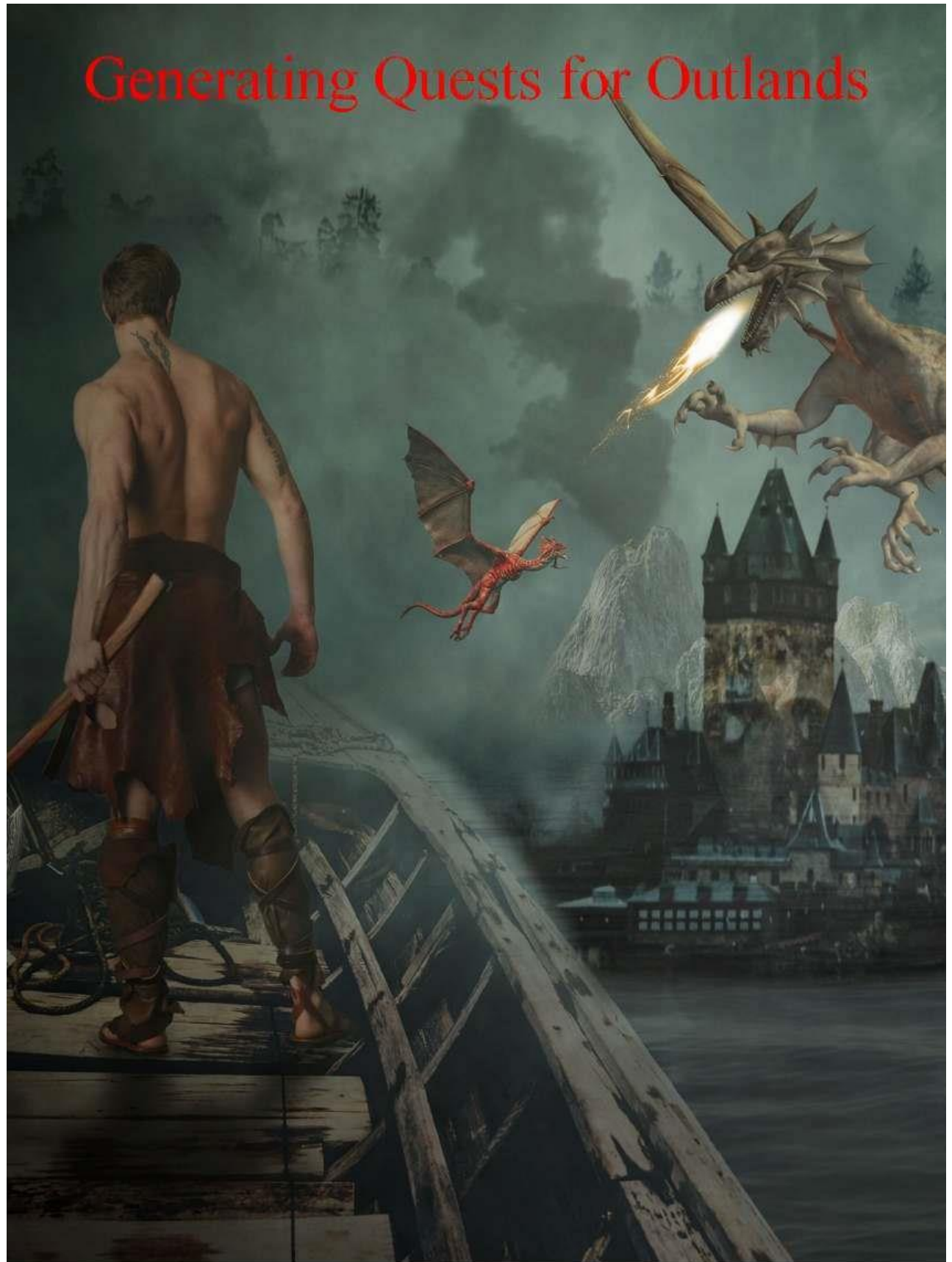


Generating Quests for Outlands



Generating Quests for Outlands

George H. Rahm © 2018

Design: Red Rahm & Conrad Hillmer

Art Director Emeritus: Todd Pickens

Cover Art: Lothar Dieterich

Tarot Images: Pamela Colman Smith from *Golden Dawn Deck* of 1909

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Here's what you need?

In order to play Chronicles of the Outlands, everyone needs to generate characters, which takes maybe a couple minutes. That and you need an able Referee. Before, I hear the wails of sorrow, don't lose hope. "*His was a tale of woe.*"

In order for the Referee to be ready, he must have a scenario, the basis of any adventure. But, what if the players don't want to do that scenario? A fair question. The Ref needs lots of scenarios. Choice is important.

Some guy wants you to do something for some reason, and he has stuff he can give you, with other guys being opposed. Let's get started. In some ways this is what most people are passing off as role-play. Sure, that *some guy* will be titled king or wizard. The *do something* is a quest, usually find a thing. The thing is a fantasy trope, a sword or ring. All the elements are generic. Any one is the same as any other. The king is truly a 2-D cardboard cut-out. A wind of sighs knocks him over.

Stop Cribbing Stale Movie Tropes

Ready for my rant, which started in 1977 and continues to this day? Stop turning role-play hours into sans costume cosplay. I'm sick of reenactments without any surprises. An elf wants you to take the magic ring on a long arduous journey and toss it into a volcano. A man searches for the murderer of his family across half a lifetime. Both fine enough stories. I paid more for the movie tickets, then the cost of many rule systems. I even enjoyed myself for three hours each time. But with characters logging hundreds of hours of investment, shouldn't we expect something tangible and unique from our gaming? Divine intervention – most of us could use help with our stories.

The problem I have with most game systems is that the reasons and true consequences are absent. There are plenty of dice and mechanics to kill characters. But the Ref is left with nothing but some broad background notes, a couple of story hints and cliché NPCs, plus the sound of crickets. Now what?

DIY Referee; those two pages of *now you're ready for many fine adventures* sends me predictably off to the last movie I watched for a hint to my next adventure. We've been duped, too often. The authors don't even seem to have any idea how to run a story with their own game systems. They fall in love the mathematics of adding to target numbers and generating opposed rolls. But after detailing a slew of dice permutations, they're exhausted, left self deluded and hanging onto a concept or at best a mood. Many game authors are adequate story tellers, and they will entertain a

group once or twice. Encouraging sales are generated. But does that translate into hundreds of hours of memorable game play for someone who has never met the author? Can any game be truly picked up and played?

Avoid those binary quests – death or no death. One patron should never be interchangeable by any other. Use a thesaurus if you feel otherwise. One mission, essentially the same as any other, is boring. **Don't bore.** Kill this guy close to your ability, then the next, then the next is a silly time waste. Just watch TV or text while you game.

Failure must mean more than roll new. Success must be more than fight another day. Maybe the players have no true role in any campaign? Nonsense, they are the only thing in a campaign driving change. These are player character stories. Mister Referee, cut your exposition, already; I'm drowning in backstory. Why am I doing this? What's likely to result? Expect more from your rule system and your game play.

End of Rant

The guidelines in this book will give the Referee the advantage – he will always be ready. Even if the campaign is not fully detailed, these mechanics generate all as needed. Scenarios live from adventure to adventure. Granted, the game is more interesting with a fully described world, but not every story needs a whole planet (from the start). Draw one river connecting two cities and your campaign has begun. The rest might be prompted by patrons sending the player characters back and forth. The cities will change as the characters grow in power. Some will die, but the campaign evolves. Your adventures gain **impact**.

Scenarios are the adventures. Each is easier to create than the campaign, because the details are on a personal level. A scenario traces the characters through a story. For instance, a rescue scenario might place a group of player characters in a tavern to start a brawl as a distraction; They could infiltrate a cabal to locate an incriminating letter. Defeat a pirate vessel, or travel to hunt down traitors, deliver messages, transport coinage, supply a fortress or train a troop of men.

The most important aspect of the scenario is the quest. The culmination of each quest arrives in the climax. In detailing the scenario, the quest must be considered. The Referee might need to diagram a fortress or list tavern occupants, their names and meritorious skills.

Combat happens during travel along the scenario and at the climax of the adventure. The players will have objectives to meet; these are usually fully detailed, but sometimes they remain vague to challenge the players to discover the true motives and consequences of their actions. Encounters occur along the way to the objectives at the climax. Some of these might be predetermined by the Referee, but most result as the characters maneuver toward their goal.

Most every quest will be **prompted by a patron** – a person requesting the task or deed. Player characters will command forces of men fighting for the patron’s objectives against his principal rival. Sometimes the patron will accompany the players, usually for low level player characters. But more often, the patron will stay safe at home, sending the player characters out to face the danger and fulfill his desires. On rare occasions, the patron for the quest will be a player character. i.e. The players have taken their own quest. But usually some grander leader, hopefully someone more colorful than the ubiquitous monarch or emperor, will supply aid and be the player’s patron prompting a quest.

Using NPCs

Before describing the scenario sequence, understand the following four terms, acquire special meaning:

Patron – NPC that directs the quest; the person who requests the players to perform some deed or task. The patron rarely will be a player character on a self initiated quest. Even if the player character is high level, he usually has a benefactor. The Ref may even take a PC as the NPC patron. Hand over the character to the Ref and go on that quest with your alternate role.



Rival – NPC that most directly opposes the completion of the quest. The principal foe that must be bested in order to succeed. The person that represents conflicting interests to the quest's objectives. Often the rival is the intended victim of violence or other intrigue. However, he might not always be a future combatant. Rivals often are powerful men who oppose through agents. Keep a few around and let the tension and feud build over several levels. A true rival is not someone you simply walk up to and dispatch. e.g. *"Where is your proof man? You can't arrest the Lord High Chamberlain of Kiev without proof!"*

Friend – NPC that has become a loyal companion or indebted comrade of the player character. Friendly NPCs may even serve out of fear or to relieve a past financial obligation. Here is an agent whose help might be requested to bolster the player character's strength or knowledge. Often a friend is abstract, some may not even have specific names. The character might have gained aid or be owed favors from someone with clout that can pay the bail, ransom or send his own minions to pull the player character out of a tight spot (like a Digression). Overuse of friendship can cause refusal or betrayal – the loss of the friend. Friendship is tenuous, usually lasting through one request for service, representing in game terms the repayment of some debt or favor. If the player used a background generator to make his character, he may even start play with some friends. Good for him; use them well.

Enemy – NPC that has become an adversary of the player character because of a past transgression or defeat. Here's a past rival, happenstance foe or incensed patron from a badly performed or failed quest. People (plural) will hate the player character enough to cause him future worry or ill consequences. In the scenario, the quest's opposition is the rival, but enemies might become involved to even old scores. An enemy remains as such, until his grievances are settled, or the player character becomes too powerful to challenge. The game will prompt enemies that the player character never knew he had. All character actions ripple beyond the immediate area. *"Rogue, you killed my brother!"*

Every player character should **list his friends and enemies for future reference**. A curt description listing the NPC's level and role in the campaign makes the contact and adversary more relevant. Player characters seldom need to list other player characters as friends or enemies. But by doing so, an accurate record is maintained. Remember, any player character becomes an NPC, when not operated by its owning player. All NPCs are run by the Ref. Should an NPC be killed, well, often that just means the character entered play and went away. A true death—tear that

paper sheet in half—occurs only when the player takes that double-tap vicious. Yet the Ref does control these fates.

Scenario Sequence

Except in cases where the Referee has created his own detailed outline of events, player characters follow this generic flow in the game:

1. Quest Generation: patron and his offer.
2. Terms & Deals: player accepts; refuse then go to step six.
3. The Referee's Role: setup specifics, flesh out details.
4. Encounters: travel, or if mission abandoned, then skip to step six.
5. Climax Challenges: concluding the quest and completing objectives.
6. Epilog: encounters traveling home regardless of quest's success or ending.
7. Scenario Aftermath: determine new friends and enemies.
8. Downtime between episodic scenarios.

Note: Digressions occur at any step, though mostly in travel, to seal a character's fate or reunite him with the group, after personal or party mishap.

This game pamphlet will not detail all of those eight steps. The first three are covered herein. The other topics have their own pdf release. Forgive me if it seems like I'm trying to nickel and dime you to buy more stuff. Truly, the reason some material is given its own booklet is for clarity of focus. *"That and corporate beats me, when I don't make my sale's quota."*

How does this Work in Play?

In general, the whole group of players travels and adventures together. Very rarely do they tactically split for the climax. By staying together—in the thick of things all the way to the Epilog—the Ref can focus on the story. Even when some players abandon the quest, the remaining force controls the Referee's attention.

The focus of scenario stays on those attempting the quest. A player might **change characters as it suits him** several times in the course of a scenario, often replacing his injured character and exchanging his role to another to keep with the main group. Play should emphasize interaction by the players attempting tasks or joining combat, as they resolve the Referee's situations.

With the number of servitors around and abounding, new characters will be easy to integrate. Granted, not the highest level, but characters are available on the

fly to join the group. The Referee will decide the appropriate time to infuse fresh blood into the game. He may do so inside of combat or usually after battle resolves. Seldom does a player need to wait for a phase change of the story settings. But that's up to the Ref, how he handles substitution for the reckless and wounded. Rather than face Digression tables, player characters may also be set aside, until they can be rescued. Else, toss the dice and meet your fate. *"My players call them DIEgressions, and not because dice are rolled."*

Useful Before and During Play

As the Ref, you can generate the quests and flesh out the events prior to play. Yet I'm sure that luxury of time is not always available. I play often as the Referee and sometimes as both the Ref and a player. When the scenario is generated, the results need not be secret. Simply flip the cards out in the various categories and write down the results. Work from an outline; nothing needs to be highly scripted.

Even when the players are being deceived, they would sense something's odd. They just might not be able to do anything for now to change the events or out the traitor. Often the players should role-play their characters without specific knowledge, until the turncoat is revealed.

All the players can help write the adventure by suggesting the timing of events preordained. *"Right about now we would meet the world's greatest swordsman, perhaps see him dueling someone else, so we know not to directly challenge him."*

Twists and traps are great when they surprise. But just as much fun is had by connecting the dots. Play along and let all decide when various limitations and engagements spring on the group.

Quest Generation

The following series of Tarot card descriptions will aid greatly the Referee in generating a quest. The quest is, above all, the purpose to the scenario. The Referee may already have an idea of the type of quest he wishes the players to undertake, so the following is then used to flesh out those ideas.

The descriptions below integrate well into the scenario sequence. There are plenty of modifiers to the basic pattern of play. Flip some cards to determine each of the following elemental parts of the quest.

Quest Elements

- ~ Patron, Benefactor or Employer w/ Patron's Quirks and Added Depth.
- ~ Quests, Jobs or Tasks for Hire w/ Quest's Surprises. Optional missions might relate to the underworlds and those dangers.
- ~ Patron's Reason, Motivation or Cause for Seeking Player w/ Reason's Changes and Attitudes. There is almost always a Political Faction in the campaign that may be impacted. Some player characters may also have Secondary Motives and Challenges.
- ~ Patron's Finances, Resources or Clout w/ Finance's Trials and Tribulation.
- ~ Twists, Difficult Situations or Unforeseen opponents w/ Unfathomable Modifiers. Those may involve Monsters, truly Wicked Ones.
- ~ Principal Rival w/ Rival's Broaden and Flesh Out. He might also have Flair Forces to influence normal combat, along with Decisive Surprises.

Also generate as desired the answers to additional questions: WHO?, WHERE?, WHAT?, WHY?, WHEN? and HOW?

The Ref should flip a card for each section, moving on to the next part when he flips a minor tarot. When a Major Tarot card is flipped, the result is added to the section being generated. The **major cards are larger pizzazz**, special exceptions and distinctions. There shall be only one minor card that details any specific element, e.g. patron, mission, motive, finances, twists and rival. Yet each section of the generation may be influenced by any and all major cards as they are flipped. The major tarot work to modify the final minor card. Those major tarots only influence the element in which they are selected.

The Referee may reinterpret any area's pick; resist discarding anything outright. Give the whole situation a serious look before making changes. All cards will need to be blended, and any selection of the quest could have more or less significance. The only time something should be truly ignored, is if it cannot be interpreted. No one should be confused, especially the Referee running play.

The quest generation becomes easier with practice and with an expanding campaign. You might sink some time into a campaign. Or, let the quests and encounters of play suggest the broader intrigues. The campaign should have important NPCs, and **each quest should add new NPCs** to the stable used by the Ref. As the Referee finds a theme, he then can more readily ignore events, or change something to better fit the campaign's intrigues (cabals). The players will hopefully find mighty themes and lofty goals. Passions not easily satisfied in any one adventure.

Also provided are tables that give rough answers to questions. I like them, because at times I get tired of improvising and snatching people and objects out of thin air. The internet should also be consulted for names and turns of a phrase. Many clever things appear online but don't get lost in the minutia.

What's truly nice, is nothing needs to be done ahead of time. You can start with your players and **get right into the game by flipping the cards**. From there, not only will the combat (at all levels of battle) be resolved by the deck, the adventure from quest to encounters to climax to aftermath, can all be generated by the Tarot. *"Yes, you'll have to trust me, until you see this prestidigitation in practice."*

With the number of combinations and modifiers presented, the resulting variations are unlimited. Even performing yet again the same task becomes a new experience, since many other elements will change. These tables generate a rival and other oppositions that influence the encounters in the settings of the scenario sequence. They also change the campaign as the player characters win or lose, succeed or fail in the adventure. *"I'm still amazed and have used the method for forty years."*

Understanding the Patron's Role

No matter how powerful the players think that their characters have become, there is always a greater authority. Those greater (and even lesser) men are the patrons. The patrons are the ones who wish something done. They are the ones who, often strangely, allow the players to freely travel and move with a purpose. The patrons create not perhaps the encounters directly, but the motives on which the players trek. If there is no quest, the encounters become rather routine and life is slow. Removing rocks from shoes and mending sail cloth, counting an ever dwindling stack of coins and inspecting the readiness of faceless minions, that's not Outlands!

Powerful player characters may become patrons, but as stated before, they often turn into NPCs. When the player has a score to settle, something he feels he must do, then between quests he has an opportunity. He might be off on his own for a bit. Yet during the downtime section of play, a new patron and plot presents itself. Each city has its own intrigues.

Couldn't the player characters just haphazardly wander and find their own adventures. There's got to be monsters to slay, somewhere? Let's say they did.

Twelve months later the longboat returns to port having barely survived the winter, void of supplies, having not seen any action. That's the reality. The water is too vast; the countryside a mix of noble estates to trespass and trudging on roads riddled with tolls and garrison checkpoints. Who vouches for you? Would the wandering party not be treated as invaders, if not common thieves? Would they end up in a baronial manor, telling tales around a hearth, and then having that castle's master offer them work?

These are story driven tales, and the story begins with a patron telling the players what he needs them to do. This generates all things which follow. That and lots of Ignoble opportunities to advance.

What can a patron offer?

Trust, opportunity, right of passage, something other than boring routine. The patron initiates the challenge. Plus, the true answer is that the patron may have some resources. He may have the key item, knowledge, authority, plus the more powerful contacts.

The players are the ones who cause change. Very little happens without them. However, the patrons are the ones who prompt when that may occur. They collectively are what changes through player action. Each quest changes the world slightly or greatly. Flip some cards and see how.

Do I work for free?

No, you'll negotiate a reward. (See terms of agreement, toward the end.) But don't you first want to know what is expected, what needs to be done? Don't you need to know a little bit more about this patron, about his quest, about the rival?

What if the players are fresh off the farm? The patron is the one who picks them up, when they initially fall off the turnip truck. (An old adage.) The patron may supply the first ship; he may have a crew and company of men. He may have some gold. Usually the patron has something, but seldom ever enough. A patron who was all-powerful, all-knowing and undefeatable would never need to hire the players, right? So why did he hire the player characters? Flip and find out.

Patron Quicklook

Patrons		
	Cups	Rods
King	Guildmaster (Moneylender)	Noble (Aristocrat)
Queen	Enchantress (Madam)	Lady (Maid)
Knight	Messenger (Justice)	Legionnaire (Knight)
Knave	Merchant Prince (Slaver)	Fop (Disguised Rogue)
10	Household (Fraternity)	Peasant (Runaway)
9	Debt Collector (Taxman)	Teen (Orphan)
8	Pilgrim (Inquisitor)	Warning (Proclamation)
7	Former Patron (Friend)	Sheriff (Vigilante)
6	Illusionist (Scholar)	Victor (Poltroon)
5	Suspect (Unknown)	Bandit (Street Gang)
4	Questing Knight (Warden)	Steward (Slave)
3	Woman (Lover)	Adventurer (Crusader)
2	Partners (Couple)	Ship Master (Smuggler)
Ace	Faithful Priest (Sham)	Omen (Nightmare)
	Coins	Swords
King	Entourage (Emissary)	Warlord (Subordinate)
Queen	Daughter (Suitor)	Widow (Bereaved)
Knight	Mercenary (Assassin)	Headstrong (Cursed Hero)
Knave	Monger (Tradesman)	Amazon (Disguised Female)
10	Innkeeper (Harlot)	Victim (Dying Warrior)
9	Gentleman (Stranger)	Shape Shifted (Cultist)
8	Dwarven Agent (Abducted)	Demigod (Wizard)
7	Ranger (Druid)	Cutpurse (Pickpocket)
6	Philanthropist (Penniless)	Outcast & Child (Fugitive)
5	Invalid (Blind)	Opportunist (Magical Glitch)
4	Heroic Enforcer (Spy)	Disgraced Soldier (Thug)
3	Heir (Pretender)	Enemy (Competitor)
2	Actor (Artist)	Viking Stellari (Pagan)
Ace	Confession (Crypt Discovery)	Demi-Human (Monster)
Inverted card result list in parenthesis.		

Five Categories of Influence and Resources

As the *Patron*, *Benefactor* or *Employer* tables are used to generate adventures, each patron has strengths and weaknesses in what he may offer for success. A set of intrinsic ratings accompanies each patron. The same labels do not apply to the prime enemy rival or anyone else who becomes opposed to the patron and his quest. Only the patron has these benefits and restrictions.

Encounters and the climax challenges generate the obstacles presented by the rival. Hope for good luck there. Avoiding a vicious and resourceful rival may turn

into the heart of play, of course, but the player need not confront any rival's total net worth. What is provided by the patron tends to be negotiated. What the rival throws against the group tends to be ultimately a surprise. *"He's not so much the slouch that we were told."*

Sea: represents the ability of the patron to add or replenish techniques to the party's longboat. Any and all might be available to the players in their deal with this patron. He may also have resources related to water born hosts like the Raja's Entourage, Order of the Seven Seas, Sea Rovers or Imperial Navy. (See Political and Sinister Organizations.)

Land: represents the ability of the patron to supply soldiers to the cause. These men might join and enhance the group's loyal crew. Some longboat techniques seem to represent the men aboard. This resource may add swagger in the second half of the list, between Seasoned Crew (L) to Battle Hard (T). Others may also be supplied or paid for as agreed by the Ref. He may also have resources related to land based garrisons like the Imperial Watchmen, Janissary or Frontier Legions. He might also have contacts among warrior based secret cabals, Amazons or Barbarians, enticing them to make a commitment to the quest. (See Political and Sinister Organizations.)

Riches: represent money; coinage as a reward is more than becoming Longboat Treasure Laden (D). The patron may make arrangements to pay off officials along the journey or have stores waiting at waypoints. Getting raw bullion across the world is difficult, because of the monsters and obstacles between, but also easy with magic gates. The Ref must decide if the patron, even a rich one, has the range of contacts or magical power to make this something more than starting flush with cash. He may have resources related to the campaign economy like the Royal Mint or Vox Illuminati. He may be admired by vain, yet powerful, groups like the various Sky Realms. (See Political and Sinister Organizations.)

Power: represents the contacts of the patron all types of influence that are wielded through agents. These are his political allies or extended relatives who've obtained lordly control of the campaign's city-states. Not all these operatives need to be great warriors. Judges and mayors are certainly resources. That forger skill may be used to fake a letter of introduction, but nice to have the real deal. He will have resources related to lawful control in the capital like the Curia Regis, Patrician Class or Grand Assize. Yet he may be able to tap the secret and corrupt, those who might fear him personally more than any outcome of his goals. (See Political and Sinister Organizations.)

Respect: represents the goodwill that the patron has acquired over the poor, the serfs, even the city guilds and lay councils. Power is usually fear, the basis for noble influence and favoritism, but no one truly rules without the masses without respect. A person with great respect is often one seen to be righteous and on a just cause. Respect clouds people's opinions. If the quest or motive is completely base, corrupt or desperate, respect will excuse or shield the characters. Advancing in level depends on the check of Ignobles for Growth and Fame. Obtaining these checks on adventures where the respect of the people is garnered is another way of achieving a long life. Evil may also respect the man, as both a worthy adversary but also as a hands-off protection. Many a noble would trade his entire fortune to have any respect from those he admires. Respect is the most tenuous of resources and influence. The patron will have influence with groups that seek great respect as well, the Patricians, Free Gladiators or Pantheon of Pagan Altars. Dwarven states, oddly, also show deference to men of high repute and renown. (See Political and Sinister Organizations.)

These general availabilities of resources have three grades: **Assuredly**, **Ordinarily**, and **Improbable**. *Assuredly* means the NPC will easily have such men or materials; he will often offer them up at the start. *Ordinarily* signifies the patron can obtain the article of favor but is usually less inclined to do so. The players are hired for a reason, usually because they come with their longboat, men and materials. But if the quest or motive is dire, *Ordinarily* coveted materials will be made available to the players, just not at first. These will be supplied only as Queen events are generated in encounters. Finally, *Improbable* is simply that, an unlikely access to ships and legions, or other kinds of power and riches. There are always exceptions, improbable is not impossible.

A few extra loyalists in the adventuring party may be better than none. The encounter tables will have great effect on any resource. The more the players receive up-front the better. Any reward saved for the end tends to be muted or denied should the mission seem successful but problematic. What good would it be for a patron's adversary to die, but his reputation be ruined by the player characters' boastful actions or extracurricular overt acts. Stay the course and succeed.

Not all patrons will have every rating. The titles themselves will imply some resources. e.g. Ship Master has access to a ship. When in doubt, assume that most anything can be *ordinarily* obtained. Not immediately perhaps, but the patrons are all people who have clout in the campaign, even when they appear less than capable.

Even that rare indigent is more than a common street waif. e.g. Often an associate of the Grandfather of Thieves or obscuring his potent past. The player characters will not be given just random stuff to do. Every scenario builds the saga, story by story, advancing the overall campaign.

Major Tarot – Patron’s Quirks or Added Depth

Patron Quirk Magician: He’s totally honest, detests secrets, confides all to the players. Patron’s fair treatment may be tempered by other elements. The man may be an honest debtor. Yet he gains **Assured Riches** as resources.

Inverted: patron is guileful, silver-tongue, a wheeler-dealer. Patron will promise more reward than he can deliver.

Patron Quirk High Priestess: Patron is a user or master of sorcery. As part of his reward, he may gift-teach wizardry techniques to the players. All players gain double make-rolls on the quest.

Inverted: patron keeps his extended talents with magic a secret. The players still gain the extra rolls, but the patron will not share his abilities. This patron will usually not like to be haggled with or outright refused. He has **Improbable Power** as resources.

Patron Quirk Empress: Patron has strong presence, persuades with voice. The player characters may be the victim of thought control. Or, the man’s charisma is endearing. He is most likely a fellow Viking and will have **Assured Sea** as resources.

Inverted: he’s overly cautious, sometimes to the detriment of his goals. He often relates how impossible his quest seems, even as the players think the task is simple. Who is right? All his Queen encounter events are treated as inverted: riddled with new requests or tangential tasks.

Patron Quirk Emperor: Patron is skilled soldier, man-at-arms, trait Bold. The players start with a plus one Quest Pip in the adventure.

Inverted: patron was once famous, but his fame has faded or lost importance over time. His acclaim may be from acts in a bygone era. He has **Improbable Land** as resources.

Patron Quirk Hierophant: Patron is deeply spiritual person, calling on the heavens for aid. In a fantasy genre, those prayers may be answered. He will see the players (rightly or wrongly) as divinely sent.

Inverted: his belief and practices tend toward dark forces, demons and outlawed cultist practices. Yet, his coin purse jingles.

Patron Quirk Lovers: Two patrons are involved, but only one approaches at a time. Pick an extra card WHO? for second patron’s identity.

Inverted: that other person is not aware of this patron’s employment offer to the players.

Patron Quirk Chariot: Patron is eager to start. This rush means the players do not gain Methodical additions to their longboat techniques.

Inverted: patron is meticulous; players gain longboat techniques from being Methodical trait starting at (A) and moving down the list, instead of starting at (T) and moving up. The goals of the quest seem crème de la crème.

Patron Quirk Justice: Patron has been outwardly a model citizen up to this time, loyal to his clan, township and the emperor. He will have contacts and favors owed within the ruling Curia Regis. The player characters may utilize those alliances during this quest. He has **Assured Power** as resources.

Inverted: patron is a renowned criminal with a long record of arrests, but no convictions. He will have contacts and favors owed by the Grandfather of the Thieves. The player characters may utilize this alliance during this quest.

Patron Quirk Hermit: Patron is much older than he appears. He may not be human or has ceased to age. He has **Assured Land** as resources.

Inverted: patron is pretending to be something he is not. Select a card for WHO? to discover his true role in the campaign. The minor card selected as patron is all a sham. Any resources or influence implied by the patron card selection will prove tainted or non-lasting.

Patron Quirk Wheel of Fortune: Reshuffle the deck and continue.

Patron Quirk Force: Patron is stout and Trait Rugged.

Inverted: he's instead weak, frail, or possibly big, yet having a vulnerability, or he's cowardly. He's no good in battle, either way. He has **Improbable Sea** as resources.

Patron Quirk Hanged Man: The man approaching the players, pretending to be the patron, is not the man he claims to be. This man is at risk for seeking out the players for his quest. He is just an agent of a more powerful patron generated by the minor card flip. He's acting and supplying resources without permission from that other NPC truly in the role. If the patron is of little or no statue, the man here still is just an intermediary, helping a friend without that friend's knowledge or even desire.

Inverted: patron's role is transient, soon another will become the patron; pick an extra card WHO? for the identity of ultimate patron. If money is involved in the quest, the new patron will have muscled his way into the deal. *"You work for me now."*

Patron Quirk Death: Patron is dashing and has killed before, though strictly in self defense. He is Trait Energetic.

Inverted: he has also slain prisoners in cold blood.

Patron Quirk Temperance: Patron is patient and humble. The player characters will feel compelling desire to help this man. Celestial magic maybe? He has **Assured Respect** resources.

Inverted: he's quick tempered and emotional, a berserker in battle. He will favor player characters that act the same.

Patron Quirk Devil: Patron is evil, without pity, conscience or sense of loyalty. The player characters will be oblivious to these harsh aspects of the employer. He changes to **Improbable Respect** for resources.

Inverted: further patron will do anything to satisfy his quest goals. Failure, even setback, will be punished.

Patron Quirk Tower of Destruction: Patron was ordered by a major campaign figure to complete this task. The true patron is a regional earl or a member of the ruling Curia Regis advising a bored or indifferent emperor.

Inverted: patron knows the quest will destroy his own power or sacrifice his own life, but he remains helpless before the crown's coercion. Like all flips, this should be known to the players. So how do they deal with such? *"We've all faced the disagreeable task, so prove you can role-play."*

Patron Quirk Star: Patron is a famous person, widely known and familiar to the player characters. He gains at least one (more) **Assured** in one of the five resources.

Inverted: this reputation is infamous, sadistic, widely feared. This should not be a detriment to the players but will affect reactions of locals along the journey.

Patron Quirk Moon: From this point on, the patron is trying to dupe the prime player character. Statistically this is by design quite rare, odds one out of seventy-eight adventure starts. The first person the player characters meet is seldom, if ever, a person they should mistrust or directly kill. Too many times that cliché has been used, and quite frankly, it's a juvenile's view of the world. Assume some things are done with do diligence, like selecting the guy who hires you. *"Here are my references."*

The players may not be drawn into a trap, but they are pawns. The rival is working with the patron. This becomes apparent from the start – shall we say just after the terms of the deal are agreed. The card flip for motive stands but should represent a desire for the opposite result. The patron wants the quest to fail.

The players might wish the plan to succeed to spite all, while they check Ignobles. Regardless, there is no-win. The reward from this patron for any outcome is twisted, and no ending leads to friendship.

Inverted: turns out it's not that bad. The rival and patron are not in cahoots. The patron simply is not a trustworthy person. The quest is a sham, but there is a real quest, which is being accomplished in conjunction with the one the players are being sent upon. *"It's all confusing."*

There is probably just mistrust. The players sensed that – saw the card flips too. Later the patron will confide more as confidence is gained. Allow a Difficult

Task Resolution opportunity in each encounter phase to allow the patron to relate the full and true objectives. However, if the players reach the climax, attempting the smoke-screen quest, they will abort straight to the Epilog.

As soon as the quest changes, by the patron becoming more forthright, there'll be new obstacles and goals; apply events to that point as tactfully as possible. Yes, the patron was being deceptive, but again, with no implied trap. There was in fact a separate rival distracted by the player characters' actions. The give away may have been when someone very important seems to oppose something germane to his own cause.

Patron Quirk Sun: Patron is cunning, practiced in politics and law. He is Trait Clever.

Inverted: he's a pretender or usurper to the imperial throne. For clarity, a pretender has a blood claim, while a usurper is someone who seizes things outside of the laws and tradition.

Patron Quirk Judgment: Patron is shrewd judge of character, high social rank. He will be Trait Methodical.

Inverted: actually, he's a drunkard, which impairs most of his decisions. He has little or no skill and fighting abilities, but he still may be high born.

Patron Quirk World: Patron is free agent, loyal to no clan or lord.

Inverted: he was banished from a city-state or foreign land. This probably limits his ability to travel, so the players will go home for him. He suffers an unexpected **Improbable** shortfall in one more of his resources. Turn one Assured resource to Improbable (if available).

Patron Quirk Fool: Patron is lucky but reckless; all players receive only half their usual make-rolls. He is Trait Gifted.

Inverted: he's grossly adventuresome. The patron will boast about his goals and plans; the enemies faced will be better prepared. Start with a minus one Quest pip.

Patron Cups

Patron King Cups: *Guildmaster* – An aristocrat who has amassed a fortune by becoming one of a few leaders within a monopolistic yet essential industry like making cloth or fermenting wine. The head of a craft, someone who employs thousands of slaves or indentured workers, plus the guards to oversee all. If not a city-state mayor, at least politically shrewd and connected to all manner of secret agents and societies. Most masters are members of cabals; murder is just another cost of doing business. Criminal, but above the law in their sanctuaries, or having bribed any judge who would dare to bring them to account. Still this man is often seen as a

benefactor, feeding the poor and offering judication to those whose cases are not entitled to be heard in a noble's court.

Inverted: *Moneylender* – Extremely rich, but especially hated. Loaning money for interest is often illegal. Only the royal mint may do so, stamping the faces of the emperor on electrum. This man is a criminal and associated with a secret group of bankers, the Vox Illuminati, that are driving an economy outside of the imperial crown's scrutiny. He's basically a loan shark, a tax dodger, an outsider of the established customs and faiths. Many a noble will owe him; the reason the pampered elite and landowners pay any interest is because the contracts have magical bindings and truly terrible penalties as late fees. The player characters will usually despise their patron on principal or may be coerced into a task because of the prime player character's own reckless debt.

Sea: Ordinarily; **Land:** Ordinarily; **Riches:** Assuredly; **Power:** Ordinarily; **Respect:** Ordinarily.

Patron Queen Cups: *Enchantress or Witch* – A woman, shunned by society, a purveyor of love potions or offering hexes for fees. Typically, a loner, her powers should be significant. Yet that also means her adversaries are significant enough to prompt her to seek outside aid. She is someone that understands and uses a variety of magical techniques. The term priestess may better apply, for a witch is often a person who worships goddess earth – the forces of gins in nature. This patron has no relationship to the psychotic forces that empower the Dark One. The female reference is important, because the chauvinism of most societies makes this woman a practitioner both despised and feared. If her ability is not kept in strictest secrecy, she has acquired incredible power that flaunts the fearful ignorance of the populace and threatens the social dominance of men in the area.

Inverted: *Whorehouse Madam, Pimp or Pusher* – Someone who controls vice in an area. More so, they are usually gypsy folk who have kin in many river towns. They may be estranged from the greater fold, but their profession suggests not. Offer a “*heart of gold*” rapsallion as the initial personality, but the truth is plain brutal. This person exploits the vulnerable, so don't think the players will be excused for failure. Vices like sexual services are important commodities, especially when illegal and untaxed. Many a constable and magistrate might be receiving kickbacks. The profit from narcotics and hypnotics make the madam rich. This patron acts in many ways similar to a guildmaster, just over an illegal trade of prostitution, gambling and virility potions. The tonics to cure baldness do garner a right proper vault of geld.

Riches: Assuredly; **Power:** Ordinarily; **Respect:** Improbable.

Patron Knight Cups: *Mounted Messenger* – The quest can either be from the person or from the message he carries, depending upon what comes next. Select WHO? if you wish to have the man simply be a go-between. He may be a courier for

a city-state, specifically seeking one of the player characters by reputation. All such riders are important, often quite skilled to traverse the lands. His horse will have magical aspects like any player character mount. The messenger may simply have other places to go and will be handing off a task to the players. Either way, this patron seldom joins the party on the quest.

Inverted: *Traveling Justice* – The justice has rounds, which take him across the realm. He moves from village to village holding court as a representative of the nobility or the imperium. By tradition, only someone's social superior may legally convict the nobility of a crime. Often hereditary nobles go unpunished for minor deeds, because there is no one with the legal authority to accuse them. That is until the justice arrives on his rounds (every four to seven years). This person has the legal mandate to arrest anyone, conduct a trial for any crime, and often follow through without appeal to the final execution.

He will always be too busy to take care of his own affairs. The position implies a noble nature and lawful intent, meaning the patron will seldom be associated with criminal dealings. If the task seems base, he is either ignorant or being coerced by someone else. Regardless, a friendly justice, later a friend, is a nice "get out of jail card." That alone might lead the prime player character to accept any task he offers.

Land: Assuredly; **Power:** Ordinarily.

Patron Knave Cups: *Merchant Prince* – Someone who controls the ships and shipping from one or several ports. Though sometimes also a guildmaster in a cabal that controls a specific item, more often as the owner of extremely expensive vessels, the patron's monopoly is in transport. He alone can ship goods in and out of specific places. That imperial charter is a significant document to possess. Good stuff for Forgers too, if they can see and copy such parchments.

The player characters often meet this patron as they have tried to deal in cargo without permission and without a ninety-nine percent tribute to the city master. An alternate mission may be the only way for the player characters to pay their debt.

Face the simple fact – the fantasy world is not a free market world. People do not buy and sell as they desire. Barter and haggle items under the table, but coinage and trade routes are guarded and restricted. Certain consequential figures control trade, telling others when to work, what to make, and where it will be sold. Luckily, the players are adventurers and are not caught in this grind. Social order ensures trade amidst the unpredictable elements of banditry, monsters and magic.

Trade was seen as a commoner's burden socially, something lesser men do. Sea travel especially was seen as a wastrel's life. Here, the patron is more open minded. He will be of the aristocratic class; he may even be the legitimate heir of a small realm, certainly a port city. With the empire in decline, ambitious men with money have been filling the void. Simply taking over where the law has disappeared.

Still even when this guy is just someone who has lots of stuff, he will be politically and civic minded. Many players will meet a merchant prince and then set their life goal to become one.

Inverted: Slaver – Person who trades in a commerce of human chattel. In a fantasy genre these slaves may be weaker nonhuman races. Else, anyplace subject to conquest will become a source of slaves.

Slavery in fantasy worlds is generally accepted. In places where magic is shunned—most everywhere—agriculture requires large numbers of unskilled labor. Empires are built with sweat and muscle by war captives with scarred backs. Monoliths of vanity are constantly being raised. Slavers will still not be highly regarded, but they are often wealthy. A player character might despise these men for many personal reasons, but the longboat probably has a fair number of slave rowers.

Sea: Ordinarily; **Land:** Assuredly; **Riches:** Ordinarily; **Power:** Ordinarily; **Respect:** Ordinarily.

Patron 10 Cups: Head of Household – Person who represents a family, clan or possibly minority in society. Clan and family bonds remain the strongest; this is particularly true in the Frontiers where almost everyone seems related. This may also represent the players being recruited by an entire city or town to perform a task.

The players will be contacted by just one person; the patron will have a name, not just a title. He will then represent the whole family or group in the negotiation. The exact family name or specifics on a group's identity might be kept secret. The quest will favor more nefarious, because this type of patron would otherwise act on his own. The players should not ever associate their actions with the family name or township. Unfortunately, just because many might be backing the quest, the reward for success need not be any greater. Because the family wants discretion, there may also be very little fame, even after a truly taleworthy experience.

Inverted: Organized Club or Fraternity of Magi – An agent who represents an established group bonded together by common interest or activity. Members are only infrequently related by blood. More often, the group gathers for social purposes, to share knowledge and delve in specialized craft. The group often has access to relics or controls forces of magic. These may also be the keepers of ancient records or protectors of a certain relic. Some fraternities maintain protective fields that guard the world from greater evil or catastrophe. So, they will say. Their goals here might have nothing to do with their collective task or reason to be. Are they a cabal? Only the Ref can truly answer that, but then the group's identity would actually be a cover story. “You say you're from the *Royal Society of Antler Collectors*?”

Power & Respect: Assuredly.

Patron 9 Cups: Debt Collector or Enforcer – Person employed by a moneylender as a strongarm or agent. This is not the banker; this is the thug who

collects from the delinquent. A debt owed by a player character is not in play; the debt collector is not after a player obligation. He could remind the player of his debts as incentive to help, perhaps.

The man seeks help from the player characters for other related matters or skills. He mostly expects anonymity. The players' mission need not relate to debts or strongarm tactics, though often it will come down to that. A balance is in arrears. The quest involves that collection, but another critical element or distraction is being undertaken by the players. Not the debt but related to the debt, which often means the players are removing an obstacle that prevents the first party from paying the second party in a timely manner. Huh? Just do as your told. Skip the Motive card; all the patron's goals relate to money.

The patron's "honest" profession will attract enemies galore. Many will oppose the player characters, perhaps not because of direct involvement, but simply in hatred for the patron. Pick two cards for the rival.

Inverted: *Tax or Tithe Collector* – A man who is literally an enforcer or debt collector for the empire. He is a praetorian magistrate able to confiscate property or hold a person until payment is made of the tax-ransom. Nobles will be afraid of this fellow, especially when he travels alone.

Praetors might also serve one of many temples collecting religious duties. His title changes to Pontificia Cohors if the debt is owed to the Patriarch of the True Faith. Such a patron is not passing a collection plate; he's demanding feudal services owed to higher authorities or divine institutions.

The players will not be expected to join him, since the mission need not relate to the patron's official role. He will have a personal task that the players must set right. He's too well known or too busy to handle his own affairs.

Such patrons are NPCs that the players should do their best to help and befriend. These men wield great discretion and ultimately serve the Curia Regis of the capital or one of the regional diocese's governors. Such a friend might intercede later with the supreme ruler to aid the players, though his continuing stature could be at the whim of that same capricious overlord.

Sea: Improbable; **Land:** Assuredly; **Riches:** Assuredly; **Power:** Assuredly; **Respect:** Improbable.

Patron 8 Cups: *Pilgrim on Trek* – Person traveling to another, often distant, place for a magical ceremony or religious rite. During the journey a difficulty or opportunity has arisen that causes the patron to halt his travel and recruit the players. His end goal need not be important, but the players will often be curious when magic is implied. Pilgrims are often simple souls, but to add some color, the pilgrim created by this card flip always seems to be a driven fanatic or weird cult member.

Outlands is a mixture of faiths, polytheistic. Yet many believe their god is greater than all the rest. That is particularly true of the *Church of the One True Faith*; says so in the title. Though not every character is a devout celebrant, most everyone still believes something. Atheists are very rare; heretics might still be burned alive for blasphemy.

When on a holy pilgrimage, local laws usually respect the traveler. Yet the pilgrim may be having difficulty completing his trek. He may need an escort. He may



just as likely have a strange task which is unrelated; he cannot break away from his rituals to complete this other pressing matter. He may just be an opportunist, who while adventuring has discovered a once in a lifetime prospect for crime. But try to infuse some religious overtones to the mission, which may even get the player characters to question their own beliefs.

Inverted: *Religious Inquisitor* – A warrior who represents the *One True Faith*, with the goal of converting or destroying the followers of other sects and religions. The Inquisitor will oppose magical forces, though he may control charms that protect him from certain types of wizardry. His Blade and Mount will endow him with plenty of swaggering. He is not a scourge, randomly raiding and persecuting. He'd need an army for that and this magical era limits that possibility. Too much disease and not enough zealots; besides, the legionnaires want to keep the peace against all raiders internal and external.

This man seeks the players, knowing they are unbelievers. Why? He's encountered an opportunity to set aside his fanatic resolve and seek more worldly profits. He'd like you to consider your souls, but his wallet is very empty and might be filled with the player characters' help.

Sea: Improbable; **Land:** Improbable; **Riches:** Improbable; **Power:** Assuredly; **Respect:** varies by region of the campaign from Assured to Improbable.

Patron 7 Cups: *Former Patron or Employer* – This is someone the players know and have had dealings with favorably or not. The person may be from the distant past and knew at least one player character when he was learning his starting skills. Such educators are often less than kind, and the player character's memory of the man will be at best mixed.

Early in campaign play, there may not be established ties to truly have any friends. Here's as good a time as any to name an NPC and make up a back story. A previous employer needs a favor and is probably down on his luck, hunted or otherwise desperate for an ally. Even when this acquaintance is hardly a friend, there is a benefit to his offer. In game terms, the players will skip the harsh encounters of Phase B and proceed right from A to C when they advance the phase.

Inverted: Friend in Need – Represents a person a player character has befriended. Pick one well known and regarded by all. Of when that's not possible, scold your players for not establishing any trust anywhere. Then go with a fellow clansman or acquaintance from mutual activity, for instance a drinking buddy, scholarly acolyte, sacred fraternity brother, fellow guardsmen, etc. He is definitely someone the player character trusts and wishes well. In game terms, the players will skip Phase C, going right to the climax events instead.

Land & Power: Improbable.

Patron 6 Cups: *Master of Illusions or Magic Deceiver* – A person or even enchanted creature who disguises his identity with the forces of magic. Unlike the Enchantress (Queen Cups) gender is irrelevant, and the patron is not abhorred by society. He may be held in high repute. Most of the locals may even know of his power, since he outwardly practices within legal limits. However, his full identity is obscured, and he typically keeps darker secrets. He is not feared by the powerful nor ignorant, which is a mistake.

Here's another place to flip a card for WHO? His spellcasting may be secondary to another established role. The players will have a hard time refusing this offer. Even if they do so, the next patron may in fact be this very same gentleman clouding their minds. Only by the climax, could they suddenly understand their prior actions have been muddled. Even then, they may fear someone of such ability and decide to continue with grater understanding of the task. Role-play that misfortune to the hilt.

Inverted: Scholar, Sage or Alchemist – Person who has spent his life trying to understand the forces of man and nature. He often understands wizardry techniques but will shun the use of magic. A scientist and an historian, magic confuses his pursuit of knowledge and his absolute understanding of the mechanics of nature. He may even insist that the player characters refrain from magic themselves. His quest should relate to a discovery. He's often trying to prove something.

Yet by accepting this quest from this patron, the players will begin knowing that there are no Queen Mission Consequence aid events; treat them instead as lesser valued Knights.

Power & Respect: Improbable.

Patron 5 Cups: *Suspicious Figure* – Flip an additional card to answer the question WHO? When told this identity, the player characters will not believe the patron and will remain suspicious. The man may be afflicted by a curse that makes him seem untrustworthy.

The players start with doubt. This can be damning. The patron is fully committed and loyal to the players and the objectives. Let the quest be offered, but everything will seem too good to be true. Such concerns are unwarranted and will add difficulties in the Encounters before the climax. Treat Queen events as Knaves. Yet by the climax, the players will realize they may have slain some agents sent to help them.

Inverted: *Unknown Identity* – Patron deliberately obscures his identity. Do not flip a WHO? Better if the Ref has no idea as well who hires the group. The players will never know who hired them. This man will be thought to be an agent or courier. The patron will never contact them again. Complete anonymity is required. Ignore completely all Queen events; flip one and skip it, as if it never appeared.

The only concern the players should have is how they will ever collect any reward at the end from someone they never truly know. The players can expect little or nothing in the quest's aftermath. Any expected reward would be handed up front. Best to get the task done and to forget all about it. But that never happens, right?

Patron 4 Cups: *Questing Knight* – An anachronism, this patron is hunting for an object, usually a magical relic. Some knights seek shrines or virgins reputed to heal the sick or even raise the dead. Others want a means to feed the masses. Miracles from legends, reproduced by the pious and the worthy, make good fodder for his reveries. The quest he offers need not be to find that relic or finish his ultimate goal, but it will be one of the infinite parts along the way.

This patron will often seem manic or distracted by internal voices. His true intent will seem like madness or edge toward the unobtainable. Yet the interim quest for the players is usually straight-forward. The grand quest and pristine motive will be something all-encompassing. The player characters could be swept up in their own desire, adopting the patron's greater aspiration. The knight may appear in and out of future adventures. The hope of something legendary lingers.

Inverted: *Warden or Man Obsessed on Goal* – A man tasked to patrol the frontier lands around city-states routing refugee camps, disbanding criminal havens and sealing monster lairs. The warden often works alone as a scout; he will call for

reinforcements when the threat proves to be real and significant. He will be a powerful warrior, trained in arms as well as magic.

His duties may keep him occupied, so he seeks the players to help him complete some personal affairs often unrelated to the frontiers. The warden is usually content in his tasks and well paid for his work; he is not one to delve into flights of fancy or criminal endeavors. Therefore, for certain missions, use a slightly altered patron role; he'll be anyone obsessed by a goal, yet without official title. Since the obsessive man label is rather generic, it may be useful to define his actual campaign role by flipping WHO? Regardless, the motive shifts to the illegal, putting this man at odds with a local warden. The mission will have a true rival and also be opposed by the city-state wardens along the journey. The player characters may not be asked to commit any crimes themselves, but their mission's completion will aid the obsessed patron toward his own illegal ends. Constables and wardens will sense that the players are furthering a crime, even when their mission seems harmless.

The obsession of the patron may also cause the request he makes to be an offer that can't be refused. He will insist the players accept, or he will dispatch his minions to hunt the player characters down in the subsequent Epilog.

Land: Assuredly; **Riches:** Ordinarily.

Patron 3 Cups: Woman – The patron is a female, usually seeking the players in violation of established customs or practices. Her kinsman, or the entire city-state where she lives, believe that women are weak and must be kept imprisoned in the household. Independent women's roles are not rare in the fantasy genre. Most role-play games accept pretty much a unisex view of power and position for most NPCs. Yet here the players are dealing with blatant chauvinism.

This woman is ignored, lost in the background, with the implication that her gender makes her a slave. She is treated as chattel and needs permission to go outside even with an escort. She accepts a secondary role; perhaps she knows no other life. Yet the female patron does manipulate the men of her family and greater clan. She is not fully autonomous, but she does execute schemes. If any harm or failure follows, her father, brother, betrothed and clan elders will punish her, as well as, attempt to punish the players.

Inverted: Player Character's Lover – The patron is a person the prime player character can't refuse. The patron is not another warrior of the party; she is a recent paramour or old rekindled flame. She did manipulate at least one of the groups, but her intentions are not deception. She has a plan and employs her special friend.

Often a request from a lover will cause a player to become at odds with his regular companions. Some norms of the group will bend to the zeal of the smitten leader. If the other players do not aid their friend, a parting of ways may take place.

Go to the alts if need be. To stay together, the players must face a greater challenge for perhaps little or no reward.

The entire group could be cajoled or seduced into the game's quest. The patron may be quite the seductress (or employed magic). This patron is not someone else's agent, but instead is her own free spirit, a liberally minded female or sexual manipulator trying to get something accomplished.

Treat Queens as Tens; she would not enflame mistrust by sending messages after the start. Yet she may be riding along, and the tension resulting from this may rise to a magnitude of splitting the band.

Land: Improbable.

Patron 2 Cups: Pair of Men or Partners – Two people approach to start a quest. In most cases, the two will have similar background or skills. Draw one additional card for WHO? and apply it to both. Yet only one of the two partners will think the player characters should be involved. This dissent will mean that all Queens will be treated as inverted. One or both men want proof of accomplishment along the way. By mission's end, one or both men may also be dead, the result of an escalating feud. Fifty-fifty to determine if the advocate or the naysayer is the one who survives this showdown. By the adventure's end, the players may be fighting both the rival and the surviving partner now also opposed to success. That doesn't always happen, but face cards during events, Kings and Knights, will suggest a change is imminent. If during encounters, more total Kings and Knights are flipped than Queens, the patron loses to his partner right at the start of the climax.

Inverted: *Distressed Couple or Man with a Mistress* – A pair, usually man-woman, has temporarily lost access to their wealth, land or status. When the finance card is flipped, it represents what they lost or what they potentially have if released by a patriarch's or clan's permission.

Players will not be expected to simply agree out of the goodness of their hearts. The couple probably has something to offer from the finance flip, but the lion's share of any reward comes only upon the successful end of the quest's encounters. The couple may have eloped and is sought by one or both sets of parents. This will add both nuance to the quest and extra problems along the way. Even if this is the last time the patrons are encountered, that intrusion into another family's affairs is never forgotten. Enemies will be made here.

The wife or mistress in this case cannot be assumed to be simply added color. To the contrary, a dominate man would not simply bring his wife or lover along. Here, the female has forced the man into seeking the players. His pride prevents him from recognizing the need to seek outsiders.

Depending upon the mission and motives, the man will so adamantly disapprove, that eventually he might pull his support for the adventure. He will, less

likely, hope it will fail and join the opposition. But that's a possibility. If the encounters generate more than one Knave, the second will suggest the man is now hiring agents to thwart his lover's plans.

Riches: Improbable.

Patron Ace Cups: *Priest of the One True Faith* – A leader in a theological movement seeks to rid the world of the unbalancing powers of magic. These men also actively seek the destruction of the Dark One. This bogymen some will say never existed or was defeated long ago. The Ref must decide to include an icon of evil or not. The more a Dark One is mentioned in play, the more likely the role will need to be filled. Regardless, the minions of such a powerful sinister force will be real.

Many city-states allow these priests to convert the populace and build cathedrals. The True Faith preaches to the peasantry a creed of faithfulness to God's appointed members on earth. That helps nobles keep power. The priests, like all men, have a range of piety and drive to ambition and greed. Some are hippy-peaceful; others are opportunists.

The fact the party of players uses magic may not be enough sacrilege to keep the patron from shunning the group's ability and employing them in services of the greater cause. Any priest might rationalize that everyone must find faith in their own way.

The patriarch of this faith is ordained by an assembly and is the head of all priests, monks and abbots. His sermons become church laws, though this is oftentimes just ceremonial. Spiritual reforms are gradual but punctuated by violence.

The player characters will be somewhat in awe of the patron, until the job specifics prove to be base. Being contacted by God's anointed in the campaign should suffice, still often it doesn't. The players are usually tasked on mercenary matters and will desire mercenary reward.

As will be seen by more flips of the deck, this patron and his minions might ask for anything or desire anything. The trick here is to not use all the property and clout available in the elements; certainly, the patron never abuses his supremacy. After the initial meeting, best that no other contact is made. This patron may be exceptional, but he would attract extraordinary opposition should his involvement become widely known. The players will be told this. So, after agreeing to the quest, treat mission consequence Queens as Knights, but every Knight will be secretly attached to the faith. The result may still be detrimental should the card flip be inverted.

Inverted: *Snake Oil Healer* – A person who uses alcohol and natural herbs, combined with the tiniest of incantations, to claim the ability to cure sickness and

restore wounds. Most of the time, the patron has no ability to do either, at least not any more than the body naturally heals injury.

These are often a sub-faction of the priests of the True Faith, humble monks who also see magic, less as blasphemy, and more as miracle. The majority of the recruitment to the new faith is coming from these miracle men spouting salvation through obedience. Most of the player characters will be suspicious or downright annoyed by any claims of divinity. But the patron has everything and anything which may be needed by the group to ensure success.

Sea: Assuredly; **Land:** Assuredly; **Riches:** Assuredly; **Power:** Assuredly; **Respect:** Assuredly.

Patron Rods

Patron King Rods: *Landed Noble* – A baron or other high born official who governs an area under the authority of an earl or the emperor himself. In troubled times, the imperial kingdom is being dismantled. The nobility usurps the power to make laws and govern. The city-state and regional courts are convicting more criminals and enemies than the imperial Grand Assize. The commoners are often looking to feudal lords to fill the vacuum of security created by the retreating legion garrisons.

Nobles are generous employers of agents like the player characters. There is no end to their intrigues. The lord will be fearless in his negotiations, because he has hired men before for all manner of business. Yet a good friend could be earned by success on his task. The noble tends to live on estates surrounded by farms, while the aristocrat, also called patricians, will have a townhouse inside a walled city. The patron will not be someone who likes to repeat himself, nor have his goals expressed and then spurned. To refuse this request or fail later will surely make an enemy.

Inverted: *Patrician or City Aristocrat* – A wealthy urbanite might manage as a mayor or govern as a merchant prince. His power arrives from craft, trade and even slaves. He may still pay lip-service and even swear false allegiance to hereditary noble households or the emperor. He or his son will marry for a true title and then transition officially to the blue blood upper crust of society. Once he is gone, his wealth may perpetuate or be squandered. Who can truly say what may occur after he or the player characters shed the mortal coil. If there is any upside to dealing with a patrician rather than a landed noble, that would be the city folk hold less grudges. Neither enjoys failure, but the wealth of nobility is more tenuous, less protected. This man will feel he can always replace his losses, even by hiring other adventurers to attempt the same quest again. Or to hunt down those who betray.

Sea: Ordinarily; **Land:** Ordinarily; **Riches:** Ordinarily; **Power:** Assuredly; **Respect:** Ordinarily.

Patron Queen Rods: *Lady of Prestige* – The wife of a lord. She will hold power, but only by virtue that her husband has power. She will usually approach the players unbeknownst to her husband, unless she is a widow. As a widow she still may have a lordly son or protector who is none the wiser. Death is a frequent occurrence in a fantasy genre. Without her living husband, she may only maintain the title without the respect or power.

The lady may just as likely have influence to proceed on her own behalf, because her father, brother or husband is extremely important in the campaign. She will use his name. If the players do not act overly impressed by her solicitation, she may tell that same father, husband or brother that the player characters insulted her dignity or honor. Yes, depending upon her goals, she may be a lying bitch.

Inverted: *Maid of High Born* – A servant of a noble woman, yet not a commoner. Many maids are the daughters of less important nobles. Rich frontier land-holders frequently send their daughters to live within the households of powerful barons or aristocrats closer to the capital in the civilized lands. The maids are taught how to manage a manor or large estate. The arrangements often go further and ensured peace by allowing the exchange of passive hostages. Many of these maids could enter into marriage with the sons of other lords as part of treaties.

The maid's mission may also represent the interests of a noble matron she serves. In either case, where she acts for another or on her own behalf, the patron secretly approaches the players. She knows her foster father or future husband would not approve. She doesn't necessarily conspire against these men, but they will become a rival should the group's plans become widely known. If any deed is to be done, the head of the household should have been involved and acted on the lady's behalf. Adventurers? The scandal! The lady herself should not associate with hooligans, ruffians or roustabouts, i.e. the low born.

If any player character starts off by doing something stupid or juvenile, take his character sheets and threaten to rip it in half. That should impress upon them that acts in the campaign have consequences – if not today, soon enough.

Land: Assuredly; **Respect:** Ordinarily.

Patron Knight Rods: *Marshal of the Legions* – This man has fought wars. But more importantly, he has seen to the feeding and clothing and housing of soldiers to and from battles (plural). Imagine doing that, plus supplying the horses? He's capable, very.

The marshal will have a bodyguard of some renown, a group that many talented men-at-arms aspire to prove worthy to join. He will seldom be offering the players that reward of entrance to his company. Instead, he will be able to intimidate and threaten the group with annihilation if they fail to follow his orders.

Inverted: Chivalrous Knight – The patron’s title is ceremonial or self proclaimed. He rarely would be associated with a traditional force of distinction, like the Imperial Watchmen, Sacred Order of the Questing Knights or Raja’s Entourage, though his dead father or brother might be a fallen member. In rare cases, as will be shown by the rest of the quest generation flips, he could be retired, or was ousted, or fell out of good grace with his former comrades. But more often he is a dreamer.

Here is a warrior that is more book read than has had true combat experience. If the patron comes aboard and along on the adventure, he will need to be constantly guarded and placated. Okay, he comes along. Otherwise he might be just another landed noble, and there’s little fun in that.

A purist knight will not be worldly in the least. He will not allow most of the skills of the group to be used in the way they were intended. He will want everyone clean and honest and charitable, even when the mission is as foul as burned toast. Well, fouler than that perhaps. Either penalize the group with a minus one Quest Pip for having the distraction. Or better yet, generate events for him. Except, any negative outcome that he produces, reflects and will knock out or injure a player character. He’s truly a living breathing bane, and he’s the stumbling boss.

Land: Assuredly.

Patron Knave Rods: *Foppish Warrior* – A fighter who has many effeminate characteristics. This patron can still be an excellent combatant (most are), but his mannerisms are such that he enjoys personal adornment – perfume, jewelry, colorful garments, etc. A fop is not always a dandy; his garishness is not related to his sexuality. Remember that magic has a way of perverting the most rugged of fellows.

Yet a fop is not a rugged man. His attire is secondary to the game related element that he will not want to outright challenge anyone by brute force. He knows he can’t overpower anyone. Nor would he want to muss his cravat. He may want the players to be his bloody killers, or very rarely wants the players to proceed adopting his temperament to live in ruthless restraint.

One last possibility, he may in fact be a she. Her appearance is the best she can muster. The players will never suspect her gender. They will simply and always see a dainty man. Would there be any reason to start an argument or prove otherwise? She’s still not rugged, but she is Amazonian in belief that women can kill as easy as men. Don’t make her prove her thesis.

Inverted: Rogue Dressed in Female Attire – When the man arrives disguised in a courtly dress, he is feigning frailty. But, the players will see straight through the disguise. Is he a transvestite, a cross dresser, or is he a very poor spy? Unlikely he lost a bet.

A job is a job, and the players should hear the man’s quest and possible reward before they cast him out. The players may also find that the man is hiding from

discovery, so then part of the opposition will be seeking the location of the patron. The gentleman may be an enigma, who is for the length of these discussions on his best behavior.

A man pretending to be a passive female might initiate an intrigue. The disguise can be very good, yet the party as a whole is not fooled. The players might discuss the quest treating him as any distressed woman offering coin. The deception fails to dupe the players, but they still might accept the mission. Do not push any intrigue after this moment, unless the events later clearly show that result. Do not even try to explain the man's behavior right here. Let the players speculate and even accept the mission for the man's aims. If he is plotting some bad outcome, this initial deception may only influence quests yet to be undertaken. Until then, he's a suspicious oddity.

Power: Ordinarily; **Respect:** Improbable.

Patron 10 Rods: *Peasant/Farmer/Serf* – A worker of the land, but of note he is a person enslaved to the land. Upfront there will be no Queen events nor aftermath; this is a onetime only approach by the patron. Treat all mission consequence face cards on the quest as Tens, even the Knaves.

By feudal law, the common people were not allowed to travel; the permission of their landlord was not ever granted. Why would he bother? The patron is enslaved by debt, family hardship and social class. He will not travel on the adventure. If any event flip states otherwise, he is doing so as a criminal deadbeat, a deserter of his obligations, a thief. See the inverted case of a runaway slave for more event modifiers.

The patron will seek the prime player character's help, but he cannot pay. Skip the pick for finances. Destitute, these patrons engender genuine empathy and make appeals to character honor. Even when additional results imply the patron has hidden a windfall or is due a fortune, the result is relative. A few coins would be a mound of treasure to him compared to the nothing he owns. The players will be sorely pressed to gain much of anything from these people as initiators of a quest. Yet the quest itself may bring accidental or unanticipated wealth.

The quest's outcome should classically skew to the righteous. Honorable players will share the desire for a successful quest's outcome. The down-trodden make such fine underdogs. How could good men and true refuse an interesting mission?

When the motive is later found to be contrary or vile, the result is not as duplicitous or deceitful as might be implied. The outcome, regardless of fractured virtue, will aid society. Even if the player character has never shown any affinity for good, here he will be honestly affected by the patron's tale and quest. This might be one or more player characters chances to atone for previous villainy. Role-play any

fresh willingness, a tug toward the lawful or good. The Ref may even force any player character's role to alter for this one quest of redemption.

The land owner and controlling shylock of this man's debt will become an extra rival. To help one poor soul is of little consequence, except it sends a bad precedence. Even if the players refuse the mission and toss the farmer a few coins to make amends, his poverty will never be abated. That is unless the players undertake his quest. Should the players outright refuse the scenario, one or all might be crushed spiritually. Take the mission or roll Difficult. Fail and spend your days spiraling as a drunk or sedentary reprobate. A lifetime of regret and obsession for atonement may additionally follow a failed quest result. That roll would be Ordinary, but failure on the quest or the dice test here would double all future Warped Outcome tally growth. Get 'er done, lads.

Inverted: Runaway Slave – Here's a fugitive who has escaped bondage. Slaves are pieces of property, and everyplace recognizes the institution. By helping the patron, the players will violate the law. But by lending aid, they perhaps further the cause of justice. Apply all the aspects of serf-farmer—no finances, extra rival, possible lifetime of regret, no Queens—except, the patron will travel with the party. He might even join them permanently after his initial quest is done. If a player needs a new character or alt, he could be allowed to play the slave.

There are serious implications to harboring a fugitive. Treat all mission consequence face cards on the quest as Knaves. The patron is someone else's property. Any player character with any of these skills: Courtly Graces, Slave Driver, Steward or Tormentor, will fully understand they abate a crime. Rationalizations aside, they will not sincerely participate. The players of those skilled characters continue at a minus one Quest Pip. Any player may wish to swap out his character for an alternate role.

Sea & Riches: Improbable.

Patron 9 Rods: *Young Lad or Child* – A youth perhaps too young to know the danger he faces by conversing with the powerful and always unpredictable players. This patron does not represent another; he's not just handing off a message. That's another selection. He comes alone and is in need of help. He may seek the players because of a family concern, but his father and mother do not know and would not approve of his actions. He is from a noble household or aristocratic clan of the wealthy and mercantile.

Adulthood begins at ten in the fantasy campaign. Yet even if the patron is older, this guy will lack experience. He is naïve to risk. He will also be driven by passionate motives of puppy love, vainglory or to seek inflated riches. He will never prove to be practical.

Perhaps, this quest represents his coming of age. He will often learn and grow only by the quest's failure. The players should never try to drive a failed event, but many others certainly will. A lesson learned, but then also no aftermath's reward.

The patron teen will come along and be there in the thick of the action with the players. Should he perish, no matter the other accomplishments, the quest ends in inglorious, ignoble failure. Trying to prevent that ill fortune, the Ref might once each encounter setting hand out a vicious wound to one player character. You're welcome; you saved the boy's life.

Inverted: Orphan or Bastard – A teen who is alone. Only in rare cases will the child be the heir to a fortune yet to be claimed. Not that this isn't a romance novel, but that correctly would be an Heir to Fortune pick. Skip finances here; you might even skip the motive, since the patron is always angry.

Helping such a patron may earn a friend for life, and who knows what power and riches he may later obtain. Many a warlord king, began life with tragedy. Such beginnings are the stuff of legends and fantasy epics.

Each player character agreeing to take the quest is helping the orphan and upon success gains the lesser contact of Fluke Associate. In truth, hardly a person you can rely upon. Certainly, difficult to contact, won't change a Digression result, just someone who may be an asset if presented well and timely. But here, that result slowly evolves. The friendly patron will grow, mature, change into a Brother in Arms or Legionnaire, a Grey One Servant or Sea Rover. His fate is solidly woven to become Frontier Lord, Nomadic Warlord, True Faith Protector or Wizardry Mentor. He might even become the Dark Lord himself. The Ref will need to decide how fast the change occurs and who in his campaign the orphan morphs into. Right now, he isn't anyone of importance. Yet can they risk passing up a chance to do the next Zaire a good turn?

Power: Improbable.

Patron 8 Rods: *Letter, Message or Warning* – Someone seeks to meet with the player characters, but not at their present location. The note may specify some details. Perhaps flip the mission card and tell this to the players but leave most of the specifics open. The players will only learn the details after they go to a rendezvous point. Once the players meet with their patron, then reveal the rest of the quest details, including a second pick to detail the cautious patron. Almost never will this take the players to an ambush, unless other card flips reveal a past rival or the Moon's deception.

The patron might never reveal himself. He could remain a written only detail of some desired quest and where they can secure their reward. The dwarven kings are fond of this form of hiring adventurers.

Inverted: Royal Proclamation or Summons – Much overused is a call for stout hearts in the service of his royal highness. Or one or more player characters receive a summons to appear in court. Never will a ruling regional earl or the emperor himself be the patron. The vulgar affairs of state that require hiring *men such as these* (player characters) will be tasked to a courtier or chamberlain. If the crisis is paramount, the players may briefly see a high chancellor.

Face the simple truth – kings in a fantasy world do not hold their thrones when they constantly allow misfits into their courtrooms. Shall it be said, dangerous misfits like the player characters. Who knows what variety of assassin (or demon) may instead appear in disguise. Likewise, nice homey little kingdoms in which the faery queen knows all of her goodly subjects just don't exist. Those places get eaten by the goblin hordes and wasted by ambitious necromancers, people controlling a realm with fear.

These starts are simply too cliché; try not to start your mission with the players meeting *their king* and off to do these *great and wonderful* things. Just once I'd like to see someone ask, "*Don't you got an army? Hey, if I was king and the matter was as important, I surely wouldn't send another group. Why not you go yourself?*"

I broke my promise not to rant; suffice to say the patron was some sort of legal mandate, more like a draft. The players have no choice, but to surrender to the authorities and perform a dirty task under threat of punishment for refusing. This may even be the reverse of a patron – the players must avoid the following mission. Though admittedly such adventures are troublesome to play as a Ref.

The patron may also represent a public writ, something posted everywhere and implying a kingly decree. A royal announcement seldom has a statement of reward, but most appear straightforward. The nitty-gritty unfolds in the events to follow. The players will find both opposition from other thrill seekers and loyalists to the crown, as well as face a rival who knows to be ready for opponents and dolts following orders. Which will be worse, the competitors or the rival? Seldom will any two groups pursuing the same goal join amicably.

Sea: Improbable; **Land:** Improbable; **Riches:** Improbable; **Power:** Improbable; **Respect:** Assuredly.

Patron 7 Rods: Constable or Sheriff – A person tasked with maintaining order and enforcing the laws inside a city-state and surrounding farmland. Many of these men work directly for a regional warden. Most enjoy autonomy; these times are dangerous. The superior warden is often busy along the borders, leaving the sheriff to keep the local peace. The mission almost always involves the patron's duties, but not always directly in apprehending criminals. Many of these men are so corrupt or drunk with their own power, that they frequently violate all manner of laws to

enforce simple ordinances. He might seek the players for any number of compromising acts, even some just to make himself appear valuable.

Inverted: *Vigilante or Woman Wronged* – A person who takes the law into his own hands in an effort to secure justice. When the person seeking justice is a female, she is doing so without the aid of her father, brother, husband or clan. She probably isn't a warrior or magic user, else she might go after her persecutor herself.

The mission relates to the vigilante's plans, though perhaps not directly in revenge. When the law fails to help, fails to convict, fails to bring charges, the commoners often take matters into their own hands. Even nobles may seek the players to obtain dark age justice on an even higher untouchable authority, an earl or nobles of the capital.

The quest will somehow further the vigilante's fury. That aspect may be hidden from the players as they tackle seemingly ordinary concerns. The players' actions could allow the vigilante his next opportunity and bring a means to his ends.

At least there is one good thing about this alternate patron – the enemy will never generate Knave mission consequence encounters; treat them instead as Knights. The rival often doesn't have any idea the savagery he engendered and now might face.

Respect: Assuredly; **Power:** Ordinarily.

Patron 6 Rods: *Officer from a Victorious Army* – A commander, though not necessarily the supreme marshal, the patron leads an organized group of soldiers, mercenaries or militia. The players may know the person from reports of his deeds, yet those same stories may be exaggerated. His mission may not relate to his position, but the fact his army is victorious will add additional rivals in the form of those he defeated. No need to name them, just treat every other Knave event as kinsmen of the defeated or remnants of the force the patron helped shatter.

The battle won by this patron will be recent and had an impact on the campaign. The patron's quest involves the losers of the battle, so the mission will take place in that general area. He might have discovered something, some opportunity, on the battlefield. Or now that its over, the war, he has neglected other matters.

The victor may simply need the players to act on his behalf. Famous people are busy. However, his triumph generates embittered opposition. The patron will warn the players of such threats.

Tangential fame has an elevating effect on the soul. The patron's notoriety often mutes any player character's temperate restraint and otherwise exercise of caution. Ref decides if the Prudence Ignoble will even be checked on this mission.

Inverted: *Poltroon or Officer from a Defeated Army* – As before, except the person commands—if he even still has an organized unit—the soldiers that went into

battle, were defeated, and fled the field. The patron tends to be in hiding, notorious for this past failure, leaving the players leery of his competence. He often is a legionnaire, undervalued and left fending, as the empire shrinks. The patron will be glad for any help. Success on his mission will tend to give his surviving troops some relief. Yet again, add other opponents; this time in the form of soldiers, scouts and spies from the forces that defeated the patron. Or worse, they may be his former soldiers searching for a coward and those who aid the poltroon.

The mission's success could bring redemption. The player characters could find a friend among the frontier legions, making the quest worth the opposition.

Land: Assuredly; **Sea:** Ordinarily.

Patron 5 Rods: *Bandit or Barbarous Chieftain* – A person who leads an organized force of thieves. The patron's occupation may remain unknown to the players, but his mission will tend to be more dishonorable. This type of man maintains order among a people that live by the simple code; only the strong survive. He will treat the players likewise. The first combat may be a test right after they accept to see if they are brave, strong and reliant enough to go forward. The first Queen is treated as a Knave.

These patrons are accustomed to illegal actions and will want the players to be equally as ignoble in their deeds.

Inverted: *Leader of a Street Gang or Group of Laborers* – A leader of a group of common workers. Guildmasters by noble law control trade, but that doesn't mean a few ambitious men from the working class don't exist. The union leader can be treated like an urban bandit. To be blunt, he incites riots for personal gain. Since the freedom to assemble is not a right, his actions are always illegal.

Just like the bandit, he is sought for regional crimes. Association with this person, even briefly, can lead to the player characters' heads resting on blocks, awaiting the axman's stroke. The players may even be forced to aid the gang and accept the task after an informant reports their meeting with the known criminal. They become guilty by association and must either flee the region or join to protect their now combined interests in an area.

Since the patron tends to hold power only in one localized city, his platoon of servants will probably have no ability to extend that prowess beyond the municipal walls. That's where and why the players are needed.

Land & Power: Assuredly.

Patron 4 Rods: *Steward or Castellan* – A person who manages the day-to-day affairs and business of a manor. He could act as an agent for his master, always a landed noble, or act independently of the same. This time perhaps less the agent and more the provocateur. The patron is a capable outsider in an estate he doesn't own. He lives in self-imposed exile, a prisoner of duty. The patron's personal life is so

attached to the house he runs that the mission will somehow relate to that manor, the estate lands or the lord he serves.

In some ways, the patron is a slave in a nice cage. This person is imprisoned, but not truly jailed; he cannot leave an area, usually a compound. Why? The answer is complex or quite plainly extortion. If he deserts his post, his family will be punished. When his exile is solitary, he will not violate the arcane terms of his incarceration.

The quest will rarely involve him trying to escape and break his vows, but any quest could start that process. For now, he has a mission, which he doesn't want his employer to know about.

Inverted: Slave Obeying Orders of Another – A servant relates a request from his master. The group may truly never know who their employer is. They will feel his presence; the slave's owner is magically endowed. The master of the slave is always aware of his property's action.

Select a second card for the true patron. The slave's master, unlike the steward's relation to nobility, could be anyone. The identity of the master often implies an explanation for why he did not come to the players in person. He will not want to be associated with the mission and players. He may not be mature or wish to risk contact with rogues. The true patron may fear to contact any outsiders or be too hideous to look upon. He may no longer be human.

The slave could be the first of many contacts—Queen events—which relay messages from an unknown source. Most slaves are confined to an estate or region. Should the players go far afield on the quest, any future contact with the patron's servant-slaves, would imply less bondage and more cabal secrecy. His slaves may be obedient lesser acolytes or rapt cultists to a magical miscreant.

Sea & Power: Improbable.

Patron 3 Rods: *Party of Adventurers* – A group like the players and doesn't that scare you all just a bit? The party should be a rounded mix of characters that typically travel on missions for others. Here they recruit the players to perform a job in which they attempted and failed. Now they know they lack the skills or are too afraid to try again. Someone else originally hired the group; now they hire the players, subcontracting the mission. Never will the players will be asked to join forces on the task, except one enforcer or guide might come along.

The leader of the group might be known to the players with a celebrity status. Imagine a player character after surviving a hundred attempted quests, and you most likely understand the patron. So why did he fail? The patron will say it was all bad luck, but time is at the essence for someone making a second try. Else, the failure will be a secret, until much later in the adventure the enforcer will spill the beans.

Inverted: Religious Crusaders – A person or group that performs on instruction of some higher, divine authority. This patron's mission will somehow relate to his beliefs. The player part tends to be quite small. The players will never be there at the grand conclusion of all the pieces, unless they discover the full quest goal and attempt the long journey and cascade of missions to make that happen. Even then they often just try to obtain one element and then prove to be a new obstacle of a cabal.

The players will be asked to do something that will aid the crusade another step toward the grand goal. This ultimate conclusion may involve finding a relic, but that is seldom the very end. The crusade typically has the great goal of inspiring the faithful, converting the ignorant and destroying all other creeds. A job well done here might spare the player characters from that eventual violent series of expulsions in a city-state, region or the entire campaign.

Paganism won't just wane away; to a large degree it will be annihilated by a faith in a minority, becoming a majority, through passive and active purges. Make a note for the campaign as this quest signals change.

Sea: Ordinarily; **Land:** Ordinarily.

Patron 2 Rods: *Merchant Captain or Ship Master* – A man with a ship, perhaps dozens, who makes a living by transport. The quests should slant toward land based affairs. Else, the man could probably take care of the matter himself. Otherwise, his mission might be any.

This is not a warship captain nor a raider. He is not inclined to fight even if he knows the threat. Enter the players. His ships move along civilized rivers with legion garrisons and friendly city-states helping to keep the travel safe. Even still, he would surrender and lose a cargo, rather than fight and lose a ship or his life. A practical man, he knows his quest is better handled by Varangian guards.

Inverted: Smuggler – A person who illegally transports restricted or forbidden cargoes. This fact should remain secret from the players. This fellow is not strictly speaking honest, and he risks his economic survival by moving high pay-off cargoes. However, by transporting richer cargoes, the patron can secure a nest-egg that will buy him another ship and crew when his present craft inevitably sinks. The mission will always relate to his ship. The smuggled cargo becomes a later surprise.

A private ship owner has a request. The master is at odds with the established laws. Privately owned vessels are rare, outside of adventuring or raiding groups like the players. Most ships are controlled by only a handful of patricians. The risk of owning just one vessel, combined with the logistics of keeping it seaworthy in domains where monsters roam usually means the patron only recently acquired his vessel.

He moves embargoed cargoes, illicit trade of slaves or deals in arms. He needs to. Legitimate guilds may not sell him anything. The man must make a living from profits moved dishonestly. The mission will relate somehow to his outfitting his ship after mishap or simply keeping the ship and crew operating.

The players will have an extra opponent of a Merchant-Prince who seeks a monopoly on sea trade in the region. This prince is an annoyance, he wishes to sink the patron's vessel and be done with the rancor.

Sea & Riches: Assuredly.

Patron Ace Rods: *Divine Omen or Summoning* – The patron is not human; he may not even have form. A supernatural or magical force offers adventure. The players will not meet a patron, but instead are summoned to complete a task after seeing a vision. The group will interpret such a message as coming from the gods.

In some cases, more practical players are not inclined to obey the muffled instructions of a dream. From the get-go some of the group will know they are being manipulated. Yet a wizard or monstrous spirit does not confront the group and make demands. This patron may be refused. Though doing so may cause a huge jump in Warped Outcome tally for those who were true believers. Roll Ordinary or else add twenty as a penalty for refusing to even try the quest.

Select a card for the mission but skip motive. Finances as well should be modified into something plausible. In most cases, the omen will offer no incentive at the start, except certain magical protection or a communication device that the referee deems appropriate. e.g. A wooden totem sometimes speaks, usually in vague viewpoints or riddles.

After the adventure is completed, other rewards might be gained. There's also loot along the journey. The players need not experience another miracle dispensing their end profit. Instead, every mission will help somebody, no matter who instigated the result. These other worldly people are the ones who usually provide the players with their worldly comforts. e.g. A local lord greets the players after the adventure, giving them all a hundred acres of prime land for slaying a ravaging beast.

If this patron happens randomly again on a future scenario, perhaps treat the card as inverted or discard for a second selection. Maybe a player character is touched by angels or simply has gone mad. Regardless, the longboat gains technique Religiously Inspired (C).

Inverted: *Nightmare or Hideous Portent* – A call to action is instigated through fear and vile enchantment. The players have no physical patron, but here the spiritual guide is knowingly vile and malignant. Such dire dreams are often blamed on the Dark One itself.

Ignoring these hideous images will usually cause the players exhaustion and continued strain. The nightmares may repeat in a ritual of nightly suffering. Since

these images must be created by another force, the sinister agent behind their cause may seek its own revenge should the players fail or falter in their task. The group will feel helpless; the only choice is to accept and hope that ends the nightmares.

Someday the players may have a chance to defeat the tormentor or just discover clues to the mystic cult or necromancer who this day enslaves them. Add clues to the culprit along this journey and in unrelated quests to follow.

Even though the force here is evil, the magical patron is not trying to kill the players. Maybe they should be flattered to be selected? Don't expect any reward; expect only the blame for what transpires. A bad flip, this Ace, which should not occur again, unless it does. The same bad patron will also be behind the next random series of quests, which produce a Patron Ace Rods.

Sea: Assuredly (group's own vessel); rest depends on how much the group is willing to commit from their own purses and campaign contacts.

Patron Coins

Patron King Coins: *Traveling Noble or Exotic Entourage* – A landowner or foreign potentate, specifically a person who is outside his jurisdiction. He has some clout and power, but far less than he would in his own domains. The mission often places the patron in direct violation of the laws of the area. The patron, as a visiting lord, dare not intercede on his own, and he seeks the players to act either openly or secretly as his agents.

Similar to the King Rods, but the person is not at home. More than likely, his finances will be distant. He has a deed which needs to be done. It may simply be happenstance that your paths have crossed, or else, he has an agent who pointed the group of players out. Since the player characters are also away from home, this person is often a fellow countryman or expatriate.



Inverted: Ambassador or Emissary – A person who represents the interests of a foreign monarch or powerful personage in another land. The mission may not relate to intrigue, though that’s often the end result. Instead the patron may be busy in counsel and needs the players to handle purely personal matters. The patron is usually above the law, protected by his position. Secrecy is important, because the patron would denounce the quest, rather than risk failing in his primary diplomatic aims.

Respect: Improbable.

Patron Queen Coins: *Daughter of a Noble* – Her father is a powerful baron or leader of a city-state. Should the father be a step-father or protector not connected by blood, the overtones become more jealous and possessive. Many people will blame the players and believe the girl was abducted or bewitched by the players.

The woman occupies a traditional damsel in distress role in the story. Her father will be grateful for the help she receives if things go well. But he will seek vengeance for any risk put on his daughter. The woman would seek her father’s help, but she is usually away from home. Time will always be critical in missions of these types. Do the players have a specific set of skills needed to rescue her from difficulties?

Similar to Queen Rods, but she’s obviously overstepping her authority and defined role. She often drops daddy’s name, but there is every likelihood that father would whip her for seeking out the players. He would likely have the player characters hung as well for any familiarity. This dynamic grows over the quest, as the girl tends to fawn over one of the player adventurers, often the one with the most character traits.

She’s not accustomed to hearing the word “no.” What she desires, her father supplies. This is a petulant teen. To refuse could bring anger, to accept will definitely bring danger.

Inverted: Suitor – The patron seeks to marry into nobility. The mission almost always relates to this planned union. At times the suitor is acting on instructions of his lover, a noble’s daughter. Else he is being deceived by his devotion. In most instances his actions will be reckless. Do not overlook a variety of classic twists that can arise with this patron. e.g. The daughter falling in love with a player instead. Or even just the perception, whether from real or imagined advances by a player. The patron will be quick to change to a jealous or spurned lover.

The patron expects this quest will result in him being married into a powerful noble family. His request brings danger, but at least there’s no misunderstanding of motive. Skip that element of the scenario as understood.

Power: Assuredly; **Land:** Ordinarily.

Patron Knight Coins: *Soldier of Fortune* – A mercenary who makes a livelihood from fighting in the numerous fantasy wars, he's an atypical player character, of sorts, with a job to offer.

A dangerous agent, he's a person hired by the more powerful and capable, usually regional nobles. He may be too well known in the area to perform the quest himself. Or, he is running into a problem with his own stratagem. No matter how routine the task, the quest is of great importance to the patron. He will of course, never reveal any of the details on his own assignment.

Inverted: *Paid Assassin* – A mercenary of more base nature, one who lives by fighting duels or performing murdering for hire. The patron's true profession may remain vague, but the players will sense from his mannerism that he can and will kill. The mission need not relate to any killing, though the adventure may provide cover or an alibi for the patron's true actions. Murder is not always the goal of the prime player character's quest. It may be for the patron, but he needs the players for any number of other deeds. Let the flips be the flips to set the parameters of the adventure.

Power: Assuredly; **Riches:** Ordinarily.

Patron Knave Coins: *Journeyman, Tinker, Vendor or Monger* – This can be a common peddler, but more than not, the patron represents someone on the cusp of wealth. The journeyman will soon be a guildmaster, and this quest is a step to that end.

Inverted: *Miner, Tradesman or Unskilled Laborer* – The peddler here thinks he is more powerful than he is. He will believe he will be made a guildmaster, but he has yet to gain any notice from his peers. He will be very convincing, and the players often take him at his word, since that element is often inconsequential to the overall quest presented. The deal may be good, regardless of the patron's false ambitions. If the quest sounds like fun, will offer Ignobles, the players may not care that the Knave of Coins as patron has little more to share than a tankard and a tale on this day.

Land & Riches: Improbable.

Patron 10 Coins: *Innkeeper* – The proprietor of a tavern or special business where the players frequently gather has a job. The patron is always someone well liked and very familiar to the players. The players will normally spend much of their time in inns, until they strike it rich and build a kingdom. Modestly successful as a former adventurer, the patron has retired by opening an inn; he finds that suits him more than governing a conquered land.

When asked by this former warrior to attempt a task, the players usually show respect and accept. The patron may also have access to information from numerous people. His mission may seem foolproof, yet the players should know better.

Inverted: Harlot or Bar Wench – A trollop, but one beloved by at least one of the poorer players, offers that prime player character a quest. She has overheard something, and she relates the gambit.

The patron will earn most of her shekels by selling sexual favors. Like the patron Lover of a Player, seduction is involved, but this patron never reciprocates any real affection. She'll use the player character's infatuation to get a step toward her aims. Acceptance of mission is a given, but the patron may not remain loyal to the party until the end. If the rival seems to offer a better deal to go away, she'll take it and run.

Like the innkeeper, these ladies often are very well informed on local intrigue and opportunities for profit. The sip of ale and growl of passion can reveal secrets that even the torture rack might fail to extract.

She is often quite skilled, a person who once kept the accounts and supplied a large palace, a garrison fort or army staging area. That was when she was young and more desirable to someone renowned, but he is now dead. The player character's own favorite barkeep is asking for a favor. If that's not enough, she can be acting as the broker for another who will never be revealed.

Sea: Improbable; **Land:** Improbable; **Riches:** Improbable; **Power:** Ordinarily; **Respect:** Ordinarily.

Patron 9 Coins: Gentleman – A landowner in the region, but of modest claim who is not part of the titled nobility. He may have only recently settled, started a family and found that life boring. Such men maintain their lands by defending them or through influence and intervention of powerful friends. A person like some of the wiser player characters, perhaps even a retired player character.

An atypical adventuring character, a look in the mirror at what any player character may be, depending on current level. The patron usually is about the same clout, class and character level as best player character. He will often join the group and expects the journey will be fun. His goal seems less important to the shared experiences. Ignore any aspect of his motive, which impacts the rival.

Inverted: Mysterious Stranger – A gentleman away from his home, either conducting business or involved in some intrigue. A large number of these patrons control magical forces and a variety of swaggering.

The patron is not from around *here* in the campaign. He need not be desperate, need not be looking to get home or be confused by his circumstances. He will have a funny accent, just to be memorable.

The patron may have any number of strange customs or mannerisms, mutations from magic, that make his behavior repugnant to the player characters. His physical maladies, cultural attitudes or bigotry may cause the players unforeseen

trouble. His twisted habits may not occur by choice, but his cancers and repugnance are typically not contagious.

Sea: Assuredly; **Power:** Ordinarily.

Patron 8 Coins: *Dwarven Agent* – This is not an imp of diminutive size. This will be a human employed by a dwarven king to propose an offer. If your players are unfamiliar with Norse dwarves, use the term goblin. Not evil nor good, just lousy, dwarves inhabit the mines and underworlds away from man. The gods banished the dwarves; they abhor sunlight. They punish man and accept the task of hiding gold and precious metals deep inside mountains. Rumpelstiltskin (a kind of dwarf) had wondrous powers, like spinning straw into gold, but he also was a creature that enjoyed eating human flesh, especially babies. Dwarves normally do not associate with the taller humans. Most represent a minor evil chased away at night by dogs or thrown stones.

Dwarves are basically greedy, undependable, sarcastic and moody. Lousy drunks as patrons, but here you have a sober intermediary. The man will not disguise his origin nor his employers. The players should be forewarned to never fully trust a dwarvish deal; expect some challenges and changes to any set plan. The terms of the deal will change. The opposition is always more than what is told. Treat encounters of Kings and Knights as always being inverted.

However, the mission will almost always involve great riches or an opportunity to gain such. Do not pick a card for motive, since that can be assumed to be greed. Do not select finances, because the dwarf will offer nothing but a promise to share in the later fortune. Yet any Queen which appears in encounters will offer tangible incentives to continue, even if it is inverted.

Inverted: *Dwarven Abduction* – Refer to the regular flip, but this time the dwarves themselves are meeting one or more players. That usually starts when the imps have the prime player character trapped. This could be in a cellar, in a cave, in an underworld. The players, usually as a group, find themselves being confronted by thousands of dwarves. They could try to evade as every man for himself. But perhaps at least listen to the deal. They might decide, one or more, to simply lie. Tell their captives that of course they will perform a service in exchange for release. Consider the group was caught once, so why not a second time?

This is actually not like the dwarves to grab someone and make them take a quest. Sure, they could kidnap someone and make a mug from their skull; that is characteristic. Yet being caught by dwarves is not a regular occurrence. The dwarven king has selected the players by reputation or because the group infuriated him in the past. The deal will set matters even for now.

Perhaps refuse, fight-on, never surrender, and die killing a whole lot of nothing. Let each player decide if rolling a new character is better than forced service.

Sea: Improbable; **Riches:** Improbable to start, Assuredly by end; **Respect:** Improbable.

Patron 7 Coins: *Forester or Ranger* – A person whose assigned duties are to protect a forest, either on orders of a ruling earl or from a higher pledge to the extinct Fae or a goddess of nature. The faery folk once flourished, but now everyone thinks they have died off. Up to the Ref, they're probably just in deep hiding.

Though cliché, such a patron will be an incredible Bowman – silent, deadly and unseen. Since the position of Forester may be an appointment, the patron may be biding his time, until a greater appointment in the realm becomes available. The mission may thus not relate to a forest. The patron may have personal affairs that he can not accomplish himself.

Inverted: *Druid or Fae* – A magical human or near-human that rejoices in nature and worships a wild area. A magical champion of nature, if the patron is human, he claims to have been reared or sired by the faery folk. A forest is threatened by expanding farms, release of a monster or demon, or changes in the weather (caused by magic). Otherwise, the human druid is a forester self empowered by his faith. These are men who gave up everything to commune with the trees, there discovering a goddess and geomancy.

Else, the patron represents a spirited creature that is itself a part of nature. The Norse myths describe the elves as the simple sprites that make flowers bloom or teach fledglings to fly. The Fae are not usually part of the campaign. If the Ref decides otherwise, the race will be weird, beautiful and small in stature as well as number. Think benign imps that can be viewed only in sunlight that reaches the floor of a glen. More whimsical snail and dragonfly racers, then creatures holding counsel to decide the fate of a Dark Lord's relic, these are not Tolkien's elves.

Do not think the patron is a pacifist. Death and life mean little to these immortals. When faced by violence, the patron will show no inhibitions about responding with the same. Decay is also part of nature. They just don't bake the remains as a dwarf might. The players will be asked to stop a danger to the forest or protect against a perceived threat always having a magical overtone. One player might experience the Fae as an erotic dream.

The referee may need to adjust the mission to match the patron and forest environs. The mission will always be related to nature but need not take place in the forest or wilds. Stopping, disrupting or humiliating a rival, quite far away, is a distinct possibility. The druid, certainly if he is truly an elf, will be like a fish out of water. Either druid or Fae needs the players to assist in a city adventure.

The patron will never have a materialistic motive. In fact, his motivation can almost always be considered obscure or non-worldly. Do not pick a card for motive.

The wealth of the patron will almost always be handed fully over to players as payment in advance. That could be enormous or pure whimsy, a one of a kind gem craved by even a Zaire to just a heartfelt thimbleful of nectar. Magic occurs, though the lasting gain may be just the Ignobles along the way.

Sea: Improbable; **Land:** Ordinarily; **Respect:** Ordinarily.

Patron 6 Coins: *Philanthropist* – A person who has made a fortune through adventure and conquest, and now spends his days in quiet administration, distributing his wealth to those in need. Many of these men are titled lords, though they see the label as meaningless. They do not seek dominion over anyplace. They no longer have ambitions.

Sometimes age, insanity or a magical curse forces these men to squander away their wealth in charitable pursuit; otherwise, they genuinely seek to do good. The fact the patron seeks the players implies the usual state of affairs is rapidly changing. Perhaps he is faced with a threat that requires adventurers. Though the patron may be wealthy, his riches are used to aid others, not to glorify a few mercenaries. A regular selection for his finances is made to show his commitment; his wealth will be considerably more.

This wealthy gentleman might seek to educate more powerful nobles. The quest might have philosophical or humanistic overtones. He is trying to change the world for the better. His efforts are often inconsequential; the world is little changed by him distributing coins by the handful.

Inverted: *Miser or Pauper* – A person without wealth, or more correctly, a patron that will not use his wealth to aid the quest. The players will almost always be recruited with a promise of sharing in the profits of the deed. Do not draw a finance card. Though he offers nothing at the start, the patron feels his information is worth a listen.

Sea: Ordinarily; **Land:** Ordinarily; **Power:** Ordinarily; **Respect:** Assuredly.

Patron 5 Coins: *Invalid* – A person injured or magically cursed so that he is physically handicapped. He can no longer walk, his hands shake, limbs are feeble, or he is grossly disfigured. The mission will almost always have a motive of revenge or restoration, so do not pick a card for motive.

This patron is menacing despite his malady. He cannot travel easily and needs the players to do his external work. He probably was injured recently, and this quest could balance the slate of his revenge. Or one quest is only a start.

In most cases the role, invalid, represents all that need be known. But when desired, select a second card WHO? for the person's past before his affliction. He will have lost any title and power. But should his malady reverse, who knows his

level of gratitude and what rank he might return to claim? Actually, he'll become WHO? again.

Inverted: *Blind Man* – A person who has lost his sight. He may overcome this weakness for short periods through magic. He was not born lacking sight and will flaunt some hideous scars. His injury was the result of a weapon not a curse. He may have been mauled by a monster. His desire for revenge is furious. Select a second card WHO? to further detail the patron's former role in the campaign. Depending upon how far he fell away from his former power, to become a has-been, will directly correspond to his anger.

Respect: Ordinarily; **Land:** Improbable.

Patron 4 Coins: *Hero of the Blade* – A person with a great power or skill that is unique; he is the only person with a special magical ability or the one destined to wield a relic. He is the ward against some future darkness. Magic, strange and exotic, can poison and pervert the world should its malevolence go unchecked. The patron is the one who safeguards the world. So, he and others say.

All these guys have personal problems. The responsibility of his burden or the relic itself drives the patron insane. The hero is himself a victim, trapped by fate into duties that have always been a burden. Some await the next chosen one to take their duties from them.

The mission may not relate to the hero's role or prophesy, but the players will see terrors they feel only the patron can truly handle. Add a twist normally occurring with quests in the underworld; this danger will appear above ground should three Knaves be flipped over the course of encounters. This is a very doomed start, so make it truly so with a minus two Quest Pip. Worse, the minus two applies here and in every mission to follow, until the players accept any quest and succeed. Might as well try here, since refusal brings an Epilog and Aftermath still at minus two to rolls.

Inverted: *Society of Watchers* – Here is a group that is waiting for an event to take place or a discovery to be made. Their purpose is a guarded secret. They will not share their story, which will make the players suspicious.

These are specialized societies of scholars or prophets that await omens or an alignment of stars. Never detail why? In truth the predictions are usually bizarre or take place a millennium in the future. Until then, these groups have their own tenuous survival to consider.

The prime player character will usually be approached by a few members who represent this group. Seldom does the collective seek the players in opposition to the group's leaders or ultimate goals. Seldom do the players have a role in their higher prophesy. Yet each such group has an arch enemy seeking the opposite event or goal. Add extra adversaries sent by the society's mortal enemies. That, and the mission

itself has a rival. Treat all mission consequence Knights as Knaves, some from the rival and the rest from the society's alter ego, splinter group or true nemesis.

Sea: Improbable; **Land:** Improbable; **Riches:** Improbable; **Power:** Improbable; **Respect:** Improbable.

Patron 3 Coins: *Heir to Fortune* – A person who one day will inherit great riches or lands, but for the moment is without money. Do not pick a finance card, unless the players speed along the process of his inheritance. But that would be a mission in and of itself. Often these people are noble dilettantes who have never known true hardship or terror. Dealing with the players will be their first introduction.

This noble patron is the classic rich brat. Pampered and haughty, the players usually want to slap some manners into him. The player characters, who are nobles themselves, will be reminded why they left that society.

The heir will want to come along on the journey and cannot be dissuaded. His conduct will improve in each phase of the adventure. He's actually not a bad person, once you get to know him. In combat, flip events for his combat, usually Brash. Whenever he is injured, instead of the wound, the players gain a negative Quest Pip.

Inverted: *Pretender to the Imperial Throne* – This person is one of many, perhaps thousands, whose father is the emperor or was the last emperor. The patron will not inherit power and authority. He may be wealthy, but usually he has squandered the huge assets he was given upon coming to maturity. He isn't disowned, rather he's just inconsequential. No one sponsors has claim to reign; no one intends to die to make him the next figurehead.

There is no established order of succession nor constitution to decide who rules next. After the emperor's death, a period of chaos ensues. This patron will most likely be slain during that power struggle or will go into exile. For now, he's a gadfly wanderer. The motive selection here will tell you what his plans are today and why.

His wealth may be strained and suffers double the problems or benefits of most other patrons. Select two cards for Finances. The pretender will never think he has enough. Enough of what? Everything.

Secretly he may think he could run the empire as a formidable ruler. He might confide those ambitions to the players, or more likely tells an enemy or a friendly stranger that is a member of the empire's secret police. His minions the players will be blamed for steering the royal prince astray.

Land & Riches: Assuredly.

Patron 2 Coins: *Performer, Juggler or Singer of Poems* – The patron is famous to a degree. This might be a local village idiot, a beloved fool; this may be the playwright of a powerful earl. He has a protector who gives him money to stage

shows, even travel. The patron is often the illicit lover of a powerful noblewoman. She, not her husband, is the theater's benefactor.

A performer in a fantasy world often enhances his abilities with charms and illusions to increase his audience appeal. He might use magic to enhance his acts as a Casanova. The patron might flee prosecution for various minor crimes. Magic, not being consistent and repeatable, has betrayed the actor. He may even have slain an audience member or paramour.

His knowledge of local events and traditional tales may prove of great value to the quest. His ability at disguise and orate will be outstanding. Many are skilled at repartee and can talk their way out of conflict. The guy will have great dexterity and be reputed to be a master thief. He may also be just someone who can recite from memory a long poem.

Proceed without expectations from here; let the cards fall as they may. The remaining selections will show whether the patron is truly gifted. But one thing is for sure, he has a following. He is admired, especially by those with influence. There is a good chance the players too have heard of him. Since fame tends to grant familiarity and trust, even when it is undeserved, the famous get special treatment. That may not be fair, but it is very true of human nature.

Inverted: Artist or Sculptor – A controversial figure, the patron creates images that are admired by ruling nobles. Almost all of these men will have a more powerful sponsor. Someone will not approve of the artist's hiatus from work to conduct an adventure. The ego of the artist will be almost unbearable. He regards his own genius as justifying his audacity or rudeness. He may be accustomed to a lifestyle far better than he will find on the adventure. Yet he will come on the journey if only to be the grumbler and complain.

Power: Ordinarily; **Respect:** Assuredly.

Patron Ace Coins: *Secret Revealed by a Dead Man* – The patron no longer lives. He was a chance meeting or the final message of a dying companion. The patron will tell the players of an opportunity. There is a mission and motive. The man then dies from a lingering wound, divine comedy (intervention), poison, curse, assassin's act, player's act of torture, etc. Do not pick a card for finances and ignore all Queen encounters that could imply a future meeting or delivery from the patron. The result here is almost always a revelation of riches or power. The players may simply be the lucky benefactors, provided they survive the trials ahead. The motive may be amended to something suitable with the players or coopted by them. They should not desire the quest to fail or be ignored.

The secret need not be detailed until the end of Phase A of encounters. Before then the patron may just have been a passenger on the longboat or minor member of the crew. Try to integrate the patron's death seamlessly, so he dies during travel.

Only then will the players learn the full extent of the mission, what they are after and what they could gain. All in a dying man's final confession.

Inverted: *Chance Discovery in an Ancient Crypt* – Something unearthed in an ancient crypt or ruin has drawn the players attention. The players are presented a mission following a discovery. Almost always a treasure awaits, revealed in maps, documents, special pools, ghosts, etc. The players will have no true patron after the start, so do not pick finance and ignore Queen encounters. At least one phase, if not the entire climax, must take place below ground in the underworlds.

Sea: Assuredly, but it may only be the group's own longboat gaining a half D8 techniques.

Patron Swords

Patron King Swords: *Warlord* – A person who holds a domain by virtue of his own force of arms and magic, plus that of his army. This may be a difficult time, and the warlord's duties keep him from completing a task that he may otherwise have enjoyed performing himself. Most warlords have faced terrors more frightening than mortal men, yet with great power comes endless responsibility. He must task others to complete some of his minor goals or intrigues. Unlike the secretive and paranoid hereditary nobles, the warlord meets directly with the players when proposing his deal. The prime player character risks death by refusing.

This patron is harsh and no-nonsense. He will usually overpay, because barter and trade are irksome. The patron will describe what he needs and further state what he offers in return; skip the negotiation. Do you agree or not?

Inverted: *Soldier on Orders* – An agent from a powerful warlord comes to the prime player character to offer the mission. The warlord himself is detained elsewhere. In this case, the players may refuse and escape now, but they will never be forgiven entirely.

Sea & Power: Assuredly.

Patron Queen Swords: *Widow* – A noble wife whose husband has died. Often the mission relates to revenge or an unfinished deed. If needed, pick a second card WHO? to describe the patron's dead spouse. Yet, the death could be incidental to the widow's motives. She may have accepted her loss and seeks to better herself.

If her motive is not revenge or solving the mystery of her husband's death, the customs of the area should oppose the widow in her efforts. In her society the widow should retire to a quiet life, bury her husband and be done, marry again if she is young, raise her children to lead if she isn't. The fact she is now consorting with adventurers is a social taboo

Sympathetic like the orphan, but of more capable means, the widow has a plan and needs agents. Rather than dwell on who her husband was, ask instead how old

she is? A young widow could use wiles to entice; she may have warrior or magical skills she has concealed. An older noble dame will have loyal servants to follow the players closely and attend to her schemes.

Inverted: *Someone who lost a close friend* – Someone is less bereaved and more vengeful. This can reflect a half finished deed, as the patron's confidante died during the mission previously. The rival has grown in strength. When one is selected, make him more prepared, his Knaves more viciously minded.

Riches: Assuredly; **Respect:** Ordinarily.

Patron Knight Swords: *Headstrong Hero* – A person who has lost his sense of perspective and seeks only the completion of his objectives. Whatever motive is selected will take on fanatic obsession. Seldom is the patron's mindset concealed. He will be plainly fuming and driven, though perhaps rightly so. The players will clearly see the uncontrolled desire in the patron. Depending upon the adventure and its rewards, the players may become obsessed themselves.

This person can no longer recognize friend from foe. He is paranoid and will accuse. Accidents seem like sabotage; failure is disloyalty. Increase the level of violence; neutral parties will be dragged into brawls. Encounters will tend toward unfavorable reactions. The patron will join the party; he dare not let the players steal his glory or reward. His attitude will prove to be a liability and impede progress. Double the phases must be crossed before the climax. Run back to back Phase A-B-C, then again, a separate A-B-C, to get to the climax challenges.

Inverted: *Hero, Feeble from Mishap or Cursed* – The hero falls in and out of delirious states. He may even have approached the prime player character in error. He may seem catatonic, then manic, then confused. All wealth of the patron is freely offered. This will seem like a final request.

His job is almost always legitimate, and his goals may align well with the player characters' interests; however, he often forgets his actions and all about the task. Treat Queens as Kings, who may be sympathetic and know of the patron hero's plight. Success may cure him of his malady, but that is never a given. The players may have even exhausted their one and only stable attempt to turn him coherent with magic, simply to get to the point of the quest and the reward. This patron is one you want to leave behind. Easy enough, he doesn't remember who you are. But he may report as theft, all the wealth he gives to the player characters.

Riches: Ordinarily; **Power:** Improbable.

Patron Knave Swords: *Female Warrior or Female Ship's Pilot* – Many of the patrons can be of either sex. The Ref may make a chauvinistic campaign, but that's not typical of the fantasy genre. There are classical stereotypes listed, like daughter, damsel or widow. But patrons of title guildmaster, warlord and cutthroat are undeniably either sex. So why mention it here?

Well, this isn't a generic sex indifferent role. The female here has been treated as the weaker sex. Despite proving her worth countless times, she's still bitter and trying to prove herself yet again. She may have her own internal doubts.

Despite how many former lovers and companions think she's brilliant. She is a loner and disinterested in friends. Her family has disowned her. She has been arrested and told she has no right to carry arms. She doesn't trust men. That's the root of her presence on the tables.

She has a quest; she needs minions. She doesn't want back sass. Either agree or don't to her demands; she couldn't care less. She can find better helpers, so she'll argue. She will only treat other female members of the players' party with any dignity. She will confer with her female counterpart but dismiss any strategy of the males as ridiculous. She will be frustrating and then happy she has frustrated the *slower* men.

Inverted: *Female in Man's Attire* – The patron is of female gender but has disguised this her whole life. Without going into too much angst, she was raised as a male. She inherited her role from her father—Pick a WHO?—continuing as his son.

This disguise is effective for most encounters, but her gender is apparent to the players from the get-go. If the Ref keeps her sex a secret, he might as well script his own plot and continue without further flips. His campaign should change in tone to one more biased by gender. Better to just let the players in on the intrigue and be coconspirators.

The player characters should not out the gal, but instead play along. Her influence might be applied remotely after this encounter. She could also join the party and supervise her quest. Keeping her identity a secret from others met will definitely arise during the encounters. Why continue this charade? Take your pick; there are all too many reasons, perhaps one relates to her mission and motive to follow. Otherwise, she guards her true reasons. *"Peculiar ways relate to singular magic."*

Sea: Assuredly; **Land:** Improbable; **Riches:** Improbable; **Power:** Improbable; **Respect:** Improbable.

Patron 10 Swords: *Betrayed Victim* – A patron who feels threatened and wants revenge. The mission will relate to this personal vendetta. Do not pick a card for motive; the motive is painfully clear. The patron has a wound more disfiguring as opposed to debilitating. Yet a terrible scar he has. Perhaps he lost a limb, yet that doesn't seem to hinder his abilities.

Revenge! A more powerful motivator has yet to be discovered. Even success in money and career has been fostered by a desire to settle a score and prove a superiority. The main rival is not always the person who wronged the patron. But that WHO? almost always is added as yet another opponent.

Inverted: Dying Warrior – The patron is wounded. This warrior may hide his injury, or he presents himself bloody. The wound had to come from someone, so either pick an extra card for the unseen opposition or select two main rivals in the quest. One opposes the present mission, and the other stems from the patron's past.

The patron is too weak to perform his duties. But that aspect would be quite frankly dull. So not only is the patron betrayed and he was injured, he wants to be there when he gains revenge. The patron usually doesn't die in the encounters of the journey. But he's also not fated to win this duel of honor. Keep his role in the background. Even as the players fight in combat, he's there, like often the servitors are. He has skills and swagger, but these need not be shown in the action before the climax.

Only when those challenges are reached, should the Ref run the patron as an NPC. He selects methods and takes events on the Q&Ds. He starts wounded so the next vicious will surely end his life. He probably has to survive and get his satisfaction in order for the aftermath to have any reward for the player characters. Does that mean the patron must strike the final blow on the rival he hates? That would come from Uncontested Dagger Thrust (S) or Irregular Tricks (M) in swagger vs swagger resolution perhaps.

Power: Assuredly; **Sea:** Ordinarily.

Patron 9 Swords: *Lycanthrope or Chaotic Shape Shifted* – The patron will present himself, outwardly, as a noble. His curse or gift, depending upon his motive and mission, is that he is a monster, hard to slay, mean when provoked. The prime player character will have heard rumors about the patron and his ability to change form. If any character of the party can demonstrate technique Wizardry Shape Shifting (J), he will tell the players his secret. However, he will not demonstrate. Otherwise, he's private and will dismiss wild rumors as mere peasant superstition.

Some of these patrons form loose societies with similar affliction. Though not the same as a guild, or even a cabal, the family is bonded in a trade. Often the shape shifters capture and train animals for gladiatorial circuses. The profits from these spectacles are quite significant, enough to live well and hide out of sight when the moon changes phase. If the patron is a powerful lord, he might operate games for the emperor using ever more exotic beasts.

Unless he travels with the party, quite rare, his lycanthrope form changes should matter little to the plot. Except, add one extra rival, a hunter from either the Imperial Janissary or the Sacred Order of the Questing Knights that seeks to unmask and rid the world of these monsters. That extra fanatic will be happy to thwart evil by killing the lycanthrope's minions (the players).

Inverted: Malicious Cultist – A member of a group that worships demons and depravity. He may ultimately seek a return to the days of rampant magic and

randomly invoked power. Else, he receives instructions from a powerful wizard who is dead. Many of these cults are simply groups of charlatans, longing for any true ability, most lacking real power. The patron will keep secrets, especially his affiliation, loyalty or worship of death.

The extra rival here, will be either an academic of the Academy of Thaumaturgical Study or a sacred searcher sent by the Patriarch of the True Faith. Even if the prime player character is unaware of the patron's cult and their twisted performances, he is a de facto servant of a lesser evil by accepting the quest. Ignorance of the law, or your patron's depravity, is no excuse.

Land & Power: Assuredly.

Patron 8 Swords: *Divine Test or Demigod* – The entire group or a blessed few are witness to a miracle. A godly being stands before them. Some of the doubters will not be convinced. Yet there they are, facing a lesser or before unknown force of divinity.

Demigods aspire to be true gods, widely known and worshiped. Even player characters with Wizardry Demigod (A) could have deep desire to be loved and worshiped. The players are instructed to accept a test to prove their worth. All the players might be considered prime player characters. This first heavenly occurrence will turn them into prophets for the new power. Sometimes the request seems clerical, controlling worldly affairs in the deity's name.

In a fantasy world, someone is screaming divine prophesy everyday. The players must capture power, control a region and eliminate the competition to truly establish a new religion or even a significant cult. For now, the demigod just needs something done.

If the players refuse, the spiritual being usually has very little power at least now. No bolts of lightning crash from above. At the referee's option or when combined with other cards, these tests can be demonic deceptions. Yet let's keep the players down to earth, so they do not rampage every time they have a bad dream. Besides, evil and good are relative and change with mores. The divine patron may want the players to do some pretty ugly things in his name. Donning robes and colorful masks are optional.

Inverted: *Wizard or Immortal* – The patron is a rather significant user of magic. Even if he is known by a variety of names, the prime player character sought for the mission will know one of them. His recollection may be mixed. The patron may be rightly or wrongly known for mayhem, mishap and cunning. He might also be respected, though this is never a guardian Zaire.

The patron may not have wizardry techniques. He may instead control a device, force or power, call it a ring. The device imparts abilities beyond imagination. How does it work and are the energies transferable?

Though a wizard may at times kill with a simple snap of his finger—do so to heighten the drama of the story—most of his abilities require considerable ritual and lucky timing. He will not be able to conjure on command; his greatest manifestations may also be from a time of life when his Warped Outcome tally was one tenth its present value. He may be burned out or knows not to use magic anymore, as he waits for the end times.

Like tides in the oceans, the wizard's power may crest and fall, but here in seemingly random cycles. The patron needs the players for a task in a place or at a time that his power ebbs. He may right now even be powerless. The drawback of magic is that it is unpredictable; it is not science nor works in a cook-book fashion. Magic is magical, often merely whimsy.

Riches & Respect: Assuredly.

Patron 7 Swords: *Cutpurse* – A minor rogue who makes a living from theft. The patron may be attempting a task that does not involve criminal activities. He will confide he's making amends for past actions. Thieves vary greatly in power but assume that any thief who approaches the players will exceed any individual in the players' group in both skills and combat techniques. Since magic is often a crutch used by those who detest hard work, almost all thieves use and abuse magic.

When his quest does not relate to crime, his reward and finances will still undoubtedly come from stolen goods or ill-gotten gains. The patron is famous for all the wrong reasons. By accepting the task, the players may later be accused of abetting. To prevent that, they should cover their tracks and hide any involvement, an added complication.

Inverted: *Pickpocket* – Another criminal but his method is subtle. He relies on stealth and deception to gain his goals. His magical ability will rival or exceed any member of the player group, though his application and aptitude with incantations may seem crude and barbaric. He certainly is squandering any gift he has, taking enough to celebrate and then gamble it all away.

Pickpockets are more feared by the city-state constabulary and society at large. They are seen as conmen and betrayers. Plus, their greater use of magic has led to mishaps. Add an extra rival, a sheriff, hunting for the patron for a prior notorious theft, perhaps a relic. If the patron does not join the party, the sheriff will pursue the players, hoping one or all of them will confess (under torture) and reveal the magical thief's hideout. This extra rival will often only appear in the quest Epilog right before the party returns to the patron at the quest's end.

Riches: Assuredly, if that be a purse of coins. “*Hey, where'd mine go?*”

Patron 6 Swords: *Outcast woman with child* – The players are approached by someone in dire need, someone totally defenseless. The patron need not just be a frail woman with a small child, but that works. The visage is a standard cover for

illusionist, demons and deceivers. Yet this card can also apply for a patron who has a weakness or vulnerability that must be protected. He may seem quite heroic, but somehow, he is vulnerable for the moment.

Somewhere along the way it might be helpful to know WHO? fathered the child. The woman will be an outcast, nine times out of ten, because the child is a bastard. Still, the patron will be sympathetic, especially when it is revealed that she probably has a boat, crew and masters which could impart techniques to the players' craft.

She often comes from afar and now has gotten herself into trouble. The father, WHO? is usually powerful; he might want his child back for fatherly or less fatherly reasons.

Inverted: Fugitive – The patron is sought for crimes. The crimes may be long past, but the patron is still pursued. The longer the patron has been on the run, the more powerful he will have become. The more powerful he seems, the more dangerous and determined will be his rivals to bring him to justice. The justice may not be of this world. The patron may have escaped a cult or ritual that employed demonic or unworldly forces.

The rival of the quest is both the person most vigorously hunting to find the patron and the main opposition to the patron's latest plans. Any player character captured by the rival and finding himself in Digressions will face scrutiny both for the current mission and also to reveal where he met the patron. A result that says ransom was paid by the patron to free a trapped player character will expose the patron to the rival's attack. The climax might then be an attempt to rescue the patron before he is executed.

Sea: Ordinarily; **Power:** Improbable.

Patron 5 Swords: Fraud Opportunist – The patron is a huckster, always trying to take advantage of a situation. His stated reward will undoubtedly be exaggerated. Through happenstance the patron often looks exactly like someone else, someone known to the players. Else the patron will pretend to be someone in order to gain the trust of the party. Use a past patron or Friend, if possible; otherwise select WHO? the patron pretends to be. Usually the players discover their own mistake by Phase B or C. The patron was certainly aware that the players thought he was someone else, but he may not have truly lied to them. Could be their own fault to be deceived, yet the betrayal feels real.

The patron's quest and goals are both true. Yet, he started the adventure with a deception. He probably felt the group, rightly, would not take a quest if they knew he was a nobody. Patrons are to be trusted. Even here, to say again, his quest was presented in good faith. Yet after the players know the truth, usually when a Knave enlightens them, they suffer a minus one Quest Pip for the rest of the adventure.

Inverted: Magical Glitch – The patron changes during the adventure. Yet only the players will think this has happened. Time will be altered or rearranged. Somewhere between Phase B and C, the rival and patron swap. Since this patron has no true identity, select a WHO? for the patron and future rival. Plus, the rival card is the person who will become the party's patron. Hocus Pocus, this can lead to some very odd situations with agents on both sides suddenly acting hostile or thinking the players are bewitched for attacking them. The cause of this magical quirk might never be discovered.

Respect: Improbable.

Patron 4 Swords: Disgraced Soldier – A person who fled battle or is wanted for crimes and atrocities committed during war. The patron's cowardice may have occurred long ago, but he is still haunted by the event. Pick an extra card for Unforeseen Opponents to represent men and troubles still that linger. These could be those seeking revenge on the patron, perhaps the forces the patron once fled.

The patron is reviled by commoner and noble alike. The players' quest hopefully is never associated with the patron, or else, that infamy could taint all. This patron has even lower moral principles than the player characters. The patron's values and criminality should not concern anyone, unless he insists on coming along. Then, everything will slip into the vile. The longer the patron travels with the party, the lower the moral of all.

Inverted: Ruthless Thug – A scoundrel who has committed many crimes, usually on helpless victims. The prime player character may not realize this until after the mission has started, then the patron's ruthless nature will be revealed. Often the patron is a noble with legal authority to commit his atrocities, or he has a noble protector and fears no court.

The patron has always gotten his way. He's a bully and will bully the players. He may threaten legal action should the prime player character refuse to accept his



mission. He can threaten friends and break trusts the party has earned. Any contact of any player character is in jeopardy. He has that much clout or holds that many blackmail secrets.

No matter the mission outcome, this patron will never befriend the players.

Sea & Land: Improbable; **Power:** Ordinarily.

Patron 3 Swords: *Reconciled Enemy* – He's a person the players once faced before in combat. The enemy has fought the players and respects their abilities. The patron wants a truce and has a deal that benefits everyone involved.

The olive branch has been offered or has it? Let's not always assume the patron even remembers the prime player character. Let's not assume whatever happened in the past has been forgiven. Let's not truly let bygones be bygones, but success here can definitely aid to that end. If possible select a second enemy of one or more player characters as the rival. The patron and party share an enemy, so by Sun Tsu that makes them friends?

One of the player character's actual enemies needs help. He will acknowledge the request is irregular, and trust is difficult. He may even say this is just a truce; the sides can get back to hating one another after the mission is done.

There will not be much love in this meeting, but the job is legit. The reward for success may be erasing a transgression, ending a warrant, causing a vendetta to lapse. Or to refuse, and the potential patron, that prime player character's enemy, will become even more incensed. To refuse and you might be adding him and his kin to the opposition in every adventure which follows.

Inverted: *Agent of a Competitor* – The party is approached by a person who represents a past rival or political opponent. This agent asks for a genuine truce, because the players are needed for a greater cause. The patron is not so stupid as to face the prime player character in person. The agent may also hide the fact he represents a notorious enemy, yet the deception is not made to cheat the players. Rather, he conceals his leader's name, knowing the prime player character would refuse the deal on principle, even when the quest profits all.

Sea: Assuredly; **Riches:** Ordinarily.

Patron 2 Swords: *Viking Stallari* – A warrior who comes from a barbaric land but has since civilized and established ties in a region. He leads a crew that operates to secure trade, stop smugglers, sink pirates and destroy monsters.

The mission in no way need relate to travel on the water, but many adventures start and end at sea. As with other patrons, the man's duties may keep him from personally taking care of legitimate matters.

Inverted: *Blood Rite Pagan* – This patron is less civilized. He and his crew travel the seas seeking plunder and forbidden objects of trade. He's an arcane pirate

and priest. He may not be always ruthless, and he's primarily accused of trading goods in violation of established monopolies.

Where does he get his cargoes? When he can't get cargo from free trading peoples or the underworld dwarves, then he uses theft. He has upkeep like for the players' longboat. As he adventures on land, his ship masters are trying to make ends meet. Sound familiar?

The pagan will have an odd pantheon of gods he calls upon. Some of those deities will even answer. The mission climax need not relate to a battle on the seas. But if he joins the party and comes along on the journey, at least some of the travel and encounters of the adventure will take place on the water.

Sea: Assuredly; **Riches:** Ordinarily; **Respect:** Assuredly.

Patron Ace Swords: *Demi-Human or Angelic Host* – Not a human, but not a monster. Use your imagination or flip randomly to a page in your favorite creature encyclopedia. Cloaked figures are seldom found in taverns, waiting to meet the prime player character. The patron will usually send a human agent to make his offer or then make a suggestion for them to meet.

The missions with this patron have two rivals (at least); select two cards for that category. Because the patron sought the players and not one of his own kind-caste, the mission should somehow either personally relate to the prime player character or be something that only the group can perform; that is, so the patron thinks. The wrong thing ever to say to this patron is *why us?* These are unworldly creatures of great power, but most lack wisdom. None are omniscient. *What do you mean 'why us?'* might follow with later realization that the players are not godlings themselves.

Inverted: *Ginn, Demon or Bonified Monster* – Not a human, not a humanoid, but an intelligent creature that needs human assistance in performing a task. Again, the patron will send an agent and ask to meet the prime player character privately. The location of the meeting may even cause the party to select Phase A encounters to cross a sea or enter the underworld.

The agent will not say at the initial meet that he represents a beast. He may not know; he may not care to know. Most messengers are magically enchanted or charmed minions; they simply follow orders or obey the cult that worships the beast.

A promise of riches is always made, since most demons and monsters think humans are greedy above all. The referee may have to modify his mission selection if the result is inappropriate. Yet, even small tasks may be distractions or necessary to a greater plot.

Only pick one rival, but additionally all humans will oppose the mission should they discover the prime player character follows the orders of a ginn, demon or monster or monstrous demon ginn. The crew must always be deceived and told the

mission has a mortal patron. Unfortunately, some players may also oppose the mission once they meet the true patron in his gloriously terrifying form. The group risks death by refusing to fully accomplish the task. But, the monster might be slain to end the mission with uncertain retribution from the beast's cult of minions.

Finally, some monsters, but seldom gins and demons, will remember a job well done and continue to offer favors like any friend or campaign contact. Oh, what a friend!

Sea: Assuredly; **Land:** Ordinarily; **Riches:** Ordinarily; **Power:** Ordinarily; **Respect:** Improbable.

Missions, Jobs or Tasks for Hire

Quite simply, this next selection is what the players are supposed to do. The patron will sometimes tell the players how he wants the deed performed. But more often, the patron is not concerned about the details; most patrons are not even concerned with the consequences, especially any blame the players might suffer. The quest is typically completed in the Climax Challenges. Yet sometimes the journey to that end is part of the quest objectives.

Never is any quest a single all-powerful task roll. If something direct—like the harvest of an enemy city-state needs to be burned—the players will not, even collectively, cast some dice for magic and declare the whole done and done. The journey is part of the experience. The **encounter phases must be endured** and crossed; the **climax challenges will be another final set of hurdles** to overcome. Then, there is also an **Epilog to get back to a safe setting for reward** by the patron or to just evade the reprisal of the rival.

The group is not being asked to do a task. The group is undertaking a quest. Quests are a series of tasks and so much more. **The quest is the chance to check Ignobles** and grow your character into the campaign.

As needed, the Ref may also flip cards for the answers to WHO? and WHERE? But unless specifically stated, reserve those card flips for the end as part three of the scenario sequence; that's where the **Ref sets the specifics and puts details into the adventure** related to his own campaign.

There are two types of missions detailed. The first are general quests on land, sea and underground. The second is specifically missions which will force the players into the underworld. Which to use? That depends on the style of play and the patron. More magical patrons will tend to be able to handle worldly issues. But **going**

into the Unending Gray is never a good idea. So, hire someone foolish enough to do so!

The underworld is definitely tougher and scarier, but there shouldn't be any limitation based on level. If anything, experienced players may tell some patrons "no" and skip the action. Better to suffer the consequences of refusal, then go to a place where the strangest of monsters dwell.

Mission Quicklook

Missions		
	Cups	Rods
King	Organize riot (Stop an uprising)	Perform to ridicule (Attempt suicidal)
Queen	Deliver writs (about players)	Raid a city-state (Supply civil war)
Knight	Raise bandits (Outfit rebellion)	Join garrison (Organize a mutiny)
Knave	Incite vigilante (Assist imperial warden)	Rescue kidnapped (to ransom elsewhere)
10	Obtain blackmail (Recover evidence)	Scout for army (meet enemy in battle)
9	Scheming politics (Study noble family)	Find lost soul in underworld (Hire delvers)
8	Hunt sea monster (not the main goal)	Deliver message (threat to an adversary)
7	Perform treason (Kill an Heir)	Burglary (of arcane or unstable)
6	Spy trade secrets (Spy on construction)	Monster Hunt (hinder the same)
5	Organize militia (lead into clash)	Accompany a lady (very disagreeable)
4	Stop commerce (End trade disruption)	Transport by land (in a race)
3	Perform under Duress (Hoax threat)	Organize Spectacle (in Saurian Swamp)
2	Find a missing person (lost at sea)	Join a crew (w/ Hidden agenda)
Ace	Take a Hostage (Distract rival)	Follow a legend (Spread a rumor)
Missions		
	Coins	Swords
King	Be patron's agent (Represent imps)	Deliver a debt (Prevent repayment)
Queen	Spy on military (Thwart a spy)	Recover a treasure (for wages only)
Knight	Rob someone (Collect a debt)	Delay an event (Rescue someone trapped)
Knave	Organize improvements (Hire courtiers)	Maim the rival (Mar a loved one)
10	Travel as companion (and stay incognito)	Smuggle (Smuggle a person)
9	Dishonorable act (Prevent desecration)	Protect the helpless (Aid repressor)
8	Protect celebration (a hoax)	Personal quest (using alternates)
7	Establish toll (Interdict supplies)	Recover theft (of magic relic)
6	Hide object (Restore object)	Adventure far (into warped fable)
5	Map a place (Destroy document)	Impersonation (Expose an imposter)
4	Gain magical secret (Seize a relic)	Imperial quest (Rival murdered)
3	Arson (with no injuries)	Murder for hire (known adversary)
2	Foster desertion (Cause labor shortage)	Explore an underworld (Seal a tomb)
Ace	Take proposal to Zaire (Deliver arcane object)	False testimony (Escort witness)
Inverted card result list in parenthesis.		

Major Tarot – Quest's Surprises

Surprise Magician: A player character must pretend to be something he is not to succeed.

Inverted: this misconception must be played on the patron as well.

Surprise High Priestess: Quest can only be completed by a female or with the help of one.

Inverted: a disguised spy in female attire may also suffice.

Surprise Empress: Quest will lead the players into private deals with nobles.

Inverted: these nobles are not entirely loyal to the regional earl or the imperial throne. Add a **Loyalist with Agenda** to expand the Motives and those opposed.

Surprise Emperor: Quest is a diversion for an even grander plot.

Inverted: that other plot will fail no matter the player group's outcome; the patron will blame the players for his own loss.

Surprise Hierophant: Quest involves a clash of faiths.

Inverted: a foreign cult has arrived in the region.

Surprise Lovers: the rival of the quest is a long forgotten enemy of one player character; this man is still eager to even that old score. The player character won't even remember the transgression and further enrage the rival. Add a **Major Clan with no Usurpation Goal** to expand the Motives and represent this half-remembered adversary.

Inverted: one player character will become married on the quest; the Ref should integrate this as subtly as possible. Else, he ties the knot in the Epilog. The bride is related to or is identified as WHO? Flip and find out this detail as the marriage occurs. A mission consequence King is a good time for an arranged marriage.

Surprise Chariot: Success on the quest will leave the prime player character famous. If any player characters lack the Notoriety Ignoble, they will gain it as acclaim or lasting ill-will by the end of the adventure.

Inverted: success will leave the players infamous, as fugitives or outcasts, possibly with large rewards for apprehension. Once again, the Fame Ignoble will check for each player character that has yet to do so this level. Being famous for a dastardly quest or a criminal action will spawn more enemies in the future.

Surprise Justice: Quest must have at least one court case before it can be completed. The characters must defend their actions in a city-state, before an earl, or at the capital in front of the Grand Assize. Digression (Q) covers lordly trials, but role-play and skill resolution may avoid that outcome.

Inverted: the verdict of this court must be illegally influenced in order for the player to succeed. A favorable ruling judge must be coerced or bribed. Display of skill is a must or continue with Digression (Q).

Surprise Hermit: Patron withholds or is ignorant of one crucial aspect of the quest. Add a **Secret or Hideous Cabal** to expand the Motives and those opposed.

Inverted: the crucial fact becomes obvious. The players will find this out early in the quest, by the end of the first setting of the encounters, the name of the cabal that opposes them. After that treat all Knights as a second set of Knaves sent from the secretive enemy.

Surprise Wheel of Fortune: reshuffle the deck.

Surprise Force: Quest will take the players haplessly into a major battle; the outcome is unrelated to the patron's objective. Add **Enemies Foreign and Internal** to expand the Motives and those opposed.

Inverted: the players will be drawn into a major battle. The patron will be angry that the players got involved in an outside feud. Yet the outcome of this battle becomes related to the quest's objective; the battle must be won for the players to succeed. Use the Q&D Legion on Legion to resolve this extra clash, which occurs as the first obstacle of the climax challenges.

Surprise Hanged Man: Quest will only succeed if at least one player takes a vicious wound to complete a deed. If this hasn't happened in the journey through Phases A, B and C, then randomly injure one player at the start of the climax challenges.

Inverted: a player does not have to lose his life, but he must sacrifice a swaggering ability, else the patron's quest fails. Again, if possible take the loss in encounters. Else, start the climax challenges with a random player losing a swaggering technique. The loss doubles to two techniques if taken from the group's longboat.

Surprise Death: Fate decrees that no character can die on this quest; no matter the circumstance, something happens to change what appears inevitable. However, if any character becomes wounded twice, instead of the injury, he loses a swaggering technique. The longboat may also suffer these losses.

Inverted: fate decrees a very bloody spectacle. The Referee will slaughter as many servitors as possible over the course of the quest; every combat engagement during encounters causes the loss of one longboat technique. Most character vicious wounds will maim, causing the loss of a trait, skill or swaggering; Ref's choice.

Surprise Temperance: The quest has confusing elements. If an object is involved, many duplicates exist to perplex the players. All three Phases of encounters will have mission consequence events like Phase B. The settings may change, but the easier mission consequence events of A and C are not used to reach the climax challenges. Each time a mission consequence Six is flipped, the group suffers a minus one Quest Pip, along with the set back to the previous Phase.

Inverted: the quest has elements which detour the journey. If an object is involved, it presently is in many pieces that need collecting and assembly. All three phases of encounters, A, B and C, must occur. The players may not skip Phase B.

Surprise Devil: No one must become aware of the full extent and motives of the quest, else disaster—quest failure—will result. Easy enough but add a **Politically Motivated Sinister Organization** determined by a card flip using that entire table; the extra group is opposed to the players, so treat Knights as Knaves sent by that group.

Inverted: the first player forced to use Digression tables will start at Captured by Cult (C). All other events intersecting at that point should remain vague. The players may never know why a cult becomes involved. Yet once in play, treat the cults' Knights as Knaves for the remainder of the quest.

Surprise Tower of Destruction: Almost all personal or privately owned resources the player utilizes on the quest suffers jeopardy. Ships will scuttle and lose technique Longboat Undamaged (O); companies disband and lose Longboat Battle Hard (T); wealth is spent or stolen. Each encounter will pose a loss preventable by display of skill and task resolution at Difficult.

The Ref should integrate the losses as subtly as possible, focus on what they employ in their other tasks and narratives, the stuff they use. At the scenario's end, a few random quirks and flukes will remain. At the beginning of the Epilog, every player at least once must defend something with character interaction. Investments, estates, companies in garrison, and ships left behind are unaffected.

Inverted: all personal resources and horded wealth will be lost, but only if the quest fails. Upon failure, everything the players own will be confiscated by the regional overlords of the frontiers or the imperium. The group might start the next quest looking for a leaky replacement vessel and green crew.

Surprise Star: Patron's error sends the players to the wrong place to perform the quest. When the players get to Phase C, they discover the error and return to Phase A to start over.

Inverted: patron will contact the players before the climax and ask them to redo the entire quest starting in the right location. When the first Queen encounter is flipped, the phase returns to A. If the players reach the climax before the flip of a Queen, they automatically fail. This is a very bad start.

Surprise Moon: To complete the quest, the players will mistakenly assume, or are led to believe by the patron, they need an object that is both difficult and dangerous to obtain. Select WHAT? guarded by WHO? The item will be seen as a relic, though in most cases it is inert, at best of precious value.

Even if the object seems ridiculous, they collectively think the item is of utmost importance. Either at the quest start, or by the end of Phase A, the players must obtain this item. Give them one phase to perform this sub-quest. If the players fail to obtain this plot point of little value, they may continue the quest. However, they attract a second rival, the WHO?, representing the owner they tried to

burglarize. Instead of WHO?, the Ref may add a monster, one which is angry its lair was disturbed.

Inverted: the players are not stymied by an object. Instead they believe they must get the help of a person who will prove to be a handicap or detriment to bring along. This NPC will automatically join the party at the end of Phase A. Give the ill-advised unfortunate an officer's ship position, like ship's pilot. He'll stay in the role even if he proves incompetent; the player characters will believe they are unworthy and were at fault for any of the NPC's errors.

Surprise Sun: Quest should be simple and take place in the immediate area. Do not use the encounters; go straight to the climax challenges.

Inverted: the quest is still very direct, even though there are encounters. However, almost all mission inconsequence encounters can be ignored.

Surprise Judgment: Quest will cause a secondary event, which must be corrected in order for the primary quest to succeed. Something lost will need to be recovered, or someone injured will need to be nursed back to health. The morale of the crew must be restored, or a ship must be repaired to good working order...force something along those lines. Select one technique presently not in the longboat, like Religiously Inspired (C). Until the players obtain that technique, the phase remains stuck in A. There should be a chance to gain the missing technique with each face card encounter.

Inverted: an unforeseen and unrelated event, one both bad or distasteful, will occur. But the players will not have the time or resources to resolve the problem without sacrificing the quest. They must ignore the problem, misery or chaos, which they observe in order for the primary quest to succeed. Perhaps they may return later and try to make amends. Besides a tragedy or campaign event, this too may be a longboat technique, like Ship Undamaged (O). The group might have to delay any repairs and limp along with a leaking and cracked hull.

Surprise World: Quest will cross both land and sea. Not all settings of the adventure will be on or related to the water.

Inverted: quest must take the players into the underworld. The mission itself should be an underworld test.

Surprise Fool: Quest is multi-parted with sub-quests that must first be completed, before the main quest is resolved. There will be a full set of encounter phases then a climax for each. The players will need to travel and resolve a climax at least twice more, if not thrice. The first mission and all the objectives are only completed after three or four linked quests.

Inverted: A sub-quest will present itself, and the players will tend to stray from their primary goal to pursue a personal adventure. Generate both a mission for the patron and a second mission for the party or ship crew. The main quest could be

no real quest at all. The encounters will all relate to the personal secondary objectives satisfied in the extra quest. The rival opposes both the main quest and the group's other goals. The two tasks might be completed together or in close succession. The Ref must decide. One or both may fail to a rival's greater glory. One or both may be a triumph for the players and patron.

Mission Cups

Mission King Cups: Organize a riot, strike or distraction at a planned time. Something is on a time critical schedule. The players are trying to delay repairs, prevent transfer of a cargo, stop the supply of a legion garrison, force the harvest to spoil, etc.

Inverted: uncover the head of a planned civil uprising or slave revolt; the players may have to pretend to be sympathizers in order to gain the trust of the rebellious workers plotting the stoppage. They may have to infiltrate the renegade slaves only to betray their desire for liberty.

Optionally, the players at any time in this quest can swap sides and join the rival and aid the slaves. The patron and his forces then switch roles to the adversary, but usually no friends are gained by doing such. The players, however, may find their task more spiritually fulfilling as a reward.

Yet, they might just stay with the patron who will pay better. Promises by the rival or his downtrodden minions may turn out to be simply false hope. The patron has the backing of the law and often more wealth to commit. But go ahead, fill you hearts with the riches of righteous. Check some Noble Deeds; wait, wasn't that Ignobles that characters check to advance in level?

Mission Queen Cups: Deliver legal writs or documents. Ten seconds out of sight of the patron, these are opened and reviewed by the players. There will not be any *Rosencrantz and Guildenstern* ending of kill the bearers of this note.

The writs have nothing to do with the players upon this pick of the deck. Court documents, noble bargains, imperial decrees travel by road and sea constantly. They report the campaign news, denote appointments, settle debts, offer plea bargains, provide amnesty, inform wardens of new outlaws, etc.

The rival does not want the documents delivered; that could not be any clearer. The journey to the end—a city-state to city-state being likely—will be fraught with subterfuge, because an insider in the players' crew or companions is supporting the rival. If not an infiltrator, the rival might watch the party via magic.

Everything in regard to encounters will skew bad. Routine problems will amplify. Sabotage and murder become masked as accident. Would the players torture everyone at the onset...okay that might happen? The insider may even be another player character. So, no matter how hard they try tormentor, or break fingers, the

traitor will only be revealed at the climax. If the players are too diligent, weeding out the duplicitous, they may fate one of their own to betrayal.

Inverted: forget what I said about the writs have nothing to do with the players. They do. They just are worded so elegantly and judiciously, that none of the players would have a chance of translating the entire scale of the documents. Wait, that just doesn't make sense? Someone might have courtly grace? So perhaps the spelling was in Latin, or some other script, which is unknown; maybe they were in code?

Sure, you can have the item being delivered burn the players later, but it isn't fun. Trust me. Instead, let's go the opposite and make the papers offer a godsend. The writ has a blank in the space for benefactor; it is signed by a royal, but the person receiving the boon is open to anyone who understands and writes a seldom used language, like Hypatia. All the players need do is correctly mark in one name, one of their names, and they have a license to steal as a legate foraging for a legion, a special appointment for the imperial crown, a writ to privateer merchant vessels in a region, or some other powerful grant of lands, titles or immunity for a future crime.

We have a moral dilemma. If the players take the prize, then turn patron into rival. Spend the quest encounters, remaining, fleeing his punishment. The climax will settle the most exigent of the patron's hired hunters. If the group decides to stay loyal, well, they have a full journey on which to be tempted. Plus, they still have the insider and a rival hoping to take the writ for himself. The longer they wait to betray their own patron, the longer they will attract a variety of people who learn of the documents and covet them for their own.

Follow though with bad news only to be shot as the messenger? Of course, that's a possibility, if the representative at the final drop point has a goblin flintlock. But wait, this wasn't about bad news. Despite the cliché, messengers, even ones collecting ransom, are not to be killed.

Mission Knight Cups: Organize a bandit gang. The players are to run a training camp to turn regular ruffians into true men-at-arms. The intent may still just be theft, often of the rival's lands and road trade. Yet forget that for the moment, since the patron's true motive is decided by flipping a card under another table. Suffice to say, the players are going to train and outfit a set of legion auxiliaries with no moral ties.

They must provide proof of concept by finally leading the resulting force into a major skirmish during the climax. Before then, they face disobedience, fracturing, desertion, quarrels over spoils, all the usual *no honor among thieves*' brand of dealings.

Encounters specifically here represent not travel but progressing events. Since most banditry finds a haven along disputed regions in the frontiers, some distant

place seems the logical start to the scenario. For advanced player characters, the force is delver and needs to be trained in a sanctuary outpost underground.

Inverted: the scale bumps up a few notches, as the players are asked to train and outfit a rebellion. The climax will decide whether the ruling earl is toppled, and his entire family is driven from a region. This will be a very hard quest indeed. The long term enemy in the aftermath will include the rival and the heirs of the defeated earl.

Mission Knave Cups: Organize a vigilante band that seeks a notorious outlaw or a rampaging monster. The local authority has collapsed or is in cahoots with the criminals; they may even be charmed by the monster.

Inverted: assist the imperial warden in a legal search for a criminal, outlaw or source of creature infestation. Note, the patron is unchanged; he's not that warden, right? The warden will not want the players help. He may be arrogant or sees the players as usurpers of his authority.

Here the crime is repugnant, and the players are facing many groups trying to take the law into their own hands. A monster and sometimes the monster's minions are always the focus of the hunt. The human rival either hates the patron or warden or both. He may lead the creature's minions or see the monster as advantageous to his own advancement in power. Failure for one official brings advancement to another. As for the patron, he's losing business or is related to the reluctant warden. *"I don't need my brother's henchmen."*

Or, the alternative is the demi-human being sought is a local hero who has supporters who believe their own lives and freedom are secondary to keeping their idol safe. The monster sought might be an ancient ward against an even grander monster. Either might be worshiped by a pagan sect of long tradition. Rabid followers of zealous disposition may be harder to kill than any single beast.

Mission 10 Cups: Spy, observe or obtain blackmail information. The rival is having an affair. For many of the rivals, this is a given. If an affair isn't a scandal, press on. The rival is keeping a secret. Again, most do so. The rival has a secret which can get him killed, force him to lose clout among the nobility, cause him to lose agents...those are more potent.

Yet, the actual secret is secondary to the manner in which the players must discover the information. There are three logical situations.

First, the rival may have an incriminating piece of evidence, usually a letter or item of jewelry. So why did he keep this? If the rival selection seems like he wouldn't be that dumb, again we skip forward.

Second logical test, the rival must be observed in a criminal act. There are no cameras, so are the players trustworthy and able to accuse? Does the viewing need to

be reproduced with magic? Is that admissible? Plus, many of the rivals will not be criminals.

We move on to the third logical assumption. So, lastly, the son of a rival must be observed in a criminal act. Again, some problems, unless we change gender and define the deed.

Here's a good catch-all, the rival's unwed daughter is having an affair. If its true, it doesn't even need proof to be scandalous. But, it must be true. So, the players must break-in on the tryst or force that outcome by their own seduction.

The Ref should select a WHO? to reveal a possible person with which the rival's unwed daughter is having an affair. Even if the players initiate the illicit action, trust me when I say, this won't be the girl's first act of pre-marital infidelity. That means the players face the rival and also WHO? Because, WHO? will not want his affair made public; both out of fear for his own reputation, but also because the rival most likely is someone who is formidable and murderous when fuming mad about his unwed daughter being now permanently unwed and now the permanent subject of idle gossip. Even a notorious fiend will not want his daughter being the subject of market gossip scandal.

Inverted: read the rather wordy description above, then realize the patron wants a letter written by his daughter to be recovered. The rival has the item and threatens to make the contents public. The players must act quick, before this becomes common tittle-tattle. In other words, recover this evidence before it is used as blackmail. If you have a gift for writing bodice rippers, feel free to change "*letter, daughter and scandal*" into a more juicy tales of intrigue and woe.

Mission 9 Cups: Spy, observe or obtain political secrets. Political secrets are ones which ensure treaties and involve secrets held by or relations silently fostered between nobles of different regions. Many noble families are related, but the loyalty of these nobles is supposed to be to the emperor. Someone is not loyal; the patron wants convincing proof. If a lord is arranging a marriage counter to the wishes of the imperial crown, find that proof.

The players will be conducting a test of loyalty, trying to discover if a viscount of a city-state has ulterior motives and wishes the change the balance of power. Does a high noble pledge his daughter to an outside power or secret cabal? The rival need not be the noble personage; he may be a staunch ally, reliable enforcer or truly be the secret the noble is hiding.

Inverted: go to a city-state and create a full dossier on a ruling family, specifically looking for vices, ambition and discontent. Name all his courtiers and their own potential blackmail and intrigues. Return with the information; give the patron something of a coercive nature. Stay until you find or cause something which is embarrassing. Test the character of the man or his minions. Find if they are corrupt

and willing to work against their own best interests in order to satisfy unusual desires for pleasures. If need be, turn them all into addicts. The dwarves have potions which you might need.

Mission 8 Cups: Hunt a sea monster. The players might join the crew of the patron's vessel or will head out with their own into deep water. They may also lead a convoy of seamen to find the beast. Most of the action will occur in encounters as the monster is sighted and whittles down the group's longboat techniques or that of the supporting ally. Best to get this adventure focused and sink the extra vessels quickly; they could also just be damaged and desert. The monster will create a spectacle in the climax challenge, proving near impossible to slay.

Before then, treat any dispatch of the Large+ leviathan as a minor victory with it sinking below to end the encounter. It will return. The players may also just be culling the smaller of the watery pack. The rival will represent one of three things: another ship on the hunt for the prey and reward, a protector of his mighty sea god or a pirate disbeliever who feels his sanctuary waters are being violated. Ref may decide, after seeing the rest of the adventure flips. For encounters, Knaves represent the rival's minions; Kings represent sightings and attacks of the monster. The rival may need to be enticed to help, though often he is slain as just one of the mob's minions before the creature is vanquished. That or vice versa.

Inverted: the creature is a hoax at least for the patron's real objectives. The hunt for a fantastique beast has a different purpose. There may be a monster; that's always fun. But the patron is using the voyage as an excuse to raid the rival's port or trade. Else the patron has to move a forbidden cargo. The watery denizen becomes a terrible flair.

Mission 7 Cups: Perform treasonable acts against the emperor. Anything which undermines or humiliates a powerful noble could be called treason. You cannot insult a powerful lord's armies, ships, counselors, mental faculties or manhood. But, the players will need to do more than insult someone to satisfy the conditions of treason here.

The campaign is not static. Quests of the players can change the greater roles and the living conditions of city-states. The quest will add bad city traits and shift racial diversity in the capital or a major vassal state. The greatest of all treasons is to support a usurper to the throne. It is also often attempted and failed.

What's often nice about these missions is the players immediately gain a choice. They can support the patron and his treason. Else they may inform on him, take the side of the rival and try to stop the patron's plans. Does that make the rival the new patron? No, hardly ever, never. What it does do is gives the players two rivals (from Queens and Knaves) during encounters, and a whole set of climax challenges to stop the treasonous acts. After which there is little or no reward. They

may have to both intercept the patron's agents and keep from being caught inside someplace they don't belong, like the imperial palace. They might keep their honor and die in virtuous standing to a decaying rex in the capital. Point made?

Inverted: the treason is against the offspring, a lone prince or the first child born to a hereditary earl. The victim is the only heir and an adult; this should force combat to sink the fated knife.

Several frontier lords may be aware of this intrigue, but quite often they pretend to be oblivious to allow them plausible deniability. No regional earl truly wants his counterparts to break order of succession, especially if the result might be a noble deposed by commoners. That suggests his own offspring are fair game, and his own peons may have rights. Yet all the powerful wish they alone would rule the world; everyone else should bend the knee. The players are trying to eliminate one piece on the game board, at least for a generation, by neutering a lordly family. Someone's going to die.

Mission 6 Cups: Spy, observe and obtain the contents of mercantile contracts. Anyone can count the number of vessels entering a port. Magic might even allow this to be done remotely. This quest will usually be the recovery of another spy's theft of a guildmaster's designs or contracts.

Delvers as companies create contracts, which might bound the signatories for a millennium. These are kept in a journal called a *Starbook*. Stealing a starbook or returning one that was lost is the essence of this quest, though true underworld delvers might not be involved.

The terrestrial aristocrats that control all commodity trade have their own generational deals, many of which they do not wish to make public knowledge. A surprising number of agreements are made with lesser demons and dwarven kings, of which most such deals would be called blasphemy by religious fanatics or treasonous by regional high lords. What underworld denizens desire in trade is exclusively repulsive. Go and uncover someone else's deals or return with a thief's hands along with what he stole. The rival is either that thief or the person to be spied upon. Deciding which will help set the mission parameters.

The Ref may also want to push the mission into arson. The contents of a mercantile contract may mean the actual goods. Fire is one of many ways to ensue a deal is broken. Sinking the transport is yet another. Both tend to be fond adventure fodder for players. If I had a nickel for every time I had a party of players burn an inn? Reckless, simply reckless, but seems to foster a laugh. "*Drinks done, light the match.*"

Inverted: spy, observe and obtain details on a construction or enhancements to a frontier fortress or city-state. Both are hubs of trade and trade protection. Knowing who is supervising the build and how much materials he has on hand are important.

Hindering the same is implied; the patron will seldom be satisfied with the intel alone. Usually the players are also looking at military transfers, build ups or the resiliency of magical wards. If a truly revolutionary designs is being constructed, the blue prints of such will be valuable to many third-party interests.

Mission 5 Cups: Organize a force of yeoman militia in the frontiers. The players should usually spend Phase A moving to the area with the would-be militia. The players may not even be trusted to immediately take command of the defenses. Their reputation, rightly, wrongly or erroneously, proceeds them. The first battle may be as the players' forces beat up the locals, injuring the levy morale even more.

Once at the area of defense, make a Difficult roll or take a majority roll of tests. (Majority rolls are made by having each player roll Ordinary and count the successes as a group.) This task resolution will determine if there is no immediate threat, and the climax challenges are the only test of battle worthiness. Or, if the militia will have to prove themselves against a serious invader multiple times during encounters; the culmination of those attacks happens in the climax challenges.

If the militia starts as mere rabble, the longboat crew may have to step up and fight alongside the militia, building the neophyte legion's confidence and experience. The techniques of the group's longboat might share or be conferred on the newly formed militia. Your loss may be the only way they gain?

Some of the crew will fall in love, settle and join the militia. A player character might do so as well, and retire his character, leave him behind for play if the party ever returns. That assumes the militia holds and survives the quest's apex battle.

The patron may not have the means to supply the assembled soldiers; that depends on his resource elements and the finances card flip. As such, the players may have to beg, borrow and steal supplies and arms from another established garrison or city-state armory in order to have the fledgling soldiers become other than cannon fodder.

These are not quests designed to be easy. Yet to refuse will produce drastic campaign changes in one or more regions. Invaders may overrun outposts. Or worse, refugees move further into civilized lands, bringing an array of bane traits to the city-states often used by the player group for travel supplies. Self funding the quest by personal wealth or stolen victuals, may keep the group's longboat from losing technique after technique on stops between later encounter phases as the campaign and the collective adventures proceed. *"Where did all these Bulgars come from; wait, of yeah, right?"*

The rival here is tricky. He can lead the foreign attacker or more often is an agent or employs his agents to aid the invasion. He will appear as an advisor to the

enemy coming to slaughter. His motive for doing such, like all rivals, is to counter the patron's goals. Some men are wicked and inscrutable.

Inverted: add to the adventure an extra test. The militia group must be formed, outfitted, trained, morale tested, blooded and then led into a climactic attack outside the established borders. The final battle is usually against a non-human foe or even a demi-human plunderer. Maybe go whole-hog and add a border siege to win.

Whether this is a tactical blunder, a feign ploy or opportune stroke of genius, shall depends on which border of the campaign is used and how the encounters shaped the new unit.



Mission 4 Cups: Disrupt trade in an area or put a place under siege. The trade item is not as important as the degree of boycott, embargo or blockade. The siege will be reinforced later, but the initial attacks will be started by the group's attacks on supply trains, by closing off a river access or by burning the harvest before it can be reaped.

Inverted: eliminate a disruption to trade or get supplies through to a city or fortress under siege. To end an embargo will take several sets of battles, all directed at the forces enforcing the blockade. To get supplies into a place, the most direct manner is through the underworlds. Those points of access will also be guarded, except for the truly arcane and treacherous paths.

Only on a Tasking roll by the prime player character will the trade route affected be entirely via the seas. Unless the

location is an isle. But even isles will have paths, mysterious and magical, to the underworlds. The default is the players must eliminate enemies on both land and the water. Any movement of men and materials through the lower mines should generate a monster as a twist.

Mission 3 Cups: Perform a specific skill—like armorer, barber or slave driver, among any of the fine choices—for someone running his household or getting ready

to perform a grand plan. For the group of players, assorted skills will be needed. Each must justify his talents or switch characters to a new role having something to offer. Note, a character with nothing but combat ability may still be hired to tutor the lord or his children in fencing; that is unless the lord already has a coach. Let each player present a sales pitch story of his acclaim and abilities.

Besides being set in a manor, this quest can be aboard the patron's ship or in his garrison. None of the players will be trusted with any other responsibilities other than doing the work of the specific skill contracted and required. The players one by one will gain the trust of the patron and then learn of a greater plan or vulnerability.

Encounters will take place in a static location, like those of *City-State Stopover*. There will be several obstacles, like the last person in the post was murdered. The Ref should add additional loyalists and antagonists in the city-state, ship masters or outpost.

Do not generate a second mission card that might lead to contradictory results. Instead the general idea is that the patron himself is an old friend or trusted agent of a noble or aristocratic city governor. The third party is the one with enemies to ferret out. The patron is not the lord under threat; the players are being added to the staff of someone else without that person's knowledge. They will also be seen as both outsiders and the guilty parties as other intrigues unfold. This whodunit will solve itself by the end of the climax challenges.

Which brings us to the rival? He might be the criminal assailant. He might be someone in the staff who does not want to lose his own position and prestige to strange newcomers (the players). He may simply wish to capitalize on the derision in the house, ship or fort.

Inverted: The players will soon discover that there is no outside assassin. A friend of the patron is killing his own hirelings. The patron will never accept that without emphatic proof. The players by the first encounter of Phase A will understand the reality. A lord or aristocrat needs no help; he needs to be stopped. The patron will not accept the fact that his friend is insane or has magically warped into evil.

There is no rival to this mission. Generate one and present him as an external threat, but the rival is actually not involved in any intrigue. The named rival often has no connection to the patron or the head of household murdering his servants. The rival starts as a convenient scapegoat. He might come into play as a judge, constable or intercedence, but then he will leave unconvinced of anything he can truly do. The patron and third-party will still venomously hate the rival. They may even convince the players to run a raid on that man's lands or agents, which will just add an enemy to the party. Treat all Knaves as curious Kings, until the players make a mistake and arouse the rival as an enemy of them.

Mission 2 Cups: Locate a missing person. The missing will be a relative, usually a son, of the patron. The child could also be a much younger brother or other relative, like an eccentric uncle, noble father, whimsical sister, etc.

The Ref may decide the missing person is kidnapped by the rival. The patron's and rival's role in the campaign should be considered. Normally, powerful men don't extort from one another, but the kidnaped may act as a prisoner of collateral to ensure loyalty or that a debt is repaid.

The rival is more likely to want to find the missing person first, to gain the reward or demand a higher finder's fee. The rival's involvement will even seem, at times, to be accidental. His commitment will thus be reduced; the rival will not send his best agents, so skip the flair ace-in-the-hole card flip.

Inverted: the person was lost at sea but rumored to survive. The missing might be found dead, and the patron will be less happy but accept that closure. Proof of death, a witness or recovery of some unique marker will be required. People lost at sea tend to end up eaten or become nameless, short-lived slaves on galley ships. They seldom are leading blissful amnesiac new lives.

Mission Ace Cups: Kidnap someone. In a feudal fantasy setting, ransom is quite common. The victim may be helpless or constantly need to be subdued to prevent retaliation or escape. Someone possessing wizardry is very hard to contain.

The victim will never be the rival, but will almost always be someone related familiarly to the rival, his young son, teen daughter, trusted henchman, noble cohort, favored mistress, etc. Taking the hostage is usually the easy part; collecting the ransom is more perilous. The captive is usually claimed in Phase A of the encounters. Then the rest follows as the captive is taken to a holding location, and a ransom is negotiated.

Low level prime player character might only need to conduct the kidnap; higher level sorts will take the hostage and make a demand. For a good chest of recompense, technique Treasure Laden (D), the extorted money must be arranged, delivered and absconded with. The rival will have a second flair ace-in-the-hole to aid him both in preventing the abduction, and if need be, punish any would-be collectors of the blood money.

Inverted: divert or remove the rival from a location for a specified period of time. A subtle objective, the easiest manner could be to threaten the rival and get him to leave a location. But, let's pretend that most of the rival card selections are not people who are easy to intimidate. The players will need to come up with a proper plan, then wait through the encounters, perhaps selected to reflect the group's travel or preparations to complete the scheme. The climax then involves facing the rival when he discovers, as he must, that he was duped or will lose if he stays away from the city-state or place of magical ritual. The Ref might find two extra card flips help

define this mission. WHERE? and WHEN? may provide some important details on the focus of the climax and for how long.

Mission Rods

Mission King Rods: Perform a ridiculous, insulting and fraudulent task. The players are sabotaging the rival's action by denying him or his greater estates of expertise. If the role of the rival would normally not have estates, then the rival is a minion of a lord. The burden falls on the rival to bring in talent, which he cannot properly judge. There was a mishap, perhaps a plague, which killed many of the location's artisans and laborers. The players arrive as contracted replacements. Their patron sent them as spoilers. The patron may pretend to be the rival's friend, vouch for the talented player characters he provides, but he has ulterior motives.

The players should be either dumbing down their skills or pretending to be proficient at something they are not. They could impersonate simple laborers and badly botch a task related to farming or repair.

Yet if anyone discovers their true skills and talents, the quest fails. The rival will be too suspicious and oust them. This is especially true of Advantage actions. When the players engage in combat, strangers will see them in action. If they dominate and display too much prowess, again this will be disclosed to the rival. If they fail an action that actually they are pretending to be experts in, that too might be noticed.

Do they need to die in the weak roles? No, but they may need to refrain from Calculated and Recitation actions, until the climax challenges. Also, for every Advantage three dice act they perform, they must provide an excuse later in either role-play or task resolution denial. *"That wasn't me."*

The patron usually knows how expert the players actually are. He wants his agents inside making a muck of things. The rival is usually too kind to punish anyone for mishap. He returned from war or an absence from the family business, promising himself a quieter life. The rival will grow in player sympathy. Each time the players cause hardship, they should also roll Ordinary to see if they abandon the quest. With each accident and loss of innocent life, the peculiar goal becomes harder to stomach.

Yet it remains critical to the quest that the players establish themselves and act as either poorly skilled peasants or instead pretend to be experts in a discipline where they have no knowledge. e.g. Someone not clever appraising jewels as a goldsmith.

The objective is to make the rival fail in his greater task of reviving his manor or city-state, by starving him of the expertise he needs to plant and harvest, ready a house or fort for winter, defend a remote region or repel an infestation of monsters, etc. The players should be constantly asking, couldn't we make as much money helping the rival and his people? The answer is emphatically no. A third-party

antagonist to this mission will produce most of the action, so add one that represents a **Politically motivated Sword**, an enemy foreign or internal. Many of those are brutal non-humans, lots of amoral lizard men, so grim times are ahead.

Inverted: perform a seemingly suicidal task, usually taking part in bodyguard travel to the arctic tundra, into wizard created storms or nautical hazards, or into a war between rival factions of earls. The journey here is more important than the end result, which need only be delivering a mundane message.

Mission Queen Rods: Raid a neighboring land's ships, trade or warehouses. But, getting there will be a challenge of its own. The players will be tasked to raid not one, but a series of warehouses, grain silos or ship yards, trying to complete their quest. The climax can be broken into three parts, and each part can take place as the encounter phase advances. At each step the encounters and opposition will get more dangerous. The rival and assorted city-state defenses will be learning from their initial failures.

The quest should be frontier versus the more civilized realms or vice versa. A feud between earls has the patron as an agent seeking profoundly brutal men, the players, while the rival is usually another agent employed by the opposite side.

Inverted: instead of raiding an enemy, the players are asked to bring arms and victuals to a civil war. They are the re-supply of a rebellion. The weapons will go to several places.

The players will probably ping-pong back and forth from armories in more civilized lands into different outposts of the frontier. Each time they venture into the frontier, they will be moving a ship load of arms. Each time they return they may be arrested or simply denied additional purchase. By the third and final transport, the materials will need to be taken by force. The climax challenges should represent the players fleeing arrest and helping the patron help his cause by joining the fight.

The rival may appear in various roles, as the commander losing control of his garrisons, as an agent of that failing command, or as someone who stands to lose much if the renegades gain autonomy. The campaign aspects of success cannot be overstated, yet after a few group missions elsewhere, all that was gained by the NPCs will return to the status quo.

Mission Knight Rods: Join a city-state or legion garrison and cause their moral to plummet. This can occur many ways, but consider the eleven traits, good and bad, of cities. The players must perform enough mischief to remove all the good traits or double the number of starting bad ones. Half their work will happen during encounters; the rest will come toppling down through climax challenges. The group broadly injures a location with combat, nasty display of skills and magic, all the while avoiding their own mishap from being caught in a place suffering catastrophe.

Inverted: go to sea and organize a mutiny. This can seem straight-forward, something the player characters tend to do during game play to grab a ride. So here, not only will the ship be celebrated, but it will have a fine elite loyalist crew.

These fellows will need more than just rabbleroxing to desert their masters and captain. It's never enough to just sink this ship; the patron wants to humiliate his rival or break the myth of this ship's invincible nature. Further, the specific ship may not even be initially in a friendly location.

The players may have to go someplace else, hide their own boat, then work their way or stow aboard. The players may start chained to oars, if that's how they get aboard. A series of unfortunate events must happen, some or all precipitated by the players' actions.

The rival's ship will have as many as twenty longboat swaggering techniques. The players will need to cripple and remove two-thirds of those. Some will go quickly during encounters, as the players foster scapegoats and point fingers at omens. The rest will be potentially lost by a series of battles in the climax.

The rival will almost always be the ship's general, or at least a taskmaster in the crew. If his role seems devoid of nautical skills, the rival may own the ship or be a mere passenger who is immediately suspicious from the get-go.

Add further elements of the unknown; the ship should be on some patrol or hunt that prompts regular combat. The players will need to either inspire the rowers to rebel or even bring their own ship in for an engagement.

Mission Knave Rods: Rescue someone kidnapped or captured in a battle. Kidnap for ransom seems a time honored form of extortion. The hostage may not even be illegally held, yet the rescue might be criminal? Treaties between kingdoms were guaranteed with exchanges of hostages.

After large battles, both sides tended to exchange prisoners based on the merits and nobility of the captives. Special hostages might be held to prevent the enemy from switching tactics to a no-quarter affair. With so many major and minor wars being fought across the frontiers, prisoners and slaves remain abundant; most are held outside of formal jails.

The captive dare not run and risk the world outside the comfort of a safer haven, even when it remains his open cell. The players may be asked to deliver the ransom, or else liberate someone being held. The hostage will be the son or a main envoy of the patron.

The back story of the arrest or conditions that left the victim detained does not need to be fully detailed. The circumstances can usually be assumed based on the character of the rival. But, also flip a card for WHERE? the rescue will take place; that too can tell much of the nature of the prison, if it is confinement awaiting money,

happens to broker a political deal, or remains a punitive part of a vendetta. This location will also help detail the encounter settings.

The rival will be the one who has the prisoner, but he may not be the closest guard. The rival will be the one who contacted the patron, and most of his identity and reputation will be known. Seldom will the prisoner sympathize with his captor; all will seek release and a chance to return home.

Inverted: the prisoner will be rescued, but not to set him free; instead the patron wants to hold the victim for an even higher ransom or demand. He may want to keep the rival from gaining his reward.

On first meeting with the players, select a card for WHO? to reveal the actual hostage being rescued. The players' part in this ends, before the patron's follow on demands will occur. The players might accurately claim they had no part in the third-party intrigue. But in truth, they have an inkling all along that the patron has an ulterior plan of his own. The WHO? adds another dynamic. If WHO? is the best of all friends, the players may decide neither patron nor rival is the greatest worry. Setting WHO? free will always make an enemy of two, even three. WHO? may blame the players as well. Beginning to sound Abbot and Costello?

Mission 10 Rods: Scout for an army. A scouting group needs to find the enemy and assess that group's size. Plus, the scout needs to find places of forage and supply, warn of plague and depravation, advise as only outsiders can when loyalists are outmatched or faltering in allegiance. This is a nice job for barbarians, supporting the supposedly civilized garrisons, yet not being encumbered to fight along side with them.

Inverted: as before, plus the players will need to join the army and fight the enemy they scouted to conclude the climax challenges. The rival may be part of the army, which the players momentarily join. Steady pay and food are assured, at least, until the encounters say that too is gone.

Mission 9 Rods: Locate a person lost in an ill-fated expedition into the underworld, or someone who seemed compelled to go there alone for unknown reasons. The missing person will not be related to a professional delving company.

The patron who lost a friend or relative tried to convince his loved one not to go. The missing person is assuredly dead. Let's add that it is far better if he is then the litany of alternatives. The rival was likely the person who convinced the missing man to make his descent for riches or magical power.

Inverted: organize the assembly of supplies and the hiring of a true delver company to make a foray into the unending gray. Besides the rival, add an extra opponent from the closest city-state to the dungeon entrance. Someone besides the rival also wishes to keep intruders from entering. Either use all phases of encounters

to assemble and reconstitute a delver company that has shattered. Else, the players guard the entrance as the delvers go below.

The players will not join a group of delvers. The company would not see them as anything but a burden, even those player characters skilled as delvers. The climax challenges will be battling off groups trying to seal the tombs and caverns, before the delvers return with some prize for the patron. The players should not even be told what is sought. Their role is to hire and defend the top breach. Yes, monsters will usually belch forth and must be stopped from wrecking havoc on the countryside.

Note this is not a game of delvers. The players' group will make forays into the underworlds, ala D&D®, but delvers are like a construction crew and salvage operation. They don't enter so much as invade. They expect horrendous losses, while maintaining draconian discipline. (Better Games has designed and played delver scenarios, but the mechanics were never published. Nevertheless, delvers are often eluded to in our fantasy campaigns.)

Mission 8 Rods: Deliver a note or message to a distant place. The adventure is in the encounters along the way. The climax will be the final set of hurdles, which the players face at that end.

Inverted: the message is going to a former adversary of the players. The players might feel they were betrayed. They will face both the final climax and the realization that at the end they have a battle to escape for their lives. There may be a reconciliation on a Tasking roll during the Epilog, but often the players only fool themselves into thinking this task has quelled an enemy. *"What, no gratitude?"*

Mission 7 Rods: Burglarize a place. These quests are more straight-forward, and the players may skip Phase B. If instructed to continue encounters in Phase B, via a Three, Ten or Sun result, move the players directly from Phase A to Phase C. The Ref may find it useful to flip WHAT? is desired, but WHERE? is implied to be nearby. The loot may be in a ship at dock or inside a noble's household; select a good challenge but nothing exotic, unless the players take this quest during downtime in a bizarre locale.

Inverted: the goal is something arcane or unstable, located at a misanthrope's tower or a lair in the underworld. If the players are low level, they will need only to recruit and bring servitors to help haul the contents away. As an alternate, the relic may be provided at the start. The players must keep it safe and stable through encounters. During the climax challenges, they will then either gain a second item, which acts like a balance or substitute what they carry for yet another item in a castle, fortress or lair. They would be undoubtedly setting a trap for the rival's domain.

Mission 6 Rods: Hunt down and slay a vicious monster.

Inverted: hinder the hunt for a monster. The players must not harm the beast. Should it be encountered, the only option will be to run away or else fail by their own engagement.

Mission 5 Rods: Accompany a lady during travel. She will be related to the patron and is usually his intended bride. But his daughter, younger sister or captive for ransom are also possibilities. The journey will cross land and sea yet need not always use travel in the harshest of settings, except if the players are high level. This quest is a series of encounters followed by a climactic attempt by the rival to kidnap the girl.

Inverted: the woman will prove to be very disagreeable, of independent wit and clearly contrarian opinions. She will be trying to escape. She will use seduction, threats and feigns to delay her passage. In Phase B, should the mission consequence Six be flipped, the woman will attempt to kill herself; both rival and patron will be disappointed should she succeed.

Mission 4 Rods: Transport items over land. Flip a card for WHAT? The rival will all but prevent sea movement during this quest. His agents will be that powerful on the water. The materials must move through the wilds.

Inverted: the quest is a race. The players must deliver the item (WHAT?) faster than the rival is able by using the sea. The players might need to early-on thwart the rival's ship having the unique cargo, plus ensure their own route is not raided by the rival.

Mission 3 Rods: Organize a spectacle for the arena. One or more players may be sponsored as gladiators, or the group is escorting a regional champion to a fight. The bout will usually be in the capital, so encounters will be the travel getting there. Else, if the players received this quest in civilized lands near the capital, they are moving to the frontiers to arrange the spectacle. The event might be a horse race, sword fight or ship to ship display of boarding action. The rival may be the competitor, trying to employ some external pressure to help him win the fight against a wounded gladiator.

Inverted: the match will pit a human champion, possibly a player character, in a swaggering duel with an inhuman Saurian lizardman. The contest will take place in their flooded swamp domains. The rival seeks to prevent the contest entirely, even by slaughtering of the human delegation.

Mission 2 Rods: Join a Stallari's crew. If the players are not inclined to do such, they will be shanghaied and impressed into service. The players will leave all their own minions and the group's longboat behind. All the forces will be provided by the patron, and that, depending upon his background, could be quite meager. Maybe Phase A will provide a chance for upgrades, accomplished by the player

characters actions. You may assume for a weaker patron, that this act of intended adventure or piracy is also a foolhardy act of desperation.

Inverted: the ship has a secret agenda, one not revealed to the players until the climax challenges. The climax might have nothing to do with the water, often it won't. Keep the motive secret and only reveal the true intent of the quest at the start of the climax, when all is explained or an *aha* discovery is made. The players are only to be the mariners or taskmasters, the sailors or slavers. Yet during the climax challenges, their hired roles may alter considerably. Ref may wish to select HOW? and apply the rival as the victim or person facing ruin from the subsequent deed.

Mission Ace Rods: Prove or disprove a legend, mystery, or unnatural event; the tale should have elements of pagan horrors, involve a coven using unlawful spellcraft, or include some mythical monster, often the last of its kind.

Inverted: spread rumors and leave a trail of fabricated evidence pointing to the existence of a monster. The city-state sent into panic will be one where the rival lives or has significant business. Personal magic will most likely be needed to sell the tale and aftermath of the monster's sighting. High level player characters might even attract the real thing, capturing and bringing some horror to the township or region.

Mission Coins

Mission King Coins: Represent the patron as his agent in a deal or duel. The players may also be his agents in a meeting with the rival to negotiate a surrender, agreement, alliance or reconciliation. One side or the other is bound to break the truce. But ignore Knaves in Phase A as a show of good faith.

Inverted: represent the dwarves or a nonhuman force in a negotiation with a city-state. This agreement is notoriously fraught with long-term consequences both to the city-state and the players. The players will be accused for all manner of collaboration with evil, even when the goal is a sustained peace and prosperity in reciprocal trade.

Mission Queen Coins: Spy, observe or obtain military information. Specifics will need to be acquired, number of soldiers, types of vessels, deployment, supplies, location of fortresses, etc. This may include an assessment of the rival's strength in terms of his own swaggering. That intel may be obtained from witnesses or NPCs he defeated in duels; the rival himself will seldom be actually engaged in personal combat, unless he stubbornly hides his talents. If so, only direct combat will demonstrate his abilities.

Inverted: thwart a foreign spy. The players will have a good description of the rival or his main minion, the one reconnoitering the patron's military prowess. That minions must be defeated in swagger vs swagger resolution.

Mission Knight Coins: Rob someone. Seldom are they to become highwaymen on a specific stretch of road. Here, they are trying to steal back an important, valuable object. Generate WHAT? Select something that the rival will carry. This item will only be surrendered from the rival at knife-point. There may be a caveat that the rival may not be slain. If the patron wanted him killed, he would have done it himself.

Inverted: the players are asked to strong arm someone to repay a debt. This debt need not be in rare bullion. But if it is so, the gold is delivered by the start of Phase B, usually by a different victim, not by the rival. Then the rest of play involves the rival trying to get back this money back. If the players injure or kill the victim, paying the debt at he mid-point of the quest, the rival will be seeking eye for an eye revenge.

Mission Knave Coins: Organize improvements to a rural manor or castle. The players are recruited to get an estate back to the glory it once knew. Shall we agree this isn't ordinary actions like painting and trimming hedges. The players could be tasked to travel and recover family paintings, sculpture and furnishings; items stolen or lost through debt. There is perhaps a distant familiar tie, cousins, who took the beds and cabinets. But usually the crux of this task is to make the household secure from a known threat. The players can defeat that threat or add defenses to drive the danger elsewhere.

The rival is a neighbor or even part of the patron's staff. He will not want the manor restored if it diminishes his control. The rival may be fabricating or sponsoring the actual threat, bandits or a summoned monster. Uncovering his duplicity is also important to success.

Another problem is here the players will never quite succeed. They may get the noble estates profitable, the villagers out of sickness, the peasants out of unrest, solve many problems, but then how do they extricate themselves from this toil. The patron will want the players to stay; he may even offer them distinguished positions. Any post will include the intrigue of those snubbed.

The mission has two Epilogs. The first represents all the action as the players make their exit, say their final farewells. The second is the actual travel or escape from the region. Use a civilized, but problematic, setting like City-State Stopover. New problems will undoubtedly occur, and the patron will keep insisting that all be perfect before the players truly leave. He is not being coercive as much as lacks in his own confidence. All the while in this first of two Epilogs, the players will be facing a jealous staff who thinks the players are entrenching themselves for good.

Inverted: find a replacement for an important courtier, a position which has struggled in the past. There are many underlings of the patron. Scan the list of skills and select someone of a skill the players can't truly cover (if possible). This is not a

job that a player character would want, unless one of the group decides to take the position and retire as an NPC at the end of the quest.

Mission 10 Coins: Travel as a companion to foreign lands. The players are not to draw attention to themselves, nor will their traveling companion want to be recognized for who he is or why he might be far afield from his home. The action is always small group and the group's longboat only represents a conveyance. No longboat techniques will apply during this mission.

The players could be paid passengers on another ship. The patron often is with the players, or else the players are escorting his representative, someone who never reveals his true objective. Once the players get the person from point A to point B, they are done. The climax will be the last set of hurdles to getting the patron, his family member or his prime agent, to a place of discourse and safety. His final destination may be found by selecting a card for WHERE? and matching to an appropriate place on the campaign map.

Inverted: the whole journey will be more than just incognito. If the players or the person they escort ever are identified, leave no witnesses. The path behind them may be littered with bodies and burned ships. The agent they travel with is an enforcer and paid killer, settling grievances. The whole will leave the naïve player characters to wonder if this was merely bad luck or the plan all along.

Mission 9 Coins: Perform a dishonorable act. The Ref must name the deed, because each group of players will have different sensibilities. Most actions will involve the rival's wife. The "*insult*" will probably occur by Phase C, before the climax. The climax will then become the rival's counteraction for vengeance. He will first retaliate on the players' group, and next make an attempt to murder the players' patron. The rival might even be defeated facing the players, at least his followers are, and yet he will continue his fight on to the patron.

Since dishonorable acts tend to divide the group's loyalty, this type of quest may end up with some bad blood among the party. That too can be settled once and for all with a final duel. If needed, take the characters supporting the rival as NPCs to finish the final act of this scenario.

Inverted: prevent a dishonorable act or desecration. The patron may not be the victim, but the rival will be the person who is planning to defile a temple or family member. A determined rival will succeed. The act may take place before the climax challenges, and the mission continues as the players avenge the act. If any Phase of encounters has two Knaves, the players will miss their chance to prevent the act. Perhaps a boasting minion will be the one to tell the players that they have failed. The outcome might be kept inconclusive if they bring the rival to justice or an ultimate justice of slaying the rival.

Mission 8 Coins: Protect a tribute or religious celebration. The guests of this event will need to be safeguarded. Forget the dining, entertainment and venue; worry about the intrigue, raiders or godlings offended. Infiltrators of the rival will be trying to stop or ruin the party.

Inverted: the party is a hoax. The festivities are being used to mask a kidnap, massacre or other selective intrigue. The group's roles are a distraction, or they are supporting the patron's greater plot. The rival may be one of many victims or represents someone who suspects the festival is mere cover for peril. In very rare cases the players are the fall guys, set-up to fail as the hired security.

Mission 7 Coins: Establish a new toll. This will almost always be at the bend in a river near the patron's estates or city-state. However, the city-state will not be the one to profit; all the money paid goes to the patron's coffers. He has an imperial boon, the right to collect the fees, but most of these permissions are ceremonial and no longer enforced. The locals forced to pay will be miffed. Any guild trade impacted will cause retaliation. The rival's role will show how many and how high in status are the affected.

Inverted: interdict the supplies moving by river past the patron's estate or city-state. If the patron is powerful, he intends to hurt the city as well as the rival. The players may additionally have to stop an overland attempt to circumvent the action. These quests could conclude by placing somewhere under siege. The goal is not to starve out the garrison, but instead deprive it of luxury indulgence or interdict a dangerous drug.

Mission 6 Coins: Bury, hide, alter or obscure an item of value; the value need not be precious metals, but the item is savagely sought by the rival. If the item is highly magical, the desecration will cause increased Warped Outcome tally; change those from half D8 to full D8 when they occur.

Inverted: acquire and restore an item that has been hidden; the item should not have any intrinsic or raw precious metal value. Whether it holds magic should never be revealed.

Mission 5 Coins: Map and document a location, place, area in detail; the players will need to assume innocuous roles and go incognito for a time to complete this survey.

Inverted: destroy a map or document. A treasure is probably involved, but the players fail if they decide to keep the map or discover where the puzzle leads.

Mission 4 Coins: Spy, observe or obtain magical secrets, descriptions of rites or written casting instructions.

Inverted: obtain the relic, totems, wardrobes, or exotic materials used to conduct the ritualistic magic. These will be taken from the cult that performs the enchantments.

Mission 3 Coins: Engage in arson. Burn a manor, vessel or warehouse. Not as simple as striking a match or hurling a fireball, the preparations and conspiracy will be the justification for encounters. The players will need to placate the suspicious; divert or incapacitate those who can stop the flames from taking hold.

Above all, the rival should start knowing that someone intends to commit arson; he has thwarted one previous attempt. If the players are truly implicated at any time, the quest should fail. They must commit this vile deed and escape as the unknown perpetrators. Err on the side of using Task Resolution not combat to resolve the encounters, but murder may also work to ensure anonymity.

Inverted: there's an important caveat. The players must insure that no one is injured in the destruction. This includes do not hurt anyone who might get in their way. That would seem impossible, so the players must hide any deaths they cause from their own patron. If the patron is informed that the players were reckless or slew without restraint, he will never become a friend. He will withhold final payment. He might even report their involvement, increasing the number of final enemies they attract from the deed.

Mission 2 Coins: Bribe, corrupt, kill in an attempt to remove the majority of policing soldiers from an area. As much as possible get men in garrisons to desert or buy out of their indentured or pledged service. By the climax, the area will be overrun by an invader or rise up in peasant revolt. The patron might return with his own soldiers to save the location from an invading rival; the patron might wish to be seen as the heroic savior. He may instead want to punish his rival by leaving him helpless.

Inverted: deprive an area of labor or craftsmen. Instead of soldiers, the patron wants to impoverish a city or deplete his rival of workers. As some locals are driven out, new migrants may enter the city. Yet by the climax, the city will be locked down, and no one will be allowed to leave. The players will be leading a resistance to fight to open the gates to freedom. The net result is a stoppage of trade, which is the patron's goal as well. Skip the motive. Magic may be instrumental to success. There will be far more people to influence. Fostering plague, starvation, fear of wildlings, racist strife, religious pogrom, etc., may be required, one and all. Perhaps reduce the labor force by a D8 percent with each planned action, until the magic number of a hundred is exceeded. These reductions should occur in encounters as well as the climax challenges.

To make the mission more bounded, the Ref may select a specific skill, like Farrier. Killing a few innocent farriers may be more relatable to the players than making the location a less than ideal place to raise families.

Mission Ace Coins: Present an encoded arcane proposal or dispatch to a supernatural location; this may be up into the sky realms, deep below the seas or to

the uncanny home of a Zaire. The party will need the help of another group; the patron alone will not have the means to get to this exotic locale. Flip a card on Major Clans with no Usurpation Goals for the outside group which must be recruited. If one of the players has a friendship with this extra faction, hazzah, the third party group will probably not force a repayment favor of their own. If the outside group must be enticed, well, that might be an entire mission involving their quest as a subplot. The secondary quest might occur simultaneously or need to happen successfully first to gain the group's aid. As often as not, the first group could refuse aid, and the players will be hunting for the next and the next, until they reach a cooperative clan. Each such detour might require a single repeat of Phase B or an entire rerun of encounters. These are long quests.

Inverted: the players will be transporting an ordinary object. The object given by the patron need not have magical form, at least, nothing baneful to start. Most of these objects are eventually handed over to be warded or properly prevented from altering reality. The receiving party, usually a Zaire, may wish the players to finish the chore; he'll teleport them to the nearest metaphoric Mount Doom. Most of these quests end blipping deep in the underworld with a return clock running.

Mission Swords

Mission King Swords: Take a debt, usually one laden chest, to a creditor. The players must also guard the final exchange. The payment will be in bullion, so it will attract numerous thieves. Select two cards for Twists to represent the unforeseen opposition besides the rival. The players, try as they may to hide their burden, will find that the secret is already revealed. Criminal minds have already determined that gold is on the move. The transport route will need to cross natural hazards or special enemies to shake off the pursuit.

Inverted: prevent a debt, again a solid chest, from being repaid. Here the players are on the other side, knowing a shipment of treasure is going to be moved. They may only try to intercept the gold bars at the climax. Before then, they are simply trying to keep pace and avoid the obstacles thrown-up along the way. Again, flip two cards for the Twists to represent the additional opposition. The rival is moving the treasure or is the recipient; he need not be there with the transport, though he may.

Mission Queen Swords: Recover a treasure. The location will be a shipwreck, monster lair or place of newly deciphered legend.

Inverted: The players will not receive the lion's share or even an equal share. They may skim some or take it all, but that does beg the question to what end? Would a ship of gold be anything more than treasure laden? Will the riches buy the player characters any extra comfort, social status or opportunity to deal in the world

of the nobles and their intrigues? The group will have to decide if full purses and probably a small portion of the whole—which still adds the technique treasure laden—is enough incentive for their involvement.

The patron has the location, key, magical phrase or critical information to gain access to the goal. Agree and he will supply what he knows to start the quest. Or he may have a map and refuses to share. The players, to say again, could betray the patron, only to spend the rest of their short lives being hunted and shunned in the civilized world.

Mission Knight Swords: Delay a highly planned event. e.g. A building dedication, an academic or religious conference, political wedding, the maiden voyage of a warship. The players will be saboteurs, trying to cause mischief and dissent. The patron's name must not be associated with any deed. He may be at the meeting as a guest or dignitary. The rival too may be there but will know the patron is unhappy.

Inverted: Rescue a caravan, shipwreck, lost expedition, stranded ambassador, surrounded legion, etc. The patron will have a close friend or relative in the trapped party. Skip motive; his desire is personal. The rival is directly involved in the mishap by either magical or agent involvement. He continues to create the conditions which keep the missing group or faction trapped.

Mission Knave Swords: Maim the rival. Getting face to face with the rival, with the upper hand, will be the challenge. He might be hiding in plain sight in a powerful earl's court. Else his sanctuary is impressive. The players might use covert entrance or gain admittance under false pretenses. This is a tough heartless quest. Sometimes its best to leave the actual details of the injury vague. The players are trying to gain opportunity to subdue the rival and then return for the reward carrying a rude trophy.

Inverted: gimp the rival by marring an object or person that he loves. An easier quest to accomplish, but this one leaves the rival fully able to retaliate.

Mission 10 Swords: Smuggle a substance or banned commodity into a city-state. The amount of material will be more than any one person can carry. The encounters should represent the group obtaining the item of vice. The climax challenges should represent entrance and delivery without being caught. The rival is a competing smuggler or a supreme authority trying to enforce a contraband law. The substance is usually narcotic and of a kind created magically by dwarves.

Inverted: Not a substance, but a person must be escorted to a place and assisted in gaining entrance. WHERE? may help define who wants entrance. The patron is merely helping the dissident return, knowing it will infuriate or embarrass his rival. Skip motive as the goal is plain. The players may have to guard the person, even when they feel they did their task, keeping him healthy inside the city and

protected as he causes some mischief, like giving a speech or holding mass. The players may end this climax fleeing the chaos which ensures.

Mission 9 Swords: Intervene to protect the helpless. A minority group in a city or region is being persecuted or exploited. This may even be a nonhuman hybrid, magical slaves of a strange form. Someone is being driven from ancestral homes. There will be no reward coming from these underdogs, except the Ignobles which might be checked. Still, the patron remains the players' benefactor, often paying them for their involvement.

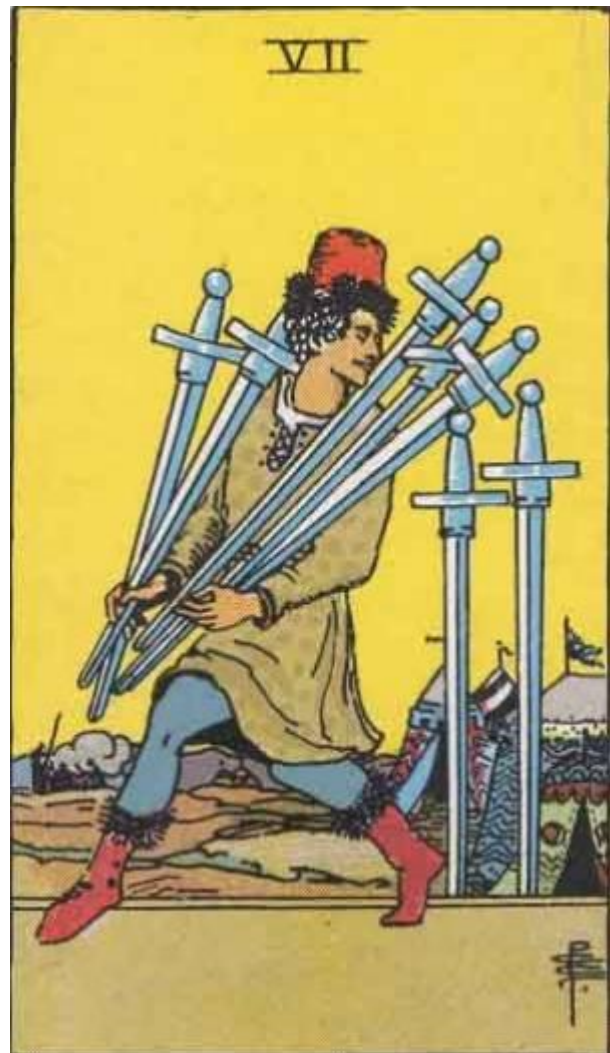
Inverted: aid a repressor to banish a racial or nonhuman subgroup from a city or region; may be just kill more faery kind here. The rival will be the person aiding this underdog, which may prove to be surprisingly resilient when under threat. Raise the magical element. The patron may want a forest felled, but the very trees are fighting back.

Mission 8 Swords: Conduct a personal quest, a chance to right a past wrong. Select a personal quest and secondary motive; apply it as the mission here. The patron will be helping as an interested party. The rival is both opposed to the patron and wants the players as a whole to fail.

Inverted: All the players should start this mission with their alternate characters. Then one by one the main characters might take their place; or else, the mission and goals are squarely the desires of the alternate characters. Ref decides.

Mission 7 Swords: Recover an item stolen by the rival from the patron. Flip a card for WHAT? That will help steer the adventure.

Inverted: the item is strangely magical, though it need not be the kind of magic that destroys. The relic may seek to return to an original owner or place of tranquility. The rival is not that owner, but he may be trying to return the relic to a safe refuge. The magic contained is of a kind



that is seldom meant to be ever wielded by mere mortals.

Mission 6 Swords: Adventure to a far away location, a place of fabled magic. Someone is sick, the patron or his beloved. Before the first player waves a cure-all wand, any use of barbarian magic might cause the illness to become contagious. There, satisfied?

The patron strongly believes his cure is in that distant land, often through mountains of sleeping giants. Skip motive but change all his categories of influence and resources to Assuredly. He will give anything to anyone to succeed. Obtaining a phial of melted glacier is often the focus of the quest. So why not bottle up a wagon load? Peddlers will be the death of heroic play. Ref, please, devise any restriction you desire to make the source very limited. *“I’m fond of one drop heal, two death.”*

Inverted: The fable is not as expected. Either the guardians are ferocious, or the water results in unintended consequences. Bad ones.

Mission 5 Swords: Impersonate someone. Flip WHO? Depending upon that result, the type of quest and type of actions or dealings the players must simulate will be defined. The rival will often be the one duped by the player imposter, but he may also be the only courtier of an earl who distrusts the player character as a sham.

“These are not your relatives.”

Inverted: Expose an imposter; the rival will not be the true enemy. He has been duped like many others. He is protective of his false master. The imposter will be a demon or malevolent ginn in the guise of a regional earl.

Causing the evil spirit to turn into its true form requires an item, spice or the discovery of the creature’s name. This part is handled through encounters. The climax has the opportunity to attempt the reveal, but also the ultimate banishment. Let the power of the monster be commensurate with the strongest player character of the party. A great man will be dispelling a great beastly threat.

Mission 4 Swords: Conduct a state quest for the imperium. Select a card to determine the Loyalist. The patron is a secret agent of this group; his swaggering abilities will be many. The rival must be stopped with extreme prejudice. Select HOW? for a general idea of the purposed method or difficulty involved. The ultimate goal is murder, but there is no crime in the act. No prosecution will follow. Yet also no fame may be claimed during this quest. It will be preformed and forgotten.

The players will have additional resources from the patron, who now represents a secret organization of like minded noble patriots. The emperor is not involved, which may be for the best. The goal is to advance the supreme group’s interests, which are usually grand. Yet, the action is direct, usually simplistic. A campaign result, like triple the result of a card flip, will follow success. Yet the players will fail to see how that could have possibly occurred.

Additionally, any campaign events generated in the course of encounters during play will grow one scale in significance. So, when two, say Sevens, are flipped in a row, it would read a result like three had followed each other.

Inverted: the patron still wants the rival murdered, but he is probably feigning his status in the loyalist group. So long as discretion is maintained, there still may be no pursuit by the law. Maybe he is what he says he is? Nope, just keep it direct, do not dally and you'll get away with the killing. Well, so long as you can defeat the rival and his minions in both encounters and the climax.

Mission 3 Swords: Murder someone on orders of the patron. Select two cards for WHO? Ref will choose one as the intended victim and the other as a separate rival as defender. Patron's finances and players' rewards should increase. The death may only occur in the climax. Even if the victim is encountered early, he is armored by the plot and escapes every attempt on his life by intercession of a red shirt or timely interruption.

The target enemy is probably not met until the climax opportunity presents itself. But the rival will suspect the plot and often know the victim and patron. His preoccupation with the patron, not his agents the players, will allow the murder a chance of occurring.

Murder is a profitable venture; however, most ordinary people, non-player characters, will shy from such evil. No one outside the party will want to get involved, if they know the goal. Murder for hire, as opposed to political assassination in the campaign, should be rare, an act which involves the players consciously being amoral. If the players do not want this, have no grudge against the victim, the patron will embellish the details trying to win sympathy for the quest outcome. The patron might make up details, all manner of despicable behavior attributed to the intended victim. The patron may even believe these exaggerations. Worse, the victim may be vile and powerful, a tough SOB to slay.

Inverted: the adversary is also an enemy of at least one of the players; now they are given an excuse to revisit one chapter of unfinished business.

Mission 2 Swords: Lead an expedition into the underworlds. The Ref may additionally like to flip a card for a specific underworld related quest.

Inverted: Seal an underworld entrance. This is seldom as straight forward as blocking a cave with an avalanche. The players may need to enter the underworld, some distance, to throw a switch, literally or figuratively. They may also have to defeat an inhuman group, which keeps opening the passage. The denizens might be led by a dwarven king who will need incentive to go elsewhere or stay far below.

Mission Ace Swords: Provide false testimony on behalf of an event of which the players have no direct knowledge; the players need not always be part of a trial

before the imperial Grand Assize. This may also be the spread of gossip, slander, false accounts of plague, unrest or a supernatural intervention.

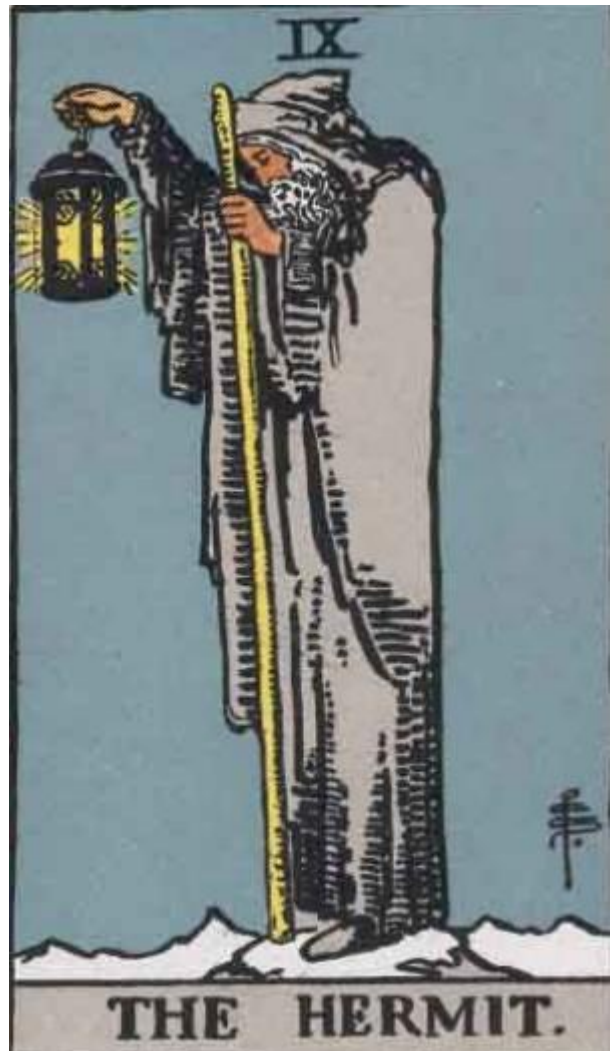
Inverted: escort a witness returning to testify in a tribunal; these trials are often religious testaments to divine experience. Because the motives are spiritual, not secular, the rival's minions act as bloodthirsty as hardened killers, without any indecision or remorse. The fanatics sent to stop the witness are brutal. The Knaves here always begin Enraged.

Optional Missions

Admitting the obvious, underworlds are a major source of adventure and fun. They are also easier to craft, even on the fly. Once Tolkien wrote of Moria—of which I prefer the pronunciation Mo-Rye-Ah—there's been no turning back. Even the blessed paragon, Conan, entered a few crypts and dark caves in his travels.

Presented here is a set of alternate missions, which will put the players into the underworlds below outland's mountains and frontiers. First find a table of Major Tarot modifiers, then a complete list of missions to follow. If the mission is ever generated from these tables, any rival which follows will have enhanced magical abilities, wizardry techniques or nonhuman followers. They would need such to inhabit or follow into these domains.

When deciding which to use, my guideline would be alternate one above and one below if you're fond of making map style room by room quests. Or one in four if you simply want to establish some dread. The mere hint of underworld travel with the many flairs related to such action could lead to the players accepting failure and dropping out to the Epilog. *"The patron be damned; I'll not risk my only one second more in that stinking tomb of ebon horrors."*



Underworld Missions Quicklook

Underworlds		
	Cups	Rods
King	Wipe denizens (to restore ore production)	Avoid pursuit (Draw rival to depths)
Queen	Escort delegate (Avoid surface path)	Deface an altar (Cleanse with sunlight)
Knight	Steal from monster (exchanged look alike)	Destroy item after learning (make holder teach)
Knave	Aid a quest (of someone fated to die)	Separate man's power (Pull man from lair)
10	Discover creature's weakness (keep secret)	Carry legal writs (through dungeons)
9	Slay Misanthrope (Slay enchanted beast)	Destroy servant (as it prepares to surface)
8	Explore new world (Map and avoid mishaps)	Hunt treasure (on a map)
7	Support factions (Thwart returning outcasts)	Slay ghoulish cult (of goblins)
6	Return an exile (a criminal)	Destroy cult sanctuary (Stealth and observe)
5	Rescue cult victims (safeguard thralls)	Slay raiders (Bring criminal to surface)
4	Follow a map (solve a puzzle)	Thwart cabal's plan (Raid supplies)
3	Circumvent a trap (Secure pilgrim path)	Slay shadowy terror (Entomb denizen)
2	Rescue a prisoner (notorious)	Travel seeking cure (players afflicted)
Ace	Recover stolen item (now worshipped)	Supervise construction (of rich tomb)
	Coins	Swords
King	Violate a tomb (Obtain an elixir)	Rescue a relative (Stop vivisection)
Queen	Test a weapon (then destroy)	Renew a cycle (next cycle corrupt)
Knight	Guard parlay (against dissent)	Prevent enslavement of evil (Fight for mobs)
Knave	Stop abuse of a device (Pursue immortal)	Defeat tough beast (Slay offspring)
10	Deactivate a force (to mixed result)	Pursue intangible (adopt goal)
9	Wield magical weapon (that corrupts)	Recharge weapon (danger to all)
8	Slay vile inhuman leader (Slay bug queen)	Demon's mark (Patron too)
7	Devastate culture (and genocide)	Cage immortal (wrongly)
6	Start a war (Release a terror)	Time sensitive death (Prevent rejuvenation)
5	Begin prophesy (Aid a risen hero)	Secure a base (Close routes by magic)
4	Turn object to dust (dump dust in sea)	Pursue fugitive (Rescue survivors)
3	Guard treasure (Guard entrance, but more)	Act as live bait (Attract a foe below)
2	Seal an underworld (Destroy one portal)	Rediscover knowledge (before rival)
Ace	Perform ordinary task (that fosters evil)	Activate guardian (anticlimactic ending)
Inverted card result list in parenthesis.		

Dangers Major Tarot of Underworlds

Dangers Magician: Rival needs the players to enter the underworld, for by doing so they bring him his means of escape; players may be unaware or fully forewarned of this fact. Ref's choice.

Inverted: patron is actually a servant or magical manifestation of the rival's powers. Yes, the group has been duped. The two are in cahoots.

Dangers High Priestess: Players will encounter, use or face, magical forces or special devices (relics) that are unique. The objects are special to the underworld and mission goals. Often means a technology, like an arcane subway, is present and must be employed to reach the climax. Nothing about this transport will be understood.

Many will refuse to follow, so no servitors or longboat techniques will be available to the group at the climax.

Inverted: regardless of seemingly altruistic intent, the Grey One also desires the mission to succeed; his servants may even offer direct aid.

Dangers Empress: Underworld connects to another more dangerous or notorious crypt or has a gate into another dimension. The players may not have been told, but their quest must take the party to this place. The climax might not occur there, but something is needed, an object or knowledge, which can only be gained by overcoming a justified fear. Any who enter will return injured with a permanent loss of a swaggering technique or with a vicious or with twenty added to their Warped Outcome tally; give each player this bad choice to make for his character.

Inverted: mission will start in the underworld, but eventually will continue above ground into the plots of the campaign frontier. Perhaps add an extra mission card or even run two sets of climax challenges. The other elements of the quest, patron, rival, finances, twists, even motive are the same for both adventures.

Dangers Emperor: If an item is involved, it will be big and bulky, difficult to transport easily; players can not flee battle and take the item with them. Escape is not an option, substitute a Shaken result or Irregular Method, whenever Escape Method is required. This may also put the players frequently in Digressions or skirting around in forced Q&D like evading dwarves.

Inverted: if an item is given to the players, it was stolen from rightful owners or original creators; the patron was not sanctioned by device's protectors. He will claim he plans to return the object; it was only borrowed. Add the owners as a neutral faction, now opposed to the quest. Select a card for Major Clans with No Usurpation Goals. God help the party if the device was purloined from delvers.

Dangers Hierophant: Underworld has recently sheltered a cult that will prove an obstacle. They might worship and serve a beast the players must slay, or dance passionately about a device the players must acquire. Generally, the present of these interlopers are a nuisance, the type that die easily but all too eagerly.

Inverted: after players leave, their actions will generate a cult that in time will become corrupt and must someday be destroyed. The next adventure to return here will have this extra obstacle. Why not foist the disadvantage on the party in a half D8 missions in the future?

Dangers Lovers: The players during the course of adventure will defeat or drive off the guards on a group of rather helpless prisoners. The players will be faced with escorting these noncombatants to the surface, risking a delay, or taking them along and protecting them from danger. The foundlings are too weak to use as slaves, and there goes surprise as they stumble about. Telling them to fend for themselves would be their certain death. Some or all would beg for execution, rather than be

released like stray dogs on a busy freeway. (Yes, modern analogy.) Any delver in the player group would advise slaughter and burning of the remains, but those without the skill will forfeit in remorse one character trait for the duration of the adventure. Accepting them into the group is always a bad idea, always turns ugly, always is rewarded with peril, transformation and delayed bloodbath. There is no telling exactly what these *innocents* truly are, but guaranteed they are not what they seem to be.

Inverted: the inevitable is not delayed. Upon slaying the guards, a ward is dissolved; the prisoners immediately transform into something worse. A nightmare reveals itself. These seemingly innocent bystanders are actually an illusionary deception created by perverse monsters. They will transform into an as yet unseen hideous and twisted form of the goblins. Ferocity should equal the strongest player, but anything above Enchanted will be adjust the collection into one monster in aggregate total that must be vanquished.

Dangers Chariot: Both the players and the rival move toward the same place or objective. If this is not a race to the same goal, the players must also defend the odd abode or a mystery item from the rival and his forces.

Inverted: rival represents the greatest of many various interest groups, and various motives, that seek the same item or result. Each player gains a half D8 enemies after the quest. Subtract one if the rival is slain in the climax challenges.

Dangers Justice: A notorious criminal is also presently in the underworld on his own motives or seeks the rival as a friend. His involvement will be deception or an extra obstacle. If two mission consequence Knaves are flipped in any encounter setting, the second one will be the criminal attacking with his henchmen. That fight will be worthy. Else, until those two Knaves are generated, all Queen events will be inverted. The criminal is working against the party to help the rival.

Inverted: patron is pursued by a nemesis or warden for past crimes; these might be long forgotten, a misunderstanding. The hunter is someone who has been trapped in the underworld for a very long time. A confrontation, a duel of revenge, will take place during the mission. Generate the battle if the patron is with the party. Else, after the first inverted Knight encounter, the patron is slain. The players might continue the quest for personal gain, but usually the motive has lapsed; the patron can aid and reward no more. If the players supporting their patron are Butsecarles (level four) and above, this quest points to their guilt by conspiracy. The driven avenger will next come after them. For now, record a new dangerous enemy, the kind of person who can survive alone for years in the unending gray.

Dangers Hermit: If an object is involved, it has altered form or changed in power, since it was last seen or used. Start looking for perhaps a sword, but it has

been re-forged into something else. The dwarves will know about the change and must be consulted and of course appeased.

Inverted: if a person is involved, he hides a dangerous secret or will change personality during the mission. The transformations may be less good to evil and more human to inhuman. He will not be recognizable, but yet again, the dwarves will know him and be able to vouch for his altered identity (if they are so inclined by an incentive).

Just to be clear, the dwarves will accept treasure, a game they obsess to play of hiding things valued by humans, especially delvers. But when that is not available, the imps are just as likely to desire a worthless item, an old hat or a rag drenched in sweat, as they are something wicked, freshly dripped blood or sliced off sensitive body parts. The players will often need to return to the surface, harvest something despicable and return. Unless, they are willing to cut pieces off a servitor and hold their crew in contempt.

What about that soiled rag, which seems easy to part with? Let future encounters slowly reveal (or not) what incongruity is started by a worthless prize of familiar nature lent by one player. The dwarves might understand DNA, certainly more than any Viking. Could the imps be making a copy of someone?

Dangers Wheel of Fortune: Reshuffle the deck and continue.

Dangers Force: Inside the underworld is an alter or device that prevents another item from having considerable power. The players may accidentally destroy or remove this device. Someone might collect a souvenir or hide a minor token worth at most a tankard of ale. Unwittingly that small theft will unleash new and unexpected forces into world for a campaign event. The plucking of a single enshrined coin could slay the current emperor. Behold the cursed powers teetering in balance just below the ground.

Inverted: player will innocently bring with them an object that can be combined with another device in the underworld to create an object of destruction. A third party aware of both the player character's lucky charm or his Mom's pendant, as well as its counterpart (in the underworld), will follow the group, awaiting the right opportunity to take *fuse* and travel to the *bomb* (both metaphors).

Dangers Hanged Man: During the course of the quest, the group will accidentally release (or awake) a beast originally imprisoned in the depths.

Inverted: the beast will not influence the present task, but the players must later return to correct this mistake within a D8 new missions. They might live with the consequences, except the longer they delay killing the thing, the stronger it grows. Large to start and add one ferocity with each passing opportunity. To simply come back, without cause or patron, may be too expensive to expedite.

More likely a Zaire must intervene. After killing the beast, the Zaire will seek out and punish the schlub who mindlessly started the chain of events. Zaires are able to accelerate Warped Outcomes as retribution. Perhaps let each player character add fifty or a hundred to each tally, unless they demonstrate honest remorse. (Tasking roll and some great role-play weeping or renunciation, please.)

Dangers Death: Underworld is famous for a magical vault rumored to contain vast riches; past attempts to enter this vault have been (to put it mildly) unsuccessful.

Inverted: patron knows how to unlock the secret or puzzle of this vault. He refuses to reveal to the players such knowledge, until after his own affairs have been completed. This knowledge may only be partial; there could be several steps to opening the vault. Or the patron must take an active part in the opening. This he will refuse to do if his life is good. He is a bird in the hand sort of fellow. There is no actual knowing what is inside. Not even the delvers, nor the dwarves of the area, are sure.

Dangers Temperance: An object is involved, that should not be removed from the underworld without grave consequences to the present balance of political powers. Players may even bring an item with them into the mines, and it will become clear during travel that the item should be left, hidden or abandoned, before they leave. One player must set aside his own sword, returning to zero Blade techniques. Since that's too easy to select the character with least to lose, why not make it the best blade or everyone's blade must be used to build an altar to contain the evil unleashed within the crypts.

A skilled delver might be warned ahead of time not to take this mission. That will often just mean that player will go on with his alternate character. At least he might be able to say I told you so. Very satisfying, if also annoying, to do so, isn't it?

Inverted: mission will require players to make a moral decision that violates their beliefs. When in doubt, players must not kill a traitor or lesser creature (minor evil) that proves a difficulty. To do so brings later hardship or future ramifications. "*My precious.*"

Dangers Devil: Players are trapped into completing this mission by supernatural forces. This will not be revealed, until they face failure and try to leave without completing their deed. At which time, they will feel a nauseating discomfort and will be compelled to continue. Though they will blame the patron, it is the very gods who wrack the party. Fantasy, the terrible closeness of the terrible gods, so perfect?

Inverted: once players complete their mission, they will feel depressed and suicidal, an obvious result of magical forces. On the next quest, the patron could offer a cure to compel obedience. Or more likely the solution to their fate will rest with a King encounter that must occur in the randomness of the deck. If encounters

are cruel, and no mission consequence Kings appear, the curse will slowly take traits from each player character. Maybe next time? The flip was an *Inverted Devil*, what did you expect in underworld quests no less!

Dangers Tower of Destruction: Violent tremors (of course directed by supernatural forces) will collapse parts or all of underworld during the quest. Players are faced with an unknown time-limit that can only be approximated based on intensity of the quakes.

Inverted: there will be no prior warnings; players are entering what may be their tomb. Often the way back will be blocked, and the only outlet is deeper or farther from home than anyone would ever expect to travel.

Dangers Star: Sages and legends have predicted the events that will unfold on the adventure. The players should not realize this at the time, but their actions are ordained and destined. Children have sung nonsense poems predicting the outcome. After the mission, the games of children will hold special honor or be especially annoying as a reminder of the failure.

Inverted: players will be told that their actions are destined and of great consequence, but the wise scholars are mistaken or deluded. After the mission, the games of children will still hold special contempt, a reminder of what might have been.

Dangers Moon: Players will at first enter the wrong area or level of the underworld in pursuit of their objectives. Run one Phase of underworld encounters twice.

Inverted: players have entered entirely the wrong underworld; the crypt or ancient place for which they search lies in another region of the referee's campaign. Run all three Phases of underworld encounters twice.

Dangers Sun: Something of great value was also added to the underworld; the mission and motive may or may not relate to this considerable wealth.

Inverted: something valuable is not wealth or material, but instead represents a powerful ally or knowledge. This new benefactor of course can be used to point the way to mere profit. Yet consider each player on the quest being given a wish—great constraint, more like a do-over or future rescue from Digressions—from this found demon, ginn or godling. *“Devil? He seems nice to us.”*

Dangers Judgment: If an object is involved, its powers and abilities will become unpredictable should it be removed from underworld. It may even prove baneful when taken further from the depths away from the place it was found.

Inverted: item will corrupt its holder or user in an unexpected fashion, causing greed, jealousy, vainglory, maniac's blood-thirst, etc. These personality flaws often become permanent.

Dangers World: Part of the mission will involve an entire destruction, both extermination of denizens and physical collapse, of a section of the underworld.

Inverted: this destruction will be caused by an accident or a secondary event that happens after the group departs. The denizens, mostly dwarves, will blame the group for transgressing. Select a card for Political Motive and Sinister Organizations; this represents the faction most affected by the subsequent destruction. That group will contact the players and warn that they are owed considerably. Not like any power on earth could restore the place, right? Maybe they will accept help on one of their missions. The group will segue from the Epilog of this quest immediately, without aftermath, into another.

Dangers Fool: Players are faced with an overly dramatic and improbable time limit, perhaps the underworld will only be magically opened for a few hours. Else, the vulnerability of rival will only last a short period. Either defies logic but work the test not so much as a do or die, but rather limit the quest to one game session. This focuses the effort and should make the players avoid prolonged combat or distracting discourse.

Inverted: Mission is pretense to get the players to enter the underworld; only after getting there will the patron describe his true mission and motives. Pick two cards for mission, the referee decides which one he tells and the other becomes his true objective.

Adventures Underworlds Cups

Delving King Cups: Clear out the uninvited denizens of an underworld, so it can be returned to its rightful owners (dwarves).

Inverted: underworld contains valuable iron or copper mines that now are not accessible because of the new monster. A pickaxe accidentally or deliberately pried open a great seal, truly a mistake.

Delving Queen Cups: Escort an important official, leader or delegate to the dwarves through the underworld to a place of ritual or importance, a designated neutral meeting area or religious chamber.

Inverted: the escorted person wants to avoid surface travel and crosses the underworld to escape pursuit by the rival. Those opposed watch and guard all surface routes. The climax will still occur below ground, but possibly not involving combat with the rival.

Delving Knight Cups: Steal a special item from a monster or group in the underworld.

Inverted: object must be exchanged with a look alike that has diminished powers; usually means item will not be laying in some chest, and a tad bit of finesse may be required to prevent detection of the phony after the swap.

Delving Knave Cups: Aid another (not the patron) in performing his own quest; the players are servitors or simple lackey guards, at least to start.

Inverted: the person the players escort will meet with tragedy. The accident will seem unavoidable, a falling rock perhaps. The players must carry on in the lost man's position and to his goals, though they will be viewed with some suspect. "*I represent Lord Darius at this concordance.*"

Delving 10 Cups: Discover lost knowledge on a creature's weakness or magical vulnerability.

Inverted: prevent the rival from making the same discovery by then destroying all remaining creatures of this type in this specific underworld. This will not result in their kind's extinction, but almost always drives the monster out of a region.

Delving 9 Cups: Slay a man that is causing strange changes in the flow and operation of once routine magic.

Inverted: not a man but a creature of equally perverse form and power; usually something that can not be slain in normal manner. The mob might charge steel but shy from wood. Apply something similar as the group fashions weapons from an alternative to steel. Yet which material? Clues or trial and error will follow.

Delving 8 Cups: Explore a newly discovered underworld.

Inverted: explore but do not disturb or meddle in any great forces that may exist within. The players are spies only and a detailed map is expected, so no shortcuts or guesswork.

Delving 7 Cups: Support one side in a feud between multiple factions that divide the underworld. This usually pits a dwarf clan against both intrusive dwarves of another kingdom and renegade goblins who hold no authority as their leader.

Inverted: lead an attack by a force of outcasts or refugees, often dwarves, returning to retake their rightful home. The players are usually expected to fight or distract a large problem. "*So long as it isn't a dragon.*"

Delving 6 Cups: Locate an exiled lord or recluse; persuade or forcefully bring him back to the surface for an important event or to officially resign his hereditary rights. He often has an heir, the rival perhaps, trying to retain his own authority by keeping Daddy away. The man will have been corrupted by magic, both growing in power and becoming a curse.

Inverted: the opposition, warrant or worldly reason the exiled person faced when he fled into the underworld is still active. The patron does not seek reward; he desires his friend's or leader's return. Will the man remember him, or can he be convinced by a strong tale or magical reminder?

Delving 5 Cups: Rescue the victims of a strange cult.

Inverted: the entire cult is corrupted by magic. The players should show restraint in killing just any minions; the thralls might be released from the charm

which binds them. Yet often they are magically misshapen, losing the aspects that made them men. Slay their leader to break the spell. However, their appearance will always leave them as nonhuman. Let one player describe in humorous or horrifying terms of what the cult members look like now. Otherwise, the mutants are not the danger.

Delving 4 Cups: Follow a map to a powerful item.

Inverted: not a map, but a complex puzzle, set of clues or the responses of a dousing rod. The path will seem to take the hardest route through all the monsters. An alternate course might be safer, easier, but not always?

Delving 3 Cups: Cross a difficult trap, puzzle or obstacle that has caused the end of many before who have attempted the same.

Inverted: secure a path through the underworld to a certain sanctuary or place of pilgrimage by defeating or driving deeper into the underworlds one of the many and twisted forms of the goblin. Think ogres, trolls, minotaur, medusa, any of an assorted set of monsters found in legend or *your other favorite role-play game*.

Delving 2 Cups: Rescue someone imprisoned and left to die in underworld; needless to say, the underworld offers other dangers besides the rival's forces.

Inverted: person was left in the underworld, because he was notorious for crimes or else has terrible powers that he can not control.

Delving Ace Cups: Recover a special item that was stolen and hidden in the underworld.

Inverted: item is now worshiped by some strange and twisted cult. The congregation may not always live in the underworld, but they guard the site of their rites.

Adventures Underworlds Rods

Delving King Rods: Avoid pursuit and flee into the dangers of the underworld. The patron thinks he can go there and wait out his adversary or a period of accusation.

Inverted: coyly draw the rival into the depths of the underworld by false retreat. At the climax, after hopefully whittling some of the rival's forces down by their own mishaps, come about, ambush and slaughter what remains. If the players have a difficult time, that also implies the rival suffered proportionally.

Delving Queen Rods: Deface or destroy an alter in the underworld.

Inverted: destroy a device of power by bringing it to the surface and into the cleansing rays of sun. There should be both a cult of worship, and a nonaligned wizard who knows this result is not for the best. Someday the relic might be needed, so best to leave it there. The rival will either represent the cult or this wizard. The patron is only after punishing or thwarting the spread of the cult.

Delving Knight Rods: Destroy an item that can be found in the underworld, but first discover how to use it one last time to reverse the effects of its present power.

Inverted: device can only be wielded by its present holder, who must be persuaded or tricked into activating the talisman another time. That could happen in combat, but the result would be deadly to someone of the party. But as a last resort, taunt the holder.

Delving Knave Rods: Separate a vile man or creature from the source of its power; usually man or creature is easy to trick, hard to kill. The power source might be moved and hidden, but it cannot be destroyed or drained today.

Inverted: the power source is instead the underworld itself (or an area) from which man or creature must be tempted or tricked into leaving. The power source is immobile, indestructible and fully charged.

Delving 10 Rods: Transport an item or message to the depths and deliver it to a person who lives there; the materials will be legal documents, a pardon, a treaty, a gift of tribute, an object that is needed for experiments, etc. All something the person below will want.

Inverted: transport of item is not for delivery to someone in the underworld, but the underworld route must be taken to avoid a more powerful force that deters surface travel; underworld is simply a hazardous path that must be traversed, through mountains and mines of legend. The climax will take place as the rival finds the group despite their best efforts.

Delving 9 Rods: Destroy a mad man's powerful servant monster or demon in the lowest depths.

Inverted: this dangerous enforcer is not in the lowest depths but has moved closer to surface as it prepares to exit and destroy.

Delving 8 Rods: Gold and treasure abound; need there be another motive or mission. Skip the motive and usually the finances, unless the result is truly bad or implies another obstacle to overcome before the start.

Inverted: patron has a map to a supremely rich vault; no telling what's guarding it. But the route seems very clear and clean. Skip Phase B of encounters.

Delving 7 Rods: Slay and collect the bounty on a ghoulish cult of humans.

Inverted: some of the members are freaks, half human, half beasts, in a name goblin.

Delving 6 Rods: Destroy a sanctuary and its cult priests. The men with jaundiced flesh and flecks of red in their eyes, signaling worshipers of the defeated Dark Lord.

Inverted: stealth in and observe the activities of a strange cult only to discover they are part of the cabal that serves the Dark Lord's second, the Grey One.

Delving 5 Rods: Bring the notorious leader of a group of raiders to justice; players may wield justice with their swords. The bounty is paid dead or alive or dead. Dead is best as nothing living should really be brought out of the underworld if it has stayed there very long.

Inverted: the leader must be subdued and returned for public trial and subsequent execution; often the players are given a magical device to aid them in their quest to capture a particularly ghastly or violent renegade. Many of these raiding groups use necromantic arts to raise followers.

Delving 4 Rods: Thwart a cabal's plans to store large numbers of arms and minions in an underworld complex. Select a card for Secret and Hideous to determine the faction. The rival will be this ad hoc group's boss.

Inverted: players are sent to destroy the supplies being accumulated to prevent a war. The materials are protected from fire and all but one other elemental force. Is it earth (burial), water (deluge), air (tornado) or metal (chop the stuff up)? Only one option will work, and the other is just a noisy failure attracting guards. Clues to the vulnerability should be sprinkled into the mission consequence encounters, especially when a King is flipped.

Delving 3 Rods: Slay a shadowy terror that arises from the tombs once a century to ravage the overlands.

Inverted: creature, monster or force can not be defeated by armed action, and instead must be entombed or caged by magical means. Players are equipped with such power or must discover the creature's vulnerability during encounters. This quest may take place for encounters above the surface, but the climax challenges will be below ground.

Delving 2 Rods: Travel to a place in the underworld seeking a cure for a disease or curse that affects an area; usually at this place, the players must perform a ritual, recover an item or slay a powerful force. All three? But the order will be important, so during encounters the players will be seeking that answer. Slay, remove item and end with ritual? Or one of the other five combinations of the same?

Inverted: players also are afflicted by the illness or curse, so time matters. Every fifteen encounters should create a Quest Pip penalty of minus one (up to neg four). Lets also add, failure is not an option.

Delving Ace Rods: Supervise and advise, provide protection or magical services, in a major construction effort to expand a fortress situated inside the underworld. These bases are rather common, just never very, very deep. Any man-made structure below the womb of gems will not just have arcane origins, but it will be of a demonic character.

Inverted: the construction is not for a fortress. The preparation is to fill a tomb with all the gifts, accoutrements and food a great hero will need in the afterlife. The

effort is riddled with corruption and watched by thieves. The climax will happen after the body is delivered, and the place is sealed. The fallen hero may also return, but on whose side?

Adventures Underworlds Coins

Delving King Coins: Violate a tomb to gain a certain weapon, device or relic; players may keep all other plunder.

Inverted: secure a special elixir extruded from a dangerous creature or made in the lab of a twisted alchemist; again, players can plunder to contentment, so long as the elixir is obtained. This variation of mission hints of greater intrigue, yet the patron hopes players are blinded by greed.

Delving Queen Coins: Take a weapon or relic into the underworld to discover its origin and powers.

Inverted: device will turn out to be corrupting and must be destroyed.

Delving Knight Coins: Guard an important portal or passage during a planned meeting between forces of the underworld and surface.

Inverted: further prevent a known dissident group or faction from interfering. Select a card against Political Motives. If a loyalist is selected, that group will clandestinely employ known enemies as a cover for their actions; they would not openly dissent.

Delving Knave Coins: Pursue and stop rival from acquiring a device of power out of the underworld; device should not be taken or used by the player group either.

Inverted: pursue a rival who grows in magical power more and more, while he remains underground. The underworld acts as a catalyst for his powers; he might need to be baited to leave, before he can be defeated. The rival will have only an inkling of the cause of his growing vitality.

Delving 10 Coins: Deactivate a magical force that exists in the underworld by performing some ritual, destroying some item or slaying some focal point creature (or all three).

Inverted: the magical force has a good and bad effect on the world, though to the patron it is more bad than good. The players face a dilemma on the final decision to shut off this magic. Each might personally lose something, a contact or swaggering technique. Else the result will add some bad city traits to ports along their supply run.

Delving 9 Coins: Take a magical weapon into the underworld and slay a particular beast to recharge the weapon's powers. The player carrying the weapon will not use his own and temporarily loses his Blade techniques. He will not carry both weapons, unless he would risk draining his own blessed sword.

Inverted: players are warned that device can turn corrupt under the wrong circumstances. Its not a toy to be used in every battle. Understand, the weapon will always roll three dice advantage. However, if the result is ever failed, the entire party suffers a vicious wound. The holder may choose to employ the weapon after reading any event in combat, but he must decide before he attempts any result roll. The user will never gain any swaggering on the trip.

Delving 8 Coins: Slay the leader of a vile and disfigured race that seeks to rise from the bowels and conquer a city-state of the surface dwellers. If this mission is failed, they do just that. Nonhumans will control one city-state as a hostile location (for a brief period until the earls ban together and oust them).

Inverted: slay the queen-mother that will soon give birth to an army of such horrid creatures.

Delving 7 Coins: Totally annihilate the inhabitants and devastate a minor culture that thrives in the underworld.

Inverted: genocide; kill all remaining monsters of a certain type. The last of a species all live in this underworld. The mission usually takes place close to breeding time. There may be some remorse; the rival certainly doesn't want the monsters gone and gone for good.

Delving 6 Coins: Start a war by attacking the dwarven inhabitants of the underworld and planting evidence that leads the imps to believe the local nobles or townsmen have broken a treaty of non-violence. This is a dangerous political gambit. Not only does it inflame the dwarves, it fosters enemies among the local lords. The players must be careful not to be associated with the attack. If any of them are captured, the jig is up, the mission will fail, and dire consequences might ensue. Just ask is one man to die, the captive, or the entire party?

Inverted: enter the underworld and release a terror that is magically imprisoned there, allowing it to foray and ravage the surface. Another big overkill on the patron's part. The players may not understand the full details of what they are about to do.

Delving 5 Coins: Follow a prophesy; fate says the players must enter the underworld at this time, yet no purpose is even hinted at. All should remain vague. Generate no motive, finances, twists or rivals. Encounters will generate all. Each King is a twist; each Queen a finance card. Each Knight is a rival; each Knave is Ace-Hole. The motive might never be known about why and how this series of events unfolded? It's all a prophesy; blame the gods!

Inverted: an ancient hero will rise from the dead at a specific place to instruct the players later of their deed. At the end of Phase A, pick a card for mission and motive.

Delving 4 Coins: Thwart the Grey One's plans by taking a great item of power to a special place in the underworld where it dissolves away into dust.

Inverted: the dust then must be returned to the surface and dumped in a deep part of the sea. Use encounters to cross the underworld; use climax challenges to escape the rival and his minions on the water. Just for fun, should the dust raise a sea monster? How's your day going, mister Ref?

Delving 3 Coins: Guard the transport of a treasure or religious artifacts from deep in the underworld to the surface; else, guard miners while they toil in an area that has not been secured from monstrous threat. Normally this is delver work, so the enemy rival will have ties to a delver company that feels slighted that scabs are being employed to handle the transfer and the mining operation.

Inverted: guard the surface entrance of an underworld, while the patron takes another party deeper, or his special mining operations are conducted. Players are told they will receive a share (though perhaps much reduced in relation to actual treasure. The group is paid to hold a rear guard position. During encounters, either a pair of Knaves or pair of Knights will reflect a mishap. The players will be called below to aid in protecting the patron; his previous bodyguard is nowhere to be seen.

Delving 2 Coins: Destroy all entrances (physical) into and out of the underworld in a specified region; this usually entails a detail survey above and below ground. Many levels must be navigated. Ignore Tens during encounters. Every King, Knight and Knave has an agenda and will be defending an opening, yet some might be convinced of the dire need to shut down and seal the tombs. When the players don't truly know why, they might wish to exaggerate and lie.

Inverted: destroy a supernatural entrance to another vile dimension that exists in the underworld; players may be given a key device to lock the gate, or they must discover through clues how the ancients once blocked the portal. The tricks, clues and incantations are left behind in and around the portal, so future generations may also succeed and keeping the gate off. The rival will be somehow related to the portal newly appearing, but he too may wish it closed (by him of course and usually not immediately).

Delving Ace Coins: Perform a strange yet ordinary task—like unlock a door with a special key, pour wine on a statue, speak an odd set of sounds in a windy tunnel—then leave quickly. The test may do nothing, but that seems unlikely.

Inverted: perform an evil or corrupt task, like sacrifice a child at an inhumanly created altar. The reward is greater for helping the patron, a servant of either the Grey One or the fallen Dark Lord. The patron may blind the prime player character with magic to ensure his service. Else the task's outcome will be described falsely. The action will summon a minion of perverse shape, one triggering revulsion to behold.

The group will be Shaken for the rest of the adventure. The act might even take place before Phase A, and much will follow to undo what was done for mere greed.

Adventures Underworld Swords

Delving King Swords: Rescue a relative of the patron being held hostage for ransom by the rival. The hostage is held in the underworld. Needless to say, the underworld offers greater danger than the rival's forces. He will be slain, before the climax challenges. The hostage must be retrieved from the clutches of a beast.

Inverted: rescue some minor rogue or slightly degenerate creature from more powerful forces that intend to corrupt it or experiment upon the thing to make it more ferocious. Again, the rival will fail to his death, and the players will face the enraged enhanced monster.

Delving Queen Swords: Take a sacred relic into the underworld and renew a cycle reputed to be beneficial, but with magic the result may be quite the opposite. The players will have completed the assignment by the end of Phase B. Then they must decide to leave or linger to see what their actions have wrought. Both result in a flight to escape, but to stay allows the players to undo some of what they caused. That could be the only way to salvage a successful ending to this otherwise travesty of a quest. Yet by delaying the departure, the escape will be harder at minus one to Quest Pip.

Inverted: the device will turn corrupt long before the players reach a designated spot of ritual. Normally incidental encounters will escalate in violence. Add one to all ranks of mission inconsequence encounters in Phase A. Then add two, and three in Phases B and C. No result will be higher than catch-all (eight), but don't expect any lucky breaks and causal meetings. The trip will end successfully once the device is destroyed in the final act of the climax challenges. Both the patron and rival will oppose that outcome, but after the Epilog a new patron will reveal himself (WHO?) and be the one satisfied or angered in the aftermath. A tad no-win, that's the gist of heroic tragedy.

Delving Knight Swords: Keep the Grey One or the fallen Dark Lord's minions from influencing the lesser evils, turning simple perversions from goblins into magical giants. The rival is corrupt, but he might not be encountered. An enemy faction hating the prime player character, after this, is most assured, but the combat is mostly cult and horrible monsters. *"Oh, that's all?!?"*

Inverted: players must lead the lesser host, a collection of dwarvish imps and several of the many and twisted forms of the goblin, in a fight against a powerful conjurer serving a cabal. The taint of helping monsters defeat humans may cause psychological flaws in every character involved. Tasking roll to rationalize and avoid. Yet isn't over use of rationalization also a possible character flaw?

Delving Knave Swords: Defeat a beast; the term *defeat* is used, because the beast itself may be indestructible. The monster is quelled if not vanquished by performing some deed or ritual in underworld. Many of these missions will feel like getting the coin into the right vending machine. Yet the real challenge is finding that machine and holding onto the elusive coin. (Metaphors employed of course.)

Inverted: slay a great beast's offspring, while they are far less than great. The form of the diminutive beast may not match the mother. Beowulf's dragon had a son that was a troll. Cracking some eggs before they hatch is probably the safest, so long as the nest isn't hovered over by mom.

Delving 10 Swords: Pursue something of intangible value, like lost honor, respect for tradition, a test of manhood, etc. The players are escorts of the patron in his search or acting toward his motive. To survive the vicious domains of the underworld may be all the patron truly intends to do. But he will fabricate some other quest of importance, even pretending to mumbo-jumbo finish the work. "*Okay, we can now leave.*"

Inverted: patron will seemingly fail or die, and players must complete the imaginary deed inspired by their loyalty or the patron's courage and intensity. Should the Ref even let them know it's all meaningless. Well, in most cases the players know this, they see the card flip. The characters are the ones who are oblivious. Just to make sure the role-play is honest, add a severe penalty for failure – loss of trait seems to create significant enticement. Or one player character at random is retired, the highest level, upon failure. But, that's a mean, mean thing to even suggest.

Delving 9 Swords: Slay the bearer of a demon's mark described by oracles, listed in an ancient text, or sung about by tavern bards. The blemish or mole relates in legends to the birth of the new Dark Lord. The rival will be a servant, one of a few remnants, who patiently await that evil's return. If so, the mark is on a baby. If the mark is on the actual rival, he is unaware. Let him escape at the climax conclusion and return to the world. The players fulfilled their part of the prophesy by informing the unholy of his purpose.

The dark lord then has a task to perform – kill the player characters at some later date. The escaped rival—name him already—will return each quest to follow as an adversary, until either all the first finders have fallen, or the rival is slain. He will battle one on one against a single character at the second flip of a Personal Event during encounters. No one else, but the one player character and the ever growing rival, will fight this duel. Should the rival be slain, that proves he wasn't the next incarnation, huh?

Inverted: patron also bears this mark. That fact will be only noted at the aftermath. Cruel, cruel ironic ending. The patron competes in the same fate as the rival. He too will appear in upcoming quests' Personal Events, every third in any

Phase, fighting to slay his too smart for their own good, former hirelings. The graphic design on many a Nine of Swords is interesting to analyze. Note, a nine is also the only card able in combination with an Ace in Phase B to generate a dreaded catch-all mission inconsequence encounter.

Delving 8 Swords: Discover a cabal's plans and report back to more powerful forces that will stop the conspiracy. But only return once proof of action or details of intrigue are revealed. Being a witness through the climax is usually enough, provided



the player characters are not notorious liars. Remember magic will not allow minds to be penetrated and thoughts to be read. Yet the truth often outs as questions are raised.

The cabal might be any faction flipped under Political Motives. However, a loyalist will only have a splinter group, which will then be purged. e.g. The Order of the Curia Regis could have a traitor or two but would never be secretly against the emperor and the ruling lords. They gain more by being the de facto rulers and his imperial surrogates. Yet loyalists, as individuals, might be coerced or corrupted, infiltrated or suffer insane lapses. The rival may be the person in the cabal, or a henchman of an even greater man, who will be seen in a meeting with demons down under. *“Did any Aussies take offense?”*

Inverted: players upon making their discovery will realize they must take immediate action, though they were told not to intervene. Sometimes you just got to improvise and trust your gut instincts. The person observed as corrupt is impossible to tarnish up above. Kill him now or parts of

the campaign will change for the worse. Various city-states will suffer shortages, and those impact the group's longboat.

Delving 7 Swords: Escort an immortal or magical criminal, a person protected by supernatural forces, to a place of confinement and ultimate imprisonment in the underworld. This is an assignment usually given to the very strong. The players should wonder throughout why they are involved? The criminal is rendered

powerless for the moment by magical charms or his last beat down. Yes, that type of safeguard seems to fall off or wear off at the climax. But more often the rival will engage in the climax to grab his ally, the criminal or his master, and then remove the arcane handcuffs.

So why don't the players kill the prisoner? Could they even do so? They can but doing so will fail the quest. Despite the man's crimes, wicked ones, he was deemed important to cage. It may even be seen as greater punishment to put him in a place of eternal agony in the depths. Some things you'll just have to take on faith. Yet once again, why are the players given this task? The powerful guards, like the emperor's own, who would normally do this deed could have mixed feelings?

Inverted: the prisoner does not deserve his punishment. The prisoner is wrongfully being imprisoned, and the players are acting as vigilante. There may be someone else, besides the rival, trying to prevent the mission. However, that extra opponent would only be met in the Epilog as Knight encounters. The Knight there will be someone who will want the players to tell where the prisoner was put. Maybe they will first wound a few player characters (via normal combat) and then ask.

Delving 6 Swords: Capture or slay someone or something that will only be in the underworld for a brief period of time.

Inverted: prevent a person or creature from entering an ancient place of power to perform some ritual of rejuvenation.

Delving 5 Swords: Secure the upper level of an underworld, so it can be temporarily used as a fortified base.

Inverted: the underworld connections to the lower depths must also be secured or closed. The patron will be open to suggestions. Blocking one with bloodied corpses of the player characters will seem ineffective. Magical prowess exhibited by wizardry swaggering is a better idea. Again, the result need only be temporary.

Delving 4 Swords: Pursue and capture, or return with the head belonging to, someone that escaped justice and fled into the underworld.

Inverted: discover the fate and rescue any survivors of an earlier group that adventured into underworld.

Delving 3 Swords: Become the bait for a powerful force, drawing it into the underworld, where it can be destroyed or trapped. Why the player characters? A question the players themselves should be allowed to answer. If they can't justify their own importance, rare blood type, heritage, link to evil, past encounter or warped outcome which makes them prime...if they have nothing, the task will be near impossible. Burn one or all of the starting make-rolls to begin this quest.

Inverted: players carry an item that is both greatly desired and feared by the force they attempt to entice below into the underworld. The object should be something they acquired in a past adventure. If nothing applies, its one or all of their

mounts. The horses will be placed in suspended animation, shrunk into a bottle and carried below. *"Makes a fine Xmas decoration."*

Delving 2 Swords: Discover lost knowledge on an event or curse.

Inverted: prevent the rival from finding such, by destroying all remnants of this knowledge in this one underworld. Usually there is an arcane library or set of pictographs which needs to be obliterated. It will be a race to see who gets to the location first. Tie?!? Meet in the climax; that's always the case, silly.

Delving Ace Swords: Activate some magical process or guardian in the underworld. These tend to be fun. They backfire, but that's fun.

Inverted: the effects of the activation will be anticlimactic, leaving the players wondering if they failed. There is no great fireworks' display or shower of energy; none-the-less, the activation is beneficial to the continuity of the campaign. The players will know they followed their instructions but feel uneasy as they escape. They have a choice. Attempt the quest again, a new set of encounters, leading to yet again an anticlimactic ending. Else, trust their actions, but face every face card in the Epilog as a Knave. They might not all be such, but the group's paranoia makes the party attack several unrelated neutral passersby. *"Maybe we twisted the wrong set of knobs?"*

Patron's Reason, Motivations or Cause for Seeking Player

Motive will help the Ref and players understand the consequences of the quest. Yet, motive is the least likely part of the quest generation tables to have a great influence on the encounters of play. The patron often appears just at the start to purpose the quest and pay some expenses. After that, he is usually forgotten. So, in many ways, motive is secondary to the players' eventual actions.

However, motive is very good for creating an atmosphere and the patron character's emotional state. If you're into the *role* of role-play, then motive will be essential to understanding the plot. If you're an indolent gamer like me, and enjoy the *rolling* primarily, then this table is a quick way to add additional modifiers to the scenario.

Trust me when I say, that after generating over a thousand quests with these tables, I welcome any deviation. Else, my players start rolling the dice rote at each phase of the encounters. These tables may also be flipped for the main rival and could make the opponents more impressive by adding extra results for success or failure. But again, I happen to like my villain's cliché. I just tend to say the rival's motive is to cause the quest to fail

However, there will be campaign aspects to why the patron is seeking the players' help. As a Ref, those is very important. When the players check the Ignoble Bard's Tale-Fame, the motives of the patron can determine whether that check was on a quest which was notoriously evil, an act of self-sacrifice or just for common everyday envy. The patron's motive can change the campaign for good or bad. Knowing that, do the players always want to take every mission presented?

Motive Quicklook

Motives		
	Cups	Rods
King	Justice (Patriotic)	Hiding (Incognito)
Queen	Lover (unrequited)	Needs praise (and flunkies)
Knight	Diabolical (Materialistic)	Out of options (feigning desperate)
Knave	Odd and obscure (deliberately so)	Remorse (Suicidal)
10	Lacking confidence, distracted (Reckless)	Proof of concept (Outsmart snob)
9	Seeks insight (to prevent catastrophe)	Part of future plan (vital)
8	Repay a favor (Long overdue debt)	Time is short (patron near death)
7	Formalizing status (Proving vitality)	Facing jeopardy (make permanent friend)
6	Thrill seeker (Violence voyeur)	Test case (wants simpletons)
5	Legal authority (Securing denied rights)	Family (Commanded despite doubts)
4	Fears something (a true spiritual bane)	Monetary gamble (great patience, bad)
3	Calculating, cold blooded (a sadist)	Craves power (Usurp a city-state)
2	Enraged (Superstition)	Easy glory-wealth (to all involved)
Ace	High treason (downplayed)	Thwart another's plan (Disgrace rival)
Swords		
	Coins	Swords
King	Frivolous (a kook)	Vanity (Bravado)
Queen	Money (treasure)	Desire or lust (Secret family ties)
Knight	Detained (uses secret enforcer)	Discredit another (Planned PC martyrs)
Knave	Establish toll (Force tax)	Naïveté (Fears rival)
10	Religious (human sacrifice)	Hunts riches (pure fantasy, deluded)
9	Infiltrated by rival (Uncover traitor)	Conflict of interest (hush-hush)
8	Revenge (for long forgotten deed)	Avoiding responsibility (Punishing father)
7	Political guile (in a foreign land)	Dominant military (Play kingmaker)
6	Create scarcity (Deal drugs)	Seeks fame (Prevent blackmail)
5	Opportunity (created by patron's intrigue)	Acts on instructions (Private-Unknown)
4	Redraw land boundary (Spark a war)	Out of retirement (After wound)
3	Long term profit (Monopoly up for grabs)	Fears loyalist intrigue (PC is prime)
2	Control region (Dominion over sea)	Acquire monopoly (from someone else)
Ace	Better himself (Calm conscious)	Insanity (Boldly maniacal)
Inverted card result list in parenthesis.		

Major Tarot – Reason's Changes and Attitudes

Reason Magician: Patron sees an opportunity now, because an overshadowing important event has brought a chance of success. This event may be a past campaign event or something wholly unknown to the players.

Inverted: the event is about to occur and currently known only to the patron. He may be speculating or has caused an event, usually in a distant region.

Reason High Priestess: Patron believes he is invincible and rightly so; the mere mention of his name brings terror to opposition. He is armored by the plot and can not die during this scenario. Since he seldom comes along on the quest, this trait is only to be feared should the players betray the patron's trust.

Inverted: patron is a fanatic-zealot to his cause. His name inspires others to oppose the players or hate them on principal. Apply to Knights and Kings with both the regular and inverted cards representing those who truly hate the patron.

Reason Empress: Patron's motives are so irresistible, that the prime player character (or all players) will eventually adopt the same.

Inverted: his motive is so distasteful, that a player other than the prime player character will feel drawn to support opposition by scenario's end. In most cases, one character should leave the adventure after encounters; the player picks up his alt and continues in a different role.

Reason Emperor: Patron feels quest will be personally satisfying. Consider the quest. Should it be criminal, the patron is evil. Should it be nationalistic, he is a patriot. When in doubt, the guy is just too optimistic to be fully trusted. He'll seem immature and pampered.

Inverted: patron is dissatisfied with his motive but accepts it just the same. If an inverted Queen appears during encounters, his motive changes. Should that occur, select a new card as well as apply any major tarot modifiers which already generate.

Reason Hierophant: Patron is supporting the One True Faith; he hates pagans. Motive should skew to reflect that disgust. Often a pagan temple will be the site of the climax challenges, and the patron is hoping it and its followers are crushed.

Inverted: Patron is trying to stop the proselytizing of disciples of the One True Faith. The rival is usually not a radical pagan; he just sees the new faith as unbridled zealotry. The rival will be sympathetic. If the rival can be convinced that the patron has the ulterior motive of stopping the church, the enemy may end his opposition. This parley with the rival must take place before the climax for anything to change. If the rival is a victim of intrigue, this plea of sympathy to reason is a guise to get him to meet.

Reason Lovers: Patron's reasons are that of another; his motives are unimportant.

Inverted: although the patron supports another, he has his own motives. Pick a second card to represent his own motives. Thus, two minor cards for motive will apply to the scenario, one for the patron and one for the true leader of the plan. This secret puppet master should be noted, but not encountered, at least not here. Best to

leave all vague, hinted and mysterious. Yet if desired the Ref may select a card for Political Motives and Sinister Organizations, then hint to the puppet master based on the faction that generates.

Reason Chariot: Patron has just returned from travels; his reason relates to this.

Inverted: someone the patron knows has returned from travels; reasons relate to this.

Reason Justice: No matter how evil the motives or quest, the patron has legal authority for any actions. This does not always grant full immunity to the players. But in the aftermath, they will not be hunted as outlaws for success.

Inverted: the reverse is true; no matter how pure or simple, the motive and actions are illegal. The players will be hunted in adventures to follow for completing this deed.

Reason Hermit: Patron's motive will change by scenario's end. Pick an extra card to represent this change at the start of Phase C. The change will influence the patron's commitment of finances, up or down, and to a degree the level of hostility presented by the rival and opposition.

Inverted: patron's motives are secondary to a world impact that will result. Pick a single minor card, ace to nine, from the deck and treat it like a four in a row campaign outcome. The campaign impact should be hinted about at the start of each Phase of encounters. However, it only occurs if the quest ends successfully.

Reason Wheel of Fortune: Reshuffle the deck.

Reason Force: Patron has been extorted into taking the quest; the motive is his tormentor's. This person might become known should a King event occur, but only then select WHO? The King will either be the true patron or someone who knows of the true patron's plan. Ref decides based on WHO? and the King's clarifying card.

Inverted: patron was duped into quest; his motive is meaningless and not the true nature of the deed. He only thinks he has a motive. Pick a second card to represent the true motive of the quest. A secret and powerful cabal desires this quest to succeed. Select a card for Political Motives and Sinister Organizations. The players will know of this faction's involvement from the get-go.

Reason Hanged Man: Patron has made a great personal sacrifice; motive relates to this.

Inverted: he must make a sacrifice but is prolonging this event with the quest.

Reason Death: Patron is afraid of his own death. If faced with combat or other peril, he will flee or feign wounds. Best that he stays behind.

Inverted: patron cannot face any person's death. He will keep aloof and avoid any action. He will want the players to show restraint. If the players leave a trail of

destruction, the patron will be incensed regardless of quest success. Even if the quest implies carnage, a stylish degree of mayhem is the patron's desired; that will confuse the objectives.

Reason Temperance: Patron is not patient. His motive is ill-thought, and the timing of this plan is not right. All player dice rolls for action and combat resolution receive a negative Quest Pip of minus one.

Inverted: patron will break under stress and become worthless to the players. Ignore all Queen encounters, treat instead as Kings. His reward for success will be paid by his agents or surrogates. Yet, there is no aftermath roll for his satisfaction. Whatever he provides up-front, the players may retain.

Reason Devil: Patron wants the players to eliminate all witnesses along the journey; anyone that discovers his quest or motive must die. If the players keep the secret safe, and involve few, the number of killings can be small. Their own crew should also be kept ignorant. By accepting this quest, the longboat loses techniques (A), (G), (P) and (S). But as recompense, the patron might pay to gain a half D8 techniques selected between (I) to (T), unless his Resource Categories are *Sea: Improbable*.

Inverted: at the end of the adventure, regardless of success, the patron will believe the prime player character can not be trusted. There may actually be a culprit planting evidence on the prime player character, or else the final twist could be he has actually betrayed the group.

In the Epilog the rest of the party will be told that their friend is a suspected traitor. The group must forego any reward from the patron or accept a final task of silencing their treacherous companion – fight the duel using swagger vs swagger? Refuse and the patron ends the quest incensed.

Note, not every swaggering duel ends in death, but the prime player character will be forced into self-imposed exile. The player character is just a scapegoat. The player may not use the character, even as an alt, for a full D8 adventures.

There is one out. If the players meet a Knave in the Epilog, they have uncovered their insider and culprit. Capture that man to prove your buddy innocent and then collect any bonus for which you're worthy. If no one is found, no Knave, or the man dies in the fight, then swagger vs swagger will happen right at the end before the aftermath. Those inverted devils are just depressing to flip.

Reason Tower of Destruction: Patron knows quest will bring a personal loss but is not deterred. The self sacrifice is usually his noble title. His city-state should also suffer a half D8 loss of good traits or the creation of negative ones.

Inverted: the personal loss only harms the prime player character. Upon reaching the Epilog in quest failure, the prime player character loses his Trait Bold and any titles or distinctions he held by being a lord. Ref may decide a different trait

is at risk, but either way the player should know what he might lose. Try to select a Bold player character to offer the mission. To entice a Bold prime player character, the patron increases his generous offer or threatens to malign a character's noble status from the start.

Reason Star: Patron was convinced by another of quest's success. WHO? should be determined, because the Queen encounters of play will be agents of this person, not those of the patron.

Inverted: patron has an ulterior motive. Pick an extra card to reflect this. As a reminder, major tarot could also be flipped, while searching for another card, not just here but whenever resolution cards are needed.

Reason Moon: Patron sends the player on the quest for his motive, but later will reverse his desires. He will still desire the quest to be successful but knows in his heart his reasoning has changed polar opposite. e.g. Where once he hoped to repay a debt, now he won't and won't care if it defaults. Since many quests, even successful ones, result in negative consequences to cities and ethnic groups, the patron's reservations may be causing those extra results. He will console himself with the money he intends to make.

Inverted: at the end of Phase A, the patron will have a complete change of heart. He will no longer truly wish the quest to succeed. The players should only get a warning of this via a Queen encounter. Regardless, the patron joins the opposition or supports the opposition with covert acts on the players. After Phase A, Knaves become more powerful, and in most cases will bring superior force to bear. They also will have more knowledge on the travel path, climax location and prime player character abilities. No Tactical Pip may ever be applied to any combat after Phase A.

Reason Sun: Patron was recently promoted or recognized by a regional earl; reason relates to this.

Inverted: the recognition was negative; he was discredited or denied promotion to viscount. He suffered a loss in status. He may be trying to redeem himself, prove his noble leader was wrong, or accepts that he's a bachelor knight or Ronin in search of a new lord to serve.

Reason Judgment: Patron will not be satisfied with the way the players proceed or the manner in which they complete the quest. Patron is overly controlling. His satisfaction in the aftermath will never result in friendship.

Inverted: if possible, patron will want quest repeated; the players will be asked to do things his way. This should only affect the Epilog. Upon success, the players will seem to face a rejuvenated rival and must repeat the climax by an alternate method in order to achieve final success. Stranger than strange, if they have killed the rival, the patron instead returns as their next rival. Feel free to be confused or blame magical curse.

Reason World: Patron will refuse to board a ship. He is afraid of the water. If he must be escorted in travel with the players as part of the quest, he will insist on land routes. Or, he will need to be drugged and carted along, even to cross a river. He will agree to walk bridges, but not ferries. Just leave him at home or be ready to magically conjure solid walkways.

Inverted: patron will never leave his sanctuary. He might not even open a door to arrange his job. He will never travel outside. If this presents an impossibility to completing the quest, well...he may need to be stuffed in a sack.

Reason Fool: Patron pretends he is motivated by his reason, but in truth doesn't truly have a compelling reason for the quest. His influence and resources change one state toward Improbable. His indifference will be apparent.

Inverted: apply the regular result, plus add supreme complacency. By scenario's end, the patron will have forgotten he has sent the players on the quest. Decrease his resource availability during encounters to zero. Treat Queen encounters from the start as Knights. There still may be a no reward at the end, just don't pretend to be successful when you have failed. "*Oh right, you guys. How fares the quest?*"

Motive Cups

Motive King Cups: Has a pure and just motive. No matter how vicious the quest or task, the patron is serene. The goals may still be sinister, which means the patron is a lunatic. Should this adventure conclude successfully, the rival's home city-state is forced to accept refugees of a shunned race.

Inverted: the actions of the patron are decisively patriotic. He seeks to better his regional earl or expand the power of the empire. The rival should be from a distant city or region, preferably one in open conflict or war. The quest may help decide who gains an upper hand in this conflict. Should the players fail in their quest, the patron's property and home city-state will suffer catastrophic harms and forfeitures.

Motive Queen Cups: Seeks to capture love or attention of another mindful of the quest. Patron often joins the adventure but let the other cards of the quest dictate or prevent that result. Sometime during the expedition, the group's longboat technique of Arcane Sentinel (F) will be tested. This occurs even if the mission is outright refused.

Inverted: by a weird twist, an NPC will instead become idolized by the person the patron covets; this often prompts a duel between this extra suitor and the patron upon the quest's end. The patron will then be seen as the better swordsman, but he may lose his love afterwards to a ghostly memory. When all is said and done,

regardless of success, the group's longboat will acquire Longboat Arcane Sentinel (F). Coincidence that one dies, and this occurs?

Motive Knight Cups: Thinks players are easily bribed or might be paid to look the other way, should the mission become criminal or evil. The quest will almost always become more diabolical or requires the actions of ruthless men. If the players agree to terms, at least one character lacking the Growth Ignoble will check his Ignoble and gain the Combative personality flaw of being self-serving and ruthless. Sometime during the expedition, the group's longboat technique of Treachery Expunged (G) will be tested. This occurs even if the mission is outright refused.

Inverted: patron feels everyone has a price, and he's prepared to pay. The reward for service should be generous, but definitely the encounters become more hostile and take on criminal overtones. Sometime during the expedition, the group's longboat technique of Noble Allegiance (K) will be tested. This occurs even if the mission is outright refused.

Motive Knave Cups: Possesses confusing or obscure motives. The motive can be left at that, or the Ref may ask WHY? the patron has such uncertainty. There may be much more to the end result of this quest than anyone thinks will occur. Should this adventure conclude successfully, the patron's home city-state will gain Trait Justice.

Inverted: patron deliberately hides his motive. A major campaign event might follow the quest. But add some uncertainty on whether the campaign event is created by success or failure of the undertaking. Flip a card at the quest's end. If it's inverted, the campaign consequence only occurs with failure. Either way, the event is truly bad and tends to hurt the player characters own estates, ships, crews and stashed wealth. Should this adventure conclude successfully, the rival's home city-state will become Trait Corrupt.

Motive 10 Cups: Lacking confidence in his ability. If the patron is powerful, he starts distracted and injured to reflect this insecurity. The players will believe based on the patron's hesitation that they are being tricked or the quest is doomed. Only by Out of the Ordinary roll, from each of the group, does the character avoid Shaken to start his next combat from the ill effects of doubt. Roll at the end of each Phase for those who still have any doubts. Again, fail and first clash receive Shaken. Let the encounters which occurred in that proceeding phase represent the experiences which manifest as qualms to proceeding. If the mission is refused or the quest ends in failure, the group's longboat loses technique Comradery (P).

Inverted: patron over estimates his abilities. All of his finances evaporate as the quest starts. There will be no final reward, and all Queen encounters will be

inverted. Should this adventure conclude successfully, the patron's home city-state will become Trait Prosperous.

Motive 9 Cups: Attempting to gain knowledge of a future war or turmoil; seeks to capitalize on a world political situation that is about to take place. The quest seldom has the power to cause the event, but it will allow the patron to benefit once the outside event occurs. Word may travel slowly; the patron may already know someone has died, before it has become widely known or verified. Should this adventure conclude successfully, the rival's home city-state will become Ransacked.

Inverted: the quest will prevent a war or catastrophe. At least the patron thinks it will. He will discuss his plans with a sense of urgency. If the quest seems mundane, the players will be left wondering why the patron is so anxious. He may have no true reason to be so, or does he know something the players might never know? Should the players fail in their quest, the patron's home city-state will become Ransacked.

Motive 8 Cups: Trying to repay the favor of an old friend, comrade or lover. Select WHO? to discover the person who will truly profit from the quest. Patron will turn over all gains of the quest to this WHO? The players may make a friend themselves or an enemy of WHO? if the debt remains unpaid by their failure to perform the deed. Should the players fail in their quest, the patron's home city-state will become Trait Pillaged (even without an overt invader). A miserable economy might strip the place to the rafters.

Inverted: the debt is long overdue, and the friend may now be dead. Skip determining WHO? It's immaterial what the patron does with the profits he reaps; they do not go to enrich him. In fact, regardless of success, this patron usually takes his cut and goes away, never to be contacted again. Should the players fail in their quest, the rival's home city-state will benefit and become Prosperous.

Motive 7 Cups: Formalizing his position and status. The patron has two rivals. A main rival opposes the quest, but also a second person craves the patron's wealth, job or authority. This second rival need never be met, unless a King of Swords is flipped in encounters. Then, the rogue should enter play with a vengeance or maybe just appearing to bribe the players off their intended goal. Should this adventure conclude successfully, the patron will become the mayor, governor or prince of his home city-state.

Inverted: patron is thought to be past his prime or unreliable. He seeks to prove his capability under duress. Still, he may stay behind and let the players do the job. He will then take credit for recruiting the best agents or outright claim he did the task himself. Both are the same in game play, unless the quest somehow (by the check of Ignobles perhaps) makes the players renowned. Should the players fail in their quest, the patron will be arrested and imprisoned in his home city-state.

Motive 6 Cups: Seeks thrill, a drive to experience a challenge. When all is said and done, regardless of success, the group's longboat will become Comradery (P).

Inverted: actual quest is secondary to the glory of battle. If the patron is not active on the quest, and often he won't be, he wants the players to come back with stories. He is a voyeur of violence, not a hero himself. When all is said and done, regardless of success, the group's longboat will become Battle Hard (T).

Motive 5 Cups: Has a legal, moral or political motive. Should this adventure conclude successfully, the patron's home city-state will become Trait Peaceful.

Inverted: he seeks to establish and secure rights that presently are denied to a clan, race or profession. The emperor routinely denies requests and petitions. The specific quest changes to something outlawed or at least taboo by some ancient fiat of a long dead godly-king. Should this adventure conclude successfully, the patron's home city-state will become racially more diverse.

Motive 4 Cups: Fears something and wants another to perform the task. The fear is usually some superstition or fantastique element, which the players think is utter nonsense. Sometime during the expedition, the group's longboat technique of Inhuman Watchdogs (R) will be tested. This occurs even if the mission is outright refused.

Inverted: when the players learn of the patron's fears, at the end of Phase A of encounters, they too will grow fearful of a spiritual bane. If the mission is refused or the quest ends in failure, the group's longboat loses technique Inhuman Watchdogs (R).

Motive 3 Cups: Cold blooded and calculating, ruthless toward his aims, will do any atrocity to obtain his goal. Yet don't make too much of this by implying the patron is pure evil. The ambition of powerful men will be prevalent; the check of this ambition is other powerful and ambitious men, plus the player characters. Patron doesn't need to come along on the journey to have his presence felt. Just be aware, his steely stare and intent to succeed is not an act. If the mission is refused or the quest ends in failure, the group's longboat loses technique Noble Allegiance (K).

Inverted: patron is a sadist and commits cruelty for sport, for simple amusement. While more disturbing than the regular description, he is still not a bully to his minions and hirelings. Meaning, he doesn't threaten the players, at least here. He probably won't meet the players in a room where he's flaying a captive. Where this truly enters play, as a problem, is when the patron must come along on the quest. There are quests which require such. Then the bastard will offer no quarter, gut injured enemies, slowly cause an escalation of peril and consequence. The rival and his agents will not be lenient and Digression tables should skew foul with a minus

one die roll penalty. If the mission is refused or the quest ends in failure, the group's longboat loses technique Disease Free (I). Via magical curse, perhaps from the gods?

Motive 2 Cups: Enraged by something that happened. The rival is hated by the patron. This quest will satisfy the patron's anger, if not his sense of justice. These two men may have been engaging in a tit for tat game of one-upmanship for some time. If the rival survives as the players succeed, the next quest offered to them will be the rival's quest to get even on the patron. Sometime during the expedition, the group's longboat technique of Orderly Kept (Q) will be tested. This occurs even if the mission is outright refused.

Inverted: patron is inspired by superstition or has a divine cause. All pagan temples will become possible enemies. The patron's involvement with curses and monsters makes him a pariah. His dark magic is far flung with unintended consequences. Sometime during the expedition, the group's longboat technique of Vermin Free (N) will be tested. This technique is automatically lost if the mission is outright refused.

Motive Ace Cups: Rebellion and high treason – patron hates the current emperor, his court's sycophants and the true lawmakers of the government on the Curia Regis. He makes no effort to disguise his hatred. Should the players refuse to undertake or outright fail the quest, the rival will become the mayor, governor or prince of the patron's home city-state. The patron will be impoverished and forced into exile.

Inverted: patron downplays his true motive even if the players have no imperial sympathies; he may even tell the group the opposite will occur, that this quest is to protect the supreme ruling body's interests. Should this adventure conclude successfully, the rival's and his minions will never be seen again.

Motive Rods

Motive King Rods: Hiding from an unidentified person or past action. Neither will influence the present play, but the players will be implicated and face retribution months or years down the road. Check the Growth Ignoble? If the mission is refused or the quest ends in failure, the group's longboat loses technique Elite Goals (A).

Inverted: patron is incognito and will not reveal his true role in the campaign. The player characters will deduce the patron's background and profession, but their guess will never be confirmed. The patron utilizes his role's actual authority and access to resources, but he will not befriend the players in the aftermath. Even if they cross paths later, the patron will treat them as strangers. Sometime during the expedition, the group's longboat technique of Democracy (S) will be tested. The player character leaders are aping their own patron's aloof and secretive behavior. This occurs even if the mission is outright refused.

Motive Queen Rods: Needs cronies and lackeys to praise his actions. The patron will not want his decisions questioned. The players are to follow orders. The quest and plans will be very scripted. Yet to reduce the prep needed, his plan falls apart in Phase B. The players should hope for an Ace encounter early. Else, the patron satisfaction, no matter the outcome, will be at best disappointed. If the mission is refused or the quest ends in failure, the group's longboat loses technique Seasoned Crew (L).

Inverted: patron thinks the players are too insignificant to threaten his stature or too stupid to seize command. This does not always mean the patron comes along as the definitive master of all. Rather, when the patron offers the players, say, longboat techniques or additional warriors for their crew, he is confident that his chattel will not only be returned, but his minions will thank their overlord for rescuing them from the incompetence of the player characters. Should the players prove more worthy of command, the patron will become incensed. Sometime during the expedition, the group's longboat technique of Seasoned Crew (L) will be tested. This occurs even if the mission is outright refused.

Motive Knight Rods: Desperate and needs aid. All five categories of the patron's influence and resources prove to be zilch, unless rated Assuredly. Skip finances; he has nothing but promises. Sometime during the expedition, the group's longboat technique of Treasure Laden (D) will be tested. This occurs even if the mission is outright refused.

Inverted: he's only feigning abject poverty and utter need. If confronted by the players, he may relent and offer something. Regardless, the players may still want to do this job for the potential friend. If the mission is refused or the quest ends in failure, the group's longboat loses technique Treasure Laden (D).

Motive Knave Rods: Living with remorse and depressed by a recent event. This motive may mean the patron is seeking to break out of his funk or the recent event precipitates the need for the quest. Here the Ref must decide, though the difference has little effect on the encounters to follow. Except, the players may believe the patron is unreliable, even when it's simply not true. Sometime during the expedition, the group's longboat technique of Vigilant (E) will be tested. This occurs even if the mission is outright refused.

Inverted: he's suicidal – cares nothing of the quest and hopes battle will bring death. If the patron does not join the players, he will kill himself should the quest end in failure. If the patron joins the group, he'll be picking a fight and leading the charge in every action. The patron's death is an obvious failed result. Sometime during the expedition, the group's longboat technique of Undamaged (O) will be tested. This occurs even if the mission is outright refused. The players will suspect rightly sabotage. But by whom? The obvious answer may not be correct.

Motive 10 Rods: Seeking to prove a point, make an example or show by deed. The patron has a higher chance of participating directly, coming along on the quest. Yet many patrons, even here, will be comfortable with the players doing the showing, as he gloats in the aftermath. Sometime during the expedition, the group's longboat technique of Charted Path (B) will be tested. This occurs even if the mission is outright refused.

Inverted: seeks to outsmart someone with a higher social position. Patron has often been humiliated and has something to prove. The rival could be incidental to this additional antagonist. Since many times humiliation comes mainly from someone close, a wife or father, the extra antagonist need not appear as an armed adversary. Yet, where is the fun in that? Go ahead and add an extra card for Twist as an unseen opponent, if only to generate some additional strife. Should the players fail in their quest, the patron's home city-state will become Trait Unruly.

Motive 9 Rods: Actions will preface a future plan, goal or aim. The patron will sweeten the deal to entice the players; he needs them to accept the first task. He will also check-up on the progress, so during encounters treat all quest consequence Knights like Queens. Should the players fail in their quest, the patron's home city-state will become Trait Depleted.

Inverted: completion is vital. Patron will also be more generous via Queen encounters to ensure success. Treat all mission consequence inverted Queens and Knights, which normally would be setbacks or opponents, as flipped to regular, not inverted. All Queen and Knights during encounters will offer aid. Should the players fail in their quest, the patron's home city-state will suffer Trait Famine, probably for many years to follow.

Motive 8 Rods: For various reasons, time is short – this is his final request or adventure. Patron must accompany the players. Whether he proves beneficial or a hindrance depends on his background. Yet, his level will usually exceed the best player character. Should the players fail in their quest, the patron's home city-state will become Trait Pestilence, probably for many years to follow.

Inverted: he will collapse and die during course of scenario. Should the players fail in their quest, the patron's home city-state will become Trait Plagued, probably for many years to follow.

Motive 7 Rods: A single, highly important person, precious object, critical event or damning secret is at stake. The patron usually is the one trying to change the campaign, while the rival is trying to keep the status quo. But, the quest will help steer who seeks what for why. Should this adventure conclude successfully, the rival's home city-state will become Trait Plagued, probably for many years to follow.

Inverted: as per above for the regular card flip, but here's an extra bonus. If the players are successful, the patron will be elated – becomes a permanent friend,

not just for one favor, but for many. Should this adventure conclude successfully, the rival's home city-state will become Trait Pestilence, probably for many years to follow.

Motive 6 Rods: Testing a reputation, patron has larger schemes to possibly follow. He heard of players' past adventures and accomplishments. If the quest is grand, the later goals will be earth shattering, relatively speaking. Should this adventure conclude successfully, the patron's home city-state will become Trait Patriotic.

Inverted: he wants simpletons who follow instructions. He heard of the players in a negative way, thinks them too weak to betray his orders or easy to silence if needed. All Queen encounters should be treated as inverted, thus as penalties. Should the players fail in their quest, the patron's home city-state will become Trait Rebellious.

Motive 5 Rods: Motivated by family matters, ordered by another to take action. Should this adventure conclude successfully, the patron's home city-state will become Trait Populous; many will be drawn to the fame of the success.

Inverted: patron has been commanded to hire the players, but he has doubts. His mind and heart are not behind the task. Anything he provides is substandard. Should the players fail in their quest, the rival's home city-state will benefit and become Trait Populous.

Motive 4 Rods: This is a monetary gamble, but with a high pay off. The patron is taking a risk with his resources. So why is this such a risk? The easiest explanation is that the resources the patron supplies are all borrowed or hired with unsecured loans. The moneylenders need not be small street level loan sharks making threats for repayment – that's not dangerous enough. Large banking households or magical cabals, the Vox Illuminati, are involved. These unscrupulous cabals deal swiftly with those who cannot repay or refused to pay. Should this adventure conclude successfully, the patron's home city-state gains a windfall and will become Trait Magazine.

Inverted: the patron knows his plan can succeed, so long as he is patient. He may not think the players have any chance to succeed, but he knows his plans eventually can. If the players ever receive an encounter of an inverted Queen, the patron for now will back out of the quest. He will no longer provide any more help. He will then ask that his men and materials be returned. The players might still press on and prove their abilities. But only on a full success, without any undue problems, can they hope to make anything but an enemy of the patron. If they just abandon their action and bring back the patron his soldiers and materials, the players enter the Epilog hoping they don't get billed for any losses. If the mission is refused or the quest ends in failure, the group's longboat loses technique Abundant Stores (M).

Motive 3 Rods: Craves raw power and an advancement in social position. His present social position will improve by half a D8 toward the highest, twenty, the imperial overlord. Additional details on social positions are listed in the booklet on consequences and downtime. Should this adventure conclude successfully, the patron's home city-state will become Trait Civil.

Inverted: he will usurp the rule over a city-state or aid another great pretender. The quest is related to this or a strong diversion from that plot's true target. Besides the rival, add one lordly, aristocratic or praetorian opponent, a loyalist in the local court of the patron's home, to represent the person about to be overthrown. Use the rival listing for Queen Cups for that potential enemy, but his forces are only met if Kings are flipped during encounters. Should this adventure conclude successfully, the rival's home city-state will become Trait Depleted.

Motive 2 Rods: Thinks this quest is a steady means of increasing his own glory and wealth. He may be mistaken, but the players may secure a windfall. When all is said and done, regardless of success, the group's longboat will become Treasure Laden (D). This wealth will be claimed by the patron, rightly or wrongly.

Inverted: the quest has a way of increasing the glory and wealth of all those involved. The setting will usually take the players into the far reaches of the realm or into the dark recesses of the underworlds. The patron will be delusional and does not understand how far away in distance his goals are to achieve. Sometime during the expedition, the group's longboat technique of Abundant Stores (M) will be tested. This occurs even if the mission is outright refused.

Motive Ace Rods: Thwart another's plans. Should this adventure conclude successfully, the rival's home city-state will become Trait Pillaged.

Inverted: disgrace the rival. The rival will be more motivated himself to cause the quest to fail. Treat all Knaves as regular, not inverted and taking more direct combative action. Should the players fail in their quest, the rival's home city-state will benefit and become Trait Strong.

Motive Coins

Motive King Coins: Patron seems frivolous or has no real reason. This works well for routine quests, where the players suspect nothing. Yet, the actual consequences can be more monumental. A frivolous patron often disguises his abilities; he acts devil may care, because he fears nothing. Should this adventure conclude successfully, the patron's home city-state will become Trait Entertained. Someone will take serious delight if not the patron.

Inverted: patron is satisfying some ill-defined basic need. Okay, this guy probably is a kook. But the players will think he's regal, aloof and deceptively powerful. Since he may never be encountered after today, let them live with their

false first impressions. Yet should they ever call on this phony friend for aid—today, tomorrow, years from now—he’s beyond worthless. Should the players fail in their quest, the patron and his minions will never be seen again. The player characters are persona non gratis in a previously welcoming city-state.

Motive Queen Coins: Satisfying simple monetary concerns. Should this adventure conclude successfully, the patron’s home city-state will become Trait Fruitful.

Inverted: patron still seeks treasures, but the livelihood of tens of thousands may be in jeopardy. Should the players fail in their quest, the patron’s home city-state will become Trait Disorder.

Motive Knight Coins: Would take an active role but detained by duties; players are asked to perform the quest on his behalf. If the quest is immoral or criminal, the meaning of this Motive card becomes all the more diabolical. For instance, he could be saying that he’d love to kill the rival, should the quest be a murder, but he just doesn’t have the time. This patron hides nothing; he is confident and a sociopath. He sees the world as a collection of his pawns. This makes the patron more dangerous should the players end their adventure in defeat. If the mission is refused or the quest ends in failure, the group’s longboat loses technique Religiously Inspired (C).



Inverted: patron is wicked for sure, plus he’s not very trusting. The players’ group will be infiltrated by a secret enforcer. This extra observer need never be encountered and will only show himself in combat should the players attempt to surrender or abandon their quest before the climax. There will be warnings of course, messages placed in their bunk space or on the side of their tents, to remind them that they are being watched by a less than guardian angel. If the mission is refused or the quest ends in failure, the group’s longboat loses technique Treachery Expunged (G).

Motive Knave Coins: Establishing an argument for additional tariffs or tolls. The extra fees will be assessed, usually, for merchant travelers taking a route not often used. The players are equally likely to be forced by stipulation in their deal to use a waterway or road far less traveled. When all is said and done, regardless of success, the group's longboat will become Charted Path (B).

Inverted: justify additional taxes or tithes. These will affect the rival, and men like him, above all. If the rival tends to be of a disposition to avoid his taxes, he still will have secret investments held through sycophants that are threatened by the mission. Should this adventure conclude successfully, the rival's home city-state will become Trait Rebellious. Any place without a greater outside protector is in danger of being absorbed by foreign interests or secretive cabals.

Motive 10 Coins: Patron's quest has an openly or hidden religious purpose. The quest will aid the cause of a pagan cult in the region. Sometime during the expedition, the group's longboat technique of Religiously Inspired (C) will be tested. This occurs even if the mission is outright refused.

Inverted: the motive is reactionary, based on old religious practices or a sinister revival of human sacrifice. The quest will suppress change and attacks members of the One True Faith. The quest may require the players to travel to a distance region or into the underworlds. When all is said and done, regardless of success, the group's longboat will become Religiously Inspired (C); this is not always beneficial, since the crew's inspired beliefs are anathema to most other organized religions.

Motive 9 Coins: Needs a trusted outsider, since a traitor is suspected in his own troops or companions. The patron will supply a ship, company or group of servants, of which one or more are agents of the rival. By the end of Phase C, the players must expose and defeat the traitors, or the quest fails outright. Sometime during the expedition, the group's longboat technique of Pure No-Curse (J) will be tested. This occurs even if the mission is outright refused.

Inverted: seeks to discover a traitor and force him to action. Sometime during the expedition, the group's longboat technique of Comradery (P) will be tested. This occurs even if the mission is outright refused.

Motive 8 Coins: Seeks revenge and retribution for another's deed. Since revenge is personal, the patron will always come along. Now, many of the quests will seem rather droll and not characteristic of reprisal. True, but who is to say how the revenge is extracted? An enemy could be bankrupted as well as maimed. The patron will disappear in Phase B, only to return in Phase C, before the climax. Thus, he may have extracted his vengeance then, or simply had additional plans he needed to attend. Even during a long voyage, the patron will seemingly shelter himself in magical isolation during Phase B and will not be disturbed. The players might be just

an alibi, while conducting a different assignment. When all is said and done, regardless of success, the group's longboat will become Pure No-Curse (J). The patron's magical wards help purge the longboat of other baneful spirits.

Inverted: going further...the incident which precipitated the wrong is a long forgotten deed by all, remembered only by the patron. The patron has waited many years to kill his foe. His victim may not even recall the incident or remember the patron's grievance. The actual rival may not be the victim and then only enters at the climax. The rival is involved, because he opposes the quest's stated plans. The quest became both the excuse and opportunity to bring someone else to the patron. If the stated mission succeeds or fails, so be it. The patron is not motivated by that other set of deeds. The quest can end at any time. By the climax, the players will usually be told that the patron has accomplished his ultimate set of goals. Sometime during the expedition, the group's longboat technique of Disease Free (I) will be tested. This occurs even if the mission is outright refused. Such hatred attracts malevolence from on-high.

Motive 7 Coins: Causing political guile and intrigue. Often through the patron's cunning or minor specifics of the quest, others are inspired to betray their sovereign lord. The patron himself may remain loyal, trying to fool the rival into infidelity. Or less likely, on say a Difficult roll, the patron is one of many coconspirators. Should this adventure conclude successfully, the rival will be arrested and imprisoned in his home city-state.

Inverted: all of this intrigue takes place in a foreign land, though one in which the players need not enter. The mission sets off a chain reaction from afar. Should this adventure conclude successfully, the rival's property and home city-state will suffer catastrophic harms and forfeitures.

Motive 6 Coins: Seeks to create a scarcity of a highly desired commodity, for instance sea salt. Often dwarves are now involved, even if none have to be encountered. Should the players fail in their quest, the rival's home city-state will benefit and become Trait Magazine. The patron is trying to prevent this build-up of stores and resourceful readiness.

Inverted: a drug is craved by many high nobles and patricians. Success will give the patron influence over one or more city ruling bodies. Should this adventure conclude successfully, the patron's home city-state will become Trait Strong.

Motive 5 Coins: Taking advantage of a recent situation or development. Should this adventure conclude successfully, the rival's home city-state will become Trait Famine.

Inverted: the opportunity was created earlier by patron's illegal actions. Should this adventure conclude successfully, the rival's home city-state will become Unruly.

Motive 4 Coins: Desires to change land boundaries or trade routes. Should the players fail in their quest, the rival's home city-state will benefit and become Trait Patriotic.

Inverted: seeks to send two hospitable regions into armed conflict. Add an extra opponent, representing the legion commander of one of these two dioceses. That commander will shun waste and will wish to prevent the outcome. Should the players fail in their quest, the rival's home city-state will benefit and become Trait Magazine.

Motive 3 Coins: Seeks long term financial return. Should the players fail in their quest, the patron's home city-state will become Trait Corrupt.

Inverted: seeks to secure a monopoly on trade. Knights encounters, along the way, will be exclusively others seeking a similar monopoly. They may be convinced to join the cause, as junior partners, but the patron may not appreciate too many extra partners in his endeavor. Should the players fail in their quest, the rival's home city-state will benefit and become Trait Fruitful.

Motive 2 Coins: Success on this task will make the patron the controller of a regional area. He may not hold an actual title, yet he could gain such by the deed. In success, the authority, power and riches of a place will be secured by the patron. Small border estates and towns are typical reference points. Choose wisely and strategically within the campaign. Too small or remote a place means nothing. If too large a region is selected, the campaign might change too radically, sending many city-states into chaos. Yet for high level players, perhaps do just that, add a bunch of negative city-state traits upon player character success. Sometime during the expedition, the group's longboat technique of Battle Ready (H) will be tested. This occurs even if the mission is outright refused.

Inverted: what's at stake is dominion over an entire sea. Not just one commodity, but all product movement across a sea will be controlled. Ask each of the players how that would be possible? Select the best description or leave the chain of events that might follow vague. Such control could be short-lived. When all is said and done, regardless of success, the group's longboat will become Battle Ready (H).

Motive Ace Coins: Seeks to better himself for past deeds or finish something he left undone. When all is said and done, regardless of success, the group's longboat will obtain Noble Allegiance (K).

Inverted: he desires to calm his own conscious, not add any new deceptions. When all is said and done, regardless of success, the group's longboat will also clean house and obtain Treachery Expunged (G).

Motive Swords

Motive King Swords: Mere vanity impels him, driven by a jealousy of another's deed. Patron may have been the first to propose the action, yet now he has a rival who seeks to do the same job faster, better, for less resources; both men want to best each other. Ref must determine based on the quest whether the rival is an opponent seeking the opposite or a competitor working on a parallel goal. Should the players fail in their quest, the rival's home city-state will benefit and become Trait Justice.

Inverted: took the quest for bravado – accepted this challenge as a wager. Again, the rival may have similar plans, depending upon the quest. Should the players fail in their quest, the rival's home city-state will benefit and become Trait Entertained. Stories of the buffoons will flourish.

Motive Queen Swords: Driven by sexual desire, adultery or wanton lust. A problematic motive to infuse into an action game, but love is undeniably a powerful motivator. Courtly love of a chivalrous nature can be platonic. Certainly, the love here is seldom unrequited, but it is adulterous or socially wrong. The patron is not bent on rape, unless the quest forces such wickedness. The patron may be trying to impress someone, but this motive selection tends to be more sordid.

The patron and rival are at odds with primal intensity. The rival has no motive to stop the actual quest; he will have one of three motives: as a challenger for the intended's affection, as a father trying to protect the virtue of his daughter, or as a husband trying to keep from being cuckolded.

The patron will join the players, using them and the quest as an excuse, to rendezvous with a lover. The patron can start the adventure, but sometime in between the phases, A, B or C, he will slip off and never return. The players may be left wondering if they should continue?

Take solace in the fact that the patron will often vanish from everything, meaning the players could be left with some fine upfront goodies. Usually skip the climax. Should the players cross Phase C, they follow directly with an Epilog. Or for added fun, the climax becomes a rescue of the patron from the rival. Sometime during the expedition, the group's longboat technique of Battle Hard (T) will be tested. This occurs even if the mission is outright refused.

Inverted: forget all that blather about love. Patron is related to one of the player characters, usually as a grandfather or older half-brother. He should be someone changed from when the player last saw the man. The patron wholeheartedly joins the party. The quest is real, but with a pretext; the relative wishes to learn the *character* of this son or sibling. Else, he wants to take the player character's role. The quest is valid and has consequences, but the patron will be less interested in any success; he will only be protective of his kindred's survival. Only in the Epilog, and

only should the patron survive, will any of this be revealed. All surviving players shall then roll a high die to find out who was the man's blood relation. If the mission is refused or the quest ends in failure, the group's longboat loses technique Arcane Sentinel (F). The gods and his ancestors will be less than pleased.

Motive Knight Swords: Forcing a legal action to discredit another. Should the players fail in their quest, the rival's home city-state will benefit and become Trait Civil.

Inverted: the players are the planned martyrs for a cause. A bad flip, indeed, as the players will see an increased amount of danger, yet never realize until the end that the patron was hoping they would die and inspire his cause. If the party survives and is successful, the patron will be at best indifferent in his enthusiasm. For what its worth, if someone does perish—heroically, outlandishly, gallantly—even as the quest fails, the surviving players make a friend of the patron. When all is said and done, regardless of success, the group's longboat will become Vigilant (E).

Motive Knave Swords: Feels the tasks required are not significant to justify his direct involvement. Patron may be naïve or uninformed on the full consequences. Should the players fail in their quest, the rival's home city-state will become less welcoming, purging itself of outsiders or banishing a racial minority.

Inverted: patron acts nonchalant, but he's actually trying to avoid involvement. He fears the rival. The patron has already sent a trusted NPC to attempt the task, but that agent appears to have failed. Time has passed, and a taunting reminder has been sent by the rival. Should the players ever encounter a Knight Swords, they meet the patron's lost agent; the man thought to have failed. He will either be still on the task or returning to report his failure. Either way, he will gladly join the players for his own honor and for revenge. If the mission is refused or the quest ends in failure, the group's longboat loses technique Democracy (S). Too many truthful *I told you so* reminders cause strict enforcement of a stoic decorum.

Motive 10 Swords: Hunts riches, gold and wealth, all seemingly for the asking. The patron often deludes himself on the actual wealth this quest might bring. If this is a simple task of simple reward, the patron may accuse the players of holding back, keeping imaginary gold for themselves. Should this adventure conclude successfully, the rival's home city-state will become Trait Disorder. His bragging has made many trust in hope, but those hopes proved fleeting.

Inverted: no matter the quest, the patron's stature or the piles of finances committed, the outcome is purely a fantasy of false hope and fool's greed. Unfortunately, the players and their servitors frequently, captivated by the same enthusiasm, digress into in-fighting. If the mission is refused or the quest ends in failure, the group's longboat loses technique Orderly Kept (Q).

Motive 9 Swords: Acting on a conflict of interest – patron must not be identified with job or the outcome. When all is said and done, regardless of success, the group’s longboat will become Elite Goals (A).

Inverted: the players must not be associated with the goals either – all actions must be kept in secret or disguised as mundane travel. When all is said and done, regardless of success, the group’s longboat will become Orderly Kept (Q).

Motive 8 Swords: Patron is avoiding another responsibility; he was tasked to do something more critical, but pretends this quest has priority. If the players ever encounter an inverted King during encounters, another principal figure in the campaign will present himself as the patron’s true patriarch, master or overlord. The higher authority will not be pleased with the players if their quest and encounters so far have been routine. He may be so incensed by the deception, that he will punish the players or rarely the patron. The players may need to hype their objectives and the dangers presented by the rival, or there will be no reward from their patron, after his stature is diminished. If the patron was originally thought to be very important to the campaign, make note that there is a secret puppet master controlling him. When all is said and done, regardless of success, the group’s longboat will become Undamaged (O).

Inverted: patron is consciously punishing an individual in his family; the quest will cause great loss to the patron’s father or brother. The first inverted King encountered will be that family member seeking to stop the outcome. If that battle is not decisive, one way or another, the henchmen of the aggrieved relative will return, once each phase, attempting to stop the players. When all is said and done, regardless of success, the group’s longboat will obtain Democracy (S).

Motive 7 Swords: Seeks to become the dominant military force in area. Two things – first, the *area* can be small, and second, someone can become the dominate military force with just a dozen men, provided all other claimants perish. Yet often the quest will allow the patron to be named as the region’s warden or marshal in command of all garrisons within. Should the players fail in their quest, the rival’s home city-state will benefit and become Trait Peaceful.

Inverted: patron seeks to place another, unknowingly, into the role of warden or marshal. Could be his son, but usually it’s not a relative or ally. The patron may be trying to remove the present military authority or legion commander. That person might be the rival or someone the rival supports. Should this adventure conclude successfully, the patron’s home city-state will purge one ethnic group.

Motive 6 Swords: Seeks fame and wide recognition. This is a bad card, which causes long term enemies. If the quest is criminal, the patron still plans to gloat. The newly infamous patron, by quest’s end, may be in seclusion or protected by an outside magical power. Will the players be so lucky? Or are they the patsies taking

the blame. Hopefully, the quest is good for all, and the players will be glad to share that fame. Most anything else means anonymity is not an option for the aftermath. If the mission is refused or the quest ends in failure, the group's longboat loses technique Pure No-Curse (J). The prayers of many may be for the group's downfall.

Inverted: patron wants to prevent blackmail to himself or another. He wants to prevent a past deed from becoming widely known. Another head scratcher, perhaps, as the Ref tries to figure out how a mere sea voyage could possibly stop a blackmail? At the very least, the rival is the person who has the blackmail evidence or knows the secret of the patron. The players' quest will distract the rival, perhaps enough, while other agents of the patron work behind the scenes or elsewhere.

A bit farfetched? Maybe the patron hopes the rival will be killed along the way? Maybe there's need for an alibi? If nothing seems to ring true, the patron simply deluded himself into thinking a quest would solve all. A Six is never a good card, here or in encounters; treat a flipped Six in Phase B as complete failure, which ends the quest immediately. When all is said and done, regardless of success, the group's longboat will gain Inhuman Watchdogs (R). Some greater force will be looking out for the players at least.

Motive 5 Swords: Acts on instructions from another, whose motive was never known or understood. When all is said and done, regardless of success, the group's longboat will become Vermin Free (N). At least all the head scratching may have been mitigated by basic chores.

Inverted: patron keeps his motive private – players will discern no apparent change in the patron's life or the greater campaign. If the mission is refused or the quest ends in failure, the group's longboat loses technique Vermin Free (N). Worry less and keep your vessel ship-shape.

Motive 4 Swords: Starts out of retirement after a period of inactivity. This patron usually accompanies the players on the quest. His level will be low. He needs to prove to himself he's still vibrant; his desire to display courage under fire should cause more combat to occur. If the mission is refused or the quest ends in failure, the group's longboat loses technique Undamaged (O).

Inverted: he suffered a major wound and only now feels fit enough to continue; he may instead be bereft from personal loss or failure. Either way, he will prove incapable, because he's not fully recovered. The players will need to protect him and his foolhardy actions. If the mission is refused or the quest ends in failure, the group's longboat loses technique Battle Ready (H).

Motive 3 Swords: Needs different companions, since his own agents are suspect. Patron thinks the players are competent and trustworthy. He will join the group as well as have his own loyalists come along. But he confides to the players that he suspects one of them with treachery. The climax will begin with a short

departure from flow, as the patron accuses and duels his betrayer. If there are several accused, the players may wish to extend aid. When all is said and done, regardless of success, the group's longboat will become Disease Free (I). The patron's cantrip wizardry did have some helpful consequences.

Inverted: patron knows one player character is the only one able to complete the task – that player character controls a prime position or can recruit the right agents. If the specifics prove elusive, just have the players roll high die at the end of encounters. The winner then must display one of his skills to overcome an initial obstacle leading to the climax. Failure there will enrage the patron, because he will feel his trust has been violated. Success, well...check an Ignoble for sure. When all is said and done, regardless of success, the group's longboat will become Abundant Stores (M). Everyone at least is well fed.

Motive 2 Swords: Trying to acquire a monopoly on a certain trade item which is not yet controlled by a noble household, guild of masters, cabal or city-state. The only thing truly that isn't run by a guild in most campaigns would be magically conjured or supplied by supernatural forces. Besides the rival, add enemies related to a cabal of guildmasters and merchantmen who will oppose any new item of trade.

Cherry pick one from the list of Political Motives and Sinister Organizations. The Imperial Guildmasters work, as does, Royal Mint, Vox Illuminati or the Order of Freemasons. Yet any of the factions will include financial members; even prime enemies could be hurt by the quest's success. Most see the economy as a zero-sum; something new means less for them. Are they right? These extra foes will come into play though Knight encounters; all will be hostile. If the mission is refused or the quest ends in failure, the group's longboat loses technique Vigilant (E).

Inverted: patron is trying to seize control of a monopoly from someone else. The rival, openly or secretly, is the one who presently profits from that exclusive



trade. The rival must die in order for this quest to truly succeed. Else, the rival could rebuild and return as a competitor. Though the patron will not reveal that extra criteria for success, the players assuredly guess that their task is futile, unless they murder in the climax. If the mission is refused or the quest ends in failure, the group's longboat loses technique Battle Hard (T).

Motive Ace Swords: Motive is pure insanity; patron is distraught over an action or obsessed with his goal. If the mission is refused or the quest ends in failure, the group's longboat loses technique Charted Path (B). Assume some time passes before anyone else offers the player characters another deal. That fast forward ages no one and changes nothing, except the technique lost by inaction.

Inverted: patron's bearing is horrific, boldly maniacal or visibly shaken; he intimidates the players with superstitious fears; he appears to be inhuman. When all is said and done, regardless of success, the group's longboat will become Seasoned Crew (L). The men have seen the consequence of sinful vice and grow wiser.

Political Motives and Sinister Organizations

When the players start to tinker with the balance of powers, they unknowingly harm other causes or make enemies of factions that lurk in the shadows. They may also see the ramifications in advance, before they agree to anything. But more likely during encounters, or the interphases between the settings, the **players will be guided by the worldly or threatened by the nefarious**. This can unfold as a simple expletive uttered by a neutral party during an otherwise casual conversation with a hospitable, though bored, lord of a manor – *"Truly!?! You say your goal is do what!"*

Generate one faction and keep it in mind as you game each quest. As you read the faction, you may be surprised to find details you never knew about the campaign. That's okay. Don't try to run the world, just run the player characters' reaction within it. **Each faction's backstory needs only be introduced as it appears**, in each quest, like now. Have fun in the discovery.

The selected political group will be aware of the patron, the players and the quest's goals. In most cases the faction's watchful eye won't matter. The Ref must decide when it does.

During the quest, this extra faction will be supporting the patron or rival, probably not both. It will mostly look at the patron's motive as either something to help or something to hinder. If the outcome causes any city-state harm, then loyalists will oppose, while enemies will take glee. Those with neutral leanings will side mostly to prevent change, tending to dislike even the good, where anything might

disbalance the rest. While those cabals having their own secret endgame will side to force random acts, since chaotic change overshadows their own plots.

By no means an exhaustive list, the next set of tables will detail some of the more overt and covert threats to the players as they adventure. These are not simply



monsters, though some are and have been listed with their respective ferocity. More to the point, these are the groups that sponsor intrigue, even when they espouse neutrality. Certainly, **they are not to be forced-in as another constant combat threat.** The faction's involvement, more likely initial interest, will be subtle, generated by softer encounters with the gaming goal to foreshadow future threats and present NPCs which slowly enter character play.

The government of the eastern Roman Empire is unstable. The order of succession is not set by constitution. When one emperor dies (for any reason), a power struggle will erupt to see who rules next. More details on this will appear in the campaign booklet. But when a patron is generated, it's sometimes nice to know who is behind his authority, who he supports politically and what extended contacts he might employ. Some of this was hinted at under the five categories of

influence. Other places the politics are interjected into the elements of the scenario.

Not all patrons need to have an agenda, nor will every desire be fulfilled in each quest. Yet this flip will help ground the patron's objectives into the campaign. Give it a gander and see if it adds some global clarity to the task presented to the players. Most campaigns should start as an outline, and after a few missions, the Ref and players together will start to get an inkling of the pawns and princes.

If the flip is inverted, the faction will not take any action or become involved in any way in the present plot. Yet they will have a preference on the outcome. They remain wait and see. Perhaps in the aftermath a representative of the group will issue a stern warning or proffer an honorarium. *“A gift from an admirer delivered with a crushing handshake.”*

Factions Quicklook

Factions		
	Cups	Rods
King	Order of the Curia Regis	Servants of the Grey One
Queen	Patrician Class	Cult of the Amazons
Knight	Frontier Legions	Brotherhood of Barbarians
Knave	Imperial Guildmasters	Grandfather of the Thieves
10	Academy of Thaumaturgical Study	Free Gladiators
9	Royal Mint	Union of Assassins
8	Legati Sky Realm Zaires	Outcast Sons
7	Bishop of Constantinople	Caliphate Thieves
6	Praetor Sky Realm Zaires	Coven of Elder Vampires (heinous)
5	Janissary	Order of the Seven Seas
4	Imperial Watchmen	Usurper's Own
3	Imperial Navy	Vox Illuminati
2	Grand Assize	Raja's Entourage
Ace	Patriarch of True Faith	Remnants of Dark Lord's Cult
	Coins	Swords
King	Pantheon of Pagan Altars	Nomadic Warlords
Queen	Prorogati Sky Realm Zaires	Lictor Sky Realm Zaires
Knight	Sacred Order of the Questing Knights	Slavic Riders
Knave	Cryptic Monks	Sultanic Raiders
10	Avar Dwarf (foul)	Saurian Grain Eating (large)
9	Volga Dwarf (horrible)	Saurian Bone Eating (horrible)
8	Khazar Dwarf (nasty)	Saurian Worm Eating (nasty)
7	Dwarven Kings, Near Realm (great)	Saurian Egg Suckers (large)
6	Dwarven Kings, Midgard Realm (heinous)	Saurian Filth Chewers (large)
5	Dwarven Kings, Eastern Realm (invincible)	Saurian Brain Eating (horrible)
4	Dwarven Kings, Caspian Realm (enchanted)	Saurian Bile Drinking (foul)
3	Dwarven Kings, Deep Realm (varies)	Saurian Gut Rot (nasty)
2	Order of Freemasons	Tundra Giants (great)
Ace	Delvers Companies	Sea Rovers
Inverted card means the faction will not take any action or become involved in any way in the present plot.		

Political Wild Cards Major Tarot

Wild Cards Magician: A philosopher hermetic arrives in the imperial court seeking sanctuary. He says he is an exile from another faction and can reveal the treasonous acts of that faction. If he implicates a Cup card, a supposed loyalist, he's either a liar or will be silenced by murder all too soon.

Inverted: The man says he is an exile from a regional earl. He says he has evidence of the hereditary lord's involvement with grave evil or conspiracy to leave the empire. Well, he's either a liar or won't survive the evening.

Wild Cards High Priestess: A pagan abbey has made a significant scientific discovery, though the dark age vocabulary of the campaign is ill equipped to describe exactly what has been observed. Everyone will think the result is crazy. It may also be short-lived. But for this next mission, magic is failing. No one may make Recitation actions. This will only last through encounters. By then the gods or a Zaire will intervene.

Inverted: The goblins have added yet another wicked piece of technology to the campaign. The Ref must ponder what to include; usually it is something explosive. But it could be quite advanced, like refrigeration or a steam pump. The technology will not be widespread, may never be widespread, but it should appear from time to time and entice the group to investigate or fall into a trap.

Wild Cards Empress: The emperor marries another bride, starting a year long celebration. These are routine, so why is this one worth mentioning. The belief is the new queen has magical influence or seductive control of the emperor, at least for now. Many loyalist factions will be disrupted and unable to fully involve themselves in the campaign. This lasts for the adventure only.

The counter to her spells, usually the separation of her head from her neck, ends the conflict. But for this mission, contacts and friends, wealth of the patron and influence may all be curtailed. Player character wealth and campaign social status may also have limited regard. The Ref may even say certain characters are too busy to join this adventure. Play some alts guys.

Inverted: a royal queen gives birth to another heir. This has a lesser effect on the campaign, but still becomes a major distraction for using any influence and resources. Everyone is trying to find a suitable gift, so to speak.

Wild Cards Emperor: The emperor is ill. All fear a new king of kings will come to power. The Ref must decide on any disruption, but usually the cabals (Rods) are too busy to influence any play. Some will be trying to heal the sick king. Others will be trying to help select the successor. The emperor should only change by Ref's decision, so here, he'll usually recover from his bout of flatulence by the time the group reached the Epilog.

Inverted: Someone has tried to kill the emperor by magic or intrigue. The attempt failed, so reports the Curia Regis. Now the investigation starts. Many will be arrested. These events are often used as excuses to round up dissidents, and those envied by the Curia Regis. All neutral factions (Coins) will hunker down and stay low. They will appear weaker in play if they have to come out at all. Situation ends once the players reach the Epilog.

Wild Cards Hierophant: A prophetess incites the masses with tales of her dreams or revelations. The woman is quickly deified, and temples and shrines appear. The disruption lasts until the players reach the Epilog. She may not be slain. But, she must be coopted into another temple. No new religion would be allowed to truly explode onto the scene. See the inverted condition if she is convinced to press her fortunes.

Inverted: she disappears as quickly as her meteoric rise. The Ref must decide why, but her followers, and the frenzy, lasts for only this mission's encounters. The Ref should also consider what she predicted and whether she was actually seeing the future?

Wild Cards Lovers: A truce is declared between an enemy faction and all loyalists. The ceasefire lasts during the quest's length but fails when the players reach the Epilog. This could be an opportune moment to enter a Saurian domain?

Inverted: two factions, normally aggrieved, reconcile. Listed with each faction will be a group they hate above all the others. There's one exception, Cryptic Monks, but they too should be kind to others for one quest's length. These détentes never become permanent by a simple flip here.

Wild Cards Chariot: The capital's officials have been keeping a grave secret, but now gossip is selectively leaking about a tragedy. Someone important, the leader of a loyalist faction, has died. Any favors the player characters are holding from that faction are lost in the change of authority; the slates are cleared. Ref must decide whether this also means debts and enemies are forgotten, usually not.

Inverted: an enemy has made a territorial gain or sacked a city. The Ref must decide where based on his campaign. During travels in this adventure, no good city traits will apply. Every township is stockpiling in case the war spreads. No place has anything to sell for coin. Does the group loot or spend their own reserves?

Wild Cards Justice: A nationwide manhunt has been proclaimed to find an escaped prisoner. The man is charged with treason or religious heresy. If the player characters cross paths with the man, he will seem more sympathetic, the charges bogus. Yet there is a reward?

The players could also face mistaken identity, checkpoint hassles, rousts from sleep at inns, long after the man has been recaptured or deemed dead. The hunt also impacts trade and raises fear of some elusive specter, whom repeatedly escapes the crown's justice.

Inverted: if the players even encounter this fiend, one of them starts the battle with a vicious wound. That might focus their attention away from fairytale gullibility.

Wild Cards Hermit: The twenty Zaires are rumored to be active in the Outlands. What brought them here is usually a great change in magic, yet the twenty

bring stability. No one will increase a tally of Warped Outcome during this adventure. If one is generated, simply ignore the change and event. But the Ref may also say more cultists and misanthropes within the enemy met will be attempting magical spells.

Inverted: nope, things are going crazy. All increases to Warped Outcome tally are doubled for this adventure.

Wild Cards Wheel of Fortune: Shuffle and continue.

Wild Cards Force: The emperor is planning a major attack this campaign season. The preparations are easy for spies to see. Food and materials are being staged. Small mistakes and corruption are everywhere. Legions are being moved about. Some places are being left undefended. The Ref should keep this in mind when generating encounters.

Inverted: the action is planned at sea against piracy. The group will meet more watery patrols and checks. More tributaries will be damned or restricted by chains run from shore to shore. More bribes will be needed to use waterways; perhaps it is best to undertake the next quest solely as a land adventure. Get mounted up.

Wild Cards Hanged Man: Wild fires scotch many places of the frontier. Crops are threatened, and timber is lost. Fires can burn for a long time, months, seasons. The timber lost means its harder to cut enough firewood to survive the winter. People are going to freeze. A shortage of cut lumber will hamper ship repairs.

The loss of crops is harder still, as people soon will starve. The cause may be an enemy faction, may be a wizardly pyromaniac, may be godly lightning or merely weather. Take this into account for encounters and city-state traits. The campaign has become harder for all as resources become scarce.

You'd think in many places the local fear of magic will be set aside. Nope. If the player character make rain or suffocate a blaze that threatens, they will be rejoiced for this mission's length. But upon return will find their faces on wanted posters. Best perhaps not to get involved, but Ignobles might be had coming and going from the frontier.

Inverted: If the players ever abandon their longboat, and it is likely they will, the ship catches fire. Assess the damage against a D8 techniques. Either let the players roll Ordinary to keep the swagger. Or, pick four letters and actually fight the swagger vs swagger as if the fire was an enemy. The result will cause loss of some players' longboat techniques as they finish off the fire's threat. (If this resolution works for you, keep it in mind for other mishaps in your game.)

Wild Cards Death: Of course, plague – the black death hits and will kill three in ten from crews, companies, estates, countrymen. The players will be immune. Many of the survivors will be left scared; some hating the players for their lack of blemishes. Might magic be used to ease the suffering? Perhaps in the longboat, but

not in a city-state. See Hanged Man for how the peasants will first rejoice and later abhor any help.

Inverted: Yes, the plague was caused by the Grey One. That faction should be injected into this mission's encounters. You can even trace the movement of the Grey One's minions by following the outbreak of the disease. If the sickness reached the capital, tens of thousands might die. Maybe that becomes the mission or at least a strong secondary objective for some or all of the party.

Wild Cards Temperance: The royal mint has declared the consumption of alcohol illegal, punishable with a small fine, a few lashes or forty seconds of hanging by your wrists, depending upon who you are and where the trial is held. The weaker you are, the more likely the punishment is severe. Since alcohol in beer and wine is about the only water free of parasites, the players and their soldiers will experience increased amebic dysentery. No one seems healthy, while this edict is enforced. It will be rescinded by the start of Phase C of encounters. But until then, suffer a minus one Quest Pip.

Wild Cards Devil: A crime wave has started. Bands of robbers roam freely. Many of these groups are foreign speaking, so racial hatreds also enflame. Migrants came looking for work but settled into thievery. The cities shut their gates both day and night. Summer fields are being stripped too early for a sensible harvest. Drunkenness and revelry replace honest work. Women are unable to travel without an escort. The capital is indifferent to such matters – boys will be boys.

Inverted: large bands of once honest tradesmen and laborers, mostly from the civilized lands undergoing an economic depression, are found camped at frontier crossroads, pleading for work. The legions have absorbed as many as they can, so now the extra unemployed men are starting to forage to survive. Since these men are legally citizens, they may not be arrested as wandering slaves, nor jailed as true vagrants without an imperial trial. Some know the law and will insist any court case be adjudicated in the capital (far away). The Assize has other matters and not the staff to do anything. Cherry pick some nice additions to the crew, but also face more brawls with the desperate. The Greek and Rus speaking disgruntled wonder why the Varangian player characters live well as they suffer. *“Get rid of the foreigners taking the jobs?”*

Wild Cards Tower of Destruction: A port is blockaded. The resolve of the enemy seems unshakable. There does not appear an easy way to break this seaside siege. The emperor will not commit his navy. He actually thinks the siege is valuable, a waste of enemy resources. The locals petition for relief to no avail. Select a city-state the players quest crosses

Inverted: to the shock of the player characters, a city-state along their travel route is now occupied by an enemy group. If the city is deep within the civilized

portion of the campaign, the place might instead be outwardly normal, but secretly overthrown by a cabal. All encounters within become hostile during this mission. Plus, this will come as a total surprise. *“We were just here last week.”*

Wild Cards Star: An exile, usually a hero of renown, someone who is an innovator in battle, has returned. He was ordered to stay away, but figured that period is over. He is moving toward the capital, inspiring a crusade of followers to march behind. He is beloved by the people and the legions; hated by those who govern, seen as a threat. The Curia Regis and Imperial Watchmen are weighing options.

Inverted: the man is a Casanova, a seducer of wives, hated by both the nobility and patricians. He is traveling toward the capital, causing scandal where ever he arrives.

Wild Cards Moon: A city or port celebrates a yearly festival, usually after the harvest. The highlight is the crowning of a *“king for a day.”* The man is allowed to make silly impractical proclamations and usually delights in debauch. If he ever steps over a line, the next day when he’s no longer proxy king, he gets a good beating by a cockled husband or humiliated dockmaster. Maybe a player character would like to be the kingly fool?

Inverted: A sly and ambitious oaf has bought the vote and is declared this prince. His first act is to declare the festival will last year round. As long as the ale is freely flowing, no one seems to mind that dawn comes and the man is still in charge. A week later, more sober aristocrats have been arrested and privately hung. The town watch is disbanded and replaced by the celebrant’s minions.

The location should be along the route of travel for the quest. The players will blindly walk into this capricious killer’s fiefdom. They will be asked to oust the braggart. The *king-fool* may even be some demigod trying to teach a perverted lesson. His removal may pose unforeseen trouble.

Wild Cards Sun: A holy spring, for many years dry, begins to flow again. Pilgrims start flocking to the location. The small shrine and abbey there are ill prepared for the influx of the sick, pious and criminally repentant. The location will be along the quest’s journey. This may actually be a boon if handled correctly and reverently by the group. Ref decides if players receive a plus one Quest Pip. (It is the Sun card, after all?)

Inverted: The spring attracts a monster, which also has not been seen in many years. Combat, such a good way to resolve most game problems, right? Flip a card for Underworld Monster to add some specificity.

Wild Cards World: One dwarven kingdoms attacks the surface. They usually only defend their domains. The attacks come as a complete surprise. The lord high mayor of one city-state is taken prisoner. That may explain things; he may have

renege on a deal made with the imps. A quandary, to help a city-state always nice, but anger the dwarves, long term bad.

Inverted: an outside force is inspiring or forcing the dwarves to hostile action. A legion outpost will disappear, sunk into the ground. That has campaign consequences, so the Ref should ask who gains the most from the missing garrison. If he doesn't have a clear answer, a flipped faction card might explain all. Even a loyalist political group could have motives for making someplace less secure.

Wild Cards Judgment: A guild is exposed making illegal loans. Lending and borrowing are usury, against the law. Enforcement will be prejudicial. Here a guildmaster has been arrested, usually already hanged. To have that happen, a power play is occurring. The faction flipped will be at war with the Imperial Guildmasters. If the faction is the Guildmasters, the group is undergoing internal rivalry and will have a spree of murders. With the guilds in turmoil, buying and selling things will be harder if not impossible for the duration of the quest.

Inverted: the guilds as victim was rather arbitrary. Any faction can be at war with any other with the inverted Judgment card selected. Flip two cards. The first is the unlucky victim that lost a major figure, often the leader. The second is the group that openly or secretly caused that death. Legal loyalists use the emperor as a cudgel for arrests. All the rest tend to expose ongoing scandals and then the emperor though his loyalists are obligate to act. The mob of the capital must be often appeased.

Wild Cards Fool: A frontier city-state or legion garrison has declared independence. For too long the empire has ignored their reasonable petitions. The leader hasn't even seen a true royal justice of the Assize in years. Civil disputes between citizens have festered. Now the new leader makes his own laws and enforces his own justice.

If he had just done just this, no one probably would have cared. But his defiance must be dealt with. Yet that will take the length of this mission to mitigate. The independent place will be crossed in encounters. The player characters will be offered a chance to join the revolt. If they refuse, they will be accused of being royal spies. No-win, maybe lie and move on. The town will be attacked, sieged and made to pay soon enough.

Inverted: the place will repel the first attempt to bring them back into the empire. They will send out emissaries and try to make allies of the Eastern Nomadic Warlords or Southern Sultans. The campaign implications are too great for a random one card flip, so the new principality will only last another half D8 missions, before the city will be stormed and sacked. Ref may decide otherwise.

Cups: Loyalists w/ Agendas

Loyalist King Cups: *Order of the Curia Regis* – A royal council which advises, read as controls, the emperor. The emperor is kept fat, dumb and happy. His harem wives ensure he has many children. A select few are groomed to take Daddy's place. The Curia Regis is comprised of some of those sons, but mostly of noble heads of households. Each regional diocese has a hereditary earl, as well as a monastic abbot of far less power.

Without a unified Church, and with pagan practices still holding fast under magic, the nobles enjoy less right to rule and more *try to knock me off my pedestal* reign. Controlling the empire through the Curia Regis helps maintain that social order. Yet if a usurping outsider, or lesser child claimant of an emperor, actually takes the throne, the entire Curia Regis might be executed.

That rarely happens. Instead, the earls will play the odds and join the one most likely to have the support of the various military groups upon the death of the last god-king. There is always bribery, as very rich men in the past have bought the crown. Most of these political philanthropists don't last long. Some of the Curia Regis, the hereditary earls, may even see themselves as the next god-king. Pity on them; there are far too many willing to slay than bow. When looking for obvious friction between factions, this group cannot stand inaction. The Curia Regis would rather make a deal with a secret cabal, then support any group which claims to be neutral in worldly affairs.

Loyalist Queen Cups: *Patrician Class* – The capital has many very rich citizens and mercantile families, not everyone is considered well-bred. Same is true of the many city-states on the campaign. Few cities are run by nobles, far more are led by patricians—governing elites—holding title as mayor or merchant-prince, a fancy yet meaningless title in the eyes of any true noble lord. First among equals being a popular euphemism.

Having the favor of the patricians is to be able to travel and dine with many self-made men. If the player characters aspire to anything, it will be to the patrician class. Unlike the dominate Greek ancestry ruling nobles, patricians are of all ethnicities. The richest members hold secret parliamentary meetings using a code of ciphers to conduct deals of political nature across far distances. They even have used *Cosmic Skype* to converse in dire times.

Before anyone becomes emperor, tradition dictates that the patrician class writes the god-king a song of praise. That ditty usually arrives after an agreed substantial sharing of authority with the Curia Regis. Both groups have a vested interest in keeping the shell game of emperors going. This assembly opposes anything related to the Grand Assize. Seeing that group as vindictive and suppressing

trade. A jury of one's peers in their eyes should not be pampered nobles but should be other rich men.

Loyalist Knight Cups: *Frontier Legions* – These groups once numbered forty, each with nine cohorts. At full strength around five-thousand soldiers obligated to a forty year tour of duty. At retirement the soldier would be given a grant of land near his outpost. He could be called to serve in a militia, doing so gladly since his own family and community is often threatened. The system worked for eight centuries.

Now the calendar has changed several times, and no one is sure how many years have passed and how many legions have all but disappeared. The legion commander, titled Consul, pleads for money in the capital. Leaving the frontier legions to survive by forced toll, forage and when needed raids.

They will try to raid enemies (see the list), but in the winter when starvation threatens, they will raid the larders of the local diocese. Morale is low, and desertion is high. The abbots and hereditary earls pay more. Few survive to retire to that grant of land near the outpost. Yet the men who have served are proud of their battles. Many a Varangian and Rus has served as an auxiliary or full-fledged centurion.

This force battles against all enemies of the empire. They are underfunded, under staffed and losing chain of authority with each commander's death. The emperor has stopped issuing royal commissions. The officers are mostly now brevet appointments, some of those being barbaric auxiliaries elevated for heroism.

Loyalist Knave Cups: *Imperial Guildmasters* – A counsel of the richest men once advised the emperor, but too many times the emperor just arrested them and ransomed the members back to their families. The group now is an honorary council, which seldom even meets at the capital. The guilds control trade; all trade is monopolistic. To be a master, you had to serve as a journeyman. To gain that roving peddler or craftsman's rank, you had to apprentice for many years. The apprentices are little more than slaves.

The guild system still thrives. In the frontier any city without guild support will be left bartering item for item. The guilds are the only true group which can trade in coins and still sees currency as holding value. Coinage is a promise; a guild promise will be kept. But just assume the economy works, until the events say it doesn't. A purse of coins or a treasure laden longboat is all the money aspect needed in the game. These NPCs can worry about all the rest.

This group fights against the goals of any force that pretends to be Zaires. Only the Zaires are apolitical and necessary. All the outland factions using Zaire in their title are charlatans. The guilds believe in pragmatism – asking what can you do for me?

Loyalist 10 Cups: *Academy of Thaumaturgical Study* – Every fantasy campaign needs a body of wizards to advise the crown. Here it is. The members are silly, not scientific. The scientific method is not yet imagined. Cause and effect is seen as both divine and beyond reproach. Yet many fallacies, just like with magic, slip into the reasoning. Wiki the laws of Plato and Aristotle if you want some idea of the state of things.

In a nutshell, the world is flat; the earth is the center of all; all matter is four elements, five if you consider pure metal; the body has only four humours inside. The highest complement one of these academy members could pay would be to confess that he doesn't know. None of them would do so. All believe they fully understand everything which has been, will be and is. Yet they are too rushed to explain to plebs.

This group primarily seeks the destruction of the Servants of the Grey One. A good wizard versus bad wizard feud, when in truth it is a jealousy over arcane power. The Grey One's disciples are more feared.

Loyalist 9 Cups: *Royal Mint* – Somehow a group of ethical purists was given a gift, probably as ironic humor, and turned the gift of being royal coin counters into control of the currency supply. No one may use coins that have the wrong face on them. Only the latest emperor's casting or stamp is legal tender.

People do use the wrong coins. The guilds will accept payment in any electrum (mix gold-silver). But, paying in older coins could result in arrest. Any constabulary might use the symbolic law as an excuse to arrest commoners or at least take their purses as contraband. Being bullies, most frontier constables would not press that claim to a brawl.

Coins of an older era may only be lawfully exchanged for new at the capital. There are never enough; the line is miles long. The vault where this takes place is as solid and magically warded as any that anyone will ever enter. Simply put, you will not pass as a thief; even the dwarves stay far away. Nor will any character wait the time to have the right faces on his money.

The Aediles of the mint maintain a simpleton's cheeriness and naiveté. The citizens never break our laws? They are fond of discussing for hours the length and color of fringe, which each elder may wear, as prescribed legally. They have outlawed loaning money for interest and borrowing money. They have outlawed all vice, all drugs and prostitution. They have outlawed all criticism of themselves and the emperor. They tried to declare the brandishing of any weapon throughout the land a crime, but this only got passage of the restriction in certain (ever-changing, mind-you) locations within the Academy center of the capital.

Why are they allowed to pass laws anyway? A long dead emperor declared that his Curia Regis did not have jurisdiction over commerce. That emperor was

punishing his lawmakers. Yet the proclamation stuck. So, all commerce is regulated by a cloistered body in the capital, the Royal Mint (of Aediles and Curule Aediles). The mint and their edicts are mostly ignored. At least until mint enforcers, Treasury Slaves, intervene.

What also makes the faction special, is that in agreement with the pagan temples, the Aediles hold three seasonal games and also supply winter food to the citizens of the capital. The food is often magically created and induces odd reactions. The non-winter, quarterly games are less gladiatorial and more horse racing. The winning plebe faction, usually coming down to red, green or blue, receives a magical boon. The mint's proficient spellcasters will bless the winner, increasing yields in fishing, farming or hunting. The strength of these incantations varies. But the result does make the winner far more capable (and profitable) in the coming full year.

The losers often riot. Murder before the horse races is common. The Aediles dismiss any slander trying to connect the violence with their games. The city would starve without the winter gifts and blessing to one of the groups feeding the capital of nearly a quarter million. Bread and circuses are the Roman way.

The slaves that work for the Aediles are militant. The faction truly is represented in campaign terms by the far-flung servants of the Aediles. Every city has a chapter of the royal mint staffed by slaves; the slaves call themselves Aediles or Curule Aediles with their owning master's surname. The elders themselves probably do not conspire beyond restricting hair length on each other and making things illegal that can not be enforced, except by corrupt officials looking for excuses. But the servant slaves exercise some authority, especially as a tax and clerical nuisance.

The mint members believe that everyone is law abiding. At least that's the standard view of the Aediles living at the Royal Mint. The slaves believe every citizen is a shit and needs a good beating (like they often receive). When you read slave, understand the servant is owed property, but also working with considerable autonomy. These are not labor slaves; these are clerks, pugilists at that. Aedile slaves will even manage wealth and property for their masters of the mint. They will have families and are as rich as many guildmasters. They just don't have freedom to travel, unless they run. Would they?

This mint's slaves primarily seek the destruction of the Free Gladiators. The mint sees gambling as another form of usury, since betting is made mostly on credit and by voucher. The gladiators hold their own events, which are illegal. The word illegal is in near every sentence uttered by an Aedile or their more crafty slaves.

Loyalist 8 Cups: *Legati Sky Realm Zaires* – Not real Zaires in any way. The Legati are wizards that come from high noble families. The group is celibate, though many of the members fail in their vows. Many noble families are as magic shy as the

common folk. Yet when a member of a noble house shows magi potential, he will often be sent to school run by the Legati.

In prior wars, the Legati have been very effective as battlefield flame throwers. Yet they are not part of the legends. They do not appear in the sagas as men who defeated the giants, like their counterpart the Praetors.

They act petty and curse the crews and boats of Vikings they feel have failed to show the right respect. This group primarily seeks the destruction of the Usurper's Own. The Legati have a solemn oath to ensure only legitimate heirs ascend to the imperial throne. When pressed for documentation or the time that edit was issued, all will demure. It's a tradition. Yet many sub factions within any group of loyalists feel they alone anoint, truly, each emperor on ascension.

Loyalist 7 Cups: Bishop of Constantinople – The One True Faith is spreading. The idea of salvation, no matter who you are in life is pretty powerful. Forgive me if I repeat too often the dogma. Obey the rules and a heaven awaits.

To keep the game fantasy, not sacrilegious, the actual faith is not a denomination of our world. This is a paper-world, a campaign set in the Outlands. The Outlands is not real. There is no holy book, and the prophets are not Biblical. These are not monotheists. The True Faith has elements of historic religion, but only the bad parts. The parts that abused power, hated enlightened change, embraced and excused racism, sexism and lots of other "isms."

These are conflicted individuals; they seek good but often fail to uphold what they preach. The bishop is the biggest hypocrite in the campaign. He acts like an emperor in everything but name. He has a harem, an orgy of blind followers.

If possible keep the religious overtones light. The main aspect of the faith is that it thinks it is better than all the rest. The followers do not declare the other pagan beliefs as invalid. That could be strange in a campaign where Norse gods, Odin and Thor, might sometime appear? Zeus as well, I'll not play favorites. I also don't name the pantheons in my game and just assume they are all there, and all competing for followers. Maybe the gods of Outlands are football teams? Every Ref should do as he likes for religious content.

Yet the followers of the One True Faith are on top; they got the winning franchise. They have the most influence politically and in manpower. All it took was one past emperor to declare himself a follower. That happened. So, add the One True faith and make them help and hurt. They are just another faction, trying to make more things go their way. And their way is to control the beliefs of the citizens and the slaves and the nobles. Do what I say, not as I act – says the Bishop in private.

The Bishop of the capital is strong. He would have Assured resources in all five areas, if he was a patron. But he's too busy. He is the most powerful member of the faith and will be the next Patriarch if that Pope dies. I'll use Pope as a term

sparingly. Cause again, this is not Christianity. If the Christian references help your players (and do not offend), use them. If someone takes offense, I don't think that's typical, but adjust. Yet if you want to see a game that can fug with the Pope, play *Crimson Cutlass!* (*Ed. Note – corporate says I need to apologize before we get letters.*)

The Bishop and his followers oppose anything related to the Order of the Curia Regis. Canon law should be the only law. Once that happens, the whole campaign changes to the High Middle Ages. But for now, we're squarely in the magical dark ages.

Loyalist 6 Cups: Praetor Sky Realm Zaires – Though truly not a Zaire in either raw power or membership in that magical guild of protectors, the Praetor are the descendants of an exiled Zaire. Most will not admit or choose to forget that their founder was cast out of the western magical guardians.

The Praetors are the most political of the wizardly groups. As for Sky Realm, some do in fact inhabit floating castles, but the majority own spooky mansions situated in most towns. These men and their monstrous pets are the occupants of the atypical lone stand-out wizard tower. The place most locals shun and never look up to gaze upon too closely.

They are not mercenary; they do not sell magic to the public or the military. Yet the group does hold grudges and takes sides. They just are never consistent. Their motivation is purely random, curious, bizarre. Many of the highest members have gone utterly insane, whimsical or possessive, from serious Warped Outcomes. The aspirants seldom question orders from within if issued from a superior adept. The rank and file live with trust or hope that any instructions come with superior, though cryptic, wisdom. Sometimes those commandments have clarity; other times the orders are contradictory as the group takes both sides for and against most missions and sets its own agents against one another in conducting intrigues. Even though the high ranking thirteen of the order are said to be of a single mind, the group from one region to the next will oppose each other in intramural competition.

Best to pay homage to any Sky Realm, but pity on those who make either friend or enemy of the Praetors. In their moments of clarity, this society seeks to expose the dangers posed by all secret cabals. All truths should be revealed, even their own confidences to the detriment of some plans. A world without secrets, amen. Wait, does that truly function?

Loyalist 5 Cups: Janissary – These are the imperial monster hunters, very capable in their task. Someone must drive away the monsters, which occasionally threaten the capital. The last serious attack was nearly three centuries ago. The current body of soldiers are more ceremonial, and the ranks are politically attained,

instead of obtained through merit or true combat honor. Less of them are truly Great as fighters, but there are always a few.

Still their vaults contain many relics that were once used to defeat certain monsters, ones now thought to be extinct. The instructions manuals for many relics have molded away. What is left is riddles and ancient mottos etched in stone. Unlocking any sword from a bronze chain hanging in the armory is a crapshoot, but a clever fellow might decipher the clues and step away with the correct vorpal blade for the specific threat.

The zoo of the Janissary was neglected and now contains only bones, yet complete skeletons of supernatural creatures. Though many of the fossils have been looted for magical charms—unicorn horns or dragon teeth—the garden is quite useful to increase the knowledge of anyone permitted entrance. Once a year the admission is had for a single copper token. Those tokens are not regularly found in circulation. Many have been ignorantly confiscated and melted down by the royal mint.

No player character will become a Janissary; all are warrior eunuchs. Were they born into the ranks or fashioned from clay? But any character might gain the friendship of the commander. Otherwise the order is insular, tends not to promote (openly) any usurper or political cause, and supports itself from riches it still holds from ages ago.

Very magical, very much feared by the common indigent masses, the red cloaked Janissary are wondrous to behold. This group primarily seeks the destruction of the Coven of Elder Vampires. Try as they may, the Janissary have never staked and dismembered the first prime vampiric princeps.

Loyalist 4 Cups: *Imperial Watchmen* – The walls of Constantinople have no equal. They include anti-magic wards of various strengths with many also causing random discharges of energy or subtle changes to the indigent that sleep in their shade. Every mile or so is a watchtower barracks of good size. They are clean, stocked with food and generally occupied vigilantly.

The watchmen are supposed to double as street constables, but most of these men feel they are too important to do regular patrols. Instead they hire block by block their own vigilante gangs to enforce the peace. In other words, each watchtower is its own criminal syndicate.

Collectively the whole pays tribute back to the Dux, imperial commander of the entire force. The duchy is a prince, an offspring of the current emperor, yet one of many. He is selected by the Curia Regis to hold that marshal's rank. The Dux is the closest thing to an heir apparent in the empire.

The commander is guaranteed great wealth and great power, but only holds the rank on the whim of the Curia Regis. If the Curia appoints a different person, the old

one is arrested by his own watch guards. The second in command, nominated from the watchmen themselves, probably holds more power.

The Dux often is impoverished by debts he makes obtaining the position and bribing his second to let him stay. Throughout the years, many of the Dux have risen to become the emperor, after solidifying power. Many others have been disgraced; the skulls of some still adorn the mighty fortress walls. This group primarily seeks the destruction of the Union of Assassins. If just anyone can kill a king, then how is anyone to truly be a living god-emperor? The second of the watch garrison was once found to be the head Auctoritas of that murderous order. My that was a scandal!

Loyalist 3 Cups: *Imperial Navy* – Mostly symbolic, the conditions of the vessels are always unready. Various admirals have tried to refurbish the fleet, but most wind up taking the annual budget and pocketing all. The crews of the fleet often sell themselves or their gear to pirates.

Western merchant ships have at various times complained to the Curia Regis, but nothing has been done. Any trade that moves through the Mediterranean Sea pays tribute or moves in convoy to offer fight. Pirates flourish in and among the Greek isles in the Aegean. However, few of these rogues are able to pass the straits and enter the Black Sea.

The baronial ships crossing the Aegean are designed as deep draft, unlike Viking longboats employed by the adventuring players. The imperial navy has magnificent three and four level oared ramming ships, but slaves are expensive to keep. Most of the boats would need to draft citizens or house servants to get moving in time of serious invasion or sustained war.

The captains of the imperial fleet are a collection that tends to favor the dolt or ambitious landlubber. So why is this group even listed here? The amount of graft and tolls makes the position of admiral a source of much intrigue and assassination. The bodyguards of the serving admiral are as impressive as the emperor's own. Many an emperor has had to order the arrest of his admiral whose power inside the capital started to exceed his own.

This faction remains at war with the Sea Rovers, a source of constant embarrassment. They have lost too many ships and crews facing these seasonal invaders coming from far away and even rumored through the Pillars of Atlas. The player characters too will always be seen as suspects by members of the imperial navy. The admiral would like nothing better than to ban all travel on water and make his job carefree.

Loyalist 2 Cups: *Grand Assize* – These are the Quaestors of the empire, the magistrates and traveling judges of both the capital and the nobles of the dioceses. The members of the Assize are appointed for life. This means they will be murdered if they ever try to force a noble to pay the smallest of fines.

The Quaestors might be employed to rubber stamp a decision to arrest an upstart or end the rise of an imperial claimant. But mostly they hear cases, pontificate, and order executions of free citizens without title.

Every so often a people's Tribune feels the Assize is too corrupt. He will castigate the Quaestors and seek reforms. Depending upon that delegate's power over the masses, the magistrates will make some token arrests of the most despised nobles or elevate the charges on ordinary criminals, like the players?

The life of some tribunes, idealists of the people, tends to be short. Many have their own price or hide a past susceptible to blackmail. Thereafter, the Assize can return to conducting regular trials as an enforcement group of the landed gentry, keeping the patrician artisan class and their guilds in check.

The Assize may also charge the defendant court costs and increase the fines on the wealthy without political power. Everyone seems to demand a share in any huge judgment. When the empire is short of money, the richest person in the civilized regions had better be worried. The frontier, less so, because the Assize has few wardens to conduct arrests. The group leaves apprehension to the regional earls.

The whole is utterly corrupt, and no justice is ever truly dispensed. This group primarily seeks the destruction of the Grandfather of the Thieves. Ninety percent of the thefts prosecuted can be traced back to that criminal cult; its laughing beggars mock the nobility.

Loyalist Ace Cups: *Patriarch of True Faith* – A digest of the One True Faith is presented in the Fundamentals book of Outlands. The Patriarch should never be met. He's larger than life, probably super magical, maybe divine. He works through his priests.

They and the pagan abbots work to gain followers. You can gain trust by kindness. You can gain it by fear. The Patriarch will tend to use kindness. His minions will tend to use fear. The Patriarch represents the faithful in the campaign. He is political but lives outside of the capital. He's elected by a ruling counsel of the faithful in assorted dioceses. He tends to have a longer than usual life, but that would be a miracle not demonic, if you seek to bandy terms.

All past and the present Patriarchs are henotheists. None have yet to declare all pagan faiths unholy. His God is the greatest, yet no one (so far) has openly declared to the faithful that his God is the only God. That day is coming. Would probably be four card Fives flipped in a row during encounters; boy oh boy would this change a few things in that Ref's campaign.

This society opposes the factions that overtly display and over employ magic. They do not like any of the Sky Realms and tell their parishioners to do not seek help nor envy these false gods. The priests of the True Faith use magic sparingly but also feel they alone can be trusted with such power. They will exhaust all options before

employing magic, teaching the commoners to shun its use. Any player character that becomes an aspirant of this same faith should do likewise, but that's role-play not an absolute game stop to his abilities. He may even continue to grow in power and hate himself for doing so.

Rods: Secret and Hideous Cabals

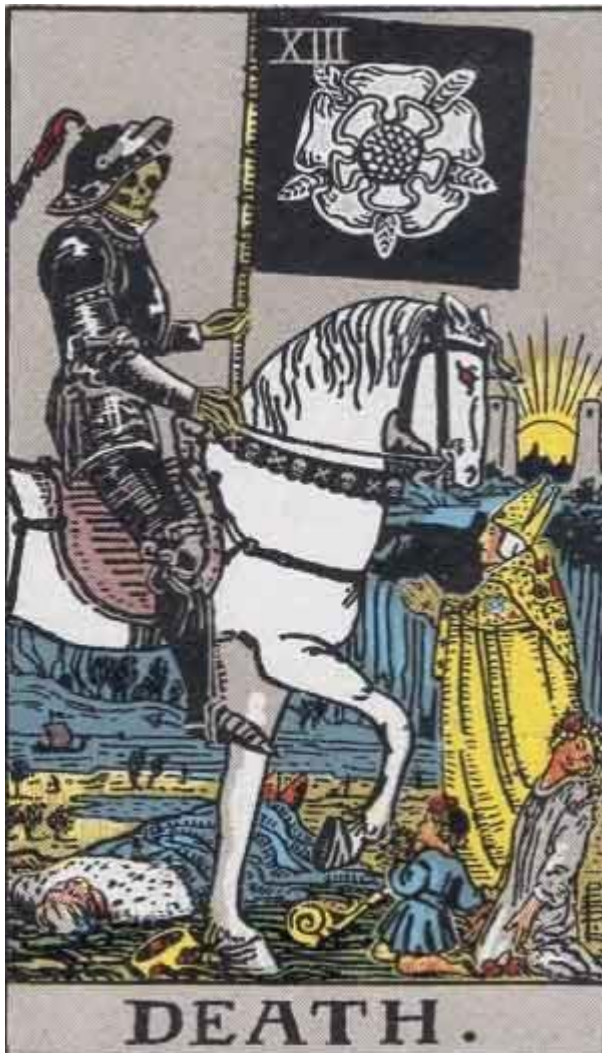
Secret King Rods: *Servants of the Grey One* – The Grey One was a minion of the Dark Lord. When the Ebon Master was slain, the servant was released from obedience. The man-monster takes many forms. His followers do as well. His goals

are ambitious, but he retains many limitations cast upon him by his once sinister overlord. The Grey One is building and restoring abilities and freedoms. Could he one day be as strong as his former master?

Many wearing the hourglass and skull, a tattoo of cult membership, see their involvement as a juvenile obsession. Or, they secretly aid the growth of the Grey One into the next Dark Lord. The loyalty of many is suspect, but without proof, nothing legally can be done. The tattoo will be espied on many of the patrician and nobility. Are they pure evil or just evil-curious?

This group fights against the goals of the Pantheon of Pagan Altars. There is one True faith and one opposing Evil. The pagan practices must die, before the final judgment occurs. The servants believe the wicked will inherit the world, after the raptured pious rise and depart. The pagans and the many demigods they idolize seem to spit in the face of that ultimate duel and prophesy.

Secret Queen Rods: *Cult of the Amazons* – Exclusively women, but not exclusively warriors, the cult was a pagan religion, a thriving one. But the temples and priestess were massacred in a grand and recent event. The perpetrators of the pogrom have been arrested, all seven of them. Yet how did over forty major temples



in one evening turn to cinder and dust by action of a mere seven, none of which shows any magical gift? Must have been lost in the mishap, says the Assize, Curia Regis and emperor himself. The true culprits may never be known. Ref may decide otherwise.

Before the collapse, this assembly spoke out against the Bishop of Constantinople for preaching chauvinism. The Amazon's very few leaders remaining have gone into hiding. In many townships, good rewards are newly posted for hunting witches, dead or alive. It is worth noting that desperate folks with little left to lose, but still having innate prowess, often do not fight back, a last gasp of futility. Instead, they join something or morph into something far worse.

Secret Knight Rods: Brotherhood of Barbarians – This may only be a legend, but every balladeer seems to have a song related to the Varangian bond of brothers, a group who wish to end the empire of the Greeks and free the river lands for the people. If any true cabal has conspired to bring that end, it has not acted with any significance, or it hides its involvement in progressive intrigues very well.

Membership in the cabal is outlawed. The slaves may not be freed, even by their masters. Manumission was happening too much, so that there was a shortage of labor in the empire. Upon death, a man's chattel property may be inherited or sold to others, but it may not gain liberty. Only the emperor may free a legally bonded slave. He rarely does so, perhaps a few gladiators and artistic figures.

Any free man captured in battle, by tradition, is the victor's slave. The players have added quite a few rowers (unceremoniously, perhaps unknowingly) to their boats after even an incidental brawl. The game does have skills of both Slave Driver and Tormentor? Many player characters lost and found in Digressions will be former, now escaped, slaves.

The brotherhood does not believe that men can be slaves. Anyone defeated in battle is to be embraced with honor. The dispute being settled, the two sides move forward without grievance. Yet that is not the imperial law, a law enforced opportunistically. The defeated are slaves within the empire.

The Referee may make slavery a big part, an obvious part, of his campaign. Or he can leave it and its cruel traditions in the background. Yet whether the man be a serf or true slave, the law sees little difference. Whether he be a wage slave to a guild or a soldier bonded for nearly his life to serve a garrison, the law sees no difference. The campaign and all who live in it are dependent upon slaves. Millions would starve, if the crops are not planted, tended and harvested, by people who by law don't own any of that product. The brotherhood thinks that's unfair. For openly stating that humanistic idea, the proclaimer can lose his tongue or his balls or his life.

This group primarily seeks the destruction of the Order of the Seven Seas. The west is slave heavy as well, and that Order has traveled to Nordic territory in its

search for more captive laborers. Yet also those freebooters are quite simply a competitive set of western baronial ship captains.

Secret Knave Rods: *Grandfather of the Thieves* – The beggars of the world are secretly united. That conspiracy is rather hard to believe. Most people see beggars as village idiots and the misfortunate touched in the head by the gods. What if that wasn't so?

The beggar king is called the Grandfather. He is mythic. Some say he is a goblin monster; others say he is Dionysus, an old god testing mankind with vice. The beggars are organized like Sherlock Holmes' *Irregulars*. Yet with a very nasty overtone, since the beggars are not beyond maiming children to make those unfortunate more miserable and better collectors.

They are everywhere and never observed. They are the background of every city street. Outside of cities, they are rather powerless. But there are many cities and that's where most people live.

Every fantasy world seems to have a guild of the dishonest. Here too. But the player characters will be too old to gain admittance. They may have dabbled as children in minor crime, but the players have grander goals. The Grandfather is content to lord over his fleas. Or is he?

This assembly opposes anything related to the Imperial Guildmasters. Organized merchants are harder to steal from. The guilds also compete for labor. The guilds believe the Grandfather role is a disguise used by a more powerful noble. The thieves are employed in deception by many of the nobility, particularly the merchant princes ruling various city-states with autonomy. The thieves have agents pretending to be servants in various factions of the capital. For that too, the guilds hate them all the more for making them feel no one can be trusted.

Secret 10 Rods: *Free Gladiators* – Started as a clique of just a few fighters and boxers who were as a group pardoned and freed by an emperor. The gladiators overtime shifted to a political role. They also had little way to make a living outside of armed combat, so they turned secretly to bodyguard work. That seemed less profitable than murder for hire and kidnap for ransom. Many of these men when brought to trial are still celebrities. As the mob screams simultaneously for both justice and clemency, some have escaped the gallows. One notorious member has been tried for capital crimes and spared five times.

Though hostile for the most part, the faction truly hates the nobles and ruling class, even as they long to be the same. The cabal has enticed many slaves to serve them. When payment is made, the insider then can kill the master. The slaves in many households believe that the Free Gladiators, not the Brotherhood of Barbarians, are the ones who are working to end the institution of bondage. The Free Gladiators at best wish to replace the nobility with their own members. They envy the elite and

seek to turn publicity into wealth, though that is extremely rare in the ancient world. To become a regional tribune, a mouthpiece for the people is the best any member of the cabal truly hopes to obtain. Some have done so. Yet this cabal's ambitions remain ever higher.

Secret 9 Rods: *Union of Assassins* – The best secret agents and secret police of the crown operate outside of the law. None of the union has legal sanction to operate for their intrigues. Money is not usually even the motivation. The union works toward a mysterious goal. Some have argued the goal is received from an ancient codex. The lettering of each victim's name blackens one page at a time each evening in twenty-six identical yet far removed copies held by the senior Vigintisexviri.

Some of these twenty-six delegates are retired members of the Imperial Watch, while others are self made mercenaries. All the men are formidable, Invincible ferocity in battle. The members are fully ensconced in the civilized lands, only to a lesser extent on the frontier. But the plans initiated by the group have been shifting east. A backlog of names is occurring, as the cabal has made mistakes and conclusively is now known to exist.

This faction remains in constant war with the Lictor Sky Realm Zaires. Some say deals were broken. Others say the assassins receive their kill on sight order from the emperor or Curia Regis, perhaps even a Zaire, scribbling far, far away.

Secret 8 Rods: *Outcast Sons* – Starting originally as royal children who threw parties and lamented that they were never going to be kings, a small sect of pampered offspring of the numerous emperors decided to secretly meet and conspire. They hate to be mocked and seem to exist wholly to avenge ridicule.

Unsure if they are organized for mutual protection or from mutual hatred, the group has settled on hating outsiders, other races, foreign speakers and slaves who act haughty and superior. These are the last of the Greek and Latin speaking natives, feeling self entitled yet in truth very dangerous. Many nobles share their feelings of superiority. They especially hate all the Nordic player characters, but the outcast are not a group that fights in the open nor in a fair duel.

Secret 7 Rods: *Caliphate Thieves* – Some people will never lose an accent. Some people will always be identified as foreign. Such is the case of the Caliphate Thieves. Are they servants of the southern Emir? Or people who fled the punishment of an Emir, only to find themselves strangers in the Outlands? Use them less as evil and more for comic relief.

This is a group bonded by both common origin and a dislike for hard work. They are gypsies and travelers who bilk people, sell miracles, and above all take anything that isn't nailed down. They are less fortune tellers and cutpurse, more three

card Monty dealers and bridge sellers. They sell goods in warehouses they don't own. They sell titles of nobility that are laughable, when discovered to be a fraud.

Caliphate Thieves are very magical. Coming from a land that has very few human wizards, the original cabal founders enjoyed sharing secrets. Membership requires at least practiced ability in seven Wizardry techniques. To complete the cliché, they will never be able to pronounce Power Words (S).

Like the Grandfather and his beggars, the organization pays dues in a Ponzi scheme, pyramid approach. The more stealing folks one recruits, the larger amount of wealth might be obtained by others taking the risk. Few of the members barely make a living. But as a despised people of now deserved reputation, the Caliphate Thieves take because no one knowing will trust.

This faction remains in constant war with the Sultanic Raiders. They steal from everyone, but they see a southern invasion of the northern frontiers as counterproductive. If people are on the run and commerce ends, there will be less of everything to steal.

Secret 6 Rods: *Coven of Elder Vampires* (heinous) – The word vampire in the title is probably enough explanation. No need to beat a dead dog, or wolf, or bat. Use any and all of your favorite powers to represent members of this undead-lycanthrope hybrid. I'd call them nasty, but Nasty is weaker than Heinous. Vampires are vile and meeting them will almost always prove grave.

Yet use this one game mechanic, before everyone has to shift to playing White Wolf's beautiful set of products. In Outlands, the first vampire created the next and so forth. Killing any vampire frees all the minions that monster spawned. This will allow the players to save their companions. Yet will always leave doubt on whether the last of this cabal is ever truly gone.

This group primarily seeks the destruction of the Cult of the Amazons. Somehow the warrior brides have found a way to dispel and repel flesh eaters and their vampiric gazes. A good thing perhaps to know. All truths are buried in the game text to be discovered not rote enforced?

Secret 5 Rods: *Order of the Seven Seas* – To the west, the realms of the baronial lords do not have an emperor. Their imperial state collapsed, some argue, a millennium before. The west also enjoys a richer soil of mana, and the spellcasters of those lands are powerful wish magi, truly as strong as any ginn.

As the wizards to the west travel east, that power wanes and fails. But the strongest of the brethren do retain a great deal of raw ability. Hence the Order of the Seven Seas contains some of those magical captains, traveling in splendidly enchanted crafts. Ones towed by whales or with stern castles hundreds of feet above the waters or transmuting to fog or rubber when rammed. You get the idea, ghostly weird cartoon ships.

In game terms imagine a group that has an extra set of swaggering that seems to mimic a combined supreme Blade and Wizardry set of techniques. The Order's vessels have this set of swagger as well as the regular benefits of being say No Disease and Vermin Free. These extra powers do not translate onto solid ground in the Outlands, but on the water the vessels are all the more difficult to defeat. The order's captains also can conjure some rather cruel monsters, porting in the creatures from underworlds that geographically lie deep in the western baronial, manna rich, bedrock.

The group is few in number and meeting one of the order is rare; climax challenge only and more likely as a Q&D filled with awful surprises. The players probably will deal with people, survivors, who have seen the western ships and the various powers displayed. In swagger vs swagger, the extra Uncanny Barque Techniques known only to the Order of the Seven Seas will still matrix to success and failure. A technique (O) is a technique (O) by any other name. Yet having six (O) swaggering, instead of at most five allowed to any player, may be advantage indeed. The captains of the order are also very adept at Dispel Magic, cancelling out the weaker magicians of the east without forcing White Magic disaster to all in the area.

This group primarily seeks the destruction of the Outcast Sons. One order is said to be an offshoot of the other; the first of the Order to arrive actually was the reverse. The order began in the east and traveled with the founder Aeneid to the west. Now his descendants return.

Both claim to be the original heirs to all. The rivalry is petty but venomous. At least one of the Order of the Seven Seas still has desires to rule as eastern emperor, if not the entire world. Another huge campaign shift if that should occur for anything longer than one breath, as the uncontested dagger is thrust.

Secret 4 Rods: *Usurper's Own* – An attempt was made by a powerful warlord of the Frontiers to take the throne. He was successful. He killed a tyrant and then reigned for sixteen months. His objective was citizenship for the frontiersmen and to build an honest order of succession based on merits and Senatorial elections. His only mistake was to pack the newly formed Senate with his loyal fighters. The hereditary nobles bided their time.

He did some short term good, fighting an entrenched bureaucracy, but eventually died of a festering disease. Many thought the illness was a divine punishment; some thought it was caused by a rival's magic. Who can truly say?

He's now gone. The old guard returned. Since the usurper sired no children, the Curia Regis proclaimed a new emperor, a son of the man he murdered. An heir was kept on ice with the western Near Realm Dwarves. The harem brides were coopted, taken by the next emperor. Nothing truly changed, and yet the bodyguard of

the fallen first citizen proved to be resilient. They fled into hiding or renounced their kinship and pledged to the newly restored emperor. Concessions were made to avoid more civil war.

Some of those in hiding, the holdouts of Usurper's Own men, formed a cabal with unknown purpose. Maybe one of them wished to take the kingship. Maybe they want the whole empire to burn. Maybe they are just banding together to profit and survive. They may be supported secretly by some of their former brethren who took loyalty oaths. They may be supported by other cabals and enemies that hate the empire.

This secret group has used the tactic of posing as other cabals. They cause mayhem and typically the Grey One is blamed. That cult does not care that it is more famous. They even see the Usurper's Own as affiliated. That is certainly not the case. But to say again, the agenda of these men, to continue generation after generation to hold a grudge is mindboggling.

This group fights against the goals of the Order of Freemasons. The masons were the first to withdraw support when the usurper died. This was seen as a stark betrayal, since the masons were also the first guild that supported the renegade as first citizen and monarch. He wasn't even buried yet when the freemasons called for the return of an heir. The guild of builders refused to erect a tomb for the fallen leader. They further by close association knew the loyalists of the usurper and aided those hunting them down. The freemasons feel they did exactly like many other groups did. Yet the Usurper's Own blame them above others. Death by magical rotting disease (of the leprous Grey One) is a preferred manner of settling these scores via sores.

Secret 3 Rods: *Vox Illuminati* – Seeing themselves as the enlightened free citizens, the group formed initially to advocate for more silver in circulation. When that failed to be taken seriously, they went underground. These men try to run a parallel economy of banks and money. In the frontier, they are modestly successful.

Anyone who knows anything about economics, even just supply and demand, can see that the empire needs a banking system and a stable currency. There is not enough gold bullion in the world to have enough coins minted to make every transactions of the growing frontier. Too many misers choke the currency.

The cabal here is filling that void. They mint great copies of the imperial currency, using mostly base metal. Any merchant might drop a coin on a table and hear the ring of purity. But in many places that isn't of any importance. The folks need dollar bills, so to speak.

The Vox Illuminati advocates and uses silver coinage. They also loan this money at exorbitant interest rates. They will back what they produce, well, most of them do. Because of their success, the Illuminati's silver is often counterfeited,

forged with common nickel and lead slugs. Blame the Caliphate Thieves for many of these false sets of tokens.

This assembly opposes anything related to the Royal Mint, and its restrictions on lending and coinage.

Secret 2 Rods: *Raja's Entourage* – A fleet of lateen sailed felucca merchant ships has begun appearing in many ports. These are able like the Viking longboats to travel easily up rivers. The merchants are honest and trustworthy. Many of the guilds have started to shift contracts away from traditional noble pontoon barges and use the foreign haulers for bulk transport.

Fostering this fair trade is a cabal. These mariners may not even be of far eastern origin. It simply serves a purpose for them to pretend to be. They could be using magical portal to move cargo. They could be manipulating the weather and currents. They could be employing risen dead crews to save on costs. They are secretly taking shortcuts and eventually, once they get a majority of the older noble riverboats to become unprofitable and fold operations, the Raja's Own will control all food trade.

Around many city-states the land is infertile. That was not always the case. With plenty of water, something should grow. It has been bountiful in the recent memory. The Raja's Own seems to be responsible for a blight. Once cities start to starve, and the only grain shipments arrive on the triangle sailed carriers, the Raja might demand any price. The group plans to impoverish one city-state at a time, then leave all to downfall. Shortages might not last, but the coup could work perfectly. The frontier population could lose all its gold and be cut by a third in number. Some merchant princes in the frontier have been warned not to use the Asian transporters. But for now, who can pass up a bargain?

This assembly oppose anything related to the Imperial Navy, seeing their tariff patrols as pirates. They also do not want the imperial fleet to start hauling feed and livestock to emergency aid. The cabal has a plan for that contingency as well. The big question is what the multitude of barbarian vessels might do. They talk with the Sea Rovers about a recall home of the Varangian for one or two years of inaction. All that is yet to decide is the price. Will the player characters comply? No, of course not, why would they?

Secret Ace Rods: *Remnants of Dark Lord's Cult* – A group of power hungry and perverse lovers of a dead autocrat. They are horror show terrible, R or NC17 rated. These are Horrible, Foul and Heinous men of agony.

The Dark Lord tried to take control of the world, above and below. He was actually an emperor, plus a great practitioner of magic. During a phenomenon of a mini ice age, magical manna returned to a power found only in western Europe. Everyone seemed to be able to make wishes come true. The situation was an illusion

created by the Dark Lord as he slowly froze the world. The wishes actually never occurred.

Many forces had to combine together to defeat the Dark Lord. That was a millennium ago. His followers remain, a stubborn cult of personality. The Dark Lord had a minion, the Grey One, who still lives, supposedly, though that source of evil has not itself been seen for a hundred years. The two simpatico groups do not get along as the dark forces demand fealty, and the greys call for disbandment of the leaderless remnants.

This assembly opposes anything related to the Legati Sky Realm Zaires for its role in slaying their mythic leader.

Coins: Major Clans with no Usurpation Goals

Neutral King Coins: Pantheon of Pagan Altars – The various regional priestly abbots do have a collective body of laws, which govern their practices and finances. They are not as strong in a clerical or canon fashion as might have been found historically in the monasteries of the Dark Ages. However, the group does hold sway with many serfs and expects a live and let live attitude from the nobility.

The tithes paid to these temples are small, usually enough to meet expenses with extra going toward causes of benign goals. Few ambitious men rise in the ranks. Yet there have been some. The First Patriarch was leading a pagan congregation when he divinely received (or some argue merely compiled) the laws of the One True Faith.

The pagan abbots will not support criminal actions; they offer no absolution for sin. They do not assist anyone who seeks to change their apolitical nature. They do not want to appear partisan and in support of any pretender to the throne. Some suspect they hide true power. Many of their temple miracles, even images of their visiting gods, are generated by relics in the catacombs beneath.

That is perhaps their strength, belief in a higher celestial force. The collection of head priests being more inclined to abuse their fatherly roles. This group fights against the goals of the Cryptic Monks. They see the monks as a quasi religious group of god defying blasphemers.

Neutral Queen Coins: Prorogati Sky Realm Zaires – Living in a world of tranquility and opulence above the filthy folk below, most of these wizards ignore humanity. They live upon the clouds studying the stars and heavens, conversing with the unknown forces above. Many are generational dilettantes, stoned out of their gourds, space cadets, whimsical do-nothings and know-nothings. The magic which perpetuates their lifestyles is enviable but also waning.

The players forced to enter these Platonic gardens will be welcomed as diversions—fools offering fresh faces and entertainment—but the *invited* may never

be permitted to leave. To offend the inhabitants, many believing they are indeed godlings, is to be hurled off the platform and plummet to the earth below.

This faction remains in constant war with the Tundra Giants. They swear never to rest, until the last giant is slain. The Praetors are mentioned in the sagas, but the Prorogati claim to be the actual ancestors of those heroes. Who can say?

Many of the Prorogati accept they won that battle; the giants are no more. They hold this lie, even as many giants have migrated magically to live on the clouds. Lightning often seems to arc with vindictive purpose. The Prorogati hate giants for the threat they pose and the reminder that smoky casual times are just hazy illusions.

Neutral Knight Coins: Sacred Order of the Questing Knights – This group is tilting at windmills for the most part. They meet and talk about legends and famous members. They consume a fine amount of ale.

Many are feeble from age or convalescing from injury. The order has not had a great triumph in a long time; they know where dragons lurk but do nothing but talk. The emperor funds their pensions and club hall. There are even several noble endowments that provide cash stipends to maintain inns and retirement homes to the maimed in many of the cities. But, most active members would be lost outside of a pub.

Unlike many of the other factions, the player characters will be persuaded to join. Then they will pay membership fees and must suffer through mandatory training; have to work two weekends a month on menial chores, while they are in the hazing period. Eventually the players will come to the conclusion that they do not want to be members of any organization, which has the temerity to want them as members.

This assembly opposes anything related to the Janissary for driving many creatures to extinction. The Janissary find the rivalry quaint and send the Questing Knights a stuffed swan each Holiday of Noise on the Lunar new year.

Neutral Knave Coins: Cryptic Monks – Lost in study, these men are nonreligious teachers employed by many noble households. They collectively run grammar schools for the poor, funded by bell ringers accepting alms in most cities. They act all too perfect.

Covered from head to toe, most of these men are riddled with signs of failed magical incantation. Some have self mutilated cutting off body parts. Disrobed anything might be seen missing or even attached to their flesh. Besides tumors and discolorations, the monks often are transforming into something else than human. Feathers are common, scales and fur as well.

Still, they are not known as adventurers? All their mishaps must occur in the many indigent dormitories they've built and manage. The cynical will assume the

group are alchemists and vivisectionists, necromancers and demon summoners. There is no proven evidence any of that is true. Many a wicked man wears a robe, hood and cowl; that raiment does not make him a Cryptic Monk, except when it does. All of the order share one feature, they all have sliced off the cartilage of their noses. Their cowls include nose caps, some of metal but most of leather.

They serve the empire as a postal service and as town criers. Since most people do not read and write, the monks provide that service too. The news is dictated on one end and read back on the other, all for free, though gifts of meals are welcome. If handed an actual letter to carry, the first thing any monk will do is open it up and read. This ensures they stay neutral, and that they can record any misbehavior. The journals of these men would make fine lurid reading, except the Monks use code or write in a dead language like Hypatia.

Where any received their education isn't clear. They may be solely teaching each other. Yet as well, their source of recruits is unknown. The monks do not run universities nor take any outside pupils past age nine. Yet conversing with any, you'd know right away the person was educated. Crazy perhaps, but calm and at peace. The group outwardly says it has no enemies, except it does. (Ref decides for his campaign or worse their hatred fluctuates.)

Neutral 10 Coins: Avar Dwarf (foul) – The colony closest to the giant tundra, these dwarves have some of the richest stockpiles of precious gems. Yet like all dwarves their desire is not of avarice to personally own riches. Instead the imps like to hide treasure, to set diabolical traps, to prevent easy discovery, to tempt others to downfall. Dwarves are tasked by the gods to make men cry out in lost anguish. They are creatures, which amplify emotion, particularly greed.

“She drew back with blinded eyes looking upon the necklace Brisingamen; a passionate wish burst forth in her heart to have it for her own, to wear it always round her own fair neck. ‘Life to me is no longer worth having without Brisingamen.’ The dwarfs held it out to her, but also looked cunningly at one another as they did so. A burst of laughter rang through the vaulted caverns, echoed and echoed back again from side to side, from dwarf to dwarf, from depth to depth.” (Heroes of Asgard, 1870)

The Avar Dwarf fight against the goals of the collective Delvers Companies. This group has fought and kept delvers out of their territory. Untapped mines, forgotten riches, lay in these imps' underworlds.

Neutral 9 Coins: Volga Dwarf (horrible) – These dwarves are related to the Fae. Though the woodland faery are all but gone, the powers to work nature and cause slumber are known to these imps.

“Continuing a downward path, the last remnant of daylight faded; this was not total darkness, for each tiny worker carried on his head a lantern, in which burned a

pale, dancing light. A captured Will-o'-the-wisp was held prisoner, yet by deal, each dwarf would only retain his slave by day and must restore the elf to earth by night.”

More pleasant than many of the imps as a ruse, the faction complains that all dwarves must unite to exterminate the surface dwellers. To a degree they are all talk and no action. But pity be on humans captured by them.

Neutral 8 Coins: Khazar Dwarf (nasty) – Most of these imps are twisted; treat them as goblins. They shun the surface, as even moonlight causes them to scurry away.

“Hump-backed, cunning-eyed, open-mouthed, the dwarf stood round, laughing, and whispering, and pointing with shriveled fingers. They play tricks and set traps, which they cannot understand, and do not know how to avoid themselves.”

This group is disgusted by everyone and everything equally. But, they tend not to lash out. They rather watch a hero get eaten by monsters, then cause the death themselves.

Neutral 7 Coins: Dwarven Kings, Near Realm (great): Having lived in close proximity to the capital and been entreated into many intrigues, these imps act more refined and civilized. They are neither, but do understand that when dealing with humans, honey is better than vinegar; all men are flies.

They supply middlemen in the capital with narcotics and aphrodisiacs. Every few centuries they try to dig their way into the Royal Mint. That starts a war which ends inconclusively.

There are many other groups who wish to eradicate all dwarves. But there are just as many who know the imps have uses. The players will set their own opinions based on their first encounters and underworld mishaps. If the players meet Near Realm dwarves, they are lucky. At least the dwarves here will not be immediately run a string around their scalp and measure each human’s skull to size a potential goblet.

The near realm have at least once helped mankind. For these dwarves forged the chain, which helped bind one of Loki’s dangerous offspring, the Fenrir Wolf.

“The chain felt no heavier than a piece of thistle-down. No set of links will ever be made again, neither will the least atom of the substance of which it is made be found more. It was fashioned from six things. The noise of the footfalls of cats; the beards of women, the roots of stones; the sinews of bears; the breath of fish; and the spittle of birds. Fear not with this to bind Fenrir; for no stronger chain will ever be made till the end of the world.”

This assembly opposes anything related to the Imperial Watchmen for those guards tend to enforce curfews with hateful bias. Dwarves of course, none of them, may stand in the light of the sun and survive.

Neutral 6 Coins: Dwarven Kings, Midgard Realm (heinous) – By far the most skilled at construction and arcane craft, these dwarves are ever busy. To their own strange ends, they make relics. They also seem to be the most productive at carving out the marrow of fallen giants and threading the silver in veins to be discovered by burdened men.

“Innumerable narrow, winding paths, all leading downwards, opened into the realm. Only the widest seemed safe, as a faint clicking sound of hammers met his ear, and, looking round, he saw groups of the little men at work on every side. Some were wheeling small wheelbarrows full of lumps of shining metal before forcing these into the cervices in the rocks.”

This group fights against the goals of the Sacred Order of the Questing Knights. They believe these idiots should stay out of the underworlds and let professionals, like the delvers, handle retrieval of relics. Their efforts, over an eon, have left that order a shell of what it once was in antiquity.

Neutral 5 Coins: Dwarven Kings, Eastern Realm (invincible) – Living inside the highest and densest range of mountains in the Outlands—all of which were giants fell in the war with the Zaires—these dwarves are behind on their task. They could actually welcome visitors to come and take the piles away? Of course not. They apply the finest of curses on the loose materials and pay most delver companies to stay away.

“Some, with elfin pickaxes and spades, were digging; some, herded together exhausted in little caves, were too weak to kindle fires, tiny hammers sat idle on small anvils. On every side lay countless heaps of treasure—gold, silver, diamonds, rubies, emeralds—which the cunning workers stowed away in their dark hiding places.”

This group maintains good relations with every delver company and with many of the ruling earls. The group primarily seeks the destruction of the Remnants of Dark Lord’s Cult. The eastern dwarves were first corrupted by the Dark Lord, and many remain goblins from that abuse. The dwarves here blame that period for putting them forever behind on their work of distributing and hiding the metals sought by man.

Neutral 4 Coins: Dwarven Kings, Caspian Realm (enchanted) – These fellows are always complaining of dampness. They have been known in small groups to desert their king but can only make the long journey to other dwarven realms with the help of humans. The connecting points below have mostly flooded and turned into rivers and lakes with hungry denizens. Surface travel would work fine, except the dwarves cannot be trusted and will not follow placidly for long. Even if a series of caves could keep the dwarves inside during the day, they tend to get distracted at different phases of the moon.

“Here, in truth, were hung all the lights in the world, which, on dark, moonless nights, are carried out by dwarfs to deceive the eyes of men.”

They love the night and love the mischief darkness allows. They might fly or float, carrying lanterns high to mimic the stars. Outside under the moon, they turn into hobgoblins. These hairy imps might sweep and clean the hovel of a tired maid or make shoes for an elderly cobbler. Just as likely they will steal a mother’s baby, just to hear both mother and child weep. The tears they turn to moonstones, only to add to the materials they obsess to bury anew.

This faction remains in constant war with the all the Saurian Chiefs. The swamp lizards are purposely flooding many of the dwarven upper levels of the underworld. None of the dwarf race can swim and will panic drown in as little as six inches of pooling water.

Neutral 3 Coins: Dwarven Kings, Deep Realm (varies) – seldom seen by anyone but a delver, below every other dwarven kingdom are an even grander set of throne rooms made by dwarves that have never reached the surface. They seldom get to see men, and when they do they frenzy at the prospect of making ale.

“‘Whose blood was it,’ Odin asked, ‘that you mixed with honey and put into jars?’ The jumping dwarfs clapped their hands, ‘that was Kvasir’s blood whom we drown.’ For that they were sentenced to spend eternity way under ground, henceforth, throwing fuel upon the great earth’s central fire.”

This group primarily seeks the destruction of the Vox Illuminati silver advocates. They are poisoned by debased and impure metals. The floors of most of their world are volcanic glass.

Neutral 2 Coins: Order of Freemasons – During the short reign of one egalitarian usurper, a guild of bricklayers and architects was the first to pledge to that man’s rule. They were rewarded well for that loyalty. After the usurper died, and the line of succession returned, the freemasons were the first to denounce the man’s followers. They were rewarded well for that reversal.

Many a grand deign is planned, some are eventually built. The freemasons were later joined by some of the senators that supported the dead king. They also have added disgruntled members from many other factions. They are becoming more than the builders, yet that is truly their strongest asset.

The architects build cathedrals for the Patriarch of the True faith and secret bank vaults for the free silver advocates, those calling themselves the Vox Illuminati. The freemasons no longer play favorites. They also do not like anyone mixing mortar, unless he is a dues paying member of their society.

A branch of the freemasons, calling themselves the Vox Illuminati, obtained status as a true cabal. These *workers of light* know the floorplans of many tombs and

may return to take from the dead what still might be used by the living. That wealth will prove ample, so long as they are not caught too soon.

This faction remains in constant war with the Slavic Riders. Many edifices constructed by the order have been burned or torn down by these vandals.

Neutral Ace Coins: Delvers Companies – There is much which could be written about humans who live and work mostly below. These organized companies of underworld exploiters retain massive wealth and magical power. Yet their goals have no ambition on the surface.

Run by as few as twenty grand masters, the companies have recorded their own exploits and that of the world below for four millennia. The underworlds below have been partitioned by the twenty grand masters as exacting as the earls have divided the dioceses above them. Yet delvers do not boast, and do not share.

Their members have reached the very core of the planet and tunneled up to every surface point on the globe. If they had political ambitions they could be in every household on the same evening, breaking through rat-like into the cellars. Seems like a ton of work for nothing?

The rank and file are all orphans, bastards sired by prostitute slaves and claimed with no kinship except to the companies. There they take finger digits as punishment, demanding discipline. Any delver could easily go weeks without food and never issue a sigh. Each survivor has taken a turn, more than once, as the designated dead-man, the person obligated to touch the unknown to judge the lethality of the strange and exotic. This is not a nice life, a cult of pain suppression; the members are not trusting of outsiders.

They do hold pacts with and over demons, and demons are truly beyond measure in their ability and cruelty. Bottom line, delvers are less creepy than dwarves, more militaristic, but essential dwarvish styled societies of human miners. These companies oppose anything related to the Patriarch of True Faith. Those zealots are against slavery, magic and vice; three things that make delving profitable.

Swords: Enemies Foreign and Internal

Imperial Enemies King Swords: Nomadic Warlords – These are the remains of the Huns, a group that invaded and pillaged the eastern and western parts of the Roman Empire, before being defeated. They will raid the Frontier but lack a true clan leader with ambition to do little else.

Asiatic, the warlords are unmistakable in appearance. They are also hard to infiltrate; imposters are seen in the eyes, unless they can sublimely control their shape shift or illusions.

This group primarily seeks the destruction of the Brotherhood of Barbarians. They hate most Nordic people for stopping their advancement into the frontiers. The

barbarians were the reserves and berserkers that drove back the Huns when the legions were near defeat.

Imperial Enemies Queen Swords: Lictor Sky Realm Zaires – Was bound to happen, that a group of wizards would hate the empire. The group retains the name of their founder; he even lives but is now without magic powers. Lictor tend to argue with themselves and kill each other to show who is strongest. The weakened winner often then is killed by someone else and so on and so forth. Yet when they do feel aggrieved, they will pick a target and put aside all vendettas.

Their astral headquarters is the highest of any of the Sky Realms. It floats in the very outer atmosphere against the dark vacuum of space. But please never turn your play into Spelljammer®. I'll refund your purchase if you wish to do so. Okay, once in a while take the adventure to the moon or some other ghastly lifeless location. Magic is magic, and who am I to say that would be tedious and defy logic.

Lictor wizards are best described as lich, undead or men who have lived for far too long; the skin of many members has melted off. Place these foes far to the east and surround them by a buffer of independent Saurians. If the players have the might to cross the lands of the lizard men, just maybe they will be able to fight the Lictor.

This group seeks alliances with other factions that sow discord. Many argue that the Lictor leaders, if not the whole society, do not get along. Each only wants to subjugate and will not share the leadership role. Q&D Fighting Misanthropes and Madmen works well when any Lictor appears in play.

Imperial Enemies Knight Swords: Slavic Riders – Dedicated to preserving the traditions of the open steppes, these horse clans hate those who live in cities; they basically hate civilization. They believe that urban life has fostered disease and greed. True, but is that any reason to rage and raid?

They hate the empire, but are more neutral to groups of players, until they discover the party is on any mission for a patron. Any noble's goal probably helps the empire (in their view). But nihilistic player characters will be given potato distillate and invited to dance. *"Drink to death; she comes to kiss all."*

This assembly opposes anything related to the Patrician Class and city dwellers.

Imperial Enemies Knave Swords: Sultanic Raiders – The precursor of a larger force of southern people who will try to conquer the north. Right now, the armed bands are scouting and hunting for weakness. Limited in magic, they are stunned somewhat by what they have found. That men actually use spells.

In their truly fabled lands, all magic has coalesced into the ginns. The rulers of these men control the trade of exotic spices coming from India. But unlike the silk roads of the Roman world, these spices have less appeal when compared to the highly addictive substances being created by the dwarves.

Hence another motive for invasion. The raiders are trying to discover why their once exorbitant trade is less lucrative. This group opposes the many loyalists who foster a strong empire. They just may be the next great human enemy of the whole campaign.

Imperial Enemies 10 Swords: Saurian Grain Eating (large) – These are vegetarian lizard men. They dislike the salty taste of human blood. They can eat flesh but would rather stay vegan. This group are the outliers, disowned by their race. They are xenophobic and desire to be left alone.

Imperial Enemies 9 Swords: Saurian Bone Eating (horrible) – These lizards have massive jaws, think crocodile, able to crush open and suck marrow. They once herded, but were forced slowly out of pastures and into places where the cattle and goats could not thrive. A group of hippy types came to offer help petitioning the empire to return the lost tribal lands. The lizards feasted on them. No one can deal with these things. Don't even try.

This assembly has never won a fight against the Frontier Legions, though they have often tried and routed.

Imperial Enemies 8 Swords: Saurian Worm Eating (nasty) – Lacking a true jaw, but loaded with grinding rows of teeth, these lizards have a long proboscis, which they use to suck muck. They can't really bite down, but like all lizard men, they can cut you to pieces or impale you on a spear. Then, go back to the buckets of writhing leeches they grow. What feeds the leeches you might ask? One guess, pens of human thralls. Though hostile for the most part, the faction only is aggressive on humans and nonhumans who dares enter their murky domains. That and when they run short of leech food, they raid the villages and farmsteads that encroach.

Imperial Enemies 7 Swords: Saurian Egg Suckers (large) – Of all the lizard races, this is the most insect-like in appearance and social workings. Not very particular in what kind of egg they consume, the race is content to eat birds or lizard broods. Yep, cannibalistic. They see little to be gained by attacking humans and will buy chickens if they have any coins. Seldom do they, for they have nothing to trade. So, when the birds migrate away, the Egg Eaters have a choice, go hungry or venture forth. The locals, even some garrisons near them, have at times left tribute of baskets of eggs. This is seen as a cheaper way of placating an armed force, rather than risk night attack. Has it been mentioned that lizard men see as well in the dark as they do in full sunlight? This group primarily seeks the destruction of the Caliphate Thieves. That group steals from everyone, but the Egg Eaters feel especially persecuted for their small losses.

Imperial Enemies 6 Swords: Saurian Filth Chewers (large) – The lizards here walk around with a cud of grass, oil and excrement. They can consume anything, even rocks. Though the rocks are just eaten as a digestive. They tend not to like raw

food and will concoct great cauldrons of spew. The innards of Filth Chewers are considered a delicacy, and some connoisseurs will pay highly for fresh contents. The lizard usually must be opened on the dining table at the feast. Which is worse, these serpent creatures or the human creatures that find that fine dining?

This group fights against the goals of any and all dwarves. The dwarven kings also know that the potions, both accidentally created by the Saurian Filth Chewers, and the monsters' stomach contents, make for good sedatives and poisons. Yet the dwarves do not often break the surface hunting large prey. They'd rather force the players to do that!

Imperial Enemies 5 Swords: Saurian Brain Eating (horrible) – This is the only Saurian group that actively goes out of the swamps to hunt. Because they are in the far eastern Frontier, they mostly capture nomads to consume. The bigger the brain the more they crave. A party might be able to buy freedom for the many by surrendering meekly the group's big-brained magi.

This assembly opposes most vehemently anything related to the Academy of Thaumaturgical Study. That order nearly hunted the tribe to extinction harvesting gallbladders. At least one unnamed cabal (Grey Servants) is known to trade ten human brains for a single gallbladder of the tribe's most recent dead. The players will probably not know of a preserving agent, even a skilled apothecary, to make hunting Brain Eaters profitable.

Imperial Enemies 4 Swords: Saurian Bile Drinking (foul) – The one shake in the morning, one at dinner crowd of the lizard world, these monsters are also the most aggressive and territorial. This group is a splinter race of lesser stature than the rest of the lizard people. The product of magic experiment?

They are runts, but all the more ferocious having stronger venom in their teeth and tougher hides on their backs. They actually hate everyone and everything equally. Yet if they have to choose, they choose mankind or on second thought anything with hair. Many of this sub species also worship and serve dragons. They have spread into the depths, and the dwarves are afraid of them too.

Imperial Enemies 3 Swords: Saurian Gut Rot (nasty) – The name of the tribe might be describing their odor or otherwise their noxious habits. These lizards probably eat a combination of things, omnivores of excrement cuisine.

They are the best organized and will be able to form true military lines in open battle. Many a would-be arcane conqueror has enslaved formations of the Gut Rot, but they are not known to sell their services as mercenaries.

They have at times rallied and marched out to defend others of their kind. The player group might start fighting one Saurian type, but pivot to face these guardians of the scales. And yet, this group strangely hates all the others of its kind. After

saving other lizards, they are reputed to crush the force's wounded and weaklings. Some races of nonhumans are inscrutable.

Imperial Enemies 2 Swords: Tundra Giants (great) – Are any giants left? Of course, from demi-sized near giants up to the titans of old. The race was fought at the dawn of mankind. Fire, frost and fury, epic tales of heroes and gods facing down a destructive threat. The giants were defeated. They fell, and where they fell, mountains formed, or holes sunk into the earth. The depressions later filled as seas. The mountains are the domain of dwarves that mine the precious metal marrow of their veins.

Some giants fled and ended up at the end of the world. There they froze. Did some thaw? Did some magically hide? The sagas sing of a number that jumped into the sky and off the world. Some did heal inside thunderclouds. Much is strange about giants. They are mythic, and like dragons, a necessary part of any campaign. Make some cool Q&D, a weave of events to defeat one or a brace of the gigantic. Your players might not thank you, but they will be entertained.

This faction could be mostly giant worshipping cults. Those assemblies hate and fear the Praetor Sky Realm Zaires; old grudges survive, even if the current Praetor are distant, distant kinsmen of the heroes of old.

Imperial Enemies Ace Swords: Sea Rovers – The Nordic people have their own kings. The players may even still feel the pang of fealty to these lords among lords and bracelet bestowers. Those nobles hold far less stature than many players with full purses.

Yet the Viking kings do command their Stallari knights to go forth and trade. Where the boats cannot reach agreement, they plunder. Vikings sack many places as Sea Rovers. The entire Baltic Sea is not safe to most of the NPCs of the campaign.

Heading out as groups of ships, they do battle far less on the open sea than they do on the beaches and in towns. They are not patient, and do not commit to sieges. The townships, all city-states, have the walls to keep them at bay. But if the rovers can surprise or infiltrate to open a door, the marauders prevail.

This group primarily seeks to plunder the fleet ships of the Raja's Entourage. Yet those elusive merchants are said to appear and then vanish, whenever they meet a raiding fleet of rovers.

Optional Personal Motives

There is one prime player character who accepts the mission from the patron. He is committing to stay through the climax. As for the rest of the players, they join out of loyalty to their friend and for the Ignobles. Yet perhaps some join with a sidebar objective and motive.

If the prime player character leaves early, decides to not risk the wounds, the mission is failed. Rarely will he pass off the task to another; that new prime would have to be the same level and have any critical skills insisted upon by the patron. One exception is where at least one character has a secondary objective. The quest then continues with that player becoming the prime for his own personal quest and with the extra responsibility for the main quest.

These motives may be forced by other elements of the quest. If a high level character joins a low level mission, the big guy should be given an extra incentive to stick around. These may also just be added by the Ref as extra concerns for specific players. Up to half the party might have an extra or ulterior motive for joining the expedition. These they can share; no need to pull a party in all directions.

Though I dislike adding method acting to my games, sometimes role-players need a motivation. The players will grow in power and sometimes they will set off to perform their own quests. When that happens they almost always know why. Yet almost every NPC patron inspired quest will **include one personal motive** for at least one player character.

If anyone grouses, “*just what am I doing here?*” perhaps use this card flip to give them an answer. A personal motive should also commit a player character for the long haul. In other words, a character having **a personal motive will continue on the quests even after taking that initial vicious**, a prelude to possible death.

Each character beyond one having a personal motive should add an extra climax challenge to represent his secondary objective. e.g. If we had Physical Barrier (C), Minions (B) and Rival(A) as the flow. If two secondary objectives exist, then slip in an extra Minions (B) someplace like the start.

Some of the secondary tasks offer stated rewards. If none is listed, the player character may claim a full purse at the adventure’s end, but only upon success. **Most of these secondary objectives are for the Ignobles and advancement opportunity.**

This might use a lot of card flips. Best not to add secondary quests for everyone in the party. Use this, as said, for mismatched levels. Or, for characters who flip a Personal Event during encounters and desire some greater purpose in today’s play. The affected player might add his own back story to check the Growth Ignoble adding a well described achievement behind the scenes. Read the personal motive

first, of course, and make it fit logically and seamlessly into play. “*I just received a letter....*”

Secondary Objectives Quicklook

Secondary Motives		
	Cups	Rods
King	Gain Blade powers (continuing goal)	Apprehend criminal (a longer objective)
Queen	Carry a gift (Negotiate a truce)	Recover family loss (a relic)
Knight	Learn to command (Write military manual)	Improve your Mount (continuing goal)
Knave	Find proof of death (Find relic that slayed)	Slay someone one on one (return at climax)
10	Escape own prosecution (unjustified fear)	Recover theft from you (your magic Blade)
9	Pilgrimage (that acts as catalyst for change)	Meet veteran (gain self improvement)
8	Rival is enemy (but mistaken)	Acquire healing elixir (save self from plague)
7	Negotiate marriage (Deliver ransom)	Hunt savage beast (mythical, unseen)
6	Study magic (continuing goal)	Rescue from slavers (then avenge death)
5	Seek counsel (Reach library or temple)	Increase Blade (Find item to support quest)
4	Avoid Grey One (Avoid Dark lord's followers)	Aid revolt (Foment unrest)
3	Recover hidden cache (without sharing)	Animal tamer (in Epilog)
2	Prove loyalty (Watched by faction)	Someone disappeared (Quest for life's answers)
Ace	Guard another player (versus magic)	Second quest by patron (simultaneous)
	Coins	Swords
King	Claim fair share (from imprisoned thief)	Coerced to serve (or face jail)
Queen	Steal item for allies (no-win cursed)	Seek half a map (Assemble a puzzle)
Knight	Slay vulnerable immortal (gain next clue)	Seek to avenge honor (going forward)
Knave	Add to odd collection (Learn fresh songs)	Pillage for fun (Kill for glory)
10	Hunted by assassins (Seek troublesome twin)	Foil a trap (when make-rolls are limited)
9	Seek legendary Blade holder (perhaps you?)	Carry and use key (while protected)
8	Desecrate shrine (Switch icon)	Seize Command (Discredit patron's motive)
7	Investigate dark terror (undead rise)	Kill good for evil's sake (Supply evil forge)
6	Count legions – treason (Count patron's wealth)	Hunt misanthrope (on orders of Zaire)
5	Explore underworld (bad for party)	Hunt method to end ward (multiple times)
4	Verifying landmarks (to reveal treasure)	Uncover arcane powers (for gains as group)
3	Promise of hot meals (tough times for all)	Gain personal swaggering (continuing goal)
2	Destroy village (settle score vendetta)	Build confidence (Handle morphing abilities)
Ace	Slay unique monster (form of Grey One)	Slay marked foes (as they appear in play)
Inverted card result list in parenthesis.		

Personal Challenges Major Tarot

Personal Magician: Player character has a family member, friend or protégé in the crew who is ill. The patron has promised to secure a cure for this disease, but only if the mission is completed successful. The player should suspect the sickness was caused by an agent of patron. Sometime before the climax, he will know if his suspicions are true (fifty-fifty chance). Even if the patron is responsible, the player has reason to stay; yet by confirming his suspicions he gains the Fury Pip for the rest of the quest.

Inverted: the illness was created by the rival or his agent. The enemy is trying to make the longboat crew too weak to finish the adventure. Lose longboat technique No Disease (I). Yet the player gains the Fury Pip for the entire length of the climax challenges. Should he fail, the character gains the Authentic personality flaw; he becomes too nostalgic, almost predictable.

Personal High Priestess: Player may add any longboat technique, so long as he ties the benefit into his personal objectives. Ref decides and should help make the actions fit into his campaign. However, should he fail, the character gains the Utilitarian personality flaw. He is too stringent about waste and excess, driving his crew to frustration.

Inverted: the longboat will lose one technique whenever any player character drops out of the quest for an alternate. This should not happen if prompted by the Ref for story flow. Maybe allow the player swapping characters to gain an Ignoble by explaining what happened to cause the loss or having the newly arriving one stop the loss from occurring by display of skill.



Personal Empress: If applicable, someone else is competing to complete the same or a similar secondary quest as the player character. First to succeed will gain the lion's share of the reward and fame. Should he fail, the character gains the Vainglorious personality flaw. He over estimates his abilities.

Inverted: the competition should appear in the present quest as a new enemy whenever encounters generate a Personal Event. Should he fail, the character gains the Melodramatic personality flaw. He will overreact to dangers.

Personal Emperor: Regardless of personal quest, player accepted this mission to pay off gambling debts; patron (or prime player character) may own the markers or has cleared all the character's bad wagers. Should he fail, the character gains the Gamester personality flaw. He is a compulsive gambler, and this is not the first time he has lost everything on mere

rolls of dice.

Inverted: slim consolation, the games were rigged. The player lost but the outcome was forced by someone involved in the quest. Leave the culprit a mystery. Should he fail, the character gains the Anathema personality flaw. He lacks trust in everyone and makes no friends among the servitors.

Personal Hierophant: Player also wants to attract followers to a new religion or school of philosophy that he has conceived. The ideas are still much in flux; the player will continue his travels and study to refine his arguments, add tenets and codify his doctrines. The longboat picks up technique Religiously Inspired (C). For military minded characters, the philosophy can be one of how to rule or lead men; a study the character hopes one day to put to practice in his own free company of auxiliaries. Should he fail his personal quest, the character gains the Braggart personality flaw.

Inverted: player suspects (or wishes) he is a godling. He fully expects one day to grow to such power that his name will be worshiped, and he will ascend to a lofty, or fall to a hellish, domain. Success on this quest will be the first divine test. If the mission fails, well, he may decide he's not so mighty as he hoped. His lost hope should leave the character with a Bereft personality flaw.

Personal Lovers: By the end of the quest the player will meet his bride in an arranged marriage. He will just a quickly desert her for continued life of adventure. And if he was already married...let him explain himself, yet often his previous wife has died in childbirth (sad times). Regardless, the character gains the Wanderlust personality flaw.

Inverted: the wife will be connected to the nobility, so the player character gains hereditary lands and feudal debts. Want to guess which he has more? Should he fail his personal quest, the character gains the Libertine personality flaw. He parties, womanizes and spends money excessively.

Personal Chariot: By joining the quest, player character also wants to bring acclaim to a friendly town, his religion, his family clan, renown to his ship's name, etc.

Inverted: player needs to redeem himself with an oft visited town, his religion, his family clan, the ship's crew, etc. This quest will allow him make amends.

Personal Justice: Player's secondary objective is a violation of the laws and wishes of a guild, city-state, regional earl or the imperial court. His character's level helps decide which. Should he fail, the character gains the Reluctant personality flaw. He will be resistant to repeat such unlawful actions.

Inverted: player has been scolded more than once by the present party's leader to not pursue his objective, not right now. Still he does so. The player causes the mission a negative Quest pip of minus one. The consequences might be dire should

the current mission fail; he will be blamed. Should he fail, the character gains the Treacherous personality flaw. He is only interested in himself.

Personal Hermit: Player hides a recent nefarious act and continues to be sought in connection with property crimes or manslaughter. The quest will keep him away long enough to let the charge lapse, but only upon success. Should he fail his quest, the character gains the Unemotional personality flaw. He probably is always hiding something. Note, that flaw normally makes the character unable to gain the Fury Pip, but a follow-on quest might bring back his passion for adventure.

Inverted: player hides a sickness, injury or magical curse from a recent event. Though not contagious, it seems dangerous for the character to be adventuring (before recovery). If the character is trait Rugged, he loses his benefit to ignore the first vicious wound. The character does not start with a wound, though, that would be too cruel. Should he fail, though, the character gains the Maniac personality flaw. He will always want to stay on the quest do or die.

Personal Wheel of Fortune: Reshuffle the deck and continue.

Personal Force: Player starts the scenario without a purse of coins; he lost or spent his money. He may not leave the quest if his purse remains empty. Should he fail, the character gains the Greedy personality flaw.

Inverted: character wants to purchase some land for himself, his clan or an indigent woman he's befriended. He used his purse as a down payment, but he needs more money to finish the deal. The purchase will take a D8 more pouches. As he acquires each new jingle of coins, he may send his accumulated proceeds at the end of each encounter phase, counting down toward the final payment. Each will leave his purse empty yet again.

Ref, do not let the group game this by having the guy double dip from the loot; a double purse is still one purse, a fat purse is the same as one half filled. A purse is a purse, lest we start counting imaginary coins, ugh! Men with money splurge and tip; ones with little spend parsimonious amounts. Both become empty upon game use, like paying a bribe.

Personal Hanged Man: Along with his secondary quest, the player has a nagging question about his past or a recent event. He suspects the motives or actions of someone yet wonders if he should. He has a quandary, which can be solved during the adventure. Perhaps he has a technique that he needs to truly test; perhaps he has a friend he now doubts in loyalty. The Ref and player must together pose a question. e.g. Not – did I leave the stove on? How about instead, am I truly a Pugilist or have I been boxing doffers.

Inverted: player doubts he's human; he wonders if he was created magically and not born from mortal parents. This internal debate will only be solved by taking a

wound or incredibly meeting his creator. Should he fail his secondary quest, the character gains the Foolish personality flaw. He will continue to have stupid notions.

Personal Death: player feels slighted that he wasn't selected as the prime player character, the one the patron offers the mission. This should not be revenge, but the player character will be trying to one-up another character. Ref and group must decide and enforce how this changes play. How 'bout the first wound the prime player character might take is instead blocked by the player character. That character takes the event, and the player must attempt he roll?

Inverted: player wishes to see the whole group meet with minor harm or hardship; he feels bitter and wants the group to suffer. He should not join the opposition, but he will unintentionally cause problems. Raise the rank of all mission inconsequent encounters by one, until the player character reconnects with the group through a combined success on this or a subsequent adventure. Should he fail this quest, the character gains the Jealous personality flaw. He will envy the success of others.

Personal Temperance: Personal quest is trivial; player is only halfheartedly pursuing the secondary objective. He will automatically complete his task at the climax challenges, but only if the start of the climax is reached. The Ref may add a battle during one of the interphases between sets of encounters to resolve the player's extra task.

Inverted: player may take a Command Pip at the start of every battle in encounters. Or else, he may gain it in every battle of the climax (his choice).

Personal Devil: Player character starts the adventure avoiding or actively evading a faction in the campaign. Ref should use the one he selected under Political Motives or introduce a regional cult, which enters play as another opposition, appearing whenever the mission consequence event is an inverted King.

Inverted: player character dabbled with becoming a member of a secretive cabal but failed the initiation or made a fatal mistake of mocking the leader. Add this new threat to his character background, though success on the current mission may mean the faction has other matters and shelves its feud against the player.

Personal Tower of Destruction: Player character is pursued by a dangerous phantasm, powerful beast or a magical misanthrope. He had a busy downtime. Perhaps check an Ignoble by telling this tale. The action will come to a head between one of the phases of encounters. At least he'll have his friends there to help him slay the monster.

Inverted: the player character has stolen a relic from a creature. The monster will attack causing a single Bane to each player character at the interphase between each phase of encounters. Yet at each phase the player may attempt Difficult roll, which upon success leads to his confession of his deed and the surrender of the relic

back to the fantastic owner; only then will these attacks end. The relic has no other powers in game terms, except its old and causes monster attacks. “*Cool, its aura is magical.*”

Personal Star: Player character thinks that his actions are watched by a deity that will judge him in the afterlife. If he fails this quest, he will be Shaken in the entire adventure to follow.

Inverted: Player character seems instructed by some unknown power or god-like apparition. He gains the Wizardry Spirit Guide (R), or locks that swaggering as Glorious.

Personal Moon: Player character accidentally aided the cause of a political faction. He does not gain a nice friend, though. Instead he has offended that faction’s enemy. The Ref should use the card he flipped as Political Motive as this enemy, or else say a low level character has angered the constables and vigilantes by helping a regional cult. The faction will enter play opposed as every other encountered Knave.

Inverted: he still has an extra enemy this adventure, but also a supporter. The faction he aided will appear as every other Queen. Treat that card as never being inverted. That friendly faction may stay anonymous, unless it is obvious from the enemy. Note, not every enemy of a cabal’s enemies produces a friend. They tend to be a chain of hatred in Outlands. “*He hates Him, but Him hates Me, but Me no like He.*”

Personal Sun: Character now seeks invulnerability or immortality; although he is unsure how that can be obtained. With such an open-ended addition to his quest, the player should try to develop character quirks to reflect his search for everlasting life. The Dark Lord once promised his followers eternal youth; yet is that the way the player wishes to head?

Inverted: character seeks to be Sol, the True King, a man described by scholars and legends as returning one day to lead a united land of peace and prosperity. He’ll probably be disappointed. So long as he is the only *Arthur* of the group, all is fine. But if two player characters both have this goal, settle it here! Fight the swagger vs swagger between the two false ones. Too harsh for a random flip? Let one recant his claim, but also lose his first alphabetically listed character Trait. (Bold, if not then Clever, if neither then Energetic, etc.)

Personal Judgment: Player knows his quest is long range and will not be completed on this scenario. The goal will continue into the next quest as well. Only in that second quest will it be fulfilled. He is still bound to stay through both adventures.

Inverted: player character is filled with doubt. He must roll twice to acquire new swaggering. If an event’s Advantage allows him to gain any swaggering, he will roll first to see if he is successful on the result. Then assuming he is, he makes a

second roll to see if he actually gains the extra technique. If he failed the first roll for result, he misses the swagger. Only when he is successful does he make the second roll. He might, of course, cause a beneficial result, but only with the subsequent successful roll does he end up with the technique.

Personal World: Along with any other quest, the player is trying to find a new home or base of operations. For one quest only, he renounces his heritage of being a Varangian Viking and adopts the cultural identity of another language he understands. Hereafter he will pretend to be Rus or Greek or Khazar. He often fails as he fakes the adopted accent and sheds his barbaric mannerisms and racial ticks. The character temporarily gains the Combative personality flaw for this entire quest. Should he fail his quest, he remains such going forward. If anyone calls him out for not being who he says he is, he must defend his honor. *"I am too Lezgin!"*

Inverted: player instead must fake having a skill. He will only think he has the ability. The character temporarily gains the Drunkard personality flaw for this entire quest. When he doesn't have a skill, he doesn't have it. He might insist on trying tasks but will fail. when someone else (with ability) then proceeds, that player's roll increases one Degree. e.g. Difficult becomes Tasking. The player character tries to stand comfortably with men of the same stature and profession. He will chat with farmers or seaman, noble servants or duelists, and make a fool of himself. His insistence that he is what he is clearly not will cause a few brawls. Again, by the mission's end, he will give up his pretense. However, should he fail his quest, he remains a Drunkard going forward.

Personal Fool: He travels under the false expectation that the patron's mission is really a cover for a more profitable scheme. Since all travel might bring a windfall of riches, especially underworld expeditions, the player may be right. But he only losses this belief if he finishes the quest and gains little. Until that time, his ninja-looting and distraction to gold makes him never gain from any Tactical Pip the group achieves. Should he fail his quest, the character gains the Puritan personality flaw. He swings too far the other way. he might not refuse to carry a purse of coins, but the contents will be assorted pennies (which he pinches).

Inverted: player is actually on another mission for the same patron. Rather than select a new card for Mission, use the personal quest motive below to represent that extra goal. The Referee may decide if any additional reward will come with victory and whether any Queen encounter switches to a result that only influences this player and his own secondary goal. As for twists and rival, those are for the prime player character's quest. Yet treat any Digression which puts this character before the rival as deadlier, maybe minus three to rolls (not below result of one).

Personality Flaws

In some games, these flaws are called buzzwords. **The terms flaw and buzzword are interchangeable**, and both mean a bad affectation that comes to influence play. The definitions of any flaw is literal, and each player should use his flaws to steer his action on the quest. The Ref may even enforce such restrictions. e.g. A Drunkard would not refuse a free ale without proof of tampering; suspicions are not enough. When the Referee feels the player is acting too far out of character, he might snatch the role up as an NPC. Threaten to do so, at the very least. Flaws are penalties, not cute aspects to role-play as you deign to amuse.

Personality flaws will be gained throughout play. Ginns and Demons may also inflict them as an alternate damage instead of vicious wounds. Every time the group fails a quest, especially if they give-up and go to the Epilog, one or all should start to feel resentment. Losing is contagious, and people hate to stay with losing teams. Start with Reluctance (to remain with the group) and proceed from there. As something that was probably left out of the Fundamentals book, here's a rough idea of different role-play flaws and how each changes the mechanics of play.

Personality Flaws	Minimum Suggested Penalty
Anathema	No use of contacts and favors in Phase C.
Authentic	No Fury Pips in Phase B.
Bereft	No Fury Pips in Phase C.
Braggart	No Tactical Pips in Phase B.
Combative	No use of contacts and favors in Phase B.
Drunkard	No positive Quest Pips in Phase A.
Foolish	No Catbird Seat Pips in Phase C.
Gamester	No positive Quest Pips in Phase B.
Greedy	No Command Pips in Phase B.
Jealous	No Tactical Pips in Phase C.
Libertine	Will never have a purse to use before the climax challenges; he may restore his purse, briefly, but only during those events.
Maniac	No Tactical Pips in Phase C.
Melodramatic	No use of contacts and favors in Phase A.
Puritan	Will never use a purse during encounters; he may only use his purse during the climax challenges.
Reluctant	No Catbird Seat in Phase A.
Treacherous	No Command Pips in Phase C.
Unemotional	No Fury Pip in Phase A.
Utilitarian	No Catbird Seat Pips in Phase B.
Vainglorious	No Command Pip in Phase A.
Wanderlust	No positive Quest Pips in Phase C.

Gaining Extra Buzzwords

Just like as magic slowly warps the player character, so do lingering personality flaws. Twenty were listed. There could be more, but the list does cover most of the basic annoying personas. Having a few prompts play. **Having too many leads to paranoid psychosis.** If a single character has more than ten of these flaws, he probably is insane. Every time a character gains yet another beyond ten, he should roll Ordinary to see if he's too far gone to truly remain in the game.

Also, if the player character gains a buzzword that he already has, use the following table to inflict an alternate penalty.

Alternate Buzzword
Anathema to <i>Melodramatic</i>
Authentic to <i>Bereft</i>
Bereft to <i>Drunkard</i>
Braggart to <i>Vainglorious</i>
Combative to <i>Jealous</i>
Drunkard to <i>Braggart</i>
Foolish to <i>Gamester</i>
Gamester to <i>Combative</i>
Greedy to <i>Utilitarian</i>
Jealous to <i>Traitor</i>
Libertine to <i>Greedy</i>
Maniac to <i>Anathema</i>
Melodramatic to <i>Libertine</i>
Puritan to <i>Unemotional</i>
Reluctant to <i>Puritan</i>
Traitor to <i>Authentic</i>
Unemotional to <i>Wanderlust</i>
Utilitarian to <i>Reluctant</i>
Vainglorious to <i>Maniac</i>
Wanderlust to <i>Foolish</i>



Removing Buzzwords

Ridding your character of these flaws is up to the Ref. Success and comradeship in a winning group is restorative. Plus, as the Growth Ignoble happens each level, the player might lose one flaw if some situation warrants. He might, though, check Growth more often for gaining flaws?

How do you stop being a Puritan? Well, something in the game should prompt you to see that that lifestyle endangers or limits not just yourself, but your friends. Magic too, might be attempted, but any roll of Celestial treatment or Thought Control mind blank should be Nearly Impossible. **Limit any attempt to restore mental health to the Epilog, so a make-roll may not be used.** Plus, any failed attempt should cause Warped Outcome Tally for the mind healer. It is just as likely such an empath would take away one person's buzzword only to add it to his own flaws. Finding a way though role-play to evolve is so much better for the story.

Personal Motives Cups

Secondary King Cups: Gain a Blade swaggering, which is your birthright to obtain. The main quest must be successful, during the climax challenges, for you to claim your goal reward in the Epilog.

Inverted: this objective may be added for another half D8 additional quests, but only if you are not the prime player character of the patron. Each time, the player character can try to acquire a new Blade technique.

Secondary Queen Cups: Carry a gift to a foreign leader or distant relative; main scenario offers a chance to gain some much needed diversion from the tedium of this basic task.

Inverted: negotiate a truce on behalf of a friend or faction. The gift is the first step toward trust.

Secondary Knight Cups: Learn how to command men; join the party to watch the leader drive the crew in battle or inspire morale. Success to gain one combat oriented skill known by the prime player character of the quest. (He's the guy who accepted the mission of the patron.)

Inverted: player is fascinated with organized combat, trying to write the definitive treatise on the subject. If he fights and wins a legion on legion battle during this adventure, he may select any combat oriented skill as a reward.

Secondary Knave Cups: Seek to find the physical remains, bones or clothing, of a mentor, a prophet or a fallen personal hero. Player will probably take a bone fragment or symbol off the corpse. Success on the main quest means he has gained opportunity to do so.

Inverted: seek the weapon that killed a hero. You must prove to yourself, one way or another, that it was magical. It won't be, but you're living with the belief that only an arcane blade could fell your larger than life mentor. While you falsely hold that impression, you may not advance in level. The last Ignoble check to go up will always elude. Success on the main quest (or if needed a subsequent quest) will break that false conviction. It was character building to discover.

Secondary 10 Cups: Escape prosecution; the player character is falsely accused and pursued by a single-minded avenger or warden. Player hopes to find proof to clear his and his family's name. Success on main quest to prove so.

Inverted: player only thinks he is wanted; a true criminal is brought to trial and convicted in his absence. The player's fears are still real and only go away if the main quest is completed.

Secondary 9 Cups: Pilgrimage to a place, perhaps in an underworld, where you can renew your own powers or the powers of a device you carry. The device is a family treasure (McGuffin) and should not continue in play after this quest.

Inverted: pilgrimage does not renew your own powers, but instead acts as a catalyst for increasing the powers of a society, religion, guild or clan chief that you serve.

Secondary 8 Cups: Rival of the mission is a personal enemy; scenario offers another chance to humiliate or harm this enemy of the player character.

Inverted: player thinks rival is a past enemy, but he is mistaken. Only by completing the quest will this become known. Otherwise, he will continue to desire to best the rival in some upcoming quest.

Secondary 7 Cups: Negotiate a deal or marriage proposal; travel of scenario is along same path. Often the player carries a hidden treasure, a gift of a ring. He might also need to conceal his secondary motive.

Inverted: instead he is delivering a ransom of jewelry for a prisoner exchange. The extra NPC liberated from captivity may be assumed to be added into the crew for safety. The captive will be in no condition to aid the main quest.

Secondary 6 Cups: Study and explore the realms of magic in the hopes of one day becoming the Deltazaire, most powerful of all wizards. If the main quest is successful, gain one Wizardry technique.

Inverted: this objective may be added for another half D8 additional quests, but only if you are not the prime player character of the patron. Each time a new Wizardry technique might be gained.

Secondary 5 Cups: Travel seeking counsel of a sage or all-knowing priest that can answer a question that has puzzled you.

Inverted: not a person, but reach a fabled library or temple, often protected by ancient traps or an enchanted monster.

Secondary 4 Cups: Avoid servants of the Grey One who search for the player for unknown reasons. Add them as an enemy.

Inverted: character carries an innocent looking object that is desired by the remnants of the Dark Lord. Add them as an enemy.

Secondary 3 Cups: Recover a previously hidden cache of treasure that was buried and left behind on an isle or in an underworld. If the mission is successful, the longboat additionally gains Treasure Laden (D).

Inverted: player does enjoy the protection of the party, but he doesn't want to share; treasure trove will be unobtrusively recovered and hidden on the vessel. But by doing so, he learns a valuable lesson. When he goes to retrieve the prize, he finds the chest gone or has changed into a box of sand. The gods toy with him.

Secondary 2 Cups: Join as a show of loyalty to another player character, or because another player character insulted your courage or dared you to come along. Regardless, your motive and secondary objective is petty. Gain little, yet if the quest fails, you lose the Trait Bold.

Inverted: asked by an outside faction to help the quest; they will be watching remotely or spying within the crew to gauge your abilities. Lose Longboat Treachery Expunged (G) at the start. Gain it back upon mission success in the climax challenges, after the evaluators go away.

Secondary Ace Cups: Tasked with protecting another member of the party; this other player character usually is ignorant and would not approve of your oath to safeguard him. A past comrade, the character's father, or a high official has made the player swear an oath. The man you guard might still take a first wound, but any injury thereafter goes to your player character as you save him from harm. If you quit the mission, you no longer take his wounds. But by lasting through to the end, both of you, you each may claim one personal swaggering technique, perhaps Better Valor (B).

Inverted: the oath is to ward him against magic. All Warped Outcome tally increases are instead suffered by you. By some odd reckoning, the misery transcends time and space. Even if you quit the mission, you will suffer his warped outcomes during this quest.

Personal Motives Rods

Secondary King Rods: Return a criminal to justice; outlaw was last seen fleeing in same direction of the scenario's travels or into the underworld. Add an extra half D8 events to the climax challenge to represent the fugitive's apprehension. The whole party will take part, though they may think your extracurricular activities will harm the main quest. If a majority agree, the secondary objective's challenges only occur after the main quest. But, both must be completed for true success on either.

Inverted: add a longer objective to find the criminal. The person will not be found this scenario; this is just another step along the path to eventually catching the rogue. An accomplice or clue will be gained by success in the climax challenges.

Secondary Queen Rods: Recover a special item taken from the player character's home, larger village, city-state or liege lord. Object is merely ceremonial in importance, but you made an oath to only return once the item is recovered. Success to do so or Shaken for the entire next adventure.

Inverted: device has a special power or function that is obsolete in one place but can serve greatly another. Player character will eventually discover this and must decide whether to take it back or leave it be. You did make an oath and might be Shaken. But another city-state gains a half D8 Good traits by letting them retain the object.

Secondary Knight Rods: Gain a Mount swaggering by training your horse. The main quest must be successful, during the climax challenges, for you to claim your goal reward in the Epilog. At least one phase of the encounters and at least one climax challenge must take place on dry land (where you can use your horse). Can a flying mount be used anywhere? Interesting, I'll leave that up to the Ref.

Inverted: this objective may be added for another half D8 additional quests, but only if you are not the prime player character of the patron. Each quest offers a chance to gain an additional Mount technique.

Secondary Knave Rods: Slay someone who also will be adventuring during the travel of this scenario. The combat must be one on one and takes place in an interphase of encounters. The other players must just sit by and watch for they will be elsewhere. If the battle does not conclude within a half D8 plus two events of combat, the murder victim escapes, and the secondary event has been failed. Try again next quest but in that subsequent attempt start Shaken.

Inverted: player character wins the duel but skips all phases of encounters. He may play an alt during encounters and will only return at the climax challenges.

Secondary 10 Rods: Recover an item that was stolen from you. You gain the Fury Pip this entire adventure. But if you fail to recover your purse—your purse from the thief, not a new one you fill—you spend the next adventure Shaken.

Inverted: the item lost is your magic Blade and all the swaggering associated with it. If you fail this quest, try again in the next and the next and the next. You gain no fury and suffer no Shaken. However, you may not gain any new Blade techniques, while your sword is gone.

Secondary 9 Rods: Player character is meeting someone returning home from a distant war, pilgrimage or meeting; scenario simply travels the same route to that friend. If the quest is successful, you add one friend to your list of contacts and favors. Ref decides his role in the campaign, but usually he is from a faction generated by Political Motives. Your new friend might even be, shock and horror, a lizard man. There is hope for reconciliation of the races yet (probably not).

Inverted: just recently you concluded service in a long war, made a pilgrimage or return from a period of confined study. Imprisonment? You need this quest to be successful for many personal reasons not the least of which that you are broke. Start the quest without money. Yet if the quest succeeds, your other activity also proves to be character building. Card Blanche! Gain a Trait, skill, or swaggering of your choice. You may instead scratch off an enemy, add a friend and contact or lose a personality flaw.

Secondary 8 Rods: Travel to an area to purchase or acquire a healing elixir or talisman that will remove a local plague or curse affecting someone you care about; route of scenario follows player's path.

Inverted: you also have the noncontagious plague and need the cure. Start with a vicious. End successfully or continue with this injury into the next and the next, until you find your cure in a successful set of climax challenges. Often you will die trying; just statistically so.

Secondary 7 Rods: Hunt a strange or savage beast; usually the elusive questing beast that changes shape or has tracks only the player character can see. Path of beast seems to follow that of party for this scenario. The battle might be an extra climax challenge in which all the other players start Shaken, except you. The monsters should be of equal level to you matching your level to its ferocity.

Inverted: player character is declared insane by his companions. The search is frustrating, so start either every combat in this adventure as Shaken. Or else start the adventure with a festering vicious delivered by the unseen beast; your proof it exists and also gain Fury Pip throughout.

Secondary 6 Rods: Rescue someone or buy their freedom, a lover or child, taken by slavers after a raid.

Inverted: when the captive is found dead, you drag your companions into combat to take revenge. Add one battle as the first climax challenge against the slavers.

Secondary 5 Rods: Find a missing, yet vital piece of a device, item or weapon that can be added to something the player character carries to amplify his power. The Ref must decide if this truly is a relic, and what powers it confers. Best to keep the mechanics grounded and just give the player an extra Blade and any one other swaggering of his choice if he completes the quest. Then forget all about magical stuff and keeping a list of gear.

Inverted: the item has no other value, except it is fated to be integral to the quest at hand. Find the object during encounters with display of skills or combat with an appropriate threat. Then, the other players can not win this alone. Unless the player character fights through the climax challenges, the main quest fails. The item has no future relevance; give it over to the Janissary or Thaumaturges for archival.

Secondary 4 Rods: Organize a revolt by carrying an important document or item to the leader of a mutiny. Place of planned uprising lies along the journey of the mission. If done correctly, the other players will feel they just happen to be in an unlucky place, one where all this occurs; only the player character knows he dragged the others into this end.

Inverted: player is trying to foment unrest in an area, spread lies about the present ruler to inspire the serfs to take the bold action. He is often undermining a decent but timid person. The area of planned intrigue lies along the journey, and party's mission offers cover for the actions. But all encounters will increase one rank, as the player character is creating trouble.

Secondary 3 Rods: Tame and catch a powerful beast for training as a personal servant; player has a competence taught from his father or a sacred society that assists him in this capture. This may not be the first time the character has captured such a beast; he may be on contract to continually do so, transporting them back to a guild or family enterprise. The Referee picks the creature – seldom a monster, often a great animal. If it is big, like a mammoth, well he should drop out of the quest upon making his catch. The player switches to his alt character. His role as captor should have a distinct name; let the player decide.

Inverted: season is wrong for the catch, so player joins the mission knowing he will not sight any of these beasts until the Epilog. Each time he makes a catch and delivery, his purse will be full.

Secondary 2 Rods: Search for father or relative who disappeared a sort time ago.

Inverted: looking for father who left when character was a child or hunt for your only remaining relative. Why do we accept such romantic quests? They're a good excuse for travel through foreign lands. The player character should be very compulsive in his search; meaning until he finds some resolution, he will never abandon a quest which offers travel to a new location to make queries. Ref decides when his task is finished, yet it might never be?

Secondary Ace Rods: Patron has already offered the player character a follow on quest. But, he must have this one completed successfully.

Inverted: the two quests occur at roughly the same time. The player character and all the other players using alts should run their next quest to conclusion, yet only after this first quest finishes (with the selecting player now starting as his alt).

Personal Motives Coins

Secondary King Coins: Recover a share of a treasure that was not fairly divided; player character seeks a partner from a recent venture that cheated him. The man is somewhere along the quest travels or can be faced in the climax challenges.

Inverted: the thief is hiding or is trapped in the underworld. The trick will be to convince your present group that it needs to delve on the current quest, so you gain an opportunity for revenge.

Secondary Queen Coins: Steal a special item to aid your home, village, city or regional earl. These are often relics that seasonally give benefits like city good traits or prevent the return of bad ones.

Inverted: the device is actually cursed, and the next activation will cause banes. The player character has a chance to discover this, but only if he completes successfully the greater quest he's on.

Secondary Knight Coins: Slay an adversary that can only be killed at a specific place or during a vulnerable time or ritual. That will correspond to the quest's climax challenges. The gods make these things come into alignment.

Inverted: except when they don't align? This will be a long range quest; the immortal will not be faced this scenario, but a vital clue to his vulnerability will be achieved if the overall mission is successful. Gain one clue or part of an object that makes the threat mortal. e.g. Pine tar from grove near Murrum, Ash of a Polosk tree hit by lightning, Tears of a maiden whose husband was slain by Saurians near Tmutarakan, mixed and coated on your own Blade.

Secondary Knave Coins: Search for items to expand a collection; the scenario offers a chance to gain something the player character desires of an esoteric nature. These collections will be small, at most filling a bag, not a pack. A threaded necklace of teeth is good, though horrid, trophies. The player warrior boasts of his collection, so much so, that one other player character might join him in shared fondness.

Inverted: player character fancies himself a bard of poems; scenario sounds like another good tale to set to music and add to his own adventure stories. Character gains skill Minstrel. Yet situation implies the character lacks discretion, advertising his involvement in past missions and revealing truths best left concealed. Ref decides when that proves hazardous. *"My kinsman was Gotham, the man you sing of slaying!"*

Secondary 10 Coins: Join the group for protection, since assassins have tried recently and several times to kill the player character. The player character receives a vicious wound if he ever abandons the quest. The mission also gives a chance to understand exactly which of your many slights caused such a heated reprisal. Only success on the mission brings the clarity needed to end these threats or gain forgiveness.

Inverted: player character has almost an exact double. With so much magic it may actually be an alter ego or his time shifted self. The doppelgänger is wanted for numerous crimes, many offering high reward. You will gain a change to dispel or

slay this evil twin during the climax challenges. Mending your reputation takes longer.

Secondary 9 Coins: Seek the true wielder of a device or weapon that the player character carries; the quest will bring you to meet a person of legend or described in poems. The item has partial powers, but at a price. You may gain Catbird Seat Pip bonus, but your Warped Outcome tally increases by one. The extra tick up does not generate an event, but don't let the player game this to leap across a full section of those shifting events. Ref may decide to impose any outcome, perhaps after a full D8 uses.

Inverted: with each use of the relic, however, you are weakening the hero of legend and becoming the true wielder of the weapon. The person you seek may be found dead if the player fails an Ordinary roll with minus one to the dice for each time the weapon was used this quest for the Catbird Seat advantage. If the hero is not available to take custody of the weapon, the power shifts into your Blade. You may tap the Blade for a Catbird Seat Pip, plus three bonus. But by doing so, you gain ten points of Warped Outcome tally – yes, ten! Once again, the Ref must decide when the tally also causes an additional game event. Every D8 battles, the Blade activates, whether desired or not.

But that's not all, there will be pretenders seeking you and trying to take your Blade. There may be a slim chance your burden transfers to another without your death, but the new host must be another player character, perhaps your own alt. Ref decides under what conditions that occurs. He may even change the whole group to the *Guardians of the Blade* and pass the power about the group; each time it is used a new host gains the ability. For that gift, you all should gain a secret faction as a permanent enemy.

Secondary 8 Coins: Desecrate a sacred object carried by a person or openly kept at a shrine in a city or region. Why you are doing this is unknown; you may not even be aware of your driven cause. Else, tell a nice backstory about why you hate the religious icon. The damage you cause typically doesn't even change the powers, if any, held by the object.

Inverted: same sort of thing, but rather than befouling the altar, the icon will be substituted with an illusionary trick or fake. If the item is held by a person, the player character gains skill Pickpocket. If it's a shrine, the character gains Prestidigitation. The swap will be attempted during an extra climax challenge. Your compatriots will not understand what you are doing and might try to stop you. If so, begin the combat sequence with everyone taking Bane Method Irregular, then switch to regular actions. "*Next time give us a heads-up, before you go crazy.*"

Secondary 7 Coins: Investigate reports that some terror or dark power has infested an area; scenario's path will enter this place of malevolence. If player's

character seems like not the sort that would go into known trouble, he either was compelled by greater authority or believes the reports are pure folly.

Inverted: the reports state that the dead do not stay in their graves. The group will encounter undead for a full phase of the adventure and meet the cause as an extra climax challenge. The sinister leader is often too powerful to fight, and all players must use method Escape before then finishing their main quest. The dark force is too important to hold a grudge but check Growth if you swear to face it again. Before next level is achieved, any character taking such a dare must fight the evil or some minions to sober up. Some elements of the campaign will always be. But did the Dark Lord return?

Secondary 6 Coins: Spy on an area's military strength and report back to another planner. Player has his own mission and uses the party as cover. If his diagrams of fortresses and counts of frontier limitanei, scribbles he keeps in a journal, is ever discovered by a patrol's search, the whole party may be accused and tried for imperial treason.

Inverted: you will spy on the wealth of the patron and report to an unknown third party. Though it seems the player is opposed to the group, the third party is neutral; the player has his task, and it does not entail disrupting the mission. Regardless of success, none of the party may befriend the patron. He will think all betrayed him later, when his wealth suddenly declines.

Secondary 5 Coins: Explore the area of an underworld. By himself would be madness. So, the player character in each phase of travel will roll Ordinary to concoct an excuse and convince the whole party to make a foray, a quick one, into the Unending Gray. All encounters will shift to underworld. He only needs to do this once, that and live, to achieve his own secondary goal. Yet each time he does so, the entire group gains a Quest Pip. Not bad, maybe worth a few lives?

Inverted: wait a second, the Quest Pip is negative? Yes, each time you get the group to divert into the underworld, not only do you get the harsh encounters, but you suffer minus one Quest Pip to all rolls for wasting that time. Hopefully the player is unlucky on his rolls, since each phase he must try to convince all. Only one foray and return is required, but the player character would be happier with three.

Secondary 4 Coins: Verifying the landmarks of a map; this map happens to follow the path of scenario. Longboat gains Charted Path (B) but lose the technique if the mission fails in the climax challenges.

Inverted: the map is supposed to reveal a treasure, but the person you purchased it from may have lied. If the treasure is found, it will be too bulky to transport. The group has a choice, fail the quest and gain Treasure Laden (D) or continue. When anyone returns to the spot (Epilog only), only on a Nearly

Impossible roll will the riches remain. The gods don't like their gifts covered with earth, nor do the ever watchful imps ignore such an easy prize.

Secondary 3 Coins: Seeks simple pay and the promise of hot meals; player character is destitute, usually having sold much of his personal gear, even his horse, right before joining the adventure. This is not debt to a mere shylock, rather the gods probably wish to teach the player character a lesson. The player may not use, nor gain, any Mount swaggering this quest. He will only regain his Mount if the mission is completed successfully. Otherwise, he might have to start over training and slowly revealing the powers of a new colt. His old one lives with the gods, but only should he fail.

Inverted: times are tough for everyone. The party does not gain Methodical additions to the longboat, nor does anyone begin the quest with a purse of coins. Only the prime player character of the patron may start with a purse, if the patron was Assuredly wealthy from resource of **Riches**.

Secondary 2 Coins: Destroy one village along the route. The event happens early and does not need to be detailed. Fire, magic, slaughter, the player character may not even remember his secondary goal. He may deny his involvement, even as he washes the ash and blood off his boots. Yet for the rest of the adventure and in one extra climax challenge, the survivors or their clansmen are hunting to avenge this brutal attack. If the character has not checked Growth, he does so now and is a sadist. There is almost always a cure or exorcism that might end this Maniac personality flaw. There is also the Uncontested Dagger Thrust (delivered by a companion). Success on the mission will lead to redemption. But his culpability in this one act remains as part of his history and to shade all his deeds to follow.

Inverted: you have a long standing vendetta to settle with an antagonistic family or clan. You might regret your unbridled acts, but you were honor bound to retaliate. If those you punished dare rise-up and cause harm to you or your friends again, the rivalry continues. Ref will judge if the encounters prove the feud remains unsettled. Kill more next time, perhaps. If any player character dies on this quest, especially if the cause was the other clan, then the feud remains with everyone seeking fresh revenge.

Secondary Ace Coins: Carry a special weapon that will instantly slay one unique and particularly ghastly monster; however, character has not obtained the proficiency or courage to attempt the task. Scenario is another step toward that final fate. This can represent not a second weapon, but a gemstone that must be added to the hilt of or holy word that must be spoken over the player character's own Blade. Each successful mission will give a chance (Tasking roll) to forge the monster's bane. Once done, the next quest will have a secondary objective to slay that beast.

But in doing so, its cult of followers or nonhuman minions will add another twist to whatever mission the players undertake.

Inverted: the weapon slays one of the alleged six hundred and sixty-six forms of the Grey One. The entire cult will become your enemy once you snicker-snack and go galumphing back (as Lewis Carroll might relate). You kill one form but enrage the others as heroes often do. The relic has fulfilled its destiny and is now inert in gameplay. Or, is it? Ref decides if the process continues with additional Tasking rolls.

Personal Motives Swords

Secondary King Swords: Threatened or Blackmailed into accepting a place in the party on the mission. Patron or even another player character was the person who forced you to join. Guaranteed end to coercion if mission succeeds.

Inverted: legally ordered to join the mission or face loss of property or imprisonment. You may have been pardoned for a previous crime or transgression for accepting a place in the party. The patron vouched for you, yet he could recant.

Secondary Queen Swords: Seek to find the other half of a map that supposedly leads to a great treasure; latest clue to the missing piece suggests travel or a person to be met in this scenario.

Inverted: not a paper map, but an object, usually of many parts, each of minor value, each piece is critical. Map or *open sesame* may be etched on the coins of a necklace since torn into pieces.

Secondary Knight Swords: Seek to slay the leader of a raiding party that originally killed all the members of your family or a former crew.

Inverted: a long range quest, you will not face the villain this scenario, but a vital clue to his whereabouts will be given if the mission succeeds.

Secondary Knave Swords: Loot, pillage, steal and plunder all, yet squander as quickly. If character has yet to check Growth, he does so as a flagrant impudent with money. This Libertine personality flaw will be removed if the quest succeeds; otherwise enjoy always being broke, carefree oft times, but little more than a mindless bandit.

Inverted: lust for battle, carnage, death and glory, just against evil if that is your wish. Players enjoy the sport and looks for every opportunity to brawl. Each level you may not check any other Ignobles, until you first check off the one for Battle. This limitation only ends if the current mission succeeds.

Secondary 10 Swords: Test your skill against a trap that lies in an underworld along the journey of the scenario. Gain the skill Delver. The whole party will spend Phase C of the adventure underground. However, only the player character is dumb enough to touch the untouchable. Roll Tasking or suffer both vicious wound and a

D8 added to Warped Outcome tally. Obviously, a make-roll, but what did you prove? If a make-roll is used, then the next player around the gaming table will also touch the forbidden snare. If all players use a make-roll, the original player will take this secondary quest into the next mission. He does not satisfy his yearning to confront a nightmare.

Inverted: if anyone uses a make-roll to pass the test, he uses all his remaining make-rolls. You might as well suck it up and attempt the Tasking to save the party a bunch of grief.

Secondary 9 Swords: Carry a key that was created with one prime purpose, to open a gate in the underworld and release a beast. The key will often not look like a key. The beast may have served its sentence and deserves release. It may not even injure the group. However, there is a danger from the cult that worships the thing or from consequences resulting from the havoc the monster will soon cause. A half D8 climax challenges in the underworld must be faced to reach this gate, open the gate and flee.

Inverted: another player character will carry a ward that protects the party from the beast's strange attack, like being turned to stone. Here's the rub, that player will not be known until the end. If anyone leaves the quest, after the start, there is an equal chance his Blade was the eerie, one-time protector. Does the party risk releasing the monster if there is even a small chance they all will petrify (or dissolve)? Why do this? The lair of the monster, after it leaves, will have accumulated wealth – maybe?

Secondary 8 Swords: Seek to discredit the present party leader (prime player character) and take his position. Player character does not want the mission to fail; he wants the patron to switch his role to the prime (reward). The best that can occur from this is the patron will reward both players equally. More likely this will become a competition. Keep it friendly or settle it once and for all.

Inverted: seek to discredit the present patron and force the party to abandon his mission. Now we have treachery. You might not support the rival, but you do not support the end result. You join as an insider sowing dissent, causing sabotage and hoping all will fail. This stops at outright pvp violence.

To make this truly work, a random player character (even the prime character of the quest) is secretly the hater. Start with a minus one Quest Pip. With each bad event, the Ref might give a clue. Offer suggestions like the perpetrator must have been Trait *Clever* or exhibited skill *Duelist*. But always try to choose describers that point to several possible characters of the group, include a few NPCs if needed for uncertainty. Only after a few mishaps are endured will a Clue®-like answer be found. *“Only Jeoff is those traits and skills.”*

Attribute all bad events of travel to the traitor. If the party ever truly fingers someone, the right person, then all trouble ends, a reconciliation occurs. All encounters afterward are optional. If the group ever guesses wrong, the scapegoat must leave; the player takes up his alt character and increase the penalty of the Quest Pip by another point. If the climax is reached before the insider is revealed, the mission fails. No one may then be known to be a traitor. That outcome might be better than the alternative of knowing the group was actually betrayed?

Secondary 7 Swords: Carry a special poison or curse that was crafted by the servants of the Dark Lord; player seeks to kill a young hero having the potential to be the True King – he who is destined to bring peace to the world through the end of all magic. This secondary quest will pose a morale dilemma for the player character. Do you truly kill the man of peace? The act to do so may be less dangerous than the aftermath of having done so. In a way, don't worry, many have the potential of being the True King; the campaign need not end.

Inverted: you will not be the assassin of this unfortunate; you may not even understand your role. You carry an item to an ancient arcane forge. Yes, the forge needs to be in the Unending Gray. From the travel encounters you will learn that you carry an element to make an alloy needed by evil to craft a relic. Hey, the money is still good? But do you offend the cult or all mankind? What do you do with the material you carry; I guess you might just toss it into the sea? How did you get yourself into this? Tell us a tale of sorrow.

Secondary 6 Swords: Seek to stop a person causing powerful changes in the flow of ordinary magic. Add a cult, misanthrope or sorcerer set of banes to the climax challenges.

Inverted: this is a long range quest given by a Zaire. The wizard being sought need not be confronted, but solid proof will take time. A vital clue to the misanthrope and his whereabouts is given upon each quest's success. Since a shell game of mystery could be hard to keep going on the fly, the Ref may secretly roll a D8 (or two half D8) and countdown the mission successes needed. The wizard being sought should also be an enemy in many adventures to follow, yet that is not enough proof for the Zaire. A tough secondary quest is generated here.

Secondary 5 Swords: Seek to discover a method for eliminating a powerful magic charm or field that prevents an ancient relic from functioning. The whereabouts of the relic is not known by the player character. He's merely been told to end the relic's counter.

Relics are like atomic bombs; many factions have them, few would use them. Relics are often created in times of extreme conflict, during arcane battles, where they destroy and are themselves destroyed. Yet some are merely countered, put on

ice and sent dormant. Player is trying to turn off one magical switch that counters another from working.

Inverted: the relic in question has more than one counter. It must be truly epic. If the player is successful this once, he will be asked to continue. Each time he will be rewarded. He'll be paid for a half D8 additional missions to continue his role in helping a faction empower their nuke. That faction may be imperial or an enemy, but usually the faction will not identify itself. They may pretend to be the ineffectual Society of Questing Knights. Are those knights' impotence an act?

Secondary 4 Swords: Questing to discover the powers of a special device or weapon carried. This will usually relate to the player character's Blade, unless a past quest have made a relic of the campaign become personal – known and handled but maybe not in the group's possession. By completing the patron's mission, every player also gains one technique, the same technique for each Blade. This must be a swaggering that all Blades are missing.

Inverted: The swaggering need not be only Blade, but everyone gains the same ability. Again, no character may already have the ability being gained.

Secondary 3 Swords: Gain a personal swaggering, which is your birthright to obtain. Could be a father's or brother's best move. Could be something your fencing master tried to teach, but you were too young to appreciate. Now is your chance for self improvement at arms. The main quest must be successful, during the climax challenges, for you to claim your goal reward in the Epilog.

Inverted: this objective may be added for another half D8 additional quests, but only if you are not the prime player character of the patron. Personal swaggering may be thought of as the bedrock of a warrior's talents. So, to fail and not gain one of these brilliant techniques, could lead to a Foolish personality flaw. An opportunity was allowed to pass. The Ref must decide.

Secondary 2 Swords: Seek confidence in an ability. Player character loses a personal swaggering or skill, and he needs an apt teacher. The best teacher could be experience and trial and error. If the mission is successful, the player regains his lost technique or skill. If anyone demonstrates the same skill successfully in the quest, he can also try to restore his lost understanding with an Ordinary roll.

Inverted: your abilities seem to have morphed. You lose one personal swaggering technique, or when none available a skill, but gain a different competence. Swap one for one, up to a half D8 techniques or a single skill. If the mission is successful, you regain your lost aptitudes, the skill or swaggering, plus you retain the surrogates you used during the quest. The fresh skill or swaggering must be utilized. The Ref should give opportunity, but more so you should get creative. Even swagger might be used outside of combat; there's of course Calculated actions. If the mission fails, however, you lose the improvements.

Secondary Ace Swords: Slay the bearer of a mark described by the oracles or poems of legend; character's destiny is involved with this prophesy. At least so he thinks. The identified characteristic may be on more than one opponent in the climax challenges. Fame, if possible, must accompany your success or failure. Fame as a murderer may not be all it's cracked up to be; the player and Ref should agree on who has this mark and how this all fits into the campaign. The cultists may not be one and done in a single battle.

Inverted: you gain a long term enemy. The bearers of these marks will sporadically appear in adventures to follow. (Rather than tattoos, it could be cult outfits to add variety and color.) Maybe not every time an inverted Knight is flipped, but the berserkers should be triggered sometimes for that mission consequence event. Only your death will end the assaults, for you *are* the one the oracles foretold. Check that Ignoble; hurry up and advance to a point in level where these bad guys seem less impressive. They should not escalate in danger. Pity though be on you, if you generate this secondary quest at level eight, *Stallari*.

Patron's Finances, Resources or Clout

The patron's typical influence and resources were defined, so this additional card flip will add some problems related to what the patron has. The card flip for finances may also modify the player characters reward for undertaking and completing the quest. The best prepared patrons seem to have an endless supply of everything, including goodwill. But then there's always something, which was forgotten. "*Did I fail to mention....*"



Finances Quicklook

Finances		
	Cups	Rods
King	Expects credit (Cursed gold)	Wealthy in frontier (Clout exhausted)
Queen	Imperial clout (watched by whispering agents)	Influence with legions (unsafe to use)
Knight	Ill-equipped armory (purses from nobles)	Pays with influence (all contacts at risk)
Knave	Downplays wealth (recognizable fraud)	Protective of legacy (abuses law)
10	Exhausted, catastrophe (purses from guilds)	Marshal's army clout (no sea, army routed)
9	Art collector (caretaker only)	Boat master supreme (use his ship)
8	Acts wealthy (servants help sell the con)	Delayed payment (disgruntled crew)
7	Assuredly across (Ordinarily across)	Area's war supplies (political rival with spies)
6	Triple wages (expects repayment)	Worthless, fraud, criminal (unknown to patron)
5	Has no helpers (Do mission without servitors)	Borrowing (using player group's assets)
4	Return big-ticket items (purses from matron)	Burgeoning cartel (help to patron and rival)
3	Spouse wealthy (mystery purses to all)	Limited usefulness (Free food for life)
2	Using dowry (purses from patron's relative)	Fyrd Gestir slave (runaway)
Ace	Damaged vessel (purses from secret society)	Hates travel (Inhuman Watchdogs to start).
	Coins	Swords
King	Shipwright boon (King boat penalties)	Organized to farthing (King lose swagger)
Queen	Mystery pouch of plenty (Fine for failure)	Short shirks (lose favors)
Knight	Make-roll charm (Knight warning)	Negotiates by threat (Knight lost favors)
Knave	Private cache (boycott upon failure)	Wants begging sycophants (ruins if failed)
10	Ethnic hater (Shipwrights great boon)	Generous to servitors (lose favors)
9	Inflated criminal prowess (Treasure Laden gift)	Offers cohort (angry relative interest)
8	Wealth far flung (Chartered Path gift)	Storehouse goods (penalty for failure)
7	Mirrored wealth (Treasure Laden gift)	One of a kind gift (indian giver)
6	Dealmaker (Mission changes radically)	Stringent budget (arcane interest)
5	Breeder (increased horse losses)	Money no obstacle (with time crunch)
4	Hates water and ships (Earl impounds longboat)	Split costs (matriarch interest)
3	Fair wage (Noble Allegiance gift)	Affectionate aid (noble interest)
2	Obscure coinage (Arcane Sentinel gift)	Blackmails prime character (cabal interest)
Ace	Land holdings (Inhuman Watchdogs gift)	Transfers ship ownership (not his to give)
Inverted card result list in parenthesis.		

Major Tarot – Finance's Trials and Tribulations

Tribulations Magician: Finances will seem adequate, but in play will never be enough. Each time a Queen event occurs, the players suffer a minus Quest Pip.

Inverted: reverse is true. All will seem meager, but otherwise will work out to be enough. Each time a Queen event occurs, the players gain a plus one Quest Pip.

Tribulations High Priestess: Someone else lends finances to the patron's quest. Pick a card for WHO? The patron's ratings for resources are actually those of the lender.

Inverted: the controller of the patron's influence and resources will require the players to make a separate petition to him, or else he might want to join the party to protect his investments.

Tribulations Empress: Nobles provided the patron his finances, often that's the case. If the mission should fail, the prime player character has made himself an extra enemy (WHO?).

Inverted: the finances were provided from peasants or humble city craftsmen or tradesmen. In the aftermath, success makes the Imperial Guildmasters or failure the Patrician class as an enemy of the prime player character.

Tribulations Emperor: During the scenario, one player will attract and command a loyal bodyguard.

Inverted: he will see the man die before his eyes. The first time the player character suffers a wound, his shield bearer is slain instead. If it doesn't happen by the Epilog, well, then the man dies by illness. This meeting is tragic, and the gods ensure this does not end well. Perhaps the bodyguard was a divine test?

Tribulations Hierophant: The finances of the patron were delivered as tithes to pagan temples. If the mission fails, the abbots of some temples will not be able to make expenses and their parishioners will starve. Add famine as a bad trait to any neighboring city-state.

Inverted: he's using the assets against the wishes of the local auguries or flamen. Add a major pontiff seeking the player characters for restitution; he becomes an enemy of one and all should the mission fail, and he isn't repaid.

Tribulations Lovers: Regardless of whatever the patron has as ratings for resources, his reward is significant. If he can supply the gold for one longboat swaggering, the group may take two.

Inverted: patron has little to offer. He has a colleague that must first agree to anything provided, but that partner is reluctant to commit.

Tribulations Chariot: Patron sends additional guards along to support of the players; these are led by an NPC.

Inverted: guards are watchdogs on the players' actions. If the group deviates from the quest's goals, the guards might punish them severely. Any player character with a secondary objective will have a harder time. Any battle caused from pursuing the secondary objectives can create a minus one Quest Pip; Ref decides.

Tribulations Justice: All the finances were secured as debts borrowed from a guildmaster or criminal loan sharks. If the mission fails, the prime player character gains an enemy of the Grandfather of Thieves.

Inverted: the patron's original material wealth came from pirates or thieves. If the mission fails, the prime player character gains an enemy of the Imperial Watch.

Tribulations Hermit: By accepting any of the patron's finances, the opposition will know the player's plans – too many spies exist. The patron knows this and will warn the players; he truthfully promises to later repay, handsomely, any expense the player fronts.

Inverted: do not generate (yet) the patron's Finances; add this quest detail only upon the flip of any face card in any Phase of encounters.

Tribulations Wheel of Fortune: reshuffle the deck.

Tribulations Force: Patron's finances were acquired by extorting another into a partnership. Do not select WHO? The other person is much weaker and therefore inconsequential. The reference is made only to show the patron's true character as ruthless.

Inverted: patron makes all his total finances available. He is threatened with blackmail or legal confiscation. He wishes none of his wealth to remain should the quest fail.

Tribulations Hanged Man: Patron is providing more than he can truly afford to offer. Even if he is a friend at the end, he'll have nothing left to offer; ignore that result of either friend or foe.

Inverted: patron only offers that which means little to him; in reality he could give quite more. Once again, his friendship or hatred later is meaningless because of his stinginess.

Tribulations Death: Patron's wealth lies in future inheritance; someday all will be his, but for now he's limited.

Inverted: a timely death made the resources available for the quest. The patron may or may not be behind this death; leave that a mystery here.

Tribulations Temperance: Patron's funds are controlled or held by an overseer. Players must first perform a straight-forward task or act of intrigue in Phase A to free up these funds, before continuing with the primary quest.

Inverted: this task is a whole adventure for the overseer. Only after this extra adventure is successful, may the party circle back and do the patron's initial quest. For the detour, only a mission and rival card needs to be selected; the overseer's task is streamlined in complexity, but the journey still has travel encounters and a set of climax challenges.

Tribulations Devil: Patron's troops, equipment and finances are exaggerated, broken, faulty, disloyal, poorly organized and undisciplined. Best to forego all he might offer. If the players desire some reward for service, they will have to loot along the way.

Inverted: innocently add to the group just enough men and materials for these flaws to become apparent at the worst of times. All dice rolls start with a minus three Quest Pip, but the penalty declines by one each encounter phase, and is wholly gone at the climax challenges, as the players discard or fire all the patron's *helpful* contributions.

Tribulations Tower of Destruction: Right after signing the terms and reward, and the prime player character agrees to undertake the quest, the patron's finances

will be consumed by an unrelated event. Quite literally, as the ink is drying, the players might watch as the patron's own ship undergoes mutiny and heads out to sea. All the bad luck—luckily?—occurs before the first encounter is generated. The players may be wondering, though, how to even start after what seems like a complete jinx of circumstances. Let later Queen encounters apply normally, as the patron provides some future aid or suffers even more inconceivable set-backs.

Inverted: delay the time of the mishap. At the scenario's end, all the patron's finances, including those taken on the quest, will be consumed upon completing the Epilog.

Tribulations Star: Patron's finances come from an enemy faction. This should not be just that he plundered and crusaded there. The true backers of the adventure are men or monsters who wish to destroy the empire once and for all. Be very hard to believe that goal is not also the patron's?

Inverted: the patron's finances come from a secret cabal. He may not realize this, but the group should suspect this from the get-go.

Tribulations Moon: By the end of the adventure, every longboat technique will be tested. Usually Ordinary rolls will be required to keep each technique. Try to weave these mishaps into play but keep a list and check any still to be tested at the Aftermath.

Inverted: the tests are made at Difficult.

Tribulations Sun: Another source of wealth becomes available to the patron after the start of the scenario. The Ref must decide the specifics, but he may select a second patron card and apply just the resource ratings. Do not add a second patron with this pick, only that this patron now has more influence and resources.

Inverted: the extra wealth only comes after the quest is done. The patron will be more generous with his rewards upon success. He will be more dangerous to those who fail him.

Tribulations Judgment: Patron's clout for **Power** and **Respect** depends on his **Riches**. By using his wealth, he reduces his social status and ability to politically aid the players. He may trade a position in court (his social ranking) for graft or sell his appointment title to another.

Inverted: the opposite seems true. Each time the patron relies on his social position and exercises his clout, he drops in wealth. He's cashing in one-time favors, waiving debts so services are provided by others.

Tribulations World: Whatever the patron has, it becomes grander, regional in magnitude. He has the power and probably the title of an Earl, so why did he pretend to be something else? If his patron's role seems small when generated, he was playing the impoverished fool, using an agent or knew his name and title would be blemished by the player characters and the quest.

Inverted: all of the patron's finances are vaulted in the underworld. The mission switches to one that would only take place in the underworld.

Since the dwarves are not bankers—they would be too impulsive and steal away anything left in their trust—his vaults must be protected by spells and demons. This money will not be fluid and may leave the patron with little or nothing to hand over at the quest's start. But the Queen events, when not inverted, arrive with lavish rewards or the use of fairylike relics.

Tribulations Fool: Patron will later attempt to rob or extort back anything provided to the players. This usually occurs in such an open way, that the players will know they've been made the fool. The patron will mock them as he takes all, even if that is just lifting their purses. He does this in a manner where resistance is futile e.g. Thought Control, Paralysis or other such binding spells. Revenge must come later; make the patron a future rival, as soon as, the next mission. *"Want to get even?"*

Inverted: patron will have miscalculated, been distant or unaware perhaps, forgotten his investment by the scenario's end; players can keep anything provided. If a relic is included, the Ref must be careful to set guidelines on its use going forward. Found or surrendered relics are often left in the care of a temple or scholarly society, for safe keeping until their use is required. If the player is walking around with a utility belt of gimmicks, you've sort of missed the theme. (His Blade may even get jealous and cut his throat as he sleeps.) Unknowingly carrying a relic, cool; walking around like Thor, bad. *"Godling hulk® smash."*

Finances Cups

Finances King Cups: Without wealth or friends; hopes the players will extend credit or share in the profits at the end. The patron is notorious and known to have defaulted on other loans. Stranger still, during Phase B of encounters, the events will always shade toward combat and the baneful.

Inverted: besides the baneful encounters suggested by the regular card flip, the players also receive some cursed gold from the emperor's treasury. This may not be the patron's fault, who can say who gave the group these coins? The curse is up to the Ref, but the coins do taint others in each player character's purse. They usually represent a feeling that the coins are shunned by most merchants who see them. *"Those all have the face of the Medusa; hide them!"*

Finances Queen Cups: May use imperial clout to obtain additional finances, but by doing so he makes this a matter of public record. The Curia Regis or regional earl will want a debrief at mission's end. More chance to make the powerful angry.

Inverted: patron has been mentioned in the capital's court by whispering agents. That is almost never a good thing. Yet strangely, do not generate (yet) a

Rival; he and his minions only enter play upon the flip of a Knave in any Phase of encounters. Note, various mission consequence encounters also are treated as Knaves for result. e.g. Eight in Phase C. If the rival has not been detailed before the end of the adventure, there was never a true enemy of this patron's mission.

Finances Knight Cups: Controls or has access to the local area arsenal.

Unfortunately, the armory is ill-equipped or lacking in variety of arms and materials.

Inverted: in addition to whatever is negotiated in the terms, the players also receive each a full purse from sympathetic lords. Stranger still, during Phase B of encounters, all combat starts with a plus one Tactical Pip.

Finances Knave Cups: Outwardly without means; secretly has great wealth.

How much the patron is willing to reveal of his fortune depends on the quest and his trust in the player characters. Typically, he is stingy in his money and confidences. Stranger still, in the Climax Challenges, all combat starts with everyone Shaken.

Inverted: prime player character recognizes this fraud but knows better than to confront his patron. Some guile must be displayed or else the patron will provide very little up front to aid his and the players' accepted cause. The prime player character, like with the regular flip outcome, also starts the climax challenges Shaken.

Finances 10 Cups: A recent catastrophe has exhausted his wealth; his current funds are meager. But he will usually provide a better reward upon a successful conclusion of the task. The patron pretends he is very affluent but is only disguising his present shortfalls. The prime player character sees through this feign of a rich lifestyle.

Inverted: in addition to whatever is negotiated in the acceptance terms, the players also receive full purses of coins from journeymen and masters of a local guild. Stranger still, during Phase B of encounters, all combat starts with the first player taking action receiving a Command Pip.

Finances 9 Cups: A collector with a fortune in art and jewelry but limited hard coin. Collectors tend not to sell their collections. Also, there will not be that many buyers of rare or stolen art outside of the capital. However strangely, all characters ignore increases to Warped Outcome Tally for the entire adventure.

Inverted: he is the caretaker of a collection. Depending upon his own resources, he may be the guardian of the harem's ceremonial head pieces and assorted adornments, i.e. recognizable pieces. Yet some of these jewels are so gorgeous that even a dwarf would trade true gold to acquire. Others still may have dormant special effects.

Finances 8 Cups: Acts extravagant and highly cultured; wears fine cloths and jewelry but has nothing else of value. His influence has all been exhausted. He may

be desperate enough to hand over what he has – a few items for a goldsmith to divvy up and top off a purse.

Inverted: besides his own thinning purse, he has a few servitors who dress likewise. These men will be less inclined to allow their master to give away his family's heirlooms. Stranger still, during the Aftermath, the patron will never befriend.

Finances 7 Cups: Neither very wealthy nor very poor yet has anything required for the scenario – Ref use discretion. All his starting resources change to **Assuredly**.

Inverted: not so fast, everything will take some time to acquire, so treat requests like those rated **Ordinarily**. Stranger still, during Phase B of encounters, all players gain the Fury Pip.

Finances 6 Cups: Pays triple wages and provides most requested items. He still has the limits set by his background and profession.

Inverted: whatever is handed over at the start, must be returned undamaged. Else the players will pay reparations. Their end of quest reward is after miscellaneous deductions. Only a trained Steward can argue otherwise with a Tasking roll. Stranger still, during the Aftermath, the rival is always an enemy, no matter how insignificant each player character is.

Finances 5 Cups: Has plenty of coin and material items but will offer no troops or crew. He wants the players to keep the number involved to a minimum. All characters may not utilize friends, contacts and favors in the campaign for the entire adventure.

Inverted: absolutely no one else should become involved – the player characters go it alone. Any travel by ship will be as part of another neutral crew, never as question raising passengers; draw no suspicion. This should not limit the action solely to duels. The players can be involved in all manner of larger battles, just not using their own loyal forces. They must join other companies or bands as needed. Of course, their own longboat techniques are off limits; however, new techniques may be acquired by event resolution. Just part of the enchanted nature and whimsy inherent in the rules. The limitation on using contacts, stated in the regular card flip, also applies.

Finances 4 Cups: Pays normal wages, but all borrowed big-ticket items must be returned. That means ships (or techniques), bands of warriors and any relics. The patron is a scrooge who provides old or damaged material items, yet he might expect new and undamaged ones upon return. Say for a wagon or the casks that hold ale; each player character must roll Ordinary at quest end or spend his purse covering repair and replacement. *“Stupid, clerks.”*

Inverted: in addition to whatever is negotiated in the terms of agreement, the players also receive full purses of coins from a powerful matron, sometimes but not always the patron's mother. Stranger still, during Phase B of encounters, anytime a King is flipped, the players gain a Quest Pip of plus one, up to a max of plus three.

Finances 3 Cups: Additionally, a father or spouse is powerful and wealthy; however, no guarantee anything can be obtained. The players must use Phase A to extort or steal from the patron's family estates.

Inverted: in addition to whatever is negotiated in the terms, the players also receive full purses of coins from an interested third party. Leave this mysterious benefactor unknown (even to the Ref). Stranger still, during the Aftermath, the patron will always befriend.

Finances 2 Cups: He's planning to marry and use his wife's dowry to fund the quest. This is a pending marriage, so he starts by offering nothing, unless his background makes the resource **Assuredly** his. The patron loathes the impending marriage and will worm his way out of it. So even by the quest's conclusion, he could have nothing to offer as a reward.

Inverted: in addition to whatever is negotiated in the terms, the players also receive full purses of coins from a relative of the patron. Stranger still, if two Kings occur in the same Phase of encounters, generate an extra Finances, a problem or a blessing.

Finances Ace Cups: Owns a damaged vessel among his limited finances. Change all **Assuredly** to **Ordinarily** to penalize the chance of obtaining desired influences or resources; these could come later, but never at the start. Take note, he hasn't the funds to make repairs to his own crippled ship, but he might strip the thing for a half D8 transferable longboat techniques. These only remain with the player characters for the length of the mission. If the techniques are lost during combat or mishap, the players may be expected to hand over a purse of coins for each loss. Some of course, like Treasure Laden (D) will not be available.

Inverted: in addition to whatever is negotiated in the terms, the players also receive full purses of coins from a secret society. Stranger still, in the Climax Challenges, all combat starts with a negative one Tactical Pip.

Finances Rods

Finances King Rods: Wealthy, but without power and influence in the civilized part of the campaign. All his ratings are available only in the frontier. However strangely, all characters lose the ability to be understood, when using any language other than their native tongue for encounters before the climax.

Inverted: the patron was once a leading government official, but all his clout has been exhausted. **Power** and **Respect** change to **Improbable**. The language limitation off the regular card result also applies.

Finances Queen Rods: Has influence in the legions; might enlist aid from cohorts or garrisons. Land resources become **Assuredly**. Stranger still, during Phase A of encounters, all combat starts with the first player taking action receiving a Command Pip.

Inverted: however, the soldiers are politically dangerous to use. This means the troops should not discover the full quest or motive, lest they join the rival.

Finances Knight Rods: Refuses to pay wages and will deal only in contacts, influences and friendships. He is a power broken for promises, many of which can be kept. Just because he will not expend his own **Sea, Land** and **Riches**, doesn't mean he hasn't a contact which could be tapped in the encounters to provide resources.

Inverted: should the mission fail, the players lose all their contacts and favors. They become political hot potatoes. Stranger still, during Phase A of encounters, all players gain the Fury Pip.

Finances Knave Rods: Rich, but protective of his estates and livestock property. In most instances, all will be fine, until he is required to sell or mortgage anything; then he would refuse. Stranger still, during Phase A of encounters, the events will always shade toward combat and the baneful.

Inverted: anything the players purchase with the patron's money is considered belonging to the patron as his property. The player characters are his servants, under the law mere agents acting on his behalf. Ref must decide how much tangible property or longboat techniques are returned or lost at the conclusion of the mission. The patron will have common law on his side, and the imperial Assize seldom listens to Varangian outlanders, unless the players are owed a favor from that faction. The regular card flip penalty of the events generating more combat in Phase A also applies.

Finances 10 Rods: Perhaps surprisingly, patron has the clout to marshal and billet an entire army. Land resources become **Assuredly**.

Inverted: but **Sea** becomes **Improbable**. Ship-wise he is without any means. Even if he should **Assuredly** have many vessels, the ships are all committed elsewhere. He still has plenty of soldiers, but most are hungry and ill-equipped; treat all as untrainable rabble. He's a paper tiger. Stranger still, all Blade swaggering techniques offer no benefit. Any character may still lose and gain techniques during the adventure. But, the ability to gain Advantages with Blade techniques only returns once this adventure ends.

Finances 9 Rods: Arrives to the meeting with a ship and crew with good order and moral. Perhaps surprisingly, patron has several ships, sailing cogs and longboat

galleys. Stranger still, during Phase A of encounters, anytime a King is flipped, the players gain a Quest Pip of plus one, up to a max of plus three.

Inverted: players will use his ship for the adventure. He may or may not be the commander, depending upon if he comes along. Often ask, why not? His boat techniques will be different but still may be utilized. Any gains to the longboat are his gains, gone at mission's end.

Finances 8 Rods: Waiting to receive payment; quest can not be delayed. Player characters know he's lying and has no true **Riches** as a resource. He still may have all other assets, just no hard currency.

Inverted: the crew of the group's ship will start disgruntled, wanting a signing bonus, but receiving nothing. Stranger still, if two Queens occur in the same Phase of encounters, the resources of the patron are withdrawn. This will also change any Categories of Influences and Resources.

Finances 7 Rods: Area's garrison, constables, ships and stores are all made available. This is about as good as it gets. Yet ask how the patron has such great wealth and power. If the answer is not apparent, he's either a liar or a representative of a secret cabal. Stranger still, do not generate (yet) an Ace-Hole; this quest detail will not apply until travel in the Epilog, and thee only on a Knave flip.

Inverted: rival is member of opposing political party that says no to any such expenditures, but he currently lacks the clout to deny. Again, this may place the patron and rival as part of the same secret cabal. Or if they are both nobles, then a city-state has two or more political caucuses. By taking anything from the patron, the rival will have infiltrated the soldiers and sailors with his spies.

Finances 6 Rods: His lands are worthless; he holds fraudulent favors and banked assets or relies entirely on criminal acts. This is a bad flip. Yet stranger still, do not generate (yet) an Ace-Hole; this quest detail will not apply until the Climax Challenges.

Inverted: all this is unknown to the patron; he's a bit naive on material matters or befuddled by magic. Could a bag of rocks be magically disguising a sack of gold? Nope, but the player characters may believe that – if only a hex or curse can be countered?

Finances 5 Rods: Of modest means, but willing to borrow extensively. His credit, and the favors he pledges to others, appear to hold value.

Inverted: anything he obtains on his good name (a form of credit) will later be collected from the player characters as de facto cosigners. The patron uses the player characters limited nobility and fame to vouch for his mission. The patron is probably a forger who countersigns the players as guarantors. If the quest fails, the group will be left with the sizable debt. The collector normally is the Vox Illuminati, so don't fail.

Finances 4 Rods: A friend or relative owns flatboats as a rather important shipper; however, no guarantee anything can be obtained. The players can use Phase A to try to persuade the burgeoning cartel to help out. Stranger still, if three Knaves occur in the adventure's encounters, the rival has changed. Discard the first and replace him with a different foe with a new Ace-Hole as well.

Inverted: the nebulous cartel will hedge their bets and provide help to both the patron and rival, but only should the players attempt to gain additional funding for their expedition through them. *"Hey, this group just invented dwarven derivative swaps."*

Finances 3 Rods: Owner of many small shops, but all have limited usefulness for this quest. The patron cannot give much now. However, if the player characters are successful, he will fill all their purses at the start of the next half D8 quests. That's a lot of longboat acquisitions and potential bribes.

Inverted: in addition to whatever is negotiated in the terms, the players also receive free food for life. Anytime their vessel passes through this port, provided the harvest was okay, and the city-state is not Trait Famine, they pick up Abundant Stores (M) or Democracy (S) for free. One or the other, but not if the patron's quest failed. Stranger still, if a second Knave occurs in any Phase of the adventure's encounters, a second rival has entered play. This new foe will also bring his own Ace-Hole.

Finances 2 Rods: Limited wealth in lands, soldiers and riches, but provides a special slave as companion to the prime player character. The slave is loyal and a formidable NPC of at least Fyrd Gestir, fifth level. Stranger still, all personal swaggering techniques offer no benefit. Any character may still lose and gain techniques during the adventure. But, the ability to gain Advantages with personal swaggering techniques only returns once this adventure ends.

Inverted: the man will only help out for one mission before he flees. If the players do not name the slave in this mission, he will run off before the climax challenges. He will not return to his former master, the patron. Personal swaggering remains unreliable per the regular flip of the cards.

Finances Ace Rods: A rich landowner but hates travel; pays handsomely to avoid personal involvement. Becomes of utmost importance not to bother the patron after the start. Ignore Queens and treat instead as King encounters.

Inverted: in addition to whatever is negotiated in the terms, the players also receive the Longboat technique Inhuman Watchdogs (R). Stranger still, in the Climax Challenges, all combat starts with a plus one Tactical Pip.

Finances Coins

Finances King Coins: Friend or relative is a shipwright in the region. He may be able to add as many as a half D8 techniques to the group's longboat. Select obvious ones, like restoring Undamaged (O) if needed. Yet the man may even provide Charted Path (B) or Arcane Sentinel (F).

Inverted: of special result, inverted King encounters carry a penalty. Each time an inverted King is flipped during travel, the group's longboat loses the equivalent of a technique. Select the loss from the highest letter toward (A) the ship has.

This is not a toll, so one's purse of coins will not restore the ship; this result cannot be countered, but perhaps allow Ignobles to be checked as each player gets a chance to explain what happened and how he was involved. Not exactly heroics, but maybe tales, lessons learned and prudence (for next loss)?

As if that wasn't enough, all longboat swaggering techniques offer no benefit. The techniques only return once this adventure ends. The ship will still lose and gain techniques during the adventure.

Finances Queen Coins: Simple possessions and a pouch of gold. Sometimes the pouch contains something other than gold, but the contents will never be shown – pearls of high value or maybe sand? Actually, this might be a bag from which he can pull anything; that's always fun.

Inverted: should the quest fail, an assembly of lords will pass into law a civil fine of a thousand sesterces payable by each player character. Is that a lot? How do they intend to collect? Refusal to agree on terms and never even start the scenario is the same as calling this quest a failure. Stranger still, all player characters lose one swaggering technique of their choice. The technique returns once this adventure ends.

Finances Knight Coins: Gives only a charm or icon and says divine forces will provide the rest. The charm shall actually work; all the player characters gain an extra D8 make-rolls. By the Epilog, the relic will have lost all power. Stranger still, do not generate (yet) a Twist; this quest detail occurs only upon the flip of any face card in any Phase of encounters. Only the first face card flip activates the one and only Twist.

Inverted: of special result, inverted Knight encounters carry a warning. Each time an inverted Knight is flipped during travel, the players receive an imperial dispatch stating that all the player characters must end the quest under penalty of forfeiture of all property. The consequences truly only concern high social position characters fully embedded in the politics of the campaign. If the inverted Knight event happens twice, the patron backs out of his mission and removes his support. The players may stay the course, regardless, perhaps hope this is all a misunderstanding. Again, the low level might thumb their nose at authority. Yet it

could also come one day to pass, when a low level character finds himself less so, this warning lingers and reemerges after he seeks a grander role.

Finances Knave Coins: Private cache of a thousand coins is hidden by the patron. The coins may be of a base currency, like copper, 1/960th the value of gold. He will not show the players the money, until after a deal is signed, and terms are agreed upon. Stranger still, during Phase C of encounters, the events will always shade toward combat and the baneful.

Inverted: should the quest fail, a guild of journeymen and masters will stop dealing with the players. Select one longboat technique which forever will be impacted. The group will never be able to buy services to make their ship Vermin Free (N) or No Disease (I), for instance. The penalty may be isolated to a single port, but then it will have greater number of techniques (half D8). Refusal to come to a deal and start is as good as calling this quest a failure. The baneful events in Phase C, from the regular card flip, also apply.

Finances 10 Coins: Wealthy, but untrusting of people of certain ethnic groups. So untrusting, that patron will insist a small percentage of the crew who are not rowers, be left behind this quest. The prime player character has three choices: make that occur, say he will and forget, or personally vouch for his henchmen. All three versions come with problems, especially if the mission fails. *“I told you not to use those dog-faced men.”*

Inverted: receive a bonus upon quest success; a local guild of shipwrights will make the group’s vessel start the next adventure with all missing techniques between (K) and (T). The players do not gain Methodical additions next quest, though. Stranger still, during Phase C of encounters, all combat starts with a plus one Tactical Pip.

Finances 9 Coins: Says he can steal or illegally acquire anything needed for the job. An obvious exaggeration, the players must aid themselves in any acquisition of men and materials. Add some theft as part of the routine encounters of play leading to the quest climax challenges. The adventure is a loot as you go sort of affair. *“We’re out of mead – so go take some.”*

Inverted: of special result upon quest success, sympathetic lords give the group fifty slaves. These can be added to the crew’s rowers or traded by a skilled Slave Driver for technique Treasure Laden (D). Stranger still, during Phase C of encounters, all combat starts with the first player receiving a Command Pip.

Finances 8 Coins: Deals in many trade goods, but his cargoes and ships are already committed. At least so he says; his deals are nearly bankrupt else he might not be planning adventures with the player characters. Success on the quest will make his claim valid again.

Inverted: of special result upon quest success, a region earl sends a slave captain-pilot as a gift to the prime player character. Add longboat Charted Path (B) or a skilled Slave Driver may sell the man for Treasure Laden (D). Stranger still, during Phase C of encounters, all players gain the Fury Pip.

Finances 7 Coins: For simplicity, the patron has funds which mirror those owned by the highest social ranked player character.

Inverted: of special result upon quest success, the players can also expect a reward equal to technique Treasure Laden (D) coming from an interested third party. Stranger still, do not generate (yet) a Twist; this quest detail occurs only upon the flip of any face card in Phase A. Only the first face card flip activates the one and only Twist. Past Phase A, there might not be any twists.

Finances 6 Coins: Carries only the simplest of items but knows contacts and has friends to acquire anything else. Patron has curried these favors for decades and will not use them on trial requests. Think more ambitiously, but don't beg for anything that seems like money until the job is done.

Inverted: the mission will quickly be revealed as inconsequential or invalid. There was not any deception, only confusion. The players will need to improvise. The players will continue through encounters but will not have a solid goal or tangible quest, until they reach the climax challenges. There they might see what presents itself. Any other part of the quest, like patron, twists and rival, all happens as cards would during the encounter phases, but the true objective is left unspecified. The motive stands, but for the targets that come later. At the climax challenges flip a fresh card for the Mission; or else the Ref should have done this (a day before) and set his challenges accordingly (surprise).

Finances 5 Coins: Breeds and owns five hundred horses – extremely rich. He will loan as many as needed to outfit your bodyguard or company of soldiers as a cataphract force of horse guards, but the group must recruit or hire the men-at-arms to ride them. The soldiers will be gained during encounters a 2D8 at a time regardless of the event. For reference a single horse, not even a good warhorse, would cost a purse of coins.

Inverted: each cavalry rider recruited will be of the understanding the mount was his to keep. The patron might accept some of his horses were lost in combat, but not many. Stranger still, all Mount swaggering techniques offer no benefit. Any character may still lose and gain techniques during the adventure. But, the ability to gain Advantages with Mount techniques only return once this adventure ends.

Finances 4 Coins: One of riches men in the world in coin and lands. However, he refuses to spend any of his wealth on anyone's ship. He hates the water; fears the unseen beneath the waves. The players must tactfully or deceptively acquire such

funding on their own. Else, all they might have is their own starting seafaring assets. Methodical trait still applies if the mission comes to terms and starts.

Inverted: should the quest fail, a powerful regional earl will impound the group's longboat. Refusal to come to a deal and start is as good as calling this quest a failure. The next quest might start with the players using boarding to take their own craft back from the authorities, a bad way to begin. In front of the new patron, no less? Stranger still, all player characters lose one character Trait of their choice. The trait returns once this adventure ends.

Finances 3 Coins: Gives fair wage for a hard day's job – that's all. This wage is only paid to the prime player character. If he has other hirelings, like the rest of the group, he is on the hook for their salaries and needs.

Inverted: of special result upon quest success, the players can also expect a reward of technique Noble Allegiance (K) from likeminded lords. Stranger still, during Phase C of encounters, anytime a King is flipped, the players gain a Quest Pip of plus one, up to a max of plus three.

Finances 2 Coins: Can only pay in obscure coins or in deeds to lands in far away places. Both are of high value, but the players should remain dubious. Also, the line of exchange at the Royal Mint is agonizing; that could even be Phase A for both comic relief and the dangers of the capital streets with obvious money in hand.

Inverted: of special result upon quest success, the players can also expect a reward of Arcane Sentinel (F) from a secret society. Stranger still, whenever generating NPC reaction, deciding whether a specific encounter has a good or bad response, players may not select Unconcerned as a temperament.

Finances Ace Coins: Maintains a reasonable allowance from lands, rents, debtors and royalties on investments. Yet he may be gambling all his wealth on this venture.

Inverted: of special result upon quest success, the players can also expect a gift of Inhuman Watchdogs (R) from an anonymous source in the capital. Stranger still, in the Climax Challenges, all combat starts with the first player receiving a Command Pip.

Finances Swords

Finances King Swords: Organizes the finances that should be used all the way down to the last farthing – maybe that's the entire party's salary. He will seem to provide them with much, but in the end, it will be all expended and used. Obviously, he had precognition, but could he even see the ending? Stranger still, during Phase A of encounters, all combat starts with a plus one Tactical Pip.

Inverted: of special result, inverted King encounters carry a penalty. Each time an inverted King is flipped during travel, one player at random loses a swaggering technique. Yes, these may be taken from the group's longboat.

Finances Queen Swords: Purposely provides half of that requested or offers up inferior quality. Patron is not to blame here. His bookkeeper is the one cheating the prime player character. Only a Tasking roll by a skilled Steward will prove any inconsistencies. Stranger still, in the Epilog, the events will always shade toward combat and the baneful.

Inverted: should the quest fail, a powerful matriarch, usually the patron's mother, will work to ruin one player character (usually the highest social position). That player will drop fully back to destitute hero (social role one). Further upon failure, all players above social rank eight, lose their appointments and positions in the greater realm. Refusal to come to a deal and start is as good as calling this quest a failure.

Finances Knight Swords: Patron states the players may take anything they need (from what he has). But he ruefully adds, "*you better need what you take.*"

This threat starts the negotiations off on a sour note. Even if he truly was joking (which he often isn't), the players may hope this quest fails. Else they will waste or destroy most everything provided to them, both out of spite and to prevent any accusations of padding their pockets.

Stranger still, all player characters lose one character skill of their choice. The skill returns once this adventure ends.

Inverted: of special result, inverted Knight encounters carry a penalty. Each time an inverted Knight is flipped during travel, one player character loses all his owed favors, friends and influence. This result is immediately enforced and has nothing to do with any battle about to start with the Knight encounter.

Finances Knave Swords: Rich but doesn't think the quest requires any special items or bonus pay. Unless the players degrade themselves by begging, they will receive little. They must even plead to get a decent end reward. Some characters, those with Clever trait, will just play the patron's game of *we're not worthy*; however, the character of both Bold and Gifted will feel denigrated and plot revenge (for a later date of course). Add a secondary objective for each to take later what is felt was deserved. Each player character will need to complete his own deed of self fulfillment. None of them should seek to kill the patron (for now).

Inverted: should the quest fail, a relative of the patron will work to ruin one player (usually the highest social position). That player will lose all his owed favors, friends and influence. He also loses his social rank and returns to one (Destitute Hero). Refusal to come to a deal and start is as good as calling this quest a failure. Stranger still, all Wizardry swaggering techniques offer no benefit. Any character

may still lose and gain techniques during the adventure. But, the ability to gain Advantages with Wizardry techniques only returns once this adventure ends.

Finances 10 Swords: Generous and offers double wages to all the prime player character's free sailors and warriors (the servitors) but will not provide anything else. He has no other items or refuses to part with them. He'll become irate if any other requests are made. This guy is a bit of a manic tyrant. Treat all his Queen encounters requests as inverted. He will claim through those Queen events that his other objectives need the group's additional support.

Inverted: should the quest fail, a secret society will see that one player loses all his owed favors, friends and influence. He also loses his social rank and returns to one (Destitute Hero). Refusal to come to a deal and start is as good as calling this quest a failure. Stranger still, do not generate (yet) a Twist; this quest detail occurs only upon the flip of any face card in Phase C. Only the first face card flip activates the one and only Twist.

Finances 9 Swords: Provides a fully paid and supplied cohort of five hundred experienced warriors. But the second in command of that unit will insist that only a smaller force from the garrison join the player characters. The rest, it is argued, must maintain the security of the area. The lieutenant's right. If the players force the issue and take more than a small detachment, the rival will become immediately aware of the players and the quest. Knaves could grow in power from opportunity pillage, and the climax challenges could be nearly impossible to accomplish.

Inverted: should the quest fail, a relative of the patron will see that one player loses all his owed favors, friends and influence. He also loses his social rank and returns to one (Destitute Hero). Refusal to come to a deal and start is as good as calling this quest a failure. Stranger still, whenever generating NPC reaction, deciding whether a specific encounter has a good or bad response, players may not select Cautious as a temperament.

Finances 8 Swords: Offers no coin but has storehouses of goods of all description. He doesn't actually own the contents; he may simply be caretaker or watchman. He pilfers or grafts from storehouses where he holds the keys as custodian.

Inverted: should the quest fail, the longboat loses both Religiously Inspired (C) and Noble Allegiance (K). Refusal to come to a deal and start is as good as calling this quest a failure. Stranger still, in the Epilog, all combat starts with a plus one Tactical Pip.

Finances 7 Swords: Patron also will give a one of a kind gift to one random player. The item should be something agreed upon by the player and Ref. The greater the functional power of this key, token or relic, the shorter its lifespan of operation. The relic, like many useful charms, might be reenergized with raw energy, the kind

that results when a Warped Outcome is forced. So, roll a half D8, add to tally and recharge the thing (after the result is suffered).

As an example, the token might impart some ability, like Tinker's gift for opening mechanical locks and handcuffs. Yet since it's enchanted, it will do a bit more. Lowering drawbridges, finding secret doors, raising or lowering a ship anchor (even on an enemy); it has aspects of Animate Objects (O) and Power Words (S).

Again, the Ref and player must free-style a part of the story and decide what works in each situation. The key should never be used to do the same thing twice in the same way. A task resolution roll may also be required in stressful situations, when these things tend to fail before the mocking gods.

Inverted: in remorse for his loss, the patron will try to buy back the item at the scenario's end. If he can't retrieve his item, he will become incensed. Would technique Treasure Laden (D) be enough? Stranger still, whenever generating NPC reaction, deciding whether a specific encounter has a good or bad response, players may not select Curious as a temperament.

Finances 6 Swords: Working under a set fund that will not be exceeded. Riches will be stringently relinquished. The patron doesn't want his money spent at all. His own reward may be part of the men and materials he already has, or his total gain is negligible even in success.

Inverted: should the quest fail, a club of arcane masters will see that the group loses both Treachery Expunged (G) and Pure No-Curse (J) from their longboat. Refusal to come to a deal and start is as good as calling this quest a failure. Stranger still, whenever generating NPC reaction, deciding whether a specific encounter has a good or bad response, players may not select Challenging as a temperament.

Finances 5 Swords: Money is no obstacle – job must be done. All material items of influence and resources are available, regardless of the patron's role. The source of this should never be known. Yet here's the dilemma: the job better be done by a certain time. The time period is seldom enough; there's no room for delays or diversions.

Within twenty encounters is an easy test in adventures; fifteen will be exhilarating to reach the climax, while ten is nearly impossible. But wait, encounters are not evenly spaced; there is no time element attached to most encounters? Seven might happen in a frantic day or hour; all could be nearly simultaneous.

The time element best to use is real game play. If you want to truly focus the player group on doing something, tell them they have thirty minutes. They won't screw around. Yet for fairness, this clock should stop when combat is entered. The mechanics should not be rushed for new players. But for veterans, expect pitch perfect use of method and trait tactics; the sand is flowing out on the timer.

Inverted: regardless of outcome, in a year's time, one player loses all his favors, contacts and friends. Undoubtedly secret forces are at work, yet not the kind that can be thwarted. How long is a year? Four seasons, maybe half a D8 missions. Stranger still, in the Epilog, all combat starts with the first player taking action receiving a Command Pip.

Finances 4 Swords: Wealthy but hopes the players will split the costs of the venture. He wants the costs split but will not share the rewards. He will reimburse, begrudgingly, any prime player character's legitimate expenses. But not cover *Act of God* losses to large ticket items like ships or crews, anything lost in warfare or weather or to magic. The patron will threaten the players with legal action, should they argue unfairness. The royal court will almost always side with the patron. This quest is probably for Ignobles only (wisdom to know who to trust).

Inverted: should the quest fail, a matriarch, usually the patron's own mother, will see that the group's longboat loses Comradery (P) and Democracy (S). Does she get the other mothers to complain to their sons? No, she uses magic, bickering hexes and psionics. Refusal to come to a deal and start is as good as calling this quest a failure. Stranger still, do not generate (yet) a Twist; this quest detail occurs only upon the flip of any face card in Phase B. Only the first face card flip there activates the one and only Twist.

Finances 3 Swords: Secretly affectionate or kindhearted to one player character; offers reasonable aid. Patron will identify with one player character, perhaps not the prime player character. The relationship should remain unclear. He could be related to another player character, a forgotten half brother. Ref should select the most humble of the group, and build a subplot related to an abandoned or kidnapped baby.

Inverted: should the quest fail, an assembly of lords will see that the longboat loses both Treachery Expunged (G) and Noble Allegiance (K). Refusal to come to a deal and start is as good as calling this quest a failure. Stranger still, in the Epilog, all players gain the Fury Pip.

Finances 2 Swords: Patron knows a secret about the prime player character and will extort that person to do the job. Any terms to be signed are between the coerced leading player and the rest of his own group. The blackmail should be absolute and may not be avenged in the here and now. For low level characters, the patron may still provide some aid. He only uses the blackmail to keep the group dedicated. If the entire group has a past secret—revisit those Fame or Growth Ignobles—something from a past quest which implicates them all, the Ref may have the patron force all to do his bidding (this once).

Inverted: should the quest fail, a secret society will work to increase the difficulty the group has supporting their vessel. The party loses all Methodical Trait

longboat technique gains for the next half D8 follow-on adventures. Refusal to come to a deal and start is as good as calling this quest a failure. Stranger still, in the Epilog, anytime a King is flipped, the players gain a Quest Pip of plus one, up to a max of plus three.

Finances Ace Swords: Transfers ownership papers of his ship to the player; this includes all the slaves aboard. The players might travel with two ships but should not keep separate lists of swaggering techniques. The sum total of benefits for their small convoy is used. What this might represent is a spare boat, kept in dock somewhere (just a money sink), or one that can be slowly ravaged and then sunk (also not as fun). Best to sell the thing for Treasure Laden (D) or maybe add it to the working assets of a higher social level character, part of his grander business dealings. A friendly Ship Captain is a not so bad favor to have. Nor is a warship general in the Royal Navy once the boat is gifted to the imperial crown.

Haggle with the players and fit this into the Ref's campaign. So, boss, what it's worth? Boats by themselves have intrinsic value, but the true economy is impossible to model and makes for boring play. Use it for the next Viking funeral. I would just exercise the ship as an extra set of problems interjected in the upcoming set of quest encounters. But that's just me being mean adding the story of two contender crews.

Inverted: the vessel is not his to give. Creditors actually own the vessel, or he just gave the players a ship he took as a prize while a'pirating. Stranger still, in the Climax Challenges, all players gain the Fury Pip.

Twists, Difficult Situations or Unforeseen Opponents

Here are things which mess with the normal flow of the scenario. Normally the players hear the patron's offer and a quest is generated. They agree on a deal, reach terms. The journey follows with travel generating encounter events, and the quest eventually reaches the climax. Twists can mess with any and all of that.

The rival seldom is a mystery. So, these card flips add some extra stuff that goes wrong and extra people who desire the players to fail. Opponents other than the rival are hinted here, but not always directly engaged. Unless specifically stated otherwise, all of the **tangible twists occur between Phase B and C**. Since Phase B is something that might be avoided, if the players jump from A directly to C (via the quest consequence Ace encounter), they also might get to ignore the damage or combat situations presented here. (More info is found in the encounters booklet.)

Twists have a greater impact when they come as a surprise. This everyone should agree. However, I tend not to keep anything a secret as I flip cards as a player doubling as Referee. The game has many events where there should be no quibbling

by the players. Some things are just despicable, and the players must accept that their lives in the campaign are not all wine and roses. Take your lump and move on, even if that means starting from scratch.

If you decide to keep the sundry problems of the adventure as a revelation with a kick in the teeth, so be it. Try to add some foreshadowing. This will stimulate your play and get your players guessing what may lie ahead. **The transition from Phase B to C will occur in about two-thirds of the adventures.** When it can be avoided, by the Ace event of travel, the players can relax; they know they skipped the unknown danger.

In most games, it will come. There is perhaps a time when the players will think the twist is much too brutal and not worth the reward. They may quit. But how will they know if the event comes with no warning? Try not to be a slave to the rules, but also not a pushover for whiney players.

The easy solution is to hint what might come. When the players have been warned or misinterpret the clues, they have only themselves to blame. Granted, clues are tough. Usually falling into the realm of too easy or too obscure. Just the right balance is very difficult to achieve on the fly. An easy solution, rather than tidbits of info, just tell the players sometime in Phase A—why not at the start?—the suit of the Twist. Then they can ask for details as play unfolds. *“Should I be concerned about the inordinate interest among guild members?”*

You could even give the suit in Phase A, and in Phase B suggest card ranks that will not be the twist. e.g. Rule out Aces and Twos. For a long set of encounters in Phase B, the players should have a good idea what might occur at the transition, when that Ten is finally flipped.

Do all twists need to be inevitable? Besides ignoring many by using an Ace to jump the phase, performing tasks for preparation, displaying skills or making a forced deviation from their planned...all may **allow the player characters to elude the threats**. Any and all is left to the imagination of the players and the discretion of the Ref.

I tend to think that truly avoiding one outcome would push the players into another. Maybe I'm heartless? I know an easy game is not worth playing. Those who truly survive and gain levels have earned their extra skills, make-rolls and multiple attempts. Even I have shed a tear when I see a player character on the cusp of level

eight die. To achieve one then will be a grand achievement, not just some colored card under your player ID, one of a list of thousands. Can anyone guess that reference? Answer, everywhere achievements in computer gaming are employed.

Maybe I should refund the \$5 of anyone reaching *Stallari*, who sends me a detailed list of all the Ignobles checked to get there. But, corporate says that's unlikely. But post that tale in the spacegamer.com Vox and be lauded by those who truly appreciate your chronicle. I salute you (when it happens). A Twist will probably kill you before then.

Twist Quicklook

Twists		
	Cups	Rods
King	Guilds oppose (Imperial Guildmasters involved)	Patrician threatens (lose Methodical)
Queen	Double settings (Add a mystery)	Dream warning (that escalate)
Knight	Treachery in group (force alternate characters)	Crippled Stallari (master disguise-illusions)
Knave	Entire city opposed (Patron's family opposed)	Comely woman (a spy)
10	Notorious smuggler (personally involved)	Earls at war (cross the battle lines)
9	Penalty Quest Pip (Land & water in Phase B)	Spotted in criminal act (by child)
8	Double climax challenges (Triple climax)	Prime character accused (Digressions for all)
7	Detained by noble (with enforcer)	Counter equal scheme (greater risk patron)
6	Sea travel use land encounters (meet monster)	Famous general (Lose Democracy)
5	Turn rival's guard (Enlist crone)	Doubt group effort (Patron incensed)
4	Mistaken for someone (a hunted criminal)	Criminal conspiracy (group as suspects)
3	Regional earl (Wizard's special servant).	Alternate profitable quest (from same patron)
2	Finest archers (one player vicious)	Never attempted (Impossible)
Ace	Ranking theologian (squad of Fetiale enforcers)	Elusive highwayman (takes relics and Blades)
	Coins	Swords
King	Rival buy-off (lose Multiple Attempt Bonus)	Badly outclassed (No Pips)
Queen	Immortal gods (Ginns or demons)	Rushed start (Crew misses launch)
Knight	Coalition of enemy (affects Epilog)	Exhausting (to all)
Knave	Setback required (Interrogation required)	Champion brut (no Blade and Mount)
10	Bandits or pyrates (force underworld journey)	Magical null (no Blade and Mount)
9	Two rivals (patron backs out)	Exotic pets (potential lose Mount)
8	Competing longboat (time shifted group)	Cheated feeling (forced reprisal on patron)
7	Disease strikes (everyone)	Delayed rival (rival far away)
6	Assassin (hunting patron)	Unforeseen opponent (patron's business partner)
5	Horse riders (all Queens inverted)	Married woman (Scorned lover of patron)
4	Longboat assailed (No alts allowed)	Prime paid only (play alts)
3	Patron underestimates (Misrepresents danger)	Disguised assassin (in Epilog)
2	Angry peasants (and lords)	Organized rival (combat to advance phase)
Ace	Richest man (Bribed crew)	Faery slayer (Faery test)
Inverted card result list in parenthesis.		

Unfathomable Major Tarot Modifiers

Unfathomable Magician: Quest is very confounding; encounters cannot leave Phase A, except by a Sun result. (That's just one card in the deck.) After that, Phase B and C will continue by the normal rules for encounters.

Inverted: again, Phase A will be stalled, until the Sun appears. Yet something different than normal occurs should the players simply give up. Instead of continuing in the Epilog, an opportunity will present itself. They continue encounters at Phase C. But in penalty, treat all face cards, Kings, Queens and Knights, as Knaves. Continue with a failed quest and start the Epilog, should they quit a second time. They might even do so immediately, but the other cards still change to Knaves. Yet if they gut it out and advance the phase, they have a last chance to finish the climax challenges.

Unfathomable High Priestess: If the twist is a secondary group or person opposing the quest, they take action between Phase A and B, instead of later between B and C. Note, this still means the players may be rooting for an Ace to avoid any other encounters in Phase B. But, the force will be met regardless once Phase A ends.

Inverted: the enemy will take action at both the transition between A and B, plus also at B to C. If there was any time to get an Ace, here's that time.

Unfathomable Empress: All twist generated opponents are zealots – never rout, fight to exhaustion, even to the last man standing. This enemy is always Enraged.

Inverted: when faced by twist opponents, your patron provided troops are also fanatic in their hatred – these groups are bitter enemies. You still meet Enraged opponents, but your own servitors expect you to fight on and never surrender.

Unfathomable Emperor: Quest is technically treason; a previous emperor has already signed an edict proclaiming the mission (or there about) such. The decree may be buried in the archive of the capital, and the wording may be obscure. However, the rival or his advisor will be able to argue the player characters should be fined, stripped of lands or executed. Punishment varies with social position? Treason is an imprecise word; the document may say naughty or inelegant in an elder language.

If the quest succeeds the prime player character rolls Ordinary. He may use three dice if he has the skill Courtly Graces or Occult Scholar. Add an enemy of the Imperial Watchmen or Grand Assize.

Inverted: during the quest, all players with Methodical trait temporarily lose this advantage, a persistent self doubt exists throughout the scenario.

Unfathomable Hierophant: All the other player characters, not the prime, will be threatened with the charge of insulting the gods (or heavens). This warning will come at the start of Phase A, after the terms are signed.

If the quest succeeds the prime player character rolls Ordinary. He may use three dice if he has the skill Courtly Graces or Occult Scholar. Fail and the label sticks; the rest of the group is shunned, declared outcasts and iniquitous to some temples. Add an enemy of the Pantheon of Pagan Altars and their supreme abbots.

Inverted: all the other player characters, even the prime, are blasphemous. Same roll and conditions apply as regular flip.

Unfathomable Lovers: The main rival is twins. This may or may not be common knowledge. You either face two cruel rogues or will have a hard time proving you killed the right rival if that was part of your quest goals.

Inverted: the doppelgangers are magically created; he can make more. A relic must be deactivated, during the quest. This precursor condition must occur at the transition of Phase B to C. The players may not skip Phase B.

Unfathomable Chariot: The opposition, the twist or the rival's minions, will

never make a battle stand before the climax. They retreat or constantly evade, rather than fully engage. No combat will last more than a half D8 plus one rounds. Each time that occurs, and some or all of the enemy get away, the players receive a negative Quest Pip, up to a maximum of minus three.

Inverted: all Ignobles are impossible to check in action versus the twist adversary or the rival's men, for whichever one this fight and evade tactic applies.

Unfathomable Justice: The player characters regardless of language skills, are hampered by obscure laws or customs. They just won't be truly understood or understand the local dialect. Usually the skill Steward will allow barter for supplies. Here, that too will not be possible. A shortage of food or critical supplies may add a negative Quest Pip. Ref decides based on encounter events.

Inverted: a magical Babel spell impacts the group. Each time the confusion arises, any one player may attempt wizardry at Tasking to dispel the hex. Role-play the justification and description of the magical counter event in the story.



Unfathomable Hermit: Some other important task distracts the rival; ignore all Knave encounters.

Inverted: the opposition has spies and agents everywhere setting ambush; ignore all Queen encounters, as the patron's couriers never make it to player characters.

Unfathomable Wheel of Fortune: Reshuffle the deck.

Unfathomable Force: The players must face double the climax challenges in order to be successful. Typically, the group must overcome three; six occur.

Inverted: the enemy is caught off-guard, and the players need only face the last climax challenge to win. That is often a fight directly with the rival and a few of his minions. But if a monster was involved, even as a run-up to face the rival, use that instead. The rival can be assumed caught if his illustrious beast is defeated.

Unfathomable Hanged Man: During the scenario, if any Digression winds and takes you to captured and presented to the rival, roll on the *Death of Character* Digression instead. Your character is hanged.

Inverted: no matter the outcome, success or fail, and no matter the anonymity or outrageous power of the group, all player characters receive an enemy of the rival. Only if he is found and slain during the quest will that lingering ranker be avoided.

Unfathomable Death: An untimely death will slay an important NPC of the campaign during the quest. This should not be the patron or the rival. Usually this death is related to the twist, occurring in conjunction or upon a bystander. The player characters are invariably blamed for this mishap. The consequences will fall on the players in the future. Ref must decide WHO? is accidentally killed.

Inverted: the prime player character will break his magical Blade or injure his magical Mount. He will undertake a secondary motive, his own quest, to restore his lost property. Until then, either his Blade or Mount (whichever had more techniques) offers no benefit. This event only happens at the transition from Phase B to C. Another reason that Ace in Phase A is so important.

Unfathomable Temperance: Misunderstanding the quest will cause it to fail on the first time it is attempted. Skip the climax the first time it's reached after Phase C. Pick three new settings to start again, or otherwise quit into the Epilog.

Inverted: during the quest a distracting element will continually make the players lose sight of their objective; ignore the results of all Tens for all encounters. *"I hate this card, flipped here."*

Unfathomable Devil: By completing the quest, choose one friend at random from each player character and turn that person into an enemy.

Inverted: by some fluke, a player character is secretly opposed to the main quest. During Phase C, right before the climax, the Referee will take one player at random; this player character will skip the climax.

He should gain the personality flaw of Traitor. Note, this doesn't banish him from the group in all cases. Sad but true, many of us live with betrayal and offer unrequited forgiveness. The player character will have to work out his own recover from his deception.

Many a seemingly accidental mishap during encounters can now be attributed to a covert act by this player character. Whether the character ever returns to the group depends on the quest outcome, and how forgivable were his acts. Ask how bad were the encounters? The Referee and players will sort this out together. Yet I tend to be forgiving and even have some player characters disbelieve the rumors that they had a collaborator in their midst.

Unfathomable Tower of Destruction: In addition to other obstacles, a prison fortress must be infiltrated during the climax. Add this as an initial first obstacle of the climax. The remaining climax might not even occur in that castle, but something critical or an unknown piece of information must be obtained from within. A good option is to free a prisoner or get an object off the bones in one of the cells. The prison or tower will be magically guarded, no single magical act will penetrate the walls, but several wizardry techniques in conjunction might produce a gate?

Inverted: the fortress must be assaulted and breached by storming or massive magical bombardment. Now you think Artillerist and Engineer-Sapper are worthless skills?

Unfathomable Star: Move any twist, which normally occurs in the transition between Phase B and C, to the transition between Phase A and B.

Inverted: Move any twist, which normally occurs at any Phase transition, to instead become an extra climax challenge at start the main climax challenges. The Ref might need to sort out any wrinkles this could cause.

Unfathomable Moon: None of the opposition directly oppose the quest, they simply hate the patron. This attitude will be enunciated upon the first encounter with a Knave. If the quest is intrinsically lucrative or popular, the rival will offer the players a compromise. If they double-back and kill their patron, they can continue the journey unopposed. The rival will be their new leader.

To do so, would mean the climax changes convert to this murderous attempt on their employer. The benefits of the quest, in wealth and clout, then will be gained by the players and the rival. The rest of the quest normally doesn't even need to take place. Yet Ref may decide, particularly if an underworld was supposed to be entered, to run all or some of the climax challenges for the first goal. The rival of course will gain more from the players' accepting this backhanded deal. But, a weak patron of insignificant campaign role, may be less of a friend than a powerful rival turned boss. The rival will honor this deal; there's no implied deception from this one card event.

Inverted: this selection has nothing to do with the regular card flip. Add some extra adversaries to the patron's quest representing a concerted effort by several of the player characters' own enemies combining forces and coming after the group. Payback has arrived.

Unfathomable Sun: In an unrelated circumstance, one of the players will find a map to a buried treasure or experience a vision directing him to riches. The wealth is unguarded but vaulted in the underworld. Give one or more players this secondary objective. The opportunity changes the setting of Phase B to Crossing the Dark Recesses of the Underworlds; the loot then is collected upon transition from Phase B to C. There need not be any last battle, except what might occur in the encounters leading up to the opening of the vault. Phase B may not be skipped, or the treasure is lost. Does it need to be said, that you cannot wait for an upcoming adventure to go after this?

Inverted: the same regular flip applies, but with a slight reverse of things. Phase B starts with the collection of the riches in the interphase between A and B. Then, the party need only survive one Phase of underworld encounters to get out with their reward. To do so will add at least Treasure Laden (D) to their longboat. But Ref may also decide the group gets that and one other technique (A) to (G) for their side adventure. And full purses? Yes, brothers, fill your pockets (and that of the dead you leave behind).

Unfathomable Judgment: Patron's exact motives or the true consequences of a successful quest, if truly known, will anger or sadden the players. In most cases he has his stated motive and a vile ulterior desire. Ignorance is the group's only hope.

The first encounter with a King brings suspicions; anytime later a second King during encounters divulges the truth to all. If this set of events occurs, the players automatically fail the quest and quit. The patron will be Incensed and become an enemy. The rival usually will also be the group's enemy, because the goals were too dreadful to ignore. In the interest of propriety, the true motive need never be said aloud. Each player must imagine the worst.

The worst case is if the climax challenges are successful, and the second King occurs in the Epilog. Then the group lives with the reality they aided something despicable or dire. Each should roll Tasking to avoid the loss of one Trait. Some things in life are nearly impossible to overcome, but again no details please.

How did I lose Rugged? Eating disorder. How did I lose Energetic? Listlessness. How did I lose Methodical? Can't concentrate with the nightmares. If the players whine too much, suicide a character; understand now what power you unleashed?

Inverted: during the encounters of the scenario, players will be unable to control their greed. The group will forage, pillage and steal. And yet, no player may

check the Desires Fulfilled Ignoble this scenario. Nor will the money taken collectively add up to anything. Lots of waste, extravagance, whoring, drunkenness, wardrobe changes, etc. They will be never satisfied with what they gain – more, more, more. This greed should fall short of player killing player, but NPCs deserve no such bonds of loyalty. Many gods toy with mortals?

Unfathomable World: Natural forces will constantly cause problems – bad weather, winds, terrain, bugs, heat, mice, phlegm, etc. This fosters gripes from many a grumbler, rather than any extra danger. The servitors will complain to no end about these meaningless and inconsequential set-backs. Mutiny is a growing possibility, unless the group quits the quest. Many gods toy with mortals?

Inverted: all the settings of this story will take place in the underworld. Perhaps the rival has a sanctuary there. Or the group becomes lost, and the rest of the journey represents them finding an escape. After Phase C, the climax challenges occur as they would, not typically underground. An otherwise uneventful journey took place between the exit to daylight and where ever the hell they were supposed to be going? Many gods toy with mortals? *“Stop saying that.”*

Unfathomable Fool: While on the quest, all gambling bets will be lost, even ones made by someone cheating, using magic or deception. Each interphase A to B and again at B to C, each player rolls Ordinary to keep from gambling away his purse of coins. Anyone without a purse may even try to gamble away the Treasure Laden (D) or Abundant Stores (M) off the longboat. Ref decides. Would someone even wager the slave rowers or ship? Ref decides. That bet would not be honored, but instead would start a brawl.

Inverted: a loyal NPC will prove a detriment somehow to the quest. Integrate this into the story as able. Blame him for an event mishap or add one he caused? Have him haphazardly spoil a surprise by alerting the rival before the climax? The servitor crew will be howling for justice. If he can survive his run of bad luck, this unfathomable twist is not lasting.

Twist Cups

Twist King Cups: Various local guilds send ships and mercenaries in opposition. The force will meet the players with such an advantage, that the players may choose only to try to evade and escape. Use either Method Escape on land or Q&D Outdistance Retreat (Escape) to resolve this attack at the interphase between B and C.

Inverted: a loyalist political faction, the Imperial Guildmasters, are involved. That guild could hold the players liable long after the success or failure of this quest. They also can make resupply difficult, more expensive, along the journey. At the

interphase between B and C, the group's longboat potentially could lose a half D8 techniques. Roll Difficult with display of skill to prevent these losses.

Twist Queen Cups: The final goal or situation is not easy to define; several places or battles must be entered prior to climax – use double the encounter settings and phases. Each phase A, B and C must be traversed twice. So, in the case of an Ace, the players must use the option to only move to phase B with the additional influence of a Queen encounter.

Inverted: the situation is a mystery – clues point to the climax. Since proper mysteries are not easy to flip and generate, use a mechanical guideline. Each completed phase, A, B and C, the players must make a progressively easier roll – Tasking, then Difficult, then Out of the Ordinary. They may not advance the phase, even when directed to do so, unless they are successful in this roll. Upon failure, encounters continue in the same phase, as the players presumably hunt for more clues. Thus, flipping a Ten in Phase A prompts a roll and upon failure, that Ten is ignored. Same is true for every phase. A long hard journey lay ahead (for those without make-rolls).

Twist Knight Cups: Treachery in the group will lead to false accusations and threats among one player and an important NPC. The fracas turns deadly at the transition from Phase B to C. Fight the Brash actions then, Calculated or magical Recitation is not an option. If the Ref desires to cull some techniques, he may use swagger vs swagger.

Inverted: Half the player group must continue at the interphase between B and C with alternate characters. Some of the group storm off and into self isolation on the ship. Split the group down the middle by letting the player of the prime character select one prime grumbler. The two then alternate picking sides for their supporters.

Twist Knave Cups: The men and resources of an entire city stand in way. The force will be too powerful here to fully vanquish. The players must bypass a city and the river it shores. If they need their longboat for the climax, they must drag it overland in Phase C. Use any overland setting, but escape is never an option without ruin to their ship. *“They approach with ax and torch.”*

Inverted: the patron's family eventually becomes opposed. There is a good chance at the transition from Phase B to C, that the patron will abandon the quest. He will pay no completion rewards. If a Queen is flipped during Phase C events, the result dumps the players unsuccessfully into the Epilog.

Twist 10 Cups: A notorious smuggler with agents in most cities attacks the group at the transition from Phase B to C. His force will be a formidable match of the players but not impossible to defeat. Use Q&D Ramming Speed or Q&D Skirmish to resolve this battle at the interphase, depending upon the setting (at sea or on land).

Inverted: the smuggler personally will become involved. The attack should start as a large scale battle. But should the players defeat his forces or escape, they will face a second personal duel. The smuggler will be one level in ferocity above the highest player character; a Stallari still faces a *Great* formidable boss in Defensive Modifier.

Twist 9 Cups: Players must traverse many unexplored or rugged-arduous miles. A penalty Quest Pip of minus one applies from the start. At each interphase, the prime player character must roll Difficult or that Pip moves to minus two or even minus three.

Inverted: both land and water must be crossed in Phase B. The phase will generate two sets of encounters. Use both the setting *Seas, Rivers and Coasts* then start again with *Traversing the Frontier*. Only after both settings occur, and each advanced to Phase C, will the quest continue there. Yet the flip an Ace in Phase A could avoid all.

Twist 8 Cups: At each climax challenge, the group must divide. The prime player character continues, and half his starting companions switch to alts. This should happen over and over for each climax challenge. The group reunites in the Epilog. Since each player usually has his main character and one alt, he may be forced to return to the party with an injured character if he left the quest early. Ref decides which player characters are left holding the line or creating the distraction at each climax challenge.

Inverted: as the regular card flip, plus the prime player character is swapped for his alternate role. But, this need only happen in the final climax obstacle or battle.

Twist 7 Cups: Large estate owner detains the group; he's probably an earl, someone with many servitors. He will welcome them, treat them to a feast and then lock the gates, chain their vessel. The players make an enemy if they refuse his hospitality. He will want them to stay indefinitely. Why this happens is anyone's guess?

He could have daughters to marry off. He could be manic for tales. He may be trying to protect the party from a horrible monster in the region but doesn't want to make that seasonal threat widely known. But, usually, he needs protection. If the players promise to fight a battle for him at the interphase of Phase B to C, they will be free to leave. They could lie and make an enemy; hope he is slain in the action. If they do not win this extra fight, they also will make an enemy. The enemy he fears will be powerful; the noble himself will be easier to defeat in duels to gain escape.

Inverted: the noble has a powerful minion, his enforcer. All the rest applies from the regular card flip, except their noble captor is no longer a pushover to threaten or escape. More emphasis should be made of why the noble causes the

players delay. He may be in league with the rival, or he may want the players to agree to take a mission in parallel.

Twist 6 Cups: Sea travel, even across a sea, will use encounters for land. The players will hug the shore and all encounters simply occur for routine shore parties. In some cases, one or more player characters will not be in the event. They will be back at the boat. Either skip those small events or swap in alternate roles.

Inverted: at least one monster encounter will be met between Phases B and C. This is a sea beast or flying creature, hovering on the water or striking from above. The crew will be in hysteria, unless they are Battle Hard (T). If they lack that technique, all the others in this battle will be locked worthless. The creature will be at least Horrible, so it will never surrender. If the creature is not truly slain, instead forced away, the longboat loses a half D8 techniques from apprehension, the lingering effect of its appearance.

Twist 5 Cups: Success in the climax depends on enlisting the aid of someone in the rival's loyal bodyguards. The potential traitor makes his presence known only between Phase B and C. If the players skip B for any reason, the man will never be encountered; the quest in that case can not succeed. This man must be enticed to switch sides by Difficult display of character skill. i.e. Briber comes to mind, but not exclusively.

Inverted: success in the climax depends on enlisting the aid of a crone; this elderly woman will be met between Phases B and C. Each player should describe the woman; each will see her differently. Her magic or information is critical to starting the climax, yet she first requires a *tiny* task. The woman will have a series of needs from the mundane and idiotic to the down-right scary. Treat any event as her asking the players to be helpful or spiteful; the card suits may steer that – Cups & Coins as aid. All this happens in Phase C.

Her request is a series of skill based rolls, no battle; these integrate into each event of the setting. If battle ever occurs, like for Knaves, she will vanish; she takes no part while combat happens and has no part in the outcome. Yet when she asks someone to perform task resolution, the penalty for failing any of her requests is the temporary loss of any trait, skill or swagger used to justify the roll. The mystic is creating uncertainty, and her presence will have a growing celestial feeling of a divine test. Once an encounter results which also advances the phase, she will point the players to their climax. Wasn't it something they could've found all along?

Twist 4 Cups: Throughout the quest, one player will be mistaken for someone else, a person the players don't even know. The recognition will be all positive, unless the player character proves he doesn't have the skills and temperament of his look-alike. Treat Knight encounters in any phase as people seeking the friendly NPC and offering reward or positive Quest Pip in return. The player could always reveal

the mistake—I am not he—but the requests are often in his wheelhouse (things he or another player character actually could do). If ever caught in a lie, the Knight (noble) will take grave offense.

Inverted: this recognition will cause outsiders to show fear or bring criminal charges against the unfortunate player. Treat Knight encounters in any phase as bounty hunters and vigilantes seeking someone notorious, matching the player character's description. Nothing short of combat will convince the law they have the wrong man. If the group doesn't actively seek less than deadly results in combat, the crimes of the double may become the player character's own.

Twist 3 Cups: The regional earl is aware and concerned about the quest. Between Phases B and C, he will have one of his agents tell the players to stop and return home. Refusing such a powerful lord and continuing toward the quest's success, should turn all face cards to Knaves in Phase C and the Epilog. But, the earl will not become an enemy, unless he loses too many of soldiers trying to stop the party. How many is too many? Say, losses in a half D8 battles, exceed his tolerance.

Inverted: a wizard has sent a special servant to stop the players. Engage this foe in personal duel in the interphase between Phase B and C. Most likely a monster, right? Got to fight some monsters from time to time in a Fantasy genre. Switch Banes into the appropriate monster Banes. The wizard will not become an enemy regardless of outcome. Maybe he feels anyone who bests his best is too much for him. Give the wizard a name, though, because he should be used again pro or con, becoming a role in the campaign and in the lives of the player characters.

Twist 2 Cups: Soldiers, considered the finest archers in the world, stand ready to attack the players in ambush. This combat will take place between Phases B and C. The initial volley will slaughter a fifth of the crew or soldiers in company overland. The players have five rounds at most to defeat the leaders of these men, numbering half the group; use regular personal combat to reflect the attacks on the enemy. The adversary loses more than his squad leaders, but it's that number that must be defeated to end the rain of arrows and drive them away. Each round, another fifth of the crew or soldiers become casualties. Remember, servitor losses are equated in direct proportion to longboat swaggering. If everyone dies, so does the longboat. Some of those arrows were flaming? If forty percent die, then lose four of every ten techniques. Overland, the number of techniques lost will be at most a third of the crew's total; in the underworld that drops to a fourth (if you check the rules). "*I hate math.*"

Inverted: a recent event has left this sharpshooter force scattered. Just one player character at random will be struck with a vicious wound between Phases B and C. Though the threat will end there. In each quest to follow a similar attack will be made. Only by discovering who hired the men and negotiating a truce will this

vendetta go fully away. It's usually a misunderstanding; celestial magic is needed to identify the aggrieved.

Twist Ace Cups: A high ranking theologian, Bishop of Constantinople or Patriarch of the True Faith, declares the player characters apostates. This will only occur if the players gain that Ace event and skip Phase B. This twist is opposite of those that normally only occur between Phases B and C. Apostates, huh? Each player character must petition for a trial for acquittal. Clearing your name usually happens during downtime between mission. The trial could bring punishment if the player's character lacks any of a number of skills to plead his case passionately, or humorously, if not by outright bribe. Being labeled as an unbeliever or atheist has long term problems. Ref must decide when the declaration changes an event. Do so in Phase C and the Epilog at the very least. No, you just don't hide who you are. Apostates usually have some dark halo or mark of the beast appear on their face. "*Cool, check Magic Ignoble.*"

Inverted: a vice squad of Fetiale, priestly enforcers, is dispatched to stop the players. These will engage them in personal duel if given an opportunity between Phase B and C. The leader, a man ranging from Large to Invincible, will be the main threat that needs to be defeated. Those caveats of *against Large+ difficulty increases by three* obviously apply.

Twist Rods

Twist King Rods: A local patrician, wealthy and powerful, will threaten the players in two ways. First, he will send out a mercenary force of men to try and raid the players' vessel or camp, burning supplies to send a message. This attack will only take place during the transition from Phase B to C. But the threat does not end with just the raid.

The connected aristocrat will use his political clout and abundant riches to directly threaten the group's regular commerce. He will buy out all supplies along their journey. There will be no ports where they can spend purses for longboat techniques in this adventure. The negative losses from city Banes will still happen.

Inverted: the players also lose any improvement gain from Methodical trait as they start the quest. The patrician must know the patron or was confided by the patron with details of the quest. Give this person a name. If the quest succeeds, add him as an enemy.

Twist Queen Rods: An outclassed opponent will make a symbolic gesture, sending the group a dream. Else the warning will be delivered by an urchin as a mummified bird. Each player must make an Out of the Ordinary roll. Failure to resist this superstition, and they suffer Shaken penalty in the first combat of the adventure. After that the mumbo-jumbo wears off, unless a Knight is flipped. Then another

warning of mummery is delivered. Once again, roll Ordinary. Else, the next combat starts again as Shaken. This will continue for every Knight encountered. Yet the first time the Ordinary roll is made, the player will be immune. These additional Knights flairs may be ignored.

Inverted: the warnings escalate, getting weirder and weirder. The roll starts Ordinary as the adventure begins. But the first Knight prompts a Difficult roll, then if again, Tasking, and so forth. Gaining immunity early is best, before these penalties become Nearly Impossible or Impossible to roll. Perhaps burn a make-roll early but the make-roll only protects the player character from one Knight. If yet another event knight occurs, the roll will need to be attempted and actually made to gain immunity.

Twist Knight Rods: A nearly crippled Stallari, both respected and feared, asks to join the party. He will say that he has an old score to settle with the rival. So, what's it going to be? Only encounters will truly reflect whether this man becomes a valued loyalist or instead turns out to be an agent of the enemy. The Ref gains an extra foil or savior to be interpreted and detailed in the context of game encounters. His combat ability seems nil; but he may have an assortment of advisory skills to help influence other player character task resolution rolls.

This twist morphs. Every King flipped makes him stronger, more vital, able to fight and with two or three fight quite well. Yet every Knight makes him meaner, impatient, mumbling about the lack of respect. By two Knights he's a bonafide grumbler, back sassing the player characters to the delight of the crew. By a third Knight he stages a mutiny to take command.

Inverted: let's also add that he's a master of disguise and illusions, someone that can be anyone at anytime. The players will never be truly rid of him, until the Epilog. Even then he may appear out of the blue in adventures to follow. Ref decides, perhaps on back to back face cards. Each time reset the clock on his transformation from meek to mean to mutinous. He can't die, so even as he stages repeated mutinies in different adventures, he'll just end any exchange by leaping overboard, a dozen bleeding wounds. The player characters will admire him, even as he causes them grief. Name him? Or is he Apollo or some other ancient and unsung god?

Twist Knave Rods: A most comely woman is part of the crew. She may have always been there; she may be a recent recruit. Name her. One or all of the players must be her protector. Shall we say anyone who fails a Difficult roll here. (Okay, only Ordinary for those characters with Trait Methodical.)

If she suffers a grave fate, then in remorse, her failed protectors will discontinue the quest. Either all drop to the Epilog, or those unlucky enough to be infatuated and see her die, continue with alternate characters. She only stays in the crew one mission, but she may return in the campaign provided she walks away in the Epilog.

Inverted: of course, she's a spy for the opposition. Of course, she will fake her death by apparent drowning. This will happen at the transition from Phase B to C. Otherwise, she may appear in the climax as a minion of the rival. "*But I loved you?*"

Twist 10 Rods: A war between regional earls stands in the way. The players will find supplies scarce and bandits abundant. If the Ref has a warzone setting, use it. Otherwise, skew the events to reflect the addition of men on the move, distant battles, road and river blocks, released magical creatures and being mistaken for the enemy (of either side).

Inverted: there is no way to cross the battle lines, unless the players join one side. Use Q&D Skirmish. The players must obtain a result of *Success and rout the Enemy* in order to reach the climax. This grand battle may occur as the first climax challenge.

Twist 9 Rods: On occasion of the next illegal act that the players commit, the deed will be noticeably spotted. This is not a case where the constables have someone red-handed. Instead it is usually an aftermath event of a witness having total recall or a conjuror summons a replay of the scene for the local authorities (nobles). If the players do not break any law this adventure, then they get a free pass.

Inverted: an oracle warns that the party's criminal act will be espied by a child or other innocent. Do you wish to be known as the criminal or a child killer? Debate this before it happens, but the prime player character must be the one who will spare or end the life of the child. Perhaps the players might be forced to perform this entire quest (and Epilog) as model citizens. "*Forget that nonsense.*"

Twist 8 Rods: As the scenario develops, the patron will become more and more untrusting of the prime player character. This is truly bad should the patron insist on joining the party. The patron will want the prime character to fire, one by one, all his underlings. With each encounter of any face card in Phase A only, the player also makes an Ordinary roll to convince the patron of one friend's importance. His choice but fail and out the selected person must go. The player whose character is ousted, goes to his alternate role. If all the main players move to alts, the satisfied patron will stop micromanaging the quest. How does he do this from far away? Magic mirrors of course.

Inverted: each character sent packing must roll Digressions, Road Home Alone (R). How bad could that be? To prevent that, the entire group must quit. In some cases, the outcome of the Digression will put the player character right back into the party. Ref decides. The patron will be none the wiser. But would the prime player try to fire the same guy twice?

Twist 7 Rods: A counter scheme of equal magnitude brews against the patron. The rival has nothing to do with this extra danger, nor does the situation require knowing WHO? is involved. Each interphase, including before the climax challenges

and right before the Epilog, attempt an Ordinary roll. The failed roll results in the patron's death and a failed quest.

There is an alternative. Whenever the adventure's encounters flip a Queen, the prime player may roll Difficult to convince the patron to join them in the adventure. If the patron is with the players at any time, treat all face cards as Knaves.

Inverted: the rolls for the patron's safety become Difficult. But the roll to get the patron to join the quest drops to Ordinary.

Twist 6 Rods: A world famous general, the leader of the Imperial Watch or Navy, else the head of the Frontier Legions, wants the players to end their quest. He will send a dispatch or make a magical appeal at the interphase between B and C. Each player then must decide on his own to drop out. Since this result would also threaten the alternate characters, the players will decide by majority decision. If more say continue, they continue; they also make a powerful enemy. If the majority says we're done, then the mission ends. Go to the Epilog and make an enemy of the patron. However, if the interphase between B and C is never crossed, again the Ace event is critical, the request never occurs or is lost in the military bureaucracy.

Inverted: the longboat loses the technique Democracy (S). The prime player alone decides if the quest continues after the command to stop is issued.

Twist 5 Rods: Patron will not believe the player characters are attempting the quest. If the patron is along for the journey, treat this twist instead as Seven Rods.

His auguries are flawed; his spies are misinformed. He needs proof by the interphase between B and C, or any reward will not be honored. He might accept a celestial or cosmic replay of events, provided the magic user is not also an Illusionist. He will only truly accept the severed head of the rival as proof. That's not likely. Instead the arms or uniforms of fallen enemy minions might be used; a monster trophy could be sent to the patron. The Ref decides how convincing is the proof and whether any task resolution roll must be made. Typically make the prime player or a user of wizardry dice Difficult. More than one attempt may be made if different evidence is proposed. If the quest was uneventful, little more than a couple of Tens, the patron will never be convinced. Skip the climax challenges if the patron fires the party before Phase C.

Inverted: No matter the outcome, the patron will be incensed. He either thinks the mission failed or was hoping for a different net outcome. *"When you tell me to kill someone, how do you expect that to end?"*

Twist 4 Rods: A criminal conspiracy or secret cabal believes the quest will interfere with their own similar plans. All encounters will be confrontational. Increase the rank of mission inconsequence events by one. e.g. Agitated become Flukes.

Inverted: same result of increased encounter ranks as the regular flip, but an enemy of the empire is conducting raids along the travel route. The people met will be more suspicious, anxious and impatient. They might even question *these barbarians* as spies.

Twist 3 Rods: An alternate quest will become available during the course of this adventure – a much more profitable one. At the transition between Phase B and C, the players will be offered a new patron and quest. (Generate the entire thing at that time.) The players may drop from this task and start the other even without Epilog encounters. They will, however, need to get past Phase A and B to have the new offer tendered. They will also offend the patron they abandon. Yet the Ref may allow the players to perform both quests in tandem or with only slight delay, back to back. There will only be one Epilog and the climax challenges could occur intermingled. All depends on what was to be done and what new is requested. If this proves too complicated for the Ref, he should just give the players a choice; someone is bound to be offended. “*What do you mean, that you took another gig?*”

Inverted: the new plot comes from the same patron, again between B and C phases. He wants to divide his efforts and pursue both. This is hardly something that can be refused. With the same patron generate a fresh secondary quest objective; add at least two challenges to the climax to complete the extra request. Unlike the regular flip, the reward is not increased. This is a *by the way while you're out* sort of affair. Or else, send the main players completing this first mission and have a second group of alternate roles following with the next mission. You can even mix and match, some main with some alts go on. The rest, as alts and mains, take the wholly new adventure. Yet, in case it needs to be said, the group has only one longboat, so who gets the lion's share of the techniques?

Twist 2 Rods: For various reasons, the quest has never been attempted. This doubt will have a negative influence on the players and their servants. The quest Pip starts at minus three, but if the group reaches the interphase between B and C, that Pip increases by half a D8. It may even shift positive, here or with other bonus obtained through play.

Inverted: in truth, the quest is impossible. So why would the players even attempt it? Fame, fortune, adventure, i.e. Ignobles. The quest has only one setting, Phase A. The setting should be underworlds. As soon as it is finished, the task fails into the Epilog. If the quest is refused from the start, terms are never reached, the patron becomes an Enemy. If the players at least begin and run Phase A, they get the Methodical trait longboat additions and will offend no one. There is an Epilog, but no aftermath. The patron automatically is indifferent should they at least make some attempt and finish one phase.

There is no reward. Yet they have all their make-rolls and may splurge in the early going; they might even like this sort of adventure. However, for game balance, each newly acquired longboat technique will disappear, unless a Difficult roll is made by the prime player at the quest's end. Plus, don't forget about the rival?

Twist Ace Rods: A lone and elusive highwayman becomes aware of the job. He is often undead, fated to be an ever-living annoyance. He will rob the players at magical gunpoint at the very start of the quest, taking all the purses. Take one person's shoes as he sleeps to demonstrate the phantom as truly mischievous. Battle him and find he's Great for Defensive Modifier and Banes. If the players ever leave their longboat and travel overland, the vessel will be robbed of both Treasure Laden (D) or Abundant Stores (M). Some say he is the Grandfather of the Thieves?

Right after the climax, they will face this ragged, yet debonair foe. The players will want to fight, but he's here to ask for forgiveness. He will give everything back that he took from the group. The group just didn't have their belongings this mission.

Inverted: he will also take relics, which may be important to the quest. The prime player character will lose his Blade by the end of Phase A. None of the players will keep their Mounts into Phase C or the climax challenges. Yet once again, everything will be returned in the Epilog. The quest might still fail as he takes a key relic. Truly, he doesn't care and has no concern for the needs of mortal men.

Twist Coins

Twist King Coins: The rival will attempt to bribe the player characters from their service. At each Knave event, the players will receive an offer, never a challenge. The first offer will match the patron's deal. The players may simply leave the quest and move straight to the Epilog. Once that finishes, they take their pay-off. Some or all of the players might accept. Any who do so, will sit out the remainder of this scenario; they do not have to roll Digressions to get home. The *betrayers* should not continue using an alternate character. That would be too convenient.

Some or all of the players may be tempted but could desire to wait for even more reward for their infidelity. If they select a second Knave during travel encounters in any phase, the deal will be sweetened. The rival will pay them double, and even guarantee them greater techniques for their longboat. Ref decides how much the buyoff increases. Though highly unlikely, this could continue with each Knave that enters play. The bribe could swell into a king's ransom. This all ends at the climax, of course, and any Knaves which appear in the Epilog will come with deadly force representing the betrayed patron's loyalists. The patron will know he has been betrayed; there's no other outcome, but him becoming an enemy to any who break the oaths sworn during the terms.

Inverted: the same situation occurs, but additional penalty applies. Any player who refuses the bribe, loses his Multiple Attempt Bonus. Whether his character's level is five, six, seven or eight, that player rolls just once for any combat Q&D outcome. The Ref may even add a greater penalty of a negative Quest Pip if a second Knave appears.

Twist Queen Coins: This quest has attracted the interest of the immortal gods. The players suffer normal travel encounters, but the climax challenges are suspended. Instead, a tribunal of angelic figures will arbitrate the dispute between patron and rival.

Trial by combat occurs. All the players will use swagger vs swagger to defeat the rival and his small group of his chosen minions. Collectively, that enemy group will have a half D8 techniques of various types per player character involved. The patron offers nothing. Win or lose, switch back to climax challenges. However, the Quest Pip is set at plus three if the duel before the gods was won, all the rival and his men lose all their swagger. Else, it goes to minus three if the players either cry uncle and surrender, or one by one lose every technique they have ever learned. Swagger vs Swagger is no joke. Any lost techniques will need to be gained yet again through regular play.

Inverted: the gods will take the form of perverse ginnns or demons. The tribunal is wicked but will still abide by the combat result. However, any character that loses all techniques is eaten by the barking demon Ammut. A great way to go, perhaps, but shred the character's sheet. His friends may check the Magic Ignoble watching his soul be devoured. Surrender is an option and puts the party in the Epilog as having failed. Any player may also switch to an alternate role here, but before doing so, perhaps read the game text on the Heroics Ignoble to see if there will be a lasting penalty for his refusal to entertain the gods.

Twist Knight Coins: Many different interest groups have banded together to plead with the players to end the quest. The patron probably is evil and his plan diabolical. That is what the representatives of this coalition will try to state. Ref decides if something else is afoot. There is no bribe. The appeal is rational and made during the first Knight encounter of travel.

The players may simply leave the quest as failed, but they must do this as a group. If anyone drops out, individually, they continue with Digressions, usually type (Y), refusing a secret deal; it could turn deadly. If the group agrees, continue with the Epilog; Knights return to normal conditions.

If the party as a whole, or a sub-group, continues after the first Knight's appeal—they stay dedicated to the patron and quest—a follow up King or second Knight in any phase means evidence is provided. The patron is implicated; he may even have ties to a blasphemous cult or secret cabal. His religious beliefs are

anathema or apostate. If details are important, the Ref should provide those, knowing what his own players might find offensive. If anyone continues on the quest, after the proof is delivered, future Kings and Knights should be treated as Knaves.

Inverted: the coalition is disorganized. Only by the Epilog will evidence be provided that shows the player group assisted in an odious act. Any Knight in the Epilog will provide the evidence that the group did something wrong, very bad. Hope for that not to occur or suffer the consequences for taking this quest?

Each player must check one of two Ignobles. If he has Growth open, he may vow to gallantly battle evil from here on out; that's the safe play. Else, he must check Fame and now associates with the crimes committed; even that is preferable to this possible alternate result. If the player has already checked Growth and Fame, he is penalized by this knowledge that he aided the proverbial devil. In remorse, the character loses all Traits. That probably won't happen; the player will most likely refuse this quest from the get-go, upon seeing the twist. The Ref should not keep this Twist a secret. The player facing loss of all his Traits should have doubts and dreams and magical premonitions, telling him to drop out and play the alt. But some players just push to the limit. *"I'll level up before then and have Growth to check?"*

Twist Knave Coins: The quest succeeds only if a player purposely suffers a setback. Here's what's needed – one player will have a preliminary enemy beat him; he must suffer a knock out or vicious wound by method Brash. Then, his nameless victor monologs and gloats on his superiority; the bastard reveals an aspect of the quest or travel which up to now is not fully known. It's a stretch, but it beats the alternative of being purposely captured by the rival, hearing about or stealing his plans and escaping via Digressions. Peruse type (K) for comparison.

Until the setback happens, travel encounters will stall in Phase A. Do not advance the phase until the *setback* occurs against a minion of the rival. Usually, the party will be at a loss on how to continue. They will not know a specific reference location or require something like a cipher for a map key. Maybe they don't know which back wood fork to take or the channel through the shoals. Leave it unexplained if nothing comes to mind.

To discover the settings of Phases B and C, one of the characters must fight and suffer. Cross your fingers for unconsciousness. I tend not to let the players purposely avoid the roll and fail. All rolls will be attempted, but here a bad roll might give a hope of later success. The info may not be acquired in any other manner. Okay, the Ref may allow Nearly Impossible (no make-roll either) for skill Tormentor on a captive to achieve the same result. Regardless, the minion must be a Knave. So, this doesn't always take a bunch of cards, treat all face cards as Knaves, until the clue is uncovered during the setback.

Inverted: alright, now you must beat the info out of someone. To move ahead and out of Phase A, the players must capture one of the rival's servitors. If no one begins as a Tormentor, the prime character gains that skill upon accepting the quest. He can practice on the other player characters, perhaps. Kidding, he'd use rower slaves. To capture someone, you'll need the surrender result. Like that had with Recitation Telekinesis or Necromancy. There are others under Calculated and in most combat Methods. If the rival only sends Horrible monsters, the players might need more finesse to capture a minion.

Twist 10 Coins: Bandits or pirates have been paid to stop the players. The money to enlist these extra mercenaries did not come from the rival. Select WHO? There is no direct battle against these soldiers and ships, except it can be assumed that normal encounters generated by the quest settings have extra incentive toward slaughter. What is important is the person identified by WHO? If the players press their objectives through Phase A and beyond, they will make a future enemy of this extra campaign figure.

Inverted: The bandits and pirates interfere with travel to such a high degree that the players are forced to use the underworld to complete their journey. There's the WHO? and the forced passage through the underworld. Worse twists are possible, yet this one's pretty bad.

Twist 9 Coins: Unknown to the patron, two rivals have joined forces; pick two cards as a pair of rivals. The rivals often are working together. If one is the intended victim, of say a murder, theft or blackmail, the player characters will still reach the correct climax challenges. They won't wind up at the other rival's fortress.

Besides making Knaves take on an eclectic mix of styles, two flair forces, ace-in-the-hole minions are generated, the climax should start with an extra challenge of a duel directly against the second rival. He should have the lesser campaign role, Ref decides the superior and inferior opponent. Rival two fights to protect his friend or his friend's interests. If both survive, both could be enemies. Yet usually the second rival will be slain in this initial duel.

Inverted: the patron will learn of the identity of other rival after the quest starts. He will not want the extra exposure. He will not want to antagonize even more unknown foes. If the players ever encounter a Queen event after Phase A, they will be told the quest is called off. Also in the Epilog, the quest can be called failed by any Queen event. The patron was ready to face one, but not the more powerful second. *"But he was the guy you told us to maim?"*

Twist 8 Coins: A competing Viking longboat becomes involved. Between Phases B and C, the players will face the other group attempting the quest. Did the patron hire two ships' crews or is the goal pursued by a second unknown party? Ref decides. But fight the ship engagement, starting at Q&D Ramming Speed. Even if the

players restrict themselves to the shore, the enemy ship will disgorge a company of warriors and engage in land battle. That uses Legions vs Legions, starting at Q&D Skirmish. Settle this and bury the dead. The captains might decide to swagger vs swagger and save the lives of many servitors. That's up to the prime player. Would he look cowardly by refusing? There's always Minor Antagonist action to help tip the chance of victory.

Inverted: the other ship is the players, just not right now or in the same dimension. It's all pretty spooky. But what this does is gives the Ref a set of swagger or other aspects he doesn't have had to generate fresh. He matches what the players collectively have and starts the fight. Yet, a deal is more likely, but only if someone has the cosmic ability to send the right group back to their own timeline. "That's you."

Twist 7 Coins: One player character will contract a disease that will leave him injured and in need of rest. The victim is decided by low roll and suffers the equivalent of a vicious wound at the transition between Phases B and C. The longboat also loses No Disease (I) if that interphase happens by exiting Phase B.

Inverted: the disease weakens everyone from the onset. For the duration of the quest, all players characters temporarily lose the traits of Energetic and Rugged. Characters lacking either start the quest with a vicious wound. Do I need mention that No Disease (I) is lost?

Twist 6 Coins: The patron is followed by an assassin from a past unrelated deed. This highly skilled adversary attacks about the time the group transitions from Phases B and C. If the patron is aboard, fight a duel to save his life versus a respectable adversary. His Defensive Modifier is based on the level of the highest player character.

If the patron is not aboard, he's killed, and the mission fails. That may be avoided if the encounters had an Ace in Phase A and never has to move from B to C. Even before that, for any pair of Kings



in any single phase, the killer might be defeated. That pair of kings, doesn't have to be sequential, will prompt the assassin to attack the party. The killer will need information on the patron. Fight the duel; again, he's probably got some heft in Defensive Modifier.

Inverted: the assassin will strike every time any King is flipped. The battle will always be one on one. His level is the same as the best player character, but the scoundrel starts against the lowest player character as his victim. Then the next and the next, if prompted, and he survived each duel. He stops doing this if he ends up killing the patron, a small consolation. Anyone attacked will fight a half D8 rounds with any Method. The player has that long to beat the assassin or must survive that many events. After which, the killer retreats and gets away.

Twist 5 Coins: World's finest horse riders oppose the quest; these are typically Hunnic nomadic warlords or Slavic riders, stereotype Cossacks. (Yes, wrong era and ethnicity, but a good reference for internet photos for visualization.) They seldom attack in force; this is not an invasion. The rival benefits by paying this new group of opponents. His Knaves are mounted and highly mobile. They might keep a watch on the group, unless these scouts are chased off, the party uses wizardry to mask their movements, or the group goes wide afield (like into open water). Lots of small battles result, so treat Kings and Knights, as well as Knaves.

Inverted: also, treat all Queens as inverted. The horsemen are raiding your patron and his agents.

Twist 4 Coins: While the patron is negotiating the terms of the deal, the group's longboat is attacked by the potential rival. What, you didn't think an NPC has precognition? If the longboat has Vigilant (E), the raid only destroys a half D8 techniques, plus the group loses Vigilant. If the longboat lacks vigilance, then the result is catastrophic. All techniques are gone. You start from scratch. You might as well take the quest and get some baseline stats via Methodical trait additions. The hard work starts again.

Inverted: one or more alternate characters may not be used in play. Each player should roll Ordinary, just before he wants to make a swap. On a failed roll, the player character on the quest must stay. Be careful if you're wounded, but you must finish the quest. Perhaps the group will resign (in protest) and skip right to the Epilog. But there could be plenty of trouble there.

Twist 3 Coins: Patron underestimates the size of the opposition, length of journey, amount of supplies required, etc. The prime player character has a choice: start with a minus two Quest Pip or start by sacrificing all purses and all improvements to be had by Methodical Traits. The Ref may decide to take Treasure Laden (D) as well, but only if the party has a character above level four. The Finance flip and resources of the patron should also be stretched, which in game terms means

curtailed (vanish by attrition during the journey). His reward at the end had better be worth it, but there he promises a bit more than he is able to deliver.

Inverted: the patron purposely misrepresents the true magnitude of challenge. The regular result applies without the choice. You have the Quest Pip and the shortages. So why even accept this? True, so let's add that the prime character also misrepresented himself and his own exuberance or pride made him jump on the chance for travel. The Quest Pip applies, if only in the Epilog, should they back out immediately. But the shortages are only discovered—the lost purses and all the Methodical additions being cancelled and removed—once the Epilog is entered. Perhaps give the mission a shot, even knowing there will be a sad accounting on the end, and the group might barely break even. Ed. Note: Gosh, sounds like publishing a role-play game.

Twist 2 Coins: Peasants will misunderstand the quest and become rowdy, disrespectful or dangerous. The player character will exude magical auras or a vibe that stinks of magic user. Start in Phase A and let many routine encounters turn more quizzical. By Phase B, the incidental encounters of the quest will grow confrontation. Finally, any encounters in Phase C, which normally would be generated and quickly skipped, should instead result in vigilante mobs attacking the party.

Inverted: the nobility will dislike their serfs being injured or agitated. Best if the players stay off the beaten path, if that's even possible. By Phase C, the group could be pursued by a lordly regiment; some examples, heads displayed on pikes, must be made.

Twist Ace Coins: The most outwardly rich man of the campaign opposes the quest. He probably is the leader of the Imperial Guilds, but this could be the emperor himself. The Ref may have another figure in mind for his campaign. The players are offered several chests of coins, right now, if they refuse to even meet the patron to discuss his plans. If accepted, continue with an Epilog. The patron is peeved, and the rival is still active. The rival thinks this is just a ruse, and the players are only faking that they had no discussions with him. The players may refuse the money, but somehow it is implied forever that they took it. Their patron will be suspicious. Should they fail the quest, the patron will call them cheats and assume the double-cross.

Several chests of coins may seem like much. But in the grand scheme, it may only be a few more acres of land to a socially powerful player character. The lowly will throw a party and gift excessively. In game terms the windfall only exchanges into something tangible, like Treasure Laden (D), if the prime player makes a Tasking roll; roll three dice if skilled Steward. Shower money on a person, someone that he has no idea how to manage his life, and as the adage says, "*it is soon lost.*"

Inverted: the crew accepts their own bequests-bribes, and most of the men do not wish to continue. Even the rowers, one and all, buy their liberty. Some of the

servitors seek to debauch, others retire to start families, return home to the motherland, separate to buy their own adventuring vessel. The robin has left the nest on night's wing. The longboat loses most of its techniques; Ref should assess the full damage, yet even the ship's mouser has resigned a wealthy man. As a small consolation, the prime character should gain at least one Long Term friend as a contact for favors. This may instead be an Experienced Mariner or some other campaign role. Just a reminder, in general, a contact is used outside of combat to make a problem go away. But this new one will not be significant and powerful enough to recruit an alternate elite crew. That only happens through continued play. If not here, upcoming, use a Phase A to recruit the rudiments of the next scurvy, starving, greenhorn crew.

Twist Swords

Twist King Swords: Opposition will outclass the players' forces in every battle. The Twist effects just the forces sent by the rival. In duels, the rival will always have a guard of level above the best player character. If they have a small escort, the rival brings a company. If they have one ship, the rival attacks with two.

Most of this is handled as restrictions. The players may never gain positive Pips against Knaves in this adventure, the exception being Fury. No Command or Tactical bonus, no Catbird Seat or Quest Pip bonus, only Fury may be used to add to a player's dice versus the rival's minions. This advantage lasts only during encounters. For the climax challenges, the players will face forces typical to the rival's background and level.

Inverted: as before, but also the Fury Pip is not possible. The foes are just that good. Since the Fury Pip may also be created by Traits, those too will not impart a bonus. Shall we also pile on? All make-rolls are cut in half. If the Ref can think of anything else, he may apply his own penalties during encounters against Knaves. Wait, I remembered one more – the loss of Pips also continues into the climax and Epilog. Too much? Maybe just for parties with multiple attempt bonuses.

Twist Queen Swords: The group's longboat must undergo repairs or some of the crew has already been dispatched on another objective. The timing is wrong, but the patron and prime player character still have agreed on a task. This is a situation of *I wish you had talked to me first*.

Part of the group was taking advantage of a lull or seasonal retreat from duties; the others are gung-ho to go off a roving. Each player should roll Ordinary to discover if he was enthusiastic or upon failure was part of the repairs (or loafing). Anyone failing the roll loses all Trait benefits for the next adventure, starting with Methodical not adding a technique to the longboat. But the apathy also effects acts like Rugged taking that extra wound or Energetic firing himself into a Fury.

The mission is typically one that has not or cannot be refused. A deal is made. What was it again? The boat is going out in whatever condition it has at the moment. Assess a full D8 techniques as dicey; these are not lost, but they may not be tapped for use during encounters. The *Scot* should have them back ready, the full crew united, by the climax challenges.

Inverted: the full crew and restored techniques come back at the Epilog. Sort of a *what did we miss* moment. Some player characters might have also missed the starting anchors up; those players missing that Ordinary roll will play alternate roles at least through Phase A. “*Why was I left behind; I’m only the band’s lead tenor bard?*”

Consider one last thing. If a Trait benefit is not available until the next mission, how does that change the extra skills and techniques gained by leveling? Are they too not acquired? The Ref must decide how much he enforces the Twist.

Twist Knight Swords: Scenario will be physically exhausting; all non-Rugged characters must rest and recover after the end. During downtime, each character must roll on Private Concerns and generate a *Task Complete* result. Failure to do so, and the character begins the next quest nursing his poor health as a vicious wound.

Inverted: even the Rugged of trait must recover during the downtime between adventures. See that guideline booklet for more details. Or wing-it? Not like I can teach most Ref’s anything they can’t make up. Queen of Sword has some good examples to apply if they rush into another adventure?

Twist Knave Swords: Rival has a servitor that’s a champion brut. He may appear via a Knave encounter, or more likely is an extra obstacle, which begins the climax. This servant of the rival is dangerous to duel. Any Advantage that uses personal swaggering is ignored. No benefit is gained of three dice from personal swaggering, and no new acquisition of personal swaggering techniques are gained.

Inverted: the skill of this minion prevents the use and gain of Blade and Mount techniques as well.

Twist 10 Swords: Rival has a servitor that’s a permanent magical null. He may appear via a Knave encounter, or more likely is an extra obstacle, which begins the climax. This servant of the rival prevents the use of Magical Method, and any wizardry swaggering is ignored. No benefit is gained of three dice for spellcraft, and no new acquisition of wizardry techniques are gained.

Inverted: the eminence of this minion prevents the use and gain of Blade and Mount techniques as well.

Twist 9 Swords: The rival has exotic pets and conjured monsters. These must be fought at the start of the climax. Or just for fun, the rival uses these animals as an

ambush, putting them into the player characters' path. One or more encountered Knaves are fought as monsters and monster Banes.

Inverted: if any outcome results in a Shaken and a second Shaken, there is a substitute penalty. The character does not surrender, instead the character's Mount is killed. He must start over nurturing a new companion. *"I weep with you."*

Twist 8 Swords: The players will feel constantly cheated during the scenario. Every Queen will cause an argument, even when it represents good news. The patron will regret his deal as much as the players. There will be no end of quest reward. Not because the patron is dishonest, but because the players feel they deserve much, much more. They will refuse the *charity* offered, lest their honor be besmirched. Make no friends here. Very wicked characters could insist they have no honor. Offer each player a choice – he can have the reward, but loses one Trait, usually Bold, by compromising.

Inverted: the bitterness becomes an obsession during travels. The overwhelming feeling is that the patron must have been trying to send the group into a trap. If the players fail this quest, the survivors will return and confront the patron. Fight a duel, where the players attack to kill. The patron will be one level below the highest surviving player character, but he will have guards that number the same as the number of players. The players must use Brash method alone to resolve this battle.

Twist 7 Swords: The true extent of the opposition will be met after the scenario in the next quest. The players do not even need to agree to terms or finish this quest for the rival to send minions against them later.

The current adventure may be accepted and will still have encounters, but the quest has no rival. Ignore the rival during events, treat Knaves as Tens. The climax might have a single obstacle to reflect the deed's completion. Any battle resulting there would need an antagonist set by the Ref; select one based on the intended outcome of the quest.

The danger appears in the quest after this one, whenever that should occur. Treat Tens as Knaves of the rival who should have faced them here. If the goal here was to slay the rival, perhaps he has been killed with little struggle? His loyalists and agents will still turn Tens into combative Knaves.

Inverted: there is a rival involved, but he is off the campaign map. With magic he may be very, very far removed. Apply Knaves normally as they appear. However, the rival will not be met, ever, this scenario. If the quest was to kill, maim or capture him, those and similar quests will end a bust; Ref may select an alternative or apply the mission against the rival's chief emissary. The rival will not appear in this adventure's climax. The rival becomes a future enemy. He will seek to avenge any loss he suffered this quest at a later time, but his involvement for now is absent.

Twist 6 Swords: An unforeseen opponent, similar to the background and resources of the patron is opposed to the quest. Between Phase B and C, the players will fight a battle against this extra adversary. He will only have resources similar to those supplied by the patron. If the patron gave the players virtually nothing, fight a duel with a few agents the enemy managed to infiltrate into your ranks or onto your ship. If the patron initially supplied much more, the battle becomes larger with many combatants and will need to be resolved with larger scale action.

Inverted: this new enemy is a former business partner of the patron. The quest is desired by both. The situation now becomes a race to see who completes it first. The players can only reach the climax by skipping Phase B. If they do not receive an Ace event in Phase A, then send them into the Epilog. Treat the result as the business partner and his agents were faster, better, and they won.

In no case will the patron be happy. Even if the quest was to kill someone, do not assume that the death was as important as the patron's own revenge, his involvement. The rival may be dead by someone else's handiwork, but the group's original patron wanted this to happen on his terms.

Twist 5 Swords: A married woman opposes the quest. She manipulates her husband into stopping the players. Flip a card for WHO? Then, add this second rival; both King and Knight events become his Knave henchmen, sent to stop the players. The husband will not have any influence on the climax challenges, nor will he become an enemy in the aftermath. Neither will the woman, whose motives will always remain (here) inscrutable.

Inverted: the woman is the scorned lover of the patron. All other details remain the same, but now we at least know her *raison d'être*. To make matters interesting, should the players flip a Queen event in Phase C, the patron will back out of his deal. He has reconciled with his lady and will want the quest to end. He may pay the group a small bonus in failure. The Referee must decide how everyone reacts if the group presses on and succeeds. It's not always as easy as the patron being displeased. Yet it may be exactly that. The motive flip often implies changes to the campaign. The players may wish those changes to occur. So even if the patron is a happy lovebird, the players may see ending starvation, for instance, in his city-state as an ennobling goal for the Ignobles of course.

Twist 4 Swords: Only one player truly attempts this quest; the rest are along for the ride. The patron does not want to negotiate with a group. All the reward for the terms, and all the men and materials provided, will be put in the care of this single prime player character. The longboat loses Democracy (S).

The prime player is the only one who rolls on the Aftermath table to gain a potential ally. The other players will get their reward in the afterlife – actually, that depends on what the leader shares. But the quest's patron will become the enemy of

any player character that shares in the reward. Ref must decide if a longboat technique aids the entire group, often it does. So, any longboat technique obtained as a quest end reward, would come with an enemy to some player characters.

The patron insists the bonus goes to just one. In most cases, the patron openly or secretly changes to a relative of the prime player character and doesn't like the man's companions, a bad influence.

Inverted: all the players, except the prime leader, should be forced to use alternate characters. The Ref may insist that those characters be fresh level zeroes; do not insist on that if it creates any real world grousing. *"Hey, I only get to play my guy once every six months, com'on?!?"*

Twist 3 Swords: A foreign emissary, spy or assassin is somehow involved. He will be in disguise, impossible to detect, as a common warrior or sailor.

Here's a case where the Ref must decide whether the agent is pro or con to the quest. Consider the whole scenario—patron, quest and motive—the campaign impact. The imposter may be an infiltrator to stop the quest, or just as likely s there to ensure the players continue despite any adversity or set-back. He won't necessarily aid the players, instead he'll leave clues that threaten *better not fail*. Though the *mole* may act like he's the patron's enforcer, the patron has no idea why this man is also involved. Did the motive's political flip result in a secret cabal, then you might have your answer.

Inverted: the agent reveals himself in the Epilog, upon success or fail. He attacks in personal duels trying to kill all and leave no witnesses. He will be of Great ferocity; the players may wish to start with Method Escape. But what happens to their vessel and the longboat techniques if they do so? If everyone flees, the enforcer will wreak havoc and eliminate at least a D8 longboat techniques, starting with Undamaged (O) going first.

Twist 2 Swords: Rival is organized from the onset. For encounters, treat Tens as also causing battle or conflict like Knaves. The phase advances, but something could be lost, or someone could be injured.

Inverted: treat every encounter card which advances the phase as also having danger like a Knave. One exception, the Sun card remains pure. In fact, if a Sun card is flipped as an encounter, this Twist ends.

Twist Ace Swords: The world's finest (non-player and non-human) swordsman is involved. Is he a cat, that would be cool? He's a Great Satyr, animal human hybrid, a faery protector. Between Phase B and C, he will attack and duel the group of player characters. In this duel, the players are forced constantly to use the events of Irregular for their Method.

This strange nonhuman will never slay. Use the combat results as presented; but even if he defeats all, there is no double-tap or Digressions. He'll wound a bunch,

cause men to cower, make men flee, soundly knock the player characters unconscious, but never kills. If he ends up doing so, the character is magically restored and heals after the battle. The injured man skips Phase C, but he will be ready for the climax challenges nursing a single vicious. Maybe the walking wounded should stay in his hammock? To clarify, this restoration does not erase wounds; merely, it erases death of character overflow.

If the satyr swordsman is ever met again, by another Ace Sword Twist, treat the card as inverted.

Inverted: here, the beast man will kill. All players get events for Escape method. Any that are injured, unconscious or surrendered will roll on the Death of Character Digression. The elfin slayer will not injure servitors or burn the vessel. He is only interested in testing leaders. His motives are peculiar. And yet some good may come of it?

He will also appear at the end of the Epilog, provided he was not slain by some miracle. There, he will ask forgiveness. He will bestow any one swaggering technique, except Wizardry, upon each character. He will also give the crew Religiously Inspired (C).

He will never be met hereafter. If an Ace Swords Twist is ever selected again, treat the card as the Two Swords instead. Yet maybe the longboat also gets Arcane Sentinel (F); it that him?

Optional, Underworld Twists

Since we've already determined that many fine adventures take place below ground, here's a few extra tricks and traps specific to those ancient and arcane realms of the Unending Gray. There's also a list of monsters. These may not be a true *Manual of Monsters*. That in play would be finely crafted Q&D specific to each and every one of the fifty-six beasts. Lots of work, thousands of hours perhaps. I'm also being reminded that the cards invert, so I'll need 112 for 112 monsters. I'll get started.

For play, the Twist list of monsters adds some nice game atmosphere, familiar things we've all fought in one game system or another. Yet if you want to see some real terror unfold, let the players describe what they see. One will usually joke about a fuzzy bunny, and a remark about Monty Python will follow. Har-har, gamer banter. But you'll also get some weird and strange descriptions of horrors; some players will even add rule specific penalties right from the get-go. e.g. No method Calculated. Players are mean or get carried away with additional poisons, mind blasts, choking odors and feet stuck to the floor. I was just trying to place some rats to get things started.

Unless otherwise stated, the Underworld Twist will occur at the transition from Phase B to C. Some, however, will occur thorough the adventure in the Unending Gray. Have I called it that enough to make my point on scale?

Monster Quicklook

Monsters		
	Cups	Rods
King	Extraordinary Beast (Godlike)	Ginormous Beast (Warnings and Signs)
Queen	Indescribable Beast (Hypnotic Beast)	Child of the Beast (Mated Pair)
Knight	Destructor (Element of Fire)	Regenerating Beast (Action-Reaction)
Knave	Egg-layer (Frenzy Beast)	Wasp Beast (Chest Popper)
10	Oath to Chaos (Exiled Iniquitous)	Scavengers (Spiders)
9	Fantastic (Lingering Spawn)	Carrion Creature (Eaters of the Dead)
8	Dreaming Giant (Ginn)	Stout Giant (Fierce Giant)
7	Amplification (Vulnerability Beast)	Mutations (Mutations of Mind)
6	Reptiles (Saurian)	Parasite Host (Trapped Soul)
5	Regal Beast (Magical Beast)	Demon Cult (Animal Cult)
4	Enveloping Forms (Suffocating Beast)	Invisible Beast (Deceiver)
3	Supreme Beast (Watching Beast)	Purveyors Magical Barriers (Artificers Traps)
2	Sect of Death (Sect of Mysteries)	Malevolent Orca (Remnants of Dark Lord's Cult)
Ace	Shapeless Creature (Hoax-changer)	The Invulnerable (Soft Spot)
	Coins	Swords
King	Bane of Steel (Impervious to Steel)	Terrible Beast (Fierce Beast)
Queen	Blood-Sucker (Legendary Vampire)	Foul Worm (Giant Mouth)
Knight	Zombies (Hosts of Dead)	Scourging Beast (Enchanted Beast)
Knave	Hostile Vegetation (Plant Creatures)	False Beast (Many and Twisted Forms of Goblin)
10	Illusions (Pranksters)	Alchemy (Dark Secrets Revealed)
9	Mysterious Non-Humans (Warlike Demi-Humans)	Dire Wolves (Ghostly Arms)
8	Gentle Giant (Fake Giant)	Hideous Voices (Face of Insanity)
7	Magical Creations (Ancients)	Unholy Priest (Wraith)
6	Powerful Protector (Powerful Ward)	Macabre Horror (Innocuous)
5	Inhuman Thieves (Nonhuman Assassins)	Cannibal Cult (Beast Cult)
4	Transforming Beast (Shifting Beast)	Resurrected Beast (Beastly Experiment)
3	Guardian Beast (Conjured Beast)	Great Dark Beast (Great Dark Beast Inverted)
2	A-B Splice Beast (Evolution)	Communal Beasts (Warring Beasts)
Ace	Demon from Broken Pentacle (Man Possessed)	Free Demon (Undead Demon)
Inverted card result list in parenthesis.		

Underworld Monsters Wicked Major Tarot

Wicked Magician: Riches of underworld don't just cause the usual greed; they cause players to attempt the cross and double-cross. The greatest treasures will appear to be of the type that only one person may truly have.

Inverted: Monster is onerous. Attempt no method Magical, must be defeated by other methods; anyone forced to Magical uses Irregular instead.

Wicked High Priestess: Magical forces, charms, devices and talents, some call them spells, will not function underground here as they do on the surface. Everything seems convoluted and confused, some for better consequences, most for worse. Treat Recitation as random, not for the result, but for the table which is used. That may mean once a player attempts his action, describes what he does, the actual table one to twenty is then determined, before he makes his final outcome roll.

Inverted: Monster requires Trait Gifted to truly slay; Ref may instead allow a Tactical Pip, upon successful dispatch delivered by a character lacking this trait.

Wicked Empress: Loyalty of servitors and followers of the player characters will be tested or changed by the experience.

Inverted: Monster is scary and negates Catbird Seat Pip, instead offers nothing.

Wicked Emperor: Scale of combat is equal to that found on the surface; player characters will battle in huge caverns. Brigades of inhuman hosts compete for territory. Q&D Skirmish might be employed, when the players bring their own company of soldiers with them in support. There will be few closet doors to simply boot open and grab the contents.

Inverted: Monster is dreadful and negates Command Pip, instead offers nothing.

Wicked Hierophant: Underworld has a portal that creates a terrible closeness to the terrible gods.

Inverted: Monster is paranormal. Along with the result for any fail, add a half D8 to Warped Outcome Tally; tally event is not generated.

Wicked Lovers: Complex clan structure has evolved, in which several different lesser species and greater creatures have joined together in a loose organization of laws, not just only the strongest survive. This is a culture that can organize retribution to the party even after it returns to the surface.

Inverted: Monster requires Trait Bold to truly slay; Ref may instead allow a Tactical Pip, upon successful dispatch delivered by a character lacking this trait.

Wicked Chariot: Area around the underworld can be exceptionally difficult to cross and dangerous to enter. Perhaps traps and magical curses have been placed by the surface inhabitants to keep the dangers that await below from coming forth into the light.

Inverted: Monster is menacing. Along with the result for any fail, lose any swaggering technique. If none available, suffer vicious.

Wicked Justice: Traps in underworld have only the most horrific of penalties; do not accidentally set them off.

Inverted: Monster is stalwart and only loses half its defensive modifier from tactical use of Methodical trait.

Wicked Hermit: Underworld hides a secret, often so bad that most care never to remember the details.

Inverted: Monster requires Trait Energetic to truly slay; Ref may instead allow a Tactical Pip, upon successful dispatch delivered by a character lacking this trait.

Wicked Wheel of Fortune: Reshuffle deck and continue.

Wicked Force: A greater creature or cult has enslaved the dwarves in the region. A relic has been used to subjugated them, or they have been turned into their savage state as one of the many and twisted forms of the goblin.

Inverted: Monster requires Trait Rugged to truly slay; Ref may instead allow a Tactical Pip, upon successful dispatch delivered by a character lacking this trait.

Wicked Hanged Man: Player characters will be faced with a situation where the group must split for one encounter phase. This could have been when someone stayed behind, guarding a chokepoint, long enough for the others to escape ahead to a sanctuary. Then the two groups were divided as each converged on that sanctuary. Each player will place his main character in one group and his alternate character in another. Mix and match so that not all the mains are in one pile. Then, run two phases back to back. Both represent Phase C with the two separated. Each will have their own set of encounters. The survivors regroup and reach the climax challenges together. (Go back to playing one character per player, of course.)

Inverted: Monster is revolting and negates the Tactical Pip, which instead offers nothing.

Wicked Death: Smell of death is all around; moral will be low. The players should make a task resolution roll to keep each longboat technique. Only those techniques, at most one-fourth, brought into the underworld are possibly lost upon failure. Ref sets degree of difficulty.

Inverted: Monster is murderous and starts Enraged.

Wicked Temperance: Strange code of honor has developed among the cave inhabitants; they will usually try to capture the players or engage in selective kidnapping as the party sleeps. They could be seeking slaves or human livestock.

Inverted: Monster is indomitable. Attempt no Brash, must be defeated by other methods; anyone forced to Brash uses Irregular instead.

Wicked Devil: Underworld was designed and created by the Dark Lord; at least one perverse cult or a monster twisted by the abomination's machinations still thrives inside.

Inverted: Monster is diabolical. Attempt no Calculated or Recitation, must be defeated by the other more random event methods.

Wicked Tower of Destruction: Horrifying non-living guardians protect the treasures within; players are warned to avoid greedy pilferage from crypts not related

to their mission. If they enter simply to steal, like many before, they face certain destruction.

Inverted: Monster is daunting and negates Make-rolls; none are allowed in the underworld.

Wicked Star: Underworld has great things in small packages; usually implies uncut, natural gems can be readily found. Otherwise, seemingly simple objects have been enchanted to great power.

Inverted: Monster requires Trait Methodical to truly slay; Ref may instead allow a Tactical Pip, upon successful dispatch delivered by a character lacking this trait.

Wicked Moon: Terrible things can be found in small packages, usually implies small creatures with nasty tenacity or prowess. Otherwise, seemingly simple objects have been enchanted to cause dire consequences if disturbed.

Inverted: Monster is exhausting and negates Fury Pip, instead offers nothing.

Wicked Sun: Underworld has numerous passages to the surface. There is an increased chance other humans will be met, adventurers, pilgrims, and exotic travelers (taking a shortcut).

Inverted: Monster requires Trait Clever to truly slay; Ref may instead allow a Tactical Pip, upon successful dispatch delivered by a character lacking this trait.

Wicked Judgment: Party will face many obstacles that must be solved by other than clash of arms or brute force. In most cases, the party's survival depends on players deliberating instead of acting on instinct.

Inverted: Monster is bloodcurdling. Along with the result for any fail, suffer Shaken. Double Shaken may result and forces surrender.

Wicked World: Underworld is not just immense in scale with tunnels, caverns, corridors and entire buildings that form an underground city. The complex also includes miles and miles of paved roads and mechanical conveyances. A once great magical city, or community from the far future, may have been banished by magic or covered by earthquakes and the dust of many millennium.

Inverted: Monster is creepy. Along with the result for any fail, player must change method. If he can't, suffer Shaken.

Wicked Fool: Underworld exemplifies the cheapness of life. The area will be littered with carnage, strange and random positions of traps, numerous curses and savage creatures. This is a place where the party should bring with them servitors of much lower fate; many red shirts are going to be needed to scout ahead, or the player characters themselves will be the ones taking the brunt of the trap inflicting wounds.

Inverted: Monster is unwavering. Along with the result for any fail, monster becomes Enraged.

Underworld Monsters Cups

Monster King Cups: *Extraordinary Beast.* Referee's card blanche to create a splendidly wicked and unique monster, usually with special powers but balancing also vulnerabilities. Flair, party ignores Banes for sacrificing Longboat Religiously Inspired (C); longboat loses technique. But with any failed result, cancel this immunity.

Inverted: *Godlike.* Beast has so many powers and special attributes that it's practically immortal. Yet that also makes it overconfident and boastful. The monster will ask for tribute. A player character may decide pragmatically to toss the monster a few slaves in exchange for safe passage. That's a definite Fame or Growth Ignoble that will haunt the group later on the surface. Feeding prisoners to monsters is barbaric; the player characters are that, but some wish to assimilate into grander civilized roles.

Most godlike creatures have banes in the form of relics made specifically for slaying or banishing them to another dimension. Probably not something any character has on them at first meeting. Maybe first meeting all try to escape? It's every man for himself. Run away in all directions. Learn to fear the monster and the creature's domain. Life can be brutal and so can this game. Revenge via a relic's power may come later.

Flair, first action gain Command or Catbird Seat Pip for having Skill Courtly Grace or Steward.

Monster Queen Cups: *Indescribable Beast.* Creature so terrifying or ugly that any who look at it die (or turn to stone); definitely hard to combat with averted eyes or a fight in pitch black. Flair, ignore Banes for having Wizardry Celestial (G), but with any failed result, cancel this immunity.

Inverted: *Hypnotic Beast.* Creature that can quell fury and cause attackers to surrender placidly. Often the order is simply sit still; wait to be torn into dinner pieces. The creature does not commonly have thought control to turn a player character against his group. Flair, ignore Banes for having Wizardry Psionics (B), but with any failed result, cancel this immunity.

Monster Knight Cups: *Destructor.* The beast that legends failed to describe, since seldom does anyone survive to tell the tale; creature that seems to have no needs except an insatiable desire to slay. Such creatures exist from the dawn of time; there is no limit to what powers such a creature can have. Technological androids and robots are very good choices, iron titans of lore. Flair, first character to act creates Tactical Pip for having any Swagger (O).

Inverted: *Element of Fire.* Monster that attacks with flame as well as burning fists and bulk mass. A destructor that erases buildings, produces a path of ashes, as

well as slays. Flair, first character to act creates Tactical Pip for having any Swagger (K).

Monster Knave Cups: *Egg-layer*. Insect creature that has a short life and seeks excrement or dead bodies on which to lay its eggs, spawning the next frightful generation. Flair, party ignores Banes for sacrificing Longboat Vermin Free (N); longboat loses technique. But with any failed result, cancel this immunity.

Inverted: *Frenzy Beast*. Creature that only exists during a short period of time, but during that time has numbers too numerous to count. Though creature will only be a nuisance, its swelling numbers can lead to danger or desperate acts. Do not corner these strange rats. Flair, first action gain Command or Catbird Seat Pip for having Skill Berserker.

Monster 10 Cups: *Oath to Chaos*. Organization that is not allowed to assemble on the surface; these groups plot violent acts or unlawful activities against every ruler. Their forms are humanoid, but you cannot call them men. Magical cancers and psychosis have taken hold. Flair, gain Tactical Pip for sacrificing Longboat Vigilant (E); longboat loses technique.

Inverted: *Exiled Iniquitous*. A former noble son whose felonies, recent or long ago, deserved death; he was pardoned by his father and told to disappear. For an age he has plotted his return and his revenge. His sanctuary underground will house his current warped minions and store his next set of dangerous creations. Flair, gain Tactical Pip for sacrificing Longboat Noble Allegiance (K); longboat loses technique.

Monster 9 Cups: *Fantastic*. Underworld contains a great device or power that attracted a greater force and its offspring. The device is critical; the monster generically awful. Destroy the source of the evil, a gate or relic, and the threat ends. Each group encountered might carry a staff which allows them to wander in the realms of man. Breaking that talisman will send the mobs back to the hell they came from. Flair, first character to act creates Tactical Pip for having any Swagger (C).

Inverted: *Lingering Spawn of Nether-worlds*. Usually the fantastic go bye-bye, when the object is no more. This is the last remnants that manifested itself, a beast of unusual abilities. Attracted by great force or a device in underworld, with that gone, it's trapped. The player characters may need to create a facsimile to give the creature hope of escape. But, it cannot return and must be killed. Flair, first character to act creates Tactical Pip for having any Swagger (L).

Monster 8 Cups: *Dreaming Giant*. Creature that is worshiped and served by a human cult. Only the bones of the monster may remain. Or the mountain range sized enemy is sleeping. It will not wake and rise; more to the point, if it did so, a Zaire would intervene (and scold the group responsible). The followers are the significant threat. Yet projections of various sizes of the giant will also appear and must be

dispelled. Flair, party ignores Banes for sacrificing Longboat Charted Path (B); longboat loses technique. But, with any failed result, cancel this immunity.

Inverted: Ginn. An angry creature that frets and lashes out with pestilence and decay. They have become trapped too far north, and seek any means to return to warmer, drier climes. So why don't they just walk (or fly) home? The player characters must supply both the answer to that riddle and a means of solving the puzzle. Since the creature is innately magical, the player characters own magical wizardry will be erratic. Not as simple as connecting two places and pushing the oaf through. But often the creature can be coached (trapped) into a metal container, e.g. lamp, for its own protection and to transport, release comes at the end. See where this is heading? The monster will hesitate or refuse, if the last time this happened he stayed imprisoned by a betrayer. He can still taste the man's heart, a feast earned, once he gained freedom. Flair, gain Tactical Pip for sacrificing Longboat Vermin Free (N); longboat loses technique.

Monster 7 Cups: Amplification. Creature that seems to grow in power depending upon the opponent it faces. Often one that mimics attacks or reflects them back as a mirror. Anything it suffers, so does the monster's adversary. Flair, gain Tactical Pip for sacrificing Longboat Battle Hard (T); longboat loses technique.

Inverted: Vulnerability Beast. Creature immune to magical attack but can be slain by a person who wields the right configuration of weapon. Select randomly a D8 Blade techniques. Then select a half D8 subset of those. If anyone's Blade has the proper combination, the creature is destroyed upon any successful combat event roll.

Short of that treat dispatch as monster retreats; it will never surrender. It will return again and again, until truly defeated. Each time it does so, the vulnerability might change. Ref decides.

Best to let the players work toward the kill-combo or have them use the quest to temporarily have one or more of their Blades become empowered with the beast's vulnerability. They could gain a temporary 21st technique, which then works to banish and slay here. Any swaggering obtained in the quest could be substituted for this 21st technique, which lasts for one quest only.

Flair, first character to act creates Tactical Pip for having any Swagger (E).

Monster 6 Cups: Reptiles. Lizards magnified in size (and hunger). Flair, party ignores Banes for sacrificing Longboat Undamaged (O); longboat loses technique. But with any failed result, cancel this immunity.

Inverted: Saurian. Lizard men that bear arms and try to maintain a simple social structure. Saurian have been employed in some armies, but they are indifferent mercenaries; being cold blooded, they suffer greatly in changing climates, becoming listless (sleepy and inattentive) in cold and hyperactive (impatient and rebellious to

fight) when the temp turns hot. Flair, first action gain Command or Catbird Seat Pip for having Skill Man-at-Arms.

Monster 5 Cups: *Regal Beast.* Creature of bearing that can sometimes be enticed to answer questions about the past or the world in general. Not often seeking riches, the price of helpfulness will stretch into the unspeakable and bizarre. The players' and Ref's decorum must decide what they can handle, a request for exotic cuisine or shocking manga coupling. Displease the monster with your efforts and fight the often Great beast. Flair, first character to act creates Tactical Pip for having any Swagger (P).

Inverted: *Magical Beast.* Creature that can summon the forces of magic and control the perceptions of man through illusion, incantation and charm. The charms here will slowly lock full obedience. Any player character under the mob's control fights his brothers in a half D8 rounds. Yet the result of this is that the charmed victim of the monster loses one swaggering per round thereafter, until he has none left and falls outright slain. He obviously couldn't injure his buddies, when he couldn't even resist the beast's thought control? Flair, first character to act creates Tactical Pip for having any Swagger (A).

Monster 4 Cups: *Enveloping Forms.* Creatures that hang from the ceiling and drop down on their victims or lower tentacles. These monsters tend to be harmless at first, but slowly drain vitality by increasingly adding a penalty to the player rolls; the victim's fate then is decided by his own combat mishaps. Flair, first character to act creates Tactical Pip for having any Swagger (D).

Inverted: *Suffocating Beast.* Creature that kills not by crushing jaw, but by strangling or constricting its victims. Like the enveloping forms, but the outcome is less combat event driven and more fail a particular roll and become knocked unconscious. If the entire group is downed, then their fates follow with Death of Character Digression rolls. Flair, first action gain Command or Catbird Seat Pip for having Skill Grit-Fortitude.

Monster 3 Cups: *Supreme Beast.* Terrible monster that drove out the dwarves and took control of their territory. The aggrieved imps will warn of the danger and hope the player characters will help them regain their lost domain. Flair, party ignores Banes for sacrificing Longboat Democracy (S); longboat loses technique. But with any failed result, cancel this immunity.

Inverted: *Watching Beast.* Creature that hides and waits for victims to suffer mishap, before attacking from the shadows. This creature may also fight solo or feigning injury, before others of its kind will suddenly appear. Flair, first character to act creates Tactical Pip for having any Swagger (S).

Monster 2 Cups: *Sect of Death.* Life and death are primal and powerful unknowns; many a religion justifies itself by explaining the meaning of life or using

necromantic forces to lengthen the time souls stay on earth. A renegade priest raises the dead and marshals them into an army of shambling followers. Flair, gain Tactical Pip for sacrificing Longboat Religiously Inspired (C); longboat loses technique.

Inverted: *Sect of Mysteries.* The cult here is devoted to the care and worship of a device or relic. Mystic pools are good choices, that way the effect is potable. (Just not for unremitting usage after the adventure.)

These groups seldom use the true magic, or at least not the full power, of the item they enshrine. The pool's energy may be caused by the basin or an item buried beneath? The cult may not even know the existence or original intent of the object. One of the side effects of the unknown relic or the underworld location will be euphoria. Some cult guardians will have tolerance, while some player characters will be struck dizzy with ecstasy. "*Get out of the orgy and help us fight!*"

Flair, gain Tactical Pip for sacrificing Longboat No Disease (I); longboat loses technique.

Monster Ace Cups: *Shapeless Creature.* Spirit that causes physical changes, but itself has no form. Many times, these creatures are thundering voices, operating a variety of telekinetic attacks. Flair, ignore Banes for having Wizardry Telekinesis (D), but with any failed result, cancel this immunity.

Inverted: *Hoax-changer.* Creature that changes form from one creature to another. It may even assume the identity of a specific party member. The form is there, but not the substance. These are tricksters, not transformers. e.g. The dragon they mimic is meant to frighten, not deliver a sulfurous breath. Flair, gain Tactical Pip for sacrificing Longboat Treachery Expunged (G); longboat loses technique.

Underworld Monsters Rods

Monster King Rods: *Ginormous Beast.* Most dangerous of all monsters; beast so large that it no longer can leave its lair, room or domain. Creature like this either has magic of its own or is supported by a cult that feeds and worships the thing. Still, it may have been a long time, since the creature tasted warm flesh. Flair, first action gain Command or Catbird Seat Pip for having Skill Engineer-Sapper.

Inverted: *Warnings and Signs.* Beast that originally haunted these labyrinths may have died (perhaps recently); all signs will indicate a grand beast lived here, but it might never be found. The anticipation slowly saps morale. The offspring or minions of the monster will also be encountered and fought. Whatever slew the beast may still be lurking about. Finding the corpse will be worse than meeting the original monster. Pray the challenger was weakened by the conquest. Flair, first action gain Command or Catbird Seat Pip for having Skill Cartographer, Forger or Occult Scholar.

Monster Queen Rods: *Child of the Beast.* The beast no longer exists, but a generation of its foul offspring survives. These creatures need not be miniature

versions of the mother. Instead generate strange cross breeds of a variety of mobs and powers. Flair, gain Tactical Pip for sacrificing Longboat Battle Ready (H); longboat loses technique.

Inverted: Mated Pair. Two or more creatures are meeting to copulate. If allowed, they will produce the next generation of some fiend. Flair, first action gain Command or Catbird Seat Pip for having Skill Farrier-Breeder.

Monster Knight Rods: Regenerating Beast. Creature that once killed will heal quickly and recover to fight again. This will come as a complete surprise. The creature needs to be slain twice. The regeneration may be subtle, and cause players to search for a method of permanent destruction. The cliché dousing with flaming oil only works after it's chopped to ribbons and scattered all over the floor. Fight the combat as usual, knowing the monster may never go away while the party remains in the underworld. Flair, first action gain Command or Catbird Seat Pip for having Skill Spy.

Inverted: Action-Reaction. A regenerating creature that seems to start weak but appears stronger and smarter after each killing. Players must quickly realize they face an increasing threat and finish their quest in do haste. The monster will become too powerful to face. Only after the adventure will the species or the gods hit the reset. All of these creatures die in the light of the outside sun; otherwise, they would have ravaged the surface long ago. Is there a means of drawing it to the surface? Flair, first action gain Command or Catbird Seat Pip for having Skill Duelist.



Monster Knave Rods: Wasp Beast. Creature that must have living bodies in order to feed their young. Worse still, the larva hatch and take hours (or days) to kill a victim as they munchie-wouchie on the victim's soft belly. Wizardry paralysis is of course being employed by the monster. Flair, ignore Banes for having your own Wizardry Paralysis (Q), but with any failed result, cancel this immunity.

Inverted: Chest Popper. Creature that must have humans to reproduce. Powerful illusions may snare the victim into casual submission. After impregnation, the human host is consumed. This might happen by Momma or by the slower incubating child. Flair, gain Tactical Pip for sacrificing Longboat Comradery (P); longboat loses technique.

Monster 10 Rods: Scavengers. Basically, an animal that will eat anything (dead or alive). Flair, gain Tactical Pip for sacrificing Longboat Abundant Stores (M); longboat loses technique.

Inverted: Spiders. Creatures that ensnare victims in webs and slowly suck out their inners. These spiders may be massive in size. Flair, ignore Banes for having Wizardry Pyrotechnics (K), but with any failed result, cancel this immunity.

Monster 9 Rods: Carrion Creature. Animal that eats the remains of another creature's kill. Depending upon the underworld, these creatures will be either well fed and docile, or it's been a long time since they had a fresh meal. Since dwarves are not typically messy when they decide to kill, there will be other denizens about. The card flip implies a pretty active ecosystem of monsters. Else, it exists in a vacuum of illogic set-up by some demon.

Fantasy justifies most everything but try to keep your mythos consistent. Reality is strange, but *consistently strange* for best game results. Try to avoid the *where did this come from* aspects of play? Monsters should not just be tossed out; they should have a biome.

Flair, ignore Banes for having Wizardry Geomancy (C), but with any failed result, cancel this immunity.

Inverted: Carrion Men. Human warriors or cult that kill and eat the dead. Strike that; these folks have no reason to be – end them! Flair, first character to act creates Tactical Pip for having any Swagger (J).

Monster 8 Rods: Stout Giant. Manlike, but to the extreme in size; often charmed by servants of the Grey One to add muscle to a surface army or greater excursion below. This giant will be confused or was left behind by his evil master; he could be injured or otherwise more vulnerable than he might otherwise be if angry. Flair, first action gain Command or Catbird Seat Pip for having Skill Artillerist.

Inverted: Fierce Giant. A giant with intelligence, one that fashions weapons of great size, one that hunts using animals as servants. An uninjured stout foe. Since giants might be the size of mountains, the players may be just battling a huge groping hand, a mouth and tongue lashing about to gnash and swallow prey. Flair, first action gain Command or Catbird Seat Pip for having Skill Mountaineer.

Monster 7 Rods: Mutations. Only the fittest survive this place where nature's gone wild. Combine best (or worse) features of normal animals. e.g. Porcupine spines with turtle's ability to hide in a shell. Of course, increase their size. Flair,

party ignores Banes for sacrificing Longboat Orderly Kept (Q); longboat loses technique. But with any failed result, cancel this immunity.

Inverted: *Mutations of Mind.* Regular animals of superior mental or magical ability. These usually have enslaved weaker minds, even human thralls, to give them the hands, arms and legs they lack. The person talked to will be the grinning cat, not the expressionless holder, even as the words are also spoken by the human. Flair, party ignores Banes for sacrificing Longboat Inhuman Watchdogs (R); longboat loses technique. But with any failed result, cancel this immunity.

Monster 6 Rods: *Parasite Host.* These are similar to mimics, but the creature attaches itself to a victim. The monster is then using the human for locomotion and deception. Seldom as obvious as a large leech on an exposed brain, juggle the horror of *this could happen to us* with the surprise of *get that lump under your armpit checked?* Most parasites pose as another party of adventurers, asking to join forces toward separate goals. “*Rule nine of the delvers, what is not of the company is shunned and suspect.*”

Flair, first character to act creates Tactical Pip for having any Swagger (B).

Inverted: *Trapped Soul.* Someone (or something) that entered the Unending Gray and found he was unable to leave. Over time the danger of the underworld has led to the warped man killing all he meets, rather than risking the danger of negotiation. The player characters can help, if they can engender some trust. Flair, first character to act creates Tactical Pip for having any Swagger (Q).

Monster 5 Rods: *Demon Cult.* Group that gains favors and powers through the summoning of fiends from other dimensions; most demons do not like the fact they are drawn into this world. The campaign is uncomfortable, and they surely don't like being compelled by an inferior master. Demons have godlike powers in their own dimensions; here they have less ability to change reality by fiat (wishcraft). Flair, first character to act creates Tactical Pip for having any Swagger (F).

Inverted: *Animal Cult.* Group that worships icons of monsters; they often change into animals or monsters by magic. Snake cults are the most prominent. Each group will have a few really big constrictors or arm themselves with hand held vipers. Flair, gain Tactical Pip for sacrificing Longboat Inhuman Watchdogs (R); longboat loses technique.

Monster 4 Rods: *Invisible Beast.* Creature that the party cannot see without the aid of magic. Flair, ignore Banes for having Wizardry Precognition (E), but with any failed result, cancel this immunity.

Inverted: *Deceiver.* Monster that impersonates something that is harmless, then attacks at a moment of weakness. This could be an inanimate object, even the floor. If the creature is able to become an imposter, the party should never separate. Upon reuniting by choice or following mishap, there will always be some doubt the

people are as they appear. Only limitation usually found in this creature will be its attachment to a focus, piece of jewelry or fixed idol, or a general inability to leave the underworld. Flair, ignore Banes for having Wizardry Shape Shifting (J), but with any failed result, cancel this immunity.

Monster 3 Rods: *Magical Barriers.* These are obstacles; to cross the party must have a protective charm or know how to deactivate them. A monster or misanthrope might also create magical force fields and diabolical traps. In combat, the monster or man will be elusive. The barriers themselves could defend like a wall of swords. Flair, ignore Banes for having Wizardry Cosmic (T), but with any failed result, cancel this immunity.

Inverted: Mechanical Traps. All manner, shape and size, of trick and obstacle exists in the underworld, but nothing is as direct or more effective as a pit with spikes. There is usually a group of artificers associated with these devices, a cannibalistic or just insane set of geniuses who keep the traps set and make new ones for their own perverse pleasures or competitions. Flair, first action gain Command or Catbird Seat Pip for having Skill Tinker.

Monster 2 Rods: *Malevolent Orca* Latin meaning killer, it's a creature created by the Dark Lord to compete with man; however, his design was flawed, and these near-men blister in the sun, and they quarrel too much with themselves to be anything other than a slave to stronger agents. There could be another greater evil commanding them and their presence is just a symptom or warning. Flair, first action gain Command or Catbird Seat Pip for having Skill Slave Driver.

Inverted: Remnants of Dark Lord's Cult. Perverted men that have given their souls and allegiance in exchange for all too minor gifts (like lustful passion or quick revenge). Dangerous when they plot to spread their terror to the surface. None have the power to bring back the Dark Lord. All pretend, convincingly, that they can. Flair, ignore Banes for having Wizardry Demigod (A), but with any failed result, cancel this immunity.

Monster Ace Rods: *The Invulnerable.* Creature that can not be killed by force of arms. Magic seems only to slow it down. Monster in true sense of the word; players usually must settle for driving away the creature with natural herbs, fire or a special amulet or power word. Monster loses its invulnerability on the surface or far away from a certain altar or ancient device. Flair, first character to act creates Tactical Pip for having any Swagger (R).

Inverted: Soft Spot. Creature that can only be killed by a special and peculiar attack method. Else, a creature that loses its invulnerability after the destruction of an altar or device. Creature will not leave the underworld; it spends its entire effort to protect the source of its immortality. Flair, first action gain Command or Catbird Seat Pip for having Skill Bowman.

Underworld Monsters Coins

Monster King Coins: *Bane of Steel.* Creature that destroys metal that it contacts. These creatures often excrete a strong acid that will also damage flesh, after first dissolving a good suit of chain. Each character's Blade is mostly immune to the effects. But Ref may assess technique damage at the start or end of combat, unless an Ordinary roll is successful. Flair, first action gain Command or Catbird Seat Pip for having Skill Armorer-Smithy.

Inverted: *Impervious to Steel.* Creature that can not be harmed by metal weapons, yet earthy weapons of wood and stone can bring it down. Each character's Blade will be an exception, but the servitors will be ineffective; no Longboat techniques apply for die advantages. Flair, first action gain Command or Catbird Seat Pip for having Skill Brawler.

Monster Queen Coins: *Blood-Sucker.* Creature that needs human blood to survive. These creatures usually do not feed constantly, nor do they pass-on this bad habit to victims. These are the type that rip victims to pieces with complete exsanguination. Flair, party ignores Banes for sacrificing Longboat Battle Hard (T); longboat loses technique. But with any failed result, cancel this immunity.

Inverted: *Legendary Vampire.* Creature cursed to survive only on human blood. Vampires have generated a host of source material for description, but the Referee should take a moment and decide what he wants this monster to be. Weird aspects add excitement. Regardless, this will not be and may not even be related to the Coven of Elder Vampires on the surface. Flair, first action gain Command or Catbird Seat Pip for having Skill Horticulturist.

Monster Knight Coins: *Zombies.* Clocklike automatons that were assembled from parts of dead men. These creatures are mindless (or simpletons) obeying only basic orders for a cruel master. Do not misunderstand and think these are weaker than men. Frankenstein's Monster falls under this category. Flair, first action gain Command or Catbird Seat Pip for having Skill Barber (Chiurgeon).

Inverted: *Hosts of Dead.* Skeletal warriors conjured by powerful magicians to battle in the underworld or at times as organized companies on the surface. Most are of greater ability than mere mortals, but all have certain flaws or limitations. Flair, ignore Banes for having Wizardry Necromancy (H), but with any failed result, cancel this immunity.

Monster Knave Coins: *Hostile Vegetation.* Non-intelligent life that kills by accident (poisonous spores) or for food (Venus-Fly traps). The monster will have vines and be very pervasive. The player characters will need to go through it or start entangled in the growing plant. This is not like fighting a hedge, something you can step back away from and be safe. These things may not be fully mobile, but they do

reach out and grasp. Flair, first action gain Command or Catbird Seat Pip for having Skill Acrobat.

Inverted: *Plant Creatures.* As before, but these can move by slithering or stepping on feet made of roots. Flair, gain Tactical Pip for sacrificing Longboat Undamaged (O); longboat loses technique.

Monster 10 Coins: *Illusions.* Phantasm and hideous images, else decoys that lead the players to attack one another. Nothing is as it appears. Flair, ignore Banes for having Wizardry Illusions (I), but with any failed result, cancel this immunity.

Inverted: *Pranksters.* Imps that delight in causing mischief and accidents. These will usually be too numerous to eliminate but might be enticed to leave (for a while). In the underworlds these are of course dwarves, but those wee folks only come out on the surface at night. Flair, party ignores Banes for sacrificing Longboat Treasure Laden (D); longboat loses technique. But with any failed result, cancel this immunity.

Monster 9 Coins: *Mysterious Non-Humans.* A clan of creatures that resemble men in their desires and attitudes, but they are not as prolific or adept at controlling the world. They do not build cities, but they may have a village. They do not oar ships but may launch an attack from a raft. Flair, party ignores Banes for sacrificing Longboat Abundant Stores (M); longboat loses technique. But with any failed result, cancel this immunity.

Inverted: *Warlike Demi-Humans.* Creatures that may have been once men, but now are brutish and without honor. For demi-humans think ogres and trolls, yet also bull headed minotaurs. Wiki “mythic humanoids” if you need several hundred examples. Flair, party ignores Banes for sacrificing Longboat Battle Ready (H); longboat loses technique. But with any failed result, cancel this immunity.

Monster 8 Coins: *Gentle Giant.* Creature that does not want to do harm but doesn't know any better. These monsters also exude magic, like frost, but cannot comprehend that such would cause anyone harm. Often driven by simple needs. e.g. Hungry, eat man. But once situated, the monster might become agreeable even tame. Flair, first action gain Command or Catbird Seat Pip for having Skill Minstrel.

Inverted: *Fake Giant.* Something that is creating the illusion or fabricating the presence of a giant for personal gain; non-humans have been known to dress as giants (several standing on each other's shoulders) to scare away adversaries or unwelcome guests. Others appear bigger but have none of the strength of a true giant. Flair, first action gain Command or Catbird Seat Pip for having Skill Pickpocket or Prestidigitation.

Monster 7 Coins: *Magical Creations.* Creatures that combine the distortions caused by magic and perversion caused by mortals attempting to create life. Flair,

ignore Banes for having Wizardry Power Words (S), but with any failed result, cancel this immunity.

Inverted: Ancients. Creatures that once competed for survival on the surface, but now exist only in powerful strongholds below. Many of these creatures are believed extinct. Flair, first action gain Command or Catbird Seat Pip for having Skill Mariner.

Monster 6 Coins: Powerful Protector. Guardian shaped like hero that served a purpose long ago, but now only poses a challenge for the players. Many of these are statues that come to life. Protectors usually were created to destroy an evil force, but after doing so they are lost without purpose in the underworld. Flair, ignore Banes for having Wizardry Animate Objects (O), but with any failed result, cancel this immunity.

Inverted: Powerful Ward. Strong magic that was unleashed in the underworld long ago to eliminate a threat. Since that time, it has continued its function of protecting. Players may suffer curses or weakness as they travel trying to discover a sign, key or word to end the ward. The ward can be germane to the area or put a face on it by describing something hideous. Flair, ignore Banes for having Wizardry Hexes (M), but with any failed result, cancel this immunity.

Monster 5 Coins: Inhuman Thieves. An odd guild of creatures that profit from dealing in stolen goods; this place will be a sanctuary, stronghold or vault for treasures. Their motives are the closest to mankind; they steal out of a desire to have, but their enrichment will be a childlike copy of human society above. Flair, first action gain Command or Catbird Seat Pip for having Skill Gambler or Goldsmith.

Inverted: Nonhuman Assassins. A guild that kills people for contract (money); this place will be a sanctuary, stronghold or vault for treasures. They are not human and are unable to blend in the surface society. If they are paid to kill, they do so by mass assault. The payment accepted is only gold, yet why do they desire it so? Flair, gain Tactical Pip for sacrificing Longboat Treasure Laden (D); longboat loses technique.

Monster 4 Coins: Transforming Beast. Creature that changes form (usually solid and liquid) and is thus challenging to injure or make it flee. Flair, ignore Banes for having Wizardry Voltaic (N), but with any failed result, cancel this immunity.

Inverted: Shifting Beast. Creature that appears to be someplace that actually it isn't. The classic multiple image, with the players swinging at reflections or projections. Flair, first character to act creates Tactical Pip for having any Swagger (M).

Monster 3 Coins: Guardian Beast. Creature enchanted or created specifically to protect something or someone; often merely riches. Long ago it failed in its task; the treasure is gone. Frustrated, it hungers for purpose and fills its pangs with

murder. Flair, first action gain Command or Catbird Seat Pip for having Skill Houndsman (Beasts).

Inverted: *Conjured Beast.* Demon brought from another dimension into the world and bound to a spot; an extremely powerful guardian, hopefully attached to an extremely valuable item or reward. Flair, first character to act creates Tactical Pip for having any Swagger (G).

Monster 2 Coins: *A-B Splice* Beast that combines the attributes of two other selections; blend two monsters to create a truly horrifying result. The right half will be one creature, the left the other. Else, the front is one and back the other; else, the upper part is one and legs-bottom is the other. Ref has to decide, though melding combination tends to exist as an obvious. e.g. Having vampire backside makes no sense, but an upper torso and head on something else is truly horrendous. Flip two more cards, but only the flair result for this Two Coins applies; do not combine the two extra combat flairs (here). Just get the descriptions. Flair, gain Tactical Pip for sacrificing Longboat Seasoned Crew (L); longboat loses technique.

Inverted: *Evolution.* Beast starts as one type of monster and evolves into another. Sometimes this transformation happens during combat. The combat flair of what it becomes are added to this initial flair listed. Flair, gain Tactical Pip for sacrificing Longboat Democracy (S); longboat loses technique.

Monster Ace Coins: *Demon from Broken Pentacle.* Signs that a ritual went awry, and conclusive evidence reveals that a demon survives in the world. Often the summoning man is taken prisoner (tortured for an eternity) by the demon. The demon wishes to return, but it lacks the ability, trusting no mortal action. Flair, party ignores Banes for sacrificing Longboat Arcane Sentinel (F); longboat loses technique. But with any failed result, cancel this immunity.

Inverted: *Man Possessed.* Demon has entered the body of a man (or child) and from its new sanctuary it seeks to spread misery on the world. It must first be exorcised then cast back into the dark dimension from whence it came. Flair, first action gain Command or Catbird Seat Pip for having Skill Briber or Linguist.

Underworld Monsters Swords

Monster King Swords: *Terrible Beast.* Inside an ancient hall lies a hungry creature waiting for treasure seekers or those foolish enough to wander in error. Flair, party ignores Banes for sacrificing Longboat Elite Goals (A); longboat loses technique. But, with any failed result, cancel this immunity.

Inverted: *Fierce Beast.* Monster that has many dangerous methods of attacking and rending flesh. Flair, gain Tactical Pip for sacrificing Longboat Elite Goals (A); longboat loses technique.

Monster Queen Swords: *Foul Worm.* An earthworm the size of a commuter bus, usually having the same impact damage to anything in its way or falling

underneath. Action here could use a simplified version of the Dagon Q&D, perhaps just every path from Zone of Terror leading to the Underbelly and there an ending. Flair, first action gain Command or Catbird Seat Pip for having Skill Equestrian.

Inverted: *Giant Mouth.* Creature so large, all that can be seen is a gaping hole with rows and rows of needle-like poison fangs, dripping with the entrails of an army of victims. Flair, party ignores Banes for sacrificing Longboat Comradery (P); longboat loses technique. But with any failed result, cancel this immunity.

Monster Knight Swords: *Scouring Beast.* Creature that leaves the underworld by night and preys on the surrounding area. Flair, gain Tactical Pip for sacrificing Longboat Orderly Kept (Q); longboat loses technique.

Inverted: *Enchanted Beast.* Creature that is only recently sent into the underworld, traveling there for a master that has sent it out on a task. These creatures are not as ferocious, since the controlling magic spell dulls its actions. They do pose other problems if the master's plans are ruined by the players, even for self-preservation. Flair, party ignores Banes for sacrificing Longboat Noble Allegiance (K); longboat loses technique. But with any failed result, cancel this immunity.

Monster Knave Swords: *False Beast.* Creature that is not so fierce or terrible as the legends or local rumors have claimed. Wait, what? That is to say a creature that during encounters is quite easy to slay, maybe merely Large and few in number. But by the climax it transforms or was only a scout for a much more impressive monster. Shall we pick one more card, or do you want to wing it? Flair, first action gain Command or Catbird Seat Pip for having Skill Pugilist.

Inverted: *Many and Twisted Forms of Goblin.* Minor nasties that make up for their lack of size and strength by almost always attacking in numbers; still they often flee rather than fight. The monster will undoubtedly be different cosmetically each time it is met. It may even adopt actions of those it fights. Be careful what magical wizardry you use on the things. Flair, party ignores Banes for sacrificing Longboat Pure No-Curse (J); longboat loses technique. But with any failed result, cancel this immunity.

Monster 10 Swords: *Alchemy.* Face the scholar that has forsaken his colleagues and tries to uncover the dark forces of magic and nature. Also face that dark force he manufactured or attracted to his experiments. Flair, first action gain Command or Catbird Seat Pip for having Skill Apothecary.

Inverted: *Dark Secrets Revealed.* A scholar spends his life reading and understanding the twisted sciences and malevolent curses that have been formulated through the ages. He wishes to be left alone or will kill to protect his studies. A dangerous misanthrope or a shape shifter that will transform to slaughter. "You won't like me when I'm mad."

Flair, first character to act creates Tactical Pip for having any Swagger (I).

Monster 9 Swords: *Dire Wolves*. Prehistoric wolves of magnificent size. These canines are as grand as horses. They also instinctively coordinate their attacks to circle and snap at opponents' backs. Flair, first action gain Command or Catbird Seat Pip for having Skill Hunter.

Inverted: *Ghostly Arms*. Fantastic warriors that appear only as swinging weapons with no apparent holders. Flair, first character to act creates Tactical Pip for having any Swagger (N).

Monster 8 Swords: *Hideous Voices*. Creatures that both manically scream or softly taunt in whisper directly into the ears of anyone who violates their sanctuaries. The victim is driven insane, reacting randomly or hysterically. Flair, first action gain Command or Catbird Seat Pip for having Skill Rabblrouser.

Inverted: *Face of Insanity*. Same result, different method. Anyone viewing the creatures as they make their enchanted pleas for mercy will react randomly, often attacking his companions. Flair, ignore Banes for having Wizardry Spirit Guide (R), but with any failed result, cancel this immunity.

Monster 7 Swords: *Unholy Priest*. The remnants of a previous colony that tried to live below ground. The survivors have changed in an ugly way. Usually a devotee to a corrupting force, like lust, greed or vanity. The sin they venerate will compel the player characters as well. Flair, ignore Banes for having Wizardry Thought Control (P), but with any failed result, cancel this immunity.

Inverted: *Wraith*. Person of great power and evil that refused to die. It exists as a rotting visage of human form. Often convincing the wraith that in fact it has died is the key to defeating the creature. Flair, first action gain Command or Catbird Seat Pip for having Skill Tormentor.

Monster 6 Swords: *Macabre Horror*. Literally the dance of death, something gruesome and frightening. Not a good time to be taken alive. Flair, party ignores Banes for sacrificing Longboat Seasoned Crew (L); longboat loses technique. But with any failed result, cancel this immunity.

Inverted: *Innocuous*. Seemingly innocent creature, a bunny let's say, that turns out to be an unholy horror. Dolls are also a good choice. Flair, first action gain Command or Catbird Seat Pip for having Skill Delver.

Monster 5 Swords: *Cannibal Cult*. A group that ritualistically practices eating human flesh. A mix of humans and near humans, the magic they employ may actually prolong life, but with other negative results. There is often an idol of worship, and the captives may need to be offered up before going into the stewpot. Flair, party ignores Banes for sacrificing Longboat No Disease (I); longboat loses technique. But with any failed result, cancel this immunity.

Inverted: Beast Cult. Religious group that controls a beast, and worships idols representing the same. Very large animals or insects will be met. Flair, gain Tactical Pip for sacrificing Longboat Arcane Sentinel (F); longboat loses technique.

Monster 4 Swords: *Resurrected Beast.* Creature that originally was a mere animal, though perhaps a large one, but it did not stay dead; the undead risen form of such animals are needless to say more powerful. Flair, first character to act creates Tactical Pip for having any Swagger (H).

Inverted: Beastly Experiment. Creature that originally was an animal, but a twisted user of magic turned the innocent into the deadly; such can be an experiment out of control or a conjured guardian whose purpose expired before its lifespan. Flair, ignore Banes for having Wizardry Conjunction (L), but with any failed result, cancel this immunity.

Monster 3 Swords: *Great Dark Beast.* Another creature that brings death without hesitation, a good catch-all. Start with Q&D Zone of Terror; the players may or may not be facing a dragon. Flair, party ignores Banes for sacrificing Longboat Vigilant (E); longboat loses technique. But with any failed result, cancel this immunity.

Inverted: Great Dark Beast Inverted. Just testing if you're paying attention. It's getting late. As the regular flip, but it is less animalistic and more purposely alarming. Probably still a dragon yet could be a demon or giant or some other wonderfully terrifying monster. Flair, party ignores Banes for sacrificing Longboat Treachery Expunged (G); longboat loses technique. But with any failed result, cancel this immunity.

Monster 2 Swords: *Communal Beasts.* A pair of monsters that share a domain. Pick two cards; both exist in harmony together in underworld. The combined tactical flairs apply, plus gain Tactical Pip for sacrificing Longboat Pure No-Curse (J); longboat loses technique.

Inverted: Warring Beasts. A pair of monsters that are always clashing. The players will be caught between these two. One again, select two cards, but ignore the flairs of each. Instead use this Flair; first character to act creates Tactical Pip for having any Swagger (T).

Monster Ace Swords: *Free Demon.* Creature from another dimension that exists in the world by its own powers. It did not reach here through the summoning of human magic – dangerous, violent, secretive, often served by a cult of men (though not controlled by a cult). Flair, ignore Banes for having Wizardry Demonic (F), but with any failed result, cancel this immunity.

Inverted: Undead Demon. Creature, often once a man, that upon death did not travel to the next life (in another dimension or place). Instead the lich remained in the campaign. Undead never willingly leave, nor can physical blows often send them to a

final rest. Find the secret, the vulnerability or resign yourself to flee whenever you face this monster. Flair, gain Tactical Pip for sacrificing Longboat Charted Path (B); longboat loses technique.

Optional, oddball charm and breath weapons?

Each monster will have a combat flair, but many also imply powers that should require a saving throw. e.g. Am I caught in its goo scales or not? Perhaps Ordinary at the start, and again every half D8 rounds of combat. Ref will need to mitigate all this.

Yet as said many times before, a finely crafted Q&D is always the best way to approach any battle. A process was described in Fundamentals' Supplemental materials. Here's an easy method for getting by on the fly. Take one suit for regular events, and pair in a different suit for Banes. Swap in an extra Monster Bane and voilà quick and dirty at your service. You just need to free-style describe one or two extra events for powers implied by the beast and apply those at flips of Six or Knave.

Jiffy Q&D Voilà			
First D8	Event Flip Regular	Second D8	Event Flip Bane
1	Brash Cups	1	Bane Brash Cups
2	Magical Cups	2	Bane Magical Cups
3	Brash Rods	3	Bane Brash Rods
4	Magical Coins	4	Bane Magical Coins
5	Brash Rods	5	Bane Brash Rods
6	Magical Coins	6	Bane Magical Coins
7	Brash Swords	7	Bane Brash Swords
8	Magical Swords	8	Bane Magical Swords
Third D8	Card Substitute	Forth D8	Substitute Bane
1	Ten	1	Bane Nasty Mob
2	Nine	2	Bane Horrible Mob
3	Eight	3	Bane Enchanted Mob
4	Seven	4	Bane Foul Mob
5	Five	5	Bane Invincible Mob
6	Four	6	Bane Heinous
7	Three	7	Bane Cultist
8	Two	8	Bane Misanthrope
Finally, regular Sixes and bane Knives should also prompt a character saving throw against monster's special ability or powers.			

Principal Rival (or answers question WHO?)

As you select the rival of the quest, you should consider the stature of the patron and the level of the players. The main threat should balance both. Powerful patrons

would not have weak adversaries, but the small tasks performed by low level players should also not elicit the extremely merciless and powerful of the campaign. In every case, the rival may be acting through lesser minions, unless his life is in danger.

That said, the results to follow state a guideline on each rival's level assignment according to archetype, plus a general rating for the rival's minions. Seldom will the main rival be slain in the campaign, unless that's the quest. These



rivals may appear during encounters and duel for a few rounds, or else pilot his vessel or lead an army to specific combat results. Yet save the out and out battle royal for the climax.

Regardless, the **rival is protected and can not die during initial encounters.** He may only be outright defeated during the climax. Before then, the players will often evade themselves or force any enemy to retreat. I've read seemingly immortal characters described as being *Armored by the Plot*, and that suits the style of play. The rival might appear to die, magically explode or fall overboard at sea. He could be a second away from capture, but a timely interruption will cancel even that inevitable. To avoid too many of these *deus ex machina*, maybe just attack the player characters in the encounters with his minions.

The rival's minions are not given a rating for their commitment, though a few have intrinsic die modifiers to event

Difficulties. The Referee must set the enemy number. **Start with half the party as a baseline and work your way up as you see your players grasp the nuances of the combat event system.** The Calculated and Recitation methods will defeat sizeable groups, but luck may wax and wane on any roll. You'll get a good idea by repeated play. Moderation is always expected. **The Referee does not win his game, when the players lose characters.**

In any battle, recall, the players have unnamed servitors on their side. The same is true of the rival's soldiers. This isn't just in larger skirmishes and ship battles. Both sides are usually gangs. The number necessary to win is probably the sergeants and enemy leaders. The rest then scatter or surrender. No need to role-play the resulting slaughter and ransoms. The servitors on both sides will mitigate that, unless that's specifically the focus of an event.

Consider the location of the encounter. Mix things up between broad Q&D and personal combat. But potential death need not be the consequences of every meeting. Any Knave encounter can be interpreted as attempting subterfuge. Keep taking longboat techniques as the players fail task rolls of detection and prevention. You may wish to have a chart and slide tokens to mark when longboat swaggering is there or gone. After a few Knave encounters, the best of forces can be weakened substantially.

These rivals also answer the question of WHO? They are divided by the four suits. The Referee should decide whether he wants the randomness of a full table or just the subset of any suit. If you're looking for a less vaulted lover or contact, the Coin suit is best. If you need an important figure, one very busy, yet is a significant friend or enemy, then perhaps use a Cup. The Rods and Swords are people more likely to appear in play if prompted.



Cups – Civilized Realms of the Campaign.

Rods – Frontiers of the Campaign.

Coins – High Nobles of the Capital (working through minions).

Swords – True Enemies inside and out of the empire's borders.

Again, just like the true rival, any WHO? should never commit all his power and henchmen just to stop a minor plot he opposes. To do so would jeopardize all the other intrigues he perpetrates or defends against.

Rival (WHO?) Quicklook

Rivals (WHO?)		
	Cups	Rods
King	Retired Admiral (Insane Lord)	Furious Lord (Famished Lord)
Queen	Aristocrat (Foppish Lord)	Undead Slayer (Tyrant in Unrest)
Knight	Monster Hunter (Immoral Lord)	Entomologist (Plague Doctor)
Knave	Diocese Captain (Wanderlust Lord)	Prospector (Permissive Lord)
10	Groomed for Success (Indecisive Lord)	Heretic Lord (Apostate Lord)
9	Cloud Lord (Ugly Lord)	Poor Architect (Pillaged Lord)
8	Arcane Scholar (Lord Without Heir)	Viking Slayer (Pestilence Lord)
7	Grand Assize (Bankrupt Lord)	Ancient Domain (Estranged Wife)
6	Bishop's Council (Ambitious Lord)	Infertile Lord (Guard Deaths)
5	Former Watchmen (Lordly Ogre)	Guild Dread (Ambitious Kin)
4	Theologian (Miserly Lord)	Prejudice (Return from Muster)
3	Vault Keeper (Paranoid Lord)	Bumpkins (Celebrants)
2	Potential Zaire (Contemptible Lord)	Creed of Fools (Quarreling Ministers)
Ace	Lord of Means (Tainted Lord)	Hill Folk (Negligent Lord)
	Coins	Swords
King	Champion (Sheriff)	Elder Statesman (Sinister Wish)
Queen	Emissary (Confidante)	Pagan Abbot (Lizard Chief)
Knight	Knight-Errant (Spy-Enforcer)	Lycanthrope (Wild Card)
Knave	Heir Apparent (Jester)	Sanctuarian Idealist (Treacherous Realist)
10	Armorer (Mount Handler)	Forgotten Elite (Ruthless Hun)
9	Astrologer (Vizier)	Pledged to Malice (Arcane Absolute)
8	Herald (Herbalist)	Dwarf Envoy (Self Ordained)
7	Master Hounds (Forester)	Feminist (Buccaneer)
6	Pagan Priest (Sophist Confessor)	Sultanic Raider (Matchless Delver)
5	Captain Watch (Barber)	Conqueror (Sea Rover)
4	Artificer (Edificer)	Wondrously Crooked (Crime Boss)
3	Gatekeeper (Valet)	Freemason (Unfathomable Conspirator)
2	Jailer (Alderman)	Deep Cover (Executioner)
Ace	Steward (Exchequer)	Slavic Rider (Extraordinary Enigma)
Inverted card result list in parenthesis.		

Broaden and Flesh Out the Rival

Unlike Twist or Flairs, most of these additional reference facts, generated by the Major Tarot here, will not have direct game mechanics attached to them. Through experience with the game system, the Ref will be able to toss in ad hoc implications within the scenario flow effecting a rival's Knaves or the climax challenges. But for beginners, the results should be used mostly as added background color or provide

fodder for future quests and confrontation. When checking and archiving Ignoble actions, liberally list these extra elements. e.g. *“You know I bested a man with numerous allies in the True Faith. I’m pretty sure that won’t come back to later haunt my character?”*

To be clear, these Major Tarot flips do modify the quest’s main rival. The narratives use the term “person,” since the results can be generated on determinations of the identity of WHO? (affects the quest). The Major Tarot may change a rival or the person answered for WHO? – it all depends when the card is flipped.

Rival (WHO?) Major Tarot

Broaden Magician: Person is highly skilled with wizardry.

Inverted: person is very far along on his Warped Outcome tally.

Broaden High Priestess: Person is influential, powerful and rich from sources other than apparent. He’s also Clever in trait.

Inverted: he’s conversant in numerous foreign languages and customs.

Broaden Empress: Person is a relative of another pick of WHO?

Inverted: he’s illegitimate, not legally recognized, but none the less a blood relative. *“Is his last name also Snow?”*

Broaden Emperor: Person backs a pretender to the throne.

Inverted: he is himself related to the present or past emperor, a potential pretender to the throne. He becomes Bold in trait.

Broaden Hierophant: Person has numerous allies among the priesthood of abbots who manage the pagan temples.

Inverted: this person has allies in the followers of the True Faith.

Broaden Lovers: Person is the illicit paramour of a sister or daughter of one more selection of WHO?

Inverted: he’s the beloved husband of the sister or daughter of some other often more powerful WHO? This still may be a shameful association; the Ref might have to decide the implications about the relationships of all involved.

Broaden Chariot: Person is currently in hiding or fleeing from the patron. He will not be where he usually lives (the region or city-state listed for him).

Inverted: not afraid of the patron, but he is trying to avoid a third party WHO?

Broaden Justice: Person has numerous allies in the imperial court.

Inverted: he has numerous allies in outside lands to the south and east of the campaign.

Broaden Hermit: Person is Methodical in trait.

Inverted: person is Gifted in trait.

Broaden Wheel of Fortune: reshuffle the deck.

Broaden Force: Person is Rugged.

Inverted: person is also Energetic.

Broaden Hanged Man: Person is a distant relative of the patron.

Inverted: the social connection is illegitimate, disowned or viewed unfavorably, a black sheep.

Broaden Death: Person is currently wounded or ill.

Inverted: he will die from this previous wound whether the scenario reaches the climax or not. His death occurs in the Epilog if not before. This could cause problems with the scenario's patron?

Broaden Temperance: Person is marked by a very distinctive feature.

Inverted: person has the scars or mutations of magical mishap.

Broaden Devil: Secretly controls many illicit activities.

Inverted: openly flaunts his illegal enterprises; most everyone who lives near him is afraid. The law begrudgingly accepts he's untouchable (for now).

Broaden Tower of Destruction: Person is about to have his role change; he will be demoted, imprisoned or sent fleeing into exile.

Inverted: he's about to be called for a tribunal before the gods. He will not return; this is the last time he will be seen in the campaign.

Broaden Star: Person is someone that one of the players knows from past dealings. e.g. A former employer, friend, enemy, distant relative, etc.

Inverted: at least one player character thinks so; the person is in fact a stranger to all.

Broaden Moon: Person is being manipulated knowingly or unknowingly. He is not acting for himself or even in his own best interests any longer.

Inverted: Person's motives and personality will change during the course of the adventure. He may even back the party, if the goals are not too opposed to his own survival.

Broaden Sun: Person is of highest level, eight, for defensive modifier.

Inverted: his defensive modifier may not be cancelled by Methodical trait action. Yet each player may save and use all his make-rolls for the final climax. Each is not restricted to just one in any given battle or task.

Broaden Judgment: The patron or his informants are confusing one person for another. Pick another card WHO? to represent some random identity, which is attributed (wrongly) as the person or rival. For the most part, the mistake will be discovered during encounters. Yet the extra WHO? may now become aware of the mission, and the Ref must decide if he contacts or joins the true rival.

Inverted: the patron dismisses any notion that the person or rival is important or consequential to his quest. The patron will not want any excuses about what he

sees as imaginary enemies. Even at the end, he will not see the opposition or their contrary motives to his own. Assume some magic is at work.

Broaden World: The person has help from dwarven agents.

Inverted: the person has help from monstrous creatures.

Broaden Fool: Person is pretending his personal involvement, yet he is merely a surrogate for someone else that truly makes all the decisions. Do NOT flip WHO? For now, just leave the unnamed terror unnamed.

Inverted: the players might gain hints to that mystery to the true adversary, but his involvement is still only that of the rival's power and position. The quest often takes the group to the rival's sanctuary or domain; here too the rival directs the location of the climax, even though the true adversary is somewhere else entirely. If it helps for clarity, consider the flip for rival as being just a powerful minion of an adversarial godling.

Campaign References in Rival (WHO?)

Recall that example map in the Fundamentals booklet. Along with the lists of the mostly noble rivals and their distractions, I included notes specific to that campaign. The city-state and regional references aid those who wish to add context without having to invest a whole lot of time making a campaign. You may want to know whether you or your players actually enjoy free-style play, before investing that prep time.

Also, this extra material makes it easier for me (the author) to play. I'm making this work for me and by extension any Ref. How many of these do I truly think are going to sell?

Back on topic, the governors and difficulties would obviously switch around. The Referee should feel free to shift obstacles, introducing new concerns to fresh areas of the map as the player characters explore and rampage.

Rival (WHO?) Cups: Miscellaneous Governors

Rival Civilized King Cups: *Retired Admiral.* What these folks lack in raw talent, they make up for in extension of power. They oppose the world through agents. The rival enjoys great loyalty from his followers. He governs the City-State Adrianople. Not only does the rival run a city-state, he owns one or more vessels on loan to the capital. He pays for all crews and provisions; the sea worthiness of the craft can vary.

Some nobles buy ships made entirely of marble; a fleet of these is on display in a private garden strolled through by the emperor and his brides.

Inverted: *Insane Lord.* Homicidal, wishes to take everything and everyone with him at death. This lord will not want to transfer power to anyone. He may be immortal having outlived everyone he ever loved a millennium ago. He tires of worldly affairs and wishes the age of man to pass into oblivion.

His Knaves will show indifferent commitment, often a few in number less than normal. However, through readiness to their own leader's intrigues, all his servants gain a bonus of three to defensive modifier. This noble and his problems are in the diocese near City-State Adrianople.

Rival Civilized Queen Cups: *Aristocrat.* Not only does the rival run a city-state, he is owed a favor among the Patrician Class. He will be very rich and have considerable autonomy, even if he is not a blue blood noble equestrian. This noble governs the City-State Belgorod.

Inverted: *Foppish Lord.* Dilettante and noble of long lineage, the lord has no outward security and a cast of heartless social climbers in his court. The area will usually be prosperous and sheltered, the brunt of danger held back by neighboring regions. So, enters the conflict, the players may meet this lord only after they are sent by another region to get help or relief. Then they must deal with a person who would insist if someone is starving for want of bread, "let them eat cake." Do not underestimate the agents of such an arrogant patrician. His guards may be angelic toy soldiers and comical diminutive gladiators, but usually just out of sight are the most wicked of protectors (often supernatural). This noble and his problems are in the diocese near City-State Belgorod.

Rival Civilized Knight Cups: *Monster Hunter.* Not only does the rival run a city-state, he has hosted and feasted with the Janissary. His home is a museum of the abnormal. This noble governs the City-State Chernigov.

Inverted: *Immoral Lord.* Decadent and silently feared, this lord will have connections to perverse rituals, demonic practices, orgiastic rites and processions of the undead. His courtiers will be equally as vicious and repugnant. The serfs will long for a knight to rid them of this scourge who feasts on the dead (or some other unclean practice). Let the lord appear at first to have just a few foibles and his actions just mocking common taboo. Only later will the players uncover the extent of the lord's depravity. Yes, that will lead to some fisticuffs at the very least. This noble and his problems are in the diocese near City-State Chernigov.

Rival Civilized Knave Cups: *Diocese Captain.* Not only does the rival run a city-state, he is owed favors among the old guard garrisons. He may be a former consul or has a close relative who is a commander of the frontier legions. This noble governs the City-State Cherson.

Inverted: *Wanderlust Lord.* He's never at home, always leaving the affairs of the manor to his servants. He may be a Questing Knight of that order, or just a

barbarian that never quite became civilized. The classic player lord, who probably took the castle as a prize or reward and has little interest in playing house. Yet when he returns he usually runs a major sweep of those he left behind, weeding out the corrupt and ambitious, putting things quickly back to a level of stability, so he can leave again for adventure. The players will arrive in the lord's absence or may be duped into thinking a major domo is the resident lord. Only later will the truth be seen as the warlord returns and find the players a major obstacle to his lifestyle. This noble and his problems are in the diocese near City-State Cherson.

Rival Civilized 10 Cups: *Groomed for Success.* Not only does the rival run a city-state, he is owed many favors among the ruling elite. He may be a governor in-line to one day join the Curia Regis or has a close relative who is an imperial senator in that august body. This noble governs the City-State Dorostul.

Inverted: *Indecisive Lord.* Having a strong entourage and a readiness in all things except his own will. The lord second guesses his every action and is always following the advice of the last person he talks to. He may be manipulated magically by an outsider (or insider), but often the lord is just not fit to rule. He may be advanced in age and having memory of more spirited, yet dangerous times wants simply to live out his days in peace. Yet there must be factors threatening. Here is a chance for the players to make a difference. By controlling access to the lord, they can make a positive effect in the region. Or, stupendously gain to their own ends. This noble and his problems are in the diocese near City-State Dorostul.

Rival Civilized 9 Cups: *Cloud Lord.* Not only does the rival run a city-state, he is elite and parties among the magical Legati in their castles among the clouds. His home will have a portal to reach those strongholds. His practice of magic will be more show than action, but he probably has a prodigy child or favorite minion with greater technique than his. This noble governs the City-State Halicz.

Inverted: *Ugly Lord.* Repulsive, uncouth, unloved, hated by the beautiful aristocrats of his court, and with no chance of rising in station. The lord may be marred by battle scars which can attest to his combat ability. But he is a fool in the social graces. His gentle wife will usually mock him openly, flaunt her lovers and seek to make the players new pawns in her game. The lord will seldom openly suspect his wife or understand in his simplistic mindset that he is just a bumpkin in their eyes. Loving his wife beyond all else, he lives in denial. He will kill the person (instantly) who opens his eyes to his stature. He'll regret it later of course, but that role is not one a player will successfully fill and survive. Let sleeping dogs lie here and look at your own skill base and see if your own characters would survive under similar scrutiny. This noble and his problems are in the diocese near City-State Halicz.

Rival Civilized 8 Cups: *Arcane Scholar.* Not only does the rival run a city-state, he is a powerful wizard. He has friends in of the Academy of Thaumaturgical Study; they too are magically endowed. Depending upon his age and prior experiments, his ability to use magic may be stunted or crippled. This noble governs the City-State Kiev.

Inverted: *Lord Without Heir.* Refuses to recognize an heir or obsessed with siring a proper offspring. Usually has numerous bastards and disowned sons who wait in the wings with factions to take control on the lord's death. The lord may also be unwilling to pick a legal heir because he cannot play favorites. Yet unless he makes a selection, his region will slip into anarchy upon his death. He knows that but is still indecisive. Whatever resolution the players attempt by interfering will just lead to more chaos. This place should be quickly departed as doomed. This noble and his problems are in the diocese near City-State Kiev.

Rival Civilized 7 Cups: *Grand Assize.* Not only does the rival run a city-state, he is owed a favor among the Grand Assize. He may be a former Questor or has a close relative who is a judge. This noble governs the City-State Myya.

Inverted: *Bankrupt Lord.* Reckless with men and money, his countless rivalries and forced marches against enemies has left him indebted to the guilds and anyone with a free-company of mercenaries for hire. Enter the players, a free company of mercenaries. This lord will have numerous acts of intrigue for which he will promise lavish rewards he cannot pay. An expert at delay, he will put the players deeply into his own intrigues and then leave them wondering how to ever extract themselves from being associated with this raging petty incompetent. This noble and his problems are in the diocese near City-State Myya.

Rival Civilized 6 Cups: *Bishop's Council.* Not only does the rival run a city-state, he is owed a favor by ambitious political clergy in the One True Faith. His is a personal friend of the Bishop of Constantinople. He may be a former confessor or inquisitor or has a close relative who is one of those religious tormentors. This noble governs the City-State Pereyslavets.

Inverted: *Ambitious Lord.* Desires to rule the entire land, and he may have the connections and ability to make a try at uniting the barons under his banner. Yet such men know the nature of politics in that the agents who get one to the top are never the ones who share power. Sacrifices will be made along the way to his goal. This noble and his problems are in the diocese near City-State Pereyslavets.

Rival Civilized 5 Cups: *Former Watchmen.* Not only does the rival run a city-state, he was once a constable of the capital. He still receives a share of their extortion. This noble governs the City-State Preslav.

Inverted: *Lordly Ogre.* Controlling and demanding, openly feared and hated, aggressive and prone to fits. He may be effective and right in most situations, but

most who meet him can't wait for him to fail. Almost everyone is driven to undermine his plans since we instinctively hate such egotistical know-it-alls. This noble and his problems are in the diocese near City-State Preslav.

Rival Civilized 4 Cups: *Theologian*. Not only does the rival run a city-state, he teaches and preaches the True Faith to a large congregation. He is an ordained confessor and clerical scholar. This noble governs the City-State Sofia.

Inverted: *Miserly Lord*. Unwilling to spend for anything, refuses to pay debts, constantly bargaining over small amounts, everything and everyone in his service is second rate. He may have a hidden treasure, but its protection will be first rate. This noble and his problems are in the diocese near City-State Sofia.

Rival Civilized 3 Cups: *Vault Keeper*. Not only does the rival run a city-state, he is owed a favor among the artisans and bankers who control the imperial treasury in the Royal Mint. He may have a secret depository of gold or entrance into the underworlds. This noble governs the City-State Tirnovo.

Inverted: *Paranoid Lord*. Employs secret enforcers or non-human spies. Untrusting, difficult to read, secretive, he may only be open and show his human side to a single player who will forever be defending the lord's taciturn nature. This noble and his problems are in the diocese near City-State Tirnovo.

Rival Civilized 2 Cups: *Potential Zaire*. Not only does the rival run a city-state, he is owed a favor among one of the societies of wizardly protectors, usually the Praetor Sky Realm Zaires. He will practice magic confidently, as will most of his servants and relatives be adept. This noble governs the City-State Turov.

Inverted: *Contemptible Lord*. Bigoted, chauvinistic, paralyzed by phobias, will be completely irrational dealing with a certain race or type of person. Of course, one personified by one of the player characters. This noble and his problems are in the diocese near City-State Turov.

Rival Civilized Ace Cups: *Lord of Means*. Not only does the rival run a city-state, he is owed a favor among the wealthy men of trade, including the imperial guildmasters. He still runs his monopoly, headquartered in his city. This noble governs the City-State Varna.

Inverted: *Tainted Lord*. Connected with unlawful acts, family ties to nobility were coerced, suspected of fomenting treason, dealt away his daughters in the worst of deals. The man's motives may seem chivalrous, but his disguised methods are always sinister. He has no ability to work within the laws and social order, like many a player perhaps. This noble and his problems are in the diocese near City-State Varna.

Rival (WHO?) Rods: Beleaguered Frontier Lords

Rival Frontier King Rods: *Furious Lord*. Leads a city shocked by tremors. The noble leader tries to track down the source of a surge in natural emergencies. There have been too many to attribute to the ever vengeful gods. He suspects a misanthrope's deliberate geomancy or magical mishap. He suspects a plot to discredit him and his governance. The area is prone to quakes, floods, brush fires, tornadoes, all manner of natural disaster. The group's longboat loses technique Longboat Undamaged (O) before entering the climax. This noble and his problems governs the City-State Beloozero.

Inverted: *Famished Lord*. His region has had successive crop failures. Despite religious offering, and the best horticultural experts, nothing seems to grow. The land was once fertile, but after several miserable harvests, the region is suffering starvation. Group's longboat loses Abundant Stores (M) before entering the climax. This noble and his problems are in the diocese near City-State Beloozero.

Rival Frontier Queen Rods: *Undead Slayer*. Wandering souls or spirits can be seen in the area. The site of an ancient battle or magical mishap, the place is simply spooky. Even if the locals grow accustomed to the site of their departed relatives, the area will never thrive. For the adventuring players, they may be blamed for angering the spirits or face avenging souls from their slain past enemies. Just not a nice place to live, but not so alarming in a fantasy world as to justify moving (for all). The group's longboat loses technique Longboat Religiously Inspired (C) before entering the climax. The too many horrors defy all faiths. This noble and his problems governs the City-State Isborsk.

Inverted: *Tyrant in Unrest*. The peasants are in revolt. They have rightful concerns, but there is a deadlock. The noble wishes them to all surrender arms then talk. He plans to hang more than he should. Until resolved, the place is in war. There could be sympathy to the poor's plight. Stamp that out; the group's longboat loses technique Longboat Democracy (S) before entering the climax. This noble and his problems are in the diocese near City-State Isborsk.

Rival Frontier Knight Rods: *Entomologist*. The area is a rising and falling bog and has its fair share of bugs. The local lord is a collector, eccentric and refusing to do anything, especially magic, to mitigate the frequent outbreaks. At least there's locusts, which many serfs are reduced to eating. During certain times of the year, malaria too may be a problem, especially as the adventurers newly enter the region.

The dung and mud puddles left by large fields of horses grazing are perfect for insects to thrive. An area like this may need fences, bridges or a defined path to pave. The players may wander, only to return again and again like a curse, to the same location. The group's longboat loses the following Longboat techniques: Abundant

Stores (M) & Vermin Free (N) before entering the climax. This noble and his problems governs the City-State Itil.

Inverted: Plague Doctor. Rival lives in a city-state with many strange illnesses. He likes to study these. He may cause some of the disease himself, but more often just helps the germs along by not solving any problems of sanitation. His skill at healing actually is quite extraordinary, having spent his life among the wretched and infirmed. Yet don't expect any bedside manner; he chuckles nervously when he finds someone in pain. He also doesn't like to wrap a wound when it's fresh; he'll wait for rot to amputate. The group's longboat loses technique Longboat No Disease (I) before entering the climax. This noble and his problems are in the diocese near City-State Itil.

Rival Frontier Knave Rods: Prospector. The area has numerous mines or rare plant crops, but their location or sprouting is quite random and leads to a free-wheeling prospecting atmosphere. Unlike a true bounty, the wealth is not controlled by happens with a fever of discovery. The city is always emptying when a new discovery is found. Many a backroom deal enriches the minor enforcers and ministers. The players' crew will tend to desert, and the entire party is prone to fight over small gains or be distracted by their greed. The group's longboat loses the following Longboat techniques: Charted Path (B), Treasure Laden (D) & Treachery Expunged (G) before entering the climax. This noble and his problems governs the City-State Murmum.

Inverted: Permissive Lord. This man rules over bedlam but does little. All manner of crime and murder occur in his city, but he thinks himself lucky there isn't more. He has allowed a clan feud to escalate for generations. Despite their best efforts, the vessel will suffer several thefts. Could have been magically purloined or just the consequence of entering a den of thieves? All the sides in the conflict also need and steal weapons. The overall loss is tremendous; replacement of even simple things ends up being grossly overcharged. The group's longboat loses technique Longboat Treasure Laden (D) before entering the climax. This noble and his problems are in the diocese near City-State Murmum.

Rival Frontier 10 Rods: Heretic Lord. The region is dominated by a strange radical religion, a cult to some obscure aspect or feature. Never orderly, the minds of the locals are charmed by the need to serve the higher master. Rather than populate the world with demons, though that works, the mysterious deity need only be a rock formation or ancient alter. The kind of vine covered ruin, which players often use as a target for magical spells or archery practice. Yes, the gods will be offended. A minor annoyance, until the god actually appears. Threaten that impossibility as the situation escalates. When too many people assemble and randomly pray, the results are always capricious. The group's longboat loses technique Longboat Pure No-

Curse (J) before entering the climax. This noble and his problems governs the City-State Novgorod.

Inverted: Apostate Lord. The leader of this city has been declared a pariah. He may not be guilty of anything except denying there are gods. Okay, that's actually pretty serious in a fantasy world where gods do come to punish men.

The leader has lost his rank. He is not legally recognized as a noble or the owner of the lands. He sends delegates and sophists to argue, but this will end in a fight. Him and his supporters live tenuously as an independent free-hold, unable to depend on help from others and subject to annex or conquest. No one is supposed to trade with this place nor even visit; the group's longboat loses technique Longboat Noble Allegiance (K) before entering the climax. This noble and his problems are in the diocese near City-State Novgorod.

Rival Frontier 9 Rods: Poor Architect. The city towers and streets have serious design flaws, like it is built too close to a mountain overhang or its entrance is down a long gentle slope. Stairwells in castles were built in a left hand screw, so the men climbing the stairs would need to fight left-handed to swing a blade. This place may have purposely built all its stairs opposite to leave the defenders at a disadvantage holding the towers.

The place is indefensible. The city has too many blind spots or portals and other problems, which would require a total demolish. Yet even there the space may not be available to bring it down and preserve the bricks. So, the area would be left defenseless during the long changeover. Worse, the lord may be in denial and even if the players discover and point-out the flaw, the city's master masons will take offense. So much potential decay and ruin has a mystical effect; the group's longboat loses technique Longboat Arcane Sentinel (F) before entering the climax. Maybe the spirit world is confused by mazes? Or the design had demonic purpose, built on spook central. This noble and his problems governs the City-State Polosk.

Inverted: Pillaged Lord. The man's city was recently attacked and sacked. He refused to pay tribute and sheltered himself and his family in his keep. The greater town outside his bastion suffered greatly. Yet the citizens within still blame the sea rovers more than the governor. That may change when the raiders come back, usually during this upcoming quest. Seeing the graves and the heartache of the loss is too much for most of the crew. The group's longboat loses technique Longboat Battle Hard (T) before entering the climax. This noble and his problems are in the diocese near City-State Polosk.

Rival Frontier 8 Rods: Vikings Slayer. Marauders frequently cross the border or arrive on river or seashore. Though they are almost always repelled or bribed to depart with little loss, the area can never be considered at peace. Passing players may be accused or confused for a scouting party of these attackers. Some of the crew will

seek to avenge the death of their brothers slain by the people of this township. The group's longboat loses technique Longboat Orderly Kept (Q) before entering the climax. This noble and his problems governs the City-State Pskov.

Inverted: Pestilence Lord. There's a persistent bad smell. The city leader could be responsible, since many claim the smell only recently occurred. He has turned reclusive. The people here are slowly being poisoned. The health of all suffers. There are no pets; they've all died. The group's longboat loses the following Longboat techniques: No Disease (I) & Inhuman Watchdogs (R) before entering the climax. This noble and his problems are in the diocese near City-State Pskov.

Rival Frontier 7 Rods: Ancient Domain. Either known or suspected, the city rests on the parapets of another buried city. The city below is dead but represents a major underworld. The dwarves below take from what's above. The castle accounting is always out of balance and never achieves a fully stocked magazine. Almost would be amusing to have a group of adventurers exit a dungeon crawl, right into the middle of some baronial lord's lower larders or great hall. Thieves or magical saviors?

The place has ancient spells, which mutated over time. The player group, as outsiders, will suffer a magic bane, still active to prevent Norse raiders. The group's longboat loses the following Longboat techniques: Arcane Sentinel (F) & Pure No-Curse (J) before entering the climax. This noble and his problems governs the City-State Ryazan.

Inverted: Estranged Wife. The city leader and his wife are openly in quarrel. She usually comes from the older clan, the one whose lord ran the place well for a generation. The new lord is the outsider coming to run his wife's fiefdom. The people hate him, and the wife is starting to understand why. This may never be resolved. Could she aid the party against the rival, her husband? Or would she have similar goals to prevent the patron. The players may inadvertently make husband and wife allies. Many of the crew actually get homesick for their own nagging wives. The group's longboat loses technique Longboat Seasoned Crew (L) before entering the climax. This noble and his problems are in the diocese near City-State Ryazan.

Rival Frontier 6 Rods: Infertile Lord. The region is under a curse or presumed curse; an unjustified fear may be more dangerous. Infertility is the most applicable. Besides keeping the region low in population, the source of the problem is impossible to find. The players who enter this area will be seen as possible saviors, foretold by prophecy to bring the cure or end the curse. Seldom will the group of outsiders be able to do so. And wild goose chases, dangerous detours, should follow. The answer is complex, social or political, as wars have killed off the young men and left many a widow. This village might just need some man-folk, breeding stock,

which can not be allowed to simply recreate and leave. The young men may also have disappeared for unknown, yet very dangerous reasons.

The crew will know of this place and not want to go there. They will need to be ordered, and they will still be reluctant. Only after a few beatings will the oars begin again to stroke. The group's longboat loses the following Longboat techniques: Seasoned Crew (L), Comradery (P) & Democracy (S) before entering the climax. This noble and his problems governs the City-State Sarkel.

Inverted: Guard Deaths. The rival's garrison is slowly being killed. If the mission could be delayed, the players could win by default. (Not going to happen.) Often these were soldiers hanged elsewhere for their criminal acts but tell that to their brethren who feel some indulgence should be granted to foraging soldiers. There will be vigilante, robin hood types protecting the locals from pillage, or nonhuman monsters making retaliatory attacks on the local constables.

Just reaching here will be exhausting; the number of ambush and archery deaths will be high. No need to resolve every attack, but the group's longboat loses the following Longboat techniques: Vigilant (E), Battle Ready (H) & Battle Hard (T) before entering the climax. This noble and his problems are in the diocese near City-State Sarkel.

Rival Frontier 5 Rods: Guild Dread. The trade in the area is controlled by a sinister master who refuses to allow his secrets to be discovered and shared. He is delusional; the guild has no new practices. The caste hierarchy is always unruly, usually acting more powerful than the lordly landowner. The local lord is often in debt to this guild and will never pay off his loans.

Adventuring players may have skills, which the guild needs. More often they have skills, which the guildmaster will feel they discovered by observing his artisans. How far will he go to keep his imaginary secret? The typical answer is to his or the player's death. Some power makes the crew believe their own commander and masters are part of a conspiracy and should not be followed. The group's longboat loses technique Longboat Elite Goals (A) before entering the climax. This noble and his problems governs the City-State Smolensk.

Inverted: Ambitious Kin. The rival is actually opposed by some of his family. But that conflict has little to do with the patron and the mission. If anything, the newly arriving player character will unify the rival's clan against the foreign influence. Some of the crew are bribed or convinced to join various kinsmen aspiring to be the city's leader. They feel there, they may get a warmer welcomed as liberator, rather than cold soup and calloused hands. The group's longboat loses technique Longboat Treachery Expunged (G) before entering the climax. This noble and his problems are in the diocese near City-State Smolensk.

Rival Frontier 4 Rods: *Prejudice*. The area lies along the common trade routes and is a crisscross of travelers and migrants and pilgrims. Hence the locals are never unified in religion or custom or even language. The slant of someone's nose may be considered petulant. This will infect the city with bigotry and cause rivalry and favoritism in the garrison. The Varangian players will be seen as the most despised caste. Part of the crew might secretly or openly agree with the bigots and the racial proclamations. The group's longboat loses technique Longboat Comradery (P) before entering the climax. This noble and his problems governs the City-State Tmutarakan.

Inverted: Return from Muster. The rival's forces have been depleted and return exhausted from a regional battle. The patron may have realized this and choose this moment to capitalize on the rival's weakened state. So why did the rival need to fight in the field? He will have been called to feudal service. Yet the presence of foreign enemies and shifting borders means the ship's records need a thorough update. The group's longboat loses technique Longboat Charted Path (B) before entering the climax. This noble and his problems are in the diocese near City-State Tmutarakan.

Rival Frontier 3 Rods: *Bumpkins*. The region is off the beaten path, hardly visited or just considered gauche and avoided by more aristocratic travelers. The city's courtiers are never in the know on noble intrigue and will never feel entertained. For traveling players, they bring diversion, which can lead to mistaken identity and confrontation, jealous rivalry as the ladies of the castle fawn all over the company to the rage of their regular suitors. On the plus side, the players might claim to be nearly anyone. "*We're imperial delegates.*"

Among these simpletons, the crew relaxes too much. The group's longboat loses technique Longboat Vigilant (E) before entering the climax. This noble and his problems governs the City-State Tver.

Inverted: Celebrants. The rival's city is having a joyous party, a festival, a Mardi Gras. The crew joins the wild orgy, and in a drunken state will damage the vessel. The group's longboat loses the following Longboat techniques: Undamaged (O) & Orderly Kept (Q) before entering the climax. This noble and his problems are in the diocese near City-State Tver.

Rival Frontier 2 Rods: *Creed of Fools*. The garrison maintains an ancient code of honor, which is just strange and arbitrary. The enforcement of rules will be spot on, and the penalties are usually very severe. The area will not know any justice besides the regimen. Some of the more obscure laws will affect nonhumans or even the proper leash for canines. The group's longboat loses technique Longboat Inhuman Watchdogs (R) before entering the climax. The players will offend and

draw challenges daily from the garrison and their commander. This noble and his problems governs the City-State Vitebsk.

Inverted: Quarreling Ministers. This is a place where the lord has lost control of his assembly of advisers. He may be under outside pressure to make changes, directed by the regional Earl, but he refuses. He either is a contrarian or knows his overlord is wrong. The ministers in his small counsel grow tired and warn visitors to pass straight through. Despite the warning to stay away, the players won't. But many officials, even imperial delegates, will be left bitter by that good turn and then disobedience. The group's longboat loses the following Longboat techniques: Elite Goals (A), Religiously Inspired (C) & Noble Allegiance (K) before entering the climax. This noble and his problems are in the diocese near City-State Vitebsk.

Rival Frontier Ace Rods Hill Folk. The area is stony, and little will ever grow in the region. Goats most likely provide most of the food, and that is never enough. This may also be at higher elevations, which are snowed in for longer periods of time. The area always has famine, no matter how much it is supplied by richer partners.

The group will suffer an accident. e.g. Mount goes lame (not usable one battle), or an avalanche traps the players in the area. Couldn't the group fly out of any stuck location? Maybe if they wish to leave their boat and crew. The loss from the accident is critical, unrepairable and unreplaceable for some time; the group's longboat loses technique Longboat Battle Ready (H), before entering the climax. This noble and his problems governs the City-State Yaroslav.

Inverted: Negligent Lord. The rival as city leader failed to prevent an attack. His own watch opened the gate and allowed the pillage to happen. Few were killed, but the armory and many stores were ransacked. That may have happened some time ago, but little has since been done to clean up the city. The piles of trash and discarded rubble, of course, make good nests for rodents. The group's longboat loses technique Longboat Vermin Free (N) before entering the climax. This noble and his problems are in the diocese near City-State Yaroslav.

Understanding High Lords of the Empire

The capital of the empire at Constantinople has many high lords, but these make poor rivals. They would overwhelm the player characters. **The player characters will usually not have a rival who is able to directly order a lawful execution** across the whole campaign. Instead, powerful men work through their agents to oppose any quest. These minions become the named rivals.

High lords employ a good many servants. Many of the henchmen detailed will be extremely loyal and independent slaves. These are the true annoyance to the players as they pursue their goals.

All these nobles will have estates in the civilized realms and the frontier. Those manors may be locations they have never visited. The rival's home city and end location of **the quest should hardly ever be Constantinople**, unless you want the campaign capital to become a wasteland of lost longboat techniques. That might still be the case.

Each agent will often have some power and authority granted by the greater lord but must exercise that permission within a stated role. Else they risk offending other underlings of the mighty. If a jester is the rival, could he truly be any threat? Of course, because each has his own favors to exercise; many of these slave captives led grand lives before becoming subservient.

These positions scale down to city-states. The merchant prince, mayor or high lord of a major port in the campaign will have his own subordinates. Yet the leaders of those places often handle their own dirty affairs. They might not always be the one in personal duels, but they also would not shun such combat. On the empire level, members of the Curia Regis, for instance, would not deign to bloody a knife on someone so beneath their social status. Let a demon do it or my valet.

These men, so focused on keeping their affairs and those of the empire in order, will often task a minion from the first one available – *“you there, come here; go do something for me.”*



Each mighty noblesse oblige is often not meticulous about sending the correct henchmen to do the job. Each of the appointed has the opportunity for his own greater status and a greater taste of life's luxuries by performing well.

All these roles must be adjusted for fantasy elements. Yet the amount of magic should be augmented to your taste. In some cities, everyone and everything has spell casting ability. In other places, only the rare few can be called actual wizards.

Rival (WHO?) Coins: Capital Subordinates

Subordinates King Coins: *Champion*. His duties are to act as honorific shield bearer, squire and prime bodyguard of his lordship. For non-combatant or elderly nobles, this person will also fight his duels. The most common mishaps he suffers is from lingering battle injuries; the champion will often practice at arms with the lord. As the lord fumbles, the champion must grin through the pain. His intrigues involve when he's paid to be negligent as a protector, or in these sparring sessions he lashes out.

Any surrogate in a duel is not bound to fight to his own death. But if he loses by surrender, the master's life is forfeit. How well can this man hide his intent to throw a match remains to be seen. Or a loyal servant may disappear before a challenge, leaving the lord to appoint on the spur a replacement.

Inverted: *Sheriff*. The high lord has absolute authority in a region, yet he's busy and bored. He will delegate his responsibility for keeping the peace to his head constable, also called a *Vigiles*. Yet that is too close to vigilante, so to avoid confusion the term sheriff is used, which as *shire reeve* is right wrong. Anyway, the sheriff is often the noble's younger sibling. The sheriff rules when the high lord is away at imperial court; that can be years at a time.

The sheriff is less able to prevent crimes and more likely to spend his time in apprehension of criminals. The accused will be delivered to the high lord for punishment; the sheriff's word is never questioned. He can grab whomever he likes and accuse. So long as there was a crime, then he will catch the criminal. No crime, no criminal. There's a crime, but who did it is of less concern than who the sheriff says did it. Most will try to be fair; looks bad when a serial crime occurs after the culprit of the first act was hanged.

As for the court trial, that is simply to ascertain any secondary outcome from the punishment. Was the criminal a fellow noble and should be fined? Or is he a nobody and will be summarily executed.

This is dangerous work, enforcing the law. Many a mishap will result from a chase on horseback. A corrupt sheriff is a symptom not a disease. The sheriff will be more pious than his high lord in all cases. Pleading above him will not prove

effective; this person is infallible. If the sheriff is a vicious bastard, his older brother is a devilish fiend. Most nobles are.

Subordinates Queen Coins: *Emissary.* An attorney who takes grievances to other lords or argues point of law before a higher authority. The esoteric nature of many laws means that someone who does little but studies the past cases and mindset of each judge will have a better chance of success. There is always trial by combat in a criminal case or accusation. But right of title and rents, or even where the lord is quartered during ceremonies, are acts negotiated by the emissary. A mistake can turn on single phrases and witticisms. The emissary is never blamed. The lord, not the messenger, is held liable. If the emissary is away or incompetent, the lord will be too busy on the external affairs to handle his daily monitoring of the capital's courtiers. More intrigue will brew. The most important act of an emissary is to negotiate ransom and terms of surrender. Is he impartial in his acts or serving another's goals?

Inverted: *Confidante.* A mistress or fraternity brother, a close associate of the lord. The typical court free-loader who stays for the luxury and none of the responsibilities. These know-it-alls have all the answers, but no power or initiative to conduct change. A lord who openly flaunts a mistress will mock social morals and cause his underlings to question their loyalty. The confidante is often openly antagonistic. Making the high court quite fractious. The players may find allies if they plan disgrace or death to the confidante as opposing rival. The confidante does not make mistakes; that would be too easy. The confidante often says, "*I told you so,*" following another person's misfortune. So, any act of mishap should be assigned to another member of court.

Before jumping on the potential cat-fight, remember that most lords have arranged marriages, and their wives at best tolerate the contractual union. The act joins property with little romance. So, the fact a lord has a mistress is not important, unless he tries to divorce his legal bride. The imperial court dislikes seeing land grants fought over, with arms or writs. Intrigue follows favoritism, and even when not a mistress, that fraternity brother may be trying to get his high lord back out on an adventure. The other courtiers will want the lord running official matters, not galivanting.

Subordinates Knight Coins: *Knight-Errant.* Not truly a post as much as a bachelor who rents a place to stay, paying usually in services. In a fantasy world, there is many a monster to slay. Yet also many a war. The knight will often take the lord's place in foreign battles of duty. The knight's past may catch up with him, and all manner of demon and monster may come seeking revenge on the servant as well as any who harbor him. He is a prime candidate to influence the greater lord by threat. The knight will philander in court, overspend his allowance and generally make mischief. He is often there as a favor to another lord, so he can not be turned

away without repercussions. Unlike the other cards, this card may have several contenders filling the role. As a rival, thus, even if he is slain, another will take his place. That person too will have about the same temperament. And the next and the next and the next.

Inverted: Spy-Enforcer. This is a temporary position. The high lord is aware of the players' patron and quest. He has recruited a local agent. The rival is thus completely neutral to the mission goals and patron's motive. He's just trying to stop the group to collect a bonus. How much? Can he be paid off? The spy-enforcer doesn't want to offend his future clients by proving untrustworthy. The bribe had better be significant. Easier just to kill him. Remember, magical augury may never in game terms reveal the honest truth. No one reads minds. If you pay the guy off, he may see this as just another bonus. He'll still be your rival, hiring his own minions to prevent the mission and counter the goals of the quest. Now using the group's money to boot.

Subordinates Knave Coins: Heir Apparent. Here is the eldest, or the adopted, the person male or female that takes over upon the death of the high lord. Since many lords are young themselves and only recently converted from adventure, the lack of a formal heir can be common. But this flip implies the opposite, that an heir is an adult and ambitious, wondering when daddy's going to die. (Or Mom?)

Most every action by the heir is a cause for embarrassment to the parent or guardian. Seldom will a good leader pass those qualities on to an heir. (Else we'd have no story.) If this person is trying to hurry along the process of nature, that heir is the source of many an intrigue. There are never two heirs, but there may be many bastards and younger siblings who hate this guy.

Remember, we're generating the servants or important lesser figures of a high lord of the capital or campaign. This is not an imperial heir in line to the throne. But he may be the next emperor's drinking companion. Or she may be that man's lover. Or she may be that gal's weaponsmith. Leave the sexism out of any application of the text.

Inverted: Jester. We all need comic relief. Yet the jester usually gets his laugh at the expense of other members at court. Only the high lord will find this twitchy character amusing. The rest will find the mockery too close to the truth. By listening to the jester, the local politics of the court, the dirt on everyone, can be unearthed. The jester may get carried away and insult the high lord himself or a favorite. Hard to believe this person can be the source of any intrigue, but he usually will be familiar with everything which goes on. How? If not magic, just consider the jester as incredibly perceptive of human nature and motives.

Subordinates 10 Coins: Armorer. Manages the arms and armor of the garrison, assisted by ironmongers, tinkers, tanners, etc. Binds magical properties into

metals, cares for the greatest of relics. Every manor will have its share of tinkers and smiths, so by generating a special armorer as a high lord's courtier, this fellow must come with a reputation or be there for a reason.

True relics are never sound of spirit. Most enchanted objects roam and seem fated to find new owners. Relics tend to be forgotten over the ages, and their importance is debated. The spirit of a magical arm usually has attracted a questing knight, or this person is a questing knight of the empire. Something simple may have recently changed when prompted by this selection. e.g. Vinegar is used to keep away rust, perhaps that has acted in the reverse on something in his care. Was that a mistake by the supplier or magical transformation?

Inverted: Mount Handler. A mere farrier, tending to horses, would not earn a place in court; magic is in work. Not deception, but rather the lord must have a mount so fantastic, that its care is trusted to a freelance agent, our smithy. His Mount will have two D8 techniques and will be a great stallion with many tricks. The mount could be a dragon or other monstrous animal. The beast is ride-able only by the high lord, the smith merely sees to the animal's special needs, diet, gear. Yet could it still fight against the players?

Riding a fantastic creature, be it a roc, or dinosaur, or dolphin, will be dangerous. Since the smith is seldom the true rider, he could suffer injury by careless handling. If the animal's death coincides with the group's arrival, they will be blamed. The players must avoid killing the high lord's prized beast.

Subordinates 9 Coins: Astrologer. Predicts the future, a hopeless activity. The castle charlatan, forecasting is always a random process beginning with the weather. Yet most high lords know this. It's their women-folk and underlings who like astrology.

Someone who truly can tell the future will tend to see nothing but the bad. Even the littlest of mistakes can become major moments of uncertainty and cause a ripple of time-fractured events. A run of events predicted by the astrologer is a mishap in its own right, even if they turn out good. Why? Because something bad is bound to occur, and the court was complacent, expecting the astrologer to give plenty of warning (wrong). Or the court was fatalistic thinking no fate is under their control.

Purposely or unintentionally, the astrologer often turns the high lord's wife against the husband. With the flip of this card, do not underestimate the control this figure exerts in the court. In most cases, he will not be loved, but he could be feared. A trusted astrologer who takes any of his visions directly to the people can cause calamity.

Inverted: Vizier. Chief magical counselor to the lord, the one who has the ability to tell the lord "no" without fear. The vizier is the high lord's mentor, often his former artificer (teacher). At court, the high lord's position and influence could be

secondary to the power vested with the vizier. Should the high lord die, the vizier will be in a panic. He is in danger of losing all he has to the hereditary heir or some other claimant to the noble's lands. Seldom will a vizier desire to be the focus of any attention. Content to play kingmaker, his actions are smooth, full of silent intrigue.

Subordinates 8 Coins: *Herald.* Announces the good deeds of the high lord, monitors his travel and itinerary. The herald is the sage who keeps the records of the land. He also works with the emissary to clear the local court docket of petitions made by the serfs. The high lord has much to adjudicate, and the herald keeps him from being capricious. To be a tyrant is infinitely better than to be labeled inconsistent or irrational.

Losing the records would be a disaster. No one can remember all the trivium. The records, mere paper, though often protected by incantation or secret vault, are subject to many a natural demise: fire, water, insects, mold, age, sun fade. People as well have been known to fabricate records. A decision made several generations ago may keep the peace between two fiefs. But no good deed goes unpunished, and the true resolution of a crisis is only deferred to a later generation (the here and now).

Inverted: *Herbalist.* A humble gardener, hardly, a full blown alchemist most likely, with a huge array of labs and experiments taking place in the lower recesses of some dungeon. But let's not get hastily into intrigue. The high lord is an addict, either benign or outright. The herbalist is his pusher. Yet to end the vernacular, and say the obvious, the herbalist has some drug, which his master craves.

Many at court may also be addicted. The drug may be social, simply an acquired taste, or more often a curative and survival depends on ingestion. Men in power seek immortality, and this herbalist may have the potions to keep someone alive long past his children and his children's children's children.

The end of the supply, a rare substance in the concoction, may force the rival to relent. If the group can interdict the supplies the herbalist needs, he might be totally distracted from the patron's mission. Also, anyone who tries to end all addiction in the high court will be opposed by many. The concoction may allow harmony and keep society from breaking down into petty conflict. All manner of power vacuum might be created by sobriety. A tough-love cure may also be horrific. Did I forget to mention the rival is a very capable user of poisons?

Subordinates 7 Coins: *Master Hounds.* The keeper of the kennels. Hounds being just a colorful way of saying beasts with moat creatures and all manner of denizens under his control. Wolves in the pens, he mixes more dangerous species with tame ones. Killing mistakes and training the rest. He is often a shapeshifter, but no one asks. His ability might be malady and not wizardry.

A keeper of long standing and tradition will be covered in scars and be an unsightly member of the court. Of all the positions, this one tends to change hands

the most. (Or this guy tends to lose a hand the most.) If anyone wants to be the beast-master, he is welcome to the job (often). Cleaning the pens and servicing the monsters is foul work. And in gratitude, who is blamed when the beasts escape? The master of the hounds is almost always totally mad and antisocial. But a lord with such a courtier is far more powerful than his counterparts, as he can call on his beasts to quell uprisings or steal forth to do his bidding.

Inverted: Forester. The warden of the wild lands, the forester in a traditional sense stops poaching. The man also manages monsters. He will know the signs, tracks, dung, odors, blight, which monsters leave behind. His job is not often to kill, but to contain and send elsewhere. The forester usually likes his job and delights in the hunt, capture and release.

Private ownership of land does exist. The player characters might claim some acreage. But, under the feudal system the land is owned by the crown and doled out to hereditary caretakers. Ownership implies both the soil and anything that lives upon it. The right to hunt, even to survive, is illegal. The forester enforces this and prevents trespassing by man and beast.

Hard to believe this likable character, who often is away from court, ever has enemies or foments unrest. Yet the high lord has ordered him to stop the player characters. The lord must not trust his other agents or feels the forester is under employed. The forester may see the patron's mission as opposed to his mandate of protecting the land. An ecologist, the forester may believe that part of his range be set aside for the wild creatures to roam. No animal, even a monstrosity, shall be hunted to extinction.

Subordinates 6 Coins: *Pagan Priest.* Here simply is a temple chaplain. Do not add any D&D® aspects of healing nor savior powers of raising the dead or walking on water. The temple priest shuns theatrics and leaves miracles to the many gods. This fellow handles the spiritual needs of the serfs, the common people. He also advises the high lord about those same concerns. He is a political operative, a poll taker of sorts. He may believe in his faiths as well as fears divine intervention. If things are going well, there is no reason to involve the heavens.

His role is to predict how decisions made by the high court will be embraced by the commoners. He controls the people pretty thoroughly. He may use magic for that, influencing key clan leaders' thoughts. That and paying bribes of luxury to the select few. He may be hated by all the other courtiers for his extended influence. Yet if the pagan temple declares someone an apostate, it will signal a riot. He may not be able to excommunicate a parishioner from the land. Instead he has them torn to pieces in the village square with little more than a pointed finger. Yet anything which may discredit his state of grace among the locals is possible. People tend to hate hypocrisy and enjoy seeing the mighty fall. There are those who want to discredit

him. He may have skeletons in the closet, besides the undead he might employ as bodyguards of his own. See no turning of the dead – where did that power come from, the cross?

Inverted: Sophist Confessor. A person who teaches ethics and absolves the sins of the high lord through rational justification. The high lord will often trust his sophist confessor more than anyone else. Every high lord has much to confess, but the gods don't like weaklings. The sophist is able to teach the high lord to forget or forgive his own iniquitous acts. Most nobles take more earnestly to redemption later in life. Each high lord reaches a point when regret consumes his thoughts. The sophist helps him relieve his guilt.

The confessor is probably magical and may not even be human, except in appearance. The high lord could stray into paranoid fits without his trusted confessor. Anyone who injures this rival will need to explain themselves, ethically. If the group's quest is on the wrong side of society, causes more harm than good, an enemy of the Curia Regis could be made following the mission's success. Until placated, that means the group is spurned by the full empire!

Subordinates 5 Coins: Captain Watch. A sergeant at arms charged with setting the rotation of the high lord's guards. Try standing a post for eight or twelve hours straight. This captain's diligence and aggression keep the rank and file in line. Always hated in peace, admired in war, the captain marks a military quality garrison, elite by all standards and the envy of other lords. Yet before even discussing intrigue, ask why someone would settle for being a mere underling?

Many men do embrace honor and loyalty; some just like to satisfy a constant bloodlust with permission toward villainy. He's a tormentor, seeing assassins and seeking confessions. Constantly taking people to the breaking point can bring insane reaction.

In order to impose his will, the captain must provoke his underlings. Else, the place will never be truly secure. The biggest mishaps will be his own illness or absence or sudden lax nature. The majority of high lords have escorts, but no chain of command. Mercenaries are not the same as a barracks of regimented guards. Who is on watch can lead to inside intrigue.

The watch commander controls who moves where and when, so he is feared by most who have secrets to hide. Some of these men are paid by other high lords to report on any suspicious actions and the master's comings and goings. Every court is socially restrained; there are many affairs both unrequited and passionate, which the captain knowingly controls. For he controls when and where lovers may rendezvous.

Inverted: Barber. Sure, he cuts hair, but few are worried about their appearance in a fantasy world. The barber here is the doctor. A quack physician maybe or just a person who does what he is told for a hypochondriac. Leeching

actually worked to reduce high blood pressure. A salt filled diet and stressful lifestyle needs some moments of relaxation in the barber's chair. Maybe the lord will get a beard trim as well.

The lord who has a barber in court will swear by the person's cure-alls and methods. Blood loss can lead to anemia; the high lord might have been more active opposing the quest, except he's fatigued. The barber may also have magical healing. Recall that vicious wounds from battle are not magically restored, but the rival's overlord may need help just to stay alive. If he's not there, indirectly, the group could be slaying his greater master?

Subordinates 4 Coins: Artificer. This person starts as the nurse maid and later becomes the teacher of the high lord's children. Hated by family members for discipline, the artist is beloved by many, including the high lord. The high lord may even appoint this person as the protector and regent of his kids, over his wife, should he die. Some have undermined longstanding hereditary roles and usurped claim to greater positions in the imperial court. Again, many will admire his poetry, painting, fireworks, engineering, artifacts, the general bon vivant exuded.

In the fantasy world, he's almost always a true wizard, but may also be one who lost considerable power an age ago by misadventure. The secrets he may know are another set of intrigues, entirely. If a vibrant man inhabits this position, he is always acting nefariously. A child under his care may soon be kidnapped. Or the child will be gifted to the wizard in exchange for a magnificent spell. These deals are binding; the gods enjoy watching the results. What the wizard does with the child is a whole story of its own. No good will come of it, even if good is intended.

Inverted: Edificer. The rival is a master mason. He may be a freemason, but not always. He designs buildings for show. Lots of statues and hanging gardens; all completely impractical or precarious. He has a staff, which keeps the walls and towers of the high lord's sanctuary maintained. He might employ strange nonhuman builders and a huge number of slaves.

Engineering is not an exact science in an age with magic. This edificer, or his predecessor, may have used a bit of magic-putty to hold things in place. Those charms are short-lived and failing. The man may be trying to get out of his service. If he stops the player characters, he may get to leave before his handiwork crumbles.

Who really cares if a section of wall falls or even if a guard is killed in the collapse? This card implies an entire fortress is assembled on a patchwork of bad ideas, mislaid brick and overwrought construction. He may even purposefully be destroying a castle and fortress to make way for a greater edifice atop the rubble. Yet none of that might come into play. Yet, why not? Striding and fighting on the paving stone of this rival's curtain walls as they are about to collapse makes a fine Q&D?

Subordinates 3 Coins: Gatekeeper. This man guards a high lord's bedchamber. That may be a barbican to a private castle or the single passage into a room. He will be in charge of all security after dark. Seldom will anyone travel inside and out after dark. This man ensures that all stay inside as prisoners, safe. Yet if a horse or merchant's cart or other item of status and trade must leave or enter, the act must be approved by the lord's appointed gatekeeper.

Acting as a self-contained vault, each gatehouse will have its own staff and discipline. The guards will not mix with the regular garrison or daytime bodyguards. Only the most loyal are allowed entrance to the innermost sanctums. This person is usually very gruff, often repugnant, generally feeling self important. The gates or portals, unlike general barracks or halls, have many traps and mechanisms which do malfunction. Accidents abound, both with falls and decapitation. Yet the difference between a secure night's sleep and an open path to murder is through this person. Can he be bought? Surely for the right price, but seldom in the simple currency of gold.

Ask why the high lord needs an identified gate warden? Why does he entrust the man to take on the players? The flip takes on more consequence should the gate he guards also lead into the domains of the underworlds.

Inverted: Valet. Clothes make the man. But here, the clothes are entirely magical. He's not simply making the lord more presentable, the valet like the armorer is creating magical apparel to protect and empower his master. The binding of magic to fashion can have consequences unintended. But more serious mishaps result when the valet needs a very rare material or dye or metal to complete a design. These quests are doomed from the start.

The valet has no ambition of his own. He delights in the creation. He enjoys the comfort of the manor and cares little for the leadership role. So long as he has the means to create unfettered, he will be happy. But his demands may be increasingly harder to come by. The valet will exhaust resources at an astonishing rate. His creations will be beyond reproach, but an entire empire would fall into poverty if he was allowed to make every design he desired.

He does make and use relics! Many seek his services and to entice him away from the high lord. Hurting him will cause many members of court to demand justice. Yet the valet here may threaten to leave with his creations or aid another in exchange for a guarantee of adequate (unlimited) materials. Get him to quit first, then rough him up.

Subordinates 2 Coins: Jailer. Besides the obvious, let's ask ourselves how psychotic it must be to run a medieval torture chamber, which is certainly what this man manages. A pure sadist, the jailer is the type of man who delights in suffering

and never tires of pleas for mercy. The player characters instinctively, even those themselves of skilled tormentor inclination, will despise the jailer.

Need more invective? Anyone in the presence of this jailer should be minus four on rolls for skills and social grace. That should stress the message he's no one's friend.

The lord who keeps a jailer is himself suspicious of everyone. His dungeons are usually crowded. He will think hanging is too good for most crimes. Few have occasion to escape, even in a world of magic jails his is formidable. If not, then all would be useless in general. This man knows his counter spells and wards.

The presence of a jailer may signify two other special situations. The high lord himself may be under house arrest, confined to his keep by imperial order. Or, the high lord keeps a special prisoner, usually enchanted, which the august body of the Curia Regis want the jailer to hold in prison, while disposition is decided. Either case represents major intrigue.

Inverted: Alderman. A representative of a guild and another sign that the high lord is sharing too much power with outside forces. The alderman as a rival will represent a magic purveyor, or even more dangerous, a delver company. The man is not directly involved with his craft, he is more of a lawyer of craftsmen. He's the Jimmy Hoffa, asking for labor concessions. He's playing the lord's friend, but with an agenda. The lord may agree to some demands from the guilds, provided the rival here stops the annoyance of the player group.

The alderman is a gang leader in his own right, and his intrigues usually spill over into the court. He may be trying to enforce the deals made by his predecessor. Every alderman falls out of favor, and most end up in asylum in the frontiers. The high lord proves he protects his friends by issuing a banishment. Friends go into exile; enemies are slain. The alderman might deserve to be executed like any mouthy servant, but a friend is a friend. Such is courtly life.

Subordinates Ace Coins: Steward. Handles the staff of servants who cook, clean and make manor life agreeable. Most castles will become pretty foul in a manner of weeks, even with a staff. A high lord usually moves between three (or four) houses to allow the filth to settle in one place, while he pollutes another. But with magic these delicacies need not be considered. So why recognize the steward here as a special courtier? The only reason would be if he is not human. As such he will be extraordinary, a cook of renown or master of efficiency. Yet his actions will be always suspect, since he isn't human. Depending upon your campaign, take your pick of races. In the campaign, fine food is always in short in supply. The leading cause of illness will be diet. Our steward may also be a food taster. Yet a high lord who believes he needs someone else to take his risks has much to fear besides poisons.

Inverted: Exchequer. The *Aerarium* is a person who collects the estate rents and keeps the expense records. All the serfs of the high lord's lands also pay rent. They labor and own nothing. What little they might make whittling, goes to pay for a door-less hovel. Any person who collects the rents and will kick a family out into the snow is a dastard. If his records are wrong or lost, the exchequer will lose a hand. The one armed exchequer is the worst of the worst toward humanity. He dares not err a second time in his recordkeeping, or more so his collections.

The hoarding of real gold attracts raiders, delvers and monsters. The exchequer will also know how to trap a vault and properly secure a coinbox. A certain amount of graft (rep fees) is expected. But how much? The high lord will take great offense when his exchequer seems to dress and live more lavishly than himself.

Rival (WHO?) Swords: Epic Adversaries

Rival Epic King Swords: *Elder Stateman.* The rival is retired from politics, yet not by choice. He was ostracized and remains hopeful he can return to good status with the emperor or Curia Regis. He may be a member of the Sacred Order of the Questing Knights, but only for the association. His heritage is long, and his nobility assured, but the powers that be wish he would just focus on raising and training his sons to enter politic life. He is dead to them. Rival's sanctuary tends to be the Civilized Realms in the Ukrainian Floodplain.

Inverted: Sinister Wish. The rival once supported the Dark Lord, he may still have sympathies and pray for his ungodly master's return. Rival's sanctuary tends to be the Ural Mountains of the Avar Dwarf, above or below ground.

Rival Epic Queen Swords: *Pagan Abbot.* The rival is the protector of a sacred temple, relic or enchanted location. Even as enemies encroach, he refuses to leave his duty, his city and his followers. He is an honor bound man, stubborn beyond reason. The rival is a member of the Pantheon of Pagan Altars. He has a following of blessed warriors and even may have engendered the protection of a demigod (or two). The clergy are not usually wealthy, more often employed in charitable poverty, but this man reveals more ostentatious wealth. This noble and his problems live in or around the complicated City-State Barda.

Inverted: Lizard Chief. The rival is outwardly human, but inside his blood is cold. His lizard father raped a damsel who carried the boy to term. He left the world of men and joined his father's people, earning a reputation for cruelty. He curries allies among the Saurian Chieftains. The lizard men are curious, tolerate his company, but skeptical any soft-skin could ever accept them as equals. Rival's sanctuary tends to be a lacustrine inlet among the Saurian Chieftains.

Rival Epic Knight Swords: *Lycanthrope.* He's a monster; he may once have been human, but none of that humanity remains. The rival secretly is part of the

Coven of Elder Vampires. This noble and his problems live in or around the complicated City-State Bereste.

Inverted: *Wild Card.* The rival is openly or secretly part of a random political faction, perhaps the one flipped for a background motive. If so, then the patron and rival are both quarreling members of that political faction. He will not be a zealot and often regrets his involvement. But for many of these factions, your loyalty is expected for this life and long into what comes after. Rival's sanctuary tends to be the Greater Frontiers of the Tribes of Prus and Pripet Marshes.

Rival Epic Knave Swords: *Sanctuarian Idealist.* The rival is secretly a benefactor supplying money and shelter to escaped slaves. He is a member of the Free Gladiators, though he might not have ever been a slave nor fought in the arena. This noble and his problems live in or around the crossroads City-State Bulgar.

Inverted: *Treacherous Realist.* The rival has no sympathy and no loyalty to the empire. He sees the model as antiquated. He believes the future lies in a feudal organization of many small kingdoms. The borders should shift with marriage and ability. He sees that happening already. He has great sympathy for the abandoned children of nobles. The rival secretly supports the Usurper's Own. Rival's sanctuary tends to be the region of the Khazar or Volgar Dwarf, above and extending below ground. He is a man of many motives, yet specific ultimate goal to end the empire.

Rival Epic 10 Swords: *Forgotten Elite.* Rival runs a city, or his companion does. He wishes nothing more than to be freed from remote service and return to where the real people live. The rival secretly supports the Outcast Sons. He has sheltered many of the lordly, banished by families or targeted for death, to ensure they do not become pawns. The rival has a palace of these potential pretenders. This noble and his problems live in or around the complicated City-State Divina.

Inverted: *Ruthless Hun.* The rival is part of the greater faction of Nomadic Warlord. Rival's sanctuary tends to be the Steppes of the Nomadic Warlords.

Rival Epic 9 Swords: *Pledged to Malice.* The rival is openly a servant of the Grey One. His followers have turned their sanctuary into a sinful den of inequity and fear. Everyone is an abused slave to someone, and even the masters seem to suffer randomly. All manner of nonhuman and cross breed are trapped here by apathy and sadism. This noble and his problems live in or around the complicated City-State Lost Citadel.

Inverted: *Arcane Absolute.* The rival is a Lictor, a part of a magical faction of Sky Realm Zaires. He believes only he and his close friends should be allowed to practice magic. He has been banished by the emperor and told never to return on penalty of death. He laughed when that was told to him, then strangled with telekinesis the imperial messenger. Rival's sanctuary tends to be floating in the

clouds above the Caspian Sea Isles, or during summer he'll be sailing lazily on the crystal waters.

Rival Epic 8 Swords: *Dwarf Envoy*. The rival is an honorary member of the Dwarves. He speaks for various dwarven rulers as their human agent and chosen emissary. For that to occur, he is not so much respected by them, as he has been good to his word and deals. He will have numerous contracts with the imps; none of these two-way delivery services will be legal in the empire. This noble and his problems live in or around the complicated City-State Nicaea.

Inverted: *Self Ordained*. The rival is a member of one of the factions of the Prorogati Sky Realm Zaires. He would say he is apolitical, which is a lie. He secretly covets the imperial crown and is building his wealth, power and contacts to either sit in the throne or stand behind making all the decisions. These men tend to be impatient; they do not like their ideas questioned. They want their orders quickly and succinctly obeyed. Rival's sanctuary tends to be the Civilized Realms of the Romanian fiefdoms.

Rival Epic 7 Swords: *Feminist*. The rival is secretly part of the Cult of the Amazons. This noble and his problems live in or around the complicated City-State Philipolis.

Inverted: *Buccaneer*. The rival secretly is a spy for the Order of the Seven Seas. He pays off the watch in many places to bring in stolen goods and study his potential targets. Rival's sanctuary tends to be an Aegean Sea Isles, or he'll be constantly on the move between the two-hundred and twenty seven alternatives.

Rival Epic 6 Swords: *Sultanic Raider*. The rival is part of the greater faction of Sultanic Raiders. He will not be the hereditary ruler of any city, but he will have a merchant prince in his pocket. Well, not literally; he could with magic make the man tiny, but the point is he controls the imperial border city by proxy. This noble and his problems live in or around the complicated City-State Sebastea.

Inverted: *Matchless Delver*. The rival is the Satrap of an active Delver Company. His magical power is near infinite below ground. His humanity is probably gone with his youthful appearance. He is typically a teen but looks eighty, scarred and deformed by the noticeable freak tentacles for limbs and stark blue jaundice. Any actuary would predict he'll be dead in ten more years, if not three. Rival's sanctuary tends to be the Caucasus Mountains of the Dwarven Kings, above or below ground.



Rival Epic 5 Swords: Conqueror.

The rival is part of the Brotherhood of Barbarians; he aspires to be that group's leader. He will be competing with the more aggressive sea rovers for followers. He would like to subvert the campaign by assimilation and absorption. Many of his fellow Vikings want only to adventure and die doing so. This noble and his problems live in or around the complicated City-State Sigtuna.

Inverted: Sea Rover. The rival is part of the greater faction of Sea Rovers. He will be a notorious captain, pirate and raider. Rival's sanctuary tends to be a Baltic Sea Isle, or he'll be found sailing along the whale roads.

Rival Epic 4 Swords: Wondrously Crooked. The rival runs a city-state by proclamation of the people. The non-resident official delegate to the empire is content to collect his tribute and let the people have the rival, as a luminary favorite. Secretly he supports or is coerced by the Caliphate Thieves. This noble and

his problems live in or around the complicated City-State Sinope.

Inverted: Crime Boss. The rival is not as much a pirate as he is a purveyor of violence. He finds the broad waters safer than most cities. He can stay on the move, in relative luxury. His vessel will be enchanted, and he will add watery denizens as protectors below. The rival is secretly loyal or beholden to the Grandfather of the Thieves. The rival will be a go-to enforcer for special deeds. Rival's wealth and sanctuary tends to be on a Black Sea Isle, but he'll be found exclusively riding the tides. His vaults however, would never fit on one ship and a convey is too suspicious and easier to spot with magic.

Rival Epic 3 Swords: *Freemason.*

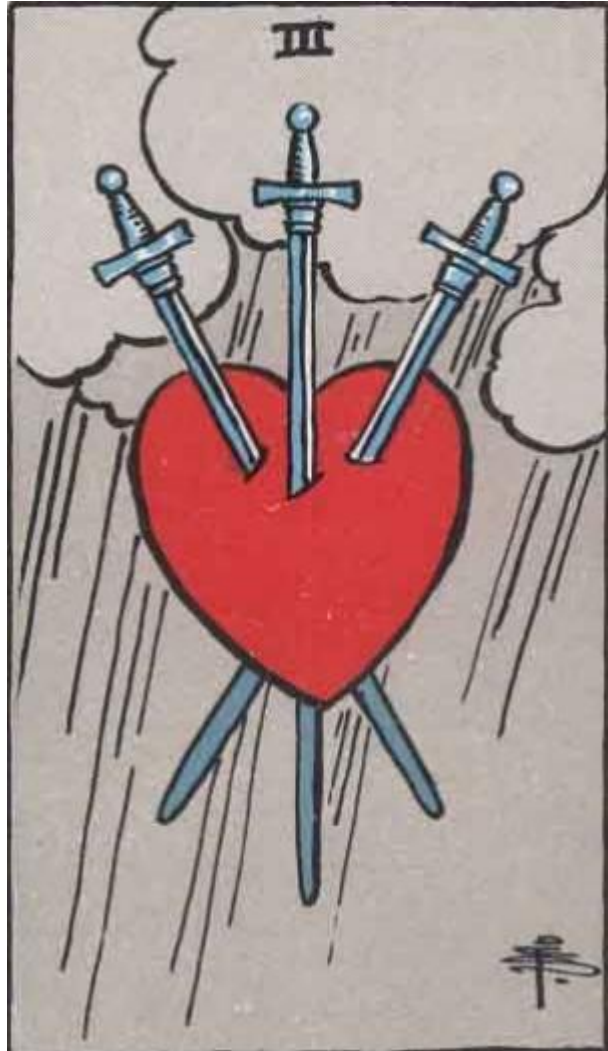
The rival is a member of the Order of Freemasons. He travels often and is not typically on his estates. He'd rather sleep in warmer climes. His lands and his title were a gift. He is a sculptor and artist and enjoys a finer taste for extravagance. He will be admired by the ladies of court and their husbands. Finding him the patronage and money to start or finish his masterwork is the current cause célèbre. He will hide dark secrets on his motive and ultimate result if the work ever is completed. Nothing good will come of it, even if the demon released was unintended. This noble and his problems live in or around the complicated City-State Staraja.

Inverted: Unfathomable

Conspirator. The rival has the ability to possess others over great distances and will frequently talk through surrogates. This is not for impersonation; instead the victim will freeze, eyes freakishly wide open, speaking in his own voice to make threats or issue henchmen their marching orders. Even a player character might become this conduit, though never in combat. The rival is secretly a member of the Vox Illuminati. Rival's sanctuary tends to be the Artic Circle inside the Lands of Tundra Giants.

Rival Epic 2 Swords: *Deep Cover.* A modest noble performs the bureaucratic duties for the empire, running a city-state. The rival secretly is an infiltrator sent from the Raja's Entourage. He ensures those ships have a sanctuary. All manner of illicit goods and captives are loaded here and then shipped throughout the frontier and civilized world by slow barge. This noble and his problems live in or around the complicated City-State Tiflis.

Inverted: Executioner. A killer, he is paid to murder. The rival is secretly part of the Union of Assassins; he is a legend among them. Using a mystic basin, he can even kill remotely, though never a player character. Rival's sanctuary tends to be on an isle in the Sea of Azov, or he'll be gliding aboard his sea chariot, shrouded in the



fog and sea foam. Sea Chariot is a kenning; he uses a boat painted like chariot with animated horses.

Rival Epic Ace Swords: *Slavic Rider*. The rival is part of the greater faction of Slavic Riders. They are poor farmers, their land is cold and barren, this is why they venture forth, vigorously, to forage and despoil. His sanctuary tends to lie in the Greater Frontiers of Arkhangelsk.

Inverted: *Extraordinary Enigma*. This guy needs a cape with “EE” inscribed on the back. The rival is a long standing member of the Cryptic Monks. He was the first to slice off the cartilage of his nose. Be not surprised to find he was a founding member, hundreds of years ago. He will be spry, vital and evasive to questions. He has outlived all his relatives. Does it need to be said, he knows wizardry? Rival’s sanctuary tends to be at Lake Ladoga & Onega, the Cold Seas Isles, where he’ll be found in his own resilient ice castle.



Longboat technique they already have, they will only smile and continue; nothing else is acquired.

Alternate longboat Technique Loss

There’s an occasion to be mean. When the players lose a Longboat technique, many times they simply do not have that technique to lose. Good for them, their weakness turns into a lucky break. Yet for parties above four Methodical player characters or when any character reaches level five+, when multiple attempt rolls occur, this benefit should end. Instead of just skipping a negative consequence, the following table shall be used to assess another debit inflicted. Note the reverse is never true. If the players are granted a

Longboat Alternative Loss

Penalty	Taken Instead
Longboat Elite Goals (A)	Longboat Pure No-Curse (J), Longboat Noble Allegiance (K)
Longboat Charted Path (B)	Longboat Comradery (P), Longboat Orderly Kept (Q)
Longboat Religiously Inspired (C)	Longboat No Disease (I), Longboat Democracy (S)
Longboat Treasure Laden (D)	Longboat Undamaged (O)
Longboat Vigilant (E)	Longboat Abundant Stores (M)
Longboat Arcane Sentinel (F)	Longboat Inhuman Watchdogs (R)
Longboat Treachery Expunged (G)	Longboat Treasure Laden (D)
Longboat Battle Ready (H)	Longboat Seasoned Crew (L)
Longboat No Disease (I)	Longboat Elite Goals (A)
Longboat Pure No-Curse (J)	Longboat Arcane Sentinel (F)
Longboat Noble Allegiance (K)	Longboat Religiously Inspired (C)
Longboat Seasoned Crew (L)	Longboat Treachery Expunged (G)
Longboat Abundant Stores (M)	Longboat Vermin Free (N)
Longboat Vermin Free (N)	Longboat No Disease (I)
Longboat Undamaged (O)	Longboat Charted Path (B)
Longboat Comradery (P)	Longboat Battle Hard (T)
Longboat Orderly Kept (Q)	Longboat Pure No-Curse (J)
Longboat Inhuman Watchdogs (R)	Longboat Comradery (P)
Longboat Democracy (S)	Longboat Battle Ready (H)
Longboat Battle Hard (T)	Longboat Vigilant (E)
<p>These negative results should cascade. If the alternate to lose is not there, well, the party loses the alternate to that and so forth. If the vessel has no traits, the lowest level player character should receive a vicious wound.</p>	

Rival's Flair Forces

Not every rival will have elite minions, his ace-in-the hole. Yet flip a card here to keep it in mind. Even a rival who is himself a minion will have guards and hirelings. The rivals generated by coin cards may be using a favor and borrow the high lord's rogues. Generate this Flair with each quest, but whether it occurs in play is at the Ref's discretion.

These henchmen are the ones the rival depends upon the most. Here are servants with special combat abilities and gear. These modifiers are optional, and more often are added to adventures when the players are pushing past the first few levels of Ignoble achievement. Make-rolls seem to help the players avoid character deaths. But a large group may have so many make-rolls, that all encounters are wished away. That was never the intention. The rival's Flair is an extra gotcha.

These are matchless advantages; the players may not simply copy the rival on the spot, or after the sport, to obtain similar benefits. Even if the characters are

awesomely skilled, each Flair Aces-in-the-Hole is added for play variety, not for the players to mimic and mass produce. The tactics and innovations will seem untraditional, uncouth and unmanly; they will also be impossible to replicate by the player characters.

The Ref should freely add additional restrictions to the players' actions or flair outcomes to reflect the rival's special forces. This table presents rather fine examples of starting notions to inspire any Ref to create his own special modifiers and secret enhancements. But, inclusion is left entirely up to the Ref and the campaign.

Flair Ace-in-the-Hole Quicklook

Flair Ace-in-Hole		
	Cups	Rods
King	Dragon Cladding (No D-swallowing)	Grogards (No P-longboat Comradery)
Queen	Fire Wands (No K-pyrotechnics)	Seers (No B-swallowing)
Knight	Winged Provocateurs (no S-swallowing)	Godly Protectors (No C-longboat Relig. Inspired)
Knave	Gifts & Luck (No E-swallowing)	Foaming Armor (No H-swallowing)
10	Skilled Admiralty (No longboat techniques)	Goblin Bombards (No G-swallowing)
9	Glistening Shields (No Blade techniques)	Terrain Shifter (No C-geomancy)
8	Flash Powder (No R-longboat Inh. Watchdogs)	Dwarven Undermines (No T-cosmic)
7	Staff Sergeants (No S-longboat Democracy)	Storm Staffs (No N-voltaic)
6	Knuckle Bucklers (No T-longboat Battle Hard)	Greek Fire (no K-swallowing)
5	Owl Eyes (No E-longboat Vigilant)	Gunpowder Bombs (No I-swallowing)
4	Calisthenics (No A-demigod)	Notorious (No P-swallowing)
3	Extra limb (No Q-paralysis)	Goblin Gelnite (No N-swallowing)
2	Breath Attack (No O-longboat Undamaged)	Iris Gates. (No O-swallowing)
Ace	Eerie Music (No P-thought control)	Logistics (No M-longboat Abundant Stores)
	Coins	Swords
King	Trabant horse (No Mount techniques)	Death Cult (No F-Demonic)
Queen	Spies & Scouts (No E-precognition)	Cruel Polearms (No F-swallowing)
Knight	Arquebusiers (No D-telekinesis)	Coursers (No R-swallowing)
Knave	Provisioners (No N-longboat Vermin Free)	Exotic Host (No M-swallowing)
10	Gendarmes (No K-longboat Noble Allegiance)	Blunderbuss (No J-shape shifting)
9	Radical Formations (No S-power words)	Walking Dead (No I-illusions)
8	Tribal Remnants (No I-longboat No Disease)	Angry Trees (No J-swallowing)
7	Garish Uniforms (No A-longboat Elite Goals)	Beastlings (No M-hexes)
6	Ice Throwers (No L-swallowing)	Statues (No O-animate objects)
5	Rockets (No Q-swallowing)	Gas Clouds (No G-celestial)
4	Cataphract (No T-swallowing)	Burgmann, low born (No A-swallowing)
3	Wall Shielding (No B-longboat charted path)	Acids & Poison (No H-necromancy)
2	Sprinters (No B-psionics)	Bang Grenades (No L-conjuration)
Ace	Training Manuals (No R-spirit guide)	Improved Kit (No C-swallowing)
Inverted card result list in parenthesis.		

Major Tarot – Decisive Surprises

Surprises Empress: The rival has paid a ruthless cult to assist him. The leader of that cult might be given amnesty or a sanctuary in the rival's domain. The cultists now assist the rival with magic. They try to predict what the players will do and where the group is likely to strike. The rival may even have sympathy for the cult or be a new member.

These mystic rogues intend to discover the players' plans and stop them by any means available. Common people and journeymen, whom the players meet along their trip, will be subsequently abducted and questioned, interrogated or punished. Word will spread, and soon no one will aid the players. Ignore Kings and Knights in Phases B and C, unless the cards are inverted for those start predisposed to oppose the group's goals.

Inverted: rival dispatches and puts his confidence in one enchanted monster; he may unleash a demon on the world to try and stop the players. Rate this monster as one ferocity better than the highest level player character. Thus, against a new group, some Large fiend is summoned. Against a Stallari the rival probably sold his own soul to a Great demon to stop the players cold. This monster attacks just once, either early or late. At the start of the quest as they set sail or as the first obstacle of the climax challenges, that's when the demon appears from a portal and attacks. The first combat card everyone receives is a Bane. That should focus the party's attention, so much so the Longboat becomes Vigilant (E).

Surprises High Priestess: Rival's forces employ seemingly fantastique elements, witchcraft, spells, potions and curses to stop the players. His soldiers may come primarily from a remote region, reputed to have superior strength and mental acuity – gypsy blood drinkers or lizard men. The players start the adventure each rolling Out of the Ordinary. If a majority fail this outcome, the group is transfixed and inflates the myths. If so, assess a minus one Quest Pip.

Inverted: the rival has created a set of clocklike automatons. These metal knights can sit, stand, salute, rotate, raise visors and gesture. They may be able to kill, but not near the water where they quickly rust up. Again, roll and find a majority. Failing the Quest Pip applies. Yet at anytime up to the climax challenges, if the machines are fought and defeated, the penalty goes away. The machines must be rated by the Ref, but usually are more frightening than real soldiers.

Surprises Empress: The rival's forces are officially sanctioned and seemingly beyond reproach. He has a relative or favors owe to him in the imperial court; this is much more than simply bribing the local magistrate. If the players are attempting something criminal, then they had better not be caught. They face hanging. Even if the players can show that the rival is abusing his authority or working outside the

law, that extra court case would be tried on its own merits. The players would still swing for their own crimes. Two wrongs equal two righteous deaths.

Inverted: rival has made a pact with a political faction, an enemy of the empire. The time-lag is such that he could not employ this connection right away. However, in the next quest, the one after this one, the players will face a delayed threat from that extra power. The threat will only appear in one battle, so it may be advisable to simply run when they appear.

Surprises Emperor: The rival employs hardened mercenaries, the remnants of a once-proud fighting force. The unit is a legion that lost its outpost or was destroyed by betrayal. The group, what's left of them, live in and around the rival's home. The force has something to prove, perhaps against a random group of players (as a start to recovery).

Inverted: the rival and his agents organize slave rabble to act as cannon fodder to cover his true forces. The slaves are promised freedom for not just themselves, but for their families if the mission ends in failure. Many have little to lose and freedom to gain. But these are not trained warriors. Each battle where the group is swarmed by this rabble begins with a Tactical pip of one.

Yet each victory, and the slaughter, causes a morale test. One player must decide if the longboat loses a technique (Ref picks as appropriate, like Battle Hard no more), or if he will suffer a lost trait for the quest's duration (not feeling Clever here), or if the entire party suffers a Quest Pip of minus one (fug you all). Start with the prime player character making his decision, but then rotate the choice each time the group is attacked by the slave mob.

Surprises Hierophant: The rival studied at university and has kept correspondence and friendship with many scholars. Upon the first flip of a Knave, these men temporarily forsake their work to help stop the players. Since each may have spent his life reading and understanding obscure physics or human behavior, they may surprise the players with their inventiveness. This could be a religious philosopher proselytizing the common folk, though seldom do they riot and hunt the players from one region into the next. Else, the locals will shun the group, suspend trade, shut taverns doors, refuse to sell drink, etc. A sophist will attempt to reason with the players. He will ask politely for this conflict to end; he needs to get back to important studies. Laugh all you want; the players' servitors are persuaded and continue half-heartedly. One of the scientists might develop a cutting-edge magical beam or cannon, calculates a mathematical table of trajectory and takes a damaging shot at the vessel. Ref must decide, perhaps all three occur over the three phases of encounters.

Inverted: the rival and his forces are religiously or spiritually motivated by a higher cosmic gargoyle, delivering a set of weird doctrines. These are violent and

involve druidic human sacrifice. The faith usually has forged, yet not tested, a relic; the rival threatens his control of a miraculous energy. The rival is seen as a messiah. The climax will show to all that the rival was insane or a masterful hoax.

Surprises Lovers: Select two Flair cards and combine results.

Inverted: select one card from each suit of Flair for a combined set of penalties. Ignore any additional Major Tarot during this selection, and upon completion reshuffle the deck.

Surprises Chariot: The rival's forces must forage in order to ready themselves for battle. They will not engage too early, until they complete their preparations. The first Knave encounter will represent the players observing the enemy gathering troops and supplies. The players may try to thwart that effort. Else, the second Knave will be the enemy fully ready for a fight. At the climax, the rival is prepped, regardless of encounters or player action up to that point.

Inverted: the rival may only use his ace-in-the-hole once. He does so early, at the first flip of a Knave. If that does not occur in encounters, he will have the flair to apply in the climax challenges.

Surprises Justice: Rival has constructed palisade forts and stationed floating checkpoints along the route of the players. The players meet the first of these emplacements with the first Knave encounter. The rival's soldiers will sally forth from temporary sanctuaries to strike the players. To make matters more vital in game terms, each of these bases starts combat by eliminating one Longboat technique. If the longboat has none remaining, combat starts with a vicious to the lowest level player character.

Inverted: rival has a longboat, so the players will meet and fight this other craft using ship to ship combat. If it is not defeated and sunk during encounters, the boat may return again at another Knave or be the first climax challenge at the end. If the rival's ship is taken in boarding, the players gain a prize equal to Longboat Treasure Laden (D). If they get captured themselves, well, Digressions to follow. *"Over the side for the masters."*

Surprises Hermit: The rival has a trickster and saboteur in his employ. This special agent delights in causing mischief and accidents. Even as a poisoner, he seldom openly attacks, but instead spikes the broth to taste spoiled. The rival's man doubles as an extra grumbler, spreading lies and covertly placing the blame for mishaps on poor player leadership.

The gremlin only appears after the first flip of a Knave. Thereafter, he will be thoroughly ensconced with the group, on land and sea, through every encounter to follow. The quest's Inconsequence Encounters will have more severity once this agent of the rival infiltrates the group. The collective damage is usually too numerous to counter. Even though the enemy appears openly in the ranks, he can never be

blamed. The players in fact will love the guy, even as he tries to undermine their every order. The players must limp along with this pest, until the climax. Then, just as easily as he appeared, he will be gone. The players may even shed a tear for their missing boot-shine. The devilish stowaway is never fought and not ever met again. *“He salutes you as he goes.”*

Inverted: the rival has convinced another WHO? that the quest is against him or will substantially impact that WHO? Consider the flipped card for often it might. The players discover this extra WHO? upon encounter with the first Knave. The Ref may deem the quest easier to present by just adding an extra rival. But only if a Knave is encountered. With some luck, this WHO? will only become an extra enemy later in the aftermath.

The potential second rival will use his forces during encounters and represent all Knaves. The true rival's forces will be held in reserve to be met at the climax challenges only.

Sometimes WHO? may be met in parley and convinced that he will not suffer as greatly as the true rival claims. The players need to calm that person's nerves. Placating all his fears with assurances that the players will cover his every loss requires a bit of role-play weaseling. Should that take place, the Knaves switch back solely to the rival's forces.

Surprises Wheel of Fortune: shuffle the deck and continue.

Surprises Force: Rival's forces will seem to start sluggish but appear stronger and smarter after each defeat. The players must quickly realize they face an increasing threat and finish their quest in do haste. Each time the players face a Knave, in whatever situation, there will be more of the enemy to defeat. Most action during encounters results in adversaries numbering half the party size as opponents to best. Maybe add two to the number each time, accumulative with each flipped Knave.

Inverted: the rival has promised slavers plenty of prisoners, so long as they help him. All Digressions resulting from player character mishap and capture, begin at (I), Slave in the Mines. The Ref may assess additional consequences, but this deal tends to inflame the party's own forces, nixing any extra penalty.

Surprises Hanged Man: Rival's forces are considerable but restricted to a certain area. He may be protecting a frontier or stands at ready to meet a different threat. He may have few soldiers overall, but instead nurtures a connection to the imperial court. The Curia Regis might order the arrest of the player characters with the chance based on the level of bloodshed and carnage that happens in the quest. Kill a monster and be a hero. Kill some commoners, tsk, tsk. Injure a noble's horse and face fines, loss of an eye. Openly murder a lord or aristocrat and spend the rest of your life facing arrest and execution.

Inverted: the rival's reputation is no longer deserved. His clout or resources were once legendary, but all has waned. This discovery occurs after the first Queen or friendly King encounter. After which, the players gain a plus one Quest Pip. The climax challenges are unaffected, representing a last gasp of his former glory.

Surprises Death: Rival or his forces regularly murder for money. They are better able to face solitary targets than groups. The rival will tempt the players to split by offering enticing diversions. Between each phase of encounters, each player must attempt an Ordinary roll. If he ever fails two in a row, he has taken the bait and decides to quickly pop-away from the relative safety of numbers. He is seduced by a fortune, a woman, a false hope, a novel threat. Take you pick, but also suffer the vicious walking wound as he struggles to make it back to the group for forgiveness. Arguably, a character of trait Clever would roll three dice for his attempt.

Inverted: the rival is fond of traps. These will present obstacles not just in his home at the climax, perhaps, but injuries can be inflicted during the routes along the way. Along with the men representing the Knaves, the encounters will include booby traps. Documents or chests might have contact poison; doors can be rigged to explode, hallways will have pressure steps triggering darts and slides, even the roadside can be littered with basic hunting pitfalls and snares. Display of the skills Apothecary, Engineer-Sapper, Hunter, Prestidigitation and Tinker may all be necessary to find and defuse these obstacles. Else calculate, who suffers the wound or how many servitors are lost in terms of lost longboat techniques? Recall the loss of half the crew should remove about half the starting techniques.

Surprises Temperance: Rival decides to contact and threaten the players' allies. He will try to take someone hostages from the group's friends and relatives; the prisoners could make a plea for the player characters to stop the quest. The favor associated with the contact or friend that was captured is of course lost, even if the innocent are rescued.

Inverted: the rival's subordinate commanders and agents are level-headed. They do not want to do real harm, especially to the helpless or innocent. They know death has consequence and would rather leave a fearful, weakened adversary. They will attack to diminish or board the group's ship to steal not sink. They will often free the slave rowers. Even Digressions should be restrained, treating the usually final result of death as the character instead being released to the patron.

Surprises Devil: Rival's forces are odious, ugly, odiferous, scarred, unshaven, tattooed, masked, frightfully groomed, in a word – repugnant. The men have been altered by magic or enhanced by illusions. Soldiers who first face them must check morale, usually Out of the Ordinary, or start at Q&D Rally. Even in duels, the player characters will constantly feel the urge to wretch and flee. Bold characters may ignore this penalty; those without should attempt Ordinary, or upon failing select

method Escape. Since higher level allows an easier roll, the result applies to any character meeting these Knaves. Yet the Ref may allow someone to remain out of party loyalty, though visibly Shaken.

Inverted: the rival was once a member of an elite group of soldiers. A logo proclaiming their disdain for life is embossed on each soldier's breastplate armor. Collectively the force has never routed on the battlefield. The rival need only contact his former confederates, and a company of these troops will force march to his aid. After the first Knave encounter, upon the second, these soldiers arrive with considerable supplies. With each Knave encounter, the forces attacking increase yet again. The players may need to conduct a ruse and draw off the majority of these enemies, if they want any chance of success in the climax challenges. Purpose your plan and have at the task rolls. So, each player takes part, maybe go around the table and have every player add something to the plan and test his own success at a difficulty set by the Ref (based on the description and skills utilized).

Surprises Tower of Destruction: The rival is extraordinary. The Ref is given card blanche to imagine a splendidly wicked and uniquely arrayed force, usually with special arms and invulnerabilities. The players should learn true fear, and they have no business entering the rival's domain. Often the first attempt is outright repulsed; the players overpowered, beaten and sent out humiliated upon failing a Nearly Impossible task roll. After that lesson, the rival's forces will relax, return to normal and might be defeated. Life can be brutal, and so can this game. Did I mention that Nearly Impossible roll is a Ref roll, so no make-roll is allowed?

Inverted: rival favors swiftness and fleet designs. Each battle has a limited number of rounds for success. The players have only so long to defeat any group they face, before it is reinforced and returns to the starting situation. The enemy is only half the party's size in terms of consequential leaders. The time restraint is almost always three rounds. If the enemy, numbering half the group, is not dispatched or forced to surrender, then start again. Any knock-outs and wounds to the players still apply. Any enemy allowed to flee, returns after the three rounds. Better to kill them outright or run away yourselves.

Surprises Star: Rival will slander, rightly or wrongly, the player characters at court, making them the butt of jokes; the player characters will collectively be seen as brazen, lower-class, contemptible. Their ship's name will be mocked. The result will influence the next half D8 adventures or full D8 if the group fails this quest. The reward for future jobs will be stunted, expect nothing as you reclaim your honor and reputation. The group might run some of their own personal quests, but that would hardly keep their boat afloat.

No, the next few patrons will even comment that they don't truly think the prime player character is capable, but all are willing to take the chance for a fair

(meaning zero consignment) price. The number penalty may be lowered by one for each contact and friend utilized by the party's characters. Your reputation is important to advance in levels, correct?

Inverted: the rival seems to call in a favor or simply delegates his response to another. Select one more card for WHO? and treat the suit as coins. The main rival skips this quest. If he was to be murdered or maimed, he won't be. The players face the underling WHO? now as the rival. The ace-in-the-hole flair is also held out for this quest. Generate one, but do not apply yet. Only at the next mission may the player characters undertake a similar quest to truly succeed against the true rival. This quest is a warm up. The climax challenges will be just some combat and foreshadow of what's to follow. Even then the quest may still end in failure, especially if the party gives up along the journey.

Surprises Moon: The rival's forces will be on the move during Phase A in a route closely parallel to that followed by the players. There they will pillage or pirate, doing the best they can to place the blame for these criminal acts upon the player characters. They may adopt mannerism, clothing, use similar field signs or flags, or often boast and proclaim themselves by the player characters' own names.

They will be quite convincing, even more so, if the players were rather libertine with ravage and desecration in their own right. The players will be confronted by an agent of the law (or their patron) at the end of Phase A. There they must display Difficult skills like Cartographer, Courtly Grace, Linguist, and gods help us all, Minstrel, to prove they were not at the scene of these atrocities.

If the truth fails, perhaps Briber, Gambler or Rabblrouser at Tasking might prevent additional opposition hunting them in Phase B. Upon failure of all mitigation, treat Knights as Knaves in Phase B, where the players stand accused. If there is any consolation, by Phase C, suspicion on the players for these deeds will pass.

Inverted: rival's forces always appear as something other than they are. They disguise themselves as the local authorities or the servants of another WHO? His forces can appear in many uniforms and with substantial documentation, all forged. They may even employ look-alikes to confuse identity. The most dangerous of these minions will pretend to be from the players' own patron. Make your Difficult rolls of discovery or your quest will go off on tangents. After foiling one enemy deception, the players will not be fooled again.

Surprises Sun: The rival has gathered much of his forces through debt. If the players can prove the rival's credit is not good, then he would lose forces and be forced to retreat until the climax. First off, the players must receive a Queen event during encounters to get this tidbit of news. Or, they must interrogate someone

caught during a Knave encounter to learn of the vulnerability. The Ref may also decide the players receive this info from a friend or favorable King event.

Eventually, they should learn that the rival is in debt. Next, they need to plan an interruption. They might want to capture or delay one of his merchant ships. They might flood his fields or burn a guildhall. Or else, steal the collateral he offered the banking cartel or urban money lender. The Ref must decide the action based on the players' plan.

Upon success, the players may ignore all Knaves for the rest of encounters. Even at Phase C right before the climax, player intercession might still prevent Knaves from revenge in the Epilog.

Inverted: the rival's forces are betrayed or suffer internal division; his Knaves are diminished. Only upon entering the climax challenges will anything significant be faced and fought. All his Knaves, before then will only attempt small acts of sabotage. Perhaps, treat Knaves as Knights instead.

Surprises Judgment: The rival's forces admire and respect him. His loyal subordinates can overcome many shortfalls in preparation and supply. They will suffer deprivation and starvation; they will forego pay and endure all manner of hardship. Even if this won't last forever, the players are facing this devotion right now. His agents throw themselves heedlessly into battle. They would rather lose their lives, then see their leader disgraced.

Inverted: the rival and his agents are braggarts. They can easily be enticed to boast about their plans or general security. This information must come from deception. If the players feign weakness during Personal Duels, maybe purposefully choosing a round of method Irregular, they then will discover weakness in the opposition. After gaining this insight, apply a plus one Tactical Pip. This option may be used in the climax challenges as well.

Surprises World: Rival can quickly replace his losses. He may also have support among the hospitals of pagan temples for convalescing his injured soldiers. Even if he would seem to lack in wealth or agents, his minions collectively employ their own favors. The players and this quest become truly hated and cheered-on for destruction.

Inverted: the rival is owed a favor by a company of delvers. The cadre is not just a group of miners; this corps is treated as an elite magical cohort. If the adventure ever travels below ground, even for a combat round, it could fail. Ref should assess Shaken and Quest Pip penalties each time the underworld is entered. The delvers will be in their element and undefeatable there.

Surprises Fool: The rival recently had a battle with another for supremacy. His forces originally killed or displaced this strong adversary to occupy his position,

territory or cabal. Even if the rival's role seems minor, he obtained his ranking henchmen status by theft and murder.

The Ref has a couple of options. The local authorities have issued a summons for the rival to appear before the magistrate. That could prove to be a distraction, so the players may ignore Knave encounters for Phase A. Else, the players will meet remnants (or allies) of the aggrieved. By passionate promises and display of skill, the players' forces will be enhanced. The rival might remain weakened by his initial clash. Or finally the local nobility can be convinced to stop harboring and feeding the rival's forces. Any and all may apply depending upon the players' exploit of this situation.

Inverted: the rival proved his merit in a recent test. If the players try to discredit the rival, he will gain additional forces. Instead, the players must acknowledge that their patron is in the wrong. They must be apologists the entire journey and act as if they are arrived to make amends, seek forgiveness. If their deception is ever discovered, if they blow the rolls to placate any third party Kings and Knights, then turn those cards into future Knaves.

Flair Forces Cups

Flair King Cups: *Dragon Cladding.* Enemy employs exotic materials as sheeting around his normal breastplate. The secret is in the fit, with each set of scales molded to the warrior by an arcane master. The material tends to deflect and bounce harmlessly away strikes. These strange garments will prove futile for the player characters to analyze and copy, even as they capture numerous examples. Players increase the Difficulty of all combat Methods by one.

Inverted: also impose this restriction; players may not use any swaggering technique (D) in combat against these minions.

Flair Queen Cups: *Fire Wands.* Rival's forces have a large number and variety of fire producing gadgets. Some of these are one-shot and triggered by command words or motions; others tap the manna inside the user, meaning the warrior slowly kills himself wielding the power and flame. Players increase the Difficulty of Bane Magical suit Swords by three.

Inverted: also impose this restriction; players may not use Wizardry Pyrotechnics (K) in combat against these minions.

Flair Knight Cups: *Winged Provocateurs.* Many of the enemy are able to fly. They can lurk at a distance, making them harder to kill. They might wear a removable set of wings or have had wings surgically or magically attached. The player characters might try to strap on the contraption, and in doing so, eventually suffer a vicious fall. Players increase the Difficulty of any result with dispatch by three.

Inverted: also impose this restriction; players may not use any swaggering technique (S) in combat against these minions.

Flair Knave Cups: *Gifts & Luck.* The rival has a way of knowing elements of the tactics and greater plans of his adversaries even before an enemy formulates them himself. Players start the adventure with a minus one Quest Pip.

Inverted: also impose this restriction; players may not use any swaggering technique (E) in combat against these minions.

Flair 10 Cups: *Skilled Admiralty.* The rival and his lieutenant captains are well studied and practiced in naval warfare. Players increase the Difficulty of ship to ship battles by three.

Inverted: also impose this restriction; players may not use any longboat techniques in combat against these minions.

Flair 9 Cups: *Glistening Shields.* The enemy employs shields, which shimmer with magical and toxic substances. The glaze will quickly kill those who get a major smear, and even those who occasionally come in contact (like the user) die slowly from accumulated exposure. Players increase the Difficulty of Brash Cups by three.

Inverted: also impose this restriction; players may not use any Blade techniques in combat against these minions.

Flair 8 Cups: *Flash Powder.* The enemy will ignite substances that flare and produce blinding results for a disorienting moment or a lingering halo of a few days or with permanent damage to the victim's eyesight. The powder slowly causes even the wielder to lose his sight. Players increase the Difficulty of Magical Cups by three.

Inverted: also impose this restriction; players may not use longboat Inhuman Watchdogs (R) in combat against these minions.

Flair 7 Cups: *Staff Sergeants.* The rival has a corps of elite drill instructors who specifically train in legionary tactics. Players increase the Difficulty of legion vs legion battles by three.

Inverted: also impose this restriction; players may not use longboat Democracy (S) in combat against these minions.

Flair 6 Cups: *Knuckle Bucklers.* The enemy fights with a modifier blade-guard which gives them greater defense in confined spaces. These weapons will seem cumbersome without specialized instruction in their handling. Players increase the Difficulty of Brash Rods by three.

Inverted: also impose this restriction; players may not use longboat Battle Hard (T) in combat against these minions.

Flair 5 Cups: *Owl Eyes.* The enemy has trained or endowed magically his minions to superior sight. They tend not to enter close assault, because they are experts in ranged attacks. Players subtract two for their results on Method Calculated.

Inverted: also impose this restriction; players may not use longboat Vigilant (E) in combat against these minions.

Flair 4 Cups: Calisthenics. The enemy is very fit, even more than most soldiers in their prime. The arcane rituals that the enemy follows makes even their senior members eugenically solid. Players increase the Difficulty of Method Brash by two.

Inverted: also impose this restriction; players may not use Wizardry Demigod (A) in combat against these minions.

Flair 3 Cups: Extra limb. The enemy minions are three armed. The extra appendage is not fully functioning and does hamper the warrior in many simple chores. However, it is hard to defend against, as it stabs, at times from concealment. During any battle before the climax, increase the Difficulty by one. The Ref may decide that the first player character to face this minion may only succeed in his initial event action by using a make-roll.

Inverted: also impose this restriction; players may not use Wizardry Paralysis (Q) in combat against these minions.

Flair 2 Cups: Breath Attack. The enemy will fill his lungs with caustics or flammable liquids to discharge these in close combat. The act is not sustainable. Even if the minions win and capture all players, some of them will later die from their own reckless, but effective, deeds. Players increase the Difficulty of Bane Brash Cups by three.

Inverted: also impose this restriction; players may not use longboat Undamaged (O) in combat against these minions.

Flair Ace Cups: Eerie Music. The enemy employs bellows or fifes to produce sounds which distract or induce fear. His own men are unfazed, acclimated to the nails on chalkboard sound. Players increase the Difficulty of Magical suit Swords by three.

Inverted: also impose this restriction; players may not use Wizardry Thought Control (P) in combat against these minions.

Flair Forces Rods

Flair King Rods: Grogards. The rival has an experienced corps of veterans, the sons of the sons of the sons of imperial crusaders. Players increase the Difficulty of Bane Brash Coins by three.

Inverted: also impose this restriction; players may not use longboat Comradery (P) in combat against these minions.

Flair Queen Rods: Seers. The enemy is constantly tracking the group's longboat from a stronghold deep within the underworlds. He may even plan ambush by attacking when the group is vulnerable. The attack should only take place on land.

Yet even vigilant player characters will stretch their legs ashore from time to time. At the very least, the players increase the Difficulty of Method Escape by three.

Inverted: also impose this restriction; players may not use any swaggering technique (B) in combat against these minions.

Flair Knight Rods: *Godly Protectors*. Something is aiding the rival and his minions, which has celestial powers of observation. His servants even call on the heavens, and the sky might answer those prayers. At the very least, the players may not use any tactical advantages related to Trait Gifted.

Inverted: also impose this restriction; players may not use longboat Religiously Inspired (C) in combat against these minions.

Flair Knave Rods: *Foaming Armor*. The enemy has leather jerkins, which repel anyone who touches them. The warriors, so clad, will also be hopelessly nauseous over time, so the player characters may not adopt the same armor, even upon killing the wearer. Players increase the Difficulty of Brash Coins by three.

Inverted: also impose this restriction; players may not use any swaggering technique (H) in combat against these minions.

Flair 10 Rods: *Goblin Bombards*. The enemy has defensive long range cannons, some weighting over a hundred tons. These shower the battlefield from afar with rocks and minced garbage. The metal of the cannons has more value smelted; anyone who looks at them would say they can't be moved to make them practical. But with magic, the impossible comes to pass. Players may not use any tactical advantages related to Trait Rugged.

Inverted: also impose this restriction; players may not use any swaggering technique (G) in combat against these minions.

Flair 9 Rods: *Terrain Shifter*. The enemy is able to make any flat place slope in grade. He might exhaust rowers, send boats into rapids or simply keep the attacking players fighting up hill from all approaches. At the very least, the players may not gain any Personal swaggering, while fighting the rival or his minions.

Inverted: also impose this restriction; players may not use Wizardry Geomancy (C) in combat against these minions.

Flair 8 Rods: *Dwarven Undermines*. Rival has an alliance with a dwarven kingdom. The dwarves will act as spies, but also may tunnel pitfalls in front of the player characters. The imps do not mess with rivers or seas, but they will produce in battle and travel more accidents. During the adventure, the players suffer a negative Quest Pip of one in the underworlds.

Inverted: also impose this restriction; players may not use Wizardry Cosmic (T) in combat against these minions.

Flair 7 Rods: *Storm Staffs*. The enemy has a very flexible, electric field gun, which aims as easily as pointing a finger. The players will realize that the guns are

too strange, too reflective back on the user, worthless without the rival's skilled experts. Players increase the Difficulty of Bane Magical Cups by three.

Inverted: also impose this restriction; players may not use Wizardry Voltaic (N) in combat against these minions.

Flair 6 Rods: *Greek Fire*. The enemy employs a pressure cannon, which shoots long arcs of flame. Even if any player character has the artillery know-how to operate the weapon, he may lack the substantial materials to load the thing. No, supplies are not going to be captured from the enemy. Flairs exist for the rival's minions only. Players increase the Difficulty of Method Magical by two.

Inverted: also impose this restriction; players may not use any swaggering technique (K) in combat against these minions.

Flair 5 Rods: *Gunpowder Bombs*. The enemy is able to light fuses on metal cans and toss them as a weapon. The materials are alchemical but also magically infused. No one outside of the rival will understand, truly, how to make the cans explode. By trial and error, someone is bound to lose a finger or hand; the detonators are sensitive to sharp impacts as well, so don't try to crack one open. Players increase the Difficulty of any event which could result in a vicious wound by three.

Inverted: also impose this restriction; players may not use any swaggering technique (I) in combat against these minions.

Flair 4 Rods: *Notorious*. Rival's warriors are murderers, having participated in the sack of a township after it agreed to peaceful terms. Both feared and hated, these men desire little, and know little else, but war. During any battle in the Epilog, increase the Difficulty by two.

Inverted: also impose this restriction; players may not use any swaggering technique (P) in combat against these minions.

Flair 3 Rods: *Goblin Gelignite*. The enemy has an explosive volatile paste. The smear is less chemical reactive, and more the result of evil inspiration; a deal with specific underworld monsters makes the item an effective weapon. Players increase the Difficulty of any Bane by one.

Inverted: also impose this restriction; players may not use any swaggering technique (N) in combat against these minions.

Flair 2 Rods: *Iris Gates*. The enemy has the ability to fire magical attacks through portals he opens in the battlefield. His minions might be miles away and still able to cause harm. The apertures are like castle embrasures, wide on the inside and narrow out. Shooting back through is hard. There should be a practical limit, else the magic users would conquer the world? Which they haven't, right? During any battle of the climax, increase the Difficulty of any roll by one.

Inverted: also impose this restriction; players may not use any swaggering technique (O) in combat against these minions.

Flair Ace Rods: *Logistics.* Rival and his adjutants are well versed in codes and have established a set of dispatch runners, riders and skiffs to ensure supply and constant readiness. His secondary depots are never in danger; his men are always fed and armed. At the very least, the players will lose their Multiple Attempt Bonus in all Siege and Storm Walls Q&D. Players may never gain a Tactics Pip, while fighting the rival or his minions.

Inverted: also impose this restriction; players may not use longboat Abundant Stores (M) in combat against these minions.

Flair Forces Coins

Flair King Coins: *Trabant.* Enemy has an elite horse guard, which often dismounts to employ halberd and dagger. The group is highly paid and professional, pledged to a code of honor. The Shaken penalty raises to minus five in the first round, when it occurs, while fighting the rival or his minions. Thereafter it falls back to minus two (or disappears for the Bold).

Inverted: also impose this restriction; players may not use any Mount technique in combat against these minions.

Flair Queen Coins: *Spies & Scouts.* The enemy has very good tactical intelligence and magical scry. He may not have an agent inside every conversation, but he does have a practiced ability to look for danger well in advance. Players may never gain the Catbird Seat, while fighting the rival or his minions.

Inverted: also impose this restriction; players may not use Wizardry Precognition (E) in combat against these minions.

Flair Knight Coins: *Arquebusiers.* Rival employs a primitive type of muzzle loaded firearm. The device has goblin markings and curses inscribed all over it. Anyone's guess when it will explode and kill the holder. Players may not gain any Mount swaggering, while fighting the rival or his minions.

Inverted: also impose this restriction; players may not use Wizardry Telekinesis (D) in combat against these minions.

Flair Knave Coins: *Provisioners.* Rival uses the precursor to canning, discovering a means of preserving victuals inside of corked wine bottles and wax covered jars. An element of starvation and deprivation probably should be added to the adventure – either by severe heat causing exposed food to spoil or a contamination by infestation that makes the group and their longboat long for a meal. The enemy side regularly eats; the players' side doesn't.

Forge by the players will also push more allies to the rival. Players may not gain any Longboat swaggering, while fighting the rival or his minions. After the mission, any captured enclosed food will be the first to be tested and consumed by

the curious. Damn, it should have been studied, but oh well, that opportunity has passed. (If this Flair occurs a second time, treat instead as a Knight Coins.)

Inverted: also impose this restriction; players may not use longboat Vermin Free (N) in combat against these minions.

Flair 10 Coins: *Gendarmes*. Rival employs a heavily armored professional soldier, capable of fighting with most any weapon, mounted or not, in every terrain and climate. Players may never gain the Command Pip, while fighting the rival or his minions.

Inverted: also impose this restriction; players may not use longboat Noble Allegiance (K) in combat against these minions.

Flair 9 Coins: *Radical Formations*. The enemy has learned not to mass his soldiers. He spreads his men in longer lines to reduce the effect of magical or artillery barrages and reduce the loss from cavalry charges. He allows his subordinates to carry out flexible orders to envelop traversing units, enfilade enemy blocks or refuse his own flanks. The rival or his minions are always Enraged, as a boost to defensive modifier, but also in treating inflicted knock out results instead as vicious wounds to player characters. They may still be quelled by events, but only in specific combat engagements. The next set encountered will be right back Enraged and spoiling for a bruhaha.

Inverted: also impose this restriction; players may not use Wizardry Power Words (S) in combat against these minions.

Flair 8 Coins: *Tribal Remnants*. The enemy employs nonhumans, which are often the last of their race. These survivors are never cautious or despondent, because the tribe has fathers fighting alongside sons and grandfathers; the last of the females also are combatants or follow with the very young as camp followers. Players may never gain the Fury Pip, while fighting the rival or his minions.

Inverted: also impose this restriction; players may not use longboat No Disease (I) in combat against these minions.

Flair 7 Coins: *Garish Uniforms*. The attire of the enemy is brightly colored, with plumed hats and slotted shirt openings, revealing even more accent hues. The outfit is synonymous with fantastic heritage, a vert valiant; their brand recognizable from miles away. During the adventure, the players may not use any favors owed to them from friends or valued contacts. No one with a choice will risk battle with these warriors. Otherwise, they bleed like anyone else, and their reputation might not match the outfit in ferocity.

Inverted: also impose this restriction; players may not use longboat Elite Goals (A) in combat against these minions.

Flair 6 Coins: *Ice Throwers*. Enemy is coated in ice and fights with javelins of frozen water. These men are sharpshooters, who continually and independently

engage and harass. At the very least, the players may not gain any Blade swaggering, while fighting the rival or his minions.

Inverted: also impose this restriction; players may not use any swaggering technique (L) in combat against these minions.

Flair 5 Coins: Rockets. The enemy has wagons of fireworks, some for signal, some to illuminate the battlefield for night engagement, and some just because they explode with body shaking thunderous wrath. The alchemical means of reproducing these results are well known; it's the sheer number the rival will commit which is impressive. The players' ship had better stow her sails before they catch on fire. All movement will be by oarsmen, unless the players risk being set aflame to farm the less fatiguing breeze. Players increase the Difficulty of Magical Coins by three.

Inverted: also impose this restriction; players may not use any swaggering technique (Q) in combat against these minions.

Flair 4 Coins: Cataphract. The enemy has a novel battle tactic, which employs the best of a heavy cavalry charge with targeted magical support. These men-at-arms are ones hired away from the imperial garrisons, so they will be few in number. But each horseman might fight like fifty. Just saying, that's the reputation. At the very least, the players may not gain any Wizardry swaggering, while fighting the rival or his minions.

Inverted: also impose this restriction; players may not use any swaggering technique (T) in combat against these minions.

Flair 3 Coins: Wall Shielding. Enemy utilizes a seemingly laughable battlefield tactic, where his bodyguard carriers shields that cover exaggerated spaces. Each must be moved by several warriors utilizing double-handles or carts. While more defensible in melee, these shields prevent the operators from striking. They are exclusively for defense, but what a defense that may prove to be. The rival seems to shrug-off any losses, as his men never appear to falter nor let the brace of protection open. Players may not use any tactical advantages related to Trait Energetic.

Inverted: also impose this restriction; players may not use longboat Chanted Path (B) in combat against these minions.

Flair 2 Coins: Sprinters. The enemy never tires. Each man may be possessed and fights beyond exhaustion right to death. Demons are undoubtedly involved. Players increase the Difficulty of any result with opponent surrenders by three.

Inverted: also impose this restriction; players may not use Wizardry Psionics (B) in combat against these minions.

Flair Ace Coins: Training Manuals. The enemy has a rote set of doctrines, which enforce uniform drills, a structure of conduct and regimented tactics. This guide of course is unwritten and will not be shared even under torture. The actual

penalty is less than the imagined effect. Players increase the Difficulty of Magical Rods by three.

Inverted: also impose this restriction; players may not use Wizardry Spirit Guide (R) in combat against these minions.

Flair Forces Swords

Flair King Swords: *Death Cult.* Rival employs an organization that is detested and outlawed by all religious leaders. Fear inducing; these groups plot violent acts or anarchist activities against not just the decaying empire, but all faiths. Players may not use any tactical advantages related to Trait Bold.

Inverted: also impose this restriction; players may not use Wizardry Demonic (F) in combat against these minions.

Flair Queen Swords: *Cruel Polearms.* Enemy employs a poleax, which has very little defensive feature. It and its user must rely on raw strength to inflict brutal carnage. Players increase the Difficulty of Brash suit Swords by three.

Inverted: also impose this restriction; players may not use any swaggering technique (F) in combat against these minions.

Flair Knight Swords: *Coursers.* The enemy has specially bred a light mount for sprint speed and stamina. Or, for actions on ships he has the same with agile mastiffs with a powerful bite. The rival has better scouting and better pursuit with these maneuverable horses. Or, he has a swift dog, which is able to tackle and hold a foe. Because they are worth a good deal if sold, the players will have less inclination to keep the animals for their own breeding stock, even if they have access to a compound of an allied landowner. Or, the dogs are tame only to their original master. The horses' speed is created by a lifetime of training with one rider. In other words, the rival has this advantage alone. Players increase the Difficulty of Method Irregular by three.

Inverted: also impose this restriction; players may not use any swaggering technique (R) in combat against these minions.

Flair Knave Swords: *Exotic Host.* Rival employs human or nonhuman savages who fight with weapons and tactics that the player characters have never seen. The minions may serve against their will, as the rival keeps them far from home and only promises, someday, they will be free. Players increase the Difficulty of Bane Brash suit Swords by three.

Inverted: also impose this restriction; players may not use any swaggering technique (M) in combat against these minions.

Flair 10 Swords: *Blunderbuss.* The enemy uses a precursor to the shotgun. These hand cannons are unwieldy and require very strong Large+ operators, who are clever and steady under threat. Sure, it seems like a scatter shotgun would be in

everyone's hands, but in practice the operator is likely to lose a finger or be blinded in the recoil. The rival's guards being the exception. Besides fighting minions that classify as Large+ on the tables—keep the number small for play balance—the players subtract two for their results on Method Recitation.

Inverted: also impose this restriction; players may not use Wizardry Shape Shifting (J) in combat against these minions.

Flair 9 Swords: *Walking Dead.* Many, if not all, of the enemy have already died. Players increase the Difficulty of any event which creates a Warped Outcome by three.

Inverted: also impose this restriction; players may not use Wizardry Illusions (I) in combat against these minions.

Flair 8 Swords: *Angry Trees.* Rival is able to turn the terrain of the battle into minions of attack. This may not be as detrimental as one might expect. All powerful magic just doesn't occur day to day in a sustained and repetitious manner. But the Ref may apply a huge penalty the first time the plants up rise and attack. Mostly while fighting the rival or his minions, the players may never gain the Advantage of rolling three dice, if any swaggering is the Advantage listed.

Inverted: also impose this restriction; players may not use any swaggering technique (J) in combat against these minions.

Flair 7 Swords: *Beastlings.* Some of the enemy will change form. Classically, they may be lycanthrope of various animal forms. This should be spontaneous and not repetitious. So, one combat may create something nasty, while in another there is just a small token dice penalty. Vary things up. Here's a good generic starter to apply throughout the mission – while fighting the rival or his minions, all players may not use make-rolls for any result, which might prevent a vicious wound.

Inverted: also impose this restriction; players may not use Wizardry Hexes (M) in combat against these minions.

Flair 6 Swords: *Statues.* Rival and his minions employ machines or figurines, which grow and come alive. Don't fight in a garden, where many humanoids might animate. This six is the worst case – the players may not use any tactical advantages related to their Traits.

Inverted: also impose this restriction; players may not use Wizardry Animate Objects (O) in combat against these minions.

Flair 5 Swords: *Gas Clouds.* The enemy summons, belches, conjures, burns to create, travels with, or otherwise is engulfed in a fog (surely magical). Everything in combat is partially obscured. The vapor may cause additional harm, but not without plenty of clues given to the players on how to defeat the disruption. Since even a natural wind might lessen the impact, the benefit to the enemy should be fixed

and non lethal. Perhaps, players may not use any tactical advantages related to Trait Clever.

Inverted: also impose this restriction; players may not use Wizardry Celestial (G) in combat against these minions.

Flair 4 Swords: Burgmann. Enemy has a large contingency of low born, impoverished servants, employed as both soldiers in garrison and farming attendants. Not precisely militia, these men administer the work by bullying other slaves to till the soil. They do have excellent infiltration skills, because they are nameless, faceless domestic hirelings. Players may not use any tactical advantages related to Trait Methodical. That includes the initial longboat swaggering, which is not acquired at quest start. Those actions have been undermined.

Inverted: also impose this restriction; players may not use any swaggering technique (A) in combat against these minions.

Flair 3 Swords: Acids & Poisons. Enemy are alchemists and overly reckless at that. They toss around acids, coat weapons with toxins, splatter chemicals which burn and dissolve. These minions are insane, sadistic, self-loathing, suicidal, right proper cretins. Yet the damage outside of fine dining is blunted. Perhaps, players increase the Difficulty of Bane Magical Rods by three.

Inverted: also impose this restriction; players may not use Wizardry Necromancy (H) in combat against these minions.

Flair 2 Swords: Bang Grenades. The rival's forces are armed with an assortment of black powder and magical bombs. They may even use larger packaged explosives to open castle walls or damage the hulls of ships. These will surprise and startle horses but are otherwise more spectacle than dangerous. True incantation is much deadlier. Players increase the Difficulty of Bane Magical Coins by three.

Inverted: also impose this restriction; players may not use Wizardry Conjunction (L) in combat against these minions.

Flair Ace Swords: Improved Kit. The rival and his men employ a well considered and superiorly crafted set of tinker's tools. His knives are sharp, his packs clean, his horses shod. His men have a better set of camp gear and tents. They are ready for the trail, rested consistently and ready for combat. Players increase the Difficulty of Bane Brash Rods by three. Yep, all that effort and that's about it for penalty.

Inverted: also impose this restriction; players may not use any swaggering technique (C) in combat against these minions.

Additional Answers (question WHERE?)

The titles below are more cosmetic than integral to the scenario. Rather than introduce yet another set of penalties on the players, the list below is a static set of

terms which will answer WHERE? The booklet of climax challenges offers other modifiers to play. Here, you get food for thought, a label for play reference. The Ref may feel free to add modifiers, which he finds appropriate.

Some of these are locations important to the campaign. The Ref should predetermine sites which are superlative. e.g. The largest populous city outside of the capital, most trafficked port with the most trade ships, location of mines, best horses. The cards below can prompt those named places on the map as the site of interest, travel or intrigue. The description below in parenthesis () apply if the selected card is inverted; Major Tarot are ignored or influence as the Ref desires.

WHERE? Cups

- King Cups:** Royal Palace (Harem)
- Queen Cups:** Private Mansion (Haunted Estate)
- Knight Cups:** Farthest Corner of the civilized campaign (of the whole)
- Knave Cups:** Isle (dividing a river)
- 10 Cups:** Sanctuary (Diseased Asylum)
- 9 Cups:** Site of past Battle (pending)
- 8 Cups:** Bridge, Ford, Ferry (River mouth or Canal)
- 7 Cups:** Urban Estate (Urban fortress)
- 6 Cups:** Royal Vaults (Delver Company's Vaults)
- 5 Cups:** People's Assembly (Imperial Senate)
- 4 Cups:** Coach in Travel (Ship in Transit)
- 3 Cups:** Rural Castle (Fortress under Siege)
- 2 Cups:** Private Party (Coronation)
- Ace Cups:** Depleted Mine (Underworld)

WHERE? Rods

- King Rods:** Imperial Court (Chambers of Curia Regis)
- Queen Rods:** Public Forum (Chambers of a Secret Society)
- Knight Rods:** Widely Traverse Spot (Glut of Residences)
- Knave Rods:** Capital's Granary (Cistern, Water Supply)
- 10 Rods:** Major Woodland (Fae Glade)
- 9 Rods:** Agora (Royal Mint)
- 8 Rods:** Largest Port of Frontier (Largest Citadel of Frontier)
- 7 Rods:** Dreaded Place (Prison of Torment)
- 6 Rods:** Secret Cove (Secret Cave)
- 5 Rods:** Tavern (Rural Inn)
- 4 Rods:** Urban Street (Alley or Sewer)

3 Rods: Allied Estate (Friendly Freehold)
2 Rods: Site of Shipwreck (Fortress in Ruins)
Ace Rods: Disputed Lands (Army in Field)

WHERE? Coins

King Coins: Open Water (Bottom of Seas)
Queen Coins: Lake (Sandy Oasis)
Knight Coins: Whorehouse (Assassin's Den)
Knave Coins: Monster's Cage (Penal Colony)
10 Coins: Raised Walkway (Vanity Park)
9 Coins: Nonhuman Village (Demihuman Lair)
8 Coins: Present Location (Close by Vicinity)
7 Coins: University (Monastery)
6 Coins: Crowded Capital Square (Remote City-State)
5 Coins: Frozen Tundra (Faraway Land)
4 Coins: Rich Township (Neglected City)
3 Coins: Seashore (Salt Flat)
2 Coins: Ship in Dry Dock (Ship Beached)
Ace Coins: Forge (Armory)

WHERE? Swords

King Swords: Mountain Range (Chasm)
Queen Swords: Farmland (Exotic)
Knight Swords: Private Chamber (Boudoir)
Knave Swords: Incorruptible Place (Godly Place)
10 Swords: Rural Heath (Dense Jungle)
9 Swords: Barracks (Constable House)
8 Swords: Wharves (Narrow Channel)
7 Swords: Library (Monument)
6 Swords: Sleepy Village (Mountain Hamlet)
5 Swords: Cathedral under Construction (Ancient Temple)
4 Swords: Graveyard (Joyless Crypt)
3 Swords: Place in Rebellion (Mutinous Ship)
2 Swords: Royal Garden (Hedge Maze)
Ace Swords: Cloud Kingdom (Place of Miracles)

Additional Answers WHAT?

This selection can be many things; hence, the small list presented will give a wide range of topics and pieces. WHAT? aboard a ship is much different than WHAT? on dry land. The following should be able to point the Referee in the right direction.

King: Official documents, writs, treaties, the harvest, rare vintage wines, tobacco, whole cities, tollbooths, privileges of kings, items of personal reputation or tokens to denote identity, male heirs. The King is a powerful card, and the smallest of items might have grave significance. The virtue of Charity is also a King card.

Queen: Items of jewelry, cooking pots and utensils, merchant ships, daughters and wives, chattel, brides, city apartments, places or letters of sadness, moods of strong emotion, especially regarding women or royalty. The Queen can be a favorable flip, but only when proceeded or followed by odd numbered cards. The Queen has a short time of prosperity, before it usually becomes an encumbrance. The sin of Envy is definitely a Queen card.

Knight: Arrest orders, military supplies, bundles, blankets, army dispatches, places of garrison soldiers and power, horses, mules, respect for commander or discipline of the troops, children. The Knight is minor, the least important face card. Here today, gone tomorrow. The Knight denotes skepticism or a difficult item to transport, bulky or easy to lose. The desire of many will be for the Knight item to quietly disappear. The sin of Anger is a Knight card.

Knave: Silk clothing, items of vanity, perfume, cosmetics, furnishings, anything owned by nobles. The Knave is a bad card, though as a catchall. Knaves are expected to be bad, often roguish and clownish. The even numbered cards tend to be much worse. The sin of Sloth is a Knave card.

10: Wine, weapons, navigational charts, plans of treaty and war, anything owned by patriotic soldiers, disputed and valued lands, finely crafted one of a kind items or buildings. Ten cards are transitions; here today and gone tomorrow, usually for the better of all. The virtue of Hope is a Ten card.

9: Lumber, wood, fire, cannons, warships, fortresses, ship designs, innovations, the plow, supplies of munitions, rural estates, musical instruments. A Nine card is a mixed card but leans toward an ending. Endings are good. The virtue of Fortitude is a Nine card.

8: Spices, slaves, medicine, galleys and galleass, the moods of ship's masters, the health or sanity of famous people, governing bodies, meeting halls, theaters and amphitheater odium, weddings, banquets, celebrations like Christmas. Eights are disappointing often, but usually for the aftermath of an Eight, the soul is able to recover. The sin of Gluttony is an Eight card.

7: Sailors and seamen, sailcloth, rope, religious relics, items of witchcraft or superstition, items of legend, roadside shines, places of pilgrimage, unproved rumor or folktales, anything to do with supernatural and fantastique. Sevens cards are whimsy and dissatisfaction with the presence. The virtue of Prudence is a Seven card, but usually in hindsight.

6: Miser's wealth, forged or false documents, fugitives, disputed inheritance, King's tax, King's lands, heavy weights. Seven is an unwanted card. Six when he's tired or lost or confused. The Six requires a clear conscious and stout heart, best at a fresh start to get past the Six and survive. The sin of Greed is a Six.

5: Books, epistle, church documents, bulls or edicts, anything to do with church property. Five can answer a prayer. But like prayers, God tends to help those who make their own good fortune by being prepared and helping themselves. The virtue of Faith is a Five card.

4: Sealed coffers, mystery containers, smuggled goods, breakthrough inventions, advances in science or technology, blackmail information or secrets of nobles. We want often what we never have, continuity. A Four should be a moment to rejoice, but usually the Four is strange and aging. Fours happen and people long for the past. Change is seldom welcomed. The sin of Lust is a Four card.

3: Food, victuals, storehouses, farm tools, sapping and sapper's tools, records of heirs and inheritance, estate lands, balance of trade, treasure, hordes of coin, money matters and exchange, anything owned by peasants. These are things that people need. You cannot live with food and water, the air we breath. Yet man can not live on bread alone, as the saying goes. Much of the Three is good fortune to others. In evil terms it might be Jealousy. Yet the virtue of Temperance is a Three card.

2: Shops and inns, cartels and places of exchange, building supplies, stone, nails, family pride and honor, brotherly love, personal freedom, rights of colony, anything owned by tradesmen or craftsmen. The Two should be a good card, but it



implies you gain as others lose. Life is a competition, and nature is the law of the fittest. Only the strong, adaptive survive. The sin of Pride is a Two card.

Ace: Pets, friends or loyal agents, trust and spirit for a cause, strong ideas, knowledge of treasure, maps, diagrams to buildings, Reformed Church. Aces tend to be important and valuable to the players. The virtue of Justice is an Ace card. The Ace is a good card, so maybe let the players name their WHAT?

Note: Treat inverted cases about the same; the Major Tarot may be ignored or apply as the Ref deems fit.

Additional Answers WHY?

King: Security, safety, freedom.

Queen: Guile, treachery, coercion.

Knight: Rage, wrath, grief.

Knave: Vanity, self-importance, fool's nobility.

10: Revenge, retaliation, justice.

9: Duty, obligation, guilt.

8: Boredom, thrill, amusement.

7: Sensation, fame, esteem.

6: Greed, avarice, profit.

5: Zeal, fanaticism, faith.

4: Insanity, debauchery, feebleness.

3: Fear, cowardice, doubt.

2: Gusto, glory, adventure.

Ace: Love, devotion, loyalty.

Note: inverted description tends to skew more base or evil; Major Tarot are should amplify the impetus as the Referee desires.

Additional Answers WHEN?

King: During the coronation.

Queen: During a wedding

Knight: At a burial or prisoner internment.

Knave: In a year.

10: After an initial event.

9: After a sea voyage.

8: At a party or ball.

7: At noon.

6: On a holiday or birthday.

5: At twilight.

4: At midnight.

3: After a land journey.

2: In a week.

Ace: In a fortnight.

Note: inverted description tends to be vague, less urgent; Major Tarot may be ignored or are should apply as the Referee desires.

Additional Answers HOW?

King: Performing or demonstrating.

Queen: Negotiating or arbitrating.

Knight: Sailing or marauding.

Knave: Degrading or defiling.

10: Riding or traversing.

9: Tunneling or breaching.

8: Spying or forging.

7: Infiltrating or by stealth.

6: Stealing or purloining.

5: Exploding or destroying.

4: Seducing or befriending.

3: Guarding or escorting.

2: Sniping or ambushing.

Ace: Sword crossing or dueling.

Note: inverted description tends to add more watery activity; Major Tarot may be ignored or are should apply as the Referee desires.

Example Quest

Let's see how this works:

Patron Seven Coins: *Forester or Ranger* – Started off a bit cliché. Yet the mission may not always relate to a forest.

Mission 3 Swords: *Murder someone* – now we're talking. He probably is busy watching squirrels and needs hard men. Patron's Finances and players' rewards should increase. Tells me to select two cards for WHO? Choose one as the victim and the other a rival defender. The death may only occur in the climax.

Notice I did not flip an Underworld mission. That was my choice. Same **Three Swords** in underworld would generate *Become the bait for a powerful force*. That sounds fun, too, but we already decided (beforehand) this was above ground.

Normally you could follow right down the list and next select a card for Motive. But the pair of WHO? seem important.

WHO? One, Knight Rods, inverted: *Plague Doctor*. Rival lives in a city-state with many strange illnesses. He likes to study these. That suggest he has possible mishaps and enemies. I'll leave the rest for now and see what happens with pick two.

WHO? Two, King Cups, inverted: *Insane Lord*. Homicidal person. I could have the mad man as rival but that sound odd. Instead I'll look at this as the rival is the Plague Doctor. He has a patient that is insane. He's keeping the man alive. So, the patron, his heir maybe, is the one who wants his father put out of his misery. Of course, the patron—we should give all these people names—would inherit a title and lands.

Rival is *Maurice the Healer*, a plague doctor. Rival lives in the diocese near City-State Itil, a place of many strange illnesses, which he studies. The group's longboat will lose technique No Disease (I) traveling there. The patron, *Marat*, wants us to reach his father, *Yury*, at a sanatorium and put the man out of his misery. I grabbed some names off the internet.

Motive Reason High Priestess: Patron is invincible, but usually stays behind. Be a nice friend to earn.

Motive Reason Justice: No matter how evil the motives or quest, the patron has legal authority for any actions. Good to know, but also, he may be able to kill, but can we? That question is best answered during encounters. Let the adventure flow as it will. Maybe the group will be hunted as outlaws for success or not.

Motive 7 Coins: Causing political guile and intrigue...Should this adventure conclude successfully, the rival will be arrested and imprisoned in his home city-state. So, more clarity, we have the patron probably got permission to recue his father. The rival will be proved to be experimenting outside the laws of man and the gods. Any retribution on the group is probably only going to come from Maurice, the rival, plague doctor. There were other complains from those who sent loved ones to his hospital. Now if the *Justice* card had not been revealed, this could change. The rival might still be arrested for our success, we'd bring back proof of his shenanigans, but we'd also be facing the murder charge. We could say it was

accidental, but the trust is otherwise. All moot, since we are being given some authority to slay.

Finances 8 Cups: Acts extravagant and highly cultured; wears fine cloths and jewelry but has nothing else of value. Tough luck. This mission is just for the Ignobles. Since we may also say this is our first mission, we can't turn the patron down. Later as we gain experience, we could just say no to this murder for no reward. We'd then follow as a group into the Epilog, avoiding the wrath of our scorned patron. Or we could let the prime player character suffer any penalty in Digressions as the rest of us move onto another quest. But this time we'll take the knife-work.

Secondary Queen Swords: Seek to find the other half of a map. Normally this would be with the motives, but I can let one other character of the group have some incentive. That map could also be another reason we take the quests. The patron is giving us cover, getting us moving to the city of Itil. The patron may also be able to give us some excuse to move through the frontier. He is an important forester, an heir to a noble estate, after all. Let's get him to write us a letter of introduction for the road. Free and easy.

Twist Monster Knave Cups: *Egg-layer*. Insect creature, frightful. Flair, party ignores Banes for sacrificing Longboat Vermin Free (N); longboat loses technique. But with any failed result, cancel this immunity. I selected a monster instead of the other choice, because I like monsters. They are easy to handle as combat and this starting quest need not be too complicated. The group is probably learning the rules. That monster may also be inherent to the map part we're missing. That Knave Cups might have been instead, men and resources of an entire city stand in way. That would be bad. Could mean Maurice has a local lord or garrison who have done him a favor or worse he also commands. But monsters are fun. Insects in the disease area, really big ones, would fit well.

Yury could also burst open in the climax and be revealed as just a shell of man nurturing the monsters before release. May describe his mood change and why the forester, knowing such, has every authority to slay his father or actually what he has become.

Are we done?

Very close, we have the patron, Murat, his insane father, Yury, the rival Maurice, an extra set of monsters, the bugs, should Maurice have an ace-in-the-hole, an additional Flair? Oh, we also did not flip a card for Political Factions. That may be nice to have, even if we don't find a place for it to influence play.

Secret 9 Rods: *Union of Assassins* is the faction. That could be a group watching to see if we'd make good members. They could also want us to fail, so they would get the gig. They could also be there, paid by others who do not like Maurice and his practice. The nice part of this, is I don't need to decide. If I flip a King in encounters, then I know the Union has its own interests, other customers. If a Knight appears before that King, I can say maybe they warn us off (if it was inverted). Not every card flip has an *X this occurs*. The Ref is there for a reason. So are the players to add their own interpretations. You'll find most will keep things challenging. I store away the Union of Assassins for later use during the journey.

Hopefully you'll see the potential. Flip a few quests of your own. Don't try at first to blend the cards and elaborate. You can do that as you play. If a Forester wants us to kill an Insane Man. A Plague Doctor wants to prevent that. You got an adventure. The Motive and Finances are just literally telling us, the patron is not committing crime. He has no money. By adding more as a Ref, you help tell a more memorable story. But many players will just want to get started, experience some Ignoble Deeds and of course roll some dice.

Reaching a Deal

When the patron offers the quest, the players will accept or refuse. By accepting the quest, the players commit themselves to undertake some task. Upon completion, the group (of survivors) will receive some reward. This reward is the basis for the terms of the quest. Terms represent any contract exchanged between the players and the patron. The players may also have terms of agreement between themselves and other NPCs, even the longboat's servitors and soldiers. It all depends on how much lawyering you like in a game. Codicil five, treatment of wounded....

The terms might also specify penalties for mishap, acts of betrayal or failure. Not all these contracts will be written, but the Referee must keep a log and rough description of all major agreements. An important deal would be signed and could appear much later in the campaign as proof of guilt. Even the illiterate have a mark.

The campaign functions almost entirely through the use of favors. Gold is too valuable to cart around. When the player character builds a reputation for keeping

agreements and equally punishing those who dare break their word, the character begins to acquire the clout necessary to wield power (and higher level).

Articles may also include a list of the wages the boat captain owes his servitors. The loyalty of servitors depends on how well the player keeps any bargain. Slaves require no such agreements, but freemen often have families and expect a share in the reward. Much of this just needs to be understood as taking place. Creating the actual sheets of vellum are less important.

Most quest offers are made to one player only. The patron will approach one player character, describe his desires, agree on proper compensation, and leave the player to perform the task. The first player character approached is the prime player character. He is the one technically on the quest. He will recruit others, but the patron is dealing specifically with the prime player character. The patron will reward him or blame him the most for any outcome. The prime character is often not the most important character or famous character of the party. Discretion is also valued.

In game terms, most of these exchanges occur during the time between adventure episodes. There is no true physical contact. The player is not drawn to a shady room, risking his life to get a job. Many of these deals are arranged through agents and secondaries. The specifics are not important. There is a patron. There is a quest. Here's the terms. Let's negotiate. No hard feelings either way.

The terms of agreement are legal documents even when merely spoken and sealed with a handshake. Honor is valued. Even the most criminal of men, expect loyalty and honest effort toward a goal. Any renege fees might result in a court case; a noble judge will then decide the outcome of this crime against property. Else, disagreements, usually after the fact, might be settled by a duel of honor between the prime player and the enraged patron. **Swagger vs Swagger work well for these heated exchanges.** The assassin's garrote almost always is reserved for illegal quests or anytime the patron is part of a cabal. Yet the game need not degenerate into a series of haggle, accuse and chintz cheating. The patron is not as important as the rival. Don't make a quest too personal too soon.

Before accepting a quest, the Referee will spell out on a piece of scrap paper all the initial payments and requested items that the player and patron haggle upon and agree. **Magical harm may be implied or stipulated.** The record keeping for these deals need not be as elaborate as the documents might actually be. Signing in blood?

Keep this simple and set in terms of what is useful in the game. Count in terms of players gaining purses, longboats gaining traits and anything magical or specialized provided. e.g. New helmets for all the crew are silly, unless it is the rpg color justifying the gain of Battle Hard. In that case matching colors and fur trim is required.

The contract is never binding – problems and betrayal can result. The patron’s resources and influence along with his Finance card flip must be considered. At higher levels the reward before or after may include campaign wealth in the form of land or promises to share in a future enterprise.

Patrons of Power Assuredly

Offer favors, many and varied, as incentives. These extra *one mission only* contacts can be spent to get the players out of a jam. Most allow a free skip of most any Digression. They also can influence combat. e.g. Visit Reggie in Ryazan for more guards. That could give the players a Tactical Pip to start the second climax challenge. So long as Reggie still lives, and the favor is honored. Those caveats could be events during encounters. e.g. Queen, inverted, detailing that Reggie has fled Ryazan ahead of your arrival.

Reward Guidelines

Money: Even a patron with **Riches Assuredly** resources offers no more than a box of a thousand coins. Close to seventy pounds weight, this will never be given all up-front to outfit the player and his men for the journey. That amount of imperial electrum will come in installments or as a special windfall for perfect completion of the task. How many coin purses does that fill? The players should not obsess as zero-sum profiteers. Yet a sum that large probably represents Treasure Laden (D) and allows a purse to be replaced every time one is used. Let the events of play determine when that treasure trove is exhausted. But the more you have the more extravagantly everyone in the crew will live. *“Fresh apples with our porridge?”*

When the patron is poor, the group may wish to use their own horded coin, knowing it’s adventure they seek not a comfortable retirement. Unless that’s the role they are temporarily playing by committing to it through a Growth Ignoble.

Supplies: Limit the patron’s purchases to any and all longboat techniques (P) to (T). The port where all this starts might lack Good City Traits to make even these available. For a patron **Assuredly Sea or Land**, he’ll be able to provide a half D8

between (H) and (O). At most confer a single gift of the equivalent of (A) to (G). Note, **Land** bases resources tend to cap at (L).

The patron will seldom have an entire boat, unless the group starts with a leaking scow of no techniques. He may point them to a mariner to make some cursory repairs to what they arrived in, but again look to the patron's resources. He may stand as **Improbable** and not know anything about ships and their care.

Soldiers: A patron with **Land Assuredly** resources may supplied men up to one cohort, about five hundred. That grows should the quest specifically involve leading more men to battle. Even then, the assorted free companies of mercenaries will stagger in as they join the growing regimental legion. Increase the group's forces with each passing event and at each advance of the encounter phase. Men outside of a garrison are hard to feed and keep orderly. They'd have to take different routes to ensure ample forage. Most still arrive haggard. The more involved the less likely secrets are kept.

One Gold for a Comfortable Month

A piece of gold is about what a worker in the city might make in a month. Six would support a bachelor at school. Ten would house and feed a family. Yet the player characters will spend about gold each day, less if they have less, more if they have more. So that purse of coins each might carry is about one month's pay and is gone after one month's expenses (to a character).

Rents from lands, even as an absentee landlord, or other banked investments will trickle in and support the extravagance. Yet most adventurers find themselves broke and wanting a chance to travel, often away from those they owe money. Only the Methodical character tends to stay in balance and only if he's a skilled Steward. Yet those spendthrifts are often humored into living large.

Patrons bring money (to waste). Even if the prime player character is doing the negotiating, the other player characters are taking, stealing, borrowing, begging, requesting, part of the payoff. Especially when flagrantly illegal acts pay better than simple transport and labor.

Where do I list my Money?

Don't tally your coins. Even your better investments or achieved titles should be left with few details. e.g. Hundred acres outside Myya; no idea where that's at. Your pin money typically goes in one pocket and out the other, paying the crew, sergeants and

specialists. That includes the other players. If an adventuring player character keeps a full purse, he's doing alright. Likewise, he's never opening it up to select a copper for a begging child. Those transactions are not events. They happen but are not detailed.

If any player uses his purse, it is to toss it over to a thief, to buy a longboat technique, to pay a noble's tribute, to pass a toll bridge, to bribe an official, to reward good service of a constantly filled mug of ale, to pity a child with his hand out. Shall we also skip the next action of how that same child then turns the purse over to an agent of the Grandfather of Thieves. An assessment is then made if the entire group should be attacked and robbed. *"Thanks, Bucky, for being soft."*

There's no true charitable act, only cynics, in Outland, especially the Frontiers.

Other Players Accept Zip

The rest of the players should expect to get nothing. They might receive an equal share of any prizes or loot. But, that's after expenses and replacement of crew. Widows and orphans should be compensated for loss. Okay, each player character may start with a full purse and new hat; maybe a true arcane blacksmith sharpened somebody's sword. Each had enough to drink, maybe.

The other players return from their downtime having taken a chance to settle some scores or rise in campaign rank. They step aboard and take their place in the ranks. There they hear that the prime player character has accepted a job. Unless he refused, then they might wonder where that player character has gone?

Any player may hear the mission and then refuse to join his fellow player on the quest. (Not me, I'm staying on the boat.) He would do so by picking up his alt or rolling a new *Dreng* character to join the party. If he thinks he's so wise, he can role-play someone who wouldn't know any better or starts chained to an oar. *"Why are we playing this game again?"*

You can sum-up most terms of agreement like this: *"Here's one-hundred coins, use it to buy supplies (Abundant Stores)...oh and did I fail to mention this snag...."* Yes, yes you did fail to mention the snags, plural. All in good fun.

Your campaign will have its own houses of banking, which the players will grow to quietly detest. As for failure on a quest, well that result is described more

fully in another booklet. Better Games has to keep the lights on. With **failure there's usually no payment received from the patron at the end.**

The player can forage, extort, and steal along the journey, especially in foreign lands, for greater gains and additional risks. Use the Mission Consequence and Mission Inconsequence encounters to give the players additional rewards and a source of replacement hats (purses). I keep joking about hats, because they get lost or suffer magical and dragon scorch marks. But also, **do we really need to count imaginary gold** in order to have fun. Keep the money accounting as exact as you find interesting. The game action tends to flow more from what a player lacks, rather than what he owns in total. Sure, you have a fortune someplace else? Yes, those fields should be about ready to be plowed; where are you? Off on another forsaken adventure, more than likely.

Refusing the Quest Offered

If the player refuses the quest, do not generate a wholly new one to offer him. If the player refuses, do not turn around and offer the quest to another player character. But yes, after some work I don't want to see go to waste, I've done it. By refusing a quest, the players may be refusing the only offer of employment in that city-state. They would then travel to the next by experiencing an Epilog of events. They're on the quest and received nothing in return but potential animus from the patron they refused.

Usually, each character takes his own turn to find a quest; this happens during downtime, the point between one quest ending and the next beginning. In some cases, the player may renegotiate the exact details of the quest and change partially the objectives or even motives. This does create confusion. After the quest is assumed complete, the patron may insist his whole original mission, or the rest of the task, be completed. Some quests may not be refused. These special cases are prompted by the quest generation tables, the Referee by fiat and the level of the player character. A *Dreng* (zero) will not refuse a quest.

The patron will usually approach only one player character at a time. Refusing a petition for aid could, depending upon the quest, send the player character into Digression tables. If the **quest was secretive or blatantly illegal**, by declining the quest the player should roll on Digression table # Y. If that Digression ever leads to a rival, that rival will be the disgruntled patron. Threaten this and most players will just accept then quit the task before things go crazy.

The group often changes cities. **Run the events of an Epilog.** The rival could be sending his Knaves anyway, to ensure the group doesn't change its mind. Or that they are not pretending to refuse the patron. Treat Queens as the last disgruntled patron extracting retribution. Patrons are vain and being refused by a barbarian is insulting. When that Epilog ends, a new downtime in a different place is resolved. Once again one of the players will get the chance to be prime player character of a quest for a new patron against a new rival.

Death of Prime Character

The Ref should not be documenting deals between players and their characters. These can be handled by the parties involved. But what happens if the prime character is knocked out of the adventure? The easy answer is nothing. This is not a *Weekend at Bernie's* event. He may be just inactive and recovering with the crew. The player takes his alt.

If he dies that death is reported to the patron in correspondence (or magical telephone call). A new person takes over. The prime character often starts as the lowest social rank and level, but the next to take his place will be the best of the group. The party may also decide to quit a quest, go to the Epilog and face the patron or not. Wasn't theirs to worry over. Ref decides if that's true.

A secondary player, not the starting leader who accepted the patron's offer, might feel his character would oppose a patron or quest or even the motive behind the adventure. *"Okay fine, so roll one who doesn't have scruples."*

Zero Level Always Enlist

Special Case – a level zero character may not refuse a quest. Anything offered by a patron (or another player character) is accepted without reservation. The Ref may also state additionally that no zero-level characters may drop from a quest, except by death. Zero level characters will press on even with vicious wounds and risk everything. Zero level characters will take quests that have very bad rivals and very bad twists. Zero level characters just don't have the experience to say *"hell no."*

By starting game play as new characters in a campaign, the players are forced to develop a history that will expand during travel and into the aftermath. The character needs to have something in his background to truly experience downtime. When he's level zero, he's longing for that first chance to *see the elephant*. He takes it. The Ref may just dice randomly among the zero levels to decide which one is the

prime character. Or just make all the level zeroes the prime characters. That way, you have a spare or two, as they double tap vicious and get buried at sea.

Starting the game by declining a patron's quest sort of proves the character is not worth playing. **Refusing a quest at level zero, kills that character in Digressions.** Yet that's no fun. Nor is flipping cards all afternoon, while the players cherry-pick an easy quest. Sure, a really strange and profitless journey should be



refused by higher level player characters. But someone around the gaming table is usually zero level. Grab your alts guys; we're all going to die (or not).

Starting inside a quest, opens play with a bang. The naive characters have become involved in an event that will forever change their lives.

Gaining Make-Rolls

When do the characters get make-rolls? As soon as the terms are agreed upon. Remember, make-rolls are not possible in the Epilog, so you might as well try and see where things go. When other player characters agree to support the quest, they too get make-rolls. Do new characters, converted from servitors or NPCs get make-rolls? Yes, once they become player characters. Most are level zero and thus get zero make-rolls. Can player characters lose their make-rolls? Yes. In the Epilog, once the quest is complete or abandoned, all unused make-rolls are lost. Encounters tend not to be created as make-roll obstacles.

But, some events do cause the players to lose their make-rolls. Start a quest and see.

The Referee's Role

What is the Referee's role? Mighty! There are three main functions the Ref performs: *record keeping*, *interpreting* and *story-telling*. The first can be easy to describe, but perhaps lengthy; the other two are more difficult. Don't despair, the mechanics of

play become easier with practice and knowledge. Try not to memorize, instead know where answers are found. The game gives numerous aids to assist both judge and storyteller.

So why does the Referee have a mighty role? Here are just a few of the features of his job:

- ~ Create the campaign and chronicle the events.
- ~ Set-up the important facts of each scenario.
- ~ Keep track of all hidden elements and infuse into play.
- ~ Choose the settings for the adventure.
- ~ Interpret player actions into game results.
- ~ Role-play all NPCs.
- ~ Provide clues and general information.
- ~ Run all the combat; not make all rolls, but know the rolls required.
- ~ Record the deal and terms.
- ~ Play the Patron and Rival.
- ~ Keep the players in the genre.
- ~ Flip the Tarot to generate encounters and combat events.
- ~ Describe the situations to the players.
- ~ Remain impartial but offer a challenge.
- ~ Tempt players to action.
- ~ Help players work as a team.
- ~ Control absolute authority over life and death of everything in the campaign.
- ~ Entertain (while maintaining sanity).

That's a partial list, but everyone gets a general idea of the Referee's purpose. Now that everyone is scared...okay, no one is scared, because most readers have played role-play, some even as the Ref.

Record Keeping

After the prime player character accepts the quest, the Referee must perform a little record keeping. Write down some additional descriptions for the scenario. Include at least the following:

1. List the quest elements and terms of agreement. This will serve as a memory aid for reminding the players of their responsibilities and compensation. Remember to include the patron's resources for reference. He might further support or request something be return.

2. List the quest's allies; not just the player characters' friends, but list others in the campaign that can profit or desire the same result as the patron. In some cases, only the patron will be an ally to the players.

3. List the player's opposition; include any strengths or weaknesses. Don't forget to describe the rival and his commitment to stopping the players. Consider the campaign (or flip extra cards) to fully detail the extent of those opposed. Extra effort spent creating or expanding the background and campaign position of the rival will return the most benefit to play. As agents of the opposition are generated by encounters, these notes will assist. Many different banes, besides soldiers, can be sent to thwart the players; some enemies obey the instructions of the rival, while others could follow the orders of an unforeseen opponent generated by a twist.

4. List where the players must ultimately travel to complete their deed. Most quests will simply require the players to move from *Point A* to *Point B* (at '*B*' do something). At times the players will start without knowing where their search will take them. In this case, the Referee still must know point '*B*' (the end location), to hint and guide the players finally to this location for the climax. Knowing what lies between *Point A* and *Point B* in the campaign world is important, because the Ref selects the encounter settings from the terrain on the trip. (See encounter section.) Understand, a detailed map of the campaign need not be completely drawn beforehand. Such a map may remain an unknown to the characters – cartography remains a developing trade. The Referee may state three settings that must be crossed during travel without showing the players a map. However, by having the campaign map available, higher level player characters may choose their own route (or what they expect to use as a travel route). The city-states between the start and end will also have Boons and Banes that change the techniques of the party's longboat. Additionally, the Referee must possibly detail the specific building or area in which the players will conduct the climax. (See Schematic Floor Plans for a method of generating, on the fly, climax action and a choice of location paths.)

5. List any other important facts, e.g. Major Tarot descriptions of the quest or time limitations, that the players face. Include such additional elements as the WHO?, WHAT?, WHERE?, WHY?, WHEN? and HOW? – anything you as the Referee feel is relevant to the quest's completion. Place the quest into the campaign, by making the quest important to future events, alliances, economics, changes to religion, etc. Flip additional cards as needed to describe the aspects of the campaign that are affected by the quest. The players should feel their actions have significance and not merely be an excuse to adventure. Add secondary objectives to some players of the party. Those also help focus the players on play, an extra vested interest.

6. Generate the climax. Have a basic idea of how the players might complete their quest. If the Referee is stymied by a task, don't think the players will luck into

their own solution for success. On a vague quest, like ship travel or garrison duties, allow the encounters to generate the action. Otherwise, turn the simple job into a mystery with clues, shadowy NPCs and hidden motives. Always structure play so that the player characters are involved, command others, and face danger. Let players gain chances to check Ignobles. Never leave them as helpless bystanders without redemption to follow.

Various sections will provide greater details on all of these areas. The Referee should generate a file of NPCs and campaign intrigues, plus special aspects of certain quests. e.g. A recently raided port must be visited along the journey. Add these campaign facts into play on seemingly routine trips. When the Referee takes an hour to set-up, the players usually know something is amiss. After a five minute set-up, should an elaborate plot twist appear, the excitement increases for the surprised players.

Use quest generation first as a straight list of cards and results, then go back and combine the descriptions relating as many elements as possible. The Referee should never hesitate to change or add factors that are felt crucial – it's his campaign. Refer to the Quicklook Tables. If you see an alternate you'd rather have, make the change.

Referee is always capitalized in this text, because the role is special. A good Ref creates all the difference between enjoyment and boredom. Everyone is a good Ref with these rules, with time even gifted. A good *Referee* knows which rules apply or has a game that guides the application; a gifted *Referee* knows why rules apply. A good *Referee* is orderly and prepared or has a game that simplifies his preparations; a gifted *Referee* is also spontaneous and adaptive. Realize that too much structure is inflexible and dulls play.

Many role-play gamers learn to *Referee* from watching others. This can be fine depending upon the teacher. A number of good *Referees* exist, but few are gifted. Let me reveal a secret – the best start on becoming a gifted *Referee* is through solitaire play.

Solitaire Role-play!

That's right; try playing alone, being both the Ref and having a character on the quest. Try to advance the character, check Ignobles, gain skills and friends, make enemies, and see the campaign and rules as any player might. In this way, all the facts are known, but you must operate the character like you are ignorant of most of

them. You must be impartial, in order to interpret events that seem harsh and uncorrelated. You will learn exactly the details required for your play, and how to generate them quickly as the action unfolds. You will learn how to expand initial details concerning the quest as your play evolves. You'll learn how to run and change the combat events to keep them from becoming stale. You may even have lots of fun.

Next, play with a friend. Continue to explore the game mechanics; both of you could Referee for each other. You don't need much of a campaign. You're taking turns in combat and running through events. Run the action for both characters. Together you'll discover how to Referee by setting the situations, not being solely an adversary. You'll develop the ability to take ideas from another player and work changes instantly into the quest. When a larger group of players assembles, you'll be ready to guide the story.

Always listen to the players. When they suggest aloud that something will happen, or another motive exists, besides the one you flipped, strongly consider adding it to play. Players like to be right – be flexible and allow them that small advantage of certainty. That's the difference, between a good and gifted Ref – **understand the audience.** The quest and encounters are not the source of entertainment, the players are. Watching their reactions and prompting their responses, that's the fun. Role-play should not always be a mind game, created solely to challenge through mystery and strategy. It is a people game, letting the players come together as a team to triumph, because everyone had his role.

The best action is not who cleverly solved a puzzle or applied a skill to overcome a danger. The best game play is when the players must rely on one another to succeed. Let them at times second guess and overcome an obstacle, even if the trap must be changed from what was originally planned. Try not to describe a challenge in terms of character traits or skills; let the players conclude that together their character abilities create a desired result. A gifted Referee doesn't just entertain; he **sparks the best reaction from the players** and allows them to entertain each other. Remember this and the Referee's role becomes easy.

Closure

Before concluding, a few notes on Tarot decks may eliminate confusion. Tarot decks come in many forms, but most of them are equivalent. Find a 78 card pack; that is twenty-two Major Arcana and fifty-six Minor cards broken into four suits. Each suit will have four face cards: King, Queen, Knight and Knave and ten numbered cards.

The deck may have pictures on the numbered cards or symbols; do not worry the difference.

The difference in most packs will simply be the name of the suits and the location of some Major cards. It may be confusing at first to look at the cards (especially those with lots of pretty pictures). Getting a pack that writes the card name out is an advantage.

The following are equal:

Rods – Staves – Batons – Clubs

Coins – Pentacles – Pomegranates – Denier – Discs – Diamonds

Cups – Chalice – Coupes – Hearts

Swords – Epees – Spades

Knives can also be Page or Valet

Knights are always shown on horseback in symbolic decks; in pictorial decks don't be confused by Chevalier. That is also a Knight.

The most common Major Tarot reverse is for card VIII and XI. The term Strength is Force. The number is not important, use the name. If your deck has VIII Strength and XI Justice, this is Okay; treat the cards as named, even though the rules will order them as card eleven, Force.

The Fool can be XXII or zero. Roman numerals have no zero, so in a deck using those, the fool is usually XXII. Again, don't consider the number.

For Major Tarot, the name is the game. Other cards may be given other names, but their order is unchanged. The Magician is also the Juggler; both are card one. Christian decks have a Pope; pagan decks have a Hierophant. Both are the same. I've also seen the Hermit called the Misanthrope. But that might have just been in the Mahu Mystery series. I'll end with that shameless plug for those books on Kindle®.