

# JERKY JOUSTERS!

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## *WELCOME TO THE KINGDOM!*

*The king has decided to celebrate the realm's 100th birthday by having a grand tournament, and the call has gone out throughout the land for all of the greatest and powerful knights to come and joust for wealth and fame!*

*HUZZAH!*

*What he wound up with was a bunch of jerks.*

## Setup:

The GM will need a deck of cards.

All players will need a sheet of paper or note cards, to keep track of their characters, who are knights. A knight has these important characteristics:

A Name.

A Title.

3 Abilities.

Some number of "wises", these are things that the knight is wise about.

The GM will lead the players in the creation of their knights, by the following process.

The GM first asks each player to create a name for his knight. Each knight should end his name with a wonderfully heroic title; something from the following list perhaps, or make up their own pompous sounding title (with the GM's approval, of course):

...the Chivalrous

...the Honorable

...the Pious

...the Fair

...the Brave

...the Humble

...the Kind

...the Faithful

...the Merciful

...the Strong

This describes the images of the knight that the player wishes to portray. But in reality, that is the exact opposite of the knight's "better" qualities. The GM now should tell all players to come up with three abilities that would describe the EXACT OPPOSITE of the title.

For example, abilities for someone who has titled himself as "Sir Jeff the Honorable" could be:

"Good at lying"

"Sabotage is his best friend"

"Sneaky thievery"

The player will also need to announce where he is from. It could be a made up name ("Westwhistle, south of the Great Plains"), or real ("Hoboken").

For each knight's place of origin, the GM will need to ask the other players:

"I know you've heard of the people of [insert location here]. What do you think they are most known for?"

Each other player will need to reply with something that they have heard about that region. These replies could be anything, really, as they are just filling in a small amount of backstory.

"I've heard that the people of Westwhistle are sturdy farmers, having survived through many potato famines."

"The king usually favors those from Westwhistle, as they are the sole suppliers of the casks that the king uses for his vineyards."

"The people of Westwhistle are fools. Every year they spend 3 months rebuilding their town from winter floods because they don't bother maintaining the dykes in the fall; they'd rather spend their time getting drunk during their autumn festivals."

Given this history of a knight's origin, the player then must create 3 wises that his knight would be good at. In the case of a knight from Westwhistle:

"wine-wise"

"festival-wise"

"shovel-wise"

Finally, the GM gives each knight 3 cards. The GM is free to give out a bonus card to the knight that he feels created the most creative wise.

## Cards, Events, and Scenes:

The game consists of a series of events that lead up to the Grande Tournament. During each event, the knights should aspire to collect cards, as the cards will be used during the Tournament. Whoever plays their cards the best, will be crowned the victor of the tournament. HUZAH!

Each event will have a series of short scenes where the knights can run around and “do stuff.” While knights can be involved in multiple scenes during an event...a knight can only be awarded a single card per event ( in some cases, the GM can award additional bonus cards, but again, those are handed out at the end of an event, and not just each little scene).

How does a Knight gain cards? Why, through the use of his jerky abilities, of course.

As the GM sets up each event, each knight should think about how to use one of his available jerky abilities within the scenes that play out. Now, it doesn't matter if the knight is successful or not, but if the GM feels that the knight has honestly attempted a jerky action, the GM should give that knight a card. In fact, if the GM feels that a knight has performed an especially jerky deed, the GM is allowed to award a single bonus card per event.

Additionally, the GM also gets to award one card to the knight who used one of his wises the most creatively during the last event. For this card to be awarded, the knight must have been successful in using his wise.

Aces count as ones, and Kings are naturally the highest rank when comparing cards.

## Success and Failure:

In general, the GM should let the knight accomplish any jerky action the knight attempts, but the GM is allowed to declare a failure if he feels the need (for interesting narrative purposes, for unrealistic goals of the knight, just out of meta-game revenge, or whatever).

Additionally, any other knight may turn in a card at any time to declare another knight failure or success...with that knight then taking temporary control of the GM duties for the remainder of the action.

Depending on that what the knight was up to, if the stakes are high enough, and if the knight failed, the knight can override the failure and make it a success ( HUZDAH! ) by taking control of the GM duties himself! However, if he wishes to do this, the knight calls for “the pain”, and the GM then injures the knight ( BOO! HISS! ), by selecting one of the knight’s abilities or wise, and inflicts such pain on the knight that the knight has to cross that ability or wise off his list. “The pain” should relate both to the ability and to what the knight was up to at the time...so while he may have succeeded, there was a price to pay! “The pain” replaces the thing that was crossed off.

Example: Sir Jeff the Honorable was attempting to lie to an opposing stablehand, so he could go into the stables and drug the horse of Sir Felicity the Meek. There’s nothing unusual about this, so the GM maybe plays it a little tough with his role-playing the stablehand, but the intention is that the GM will let Sir Jeff get through.

However, Sir Felicity sees what’s going on, puts one-and-one together, and throws a card the GM’s way, announcing that his stableboy sees right through Sir Jeff’s ploy, and throws a punch at Sir Jeff.

At this point, Sir Jeff’s attempt is a failure, but Sir Jeff pulls out his ace-up-his-sleeve, and calls for “the pain”. The GM informs Sir Jeff that as the scuffle escalates, the stableboy grabs a shovel, and whacks Sir Jeff in the chin, severing his tongue between his clenched teeth, crossing off “really good liar” and replacing it with “unable to speak clearly”!

Sir Jeff is now free to finish off his action, stating that not only does he best the stableboy, he kills the stableboy and buries him deep in the manure pile behind the stables, and then he quickly poison’s Sir Felicity’s horse’s feedbag.

Sir Jeff gains a card for being jerky...and the burying the stableboy was a nice touch, the GM puts it near the top of his list for the bonus card during this event...)

## Event Ideas:

Since this is a big deal for the King, there's a lot of pomp and circumstance going on, leading up to the main event (the Grande Tournament). The knights should relish in the attention that they get as conquering heroes....all while using their jerky abilities to knock those other pompous asses down a few pegs. While the GM is free to adjust the events and scenes accordingly as the game goes along, here is a brief list to get the GM started of what a "traditional renaissance faire" event timeline would look like. It should also be noted that the extent of my research of jousting tournaments consists solely of watching "A *Knight's Tale*"....numerous times.

The arrival of a Knight to the village that surrounds the castle. Does the Knight come announced with his small group of assistants, or does he sneak in?

An official public presentation of submittance to the tournament in front of the people, or to the court.

A "show of arms" outside the grounds, showing off the knight`s skill to the people, to curry favors and gifts and followers for the upcoming tournament.

The Grande Parade is the official "look at me be all King-like" ceremony that officially presents all of the entrants to the kingdom. Various Counts and Countesses of neighboring realms may be present. Knights really should be on their best behavior for this.

The Gala Ball, held the night before, for all of the entrants and visiting royalty. in their finery.

The morning of the tournament, where the excitement builds, final bets are tallied, and royalty walks the grounds.

And then finally, the tournament itself.

After the GM announces the event that is going on, he should take note of what each knight is planning on doing. The GM is free to break up the knights into smaller groups if needed, if different knight wish to go on their different jerky ways. At this point various little scenes will take place, with the GM officiating the proceeding as the knights go about their business.

# THE GRANDE TOURNAMENT:

The GM will have to set up a double elimination tournament system (or some other kind of system) for the king for all the knights. Jousts are handled simply with each knight playing a card from their personal collection against another knight, with the highest card winning their round, if all things are equal. Cards are discarded after play.

Additionally, any other knight may play a single card into any current battle, with a description of added jerkiness; perhaps Sir Felicity's armorsmith is in the stands flashing the sun into his opponent's eye with a mirror? Additional cards are played to one participant or the other...when all cards and actions are played out, they are revealed, and **only the highest single card for each participant counts** (cards are NOT additive if a player has a stack of cards).

Now, the GM has quite a bit of sway in terms of what "all things being equal" means, as he is allowed to adjust these card values based on whatever other shenanigans may be affecting the current joust. Which can run the gamut of hobbled horses and sabotaged lances to the famous "helmet smothered with honey that attract the angry beehive that was just thrown into the ring from the stands" ploy or whatever gouged eyeball or broken bones that have previously occurred.

Tie breakers between two knights are also at the full command of the GM's wishes, based on how the narratives have gone up to this point. There should never be a true tie! Man up, Mister GM and pick someone.

And if a participant has no cards to play? Well, he better hope that he spent them wisely during the earlier events, and hope the GM is generous with his "adjustments".

In the end, assuming that a knight hasn't rigged the entire tournament ring to explode with kegs of black powder, there just might be a knight crowned as champion, no matter how broken or maimed he looks on stage with the king.

## EPILOGUE:

If so desired, each player is allowed to describe what happens to his knight after the tournament, starting with the victor. And again, if another player has cards left over, he can throw a card at the GM's way to take control of another knight's epilogue for a short time.