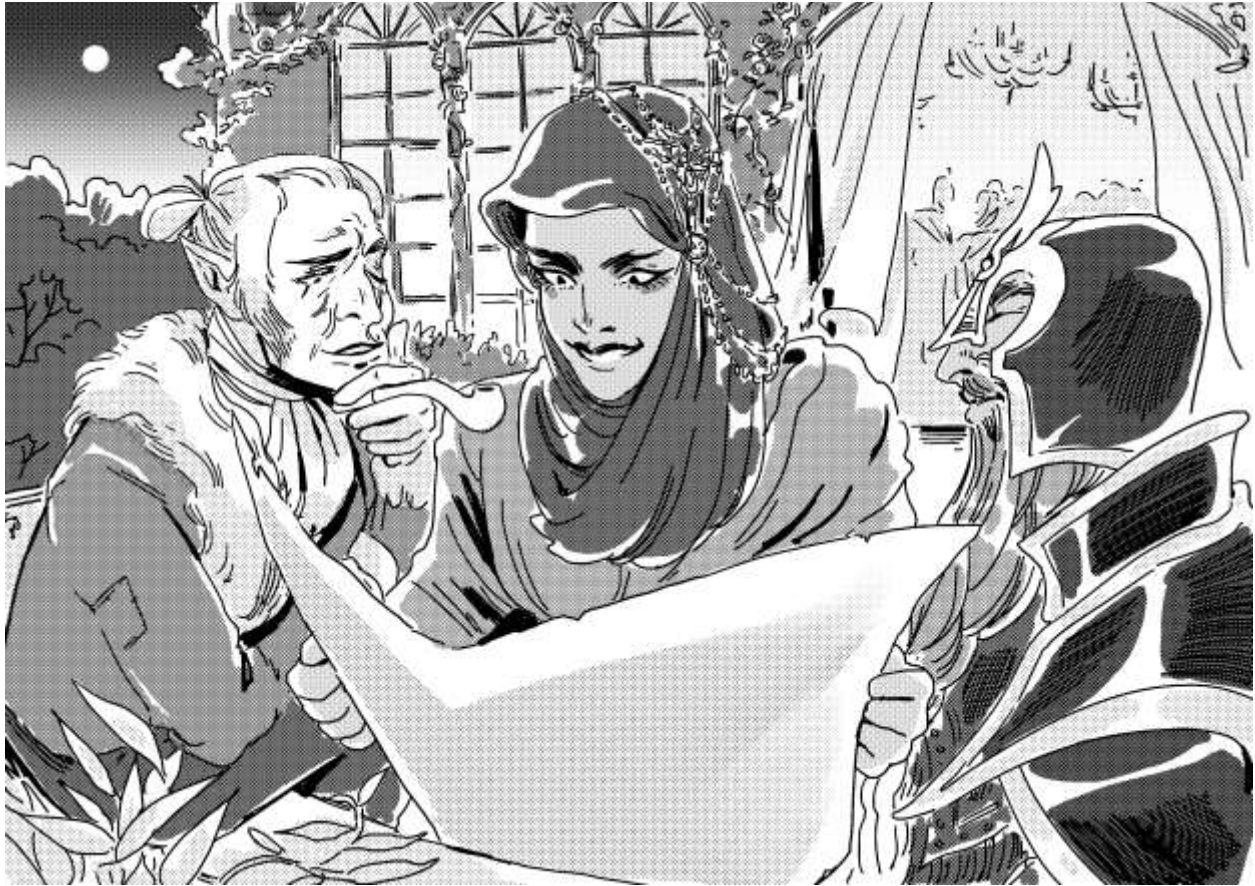


Making Parties Matter v1.0



A set of new mechanics related to parties and party games for the world's most popular roleplaying game system.

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5E

Making Parties Matter v1.0

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The work presented here was influenced by many, and I would like to take some time to thank a few notable contributors.

My design in the world's most popular roleplaying game has been influenced by the works of Creighton Broadhurst, Kent Kelly, and Owen K.C. Stephenson.

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If you enjoy what you see in here and are not familiar with any of the names above, please look them up. They are all better at this stuff than I am.

I would also like to thank everyone who has been involved with and continues to be

involved with playtesting, without which this module would not be possible.

And finally I would like to thank my family for allowing me to carve out some time to do this thing.

Game Feedback:

Thank you for buying this product, it means a lot to me that people are interested in what I am doing. This game is in open playtesting, which means your feedback could influence future iterations of this game. Don't worry, you aren't going to be left with an "outdated version," as subsequent versions will become available to early purchasers. Also be on the lookout for a full adventure in the coming months illustrating how to make use of these new mechanics. If you are going to use these new mechanics in your own gaming product, please be so kind as to reference this supplement as a resource.

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Introduction

Parties and party games can be a fun addition to roleplaying games regardless of the setting. Whether these parties are regional festivals, impromptu bar sing-alongs, grand balls, or secretive gatherings of woodland dwellers, there is much fun to be had by attempting to win the fame and adoration of both commoners and nobility. The challenging aspect of parties is that there is often little in the game mechanics that encourages or rewards these activities. They become more diversions than actual integral parts of the game itself. This supplement introduces a few ways to make the activities at a party more mechanically meaningful to the narrative of the roleplaying game itself.

There are two chapters in this supplement: new mechanics to influence the result of a party, and a list of party games that could be a part of

this influence. The new mechanics introduced in chapter one will highlight ways in which the characters can have an influence on the success of a party. There are a variety of ways in which the characters can receive benefits based on how successful they are in influencing the success of the party. This will often involve engaging in a series of party games.

The party games introduced in chapter two are activities the characters can engage with as they attempt to influence the success of the party, or to make a bit of cash along the way. There are thirteen party games listed here that you can choose from to add to your campaign.

Chapter 1: New Mechanics

The new mechanics introduced here are associated with influencing the result of a party. Characters can do things to gain influence, and then can check to see if that influence is sufficient to make the party a success. Once the party is a success they can gain additional benefits. The new mechanics here are categorized in the following way: character attributes, party attribute, character actions, and NPC actions.

Character Attributes

There are two new attributes introduced here. These new attributes can be gained during the course of the adventure and then used in a variety of situations. These are things that characters either have or don't have. They are not things that can be stockpiled. The uses of these new attributes are further detailed below in the section **character actions**.

Popularity- Characters' success at party games and activities gives them some fleeting popularity. This popularity can fuel continued success. Popularity is earned through successful skill checks. These skill checks will often be from success at party games (requiring multiple successful rolls in most cases), but could also simply be a Charisma (Persuasion) check in certain circumstances.

Popularity is always fleeting, and in most cases will need to be used before the completion of a long rest. Some uses require that it be used immediately upon receiving it. See the section **character actions** for more details on how popularity can be used.

Heroic- If characters are not heroic, most of their actions have very little effect on the party. When they are heroic, their actions can have very dramatic effects on the party. Depending on how you intend to incorporate the party into your game, the characters might be heroic as the party starts, or they might need to take actions in order to become heroic.

Beginning a 1st level campaign at a party might involve actions the characters need to take in order to become heroic. These actions should include some sort of life threatening encounter that somehow benefits the party if the characters succeed. Perhaps it is something as simple as defeating a handful of drunken thugs. Perhaps it is more complicated, like rescuing a relative of a prominent partygoer who was kidnapped earlier in the party.

If you want to highlight the heroic mechanic in your campaign, it might be best used by having some of the other interactions before the characters have a chance to become heroic as well as after they've had a chance to become heroic. In this case, you should consider allowing certain party activities to count towards becoming a smash hit because the characters are not able to use their popularity in this way yet (see **party attributes** for more regarding smash hits). The dance party is a good party game to be used in this way.

For higher level characters, and for situations where you want a more limited scope of party interactions, the characters can start the game as heroic. Once they become heroic, they continue to be heroic until the end of the party. If characters are heroic, they can use any

popularity they earn to make the party more successful.

Party Attribute

Similar to **character attributes** this is something that is either true of the party or not true of the party. There is only one thing that matters for a party, whether it's a smash hit.

Smash Hit- The party does not start out as a smash hit, but characters might take actions to make it become one. If the party is not a smash hit, most attendees are commoners passing by for a free drink and there are few good leads on interesting things going on in the rest of the world. Once the party becomes a smash hit, there will be people of influence dropping rumors and adventure hooks that might interest the characters.

Once the party becomes a smash hit, it continues to be a smash hit until some larger event has an opportunity to derail it. Becoming a smash hit might also be necessary to influence the person who is hosting the party. There are four mechanical differences that could occur based on whether or not the party has become a smash hit. Choose all or some of these events to affect your game.

- Being a smash hit is an event which must occur to please the host of the party. The host of the party will grant some sort of favor on the characters if they help in achieving this goal and possibly some sort of disfavor if they are unable to help in achieving this goal.
- Being a smash hit is necessary for the host of the party to achieve something. If the host of the party achieves this thing, it might open the doors for the

characters to have additional successes.

- When a party is a smash hit, gather information checks become easier and/or more useful. There are a variety of ways you can adjudicate this, all of which are detailed below in the section **character actions**.

The frequency of checking for a smash hit will depend on the length of the party itself. For an all day party, it might be checked every few hours. For a multiple day party, it might be checked once per day. For an evening party, there might be one check prior to the opportunity to Party Hard. (see **character actions** for more details on how to Party Hard.) Throughout the remainder of this section, this frequency will be referred to as the time period.

In any case, you should expect to have between three and five opportunities for the characters to attempt to make the party a smash hit. It's important to have more than one opportunity, because the difficulty of making the party a smash hit is not the sole responsibility of the characters, nor is it necessarily easy to succeed on the skill checks involved in getting there. If you prefer having a shorter party where they only get one chance to make a smash hit, consider the possibility of having multiple parties over the course of one week that the characters might attend in order to achieve the benefits of making a party a smash hit. Alternatively, you could make it significantly easier to succeed at the party games detailed in chapter two.

If the party is not a smash hit, roll 2d4 at the end of each time period to determine how many successful events the characters must have experienced in order to turn the party into a smash hit during that time period. The

successful events the characters may experience are generally going to occur by using popularity gained during party games. Each character should generally be allowed two to three opportunities to participate in party games per time period. If the characters are not heroic, they might only have one opportunity per time period, but should be provided an opportunity to become heroic eventually (as well as more opportunities to make the party a smash hit). It would be quite rare for a group of non-heroic characters to make a party become a smash hit, but it is not completely out of the realm of possibility.

If the host is rewarding the characters for their role in making the party a smash hit, she will recognize how much credit they should get for making that happen. The party host may either reward or punish the characters based on the success or failure in making the party a smash hit during a given time period. The results of the smash hit dice are grouped into three categories representing the level of effort necessary for the characters to make the party a smash hit.

- 2-3 (easy): There is significant effort by both characters and NPCs in order to make the party a smash hit. If successful in making the party a smash hit, the host grants her favor on half the characters. If unsuccessful in making the party a smash hit, she grants disfavor on all characters.
- 4-6 (medium) : The effort in making the party a smash hit is mostly done by the characters. If successful in making the party a smash hit, the host grants her favor on all characters. If unsuccessful in making the party a smash hit, she

grants her disfavor on half of the characters.

- 7-8 (hard): Several NPCs are clearly making it very difficult to make the party a smash hit. The host does not grant disfavor on any characters, and might dismiss several NPCs from her employment. If the characters are somehow successful in making the party a smash hit, they all receive a more prominent or sustained benefit.

These results are for a group of four to five players. For larger or smaller gaming groups, feel free to adjust the smash hit dice as follows. For three or fewer players: roll 2d4-1, and adjust each difficulty category down by one. For six or more players: roll 2d4+1, and adjust each difficulty category up by one.

Alternate: For a more fast-paced game, you could have the smash hit dice be cumulative. In this case, you would initially roll 2d4 and then an additional 1d4 for each time period after the first. The total of all the smash hit dice is what is necessary for the total of all the successful events to match. This approach is more appropriate for a shorter party.

Character Actions

These are choices characters can make while at the party, most of them involving a die roll. As the party progresses, the nature of the choices available to the characters will change as well. In general, they will likely start out attempting to make the party a smash hit, and then once that has happened they will try to gather information or achieve other benefits. The ways in which they can attempt to make the party a smash hit change once they become heroic. Allow the characters to make different choices than this if they would prefer to go in a

different direction, but this course of action provides the easiest pathway to success for them in most cases.

Gather Information- Gather Information checks can be made with either a Charisma (Persuasion) check or a Wisdom (Insight) check, at the player's discretion. Charisma (Persuasion) checks represent a character spending their efforts trying to convince others to share information, while Wisdom (Insight) checks represent a character knowing how to be in the right place at the right time in order to overhear something. If creative players propose some other skill check they would like to use in order to gather information, consider allowing it but with additional restrictions such as disadvantage or some consequence for a failed roll.

Every character gets to make one Gather Information check per time period. Some situations might lead to additional gather information checks: party hard, and the use of popularity.

The nature of Gather Information checks should be altered somewhat based on whether or not the party is a smash hit. There are a few ways to approach this change, but in all cases the goal is to represent increasing the ease of Gather Information checks once the party becomes a smash hit:

- Lower the DC once the party becomes a smash hit. Generally a DC 13 is a good benchmark for a smash hit, with a DC around 17-20 prior to becoming a smash hit.
- Roll on different tables for a smash hit but keep the same DC either way. Perhaps a non smash hit party results in a 1d4 roll. Three of the results of this

roll might provide cursory information about how to impress the host or make the party more successful, and the other result allows a roll on the table used for smash hits.

Have a table of several results ready for the characters should they succeed on the Gather Information check. The rumors could be listed on a d100 table or a d20 table depending on how many you would like to use. If you are using an official sourcebook for your game, these often contain such tables.

Party Hard-Character can choose to stay up all night, extending the life of the party. If the characters are considering whether to Party Hard in order to achieve a smash hit, reveal the number of remaining successes necessary as you give the characters the option to Party Hard. They will have some sense of how well NPCs have contributed to making the party successful and whether it is worth their extra time to stay up late in this sort of effort. If the characters do Party Hard, they may choose one of the following benefits:

- If a character has gained popularity for anything earlier in the day, they may make a DC 15 Charisma (Persuasion or Performance) check in order to gain an additional success towards becoming a smash hit.
- If all characters are involved in some sort of performance, they can make a group check in order to gain additional successes towards a smash hit. This performance should be something that the characters have had some amount of training with, or at least have practiced together prior to making this check. It could be that each character needs to succeed on a Charisma

(Performance) check, but other possibilities such as Dexterity (Acrobatics, or Sleight of Hand) could work as well. Regardless of the skill check chosen, the DC is 15. Each success results in an additional success towards becoming a smash hit. Any failure by 5 or more cancels out one success.

- A character can choose to make one additional Gather Information check

during this time period. This Gather Information check roll is made at advantage, as there are fewer inhibitions as the night gets longer.

Regardless of which benefit the characters took, each character who chooses to Party Hard must then make a DC 10 Constitution saving throw or else gain a level of exhaustion.

An Example

Dorkal, Dunt, and Ormallo are working for a Noble, trying to make the party a smash hit so that she will be considered for the granting of additional lands. The party is several days long, and they have five days within which to make the party a smash hit or else she will not be considered for the land grant.

On the first day, you roll the the smash hit die, resulting in a six. Because there are only three members of the party, you then subtract one to get a result of five. Between them, Dorkal, Dunt, and Ormallo need to do five things in order to make the party a smash hit this day. Because there are only three of them, this qualifies as a hard attempt to make the party a smash hit. Only Dorkal succeeds on a carnival game this day. Because this was a hard attempt, they are not penalized for their efforts and the Noble fires several NPCs that day and none of the characters are penalized. They do not choose to Party Hard.

On the second day of the party, Dorkal, Dunt, and Ormallo become heroic and there is a dance party in honor of this. Dorkal and Ormallo succeed on the acrobatics check, but Dunt fails. You roll the smash hit die, resulting in a five, lowered to a four, as before. This is a medium attempt. The party needs four successes and has achieved two of them. Because this was a medium attempt, the Noble expresses her disfavor with Dunt as well as three NPCs and then goes to bed. The characters choose to Party Hard, but gain only one more success. Dorkal fails his Constitution save and is exhausted the next day.

On the third day of the party, Dorkal, Dunt, and Ormallo engage in party games in an attempt to make the party a smash hit. Dorkal participates in the carnival games and fails to win each time (perhaps due to exhaustion). Dunt participates in the contest of strength and wins twice. Ormallo participates in the scavenger hunt and wins once. Because they are heroic, they are able to apply each of these successes towards turning the party into a smash hit. You roll the smash hit die, resulting in a four. Because there are only three members of the party, you subtract one, resulting in a three. This is a medium attempt. They have made three successes, the party becomes a Smash Hit. Dorkal, Dunt, and Ormallo each receive the Noble's favor.

Use Popularity- If a character has popularity, there are three things he can do with it. Once popularity is used, it is gone, but can be regained when additional opportunities are presented.

- A player can spend popularity to gain advantage on a skill check (similar to inspiration), with a few limitations. The popularity can only be used on skill checks (not attack rolls or saving throws). The skill check has to be taken at the same party at which the popularity was gained. Popularity can't generally be "given" to another player the way inspiration can be. There should be a plausible reason why using popularity would be beneficial for the given skill check in this situation. A player can have both popularity and inspiration at the same time.
- A player can spend popularity as he receives it in order to make a Gather Information check. The player still needs to make the roll for the Gather Information check (and can't use the popularity to give advantage on this roll, because the popularity is being used up in creating the opportunity for the roll).
- If a character is heroic, she can spend her popularity as she receives it in order to gain one success towards making the party a smash hit.

NPC Actions

There will obviously be many NPCs present at a party. The characters will engage with some of them via party games or gather information checks. Adjudicating these situations is detailed elsewhere. The focus of this section will be on

that one special NPC who can grant special boons to the characters: the host of the party.

The Host- A potentially important benefit to making the party a smash hit is gaining the favor of the party's host. This favor could be as simple as a large payment or the sharing of information that is particularly useful for the characters. However, it is also possible to be a bit more creative and give mechanical bonuses for great success, as well as mechanical penalties for great failure. The following are possible favors and disfavor the host might grant on characters who are attempting to make her party successful:

- The host's favor might be similar to a bardic inspiration die. This favor might last ten minutes or a full day depending on the situation. This sort of favor might be dispensed conservatively for efforts that are leading towards the party becoming a smash hit, and more liberally once it has become a smash hit.
- The host's favor might be similar in effect to a divination spell such as *Augury*, *Locate Object*, or *Divination*. For greatest effect, this should be selected as something the characters do not yet have access to on their own. In some cases this favor might look like important healing spells for the characters such as *Greater Restoration*, *Revivify*, or *Raise Dead*. For particularly high levels, the favor could even be something as powerful as a *Wish*. If a *Wish* is a possible favor, the host is likely a god and the penalty for failing to make the god's party a smash hit could be quite steep. (As would be the skill checks necessary to impress the

attendees of whatever type of a party a god might host!)

- The hosts disfavor might be granting disadvantage on a die roll of your choosing. The character may choose to make a DC 13 Wisdom saving throw to avoid this affect, but risks termination of employment if they do so.
- Failure to make the party a smash hit should result in dire consequences for the characters. At the very least they will be terminated from the host's employment and suffer disadvantage on social skills involving that host or her other employees. Some situations

might involve the host having the power to imprison the characters for this sort of failure, or magically exile them to another plane for their incompetence.

- The fate of the characters might be linked to the fate of the host. Perhaps the success of the party is a requirement for the party host to attain a new level of prestige, such as becoming a noble or becoming heir to the throne. As the party's host ascends to power, he will be inclined to favor those who have helped him along the way.

Chapter 2: Party Activities

Characters can engage in party games in order to derive a variety of effects. Generally, success at these party games will result in popularity. The character can then use that popularity in order to gain what they want. Details of how this might work are found in the **Chapter 1: New Mechanics**. Alternately, or additionally, the characters might be able to win a small cash prize for succeeding at party games: 2d8 silver pieces for a win. Feel free to increase this amount for higher level play, but also adjust the difficulty of the party games.

Many of these activities will involve a few initial challenges to make it to the final round, at which point contested rolls will be made to determine the winner. Other games will simply have a series of skill challenges, or have contested rolls throughout the challenge. The party games included here are Card Games, Carnival Games, Contest of Strength, Dance Party (including accompaniment as a separate activity), Drinking Contest, Hotdog Eating Contest, Maze Exploration, Scavenger Hunt, Sparring Contest, Spinning Contraption, Strongarm Contest, and Trivia Games. Some other activities that characters might be engaged in during this time are listed as well: participation prizes, and observation. These additional activities are things that can modify the results of the other party games.

For each of the contests, there will be a list of characteristics which describe certain properties of that contest. Many of the same characteristics occur in all contests, but some of them have different characteristics. All contests have the characteristics *Cheating*, and *Rewards and Penalties*. Some contests will have differing requirements at different points in the contest,

for these contests there will be entries such as *Initial Rounds*, and *Final Challenge* to make this distinction. Contests which don't have this distinction will have the category *Contest*. Some contests will also have a category called *Outcome* for additional effects that are a result of participating in the contest regardless of whether or not that participation was successful. Although many of the party games have similar entries for many of these categories, each party game has sufficient information listed in its entry to determine the result of that game without needing to reference a standardized list.

Cheating is any activity which someone not engaged in the contest might do to influence the contest. The most obvious such choices are listed with consequences for those choices. But players may, of course, make all sorts of additional choices beyond the ones listed in each entry. Characters who are not directly engaged in the contest are limited in the number of ways they can influence other contests. These is detailed in the activity observation at the end of the list of party games.

Characters have the opportunity to gain popularity during each of these activities. The activities included here are balanced for Tier 1 characters. For higher level characters, you will need to increase the DCs of the activity and the relevant bonuses of any NPC contestants.

Card Games

This contest could represent several types of card games, both real and imagined. The commonality in any of these games is the

dependence on both luck and skilled thinking in order to succeed.

Contest: there are several ways to succeed on this sort of contest. To win the contest, characters must have a total of three successes in a variety of skills, and no failures. If a character beats the DC of any of these skill checks by 5 or more, they have advantage on the next skill check they make related to this contest. Generally, they can have no more than two of the skill check successes owing to any one ability score. The following are the skill checks that might be attempted:

- Luck: A DC 10 Charisma check. This may only be attempted once.
- Trickery: A DC 12 Charisma (Deception) check. This may only be attempted once.
- Skill: A DC 12 Intelligence (Investigation) check. This may be attempted twice.
- Awareness: A DC 12 Wisdom (Insight) check. This may be attempted twice.
- Cheating: A DC 15 Dexterity (Sleight of Hand) check. This may only be attempted once, but counts as two successes. Failure results in expulsion from the game and the character can't receive popularity until after a long rest.

Cheating: Cheating is included as one of the ways of winning this contest, as detailed above. In addition to this, another character could also attempt to cast a spell or use an ability that benefits the character during the contest itself. To do so, they must succeed on a DC 13 Sleight of Hand check to avoid the game's referee realizing what they are doing. If they fail the Sleight of Hand check, the character

automatically loses the contest. Spells may be cast before the contest begins, but assume this must be done two rounds ahead of time to avoid the need for the Sleight of Hand check. Also assume the skill checks occur 20, 40, and 60 minutes after the start of the contest.

Rewards and Penalties: Any character who wins the contest gains popularity. There is no penalty for losing the contest. Any character who is caught cheating can't gain popularity again prior to a long rest.

Carnival Games

There is an elaborate arrangement of spinning spokes on which contestants must toss rings. After each round, the spinning spokes are moved back five more feet and any remaining contestants can continue to participate.

Initial Rounds: Success on an AC 10 ranged attack is necessary to move on to the second round, and on an AC 12 ranged attack to move on to the final round. Attack rolls of 20 or more count as trick shots which woo the crowd and grant advantage on the next attack roll.

Cheating: Another character can attempt to do something to distract one of the contestants, giving that contestant disadvantage on their next roll. It takes a DC 15 Charisma (Performance) check to distract a contestant. A character may only attempt this once. Another character could also attempt to cast a spell or use an ability that benefits the character during the contest itself. To do so, they must succeed on a DC 13 Sleight of Hand check to avoid the game's referee realizing what they are doing. If they fail the Sleight of Hand check, the character automatically loses the contest. Spells may be cast before the contest begins, but assume this must be done two rounds ahead of time to avoid the need for the Sleight

of Hand check. Also assume the final round is 20 minutes after the start of the contest.

Final challenge: Each contestant must attempt to hit the spinning spokes with their tossed rings, and the target will continue to be moved back until one of the contestants fails. The first round of the final starts at an AC of 14, and increases by two for each round after that. If both contestants fail to hit the target, it doesn't move back any more until they both hit it. Unless two characters are both competing and make it to the final round, the opponent will have a +3 ranged attack roll.

Rewards and Penalties: Any character who wins the contest gains popularity. There is no penalty for losing the contest. Any character who is caught cheating can't gain popularity again prior to a long rest.

Contest of Strength

The contest of strength could be a variety of activities: an arm wrestling contest, a caber toss, long jumping, or a wrestling contest. Whatever the case, the contest will be won or lost based on athletics checks.

Initial Rounds: Success on two consecutive DC 12 Strength (Athletics) checks is necessary to make it to the final round.

Cheating: Another character can incite the crowd once per contest, giving one of the contestants either advantage or disadvantage on their next roll. It takes a DC 15 Charisma (Persuasion) check to incite the crowd sufficiently to have this effect. A character might attempt this prior to each roll, but it only has an effect on the first success.

Final challenge: Success on two successive contested athletics checks is necessary to win

the contest. Unless two characters are both competing and make it to the final round, the opponent will have a +3 athletics check.

Rewards and Penalties: Any character who wins the contest gains popularity. There is no penalty for losing the contest. Any character who is caught cheating can't gain popularity again prior to a long rest.

Dance Party

A dance party will be a long activity that requires some skill in movement as well as the energy to maintain for a long period of time. The dance party isn't so much a battle between contestants as a cooperative activity among all who are present. Because of this, the barrier to success should not be as high, but there should be additional consequences that limit the use of the dance party. Perhaps the dance party can only work towards making a smash hit once per day when a prominent guest is present.

If any characters are going to provide accompaniment to the dance party, they must make that roll prior to the characters who make the roll for the dance party. It is possible for the accompaniment to provide either advantage or disadvantage on the roll for the dance party itself.

Contest: A DC 15 Dexterity (Acrobatics) check is necessary to succeed at the dance party.

Cheating: This activity is not contested, so there is no real opportunity to "cheat." The host probably has no problem with anyone else using resources to make her employees better at participating in the dance. If someone is providing accompaniment to the Dance and rolls a 20 or higher on their Charisma (Performance) check, it grants advantage to anyone participating in the dance.

Outcome: Anyone participating must also make a constitution save after each attempt, or else suffer one level of exhaustion. The DC is 10 on the first attempt, but increases by one for each additional attempt prior to a short or long rest. Anyone rolling a 20 or higher on the acrobatics check gets advantage on this constitution save. The exhaustion levels gained in this way can be removed with either a short or a long rest.

Rewards and Penalties: Anyone who succeeds gains popularity, and may apply this popularity towards becoming a smash hit regardless of whether or not they are heroic. Anyone who fails by five or more results in the loss of one success towards becoming a Smash Hit.

Dance Party Accompaniment

Anyone who is skilled at performance may join the bards playing the music that accompanies the dance, though the host will encourage them to try the dance itself before trying to make music to accompany it. To qualify for this, the character must have a musical instrument, and must have participated in at least one dance party that they did not fail by five or more. Make any dance party accompaniment rolls prior to dance party rolls, as these results might grant advantage or disadvantage to the dance party rolls.

Contest: A DC 15 Charisma (Performance) check is necessary to succeed.

Cheating: This activity is not contested, so there is no real opportunity to “cheat.” The host probably has no problem with anyone else using resources to make her employees better at participating in the dance.

Rewards and Penalties: Anyone who succeeds gains popularity, and may apply this popularity towards becoming a smash hit regardless of

whether or not they are heroic. If a character fails by five or more, this results in the loss of one success towards becoming a Smash Hit, and causes everyone making dance party checks to do so at disadvantage. Anyone beating the DC by 5 or more allows anyone making the dance party check to do so at advantage.

Drinking Contest

A true staple of many a storied party. Whoever can down the most alcoholic beverages without keeling over wins the contest.

Initial Rounds: Success on two consecutive DC 10 Constitution saving throws is necessary to make it to the final round.

Cheating: Another character can attempt to aid the character engaging in the drinking contest by providing any amount of magical healing. To do so, they must succeed on a DC 10 Dexterity (Sleight of Hand) check to avoid the other contestant realizing what they are doing. If successful, the character automatically succeeds on their next Constitution saving throw. If they fail the Dexterity (Sleight of Hand) check, the targeted character automatically loses the contest, but doesn’t need to save for the poisoned condition.

Final challenge: for each of the subsequent rounds of drinking, the other contestant and the character must succeed on a Constitution saving throw or fall prone and become nauseous, subsequently losing the contest. If both fail on the same round, there is no winner. The DC for this check starts at 10, but increases by +1 for each additional round. The other finalist has a +2 Constitution saving throw modifier.

Outcome: If the character wins the contest, they must also make a final Constitution saving

throw at disadvantage. On a failure, they have the poisoned condition. If they lost the contest, they automatically have the poisoned condition. This condition can be removed with any amount of magical healing, or a long rest. If a short rest is taken, the Constitution saving throw can be made again at advantage to remove the condition.

Rewards and Penalties: Any character who wins the contest and does not receive the poisoned condition gains popularity. Any character who participates in the contest but doesn't win can't gain popularity again until after a long rest.

Hotdog Eating Contest

This is simply a contest to see who can eat the most food. Feel free to substitute hotdogs with pies, haggis, lutefisk, or whatever food is most appropriate for your campaign.

Initial Rounds: Success on two consecutive DC 10 Constitution saving throws is necessary to make it to the final round.

Cheating: Another character can attempt to aid the character engaging in the hotdog eating contest by providing any amount of magical healing. To do so, they must succeed on a DC 13 Dexterity (Sleight of Hand) check to avoid the other contestant realizing what they are doing. If successful, the character automatically succeeds on their next Constitution saving throw. If they fail the Dexterity (Sleight of Hand) check, the character automatically loses the contest.

Final challenge: for each of the subsequent rounds of eating, the other contestant and the character must succeed on a Constitution saving throw or become nauseous, subsequently losing the contest. If both fail on the same round, there is no winner. The DC for

this check starts at 10, but increases by +1 for each additional round. The other finalist has a +2 Constitution saving throw modifier.

Outcome: If the character wins the contest, they must also make a final Constitution saving throw at disadvantage. On a failure, they have gained a level of exhaustion. If they lost the contest, they have already gained a level of exhaustion.

Rewards and Penalties: Any character who wins the contest gains popularity. There is no penalty for losing.

Maze Exploration

A labyrinthine construction traps the contestants. The construction of the maze can vary depending on the setting of the party. Perhaps it is made of solid stone or crystal, or it could be trimmed hedges or dangling tapestries. In any case the goal is the same: Whoever gets out first wins the contest!

Contest: The characters make a series of skill checks to determine how rapidly they are able to escape the maze. Unlike many of the other contests, there aren't "rounds" to be completed before facing off against a finalist: everyone is competing against each other. The race is to complete the skill checks before everyone else does. If the character successfully completes three DC 14 Intelligence (Investigation) checks before anyone else does, they win the competition. The difficulty of these checks might be varied by moving more deliberately or more swiftly through the maze. There are three possible approaches:

- Move at a normal pace and make all skill checks as normal.
- Move quickly: skill checks are made at disadvantage, but the character

receives an additional check after their competition has made two checks.

- **Move deliberately:** skill checks are made at advantage, but the competitor receives an additional check after the character has made two checks.

Assume the chief competitor has a +2 Intelligence (Investigation) modifier, and always moves at a normal pace.

Cheating: Because the maze is by its nature isolated from the rest of the party, it will be difficult for others to affect the results in most cases. Another character might attempt to sneak into the maze in order to help the competing character in their attempts. A DC 18 Dexterity (Stealth) check is necessary in order to avoid detection while sneaking into the maze. Once in the maze, the character attempting to help must then make a DC 15 Wisdom (Perception) check to determine what direction to move in order to find the character. One round after succeeding on this check, they may help the character in the maze, giving them advantage on all subsequent skill checks.

The character might attempt to do something while others are not able to see him inside of the maze. For example, a character might use tools such as a string or marking device to help figure out the way through. Any such activity can grant advantage on up to two of the skill checks. Unless accompanied by a DC 15 Dexterity (Sleight of Hand) check to cover up what they were doing, assume any such efforts will be discovered in 1d4 hours and traced back to the character as the source. Similarly, if the character tries to incapacitate the other competitors and leave them in the maze, such efforts will be discovered in 1d4 hours.

Rewards and Penalties: Any character who wins the contest gains popularity. There is no penalty for losing the contest. Any character who is caught cheating can't gain popularity again prior to a long rest.

Observing

A character can choose to observe the various contests instead of participating. This might be purely for enjoyment, or it might give them an opportunity to do something to sway the result of a contest in one way or another.

A character observing can take one action at up to two different activities occurring within the same time period, or can take multiple actions at one activity. Some possibilities for the sorts of actions these characters might take are listed under each activity as *Cheating*. You will need to adjudicate the results for any actions the characters might take which are not listed in this portion of each activity.

Participation Prize

Anyone who did well in several contests but never quite got first place will be able to attempt to convince other party goers that they are still worthy. The eligible contests are any for which there is a category of *Final challenge*, as well as the Trivia Games contest.

Contest: If someone was a finalist in one of these contests a total of twice or more, they may attempt a DC 10 Charisma (Persuasion) check to convince others of their popularity. If they were a finalist three times or more, they gain advantage on this check.

Rewards and Penalties: Success gains popularity. Failure means that character can't gain popularity until after a long rest, as they are perceived as whiny.

Scavenger Hunt

Contestants are tasked with finding objects hidden in an area. The area could be the grounds of an estate, the hallways of a castle, or any type of untamed wilderness. The nature of the region in which this occurs will determine the applicable skill checks to make. In a more wilderness-type setting Wisdom (Survival) checks might be appropriate, while in an urban setting Intelligence (Investigation) checks might be appropriate. There may be settings in which both are important!

Contest: The characters make a series of skill checks to determine how rapidly they are able to find the hidden objects. Unlike many of the other contests, there aren't "rounds" to be completed before facing off against a finalist: everyone is competing against each other. The race is to complete all tasks before anyone else does. If the character successfully completes four skill checks before anyone else does, they win the competition. They must complete a total of four skill checks divided from among at least two different categories. The possible skill checks are detailed below:

- DC 14 Wisdom (Perception) check.
- DC 16 Intelligence (Investigation) check.
- DC 16 Wisdom (Survival) check.

As the character rolls each skill check, roll a skill check for their toughest competitor and keep a running tally of the success or failures of this competitor. Assume the competitor has a +2 Wisdom (Perception) modifier, and a +3 to whichever other skill you are using in this contest. If you choose to require the use of all three skills, assume the other competitor has one skill with a +0 modifier as well. If the character makes four successful skill checks

before the competitor does so, the character wins.

If it takes the character the exact same number of skill checks to succeed as the competitor, then it becomes a race to see who gets back to the referee with their results first. Assume the competitor has a speed of 30'. If the character and the competitor have the same speed, then assume they both take the dash action until exhausted. Roll DC 10 Constitution saving throws until someone fails, and lags behind. Assume the competitor has a +0 Constitution saving throw modifier.

Cheating: Another character can attempt to do something to distract one of the contestants, giving one of the contestants disadvantage on their next roll. It takes a DC 15 Charisma (Performance) check to distract a contestant. A character may only attempt this once. Another character could also attempt to cast a spell or use an ability that benefits the character before the contest starts. Assume this must be done two rounds ahead of time. Also assume that it takes approximately 10 minutes between each of the skill checks. Another character might attempt to sneak into the area of the scavenger hunt in order to help the competing character in their attempts. A DC 15 Dexterity (Stealth) check is necessary in order to avoid detection, and must be attempted before each attempt to help the competing character. If this attempt is successful, the helping character may either cast one spell, or make the same skill check roll that the competing character is making. If either roll is successful it counts as one success.

Rewards and Penalties: Any character who wins the contest gains popularity. There is no penalty for losing the contest. Any character who is caught cheating can't gain popularity again prior to a long rest.

Sparring Contest

The head bodyguard of the host is willing to take all comers. He says he will reward anyone who lasts half a minute against him.

Contest: This is a combat contest. The bodyguard has the statistics of a **veteran**.

The bodyguard will yield if he is dealt a given amount of damage, or based on the passage of time. The amount of damage or time is dependent on the level of the contestant. The time limit is one round plus a round per level of the character. The damage limit is five hit points, plus five hit points per level of the character.

Even if injured in a contest, he will continue to spar with anyone else who is willing, taking a healing potion if necessary between bouts.

Cheating: Another character can incite the crowd once per contest, giving one of the contestants either advantage or disadvantage on their next attack roll. It takes a DC 15 Charisma (Persuasion) check to incite the crowd sufficiently to have this effect. A character might attempt this prior to each roll, but it only has an effect on the first success. Another character could also attempt to cast a spell or use an ability that benefits the character during the contest itself. To do so, they must succeed on a DC 13 Dexterity (Sleight of Hand) check to avoid the bodyguard realizing what they are doing. If they fail the Dexterity (Sleight of Hand) check, the character automatically loses the contest. Spells may be cast before the sparring contest begins, but assume this must be done two rounds ahead of time to avoid the need for the Dexterity (Sleight of Hand) check.

Outcome: Damage dealt in the fight is nonlethal, and anyone reduced to 0 hit points

regains consciousness at 1 hit point within a few minutes. However, regular means are necessary to restore lost hit points beyond this.

Rewards and Penalties: Any character who meets the time or damage requirement gains popularity. Any character who defeats the bodyguard in single combat gains popularity, and is given an uncommon one use magic item (such as a potion or scroll) by the host as a reward for such valor. There is no penalty for losing the contest. Any character who is caught cheating can't gain popularity again prior to a long rest.

Spinning Contraption

An artificer stands next to a large metallic device covered in sprockets, gears and knobs. In the center is a large sphere filled with a variety of spokes and rungs on which anyone inside might be able to cling. But why would anyone go inside there on purpose?

Contest: Whoever can last the longest inside of a spinning sphere is the winner of the contest. The challenge is partly based on the ability to withstand the movement, but also about positioning and repositioning oneself within the sphere to avoid the worst effects. Assume there is only room for two contestants within the sphere.

Each round, the contestants may make a DC 14 Strength (Athletics) or Dexterity (Acrobatics) check to position themselves within the sphere. Success gives them advantage on the Constitution saving throw to avoid becoming nauseous. The Constitution saving throw is generally DC 12, but it is possible to spin faster or slower allowing for a variety of challenges if requested. The first time a character fails this saving throw, they become nauseous and gain a level of exhaustion. They can signal their

surrender and for the contest to stop at this point if they want. If they continue with the contest, and fail the Constitution saving throw a second time, they become stunned and automatically lose the contest.

Assume that their competitor has a +2 Constitution saving throw modifier, and will always choose to surrender if they fail the first saving throw.

Cheating: Another character could also attempt to cast a spell or use an ability that benefits the character during the contest itself. To do so, they must succeed on a DC 13 Dexterity (Sleight of Hand) check to avoid the artificer or other contestant realizing what they are doing. If they fail the Dexterity (Sleight of Hand) check, the character automatically loses the contest. Spells may be cast before the contest begins, but assume this must be done two rounds ahead of time to avoid the need for the Dexterity (Sleight of Hand) check. Any amount of magical healing before the end of the contest allows the character to take additional levels of exhaustion in lieu of gaining the stunned condition on their next failed Constitution saving throw.

Outcome: Whether the character wins or loses, they have the incapacitated condition for ten minutes after the completion of the contest. Normal exhaustion rules apply if they gained exhaustion. If they obtained the stunned condition, they retain it until taking a short rest, and are frightened of the contraption until they take a long rest.

Rewards and Penalties: Any character who wins the contest gains popularity. If the contest is lost due to gaining the stunned condition, the character can't gain popularity again prior to a

long rest. Any character who is caught cheating can't gain popularity again prior to a long rest.

Strongarm Contest

A large hammer sits next to a fifty foot tall pole with demarcations along it and a bell on the top. Hitting the hammer squarely on a tiny button at the base of the pole causes a weight to rise along the pole, potentially hitting the bell at the top.

Contest: The characters make a melee attack roll with a maul. They may add their proficiency bonus if they are proficient in the use of the maul. The "damage" done by the maul scales with the AC they are able to hit, as detailed below:

- AC <5: completely miss the button and are disqualified from the contest.
- AC 5: roll 4d6 and drop the two highest results, then add strength modifier to calculate damage.
- AC 10: roll 3d6 and drop the highest result, then add strength modifier to calculate damage.
- AC 15: roll 2d6, then add strength modifier to calculate damage.
- AC 20: roll 3d6 and drop the lowest roll, then add strength modifier to calculate damage.
- AC 25: roll 4d6 and drop the two lowest rolls, then add strength modifier to calculate damage.
- Critical hits: add 2d6 to whatever roll is called for in the AC roll that would have been hit, as indicated above, dropping the number of dice indicated in each case, and adding strength modifier.

Initial Rounds: To make it to the final round, it is necessary to deal 8 damage on successive

attacks. Damage rolls of 13 or higher result in the weight moving to within inches of the bell, wooing the crowd and granting advantage on the next roll. Damage rolls of 17 or more result in the weight smacking the bell, and the contestant instantly being declared the winner of the entire contest.

Cheating: Another character can attempt to do something to distract one of the contestants, giving one of the contestants disadvantage on their next roll. It takes a DC 15 Charisma (Performance) check to distract a contestant. A character may only attempt this once. Another character could also attempt to cast a spell or use an ability that benefits the character during the contest itself. To do so, they must succeed on a DC 13 Dexterity (Sleight of Hand) check to avoid the game's referee realizing what they are doing. If they fail the Dexterity (Sleight of Hand) check, the character automatically loses the contest. Spells may be cast before the contest begins, but assume this must be done two rounds ahead of time to avoid the need for the Dexterity (Sleight of Hand) check. Also assume the final round is 20-40 minutes after the start of the contest.

Final challenge: Each contestant must attempt to hit the button and cause the weight to fly the highest. If one of the finalists does at least two more damage than the other, she is considered the winner. Otherwise, the height that the weight rises is too close to differentiate and the final round is repeated. The final round opponent has an attack bonus of +4 and strength modifier of +2.

Rewards and Penalties: Any character who wins the contest gains popularity. There is no penalty for losing the contest. Any character who is caught cheating can't gain popularity again prior to a long rest.

Trivia Games

One of the host's lackeys is willing to test anyone who is interested on their knowledge of the region. Participants are asked a question and write their answer on a sheet of paper. If they miss the question they are dismissed from the game until there is only one contestant left.

Contest: This contest proceeds through a series of rounds, but unlike other round-based contests there is nothing special about the last round unless another character is participating in the contest. Success on an Intelligence (History) check is necessary to proceed to the next round. The DC increases from one round to the next: 10, 12, 15. If a character succeeds on all of these skill checks, assume they have won the game unless they are competing against another character. In that case, assume the highest roll wins.

Cheating: Another character could potentially try to help a contestant. To be helpful they must both know the answer to the question and communicate it with the contestant without the lackey realizing it. They must succeed on the same Intelligence (History) check that the contestant is participating in to know the answer. They must succeed on a DC 15 Dexterity (Sleight of Hand) check to avoid the lackey realizing what they are doing. If they fail the Dexterity (Sleight of Hand) check, the character automatically loses the contest. Another character could also attempt to cast a spell or use an ability that benefits the character during the contest itself, and would need to pass the same Dexterity (Sleight of Hand) check if they do so. Spells may be cast before the contest begins, but assume this must be done two rounds ahead of time to avoid the need for the Dexterity (Sleight of Hand) check.

Also assume there are 10-20 minutes between rounds.

Rewards and Penalties: Any character who wins the contest gains popularity. There is no penalty for losing the contest. Any character who is caught cheating can't gain popularity again prior to a long rest.

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