

# The Princess' Kingdom



a Clinton R. Nixon game



# The Princes' Kingdom

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**Based on**

*Dogs in the Vineyard*  
by D. Vincent Baker

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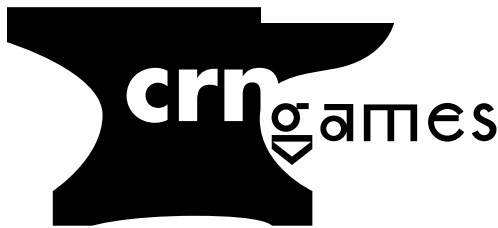
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# Foreword

**by D. Vincent Baker**

Clinton R. Nixon, Joshua Newman and Ben Lehman gave this game to me as a gift, at a party celebrating the soon-to-be birth of my third son.

As I write this, my dad is dying.

I think this is a great game. It's a fulfillment, not a copy or adaptation, of *Dogs in the Vineyard*; it has moral life and moral light and moral danger all its own. When we play it, it'll show us truth in ourselves and in our friends.

But my thinking it's a great game, that's only the smaller part of what *The Princes' Kingdom* means to me.

Let's suppose that self-expression matters. Let's say that if I can take my burdens – my childhood heartbreaks, my anxieties, my secret shames, the dreams I think I'll jinx if I admit them, the fear I feel at being responsible for the lives and growth of three radiant, perfect boys – if I can take my burdens and write them down, draw them or paint them, just somehow *express* them and

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be heard, let's say that then I can be a better person than I am now. Even a little bit better – I'll tell you, responsible for raising children, I'm grateful for every little bit better. I see myself in my kids and I'll take every little bit.

And then suppose that I have a strong community, and we're all mutually dedicated to the success of one another's self-expression. Dedicated beyond "yes, I support you" – these are people who'll work materially for you, invest time and money and expertise in your success, *be there showing people what you've made* with real, unmistakable enthusiasm. They'll celebrate your success and then challenge you to even better.

Can you imagine it? They'll celebrate your success and then challenge you to better. They're better for you than anyone. They're what a church wishes it could be. They're what your family hopes for you when you're grown.

In the original afterword, Clinton said that I'm a lighthouse to him. Maybe so – and believe me that I'm touched – but if I am, it's to the credit of the family that raised me and the community that took me in. Clinton himself very much included.

You know what they say about men and islands.

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# Welcome!



*The Princes' Kingdom* is a game in which you and your friends act out the adventures of children in faraway lands. These lands are all across an ancient ocean, and are all ruled by a wise king. You play the king's children, princes, sent out to explore the kingdom and help out the citizens. The kingdom is very large, made up of hundreds of islands, and so the king sends out his princes to survey it and find out what sort of problems people have across the lands, so that they may one day be wise rulers themselves.

## **Have you played a role-playing game before?**

If not, that's OK. It's simple and you already know how to do most of it. It's like make-believe, but even more fun. If you've played cops and robbers, for example, you've probably had some point in the game where you said to your friend, "I caught you!" and he



said, “No, you didn’t!” and then you argued about it. In a role-playing game, you won’t know if you’ve caught him until you roll some dice. It’s as thrilling as a good book or movie, but you get to decide what the characters try to do.

The first thing you’re going to do when you play is make up a prince. You’ll decide how old he is and what he is good at and not so good at and who his friends and enemies are.

One player will be picked to be the Guide. The Guide doesn’t play a prince. Instead, the Guide is responsible for moving the story along and providing lots of stuff for the princes to do. The Guide will play all the people in the world who aren’t princes.

The Guide’s going to work with the other players and figure out where the princes are going. When they get there, there will be problems, and you will decide how you want to fix them. You’re the princes, after all! It’s your job to make sure your father’s kingdom is running well. Then you and the Guide will decide how well you did at fixing the problem using some dice and playing a little game within the game.

Lastly, you’ll decide whether you did enough and maybe you’ll stick around and solve some more problems or work on that first one some more. Or maybe you’ll go someplace new and start over again.

## **It’s a game for kids and adults**

Both kids and adults can really enjoy this game. One great way to play it is with an adult as the Guide and kids as the other players. That’s not the only way you can play it, though! Once you’ve

played, maybe a kid should be the Guide while the other people, including adults, play the princes. Whatever you decide is alright by me and is going to be a lot of fun!



## Dice

This game uses three different sizes of dice. The normal size, the cube you see in many board games, has six sides. We call it a d6. Another size has four sides and looks like a pyramid. It is called a d4. The last size has eight sides and looks like a diamond. We like to call it a d8.

When you have more than one of any die size, you put the number in front of the abbreviation. Five six-sided dice are written as 5d6. Two eight-sided dice are written as 2d6. One four-sided die can be called a d4 or 1d4. All these are pronounced as *number-dee-number*. “2d6” is pronounced “two-dee-six.”

You will need about 20d6 and about 10d4 and 10d8 to play. That’s a lot of dice, and that equals a lot of fun.

## Getting started

You need at least two people to play this game. I think it’s a lot of fun with more, but more than six or maybe seven is too many. One of these people will be the Guide. I talked about him in the section above. (Oh, yeah, sometimes I say “him,” and I mean anybody. It could be a man or a woman or a boy or a girl. It could be your mom, a teacher, or a girl from school. English is weird that way and someone should do something about it!)



Anyway, I was telling you about the Guide. It makes a lot of sense for the oldest person in the group to be the Guide, at least the first time you play. You need to choose that person before you play.

Everyone else gets to play a prince! Before, I told you anyone could play this game. That's true. In this kingdom that you're going to play in, both boys and girls are called princes, and you can play a boy or a girl. Boys can play girl princes and girls can play boy princes. That's OK.

## **The first time you play**

The first time you play, you have to make up your princes. This is super easy and fun, and it will not take long.

After that, you will learn how the game works as your prince gets one chance to prove something to his teachers and dad before he leaves on his adventures.

Then, the princes will start traveling in the kingdom. Your princes will need an island to go to. The Guide will create this island based off the type of adventures you want and what he thinks will be fun.

## **After that**

When you play after the first time, the Guide gets to create the island you're going to between times that you play. You'll go to new islands and meet people and help them fix their problems.

Afterwards, you can talk about the game with the Guide and let him know what was fun and what you liked most.

# The Island Kingdom



The kingdom – actually it's the Kingdom of Islandia, but most people call it "the kingdom" or "the Island Kingdom" – spreads out as far as a person can see and farther! The king's castle is on a large island in the middle of an even larger ocean. The rest of the kingdom is also made of islands – some so big that it would take five days to ride a horse across them and some so small that only five families can live on them. There are people whose entire



job is to run boats through the ocean to move goods and people between islands.

The entire kingdom is run by the king, your father.

He is a wonderful ruler and only makes laws that help the people of the kingdom and all good people love him. Even things that seem hard, like taxes, are done for good – the king uses them to make sure people have roads and boats and food in rough times.

There is no telling what all lies out there in the kingdom. It is grand and old, and legends abound. Some people say that magic happens out in the hidden islands, but others say that's hogwash. Maybe you will find out the truth.

The sad part is that the kingdom is so big and spread out that sometimes problems exist that the king doesn't know about. This is where you will do good work! Because the king can't be everywhere, you get to go and solve problems where he cannot. He will not be able to come and save you, because it takes a long time to get places on a boat. The king trusts you a whole lot, and knows you will do well.

## Being a prince

You are a prince of the Kingdom of Islandia. You were raised in the royal court and had teachers from a young age. Many days, they took you out and taught you how to read and write and how to do math and read maps and ride horses. They probably taught you how to defend yourself in a fight. Most of all, they tried to

teach you be a good leader, because someday, you will lead the kingdom.



You grew up seeing your father each day. He wore a crown of shining gold, but he took that off when he played with you. He could be soft and caring, and he could wipe away your tears with his big golden beard when you fell and skinned your knee. He could be hard and stern when he caught you lying or doing something that hurt someone else. Most of all, he told you stories about being a boy and about being a king and how to do both.

Now he's told you that you have to go be a leader. You have to travel throughout his kingdom and make sure that the people are doing well. You are his son, the prince, and it is up to you to know what the people need and make sure they get it. When you travel out in the world, you speak for the king! That's a big responsibility.

All princes sent out into the world are between five and twelve years old. When you turn thirteen, you go back to the king's castle and become an adult and help the king rule the land! Maybe you'll even be the new king!

The other princes are your brothers and sisters. Though you grew up with them, they might be much older or younger than you, so maybe you didn't play with them a whole lot. Despite this, you all have a bond. You need to take care of each other as much as you need to take care of the people.



## Discovering the Island Kingdom

If you've played another role-playing game before, you might be surprised to know that what I've just told you is all you need to know about the Island Kingdom to get started. This game is about exploration and adventure and discovery, and the best way to achieve this is to organically make up stuff as you play. After all, this is a game about a make-believe world. So make believe! Anything you can imagine can exist in the Kingdom of Islandia.

You'll see that when you make up princes you'll be filling in the Kingdom from the get-go. Don't be afraid to throw in wild stuff, and mix up real-world cultures however you like. Most importantly, add in any elements that you and the rest of the players find interesting. When you make up stories, you put in details from your own unique interests. Do that in this game, and you'll have a blast.

# How to play this game



Everybody likes to sit around and make up stories, I think. I sure do. Usually when you tell a story, you simply recount a tale that already exists in your head. You already know what that story's all about! In this game, you tell a story with your friends, and you don't know how it's going to end!

How does that work? Well, in each part of the story, you have stuff you have to do. And it's easy! I'll tell you what that stuff is.



You don't have to read this whole section right now if you want to, although you can. It's a good reference for you during the game. Whenever you're unsure as to what to do next, look here, and it will tell you.

## Character creation

*If you are a player and not the Guide, you have to do this stuff:*

- ♦ Make neat princes to play.
- ♦ Help each other make neat princes.
- ♦ Help the Guide make up the world. You'll do this just by making neat princes.
- ♦ Start learning how to have struggles – that is, solve problems using the dice.

*Your princes only have to prove they are ready to see the world.*

*If you are the Guide, you have to do this stuff:*

- ♦ Help the other players make up their princes.
- ♦ Start painting the picture of the world by listening to what the other players want and adding stuff you like.
- ♦ Go ahead and read further in the game, and start learning the rules on how to have struggles.
- ♦ Run the beginning struggle for each prince where he proves himself.

*The Guide's characters* – meaning everyone who isn't a prince, who we'll call "citizens" – have to be there to make it kind of tough for the princes to prove themselves, but make sure they get the chance to.

# The entire journey of a prince



*The players* have to do this stuff:

- ♦ Play the best prince ever!
- ♦ Talk about each other's princes and help others think about what their princes are doing.
- ♦ Help the Guide make up stuff about the kingdom.

*The princes* have to do this stuff:

- ♦ Travel from island to island, finding out about people's problems and helping them solve these problems.
- ♦ Learn about the land they will rule some day.
- ♦ Make sure people know they speak for the king.
- ♦ Change the world!

*The Guide* has to do this stuff:

- ♦ Make up islands for the princes to go to.
- ♦ Make up neat details about the kingdom.
- ♦ Give the other players really hard situations to deal with.

*The citizens* have to do this stuff:

- ♦ Help out the princes.
- ♦ Make life hard for the princes.
- ♦ Bring all their problems to the princes.

## When you go to an island

*If you are a player*, you have to do this stuff:

- ♦ Play your prince!
- ♦ Listen to other players play their princes and help them out.



- ♦ Tell the Guide what you want to do and how you want your prince to help fix problems.
- ♦ Engage in struggles and then show what happened to your prince because of the struggle.

*The princes* have to do this stuff:

- ♦ Meet people and let them know the king cares about them.
- ♦ Let people know they're the princes and that they speak for the king.
- ♦ Find out about people's problems.
- ♦ Help people find the root of their problems and help them implement solutions. The most common problem is a person who decides he's better than other people, and it's up to the prince to let that person know he's doing wrong, and even make him do right if you have to.

*The Guide* has to do this stuff:

- ♦ Play all the citizens on the island.
- ♦ Make sure that the people's problems are brought up quickly and often.
- ♦ Listen to the players and make sure you are driving the game in a direction they find enjoyable.
- ♦ *Do not* already have a plan for how people's problems are going to get solved. Let the players come up with that.
- ♦ Make sure that the troublemakers on the island struggle against the princes.

*The citizens* have to do this stuff:

- ♦ Try to get the princes on their side.
- ♦ Try to tell the princes what they should do.
- ♦ Tell the princes all their problems.
- ♦ Make things hard for the princes by trying to fix the problems themselves.
- ♦ Offer to help the princes out however they can. After all, they're princes!
- ♦ When the princes aren't looking, cause trouble!

## Between islands

*The players* have to do this stuff:

- ♦ Choose what changed about your prince.

*The princes* have to do this stuff:

- ♦ Decide what island to go to next. They might even go back to an island or head back to the king's castle.

*The Guide* has to do this stuff:

- ♦ Write down the problems on the next island the princes are going to.
- ♦ Start to create the citizens for the next island ("making proto-citizens," which you'll see in the chapter "Friends and troublemakers.")

## When a prince goes home

*The player* has to do this stuff:

- ♦ Describe how the prince learned to be a king.
- 
-



- ♦ Make a new prince, if you want to keep playing.  
(The king has a lot of sons!)

*The prince* has to do this stuff:

- ♦ Take his place beside the king.

*The Guide* has to do this stuff:

- ♦ Help the player out with his epilogue.

*The citizens* have to do this stuff:

- ♦ Welcome the prince home!

This is what you do in this story. If you are ever confused or don't know what to do next, refer back to this section, "How to play this game," and it will tell you.

# Creating your prince



Everyone makes up their princes together, because it's a lot more fun than doing it by yourself. Everyone should get a copy of the character sheet out to make up their prince. (The character sheet can be found on the website for *The Princes' Kingdom*.)

Do you see that it has questions on it? We are going to answer them together, now.

First, *what is your prince's name?* Think about it and write that down. Here's something to think about – what you name your prince says a lot about the kingdom and the king. If he is named



“Edward” or “Arthur,” that sounds a lot like old England. If he is named “Nwete” or “Shaka,” that sounds kind of African. “Erethan” and “Noltar” sound like names from a magical place. “Lion” and “Rainshower” sound like names from a place very different from Earth where people name themselves after the natural things they resemble.

*How old is your prince?* Remember, your prince must be between five and twelve years old. The older you make your prince, the more problems he has had a chance to have, which is great! It means your prince will be stronger, but he will have to deal with bigger problems. If you are between five and twelve years old, maybe you want to play a prince who is the same age as you.

## Qualities

*What strong qualities does your prince have?* These are things your prince is really good at, things that help him out regularly. You can write down this stuff lots of ways. You might write down “climbing stuff.” Or you might write down “I’m an excellent climber.” Or you might write down “I used to climb cliffs with my favorite teacher.” All of these are great!

If your prince is five years old, write down five strong qualities. Your prince must be very talented to leave the castle so early! If your prince is six or seven years old, write down four things. You are leaving early and have lots of promise. If your prince is eight or nine years old, write down three things. If your prince is ten or eleven years old, write down two things. If your prince is twelve years old, write down one thing. Your prince has a lot more general knowledge than the younger kids and will be expected to lead the way.

*What troublesome qualities does your prince have?*

These things are not really that bad! It might even be something that your prince likes to do a lot. What matters is that he sometimes gets in trouble when he does these things. These things might be stuff like “arguing.” Your prince might like to argue, but trouble happens when he does. You might write down “I like to argue,” or even “I’m good at arguing.” You can write down other stuff like “sneaking up on birds” or “horse riding.” These are not necessarily your prince’s weaknesses. They are things that sometimes give him problems.



If your prince is five or six years old, write down one troublesome quality. If your prince is seven, eight, or nine years old, write down two troublesome qualities. If your prince is ten, eleven, or twelve years old, write down three troublesome qualities.

Your prince must be either be strong or troublesome at being a prince. Write down “I’m a prince” for one of the two.

### ***Using qualities to color the world***

You can choose anything you want as a quality. The point of this game is to let your imagination run wild. So, if you want to pick “I can move things with my mind” or “I can talk to animals” as qualities, go for it!

When you do this, though, remember that you’re helping to create a shared vision of the world that you are going to play in. This is one reason making characters together is fun. By bringing up the qualities you are going to take, you get input from everyone else about whether your ideas fit with theirs, and your ideas may inspire them!



If you choose to take an ability that greatly changes the idea of the world your prince will be adventuring in, ask everyone else if that's OK. If you find yourself in a situation where two people don't agree about what is possible or what would be fun in this imaginary world, take a break and get the Guide to help you find a compromise.

## Relationships

*With whom does your prince have a strong relationship?* These can be friends, allies, teachers, role models, or even pets! The only rule is that they have to be living things. Maybe your prince has a dog or a cat. If your prince is five or six, he has three strong relationships. If he is seven, eight, or nine years old, he has two. If he is ten, eleven, or twelve years old, he has one.

*With whom does your prince have a troublesome relationship?* These are people who your prince may or may not like. They don't have to be bad people, but sometimes your relationship with them gets you into trouble. They could be a friend who gets you to do crazy things. Maybe they bug you – they could be a hard teacher or a squirrel that always follows you around begging for food. If your prince is five, six, seven, or eight years old, you have one troublesome relationship. If your prince is nine, ten, eleven, or twelve years old, you have two.

You can always take relationships with your siblings, the other princes. You don't have to, however. You should only do this if you want to have an especially strong or especially troublesome relationship with one or more of them.

If you can't think of all these people right now, that's OK! You don't have to fill them all out now, and you should leave some empty if you can. You should fill out at least one, though. Write the number of relationships you haven't established yet on your character sheet under "unused relationships."



## Equipping your prince

*What stuff does your prince carry?* These are the things your prince is taking with him. This can be anything you want! Your prince probably carries something to defend himself with. Maybe he has a staff or a bow or even a sword.

He has one thing for sure: a cloak. Each prince owns a beautiful cloak made by his mother. It is usually made up of all sorts of bright fabrics. All the people in the king's castle, including the king himself, gave a part of their own cloak to make the one for your prince. Everyone who sees it will know that the wearer is a prince of the kingdom and speaks with the authority of the king. You should describe what your prince's cloak looks like.

Once you write down what your prince is carrying, you need to write down what kind of dice it gives you. Did you see that the other questions had a type of die beside them on your character sheet? Well, this one doesn't, so you'll have to figure it out. If you have trouble, ask the Guide for help.

If what your prince are carrying is awesome or really good, it gives you a d8.

If what you are carrying is just good or OK, it gives you a d6.



If what you are carrying is cruddy, it gives you a d4.

Sharp things can add an extra die that you will roll when using that item. If what you are carrying can be used as a weapon and it is sharp, like a knife or a sword, you will roll an extra d4 when you use the item. If you had a really awesome sword, it would give you a d8 and a d4. If you had an OK staff, it would probably only give you a d6 because staffs aren't usually sharp. Write the item down like this example: "OK sword – d6 + d4."

Guess what? You are done creating your prince!

## Carter and Lincoln make up their princes

To give you an idea of how princes are created, here's an example of how two boys, Carter and Lincoln, start the game. We'll revisit them several times in later examples.

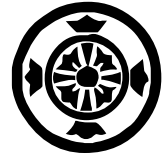
Carter and Lincoln are going to play this game with Ronald, the Guide. They're going to make up princes first, of course.

Ronald asks Carter and Lincoln, "What kind of names do you guys want to use?"

Carter's got a strong opinion on this one. "I know this kid named Sulayman. Can I play a character with a cool name like his?"

Ronald says, "Of course. Is that OK with you, Lincoln?" Lincoln nods.

After looking up some names with a baby names book, Carter decides on “Mustafa” for his prince’s name and Lincoln decides on “Baha.” These names sound Arabic or Persian, so the three players decide that the king’s island is dry with beautiful domed castles and gardens.



Ronald asks, “So, how old are your princes?” Carter decides to be the older brother and play an 11-year old. Lincoln wants to play a six-year-old. Both boys write down their prince’s age.

Carter has to decide on two strong qualities and three troublesome qualities for his prince. One of these will have to be “I’m a prince.” He wants to be especially good at that, so he makes it a strong quality. Carter wants to play a strong leader and an expert with the bow, but he’s only got one strong quality slot left. Ronald mentions that the bow can hurt people, and maybe it’d be a good troublesome quality. Carter thinks about it and decides the opposite: his prince wants to be a leader, but he’s still young. He thinks up two more troublesome qualities and ends up with the strong qualities of “I’m a prince,” “I’m a really good shot with a bow,” and the troublesome qualities of “Leadership comes natural to me,” “I like action, not talking!” and “I can live on bread and butter.”

Lincoln’s got four strong qualities and one troublesome quality to think up. His prince is very talented, but Lincoln says, “I think that Baha doesn’t



really want to be a prince.” Ronald thinks that’s a good start for a really interesting character and Lincoln chooses “I’m a prince” for his troublesome quality. His strong qualities end up being “I’m smarter than my age,” “Animals trust me,” “I once read that in a book,” and “I can turn into a fox.”

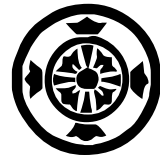
Ronald and Carter stop for a second. Ronald asks, “Is everyone OK with that last one? It definitely puts magic in the game.” Carter’s fine with it, and so Lincoln’s prince, Baha, can transform into a fox.

*(This is what I told you about earlier in the section “Using qualities to color the world.” Having cool abilities like this is great, but you should make sure everyone is OK with you adding such a large possibility to the world you will play in.)*

Next, Carter and Lincoln have got to figure out their characters’ relationships. Mustafa, Carter’s prince, has one strong relationship slot and two troublesome relationship slots. He chooses Suha, the female captain of their ship, as a strong relationship and decides to keep the other two troublesome relationships open for play. Ronald comments how Carter got to make up a citizen that will always be with them when he wrote down that relationship.

Baha, Lincoln’s prince, has three strong relationships and one troublesome relationship. Lincoln chooses to have a troublesome relationship with his adopted

fox brother and a strong relationship with Mustafa, leaving two strong relationships to add in play.



Lastly, the two of them need equipment.

Carter's definitely taking a bow for Mustafa. Ronald asks, "Is the bow a really good one?"

Carter says, "Of course it is!" He writes down "excellent bow – d8 + d4," because a bow shoots sharp arrows. He also writes down "old fishing pole – d4" and "one of the king's rings – d6." He describes his cloak as purple and gold, and half made up of one of the king's older cloaks, with everyone else's pieces sown around the center piece, and writes down "purple and gold cloak – d6."

Lincoln wants to have a few books, so he writes down "a small library – d6." He also chooses "a chipped dagger – d4 + d4," and "a loud golden whistle – d8." His cloak is made up of red and brown cloths, and has a fox's head embroidered in the back, and he decides it's really great – a d8 cloak.

With that, Carter and Lincoln are ready to play!

# Proving your prince



OK! At this point, you and the rest of the players, except the Guide, have made up your princes. Now you get to play the game as your princes for the first time and learn about the game. The Guide gets his first chance to challenge you.

The Guide will ask every other player, “What do you hope you have proved to your teachers and to your dad?” You will think of an answer, such as “I hope I’ve proved I’m a good speaker” or “I hope I’ve showed that I’m good with a bow.” You shouldn’t say

something that you already wrote down that your prince is good at – after all, you’ve already proved he is good at that! You can say something like it, though. For example, maybe your prince is already a good speaker. You could say, “I hope I proved I am good at talking with adults.”



You’re going to act this out! You and the Guide will talk about the setting where your prince has found himself and who’s there with him. You will set the scene together and talk about what your prince is going to try to do and what people or things will be holding him back.

Then you’re going to act it out and have a *struggle*. (That’s what a situation is called when it’s not certain your prince can do something. You will roll dice to find out if he can do it!) There are detailed rules for this later, in the section “Problems and fixing them.” (The Guide can go ahead and read this if he has any questions. For now, don’t worry about “fallout,” which you’ll see explained in that section.) You are going to try to prove your prince’s worth, and the Guide is going to act out all the obstacles in your way.

Follow these steps to see what happens:

- ♦ The Guide is going to roll 4d6 and 4d8.
- ♦ You are going to roll your prince’s age in d6s. If your prince is eight, you will roll eight d6s.
- ♦ If you have a relationship on your character sheet with any character the Guide is playing in this struggle, roll the die for that relationship.



- ♦ You and the Guide should separately line up all your dice in order of their value.
- ♦ You should go first. Say something your prince is going to do in order to prove himself. It should be something that your opposition can not ignore.

Take two of your dice and push them to the center of the table. This is called a *raise*.

- ♦ Then the Guide will say how the people and things in the scene react to this. The Guide should push one or more dice to the middle of the table whose sum is equal to or greater than the sum of your two dice. This is called a *see*.

- ♦ If the Guide uses only one die to see, he or she can describe the scene as really preventing you from doing well. This is called *reversing the blow*.

- ♦ If the Guide uses two dice to see, then you do well, but the opposition still stops you. This is called *blocking or dodging*.

- ♦ If the Guide uses three or more dice to see, then you do really well, and the opposition is taken aback. This is called *taking the blow*.

- ♦ Then the Guide will push two dice forward, raising, and say what the opposition is going to do in return.

- ♦ You push forward dice like the Guide just did, seeing, and describe your reaction in the same way – one die is great, two dice are OK, three dice means you've been pushed around.

- ♦ You two will go back and forth doing this until one person can't see a raise or no one can make a raise. The side that last

saw is the winner. If it's your turn, and you can't raise, but the other person can, then they get to raise.



At any point, you can roll a d8 for any strong quality your prince has that you can use and you can roll a d4 for every troublesome quality your prince has you can use. You can even roll the dice for something you are carrying, if you use it in the struggle. You have to describe using the quality or item when making your next raise or see.

If you win, you get to add an additional strong quality to your prince's character sheet. For example, if you said "I hope I've proved I am good at talking with adults," you get to write down "talking with adults" under "What are my prince's strong qualities?" If you lose, you have to write down an additional troublesome quality on your prince's character sheet. This should be related to what you were trying to prove, or something bad that happened to you while you were having your struggle.

When everyone is done proving their prince, then you get to say goodbye. The Guide then plays the king, your dad. Pretend that your prince is telling him goodbye. The king will tell your prince that he is proud of him and wish him good luck and then you'll start the rest of your prince's story!

## **Mustafa and Baha prove themselves**

After Carter and Lincoln have made up their princes, Ronald looks around the table. "Does anyone have an idea for what their prince proved to everyone before he left?"



Lincoln says, “I want to prove that I can make it alone in the wilderness.” Ronald says that’s a good idea. They’ve already described the king’s island a little, and it seems like it’s dry, but not a desert. Together they decide that it has cedar forests, and Baha likes to play in them after school, even though he’s been told to be careful.

Ronald sets the scene. “OK. Baha’s in the forest one evening, and he hears the snap of a dry twig. He turns around and sees a wild boar there.”

Lincoln says, “That’s scary. Baha’s going to try and get up a tree.”

Ronald says, “Let’s roll the dice and see what happens.” He gets to roll 4d6 and 4d8 because he is the Guide and Lincoln rolls 6d6, because Baha is six years old. After they sort out their rolls in numerical order, their rolls look like this:

*Ronald (the boar): 1, 2, 3, 3, 3, 3, 4, 6*

*Lincoln (Baha): 1, 1, 1, 4, 5, 6*

Lincoln says, “I’m going to jump and climb up the closest cedar tree.” He takes a 5 and a 6 in his hand and pushes them to the middle of the table for his raise, totaling 11.

Ronald looks and sees that it will take three of his dice to make 11, so he takes the blow. (*Remember, ‘taking the blow’ is any time you have to use three or more dice to see. Since Ronald’s two highest dice are 4*

and 6, he can't use two dice to see a raise of 11.) He pushes forward a 1, two 3s, and a 4 for his see and says, "The boar chases you, but can't get to you before you get up the tree. He's frustrated." He then raises with a 3 and a 6, totaling 9 and says, "The boar is angry and wants to get you down. He starts head-butting the tree, trying to knock you out of it."



Lincoln doesn't have a lot of dice left. His original roll was poor, and he can't see that raise. Ronald says, "Look at your character sheet, Lincoln. Maybe there's something there you can use."

Lincoln says, "OK! Well, I have a strong quality that animals trust me, so that's a d8 I can roll." He rolls and gets a 7. The rolls now look like this:

*Ronald (the boar):* 2, 3 (3 + 6 pushed forward for a raise)

*Lincoln (Baha):* 1, 1, 1, 4, 7

Lincoln can now see that raise, but has a choice. Does he use a 4 and a 7 and block and be wasteful, since that totals 11? Or does he take the blow with two 1s and a 7? (A 'block' is when you use only two dice to see a raise.)

He decides to take the blow and pushes forward two 1s and a 7 and says, "I lose my grip, and beg the boar to leave me alone, hoping he will listen." He raises with his last two dice, a 1 and a 4, and says, "My words make the boar more calm."



Ronald sees this with a 2 and a 3, blocking, and says, “Your words soothe the boar, but the thorn in his foot enrages him again.” He can’t raise, but neither can Lincoln. Ronald will win unless Lincoln thinks of something.

Carter says, “Hey, what about your whistle? Can you blow it to scare off the boar?”

Ronald says, “Of course! That’ll work.”

Lincoln rolls a d8 for his awesome whistle and gets a 3. He raises, saying, “I blow my whistle loudly!”

Ronald can’t see this raise, and has to give. He says, “You win! Write down what you proved on your character sheet as a strong quality.”

Lincoln writes down “I proved I can take care of myself in the wilderness.”

Now it’s Carter’s turn. He’s had time to think about this and he says, “I want to prove that I can act like an adult.”

Ronald says, “We need a situation for that. How about this? You’re at a dinner for the nobles, and your 13-year-old girl cousin, Kamala, is there and being annoying. You have to make it through dinner without her making you act like a child.”

Carter thinks it over. “OK. I can do that.”

They roll their dice. Ronald rolls 4d6 and 4d8 like before and Carter rolls 11d6, because he’s 11 years old. Their rolls look like:

Ronald (Kamala): 2, 2, 4, 5, 6, 6, 8, 8

Carter (Mustafa): 1, 2, 2, 2, 3, 4, 4, 5, 5, 6, 6



Carter starts. He has to think of something his opponent, his cousin Kamala, can't ignore. He says, "This is hard. Whatever I say to her, she can ignore, right?"

Ronald says, "Well, sure, but ignoring you would be doing something in this case. You're in a room with lots of adult nobles. If you say something forcefully, then ignoring you would be a bad thing for her. Just don't say 'hello' or something."

Carter says, "OK. Well, then, I decide to act very adult. I say, 'It is very nice to see you here today, Kamala. I was not expecting you.'" He pushes forward his two 6s, raising strongly.

Ronald sees with a 4 and an 8 and says, "It is also nice to see you, Mustafa." He grins. "Kamala says, 'I most certainly did not expect you, being that this is not a children's dinner.'" He raises with a 5 and a 6.

Carter can't see the total of 11 with only two dice, so he has to take the blow. He says, "I'll act upset with her and say, 'I'm about to go see the world. That's not something a child gets to do!'" He sees with his 3 and two 4s.

Their dice look like this right now:

Ronald (Kamala): 2, 2, 6, 8

Carter (Mustafa): 1, 2, 2, 2, 5, 5



Carter raises with his two 5s and says, "Aren't you dancing with your little sisters later at the children's party? I look forward to seeing that."

Ronald says, "That's mean, Carter. Well, I've got a response." He sees with his two 2s and his 6, taking the blow. He says, "Kamala sniffles a little. 'I will be at the children's party,' she says." He raises with his last die, an 8. "But it'll be the last time! For my engagement will be announced tonight!"

Carter can't see this. He's only got a total of 7. He looks on his character sheet, but none of his qualities will help here. He's in a corner, and has to give. He says, "Mustafa laughs loudly! 'Engaged! That's gross.' Everyone looks at him."

Ronald says, "What did your prince prove? You've got to write down a troublesome quality."

Lincoln says, "How about 'Mustafa doesn't understand girls.' It's not anything about being an adult, but it's true."

Carter says, "I like that, Lincoln."

Ronald says, "Actually, it should be tied into the adult thing. How about 'I think girls are gross.' That way, Mustafa has something he can change later, and it can help him sometimes, even though juvenile."

Carter agrees. He writes down "I think girls are gross" as a new troublesome quality for his prince.

# Creating islands



Creating islands is the job of the Guide, but anyone can read how you do it. It's no secret!

Every island the princes go to is going to have a problem. That's the whole point – how could they fix problems unless problems existed? When the princes get to an island, there will be lots of people – citizens – who want to meet them and everyone's going to want to give them dinner, but something's going to be wrong and they'll have to fix it. I bet some people won't appreciate that a bunch of meddling kids are there, but that will just make it more fun.



So what are problems like? Problems start small and get progressively worse in a sort of ladder of badness. It goes like this:

*Conceit* is the smallest problem, and it manifests itself as *injustice*.

*Disobedience* is when people don't follow the king's lead, and it manifests as *outlaws* plaguing the land.

*Unrest* is a bigger problem and it's when all the people start believing that the king doesn't care about them. It manifests as *loss of liberty*; that is, restrictive laws enacted that did not come from the king.

If there's unrest and bad laws, a *false leader* will arise, someone who wants to take the king's power. This manifests as *rebellion*.

And if all those things exist, *war and killing* can break out, and that's the worst thing of all.

## How to make an island

As the Guide, you are going to make up the island's leaders. You're going to figure out who is causing problems and who has the ability to fix those problems (and why aren't they fixing them already?) and who is most affected by those problems. You're going to make up what those problems are. You're also going to figure out what all those people above want the princes to do, and what would happen if the princes never came to the island.

You're also responsible for making up some information about what the island looks like, what the people are like, and what the local customs are.

# Conceit and injustice



What's conceit? Conceit is when someone thinks they're better than someone else, pure and simple. Even princes know they're just people and that they have a role to play. Thinking you are better than someone else can show up a lot of ways in people.

In the Kingdom of Islandia, everyone has a role in life. A lot of people have jobs. Some people take care of their home. Some people even hang out by the road and play songs. For all those people, that's their role in life. Some people, though, don't think they have to play their role – they think that they can just relax and not do anything. That's conceit – thinking you're too good to do your job.

There is a system in the kingdom for determining who is supposed to solve problems. Every village has a mayor. Because there are so many islands and cultures in the kingdom, some people elect this mayor while other villages have a mayor for life. However the mayor is chosen, it is his or her role to fix people's problems! If the mayor isn't fixing people's problems or is fixing one person's problems more than someone else's, that's conceit. Some islands are so big they have more than one village. In that case, there's a governor. He or she is supposed to make sure and solve big problems. If the governor lives in a big house and doesn't solve problems, that's conceit.

Long ago, the king of Islandia – that'd be your grand-dad or even your great-grand-dad – declared that if people are hungry and other people can help them, they have to. They can even report it to the authorities and they'll get paid back! That's what taxes are for. If someone is hoarding their wealth, that's conceit.



Marriage is serious stuff in the kingdom. If two people are married and they have real problems, sometimes they get separated, but they have to go to the mayor and state their problems. Only if they have proof and the problems can't get fixed can they get separated. You can't run away from your family because your husband or wife eats too much butter or doesn't pick up their underwear off the floor. If you are making life hard for your spouse by not doing your part, that's conceit.

If you have children, it's even more serious. You have to take care of your kids. If you aren't making sure they have food to eat and clothes to wear before you do, you aren't doing your job, and that's conceit.

Lastly, and this is a big one, there's a lot of different type of people in the kingdom. Sometimes, different cultures run into each other, and some people don't like that. If you think someone isn't as good as you because they have a different skin color or they eat different food or wear different clothes or whatever, that's real big conceit and that's a problem.

If any of the above instances of conceit are happening, it causes injustice. Chores don't get done; people don't get to eat; wives and husbands get mad at each other; kids get hurt; and people get discriminated against. All those things – really, really bad.

## **Disobedience and outlaws**

Disobedience means breaking the laws of the king. Because the kingdom is so very large, there can't be a lot of laws, or people wouldn't remember them. So the king has made very simple laws for people to follow:

- ♦ Do not be violent. That is, don't go around hitting people for no good reason.
- ♦ Do not cheat other people, steal from others, or willfully cause harm to other people's stuff.
- ♦ If you are paid to do a job, do it. If someone does a job for you, pay them a fair wage.
- ♦ Everyone in a family should live up to their role in the family. Parents should keep care of their children, and children should help their parents.



That's it! But you'd be surprised at how hard it is for people to remember to do those things.

When people start breaking these laws, other people think they can break the law, and before you know it, you've got outlaws. Outlaws might be bandits stealing from others. They might be tax collectors taking too much from people. They might be a band of youths hurting people and vandalizing stuff.

## Unrest and loss of liberty

When enough people get cheated or hurt, they get scared. And when people get scared and don't know who to turn to to fix their problems, they get riled up. This creates unrest. Unrest is when people live in a state of fear and bad-mouth their mayor and governor and king. If people who should be working stand around and say, "That king doesn't know what he's doing," that's unrest. Unrest doesn't help anyone.

When there's unrest, people sometimes try to take matters in their own hands and make their own laws. Let's say there are bandits that steal from people travelling at night. People might make a law



that no one can be outside after dark. That law's not from the king! They made it up, and it's a bad law. It prevents the liberty of the citizens of the kingdom and unfairly restricts them.

## **False leaders and rebellion**

When you've got enough people all stirred up and making laws willy-nilly and starting problems, someone will usually try to lead those people. It's a quick way to get powerful without doing what's right. A false leader will get up and make speeches about how he can solve all your problems if you just follow him, but he usually doesn't want anything but power.

Still, people will listen, and then you've got a whole rebellion – a bunch of people who want to make their own kingdom!

## **War and killing**

This is the worst problem of all. When an island is divided up and some people follow one false leader while others follow another guy and still others follow the king, they're going to fight. This is war, and people will die. Nothing – absolutely nothing in the world – makes the king more sad than a war, a purposeless, destructive thing.

## **The ladder of problems**

Use the problems above to make up an island. Before you get too involved, you'll need to make up some people to inhabit the island. These should be people who the princes have to see, some people who will force themselves upon the princes, and some people

who've done wrong, probably with understandable – though definitely wrong – reasons. These might be the same people, or they might not. It's up to you!



So, to make up the town, start by re-reading the section on conceit and injustice, above. Find something that appeals to you and write it down. Choose a person who has this conceit and write down their name. Write a little bit about their conceit. Then write down who this conceit affects and what injustice they are experiencing.

Ok, now we look at the island and ask ourselves “Is this enough to keep the players interested? Is this enough for the princes to deal with?” If not, we layer on more problems. If so, then we move on to the last steps of building an island.

If we choose to add more problems, we invent an instance where someone's being disobedient to the king and his laws. This might well be an outcome of the conceit and injustice we've already written down. It's never a bad idea to link these, but sometimes it's an even better idea not to – to make the disobedience unrelated or slightly related. Again, it's all up to you. So, write down the name of the person being disobedient and what they are doing. Then, write down what sort of outlawry is occurring because of this disobedience.

We've got at least four people that the princes have to deal with at this point. Is that enough? If not, we move on to unrest.

Identify a group of people to be in unrest and explain why they're in unrest. What are they doing about it? Are they spreading rumors about the government or not paying taxes or stealing or what? Write all this down. Then decide what bad laws are being



enacted. Maybe these are enacted by the unrestful, or maybe to stop the unrestful.

We have a whole lot of people at this point. Is it enough? If not, we have a false leader.

Write down the false leader's name and what he wants. Who follows him? Write down some stuff about them, too. Remember, a false leader leads to rebellion. Who's in this rebellion? What are they up to? All of this is good stuff for later play.

And if this really isn't enough for the princes to deal with, you've got war and killing. The island's embroiled in full-scale war. Write down the who is on what side and what they want.

You don't have to limit the times you go through this process! You can build one chain of problems up to unrest and another chain only through conceit, or you could build three small chains or two big ones or whatever you want. You also choose to split and join a chain; that is, one bit of conceit might make two bits of disobedience, or two false leaders are responsible for one war.

## The people involved

So, you should have a list of people on the island who have problems or are causing problems. What do they want from the princes? Write down a sentence or so for each one.

Then ask yourself what these people would do if the princes never came to the island. What would the eventual outcome be? Write down a sentence or so about this.

That's it! You've got an island made and ready for play.

# The Island of Lo Pang



Ronald says to Carter and Lincoln, “You guys go get some juice and give me 15 minutes. I’m going to make the first island for your characters to go to.”

He decides to go ahead and give it some big problems to hook in the other players.

He starts by thinking about the island’s look and feel. He decides he wants something pseudo-Japanese and in the 1200s. It’s still an island, and not a giant one, but big enough to have a hill-lands and low-lands. He also decides to go with Chinese-sounding names for no real reason besides he likes that idea. He names the island Lo Pang.

He also decides that two cultures live on the island. The larger area, the hills, are where he places the dominant people of Lo Pang. He decides they look Asian. Below, in the lowlands, he puts the Wulin, a more primitive minority that are large people covered in reddish-blond fur. Ronald’s always liked the Ainu, an ethnic minority in Japan, and also the idea that orangutans were once thought by the Malay to be another race of people who lived in the forest. He combines the two to make the Wulin.

Ronald now writes down the problems the island has. The conceit is easy – the islanders think that the beliefs of the Wulin are silly and stupid. They think they’re better than the Wulin. What injustice could



come out of that? Ronald decides that the Wulin revere the coy in a certain pond. The injustice is that the islanders decided the coy looked tasty, and they fished for them and ate some.

Looking this over, Ronald decides that he needs more.

He'll need to figure out disobedience next. He decides to reverse the people at fault and put it on the Wulin: they attacked a group of islander boys they caught fishing and beat them pretty badly. The outlaws created because of this are easy to invent: gangs of islander men have been hunting down the Wulin to get revenge. They guard the main town, too, driving off any Wulin who want to trade.

Again, Ronald wants to up the stakes. He adds a level of unrest: rumors have been spread that the Wulin kill children. The loss of liberty caused by this is a new law: no women or children are allowed outside after dark.

Finally, he adds a false leader, because at this point, it's evident there should be one. His name is General Fan Mu, and he's a retired naval officer. He has taken over the island. The people have joined with him in rebellion. The island's real governor, Pei, has been imprisoned, and the people are happy to follow Fan Mu.

There's a few small things he noticed in doing this.

The governor and the general both have another conceit. The general thinks he can do a better job

than the governor. The governor thinks that he shouldn't have to work very hard. The injustices: Governor Pei gets locked in the stockade, and the Wulin are marginalized and oppressed.



Next, Ronald has to describe on paper everyone involved. He scribbles down this list:

- General Fan Mu
- Governor Pei
- The leader of the Wulin
- The beaten boys

Looking at that, he decides everyone needs names and that the boys' parents should be involved, too. He ends up with:

- General Fan Mu
- Governor Pei
- Ang, leader of the Wulin
- Tze Fo and Tze Mo, two young boys who like fishing and trouble
- Lao Tze, the father of the boys, and his wife, Wen Li.

Each of these wants something from the princes. What will it be? Ronald writes down:



- General Fan Mu: He wants the princes to officially make him the new governor.
- Governor Pei: He wants the princes to restore order and tell the citizens that he hasn't made any mistakes.
- Ang: He wants the princes to get the Lo Pang to stop eating their sacred fish and let the Wulin live free and trade again.
- Tze Fo and Tze Mo: They want the princes to let them run around in the woods like crazy hooligans. They also want to know more about the Wulin.
- Lao Tze: He wants the princes to make the Wulin pay for their violence.
- Wen Li: She wants the princes to recognize her children as faultless little angels.

This looks pretty good! Now, Ronald thinks, what would happen if the princes never came? That's easy. War would break out, with the guerrilla Wulin fighting back against the islanders, at high costs to both.

The island of Lo Pang is ready for play!

# Friends and troublemakers



When you are the Guide, you should have two things that will make the game sail smoothly: a list of names of people on the current island and a sheet of *proto-citizens*.

A proto-citizen is a collection of all the stuff you need to make a real citizen without any of the words attached; that is, it's the raw numbers you need to make a citizen quickly.

It's easy to do! Citizens are made up of the same stuff as the princes, with one exception. Instead of being defined by their age, citizens are defined by their power – their influence on the story.



<i>Roll</i>	<i>Power</i>	<i>Qualities</i>	<i>Relationships</i>
1	6	1	1
2	7	2	1
3	8	2	1
4	9	3	2
5	10	3	2
6	11	4	2
7	12	4	2
8	13	5	3

To make up citizens, use the above table.

Roll a d8 on this table to determine the citizen's power. Then roll once for "how many strong qualities do I have?" Roll again for "how many troublesome qualities do I have?" Roll another time for "how many strong relationships do I have?" Then roll one last time for "how many troublesome relationships do I have?"

Write down these results. You should do this six times before play, giving you six proto-citizens to use in the game. Any time you have a citizen who has not been given numbers, but who gets involved in a struggle, pick a proto-citizen and match them up! You can assign words to the qualities in play. You can also choose what the citizen is carrying. You do this during play, not before play, because you never know what citizens the princes will decide to focus on.

If you run out of proto-citizens, take a break and make some more up. If you're out, this indicates that your game is probably full of excitement!

# Using proto-citizens effectively



As the Guide, you can fill out proto-citizens and turn them into fully-fledged characters at any time during play, including in the middle of a struggle. You can write down whatever you want for their qualities, which can make them pretty strong for a scene. However, defining all your qualities in one scene makes that character very focused and not complex. If that's fine with you, go for it! Challenging the princes with a tough citizen is fun and rewarding.

If you have a hard time thinking up qualities, remember that many characters the princes meet will be much older than them. Writing down "I'm an adult" as a strong or troublesome quality always works, and gives your citizens a fun die to use in any struggle with the princes.

## *Dealing with groups*

Proto-citizens can be used to represent groups of characters in the game as easily as individual characters. Whenever you have a group of people that are only important to the game as a group – a mob of angry protesters, as opposed to the protest leaders, for example – you can use one proto-citizen to represent the whole group. In this way, you can have scenes where the princes deal with an entire group of people at once without the Guide having to control dozens of characters.



## Some names and proto-citizens for Lo Pang

Ronald remembers at the last minute that he is going to need some numbers for the citizens of Lo Pang. He looks at the chart and quickly rolls up some proto-citizens, ending up with:

- Power 10, 1 strong quality, 2 troublesome qualities, 1 strong relationship, 1 troublesome relationship
- Power 9, 3 strong qualities, 3 troublesome qualities, 2 strong relationships, 1 troublesome relationship
- Power 12, 3 strong qualities, 4 troublesome qualities, 2 strong relationships, 1 troublesome relationship
- Power 8, 2 strong qualities, 4 troublesome qualities, 2 strong relationships, 2 troublesome relationships
- Power 6, 3 strong qualities, 4 troublesome qualities, 2 strong relationships, 2 troublesome relationships
- Power 6, 2 strong qualities, 2 troublesome qualities, 2 strong relationships, 2 troublesome relationships

He needs some names, too. He grabs his baby name book off the shelf, which has a section on Chinese names, so that will work for him. He also knows of a few places online where he could have looked, all linked to from the *The Princes' Kingdom* website.

Now he's really ready for play!

# Problems and fixing them



We've talked about *struggles* earlier. It's when one character wants one thing and another character wants something else, and there's not a clear answer as to what should happen.

When your prince wants the local butcher to do his job right and stop letting his meat just hang in the sun, and the butcher would rather argue about it, it's a struggle. When a player wants his prince to chase down an outlaw and the Guide says that outlaw is running off on a horse, that's a struggle.



The way we deal with struggle is by rolling dice and comparing them. These dice will not only help us find out the final outcome of the struggle, but they will also help us narrate what happens along the way to that outcome. You will use the dice you roll to back up all your actions in the struggle.

## Starting a struggle

Before we roll any dice, the players and the Guide need to determine who exactly is involved, what the setting is, and what is at stake in the struggle. This last bit is really important: you need to know what happens when one side wins.

Then each player involved takes up dice for his character and rolls them. These dice are determined by your prince's age, or your citizen's power, if you're the Guide, and any qualities, relationship, or equipment that is relevant.

## Resolving a struggle

Struggles operate kind of like a game of poker. One side will push forward two dice, called a *raise*. The other side will push forward any number of dice whose values equal the sum of the raise. This is called a *see*. Then it changes – the other side raises and the first side sees. This goes on until one side can't see anymore.

While you are doing this, you will also say what your character is doing in the struggle when you raise and see. If it's hard for you to see – that is, you have to use three or more dice to see – you take *fallout*. Fallout isn't necessarily bad! Fallout is a side-effect of struggle, and it is how your character changes and grows up.

## An example of a struggle



Remember the butcher from earlier in the book who was lazy and didn't do anything to preserve his meat? Well, he's sold some bad meat to a family on the island. Now a kid in the family is really sick, and his dad is angry. In fact, his dad wants to go beat up the butcher. Your prince stands in the way. I'm going to play the Guide role here.

We first figure out first what's at stake. In this case, it's "does the father beat up the butcher?"

We set the stage next. We talk about it and decide that we're at the butcher's stall, and the father and butcher are there, along with your prince. The stall is in a big open-air market.

As for who is involved, it's your prince and the father. The butcher is staying out of your argument. You are taking the prince's side, and I am taking the father's side.

Now we get our dice together.

You are going to take a number of d6s equal to your prince's age. You are going to bring in dice for your relationships (a d8 for strong relationships, a d4 for troublesome ones) if the stakes are related to them or if you are struggling with them. In this case, your prince has a troublesome relationship with the butcher. So you take a d4. Your qualities and equipment come in later. Whenever you use them in a raise or see, you get to roll dice for them, but you only get to do this once per struggle.

I am going to roll a number of d6s equal to the father's power – it's like age, but for characters that aren't princes. I get to roll relationship dice too, but I don't have any that apply here.



Your prince is seven years old, so you roll 7d6, plus the d4 for the relationship with the butcher.

The father's power is 8, so I roll 8d6.

Now we roll the dice. We put them up on the table so everyone can see them. A good idea is to sort them by value.

You roll: 1, 1, 1, 3, 3, 4, 5, 6.

I roll: 1, 2, 2, 3, 4, 4, 4, 5.

Now we take turns raising and seeing. Here's how that works:

If it makes sense for one of us to raise first, then we do. For example, if you had said that your prince storms into the room and leaps in front of the father, and then we started the struggle, you'd go first. But let's say we were at a stand-off: the father wanted to slug the butcher and your prince was arguing with him. In this case, we'd look at our best two dice. Yours total 11 and mine total nine, so you go first.

To raise, you put forward any two dice and say what your character is doing. This should be something the other character can't ignore. If you only have one die left, you can raise with just that one.

To see, you put forward any number of dice whose sum equals or is higher than the sum of the raise you are seeing, and then you say what your character is doing to deal with that raise.

- If you put forward only one die, that's called *reversing the blow*, and it is awesome. You get to describe how your character turned his opponent's raise back on him, and you keep your die for a moment. You get to reuse it in your raise later.

- ♦ If you put forward two dice, you *block or dodge*. You describe how your character avoided or stopped his opponent.



- ♦ If you put forward three or more dice, you *take the blow*. You describe how your character's opponent hurt your character and how your character reacts. When I say "hurt," I don't mean that your character's opponent always physically hurt your character. It could be that he made an especially cutting remark.

When you take the blow, you take fallout. I talked about this earlier. Fallout is both good and bad things that happen to your character because of struggles. It's how your character changes and develops. The size of die you use when taking fallout depends on what sort of blow you took.

- ♦ If you took a blow while *talking*, your fallout equals a number of d4s equal to the amount of dice with which you took the blow.
- ♦ If you took the blow when *doing something physical* – a race, a horseback ride, wrestling for a shovel – your fallout equals a number of d6s equal to the amount of dice with which you took the blow.
- ♦ If you took the blow while *fighting*, your fallout equals a number of d8s equal to the amount of dice with which you took the blow.

Bigger dice are more dangerous fallout. Fallout is cumulative, and you should keep track of your fallout during a struggle. You will roll your fallout dice at the end of the struggle.

Lastly, you never have to see if you don't want to! You can give, but if you do this, your opponent wins the stakes of the struggle.



Sometimes, that's OK, especially if you don't want to take a lot of fallout.

Whenever you can't see a raise, you have to give. If it's your turn to raise and you can't, skip to the next person. If no one can raise, the last person to see wins.

## What happened with that butcher?

So, as we were saying, your prince is trying to stop the father from beating up the butcher. You have to go first, and you decide to make it hard on me and raise with your 4 and 6, making a total of 10. Do you see how I can't block or dodge that, because I don't have two dice that equal 10 or more? You say, "My prince stands in your way and says, 'No, sir. The king has ordered you not to harm one another.'"

I have to take the blow, which I don't want to do. I put forward 2, 4, and 4 to see. I say, "The father looks upset. He says, 'I know it's against the law.'" I will have 3d4 fallout to roll later: 3 because I used three dice to take the blow, and d4 because we're just talking.

I get to raise now and put forward my 4 and 5, totaling 9. The father says, "But his laziness hurt my son, and it's only fair that I stop him from being lazy. *That's* the law."

You can't see 9 with two dice, so now you have to take the blow. You decide to put forward your 1, 3, and 5 to make 9. You say, "Well, it is the law that he has to do his job." You will have 3d4 to roll later, too.

You raise back with a 1 and 3. “But it’s not your job to enforce the law. You should go home and take care of your son.”



I see that with a 1 and 3 as well, blocking. “My son is in his mother’s care.”

And then I raise with a 2, my last die. “And I think I know a bit more about how the law works on the islands, son.”

You only have a 1 left and can’t see! You have to give, and the father clocks the butcher.

## What could you have done?

You can always use qualities and your items to get more dice in a struggle. Whenever you use a quality your prince has to raise or see, you can add its die. Whenever you use some of your belongings to raise or see, you can add their dice, too. You explain what your prince is doing, roll the dice, and then put dice forward.

So, if you had “I’m good at talking to adults” as something you were good at before, you could have rolled it in when arguing with the father. Let’s say you didn’t have that, though. Let’s say your prince is strong at tripping people. You could have raised with “I try and trip the father as he moves toward the butcher.” And you’d get to roll another d8, which would really help.

Notice, however, that tripping would count as fighting, and fallout would change to d8s. That might be good. However, if the father decides to push you back, that means you’ll take d8 fallout if you have to take the blow.



## Dealing with lots of people

If there are more than two players in a struggle, it's not that much harder. In a circular fashion, you take turns raising. Whenever you raise, everyone who is affected has to see. So if three princes were arguing with the father, they'd all have to see when the father raised! While it may seem like the father gets a lot of power, he has to see three different raises, once from each prince.

Oh, and helping each other can happen, too., which is neat. You can always give some of your dice to someone else to help them out in a see. If they see with three or more dice, they don't take the blow. You do instead!

## The Problem Level

The *Problem Level* is simply a measure of how bad the princes have found things. It is set by the worst thing the princes have found on the island. If they've found:

- ♦ Injustice, it's 1d8
- ♦ Outlaws, it's 2d8
- ♦ Loss of liberty, it's 3d8
- ♦ Rebellion, it's 4d8
- ♦ War, it's 5d8

The Problem Level matters most when a character's badly hurt. In this case, the Guide will roll the character's fallout dice, plus the Problem Level in a struggle, to see if the character lives.

Whenever there is a conflict and the opposition isn't clear – let's say the prince is trying to sail a boat into stormy waters to save someone – the Guide will roll 6d6 plus the Problem Level.



A false leader can *always* use the Problem Level when his subjects are backing him up.

## Mustafa and Baha confront Fan Mu

Ronald, Carter, and Lincoln are playing through the island of Lo Pang, and they've solved a lot of problems. The big problem in front of them, however, is that General Fan Mu is not the rightful governor of the island, and he isn't doing a good job. He's a military man, not a compassionate one. Carter and Lincoln decide that their princes need to remove him from office.

Ronald decides Fan Mu's going to resist this pretty heavily, though. They start the scene.

Carter says, "Mustafa walks right into the general's office. 'General, we're going to ask you to release the governor and step down.'"

Ronald says, "Well, that was forward. The general laughs. 'I don't think so, child,' he says. I think a struggle is required for him to even remotely take you seriously."

Lincoln says, "OK. Let's have a struggle. I really don't like this guy."



All three of them roll their dice.

Ronald rolls 12d6 for the general's Power 12, and a d4 for the general's troublesome relationship with the governor, because the governor is part of what this struggle is about. In addition, the island's in a state of rebellion, so he's going to roll 4d8 for the Problem Level, described as his guards that are in his office. That's 12d6 + 1d4 + 4d8: a lot of dice!

Carter is going to roll 11d6 for Mustafa's age of 11.

Lincoln is going to roll 6d6 for Baha's age of 6, and he has a troublesome relationship with the general, so he rolls another d4. Their rolls look like:

*Ronald (General Fan Mu):* 1, 1, 1, 2, 2, 3, 3, 4, 4, 4, 4, 5, 6, 6, 6, 7, 8

*Carter (Mustafa):* 1, 1, 2, 2, 2, 3, 3, 4, 5, 5, 6

*Lincoln (Baha):* 2, 2, 3, 4, 4, 5, 6

Since Mustafa really started this struggle, Carter goes first. He raises with his two 5s and says, "General, you don't have a choice. We're putting the governor back in place no matter how we have to."

Ronald says, "Nice." He sees with a 4 and a 6, blocking. He doesn't get to raise yet, because it's Lincoln's turn next. He says, "The general just looks at you blankly."

Lincoln says, "I'm going to try to appeal to his nice side. 'General, look around at all the people who are

hurt by this. Don't you want to make things better?" He raises with a 5 and a 6.



Ronald sees with a 5 and a 6 too, and says, "The General says, 'Of course I want to make things better.'" He raises with a 4 and a 6, and both Carter and Lincoln will have to see. He says, "It's easy for you two boys – you've grown up around your own kind. Stay here and rule the island with me, and I'll help you learn."

Carter and Lincoln both grumble. Carter sees with a 4 and a 6, blocking, but Lincoln has to take the blow, seeing with a 2 and two 4s. He notes that he has 3d4 fallout, because they're still just talking. They both describe their characters being taken aback, and Lincoln says, "Baha is stunned at this man's ruthlessness. He yells out, 'No!' but looks shaken."

The dice now look like this:

*Ronald (General Fan Mu):* 1, 1, 1, 2, 2, 3, 3, 4, 4, 7, 8

*Carter (Mustafa):* 1, 1, 2, 2, 2, 3, 3

*Lincoln (Baha):* 2, 3

It's Carter's turn to raise. Because Ronald has that 7 and 8 left, he can reverse the blow with any raise Carter makes. Carter looks at his character sheet. He can easily bring the strong quality "I'm a prince" into this situation. "Leadership comes naturally to me," a troublesome quality, fits as well. Finally, the ring of the king, a piece of OK stuff, will work. He



rolls a d8 for “I’m a prince,” and a d6 for the ring, and a d4 for “Leadership comes naturally to me,” and the dice now look like:

*Ronald (General Fan Mu):* 1, 1, 1, 2, 2, 3, 3, 4, 4, 7, 8

*Carter (Mustafa):* 1, 1, 2, 2, 2, 2, 3, 3, 4, 6

*Lincoln (Baha):* 2, 3

He really lucked out with some good rolls there.

Carter raises with a 3 and a 6 and says, “Mustafa stands up straight and puts the king’s ring on his finger. ‘By the authority of my father and me, you will stand down, General!’”

Ronald sees with a 1, a 2, and two 3s and says, “That was really good! I’m going to take the blow. The general stands up, surprised at your verve. He says, ‘I thought I served the king’s interests.’”

Lincoln smiles. “We’ve got him on the ropes now!”

He’s only got a 2 and a 3 to raise with, unfortunately. He decides to pull in his troublesome quality “I’m a prince,” and his strong quality “I’m smarter than my age.” After he rolls the d4 and the d8, the dice look like:

*Ronald (General Fan Mu):* 1, 1, 2, 4, 4, 7, 8

*Carter (Mustafa):* 1, 1, 2, 2, 2, 2, 3, 4

*Lincoln (Baha):* 1, 2, 3, 6

Lincoln says, “Baha also stands up straight and says, ‘General, according to the ruling of the high court

10 years ago, any member of the royal family has a military rank greater than general, and only less than the High General appointed by the king. That is correct, is it not?” He raises with a 3 and a 6. If he raised with anything less, the general could reverse the blow.



Carter and Ronald look at each other. “Really nice role-playing on that smarter quality, Lincoln,” Carter says.

Ronald says, “I’ll take that blow, too.” He grins kind of evilly. He sees with a 1 and two 4s. He says, “That is true. I am sorely outranked here.” Then he raises with the 7 and 8 and says, “This should only affect Mustafa. You don’t have to see, Lincoln. The general pulls his sword” – and he rolls in a d8 and a d4 for the sword, getting only 1 and 5 – “and swings at Mustafa, saying ‘But I’ll fix that!’”

Carter says, “What did I do to you? That’s crazy. I’ll have to take the blow and won’t be able to beat him afterwards.”

Lincoln says, “Let me help! My 1 and 2 aren’t useful, anyway.”

Carter says, “Well, yeah, but then you’ll get hurt. That will be just as bad.”

Lincoln replies, “But you can beat him, and I can’t. Let me do it, please?”



Carter shrugs and takes the 1 and 2 from Lincoln. "OK. I take the blow." He takes the blow with four 2s and a 4. "Or I guess Baha does. Describe it, Lincoln."

Lincoln says, "The sword swings down at Mustafa's head. Baha screams 'No!' and leaps to stop the general. The general's sword catches him instead and he falls into a crumpled heap on the floor." Lincoln marks down 5d8 fallout, which is really bad.

The dice now look like this:

*Ronald (General Fan Mu): 1, 1, 5*

*Carter (Mustafa): 1, 1, 3*

It's Carter's turn to raise. He says, "Oh, man, you just made a mistake. I can use my bow and I'm a good shot. I will put down this old guy, general or not."

Ronald says, "I give, guys. No need for that. The general didn't expect to hit the kid. He drops the sword. 'I will do what you ask,' he says."

# Fallout and change



Once a struggle is over, you roll your fallout dice. If you are the Guide, you can roll fallout dice for your citizens.

Did you roll any 1s? If so, you get a *growth fallout*. Choose one thing from the following list:

- ♦ Add a new strong quality.
- ♦ Change a troublesome quality to a strong quality.
- ♦ Add a new strong relationship with someone involved in the scene.
- ♦ Change a troublesome relationship to a strong relationship.
- ♦ Add a new belonging.

For any of these, you have to tell everyone what happened. How'd your enemy become your friend, for example?



Then, you take the two highest dice from the fallout roll and sum them together.

If this sum is less than eight, you're lucky. You just take *short-term fallout*. Choose one thing from the following list:

- ♦ For the next struggle, you roll dice as though you were a year younger.
- ♦ Add a new troublesome quality for the next struggle.
- ♦ Lose a quality for the next struggle.
- ♦ Gain a troublesome relationship with someone who was just in the struggle with you that you do not currently have a relationship with. This lasts only until the next time you have a struggle that they are involved in.
- ♦ Lose your relationship with someone who was just in the struggle with you that you currently have a relationship with. This lasts only until the next time you have a struggle that they are involved in.
- ♦ Your prince has to leave the scene and spend some time alone. (You can only do this if no one wants to have another struggle afterwards.)

If your fallout sum is eight or more, though, you have *lasting fallout*. Choose one thing from the following list:

- ♦ Add a new troublesome quality.
- ♦ Change a strong quality to a troublesome quality.
- ♦ Lose a quality used in the struggle.
- ♦ Add a new troublesome relationship.
- ♦ Change a strong relationship to a troublesome relationship.

- ♦ Lose a relationship used in the struggle.
- ♦ Make a belonging cruddy (d4).
- ♦ Remove one belonging from your character sheet.



- ♦ Write down how your prince's cloak was damaged. If you need to, reduce its die size.

Again, tell everyone how this happened. How did your sword become cruddy, or how did your loyal dog become angry with you?

If your fallout sum is 12 or higher, you have to choose from the lasting fallout list twice. In addition, your prince is hurt. He'll be fine in a few days, but you should describe how he came to be hurt.

If your fallout sum is 16, your prince is hurt bad. He needs a healer soon.

If the other characters can get you a healer, start a new struggle. What's at stake is your prince's life. The healer rolls his power, but both of you can add in qualities and relationships and belongings. The Guide rolls your fallout dice again, plus the Problem Level. The healer takes any fallout from this struggle. If you and the healer win, your prince will live. If the Guide wins, your prince will die.

If your prince is going to die, you get to choose whether he dies now or whether you have a last scene. This scene can even have a struggle, but your prince will die at the end of it.



## Baha suffers a grievous wound

After the fight with General Fan Mu, Baha is left with 3d4 and 5d8 fallout. Lincoln has to roll this now and ends up with: 1, 2, 3, 4, 4, 6, 7, 8.

His fallout total is fifteen and he has one die with a value of 1. He lucked out: if his total had been sixteen, Baha would be dying right now and would need a healer to live. As is, he's very hurt and will have to rest for a few days. He has to choose one growth fallout because of the 1, and two long-term fallouts, because of the total of fifteen.

He chooses to take a new strong quality with his growth fallout. He takes "I'm tough as a pine knot." Considering he just lived through a war-sword hitting him in the head, this is certainly true.

For his two long-term fallouts, he chooses to change a strong quality to a troublesome quality and to damage his cloak. His strong quality, "I'm smarter than my age," is now a troublesome quality. He describes how his cloak is now stained with blood, and how half of it is now a dark crimson. The group talks about it, and decides that the cloak is has not decreased in ability, so its die size remains the same.

# Sailing through the Kingdom



Once the princes leave an island, it's time to think about what they did there. Did they really solve the island's problems? Did they pick the best way to? Are they better or wiser princes now? Or are they damaged by their experiences?



These are all topics you should feel free to talk about. If you're the Guide, it's your job to bring them up, although it's definitely not your job to answer them.

As players, you should also talk about what you liked and disliked about the game.

Once you do that, you choose a growth fallout. These were listed before, and here they are again:

- ♦ Add a new strong quality to your prince.
- ♦ Change a troublesome quality to a strong quality.
- ♦ Add a new strong relationship with someone involved in the scene. In this case, it should be someone who is on the boat with your character.
- ♦ Change a troublesome relationship to a strong relationship.
- ♦ Add a new belonging.

In addition to that, choose one of the following:

- ♦ Have a birthday! Your prince is a year older.
- ♦ Change a belonging from cruddy to good or good to awesome.
- ♦ Make a space on your character sheet for a new strong relationship. You can use this at any time later, even in a struggle!
- ♦ Make a space on your character sheet for a new troublesome relationship. You can use this at any time later.
- ♦ Choose again from the growth fallout list.

# Where do you go from here?



Do the princes choose to continue to another island? Do they go back to an island they've already been to? Do they go home? (If any prince turns 13, they need to go home.) Talk about what sort of island you want to go to next, if that's what you choose.

## The Guide's job here

As the Guide, it's your job to push the limits set by the previous island. If the princes determined it was acceptable to take something if you're hungry, show that situation in a different light. Is it still OK to take something just because someone else has more than you? Push those buttons.

In the default arrangement of this game, the Guide's an adult and the players are kids. Kids can deal with this stuff, and it's good for you to ask them and listen to their answers. Don't fall into that trap of thinking your job is to teach children by telling them the answers. Sure, your job is to teach children. The best way to do that is to give them the tools to learn. Ask questions. Propose hard situations. Then you can stand back and watch them grow. It's pretty awesome.

By the way, this works great with adults, too.

# Afterword



*The Princes' Kingdom* has been the most fun game I've had the chance to write. It doesn't hurt that the game it's based on, *Dogs in the Vineyard*, is an incredible piece of work.

I tried explaining role-playing games and their appeal to my own father a few years ago. I said, "These games are a moral testing ground. In real life, I've never had to make a really hard decision such as 'If I see someone hit their child, what should I do?' That's a really hard question, and I don't want to have to answer it. But by asking that question in a fictional context and having that extra

filter of ‘playing a character,’ I can answer this type of question and know the answer ahead of time.” That’s a pretty wild thing to say, but I truly feel this way about RPGs. I’ve had the opportunity to ask everything from “When is it OK to steal a loaf of bread?” to “What would I do if a magical elf swung a double-ended sword at me?” That last one hasn’t come up since, but still, I’m glad I know the answer.



This game is the distillation of this particular thing I like about role-playing games. It’s not sugar-coated: you play a human child in some very hard, probably very realistic situations. But every time I’ve played, someone’s surprised me by making a hard decision and carrying it out. I look at the situation and think, “Yeah, I could see a child doing that,” and feel a little better about the world.

## Thanks

I want to thank Vincent Baker most of all. His agreement to let me publish this has meant a lot, and his constant advice and friendship have been more valuable than gold.

Thanks go out to others, of course. Jason Morningstar and Remi Treuer have listened to me ramble about this game patiently, and were great playtesters. My wife, Crystal, has put up with my late nights typing. Ron Edwards, my friend and mentor, has been there since the beginning, and definitely put up with a lot of my excited ramblings. Best wishes and much credit go to all those who tried out this game at Origins and Dreamation 2006.

My biggest thanks, though, goes out to my dad, and to every father who helps his children become adults.



## The American Friends Service Committee

The profits from this game go to benefit the American Friends Service Committee (<http://www.afsc.org>). From their website:

“The American Friends Service Committee is a practical expression of the faith of the Religious Society of Friends (Quakers). Committed to the principles of nonviolence and justice, it seeks in its work and witness to draw on the transforming power of love, human and divine.” From World War I, the AFSC has provided assistance to the victims of war, especially children. Just like in the idealized world of this game, they realize “that most conflicts have their roots in injustice” and work to eliminate injustice peacefully wherever they might find it.

I strongly urge you to go to their website and see their mission statement and work. I feel comfortable saying that no purchaser of this game will find their mission less than admirable. I would like to quote from their mission statement to close this afterword, as I think it may well be a good code for your princes.

We seek to understand and address the root causes of poverty, injustice, and war. We hope to act with courage and vision in taking initiatives that may not be popular.

We are called to confront, nonviolently, powerful institutions of violence, evil, oppression, and injustice. Such actions may engage us in creative tumult and tension in the process of basic change. We seek opportunities to help reconcile enemies

and to facilitate a peaceful and just resolution of conflict.



We work to relieve and prevent suffering through both immediate aid and long-term development and seek to serve the needs of people on all sides of violent strife.

We ground our work at the community level both at home and abroad in partnership with those who suffer the conditions we seek to change and informed by their strength and vision.

We work with all people, the poor and the materially comfortable, the disenfranchised and the powerful in pursuit of justice. We encourage collaboration in social transformation towards a society that recognizes the dignity of each person. We believe that the Spirit can move among all these groups, making great change possible.

Seeking to transform the institutions of society, we are ourselves transformed in the process. As we work in the world around us, our awareness grows that [our] life must change to reflect the same goals we urge others to achieve.

We find in our life of service a great adventure. We are committed to this Spirit-led journey, undertaken “to see what love can do,” and we are ever renewed by it.

(from the AFSC Mission Statement, <http://afsc.org/about/mission.html#2>)



## A brief history of this game

I wrote this game in fall of 2005 to celebrate the birth of the third child of my friends Vincent and Meguey Baker. I gave it as a present to them, and Vincent later encouraged me to share it with others.

We decided on a charity to which to give the profits, and I've published it for you to hopefully have a great time with. Thanks for buying and reading this game; I appreciate it.

Find more resources for  
*The Princes' Kingdom*,  
including character sheets,  
Guide aids, and examples at  
[www.crngames.com](http://www.crngames.com).



# The Princes' Kingdom

*You are nine years old! You just had a birthday, and your brothers gave you a puppy. The three of you are seeing the world from your very own boat. You are the sons of the King of Islandia!*

*And you are the only three that can stop the war.*

*A game about children, adults, and ideals.*



Every sale of *The Princes' Kingdom* supports the American Friends Service Committee ([www.afsc.org](http://www.afsc.org)).

