



# The Queen of Spades



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# General Information



# What is a LARP?

A larp is an activity involving several people in which the participants act out a story. Like a play or traditional improvisational theater, each participant generally acts out one character in real time. Unlike a play, the events and ending of the story are not predetermined. Unlike traditional improvisation, the starting situation and nature of the characters is predetermined.

All but one of the participants (the Players) depict characters in the story. They choose their own interpretation of whatever details are unspecified about the personality and background of the character, and use this to decide on the dialog and actions of their character. They are responsible for the strategic and thematically significant decisions of the character and thinking of the ideas that the character is likely to think of. Some value playing a character for the strategic challenge of trying to achieve the character's goals. Others value the vicarious experience of drama and emotion.

The last participant (the Director) is responsible for managing the larp and performing the many necessary tasks other than depicting main characters. These include general organization, playing minor characters, keeping track of the results of actions and the consequences of hidden aspects of the situation, sometimes introducing new elements or information to manage the plot, and adjudicating rules. The Director does not have the authority to dictate actions of other participants' characters.

Rules exist to represent skill differences between characters that do not exist between players and to resolve actions that cannot be directly acted out, either because they are unsafe (like fighting), or simply impractical/impossible (like magic).

Looking for more explanation? Just check out the detailed guide available on our website, [www.shiftingforest.com](http://www.shiftingforest.com).

## **DEFINITIONS:**

Player: A participant whose sole role is the depiction of one important character.

Director: The participant managing the larp who performs the other tasks described above. Traditionally called the Game Master.

PC: A character depicted by a player.

NPC: A character depicted by the Director.

In Character (IC): Descriptive of actions, dialog, events or decisions actually made by the character and taking place in the fictional world.

Out of Character (OOC): Descriptive of actions, dialog, events or decisions involving the participants in the real world.

Roleplaying: The act of thinking as a character and deciding and depicting their actions, using the character's own decision making process. An action that is "roleplayed" is carried out by acting rather than abstracted within the rules.

Game: A specific time a larp is played.

## **THE FIRST RULE OF LARPING:**

Always keep IC and OOC knowledge/motivations separate.

# What is a Parlor Larp?

## **FORMAT AND MISSION:**

Parlor Larps are designed to provide maximally accessible, artistically satisfying larp experiences to a relatively small group of 4- 8 players and 1 Director. All require little or no preparation, a normal sized living room, and take 4-5 hours.

## **THE ART FORM:**

Parlor Larps are intended as something more than "just a game." While they are certainly a leisure activity, they are meant to be thought of as exercises in art as well as entertainment, and in that sense are more like theater games than board games, or even many traditional larps.

Like a play or novel, they are designed to provide an experience, provoke an emotional response or make the participants think. While elements of entertainment, fun and challenge will certainly be present frequently, many of the Parlor Larps are not, and are not intended to be, entirely pleasant experiences. (A successful portrayal of a frightening atmosphere is rewarding even though everyone is feeling frightened.) These larps will be much more successful and enjoyable if all participants keep this goal in mind.

## **CHARACTER DEVELOPMENT:**

Unlike many other single-session larps, Parlor Larps ask players to fill in many details of their character before beginning to play. This personalization process is guided by a set of questions at the end of each character sheet. It helps turn the characters from a collection of goals and background information into real, fully-fleshed people, and also allows each player to identify better with his/her character.

All characters can be played by either gender, though each game has one preferred male and one preferred female character.

## **DON'T CONFLATE PLAYER AND CHARACTER SUCCESS!**

While each character has his own goals, and many characters have directly opposing goals, it is critical to remember that the players are not competing with each other. The goal of each player is to effectively simulate and portray his character and work with the other participants to build a rewarding story. This is true for most larps, and is vital to the spirit of Parlor Larps.

Remember: If you produce a dramatic and compelling story, everybody wins.

# How to use this Book

## **GENERAL INFORMATION:**

All participants should read this section the first time they play a Parlor Larp, (except the Guide To Directing, which need only be read by the Director.)

## **DIRECTORS' SECTION:**

Directors, and only Directors, should read this entire section ahead of time. This section contains secret story information and advice necessary to direct the larp, as well as Director copies of information given out to players.

Directors should read the Public Background Overview, and then Larp-Specific Rules & Announcements to players at the start of game.

Public Background Overview: Relevant background info that all the PCs know.

Secret Background Overview: Relevant background info that not all PCs know.

Player Character Overview: A quick summary of PCs and their roles in the larp.

Game Overview: A guide to the plot and progress of the game itself.

Larp-Specific Rules: Rule changes or additions for this particular larp.

Announcements: Useful OOC reminders and other info for the players.

Character Summary Chart: A quick summary of major relevant info for all PCs.

Character Sheets: The Director's copy of each character sheet.

## **PLAYER MATERIALS:**

This section contains perforated pages that the Director can tear out of the booklet and hand to players as appropriate. Keep in mind that by default, players should not see other players' Character Sheets or Game Materials.

Rules Summary: A shortened version of the Parlor Larp Rules for reference.

Public Background Overview: A copy of the publicly known background info.

Rules and Announcements: A copy of the larp-specific rules and announcements.

Character Sheets: 8 character sheets to be given out, one per player.

Game Materials: Some larps have additional materials. See Setup Advice.

## **IC/OOC:**

Agree on a symbol (e.g. crossed fingers) to indicate when speaking OOC.

## **INTERPRETING CHARACTER SHEETS:**

Names: [Male option / Female option] Lastname. Or, Firstname Lastname.

Character Style (see next page): Found in upper left corner.

Age: Found in upper right corner. (Certain larps don't include ages.)

Apparent Identity: General idea of what type of person the character appears to be.

Real Identity: General idea of what type of person the character really is.

Goals: A character's goals at the beginning of the larp. Not set in stone; can change through new events and roleplaying. Given in roughly decreasing priority.

Abilities / Resists: See Rules

Inventory: A list of nonobvious items the PC has at the time

Questions: These questions refer to aspects of the character that were not previously specified, that the player should develop at start of game. Make sure to answer questions in accordance with the spirit of the specified parts of the character sheet. Potentially controversial answers should be checked with the Director first.

## **A NOTE ON GENDER:**

All PCs can be played as either male or female, though each larp has one character that is preferentially male and one preferentially female. However, for the sake of saving space and standardization, all PCs (and some background characters of unfixed gender, such as "John/Jane Smith's spouse") will be referred to by default as "he".

## **PRIORITY OF CHARACTERS:**

While 8 characters are always provided, each larp can run with as few as 4.

In the Character Overview and in the ordering of character sheets, PCs will always be listed in order of priority. This means that the first 4 should always be included, and each subsequent character should be added with each subsequent player. Using this order is critical to the balance of the game -- don't change it.

## **CHARACTER STYLES:**

Each character has a 3-letter code representing its Character Style. This code is meant to describe what it's like to play the character to help players pick characters.

G/E: Goal or Emotion oriented. Gs are more rewarding to play when focusing on pursuing goals, and Es are more rewarding when focusing on depicting emotions.

L/D: Light or Dark personality. How depressing/disturbing the PC is.

S/C: Simple/Complex personality. Complexity of the PC's personality/motivations.

Each larp has one character of each style. All letters are given relative to the other characters in the larp (so in a Dark 5 larp, the Ls will be darker than in a Dark 1).

In general, all Ls can be darkened and all Ss can be made more complex if the player desires, but the converse is not true.

## **QUICK-DESCRIPTION CLASSIFICATION FOR PARLOR LARPS**

### **(SEE UPPER RIGHT OF BACK COVER):**

The classification system is designed to describe the emphases of each larp in order to give an idea of what it would be like to run and play.

**PRIORITIES:** The opening letters of the classification represent which of five major elements are present as priorities in the larp, in decreasing order of importance.

A: Atmosphere. A particular mood or feel to the larp

D: Discovery. The existence of IC unknowns and the need to find out about them

M: Morality. Moral dilemmas and complicated moral decisions

R: Relationships. Complicated or changing relationship dynamics

S: Strategy. A need to make strategic decisions in pursuit of goals

**SCALES:** A number from 0-5. 0 = barely present. 3 = average. 5 = maximal.

Dark: The prevalence of depressing or disturbing elements

DIR: The amount of Director plot intervention required, difficulty of Director role

NPC: The amount of time and effort the Director must expend playing an NPC(s)

## **CONTENT ADVISORIES:**

NC: Normal content. Teenagers and older should be comfortable playing.

AC: Adult content. Contains themes/elements that may not be suitable for teens.

DC: Disturbing content. Contains themes/elements that some adults may not be comfortable with. Consider comfort level of everyone in group before playing.

# A Guide to Directing

## THE BASICS

### WHAT DOES THE DIRECTOR DO?

The Director is the person who manages and simulates the universe of the story so that the players can focus on roleplaying their characters. He knows everything about what is really going on, and observes all aspects of the plot as it unfolds. He manages the game, gives descriptions, answers questions about the environment/situation, propagates effects of PCs' actions on the environment and on NPCs' actions, mediates Ability use, and sometimes mediates Conflicts.

The Director also filters information so that each player only knows what he needs to know in order to successfully play his character. Most players find that having a lot of significant knowledge OOC but not IC can get distracting or confusing.

### NPCs:

In some larps the Director also physically roleplays an NPC at the same time as his other duties. When doing so, it's fine to move in and out of character as long as it's clear which is which. However, he should take both roleplaying and directing responsibilities into consideration when determining the NPC's actions and timing.

### THE DIRECTOR'S OBJECTIVES:

The primary objective of the Director is to produce a satisfying experience for all participants. There are two parts of this: making sure each player is satisfied with his PC's involvement, and making sure that the flow of the collective story is satisfactory.

The first involves making sure that each PC cares about what's going on, always has something to do and is capable of seriously affecting events that matter to him.

The second involves keeping the flow of events roughly within the intended progress, guiding the story to rising action, climax, and an ending that feels conclusive, as well as timing events to be as interesting and dramatic as reasonably possible.

### STEP-BY-STEP GUIDE TO DIRECTING A PARLOR LARP

Make sure you are familiar with all the General Information.

Read all the Game-Specific Info, ideally at least an hour before playing. Make sure you know all of it, including character sheets. Important details may only be stated once.

Set up the room according to Advice on Setup.

Gather your players and explain the gist of the game.

Go through PCs. Describe them by name, style, age, and Apparent Identity.

Distribute character sheets, but don't let the players read them in detail yet.

If the players don't know the rules, go over them.

Read aloud Public Background Overview.

Let the players read and answer the questions on their sheets in private. When they are done, quickly go over the character with them--you don't need to know the answer to every question, but get an idea of each character. Give out props at this time.

Have players of PCs with significant relationships (e.g. married couples) go over their PCs' personalities and relationship together before start of game..

Gather everyone together and read the Game-Specific Rules and Announcements.

Run the game!

Afterwards, players tend to enjoy a wrapup to discuss what was going on.

## ADVICE ON DIRECTING

### PHYSICAL BEHAVIOR:

Maintaining atmosphere and keeping everyone in character as much as possible are critical to a successful larp. Thus the Director's involvement must be very unobtrusive when not playing an NPC: Stay in an unused corner. Don't interact with any props (even chairs). Ask and answer questions as discreetly and quietly as possible. Avoid interrupting important moments. Don't referee conflicts that the players can manage themselves. The Director is invisible IC, and therefore shouldn't be a social presence.

However, you should still move around and query players every once in a while so as to keep track of what is going on with everyone. You will also occasionally have to give expositions of events or people to all parties present-- at these times, interrupt clearly and briefly. Make sure everybody hears you the first time.

### UNDERSTANDING PLAYERS AND CHARACTERS:

The more you understand each PC's priorities and way of thinking, the more easily you can guide events in directions that will seriously matter to the characters. The story is about them-- it should evoke ideas, themes, and interactions they care about.

### PACING AND ACTION:

Timing makes the difference between a story and a three-hour sequence of events. Time background events and NPC actions so that they contribute to rather than detract from the flow of the plot. Each conflict/situation should be thoroughly addressed: Don't interrupt situations that have not been thoroughly explored with new problems. Don't introduce an event until a few PCs are in a position to properly address it. Don't add lesser plot points to a major plot point in such a way that they will draw attention away from what really matters. Keep in mind that even things like responses from background characters (like servants on errands) will contribute new material.

Be aware that at many times nothing will appear to be happening from the Director's point of view, but the same may not be true of the players'. Do not be afraid of twenty minute lulls. On the other hand, do check with players in a lull to see if they feel involved. If they're not, don't be afraid to give advice or, in more extreme cases, tweak events to make sure things get rolling again. A half hour lull is a problem.

Parlor Larps are written to take approximately three to three and a half hours-- the game will be most rewarding if you pace it to last about that long.

### MAKING UP ANSWERS:

You will frequently have to answer questions about a given situation. When doing so, answer based on what is consistent with booklet information and previous answers, generally logical, appropriate to atmosphere and genre, compatible with pacing, interesting for the plot, unlikely to upset or derail the plot, feels fair to the players, and will leave you ample room later to guide the game in a variety of directions.

### EXERCISING INITIATIVE AND MAKING EXCEPTIONS:

Parlor Larps are written to save the Director from having to spontaneously take major guesses or make up important plot. However, every Director will run into situations where it seems most beneficial to the game to depart from or override aspects of the scenario. The following is advice to keep in mind when doing so:

Understand the scenario so that you will be able to understand the consequences of your changes. Be selfish: always leave yourself as much room to maneuver as you can, and commit to as little future improvisation as you can. Remember that the bigger the change, the more likely it is to get out of hand. Pay careful attention to how your change draws the PCs' focus, and watch out for pacing.

Most importantly, identify and play to your own strengths. Make it so that any additional work you have to do is work that you understand and comes naturally to you.

# Parlor Larp General Rules

## **RULES IN LARPING:**

In a larp, most normal activity is simply acted out, with roleplaying and common sense determining the effectiveness of social interactions. The rules exist as a means to simulate characters' actions and capabilities that cannot be safely or effectively acted out.

## **FUNCTION LEVELS:**

Each character, by default, starts at Function Level 5. A character's FL represents the condition the character is in and their ability to act, both physically and psychologically, and can increase or decrease over the course of the larp as a result of harm or recovery.

In general, a character at FL 5 is essentially unharmed and in good shape, at FL 4 is in an unpleasant but not particularly disabling state, at FL 3 is somewhat disabled, at FL 2 cannot perform most activities, and at FL 1 can do little other than speak. If a character is ever reduced to FL 0, s/he is out of the game and completely unable to affect the plot thereafter. It is impossible to go higher than FL 5 or lower than FL 0.

## **DAMAGE AND RECOVERY:**

Decrease of FL is called Damage, but represents any long term harm to effectiveness, not just physical injury. Increase of FL is called Recovery and represents either fixing or making up for previous harm to the character. Change in general is abbreviated DR.

DR is mostly done to a character through Abilities. Each Ability causes DR in a slightly different way, so it is important that each player keep track of what specific injuries/recoveries his character's DR represents, as well as what FL the character is at.

In most cases, DR is explicitly called for by the rules, but if a player decides that his character would be seriously affected either way by what has happened, he can change his character's FL accordingly, subject to Director approval.

## **REMOVAL FROM THE GAME:**

A character that is taken to FL 0 is removed from the game. Specifically, he is removed by the type of damage dealt in that last blow. All previous damage is simply interpreted as making it easier to deal the last blow. Thus, if a character is removed by being punched, he is probably unconscious, but if he is removed by being intimidated, he is probably hiding in a corner unable to do anything.

## **ABILITIES:**

Abilities are actions that a character can take with success determined by rules rather than roleplaying. Abilities are divided into Conflict Abilities and Non-Conflict Abilities. Non-Conflict Abilities always work; Conflict Abilities start Conflicts in which other characters can use other abilities to oppose them.

Abilities are given in the following format:

NAME x [# of uses] (RANGE OF FLs) [bonus]: DESCRIPTION OF EFFECT (amt DR) (resist type)

Examples:

Intimidate x3 (4-5) 1: Make someone back down (-FL3) (S)

Flatter x1 (3-5): Make someone feel unduly proud of themselves (+1) (E)

Spark (1-3): Briefly create a tiny flame by magic

# of uses = the number of times that ability may be used during the Larp. If none is listed, the ability may be used as many times as the opportunity arises.  
Range of FLs = the range of the user's FLs at which the ability may be used. If a character's FL is outside the range, he may not use that ability.  
Bonus = a number from -3 to 3 that represents the character's effectiveness at using that ability against opposition. +/-1 = significant, +/- 2 = extraordinary, +/-3 = world class. (Conflict abilities only.)  
Amt DR= DR caused by the ability, if applicable. -/+ FL# indicates that it takes the target down/up to that FL, respectively. -/+ # indicates that the target loses/gains that number of FLs.  
Type = type of Resist required to block the ability. P = Physical, S = Social, E = Emotional, NR = Not Resistable, P/S = Physical or Social, whichever is higher. Other letters for other Resists. (Conflict abilities only.)  
Special exceptions to abilities are given in the Special section of the character sheet

### **CONFLICTS:**

A conflict occurs when two or more people use opposing abilities. Conflicts need not be physical; two people attempting to intimidate each other also counts.

Whenever anybody uses an ability listed under Conflict Abilities, everybody able to participate in the conflict is invited to do so simultaneously. To participate is not necessary to be directly involved in the action that starts the conflict—one simply has to be taking an action in reaction to other actions taking place.

If a player thinks that his/her character would be too surprised to immediately respond, he should wait until after the conflict to respond, though he still Resists.

## **CONFLICT RESOLUTION**

### **DECLARING ACTIONS:**

Conflict resolution works as follows: First, participants state their intended actions. Others are invited to participate, stop participating, or change their own intended actions in light of the intended actions of others. (In the rare case that this causes an endless circle, everybody should choose actions simultaneously in secret.)

A participant can declare his/her intended action as contingent on the success or failure of another action (e.g. only running away if his partner dies.). He can also declare that he is not acting, and simply focusing on Resisting as a primary action.

### **RESISTING:**

Every participant in a conflict is always by default Resisting, even if he is performing another action at the same time. This means that the character is trying not to be affected by hostile actions of others. There are three default types of Resists: Physical, Social, and Emotional. Certain larps may change types of Resists. A character always uses all Resists he has at the same time.

Each type of Resist behaves like an ability with a bonus of the Resist number (see bottom left of character sheet) whose effect is to prevent all undesired actions corresponding to that type of Resist from affecting the user.

Note that most actions don't need to be resisted. By default, especially in small conflicts, a player can choose to just permit an action targeting his PC for simplicity, or because he wants it to succeed.

An ability that takes a <type> Resist is called a <type> ability.

### **BIDDING:**

After all intended actions are established, all participants then simultaneously Bid Damage. Bidding means secretly choosing an amount of damage (in FLs) the player is willing for his/her character to risk getting in order to increase the character's action's chance of success.

This is not to say that the character explicitly decides to get damaged in order to succeed-- whether and how much to bid is an OOC decision that is based on the player's judgment of how likely the character is to seriously push for his intended result despite chance of physical or psychological trauma.

No matter how dedicated the character is, however, bid sizes are also limited by the amount of damage the character can plausibly get in the conflict, and each participant is responsible for determining a plausible IC reason to take the amount of damage he bid.. For example, in most cases it is implausible to take more than 1 damage in a petty argument, but any amount of damage is possible in a gun fight. Keep in mind that losing an FL is important, and by default players should not bid.

Bids only apply to a character's primary action. This means that if a character is doing a normal action, the bid does not increase his chances of Resisting. If, however, he is only Resisting, then the bid will increase the chance of all Resists succeeding. Damage that was bid only actually occurs if the action is in any way successful.

When all bids are decided, all participants hold out 0-5 fingers behind their backs corresponding to the size of their bids, then show them at the same time.

### **RANKING:**

Participants then calculate totals by adding their ability bonus and bid. (We recommend then holding out fingers for totals, for efficiency.) If a character is primarily Resisting, any bid he made is added to all his Resist totals.

At this point, participants sort out which attempted actions execute by ranking all participants by their totals, from highest to lowest, with ties broken randomly (such as with rock-paper-scissors).

Actions take place in order, starting from the highest. If a previous action causes a character to have too low an FL to perform his intended action, or simply prevents that action from occurring (e.g. a Resist), that action is cancelled. In essence, a Resist cancels all lower-ranked effects of the relevant Resist type on that character.

If any part of an action succeeded, then the bid goes into effect immediately after the action executes.

It's important to note that when an intended action gets cancelled because of effects of earlier actions, any limited-use abilities spent to attempt the action are still used up, but any damage bid does not occur.

### **ARTIFACTS**

Artifacts are items that make it easier for a character to cause DR, often as a conflict action. The most common type of artifacts are weapons, which obviously cause damage. However, artifacts like drugs may cause recovery.

Certain characters may have abilities that make them good at using an artifact, but by default, characters simply use artifacts with their General Physical ability. If an artifact use action succeeds, then the target is DRed an amount according to the DR amount of the artifact (exactly the same as using an ability that normally causes DR on its own).

In certain cases, artifact use abilities override DR amounts on an artifact, either by the description, or by being themselves fixed DR (i.e. -/+ FL#). Artifact use abilities that are themselves unfixed DR (i.e. -/+ #) stack with the artifact's own DR amount.

By default, knives are (-1) and guns are (-2).

### **AFTER RESOLUTION:**

After the above process is complete, characters may elect to use more abilities in response to the results. This opens a new round of the conflict in which anybody involved can use abilities and the rules for resolution are the same. This process repeats until a round happens in which nobody uses an ability. Then roleplaying can resume.

After a block of conflict is resolved, we recommend playing out as much of the determined actions as possible (without really hurting anybody, of course). This is especially helpful when a conflict ability used corresponded to IC dialog—it is useful for future dialog to know exactly what the characters said.

# The Tale of Bob the Surgeon: A Few Examples of Conflict Resolution

Bob the Surgeon is strolling through a park, enjoying the flowers. His wife, Meg the Engineer uses her "Get Bob to Come Home" ability. (She chooses to do this because she has the ability—if she didn't, she could still simply try to talk him into going home through roleplaying.)

Bob does not want to go home, and chooses to Resist (in this case, only his "Social Resist" matters, since the only power being used against him is social). Bob's player thinks that Bob finds this is important enough that he should bid 1 to Resist, which he defines to represent damage from the frustration. Meg's player decides Meg doesn't consider the matter important enough to bid. Bob has a bonus of 0 to "Social Resist" and Meg has a bonus of 1 to "Get Bob to Come Home." Consequently, both of them have totals of 1.

The tie is resolved by rock-paper-scissors. Bob wins—his Social Resist is ranked higher, and therefore executes first, blocking any Social powers used against him for the rest of the round. Since he has bid 1 to use it, he is reduced to FL 4 as soon as he resists. When they play it out, Meg still acts out trying to talk him into going home, but he is prepared to say no, although he gets frustrated at her. Meg's ability is used up, so she cannot try again.

Bob has a non-conflict ability called "Independence" which allows him to recover 1 FL of damage whenever he successfully resists his wife. Since he's just resisted Meg, he can use it, and he is restored to FL 5. Since it's a non-conflict ability, it doesn't create a conflict and Meg can't prevent it.

After this has occurred, Meg does not drop the conflict, but starts a new one by immediately trying a more desperate tactic. She uses her "Guilt Trip" ability, an emotional attack which does actual damage. Bob decides to flee the park; since he doesn't have a specific ability that lets him do this, it counts as a "General Physical." Zagrabas the Restaurateur, who is also walking by, uses his social ability "Tease" on Bob to embarrass him into staying and standing up to his wife.

Bob has a "General Physical" of 0, and again bids 1. Meg has a "Guilt Trip" of 1, and doesn't bid. Zagrabas has a "Tease" of 0, but a special ability that gives him a bonus of 1 to social abilities immediately after taking a refreshing walk. In addition, Zagrabas cares so much about encouraging Bob to stand up for himself that his player decides that he bids 1 FL of damage, representing the social awkwardness of forcefully intruding on a private argument. This gives Zagrabas a total of 2, while Bob and Meg both have totals of 1.

Zagrabas goes first, beating Bob's social resist of -1, and forces Bob to stay; right after his action executes, his bid executes, reducing him to FL 4. Bob's action contradicts this and would have executed after, so it gets cancelled. Since his action didn't happen, his bid gets cancelled as well. Meg can still do her action, and she beats Bob's emotional resist of 0. Her power immediately takes the target to FL 3, and since Bob's current FL is greater than that, he is reduced to FL 3.

They pause to act out the actions of the round. Bob turns to leave, but Zagrabas starts mocking Bob for caving into his wife, whom he describes in unflattering terms. Bob turns back to confront her as she starts making him feel guilty.

Because Zagrabas succeeded during the previous round, Bob stands up for himself, using his "Complain" ability to do damage to Meg. Meg, meanwhile, tries to get revenge at Zagrabas for what he said about her, using her "General Physical" ability and

her unusual, extra-heavy purse (which does the same damage as a knife). Zagrabas gets angry at Meg, and uses "Embarrass" (an emotional attack) to humiliate her for 1 FL of damage, hoping she will then leave. A passerby uses "Instantly Summon Police." When Meg learns this, she decides that she only wants to attack Zagrabas if the police haven't arrived yet. At the same time, an unnamed shady character wishes to slip out before the police arrive, using a "General Physical." Unk the Lawyer, in the escalating argument, tries to use his "Threaten to Sue" ability on Zagrabas because he hates restaurateurs.

Meanwhile, Unk's pet platypus Eggy and Zagrabas' pet echidna Etch each fight to help their masters. Eggy declares that he wants to use his "Speedy Attack" ability to do physical injury to Zagrabas. Hearing this, Etch decides to attack Eggy in his master's defense. Eggy declares that if he is being attacked, he would rather fight his attacker instead of Zagrabas, and Etch decides that he still wants to attack Eggy anyway to demonstrate his loyalty. So Eggy instead uses his ability to attack Etch, while Etch uses his General Physical to poke Eggy with his spines, even though he can't actually cause damage using general physical without an artifact. Thus the fight between the two pets becomes a completely separate conflict happening at the same time.

Bob's bonus is -2, and he is so drained by Meg's guilt trip that he has nothing extra to throw into it, so he doesn't bid. Meg has a bonus of 0, and bids 1 because she's gotten angry and reckless. Zagrabas has a bonus of 2, but all of his Resists are 1. He would like to bid to increase his Resists, but because he is performing an action besides Resisting, his bid could only apply to the action, so he doesn't bid. The passerby has a bonus of 1, the shady character has a bonus of 3, and Unk has a bonus of 2. Finally, the pets both have attacks of -2 and all Resists at -1 (being only pets). None of these people are invested enough to bid.

The shady character goes first at 3, and leaves. Since nobody's action is contradicted by this, everyone else's actions still have the possibility of happening normally.

Unk and Zagrabas are tied at 2. Unk beats Zagrabas' Resist, but the order matters since Zagrabas can only use Embarrass at FL 3 or higher, is currently at FL4, and Unk's lawsuit always does 2 damage. Zagrabas has a single use non-conflict ability that lets him win a tie due to being extremely lucky. He uses it, and humiliates Meg before Unk threatens him. Then he is reduced to FL2.

Now Meg and the passerby both have totals of 1, and Zagrabas has a physical resist of 1. Meg won't attack Zagrabas if the police are there, and has to beat Zagrabas' Resist, so all three throw rock-paper-scissors together (even though it doesn't matter whether Zagrabas or the passerby goes first, as long as one of them beats Meg). Meg wins, and hits Zagrabas with her purse, since she won't react to something that hasn't happened yet. Her purse always does 1 FL of damage, so Zagrabas is reduced to FL 1. Then the passerby summons the police, who see everything that happens, but are too surprised to react until this set of actions have resolved.

Now, at -2, Bob complains to Meg and both animals attack each other. None of these activities contradict each other, so the order doesn't matter, but all the actions lose to the corresponding Resist.

Now that the police are here, Meg's player gets Director approval to take 1 FL of voluntary damage to represent her fear of getting in trouble for caught disturbing the peace by hitting people in a public park, bringing her down to FL3.

Since the police are present, people have to be careful about what they do. Unk uses a social ability, "Slander," to make Zagrabas out to be a violent criminal. Bob decides to try to make Meg feel better using his "Shelter" ability, which recovers someone 1 FL by offering to protect them from danger. Meg is so surprised at this that she fails to take any action, but she decides that the way Bob is helping her is too demeaning, and Resists it. Since the police don't care about the pets, Eggy and Etch attack each other again, and this time each bid 2 because, with Zagrabas so injured, they're both willing to risk serious physical injury to try to hurt the other. No one else bids.

Unk has a bonus of 2, which overcomes Zagrabas' Resist of 1. It does 1 FL of

damage, reducing Zgrabas to FL 0. Zgrabas is so reviled as a criminal that he can no longer affect the game, and is removed from play. His previous damage contributes to this—for instance the bruise from the purse makes him look less respectable—but it is the final ability which determines why he is removed. Bob has a bonus of 0, while Meg's Resist is 1, so Bob is unable to heal her. Finally, Eggy and Etch have totals of 0, so Eggy does 1 FL of damage to Etch while Etch (who used a "General Physical") succeeds in poking Eggy with his spines, but does no damage to him. Finally, they act out the results, with Unk openly accusing Zgrabas of being a criminal and Bob trying to comfort Meg and she rebuffs him, while the pets fight dedicatedly in the background.

# Game-Specific Information for Director



## Public Background Overview

The setting is modern action genre. There is very little public knowledge; however, all characters know Marissa Islington, a strong, ruthless, and extremely competent woman with serious criminal connections. She is in her early 50s.

# Secret Background Overview

## **GENERAL BACKGROUND:**

Marissa Islington only believes in three things: power, standing up for oneself, and God. She is the creator and head of a large international criminal network called the Consortium. It is a financial and technological empire that has been around for twenty-six years. In that time, Marissa has done anything and everything it took to increase the Consortium's power and influence. She is especially known for both her ability and her willingness to use people in any way to get what she wants, and then abandoning them when she no longer needs them. Between her brilliance and her ruthlessness, she managed to bring the Consortium from a vague collection of resources to what is possibly the most significant and stable power in the criminal world.

For the past ten years or so, the interests of the Consortium have learned farther and farther toward contraband technology. Marissa has trafficked some and directly taken advantage of other secret and dangerous technological developments not even available to governments.

Several years ago, in a series of deft economic (and more direct) maneuvers, the Consortium wiped out the prestigious Fier family. The Fiers had been dealing in illegal technology for generations, and were Marissa's last major rivals. Now many of them are dead, and the rest have found new careers. Since that time, Marissa has largely monopolized international contacts in the field. With the elimination of the Fiers, the Consortium has no more enemies, and is steadily on its way to dominating the international criminal world.

## **GAME BACKGROUND:**

Marissa Islington is 51. For the past two years, she has started to think of herself as aging, and to long a little bit for the things, and most especially people, she gave up to get to the top (although not to the point of regretting her choices.) She has tried to contact a few of these people for purely personal reasons, but has been rebuffed and avoided by them. Then, a few months ago, she discovered she had uterine cancer.

After Starling's departure, the Consortium has had no heir, facing death, loneliness, and the possible end of the empire she has given everything to create, Marissa arranged the event the larp is set around. She gathered together a group of people who she feels has some right to either her or the inheritance. These are the people she screwed over or put aside for ambition.

But the reason she put them aside was that they failed to stand up to her, and she is unwilling to give the Consortium up to someone who will not be able to handle it. So she is giving them one last chance: she gave each person a small amount of poison and arranged this scenario so that they would each have a very good chance to poison her. The one who has the nerve to do it will be her successor.

The poison is developed from the nanotechnology supplied by Rotashi. Each capsule is set to transmit a different signal, so that when her people pick her up the next day, they will be able to identify who killed her, and thus to whom to give the Consortium, and subsequently serve.

What if the poisons get mixed up and the real poisoner gives her someone else's poison? Then no one will know and the Consortium will still go to the owner of the poison. That is the element of all this that she left in God's hands.

She of course doesn't want it known that she was the one who set it up, so she added elements like the letter and her own false abduction to conceal the fact.

# Timeline

<b>MARISSA'S AGE:</b>	<b>YEARS AGO:</b>	<b>EVENT:</b>
19	32	Started going to Harvard with Landing
23	28	Stole Landing's contacts and fiancé
25	26	Started Consortium
27	24	Delindt joined Consortium at age 26
28	23	Mirano joined Consortium at age 18
30	21	Married Albert Starling
31	20	Starling was born
41	10	Started moving into contraband technology
42	9	Relationship with Esperanza
46	5	Starling left Consortium Fiers hired Grey to investigate Marissa Marissa purchased nanotech from Rotashi
47	4	Mirano stopped Sobiesky attempted infiltration Defeat of Fiers
48	3	Mirano dismissed
49	2	Delindt dismissed

# Character Overview

(Listed in order of decreasing necessity for smaller-group games.)

- J. MIRANO (PREFERRED MALE): GLC.** Mirano has been Marissa's competent and faithful lieutenant for 23 years. He was a major factor in the defeat of the Fiers. Shortly thereafter, Marissa told him to leave and find a new job because she didn't need him anymore. He knows just about everything about Marissa and the Consortium. He is here because he contributed the most to the Consortium and knows the Consortium the best.
- T. STARLING: ELS.** Starling is Marissa's child. She went through a quick marriage in order to produce him as an heir. But Starling didn't want to be a criminal leader, and instead left the Consortium to become a gymnast. Marissa disapproved of this and had his legs shot. He is here because he was her intended heir.
- C. ESPERANZA (PREFERRED FEMALE): EDS.** Esperanza was once Marissa's lover, and their relationship was the only one Marissa ever had for purely personal attachment. However, when the time came for Marissa to marry, she sent him away. He still loves Marissa, understands her, and wants to kill her for her own good. He knew about the Consortium but was not a part of it. He is here because Marissa loved him.
- S. ROTASHI: GLS.** Rotashi is a scientist who developed a powerful nanotechnology and sold it to the Consortium, only to find that Marissa intended to use it for destruction. He is a decent person who regretted being a party to evil, and turned down repeated employment offers by Marissa. He is here because his brilliance, combined with the resources of the Consortium, could change the world.
- R. DELINDT: EDC.** Delindt was a thug of Marissa's for a long time. He joined the Consortium after Marissa forced him to kill his spouse and children in order to save his own life. He too was sent away when no longer needed. He is here because he is one of her oldest retainers, and Marissa thought to give him one more chance.
- L. FIER: ELC.** Fier is the would-be scion of the Fier crime ring, had Marissa not wiped it out. After the death of much of his family, he found a new and satisfying life as a doctor. He is in the odd position of owing her both revenge and gratitude. He is here because he is already trained and familiar with the business of the Consortium.
- F. LANDING: GDS.** Landing was Marissa's best friend from college. He had ambitions for starting a secret society, worked hard for it, and Marissa took advantage of their friendship to steal both his accumulated resources and his fiancé in order to start the Consortium. He is now a television reporter. He is here because he can be considered to deserve the Consortium.
- R. GREY: GDC.** Grey was a private investigator hired by the Fiers to find information on Marissa that they could use to take her down. He has always wanted to be a composer. Marissa found out about him and offered him artistic patronage as a bribe. He turned her down but felt that she had corrupted his art. He is here because Marissa finds him an interesting person and an interesting phenomenon.

# Game Overview

## **SUMMARY:**

All characters, including Director-played NPC Marissa Islington, wake up on Marissa's yacht out in the middle of nowhere. Checking rapidly reveals that the boat is functional, but out of gas, and the GPS and all communication devices have been disabled. There is also a letter on the table promising morning pickup.

All the PCs have secretly been given boxes containing slips of paper with a small black dot of poison on it and instructions for its use. At some point in the evening, one of them will poison her. After she dies, the rest will try to figure out what happened. The game ends when her people come to pick everyone up and escort the new Consortium Leader away.

## **AWAKENING:**

Characters should wake up on the yacht in the following order: Mirano, Delindt, Grey, Fier, Rotashi, Landing, Esperanza, Starling. If some characters are not in play, just cut them out of the line, and the order remains the same.

Marissa is faking unconsciousness. She can wake up at any point in this process that is convenient, depending on the pacing of the other awakenings. The ideal place for her is between Esperanza and Starling, but make sure nobody gets a chance to examine or attack her before she wakes up.

## **THE YACHT:**

The Queen of Spades is Marissa's yacht that she has not used for two years. It is undamaged except for the fact that GPS and communications have been disabled. These can be easily repaired later, but the necessary tools are not available. It is also has no gas, emergency systems, or any other way of moving or getting out of the situation.

The yacht has one tiny engine room, which contains all controls, plus rope and a First Aid Kit with 5 uses. There is also a tiny bathroom.

It has a fully stocked drink (and ideally snack) bar.

It has no cameras or bugs on it.

There is a letter (see Game Materials) set in a prominent place.

## **MARISSA:**

Marissa has a small 12-shot pistol concealed on her person. It has a damage of -2. It is meant to be used to hold people off in the event that everyone mobs her, in which she risks getting killed without a demonstration of assertiveness.

A very detailed search or medical examination of her will reveal two things. The first is that she is in bad health. The second is that she has small metal implants at the tips of her left thumb and forefinger under the skin, placed so that so can touch them to each other with skin in between.

The implants transmit up to X different signals at three different strengths, where X is the number of players. Each signal can only transmit at one strength at a time, but any combination of the signals can transmit at the same time. The PCs will have no idea what the device is for, but will be able to mess with the signals. (It exists as her manual override for the inheritance transmission, see Inheritance later this section).

Marissa's Abilities are as follows. Feel free to change them if convenient for plot:

General Physical (1-5) 2: Physical actions not otherwise covered. (P)

Gun Use (1-5) 3: Do any amount of damage with a gun. (P)

Scathing Denunciation (1-5) 2: Criticize someone (-FL3) (S)

Sheer Status x1 (3-5) 3: Stare down someone trying to attack you (S)

Physical Resist: 1. Social Resist: 5. Emotional Resist: 4

The moral of this story? There's a reason they should be trying to kill her with poison instead of in direct combat! (However, if one of them actually works up the nerve to attack her and it's cool and appropriate, tone her down so they have a chance.)

### **THE POISON:**

The poison is, technically, not poison but nanomachines, though that is not obvious. However, using the Analysis ability on the poison will reveal to Fier that it is nanomachines designed to kill, but nothing more. It will reveal to Rotashi that it is a new adaptation of his technology that is designed to kill and then transmit a signal. Each person has a poison with a different signal.

The poison is given to the PCs in the form of small black dots that can be removed from a slip of paper, and can be administered in food or drink.

OOO, all the players have to do to administer it is touch something that Marissa eats or eats from, with the intent of poisoning her. Unless they are ridiculously obvious about it, they will not be noticed by her. (It should be maximally easy for them to succeed, since that's where the plot of the game comes from.)

After it is administered, she will die in 15-30 mins, as theatrically convenient.

It is, of course, possible that someone other than Marissa gets poisoned. This will, in fact, succeed, and there is no Physical Resist allowed. If this happens, inform the victim about ten minutes later than he feels ill and will die in another ten minutes.

### **MARISSA'S SOCIAL BEHAVIOR:**

Marissa will call everyone by their first name. She will occasionally ask people (Mirano, Starling, Esperanza) why they did not return calls, and will ask Rotashi and Grey why they wouldn't work for her. She will also tend to ask people how they have been doing, what they've done with their lives, and things like that. She genuinely wants to know how they've been.

She should at some point express to Starling disappointment that Starling did not have the determination to get physical therapy. She will not deny (but will not necessarily confirm) that she was responsible for Starling's legs.

She is closer to Mirano than anyone else, by far. She will naturally default to trusting and depending on him. If relevant, she will even confide in him (though not about the setup). She will automatically give him orders as she did before, though only if they befit his status as lieutenant (e.g. searching for weapons).

Any menial orders she will automatically give to Delindt. However, she will do most things herself.

If at any point in social interaction she is particularly pleased with someone, she can set them to inherit some portion of the Consortium using her finger device.

### **SPECULATION:**

The characters have false leads that, if combined, will lead them to one of two major suspects for having set everything up.

The first is the Sobiesky group, a Polish smuggling organization that tried to infiltrate the Consortium some years ago—it is possible that they succeeded and set this up using internal Consortium resources. However, Mirano knows they are not a threat because he, personally, rooted out the infiltration.

The second is Albert Starling, T. Starling's father, who has gone somewhat crazy and has been plotting revenge on Marissa. He has approached some of the PCs looking for information under various last names, including, confusingly enough, Soviesky. Yes, the one-letter difference between Sobiesky and Soviesky is deliberate.

The Fiers are also a perpetual suspect, although L. Fier, if he is in play, knows they are unlikely to make a comeback.

### **KEEPING MARISSA'S INTENTIONS SECRET:**

It is critical that the reason everyone is on the boat remains a mystery while Marissa is alive. People will naturally suspect Marissa of orchestrating the event, especially because it's her boat. However, they will tend to be willing to let go of the idea because the situation has no apparent possible benefit to her. Also, Marissa herself is doing her best to make it look like she has no idea what's going on -- she will declaim the unlikelihood that she would be kidnapped despite Consortium security, ask Mirano to check the room for bugs, criticize the frivolity of the font used in the letter, etc.

### **MARISSA'S GUN:**

After Marissa dies, someone will probably find the gun. At this point, it's all right if they consequently suspect her involvement. The gun then serves as a useful tool for escalating conflict, especially if someone decides to avenge Marissa.

### **INHERITANCE:**

The people who come and pick the characters up will determine how to bequeath the Consortium based on a collection of signals.

First, any nanomachines inside her body will transmit a signal corresponding to a particular person. This signal is transmitted at Strength 3.

Also, the implant in her finger can transmit signals corresponding to people, at Strengths 1-3. 1 means 'give him a relatively small amount' (about 10 million worth in money or resources), 2 means 'give him a decent amount', and 3 means 'make him an heir'.

The small and medium allocations will be taken from the Consortium and bequeathed, and then the main Consortium will be split between everyone whose signals were transmitted at Strength 3.

If there are no Strength 3 people left alive, the Consortium will go to any Strength 2 people, or lacking those, to Strength 1 people. If there is simply no possible person to inherit, the Consortium's people are under orders to simply let it die.

Remember that Marissa's people will take the most recent transmission of the device before they arrive, so if the characters change the transmissions, they will be mistaken about her intentions. However, if they see the device's transmission fluctuate too much, they will realize something is wrong and ignore the device's information altogether.

### **ENDGAME:**

People from the Consortium (whom Mirano will know as trustworthy) will arrive a time convenient for the plot after Marissa dies, probably after the game has run for about three hours.

The characters will see and hear a boat arriving about 15 minutes before it gets there. Then a large boat will pull up alongside the yacht, attach, and 12 heavily armed men will come aboard, led by a young, authoritative Japanese man named Jack. They will then politely greet everyone and invite them onto the boat to be taken home.

They will be very polite to everyone, especially Mirano and any Strength 3 heirs. They will refuse to answer questions. If pressed, they will (politely) say that everyone must get on the boat or be left behind.

All Strength 3 heirs will be taken off alone. Any other heirs will be taken off in a different direction. Everyone else will be taken off together in a third direction.

All non-heirs will be sent home, given \$5000 for their time, and left alone thereafter with nothing ever explained to them.

Lower level (Strength 1 and 2) heirs will be told that they inherit, what they inherit, and the transfer of resources will be made. None of the actual decision mechanism will be explained. Then they'll be sent off to their now more affluent lives.

Full heirs will have everything explained to them, and will be given the Consortium to do with as they see fit.

## Advice on Setup

- An ideal room to run in would have an adjoining bathroom and closet, for the bathroom and engine room, plus a section outside the door to represent the outside walkway.
- If operating in a single room with no adjoining rooms, simply abstract the engine room and bathroom as too small to have private conversations in, and say it's raining too hard to go out on deck. If there is one adjoining room, it's more important to use it represent the engine room.
- \* It is critical that the room is laid out in such a way that will promote clusters of small interactions rather than a large discussion, making it easier to poison Marissa. Orient chairs and sofas so that they can't all be made to face each other.
- Marissa's yacht is stocked with a drink bar in character. The drinks are extremely necessary because they give people a chance to poison her. In the ideal case, there will also be snack food.
- If possible, we recommend getting a variety of nonalcoholic beverages and labeling them as alcohol. Using real alcohol is impractical because it will hinder roleplaying for the players, and more importantly, Marissa will be drinking a lot, and almost certainly has a higher alcohol tolerance than the Director.
- If you can't do that, it's fine to get containers of water and label them alcohol, or even a pitcher of water that is IC water, or just snacks. Anything is fine as long as Marissa can keep consuming things.
- Try to have a good number of extra cups/plates, so Marissa can leave several of "her" cups/plates unattended relatively often to allow access to poisoners.
- Place the letter somewhere maximally obvious. Somebody who is not Marissa should plausibly find it first.
- In the ideal case, Starling should have a wheelchair. A rolling office chair works fine. Otherwise, use a lighter chair, ideally with arms, ideally not folding, that Starling can just move around, manually.
- Give Starling a blanket to cover his legs. If there isn't a suitable blanket, use a jacket or other piece of clothing and pretend. He needs this for one of his abilities (Surprise.)
- Have at least one deck of cards and poker chips. Stack the deck so that if Marissa is dealing to a group of 4 players in a game of Hearts, she gets the Queen of Spades and a good hand to shoot the moon with. If convenient, have a few other short games available, to distract people from the poisoning.
- Cut apart the slips of paper in the Game Materials section and secretly give one to each player. The players should not know which characters have slips of paper.

# Advice on Casting & Running

## **CASTING:**

- It is important that someone capable of being assertive, socially strong, and professional play Mirano.
- It would be nice if someone assertive played Landing.

## **PLAYING MARISSA AS NPC:**

- There are three important aspects to Marissa that, if kept in mind, will make player her both easier for the Director and more satisfying for the players:
- She wishes these people had stood up to her more and argued her down when she screwed them over, rather than resentfully obeying or ignoring her.
- She is used to getting her way.
- She believes in God. She considers God to have brought her this far, and has somewhat placed this situation in God's hands.
- Keeping your head still when you talk is difficult, but will give you an incredible air of authority. Practice it in front of a mirror if you have time.
- Keep in mind that she is trying to make it easier for the characters to poison her. Make sure people know which cups are hers. Leave cups/plates unattended before finishing them. Get random people to pour/pass her drinks/food.
- Keep in mind that her ultimate goal is to get an heir to the Consortium, not resolve her relationship problems.

## **OTHER ADVICE:**

- Keep track of where each person's poison is!
- Feel free to change Marissa's abilities if it helps the plot.
- Remember to keep track of what people do with their slips of paper if they use the poisons. They could get used against them later. Similarly, make sure the dots that have been used are ripped off.
- Do what you have to to keep the PCs from finding out that it was Marissa who set up the kidnapping before at least the last half hour (or until Marissa dies.) The story gets substantially less interesting if they figure it out too early. Assume that her plan was flawless. Ability use will not yield information.
- If half an hour has passed with no one trying to kill Marissa, check with the definite killers (Rotashi, Landing, Esperanza) and see what they're planning. Make sure she gets killed.

# Larp-Specific Rules and Beginning Announcements

(Read this to your players at start of game)

## **LARP-SPECIFIC RULES:**

- None

## **BEGINNING ANNOUNCEMENTS**

- All characters, including Marissa, will wake up sprawled around the room. Those who would recognize it know that it is the main room of Marissa Islington's yacht, The Queen of Spades. It is night, and the boat is surrounded by ocean, with nothing in sight. In addition to the main room, the yacht has a tiny bathroom and a tiny engine room. Further details on character sheets.
- The order in which you will wake up will be given to you by the Director. You will wake up shortly after each other. Once you all have your numbers, try to roleplay the waking up process without OOC interruption.
- Some of you have physical objects attached to your backs. Keep in mind that you don't know what they are until you take the time to remove and look at them. You should probably do this in secret.
- Anyone who wants to can recognize T. Starling. Starling was a gymnast who dropped out of the US Olympic qualifiers due to a training accident, and has been crippled ever sense.
- [If Landing is in play] Anyone who wants to can recognize F. Landing, a well-known television reporter with a strong personality.



# Character Summary Chart

## Character

<b>CHARACTER</b>	<b>STYLE</b>	<b>RELATIONSHIP TO MARISSA</b>	<b>PUBLIC IDENTITY</b>
Jasper / Julia Mirano*	GLC	Former lieutenant	US smuggling ring leader
Trent / Trinity Starling*	ELS	Child, intended heir	Retired former gymnast
Carl / Cara Esperanza*	EDS	Former lover	Respected attorney
Sarabh / Simina Rotashi	GLS	Scientist who sold tech to Consortium	Engineering Professor
Roger / Rose Delindt	EDC	Dirty work thug (shot Starling)	High-class waiter
Lawrence / Laurel Fier	ELC	Scion of family she defeated	Doctor
Felix / Faye Landing	GDS	Former best friend	Reporter
Renault / Regina Grey	GDC	Hired to investigate her	Private Investigator

\* People Marissa tried to contact recently who refused to hear from her.

# Summary Chart

<b>REASON TO KILL MARISSA</b>	<b>PLOT-CREATING GOALS</b>	<b>POSSIBLE SUS- PECTS</b>	<b>PCs RECOG- NIZED</b>
Was dismissed despite loyalty	Find killer Maybe avenge her	None	Starling, De- lindt Esp., Rotashi, Fier
Suspects M of shot legs	Learn about PCs Find killer	Maybe Polish group infiltrated Consortium	Mirano
Romantic revenge, for her own good	Kill Marissa	Albert "Black"	Mirano Landing
For the good of humanity	Kill Marissa Learn about her	Rumors of return of Fiers	None
For completely ruining his life	Destroy Marissa	Someone wanted info on Consortium	Starling
Revenge for family	Maybe kill Marissa	Polish group wants to compete	Grey
Ruined hopes and romance	Destroy Marissa Kill Marissa	Albert "Soviesky"	None
Corruption of art, good of humanity	Find killer Learn about PCs	None	Rotashi



# The Queen of Spades

Age  
41

[Jasper/Julia] Mirano

**APPARENT IDENTITY:** Leader of an American drug smuggling ring

**REAL IDENTITY:** Former lieutenant for Marissa Islington; cast out by her

**KNOWLEDGE OF MI:** Marissa only believes in three things: power, standing up for oneself, and God. She is the creator and head of the Consortium, a large international criminal network. It is a financial and technological empire that has been around for 26 years. Marissa did anything and everything it took to increase the Consortium's power and influence. She is especially known for her willingness to use people in any way to get what she wants, and then abandon them when she no longer needs them. Between her brilliance and her ruthlessness, she managed to bring the Consortium from a vague collection of resources to the most significant and stable power in the criminal world.

For the past ten years or so, the interests of the Consortium have leaned farther and farther toward contraband technology. Marissa has both trafficked and directly taken advantage of many secret and dangerous technological developments not even available to governments.

Four years ago, in a series of deft maneuvers, the Consortium wiped out the prestigious Fier family. The Fiers had been dealing in illegal technology for generations, and were Marissa's last major rivals. Now many of them are dead, and the rest have found new careers. Since that time she has monopolized international contacts in the field.

With the defeat of the Fiers, the Consortium has no more rivals. The stake of anyone who had a problem with Marissa would have to be personal.

## CONFLICT ABILITIES:

General Physical (2-5) 2: Physical actions not otherwise covered (P)

Intimidate x3 (2-5) 1: Make someone back down (FL3) (S).

Add weapon damage to score when ranking.

Coerce x1 (4-5) 1: Make someone do something by threat of force (S).

Add weapon damage to score when ranking.

## NON-CONFLICT ABILITIES:

Bodyguard (2-5) x2: Take any amount of physical damage just inflicted on a target -- whom you are physically in a position to defend -- for yourself, instead, as a free action in combat. Can take you below 0. Can be used on bids.

Determination (1) x2: Use General Physical at FL 1.

### RESISTS

Physical 1  
Social 0  
Emotional 0

### SPECIALS

Cannot be forced to  
betray Marissa

### INVENTORY

Item taped to back

**BACKGROUND:** For twenty years you were Marissa's loyal lieutenant in the Consortium. You understood her principles, kept her secrets, and were if not a huge part, a very solid part of her bringing the Consortium to power. You carried out countless critical missions. You discovered and rooted out several attempts to destroy the Consortium, including a near-successful infiltration from the Sobiesky electronics smuggling group four years ago. Through your work, the Consortium gained stable supremacy.

You saw other people come and go, always believing that Marissa got rid of them because they were not effective enough. You never dreamed that she would ever dismiss you the same way -- and because you were too effective.

After the destruction of the Fiers, the future of the Consortium was guaranteed and Marissa no longer needed you. Three years ago, she summoned you and made you reiterate your vow never to give away the secrets of the Consortium. Then she told you to go leave and do something else. You didn't really argue because you had seen her do it so many times before. Your last obedience to her was to leave, and you never tried to reach her again.

You used the skills you learned with the Consortium to quickly and efficiently establish your own smuggling ring. You have always kept and will keep your vow to Marissa, and of course she understood this. However, you are understandably furious at being put aside so easily; though in your heart you are still quite loyal to her: the woman who taught you everything and made you what you are. In the past year, Marissa has tried a few times to contact you, but you have adamantly refused to hear from her.

#### **GOALS:**

Decide what to do about Marissa. Twenty years of love is hard to put aside.

On the other hand, she put you aside. Maybe serve her as best you can. Or maybe don't listen to her at all...

If someone kills her, find out who it is. Maybe avenge her.

#### **OTHER KNOWLEDGE:**

T. Starling is Marissa's child. Marissa tried to train him, but he refused to be her successor and instead left to be a gymnast, making her furious.

C. Esperanza used to be Marissa's lover, but she cast him out after she decided it would be more politically useful to see another person.

S. Rotashi was a scientist that sold Marissa the technology that she used to wipe out the Fiers: some sort of remote-controlled nanomachines.

R. Delindt used to work for the Consortium. You think he might have been coerced into cooperation. Marissa got rid of him a few years ago, also.

**How You Got Here:** You were going about your normal life by yourself when you felt a prick. You remember that before you fell unconscious, someone told you that you would not be hurt, but that you would be left something that you must keep secret. When you wake up you will find that you have everything you that had on you at the time, except for identification and weapons. You do find a piece of paper taped to your back that wasn't there before.

#### **QUESTIONS TO ANSWER:**

What do you want regarding Marissa?

Why not answer her calls?

How do you treat your underlings compared to how she treated hers?

Do you have ambitions? What are they?

What do you want for the Consortium?

# The Queen of Spades

S  
L  
E

Age  
20

[Trent / Trinity] Starling

**APPARENT IDENTITY:** Former gymnast, independently wealthy. Dropped out of Olympic qualifiers due to training accident. Now confined to wheelchair.

**REAL IDENTITY:** Child of Marissa Islington. Left Consortium for gymnastics

**KNOWLEDGE OF MI:** Marissa Islington only believes in three things: power, standing up for oneself, and god. She is the creator and head of a large international criminal network called the Consortium. It is a financial and technological empire that has been around for 26 years. In that time, Marissa has done anything and everything it took to increase the Consortium's power and influence. She is especially known for both her ability and her willingness to use people in any way to get what she wants, and then abandon them when she no longer needs them. Between her brilliance and her ruthlessness, she managed to bring the Consortium from a vague collection of resources to what is possibly the most significant and stable power in the criminal world.

**GOALS:**

- Maybe convince Marissa of your worth
- Resolve your relationship with her (not necessarily positively).
- If she dies, figure out who killed her and why.
- Figure out what other people's relationships with her were like.

**CONFLICT ABILITIES:**

- General Physical (2-5) 1: Physical actions not otherwise covered (P)
- Martial Arts (3-5) 2: Attack without a weapon (-1) (P)
- Decisive Strike (3-5) 2: Attack without a weapon (-FL2) (P)
- Gymnastics (4-5) 3: Perform an acrobatic or gymnastic feat (NR)
- Size Up x2 (2-5) 1: Figure out what someone's first priority or loyalty is (E)

**NON-CONFLICT ABILITIES:**

- Surprise x1 (3-5): Automatically go first in ranking for a physical action when you first reveal that you are not really crippled
- Resilient x2 (1-4): Recover from non-physical damage (+1)

RESISTS	SPECIALS	INVENTORY
Physical 0 Social 1 Emotional 0	Social Resist is 2 against Marissa	Paper taped to back

**BACKGROUND:** You are Marissa's only child. Your father was Albert Starling, whom Marissa briefly married, solely to father her successor (you never knew him). You were raised inside the Consortium, explicitly taught to someday take over. You hated it, and developed an interest in gymnastics, which Marissa allowed only as far as it would help you be a criminal leader.

When you were 15, you realized that you were very good at gymnastics, and gathered the courage to leave your mother and the Consortium to pursue your passion. You took some money, paid a random person to adopt you for legal convenience, and arranged to get a trainer. Marissa was furious but did not pursue you.

Before the qualifiers for the Olympics, which everyone expected you to pass easily, someone broke into your house at night and shot you in the legs. You knew that this was your mother telling you that she would not allow you to compete; whether out of practical concern that your emergence as a public figure might endanger the secrecy of the Consortium, or out of sheer vindictive possessiveness, you are not certain. However, understanding for the first time that she would really never let you have a chance, you pretended to the public that you were injured in a training accident, and gave up your dream. But you still refused to go back to the Consortium.

You in fact recovered quickly and completely, but continued to pretend to be crippled. In secret, you have continued private training, especially in martial arts, but insist on going around in a wheelchair.

During all the time you were away, especially in the past two years, Marissa occasionally tried to contact you, but you have never returned her calls.

**OTHER KNOWLEDGE:**

J. Mirano was one of Marissa's loyal lieutenants in the Consortium. Marissa has a great many enemies, some of them very resourceful & creative. Before you left the Consortium, you had found some hints that it was being expertly infiltrated. You didn't mention this since you were leaving.

**How You Got Here:** You were going about your normal life by yourself when you felt a prick. You remember that before you fell unconscious, someone told you that you would not be hurt, but that you would be left something that you must keep secret. When you wake up you will find that you have everything you had on you at the time, except for identification and weapons. You do find a piece of paper taped to your back that wasn't there before.

**QUESTIONS TO ANSWER:**

- What caused you to finally leave the Consortium?
- Why did you not go back to gymnastics?
- Why are you pretending to be crippled?
- What do you do all day now?
- What do you want from life at this point?
- Why did you not return your mother's calls?
- How do you feel about the father that you never knew?
- What do you want from your mother?
- What do you want to happen with the Consortium?

# The Queen of Spades

E D S

Age  
49

[Carl / Cara] Esperanza

**APPARENT IDENTITY:** Respected attorney

**REAL IDENTITY:** Former lover of Marissa Islington; still very in love with her

**KNOWLEDGE OF MI:** Marissa Islington only believes in three things: power, standing up for oneself, and god. She is the creator and head of a large international criminal network called the Consortium. It is a financial and technological empire that has been around for 26 years. In that time, Marissa has done anything and everything it took to increase the Consortium's power and influence. She is especially known for both her ability and her willingness to use people in any way to get what she wants, and then abandon them, when she no longer needs them. Between her brilliance and her ruthlessness, she managed to bring the Consortium from a vague collection of resources to what is possibly the most significant and stable power in the criminal world.

**How You Got Here:** You were going about your normal life by yourself when you felt a prick. You remember that before you fell unconscious, someone told you that you would not be hurt, but that you would be left something that you must keep secret. When you wake up you will find that you have everything you had on you at the time, except for identification and weapons. You do find a piece of paper taped to your back that wasn't there before.

**CONFLICT ABILITIES:**

- General Physical (3-5) 0: Physical actions not otherwise covered (P)
- Denounce (2-5) 2: Eloquently say bad things about someone (they must be true to the best of your knowledge). (-FL 4) (S)
- Vilify x1 (2-5) 1: Stronger version of Denounce. (-FL2) (S)
- Laud x3 (3-5) 1: Publicly praise someone at length (+1) (S)
- Detect Lie x3 (2-5) 0: Determine if someone is lying. (E)

**NON-CONFLICT ABILITIES:**

- Orate (4-5): Give an eloquent speech. Only needs minimal factual support.

RESISTS	SPECIALS	INVENTORY
Physical 0 Social 1 Emotional -1	None	Paper taped to back

**GOALS:**

Kill Marissa for her own good.

**BACKGROUND:** Nine years ago, you were in love with Marissa Islington and the two of you were very close. You knew she was fond of you, but you could never figure out if she actually loved you back. You helped her with the Consortium, and lived with her. You understood that the Consortium was her life. Then, two years later, she decided that she needed to make an alliance by seeing someone else. She gave you her regrets, but told you that you had to leave.

You stayed in loose contact with her for several years after, but eventually stopped returning messages; you never stopped loving her. You knew better than to try to convince her to take you back. You knew her well enough to understand her pattern of using, even caring about, and then deliberately losing people due to her obsession with the Consortium. You are convinced, and grieved, that she has been her own destruction; she is not a complete person and, for her own good, she is probably better off dead.

**OTHER KNOWLEDGE**

You think F. Landing is one of Marissa's friends from a long time ago.

J. Mirano used to work for the Consortium; you're not sure what he did.

Three years ago you were contacted by someone named Albert Black, who claimed to be another of Marissa's old lovers from over twenty years ago.

He had evidently been living in seclusion for most of that time, amassing a private fortune. He asked you some oblique questions about Marissa's daily lifestyle, but said little about himself. You never heard from him again.

**QUESTIONS TO ANSWER:**

Why did you stop talking to Marissa?

What type of law do you do?

How do you feel about the other spouses or lovers she's had?

What, ideally, do you wish could have happened?

Do you think it's possible to fix her?

At what point would you just decide to kill her?

Have you had any relationships after Marissa? If so, how did they go?

What do you think of the Consortium?

What are your ambitions at this point in your life?

# The Queen of Spades

S  
L  
G

Age  
55

[Sarabh / Simina] Rotashi

**APPARENT IDENTITY:** Eccentric but inspired engineering professor

**REAL IDENTITY:** Inventor of dangerous nanotechnology that was sold to Marissa Islington

**KNOWLEDGE OF MI:** Marissa had many financial interests across the world, many of them illegal to varying degrees. For the past ten years or so, the interests of the Consortium have leaned farther and farther toward contra-band technology. Marissa has both trafficked and directly taken advantage of many secret and dangerous technological developments not even available to governments.

Four years ago, she wiped out the prestigious Fier family. The Fiers had been dealing in illegal technology for generations, and were Marissa's last major rivals. Now many of them are dead, and the rest have found new careers. Since that time, she has monopolized international contacts in the field.

**GOALS:**

Kill Marissa for the evil she has done and will do, and for corrupting your art. Learn more about Marissa and about the other people here.

**CONFLICT ABILITIES:**

- General Physical (3-5) -1: Physical actions not otherwise covered (P)
- Drink (3-5) 3: Win a drinking contest. (NR) (Opponent uses Gen Phys)
- Technobabble x3 (2-5) 2: Get someone to temporarily drop a non-essential topic by giving them so much technical information that they get confused. (S)
- Superiority x1 (4-5) 0: Make someone feel stupid in contrast to you (-FL3) (E)

**NON-CONFLICT ABILITIES:**

- Analysis (3-5): Analyze a piece of technology (takes twenty minutes).
- Think fast (3-5) x1: Win a tie in a conflict

RESISTS	SPECIALS	INVENTORY
Physical 0 Social 0 Emotional 1	None	Paper taped to back

**How You Got Here:** You were going about your normal life by yourself when you felt a prick. You remember that before you fell unconscious, someone told you that you would not be hurt, but that you would be left something that you must keep secret. When you wake up you will find that you have everything you had on you at the time, except for identification and weapons. You do find a piece of paper taped to your back that wasn't there before.

**BACKGROUND:** You were a brilliant engineer and scientist who did not mind making some more money by selling your developments to the criminal technology market, on the side. Your illegal activities were solely restricted to violating patents, commitments, and import/export laws. You did this because you felt too intellectually restricted by the options available at the university.

You sold your masterpiece, remote-controlled nanotechnology, to Marissa Islington. You weren't entirely certain what she would do with it, and didn't really care, until you found out that her own researchers had developed it into a particularly effective way to kill people. She modified your machines to be able to spread in a controlled fashion, enter a person's body, and kill that person at the push of a button. This was five years ago. The implications of what she might have done with the technology since is even more frightening.

Marissa offered to hire you to do further work, as well as give you the laboratory and license you have always dreamed of, but the price of making more deadly technology for her was not worth it to you, so you turned her down and deliberately avoided trying to find out what she has done with what you developed.

**OTHER KNOWLEDGE:**

You have heard rumors in the last year or so that the Fiers have been reorganizing and resurfacing under a different name. You have not had any evidence of this, or means of contacting them, but if it is true then you might consider working for them, since they were far less ruthless than Marissa. But then, the stakes have become much higher.

**QUESTIONS TO ANSWER:**

Do you have a family?

Do you consider yourself a good person?

How do you feel about the idea that your invention was made so destructive?

Why avoid finding out what she's done with your technology?

What did the experience of dealing with Marissa change for you?

Do you ever regret turning down her job offers? Why or why not?

Have you killed anyone before? If so, why?

What makes you willing to kill Marissa? Would you have been willing to do it if you had needed to track her down and make all the plans yourself?

What principles do you consider inviolate?

What would you change about the world if you could?

# The Queen of Spades

Age  
50

[Roger / Rose] Delindt

**APPARENT IDENTITY:** Waiter at upscale restaurant

**REAL IDENTITY:** Former henchman in Consortium; coerced to cooperation

**KNOWLEDGE OF MI:** Marissa Islington only believes in three things: power, standing up for oneself, and god. She is the creator and head of a large international criminal network called the Consortium. It is a financial and technological empire that has been around for 26 years. In that time, Marissa has done anything and everything it took to increase the Consortium's power and influence. She is especially known for both her ability and her willingness to use people in any way to get what she wants, and then abandon them when she no longer needs them. Between her brilliance and her ruthlessness, she managed to bring the Consortium from a vague collection of resources to what is possibly the most significant and stable power in the criminal world.

**How You Got Here:** You were going about your normal life by yourself when you felt a prick. You remember that before you fell unconscious, someone told you that you would not be hurt, but that you would be left something that you must keep secret. When you wake up you will find that you have everything you had on you at the time, except for identification and weapons. You do find a piece of paper taped to your back that wasn't there before.

## CONFLICT ABILITIES:

General Physical (3-5) 1: Physical actions not otherwise covered (P)  
Cooperate x2 (1-5) 2: Convince someone you will do what they want you to, regardless of whether you actually will. (S).  
Empathy x3 (2-5) 2: Figure out how someone is feeling. (E)  
Flatter (2-4) 0: Make someone feel better because they irrationally believe your flattery (+1) (E)

## NON-CONFLICT ABILITIES:

Bartend (3-5): Produce a really good drink.

### RESISTS

Physical 0  
Social -1  
Emotional -1

### SPECIALS

None

### INVENTORY

Paper taped to back

**BACKGROUND:** 24 years ago, you were an intelligent young person with a spouse and two very young children. Your spouse's family was small but wealthy, and they did some smuggling on the side; you quickly became an efficient partner. One night, Marissa Islington and several thugs broke into your house to kill you. You begged passionately for your life, and she agreed to let you work for her if you demonstrated your loyalty by killing the rest of your family, including your spouse and children. You cooperated, and became a grunt working for her in the Consortium, moving your late-in-laws' contacts into Marissa's control.

You did Marissa's dirty work for 22 years. You never challenged or showed her disobedience. Two years ago she decided that she did not need you anymore and essentially told you to get lost. You did as you were told, though this bothered you. Thrown out of the Consortium with no friends and no resources, you have been making a living as a waiter.

Your feelings about yourself are understandably mixed. There is, however, no doubt that you passionately hate Marissa Islington.

### **GOALS:**

Destroy Marissa. Completely. And ideally painfully. This may or may not involve killing her; you decide.

Destroy other people who have contributed to the Consortium.

Get the personal nerve to pull off the above.

### **OTHER KNOWLEDGE:**

T. Starling used to be someone close to Marissa and the Consortium, who left of his own volition some time ago, making Marissa very angry. When Starling was going to qualify for the Olympics, Marissa didn't want too much attention on him for fear of the Consortium being discovered, so she sent you to arrange a "training accident" for Starling, certain that Starling would not report an attack. You broke into his house and shot him several times in the legs. You were surprised that Starling did not recover because you were pretty certain that you didn't cripple him.

Last year, someone approached you, offering a lot of money for information on the Consortium. You have no idea who they were or for whom they worked. When you turned them down, they never came back.

### **QUESTIONS TO ANSWER:**

Okay, so why were you willing to kill your family?

How, in all this time, have you felt about having done that?

Why did getting thrown out of the Consortium bother you so much?

What, other than hate, do you feel for Marissa? Do you love her?

If you could go back twenty years, would you make the same choice?

What do you daydream about these days?

Although the Consortium was large, you had no power in it. When you were still in the Consortium, what would you have liked to do/be in it?

How have you felt about all the people you killed for Marissa over the years?

Do you still want a family?

Why did you turn down the guy who wanted information on the Consortium?

How do you think about the three very different segments of your life?

# The Queen of Spades

E  
L  
C

Age  
30

[Lawrence / Laurel] Fier

**APPARENT IDENTITY:** Doctor from wealthy family

**REAL IDENTITY:** Would-be scion of the Fiers before they were destroyed by Marissa

**KNOWLEDGE OF MI:** Marissa had many financial interests across the world, many of them illegal to varying degrees. For the past ten years or so, the interests of the Consortium have leaned farther and farther toward contra-band technology. Marissa has both trafficked and directly taken advantage of many secret and dangerous technological developments not even available to governments.

Four years ago, in a series of deft economic (and more direct) maneuvers, the Consortium wiped out the prestigious Fier family. The Fiers had been dealing in illegal technology for generations, and were Marissa's last major rivals. Now many of them are dead, and the rest have found new careers. Since that time, she has largely monopolized international contacts in the field.

**HOW YOU GOT HERE:** You were going about your normal life when you felt a prick. Before you passed out, someone told you that you would not be hurt, but that you will be left something that you must keep secret. When you wake up you will find that you have everything that you had at the time, except for identification and weapons. You do find a piece of paper taped to your back that wasn't there before.

## CONFLICT ABILITIES:

General Physical (3-5) 0: Physical actions not otherwise covered (P)  
Quiet Authority (4-5) 1: Glare at someone who is challenging your professional opinion, either in technology or medicine (-1) (S)

## NON-CONFLICT ABILITIES:

Analysis (3-5): Analyze a piece of technology (takes 30 mins)  
Examination (3-5): Perform a medical examination (takes 10 mins)  
First Aid (3-5): Heal someone's physical damage (takes 5 mins) (+1)  
Revive x1 (3-5): Bring a person at 0 FL who is not dead to 1 FL (takes 10 mins). They cannot be further healed to a higher FL)

## RESISTS

Physical 2  
Social 1  
Emotional 0

## SPECIALS

First Aid requires one use for a First Aid Kit; available on the yacht.

## INVENTORY

Paper taped to back

**GOALS:**

If you want to avenge your family, kill Marissa.  
If not, decide how Marissa stands with you and act accordingly.

**BACKGROUND:** You were the scion of the Fier family before they were ruined by Marissa. You grew up in the family illegal tech business, and got an excellent education in both science and finance, though were never quite content. You met Marissa during the time she was pretending to negotiate with your family, while secretly manipulating them to doom. About four years ago, she moved against your family, using high-level technologies to assassinate some people (such as your parents) and economic and social/political manipulations to make sure the Fiers could never get their business together again.

You and other family members went off and found other lives. You used your scientific expertise to become a doctor. Freed from your family, you have found yourself becoming much more of the person you want to be, doing the things you want to do, and are now very deeply content with your life. You regret the lost prestige and, in some cases, lives of your family members, but in some sense their destruction was the best thing that ever happened to you.

**OTHER KNOWLEDGE:**

Your family anonymously hired R. Grey to investigate Marissa Islington five years ago, when they were becoming increasingly concerned about her.

After some time investigating, Grey abruptly reported that he could find nothing and returned his fee.

You've heard rumors that a very secret Polish group has been angling to fill the Fiers' former place and compete in the illegal nanotechnology field.

**QUESTIONS TO ANSWER:**

What type of doctor are you?

When the Fiers were still powerful, did you ever wish you could do something else? If so, what? If not, why not?

What about being a doctor do you enjoy so much?

How do you feel about the ruin of your family?

Do you want revenge?

How do you feel toward Marissa?

What do you like to do in your spare time now?

What is your attitude toward the whole illegal technology underworld?

What do you regret not having said to your parents?

What are your religious views?

What makes you happy?

What makes you angry?

# The Queen of Spades

Age  
50

S  
D  
G

[Felix / Faye] Landing

**APPARENT IDENTITY:** Opinionated TV reporter with strong public personality

**REAL IDENTITY:** Best friend of Marissa a long time ago; betrayed by her

**KNOWLEDGE OF MI:** Marissa Islington only believes in three things: power, standing up for oneself, and god. She is the creator and head of a large international criminal network called the Consortium. It is a financial and technological empire that has been around for 26 years. In that time, Marissa has done anything and everything it took to increase the Consortium's power and influence. She is especially known for both her ability and her willingness to use people in any way to get what she wants, and then abandon them when she no longer needs them. Between her brilliance and her ruthlessness, she managed to bring the Consortium from a vague collection of resources to what is possibly the most significant and stable power in the criminal world.

**OTHER KNOWLEDGE:**

One of Marissa's many enemies is the slightly crazy Albert Soviesky, a cast-off lover of hers from about twenty years ago. Last you checked, he had been meticulously accumulating resources to execute an elaborate revenge.

**GOALS:**

Personally kill Marissa for revenge. Ideally destroy her completely as well. If someone else kills her, find out who did and consider getting revenge on them for stealing yours.

**CONFLICT ABILITIES:**

- General Physical (3-5) 0: Physical actions not otherwise covered (P)
- Piss Off x2 (1-5) 2: Say just the right thing to make someone really angry (E)
- Detect Lie x1 (3-5) 1: Tell if someone is lying (E)
- Devil's Advocate x3 (2-5) 2: Get two people who are disagreeing to argue more heatedly. Must beat both in conflict. (S)
- Snappy Retort (3-5) 1: Make someone who just insulted you look bad (-FI4) (S)

**NON-CONFLICT ABILITIES:**

- Blind Luck x1 (1-5): Cause a random event to go favorably for you, or automatically break a tie in your favor during conflict
- Raise Topic x1 (3-5): Get everybody to seriously discuss a topic of your choice without it being obvious you brought it up

RESISTS	SPECIALS	INVENTORY
Physical -1 Social 0 Emotional 2	None	Paper taped to back

**BACKGROUND:** You and Marissa went to Harvard together, thirty-two years ago. You were very close friends. Even then she was very ambitious. You and your fiancé, whom you had met in high school, had managed to gather together a collection of contacts and opportunities to start your own independent secret society, based on a set of unconventional ideals that the two of you shared. You had managed to pull this off largely through synergy, luck, and one-time favors.

When you told Marissa about your plans, she pretended to be excited and supportive. However, she was entertaining her own plans about starting a criminal network, and over your time at college managed to co-opt everything you had put together to her own use. She took advantage of your trust by getting all the necessary information from you, and gradually seduced your fiancé. It was only when she ran off with him/her to create the beginnings of the Consortium that you realized what she had done. Several years later, she killed your ex-fiance when she no longer needed him/her.

After that, you had to give up your idealistic goals and get a normal life, alone. Marissa completely ruined all your hopes.

**How You Got Here:** You were going about your normal life by yourself when you felt a prick. You remember that before you fell unconscious, someone told you that you would not be hurt, but that you would be left something that you must keep secret. When you wake up you will find that you have everything you that had on you at the time, except for identification and weapons. You do find a piece of paper taped to your back that wasn't there before.

**QUESTIONS TO ANSWER:**

What were your unconventional ideals?

What was the nature of the secret society you were planning to start?

What was your fiancé like? What did you love about him/her?

Whom did you love more at the time, your fiancé or Marissa?

How did you react when you realized how much she had betrayed you?

What have you been thinking about her all these years?

Why did you become a reporter?

What field of reporting do you do? What's your public persona and opinions?

Do you still believe in the ideals you had in college? If not, why not?

Is there anyone else to whom you feel as strongly as you feel towards her?

If you had the ability to start your society now, would you do it?

What kind of person do you consider yourself to be?

# The Queen of Spades

Age  
28

[ Renault / Regina ] Grey

**APPARENT IDENTITY:** Independent private investigator

**REAL IDENTITY:** Investigator with passion for composing, who refused to be bribed by Marissa Islington

**KNOWLEDGE OF MI:** Marissa Islington had many financial interests across the world, many of them illegal to varying degrees. For the past ten years or so, the interests of the Consortium have leaned farther and farther toward contraband technology. Marissa has both trafficked and directly taken advantage of many secret and dangerous technological developments not even available to governments.

Four years ago, she somehow managed to wipe out her last competitor in illegal technology: a group that had been dominating the field for several generations. Since that time, she has monopolized international contacts in the field.

**KNOWLEDGE OF OTHER CHARACTERS:**

S. Rotashi used to be a researcher in the criminal technology scene. He had some dealings with Marissa starting about six years ago.

**CONFLICT ABILITIES:**

General Physical (3-5) 0: Physical actions not otherwise covered (P)

Detect Lie x3 (1-5) 0: Tell if the last statement was a lie (E)

Insinuate x2 (2-5) 1: Subtly hint in conversation that something someone finds unpleasant is true (-1) (E). Can't take someone to FLO.

Just x2 (4-5) 2: Cause someone to immediately recover nonphysical damage they just received, by pointing out that you felt that the attack was unjust (you must actually believe it). (Social resist by the attacker, not your target)

**NON-CONFLICT ABILITIES:**

Leap of Logic x2 (1-5): Ask Director for a hint towards something that does not have to do with why you're on the boat

**RESISTS**

Physical 1  
Social 0  
Emotional -1

**SPECIALS**

You cannot be Intimidated

**INVENTORY**

Paper taped to back

**GOALS:**

Defeat Marissa, whatever that means to you  
If Marissa dies and you didn't kill her, figure out who did  
Figure out the extent of Marissa's dealings.  
Figure out what is going on with everyone else on the boat.

**BACKGROUND:** You are a private investigator who always had a passion for composing and wanted to be a composer, but knew that you wouldn't be able to make it as one. Five years ago, you were hired anonymously to investigate Marissa Islington. You tracked her down through financial dealings to find that she was a powerful and ruthless international criminal with a chilling record. You gathered enough information to take her to court, but she found you first.

She approached you and told you that she was too powerful to ever be convicted, even on the evidence you had, and you believed her. She offered to patronize you and start you on a musical career, if you left the issue alone and reported back to her on the people who hired you.

It was very difficult decision. The two of you went through a period of tense but tentative negotiations that you will never forget. You finally turned her down, but after it was all over, you found that you could not see music the same way again. Marissa's offer and negotiation had irrevocably corrupted what composing meant to you.

A small amount of research revealed that your employers were probably also criminals. You ended up doing nothing with your information on Marissa, reported failure to your employers and returned your pay.

Since that time, you have occasionally received messages from Marissa asking you to contact her, and even a direct offer of patronage with no evident strings attached, but you have responded to none of them.

In some sense, you hate her for what she did to you. But at the same time she was also the only one who ever thought to give you a chance.

**How You Got Here:** You were going about your normal life by yourself when you felt a prick. You remember that before you fell unconscious, someone told you that you would not be hurt, but that you would be left something that you must keep secret. When you wake up you will find that you have everything you that had on you at the time, except for identification and weapons. You do find a piece of paper taped to your back that wasn't there before.

**QUESTIONS TO ANSWER:**

How did you feel about negotiating with a ruthless criminal?

Why did you turn her down?

Why did you consider her offer?

Is there something she could have offered that you would have accepted?

Why didn't you turn her in?

Why didn't you report to your employers?

Do you believe her offer of free patronage? Why do you think she's giving it?

What is your current relationship to composing and music?

How is your life different now as a result of composing seeming different?

# Player Materials



# Rules Summary

## FUNCTION LEVELS, DAMAGE, AND RECOVERY:

By default, each character starts at Function Level 5. A character's Function Level (FL) represents the condition that the character is in, physically and psychologically, and can decrease or increase over the course of the larp as a result of harm or recovery.

In general, a character at FL 5 is essentially unharmed and in good shape, at FL 4 is in an unpleasant but not particularly disabling state, at FL 3 is somewhat disabled, at FL 2 cannot perform most activities, and at FL 1 can do little other than speak. If a character is ever reduced to FL 0, he is out of the game and completely unable to affect the plot thereafter. Exactly how the character is taken out depends on the nature of the damage that reduced him to FL 0.

A player can request that the Director approve an FL change even when the rules don't call for it, if he thinks that prior events would cause the change to happen.

## ABILITIES:

Abilities are given in the following format:

NAME x [# of uses] (RANGE OF FLs) [bonus]: DESCRIPTION OF EFFECT (amt DR) (resist type)

Examples:

Intimidate x3 (4-5) 1: Make someone back down (-FL3) (S)

Flatter x1 (3-5): Make someone feel unduly proud of themselves (+1) (E)

Spark (1-3): Briefly create a tiny flame by magic

# of uses = the number of times that ability may be used during the Larp. If none is listed, the ability may be used as many times as the opportunity arises.

Range of FLs = the range of the user's FLs at which the ability may be used. If a character's FL is outside the range, he may not use that ability.

Bonus = a number from -3 to 3 that represents the character's effectiveness at using that ability against opposition. +/-1 = significant, +/- 2 = extraordinary, +/-3 = world class. (Conflict abilities only.) This will modify the character's chance of success when using the ability.

Amt DR= DR caused by the ability, if applicable. -/+ FL# indicates that it takes the target down/up to that FL, respectively. -/+ # indicates that the target loses/gains that number of FLs.

Type = type of Resist required to block the ability. P = Physical, S = Social, E = Emotional, NR = Not Resistible, P/S = Physical or Social, whichever is higher. Other letters for other Resists. (Conflict abilities only.)

Special exceptions to abilities are given in the Special section of the character sheet

## CONFLICT RESOLUTION

### DECLARING ACTIONS:

Conflict resolution works as follows: First, participants state their intended actions. All other characters are allowed to participate, stop participating, or change their own intended actions in light of the intended actions of others. (In the rare case that this causes an endless circle, everybody should choose actions simultaneously in secret.)

A participant can declare his/her intended action as contingent on the success or failure of another action (e.g. running away only if his partner dies.). He can also declare that he is not acting, and simply focusing on Resisting as a primary action.

## **BIDDING:**

After all intended actions are established, all participants simultaneously Bid Damage. Bidding means secretly choosing an amount of damage (in FLs) that the player is willing to risk his/her character receiving in order to increase the character's action's chance of success.

Regardless of the character's dedication, bid sizes are limited by the amount of damage the character could plausibly get in the conflict, and each participant is responsible for determining a plausible IC reason to take the amount of damage he bid. For example, in most cases it is implausible to take more than 1 damage in a petty argument, but any amount of damage is possible in a gun fight. Keep in mind that losing an FL is significant; a player's default bid should be 0.

Bids only apply to a character's primary action. This means that if a character is doing a normal primary action, a bid does not increase his chances of Resisting. However, if he is only Resisting, then a bid will increase the chance of all of his Resists succeeding. Damage that was bid only actually occurs if the action is in any way successful.

When bids are decided, participants hold out 0-5 fingers behind their backs corresponding to the size of their bids. All participants then show their bids at the same time.

## **RANKING:**

Participants calculate totals by adding their ability bonus and bid. (We recommend then holding out fingers for totals, for efficiency.) If a character is primarily Resisting, any bid he made is added to all his Resist totals.

At this point, all actions are ranked by their totals, from highest to lowest, with ties broken randomly (such as with rock-paper-scissors).

Actions take place in order, starting from the highest. If a previous action causes a character to have too low an FL to perform his intended action, or simply prevents that action from occurring (e.g. a Resist), that action is cancelled. A Resist cancels all lower-ranked effects of the relevant Resist type on that character.

If any part of an action succeeded, then the bid goes into effect immediately after the action executes.

It's important to note that when an intended action gets cancelled because of effects of earlier actions, any limited-use abilities spent to attempt the action are still used up, but any damage bid does not occur.

## **ARTIFACTS**

Artifacts are items that make it easier for a character to cause DR, often as a conflict action. The most common type of artifacts are weapons, which obviously cause damage. However, artifacts like drugs may cause recovery.

Certain PCs may have abilities that make them good at using an artifact, but by default, PCs simply use artifacts with their General Physical ability. If an artifact use action succeeds, then the target is DRed an amount according to the DR amount of the artifact (exactly the same as using an ability that normally causes DR on its own).

Specific artifact use abilities may override DR amounts on an artifact, either by the description, or by being themselves fixed DR (i.e. -/+ FL#). Artifact use abilities that are themselves unfixed DR (i.e. -/+ #) stack with the artifact's own DR amount.

By default, knives are (-1) and guns are (-2).

## **AFTER RESOLUTION:**

After the above process is complete, characters may elect to use more abilities in response to the results. This opens a new round of the conflict in which anybody involved can use abilities and the rules for resolution are the same.

## Public Background Overview

The setting is modern action genre. There is very little public knowledge; however, all characters know Marissa Islington, a strong, ruthless, and extremely competent woman with serious criminal connections. She is in her early 50s.

# Larp-Specific Rules and Beginning Announcements

## **LARP-SPECIFIC RULES:**

- None

## **BEGINNING ANNOUNCEMENTS**

- All characters, including Marissa, will wake up sprawled around the room. Those who would recognize it know that it is the main room of Marissa Islington's yacht, The Queen of Spades. It is night, and the boat is surrounded by ocean, with nothing in sight. In addition to the main room, the yacht has a tiny bathroom and a tiny engine room. Further details on character sheets.
- The order in which you will wake up will be given to you by the Director. You will wake up shortly after each other. Once you all have your numbers, try to roleplay the waking up process without OOC interruption.
- Some of you have physical objects attached to your backs. Keep in mind that you don't know what they are until you take the time to remove and look at them. You should probably do this in secret.
- Anyone who wants to can recognize T. Starling. Starling was a gymnast who dropped out of the US Olympic qualifiers due to a training accident, and has been crippled ever since.
- [If Landing is in play] Anyone who wants to can recognize F. Landing, a well-known television reporter with a strong personality.

# Game Materials



Place in food or drink  
fatal effect in 15-30 min.

(OOC: The dot represents a peel-able dot of poison. To use, rip off dot, touch plate/cup with a finger, then alert Director)



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fatal Effect in 15-30 min.

(OOC: The dot represents a peel-able dot of poison. To use, rip off dot, touch plate/cup with a finger, then alert Director)



Welcome, ladies and gentlemen!

Marissa, I hope you do not mind that I have borrowed your yacht for this evening's affair. I assure you, I would have asked first, had it been more convenient to do so.

In any case, you are all very welcome here. Please do not be alarmed—a ride will be available to take you back to your respective homes tomorrow morning, and you have my word that no harm will come to you except, of course, what harm you may do to yourselves. However, I should warn that since you are currently stranded in the Pacific Ocean, the ride will most likely be your only way back.

I feel that this is a gathering that has been long overdue, and as such encourage you all to take full advantage of the occasion. Refreshments have been provided. Please do not be too concerned, and be assured that you may all return to your regular lives tomorrow.

I wish you all a truly rewarding evening.



# The Queen of Spades

G  
L  
C

Age  
41

[Jasper/Julia] Mirano

**APPARENT IDENTITY:** Leader of an American drug smuggling ring

**REAL IDENTITY:** Former lieutenant for Marissa Islington; cast out by her

**KNOWLEDGE OF MI:** Marissa only believes in three things: power, standing up for oneself, and God. She is the creator and head of the Consortium, a large international criminal network. It is a financial and technological empire that has been around for 26 years. Marissa did anything and everything it took to increase the Consortium's power and influence. She is especially known for her willingness to use people in any way to get what she wants, and then abandon them when she no longer needs them. Between her brilliance and her ruthlessness, she managed to bring the Consortium from a vague collection of resources to the most significant and stable power in the criminal world.

For the past ten years or so, the interests of the Consortium have leaned farther and farther toward contraband technology. Marissa has both trafficked and directly taken advantage of many secret and dangerous technological developments not even available to governments.

Four years ago, in a series of deft maneuvers, the Consortium wiped out the prestigious Fier family. The Fiers had been dealing in illegal technology for generations, and were Marissa's last major rivals. Now many of them are dead, and the rest have found new careers. Since that time she has monopolized international contacts in the field.

With the defeat of the Fiers, the Consortium has no more rivals. The stake of anyone who had a problem with Marissa would have to be personal.

## CONFLICT ABILITIES:

General Physical (2-5) 2: Physical actions not otherwise covered (P)

Intimidate x3 (2-5) 1: Make someone back down (FL3) (S).

Add weapon damage to score when ranking.

Coerce x1 (4-5) 1: Make someone do something by threat of force (S).

Add weapon damage to score when ranking.

## NON-CONFLICT ABILITIES:

Bodyguard (2-5) x2: Take any amount of physical damage just inflicted on a target -- whom you are physically in a position to defend -- for yourself, instead, as a free action in combat. Can take you below 0. Can be used on bids.

Determination (1) x2: Use General Physical at FL 1.

### RESISTS

Physical 1  
Social 0  
Emotional 0

### SPECIALS

Cannot be forced to  
betray Marissa

### INVENTORY

Item taped to back

**BACKGROUND:** For twenty years you were Marissa's loyal lieutenant in the Consortium. You understood her principles, kept her secrets, and were if not a huge part, a very solid part of her bringing the Consortium to power. You carried out countless critical missions. You discovered and rooted out several attempts to destroy the Consortium, including a near-successful infiltration from the Sobiesky electronics smuggling group four years ago. Through your work, the Consortium gained stable supremacy.

You saw other people come and go, always believing that Marissa got rid of them because they were not effective enough. You never dreamed that she would ever dismiss you the same way -- and because you were too effective.

After the destruction of the Fiers, the future of the Consortium was guaranteed and Marissa no longer needed you. Three years ago, she summoned you and made you reiterate your vow never to give away the secrets of the Consortium. Then she told you to go leave and do something else. You didn't really argue because you had seen her do it so many times before. Your last obedience to her was to leave, and you never tried to reach her again.

You used the skills you learned with the Consortium to quickly and efficiently establish your own smuggling ring. You have always kept and will keep your vow to Marissa, and of course she understood this. However, you are understandably furious at being put aside so easily; though in your heart you are still quite loyal to her: the woman who taught you everything and made you what you are. In the past year, Marissa has tried a few times to contact you, but you have adamantly refused to hear from her.

#### **GOALS:**

Decide what to do about Marissa. Twenty years of love is hard to put aside.

On the other hand, she put you aside. Maybe serve her as best you can. Or maybe don't listen to her at all...

If someone kills her, find out who it is. Maybe avenge her.

#### **OTHER KNOWLEDGE:**

T. Starling is Marissa's child. Marissa tried to train him, but he refused to be her successor and instead left to be a gymnast, making her furious.

C. Esperanza used to be Marissa's lover, but she cast him out after she decided it would be more politically useful to see another person.

S. Rotashi was a scientist that sold Marissa the technology that she used to wipe out the Fiers: some sort of remote-controlled nanomachines.

R. Delindt used to work for the Consortium. You think he might have been coerced into cooperation. Marissa got rid of him a few years ago, also.

**How You Got Here:** You were going about your normal life by yourself when you felt a prick. You remember that before you fell unconscious, someone told you that you would not be hurt, but that you would be left something that you must keep secret. When you wake up you will find that you have everything you that had on you at the time, except for identification and weapons. You do find a piece of paper taped to your back that wasn't there before.

#### **QUESTIONS TO ANSWER:**

What do you want regarding Marissa?

Why not answer her calls?

How do you treat your underlings compared to how she treated hers?

Do you have ambitions? What are they?

What do you want for the Consortium?

# The Queen of Spades

S  
L  
E

Age  
20

[Trent / Trinity] Starling

**APPARENT IDENTITY:** Former gymnast, independently wealthy. Dropped out of Olympic qualifiers due to training accident. Now confined to wheelchair.

**REAL IDENTITY:** Child of Marissa Islington. Left Consortium for gymnastics

**KNOWLEDGE OF MI:** Marissa Islington only believes in three things: power, standing up for oneself, and god. She is the creator and head of a large international criminal network called the Consortium. It is a financial and technological empire that has been around for 26 years. In that time, Marissa has done anything and everything it took to increase the Consortium's power and influence. She is especially known for both her ability and her willingness to use people in any way to get what she wants, and then abandon them when she no longer needs them. Between her brilliance and her ruthlessness, she managed to bring the Consortium from a vague collection of resources to what is possibly the most significant and stable power in the criminal world.

**GOALS:**

- Maybe convince Marissa of your worth
- Resolve your relationship with her (not necessarily positively).
- If she dies, figure out who killed her and why.
- Figure out what other people's relationships with her were like.

**CONFLICT ABILITIES:**

- General Physical (2-5) 1: Physical actions not otherwise covered (P)
- Martial Arts (3-5) 2: Attack without a weapon (-1) (P)
- Decisive Strike (3-5) 2: Attack without a weapon (-FL2) (P)
- Gymnastics (4-5) 3: Perform an acrobatic or gymnastic feat (NR)
- Size Up x2 (2-5) 1: Figure out what someone's first priority or loyalty is (E)

**NON-CONFLICT ABILITIES:**

- Surprise x1 (3-5): Automatically go first in ranking for a physical action when you first reveal that you are not really crippled
- Resilient x2 (1-4): Recover from non-physical damage (+1)

RESISTS	SPECIALS	INVENTORY
Physical 0 Social 1 Emotional 0	Social Resist is 2 against Marissa	Paper taped to back

**BACKGROUND:** You are Marissa's only child. Your father was Albert Starling, whom Marissa briefly married, solely to father her successor (you never knew him). You were raised inside the Consortium, explicitly taught to someday take over. You hated it, and developed an interest in gymnastics, which Marissa allowed only as far as it would help you be a criminal leader.

When you were 15, you realized that you were very good at gymnastics, and gathered the courage to leave your mother and the Consortium to pursue your passion. You took some money, paid a random person to adopt you for legal convenience, and arranged to get a trainer. Marissa was furious but did not pursue you.

Before the qualifiers for the Olympics, which everyone expected you to pass easily, someone broke into your house at night and shot you in the legs. You knew that this was your mother telling you that she would not allow you to compete; whether out of practical concern that your emergence as a public figure might endanger the secrecy of the Consortium, or out of sheer vindictive possessiveness, you are not certain. However, understanding for the first time that she would really never let you have a chance, you pretended to the public that you were injured in a training accident, and gave up your dream. But you still refused to go back to the Consortium.

You in fact recovered quickly and completely, but continued to pretend to be crippled. In secret, you have continued private training, especially in martial arts, but insist on going around in a wheelchair.

During all the time you were away, especially in the past two years, Marissa occasionally tried to contact you, but you have never returned her calls.

**OTHER KNOWLEDGE:**

J. Mirano was one of Marissa's loyal lieutenants in the Consortium. Marissa has a great many enemies, some of them very resourceful & creative. Before you left the Consortium, you had found some hints that it was being expertly infiltrated. You didn't mention this since you were leaving.

**How You Got Here:** You were going about your normal life by yourself when you felt a prick. You remember that before you fell unconscious, someone told you that you would not be hurt, but that you would be left something that you must keep secret. When you wake up you will find that you have everything you had on you at the time, except for identification and weapons. You do find a piece of paper taped to your back that wasn't there before.

**QUESTIONS TO ANSWER:**

- What caused you to finally leave the Consortium?
- Why did you not go back to gymnastics?
- Why are you pretending to be crippled?
- What do you do all day now?
- What do you want from life at this point?
- Why did you not return your mother's calls?
- How do you feel about the father that you never knew?
- What do you want from your mother?
- What do you want to happen with the Consortium?

# The Queen of Spades

E  
D  
S

Age  
49

[Carl / Cara] Esperanza

**APPARENT IDENTITY:** Respected attorney

**REAL IDENTITY:** Former lover of Marissa Islington; still very in love with her

**KNOWLEDGE OF MI:** Marissa Islington only believes in three things: power, standing up for oneself, and god. She is the creator and head of a large international criminal network called the Consortium. It is a financial and technological empire that has been around for 26 years. In that time, Marissa has done anything and everything it took to increase the Consortium's power and influence. She is especially known for both her ability and her willingness to use people in any way to get what she wants, and then abandon them, when she no longer needs them. Between her brilliance and her ruthlessness, she managed to bring the Consortium from a vague collection of resources to what is possibly the most significant and stable power in the criminal world.

**How You Got Here:** You were going about your normal life by yourself when you felt a prick. You remember that before you fell unconscious, someone told you that you would not be hurt, but that you would be left something that you must keep secret. When you wake up you will find that you have everything you had on you at the time, except for identification and weapons. You do find a piece of paper taped to your back that wasn't there before.

**CONFLICT ABILITIES:**

- General Physical (3-5) 0: Physical actions not otherwise covered (P)
- Denounce (2-5) 2: Eloquently say bad things about someone (they must be true to the best of your knowledge). (-FL 4) (S)
- Vilify x1 (2-5) 1: Stronger version of Denounce. (-FL2) (S)
- Laud x3 (3-5) 1: Publicly praise someone at length (+1) (S)
- Detect Lie x3 (2-5) 0: Determine if someone is lying. (E)

**NON-CONFLICT ABILITIES:**

- Orate (4-5): Give an eloquent speech. Only needs minimal factual support.

RESISTS	SPECIALS	INVENTORY
Physical 0 Social 1 Emotional -1	None	Paper taped to back

**GOALS:**

Kill Marissa for her own good.

**BACKGROUND:** Nine years ago, you were in love with Marissa Islington and the two of you were very close. You knew she was fond of you, but you could never figure out if she actually loved you back. You helped her with the Consortium, and lived with her. You understood that the Consortium was her life. Then, two years later, she decided that she needed to make an alliance by seeing someone else. She gave you her regrets, but told you that you had to leave.

You stayed in loose contact with her for several years after, but eventually stopped returning messages; you never stopped loving her. You knew better than to try to convince her to take you back. You knew her well enough to understand her pattern of using, even caring about, and then deliberately losing people due to her obsession with the Consortium. You are convinced, and grieved, that she has been her own destruction; she is not a complete person and, for her own good, she is probably better off dead.

**OTHER KNOWLEDGE**

You think F. Landing is one of Marissa's friends from a long time ago.

J. Mirano used to work for the Consortium; you're not sure what he did.

Three years ago you were contacted by someone named Albert Black, who claimed to be another of Marissa's old lovers from over twenty years ago.

He had evidently been living in seclusion for most of that time, amassing a private fortune. He asked you some oblique questions about Marissa's daily lifestyle, but said little about himself. You never heard from him again.

**QUESTIONS TO ANSWER:**

Why did you stop talking to Marissa?

What type of law do you do?

How do you feel about the other spouses or lovers she's had?

What, ideally, do you wish could have happened?

Do you think it's possible to fix her?

At what point would you just decide to kill her?

Have you had any relationships after Marissa? If so, how did they go?

What do you think of the Consortium?

What are your ambitions at this point in your life?

# The Queen of Spades

S  
L  
G

Age  
55

[Sarabh / Simina] Rotashi

**APPARENT IDENTITY:** Eccentric but inspired engineering professor

**REAL IDENTITY:** Inventor of dangerous nanotechnology that was sold to Marissa Islington

**KNOWLEDGE OF MI:** Marissa had many financial interests across the world, many of them illegal to varying degrees. For the past ten years or so, the interests of the Consortium have leaned farther and farther toward contra-band technology. Marissa has both trafficked and directly taken advantage of many secret and dangerous technological developments not even available to governments.

Four years ago, she wiped out the prestigious Fier family. The Fiers had been dealing in illegal technology for generations, and were Marissa's last major rivals. Now many of them are dead, and the rest have found new careers. Since that time, she has monopolized international contacts in the field.

**GOALS:**

Kill Marissa for the evil she has done and will do, and for corrupting your art. Learn more about Marissa and about the other people here.

**CONFLICT ABILITIES:**

- General Physical (3-5) -1: Physical actions not otherwise covered (P)
- Drink (3-5) 3: Win a drinking contest. (NR) (Opponent uses Gen Phys)
- Technobabble x3 (2-5) 2: Get someone to temporarily drop a non-essential topic by giving them so much technical information that they get confused. (S)
- Superiority x1 (4-5) 0: Make someone feel stupid in contrast to you (-FL3) (E)

**NON-CONFLICT ABILITIES:**

- Analysis (3-5): Analyze a piece of technology (takes twenty minutes).
- Think fast (3-5) x1: Win a tie in a conflict

**RESISTS**

Physical 0  
Social 0  
Emotional 1

**SPECIALS**

None

**INVENTORY**

Paper taped to back

**How You Got Here:** You were going about your normal life by yourself when you felt a prick. You remember that before you fell unconscious, someone told you that you would not be hurt, but that you would be left something that you must keep secret. When you wake up you will find that you have everything you had on you at the time, except for identification and weapons. You do find a piece of paper taped to your back that wasn't there before.

**BACKGROUND:** You were a brilliant engineer and scientist who did not mind making some more money by selling your developments to the criminal technology market, on the side. Your illegal activities were solely restricted to violating patents, commitments, and import/export laws. You did this because you felt too intellectually restricted by the options available at the university.

You sold your masterpiece, remote-controlled nanotechnology, to Marissa Islington. You weren't entirely certain what she would do with it, and didn't really care, until you found out that her own researchers had developed it into a particularly effective way to kill people. She modified your machines to be able to spread in a controlled fashion, enter a person's body, and kill that person at the push of a button. This was five years ago. The implications of what she might have done with the technology since is even more frightening.

Marissa offered to hire you to do further work, as well as give you the laboratory and license you have always dreamed of, but the price of making more deadly technology for her was not worth it to you, so you turned her down and deliberately avoided trying to find out what she has done with what you developed.

**OTHER KNOWLEDGE:**

You have heard rumors in the last year or so that the Fiers have been reorganizing and resurfacing under a different name. You have not had any evidence of this, or means of contacting them, but if it is true then you might consider working for them, since they were far less ruthless than Marissa. But then, the stakes have become much higher.

**QUESTIONS TO ANSWER:**

Do you have a family?

Do you consider yourself a good person?

How do you feel about the idea that your invention was made so destructive?

Why avoid finding out what she's done with your technology?

What did the experience of dealing with Marissa change for you?

Do you ever regret turning down her job offers? Why or why not?

Have you killed anyone before? If so, why?

What makes you willing to kill Marissa? Would you have been willing to do it if you had needed to track her down and make all the plans yourself?

What principles do you consider inviolate?

What would you change about the world if you could?

# The Queen of Spades

Age  
50

[Roger / Rose] Delindt

**APPARENT IDENTITY:** Waiter at upscale restaurant

**REAL IDENTITY:** Former henchman in Consortium; coerced to cooperation

**KNOWLEDGE OF MI:** Marissa Islington only believes in three things: power, standing up for oneself, and god. She is the creator and head of a large international criminal network called the Consortium. It is a financial and technological empire that has been around for 26 years. In that time, Marissa has done anything and everything it took to increase the Consortium's power and influence. She is especially known for both her ability and her willingness to use people in any way to get what she wants, and then abandon them when she no longer needs them. Between her brilliance and her ruthlessness, she managed to bring the Consortium from a vague collection of resources to what is possibly the most significant and stable power in the criminal world.

**How You Got Here:** You were going about your normal life by yourself when you felt a prick. You remember that before you fell unconscious, someone told you that you would not be hurt, but that you would be left something that you must keep secret. When you wake up you will find that you have everything you had on you at the time, except for identification and weapons. You do find a piece of paper taped to your back that wasn't there before.

## CONFLICT ABILITIES:

General Physical (3-5) 1: Physical actions not otherwise covered (P)  
Cooperate x2 (1-5) 2: Convince someone you will do what they want you to, regardless of whether you actually will. (S).  
Empathy x3 (2-5) 2: Figure out how someone is feeling. (E)  
Flatter (2-4) 0: Make someone feel better because they irrationally believe your flattery (+1) (E)

## NON-CONFLICT ABILITIES:

Bartend (3-5): Produce a really good drink.

### RESISTS

Physical 0  
Social -1  
Emotional -1

### SPECIALS

None

### INVENTORY

Paper taped to back

**BACKGROUND:** 24 years ago, you were an intelligent young person with a spouse and two very young children. Your spouse's family was small but wealthy, and they did some smuggling on the side; you quickly became an efficient partner. One night, Marissa Islington and several thugs broke into your house to kill you. You begged passionately for your life, and she agreed to let you work for her if you demonstrated your loyalty by killing the rest of your family, including your spouse and children. You cooperated, and became a grunt working for her in the Consortium, moving your late-in-laws' contacts into Marissa's control.

You did Marissa's dirty work for 22 years. You never challenged or showed her disobedience. Two years ago she decided that she did not need you anymore and essentially told you to get lost. You did as you were told, though this bothered you. Thrown out of the Consortium with no friends and no resources, you have been making a living as a waiter.

Your feelings about yourself are understandably mixed. There is, however, no doubt that you passionately hate Marissa Islington.

### **GOALS:**

Destroy Marissa. Completely. And ideally painfully. This may or may not involve killing her; you decide.

Destroy other people who have contributed to the Consortium.

Get the personal nerve to pull off the above.

### **OTHER KNOWLEDGE:**

T. Starling used to be someone close to Marissa and the Consortium, who left of his own volition some time ago, making Marissa very angry. When Starling was going to qualify for the Olympics, Marissa didn't want too much attention on him for fear of the Consortium being discovered, so she sent you to arrange a "training accident" for Starling, certain that Starling would not report an attack. You broke into his house and shot him several times in the legs. You were surprised that Starling did not recover because you were pretty certain that you didn't cripple him.

Last year, someone approached you, offering a lot of money for information on the Consortium. You have no idea who they were or for whom they worked. When you turned them down, they never came back.

### **QUESTIONS TO ANSWER:**

Okay, so why were you willing to kill your family?

How, in all this time, have you felt about having done that?

Why did getting thrown out of the Consortium bother you so much?

What, other than hate, do you feel for Marissa? Do you love her?

If you could go back twenty years, would you make the same choice?

What do you daydream about these days?

Although the Consortium was large, you had no power in it. When you were still in the Consortium, what would you have liked to do/be in it?

How have you felt about all the people you killed for Marissa over the years?

Do you still want a family?

Why did you turn down the guy who wanted information on the Consortium?

How do you think about the three very different segments of your life?

# The Queen of Spades

E  
L  
C

Age  
30

[Lawrence / Laurel] Fier

**APPARENT IDENTITY:** Doctor from wealthy family

**REAL IDENTITY:** Would-be scion of the Fiers before they were destroyed by Marissa

**KNOWLEDGE OF MI:** Marissa had many financial interests across the world, many of them illegal to varying degrees. For the past ten years or so, the interests of the Consortium have leaned farther and farther toward contra-band technology. Marissa has both trafficked and directly taken advantage of many secret and dangerous technological developments not even available to governments.

Four years ago, in a series of deft economic (and more direct) maneuvers, the Consortium wiped out the prestigious Fier family. The Fiers had been dealing in illegal technology for generations, and were Marissa's last major rivals. Now many of them are dead, and the rest have found new careers. Since that time, she has largely monopolized international contacts in the field.

**HOW YOU GOT HERE:** You were going about your normal life when you felt a prick. Before you passed out, someone told you that you would not be hurt, but that you will be left something that you must keep secret. When you wake up you will find that you have everything that you had at the time, except for identification and weapons. You do find a piece of paper taped to your back that wasn't there before.

**CONFLICT ABILITIES:**

General Physical (3-5) 0: Physical actions not otherwise covered (P)  
Quiet Authority (4-5) 1: Glare at someone who is challenging your professional opinion, either in technology or medicine (-1) (S)

**NON-CONFLICT ABILITIES:**

Analysis (3-5): Analyze a piece of technology (takes 30 mins)  
Examination (3-5): Perform a medical examination (takes 10 mins)  
First Aid (3-5): Heal someone's physical damage (takes 5 mins) (+1)  
Revive x1 (3-5): Bring a person at 0 FL who is not dead to 1 FL (takes 10 mins). They cannot be further healed to a higher FL)

**RESISTS**

Physical 2  
Social 1  
Emotional 0

**SPECIALS**

First Aid requires one use for a First Aid Kit; available on the yacht.

**INVENTORY**

Paper taped to back

**GOALS:**

If you want to avenge your family, kill Marissa.  
If not, decide how Marissa stands with you and act accordingly.

**BACKGROUND:** You were the scion of the Fier family before they were ruined by Marissa. You grew up in the family illegal tech business, and got an excellent education in both science and finance, though were never quite content. You met Marissa during the time she was pretending to negotiate with your family, while secretly manipulating them to doom. About four years ago, she moved against your family, using high-level technologies to assassinate some people (such as your parents) and economic and social/political manipulations to make sure the Fiers could never get their business together again.

You and other family members went off and found other lives. You used your scientific expertise to become a doctor. Freed from your family, you have found yourself becoming much more of the person you want to be, doing the things you want to do, and are now very deeply content with your life. You regret the lost prestige and, in some cases, lives of your family members, but in some sense their destruction was the best thing that ever happened to you.

**OTHER KNOWLEDGE:**

Your family anonymously hired R. Grey to investigate Marissa Islington five years ago, when they were becoming increasingly concerned about her.

After some time investigating, Grey abruptly reported that he could find nothing and returned his fee.

You've heard rumors that a very secret Polish group has been angling to fill the Fiers' former place and compete in the illegal nanotechnology field.

**QUESTIONS TO ANSWER:**

What type of doctor are you?

When the Fiers were still powerful, did you ever wish you could do something else? If so, what? If not, why not?

What about being a doctor do you enjoy so much?

How do you feel about the ruin of your family?

Do you want revenge?

How do you feel toward Marissa?

What do you like to do in your spare time now?

What is your attitude toward the whole illegal technology underworld?

What do you regret not having said to your parents?

What are your religious views?

What makes you happy?

What makes you angry?

# The Queen of Spades

Age  
50

[Felix / Faye] Landing

S  
D  
G

**APPARENT IDENTITY:** Opinionated TV reporter with strong public personality

**REAL IDENTITY:** Best friend of Marissa a long time ago; betrayed by her

**KNOWLEDGE OF MI:** Marissa Islington only believes in three things: power, standing up for oneself, and god. She is the creator and head of a large international criminal network called the Consortium. It is a financial and technological empire that has been around for 26 years. In that time, Marissa has done anything and everything it took to increase the Consortium's power and influence. She is especially known for both her ability and her willingness to use people in any way to get what she wants, and then abandon them when she no longer needs them. Between her brilliance and her ruthlessness, she managed to bring the Consortium from a vague collection of resources to what is possibly the most significant and stable power in the criminal world.

**OTHER KNOWLEDGE:**

One of Marissa's many enemies is the slightly crazy Albert Soviesky, a cast-off lover of hers from about twenty years ago. Last you checked, he had been meticulously accumulating resources to execute an elaborate revenge.

**GOALS:**

Personally kill Marissa for revenge. Ideally destroy her completely as well. If someone else kills her, find out who did and consider getting revenge on them for stealing yours.

**CONFLICT ABILITIES:**

- General Physical (3-5) 0: Physical actions not otherwise covered (P)
- Piss Off x2 (1-5) 2: Say just the right thing to make someone really angry (E)
- Detect Lie x1 (3-5) 1: Tell if someone is lying (E)
- Devil's Advocate x3 (2-5) 2: Get two people who are disagreeing to argue more heatedly. Must beat both in conflict. (S)
- Snappy Retort (3-5) 1: Make someone who just insulted you look bad (-FI4) (S)

**NON-CONFLICT ABILITIES:**

- Blind Luck x1 (1-5): Cause a random event to go favorably for you, or automatically break a tie in your favor during conflict
- Raise Topic x1 (3-5): Get everybody to seriously discuss a topic of your choice without it being obvious you brought it up

**RESISTS**

Physical -1  
Social 0  
Emotional 2

**SPECIALS**

None

**INVENTORY**

Paper taped to back

**BACKGROUND:** You and Marissa went to Harvard together, thirty-two years ago. You were very close friends. Even then she was very ambitious. You and your fiancé, whom you had met in high school, had managed to gather together a collection of contacts and opportunities to start your own independent secret society, based on a set of unconventional ideals that the two of you shared. You had managed to pull this off largely through synergy, luck, and one-time favors.

When you told Marissa about your plans, she pretended to be excited and supportive. However, she was entertaining her own plans about starting a criminal network, and over your time at college managed to co-opt everything you had put together to her own use. She took advantage of your trust by getting all the necessary information from you, and gradually seduced your fiancé. It was only when she ran off with him/her to create the beginnings of the Consortium that you realized what she had done. Several years later, she killed your ex-fiance when she no longer needed him/her.

After that, you had to give up your idealistic goals and get a normal life, alone. Marissa completely ruined all your hopes.

**How You Got Here:** You were going about your normal life by yourself when you felt a prick. You remember that before you fell unconscious, someone told you that you would not be hurt, but that you would be left something that you must keep secret. When you wake up you will find that you have everything you that had on you at the time, except for identification and weapons. You do find a piece of paper taped to your back that wasn't there before.

**QUESTIONS TO ANSWER:**

What were your unconventional ideals?

What was the nature of the secret society you were planning to start?

What was your fiancé like? What did you love about him/her?

Whom did you love more at the time, your fiancé or Marissa?

How did you react when you realized how much she had betrayed you?

What have you been thinking about her all these years?

Why did you become a reporter?

What field of reporting do you do? What's your public persona and opinions?

Do you still believe in the ideals you had in college? If not, why not?

Is there anyone else to whom you feel as strongly as you feel towards her?

If you had the ability to start your society now, would you do it?

What kind of person do you consider yourself to be?

# The Queen of Spades

Age  
28

[ Renault / Regina ] Grey

**APPARENT IDENTITY:** Independent private investigator

**REAL IDENTITY:** Investigator with passion for composing, who refused to be bribed by Marissa Islington

**KNOWLEDGE OF MI:** Marissa Islington had many financial interests across the world, many of them illegal to varying degrees. For the past ten years or so, the interests of the Consortium have leaned farther and farther toward contraband technology. Marissa has both trafficked and directly taken advantage of many secret and dangerous technological developments not even available to governments.

Four years ago, she somehow managed to wipe out her last competitor in illegal technology: a group that had been dominating the field for several generations. Since that time, she has monopolized international contacts in the field.

**KNOWLEDGE OF OTHER CHARACTERS:**

S. Rotashi used to be a researcher in the criminal technology scene. He had some dealings with Marissa starting about six years ago.

**CONFLICT ABILITIES:**

General Physical (3-5) 0: Physical actions not otherwise covered (P)

Detect Lie x3 (1-5) 0: Tell if the last statement was a lie (E)

Insinuate x2 (2-5) 1: Subtly hint in conversation that something someone finds unpleasant is true (-1) (E). Can't take someone to FLO.

Just x2 (4-5) 2: Cause someone to immediately recover nonphysical damage they just received, by pointing out that you felt that the attack was unjust (you must actually believe it). (Social resist by the attacker, not your target)

**NON-CONFLICT ABILITIES:**

Leap of Logic x2 (1-5): Ask Director for a hint towards something that does not have to do with why you're on the boat

**RESISTS**

Physical 1  
Social 0  
Emotional -1

**SPECIALS**

You cannot be Intimidated

**INVENTORY**

Paper taped to back

**GOALS:**

Defeat Marissa, whatever that means to you  
If Marissa dies and you didn't kill her, figure out who did  
Figure out the extent of Marissa's dealings.  
Figure out what is going on with everyone else on the boat.

**BACKGROUND:** You are a private investigator who always had a passion for composing and wanted to be a composer, but knew that you wouldn't be able to make it as one. Five years ago, you were hired anonymously to investigate Marissa Islington. You tracked her down through financial dealings to find that she was a powerful and ruthless international criminal with a chilling record. You gathered enough information to take her to court, but she found you first.

She approached you and told you that she was too powerful to ever be convicted, even on the evidence you had, and you believed her. She offered to patronize you and start you on a musical career, if you left the issue alone and reported back to her on the people who hired you.

It was very difficult decision. The two of you went through a period of tense but tentative negotiations that you will never forget. You finally turned her down, but after it was all over, you found that you could not see music the same way again. Marissa's offer and negotiation had irrevocably corrupted what composing meant to you.

A small amount of research revealed that your employers were probably also criminals. You ended up doing nothing with your information on Marissa, reported failure to your employers and returned your pay.

Since that time, you have occasionally received messages from Marissa asking you to contact her, and even a direct offer of patronage with no evident strings attached, but you have responded to none of them.

In some sense, you hate her for what she did to you. But at the same time she was also the only one who ever thought to give you a chance.

**How You Got Here:** You were going about your normal life by yourself when you felt a prick. You remember that before you fell unconscious, someone told you that you would not be hurt, but that you would be left something that you must keep secret. When you wake up you will find that you have everything you that had on you at the time, except for identification and weapons. You do find a piece of paper taped to your back that wasn't there before.

**QUESTIONS TO ANSWER:**

How did you feel about negotiating with a ruthless criminal?

Why did you turn her down?

Why did you consider her offer?

Is there something she could have offered that you would have accepted?

Why didn't you turn her in?

Why didn't you report to your employers?

Do you believe her offer of free patronage? Why do you think she's giving it?

What is your current relationship to composing and music?

How is your life different now as a result of composing seeming different?



## Parlor Larps

1 Living Room  
1 Evening  
1 Director  
4-8 Players

DR

NPC 5

DIR 1

Dark 2

- NC -

(See Page 8)

## The Queen of Spades

Marissa Islington is a powerful and ruthless woman with almost as many enemies as criminal connections. A group of these enemies wake to find themselves trapped on a boat in the middle of nowhere with each other, a suspicious letter and of course Marissa herself. Nobody knows how they got there or what will become of them when morning comes.

As the night goes on, murder will be committed and secrets revealed. Everybody has a motive and a past they thought they'd left behind.

Requires  
beverages

\$10.00

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