

THE CHAMPION

Key

Depression: The King is dead and nothing will ever mean anything anymore.

Spirit

Invincible: You are the greatest warrior of your time, no one fights, laughs or drinks harder than you. And all this valour meant nothing in the end.

Broken: You have failed and remorse eats at you. You can do nothing to fix your mistakes, but you don't think you can live with your failure.

Bonds

The King: You have been the King's Champion for a lifetime, even before you He gifted you with the title. You two grew up together and you have always been a step ahead of Him, whether it came to competing with a sword, a horse or a barrel of mead. You have never wanted the crown for yourself, and you have never felt like a servant: Only a man watching his friend's back. Together you played at creating a legend, letting others look at you as divine heroes come to Earth, only to tease each other about it during hunting parties. But youth flew away in the end, and so did those days.

The Knights: They are your brothers in arms, all noble and courageous men, from first to last. Something about the young *Squire*, so pensive and wide-eyed, reminds you of the King before He donned His crown, but truth is the Gods threw the mould away after they forged your friend.

Conversely, the *Last Knight* nurses the foolish dream of following in your footsteps, and he'd have the fire to do it too, if only the ballads hadn't embellished your deeds so much. Still you like him, just as much as you like the *Stable Master*: You've defeated him five times in five different jousts, and not once did he regard you with envy. He is a stout man, a trustworthy warrior and a peerless horseman; but none have earned your esteem more than the *First Knight*. Righteous and austere, he has guided and shaped the King into a fair judge and a cunning strategist. And yet none of the Knights could save your friend.

The People under the Mountain: Nobles and peasants clamoured for you to slay the monsters in duel, until one night you worked up the nerve to ride to the lakeshore under the Mountain. There you found a Knight waiting, a master swordsman the likes of which you'd never seen. As you kneeled before him in defeat, he took his helmet off to reveal himself: His face was a mirror to your own. This was your only failure, a secret you've kept for years, up until now. This is why the People under the Mountain let you live that day: To mourn for your King, killed in a duel against Himself. Like you should have been.

Quote: "When I heard the King had accepted their ruler's challenge, I hoped it wouldn't fall on me to fight that battle".

Body Language

Gargantuan: Your gestures are wide, your movements exaggerated, your manners coarse. You are more than a warrior: You are a hero and, like everything in your life, your pain has no equal.

Darkening

When the People under the Mountain point to you and give you one of these instructions, follow this guideline up to the end of the current dialogue or action sequence. Once it is over, go back to acting however you wish.

- ▼ *More:* Like a bottomless pit, Depression quenches every last spark of your spirit. More than that: Your every word, your every gesture is spent to suffocate the others' well-meaning attempts to make things better. Nothing is worth anything any more.
- ▼ *Less:* The King was the greatest of rulers, and you are the greatest of warriors. Why tolerate the foolish chatter of those who still delude themselves into thinking they can succeed where you failed? Put them in their places.

Impressions

To play out an Impression grab the Mask and, while holding it up, declare the setting and participants of the upcoming scene. Then bring the Mask to your face and act as the King, keeping close to your Knight's vision of Him. You will need to take the lead, as the others have no clue about the point of the scene.

- ▼ *Hunting lodge. The King and the Stable Master.* The King ran from the court to get drunk and mourn for the olden days. He confesses to the Stable Master His greatest fear: That He may not have the strength to defeat the People under the Mountain. Oh, how He wishes it didn't fall on Him to carry this burden.
- ▼ *In the bowels of the Mountain. The King, the First Knight, the Last Knight and the People under the Mountain.* Before the Last Knight, the King stresses to the First Knight that He needs to accept the challenge of the People under the Mountain in person. It is a matter of honour, of writing the last chapter of a legend. This is no time for wisdom and caution.
- ▼ *At the foot of the Mountain. The King, the Squire and the People under the Mountain.* The King bids His last farewell to the Squire before setting foot towards the lakeshore. He wishes He could pass the torch to him for a hundred more years of glory, but now He must focus on His desperate duel against the People under the Mountain.

When the Impression is over, lay down the Mask, tear a fragment from it and remember to keep it with you. When everyone is back to the present, in the cave, explain how you know what you just recounted. Take initiative here, as well.