

THE FIRST KNIGHT

Key

Acceptance: The King has fallen, the golden age is over. Your duty, however, remains the same.

Spirit

Austere: You were never carefree, not even in youth. You have always put honour before happiness. And time has done nothing but harden you.

Unshakable: You are certain that the Kingdom will fall apart without its King. Yet the worth of a cause has nothing to do with the chances of victory, and you will endure.

Bonds

The King: He wasn't the one to dub you a Knight, and you were not friends before His coronation. In spite of this, the King promptly allowed you to counsel Him, holding you in high regard for your loyalty as well as your good sense. You have never seen Him as a peer, certainly not as a drinking companion, but truth is you have never shared such a friendship with anyone. If nothing else, the two of you used to discuss strategy, honour and the valour of men with almost enough earnestness to spark the occasional fight. You couldn't have esteemed Him more.

The Knights: You have never been as good as the *Champion* in a fight, and at first you merely saw him as the King's braggart friend, but you soon came to understand that your opposite temperaments compliment each other. As for the

Stable Master, he has always been a kindred spirit and you have never met someone more reliable, pragmatic and humble. He is nothing like the *Last Knight*, so young and reckless, so confident in his own righteousness. But you are proud to have instilled in him a strong sense of honour, and you know he could even come to succeed you, if only he didn't live to emulate the Champion. On the other hand you have the *Squire*, utterly ambitionless, in spite of the royal blood flowing in his veins. In different times the people would have welcomed such a noble, innocent ruler, but tragedy now looms over the Kingdom and there is no one capable of guiding a final stand.

The People under the Mountain: Although they might take the shape of men, they remain as unpredictable as beasts. You told as much to the King, opposing His will to accept their ruler's challenge to a duel, but His honour would never allow Him to refuse. Now your Sire is dead and the Kingdom doomed, yet this is not your greatest worry, for fierceness does not rely on victory. What you fear is that treason may lurk under the Mountain, that one of those creatures might have taken the place of a Knight to orchestrate the Kingdom's fall. You will be damned before you let this disgrace befall the Knights.

Quote: "We must return and serve a Kingdom that we cannot save anymore, not for ourselves".

Body language

Seasoned: Your gestures are essential, your movements rigid, your manners formal. Some might take you for an armour of ages past, cold and unmoving, but there is no rust on your sword.

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:* There is nothing left for you but Acceptance of the King's death. Those who despair are not worthy of the armour they wear. Let them hate your bluntness if they so wish, but the Kingdom needs its Knights.
- Less:* There are no legends, only men. Death in the name of honour is still death. You are not even sure that all those by your side are loyal. Sometimes, regret finds its way through the cracks of your armour.

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.

- Royal chambers. The King, the Squire and the Stable Master.* The King discusses the progress made by the Squire with the Stable Master, to try and understand whether he's ready to succeed Him. By now the King is well aware of His nephew's reluctance, but He is also aware that none of His other blood relatives knows honour.
- Camp on the path to the Mountain. The King, the Champion and the Stable Master.* As the end of the journey approaches, the King summons His two oldest friends to remember the days gone by. He commands them to stay strong, whatever may happen, and to trust the First Knight, for a stern spirit will be needed in the dark days to come.
- In the bowels of the Mountain. The King, the Last Knight and the People under the Mountain.* Before facing His fate, the King wants to impart one last lesson to the Last Knight: Glory and success are no more than jewels, shiny but unnecessary, on the sturdy iron of honour. More than anything else, He wants the boy to understand His sacrifice.

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.

