Triangle Strategy

A Jumpchain CYOA based on Square Enix's strategy role-playing game
Version 1.1: Tipping the Scales Edition

Norzelia. A continent built on salt, iron, and water. A continent stained in blood. Thirty years ago, the long and bitter Saltiron War came to its conclusion, and established the present balance of power. In the cold, mountainous northwest lies the aggressor of the last war, the Grand Duchy of Aesfrost, ruled by its Archduke Gustadolph Aesfrost. In the temperate, well-watered southwest stands the overall victor of the Saltiron War, the Kingdom of Glenbrook, ruled by King Regna Glenbrook. In the hot, arid east lies the party aggrieved aggrieved by the war, the Holy State of Hyzante, ruled by the Saintly Seven – a collective of seven ministers. The central plains, though nominally held by Glenbrook, are in truth the domain of House Wolffort, led by Lord Symon Wolffort. Though all look back upon the war as their proving ground, all hope to put the old conflict aside and step forward into the age of peace they have created – or so it appears. In truth, various plots, both newly-hatched and buried by centuries of deception, roil just under Norzelia's surface.

Onto the scene steps Serenoa Wolffort, the young son of Lord Symon, just now come of age. At this same time, you too will arrive in this world, ready to make your own mark. In about a month, a ship from Aesfrost will arrive at a port along the Norzelia River within the Wolffort Demesne, carrying Lady Frederica Aesfrost, whose marriage to Serenoa Wolffort has recently been arranged. From there, much will transpire, and the choices made by Norzelia's major players will shape its future. You, too, will have that chance. Take these **1000 Conviction Points**, and with them, decide your destiny in this world.

Section 1: Location and Background

In order to move forward, you must know where you have been. As such, please select one Location below to start in, as well as one Conviction, one Occupation, and one Homeland to define yourself. Your identity is otherwise up to you – men, women, and others altogether alike will earn much glory in the days to come. Likewise, old and young alike fought in the Saltiron War, and both will find themselves with much to do in the coming days. In matters of age, it is recommended that you have seen at least twelve years. Would that this limit were higher, but youth will not spare you from the pain to come.

Location

1. **Whiteholm** – The crown city of the Kingdom of Glenbrook sits upon the great Norzelia River, and is ruled from Whiteholm Castle by the royal family. King Regna Glenbrook, his sons Prince Frani and Prince Roland, his daughter Princess Cordelia, and the upper echelons of Glenbrook's nobility, the Royalists, can be found here. Here also reside the Kingsguard, protectors of the royal family.
2. **Ironstone** – The capital of the Grand Duchy of Aesfrost sits in the frozen north of Norzelia, in close proximity to several massive forges. Here, Archduke Gustadolph Aesfrost reigns, alongside his siblings, Prime Minister Thalas Aesfrost and Lady Erika Aesfrost. Here too are headquartered the fearsome Blackirons, the elite of the vast Aesfrosti armies.
3. **Goddess' Shield** – The capital of the Holy State of Hyzante surrounds a great salt lake called the Source, deep in Norzelia's eastern desert. Here, the mysterious Hierophant presides over the nation, along with the Saintly Seven – Idore Delmira, Minister of Religion; Exharme Marcial, Minister of Arms; Sorsley Ende, Minister of Salt; Lyla Viscraft, Minister of Medicine; Kamsell Pharant, Minister of Domestic Affairs; and Tenebris Mistel, Vice-Minister of Religion. These seven preside over the affairs of Hyzante as a whole, collaborating to promote and enforce the Teachings of the Goddess of Salt. The Goddess' Shield is, of course, the nigh-impregnable wall which surrounds this great city.
4. **Hawksroost** – The hereditary seat of the Wolffort Clan of old, and of House Wolffort to this day, this hilltop fortress is the home of Lord Symon Wolffort and his son Serenoa Wolffort, as well as the tactician Benedict Pascal, the spy Anna Pascal, and the shieldbearer Erador Ballentine. Soon enough, the forces of House Wolffort will begin to grow, and those swelling ranks will also be headquartered here.
5. **Twinsgate** – This city, standing as the entryway to Aesfrost's mountains, is the home of Lord Svarog Aesfrost, and his latest project – the Deathsknell. A weapon being developed in relative secrecy, designed to accomplish the aims of the Duchy – though what those aims are is anyone's guess at this precise moment. You, and all Norzelia, will learn soon enough.
6. **Telliore Plaza** – This hilltop town is the central holding of House Telliore, one of Glenbrook's Three High Houses, created by splitting the Wolffort Clan into three. The great dam which holds back the flooding of the Norzelia River is nearby, and the nearby vineyards are House Telliore's claim to fame and the source of the self-serving Lord Silvio Telliore's wealth.
7. **Falkses Demesne** – The rolling fields of southern Glenbrook are home to House Falkes, one of the Three High Houses created by the splitting of the Wolffort Clan thirty years ago. Here, Lord Landroi Falkes presides over Norzelia's breadbasket, though these vast fields of grain might well burn, should war engulf the continent again.

8. **Citadel of the Sands** – During the Saltiron War, this fortress was the stage of a great battle between the Aesfrosti general Groma Jurgina and the Hyzantian general Archibald Genoe, wherein the former proved victorious and razed the citadel to the ground. Since then, Hyzante has rebuilt this fort, and House Ende currently quarters itself here.

Conviction

The convictions and beliefs of the people of Norzelia are the foundations on which their actions rest, and you are likely no different. What is it that you believe in most?

Utility – The will to accomplish your goals, no matter the cost. To spare no expense, to justify any means to your ends, to act in the spirit of logic, practicality, and opportunity, this is the path of Utility. You are someone who believes in this above all else, a trait you share with one Benedict Pascal.

Liberty – Freedom to live as one wishes, forthrightly and with a free spirit. To unshackle the oppressed, to encourage others to chase their dreams, to chart your own course through life, this is the path of Liberty. You are someone who believes in this above all else, a trait you share with one Frederica Aesfrost.

Morality – Honor and justice, gladly and forevermore. To keep one's oaths, to show mercy to defeated foes, to face danger head-on and sacrifice your pride for the sake of others, this is the path of Morality. You are someone who believes in this above all else, a trait you share with one Prince Roland Glenbrook.

Conviction – To champion ideals in and of themselves is the path of Conviction. One who follows it seeks to achieve what satisfies all parties involved to the greatest degree possible, even those whose ideals would otherwise set them against one another. To walk the path of Conviction is to reach out one's hand, that those who dream of a better world might take it all at once.

Occupation

The people of Norzelia likewise have a number of different occupations, which naturally allow them various means to advance both their ideals and the interests of their homelands.

Soldier – The most straightforward of occupations, in many ways. Put the pointy end of the weapon in the soldier standing opposite you. Whether in a suit of heavy armor or from the back of a great hawk, you've spent much of your life either on the battlefield or preparing for it.

Scholar – Beyond the work of the body, there is the work of the mind, and all three of Norzelia's realms have a place for it. Hyzante's Ministry of Medicine, as well as the Aesfrosti Archives, bear this out. Whether you study the healing arts, magic, or the very earth beneath your feet, Norzelia's future rests on the ideas you bring to the table as much as it does on the tip of any sword.

Smallfolk – From farmers to performers to blacksmiths, Norzelia is home to countless common folk, practicing the various trades on which the realm runs. In times of peace and war alike, people rely on the work you do, whether to survive or to give their lives greater meaning. That said, your skills may yet prove surprisingly useful on the battlefield.

Speaker – And, of course, there are those who live and die by the alacrity and elegance of their tongues. Priests, merchants, and of course, politicians. Whether you seek faith, power, or coin, it is your ability to sway others to your ends that shall allow you to shape Norzelia.

Homeland

The people of Norzelia call three great realms home, and each has its own advantages and specialties. Where is it that you come from?

Kingdom of Glenbrook – The great Norzelia River waters well the southwestern plains and hills, and this allows for plentiful agriculture. As such, the cradle of civilization in Norzelia sits here, and Glenbrook proves the oldest of the three realms. Long ago, great forests stood in this land, but now fields of grain and vast vineyards drink deeply of the blood, sweat, and tears Glenbrook's people put into cultivating them. Glenbrook's subjects have also long cultivated trade along the river, making their kingdom an economic powerhouse.

Grand Duchy of Aesfrost – The northwestern mountains of Norzelia shield the Grand Duchy of Aesfrost, and their many caverns contain rich veins of iron. This has fueled Aesfrost's industry, making them the most feared military power on the continent. Interestingly, they descend from a noble house of Glenbrook, who sent the House Aesfrost of old to subjugate iron-armed raiders from the northern mountains. To these mountains too are the Greathawks ridden by so many Norzelian warriors endemic.

Holy State of Hyzante – The southeastern desert of Norzelia is home to a great salt lake, known only as The Source. To the continent at large, it is the one and only source of salt. Controlling this source is the Holy State of Hyzante, and the Hyzantian salt monopoly has made it the most prosperous of the three realms of Norzelia. Its citizens know no poverty, so long as they adhere to the Teachings of the Goddess of Salt. There is, naturally, more to it than that. Yet, between the salt monopoly and the impenetrable Goddess' Shield wall, who could hope to gainsay Hyzante *even if* they learned some unforgivable truth about the Holy State?

Outsider – Not everyone adheres to the laws of the three great realms, even as they live within their borders. Bandits and outlaws, for instance, or the shaman-heeding people of the deepest deserts of Hyzante. If you would live by your own way, lacking the benefits of the three great realms but unbound by their rules and cultures, you too are an outsider.

Section 2: Perks

Here, you will spend the **Conviction Points** you earned earlier to define your abilities in this world. Look back to your Conviction, Occupation, and Homeland – the perks under the matching headings are discounted by 50%, save those which cost **100 Conviction Points**. Those, in turn, are free to you should their heading match your choices.

Utility Perks

Resourceful [100] – How can you use all you have to achieve all you desire if you're not even sure what you have? Worry not about that. Henceforth, you find it easier to take stock of the assets at your disposal, physical or otherwise, and from there determine what each resource can be used to accomplish. This isn't a compulsion to maximize and weaponize every interaction, just an enhancement of your ability to do so.

"I shall do my level best." [200] – To this end, you would also make an excellent strategist. You're a quick thinker, able to keep your cool in the throes of war, understand the ebb and flow of battles and economies alike, and even act as a spymaster. Any lord would be blessed to have you as a bannerman, and any kingdom blessed to have you as a vizier.

Steward's Schemes [400] – Blow up the dam to destroy the enemy army with a flood? Destroy the blast furnace to flood the city with molten iron? Set your own homes on fire to trap enemy forces and destroy them? How callous of you. But one cannot deny the effectiveness of it. Others might do well to learn from your pragmatism, and so it will be. Your words will cool the tempers of those who follow you over time, helping them recall the guidance of their heads when their hearts would lead them astray. They may have their regrets of what must be done, but should they follow you long enough they shall not hesitate to do it.

A World Free of Sin [600] – In the end, the needs of the many outweigh the needs of the few. You cannot save everyone, but you can save as many as possible – if only at the expense of the rest. For many to thrive, some must suffer. For many to live, some must die. You have swallowed this bitter pill, and it would seem that fate agrees. When you sacrifice the few for the many in the course of running a society or organization, it really does *work.* Whatever oppression you allow of a few for the greater good, it will not spiral outward and devour the many. Kill one man of every ten in a given unit of your army for their failures as a unit, and you'll find the rest becoming the envy of their peers in terms of both morale and skill. Perhaps someday, with the right resources and abilities at your disposal, you'll even be able to bring utopia to a world at the sole price of plunging an innocent child into the depths of Hell, so to speak. Even those who know the price paid for their prosperity might hardly find fault with you, once they see how it benefits the many. There will be those who walk away from your shining city, but even these will know why you did it. Peace built on a lie is still peace, after all. The real question is whether you can live with yourself, but you wouldn't have walked this path if you couldn't, now would you?

Liberty Perks

Liberated [100] – How can you free Norzelia if you can't even free yourself? Well, worry no more about that. You find it easier to go your own way, now, less likely to resort to conformity to solve your problems. This isn't a compulsion (that would be ironic), but rather a greater ability to resist intimidation, peer pressure, and the like.

"The future belongs to the ardent youth!" [200] – Without resources, even the most ambitious can accomplish nothing. Without ambition, even the richest can accomplish nothing. Yours, then, is the

skill to acquire sponsors by means of your personal ambitions. The well-to-do in society, at least those with any sense at all, will find themselves intrigued by the zeal with which you chase your goals. At first, they will only furnish a pittance, and a promise to watch your career with great interest. The more you prove yourself, the more the positions of power and resources you need to continue will come rolling in. From there, the path is yours to carve, even if it is a path of blood and iron.

Operation Emancipation [400] – The time has come. The people cry out for freedom, and the tyrants must be made to fear their might. But who could possibly lead the people to this end? You, dear traveler. Whether it's charting the right path for runaway slaves to take, or teaching the conflict-averse to stand up for themselves, you just have a knack for freeing people, body and mind, of the impositions made upon them. This is especially the case, ironically enough, for those who for one reason or another find themselves following you. This may not be enough for them to survive afterward, but at the very least they would die free.

The Endless Path [600] – In the end, freedom isn't free. The gears of liberty and enterprise must be oiled with the blood, sweat, and tears of the people. Yet, equality of opportunity is not equality of outcome, nor is it always respected in itself. The freedom of the advantaged – the wealthy, the strong, the abled – allows them to trample over those who lack their privileges, and shut them out from the mobility that a society of merit and freedom should offer to all. The worst off will not even know how to seize the opportunities you offer them, and so in the end the whole thing spirals ever downward. Or so it would be, if fate did not seemingly smile upon you. When you strip a society you lead of its controls and safety nets, you'll find that the people prosper despite the risk. They play the hands they are dealt, and play them fairly. Some will, of course, fall through the cracks. You can't fix stupid, you can't fix lazy, and cheaters never prosper. But those who would otherwise end up confused and overwhelmed will learn the game and rise to whatever heights they are worth. The world you create will not be equal, but it will be free, and those who fail truly *will* have no one but themselves to blame.

<u>Morality Perks</u>

Benevolent [100] – It's a bit difficult to stand for justice, honor, and altruism if you're selfish through and through. Worry not! From here on out, you'll find it easier to consider others' needs and feelings, and to maintain your integrity even when betraying your principles would make your life easier. This isn't a compulsion, merely an enhancement of your ability in that regard. If everyone could reliably do it, Norzelia would be a much better place, would it not?

Honor Above All [200] – There is only so far one can go, playing fair while the world around them cheats. Yet, rarely do you seem to encounter this problem. Indeed, so long as you continue to act honorably, justly, and bravely (keeping your word no matter what, defending those who cannot defend themselves, not hesitating to risk your life for another), even those who would otherwise sneer at you will respect your moral fiber. Perhaps not enough to hold back against you if you are enemies, but they certainly won't disparage you for it as allies.

The Beacon Is Lit [400] – And that beacon is you. Many think themselves beyond redemption. Many have hardened their hearts. Yet, even those long ago set in their ways might find a way to the light, should they follow you. Those over whom you have influence, those who care what you think, will find their image of you acting almost as a second conscience. Just as it's likely easier for you to do the right thing, so it will be for them.

Calm Waters [600] – In the end, the right path is usually the hard one. You'll have to sacrifice your privileges, your safety, maybe even your life, to do right by those who have had it worst. But you

refuse to turn your back on them. Others' "due time" to see to their plight is "never," and others still would gladly sacrifice them for the prosperity of yet others more. Fate, it seems, has rewarded you for your integrity. So long as you are acting to undo an injustice, you'll find even your riskiest plans likely to succeed. Freeing slaves is one thing, but leading them to a continent that may not even exist, where they can live happily ever after? Surely, surely you should fail – but you do not. If that safe haven exists at all, you will manage to find it, and quickly. You're not even likely to lose many of your charges on the way there. Well, unless the slavers chase you down impossibly quickly without stopping to rest, but what are the chances of that?

Conviction Perks

Assured [100] – What is conviction? It is to look upon your own beliefs, your own perspective, and say "this is Truth" without a hint of irony. Your ability to do this is greater than ever. This is not a compulsion to do so, but rather, you find yourself enabled in this regard. Whatever you believe, you can believe *more*. If that makes any sense?

A Soul Upon the Scales [200] – If you're going to lead an ideologically diverse group to accomplish your goals, the first thing you have to ask yourself is how you're going to know their thoughts on everything. Luckily, polling is more effective for you than it is for most. Something about you gives people, especially those under your jurisdiction, the sense that you really *do* want their honest opinion on matters, and so they offer it gladly. In a representative system, with this and enough effort on your part, you might well see full voter turnout for election after election. Granted, it'll be up to you to meet all of those demands, but at least you really will know what the people want.

No Turning Back [400] – It's one thing to lead, and another to be followed. It's one thing to believe, and another for others to believe with you. Luckily, you seem to inspire confidence in spades. Whatever path you choose to walk, those who already serve or follow you in some capacity will find themselves making excuses to follow, until and unless you choose a road they cannot follow without betraying their most basic nature. A pragmatic man will not go chasing fairy tales, a dutiful son will not give the world to his father's killer, a daughter of slaves will not side with her mother's enslaver, but all will help you carry contraband from one side of the continent to the other. Funny how things like that work.

The Hawk Flies Free [600] – In the end, it's not as easy as it sounds to get along. It is one thing to reconcile personal opinions on small matters. It is another thing entirely to reconcile people's ideals for society. Their beliefs concerning how people should live their lives, how the world should be governed if at all, what is right and what is wrong, these things can drive wedges between even the best of friends and even the closest of kin. Yet, it would seem fate agrees with your desire to leave no one behind. When you find yourself as a leader, taking counsel from those who disagree with one another on matters of ethics, social organization, and policy, you'll find yourself picking up on which parts of their ideas you can incorporate into a plan of your own, one with the best chance to satisfy them all at least somewhat. The truly uncompromising still won't go along, but anyone not completely consumed by their conviction will be inclined to find your synthesis acceptable, even worth fighting for as much as their own plans. What's more, the overall plan will prove no more likely to fail than the best-laid of the original plans, even if by all means it should be incredibly risky.

Soldier Perks

Basic Training [100] – Most of Norzelia's soldiery have a specialty in combat. Some are swordsmen, others are shieldbearers, others still are archers or mages. Some go into battle armed with nothing but their own fists, while others carry massive clubs. Now, you too are trained in one of the

many ways of Norzelian warfare. Whether you're most skilled in sneaking around with a shortsword, wielding a longsword on the frontlines, peppering enemies with arrows from afar, or even calling down lightning from the heavens, you'll be able to pull your weight on the battlefield!

Stand Your Ground [200] – Iron is strong, but it is of no use if the hand that wields it is weak. The hand that holds the iron will prove feeble if the heart that hand belongs to wavers. That is why yours is a heart steeled for battle. It will take more than hawks descending from the sky, cavalry bearing down on you, or lightning striking your fellow soldiers to set your nerves trembling. What is their might and magic before your heart of steel? Incidentally, you are also slightly better at resisting attacks that have the secondary effect of pushing you away from their performer.

They Made Ready For War [400] – Warriors and soldiers win engagements. Tacticians win battles. When the air fills with smoke and blood, those doing the fighting need to know what the orders are, how to account for the terrain, and, yes, whether or not they're winning. That's where you come in. You keep cool in the heat of battle, rather than rush in swinging wildly. You keep your head on a swivel, and the enemy's movements in mind. You have the clarity to identify their weak spots, and a voice powerful enough to convey orders over the din of battle.

Divine Arms [600] – The Ironfist. The Bloody Shield. The Dawnspear. These names and more have written themselves into the pages of Norzelia's history in blood. If you have not already, you will soon make just such a name for yourself. Whatever fighting style you specialized in via **Basic Training**, you are to that style what Ser Maxwell Trier is to his spear – somewhere between a war hero, an urban legend, and a demigod. Others with the same specialty will seek you out in hopes of training under you, for so great is your skill in that specialty that you could singlehandedly turn a losing battle for your side into an absolute rout of the enemy, all other factors being equal. In battle after battle, you'll prove the kind of warrior legends are made of.

<u>Scholar Perks</u>

Study Hall [100] – To learn the ins and outs of the world takes a level of focus many do not possess. You need to retain the information, yes, but first you need to acquire it, and not everyone knows how to do that effectively. Thus, not only have you proven yourself to have an excellent memory, but you've also displayed the study skills necessary to perform cutting-edge research. Your variables? Accounted for. Your control group? Accounted for. The sources you need to reference? You know not only where to find them, but how to cut through the fluff and get to the information you need. If Norzelia had formal universities, you'd probably pass with flying colors.

"Prepalderdash!" [200] – Well. Like a certain Hyzantian ice mage, it seems being sauced to hell and back doesn't impair your gray matter nearly as much as it should. Yes, you'll still slur your words and hiccup more often, but your ability to conceptualize and convey ideas won't be impeded at all. Why, you might even make your next big breakthrough a day or two sooner if you remember something you said while summarily sloshed!

Secrets of Life [400] – Whether you discerned this on your own or learned these things at the Ministry of Medicine, you know quite a bit more about the human body, how it works, and what can be done with it than most. This isn't just a matter of a working knowledge of human macroscopic anatomy, mind you. You also know how human remains can be, let us say, repurposed to produce the mysterious crystals called Aelfric. This alone won't tell you how to build Aelfric-powered devices, but the fact that there are now two people in the world who know how to perform this process will make quite a few waves if anyone ever learns that.

Divine Mind [600] – Necessity is the mother of invention. You must be feeling quite the need indeed. A spell to make unmelting ice, strong and thick enough to replace iron in weaponry? That's the sort of thing you could invent if you're a specialist in ice magic. Specializing in fire magic might see you devise more controlled spells, for the sake of hitting just the right temperature for ironworking, cooking, or garbage disposal. Specializing in lightning magic might see you devising some applications for controlled electricity this world has yet to see, and if you're more interested in medicine, your accomplishments there might lay low plagues that have ravaged Norzelia before. Whatever it is you're coming up with, the point is that yours is the kind of mind that can revolutionize academics in Norzelia. Entire new disciplines might be born from what you accomplish in your time here, making you the giant on whose shoulders future inventors stand.

Smallfolk Perks

Plying the Trades [100] – Whether you're a carpenter, a brewster, a stonemason, a cooper, a cobbler, a blacksmith, or a glassblower, there's a trade you've been training for since you could walk, if not before. After all these years, you're either an acknowledged master or a prodigy just as skilled as one. You're good enough that in times of peace, your crafts might be a household name across all Norzelia. In a time of war, though, it's the soldiers who will thank you for equipment they can rely on. As a bonus, you also know how to use the tools of your trade as improvised weapons with which to defend yourself. The baggage train's going to be attacked at some point, after all.

What the People Need [200] – A craftsperson's life can be hard, if the times move away from their trade. You can make all kinds of things that people end up never using, and that'd just be no good. It's a good thing you won't have that problem. Whether you be a blacksmith getting recruited into an army that desperately needs one, or a glassblower finding a wealthy patron, your luck will ensure you're never without a market for your trade. Even if, in some far-off time, machines should replace your fellows, you'll find *some* way to continue your living. It's not guaranteed to be glamorous. You could end up spending all day making horseshoes for games where people throw them at standing targets. But it *will* be *something*, and when it comes to eating or not eating, that will be all you need.

Macher's Mark [400] – You know what you need when it's time to get to making things? Resources. This is especially true if you're hewing wood into ladders in the middle of a battle! Luckily, you're incredibly resourceful. As an engineer, you could build bear traps, springs, ladders, or even ballistae from nothing but the wreckage found on a battlefield or in a ruined village, and do so quickly enough that your allies might very well be more confused than your enemies. As a brewster, you might be able to make a quick invigorating mug for those around you with nothing but the grass of the open plains! They won't even be any worse than your usual work for how rushed they are, and imagine your enemy's surprise when you've forged and cooled a sword to meet them with by the time they were finished charging at you!

Divine Hands [600] – There's being an acknowledged master of a trade, and then there's this. If they did not know better, your comrades would think you a god of crafts, because the things you make last much longer and hold up far better than they should. Make a pair of boots for a soldier and that one pair might last them through two wars and the rest of their life afterward, and that's without a day's maintenance. Forge a sword for a friend, and someone who digs it up five hundred years from now might even find that the edge is still sharp. Ah, but there's more. Namely, you have what it takes to reforge existing tools and weapons into similar masterpieces, upgrading their innate capabilities as well. If a mage brings you their staff, already meant to hone their magic such that an apprentice would seem a journeyman, it might make an apprentice seem an archmage by the time you're done with it.

That which you make and remake is worthy of the greatest champions, and history would do well to remember you.

Speaker Perks

Speech 101 [100] – Let there be no more stuttering, no more filler words, no more qualifiers or downplaying statements. With how predicated your present profession is on proper parlance, it pays to be professional with your prose. And so, you have learned the ropes and polished your tongue to at least a copper sheen! Your days of hemming, hawing, and tripping over your syllables are at an end. People can still decide whether or not they like *what* you say to them, but now you may confidently deliver your every line as if you had rehearsed it a thousand times.

Pick Your Poison [200] – Sometimes, it's not enough to listen closely to what you say. Sometimes, people need to pay attention to what you don't. If there's one part of conversation you've brushed up well on by now, it's the art of wielding your *exact words* to instill ideas and sell people on fables without ever actually promising anything. You don't have to lie about the effects of the elixir you're selling, no. All you have to do is not say that *your* elixir does any of that while you're talking about the *other* one. It's their fault if they don't pay attention, hm?

Jumper Has Many Tricks! [400] – Perhaps you offer coin out of pocket. Perhaps your shapely form and wily words beguile the mind. Perhaps you are simply too cute to refuse. Bribe, seduce, or charm away, even in the heat of battle, and watch your enemies fall on one another's swords – for now you possess some means to temporarily turn foes into friends in combat. This has a better chance of working the less "important" your target is, and the turning of their coat is as instant as their loyalty to *you* is temporary. Be sure to have a plan to deal with your temporary puppets once they snap out of it, or a plan to deal with their much-aggrieved ex-comrades should this betrayal not be enough to eliminate them.

Divine Tongue [600] – It is one thing to talk a man out of his coin. It is another thing entirely to convince a continent to follow your ideals. A good thing, then, that you very well can. If social manipulation is an arena, you are the lion loosed to devour the poor souls trapped inside. Whether you appeal to logic, emotion, conscience, self-interest, or even the simple realities of power and agency, yours is the good fortune and honed ability to lead those you speak to down whatever path you see fit. Why, by the time you're done, whoever you're advising will likely think it was their idea to do, well, whatever it is you've talked them into.

Glenbrook Perks

Tradition Is Our Bulwark [100] – Whatever Hyzante may say, Glenbrook is the eldest of Norzelia's three great realms. Its royal family is centuries the elder of the wayward House Aesfrost, and its first kings were crowned even before the Roselle first arrived from Centralia. This has been quite a lot of time to build up traditions and norms among Glenbrook's people, and so entrenched are they that they oft go unspoken. It would not do for you to be unfamiliar with these traditions, and so you are not. Not only do you know Glenbrook's social rituals and norms like the back of your hand, you'll find you have a much easier time learning the ropes in other places as well.

Down By The River [200] – Of the three great realms of Norzelia, the Kingdom of Glenbrook, with its control of the two rivers, has the most experienced fishermen and sailors. It is these after whom you take. You are not only an angler keen enough to feed yourself entirely on fish, but a sailor able to navigate the choppiest rapids and even the deep blue sea with little trouble. Were any expedition from Norzelia to actually *set out* to sea, they would certainly want you aboard.

Amber Waves of Grain [400] – Glenbrook is, of the three realms of Norzelia, the only one with green, growing things in great numbers. Hyzante has some oases, and Aesfrost has the hardiest trees the north can offer, but only Glenbrook *blooms*. The Falkes Demesne is especially well-known as the breadbasket of the kingdom, and of all Norzelia. Now, they may have a rival. Lands under your supervision prove fertile year after year, seeming to repel all but the worst droughts and blights entirely. People under your jurisdiction, as well as you yourself, will prove to have green thumbs as well, ensuring any plants they tend grow as healthy and strong as possible. This alone won't work miracles, soil that cannot grow wheat will not grow wheat, but whatever *can* grow in that soil *will*. Whoever said that man lives not by bread alone has never met you.

The Once and Future King [600] – Brute force alone will not create a kingdom, or make one stable. Faith is a thing all too easily perverted to the ends of wicked men. It is only through the sacred trust between king and kingdom, between sovereign and people, that Glenbrook has survived so long. This is a trust you are more than capable of cultivating. You know just how to present yourself to seem regal, competent, heroic, and most of all, trustworthy. Whoever you rule over will, with even a modicum of effort on your part, consider themselves as having a vital personal relationship with you. You are someone even the lowliest peasant could come to for their problems, someone only the worst of nobles would even think to betray, more symbol than king and yet a friend rather than a distant ruler. That same trust will extend to your descendants, and to theirs, so long as they do not prove inadequate successors. Feudalism made easy? Perhaps. Too good to be true? Of course. There will always be those planning to stab you in the back, make a puppet of you, or even just take what you have from your cold, dead hands. But what you now represent is the sort of reality Glenbrook wishes it lived in.

<u>Aesfrosti Perks</u>

Where At Least I Know I'm Free [100] – Aesfrost is a nation with a particular idea of freedom and merit. Namely, blood is supposed to mean nothing when compared to achievements, and many Aesfrosti are rather proud thereof. With this, you'll join their ranks, finding morale and hope in recalling all you've done on your own merit thus far. That would require you to have achieved something worth being proud of before, mind you, but that bar is lower than you may think.

Iron, Cold Iron [200] – Aesfrost is cold. If it's not the year-round winter conditions that break your body, it's the heartless rat race for the wealth to survive that breaks your spirit. But you've lived with that all your life, and like the iron your homeland clads itself in, you don't break so easily. You have an incredible tolerance for the cold – both the physical ice outside, and the callous emptiness inside the hearts of your neighbors. You could dress like a Hyzantian dancer and still be fine in Aesfrost's icebound mountains, and you could endure a life of constant betrayal, bullying, and distrust without ever losing your hope for the future or your ability to care for others. The world is cold, but it has not broken you.

The Wheels Keep Turning [400] – Of the three nations of Norzelia, Aesfrost is the most industrial, and you will find that any realm you come to rule or otherwise greatly influence will quickly develop its industry and technology thenceforth. The wheel of progress will quicken, and the people will discover properties of the resources available to them they had never before imagined. Your iron grip will lead them out of ignorance, into an age of glorious technology. Just be careful that their reach does not exceed their grasp.

Master Of Men All [600] – In the end, ideals alone cannot shape a nation. Noblesse oblige is a myth, and religion is a joke. Only those with the might to take what they wish can truly win in this

world. That force, leveraged toward your ends, is something with which you are immensely familiar, and you will find it highly effective. Peoples and places you conquer through naked force will find themselves quickly beginning to acclimate to your ideals, your sheer power impressing and inspiring those who would otherwise despair at what they have lost, and attracting the opportunistic to your side. Naturally, there will be those truly loyal to the old regime, and those with plots of their own, but surely your power is enough to crush them as well?

Hyzantian Perks

My Faith Is My Shield [100] – There is much to be said for the ability of faith to keep one from despair. The object of one's faith need not even be real, and the faithful need not even be human. How many dogs have died waiting for masters who will never come home, after all? So it is with you. Your faith, in whatever it is you believe in most, will see you through even the darkest days without a single tear of despair. Of course, this requires that you have some sort of faith at all.

Saints and Sinners [200] – Orthodoxy is more important in Hyzante than it is anywhere else in Norzelia. Coincidentally, the Holy State of Hyzante is by far the most open of the nations as to what its faith precisely *is*, and what it *isn't*. The Teachings are clear, and explanations are available for anyone who asks. What *you* have done is memorize the Teachings of the Goddess of Salt by heart, to the extent that you can tell a true believer from a heretic or pretender in a single conversation. Likewise, in the future, you will find it far easier to glean the dogma of the faiths you encounter, and from there spot heretics, apostates, infidels, and false prophets. Perhaps you will leave them to their fates, or perhaps you will kill them all and let the Goddess sort them out. *That* choice is still up to *you*.

Fun and Prophet [400] – Hyzante, of the three nations, is the most advanced in matters of magic and medicine. One of its Saintly Seven is a mistress of temporal magic, for instance, an art few Aesfrosti or Glenbrook mages will have even heard of. Any realm you come to rule or otherwise heavily influence will also find itself making breakthroughs in that regard. Whatever resources they come to possess, they will quickly begin to suss out the medical uses of, and likewise should they have access to magic they will make leaps and bounds in their understanding of it under your steady hand. Be careful that they do not call up – or create – that which they cannot put down.

Idorelatry [600] – Trust in a royal family can waver under a poor king. Brute force will be met with brute force. To truly rule, one must give the people something to believe in. Not something fleeting or questionable, like a bloodline or a man's strength, but something immortal and unassailable. The people need the Goddess, and you will deliver. Much like the Hyzantian founders of old, your efforts at creating and preserving a status quo favorable to your ends are best accomplished through the lens of religion. Your god need not be real, your priests need not be saints, you yourself need not even believe. But give the people you rule a solid doctrine, a dogma with answers to their anxieties, and you will see conversion en masse. So long as they can think you ordained by the heavens, the masses will not question you, or your plans for their lives. This may falter, should too much evidence pile up against you, but surely you know how to handle that sort of thing? It's tough to be a god, but it's good to be the one who *makes* gods.

Outsider Perks

Wild Life [100] – Glenbrook has its agriculture. Hyzante has the salt trade. Aesfrost has its iron. One way or another, the people of the three great realms either buy or grow their food. But what of those with no such home? What of those who must fend for themselves? Well, that does include you. You're good at hunting, foraging, firemaking, and gathering, allowing you to safely feed, warm, and water yourself in the wilds of Norzelia. You also have some basic skill at making shelter, maintaining

your clothing, and finding minor medicinal herbs to keep yourself healthy out there. When the sky is your roof, you need to know these things.

Dirty Deeds [200] – Of course, there's another way to support yourself. Where the three great nations lie and cheat, you prefer to steal. Banditry comes easy to you, whether it's planning for raids on villages, picking the right back roads to travel and remain undetected, or even sniffing out the caravans with the most valuable cargo. You've learned countless little lessons in trickery. Maybe your next heist is going down in history?

From Inside The House [400] – Of course, not every outsider can remain so forever. Sometimes, the great powers come to you. Sometimes you are forced to go to them. They might not trust you, they might not like you, they may even think you bear a curse in your blood! Yet, like Lady Orlaea Roselle and those of her followers who fled to the Wolffort Demesne, you have a knack for earning yourself and your people (whoever those might be) stable, even comfortable positions in a society that isn't the one you hail from. Whether you marry into high nobility or find a sympathetic margrave to attach yourselves to, you and yours will always have good options to ingrain yourselves in a foreign culture without causing or suffering too much friction. You'll even be able to keep your traditions alive, unless they prove truly abhorrent to your hosts. This isn't a total guarantee of safety – there will inevitably be those who seek your destruction, enslavement, or banishment – but you'll always find *someone* willing to help, and sometimes that's all a people on the run needs.

No Goddess, No Masters [600] – Even a whipped dog will bite back, one day. But it must then unlearn all it has learned of obedience. This is a task to which you find yourself particularly suited. When you find yourself building a community out of those who have hitherto been oppressed or ignored, you'll find yourself easily guiding them to live, and even thrive, for themselves. Even slaves indoctrinated for centuries to perpetuate their own suffering will unlearn that bitterly-taught shame in weeks, and refugees fleeing a burning homeland will shake off the shock and make the most of their new world. On the other hand, those who sit atop society's pyramid do not always stay there, and your lessons can benefit those cast down from such heights just as much. Under your wing, even someone raised as royalty, ordering hundreds of servants around, will learn to move on and do what work they must to survive, rather than wallow in laments for their lost luxury. Why rule the outcasts, when you can teach them to rule themselves?

<u>Undiscounted Perks</u>

Ah, a courier has arrived with a message! It would appear that you receive a stipend of **200 Conviction Points** for this section alone.

Norzelian Notes [Free] – Do you hear that? The music in the air? Somehow, it rises above even the din of battle. Henceforth, you possess a mental playlist of the soundtrack of Triangle Strategy. Left to its own devices, it will play songs appropriate to the situation you are in. However, you can also choose songs to play, organize said songs into playlists, decide whether or not others around you can hear the music as well, and raise or lower the volume (though not to the point of harming the human ear). Should you already possess some manner of leitmotif or personal theme, you will also find a remix of it in this game's style among the songs available to you, likely playing when you fight a battle of great personal importance.

Proper Profiling [50] – There's an interesting new pattern to your thoughts. When you think about someone you've met and learned the name of, you can close your eyes and envision a sort of 'profile' for them. This will include a brief summary of their personality and present situation, a portrait

of them from the waist up, and a banner and label indicating their current faction or affiliation. If you don't know who they work for at all, that last part will remain blank until you learn their allegiance. This might not be much, but it's a good way to remind yourself of the basics. You may even occasionally get information you didn't actually know.

A New Character Story Has Unlocked [50] – As you get to know someone better, sometimes you may find yourself dreaming, or daydreaming, of brief episodes from their life. Generally, you'll get up to three of these little vignettes per person, and each will give you even further insight into their character, history, and/or goals. The bonds you make may be forged in fire, but this will make the process that much faster.

Proper Positioning [100] – Over, behind, and through. You've taken the art of combat positioning to heart. You see, when you attack your enemies from a higher elevation, gravity will lend you more assistance than usual. Any attack you unleash from above will hurt your enemy slightly more than it otherwise would, even if your strike still merely clangs against their armor. Furthermore, when you strike an enemy from behind, even should you merely graze them, you'll likewise see an increase in damage. Finally, even through armor, any enemy you can send flying into a wall or another person will take somewhat more damage than such a collision would otherwise cause. This can be the difference between life and death.

Terrific Terrain [100] – Ground on which one can only be saved from destruction by fighting without delay is called desperate ground. With how well you know the battlefield, your enemies will find themselves on desperate ground more often than not. You've learned to exploit several kinds of terrain to your advantage, depending on your abilities! Burning ground hurts those standing on it, but a fire mage might make use of that pre-existing fire to regain some power. Frozen ground can be slippery, and an ice mage might be able to draw power from it, too! Last, but not least, waterlogged ground and metallic surfaces don't necessarily impede enemy movements, but strike them with a single lightning spell and everyone standing on a connected piece of water or metal is going to get zapped almost as badly as the initial target!

After You [100] – One of the most important aspects of any army is cooperation. A lone warrior is no match for a troop of soldiers acting in concert. An untrained mob would be one thing, but when the skilled and determined act in tandem, little can hope to resist if pincered between them. You and your allies have taken especial note of this, and as such have heightened your reactions. When in battle, whenever you and an ally, or any two of your allies, are fighting the same enemy, if the two fighters are on opposite sides of said enemy, then whenever one strikes at the enemy, the other will react immediately and strike from the other side. This follow-up attack will be not necessarily be more powerful for it, but every extra blow dealt this way is an enemy brought low just that much sooner.

Automaton [200/400] – This entire time, we have assumed you to be human. Should you choose this option, this is not the case. For **200 Conviction Points**, you are a prototype automaton akin to Decimal. Your body may be a barrel, or some other obviously non-humanoid vessel, but the Aelfric that powers you makes you an unaging being with no biological needs, and allows you to magically strike your enemies, using mathematical formulae to target them based on their elevation, remaining vitality, or other such factors. For **400 Conviction Points**, you are instead kin to Hyzante's own Hierophant, able to create and control up to a dozen smaller automatons at a time, target whoever you wish within your awareness with magical blasts, and pass for human so long as no one sees the ball joints in your limbs or the puppet-like hinge of your jaw. And, of course, unlike the empty doll seated on Hyzante's throne, you are still yourself. Do with that knowledge what you will.

Section 3: Items

Just like with the Perks beforehand, here you will spend your **Conviction Points** on various items and properties which define your possessions in this world. Likewise, those under the appropriate headings are discounted to half their normal price for you, and those which would otherwise cost **100 Conviction Points** are free. Furthermore, you receive **a stipend of 600 Conviction Points** to be spent in this section alone.

Miscellaneous Items

You may discount up to two items of each tier (100, 200, 400, 600) in this subsection, following the same rules as those under your appropriate headings.

Tools of the Trade [100] – What is a craftwright without their tools? Hardly anything at all, really. So, whether you be a smith, a carpenter, a brewster, or a cooper, you'll find all the mundane, hand-portable tools you need to practice your craft in this convenient satchel. You can also look forward to any tools inside being repaired or replaced within a day if broken, lost, or stolen.

Standard Kit [100] – Whether it's the yellow tabard of a Glenbrook Bowman, the green tunic of a Rosellan Mender, the blue turban and leather breastplate of a Hyzantian Spear Knight, or even the sable armor of the famed Aesfrosti Blackirons, it's no good to go to war unprepared. Thus, you possess the basic arms and armor of your **Homeland**, as befits your specialization in **Basic Training** if you possess that perk or your most notable combat skill if you don't.

Norzelian Delicacies [100] – An army marches on its stomach, and it doesn't hurt to have something tasty in peacetime, either. Luckily, you won't find yourself going hungry. Between a bottomless but personal supply of Hyzantian salt, bread made from Falkes wheat, Telliore vintage wine, and fish from the great Norzelia River, you'll have everything you need to keep yourself nice and fed.

Norzelian Cosplay Closet [100] – If anyone sees you with these, there will be questions, and most will be variations of "how did you get these?" or "why do you look like me?" What you have in this wardrobe is no less than a cosplay copy of the standard outfit of every named character in Triangle Strategy, prop versions of their weapons that look the real deal but are no use in a fight, and even wigs to match their hair. Come to think of it, you could probably use these for a false-flag operation if you were a good enough actor, but otherwise these will mostly be of use to you *elsewhere*.

Cast The First Stone [200] – It isn't quite clear where they come from, but the magical elements do crystallize often enough to be mined and distributed in such a form. This satchel contains Firestones, Icestones, Thunderstones, and Windstones, and the supply replenishes on a monthly basis. Specifically, there's ten each of the single-target stones, five each of the multi-target Ranged stones, and three each of the multi-target Large Ranged stones. The Firestones, notably, also set the ground beneath their target ablaze, whereas the Icestones freeze the ground beneath their target. The Thunderstones electrify metallic or wet ground beneath their target, and the Windstones will simply spread nearby fires on impact. Lastly, perhaps to facilitate the Firestones, you'll also find ten jugs of oil and five large jugs of oil within the satchel, which on impact with a patch of ground render it flammable.

Militant Mount [200] – Whether it's a purebred Hyzantian horse or an Aesfrosti great hawk, you have a loyal, swift mount strong enough to carry you across the battlefields of Norzelia with aplomb. This creature is somewhat more humanlike in thought than you might expect a horse or hawk to be, allowing it to interpret your orders with great precision.

Medical Marvels [200] – Isn't it wonderful how far Norzelian medicine has advanced? What you hold now is a set of medical pellets, which replenish on a monthly basis. Within are ten HP Recovery Pellets, 10 of each of the recovery pellets against Paralysis, Poison, Sleep, Blindness, Immobility, Fury, and Temptation, and a single Panacea Pellet which can undo all such 'status ailments' and bring someone on the brink of death back to full health. Simply touch the pellet to whoever you wish to heal, and they will be healed! One wonders how the Ministry of Medicine invented such convenient remedies.

"Got something for ya!" [200] – This is curious. You seem to have some kind of automated weapon on hand at all times. What is it, exactly? Well, it's something your trade (or a crafts trade of your choosing, appropriate to this world) would feasibly allow you to assemble or have. Whether it's a miniature ballista erected by a blacksmith and carpenter, or some kind of weaponized still set up by a brewer, you can deploy this odd artifact of your work on the battlefield and watch it attack any enemy who moves within range of it. Some such functions will be more difficult to imagine than others, one suspects, but you'll surely figure it out.

Humble Encampment [400] – Every army needs camp followers, and a place to rest their head. They'd do well to come to you for both. Not only does this collection of tents prove easy to carry on the road and easy to set up, but you'll note that your camp followers will be far safer than they otherwise should be, here. For whatever reason, your enemies are simply less likely to attack them than to face you in the field.

Enfeoffed [400] – Royal or not, you are among the nobility of Norzelia, and have been entrusted with a small but decent plot of land in your **Homeland**. Should you be an **Outsider**, this is within the vast stretches of central Norzelia which otherwise fall under the Wolffort Demesne. Roughly one thousand people live in villages and towns across this fief, though its defenses are sadly rather minimal. Still, it produces food and goods enough to remain mostly self-sufficient.

The Cards Will Tell [400] – Quietuses. The precise origin of these cards of great power is unknown, but those with the ability to invoke their power can turn the tides of battle in the blink of an eye. Now, you, too, hold a small deck of these cards, allowing you to activate each of the following abilities no more than once in a given battle. Lightwave will instantly teleport one of your allies (including yourself) a short distance in any direction, at the cost of interrupting any continuous action they were taking. Revitalize will allow one unconscious or dying ally to rise again, healed just enough to function in battle. Restore will allow one of your allies to recover half of their overall vitality, as well as undoing any "status effects" or "debuffs" they are operating under. Battle Cry will infuse one of your allies with a vast amount of energy, enough to fuel one of their most powerful techniques. Fleet-Footed will cause all of your allies to move noticeably faster for a brief moment. In Tandem will cause a single ally to act immediately after you do, possibly in defiance of the limits of their own body. Hidden Reserves will allow you to banish one of your allies from the battlefield in order to call forth one who did not originally come to that battlefield with you. Lastly, Rejuvenate, the most draining of these cards to wield, allows one of your allies to return to full fighting fitness and perfect health from even a fatal injury, so long as they aren't *already* dead.

Shadow of the Consortium [600] – Or, at least, a similar underground merchant organization. With this purchase, yours is the power of economic leverage. While the Norzelia Consortium possesses the overwhelming rights to the regulation of the lucrative salt trade between the three great nations (a good on whose production Hyzante holds its own monopoly), independent merchants in the employ of savvy nobles and the like have various ways of making their own fortunes, not all of which are, strictly

speaking, *legal*. You are now the leader of a network of around two hundred such merchants, able to smuggle contraband across the continent at your behest. With the right palms greased and the right supplies "acquired," you could very well become the power behind a throne. Perhaps even all three?

Divine Armaments [600] – A warrior of your caliber deserves a weapon worthy of your hand, or at least one that won't break the moment you use it for more than a basic swing. So, you find yourself here, with this. There's not likely anything explicitly magical about it, but this weapon is fit perfectly to your specialty in combat, will not break while clashing with any other weapon in this world, and can enhance your innate skills to allow for a new "ultimate technique." Think of a spearman leaping high into the air and dropping down to impale multiple foes at once, or a staff letting its bearer fire a beam of magic that scourges foes and heals friends in a straight line ahead of them. Maintenance is practically unnecessary, and on top of it all, it's a rather fancy weapon, the sort anyone who's anyone would recognize on sight.

Grand Norzelian Archive [600] – Where exactly you got this, many would kill to know. Funny, given knowing things is the whole point of it. Here, in this library modeled on the Aesfrosti Archives in Ironstone and the Hyzantian Ministry of Medicine alike, you may keep the accumulated knowledge of your predecessors, as well as your own discoveries. Already, volumes about everything from the many uses of salt to the ironworking techniques of Aesfrost reside in the stacks. This is the giant on whose shoulders Norzelia's future will stand.

A Second Source [600] – Salt. A boundless vein of rock salt. This mine, located somewhere far from civilization, seemingly never runs out of salt. If anyone in Norzelia knew you knew the location of this mine, anyone at all, all eyes would be upon you in a matter of days. The Holy State of Hyzante would be especially keen to take on the burden of managing such a marvelous display of the Goddess' blessings. Of course, they don't know this remote salt mine will follow you from world to world, should your journey continue, appearing in an appropriate location known only to you and those you entrust with it each time or attached to one of your other properties if desired.

Glenbrook Items

Regal Raiments [100] – The people of temperate Glenbrook need fear neither the snow of Aesfrost nor the sun of Hyzante. Is it any surprise, then, that they see less need for practicality over expression in their clothing? Thus, the set of comfortable, fashionable clothes you receive. Whether dresses and necklaces or tailcoats and cravats, these seven outfits will never leave you looking out of place at a Glenbrook ball. Of course, they're not meant for the battlefield, the wilds, or any climate besides Glenbrook's, but that's a problem for people who actually *live* in those places.

Rear Guard's Cloak [200] – This little number, sometimes found on Glenbrook nobility, has the curious effect of somewhat blunting the damage of attacks the wearer takes from behind. Useful, perhaps, in a royal court where the backstabbing can turn literal should someone's mood grow sour enough.

Bring Forth the Scales [400] – Much like the ancient artifact passed down through the Wolffort Clan since its founding, the object you possess is a set of scales, like those on which goods are weighed. These scales respond to the convictions of those who bear the seven tokens which come with it. When desires conflict and your path is unclear, know that any vote made upon the Scales is one to which all those who follow you shall acquiesce, save in direst threat to their convictions.

Alabaster Keep [600] – You find yourself in possession of a castle much like that in the center of the Crown City of Glenbrook. Its white walls and high towers, surrounded by a moat, are accessible only by the mighty drawbridge outside and a secret passage known only to you. This castle serves not only as an immensely fortified palace, but as the perfect center for a castle town, ready to prosper through trade. The castle retains any modifications you make to it, follows you between worlds, and can appear in an appropriate location (where two rivers meet, perhaps?) or attached to one of your existing properties when it does.

Aesfrosti Items

Aesfrosti Apparel [100] – Unlike the desert-dwelling Hyzantians or the temperate people of Glenbrook, Aesfrosti must live with the cold every day. One of their primary ways of enduring it is by wearing heavy clothes like these. You now possess a cozy set of red-violet coats, all made of thick fur and with matching fur hats and boots, about seven of each. Not only are they all warm and insulating, they're even great at keeping water out. If there's one thing worse than walking through waist-high snow, after all, it's doing it in wet socks.

Grounding Amulet [200] – The Aesfrosti are a hardy, iron-willed people, who will budge for nothing and no one. Items like this may well be popular among them. This amulet, when worn, will prevent enemy attacks from pushing you around. It won't prevent damage, but the mightiest of hammer swings or howling gales won't send you flying.

It Tolls For Thee [400] – The Deathsknell. Little is known of it, though it is said to be a weapon of immense power. You might know more than most, for you just so happen to possess a copy of it. This is a vast cannon, easily five men high and twelve men long, made of Aesfrost iron, and with such recoil that it must be bound to the ground in heavy chains to keep from knocking itself over when it fires. Power like this can smash the gates of the Goddess' Shield in one shot. In fact, that is what this is meant for. It comes, of course, with enough gunpowder and iron cannonballs to fire time and again, ensuring that even a prolonged siege does not see you run out. Be careful that Archduke Gustadolph does not learn you have this before you are ready to answer to him.

Great Foundry [600] – Just like the forges of Ironstone, this. You now have in your possession a massive ironworks with a blast furnace inside. There's about a thousand workers here, too, who count as Followers and are deft hands at ironworking. This furnace is large enough that, if blown open while in operation, it could flood the streets of an entire city with molten iron. Speaking of iron, this immense foundry never seems to run out of the stuff, taking in shipment after shipment of Aesfrosti iron even should you leave this world, taking it with you to lands undreamed. Whatever your iron and steel needs may be, you may fulfill them here.

Hyzantian Items

Desert Duds [100] – Unlike the other nations of Norzelia, Hyzante bears the brunt of the sun's wrath. Where Aesfrosti welcome what few appearances it makes in their snowy mountain home, and Glenbrook folk exult in the growth it gives their crops, Hyzantians know the pain the blazing orb can inflict. To protect themselves, they have long worn outfits much like the set you now possess. Thin blue and white linen leaving little besides your face and hands exposed, seven outfits of it in all, as befits the style of the Goddess' own people. They protect your skin from the baleful rays of the day-star, while still breathing enough to let the sweat evaporate out. After all, the only thing worse than climbing waist-high dunes all day is doing it with a sunburn.

Black Anklet [200] – A willingness to martyr oneself in service of the Goddess is an admirable quality in Hyzante, but perhaps this is taking it more literally than most. To wear this anklet is to enhance the strength of your sword-arm and magic, as well as your ability to withstand the same, at the price of doing small amounts of damage to you every so often while worn.

A Terrible Gift [400] – This is a frightful weapon indeed, though it was not meant for that to begin with. This purple crystal the size of a man's head is called Aelfric, and when properly struck, it detonates with such force as to destroy the dam holding back the Norzelia River at the Reservoir, sink an Aesfrosti battleship in one blast, or even shatter the Whiteholm Drawbridge. Such power is not to be used lightly, not even for its true purpose – for in truth, it is meant as a power source for automata. Indeed, it gives life to the unliving, allowing a human-sized machine to not only operate indefinitely but even wield some measure of its destructive power against its foes. As to how it is made, leave that to the scholars, and do not allow Minister Idore to find out that you already know (if you already know). The man loves his secrets.

Greatest of Walls [600] – The Goddess' Shield. This is the wall which protects the Hyzantian capital from all its foes, and has done so since the foundation of the Holy State. Somehow, you have gotten your hands on a similar wall, as well as something for it to protect. You may either acquire a small town of a thousand souls behind this wall, resembling the Hyzantian capital in miniature with room within the wall to expand to the size of that very capital, or you may surround one of your existing properties with this blessed bulwark of stone. Either way, the thick sandstone will prove stubborn, even against sappers armed with small bombs over hundreds of sieges. Without a weapon against which no wall of stone, however thick, could hope to stand, foes will find it easier to try and starve you out than to try and claim whatever you have placed behind this mighty slab of stone.

<u>Outsider Items</u>

Wild Wear [100] – Whether a bandit at large or a Rosellan on the run, when you live as an outsider, you live rough. There's little time to stop and wash your clothes, and you're not exactly going to find a tailor in the hill country. That's where these seven outfits come in. Each is rough-spun and rugged enough to last you weeks in the wilderness, even if you're on the run from the law. They're also fairly easy to repair, and while they won't protect you from the Hyzantian heat or Aesfrosti chill as well as clothes from those places would, they'll do the job better than a ballgown.

A Pink Crystal [200] – Where exactly did you get this? It matters not. The simple fact is, this fist-sized pink crystal is made of solid rock salt. It's also a clue, that salt does not come only from the Source. The crystal itself is less special than the chance to dispel an ancient lie that it represents. Likewise, you will find yourself in possession of similar tiny clues in worlds yet to be seen, clues that if used with the right leverage can put an end to the oldest lies in that world. Of course, whatever truth these clues prove will be true *in that world*. That distinction may mean more than you think, if you're not careful.

Ill-Trodden Roads [400] – How do you suppose bandits get around when they're not in place to hold up a caravan? They don't take the main roads, for one. This is less an item and more a guarantee – that wherever you go, when you seek to move discreetly, you'll find less-beaten paths to get where you're going. They'll be rougher and sometimes more dangerous than the main roads, but there won't be any patrols, and they'll never be slower than going the normal way. In fact, some of them will be faster, but those tend to be the more dangerous ones. Still, better than getting caught.

Mountainside Refuge [600] – In the wake of the Saltiron War and the Rosellan Rebellion, a good number of the Roselle set free from the Source by Orlaea settled in a village in the Wolffort Demesne. Under your protection, one way or another, stands a similar village of Roselle. At present, only one thousand of them or so live here, but that will change as such things often do. Not only will this village retain any additions you make to it, its population will naturally grow over time. Descendants of the original Roselle will make up most of this if allowed to prosper, but should you free any other populations of slaves or welcome those fleeing from such conditions, some will surely will find this remote village a good place to start new lives, and will thus join the Roselle in following you across worlds.

Section 4: Companions & Followers

One cannot meaningfully pursue one's convictions alone. Here, you may employ the **Conviction Points** left to you to recruit allies to your cause, whatever that may be.

Old Friends and New [50/200] – To go to war alone is a fool's game. Bring your friends, and maybe you'll make it out alive. To that end, for **50 Conviction Points**, you may import one of your existing Companions or create a new one, granting them a **Conviction**, **Profession**, and **Homeland**, a starting budget of **800 Conviction Points**, and an Item stipend of **300 Conviction Points**. They will not be able to purchase their own Companions, but they *can* purchase **Reinforcements Arrive!** If you instead pay **200 Conviction Points**, you will be able to import or create up to eight Companions operating under the same rules.

Encampment Encounter [50] – Is there someone here you've met, who you might see join your traveling entourage? Worry not. For this small investment, you're sure to meet one of the colorful characters from Triangle Strategy under relatively good circumstances, making it more likely for them to follow you off into the yonder. If that person should somehow come to despise you before your time is up, you may offer the slot to another character with whom you have a better rapport.

"If She is neither able nor willing to prevent Evil, why call her Goddess?" [100, discount Utility] – This middle-aged man looks to all the world a typical Hyzantian, but his olive skin, dark hair, and gray eyes conceal a scorn for the Teachings of the Goddess of Salt you'd never see in them. Somewhere along the line, he fled Hyzante after coming to see the Teachings as an absolute sham. The Goddess did not save his elder brothers from death in the Saltiron War. The Goddess did not save his mother from her illness, or his father from his addiction to drink. The Goddess is empty words, bandied about by corrupt men to control the mindless sheep around him. For the last six months, he's come to see you as either someone at least capable of debating him on this without killing him, or the only other free thinker in a land of passive sheep. He's at least a good speaker, with equivalents to **Speech 101** and **Pick Your Poison**. He's also familiar enough with Hyzante (from being born and raised there) to know its **Saints and Sinners**, and his belief in utility over faith sees him being rather **Resourceful** and thinking quickly enough to promise you **"I shall do my level best."** He'd feel so very *vindicated*, if some dark secret about Hyzante came to light. Maybe there's something you know?

"Who was then the gentleman?" [100, discount Liberty] – Though born and raised in Whiteholm to a family of merchants, this young man has come to believe that Glenbrook's noble houses, one and all, are useless. What exactly makes one man's red blood so much better than another's, that such a thing should give him power of life and death over another man? It's not like the villages out in the Three High Houses' territory *need* the King! Instead, he steals their food at swordpoint, like a common bandit! Before the founding of Whiteholm, there were no kings or nobles, he thinks, and surely people still lived and thrived back then? If Aesfrost *truly* wants to free Norzelia, they should sweep down into the plains and depose all the nobles! They can worry about Hyzante after *that*! Or, so he's been telling you for six months now, believing you can help his goal of inciting a peasant uprising. As you might imagine, he's rather **Liberated**, and his history with the Norzelia River trade means he's as good a sailor as any **Down By the River**. His ambition does remind others that **"the future belongs to the ardent youth,"** but not everyone will agree with his desire to abolish nobility entirely. They'll say he spent too much time in his **Study Hall** rather than learning the way things are. Perhaps you can warn him to be careful what he wishes for *before* the Blackirons storm his hometown and sack it?

“What should it profit a man to gain the world and lose his soul?” [100, discount Morality] – Born and raised in Ironstone, this middle-aged Aesfrosti woman weeps for the cold place her meritocratic homeland has ever been. Day after day, she watches those whose only sin was mediocrity freeze to death on the streets, unable to earn their bread. She watches despair eat away at those who manage to eke out a living, knowing all that they are deprived of merely because they cannot pay for it. Her heart bleeds for them, she weeps, and she feels things could be better. If Aesfrost would just provide every person what they need, out of the goodness of its heart, who *knows* what they could accomplish? As you might imagine, she’s rather **Benevolent**, and has proven more resilient than **Iron, Cold Iron** in the face of the suffering of the poor. She has been **Plying the Trades** as a weaver for a while, too, well enough to make extra blankets and distribute them to those in need. She may look to Hyzante’s provision for its people as a model now, as she told you when you met six months ago, but if she knew on whose backs it was built...

“Believing takes practice.” [100, discount Conviction] – This young woman, ginger-haired and hard-bitten, has lived a hard life. Growing up in a clan of mountain bandits, stealing to survive and surviving to steal, has left her scarred. A gap in her front teeth from the butt of a spear, an eye lost to an arrow, gashes from fights over spoils, a finger lost in a knife fight with a man who got too handsy, but that’s nothing compared to what it’s done to her heart. Over the years, she’s become disillusioned with the bandit life. So much so that she fled her clan in the dead of night about a year ago, and spent six months wandering before she found you. She’s clearly used to doing **Dirty Deeds**, and has some **Basic Training** with an axe, but more than that, she wants to rest **Assured** that you can give her something better, worthier to do with her life. Maybe you can show her a path she can believe in?

“Ho ho ho, to the bottle I go, to heal my heart and drown my woe!” [100, discount Glenbrook] – This middle-aged woman hails from House Telliore, and in fact knows Lord Silvio Telliore rather well. She is a cousin of his, after all. Hers has been a charmed life, despite being born during the Saltiron War. By the time she was of any age to be thinking about life, the war was over, and her family’s new status ensured she had all the wine, all the leisure, and all the reading she could want. She does, however, keep up the practice of fire magic, just in case. You met six months ago during one of many strange occasions, and she took something of a liking to you for some reason or another, hence your frequent invitations to come drinking with her. She may find that **Tradition Is Our Bulwark**, but more importantly to her, her luck also benefits the vineyards just like the tenants of House Falkes work their **Amber Waves of Grain**. Interestingly, she even takes to her **Study Hall** drunk, as if to say **“Prepalderdash!”** to the idea that she wouldn’t retain anything that way. If she only knew the sort of man her cousin will prove to be when lives are on the line...

“One man’s magic is another man’s engineering. Supernatural is a null word!” [100, discount Aesfrost] – This middle-aged man, born and raised in Ironstone, is an engineer by trade, and rather proud of his work. Indeed, he’s produced several iterations on ballistae in Aesfrost, **Where At Least I Know I’m Free**, and he but wishes he’d been old enough to contribute to the Saltiron War. With his designs, why, they could have achieved victory! These days, though, he pursues **What The People Need**, such as more efficient ovens and forges bearing his **Macher’s Mark**. It might seem odd that he bears a slight resentment for mages, until you recall that he somewhat disdains Hyzante (which hosts Norzelia’s premier experts on magic) and has never been able to successfully cast a spell himself. So, **Plying the Trades** as an engineer, he endeavors to ensure that **The Wheels Keep Turning**. You met six months ago after he demonstrated a model of one of his more out-there ideas: a means to redirect the extra heat of Ironstone’s forges to warm the homes of its citizens in the depths of winter. General opinion is that the idea is sound, but the technology isn’t quite there yet. If only he knew how little anyone truly cares...

“Never be afraid to trust an unknown future to a known Goddess.” [100, discount Hyzante] – This young man, born and raised in Hyzante’s capital, is faithful and true to the Teachings of the Goddess of Salt. He’s always been a bright student of his craft, and has a bit of healing magic at his disposal. He might say that **My Faith Is My Shield** if asked how he has endured watching his peers grow bitter, and living without his father who died in the Saltiron War. He knows all the **Saints and Sinners**, as though he’d studied them for fun, and spends his days **Plying the Trades** as a glassblower. He’s also a good influence on those around him, as if **The Beacon Is Lit** by his presence, somehow. Interestingly, he spends his nights praying that the Goddess might forgive the Roselle at long last, for surely she is merciful enough to absolve their ancient sin? Surely she shall not forever punish the sons and daughters for the sins of their fathers? If he only knew the real reason the Roselle toil their days away at the Source...

“You brought me into your world with no purpose but to be your slave.” [100, discount Outsider] – This young woman is Rosellan, though you couldn’t tell by looking at her. Her eyes may be the same pink as her people’s hair, but her hair itself has turned a premature white. She hasn’t told you yet why that is, in the six months since she collapsed in front of the building you were in at the time. She also hasn’t told you the source of the tiny scars all over her body. But, given how she speaks to someone you can’t see about avenging them with the blood of the Ministry of Medicine, you may have an idea. In truth, she is a victim of horrible experimentation at the hands of the Ministry of Medicine, a prototype for a more terrible procedure than even the (top secret) creation of Automata. Being a Rosellan, she is of course an **Outsider**, and knows enough of the **Wild Life** to have survived her escape from the Ministry to meet you. She has more than enough grit to **Stand Your Ground** if you tell her to, given what she’s endured, and has had to be rather **Resourceful** to make it to you. Then there’s the most curious thing about her. She has no heartbeat, as her heart has been replaced with a purple crystal that burns with an eerie violet flame. That flame seeps out of her eyes when she wields her great magical power, similar to the inherent powers of an **Automaton**, but the potential for command of lesser puppets or mathematical targeting is replaced with sheer destructive force. If only she knew what truly came from the experiments performed on her...

Reinforcements Arrive! [100/200/300/400] – Soon enough, armies will clash across Norzelia again. If you should wish to take part in the fighting, you’ll need troops of your own. Thus, these Followers are offered to you. Their general appearance will be influenced by your **Homeland**, with **Glenbrook** providing its golden-clad soldiers, **Hyzante** providing its blue-clad forces, and **Aesfrost** providing their red-and-black-clad troops. **Outsiders** may employ Roselle, bandits, or a mix thereof. For **100 Conviction Points**, you get a small force, consisting mostly of one type of troop. Perhaps they are sneaky Shortswords, roving Bowmen, or simple sword-and-shield Soldiers. Those might also be mounted, either on horses or on the great hawks native to the Aesfrosti mountains. Perhaps they are instead heavily-armored Pikemen, Shieldbearers, or Staffwielders, slower but more focused on defense. Perhaps, instead, they are Mages wielding the elements (Glenbrook Mages prefer fire and are weak to ice, Aesfrosti Mages prefer ice and are weak to fire, Hyzantian Mages use wind and lightning, and Bandit Mages use fire but lack the Glenbrook Mages’ weakness to ice) or Menders providing curative assistance. In any case, there’s only about one hundred of them, and none are particularly powerful. For **200 Conviction Points**, your forces are larger, and consist of a decent mix of troops. Roughly five hundred troops in all, with a mix of light and heavy infantry, would allow you to meaningfully contribute to a battle. For **300 Conviction Point**s, you have a larger force, a balanced composition of about a thousand troops, featuring infantry, cavalry, and spellcasters all working together. For **400 Conviction Points**, however, you gain a muster of about five thousand soldiers, allowing for a true

combined arms approach and allowing you to meaningfully contribute to the coming war, rather than merely one or two battles.

Section 5: Drawbacks and Ending

Your convictions may lead you down dangerous roads, but the rewards for surviving those roads are many. If you find your initial budget was not enough to sate your desires, you may acquire **up to 800 more Conviction Points** in this section by taking on additional challenges. Be warned, these will counteract any perks from this document which would contradict them.

Where It All Began [+0] – Perhaps you seek to steer Norzelia's course from an earlier point? Very well. By choosing this option, you will instead begin your time in Norzelia on the eve of the Saltiron War. Archduke Zygmunt and a young King Regna plot to strike down Hyzante's salt monopoly once and for all, the previous Hierophant is alive and well, and Symon Wolffort faces the challenge of ruling the Wolffort Clan with pride, just as his son will more than thirty years from now. Unless, of course, you ensure Serenoa is never born. From here, you may choose to leave after a decade, or stay until a decade after the normal start of this story – at least forty years from when you are now.

Logistical Issues [+100] – An army marches on its supplies. This isn't just food, but clean water for drinking, bathing, and cooking, medical supplies, clothing, tools for maintaining clothing, armor, and weaponry, and more. Unfortunately, it seems you and any forces you lead here are prone to having to scrape by when it comes to these things. You'll still have whatever you can loot or forage, but finding itinerant merchants who have exactly what you need to upgrade a weapon or restock your medical stores? That's going to be rather harder than it should, even while you're encamped.

Vicious [+100] – Which is to say, you possess a vice that others will remember more thoroughly than your virtues. Perhaps you're a bully and a braggart, puffing yourself up on vainglory and kicking down at whoever you think is weaker than you simply because they're there. Maybe you're a drunkard, in your cups more than you're out of them. Maybe you're shy and simpering, hiding behind others rather than face your problems head-on. Or maybe you're the opposite, a reckless sort, always acting before you think. Whatever the case may be, it won't kill you *on its own*, but your difficulty making friends and allies will make it harder to deal with any other trials you might face. Such as, oh, I don't know, *surviving a war*.

Classified Information [+100] – Loose lips sink ships, surely, but this is perhaps a bit overboard. Expect your allies and superiors to hold you at arm's length when it comes to secrets and plans until it's time for you to take your marching orders. Nothing too serious, nothing that can't be justified by operational security, but whether it's blocking you from accessing geological texts in the Aesfrosti Archives or barring you from certain branches of study at Hyzante's Ministry of Medicine, or even just not telling you where in Norzelia you're *going* until you get ambushed halfway through by bandits, you'll be left out of the loop unless you can force it out of people.

"*Yes, hahaha, yes*!" [+100] – Has anyone ever told you that you seem suspicious? Well, it's true. There's just something about you that makes people suspect you of being up to no good. Maybe your face at rest resembles a contemptuous sneer, maybe your smile looks more like a wolf baring its fangs, or maybe your pattern of speech reminds others of a confidence man more than the honest merchant you actually are. Whatever the case may be, it'll be harder to get others to trust you when their first impression of you is that you're some kind of sicko.

Absolution [+200] – Have you looked in a mirror, lately? For reasons I will soon tell you, that is unlikely. That said, you can see your reflection in the waters of the Source, as you shed your own blood, sweat, and tears to draw forth the Goddess' blessing. Whatever else you might have been, you

are presently a slave, trapped within the great salt lake at Hyzante's center. Whatever wealth, arms, or lands you might have held in this world, whoever might have fought at your side, you will not meet with them in this world until and unless you can escape. The armies of Hyzante will do their level best to hold you there. If you are of the Roselle, this is to be expected. If you are *not*, who is to say what you might have done to find yourself in this predicament?

"Or perhaps it is nothing..." [+200] – Much like Archduke Gustadolph Aesfrost, you have a terrible habit of overlooking important information and underestimating those you consider beneath you. Which is, most likely, *everyone*, given how assured of your own glory and genius you are. You'd ignore a potentially massive clue to exactly what your enemies are doing, simply because it's a book belonging to your father's dead second wife, who you've already written off as irrelevant. Likewise, you'd regard your new puppet queen as the weakling she seemed at first even after she's seduced your best general away from you. Try not to let your would-be assassin get a free shot at you because you're feeling like a particular show-off that day.

War Is Hell [+200] – And you knew that hell long before you ever picked up a sword. Perhaps the Saltiron War claimed the lives of your parents, or saw your entire clan wiped out save for one small child (that being you). Perhaps your family lives, but your home is no more, burned down during the War and abandoned thereafter. Perhaps the pain of the war broke someone who should have loved you, and they took that pain out on you instead of healing from it. Whatever the case, the trauma you bear now is a scar from a war you never even fought in. Beyond the nightmares, and whatever misery may still linger from your past, it's likely that some lingering remnant of that hell will come back for you. Perhaps whoever destroyed your clan or hometown still lives, and is seeking to finish what they started?

"What do you mean, not enough TP?!" [+200] – Oh, goodness. Your time here was never meant to be *quite* so gamified, but here we are. You see, while you're still capable of making basic physical attacks right off the bat in battle, you need to collect TP over time to perform your more potent tricks. Things you could otherwise do without breaking a sweat will cost one TP, and your most earth-shattering abilities will cost a full five. Seeing as the only way most people have to gain TP is to wait for it, you'll find yourself standing around doing nothing when enemies aren't near, and smacking them with the most basic of strikes when they are, until you finally have enough TP to let loose with that massive fireball.

The True Enemy [+300] – Is you, as it turns out. I do not claim to know what you did, or who you did it to, or even if you *truly* did anything at all, but whatever it is will soon come to light, and Norzelia as a whole is displeased. The Kingdom of Glenbrook, Duchy of Aesfrost, and Holy State of Hyzante have come to an agreement far more binding than the Grand Norzelian Mine. Their agreement is, simply, that *you* must die. Whatever forces owe their loyalty directly to you will not betray you, not yet, but everyone else on the continent wants your head on a plate. Maybe you're good enough to fight your way out, maybe you're savvy enough to eventually convince one of the three to turn on the others, or maybe you're nimble enough to outrun them until they all exhaust themselves, but the fact remains that unless one of those is true or you have some other way to win out, you're going to be trampled underfoot by the armies of a united Norzelia in short order.

"Then cast aside your pretensions and grovel." [+300] – Perhaps it is one of the Saintly Seven. Perhaps it is Archduke Gustadolph, or another member of House Aesfrost. Perhaps it is one of the nobles of Glenbrook, or the lord of one of the Three High Houses. Perhaps it is a particularly high-ranking member of the Consortium. Whatever the case may be, one of Norzelia's power players, and

it's one you'd personally dislike, *has you by the genitals*. Whether via blackmail or a life debt, they all but own you, and there will be terrible consequences should you try to slip your leash. No place in Norzelia will be safe for you, for they or their agents could reach you anywhere. And yet, slip your leash you must, unless you are content to spend ten long years or more as another's lapdog, doing their dirty work no matter how thoroughly against your nature it may be.

Irresolute Heart [+300] – The problem is not that you lack courage. Indeed, you may possess it in spades. The problem is that, like Lord Symon Wolffort, you are slowly dying. Your spirit may be willing, but your flesh is weak enough to leave you bedridden the moment you get too excited. If you cannot resolve this matter, you will perish by way of cardiac arrest within the last year of your stay – sooner, should you engage too often in pitched battle. No healing magic known to Norzelia can allay this condition, though Hyzantian medicine may offer good treatment – and yet, no cure. There *is* a cure, *somewhere* in this world, but how are you to find it in the chaos of war and with this very condition keeping you at home?

The Age of Salt and Blood [+300] – You are too late, and the striving of those who would otherwise guide Norzelia's destiny was for naught. The course of Gustadolph's war up to this point matters not. What matters is its result. Norzelia is in chaos. Prime Minister Thalas and Lord Svarog contend for the throne of Aesfrost, filling the mountain air with smoke and blood. Patriatte and a handful of the Royalists are all that remains of Glenbrook proper with the annihilation of the royal family, and the Three High Houses lie lordless. Even House Wolffort, mightiest of the three, finds its affairs in the hands of the spy Anna Pascal, the only member of Symon's court to survive. Hyzante drowns in blood as Minister Exharme and Minister Kamsell vie for the vacant seat of the Hierophant, and the chance to forge a new Saintly Seven around themselves. Any hope of correcting this lies with you, for without a hand at the tiller and your hand to get it there, Norzelia may never know peace again.

The Gates Open Wide [+600] – Did you think Norzelia an island, as Hyzante does? That would have been true elsewise, save for the land of Centralia across the shallow sea. Now, however, you find yourself in a world where connections once tenuous and ephemeral have come true. When you arrive, Norzelia is merely one land of many, and rifts have opened to other lands. Now, three tiny winged creatures whisper in Gustadolph's ears. They speak of ***glimmering crystals***, and of *true* gods that put the lie to Hyzante's Goddess of Salt. They speak of a realm above and beyond, whose power would be his for the taking, if only he heeds them. Glenbrook finds itself haunted, its people beset by nightmares. Thunder booms atop a black mountain, and in a shrine of death sits an empty black throne, wanting for an heir. Prince Roland seems to suffer from these nightmares worse than anyone else, and claims a voice whispers to him. Soon, it says, he will drink of the sweet, all-tempting draught of ***hate***. In Hyzante, Idore Delmira's plans have gone up in smoke. The Hierophant who once spoke to him alone now declares to all who would listen – ***she will become as gods***. Many find her incorrect grammar curious. They *should* be concerned by what it *means*. Worse, the Ministry of Medicine may need a new name for the blast crystals it has created, for they burn with curs'd flame rather than sacred. Not Aelfric, but… well. Best not to invoke ***him*** just yet. As if *all of that* were not enough, you should do your level best to avoid anyone who starts staring up at the moon and waxing poetic about darkness returning so long as men hold evil in their hearts, and steer well clear of anyone who asks you where life, dreams, and hope come from and go to. May the Goddess have mercy on your soul. The horrors which may soon visit themselves upon all Norzelia will not.

Ending

The time has come, some ten years hence. Long days have you spent here, and now you must decide one final time. Will you **Return Home**, abandoning your journey but retaining all you have so far

reaped from it and reuniting with those you left behind so long ago? Will you **Remain Here**, adopting this world as your new home and looking after the outcome of all you have done in this time? Or will you **Move On**, continuing to blaze your peculiar path across the multiverse? A decision must be made. Make ready your token, and consult the Scales of Conviction!

Section 6: Notes

- On **The Gates Open Wide**: You ***really*** shouldn't have opened that door. Essentially, Octopath Traveler: Champions of the Continent (where Serenoa, Frederica, and Roland make cameo appearances) is now somewhat "canon" to your stay in Norzelia, giving Galdera, Odio, Zemus, Airy, Anne, and Edna, the Logic Virus, and even a post-ascension Kefka Palazzo the chance to influence a woefully unprepared continent.
- On **Divine Mind**, **Divine Hands**, and **Divine Arms**: Should you already have mastery of a field of study, particular craft or trade skill, or combat style respectively, you may also find those skills benefiting from the same effects as those perks grant to skills acquired here.
- On **Amber Waves of Grain**, **The Wheels Keep Turning**, and **Fun and Prophet**: If you wish for hard numbers, consider these to be roughly 25-30% boosts to the agricultural output, industrial capacity, and medical and magical R&D respectively of territories under your control.
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