

Social Interaction

“Plays well with others: ~~Usually does~~ Too often does not”
 —My report card (grades K-12)

Social interaction is perhaps the most important aspect of the game. Sure hitting and breaking stuff is great fun, but you will eventually be obligated to deal with someone other than at the point of your sword—or you will soon find yourself at the

point of someone else’s blade. This is a catchall category covering such diverse areas as whom you know (contacts); how well others know you (reputation); your morals and ethics; as well as titles, status, rank, or your skills in dealing with others.

Comparative Appearance

The appearance listed with the attribute scores is how other members of your species perceive your character. See the Comparative appearance chart below to determine how another race perceives your appearance.

Find your race along the left and read across to find how other races perceive your appearance; i.e. Humans consider Elves attractive, so if playing an Elf your appearance is effectively +3 to Humans.

Your appearance is normal when viewed by other Elves; and you would perceive Humans neither favourably nor disfavouredly. Partially responsible for limiting the birth of children of mixed species, are differences in standards of beauty. What an Elf, for example, finds attractive is quite different from what a Dwarf values in a prospective mate [see the *Comparative Appearance* chart in the **Social Interaction** chapter for this].

PC Race	Dwarf	Elf	Firp	Ghoul	Hobgoblin	Human	Killian	Ogre	Orc	Troll
Dwarf	–	-6	-4	-3	-2	-3	-7	-3	-5	0
Elf	-3	–	0	-2	0	+4	-4	+3	-9	+2
Firp	-2	0	–	-3	-5	-6	-1	-5	-4	-5
Ghoul	-4	-6	+1	–	-5	-4	-5	0	-2	-3
Hobgoblin	-3	-3	-3	-5	–	-3	-5	-4	0	0
Human	0	-1	-2	+2	-3	–	-4	+1	+2	+1
Killian	-4	-6	-1	-2	-3	-6	–	-5	-10	-4
Ogre	-5	-5	+1	+1	0	-3	-6	–	0	+1
Orc	-4	-3	-6	-3	+2	-1	-3	0	–	-2
Troll	-2	-8	-8	-5	0	-4	-8	0	-6	–

Contacts

Every character has at least 2 contacts to start; no matter how annoying or boring you are, you at least know somebody. Very personable characters start out with more contacts, or greater quality of contacts. Your starting contacts are either:

one *'Companion'* and one *'Associate'* level,

one *'Buddy'* and two *'Associate,'*
or two *'Buddy'* contacts.

'Companion' level contacts are good friends that you have known for years; you don't keep track of who owes whom a favour. *'Buddy'* level contacts are often more like drinking mates than truly close, but can still be called upon occasionally for assistance. *'Associate'* contacts are associates or are a friend-of-a-friend, you may have worked together for years, but don't go to each other's house on holidays. Contacts are not necessarily the same thing as friends; for example, other player characters don't need to be included on your contacts sheet-but they can be if you desire. Relatives also do not necessarily count unless they are notable or have certain connections of their own. Also note that you don't necessarily have to like someone to have them as a contact, i.e. you don't have to like the guy you fence your stolen goods to in order to do business.

Another way to describe the degrees of association is if you are looking for a job where your contact works. An *'Companion'* contact will put his or her own job on the line for you and would hire you themselves if possible. A *'Buddy'* level contact will put in a good word for you and may suggest how to make the interview go

better. An *'Associate'* contact will tell you about the job opening.

Bear in mind that your contacts will have connections of their own. The character sheet reflects that fact. People that you know personally should be underlined or circled on your contacts sheet; and their contacts that you are aware of, but don't know personally, should be connected to their name with the level of association (*A, B, or C*) listed if known.

Good relationships require work to maintain. To keep someone at a *'Companion'* level you should see them frequently—and not just for constant favours. *'Companion'* contacts can slip down to *'Buddy'* level after a few months of inattention or by abusing the relationship. *'Buddy'* contacts can slip down to *'Associate'* after about a year or so. You can increase the level of a contact with time & effort (which usually means money). Increasing from *'Associate'* to *'Buddy'* involves palling around for a time; increasing from *'Buddy'* to *'Companion'* can take years of effort.

For starting characters, contacts don't need to be fully fleshed out. A basic idea such as "a thief in the next town" works until the relationship can be fully explored and developed through play. Some examples of contacts are: a city's captain-of-the-guard, blacksmith/weaponsmith/armorer, travelling merchant, fence, noble, alchemist, wealthy landowner, technomancer, musician, bureaucrat/politician, wizard, military leader, scout, childhood acquaintance, someone in a distant land, thief or other outlaw-type, someone possessing a certain skill, drug connection, teacher, or anything else you choose (and the Game Master allows). Contacts may act as patrons, employers,

allies, sources of information, companions, or simply someone who owes you a favour.

Associations

Those whom you associate with will affect how you are perceived. This could cause your contacts to be wary; they don't know these people. Guilt by association is also a problem. For example, a Troll will stand out in a crowd within a Human city. There are times when being with your companions could be problematic. Being by yourself could get you places that you never could with a group. Your fellow player characters are your lifeline, however, keep them close at hand—even if not directly by your side.

Influence

Influence is simply a subset of contacts. If you know a great deal of people in a certain field (especially powerful people) or have a measure of personal power in an area then you can be said to have influence. For example, the Admiral in charge of Formour's 3rd expeditionary fleet has influence over foreign policy, as does the seneschal who oversees ambassadors; a Bishop has influence over his diocese, as does the Duke within whose domain it resides. Influence can be over a geographic area or over a church, high society, an industry, the legal/bureaucratic system, the military, a university, organized crime/underground, or street influence. There is no game system for influences (i.e. a judge has influence over legal matters, but cannot change the law), but when you think you have

enough connections and personal authority to influence something, you are free to make the attempt. The Game Master must determine the outcome based on the innumerable variables and circumstances.

Influence is the true measure of being well connected. Whom you know—and how well you can influence them (social skills)—affects what you can control. Remember that your contacts have contacts of their own & can possibly get things done indirectly. Remember also that a contact represents a person, not just a game mechanic; they may call upon you (or your other contacts) from time to time.

The greatest factor behind influences isn't people; it's money. Being able to grease a few palms with silver can get many things accomplished. Conversely, many organizations can be convinced support/sponsor an endeavour. Support can come in other ways than directly with cash. For example, if you need a ship because your quest is sending you across the sea. Finding someone to buy one for you is nearly impossible; but if you can convince your friend that collects taxes on the docks to look the other way if you bring back some of the rare spices he loves from overseas, then that ship's captain may take you for free in return for not having to pay docking fees.

Reputation

Reputation is the percentage chance that someone has heard of your character or if you have heard of that particular non-player character. The base fame rating can be modified—either

permanently or for just one particular roll—by your actions, how public those actions are, distance, or how “in-touch” someone is. For example, murdering someone in a crowded marketplace might raise your permanent reputation by 2 or 3 points (you may be a criminal, but a well-known one); if you are a very long way from your homeland your effective fame may be 1/10th of what it would normally be.

Reputation is not how well liked you are, it is simply the chance that someone has heard of you or recognises you. Your statuses, detailed below, will determine how you are perceived. Game Masters, feel free to give these to the players. They are a great role-playing tool & work much better than simply increasing the base reputation. Reputation is if you are known, Status is how you are known.

Status

Status is a descriptive term for a character, whether famous, noble, feared, or honourable. Status represents how your character is perceived, whether true or not is another matter. Each status is added to fame to determine the base chance that the character’s reputation has preceded him or her. That is, if you have a fame of 8 and 4 status traits then the chance to be known is 12%. Some appropriate statuses can also

be used as a bonus for social skills. It is possible to have more than one of a particular status; i.e. being nobility in more than one country or having ‘titled’ status more than once (i.e. Sir Daren von York if both knight and baron, or *feared x2* for a bad mother—shut your mouth). Some of the following statuses have additional bonuses, but most are simply social. Some examples of status and brief explanations are:

- Acknowledged:** You are a recognized member of court.
- Artful Dodger:** You are known to be a masterful thief (often refers to pickpockets), you always get away with your crimes.
- Avaricious:** You are known for your excess of greed. However, your miserly tendencies pay off—at least in other people’s minds—this status doubles the bonus from *Wealthy*.
- Blessed:** You receive the blessings of a divine order.
- Cherished:** Someone in high office holds you in loving regard.
- Clean:** You are known not for your tidiness (that is the *Neat* status), but for your lack

- of objectionable behaviour. You are always considered to be fair and honest—unless you do something to lose this status.
- Courtly:** Use this status as a +1 bonus when trying to impress nobles or the influential with your graces.
- Disciplined:** You are noted for your self-control and desire for order. You receive a +1 on social checks that involve keeping yourself or subordinates in line.
- Dishonest:** You just cannot tell the truth. You are well known for your falsehoods (this can be used in your favour).
- Divine:** Godhood—or at least the trappings of being a living god.

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- Dominant:** +1 to social skills when controlling underlings or otherwise trying to bully someone.
- Earthy:** You are considered sensible and practical, with a straightforward approach. Some may consider your simple, direct manner crude.
- Elite:** You are regarded as representing the top of your profession or class.
- Enraged:** Your viciousness & uncontrollable anger are well known.
- Esteemed:** You regarded with respect.
- Eternal:** You are as unchanging as the tides or as unquenchable as the sun.
- Famous:** You are very well known. This status also includes the Well-known status for free, and the area that you are known in is much larger.
- Feared:** Those who know you fear you, for you have the power to destroy them. You must be able to back this up to be eligible for this status.
- Genuine:** Any hypocrisy on your part is at first believed to be only part of your 'complexity.'
- Greater nobility:** This is the upper echelon of the feudal castes.
- Grounded:** Your beliefs and principles are firmly fixed. No one can cause your morals or disposition to change unless you desire it. You must have overcome an ethical dilemma to gain this status.
- Holy:** Your very touch is considered elevated above lesser mortals.
- Honest:** Until proven otherwise your word is considered completely truthful.
- Imperial:** This status denotes Emperors & Empresses.
- Influential:** You are well connected or your words hold merit to others. You have demonstrable control over an area; see the section on *Influence* above.
- Insightful:** You are known for your wisdom & ability to see the truth in all things.
- Judicial:** You are known for your ability to make unbiased & fair decisions.
- Knighthood:** You have been made a defender of the realm; this feudal status is not passed down to your children & is available only to those who have actually achieved knighthood.
- Knowledgeable:** Sage-like information is considered yours to command.
- Known:** This status adds an additional +1 to your effective reputation in areas (geographical or occupational) where someone might have heard of you.
- Landed:** You have control over a large tract of land.
- Leader:** Available only to those of proven ability (i.e. you have been in charge of a group before) and grants a +1 to when you are trying to get those placed under you to do something.
- Masterful:** This status denotes those that have achieved level 10 in a proficiency or by having an apprentice skill at master level (not counting your native language) and creating a 'masterpiece' or the equivalent for non-craft skills
- Named:** Your last name reflects your title/status or you gain an appropriate last name.
- Neat:** You are known to be tidy and organized.
- Noble:** You are a member of your country's nobility.
- Polite:** Smooth and refined in behaviour or manners; well bred; courteous; complaisant; obliging; civil.
- Regal:** This status denotes royalty—Kings, Queens, Princes, & Princesses
- Renowned:** You are famed for your deeds.
- Respected:** this merely means that you may expect to be formally referred to by other than your title; i.e. your grace or your royal highness.
- Sly:** You are noted for your craftiness and cunning.

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Take-charge: You are known to have stepped up and controlled a situation successfully.

Tenacious: You are noted for your unyielding persistence. To receive this status, you must have overcome a difficult obstacle that was defeated by your determination and will to succeed.

Titled: You are entitled to have others refer to you by your formal *Title*.

Triumphant: You have achieved a great victory in battle.

Trouble-magnet: Strange situations (and even stranger individuals) seem to seek you out; this can never be good for those around you.

Trustworthy: You are considered to be reliable, honest, and dependable.

Trusty: Another in the series of 'honest/nice guy' statuses.

Unholy: Whether or not you are in league with dark gods is debatable, but you do make them proud.

Unique: There can be only one.

Untouchable: You have escaped dire punishment repeatedly.

Untrustable: No one would place any confidence in you.

Vengeful: You are known to have exacted a brutal revenge on those who wronged you.

Warrior: Many cultures place this status at a premium, considering all others unworthy of respect.

Wealthy: You are known for having money (true or not) and can use this status allows you to have a line of credit or to get by (buy) without spending cash (use this as a +1 to social skills when trying to do either of these things).

Well-known: You are recognized quite often. This status adds an additional +2 to your effective reputation.

Wise: Whether true or not, you are considered to be knowledgeable and fair in judgement.

Nobility and Titles

There are two ways to earn a noble rank in most countries: birth or earning. Each noble rank has certain prerequisite statuses that someone must possess in order to achieve that title as well as having bonus statuses that you gain for having this rank. There are usually additional requirements for achieving nobility; it is never automatic simply for having the required status. If you are born into a title then the prerequisite statuses are added as additional bonus status. Some titles (such as knight) you cannot be born into and must

earn. The Kingdom of Formor and the Byzantium Empire in particular are both expanding their controlled lands and thus their nobility, and as such there exists greater possibility of increasing one's station in life there than in a more rigid caste society.

The exact structure of a country's nobility will vary from location to location, but the rough composite feudal order follows on the next page:

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Pharaoh
Emperor/Empress
High King/High Queen
King/Queen
Kahn
Prince/Princess (royal)
Prince/Princess (city)
Archduke/Archduchess
Duke/Duchess
Marquis/Marquese

Chieftain
Count/Countess/Earl
Jarl
Subchieftain
Viscount/Viscountess
Baron/Baroness
Baronet
Knight
Hetman
Squire

The social order will be included in each countries description and usually doesn't include all of the titles listed. The Kingdom of Formor has its order of feudality (with required and bonus statuses) as:

King / Queen:

Required: Acknowledged, Courtly,
Dominant, Esteemed, Feared, Greater
Nobility, Influential, Known, Landed,
Leader, Noble, Regal, Respected;
Bonus: Elite, Famous, Cherished, Genuine,
Known, Respected, Titled (Your
Majesty), Unique, Well-Known

Prince / Princess (Royal):

Required: none
Bonus: Acknowledged, Cherished, Famous,
Greater Nobility, Known, Titled (Your
Highness)

Archduke / Archduchess:

Required: Acknowledged, Courtly,
Dominant, Esteemed, Greater Nobility,
Influential, Landed, Leader, Noble,
Wealthy
Bonus: Elite, Famous, Known, Respected,
Titled (Your Grace), Well Known

Duke / Duchess:

Required: Acknowledged, Courtly,
Dominant, Influential, Landed, Leader,
Noble
Bonus: Greater Nobility, Known, Titled (Your
Grace), Wealthy

Marquis / Marquese:

Required: Acknowledged, Courtly,
Influential, Landed, Noble
Bonus: Titled, Wealthy

Count / Countess / Earl:

Required: Acknowledged, Courtly, Landed,
Noble, Influential
Bonus: Titled, Named (Earl)

Viscount / Viscountess:

Required: Acknowledged, Courtly, Landed,
Noble
Bonus: Influential, Titled

Baron / Baroness:

Required: Acknowledged, Courtly, Noble,
Landed
Bonus: Named (von) Titled,

Baronet:

Required: Acknowledged, Knighted
Bonus: Noble, Named (Lord/Lady)

Knight (Non-Noble):

Required: Acknowledged, Esteemed
Bonus: Knighted, Named (Sir/Lady)

Squire (Non-Noble):

Required: none
Bonus: Acknowledged