

Welcome to the palace of the Prince. Why have you come? Will you get what you want, or end up paying a dark price?

## Introduction



The Imperial Prince has many palaces, each one of them numbered and amazingly grand, but none that come close to the phenomenon that is known as Palace Zero. Nobody, not even the Castellan of the Palace, understands the full extent of Palace Zero, which goes on for many miles in every direction from the Prince's main quarters.

The Prince's Empire takes up half the world, it is said, and maybe someday it will encompass the whole globe. The Empire's dirigible air-fleet and the new invention of tanks makes it seem like an unstoppable juggernaut. But the Empire itself is creaky, straining under its own weight, and the Prince has enemies from within. And something darker in the Palace as well. So perhaps world domination is less inevitable than it might at first seem.

There's a lot of spiritualism going on, and a lot of people believe in this or that form of the supernatural. Are magic and ghosts real? Only your characters know for sure.

(Note that the text uses the typically male term "Prince." To be sure the game will be at least as fun if the Prince is a Princess. But feel free to use whichever term you prefer, no matter what gender the

player decides for the character.)

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# Characters

Characters in Palace Zero are rated primarily by their proximity to his Grand Royal Highness the Imperial Prince. They also have a few abilities to describe them, including a primary role. Decide on a reason for your character to have been summoned to the Palace, or what their agenda is while they are there. Or decide your proximity and role first perhaps, and see what you may think works as their agenda then. Whichever order works best for you.

At some point during creating your character come up with things like sex/gender and a name for them.



## Proximity

Some characters are closer to the prince than others, and their players have more control over the secrets that abound. On the other hand, the closer they are, the more coddled, and less able.

Pick a Proximity to the Prince:

Proximity	Secrets Points	Abilities	Target #
Prince	5	1	3
Family	4	2	4
Relation	3	3	5
Staff	2	4	6
Courtier	1	5	8
Outsider	0	6	9

## Roles

Once you have selected a proximity, select one of the roles typical for that Proximity. Or if you have another idea, talk to the GM, and invent a new role. Your role is one of your abilities, and a broad one that encompasses a wide array of skills and such that go into such a role. Yes, the Prince's only ability is being the Prince.

Only one player may take a particular role, unless otherwise noted in the description.

### Prince Roles

The Prince has no options in terms of specialized roles, they are always the Co-GM, and their role is simply to be the Prince of the Empire.

## Family Roles

These are the close family of the Prince. This is not only brothers and sisters, or sons and daughters, but also it may be the father or mother of the Prince (who may have abdicated previously). They have roles of great importance in ruling with Important titles.

### Vizier

This is the Prince's closest confidant, and advisor, very much a second-in-command, who speaks with the authority of the Prince on most matters. One player should probably play the vizier.

### Grand Duke

Runs a large portion of the Prince's empire. Invent the domain your character administers. More than one player may take this role.

### Grand Marshall

The commander of the Prince's armed forces worldwide. The Marshall has access to amazing military resources and might. Describe your military's doomsday weapon, with which the Empire has conquered half the world.

## Relation Roles

Relations are more distant family, sometimes quite distant, but not so distant that they aren't allowed near the prince (for that, create a courtier instead). Grandparents, grandchildren, aunts and uncles (by blood, those by marriage are probably courtiers), nieces and nephews, and cousins (probably first, or from disenfranchised lines further back). Relations have roles as advisors to the Prince, typically.

### Foreign Minister

Works closely with the Vizier, and interacts with all manner of foreign dignitaries.

### Chancellor of the Exchequer

Deals with money matters for the Prince, and handles economic policies for the Empire worldwide.

### Minister of Intelligence

Also works with the Vizier, this minister is in charge of the various spy organizations that the Prince has in place. Only one player may take this role.

## **Minister of Justice**

Essentially the Supreme Court for the Empire, this individual interprets the Prince's law.

## **Minister of the Imperial Court**

A relation given the duty of overseeing the affairs of the courtiers at court at the Palace and beyond.

## **Staff Roles**

The Staff are involved in all activities that support the palace and thus the running of the Imperial government.

### **Castellan**

The Castellan is in charge of the Palace edifices, and making sure that they are maintained and expanded as needed. The Castellan is always extremely busy.

### **Major Domo**

The Major Domo runs the household in terms of seeing that operations work smoothly. Everything from state dinners, to travel arrangements.

### **Head Gardener**

The Head Gardener is in charge of the exterior of the palace, its grounds and even the many plants on the inside of the Palace. They work closely with the Castellan, and are just as busy ensuring that the grounds are up to the Prince's high standards.

### **Chef**

The chef is in charge of the operation of the many kitchens all over the palace grounds, and works with the Major Domo when planning events.

### **Quartermaster**

The Palace is an amazingly complex place, and maintaining supplies for it is a daunting task. The Quartermaster reports to the Chancellor of the Exchequer who ensures that there is money for supplies.

## Courtier Roles

Courtiers serve less formal roles in the palace, mostly being minor nobility who the Prince tends to allow around himself occasionally, a means by which to keep an eye on them all. All Courtiers report to the Minister of the Imperial Court.

### Dandy

The Dandy is a foppish type. Often this sort of character is under-estimated, and can get more done than one would think. More than one player may take this role.

### Gossip

The gossip is the courtier one goes to in order to get all of the knowledge they need about others at court. They have a knack for finding out the secrets of others. More than one player may take this role.

### Rake

The rake is the party animal of the court, carousing, gambling and generally upsetting the peace at all hours. Fortunately for the Rake, the Prince has a fondness for their tomfoolery, and thus lets them remain at court. More than one player may take this role.

### Lover

Like Casanova, this character is good at seducing other members at court (and not just other courtiers). The Lover has a LOT of enemies.

## Outsider Roles

Outsiders are always just arriving at court, and would not be there, except for some current specific need that gives them access to the Palace.

### Business

A business person who has some contracts or deals, discussions of which have required them to come to court. More than one player may take this role.

### Media

Some media hound has written an article that has drawn the attention of the government, or have

proposed writing such a story, and thus have been allowed into the palace. More than one player may take this role.

## Petitioner

The ancient rite of commoners being able to petition the Prince still exists. No, you might not get to see much of the Prince, if at all, but somebody will be assigned to deal with your petition. More than one player may take this role.

## Military

A member of one of the Prince's armed services, you are probably at the palace to discuss a military operation, or observations made during a military operation or some such. More than one player may take this role.

## Foreign Dignitary

You've been assigned by your government to treat with the Empire, and now you've been summoned to the Palace for some reason.

## Second Abilities

The world in which Palace Zero exists is one of action and adventure. Consider taking one of the following as your second ability; these are often parallel professions or previous positions:

Two-Fisted Adventurer	Rich Dilettante	Charismatic Sailor
Military Training	Circus Performer	Adventuresome Kid
Successful Antiquarian	Intrepid Archaeologist	Retired Officer
Fencing Champion	Gifted Spiritualist	Salvage Operator
Daring Pilot	Crusading Attorney	Private Investigator
Wise Librarian	Gallivanting Aristocrat	Talented Assassin
Submersible Commander	Dastardly Ruffian	Fast-talking Huckster
Big Game Hunter	Raised by Wolves	Wealthy Entrepreneur
Aristocratic Burglar	Canny Conman	Tribal Warrior
Psychologically-Challenged Scientist	Rugged Mercenary	Tricky Smuggler
Intelligence Agent	Imperial Guardsman	Brawny Brawler
World Traveler	Dispossessed Noble	Rustic Woodsman
Crime Boss	Maverick Police Officer	Engaging Charlatan
Bold Explorer	Proselytizing Priest	(come up with your own!)

## Other Abilities

If your character is a Relation or further in proximity from the Prince, they will have even more

abilities. These should be a bit narrower than the second abilities above, and often are like skills or abilities from other RPGs. Things such as acrobatics or botany or wealth. Be sure that one of your other two abilities doesn't already cover your third or more abilities.

You can decide on these other skills before play, or you can reveal them during play as you find convenient.

## Rusty Ability

Your character also has one other ability that they've let fall into a lack of maintenance, such that they're “rusty” at it.

## Free Secret

Lastly, invent something secret. You may well want to invent something that helps your character's agenda; but don't invent something that resolves it before play begins.

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# Resolution

Roll 2d6 and multiply the results of each die together. Then compare to your character's TN, depending on the type of ability below:

Ability Type	Succeed If
Regular Ability	Roll $\geq$ TN
Rusty Ability	Roll $<$ TN
No Ability	Roll $<$ TN -1

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# Secrets Points



Spend secrets  
points to invent  
secret things.  
Send a note to  
the GM to  
indicate what  
you've created.



[Can more be obtained? For a one-shot, maybe no?]



# Optional Rules

## Multiple Princes

For a large game with a lot of players, there may be two Prince players (or even more), each vying for sole occupancy of the throne.

## The Emperor

You didn't think that a Prince ruled the Empire, did you? In this scenario, the Prince is beholden to his father

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# Actual Play

[Palace Zero Play](#) in actual play.

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