

Know Thyself

A Game of Discovery

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Game Chef 2007 Entry
Feedback Group Epsilon (Go Barnstormers!)
Ingredients: Memory, Palace, Currency

What if you woke up one day with no memories, a few items on you, and a letter stating you agreed to some strange wager? Would you want to find out what's going on? Would you want to find out about yourself?

After everything is said and done, would you want to still be that person?

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What is the first thing we see?

Good morning,

No doubt you are right now questioning where you are, given you have no memories of last night. Depending on how suspicious your area, you may even suspect that the strangers in the room with you be in league against you.

The question you likely haven't arrived to yet is "Who am I?" Give that a moment to sink in.

I would like to say, "Rest assured that I mean you no harm." But with no memories, you have no guarantees. You don't remember who I am or whether I am trustworthy. But more than that, what I would like to have happen and what will happen are two entirely different things. "I mean you no harm" is a far different phrase than "You will not be harmed."

But I digress. Regardless of whether you believe it, you are here of your own volition. You have made a wager with me, the Master of this Palace, and part of that wager means you may not remember anything upon waking. Worry not; your memories will return as you travel throughout my Palace.

What you see in the mirror and laid upon the nightstands next to each of your beds are those things you deemed important. I would advise keeping them with you, if you wish to regain any memory of who you were.

When the time is right, you will be summoned to my throne room and our wager will be settled. Whether you win or lose will depend on your actions in this Palace. I will give you the courtesy of reminding you that your wagers are linked together, so working together might be advised. Naturally, it is not a requirement; merely a suggestion.

Enclosed is a map of the Palace. You may find it useful for navigation, though be forewarned that the True Names of a room will only be revealed upon entry in that room.

I wish you the best of luck. Let the games begin.

Cordially yours,

- The Master of the Palace

What is this game?

Know Thyself is a role-playing game where you create your character during play. Unlike many other role-playing games, you start truly knowing almost nothing about the character. As with many games, there are various components to Know Thyself:

The Players & their Characters

The players play the role of someone who has just lost all of their memories. These Player-Characters (or PCs) all wake up in a room together, each with a letter on the nightstand next to them. They then proceed to explore the Palace to regain memories and learn about who this character was once.

The Game Moderator/Master of the Palace

The GM plays the role of the other characters in the Palace, known as Non-Player-Characters (or NPCs). The GM also serves as a foil to the players, in a slightly competitive – but still friendly – manner. By acting as a source of friction, the paths the characters take as they emerge and regain memories will take everyone on an unexpected, and hopefully amazing, ride.

The Palace

Know Thyself is played on a map of the Palace. The character move around on the board, either together or separately, and encounter rooms as they move. There is a map in the back of this document for the group to print out and use. As the True Names of each room change with each game play, the map is designed to be written on and tossed aside or saved with each use.

The Cards

The core mechanics of Know Thyself require two decks of standard playing cards, without jokers. One deck should be separated into two piles: one deck of black cards (Spades and Clubs) and one deck of red cards (Hearts and Diamonds). These two smaller decks are known as the True Name decks.

The remaining deck is kept together. It will constantly be shuffled, drawn from and cut during play. This is the Play Deck.

The Coins & Wagers

The mechanics of Know Thyself involves wagers the GM makes with the players. These wagers involve physical tokens of some sort, called Coins. The Coins can be actual money, poker chips, or anything else as long as everyone understands the denominations used (i.e. pennies, nickels, dimes or white chips, red chips, blue chips). The game requires around 35 Coins per PC in total, which will be split up into various pools: one for each PC, one for the Master of the Palace, and a separate pool for Bribes and Tolls.

What will we need?

- Enough character sheets for each PC
- A copy of the Palace Map
- Tokens for each PC to place on the Palace Map
- Five index cards per person (including GM), if playing Hardcore (see p. 6)
- Two decks of playing cards
- 35 coins per PC

Who are we?

Player Characters in Know Thyself require little setup, as they have no memories in the beginning. But as they can see themselves in the mirror and the items they have, there is some setup: Describing Appearance and Describing Attachments.

Describing Appearance

When characters wake up in the Guest Suite, they will have ready access to a number of mirrors, as well as having other pairs of eyes looking at them. Since all a PC has is what they look like and what they have in the room to go on, appearance is an important element.

By the same token, the more they describe here, the more their own ideas of this character could drive their memories. There are some guidelines to describing appearance:

- These descriptions alter the starting Coins for their player – the more described, the fewer Coins given. The number of Coins you have at the end of the game will determine whether that character wins or loses their wager with the Master of the Palace.
- Nothing can be mentioned that would personally identify the character in a way anyone could understand – name tag, I.D. card, name sewn into underwear, etc.
- Names are absolutely forbidden. Even if they could be interpreted as someone else’s name rather than their own. The Master of the Palace forbids anything with a name.

<i>Example Descriptions</i>	<i>Coins</i>
“My Star Corps tunic notes three medals and a star on each collar, noting rank. I have a snappy-looking crew cut and have a scar down my left cheek. I’m fit in a way that indicates that I truly use my body rather than simply work to improve it.	6
“I have a Star Corps tunic that shows off my fit body and a scar down my left cheek.”	9
“I’m an athletic young man with short, black hair. I am wearing a simple shirt and pants. I have a scar down my left cheek.”	12
“I wake up naked. I have a scar down my left cheek, probably from some blade. Other than that, I’m a healthy-looking young man with short, black hair.”	15

- The only elements allowed in this description are elements can are inherent to the body (general body descriptions, beauty, scars, deformities, other oddities) and any clothing worn.
- The Nudity Bribe: If your character is nude and otherwise lightly-described, the GM should consider 15 Coins – the maximum Coins a PC can start with.

Describing Attachments

Once you have an appearance, you describe four Attachments. These are items or characteristics that are near or on the character upon waking. These four Attachments are crucial to characters in play, as these are what generated Memories will be attached to.

The character sheet has four boxes for Attachments & Memories, each with a playing card suit. These suits have no special meaning for the Attachment, but are how the mechanics determine which Attachment will gain a new Memory as a result of a Wager.

Anything that is a part of you or could be carried with you can be an Attachment. As with your appearance, Attachments have some guidelines:

- Nothing about these Attachments can identify or name this character or anyone else. Names are still forbidden here.
- A symbol or sigil is acceptable as long as it's vague and can only identify someone if they know that symbol in the first place. Heraldry and brands are examples of this.
- The phrase "less is more" fits well here. Avoid the temptation to over-describe an item. On the other hand, one or two over-described (but still not identifying) items would be an interesting addition to a stack of Attachments in the Hardcore variant (see next page).
- If the GM feels like the player is trying to get the advantage of a spare character appearance by putting more information in the Attachments, the GM may decrease the number of starting Coins appropriately. Having said that, the GM should consider the following: if the Attachment is ambiguous, the Memories attached may not be what the character has in mind.
- Anything with words, like a scroll or books, are acceptable as long as they are somehow generic (a history book, and atlas) or unreadable (a cryptic tome, a locked diary). The book may not contain anything that identifies the character, and anything that might give hints to the character's origin (like "a history book of the 17th Century") could be seen as trying to add more information to the character's general description.

Example Attachments

- Gold ring
- Folding paper lantern
- Ornate rapier with an "S" in the pommel
- Black & white photo of a 1986 Honda Civic
- Scar on my face
- Journal written in some sort of code
- Sharpened toothbrush
- Fountain pen
- Left ring finger, cut at the last knuckle, wrapped fifteen times with silk thread and tied to a silver chain
- Broken walking cane
- Titanium spork
- Iron key ring containing three keys
- My peg leg
- Gold Krugerrand
- Revolver with one bullet in the chamber
- Three roses: red, yellow and white
- Vial of some clear liquid
- Ray gun
- Necklace crucifix
- Acid burn down my throat
- Swiss Army Knife
- Cribbage set
- Bunny slippers

- If the GM is looking to dock Coins for an Attachment, the player and GM should talk to see if may one is misunderstanding the other before blanket rulings are made. Work with each other.

Example

Jerry is playing in Aaron's game. He decides that he wants to angle his character to be a Sword and Sorcery barbarian. That colors his character setup.

What do I see in the mirror?

I am a man of remarkable physical prowess and chiseled features. I'm wearing only a tiger-skin loin-cloth and some sandals.

What are my Attachments?

Jerry chooses a rusty longsword, a gold amulet, a scar on his right shoulder (which he didn't declare in the "What do I see in the mirror" question initially, and added in later), and a red rose.

Ryan weighs the character setup, and gives Jerry 12 Coins.

Optional: Hardcore Character Creation

If the group is comfortable playing games like Know Thyself with random character creation, use the following set-up before describing any PC's appearance:

1. Give five index cards to each person (including the GM).
2. Each person should write an Attachment on the index card.
3. Collect the index cards together, along with any Attachment index cards left over from previous games.
4. Shuffle index cards together.
5. Deal four cards to each of the players (not including the GM).
6. Each player writes down those four Attachments on their character sheet.
7. Shelve the remaining Attachment index cards for another game. If you want to reuse the dealt Attachments, shelve those as well.

Extra Hardcore Variant: Do this *after* describing each character's appearance.

How do we play the game?

Setting up the Game

Make sure the group has everything needed as described on page 3.

Choose one deck to be the True Name decks. Separate it into two piles by suit color – red in one and black in the other. Shuffle these piles and set them aside. The other deck is the Play Deck. Shuffle it and keep it near the GM for now.

Grab some tokens from another game to represent your characters in this map, and place them in the Guest Suite.

Have the players create their character. Once that is done, hand each play a copy of the letter (p. 2). Let them read it, and then frame the initial Guest Suite scene.

Draw one card from each of the True Name decks for the Guest Suite. Consult the True Name chart for this room as per page 26.

Beginning Play

All the player characters start in the Guest Suite. Allow the players time to for their characters to get into the situation, and once they have all of their Attachments in their possession, they will be allowed to leave that room.

Moving Through the Palace

Each time you move into a room, if that room has not had a True Name defined for it, draw from the True Name decks to generate that room's name. Draw one card from the True Adjective deck and one from the True Noun deck, and put them together in the blank spaces for that room.

Example

Gregory and Jerry walk into the Garden. The map says "Garden of _____" and has no True Name written down yet. Aaron draws the cards for the True Name – Undeserved and Allegiance. This room is now the "Garden of Undeserved Allegiance."

Encountering a Room -- Wagers

When a character or group of characters wants into a room, they may not leave that room until they have Settled a Wager in the room with either an NPC or the room itself. Should more than one character arrive in the room together, they may leave once any one of them has a conflict, though they may also stay longer.

A player may either frame the Wager or the GM can offer a Wager, depending on the pacing and the needs of the story. They may have as many Wagers as the story supports before moving on, provided they have at least one. Wagers are discussed at length in the following section.

What is a Wager?

What other games call a “conflict” or “contest,” Know Thyself calls a “Wager.” This is because something is always at stake in any conflict or contest in the Palace – Coins, Edges, and Memories.

State the Situation

A Wager is a conflict between a PC and either an NPC or some element of a Room. Wagers may arise naturally as two parties want different results from their interactions, or be framed by the player or GM to create a specific sort of conflict or contest.

Once a Wager comes into play, the player & GM together follow a series of steps.

First, the player should state what they want to happen as a result from this conflict, in terms of the story or narrative. Examples: “I want to beat the archer.” “I do not want to be seduced by the Countess.” “I want to win this debate.”

The GM is free to ask any questions to clarify the situation. Should this not be in conflict with what the NPC wants or would accept, there is no Wager – just narrate that result and continue on.

Otherwise, the GM states the NPC’s wants and the wager of the conflict just as the player did. The only thing off-limits is the dead or incapacitation of a PC, as the game would likely grind to a halt. However, the PCs aren’t immune from dangers – Edges may hinder (or even help) a player when it comes to the stakes of a Wager.

Establish the Wager

Then the GM sets the number of Coins he’s willing to stake on this Wager. The number of coins should be directly proportional to the severity of the situation: a minimum of 2 for a minor Wager – either a Wager of little consequence or one where the PC is likely superior in skill against the NPC or environment; 3 or 4 for a significant wager – one with a more substantial consequence or where the PC has an even, but serious, challenge; 5 or more for vast consequences or situations where the PC is significantly outclassed.

If the player finds the number of Coins staked acceptable, the he agrees. If he does not, the PC must back down. The PC may narrate their backing down if the GM initiated the Wager; otherwise, the GM narrates the result.

Wager Quick-Reference

1. The player states his character’s wants.
2. The GM states the NPC’s wants or other outcome and the number of Coins staked.
3. The player chooses whether to accept the wager.
4. Edges may be called on.
5. The player draws the top card from the Play Deck face up.
6. Once the player has a card, the GM cuts the deck and plays the under card.
7. The player may Invoke a Memory.
8. The values are compared. The higher rank wins, with the PC winning ties (except in the Master Suite).
9. The player chooses narration rights.
10. The player narrates his choice.
11. The GM narrates the other choice.
12. Payment for Wager is made.
13. Add or remove any Edges.

Edges and Wagers: Once the player accepts the Wager, the GM and the player may tinker with the Wager by calling on any Edges the character has listed. Edges are things that a character has had happen to them that affect what they're able to do – positively & negatively. (See Edges, at the end of this section.)

One Edge can be called on by the GM and one can be called on by the player. When called on, the other side has to put in an additional Coin on their side of the wager. Example: Jerry has the Edge “Bullet Wound.” Aaron, the GM, calls on this Edge in a Wager about chasing down an NPC, where both sides have two Coins anted. Jerry then has to put in a third Coin, and looks at any Edges he has that could help him out.

Covering another Player: Should one player be low on Coins, another player may give them some from his pile. However, this is not free. For every two Coins that are transferred, rounded up, the giving player must pay a fee of one Coin. This fee goes into the general Coin stack, not the Master’s stack. This may only be done if a player either cannot afford a Wager or the moment they lose all their Coins.

<i>Cards Drawn</i>	<i>Effect on Success</i>
1	Full success – the PC gets what they want and the NPC does not. You win the full wager.
2	Partial success – the PC gets most of what they want, but has to give up some element to the NPC. You win one less than the full wager (minimum 1).
3	Minor success – the PC only gets a small element of what he wants. The NPC gets some of their way. You win two less than the full wager (minimum 0).

Determine Success

Assuming the Wager continues, the Play Deck is shuffled and the player draws the top card from it, face up. The player may choose to keep it, or discard it for the next card in the deck. He may do this a second time (for a total of three cards drawn), but then must keep that last card. Should the player be victorious in the Wager, the number of cards drawn determines the degree success (see next page).

Once the player chooses to stay, the GM cuts the deck and plays the under card. The values are compared. The higher rank wins. However, there are some things to note:

Aces and Ranks: Aces have a special value. Against a number card (2 through 10), Aces are low (rank 1). Against a face card (Jack, Queen, King), Aces are high (14). In the case of a multi-PC conflict, if the GM draws an Ace, treat whether it’s high or low for each individual participant in the conflict.

Ties: In most situations, the players win ties against the GM. However, when the characters are in the Master Suite, the GM wins all ties. This is important to note because of the final Wager during the end of the game, and will be repeated.

Invoking Memories: Should a PC be losing, they may Invoke a Memory to draw another card.

Look at the Attachment with the same suit as their current card. Should they have a free Memory on that Attachment, they may work in how this memory helps them dig down deep and try to help them out.

This requires narrating a touch more on the memory, expanding it to cover this situation. The player must also spend a Coin to activate this, which goes immediately into the GM's pool. Once done, the Invoke checkbox is checked on this Memory and another Card is drawn. Should the player win, consider the success as though the player drew three cards initially – thus, a Minor Success – regardless of how many cards were drawn.

This may be done multiple times, though the new card will determine which Attachment may be drawn from again. Note that it costs each time, and depletes the number of Memories that may be used later.

Example

Gregory is currently losing a conflict, having an Eight of Diamonds versus the GM's Nine of Spades. He does not want to lose this conflict, as four Coins have been wagered. He Invokes a Memory on his Diamond Attachment, a severed human finger. The free Memory on this Attachment is on of him biting the finger off himself.

In Invoking the Memory, he pays the GM one Coin, says that he bit off the finger because he was a vicious man, and draws another card. It's the Five of Spades. Tough luck!

Narrate Success/Failure and Memory

Once success is determined with no other gambits made, the player chooses whether to narrate their success/defeat or their memory. The GM will be handed the other option to narrate. The player always narrates first.

Player narrating success: In the case of a Partial Success or Minor Success, the GM may note objections, and may always offer suggestions, but the player always has the last say on the success. In the case of a Full Success, the player is encouraged to go a bit over the top in describing their supreme victory.

Player narrating failure: Unlike PC success, failure has only one degree: total. This is the tradeoff for the GM – he is stuck with whatever card he draws, but if he wins that NPC or room element achieves total success.

Player narrating Memory: If a player chooses to narrate their character's memory, they use the suit of the GM's card to determine the type of Memory regained, the suit of their card to determine which Attachment the Memory is assigned to, and the True Name of the room as an element, theme, or color of Memory. See *Regaining Memories*, pg. 13.

Once the player is done narrating, the GM narrates their piece. The GM may always call for suggestions from the other players, and is especially encouraged to do so when narrating a memory.

GM narrating PC success: As with players, the GM is encouraged to be over-the-top if the PC has a Full Success. With Partial or Minor Successes, the GM can determine what sorts of concessions are made; however, the GM should not forget that regardless of the level of success, the character did in fact succeed at something.

GM narrating PC failure: If the player hands narration of their character's failure to the GM, they are asking for trouble. Do not disappoint them. Ask for ideas from other players – especially from those who have been screwed over because of the failing player's ideas.

GM narrating Memory: The process for determining the elements of Memory is the same as what the players use. As with narrating success and failure, the GM is encouraged to solicit ideas from the other players. In particular, Memories from the GM should be somehow twisted from the point of view of the Attachment.

Example

Gregory has a Guilt Memory involving Necessary Deceit for his Star Corps Tunic, and chose to narrate his success. It would not be out of the GM's place to make that Memory something like "This is the uniform of that last man I killed" – provided that that doesn't contradict other memories.

Edges

Edges are elements that the character is currently dealing with or has as a result of successes and failures in previous Wagers – things like "I have a huge gun from the Armory," "The Countess gave me a letter," or "That damned fool stabbed me!"

These Edges have two mechanical effects during a Wager – a way a player can use one and a way the GM can use one.

Player use: After establishing the Wager, but before drawing cards to determine success, the player may note how one of his character's Edges is helping him in this Wager, such as "A reputation for beating the truth out of people" might be helpful in a diplomatic Wager. Doing so means the GM must add a Coin to his Wager of forfeit – the player stands to receive a higher reward because of the Edge. This may only be done once per Wager and only if the GM can cover the additional Coin.

GM use: Exactly the same as how a player uses an Edge. The GM describes how one of the character's Edges hinders him during this conflict, causing the player to have to add one more Coin. An Edge like "That damned fool stabbed me!" is pretty likely hinder any sort of physical conflict.

Yes, both the player and GM may do this. This is called a "Double-Edged Wager." There is no such thing as a purely good or purely bad Edge – Edges like "Brilliant Swordsman" are likely to put off interactions with pacifists, for instance.

Gaining and Dropping Edges: As the result of a success or failure, the narrator (either player or GM) may either add in one appropriate Edge to the character in the narration or narrate how

the character drops an Edge. Either way, only one change may be made per Wager, and not every Wager need generate an Edge.

Regaining Memories

Determining Memory type: The suit of the player’s card – the last one they player that was matched against the GM’s card – determines the type of Memory as per the chart on the side.

Determining Attachment: The suit of the GM’s card is used to pick which Attachment the character gains a Memory on. Look for that suit’s Attachment on the character sheet.

Flavor of Memory: The True Name of the room must somehow tailor the sort of Memory, even if in a vague way.

Rule of Contradictions: As long as there are no open contradictions, a new memory is fine. It’s alright if the memory doesn’t quite make sense yet when compared to other memories, as long as none of the facts involved are actually opposing.

With these in mind, the narrator of the Memory describes the Memory regained either as a scene or as a short sentence – the former if the Memory is the sort where a scene is natural, or the latter where remembering a fact is appropriate.

<i>Suit</i>	<i>Memory Type</i>
Diamonds	Triumphs Memories where was part of a some victory – maybe a personal victory like getting the girl to kiss you, maybe a larger-scale victory like when you heard that the enemy just surrendered.
Hearts	Goals Memories that remind you of something you still are striving for.
Clubs	Defeats Memories where was part of a some loss – maybe a personal defeat like having your best friend walk out on you, maybe a larger-scale defeat like seeing your home town destroyed.
Spades	GUILTS Memories about something you fell you could have or should have done something about. Guilts need not be restricted to the reasonable.

Example

Jerry gets his first Memory for his rusty longsword Attachment – one involving Guilt and Sorrowful Kinship. He has a neat idea, so he decided to narrate the Memory and simply states a fact: “I stole this from my father.”

Later, Jerry gets another Memory for that same Attachment, this time a Defeat involving Undeserved Desire. He lost this Wager and doesn’t want to hand Aaron, the GM, narration over his defeat, so Aaron narrates the Memory instead. Thinking for a moment, Aaron describes a scene where the character’s love convinced him to murder his father with his own sword.

Jerry’s eye widen as, for a moment, he wished he kept narration over the Memory.

Wagers with More Than One PC

If more than one PC wants to be involved in a Wager, the following should be made clear: while they may narrate helping each other out, there is no mechanical benefit in the Wager system for

doing so. In fact, if a player wants to add his character to the Wager, there's greater chance of things going wrong for the group.

On the other hand, that's where great gaming comes from.

Most of the Wager system is unchanged, aside from the following:

Everyone covers themselves: Whatever Wager level the GM determines, he must make a pile for every player involved.

Dog pile on the GM: After every player draws their cards from the single Play Deck and is either satisfied with their card or has run out of options, the GM then cuts the deck once and plays the under card. That single card is matched against each player's card and success is determined for each PC individually. This means if, for example, three PCs are involved in a conflict, another may win squarely with one draw, barely win with three draws, and the last may lose.

Tied narration rights: the players must agree on whether they'll narrative their success/defeat or their memories. The players may not split between the two. If a decision cannot be made, the majority will win with the GM casting the deciding vote (if needed).

Where are we?

The Palace is a vast place full of possibilities. There are three elements to the Palace: the map, the room descriptions, and the True Name deck & chart.

The Palace

The Palace Map is something that both the players have access to as a board to play on and the characters can refer to in the game. The Map can be found on page 29.

The Map has room to write the True Names of each room on it as the characters progress. Pathways between rooms are indicated by an open square in between the spaces on the map – doors, stairs, arches, or other openings. The only exception to this is the symbol for stairs on the Map between the Courtyard and the Field.

Black-filled squares show doors that exist but cannot be opened. The dotted line surrounding the Terrace indicates that it's a flight above the Courtyard, extending out covering a small part of it.

The players may not move around the outside of the Palace by going around the side via the Cemetery or Cliffs. Regardless of map appearances, the Cemetery and Cliffs are connected by a passage.

Room Descriptions

The rooms in the Palace are the lifeblood of Know Thyself. It is in these rooms that conflicts occur that define the characters and bring them closer to the end of the game.

The descriptions of the rooms are essentially skeletons, meant for the GM to read to himself and process rather than read to the players. They are meant to be fleshed out further by the NPCs you choose to add to the room, the direction the PCs seem to be heading with their characters and the True Name of the rooms as they are discovered. In this way, you put the flesh on the room to make it come alive. Each room description also includes three or four items of note:

Special Effects. Some rooms, such as the Hedge Maze or Guest Quarters, have special effects that are noted relating to movement or wagers in those rooms.

Conflicts. Since the PCs have to have a conflict in a room in order to leave it without paying a toll, there are some suggested conflicts. These are by no means an exhaustive list. Should the PCs want to set up a different conflict or should you involve different characters in a room, these conflicts may not make much sense. They exist more to help kick-start the PCs into action than actually drive or railroad the game. The True Name of a room can easily inspire particular conflicts to arise as well.

Generic Conflicts: Ricardo, the hot-headed swashbuckler, bursts into the room to attack a PC. Guards stationed at a room entrance refuse to allow the PCs through -- perhaps without explanation, perhaps asking for some sort of papers or pass.

Hooks. Hooks exist to keep the game moving by providing PCs with potential directions while they wander around the Palace. They aren't conflicts themselves, but can lead to both conflicts and non-conflict role-playing. These hooks may only have something to do with this room, or may set up things down the road. Like the example conflicts, these should be taken as inspirational and used when the GM sees that adding another element would be appropriate. Naturally, the players may take any element said as a hook and steer their PCs down that path as well -- that's to be encouraged! Players and GMs can also look at hooks as a way to separate characters or bring characters back in the same room. The True Name of the room may also suggest certain hooks to try on the PCs.

Generic Hooks: The initial letter is the one mandatory hook in the game. Other hooks could involve: hearing a scream, gunshot or the sound of steel on steel in an adjacent room; being asked to deliver a message to an NPC in another room or fetch an NPC in another room and bring them into this one; talking to someone about the nature of this Palace and potential clues or leads to help them leave or win the Wager (such as a book in the Library, a grave in the Cemetery, etc.).

Characters. Each room mentions some characters that could be inside, by first name and a short description. Since there are no stats or attributes in Know Thyself that indicate skill or talent, these NPCs need nothing more than a short description to use. Values of wagers should be determined at the time based on how the GM wants to portray the character and any sort of actions or memories that might influence the PC's ability to do well in this wager.

In many cases, these characters are mentioned in more than one room. NPCs can move around just as freely, if not more so, than PCs can. Like with conflicts and hooks, these are some ideas of who a GM could include in a room. The GM is, of course, free to change their first names and add last names, though he would do well to make a note of any changes to keep it consistent throughout the game. Likewise, adding, changing and removing characters in the cast is highly recommended in order to tailor the room to the specific situations the PCs are going through. The True Name would be a good indicator of the sorts of NPCs to have in the room.

Armory

The armory is an enclosed room with various melee weapons and ranged weapons from various ages. Roman glaives, Renaissance-era rapiers and modern-day Glockes would not look out of place in this room.

List of Characters

- Ainslie, the lecherous Countess
- Barbara, the roguish scullery maid
- Cain, the ignoble heir
- Candace, the solemn nun
- Danielle, the timid servant girl
- Dai, the duplicitous chef
- Eden, the spiteful stable master
- Grigori, the stoic butler
- Hakim, the distracted librarian
- Johann, the dead stable hand
- Jonah, the cool-headed swashbuckler
- Liam, the world-weary surgeon
- Lucas, the envious advisor
- Miriam, the cheerful child
- Mikhail, the worrisome band leader
- Neil, the brutish convict
- Olaf, the attentive head waiter
- Patrick, the irate poet
- Ricardo, the hot-headed swashbuckler
- Rudolf, the stout master-of-arms
- Sylvia, the distraught orphan
- Yamini, the mistaken crone
- Zhi, the impetuous youth

Depending on where the characters are going, futuristic or Fantasy-genre legendary weapons may be in here as well.

Potential Conflicts: A PC wants to take weapon – possibly a physical conflict or a test of honor. An NPC wants to prove himself to someone or spar out of boredom.

Potential Hooks: An NPC asks a PC to be their second in a duel against another NPC.

Likely Characters: Rudolf, the stout master-of-arms. Ricardo, the hot-headed swashbuckler. Cain, the ignoble heir.

Ballroom

The ball room is an expansive space fit for a hundred dancers. There is a vaulted ceiling with a couple dozen golden chandeliers hanging from it, illuminating the room. A band is playing in the adjacent band stand. There are a number of tables & chairs off to one side of the room, with a table of hour d'ourves and drinks in the corner. The room is crowded with dancers.

Potential Conflicts: PCs try to make it across the room without offending someone, being noticed, avoiding capture, etc. An NPC tries to seduce a PC, perhaps at the expense of insulting another NPC. A PC is challenged to a duel or dance-off.

Potential Hooks: A PC is asked to convince on NPC to ask another to dance. Courtly intrigue is overheard. A band member cannot play for some reason, and a PC is asked to play.

Likely Characters: Mikhail, the worrisome band leader. Ricardo, the hot-headed swashbuckler. Ainslie, the lecherous Countess. Danielle, the timid servant girl. Jonah, the cool-headed swashbuckler.

Banquet Hall

The banquet hall contains a large, rectangular table with seating for around 30. There are to rather ornate chairs at the end and foot of the table, neither of which are occupied. There are decorative chairs along the side, spaced with plenty of room in between each person seated. Some food is placed in the center of the table -- roasted duck, baked ham, and various side courses. Empty wine glasses are set at each place setting. A waiter comes out occasionally from the kitchen.

Potential Conflicts: An NPC perceives a breach of etiquette as an insult and demands satisfaction or recompense. Someone takes food off of a PCs plate and starts eating it. The PCs want to force their way past the waiter, who is blocked the entrance to the kitchen.

Potential Hooks: An NPC talks to the PCs about how he's been here for some time -- maybe a few months -- and has not seen any game like what's on the table. He directs the PCs to see for themselves and look in the Grove or Pond.

Likely Characters: Olaf, the attentive head waiter. Sylvia, the distraught orphan. Neil, the brutish convict.

Baths

The air in the Baths is constantly moist and hot, like a mild sauna. The bathtubs are large but comfortable. They stand freely, requiring someone to draw water into them. There is a trough to the side that seems to keep full of hot water.

Potential Conflicts: The PCs attempt to smooth-talk out of an embarrassing blunder. Someone tries to steal the PCs belongings while they're bathing.

Potential Hooks: There are enough bathtubs for each of the PCs, and they appear to all have been freshly drawn with hot water even though no one is in the room. The PCs walk in on someone bathing.

Likely Characters: Barbara, the roguish scullery maid. Neil, the brutish convict. Rudolf, the stout master-of-arms. Zhi, the impetuous youth.

Cemetery

There is a small plot surrounded by an iron fence. Inside the plot are close to fifty grave markers -- small stone markers, crosses, flowers -- all unmarked. There are enough freshly dug graves for PCs, including any unusual size they may have. There are no grave markers on those plots. A shovel leans on the fence near the gate. There might be a mourner or a ghost in this room.

Potential Conflicts: A drunk mistakes the PCs for someone else and attacks, claiming that "it's their fault." The PCs try to bargain with a ghost for something. Zombie attack, if the GM is running that kind of game.

Potential Hooks: The PCs comfort a mourner, who asks them to take revenge for him or her. The PCs hear moaning or a commotion from a grave, which a quick glance looks to be a very recent addition.

Likely Characters: Johann, the dead stable hand. Sylvia, the distraught orphan. Candace, the solemn nun.

Cliffs

The sea expands out to the horizon. The cliffs drop sharply to jagged rocks below, where seagulls perch and make their cacophonous calls. The wall of the cliff does not look safe to climb; only a capable climber would dare. The winds pick up here, enough to wrench papers or hats if not held tightly and cast them into the sea.

Special Effect: If a PC succeeds in climbing down, they are stuck in the Cliff room and must succeed in a Wager to climb back up and leave the room.

Potential Conflicts: Someone tries to keep hold or something the wind is getting at or chase down something the wind has picked up. A PC wants to climb down the cliff.

Potential Hooks: Someone tries to jump off the cliff as the PCs enter. The PCs encounter two people looking for privacy -- maybe a romantic rendezvous, maybe something more sinister.

Likely Characters: Cain, the ignoble heir. Yamini, the mistaken crone. Neil, the brutish convict. Olaf, the attentive head waiter.

Countess's Chambers

The chamber is lavishly decorated, with tapestries, paintings, rugs, vases, busts, and all sorts of art and signs of wealth adorning the room. There is a large bed with various layers of curtains hanging over the top. To the other side of the room is a golden bathtub.

Potential Conflicts: The Countess attempts to seduce an attractive PC (of any gender). Ricardo sees the PC in the room and immediately attacks to defend her (or his) honor.

Potential Hooks: The Countess is bathing in her tub and asks the PC walking in to help scrub her back. The PCs barge in on the Ricardo stealing a kiss from the Countess. The Countess offers a pass or papers of some sort that will allow them into some room or see something they otherwise wouldn't have access to (perhaps something in the Library), in exchange for a promise for a secret rendezvous later, alone.

Likely Characters: Ainslie, the lecherous Countess. Danielle, the timid servant girl. Ricardo, the hot-headed swashbuckler.

Field

There is a field of freshly mowed grass on a slight slope down from the front of the Palace. There are some picnickers here -- possibly lovers, possibly children with caretakers. There is a gentle crosswind blowing, gently pushing or picking up anything light, such as an unattended napkin. It's enough to fly a kite if one runs.

Potential Conflicts: A couple makes a friendly wager with a PC over a game of cards -- information if the PCs win, a favor if they lose. A PC tries to grab a kite that a child loses hold of due to a sudden gust of wind.

Potential Hooks: A child comes up to one of the PCs and says "You look like my (father/mother/brother/sister/etc.)." Miriam offers them spiritual advice, and says that solace may be found at the Shrine.

Likely Characters: Ainslie, the lecherous Countess. Danielle, the timid servant girl. Jonah, the cool-headed swashbuckler. Miriam, the cheerful child. Candace, the solemn nun.

Fountain

Within the hedge maze is a marble statue fountain. The water spouts up from the center to a slightly higher height than the hedge maze, filling a square base. Bordering the fountain is seating enough for three or four on each side. The statue in the middle of a fountain has four figures emerging from a central column: an angel wielding a sword, a cloaked crone clutching a book in her hands, the head and neck of a dragon, and a young woman holding a child to her breast. The water slowly changes color over time from blue to red and back.

Potential Conflicts: Patrick gets into a shouting match with a PC. The PCs try to calm a crying Danielle. The PCs try to stop Jonah from drawing his sword against Patrick.

Potential Hooks: Patrick reads a poem to the PCs that hints to a memory a PC has regained. A PC feels as though the statues are looking at him or trying to speak with him. The PCs walk in on Patrick berating Danielle, or Jonah walks in on the same scene after the PCs arrive.

Likely Characters: Jonah, the cool-headed swashbuckler. Danielle, the timid servant girl. Patrick, the irate poet.

Gallery

Paintings of various sizes, mediums and styles hang on the various walls in the Gallery. The room is set up as a simple maze, to offer more wall space and give the sense of being lost in art.

Potential Conflicts: Someone tries to steal or destroy a painting a PC is interested in. The painting itself hostilely engages one of the PCs.

Potential Hooks: One of the PCs recognizes someone from a Memory in a painting. One of the PCs sees their death in a painting.

Likely Characters: Ainslie, the lecherous Countess. Lucas, the envious advisor. Patrick, the irate poet. Hakim, the distracted librarian.

Garden

Rows of exotic flowers, rare shrubs, and otherworldly plants fill this garden. Various plants have labels near them, giving their scientific name in Latin as well as their common name. There is a constant mist here.

Potential Conflicts: A plant attacks a PC. The gardener tries to chase the PCs away, accusing them of coming here to steal a particular plant.

Potential Hooks: An NPC elsewhere says that one of these plants is rumored to produce a hallucinogen that helps restore memory loss. After an NPC picks a flower runs off, Zachariah asks if the PCs could chase after him and retrieve the flower.

Likely Characters: Zachariah, the suspicious gardener. Danielle, the timid servant girl. Ricardo, the hot-headed swashbuckler. Eden, the spiteful stable master.

Courtyard

From the Terrace, the cobblestone floor looks like a mosaic of a golden chalice with a white halo on a brown backdrop. The pillars each have a name engraved on a bronze plaque, with something else listed underneath – such as “Reginald Taylor, His mother’s health.” Under the Terrace are enough pillars with blank plaques equal to the number of PCs.

Potential Conflicts: Some NPC attacks a PC that gets too close to one of the pillars. Miriam offers a secret if the PC wins a footrace across the Courtyard.

Potential Hooks: One of the NPCs stares at a pillar and starts crying. One of the PCs hears what sounds like whispering coming from one of the pillars.

Likely Characters: Zachariah, the suspicious gardener. Miriam, the cheerful child. Dai, the duplicitous chef. Eden, the spiteful stable master.

Great Hall

The painting on the vaulted ceiling of Thor riding on a thunder cloud gives the room a very spacious and someone divine feel. The acoustics here cause anything spoken loudly to echo throughout the hall.

Potential Conflicts: An NPC thinks he heard a PC say a snide comment about them because of the echo. The PCs attempt to dodge lightning from the ceiling.

Potential Hooks: The PCs hear a different voice in their echo. Someone in the corner of their vision runs into a nearby room. Two NPCs emerge from different rooms, see each other, and immediately begin arguing or fighting. The room begins raining.

Likely Characters: Mikhail, the worrisome band leader. Grigori, the stoic butler. Cain, the ignoble heir.

Guest Suite

This is where the PCs first awaken. There is a bed for each PC, with a nightstand containing their Attachments and a standing mirror for them to look into. The butler stands by the door, waiting for them to leave.

Special Effect: The PCs do not need to have a conflict in the room in order to leave it.

Potential Conflicts: A naked PC could challenge Grigori to give him his clothes, or any PC could attempt for force information out of him. The PCs could try to force their way out without taking the Attachment with them.

Potential Hooks: The letter and Attachments are the main, and mandatory, hooks in this room. Grigori could suggest the characters go to some room to find more information -- preferably one that requires them to travel to a couple rooms in between.

Likely Characters: Grigori, the stoic butler.

Hedge Maze

The walls of this hedge maze are over ten feet tall and three feet thick with dense shrub and ivy. The floor of the maze is a soft, cool bluegrass. Various people may be encountered in the maze - some enjoying themselves, some lost and some looking to not be found.

Special Effect: Should a player lose a conflict in this room, the GM may place either the losing PC or all the PCs in any other room in the Palace (aside from the Master's Suite, unless endgame

is reached). They may not make their way back into the Hedge Maze unless they're in a space that is adjacent to it. This is available to the GM regardless of narration rights.

Potential Conflicts: The PCs try to find their way to another room. An NPC bumps into the PC, stealing an Attachment, and attempts to flee in the maze.

Potential Hooks: The PCs hear sobbing or whispering from around the corner in the maze. The PCs encounter someone who has been lost in the maze for a few hours.

Likely Characters: Sylvia, the distraught orphan. Mikhail, the worrisome band leader. Cain, the ignoble heir. Barbara, the roguish scullery maid.

Kitchen

The Kitchen is a whirlwind of activity. Ovens, stoves, counter space, basins -- all are cluttered as work is being done. To one side is a wine rack and some kegs of ale. Every bit of the process of meal-making can be seen here, from slaughtering of animals to the final dish presentation.

Potential Conflicts: An NPC attempts to chase the PCs out of the kitchen, or conscript them into dish washing service. Barbara very openly attempts to seduce the PC she thinks would be most uncomfortable by such open, blatant acts.

Potential Hooks: Dai notes something to one of the PCs regarding a book in the Library or an herb in the Garden.

Likely Characters: Barbara, the roguish scullery maid. Olaf, the attentive head waiter. Dai, the duplicitous chef.

Library

The library is a vast collection of stacks of dusty tomes, few of which have any titles on their covers. The layers of dust should give the impression that the room is not kept well, let alone used often. This could allow for clues as to finding a particular book, or even a recently-used book.

Potential Conflicts: The PCs try to find a particular book in the massive stacks. The PCs coerce the librarian to finding a book. An NPC seeks to burn a book in the library, possibly the entire room.

Potential Hooks: The PCs are told that a book here may hold the key to who they are or how to leave (perhaps even literally). The librarian is willing to make a deal with the PCs in order to retrieve a rare tome from another character, like the Advisor.

Likely Characters: Hakim, the distracted librarian. Candace, the solemn nun. Lucas, the envious advisor.

Master's Suite

The players cannot enter this room until the end of the game, when they are forced into this room. See “What happens at the end?” on page 27.

Mirrored Hall

While the hall is lit, the light source cannot be found. Every surface of the hall is covered in mirror. The room seems straight-forward at first, but quickly seems like a maze with no clear way out – not even the way the PCs came in,

Special Effect: Should a player lose a conflict in this room, the GM may place either the losing PC or all the PCs in any other room in the Palace (aside from the Master's Suite, unless endgame is reached). They may not make their way back into the Hedge Maze unless they're in a space that is adjacent to it. This is available to the GM regardless of narration rights.

Potential Conflicts: The PCs try to find their way out. The PCs chase after someone.

Potential Hooks: One of their reflections is off – perhaps wearing something different, or possibly even trying to interact with them. Someone from a PCs Memory is visible to them, and only them, in one of the mirrors.

Likely Characters: Miriam, the cheerful child. Johann, the dead stable hand. Sylvia, the distraught orphan.

Parlor

There are several leather chairs, set around small tables in pairs or threes. A fire is going in the fireplace. Bear skin rugs adorn the floor and various animal heads are mounted on the walls. On the fireplace mantle are several urns.

Potential Conflicts: Ricardo throws brandy in the face of one of the PCs and begins a shouting match.

Potential Hooks: Liam drinks to excess and makes some splits of the tongue. Jonah tries to calm Ricardo down as the PCs enter the room.

Likely Characters: Ricardo, the hot-headed swashbuckler. Jonah, the cool-headed swashbuckler. Liam, the world-weary surgeon. Olaf, the attentive head waiter.

Servants' Quarters

There are several small rooms in the dormitory. Few of the doors are labeled with names, and none have locks on the doors. Each room slightly differs, but the essentially contain the same things: a basic bed, a foot locker, a small writing desk, a rod for hanging clothes. There are two communal bathrooms with modern-looking men and women symbols on the doors. Inside the bathrooms are modern stalls and showers, as one might expect in a college today.

Potential Conflicts: Any number of NPC motivations mentioned in other rooms may be triggered here, such as Barbara's in-your-face seduction.

Potential Hooks: As with conflicts, any number of hooks revolved servant NPCs may happen here, such as Danielle's need to send a message to Jonah.

Likely Characters: Any of the servant NPCs, such as: Hakim, the distracted librarian. Barbara, the roguish scullery maid. Olaf, the attentive head waiter. Grigori, the stoic butler.

Shrine

There is a dimly-lit room, covered in red shag carpet. On the wall is an oil painting of a young man healing the sick – a full head of dark hair, sunglasses, a white jacket with rhinestones, and a guitar. There is a faint halo, in the shape of a crown, around the man's head. A small bench is near the painting and holds some candles and incense.

Potential Conflicts: Someone knocks over a candle and the PCs try to stop the fire.

Potential Hooks: A PC gets a vision or hears the voice of the man in the painting. A PC overhears a whispered prayer. Candace asks one of the PCs to help her comfort someone.

Likely Characters: Candace, the solemn nun. Neil, the brutish convict. Liam, the world-weary surgeon. Sylvia, the distraught orphan.

Sparing Grounds

The dusty ground is full of footprints circling around with drops of blood and sweat. A couple archery targets sit in the distance. A wooden practice is leaning against a post. Some wooden sparing swords and shields are piled off to the side,

Potential Conflicts: Someone challenges a PC to a contest -- swordplay, archery, wrestling, etc. A wounded character may try to get treated.

Potential Hooks: A PC may be asked to participate in a duel here.

Likely Characters: Liam, the world-weary surgeon. Jonah, the cool-headed swashbuckler. Neil, the brutish convict. Zhi, the impetuous youth. Rudolf, the stout master-of-arms.

Stable

The Stable is thick with the musty aroma of dander and manure. Out of the dozen stalls in the stable, around half are filled with horses -- stallions and mares of various breeds. There is a loft above that holds hay and a pitchfork.

Potential Conflicts: Someone attempts to ambush the PCs. A horse becomes unruly.

Potential Hooks: The PCs hear something in the loft above. A horse is sick and needs some medicine, which can be found in a plant in the garden.

Likely Characters: Eden, the spiteful stable master. Ricardo, the hot-headed swashbuckler. Danielle, the timid servant girl. Cain, the ignoble heir.

Study

A large table sits in the middle of the room, with a chandelier hanging overhead. To one side is a map drawer. There are a few desks placed throughout the room along the walls, each with a lamp, paper, a ball-point pen, and a single chair.

Potential Conflicts: Hakim attempts to keep some work hidden. A lamp bursts into flames, threatening to ignite the maps.

Potential Hooks: One of the desks has a piece of paper with some writing on it hidden in a drawer. The map on the table shows a location one of the PCs remembered earlier.

Likely Characters: Hakim, the distracted librarian. Mikhail, the worrisome band leader. Zhi, the impetuous youth.

Terrace

The terrace overlooks the Courtyard from the top level of the Ball Room. A cool breeze blows over. There are a dozen tables with umbrellas on the terrace, with room for people to stand at the edge and look out. A white stone series of columns up to waist height borders the edge.

Potential Conflicts: Someone tries to push the PC off the ledge. A PC tries to swoon someone, or the other way around. A dashing swordfight near the edge would not go amiss.

Potential Hooks: The PCs walk in on a romantic rendezvous. Someone waves over a PC to a distant table for a private chat.

Likely Characters: Mikhail, the worrisome band leader. Ricardo, the hot-headed swashbuckler. Ainslie, the lecherous Countess. Danielle, the timid servant girl. Jonah, the cool-headed swashbuckler.

True Names

When encountering a room for the first time, a card is drawn from each of the True Name decks: the red deck for the adjective and the black deck for the noun. It isn't necessary to tell the two decks apart, as long as only one card is drawn from each.

Once drawn, the words are written on the Map and referred to in future conflicts. The cards are discarded – they are only used once per game.

As Know Thyself is built to use standard Poker decks, a lookup chart is needed to translate a rank & suit of a card to an adjective or noun.

<i>Adjective</i>	<i>Diamonds</i>	<i>Hearts</i>
Ace	Abused	Overbearing
Two	Bitter	Painful
Three	Blessed	Protective
Four	Corrupt	Regretful
Five	Eternal	Righteous
Six	Excessive	Shaken
Seven	Exemplary	Sorrowful
Eight	Fruitful	Supreme
Nine	Harmonious	Traitorous
Ten	Humiliating	Treasured
Jack	Lost	Undeserved
Queen	Misguided	Unearned
King	Necessary	Unrealized

<i>Noun</i>	<i>Clubs</i>	<i>Spades</i>
Ace	Allegiance	Knowledge
Two	Betrayal	Love
Three	Camaraderie	Mystery
Four	Charity	Peace
Five	Deceit	Power
Six	Desire	Prowess
Seven	Duty	Purity
Eight	Faith	Recognition
Nine	Foolishness	Romance
Ten	Gratitude	Strife
Jack	Happiness	Temptation
Queen	Innocence	Understanding
King	Kinship	Union

What happens at the end?

Conditions that Cause Endgame

There are three conditions that cause the end of the game to occur.

1. A player runs out of Coins, and no other player is willing or able to transfer any Coins (pg. 10) to that player.
2. The Master's Coin stack falls under eight Coins per PC (i.e. 16 for two PCs, 24 for three, 32 for four, etc.).
3. A PC has at least 9 Memories total, with an Attachment having at least 5 Memories.

Alternatively, should the game need to be called because people have to leave, endgame can be called early.

Once any of these events occur, the PCs are immediately brought to the Master Suite. The room is too bright to see anything, but a booming voice asks the PCs the following questions:

What is your name?

Each player names their PC and fills it out on their character sheet.

Why are you here?

Each player describes why their PC came to the Palace.

What was your wager?

Each player describes what they were trying to win and what they were willing to risk for it.

Did you win?

Here's where the Coins come in. Each player checks their Coin pile individually against the Master's pile. If they have more than the Master, they win the wager. If the Master has more of if the Master and player tie, the player loses.

One last wager: If a player is losing, they could stake any number of Coins against the Master for a single card cut. The GM shuffles the Play Deck and draws off the top. The player cuts the deck and plays the under card. If the player's card is higher, they win those Coins from the Master; otherwise, the Master takes those Coins.

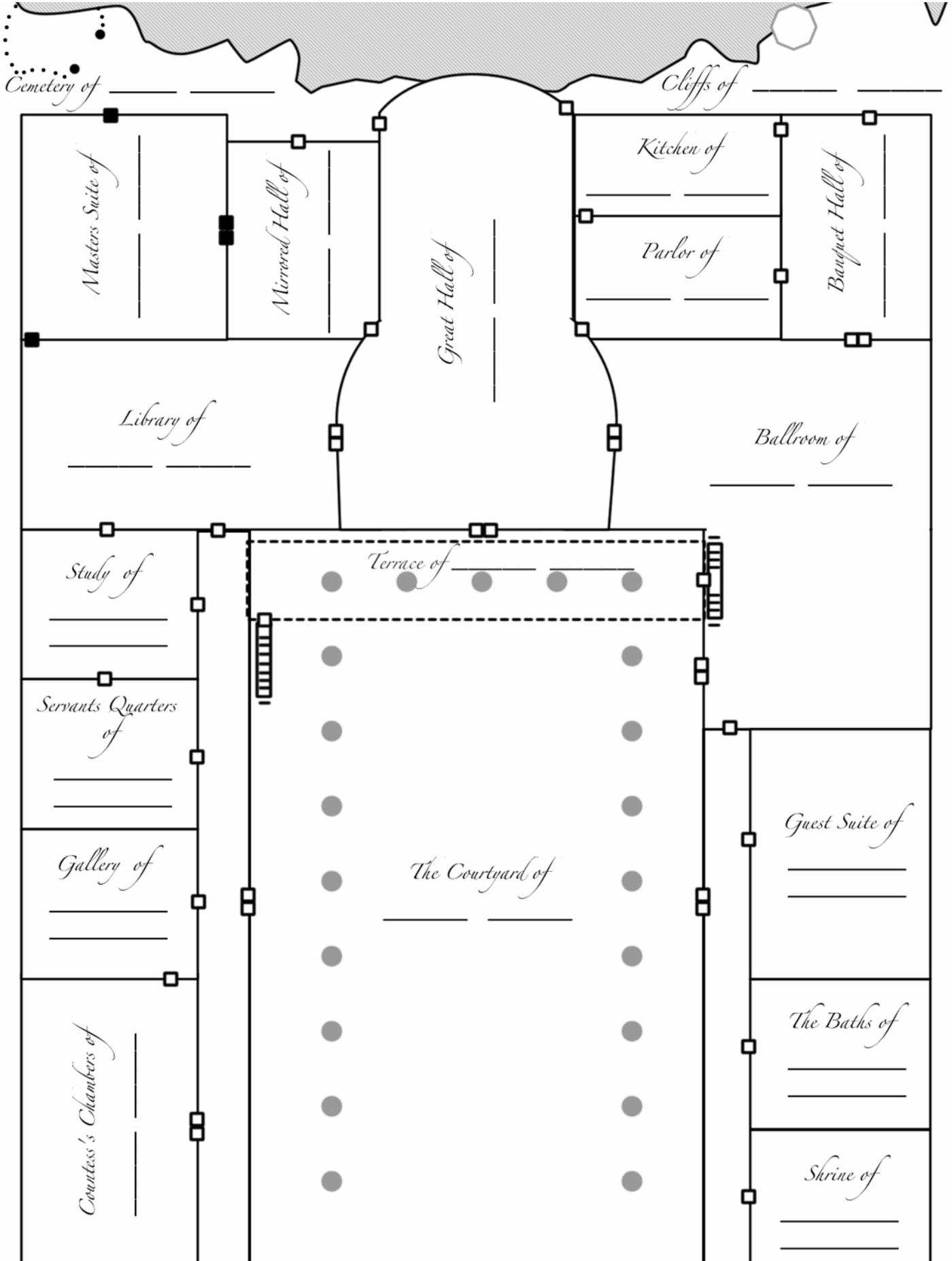
Each player may do this once. As the Master's Coin pile may grow during this, players may pass on this option early and come back to it later, if they suddenly start losing.

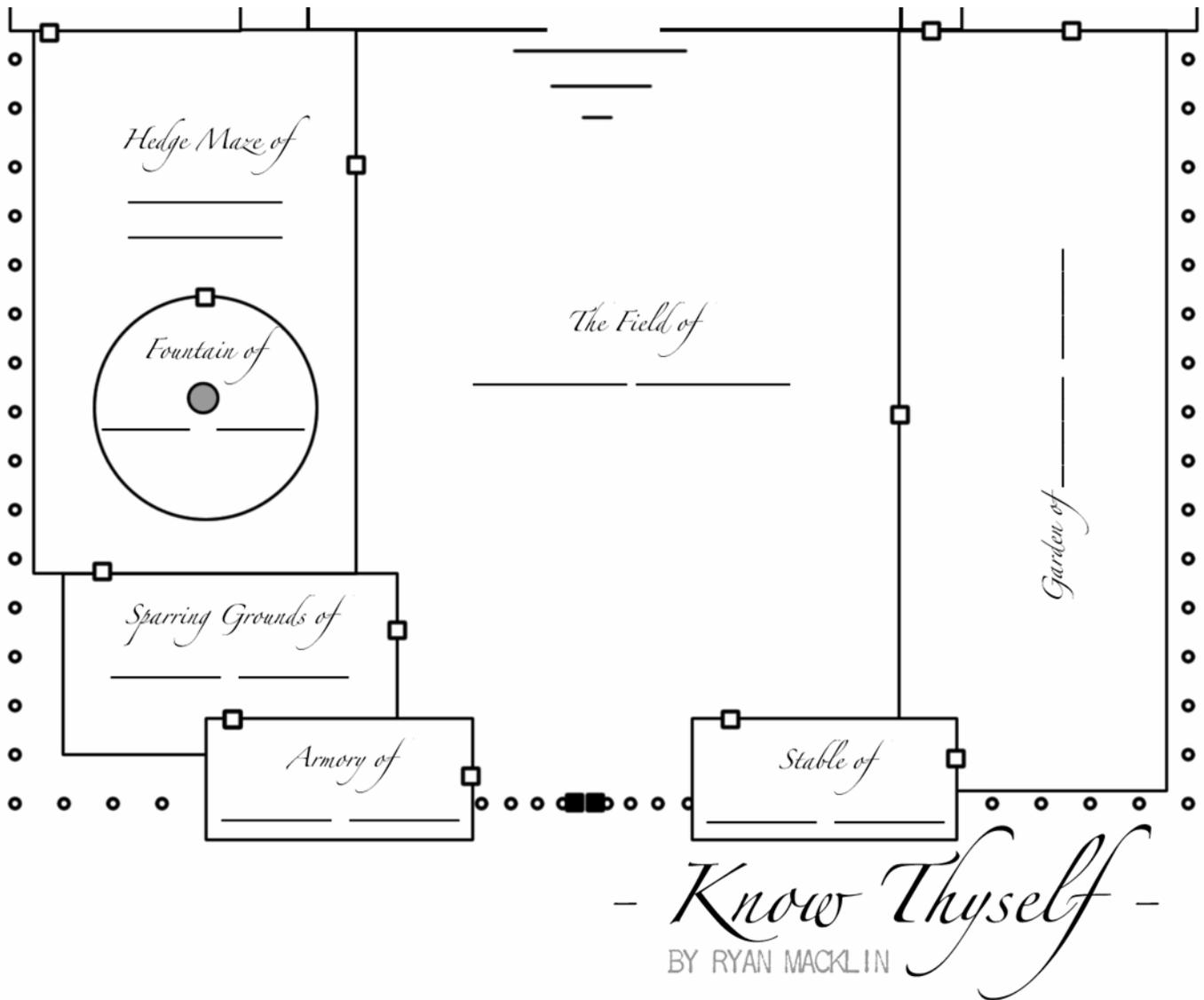
Once everyone who wants to do this has done so, check again to which players are winning and losing.

Winning players: The player may narrate their PCs happy ending, where they win what they sought.

Losing players: The player may narrate their PCs unhappy ending, where they lose what they wagered.

With that, the game is over.





<i>Suits</i>	<i>Memory Types</i>
Diamonds	Triumphs
Hearts	Goals
Clubs	Defeats
Spades	GUILTS

<i>Cards Drawn</i>	<i>Type of Success</i>
1	Full Success
2	Partial Success
3	Minor Success

Wager Quick-Reference

1. The player states his character's wants.
2. The GM states the NPC's wants or other outcome and the number of Coins staked.
3. The player chooses whether to accept the wager.
4. Edges may be called on.
5. The player draws the top card from the Play Deck face up.
6. Once the player has a card, the GM cuts the deck and plays the under card.
7. The player may Invoke a Memory.
8. The values are compared. The higher rank wins, with the PC winning ties (except in the Master Suite).
9. The player chooses narration rights.
10. The player narrates his choice.
11. The GM narrates the other choice.
12. Payment for Wager is made.
13. Add or remove any Edges.

