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Here are all the blurbs for the characters available to play in *Triumph*. These are intended as a brief sketch; a fuller character sheet will be available closer to the event, with more details about motivations and relationships.

Note: You may not wish to read the blurbs for characters with secrets unless you are considering playing a character of that type. Those marked ‡ have deep secrets and, on the whole, are not quite what they seem. Those marked † have secrets of a lesser nature.

Names of other characters in bold indicate potential romantic relationships, if both players consent to play that but please note that other romances are possible and, if both players consent, encouraged.

★⚡ Kes Gold	The beloved heir
★⚡ Drew Gold	Triumph from a poor family
♂⚡ Kim Gold	Professional coach
☞⚡ Amory Gold	Triumvir
☞⚡ Nevin Gold	Corporate rep
★🍃 Cullen Weaver	An ordinary Weaver in an extraordinary situation
★🍃 Baylor Weaver	Troublemaker
♂🍃 Memphis Weaver	Weaver of webs
☞🍃 Jess Weaver	Media Star and MC
☞🍃 Kelly Weaver	Fashionista
★⚓ Gem Fisher	The survivor
★⚓ Cass Fisher	Torn from their beloved
♂⚓ Frankie Fisher	Team worker
☞⚓ Bowie Fisher	Security
☞⚓ Arden Fisher	Praisesinger
☞⚓ ‡Trebizond Spretzel	???
★💎 Mal Spade	Framed for a heinous crime
★💎 Lin Spade	Jailed for heretical views
♂💎 Everest Spade	Top dog
☞💎 Yanik Spade	Gamekeeper
☞💎 ‡Filimore Partridge	???
★🔪 Tov Smith	Naïve and unfortunate
★🔪 Falc Smith	Rebel without a clue
♂🔪 Brook Smith	Hard bitten, taciturn
☞🔪 Castor Smith	Triumvir
☞🔪 ‡Indigo Smith	Board Member
★⚙ Ban Wright	Test pilot
★⚙ Jules Wright	Resentful youth
♂⚙ Tobin Wright	Brains are better than brawn
☞⚙ Goura Wright	Gamekeeper
☞⚙ Munroe Wright	Corporate rep
★🍷 Swift Silver	Embezzler and a sneak thief
★🍷 Blair Silver	Athlete and team player

  Silence Silver	Wheeler dealer
  Milan Silver	PA to a Triumvir
  Ellis Silver	Corporate rep
  Red Ward	Disgraced NCO
  Ripley Ward	Professional soldier
  Strega Ward	Someone with a target on their back
  Shiloh Ward	Ex Victor
  Paris Ward	Corporate Rep
  Jan Bright	A lover, not a fighter
  Cal Bright	Focussed and determined
  †Rain Bright	Dying from consequences of past actions
  ‡Sigil Bright	PA and voice of absent Triumvir
  ‡Sky Bright	Bodyguard to Triumvir
  Arles Cropper	A martyr for the family
  Bel Cropper	A reckless volunteer
  Barley Cropper	Jaded and lonely but not without hope
  Hemmy Cropper	Gamekeeper
  Briar Fletcher	The great hunter
  Jaz Fletcher	The naïve idealist
  Sam Fletcher	Killed their lover in the Games
  September Fletcher	PA to Triumvir
  Syd Piper	Musical prodigy
  Cory Piper	Clown
  ‡Gentry Piper	Haunted by their secret
  Charleston Piper	MC
  Pip Piper	Assistant to the Media
  Stafford Piper	Gamekeeper
  †Hamilton Maddox	Bored corporate heir
  †Arundel Cambourne	Shallow socialite
  †Zephyr Baradras	Poor little rich kid
  †Lennox Downwater	Corporate heir and adrenaline junkie
  Caroly Wendelsmith	Child of a Triumvir
  †Porphyry Mendleson	The richest person in the Eternal City

ON RELATIONS

Full relationships for the characters will appear in the finalized sheets. We are trying to keep these teasers short so there isn't space to go into any depth about them. It is safe to assume that everyone living in the Eternal City has some knowledge of each other (depending on how long they have been there). Characters from the provinces who have been together in Canton 12 or who reside in the Eternal City also tend to know each other. Expats always tend to hang out in the same places and hand out advice (both good and bad) on how to survive in their adoptive environment.

Similarly, everyone knows something about the famous characters... The Triumvirs, the Media stars and, to a lesser extent, the Victors. The mentors all know each other, and this will be reflected in their full descriptions.

ON SECRETS

Several characters have secrets — we've done our best to hint at them without revealing them fully here. In the interactive table we've indicated which characters have secrets you, the player, may prefer not to know.

JUPITER'S CHILDREN

TRIUMPH KES GOLD

The beloved heir

WHAT YOU HOPE FOR

To win the Games and bring honour to your canton

HOW YOU GOT HERE

You believe in the Imperium. You believe in the system. You worked and trained damned hard to earn your place at the Games and you're determined to do your Canton proud. The Fortunate Canton is, after all, the best place to be born. Most people's families would be proud and honoured to have one of their own represent the Canton. Your family, on the other hand, whilst wealthy and successful enough to promote you, appear to find your participation in the Games a source of great distress. Which is downright weird. Everyone else in the Canton supports you.

The partner you trained with failed the selection. You can't entirely regret that; you'd become close and it would have been upsetting to have had to kill them. It could have put you off your stroke. The other Triumph from your Canton is someone you don't know so well. You think their mother was a cleaner or a waitress or something. Not your class of person at all.

TRIUMPH DREW GOLD

The Triumph from humble origins

WHAT YOU HOPE FOR

To survive and return to your loved ones

HOW YOU GOT HERE

Not everyone from canon 1 is born with a silver spoon in their mouth. Your father was a junior schoolteacher — you don't really remember him — he died when you were young of some kind of cancer. Your mother didn't like to talk about it. She worked as a cleaner, keeping house for rich people and when she was not at work she was busy looking after your younger siblings. Despite your relative poverty, you benefitted from a Canton 1 education and, through dint of hard work got a scholarship to the Academy. There you kept your head down and trained hard, though you were often the butt of jokes made by those from 'worthier' backgrounds — those whose families were able to sponsor their studies. All except for one special person who became your lover.

No one was more surprised than you when you made the selection for the Games. Now you have a chance to make a name for yourself and provide for your family. Which is all you ever wanted. Well, that is one way of looking at it. The whole thing has been very confusing. You miss your family and your lover, and worry that you will never get back to them. The Games, after all, have only one Victor.

MENTOR KIM GOLD

The professional mentor

WHAT YOU HOPE FOR

Another Victor for your Canton

HOW YOU GOT HERE

The fortunate Canton has a good record at the Games, and you are one of seven Victors. Unlike some Cantons who always give the same Victor with the job of mentoring the new Triumphs, Jupiter tends to share the work around. This is good, it means the mentors are always fresh. The six of you get together (the seventh Victor died of over-indulgence three years ago) and decide who is the best match with the current crop of candidates. A bureaucratic process, perhaps, but that's what the fortunate Canton are good at.

You enjoy the Games. You like seeing your mentees win! And you fully intend one of them to win this time. They are both solid Victor material. They don't seem to have taken an immediate liking to each other, which is not a bad thing, problems arise when they keep trying to rescue each other. The big worry this year is Ari's family. They seem determined that Ari should survive the Games. If that is by winning, all well and good. If it's by some form of illegal abstraction... it would do your reputation no good at all. Their father would pay generously if you could arrange to save his child, but you don't need the money. It's not as if any sensible Victor is short of a few thousand credits. And the penalty for corrupting the Games is death.

You think of yourself as a professional. Your Triumphs must think of themselves as professionals. You will encourage them to head up a team, which means they need to find other Triumphs to join them. You will use your relationships with the other mentors to help with this.

TRIUMVIR AMORY GOLD

Everything is for the best in the best of all possible worlds and the Imperium is, beyond a doubt, the best of all possible worlds.

WHAT YOU HOPE FOR

Appreciation from the masses you serve.

HOW YOU GOT HERE

You were born in Canton 1, rose through the ranks, got residency in the Eternal City and through hard work and dedication gained enough support from the powerful to be elected as a Triumvir. The system of governance may not be perfect, but it is the best that could be, and improves year on year. You have worked hard to improve it. You genuinely want what is best for the Imperium and all its citizens — rich and poor.

Sometimes you have to make harsh decisions. That is the nature of rulership. It's difficult and often costs you your sleep at night, but you always strive to do what is best. Your past mistakes haunt you, but you can't let that interfere with official duties. You try to listen to everyone who petitions you, but there are a great many of them and you rely on your personal assistant, Milan Silver, to screen them for you.

You believe that the populace loves you and would be shocked to learn of anyone who did not admire you or believe that the Imperium acts in the best interests of all its citizens. You are willing to listen to tales of hardship and do your best to correct these isolated glitches in the system. Are there rebels? What is it they don't like? Clearly they cannot understand the true situation!

NEVIN GOLD

Skilled and savvy corporate rep out to impress the boss

WHAT YOU HOPE FOR

A promotion

HOW YOU GOT HERE

You came to the Eternal City quite recently from Canton 1. There your skills as a Project Manager and Negotiator brought you to the attention of Cambourne Fast Foods corporation. Apart from working closely with the production teams from Cantons 3 and 10, you have important relationships with Venus as her denizens create the advertisements on which Cambourne profits depend. It's demanding work and you feel very honoured to be representing the Corporation at this year's Games. Do well and you could get promoted, do badly and you might end up back in your native Canton.

Your job here is twofold. Most importantly, you have to ensure proper product placement. Packs of delicious Camborne products must appear at some point during every interview. If the Triumphs praise the fish fingers or the instant-heat apple turnovers you are in a position to reward them with delicious food drops. Oh, you know that once they get out in the field, they're not going to care much about what the food tastes like, as long as it fills their bellies and gives them strength. But you hope to play on the ease of preparation angle. The Triumphs who please you will just need to add water whilst those who do not help with product placement will have to cook their food over an attention-attracting open fire or eat it raw. The hygienically packed product is also proof against poisoning, something you understand has been a problem at previous contests. You would like to know more about that — it would help you to convince the Triumphs of the desirability of your product.

It's surprising that Cambourne's major rivals, Armwood Delicacies, do not have any open representation here although you've noticed their products being served at every official dinner.

You have yet to form relationships with anyone from the Eternal City but, clearly, the right sort of relationships could benefit you greatly.

JUNO'S CHILDREN

TRIUMPH CULLEN WEAVER

WHAT YOU HOPE FOR

To be with your beloved or, at least, to be able to talk to them

HOW YOU GOT HERE

Usually the Council of Elders select troublemakers to be Triumphs, though some years they have chosen to sacrifice one of the exceptionally talented. You have no idea why they selected you. You are, honestly, no one special. You're not exceptionally talented but neither are you clumsy. You just keep your head down in the weaving workshop and produce work of an acceptable standard. At least that is what you did before your selection. It all came as a bit of a shock.

Back in your home canton you spent a lot of time with your beloved. You and they had hoped to make a life together, though their family, who are well connected, did not approve. Your partner even went so far as to suggest that it was their disapproval that led to your selection. You find it hard to believe anyone could be so mean.

Your beloved does not want to lose you and is determined you should be the Victor at these Games so you can bring them to the Eternal City and the two of you can be together again. The problem is that your Canton has only ever produced two Victors. One of those is your mentor and they are contradicting everything your lover taught you.

★ TRIUMPH BAYLOR WEAVER

A rebel and a troublemaker

WHAT YOU HOPE FOR

To win the games or, at least, to enjoy your brief experience of the Eternal City

HOW YOU GOT HERE

You know full well why the Elders selected you for the Games. You've always been a rebel and a troublemaker. If they told you to weave red, you'd weave blue. But blue of the most wonderful and original shade. The plain fact is that the Elders never really recognised your talent. You should have gone to Venus' Canton to design costumes for the stars. That would be a fitting task for you. Instead they sent you to the Eternal City to be out of the way. Probably to die.

Whatever. Your rebellious streak tells you that the best way to defy the Elders here would be NOT to die. You are going to do your best to win these Games.

You've fallen head over heels in love with the Eternal City and the people who live here. It's so different from the boring way things are back home! So, whilst it goes against the grain, you're trying hard to do exactly as your mentor instructs. They say you need to develop a killer instinct. You find it helps to regard your rival Triumphs as some particularly oppressive Elder or Teacher. That way you can hate them. That way you can imagine trying to kill them. You need to practice with weapons, and you need to gain the favour of influential people...

✧ MENTOR MEMPHIS WEAVER

WHAT YOU HOPE FOR

One of your Triumphs to survive

HOW YOU GOT HERE

Yours is a tough job. There have only ever been two Victors from Canton 2. You won your crown by weaving webs — webs of netting and webs of deceit — to entrap the other Triumphs. Cameron, the other Victor from your canton won his by being patient, lying in wait for the others and lashing out at them as they passed him. He's gone now. Couldn't cope with life in the Eternal City — couldn't cope with being away from his friends and family back home. He killed himself. Now you remain and you have to teach these two Triumphs how to survive in the arena.

You will do your best for them. Cullen is steady and determined but lacks the killer instinct, far too prone to pull their blows or looking over their shoulder to check with you that they are doing everything right. Baylor has the spark but lacks concentration. You have real doubts either could survive on their own ability. There is some fierce competition this year. Both Triumphs from 1 are top class and one of the Triumphs from 8 seems to have everything it takes. You are going to have to use all your deceitful and wily nature to persuade those in power to favour your Triumphs and supply them with the weapons and conditions they need to survive.

You've been cultivating Jess Weaver in the hope that they will be generous to your Triumphs and help to make them more attractive to sponsors.

JESS WEAVER

The up and coming media star

WHAT YOU HOPE FOR

To prove yourself

HOW YOU GOT HERE

You were born and received your primary education in Canton 2. A talented actor with journalistic talent, you won a scholarship to film school in Canton 12 from whence you recently graduated. You've done a couple of shows which got complimentary reviews, but this is your first really big assignment. You are proud and determined to do well but this is a huge challenge. Charleston Piper has been your role model for as long as you remember, and you would love to learn from them. They do, however, seem rather impatient. Still, you know you have a lot to learn and you are trying to make the best possible impression on your fellow MC as well as on the public.

It is a huge honour to interview the Triumphs and their mentors. You have heard stories of media stars taking bribes to favour one Triumph over another, but you are sure this is just rumour put around by malcontents. In any case, this is your big chance — do well here and the world is your oyster. Mess up and the world will forget you in an instant. Mess up really badly and they might even send you back to Canton 2 which would be shameful — how could you explain yourself to your family and friends if that were to happen?

You are relying on your PA, Pip Piper, to advise you on etiquette and how to handle the unfamiliar atmosphere of the Eternal City, but they do seem rushed off their feet. You would like

to support them more. You are part of the loose social group of those who went to Canton 12 from elsewhere. Kelly Weaver has been a close friend and you are happy to see them here. Mentor Memphis Weaver seems keen to cultivate you but whether that's flirtation, genuine friendship or the hope that you will promote their Triumphs is currently unknown.

KELLY WEAVER

Fashionista: Assisting the Games with everything related to fashion

WHAT YOU HOPE FOR

Gossip. And, maybe, romance

HOW YOU GOT HERE

You were born and raised in Canton 2 where you discovered your flair for clothing design. That got you sent to Venus' Canton to work on costuming. Today you are in the Eternal City to assist the media in covering all kinds of fashion issues. You will be commenting on the way the Triumphs present themselves, ensuring their costuming meets both their needs and those of the camera crews. You will provide reports on the fashions worn by the glitterati in attendance. Not a stitch escapes your knowledgeable and critical gaze.

After fabrics and fashion, your second love is gossip. You don't go in front of the cameras yourself, but you love to provide the MCs and their assistant with juicy material. Because you are not directly associated with the media, people open up to you more than they might if they thought their confessions would get an immediate public airing. And you can sneak around, waiting for people to reveal themselves.

You are part of the loose social group of those invited to Canton 12 from elsewhere. You don't know Arden Fisher so well, but you were friends with an ex-lover of theirs and know how much they would like to get back together. You and Jess Weaver were close during your time in Canton 12 and you're happy to see them here. You have observed that Charleston Piper is trying to undermine your friend and you will support Jess in any way you can, by providing them with the juiciest bits of gossip that fall into your open hands.

NEPTUNE'S CHILDREN

TRIUMPH GEM FISHER

The survivor

WHAT YOU HOPE FOR

To survive by learning the weaknesses of your opponents

HOW YOU GOT HERE

You were born and raised in Canton 3. The sea is a cruel mistress and many of your friends and family drowned, sailing out in storms when they would have been better off staying home by the fire. Sailing out to bring home a catch, to make a living for their loved ones. You've been

working the boats since you were six. It's made you strong, tough, and quick. You may not have the benefit of the kinds of training they get with Mars or Jupiter, but you are sure you can give those coddled Triumphs a run for their money. You are a survivor. You've swum ashore from boats when the others all drowned.

Cass, your fellow Triumph is a ball of misery, unlikely to be of much help. You don't regret that too much, you are, after all, going to have to kill all the other Triumphs if you are to survive. And you are a survivor. That is what you have going for you. Now you just have to concentrate as hard as you can on your training and try to learn the weaknesses of your opponents.

★ TRIUMPH CASS FISHER

Ripped from a perfect life with their beloved.

WHAT YOU HOPE FOR

To be reunited with your beloved

HOW YOU GOT HERE

You were born and raised in Canton 3. Not in the lap of luxury, but you and your family nearly always had enough to eat and, if you didn't, the neighbours would see you right. Everything was going so well! You and your childhood sweetheart saved up enough to lease a stall on the fish market in a pleasant district near to both your families. You married and both of you looked forward so much to running the business and raising children. Then your name came out of the lottery.

You were devastated. You tried to put on a brave face for your spouse and the rest of your family and friends but here in the Eternal City you feel so alone. Your mentor and fellow Triumph try to be sympathetic but can't help showing their frustration at your continuing misery. Now you have to smile for the cameras when all you want is your old life back. Is there any escape in sight for you? Will you ever see your beloved again?

✧ MENTOR FRANKIE FISHER

Believer in Fortuna and teamwork

WHAT YOU HOPE FOR

One of your Triumphs to survive

HOW YOU GOT HERE

Some Cantons select their best to represent them at the Games, some chose their worst as a means of being rid of them. The Fishers draw lots, showing their faith in Fortuna. You are one of three Victors from Neptune's Canton and the fact that your Canton has produced so many is testament to the power of Fortuna. The three of you draw lots to see who will mentor in any given year, and this year the lot fell to you. You've discussed strategy with your fellows ahead of time and you know they will be cheering you on. The problem with Triumphs from your Canton is that they tend to be very independent minded and underestimate the importance of teamwork. So, apart from the actual training and advice and pushing for sponsors etc. etc., a

large part of your work will be talking to the other mentors and getting your Triumphs into powerful teams.

The simple fact is that there is only one way to win the Games and that is to outlive all the other Triumphs. Fortuna has sent you a mixed pair of Triumphs this year. Cass is in constant misery. You are not sure whether you can motivate them. You fear they will be amongst the first to die unless, of course, you can persuade the other Triumphs they are not a threat. Gem is promising. Very promising. Reminds you a lot of your own attitude and that of your fellow Victors.

Bowie Fisher is a friend and has asked you to let them know if you get any hint of dissent — they say people are more likely to confide in you than they are to confide in a security guard. You're not sure how you feel about that. You're here to look after your Triumphs, not to be a spy. But as you'll be talking to the other mentors anyway, there seems to be no harm in helping your friend out with this task.

BOWIE FISHER

Security chief alert for signs of trouble

WHAT YOU HOPE FOR

A smooth-running Games with no disruptions.

HOW YOU GOT HERE

You were born and raised in Canton 3. This made you hardy and wary. A while back you received an invitation to the Eternal City to work with the security forces. Too much like grunt work for any of their own kids and, whilst the majority of your colleagues originate from Cantons 4 and 9, there is a move to ensure that every Canton has representation on street level if not necessarily in the higher echelons.

You are here to provide security at the Games. Any issues that break out are yours to deal with. You don't have to go diving in yourself, you have plenty of staff to deal with any issues, but it's your job to spot issues before they get on camera and get any problems closed down. You report to Triumvir Amory Gold and you often work through their PA whom you trust to get information to whoever needs it. You understand that Porphyry Mendleson is the top security boss, though you have never met them before.

On top of this task, you are on the lookout for any dissenters who might seek to disrupt the Games or undermine the Imperium. This is one of those rare occasions where people from all the Cantons get the chance to meet openly and the security forces consider it likely that rebels will try to make contact with sympathisers here. You've asked your friend, Mentor Frankie Fisher, to let you know if they hear anything.

ARDEN FISHER

The praisesinger

WHAT YOU HOPE FOR

To determine your own future and, maybe, get back to your first love

HOW YOU GOT HERE

You were born in Canton 3. Your family were poor but not desperately so and always gave to those worse off than themselves. From your earliest years you showed a talent for art and your family and teachers encouraged this. You were a great admirer of the Imperium and the system and longed to travel to the Eternal City. By your late teens, you were sent to Canton 12 which you hated. You found the residents far too superficial though you did find your first love there and, though you have had other lovers since, you still miss them.

You had to leave your first love when you achieved your lifelong ambition and received the call to reside in the Eternal City. Here you create art in praise of the Imperium and its most important citizens. Of late, however, you have become disillusioned. Close proximity to the centre of power has shown you the corruption that lies beneath the glittering surface. You still create paeans of praise for your patrons, but you have come to despise yourself for your own hypocrisy.

You understand that your Art could undermine the status quo as easily as it props it up. You have heard rumours of a nascent rebel movement but understand they are reluctant to approach you due to your reputation for singing the praises of the Imperium.

Most of those who are invited to the Carnival from elsewhere know each other. It's a loose social group. So, you have a vague acquaintance with Jess and Kelly Weaver. Kelly, in particular, was friendly with your first love... Might they be able to put you in touch again?

TREBIZOND SPRETZEL

Ambitious undercover corporate rep, posing as a vapid socialite

WHAT YOU HOPE FOR

An invitation to remain in the Eternal City

HOW YOU GOT HERE

You were born and raised in Canton 3. There you worked in food processing and your talent for inventing new ways to present and preserve delicate produce came to the attention of Armwood Delicacies, a major corporation specialising in fancy foods. They have invited you to attend the Games as their undercover representative. If you do well, a more permanent position with the corporation is on offer. If you do really well, that position might be based in the Eternal City itself. Sure, if you got that, you'd be leaving your friends and family back in Neptune's Canton, but you're not that attached to the place and, anyway, there's always the possibility of bringing others to live with you if you get promoted high enough. You've always been ambitious, and this is an exciting opportunity.

Armwood has provided you with a fashionable outfit and spent some time working with you on your accent and speech patterns. You are posing as a vapid socialite, but your real purpose is to undermine Cambourne's efforts to use the Games to publicize their disgusting products. They will, no doubt, be offering drops of their instant goop to the Triumphs. Armwood foods are not suitable for that — it would wreck the careful presentation. There is, of course, nothing to stop you using the samples you carry to tempt the jaded appetites of those who dwell in the Eternal City. Others have ensured that Armwood products are on every table set to entertain the Triumphs.

Arundel Cambourne seems to enjoy your wares and to have taken a liking to you. They have taken you under their wing and you are learning from them how to pose as a socialite in the

Eternal City. Which is a bit awkward as your task here is to undermine their family corporation.

PLUTO'S CHILDREN

TRIUMPH MAL SPADE

Framed for a horrible crime

WHAT YOU HOPE FOR

To clear your name

HOW YOU GOT HERE

You were born and raised in Pluto's Canton. You once worked as a clerk in an office associated with a coal mine. It was a good enough life, considering. You were grateful that you did not have to work in the mines because people who work in the mines constantly face the threat of death or life changing injury. Then, some years back, you found yourself in jail, serving a life sentence. Accused of a heinous crime, the jury found you guilty. You can't blame them. You've seen the pictorial evidence. It makes you feel sick just to think of it.

The mass of evidence ranged against you almost made you believe that you committed the crime. But you didn't. You know that you didn't.

Being a Triumph is your only chance for parole. Though that doesn't matter so much. More important, it is your only chance to clear your name. You would, honestly, rather die with honour in the Games, with your name cleared than have people go on believing that you committed that terrible crime.

TRIUMPH LIN SPADE

Rebel, jailed for political views

WHAT YOU HOPE FOR

To change the corrupt system

HOW YOU GOT HERE

You were born and raised in Canton 4 where men and women go down the coal mines and, even if they aren't horribly mutilated or dead in some accident, have a vastly reduced life expectancy due to the conditions they suffer. The bosses have it easy. Them and the idle rich in the Eternal City who profit from the fruits of the labours of others. The Games aren't even half of it. Sure, it's bad enough that the toffs get their rocks off watching the proles slaughter each other on an annual basis, but it's what goes on in the Cantons, day after day, week after week that really gets you angry. You are constantly angry, and you are not the type to keep quiet about injustice.

Which is what got you thrown into jail. Where you would have rotted had you not grabbed at the chance to come to the Eternal City and make your points to the Triumvirs and their lackeys in person. Of course, it would be good to vindicate yourself by winning the Games but, if you end

up being a martyr to the cause, that's still better than rotting in jail for the rest of your natural life. You believe there are those here who are sympathetic to the rebel cause and you are determined to locate them and work with them.

You are disgusted that your fellow Triumph, Mal, is a notorious criminal. Your mentor has explained that you need to work with them, but it goes against the grain.

MENTOR EVEREST SPADE

Top dog ex-convict

WHAT YOU HOPE FOR

Your Triumph to win through fair means or foul

HOW YOU GOT HERE

When you pull a person out of prison and send them to the Games, they have two huge advantages. First is that jailtime makes them tough (either that or they give up in despair and die). Second is that they're desperate. That is why your Canton has produced 3 Victors, even though their selection methods mean they don't always pick the best. Condemned people will always fight for their lives and that is what you need to do in order to become a Victor. You've discussed this year's selection with the other two Victors from Pluto, and you agree you're in with a good chance. Another plus is that the Yanik, the new Gamekeeper, is from your Canton. Of course, they're going to do everything they can to appear neutral (given that the punishment for bias is death) but they're bound to favour their home Canton — it's only natural. Apart from which, they're a friend of yours and you were happy to celebrate their promotion. You confided in them that you have some evidence to back up your suspicion about who bribed their predecessor.

When you were in jail back in Pluto's Canton, you made certain you got to be top dog. You did that through a combination of bribery, fear and picking favourites. You employed much the same strategy in the Games and that is how you got to be a Victor. Having good sponsors helps and you're working on that as hard as you can. You hope the other two Victors from your Canton are working on that as well, behind the scenes.

GAMEKEEPER YANIK SPADE

Honest explosives expert

WHAT YOU HOPE FOR

A good, clean fight. May the worthiest Triumph win.

HOW YOU GOT HERE

You were born and raised in Pluto's Canton. Last year, your expertise with underground operations and explosives led to a promotion to the Eternal City as a Gamekeeper. You were, after all, a great fan of the Games so you are delighted to be here, though still a little overawed by the luxurious lifestyle of the Eternal City. You know that rumours of corruption are rife but you've managed to hang onto your belief in the fairness of the Imperium, despite inadvertently uncovering some evidence that those rumours of corruption have some basis.

For your own part you are determined to be fair to all the Triumphs. Especially as you know your predecessor was executed for taking bribes. Everest Spade, (currently mentoring the Triumphs from your Canton) says they know who did the bribing, though you do find it hard to believe that there is so much corruption.

You were very wary of Everest at first — all the Triumphs are chosen from the prison population and it went against the grain to trust a convicted criminal, but as you got to know them better you became convinced that they had reformed and started to think of them as a friend. But now they seem to expect you to favour their own Triumphs...

FILIMORE PARTRIDGE

Posing as a gambler from the Eternal City

WHAT YOU HOPE FOR

To find out who really hired you, and why.

HOW YOU GOT HERE

Until recently you were a prison guard in Canton 4. You couldn't say you positively enjoyed the work, but it was better than working in the mines. Working in the mines can easily get you killed or maimed. Being a prison guard can get you killed but you can protect yourself against that by keeping yourself physically and mentally fit (things that do you little good in a mine collapse and provide no protection from dust or poison in the air). You're not 100% certain why you received an invitation to the Eternal City, but it's not the kind of invitation you can refuse. You were invited by Indigo Smith who told you they had spotted your talent. Your task here is to act as undercover security for Triumvir Smith.

It's clear that Triumvir Smith does not trust the Bodyguard assigned to him and, truth to tell, there is something odd about that one. You are curious about the reasons the bodyguard needs watching and why someone on the Board of Maddox corporation is involved in Triumvir security issues. You reckon, if you can get to the bottom of that, there might be something in it for you.

Being undercover requires a cover and Indigo hasn't really specified that for you. They told you to 'act like a toff who has a right to be here', gave you a fistful of credits and encouraged you to spend them with Lennox Downwater who is running a book on the Triumphs. The Downwater kid is from the eternal city and Indigo told you that, if you need any hints on how a native of the Eternal City would act, ask Lennox quietly and they will explain. Which adds another level to the mystery. What is the connection between Indigo, Maddox and Downwater?

VULCAN'S CHILDREN

TRIUMPH TOV SMITH

Naïve, hardworking, unfortunate

WHAT YOU HOPE FOR

To learn more about the Imperium and perhaps even to survive

HOW YOU GOT HERE

You were born and raised in Canton 5. Life there is difficult. Everyone has to work hard to keep up with their quotas in the factories and, if you or a family member get sick, you fall behind. Nothing you can do about it. And, if you fall behind, you lose your job or, worse still, be chosen to die in the Games. And that is what happened to you. Your mother got sick. You had to stay home to look after her and your younger siblings. Then your mother died and, apart from dealing with your grief, your younger siblings needed you. This left you so far behind on your quotas that you had no hope of catching up, so you stopped trying. You are not the only worker behind on your quotas, you know some who are even further behind, so you don't really understand why you are here.

To be honest, you've never taken much interest in politics. It came as a surprise to you to learn (from your mentor and fellow Triumph) that different Cantons have different means of selecting their Triumphs and some even regard it as a privilege rather than a punishment. There is a whole world outside Canton 5 that you never even got to know about. You are amazed by what you see around you but apprehensive about what the actual Games will bring.

★ TRIUMPH FALC SMITH

Rebel without a clue

WHAT YOU HOPE FOR

To get a favour from Triumvir Smith that enables you to win the Games. And maybe to contact some rebels as well

HOW YOU GOT HERE

You were born and raised in Canton 5 and, like many of your peers, you believe the entire system of the Imperium to be inherently unfair. Not every citizen of every Canton has to work in the factories till they drop and could be sent off to the Games for a failed quota. You know that Castor Smith rose from humble origins in your home Canton to be one of the three highest in the Imperium and you guess he did this by foul means rather than fair ones. From talk in the taverns of your Canton you are aware that, before he left for the Eternal City, he had a bad reputation. Still, if the Triumvir has any fidelity to his original Canton you might be able to get a favour from them. A favour that would allow you to survive.

You have heard rumours about some sort of rebel movement, though it tends to stay deep underground. It was in the hope of meeting up with the rebels and helping their cause that you deliberately fell behind on your quotas. Perhaps there will be rebels you can contact here in the Eternal City. Perhaps they will even help you to survive the Games. But best not to talk about that with anyone you don't trust.

✧ MENTOR BROOK SMITH

Hard bitten former victor. Knows much, speaks little

WHAT YOU HOPE FOR

To train and discipline your Triumphs

HOW YOU GOT HERE

Your Canton does not have a bad record in the Games. OK, you're not consistent winners like Jupiter's Canton or the soldiers from Mars, but Vulcan produces hardy souls. The Smiths can be rebellious, but resentment for the system can be a great motivator in the Arena. As long as that resentment doesn't involve trying to get people to rise up against the Imperium. That kind of attitude gets people killed, in or out of the Games. Your Triumph won last year. You've heard rumours that they won via bribery, but bribery is part of the Games and the gamekeeper who took the bribe is gone now — the penalty for taking bribes is death. You didn't have anything to do with it — you're too fond of your own skin to get into that — and you think it's safer if you never find out who was responsible. You've heard rumours it was someone very high up, but it is better to keep your mouth shut than indulge in the kind of talk that would get you branded a rebel.

You won your own Games by sheer bloody-minded persistence. Working in the factories made you strong and nimble. One of the Triumphs from Canton 8 was favourite to win, but they pissed off two of the Gamekeepers with sheer arrogance, so they never got the weapons and conditions that suited them. Your mentor curried favour with good sponsors. One of the Triumphs from Canton 6 was exceptional that year. You thought they might beat you with their improvised technology and expertise at laying traps, but you killed them when there were only three of you left — in the final half hour of the Games. It was a close-run thing and it still gives you nightmares. It was your strength that enabled you to wrest the advanced weapon from their grasp but sheer luck that you managed to turn it upon the unfortunate Wright.

TRIUMVIR CASTOR SMITH

Rags to riches and great power

WHAT YOU HOPE FOR

To establish yourself as Emperor and sole ruler of the Imperium

HOW YOU GOT HERE

You are one of the Triumvirate and you worked your ass off to achieve your position. Born in grinding poverty in Canton 5, your father lost his job in the local factory due to a chronic, alcohol-related inability to fulfil his quotas. He beat your mother. You were determined to rise above your humble origins. You worked hard. You achieved promotion by driving the workforce to their limits and beyond. Production soared when you were in charge. You attracted the attention of one of the Fortunate and were put in charge of a factory. There you learned new skills — how to bribe and threaten your way to further favors. You formed an organization, some, unkindly, would call it criminal but the only thing that differentiated you from the corporations heirs was that you built your empire yourself and didn't kowtow to anyone.

Eventually you blackmailed the fortunate one to have you invited to the Eternal City. There, through a web of connections you bribed, threatened, and blackmailed your way onto the triumvirate. Something you will not give up under any circumstances. You know all about grinding poverty and how to control the grindingly poor. You ensure that they stay in line and, if anyone gets out of line, you cut them down as publicly as possible so they serve as an example to their peers.

You are not convinced electing Triumvirs is a good thing. You would much prefer it if your descendants followed you into your position. You are not convinced that Caroly Wendlesmith, your only child, is up to the job. Maybe you should remarry and produce more children?

Annoyingly you have been assigned a new bodyguard — Sky Bright. You have no idea who put someone not screened by your own people in a position so close to you, but you are determined to find out.

You have dirt on many powerful people and you're not afraid to use it. Increasingly, though, you worry they might be in a position to blackmail you.

INDIGO SMITH

Childhood friend and second in command

WHAT YOU HOPE FOR

A violent and bloody show

HOW YOU GOT HERE

You came to the Eternal City from Canton 5 with Triumvir Smith. The two of you grew up together and have always been close. You know precisely how Castor got their position — bribery, corruption and occasional violence. You remain their main connection with the criminal underground. You do the dirty work, Castor keeps their hands clean and you are well rewarded. You wield a great deal of power in the Imperium, though you don't get a lot of recognition. Castor got you a job on the Board of the Maddox corporation and that provides you with cover for the work you actually do. Which mostly involves ensuring everyone stays in line.

It's been a long time since you've beaten or murdered anyone yourself. You have an army of thugs happy to perform such tasks on your behalf and an army of thieves and drug dealers to provide the necessary finances. It's a good life but sometimes you wonder whether Castor appreciates you enough. You could, after all, sell them out quite easily — if the price was right.

You're quite unhappy that Castor wants to change the system so that their heirs will follow them into that role. It doesn't seem right to you, especially as their child is a dead loss, in your opinion. At the same time, if Caroly Wendlesmith is to be Triumvir, or Emperor or whatever, maybe one of yours should become their chosen life partner. That would be a great way to keep them in line! You have plenty of children, Castor only has one.

You have always enjoyed the Games. You enjoy the spectacle. The bloodier and more violent things get, the more you like them. You don't really have any great need to support your home Canton, but you enjoy betting and are keen for any investments you make in that direction to be successful.

MINERVA'S CHILDREN

TRIUMPH BAN WRIGHT

The test pilot

WHAT YOU HOPE FOR

To prove the efficacy of your new armour

HOW YOU GOT HERE

You were born and raised in Canton 6. You were working on a team whose job it was to perfect a new kind of flexible armour — a commission from the Maddox Corporation. The team was out celebrating their success one night quite recently when it occurred to someone (no one remembers precisely whose idea it was) that the Triumphal Games would be the best place to test out just how well this stuff actually works in combat conditions. You volunteered. Maybe you were a bit drunk, but you can't honestly say you regret it. You have every faith in the material you helped develop and are proud to be the one to try it out.

Your family are angry with you. They think you've chosen far too risky a course, but you are confident this material will win you the Games and that you will live out the rest of your life in luxury. Your lab team back in Canton 6 are cheering you on and you expect Maddox to back you. Over the last couple of days, though, you've run into a couple of snags. Your fellow Triumph, thinks you should 'share' the armour. You regret that you ever shared your 'secret' with them. And your mentor is uncertain whether wearing your armour in the actual Games is permissible. The Gamekeepers, or maybe the Triumvirs may need some persuading. You don't see this as a massive problem. Goura Wright, the Gamekeeper will doubtless take your side and Maddox will surely help. And why shouldn't you wear what you want to wear? Everyone else round here does.

★ TRIUMPH JULES WRIGHT

Resentful person

WHAT YOU HOPE FOR

To get out of this alive

HOW YOU GOT HERE

You were born and raised in Canton 6 and you are seriously angry that they chose you as a Triumph. You did your best to appeal the decision, but no one was listening. To hear them talk you would have thought you'd deliberately sabotaged the genetic splicing experiment. It was an accident. You are not normally clumsy, but your mind was on your private life and not your work. Your lab coat caught on the corner of the table when you were opening the door of the cage to feed the experimental animals and one of them got out. And the one that got out turned out to be pregnant. Now the damned things are breeding all over the facility and everyone is blaming you (not whoever it was that allowed the animal to get pregnant in the first place).

Your supervisor recommended you to the committee as a Triumph, she called you 'that clumsy oaf' which was not a nice thing to say. You honestly do not believe you were at fault and death in the Games is a high price to pay for a momentary lapse in attention. That said, you will do whatever you can to survive. You're not exceptionally fit or athletic, but you know how to use your brains. Also, your fellow Triumph has some kind of new armour they're testing. Maybe you could have some too?

✧ MENTOR TOBIN WRIGHT

Brains over brawn, though a little athleticism helps

WHAT YOU HOPE FOR

To train a Victor

HOW YOU GOT HERE

Minerva's Canton has won the Games four times and every time the Victor survived by inventiveness and cunning. The Wrights produce brain rather than brawn though, of course, some athleticism is a great advantage. The four former Victors generally come to a consensus about who is to act as Mentor in any given year though Hamish is getting rather too old and Sully doesn't really have the experience yet. In effect, you and Marion tend to take turns.

You have two very different Triumphs this year. One volunteered because they want to test a new piece of equipment. They're enthusiastic about it so you hope you can persuade the Gamekeepers to allow that armour into the Games. Either that or work out how to disguise it as part of a costume. It doesn't look a lot different to some kind of high-tech fashion fabric so you're not anticipating a huge amount of difficulty. You need to persuade Ban that no piece of equipment is foolproof and no Victor ever got to survive just because they had a particular weapon or item. There is more to the Games than that. Jules is being punished for a piece of clumsiness that wrecked an experiment. They seem to be seriously resentful about their selection. Maybe that can be turned around — anyone is potential Victor material.

You think you can work with Kelly Weaver on the high-tech material. Kelly understands that kind of thing and can help you and your Triumph to make a fashion feature of the armour. Kelly has a great relationship with the media which is helpful. Goura Wright (Gamekeeper) might also be able to assist and still has ties to your home Canton. And, of course, you'll be working with the other mentors to ensure both your Triumphs are on strong teams.

GAMEKEEPER GOURA WRIGHT

Setter of tricks and traps

WHAT YOU HOPE FOR

Revenge on Brook Smith who killed your lover

HOW YOU GOT HERE

You were born and brought up in Minerva's Canton. Your inventiveness got you noticed and a few years ago, you received an invitation to the Eternal City to help devise tricks and traps for the Triumphs. You're good at this work and you enjoy it. You work closely with the media and have a good feel for the sorts of challenges the audience will enjoy. It is, after all, important not to kill all the Triumphs off, and not too many of them in the first half hour. Stafford Piper, who is the official liaison between your team and the media, understands this well and the two of you work well together.

Back when you were living in Canton 6 you formed a close relationship with Lee Wright. Lee was brawn to your brain. The committee chose Lee to serve as Triumph. You assisted them with their training, and, to this day, you are convinced that if all had been run fairly, they would have won. But no, they died in the final half hour at the hands of Brook Smith, the current mentor for Canton 5. You never really got over it and you are looking for revenge. If you get your way, the Triumphs for Vulcan's Canton will suffer. But you will have to be sneaky about it. Not only will your fellow Gamekeepers be on the lookout for any unfairness, but Triumvir Castor Smith is known to favour their home Canton... Obviously you retain a fondness for Minerva's Canton but you can't afford to let that get in the way with your professional detachment, or your revenge.

MUNROE WRIGHT

Child of rebels, trying to make good

WHAT YOU HOPE FOR

To prove your loyalty to Baradras

HOW YOU GOT HERE

Your family comes from Minerva's Canton. You, however, were born and brought up in the Eternal City. Your mother was headhunted by Baradras Pharmaceuticals and ended up as one of their top scientists. She's back in Minerva's Canton now, by her own choice. Your father was banished back there after he was caught criticizing one of the previous triumvirs. She decided to follow him. You did not. You're doing too well in your corporate career and you have never felt much of a tie to your origins. You knew that your father had connections with dissenting movements within the Eternal City but you neither denounced him nor felt any need to find out more about his political shenanigans. You do worry, though, that some rebels might recognise you and mistakenly believe you share your father's sympathies.

You were subjected to a number of interviews in which you had to prove your loyalty to Baradras Pharmaceuticals and you count yourself fortunate that you still work for them, are still in the Eternal City and have been given the responsibility of representing your Corporation at the Triumphal Games. You are in a position to arrange drops of medical supplies to any Triumphs you chose. It really doesn't matter to Baradras whether they end up winning or not, it's the curative effects of the product that they wish to publicise. It's quite exciting really, because you find yourself in the position of being able to decide who will live and who will die.

One complication is that Downland Pharmaceuticals, a rival corporation, seem to have a large presence here. You know they use underhand methods and you need to take care of your own safety.

MERCURY'S CHILDREN

TRIUMPH SWIFT SILVER

Embezzler and sneak thief

WHAT YOU HOPE FOR

Enhance the reputation of the Moneylenders Guild. Maybe make a bit of cash on the side.

HOW YOU GOT HERE

You were born and raised in Canton 7. There you worked as an enforcer for the Moneylenders Guild. Not a job that makes you popular, to be honest, but you quite enjoyed it, managed to line your pockets a little on the side. Which, you guess, is why you ended up as a Triumph. The guild doesn't appreciate being short changed. You're nervous about the Games, naturally, you're no great athlete, but you are wily and lithe and, truth to tell (though you don't admit it) you're

good at stealing and concealing things. You know how to distract your mark so that they don't notice your sleight of hand. You think this could come in useful in the Games.

You do retain fidelity to your Canton and your Guild. You want to make them proud of you. Putting on a good show, whether you survive or not, will do a lot to enhance the reputation of the Guild and you might even manage to get the Triumvirate to recognise the Money Lenders Guild, something they have, to date, been reluctant to do. So, whatever, you're determined to make the best of a bad job. You're enjoying your time in the Eternal City. You've managed to pick a few pockets and... well, you might as well die rich as poor.

★ TRIUMPH BLAIR SILVER

Amateur athlete and team player

WHAT YOU HOPE FOR

To survive as part of a strong team

HOW YOU GOT HERE

It's not very often that the Transport Guild needs to put forward a Triumph. This year, however, there have been a number of snags and delays — a combination of bad weather and rebel actions. The Guild-Masters decided that your Guild had not performed as well as it should and your Guildmaster put you forward. They put you forward because as well as being fast on your feet and intelligent, you have a reputation as an amateur athlete. You won the triathlon in your Canton three years running and you expect to do well at the Games.

Apart from your own acknowledged talent, the whole guild is rooting for you and you are confident they will send you regular drops of supplies and weapons during the course of the Games. Winning is, of course, never guaranteed. So, whilst it's difficult to avoid the parties and celebrations that surround the Games, you're using as much time as you can to assess the strengths and weaknesses of the opposition. The Triumphs from Cantons 1 and 8 are professional in their approach, you've studied their form. Perhaps you could form an alliance with them? It would be a mistake, though, to underestimate the rest of the field. Every Canton has produced at least one Victor.

✧ MENTOR SILENCE SILVER

Ambitious wheeler dealer

WHAT YOU HOPE FOR

A Victor from your canton.

HOW YOU GOT HERE

It irks you that Mercury has only ever had two Victors. Your fellow Victor, Seamus, was one of the earliest and now insists he has retired, leaving you to mentor those who follow. But it's not the work that bothers you. You believe that the Silvers could do a lot better. One problem is that they keep sending you poor material to work with. Though that should not make so much difference — it's not so much what they can do, as their attitude. Speed and strength alone do

not win the Games — cunning and trickery are just as important, and Mercury should excel at both.

You won your crown by convincing teams led by the favourites (Mars and Jupiter) to face off against each other in the last hour. Then you waited, making yourself ‘useful’ by tending to the wounded till the survivors killed each other off. Your medical ministrations made you popular with the audience who still don’t know what you were actually doing. There was a very touching scene at the end when you treated the wound of the last man standing and he dropped dead at your feet.

You have advised many corporate heads and even Triumvirs on certain covert financial transactions. As such you have blackmail material on some powerful figures. As you always make a bit on the side, you have considerable financial resources.

You also know **Milan Silver**. They are from your Canton so it’s only natural that you hang out together. You know that they are ‘on the make’ and insist on a sweetener before anyone gets to see their boss. But that’s fine. That, after all, is how business is done, how profits are made.

MILAN SILVER

Ambitious Personal Assistant to Triumvir Amory Gold

WHAT YOU HOPE FOR

Permanent residence in the Eternal City, power and wealth beyond the dreams of avarice

HOW YOU GOT HERE

You were born and brought up in Canton 7. Your acumen was recognised, and you were put forward as a possible candidate to serve in the Eternal City. Triumvir Amory Gold interviewed you and took a liking to you. More fool them. Triumvir Gold is a fool. Hopelessly privileged, they don’t realise how everyone dances around them catering to their every whim. They are also a hopeless idealist and naïve enough to entrust you with their entire schedule. So, of course, you’ve made a nice profit for yourself. No one gets to see the Triumvir without lining your pocket or doing you a favour.

You believe Triumvir Smith to be corrupt. It is beyond you to understand how anyone could have failed to notice. Not just corrupt, you believe they are trying to make themselves Emperor, so that they can occupy the position for life and have their child follow them. You are torn between blackmailing them and trying to get close to their child, and work to become the life-partner of a future Emperor. Triumvir Smith has a new PA, September Fletcher, who doesn’t seem to know what they are doing. You could mentor them, as they seem to want, or you could undermine them, which might be more fun.

You are close friends with **Silence Silver**. You know their secret. Whilst you don’t mind making a bit of cash on the side, you’re reluctant to betray such a dear friend.

ELLIS SILVER

Competent and ruthless representative of a pharmaceutical corporation

WHAT YOU HOPE FOR

Promotion, probably involving undermining your rivals

HOW YOU GOT HERE

You came to the Eternal City on an invite from the Downwater Pharma corporation due to your ability to play and manipulate the markets. Prior to that you'd been a member of the Speculators Guild. You worked hard and your talent and education bought you promotion, promotion over the head of Lennox Downwater who clearly resents your position and will do what they can to undermine you.

You are attending the Games to advise Downwater on which Triumph they should sponsor. That's difficult for you as you would dearly love to see someone from your own Canton win. You've researched their two candidates. You do not intend to support the one from the Money Lenders. They are just bad news, but the Triumph from the Transport Guild looks promising.

It would be possible for you to supply drugs to damage a Triumph as well as to enhance their performance.

You will be betting on these Games as well. For personal profit. Your rival, Lennox Downwater is keeping a book and the more they lose, the less likely Downwater is to promote them over your head.

Hamilton Maddox is testing out a new drug for Downwater. You need to keep an eye on how that is going, though the close relationship between Downwater and the Maddox heir should remain secret.

Baradras corporation also has a representative here. They're a serious rival to Downwater in the Pharmaceuticals market, you will try your best to undermine them. Showing that they were trying to pervert the integrity of the Games (maybe by nobbling a Triumph) would be a major achievement for you.

MARS' CHILDREN

TRIUMPH RED WARD

Sergeant major, dishonourably discharged for abusing recruits

WHAT YOU HOPE FOR

Trial by combat

HOW YOU GOT HERE

It's been just less than a year since your dishonourable discharge from your post as an NCO in Canton 8. The charge that you abused recruits was manifestly false. Your court-martial was a farce. You were tough, yes. You had to be. You had to harden up those soft recruits if they were to stand a chance of survival on a real field of battle. That's the problem with the brass in Canton 8. They have forgotten the army exists for war, not for smart manoeuvres on the parade ground.

Since your discharge you have struggled with everything. You won't admit weakness, but the plain fact is that your personality and training have ill fitted you for civilian life. Becoming a Triumph was the only course left open to you and you are happy you landed the mission. You don't care about the honour of your Canton. For you this is a personal trial by combat. Either

you win, in which case your troubles will be over, or you will lose. If you lose it proves you were not worthy to survive.

★ TRIUMPH RIPLEY WARD

The professional soldier

WHAT YOU HOPE FOR

Survival or martyrdom to bring wealth and honour to your family

HOW YOU GOT HERE

You were born and raised in Canton 8 so, naturally, you are a soldier. It is the only life you have ever known. You are proud of your Canton and proud of your own military background. Your family is not one of the well-renowned, so you have found it hard to get promotion, although you and your superiors are confident of your ability. You guess that is why they offered you the chance of becoming a Triumph. You thought long and hard before you accepted. At the end of the Games there will be one Victor and 23 dead. You're a soldier though, death is something you know you might need to face at any time. And, whatever the outcome, you know your loved ones will be honoured and cared for better than you could manage yourself. Even if you got the promotion you know you deserve.

Your fellow Triumph is known to you, at least by reputation. He was dishonourably discharged from service about a year ago. You heard it was for mistreating recruits. Well, NCOs can be harsh. They need to be harsh in order to harden the recruits but sometimes... Well, sometimes a Sergeant Major takes it too far. You're not sure whether or not that is true in Red's case. They do seem rather overconfident of their own ability and your military training taught you that overconfidence is a liability in a combat situation. Alertness and caution are what keeps a soldier alive. And teamwork, even if you end up having to sacrifice your own team. You know you will find this hard.

✧ MENTOR STREGA WARD

If I wasn't a mentor, no one would want to kill me.

WHAT YOU HOPE FOR

To know the enemy who is trying to kill you. To avoid the shame if you fail to produce a Victor

HOW YOU GOT HERE

It's tough mentoring triumphs from Mars' Canton. Tough for a number of reasons. For a start there are your fellow Victors. The Media present the rivalry between you as 'friendly' although in reality it is anything but. Sedro, who was mentoring up to three years ago, is dead. Her murder remains unsolved, but you are fully aware that it was organized by one of the Victors. You'll never reveal it, of course, the squaddies take care of their own. You're not sure which Victor it was anyway. The perpetrator may get jumped on a dark street corner, or maybe not. One thing is for sure, they're not going to take your place as Mentor. You do lie awake some nights, wondering if you will be next to die.

Another factor that makes your task harder than it might be is the common conviction that one of your Triumphs will survive. Mars has a good record at the Games, and it will not go down well in the Canton if you fail to uphold it. It won't go down well with Maddox corporation either — they're naturally inclined to support military Triumphs, but you need to work closely with them to ensure your mentees get the best of the best. You know Hamilton Maddox is a dead loss and has problems with his family. Their official rep, Paris Ward, is a better prospect. Paris was very friendly with Sedro and, no doubt, wants to solve the murder. Which gives you a dilemma as, on the one hand, you would like some kind of protection from assassination and, on the other hand, squaddies should be sticking together... In any case, forming a good team with your mentees at the head has to be your main concern this weekend.

You have limited material to work with. Red is a lout — dismissed from their post for bullying recruits and Ripley, though likeable, is under confident though probably not totally inept. Some years are easy. This year you have hard work ahead of you if you're not to let the side down.

SHILOH WARD

Jealous ex-victor

WHAT YOU HOPE FOR

To become official mentor for your Canton

HOW YOU GOT HERE

The Media present the rivalry between the Victors of Canton 8 as 'friendly' although in reality it is anything but. Mentor Ward, the one chosen to replace Sedro as Mentor for your Canton, is an incompetent idiot. You truly believed after Sedro's assassination you would be chosen. You'd have killed her yourself in a flash, but the risk of discovery was just too great. You're certain that others from your Canton know you were involved in the assassination, several of them were co-conspirators. But squaddies do not betray their own, it's an unwritten rule. You just have to make sure that everyone sticks to that rule and no one else finds out.

You always enjoy the Games but this year you are conflicted. Obviously, you support your own Canton — it would be treacherous to even hope that another might win. But you also want to show Mentor Strega up for a useless fool and be in a position to take their place. Maybe you could get close to the Triumphs themselves, undermine their mentor and ensure that they give you credit for their success and blame the official mentor for any problems they run into.

You believe that Strega Ward has an excellent relationship with the Maddox Corporation. You believe that is how they got their position. You are a soldier, not someone who sucks up to corporate families, but maybe flattery is something you should learn.

PARIS WARD

Research and Development coordinator for Maddox Corporation

WHAT YOU HOPE FOR

You have a lot of delicate work here. You hope to perform it well.

HOW YOU GOT HERE

Back when you were living in Canton 8, you had a successful military career. More of a thinker than a fighter, your specialism was the development (in conjunction with Canton 6) and procurement (in conjunction with Cantons 5 and 7) of military equipment. Maddox Corporation, who specialise in military hardware invited you to work in the Eternal City, doing much the same work as you were doing back home. You are a valuable asset. Not only do you have a good understanding of military needs, but you are an effective negotiator and tolerate long meetings better than most of your Canton compatriots. You have enjoyed several promotions. You brought members of your family to the city to be closer to you and you fully expect to remain here for the rest of your life, unless, of course, you mess up. These days, you reckon, you think pretty much like a native of the Eternal City, though, of course, you still have loyalty to Mars.

You are here as a corporation representative, in a position to provide drops of advanced hardware to worthy Triumphs. You worked closely with Sedro, the recently murdered Mentor for Canton 8. You'd quite like to know what happened to her as she was a friend as well as an associate. You have no special relationship with Strega Ward, the current mentor but you are vaguely aware that not all the previous Victors from Canton 8 get on with them. In any case, you are here to further the interests of Maddox corporation and you can't afford to play favourites with your own former Canton. You are aware that one of the Triumphs from Canton 6 is 'test-driving' a new form of armour and that interests you greatly. Your instructions are to ensure that the testing is thorough and to commission the equipment if it works.

Maddox Corporation is aware that Hamilton is working with Downwater Pharma. You need to find out the nature of that connection and generally keep an eye on the wayward Maddox offspring.

APOLLO'S CHILDREN

TRIUMPH JAN BRIGHT

A lover not a fighter.

WHAT YOU HOPE FOR

To have a good time before you die — unless you can find some way to survive

HOW YOU GOT HERE

You were born and raised in Canton 9. Your mother was a supervisor responsible for the output of one of the solar plants. Your father was well known for his musical talent. Something you inherited. Your father helped out around the plant and around the house, but he always preferred playing his guitar and singing to working hard. You inherited that too. You have to work of course, you need to contribute to the household income, and you earned your money serving drinks in the local bar where your father plays. Both of you are popular locally and you have never been short of a romantic partner or two.

All that is in the past. The oracle chose you. You were raised to believe in Apollo, and you know the oracle does not make errors. You were chosen for a reason. Maybe you are a sinner. Maybe one of your discarded lovers prayed for revenge. Who knows? It doesn't matter now. You're a lover not a fighter and you don't think you stand a chance of survival in the Games. So, you might as well have a good time whilst you still can. Everyone wants a brief fling with a Triumph, don't they? There's food and drink, wine and song a plenty here and, it is rumoured, some more exotic pleasures available to anyone who knows where to look. Anyway, if you can

make the other Triumphs like you enough, they might not want to kill you. The whole thing is distasteful — you'd rather just play guitar.

★ TRIUMPH CAL BRIGHT

A focussed and determined worker

WHAT YOU HOPE FOR

To survive, though you know it will take hard work and the blessing of Apollo

HOW YOU GOT HERE

You worked in a power plant in Canton 9. It was a life. Not a particularly good one but not a bad one either. You've heard the rebels preaching and read one or two of their tracts. There were a lot of those going around the plant you worked in. You understand they have a point. Those in the Eternal City live in luxury whilst those in the Cantons labour to produce the goods that enable them to live in luxury. Strictly speaking that is not fair. But, as you understand it, it's the way things are, the way they have always been. Sky Bright was your supervisor at one time. They were very keen on those rebel tracts and their rebellious thoughts and actions got them carted off to the prisons of Pluto's Canton. Or so you thought. You can't help noticing that Castor Smith's bodyguard looks very much like your old supervisor. Could they be the same person?

All that, however, is no more than a distraction. If you don't concentrate really hard on what your mentor tells you, if you don't make a good enough impression on the sponsors and Gamekeepers, you are going to die. Maybe you will die anyway. But, unlike your fellow Triumph who seems keener on enjoying the delights of the eternal city than they are on harsh training, that doesn't mean that you're not going to try your hardest to survive. That way you can join your mentor and the other Victor from your Canton in the Eternal City.

✧ MENTOR RAIN BRIGHT

Dying from the desperate measures they took to become Victor

WHAT YOU HOPE FOR

To get another Victor for your canton before you die

HOW YOU GOT HERE

Maybe it's blasphemous, but you can't help wondering why the Oracle doesn't choose stronger candidates for their Triumphs. There are only two Victors here in the Eternal city, you and Cerdwyn. Both of you won by sneaky means. You were a chef before the Oracle called you and volunteered to cook for the Triumphs. Late on the last day you poisoned the food with cyanide, to which you had built up an immunity. It's this thing called the mithridatic process. Sadly, it doesn't work as well as you believed it would and you are now suffering the effects of having ingested a whole load of cyanide in your youth. You are in constant pain, and dependent on a cocktail of expensive drugs to keep on your feet. Hamilton Maddox provides the drugs but the price keeps going up... You don't think you will last much longer so you are quite glad that Cerdwyn is around to take over from you.

You'd like to get another Victor for the Canton before you die. One of this year's seems devoted to nothing other than eating, drinking and being merry and no doubt tomorrow they will die, though their sunny nature could make them friends amongst the other Triumphs. The other is ready to train and to learn but is not making themselves popular. Both of them are strong-minded and you need to take care if you are to lead them in the right direction. Teamwork, you feel, could be a deciding factor here.

SIGIL BRIGHT

Voice of the third Triumvir

WHAT YOU HOPE FOR

To defend your boss and, thereby, your own position of power

HOW YOU GOT HERE

You are personal assistant to the Triumvir Hedony Melody. You speak for them when they are not around. You speak with their voice and, therefore, people (including the other two Triumvirs) listen to you. You cannot, however, exercise your boss' vote. There are limits to your power. Triumvir Melody is not here, they have not been seen for several weeks and their public appearances had been sporadic for some time before that. There is a great deal of speculation around this and the reasons for it. The media have not got hold of any potential scandal yet. They have the sense to be wary of a public figure as important as a Triumvir. But you can feel them circling like a pack of dogs around a bone.

You are personally faithful to Hedony. They have always treated you well. It is very much in your interest to defend their reputation. You, however, are very much aware that they are 'losing it'. Hedony is no longer fit for office. You are their voice and you mean to use it well. You also need to deflect any questioning of Hedony's competence. If they lose their job, so do you. You enjoy the considerable power you wield and do not want to lose it. Triumvir Gold is not a threat, you couldn't say the same about Triumvir Smith. You have to watch your step around Castor. You believe Castor wants to get rid of both the other Triumvirs so they can rule alone.

Although you have come to think of yourself almost as a citizen of the Eternal City, you have some fidelity to your old Canton and would love to see one of their Triumphs win these Games. Their mentor, Rain, seems a bit... unwell. Perhaps you should look into this. And you certainly want to talk to the Triumphs and discover any news they might have of your old home.

SKY BRIGHT

Newly appointed bodyguard to Triumvir Castor Smith

WHAT YOU HOPE FOR

To start an effective rebel movement

HOW YOU GOT HERE

Originally from Canton 9 you are currently under deep cover. You have long been convinced that the entire system of the Imperium is corrupt and rotten to the core. The few in the Eternal City oppress those in the Cantons without whom they could not survive. You worked as a

technician in a power plant where you diverted energy to the people for free, rather than having it go through the profiteers in charge of distribution. Your position as a supervisor helped. It would have gone a lot better if you hadn't decided to preach your discontent to your colleagues. Marked down as a dangerous rebel, the guards watched you carefully. You were careful not to let them get evidence against you, so they framed you for a minor misdemeanour and put you on a train bound for the prisons in Canton 4.

With the aid of some friends you escaped by leaping from the prison train. You met up with a small group of rebels who are trying to get organised. They have good contacts and were able to get you a false identity. Through conversations with them, you have learned that Triumvir Smith is trying to bring down the system and make himself Emperor. Your comrades in the movement got you a job as Smith's bodyguard and you are watching Smith closely for evidence of criminality. It would be pointless to report this to the authorities. Triumvir Smith is the authority but surely someone in the media could make constructive use of the information?

CERES' CHILDREN

★ TRIUMPH ARLES CROPPER

Sacrificing yourself so your family will survive

WHAT YOU HOPE FOR

Your family's survival

HOW YOU GOT HERE

You followed the fine tradition of your Canton by volunteering for the Games. You do not think you are likely to survive. Only one Triumph from your Canton ever became a Victor and Barley Cropper is your mentor. You will, of course, do the best you can. You owe that to your friends and family back home. And your family are the very reason you are here.

The past several years brought poor harvests and your family — your entire village — are utterly dependent on the land. You have seen infants die from malnutrition, kids with swollen bellies, mothers getting thinner and thinner as they struggle to feed their newborns. Your own family are no exception to this. Your Canton has a tradition of rallying round villages that provide a Triumph. The aid started to arrive at the village hall before you left. The rich corporations who buy your crops sent enough bags of grain and flour to alleviate the famine. If, by some miracle, you survive, you will be able to celebrate with your family and community. If you don't survive... Well, you have the satisfaction of knowing that your family will live on and will honour you in their memories.

One thing that bothers you is this: Cambourne fast foods sent famine relief to the village after you volunteered. But lots of people had died by then. Why couldn't they do that before? Is it right that they stand back and let those who provide their wealth die? Is it just because their lives are so distant from the realities that surround your family? Before you die, is there something you can do to improve things? Maybe you could have a word with the Cambourne rep about it, assuming they have one here, because you think that doing some humanitarian work could be good publicity for them.

★ TRIUMPH BEL CROPPER

Volunteered recklessly when rejected by their beloved

WHAT YOU HOPE FOR

You don't really know anymore

HOW YOU GOT HERE

You were born and raised in Canton 10 where your family own a flour mill. It's a profitable business and, despite the famines that plague your Canton, your family always has enough to eat and sometimes has enough to share with the wider community. Your friends, for the most part, consider you fortunate. So why did you volunteer for the Games? It was done on impulse and you kind of regret it. Thing is, you are madly in love with Demi from the next village and, about a week before you volunteered, they rejected you. Definitely. They are going to marry in a fortnight and you just can't bear to think about it. You thought about ending your own life so, when they came to your village, asking for volunteers, it occurred to you that the Games would be the best way to do it. It should have made your family proud of you. Well, it hasn't, they called you a bloody idiot. If you'd just quietly killed yourself, they might have thought the same, but you wouldn't have had to listen to them.

Maybe it was stupid to volunteer. You are certainly starting to have your doubts. But it's not something you can get out of now. Unless, of course, you end up as the Victor. Fat chance of that! You do know that your family flour mill was ultimately owned by Cambourne Fast Foods. Perhaps their representative here will be willing to help you?

MENTOR BARLEY CROPPER

Jaded and lonely, but not entirely given up hope

WHAT YOU HOPE FOR

A victor to keep you company

HOW YOU GOT HERE

You are the only person from Canton 10 who has ever been a Victor and, since your victory, you have had to serve as mentor every year, watching your charges die in the arena. It's depressing. At first you enjoyed life in the Eternal City, basking in the attention you got as the first ever Victor from your Canton. You took many lovers, you had many friends, you feasted. You visited your family from time to time and were delighted to see them comfortably settled. Your parents and siblings even got to visit you in the Eternal City — in the beginning.

Time wore on and the pleasures started to bore you. Some go looking for pleasures more extreme, you tried that, but it wasn't really your scene. You still miss your family, of course, but the pain has become less acute. The only thing that breaks the boredom is the Games and... You've not managed to coach a single Victor. You do your best to teach them the tricks that worked for you. Make friends with the most promising looking contestants. Help them (carefully) in the early stages. Hide well and don't come out of your hidey hole until all the rest are dead.

It doesn't help that the Triumphs you get from the Canton tend to be poor material. Neither of them has any confidence in their own ability. Maybe you can help them to gain some self-respect? Maybe you can find them some team-mates? For that you have to make them look like attractive propositions.

Outside the Games you are close to **Hemmy Cropper**, one of the Gamekeepers. During the Games, though, you both understand that you have to keep a distance from each other. It wouldn't do for someone to get the idea that your friend was unfairly biased towards their home Canton. You would like to get closer to Arundel, the Cambourne heir. They remind you so much of how you were when you first started to live in the Eternal City. And Cambourne, of course, are not only in a position to help your mentees with their sponsorship but could do a lot of good for your home village in Canton 10, from which you feel ever more alienated and distant.

GAMEKEEPER HEMMY CROPPER

Tempted to be biased and, this year, bribed by a Triumph's father

WHAT YOU HOPE FOR

Not to get caught

HOW YOU GOT HERE

You came to the Eternal City from Canton 10 to serve as a Gamekeeper. This you have done faithfully for the past nine years. You are constantly tempted to support the Triumphs from your own Canton but this year the volunteers, whilst putting a brave face on things, do not seem to have what it takes to beat the semi-professionals from Cantons 1 and 8. Both lack the killer instinct that typifies a Victor. You are very close to **Barley Cropper**, who has to serve as mentor. You worry about them as they have become jaded over time and are only a shadow of their former self. During the Games you both understand that you have to keep a distance from each other. It wouldn't do for someone to get the idea that you were biased towards your home Canton.

This year, to your shame, you have taken a bribe. The family of one of the Triumphs from Canton 1 are desperate for their Triumph to survive. They want you to organise some sort of escape and, if that proves impossible, to ensure their offspring wins. The Triumph in question is well trained, they have the killer instinct. It should not be too difficult to arrange. In fact, you might not even have to do anything. If the Triumph in question survives the Games, you will receive wealth beyond your wildest dreams and a comfortable home in Canton 1, should you not be able to remain in the Eternal City. If the Triumph in question dies, you get nothing. Well, you get to keep your integrity whilst gaining some powerful enemies amongst the administrators. The punishment for taking a bribe is death. You've seen it happen.

DIANA'S CHILDREN

TRIUMPH BRIAR FLETCHER

The great hunter, believes they can become the Victor — but has doubts

WHAT YOU HOPE FOR

To become the Victor

HOW YOU GOT HERE

You were born and raised in Canton 11. Diana's Canton honed you well and you are known as one of the best of her hunters. Up until this year, you'd been one of the trackers who helped to select the Triumphs. You could have done the same this year, but decided you wanted to attend the Games. Your friends and family think you've gone mad — maybe you took a knock to the head in the woods or something. But you have thought this through carefully. The Canton does not have a glowing reputation. Natives of the Dryad Canton don't get rich. You reasoned that, if you got yourself a place as a Triumph and win, you would be able to get better treatment for the Dryads. Due to the selection method, your Canton tends to send its worse (and even then, you've had three Victors). It's time to show the Eternal City what Diana can do when she sends her best!

You know **September Fletcher**, you were friends at school. You suspect they may have had a crush on you. You can play on that... They're close to a Triumvir and the Triumvirs are all-powerful.

You intend to win. You've been training hard and you continue to train hard with your mentor. You're also enjoying the entertainment laid on for you, but in moderation. You want to be in peak condition when the actual Games start. Everything else is a distraction. There have been a couple of occasions, mostly late at night, when you've had doubts. There is, after all, no way you can guarantee that you will win these Games. Some of the other Triumphs look extremely capable. But you push those doubts to the back of your mind, try to distract yourself by thinking of all the times you ran wild in the woods, overcoming every obstacle nature put in your path. You can survive this. You know you can. They say that teamwork is important in the Games, but who can you trust?

★ TRIUMPH JAZ FLETCHER

The naïve idealist

WHAT YOU HOPE FOR

To help bring about a more just society

HOW YOU GOT HERE

Up till now, you lived all your life in Canton 11. You lived with your family out in the woods, cutting wood and supplementing your inadequate income with the fruits of your hunting. It's a harsh life but most count it good enough. You're not sure you agree with them. You've seen things. You've seen things on the television and when you went to the trading post to barter or deliver your log quota. You've seen that not everyone lives as you do. You've tried to work out why that should be — why the denizens of some Cantons have things that those from other Cantons do not — and it all seems very unfair. Those people, the merchants and transport guys from 7, the teachers from 1 and the whatever-they-ares in the Eternal city. They have two arms, two legs and a brain, just like you do. They eat and fuck and piss and shit. But they have stuff and you don't.

From tavern talk you learned that you are not the only person who feels that way. You were up drinking late the night before the trials, drinking with some guy from Canton 7, a couple of Elders from your own Canton and a train guard from Canton 10. There is some kind of movement going on. Oh, it's all very secret and underground right now but there is work to be done. A lot of work to be done if people are to be treated fairly instead according to the random accident of which Canton they were born in. They got you to sign up.

The next day, you were hungover. You stumbled and the trackers caught you first. You're better now. Unsure whether you're good enough to win the Games but... Maybe there is something

you can do here for the rebel cause?

MENTOR SAM FLETCHER

Tortured by their memories of killing their lover to become victor

WHAT YOU HOPE FOR

Peace of mind and another Victor for Diana

HOW YOU GOT HERE

For a poor Canton, Diana does not do badly in the Games. She's had three Victors in the past and you believe she will have more in the future. Though Victory in the Games must always come at a price. You discuss this with your fellow Victors often, over a few glasses of wine late at night. Everyone sacrificed something. You sacrificed the Triumph who had become your lover. By fidelity to each other, and joining up with a strong alliance, you were the last two left. Neither of you wanted to kill the other but... You had no choice. When you are mentor you always warn your mentees not to form close relationships. Death is easier and death in the Games is not a shameful matter.

This week it is important not to brood too much. These new Triumphs are depending on you. You need to show them how to win. Being Fletchers, they will already be excellent at tracking and trapping. You can help them hone those skills. You need to concentrate on that, not the terrible memories the Games always evoke.

You worry about September Fletcher. They are from your Canton and you see them getting kicked around and exploited by their boss. OK, the boss is a Triumvir, a very important and powerful person, but there is no need to treat staff badly. You also suspect that Milan Silver sees them as a rival and tries to undermine them. Sadly, September does not seem interested in listening to your advice.

You know you need to keep an eye on the Gamekeepers. They have a tendency to take bribes (well, you can understand the temptation). You were hard put to it not to cheer last year when the woman who had deprived your mentee of their victory (not to mention their life) was executed.

SEPTEMBER FLETCHER

PA to a Triumvir, newly promoted and bullied by their boss

WHAT YOU HOPE FOR

To make your Canton proud and to renew your acquaintance with Triumph Briar Fletcher

HOW YOU GOT HERE

You came recently to the Eternal City from the forests of Canton 11. You're still a bit overawed by the luxuries of the Centre but determined to serve well and be a credit to your Canton and your family. Your boss is... difficult. Castor Smith is very demanding and not slow to criticize, although sometimes you're not sure what you've done wrong. Which, of course, is entirely your fault. The Triumvir is far too important to be wrong about anything. They do seem to have some

quite unpleasant people around them, maybe you should mention this to them? Or maybe not — it could be taken as implied criticism and make them lose their temper.

You look up to Milan Silver, PA to Triumvir Gold. They have been in the job for a long time and seem quite confident about everything it entails. You would like to get closer to them and get some good advice.

Although you are proud and honoured to have a chance to serve the Imperium in the Eternal City you miss the forests of Canton 11, as well as the friends and family you left behind. You were at school with **Briar Fletcher** (maybe even had a bit of a crush on them) and seeing them again is exciting for you — a reminder of home. You know that Sam, the Mentor from your Canton looks out for you, but you can get irritated when they are too free with their advice. You need to find your own way and they should be mentoring the Triumphs, not you!

VENUS' CHILDREN

★ **TRIUMPH SYD PIPER**

The self-absorbed musical prodigy

WHAT YOU HOPE FOR

To find someone who appreciates your talent enough to ensure you survive

HOW YOU GOT HERE

You were born and raised in Canton 12. You were a musical prodigy, your talent realised and praised by everyone who heard you play. You grew up knowing that you were better than the other kids, and they were always jealous of you. Part of your success is natural talent, but you also work hard, practising constantly with the encouragement of your parents and your teachers. They protected you from the rough and tumble most of your peers enjoyed. You were far too precious an asset to mingle with the hoi polloi.

You did not expect to end up as a Triumph. The committee did not encourage the public to vote for you but... You don't know why they did. Usually they vote for whoever the committee recommends, or for someone who puts on a truly despicable performance. You strongly suspect it was jealousy. Whatever, you are here now. You have watched the Games every year, it is, after all, compulsory to do so, but you never took much of an interest. The Games were just a distraction from your music. You are aware that your mentor is the only person from your Canton ever to have won the Games. You should respect them for that, but it's difficult. It's not music.

★ **TRIUMPH CORY PIPER**

The Clown

WHAT YOU HOPE FOR

To make people laugh. If they're laughing hard enough, they might not kill you.

HOW YOU GOT HERE

You were born and raised in Canton 12. You were always good at telling jokes and had launched into a career as a stand-up comic. That's how you ended up in the talent contest. Sure, you always knew there was a chance you'd end up at the Games, but it's good exposure. And you needed exposure if you were going to get somewhere. You guess you didn't really understand how unpredictable your Canton is when they vote someone into the Games. Sometimes they will choose the candidate they think is the most talented, so that the Cabaret will look good and sometimes they choose someone they don't want to see any more — rather like getting booed offstage but considerably more permanent. You're not sure which applied in your case.

You are determined to do Venus proud in the Games. You know full well that the Cabaret has only ever produced one winner. That's your mentor, Gentry Piper, and you will learn what you can from them. You're rather fond of your own skin and will survive if you can. You're not expecting a lot of help from your fellow Triumph — Syd seems snobbish and stand-offish, and you suspect they will not survive very long. Whatever, if you die, you will go out with a bang. You will keep the audience entertained with your clowning and some of the acrobatic tricks you use as part of your routine may turn out to have survival value.

MENTOR GENTRY PIPER

The fake

WHAT YOU HOPE FOR

To coach one of your Triumphs to become a Victor. To find someone with whom to share the burden of your secret.

HOW YOU GOT HERE

Not many people know this, but you have never taken part in the Games. Probably it would be better if Venus could find someone else to coach her Triumphs but, as there has never been a genuine Victor from your Canton, there is little choice. Of course, not having ever been in the Games is your terrible secret, known only to yourself, Charleston Piper and the Triumvirs. The film crew and Gamekeeper who witnessed what really happened have all met with untimely ends — horrible diseases or terrible accidents.

The year you supposedly won the Games, all the Triumphs ended up dead. Charleston Piper put out a call to Venus for a body double. That was you. And one of the presumed dead was miraculously alive.

Every year since then you've had to act as Mentor to two new Piper Triumphs. You feel like a fake, but you haven't dared admit to it as that would inevitably lead to your death and you don't want to die. It would be nice if, just this once, you could persuade one of the Triumphs to survive. That way you would have someone with whom to share the burden of Mentorship, even if you didn't share your secret.

CHARLESTON PIPER

The established media star

WHAT YOU HOPE FOR

To balance all the demands on your time and attention to gain the maximum benefit

HOW YOU GOT HERE

Born and raised in Canton 12, you were destined to become a star. You've been in the business since before you could walk and, through talent and sheer hard work you are now the most popular presenter in the Imperium. You know precisely how to please the public. Your interview technique is impeccable. Your viewers will believe whatever you want them to believe and, as such, you have a great deal of influence over the outcome of the Games. If you present a Triumph in the best possible light, they will attract sponsors. If you make them look a fool on air (and it's easy enough to do) their sponsors and maybe even their mentor will abandon them.

You are not above taking bribes, but you have a reputation to maintain so anyone who wants you to favour a particular Triumph had better make it worth your while. An insulting offer can be... counterproductive. Like any other media personality, you are susceptible to flattery, but you've been in this game long enough to know that not all flattery is genuine. You are sweet as can be when you're on air but you do not tolerate fools gladly and have a fine line of sarcastic invective for incompetent film crews, your support staff and that hopeless new young puppy who is supposed to be your back up. Jess Weaver — from Canton 3, not the Carnival, how low can you get?

PIP PIPER

Herder of kittens

WHAT YOU HOPE FOR

To get everything and everyone into the right place at the right time

HOW YOU GOT HERE

You have the unenviable job of being personal assistant to both the MCs for this year's Games. It's what you were raised and educated in Canton 12 to do. It would be easier if Charleston did not despise Jess so much. It would be easier if Charleston was not so full of themselves, it would be easier if Jess had a bit more experience, or confidence. As things stand, you often feel like you are the one holding the whole show together. You are in charge of liaison between the Triumphs, their mentors, and the media. This is non-trivial as many of the Triumphs do not seem to understand what they need to do. Even getting them into the right place at the right time is like herding kittens.

One minute you might be getting Charleston the precise delicacy or prop they crave, the next you might be persuading a weeping Triumph to smile for the cameras, or you might be pacifying a mentor who feels that their Triumph has not got the publicity they deserve. It's challenging work and hectic. At least Jess does what they can to make your life easier. You would like to see them do well and, if you get to take Charleston down a peg or two in the process well... so be it. On top of that you have heard rumours that someone here has some dirt on one of the Triumvirs. If that's true, it would certainly make a good news story!

GAMEKEEPER STAFFORD PIPER

Liaison between the Gamekeepers and the Media.

WHAT YOU HOPE FOR

To be bribed or, failing that flirtation and inebriation.

HOW YOU GOT HERE

You were born and raised in Canton 12. Your role amongst the Gamekeepers is to ensure that everything the team devises looks good on camera. You act as liaison between your team and the media and you are appreciative of the help you get from Goura Wright, another of the Gamekeepers who understands what the media need. You've been doing this job for years and, frankly, it gets boring. You know that the Gamekeepers all take bribes and you know that from time to time one of them is executed for this activity. You're not averse to taking bribes yourself, you are very averse to dying which means you take great care not to get caught.

This year, no one has tried to bribe you... yet. This means you don't have much of a challenge and, when you have little to occupy your mind, you get bored. When you are bored you tend to look for sources of inebriation and flirtation. The Games provide plenty of opportunity for either or both.

You are very aware that a Gamekeeper was executed last year for taking a bribe to ensure the Victor came from Canton 5. Your money would have been on the Triumph from Canton 11.

THOSE OF THE ETERNAL CITY

HAMILTON MADDOX

Bored corporate heir addicted to exotic intoxicants

WHAT YOU HOPE FOR

Permanent intoxication — and not to fall too far from your family, you still need their money

HOW YOU GOT HERE

Born in the Eternal City you led a life of privileged boredom. Your family's corporate business provides you with wealth but holds no interest for you and you involve yourself in it as little as possible. You escape boredom by indulging in various intoxicants, the more exotic and expensive, the better. Of course, your family do not approve of this activity. Especially as it makes you dependent on some rather despicable characters who provide you with ever more expensive pharmaceuticals.

A while back Indigo Smith approached you and threatened to inform your family of your addictions unless you worked for them. Well, working for them suits you quite well. You supply pharmaceuticals to your peers (and others), you get your own supply for free and get to attend all the best parties. Like this one.

Downwater pharmaceuticals recently approached you to see if you would be interested in helping them test a new drug they have invented. You're thinking about that.

Of course, you are able to source performance enhancing drugs which might be of interest to the Triumphs and their mentors. You could also reduce the performance of a Triumph — if the price was right. You heard through the grapevine that Mentor Silent Silver became Victor through the

judicious use of pharmaceuticals — though this is not generally known. They might be interested in a similar package for one of their Triumphs, assuming they can find someone who can afford to pay.

ARUNDEL CAMBOURNE

Shallow socialite

WHAT YOU HOPE FOR

Love and romance

HOW YOU GOT HERE

You were born and raised in the Eternal City so, of course, you consider yourself to be better than any underling from the Cantons. You do not ‘work’, your family are able to keep you in the lap of luxury. The Games are your favourite time of year. So much fun! All the peasants in from the Cantons, the colours, the excitement and of course The Triumphs. Last year you enjoyed a whirlwind romance with the Triumph from Canton 3. They were not much of a conversationalist, but the sex was sensational and all the more poignant because you knew the affair would be short lived. Well, it had to be — your father would not tolerate you taking up with someone from any of the Cantons, especially one of the poorer ones, even if they were a Victor. You have been eyeing up the Triumphs as they appear. You would love to repeat the experience with a new lover — so romantic!

You have recently met Trebizond Pretzel and taken them under your Wing. They seem so sweet and naïve but, at the same time, you see yourself in them! You think the Mentor Barley Cropper has taken a liking to you. Maybe they even have a bit of a crush on you. This is touching but they have such a terrible reputation! Which is, of course, exciting in itself.

A minor problem is that you are pretty sure your family have paid someone to keep an eye on you and ensure that you don’t get yourself into trouble, they’ve done that before. But what fun would the Games be if you couldn’t go off the rails just a little?

ZEPHYR BARADRAS

Poor little rich kid idealist

WHAT YOU HOPE FOR

To join the rebels, help organise them and make a fairer society

HOW YOU GOT HERE

You were born with a silver spoon in your mouth. Daddy always bought you everything you wanted. He bought things for Mummy too, but mostly all she wanted was to get stoned or drunk on the latest intoxicant. Though, to be fair, she always managed to look good on his arm, at least for the first hour or so of any event (after which she would need a lie down). Daddy got you a ticket to this event in the hope that you would find yourself a suitable spouse.

But you have always had a rebellious nature. Oh, you understand that most people would consider you to be extremely lucky, but you know in your heart that the system that produced

your privilege is profoundly unfair. Things need to change, and you have access to the cash and the influence to change them. You have joined a secret movement, active in the Eternal City, who want to see change. They are still getting organised and there is much debate about whether they should work for reform or revolution — you're not sure which of those you'd prefer. They don't really trust you yet, due to your background, so your mission here is some sort of test.

You recognise Munroe Wright. Their father was one of the original members of your movement but got himself banished back to Canton 6 for speaking against the Triumvirs.

Your mission here is twofold. Firstly, you are aware that one of the leaders of the movement is here, working in deep cover. You are to keep an eye out for any threats to them and find some way of warning them should any such threats arise. You are also here on a recruitment drive though, naturally, you have to be *very* careful who you approach. The poor-little-rich kid cover is something you can carry off without thinking.

LENNOX DOWNWATER

Corporate heir, adrenaline junkie with gambling debts

WHAT YOU HOPE FOR

To pay off some of your debts

HOW YOU GOT HERE

You were born and raised in the Eternal City. You have a nice little position in your family corporation (Downwater Pharma) but it doesn't bring in the amount of money you need to meet your gambling debts, nor does it provide the kind of excitement that only comes at the gaming tables. You instinctively know that you are just better than anyone from any of the provinces. Maybe you don't have as much education or talent but being born into an elevated family is worth more than any knowledge or ability. It is all that matters. Sadly, your family do not appreciate you. The firm promoted Ellis Silver, some jumped-up nobody from Canton 7 ahead of you. Your uncle (who is head of the Corporation) complains about your gambling debts. He says you cost the Corporation too much money and are bad for their reputation.

You owe a lot of money to Indigo Smith. They often get you to do favours for them to help pay off your debts. This weekend they asked you to keep an eye out for Filimore Partridge who has recently arrived in the Eternal City from Canton 4. You're not sure what they are doing for Indigo, but your task is to help them 'act like a toff'. Well, Indigo is on the board of Maddox Corporation, but Filimore has just arrived from some province or another and you are pretty certain they are not entirely what they seem.

You love to gamble. But it's not enough just to place bets on the Triumphs. This year you are running a book. You will have to set the odds carefully as, regretfully, you've reached the limits of your allowance, your debts are mounting, and you cannot afford to lose money. If it looks like the 'house' is going to take a loss on the Games, you will have to nobble one or more of the Triumphs.

One thing you know that your rival, Ellis Silver does not. Downwater provided Silence Silver with something they used to win the games. That's a secret, and a valuable one. You need to ensure that it comes out in a way that is maximally advantageous to you. And preferably in a way that makes the official rep look foolish. Or maybe you could blackmail the mentor or find some other way to profit.

CAROLY WENDELSMITH

Next in line for the Throne

WHAT YOU HOPE FOR

To get out from under your father's influence and do the right thing.

HOW YOU GOT HERE

You have vague memories of living in Canton Five with two parents. Your parent, Castor Smith, brought you to the Eternal City when you were very young, and you grew up here as part of a one parent family. If you can call it that — your single parent is always busy with some sort of business or other and you know their employees only treat you well because they are afraid of them. Everyone is afraid of your parent. You are terrified of them. You know they want to be the only ruler of the Imperium and that they want you, or maybe a younger sibling, as yet unborn, to succeed them. You also know that this is not how things are done in the Imperium and that changing things to be the way your parent wants them to be would involve a great deal of bloodshed and hardship. Maybe even a war!

You are, really, stuck between a rock and a hard place. You believe that what your parent wants is wrong, but you can't see a way to stop them. Especially as you are so afraid of them, and the thugs with whom they surround themselves. Maybe, if you go along with their plans (and, in the event that they succeed), you could turn the Imperium into a better place. That is what Triumvir Gold seems to want to do. They're kind of a mentor figure to you — someone in whom you might be able to confide — but you've not approached them about your parent's ambition yet. Triumvir Gold is always determined to see the best in everyone.

It irritates you that everyone always underestimates you and assumes that you will support your parent whether they are right or wrong. You think it's important to do the right thing, even if that means betraying your parent.

Of course, if your parent knew this, they would get rid of you and raise a younger, more compliant sibling in your place.

PORPHYRY MENDELESON

The richest person in the Universe

WHAT YOU HOPE FOR

To keep the status quo, whatever the cost

HOW YOU GOT HERE

You are the CEO of Downwater Pharma and Baradras Pharmaceuticals. Even within the eternal city few know that these apparent 'rival corporations' belong to the same family. Yours. There are a lot of things that are not as they seem. The triumvirate think they run things in the Imperium. The ignorant masses agree with them and think the whole bureaucratic structure that supports them in their apparent power is effective. You know better. It is the corporations, lifeblood of the Eternal City which hold the true power

If the Triumvirate had power, why would anyone allow a petty criminal from Canton 5 to rise to their ranks? A half blind bureaucratic sybarite from Canton 2? It's true that the other Triumvir is from the Eternal City — their function is to remind the other two of their place — but Hedony Melody has not been seen for some months. You believe they are ill and will soon need replacement. You have your eyes wide open for a likely replacement, preferably a Mendleson.

It is absolutely essential to keep the status quo of power in place. It is absolutely essential that no one outside the Eternal City understands that the whole thing is a sham. Like most of your peers, you consider the Games to be a deadly bore. The CEOs, however, do take it in turns to oversee the rituals in person. You leave the actual competition to subordinates, of course, why would you wish to get your hands dirty?

There are two main threats here. One is the nascent rebel movement — rebels are always around but you need to make sure they cannot organise or grow. The other is Triumvir Castor Smith who, so rumour goes, wishes to make himself Emperor and have his offspring follow him.

The younger generation of the corporations are a worry... Arundel Cambourne, Lennox Downwater, Hamilton Maddox and Zephyr Baradras. You can use their antics to embarrass their families and keep the lesser corporations in line. That said, you would use your wealth and influence to save them from execution, if it came to that — banishment would be a better solution.

You can also call on Bowie Fisher, the official head of security here. They believe you to be a senior member of their organisation and should do anything you ask of them.