**arsékmekoi**

Nonchalantly sitting down beside young *Kleyára hiViridáme*, the *Lord Neshuél hiMráktine* exuded charm and verve. First there came the honorifics all nobles are expected to employ, but with just a hint of discordance, the better to suggest deep but smoothed-over turmoil-of-heart. Then came the quick bursts of seeming-sincere passion. Then at last an admission of sincere love, hopeless and foredoomed. The young woman, *Neshuél* could see from the dilation of her dark eyes, was completely enthralled. She would do whatever he asked, even to the detriment of clan and self.

His words barked forth in crisp, forceful stabs. Instantly, the effect rippled through the crowd of gathered commoners. All of their brittle courage and uneducated resolve dissipated in an instant, cowed as they were by the stature, energy, and manifest willpower of the *Lord Hóru hiTánkolel*, who stood among them.

The undead *mrúr* swarmed along the dungeon corridor. For a time, the baron could see his allies’ courage steadily faltering. This brought him into action; he strode forward, lay hand on a shoulder here, an arm there – directing his men to stand fast and block the oncoming assault. Some aspect of his noble carriage, some instilled discipline and loyalty to the Petal Throne, shored up the resolve of his subordinates and a rout away from the *mrúr* was prevented.

The *arsékmekoi* concentrates on intrigues and favours and, when the crisis impends, brutal acts of political violence. The useful *arsékmekoi* citizen ally is the one who knows who to go to in order for a bureaucratic roadblock to be removed; the one who knows how to forge an imperial licence; the one to knows where a certain Lord will be hunting alone so that he may be “disappeared”. It’s a vital role to play for success in any campaign based in the *Empire of the Petal Throne*.

**Born for Rule, but Ruled by Birth**

The Second Imperium of *Tsolyánu*, also called the Seal Imperium and the Empire of the Petal Throne, is rich with tradition and glorious history. Though modelled on the *Bednálljan* Empire, the *Tsolyáni* state has survived nearly as long, and has been as glorious, as did that ancient society. Aristocrats within a system with such legacies of strength and discipline gain powers of leadership and influence unheard of in smaller locales. The costumes they wear, the formulae of address, the staffs of power that they carry, all reinforce this sense of strength and unimpeachable majesty. This allows the class of the *arsékmekoi* to exert influence, open doors to mission opportunities, and advance their interests as no other character can.

**The Sorrows of Empire**

Maintaining an empire like *Tsolyánu* is a difficult task, to say the least. The society is bifurcated along the lines of religion, those who worship the *Tlomítlanyal* versus those who worship the Old Gods, the *Tlokìriqáluyal*. This is not like Shi'a vs. Sunni in the Middle East of Earth. Worshipers of the Lords of Glory do not consort with worshipers of the Masters of Shadow. No overt violence takes place, or course, but interaction is held at a cold minimum, with an icy distance kept at all times (if any involvement at all is needed). Society is also divided along other fault lines: free vs. slave; core provinces vs. frontier protectorates; clan status vs. clan subservience, etc.

*Arsékmekoi* enter into citizen alliances to hone their leadership and combat skills, to serve their emperor, and to garner glory and reputation for themselves and their clan.

The overall thrust of this character class is to be a leader, diplomat, and support person – with fighting ability coming in when needed.

**Your Concept**

As you build your *arsékmekoi*, think about four related elements of your character concept: how do you build and maintain a regal look and martial bearing? How do you keep aflame your devotion to clan and emperor? How do you extend your insider knowledge (personalities, postings, treasuries, scandals)? And how do you appear pious while at the same time acting in a practical goal-oriented manner? These are important questions that keep a constant outlay upon your attention, time, and money.

Work with your DM to figure out how answers to these questions give substance to your acting, your roleplaying.

You should establish a idea of your clan and imperial contacts. You have many friends, allies, and enemies. It is best that you spend some time sketching out these relationships.

Naturally, the other players around the table are also contacts of yours. You may consider them to be your underlings, and since you are the high clan character you’re probably right.

Ask yourself what your leadership style is: cold and imperious, or informal and comradely.

**Class Features**

As an *arsékmekoi*, your get the following class features.

**Hit Points**

**Hit Dice:** 1d10 per *arsékmekoi* level.

**Hit Points at 1st Level:** 10 + your *Balétl* modifier.

**Hit Points at Higher Levels:** 1d10 (or 6) + your Balétl modifier per *arsékmekoi* level after first.

**Proficiencies**

**Armour:** all armours

**Weapons:** Simple weapons, martial weapons

**Tools:** Gaming

**Saving Throws:** Charisma, Wisdom

**Skills:** Choose two skills from Deception, Etiquette, History, Insight, Intimidation, Percep-tion, Performance, Persuasion.

**Equipment**

You start with the following equipment, in addition to the equipment granted by your background:

* plate cuirass (steel)
* two easily concealable martial weapons
* gaming tools
* dungeoneer’s pack or explorer’s pack

**Social Influence**

At first level, you have learned to untangle social situations and reshape the balance of forces near to you. Your influence is a part of your being as a *Tsolyáni* high clan aristocrat. Using the Bard Spells Known and Spell Slots tables, choose any spells that influence behaviour and rewrite them so that they are social phenomenon rather than magical effects.

Resistance to your attempts at influence are rolled against 8 + your proficiency bonus + your *Jaráikh* modifier. Your influence attack = your proficiency bonus + *Jaráikh* modifier.

**Aid**

*Prerequisite:* third level

Your influence bolsters your allies with toughness and resolve. Choose up to three creatures you see and reach with your voice. Each gains 5 temporary maximum and current hit points for eight hours. Increase this total by 5 points each *arsékmekoi* level above third.

**Calm Emotions**

You can suppress strong emotions in a group of people whom you address. After speaking to them, you cause them to shed negative conditions such as Charmed, Frightened, or Hostility. They make a *Pedhétl* saving throw to resist.

**Charm Person**

You are able to cause one creature within range to regard you as a friendly, trusted acquaintance. At higher levels you can target one additional person per level above first. This attitude lasts for 20 – *Pedhétl* hours.

**Command**

When you bark a command in that typically severe way that *Tsolyáni* aristocrats have, your target, who must be of lower social status, must make a *Pedhétl* saving throw or obey without thinking. An example command might be “Halt!” or “Drop that!” or “Grovel!” or “Come here!”.

**Friends (so-called)**

As long as you are focused on influencing your target, you have advantage on all *Jaráikh* ability rolls having to do with that person. Because you are essentially coercing compliance, your target may become hostile in attitude toward you after the encounter has ended.

**Heroism**

You are able to inspire allies and cause them to exceed their normal limitations. In effect, they gain immunity from being frightened and temporary hit points equal to your *Jaráikh* modifier + proficiency bonus for as long as your harangue lasts.

**Vicious Mockery**

You unleash a string of insinuations about your target’s clan, lineage, or provenance and cause the target to suffer 1d4 psychic damage unless they make a *Jaráikh* saving throw. The damage dice is increased by 1 at fifth, tenth, and fifteenth levels.

**Lordly Inspiration**

Beginning at first level, you can use an imperious carriage to awe others into improved performance. You have a number of Lordly Inspiration die equal to your *Jaráikh* modifier. These begin as d6, but at fifth level become d8, then d10 at tenth level, and then d12 at fifteenth level.

You expend these die, and recharge them via a long rest. When you expend them, you give one to a single ally who can use the result of its throw to alter any kind of check. This altering can happen after a check to turn a failure into a success. And it can happen up to ten minutes after the granting of the die by the *arsékmekoi*.

**Noble Action**

Starting at second level, you can add half of your proficiency bonus, rounded down, to any ability check that already include your proficiency bonus.

**Political Party**

Starting at third level, you join one of *Tsolyánu’s* two major factions – the Imperial Party or the Royalist Party. Both are detailed at the end of the class description. Your choice grants you features at third level, sixth level, and fourteenth level.

**Ability Score Improvement**

When you reach fourth level, and again at eighth, twelfth, sixteenth and eighteenth levels, you may increase one ability score of your choice by 2, or two ability scores of your choice by 1. You cannot increase an ability score above 20 with the use of this feature.

**Reminders of Past Glory**

At fifth level, you can use vivid histories and stirring scenes to cause wounded allies to rally during a short rest. As long as the rest is finished without interruption, your allies gain an extra 1d6 hit points. At eighth level this is an extra 1d8, and at twelfth level 1d10, and at eighteenth level 1d12.

**Expertise**

At sixth level, choose two skill proficiencies, or one skill proficiency combined with gaming tools. Your proficiency bonus is doubled for all ability checks made with either of those two proficiencies.

At tenth level, you choose another two skills or tools with which to double proficiency.

**Imperial Ambitions**

Beginning at seventh level, you recharge all of your expended Lordly Inspiration dice when you finish a short or long rest.

**Royal Mein**

Starting at eighth level, you gain the education and experience necessary to disrupt mind-influencing effects. As an action, you can start a commanding performance that lasts a number of turns equal to the level of the effect you’re attempting to counter. During that time, you and any creatures within sight and clear sound of you have an advantage on saving throws against being frightened or charmed or confused.

**Imperial Secrets**

Starting at ninth level, you can use your Social Influence abilities against citizens belonging to the Political Party opposed to your own as though they were cantrips (i.e., without expending spell slots). This only applies to abilities of the fifth level or less in power; sixth through ninth level abilities expend slots as usual.

**Myriad Costume Forms**

By fourteenth level, you have learned to quickly adopt the exactly perfect costume form for the specific occasion. You gain a +5 to all *Jaráikh* ability checks taking place in high society public events.

**Superior Inspiration**

At fifteenth level, when you roll initiative and you have no Lordly Inspiration die left to grant to your allies, your regain one die.

**Aura of the Seal**

Starting at eighteenth level, you and your allies within 30 feet of you cannot be frightened while you are conscious.

**Mantle of the Jade Screen**

Starting at nineteenth level, you and your allies within 30 feet of you make all saving throws with a bonus equal to your *Jaráikh* modifier.

**Nimbus of the Petal Throne**

Starting at twentieth level, as an action, you can emanate a nimbus of the Petal Throne. For your *Jaráikh* modifier in minutes, a bright jade green light shines from you in a radius of 30 feet, and a dim light radiates for a further 30 feet.

Whenever an enemy creature starts its turn in the bright light, the creature takes 10 radiant damage.

In addition, for the duration, you have advantage on saving throws against spells cast by demons or undead.

Once you use this feature, you can’t use it again until you’ve completed a long rest.

**The Imperial Party**

The Imperial Party is centred at *Avanthár* under the leadership of the High Provost of the Omnipo-tent Azure Legion, Lord *Qorumá hiRi'inyússa*. It is comprised of the most influential courtiers, palace officials, and *Tlakotáne* in the empire. Its lords and ladies are the most committed to continuing the traditions and continuity of the Seal Emperor of *Tsolyánu*. The Petal Throne is its emblem and spiritual heart. Currently, the party seeks to keep *Hirkáne Tlakotáne* alive as long as possible, so as to ensure a smooth succession. The next priority is to prevent any sort of alliance between two or more of the neighbouring states. A last priority is to strengthen the central authority of the empire, while also keeping it secular and neutral in the struggle between the *Tlomítlanyal* (centred in the south) and the *Tlokiriqáluyal* (centred in a band of cities further north).

**Bonus Proficiencies**

When you join the Imperialist Party at third level, you gain proficiency with three skills.

**Imperious Words**

At eighth level, you have enough experience to use your rhetoric and etiquette to degrade the performance of foes. Using a reaction, you simply expend a Lordly Inspiration die, using its result to lower a foe’s ability, saving, or attack throw that would otherwise adversely affect you. A person not able to hear or think for themselves is immune to this feature.

**Peerless Peerage**

At thirteenth level, you can expend a Lordly Inspiration die on your own skill rolls and use its result to gain a success where there might otherwise be a failure.

**Additional Imperial Secrets**

At seventeenth level, you can use your Social Influence abilities against citizens belonging to the Political Party opposed to your own as though they were cantrips (i.e., without expending spell slots). This includes everything up through ninth level, if such exist.

**The Royalist Party**

The Royalist Party is so-named because its people are descended from the ancient royal families of the *Bednálljans* and the *Mridleneláni*. This is their claim, anyway. In reality, these are the noble clans and families that ruled *Tsolyánu’s* over twenty-odd separate kingdoms during the Time of No Kings interregnum. This bloc is held together by the skill of *Lord Khámiyal hiSayúncha*, Governor of *Béy Sý* (still *Tsolyánu’s* largest city). This bloc of families and clans seeks to replace the *Tlakotáne* with their own dynasties. They also seek a decentralisation of the state, more power-sharing, and eventually a political revolution resulting in a system similar to that existing in feudal *Salarvyá*. This party doesn’t see *Mu'ugalavyá* as a threat, doesn’t really want to give any more land over to the temples, but does, for now, want to prevent war and disruption.

**Bonus Proficiencies**

When you join the Royalist Party at third level, you gain proficiency with three skills.

**Royalist Legacy**

Also at eighth level, the Lordly Inspiration die that you expend by granting them to allies may be used in reaction to events to improve damage done, or to improve AC against a foe’s attack. This can be done after those initial rolls, so that the result only be used when needful.

**Noblesse Oblige**

When you reach thirteenth level, persons of low clan status sense your rank and become hesitant to attack you. Any lower clan persons who might have a motive to do you harm must nevertheless roll an opposed *Pedhétl* ability check against you or be overawed into giving up any idea of doing you violence.

**Extra Attack**

Starting at seventeenth level, you can attack twice, instead of once, whenever you make an attack on your turn.