**Character & plot concepts**

**Main character:**

**Possible first names:** Achamon, Achas, Bion, Deiphanos, Iael, Ianos, Ladon, Laikon, Mnason, Palaimon, Yorgos (just tell me which name you think would suit the character best, fellas. Alternatively, if RPGMaker allows it, we could just let the player name their character whatever)

**Possible last names:** Diocleon, Kartoriskis, Lachonadrakon, Macroneidas, Pegonitissos, Thrax (same as above: tell me which you think sounds best)

**Appearance:** Let's go for a 'Mediterranean commoner' look. By that I mean: 5'3-5'5" in height (even nobles rarely exceeded the 5'6-5'9" range due to lack of nutrition in those days), olive/tanned skin (as was the case for basically everyone who had to work for a living, the upper classes prized pale skin since it meant you didn't have to work and thus were probably a noble), dark hair and eyes. This guy would also probably be thin but well-muscled, which was par for the course for experienced common warriors (again unlike nobles, who could afford to get fat). Age: I'd say late twenties to early thirties, with a birthdate in the late 1440s or 1450s (remember that the year the game's set in is 1480).

In terms of dress he'd be wearing a 'fustanella' (tunic with man-skirt, like the Byzantines they're based on the Ellisians will consider pants to be barbaric, link to picture below), leggings and simple shoes or sandals, all plain brown or off-white in color. Maybe throw in a dark blue, brown or gray cloak with a hood for night operations as well, I've read that dark blue is actually better than black as night camo and brown or gray would help you blend in with the buildings. If we need him to be a bit more colorful, maybe he can have a red pillbox cap or something for day wear. (it's obviously a bad idea to wear that at night though, and brightly colored cloaks are right out for anything besides formal occasions)

What a fustanella looks like: https://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/1/13/Souliotis\_in\_Corfu.jpg

What I mean by 'pillbox cap': http://www.medieval-creation.com/pictures/1342542546.jpg

**Personality:** Should this be left to the player, to be determined through their dialogue choices? Ex. some guy walks up to you and says 'Good morning', then you'd be able to respond 'Hello' (the nice guy option), 'This morning's looking pretty bad actually' (the 'snarker' option) or 'Go jump off a cliff' (the asshole option). Each option will increase a character flag representing the character's dominant personality, for example picking almost all 'nice guy' options and a few or none of the snarker/asshole choices will = your character has a lot of 'nice guy' flags = he'll be marked as a nice person. At critical plot points, your character may gain additional choices depending on how many character flags he's got, ex. in a hostage situation a nice guy would have an extra dialogue option to talk the hostage-taker down, a snarker would have the chance to distract the hostage-taker until the city watch arrives, and an asshole would have the option to just shoot through the hostage.

**Backstory:**

* Born to a 'new money' family that's only recently entered the nobility. Say, grandpa did something so awesome on the battlefield that the Emperor of his day promoted him to an officer and awarded him a title (actual noble estates optional).
* While MC (main character) was still a child, his dad got framed for treason (say, a letter noting troop positions along Ellis' walls that was marked for the Umari) by rival nobles. Both parents and maybe an elder sibling all get attainted and executed for treason, family house & fortune gets confiscated, MC is turned out onto the streets or just escapes the imperial army before he can be captured & killed with the rest of his kin.
* MC grows up into a feared enforcer for a major crime outfit in the slums and is eventually promoted to lieutenant by his boss, who considers naming him his successor ahead of even senior members of the syndicate. Along the way, he becomes friends with his fellow criminal enforcers.
* Too bad there's no honor among thieves here, so they wind up setting him up to look as though he was plotting on ousting his boss. This results in him getting sent to die on a suicide mission by said boss, after which he's arrested by the city watch. Joke's on your boss though, the leader of the traitors offs him and usurps his organization while you were too busy being carted off to jail to save him.
* As of the start of the story, he will first open his eyes in a dungeon late at night, being literally slapped awake by the captain of the city guard. The captain will bluntly inform him that he's already been tried & found guilty on various criminal charges ranging from petty thievery to armed robbery to mass murder & give him an offer to help him bust the crime ring, or else be executed at dawn. Thus comes the first major choice of the game, which I intend to use to demonstrate that every choice has consequences: agreeing results in the game continuing, refusing results in a game over as MC is promptly actually hanged at dawn - there's no realistic way for him to escape his situation (beaten into a pulp, left starving & dehydrated in a stone dungeon cell with no windows and only one locked door, surrounded by armed guards) without outside help, which obviously isn't coming due to the circumstances leading up to him being here.

**City watch captain Blasios Zervis:**

The captain of the city guard who slaps MC awake at the start of the game, and becomes his 'handler': that's to say, the guy who gives you missions, keeps track of your progress and will kill you if you screw up too much or give him reason to think that you're sabotaging his cause. Can become a party member on missions that directly involve the city guard.

Per his name, he's got a lisp as well. (Blasios = Blaise, which means 'lisp' or 'lisper') He'll also beat you half to death if you make fun of it.

**Appearance:** A squat (say, 5'2-3" but pretty wide) man in his forties or early fifties with a combover + a thick dark mustache & beard. Olive-skinned like most Ellisians (and you know, real Greek people). Outside of formal occasions he'll always dressed in the maroon uniform of the Ellisian army and armored in the brimmed helmet, lamellar cuirass, chainmail shirt, gauntlets & greaves of a high-ranking imperial officer. So, his armor would look like this:

https://georgefitzhume.files.wordpress.com/2012/04/img\_0654.jpg

Maybe give the helmet a wider brim, though.

In terms of armament, when he does have to fight (whether as a party member or not): can't go wrong with the sword and shield combo. Swords were used most often by nobles and army officers after all, and a shield's a good idea when your armor isn't as nigh-impenetrable as a late medieval full plate harness. Dude would also carry a short but thick vinewood rod with which to whack insubordinate soldiers (or you) when he's pissed, much like historical centurions.

Sword: http://s1337.photobucket.com/user/AlaeSwords/media/persianandsolingen6\_zpsfe0afe1c.jpg.html

Shield: https://s-media-cache-ak0.pinimg.com/236x/f0/f9/57/f0f95776f7a392f3d261d04a30392eed.jpg (a big kite shield that would cover basically his entire body from the neck down, maybe painted with the Ellisian coat of arms found in the other document)

**Personality:** Kind of a self-righteous douche. Ill-tempered, stubborn as a mule, and absolutely convinced that his extreme methods to clean up crime (which go well beyond hiring crooks like the MC to bust other crooks and into the territory of summary executions, blackmail, reading nobles' mail and taking hostages to ensure criminals' good behavior among other things) is totally warranted by the dire straits Ellis is in. In general, he has a Manichean view of the world: either you're with him 100% and thus a good guy or you're not and thus an evil enemy of Ellis who must die, either quickly at swordpoint or slowly in a jail cell, plus any means are justified in the pursuit of his 'greater good' (defined by him as the continued survival of Ellis as a crime-free & efficient empire). Also a harsh martinet to his men, and absolutely convinced that the MC's former criminal outfit is involved with a plot to sell the city out to the Umari.

All that said, he'll mellow out if the player is nice to him. (alternatively, you could continue to answer his jerkitude with your own, in which case he'll never stop viewing the MC as anything more than a mad dog that may occasionally need to be let off its leash) And even if he continues being a douchebag, that doesn't necessarily make him wrong all the time - sometimes his harsh advice will actually work, and he is actually spot on in regards to that pro-Umari criminal conspiracy mentioned above. In addition, most of his dickishness toward you will be due to the fact that the MC is after all an infamous criminal: he looks out for the men under his command (indeed, he believes in harsh discipline as a form of tough love - the men might hate him for being a martinet but he's certain that it's better for them to go through harsh training/disciplinary regimes than to needlessly die due to lack of discipline) and although he will grimly sacrifice them in the name of his duty if he feels it's necessary, he won't just casually throw their lives away either.

**Backstory:**

* Kinda like the MC's backstory gone right - Zervis was born into a 'new money' family originally from the slums that had been elevated to nobility in his grandpa's time for military feats, and thus was looked down on by the high nobility as a bunch of thuggish upstarts. Unlike MC's family, his never got framed for treason, allowing him to grow up in relative luxury while not being too far removed from the terrible conditions in Ellis' Brown Quarter.
* As the second son in his family, Zervis wasn't going to inherit anything (not that his parents even had that much to pass down), so while still in his mid-teens he decided to join the army to make his own fortune like his grandpa.
* He has served in the Ellisian army for 30-35 years at this point, and performed well on the battlefield. He was noted to only be a competent fighter but a very capable commander.
* Six years ago, he retaliated against a higher-born junior officer's mockery of his lisp by smashing said boy in the face with his stick. The officer's family wanted his head on a platter but Emperor Harudion saw that he'd be more useful to Ellis alive than dead, and so appointed him to lead the city guard: this way he'd be able to do good for Ellis by rooting out crime & corruption at home, while also being denied the more glorious role of a frontline officer.
* Also has a wife and kids. Not that he's ever going to let the MC (who is after all a known criminal) anywhere near them.

**Crime lord Aegidios Skleros:**

The head honcho of the largest and most powerful crime syndicate of the game (for which I still have no name), one of the MC's former friends turned worst enemies, and the big bad villain of the game. He's the guy who engineered the MC's frameup and thus got him nearly killed & delivered into the hands of the city guard, and while you were in jail he overthrew your/his former boss and usurped control of the syndicate. The player won't (and probably shouldn't) fight him until the end, until then he'll be busy throwing his goons & lieutenants at you instead.

**Appearance:** An olive-skinned man of average height with short to shoulder-length dark hair and a thin mustache, appears to be in his late twenties to early thirties. Should look fairly similar to the MC, since he is after all meant to be a foil of sorts to you. He'd wear fancier clothes than expected of a commoner, ex. a particularly colorful embroidered fustanella and hat, to set himself apart from the common criminals he rules with an iron fist. When forced to fight, he will make use of a crossbow at range and a simple spear & shield in close quarters: you might recognize all of these as commoners' weapons, a perfect fit for a former street urchin like Aegidios.

**Personality:** In one word: ruthless. In another: ambitious. Aegidios is driven by his ambition to rule Ellis, and according to him the first step towards that goal was to become the master of the crumbling empire's criminal underworld, hence him betraying the MC (and their boss) before the game begins. Since the nobility would never voluntarily accept someone born as a gutter rat as their overlord, he's entered talks with the Umari behind closed doors to betray the city to them when they attack again in exchange for being made governor of Ellis after their victory.

All of the above said, he isn't exactly a sociopathic cutthroat. He knows all too well that the overwhelming majority of Ellisians are struggling under the corrupt and apathetic rule of the Marethi dynasty & the aristocracy, and although he does partly want the Ellisian throne out of ambition he also honestly believes that he would make a better & more caring ruler than them, having come from the underclass himself. Indeed, he hates anyone who looks down on the commons, and though he's normally a reserved fellow mocking his own station of birth is the fastest way to piss him off. He recognizes his less than savory deeds, from all of his past criminal activity as a common footpad to him screwing you over, as dick moves and accordingly feels kinda bad about it, but believes they were all necessary sacrifices to help him reach his goal and thus tries not to think about it too much.

Like most lower-class people of this time period, Aegidios is illiterate, and though he is capable of working out some pretty clever schemes (like the one that lands the MC in jail and their boss Byennios in a grave) he's blind to the subtler intrigues practiced by the nobility he despises so much. The worst example would be his belief that when the Umari take over Ellis they'll really make him the governor, as opposed to oh I don't know, slitting his throat & tossing him in a sewer to rot while placing one of their own to rule the city. (revealing the Umari treachery, thus proving that basically everything he does over the course of the game was for nothing, could be the diplomatic way of 'defeating' him at the end of the game)

**Background:**

* Born to a prostitute in the Brown Quarter. His mother tried to raise him as best she could before dying of 'the pox' (syphilis) when he was five, after which the brothel owner threw him out onto the streets.
* There he spent his days begging and stealing until at the age of 12 he dared try to pick the pocket of Maurikios Byennios, the leader of the most powerful crime syndicate in Ellis. Byennios was impressed by Skleros' suicidal bravery in making the attempt and, far from simply killing him, hired him as a thief for the syndicate.
* Skleros became an accomplished thief, and by the end of his career (right before the game begins) he's pilfered millions of nomismae in valuables from all over the city, either directly or through the gang of lesser thieves given to him by Byennios. He is one of the syndicate agents to have visited the upper districts of Ellis, and in the process he was simultaneously awed & made envious by their wealth. Why should all of the city's wealth be hoarded by these noble fools and fat merchants, he thought? If he were Emperor, he'd distribute that gold to the needy of the Brown Quarter so that all could eat well and have a roof over their heads, and there'd still be enough left for himself…
* Eventually his envy of the upper classes and his ambition to take over the place drove him to betray & frame the MC, thus knocking him out of the running to succeed Byennios, and to poison Byennios' wine minutes after the man named him his successor. He now reigns as the leader of the Ellisian crime syndicate, and is working to sell the city out to the Umari in exchange for being made its governor after their victory.

As for other characters: before I get around to writing them, I want to know how many levels you believe this game should have first. It'd suck if (for example) I wrote like 10 additional arc villains to serve as final bosses for 10 different parts of the map but then only 3 can make it to the final cut, after all.

The plot - well, we already talked about this. MC gets hired by the city guard to bust other crooks, and proceeds to spend the rest of the game doing just that. The ending should be a cliffhanger linking Skleros' Umari scheme to traitorous nobles further up the social food chain, giving MC a reason to look into the upper districts of Ellis and get involved in noble politics. I want to know how many levels we should stretch this plot over.

Plot starting point: MC wakes up in dungeon cell, guard captain demands he join the law in stamping out his former allies (who betrayed him). Choice: Go along with him, game continues as normal; refuse, you die and it's a game over right there. Go along with him 🡪 guards let you crash at their barracks for 3 reasons: 1. you can hide there without giving up your identity, 2. you can't be attacked by your former allies turned enemies there, 3. you're always surrounded by other guards so no tomfoolery. Guard agent will also be present to warn you that he's watching you.

First target: Street thieves. Three pronged approach possible: either bribe/talk your way past the 6 lesser gangsters (so you don't have to fight them), sneak your way past them, or attack them head on (then you have to fight them all). If you attack head-on, the city guard will help (some guards will join your party). If you reach the boss, you can spare./kill him, ultimately the consequence is the same though: he's out of your way forever. Then the guard captain either congratulates/yells at you for killing/not killing the boss, tells you to go hit the sheets & that he'll have another mission for you tomorrow, THE END.