

The King is Dead

— An Agora RPG Playtest Scenario (v 0.3) —

The Hook

King Llwyd has died. His family gather in the great hall to hear his will be known, spoken by his wife and stewardess, Arian. It is as many suspected, and as a few Færed: all lands, fortunes, guardsmen, and powers are to be inherited solely by the king's youngest born — the teenaged prince Ddu — rather than being divided equally...

The reason for this sudden change in tradition? Ddu was prophesied by the king's witch, Melyn, many years ago "to be born under a full moon with eyes and hair as black as jet: who will befriend the Fair hound Dormadd, and will come of age upon the night of his father's natural passing, and so will inherit all the world of Men."

So now each lordling must now choose: whether to follow their father's wishes and swear Fæltý to their new king Ddu, or to revolt and fight against the tide of destiny and take what is rightfully theirs, or perhaps to find a third option?

At a Glance

- This is a *one-shot* demo scenario about family, feuds, and our role in the path of fate.
- It is not inherently built as a *player vs. player* type game, but ending everything in a duel or starting a civil war are definitely some possible outcomes of the session.
- It is intended to be played with 3-5 players, who should each take a character sheet from the following list, in this order of importance:
 1. Gwyn, *first-born*, Thunderous — Austere. Feels robbed by the unorthodox changes made by their father in this late hour, and wants the will to be rescinded. Thinks Melyn is a fraud.
 2. Reudd, *twin of Oren*, Arbiter — Inquisitive. Will follow the prophesy only *if it's true*, but wonders about it's legitimacy and the timing of Melyn's claims. Wants answers. Offers guidance to Ddu.
 3. Oren, *twin of Reudd*, Trickster — Jealous. Wants total rule instead of Ddu, and will try anything to prove they are worthy. Willing to fight and draw blood, but isn't as skilled at war as Gwyn.
 4. Melyn, *the enchanter*, Seer — Apprehensive. Wants their fortune to come true, peacefully.
 5. Ddu, *the prophesied king*, Chosen by Fate — Naive. Doesn't understand what all the fuss is about.
- If you have fewer players, then Melyn and Ddu should be played as NPCs by the Facilitator (FC), along with Arian the king's wife (and the only other witness of the king's death), and Dormadd Ddu's pet 'wolf' (who may or may not be a fairfolk monster).
- There are no other NPCs in the opening scene. The royal vanguard of each lordling await their orders outside, and the servants are in the back-rooms.

Potential Content Warnings: Family Tragedy, Violence, and Conspiracy. Alcohol and Black-Magic. The Dog May Die.

Setting the Scene

The main characters are royals in an ancient line that supposedly leads back to the God-King Eiddur. The game is set in the Glass Hall on the Mound, in Dinas Olai the city of light, in the *semi-mythical bronze-age* Kingdom of Prydein. It is a resplendent mead hall, with many rows of vertical green and blue window panes and a marvelous central firepit. Two long feasting tables line the walls, with pews either side, strewn with half-eaten food and spilled drinks. For today was supposed to be a day of celebrations: *Prince Ddu's coming of age party*. But king Llwyd had been sick for weeks, and has left the throne empty on this portentous night: only his fabled iron sword hangs on the mantel above it, *symbolic of his presence in spirit*.

Before beginning play properly, get players to read their Principles out loud, and *roll Kismet and Favor*. All the characters start with Ego, 2 Health, and 1d6 Lots, and have a 50:50 chance of having Favor with each of their VINPCs at the start of play (roll a d6 and count evens or odds); and then they should think up a reason as to why each character would or wouldn't aid them. Melyn or Ddu may also count as VINPCs if they are not players.

Beginning Play

The scene begins with queen Arian and Melyn entering the glass hall from the king's chambers. She interrupts the festivities and bluntly announces the king's death. Then calls for the vanguard and servants to leave and await outside, so that the will of the late king can only be heard by those of royal decent. *Curiously, the wizard Melyn is not asked to leave*. With tears in her eyes, she tells everyone

"Llwyd feared that the kingdom would fall to desolation should Melyn's prophesy turn true. And as tonight is both Ddu's birthday, and the night upon which the king has come to terms with own demise; as the full moon rose and he passed on, he has bequeathed all his worldly possessions and powers as king of this goodly land to the young prince Ddu. May he live long, and reign in peace... and may the Heavens and the Earth be once again united..."

then she bows *curtly* to Ddu, and sits down turned away in her throne and begins to sob quietly.

The roleplaying game begins properly by progressing in whatever turn order feels most natural, but the FC should ensure that everyone gets a chance to speak and act at least once every round. Remember, *turn order is just a pacing device not a strict schedule*. Performing Checks is quick — and may be interjected between turns — but try to end each turn with a full Task so every character can *really* push their agendas as the night progresses.

Very Important Non-Player Characters

Arian

Tall and lithe with decorated silver hair and blue eyes, wearing a gray pencil dress and brown fur cloak. The dowager queen cannot be consoled initially, and will continue to cry until for at least the first round, or until the conversation gets too heated. Afterwards she remains reserved, but generally supports her late husband's will, and makes a bigger show of fealty if pushed.

Dormadd

Resembling a handsome wolf at first glance, but rounder. He carries the eerie light of an eclipse his fur, and his bark is the call of lightning. His eyes are also black as jet, like Ddu. Dormadd is supposedly a *Fæ creature*, and truly the best of dogs, but some think of him as a monster. King Lwydd did not look upon him kindly, for example, and even threatened to kill him once. Dormadd can talk in simple barked sentences, and supports Ddu's claim to the throne wholeheartedly.

Spoilers: Do not read beyond here, unless you are the game's Facilitator or have played the game before!

The Whole Truth

- King Llwyd was genuinely dying in the weeks leading up to Ddu's birthday.
- Arian believed that all the signs of the prophecy had thus far been true, and decided to hasten her husband's death using lead powder from her make-up purse: to ensure the timing fit.
- Not realizing *until tonight* that her intervention may have now inadvertently ruined the prophecy (since his death may not be considered a 'natural passing' anymore), she is suddenly wracked with both grief and guilt.
- But she wants to pass the prophecy off as having been fulfilled anyway, and simply hopes that Melyn's magic isn't *real enough* to detect the discrepancy.
- Melyn has no idea about Arian's involvement and the potentially ruined the prophecy, but will *react badly* if they are an NPC and the truth is revealed.
- She will only admit to her crime if her whole family begins to suspect and turn against her ; and *even then* she will double down and say that lead is natural, and so her poisoning still shouldn't break the rules. (Perhaps pleading with the universe more than with her family)?
- Whether anyone agrees with her at this point is up to them. But one thing that might help prove her case, if not her innocence, would be to get Ddu to perform the king's ritual. (See below).
- Dormadd was sent by the moon goddess, Prince of Fæ, to protect Ddu and ready him for his destiny.
- Dormadd will defend his master with his life, but he can't be slain except by the touch of iron, flame, or magic. If killed, his body rapidly rots into the sky.

Arian as a Player Character?

Arian has a fully written character sheet to help the FC with playing her. But if you have six players who want to play, and one of them has either played this scenario before or is a very experienced roleplayer, you may offer her for them to play. Let that player open the scene and relay the king's final plea in their own words. This can dramatically change the direction of the game, but may be fun!

The King's Ritual

All true kings of Prydein must perform the '*Quelling of the Moon God Ritual*' to prove they are worthy to rule over all that the Fælight touches. Improvise with the players what this ritual involves at the table.

If Ddu is a player, then have them lead the task: but remember to include Ddu's *phobia moonlight* as a difficulty factor. It should *require at least 4 successes* to fully appease Lleuadd, the moon god. Be clear with the players that failing the moon ritual outright will mean the *death of someone*, be that Ddu or a helper.

If Ddu is an NPC, he will fail this ritual but Dormadd will sacrifice himself to save his master from death. (Assuming Dormadd has not already been slain before now).

