

## 36 Courtier (Ver 2.0)

A courtier may be an attendant at and frequenter of courts and palaces, or merely a most civilised student of polished and refined manners. Courtiers learn to survive in the Machiavellian political situation prevalent in most courts and places of high estate, and to be obsequious and intimidating by turns. They may learn musical or creative skills to enhance their status, and may indulge in manipulation and seduction.

### 36.1 Restrictions

A courtier must pay an additional 10% EP to increase their rank if:

- Their AG is less than 12;
- their PB is less than 15.

A courtier pays 10% less EP to increase their rank if:

- Their AG is more than 22;
- their PB is more than 20.

All modifiers are cumulative.

### 36.2 Benefits

A courtier gains 2 abilities at Rank 0, and 1 further ability per Rank. All abilities are usually performed at the overall Rank of the courtier. However, a courtier may choose to specialise. If, upon gaining a new Rank, the courtier wishes to forego gaining a new ability, they may specialise in one of the abilities that they already possess. That ability then operates at (courtier's Rank + 1), maximum 10. A courtier may specialise more than once with the same ability, gaining Rank + 2, Rank + 3, etc. Additional abilities may be gained after achieving Rank 10, by the expenditure of 500 Experience Points and 2 weeks of training. Individual Base Chances are not provided for the various courtier skills; rather there is a generic Base Chance of  $3 \times \text{appropriate characteristic} (+ 5 / \text{Rank})$ , modified by the GM to reflect the difficulty of the feat being attempted.

The abilities available to a courtier are:

**Bureaucracy** an understanding of organisations and hierarchies, how to get information, which wheels to oil, and which palms to grease.

**Carousing** the ability to socialise informally with persons of all social classes, without being seen as an outsider. Also includes the ability to drink considerably less than most observers would think.

**Dress sense** the knowledge of what to wear, how to wear it, and when. This skill includes dressing formally, seductively, or ridiculously as the occasion and culture require. Also includes what cosmetics and scents to wear, what accessories, and even when to not wear things.

**Entertaining** the ability to organise events, ranging from intimate parties, to state dinners, grand fetes, and balls. The courtier may supervise caterers, and menials, arrange the entertainments, and will know whom not to seat next to the Duke.

**Etiquette** the knowledge of what to do, how to do it, and when. This skill includes courtly graces, correct forms of address, and which fork to use for the fish. Etiquette must be learnt separately for different cultures.

**Formal dance** a good grounding in formal courtly dances, particularly suitable for fetes and balls.

**Gaming** an understanding of the rules of such recreational pursuits as backgammon, chess, go, fox-and-geese, nine-men-morris, and tafl. Also various card and dice games.

**Hunting & Hawking** a familiarity with the practice and styles of falconry, riding to hounds, and similar courtly sports.

**Intimidation** the ability to rule subordinates through terror, and knowing character flaws and weaknesses. Also includes a good general grounding in methods of personal manipulation, such as black-mail.

**Oratory** presenting a point of view or a set of information in a formal and forceful manner, to an audience. Includes rhetoric and declamation, and also the ability to handle interjection, and questioning.

**Play an instrument** this ability may be taken several times with different instruments. A Singer is one who has Play Instrument (Voice). A courtier can usually play similar instruments to the ones they have chosen at (Rank / 2), and will tend to know mostly formal, structured music.

**Poetry** creating poetry, often of formal and highly complex structure.

**Seduction** (see below).

**Simulate emotions** the ability to keep careful check on the emotions being displayed, so as to deny observers information (such as when playing poker), or to give false information (feigned surprise, apparent pleasure).

### 36.3 Seduction

Whilst seduction may be used to entice an entity who is compatible with the seducer into a sexual relationship, it may also be used to create a sense of friendship and trust, even with a being not sexually compatible with the seducer. The skill mostly consists of flattery and gentle coaxing, and a seducer will greatly benefit from being skilled at etiquette, dress sense, dance, playing music, or whatever is appropriate to the type of seduction undertaken. Seduction is not a rapid skill, requiring hours or even days to achieve the desired result. Often there is no skill check made since the GM will decide the results of the seduction based on the character's Rank and the way the Player describes the attempted seduction. If a Base Chance is used, it is seducer's PB (+ 10 / Rank), modified by the GM to reflect the difficulty of the seduction. If the attempt succeeds the seduction is generally successful. If the attempt fails but is close to the Base Chance the seduction may be attempted again, at a later time. A particularly high roll indicates that the target is unimpressed or repulsed by the seducer. Player Characters are not bound by the result of seduction attempted on them, but the GM should give them strong hints as to how their character feels about the seducer.