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Writing Samples

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Excerpts covering scenes, branching dialogue, barks, quest design and lore. Full versions of every document are on andresvalbuena.com.

SAMPLE	TYPE	PAGES
A Bad Hand, screenplay excerpt Fallout: Cascadia	Scene	2 to 3
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Playable: *Charming*, a Twine RPG, at andresvalbuena.com/writingsamples.html#playables.

JOHNNY
(startled)
Who... who are you?

The Drifter slides into the booth across from him. Says nothing.

JOHNNY (CONT'D)
Look, tonight's not good. Whatever you want, I can't help you.

The Drifter studies him. The sweat. The tremor. The untouched drink.

THE DRIFTER
Someone's already been here tonight. The Spades, maybe?

Johnny goes WHITE.

JOHNNY
(urgent whisper)
Keep it down! Yeah, yeah. The Spades were here. Courtesy of Granddaddy.

(bitter laugh)
Guess I'm deeper in the hole than I thought.

THE DRIFTER
The Orcas sent me. Granddaddy's tired of excuses.

JOHNNY
(pleading)
Look, I know how this works. I need one more day. The caps are coming.

THE DRIFTER
Convince me your plan is solid, and maybe I'll put in a good word.

JOHNNY
(words tumbling out)
It wasn't my fault! Commissioner Rothwell, Security, they were backing me. Then they just stopped. Used me to expose the Orcas' investments. I was bait, and I didn't even know it.

The Drifter's eyes drop to Johnny's wrist. GOLD CUFFLINKS catch the lamplight. Expensive. Too expensive.

THE DRIFTER
Nice cufflinks. Pretty lavish for a broke man.

JOHNNY
(defeated)
They're... from Alicia Wu. A gift. Proof that Security wouldn't dare touch me.

(bitter)
She probably set me up too. Damned Hearts. Always two-faced.

THE DRIFTER
Names. Connections. All of it.

JOHNNY
(lowering voice)
Alicia Wu handles contacts in Security. She's got a mole - Sergeant Vickers. He's been funneling caps for months.

And Sawmill from the Diamonds? He skims from Granddaddy's operations. If the old man found out, there'd be hell to pay.

JOHNNY (CONT'D)
That enough?

The Drifter stands. Johnny half-rises.

JOHNNY (CONT'D)
Wait, wait - what are you going to tell them?

THE DRIFTER
That depends on what Granddaddy wants to hear.

The Drifter walks out. Johnny slumps back, staring at his untouched whiskey.

JOHNNY
(to himself)
God help me.

Catch and Release is an early game sidequest set in Kent, where the Drifter is asked to find a missing grandmother who's not back from fishing.						
FILE NAME&SCENE	PLAYER LINE	NPC REPLY	S/P	LEADS TO ANOTHER WHEEL	FACIAL EXPRESSION	MISC
Dialogue set1.intro	START	TOBY GREEN				
		Hey, you're the one from Beargrass, right? Listen, I really need some help. It's important.		[SCENE1]	concerned	
PREREQ: Help Bella and get the rod back		Did you... find her yet?		[SCENE5]	concerned	
Dialogue set1.SCENE1	START	TOBY GREEN				
	Who are you?	Toby Green. I farm around here. Look, I'd chat more, but it's urgent.		[BACK]	concerned	
	What's the problem?	It's my grandmother. She went out fishing and hasn't come back yet.		[SCENE2]	worried	
	Will I get paid for helping?	Yeah, yeah, I'll find some caps. Just help me, please?		[BACK]	annoyed	
	I'm not interested	Look, I wouldn't ask unless it was important.		[SCENE4]	afraid	
	Why not ask the NCR for help?	I tried. They said they're not "authorized" to chase ghosts. Guess that's what she is now.				
	I'm not interested	Look, I wouldn't ask unless it was important.		[SCENE4]	afraid	
Dialogue set1.SCENE2	START	TOBY GREEN				
	Missing?	Not exactly missing, just late, she's always home before dark. I'm getting worried something happened.		[CONTINUED BELOW]	nervous	
		I'd check myself, but I'm not much good if things get rough. I don't even have a gun.		[BACK]	nervous	
	Where should I start looking?	Down by the river near town. She has a usual spot, I'll mark it on your... uh, whatever you're using there.		[SCENE3]	afraid	
	You sure she didn't just wander off?	You don't know her. She's got a rhythm to her days like a clock. Something messed with that.		[BACK]	nervous	
	If she's in trouble, this could be dangerous. I'll need hazard pay.	Uh, sure. 50 caps? She's normally in charge of the finances, but that's fair, right?		[BACK]	nervous	This isn't a dialogue check, as Toby is pretty nervous during this dialogue. 50 CAPS
Dialogue set1.SCENE3	START	TOBY GREEN				
	I'll go there and check it out.	Thanks. She's probably fine, but you can't be too cautious when it comes to family, right?		[END]	grateful	
	You better hope she's just late.	Me too. For both our sakes.		[END]	worried	
Dialogue set1.SCENE4	START	TOBY GREEN				
	Fine, I'll hear you out.	Thank you, thank you..		[SCENE1]	grateful	
	I don't want to repeat myself. Go bother someone else.	Guess you've got more important things going on. Sorry to bother you.		[END]	sad	This fails the quest.
Dialogue set1.SCENE5	START	TOBY GREEN				
	Yeah, found her. Tell her to be careful next time.	She always carries her knife, but maybe I should tag along next time...?		[SCENE6]	thinking	
	Found her. Lucky she's alive. She should quit fishing.	Yeah, but it's not my place to tell her what to do...		[SCENE7]	nervous	
	She's safe. Got my caps?	Oh, right, right. Here's 50 caps. Is that good enough?		[SCENE8]	annoyed	
Dialogue set1.SCENE6	START	TOBY GREEN				
	I think you should. It'll keep her safe.	You're probably right. I'd be good company, I think.		[END]	confident	50 CAPS
	If she wants company, she'd ask.	Yeah, good point. I'll give her some space. Thanks for the help.		[END]	sad	50 CAPS
	You need to decide that for yourself.	You're right. I'll have to think about this some more.		[END]	thinking	52 CAPS
Dialogue set1.SCENE7	START	TOBY GREEN				
	You should. The river isn't as safe as she thinks it is.	I'll do my best, thanks for the advice.		[END]	confident	50 CAPS
	No, you're right. She'd probably keep doing it even if you asked her to stop.	Why bring it up then? ...Whatever, thanks for the help.		[END]	confused	50 CAPS
	You should decide that on your own.	Yeah, I guess it is sort of my decision..		[END]	thinking	50 CAPS
Dialogue set1.SCENE8	START	TOBY GREEN				
	[Barter 20+] I hauled her out of trouble. You can do better than 50.	[SUCCESS] You're.. right. Here you go. So, what're your thoughts on this whole, uh, situation?	BARTER ≥ 20	[SCENE9], 25 CAPS	confident	
	[Barter <20] Come on, 50 caps barely covers the ammo.	[FAILURE] If I had more, I'd give it. You want to squeeze a guy who just watched his gran nearly die?	BARTER > 20	[SCENE9]	confused	
	That's enough.	Cool, cool. So, what're your thoughts on this whole, uh, situation?		[SCENE9]	thinking	
Dialogue set1.SCENE9	START	TOBY GREEN				
	She should be more careful next time.	She had her knife with her, though... hey, should I start going with her?		[SCENE6]	thinking	
	You're lucky she's still alive. Maybe you should tell her to stop fishing.	I... I'm not sure about that...		[SCENE7]	nervous	

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SCENE: THE MONARCH HOTEL – FIRST MEETING WITH JOHNNY
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[The player steps inside The Monarch Hotel, its once-grand hotel floor now dimly lit by flickering wall sconces and dusty chandeliers. The smell of old alcohol and cigarette smoke lingers in the air. The tables have been cleared, replaced with makeshift strategy boards, crates of stolen supplies, and a few scattered weapons.]

[Johnny Velvet stands near a broken roulette table, idly smoking his cigarette. His tailored pre-war jacket, decorated with faded gold trim, gives him the appearance of an old-world mobster rather than a gang leader. His men, stationed near the room's exits, keep their hands near their holsters, but none of them make a move.]

[As the player approaches, Johnny smirks, finally lowering the cigarette from his mouth.]

JOHNNY VELVET: FIRST GREETING

JOHNNY:
[Smooth, confident]
"Well, well. Look what we got here. Word travels fast in Freeside, and I hear you're the curious type.
You ain't one of my boys, and you sure as hell ain't here to play blackjack.

That only means one thing—The King sent you.

So tell me, did he send you to warn me off? Or are you just here to sniff around and see what's what?"

[Johnny flicks the ash from his cigarette, exhaling slow as he leans against the table. His smirk lingers, but his eyes study you carefully.]

"Well, friend, you got my attention. So let's have ourselves a little talk."

PLAYER RESPONSE OPTIONS
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1. [Neutral/Friendly] "No need for hostility. I just want to hear your side of things."
2. [Undecided/Neutral] "The King's got concerns. Should he be worried?"
3. [Rude/Aggressive] "Cut the act. You're stirring up trouble in Freeside, and I want to know why."

4. [Speech ??/60] "If you really want to be in charge, maybe start by not acting so guilty."
  - [Speech 60+] SUCCESS:
    PLAYER: "The Kings are all about freedom, right? So speak freely."
    JOHNNY: [Laughs] "Fair enough. No sense in playin' coy, huh? The truth is, The King's had his time, and Freeside needs more than a smooth talker.
    I've got the numbers, I've got the backing, and I got the plan to make this place strong."
  - [Speech < 60] FAILURE:
    JOHNNY: [Smirks] "I don't need to 'own' a damn thing, friend. You'll see soon enough. Freeside's got two futures: mine, or a slow, painful death."

  - [Perception 7+] SUCCESS:
    PLAYER: "Your people aren't as loyal as you think. They're watching you, waiting to see if you're just talk."
    JOHNNY: [Pauses, then grins] "Damn, you got a sharp eye. Yeah, not everyone's convinced yet. Some of 'em are still caught up in that 'Kings forever' nonsense.
    But trust me, when the time comes, they'll fall in line."
  - [Perception < 7] FAILURE:
    PLAYER: "Your boys are nervous. You sure everyone here is on your side?"
    JOHNNY: [Chuckles] "Nervous? Nah. They're just waitin' to see if you're friend or foe."

  - [Barter 50+] SUCCESS:
    PLAYER: "You talk about power like it's free. But you and I both know big plans don't come cheap. Who's paying for yours?"
    JOHNNY: [Pauses, before chuckling] "Sharp one, ain't ya? Let's just say I got friends in high places.
    Freeside ain't the only place NCR's got their eyes on. Some folks in the Mojave got more interest in me than The King."
  - [Barter < 50] FAILURE:
    PLAYER: "You talk a big game, but every gang runs on caps. Who's bankrolling you?"
    JOHNNY: [Smirks] "Caps ain't the problem. Vision is. But I get it, some folks need a paycheck before they see the future."

 OUTCOME OF SECTION

- If the player plays friendly or neutral, Johnny remains open and discusses his plans.
- If the player is aggressive or rude, Johnny remains wary but still engages.
- If the player passes skill checks, they gain deeper insight into Johnny's operations and funding.
- If the player fails skill checks, Johnny deflects, remaining cryptic about his plans.

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SCENE: THE MONARCH HOTEL – JOHNNY REVEALS HIS PLAN
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[Johnny moves away from the table, rolling his shoulders like he's shaking off an old weight. The smirk is still there, but his voice is lower now, more measured, more real.]

JOHNNY VELVET: FREESIDE NEEDS A FUTURE

JOHNNY:
"You ever stop and really *look* at Freeside?
Not just the Kings' clubhouse, not just the lucky few who scrape by,
but the folks diggin' through garbage, the ones getting trampled outside the gate?

The King talks about 'freedom.' But what's freedom worth when you can't even afford a meal?"

[Johnny turns back to the player, his smirk fading into something colder.]

"The NCR's got their boots in the dirt.
The families? They don't give a damn 'bout this place unless it starts hurtin' their bottom line.
So tell me something,
You really think The King's got this under control? Or is he just keepin' the throne warm until someone stronger comes along?"

PLAYER RESPONSE OPTIONS
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1. [Supportive] "I see what you're saying. Freeside does need change."
2. [Skeptical] "You talk big, but what exactly are you offering?"
3. [Defensive] "The King keeps Freeside free. You just want power."
4. [Hostile] "This is just an ego trip. You don't care about Freeside."

- [Charisma 6+] SUCCESS:
  PLAYER: "If you want me on board, you gotta be straight with me."
  JOHNNY: [Pauses, then nods] "Alright. No bullshit. I got NCR officers willing to *look the other way* if I take power.
  They get order, I get Freeside. Simple as that."
- [Charisma < 6] FAILURE:
  PLAYER: "You keep dodging. If you want power, own it."
  JOHNNY: [Shrugs] "Trust has to be earned, friend. And right now, you ain't earned it."

- [Survival 50+] SUCCESS:
  PLAYER: "You overthrow The King, then what? You got food, water, infrastructure?"
  JOHNNY: [Smirks] "Damn, you *do* think ahead. Yeah, I got a plan. Caravans. My NCR contacts make sure the supplies *keep coming in*."
- [Survival < 50] FAILURE:
  PLAYER: "You say you want change, but what about food? Resources?"
  JOHNNY: "You think I forget what makes a King a king? Please."

- [Perception 7+] SUCCESS:
  PLAYER: "Some of your boys look uneasy. You sure you got ‘em all on your side?"
  JOHNNY: [Smirk fades slightly] "You’re sharp. Yeah, not everyone’s sold, yet. But when they see what I’m buildin’? They’ll come around."
- [Perception < 7] FAILURE:
  PLAYER: "You talk like a leader, but your men don’t all look convinced."
  JOHNNY: [Chuckles] "They’re just waitin’ to see if you’re friend or foe. Is that our own fault?"

- If the player agrees with Johnny, he begins considering them an ally.
- If the player presses him, he admits NCR backing if prompted correctly.
- If the player calls him out, Johnny gets defensive but doesn’t turn hostile, yet.

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SCENE: THE MONARCH HOTEL – JOHNNY’S HISTORY REVEALED
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[Johnny’s smirk fades slightly, replaced with something harder to read.
He exhales through his nose, rolling his shoulders before pacing a little.]

JOHNNY:
"You keep askin’ questions like you already know the answers.
But alright, let’s entertain the idea for a second.
Maybe I got history with The King. Maybe that history ended with a gun at my back and a boot out the door."

[He stops, turning to the player with a raised eyebrow.]

"But before we go down that road, let me ask you something."

PLAYER RESPONSE OPTIONS
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1. [Neutral] "I’m listening."

The Phantom King

A Fallout: New Vegas Side Quest Centered on The Kings & The Future of Freeside

Quest Details

- **Quest Giver:** *The King (King's School of Impersonation, Freeside)*
- **Main Antagonist:** *Johnny Velvet (Exiled former King, charismatic, cunning, and ambitious)*
- **Wildcard Factor:** *Pacer (Loyal but volatile second-in-command, unpredictable under pressure)*
- **Location:** *Freeside (Multiple areas, including a new location: The Monarch Hotel)*
- **Theme:** *Power, loyalty, and the struggle for Freeside's future*
- **Major Factions Involved:** *The Kings, NCR (rogue faction), Followers of the Apocalypse, Mr. House's Securitrons*
- **Rewards:**
    - **Caps & XP** (*Variable, based on resolution*)
    - **Kings or Johnny's support** (*alters Freeside's future*)
    - **Possible NCR backing or House's intervention** (*reputation & faction standing shifts*)
    - **Unique gear or weapons** (*dependent on chosen side*)
    - **Potential to claim leadership over Freeside (Wildcard Ending)**

Quest Structure & Walkthrough

Phase 1: The King's Unease (Quest Start)

The player is **summoned by The King**, who appears troubled yet composed. He keeps his tone light, but something **feels off.**

The King's Introduction:

> *"Ain't no secret Freeside's got troubles. Ain't never been easy, but now some of my boys ain't actin' right. Whispering behind my back, sneakin' off without a word. It ain't normal, and it ain't good. I need you to find out who's stirrin' things up. But be careful, this one feels personal."*

Clue: He never names names. The way he avoids saying anything too specific hints that he already has suspicions, but won't admit them.

Main Objective:

- Investigate The Kings' growing dissent and locate missing members.

Phase 2: The Investigation - Tracing the Phantom King

The player must **gather intel** by speaking with **Kings members and Freeside locals.** Various skill-based approaches include:

Skill-Based Investigation Options:

- [Speech 50+] → Convince a nervous King to talk:
  "Some of the boys ain't happy, y'know? Johnny was different. He had plans."
- [Medicine 40+] → A wounded King at the Old Mormon Fort says he was attacked by old friends who tried to "convert" him to a new cause.
- [Sneak] → Overhear a secret conversation near Mick & Ralph's about a "meeting at The Monarch."

If the player talks to Pacer before choosing a side, they can learn that:

> *"Johnny's got vision, sure. But so did those Van Graff bastards, and look where that got me. I ain't lettin' no smooth talker run me again."*

Outcome:

- The player learns that Johnny Velvet, a former King exiled long ago, has returned and is rallying old allies.
- His base of operations is the Monarch Hotel, a pre-war hotel.
- Twist: The King knows who Johnny is, but refuses to talk about him.

Phase 3: The Monarch & Johnny Velvet (The First Confrontation)

The player arrives at The Monarch Hotel, where Johnny Velvet is expecting them.

Johnny Velvet's First Words:

> *"I knew you'd come. The King's got his heart in the right place, but Freeside's rotting while he plays rockstar. Freeside needs a leader, one with a vision."*

- He believes The Kings are too traditionalist and Freeside needs order, not blind freedom.
- Johnny has NCR backing, but from a rogue NCR splinter, not the entire faction.

Dialogue Paths & Skill Checks:

- [Speech 60+] → Convince Johnny to explain his full plan, he intends to force The King out, but not kill him (yet).
- [Barter 50+] → Johnny offers caps and power if the player helps him take over.

- [Followers Rep Check] → If the player is allied with The Followers, Johnny admits *they'd be a problem* for his plans.

Twist:

- If the player presses Johnny, he reveals why The King never speaks of him:
  "He wasn't always The King. He and I started this together. We built The Kings. But when the NCR first came sniffing, he folded, let them push in. He exiled me for wanting more."
- Johnny presents the player with a choice:
  - "Help me. Or stay out of my way."

Phase 4: Shaping Freeside's Future

Option 1: Support The King (Defend Freeside's Freedom)

- Report back to The King → Reveal Johnny's return and NCR backing.
- The King is visibly shaken, Johnny was once his closest friend.
- Problem is, The Kings are already divided.

Paths to Keep The King in Power:

- [Speech 80+] → Convince Johnny to leave peacefully (*only if the player exposes the NCR's betrayal*).
- [Combat] → Lead The Kings in a raid on The Monarch, killing Johnny.

Outcome:

- Freeside remains independent, but NCR tightens its grip through other methods (player involvement)
- The King hardens and changes character, he starts taking leadership differently but more strictly.

Option 2: Support Johnny Velvet (A New Regime)

- The player helps Johnny overthrow The King.
- The player weakens The King's reputation.

Paths to Overthrow The King:

- [Speech 70+] → Convince key Kings, such as Sergio and Tapper, to turn on The King.
- [Barter Illusion] → The player can *attempt* to bribe Pacer, but his loyalty will remain true.
- [Combat] → Lead Johnny's men in a coup at The King's School.

Outcome:

TRIGGER		FACIAL EXPRESSION	
AllyKilled	Damn! We needed them for the run!	Angry	
	We've got a problem! Man down!	Angry	
	You'll pay for that!	Angry	
	They got 'em! Keep your heads down!	Angry	
	I'm not hauling that corpse with the cargo.	Angry	
Attack	Let's clear this roadblock!	Angry	
	Can't have shit!	Angry	
	You picked the wrong trail!	Angry	
	This run was getting boring!	Angry	
	Get ready for a rough ride!	Angry	
	Fight back! Earn your keep!	Angry	
	This is the *last* thing I need today!	Angry	
AvoidThreat	This will ruin our schedule! Get out!	Angry	
	Get back! Get *back!*	Worried	
	Shit, take cover!	Worried	
	Keep your distance!	Worried	
	This ain't worth the damage!	Worried	
BleedOut	Not... not on the road...	InPain	
	All of this for some shitty caps...	InPain	
	Just need to get to the next post...	InPain	
	Told them I wouldn't make it...	InPain	
	Told them this run wasn't... worth shit...		
CoverMe	Cover me! Now!	Irritated	
	I'm pinned! Help me!	Irritated	
	Don't stand there gawking!	Irritated	
	Keep 'em busy, you slackers!	Irritated	
	Can I get some help?!	Irritated	
	Agh! My arm!	InPain	
	Shit! My leg! I-I can't walk!	InPain	

CrippledLimb	Agh! That was my arm!	InPain	
	My knee! Shit, shit!	InPain	
	They blew off my fuckin' trigger finger!	InPain	
	Augh!	InPain	
	Ow, that hurts like hell!	InPain	
	My chest... it hurts...	InPain	
	Fuckin' migraine... this hurts...	InPain	
Death	What a run...	InPain	
	S-shit...	InPain	
	Agh...	InPain	
	I-I can still... make the run...	InPain	
	I never break even...	InPain	
	Why me...	InPain	
Flee	Retreat! We're cutting our losses!	Afraid	
	Get out of here! Run!	Afraid	
	Not dying for this load!	Afraid	
	I'm pulling out! Trail's clear!	Afraid	
	Not worth any of this crap!	Afraid	
Hit	You owe me for that!	Confident	
	That all you got, road trash?	Confident	
	You hit like a Radroach!	Confident	
	Ngh, take this!	InPain	
	Agh, shit! That hurt!	InPain	
OrderFallback	We need to fall back!	Worried	
	Move back, don't take too much damage!	Worried	
	Come on, get moving!	Worried	
	They damaged the goods, run!	Worried	
	This isn't worth losing the run! Fallback!	Worried	
OrderFlank	Get 'em from the side!	Confident	
	Pin them while I move!	Confident	
	Hit the sides!	Confident	

	Time for some side action!	Confident	
	Hit their weak side!	Confident	
OrderTakeCover	Grab cover! Now!	Worried	
	Get some damn cover!	Worried	
	Get behind something! Even the brahmin!	Concerned	
	Don't let 'em ruin the equipment!	Concerned	
	Get down! Now!	Concerned	
OrderMoveUp	Moving up!	Confident	
	Time to move up!	Confident	
	Get out there!	Confident	
	Go! Go! Move!	Confident	
	The longer we wait, the more trouble we draw! Move!	Confident	
SupressiveFire	Keep those heads down, scavs!	Confident	
	They're pinned! Use the opening!	Confident	
	Usin' all my ammo here! Move!	Confident	
	Layin' down some fire! Move it!	Confident	
	They're stuck! Let's finish 'em!	Confident	
Taunt	You ain't worth the bullet it takes to kill you!	Confident	
	Go back to rooting through trash!	Confident	
	Eat rad lead, asshole!	Confident	
	You're nothing! We're getting paid!	Confident	
	Get lost! We don't have time for this!	Confident	
	Expensive power armor there! Seems you'll die poor!	Confident	pa
	This asshole's got a suit!	Confident	pa
	That's a lot of firepower for a mugging!	Confident	
	Big gun, small target!	Confident	
	Fuckin' scavs!	Confident	
	Grenade out!	Angry	
	Sending a little package your way!	Angry	

Calinsis Redana

People - Church of the Thousand Eyes

Calinsis Redana is a Communications Captain within the Bellamissaro regiment of the Cervinian Guard. Born in 945 AA, he came from a commoner background and received an education in psionics from The Order of Climensor with a specialization in the nascent field of communications psionics. Where then, he has employed his education within the Bellamissaro and remains as such. He has two sons and is happily married.

After becoming disheartened with the theology of the church after the passing of his sister, he eventually found The Thousand Eyes. Since then, he has been a loyal member of the Church of The Thousand Eyes for nearly a decade. Over the course of his membership within the church, he has demonstrated his capacity and eagerness to serve the church.

Oftentimes, he will pass on small pieces of information about guard movements, launching of investigations, and more, which are passed onto Doliturne. He has, in fact, worked with Doliturne extensively, and the two of them share a great mutual respect for each other, along with some friendship.

Grisella Bascriphis

People - Church of the Thousand Eyes

Born in 940 AA, Grisella is a professor of Natural Psionics at Linsilla University, wife to Alinsol, and mother to Doliturne. Coming from a more poor family, Grisella was prodigal at nature psionics from a young age where her talents were luckily recognized for what they could be. After spending years of her young adult life struggling, working, and making her way through the world, she eventually made a name for herself through her academic work in natural psionics. Through academia she met Alinsol, became close with him, and eventually the two were wed.

Although she knows of The Thousand Eyes, she is not a member, and has mixed feelings about the goals of the church. On one hand, she is deeply devout, and understands the sincerity of the theology. However, she has seen the church strain her marriage across the years, and has a more complex view as a result. While Alinsol has focused his attention on his work, Grisella found herself as the sole parent of Doliturne. She loves her son deeply, and worries about his future within the church. Through the years, an emotional gulf has developed between Alinsol and her, but even still, she loves him.

In matters of theology, Grisella considers herself a devout Cervinian, but she is not rigid or dogmatic. She finds herself sympathetic to the views of the Thousand Eyes in many respects,

though this is not something she publicly admits. She finds herself in a difficult position, straddling the line between her personal faith, her husband's cause, and the institutional church she has taught within her entire career.

Corensus

People - Parliament of Cervinae

Corensus is a serving Parliamentarian within the secular branch of the Cervinian Church, currently acting as the representative for his Parish. A moderately sized district comprised mostly of Artisans and manufactories. Corensus is a relatively new addition to the political theater of the Parliament, having won his seat only three years ago. Despite his short tenure, Corensus has made himself known for his particular brand of ambitious pragmatism and his ability to navigate between the entrenched factions that dominate the Parliament with a flexibility that older members sometimes mistake for opportunism.

In matters of doctrine and governance, Corensus is a moderate, committed to neither the reformist wing of the Parliament nor to its more conservative elements. He has cultivated this position deliberately, understanding that in a Parliament where power is distributed as unevenly as it is in Cervinae, those who align too firmly with any single bloc limit their own future possibilities. His constituents, largely artisans and working-class Cervinians, care little for the theological debates that consume so much of the Parliament's time. They want fair labor standards, protection of guild rights, and honest administration of the city's infrastructure. Corensus has been attentive to these concerns, and they have rewarded him with a loyalty that his fellow Parliamentarians have taken note of.

Beyond the floor of the Parliament, Corensus maintains a modest household and a reputation for personal integrity that is, in the context of Cervinian politics, somewhat unusual. He does not take bribes, at least not the obvious kind, and he has not yet accumulated the debts of obligation that define the careers of most long-serving Parliamentarians. Whether this speaks to genuine principle or simply to the caution of a man who has not yet been offered the right price remains to be seen.

The Church of the Thousand Eyes

Factions - Secret Sects

Forged from the quiet labors of Praeso Dioscynresus, theologian and visionary of no small conviction, the Church of the Thousand Eyes was founded in secrecy some fifty years past. Its foundations laid in the margins of orthodox Cervinianism thought before its existence was known to any but the most trusted of the faithful such as Alinsol and Vivo. Upon Praeso's death in 959 AA, stewardship of the Church passed to his pupils Alinsol Bascriphis II and Vivo Ponscreus. Alinsol handled the organization and leadership while Vivo maintained development of its doctrine. Under careful and deliberate action, the sect has grown from a small congregation of the like-minded into something that the Second Church of Cervinae, were it to perceive the full breadth of what stirs beneath its feet, would recognize as a threat of considerable consequence.

In matters of tradition and observance, the Church of the Thousand Eyes does not diverge far from the faith that bore it. It continues celebrating the same holy days, venerating the same saints, and holding to the same sacred history that has united the people of Cervinae for nearly a millennium. The divergence lies deeper, in a single discrete theological antecedent whose implications radiate outward into every corner of Cervinian doctrine. Where the mainline Church of Cervinae holds that The Lord is distant, watchful from the heavens as a shepherd who tends his flock from afar; the Thousand Eyes proclaims that He is present at each stride of the faithful, woven into the fabric of their daily existence, intimate and perpetual in His attention. From this foundational difference there emerge radically different answers to the same questions the Church of Cervinae has grappled with across its centuries of tradition, questions of divine will, of psionic purpose, of what it truly means to be the chosen people of The Lord.

Against the vast institutional bulwark of the Church of Cervinae, the Thousand Eyes remains small, its adherents a carefully selected congregation whose loyalty Alinsol has cultivated with the patience of a buck who understands that the work of generations cannot be rushed. To openly challenge the Second Church of Cervinae at this juncture would be to invite dissolution. Alinsol is not a buck given to such blunt instruments. Instead he moves within the institutions of Cervinae with deliberate and unhurried purpose, laying the groundwork for an ascension with the quiet certainty of one truly faithful.

BANDIT FOUR
Ha ha! Nice shot!

Bandit three continues laughing, throwing his hands in the air in a bashful manner.

BANDIT THREE
But the best part is yet to come. As he falls off the horse, a second rider appears behind him. He looks scared and confused, as well as wounded. You can tell who did it, right?

The rest of the bandits point to another bandit, who is leaning against a beam with a drink in hand while grinning.

BANDIT FIVE
Yep! That's my lad. What a great shot.

He grins, raising his glass to toast his friends.

BANDIT THREE
Wait, wait! Shut up! Listen!

BANDIT TWO
I am listening! Keep going with the story!

BANDIT THREE
No, you idiot! Look-

One of the bandits are swiftly killed by a sword strike. All the other bandits turn to look where the attack came from, finding two riders standing approach out of nowhere. They are clad in armor, shield and sword, and they reveal themselves to be...

BANDIT ONE
Knights!

The bandits panic, trying to find cover and escape. The knight riding first grabs a nearby axe lying near the dead body and swings it with expertise, hitting several bandits. A brief skirmish starts.

From the back, the bandit previously leaning against a wooden support beam is no longer there.

One of the other cornered bandits placed in the front of the chaos looks back to find him but cannot spot him.

With his own sword in hand, then turns to parry a swing from a knight, but does not succeed.

Another hit hits him in the side, sending him crashing onto the ground. A third blow lands on his head, killing him instantly.

As the knight still mounted dismounts, he notices the rest of the bandits now dead on the ground. The two other knights assisting in clearing the hideout search the place but find nothing of importance.

A sudden arrow strikes one knight on the head, with his helmet proving useless as the arrow found its way into its opening through the sockets.

He collapses immediately, dying before anyone could react. The other knights find the last remaining bandit on top of a log across the hideout, holding a bow.

While the first knight gets on his horse and rides to cut off his exit, the other knight runs towards the bandit.

Their plan works perfectly, and the bandit, realizing he is cornered, drops his bow and draws his sword, ready to defend himself.

The knight approaches quickly, swinging his blade down to end the fight once and for all. The bandit manages to block the blow and dodge the next, allowing him time to draw a dagger.

His opponent has no intention of letting this opportunity go. With a swift stab, the knight him on the ground, also knocking his sword and his dagger away with ease, leaving him defenseless.

BANDIT
You haven't killed me already. What do you want?

KNIGHT ONE
Your leader was not here. Where is he?

The bandit scoffs while on the ground.

BANDIT
You already killed him.

KNIGHT ONE
You find that easy to believe?