

The Tournament

Initial Brief

>>> Incoming Transmission

>>> Source Identifier: Aces High # Ace's World

>>> Destination Identifier: TE3-Firebrand#Her Glorious Command#Starlight Ebbing#Muse IX#Endeavour#Unquiet Journey#Starlight Ebbing#*

>>> Subject: Recruiting a Tournament Team

>>> Message Begins

Aces High is seeking to recruit a team to compete in a tournament at a settlement on Ace's World. If interested, see the attached file. Applicants should report to Aces High. If selected, your entry fee will be covered.

>>> Attachment: Original document in ink on parchment, transcribed as follows:

By decree of King Valiant, all ye of knightly demeanour and chivalrous value are invited to compete in the annual Tournament of Fableland, by trial of might, skill, and strength. The prizes afforded to the victors shall number one dozen gold pieces for both the Team Tourney and the Contest of Skill, and four-and-twenty gold pieces for the champion of the Grand Melee.

>>> Message Ends

>>> End Transmission

Characters

- [Honest Jack](#) - Susannah
- [Wretched Export](#) - James
- [Last Resort](#) - Katie

Summary

- The party are sent by Aces High to compete in the annual Tournament of Fableland while surreptitiously keeping an eye on proceedings to make sure no one destabilises the current status quo or, in the words of Last Resort, "blow it up".
- On the way, they encounter an angry flock of goosehawks and their baby goslingeyas. They defeat the goosehawks, steal their eggs and Honest Jack sets fire to their nest to cook one of them. It doesn't taste great.
- Eventually, barren land gives way to a patchwork of small fields and farmland which appear to be farmed without any automation. The town of Fableland stands behind a wooden palisade, reinforced with metal sheeting. They are greeted by a farmer who speaks with a smattering of archaic words. A few decay seekers shamle up, attracted by the technology that outsiders have brought into the kingdom, but they are easily dispatched by a guard named Straight Shooting who also mentions King's treasure vault.
- Within the gates of Fableland, the party first meets King Valiant who signs them up. Last Resort comes up with the team name Trebuchet, after a particularly attractive piece of siege equipment she'd like to see mounted on Wretched Export's shoulder. The team leader is explicitly *not* Last Resort.

- In the tavern, which bears only the name Tavern, Team Trebuchet meet some of their competitors, including Feral Instinct and one of his trained raktors, Fableland native Farmer Brown, and River Turned, a various vyxian in plate armour. Last Resort is particularly intrigued by Grey Beard the wizard's claims of magical ability. It soon becomes clear that Grey Beard is actually the roleplaying character of Starlit Dream. The fake beard and elf ears stuck to the side of her chirrid exoskeleton are somewhat of a giveaway.
- In the first match, Team Trebuchet defeat the Farmer team, despite their ingenious attempt at using a scarecrow to exploit the "last team member standing" rule. In the second round, they face Grey Beard - actually Starlit Dream and her group of friends pretending to be magical mirror copies of Grey Beard. They are not particularly effective and some are quite traumatised by real violence. Last Resort attempts to cheer Starlit Dream by upgrading her wizard staff prop to fire grenades. It explodes.
- Coming into the semi-finals, they are up against River Turned's knights who have so far sailed through. They quickly determine that the knights are actually security bots welded into suits of armour and what's more, they're suffering from decay. Once her ailing bots are put down, River Turned surrenders, putting Team Trebuchet through to the finals.
- In a climactic final bout, Team Trebuchet is very nearly defeated by Feral Instinct's trained raktors, Blue, Alpha, and Gamma, but snatch victory from the jaws of defeat.
- While Honest Jack and Wretched Export plan their talents for the Contest of Skill, Last Resort races after Starlit Dream.
- After witnessing a spectacular display of skill by Feral Instinct and Alpha, Wretched Export attempts to impress King Valiant and the audience by constructing a fully-functioning trebuchet. The trebuchet works exactly once... flinging Last Resort up through the tavern roof and then flying into pieces. This disastrous display is quickly forgotten when Honest Jack burns the tavern down.
- While all the guards inside the town are busy dealing with the fire, the party realise that Straight Shooting, who is mysteriously unknown to both King and his sheriff, has vanished. Realising he is an imposter, King Valiant directs the party to his secret vault behind the throne. There they catch Straight Shooting in the process of robbing the vault. They take the brigands to the gaol and put them in the stocks. In thanks, King Valiant offers them each a knighthood, though Last Resort gives hers to Alpha the raktor.
- Team Trebuchet return for the grand melee. One by one, the competitors fall until it is only Wretched Export and Honest Jack left. Honest Jack appears sure to triumph with his flaming sword but through sheer determination, Wretched Export powers through the flame to stand victorious as champion of the melee.
- However, the tournament has attracted many, many decay creatures outside of the walls and so begins a surprise fourth event - defending the kingdom. Team Trebuchet fight through waves of decaying monsters, finally defeating a giant mechanical mining scorpion.

Aftermath

- After the end of the tournament, Wretched Export collects his winnings from the grand melee. Honest Jack shares around some of the loot he stole from the thieves who stole it from King Valiant.
- The party report back to Aces High. Last Resort informs her about the presence of Straight Shooting's ship, presumably abandoned somewhere nearby. Wretched Export points out that they don't have the name or a description of the ship.
- Export sets out to find this ship. He's able to narrow down the search area by consulting with topographical maps to identify potential landing sites for a ship within reasonable distance of

Fableland. After a few false leads, he finds a landing spot. Scorch marks and furrows in the sand mark where the ship was but it seems it has left recently. However, Export is able to find a local prospector who got a look at the ship and reveals its name: *Pandemonium*. When he relays this information to Aces High, her poker face is nigh unreadable but the absence of a reaction is telling in itself.

- Last Resort gets in touch with Grey Beard (aka Starlit Dream) and helps her design and build a new wizard staff, complete components which light up and emit effects such as sparks and smoke.
- Honest Jack becomes Aces High's official liaison with Fableland. The job isn't too strenuous since Aces High's policy toward Fableland is fairly laissez-faire. It does, however, come with VIP access to all casinos on Ace's World.

Consequences

All Characters

- +3 Clout with Ace's High or +1 with another faction.

Ser Wretched Export of Fableland

- Knighthood
- +1 clout with Ace's High for information about the *Pandemonium*.
- 55gp (tradable with anyone who has a use for gold)

Last Resort

- +1 clout with Ace's High for information about the brigand ship
- Friendship with Starlit Dream
- +1 clout with the Borderland Botanists as a result of using her prize money and loot to help Starlit Dream whose day job is in hydroponics on Kyal.

Ser Honest Jack of Fableland

- Knighthood
- +2 clout as Ace's liaison to Fableland (plus VIP casino access)
- 39gp (tradable with anyone who has a use for gold)

[mission](#), [honest jack](#), [wretched export](#), [last resort](#)

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