Character ideas for the Christpunk

This section offers basic ideas and guides to your character to help you fit them in the world of the Crusades.

Choose your race

As in the core rulebooks, you should decide which race you'd like to play first. It has an impact on some of the decisions you have to make ahead.

Human

If you choose to play as a human, you don't need extra effort to adapt your appearance, as you have nothing to hide. However, if you have some arcane features regarding your body due to your class, background that is magical or arcane in nature, you must take some precautions to hide them as it may arouse many questions.

Non-Human

If you choose to play as a non-human race, think about the sections on how to keep your arcane features a secret from the superstitious, hateful, and ignorant eyes of the locals. See Running a Story in the Crusades in the Era of the Crusades to see how you might hide out amongst the humans. Naturally, some races will need to go to greater lengths than others to hide their true nature.

Where did you come from?

Take some time to consider this question. Jerusalem is a place where people from different civilizations all across the world meet. Though it doesn't have to define you, the place you come from is still important in understanding how you fit into this rich tapestry and decide your place in the world through roleplaying and character development.

1) I am from Kingdom of Jerusalem

You can be a local of the Kingdom of Jerusalem or be born in the city itself. You can be a knight,

squire, farmer, trader, priest, acolyte, sage or a person with a whole other profession or interest. You are on your journey to return to the city. It is where you live after all – it can be the reason for the beginning of the adventure. You know the customs, laws, culture, habits and other aspects about the city. You probably know who's in charge, which lord does what, and which knightly order helps out the poor and similar core information regarding the city.

The GM may feed you needed information in the right places without an ability check.

2) I am from Europe

You are from Europe, possibly and not limited to Berlin, Vienna, Toledo, Paris, Warsaw, Belgrad, Copenhagen,

Brussels, Stockholm, London, Venice, Rome, Florence.

You came here for a cause. It can be for pilgrimage, joining the crusade or a whole other reason. You still share

a bond with the locals and nobles in Jerusalem. There is a good chance you have the same faith and speak the same languages or at least you are familiar with the languages spoken in the Holy Lands and probably know the general customs and traditions of the kingdom.

3) I am from Ayyubid Dynasty

You can be from Cairo, Alexandria, Damascus, Aleppo or a similar city or countryside controlled by the Ayyubid Dynasty, thus from the areas called Egypt or Syria. You can be a local Muslim or an Eastern Christian, or even one of the descendents of the Ptolemaic Dynasty or local Egyptians of old. You are familiar with the area, as Jerusalem is surrounded by the Ayyubid forces and Saladin's army is closing in. You are aware of the general customs, law and people in the city and know some important figures by name.

4) I am from other Muslim countries

You can be from Isfahan, Baghdad, Tashkent, Ghazne, Anatolia or other Muslim-controlled places. You may have originated from the remnants of the Great Seljuk Empire as they face their last years or come from Anatolia, the very heart of the Sultanate of Rum, another country controlled by the Seljuk Dynasty. You are familiar with Muslim laws and customs but probably don't know the specifics about

the Holy Lands and especially about Jerusalem. You may bring special trade goods, interesting items, weapons and other things after consulting with your GM.

5) I am from Byzantine Empire or other

Christian realms

You are from Constantinaple, Macedonia, Silistre, Thessaloniki, Kiev, Moscow, Thracia or a similar Christian-ruled realm. You can be considered as an ally of the Crusaders depending on your

worldviews or you could be an Eastern Orthodox that has an enmity towards
the Roman Catholics. You probably know Greek, Russian, Armenian or other proper language and do not share the tongue with the locals. You can bring special items from your realms with the discretion of the GM. You can be greeted as a friend or an interesting traveler but the locals most likely heard about your realm and will be interested in what you brought. In general, you are a stranger to
these lands and you do not know local laws, customs and traditions and only heard them in legends.

6) I am from distant lands

You can be from Nanjing, Xi’an, Lhasa, Delhi, Ferghana, Ordu Baliq, Otugen, Mali, Kyoto, Kilwa. You are most likely considered a stranger among these lands, and you probably only know of myths, legends and childhood tales of the holy cities of the Levant. Though people from all over the world are commonplace in the markets and caravanserai of the region, people are more likely to be curious of you and want to raise a glass of ale with you and hear your story. Alternatively, some may be suspicious of you and act hostile towards you.

If the GM allows you, you may bring interesting weapons, items, armor, tools or exotic goods with you.

Jerusalem Hooks

This section offers ideas about your characters’ motive for entering Jerusalem. There can be just one motive or many at once depending on the character’s backstory. Work with your GM to establish the details.

Business Reason

You are trying to reach Jerusalem in a matter related to your occupation, profession or interest.

D8 BUSINESS REASONS

1

In Jerusalem lies your chance to settle a crippling trade debt. Protecting the caravan and succeeding
in the city's cutthroat markets is your only hope to avoid financial ruin and a life of servitude.

2

You are sent as envoys to negotiate with the King, but the real task is to repay a massive
debt to the crown, incurred by your homeland. If you fail, your local government faces severe diplomatic
and economic repercussions…

3

You are an ambitious merchant seeking to establish new trade routes in Jerusalem. Your goal is to secure lucrative contracts with local suppliers, navigate complex market dynamics, and outmaneuver rival traders to build a profitable trade empire.

4

As a skilled architect, you travel to Jerusalem to study its famed architectural marvels. Your objective is to gain inspiration and knowledge to apply to a significant construction project back home, requiring you to engage with local architects, scholars, and builders to exchange ideas and techniques.

5

You are a savvy banker tasked with establishing a branch in Jerusalem. This requires negotiating with local authorities for permits, understanding the economic landscape, and building a network of clients. Your success could bridge financial gaps between diverse communities and create new opportunities for trade and investment.

6

You are a collector and trader of rare manuscripts, and Jerusalem's libraries and monasteries hold the promise of undiscovered literary treasures.

7

It is rumored that there are many good blacksmiths forging incredibly good quality metal armor and weapons. You may need it for your own business and your recent unsuccessful attempts at rebuilding your business endeavors puts you in a dire position.

8

You recently failed at a job and you hear that the city needs many hands from many occupations that could be put to good use. Especially for a person like yourself: an adventurer.

Personal Reasons

Your reason to reach Jerusalem is based on personal reasons. It holds a significance for you on a personal level.

D8 PERSONAL REASONS

1 You must journey to Jerusalem on a sacred pilgrimage, not just for devotion, but to settle a debt owed to a powerful religious order. Failing to fulfill this holy mission could bring divine wrath upon you and your loved ones...

2 Your quest for ancient knowledge leads you to Jerusalem, driven not just by curiosity, but to repay a debt of honor to a legendary scholar. Failure to uncover the sought-after secrets could tarnish your mentor's legacy forever.

3 Seeking a healer in Jerusalem serves as your cover to spy on a secretive medicinal guild for a rival faction. As you search for the cure, you must also discreetly gather information on the guild's practices and alliances.
4 A dear mentor who once dreamt of a pilgrimage to Jerusalem has passed away in Baghdad. Honoring their last wish, you are here to complete their journey, facing both emotional and physical trials along the sacred path.
5 You flee to Jerusalem not for sanctuary, but to seek retribution against someone who betrayed you in the past. As you navigate the city's labyrinthine streets, you know this vendetta will end in death – yours or theirs.
6 A dear friend, now passed, always dreamed of visiting Jerusalem but could never make the journey. Carrying their diary filled with notes and sketches of the city, you embark on this journey to fulfill their dream, experiencing the city through their eyes.
7 A loved one of yours or someone dear to you in a way you choose, came to Jerusalem some time ago, possibly to join the Holy War. You are in search of them.
8 You have a calling in your heart. It lies in Jerusalem and you know it’s a holy duty. You must join this holy war as a Crusader or as a Saracen.
D6 OTHER IDEAS
1 A mysterious seer has prophesied that your destiny lies within the ancient walls of Jerusalem.
2 In your family's old heirlooms, you discover a cryptic scroll hinting at a long-lost family treasure hidden somewhere in Jerusalem.
3 You're a renowned artist who experienced a vivid dream of a unique, undiscovered artifact in Jerusalem. Believing it to be the inspiration for your masterpiece, you travel to the city, intent on finding this artifact and unveiling its hidden beauty through your art.
4 Once a noble of Jerusalem, you were unjustly exiled. Hearing rumors of political shifts, you return, determined to reclaim your honor and position.
5 As a musician, you're haunted by a fragment of a melody you once overheard, said to originate from an ancient instrument in Jerusalem. Believing that completing this melody is key to your greatest composition, you embark on a quest to uncover the musical secret.
6 An ancient astrological event predicted only once in a millennium is set to occur, visible perfectly from Jerusalem. As an astronomer, you cannot miss this celestial event, believing it holds the key to understanding the cosmos.

CLASS BACKSTORY/CLASS IDEAS

Barbarian Seeking to prove your strength and earn the respect of your tribe, you've heard of a

legendary warrior in Jerusalem known for their unparalleled combat skills. You journey there to challenge them and gain glory through a test of might.

Bard A famous bard has composed an epic poem said to reveal a hidden truth about Jerusalem's history. Intrigued and inspired, you travel to the city to uncover the story behind the poem and compose your own masterpiece.

Cleric A divine vision has called you to Jerusalem, where an ancient relic of your deity is said to be hidden. Your mission is to find and protect this sacred object, facing both spiritual and physical trials on your holy quest.

Druid Your very connection to the wilds calls you to a city for the first time. When you commune with nature, you feel the

corrupted branches and roots of a dark tree trying to embrace Jerusalem and drown it to the dark lands that resemble a dreadful swamp.

Fighter You are looking for seasonal warriors that can train you or you are looking for formidable warriors that can test your might and prowess. You are sure to find one in Jerusalem, the victorious army that defeated Saladin years ago.

Monk Your spiritual connection to the cosmos has recently been crippled. You now seek a way to reforge it and your inner Ki guides you to the city of Jerusalem. Your masters and mentors all agree that something dark and dangerous lurks under it and it is worthy of investigating.

Paladin You are a holy warrior and Jerusalem, the holiest city, is where you belong. Deus vult!

Ranger As a ranger, you journey to Jerusalem to track a rare, mythical eagle rumored to nest atop the city's ancient walls, seeking to understand its mysterious connection to the city's history and the natural world.

Rogue You are looking for a mysterious person last seen in Jerusalem. Someone offered an entrance to an important black market in exchange.

Sorcerer Your arcane research has led you to Jerusalem, where a convergence of magical ley lines is rumored to occur. Seeking to tap into this immense power, you journey to the city to unlock new magical abilities and secrets.

Warlock

Through your patron, you feel a sense of dread and a calling from the cosmos itself that stimulates the ancient fear that resides inside you. The very heart of Jerusalem is infested with the horror that strangles your soul and you must discover what lies there.

Wizard An ancient library in Jerusalem holds a spellbook containing unique and powerful spells. As a wizard, you seek this book to expand your magical repertoire and delve deeper into the arcane arts.

Conflicting Characters

The Holy Lands are in the middle of turmoil and there are two main sides: Kingdom of Jerusalem (The Crusaders) and the Ayyubid Dynasty of Syria and Egypt (The Saracens).

The players are free to choose who they are, there are no restrictions (unless you, as a GM, force some restrictions on them, this is going to be your story after all). All that is expected from the players for them to have a strong reason to travel to Jerusalem.

As the player characters are free to choose, there can be many different characters with different and even opposing backgrounds. For example, one character could be a Mamluk-trained-fighter and a loyal soldier to Sultan, leader of the Saracens, while the other could be
a proud and strong Crusader (a Paladin) who is extremely loyal to the King. From a distance, these characters seem to clash from the beginning and could turn enemies very quickly. In Sigil of Jerusalem, this is not the case.

There are several reasons that can be explored before the beginning of the campaign:

F There is truce between Baldwin and Saladin. It is a fragile peace but some Muslim entries to the Crusader cities are allowed.

F The story’s main plot is about an eldritch horror that lies beneath the city of Jerusalem rather than the enmity between the two clashing countries.

F The characters’ backgrounds can be tied to stop the enmities between them.

F The story’s first important moment will tie the characters nonetheless to a tied cause. So, at the beginning of the story, some tension between them can be explored and that could turn out to be a great companionship.

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