



Rivals for CATAN

Part 12 -“Age of Enlightenment” Expansion – “The Era of Prosperity” Theme Set

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In the fictitious history of Catan, the Era of Barbarians is followed by the Era of Prosperity. The barbarians have been defeated, and Catan has defended its independence. The returning prosperity improves the Catanians’ living conditions and allows the arts – influenced by the European Renaissance – to flourish on Catan. This has a positive effect on the contentment of the citizens.

In the game, the citizens’ contentment is represented by the “**Public Feeling**” marker card. The blue stars symbolize contentment points. A player can earn or lose contentment points by means of certain actions – in each case, the card is rotated in the corresponding direction.

Being in the role of princes or princesses, it is in our – the players’ – hands whether our people are content or whether the next insurrection is just around the corner ... Let’s see how our nameless **Prince** deals with his new possibilities:

“Good morning, Your Princely Highness. Congratulations to your inauguration! You rested well, I hope?”



“No, not at all, Chancellor! Almost all night long I asked myself the nagging question of how to replenish my empty coffers.”

“Your Highness should build **schools**.”

“Schools? Those country bumpkins are supposed to drudge, not laze around!”

“Of course, Your Highness. But please consider that he who is literate and numerate will be more successful as a craftsman or merchant. And he who is more successful is more content and can pay higher taxes and thus will fill your princely coffers faster.

“Good point, Chancellor. Well then, let schools be built. But those yokels have to learn fast. I can’t wait forever to get my money.”

At the same time, in the **Princess’s** chamber:

“Good morning, Princess. I hope you had a good night?”

“No, unfortunately not, dear sister. I had to think incessantly of the poor in my principality. There are so many who have no land to cultivate grain or at least sustain a skinny cow on a pasture.”

“Maybe you should establish common property. That is, land that every inhabitant of a village can use. In old Europe, which I recently visited, they call it **Common Land**.”

“That’s a good idea, dear sister. I will immediately decree that parts of my princely property be designated as common property.”

“You won’t regret it. With Common Land in the future, not only will your people be better off, there will also be fewer resource shortages.”

“Yes, those shortages are really a pain in the neck. In one area the granaries are filled to the brim, while in



another area people don't have a single brick for building.”

“So why don't you also give your people places where they can meet to trade?”

“You mean, I should establish a **Small Market Town** between larger market towns?”

“Yes, then people won't have to travel too far in order to use their abundance in one resource to balance their shortage in another.”

Chapter 2

A few months later, in the Prince's reception room:

His face pinched with grief, the Chancellor entered and bowed to the Prince.

“Why so glum?” the Prince grunted. “Have the peasants skipped their dues, because their brats are wasting time in school instead of helping with the harvest?”

“Worse, my Prince. The Brigands have struck again and robbed a shipment of wool and gold that was meant for you.”

The Chancellor ducked the princely slipper flying towards him as well as the furious rant that simultaneously rained down on him.

“What's gotten into you, Chancellor! Confronting me with such ghastly news before my afternoon nap, that's outrageous! And what do you intend to do about that ruffraff?” “We could hire **Mercenaries**, your Highness, to secure the roads.”

“Mercenaries, I see! If they offer their services for free, then I'm all for it.”

“Probably not for free, but we could send the thieves who are now in the dungeon to the Princess's realm and use the stolen goods in the **Thieves' Hideout** to pay the Mercenaries.”

“Good proposal, Chancellor. Killing two birds with one stone. The Princess's success and popularity are a thorn in my side anyway.”



In the neighboring principality, the Princess was walking through the streets of her city, accompanied by a small entourage. At a plaza, she encountered some children standing around a well with empty buckets in their hands – they were all weeping.

“Why are you crying, children?” she asked.

One girl valiantly stepped forward, made an awkward curtsy, and replied. “The well is empty, Your Highness, and in all other wells of the city, the water is bad and makes us sick. If we come back with empty buckets, our parents will be very angry again.”

“There is no clean water?” The Princess gave her sister a horrified look. “Why does nobody tell me these things? Somebody has to do something about it!”

“Dear Princess, I didn’t want to bother you with that,” her sister replied. “Only an **Aqueduct** that carries fresh water from the mountains to the city could help. But building one is too expensive. We cannot afford it.”

“Yes, we can!” With a forceful movement of her hand, the Princess seemed to brush aside her sister’s concerns.

“There are many craftspeople here that are looking for work. We’ll construct a **Builders’ Hut**, gather them there, and provide them with the tools and building materials needed.”

“Dear princess sister, that still leaves the financing problem unresolved, particularly since a mysterious band of thieves has been stealing resources from us lately.”

“The Prince sent them after us, that obnoxious fellow. But we’ll turn the tables on him and send **Bera the Insurrectionist** after him. That will increase his unpopularity, until he is ready to help us out with resources for our Aqueduct in return for Bera’s withdrawal.”



Chapter 3

Once again, some time has passed. Our scene unfolds in the reception hall of the Prince's **City Palace**. "Did we finally get rid of that Bera, Chancellor? Or is she still instigating the people against me? By the Gods! After two **Insurrections**, half of the city has been reduced to rubble. This needs to end!"

"It has ended, Your Highness," the Chancellor replied. "Shortly before our guards could catch her, Bera finally returned to the circle of the Princess's court ladies."

The Chancellor fervently hoped that the Prince would not ask him how much this had cost the state coffers.

"Good. But even so, things must change, Chancellor. The people ought to venerate me. The large **Relief** I recently bestowed upon my subjects in memory of the glorious past of my ancestors doesn't seem to impress them much. We need something that makes them look up to me. We need a monument with an impressive bronze statue of me. A powerful, martial monument that would even impress the Princess's own heroes."

"Good idea, Your Highness," replied the Chancellor. "However, the princely coffers are empty. How can we ..."

"Whaaat!?" the Prince screamed. "Do you have no imagination? Clearly, you do not. The magic word for filled coffers is **Taxation**! Don't you know that?"

The Chancellor cleared his throat. "But Your Highness," he said intimidated, "that would already be the fourth special tax of this year ..."

"So what? People will be proud to make sacrifices for a magnificent monument of their Prince. Get hold of a **Traveling Theater** if you like. Aren't there still some actors in the dungeon? Have them put on some funny play. That will raise the people's spirits. And distribute bread for free."



At the same time, in the Princess's ballroom:

“Thank you for your loyal services, Bera. It seems you gave the Prince a terrible time.”

“It wasn't difficult, Princess,” replied Bera. “The Prince treats his people badly, and my words fell on fertile ground. Besides, I liked to contribute to building the Aqueduct.”

“Yes, finally all citizens have fresh and clean water. People are healthier and more joyful at their work. The production of fields and pastures increases noticeably and provides me with the means to build a **Hospital** soon.”

“The populace loves you for your deeds, Princess – also in the Prince's land, where more and more people manage to get across the strongly guarded border, to settle in our principality. The numbers are rising since you have started **Feeding the Poor** regularly.”

“Everyone is welcome. There is still a lot of room for settlers in my principality.”

Chapter 4

One year later, the Princess was strolling through the streets of her city again, accompanied by her sister and her small entourage. Whenever she encountered people, they bowed informally and smiled.

“Oh, dear sister, look at this gorgeous **Fountain!**” exclaimed the Princess. “It reminds me of the time when our ancestors' ships ran ashore on Catan. Our citizens love it. For them, it is the symbol of the new quality of life we have created by building the Aqueduct and the Hospital.”

“Yes, it is indeed. And it is so refreshing, especially since it is so unbearably hot today,” replied her sister.

“Say, who posed as a model for the sculptor who created the wonderful **Sculpture** over



there?” she asked. “Although made of stone, the man looks very much alive. His eyes seem to rest on the Fountain, with a pensive or perhaps even slightly melancholic glance.”

The Princess gave her sister a mischievous smile. “What, my educated sister has never heard of Austin, one of our founding fathers?” she said. “Austin was a monk and initially, one of Candamir’s slaves. He ran ashore on Catan together with our ancestors. He was the one who, in his chronicles, told of the beginnings of the settling of Catan. The sculptor created him according to how I imagined him.”

“In that case, your imagination should have provided him with a friendlier countenance,” retorted the Princess’s sister. “Austin would surely be proud and happy if he could see what the descendants of the first settlers have created on Catan.”

“Dear sister, perhaps it isn’t the Trick Fountain he’s focusing on. Maybe his eyes are gazing beyond it, towards the principality of my despotic neighbor. And he like me, most assuredly doesn’t like what he sees there. Our **Court Astrologer** thinks that the stars will soon align favorably for a dramatic event in the realm of the Prince ...”

After the Riots, the neighboring realm of the Prince had been shaken by an Insurrection again, which had reduced the City Palace to rubble.

The Chancellor was on his way to the Prince to deliver him this bad news. As he was approaching the reception room he heard the Prince’s muffled voice:

“... and so the Prince put all enemies of his people to flight. Alone, with a bloodstained sword in his right hand, he stood on the dead bodies of his adversaries, looked up to the sky and whispered, “For my people.” From many wounds poured his blood and soaked the ground. Exhausted, nearly to the point of death, the Prince then dropped to his knees. When his subjects saw him like this, they shamefully realized that they had misjudged him, and that the many sacrifices they had made for him were nothing compared to the sacrifice the Prince had made for them: his life for his people.”

“Ahem,” the Chancellor said, clearing his throat.



“Good to see you, Chancellor!” The Prince had a feverish glint in his eyes. “Isn’t that a wonderful **Epic**?”

“Yes, Your Highness, please excuse me for interrupting. Regrettably, I have to inform you that the City Palace has been destroyed. Furious citizens have ...”

“Destroyed the City Palace? So what? It isn’t important. I don’t need a City Palace. I need a place where I can present my grand Epic. Not a crummy Traveling Theater, no – a real **Theater**. My subjects will love me for it! Let a Theater be built from the ruins of the palace.”

Although the Theater would be built later, the Prince should not have the opportunity to exact another sacrifice from his people by presenting his Epic there.

On a sunny day, the Prince was at the marketplace, accompanied by only a few followers and the entire city guard. The **Monument to the Prince** was still veiled. Elated, the Prince watched as the canvases – which had protected the monument from curious looks while being built – were gradually removed. Then the last canvas fell.

The Prince’s smile became a grimace, and his complexion acquired an unhealthy flush of red. It wasn’t he who, cast in bronze, stood on top of the monument’s pedestal – it was the Princess in a triumphant pose, with her oldest son in front of her. And then the latter suddenly stood at his side, in person. From houses and streets, the people flocked to the marketplace and started chanting, first softly and then louder and louder, “Long live the new Prince!”

In a daze, the Prince heard how his successor ordered the city guard to put him in chains and take him away. When he recognized that his power was broken, he dropped to his knees and sobbed miserably. When his subjects saw him like this, they realized, with immense relief, that the Prince’s despotic rule had come to an end.



The new Prince ruled his principality in his mother's spirit – wise and just. And so it didn't take long until in both principalities **Prosperity** arose and the Age of Enlightenment began.

“The Era of Prosperity” is the first of three new Theme Sets of the “**Age of Enlightenment**” expansion for “**The Rivals for Catan.**”

In my next blog post, I will present the first cards of “**The Era of Explorers**” Theme Set. This set is a new development – there are no comparable cards in the old “Catan Card Game.”

Klaus Teuber

The logo for the board game Catan, featuring the word "CATAN" in a bold, serif font with a curved line arching over the letters "A" and "N".