*Xaire*!

You are about to play a short, fun, intense game set in Athens in 403. Big ideas are going to collide, surprises will happen, skill and luck will play a role, and you are going to have the chance to change history – *but should you*?

Everything you need to know is in this packet. You don’t need to do any outside research, all the relevant information is here. You don’t need to study the information here too diligently to have a good time, read it over once or twice and you’ll be all set.

Here’s what you should to:

1. **KEEP THE CONTENTS OF THIS PACKET A SECRET!!!!! DON’T TELL ANYONE YOUR CHARACTER INFORMATION BEFORE THE GAME BEGINS!** Everyone has a different character, everyone has secrets. You want to keep your information secret so nobody has an advantage over you.
2. Print a copy of this packet. You’ll need some parts of it for the game itself. There is an introduction, a big letter, your individual role sheet. Some characters may have a couple extra secret documents here as well.
3. Read the contents of this packet once or twice before the game starts.
4. When you enter the game-room, find other people with the same big letter as you and sit with them. They will be your team. 2 things:
   1. The roles are not equally distributed – if you see another group with more people than you, don’t worry about it. The game has been carefully calibrated, this is all part of the plan. Everyone can win the game regardless of what role they are in.
   2. If you have a K, M, P or L, you will not have a group, come find the game-master at the beginning of the game, or, if possible, right before the game begins. You’ll recognize the game-master because he’s a big, goofy looking guy with brown hair and blue eyes in a black suit. He will likely be shouting instructions.

***This is going to be so much fun!***

-GameMaster Chrol

**Introduction to Athens Besieged: Debating Surrender**

When you walked through the doors today, you probably thought you were entering a classroom. You were wrong. Instead you passed through the Dipylon Gate into Athens. You also moved 2500 years back in time. The year is 405 BCE; the month is December. The walls you can touch are the 18-foot-high stone walls of ancient Athens (shown below). Beyond those walls, stretching as far as the eye can see, are the tents and campfires of the Spartan army, joined by armies from Thebes, Corinth, and other city-states that have long sought to destroy Athens. For 27 years they have sought to climb over the walls of Athens. For 27 years they have waited to slaughter the men of Athens and enslave its women and children. For 27 years they have prayed to destroy Athens and annihilate its democracy.

Now, at long last, their dream—and your nightmare—may become a reality. Sometime soon, perhaps one month from now, perhaps more, Spartan soldiers and their allies will march into Athens and supervise its surrender.

And then the horrors will begin. If you are a man, you will likely be butchered by the Spartans, cut down like a pig in a pen. If you are a woman, you and your children will be seized as slaves.

How did it come to this?

The Great War began 27 years ago. Athens had become a mighty empire, collecting annual tribute from hundreds of city-states throughout the Aegean. Sparta, alarmed by Athenian power and its aggressive democracy, invaded Attica and marched on Athens. Believing the Spartan army to be invincible, Athenian generals ordered its soldiers to retreat behind the protective walls of Athens. Most citizen-farmers, too, streamed through the gates to safety, bringing their families, slaves, cattle and as many household goods as they could carry. While the Spartans ravaged the countryside and probed your walls, the Athenian fleet, sailing from Piraeus, raided the coast of Sparta, burning and plundering Spartan towns and cities.

Nearly every year brought another Spartan invasion of Attica—as well as Athenian raids on the Spartan coast. The walls around you form a protective corridor, encircling Athens and extending all the way to the port city of Piraeus (see map, next page). You are now within these walls (the white area on the map). Throughout the war, ships carrying grain from the Black Sea, Egypt and elsewhere have docked at Piraeus. That all changed a few months ago, when the Spartans caught the Athenian fleet by surprise and destroyed it. The gods, who so long favored Athens, have dealt her a cruel blow.

Spartan ships ring harbor of Piraeus. No grain ships can get through. And just beyond the great walls, the Spartans lie in wait, sharpening their swords and spears. Lysander, their victorious general, is brilliant and brutal. He demands that Athens surrender immediately: If Athens tears down the North Long Wall, he says he will not slaughter Athenian men or sell the women and children into slavery.

But if you tear down the Long Walls, the Spartans and their bloodthirsty allies will be able to march into Athens and commence the slaughter. When Lysander defeated the Athenian fleet a few months ago, he similarly promised to spare those who surrendered. Instead he lined up the 4000 Athenian sailors along the beach and hacked them to pieces. Rumor has it that he even ordered his soldiers to stab victims in the soft parts of the abdomen, lest his men’s blades become dull from striking the ribs or necks of victims.

Now the public granaries are empty. Most Athenians have set their slaves free, letting them slip over the walls at night. Some Athenian citizens have tried to escape, too, pretending to be slaves. But their lilting Attic accent and soft hands give them away. Each morning you see their bodies, hacked beyond recognition, just beyond the walls.

Now you must make difficult decisions. Though there are no good options, there is some hope.

A few weeks ago Theramenes (theh-RAH-meh-neez), one of Athens's most respected leaders, told the Athenian Assembly that he had some "secret" knowledge that could save the city. The Assembly authorized him to negotiate with Sparta and he left on this mission. Nothing more has been heard from him. Many expect him to walk through the gates at any minute, carrying a treaty that will deliver Athens from calamity.

But what if he fails to return? Or returns without a treaty? What if the treaty authorizes the elimination of the Athenian democracy? What if Sparta and its allies, after signing a treaty, go back on their word and kill all Athenian men? What should Athens do?

You must find a solution, and persuade the Assembly to adopt it. You must speak, because some 500 Athenian citizens hang on your every word and vote exactly as YOU do.

A **“Save Democracy” Faction Sheet**

**(all of you have a big “A”)**

**Winning the game**

You must:

1) Remain alive by the end of April;

2) Preserve Athens’s democracy: all adult male citizens must still decide all matters after open debate in the Assembly.

If, at the end of the game, you are alive but the democracy has been destroyed, you lose.

**Problem 1: STARVATION**

Nearly all Athenians are hungry. Many are starving. The game will begin in 10 minutes (December, 405 BCE). At the end of that month (10 minutes), and every successive month, you must take part in the Starvation Lottery. **Exception: the last surviving member of your faction is excluded from the Lottery.**

Perhaps the Gamemaster will use marbles or some other random procedure to determine who perishes.

If you perish, the Gamemaster will give you an envelope containing a ticket to give the boatman who will ferry you across the River Styx to Hades. Take the envelope, read its contents, and leave the room. What happens beyond, no mortal knows.

**Problem 2: PRESERVING THE DEMOCRACY**

Some Athenians want to surrender immediately or knock down the Long Walls—which is the same as surrendering. Spartan soldiers will likely execute all Athenian men, enslave the women and children, and obliterate the democracy.

Persuade the Assembly to hold out until the siege ends or a peace can be negotiated that preserves the democracy. You cannot trust Lysander to keep a deal: Once he famously boasted that he cheated “boys with knuckle-bones [dice] and men with oaths.” His promises mean nothing.

Exactly how you will win remains unclear. Think hard and work with your teammates.

**Work with your Faction:** Meet now with players whose role sheets are the same color as yours). Every member of your faction has a DIFFERENT argument to make in support of your cause. **YOUR** special argument, and your own personal identity, is indicated on your individual role sheet. Discuss these arguments. If you fail to share your argument with your faction, and with the Assembly, then you will have failed your teammates—and Athens!

**REMEMBER: ATHENS IS A DIRECT DEMOCRACY. ALL DECISIONS ARE MADE BY A MAJORITY OF ADULT MALE CITIZENS WHO GATHER IN THE ASSEMBLY TO DISCUSS AND VOTE ON ALL POLICIES. NO KING OR "PRESIDENT" MAKES SUCH DECISIONS ON HIS OWN.**

**Player 5 (Rhinon)9[RYE-non]: “Save Democracy” Faction**

9 Rhinon is a real historical person, and also a figure in the game, *The Threshold of Democracy.*

Like most Athenian men, you have fought courageously during the Great War. You were on leave when the Spartans destroyed the Athenian fleet at Aegospotami in 405. Then the Spartans blockaded Piraeus, depriving Athens of imported food. You gained immediate fame in the Assembly by your rousing speech, which culminated with the ringing words:

“Better dead than ruled by Spartan dogs!”

The point is simple: Some things are worse than death. Such words may seem fine when things are going well; but you must persuade those who are dying of hunger even as you speak.

You also have a special argument to advance against surrender:

**HOLD ON! ATHENA ALWAYS SAVES ATHENS!**

Athens has been in difficult situations in the past. Almost a century ago nearly a million Persian soldiers swarmed out of Asia and down into Greece, and yet clever Athenian generals found a way to defeat them and save Athens--and all of Greece!

Several times during the Great War, too, Athens has been in trouble. A decade ago, Athens lost 50,000 men in the expedition to Sicily, which was wiped out. Everyone then said that Athens was finished, and some rose up to overthrow the democracy.

But Athens recovered from that disaster and put down the enemies of the democracy, too.

You're not sure HOW to save Athens, but something will develop. It always does. Surely the goddess Athena, though momentarily absent, will return, and save Athens. She always does.

To give up hope is to insult the patron goddess of Athens, Athena!

(If you wish, you may do further Google research on Athena to buttress this argument: You may even offer her a prayer; perhaps, if your prayer tugs her heart, she [the Gamemaster] may spare you from the next Fate(ful) Urn.)

Also, at some point, you must reiterate the words of your famous speech:

“Better dead than ruled by Spartan dogs!”