

HOW WE CAME  
TO LIVE HERE

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STORIES OF THE  
FIFTH WORLD

BRENNAN TAYLOR

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STYLED BY JAYWALT  
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# INTRODUCTION

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**Listen. This is a tale of our People.**

Once, First Man and First Woman lived in the First World. The First World was dry and small, and black as the inside of a sack. Their children were the First People, but their lives were hard. The First People had to creep about from place to place, because the sky was so close to the ground that they could not stand. After a while, the First People got tired of crawling around in this tiny world, and one of them, He-Forces-His-Shoulders-Through, decided to stand up. When he did, he punched a hole through the sky and created a passage up into the Second World. When he crawled up through, the rest of the First People followed him.

The Second World was much better than the first, but it was still dark and there was no water or food. Here, however, the sky was much farther above the earth, and the First People were able to walk about without stooping. Now released from the constraints of the First World, they became taller and stronger. After a while, the First People grew irritated with the Second World, for they still had no food or water, and the darkness was still impenetrable. Because there was nothing to do, the First People began to fight amongst themselves, and contention grew and grew, leading to violence.

Remembering how the First People had emerged into this land, She-Throws-a-Rock-Through-the-Sky took a great stone and hurled it upward with all of her strength. When she did, the rock broke through the sky and created a new hole up into the Third World. Water began to pour down through the hole and fill the Second World. Soon, there was nowhere left to stand, and the First People went up through the hole into the Third World.

The Third World was large like the Second World, and it was full of water, but it still had no food or light. The First People grew angry, saying, "We are still hungry, and we must always swim, for there is no place to stand."

He-Holds-Them-On-His-Shoulders spoke then, saying, "Stand upon my back, and I will lift you up. There may be a better world above this one."

He took the other First People upon his broad shoulders, and they climbed up through a hole in the sky of the Third World and out into the Fourth World.

In the Fourth World there was dry land, food to eat, and water to drink, but it was still dim, like a starry night, for there was no sun in this world. The First People lived there for a long time, but after a while there grew to be a great many people, and the space of the Fourth World was filled up. Again, fighting began to break out among the People, since there was no room for new people to build their house and plant their corn. At last, the boldest of the People, She-Climbs-to-the-Top, built a ladder and put it up to the sky of the Fourth World. The sky here was higher still than it had been in the previous worlds, so She-Climbs-to-the-Top rose, rung on rung, for many days before she reached the sky. There was no opening in the sky of the Fourth World, and She-Climbs-to-the-Top searched for some time before she found a small crack. She dug into the sky at this crack, opening and widening it until she could squeeze through. When it was large enough, she climbed into the crack and emerged into the hot light of the sun.

This is how we came to live here. This is how we came to live in the Fifth World.

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## THE PURPOSE OF THIS GAME

*How We Came to Live Here* is a game that takes its inspiration from the mythology of the people native to the American Southwest. Although I am as Anglo-Saxon as they come in United States, I have always loved mythology. I devoured Greek and Norse myth early, and growing up in Tucson, Arizona, I had a lot of exposure to myths from the local cultures, the Hopi, Dineh, Zuñi, Tohono O'odam, Pueblo, and Apache people. I have visited Mesa Verde and

Chaco Canyon, where the remains of an ancient civilization known as the Anasazi can be found.

*How We Came to Live Here* is best thought of as an imagining of a fantastical Anasazi culture. The world in which the game is set is to the real cultures of the American Southwest as *The Lord of the Rings* is to European culture: a pastiche of ancient days liberally mixed with mythology and outright fantasy. The game is not meant to represent any real-world culture. Nothing that is presented in *How We Came to Live Here* should be considered authoritative or even indicative of any real cultural facts or practice. It is a work of fiction.

You will also find no white people in this book. The subject of *How We Came to Live Here* is not the European colonization of the Americas. It takes place in a time and place where this cannot happen. The People described in this game are the only people. The world is full of monsters that they are destined to conquer. I would advise players to avoid bringing in any European tropes or characters. That is not what this game is about. This game is about the People, and the heroes who will carve out a place for people in the world or go down trying.

As I mentioned earlier, I am white. I am not a member of any of the cultures that lent inspiration to this game. I have some concerns about someone like me writing this game. My main motivation is to venture forth from the typical fantasy world found in most fantasy. I am interested in exploring fantasy that draws on different traditions for inspiration. My goal is to treat this subject with respect, and I have done my utmost as a person who is not a member of the culture in question. I have tried to avoid appropriation, but there is no way for me to do so entirely.

One of the ways to stay respectful toward cultures other than one's own is to avoid either denigration or idealization, because both are condescending attitudes. I have tried to portray the characters in *How We Came to Live Here* as people who have both virtues and flaws, living in a culture that is very human. When you are playing *How We Came to Live Here*, remember to treat the characters in your own game as people, not as caricatures.

## GAME PLAY GOALS

The stories this game is meant to tell are those of powerful but flawed heroes. Your game should recall myths and legends of ancient heroes of great strength and ability, but subject to flaws and complications that can lead to their downfall. Your characters should be able to grow in power and perform epic deeds. They will also have to choose between the many paths available to them, and they will not

be able to achieve all that they desire. While playing you will have to make choices about your priorities, and some things you want will fall by the wayside as you work to achieve other goals.

Everyone at the table should play with the other participants in mind. You are responsible for helping everyone have a good time, including yourself. When you are contemplating your next move, be mindful of what will be fun for everyone.

This game will tell the tale of a village and the heroes who lived there. Threats from inside and outside will be met and defeated, or they may overwhelm the village and those within.

## DESCRIPTION OF PLAY

To play *How We Came to Live Here*, you will need a group of friends. The game is played with a minimum of three people, but you can have up to six. It is possible to play with as many as eight or nine players, but a game with this many participants may not be as enjoyable and will take a very long time. Any group larger than six should probably be split in order to play.

The first time you get together, you will spend most of your time brainstorming the characters in your game, and building them within the rules of *How We Came to Live Here*. This must be done as a group, and it is very important to include everyone who will be playing the game.

After this initial step, you will begin to play through the events in the life of the village. Two of the players have the responsibility to create opposition and complications for the others. The rest of the players portray individual heroes within the fictional world. The game is played in a series of rounds in which each player has a turn to set and play through a scene. Each scene will have a goal, and all of these scenes should add up to a bigger epic story. Hero characters will become more powerful as play proceeds, and their deeds will grow greater.

# THE FIFTH WORLD

The Fifth World is a dry, relatively inhospitable place. The People live in a roughly triangular area, bounded by the Spirit Mountains in the west, the sea in the south, and the rugged badlands to the east.

The terrain and climate closely resembles the American Southwest, especially the deserts of Arizona and New Mexico. There are red and yellow sandstone cliffs, box canyons, stone arches, and chimney rocks. The soil is sandy and poor, and often of vivid colors. There are volcanic outcroppings of twisted black stone, fields of pumice, and expanses of yellow sand. Vegetation is spiny and stunted, with plants like mesquite, creosote, and ocotillo common, as well as cacti. Higher altitude areas have more conifers, like small pines and juniper, and granite stones. By the few running streams and rivers, the vegetation is lush, with taller trees, cottonwoods and live oak. Cattails grow in the water. Running streams are rare. Most streambeds are dry and sandy throughout the year. In the late summer, thunderstorms come almost every day and the dry streambeds become raging torrents of brown water.

The land is inhabited by many animals: Cougars, bears, wolves, peccaries, raccoons, jackrabbits, bighorn sheep, coyotes, prairie dogs, rattlesnakes, tarantulas, and mule deer are all common. There are no horses, pigs, or cattle.

## REGARDING THE NUMBER FOUR

As you read through *How We Came to Live Here*, you may notice something that could seem a bit off. In many of the stories, as well as within the game mechanics, the number four features prominently. In folktales, things will often happen four times and then resolve. The characters have many characteristics in sets of four. In the European folk tradition, the number three is considered lucky, and in folk stories, things often happen three times before they resolve. Among many of the people of North America, the number four was considered the magical number, and that is why you see it feature so prominently in *How We Came to Live Here*. This may seem a bit strange at first, but it is a good fact to keep in mind when reading and playing the game.

## CLANS

The clans are the People's kinship groups. There are numerous clans, some extremely large and others with fewer members and little influence. Major clans usually number in the high hundreds or even thousands of individuals, while the minor clans can be quite small, between 50 and several hundred people. The clans are one of the most important organizing influences among the People. Kinship is a very important tie, and clan lineage is a way of tracking these links.

The clan name is traced through the female, and a married man is adopted into his wife's clan. When introducing himself to a stranger, a man would indicate his birth clan in an introduction as well, generally naming himself, his wife's clan, and then mentioning the clan into which he was born. Children are considered part of their mother's clan, although there is still some link through the father to his old clan.

The largest clans among the People are listed below. There are numerous other, smaller clans, but these are not described in the rules.

### BLACK STONE CLAN

This clan was founded by a group of adventurous individuals who journeyed to the edge of the People's lands to construct a new city. Led by She-Stacks-Stone-on-Stone, they constructed the strong houses of their new village from the hard local volcanic rocks. The Black Stone Clan is known as a clan of tough and hard-bitten people, as strong as the stones for which their clan is named. The general opinion is that Black Stone people are grim in demeanor and hard to know.

## **BIGHORN CLAN**

The first woman in this clan, She-Kills-a-Ram, is famous because she slew a bighorn sheep and prepared its hide. The clan is large and respected, and quite wealthy. They prefer to live in fringe communities where the hunting and herding is better. The men of this clan are known for hunting ability and the women for tending their flocks of domesticated sheep. The Bighorn people are thought to be independent in spirit, not so wild like the Wolf Clan, but still fond of the outdoors.

## **KNIFE CLAN**

This is one of the oldest and most numerous clans, a clan of famed warriors descended from the first man to kill a monster. He-Pierces-Its-Skin was a brother of She-Climbs-to-the-Top, and his name now means “knife”. When the People were attacked by the Hunger People, He-Pierces-Its-Skin took up a sharp rock and killed the chief of the Hunger People, driving them off. The members of the Knife Clan are known for relentless prowess in both the hunt and in combat, both valuable skills among the people. Their strength is respected, but Knife people tend to see all conflicts through a violent lens.

## **PORCUPINE CLAN**

The porcupine is the keeper of sacred things in the Spirit World, and the reputation of the Porcupine Clan benefits from the association. Porcupine people are considered more holy than people from other clans, and are treated with respect. They cultivate their reputation for wisdom purposefully, and many Porcupine people are quite important individuals in their community.

## **RED EARTH CLAN**

Red earth is the best for making pottery. Red earth is also associated with blood and the healing arts. The members of the Red Earth clan are considered to be good nurturers and healers. The Red Earth clan is relatively large and respected. Red Earth people have a reputation for warmth and caring, but also for meddling in other people's business.

## **SPARROW CLAN**

This clan is famous for its cliff cities. Settlements founded by the Sparrow clan are built within wind-scooped caves halfway up cliff sides. Sparrow people show little fear of heights, and clamber up and down the cliff walls with ease. They tend to be haughty and quite pleased with themselves, and as such are not particularly well liked among the other clans.

## **SWEET WATER CLAN**

This clan is known for strong and powerful matriarchs. Women from Sweet Water Clan are famous for going on journeys to seek out their own husbands in other villages, rather than relying on parental arrangements for marriage. Since the clan is relatively rich this is not an unwelcome prize for men from other clans.

## **WOLF CLAN**

Members of this clan are prone to wanderlust, and often can be found on the fringes of the People's lands, communicating with Outsiders and even, it is rumored, monsters. Wolf people live mostly in those settlements closest to the borders of the People's lands. Many go on their journeys and do not return. Wolf people are considered odd and possibly foolish by other clans.

## **YELLOW EARTH CLAN**

This clan is numerous and prosperous, but some view them as soft, since they stick to the safe heartland of the area conquered by the People. They do provide much of the food consumed by all of the People's settlements, even those on the fringes. This clan is quite wealthy and many young men are eager to marry into its ranks. The Yellow Earth people are considered a bit plodding and set in their ways, but they considered good to have as friends since they have a reputation for stalwart loyalty.

## **VILLAGES**

There are about two-dozen large settlements (cities) within the area controlled by the People, and numerous smaller villages and enclaves scattered throughout. Cities range in size from 1000 to 2000 inhabitants, while villages typically number between 100 and 1000 residents. Smaller enclaves are often just one or two families living on their own, and can be as few as a handful of people or as many as 100 for a large enclave verging on a village.

A village is typically a collection of square, flat-roofed buildings constructed of stone or adobe brick. They are often built atop mesas or tucked into shallow caves on the side of sandstone cliffs. Communities near the edge of the People's territories are usually built quite defensibly. Deeper in the People's lands, where monsters are scarce, a village may be set in an open area, surrounded by fields under cultivation. Houses are built atop one another, up to four stories high, and the upper levels are reached by ladder. In small plazas or at the edges of the village are open areas that are really the tops of kivas. Kivas are deep, round, covered pits that can

only be entered through a small hole in the roof. Kivas are the meeting places of the secret societies of a village.

Villages are always constructed near water. The lands of the People are arid, and in order to grow crops, a stream or river that is available year-round is preferable. Many streams are dry much of the year, only swelling during the summer rains. If there is no running water near the village site, the people use wells or build cisterns to hold water, and irrigate the fields by hand. Obviously, a village with no reliable source of water will be quite small, and may not survive.

When a woman marries, she leaves her mother's house for one of her own. She and her mother select a suitable spot within the village and build the new house. The multi-layered effect of a village often comes from a new bride and her mother building a house for the younger woman right on top of her mother's house.

## RESOURCES AND DAILY LIFE

The People have domesticated several animals: dogs, a smaller type of bighorn sheep, and turkeys. They have no horses, swine, or cattle. Most meat is obtained by hunting, and the domesticated animals are rarely slaughtered. Eggs are taken from turkeys, the sheep provide wool and milk, and the dogs provide protection and assistance when hunting. On special occasions, any of these animals might be slaughtered to eat.

Common items found in a household are red clay pots, woven baskets, corn, hot peppers, edible roots like quinoa, stone grinders for cooking, flutes and drums, bone or leather armor, round leather shields, and stone weapons and tools (bows, knives, spears, axes, clubs). Some individuals will have special items, like bronze weapons (short curved swords, knives, axes).

The People have no currency. All goods are traded in a barter system. Things are only as valuable as other items for which you can trade them. Values for items can fluctuate greatly, depending on circumstances. If a character is in a village by the large river in the center of the People's lands, pottery will be relatively plentiful and a pot will be worth less than a well-tanned buckskin. On the edges of the People's territory, wild items like buckskin will be relatively easy to come by, but a well-thrown pot will be much more valuable.

Gift-giving is a big part of the People's society. A person who is regarded as exceptionally generous is respected and admired, and many people work hard to be able to have a lot of items they can give away. Some people will hold a big party and load down their guests with gifts to prove how rich and generous they are.

Men and women wear their hair long and in braids, either a single braid or two. Wearing your long hair loose is a highly sexual and very private look, only your lover or your spouse would expect to see this, except when washing. When the temperature is hot, both sexes wear only a loincloth. Children (under 7 or so) typically wear no clothes at all. At night, or in winter, heavier clothing is needed for extra warmth, and people generally wear skin robes or wool blankets for warmth. Garments are often decorated with shells or beads, and a person's braid is decorated with beads, shells, or feathers.

## GENDERED ACTIVITIES

Most activities are strictly split into male or female roles. Doing some activity that belongs to the other gender is considered a crime, and is quite shameful.

- The following things are male areas of expertise: hunting, shooting a bow, dressing meat, tanning hides, wrestling, dog training, throwing pots, flint knapping, and fighting with knives, swords, spears, clubs, or axes.
- These things are female areas of expertise: cooking, farming, fishing, raising sheep or fowl, baking bricks, constructing dwellings and storehouses, weaving, sewing, playing drop-ball, fighting with a staff, and carrying water.

At puberty, a person may choose to voluntarily switch gender (obviously, physical characteristics remain the same). The person who chooses this route is thereafter always treated as a member of the new gender, and must then act in all respects as a member of the other gender (a woman who becomes a man must take a wife, fulfill male duties, etc.). This is an all-or-nothing, permanent choice. A person who chooses to do this can't choose to be a woman again once he has become a man.

## CRIMES

Many of the things that the People consider crimes are familiar and are crimes in our society as well. Some things would not be serious to us, but are transgressions in the People's society.

Minor transgressions included telling a lie that harms another person in any way (lying to monsters and Outsiders is OK), crafting an object without obeying the proper rituals, performing a task properly belonging to another gender, coming in contact with menstrual blood (if you are a man), refusing to aid your kin when asked, killing an animal

(other than vermin), showing disrespect to an elder or kin, or treating with monsters in any way.

Slightly more serious would be refusing to honor a promise, stealing, assault resulting in permanent harm, rape, incest (immediate family only, marriage between cousins is considered OK), homosexuality, adultery, sex with monsters, Outsiders, or animals, breaking a rule of your kiva society, or having any contact with a dead person.

Serious crimes are such things as killing a person, refusing to honor a promise made to your kin, and performing or commissioning harmful magic directed against another person.

The most unforgiveable crime is to kill one's own kin.

## LANGUAGE

The language of the People has no name, since it is the only language that they know, apart from those spoken by monsters, which don't count as languages, since People don't use them to communicate. The People's language has a compound structure. There are some basics, mostly verbs and pronouns, and a surprisingly small number of basic nouns. Sentences and other words are then created using these building blocks. Most complex nouns take the form of a short phrase with an active verb, describing the object in some way. For example, the name for a brick is she-bakes-hard-in-the-sun, a knife is called he-pierces-its-skin. These names are more complex for newer items, and they become shortened as time goes on. Nouns in the People's language are gendered, typically determined by which gender is associated with the object, whether as a tool or output (women build houses, so a brick is female, men fight with knives, so a knife is male, for example).

## NAMES

Personal names change over time. Early in life, people are called by a cute "child name." These names are cute to adults, but are often vaguely insulting or call out some negative trait in the child that her parents feel is in need of correction. Child names are things like She-Cries-a-Lot, He-Brings-Trouble, His-Nose-Always-Runs, etc. A person gains a new, adult name when she reaches her early teens and is initiated in her first society. To call a person by her cute childhood nickname after this is exceptionally insulting, and sure to provoke an angry reaction.

When a person does something else that others feel is significant, a new name is often given to him. Sometimes people are referred to by more than one name at a time. Which name another member of the community chooses

to use is important, and says something about their current attitude toward a person. People may even use different names in different situations when referring to the same person.

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### *Listen. This is a tale of our People.*

Once, there was a young man of the Porcupine Clan. His name was He-Hears-Voices-from-the-West, but before he earned this name he was called He-Wanders-Alone. He-Wanders-Alone had three brothers and a brother-in-law, and often he would go hunting with them. When the group went out to find game, He-Wanders-Alone would leave them and walk by himself in the wilderness. His brothers did not like this, and mocked him when he returned with tales of what he saw. His brother-in-law listened quietly to his tales but said nothing.

One day, while hunting, He-Wanders-Alone entered a deep canyon by himself. He sat under the shade of a stone and as he rested there he heard the sound of some voices talking above his head, along the canyon rim.

"Lament, my brothers," the first voice said, "Two of our kin have died."

"Who is dead?" answered the second voice.

"The old gray one and the largest warrior," the first voice replied. "Some hunters slew twelve deer, and our kin went to drink the blood. They were shot and slain."

"Ah!" cried the second voice. "I have told you never to go down to a hunter's kill! This is what happens."

"They are dead and gone," the first voice said. "We shall speak of them no more."

After this, He-Wanders-Alone heard no more voices and he returned to the camp of his brothers.

"Where have you been?" Eldest Brother asked him.

"I went into a canyon and I heard some voices talking," He-Wanders-Alone said.

"Not another tale," Second Brother said. "We have much work to do dressing our kill."

"What did you hear?" Brother-in-Law asked him.

He-Wanders-Alone told them he heard two voices talking, and told the story of what they said of the deer and how their kin were slain.

"I never believed your tales," Eldest Brother said, "But this is strange. Your brothers have killed twelve deer, and when the crows came down to the carcasses, we shot and killed two of them. The rest flew off and left the kill alone."

The rest of the brothers did not make fun of He-Wanders-Alone's tales this time.

The hunting party went to return to the village, and as they were walking along a ridgeline, Eldest Brother spotted four big-horned sheep across a ravine.

"We may have some hunting yet," Elder Brother said as he pointed out the sheep.

"Let He-Wanders-Alone hide ahead of them and slay them," Brother-in-Law said. "He was not with us when we made our first kills."

He-Wanders-Alone crept up to a hiding place ahead of the sheep and hid within some bushes. When the sheep approached, he became insensible and when he recovered, the sheep had passed on. Again, he crept ahead of the sheep and hid himself, and again he passed out and could not kill them. He crept ahead of them, high in some rocks, and waited for the sheep to approach. It was as if there were a bright light shining from the sheep as they approached, and He-Wanders-Alone was blinded and again lost consciousness.

His brothers were watching from the opposite ridge, and to their eyes He-Wanders-Alone did nothing as the sheep passed by.

"What is he doing?" Eldest Brother asked. "He-Wanders-Alone is not serious about hunting. He is playing some game."

Brother-in-Law merely watched and said nothing.

He-Wanders-Alone decided to try a fourth time to kill the sheep, and he hid ahead of them again. This time as they approached, they transformed, and instead of sheep he saw four gods: Corn Maiden, Red Sand Serpent, Sun Father, and Rain Woman.

"Look," said Corn Maiden. "It is He-Wanders-Alone again."

He-Wanders-Alone put down his bow and knelt down in front of the gods. "I am sorry I stalked you, but you were sheep to my eyes," he said.

"You see our true forms now," said Red Sand Serpent. "Rise, and come with us to the Black Mountains. We have many things to teach you."

He-Wanders-Alone stood and followed the gods to the Black Mountains. From the opposite ridge, his brothers only saw him put down his bow and kneel before the sheep. To their eyes, He-Wanders-Alone changed into a sheep and then all five sheep bounded up the slope. They gathered his bow and returned to their village, afraid to speak of what they saw.

When a year had passed, He-Wanders-Alone reappeared in the village, but he was now called He-Hears-Voices-from-the-West. When he came into the village, his brothers did not believe he had returned.

"This is not He-Wanders-Alone," said Eldest Brother. "This is a spirit taking his form. No one should listen to this being."

Brother-in-Law spoke up then. "This is our lost brother. I saw him change into a sheep, but also saw that the four sheep he stalked were gods, and he must have gone with them to the west. Tell us what you saw there, brother."

He-Hears-Voices-from-the-West spoke to the People and taught them the secrets told by the gods. This is when the first kivas were built, and He-Hears-Voices-from-the-West arranged all the People into kiva societies and taught them the right ways of devotion.

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## RELIGIOUS LIFE

Religion is a fundamental part of life among the People. There are numerous ceremonies held throughout the year. The People venerate the spirits of their ancestors, as well as more powerful gods. The secret societies that underpin their religion are a fundamental part of life in a village.

### ANCESTORS

Spirits of the dead are honored within the people's society. During ceremonies, especially the Dust Ceremony, the People make offerings to the departed spirits of their ancestors, as well as to any individuals who have died that are still remembered. This generally extends up to grandparents, but beyond that it is rare for a person to make offerings to a specific person. Some families with a famous ancestor will continue to honor that person for many generations, but this is unusual. Sage is lit, and food and other items are left for the spirits beside the fire pit. The spirits of ancestors are said to watch over their descendants and attempt to intercede with the gods if a descendant is in distress.

### Gods

Gods are powerful spirits who represent various forces of nature. There are hundreds of gods, but some are more powerful than others. The gods are patrons of the People, and wish to see them succeed. When people stray from a right way of living, the gods turn their backs on them, and calamities can occur. Floods, droughts, earthquakes, and other natural disasters are signs of their disfavor.

The four principle gods are Corn Maiden, Red Sand Serpent, Sun Father, and Rain Woman. Each of these has dominion over one of the cardinal directions, and therefore rules over the other gods. Sun Father rules the east, Red Sand Serpent comes from the south, Rain Woman comes from the west, and Corn Maiden rules the north.

Some other gods are Coyote Old Man, Red Tongue Wolf, Dust Woman, Weaving Woman, Moon Woman, Flint-Knapping Man, and Strong Killer. Many villages have some minor gods that are unique, and not recognized in other villages. Gods representing a local spring or some other feature are common local spirits.

## CEREMONIES

Throughout the year, the people hold important ceremonies or dances. These dances help keep the favor of the gods, and are one of the principle duties of kiva societies. Each kiva has several ceremonies they perform, and the members of the kiva dress in costumes to represent ancestor spirits and the gods in the dance. The costumes keep the kiva members' identities secret, as well as obscuring who holds what rank within a kiva. Only kiva members are allowed to know the identities of the dancers.

Some of the most important ceremonies are the Corn Dance at the vernal equinox, the Rain Dance at summer solstice, the Dust Ceremony at the autumnal equinox, and the Sun Ceremony at winter solstice. These ceremonies are universal among the people, along with several other dances throughout the year. Each village also has some local ceremonies, if they have had time to develop. Some very new villages don't have their own dances, but variations usually show up with a little time.

There are also ceremonies that are performed when a problem arises in an attempt to gain the attention of the gods and solve the problem. Cleansing ceremonies for illness or spiritual corruption are examples of these, and sometimes an entire community must be cleansed. Ceremonies to counter drought or other problems also exist.

## KIVA SOCIETIES

The primary expression of religion among the people is the kiva society. Kiva societies are exclusive groups whose purpose is to teach magical secrets to initiates. Membership in a kiva society is a fundamental part of village life. A kiva is the secret meeting place for one of these societies. Kivas are round rooms constructed below ground level that can only be entered through a hole in the roof. They are meant to emulate the first emergence into the world, and entering the kiva represents moving back to the origins of the People.

Members typically go to a meeting disguised with a mask, and descend into the kiva by ladder through the hole in the roof. It is strictly forbidden for someone who is not a member or initiate of a society to enter that society's kiva. Some kiva societies are tied quite closely to certain clans, but one's clan does not restrict membership. It is quite proper to join any other kiva society. People generally initiate in their

first society around the age of 12 or 13. Initiating in a kiva society makes a person officially adult and responsible for her own actions.

To initiate in a kiva society, a person must have a sponsor within the society. The candidate is not technically allowed to actively seek a member to act as sponsor, but in practice this is the normal way to find a sponsor. Gifts are often given to the sponsor by the candidate's family by way of thanks. Of course, many initiates join kiva societies already closely tied with their own clan, and have close relatives (fathers, brothers, uncles, etc.) within the society to sponsor them.

A person can initiate in more than one kiva society, but there are strictly proscribed limits. He may only begin initiation in one kiva society at a time, and must have achieved a rank above First in any societies in which he is already enrolled. Kiva societies are strictly segregated by gender. This is an obvious barrier to entry if the would-be initiate is the wrong gender.

All kiva societies have magical secrets not known to other kiva societies. They are all self-governing and completely separate. These kiva societies are the underpinnings of the People's entire culture, and all participants take them very seriously. The magic taught by these societies keeps the monsters at bay and prevents the human lands from falling into disorder, like the culture of the Outsiders.

- **FIRST RANK:** First Rank members of a kiva society participate in society rituals, but must sit at the back and do not take any important roles in the ceremonies
- **SECOND RANK:** Second Rank members are the main rank and file of a kiva society. Most members of a particular society fall in the Second Rank. Second Rank members participate in society rituals as dancers, and all Second Rank members wear a certain uniform of masks and costumes for the dances that varies by society.
- **THIRD RANK:** Third Rank members are the elite of a kiva society. Third Rank members take the roles of the ancestor spirits in society rituals.
- **FOURTH RANK:** Fourth Rank members are the most respected and powerful members of their kiva society. They make all of the decisions for the society and take the role of the gods in society rituals. There are only a handful of Fourth Rank members of a kiva at any given time, and all must agree to add a new member to this rank.

## **MEN'S KIVA SOCIETIES**

The following are kiva societies open to membership by men:

### **ARROW SOCIETY**

The Arrow Society is a hunter's society. Members of this kiva society are instrumental in finding wild food for their community. Wild food is the primary source of meat, and is quite important. This society is stronger in fringe communities where hunting is more important, and its influence fades in central, safe communities where farming is the more prevalent mode of food gathering. The Arrow Society has a traditional rivalry with the Corn Maiden Society, and many say that the Arrow Society is fated to lose this conflict as more areas become civilized.

### **BRONZE SOCIETY**

The Bronze Society is heir to the secrets of metalworking. Most tools are made of stone, but the Bronze Society members create strong metal implements imbued with magic. The Bronze Society is more socially powerful than might be suspected, because it is one of the richest societies. The bronze tools they create are a valued trade item. The society is quite exclusive, and many more young men petition than are allowed to join. It is common for men to be members of another society before they attempt to join the Bronze Society.

### **DOG SOCIETY**

The Dog Society organizes communities against external threats and problems. They provide fighting power in times of crisis or attack. The Dog Society will go to war against all "outside" threats: travelers, monsters, Outsiders, and sometimes other villages. The outside chief of every community is almost always a member of this society. This society is not difficult to join, but moving up requires acts of valor or foolhardiness. Every community has a Dog Society kiva.

### **GHOST SOCIETY**

The Ghost Society is a society of sorcerers, teaching men's magic that can be used for good or ill. The Ghost Society meets in secret, and its members do not reveal their affiliation. Because of the kind of magic they practice, they are feared and hated despite the fact that when desperate, people seek out their services regardless of their reputation. Their magic can be used for harm, and when it is, corruption begins to infect the sorcerer. If a person is publicly revealed to be a Ghost Society member, he will typically be driven

out of his community. Of course, Ghost Society members can wreak revenge on those who drive them out, so they are often killed instead. Ghost Society members often join in order to gain power over their neighbors, and this type of arrogance and ambition is quite dangerous when combined with the secrets taught by the society. Ghost Society kivas can be quite small, sometimes only one or two members.

### **MEDICINE SOCIETY**

This society administers both physical and spiritual healing for both men and women, even though only men can join its ranks. Medicine Society members are not allowed to be present at childbirth, however. That medicine is handled by the Moon Society. The two societies are rivals, and the women's magic performed by the Moon Society is mistrusted by Medicine Society members. The Medicine Society is a prestigious one, but has little political influence. Medicine Society members are also known as witch-hunters, since their secrets can help absolve people of Outside influence and bad magic.

### **TALKING SOCIETY**

The Talking Society knows the magic that allows the People to communicate with the ancestors for advice and supernatural aid. This society is revered, and its members are all considered holy. They take only those who have a gift for the magic, and their numbers are small. Because they speak with the authority of the ancestors, however, members of this society are very influential. They are few and far between, for the Talking Society only accepts members who are already touched by spirits. The Talking Society is a rival of the Dream Society.

## **WOMEN'S KIVA SOCIETIES**

The following are kiva societies open to membership by women:

### **BONE SOCIETY**

The Bone Society is the society of witches, teaching women's magic. These dangerous techniques can be used for good purposes, but can also easily be turned to harm. The Bone Society is kept secret and members do not reveal their allegiance. These witches cause much fear and animosity, but are still sought out by those who wish to use their powers. If the magic is used to harm, the witch will corrupt herself. Witches, if discovered, are typically driven out of their village. Bone Society kivas usually have only a handful of members.

## **CORN MAIDEN SOCIETY**

The Corn Maiden Society teaches the secrets of crop husbandry and farming techniques. This society is found in all communities, and readily accepts new members. The Corn Maiden Society is essential to the survival of any community, because without their magic, crops cannot be grown. It is a mark of prestige to be part of the Corn Maiden Society, and the elders of this society often have more power in a community than the chiefs. Each kiva has a woman who is the local handmaiden, a proxy of the Corn Maiden. She can never own property and must remain a virgin. She is required to perform blessings on the fields in order to preserve their fecundity. There is a traditional, if low-key, rivalry with the Arrow Society.

## **DREAM SOCIETY**

The Dream Society is a society of seers and diviners, they learn magic that can tell the future. They partake of special medicines that bring on the visions, and they can be a valuable asset to any community. Despite this, they are considered frightening and possibly dangerous. The drugs take a physical and mental toll that adds up over the years, with the highest ranking members quite frail and often completely mad. These high ranking members also deliver to most potent and useful prophecies. The Dream Society is a rival of the Talking Society.

## **DUST SOCIETY**

The Dust Society is responsible for the preparation and burial of the dead, a dangerous and potentially corrupting activity. Dust Society members conceal their appearance by wearing white masks or by painting their faces. If it is discovered that a person is a member, they could possibly be ostracized by their neighbors, thus requiring anonymity. Contact with the dead is considered ill-omened, and thought to invite the attention of malevolent ghosts. Of course, funerary rites are essential in any community, so Dust Society members are necessary, even if they are not loved.

## **LONG WALKING SOCIETY**

Members of the Long Walking Society travel into the wilds to explore and discover new things. The Long Walking Society is dedicated to exploration, and its members know many tricks to effectively travel in dangerous areas. They are constantly going deep into monster lands, and they have also compiled maps of the lands of the People. Some members of this clan have even been to the peaks of the Spirit Mountains, it is said. The Long Walking Society has very little influence, for its members are often absent from

their home communities. The society is consulted whenever information about outside areas is needed, however.

## **MOON SOCIETY**

The Moon Society teaches women's mysteries and magic. Society members have a lot of social input in women's lives in a community, and Moon Society members are often consulted about feminine matters. Women's magic is viewed with a great deal of fear and mistrust by men. Membership in the Moon Society can intimidate some men, and some try to prevent their family members from joining this society. Tradition dictates that the Moon Society and the Medicine Society are at odds, since both concentrate on healing and spiritual matters. On the rare occasions the two societies collaborate, extremely potent magic can be formed. Usually, they feud.

## **SPIRITS AND SORCERERS**

The People also recognize certain malevolent spirits, including some harmful gods. Also, some individuals can learn to do magic, which is outside the bounds of what people should do and is innately corrupting. Such sorcerers can do good things for people, but they also will lay curses and other harmful magic, which is one of the most terrible crimes a person can commit.

## **GHOSTS**

When a person dies, the corrupted portion of that person cannot travel to the afterlife. Instead, these evil parts of a person linger after his death, becoming a malevolent ghost. Although they have no body, ghosts can bring harm much like a sorcerer. Their very presence corrupts, and a powerful cleansing ritual is needed to drive them off. Since they have no body, they cannot be slain with weapons, or even perceived, usually. A person can sense a ghost by its powerful evil, but this is typically manifested as an uneasy feeling or unexplained terror when a ghost is present. Ghosts can attack people and make them sick, and this corruption can be detected by holy people and driven off by the proper ceremonies.

## **HARMFUL SPIRITS**

Besides ghosts, there are many other harmful spirits. These are spirits of vices that can afflict people, or spirits of disease that cause them to become ill. The spirits of vices like greed, lust, or rage can attack a person and change the way they act. A skilled healer can detect these spirits within a person and drive them out with the proper ceremony. Like

ghosts, these spirits have no body and cannot be affected by physical weapons.

The most terrible of such spirits is the cannibal spirit, which causes a person to be afflicted with a great hunger that can only be satiated with the flesh of his own kind. These spirits are terrible and dangerous, but luckily rare. It is said that such spirits once destroyed an entire clan.

Spirits of disease are more common, but these spirits cannot attack a healthy person. If a person has become corrupt, then the spirit has an opportunity to attack. This is why people who are morally lax can become sick. A person's corruption can also affect his loved ones, as spirits of disease use his emotional connection to these people to afflict them as well.

Sorcerers can command harmful spirits and cause them to attack even blameless people. This is how good people get sick.

## **SORCERERS**

A sorcerer or witch is a person who uses harmful spirits to create magic. This practice is very dangerous because such spirits have a powerful corrupting influence on anyone who comes in contact with them. Sorcerers can use these spirits to good effect, and can cast good magic. Even good magic cast by a sorcerer uses corrupt spirits, however, and all good people avoid such things. Sorcerers can also cause harm with these spirits, which is far easier than doing good through them.

A sorcerer will rarely admit his profession, because any calamity that befalls a village will be laid at the sorcerer's door. If people get ill, or their crops and animals die, a village will often kill or exile a sorcerer if they think he is to blame. On the other hand, many times people will decide that a sorcerer's magic is the best way to accomplish something and seek out the sorcerer. Often, the goal in this situation is a crime, and the person wants the sorcerer to perform some magic that will not be traced back to the person asking for it. This is a way to get revenge on enemies, eliminate rivals, or fulfill other dark desires. It is far more common than anyone will admit.

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### ***Listen. This is a tale of our People.***

Once, a man wished to marry a Wolf Clan woman, but he was weak and a poor hunter and none would have him. Heartbroken, he went into the wilderness, and wept and tore his clothes.

He cried, "Why will no Wolf woman have me?"

At that moment, a woman emerged from the scrub. "I will take you, man, if you are bold enough. I am a wild woman, and I live my own way."

The man looked at her. She was very beautiful, but her hair was wild and tangled, and she wore raw wolf-skins rather than proper clothes. She looked like an Outsider to his eyes. The man was so desperate for a wife that he took her offer anyway.

He took her back to the village. The wild woman had no family, so there was no house for them to move into. They had to live in an empty house at the edge of the village. The wild woman did not like the village, and flinched whenever neighbors spoke to her. She would only answer with brief words, and spent most of her time staring out into the desert.

The wild woman had no people, and had no land to cultivate. The man's mother gave the wild woman a part of her lands, so that her son would not starve, but the wild woman would not work the fields.

When the man confronted her about this, she replied, "I am no prairie dog, to dig in the ground. When my people want food, we seek it out and take what we like."

The man grew angry at her words, and shouted at her. She merely gazed out toward the desert and ignored him. He beat her with his fist. After he struck her, she said to him, "I told you, I am a wild woman, and I live my own way. Strike me again and see what happens."

Since his wife would not till the fields, the man went hunting, but he had little luck and returned with two small quail. When he brought them into the house, the woman clucked her tongue in disgust at him. "This is what you bring me?" she said. She left the house and went into the wilderness. She returned with a large buck.

"This is what my people bring back when they hunt," she told him. The man was ashamed and enraged, and again he struck her. She said, "I told you, I am a wild woman, and I live my own way. Strike me again and see what happens."

Since his wife did the hunting, the man became idle, and gambled with other idle men by the ceremonial square. He spent so much time there that other men began to live by his example and provided poorly for their households. The Inside Chief could no longer ignore this, and came to speak to the man. When the chief learned what was making him idle, she spoke to his wife to tell her that she must allow her husband to hunt while the wife worked the fields. The wild woman ignored the chief, simply staring out into the desert. Angered again, the man seized her and threw her to the ground where the chief was sitting.

Looking up at him, the woman said, "I told you, I am a wild woman, and I live my own way. Strike me once more and see what happens."

Unable to bear the shame of being spoken to in this way in

front of the Inside Chief, the man snatched up a piece of wood from the fireplace and struck his wife in the face. She fell back, bloodied. "You are a poor husband," she said, "And you have struck me for the last time."

In a wink of an eye, the woman turned into a great grey wolf, and the wolf chased the man from the house and out into the desert. The Inside Chief ran into the village and got some hunters, who followed the man out into the desert. They tracked the man and wolf for a long way, but all they found was a bloody sandal. No one ever saw the man again.

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## MONSTERS AND OUTSIDERS

The lands are still full of terrible creatures and deadly tribes of monstrous people called Outsiders. Most of these beings are unrelentingly hostile to the People, and contact with them is almost universally violent. Some members of the Long Walking Society are said to be able to communicate with some monsters, and even move about in their lands unharmed, but this ability is viewed with fear and horror rather than respect in most communities.

### THE BLOOD PEOPLE

These Outsiders are among the most insidious creatures in existence. They are actually the remaining members of a clan of the People called the Blood clan. It is widely assumed that the Blood clansmen were all slain, and their line lost. In fact, the clan members were possessed by cannibal spirits, and returned to the lands of the People in secret. They live among other clans in the cities, pretending to be normal individuals but killing and eating people when they can do so without risk of discovery.

### CHIEF-WHO-DANCES

This terrible king of monsters lives in the north, and is sometimes called North-Wind-Chief or Winter-Chief. His subjects are pale and cold vulture-like fiends, the Winter People, who fly through the air, snatching people up and taking them to the lands of the Chief-Who-Dances. No one knows what happens to those taken away. It is said that they are devoured, but perhaps some more horrible fate awaits them.

### GRIZZLY BEAR WOMAN

They say this woman was once one of the People. How she became Grizzly Bear Woman is a tale of its own. She lives in a house in the badlands, and is she comes across a

person walking along, sometimes she will murder them to eat, and sometimes she will take them back to her home. If it is a handsome young man, she will keep him for a husband. None of her husbands last very long.

### HE-EATS-THEM

This is the worst monster of the eastern lands. He-Eats-Them is a huge and powerful ogre, capable of seizing a person in one hand and dashing his victim's head against a stone. He likes to eat the viscera rather than the meat and bones, and has long black claws with which to pick out his victims' internal organs. His teeth are sharp and yellow, and his breath is an offal pit. He is fast and dangerous despite his immense size, and can hide in the narrow sandstone canyons surprisingly well.

### THE HUNGER PEOPLE

These are the first Outsiders encountered by the People as soon as they emerged from the underworld. They superficially resemble people, having hands and standing upright, but they wear no clothes, and their hands and feet bear sharp, curved claws. Their skin is pallid and colored like grey clay. They have bushy black hair on their ankles, wrists, underarms, and genitals. Their heads are bald but their faces horrifying, with a round, open mouth filled with a ring of needle-sharp teeth. Their ears are long and beast-like. They are always hungry for meat, and will attack and kill any person they can find for food, but they are cowardly and will flee before any determined resistance.

### MERCILESS MAN

This powerful monster is a moving stone dwelling in a canyon. He can crush any person that he encounters with his unyielding body. He seeks a wife, and without a doubt, his lovemaking would grind her to pulp. Thus, his attentions are most unwelcome and his canyon is shunned. If a woman has the misfortune of encountering him by accident, he will demand that she marry him. If he encounters a man, he will only release him by extracting a promise that the man will find him a wife.

### THE NIGHT PEOPLE

These horrifying Outsiders dwell below ground and only emerge during the night, and even then they shun moonlit nights. They have no eyes, but rely instead on some other sense to hunt, using low hoots to communicate. Their skin is pallid, and they have shaggy white hair on their heads, and they almost look like a person. Their limbs are long and have too many joints, with long claws on their fingers and toes. They can weave webs like spiders, and steal away their

prey live to eat later in their honeycombed lairs below the ground.

## **OUTSIDERS**

There are tribes living around the lands of the People who look very much like people, but they are actually monsters. They have strange customs and do not follow the right ways of living. They do not build houses, but move place to place and live in tents. They do not cultivate corn, but subsist on what they can hunt or scrounge. They often come into villages to beg for food, or raid them to steal whatever they can carry. Some people have occasionally married one of these Outsiders, but it always ends badly.

## **THE WATER SERPENT**

This monster dwells in a sweet water well near a mesa. The mesa looks like a fine place to build a city, and some ruins attest that this was attempted at some time in the past. The Water Serpent's well is the only source of water within miles, and the Serpent will emerge once a year to seize a child and take him or her into the well to be his servant. After a year, the Serpent will devour the stolen child and seek a new one.

# POOLS

Players will have pools of resources they can use during the game. These represent different things within the game world. How you build these pools is described later, but what they represent within the game is detailed in this chapter.

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## *Listen. This is a tale of our People.*

Once, there was a man of the Wolf Clan named He-Walks-Where-He-Wants. He was a wanderer, and known for going wherever he liked without a care for danger. His mother and father were dead, and he lived with his grandmother for he was not married.

His grandmother worried about him because she knew he had no caution. One day when he took up his sandals, she stopped him at the door.

"Where are you going?" his grandmother said.

"I don't know. Just rambling around," he replied.

"If you go east, stay away from Red Mesa," his grandmother replied. "Many hunters who go there don't come back."

He-Walks-Where-He-Wants didn't answer her, he just left and went into the wilderness. He-Walks-Where-He-Wants was not a bad man, he was just curious. Since his grandmother

told him about Red Mesa, he wanted to see what was there and why the hunters didn't return, so he headed out east. It was a long climb up Red Mesa, but when he got near the top he saw many big-horned sheep. There were so many he knew it would be good to hunt here. He also knew there must be something wrong because Red Mesa was close to the village. With all the good hunting, men from the village would have killed a lot of these sheep if they could.

He-Walks-Where-He-Wants followed a sheep trail around the mesa, and it passed a big rock next to the mesa's edge. Only a narrow path was left between the rock and the cliff, which dropped a hundred feet to the rocks below. As He-Walks-Where-He-Wants came around the rock, he saw a strange person lying there on the path. He looked like an old man, and he was leaning up against the big rock with his legs across the path.

"Hey, Grandfather," He-Walks-Where-He-Wants said.

"Hey, Grandson," the old man replied.

"I want to follow this path," He-Walks-Where-He-Wants said.

"Let me move my legs for you, Grandson," this person replied.

The old man was not actually a person. He was really a monster called He-Kicks-Them-Off-a-Cliff, and he waited in this spot for a person to walk by and then kicked him with his legs and knocked him down to the rocks below, where his family would devour the victim.

He-Walks-Where-He-Wants did not know about this monster, but he was mistrustful of the old man. When the old man pulled back his legs, He-Walks-Where-He-Wants made as if to go past but stopped just before he got in front of the old man's legs. The old man kicked out, but he missed He-Walks-Where-He-Wants.

"What are you doing," He-Walks-Where-He-Wants asked.

"Nothing, Grandson. Have no fear," the old man said, and pulled his legs back as if to let He-Walks-Where-He-Wants go past.

He-Walks-Where-He-Wants made as if to go past again, and again he stopped short. The old man kicked out again, but again his plan was foiled.

"So, you are the reason no hunters return from Red Mesa," He-Walks-Where-He-Wants said. "When they come down this path, you kick them over the edge."

"Don't be foolish, Grandson," the old man said. "I shall turn my back and then you can pass in safety if you are worried."

The old man drew up his legs and turned his back to He-Walks-Where-He-Wants. This time, He-Walks-Where-He-Wants took a large stone and dropped it in front of the old man's legs just as he was about to walk past. Again, the old man kicked

out, and the stone fell over the cliff. He-Walks-Where-He-Wants looked over the edge and saw it smash on the rocks below. He saw many shapes as well, as He-Kicks-Them-Off-a-Cliff's wife and children came out to feast but found only a broken stone.

"Aha!" cried He-Walks-Where-He-Wants, and he stepped forward on the path. He-Kicks-Them-Off-a-Cliff lashed his feet out, but He-Walks-Where-He-Wants leapt over the old man's legs. He then seized the old man around the neck and killed him with his knife. Then he threw He-Kicks-Them-Off-a-Cliff's body over the edge, and it crashed into the stones below. He-Kicks-Them-Off-a-Cliff's family came out again, but when they saw who it was they began to weep and wail.

He-Walks-Where-He-Wants went down to where the old man's family lived and saw them crying around the body.

"Did you kill him?" the old man's wife and children cried out.

"Yes," replied He-Walks-Where-He-Wants. "Because the way you live is evil. If you need food you must grow it or hunt it like regular people. To kill people and eat them is not a right way to live."

He-Walks-Where-He-Wants took He-Kicks-Them-Off-a-Cliff's family back to his village and showed them how to build a house and cultivate fields. They left off their wicked ways and became regular people.

Then He-Walks-Where-He-Wants went back to his home, and his grandmother asked where he had gone. When he told her his story, she wept for joy that he was safe and had destroyed the terrible monster.

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## HERO POOLS

Each hero character has four pools from which they can draw dice in conflicts. A character's strength in each of these pools indicates what virtues are most powerful in the character, as well as the flaws the character is most subject to. Choosing which pool to emphasize says a lot about the character's methods of interacting with the world.

Each pool has several principles that are associated with it. These are the ways all People are expected to act. These principles are sometimes contradictory, and their effects are not always good. These principles are neither wrong nor right, and they are not meant to be taken as a blanket requirement for characters. They are merely the stereotypes associated with each gender by the People.

## SKILL

This pool comes from the North and is represented by the color white. This is the pool of dispassionate dedication to craft, careful planning, aptitude, age, and experience.

### MASCULINE SKILL CHARACTERISTICS

- **STRENGTH AT ARMS:** A skilled man is a good fighter, and can defend his people and his village. To be a man is to be able to kill.
- **FITNESS:** A skilled man does not lack in physical ability. To be a man is to run far, lift heavy loads, and perform hard labor easily.
- **ARTISTRY:** A skilled man makes beautiful things. To be a man is to take pride in your work and to craft it in a way that is inspiring to behold.
- **OBSERVATION:** A skilled man watches carefully. To be a man is to observe everything closely before you act, and to see what is there.

### FEMININE SKILL CHARACTERISTICS

- **HOUSEHOLD:** A skilled woman can provide food and shelter for her family. To be a woman is to grow food and build a home.
- **MOTHERHOOD:** A skilled woman can bear many children for her family. To be a woman is to raise many boys and girls to adulthood.
- **TIRELESSNESS:** A skilled woman can work many hours without complaint. To be a woman is to till the fields, prepare food and clothing, and maintain a household all while showing no sign of discomfort.
- **CARE:** A skilled woman works methodically. To be a woman is to do your work carefully and to avoid mistakes.

## STRENGTH

This pool comes from the East and is represented by the color yellow. This is the pool of the self, and the drive for dominance and power over others.

### MASCULINE STRENGTH CHARACTERISTICS

- **BRAVERY:** A strong man does not back down from a physical challenge. To be a man is to face danger without showing any sign of fear.
- **RUTHLESSNESS:** A strong man shows no mercy to his enemies. To be a man is to force conflict to the end, without pity.

- **STOICISM:** A strong man is silent even when he suffers extreme pain. To be a man is to show no sign of distress when injured or tortured.
- **ESTEEM:** A strong man commands respect. To be a man is to walk proudly and display your strength as an example to others.

### FEMININE STRENGTH CHARACTERISTICS

- **PRIDE:** A strong woman carries her head high. To be a woman is to walk boldly wherever you wish to go, secure in your own power.
- **WISDOM:** A strong woman uses her head. To be a woman is to be wise and intelligent in your actions.
- **OUTSPOKENNESS:** A strong woman speaks her mind. To be a woman is to give voice to the truth, even if that truth is painful.
- **EXPERTISE:** A strong woman knows her craft. To be a woman is to do your best at whatever you put your mind to.

## SPIRIT

This pool comes from the South and is represented by the color red. It represents youth, love, hate, lust, anger, fear, and all of the other things that run hot.

### MASCULINE SPIRIT CHARACTERISTICS

- **ANGER:** A spirited man is quick to become enraged. To be a man is to take offense at insults and to show your displeasure.
- **PASSION:** A spirited man openly shows his emotions. To be a man is to weep in grief, cry out in rage, and act boldly in love.
- **TENDERNESS:** A spirited man is tender with his love. To be a man is to hold your woman tenderly and lend her your strength.
- **ENVY:** A spirited man must be the best. To be a man is to try to bring down those who exceed you.

### FEMININE SPIRIT CHARACTERISTICS

- **LOVE:** A spirited woman burns with love. To be a woman is to fall for a man completely.
- **REVENGE:** A spirited woman seeks vengeance when she is wronged. To be a woman is to nurse a grudge and to wreak revenge when the time is right.
- **JEALOUSY:** A spirited woman protects what is hers. To be a woman is to guard your possessions closely.

- **JOY:** A spirited woman is delighted by the world. To be a woman is to sing with happiness as the day goes on.

## FAITH

This pool comes from the West and is represented by the color black. It represents your spiritual power and connection to the unseen world, and your ties to family, ancestors, and community tradition.

### MASCULINE FAITH CHARACTERISTICS

- **LOYALTY:** A faithful man never betrays his family and village. To be a man is to give those within the community unquestioning allegiance and respect.
- **CAMARADERIE:** A faithful man bonds tightly with his brothers-in-arms, his friends and kiva brothers. To be a man is to hold these ties deeper than any other.
- **TRADITION:** A faithful man adheres to the traditions of his kiva and his village. To be a man is to not tolerate deviation from these customs.
- **RESPECT:** A faithful man holds those higher than him in high regard. To be a man is to show respect where it is due, to the elders of your kiva and your village.

### FEMININE FAITH CHARACTERISTICS

- **KINSHIP:** A faithful woman holds close her immediate family, her parents and her children. To be a woman is to know that these are the most valuable people in the world.
- **TRADITION:** A faithful woman adheres to the traditions of her kiva and her village. To be a woman is to not tolerate deviation from these customs.
- **SECRECY:** A faithful woman keeps secrets to herself. To be a woman is to know many things, but never to reveal them improperly.
- **FIDELITY:** A faithful woman does not stray from her man. To be a woman is to love one man without a wandering eye.

## THREAT POOL

The Inside and Outside Players each have a pool as well, different from those of the hero characters. This is the threat pool. Each of these players uses the threat pool when taking actions for supporting characters or inhuman forces.

Inside represents everything internal to the community. The Inside influence is the force of tradition and social control that the village can exert over heroes.

Outside represents everything external to the community. The Outside influence is the force of chaos and disorder, and other people or monsters that wish to control or consume what belongs to the village.

## CORRUPTION

There is one last pool possessed by a hero: corruption. This pool represents how far the hero has strayed outside the bounds prescribed by society. Crimes cause a hero to accumulate corruption, and this spiritual stain will begin to taint him and all those close to him. Corruption causes illness, disaster, and sometimes transformation.

When a hero character commits a crime, he gains Corruption. The Inside Player must agree that what the character has done is a crime, and she assigns the Corruption to the hero character's pool.

| GAIN       | ACT   |
|------------|---|
| • 1 point  | A lie that harms another person in any way. Lying to monsters and Outsiders is OK.  |
| • 1 point  | Crafting an object without obeying the proper rituals. Any time a character makes an item that is a kiva secret from a society of which he is not a member he earns this point. Additionally, making an item without belonging to the proper rank in the kiva is also a corrupting act. |
| • 1 point  | Performing a task properly belonging to another gender.   |
| • 1 point  | Touching menstrual blood (if you are a man).  |
| • 1 point  | Refusing aid to kin.  |
| • 1 point  | Killing an animal (other than vermin). Monsters and Outsiders count as animals.   |
| • 1 point  | Showing disrespect to an elder or kin.  |
| • 1 point  | Treating with monsters.   |
| • 2 points | Refusing to honor a promise.  |
| • 2 points | Stealing.   |
| • 2 points | Assault resulting in permanent harm.  |
| • 2 points | Rape.   |
| • 2 points | Incest with a relation closer than your cousin.   |
| • 2 points | Physical homosexual activity (even kissing).  |
| • 2 points | Adultery.   |
| • 2 points | Sex with monsters, Outsiders, or animals.   |
| • 2 points | Breaking a rule of your kiva society.   |
| • 2 points | Having any contact with a dead person.  |

- 3 points Killing a person.
- 3 points Refusing to honor a promise made to kin.
- 4 points Performing or commissioning harmful magic on another person.
- 5 points Killing kin.

## SPENDING CORRUPTION

The Outside Player may spend Corruption points to harm the hero character. This represents how the hero character begins to suffer as he grows ever more estranged from the community of the People.

| COST       | CONSEQUENCE   |
|------------|---|
| • 1 point  | Add a new failing to the hero character's sheet.  |
| • 2 points | The hero character's artifact breaks when next used.  |
| • 2 points | Turn a friend or lover's heart against the hero character (a positive connection becomes negative). |

These may only be done to a hero character who has already suffered at least one consequence from the list above.

- 3 points The hero character is haunted. His animals get sick, his crops fail, his family grows ill, and eventually the character himself grows ill.
- 3 points One of the hero character's loved ones becomes a failing, constantly causing problems for the hero with bad actions.

These may only be done to a hero character who has already suffered at least one consequence from the second list.

- 4 points The hero character becomes seriously ill. He cannot call on traits until cured.
- 5 points A close loved one becomes seriously ill. Unless cured through a conflict, the loved one dies.

These must be done in order, and after the hero character has suffered at least one consequence from the third list.

- 5 points Monsters seek out the hero character, but as allies not enemies.
- 10 points The hero character transforms into an Outsider. This character is no longer a hero, but is instead an Outsider under the control of the Outside Player.

# CREATING A CHARACTER

Making the characters for *How We Came to Live Here* is a group activity. All of the players will build the village and the hero characters together, and interweave the relationships the hero characters have with one another. It is pretty important for everyone who plans to play to be present together for this process, although it is possible to bring new characters in for subsequent sessions. The relationships between hero characters and between members of the community are the main focus of this game, and if someone isn't present at the beginning, it will be hard to integrate them later, and they will have less influence over the flavor of the game and may feel left out.

The hero characters will be young members of the village, just starting on their journeys. These heroes will have earned a name for themselves, and will have initiated in their first kiva society, but will have otherwise done little of note.

## STEP 1: DEFINE YOUR VILLAGE

This first step is done by all of the players together. The group as a whole needs to decide the characteristics of the village in which the game takes place. Where is the village located? Is it in the fertile valleys deep within the People's

lands? Is it perched on a mesa in the badlands, surrounded by hostile territory? Once you have settled on the village's surroundings, decide what the village is called. Villages are generally named after nearby geographic features, such as Sweet Spring Village, Chimney Rock Village, or Yellow Mesa Village.

## STEP 2: CHOOSE CLAN

The next step is determining which clan each hero character comes from. Each Hero Player starts by deciding what clan her hero character was born into, and what clan her father came from. Clans have an effect on the character's personality to a greater or lesser extent depending on player choice. All of the clans definitely have a reputation, and other characters will judge yours based on clan, whether this is merited or not.

Characters automatically get one trait based on one of their birth clan's strengths (their mother's clan). This is chosen now and noted on the character sheet. A second trait can be gained from the birth clan's other strength, but if you choose this trait, a failing must be taken based on the clan's weakness as well. Next, choose your character's father's clan. Normally, characters gain no benefit from their father's clan. A character can get one trait from the father's clan, but must also take the failing for that clan's weakness to do so.

In summary, each character gets:

- 1 Birth Clan Trait
- *and/or* 1 Birth Clan Trait + Birth Clan Failing
- *and/or* 1 Father's Clan Trait + Father's Clan Failing.

Coordinate with the other players during this step. Having characters that are siblings, cousins, and other blood relations adds a lot of depth to *How We Came to Live Here*, and has a lot of potential for dramatic moments in the game. If two characters have either a mother or father from the same clan, they are cousins, and if they have parents with matching clans, they are siblings. Characters marked with a kinship bond in the Village Web must have at least one clan in common.

## STEP 3: CHOOSE GENDER

This is an important step in creating a hero character. Men and women in *How We Came to Live Here* have distinctly different roles in the People's society. What your character will be allowed to do during play will be determined by your chosen gender to a large extent. Men and women have strict and separate roles among the People. Also, kiva societies are restricted to members on one gender, and this choice will

determine which societies will be open to your character in the game.

It doesn't matter what gender you are, you may choose either a male or a female character. Sometimes it is interesting to explore a character of the opposite gender.

Note that the actual physical sexual characteristics of the character are secondary. The chosen gender is how the character will live, and on rare occasions a male character may choose to live as a woman, or vice versa. This is not a choice that is made lightly, nor can it be changed once the character goes down this particular path.

## STEP 4: SET PERSONAL TRAITS

Next, choose the personal traits your character has. Each character begins with two personal traits and one personal failing. These are the way you customize your character, and have these traits can be unique to your character. The best way to choose these traits is to create a short sentence that describes your character. The sentence states two positive traits he is known for, and one failing that is also known.

For example, a player describes his character as a swift runner who has a charming manner, especially with the ladies, but doesn't know when to keep his mouth shut. The two traits from this are "swift runner" and "charming manner," and the failing is "doesn't know when to keep his mouth shut."

Other examples:

- He is a muscular and handsome man and he fights like a wild beast, but he's too quick to take offense.
- She has a charming way with words and refuses to be intimidated by any man, but she knows she is the most beautiful girl in the village.
- He's a peacemaker and always quick with a joke, but he always thinks there is an easier way.
- She is fierce when defending a friend, and powerful in her silence, but she is often overlooked because of her quiet way.

## STEP 5: ASSIGN POOLS

There are four directions on the character sheet, and each of these is associated with a pool. The pools are Skill, Strength, Spirit, and Faith. Each will have a numerical value. When a conflict is initiated, you will call upon one of these pools.

Each of these will have a numerical value for your character ranging from 1 to 4. They should be ranked according to how important each pool is to your character,

with 4 having the most influence on him, and 1 the least. You will end up with one direction ranked 1, one ranked 2, one ranked 3, and the last ranked 4.

## STEP 6: CHOOSE NAME

The People earn their names through their deeds. These earned names are powerful, and act as traits that your character can call on in conflict. At this step, you will choose the first name that your character earned, the one that made her a woman or made him a man.

The name your character earned is a descriptive one. It tells a story about the deed your character performed to become an adult. Names among the people take the form of a short sentence, such as She-Brings-in-the-Crops, He-Fools-the-Wolf, She-Laugh-at-Suitors, or He-Kills-Them-All. This name is a trait, and it helps define your character. Choose one that describes the first impression you want your character to convey.

Before your character has earned a name of his own, he has a childhood name that was given to him by his parents. These are descriptive, affectionate, and often demeaning. Names like He-Is-Full-of-Trouble, She-Never-Stops-Talking, and His-Ears-Are-Like-Handles are typical of childhood names. Characters will go by these childhood names until they can earn their own. Once someone has earned a name, calling them by their childhood name is incredibly insulting. You may also choose a childhood name for your character which everyone in the village will still remember, even if they don't use it. This step is not required.

## STEP 7: CHOOSE FIRST KIVA SOCIETY

Normally, characters must spend resources and meet specific requirements to join a kiva society. As a starting character, your character has just joined her first kiva society. Joining a kiva society is what marks a person's passage to adulthood among the People. Each character starts play as an initiate in one kiva society, with access to all the benefits that the affiliation grants. Further initiation and advancement follows the regular rules.

## STEP 8: BUILD YOUR VILLAGE WEB

The next step to take before play is creating the Village Web. This is a map of the relationships between various people in the village.

## STEP 8A: LIST OF NAMES

To begin, two sheets of paper should be placed in the middle of the table. Each player takes a turn and adds one character to the village on the first sheet of paper: the character list. These characters are the prominent members of the community. They can range from village elders to creepy sorcerers on the outskirts of the village. Each player gets to name and describe two characters in the village. A brief description is all that is required at this point, just a quick sentence that evokes the character.

After people in the village have been named, flip the paper over. Each player, in turn, names an outside influence or monster that is threatening the village. These can be natural forces (floods, earthquakes, etc.), other villages, or monsters and Outsiders. Everyone gets to write down one of these, and again, a few brief words to describe it should be sufficient.

Example characters and outside threats:

- She-Is-Pregnant-Again; the village's Inside Chief and a legendarily prolific mother.
- Her-Eyes-Shine-Like-Stars; the most eligible maiden in the village.
- He-Talks-to-Owls; a sorcerer living in a cave near the village.
- He-Strikes-Fast; the village's most powerful warrior.
- The Corner-of-Your-Eye People; a tribe of invisible monsters you can only glimpse from the corner of your eye.
- Famine; lack of rain and a corn blight have ruined the village's food supply.

## STEP 8B: CONNECTING THE WEB

Once these things have been added to the sheet, move to the other paper. This is actual Village Web. As names are added to the Village Web, begin with slot one on the sheet and count up.

First, each Hero Player writes the name of his hero character on the sheet. The first Hero Player puts his character name in slot one, the second in slot two, etc.

Second, in turn, each Hero Player creates a positive bond between his hero character and one of the other characters named in the previous step. This can be a bond of kinship, friendship, a mentoring relationship, or love. Again, add each character's name in the next available slot, counting up. After all Hero Players have had a turn this step is complete.

Third, each Hero Player creates a second, negative connection for her character, a relationship of rivalry, hate,

or resentment. Continue filling the slots in order. Again, once all Hero Players have had a turn, this step is complete.

Finally, each Hero Player chooses which outside influence particularly threatens her character. Describe what the relationship here is like. Does the hero feel tempted by something, or want something this outside influence can provide? Is it the other way round: Does the outside influence want something from the hero? Each chosen outside influence gets a slot on the village web sheet as well, counting up as usual. Once the Hero Players have each had a turn, this step is complete.

It is OK to choose the same character or outside influence as another player at any of these steps. The connections can also be made between hero characters. During these turns, Hero Players are free to create and name new characters in the village web if no character on the character list fits what they would like to do. New characters can be of any rank or position in the village, and must be added to the character list. Only supporting characters with relationships to the hero characters may be created at this stage.

When complete, you should have a map of the relationships between many members of the community, with the hero characters tied closely to all of these people. It is essential to create an interlocking web of relationships that ties all of the hero characters together. When the web is finished, there should be no sections that exist off on their own without some sort of connection to the other characters in the web. There will be complex interweaving of relationships, often with good and bad relationships crossing and interacting with one another. This is good.

## STEP 9: ASSIGN AMBITIONS

Once you have built the village web, you will choose your character's ambitions. All characters will have four ambitions. These ambitions drive your character's actions in the game, so choose ones you are interested in having the character pursue.

Ambitions should be chosen carefully. They should be goals that your character can achieve, but not goals that will be easily accomplished. Ambitions are medium- to long-term goals, not impossible goals.

- **RENOUN:** Write what act of heroism your character would like to achieve: To craft a bronze work of the greatest beauty; to count coup on 10 enemies in battle; to be solve a mystery that baffles the elders of the village; to bring in the most crops at the end of the growing season; etc.
- **AID:** Write what act you would like to help someone else in the community achieve (whether they like it

or not): To get my sister and my best friend to wed; to get my friend to join my kiva; to get my enemy to leave the village forever; to get my father to acknowledge my brother's skills; etc.

- **COMMUNITY:** Write what deed your character would like to perform to strengthen the village: To wed and tie the Wolf and Porcupine clans together; to bear the most children of all of my siblings; to force the Hot Spring Village to let people from our village use the springs whenever we wish; to become the handmaiden of the Corn Society and increase the fertility of the village fields; etc.
- **CRIME:** Write what crime your character secretly wishes to commit: To kill my father; never to marry; to love someone of my own gender; to learn the secrets of the Bronze Society without initiating; etc.

When ambitions are assigned, announce them to the whole group. *How We Came to Live Here* is not a game about secrets. The play will be much more enjoyable if everything is on the table.

# CLANS AND KIVA SOCIETIES

The People have two groupings that define a great deal about all individuals, their place in the village, and how others view them: clans and kiva societies. Clans are bloodlines and the members of a clan are thought to share certain characteristics in common with the other members of their clan. The People trace bloodline through the female side, so a person's maternal clan is much more important, generally, than his paternal clan. Kiva societies are secret groups that individuals join after they reach their majority. A kiva society, unlike a clan, is a personal choice, and membership also says a great deal about a person. What a person wishes to do is pretty clearly indicated by which kiva society she chooses to join.

## CLANS

When you choose your mother's clan, you gain one of the traits of that clan. Each clan has two traits and one failing common to the members. You can have both traits from your mother's clan if you take the failing as well. Your father's clan can also be an influence, and you can choose one of the traits from that clan if you take the failing as well. Below are the traits and failings associated with each clan.

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### ◇ BLACK STONE CLAN

- **TRAIT:** Black Stone People are no strangers to hardship.
- **TRAIT:** Black Stone People are strong as the stones.
- **FAILING:** Black Stone People have no need of friends.

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### ◇ BIGHORN CLAN

- **TRAIT:** Bighorn People are great hunters/herders (depending on gender).
- **TRAIT:** Bighorn People forage like wild sheep in the wilderness.
- **FAILING:** Bighorn People do not fear dangerous places.

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### ◇ KNIFE CLAN

- **TRAIT:** Knife People are the greatest hunters among the People.
- **TRAIT:** Knife People do not shrink from a fight.
- **FAILING:** Knife People are violent and unpredictable.

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### ◇ PORCUPINE CLAN

- **TRAIT:** Porcupine People are the holiest of the People.
- **TRAIT:** Porcupine People are wise in the ways of the spirits.
- **FAILING:** Porcupine People are aloof from day-to-day affairs.

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### ◇ RED EARTH CLAN

- **TRAIT:** Red Earth People care for those in need.
- **TRAIT:** Red Earth People can be trusted.
- **FAILING:** Red Earth People always try to get in your business.

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### ◇ SPARROW CLAN

- **TRAIT:** Sparrow People fear no height.
- **TRAIT:** Sparrow People are quick and agile.
- **FAILING:** Sparrow People look down on the other clans.

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### ◇ SWEET WATER CLAN

- **TRAIT:** Sweet Water People are wealthy.
- **TRAIT:** Sweet Water People are strong of will.
- **FAILING:** Sweet Water People let women step outside their role.

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## ◇ WOLF CLAN

- **TRAIT:** Wolf People value curiosity over fear.
  - **TRAIT:** Wolf People know how to speak to many people.
  - **FAILING:** Wolf People cannot resist a journey.
- 

## ◇ YELLOW EARTH CLAN

- **TRAIT:** Yellow Earth People never abandon a friend.
- **TRAIT:** Yellow Earth People are steady and uncomplaining workers.
- **FAILING:** Yellow Earth People are set in their ways.

## KIVA SOCIETIES

Each rank in a kiva society grants the hero character additional traits and abilities.

To move up in a kiva society requires a conflict with the goal of advancing in the society. Each society lists a requirement someone of a given rank must fulfill to move up to the next rank. A hero character must get into a conflict to achieve this goal. Achieving the goal without a formal conflict will not allow the character to move up in rank. As a Hero Player, the best way to move your character up is to set a scene where the requirement can be met on your turn.

To join a new kiva society, the hero character must initiate in the new society. Like moving up in a society, initiating also requires a conflict with the goal of joining the society.

The hero character may only undertake one kiva-society related conflict between recuperation scenes. This means he may initiate in a new society or move up one rank in a society in which he is already a member only once until a recuperation scene has passed.

## MEN'S SOCIETIES

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### ARROW SOCIETY

#### INITIATION

An Arrow Society initiate is ritually prepared, his body painted, and he spends a four-day vigil in the smokehouse. Then, he is given a bow and four arrows and sent naked into the wilderness to hunt and return with a large or dangerous animal. There is no time limit, but he may have no assistance on this journey, and anyone who encounters an Arrow Society initiate on his hunt must immediately turn around and leave the area. If he returns successful, he is made a First Rank member of the Arrow Society.

#### FIRST RANK: YOUNG HUNTER

Young hunters are expected to accompany elders on hunts and perform duties such as flushing game. They learn technique from the older hunters on these missions. They also hunt themselves, and try to distinguish themselves in order to move up. Arrow Society members are rarely in First Rank for long.

- **ABILITY:** The hunter's heart. You have learned how to hunt and kill animals without bringing spiritual corruption into yourself. You do not gain any Corruption points from killing an animal.
- **TRAIT:** The hunter makes no sound.

The First Rank member is required to give a gift to the local head of the Society in order to advance to Second Rank. This gift must demonstrate his hunting skill.

#### SECOND RANK: HUNTER

Hunters undertake hunts themselves and are tasked with providing meat for their families first, and then for the village as a whole. Hunters are a vital part of most villages, especially those on the fringes where domesticated animals are less common.

- **TRAIT:** The hunter is patient as a stone.
- **ARTIFACT:** Horn bow. This tool is made from horn and is superior to bows made of wood. Only Arrow Society members know the secrets of this bow.

The Second Rank member must distinguish himself as a skilled hunter by bringing down a powerful predator or a particularly elusive animal in order to advance to Third Rank. Many members of the Arrow Society never advance beyond Second Rank.

#### THIRD RANK: MASTER HUNTER

Master hunters hunt the largest and most dangerous game, and are sent when some particularly savage or dangerous animal needs to be slain.

- **ABILITY:** Touch of the hunter. You know the paths of the animals' souls, and can free others of the taint of death. By performing a sweat lodge ceremony, you can remove Corruption gained from the death of an animal from someone who is not a member of the Arrow Society.
- **TRAIT:** The hunter's arrow strikes true.

The Third Rank member is a highly respected hunter, but must be acknowledged by the top hunters of the village to be among the best in order to advance to Fourth Rank. The hunter must bring down some animal that a Fourth Rank hunter failed to kill. Only the most skilled hunters join the Fourth Rank of the Arrow Society.

#### FOURTH RANK: ELDER HUNTER

Elder hunters will go on hunts themselves, but many are too elderly to undertake dangerous tasks.

- **ABILITY:** To the hunter, all prey is equal. You can hunt and kill any creature, including monsters, Outsiders, or strangers, without bringing spiritual corruption onto yourself. You do not gain any Corruption from killing your prey.
- **TRAIT:** No trace escapes the hunter's eye.
- **ARTIFACT:** Obsidian arrows. Arrowheads made of volcanic glass are sharper than any other stone. Only the Arrow Society knows the secret of making these arrowheads.

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### BRONZE SOCIETY

#### INITIATION

Bronze Society initiations only take place once a year and all prospective initiates perform the rituals together. The Bronze Society initiate must be painted and prepared, then spend four days cleansing himself in the forge-room, sitting on a mat and eating no food, partaking only of water. The fires are constantly stoked. If the initiate moves or passes out he must leave and try again next year. After four days, each initiate advances one by one and stokes the fires while a Fourth Rank member heats a bronze knife blade within the fires. The blade is pressed to the initiate's flesh. He cannot cry out, or the burn will be marked and he will be beaten out of the forge-house. By means of these brands, Bronze Society members identify one another. Each kiva places the knife in a unique place. If successful, he is made a First Rank member of the Bronze Society and is taught the first secret of the society.

#### FIRST RANK: FIRE STOKER

Fire stokers are required to attend to the forge within the kiva, and fetch tools and supplies for the higher rank members when they are crafting. Fire stokers spend this time learning about the tools and techniques of the forge, and they also accompany higher rank members on expeditions for copper and tin to make the bronze. Bronze Society mines are hidden from the uninitiated, it is forbidden to bring anyone who is not part of the society to visit the mines. Bronze Society members spend longer than other societies do in each rank, as the skills they learn are quite complex and must be mastered before the member can advance.

- **ABILITY:** metallurgy. You know the proper rituals and ingredients which are used to make bronze metal and can create metal objects.
- **TRAIT:** Hardened by the forge.

The First Rank member is required to prove his ability on the forge to advance and must craft a special object.

#### SECOND RANK: CASTER

Casters are craftsman and have learned to make durable artifacts of bronze. They do cast their artifacts, rather than crafting more complex metal objects.

- **TRAIT:** Strong as bronze.
- **ARTIFACT:** A bronze knife.

The Second Rank member must create a unique and beautiful piece of bronze work in order to advance to Third Rank, using techniques beyond mere casting of metal. It is common for a Bronze Society member to fail to advance beyond Second Rank.

#### THIRD RANK: METALWORKER

Metalworkers know how to make the most complex of items using bronze. They are relied upon to construct any bronze item of significance.

- **ABILITY:** bronze-working. You can make almost any item from bronze, including tools. These are valuable as trade goods and will enrich your household.
- **TRAIT:** Sure hands make fine crafts.

The Third Rank member is a master craftsman, but must be acknowledged by the top crafters of the village to be among the best in order to advance to Fourth Rank. Only the most skilled crafters join the Fourth Rank of the Bronze Society.

#### FOURTH RANK: CRAFTER

Crafters are the most knowledgeable members of the kiva regarding metalworking, and they know secret Fourth Rank techniques that allow them to create the most durable and beautiful items.

- **ABILITY:** master craftsman. You can make bronze items that act as artifacts for anyone, and give them as gifts.
- **TRAIT:** The sharp eye sees flaws.
- **ARTIFACT:** A bronze hatchet or sword.

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### DOG SOCIETY

#### INITIATION

Anyone who wishes to join the Dog Society can find a sponsor. Some members sponsor several initiates at any give time. The initiate must prove his valor. He is taken into the kiva, and his hands are bound. Each of the elder members will cut the initiate's chest with a knife, and he must not cry out. If he cries out, he is driven from the kiva and may not

attempt to initiate again. If he does not cry out, he is made a First Rank member of the Dog Society and is taught the first secret of the society.

#### FIRST RANK: SCOUT

Scouts accompany older members on scouting missions and other military endeavors. They must obey higher ranked members, but are typically given opportunities to prove themselves. It is not difficult to advance in the Dog Society, and most members do so quickly.

- **ABILITY:** The warrior's heart. You may kill monsters, Outsiders, or strangers without bringing spiritual corruption onto yourself. You do not gain any Corruption from committing such an act.
- **TRAIT:** Fierce as a dog.

To advance, the member must defeat an enemy on the field of battle, and show his valor by taking a trophy from his enemy while the enemy is still alive.

#### SECOND RANK: WARRIOR

Warriors of the Dog Society are the main body of fighters for a village. They share camaraderie but also rivalry, as acts of valor are what distinguishes a member from his fellows.

- **TRAIT:** A dog knows his brothers.
- **ARTIFACT:** A spear, axe, or war club.

In a battle, the member must find and defeat an enemy leader single-handedly if he wishes to advance to Third Rank.

#### THIRD RANK: WAR LEADER

War Leaders plan and execute raids and lead the warriors in battle. They are generally quite skilled and combat-hardened fighters by this rank.

- **ABILITY:** You may kill other People in fair combat without bringing spiritual corruption onto yourself. You do not gain any Corruption from committing such an act.
- **TRAIT:** Leader of the pack.

The member must fight and defeat a Fourth Rank member if he wishes to advance. Sometimes, this is his sponsor. Often, it is a Fourth Rank member who opposes the advancement. These fights are meant to be non-lethal, but sometimes accidents happen.

#### FOURTH RANK: WAR CHIEF

The War Chiefs of the kiva are the most tested and hardened warriors of the village. They use their knowledge strategically, and plan for the defense of the village against known threats and those they anticipate.

- **ABILITY:** Touch of the killer. You know the paths of the other beings' souls, and can free others of the taint of death. By performing a sweat lodge ceremony, you can remove Corruption gained from a killing in combat from someone who is not a member of the Dog Society.
- **TRAIT:** Hardened by battle.
- **ARTIFACT:** Trophy bag: a spirit bag artifact containing trophies taken from defeated enemies, a symbol of potent martial power.

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## GHOST SOCIETY

### INITIATION

It is difficult to initiate in the Ghost Society, because it is so secretive. Members are usually invited, and invitations are most often extended to close family members. The initiate is taken out of the village to the society's hidden kiva, then received by the masked elders of the Ghost Society, all dressed as spirits. The initiate must face these apparitions of the dead without fear and answer their mystical questions to be received into the society. The initiate must show that his desire for supernatural power overcomes his fear of the dead.

#### FIRST RANK: GHOSTWALKER

Ghostwalkers take on some of the riskiest tasks of the Ghost Society, such as stealing bones from graves, or personal effects from the houses of potential victims. The movement up through the ranks of the Ghost Society is slower than others, and members without skill can stay at First Rank for a long time.

- **ABILITY:** Ghost curse. You can curse a person with evil magic, causing bad fortune to haunt them. They will suffer as if their Corruption pool was the same as your own.
- **TRAIT:** Ill-omened.

To advance, the member must successfully curse an enemy with black magic.

#### SECOND RANK: SORCERER

Sorcerers are the full-fledged magicians of the Ghost Society. They are justifiably feared black magicians, and they use their abilities to gain power for themselves.

- **TRAIT:** Sorcerer.
- **ARTIFACT:** Bone shooter: a blowpipe used to shoot a bit of human remains beneath the skin of potential victims.

The member must demonstrate that he is feared and respected by his fellow villagers to advance. The mere threat of his displeasure should cause others to pander to him.

#### THIRD RANK: WARLOCK

Warlocks are terrifying magicians, and their counsel is sought against dire threats. They can easily curse others, and have the ability to hide their powers from other villagers.

- **ABILITY:** Purge evil influences. You can remove Corruption gained by black magic from your own pool and give them to another person. The victim's pool increases, while your own goes down.
- **TRAIT:** Fearful countenance.

A warlock must show the favor of the spirits in order to advance. Once he can demonstrate this favor to the elders of the kiva, he can become a skinwalker.

#### FOURTH RANK: SKINWALKER

The skinwalkers are the most powerful and terrifying of the Ghost Society members. They have nearly become monsters themselves, and gain the ability to change their shape.

- **ABILITY:** Shape-changing. You can transform yourself into a coyote, owl, or other night creature. You can also take the form of a man with an animal head.
- **TRAIT:** Skinwalker.
- **ARTIFACT:** Second skin: the pelt of an animal, which you can throw on yourself to change shape.

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## MEDICINE SOCIETY

### INITIATION

The initiate is blindfolded and wrapped in a blanket, then handed head first down into the Medicine Society kiva. Once inside, the initiate is cut, to spill blood like those injured persons he will be expected to heal, then heated rocks are placed under the blanket, and water steamed up inside, in a simulation of a sweat lodge. Once purified, the initiate has his blindfold removed and he is welcomed into the society at First Rank and taught the first secret.

#### FIRST RANK: NOVICE HEALER

Novice healers are given a mentor, a higher ranking member that takes the young man under his wing and begins to train him in the healing arts. Generally, the novice healer's tasks are fetching and carrying, and close observation.

- **ABILITY:** Purification. You can construct a sweat lodge, a small wood and skin hut with a fire pit

inside to heat rocks. Eight hours inside will ritually purify any person so that spiritual activities can be performed without danger, no matter how large the person's Corruption pool is. The GM may not spend Corruption to hinder the purified individual's next contest or quest.

- **TRAIT:** Herbalist.

The novice healer must perform a healing ritual on his own to advance.

#### SECOND RANK: HEALER

Healers commonly perform ceremonies for ill members of the community, and help and aid the injured. They generally deal with everyday complaints.

- **TRAIT:** Wise in the ways of disease.
- **ARTIFACT:** A medicine bag: a spirit bag artifact containing holy items that help purify poisonous influences and aid the process of healing.

The member must cure a seriously ill village member in order to advance.

#### THIRD RANK: MEDICINE MAN

Medicine men are consulted when ailments prove beyond the powers of the lower ranked healers. They are able to handle serious illnesses and life-threatening wounds.

- **ABILITY:** Medicine blessing. You can remove Corruption sent by evil magic. The treated villager's Corruption pool will decrease, and the Corruption points return to their original owner.
- **TRAIT:** Soothing words.

A medicine man must counter the attack of a sorcerer or witch on an ill villager.

#### FOURTH RANK: MEDICINE SINGER

Medicine singers are the most powerful healers around. They can purify an entire village, and drive out evil influences.

- **ABILITY:** Wipe away sin. You can remove Corruption caused by the person's own sins. They must make amends with their victims, and then undergo a rigorous purification, but you can decrease the Corruption pool equal to the crime in question.
- **TRAIT:** Medicine singer.
- **ARTIFACT:** Sacred sand: this sand can be used to make sacred paintings that draw away evil influences.

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## TALKING SOCIETY

### INITIATION

The initiate is purified in a sweat lodge for four days, and then brought down into the kiva. A special substance that opens the mind to visions is burned in the fire pit and the initiate breathes in the smoke. The initiate then begins to speak in spirit voices. Many people are unable to contact spirits, and fail this stage of the initiation. If they do, they awaken to find themselves at home, and they can never attempt to initiate in the Talking Society again. If they do begin to speak in the voices of spirits, they remain in the kiva until the spirits have left them, and then are formally initiated with a ceremony.

### FIRST RANK: AUGUR

Augurs must learn to regularly contact ancestor spirits, and to deal with the powerful influences these spirits assert over their hosts. Augurs are not allowed to enter trances very often, and must always have an elder member with them.

- **ABILITY:** Spirit channeling. You can allow spirits to enter your body and speak through your mouth. You have no memory of what happened afterwards, however.
- **TRAIT:** Touched by spirits.

In order to advance, Augur must contact a spirit known to a higher ranked member, and communicate information that only the spirit, rather than the initiate, could know.

### SECOND RANK: SEER

Seers gain some more control over their powers, and begin to be able to channel more powerful spirits, sometimes even gods.

- **TRAIT:** Sees the spirit world.
- **ARTIFACT:** Spirit bag. This is a special bag constructed of items that spirits instruct you to gather. It has magical powers.

Seers can only advance if they are able to contact a god. If they cannot contact such a powerful spirit, they remain seers.

### THIRD RANK: MYSTIC

Mystics regularly contact the most powerful spirits, the gods. By this stage, Talking Society members are becoming very different than their peers among the People. This type of contact with the spirit world changes a person.

- **ABILITY:** Foretelling. The spirits begin to tell you of events that will happen in the future.
- **TRAIT:** Halfway to the spirit world.

Mystics can advance if they are favored by a particular god. In the Talking Society, the gods choose those who advance, rather than the elder members of the kiva.

### FOURTH RANK: PROPHET

Prophets have become favored by one particular god, and this god chooses one person to manifest within in each village. Prophets often identify one another as gods rather than as People any longer.

- **ABILITY:** Manifest god. A god chooses you as an earthly vessel, and when possessed, you have the insight and abilities of the god himself.
- **TRAIT:** Chosen by a god.
- **ARTIFACT:** God mask: the mask is imbued with the presence of your chosen god, and is one of the most holy artifacts among the People.

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## WOMEN'S SOCIETIES

### BONE SOCIETY

#### INITIATION

Like the Ghost Society, it is difficult to initiate in the Bone Society. Members are almost always chosen and invited, rather than seeking the Bone Society out themselves. Initiates must cross the graveyard and confront a human skeleton. The skeleton then appears to quiz the initiate's magical lore. If the initiate shows no fear and is willing to touch the bones of a dead person, she is initiated in the society.

#### FIRST RANK: BONE STEALER

Bone stealers take must steal bones from graves or rob personal effects from the houses of potential victims. A member who displays no magical skill will stay a bone stealer indefinitely.

- **ABILITY:** Bone curse. You can curse a person with evil magic, causing bad fortune to haunt them. They will suffer as if their Corruption pool was the same as your own.
- **TRAIT:** Evil eye.

To advance, the member must successfully curse an enemy with black magic.

#### SECOND RANK: WITCH

Witches are powerful black magicians. They are feared, and can use their powers for personal gain.

- **TRAIT:** Witch.

- **ARTIFACT:** Bone charm: a charm made from the bones of a person that died from a witch's magic. It has terrible dark powers.

The witch must be recognized as a powerful magician among the village to advance. Her true identity might be unknown, but as a witch she is known and feared.

#### THIRD RANK: BRUJA

Brujas are powerful magicians, and the people of the village will seek them out in desperate situations. They can hide their abilities from their fellow villagers and send evil influences on people.

- **ABILITY:** Purge evil influences. You can remove Corruption points gained by black magic from your own pool and give them to another person. The victim's pool increases, while your own goes down.
- **TRAIT:** Unsettling manner.

A bruja must demonstrate the favor of dark spirits in order to advance. If the elders of the kiva are satisfied, the bruja moves up.

#### FOURTH RANK: SKINWALKER

Skinwalkers are really no longer human, and have become monsters. They can change their shape and have terrifying supernatural powers.

- **ABILITY:** Shape-changing. You can transform yourself into a coyote, owl, or other night creature. You can also take the form of a woman with an animal head.
- **TRAIT:** Skinwalker.
- **ARTIFACT:** Second skin: the pelt of an animal, which you can throw on yourself to change shape.

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### CORN MAIDEN SOCIETY

#### INITIATION

A woman cannot join the Corn Maiden Society until she has fields of her own to cultivate. A woman who owns land must join the society, and if she fails initiation she will lose her property. The woman must plow her monthly blood into her field, and prepare a meal for the village with the resulting crops.

#### FIRST RANK: DIGGER

Diggers cultivate their own fields, but under the supervision of a higher-ranking member. Their first few years of crops are often poor, and the older members will provide backup to cover any shortfall.

- **ABILITY:** farming. You know the proper rituals for planting and raising crops.
- **TRAIT:** No stranger to work.

The digger must show ability in crop-raising to advance, and there is a lot of competition among kiva members to produce the most food

#### SECOND RANK: FARMER

Farmers are householders, and are able to provide for their own family, save crops for a poor season, and share food with those less fortunate than themselves. Many society members never advance beyond this rank.

- **TRAIT:** Knows the secrets of weather and the seasons.
- **ARTIFACT:** Corn bag: a spirit bag artifact containing holy seeds that aid the growth of crops.

Farmers can advance if they show leadership among the other field workers and have a desire to advance in the society.

#### THIRD RANK: HARVESTER

Harvesters organize the field workings, help young women get their crops started, and organize village grain storage and distribution when needed. They are powerful and important members of the village.

- **ABILITY:** grain storage. You know the proper rituals for storing grain, which stave off rot and pests.
- **TRAIT:** Measure by eye.

To become a corn woman, a harvester must demonstrate great competence and insight in the planning and logistics.

#### FOURTH RANK: CORN WOMAN

The corn women of a village have the authority to grant fields to young women, and to take fields away from those not worthy. They can reallocate lands as they wish.

- **ABILITY:** fecundity. You know the secrets of the fields, and can make a cultivated field yield twice as much food with the proper rituals.
- **TRAIT:** Matron.
- **ARTIFACT:** Corn necklace: this artifact is the symbol of your authority over the fields.

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### DREAM SOCIETY

#### INITIATION

The initiate is purified and then led into the desert. After an all-night vigil, at sunrise she is given the drink that the dream society uses to contact the spirits. The initiate will

then speak a vision. If the initiate seems somewhat resistant to the influence of the spirit, it is considered safe to initiate her into the society. The drink gives everyone visions, but if the spirit influence is too strong in a person, drinking it regularly will drive them mad.

#### FIRST RANK: DIVINER

Diviners will be visited by ancestor spirits, and the main duty they have at this stage is to acclimate themselves to the powerful drinks used by this society.

- **ABILITY:** Spirit potion. You know the secret of making the potion that causes spirit visitation.
- **TRAIT:** Seen the other side.

In order to advance, the diviner must be able to voluntarily end a trance.

#### SECOND RANK: SOOTHSAYER

Soothsayers are allowed to contact more powerful spirits. Soothsayers probably drink the potions more often than any other rank in the society.

- **TRAIT:** Instrument of the spirits.
- **ARTIFACT:** Spirit bag: this is a special bag constructed of items that spirits instruct you to gather. It has magical powers.

Soothsayers must contact a powerful god in order to advance.

#### THIRD RANK: VISIONARY

Visionaries are in regular contact with the most powerful spirits, the gods. The drinks that she takes have transformed the member at this stage, and she is distant and strange, often seeing things that others do not, even without the potions.

- **ABILITY:** Foretelling. The spirits begin to tell you of events that will happen in the future.
- **TRAIT:** Talks to spirits.

Only the strongest visionaries are able to advance, because the powerful potion taken by the fourth rank will kill most people.

#### FOURTH RANK: ORACLE

Oracles take the most powerful potion of all, which allows them to leave their body completely and enter the spirit world. This is only done in the safety of the kiva, because the oracle appears dead when she has crossed over.

- **ABILITY:** Enter the spirit world. You can leave your body and enter the spirit world to speak to any spirit you choose.
- **TRAIT:** Slightly mad.

- **ARTIFACT:** Spirit knife: This knife is the only thing you can take with you into the spirit world.

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## DUST SOCIETY

#### INITIATION

The initiate is laid out like a corpse, wrapped in a shroud, and then carried to the burial grounds. A grave has been prepared for the initiate, and she is laid within and buried. She is quickly dug up again, and the eldest member of the kiva gives the initiate her hand to help her climb out.

#### FIRST RANK: GRAVEDIGGER

Gravediggers do most of the hard physical labor involved in burying the dead, especially the digging of graves. Gravediggers are also given the responsibility of guarding the burial grounds to prevent witches and sorcerers from desecrating the graves.

- **ABILITY:** Affinity for the dead. You are able to handle corpses but gain no Corruption.
- **TRAIT:** No fear of the dead.

To advance, gravediggers must spend an all-night vigil at the burial ground, alone.

#### SECOND RANK: PALLBEARER

Pallbearers do just that: It is their duty to lift the bodies of the dead onto a plank and carry them to the graveyard.

- **TRAIT:** Solemn countenance.
- **ARTIFACT:** White beads: these beads are placed in the hair of a dead person, but if you wear them in your own hair, other members of the village will fear you as if you are a corpse yourself.

Pallbearers must learn and demonstrate the rituals for cleansing a corpse in order to advance.

#### THIRD RANK: CORPSE HANDLER

The corpse handler washes and prepares the body for burial, and wraps the person in their burial shroud.

- **ABILITY:** Ghost propitiation. You are able to handle the corpse and prevent any evil spirit from haunting you.
- **TRAIT:** Familiar with death.

The corpse handler must confront and confine an evil spirit in order to advance to the final rank.

#### FOURTH RANK: USHER

The task of the ushers is to help the spirit move on to the next world. When spirits leave, they also leave behind their

tainted parts, which become evil spirits that try to harm people. An usher can also banish these spirits.

- **ABILITY:** Exorcism. You can drive off evil spirits so there will be no harm to the village.
- **TRAIT:** Exorcist.
- **ARTIFACT:** Spirit rattle: this artifact will drive spirits before you, and ushers generally force them into the wilderness with it.

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## LONG WALKING SOCIETY

### INITIATION

The initiate must undertake a journey outside of the lands of the people. She must add some new knowledge to the collective wisdom of the society when she returns. If she is successful, she is initiated into the Long Walking Society.

### FIRST RANK: WALKER

Walkers gather information near their villages, and add to or complete the knowledge of the kiva regarding these closer areas.

- **ABILITY:** The Outsider's tongue. You have learned how to communicate with those Outsiders and monsters with the ability of speech. You do not gain any Corruption from speaking to these beings.
- **TRAIT:** A steady stride eats the miles.

The walker must travel with a higher ranked member regularly to advance. This member will teach her the ways of this society.

### SECOND RANK: LONG STRIDER

The long strider takes trips to other villages and bears news and messages between them. They mark and maintain the trails of the People so others do not stray into dangerous territory.

- **TRAIT:** Well-traveled.
- **ARTIFACT:** A walking staff. This staff is a symbol of the society, and many monsters and Outsiders who see it will be friendlier to its bearer than usual.

The long strider must map and mark a new trail in order to advance.

### THIRD RANK: FAR WALKER

The far walkers travel off the beaten paths and outside of the People's lands. They enter the territory of monsters and break new ground, bringing back information about areas outside of those controlled by the People.

- **ABILITY:** Know the way back. You do not get lost, for you have a technique for always retracing your steps.
- **TRAIT:** Knows the wilds.

The far walker must speak to a monster and learn of its ways in order to advance. This is obviously an extremely dangerous task.

### FOURTH RANK: TRAVELER

Travelers are the most knowledgeable members of any village about what lies beyond its borders. They regularly go into the wilderness to explore.

- **ABILITY:** Monster soothing. You can calm a hostile monster with this ability. If it is trying to attack or eat you, you can get it to just talk for the initial conflict.
- **TRAIT:** Talks to monsters.
- **ARTIFACT:** Soft moccasins. These shoes make very little sound, and help you travel both far and quietly.

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## MOON SOCIETY

### INITIATION

A girl must have had her first blood in order to join the Moon Society, but as soon as she does, she is eligible. On the night of the full moon, the initiate is brought into the kiva and stripped naked. Her body is ritually painted and she is laid in the moonlight that falls through the entrance of the kiva. The entrance is guarded above by two masked women with whips, who will fiercely scourge anyone who tries to come near.

### FIRST RANK: MOON MAID

Moon maids are given the task of cleaning and preparing the blood house, where women go for their monthly menses.

- **TRAIT:** Knows the secrets of women.
- **ABILITY:** Female magic. You know the mysteries of women, and can aid in childbirth and touch menstrual blood without gaining Corruption.

Most women are advanced when they go through labor for the first time, but some select members of the society eschew sexual intercourse and marriage altogether, which concentrates magical power. These women are advanced when they help one of their fellow initiates bear a child.

### SECOND RANK: MIDWIFE

Midwives help other women in pregnancy and oversee the bearing of children. They also guard the blood house so that no men can approach.

- **TRAIT:** Blood magic.

- **ARTIFACT:** A moon knife: made from hard white stone in a sickle shape, used to cut umbilical cords.

To advance, a midwife must adopt a child whose mother died during birth.

#### THIRD RANK: MATRON

The matron's duty is to oversee the care of all of the children in the village. When the women are working the fields, the matrons take care of the children old enough to walk but too young to work.

- **ABILITY:** Lullaby. You know how to cause children to listen to you and behave.
- **TRAIT:** Mother to all.

A matron can advance when she goes through menopause.

#### FOURTH RANK: CRONE

These are the eldest, wisest women in the village. They know much about women's ways, and see to it that all of the proper rituals are performed.

- **ABILITY:** Fertility blessing. You can bless a woman that can't conceive so that she will bring a child to term.
- **TRAIT:** Wise woman.
- **ARTIFACT:** Crone's rattle: made from rattlesnake tails, and used in blessing ceremonies.

# SCENES

Play in *How We Came to Live Here* is measured in scenes. A scene in this game is similar to a scene in a movie or novel. Characters appear in a particular place or setting, and interact with other characters and often engage in some kind of conflict, whether that is physical, emotional, or personal. Everyone in the game will have a chance to create a scene that interests them, and to depict characters interacting with each other in that scene. Each player has control of a certain set of characters, and you will often portray a character even in scenes you do not initiate.

## SCENE PROGRESSION

When you play *How We Came to Live Here* you will dramatize a series of scenes. There are three types of scenes in the game: action scenes, drama scenes, and recuperation scenes.

- **ACTION SCENES** are those in which a conflict occurs and is resolved.
- **DRAMA SCENES** are those in which pure roleplaying alone takes place. Drama scenes do not count on the threat track. The threat pool is not used in a drama scene, and therefore carries over to the next action scene.

- **RECUPERATION SCENES** are those in which players recover their dice pools and traits, and time passes in game.

Scenes are called for in a particular order, with players taking turns initiating scenes. During a session, play begins with the Inside Player, who calls for the first scene. Next, the Hero Player to the left of the Inside Player calls for a scene, followed by the Outside Player calling for a scene. Each Hero Player in turn after the first one calls for a scene, alternating with first the Inside Player, then the Outside Player, until all Hero Players have had a turn. The turn then passes back to the first Hero Player and the cycle repeats. The Inside and Outside Player have a track of threat pools. When there are no more pools of dice in their track, a recuperation scene occurs. This will typically end a session, but if the players wish to continue, begin as if play is restarting, with the Inside Player again.

The easiest way to keep track of this is with the use of turn markers. You will need two turn markers: one for the Hero Players, and one for the Inside and Outside Players. At the end of a Hero Player's turn, he passes the turn marker to the Hero Player to his left. By the same token, whenever the Inside Player finishes a turn, he passes his token to the Outside Player, and vice versa.

A sample scene progression in a game with three Hero Players:

1. INSIDE PLAYER
2. HERO PLAYER 1
3. OUTSIDE PLAYER
4. HERO PLAYER 2
5. INSIDE PLAYER
6. HERO PLAYER 3
7. OUTSIDE PLAYER
8. HERO PLAYER 1
9. INSIDE PLAYER
10. HERO PLAYER 2
11. OUTSIDE PLAYER
12. HERO PLAYER 3
13. INSIDE PLAYER
14. RECUPERATION SCENE

## CALLING FOR SCENES

When you call for a scene, you may not know yet if it is a drama or an action scene, but you may have a pretty good idea which type it will be. The player calling the scene sets the time and place with a brief description and describes

which characters are there. Is the scene in a kiva? Then the other kiva society members are likely to be present. Is the scene in the character's home? Then her family is likely to be there.

If a Hero Player is setting the scene, his hero must be present. He must also declare whether the scene is an inside or an outside scene. Depending on his choice, the Inside or Outside Player gets to participate in the scene as his opposition. If the Inside or Outside Player is setting the scene, at least one hero character must be present.

Once the scene is set, the players controlling any character in the scene begin to describe the actions and speech of their characters. Sometimes, the scene will play out without a formal conflict and all of the players involved will be satisfied. This is a drama scene. Sometimes, one of the characters will try to do something that another character will want to oppose. When this happens, the scene becomes an action scene, and a conflict begins.

New characters can be introduced into a scene with the following rules. Any Hero Player can invite any other hero character into the scene. The invited Hero Player may choose to join the scene or can refuse. The Inside or Outside Player can introduce any character under her control into the scene if it makes sense to do so.

## MOVING TO A RECUPERATION SCENE

Once all players have had at least one scene, the group can choose to have a recuperation scene. This choice must be unanimous among the Hero Players. If any Hero Player desires another action or drama scene, they can vote against moving on and regular scene progression continues. If the Hero Players do not call for a recuperation scene, one occurs automatically when the threat pools run out (the Inside and Outside players have reached the end of their track).

Recuperation scenes should be used to move time forward in the game, and should usually be between a few months and several years, depending on the interests and desires of the group. Each player, starting with the Hero Player to the Inside Player's left, moving clockwise through the other Hero Players, and followed by the Inside Player and then the Outside Player, describe what the intervening agreed-on time has done for the characters under their control. The actions and consequences of the drama and action scenes that preceded the recuperation scene should all figure in this narration. The other players can comment and criticize as desired, and the narrating player should consider the reactions of the group accordingly.

The long-term effects of important events should be described, and if the heroes neglected to deal with any

problems, these should grow in significance and spawn new problems of their own. Players cannot describe new conflicts in the recuperation scene, merely the consequences of conflicts that came up in the preceding rounds.

## INSIDE AND OUTSIDE PLAYER ROLES

During a drama or an action scene, the role of the Inside or Outside Player is to provide tension in the scene.

- **IN A DRAMA SCENE**, this means portraying a supporting character as a person with desires and needs that probably conflict with or complicate the player character's desires and needs.
- **IN AN ACTION SCENE**, this means providing active and strong conflict for the Hero Players.

## THREAT POOLS

The Inside and Outside Players do not use the regular directional pools. Instead, they use special threat pools. Threat pools are a progression of dice pools that can be used turn by turn in the game. Both the Inside Player and the Outside Player follow the track. Each time they draw on a pool in a scene, they use the next threat pool available.

At the beginning of the game, and after each recuperation scene, the Inside and Outside player decide what track to use in the next round of scenes. Which track is chosen will determine some of the tone in the round. When the last threat pool is used, a recuperation scene must be next.

### GATHERING THREAT

Use this pool early in the game when threats begin to show themselves and gather in strength.

- 1 Hero 3 . 4 . 5 . 7
- 2 Heroes 3 . 3 . 4 . 4 . 5 . 6 . 6 . 7
- 3 Heroes 3 . 3 . 3 . 4 . 4 . 4 . 5 . 5 . 6 . 6 . 7 . 7
- 4 Heroes 3 . 3 . 3 . 4 . 4 . 4 . 5 . 5 . 5 . 5 . 6 . 6 . 6 . 7 . 7 . 7

### EARLY SURGE

Threats in this track peak early, and then subside. This gives the heroes a victory as their early actions result in lowering danger.

- 1 Hero 4 . 7 . 4 . 3
- 2 Heroes 4 . 6 . 7 . 5 . 4 . 3 . 3 . 3
- 3 Heroes 4 . 5 . 6 . 7 . 5 . 5 . 4 . 4 . 4 . 3 . 3 . 3
- 4 Heroes 4 . 5 . 6 . 6 . 7 . 7 . 6 . 5 . 5 . 4 . 4 . 4 . 4 . 3 . 3 . 3

## STEADY ASSAULT

This track delivers a steady, relentless attack of adversity.

- 1 Hero 4.5.5.4
- 2 Heroes 4.5.5.4.5.5.4.4
- 3 Heroes 4.5.5.4.5.5.4.4.5.4.5.4
- 4 Heroes 4.5.5.5.4.4.5.5.5.4.4.4.5.5.4.4

## ASSAULT, RESPITE, RENEWED ATTACK

For another classic narrative, the heroes suffer, get some breathing room, and then are hammered with a follow-up.

- 1 Hero 6.3.5.6
- 2 Heroes 7.6.3.3.4.5.5.6
- 3 Heroes 7.6.7.5.3.3.3.4.5.5.6.7
- 4 Heroes 7.6.7.6.5.3.3.3.3.4.4.5.5.6.6.7

## DENOUEMENT

This track is for late-game play. It delivers some serious adversity, and then a brief set of light scenes. Use sparingly.

- 1 Hero 7.6.3.3
- 2 Heroes 7.7.6.5.4.4.3.3
- 3 Heroes 7.7.6.6.5.5.5.4.4.3.3.3
- 4 Heroes 7.7.7.6.6.5.5.5.5.4.4.4.3.3.3.3

## SUPPORTING CHARACTERS IN SCENES

When a player frames a scene, it will either be an Inside scene or an Outside scene, depending on the setting and circumstances of the scene. Inside scenes deal with issues internal to the village, and Outside scenes deal with external threats. The player associated with the appropriate side will then provide opposition for the scene.

The Inside or Outside Player will usually bring in characters during a scene. In an Inside scene, it is the task of the Outside Player to portray the first character brought into the scene. The opposite is true of an Outside scene. Any subsequent characters may be played by either player, but the first one always goes to the player not in control of the scene as set. Often, the player handed this character will need to discuss and strategize with the controlling player to learn the controlling player's intent for the scene, but this rule helps both players keep in the action even when the scene is not in that player's realm.

## THE OUTSIDE PLAYER

The Outside Player controls any dangerous forces, monsters or Outsiders that exist outside the village. This can include wild animals, sorcerers and witches, monsters, other villages, ghosts, natural disasters, and Outsiders. The Outside Player should use her scenes to introduce and then escalate threats from outside the village. These threats must be tied into the hero characters. Each player created a link between their hero character and an outside threat in the village web step of character creation. The Outside Player should use these threats to heighten tension between the hero character and the village. Outside threats should eventually threaten the village's very existence.

Below are some example Outside threats.

### INTRODUCING OUTSIDE THREATS

- A new monster or monsters are sighted in the vicinity of the village.
- Another village begins to use a resource originally dedicated to the players' village.
- A tribe of Outsiders moves into the area.
- Someone is afflicted by witchcraft.
- Wild animals that might threaten the village's resources are sighted around the village (big cats, wolves, or other predators, or insects that could damage the village's crops, etc.)
- Augurs indicate a natural disaster threatens the villages resources (fires, storms, earthquakes, etc.)

### ESCALATING OUTSIDE THREATS

- The monster kidnaps or harms someone from the village.
- The other village blocks people from using the resource.
- Someone is killed by witchcraft.
- Outsiders begin kidnap someone from the village or begin to steal resources from the village.
- Wild animals begin to consume the village's resources (flocks, grain stores, crops, etc.)
- The disaster appears.

### ATTACKING OUTSIDE THREATS

- The monster attacks and kills someone outside the village.
- The monster enters the village and demands to be served.
- The monster enslaves some people from the village.
- War starts with another village.
- Outsiders attack and kill someone outside the village.
- Outsiders attack anyone who leaves the village.

- Outsiders invade the village to pillage and carry people off as slaves.
- Fear of witches is causing accusations to fly, and innocent people are accused and murdered.
- Wild animals attack people.
- Wild animals decimate one of the villages resources.
- The disaster destroys one of the villages resources.

## THE INSIDE PLAYER

The Inside Player controls all people and forces within the village. The Inside Player should use her scenes to introduce conflicts of interest and pressures from family, friends, and authority figures who all try to control the heroes and bend them to their will. This could be a new disruptive custom, like polygamy, a new privilege reserved only for some members of the village, the stultifying imposition of older practices that go directly against player character ambitions, love triangles, family pressure to wed, friends asking for favors, etc.

A key part of a threat is making non-player characters call in obligations that player characters have, and ask the player characters to perform tasks they do not want, or that go directly against their ambitions. Hero Players created links between their characters and the other people in the village during the creation of the village web. The Inside Player should use these connections to put pressure on the Hero Character by having these characters put conflicting demands on the character.

Below are some examples of Inside threats.

## INTRODUCING INSIDE THREATS

- An elder decides to take a second wife.
- Members of one kiva vandalize another rival kiva.
- Another character is romantically interested in the same person as a hero.
- A family in the village seriously wrongs another family.
- A character's friend or family member gets into a rivalry with someone close to the hero.
- Young members of a kiva are denied a traditional privilege.
- A kiva creates a new ceremony on a day another kiva has a traditional service.
- Young people are required to go outside the village to find a husband.

## ESCALATING INSIDE THREATS

- All of the elders decide to practice polygamy.
- Brawls erupt between members of rival kivas.
- A romantic rival takes action to win someone from the Hero.
- Members of feuding families try to undermine and harm each other.
- Both members in a feud appeal to the Hero for help.
- Young members of a kiva are stripped of rank.
- The new ceremony becomes more popular than the old one.
- Old people take young men as husbands, while the young must go farther afield.

## ATTACKING INSIDE THREATS

- People below a certain age are denied the right to marry.
- The two kivas are at open war within the village.
- A romantic rival duels or attempts to harm a hero.
- The feuding families begin to kill one another.
- The hero is forced to decide between two rivals close to him.
- The kiva closes to new members and everyone below of certain age is thrown out.
- The rival ceremonies battle in the streets.
- The young women without husbands are driven out of the village.

# CONFLICTS

*How We Came to Live Here* uses a special kind of dice called Fudge dice. These dice are marked with three numbers: plus [+], minus [-], and blank [ ]. When you roll, you will sort your results into three groups for each type of result. This collection of dice is a pool of resources that are then used in conflict.

If you do not have any Fudge dice, use a pool of six-sided dice. When rolling, the result of 5 or 6 indicates a [+], the result of 3 or 4 indicates a [ ], and the result of 1 or 2 indicates a [-].

In a conflict, you will roll several of these dice together. Separate the dice into groups depending on their face. Each result has a different effect in a conflict.

## TRIGGERING CONFLICTS

A conflict is triggered when the player of a character in your scene chooses to resist an action of another character. Now the conflict is opposed, and both sides have an opportunity to bring their resources to bear and attempt to beat their opponent. Conflicts always take place between one Hero Player and either the Inside or the Outside Player.

Once it is clear that a conflict will be a serious one, take a moment to be clear about what the characters are in conflict

about. Each player involved in the conflict should be clear about her character's motivations and what the character is trying to achieve in the conflict. These helps everyone keep focus during the mechanical phase of the conflict and avoid conflicts that have no point for the characters involved. Before starting the conflict, take a close look at the goals. Determine if the other character is really resisting her opponent's goal, and if so, initiate the conflict. If the characters have unopposed goals, then the conflict is not necessary. Simply run the scene as a drama scene.

## HERO PLAYER: CHOOSE POOL

To determine how many dice to roll, the player who set the scene, either a Hero, Inside, or Outside Player, will choose a pool that Hero Players will use to draw dice for the conflict. Each pool has various principles associated with it. Use this description to determine to appropriate pool for the conflict. Of course, there is a lot of ground for interpretation here. The player choosing the pool has the flexibility to put a conflict into whichever pool they feel is the most appropriate after the goals and methods of the characters involved have been stated.

Hero Players will try to frame conflicts to their strengths, and it is fair for them to do so. The Inside and Outside Players will, in turn, frame conflicts in their favor on their turns.

## INSIDE OR OUTSIDE PLAYER: CHOOSE OPPOSITION

Inside and Outside players don't have four pools. They only have one pool in a given turn, the threat pool. In conflicts, the Inside or Outside player chooses how many dice to draw off of her threat pool. The Inside or Outside Player does not have to roll all of the dice. Some can be held in reserve to use as flips on the rolled dice (described below). Any reserve dice not used in a conflict can be added to the threat pool in the next conflict. Any dice rolled are lost at the end of the conflict, whether they were used or not.

## ROLLING THE DICE

Once you have determined how many dice you will use for the conflict, you pick up all of them and roll them. There are three results available on the dice: plus [+], minus [-], and blank [ ].

- **[+]** results are opportunities to attack your opponent. These are called Attack Dice.
- **[-]** results are opportunities to defend yourself. These are called Defense Dice.
- **[ ]** results are neutral dice. They merely represent your character's disposition in the conflict. Along with all of the **[+]** and **[-]** results, **[ ]** results indicate what resistance your character can offer your opponent. These are called Neutral Dice.

Until the dice are used, these attack and defense opportunities are not realized. These rolled dice are called your "hand."

## CONFLICT TURNS

The dice have now hit the table. That means the conflict is on. Each player involved takes a turn in the conflict. This begins with the player who has the most **[+]** results. If there is tie for this distinction, the player among those tied with the most **[-]** results begins. If this is also tied, move to the player with the most **[ ]** results. If there is still no winner, the players should roll off, with **[+]** beating **[-]**, and **[-]** beating

**[ ]**. Roll until there is a clear winner. This roll-off die is not added to the players' roll, it is merely for breaking ties. Each player then takes a turn, using the turn order described above, until everyone has had one, then the cycle begins again.

Once this initial turn order is determined, it does not vary, even as the dice are used and the totals change. In conflicts with multiple participants, it's a good idea to write the turn order down so it isn't forgotten. It's also a good idea to have some sort of token to indicate whose turn it is. When your turn is complete, pass it to the opposing player.

On your turn, you can choose from three possible actions:

- **MAKE AN ATTACK.**
- **PROPOSE A COMPROMISE TO END THE CONFLICT.**
- **FLEE THE CONFLICT.**

## ATTACKING AN OPPONENT

To attack an opponent on your turn, you need to use an attack die **[+]**. Describe how your character is attacking his opponent. Your opponent must then defend.

## DEFENDING YOURSELF

When attacked, you have three options:

- **DO NOTHING.** If you do nothing in response to an attack, you must remove two dice from your hand as your opponent's attack damages your position. These dice go into your opponent's victory pool. The attacking character describes the resulting damage to your character. The damage described cannot be permanent, but it should make your position more difficult in the conflict.
- **AGGRESSIVE DEFENSE.** You can choose an aggressive defense by spending an attack die **[+]**. In this case, you still lose an additional die from your hand, but your opponent must now defend as you attack him. The extra die goes into your opponent's victory pool, but the attack die does not. This attack takes place during your opponent's turn and has no effect on the turn order. You describe how your character suffers the attack your opponent offered, but in so doing also strikes back at the original attacker. You must describe some damage to your character, as specified in the attack result above.
- **FULL DEFENSE.** You can choose a full defense by spending a defense die **[-]**. In this case, your character avoids damage altogether, and you describe how your character avoided your opponent's attack. Your defense die goes into your opponent's victory pool.

## HERO PLAYER: CALLING ON TRAITS

Often, the hand of dice you roll will have a lot of results that are not too useful in the conflict, or you will begin to run out of dice to use. The Hero Player can call on a trait for two things:

- **FLIP A DIE TO ANOTHER RESULT.** You may flip one of your dice to another face by checking a single trait.
- **ROLL A NEW DIE AND ADD IT TO YOUR HAND.** You can only do this once per turn. If you are called on to act in your opponent's turn, such as when you are being attacked, this counts as a turn, and you may roll another die in this instance. If you are not called on to act, you may not roll a new during your opponent's turn.

When you call on one of your character's traits, you describe how the trait is applied to the situation at hand and then check the trait off on your character sheet. Traits that are already checked off may not be called upon.

Your opponent must agree that any trait you provide is appropriate, and has the right to veto any trait you attempt to call on. Inside or Outside Players should be sparing with the veto. Only use it if the trait is completely inappropriate to the conflict at hand.

You may call on as many traits as needed or desired. You may call on traits when both attacking and defending, even if it is not your turn. If you have no need to use a die at any given moment, you may not call on traits at that time.

When you call on a trait, a check is placed beside the trait on the character sheet. This trait may not be reused until the check is removed during the recuperation round.

## **HERO PLAYER: CALLING ON FAILINGS**

Your character's failings can be called on during a conflict. When you call on a failing, you may uncheck one of your traits. The failing must be described as it applies to the situation, and is subject to veto just like a trait. When you do this, however, your opponent gains a victory point.

Failings are checked when used in exactly the same way as traits, and checked failings cannot be reused until refreshed in the recuperation round.

## **HERO PLAYER: REFRESHING TRAITS**

Traits can be refreshed by going through a recuperation scene. Until refreshed, the checked traits of a hero character are unavailable for use.

## **HERO PLAYER: ARTIFACTS**

Artifacts are powerful items your character can possess that act just like traits, granting dice flips in conflicts. Artifacts are checked off just like regular traits. However, they are unchecked at the end of any given conflict, and are available for use again immediately, rather than having to wait for the recuperation scene to refresh. Supporting characters cannot use artifacts.

## **HERO PLAYER: GOING OUTSIDE IN CONFLICTS**

If your hero character is losing a conflict, you can go Outside to give yourself a boost. To go Outside, you must do something criminal or subversive (any act banned on the list in the crimes section). You gain two dice to add to your hand, but rather than rolling them, you may choose what value they have when they are added to your hand. Each one can have a different value, if you desire. Doing this adds a

point (or more, depending on the crime) to your Corruption pool. Whatever act you decide to commit, the Inside Player must agree that it is a crime. If the Inside Player does not think the act is criminal enough, you do not gain any extra dice.

The Inside and Outside Players should remind Hero Players of this option in conflict. Make sure the temptation is there for the characters, especially when things start to look bad. Supporting characters cannot go Outside.

## **INSIDE OR OUTSIDE PLAYER: SUPPORTING CHARACTERS**

Supporting characters do not have regular pools or traits. The Inside or Outside Player has a threat pool instead and uses these dice in a conflict. Inside and Outside Players may roll as many dice as they want from the threat pool for a turn. Some dice can be kept aside.

Instead of checking a trait, the Inside or Outside Player may flip a die by discarding one of the dice set aside from their threat pool. If any dice remain set aside at the end of the conflict (they have not been rolled or discarded), they may be saved for use in a later conflict.

## **WINNING A CONFLICT**

If both sides continue to attack on their turns, eventually one side or the other will run out of usable dice in his hand. If the player is unwilling or unable to bring any more dice into play, the conflict ends. There are two possible ways that this can occur:

- One character is subject to an attack, and cannot respond due to a depleted hand.
- It is a player's turn and he has no more [+] dice in his hand, and cannot initiate an attack.

When the conflict ends, the player who ran out of dice loses. The winning player gains two points for his victory pool.

When the conflict ends, each side totals up their victory pool, including the points the winner receives at the end of the conflict. The dice in the victory pool can then be spent to determine the outcome of the conflict. To change events in the game, you must spend your victory dice to cause effects. The character with the most dice begins, and can spend as many as he likes. Then, it is his opponent's turn to spend dice. Repeat until all dice are used.

### **SPEND 1 VICTORY DIE TO:**

- Remove a Victory Die from your opponent's pool.
- Narrate a change within the game that has no game-rule impact. This should be related in some way to the conflict that just occurred (even if it is just metaphorically).
- Earn a 1-point favor from someone (cumulative: spend 2 dice for a 2-point favor, etc.).

### **SPEND 2 VICTORY DICE TO:**

- Change a relationship one step: an enemy becomes neutral toward you, or someone neutral becomes a friend.
- Force someone to perform a minor crime (worth 1 or 2 points).
- Give someone a temporary failing (1 use, lost if not used before a recuperation round).
- Give someone a temporary trait (1 use, lost if not used before a recuperation round).
- Temporarily remove an artifact (lasts 1 conflict).

### **SPEND 3 VICTORY DICE TO:**

- Change a relationship two steps: an enemy becomes a friend, or vice versa..
- Destroy an artifact.

### **SPEND 4 VICTORY DICE TO:**

- Give someone a new permanent failing.
- Give someone a new permanent trait.
- Earn a new name for your character.
- Increase the Hero Player's pool used in the conflict by 1 point (no pool can exceed 4 points).
- Reduce the Hero Player's pool used in the conflict by 1 point (no pool can be less than 1 point).
- Force someone to perform any crime.
- Earn an appropriate honor (inside chief, outside chief, etc.)

### **SPEND 5 VICTORY DICE TO:**

- Kill someone.
- Change a societal rule through your example (e.g. allow a gender to perform a previously restricted activity).

## **PROPOSING A COMPROMISE TO END A CONFLICT**

Sometimes, when a conflict has been initiated, you may not want to play it out to the end. It could be clear you will lose, or you may not want to continue to use your character's resources in the conflict, etc. If you wish to end it early, you

can propose a compromise to the other player involved in the conflict. This can be any resolution to the various goals. If the other player accepts, the conflict is over. Any victory dice gained to this point may be spent, but no one is considered to have lost the conflict and the two extra victory dice are not awarded.

## **FLEEING A CONFLICT**

Sometimes things will go very badly for you, and you may wish to escape conflict rather than risk losing or compromising. This can be done by using two defense dice [–] on your turn rather than attacking. Your character can flee the conflict, but your opponent may give your character one temporary failing. If you successfully flee a conflict, your opponent cannot force his goal upon you, but you also cannot achieve your ultimate goal for the conflict either. The result is an impasse.

If your opponent wants to stop you from escaping, he can spend two attack dice [+] to do so, and gets to perform a regular attack on you even though it is not his turn.

## **HELPING ANOTHER CHARACTER IN A CONFLICT**

Conflicts are between one Hero Player and the Inside or Outside Player. If another Hero Player wishes to help the player in conflict, he may offer his character's traits to the player in the conflict. If she wishes, the Hero Player in the conflict may call on one of the helping character's traits as if it were one of her own. If she does so, she owes a 1 point favor to the helping character. This can be done as often as the players involve wish, but each trait called upon results in a 1 point favor. Helping traits are checked just like any other trait in a conflict.

## **ACHIEVING AN AMBITION**

Each time a character enters a conflict, your goal in the conflict could move your character toward realizing that ambition. At the outset, you must declare that this conflict is moving the character toward one of his ambitions. Your opponent has the opportunity to object if he wishes, but he should have a good reason to do so.

When the conflict is resolved, the ambition will either be realized or it will not. If it is not realized, you place a mark next to the ambition. If the ambition is realized, then the marks next to the ambition are added to the victory pool at the end of the conflict.

Once all four ambitions are realized, the hero character should be retired. Retired hero characters become supporting characters. At this point, you should be close to the end of the game. Players with retired characters should be given supporting characters to play during scenes. Players with retired characters are not counted when determining the threat pool track.

## CHANGING AN AMBITION

Hero characters are unique in that they have ambitions. As shown in the *Create a Character* chapter, Hero Players set the ambitions of their character when the character is created. Sometimes, a Hero Player might decide that he wants to change his ambition after the game begins. This is a simple process: the Hero Player declares that he is going to change the ambition, then erases the old ambition and writes in a new one. If a player changes his ambition, however, any progress made toward the old ambition is lost, and he must start from scratch on the new ambition.

## FAVORS

Characters can earn favors from one another as the result of a conflict. Favors are markers that can be called in during later conflicts. If a character is in a conflict, he may call on a favor to aid him. When you call in a favor, you may use it like a trait to flip or reroll a die. Even supporting characters can call on favors in this way. If it is a hero character who owes the favor, then check a trait on that character's sheet for each favor called in. You must narrate how the character is helping you in the conflict. It is more difficult to get help if the character is not there, but not impossible. You can use a flashback scene to explain how the character gave you aid before the conflict began, for example.

## CONFLICTS BETWEEN TWO HERO CHARACTERS

It is possible for a conflict to occur between two hero characters. If this is the case, it works just the same as a regular conflict, but both players use the hero character rules in the conflict. The Inside and Outside Players will have no role in this type of conflict, and their threat pool will remain unused.

progress more rapidly in the game, and ambitions are likely to be achieved more quickly and decisively.

## ONE-SHOTS

Setup time for a regular game of *How We Came to Live Here* can be somewhat long. If you want to play a game in a single evening, it's a good idea to do some of this setup in advance. Characters should be ready to play before the players gather, with everything filled in except for ambitions. Characters should probably have a few checks by some ambitions, and instead of starting as first rank in a kiva society, characters should be second rank or even third rank. When the players gather, build the village map together, and then have Hero Players assign ambitions for their characters. A satisfying single session can be played with this level of setup, but it is unlikely a complete endgame will be reached.

## BRINGING IN HERO CHARACTERS

Bringing in characters after a game has started can be a bit tricky. It is important for a new player to be comparable in advancement to the other characters. Make sure the new character has as many traits, kiva ranks, and ambition checks as the least advanced character already in the game. The new hero character should be added to the village map, and his relationships marked. It's important to make sure that the relationships tie into existing links and make these links more interesting for all of the players involved.

Note that adding extra characters will slow the speed of the game.

# VARIATIONS ON STANDARD PLAY

As it is structured, *How We Came to Live Here* is aimed at 4 to 6 sessions per game, giving the characters a longer story arc. A session is considered to be one instance of the players coming together and playing out scenes. You should be able to get through a whole arc of threat dice in a single session, although if your group has three or more Hero Players, it may not be possible to get through all the scenes and a session might take two meetings to complete.

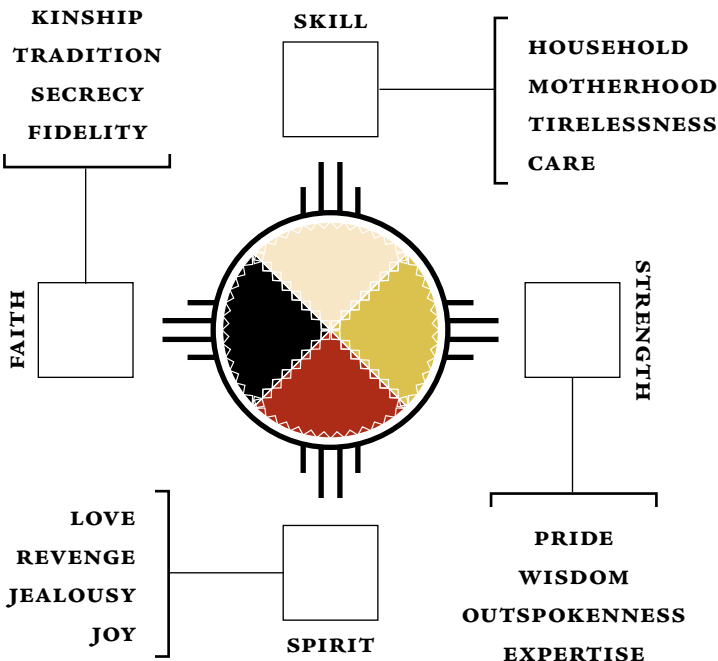
Characters are expected to start as young people with low status in the village and gradually improve in ability and fame until they become heroes of their village. Sometimes you don't have time to play out this many sessions, however, and you may want to play a shorter game or even a game in a single evening.

## SHORT GAMES

Shorter story arcs can be achieved by accelerating the story arc during play. The best way to do this is to award three victory dice instead of two to the victor at the end of a conflict. Characters should also start with two checks by each of their ambitions. With these changes, characters will

# How We Came To Live Here

## STORIES OF THE FIFTH WORLD



FEMALE CHARACTER

NAMES

CLAN

FATHER'S CLAN

KIVAS

AMBITIONS

RENOWN

AID

COMMUNITY

CRIME

FAVORS

ABILITIES

TRAITS

ARTIFACTS

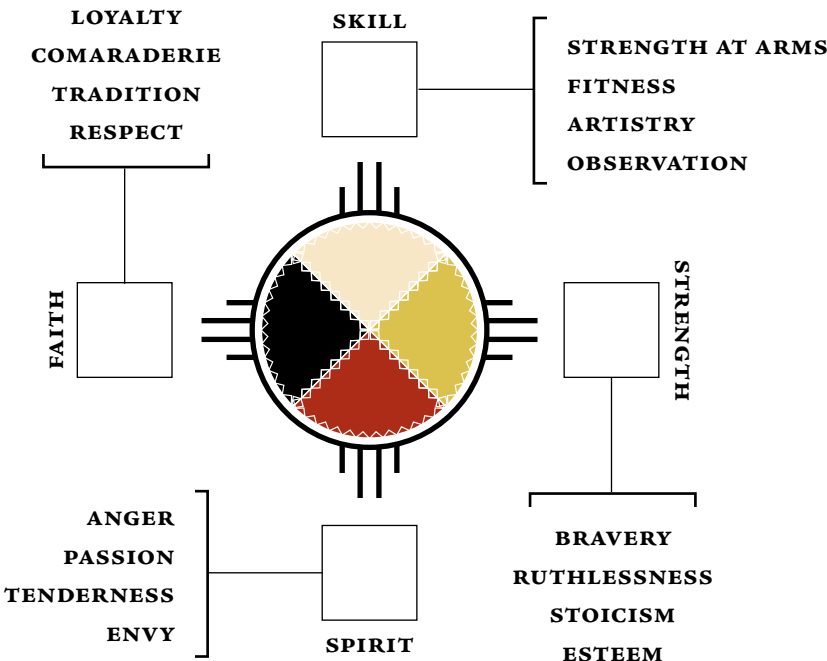
CONNECTIONS

CORRUPTION

FAILINGS

# How We Came To Live Here

## STORIES OF THE FIFTH WORLD



MALE CHARACTER

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TRAITS

ARTIFACTS

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# How We Came To Live Here

STORIES OF THE  
FIFTH WORLD

VILLAGE WEB

VILLAGE NAMES

MAJOR CHARACTERS

