SCION
SECOND EDITION
BOOK TWO
HERO

Dale Andrade, Dave Brookshaw, Laura Dasnoit, Tanay "Samudra" Dutta, Danielle Lauzon,
Meghan Fitzgerald, Matthew Herron, James Mendez Hodes, Eloy Lasanta, Neall Raemonn Price,
Charlie Raspin, Lauren Roy, Allen Turner, Malcolm Sheppard, Monica Speca,
Chris Spivey, Travis Stout, Geoffrey McVey, Vera Vartanian, Ben Woerner

GRASS

A cloud-darkened sky is only featureless to those who don't really look. The careful and discerning eye perceives a thousand folds within the gathering storm. One can take any number of lessons from the sky beyond simple observation and appreciation, comparing the overlapping clouds to a well-made sword. Lessons of a storm's strength born from careful refinement of air and water, or of a land's parched patience rewarded with rain. But those were lessons Yukiko Kuromizu had long since learned, so she put the thought out of her mind in the split second before she slammed back-first into the cold waters of San Pedro Bay.

"Kuso," she whispered beneath the waves, the bubbles from her muttered curse floating upwards. Yukiko imagined she could hear the fire giant's roar beyond the waves. He was probably brandishing that lead pipe still, leaving a trail of burnt wood and dripping molten metal on the docks as he stalked and bellowed about the sons of Muspel. She had assumed it was too heavy to strike with any sort of speed. Her crushed ribs and the aching warmth spreading in her chest were the fruits of that assumption.

Yukiko rolled — or perhaps drifted — to face the blackness below. The blood was flowing freely from her mouth. She heard the sharp rapport of gunfire above and behind her, muffled through the water. Donnie Rhodes battling against her assailant, but that was another thought she needed to put out of her mind.

Kusanagi-no-Tsurugi, the Grass-Cutting Sword, slipped out of her grasp and plunged toward the ocean floor. She did not have the strength to catch it; instead, she watched it slicing easily through the ocean water. It had been lost at sea before, but they were a very long way from Japan. She imagined it turning along the ocean floor over the course of long months and years, far from Amaterasu-ōmikami's light. She imagined it washing ashore, not in Yokosuka where the waters were cold and the coarse beach crunched beneath your feet, but in Okinawa, where the sand was white and soft. She imagined the Shintō priests wrapping it in silks and lifting it gingerly from the surf. She imagined it being presented to the emperor upon his ascension. Yukiko imagined the sword being privately mentioned to her mother.

"Sansei," the children outside the base called her. Three generations from Japan, though her mother was native to Okinawa. Her father was born in America, nisei, and had worn the naval uniform of his homeland. She didn't know how her parents met, and had never truly asked. Yukiko's father had been a man who didn't care that an unmarried woman had been driven out of her village by her traditionalist family, or even that she carried the child of another man who'd loved her for a week and left forever. He only knew that the too-proud hostess he met at Navy Restaurant Yokosuka was the most wonderful woman he'd ever met, and he wanted to be the light in her life. Yukiko's earliest memories of her father were of a handsome man smiling and kissing her mother, of him bouncing her happily on his knee and promising brothers and sisters.

Her father was in their family home still, sitting on the mantle, lacquered chopsticks within an empty funeral urn to commemorate a man lost at sea. The

pension was little comfort. Yukiko's childhood was a series of silent weekend afternoons and Japanese language lessons on weekday nights, of sorrowful silences at the dinner table. Her mother carried the grief of two lost loves like a sack of rice on her shoulders, and she stooped under the weight.

The children off-base were the worst. They were free to indulge in the customs of America, eating hamburgers and curry while she ate pickled vegetables and slivers of grilled fish. They were free to laugh and giggle with one another, but she was met with chilly silences and laughter that was cruel, not kind. Yukiko's mother never noticed when she came home with bruises or muddied clothes or torn schoolbooks. The older woman went to work, came home, cooked dinner, and ensured her daughter was attending Japanese lessons. Then she would retire to bed, and Yukiko would be left with household chores. When Yukiko's mother smiled, it was for American sailors, and it never reached her eyes.

One day, Yukiko noticed she'd grown taller than her mother. That day, she summoned her courage, and spoke long-hidden feelings aloud.

"Mother, I am sorry." Once she started, she could not stop. "I am sorry I remind you of what you lost. I am sorry I am a failure at school. I am sorry I am too much like my father with too little Japanese in me." That was a phrase from the girls at school, and it must have hurt her mother as much as it hurt Yukiko, for she had never seen the older woman's jaw drop quite so. Even so, she had to finish. "I am sorry," she choked, "That I cannot be a daughter you are proud of."

Silence. After an eternity, her mother spoke. "Yuki-chan," she said, cupping her daughter's face with a gentle hand, but only for a moment. She reached over, flicked on the stove, and moved the kettle on to boil. "Never apologize for what the world does to you. Only apologize for what you fail to give back."

"Mother?" Yukiko had never heard her speak about anything other than base practicalities. "What do you mean?" she asked.

Her mother took a deep breath as the steam began to spout, and poured warm water on a cloth. Yukiko felt the heat of the cloth as her mother gingerly wiped her daughter's face, felt the gentle strength in her hand as she stilled Yukiko's attempt to shy away from cloth and cleanliness. Her mother rubbed water over her hands, then returned the kettle to the stove.

"I mean that our thoughts, our feelings, our actions, disturb the world around us." Something had changed in her mother's voice as the woman gestured around the room. "You know this, right? Shintō? Kids talk about it, you learn it in school, right?"

She did not. Most kids didn't talk to her, and if they did, they didn't talk about Shintō. "Is this about the Buddha?" she asked. She knew about the Buddha, definitely.

"The Budd—" her mother started, and Yukiko shrank back from the sudden note of strength in her mother's voice. Her mother opened her hands and sank to her knees, lowering her voice and steeling her tone. Not with anger, Yukiko realized, but with pride. "No, this isn't about the Buddha. This is about the world, and everything in it, and you and you in it."

The kettle began to whistle. Her mother took it from the stove and poured two cups, whisking in some powder. The scent of matcha filled the air.

"This is the truth, Yuki-chan," her mother began, seating herself next to her but staring at something out the window Yukiko couldn't see. "Everything we do affects everything around us. To live only for one's self is to twist that. You must live for others, and for the world. You must keep your eyes open, observe all around you."

She paused for a moment. "My mother told me this story once: When the son of the Emperor took up the blade Kusanagi, taken by the God Susano-O from the tail of a great serpent, he found himself fighting a great warlord. The warlord's men set an entire field of grass aflame to entrap him, but the prince did not charge in heedlessly. He stood back and watched the fire crawl along the field, then sliced every blade of grass off before it could catch fire. He swept the blade—" and here her mother stood and made great sweeping gestures so unlike her, much to her daughter's delight, "—to throw the flaming grass back at the warlord. He watched the world and saw it, rather than forcing himself upon it. You understand, right? He saw the kami."

"What is a kami?"

"The kami are in everything and within everything. They are in the air, in the sword, in the fire, in the grass," her mother said. There was strength in her voice. "They float between everything and they are in harmony, unless we disturb them. We cannot rule them, daughter, we can only see them and move between them."

Her mother looked at her, truly looked at her, and stood. Yukiko realized she wasn't taller than her mother after all. "You cannot force the girls at school to be kind to you, you cannot force your father to come home, you cannot force the world into what you want it to be. You can only see it and move within it, until you are where you want to be, not where they should be."

Yukiko thought back to this moment often over the years. She thought back to it when she learned to watch the other children, to learn their cliques and their fears and their anger, and how to avoid it or redirect it. And again when a professor at Kyodai took the same umbrage at her heritage that ignorant schoolchildren had. She thought back to it when she was grown, when she rode across Japan on a domestic motorcycle until she came to an Okinawan beach, and a smiling surfer with a giant board across his shoulders walked along the surface of the water to tell her a story of how he seduced her mother. She thought back to it when that great kami shrank back in surprise from the

fury her mother had given her, and asked her what gift he could give his daughter and a princess of Heaven as her birthright in recompense for a life of neglect. She thought back to it now, dying in some foreign ocean.

"See the world as it is, not as you want it to be. Look upon the kami with your own eyes. Now! Taste your tea and savor it for what it is."

Yukiko sipped her tea and pursed her lips at the taste. It wasn't very good at all. Her mother tapped her hand with something — a small packet of honey from the Naval commissary. Then the older woman smiled with her eyes for the first time in her daughter's memory. "Sometimes the world really needs a bit of adjusting," she admitted. "Sometimes we all do. I love you, Yukiko. And I am proud of you."

Yukiko opened her eyes to the kami within the depths and saw only her own face.

The blood in the water, her blood, shimmered bright gold in the span of her heart's beat. With a gesture she was one with the sea, and it raised her as easily as lifting her own hand. The surface of the water shattered as she rose, a pillar of might, higher than the giant and higher than the docks and higher than everything. Deeper, too, as she felt her sea touch the garbage-scattered ocean floor to find an imperial treasure. Kusanagi leaped upwards, breaking through the waterspout to rest in her hand. She saw the towers of the city of angels in the distance, shining white and brilliant as dragons made of lightning crawled across the sky, rising from the sprawl across the valley extending out to the mountains of The World.

Donnie whirled through the air, the great golden wings on his back beating furiously, the invention of someone named Daedalus. His twin pistols did nothing more than irritate the giant, and Yukiko thought she heard Eric Donner's name in the Greek Scion's shouted curses. Lambasting the other man for not dealing with his own monsters, she imagined.

No matter. Donnie knew, even if he pretended not to: The World was their duty.

The giant had set an entire section of the pier ablaze, a great black cloud crawling up through the sky. In truth, he wasn't all that tall, maybe eight or nine feet, but he carved a swath of fire and destruction. He waved and gestured at Donnie, not seeing the column of water until it slammed into his head.

The fire incited the water to a riot of steam. It rolled, thick and heavy and white, across the cold ocean and the docks. Yukiko whirled Kusanagi above her head and felt the ancient magic respond, snuffing out the smoking embers all around and fanning the steam, flames, and sand from the sea's floor into a column around the giant, thick and heavy. She flicked the sword up, touching a single pure white finger to the sky. The giant hovered a few feet off the docks, a massive shadow within.

Donnie landed beside her. "That's not going to hold him!" he shouted over the boom of distant thunder and the twin roar of giant and whirlwind.

"It doesn't have to!" Yukiko shouted back. "It's just got to exist."

"What?" Donnie asked. "What does that—"

Everything went white, the static setting Yukiko's hair on end, the noise deafening her. The reek of ozone filled the air, and Yukiko let the magic lapse, lest another lightning bolt come screaming down from the sky. The giant was still smoking, but he was lying face down in scattered specks of lightning-forged glass.

Donnie said something, then smacked his ear. Yukiko shook her head. He smiled instead, and the sun, her aunt, broke through the storm clouds.

She was her mother's daughter, and it would be a good day.

CREDITS

Writers: Dale Andrade, Dave Brookshaw, Laura Dasnoit, Tanay "Samudra" Dutta, Danielle Lauzon, Meghan Fitzgerald, Matthew Herron, James Mendez Hodes, Eloy Lasanta, Neall Raemonn Price, Charlie Raspin, Lauren Roy, Allen Turner, Malcolm Sheppard, Monica Speca, Chris Spivey, Travis Stout, Geoffrey McVey, Vera Vartanian, Ben Woerner

Introductory Fiction by: "Grass," by Neall Raemonn Price; "Eric" by Lauren Roy

Developer: Neall Raemonn Price

Editor: Dixie Cochran

Indexer: Rita Tatum

Artists: Marco Gonzales, Darko Stojanovic, Aaron Riley, Steve Ellis, William O'Brien, Shen Fei, Patrick McEvoy, Chris Bivins, Grzegorz Pedrycz, Enzo Lopez, Felipe Gaona, Bryan Syme, Michel Giorgi, Luciano Komorozino

Art Director: Michael Chaney

Creative Director: Richard Thomas

Storypath System by: Rose Bailey, David Brookshaw, Meghan Fitzgerald, Danielle Lauzon, Matt Miller, Neall Raemonn Price, Lauren Roy, Malcolm Sheppard, Stew Wilson

Playtester Storyguides: Daniel Van Patten, Amanda Henry, David Planas, Emmet Taylor, Florian Wieser, Kiel Johnson, Michael Page, Michael Radey, Ryan McGrath, Tiffany Zawada, Dave Martin, Scott Vigil, Ben Miller, Dawn Lynn, Burton Wright, Matthew Hunt, Michael Anthony Clemons, Ryan Bond, Tracy Cook, Louis Garcia, Cary Kingdom, Henry Ulrich, Steve Ault, Jonathan Basiago, Carolynn Neumann, Michael Hren, Jennifer Lewkowicz, David Edwards

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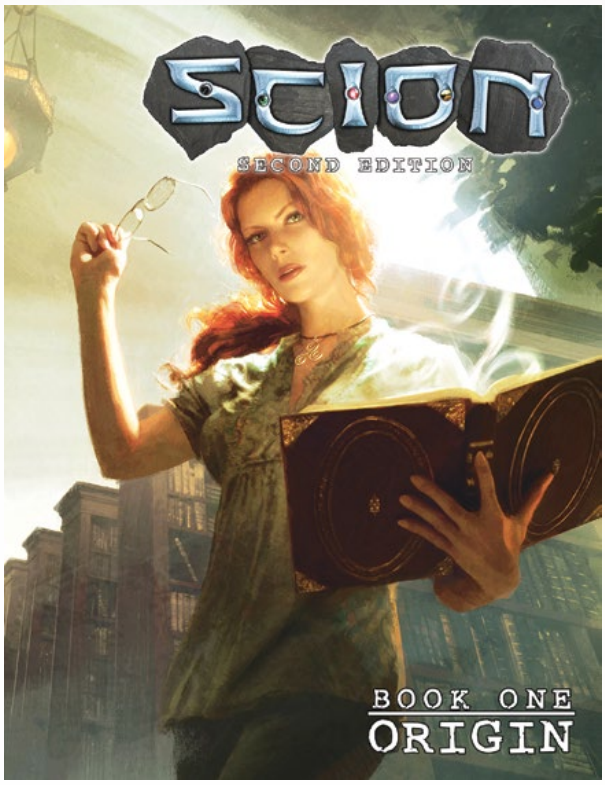

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INTRODUCTION

What are men?
Mortal gods.
What are gods?
Immortal men.
- Heraclitus

Escaping from Polyphemus's cave. Freeing the valkyrie from her fiery prison. Serving as a loa's steed. Slaying the ahuitzotl. Scribing the Papyrus of Ani. Darkening the river with Orochi's blood.

The Gods performed Deeds of great import and valor, which filtered into the epic folklore of humankind to inform cultures and create religions. Each tale is a memorable event; each carries within it one of the fundamental truths espoused by the cultures in question. Each tale shows the precarious relationship between Gods and mortals. You are the one who walks between mortal and immortal, between human and God. You are of both worlds. You are a Scion.

At the dawn of the legends, Scions are Heroes, humans who fight harder, love better, and live more fully than their fellows. Descendants of the Gods, Heroes are technically demigods, but not yet in the truest sense. They have received the Visitation from their parents, fully awakening them to the World of myth and divinity. The book you hold in your hands is the first step into this new World.

Some Heroes never go further. They touch lives and shape nations, but they age and die as mortals do. Some never want to go further, shedding their mortality in order to become something greater. They're content to remain human. That's their destiny, but it might not be yours. Find the destiny that is your own.

HOW TO USE THIS BOOK

Scion: Hero is the companion book to **Scion: Origin**. This book contains 10 pantheons, powerful groupings of Gods from whom the Heroes may descend. **Scion: Hero** will allow you to make characters who have completely adopted their heritage and stepped fully into the World of myth.

THE PANTHEONS

The 10 pantheons featured in Hero are:

- **Æsir** — The Norse Gods of Scandinavia, an uneasy marriage of a separate warlike pantheon and an agricultural pantheon, both waiting for the final battle that will end the World;
- **Devá** —The Hindu and Vedic Gods of India, powerful and ancient beings who stand astride this World and many others;
- **Kami**—The Japanese Gods, concealing deep passions and fierce rivalries beneath calm faces and subtle movements;
- **Manitou** — The Native Gods of the Algonquian people, who have suffered much in the diaspora of their people but never lost their own sense of righteousness;

Scion is a game about gods and humanity, and everything in between. It's a game about mythic Deeds and the reasons why people talk about those mythic Deeds. It's also about modernity — the World today is a very different place than the anything our ancestors could've conceived.

Scion encompasses four core books — **Origin**, **Hero**, **Demigod**, and **God** — defining and expanding the setting and some of the primary pantheons or groups of Gods. They also detail the primary player-character type (Scions) climbing in power and Legend until they're Gods themselves. Despite the size, Scion: Hero isn't a complete game. It needs **Scion: Origin** to explain much of the core system, Storypath, that guides you in crafting stories for your Scions.

Hero details the Scions after the Visitation that introduces them to the divine World — they're exceptional humans, blessed with luck and skill or cursed with ill fortune and strange trials in their lives, armed with divine gifts and accompanied by strange beasts and powerful immortals. The book explains how to fully create Heroic Scions, and includes rules and information on the various denizens and Legendary creatures who match and equal them, as well as the foes who oppose them.

- **Netjer**— The Egyptian Gods, eternal yet mutable, watching over a people not truly their own any longer;
- **Òrìshà** — The Yoruban Gods, the African Gods who transformed themselves during the trans-atlantic slave trade, and also encompassing a sub-pantheon of Voudoun deities called the **Loa**;
- **Shén** — The Chinese Gods, a truly massive group of deities organized into a grand Celestial Bureaucracy;
- **Teōtl** — The Aztec Gods of the Mexica, who sacrifice greatly for their people and receive sacrifice in return;
- **Theoi** — The Greek and Roman Gods, noble lineages existing in one big (some would say *titanic*) family;
- **Tuatha Dé Danann** — The Irish Gods, fierce in their honor and passionate in their art, descendants of ancient divine refugees.

MEDIA

We particularly recommend the following as sources of inspiration for the content and tone of your **Scion: Hero** stories.

***Vikings*, by Michael Hirst**

Vikings is inspired by the sagas of Viking Ragnar Lothbrok, one of the best-known legendary Norse heroes and a notorious raider of England and France. Plenty of characters, Ragnar included, claim descent from the Norse Gods, and the show even allows for some support of this idea. More importantly, many characters accept these claims at face value — and expect Ragnar and others to live up to their heritage. Due to this, it's a valuable example for Storyguides showing the expectations placed on Heroes by their community, and how the sacred and the profane seamlessly interact.

***Mage: The Hero Discovered/Defined/Denied*, by Matt Wagner**

An allegory for the author's experiences in writing comics, Mage follows Kevin Matchstick, who discovers that he's the reincarnation of King Arthur. Along the way, he interacts with — and involves himself in — the stories of a dozen other reincarnated Heroes. Mage's themes and power levels match up pretty well with **Scion**'s, and Kevin's goals provide a great map for Deeds...and failures.

***Lucifer* by Mike Carey**

In a world of demons, faeries, angels, and worse, Lucifer Morningstar, First of the Fallen, runs a piano bar in L.A. The *Lucifer* comic series deals with the problem of free will and

the tyranny of having a divine father, and features appearances from a whole host of Gods (including representatives of the Norse and Japanese pantheons). The tone of the series rarely verges from seriously irreverent, though the power scales off **Hero** and straight into **Demigod** much of the time.

***The Incredible Hercules*, by Greg Pak and Fred Van Lente**

A comic wherein Hercules travels the Marvel universe alongside his sidekick, Amadeus Cho, the seventh smartest person in the world. They get involved in shenanigans throughout the Marvel universe, then moves on to dealing with rest of the Greek pantheon, and later that pantheon's dealings with other gods, and even alien gods. Notable for a very notable touch of the Rashomon Effect, where Hercules realizes that he doesn't actually remember his history, but that it doesn't actually matter —who he is now defines him. Ares comes to the same conclusion, but is a lot sadder and angrier about it.

The Mahabharata

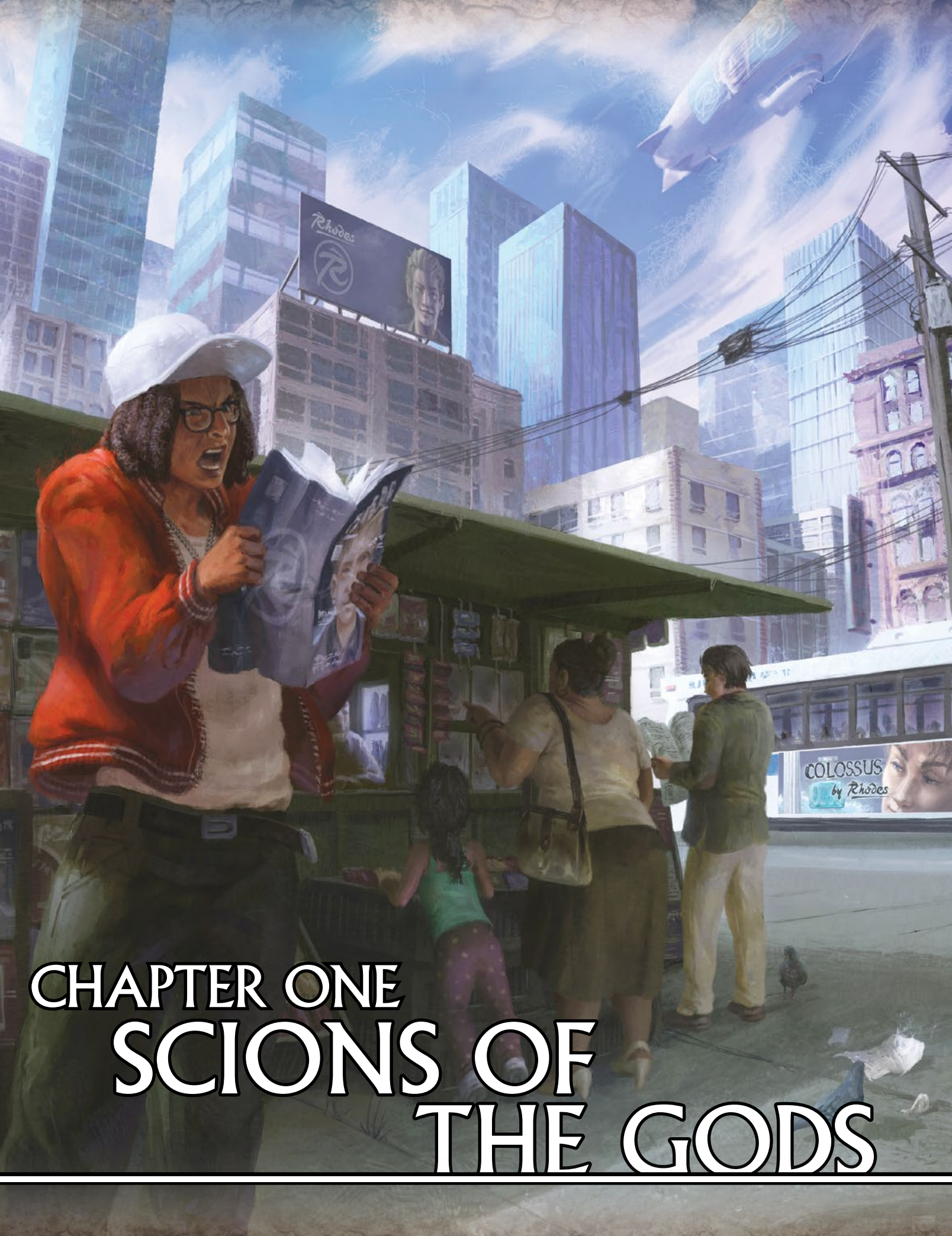
The Mahabharata is a work of epic poetry of the Vedic/Hindu religion, but has some great English prose translations and applies a great deal to Scion. Empires rising and falling, high action, revenge, the children of Gods warring for primacy, relic weaponry that allows demigods to channel divine power, and miracles. It's pretty great.

***Mythender*, by Ryan Macklin**

Mythender is a roleplaying adventure game about stabbing gods in the face and killing Mythic creatures... while trying not to become them, for the power that allows you to slay them is the same power that fuels their Myth. Perhaps not entirely in Scion's milieu — in fact, it's somewhat antithetical — Mythender nonetheless has several powers and traits (like Heart, Past, and Fate) that map fairly well to Scion. The game's adventure structure also makes for a good, if antagonistic, Scion season.

***Godbound*, by Sine Nomine Publishing**

Another RPG in the OSR (Old School Revival or Old School Renaissance) vein, Godbound takes place in a fantasy realm where the gods have perished and heroes have risen with splinters of divinity to take their place. The simplicity of use and the nature of their Gifts can easily be seen as Knacks or Boons in Scion (and vice-versa). Godbound also features an excellent plot-generation system that can function alongside Scion's.



CHAPTER ONE
SCIONS OF THE GODS

"A hero is someone who has given his or
her life to something bigger than oneself."
- Joseph Campbell

"Once upon a time," says the storyteller. People in our world hear the phrase and know it means "a long time ago," or "before things were the way they are today," or "in the beginning."

For Scions, "once upon a time" is now, and their stories are just beginning. Some come from humble beginnings, some from incredible luxury; some have no idea of their parentage, while others are raised from birth to embrace their sacred heritage.

GODS AND THEIR PANTHEONS

The problem with humanity shaping you is that humans are never satisfied with a simple answer. They want to know the how and why of everything, and a single God can get very worn out being the font of everything (though some have certainly tried and succeeded — Zalmoxis, God of Sacrifice and the Dacians, did fairly well for himself). Most of the time they band together and form a pantheon — a group of Gods who divide up the labor of creation.

All myths are true. If a group of followers begins to believe that their Gods created the World, they did — for those were Deeds, a seed of truth around which faith can grow. Even if the Gods in question didn't come along until quite recently, once it is a part of who they are to have created something, they *did*. They have always been the ones who did it. Divinity has some perks, and being outside of time and space is one of them.

This means that a God whose followers believe that he watches the flight of every sparrow actually has to have done it at some point — and that point becomes extrapolated throughout all of history, and eternally into the future via the God's Legend. This can be very boring when you'd rather be waging war or drinking wine, so the Gods share the load with other like-minded beings.

Once a pantheon forms, it orders the World around itself in a cosmology. Worshippers tell stories of the Gods, and the Gods' homes take those forms around them. Terra Incognitae are colonized and reordered, unmoored from the World and taken to the Underworld and the Overworld alike. These places aren't exactly created by the Gods, and this isn't always a conscious process; altered by Deed and by belief, the Incognitae suit the needs of the pantheon. When a God goes on a journey, the road literally comes up to meet them.

Not every Terra Incognita is separate from the World, though. Many Gods choose to make their homes in the shadows of ours. Terra Incognitae can fit in the cracks of the World — a God can build a home for themselves in a tree or a hearth or a statue every bit as mythic as a feasting hall. If a God lives there, it's a Terra Incognita, and within it the true Gods live.

But wherever the Gods go, conflict follows. Every story needs a conflict, and the Gods cannot escape the fact that they sow the seeds of their own dramas. They cannot help but stir up trouble in the form of mortal entanglements, cultural indiscretions, and spats with each other. But the biggest conflicts usually arise when they interact with their counterparts: the Titans.

TITANS

Titans and titanspawn are inextricably bound to the stories of Gods and Heroes, but the role they play isn't always clearly defined. It would be too easy to cast all Titans as villains, but myth and real life are never that simple. For one thing, Titans and Gods are both elemental expressions of the World, so it cannot be black and white. For another, if all Titans are villains that means that all Gods are heroes, and that's definitely not true.

When Prometheus saw the fires of creation on Mount Olympus, he wasn't overcome by compassion for the poor humans huddling on the face of Gaea below. Prometheus *is* creativity and for him to see an opportunity to spark an endless age of creative furor across the world isn't just a temptation, it's an inevitability. The creation Prometheus sparked generated as many terrors as it did wonders, and both delight the Titan equally. Prometheus cares not — that new things are being created is all that matters. It is not even a desire; it is a fact of his existence.

While King Rāvaṇa clearly wishes to destroy the Devá, this desire doesn't come from his demonic whims — it is his nature to seek to better himself through destructive ambition. With his knowledge of the shastras and Vedas, he knows that the only way he can advance is to submit to reincarnation and begin to learn and grow, but he cannot, for his nature prevents him. It is his role to lead the rākṣasas and wage unending war against the Devá; without him the entire karmic cycle would lose its balance, and so he remains perpetually in Lankā and devises plots for subterfuge that are ultimately doomed to failure. He cannot be reformed, not because of an inherent evil, but because he is defined by his role in the progression of the universe.

LEGENDARY CREATURE COMMUNITIES

As much as we may not like to think about it, most of the sentient Legendary creatures are not that different from humans. If they don't have some inborn hatred of or hunger for mortals, they usually just end up trying to eke out an existence in whichever corner of the World or Overworld they end up in. And so it's not uncommon for these Denizens to form communities of various descriptions to make existence a little easier and more comfortable. For instance:

In Tír na nÓg, travelers may come across a faerie circle where Tylwyth Teg gather to dance and create art. Living largely in makeshift homes such as caves and trees, the majority of the work in a village of fair folk revolves around gathering food and throwing parties. They do not harbor ill will towards mortals or other creatures of the World, but they do attempt to trick mortals with magically binding bargains. Since the Tylwyth Teg are typically incapable of reproducing, they attempt to steal or bargain for children that can be transformed into young faeries to continue the traditions of the fair folk.

In the forests of Japan, there are many small communities of Kitsune, usually carefully guarded from the eyes of outsiders. These fox spirits have deep respect for their elders and are fiercely loyal to their young. They can shapeshift from fox into human at will and use this ability to evade the notice of most mortals. The communities are often shy, but have opened up to humans who are lost or in need of help, though they rarely let such visitors leave for fear of being exposed.

The jungle-dwelling were-jaguars of Central America are expert hunters and perfect predators, so they seldom allow visitors to see them or their tightly knit communities. Their villages are small but elaborately built, with the majority of life taking place in a central open area where children are raised by the group. Males and females hunt together in packs for food and elders serve as spiritual and political leaders.

So it is with all Titans: Their inability to defy their nature often brings them into conflict with the Gods. Titans may be jealous of the Gods' ability to change, their connection with humanity, their capacity for compassion and understanding. A God can show mercy, but a Titan could not defy his nature to save a mortal even if he wanted to. But ultimately, a Titan exists as both counterpart and kin to the Gods, and whether they are to be worshipped, reviled, or reformed is largely a matter of opinion.

TITANSPAWN AND LEGENDARY CREATURES

Children of the Titans and other mystical castoffs take many forms, and they arise in many ways. While some are born of monstrous lusts being slaked in a thankfully distant past, others are created from the soil or the animals of the World. These misbegotten creatures populate almost every Terra Incognita and even scrape out an existence in the World where they can. They are not inherently evil, just different from mortals in an often-incompatible way.

The wendigo are massive creatures that usually dwell in the wintery wilderness of various North American Terra Incognitae, but when the cold winds blow through the World they can step across and raid humanity for food. They are gluttonous beasts full of hate and the desire to destroy, but it is the fact that they subsist entirely on human meat that makes them incapable of harmonious coexistence with mortals. They are not interested in mitigating their desires or learning to be among the mortals — they will eat human meat until they are killed. And if not for the tireless efforts of Nana'b'oozoo and his followers, they would invade our world and feast.

Some of the more intelligent Legendary creatures and titanspawn have learned to coexist with the other inhabitants of the World, however. The Tengu once delighted in bringing fear as harbingers of battle, but soon learned that mortals are extremely capable of chasing off creatures they consider to be bad luck, often fatally. So now communities of Tengu live in the mountains and rivers of Japan, staying mostly out of humanity's way and looking for good places to lay their eggs. Occasionally they may cross the path of a human, but they have no interest in mortals as food or entertainment anymore, so they retreat back to their nests. But anyone who interferes with their young may find themselves with reason to recall why these creatures were once considered fearsome demons.

Of course, titanspawn forming communities doesn't always bode well for humanity. The Fomorians have formed an army of hideous warriors to battle the Tuatha Dé Danann eternally. Under the leadership of Balor, they are capable of causing no end of destruction and death amongst the Tuatha. And even if death isn't much of a challenge for the Gods, it's still annoying enough to continue the perpetual squabble between these groups. And whenever Gods and Titans start to battle, it's the titanspawn and Scions that get the bloody nose.

As if the World weren't populated with enough wonders and horrors, there are also legendary creatures that arise without the intervention of God or Titan. Perhaps they come into existence through hiccups in Fate or from the power of human belief, perhaps they creep in through the Axis Mundi that connect the World to the bizarre dreamscapes of the Terra Incognitae. The griffons and kodama and hippocamps fill in the gaps in human imagination

and keep open the doors between the World and the lands of imagination from which they come.

Much like everything else in the World, the delineation between the Titanspawn and Legendary creatures isn't always clear. In fact, the creatures themselves may not know whether they are born of the Titans or simply arose from some indefinable narrative or ecological need. It's often the stories that mortals tell about these creatures that solidifies their nature, if only because creatures choose to alter their culture and become the monsters or the enigmatic tricksters humanity sees them as.

Since the terms "Titan" and "God" can be seen as somewhat arbitrary, there are those who will view Scions of some pantheons as titanspawn. Running up against a Scion of a pantheon that doesn't think much of her divine lineage, a Hero may find herself being treated as a monster by another Hero. All the more reason for Scions of a more contemplative nature to take the time to think about where the lines are drawn before charging into battle against an unknown enemy.

While she may be able to find a niche in the pantheon of her sires, no few strike out on their own. They band together and carve out a new structure for their followers. Many new pantheons began as a band of Scions reforming their myths into a cohesive story

TYPES OF SCIONS

Scions come in all shapes and sizes, but most are human, or at least mortal. They may be *born*, *Created*, *Chosen*, or *Incarnated*.

BORN

Most Scions are the outcome of a God and a mortal (human, animal, whatever...) having sexual relations. In truth, divine trysts with humans are invariably marked by lies, shapeshifting, manipulation, and force. All of these deserve a reckoning on behalf of injured mortality, but too often the Gods are beyond reproach. Scions are usually born bastards, orphaned by one of their parents (the Godly one) and left to be raised by their human side. They grow up in a World that sees them as forever different, and excel at things others wouldn't dream of.

Being touched by the Gods, Scions — even before they know their heritage — set their sights high and take heroic challenges head-on when the opportunity arises. Some have a feeling of privilege, the idea that they're owed by divine birthright, while others feel their Deeds set them apart. Those who discover their heritage may hope to one day ascend to true Godhood, but a surprising majority are quite happy with their human lives and simply knowing who and what they are.

CREATIO CONTINUA: THE CREATED IN ORIGIN

Being Created is a valid Path in **Scion: Origin**, but how can you reconcile that book's air of mystery and subtle movements of divinity with a being created *ex materia*? Many cultures and religions have legends of foundling children, which can give your Created a history and childhood of feeling different and unique. Some legends — and even popular television shows — depict fully-grown adults waking up in strange places, bereft of memory and identity yet possessing an air of mystery, typically aided by handsome federal agents pursing tattooed enigmas or attractive psychologists trying to help with the inevitable amnesia. Make the mystery of the Created part of their Path and their connections.

BORN SCIONS OF MYTH

Hanuman (The Devá): Now a powerful God, Hanuman began life as a Scion, son of Vayu, the God of the wind. Unlike most Scions, his divine nature was not kept secret from him; in fact, he was given many gifts from his pantheon to ensure he survived, as he became a fast favorite. Born with an intense curiosity, he once tried to eat the most delicious orange he ever saw... the sun. After playing pranks on several gods and their minions, Hanuman was cursed with the inability to remember his great power, until someone reminded him of the Deeds he was capable of performing. Stories of varying accuracy and magnitude have long circled in the World, though Hanuman is unsure if they're just interesting stories or truths unlocked by his memory.

Little Hare (Manitou): Born the son of Earth-maker, Little Hare was destined to become a hero. He was raised by his grandmother, the Earth itself, nourished and cared for by nature all around him, but he was very foolhardy. Little Hare ran head first into danger, once taking on an elephant that swallowed him whole, and has even died on many occasions — only to have his grandmother bring him back from beyond. He exists as a lesson to humanity to use their heads, always in the spotlight of an endless cycle of grand success and terrible failure.

Xolotl (Teōtl): Xolotl is the twin brother of Quetzalcoatl, both the sons of Coatlicue. While his brother represented the light, Xolotl had more of an affinity for darkness, night, and death. The Scion's claim to fame comes from his first trip to the Underworld, where he tricked the ruler there into letting her bring the remains of a lost civilization to the surface and Quetzalcoatl brought them back to life, thus giving humanity life. His visage took on a canine appearance the longer he spent in the Underworld, reflecting the fact that dog spirits often escort the souls of the dead to the afterlife. He has always been content to let his twin be the one adored by the pantheon, happy to guide the sun to its resting place each night.

CREATED

Some Scions are those beings granted Godlike abilities even though they hail from origins other than humanity. This can include reaching into the clouds and giving life to a wisp who eventually becomes a God of winds or taking lesser creatures, like insects or dogs, and giving them human form. Many Created Scions are made for the express purpose of being a minion to the God in question, often to guard tomes or become a muse to the God's favorite worshippers. A special few who catch their creator's eye may be given more freedom to pursue their own destinies.

Their existence is far from easy, however. If created from an animal, their wild instincts often get the better of them; if crafted from non-living material, their emotions and thoughts are often fabricated for a time, causing existential periods of self-exploration before they can be considered anything close to normal. They look upon the World with a child's eyes, but learning how to become human isn't always at the forefront of the Scion's goals. Instead of looking to integrate, many hope to undergo apotheosis to Demigod-hood, to surpass the necessity for such things.

CREATED SCIONS OF MYTH

Galatea (The Theoi): There was once a gifted sculptor named Pygmalion who created his greatest work...a statue of a the most beautiful woman he had ever seen. In fact, he had fallen in love with his creation, a fact the Gods did not overlook. Aphrodite chose to grant life to the statue, instilling Galatea with an intense love for her creator and even officiating their wedding before the Gods. Though the story often ends there, Galatea ultimately outlived Pygmalion, and wandered the world in search of a new love for centuries afterward. Their children also went on to have their own adventures that have contributed to many great works of art.

Mafdet (Netjer): Mafdet was once a cat, the most beloved cat of the pharaoh. Bast saw the cat's affection for her master and granted her human form to more effectively perform her duties. Mafdet became synonymous with protection from snakes and scorpions, and then eventually criminals. She rose to God of justice, seen as the God of capital punishment to some, as she always brought her catch before the pharaoh like a cat proudly displaying a lizard to its owner. Of course, in this case, it was the bloodied corpse of anyone who dared cross Mafdet's path with ill intent. As she grew older, Mafdet became the guardian of burial sites, continuing to protect her masters long after they were dead.

Ukemochi no Kami (Kami): This being, created spontaneously from a mixture of divine magic and fanciful

feast, became known as the Young Woman with Food. She could produce food with a snap of her fingers or the feeling of being full with a simple touch. In myth, her meeting with the greater Gods to prove her worthiness was met with disaster. Ukemochi vomited forth the tastiest rice for Tsukiyomi, the moon God, who felt disrespected and struck her down. Amaterasu, the sun goddess, became angry and vowed to never see her brother face to face again, which is the reason the sun and moon never hang in the sky together. Ukemochi's body became a feast for the land again in her death.

CHOSEN

Some people are gifted or blessed by the Gods, even though they have no blood relation. Often this requires a powerful bloodline, forged through generations of worship to the God, or a royal pedigree. Alternately, they may have been party to a mystic confluence of Fate, something that aligns enough with a God's Legend to warrant adoption.

Perhaps the darkest Path to becoming a Scion, Chosen Scions owe the God a degree of servitude in exchange for the favor they've granted. Some serve willingly and gladly, while others may resent their adopted parent. The Chosen are never without a constant reminder that they are indebted to the gods, whether they wear it physically as a brand or in the divine power that is never truly their own.

CHOSEN SCIONS OF MYTH

Macha (Tuatha): Macha is one of the Morrigan, the three-who-are-one. Unlike her sister-selves, she was once a mere mortal, without a touch of divinity. She was a queen, or perhaps the daughter of a king, intimately associated with the land of Ulster. Chosen by her sister-selves in an effort to create a new aspect, she died in Ireland, shedding her mortality and joining the Morrigan. Of all her sister-selves, she is the one closest, if not kindest, to mortality.

Sigurd (Æsir): Born to a bloodline that Odin favored, Sigurd was always a humble man. After his father's death, his stepfather, the king, attempted time and again to corrupt Sigurd with riches and influence, but he refused every time. He had the respect of other kings and the blessing of the Gods. His steed, Grani, was born from Odin's own eight-legged horse, Sleipnir, and he was graced with a sword, Gram, sharp enough to cut through an anvil. All of this led to his becoming known as the dragonslayer, after handily defeating the dragon Fafnir, drinking his blood and learning to speak with birds. After decades of adventure, he later chose to settle down and pass the legacy on to his kids, knowing Odin would watch after them as they walked their path.

Wen Zhong (Shén): Wen Zhong was the military advisor of King Da Yi until the king's untimely death crowned a new king and ushered in the Shang Dynasty. Zhong left in search of enlightenment, which he found when encountering the legendary dragons of the North Sea, eventually coming to ride on one's back to quell a rebellion. The Gods viewed Wen Zhong and granted him the third eye, capable of seeing through untruths and illusions. When he arrived home to the new king, he saw the bitterness and idiocy of the ruler, and led a coup that brought China a more compassionate and worthy king.

INCARNATE

Scions who are Incarnate are, perhaps, the oddest of the lot. The Gods frequently create mortal avatars, aspects of themselves that wander the World — recreating myths, experiencing life, and enjoying the various experiences of humanity. It's these Incarnations that sire Scions. However, when a God's mantle is sundered from their physical form, or a God is killed, any Incarnations they have left in the World are cast asunder...but not forgotten. These Incarnations become full-fledged Scions, awakening to their true identity but bereft of patronage or power from their dead over-selves.

Even stranger, some Incarnates were never properly Gods. A dead Hero or Demigod leaves behind no full-fledged mantle to carry their immortal Legend, but depending on pantheon, their souls may be reborn in a new life, and these reincarnations find themselves going through the same omens and mysteries as other pre-Visitation Scions. Their early Deeds replicate their ancient feats, but these Incarnates inevitably face a vicious trial, for whatever Deed ended their life and sealed their incomplete Legend is often just as deadly the second time around.

Incarnates have a clear road map to assuming their mantle once again: recreating the epic Deeds that forged the mantle in the first place, drawing it down upon them once more. This can be done by any Incarnation, however, and often a Scion's worst enemy is literally themselves — or rather, a competing Incarnation. And unfortunately, the ability to draw down the mantle isn't necessarily something an Incarnation alone can perform, though they're driven to do so. Any Hero of the deceased deity, sired by an Incarnation, can deliberately walk the same path as their parents and claim the mantle of divinity.

INCARNATE SCIONS OF MYTH

Xiuhtecuhtli (Teōtl): The Turquoise Lord is the personification of life after death, and a small flame is kept alive in every Teōtl worshipper's home in his honor. One of the Lords of Night, he is the light in the darkness and the food during famine, continually growing old and then becoming young again. This is a literal phenomenon. Every few centuries**,** Xiuhtecuhtli purposefully sheds his immortality and divine nature and reincarnates as a mortal, growing through the World and undergoing apotheosis to reclaim his godhood.

Dionysius (Theoi): The fun-loving son of Zeus was lured to his death with toys of his childhood. In a rage, his father destroyed the Titan responsible, and used the ashes of his beloved child to form humanity. His Titanic mother, Rhea, guided the Scion left from the last Incarnation of Dionysius to reclaim his heart and assume the mantle of his deceased father-self.

Tammuz (Annua): The Sumerian God of food and vegetation voluntarily killed himself to secure Inanna's release from the Underworld. Previously a minor deity serving Inanna, he had multiple Incarnations present in the World upon his death; they battled one another for supremacy until one claimed the mantle of his progenitor and reclaimed the other Incarnations. Since his ascension, Tammuz has acquired characteristics of solstice deities and must remain in the Sumerian Underworld for several months out of the year, much like Persephone in the Greco-Roman pantheon.

THE VISITATION

Nascent Scions live lives touched by myth, moreso even than the typical denizen of the World. Some go their entire lives without really grasping the divine, skating by on providence and charm. Others confront their nature directly — or, more often, are confronted by it. A God appears in a storm of holy fire, bearing an annunciation of divine heritage. Monsters torment the Scion and her family, not merely stalking them but attacking en masse, like iron filings to a magnet, until she has no choice but to fight back. Scions call this moment, when the divine intrudes upon the profane in a manner beyond signs and portents, and they awaken to their true power, the Visitation.

The Visitation is never accidental, though it isn't always deliberate on the Gods' behalf — for every instance of Ganesh riding in on a mouse to welcome his child to the Devá, there's a Scion of Baldr hunted by sapient, murderous mistletoe. Whatever form it takes, it's not a call that can be ignored. Fate takes an active hand when the gods do not, driving the Scion to a cataclysmic confrontation with her Legend.

It is a visceral, physical change — the Scion feels her blood boil away, refined into golden ichor, which roars in her ears not with the sound of her own heartbeat, but with the prayers of millions of faithful. Her breath becomes incense, carrying benedictions and curses in equal measure. Scions of elemental Gods feel their flesh transfigured into fire, or earth, or raging sea, while Scions of conceptual Gods are flooded with a sense of power and purpose: Children of war Gods feel they can challenge any foe, while farm Gods' chosen experience a surge of endurance rising from the earth itself.

At the same time, it is a profound psychological awakening. For many Scions, it is their first encounter with their divine patron, and the first realization that the strange phenomena that have dogged their lives are signs of something greater. Whether it comes in the form of a bolt of divine awareness from Heaven or a long conversation over midnight burgers with Thor at a greasy spoon, it's a dramatic realignment of the young Scion's worldview from the mortal to the immortal.

AGE AND VISITATION

Even among born Scions raised in Terra Incognitae by their parents' divine servants, Visitations before late adolescence are rare. The days of child Heroes like Cu Chúlainn are over, and Scions have enough to deal with without dodging truancy officers. It's not that it can't happen — it just doesn't, for pretty good reasons.

Gifts, too, are common features of Visitations. Some Gods appear to their Scions with a veritable gift basket of holy Birthrights — Relics, Followers, and Guides all primed to aid the Scion in her execution of divine will. Other times, the nascent Scion must win her gifts, by force of arms or cleverness, from the titanspawn that beset her. Demons defeated in riddle contests are bound to serve as Guides or Followers, while trophies wrenched from the bones of slain Giants make Relics as fine as any produced in Hephaestus' forge.

BORN SCIONS' VISITATIONS

Gods tend to keep close tabs on their mortal children (or at least have divine functionaries that do so), so most born Scions' Visitations come in the form of a literal visitation: The God (or a duly appointed celestial representative) appears to the Scion, explains the truth of her heritage, and gives her several gifts. These gifts are usually followed immediately by a quest, because Gods aren't known for being open-handed when there's nothing in it for them. Still, some Gods are fickle when it comes to mortal relationships, and it falls to the Scion herself to discover her place in the world, armed only with strange trophies from a slain beast and powers she doesn't entirely understand.

CHOSEN SCIONS' VISITATIONS

Those who would earn the Gods' favor without the benefit of direct descent must prove themselves worthy. Chosen Scions' visitations, therefore, are almost invariably trials. Sometimes, those trials are sent by the Gods themselves — Itzpapalotl sends tzitzimime to torment her high priestess, and waits to see if she will overcome the star demons. Other times, the trials aren't planned, but are observed — Heimdall sees all that happens in the Nine Worlds, and often chooses Scions who display remarkable feats of foresight or innovate in the telecommunications field.

Assuming the nascent Scion survives her trial (which is by no means guaranteed), her patron deity usually appears to her to bestow the gift of divinity on her. Sometimes, the God even admits to testing his chosen, which doesn't always go over well with modern mortals. But the gift of ichor, once given, cannot be taken back — as many chosen Scions are resentful rebels as loyal priests.

CREATED SCIONS' VISITATIONS

Alone among Scions, Created Scions receive the Visitation early — usually, the moment of genesis is also the Visitation. Gods make created Scions for a specific purpose, and send them out well-equipped to fulfill that purpose. Rarely, a God creates a Scion and casts it into the World, with no memory or with a carefully manufactured one, as part of some long-ranging scheme, and more rarely one of a pantheon's automaton servants goes missing, but those are outlying cases.

INCARNATE SCIONS' VISITATIONS

Fate takes the greatest hand in the Visitations of Incarnate Scions. The reincarnations of dead heroes and forgotten Gods seldom receive Visitations from outside sources. Rather, they find themselves drawn into repeating the myth cycles of their former selves. Perseus reborn finds himself interrogating old, blind women for the location of Hesperides Farms, while Fionn mac Cumhail wakes to find himself embroiled in intrigues over the leadership of the Kerns Motorcycle Club in Ulster Township, PA.

While reenacting these ancient stories, Incarnate Scions come into possession of the Birthrights associated with her previous life. Beowulf's modern Incarnation pulls Nægling from the troll-hoard under the George Washington Bridge, while Ivan Tsarevitch's latest Incarnation just seems to trip over the sword Kladenets. The actual moment of Visitation, when the nascent Hero is transfigured, typically comes at the instant the Scion puts together the story she's living with her own vague memories of her former life to realize who she really is.

HEROES AND TITANS

You're a Hero. What do you do? Anything you can. Everything you must. But the Furies are in the details. Heroes are the most visible representatives of the Gods. They understand ordinary people the best. They spend more time in the World of regular mortals. They have fragile friends and

ALTERNATIVE SERIES STRUCTURES

Scion's traditional mode, where characters work their way from mortals and Heroes up to the ranks of Gods, suits long-form series, but you might choose other paths, either as a temporary change or a permanent way to structure your series. Some work especially well for **Hero** because they let you get around those characters' limited access to parts of the setting, and demonstrate that their actions have broader consequences. Troupe or ladder play (below) gives players an opportunity to explore their characters deeply, through extra time or attention.

Epic: Play everybody. Well, almost. In epic play, the story focuses on a slice of the entire setting, not just a band of Scions. The Storyguide and players create a broad cross-section of characters, from mortals to Gods. Play routinely shifts perspective, so players may move from a doomed mortal military squad running up against titanspawn monsters, to the Heroes who respond when the squad dies. The next session might put the players in the roles of the Gods and Demigods, who know why the attack happened. The epic structure requires a great deal of preparation and a willingness to let characters go dark for a while, or even die, because they exist to show you parts of story larger than any of them. Players must also prevent the knowledge acquired in some roles from bleeding over into others. In **Scion**, this style usually shifts between mortal/Origin, Hero, Demigod, and God tiers.

Ladder: The ladder structure is the traditional mode previously described. Mortals become Heroes, and climb the ladder of Legend to become Demigods and Gods. Don't let the other structures mentioned here distract you from the virtues of this form, which gives players an unprecedented opportunity to develop individual characters and build complex stories. The ladder takes time, however, and you may wish to adjust character advancement or make use of time shifts to move characters up a tier faster, to include it in a series with fewer sessions. Like television series, **Scion** games can struggle with schedule changes and the threat of cancellation, and it's no less valid to adjust your series so that it gets its share of satisfying arcs.

Multi-Tier: This scales back from the epic structure and requires you to make a different set of characters for each type of Scion (or mortal) you'd like to see. Play shifts back and forth between these groups, so players participate in the story unfolding in the World with Heroes, and across other realms with Gods and/or Demigods. For instance, you might confront a Titan's cults with mortals or Heroes, while contending with the Titan itself when Gods take the field. This presents the same challenges as epic play (being willing to shift characters and not let knowledge of one side unduly affect the other) while giving you the opportunity to focus on a smaller group of characters.

Nonlinear: In this structure, create the same characters at different stages in their mythic lives, as Heroes, Demigods and Gods (and possibly as mortals, too). The central conceit is that even though the finale occurs with the Gods, it gets put into context by recalling the past, when the characters were struggling to build their Legends. This structure's limitation is that without some sort of strange handwaving, everyone knows the characters all made it to Godhood (though you can cap the end stage at Demigod or even Hero); the attraction lies in discovering why. You may wish to design mortals and Heroes first, and leave certain spaces on the Demigod and God sheets blank, noting they'll get filled in as soon as the story prompts a recall of the relevant game traits — or invoking the traits might trigger a flashback, telling the story of how they were acquired. This method breaks the ladder structure up, allowing you to explore different levels without waiting for conventional advancement.

Troupe: This old structural innovation works well for **Scion**. Create three types of characters: everyday mortals (cultists, Worldly contacts and so on), exceptional mortals as covered in **Origin**, and true Scions. In each arc, one player portrays her Scion, a few play exceptional mortal allies, and the rest play everyday mortals. Thus, every player eventually enjoys a story focused on their own Scion, while everyone else plays the supporting cast. Once slain, ordinary mortals are quickly replaced — you can usually find another brave cult foot soldier in this style of play — and should be casually swapped between players.

family, but must balance them with new, divinely ordained obligations. It's tempting to think of Heroes as the bottom link of a chain of command, reaching all the way to the brooding throne of Odin or whoever, but that's not usually the case. Heroes possess a certain degree of freedom that Gods and Demigods envy. Fate has only wrapped a few weak threads around the young ones. Perhaps Heroes are the only ones who truly get to revel in their divine gifts.

Heroes put boots on the ground when the "cold war" between the Gods and Titans intensifies. They rush in with tactical concerns — the Gods usually deal with grand strategy. When winged snakes erupt from the earth and giants savage remote communities, Heroes are usually the first on the scene who can do anything about them. They may not know the entirety of what's happening, but that gives them a chance to do good deeds, undiluted by divine politics and cynical big-picture thinking. Monsters attack; they defend

HEROES AND GODS IN THE DIGITAL AGE

As the World shrinks under global communications and rapid travel, cross-cultural encounters have moved from tentative interactions between closed communities to a messy synthesis. It used to be rare for Heroes from multiple pantheons to form bands, but now it's par for the course. That creates new issues for Heroes, and for greater Scions who aren't always as broadminded as their children. Gods aren't necessarily bigots, per se, but they have a keen understanding of how their Virtues and Legends interact, and have much to teach young Heroes — until mythic cross-pollination occurs. When Kami and Theoi Heroes battle frost giants, many Gods don't really know how to respond. What songs should be sung about such deeds? What Legends rise?

Every member of a cross-pantheon band may be put in the uncomfortable position of acting as an ambassador to a companion's principal Gods, who are often highly suspicious of where an outsider's loyalty lies. History taints relations. For example, the Òrìshà aren't inclined to believe the Theoi Hero who brings praise from his parents, even if he's in a band with one of their own Scions. But when a multicultural band performs great Deeds, it overcomes old suspicions, and strengthens ties between pantheons. Some Gods require bands to perform such Deeds to prove themselves, and may even wager on the outcome. Sometimes, even enemy Gods like to gamble.

the people, unless of course, they brought the monsters, and have arrived as agents of divine punishment. Some Heroes are as cruel as the Gods, or worse.

MONSTERS

Heroes contend with an array of strange, dangerous titanspawn, and perilous creatures people assume are titanspawn, even if the Titans didn't have anything to do with them. The simplest scenarios pit Heroes against monsters which are more driven by instinct than intelligence. In old legends, some Heroes had an easier time, because mortals and Gods expected a simple response: When the beast appears, slay it! Mortals made statues and sang poetry, and the Hero built their Legend. Nowadays, mortals often believe animalistic monsters deserve compassion, and even distinct rights. This isn't to say that weird monsters fall under animal-cruelty laws, but attitudes about nature have changed. Mortals might expect Heroes to capture animalistic monsters and release them in some divine nature preserve they assume exists, and must be far, far away.

When the "monster" can speak it's an even more complicated affair. The World's courts have, by and large, refused to comment on whether intelligent nonhumans are entitled to human rights. In most places, any being that doesn't have a human progenitor can be assaulted and killed at will. That category includes many (though not all) giants and "hidden folk" (the house elves and mine knockers known to certain pantheons), but killing them is unpalatable to much of the public. On the other hand, consciousness can go hand in hand with an evil will, and everyone knows how some trolls *hate* people.

MYSTERIES

Heroes may confront titanspawn without knowing anything about the plot that brought the battle about, but rooted in the World, they can learn more. They interrogate the Titans' servants and collaborators. They uproot dangerous cults (always risky in places that protect religious freedom) and find stelae with strange prophecies inscribed upon them. That gives Heroes a certain amount of sway over Demigods and Gods, who don't want to be left out of the loop. Crushing a knot of worm elves who've been killing people across the American Midwest may be satisfying, but finding out why they left Niflheim, and which Titan benefits, is the better question. In truth, even reputedly "all-seeing" Gods can't exercise their most exalted modes of perception all the time. They need Heroes who've been there.

Titan plots are ultimately designed to free the plotters from imprisonment, but in stories that Heroes encounter, the Titans are still loosening their chains. The Gods don't talk about the exact process used to imprison Titans, but as Heroes eventually learn, Gods who mind the Titans' jails must stay strong. Attacking Tyr's cults is good for Fenris. Heroes should also be mindful of any activity related to the Titans Purviews. When they manifest in weird or potent ways, it means the Titans have slipped some thin tendril of power from the cracks of their prisons.

HEROES AND GODS

Parents. Creators. Cousins. Rivals. Gods and pantheons lay their burdens upon the youngest Heroes, but any obligations come with potent benefits. After all, the Gods made them who they are. Newly initiated Heroes tend to get a bit starry-eyed before the Gods. Not long ago they were mere mortals, often raised from birth to worship the very beings they now call family. Yet there's no argument as vicious as a family quarrel, and many of the Gods have more children than they know what to do with, even before considering Gods who traditionally ignore their offspring, and Heroes who aren't the Gods' children to begin with.

MONOTHEISM AND ATHEISM

Monotheism exists in **Scion**, and many, many people believe in one supreme omniscient, omnipotent God. Several schools of thought reconcile the mythic Gods with the God of Abraham, the Absolute, Mahāvairocana, and the Supreme Being's other names. Some of these schools are subscribed to by the Gods themselves.

The Abrahamic religions (Judaism, Christianity, Islam, and a host of other faiths) usually believe that the Gods aren't really divine, when they bother to acknowledge them at all. They're phenomena the Creator allows to exist. Despite their mythologies, they had no real part in making the Cosmos, and invent stories to justify their power over mortals. Their Purviews don't bring about true miracles. When the dead go to the Underworld, it's because Gods use their natural powers to force them there; Overworld realms are likewise extraordinary, but no more divine than the ability to build a house. The Òrìshà believe that there is only one God, and order their pantheon accordingly.

Many other religions hold that Gods and Titans are aspects of a greater Creator, and the parts are incapable of fully knowing the whole to which they belong. This stance is more common where the Devá have historically manifested, since they belong to a theological structure that accepts such phenomena as a matter of course. These religions often posit that while the Devá and similar beings possess a measure of divine power, mortals possess the distinct ability to pursue union with the Absolute, and attain spiritual liberation unknown to the manifest Gods.

Atheism is something else entirely. There are plenty of folks who don't believe in God or Gods, or acknowledge them when they're around but don't acknowledge that they're worthy of worship. At the **Origin** level, this isn't an uncommon phenomenon, as the Gods take a dim view of mortals trying to scientifically determine if they even exist. Omens and mysteries are how the Gods interact with humanity outside their Scions, for faith is a precious commodity, and can bind more surely than any established fact. Nevertheless, even some Scions don't believe the Gods to be worthy of worship, even as Legend climbs and they're shocked to find votive candles lit to *themselves*. Some full Gods even share this belief.

These philosophies, combinations thereof, and numerous variations can't be fully described in this brief section because they've had millennia to develop mature, complex arguments. For example, one Indian religious movement believes the Devá are not true gods, but illusions or sub-manifestations sent by them to instruct and test the devout. Several Gnostic-influenced theologians believe the manifest Gods are mockeries of the angelic host, made by the Demiurge to turn humanity away from the Almighty.

Scion's position is that the Gods are divine, or at the very least sacred, and we urge Storyguides to treat them as such: With respect and as much grace as their own myths do (which is, admittedly, sometimes sorely lacking in those myths where Thor gets drunk or any of the ones involving Eshu's sexual prowess). In the setting itself, despite the considerable thought people have put into all these various –theism positions, most mortals don't bother with it. Just like in the real world, millions of Christians go to church on Sundays and come home to burn offerings, or in cult temples on other days, and they don't see any contradictions. Cultural tradition sends you to one to get married and buried, and to the other for money, favors, or revenge. You have purists, intellectuals, and eccentrics who do it differently, but in this World, most people simply sense an order of things, and act accordingly.

ENEMY GODS

Few things pain a Hero more than the hatred of another God or Demigod. The closer the relationship, the worse it burns. Hera tried to have Herakles slain from the moment he was born. Have those wounds healed? Hera's cult says she never drove Zeus's son mad, never forced him to kill his children, his wife, or a man he loved. Poseidon trapped Odysseus at sea for a decade. Family rivalries, offenses against morals and customs, palace intrigues, and a host of other motives set Gods against Heroes.

Sometimes the Gods strike directly, but most pantheons discourage this, knowing it would lead to endless vendettas. Instead, enemy Gods attack whatever the Hero values, and often include a definite hint as to who's responsible, and how the Hero should make amends. Yet it's not always possible to resolve these differences. Hera hated Herakles for existing at all, and their modern alliance is a restless one. Stories dealing with enemy Gods are often reactionary. The God sends troubles, and the Hero uses cleverness and force to deal with them. Sometimes these resolve themselves when the quarrel gets out of hand, prompting a pantheon's principal figures to forcibly arbitrate, but a Hero might make amends, or simply crush each threat as it comes until, bloody and unbowed, until they make it clear that they'll never be intimidated.

DIVINE MENTORS

Sink or swim: That's the ancient way Gods raised Heroes. They break it from time to time, especially when rival Gods and Titans produce hazards too intense for Heroes

to handle, but to constantly intervene would interfere with the Hero's rising Legend, and perhaps influence the Gods in some unwanted fashion. Thus, after the Visitation, the Gods most concerned with the Hero's fortunes tend to stay away. But this doesn't change the fact that the Hero has a new family and society, whose members may not ride in to save the day, but will provide advice and social support when it pleases them.

These mentors usually come from the Hero's pantheon, but they don't have to. If the Gods never meant to produce a Hero, they must often find their own advisors. Furthermore, some Gods, and even Titans, are especially suited to the role. Prometheus and Mimir both stand outside their pantheons' societies, but are greatly honored for their wisdom. It may be that such sage figures seek the Hero out, for they perceive Fate with enough clarity to know that the World needs their young charges to battle some future calamity. Sometimes Heroes seek certain Gods for their knowledge, and this plants the seeds of a fruitful relationship.

Mentors not only give advice, but spur Heroes to act, as payment for advice, or because the mentor knows their Heroes must accomplish certain tasks that Fate has yet to weave. Unfortunately, these necessary things don't always reward the hero — tragedy has its omens too.

COMMANDERS OF THE HOST

Sometimes you must go to Troy, or muster the troops for Ragnarok. Parents and ruling Gods rarely exert naked authority but when they do, it's for some critical purpose. These councils of war, great vendettas, and epic missions involve Heroes when it's time to prevent a catastrophe that would otherwise entangle greater Scions, with all the snarled Fatebinding and Legend-twisting that would ensue. In these cases, Gods may force Heroes who don't know or like each other to work toward this common purpose, or they lay it all on the players' band, invoking some variation of "Do this, or else."

This is a heavy-handed tool for producing **Hero** stories, so Storyguides should use it sparingly, in situations where it's thematically appropriate and logically evolves from the series' main storyline. "Do this, or else," should never be the prime mover of the story; rather it underscores how serious the situation is. It's also a bit of a bluff, really. Limited to lesser Incarnations and mindful of Fatebinding, the Gods cannot order their offspring around so cavalierly. Furthermore, it would signal to other Heroes and Demigods that the Gods are bullies, and hardly moral leaders imbued with Creation's innate wisdom. And if that's the case, why pay attention to them at all?

PARENTS AND PROGENITORS

Zeus is a famously terrible father, but not all Gods are so negligent. Yet, as noted elsewhere, the Gods can't constantly intervene without producing undesirable results. Nobody wants weak Heroes constantly after Mom and Dad (or some other figure) for help. None of this addresses the emotional issues between Scions and their creators, however. This doesn't just hold true for children of the Gods. When a Scion is born as a spontaneous reincarnation of another God or divine principle, Gods who knew the prior incarnation, or value the principle, often feel a familial bond. The Hero is a loved one (or enemy) born anew. Heroes given power out of a pledge to serve might be thought of as adopted children. No matter its glory or subtlety, the Visitation is *intimate*; the God shares something of its essential being with the Hero. The same holds true for Heroes created from the raw stuff of the World and Fate.

Will the Hero learn to love their progenitor? Will they resent the God? What does love even mean to a being of myth? Cynical Gods manipulate Heroes searching for approval. Even if the players' Heroes don't have to deal with that crap, they might clash with other Scions willing to do great or vile things for the sake of acknowledgment. Many Heroes have mortal parents who may not approve of the divine progenitor, even in cases where they loyally serve that God. Family can trump faith. Gods have been known to use everything from bribery to murder to get the mortal family out of the way, and when Heroes find out, they may come to blows with their divine parents.

HEROES AND MORTALS

The World matters. Mortals give the Gods' lives meaning. Of all Scions, Heroes interact with ordinary people the most. They often have mortal families and ordinary friends. They went to school, or had regular jobs before the Visitation. Sometimes they *still* have jobs and educations to deal with. Some Heroes are loath to sponge off their cults, and log in at the office like everyone else. And while stereotype tends to push Heroes into pursuits matching their Purviews, not all of them are so willing to take such a straight, predictable path. One may be the daughter of Ares with a mind for battle, but she still wants an MFA in Creative Writing, and will wash the blood of dragons off her hands to finish a short story. Another Scion of a craft God wants to forge a Legend out of working-class industry, and never misses a shift at the plant.

GOVERNMENTS

Most governments pursue a hands-off policy regarding Scions, and expect the same in return, as long as Scions keep protecting everyday life from mythic threats. As they stand closest to the World, Heroes walk the line between subtle aid and meddling more often than other Scions. Police, bureaucrats, and politicians quietly call for Heroic aid. Sometimes they do it for the sake of their careers, or to deal with an intractable mundane problem. Cops, officials, and workers notice titanspawn and mythic strangeness on the job, and contact Heroes for help. When they're cultists, political figures sometimes figure their piety should be rewarded with favors Heroes wouldn't otherwise provide.

Politically proactive Heroes don't wait for mortal prompting. They exercise divine gifts to solve crimes and defend the rights of groups they care about. They pursue their share of patriotic and subversive activities. It's no big thing for a Hero to do it through words and ordinary actions, but mortals resent it when Heroes blatantly use Purviews, Knacks, and Birthrights. Telling your cult not to move when the riot cops move in is one thing; using your divine powers to command the cops to lay down their arms and flee is usually too much. In those cases, governments crack down on associated cults, and may charge the Hero with a crime, though processing a Hero through the courts is usually a last resort. Instead, officials may quietly contact other members of the Hero's band or pantheon to get them to step back. When that doesn't work? Well, antagonistic officials belong to cults, too, and *they* have Scions looking out for them.

BUSINESS

Cult ties and innate talents usually ensure that a Hero can always find a place to sleep and a decent meal. Some Heroes cultivate Legends founded in work. They're steel-driving men, women who beat fascism one rivet at a time, or people who embrace the archetype of the suit-clad, ruthless business leader. Heroes with the appropriate talents apply incredible skill and strength to a task. Cult-run firms are also common enough to warrant Hero participation. These businesses won't give you direct access to Hephaestian craftsmanship, but you can tell who's behind it through small signs: names, logos and industries connected to the cult's favored Scions. Just as for governments, mortals don't like Scions to become major economic actors, but Heroes often have mortal families they want to see prosper, and cults who expect help putting bread on the table. This motives send Heroes to work for short periods of time, give them business interests, or being them to an office to solve some intractable problem, which might be traced to rival cults, Scions, and titanspawn.

The big multinationals don't want Scions screwing with them, but they're not always big on ethics and long-term objectives. A Hero with the right Purviews and other powers is an ideal executive, marketer, or industrial spy. Violent Heroes might be called on in shady situations, or to rescue company workers from riots, war zones, and supernatural hazards. Corporate gigs have the advantage of not needing the Scion to mind a cult. They work and their bosses (or stock options) pay, with no need to minister

I WAS A TEENAGE HERO

A Hero's divine legacy doesn't let them out of the need for (and in many countries, their legal obligation to get) an education. It doesn't deprive them of their need to socialize with same-age peers, or provide comfort when some Becky trashes their reputation to turn them into a dateless wonder around prom time. That's right: There are Scions in schools, and you can play them.

Now being as quietly influential as they are, some cults do arrange for variants of homeschooling and distance learning to push Scions through high school or college, but mortal families, cult elders, and divine progenitors may well favor ordinary schooling, to keep a young Hero grounded. Cults have been known to interfere by, for example, arranging for multiple Heroes to attend the same school. At the college level, some Greek societies waive pledging requirements for Heroes.

These are all the excuses you need to run a school-centered series, where young Heroes balance high school or college with Legend-making deeds. This is well-trod ground, familiar through multiple television series, so it should be completely allowed in **Scion**. Keep in mind that this will stretch credulity more than the game's usual setup (how do titanspawn keep joining the substitute-teacher pool?) but if your group is into it, do it.

IN THE SYSTEM

How formal is a Hero's relationship with the government? It depends on the governments and pantheons involved. In Western Europe and North America, Scions possess no special legal status beyond possible recognition as religious figures. Various agencies informally track them, but don't talk about it in public, because it might be seen as a form of persecution against their worshippers.

In countries where a pantheon is deeply connected to the national identity, state-sponsored bodies might register their identities and roles. For example, until the end of the Qing Dynasty, China's Shén were registered with the government, as mortal and Shén policy required. Social disorganization and later, the growing belief that these policies were hallmarks of an oppressive traditional culture, ended the practice until after the Cultural Revolution, when it was revived and integrated with state security interests.

Registration systems tend to break down when Scions cross borders. It would offend various cults to detain Heroes, but some organizations are intensely interested in their movements. A disruptive Hero probably won't get in trouble for refusing to declare their nature, but might be deported for being some other sort of undesirable.

to the flock. Most large corporations know where to find the Heroes they need for special jobs, and prefer to keep these arrangements under wraps, but when a Hero shows up after an unexplained absence with a full bank account, they've often been doing this sort of work. They can't always keep their involvement quiet, however, and the greater the secrecy, the more likely it is to have involved the sort of ethically dubious acts whose consequences extend well beyond the job's end.

CULTS

Cults love Heroes. The word "cult" refers to any cultural religion that honors the pantheons. The name shouldn't be construed to imply that these faiths are more likely to have sinister goals, fanatical worshippers or deadly secrets buried within strange liturgies. While *some* of them do indeed have all these elements, the average cult is the sort of thing ordinary families enjoy with kids in tow. (And if the kids can't attend a ritual, the good cults provide childcare.) Weird, dangerous cults exist due to the efforts of weird, dangerous people, and in the World, they're a minority.

Sometimes cults love Scions too much, with the intensity of screaming groupies. Sometimes they believe love and worship entitle them to control a Hero's actions. Heroes spurn their cults at their own risk: As far as larger pantheons are concerned, cult support is one of a Hero's primary functions, especially if they were raised from mortal status due to exceptional piety. The Hero visits and reminds the flock that divine power is real. They listen to prayers and split them into those the Hero can deal with themselves, those to be forwarded to Demigods and Gods, and those which cannot or should not be answered. In some pantheons, this is a formal process. For instance, the Shén maintain a bureaucratic apparatus for managing such requests. This can be burdensome not only because of its complexity, but because it empowers mortals to expect a proper answer to a correctly submitted request. In any event, it's often in a Hero's interest to answer prayers and build their Legend thereby.

In return, cults provide material support and personnel for anything the Hero needs that's consistent with the religion's theology. This isn't an unlimited right to abuse

TITAN CULTS

Titans have cults, too, but they have a tempestuous relationship with their patrons. Titans don't care about worship, so in some ways, their followers are more faithful than the rest, since they can't expect the slightest bit of divine favor. Their cults either honor the Titans as pure creators, or are propitiatory — that is, they worship to beg the Titans not to act, or at least to delay whatever calamities they have planned.

Titanspawn usually call upon these cults only when it serves some immediate practical purpose, offering a token reward to keep the faith running. They need muscle to help take down a Scion, a go-between to deal with a modern world repulsed by their monstrousness, or even just food, clothing, and shelter. When the job's done, titanspawn just leave or, to tie up loose ends, kill everybody.

Of course, some Titans have been known to favor their cults, and not all titanspawn are so selfish. Some instruct their cults to prepare for the Titans' doomsday, so they can thrive after it all comes crashing down. Some of them appreciate a select group of mortals not for their love, but for their appreciation of a Purview. They love artists, naturalists, and explorers who open themselves to the raw power of nature, untempered by human desire. It is said Prometheus' cults are of this type.

people and funds (cult treasurers can get remarkably testy with greedy Scions) but a Hero in good standing can at least expect help with room, board, and a host of trivial expenses. Storyguides should be generous with any support that moves the story along and keeps it focused on **Scion**'s themes and stories. If you're not interested in Heroes paying student loans and buying furniture, the cult takes care of it. On the other hand, this trivial business can acquire some standing in the series. A Hero's enemies will often attack their cult, or connections to it. Perhaps they bankrupt the cult and make the Hero look responsible, or deprive cultists of work, housing, and other necessities, while making it clear it's all because they support their local Hero. This can foreshadow direct violence, or drive Heroes to solve the problem and win back their cult's trust.

TYPES OF CULTS

Cults have always existed, so they've taken so many forms that any attempt to catalog them all would fall short. Nevertheless, we can survey the more interesting types of cults, and note that these categories aren't mutually exclusive. A coven might satisfy its demand for practical supernatural power by being Reliquarians, for example.

COVENS

The most distrusted, secretive, and dangerous cults, covens exist not to simply honor Gods, but harness their powers to whatever end the coven desires. Covens often treat worship as a perfunctory matter: a technique or social maneuver, instead of a way to surrender to divine guidance. They perform the rite; the Scion (or their proxies, tools, whatever) does the job. This doesn't mean covens are less devout. They often possess an internal theology where worship is a transaction. It's still the holiest thing you can do, but wanting results isn't considered "base" or unworthy.

Covens have poor reputations due to groups that sell the Gods' services, or demand divine intervention for malicious or venal ends. Thus, coven members may be treated as witches in the anthropological sense of the term (people who use magic to make others suffer, not Wiccans). On the other hand, covens have bargains with Scions to heal the sick and aid the oppressed. Some Scions even favor covens, who tend to spell out their expectations in clear-cut ways, and who make excellent "talent agents" when a third party wants their help.

Example Coven — The Weird Sisters: *About 1,000 years ago, three sisters became widows as two warlords — Duncan and Mac-Bethad, ravaged the land in a series of petty Scottish wars. The sisters secured the aid of the Morrígan in a complicated arrangement. Wishing to extinguish both warlords' lines, the sisters thought it might be the work of generations, but the Morrígan only agreed to aid female, property-owning descendants. It was a typical Morrígan trick that would see the sisters either lose her favor, or join with the sort of men they hated. She didn't count on the sisters remarrying and promptly employing mariticide and selective infanticide to keep the bargain intact, nor did she think the Weird Sisters would produce disciplined daughters willing to repeat the process, until liberal social mores and better reproductive medicine made keeping the covenant a bit less harsh. So, to this day, the Morrígan's Scions are bound to aid the sisters' three eldest female descendants, provided the women own a bit of land. The Weird Sisters use such assistance to keep themselves rich, and fund initiatives that support financial autonomy for women. As for the warlords? Shakespeare wrote a play.*

GUILDS

For as long as Gods have blessed particular professions, cults have arisen among them to return the favor. They're warrior societies, smithies who teach through religious rites, houses of sacred sex workers and, nowadays, programmers, engineers, and intelligence analysts, too. Many guilds have an ancient pedigree though in some cases, such cults have changed the profession they serve, or evolved into social clubs (see below). Others spring up anew, though Scions rarely acknowledge them until their

profession "puts down roots." Nobody wants to bind their divine power to something that might grow obsolete.

Guilds act as professional networks for their members. In many countries, a guild might be a formally recognized authority for its trade, but in that case, its religious aspect is officially optional — though everybody knows you can't make it as a Greek steelworker without giving Hephaestus his due. Scions with purviews related to mortal trades often form guilds without really trying; their natural aptitude for meeting such people brings them together.

Example Guild — IBIS: *The Institute for Business Information Sites is a recognized leader in setting standards for secure network facilities, specializing in air-gapped systems and protocols for courier-facilitated data transfer. Begun as a joint project between several Thoth-worshipping librarian and archivist groups, IBIS has grown wealthier than all of them. IBIS-approved facilities combine Faraday cages and biometric security with intruder-defeating techniques that date back to the pyramids (in the chambers most people don't know exist). As an act of devotion, IBIS builds its own facilities to preserve human knowledge (which is really Thoth's knowledge) against future disasters. These places also serve as excellent bolt holes in case members get in trouble, though they'll have to squeeze in between slabs of etched granite.*

FAMILY TRADITIONS

Some families grow close to the Gods, and develop special ways of honoring them. The founding matriarch was a Scion herself, or her brother was. A God gave them a special revelation, or even a relic to keep (see Reliquarians, p. 31), or their family is descended from the old priest-kings. Whatever the origin, a family tradition fuses cult and clan. Family reunions are religious rites, and estates are temples. Most family traditions are highly idiosyncratic because they evolved behind closed doors, exposed only to the quirks and unspoken beliefs of related members. Some families keep the oldest secrets of the Gods — and some have distorted them into horrific practices driven by the belief that the privilege of being in the family makes them too holy for ordinary morality.

Given the fact that they usually don't need unrelated worshippers, family traditions often escape notice, even by the Gods they purport to serve. A civilization collapses; a priestly clan vanishes. The Gods move on, never knowing that the clan became refugees, carrying their religion with them. Discovering such a sect is a happy occasion for anyone they worship, as long as they've kept the true faith. In some cases, family traditions might be coaxed into spreading their religion, but this runs the risk of offending the clan, who've earned their place with generations of discipline.

HEROES AS CLERGY

One of the standard conveniences cults offer Heroes is recognition as ordained clergy. Governments typically don't recognize Heroes as the subjects of worship, but do allow them the state-sponsored perks of priesthood, such as tax-exempt status in jurisdictions that provide it, and professional recognition from law enforcement and cultural administrations. For example, in several countries clergy have the right to privileged confidential communications with the flock. And of course, police may let speeding tickets slide, especially if the priest tapping his wheel impatiently could be a modern Achilles.

Clergy might be encouraged to refrain from some forms of political speech and have to deal with restrictions on how they can spend tax-free incomes. They need to demonstrate that they really are attending to the needs of worshippers, above and beyond killing menacing giants for them. Clerical investment suits Heroes who aren't interested in business or politics, and who like building close relationships with their followers. When an ordained Hero doesn't perform any clerical duties, it may call into question their legitimacy as a priest, or threaten the cult's legal status.

Example Family Tradition — The Grandchildren: *Ògún has a lot of Scions, and they've started large families of their own. The Grandchildren (Yoruba: ọmọ) follow their ancestor's ethos, ready to protect their communities with weapons or wisdom. Individual lineages follow their own customs, but when branches meet, they follow rules similar to those of Yoruba Ogboni, or fraternal institutions. These customs include subtle symbols, hand signs and shibboleths designed to confirm membership. As Grandchildren found self-defense initiatives wherever they live, this has often protected them from persecution. They tend to be physically fit and good in a fight.*

HISTORIANS

Some cults exist to maintain a historical tradition. These groups tend to serve pantheons with a well-known ancient pedigree; counterparts that might be just as old but not as firmly attested to are less likely to have these sorts of worshippers. Some historian cults really do date back to the Bronze Age, but no small number are reconstruction groups, who study the past to uncover the "true religion of the ancients" so they can practice it now. This might seem simple, and even redundant when ageless Gods exist and so many pantheons have prospered into the present time, but the oldest Gods aren't the most accessible people, and all religions evolve. Therefore, many reconstructionists are fundamentalists of a sort, pointing to one period as the pure age of faith they must emulate. Sometimes this leads them to offend modern secular values, but it's just as likely to make them weird, and a bit out of touch. For every priest who refuses to marry two men there are three who wouldn't care about that, but would argue with each other over the proper dowry.

Historical cult practice requires deep research — so deep, in fact, that worship might be a secondary concern. In fact, many members dislike contemporary Scions, and may go so far as to instruct them in the "proper" way of doing things — and an older God might even direct a new Scion to the cult for such instruction. Nevertheless, such a cult includes people who know about old rites, places, and myths, and can help people looking for answers in the past.

Example Historians — New Arcadia: *New Arcadia is an island commune off the coast of Washington state. Anyone who flew by would notice it in an instant, as its native flora have been replaced with Mediterranean plant life, and primitive fishing boats amble around its coast. New Arcadia's residents settled here to live as the Greeks did 3,000 years ago. Mortals don't know much about this period in Greek history, and the Theoi have proven unhelpful in filling in the gaps, so 102 dedicated worshippers decided this was a test, and that they should live as the ancients did, so the Gods would reward their dedication. It's worked. Several Scions have visited the island, and on one occasion, improved the residents' understanding of Achaean, and taught them how to read the Linear A script. This exclusive knowledge generates about half the money the community needs, as members consult with universities. The rest comes from donations, as other Theoi cults support this experiment in living history. New Arcadians keep very little modern technology, but it includes radios for emergencies, and guns to drive off unwanted visitors.*

MYSTERY SOCIETIES

In some cultures, everyone joins an initiatory society, where they learn hidden knowledge not be shared beyond one's gender, family, or trade. Others are true secret societies, where special gestures and symbols confirm one's membership. They're Masonic-style groups, organized crime syndicates, or simply people who don't want to talk about their religions. Some of these mystery cults stand in the middle, where low-level knowledge is freely shared, but the most sacred doctrines require long service, and ritual passage into the next degree.

Despite the way they ration knowledge, many such cults exist. As the Gods decided to interact with the World more subtly, worshippers followed suit by requiring initiation to enter into rites that used to be performed in public. Yet in many cases, mystery cults predate the change. Such

groups were entrusted with particular secrets, from the location of Terra Incognita realms to the Gods' secret appetites. Titan cults are often mystery sects, who do not even acknowledge their true masters until the apex of initiation.

Example Mystery Society — The Order of the Mule: *The Order of the Mule's idiotic antics have scored millions of YouTube hits, and "Set — WOO!" has joined "YOLO" as a famously ill-considered slogan. The Order recruits from college campus, competing with the Greek societies who've denied them official recognition. After a week of booze-fueled antics performed while wearing donkey masks, successful candidates earn the right to enter the bottom floor of the clubhouse and raid the fridge for beer whenever they like. The minority who avoid the parties after entering are singled out for further initiation. Leaders test their intelligence, take them on grueling expeditions through arid terrain, and after determining their life goals, try to fuck them up with temptation, threats, and general harassment. Each ordeal brings them closer to their true purpose: to serve Set as moral leaders and occasional soldiers.*

RELIQUARIANS

Reliquarian cults form around holy objects. The cult keeps one or more of these safe, and performs rituals to honor the God or other power that made it. Some of these cults only possess a facsimile of the true object, but believe the worship they give it passes through this symbol to the genuine article and beyond, to patron Gods. Such groups often develop this belief out of necessity, when a Scion comes to claim the holy object as a Birthright — or a thief steals it. Yet many cults possess genuine artifacts: body parts that belonged to Scions or monsters, or even true Relics of power. Worship may shift from the Gods to these objects, and some might accuse Reliquarians of being shallow idolaters, but their belief systems usually contain answers to these objections.

When the purported owner or "true master" of the object comes to collect, things might get a bit acrimonious. A Scion might have to make a show of only borrowing an item, returning it to its altar or other sacred place whenever possible. They might have to pass a number of tests devised by the cult (or by a God that gave the cult the artifact to begin with) to prove their worth. And if the Scion loses it? They won't be happy — but they might wade through shit and fire at a Scion's side to get it back, too.

Example Reliquarians — The House of Caladbolg: *Why yes, they do have Excalibur. Well, one of them. The House of Caladbolg (that's the sword's name in Middle Welsh) collects potential Excaliburs for safekeeping and future conflicts. The Scion Fergus mac Róich commanded them to do it over 1,000 years ago. Fergus had lost his blade, the first Caladbolg. He pretended to die, but sought the blade zealously, until locating it — or a twin made by Fate — in the hands of Pendragon, the Bastard (the House doesn't call Arthur by his given name, or acknowledge his kingship, and they consider the Welsh pantheon upstarts). Fergus was soon able to travel to secret places as his geas commanded, and bade the descendants of his old warband to continue the quest. The House of Caladbolg is loyal to the Tuatha Dé Danann and hoards supernatural arms they believe belong to the pantheon by right, but modern members trade in other antique weapons, and are willing to trade foreign miracle-weapons for cash and favors.*

SOCIAL CLUBS

Social clubs resemble guilds, but without the professional focus. A social club promotes recreation of one kind or another, and treats the Gods as patrons for their pleasure. They meet for drinks and meals in luxurious private buildings. They play sports. They debate. They go camping, or host orgies. Clubs often follow Gods based on compatible Purviews, but might defy that expectation due to longstanding tradition, such as if the founders all loved a particular God, or if the club developed from some other type of cult. For example, the upper-crust Lycoctonus Club may have started out as a society of hunters devoted to Apollo, but now they limit woodland pursuits to the 72-hour game of tag they play on the club's private island.

Social clubs love their rituals but, truth be told, are not the most devoted cults around. Nevertheless, they stand proudly by their traditions and would be embarrassed if the Gods that brought them together for leisure were harmed. They offer unusual knowledge, and shared resources when necessary and at the very least, are more fun than most other cults.

Example Social Club — The Corinthian Society: *After the First World War, The Corinthian Club of New York avoided the general decline of gentlemen's clubs by redefining itself as a benevolent works society, open to all. Nevertheless, not all members are created equal, and while anyone (of any gender, since the 60s) may pay the steep initiation fee to join, descendants of 19th-century members and select invitees benefit from a network of private estates and slightly better service, as long as they honor Poseidon. The Society keeps up the estates to house Poseidon's Scions and servants, who are of course given elite membership, free of charge. To the public at large, the Society is best known for promoting the Corinthian ideal in amateur sport. Every few years they raise funds with the Isthmian Games, an Olympics-like event strictly limited to people who haven't competed since age 16, if at all. The Games feature a certain degree of clumsiness that amuses the public but irritates Poseidon himself, since the original Isthmian Games were held in his honor. Nevertheless, the God appreciates the Society's work. It funds horse-rescue charities, support for earthquake victims, and importantly, gives his Scions decent meals and accommodations whenever they drop by.*

TEMPLES

Many cults organize around a place of worship, whether it's the corner of a strip mall with frosted glass, a rented church hall (which happens more often than you might think) or an ancient temple or sacred space, carefully maintained to invoke divine power. The Parthenon's been restored, Elgin Marbles and all, though this grand temple

to Athena still hosts tourists more often than worshippers. Due to the required infrastructure, temple-bound cults are the bodies most likely to have full-time priests and caretakers. Maintaining a sacred site requires money and work, so these religions also possess efficient fundraising methods or at the very least, some well-heeled patrons. Some Scions personally fund their pantheons' temples.

When such a cult comes under attack, it benefits from a dedicated space, but the temple itself might be a target. Temples to belligerent or oft-persecuted Scions and pantheons may contain safe rooms, emergency supplies, and even small arsenals. These are kept out of sight to avoid panic and unwanted attention. In some cases the best protection is public access. Hit the Parthenon and millions of Greeks will despise you, even if they don't care about Athena. Temples may double as soup kitchens, emergency shelters, food banks, and other charitable ventures.

Example Temple — Ishtar Gate, USA: *In northern Mississippi, a small, wealthy, incorporated cult that worships the Babylonian gods intends to build an exact duplicate of Babylon's Ishtar Gate, using nothing but period construction techniques, with the exception of contemporary computer modelling to get it exactly right and of course, modern shipping to get the materials to their site. The gate is half-finished and lies off the beaten path, in nondescript, swampy territory, but it's open to the public, and draws a small number of tourists throughout the year. The company owns enough land to rebuild the rest of Babylon, but they haven't worked out a decent business plan. Marduk Scions have made it clear that the end result needs to be an economically viable community, or it'll dishonor his city-God Purviews.*

THE DEVOTED

Most cultists are ordinary people who worship as part of their lives' routines. They drop by the temple after work to ask for divine aid in hitting a deadline or acquiring a choice client. They pack the kids into the van every Tuesday after karate class to drive up to a sacred grove, or set aside a week a year to visit the Æsir temple in Uppsala. Sometimes they forget to turn off their phones in the middle of burning meat for Zeus, or grab a quick nap through yet another recitation of some ancient epic. This doesn't make them false believers, but since everyone knows the Gods exist, it's easy to take them for granted.

Cults are communities, so they influence a member's friendships, hobbies, and professional networks, even in cases where that's not the cult's primary purpose. You might ask around your cult to find a decent real estate agent or dentist. If your house burns down, they raise money to help you out. When necessary, cults can mobilize people rapidly through phone trees, email lists and social media. Cults spread annoying gossip too, and can host all the other ills of a community organization.

When a Scion of the cult's persuasion appears, they're usually allowed to take command and do whatever they please...provided it's consistent with cult doctrine, is practical, and doesn't annoy the cult's mortal officers. When Scions screw up, cultists rarely defy them openly, but will focus on what the Scion "really meant," foment delays and pray, pray, pray to a God senior to whoever's annoying them. Ultimately, power rests in the hands of whoever organizes cult activities and assets. Nowadays, it's common for the congregation to elect these individuals from among their own, and in some countries it's legally required. The U.S. defines most cults as "Traditional Religions Operating as Private Endowments" (TROPEs) and sets aside rules for governance and financial reporting. (No, they don't have to pay taxes.)

Only large cults require full-time staff, and not all of them possess formal priesthoods. The Æsir's godi are typically volunteers, elected because of impressive accomplishments in public life, while the Shén possess a number of different types of priests, who might be full or part time clergy based on their specialties. In any event, modern priests are usually expected to run the cult's religious functions and set general goals for the organization as a whole, but leave practical matters to lay officers unless some emergency requires their attention. That means if a Scion wants $10,000, a priest can't just write a check — it goes through the budget committee!

Not every spiritual matter requires full ceremonies, and some of them are just too sensitive to share with an entire congregation. Many cults possess a small number of individuals who practice rituals outside the mass of cultists, and who specialize in practical, specialized services. They're ascetics, soothsayers, cunning people, and casual exorcists. They're the people you visit when you want to know where your grandfather hid the safe, or if your fiancée's destined to bail on the relationship. Cunning people don't perform social rituals like weddings, though they sometimes do funerals, especially when such ceremonies are designed to keep the dead quiet. Like formal priests, cunning people are often part-timers, but not all of them are above charging a fee for services rendered. Note, however, that in many jurisdictions it's a crime to pretend to offer supernatural aid. False soothsayers risk fines or imprisonment. If they can prove they really did read the future in entrails, however, there's no case, and that defense frequently succeeds.

DEIFANS

A new subculture has upended the old ways cults organize. Mass media created new myths without the real Gods. Pantheon elders used to manage their legends by telling them to trusted scribes and poets. While there was no way they could completely control the creative minds of figures like Homer and Vyasa, they could introduce biases, omit information, and occasionally lie outright, so the old epics unfolded to their liking. Mass literacy, the printing press, and new media arose while the Gods relinquished the most blatant forms of influence. They abandoned their storytellers just as the number of storytellers skyrocketed. This probably encouraged mortal creativity, as people were forced to not just record legendary deeds, but invent them whole cloth, and without the shadow of divine authority it

became clear that anyone could share their stories, to the limit of their creativity and skill.

That's how fandom arose in the World of **Scion**: in a vacuum left by the Gods but unforgotten by amateur storytellers. When small press, webcasts and sites ripped every possible variation out of media franchises, a few fans decided to write speculative fiction about real people like celebrities and Gods.

Deifans aren't traditional worshippers. To them, the Gods are the ultimate reality stars, and ready fodder for fanfiction and gossip. They write love stories featuring outrageous cross-pantheon pairings and report their interactions with Scions to online communities. Some of them step over the line between gossip and fiction, reporting things they wish happened as if they actually did. Everybody's read stories about fucking the Gods, but most of them are fake. Most of them. The best writers sometimes get their stories published, but at that point, tradition demands a roman à clef. In a world where Gods are real, Deifans are among the few who invent new ones, to disguise identities of Scions and their adventures, fictional or not. This is usually just enough to invite near-accurate speculation about who characters are supposed to be, but not enough to count as a legend that might induce Fatebinding. Deifans love interacting with Scions, and are often eager to render aid, but you never know what they're going to say about it.

CULTS IN THE CORRIDORS OF POWER

In their efforts to avoid excessive attention, few Gods will openly support cults embedded in governments and large businesses. Everybody knows that some corner stores and small chains support one pantheon or another, but if mortals suspected that Scions controlled large multinational corporations, they'd not only suspect them of undue influence over the economy, but could demand that their own Gods take action.

Similarly, while civic religions are allowed to gather politicians for prayer breakfasts and memorials, the public doesn't want any part in a presidential blót. In countries with strong national pantheons, governments tightly control how ceremonies are framed to make it clear they represent the state's traditional relationship with what the Gods represent, not the Gods as persons. That's a thin line, and people may stray over it from time to time, but even in Japan, civic Shinto rituals avoid including actual Scions.

Some Scions go for it anyway, but they try very hard not to get caught. So while Anubis' Scions may well have the market cornered on urns and coffins, they're not going to do it under the name Pyramid Corp. Smaller firms such as IBIS and Fenris Arms (see below) can get away with a nudge and wink, but mortals and Gods

HEROES AND THE LAW

Legally speaking, a Hero is no different from any other citizen, but putting the full weight of the law on a half-divine offender draws the ire of cults, and allied Scions. Titanspawn and other foes might strike while the Hero's at a county lock-up or in court. Thus, the law tends to treat Scions with exceptional lenience, in a way that resembles the classic action-film denouement. If bodies litter the floor and Heroes make poorly-supported self-defense claims to justify it all, and if questioning determines that the Heroes were basically in the right, they'll get grilled and maybe advised to get out of town, but not actually arrested. This sort of leeway applies to Heroes with a reputation for benevolence, not some fresh-faced Achilles dragging an enemy's body behind his Chevy.

When Heroes appear to be in the wrong (or too disruptive to tolerate), officials bring whatever alternative means of pressure they can find. Principal Gods usually hate it when Scions cause serious disruptions to mortal lives, and may intervene when notified, using backchannels (usually through their cults) to make it known that the matter is being dealt with. In truly dire straits, police might deputize friendly Heroes and make the arrest anyway. Law enforcement hates this because it sets Scions against each other on mortal turf, however. But if they need to, police readily give Heroes law enforcement credentials to help deal with titanspawn and mythic hazards.

alike will watch them closely for signs they exert undue influence.

However, governments and businesses do deal with supernatural affairs from time to time. Companies dig up temple ruins, and local surveyors blunder into monsters' lairs. It's quite common for these organizations to quietly inquire about staff cult affiliations, and use them to build relationships with Scions willing to investigate these problems. The rewards? Vaguely worded honorariums, contributions to charities the cult supports, and special considerations when it comes to zoning bylaws, customer-reward programs, and other elements that lie within an organization's power, but don't imply a deep relationship.

Example — Fenris Arms: *Known for firearms stamped with the Tiwaz rune, Fenris Arms manufactures extremely durable pistols, rifles, and military-grade personal arms for militaries, police forces, and private security. All Fenris guns are ambidextrous, and the firm has pioneered assistive technologies to aid users with physical disabilities. Fenris was founded by an incarnation of Tyr himself, and he continues to act as CEO through a number of identities. The board and a significant number of employees are either his cultists or Æsir Scions. Tyr keeps the company small and prices its products out of reach for typical hobby shooters, so Fenris weapons can either be seen in the hands of elite military and police forces, or held by individuals with disabilities, who are entitled to a steep discount. Fenris' head office is located in Neuhausen am Rheinfall, Switzerland, just down the street from Swiss Arms' much larger corporate headquarters. Tyr is rarely there. He had to locate the company in Switzerland for political reasons, but he's never been too fond of the country itself.*

CRIME

Modern Gods don't want their children to disrupt society, but that makes crime a paradoxically relaxing pursuit for Heroes. They're already breaking the rules, so why not do it with a bit of divine panache? Many cults tolerate minor crimes: tax evasion, labor exploitation (internship has nothing on doing it for the Gods), and shady business deals that end with a prayer to Hades, or whoever. It doesn't take much to shift from a few habitual acts into organized crime. Police are aware of this, and maintain files on criminal cults. They're tough to crack. Before they even get to the problem of Scion crime lords, they need to deal with the members' extreme loyalty, and the shibboleths cultists use to detect outsiders. Cultic syndicates use the time-honored methods of mystery cults to identify each other, communicate in secret, and set up chains of command. They teach secret signs and confirm members' loyalty through multiple initiations. Heroes are naturally inclined to lead crime cults, but sometimes these groups develop on their own, and may even resent a Hero's efforts to take command, or change its tried and true methods.

But cults can be victims, too. They might get singled out for hate crimes, or attacked by gangs backed by titanspawn or rival Scions. Followers might just live in a bad part of town, or belong to a group that experiences routine discrimination, and can't trust the police to protect them. Along with threats to family and friends, these situations drive Heroes to fight crime. Police don't especially appreciate this sort of vigilantism. It brings law enforcement into the dangerous orbit of Scion (and Titan) concern, might make them look foolish, and often forces them to clean up whatever mess the Hero made when they "cleaned up the streets." Heroic meddling might turn one easy-to-handle syndicate into a handful of warring gangs. A Scion who hospitalizes a mob boss before handing her to the police not only makes it easy for the crook to escape being charged, but exposes police, prosecutors, and the Scion himself to various lawsuits.

EXPLORING THE HYDRA'S LAIR

Unless emergencies or cult traditions compel them, mortals avoid strange places like Midrealms or gates to the Gods know where. Stupid kids will go anywhere on a dare, however, and desperate journeys to save friends and family, or demand something of the Gods, are the stuff of legend. Governments occasionally send highly trained teams to survey mythic places as well. It's only recently that people have begun exploring Terra Incognita as a form of organized recreation. It's an extreme activity that attracts physically fit people with dulled panic reactions: the sort of folks who enjoy long caving expeditions and free solo climbing. Not all Terra Incognita is comparably arduous, but if it isn't, it might be too boring anyway.

Explorers plan their trips in secret, aware that fellow mortals think they're idiots and Scions might get very, very cross with them. Heroes might be called upon to guide them, save them from being stranded or killed, or dissuade them from trespassing.

THE MYTHIC UNDERGROUND

They're not quite cultists, but they might worship. They might be entangled in dirty deeds, but they're not usually criminals by trade. In a World that lives in myth but relegates it to the background, some people are bound to dig down, making their homes in the spaces between legends and mundane lives. The mythic underground isn't a coherent organization but a collection of subcultures, cliques formed by common obsessions, and even groupies pissed off (or in love, still) with Scions. You go to your cult to receive worship and gifts and in return, affirm its connection to the Gods above. You hit the underground to sell a kraken's tentacle to some eccentric that has a use for it, meet titanspawn on neutral ground, and make sculptures out of fire on stage, for art or money's sake. Plus, everyone knows the underground is where single Heroes often go to get laid. It's morally shady to find partners within one's cult, and a pain to hook up within the band, but some people *love* Heroes — or at least, the idea of fucking one. Some prospective partners are happy with nothing more than sex and gossip, but others want a deeper connection, and might even be able to build one with a smitten Hero.

The mythic underground contains multiple subcultures, and these hazily merge with cults, criminal groups, and cultural movers. Orthodox cults hate these scenes, which are multicultural as a matter of course, because the underground embraces mythic reality as a whole, not just the parts joined to particular pantheons. Although the underground is different from those groups who live in Terra Incognitae, there's considerable degree of crossover. Emigres from the mythic lands feel at more at home in these subcultures, while members of the scene stuck in the everyday World often yearn to move somewhere wondrous.

The following scenes are especially notable.

- **Collectors:** This network of merchants and their oft-anonymous clients acquire divine and Titan-wrought artifacts, the body parts of legendary creatures, and anything else for which a demand exists. It's a good way for a Hero to make a bit of extra cash. The frontperson of a collection operation typically refuses to name buyers or sellers, and may keep a supernaturally gifted associate on hand for security, but if you can beat discretion and brute force, a lot of them keep client lists in case of emergency.
- **Cultclubs:** People who love the mythic World and Scions own and frequent bars, attend certain nights at dance clubs, and organize one-off events where they express their passions through distinctive music, art, and fashion. Organizers invite Scions and sometimes even titanspawn to attend. Some Heroes and other mythic beings believe in a code against fighting at a cultclub, but not everyone respects that. Clubgoers revel in the presence of Heroes, but only neophytes would be so gauche as to just walk up and greet them. Unless you know a Hero well, the custom is to wait for an invitation. Scions who love performing for a crowd indulge themselves here. Despite the name, cultclubs are usually supported by people with a general interest in mythic matters instead of dedicated cultists, though a few well-known venues are sponsored by the cults of certain recreationally oriented Gods.
- **Deifans:** Deifans, as mentioned previously, write fiction about real Scions, share it online, and occasionally cross the line into gossip and journalism. The Deifan community is primarily an online affair, where the deepest relationships may never lead to face to face contact. Some of their work (called deific in writing, but pronounced "day-fic" by those in-the-know) puts Heroes in fantasy relationships that embarrass and offend them. But Heroes occasionally embrace their Deifans, and use deific to relay messages and build their Legends.
- **Godbloggers and Godcasters:** Successors to the G-Zine movement of past decades, Godbloggers and Godcasters are citizen journalists who report Scion activities and strange events to small, devoted audiences. Some of them cross into Deifan territory with their speculations and biases, but a fair number follow a professional ethos, use

THAT DEMOGRAPHIC QUESTION

How many Heroes roam the World? It's a funny question, because even though looking for the answer can inspire you, answering it causes all kinds of problems. If we said there's a ratio of one Hero per 100,000 or so mortals, that would give you an excuse to populate big cities with multiple bands and chart their rivalries, but it would also raise several annoying questions. How do even Gods find the time to produce over 70,000 to 80,000 offspring at a time? Did they produce fewer Heroes in the past, or is this number a constant, and Heroes used to be more common on a per capita basis? If only 1% of them become Demigods, does that mean there are 7000-8000 of those Scions kicking around?

These questions can inspire clever stories, but they don't make the setting more realistic, and cut off certain opportunities. It's productive to consider that many, many Heroes would arise from 1.2 billion African mortals, looming larger than the continent's people do in Western stereotype. It's annoying to decide that an area has run out of Heroes, or has too many of them for the story you want to play through.

Therefore, we're not going to provide definitive numbers. Ask these questions yourself, but don't treat your answers as strict rules that interfere with your ability to run an engaging series. **Scion**'s World is made of Legends, after all; Scions and monsters appear when they're needed.

HEROIC EXPECTATIONS

Beneath silent respect, fawning worship, and fear, mortals hold Heroes to an implied duty: *Protect us, and act as our representative among divine and legendary powers.* Heroes bind, tame, or slay monsters. They plead the people's case before angry Gods, or tell mortals what the Gods want. They explain why children vanish on the full moon by the ancient mounds, and if they can't convince the beings inside to give the kids back, they can at least tell mortals how to prevent it from happening again. Sometimes holy covenants spell these expectations out, but most of the time people expect Heroes to do it because of who they are.

When Heroes skip town when monsters come around or shrug when cultists ask them why Zeus is getting generous with his thunderbolts, mortals take note. Leaving aside the consequences to a Hero's Legend, shirking these ancient duties damages their reputation in mortal society. The cult doesn't invite them to rituals. People in the mythic underground snicker or shake their heads in conversations just out of the Hero's presumed earshot. The Gods have a way of finding out, too, and might explicitly discipline a reluctant Hero, but fear usually limits mortal reactions to quiet contempt and shunning, save for acidic comments in social media, where mortals exhibit more bravery.

Storyguides should warn socially adept Heroes about the consequences of avoiding mythic dangers, and leave it to them to respond. If they still don't want to bother with monsters and strange gates, well, mortal disdain shouldn't be a punishment, but an impetus for a new story.

reliable sources, and try to consider the fallout of an important scoop before throwing it online. Some Godcasts are pure cult propaganda, too. Heroes listen and read for the news, and just in case a story reveals secrets they'd rather remain hidden.

- **Mythopoetic Societies:** Mythopoeticists are scholars interested in Gods, Terra Incognitae, and the others workings of Fate and Legends. They want to know how it works, or how an epic poem compares to historical fact. Mythopoetic studies is a less-than-well-regarded field in the academic community, but it's not quite a career ender. Even if nobody would ever say it, scholars confront a bias against questioning or annoying the Gods. Mythopoeticists interview Heroes, publish embarrassing revelations, and occasionally unearth dangers even the Gods didn't know about.

ALLIANCES AND RIVALRIES

The best and worst companions Heroes have might be each other. Other Scions may be stronger, but Heroes usually don't share their peculiar social roles, common hangouts, and the rest with anyone but each other. A Hero isn't just a nascent form of some greater Scion, but a distinct position, with its own Fate-mandated purposes. Heroes bring divine power to the World in their own way, treat mortals with greater intimacy, and revel in the complex humanity beneath their Legendary selves.

THE BAND

The Heroes' band is a known institution. Heroes don't fill out forms or anything, but Scions and interested mortals talk about bands, gossip about changing memberships, and argue

the merits and failings of famous ones. Heroes join forces when Fate throws them together, to cement Gods' alliances, out of tradition, or even after making friends with each other online, or at common haunts. They say the manner of a band's origin influences its members' Legends, so Scions have been known to stretch the truth about their band's beginnings, or even throw themselves into a foolhardy first quest to give the band epic cachet. Many bands do without names, or make do with an informal handle, but be warned: When a band's Heroes don't pick a name, somebody else will. Gods, other Heroes, mortal followers, and fans inevitably think of some nickname. A band of Tricksters may feel pretentious for calling themselves the Beguilers, but it's better than, say, Team Jerkface.

Cross-pantheon bands have always existed, but it's only in the last few centuries that they've become common enough to escape comment. Even conservative Gods have largely resigned themselves to such bands' modern prominence, and nowadays some pantheons even encourage them, to foster friendly relations between the divine nations. When diplomatic ties fray, however, Scions in mixed bands need to choose between their respective pantheons and their bonds with other Heroes. Yet these tensions often prove why cross-pantheon bands are a good idea, because they're in the best position to view a conflict from a third, balanced position (though they might come to it through some intense arguments), investigate it, and develop a solution.

PANTHEON

Within every pantheon, Heroes usually treat each other like family — distant cousins sometimes, with a contingent of people they wouldn't invite to the annual cookout, but with a basic respect for their common heritage. Some branches stand closer together than others. Theoi Heroes often celebrate common descent from a given God. The oft-abandoned children of Zeus should look out for each other, after all. Some pantheons make other distinctions based on origin, discriminating against the offspring of certain Gods or valuing blood-related Scions over those empowered for their faith and service.

The Gods grant power — and baggage. Heroes born of or raised up by vilified Gods face discrimination from the Scions of rival Gods, and from members of the public who know of their progenitors' evil reputations. People might shun Loki or Set's Heroes,

but this is almost never an overpowering, omnipresent problem. Considerate Heroes understand how difficult it is to escape the progenitor's shadow and, looking from the inside, understand the political components of old myths. Loki helps other Æsir at times, and Set has been a God of kings as well as outsiders. It takes a certain amount of stubbornness to not only pigeonhole them, but insist that their offspring are bound to be untrustworthy. Nevertheless, Scions who aren't familiar with a foreign mythology often rely on the same biased sources as mortals, and might treat a Hero born of a "dark God" with a bit of standoffishness.

HERO CULTURE

Heroes from all pantheons belong to a common culture shaped by the realities of who they are. They don't always acknowledge their shared passions and struggles, but these often bring Heroes together to fight common enemies, pressure demanding Gods into giving them more freedom, or just share advice about personal matters. A Hero who needs to hide their mortal family from enemies might find another who's done it — even one who does it as a regular sideline, for charity or payment. Then again, shared interests create resentment as well, but in some ways mutual hate creates a community bond as strong as camaraderie. You don't have to like the other members of your band, or the shady Hero who has shadier connections, but they all understand the need for some common decorum.

Heroes develop common hangouts, local customs, and ways to communicate, many of which can be found elsewhere in this book, but which all stem from Heroes' unique positions as the Scions closest to the World and mortal life. Hero culture crosses over with the mortal mythic underground, but claims some exclusive spaces and secrets: private rooms in cultclubs, and forbidden volumes in mythopoetic libraries. Thanks to these habits, their divine progenitors, and limited numbers, Heroes are often known to each other before they ever formally meet. No Hero is an anonymous face in the crowd, unless they choose to hide themselves.

HEROES IN THE COSMOS

Freshly reborn from mortal lives, Heroes remember mundane affairs: work, hobbies, and relationships where love is a messy feeling, not a divine force. They haven't earned homes in the Otherworld, and even if they were raised in a Midrealm or cult sanctuary, it was to make them exemplars, ready to bring something pure and powerful to an imperfect World. Thus, most Heroes consider themselves beings of flesh and blood, standing on ordinary earth. The gates of Terra Incognita open to them to a greater degree than for any mortal, but Heroes who walk through them are usually going somewhere they consider weird, fearsome, and a bit beyond them, as mortals would. This makes them better suited to represent Worldly interests. They know what people need and fear, and come as protectors and mediums, bringing a perspective the great Gods so often forget.

THE UNDERWORLD: PSYCHOPOMPS AND NECROMANCERS

Not all pantheons have a presence in the Underworld, but not even Heroes from those groups should ignore it. Beyond interactions with other pantheons, the Underworld makes itself relevant to them through the dark Primordials who dwell there, Chthonians that occasionally enter the World, and Shades they may not share a culture with, but who can, through error or malice, make trouble for people they care about. When souls lose their way, and become ghosts, Heroes may need to play the role of psychopomp, or soul guide. They'll walk with the dead to the gates of their Afterlives. Not all lost souls took a wrong turn, however. Some dread the Underworld, or even escaped of their own free will. The strongest of the dead may possess a malevolent intelligence, and powers to rival a Scion's.

Then there are times when Heroes must communicate with the dead, or visit the Gods of the Underworld. These are a necromancer's traditional feats, but for Heroes they require less occult lore than sheer determination, combined with some knowledge of the Gods and realms they would contact. The Gods of Afterlives have diverse aspects, but none of them accept visitors casually, and all enforce the religious and mystical laws that divide life and death. Sometimes they might permit Shades to manifest around a gate or some withered part of the world if a Hero performs the proper rites, but many of the dead remain deep below, and those who seek them out must follow the footsteps of Orpheus and Gilgamesh. This sort of journey is almost always necessary when Heroes seek an audience with the Gods of death who reign in the Underworld. Some of these Gods have a reputation for dour and even malevolent behavior, but this is not always the case. The Egyptian Netjer are all Gods of the Underworld, but some of them are quite friendly, though of course, ruling life beyond life as they do, each of them keeps one eye gazing on eternity, beyond Worldly concerns.

THE OVERWORLD: AMBASSADORS AND PETITIONERS

To most Heroes, Godsrealms are foreign places with exotic customs and unanticipated dangers. Even if their progenitors come from the Overworld, Heroes usually treat it the way the second or later generations of an immigrant family regard their ancestral nations. Sometimes they feel a deep connection, but they were raised in the World, and that tempers any sense of "coming home." They don't really know their progenitors' Godsrealms the way a native would, and depend on relatives and guides to make their way. Sometimes, however, the Gods prepare their children for the Overworld from birth, and even arrange travel before the Visitation. Those Heroes may feel like they've

MYTHCRAWLING

Scion uses cinematic language that inspires scene, act, and arc-based stories, but you don't have to use that kind of structure. **Hero**'s focus on the World makes it especially suited for map-based exploration. In these "crawl" or "sandbox" style games, the Storyguide maps out a region for the Heroes to explore. They might modify a real map with information about gorgon territory, turf claimed by a belligerent Hero, gates that occasionally spew monsters — any site with conflict-spawning properties. Note that this is a little different than a typical local setting, since it concentrates on challenging places your Heroes haven't discovered. Police stations, temples, cultclubs and other known sites can go on the map players see, but the second map's a secret.

Next, the Storyguide provides intrigue and investigation-based channels to find out about these places so that the band doesn't have to walk block by block, looking for danger. (Why would they?) In the modern day, mass and social media are easy ways to pique Heroes' interests. In **Scion**'s World, traditional media is reluctant to talk about mythic affairs, but semi-private social media spaces aren't nearly as guarded. The news tells you about the murder. Your feed tells you the rumor that a psychotic house spirit did it. Use news and rumors to give the band a little push, but unlike a traditional arc, provide clues about multiple sites and let the players pick a direction to investigate. From that point the band needs to do active research, explore places, and talk to people, until they discover the site and unlock its secrets.

This style of play isn't for every group. Players need to be proactive, with Heroes who are more interested in reshaping the region, and the Storyguide needs to be willing to roll with their decisions instead of pushing them into a set story. On the other hand, you can design sites that lead to overarching conflicts. Every Strange Site has a reason for existing. In one place, a God did something shameful. Another represents the fruit of some Titan's plot. Go forth and find out.

come to their rightful homes, but they're not Gods, and the canny denizens of a Godsrealm may treat them like visitors, or even playthings of the realm's true overlords.

Yet Heroes possess the strongest ties to the World, which gives them a unique status in the courts of the Overworld. They're the Scions who bring important prayers and cult business to the Gods' attention. They provide firsthand knowledge about the state of the World from an intimate perspective that even Gods who Incarnate among mortals sorely need. Gods tend to see things in terms of their mature Legends and mighty Purviews. For instance, Tyr manages gun-maker Fenris Arms and pays close attention to its business, but that suits him as a martial God. He might not know a damn thing about mercenaries using his wares to suppress a labor movement in Sudan. It's up to Heroes to take care of those complex matters anyway — why is it his business? Anyone coming to Tyr with such news probably needs to frame it carefully. This goes double for when the messenger comes from another pantheon. Cross-pantheon bands are common enough that Godsrealms must adapt to foreign visitors, and any reasonably busy one no longer treats strange Scions with hostility or gawking awkwardness. Yet visitors from other pantheons are ambassadors by default. Gods demand answers for various offenses, ask them to deliver messages, and in some cases, even suggest political marriages.

MYTHIC PLACES IN THE WORLD: EXPLORERS AND PROTECTORS

The World's full of strangeness, and opportunities to build Legends. Heroes can stand up to bullying giants, negotiate with crafty, speaking animals and unearth labyrinths without ever having to visit the Overworld or Underworld. Many pantheons live fully in the World, embracing its gritty complexity over otherworldly transcendence. But even their ruling Gods know that Heroes enjoy a special understanding of the World. Recently shaped from mortal clay, Heroes understand how ordinary people cope with mythic intrusions into their lives. Mortals and Gods come to Heroes to deal with such crises. In dealing with them, Heroes travel to strange places, ranging from haunted cemeteries to Midrealms.

When Heroes settle somewhere, they'll eventually learn about local Strange Sites, Midrealm connections, and gates to the Otherworlds. Mortals usually relay the information. Kids tell them about the witch house they always run past, because of a girl who disappeared, according to some third-hand story. Park workers admit that a certain accident-plagued corner of the woods hosts green-eyed phantom hounds. It's rudimentary information, but enough to send Heroes forth. They discover that the witch house belongs to the girl's real, divine mother, a terrible parent who traps her daughter in a maze of rooms no ordinary house could contain. They recognize the hounds as an errant pack from the Wild Hunt, and learn why they refuse to return to their divine master. Journeys to Midrealms or isolated places test Heroes' survival skills, but also give them an opportunity to really cut loose. Heroes don't have to hide their true nature, of course, but battling a giant on Main Street can endanger bystanders, inspire unwanted Legendbinding, and earn criticism from mortal and divine authorities. But even though Strange Sites and Midrealms provide more privacy than mortals might expect, not all monsters lair in the uttermost wilderness, and you can only find so many deserted warehouses and abandoned factories to which to lure enemies. In these situations,

Heroes must strike a balance between the immediate threat and the problems that arise when mythic conflict explodes in the public eye.

DEVOUT LANDS

In select Midrealms, Godsrealms, and places charged with Legend, the Gods watch over their most devoted mortals: members of isolated settlements devoted to the pantheon's faith and culture. They live and worship as the Gods desire. The smallest of these are backwoods communes with a couple of families, but the largest, contained in Midrealms or the Overworld, host thousands of citizens. The larger a secret settlement, the more self-sufficient it tends to be, because it's settled in a place with plentiful resources or has sorted out a reliable way to trade with the outside world.

Heroes frequently visit devout lands. Cult leaders might live there. The Gods may ask Heroes to look in on such places, and governments might request mediation when residents cause problems. Furthermore, some Heroes were born in such places, and in fact, a few settlements were specifically founded to raise them (see "Cradle of Heroes," below, but note that Heroes can be placed in other sorts of communities). Native Heroes grow up with a powerful sense of purpose and an impeccable education in the mythology and customs of their pantheons, but with a certain naïveté about the outside world. They might even resent being denied a normal upbringing. Some of these places offer rough lives to residents, thanks to monsters, primitive technology and local dictators (including cruel Gods, when they take a direct interest).

New Arcadia is one example of such a place, though it's exceptional in being well-known to the public. It's also notable in that it's aiming for living history, but other such settlements often embrace the present, though not its popular culture. Each regime has a unique history, though most can be traced to one or more of these basic origins:

Covenant: The Gods promised to reward or protect a group of mortals for their faith and service and thus, led them to the settlement. Covenants can found the oldest or newest settlements, though new ones are usually smaller. They tend to demand extra attention from the Gods; the covenant itself contains obligations for both sides. These may include a promise that Scions will visit, certain prayers will be answered, and that the Gods will prevent everything from famine to social disharmony. Gods might send Heroes to fulfill these obligations in their stead.

Cradle of Heroes: Sometimes, the Gods want their offspring raised *just right*. Cradle settlements were founded to raise one or more Heroes within the pantheon's faith and culture. Some of these places are the traditional homes of many Heroes, while others were founded as needed. The latter tend to be younger, shorter-lived communities, but some buck the trend, waiting generations for the one prophesied to come — and may fall apart in shock when the promised one is finally born, or doesn't do what the prophecy says they'll do.

Great Temple: Some regimes grow around significant temples and monasteries and other holy places. These contain gates to places where the inhabitants live, or the region itself supports the community. These are the best-known examples of devout regimes, and may host regular traffic from the outside world, including cultists who want to take a break from the profane world to search for spiritual refinement.

Historical Preserve: While the Gods are as much a part of the modern world as the past, every pantheon favors certain times and places, where people lived in special accord with their Virtues. If a God sees such an era declining, they might move some of its people to a safe place and encourage them to keep their culture. The Æsir originally hoped Iceland would work out this way, but their mortals wouldn't cooperate. Yet they've preserved other settlements, and other Gods have kept pieces of the Rome, Great Zimbabwe, and other historic cultures. The Gods and devout cultists restrict movement or ban modern "pollution," like media and technology, though not always, as in many cases the inhabitants do just fine checking their smartphones on the way to a Saturnalia banquet.

Radical Faith: Zealous cultists may colonize a mythic place to better practice their faith. These communes rarely exist outside the World, though in rare cases a cult learns to cross a gate or Axis Mundi to cast themselves on strange shores. These communes often endure hardscrabble conditions because their isolation forces them to handle their own food, shelter, and other necessities. They might call on Heroes to help them, or the Heroes may discover disease, malnutrition, and abusive leaders hiding beneath a Utopian mask.

Winter Palace: Sometimes the Gods want to rule cooperative subjects directly, from a second home. They do it to provide a moral example for their cults, pursue certain projects away from prying eyes, or just because they like ordering people around. Powerful Gods may found these places as "fallout shelters," against the day an emergency compromises their better-known homelands. Living conditions depend on the leadership skills and temperament of the ruling God.

A FINAL WORD: FROM DESTINY TO MYTH

You're looking for your Golden Fleece. You're looking for the runes, but you don't know what sacrifice you'll need to make. You hunger for the Peaches of Immortality, or to concentrate their golden elixir within yourself. Monsters, tricksters, and rivals abound. You're a Hero. Your conflicts make myths, and the myths reshape you. Your pantheon's

Virtues inspire you and shape your path, but you've still got feet of clay, earthy passions. Pride. Rage. Love. None of these are the archetypal emotions the poets talk about—yet. They belong to your mortal side, but they drive you, and make you relevant to the ordinary people who venerate you. Being a Hero isn't about thinking in black and white terms, but shades of gray would be too vague and boring for the tales. It's about full-color morality: stories whose mythic exaggerations reveal a spectrum of motivations and influences.

Scion: Hero doesn't have a heavy-handed message. It's meant to entertain, but everything orbits core themes and a guiding ethos. A Hero finds their destiny when the Gods unveil it. Ancestral stories and mythic possibilities arise beside their old, everyday selves. And that's not so different from how mere mortals live. Myths shape our view of life. **Hero** tells us we can make our own myths with what we've been given, and that's true for all of us as well. We don't have to follow a traditional "hero's journey" with all its assumptions. We live in a multicultural world, and it's time to tell stories that were suppressed or misrepresented.

A Hero makes new stories, and doesn't need to follow the old myths note for note. Eric Donner may be Thor's Scion, but he doesn't need to use the same impulsive violence as his father did. He'll take what he needs from his heritage to build a Legend of his own, suited to the modern age. For some, new Legends revive traditions instead, crushing oppression and ignorance as the Manitou's Heroes do.

That's what Heroes do, but you can do it, too, whether the Gods are watching or not.

CHAPTER TWO
PANTHEONS

"Anybody depending on somebody else's gods
is depending on a fox not to eat chickens."
- Zora Neale Hurston

From the Greek word (much to the annoyance of other divinities), a *pantheon* is a group or family of Gods from a common culture. Despite their immortality, Gods rarely last very long on their own — not with the constant threat of the Titans. They serve as the main factions in **Scion**, and (nearly) every Scion or Denizen player character is linked to one, though exceptions do exist for solitary deities — Zalmoxis is the sole God of vampires and the Geto-Dacian people.

Most pantheons have settled in Godrealms in the Overworld, where they rest and send Incarnations down to live among mankind. Pantheons of Gods are associated with specific places and people within the World, places that share their values or where they were (and are) worshipped. Dozens of pantheons and solitary Gods spread influence throughout the World, though only a few have the power and influence to spread their influence across the varying cosmologies.

Each pantheon follows its own goals, and the differing philosophies of various pantheons has led to violent clashes over the centuries. Still, the great common thread linking the pantheons is their desire to keep the World and humanity from falling into the hands of their immortal enemies, the Titans...although some pantheons have extraordinarily different views on how to accomplish this.

Other pantheons besides the 10 featured in this book exist, such as the **Yazatas**, the Gods of Persia who hold centuries-old grudges against multiple pantheons; the **Palas**, the saints and devils of Buddhism; and the **Nemetondevos**, the Gods of Gaul destroyed by Caesar in his bid to become the divine Divus Iulius. The World is as full of Gods as it is humanity.

MANTLES OF DIVINITY

The Deeds of a Scion cling to them, shaping Fate in their wake. These Deeds alter the Scion's Callings, warp their relationships, and define their future. The past is a path, and it is a shield, but it is also a chain.

As a Scion journeys and achieves new and bold Deeds to grow in Legend, they create a sort of divine identity around them called a *mantle*. When a Demigod reaches the apex of their power, they must shed their mortality in some manner. Hercules burned his away in a pyre after suffering from a titanspawn's poison, while Māui perished between the legs of the guardian to the Underworld and thus rendered all men mortal. If their Deeds are worthy, and their divine identity strong enough, the mortal dies...and the God awakens. It's rarely a pleasant experience — Divus Iulius' Deeds of destroying a rival pantheon were enough to earn his Godhood, yet he met his mortal end on the floor of the Roman Senate, the knife in his heart held by his best friend. Fate can be cruel.

These mantles persist around deities, who may Incarnate and create new mantles to fit a new age. This is how bloodthirsty Ares became stoic and virtuous Mars, or how Lakshmi and Durga took on the role of Kali. Other Scions may grow to inhabit these new mantles, shed them and grant them to descendants, or suffer defeat and battle and the theft of their divine identity. Gods who possess multiple mantles may switch between them and birth Scions from their various identities; should the God perish, these identities and memories persist beyond death, and a Scion who walks the way of these fallen Gods finds that the fallen Gods walk like them. Aphrodite was born from Uranus' severed genitals, cast into the sea to foam and birth the Goddess in a great seashell...but she was also the daughter of Zeus and Dione, who rose in apotheosis to claim the mantle of the most beautiful Goddess in the World. When asked whether her predecessor died or merely gave up her mantle, Aphrodite hides her expression behind a glass of watered wine. Venus will grant a withering glare, at least.

Destruction of a mantle is difficult, but not impossible. Destroying the various mythological links and identities of a God when the mantle has not settled upon a deity sunders the links the mantle has to Fate and the consciousness of humanity. Cast adrift in the Overworld, these Gods fade from the memory of mortal and God alike. Their remnants exist within the World — ancient shrines devoid of spiritual power, once-colonized Terra Incognita, the faded kobolds and spirits who claim they were once great. If the Primordials recall the true power of these forgotten Gods, they do not speak of their lost children.

TITANS

Titans can belong to pantheons, and like their spawn they conform to the myths of the Gods, filtering their energies through cultural lenses. Titans have Virtues like the Gods, but theirs are a fourfold expression based around their Purviews.

- Fecundity (creative capacity): the desire to spread the energies of their Purview.
- Rapacity (destructive capacity): the desire to let their Purview grow and consume everything in their path.

STORYGUIDING INCARNATIONS

Gods spin off aspects of themselves to live lives as mortals do, to experience love and food and heartbreak and play out their various Fatebindings in an environment that won't wreck the World. It's not always a conscious process, either, but simply another part of being divine. The Paramour is an easier Fate to deal with when it's the prom queen rather than the Queen of the Underworld. No Incarnation is the same, but they are all the God, and their mortal loves are how Scions are typically made. Incarnations have histories, as the World deforms to create Paths for the deity to exist, filling in the details *ex nihilo* and subtly discouraging anyone from digging too deeply into the general's war record or the employment history of the brilliant software engineer in the wheelchair. Some Incarnations are especially long-lived, building a life over decades and being exceptional but not Legendary in and of themselves, for that would defeat the point of living as mortals do.

Storyguides, use Incarnations sparingly when dealing with Heroes, but be especially subtle. They intervene with their children and pantheon-mates to bedevil, to trick, to guide, to welcome and treat as family, but they're seldom — if ever — direct about who and what they are. Allow players an Occult roll to see if they recognize Omens (see p. 188) of the deity if the players ask, lest they check to see if every single old grandmother is Geezhigo-Quae, but don't prompt it, and only allow a whiff of Scent of the Divine (p. 224) at the end of the scene after the God has left some pithy bit of wisdom or guided the Hero to a new scene. Intervention from a deity needn't come from a human Incarnation, either — Apollo is the sun, and a beam of sunlight that breaks through the clouds to show Scions which section of the city to visit next is just as much his sign as a handsome stranger playing acoustic guitar in some sun-dappled bar.

- Submission (destructive union): subsuming the World into their Titanic essence and the those of the greater Primordials.
- Dominance (creative union): corrupting influence and spreading Titanic energies across the World.

Titans exhibit one Creative and one Destructive Virtue, no matter what pantheon's myth and Legend they belong to. If they're civilized within the pantheon structure — like Helios with the Theoi, Bres with the Tuatha, or any number of the Shén who are given jobs — they exchange one Titanic Virtue for one Pantheon Virtue.

TITANSPAWN AND LEGENDARY CREATURES IN THE PANTHEONS

Most Legendary Creatures conform to mythologies, but some arise without the intervention of God or Titan. Perhaps they come into existence through hiccups in Fate or from the power of human belief, perhaps they creep in through the Axes Mundi that connect the World to the bizarre dreamscapes of the Overworld between Godrealms. Between the gaps in human imagination, griffons and kodama and hippocamps keep open the doors between the World and the lands of imagination.

When a couple of Scions go on a raging ego trip in the middle of Times Square pounding an oni into the ground, the crowds are more concerned with how it will affect their subway ride home than the fact that oni exist and people can throw cars. The pantheons continue to receive worship and affect the World. While a Scion who becomes a God may be able to find a niche in the Pantheon of her sires, she may decide to strike it out on her own. Scions of differing pantheons band together to carve out a new structure for their followers. Many new pantheons began as a band of Scions reforming their myths into a cohesive story

GOD VERSUS TITANS

The Devá, Theoi, and Teōtl aggressively promote and prosecute the Second Titanomachy, which involves not only aggressively destroying Titan cults and keeping Titans jailed, but also pursuing means of defeating and sealing these dangers forever. These three desperately want the divine cold war to turn hot. The Devá decided, without caring to ask anyone else (as usual), that they are in charge of this alliance, treating the Teōtl with honorable respect and the Theoi with patronizing condescension (which might have to do with the stronger Titan blood amongst the Theoi). Among the Devá, Durga, Indra, and Karttikeya are the most hawkish, whereas Ganesha may have singlehandedly (okay, four-hands-and-a-trunkedly) averted more international incidents than any other deity by beating those three to conflict zones and telling people to smile and nod at Indra until he goes away instead of rising to his bait.

The Æsir, Netjer, Shén, Yazatas, and Tuatha have mixed approaches. The Æsir love a good fight but the Devá's obnoxious suspicion of them (not to mention the Jötnar among their own ranks) prevents them from participating as uncomplicatedly as the Theoi and the Teōtl. The Netjer hate certain Titans, but they also have a lot of Titan friends, of whom they're quite protective. The Shén are on board as far as fighting Titans goes, but they keep hiring defeated Titans instead of imprisoning or killing them, which weirds their Devá friends out. The Yazatas like

OTHER PANTHEONS

The 10 pantheons in this book aren't the only pantheons in The World, or even a total listing of the most potent. Along the roads of Europe walk the Theoi and the Æsir, but also the Yazatas of Persia and the Bogovi of the Slavic peoples. The Aztecs rose long after the K'uh of the Mayans retreated back to their strongholds in the Yucatán, and Scions of the Manitou sometimes venture far north to walk among the arctic spirits of the Inua. The Netjer look warily upon the myriad and manifold pantheons of the Fertile Crescent. This includes tribal or national Gods who have spread far beyond their original borders, for some Gods do not belong to a pantheon at all, choosing to brave the mysteries of The World with nothing but their wits, their Legend, and their followers.

Sometimes pantheons vanish. The Gods created The World and have existed since time immemorial, and that is true, but those same exact Gods have also arisen alongside mortal culture and human empires within recorded history — and this is equally true. If there were Gods who wore the mantle of Bull and Bear and Hawk and Deer worshipped by the earliest humans, they have retreated into the Overworld, or shed their mantles in favor of a more cultured outlook. If the Neanderthals who lost the battle for supremacy over *homo sapiens* had deities to watch over their nascent culture, those Gods have done the same. The World may be ancient beyond human reckoning, but the Gods are wise beyond human reckoning as well, and immortals have long memories indeed.

There are many Gods, and many pantheons. They all keep an eye on the others. **Scion** will detail some of them within The World. Feel free to change them for your World, or to detail the rest. Remember that Gods do not arise from fame and faith alone; works and Deeds are the crucible of Legend.

the concept of Titanomachy, but they were pretty sure the most dangerous Titans were the Devás, and now they're not really sure what to do. The Tuatha say they're down with Titanomachy, but the cross pollination between them and their Titans might be more confusing than any other pantheon's, so no one from outside is entirely sure what to do to help them.

The Manitou and Òrìshà are on the dove-ish side. The Manitou view violence against Titans as a last resort; they play defense against their own Titans, and will only help with anyone else's in extreme cases. With the exception of King Odùduwà, who throws around the word "Titan" the way a mortal use the word "jerk," the Òrìshà and Loa reject the designation "Titan" and the concept of Titanomachy as racist warmongering.

THE ÆSIR OF ÁSGARÐ & MIÐGARÐR

"I remember yet the giants of yore,
Who gave me bread in the days gone by;
Nine worlds I know, the nine in the tree,
With mighty roots beneath the earth."

–Stanza 2, Völuspa

Forged from fire and ice, the Æsir and the Jötnar (the giants) clashed the moment they met. It had to be done. They were born into a world with nothing and with no land to call their own. Odin and his brothers ripped Ymir asunder and with his flesh, bones, brains, and blood, they created the mountains, the ocean, the clouds, and the lands of Miðgarðr. As fate would have it, Bergelmir and his wife were the only two giants to survive, becoming the progenitors of their race. They fled to Jötunheimr — a wild place filled with beasts that inhabited dark forests. Relentlessly battered by the Æsir and storms alike, the Jötnar had a choice — to live and mate with the Æsir or exist to torment their enemies until the great wheel turned.

The Æsir dwelled in Ásgarð, a civilized and law-abiding land, surrounded by a thick wall. Eventually, a second tribe of Gods appeared, calling themselves the Vanir. They hailed from Vanaheim — a land with sacred halls, woods, and fields. The tribes coexisted with nothing but peace in their hearts until it was discovered the Vanir possessed the art of *seiðr*, a magic of incredible potency. Odin, seeker of all things mystical, sought to take the knowledge by force. The war proved one thing — that each tribe could gain the upper hand, but neither could truly succeed. After much bloodshed on both sides, the Titanic opponents of both devastated the Gods. The Æsir absorbed their rivals into their ranks and thus preserved themselves in difficult times.

Born in the wastes and ruin of Northern Europe among Germanic warriors and Nordic pirates, the Æsir are the product of this shotgun wedding millennia ago, and the dichotomy still shows today. The Æsir do not regard the past as better than the present. In fact, they appear more at ease these days, for they are bound by Fate, and look to the future with dread.

PRINCIPAL MEMBERS

The Æsir are an ancient calling — a voice of nature and the force of war drums, loving flyting in the grand halls of Ásgarð as equally as they do a worthy battle. Bound by Fate, they are entangled to the whim of the Nornir — **Urðr**, that which is; **Verðandi**, that which is becoming; and **Skuld**, that which should be. **Odin**, the All-Father, rules over the Æsir, and often wanders the World adhering to his own agenda of breaking the cycle of Ragnarok, the great prophesied Twilight of the Gods. The Æsir continue to wait and hope: **Tyr**, **Skaði**, **Thor**, **Sif**, **Heimdall**. Only **Baldr** and **Hel** await the death of all with something resembling joy, for the former will resurrect as the sun over the new world and the latter will rule over the dead remains of the old. The Vanir still exist, bound by marriage to the Æsir: **Freyja**, **Freyr**, and **Njörðr** all grimly await their fate, doomed and bound by blood oath. And **Loki**, blood-brother to Odin, futilely struggles against Fate to save his pantheon and family.

ODIN, GOD OF WISDOM, THE DEAD, AND MAGIC

Aliases: Alfaðir, Harbard, Vak, Valtaid, Wodun, Wotan, Ygg

Ancient and wise, Odin is the imposing leader of the Æsir. The All-Father sends his Valkyries to collect half of

PRONUNCIATION OF NORSE WORDS:

Æsir – Ice-ear
Ásgarð – Az-guard
Baldr – Bal-durr
Bifröst – Bye-frost
Freya – Fray-ah
Frigg – Ffrig
Heimdall – Hayme-dahl
Hel – Hell
Huginn – Hoo-gin
Iðunn – I-dunn
Jörmungandr – Your-mun-gand
Logi – Lore-gee
Loki – Low-key
Miðgarðr – Mith-gard
Mimir – Mee-mere
Mjolnir – Mee-oll-near
Muninn – Moo-nin
Njörðr – Nigh-ord
Odin – Oh-din
Ragnarok – Rag-na-rok
Ratatosk – Rat-at-osk
Seiðr – Say-de
Siff – (rhymes with jif)
Sleipnir – Slayp-near
Skaði – Skahd-ee
Thor – Thore
Tyr – Tee-ya
Urðr – Oord
Valhalla – Varl-hal-lah
Valkyrie – Vall-ki-ree
Vanaheim – Varna-haym
Vanir – Var-near
Yggdrasil – Eeg-drass-ill
Ymir – Ee-mere

all battle-fallen souls to place them within the Great Hall of Valhalla, there to wait until Ragnarok. A seeker of wisdom, he hung for nine days from Yggdrasil to suffer and learn the secret of the runes. He sought out and unmanned himself to learn the seiðr, the magic only women used. Desiring to twist fate, he went so far as to pluck out his own eye to offer to the Well of Mimir. To see the World, he acquired two ravens, Huginn (thought), and Muninn (memory), to take flight across the Realms and report their findings. He is a leader born and bred, terrifying in both war and peace, all-seeing and all-knowing.

He is not now, and has never been, a good father. In modern times, Odin has not changed in his appearance: an old haggard man, with a thin mouth tucked under a full beard no matter the Incarnation — telecom magnate, smooth-talking con man, or rookery master. He drinks and seduces, but is never drunk and never seduced. His mind is ever-set on the Twilight of the Gods. In rare times he appears as a golden eagle or as a ferryman. No matter the form he takes, Odin's left eye is missing. Like a heavy war mule, Odin moves with purpose — never an indecisive action.

A traveler, a seer, and a warrior, the All-Father expects his Scions to walk on the same path: to be willing to do anything for knowledge, and be wary of those who would stand in the way. No sacrifice is too great for wisdom. Cryptic and patient, Odin speaks to his Scions through Guides and gives Birthrights with strings attached and high expectations, and he always expects they will be wise enough to interpret the messages.

Callings: Leader, Sage, Trickster

Purviews: Fortune, Journeys, War, Artistry (Poetry), Death, Deception, Epic Stamina

THOR, GOD OF THUNDER, RAIN, AND CROPS

Aliases: Donar, Thundr

Thor is the right hand of Odin, the strongest of the Æsir. His courageous, brash nature is one that shakes the very presence of Gods and Jötnar alike. The Odinson focuses on protecting both Ásgarð and Miðgarðr while wielding Mjolnir, a hammer flawed in its construction due to Loki's mischief. Despite the shortened handle, Mjolnir is the strongest weapon ever forged; in order to carry the hammer safely, Thor must wear the iron gauntlets Járngreipr. His already-prodigious strength is increased by his belt, granting him might enough to lift the disguised World Serpent. His regular companion Thjálfi is the best runner and scout in the Nine Worlds, and Thor races across the sky in a cart drawn by two giant, golden goats.

Bold and to the point, Thor is a warrior and guardian born, albeit one as dangerous to his allies as his enemies. When the Jötnar attack Ásgarð every winter, Thor leads the charge without complaint. He knows his role, and he does what is needed to protect those he cares for. He accepts Fate for what it is, and does not attempt to change it like his father. Red-haired with lightning-blue eyes, with a voice that booms as loud as thunder, Thor is as imposing as his Purviews. He does not make his presence known often, but when he does, it is always best to listen.

In modern times, Thor maintains his protective nature. Worn after endless battles, he spends his downtime avoiding conflict — a garage mechanic working on a collection of antique cars, a rock musician, a sound engineer. In the worst situations, he can be found in a ring — usually in small rundown gyms. Heavy thunder clouds tend to

form when he is around. Thor is associated with the color red — whether it be red hair and a beard or a more simplistic red hoodie. No matter his size, he cuts an imposing figure, with calloused knuckles, oil under his fingernails, and a crooked nose. Thor expects his Scions to root for the underdog and protect them from would-be bullies. His passion carries through the blood, embodying both his warrior and protective nature.

Callings: Guardian, Leader, Warrior

Purviews: Epic Strength, Epic Stamina, Fertility, Sky

FRIGG, GODDESS OF MARRIAGE AND DESTINY

Aliases: Frigga, Freja, Frige

Wife to Odin, Frigg is a strong and capable Goddess that sees many things, but speaks very little. Her guiding hand gives solace to women in childbirth — and she is ever the mother, the wife, and the protector. When her son Baldr spoke to her of his prophetic deadly nightmares, Frigg journeyed to every living creature and asked that they not harm her son. She knows many magics — her falcon skin can transform anyone without the risk of them being lost in the animal spirit, and her skills at fortunetelling are almost beyond compare. Some believe her to be a Titan, others a mortal sorceress who draws power from the old energies of the World, but Frigg keeps her enigmas close to heart to guard her secrets and her rare failures alike.

Today, Frigg appears as a matronly woman with motherly, piercing blue eyes. No matter the season, she wears a piece of jewelry that hints at mistletoe. She is always in the presence of three young maidens; one can be seen carrying an ash cigar-box purse. Frigg appears highly concerned and takes on roles that allow her to enact diplomacy or tell the future — a tutor at War College, a marriage counselor, an international diplomat, a high-profile financial planner. Her Incarnations can also be found as NICU nurses comforting pregnant women or as doulas assisting natural births.

Frigg sees the bigger picture, but sometimes fails to see what is right in front of her. She expects her Scions, typically female, to focus on what she cannot see. Oaths are vastly important in this relationship: her Scions will always feel her presence, and they tend not to be prone to quick action. Like Frigg, they take their time to logically attack a problem, no matter how long it takes.

She also requires them to swear an oath they will never harm Baldr, but more than a few have died regretting that promise.

Callings: Sage, Guardian, Lover

Purviews: Beasts (Falcon), Fortune, Order, Wild

HEL, GODDESS OF THE REALM OF THE DEAD

Aliases: Hela, Hell

Hel, queen of the Underworld, is fierce, dark, unforgiving — and hideous. To reach her grand hall, she had to travel the dangerous road of Helveg. It was so rough that one was

required to wear Helskór, "Hel Shoes", to aid in a journey that took nine days and nine nights. She resides in a grand hall named Elvinder, where she is attended by two servants named Idleness and Sloth that only serve one dish, Hunger. She sleeps in a bed called Sorrow and lives in a land called Ruin.

Living among the dead in the dark and ornate hall, Helheim is not as lonely as one might think, as this Hel has other people — the souls of those who die in sickness and old age. Hel is a quiet, patient Goddess, half-flesh and half-rotten. She prefers the hour of the wolf: late at night, just a few hours before the dawn. She prefers the solitude, the quiet hours of humanity, so she can hear the ghosts speak. Ancient, with the stillness of the dead, she rarely stands from her throne. Clad in simple black, Hel speaks softly — a voice sashed in whiskey and cigarettes.

Cold and unforgiving, she guards the dead, and is the archetypal ice queen. It is the nature of this chill that she chooses to emulate in her Incarnations. She often takes roles that allow her to be near the dying or those who require judgment: chief doctor in residence in the ICU, the administrator of a senior citizen's home, groundskeeper for a prison that handles death row cases. As for her Scions, they are often associated with the moribund, and often Chosen. She speaks to her Scions through the tongue of the dead, and expects them to attend to the souls of the dead and dying that belong to her.

Callings: Liminal, Guardian, Judge

Purviews: Death, Frost, Forge, Passion (Fear, Disgust), Health

BALDR, GOD OF LOVE, BEAUTY, AND PEACE

Aliases: Baldur

Bright, beautiful, beloved Baldr, the favorite son of Odin and Frigg. None are as loved as much as he, and not just for his beauty: he's known to be the most cheerful and kind of all Gods. Bold, brave, and handsome, this fair-skinned, blue-eyed God radiates a soft glow when he smiles. So loved was he that Frigg collected oaths of every creature and plant to prevent them from harming her son.

He once became distraught when nightmares of his own death in Ragnarok plagued his mind, yet allowed the Gods to throw things at him to ease their minds and prove he would always be impenetrable. Loki took advantage of this and convinced the blind God Höðr to shoot an arrow of mistletoe — the only plant that Frigg passed by. Baldr died due to Loki's trickery, and he then became trapped in Helheim to keep Hel company until the end of time. When Baldr's brother, Hermod, asked Hel for his release, she demanded that every creature weep for Baldr. Every creature but a Jötunn named Þökk, rumored to have been Loki in disguise, did so — Þökk refused and Baldr remained in Helheim. He got out once the deception was revealed, but he worries Loki will try again. Even Surtr, Fenrir, Hel, Hadi, Skoll, and Jormungand cried for Baldr when they thought him dead.

In modern times, Baldr is still handsome. He dresses impeccably, but modestly, for clothes do not make the man. He is often found helping those who are less fortunate — sometimes in an orphanage or on the streets feeding the homeless.

He is a passionate and caring lover and is very meticulous about his own appearance. Baldr is not always a peaceful being. His agility and strength are at the peak — and he will resort to violence on a case-by-case basis. He expects his Scions to be equally passionate — in every role they choose. They find that Baldr is very much invested in their lives and seeks to guard his own. He sometimes forgets limitations, and thus his Scions must endure his constant guiding hand.

Callings: Guardian, Liminal, Lover

Purviews: Beauty, Passion (Love, Peace), Health, Epic Stamina, Sun

HEIMDALL, GOD OF PERCEPTION

Aliases: None

Born from nine mothers of the sea, Heimdall is incredibly fair. A dutiful God with gold teeth, sight beyond sight, and keen hearing, he guards the Bifröst bridge with senses that can hear the grass grow on all the Nine Worlds. He turned Thor away, forcing the God to wade in the rivers under the bridge. Heimdall carries the Gjallarhorn, so that he may alert the Gods of intruding forces. When he has the time, he's fond of drinking mead in his home, Himinbiörg. Heimdall is destined to die at the hands of Loki, but he is also destined to destroy Loki simultaneously, proving that he is the only God that can pierce Loki's tricks. Knowing this destiny, he does not pay much heed to the trickster.

As the Father of Mankind, Heimdall watches over his creations with the same vigilant eyes as he does the abode of the Gods. Heimdall is seen as a tall and broad-shouldered man, with large ears that are often hidden under his long, dark hair. He speaks when it is necessary, and does not waste his time listening to useless drivel. He expects his Scions to be similarly direct and to the point. His Incarnations are as diverse as cybersecurity experts, investigative agents, soldiers in the bowels of a submarine, or code-breakers (...or perhaps they're not all that diverse). Heimdall sleeps less than a bird, and never seems to understand the necessity of keeping daytime hours.

Fortunately, most of his many Scions find that they can withstand 24-48 hours without sleep without requiring endless cups of caffeine to keep awake. Observant and with high stamina, Heimdall watches and listens, using his Scions to further his own all-seeing ways and manipulating them into keeping his security network solid. It is virtually impossible to keep a secret from him, and he often meddles in the careers of his children.

Callings: Creator, Guardian, Hunter

Purviews: Artistry (Horns), Beauty, Epic Stamina, Journeys

SIF, GODDESS OF THE HARVEST

Aliases: None

Wife to Thor, Sif is the only Goddess that can balance his storm, both power and temper. Married to him, the harvests are abundant and rich. Considerate, compassionate, and enduring, these are the traits that Sif embodies. Often times, she was the one to make peace out of disputes, even when Loki was involved. When the trickster God cut the golden hair that spilled down her beautiful frame, Thor threatened to behead Loki with his hammer (roughly as painful as it sounds). Quick to act, Loki promised recompense and sought out the dwarves, asking them to make a headpiece to restore Sif's lost hair. They complied and her golden tresses returned, made of metal rather than hair. The Goddess suffered in the same way as a harvest is plucked; with action and renewal and the work of metal, the harvest will grow once more.

Sif is one of the more archaic gods. Associated with the earth, she moves to protect the harvest and to add warmth. Even though she must deal with blight and vermin, she does so with grace and surety. Her sharp nose and keen intellect stay with those to whom she speaks, even long after the shine of her golden hair fades from their eyes.

In modern times, Sif finds herself in diverse roles, and her Scions are equally diverse. She is found to be a mediator, a celebrity chef focused on the fresh and local, and a cattle heiress. She is fair and level-headed, but is quick to remind her Scions about the harsh qualities of life. Crops suffer to pollution, insects, and wildlife — and only the strongest harvest with the strongest workers endures. Her Scions are as passionate as they are hard workers: Type-A personalities who live by their calendars. Like Sif, they are competitive, and seek to surmount whatever goal is in their way with grace and ease.

Callings: Creator, Guardian, Lover

Purviews: Beauty, Earth, Fertility, Order

LOKI, GOD OF TRICKERY AND FIRE

Aliases: Logi

Loki, the trickster, the shapeshifter, is pleasing to gaze upon and questionable in character. They are cunning without a doubt, shifting gender on a whim, and often found to be in the direst of trouble, but it is their undeniable quick wit that allows them to save their neck. Blood-brother to Odin, child of giants, Loki is the father of monsters — Fenrir, the great wolf; Jörmungandr, the World Serpent; and, it is rumored, Hel, Goddess of Death — and mother to Sleipnir, the eight-legged stallion that is Odin's steed. The stories say they will be bound in a cavern with poison ever dripping into their eyes because of the betrayals they've committed, and that they will side with the Titans at the end of the World. Yet while Loki gets themself into trouble frequently, and endangers the Æsir constantly, they are — for now — ever on the side of their tribe.

When Logi, the true God of Fire, bested Loki in an eating contest by burning the contents (including the platter) as he ate, Loki became enraged and called him a cheater. Yet they eventually tricked Logi into consuming himself, and stole the God's mantle, even stealing Logi's wife Glöð as well. Careful, sometimes cowardly, this God is the sly undercover agent, the

politician that oozes charisma, and the seductress that can manipulate anyone to kneel at her feet. Passionate, with a belly full of fire, Loki will achieve any goal they set their mind to, and they will do anything to twist fate to their whim.

In the modern day, Loki is a handsome, charming man with flame-red hair or an imposing and powerful woman, and sometimes something other or in-between. No matter their gender, Loki always has a devilish smile and twinkling eyes, imparting lessons and humility with equal measure. Their Scions find these lessons are without prejudice, but rarely without danger. They will place them upon anyone at any time, and their victims must endure their fickle nature, for the art of the double-cross comes naturally to Loki. Yet if their children earn loyalty, Loki will remain to guide them for as long as they serve Loki's needs.

Callings: Liminal, Lover, Trickster

Purviews: Deception, Chaos, Fire, Epic Strength

TYR, GOD OF COURAGE AND JUSTICE

Aliases: None

Tyr is the only God that can compare to Thor's power. When Fenrir the wolf grew large, the Gods decided to bind him. Tired of the wolf breaking free, they sought to bind him with dwarf-forged chains. Fenrir sensed a trick, and when the Gods approached, the wolf said he would only be bound if one of them would put a hand in his mouth. Tyr was the only one brave enough. Once Fenrir was bound, the wolf bit off Tyr's right hand. The Gods all laughed, except for Tyr. Despite the loss of his hand, Tyr did not complain. He never does.

Tyr may once have been leader of the Æsir before the All-Father rose to prominence, but he does not speak of it, nor does he seem concerned by his loss of limb or station. All of Tyr's Incarnations are without a right hand, for he never accepts a prosthesis. Tyr is a strong, capable man, short and sturdy with fierce eyes, salt-and-pepper hair, and an unfaltering smirk. He can be found in a veterinarian's office wrangling down the most temperamental animals, blogging about national security issues, as a court judge in the military, or climbing telephone poles one-handed. He believes in courage, and accepts no cowardice or weakness as an excuse. A warrior with fierce stamina, he does not tolerate the breaking of oaths or commitments, no matter the reason — for he does not swear oaths casually, and he is a careful observer of what is good and just in the long run.

His Scions would not dare be late to anything to which they have committed themselves, and are frequently as invested in justice as he. He implores them to never back down in dangerous situations, despite all odds, and to remain as brave and unflinching a warrior as he. They will find that Tyr only steps in if it is dangerous enough for him to feel threatened, for true bravery can only be demonstrated when one is endangered and afraid.

Callings: Judge, Leader, Warrior

Purviews: Epic Stamina, Order, Passion (Courage), War

FREYA, GODDESS OF FERTILITY, LOVE, LUST AND WAR

Aliases: Frau, Freyja

Like Odin, Freya collects the souls of the battle-slain. As leader of the Valkyries, she even gets first pick. Covetous and cruel but forgiving and merciful in equal turns, she loves the din of battle, but cherishes the quiet moments. She collects the worthiest, and must always take a number equal to the All-Father's. The souls she chooses go to the hall of Sessrúmnir, which is also a grand ship stranded in the field of Fólkvangr, there to train and innovate and prepare for a great offense rather than merely feasting and slaying during the day. When she sheds tears for her warriors, they are tears of amber, clattering upon the ground and enriching those for whom they fall. She once met with Odin in the guise of a wise woman, and is skilled in the art of *Seiðr*. Her sexual appetite is voracious, but she never takes a lover who doesn't know what they're in for. She inspires shieldmaidens across the World, who pray to her for protection and inspiration in battle.

One of the Vanir, Freya is a ginger woman of clear skin and clearer eye, older and matronly yet still gorgeous. One of the original feminists, she encourages self-awareness, beauty, and worth in women, and while she respects boundaries, she doesn't always enjoy that they exist. Freya's Incarnations can be found running establishments — anything from a Krav Maga studio to a high-end jewelry store to a bakery to a boutique with the latest fashion trends. She always leads, and she always makes a worthwhile product.

Like Freya, her Scions are full of passion. They are devoted to being as well-rounded and diverse as her — to fight, to love, and to understand the nature of magic and war. Sometimes, they can gain her ability of *seiðr*, through meditation and focus. Her Scions can expect that she is invested in their existence and sometimes, just sometimes, she leaves behind flashy jewelry that must be worn. To do otherwise would be a slight.

Callings: Lover, Guardian, Sage

Purviews: Beauty, Death, Epic Stamina, Fertility, Fortune, Passion (Love, Lust), War

FREYR, GOD OF FERTILITY AND PROSPERITY

Aliases: Frey

Freyr is the son of Njörðr, brother of Freya. He became so consumed with desire by a mere glance upon Gerðr, a daughter of a giant, that he stopped eating. No longer able to contain his lovelorn state, he sent his servant, Skírnir, to convince Gerðr to marry him. Skírnir agreed, as long as he could have Freyr's sword — a magical weapon that could fight on its own. Without hesitation, the God accepted the terms. Nine days later, he had the woman of his dreams. Lacking the sword, Freyr cannot defeat Surtr in Ragnarok, but to

him, love is far more important. Called the Battle-Bold, he once fought an army armed with only a stag's antler, and conquered Sweden to found a royal dynasty.

The most powerfully fertile of all the Norse Gods, Freyr overlooks both mortals and the lives of the plants of the World. Beautiful and charming, Freyr is the spark of life. In war, he is adrenaline; in fear, he is rationality. His radiant light overcomes sorrow and despair as he wanders the World with his ship and pet boar, sowing seeds both literal and metaphorical. Brown-haired with a linebacker's strong build, Freyr's Incarnations can be found volunteering to aid the suicidal, starring in pornographic movies, or spending billions in charity money to bring fortune to the less than fortunate.

Always the best-dressed man in the room, Freyr believes that his Scions should follow in his steps: Be a leader, but also be willing to listen to the misguided and the hurting. He conspires to make opportunities flow to them no matter their desire. He stresses making a difference in Miðgarðr rather than the other Nine Worlds, and implores his innumerable children to be aware of the influence they have on others.

Callings: Lover, Leader, Warrior

Purviews: Beauty, Fertility, Order, War, Wild

SKADI, GODDESS OF WINTER

Aliases: Skaldi

The frost giantess Skaði is the ruler of the winter wilds, Goddess of the cold and snow, a huntress with the bow and arrow. When she was seeking weregild for her father's death, Odin was so intimidated by her fierce aspect that he agreed to pay the blood price, under condition that she choose her husband from among the Æsir by their feet. She picked the most beautiful of feet, but she had chosen the feet of Njörðr. With vastly different lifestyles, they agreed to spend nine nights in the mountains to appease Skaði and nine nights near the sea to appease Njörðr. Needless to say, they both were miserable and soon (amicably) divorced.

When placed together, Skaði and Njörðr are the perfect duo to help those who seek an amicable divorce. She also married Odin at one point, and produced many Scions with the All-Father. She even had an affair with Loki and, when they proclaimed it before the other Gods, her hatred for them grew ferociously. She has, at times, placed a snake upon their head to drip venom into their eyes. Humorless and devoid of passion, Skaði reserves her emotions for deeds and those with whom she shares an indescribable bond — hunting, skiing, those who do not feel at home within their skin, and Loki.

Today, Skaði's Incarnations spend a great deal of time in snow-plagued lands under the guise of a winter park caretaker or a hunting ranger, often dealing with her frost giant kin. Bundled in the best gear, Skaði makes time to ski and snowboard. If she is forced outside of her niche, she quickly grows bored and very impatient, even to her own Scions (who often display giant or Titanic heritage). They possess her same warrior nature and her love of hunting.

Callings: Hunter, Warrior, Judge

Purviews: Earth, Epic Dexterity, Journeys, Order, Frost

NJORDR, GOD OF THE SEA AND THE WINDS

Aliases: Njord, Njor, Niord

When the Vanir sent hostages to the Æsir, Njörðr was among them. He was the husband of Skaði, until they divorced because they could not live together, for he despised the mountains and she despised the sea. Despite their separation, Njörðr remained close to Skaði, often helping those who sought a divorce. It is well known that Loki is quite wary of the sea God, as he possesses the ability to calm fire. The God of Wind and Sea is inconstant enough that even Loki gives him a wide berth, for he does not merely calm fire but tame it. His name was on the lips of every Viking sailor as they took to sea.

Father of Freyr and Freya, Njord is the eldest of the Vanir, and never speaks of his sister-wife, the mother of his two most famous children. Under his leadership, the Vanir won many victories in the war with the Æsir, wrecking Ásgarð's walls in a furious battle. Yet today, the sea God spends most of his time near the ocean, at peace. Sometimes Njörðr appears as a sun-kissed, weathered old man clad in a raincoat. His Incarnations can be a lighthouse keeper, or a fisherman seeking the catch of the day. Other times he takes on lovers as a young rich bachelor that dwells in an oceanside mansion. No matter his form, there is the subtle scent of salt water in his hair, and a longing for the greater life, love, and lady.

Rich in life as he is in wealth, Njörðr is a light in the darkness for a community or for a single ship lost at sea. A God of Fertility, he has many children, and loves them all equally, if distantly. He sets the example for his Scions of responsible leadership under difficult circumstances. Like the harsh sea that batters the stony shoreline, he teaches his Scions that over time, cruel realities and harsh ways, doing what must be done, result in a stronger and healthier society —the smoothest of sands to be enjoyed by many.

Callings: Creator, Hunter, Liminal

Purviews: Fertility, Fire, Journeys, Prosperity, Sky, Water

COSMOLOGY: THE NINE WORLDS

The World is Miðgarðr, centered around Yggdrasil, a great ash tree that connects the World to eight others. Showered in white hail, it stands evergreen on three roots. The roots end in Ásgarð, Jötunheimr, and Niflheim.

Yggdrasil - The Great Tree

The ancient universe is visualized as nine worlds divided up into three sets of three on three end or no beginning, sustained by the Nornir known as Urðr, Verðandi and Skuld. They would pour water over the branches so that the tree

would not rot. At the top perched a great eagle with a hawk resting between its eyes. The serpent Nídhögg gnaws at the roots. Ratatosk, the squirrel, runs up and down the trunk carrying insults from the serpent to the eagle.

Ásgarð rests high on the branches. It is the home of the Æsir.

Miðgarðr is the World, the realm of humans, resting under **Ásgarð**. Bifröst connects Miðgarðr to Ásgarð.

Jötunheimr surrounds Miðgarðr. It is a place of chaos and all things wild.

Vanaheim has long been abandoned by the Vanir. There are rumors that squatters have taken advantage of the fertile soil in the great fields.

Alfheim is where the light elves reside. It is said that Freyr once ruled these lands.

Nidavellir was the home of the dwarves, the creators of many artifacts of the Gods

Helheim is where Hel rules. This is the realm of the dead for those that did not fall in battle.

Niflheim is the land of ice and mist. It is Primordial. It has existed for as long as Muspellheim.

Muspelheim is known to be a realm, but it is also Primordial. It has existed since the beginning. Surtr, the fire giant, resides here.

UNDERWORLDS

The Norse Gods have numerous Underworlds, for their wars produced many dead by varying degrees. So too do the lives of their followers produce favored of several Gods. Many of the Norse faithful in the World today are claimed by one of four Gods, and taken to rest in their various halls, though it's not unusual for favored of another God to be given residence in another place in the Norse Overworld (such as Ydalir, the Yew-Dales, watched over by Freyr). Valhalla is the most prominent in the mythology and religion of the Æsir, but three others receive their share of the dead and dying. Those who perish in battle go to Valhalla or Sessrumnir respectively, while those who die of disease or decrepit old age go to Helheim, and the rest of the find rest in Helgafjell.

Hel - Abode of the Doomed

The largest Underworld of the Norse Gods is known after the goddess who rules it, though it's just as often called Helheim. It lies across a dangerous road and a turbulent sea, over which one must travel through darkness for nine days and nine nights until reaching a river called Gjöll, spanned by a bridge named Gjallarbrú. The bridge is guarded by Móðguðr, a female Jötunn, who allows the dead to pass when they state their name and business. From there, to the north rests Elvinder, surrounded by a large gate guarded by Garmr —a bloodstained hound. The dead who reside here, however, always find their way after great and grand trials. They do so in the shadow of Helgafjell, where others find rest.

In the halls of Elvinder, Hel sits on her throne. She is the only Goddess of this place. She has two servants, named Idleness and Sloth, on hand. Within her own chambers, she sleeps in a bed called Sorrow. The souls of those who died old and alone and without family, and those who died of sickness dwell within this place, and there they will stay until the end of days. Life wore them down to nothing, and death has reduced them to less. Needless to say, Hel is an unpleasant place, even though Hel sets a feast for Baldr's return to her hall, and the dead are free to eat. Despite the chill and gloom, the dead here are free of the things that destroyed them while they yet lived, and they spend their endless night eating, drinking, carousing, fighting, sleeping, and practicing magic. Those in the World faithful to the Norse Gods will choose a valiant death or dignified suicide in the face of terminal illness, fearful of the abode of the dead, but in truth it is not the worst of fates.

Valhalla - Hall of the Fallen

Valhalla is known to be a grand hall thatched with gold shields and spears. Standing before the hall is a great tree, Glasir. The Valkyries bring in the Norse-faithful, battle-fallen souls that were chosen by Odin, from battlefields in Afghanistan to Mexico to Syria to Myanmar. Here, within this grand place, the souls of the dead fight and train with weapons both ancient and modern. They have their fill of the meat of the resurrecting Sæhrímnir and mead from the udder of Heiðrún, and drink until the end of days. Odin himself is rarely seen. He does not need to watch over those he chose. Heimdall is known to have returned the best of the dead to aid in battles against the Jötnar, but they were commanded to keep silent and to never speak to the living.

SessrUmnir - Hall of Seats

Resting on the field of Fólkvangr is Freya's hall, called Sessrúmnir. It is here where Freya collects half of the battle-fallen, but also deceased women of noble birth or those who fell in service to causes she found pleasing. Within this grand hall, there are enough seats for those souls — and as more appear, there are always chairs. Here, they drink and fight and train, much like in Valhalla, in weapons and battle but also rhetoric, philosophy, and strategy. It is a grand and fair place, open and full of golden walls, reflecting the light — so there may be no shadow.

Helgafjell - the Holy Mountain

Those who don't die of disease, old age, or in righteous battle end up in Helgafjell, a mountain shrouded in mist yet dotted with urban domiciles. It cannot be looked upon by the living, and stretches up far into the sky. Here, a faithful soul may find their ancestors who were claimed by accident and misfortune in the World before their skein had a chance to complete itself, living in comfort. There are no feasts here, though food and drink are plentiful; there is rest, but not true happiness.

The Norse believe in reincarnation, after a fashion, and the Gods allow those residing in Helgafjell to walk down the mountain and through the mists once more. Through the mists, a soul will be reborn within their family lines. Scars that mark the old will become birthmarks on the reborn; eccentricities acquired with age become odd sentiments in a youth. Those reborn within families are often named after the elders they show the signs of, acquiring a legacy to live up to not unlike those of proper Scions.

NOTABLE TITANSPAWN

Giants, dragons, and trolls bedevil the Æsir, chief of which is the devil-giant with the flaming sword, Surtr, who will bring forth the flames that engulf the World during the Twilight of the Gods. The Titan remains bound within his Primordial-self, Muspelheim, an Emanation of supreme power and malicious nature. The Æsir fear that slaying the giant would destroy the Primordial, so they've settled for sealing him within Muspelheim and aggressively killing lesser fire giants.

Níðhöggr

The chaotic titanspawn known as the Níðhöggr — once the title of the foremost serpent that chewed the roots of Yggdrasil —have been merged under the name and taxonomy of "large, wicked serpents". These titanspawn seek the destruction of the cosmos by destroying civilization and affecting the mythic and mystical roots that connect the World to the Nine Realms. They often appear as bearded dragons or snakes, and their venomous spawn afflict cities and rural towns alike.

Vargr

As both Hati Hróðvitnisson and Sköll are destined to swallow the moon and the sun, these wolves are often beasts of destruction. These wolves care not for good or evil, they simply destroy whatever is in their path. Most know them as the Fenrirspawn — large wolves with sharp teeth and wild eyes, particularly prizing the hearts of Scions. Devouring the heart of a child of the Gods is necessary for the wolves to grow stronger and more cunning.

Devourers

Most Jötnar are some form of titanspawn, but some inherit a cruel dislike for humanity rather than a vaguely malicious indifference. Known to some as the Thurs, or "thorn," these titanspawn are the smaller brethren of the Jötnar Titans. Born of ice or fire, they either hail from Niflheim or Muspelheim. They are woe and misfortune — turning order into chaos, and beauty into ugliness. Walking the World disguised as large and unpleasant mortals, they work as enforcers or thugs for hire, viciously beating on mortals for a thrill until they're put down by some enterprising Scion.

Primordials

Ymir, the original Father of the Jötnar, is believed to be a dead Primordial. In the beginning, Odin and his brothers waged a war against Ymir and his sons. Ymir's blood created

the oceans, his skin the soil, his hair the vegetation, his skull the sky, and his brain shattered, forming the clouds. If he's still alive, he's never manifested in the Overworld.

It's theorized that Niflheim is a Primordial as well, for only darkness and ice were present in the very beginning, until Muspelheim and Surtr's flaming sword touched the darkness and warmed the ice to reveal Ymir. The creation of the Gods soon followed. As mentioned previously, Surtr is an Emanation of the Primordial Muspelheim: as he brought life with fire, he shall destroy life with fire in the end days.

RELIGION: LAUKR

Worship of the Æsir was once disparate and highly personal in the World, only to be later unified and partly codified under great religious warlords. With the Scandinavian people comfortably spread out in diaspora, worship has largely returned to the ancient roots, but it never precisely escaped contact with the monotheistic religions unscathed. The Norse rune *laukr* roughly translates to "water," or "leek," or "to bend," neatly describing a religion focusing on the ebb and flow of life and (more importantly) how to shape one's life to fit any circumstance. The skein of their lives and deaths has already been woven by the Nornir, but cloth and twine will bend, and so too will a follower of the Æsir. While those who follow the Norse Gods prize seers and fortunetellers, they also council caution: "Wise in measure should each man be, but ne'er let him wax too wise, for he who looks not forward to learn his fate will bear an unburdened heart," Says the Edda. Priests of Laukr are called gothi (when male) or gytha (when female), while the priests who care for the stave temples of the Gods called hofgothi. In the past, the Norse religion was led by great jarls or kings called *fylkir*, but the last died centuries ago, and no Hero of the Gods has yet arisen to replace them.

Transmitted through oral culture in ancient times, modern practice of Laukr in the World involves some codified texts on codes of behavior, such as the nine noble virtues detailed in the Poetic Eddas (particularly *Sigrdrífumál* and the *Hávamál*) but still heavily focuses upon public acts of sacrifice and feats of daring. Practitioners are typically loud about their faith, wearing arm rings and torcs, sporting tattoos of scenes from Norse myth, and making obvious their sacrifices and pledges of victory. Even the quietly pious will proudly answer when asked to whom they're pledging a victory, whether it be Odin on an exam, Bragi in a rap battle, Tyr in a court session, or any manner of natural luck to the *Vættir*, or "wights", the nature spirits who rule over aspects of the World and include elves, dwarves, and giants. Practitioners inscribe runes on equipment and jewelry to invoke protection or esoteric magical effects; they also often choose a specific deity to whom they themselves are pledged. Numbers or collections of things are attributed especial significance, especially three and nine, but also things numbering seven, eight, 10, 12, 13, 18, or 27. They give offerings to the Gods — victories and accomplishments, yes, but also baked cookies for Loki, or mead to Thor, or books to Odin, and so on.

The Gods challenge both specific people and whole Worldly communities, striving for greater justice and firmer community stability as a hedge against modern life's harshness. Yet the religion also emphasizes personal rights and individual honor. While family and nation are important, injustice against a single person is cause for action and even vengeance from the community entire. Sacrifice binds the community together: great ceremonies called *blóts*, where animals and wealth are sacrificed to the Gods, the blood of those sacrificed is sprinkled over those present, and all feast and drink goblets of mead to the Gods and in remembrance of those who have passed. In ancient times, holy men and women of other faiths were sacrificed and most pleased the dominant Æsir, but in modern days human sacrifice is frowned upon (and politically damaging for an up-and-coming Scion). Still, the deaths of titanspawn and their cult hierophants are known to bring blessings from the Gods, even if they are questionably human.

Laukr prizes cultic spaces such as groves and lakes and mountaintops, but the distinctive stave temples are even built in cities, a not-uncommon feature nestled between skyscrapers. The temple of Uppsala plays host to many festivals throughout the year, including May Eve, marking the last night that Odin hung from the tree. Midsummer is the longest day of the year, and a time of great rejoicing for the longer days. Winter Nights starts the Wild Hunt, which begins with a sacrifice performed by the greatest or highest-ranking political leader present. Yule is a time of great reflection, as the days are growing shorter and the night is when the Wild Hunt is at its peak.

Seiðr

Seiðr is a clairvoyant ritual often performed by women — calling to the highest power for aid, either to bless or to curse, often in some dramatic and highly poetic manner. These days, acts of the *jarteign* — the power to change Fate — are far too obvious for observers, far and few between besides. Most of the *jarteign* performed in the modern era mimics the troubles of today — small troubles and smaller blessings.

The act of Seiðr is an interconnection between the user and the Nornir — to control their loom for a short time, such as the ability to take control of a raging fire or to force a powerful speech upon an unknowing observer to compel an unruly crowd. By seeing a thing, the practitioner may manipulate it, but also locks that event into being. Despite (or perhaps because of) the gendered association, men, those without a gender, or with a fluid gender may practice the art, but must adopt a specifically feminine presentation regardless of their true feelings: something traditionalists find unnatural.

Galdr

The magic incantations of the runes are chanted in a falsetto voice, in a special lyrical meter called the *galdralag*. The runic magic of the Æsir takes the form of charms or certain purpose-made miracles, spoken and sung aloud in a specific lyrical meter. Most of these runes and charms are harmless and without power, but a few invoke the power of the Gods and their Purviews. Many of the Marvels of the Æsir are performed through these runes, created to serve a specific purpose.

BIRTHRIGHTS

Creatures

Gramr: Gramr is a creature that once was found guarding the gates of Helheim. It is a blood-covered hound in one form; in another, it is made up of wispy shadows, and able to move through the smallest of spaces. The spawn of the creature often accompany Scions into the dark places under Yggdrasil.

Sleipnir: Descended from Loki, the horses bred from this mighty stallion possess eight legs and are swifter than any mortal horses in existence. They can travel to realms that normally would be unpassable.

Followers

Berserkers: The famed Norse berserkers can be of virtually any strain of modern military or bodyguard; Fenris Arms runs a side business as a private military contractor to give berserkers work and provide young Scions with bodyguards and a strike force. They come in three varieties: *bear* warriors, who are supremely powerful and tough; *wolf* warriors, who are skilled and quick; and *boar* warriors, stealthy masters of disguise and the landscape. All three are capable of using the battle-rage, and typically take the Savage and Tough Follower qualities.

Draugar; The Draugar are the undead that were not properly laid to rest. Swollen to the size of an ox, these dark blue creatures guard treasure and torment the living. They are mildly intelligent, as they can shapeshift and perform magic.

Dvergar: Dwarves skilled in crafts can be found in heavily fortified homes, as living in mountains isn't often the norm these days. Many make a living as civil engineers or construction workers, but they're always willing to aid a Norse Scion who can meet their (usually usurious) price.

Guides

Disir: Female spirits, often bidden to protect a family or an entire clan. A special type of sacrificial festival, the *dísablót*, honors them above all others. They ride black or white horses, and are usually invisible unless they're pursuing a target (in which case, only the target may see them).

Myling: Child spirits, sent by Hel to pass messages. They sometimes chase wanderers at night, acting unruly and leaping upon the backs of the unwary. They are particularly skilled at being stealthy assassins.

Hrafn: The birds of Odin, these birds are watchers, often relaying messages for the All-Father. Their murder (flock, not death) will sometimes choose promising Scions to counsel and scout for.

PANTHEON PATH OF THE ÆSIR

Path Skills: Close Combat, Occult

Virtues: *Fatalism and Audacity.* The Æsir remain bound by Fate, knowing the significance of every encounter to come. Odin willingly sacrificed his own eye to see the story unravel. In time, he hung on Yggdrasil for nine days and nine nights to learn the magic of the runes by watching the Nornir write them on the trunk of the tree. Fatalism is the understanding and acceptance of events: The Æsir will not live past the moment that the Nornir choose to end their existence. Nothing can change that time, regardless of which path they venture down. Fatalism is the act of knowing the Nornir weave fate, which in turn implies that every life of every man is threaded into a tapestry, and that every action has been decided from the day of that man's birth. Yet Audacity is the Virtue of the valiant and the bold. Audacity is having the courage to step past the desire of the Nornir — to force a jarteign. To move against this Virtue is to be a Níðr — a coward, the worst of all insults.

Signature Purview: Wyrd — The Wyrd promotes experience and fixation of what is perceivable to the Nornir — the three fates. They sit and spin their tapestry connecting men and Gods to their threaded creation and, like ley lines, they force encounters that are destined to be.

As the Gods chained Fenrir, tossed Jörmungandr into the sea, and placed Hel in Helheim, they accepted that their Fate is set in stone. They can no longer deny that ash-ridden lands will become blanketed in darkness as the sun and the moon are swallowed hole. Gods will die by the hands of the most monstrous of beings. The giants will die by the hands of Gods. Ragnarok is believed to be the end of days, but really, it is the beginning.

Ratatoskr: The squirrel of Yggdrasil will pass along messages to any of the Æsir. The squirrel itself is a titans-pawn, and creates spiteful rumors wherever it traverses.

Skogkatt: Large, 14-pound cats that deliver messages to and from Freya, but are just fine being cuddly housecats around the World.

RELICS

Thor's Bridal Veil: When gazed upon, it is simple white lace. When worn, the wearer is disguised from any Jötnar in the area.

Gun of Tyrfing: A gun that never rusts, never misses the target, and can be shot underwater with no issue.

Thread of Loki: Originally used to sew Loki's mouth shut, this can be used to sew just about anything, in a pinch.

Mead of Poetry: Fermented from the blood of Kvasir, this is used for inspiration for the artists who seek to gain a muse.

RELATIONSHIPS

In terms of interpersonal relationships, Thor and Zeus often attempt to best one another in whatever contest they feel is appropriate at the time, usually eagle fighting. In winter, Skaði will hunt with whatever hunter or huntress will take her up on the challenge. Loki and Set, the two notorious tricksters, have a friendly rivalry.

Thor and Jörmungandr represent man versus nature. The robust God keeps nature from overtaking civilization as Jörmungandr provides a boundary for nature and natural places. It is only at Raganarok that Thor and Jörmungandr can successfully destroy one another — leaving room for new things to grow and emerge.

Loki and Odin are opposite sides of the same coin. Loki is the trickster: He will lead those to where they wish to go, but it will never be a straight path. Odin, on the other hand, seeks to obtain his own desires. He isn't entirely selfish or uncaring — the All-Father always has an agenda, and he can be deceitful about it.

OTHER PANTHEONS

The Æsir find the Tuatha to be companions on many levels; Odin once spent years with Ogma which is given away by the similarities between the Futhark and Ogham runes. Aside from the Tuatha, the Æsir aren't particularly close with any other pantheon. The Devá are a burden to speak to, considering they seemingly can't tell the difference between the Æsir and the Jötnar. The Æsir find the Netjer to be strange altogether and can't quite comprehend why that pantheon keeps their treasure within arm's reach. If that wasn't befuddling enough, they don't understand the massive Underworld or why they would keep organs in jars near the dead.

GREATEST WEAKNESS

Much like humans, the Æsir possess a number of good traits: kindness, courage, and loyalty. Again, much like humans, they are also flawed with pride, cruelty, and deception. What is more, those of the pantheon can age and wither, falling into a weak state. The Æsir rely heavily on the golden apples to keep age and death at bay, keeping them young and vibrant. These Gods exist in a world conjured to fight the darkness and clutch what little light exists in their lives. This constant knowledge of how their fate will turn, per the Nornir's desire, is truly their greatest weakness and their greatest pride.

THE DEVÁ OF SOUTH ASIA

Her arched brow is his bow,
Her darting glances are arrows,
Her earlobe is the bowstring —
Why are the weapons guarded
In Love's living goddess of triumph?
The world is already vanquished.

— "The Cowherd's Song," Jayadeva

In the beginning were questions: what was earth and what was heaven? What was life, what death? What night, what day, what dark water, and what desirous heat? Who made creation, and how did it make itself? Which poet was the first to measure male from female, existence from nonexistence, meter from meter? When the powers came forward in this age's dawn, who was first to declare, "You are an asura...but I am a Devá"?

The Devá's temporal power exceeds any pantheon's. They have amassed over a billion mortal followers among myriad faiths, a devastating panoply of artifacts including some of the most powerful divine superweapons ever imagined, and great diplomatic clout over many other religions and pantheons in and near the Indian subcontinent. Regardless of who you are or where you're from, if you want to make your mark on the World, sooner or later you'll have to deal with the Devá.

PRINCIPAL MEMBERS

Devá number in the hundreds, the taxonomy of their names, Mantles, and avatars (also known as Incarnations) infinite and baroque. Poetry, song, and art widely depict each one, adorned with signature tools and weapons and riding a sacred mount.

The original Devá declared themselves a sort of noble caste of an older class of entities, the asuras, from whom they drifted further apart (sometimes violently) over the millennia. That first generation included Agni the sacrificial flame, Surya the sun, Yamaraja the king of death, their original chief Varuna the sea, and their later leader Indra the storm-hero. But the recent rise of Vaishnavism, Shaivism, and Shaktism made Vishnu the Preserver, Shiva the Destroyer, and Durga the Mother of all feminine power even more influential than the Vedic generation. Shiva's sons Ganesha the Lord of Obstacles and the General Karttikeya ascended from Scionhood to Godhood long ago.

Durga is the prime emanation of Shakti, the Primordial feminine power. She further subdivides into Lakshmi the Goddess of fortune, Parvati the Goddess of love and devotion, Sarasvati the scholar-artist, and Kali. Shakti's exponents can split and fuse with one another's identities and Mantles with an ease that rivals the *caminos* of the Òrìshà.

AGNI, THE SACRIFICIAL FLAME OF KNOWLEDGE

Aliases: Aggi, Jataveda, Kravyada, Abhimani, Atithi, Vaisvanara

When humans discovered fire, birthing the first civilization, they discovered Agni. Who founded the flame that rose from the waters and burst into being as fire, lightning, and the sun? Was he the Primordial Brahma's eldest son, exhaled from the Primordial Purusha's mouth? Was he the

child of Law and Light, or the sage Angira? With red skin, black hair, black eyes, two heads, seven hands, and three legs, he rides the ram to battle and bludgeons foes with his quarterstaff. His is the fire of knowledge as well as of sacrifice and heat, identified with the divine word which ignited the cosmos at the beginning of this age. He brings the Devá the sacrificial oblation, devouring it with his heat.

Agni once fled to the side of the asura Vritra along with Varuna and Soma. But Vritra's slayer Indra, Agni's own twin brother who emerged with him from Purusha's mouth, convinced him to join the Devá. Agni is the priest offering the sacrifice, the shepherd guarding the flock, the firefighter who saves the dying, the laborer on the offshore platform, and the forester who starts the fire so the next generation of trees may grow. But even as other Vedic Gods struggle and grow dim, so long as humans need to keep darkness at bay, so long as sacrificial smoke spirals upwards towards the heavens, Agni will never be forgotten.

Agni's wife Svaha, Goddess of the offering, bore his children: the purifying flames of electricity, friction, and the sun. Like a bull bursting with seed, he fathers many Scions. He encourages them to adventure among other pantheons, forging relationships and learning. They link the next generation of Gods to humanity, just as the sacrificial fire links humanity and the divine. Meditate upon Agni, that he may ignite your mind and spirit.

Callings: Guardian, Liminal, Sage

Purviews: Epic Strength, Epic Dexterity, Fire, Journeys, Prosperity, Water

DURGA, THE MOTHER OF VICTORY

Aliases: Adi Parashakti, Devi, Mahamaya

We bow to you, whose motherhood births power, whose victory brings peace. The Primordial feminine power Shakti manifests as Durga, ultimate warrior. Was the supreme mother present at the beginning, to create Brahma the Creator and Vishnu the Preserver? Or did she take form to defeat the Aurochs Asura, when Brahma, Vishnu, and Shiva crossed the streams of light emerging from their enraged visages? The Aurochs Asura wrung a boon from Brahma that made it so no man could defeat him. He stood against Durga, thinking no woman strong enough to take him. But astride a great cat, blowing a conch-shell, she struck him dead with her trident, chakram, mace, bow, longsword, and thunderbolt. Today she enjoys a 10-day-long annual prayer festival. Her Incarnations include the Navadurga's nine forms, among them the mountain princess Parvati, who has ascended to Goddesshood in her own right. As a Shakti emanation, she shares her essence with Kali, Parvati, Lakshmi, and Sarasvati.

While nearly all Devá are adept martial artists, only Karttikeya's mastery of war matches Durga's. All armaments are hers to bless. She embodies the purest warrior impulse, the noblest rationale for weapons and soldiers: to defend what matters. She takes no pleasure in combat. She has no rage — only focus and purpose. This perspective sets Durga at odds with Gods who exult in battle, such as King Shàngó of the Òrìshà, as well as those whose wrath oversteps their control, like Maudjee-Kawiss of the Manitou.

Durga is Titanomachy's most zealous opponent, demanding her Scions identify and put down asuras and their spawn swiftly and directly. She lacks patience for anything short of staunch bravery and unyielding defense against asura forces. When the Yazatas or Æsir, who are probably asuras anyway, dare question the Devá's will, they must contend with Durga before all.

Callings: Guardian, Hunter, Warrior

Purviews: Epic Strength, Epic Dexterity, Epic Stamina, Deception, Fertility, War

GANESHA, THE LORD OF OBSTACLES

Aliases: Ganapati, Pillaiyar, Maha Peinne, Phra Phikanet, Kangiten, and 108 other names

Smrti, Buddhist, and Jain honor Ganesha the wise and brilliant. Whence came the paragon of academics? Was he Parvati's creation, Shiva and Parvati's son, or the elephant-Goddess Malini's get after she drank Parvati's bathwater? Was he older than Karttikeya, or younger? Was he born with an elephant's head, or did Shiva affix it to him after decapitating him accidentally? His avatars number 32. His symbols range from armaments to musical instruments, the serpent Vasuki as a belt to his broken tusk in one of his many hands, but his favorites are sweet fruits and candies. His mount is the mouse and he is a bachelor, married only to wisdom, prosperity, and enlightenment.

The illustrious scientist's popularity knows no bounds among mortals or Gods. Every caste honors him. The

ROMANIZATION AND PRONUNCIATION

Our fonts lack all the characters necessary to transliterate names according to the International Alphabet of Sanskrit Transliteration, so we have removed most of the diacritics and replaced the "s" with a dot under it and "s" with an acute accent with "sh." "R" with a dot under it is "ri."

The Devá's names came originally from Sanskrit, but modern Hindi silences many of the final vowels: so Devá becomes Dev, Ganesha becomes Ganesh, Shiva becomes Shiv, Rama becomes Ram, Yamaraja becomes Yamaraj, etc.

Smriti tradition exalts him alongside Durga, Surya, Vishnu, and Shiva; the Ganapatya tradition identifies him with the Godhead. He is friend to every Devá; only a truly wicked demon could ever attract his wrath. When he travels amongst other pantheons, he must turn down myriad invitations to dine or dance, for he receives far too many to accept.

As placer and remover of obstacles, Ganesha believes in challenge (like tough courses outside your major) but denounces any which don't strengthen those they test (like standardized testing). He often personally mentors his own and others' Scions, whom he thinks key to the Devá's continued successful relationship with other pantheons. The olive branch he extends in his trunk counterbalances Indra's aggressive policy toward opposition from asuras and other pantheons. Let the obstacles between Devá and every other pantheon fall before his Scions' dancing feet. Let them extend faith and diplomacy to all who stand for truth and righteousness — even, should it become necessary, to the asuras.

Callings: Guardian, Liminal, Sage

Purviews: Artistry (Dance, Writing), Beasts (Elephants), Chaos, Fortune, Journeys, Prosperity

INDRA, THE STORM KING

Aliases: Inthiran, Indera, Vrishan, Vritrahan, Devaraja, Vajrapani, Shakra, Sakka, Phra In, Dishitian, Taishakuten

Salutations to you, Indra, chief of the Gods! In the beginning, the cosmic man called Purusha sacrificed the cosmic man Purusha to the cosmic man Purusha. Was he Ymir? Was he Pangu? Was he Cipactli? Who knows? What is known is that from his mouth emerged Agni, the divine fire, and Indra, king of the heavens. His thunderbolt wounded Prince Arjuna when Arjuna and Lord Krishna set Agni loose upon Indra's Khandava Forest. Indra ended the monsters Vritra and Puloman, rescuing and marrying Puloman's lovely daughter Shachi, Goddess of jealousy and wrath.

Indra, the proudest Devá, took control of the pantheon from Varuna in the beginning of time, and still has not technically handed the reins to Vishnu, regardless of what anyone says. The controller of horses, chariots, villagers, and cattle annoys the Theoi, whom he has decided he also rules by analogy with Zeus, an analogy that only he makes. Indeed, his habit of acting like he and every other chief deity are old friends with much in common confuses Zeus and his peers, although Huangdi of the Shén is polite enough not to give him grief about it. But let them remain confused, for Indra's elephant Cloudbinder has five heads, his dog Sarama is all dogs' foremother, and his horse Long-ears has seven heads, whereas Odin's steed Sleipnir has a paltry eight legs, so there. In his infinite generosity, and certainly not because he wishes to show off his phenomenal cosmic

strength, Indra serves also as a guardian God to the Buddha and the teaching-Gods of Jainism.

Indra's Scions are his pride as well, for all things that belong to him must be known to be the best of the best. He frequently appears at their greatest battles and exploits to watch, applaud, and boast of how he had a hand in their genesis and also taught them everything they know, even if he did not.

Callings: Guardian, Leader, Warrior

Purviews: Epic Strength, Epic Dexterity, Beasts (Cattle), Fertility, Order, Wild, Sky, War

KALI, THE DARK MOTHER

Aliases: Bhavatarini, Chamunda, Kaalratri

We bow to you, Mother, who stands in the cremation grounds atop the corpse of Shiva, surrounded by howling jackals, smiling the sweet smile of Death with your blood-soaked lips! The Gods themselves fail to grasp Kali's nature and origin. Did Parvati take on her form to defeat the asura Andhaka? Did she emerge from the forehead of Great Sarasvati, her anger made manifest? Did Queen Sita first take on her Mantle to end the Thousand-Bodied Ravana? Did Durga bring you forth from herself, to be Shiva's eternal Companion? Or were you there before all of them, the Primordial Night from whence countless Brahmas, Vishnus, and Shivas arise like unto the foam at the edge of the sea?

Kali wears around her waist the Girdle of Human Hands, for no action can touch her. She wears the 50 letters of the Sanskrit alphabet about her neck on severed heads with silent voices, for what language can possibly describe her? Is she skeletal, or voluptuous? Terrifying or alluring? Kali strides the line between asura and Devá, Titan and God, a little too closely for comfort. Kali dances, unconcerned with what the other Gods think, with Durga and Lakshmi at her side as sister-selves and defenders, for she has been them at times and they her.

Kali rarely Incarnates directly into the World. She has sometimes manifested directly to her Chosen, but often works through omens or proxies, unremarkable people in the right place at the right time. When Scions of Lakshmi or Durga need her, she aids them, as she did for Lakshmi's Incarnation Sita when the latter stood up alone against Ravana. Her Scions tend to be iconoclasts with a single-minded fervor, and have ranged from wandering ascetics who shun society to reformers fighting against the caste system and *suttee*, to serial killers. In traditional tales, Scions of Kali have often clashed with each other, each believing in their own version of right. As Goddess of Freedom and Liberation, Kali passes no judgement...as the End of All Things, they will all, saint and sinner, come back to her in time.

Callings: Guardian, Liminal, Warrior

Purviews: Epic Strength, Epic Dexterity, Epic Stamina, Artistry (Dance), Chaos, Darkness, Death, Deception, Fire

KARTTIKEYA, FIELD MARSHAL OF THE GODS

Aliases: Murugan, Skanda, Tamill Kadavull, Subrahmanya, Kataragama Deviyo

Hail to the conqueror Karttikeya, whom the Tamil people revere as Murugan, who marshals Devá into war. Was he born of Shiva and Parvati through Agni's misadventure, his birth saving the World from erupting into flames? Or did Agni and Svaha or the Ganges River bear him, that the Krittika stars might raise him? His prowess alone averted annihilation at Tarakasura's hands. In a pantheon of warriors, none without martial power, he is the soldier among soldiers, the match of Durga. Whereas many other Devá are associated with Aryan conquerors, who swept into North India from Central Asia and subjugated the locals with chariot technology, Karttikeya bridges the gap between Aryan and Dravidian, reminding Indians they are strongest when they unite behind divine leadership.

Karttikeya's avatars reveal themselves whenever there is need for a general among generals, at the moment of greatest urgency: in the village under attack by marauding warlords, on the street where the bully threatens weaker children, Karttikeya shows one of his six faces. His favored form bears all the weapons he has mastered at once. Skilled with the bow, javelin, chakram, mace, and sword, his favored armament is Parvati's spear, which he wields with unchecked power from his peacock's saddle. At once he is the divine bachelor Kumaraswami, and the husband of Devasena and Valli.

Karttikeya enjoys prayer festivals in northern and eastern India as well as throughout the Tamil diaspora. Durga Puja also highlights him as Durga's child via Parvati. But despite his popularity, he and his Scions must tread lightly around other Pantheons, for their very presence unnerves others as living rumors of war. Whereas Durga represents defense and security, Karttikeya rules conquest, whether he likes it or not. Should the Devás ever take up arms against other Pantheons, Karttikeya knows he or his Scions must lead the charge.

Callings: Leader, Sage, Warrior

Purviews: Epic Strength, Epic Dexterity, Epic Stamina, Beauty, Stars, War

LAKSHMI, GODDESS OF FORTUNE

Aliases: Shri, Thirumagal, Vasudhara, Sita, Rukmini, Kisshoten

Abide by us forever, great Lakshmi, owl-rider, Goddess of the three worlds. All wealth, fortune, and beauty in the physical and spiritual realms are hers. With her consort Vishnu, she governs the exalted realm Vaikuntha, as well as the Ocean of Milk from whence she came. Others may claim material wealth and security mean nothing to them, but she knows better. The fortune and prosperity she brings are no mere luxury, but bulwarks against hunger, disease, thirst, and exposure. In a world concerned with high-minded ideals and heroic ventures, she has to look out for the masses' health and safety.

As Queen Sita, Lakshmi endured indignity after indignity — exiled by her wicked stepmother-in-law, kidnapped by the Demon King Ravana, and ultimately doubted and rejected by Vishnu's avatar Prince Rama himself — but kept her grace, composure, and courage through all of them. As Rukmini, she engaged in an epic romance with Lord Krishna. Her avatars include the prudent farmer, the daring investor, the keeper of elephants, the pediatrician, the sports-team manager, and the economics professor. She often hangs out with Òshun of the Òrìshà to discuss economics, fashion, and politics; they even swap gold outfits from time to time. Like the lotus that sprouts from foul water, she sees no prayer as beneath her notice.

While others focus on heroic ends, Lakshmi's Scions balance budgets and make sure there's enough money in the pot to keep everyone in nectar and ambrosia through the next adventure. She commands her Scions to never forget the common folk; their great power can vanquish terrible foes, to be sure, but can also aid vast populations when parceled out amongst them.

Callings: Judge, Leader, Lover

Purviews: Epic Strength, Beauty, Earth, Fertility, Fortune, Order, Passion (Joy, Love), Prosperity

PARVATI, GODDESS OF LOVE AND FERTILITY

Aliases: Uma, Lalita, Sati, and 1,000 or so other names

Parvati is the Goddess of love, devotion, and fertility, sister of the Ganges River, daughter of the king of mountain snow and granddaughter of Mount Meru itself. In her hands she carries the growing things of the earth, the crown, the bell, and no armament more fearsome than a mere elephant-goad. Hers is the strength of the ox pulling the plow and the peace in the cow's eye. Her dedication and compassion know no bounds, permitting her to stand up to Lord Shiva the Destroyer's extremes of temper or self-denial.

Kalidasa's celebrated epic *Kumarasambhavam* chronicles Parvati's courtship of Shiva. After his first wife, Queen Sati, burned herself, a grieving Shiva retired to the mountain to lose himself in austerities, unwilling to entertain Sati's reincarnation Parvati's advances. The God of Love shot Shiva with his arrow, even though he knew Shiva's third eye would immolate him in response. Then, Parvati undertook punishing austerities herself, her boundless devotion winning Shiva over. Their marriage founded Lord Ganesha and Karttikeya, ensuring the Devá's military primacy over any asura threat.

Find Parvati's avatar high in the mountains of India, New Mexico, or Switzerland. Hail her as queen of growing things and food. Seek refuge in her motherhood from war, starvation, extremism, and strife. Thank her for her and her Scions' immeasurable, oft-uncompensated emotional labor. She exhorts her Scions to form the band's emotional center, promoting mercy and temperance even as the Scion of Hachiman says to shoot first and ask questions never, or the Scion of Dionysus insists there's nothing wrong with doing Jell-O shots at 11 in the morning. Their love counterbalances the extreme with the moderate rather than the opposite, forming the radical center, nourishing body and heart in equal measure.

Callings: Creator, Lover, Trickster

Purviews: Epic Strength, Epic Stamina, Artistry (Dance), Beauty, Earth, Fertility, Frost, Passion (Devotion, Love)

SARASVATI, GODDESS OF ARTS AND LETTERS

Aliases: Thurathadi, Benzaiten, Biancaitian

May your waters cleanse us, O Sarasvati, Goddess of the river of your name, and of arts and learning. The words she writes and the notes she plays on her vina are as Soma to the one who loves knowledge, nourishing the body and enlivening the spirit with clarity and purity of vision. Wherever she rides upon the pure white peacock or swan, the current of truth washes away all lies and impurities. When asuras threaten, great Sarasvati's hands reach out to grip the trident, chakram, or bow, as unafraid as if she were taking up her vina or fountain pen. Her strength is Devi's own strength.

Where other Gods' greatness exalts themselves, the wife of Brahma's greatness flows into her worshippers' minds like clear water into their mouths. She would rather Incarnate herself as a high-school music teacher than a rock star, a local librarian than a bestselling novelist. Yet her fame, unsought, extends from her home river to far-away Cambodia, the United States, Indonesia, Japan, and Thailand; and to Shinto, Jainism, and Buddhism. When the student fears the exam that will make or break a grade-point average, when the writer races towards the looming deadline, they honor the one garbed in the white of a swan's feather or an unmarked page.

Of her Scions, Sarasvati demands pure and correct conduct as well as great achievement in scholarship or creativity, which won her Confucius', Obatala's, and Athena's admiration. The gifts she grants Scions are considerable, just like the gifts she grants all humanity. In particular, she encourages her children to confront problems with creativity and artistic flair. Any Scion can wrestle a dragon into submission, but a Scion of Sarasvati can charm it to their side with an impromptu song. The most brilliant manifestation of feminine might demands nothing less.

Callings: Creator, Healer, Sage

Purviews: Epic Strength, Epic Dexterity, Artistry, Health, Water

SHIVA, THE DESTROYER

Aliases: Lingam, Maheshvara, Nataraja, and 1,000 or so other names

High atop Mount Kailasha, unclimbable by anyone without sin, Lord Shiva the Destroyer lives as a remote ascetic in his house with his wife Parvati and his sons Ganesha and Karttikeya. The sacred river Ganges flows from his dreadlocks. Shiva is a serene master of yoga, a dancer whose motions end and begin the World. In the Vedic era he was called Rudra, the Roarer, terrifying and unpredictable as the storm. The religion which exalts him as greatest of the Gods is called Shaivism.

We shall know Shiva by his brilliant third eye, which can incinerate a God when focused in anger, and the serpent-king Vasuki coiled around his neck or his son Ganesha's midriff. His weapon is the trident, his instrument the two-headed drum. His Incarnations are rarely seen, as he prefers to meditate or dance in remote and dangerous locations, such as a mountaintop during a lightning storm or a plague-stricken slum. We salute his avatar Hanuman, lord of monkeys, mightiest follower of Rama, whose mace crushes King Ravana's rakshasa army.

Shiva's Scions have much to live up to. Ganesha and Karttikeya are foremost among them, both powerful Devá in their own rights who have performed great deeds and won entire religions' adoration. However, Shiva is vast and contains multitudes, so a Scion has many of his examples to follow. Some are esoteric and remote, some are amorous and carnal, and some are devoted to unquestioning service. Among his 1,000 names are answers and examples for everyone. Shiva is perfect balance and stability, wild abandon and destruction, self-indulgence and self-denial. But his Scions are not surprised when they meet one another and share very different conceptions of who and what their father really is.

Callings: Hunter, Lover, Sage

Purviews: Epic Strength, Epic Dexterity, Epic Stamina, Artistry (Dance), Beasts (Monkeys), Chaos, Death, Deception, Fertility, Fire, Moon, Sky

SURYA, THE VIVIFYING SUN

Aliases: Ravi, Bhanu, Savitr

Every morning, every Devá salutes the highest light's rise from his golden palace. His daughter-rays are the seven bay mares who draw his chariot, beating their hooves in time with the seven meters of prosody. His son-rays are the banners that flutter like flames. He is purifying Varuna's eye looking upon the one who makes the sacrifice. He is wise Agni's luminosity, both the firelight shining across all of space and the enlightenment awakening every generation

of humankind. Let the banisher of impurities and ill health be a friend to us as he is friend to Agni and Varuna. Jains and Buddhists point to him to represent understanding's triumph over ignorance, good's triumph over evil. His temples, famous and high, tower over all India; and the other Gods recognize his comradeship with images on their fanes' walls.

With Princess Kunthi, Surya fathered King Karna of Anga, the *Mahabharata's* most honorable warrior, born with golden earrings on his ears and armor on his skin. Always denigrated for his mixed-caste parentage, Karna inherited Surya's love of friendship, staying true to the villain Prince Duryodhana even through his destructive battle with the Pandavas. Even the noble Prince Arjuna had to resort to dishonorable tactics to defeat mighty Karna.

Surya is the driver on the race course, the doctor who goes unflinching into the heart of a plague, the Blue Helmet who rides into the warzone, the teacher in the neglected public school, the speed of light. He is all the sun's hope and triumph. But his Scions could probably use a little more hands-on support from the lotus-handed one. Surya tutored Hanuman, but only after extensive supplication. Karna lived out his life in disappointment and confusion because of what he did not understand about himself, what Surya could have prepared him for. But perhaps it is right that he relied on his strength and honor, which carry Surya across the sky every day. If only they could have saved him from Arjuna's arrow.

Callings: Healer, Leader, Sage

Purviews: Epic Strength, Epic Dexterity, Fire, Health, Journeys, Stars, Sun

VARUNA, THE FACE OF THE WATERS

Aliases: Baruna, Suiten

Let this paean to the Emperor of Order surpass in splendor every song that now exists. Mounted atop the amphibious beast called a makara, Varuna was one of the first asuras to set himself above and apart from his brethren. His mandate sets the rivers flowing down to the sea, swift as birds. His lasso binds up fear and anguish, debt overwhelming, and thieves in the night. He was the Devá's first king before he ceded his throne to great Indra. Yet he remains present, his lasso in hand to cast towards those who would speak untruths.

What are we to think of his fall from primacy? Have the millions forgotten that he measured out the distance between the sky and earth with the primordial sun? During the war between Rama and Ravana, Varuna failed to answer Rama's call to part the seas until Rama threatened to smite him with a cruel weapon, at which point Varuna revealed Ravana had enslaved him. It is all well and good

that Varuna's lot might be humility, but does it now ever cross the line into humiliation?

Varuna remains a symbol of a bygone time, a simpler time, when a Devá's responsibilities were the sky and the seas, the sun and the earth, the primal forces that comprise the World's basic functions. His avatars exemplify that foundational formlessness: They don't look like a person with a job so much as a hulking, dripping-wet man staggering out of the nearest waterway, a rope in his hand. But while his sovereignty may have faded, he encourages his Scions to act out the lordly grace of their pantheon's earliest history. They can still be kings of kings, shaping the world according to Varuna's order and vanquishing lies with their regal gazes. Perhaps one of them will rise above this generation, as Indra over Varuna and Vishnu over Indra.

Callings: Guardian, Judge, Leader

Purviews: Epic Strength, Darkness, Fertility, Order, Sky, Sun, Water

VISHNU, THE PRESERVER

Aliases: Jagannatha, Gorakh, Bichu-ten, and 1,000 or so other names

Triumph, Vishnu, lord of the world, the preserver of all things that live, have lived, and will live. He emerged from Purusha's mouth at the beginning of time and ascended to supreme Godhood. He, lotus bearer and great Lakshmi's devoted consort, blows the conch shell that foretells his foes' doom, slaying them with his mace or whirling chakram. He is lord of the Vaishṇavas, most numerous of Hindus. Where Brahma rules the moment that went before, and Shiva rules the moment to come, Vishnu rules the moment that is.

Vishnu has incarnated himself as the fish Matsya, the turtle Kurma, the boar Varaha, the lion Narasimha, the dwarf Vamana, the martial artist Parashurama, and even the Buddha (but don't mention that to Buddhists unless you want to start a fight). But the best-known and best-loved avatars are none other than Prince Rama and Lord Krishna.

Prince Rama was the hero of Valmiki's *Ramayana*. His evil stepmother exiled Rama, his wife Sita, and his brothers to the forest, where the Demon King Ravana's minions conspired to abduct Sita. His rescue of Sita forged Rama's friendship with Shiva's avatar Hanuman and ended Ravana's reign over Lanka; but his suspicion of Sita's virtue (which was indisputable, not that it should fucking matter) in the aftermath drove a wedge between Vishnu and Lakshmi that they have never really resolved.

Named for his dark, blue-black skin, Krishna was born to the knight caste, a four-armed infant famous for stealing butter in his youth, who strangled serpents and demons. He grew to be a great lover and swordsman, who once split

himself into 100 Krishnas to get down with 100 cowgirls at once. As an adult, he charioteered for Prince Arjuna in the Kurukshetra War. You never know when the driver of your auto-rickshaw, the pilot of your airplane, or the cowboy herding the dogies back to the ranch will turn out to be the Dark Lord himself.

Callings: Guardian, Lover, Trickster

Purviews: Epic Strength, Epic Dexterity, Epic Stamina, Artistry (Dance, Wind Instruments), Beauty, Deception, Order, Passion (Hope)

YAMARAJA, THE KING OF DEATH

Aliases: Imra, Yanluowang, Enma Dai-o, Yeomna Daewang, Shinje

Honor King Yama with the oblation, first mortal ever to die, blazer of the trail from the World into the darkness beneath. Son of the sun Surya, grandson of the demiurge Vishvakarman, he answers the call we code as poetry, inviting dead souls to Naraka for judgment. His four-eyed dogs guard the gates and his Yamaduta messengers guide the dead past flesh-eating ghouls and demons. He is close to Agni, who burns the dead before their souls pass towards him. Lord Chitragupta is his most devoted secretary, and the record keeper for all who ever have died. His emblems are the noose and stick, his mount the buffalo.

Since Yamaraja rules Naraka, many Asian peoples' shared afterworld, he is as much Shén, Kami, and Pala as he is Devá. Of all the Devá — indeed, of all the Gods, he is busiest and most stressed. His organizational skills and wise judgment make him invaluable to all these pantheons. He wields the Purviews of Yoga, Tianming, Yidam, and Yaoyorozu-no-Kamigami in equal measures. His Scions, beloved as they are to him, must make appointments with Chitragupta to see him. He has no avatars. They'd take too much time.

The king of law points his Scions toward the dirtiest jobs, which even the mighty fear. Paperwork. Caring for the sick and elderly, or those beyond help. More paperwork. Seriously, one might be surprised how much confusing paperwork punching down buildings and founding political movements generates. When the unthinkable happens, when the world falls into confusion, when everyone around them breaks down and falls into their worst habits, there they shine, there they thrive as masters of death and darkness, who bring grace to the things everyone else fears.

Callings: Judge, Leader, Liminal

Purviews: Epic Dexterity, Epic Stamina, Darkness, Death, Journeys, Order

COSMOLOGY

The Devá conceive of time in cycles of four epochs called "yugas." During the 4,800-year-long Satya Yuga, first of the four, virtue abounds and humans have great stature and long lifespans. The successive three yugas —Treta Yuga, Dvapara Yuga, and Kali Yuga — see mankind grow nastier, more brutish, and shorter. Currently we're in a Kali Yuga, at the end of which the world will end and the cycle will begin anew.

Lokas

The Devá conceive of all existence as a towering stack of lokas ("planes" or "levels"), listed here from lowest to highest.

The lowest level, just above the primeval Garbhodaka Sea, is Naraka, King Yama's abode and the site of myriad hells and other postmortem destinations. Above that are the Patala Underworlds: the Serpent Level, Rasatala, Mahatala, Talatala, Sutala, Vitala, and Atala. Our World, known as Pṛthvi, is above those, divided into the Bhu (earth) and Bhuvar (sky) Levels. Above our world are the Svarga Levels: the Svarga Level, Mahar Level, Jana Level, Tapa Level, and Satya Level. The pinnacle is reserved for the greatest of the Gods, although depending on whom you ask, that could be pretty much anyone, so a number of penthouse levels including Lord Krishna's Cow Level and Durga's Mani Continent jostle one another for primacy up top.

Terra Incognita: Mount Meru

The gigameter-tall, five-peaked mountain Meru is the center of the cosmos, the axis on which all the World turns. The top of this mountain is the Devá Level, abode of the primordial creator Brahma, while the terraces below host serpents, raptors, nature spirits, and dwarves. Meru is accessible via one of the many mythical locations where it has been sighted, including the cosmic ocean and the Pamir Mountains. Climbing Mount Meru is a task no mere mortal may attempt, requiring strength of both body and character — but reaching the top proves one worthy of Heaven.

Primordial: Brahma, the Creator

First of the Trimurti alongside Vishnu and Shiva is Brahma. Was he self-born, born of Vishnu's navel, or born of Shiva and Parvati wound together? Was he Prajapati or Purusha? The lord of speech's four faces' four mouths spoke the Vedas into existence. His red skin contrasts with his white beard, white clothes, and white waterfowl mount. His four hands hold the Vedas, the ladle that feeds the sacrificial fire, the lotus, and the water source. He cares little for worship and receives little as well; only a handful of temples are dedicated to him. As a Buddhist guardian God, Brahma urged the Tathagata to share his enlightenment with the world. His lust and thirst for knowledge counterbalance his wife Sarasvati's coolness and harmony.

Naraka

Yamaraja's psychopomps and messengers escort dead souls to the Underworld. There, Yama or one of his nine subordinate judges assign the soul to a Svarga Level or to one of Naraka's many hells for reward or punishment, after which the soul is reborn into the world.

Naraka processes Hindu, Buddhist, Jain, traditional Chinese, and Shinto dead. Each type of soul has specific needs and expectations for their afterlife experience.

Hindu souls undergo torments appropriate to their sins until they are purged and ready for rebirth. Buddhism doesn't really deal in souls, but unspeakably bad people still wind up in the darkness beneath.

In addition to its many carefully tailored torments, Naraka also features a sprawling necropolis housing the monsters and spirits from four different pantheons who aid King Yama in his work. A handsome citadel functions as a hall of records, where Lord Chitragupta organizes, updates, and curates records of everyone who ever died or will die. Its demonic guards watch constantly for mortals or spirits (like, for example, certain Chinese simians) trying to break in and erase their names from the book of those who will die.

Lanka

Rising from the sea 1,300 kilometers southwest of Kerala is Lanka, the devils' island kingdom. The divine architect Vishvakarman originally constructed the island and the city thereupon, but three rakshasa brothers took it over. Over the centuries, it fell into different hands, always monstrous or demonic — most famously Ravana, the Demon King of Lanka. In the lead-up to the Battle of Lanka, Hanuman, son of the wind-God Vayu and avatar of Shiva, torched Ravana's citadel; and Prince Rama, avatar of Vishnu, exploited a loophole in Ravana's invulnerability to slay him. Lanka has remained rulerless since then. Most people assumed it had faded into obscurity.

In 2009, the Sri Lanka Navy rediscovered Lanka in the aftermath of the Sri Lankan Civil War, although the locals rebuffed their approach. The city of Lankapura had been rebuilt, covering nearly all the island. It's not what it used to be, but that might not be a bad thing. Lanka is now an anarchic haven for monstrous humanoids. Most of its inhabitants are rakshasas, yakshas, and serpents, but during the past 100 years, monsters from all over the world have taken refuge in Lanka. Indian monsters rub shoulders with rusalkas, manananggals, trolls, and other international monsters with no place else that's safe ("safe") to go.

When they originally heard about Lanka, the Devá immediately organized a war party to head there and clean the place out, but they ran into, of all things, a protest on their way there. When Guanshiyin Pusa of the Shén personally interceded to beg for peace, mercy, and consideration of the possible international political fallout, they relented; so Lanka stays, for now.

The question of who will rule Lanka remains. Its inhabitants rebuilt King Ravana's golden palace in between the peaks of the Trikuta Mountains. Every few years a monstrous strongman sets themself up as King of Lanka, but the squabbling gangs who rule the warren of alleyways that makes up the city inevitably set aside their differences to throw that strongman out. But one day, Ravana may come again, or send one of his Scions. Rumor has it one of his daughters fought on the LTTE side in the Sri Lankan Civil War, but she hasn't returned to the island. Perhaps the place is ripe for some Scion's picking. Or for another Battle of Lanka.

Titan: Ravana, the Demon King of Lanka

How the mighty have fallen.

Once, Lord Shiva rewarded the rakshasa Ravana, his most devoted worshipper, with a boon of invulnerability to anyone but a mortal. In his numberless hands Ravana could wield any weapon; in his 10 heads he held perfect knowledge of classics such as the Vedas. But legend holds that power corrupted Ravana, transforming him into an evil tyrant. He lusted after Prince Rama's wife Sita, abducting her and precipitating the Battle of Lanka, which eventually got him killed at Rama's hands.

...or so the popular story goes. Ravana has been dead a long time, but the burgeoning rakshasa welfare movement rallies around him as a martyr, citing little-known South Indian versions of the *Ramayana* which cast Ravana as a hero, clashing with the Northern and Southeast Asian versions. "Ravana reborn" is a common rallying cry for modern rakshasas, who maintain that a new Incarnation or scion (Scion?) of Ravana is on their way to lead them once again.

Purviews: Artistry or Epic Stamina, nobody's quite sure which

Virtues: Dominance, Rapacity

RELIGION: THE HINDUISMS

Upwards of one billion mortals in the World adhere to one of the myriad faiths now collectively called Hinduism in English. Hinduism, an exonym with British origins reinforced by latter-day Hindu unitarian movements, encompasses a staggering diversity of religious traditions born in the South Asia of the World, including Vaishnavism, Shaivism, and Shaktism. Indonesian Hinduism is also related to, but distinct from, South Asian Hinduism, emphasizing a single deity called Acintya whose Godhead encompasses the entire pantheon of the Devá (and boy, can it get weird when they all get invited to the same parties). Indians, Pakistanis, Nepalis, Sri Lankans, Indonesians, and Bangladeshis are wide-ranging peoples; affiliates of the Devá will find co-religionists in the United States, South Africa, England, and Southeast Asia. You might think of Hinduism's different traditions or denominations as a cluster of different but related languages or dialects: While the languages might share vocabulary, grammatical patterns, script, or other important concepts with one another, each language is ultimately an independent entity, only partly intelligible with its neighbors. As such, describing the World's Hinduism as a whole is a challenging matter, but the Hindu religions tend to emphasize prayer, devotion, religious art, and sometimes dietary restrictions such as vegetarianism or avoiding eating the flesh of certain animals, such as cows, which are sometimes considered sacred. A professional scholar-priest caste, the Brahmins, historically presided over

the religion and important events such as animal sacrifice; but the religion also featured ascetics who would undergo punishing austerities in the wilderness.

Buddhism's presence in the World also merits mention here. One of Vishnu's best-known avatars was a Nepali prince, Siddhartha Gautama. He achieved enlightenment after a period of meditation and established a new religion based on moderation, compassion, and freedom from the suffering desire and attachment to the world cause. His religion emphasized nonviolence and decried the animal sacrifices that many Hindu religions had practiced since Purusha's own sacrifice. Even before they realized the Buddha was an avatar of Vishnu (which Buddhists adamantly deny), many Devá were fascinated by the intellectual and spiritual challenge Buddhism posed to their way of life. Many Devá were present at the Buddha's later sermons, such as the one delivered at Vulture Peak (recorded as the *Lotus Sutra)* which drew four percent of the entire World's population. Even today, many Hindus (not to mention the Devás themselves) are mindful of the contrasting viewpoint Buddhism poses, creating a dialectic between Hindu and Buddhist perspectives.

BIRTHRIGHTS

CREATURES/FOLLOWERS

Animals: Serpents, bears, monkeys, and raptors figure prominently in Indian myth. These entities display both human and bestial qualities in different places in the mythical canon. Serpents are sometime-antagonists, sometime-allies of humanity and the Devás. Monkeys are one of the monkey-like God Hanuman's symbols; his followers the vanaras are sentient primates with both human and monkey characteristics. Sentient bears fought alongside them in the Battle of Lanka. The greatest of the raptors is the garuda, a mount of Krishna and a great enemy of serpents. You may represent these entities either as Legendary creatures, denizens, or as Followers depending on the form they take. You might also buy both Birthrights to depict creatures who can transform back and forth like fairytale animals.

GUIDES

Bodhisattva: Many Devá, regardless of their personal philosophies, are also interested in Buddhism; a Buddhist arhat or bodhisattva would make an appropriate teacher for a Devá affiliate with questions about philosophy or personal conduct. The Buddha, after all, was one of Vishnu's avatars.

Preceptor Drona: South Asian culture puts great and specific emphasis on parampara, the lineage of gurus (teachers) and shishyas (students) in the arts or humanities. Even Godlike heroes might study with a mortal or immortal sage or instructor. Preceptor Drona, martial-arts master to the Kauravas and Pandavas, founded the city of Gurgaon in Haryana; his military academy may still be found there, a strange sight amidst the factories and office towers.

RELICS

Astras: Devá epics describe some of the most devastating superweapons ever seen, designed to vaporize entire armies or nations in one strike. Most of these astras are missiles meant to be hurled or loosed from a bow. The traditional conventions of Indian warfare consider the use of such weapons against common soldiers (rather than rathis or Scions) to be a war crime, but who knows to what depths someone will stoop in this degenerate age?

Soma: Beloved of Indra, soma is a substance both drink and deity. Purchasing soma as a Relic gives you a leafy green plant which you can cultivate and milk, mixing its sap into the intoxicating concoction which confers divine vitality.

RELATIONSHIPS

Everyone who understands what the Devá's apocalyptic superweapons are capable of fears them. An astra that misses its target, or strikes a target not "worthy" of its power, causes nuclear-scale collateral damage. Hypothetically, a divine weapon not of Indian origin — Mixcoatl, perhaps, or the Spear of Lugh — should be able to block or counter an astra in a worthy hero's hands. No one has tested this hypothesis. No one wants to be the first.

The Titanomachy always has been the Devá's first priority. The Devá's foundation as a pantheon dates back to a schism between two divine factions, called Devás and Asuras in Sanskrit or Daevas and Ahuras in Avestan. These parties clashed over territory, religious practice, and ideology, with the Devá winding up on top in the Indian subcontinent and the Asuras in a stronger position in and around Iran. Each faction's word for "Titan" is simply the other pantheon's name. So Titanomachy is inseparable from the Devá's identity as a pantheon. They exist because they oppose Asuras and their degenerate values. Abandoning the struggle against Asuras, a struggle at which they excel, would be tantamount to breaking up the band. Partisans at both pro- and anti-Titanomachy poles cite the Devá's outspoken, hawkish belligerence as evidence for their own positions.

OTHER PANTHEONS

The Devá's oldest enemies are the Yazatas. That war went cold a long time ago, as despite the Devá's greater influence in the mortal world, all the other pantheons recognize the Yazatas as deities. Even the most aggressive Devá would never encourage their Indian followers to persecute the many Parsis who live there; there's enough prejudice as is. Nevertheless, the Devá still think Yazatas are just jumped-up Titans, and they've made noises about how the Æsir, who harbor a proud jötunn, are probably Titans as well. Keeping Thor and Indra from running into and inevitably murdering one another is an important duty for both pantheons.

The Devá get along with other pantheons who share their aggressive attitude toward Titans, especially the

PANTHEON PATH OF THE DEVÁS

Path Skills: Athletics, Survival

Virtues: *Conscience* and *Duty*. After years struggling against the Kaurava family throughout Veda Vyasa's epic *Mahabharata*, Prince Arjuna of the Pandava family regards the army arrayed against him on Kurukshetra Plain: his own relatives, manipulated into conflict by the evil and selfish Kaurava Prince Duryodhana, who will stop at nothing to fulfill his own destiny of death in battle. Arjuna knows in his heart that to war with his own relatives is wrong, so he throws down his sacred bow Gandiva and unburdens himself to his charioteer, Lord Krishna. Krishna responds, explaining in the context of divine truth Arjuna's grisly duty as a knight, fulfilling his caste's and his own destiny. This explanation, the "Bhagavad Gita" ("Song of the Lord"), defines many Hindu religions...and articulates a struggle Gods and mortals have always wrestled with: What happens when your heroic duty is to do a certain thing, but you're pretty sure that thing is villainous? The Pandavas obey Krishna's ruthless advice, stooping to treachery to take out King Karna and Prince Duryodhana. Yet Duryodhana still gets his knightly death in the end, even going to heaven and taunting the Pandavas from there.

A modern Scion will encounter similar situations, where their own conscience will conflict with the dictates of their religion or pantheon. Consider, for example, the bit of the *Brihadaranyaka Upanishad* which explains how to coerce a woman into sleeping with you — and recommends beating her with a stick if she's uncooperative. Consider the caste system, which the Indian government has formally abolished but which is taking a very long time to disassemble in practice. Consider the entire Rama/Sita disaster. Consider any number of less charged but equally wretched situations, where you've promised or sworn or thought you'd do one thing but it seems like a terrible idea now that you're faced with it. Will you adhere to the dictates of duty, fulfilling the destiny laid out for you? Or will you fly in the face of honor and fate, striking out on your own path even if your whole world will fall apart afterwards? Sometimes, the rules reward you for one thing even when another option seems like the right thing to do. You're going to have to make a call.

Signature Purview: *Yoga*. This pivotal religious practice is a set or system of activities which unmake attachment, ego, and desire and elevate the self unto the divine. Yoga's ultimate reward is unity with the Godhead and escape from life, death, and rebirth. Some seekers practice karma yoga, the yoga of selfless action, purifying themselves of any hope of recouping their efforts' fruits in order to help others more perfectly. Some practice jnana yoga, the yoga of selfless meditation, dissociating from their own minds' depredations and the misery of pain, desire, and misfortune. Some practice bhākti yoga, the yoga of ecstatic love and devotion to God, expressed through art, sex, or weirder things. Some practice two or all three.

Teōtl. The Theoi haven't forgotten the time the Pandavas conquered Greece and Rome because they were bored, then left without bothering to administer an empire. The Devá's patronizing encouragement toward them, as if they're the kids from the wrong side of the tracks who somehow managed to make something of themselves, doesn't help much. Conversely, the Òrìshà and Loa are unfailingly polite to the Devá, yet vocally and vehemently oppose their attitude towards Titanomachy. They point to the Devá-Yazata conflict as the perfect example of a pantheon abusing the term "Titan" to slur their enemies.

The Devá's closest allies are their East Asian partners, the Shén of China and the Kami of Japan. Originally, shared interest in Buddhism and geographic proximity brought them together. Principals from these pantheons frequently visit or even Mantle into one another; Yamaraja, for example, operates Hell for all three pantheons. These groups know how to operate in large, messy families, confusing bureaucracies, and systems of regional devotion where different areas of the same country may emphasize different parts of the pantheon or the religion.

GREATEST WEAKNESS

The Devá's strong position makes them a really big target. As overseers of the largest religion of any pantheon, and holders of the most terrifying arsenal in all the history of the World, the Devá are the most obvious enemies for Titans with nothing to lose who want to prove themselves against someone who looks huge and oppressive. The Devá's attitude towards such threats is and has always been "come at us, bro," which may or may not work out for you as one of their Scions who's probably gonna be on the front lines.

THE KAMI OF JAPAN

Where you have sincerity,
There also is virtue.
Sincerity is a witness to truth
Sincerity is the mother of knowledge.
Sincerity is a single virtue that binds Divinity and man in one.
— Shintō saying

To outsiders, Japan and its Kami have always seemed to be homogenous, united, and indivisible. What most foreigners do not know about is the long and fractured history of the islands of Japan. They do not know about the Ainu people or the Ages of War, the divisions between earthly and heavenly Kami, or the invasion of Buddhist bodhisattvas who accepted roles as Kami. To *gaijin*, Japan has always been the unified Empire of the Rising Sun.

It's true that Amaterasu, the sun Goddess, has ruled over all for virtual eternity. But there are lines of division that have broken out into all-out war. But know your history, and you can read between the lines of polite dialogue, between Fortune and Earthly, and you will find those divisions. Against outsiders, the Kami will come together like no other force. Even the Titans come to the Kami's aid when all of Japan is threatened, for that is their way: something that isn't quite Shintō, Buddhist, Bushido, or even Christian, but all of those, and more.

The Kami descended from the Heavenly Plane to rule over Japan some 2,500 years ago. Around 600 BCE, the Heavenly Kami decided that Ninigi-no-Mikoto, the grandson of Amaterasu, should travel to the Central Land of the Reed Plains (the Kansai Region of Japan) and rule as Emperor. He was given three gifts by his grandmother: her string of magatama jewels, the mirror that drew her from the cave, and the sword Kusanagi.

His path to Earth was blocked by Sarutahiko, the king of the KunitsuKami: the Earthly Kami. The Heavenly Kami had so long ignored the Earthly that the "lowly" Kami had organized under new leaders. They saw Ninigi as an interloper, an outsider, and an invader. Sarutahiko girded his loins and prepared for a fight against the upstart Ninigi-no-Mikoto, but he was blindsided by the laughter and beauty of Ama-no-Uzume, who had joined Ninigi's entourage as an advisor.

She spoke kind and gentle words to Sarutahiko, and had Ninigi show Sarutahiko his grandmother's heirlooms. Amazed, Sarutahiko agreed to stand down and discuss Ninigi-no-Mikoto's expedition. Ama-no-Uzume's charms won over Sarutahiko and Ninigi won the right to rule over all of Japan as Emperor without a single fight. Uniting it was another matter, but unite Japan they did, and the Kami's power structure has remained since that time.

When foreign Gods arrived in the Land of Eight Million Kami, they were shown their place in the order of

PRONUNCIATION GUIDE

Even for a non-native speaker, Japanese pronunciation is fairly simple, as the language has none of the tonal qualities of Mandarin or even English. Almost every syllable ends in a vowel, and every vowel is pronounced the same way all the time, without any of the variance found in English. Most Romanization makes the pronunciation fairly obvious.

A: "ah" as in "lava"

E: "eh" as in "cake"

I: "ee" as in "sheet"

O: "oh" as in "coat"

U: "oo" as in "shoot"

Therefore "ei" is pronounced "eh-ee," which sounds like "ay" to most English speakers. "Ai" is "ah-ee," or "aye," etc.

Double vowels, like "oo" in Japanese simply lengthen the vowel sound being made, so "oo" is pronounced "ohhh," not "ooh." Double consonants indicate a short stop between them. The word for "hello" is "kon-nichiwa," not "konichiwa."

A few other sounds non-native Japanese speakers may need to familiarize themselves with are:

F: Pronounced as somewhere halfway between an "f" and an "h." Make a face like you're gently blowing and try to say "f" without your teeth touching your lower lip. "Mount Fuji," or "Fuji-san" can easily sound like "Huji-san" to English ears. If your vocal chords move when you say it, you're saying it incorrectly.

Ts: One sound, as at the end of "bats." The syllables "tsu" and "fu" are common in Japanese, as in "tsuki," moon, and "fuyu," winter.

R: Think of the soft "t" in words like "water" or "daughter." Essentially, you say "r" but with your tongue touching the back of your teeth. This is similar to some sounds in Spanish and Italian, as it almost sounds like a rolled "r," without the repetition required for such a sound.

Lastly, syllables like "kyo," "gyu," and "shyo" are pronounced as only one syllable. "Tokyo" is a two-syllable word, not three. Here are the phonetic spellings for two of the Gods covering most of the special sounds:

Amaterasu — ah-mah-tay-rah-soo

Tsukiyomi — soo-kee-yoh-mee

heaven and worshipped. This shinbutsu-shūgō, or synchronistic view, has saved Japan much religious strife. That isn't to say there has been no strife. The arrival of Buddhism saw great upheavals that threatened to destroy Shintō belief, but synchronicity and the Buddhist Fortunes accepting their roles as Kami saved the faith. This, of course, created a third major political faction beyond just the heavenly and earthly Kami factions, a division the Fortunes are happy to play to their advantage. Yet today Japan is one of the most religiously integrated and pluralistic societies.

PRINCIPAL MEMBERS

The Kami of Japan are part of a massive pantheon where everything from a small pebble or an ancient camphor tree are Kami. They are the single largest pantheon on Earth, and the more liberal members argue that every God and or supernatural being could find their place within the Kannagara: order of all things.

Despite their numbers, there are major leaders, and those with the power to create Scions are most often limited to these figures. Also, the leaders are very willing to adopt Scions born of others; there is no problem with such issues socially, and the only stricture that all Kami place on such acceptance is that the Scion must prove themselves worthy. These can range from simple tasks like a potential Scion of Ama-no-Uzume making another person laugh, to a death-defying epic quest to find the missing silver chopstick of Uke Mochi, lost at the bottom of the Sea of Japan, for Tsukiyomi so he can prove to his sister he was correct in his actions.

The Kami of Japan include: Amaterasu (sun and leadership), Tsukiyomi (moon and order), Susano-O (sea, death, and storms), Hachiman (archery, culture, and warriors), Inari (rice and fertility), Ama-no-Uzume (dawn and revelry), Sarutahiko (martial arts and monkeys), Takemikazuchi (thunder and sumo), Ebisu (luck and fishing), Ōkuninushi (heroes and wealth), Bishamon (war and punisher), Benzaiten (talent and eloquence), Fukurokuju (longevity and wisdom), Kisshōten (beauty and mercy), and Hotei (Contentment and Children).

AMATERASU-ŌMIKAMI

Aliases: Ōhirume-no-muchi-no-kami, Ōmikami, Tenshō Daijin

Amaterasu is the Queen of Heaven, the Goddess of the Sun, and the grandmother to the Imperial family of Japan. Amaterasu was the firstborn of the three Kami born from the Primordials Izanagi and Izanami, who declared her ruler of all.

Her early period of ruling was fraught with hardship, but from this struggle she learned wisdom. Her younger brother, Susano-O, rampaged across heaven. He destroyed much, killed other Kami, and drove her in her anger to hide in a cave, plunging the world into darkness. The other Kami, through the cunning use of a mirror and the bold dancing of Ama-no-Uzume tricked Amaterasu from the cave, and while she could have been furious she recognized that her

actions had endangered all. She banished Susano-O and took back control of heaven.

In modern day, she continues to advise the Emperors of Japan, despite a rocky relationship during the calamitous days of the Pacific War. It was an experience from which she learned much. She realized that she must bring illuminating wisdom to all who see her guidance, not just her direct descendants. She still appears in the Imperial Court as a long-haired woman with heavenly poise and a quiet voice that silences all others with the truth of her words. To others, she appears as a motherly figure who offers sage advice. To corporate workers she appears as a personal advisor who's quick and meticulous, showing them ways to get around or work within the bureaucracies that govern most Japanese corporations with the utmost efficiency and discretion, while remaining humble and honest.

Her Scions all understand the value of hard-earned wisdom and helping those in positions of power. Amaterasu sees her children as some of those who need the most help, and she often visits them to give them advice, wanted or not. Even if they are sometimes haughty, the Scions of Amaterasu are altruistic and will often care more for others before considering helping themselves.

Callings: Leader, Judge, Sage

Purviews: Epic Strength, Fertility, Order, Prosperity, Sun

TSUKIYOMI, AMATSUKAMI OF THE MOON

Aliases: Tsukiyomi-no-Mikoto

Tsukiyomo, the God of the moon, is the middle child and brother of Amaterasu and Susano-O. And like most middle children, he has gone off to do his own thing. He hasn't seen his sister in countless years, and he claims he likes it that way. Don't bring up the fact that Amaterasu banished him to the moon to live forever opposite of her. He still feels like he was justified in killing Uke Mochi, the Kami of food. He says Uke Mochi spit in his food before serving him. Amaterasu told him that once he accepts the justice of his banishment she will rescind his sentence.

His banishment has granted him freedom to travel far more than most other Kami. He acts as a messenger between the Kami, although he will provide his opinion on the contents of the message. This has provided him extensive knowledge of both current events and history. He has all the best gossip. When he is not traveling, he spends most of his time soaking in the nightlife of Tokyo. This puts him far from his sister, who prefers Kyoto. He is often found as a food critic, otherwise he likes to shine a light on all the best nightspots wherever he may find himself. Some Kami find him insufferable and a gossip, but none deny that his taste is impeccable.

His Scions are in the know. He shares his gossip with them. For what good is information if it is not shared? They also tend to have the hippest tastes and are on the cutting edge of what is fresh, new, and cool. They'll be the one at the secret new club or art show, sporting the avant-garde hairdo and telling their friends about the amazing new restaurant they all just have to try.

Callings: Liminal, Judge, Healer

Purviews: Artistry, Darkness, Moon, Order

SUSANO-O, AMATSUKAMI OF STORMS

Aliases: Susanoo-no-Mikoto

Susano-O is the youngest of the three sibling rulers of the Kami, and it shows. He cried for his mother, Izanami, demanding to see her, even though she had died and traveled to Yomi. He challenged Amaterasu to a duel of creation, to see who could create the best offspring. His crazy luck, natural talent, or his sister's good graces led him to declare himself the winner. His subsequent celebration across the Heavenly Plane caused much death and destruction. Amaterasu put an end to Susano-O's bad manners, banished him from heaven, and ordered him to the unenviable job of watching over the entrance to Yomi-no-kuni in the Izumo province.

To win himself back into his sister's good graces Susano-O decided to complete epic quests to impress her. He wandered the seas, discovered new plants, defeated a great dragon through trickery, and discovered a sword in its tail. He brought stories of his adventures, the plants, and the famous sword Kusanagi as gifts to his sister. She forgave him, but did not let him relinquish his job as guardian between life and death.

Ages later, one of his Scions, Ōkuninushi, was frustrated that the living and dead were so separated. Ōkuninushi snuck into Susano-O's realm, and over a series of days tricked Susano-O and stole from him multiple times. Instead of being angry with his Scion, he was delighted that Ōkuninushi had bested him and promoted him to the rank of Kami. He even gave him his hall, he didn't want it anyway. Then he opened up the pass between Yomi and Izumo so that honored ancestors could speak to their descendants.

These days, Susano-O spends as little time as possible doing his job. He is technically in charge of the dead and the seas, but he'd much rather be out at surfing extreme waves while knife hunting massive sea dragons or heli-snowboarding with a bunch of his Scions in Yukiguni (snow country) while searching for elusive snow monsters.

His Scions crave adventure, extreme challenges, and the subsequent parties as much as he does. What are a few trashed hotel rooms between friends if you're celebrating something epic? Of course, they'll pay their bill the next day, and leave a great tip, trouble seems to just slide off them like water off a duck's back.

Callings: Creator, Trickster, Warrior

Purviews: Artistry (Poetry), Chaos, Death, Epic Strength, Forge, Sky, Water

HACHIMAN, AMATSUKAMI OF ARCHERY AND WAR

Aliases: Daibosatsu, Emperor Ojin, and Yahata-no-kami

Hachiman, the Kami of warriors and Japanese culture is one of the most popular Kami in all of Japan after Inari. The eight banners and the dove are signs of his presence, however, the most definitive of his signs is the mitsudomoe. His symbol, the mitsudomoe, the three teardrops in a vortex, symbolizes flexibility and willingness to change so that one can prosper and succeed. His wisdom is that of reacting to the new and unexpected, changing to best respond to the situation at hand. He guided the warriors of Japan via bushidō and even incarnated himself as an Emperor once so that he might help them succeed in difficult times.

He seeks victory in all conflicts, not just military, and understands war by other means. While he appreciates Amaterasu's passion for helping her people, he knows that she will never focus on organizing large groups and thus the task falls to him. He realizes that wars are won by logistics, organization, and proper training, not skirmishes or wild heroic deeds. Like Amaterasu, he loves and wishes to promote Japan and the Japanese people, to see them prosper, and he believes the best way to do so is by organizing them and helping them work together.

In modern times, he often appears as an interim CEO or a military reformer bringing in new ideas that increase effectiveness and efficiency. Often he appears as a mentor to a team of green, but eager to learn, young leaders. He will recount stories of his successes and failures, but there is always a lesson he is teaching.

His Scions have been famous military leaders, corporate presidents, anime, monster movie, and chanbara film producers, teachers, mentors, and those who would promote the positive aspects of Japan's collectivist culture. Their zeal for hard work, confidence, and perseverance set them apart from others. If you meet a Scion throwing themselves into a difficult problem with gusto while shouting and encouraging others to join them, you've met a Scion of Hachiman. And when they succeed their enthusiastic shouts of "Yatta!" can be heard for miles.

Callings: Leader, Sage, Warrior

Purviews: Artistry, Beasts (Dove), Order, Prosperity, War

INARI, KUNITSUKAMI OF RICE

Aliases: Inari Ōkami, Oinari, Inari Daimyojin, Dakiniten

Inari is the Kami of both the fulfillment of wishes and growing rice. Inari has a long history of popularity with commoners and the nobles who controlled the production of the important staple food.

Inari has many forms. When helping farmers, Inari appears as an old man with many sheaves of rice. When helping a noble, Inari appears as a young family man and farmer with knowledge about what their people need. When helping women reproduce, Inari appears as a young mother in the bloom of health. To those to whom Inari brings messages, Inari appears as a magnificent nine-tailed fox Kitsune, or even a beautiful, but simple maiden. While many of the most powerful Kami have chosen a gender, Inari sees gender as just another form or appearance the Kami can take, another tool in Inari's toolbox to fulfill Inari's duties.

In modern times, Inari is still the most popular Kami, a position that bolsters the power of the Earthly Kami politically. There are over 32,000 attended shrines dedicated to Inari throughout Japan, a full one-third of all shrines cared for by people, and Inari would easily overwhelm all other Kami shrines combined if Inari's roadside shrines were counted. Food and family production are still very important today. Inari is sometimes overworked answering all of their prayers. Fortunately, Inari's foxes are protected in Japan and they and Inari's Kitsune allies can lend a hand. Inari works in whatever form is most pleasing to the mortals with whom Inari works. Inari often appears as a reproduction specialist, a family planner, or an agricultural engineer. Inari and the foxes try to answer as many prayers to Inari as possible from those who are pure of heart and sincere in their wish.

Scions of Inari often work in the areas that Inari most cares about, as Inari is so busy, Inari drafted their Scions to pick up the slack, and is the most prolific adopter of all the Kami. Inari's Scions are compassionate and want to help those seeking Inari's blessings. Inari's fluid gender also attracts many transgender Scion hopeful adoptees; more help always pleases Inari and they are welcomed as long as they are willing to work.

Callings: Creator, Healer, Liminal

Purviews: Beasts (Fox), Fertility, Fortune, Journeys, Prosperity, Health

AMA-NO-UZUME, AMATSUKAMI OF DAWN

Aliases: Otafuku or Okame

The Kami of new beginnings, simple pleasures, and partying! Ama-no-Uzume has never cared about tradition or propriety. She showed Amaterasu her breasts and stomach to remind the elder goddess of her duty to nourish life in the World and get her to leave her cave. If a big, fire-breathing, angry Kami blocks the road then she'll just tell him off. She's a Kami of action and she speaks her mind. Sea Cucumber bad mouthed the Emperor, and when she told him off he wouldn't stop, so she slit his mouth. Don't cross Ama-no-Uzume.

She may appear in many forms, but she's always enthusiastic regarding whatever she's about. Her other name, Otafuku, means "good fortune," and she revels in it, laughing and smiling. But she's not just about jokes and partying. Her greatest passion is bringing joy to others, be that through baking cookies, sex, or just rubbing someone's shoulders. No job is too big or too small for Ama-no-Uzume.

She married that big, angry Kami who was blocking the Emperor's way: Sarutahiko, and they still get along great. She tells everyone that it's because he's so well endowed, and while that's true, they are both assertive and spend a lot of time together. She may not be the most beautiful Kami, some even say she's more often homely than not, and her husband isn't that much of a looker either. But they don't care, they're having too much fun and enjoying the parties they throw.

Her Scions are much the same. You may see one, a lot more of one than you expected, being the life of the party, making everyone's lunch during a big move, or at a karaoke bar leading the weary workers in singing a popular standard. Glory is not the concern of Ama-no-Uzume or her Scions; having a great time while making sure the job gets done is all that matters.

Callings: Lover, Liminal, Trickster

Purviews: Artistry (Dance, Singing), Deception, Passion (Mirth, Lust)

SARUTAHIKO-DAIMYŌJIN

Aliases: Dosōjin, Kōjin

Sarutahiko is the one who blocked the future emperor, Ninigi-no-Mikoto, on his journey to the World. The Imperial party was unsure of how to get past him or even defeat him until Ama-no-Uzume stepped forward, told Sarutahiko of their journey, and then told him off for being rude. He fell in love; no other Kami had ever dared to harangue him, the mighty Sarutahiko! So impressed was he by Ama-no-Uzume's courage that he joined the Imperial party. He told Ama-no-Uzume that he would even help Ninigi-no-Mikoto subdue Japan, and then when they were done he would marry her. Impressed by his forthrightness, she agreed, and Ninigi-no-Mikoto was able to conquer Japan faster than hoped because of Sarutahiko's strength and knowledge.

Since those days he's more focused on taking trips all over with Ama-no-Uzume, getting even better with his aikido and hand-to-hand combat, and hanging out with monkeys. When he decides to help others, he's best at showing them all their options. Amaterasu or Tsukiyomi might tell you what's best for you or what is proper, but Sarutahiko doesn't care about all that. He's happy if you're happy, even if it was a bad choice you made. Sometimes he'll show up as a literal sign so that a person's choices are made clear to them. Other times, when he's annoyed with the person, he'll show up as one of his many monkey friends and mess with the indecisive person. When he's feeling sage he'll be the silent guiding scarecrow in a field pointing the way, an understanding sensei, teacher, or maybe a stranger willing to give directions.

His Scions are numerous, both Kami and human. He's well-endowed, that's no secret, large phalluses are still left at roadside shrines as offerings to him, and he'll get it on with anyone that strikes his fancy, if Ama-no-Uzume is unavailable. They may be married, but they're very open about their relationship. He doesn't care what his Scions get up to as long as they decide and do it with gusto. If being an *otaku*

in their mom's basement is what they want, then be the best damn otaku. Of course, if they choose to do anything with monkeys, martial arts, or taking trips, he'll love them even more and help them out more often. Heck, combining all three, like being a zoologist who studies how monkeys in other parts of the world fight, would just be the best in Sarutahiko's book.

Callings: Liminal, Lover, Sage

Purviews: Beasts (Monkey), Earth, Journeys

TAKEMIKAZUCHI, AMATSUKAMI OF THUNDER

Aliases: Takefutsu, Toyofutsu, Ikazuchi-no-kami

Takemikazuchi is a hardliner Heavenly Kami. If Amaterasu has an unpleasant job that needs being done, Takemikazuchi volunteers, especially if he gets to stick it to the Earthly Kami. He was the Heavenly Kami that came down when the Earthly Kami supported the unaligned clans against the Emperor. He challenged Ōkuninushi's sons, the leaders of the rebellion, to a fight and beat them all. The first several he beat with his unparalleled swordsmanship, so the last one challenged him to a battle of pure physical might. Takemikazuchi won, and from that single bout sumō wrestling was born.

However, his most notable job is keeping the Titan Namazu from destroying Japan. Namazu, who is a giant catfish that lives in the mud in the waters deep below Japan and would love nothing more than to shake until all the land had sunk into the oceans and become mud for him to lie in. Takemikazuchi battles Namazu, his shouts, the thunder in the sky, his sword and sumō skill all that keep Japan from falling into the sea.

Throughout the ages and into modern day he's appeared as an advisor who will drive his charges to unimagined heights no matter the cost. Unenlightened people believe that sumō wrestlers can just eat, get fat, and train a bit at hugging and the bigger guy wins, but those that understand sumō realize it is an austere path of punishing work and perseverance. Self-sacrifice is the watchword for Scions of Takemikazuchi, and the cry of "Banzai!" has been heard on many of their lips just before they died. Many Scions of other Kami will whisper about the methods of Takemikazuchi, but all will be happy to have one at their side come a hard fight.

Callings: Guardian, Leader, Warrior

Purviews: Beasts (Deer), Epic Dexterity, Epic Stamina, Epic Strength, Sky, War

EBISU, FORTUNE OF LUCK AND FISHING

Aliases: Yebisu, Hiroku, Kotoshiro-nushi-no-kami

Ebisu, the Kami of Fortune and Fishing is one of the Shichifukujin, The Seven Fortunes, although he is the only Fortune originally from Japan. Unlike most Kami and the Seven Fortunes, he does not tie himself to any one place, shrine, or event. Long ago, he decided that he much preferred the natural world and the company of humans and animals

over that of the Kami. Thus, he began to pretend that he was deaf so that when the Kami were called to Izumo for their annual party by the ringing of the great bells he would not go.

These days, he works as a caretaker of the seas around Japan and even Japan itself when the other Kami are busy with their Kami parties. He doesn't mind. He likes the quiet alone time of fishing. If he gets lonely, he'll turn into a fish and let himself be caught by some lucky fisherman. If the fisherman is kind and treats Ebisu well, then he'll bless the fisherman. Other times, when he wants to be around people, he'll turn into just a normal-looking shopper and join the throng of busy shoppers. If shopkeepers treat him well when they don't know who he is, he will bless their store.

Ebisu's Scions are much like him: strange dichotomies. You can find them in crowds, but never part of the crowd. Many prefer nature, outdoors, and sailing the seas around Japan. They like their anonymity, but won't hesitate to help others when they are treated well. They are the ones most likely to be found outside of Japan, traveling for the sake of traveling.

Callings: Hunter, Liminal, Trickster

Purviews: Beasts (Fish, Sharks, and Whales), Epic Stamina, Fortune, Prosperity, Wild

ŌKUNINUSHI, FORTUNE OF HEROES

Aliases: Onamuji, Daikoku, Daikokuten, Daikokutennyo

Ōkuninushi is an epic character. He began as a Scion of Susano-O, but tricked Susano-O so well that Susano-O gave him his treasured hall at Izumo, the great hall that leads to Yomi, where one may speak with their ancestors. He didn't rest there. He finished Izanagi's work of forming the islands of Japan, and he accomplished countless other epic feats that he ascended as a Kunitsukami and rivaled Sarutahiko in power.

His power was so great that his sons, all Scions, grew rebellious and supported the unaligned clans against the Emperor. They were defeated, yet Ōkuninushi never spoke for or against either side, he knew that if he did he would either spark a war with the Heavenly Kami or destroy his honor and reputation and appear as a weak appeaser to the trespasses of the heavenly Kami. Soon after the original Daikokuten, the Buddhist deity Mahakala, wished to return to China. The Seven Fortunes fearing a fracturing of their pact approached Ōkuninushi for advice on what to do. Seeing a solution to both the fractured state of the Fortunes and his own problems, he volunteered to replace the Daikokuten while continuing to embody his original ideals, but as a Fortune now, not a Kunitsukami. His brilliance solved the problem by removing himself as a rally banner for the rebellious Kunitsukami while maintaining his honor and face without entering open warfare with Amaterasu, whom he admired.

In modern day, Ōkuninushi and his Scions are out searching for epic quests to make the world a better place. They are great friends with the Scions of Susano-O, and try to steer them away from trivial adventures to more important quests. Scions of Amaterasu butt heads with his Scions. Most Scions of other Heavenly Kami are cautious around his Scions. Yet if there is a great need, an epic adventure to fulfill, then the Scions of Ōkuninushi will be leading the way.

Callings: Creator, Leader, Liminal

Purviews: Beasts (all), Darkness, Earth, Fortune, Prosperity

BISHAMON, FORTUNE OF WAR

Aliases: Bishamonten, Tamonten, Vaisravna

Bishamon, the brother of Kisshōten, the God of fortune in battle is the defender of the laws of the Buddha, and one of the Seven Fortunes. He is a Kami who came to Japan from China and India and found a place that welcomed him. He used to wear Chinese armor, carry a Chinese halberd in one hand, and the pagoda that holds the scrolls of Buddha's laws in the other.

During the Sengoku Jidai, the Warring States Period, Bishamon blessed his most fervent follower, Uesugi Kenshin, Kanrei of the Kanto region, with such skill in battle that he was never defeated in battle. He could only be killed by a ninja at night in a latrine. Amongst the Kami, it is said that Bishamon guided the Japanese leaders during the early stages of the Pacific War, but that he abandoned them when he discovered their unclean and anti-Buddhist actions in China. Bishamon seemed to never recover from the shock of the Pacific War. For decades he appeared dressed as a Buddhist monk. He concerns himself with right action and Buddhist law. But things might be changing for him and his Scions.

His Scions for the past several generations have been focused on guarding temples, practicing law, or Buddhism as priests. However, during the early days of the Iraq Invasion by Coalition Forces, a Scion of Bishamon was revealed when he drove his medical truck laden with casualties through enemy fire and not a single round touched him or his vehicle. Bishamon revealed himself in full Japanese Defense Force Regalia and praised the young Scion. Since that time, several more Scions of Bishamon as Warrior have been discovered.

Callings: Guardian, Sage, Warrior

Purviews: Epic Dexterity, Fortune, Prosperity, War

BENZAITEN, FORTUNE OF TALENT AND ELOQUENCE

Aliases: Bentensama, Benzaitennyo, Ichikishima-hime-no-mikoto, Ugajin

Benzaiten joined the other Seven Fortunes as a Buddhist Goddess from India. When she arrived, she found a small home by the river that flowed from Mount Meru. She began to play her biwa, a short-necked lute, and sing. First, the Kami of the river listened to her, then the Kami of the land and the mountain, and finally, all the Kami stopped what they were doing and listened to the beauty that was

Benzaiten. The other Kami gifted her with the torii arch and all the comets in the sky as they were so impressed with her grace and eloquence.

She continues to this day to inspire all who listen and watch her, and she gifts many artists with fortune while performing. She herself will often show up, dressed as a simple musician, at a coffee shop, open mic night, or even during a concert, and give an impromptu performance, wowing the crowd and inspiring other artists with her sublime performance. This passion will, at times, engage her other aspect as a Goddess of love and the Kami say that many children are bred whenever Benzaiten performs.

Her Scions are almost all artists of some discipline. Most prefer the refined arts of writing, painting, calligraphy, music, and sculpture. However, a fair few have strayed into more cutting-edge arts. Beyond art, Benzaiten counts a fair amount of sex workers and sexual therapists amongst her children, as she sees lovemaking as the most sublime of all art forms.

Callings: Creator, Lover, Sage

Purviews: Beast (Snake), Artistry, Beauty, Fortune, Fertility, Stars

FUKUROKUJU, FORTUNE OF LONGEVITY AND WISDOM

Aliases: Old Man of the South Pole

Fukurokuju is one of the oldest Kami, and the only Kami who knows the secret of defeating death and restoring the dead to life. When he arrived in Japan he was already ancient. He is short, but has a very tall, bald head,with a few whiskers on his face. He always carries his scrolls with him, scrolls that carry his secret wisdom of life over death. He is often accompanied by his three pets, a deer, a turtle, and a crane, pets he acquired when he was just a young Kami.

Modern-day Fukurokuju has gained a reputation as a dirty old man. The Kami say that he often flirts with the other Kami. When asked, Ama-no-Uzume laughs and tells whoever wanted her opinion about Fukurokuju that he knows what he's doing. To mortals, he often appears as a short or hunchbacked pensioner, old doctor, or retired businessman with a stack of books and a cocky gleam in his eye: that twinkle that says he knows the secrets of the universe, though, in fairness, he knows at least one.

His Scions are many, and some of the oldest Scions in existence, although new ones are being born every day. Many work in medical fields, like geriatrics and oncology. However, a fair number work as research scientists in all areas of medicine. They may have wild and varied sex lives in their free time, but no one complains that they are not hardworking or know what they are talking about.

Callings: Healer, Lover, Sage

Purviews: Beasts (Deer, Turtle, Crane), Epic Stamina, Fortune, Health

KISSHŌTEN, FORTUNE OF BEAUTY AND MERCY

Aliases: Kichijoten, Kudokuten, Lakshmi, Mahasri

Kisshōten, sister of Bishamon, came to Japan as Lakshmi, but realized that she must adapt to the strong local culture. She changed her clothes, painted her face with the most beautiful makeup, and learned the graces of the local geisha. Every Kami or mortal she met was struck by her beauty and her kindness to the most vulnerable, particularly children. While the foolish say that she is just a pretty face, the wisest know that it is her mercy that is the wellspring of her beauty.

Today, Kisshōten is still found caring for the vulnerable, and she is still breathtaking. She often allies herself with Inari when she works at clinics to ease the suffering of women who work in the sex trade. Or she will be found with Hotei, bringing aid to poor children while he tells them stories and gives them sweets to make them smile.

Her Scions tend towards the gorgeous — they are her children, after all — but what they are to a man or woman is merciful. They care for the weak beyond the level of any other. They work hard to find those most in need, those most downtrodden, and grant them help and care, a rare thing in a culture that venerates proper place and action of all people, and a cycle of death and rebirth where every failure is punished in a specially tailored hell.

Callings: Guardian, Healer, Lover

Purviews: Beauty, Fortune, Health

HOTEI, FORTUNE OF JOY

Aliases: Laughing Buddha, Fat Buddha, Budai, Miroku

Hotei, the Fortune of Joy, has long appeared as a fat Zen monk wearing Buddhist beads, with his belly exposed, his head bald, and his earlobes fat. His name comes from the sack he always carries with him. Often, the sack has inside it whatever the person he wishes to help most needs. Most often, that is candy or small gifts for the children who follow him wherever he wanders, children he makes sure to protect from harm.

A famous Zen story is told about Hotei. Hotei was traveling, as he always does, giving children candy from his bag and only asking for a penny from monks or lay practitioners he meets. One day, a monk recognized him and asked, "Hotei, what is the meaning of Zen?" Hotei dropped his bag. "How does one realize Zen?" Hotei picked up his bag and continued on his way.

Scions have reported meeting Hotei all over the world. Often he appears as a friendly, fat, and bald man, but wherever he is, he is smiling and giving gifts to children. His Scions don't always appear as he does, but they are those who can see the good in any situation, and see the long arc of time bending towards goodness. Many work in service industries, as volunteers, even monks, priests, or nuns. A very special group of Hotei's Scions work in child

protective services or as foster parents taking care of children that others have not.

Callings: Guardian, Liminal, Sage

Purviews: Chaos, Fortune, Journeys, Passion (Joy)

COSMOLOGY

The Overworld: Takamagahara (The High Plain of Heaven)

The rulers of all the Kami are the Heavenly Kami, or Amatsukami. They are led by Amaterasu, who rules over the High Plain. Not much is known about the place, as few who are not Kami, and many Kami themselves, never travel there. Amaterasu has her palace there along with her rice fields, dikes, and various important buildings for carrying on life.

There is also a great river that flows through heaven, but it has been dammed up so that the Heavenly Kami can all collect there and discuss important matters. It is a fantastic place, but much like the land of early Japan. To get there one must cross the Heavenly Bridge, which is the Milky Way. Somewhere along that route is the eight-path crossroads where Sarutahiko confronted Ninigi-no-Mikoto's procession to Earth.

The Underworld: Yomi/Jigoku

Yomi was the original land of the dead. It is deep beneath the earth, dark and dusty, and those who reside there are unclean. Susano-O guarded the entrance to Yomi at his castle of Izumo, until he turned it over to Ōkuninushi. There is said to be a river, and for it to be much like the land of the living, except everything is decaying and a shadow of its former life.

When Buddhism became part of the syncretic beliefs of the Japanese, many more Kami joined the realms of both the living and the dead. The Underworld expanded, and across the river bordering Yomi appeared Jigoku, the Buddhist hells and lands of the dead. There, those who have not attained enlightenment are punished for their sins in life, and once their punishments are complete they are sent back up and reborn into life. There are eight hot and eight cold regions in Jigoku, and a capital city where the great Emma-O is said to rule. Besides the ruler, there are many demons of a multitude of ranks that run Jigoku and punish the inhabitants.

Titans

Finding one's proper place in this cycle isn't always a great thing. Your place might be as the example of what not to do when riding a bike down a road. A number of the Kami have succumbed being so focused on one's specific place that they have lost sight of balance and harmony and become Titans. This is a path all Kami are fearful of treading, but one that has claimed many over the eons, and why harmony in all things is considered important, for any Kami could become as broken and dark as these Titans.

Fujin, one of the oldest Kami, along with his brother Raijin, both fell to the dark focus of the Titans. Fujin once

dealt in magic, strange creatures, and sailors, but now cares for nothing else but blowing wind. He appears as a monstrous, green-skinned demon with red hair and a leopard-skin loincloth. He carries a large bag of wind over his shoulders.

Purview: Sky

Virtues: Fecundity, Dominance

Raijin, brother of Fujin, was originally a protector of the Buddha's teachings and Japan, but became so absorbed with dominating the power of lightning as his tool to protect that he lost sight of all other things. Now, he is a monster of lightning, and cares little for protecting anything, just reveling in his destructive power.

Purview: Sky

Virtues: Rapacity, Dominance

Nezumo was once a simple carp Kami who could shake and escape anything. Because nothing could trap him, he continued to eat and grow for thousands of years. Unfortunately, he gained a taste for the fish who live in the deepest oceans and caverns below Japan, but he was too large to fit until he shook himself, broke through, and trapped himself below Japan; this, of course, caused earthquakes. Now all he cares to do is escape. Takemikazuchi was tasked with stopping Nezumo.

Purview: Earth

Virtues: Fecundity, Submission

RELIGION: SHINTOISM

Shintō, or the Way of the Gods, is as old as the history of Japan in the World. Most Worldly Japanese people say they *are* Shintō. There is a common saying in Japan: "Born Shintō, marry Christian, die Buddhist." In the World, Shintō and the Japanese people are synchronistic: Many see no trouble with religions and beliefs coexisting at the same time. This doesn't mean there are not rifts between the various factions. If most devout Japanese knew about the kirishitan Kannon during the long era of the closed Japan, they would have torn down the shrines and executed the Christians. Similar fights between Buddhist and Shintō beliefs occurred, with Buddhism winning in many ways, but accepting Shintō as a lesser form, and the Shintō just incorporated the Buddhist deities into their pantheon.

The basic tenant is the belief in the *Kannagara*, or the proper and natural order of things. It includes the understanding of being clean and unclean, right action, sincerity, and duty. Everything, including outside beliefs and Gods, have a place in Japan, one must just find the proper place and become part of the order.

Most practitioners interact by visiting shrines, praying to the Kami, lighting candles, ringing bells, and leaving them small offerings. One, some, or all of these actions can be taken, but there is no specific action for all Kami. All Kami are different, and while the deaf Ebisu will not hear the bell ringing, he will appreciate the gift of fish left at his shrine.

PANTHEON PATH OF THE KAMI

Path Skills: Culture, Persuasion

Virtues: *Sincerity* and *Right Action*. The Kami believe that Sincerity and Right Action are the best possible way for a person to act. If they are sincere in all they do, and what they do is right and proper, then they will always be victorious, prosperous, and happy. Some wrongly believe that bushidō is the Virtue of the Kami. But that is only the path that *bushi*, warriors, must follow. It would be wrong for a farmer to follow bushidō, just as it would be wrong for a warrior to follow the path of the farmer.

Sincerity: The Virtue of Sincerity is to believe in what one does with all their heart. To commit partially will lead to failure and unhappiness. No matter what one does, be sincere; commit fully and earnestly. Whatever you do, be that planting rice, running towards the enemy, or playing the biwa, be sincere and one will find greatness.

Right Action: All things have a place under heaven. One must find their proper place, and with sincerity do the thing they are meant to do. All paths are different in life, and while many might converge on a battlefield, they are not all the same, even if they are similar. Do sincerely what the right action is for yourself in every moment and you will not fail. That right action might be to die gloriously, but it is the right action. Alternatively, the right action might be to stay home with a broken leg and take it easy while your friends are off at war and your father cares for the horse that threw you off.

Signature Purview: Eight Million Kami: All things are Kami and can be bidden to work wonders. Everything that exists is a Kami. The pebbles in a stream are all Kami, the river they are in is a Kami, the bay it flows into is a Kami, and the dream of a man about the Kami Godzilla sleeping in that bay are all Kami.

If one knows the proper way to appease a Kami, then it will help you in whatever way it can. A great river Kami might know about all the places it goes and that people have stepped into the stream that feeds into it, but it won't know the type of shoe worn by the man who stepped into the stream the previous night. But the stone that the man stepped on can probably describe to you the design on the bottom of the boot the man wore, but only if you know how to appease it with the proper prayers and treat it with respect.

BIRTHRIGHTS

The most common Kami Birthrights are Creatures and Relics although there are some Followers and Guides.

CREATURES

Komainu: Lion dogs are magical creatures that protect Shintō shrines and temples. They have a lion-like head with a mane, a large mouth, bulging eyes, and the body of a dog.

FOLLOWERS

Kitsune: The magical foxes of Inari, whom she employs as messengers and advisors to supplicants. While some appear as simple foxes, others can have multiple tails; the greatest will have as many as nine tails. They can shapeshift into beautiful maidens.

GUIDES

Tengu: Powerful raven-headed Kami with the body of a man and often wings. They live at the top of secluded mountains and are wise and skilled sword masters. If one gains their respect, then they will teach the person in the ways of the sword.

RELICS

Magatama beads: The Yasakani no Magatama beads of Amaterasu and later the Emperors of Japan, is the symbol of the right to rule over all of the Kami. They are kept safe in the Kashiko-dokoro Shrine in the Three Palace Sanctuaries at the Tokyo Imperial Palace.

The Eight-hand Mirror: The Yata no Kagami is the mirror used by the Kami to trick Amaterasu from her cave. It was lost sometime in the 9th-century C.E. and has the ability to show the viewer any place or being they wish to view.

The Kusanagi sword: Named Kusanagi-no-Tsurugi, *the grass-cutting sword*, it is the sword that Susano-O gifted to his sister Amaterasu. It gained its name when one prince, Yamato Takeru, used it to free himself from a surrounding flame set by his enemies. He discovered it can control the Kami of the air, but lost it soon after.

RELATIONSHIPS

In Japan, face is an important concept to everyone. *Tatemae* is the outward face one projects to preserve harmony in any given social situation. *Honne* is one's inner face, or true feelings about such situations or personages. While one would never share their honne with anyone but family and friends, it can create problems when actions promised under tatemae never materialize because of honne.

OTHER PANTHEONS

Other pantheons find the Kami to be very friendly, but sometimes frustrating to work with as honne and tatamae

come into play. The Kami, wishing to preserve harmony within a group, will agree to things or make promises they cannot or will not keep, while Gods of other pantheons have no clue why the Kami are acting in this manner.

The Buddhist and Hindu pantheons have the closest relationships with the Fortunes, who are the most diplomatic of the Kami. Many of them are different incarnations of themselves, with good working relations and little animosity. Kannon has a direct connection to the Catholic Virgin Mary as her incarnation for the crypto-Japanese Christians of the 17th and 18th centuries. After that, pantheons who have a strong relationship with nature, like the Tuatha Dé Danann, have the most cordial relations with the Kami.

GREATEST WEAKNESS

The Kami would never speak of this publicly, but they all know that they are superior to all others. They are the greatest pantheon of Gods. Saying so out loud would destroy harmony and lose them face, but to them it's true. Who works harder than Hachiman? Who is more enlightened than Amaterasu and the Fortunes? Who is more epic than any of them? None! They expect other Gods and Scions to fail where they would, and plan for that failure. If others do not fail, they are surprised, and this surprise can reveal their superiority complex, and thus destroy harmony.

THE MANITOU OF THE ANISHINAABEK

In their lessons the old storytellers tried to explain how life, being, and the world originated. They told the creation of the world; life; order; the seasons; and phenomena in the skies, on Earth, and deep in the Underworld of the afterlife. They explained that "no man or woman can do this. Only a manitou."

— Basil Johnston, The Manitous, The Spiritual World of the Ojibway

The divine beings of the Anishinaabek people, the Manitou have been here since the World was created. They represent a wide range of mythic stature, from divine humans with great magic to the primeval forces of creation and destruction that dwell within the World. Yet one of the great distinctions of the Manitou is that they dwell, for the most part, in the same World as mankind, without separating themselves into the Overworld and Underworld of other pantheons. They are unseen, but ever here.

Born of a Titan's destructive act against a noble God, the principal Manitou are linked as a nuclear family in a way few other pantheons are. Innumerable spirits great and small are accorded stature by these Gods, who express their equality down to the lowliest nature spirit. As much as a term for the spirits as it is a term for all things energetic, mysterious, deific, dangerous, and powerful, *Manitou* is applied equally to Primordial forces, Gods, faerie creatures, wizards, witches, and great Chosen leaders. Their divinity is a difference in degree, not in kind. Most other pantheons are dismissive when speaking of them, suggesting they have no structure beyond this — titanspawn and Gods rub shoulders with no real respect for authority or hierarchy. The Manitou look at most other pantheons and just see Manitou.

There are Manitou of all shapes and sizes, always affecting the World, but only a small few have had an active role in the development of the mythology and the people. Many humans think of Manitou as only being connected to things of nature, but such thought is an arbitrary restriction imposed on them by human culture. Just as there are Manitou who watch over mountains and rivers and deer and corn, there are Manitou who watch over people, cities, neighborhoods, even strip-mining. As new Gods begin to intermix with the Manitou, the ancient ones see them as equally old Manitou they're only just now meeting. It doesn't mean they all like each other — some are downright hostile, as their people have been moved from land they gave them.

PRINCIPAL MEMBERS

The Manitou are the bringers of art, tradition, and prosperity to the people. They are painfully human, brash, self-righteous, and supremely prideful in their interactions with other beings. As a rule, the Manitou are fairly removed from the day-to-day lives of their followers. While the people will make offerings to them, more often than not it is to keep them at bay, to acknowledge the right to live off creatures and plants to be hunted or gathered, or to have them look favorably on an interaction or trade that might concern the Manitou. When a Manitou comes among the people it is usually a significant event, and not necessarily a good one. Many Manitou are predatory, and such creatures are numerous and of many forms.

GEEZHIGO-QUAE, GRANDMOTHER OF US ALL

Aliases: Nokomis, Grandmother, Sky Woman

It is said that Geezhigo-Quae came from the Sky People, powerful beings that lived high up in the sky above the clouds. The story is that she grew heavy with child and came down to the earth to deliver, but found there was no safe purchase because the World was covered in water. Whether she came down of her own accord, fell, or was instructed by Kitchi-Manitou is a matter of contention, and Geezhigo-Quae makes no attempt to correct the story whenever she hears it told.

Once she was upon the World, a great turtle allowed her to rest upon its back while she entreated the animals to find her earth from deep below the water. The animals responded, trying one after another, until the muskrat was able to bring forth a paw full of earth.

Sky Woman caused this soil to grow and expand until it had covered the entirety of the great turtle, forming Turtle

TURTLE ISLAND

Turtle Island is an interesting phenomenon. It is most of the World, but not *all* of the World. There are obviously other islands besides Turtle Island, but those islands came later, and most likely have turtles beneath them (or something else). What is important about Turtle Island is that it hasn't always been there and will, in time, return to the waters. While it is a part of the Earth, it isn't strictly speaking Mother Earth (Muzzu-Kumik-Quae), who was there before Turtle Island and covered in water. Turtle Island is an allowance from her, part of her, that is called up from the waters to support the people. Only great Manitou can communicate with the earth-divers, creatures who can retrieve the gift of the soil seed from Mother Earth's home deep beneath the waters, and then cause the gift to grow into the portion of World we call a Turtle Island. It is affected by her mood, and she can reclaim it by extending her waters. It is a sacred gift of renewal that can bring great life, if only by destroying what was once there with creation anew.

Sky Woman wasn't the only one to call forth a Turtle Island from the depths of the waters. Nana'b'ooozoo and Wisakedjak did as well. The flood has occurred more than once, and there is belief among Manitou and humans that it will occur again soon. Muzzu-Kumik-Quae has been rumbling of late about how dirty she feels and how a bath is well overdue. She dares not call forth the Island without the blessings of Kitchi-Manitou but, just in case, Geezhigo-Quae keeps an eye out for a Scion or someone else to teach the secret should it need to be repeated. She doesn't trust Nana'b'oozoo to always be around or to get it right again.

Island. Once made, plants and trees immediately took root and grew, providing her with a sustainable place to deliver her child. This was the home of the people. She laid the groundwork, in the most literal sense, for the rest of the peoples to come.

Geezhigo-Quae continues to watch over the people. She cares deeply about humans in general and will advise any who seek her out. She is very quick to adopt other Scions, seeing them all as her grandchildren. Scions in her care can be seen displaying Callings and Purviews that come from other Manitou. Some wield powers that come from a range of Titans and Primordial beings from the fringes that are simply accepted by the Manitou as Manitou as long as they don't cause too much trouble.

Geezhigo-Quae's own Scions find that they are driven to gather people together and act as caretakers. Some have adamantly argued that she has no Scions beyond those that she's Chosen, in that she doesn't birth new Scions. She typically only has one Scion at a time, usually a woman. Sometimes she is gifted with power; sometimes she is mostly human. Unfortunately, these Scions often die after they have children of their own. Those of her Scions who survive speculate that she gives birth to her own Incarnation, some aspect of herself trapped in a cosmic cycle.

Callings: Guardian, Sage, Healer

Purviews: Moon, Sky, Stars, Beasts (Crane, Turtle), Order

MUZZU-KUMIK-QUAE, MOTHER EARTH

Aliases: Mother Earth, Earth Woman

Muzzu-Kumik-Quae came to be when Kitchi-Manitou created all things. She received the other created peoples and Manitou upon herself. She is all the World, the heart of the earth and waters. An elder Manitou, Earth Woman is tended by the thunderbirds who keep her cooled and cleansed with rains in some places and burn down old-growth forests in others, ensuring a steady cycle of growth and regrowth. She manifests in many forms. She can be almost anything she chooses but most often chooses the form of an old woman. A famous story has four young men finding her to bring prosperity to the people. She grants them their wish after they tend to her with kindness, as though she were their grandmother. The gifts she gives them are bundles filled with medicine. When they got home,

the young men were to take the medicine. The young men returned home to their village, made the brew and, drank the medicine. At first they thought they had been swindled. Nothing happened. Then, suddenly, they all died. The people buried them and from their graves sprang the gifts Muzzu-Kumik-Quae had given them for their people. One grave sprouted the evergreen trees, from another sprouted the weegwauss (birch). From the third grave arose flint, and from the last came tobacco. The people would use these gifts and move on to prosperous lives.

While she is fond of giving boons to those who seek her out and have genuine, heartfelt requests, there is a catch. She is a force of nature. She is nature. She is blood and green, soil and rock, wind and storms. There is no life that stands above another in her eyes. Everything must be part of the cycle. To request aid from Muzzu-Kumik-Quae is to know that, somehow, you must give to the cycle of life. She has no care for whether you are vegan or carnivore, a medicine-person or a gangster. The cycle is the cycle, and all things have a place.

Her Scions come in many forms. They find that they have an inherent connection to the Earth and the creatures upon it (including humankind). They excel at such things as hunting, fishing, and farming but are given to rage when viewing excess and abuse of the earth. They can be found in all manner of agricultural and wildlife-oriented pursuits, as well as earth resource and human rights activism.

Callings: Healer, Sage, Hunter

Purviews: Beasts (all), Fertility, Earth, Sky, Water , Wild

WINONAH, THE FIRST WOMAN

Aliases: Winona, Tekawerahkwa

Winonah is the child that Geezhigo-Quae gave birth to on Turtle Island. Upon her birth, she quickly grew into a woman, knowing no time as a child. She lived among the people for many generations. She was taken by the Titan Ae-pungishimook, who came across her when he saw her bathing, and made her bear a son. He returned to her four times over four generations, and she bore him a son with each visit. With the last birth, she is said to have died, but her death was never to be permanent, and she has always returned. Her sons would come to bring the traditions to the people and clear the land of many of the bad Manitou that plagued them.

Winonah continues to exist in the World, and mothers many Scions. She is a very loving mother and puts much of her energy and time into fostering and adopting children of all sorts as well as standing up for women's rights issues. She keeps on the move, staying one step ahead of Ae-pungishimook who still hunts for her every few generations when he awakens, to her dismay and inevitable and powerful defense. After a time, she fades from the World, leaving Geezhigo-Quae to tend to her Scions. Invariably, she returns when she has escaped the Titan's spawn.

Winonah has appeared, given birth to pantheons, and died more than once. Her name changes, but she is always Sky Woman's only daughter. In this way she has many names and manifestations. The only real difference between manifestations is which Manitou she gives birth

to. One manifestation in particular, called Tekawerahkwa, gave birth to two very different sons who frequently do battle with the sons of Winonah.

Callings: Guardian, Lover, Healer

Purviews: Health, Passion, Prosperity, Epic Stamina, Fortune

MAUDJEE-KAWISS, FIRSTBORN SON

Alias: The Warrior

Maudjee-Kawiss is the first son born to Winonah. His name translates roughly to "The beginning son" and is as much a title as it is a name. His name denotes his responsibilities to all that come after him. He is a powerful warrior who can best nearly any foe and his Scions likewise excel at all physical endeavors, being possessed of great might and prowess.

Unfortunately for Maudjee-Kawiss, he tends to take after his father and seems to have inherited Ae-pungishimook's Titanic demeanor. He doesn't get along with others very well over long periods. He is incredibly brash and quick to rage. His first instinct is to solve any problem, or perceived slight, with violence, general uses of force, and displays of strength. Others learned quickly to give him a wide berth, fearing what he may do if provoked. Maudjee-Kawiss knows he makes people uneasy, partly because everyone else is so weak. Consequently, he doesn't stay in any one place for very long. If he gets wind of gatherings of strong warriors or where there is a good fight to be had, he'll head toward adventure.

He does circle back around from time to time to check on the well-being of his people. He carries a grudge like no one else, however. When he does find himself in Anishinaabek country he's most likely to try to stir up some sort of fight against any western pantheons in the area.

The Scions of Maudjee-Kawiss have a hard life. He is known to take them when they are four, train them to be warriors and soldiers, and then abandon them in bad situations to see how well they survive. If they please him he keeps an eye on them, helping them from time to time or inviting them to go hunting or fighting with him. If he is not pleased with them, he ridicules them and then casts them away, giving them no further assistance.

Though he has a general dislike for many of the pantheons from the west, Maudjee-Kawiss has been seen on many occasions hunting for wendigo and other titanspawn with Oshoshi and Skanda and Artemis.

Callings: Warrior, Leader, Hunter

Purviews: Beasts (Bear, Eagle), Epic Strength, Epic Dexterity, War

PUKAWISS, THE DISOWNED

Alias: The Disowned, Unwanted

Pukawiss was the son that Ae-pungishimook didn't understand. He had no interest in fighting, sports, or any of what Ae-pungishimook thought of as manly attributes.

He was squeamish, turned away from killing in general, and couldn't even look at dead animals. He was instead much more interested in playing, and listening to the world around him, laughing, telling stories, He was distracted with the miracles of life all around him. His father saw none of his interests as practical and he became known as Pukawiss, which translates to "Unwanted" or "Disowned." Ae-pungishimook actively estranged himself from the boy. Pukawiss' impulses took him down the road of becoming a dancer, actor, and quite the prankster. His pranks and tendency to tease his very tender brother Nana'b'oozoo caused such a rage in his sibling that Nana'b'oozoo chased Pukawiss under a mountain and tried to kill him by summoning thunder and lightning to destroy the mountain. Using his own magic, Pukawiss escaped death, though he let his brother think he had killed him, watched him mourn and suffer with guilt, then started pranking him again to let him know he was still alive. He's still doing that, but now has the whole internet to do it with.

Pukawiss has little patience for the self-absorbed or the foolish, so he took little notice of his father's abandonment of him. Everything else was so much more interesting. As he witnessed the miracles of life, he also spied the drama and lessons inherent in all things around him that went unseen by most. He began to manifest these through pantomiming and acting and dancing out what he saw as the secrets of the birds, and beasts, and insects, and plants. Sometimes he would get so into character that he would walk around pretending to be a squirrel or rooster or snake. Eventually, he became a dancer and entertainer who traveled from place to place bringing lessons and stories to all the people. While his father had disowned him, the people were drawn to him and the things he had to say. He invented many dances (most notably the hoop dance) and imbued them with meanings that served to raise the consciousness of those who viewed him in action.

Scions of Pukawiss are born storytellers and dancers. They find they have an inherent spiritual restlessness that causes them to look at structures, traditions, and nature, see the flaws and flows in them, and then put them into motion through their own body and voice. There is an inherent spiritual, therapeutic quality to what they can do and how it allows them to pull stories out and put them in a place to be examined. While some can be found on the big stage, they more often than not are drawn to places where people gather so they can move them in more intimate spaces. They also have a tendency to want to do things their own way. While they may be attracted to traditional dances, they will invariably mix them with modernity and sudden inventiveness to make new things. This makes them sometimes unpopular among more traditional gatherings, where custom is adhered to like dogma.

Callings: Trickster, Lover, Sage

Purviews: Epic Dexterity, Artistry (Dance, Acting, Storytelling), Passion (Mirth), Fortune, Deception

CHEEBY-AUB-OOZOO, CHIEF OF THE UNDERWORLD

Alias: Jiibayaabooz, Chipiapoo, Moqwaio, Ghost of Rabbit

Cheeby-aub-oozoo is the third son of Winonah and Ae-pungishimook and born of an altogether different temperament. He didn't have the brashness of the first son or the rampant silliness of the second. He was the serious one. He was similar to Pukawiss in that he had an inherent connection to the world around him, but where Pukawiss was content to extract the story and drama before him, Cheeby-aub-oozoo needed to know the why of everything. He had a tendency to go stock still and go into strange trances where he listened in rapturous presence to the beauty of one thing. He could do this for hours at a time. Others found it at least a little weird and disconcerting.

Before long he began seeking out the places where the Manitou dwelled, as he could hear them whispering to the animals, plants, and birds. He started speaking to thin air and completely creeped out everyone around him. The people were worried he was possessed, or worse, that he would attract bad Manitou to them all. Instead, the Manitou gave him visions and he came to bring new ways to the people.

The Manitou taught him how to make special drums and special ceremonies that would allow the people to communicate with the Manitou. He taught the people how to fast and seek visions from the Manitou and how personal Manitou would help them if spoken to correctly. He brought forth new chants, songs, and drumming that pleased the Manitou and moved people to dance. Even his brother Pukawiss was impressed and moved to create theater and dances to these songs and rhythms.

He finally got to meet his other brothers at the occasion of Nana'b'oozoo's wedding. Unfortunately, this came at a cost. Maudjee-Kawiss was very displeased with the perceived lack of manliness of his brothers. He chided and shamed them mercilessly, so much the Cheeby-aub-oozo sought to prove his brother wrong and show that he too had might. He got into a canoe to go fight a terrible giant and never came back. They found that he had drowned in the lake that night. Nana'b'oozoo cried so hard that he summoned his brother back from the land of the dead. He rose before all as a phantom, and everyone yelled at Nana'b'oozoo to stop and send him back. Cheeby-aub-oozoo returned, and the elders of the dead were so moved by him that they asked him to be their "ogimauh" or leader.

He remains in the land of the dead for the most part, venturing out on occasion. He still speaks with Pukawiss and Nana'b'ooozo but has nothing to do with Maudjee-Kawiss. His Scions are strange people, often seen as odd by others. They have a tendency to be bothered by spirits and have strange bouts of genius that seem to come from nowhere. Most find themselves drawn to communication and community building. Many have found a particular knack for programming virtual worlds and alternate-reality games which allows them, and others, to communicate with Manitou and receive visions.

WISAKEDJAK

At some point Nana'b'oozoo had a really bad day, and the Mantle known as Wisakedjak came to be. Wisakedjak is associated with many, if not most, of the same stories as Nana'b'oozoo, but he's always been considerably more troublesome. While Nana'b'oozoo tends to be a lovable and kind-hearted fool and collaborative trickster, Wisakedjak, on occasion, starts trouble just to see what will go down. He's often sorry when it goes bad, but the deed has already been done, and he sometimes moves to fix it but just as often runs away. Then there was that one great flood incident, which he is, again, really sorry about.

The chief difference between the two is that Nana'b'oozoo is trickster who grows alongside humanity, teaching them to avoid mistakes by making them himself. Wisakedjak is a trickster in the more *European* model — he will punish and inflict savage lessons, which can be fatal if the learner doesn't adapt.

Callings: Liminal, Hunter, Judge

Purviews: Beasts (Wolf), Death, Epic Stamina, Artistry (Song, Music), Order, Darkness

NANA'B'OOZOO, THE PROTOTYPE OF MAN

Alias: Manobozho, Wisakedjak

The last-born son of Winonah, Nana'b'oozoo is also the child that she (first) died giving birth to. Though he is a son of Ae-pungishimook, his father never came to visit or teach him the way he did with the other sons. Only his nookomis, Geezhigo-Quae, was there to raise him. Though he grew quickly to be a man, without the direction of a mother and father, his demeanor and perception of the World remained someone childlike and selfish. He wanted to be beloved of the people, and already had great power, but emotionally was given to extremes, and would never allow anyone to teach him anything. As a result, though he is always trying hard to do the good thing, he is often impeded by his failings. Besieged by bouts of laziness, cowardice, rage, and hunger he is easily distracted and often stumbles into more than his fair share of trouble. While he fashions himself a mighty warrior and hunter, he winds up more often than not a lucky fool. He discovered and cultivated many great powers which, of course, made his fumbling and successes greater by an order of magnitude. The people recognize him as a champion, however, and they also recognize that he is a Manitou, and Manitou can be a bit unstable by human terms.

There was a rumor going around that said that Nana'b'oozoo got into a canoe one day with Geezhigo-Quae and left the World. He was frustrated with the people's lack of acceptance of him and their tendency to laugh and ridicule his foolishness. Yet, he noticed, they were quick to accept the strange ways of the newer pantheons. Of course, he failed to acknowledge that people were still sore about the whole "inciting riots and making the creator flood everything" incident, maintaining "That wasn't me, it was that other asshole, Wisakedjak."

The rumor was that he was going to stay away until the people missed him, apologized, and were ready to accept him. Of course, the only one spreading the rumor was Nana'b'oozoo, and when people realized it was yet another one of his schemes they just started ignoring him. Nana'b'oozoo has always been short on patience, however, and when no one cried over his absence he started quietly looking for ways to come back but didn't want to lose face. He discovered social media in the modern World, and his Incarnations invariably become a social-media celebrity. His video channel alone is pretty popular, and he has millions of followers across various platforms. The fact that many people are laughing *at* him while he speaks his mind on World politics or his burlesque performances (which are very good, apropos of nothing) doesn't seem to bother him much. As far as he's concerned, he now has thousands of friends, and even if they're laughing at him it's a short trip to laughing with him. The downside is that Pukawiss' Incarnations troll his brother's pages something fierce. He downvotes all of Nana'b'oozoo's videos and regularly reports his pages to be fake. Some folks subscribe and follow him just to watch the epic rages to which Nana'b'oozoo can be pushed by his brother. Every now and then someone tries to be as witty as Pukawiss on Nana'b'oozoo's posts, and that usually doesn't go well for them.

Nana'b'oozoo's Scions find that they have their father's knack for bumbling their way into and out of trouble. Luckily for them, Nana'b'oozoo is nothing but attentive to his Scions. He wants to make sure that he is around as a dad in some form for them.

Callings: Trickster, Hunter, Warrior

Purviews: Beasts (Rabbit, or Wolf for Wisakedjak), Chaos (Water for Wisakedjak), Epic Dexterity, Fortune, Journeys.

THE ORENDA

The two *other* sons of Winonah are the foundation of the Iroquois pantheon, recognized as a subset of the Manitou (the Orenda, of course, argue that the Manitou are a subset of the Orenda). The two sons are twins named Ioskeha and Tawiscara — "Good Mind" and "Bad Mind". Ioskeha tends to the things above the World, and Tawiscara tends to that which is below. Good Mind creates the things that are seen as wholesome and Bad Mind creates and tends

to those things that are seen as dark and twisted. Together, they created humankind, who inherited both capacities for good and bad. The brothers are both necessary for the World to flourish, and a subtly different pantheon of spirits and Heroes grows up around them. They see the Manitou and the four brothers as rivals, due to the presumption of seeing themselves as the true descendants of Geezhigo-Quae. Sometimes Winonah isn't even part of their telling of how they came to be. While Ioheska doesn't pay much mind to the four brothers, Tawiscara takes their existence personally (although, he kind of takes *everyone's* existence personally, so the Manitou don't take *him* personally). Nonetheless, he tries to cause conflict between the four brothers, and everyone else from time to time. Tawiscara has a particular dislike for Nana'b'oozoo.

IOSKEHA

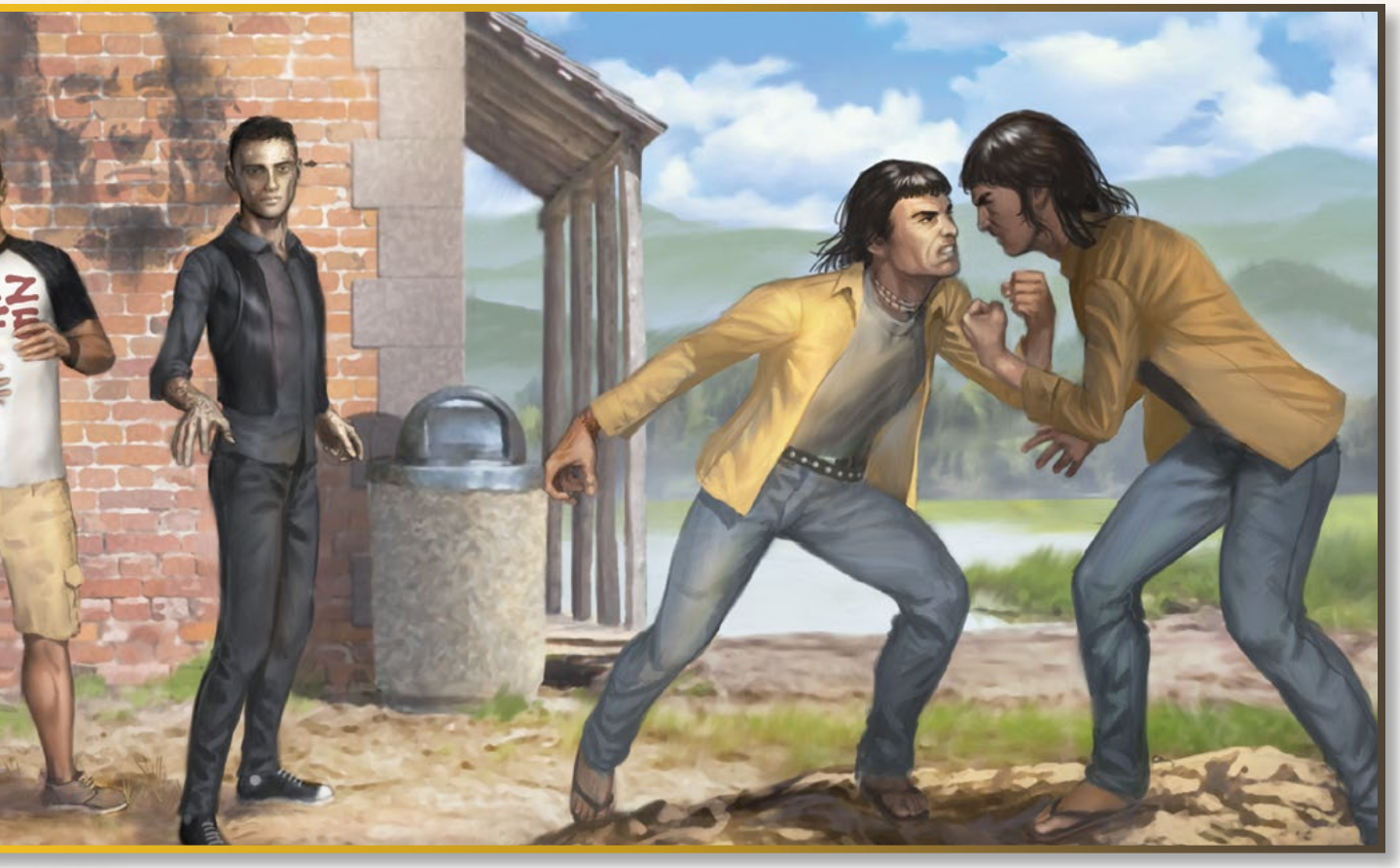
Alias: Sapling, Good Spirit, Good Mind, Right-Handed Twin, Little Sprout

One the twin sons of Tekawerahkwa, another Mantle of Winonah, Ioskeha represents all that is good about mankind. Legends say that he fought with his twin brother Tawiscara in his mother's womb, and it was their discord that killed her in childbirth. The twins were raised by their grandmother, Sky Woman, but Ioheska and his grandmother never got along, as she believed his brothers lies about him. Ioskeha and his brother created the Iroquois people, and added to all the things inhabiting the World. Ioheska created all the things of light and above the World, imbuing mankind with all of its most noble qualities.

Ioheska strives to be the best representation that he can be to the people. He was gifted with the knowledge of bows, maize, and growing and did his best to pass this knowledge on to the people so that they could care for themselves and grow strong. Ioheska is a mighty creator, but one of the things he regrets is that he never got to know his mother before she died. Even though he doesn't go out of his way to interact with them, this disconnect with his mother is something of a sore spot he has built up between himself and the sons of Winonah. This enmity is somewhat fueled by Tawiscara, who tries to convince Ioheska that the four brothers somehow stole their mother from them. If they are fighting his brother, he typically intervenes to drag his brother off to deal with the dark twin himself. Only he has the right to punish Tawiscara.

Ioskeha's Scions are the kind of people who are just *nice*, and will typically do the right thing no matter the consequences. They have an incessant need to make things and provide service to others. Ioskeha cares deeply for his Scions, and will go out of his way to help them and to teach them lessons. He does not coddle them, however; if he feels they need a hard lesson, he makes sure they get it. He encourages his Scions to do simple services like volunteering in soup kitchens and building houses for the poor, as well as monster hunting and fighting off the Titans. A great many of them are peacefully protesting corporations and governments harming the land and the people.

Callings: Creator, Leader, Warrior



Purviews: Forge, Sun, Sky, Order, Beasts (diurnal mammals and Birds, Insects, and Fish), Health, Passion (all light emotions)

TAWISCARA

Aliases: Flint, Bad Mind, Left-Handed Twin, Molsem

Tawiscara is the other twin born to the Tekawerahkwa. He is, to put it plainly, the sociopath of the two. Compulsively driven to do terrible things, even Tawiscara's birth was wrong — he so disliked his twin brother that he made his own exit from the womb, killing his mother by ripping through her side. Like Ioheska, Tawiscara is a powerful creator, and responsible for creating many things in the World that Kitchi-Manitou did not. For everything of light and beauty created by Ioheska, Tawiscara created something foul.

Tawiscara is always dying but never dies and, instead, embodies death. His form is ugly to look upon, and it resembles that of a diseased man.

Tawiscara is a spirit that is entirely driven to do things that run counter to what is healthy to humanity, yet he actually cares in his own twisted way. He cares about the wrong decisions, the dark moods, the pains, and the rages. He wants people to experience the dark side of life, and gave all of his creations such gifts. Bats are content to fly at night and snakes are content to envenom their prey; why humanity persists in the resisting the gifts he gives to make them stronger he does not understand. Tawiscara loves a good drama (and absolutely loves daytime reality shows). The only other thing that drives him crazier than Ioheska getting in his way and undoing his work is when the pretenders who claim to be the grandchildren of Sky Woman (Nana'b'oozoo and his brothers) cross his path. Any time Tawiscara can bring harm and chaos to those pretenders he acts on it, warring against the others.

Many Scions of Tawiscara exhibit antisocial tendencies. Trouble follows them like a magnet. Yet they, like their father, are creators, and will often band together with each other to initiate large, elaborate schemes or become so worried about doing what they can that they never stop to consider if they should. The fighting between Tawiscara and Ioheska, and between their Scions, is so great that most other Manitou give them a wide berth. Engaging one means both turn on the interloper.

Callings: Creator, Trickster, Warrior

Purviews: Chaos, Deception, Darkness, Death, Passion (all dark emotions), Forge, War

COSMOLOGY

Manitou are, by default, unseen to humans. While they coexist in the world they are mostly non-physical beings with invisible manifestations. The exceptions are those Manitou who are inherently physical; they can be seen. Manitou are as the World: Some things are untouchable and unseen, and some things are seeable and touchable. It follows then that humans stumble across Manitou all the time and can, on occasion, stumble into, and trespass upon, their homes. This is why it is wise to treat all places with

respect, for one never knows what place a Manitou has come to dwell in or protect. In general, the Terra Incognita of the more powerful Manitou are a bit harder to come across. These places may be hard to find, or require particular tricks or tenacity to access, but they are nonetheless in the World of men. The rivers are known to have secret entrances to places where the Manitou called Memegwesi, small water spirits, live and also to where dwell tribes of the strange Nibiinaabe (mermaid- and merman-like creatures).

There are some places that are far enough removed that they might as well be considered other realms. This includes the elusive and unmapped Skyworld and the frightening Underworld.

The Manitou of the pantheon mostly choose to live incarnated physically in the World, enjoying Worldly experiences and guiding their Scions. Cheeby-aub-oozoo is the exception, for he dwells in the Underworld, and Kitchi-Manitou really doesn't manifest, per se, anywhere.

Skyworld

Skyworld has been said to be somewhere just above the clouds and/or somewhere on the moon. It is a place filled with Manitou that mankind has never met. Only Geezhigo-Quae left Skyworld and came down to the World. In Skyworld, there is a great tree that reaches from the cloudy base of Skyworld and extends its branches up into the stars. It was a hole by the roots of the tree through which Geezhigo-Quae descended/fell to the world. Getting to Skyworld is difficult for any Manitou that cannot fly. Even then, only the wicked would go there without permission from Kitchi-Manitou.

Underworld

The Underworld is said to be literally *under* the World, accessible through deep lakes and underwater caves. It is filled with the spirits of the deceased and other strange Manitou that no living person has communicated with. Cheeby-aub-oozoo is the ogimauh, or leader, of this world. The Manitou of the Underworld were so impressed by his ability to speak to the Manitou and teach the humans how to listen to the Manitou that they decided he would be the best intermediary for all involved. Somewhere in the deep shadows of the Underworld also dwells Tawiscara.

Both of these places, in ages past, were completely inaccessible to normal people. In the modern age, this has changed. Now, with the help of the great machines of man, humans might accidentally trip across Terra Incognitia connected to Skyworld on the moon and to the Underworld deep beneath the Earth. The Manitou in these places have little to do with humans, and next to no concern with their existence. Some may not even be aware of humans and barely interact with other Manitou. Others may be waiting for doors to be opened so they may pour out to ravage. Technology allows the curious to extend the reaches of their explorations so that they may bump shoulders with these Manitou. This, of course means that humanity stands the chance, more and more, of disturbing Manitou that should not be disturbed.

Titans

The Manitou count all mysterious divine and semi-divine beings as Manitou and try their best to engage each other with respect. They presume all were created by Kitchi-Manitou and, therefore, all have a purpose. There are some Manitou, however, that are given to a rapacious need to just destroy things in the foulest way possible. Something got into them that has left them all kinds of twisted and perverse. These Manitou are titanspawn.

Not all titanspawn are extreme. Some just have natures that make them dangerous for them to be around humans. These get checked by the Heroes and Scions of the Manitou, and are allowed to do whatever task they do best. Others must be destroyed on sight. Some giants have their own tribes. On occasion one will amass power and begin to raid and destroy the cities of man and the Terra Incognita of other Manitou. These get slain much like the wendigo. Beyond the giants, most notable titanspawn are strange twisted beasts.

Ae-pungishimook: (The West Wind, Death). This giant lives in a great cave somewhere in the west. He is more powerful than any other giant and destroys what he wishes, relatively unimpeded. He is the father of the four brothers, having sired them by forcing himself upon Winonah over several generations. His relationship with his sons is tenuous. He is most proud of the might and ferocity of Maudjee-Kawiss but fairly disappointed in all the others. He at least tried to get to know Pukawiss, but he completely abandoned Nana'b'oozoo,

MANITOU OF THE UNDERWORLD

The Underworld is home to a great many Manitou that have no interest in coming up to the World. There are no living things in the Underworld, so there aren't Manitou that manage the life of things. There are Manitou that guide the dead to where they belong and ensure that the dead stay out of the world of the living and vice versa. They tend to pathways, and gateways, and forgotten things, and things whose time in the World has come to pass. There are also the monstrous things. Some are hungry, some are angry, some are warlike, all are nightmares. These dark Manitou would love to come into the world and rampage like a wendigo. The Manitou that guard the ways ensure this doesn't happen. Cheeby-aub-oozoo can pass freely between the two worlds. Tawiscara, however, is always making or inciting more nightmare Manitou and helping them get into the World to see what havoc they cause.

who sought him out for vengeance. Nana'b'oozoo could not even begin to match Ae-pungishimook's power, or his bow that shot volleys of flame and lightning. He soundly beat Nana'b'oozoo. Ae-pungishimook, however, impressed with his son's tenacity, gave him the *pawaugun* (pipe) as a token of an agreement of mutual respect.

Purview: Death

Virtues: Rapacity, Dominance

Wendigo: (Windigo, Widjigo, Windego). The greatest of the titanspawn among the Manitou is the wendigo. No one quite knows for sure where it comes from. The wendigo, or windigoag plural, are giant cannibals who only exist to destroy humans and other corporeal beings. Especially active in the winter, they feast with great gluttony on the flesh of their victims. They especially hate Nana'b'oozoo and his Scions, as Nana'b'oozoo is said to have wiped out an entire tribe of over 40 Windigoag singlehandedly, drowning them all in a lake because they can't swim.

Mishibizhiw: (The Water Lynx, Underwater Panther). Somewhere deep in the water dwells Mishibizhiw. It is a terrible creature that is some strange cross between a furry, cougar-like thing and a dragon sporting the antlers of a deer, a series of sawtoothed ridges along its back that are as sharp as knives, and a long prehensile tail made of copper. It preys upon all who venture into its waters. It is rumored to be the thing that actually drug Cheeby-aub-oozoo down into the water and drowned him, sending him to the Underworld. It can appear as small as normal cougar or as something Titanic that destroys everything in its path.

Misiginebig: (Mishi-Ginebig, Great Serpent, Wewiwilemita Manetu). These strange giant serpents lurk in lakes and like to eat humans. There are many and all are extremely malicious, having no real reverence for life. They are enemies of the Animikii (Thunderbirds) who go out of their way to slay them with extreme prejudice, lest they find their nests and eat their young.

Aniwye: (Aniwo'ye, Mishi-Zhigaag, Giant Skunk). Aniwye is a man-eating skunk of absolutely colossal proportions. It would rampage, slaying everyone with its terrible musk. People affected by its musk would grow sick, wither, and die. Nana'b'oozoo stumbled across it and kind of "killed" it by shattering it into all the skunks in the world. Its essence remains, however, and it will, from time to time, assemble enough of itself to rise again. Scions of the four brothers seek out any evidence of its rising and put it down before it figures out how to amalgamate its disparate skunk bodies into one giant monstrosity again.

Primordials

The chief Primordial of the Manitou is Kitchi-Manitou: the Great Mystery, creator of all things, people, and Manitou. Creation began with the vision and dream within Kitchi-Manitou, sometimes known as Gitche-Manitou, other times as Chi-Manidoo. Through this dream, the Primordial had a knowing of the universe, and an experience of all it could be. Kitchi-Manitou immediately set into motion making this dream manifest, creating what we know to be the physical World. In the World, Kitchi-Manitou created and placed all the beings that would cohabitate in all ways. This included all plants, animals, fish, birds, insects, peoples, and Manitou. This is all that it did.

Once creation was done, Kitchi-Manitou left things to the created beings so that they would, in turn, create and grow the World and shape it even as they were shaped. Humans in particular inherited the capacity to dream as Kitchi-Manitou had dreamed. This allowed a human to find their purpose in the World and showed them which creation they were to make manifest.

On occasion, Kitchi-Manitou imparts power to a mortal in the form of a dream. This is how its own Scions come to be. Such Scions are impulsively drawn to find their particular place in the World, driven by the dream that they must make manifest. They have to create, or, in some cases, destroy something. In this way, Kitchi-Manitou ensures that the World stays in motion and that the people always have protection against the titanspawn, bad Manitou, and twisted humans.

The Primordial reaches out and connects to humans who seek guidance from it with great frequency, though never through Incarnations. It only manifests to other Manitou through messengers, portents from Skyworld, and dreams.

Callings: Creator, Judge, Sage

Purviews: Fortune, Stars, Prosperity, Sun, Darkness, Forge

RELIGION: MIDEWIWIN

The major World religion that centers around the Manitou is that of the *Midewiwin*. Those who practice the religion in the World are referred to as *Midew*. Male practitioners are called *Midewinini* and women are called *Midewikwe*. Midewiwin is a state of being more than it is a role and translates to something like "the state of being in midewi." The whole idea gets turned into medicine men by outsiders, but that's wrong. Medicine men, or doctors, would be *Mashkikiwin*. Midewi truthfully doesn't have a direct English translation. The closest attempts would be "spiritual," "mysterious," or "sacred." This state of midewi is necessary to be able to connect with the Manitou to receive visions and favor. Most practitioners are only found on reservations, as they prefer to practice without the influence of outsiders. There are those, however, who are trying to popularize the teaching again in Anishinaabe social groups in urban areas.

In general, there is also the belief in *dodaem*, these days more commonly called totems. The idea of dodaem is that there is a personal Manitou that oversees the needs and affairs of every person. People are born into one of the tribal clans, which have a family dodaem. The major clan dodaem are bear, bird, fish, catfish, crane, deer, loon, and marten. Within a clan there are also several sub-totems of the same type as the main dodaem. These totems can be connected to by anyone, but members of those clans have particular

favor. The clan dodaem is, in effect, a Manitou relative. In addition to the clan totem, a person would seek out which Manitou would be their personal guardian. That guardian could appear or manifest as any non-human animal, bird, insect, or plant. A person could have multiple dodaem in their life. The dodaem could be convinced to lend the particular attributes with which they're associated to a person, help them resolve obstacles, or teach them new skills.

Many ceremonies are devoted to acknowledging the presence of powerful Manitou and their effect in the World. These ceremonies include, but are not limited to, the Midwinter Ceremony, the Feast of the Dead, Raven Festival, Painted Pole Festival, War Dance, ceremonial feasts for each season, and various rites of passage (birth, naming, first kill, puberty, dream seeking, marriage, and death).

BIRTHRIGHTS

Birthrights for the Scions of the Manitou come in many different forms. The most common are Relics in the form of weapons, utility items, and clothing as well as strange creatures and magical animals representative of a personal or clan dodaem.

CREATURES AND GUIDES

Animals: General creatures of nature of the same type as the clan dodaem that attach themselves to the Scion as a pet and companion and guide. They tend to be bigger and more robust that normal animals of their type with particular qualities or attributes that really stand out (brave, tenacious, intelligent, swift, sharp-eyed, etc.).

Animikii: (Thunderbirds) These creatures are tribes of great, magical, eagle-like creatures that serve Muzzu-Kumik-Quae. They are more commonly called thunderbirds. They can control winds and rain and create lightning. They can shape-change into a human form and appear as human but prefer to stay among their own kind. While similar, they are different from the Wakinyan-Tanka who is the mighty "thunderbird" of the Lakota. Wakinyan-Tanka is a god in and of itself and has its own Scions. The Animikii are believed by some to be related to it but are such distant descendants as to be a different kind of creature. A Scion who is favored by the Animikii has no connection to Wakinyan and is as likely to go mad seeing it as anyone else.

Bagwajiwinnini (Pukwudgie): These diminutive, hirsute wildmen are benign, though given to small acts of good-hearted mischief. Like gnomes, they will make themselves at home in a Scion's house or ride around with them in a backpack or purse. They are fond of Nana'b'oozoo's Scions because they make them laugh just as Nana'b'oozoo once made the children laugh when they were plagued with despair.

Nibiinaabe: (Mermaids/Mermen) These water spirits are like merpeople and are found in riverbanks and docks. They will befriend Scions who spend most of their time in or around the water.

FOLLOWERS

Clan: Human relatives within your clan, most likely Turtle for Heavy Followers. They also might be someone who has a personal dodaem that is the same as, or connected to, the dodaem of the Scion. All of the Scions of the Manitou tend to attract their fair share of activists who feel like they have more authority by connecting with a being of power. This can be a double-edged sword.

RELICS

Club of Maudjee-Kawiss: This mighty club was wielded by Maudjee-Kawiss long ago when he stole the Wampum from the bear people. It allowed him to best nearly any foe with but a single stroke.

Spirit Rifle: While bows and arrows are all good and exotic, younger Scions like the modern feel of these enchanted rifles. They must be charged with a war dance and have their bullets blessed by blood. It fires the bullets with unerring accuracy and burns the flesh of titanspawn.

Winonah's Jingle Dress: This ornate medicine dress is made of buckskin and covered with small tin cones from shoulder to hem. The sound of it frightens weaker titanspawn and confuses the stronger ones, making it hard for them to focus.

Hill Striding Moccasins: This leather footwear, beaded with symbols of clouds and birds and lightning, allows the wearer to move at great speed.

RELATIONSHIPS

Wendigo are everywhere. People are led to believe in this modern time that the wendigo are dying out, but in truth they are adapting. These giants are melding in, and among, the peoples of the world, feeding slowly and amassing their forces. In the dark of the night they can descend on people in the shadows of ghettoes and slums and feed while no one pays heed. The growth of man into the places that used to belong to the Manitou is also awakening strange new Manitou who are either variations of the wendigo or something worse.

In response, the Manitou have begun guiding their Scions and followers to go hunting in the dark, cold places in the world of men and kill these awakening titanspawn before it's too late. They remember the old days when whole armies of the things would descend on a winter night and wipe out a village.

Geezhigo-Quae, watching and listening to the stories of other Scions and Muzzu-Kumik-Que, fears that something bigger is in motion and if they don't work with others to stop it there may be another flood soon as a result.

Of the other pantheons, the Manitou relate best (as a whole) to the Kami and Òrìshà. These groups have a similar understanding of the fact that there are many uncountable spirits. Even the more powerful spirits must connect with and respect the smaller spirits to maintain harmony. Kami are quick to recognize Manitou as Kami, just as Òrìshà are quick to see the Manitou as Òrìshà. Since the Manitou also

PANTHEON PATH OF THE MANITOU

Path Skills: Medicine, Occult

Virtues: *Pride* and *Dream*. The Manitou never stop doing and providing for their people. As they strive to make the World a better place there are internal forces at work that keep them moving forward as much as they get in their way.

The Manitou are prideful to a fault, without a doubt. Pride stems from their father, and pride defines them all in subtle ways. Though they are not necessarily hierarchical, they do like to be acknowledged for their Deeds and stature, and jockey for position amongst themselves. Many a Manitou will fly into an uncontrolled rage or begin a vindictive plot when they feel slighted. Some have much shorter fuses than others, but it is one of the main reasons that the people don't invite the Manitou, or their Scions, to live among them for long periods of time. They are Heroes, but rarely champions. While their pride can be the thing that makes them move to solve a problem, if it doesn't go their way the damage they do in a burst of anger can exacerbate the problem beyond measure. Even the greatest of Manitou must learn to communicate with the lowliest of Manitou so that altercations can be avoided, but the learning is always a journey.

Yet the Manitou are not static beings. They each have a purpose that is given to them in a dream and in the dreams they give to others. That purpose keeps them fidgeting about, always. It is rare for a Manitou to stay in one place for very long because the hunger to physically act on their dream purpose begins to bring disquiet after a time. Being restricted causes such unrest. They cannot escape their natures. This can cause them to be manipulated by the savvy and the unsavory among men and Manitou.

Signature Purview: *Dodaem*. Dodaem refers to the ideas of action, heart, and nourishment. The people believe that there is a Manitou for all things in the world. This spirit oversees the well-being and functionality of its charge. Before any undertaking these guardian Manitou, called dodaem (or totem) must be acknowledged with respect and your intent made known. Additionally, your own dodaem must be invoked and sought out. It will give you dreams of how to accomplish the thing you wish to do and can be convinced to intervene with other Manitou on your behalf to get them to use their abilities and shape the world to achieve your desired goal.

Tobacco is a plant that seems to resonate with the Manitou. Making physical or burnt offerings of it allows communication to be established and acknowledges respect for the workings of the world and the place of the Manitou and their charges. In addition to tobacco, proper prayers are required. These prayers aren't limited to sitting and praying. They often include songs and chants as well as dances. Once connected, if the Manitou decide in your favor, then miracles can be made to happen.

adopt this approach there is an interesting back-and-forth flow of Scions across these pantheons.

OTHER PANTHEONS

While there had been contact with both Tuatha and Æsir in the past, the advent of the colonization of the Americas increased this contact greatly. While there is a tenuous amount of respect between the groups, they see each other as rivals more often than not. Particular sets of individuals get along more than others. Maudjee-Kawiss, always finding his brothers lacking, has found some comradeship among a few of the other warrior/hunter gods. He has gone so far as to invite some more regularly into his wendigo hunting war parties. Nana'b'oozoo is bothered by this. He feels left out and that both the people and his brothers are too quick to accept the strangers when they never quite seem to accept him fully. It was apparently enough to make Nana'b'oozoo leave. He made sure everyone knew.

Geezhigo-Quae is happy to foster Scions from all pantheons, as is Winonah. Nana'b'oozoo is happy to have anyone who'll hang out with him.

The Manitou know that the Teōtl see them as barbarians, but they don't care. They'd rather avoid the Teōtl altogether, as the Manitou perceive the group from the south to be more than a little obsessed, intense, and uptight.

GREATEST WEAKNESS

With the growing interest in the other pantheons, the Manitou are providing dreams to more and more people to lead them to reclaim culture and language. Unfortunately, for this to be done, Pukawiss knows that new traditions and songs must be created — and some things must be destroyed. In this, tradition has become their greatest enemy. Convincing their people to embrace new songs and stories has been hard. Nana'b'oozoo may have hit on the solution by being so enthralling to the younger tribes, causing them to dig deeper into spiritual tradition and adapt them to their modern lifestyles, but this causes generational strife anew.

THE NETJER OF EGYPT

I have not uttered lies.
I have not uttered curses.
I have not been angry without just cause.
I have not acted (or judged) with undue haste.
I have not felt remorse.
— From the 42 Negative Confessions to Ma'at

It always begins and ends with the water. Some of the Netjer claim that eight Primordials — or maybe Titans — called the Ogdoad arose from the primeval and chaotic waters of Nu, creating the World as a mound rises from the falling flood waters, given space by the creation of Re. In others, the Primordial Atum, divinity without peer, created the Ennead Titans, who themselves gave birth to the Gods. The God Ptah has claimed at times to have built the World as a grand project, but he's demonstrably young... though he has significant evidence to the contrary. Both the Ogdoad and the Ennead exist, and the Gods can produce evidence for every origin.

Truly, the Netjer originated in ancient Egypt over 7,000 years ago. In the earliest days, the people, *remet*, worshipped one or two Gods who acted as patrons for the region from individual cities. These cults rose up around stories and names of Gods, but they did not understand the full breadth of the Netjer any more than they understood the course of the Nile. As people traveled between cities, the Gods' influence also spread, causing conflict between those who were used to the undivided attention of their worshippers. Some Gods always enjoyed the attention of all the people of Egypt, using different names between different cults to deceive the other Gods. None know when it began, or with whom, but the pharaohs in Upper Egypt claimed they were divinely appointed to rule all of Egypt, and the Gods backed them. In short order, the land was unified, and so too were the Netjer. Since then, the Gods of Egypt have endured through cultural, mythic, and physical changes to the World.

They have fought with the Yazata and the Theoi, even had some scraps with the Gods of Caanan, but in the modern era the Netjer have no enemies but the ones they've faced daily for millennia. The pantheon concerns itself with the concept of *ma'at*, living a just and true life. They believe this can be achieved through balance and order, seeking justice and leading through just acts. They are at constant odds with their antithesis Titans, who seek to disrupt social order and spread injustice.

Where once the Netjer commanded worshippers in the millions, they now look over hundreds of thousands. Their followers are no longer located solely in Egypt, but instead circle the World. Yet Egypt lives in their *ib*, their hearts. Even if it's no longer the superpower it once was, the Netjer are never far from the sands and silt, both literally and metaphorically.

PRINCIPAL MEMBERS

For the Netjer, Gods come and go. Sometimes it's the same God, under a different name; sometimes an old God falls out of favor, people stop worshipping her, and a new one with a new name takes her job. Those Gods don't just disappear; instead, they end up with small, bit roles among the intensely political greater pantheon. Wordy rhetoric and poetry fill their days and nights, and there's little room even at the bottom for the ambitious — but even kind, balanced Heru was devious and vicious in claiming his kingship. This means there are thousands of Netjer Gods, lesser Gods, and Titans who would love to fill the roles of the principals, but only a few have held mortal interest and the political will of the pantheon for more than a few centuries, and few have the mettle and the will to sacrifice virtue to climb to the top. At times, a collection of nine Netjer Gods and Primordials, the Pesedjet, was worshipped, but the modern World shows a different series of faces.

ANPU, WEIGHER OF THE HEART

Aliases: Anubis, Anapa, Yinepu, Upauaut

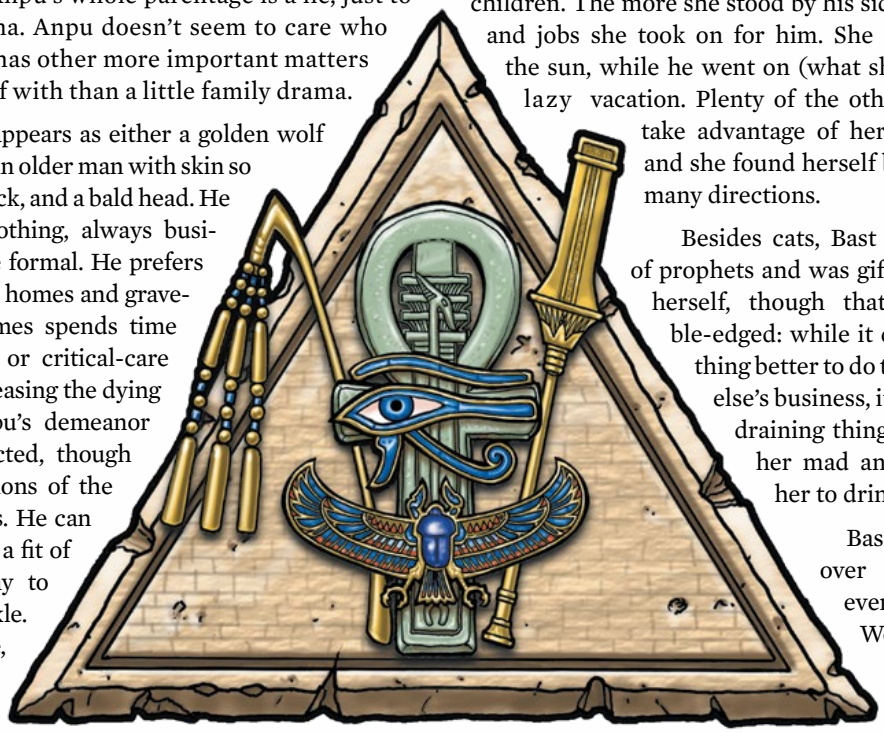
The jackal-headed God, Anpu, weighs the hearts of the dead in Duat, determining if they are worthy to pass into an afterlife. Otherwise, he tosses them to Ammut, who devours

GET THEM TO THE GREEK

In popular culture, most of the Egyptian Gods are known by their Greek names rather than the classic Kemetic. Hathor rather than Het-Heru, Isis rather than Aset, Anubis rather than Anpu, Osiris rather than Wesir. We're guilty of it ourselves in this book: talking about Hermes-Thoth and their shared patronage of wizards and whatnot. They're listed here properly, but if it helps players to adapt, adjust, and engage with their themes, go ahead and use the Greek names. The Gods won't mind. Probably.

them. For a short time, he shared this duty with Wesir, but he usually still functions as judge of the Underworld. He took to guiding the dead through Duat to the scales, and presiding over funerals. Ultimately, *ma'at* decides who has led a true and just life, and Anpu never cared if he was the one to read the scales.

Anpu is one of the older Gods of the pantheon, one of Re's children, though he is unsure as to who his mother really is. Bast has always claimed that title, though sometimes Set claims Anpu's whole parentage is a lie, just to stir up some drama. Anpu doesn't seem to care who spawned him; he has other more important matters to concern himself with than a little family drama.



Today, Anpu appears as either a golden wolf who can speak, or an older man with skin so dark it is nearly black, and a bald head. He wears all-black clothing, always business attire or more formal. He prefers to frequent funeral homes and graveyards, but sometimes spends time in nursing homes or critical-care wards as a doctor, easing the dying into oblivion. Anpu's demeanor is calm and collected, though he holds the passions of the jackal he embodies. He can be loyal, or turn in a fit of rage, leading many to believe he is fickle. Anpu isn't fickle, he's impassioned, and isn't afraid to show it when it matters to him.

Likewise, Anpu's Scions are full of passion. They are loyal and devoted followers who take it upon themselves to ensure people do not die before their time, but try to ease the dying into death with a gentle hand. They have the passion of the jackal, even if they do not know how to control it. These Scions tend closer to the Virtue of Justice over Balance, allowing their passions to guide them.

Callings: Guardian, Judge, Liminal

Purviews: Beast (Jackal), Darkness, Death, Order

BAST, GODDESS OF WAR AND PROPHECY

Aliases: Sekhmet, Bastet (alternate mantles)

Bast started as the Goddess of war in ancient Egypt, patron of lions and cats, the most fearsome hunters of the wild. She took her duty seriously, fighting against the Titan serpent Apep who sought to overthrow Re. She stood by Re's side as his bodyguard and protector, one of his many children. The more she stood by his side, the more duties and jobs she took on for him. She even took time as the sun, while he went on (what she assumed) was a lazy vacation. Plenty of the other Gods sought to take advantage of her warrior prowess, and she found herself being pulled in too many directions.

Besides cats, Bast is also the patron of prophets and was gifted with prophecy herself, though that ended up double-edged: while it did give her something better to do than fight everyone else's business, it was a terrible and draining thing that nearly drove her mad and definitely drove her to drink.

Bast wars with herself over her own nature, even in the modern World. When she is calm and contemplative, she goes by Bast, the prophet and gentle guide. When visions of the future become too much, the old warrior surfaces within her. Bast appears as a woman with long, straight black hair, light-brown skin, and flashing green eyes. Talking to her takes patience and daring; her dual nature makes it difficult to know who you're really talking to at any given time. However, if you check for alcohol on her breath, it's relatively easy to figure out.

Bast's Scions embody her warrior prowess and nature. They sometimes gain her abilities of prophecy, but it is not nearly as debilitating to them as it is to her. She is a hands-on God, guiding her Scions through the difficulties

presented by their warlike nature, leaving them surprisingly well-adjusted, despite their drunkard mother.

Callings: Hunter, Guardian, Warrior

Purviews: Artistry (Dance, Music), Beasts (Cats, Lions), Epic Dexterity, Fertility, Fortune, Health, Moon, Sun, War

HET-HERU, MOTHER OF THE NETJER

Aliases: Hathor, Bat, Sekhmet

Het-Heru is the Goddess of the sky, love, fertility, and birth and is the mother to all the Netjer. She is one of the oldest of the pantheon, and many say she was born of the Primordials. Re claims he made her, but some believe she gave birth to him. Either way, as the sky she gives birth to the sun each morning and takes it to bed each night. And as such, her association with Re is one of mother-lover. She and Sobek also had a wild fling, earning her the title Mother of the Nile, which then led to a short interlude with Khnum. She spends her evenings with Djehuty while Re is in the Underworld, though he has his own wife. She even spends quite a bit of time with Wesir, gaining the sometimes duty of leading people to the Underworld. Thankfully, Re is not a jealous husband. She often comes back to Heru, though, hence the name *Het-Heru* (House of Heru).

BAST, BASTET, SEKHMET

Sekhmet and Bast were the same deity, once, but aren't any longer. The Goddess Het-Heru once wore the Mantle of Sekhmet, a twin sister fighting alongside Bast. Sometimes Bast takes back the Mantle of Sekhmet, and sometimes Het-Heru does; sometimes, all three appear in the same place, which puzzles the conspiracy theorists of the Netjer. When she's Incarnated in the World, Sekhmet drinks to forget her visions and fights anyone who crosses her — and she could be Bast's twin sister, albeit of a rougher disposition. She spends most of her time in a drunken haze in some spot of the sun. She frequents bars, pubs, wineries, boxing rings, and sports matches — pretty much anywhere she can find a drink and a good fight. She has Epic Strength and Wild in addition to Bast's Purviews, more of a lioness than a cat.

Bastet is another Goddess entirely. She may *also* have once been one of Bast's divine Mantles, but the current Goddess Bastet was most certainly once a Scion of Bast, and she grew far apart as time went on. Bastet is associated with cats and fertility, but also with prophecy and guardianship. Her Scions are sometimes hard to distinguish from Bast's, but woe betide any Scion who can't keep all three straight.

Above all, she is the embodiment of a mother, and acts as mother to the Netjer. When Aset looked to become pregnant, she went to Het-Heru to help fashion her golden phallus, though neither speak on the subject. When Heru lost his eye to Set, Het-Heru took the piece of the moon Djehuty offered and sewed it into Heru's socket. And, when someone threatens the Netjer, Hathor protects them. She has on more than one occasion possessed the Mantle of Sekhmet, driving her into a bloodthirsty rage against the Netjer's enemies only to be lulled out by Re feeding the warrior Goddess alcohol.

Het-Heru appears as the most attractive woman a person could behold, and equally as the most matronly woman anyone has ever seen. She takes on roles that allow her to be both nurturing and sexual: sometimes as the madam of a high-class escort service, sometimes as the chic movie star who adopts 15 children. Hathor's Scions are equally compassionate, helpful, and above all charismatic. They often gain her ability to heal and create. The only relationship problems they face are the ones that arise from having too many at once.

Callings: Creator, Lover, Healer

Purviews: Artistry (Music, Dance), Beasts (Cow), Beauty, Fertility, Fortune, Passion (Love), Sky

HERU, LORD OF THE BLACK SOIL

Aliases: Horus, Nekheny

Heru, God of skies and kings, King of Egypt, Scion of Aset and Wesir. Set cut Wesir to pieces — discarding the latter's genitals in the process — and Aset put him back together, forming a magical golden phallus with which to impregnate herself. Some say Heru is Nut's child, born on a fifth day granted her by Djehuty. Aset maintains he is her own son, though refuses to speak of where her golden phallus came from.

When Heru was born, his uncle Set sat upon the Egyptian throne. Through birthright, the throne was Heru's, but Set refused to give it up. This led to battles and years of disputes, which most of the other Netjer watched with nervous anticipation or the occasional playing of both sides. Re once gave Heru the sun to use as his eyes, the better to rule the people; later, he gave Set a golden spear to gouge those eyes out. Set was only able to claim one, and Heru was able to replace it with part of the moon granted by Djehuty. Through all the fighting, Set and Heru eventually reconciled their differences and split Egypt between them (after a sexual encounter that gave Set a golden crown), to the relief of the rest of the Netjer.

Heru spends his time protecting mortal kings and rulers from unfortunate fates, but also protecting the people from unwise rule. A great tactician and warrior, he's a proud leader, but one who takes time to deliberate before taking action. Most of the Netjer adore him, and he is quite popular with the pantheon's followers. In modern times, he appears as an athletic youth with light-brown skin and toned musculature, though he is missing his left eye. He often takes roles that people routinely look up to, such as a political leader, a sports star, a judge, or a firefighter. He

is dedicated and usually pursues his goals with a singular mind and passion, to the point of obsession.

Heru's Scions are similarly driven and goal-oriented. They emphasize justice, but have a hard time finding balance, often resorting to vengeance as a form of justice and using more force than absolutely necessary. They prefer roles that allow them to express their leadership prowess, taking jobs in law enforcement (often punishing abuse or corrupt fellow cops) or rising as reform-minded CEOs of corporations.

Callings: Leader, Guardian, Warrior

Purviews: Beasts (Falcon), Moon, Order, Sky, Sun, War

ASET, GODDESS OF MAGIC AND REBIRTH

Aliases: Isis

Aset is the sister and wife of Wesir, born of the Primordial of the heavens, Nut. Her other brother Set cut Wesir into pieces in order to take his throne. Enraged, Aset stalked across the world collecting pieces his pieces to restore him. Unfortunately, Set had absconded with Wesir's genitals, and Aset was unable to restore her husband fully. Beyond that, Anpu forbade Wesir from leaving Duat after returning to life, and therefore could not retake his throne. Undeterred, Aset decided to get pregnant with Wesir's heir before she left Duat to displace Set.

Re, already deeply involved in the Wesir and Set affair, was angry at Aset for bringing Wesir back. Instead of letting him bully her though, she tricked a snake — a titanspawn of Apep, to be precise — into biting the God, inflicting him with eternal poison. Re, knowing when he had been outmaneuvered, agreed to give Aset one secret of her asking in exchange for the antidote. She asked for his name, the one mystery he held out against all the Netjer, and the one thing that would give her full power over him when she needed it. Re gave Aset his name, reducing him to parity with the rest of the Gods.

Aset is arguably one of the most powerful Gods of the pantheon, a stunningly capable magician and expert politico. Cunning and brave, she refuses to back down, no matter the odds, and as a Judge of the Dead she never breaks a deal once she makes one (though she won't make one until she gets what she wants). In the modern World, Aset appears as a lush woman with thick black hair and smooth dark skin. She takes on many different roles, always powerful, picking her place and persona to best fit her own personal plans. She loves to the point of doting, but her loves receive a fierce reminder that she could, would, and has done anything to ensure their safety.

Aset's Scions are protectors. They too hold her ability to stand up to danger without backing down, and seek roles as doctors (especially as heads of reproductive medicine), teachers, and family protectors. She takes a great interest in her own children, and tries to meddle in their affairs, feeling she knows what's best for them. Aset is also responsible for creating Wesir's Scions, and though she tells him that he is solely responsible for their upbringing, she cannot help mothering them as well.

Callings: Guardian, Healer, Trickster

Purviews: Beast (Kite, Serpent), Death, Deception, Fertility, Fortune, Health, Stars

KHNUM, GOD OF ARTISTRY

Aliases: Khnemu, Atum

Khnum, ram-headed God, God of the Nile, of pottery, of rebirth and the evening sun. One of the oldest of the Netjer, it was Khnum who crafted you from clay, placing you within the womb of your mother. The first humans were created from the falling tears of Re, but Khnum repeats the feat 1,000 times over every day.

Constantly creating, Khnum produces wondrous works of art, then moves on to new things, leaving his old creations behind. It isn't that he's careless of his charges, he's just preoccupied with the sheer joy of creation. His first works were pottery, but after Anpu introduced alabaster, he took a liking to working with stone and metals. Khnum's love of art extends beyond that of the material and into singing and dance as well, inspiring passionate performances from his followers. Khnum inspired Ptah to architecture, and his influence still shapes the way Ptah turns constructions into works of art.

In modern times, Khnum is a lithe man with brown skin and a dancer's body. He sometimes appears as a nimble ram, though he spends most time in his human form. His Incarnations allow him to pursue art and artistry of some kind: a dance instructor at a world-class institute, a street artist in a big city, an opera or Broadway singer, or an art teacher at a primary school.

Khnum's Scions share his love of art and artistry, and are often performers or artists themselves. They always embark in creative pursuits, from writing and journalism to material or performance art. Their creativity does not stop at art though, as they are all highly intelligent and use their creativity to come up with unexpected solutions to problems. Khnum's children seek balance, believing that true balance is the height of artistry.

Callings: Creator, Healer, Sage

Purviews: Artistry (Dance, Pottery), Beasts (Ram), Earth, Health, Water

WESIR, KING OF DEATH AND RESURRECTION

Aliases: Osiris, Sepa, Serapis

Wesir embodies both death and resurrection. The Primordial of the heavens, Nut, laid across her husband, Geb the Primordial of earth, fornicating day in and day out. As Nut grew gravid, Re grew jealous and forbade her to give birth on any day of the year. Nut turned to Djehuty for help, and the God brokered enough extra moonlight for four more days. Nut gave birth to four children, one for each

WESIR'S CHILDREN

Physical procreation isn't the only way to create a Scion, but Wesir's peculiar situation means he cannot adopt, and his attempts to Choose a Scion work idiosyncratically, if at all. He's at the mercy of Aset to make them for him. Aset loves Wesir deeply and wouldn't deny this to him, but she isn't above extracting some deal out of her husband-brother in the process. Besides whatever aspect she chooses to pass on, Wesir must be solely responsible for them once they are born. Those few Scions of Wesir, Chosen or born, are treasured and honored by the God — but above all, closely watched and judged.

extra day. The firstborn of her children, Wesir, became king of Egypt. Set, jealous, killed Wesir and cut him into pieces, throwing them across the World. Wesir's sister and wife, Aset, picked up (most of) the pieces of Wesir's body and begged Ma'at and Djehuty to help her restore him.

They convened in Duat, where Anpu had Wesir's ib on his scales. Anpu, who felt Wesir had died before his time, allowed Aset to take the heart before he weighed it. Djehuty gave Aset the spell she needed to bring Wesir back to life, and Ma'at gave her the power to do so. When they tried to leave, Anpu forbade Wesir from leaving Duat, for his body was incomplete. Wesir agreed, but only if he could be the ruler of a piece of Duat, as Set had snatched his place as king. Anpu agreed.

The modern Wesir is a shrewd businessman, though his perfect fairness and just nature tends to mean his deals aren't as profitable as most would like. He has made his kingdom within Duat a place of relative comfort and luxury for those who pass into the afterlife. He has power over resurrection, sometimes granting it to those who ask, though always at a high price. Wesir spends his time brokering deals and garnering power over those who wish to cheat death.

Wesir's Scions are not born in the same way as other Gods' offspring, and he is instead at Aset's mercy for creating Scions. In this way, his children do not fully encompass all his aspects, though he gets to pick and choose which aspects they do have.

Callings: Creator, Judge, Leader

Purviews: Beasts (Ram, Centipede), Death, Earth, Fertility, Order

PTAH, GOD OF CRAFTSMEN

Aliases: Petah

Ptah is a newer God in the Netjer pantheon, though he's still thousands of years old. An ascended Scion of Re, he rose to prominence due to his activities during life. Ptah was one of Re's favorite children, claiming one of the God's earlier Mantles — or, perhaps, the Mantle of a rival — to take a name meaning *breath of life*. He also assumed a marriage to Sekhmet in the process. Ptah worked to engineer and build up the city of Ineb-Hedg, now known as Memphis. Before he left, he had laid down the architectural groundwork for the city, inspiring others to build and craft a city so great it became the seat of the kingdom.

As Ptah ascended, he distinguished himself from his father in many ways, though ultimately Re's aspects still clung to him like a protective shield. For a time, the people of Ineb-Hedg worshipped Ptah as the sun God, and had given up Re completely, which angered Re. While he still had care for his son, he was not thrilled about a replacement. Re took the sun away from the people for three days and exiled Ptah back to Ineb-Hedg to correct his problem. In that time, Ptah taught the people how to build fires for light, and increasingly elaborate architectures and buildings, and soon they started to worship him as a God of crafters and builders.

Nowadays, Ptah is a master craftsman, who designs and creates buildings, engineering projects, and complex machinery, each a work of art on its own. He enjoys taking on complex tasks and building elaborate works. He enjoys working in architectural firms, creating innovative designs. He may also appear as an engineer, a computer programmer, a carpenter, and sometimes as a toy maker. Anything he creates tends towards simplicity of design with complex actions or mechanisms. He created games and puzzles and enjoys designing brain teasers that even he has problems solving.

His Scions are similarly possessed with the ability for design and challenge, leading them to areas of both crafting and puzzle solving, such as cryptology. They are logical people, who easily see the underlying mechanisms of a problem or situation and can approach solutions in a rational way. They are not prone to rash action, though they do have passions that can get in the way of their own logical thought. They seek justice over balance, believing their logical processes will prevent biases.

Callings: Creator, Liminal, Sage

Purviews: Beast (Bull), Fire, Forge, Prosperity

RE, BETWEEN TWO HORIZONS

Aliases: Atum, Atum-Re, Khepri, Ptah-Re, Ra, Tem-Ra

Re is the great creator of all, God of the sun, Earth, and the Underworld. The God of many names, the God with no name, his mere presence creates order and justice. Re is the father of many of the other Netjer, and some say he even created himself. He is the oldest of the Netjer, barring only Khnum, the other great creator. Re's history is hard to pin down, because he goes by so many different names, and if there were any rivals to his might, he cast them down. Only naming him removes his power over others, and only Aset knows his true name, the revelation of which reduced his power to mere divinity.

Re has three different faces, based on the sun: morning, afternoon, and evening. In the morning, he is bright and welcoming, acting on impulse with vibrancy and enthusiasm. In the afternoon, Re is terrible and exacting, demanding action with harsh impunity. In the evening, he is thoughtful and rational, though tired and unwilling to do work. He ventures through the Underworld during this time, where the pantheon entire (and chiefly Set) defends him from Apep.

Today, Re appears as a tall, dark-skinned man with impeccable taste in fashion. He changes persona depending on his mood, sometimes bright and cheery, working as a dance instructor or gardener, sometimes gruff, working within a military command position or doing hard labor, and other times tired, as a retired teacher, or elderly community leader. His Scions adopt one of his three personas, and sometimes shift between them as they grow in power. Usually mellower than their father in whatever aspect they embody, these Scions follow ma'at rigorously, often leaving Balance behind in the pursuit of Justice.

Callings: Creator, Judge, Leader

Purviews: Beast (Falcon, Scarab, Ram), Death, Journeys, Fire, Order, Epic Stamina, Sun

SET, LORD OF THE RED DESERT

Aliases: Seth, Sutekh

Set, God of the desert, disorder, and violence. Despite this poor reputation, Set's a loyal member of the Netjer, though his impetuous nature gets him in trouble more often than not. He did kill his own brother, but he's also saved Re from Apep more times than anyone can count, and continues to do so every night — the one time he took the night off, the World ended in Apep's belly, until Set slit it open and drew the World back forth. He is the warden of the desert, and protects the people who travel through it. Set believes in lessons, and thinks people cannot follow ma'at unless they have truly learned what justice is first. These "lessons" sometimes come out of nowhere and more often seem like pranks than anything else. Despite how Wesir and Heru view him, Set holds no animosity towards the rest of the pantheon.

In modern times, Set appears as a nondescript young man with dark skin and a long nose. His mood is mercurial, but he enjoys taking on roles in which he can teach hard lessons. He has been a marine sergeant, a parole officer, a crime boss, and a director of a boot camp for troubled youths — but he's never around at night, having somewhere else to be. Wherever he appears, people remember him not by his looks, but by his temperament, always jovial but with a distinctive mean streak.

Set's Scions are similarly driven to teach lessons and guard others, but often end up taking these things too far. Much like their father, they're fiercely loyal to the Netjer, doing any task or job asked of them, though they may demand a price. They make good spies, working in jobs that require the ability to their hide emotions and true motivations.

Callings: Guardian, Leader, Trickster

Purviews: Beasts (Salawa, Fish), Chaos, Earth, Epic Strength, Journeys, Sky, War

SOBEK, GOD OF FERTILITY AND PROTECTION

Aliases: Suchos

The crocodile, Sobek, is a fierce protector. He, along with Bast, represent the animalistic warriors of the Netjer. Where Bast serves as a personal guardian for Re and others who request her services, Sobek is a monster, albeit one who protects the common people. The great son of Neith and Set was placed in charge of the Nile River to protect people from the dangers it presented. The river's fertile soils infected Sobek, however, leading him to spend a great deal of time impregnating and propagating crocodiles in the Nile.

When the Netjer called him back, he had nearly lost himself, growing increasingly aggressive towards people. He's a shameless, wild, destructive beast, but one with a protective nature that wins out in the end. Sobek always extends his protection over children, regardless of who they are. He guards the deep waters of his home, the mysterious place where Re and Wesir fuse every night. He guards the World by fishing the fish of chaos, spawn of Apep, out of the Underworld river to devour them. He guards Heru, catching and returning the young God's cut-off hands. He continues to grant fertility blessings to those who ask, in the hopes that his effect on their children will make them better people than their father.

Today, Sobek rarely spends any time as anything other than a crocodile. If he does spend time as a man, he is a large black man with thick, muscular arms and legs. He sometimes spends time in orphanages caring for children without parents, or as a district attorney taking on the cases of abused and battered children.

Sobek has a larger percentage of Scions than any other God in the Netjer due to his promiscuous ways. His Scions gain all his aspects of viciousness and passion, leading them to one side or the other of criminal activity or law-enforcement roles. In turn, they gain the benefit of a father who is deeply invested, who takes great care in providing for his own children.

Callings: Guardian, Hunter, Lover

Purviews: Beasts (Crocodile), Epic Stamina, Fertility, Passion (Lust), Water

DJEHUTY, GOD OF KNOWLEDGE

Aliases: A, A'an, Asten, Thoth, Hab, Kenti, Mehi, Sheps

Djehuty, the ibis-headed God, God of all things known by the Netjer. Djehuty holds all the knowledge — magical, mystical, or otherwise — in the known World, and is responsible for language, writing, mathematics, and ritual. He is also the God of the moon, spending his time in the night sky watching over the people as they tell their stories,

passing on knowledge as Re watches over them in the daytime, or weighing hearts with Anpu. Djehuty is married to the Primordial Ma'at, the balance to Ma'at's justice. He cares about keeping the Netjer in balance, leading him to get involved in more than one spat in which one of the Gods gained an unfair advantage over another. He isn't without his own sense of justice though, and balancing two sides of a dispute sometimes involves taking one side down a peg or two. Many of the Gods respect Djehuty and seek him out for aid, but he isn't necessarily the most well-liked.

In modern times, Djehuty spends a great deal of time keeping up with scientific and technological advances. He sometimes appears as a professor or student at a university, a computer guru within a bleeding-edge company, or a Las Vegas magician's technical director. Short, with dusky brown skin and close-cropped, silky black hair, Djehuty always wears glasses — not because he needs them, but because he is convinced that they make him look more intelligent. He is an expert in nearly every field, and if asked may spend an inordinate amount of time chatting about his newest interest. Those who seek his advice must exercise patience, as he is likely to impart more information than they can process.

Scions of Djehuty are subtle, tending to have a single special interest or topic that they obsess over. Other Scions would describe them as nerdy, though they exhibit the same knack for gathering and processing information as their father. They're also as concerned with balance as their father, seeking to find a way to mete out justice through complex plans.

Callings: Guardian, Liminal, Sage

Purviews: Beasts (Baboon, Ibis), Deception, Health, Fortune, Moon, Order

COSMOLOGY

The Overworld: Nu and Pet

Nu and Pet are both Terra Incognitae associated with the Netjer in the Overworld, though Nu is itself a larger portion of the Titanic (possibly Primordial) ocean and isn't safe for visiting. The path between the World and Pet, or between Duat and Pet, is long, arduous, and often requires climbing a physical and metaphysical ladder. Few bother to make the climb unless in great need, such as when Aset went to ask for assistance in resurrecting Wesir, and later when Wesir climbed the ladder from Duat to offer his thanks.

The Overworld of Nu is vast and boundless: an ocean that not only feeds the rivers of Heaven, the World, and the Underworld, but seeps into the deepest part of Duat, the Sixth Hour of the Night, creating a pool of water in which Re is reborn in the night. Nu is chaos, waters that dissolve the damned souls that wash out of Duat.

Pet is a wide plain held up by Shu in the middle, and by the four pillars — themselves deities called the Heh — in the four corners. It has four directions with four gates, bordered by the horizons and the zenith. The plain itself is a giant freshwater swamp that the Sun Barque sails through daily; at the east and west are solid banks, with the only other solid ground being the Beaten Path of Stars, the Milky Way, leading through the swamp.

Pet is a "domain of passage, not of residence" — nothing dwells here, except the stars on occasion. Besides the two mountains that mark the way westward, Pet features the eastern bank of Heaven, location of the Field of Reeds and the Field of Offerings. The morning sun Re is born here from the lap of Nut, cleansed in the Reeds, fed in the Offerings, then sent off on his journey to the West.

The Underworld: Duat

The closest to an otherworldly home the Netjer have is their Underworld, Duat —sometimes called *the* Duat. Many of the Gods live within it, Set defends it during the evening, and others visit at certain times of the day or year. The Underworld is split into the main body, or Duat, and a paradise called A'aru. Running through Duat is the great river, Iteru, which connects the Underworld to the mortal realm via the sky. Re floats along this river in the sky during the day as the sun, and through the Underworld at night. He is flanked on either side by Bast and sometimes Djehuty, while other times Khnum sits beside him. A'aru is separated from Duat by a series of gates leading from the Hall of Two Truths. Duat only lacks the souls of those whose hearts weighed more than Ma'at's feather. These hearts are fed to the crocodile-headed monster, Ammut, destroying the soul.

Duat is divided into 12 Hours, the time it takes the barque to sail through, when the realm transforms into a battleground against Apep. Wesir and Re become one, and eventually the sun is reborn to leave the Underworld. The dead are judged nightly; if a Scion of the Netjer dies, she must be rescued from the Underworld before she's judged in the Sixth Hour of Duat.

Hall of Two Truths: The Hall of Two Truths holds the scales of Ma'at, used for weighing the hearts of the dead to determine if they are worthy to pass into the afterlife found in A'aru. Wesir sits there, before the gates to A'aru, with Djehuty and Anpu weighing the ibs of the dead brought to him by Anpu. Anpu also resides in the Hall of Two Truths, though he travels often enough. Ma'at is said to embody the scales Wesir uses.

Mesektet: Re's boat as he passes through Duat is named Mesektet. Here, and along the banks of the Iteru, is where many of the Gods make their homes. Hundreds of Gods of the Netjer live on the boat other than Re, and every night it becomes a fortress protecting the sun God. While Mesektet is a boat, it is also a floating realm of its own. Re grants a few chosen souls — often those of important political leaders — access to the boat in lieu of going on to A'aru. These souls enjoy the lavish lifestyle provided by Re in return for doing odd jobs and favors for the God. This awards them the ability to return to the World and visit loved ones at times, and is a prized place among the dead.

A'aru: Translated as "reed field," the souls of those who have led just lives and followed ma'at pass into A'aru to spend eternity. Here, the river of the Underworld feeds lush islands of fertile earth and gentle sun, allowing people to live at ease and without any worries or needs. Hathor provides an abundance of milk and meat for those who spend their time here, and Wesir provides plenty of comforts and luxuries to keep the souls content. This part of the Underworld is a literal paradise, though it is reserved only for those who have been judged worthy; even the Gods do not reside here.

Primordials: Ma'at and the Ogdoad

Ma'at not only represents Primordial Truth, she *is* Truth, and expresses herself through the expression of her nature. The Primordial herself sometimes walks the banks of Pet, appearing and speaking directly to Scions of the Netjer on topics of import. She appears as an androgynous individual with short-cropped black hair and mahogany brown skin. She speaks in riddles and enjoys putting on an air of mystery, though she is likely to give up the façade if presented with a real conundrum. Even Truth can contain multitudes.

Then there are the Ogdoad, the eight deities. Originally worshipped by humans in Egypt, they encompass all the unknowable things, such as night and day, sky and sun, the joy of taking action and the endless pull of inaction. As unmoving and unbending creatures, they could not change as the fickle minds of their worshippers did, and were left behind. The Netjer come to them for aid and sometimes advice. Some of them embody elements that would oppose ma'at but their mate — their intrinsic other halves — embody elements that uphold ma'at. This constant balancing act gives many Netjer pause when seeking to oppose or gain aid from the Ogdoad, but thankfully most are content to reside beyond the World.

Titans: Apep, Isfet, Aten

Most of the Netjer's enemy Titans embody elements antithetical to ma'at. They sometimes work alone, but often seem to oddly synchronize, and how not? Apep and Isfet both promote chaos, while Aten promotes a singular order around himself.

Apep: The mighty serpent brings chaos and disorder wherever he goes. He tries to eat Re in a nightly war, and is constantly locked in battle against the Gods in Duat, in which the weapons have changed with the times. Some of the Gods fear what will happen if Apep acquires nuclear weapons, Re's own fire; the Titan and his cults occupy a great deal of the pantheon's attention, and cause a great deal of radicalized trouble throughout the World.

Purview: Chaos.

Virtues: Rapacity, Dominance

Isfet: A being who literally embodies evil and Deception, opposing truth and seeding lies. She exists as the counterpart to Ma'at, working in tandem with her fellow Titans to destabilize cultures and spread lies and misinformation. Her cults work to suppress stories of truth and oppress hardworking journalists in the World, and she is keen to work with other pantheons in order to promote narratives that diminish or humiliate the Gods and *remet* (people) of Egypt before the countries of the World.

Purview: Deception

Virtues: Fecundity, Submission

Aten: For a brief time, the people of Egypt were monotheistic. Amenhotep IV (who took the new name Akhenaten) decreed that the Gods of the sun were one, a single expression of a single deity, Aten. The first example of monolatry in the World was, naturally, a Titan cult. Aten is solipsistic and grandiose, refusing the divinity and legitimacy of all other Gods and acknowledging them only as supernatural pretenders unworthy of true worship. A powerful, bearded man shining forth with rays of the Sun, Aten's light corrupts all it touches, filling them with the fiery certitude of the zealous. His cults borrow a great deal from classic Kemeticism and the more modern monotheistic religions, shimmering white robes and dried cakes to promote communion held in golden monstrances. They bind and bend entire communities to Aten's will, fearful worshippers clutching papyrus scrolls and powerful firearms.

Purview: Sun.

Virtues: Fecundity, Dominance

RELIGION: KEMETICISM

The people in the World who worship the Netjer call themselves Kemeticists, from Kemet, the ancient word for Egypt. They worship all the Egyptian Gods in their different roles, but most place more importance on living a life that exemplifies ma'at over individual worship. As in the early days of worship, the current religion is broken down into highly individualistic cults divided amongst cities, each one following a small number of Gods whose Purviews match the needs of the followers. They perform rituals and magic granted by these individual Gods and serve them as loyal cult followers, according to the needs of their city priests.

Any of the Netjer can call upon any cult, though tapping a cult not devoted directly to them is likely to end in miscommunication and unwanted results. No matter what, each cult attempts to follow ma'at and as long as directions are couched in those terms, the Netjer have a deep resource to draw on.

BIRTHRIGHTS

The most common Birthrights of the Netjer take the form of Relics or Creatures, though a few Followers and Guides can be counted within their number. The following Birthrights are unique to the Netjer.

CREATURES

Sha: Sha is the mythical creature created by Set to embody his persona. It has the body of a dog, the head of

PANTHEON PATH OF THE NETJER

Path Skills: Academics, Occult

The Netjer believe in balance in all things and seek to live true and just lives. Ma'at often translates into some form of truth or justice when the philosophy is boiled down, and most of the Netjer seek justice in one form or another. But that justice can sometimes take the form of vengeance or mercy depending on personal bias. At the same time, the Netjer caution to exercise care in determining who and what kinds of justice to use. They maintain that balance is vital, and all things have an opposite that is equally important. Allowing passion to overcome sense and straying too far to one end or another leads to imbalance, which can then spread to all aspects of life. All Netjer are reconciled with their opposites and use them to learn and grow, hoping to maintain a balance that will give them greater insight into leading a just life.

Virtues: *Balance* and *Justice*. Balance is order, harmony, and the place of all things within the World. Yet the World must continue to function and proceed in a way that reveals the truth of all things, for the Netjer know that to lie is to forsake ma'at and lose their place in Duat. Truth may not be *literal* truth, but the proper way things proceed, and thus an even and equitable distribution to all. Justice, by contrast, is about repayment in its truest form. Justice is not just the act of punishing wrongdoings, but is instead appropriate consequences for actions. Justice can be a reward for a life well-lived, and it can be punishment for bad deeds. The philosophy of ma'at holds that the Netjer should endeavor to live just lives, handing out justice to those who deserve it. This pursuit can easily become a singular passion, causing those who follow it to forget the need for Balance.

The Netjer are concerned with the proper and orderly flow of the World, yet all things demand an accounting. Justice pursued too vigorously leads to vengeance and the lack of balance, but over-weighing the scales towards balance permits injustice to flourish.

Signature Purview: *Heku*. The Netjer are concerned with the state of one's soul above all else. A person is made up of multiple parts the Ren (name), Ib (heart), Sheut (shadow), Ba (personality), Ka (vital essence), and Ha (the sum of all these). In sum, all these parts make up the person's soul, their intentions, personality, intelligence, and the life force that drives them. Heku is the magical energy that comes from the life and death of a person.

a giraffe, and the tail of a donkey. It is the only animal that Set allows to follow him, eschewing other spiritual animals.

Spawn of Ammut: This creature normally sits in the Hall of Two Truths and eats the hearts of those deemed unworthy. He is an amalgamation of the three most dangerous creatures found on the Nile — a crocodile, lion, and hippopotamus. Her spawn — technically titanspawn, though few admit this — are domesticated as small pets and used by Scions to track sinful hearts in the World.

Spiritual Animal: All the Netjer are associated with a specific animal. Their spiritual animals are the first of their kind, uplifted to sit by the God's side throughout eternity. Each one shares some divine properties with its master.

FOLLOWERS

Mummies: Corpses animated by Wesir to do his bidding, mummies populate both Duat and the world.

Wadjet: Beings who offer protections to Egypt and others at the behest of the Netjer, their symbol is a stylized eye, often called the Eye of Heru or the Eye of Ra.

GUIDES

Ghosts: While not ghosts in the traditional sense, these souls come from Duat, and are allowed to leave for the express purpose of acting as guides and messengers for Anpu.

Scarab Beetle: The creature who rolls up the sun each night and lets it out again during the day. This creature is imbued with power and wisdom from Re.

RELICS

Amulet of Resurrection: These amulets, created by Wesir, can be placed on a mummified corpse to animate it for a short time.

Book of Going Forth by Day: This book details the steps and spells used to resurrect Wesir. It also details how to get to Duat and how to perform a resurrection — or rather, a prison break before the execution.

Feather of Ma'at: A replica of the feather used to weigh hearts against, containing fragment of Ma'at's justice and the weight of her own soul.

Sekhem Scepter: Wesir's scepter, used as ruler of the Underworld. The scepter denotes power and the vital essence of life energy and resurrection.

RELATIONSHIPS

OTHER PANTHEONS

The closest of the other pantheons are the Theoi, who originate in a similar area of the World. Many of the Netjer followers began intermingling with the Theoi followers, bringing the Gods into contact with each other early in

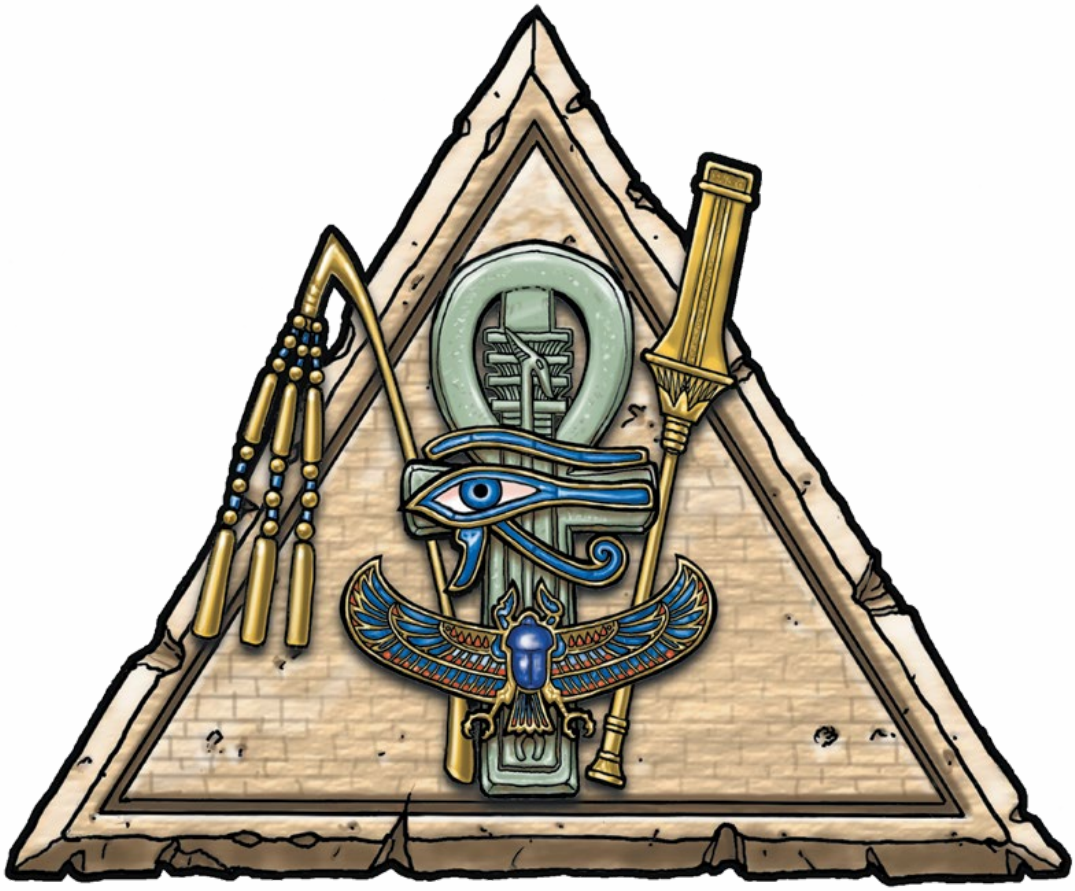
their history. This isn't to say that the Gods of each pantheon are all friendly with one another, though some deep friendships have arisen, such as with Djehuty and Hermes. Re, being of many minds and having much jealousy, is often at odds with members of the Theoi, which of course means Wesir spends a great deal of time with them when he gets the chance. The Theoi also spent a bit of time in Pet and Duat after a brief expulsion from Olympus, something the Netjer have never really let them forget, especially after Egypt became a client state of Rome. Still, things have settled down these past few centuries.

The Netjer and the Teōtl get along to a large degree, finding a great number of commonalities and a proper appreciation of the sun. Both work hard every day and night to ensure the World does not end.

While Set and Loki have developed a bit of a friendly rivalry amongst themselves, often resorting to one-upmanship to an unreasonable degree, the rest of the Æsir have little contact with the Netjer and vice-versa.

Greatest Weakness

The greatest weakness the Netjer face is delegation and separation of duty. Throughout their existence, their followers have attributed nearly everything important to one member or another, to where half the pantheon has been deemed responsible for the sun at some point in their history. They aren't very good at not stepping on each other's toes either. Infighting among the Netjer is intense when they aren't concentrating on fighting off their Titans. This lack of separation can get fierce and vitriolic, and not a few Gods have fallen out of favor over the years due to political fights. Scions are often brought into these internecine conflicts on behalf of their parents, involving themselves in millennia-old grudges based on ideals of justice that have become lost in the reeds.



THE ÒRÌSHÀ OF YORÙBÁLAND

Quando chego no terreiro / As soon as I arrive at the temple
trato logo de louvar / I get right to giving praise
Louvo a Deus primeiramente / First I praise God
Louvo meu pai Oxalá / I praise my father, the King of the White Cloth
também louvo o pai Xangô / I also praise my father, the Striker
e a rainha do mar / and the queen of the sea
Peço licença Deus de Angola / I ask leave of the God of Angola
me dê o salão prá eu vadiar, câmara/ to give me space to kill some time, my friend
— Mestre Joro Grande, angoleiro

After the flood — you know the one — a golden chain descended from Heaven. Either Obàtálá or Odùduwà, depending whom you ask, brought down a seashell full of dirt and a five-toed chicken. The creator spilled soil upon the face of the waters. The chicken pecked, spreading it into continents. Then the Òrìshà descended the chain to prepare the World. We call the place where the World was made Ilé-Ifè, "place of expansion." Here, in West Africa, the Òrìshà looked after the flourishing Yorùbá kingdoms while their neighbors, the Vodun, cared for Dahomey's Fon people.

Two lands. Two peoples. Two pantheons, side by side since time immemorial. Thus the story was supposed to go — until human greed and villainy betrayed, kidnapped, tortured, enslaved, and brainwashed Africans. The trans-Atlantic slave trade shattered lives, families, and religions. Myriad peoples whom evil made one pieced them together anew from broken bones and half-remembered songs, all hidden behind a Christian veil.

The Vodun (now more popularly known as the Loa) and the Òrìshà could have stayed behind, true to themselves to the bitter end. Instead, they rode the slave ships, tasted the lash, and laid down their lives for freedom in Haiti's revolution and Brazil's quilombos. They chose to change, to shatter and reform like humanity. These are the results.

PRINCIPAL MEMBERS

We list Òrìshà principals with Yorùbá nomenclature. "Aliases" gives Yorùbá AKAs (Yr) as well as their common equivalents in Spanish (Sp), Portuguese (Pt), Fon (Fn), Kreyol Ayisyen (Kr), and occasionally English (US), although correspondences across countries and seas are never exact. To circumvent religious persecution, Africans in captivity disguised the Òrìshà as Catholic figures, usually saints, listed under "Syncretisms."

Scion mechanizes Òrìshà and Loa as Gods and Olódùmarè as a Primordial, but remember these are not polite in-fiction terms. While "god," "goddess," and "deity" are popular translations of "Òrìshà" and "Loa," formally speaking these pantheons recognize but one God: the tripartite sun-lord, Olórun/Olódùmarè/Olófin, also known as Mawu Bondye in Kreyol. Syncretism has popularized the appellation "saint," but it's a bit vulgar, like calling a lawyer or businessman a "suit."

Slavery and its aftermath have fragmented and reconstituted Òrìshà and Loa identities frequently and forcefully — and will continue to do so, perhaps before your eyes. Different regions, religions, and worshippers diverge on not only names and stories, but also familial relationships, genders, even ethnicities. If other deities are atoms, with a cloud of uncertainty orbiting a static core, Òrìshà and Loa are quantum particles. Even an individual Afro-Atlantic religionist may recognize many Mantles, or *caminos* as Cubans call them, in a single Òrìshà's identity.

One common relationship map (to which you shouldn't get too attached) identifies Obàtálá and Yemoja-Oboto as king and queen of the Òrìshà. **Òrúnmìlà**, **Èshù** Elègbará, **Ògún**, and Oshóssí are their sons. Odùduwà wrested Ilé-Ifè from Obàtálá and begat Òyó's founder Òrànmíyàn, who begat Ajaka and Shàngó. King Shàngó's wives include **Òshun** and Oya Iyansan. Rounding out the pantheon are the **Ìbejì**, **Òrishà-Oko**, **Òsanyìn**, and Sònpònna.

PRONUNCIATION GUIDE

Yorùbá is a tonal language: an ácúté áccént over a vowel denotes a high tone, a gràvè àccènt a low tone, and no accent a middle tone. So the word "Yorùbá" goes middle-low-high. Following scholarly convention, we don't distinguish morphologically between singular and plural Yorùbá nouns: so "the égún" might refer to one ancestor-spirit, or to several.

Most Yorùbá letters sound like their English equivalents, with a couple of exceptions this book's font unfortunately cannot display. In **Scion,** the Yorùbá letter "s with a dot or short line underneath it" is transliterated and pronounced like the English "sh." We also can't display "e with a dot/line" and "o with a dot/line," so when you read an "e" it might be pronounced either "ay" or "eh," and when you read an "o" it might be pronounced either "oh" or "awh." Also, a Yorùbá "n" can be an entire syllable to itself, and in the case of the name "Kéhindé, that "n" has a low tone that we also can't print.

ÈSHÚ ELÉGBARÁ, THE OPENER OF THE WAY

Aliases: Eleguá (Sp), Exû (Pt), Papa Legba (Fn/Kr), Papa LaBas (Kr)

Èshù can make and unmake a community, and is seen as behind all unusual occurrences in any place. First and last and always, Èshù Elègbará opens the way to begin every ceremony, then closes it at the end. Wanna talk to anyone else on the list? Get at him first.

When Olódùmarè upended his basket of Purviews, Èshù Elègbará shouldered everyone else out of the way to catch the most: travel, language, play, timely and untimely arrivals, ordered and chaotic paths, stories, sex, the passage between life and death — everything between point A and point B. He is the divine messenger, the prime manipulator of the universal energy called àshe. As a lover of games and storytelling, you're his charge. If you feel thankful, he likes rum, toys, candy, and cigars. Leave them at any crossroads. He'll get 'em.

You'll know it's him if you see a kid or an old man in a black-and-red outfit, anything from a linen suit to a Deadpool cosplay. His adult Incarnations tend to have a permanent Omen in their pants, which Olódùmarè probably intended as a curse, but was not received that way. He leans on a staff or cudgel, and not just for dick jokes; Èshù usually has a missing leg and/or a back injury. His sexual appetite is legendary, his Scions many. He expects them to do whatever they want and not bother him about it, although if you manage to buttonhole him and make him laugh, he'll probably take you out for drinks or dinner and somehow charge Obàtálá for it.

Callings: Liminal, Lover, Trickster

Purviews: Artistry (Storytelling), Chaos, Deception, Epic Dexterity, Fortune, Journeys

ÍBEJÍ, THE SACRED TWINS

Aliases: Taiyewo and Kéhindé, Edun, Adanjukale (Yr), Hohovi (Fn), Marassa Dosu Dosa (Kr)

Twins saw the houses of great personages but did not go there; instead they entered the houses of the poor. In Ishokun, Òyó, a farmer had an ongoing infant-mortality problem until he figured out that, oh, of course the troop of monkeys with super powers that he repeatedly drove away from his fields had cursed his wife out of spite. Once he let the monkeys run rampant over his crops, his wife bore two healthy children, the first sacred twins among the Yorùbá. Presumably his farm didn't do so well after that, but he had magic children, and that was what was important.

Yorùbá mothers are now four times more likely to conceive dizygotic twins than any people on Earth. The older twin, traditionally named Kéhìndé, sends the younger twin, Taiyewo, out first, to make sure the World is worth inhabiting. The Twins judge your actions with the clarity and

lack of preconceptions only children have. Wherever they go, animals follow, singing along with them like they're a Disney prince and princess, or animated ponies. Their incarnations are always twin children, though neither has a preferred gender.

Ìbejì tend not to generate Scions traditionally. Any twin, though, can become their Scion, especially if their mother has previously lost children. Because the Ìbejì Visit these Scions young, their adventures often involve their families, and they rarely operate without bands. As often as not, the non-Ìbejì-Scion twin winds up Scion of some random non-Òrìshà divine parent, who generally claims to have no idea how it happened. This phenomenon makes them foundational to Òrìshà diplomacy with other pantheons.

Callings: Healer, Judge, Trickster

Purviews: Artistry (Dance), Beasts (Monkeys), Death, Fertility, Fortune, Prosperity

MORÉMI, THE GREATEST YOR ÚBÁ HERO

Hail to you, Morèmi, oh Great Mother, our sacrificial redeemer. Once upon a time, the Ìgbò people (no relation to the modern Igbo) attacked Ilé-Ifè. Terrified to see not men, but alien beings from beyond the veil assaulting them, Ifè's defenders broke in confusion. Many Yorùbá were captured and enslaved. A woman named Morèmi promised the Esinmirin River a great sacrifice if she could end Ìgbò's tyranny, then allowed the Ìgbò to capture her. Tall and statuesque, she caught the Ìgbò king's fancy. She lived as his wife for five years until, in a moment of weakness, he revealed to her that the Ìgbò spirits were no spirits at all, but mortals in raffia costumes. Morèmi escaped to Ilé-Ifè, revealed the secret, and suggested Ifè's infantry carry torches into battle to burn away the raffia. At the next raid, Ifè routed the terrified Ìgbò, who never returned. But the river Esinmirin demanded the life of Morèmi's son Olúorogbo in return. When she killed him, a golden chain descended from Heaven. Olúorogbo sprang to his feet and scaled the chain into the sky.

Morèmi always has an Incarnation — in fact, a reincarnation — in Ilé-Ifè. The reincarnation, called Chief Èrí, presides over the yearly Edì Festival of purity, which reenacts Morèmi's adventure and sacrifice through feasting, wrestling, and pranks. But the Èrí remains solemn and mournful throughout the festivities, for it is hers to remember Morèmi's grief and loss. On the rare occasions Morèmi Incarnates herself as someone else, she picks unassuming woman in a servile or subordinate position such as an office worker, cleaning lady, or army grunt — the better to spy on the wicked and powerful.

Olúorogbo's sacrifice gave Morèmi an anxious intensity towards her Scions. She chooses them carefully and takes an active role in their lives. Yemoja nags her about being a helicopter parent, but Morèmi's unlikely to listen.

Callings: Guardian, Lover, Trickster

Purviews: Beauty, Deception, Fertility, Fire, Passion

OBÀTÁLÁ, THE KING OF THE WHITE CLOTH

Aliases: Aníyìkáyé, Òrò Oko Àfín Ení Shojú Shemú, Obàtarìshà, Aládé Shéshéfun, Òrìshà-Ńlá (Yr), Oxalá (Pt)

One should not laugh at a person with protruding teeth because the deformity is caused by the fashioner Òrìshà, who made the teeth without covering them with flesh. Obàtálá is nominally in charge of the Òrìshà, although their wife Yemoja hasn't noticed, King Shàngó doesn't care, and you shouldn't even mention the issue to Odùduwà. We use they/them pronouns because Obàtálá bounces between male and female depending on which *camino* — that's what they call Mantles in Cuba and Puerto Rico — you encounter. Obàtálá's *caminos* evince a particularly diverse range of Callings, from his Warrior youth to his sagely old age.

When Obàtálá molded the first humans from clay, Èshù offered them a draught of palm wine. They were too tired and thirsty to realize what exactly they drank until it was too late; Obàtálá's humans weren't quite up to code the rest of the day. They still feel bad about it, so they're now the patron of people with disabilities. Obàtálá was also Ilé-Ifè's first king before Odùduwà busted in and took over, which is the closest thing there is to a Titanomachy around here.

Many of Obàtálá's favorite Incarnations help out disabled people. You might find them working in hospital administration, social services, or a nonprofit. They also like to travel, wandering around as a tourist complete with belt pouch and giant camera. Èshù might not be too far behind.

Callings: Creator, Leader, Judge

Purviews: Artistry (Sculpture), Health, Order, Sky

ODÚDUWÀ, THE GOD-KING OF ILÉ-IFÈ

Aliases: Oòduà (Yr)

The one whose abode covers the entire world, the mighty one of the world, he who blesses his devotees and never causes them harm. King Odùduwà is Ilé-Ifè's tutelary god. He accuses Obàtàlá of getting drunk and falling asleep when they were supposed to create and populate the World, so that Olódùmarè sent Odùduwà after them to finish the job. Odùduwà created the Earth, sparking a long rivalry which ended with Odùduwà seizing Ilé-Ifè from Obàtálá — a conflict that humans ritually reenact every year. Odùduwà and Obàtálá never get along even at the best of times: Odùduwà thinks Obàtálá weak, and Obàtálá thinks Odùduwà stuffy, stuck-up, and presumptive. Even more controversially, Odùduwà alone among the Òrìshà or Loa believes in Titans as a separate category from Gods. He claims to have defeated ancestral spirits of the river, sun, and fire when he first took power in Yorùbáland.

Odùduwà believes in ending threats and problems swiftly and forcefully. The god-king who rules Yorùbáland from Ilé-Ifè is Odùduwà's current Scion and Incarnation. Ritually sequestered from mortal humans, he participates on Odùduwà's behalf in various important ceremonies.

Odùduwà's best-known Scion, Oranmiyan, represents what Odùduwà expects of every child: perseverance and greatness. When it came time for Oranmiyan to leave home, Odùduwà sent three lice to each king of Benin, bidding them care for the lice for three years and then return them. When they succeeded, Odùduwà judged Benin worthy to receive Oranmiyan as their god-king and warrior hero, thus founding the Òyó Empire.

Callings: Creator, Leader, Warrior

Purviews: Darkness, Earth, Order, War

ÒGÚN, THE GOD OF IRON

Aliases: Oggún (Sp), Ogûm (Pt), Gu (Fn), Ogou (Kr)

Ògún prefers to bathe in blood even when there's water at home. If they ever make a movie about the Òrìshà that makes it past Kickstarter, Samuel L. Jackson better play Ògún. He'll kill you. He'll chop your head off with a sword, shoot you with a revolver, carve your innards out with surgical equipment, hit you with a train...anything metal, really. The machete, though, that's his favorite.

One could charitably call Ògún an introvert. He spends a lot of time in the woods by himself or (ever since Èshù convinced the two of them to stop quarreling over hunting grounds) with his brother and hunting buddy Oshóssí. Ògún bulls ahead and clears brush so Oshóssí can creep along and put arrows in dinner.

Ògún wears green and black, he's always swole as hell, and he's serious as a heart attack. When he gets a choice, he travels by rail: He has a hard time getting through airport security, and besides, he legit loves trains. If an old-school locomotive goes by, he'll tell you exactly what make and model it is. So he might be a blacksmith who makes farm equipment or a railroad engineer when you see him. Lately, he's frequently Incarnated himself as a combat medic. That's where he's most comfortable: surrounded by chaos and bullets with a piece on his hip and metal tools in his hands, protecting someone or something he cares about.

Ògún fathers lots of Scions and he's proud of it. Since he likes to see how his kids handle stress, their Visitations often coincide with crises: brawls, opening night for a show, or when a deadline approaches.

Callings: Creator, Hunter, Warrior

Purviews: Earth, Epic Strength, Epic Stamina, Forge, Passion (Fear), War

ÒRÍSHÀ-OKO, THE GOD OF AGRICULTURE

Aliases: Zaka (Fn), Kouzen Azaka Mede (Kr)

Òrìshà-Oko plants no melon; yet he eats its seeds. Once a mortal hunter and soothsayer, Òrìshà-Oko (literally "Farm Òrìshà") is country as hell, but he's a great friend to everyone. You can trust him with any secret, but he'll always tell the truth — and neither of those things is a contradiction to him. He may have a less glamorous job than "lady of the storm" or "master of smallpox," but we all survive by Òrìshà-Oko's power. Any time the Òrìshà can't resolve a conflict themselves, they drag ÒO away from his farm to mediate. When he and Baldr of the Æsir hang out at parties, it's adorable.

ÒO's symbol is the bull behind the plow. All cultivated plants are his domain. He wears no-nonsense workman's clothes in earth tones, and his Incarnations are farmers, hunters, or ranchers, people who live close to the soil and the plants. West African agriculture's sorry state demands most of his attention these days. His Scions have joined those of the Shén Yandi Shennongshi and the Kami Prince Inari in an agricultural think tank, researching new techniques to improve crop yields while campaigning against cocoa plantations' child slavery and wasteful corn ethanol. Òrìshà-Oko's goal is to ensure that no human need ever go hungry again.

Òrìshà-Oko's Scions tend to be unpretentious, generous, and hardworking, the glue holding bands together. When everyone else is too wrapped up in themselves and their own stories to realize "we should figure out who's cooking breakfast this morning" or "we should resolve this personality conflict on the off chance we need to use teamwork in the near future," Òrìshà-Oko's Scions step in to save you from ignominious failure.

Callings: Hunter, Judge, Sage

Purviews: Beasts (of Burden, Birds), Fertility, Fortune, Order, Prosperity

ÒRÚNMÍLÀ, THE POWER OF DIVINATION

Aliases: Ifá (Yr), Orúla (Sp)

Whoever refuses to obey the diviner's words...should be prepared to see Olódùmarè in heaven. Anyone can throw kola nuts or cowries and read how they land. But for serious quandaries, you need a trained diviner, a babaláwo (male) or iyaláwo (female), to perform a formal Ifá divination for you. Bring an offering of money, whisper your question or problem to the offering in secret, and hand it over. The awo throws a divining chain strung with halved palm nuts, or else tosses nuts on a ritual tray, matching the pattern in which they land to one of 256 poems they memorized during training. The awo then counsels you on how to proceed, including recommending sacrifices to any spirits who might be less than pleased with you.

Ifá is synonymous with its Òrìshà, Òrúnmìlà. He's close to Òsanyìn and Èshù, and is the only Òrìshà who regularly talks to Olódùmarè. As befits the voice of God, Òrúnmìlà doesn't go in for fancy Incarnations, dressing in a billowy green-and-gold Nigerian agbada wherever and whenever you see him. He's a working babaláwo even now; if he has time, he'll usually get out the palm nuts for someone free of charge if they recognize him and ask politely. It's who he is: not only the god of divination, but also divination itself.

Òrúnmìlà's Scions gravitate not only to divination, but also to any field which demands a steel-trap memory. Predictably, they make excellent detectives, university

presidents, and pharmacists. They're highly sought after as advisors and consultants.

Callings: Healer, Judge, Sage

Purviews: Fortune, Sky, Stars, Wild

ÒSANYÍN, THE GOD OF HERBAL MEDICINE

Aliases: Àròni (Yr), Ossaim (Pt), Ossange (Kr)

Praise to the owner of herbal medicine. Once upon a time, the master botanist and herbalist Òsanyìn hoarded his knowledge, plants, and concoctions. When Òrúnmìlà complained to Èshù that he needed Òsanyìn's plants to divine, Èshù knocked over Òsanyìn's house. For what it's worth, he insists he didn't realize Òsanyìn was inside at the time. Rocks fell, crushing Òsanyìn like a cartoon coyote. Now he's half his former height, with one eye, one arm, one leg, one giant deaf ear and one tiny hypersensitive one, and a squeaky little voice. But at least now he understands how to share.

Òsanyìn's symbol is the healer's or diviner's staff, topped with a metal bird figure. His herbalism underlies all West African and Afro-Atlantic sorcery — thus its common African-American name, "rootwork." Strangers in a strange land, struggling to apply a different continent's botany to American flora, African root doctors nevertheless were slave society's medical, spiritual, and cultural keystones. In places like pre-Civil War New Orleans, while white pharmacists poisoned rich clients with mercury and opium, poor and malnourished black people enjoyed a higher standard of care from conjurers who had already figured out such techniques as inoculation.

Òsanyìn hates to Incarnate because his new body inevitably suffers some catastrophic accident; waiting for it to happen is just too nerve-wracking. Instead he possesses dolls or children's toys, imbuing them with his weird fast-forward-sounding voice (and giving everyone nightmares). He exhorts his Scions to master a field of knowledge (not just medicine or botany, though those often come easier), then share it with the World. Divinity's seed is in them; they can do better than big pharma.

Callings: Healer, Hunter, Sage

Purviews: Beasts (Birds), Epic Stamina, Fertility, Fortune, Health, Wild

OSHÓSSÍ, THE BOWHUNTER

Aliases: Ochosi (Sp), Oxóssi (Pt), Age (Fn)

Oshóssí quickly unleashes his arrow; we see him only to embrace a shadow. Oshóssí, the handsome archer with the sexy voice, came originally from Ketu in the former Òyó Empire, whence many slaves were kidnapped to Brazil. His symbols are the bow and arrow, often wrought in iron as a holy symbol, and the huntsman's flywhisk. In the New World, where bowhunting and the forest were Native American signifiers, he gained a feather headdress, a jaguar skin, and considerable anxiety re: getting Fatebound into cultural appropriation.

But there's depth behind the awkwardness. Another of Oshóssí's symbols is three parallel arrows, which represent not only his marksman's eye but also the strength of unity. He and his brother Ògún bickered all the time over hunting grounds until Èshù heckled them for not getting any hunting done while arguing. Thereafter, Ògún cleared brush with his machete and Oshóssí crept along behind to shoot game. So Oshóssí embodies the relationship between Africans and American Indians. When African captives escaped into the Amazon rainforest, American swamps, or Haitian backcountry, the First Nations helped them adapt their survival skills to new territory. Then, as Europeans systematically exterminated indigenous peoples and belief systems, some of their religious figures passed into African keeping and became Òrìshà.

Oshóssí's parenting style is quiet and patient. A consummate hunter, he watches and listens more than he speaks, but his words are concise, beautiful, and memorable. His Scions are frequently multiracial, cross-cultural adoptees, or immigrants, living on the threshold between demographics. They love to explore; no social or geographic territory is too dangerous for them.

Callings: Hunter, Liminal, Judge

Purviews: Beasts, Epic Dexterity, Prosperity, Wild

ÒSHUN, GODDESS OF COOL SWEET WATER

Aliases: Ochun, Yalorde (Sp), Oxûm (Pt), Aziri (Fn), Ezili (Kr), Erzulie (USA)

Crowned woman, oh so rare, owner of a piercing knife. When the Òrìshà first came to Earth, the men among them called a secret meeting — no one remembers what about. Òshun figured out where it was and tried to attend. They turned her away. Quick with a blade, she could have cut her way in; but she thought she'd make a statement instead. If they thought they could get along without women, fine. So she revoked humans' power of childbirth. The offenders apologized, offering copper, gold, and brass, but even her favorite metals wouldn't quiet her wrath. Only a bribe of honey finally appeased her.

Òshun, goddess of love and affluence, rules fresh water in general and Nigeria's Òshun River in particular. Healing water flows from one hand; a jeweled knife glitters in the other. She's hooked up with both Èshù and Òrúnmìlà (and still practices divination), but she's married to Shàngó now. When she first arrived in the New World, she asked Yemoja to give her fair skin and straight golden hair like a European painting of the Virgin Mary to fit dominant beauty standards, but quickly lost patience with that kind of thing. She has become the pantheon's public face with a performer/businesswoman/philanthropist Incarnation she's maintained for the past 36 years. This gleaming golden queen bee is always orbited by a swarm of killer bees — a deadly European/African hybrid created to slake human greed with boosted honey production,

which escaped captivity in Brazil and has spread across the Americas. Apt.

Òshun dearly loves her Scions, but demands results. Don't just party: network. Don't just clean up nice: dress to kill. Don't settle: marry someone who deserves you. Then, when you're rich and powerful, the witch-empress on a gold and brass throne? Heal the sick. Enrich the poor. Slay, queen.

Callings: Healer, Lover, Sage

Purviews: Beasts (Bees), Beauty, Fertility, Fortune, Frost, Health, Passion (Love), Prosperity, Water

OYA IYANSAN, GODDESS OF THE RIVER NIGER

Aliases: Àràká (Yr), Iansã (Pt), Avesan (Fn)

The Tearer arrives; the palm fronds tear. Oya don't play. She guards the cemetery gate with a sword in one hand, a whip in the other. Where her husband Shàngó is the thunder, Oya is the lightning and stormwind. Her sacred place is the market and her sacred animals are the bull, goat, pigeon, and black hen. When Shàngó's ego gets out of control, Oya checks him. She's also the only Òrìshà who risks standing up to Yemoja. At some point in the past, Yemoja guarded the cemetery and Oya the sea, but Yemoja tricked Oya into swapping Purviews. Oya grew into her new role, but never forgave Yemoja. She may not relish warfare like Shàngó or Ògún, but she's always ready for a good fight. She'll tear into you with an evil grin on her face and as much excitement as if she were dancing in the club.

Oya dresses like a superhero: rainbow outfits, capes flapping in the wind whether or not there's any wind that day. Describing her Incarnations as "riverboat captain" or "meteorologist" doesn't quite capture the impact of seeing lightning illuminate her standing on deck during a storm, or seeing a twister sweep over her and lift her, cackling with glee, into the sky. She's one of the most popular Òrìshà, and she deserves it, because she's a fuckin' badass.

Oya's Scions are flashy and fearless, ready to speak truth to power and look good doing it. You might have heard of Omolara Muḥammād, the Wall Street whistleblower who lost her job at a leading brokerage firm because she investigated her superiors for a crime they did, in fact, commit.

Callings: Guardian, Liminal, Warrior

Purviews: Beasts (Bull), Epic Strength, Epic Dexterity, Death, Prosperity, Sky, Water

SHÀNGÓ, THE KING WHO DID NOT HANG

Aliases: Jakuta, Obà Kòso (Yr), Hebiosso (Fon), Changó (Sp), Xangô (Pt)

He makes a detour in telegraphic wire...a storm on the knife's edge. Once upon a time, a mighty king named Shàngó ruled the Oyo Empire, which you almost certainly did not learn about in history class. He was the sexiest man in Africa. In close combat he wielded a two-headed

axe, and he could hurl a simple rock so hard it struck like a thunderbolt. Originally he was a god of divination, but traded that Purview away for drumming, dancing, and sorcery. His favorite spell let him breathe fire, which he did at any provocation, especially if you angered him. But Shàngó grew suspicious of his own most loyal, honorable officers. His schemes to turn them against one another backfired. Finally, his man Gbonka learned to counter his fire breath. After Gbonka stood up to and humiliated him, Shàngó went into the forest and... okay, we don't really talk about what happened then. Shàngó would get upset.

Shàngó wears red and white. He has various wives, including Òshun and Oya. His incarnations are ambitious politicians, virtuoso drummers, b-boys, and (probably his favorite) baseball players. His symbols are his armaments: the two-headed wooden axe (or baseball bat) and the stones he throws like lightning. Fun fact: if you go into the 6 train stop at 110th Street and Lexington Avenue in New York, New York, there's a huge mosaic of Shàngó on one wall (and another of Yemoja on the opposite side).

Shàngó's Scions have been many, but they aren't exactly known for their survivability. They tend to get their Visitations in their mid-teens, live fast, and die young. The media loves them for their tempestuous love affairs, high-profile beef, and general reality-television antics. Fortunately, Shàngó's Scions love the media right back.

Callings: Leader, Lover, Warrior

Purviews: Artistry (Drums, Dance), Beauty, Epic Strength, Fire, Order, Passion, Prosperity, Sky, War

SÒNPÒNNÁ, GOD OF SMALLPOX

Aliases: Obaluaiye, Ile-Gbigbona, Ile-Titu, Olode (Yr), Babalu Ayé (Sp), Obaluaiê, Omulu (Pt), Sagbata, Sakpata (Fn), Sabata (Kr)

He feasts with the father of the household, but he strikes down his son in the doorway. That one day, the day of the yam festival, Sònpònná wasn't dancing. He has a cane, after all, and he'd drunk as much palm wine as anyone else. But they wouldn't stop bothering him, so he eventually got up and got down — not well, but at least he tried, right? So it was not cool when someone crashed into him, he fell down, and everyone saw his wooden leg under the raffia cape that conceals his disease-scarred figure. They pointed. They laughed. Someone improvised a song about it. Sònpònná lashed out at the dancers around him with his cudgel...and soon after, they came down with smallpox. For that, Obàtálá banished him to the forest, which he wanders to this day. Yet the Òrìshà close ranks around Sònpònná every time an angry mob or witch hunt seeks to cast him down. Let the other pantheons throw shade and whisper all they want. He's no Titan, he's our brother.

Sònpònná wields smallpox and other epidemics. Some say Olódùmarè originally cursed him with disease for his sexual promiscuity, that he died and Òshun had to bribe God to bring him back. His Incarnations show his face never, his body rarely. He might be a hazmat-suited doctor or researcher, or a Fuke Zen monk with a straw hood and

shakuhachi. His popularity among mortals nevertheless rivals Òshun's: congregations, capoeira schools, and popular songs bear his name.

Sònpònná's Scions are scary. They're unafraid of seeing the worst of the World: war, disease, pollution, Australian wildlife, you name it. They're at home in shadows and wilderness. They go to places no one else dares, to solve problems no one else wants to think about.

Callings: Healer, Hunter, Liminal

Purviews: Death, Earth, Health, Passion (Spite), Wild

YEMOJA-OBOTO, QUEEN OF THE SEA

Aliases: Olókun, Yemòó (Yr), Yemayá, Iemanja, Stella Maris, Lasyren, Mami Wata

Yemoja, angered water that smashes down the metal bridge. In Nigeria they are three: Olókun the primal sea sovereign, Yemoja the Ògùn River goddess, and Yemòó the wife of Obàtálá. In the Americas they share the ocean mother's Mantle; just as all life began and emerged from the sea, so most of the Òrìshà and, ultimately, all life are Yemoja's children. Yemoja takes to leadership more readily than her spouse Obàtálá. Her wrath is the crashing wave and undertow. Her magnetism is the moon commanding the tides. Her intellect is deep and unfathomable as the abyss. No Òrìshà is brave enough to gainsay her, save Oya.

Yemoja wears blue and white, the colors of the sea and spray. She might Incarnate herself as a sailor or naval officer, but terrestrial avatars aren't really her style. She prefers to manifest as a mermaid — or better yet, a mighty whale. Her symbols are seashells, anchors, and violets.

Yemoja's Scions may or may not have actual positions of authority, but are usually authorities nonetheless. Yemoja is nothing if not a good mom, so she tends to Visit them early and take an active role in their upbringing and development as Scions — including fussing over their homework, resumes, and significant others. This habit sometimes confuses their regular parents, who wonder why their kid heads down to the docks after school to get advice on extracurricular activities from a vaquita.

Callings: Creator, Guardian, Leader

Purviews: Beasts (Cetaceans), Epic Strength, Epic Stamina, Fertility, Frost, Journeys, Water

COSMOLOGY

The Soul's Nature

Besides their *ara*, or physical body, a Yorùbá soul has four components:

- the **èmi,** or breath of life, which God grants of his own primordial being at birth and recalls upon death;
- the **orí** (literally "head"), or personal destiny, which demarcates the course of an individual life — in Scion terms, the part that interacts with Fate;
- the personal **òrìshà,** which determines one's mythic origin, abilities, and limitations (much like how a character sheet delineates a roleplaying game character); and
- the **égún,** the immortal spirit itself, which passes to Heaven after death to await reincarnation or become a revered ancestor.

The Dahomean tradition in Haiti, on the other hand, recognizes two components: the **gwo bon anj,** identical to the èmi; and the **ti bon anj,** analogous to the other three parts together. The ti bon anj undergoes up to 13 reincarnations, with sojourns in the spirit world and the forest in between them, before merging with the godhead.

Heaven and Earth

The cross-in-circle cosmogram ḥ represents the universe as the Òrìshà and Loa know it. The World, "ayé" in Yorùbá, is the marketplace where mortals and spirits meet, have fun, and do business. Upon death, all égún (regardless of moral fiber or lack thereof) ascend to Heaven, the spirits' home: "òrun" in Yorùbá, "Ginen" in Kreyol. The spirit world is fine, but even Òrìshà and Loa agree the World is far more interesting. Most spirits are eager to reincarnate, usually into their same family a few generations down the line. Renowned heroes, influential world leaders, religious luminaries, and the like prefer to hang out in òrun as ancestor spirits (Yorùbá "egúngún"). They possess performers at festivals to regale their descendants with judgment and advice.

The World's holiest place is Ilé-Ifè in southwestern Nigeria's Osun State, where the Òrìshà first descended from òrun to create ayé. The Yorùbá king of kings, Odùduwà's Scion, still reigns in his palace there. But Yorùbá religious culture's most active locus is São Salvador de Bahia de Todos os Santos, the "Black Rome" of Brazil. The Middle Passage's shortest route connected Angola and Bahia. Accordingly, Bahia became a hub of American Yorùbá, Dahomean, and Kongolese culture. Bahia originated the Brazilian religion of candomblé as well as other Black arts such as capoeira and samba. Òrànmíyan and Shàngó's capital of Òyó, in present-day Benin, is also important. Rivers in West Africa, as well as in West African outposts such as London, frequently harbor an Òrìshà, whether great as the Òshun and Niger or small as Esinmirin.

Primordial: Olórun/Olódùmarè/Olófin, God Almighty

Aliases: Mawu (Fn), Bondye (Kr)

Yorùbá and Dahomean religion is technically monotheistic. Olódùmarè is God Almighty, generally thought to be the same as the Abrahamic God, who lives alone in Heaven. His form, thoughts, and concerns are alien and remote even to the Òrìshà; only Òrúnmìlà interacts with him regularly.

Titans: None

The Òrìshà and Loa don't believe in Titans. The worst tragedy ever to befall them, the trans-Atlantic slave trade, was ordinary humans' fault. Òrìshà have quarreled and fought among themselves but, except for Odùduwà beating up nature spirits at the beginning of time (which no one else remembers), never approached a Titanomachy.

They've heard the Devá label the Yazatas, Æsir, and any other Gods who offend them asuras. They've noticed the Shén's patronizing attitude towards gui. They know Titanomachies coincide with one ethnic group curb stomping another. "Titan," they claim, is a slur privileged pantheons slap on pantheons they don't like, to make their allies gang up on their enemies. "First they came for the Titans, and I did not speak out...."

Instead, the Òrìshà and Loa's archenemies are evil wizards and witches: regular humans who curse, sicken, and harm the innocent with occult knowledge. The deadliest are as subtle as they are powerful, blending in with other humans or transforming into animals to perpetrate wickedness. In the Americas, the Night Doctors creep about under cover of darkness, abducting black folks American society forgets. They then experiment on their captives, transforming them into monsters, infecting them with syphilis to see what happens, or pumping them full of deadly, experimental super-soldier serum.

RELIGIONS: CANDOMBLÉ, LUKUMÍ, THE SHANGO CULT, AND MORE

Wherever the Yorùbá live in the World — Nigeria, Benin, Ghana, Côte d'Ivoire, England, and the United States, primarily — there are abòrìshà, or Òrìshà devotees. They largely haven't bothered to name their religion formally; it's a thing they *do*, not a club they're *in*. But Òrìshà devotion's first great export came with the tragedy of slavery.

The slave trade's exponents frequently justified their crimes as humanitarian endeavors, bringing civilization and Christianity to African savages who were doing just fine with their own ancient civilization, thanks much. As if backbreaking servitude, cultural annihilation, and eventual accusations of reverse racism weren't enough, the World's slave masters forced African captives in the Americas to replace their traditional religions with Protestantism and Catholicism. In Haiti, Brazil, Cuba, Puerto Rico, and Trinidad, Africans developed ingenious deceptions to preserve their practice: They used Catholic saints' and religious figures' names and iconographies as ciphers for African ones. For example, a popular lithograph missionaries distributed to slaves showed Santa Barbara with a tower in the background that was struck by lightning. Accordingly, "Santa Barbara" became Shàngó's new codename. You could tell your friends things like, "Hey guys, after work tonight we're gonna throw a party in honor of Santa Barbara," even when whites walked by, without having to visit the whipping post.

Unlike the World's religions of the book, West African worship doesn't rely heavily on concepts of faith or membership. Few abòrìshà will ask you whether you really believe in the Òrìshà; besides, do you actually need faith in a spirit which pops into your friend's head to talk to you every week? The pantheon has cautiously entertained neo-pagan interest in their folkways as well, although you can probably imagine why it makes them nervous.

You needn't formally affiliate with the pantheon or their religions to participate in many ceremonies to honor the Òrìshà. The joke goes that many àbòrìshà first showed up because they smelled good food cooking for the sacrifices, then decided to stick around for the religion. You can be a Muslim abòrìshà, a Catholic abòrìshà...in fact, the Yorùbá King, the 401st Òrìshà, has always had a palace imam who's a pretty big deal in Yorùbáland.

BIRTHRIGHTS

CREATURES OR FOLLOWERS

Capoeira Players: Capoeira is an Afro-Brazilian martial dance from the mean streets of São Salvador de Bahia, Brazil. Capoeiristas who lead dangerous lives often invoke the Òrìshà to protect them; for Òrìshà Scions, they'll happily return the favor.

Ijapa: If you were in a café and wanted to go to the bathroom and asked Ijapa to look after your computer for five minutes, he'd try to run off with it. Fortunately, he would fail, because he is a tortoise. Sometimes. Other times he's human. Other times he's a ninja-like anthropomorphic chelonian. He's a trickster who's always looking out for a way to get ahead, and if he's your friend (and you put up with his pranks) he'll use his cunning little mind for your benefit.

GUIDES

Égún: Every abòrìshà who knows what's good for them consults frequently with their ancestor spirits.

Ifá Diviner: A babaláwo (male) or iyálawo (female) is a priest who has memorized and mastered Òrúnmìlà's most sacred divinatory method.

RELICS

Èshù's Red-and-Black Hat: Èshu tells the story: "One day I walked through a village wearing a hat that was black on one side, red on the other. Afterwards, half the villagers were talking about how lit my red hat was, the other half about how lit my black hat was. They were finna beat the hell out each other over who was right until I came back to watch them beat the hell out of each other and laugh. ...I mean, uh, teach them an important lesson about acknowledging others' perspectives. That's totally what I did."

Sacred Drums: Instruments for calling spirits across grand cosmic distances are traditionally of the large conga drum variety, but perhaps a drum machine or ghetto blaster might be more convenient.

PANTHEON PATH OF THE ÒRÌSHÀ AND LOA

Path Skills: Medicine, Subterfuge

Virtues: *Tradition* and *Innovation*. Old-school African values maintained abòrìshà and vodouisant communities in the face of overwhelming oppression, genocide, and opposition. But these religions would not be what they are today without upheaval and innovation. Catholic and Native American traditions changed Òrìshà and Loa devotion beyond merely allowing for clever disguises. Is old or new more important?

The Òrìshà and Loa risked their very identities to safeguard African **tradition:** martial arts, songs, stories, language, medicine, and more. But the Yorùbá respect for mighty kings dominating efficient, paternalistic bureaucracies, while reliable, sits poorly with younger generations raised on (at least the illusion of) democracy. At its best, tradition empowers us to benefit from our ancestors' lived experience, repeating history to prevent history from repeating itself. At its worst, tradition leaves us inflexible and fearful of change, unable to think laterally or leave our comfort zones. Historically, for example, menstruating women were never to touch ceremonial batá drums. What about transwomen who don't menstruate? What about transmen who do? What if you just don't feel like being sexist about drums?

Innovation's effects on the Òrìshà are undeniable. On this side of space and time, they have new identities, new celebrant populations, new herbs to work into magic and medicine. Ògún's songs sacralize railroads and firearms. Shàngó reaches for his trusty baseball bat as often as his ancient two-headed axe. But adopting something new sometimes means giving up something old. While the art of capoeira accumulates new and impressive acrobatic flourishes and pop-inspired songs, the jogo de navalha, or razor game, is almost forgotten. Mestre Pastinha's ultimate secret technique, the Cat's Leap, may already have passed into dream and rumor.

As modern abòrìshà emerge into public view, with courts and higher education (if not society at large) finally acknowledging their right to worship, new conflicts complicate the dialectic. The Internet allows information once meticulously concealed to spread at unprecedented rates, but raises questions about authenticity and appropriation as occultists outside historical abòrìshà demographics latch on to charismatic Òrìshà and Loa with pop-culture presences like Òshun and Baron Samedi. Syncretism's fate is at stake as well: if abòrìshà need no longer conceal their practice, should they discard the Catholic masks as outdated symbols of oppression? Or has Catholicism's influence established tradition of its own?

Every tradition was once an innovation. Every successful innovation will one day become tradition. Which is truly old, and which is new?

Signature Purview: *Gún/Cheval*. Òrìshà and Loa possess willing (and, rarely, unwilling) humans in order to communicate with their flocks, generally at religious ceremonies with plenty of drumming and dancing to get an Òrìshà's, Loa's, ancestor's, or other spirit's attention. Haitians say the possessed's ti bon anj makes way for the spirit's, letting the spirit make use of the possessed celebrant's language, intellect, and body to communicate matters of spiritual import — and indulge in fine tobacco and liquor, which are hard to get in Heaven. This Purview confers the power to project one's consciousness into another, to draw a spirit into one's own form, and to detect (and counteract) possession in others.

RELATIONSHIPS

OTHER PANTHEONS

The Teōtl creep the Òrìshà out. They survived similar violent marginalization, but it didn't really change them. They still love military aggression and human sacrifice, vices the Òrìshà gave up a long time ago.

The Òrìshà get on great with the Manitou, who only take the fight to the most irredeemable Titanspawn. Oshóssí always tries his best to understand and respect the cultures he's been Fatebound into, and Èshù's social-media back and forth with Nana'b'oozoo (and Sun Wukong, for that matter) is great for a laugh. The Manitou are trying to mend fences between the Òrìshà and the Kami, who have a lot in common, but the Kami's close relationship with the Devá discomfits the Òrìshà.

The Òrìshà, with the exception of Odùduwà, think the Devá and Theoi, Titanomachy's most ardent prosecutors, are privileged braggarts at best, racist warmongers at worst. You'd think they'd click with the Yazatas as a result, but the Òrìshà are pretty sure that if the Yazatas had the Devá's luck, they'd have turned out equally annoying.

For some unfathomable reason, people keep assuming the Òrìshà and Netjer know each other, or are related, or something. They don't, and they're not.

The Òrìshà and Loa think Titanomachy is bullshit and they're tired of being the only ones. They want as many

other Gods and Titans as possible to lay down their arms and join them. The Manitou are already down. The Shén have considerable deep-seated prejudice to work through, but they agree in theory; in practice, they worry about angering their old and powerful friends and neighbors, the Devá. The close familial and cultural ties between the Tuatha Dé Danann and the Fomorians have left them more sympathetic to the Òrìshà viewpoint than they'll yet admit, but some of them are coming around. Of course, not all the Tuatha Dé Danann would be happy to discover Èshù talking turkey with Bres the Beautiful over pints of Guinness....

GREATEST WEAKNESS

The Òrìshà's greatest weakness is overwhelming systemic racism and religious intolerance. West Africans abroad face monotheists' accusations of idolatry in addition to expatriates' usual stereotypes and struggles. But the even larger New World abòrìshà demographic descends mostly from enslaved Africans, who face overwhelming prejudice, violence, and economic injustice even today, even after overcoming impossible adversity. In the United States, for example, the Hialeah, Florida City Council passed an injunction in 1987 outlawing ritual animal slaughter, literally demonizing abòrìshà of their local Church of Lukumi Babalu Aye. Their priest, Ernesto Pichardo, sued the state of Florida, igniting a landmark case — *Church of the Lukumi Babalu Aye, Inc. and Ernesto Pichardo v. City of Hialeah* — which the United States Supreme Court decided in favor of the church, prohibiting the states from outlawing animal sacrifice. The court called Sònpònná himself as an expert witness.

THE SHÉN OF CHINA

Master Dongguo asked Master Zhuang, "This 'Way,' as you call it — where is it?"
"There's nowhere it isn't," said Master Zhuang.
"Be more specific," said Master Dongguo.
"It's in this ant," said Master Zhuang.
"Is there a lower place?" said Master Dongguo.
"It's in this panicgrass," said Master Zhuang.
"Is there an even lower place?" said Master Dongguo.
"It's in this earthenware tile," said Master Zhuang.
"Surely that is the lowest place?" said Master Dongguo.
"It's in this pile of crap," said Master Zhuang.
To this Master Dongguo had no reply.
— Zhuangzi, Outer Chapters 22:6

The story goes that during the primordial chaos preceding the World, the giant Pangu was born inside the cosmic egg. When it hatched into heaven and earth, Pangu held them apart with his expanding body. When he died, his body became the 10,000 things, and the insects who lived on him became the first humans. The really interesting part, though, came with the formation of the pantheon as we know it. The Jade Emperor, one of the Three Pure Ones who set Heaven and Earth in motion, organized all the Shén into a proper imperial court, which soon evolved into a sprawling, massive bureaucracy encompassing every Chinese spirit. Some pantheons are gangs, some pantheons are families, some are even royal courts; but the Shen organize like they plan to run the World.

While Shén may argue amongst themselves over political philosophy, who ought to be in charge, and what everyone's responsibilities really ought to be, they firmly believe the whole World will be better off as part of the same system, even if that system is bloated, spread thin, and occasionally corrupt. But the World's other pantheons are more than a little concerned that the Shén believe defeated Titans ought not to be destroyed, but rather converted and rehabilitated with productive jobs within the bureaucracy.

PRINCIPAL MEMBERS

CHANG'E, THE IMMORTAL IN THE MOON

Aliases: Heng'e, Changxi

In late September or early October, on the eighth lunar month's 15th day, Chinese, Taiwanese, and Vietnamese folk celebrate the harvest with the Mid-Autumn Festival. Families come together under the lantern light to share mooncakes full of duck-egg yolk and sweet bean or lotus seed paste, washed down with tea or cassia wine. Parents

LANGUAGE

We present Chinese terms using their Mandarin readings with Hanyu Pinyin romanization, minus tone markers.

point towards the full moon and tell their children the story of the beautiful woman who lives on the moon under a cassia tree.

Chang'e is a harsh mistress. After Hou Yi, the Excellent Archer, shot nine suns out of the sky, the Queen Mother of the West Xiwangmu granted him the Elixir of Immortality. But when he began to rule the World as a cruel and selfish tyrant, his wife, the lovely Chang'e, stole his elixir and fled his vengeful arrows to the moon. There she remains. Look at the moon, now: What form does she take? Is she a toad or rabbit, forever pounding the elixir with mortar and pestle in case one day it should be needed? Or is the rabbit her companion, one of the few immortals who lives on the moon? At any rate, Chang'e represents a difficult choice. Should you strike out into the darkness for what you want or believe in, knowing you might be alone (except for a bunny) if you succeed? Chang'e says yes.

Chang'e's Scions share her reputation for flightiness, selfishness, and superficiality, which Chang'e herself attributes to the eyes of sexism on a woman who knows what she wants and goes for it. Most famous of them is Japan's Kaguya, bamboo princess of the moon. Chang'e doesn't go in for fancy incarnations; she likes to appear as a Han Chinese woman wearing billowing traditional robes, shining faintly with silver light. She's cheerful, welcoming, and likely to ask questions a little more probing than you wanted, just like your family when you see them at a holiday gathering.

Callings: Healer, Lover, Trickster

Purviews: Epic Stamina, Beasts (Rabbits, Toads), Beauty, Health, Moon

CONFUCIUS, THE MODEL TEACHER FOR TEN THOUSAND AGES

Aliases: Kong Qiu, Kong Fuzi, Zhongni

No one was more surprised than Confucius to learn Confucius had become a God. After all, he had spent a lifetime as an underemployed philosopher whose education and refinement never netted him a decent job, with a passel of students he encouraged to spend as little time as possible thinking about Gods and spirits. It was only after his death that he really blew up, kicking off a scholarly tradition — the Rújiā — known by various English names, most commonly Confucianism. This system, which recommended a government centered around a charismatic and perfect gentleman and structured like a family, dominated public life in China, Korea, Japan, and elsewhere, even to this day. During the Neo-Confucian period, wires got crossed somewhere, and to his consternation, Confucius was deified.

Confucius's philosophy extolled family's sanctity and primacy. When a duke told Confucius how one of his subjects snitched on his own father for stealing sheep, Confucius famously replied, "Where I come from...sons cover up for their fathers and fathers cover up for their sons." Law and government were of little use to him if family didn't come first. His relationships with his Scions are predictably demanding.

Confucius's incarnations tend towards the erudite and high-class, but never quite the highest: non-tenure-track professors of hard-sell topics like literature or philosophy, second-string socialites, government apparatchiks. He's inevitably followed by a train of students and hangers-on, which Laozi and other Daoists frequently try to sneak into to piss off Confucius, since Confucius's temper tantrums are inevitably hilarious and often enlightening.

A strict Confucian would never presume to describe the Master as a God, or anything more than a revered sage or ancestor; but that hasn't stopped thousands of supplicants over the course of history from earnestly and devotedly worshipping him. Confucius frequently deploys his Scions to disabuse Cults in his honor of his divinity. Sometimes, it doesn't even make things worse.

Callings: Judge, Leader, Sage

Purviews: Artistry, Order, Passion (Filiality)

ERLANG, THE MERCIFUL AND MIRACULOUS KING

Aliases: Li Erlang, Yang Jian, Governor Zhao Yu

The True Lord and Illustrious Sage Erlang is the Jade Emperor's nephew, but his legendary pride keeps him from spending much time in Heaven, where he feels like he wouldn't get the respect (read: attention) he deserves as Heaven's finest warrior; instead, he hangs around a temple dedicated to him in east China's Jiangsu Province. During his most famous visit, he mustered an army of heroes to

smack down Sun Wukong's primate host. The clash between them started out as a field engagement which Erlang won, developed into a kaijū duel which Erlang won, and degenerated into a transformation battle which Erlang won. It ended when the Monkey King disguised himself as Erlang himself to infiltrate Erlang's own temple and finally succumbed to Erlang's forces, aided by Laozi. Monkey has been cool with Erlang since then; Erlang does not return his amity.

Erlang's a good shot with any bow or crossbow, but his favorite weapon is his Three-Pointed Double-Edged Blade. With this polearm and his faithful Howling Celestial Dog, he subdues any demon who takes up arms against the Shén. His third eye can pierce truth and falsehood or discharge thunderbolts, his body is immune to nearly any attack, and his transformations are innumerable. No wonder he's got an ego.

Erlang loves to play hero. Were he a player at your table, he'd probably turn in a stack of bluebooks of character backstory and expect everyone to read them and compliment his creativity. His mortal Incarnations undertake elaborate adventures, overcoming villains, rescuing damsels in distress, and generally doing their best to upstage anyone and everyone nearby. He relishes competition with his own Scions, turning simple Visitations into climactic duels or tests of their puissance. It's always gotta be a whole thing with this guy.

Callings: Guardian, Hunter, Warrior

Purviews: Epic Strength, Epic Stamina, Forge, War, Water

FUXI, ANCESTOR OF HUMANKIND

Aliases: Paoxi, Baoxi, Taihao

Fuxi, the great serpent with a human head, has always prioritized the care and development of humanity. He can also manifest as a more humanoid dragon-man rather than just a serpent, the better to have hands to do things with. After the flood, Fuxi took it upon himself to recreate humanity, marrying his sister Nüwa (that's not weird if you're a God, right?) and inventing myriad practices, crafts, and tools to keep mortals alive in a cruel World. Fuxi's inventions include fishing nets, writing, various musical instruments, law, calendars, and the *Changes Classic* divination manual.

Fuxi technically retired from his Ministry of Health post long ago. He should be enjoying himself in a handsome villa with a generous pension and his sister-wife Nüwa; but he can't keep himself out of the office. He still comes in to work every day, even though he doesn't officially do anything, to offer advice and ideas to other Shén, some of whom find his little suggestions edifying and some of whom wish he would go home and shut up. Wherever he goes, everyone seems to know him: "Oh, it's that guy, don't quite remember his name, but he definitely works here, something important."

Fuxi's Scions are innovators in fields from cultural practice to mechanical engineering. Some join high-profile startup adventures, as they're the type to use the verb "disrupt" unironically. They'll look at their house falling apart around them and start talking about all the cool stuff they could build with the debris. Ever the busybody, Fuxi likes to show up and help even when his Scions have assured him they'll be fine on their own — half out of loneliness and boredom, half because he believes there's no problem he can't solve.

Callings: Creator, Hunter, Sage

Purviews: Artistry (Musical Instruments, Writing), Beasts, Fertility, Forge, Fortune, Health, Order, Sun

GUAN YU, THE DIVINE GENERAL

Aliases: Yunchang; Changsheng; Shouchang; Marquis Zhuangmou; Duke Zhonghui; the Lord of the Magnificent Beard; Guan the Holy Great Deity, God of War Manifesting Benevolence, Bravery and Prestige, Protector of the Country and Defender of the People, Prow and Honest Supporter of Peace and Reconciliation, Promoter of Morality, Loyalty and Righteousness; Sangharama Bodhisattva

Riding alone for thousands of lǐ, pressing on untiring towards his destination, Lord Guan arrives in a thunder of hooves. His green armor strikes fear into the hearts of the enemy. His Green Dragon Crescent Blade fells a dozen warriors with the slightest movement. His beard radiates majesty. Confucians, Daoists, Shintōists, and Buddhists all revere Lord Guan, most loyal and dedicated of all the Three Kingdoms period's combatants. Establishments from police stations to candy stores display his image to invoke his protection, to guard their health and their fortunes. The *Romance of the Three Kingdoms* details his steadfast success in battle and tragic death.

General Guan represents loyalty above all else. None of Chancellor Cao Cao's gifts and temptations weakened Guan's devotion to his sovereign, Liu Bei. He sees his role as the general of the Shén as an opportunity to instill a loyal spirit in his subordinates and peers. He has no time for unjust warfare, or petty and selfish warmongers. Divine might, says Guan, must always be used to help others.

Wherever General Guan goes, he's ready for action. His Incarnations tend to be protectors and commanders, from the local Better Business Bureau head to the police commissioner. He's not afraid to show anger in his words, but he never lets wrath take the wheel from him. He isn't pushy when it comes to his Scions' activities, but if anyone asks, he'll express his approval or disapproval frankly and directly. If one of them steps out of line — perhaps failing to honor an agreement, or working for the wrong guy — he asks another Scion to visit and suggest a change of course. Still, as the centuries have passed and he's reflected on mistakes he's made, he's realized how much toxic masculinity colors his actions and feelings.

Callings: Guardian, Leader, Warrior

Purviews: Epic Strength, Epic Stamina, Artistry (Historical Fiction), Order, Passion (Loyalty), Prosperity, Sky, War

GUANSHIYIN PUSA, WHO PERCEIVES THE SOUNDS OF THE WORLD

Aliases: Avalokiteshvara, Hayagriva, Guanyin, Kannon, Cundi

Guanshiyin Pusa — Guanyin for short — is a bodhisattva, a Buddhist luminary who has postponed their own final enlightenment and exit from the chain of dependent origination in order to help all other beings achieve Buddhahood. Their original Mantle was Avalokiteshvara, lord of compassion. They are also Cundi, the 18-armed lotus-throned monster, invoked with the popular Sanskrit mantra "om manipadme hum." The Chinese so loved Guanyin that they deified them, which confused Guanyin a good deal: While Buddhism describes many Buddhist or Buddhist-adjacent figures as divine, they don't occupy the same station relative to the Buddhist flock as, for example, a more traditional God like Huitzilopochtli of the Teōtl does relative to his. Divinity exists in Buddhism, it just isn't that important.

Guanyin is the World's most popular Buddhist, exceeding even the Tathagata. They struggle to pay their Scions adequate attention because of their packed schedule answering prayers and displaying compassion towards the entirety of Great Vehicle Buddhism. Guanyin nevertheless expects one thing above all from their children: compassion. They maintain that Scions come into being to spread the blessings of Godhood, which Guanyin regards as a weird kind of privilege, to mortals in need who lack those blessings through no fault of their own.

Ever the populist icon, Guanyin favors humble Incarnations such as fishermen, mendicant monks, and sex workers, though omens such as thousands of eyes, hands, or faces sometimes set them apart. They often travel with bodyguards (sometimes including General Guan Yu himself) and her faithful white parrot. Likable and experienced in liaising between the Shén and the Buddhist community, Guanyin and her Scions often take point on delicate diplomatic proceedings between pantheons.

Callings: Guardian, Healer, Sage

Purviews: Epic Stamina, Deception, Health, Journeys, Passion (Mercy), Water

HUANGDI, THE YELLOW EMPEROR

Aliases: Gongsun, Xuanyuan, Youxiong, Zhongyue Dadi

The Yellow Emperor ruled China from 2697 to 2597 BCE. He controls the center direction and the element of earth. He is a culture hero, the father of Chinese civilization, master of bears, commander of animal armies, author

of classics on medicine and politics, inventor of dozens of necessities such as the calendar and clothing, and husband of Leizu the Goddess of Sericulture. Lightning among the stars presaged his birth. He has four faces, all of which could speak when he was a mere infant. Early in his reign, he warred against Chiyou and Yandi Shennongshi. He slew Chiyou in battle after a long and bitter war, but found after Chiyou's death that he still needed Chiyou's services as a God, and so allowed Chiyou to be deified. Later, when he fought Chiyou's father Yandi Shennongshi, the Yellow Emperor set an example for the Shén who would one day bow to him when, instead of executing or imprisoning Yandi Shennongshi, he installed the Flame Emperor as a client king. Since then, the Shén have preferred to adopt defeated demons, Gods, and monsters into their pantheon instead of obliterating them.

Huangdi has founded so many Scions that one struggles to describe them with any common qualities other than greatness. They include the heroes Gun, Yu, Zhong, and Li; Gods such as Shujun and Yuqiang; and even entire ethnicities like the Huantou and Miaomin. Any Scion of Huangdi's, though, should rest assured that theirs is the road more traveled. Dozens, at least, of Huangdi's Scions are still active, ready to provide advice and trade favors with any more recent developments.

Huangdi watches current developments in Chinese government with reservation and concern, but in typical Daoist fashion prefers not to make noise or get involved. The Great Cultural Revolution hit the Shén hard; many of them still haven't forgiven mainland China's Communist government for the event. Nevertheless, the Communist Party has sent representatives to participate in sacrifices and rites to the Yellow Emperor, whom they acknowledge as the founder of the civilization they recently inherited.

Callings: Creator, Leader, Sage

Purviews: Beasts, Death, Earth, Forge, Health, Order, Prosperity, War

LAOZI, THE OLD MASTERS

Aliases: Li Er, Lao Dan, Boyang, Taiqing, the Grand Supreme Elderly Lord, the Universally Honored Virtuous One, the Daoist Ancestor

Eighty-one short poems plus commentary, originally written on bamboo strips and organized into two books called the *Way Classic* and the *Virtue Classic*, comprise the ancient Chinese text now called the *Daodejing* — "Way and Virtue Classic" — or the *Laozi* — "Old Masters." The *Daodejing* is the second-most-translated text into English, after the Bible. It ostensibly concerns political theory, but fans have expanded its applications to disciplines as disparate as martial arts, medicine, and magic. Through comparisons to natural phenomena, it advocates a social and political approach to life centered on exerting as little effort as possible to achieve greatest efficacy, in accord with things' true nature.

Few know for sure the true personae of the Old Masters who wrote it, for they obscure their identities as much as

possible. Some say the Old Master was a court official, an archivist or astrologer perhaps, who wrote down his wisdom before riding a water buffalo into the west. Others call him an Incarnation of the Heavenly Lord of Way and Virtue, one of the Three Pure Ones who created the Universe. Laozi is happy to let these stories propagate, for their favorite Incarnation throughout the ages is actually a large number of grandmas, dressed however grandmas dress in China at the time, who constantly bicker amongst themselves.

Laozi's Scions tend to be of humble birth, rarely male. They excel in positions which require subtlety: not president or king, but the power behind the throne, the campaign manager or chief of staff. Traditionally in China, many of Laozi's Scions wound up in the Daoist priesthood based out of locations like Wudang Mountain. Laozi's most notorious Scion is the White Eyebrow, a Shaolin monk whose research into Daoist black magic (apparently that's a thing) got him expelled from the Monastery — and who subsequently betrayed Shaolin to the government, resulting in one of the temple's many destructions.

Callings: Leader, Sage, Trickster

Purviews: Epic Stamina, Artistry (Poetry), Chaos, Darkness, Health, Order, Water

PRINCE NEZHA, THE MARSHAL OF THE CENTRAL ALTAR

Aliases: The Third Lotus Prince, Nataku

Prince Nezha is one of those guys with no acquaintances or casual friends — just devoted allies and spiteful enemies. Nezha's mother gave birth to a rolling ball of flesh after three-and-a-half years of pregnancy. His father split open the ball to reveal a boy who could already speak and walk, bearing a magical ring and bolt of cloth. Nezha was almost two meters tall by the time he turned seven. He antagonized the Dragon King Ao Guang, killed his third son and bodyguard, committed suicide in recompense, and became a God of healing. Ultimately his teacher Taiyi Zhenren made him a new body out of lotus roots. Now he dashes about on his Wind-Fire Wheels, flaunting his Universal Ring and his Red Armillary Sash, impaling foes with his Fire-Tipped Spear...you get the picture. Big damn hero, unless of course you ask the Dragon King.

In contrast to Erlang Shén, whose pride is a passive kind of thing that has him laying back in the cut and waiting for accolades to come (inevitably) to him, Nezha's pride is an active force. He's badass and he's got lots of toys, but he's not quite as badass as Erlang or Sun Wukong, so he has to work to make it up. Nezha's office constantly licenses the prince's likeness and life story for animated series, stage productions, feature films, and video games, in exchange for partial creative control and a slew of sacrifices and ceremonies.

Nezha doesn't give a damn what his Scions do as long as he hears about it. Wanna start a wuxia battle in a nightclub? Rescue a busload of orphans from a right-wing militia? Cure cancer, but one of the cool cancers? Knock yourself out. Knock someone else out, too. Make Dad jealous. That's how he knows you're his kid.

Callings: Guardian, Trickster, Warrior

Purviews: Epic Stamina, Epic Strength, Artistry (Animation), Health, War

NÜWĀ, THE SNAKE GODDESS WHO MENDS THE HEAVENS

Aliases: Nügua

Nüwā, a great serpent with a woman's face, was so resourceful and powerful she could have been or done anything, but she chose to care for humanity and the World it lived in. When the pillars holding up the sky collapsed, everything was in chaos. Fire, water, birds, and beasts ran rampant across the land, and none could stop them — save Nüwā. She patched the sky with colorful stones, cut off a giant tortoise's legs to prop up the sky, fought off a black dragon, dammed the flood with reed ash, and — since she could not reproduce normally with her brother-husband Fuxi — molded humans using mud, though pieces occasionally fell off and resulted in disabilities. She taught them to arrange marriages and created wind instruments for them to play.

Today, Nüwā serves as a Divine Sovereign among the Shén, along with Yandi Shennongshi and the technically-retired Fuxi. She liaises between humanity and the pantheon due to the volume of prayers she receives. Send a random cry of need into the æther, there's a good chance Nüwā will hear and even respond to it. Her commitment to humanity's priorities sometimes brings her into conflict with more ruthless Shén like Laozi, who see humans as straw dogs; she once saved humanity when her father the Jade Emperor sent the God of Plague to cull humans. When she goes among humans, the "serpent with a human face" form tends to freak people out, so she more commonly looks like a smiling older woman in traditional Han Chinese clothing.

Nüwā's Scions tend to share their mother's selfless love for humanity and lateral thinking skills. They care deeply about humanity's problems and are endlessly creative and brave in how to solve them.

Callings: Creator, Guardian, Healer

Purviews: Earth, Fertility, Forge, Health, Moon, Sky

SUN WUKONG, THE MONKEY AWAKENED TO EMPTINESS

Aliases: Miao Min, Tôn Ngô Không, Heng Chia, Son Ogong, Sun Gokong, Son Gokū, the Monkey King, the Great Sage Equalling Heaven, the Protector of the Horses, Sūn the Novice, the Victorious Fighting Buddha, Clever Stone Monkey, That Damned Macaque

Handsome Monkey King! He was born from a stone egg on the Mountain of Flowers and Fruit, ruling over the monkeys, baboons, gibbons, tamarins, aye-ayes, and gorillas. There is a poem to prove it:

Playful bonobos scale the branches,
Chimpanzees use sticks as weapons.
On the slopes of the Mountain of Flowers and Fruit,
Primates great and small take their leisure.
Their king, the Handsome Monkey,
Actually isn't all that attractive.
This guy counts as a Buddha?
How is that a thing?

After cultivating his conduct with a Daoist teacher, Sun Wukong made havoc in Heaven, fighting Heaven's most distinguished warriors and generals. He stole Laozi's immortality pills, erased his name from King Yama's records, and generally proved himself a nuisance until the Tathagata Buddha, who happened to be visiting for a social function, trapped him under the Five Elements Mountain for 500 years to teach him a lesson. Then the Tang Priest Xuanzang snookered him, along with Pigsy and the Sand Monk, into bodyguard duty on his journey to India to fetch the Tripitaka scriptures. For his devotion, the Tathagata made Monkey the Victorious Fighting Buddha, which is apparently a real job you can have. The Chinese classic *Journey to the West* and its infinite adaptations chronicle Monkey's adventures.

The Monkey King is, depending on whom you ask, either a) living proof the Shén can rehabilitate even the most troublesome and intractable monsters, b) living proof that rehabilitating the most troublesome and intractable of monsters will backfire catastrophically, or c) all of the above. Still, no one can deny he's talented. His favorite outfit is the elaborately made-up costume that represents him in the Běijīng Opera, though he often appears as a completely ordinary monkey. His Scions tend to share his indefatigable commitment to noble goals, and his incorrigible demeanor and pranks which will leave you constantly doubting that commitment.

Callings: Liminal, Trickster, Warrior

Purviews: Epic Strength, Epic Dexterity, Epic Stamina, Artistry (Opera), Beasts (Monkeys), Chaos, Deception, Journeys, War

YANDI SHENNONGSHI, THE FLAME EMPEROR AND DIVINE FARMER

Aliases: Sinnong, Thán Nông, Entei, Shin'nō, Five Grains Emperor, Medicine King

Yandi Shennongshi, God of agriculture and medicine, rules the southern direction, the summer season, and the element of fire. He was once two different Gods — Yandi the Flame Emperor, and Shennong the Divine Farmer — but Huangdi merged their offices under a single Mantle for administrative reasons. Yandi once ruled nearly half the World, but he warred with his half-brother Huangdi and lost. Huangdi was merciful to Yandi Shennongshi, though. Recognizing his genius, Huangdi assigned him to Shennong's office, and eventually to Shennong's Mantle. The success of this interaction set an important precedent for the Shén: Defeated enemies, if shown mercy, can be rehabilitated and become productive members of society.

The son of draconic parents, Shennong himself has a dragon's head and a human's body. By age three, he knew everything there was to know about agriculture, invented various farm implements, and taught the first humans the secrets of cultivation. His exhaustive surveys of wild plants revealed the staple crops called the Five Grains (rice, two varieties of millet, beans, and wheat) and gave rise to Chinese medicine via his catalogue of plants' flavors and qualities, which nearly got him killed over and over as he tasted poisonous plants.

Yandi Shennongshi's Scions tend towards interdisciplinary excellence, but they are rarely far from the land. Their father encourages them to look towards the needs of not only their fellow Shén and Scions, but also the common folk in the background. Don't just stop an attacking Titan: Convince that Titan that gainful employment with their Pantheon would be a better way to spend their time. Don't just feed the hungry: Revolutionize a nation's farming infrastructure. Don't just heal the sick: Cure cancer, and not just one of the cool cancers. After all, If Huangdi could take a chance on Yandi Shennongshi....

Callings: Healer, Leader, Sage

Purviews: Epic Stamina, Artistry (Storytelling), Fertility, Fire, Forge, Health, Prosperity

COSMOLOGY

Heaven

The Chinese character "tian" refers to all three Heaven, the sky, and the weather. To the Shén, those three concepts are one and the same. Heaven is the Gods' abode and workplace, where palaces, citadels, and offices sprawl amongst the upper troposphere's clouds. While other pantheons break their own overworlds away from tellurian skies to avoid, for example, getting in the way of spacecraft launches, the Shén wouldn't dream of dwelling in a different World than their human charges. How, then, might they manage and monitor the weather? Can you imagine the paperwork? Accordingly, jets that fly high enough above China find themselves soaring amidst cloud-wreathed pagodas, with serpents and star-spirits darting back and forth in their path. There were even a few crashes early in the 20th century until Nüwā built an Air Traffic Control Constellation. Heaven is accessible via sky ladder or by climbing certain mountains

The Mountain of Flowers and Fruit

The Mountain of Flowers and Fruit (Huaguo Shan) is in eastern China's Jiangsu Province. Occupied mostly by sentient monkeys, this mountain is the birthplace of Sun Wukong himself. The mountain is an independent principality ruled directly by the Monkey King and his junta of primate officials, who meet in the famous Water Curtain Cave. They offer asylum to any demon who comes

there and manages to impress them (and has the emotional fortitude to survive spending their entire day surrounded by obnoxious monkeys). Every time the Shén attempt to seize control of the Mountain, the monkeys there initially welcome their conquerors with open arms, then make them wish they'd never come there as only annoying monkeys can. Meanwhile, Sun Wukong himself mysteriously disappears for the duration of the conflict; don't tell the other Shén, but he's usually hiding out in a café in Nanjing watching Snapchats of the chaos. The Mountain of Flowers and Fruit supports itself with tourist revenue, establishing an odd precedent for tourist locations where you go to get pickpocketed on purpose.

Womanland

Another independent principality, Womanland (Nüguo), lies in southwestern China. The Tang Priest, Sun Wukong, Pigsy, and Sandy stopped at this state, populated entirely by women, on their way to fetch the scriptures from India. It was an eventful visit. First, the Tang Priest and Pigsy drank from Pregnancy River (yes, this is a real place), the source of all new births in Womanland, and had to visit Abortion Mountain (unfortunately also a real place) in order to alleviate...whatever would have happened. Then, when the Queen of Womanland proposed marriage to the Tang Priest, they said yes and then ran away. Ever since, relations between Womanland and Heaven have been chilly at best.

Unlike the Mountain of Flowers and Fruit, which has been more or less frozen in the past (plus cell phones), Womanland is a technologically advanced mini-state within the Chinese hegemony. The Communist Party has an attaché in town, but she doesn't control anything, really; the Queen of Womanland is squarely in charge. During much of Chinese history, when Confucian patriarchy dominated politics, Womanland positioned itself as a counterpoint and counterweight to those tendencies.

Diyu

The Shén share an underworld with the Devá, Palas, and Kami. Together with nine other royal judges, Yanluowang (also known as Yamaraja, listed under the Devá but with joint citizenship here) processes each new ghost who comes to Diyu and assigns them to one of the thousands upon thousands of afterlives, torturous or otherwise, that wait below — or else determines they died before their time and annuls their death.

However, not all the dead wind up in Diyu — far from it. Many dead from the populations that venerate the Shén remain within the World, albeit invisibly, as tutelary Shén of clans or locations. But individuals with more Buddhist influence on their afterlives are directed towards the more regimented afterworld.

Diyu's largest city, the Dark Capital, even now looks like a Chinese metropolis from 1,000 years ago, with city walls, temples, palaces, residences, and a gigantic citadel which houses the Courts of Hell and, most important of all, the official administrative records of the afterlife. It was from these records that Sun Wukong erased his name, along with every other primate's on the Mountain of Flowers and Fruit, when he made havoc in Heaven and Hell.

Wuyue, the Five Sacred Mountains

You can't get to Heaven from just anywhere, unless you have a somersault cloud or sky ladder. If you want to petition the Gods, climb one of the Five Sacred Mountains. They are:

- Mount Song in Henan Province
- Northern Mount Heng in Shanxi Province
- Mount Tai in Shandong Province
- Southern Mount Heng in Hunan Province
- Mount Hua in Shaanxi Province

A grand temple surmounts each of these peaks. There's a really long line, and if you're able-bodied you must climb every step (if you aren't there's a chairlift, but there's a line for that, too) to be considered for entry. At the temple itself, demons staff the processing center's desks, where you must present a petition on one of the provided forms for consideration, as well as a bribe, using one of the provided bribery shrines. Some petitions are accepted right away, especially if they're done by hand in fancy calligraphy or accompanied by really convincing bribes (like your grandma's pork buns). Then you file into heaven, where you will probably get lost, because all the signs are in seal script (and be grateful for that — they only updated from bronze script this year). Attempts to jump the line or sneak in put you face to face with ogres with cudgels who will throw you out. It's a long way down.

Other mountains or ranges are sacred specifically to Buddhism and Daoism. The Wudang Mountains, for example, are the home of the World's most important Daoist temple complex and its caretakers, the infamous Wudang Clan.

Primordial: Xiwangmu, the Queen Mother of the West

Looking upon the refined elderly noblewoman who entertains divine and royal visitors with tea, songs, and poetry at her Jade Mountain country house, you wouldn't know her true form is a coruscating, roaring storm of fangs, fur, and tails. Xiwangmu and her husband Dongwanggong, the King Father of the East who lives in a stone mansion on the Eastern Wild Mountain, represent the natural chaos counterbalancing Chinese civilization. Xiwangmu was the first sovereign of the Shén, reluctantly adopting a more Godly form to help the pantheon form; but she retired to Primordialhood as soon as a Jade Emperor presented himself. Hers are the Peaches of Immortality, which Sun Wukong stole from a Heavenly party, and the Elixir of Immortality, which Chang'e took to the moon.

Titan: Ao Guang, the Azure Dragon King of the Eastern Sea

Ao Guang rules the color blue, the eastern direction, the element of water, an entire household full of errant princesses and half-competent creature officers and divine superweapons, and a lot of stress. All he wants to do is have a little peace and quiet, maintain the sea and the weather, and occasionally scare a few mortals with a tsunami or flood to keep them on their toes (and sacrificing generously). But ever since Prince Nezha humiliated him and his family in front of all the Shén, and Sun Wukong proved himself the worst houseguest ever and absconded with his As-You-Will Gold-Banded Cudgel, every Scion who visits the East China Sea wants to show up at his doorstep and challenge him to a fight, seduce one of his daughters, or steal magic towels from his guest quarters.

Purview: Water.

Virtues: Dominance, Yin.

Titan: The White Eyebrow, Betrayer of Shaolin

The White Eyebrow (Bai Mei in Mandarin, but more commonly known by the Cantonese pronunciation Bak Mei) was a Chan Buddhist monk and Scion of Laozi who achieved one of the less healthy forms of alchemical immortality. Expelled from the Shaolin Monastery for his research into Daoist black magic, he betrayed Shaolin to the government and/or set it on fire and/or punched everyone inside to death, depending which story you believe (and he refuses to clarify). Since then, he's been associated with various shady organizations as well as the White Lotus Society and the Wudang Clan, and grown in power until he was able to steal Titanhood from...whoever it is you steal Titanhood from, but rest assured someone got betrayed in the process. The infamous "Death Touch" is the ultimate technique of his notorious White Eyebrow Style of Chinese boxing, derived from the older Tiger style.

Purview: Kung Fu Treachery (Epic Dexterity).

Virtues: Rapacity, Yin. The White Eyebrow is no longer welcome among the Shén; he just happens to be irreparably Yin-imbalanced.

RELIGIONS: CHINESE TRADITIONAL RELIGION, DAOISM, CONFUCIANISM

Most worship of the Shén in the World is something you do, rather than something you are. Families venerate tutelary and ancestor spirits with offerings and consult spiritualists from various traditions, many of them idiosyncratic to a location, if they need direct contact or advice. That said, it is easiest for the newcomer to understand Chinese religion as an array of different ingredients which can be ingested individually, or combined in potentially infinite permutations to create religious traditions passed down like an herbalist's or chef's traditional recipes. For any given combination of indigenous Chinese religion, Confucianism, Buddhism, and Daoism, there exists some place and time in Chinese history when it was popular.

Textual canons provide many of these recipes' main ingredient. Each canon contains a series of texts associated by philosophy or reference, delineating a school of thought. There is a Daoist canon inspired by the early *Laozi, Zhuangzi,* and *Liezi* which starts with politics, meanders into naturalism and mysticism, returns to politics with Legalism, and ties it all together with a cosmic model based on balance and no wasted effort. The Confucian canon contains the *Analects* as well as certain important classics: the *Classic of Poetry, Book of Documents,* and the *Spring and Autumn.* The Confucian canon focuses on living as a productive and positive member of society, especially where the family is concerned. The *Classic of Changes* appears in most canons.

Various Daoist monastic associations exist in the northern China of the World, combining philosophy and cosmology from the Daoist scriptural canon with traditional shamanic practices in myriad combinations. While these monasteries adhere to celibacy and vegetarianism like their Buddhist counterparts, many more Daoist priests study the canon and perform shamanic services without them. A formal tradition, the Academic School (Rujia), also appeared around Confucianism, eventually morphing into a system of religion that deified poor Confucius and incorporated traditional practices much like Daoism.

Buddhism, though, really introduced the idea of a religious tradition with *membership* to China. The old-school Indian Theravada Buddhism changed when it arrived in China, becoming the more populist Great Vehicle Buddhism and bringing bodhisattva-hood, rather than arhat-hood, into primacy as a goal state. However, while Buddhism always advertised the quest for nirvana and the freedom of all mankind from the cycle of suffering as the supreme goal, it never truly rejected any other religion with which it coexisted. Indian Devá and Chinese Shén were invited to study the Buddha's Law alongside humans. Many of them accepted wholeheartedly, including Sun Wukong, the least likely of converts to the Middle Way.

BIRTHRIGHTS

CREATURES

Animal Officers: They might start out wild and dangerous, but if you beat them up and/or expose them to the Way of Laozi or Buddha or someone else reputable, various sentient animals will faithfully serve you in whatever way you need. The Dragon King Ao Guang, for example, commands crab generals, shrimp amazons, bream provincial commanders, and crocodile ministers in addition to his own draconic family. Many of these animals can shapeshift into human or demonic forms to blend in or raise hell.

FOLLOWERS

Triads: "Triad," denoting a Chinese crime family (or one of its members) in common English parlance, comes from the name of the Three Harmonies Society (Sanhe

PANTHEON PATH OF THE SHEN

Path Skills: Academics, Leadership

Virtues: *Yin* and *Yang*. Traditional Chinese thought models the World and the powers which move within it in terms of cyclical forces in constant tension, complement, and balance. The Supreme Ultimate cosmogram, or taijitu, illustrates this cycle with the circle of unity at the top, followed by the layer of black-and-white duality, followed by the five elements, followed by the eight trigrams of the *Classic of Changes*, followed by unity once again. Each cosmographic element is one complete model of the system of the World; but it is the cosmogram's second segment, better known in English as the yin-yang, that interests us right now.

We have come to illustrate this cycle with two interlocked comma shapes, one black and one white, each with an eye of the opposing color. Yin is feminine, receptive, dark, expansive, and sinister. Yang is masculine, active, bright, focused, and positive. But in its eye, each energy carries its opposite's seed. Their complementary waxing and waning is the motion of the sine wave, the circuit of the moon and sun, the rotation of the earth and the cycle of time.

A Yin-aspected individual is subtle, gentle, and patient. Yin is the therapist's question, the joint lock that counters the punch, the poem uninterpreted, the sea at night. Yin is associated with the elements of metal and water. At best, yin is sensitive, caring, and adaptable. At worst, yin is sinister, dishonest, and ruthless.

A Yang-aspected individual is bold, powerful, and charismatic. Yang is the leaping flame, the demagogue's oratory, the painted emblem on the shield. Yang is associated with the elements of wood and fire. At best, yang is strong, hopeful, and vibrant. At worst, yang is inflexible, loud, and angry.

In the old days, each Shén occupied a specific place on the spectrum of yin to yang. The Yellow Emperor, for example, represented the earth element, the center, the axis, a balance between the two forces. You stayed in your lane, you performed your duties as handed down to you, and the seasons kept turning. Scions, though, have it harder. You live in the World amongst the Ten Thousand Things, the complex manifestation of that seemingly simple interplay between light and dark. Every action you take is deep with meaning in both yin and yang tendencies, and you yourself probably sway naturally from one side to the other. Yet your superiors expect you to bring balance to heaven and earth.

Signature Purview: Tianming. The Shén order heaven, hell, and the World through a great celestial bureaucracy. At its head is the Jade Emperor, and from him all power flows downward in the form of positions and titles, privileges and responsibilities: the tianming, or mandate of heaven. This Purview holds sway over the hierarchy of the heavens as well as all mortal bureaucracies, which are seen as Worldly extensions or reflections of the celestial model.

Hui), a well-known branch of the older clandestine fraternal organization originally called the Heaven and Earth Society (Tiandi Hui). Many modern Triads pay lip-service to popular deities such as Guan Yu, but are otherwise entirely secular. A few, though, hearken back to their earliest Qing-era roots as ardent Shén devotees. Fundamentally, like many worldwide organized crime outfits, an old-school Triad is a community support organization that relies on donations and volunteer efforts from a lower-class community to look after its most vulnerable members. Triads are often politically active as well, supporting candidates and causes; many American Triads, for example, support the Taiwanese government over the Chinese Communist government — a conflict about which the Shén are studiously silent. But with friends like the Triads, maybe you could tip the scales the way you want without Huangdi noticing....

The Wudang Clan: This ancient Daoist priesthood devotes itself to political meddling and internal alchemy in equal measure. Rumor has it that they have their hooks in everything from the Chinese government to the financial services sector to the record industry. They practice several ancient martial styles, especially the internal schools — supreme ultimate boxing, form-mind boxing, and the eight-trigram palm — which align with their alchemical expertise. Challengers to their machinations should know they are nothing to fuck with.

RELICS

Any natural feature or piece of hardware that allows a God or mortal to ascend quickly and easily to Heaven is called a **sky ladder.** Many sky ladders are physical-terrain features anyone may climb to get to one precinct or another in Heaven, such as ancient trees or sacred mountains like Kunlun. You can also get a portable version in the form of a collapsible ladder, grapnel gun, or similar climbing aid; the Òrìshà, who also employ sky ladders to get to their Heaven, like golden chains. Especially outside the Middle Kingdom, where natural sky ladders are rare, a pocket sky ladder is a great way to keep in touch with your superiors, or escape to your office when your ex shows up.

Somersault clouds are the best way to travel. A somersault cloud is just that: a fluffy cloud, about a meter in

diameter, which looks even in real life like it's been drawn with brush and ink, or maybe crayons. Hop on and your feet will sink and lock into the vapor, which feels like cotton candy under your feet (but isn't quite as sticky). Lean in a direction and the cloud speeds off with you attached. With a little practice you can rise, drop, twirl, and otherwise manipulate it like a space-age hoverboard (except it won't catch on fire or explode).

Many Shén of high station rule a specific **constellation.** You can have one too! A constellation is a group of burning plasma balls an unimaginable distance away in space, but also conveniently located in Heaven. A handful of lights in the sky can communicate a vast quantity of information, or inspire individuals to feats of storytelling or art. By controlling the twinkle of those stars just so, you control how they speak to those beneath.

RELATIONSHIPS

The Shén have important, formalized working relationships with the Devá and Kami. The South and East Asian pantheons share a non-discriminating attitude towards the simultaneous practice of multiple religions, as well as an aggressive stance towards Titans (though there's some disagreement as to what to do with the Titans after you knock them out). They don't have the same long history and close ties with the Òrìshà, but they respect the Yorùbá attitudes towards ancestor worship, religious openness, and efficient bureaucracy.

The Shén have a peculiarly bipolar attitude towards Titans, whom they generally call "gui" — a term that can refer to ghosts, devils, or monsters of any species, glossed here as "demon." On the one hand, subduing demons with extreme prejudice propelled many Shén to fame and divinity. Nearly every well-established Shén has famously beat the hell out of at least a few fearsome monsters during their time. On the other hand, the celestial bureaucracy employs thousands of spirits who identify themselves, or are identified by others as, demons. When the Monkey King made his legendary Journey to the West, most of the monsters he subdued with the help of (the ex-demons) Pigsy and Sandy did not die, but instead converted to Buddhism and got themselves jobs in the pantheon — or else returned to jobs from which they had turned truant! The Devá and Æsir, who have drafted the occasional asura or frost giant into their ranks, understand the value of a redeemed foe, but the breadth of the Shén's mercy towards even repeat practitioners of Titanomachy is baffling to them at best, evidence of treachery at worst. The easiest way to sum up the Shén attitude towards Titans is, as with many Shén foibles, by analogy with mortal China: "gui" is to "Shén" as "barbarian" is to "Chinese."

GREATEST WEAKNESS

The Shén's greatest weakness is that there are too goddamn many of them. China's billions of human inhabitants frequently become tutelary or ancestral Shén upon their death. Maintaining the chain of command and communication between literally billions of Shén is a nightmare even for the World's oldest and most experienced bureaucracy. Setbacks other bureaucracies would find unconscionable — such as previously subjugated Titans, or entire disgruntled administrative departments, going rogue and becoming cannibal chieftains on some mountain or other — are an everyday kind of problem around here. Shén Scions expect to be regularly drafted into solving any number of problems considered "beneath Heaven's notice" (read: someone fucked up somewhere and they're trying to play it like they planned it this way).

THE TEŌTL OF THE MĒXIHCAH

Proud of itself
Is the city of Mexico-Tenochtitlan
Here no one fears to die in war
This is our glory.
This is Your Command,
Oh Giver of Life!
Have this in mind, oh princes
Lest we forget it.
Who could conquer Tenochtitlan?
Who could shake the foundation of heaven?
— Cantares Mexicanos

Other pantheons question the "savage" methods of the Teōtl. The Teōtl question their dedication. Blood is the elixir that feeds the Gods, and the Gods preserve the universe. Who are outsiders to question their methods when they stand between humanity and eternal darkness? To comprehend the Teōtl, one must understand the nature of sacrifice. Sacrifice unto them, and they will sacrifice unto you. Are you strong enough? Are you brave enough? Are you prepared to pay the price?

Born of the Primordials Tonacacihuatl and Tonacatecuhtli, the four sons of heaven, the "Tezcatlipocas," begot many other Gods and were tasked with populating the universe. Taking up their task with vigor, the Tezcatlipocas' attempts were thwarted when the fearsome crocodilian monster Cipactli consumed all they wrought. The Black Tezcatlipoca plunged his foot into the void to distract Cipactli, who quickly devoured it, only to be set upon by the other Tezcatlipocas in all their fury. The brothers tore Cipactli asunder to create the universe. Cipactli's head became the heavens, its tail the Underworld, and its body the World.

With Cipactli vanquished, five worlds were created — and then destroyed, along with all their peoples. Each had a sun whose light was extinguished. First it was Tezcatlipoca, the Jaguar Sun, who took up the responsibility of lighting the World by jumping into the sacrificial fire, but his dark nature or Cipactli's wounds weakened him, and he burned but dimly. Quetzalcoatl knocked him from the sky and took his place. Furious, Tezcatlipoca had his jaguars consume the race of giants that peopled the World.

During Quetzalcoatl's reign, the reign of the Wind Sun, the new people became lax and descended into decadence. Tezcatlipoca changed the worst of them into monkeys, and Quetzalcoatl swept humanity from the land in a fearsome hurricane. Defeated, he vacated his

PRONUNCIATION GUIDE

There are no silent vowels, and words are stressed on the second to last vowel. Nahuatl had no "U" sound, only "O."

"X" is pronounced "sh."

"Uc" and "Cu" are both pronounced "kw."

"Uh" and "Hu" are both pronounced "w."

"Tl" counts as a single consonant, never as a full syllable.

"H" without an adjacent "U" represents a "silent" glottal stop, as in the pause in "uh oh" or "go over."

"C" before "E" or "I" is pronounced like the English "S."

"Z" is pronounced like the English "S."

Quetzalcoatl: Quet-zal-CO-atl

Huehuecoyotl: [weːweˈkojoːt͡ɬ]

Huītzilōpōchtli: Huit-zil-o-POCH-tli

Tezcatlipoca: Tez-ca-tli-PO-ca

Tlaloc: TLA-loc

Mictecacihuatl: mik-tl'ahn-si-KWA-tl

Xīpe Totēc: she-pe TO-tek

Chalchihuitlicue: chall-wee-tl'E-kO

Xochipilli: Xo-chi-PIL-li

Xōchiquetzal: Xo-chi-QUET-zal

Ītzpāpālōtl: its-pahpah-LO-tl

Chantico: chan-TE-kO

Chicomecoatl and Centeotl: [t͡ʃikomeˈkoːaːt͡ɬ] and [senˈteoːt͡ɬ]

place as sun and abandoned the few surviving monkeys to eternal darkness.

Tlaloc, the Rain Sun, was next to take up the burden. He shone brightly over a loving humanity until Tezcatlipoca stole his beloved wife Xochiquetzal. In his grief, Tlaloc failed to send rain, plunging the World into drought. Humanity begged him for succor, but their pleas exceeded his mercy, and Tlaloc sent a fiery rain to burn them to ash.

From the ashes, the World was rebuilt, and Tlaloc was quickly replaced by his wife Chalchihuitlicue, the Water Sun. Jealous of her kind treatment of humanity and the veneration she received, Tezcatlipoca called Chalchihuitlicue's sincerity into question, forcing her to cry so vigorously, she drowned the World in a flood of tears.

Quetzalcoatl then descended to Mictlan to retrieve humanity's bones from prior ages. He sprinkled them with his blood, creating the humans of today. The humblest of the Gods, Nanahuatzin, sacrificed himself to become the Fifth Sun, but required the hearts blood of all the Teōtl to set him into motion. As the Teōtl's blood burned and steamed skyward, the Earthquake sun was born. This is the final sun, for there will not be a sixth. Should the Teōtl fail, earthquakes will rend the world as celestial horrors consume humanity, but the Gods know their duty. There is nothing they won't sacrifice for humanity, and they expect nothing less in return.

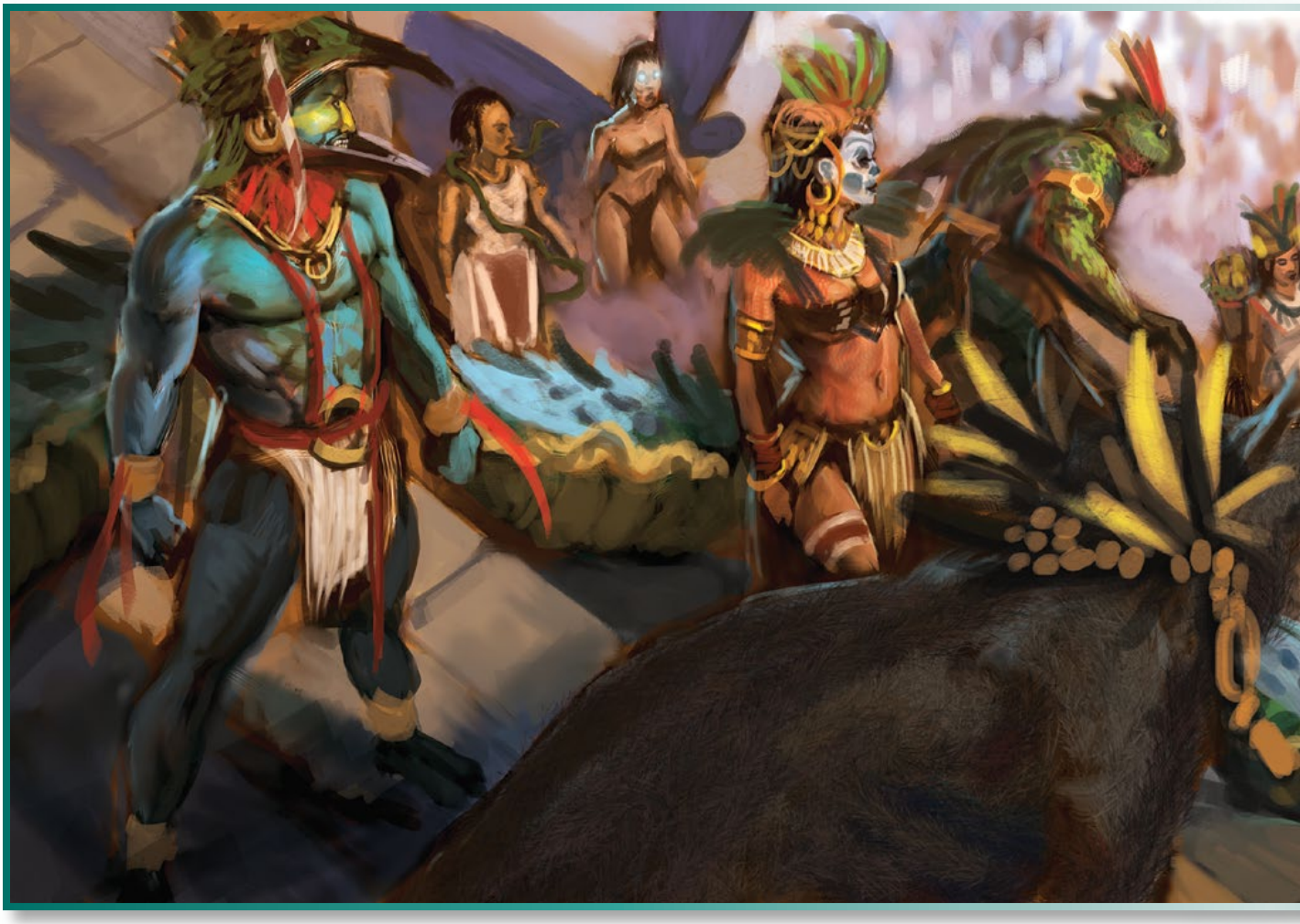
PRINCIPAL MEMBERS

The Teōtl are a fearsome pantheon that maintains a great sense of duty and sacrifice. They are passionate, yet sober, inclined toward fatalism while knowing they can change their destiny. They hold a ridged hierarchy with clear demarcations between the powers of one God ans another, but encourage innovation among their Scions. While ultimately dedicated to maintaining the Fifth Sun and reclaiming their civilization, they are more than capable of destructive infighting. The Teōtl are a study in contrasts, but all are united behind the ideal of shared sacrifice.

CHALCHIHUITLICUE, SHE OF THE JADE SKIRT

Aliases: The Water Sun, Acuecucyoticihuati, Matlalcueitl

Chalchihuitlicue is the Fourth Sun, Queen of Tlalocan, and wife of Tlaloc. She holds absolute dominion over rivers, oceans, and running water, in addition to protecting women in childbirth. Her vibrant nature endears her to those under her patronage and she freely shares her blessings with those under her care. Farms touched by Chalchihuitlicue never fear drought, and mothers in her care never lose a child during pregnancy. Chalchihuitlicue



blesses married couples and employs unique midwives to baptize newborns in her name. Far from limiting herself to humanity, Chalchihuitlicue offers equal patronage to mortal and Scion alike. This includes building bridges of water between the World and the 13 Heavens for Scions who win her favor.

Chalchihuitlicue's traditional appearance is that of a Mēxihcah noblewoman adorned with an elaborate headdress, a shawl festooned with tassels, and a green skirt. Like her husband, she frequents a rooftop--gardened penthouse in Mexico City when not governing affairs in Tlalocan.

Like their divine mother, incarnations of Chalchihuitlicue are dedicated guardians of humanity and often assume leadership roles in any situation. They are sailors, farmers, champions of sustainable farming, and stalwart guardians of those in need.

Callings: Creator, Guardian, Leader

Purviews: Beasts (Aquatic Animal), Fertility, Water

CHANTICO, SHE WHO DWELLS IN THE HOUSE

Aliases: Ruler of Ehecatl

Chantico is the Goddess of the hearth, volcanos, and precious things. She affects the guise of a highly successful (if somewhat eccentric) businesswoman, whose crimson designer outfits, rouged cheeks, and fire-red lips are a common sight in Mexico's halls of power. She owns both the "Seguridad Chantico," a private security contractor specializing in home security and the "Banco Chantico," one of Mexico's most reputable banks. Both have connections to the commodities market and are avid sponsors of volcanic national park preservation.

Homes protected by Chantico are seldom robbed, and those that are find their possessions promptly returned by red-uniformed Seguridad Chantico officers. Alarms blessed by Chantico never fail, and her bank vaults are all but impenetrable.

Chantico lovingly protects the home, its occupants, and their possessions. She also has a materialistic streak, bordering on obsession, for collecting precious things and luxury items. Those who steal from Chantico quickly learn that she conceals a temper that burns far brighter than any volcano. When roused to anger, Chantico transforms into a massive red serpent, crowned with poisonous cactus thorns, and a plume of aztaxelli warrior feathers. Chantico's warlike aspect is every bit as fearsome as Huitzilopochtli, and God and mortal alike are wise to give her a wide birth when she is protecting a charge or recovering a precious bauble.

Chantico's Scions are hot tempered and passionate about everything they do. They specialize in the protection and recovery of homes and valuable goods and are the ideal choice to guard or transport rare relics and antiquities. They are security specialists, bankers, commodities brokers, volcanologists, and talented artists of all stripes, specializing in the creation of luxury goods.

Callings: Healer, Liminal, Sage

Purviews: Fire, Forge, Order, Prosperity

CHICOMECOATL AND CENTEOTL, DEITY OF CORN AND MAIZE

Aliases: Xilonen, Centeocihuatl

Maize is sacred to the Mēxihcah in a way few can comprehend. It blesses them with health and vigor, grows in places other crops cannot, and is sacrificed to propitiate the Teōtl. Quetzalcoatl may have given maize to humanity, but Chicomecoatl and Centeotl are its guardians.

Few members of the Teōtl are more beloved than Chicomecoatl, for she acts as a benevolent mother to her people and provider of maize. Her consort and fellow God of agriculture is Centeotl. Together, they provide the sustenance their people vitally need.

As befits a former wife of Tezcatlipoca, Chicomecoatl can take a variety of forms. She commonly appears as a kindly young woman, clad in a feathered headdress, whose face, clothes, hands, and feet are painted red, with ears of corn in each hand. She can also appear as a young woman holding water flowers, a woman whose embrace means certain death, or an elderly woman with a sun-like shield.

Chicomecoatl's consort Centeotl is a golden-skinned young man who bears a headdress filled with life-giving maize. The energy of the earth radiates from him. He and Chicomecoatl preside over great harvest festivals that bring luck and sustenance to those under their care.

While not as martial as their fellow Teōtl, few are as well loved. Scions of Chicomecoatl and Centeotl are vibrant and full of energy. They are positive, forward looking, and make ideal guardians of humanity and the earth alike. They impart luck and prosperity to those around them and are more than capable healers. They are farmers, sages, environmentalists, purveyors of green business, doctors, and capable defenders of those in need.

Callings: Healer, Guardian, Judge

Purviews: Earth, Fertility, Prosperity

HUEHUECOYOTL, THE OLD COYOTE

Aliases: Xochitl

As the God of music, song, and dance, Huehuecoyotl is the life of any party. He revels in decadence, always looking for a way to satiate his bottomless sexual appetites and lust for a good time. Huehuecoyotl is a notorious trickster and a loner by nature, although he has a formidable entourage of adoring revelers. Huehuecoyotl eschews the company of his fellow Teōtl with the notable exceptions of Xolotl and the questionable, yet vigorous, "companionship" of Xochiquetzal.

For all his youthful exuberance, Huehuecoyotl's eyes reflect the weight of ages. When not in the thrall of his lifestyle, he waxes philosophical and can often be a source of great knowledge and sage counsel for Scions in need. The price of said knowledge can be anything from a night of karaoke, to winning of heart of the Goddess of saunas, but whatever it is, it will never be boring.

Huehuecoyotl's natural form is that of a human-like coyote, but he is a masterful shapeshifter, capable of taking any form that allows him to slake his lust. This lust is difficult to satisfy, and Huehuecoyotl occasionally abandons his parties to sow chaos and war to pass the time. He recently manipulated the Mēxihcahn government into canceling its German (secretly Æsir) defense contracts in favor of local Mēxihcahn arms manufactures. Cooler heads prevented all-out war, but Huehuecoyotl's penchant for mischief is not easily satisfied.

Huehuecoyotl's Scions drink down life in panting gulps, yet have the soul of a sage, mirth of a trickster, and loyalty of a dearest friend. They are party organizers, revelers, spies, tricksters, reality TV stars, the idle rich, prodigal musicians, and professional dancers.

Callings: Lover, Sage, Trickster

Purviews: Chaos, Epic Dexterity, Passion

HUĪTZILŌPŌCHTLI, GOD OF WAR AND THE SUN

Aliases: The Blue Tezcatlipoca, Lord of the South, Patron of Tenochtitlan, Champion of the Mēxihcah

Huitzilopochtli greets the dawn with a roar of fury and the flash of his Xiuhcoatl, banishing night from of the world and escorting the sun aloft with a train of fallen warriors at his back. Ascending skyward, Huitzilopochtli becomes the noonday sun, the light that banishes all shadow. As the sun sets, Huitzilopochtli's warrior entourage retreats on hummingbird wings, replaced by a fearsome host of skeletal

Cihuateteo, women who died in childbirth. They fight with rictus grins and clawed hands to beat back the dark until the sun is swallowed by the underworld to be reborn on the morrow. Huitzilopochtli never wavers, never tires, and certainly never retreats.

Huitzilopochtli participated in the creation of the world and later took interest in a promising young tribe from Aztlan, marking them for greatness. Leading them south, he guided them on an onerous pilgrimage to Tenochtitlan, the center of the universe, and site of their future glory. He sternly admonished them to abandon the name "Aztec," for they should never look backward, only forward to glory. They were now "Mēxihcah," and few test this prohibition in Huitzilopochtli's presence.

Huitzilopochtli's Scions are warriors, aggressive to a fault, yet relentlessly self-sacrificial in defense of their people. They are fighters, modern Eagle warriors and gang members who wear hummingbird tattoos and fight elaborate "flower wars" to capture rivals for sacrifice. Others become politicians, wealthy corporate moguls, or influential celebrities dedicated to conquering those around them through trade and commerce.

Callings: Guardian, Leader, Warrior

Purviews: Beasts (Eagle, Hummingbird), Death, Epic Strength, Prosperity, Sun, War

Ītzpāpālōtl, the Obsidian Butterfly

Fearsome is the name of Ītzpāpālōtl, for she is the Obsidian Butterfly. Bearing the untrammeled might of her dual nature, Ītzpāpālōtl is both a Cihuateteo, a woman who died in childbirth, and a Tzitzimime, star demon. Her Cihuateteo side makes Ītzpāpālōtl's loyalty to women and defense of the sun beyond question. Her Tzitzimime side exposes a feral brutality that leaves a broken trail of unfaithful men and titanspawn in her wake. She fell from the heavens in a shower of Tzitzimime, frogs, and toads and conceals her appearance within a cunningly wrought cloak of invisibility. Dual-natured at the best of times, Ītzpāpālōtl alternates between protector of women and monster of the night, inflicting madness, stealing children, and seducing men before tearing them limb from limb. Ītzpāpālōtl was granted dominion over Tamoanchan after Xochiquetzal's fall from grace, but her new position has done little to dull her edge. She senses that war is on the horizon and while she is reluctant to fight her sister Tzitzimime, there is no savagery she won't inflict upon the enemies of the Teōtl.

Ītzpāpālōtl often affects the guise of a seductively beautiful noblewoman. She is a master of disguise, employing a mystical combination of white face paint and rubber to affect a human guise when not employing her invisibility

cloak. When her guise falls away, all that remains is the leering skull of a savage skeletal warrior, whose obsidian-edged wings are as horrifying to behold as her jaguar talons and clawed feet.

Ītzpāpālōtl's incarnations are creatures of the hunt that have more in common with beasts than humanity. They cling to darkness and leave fire and destruction in their wake, but can be strangely protective of the rare person they bond with. Formidably seductive, they make excellent lovers, but it is rare that these relationships end well. Ītzpāpālōtl's Scions have to find the balance between their destructive nature and the World they must protect. Like their mother, paradise is at their fingertips, but can it ever truly be theirs?

Callings: Hunter, Lover, Warrior

Purviews: Beasts (all), Darkness, Death, Fertility, Stars, War

Mictecacihuatl, Queen of the Underworld

Aliases: Lady of Mictlan, Watcher of the Bones, Lady of Death, La Calavera Catrina, Wife of Mictecacihuatl

The conquest of Mexico flooded Mictlan with countless souls, but this flood waned to a trickle as a new faith replaced the old. The funeral rites and grave goods Mictlantecuhtli and his Queen were accustomed to fell out of favor and Mictlan began to falter. But death is patient, and the Lord and Lady of Mictlan pondered their lot in the frozen darkness until Mictecacihuatl struck upon the solution. Death was no longer to be feared, but celebrated. She whispered to her followers above and "Dia de los Muertos" or "The Day of the Dead" was born.

Mictecacihuatl reveled with her newfound host of painted celebrants as new offerings began to flood the underworld. Mictecacihuatl is now known as "Lady of Death" or "La Calavera Catrina," and it did not take long for her popularity to eclipse that of her beloved husband as the Lord of Mictlan.

The Day of the Dead has spread beyond Mexico, and with it, the skeletal grip of its lady. Mexico, the Americas, and beyond have become Mictecacihuatl's playground and none are foolish enough to challenge her will from October 31st to November 2nd, for on those days Mictlan seethes with power as mountains of offerings are pilled at Mictecacihuatl's feet.

Reveling in her newfound might, Mictecacihuatl has not abandoned her traditional duties. She lovingly embraces all who emerge from the world above to take their place in her dark realm. But woe to those who defy her will, for she is Lady and mistress of death and save for a brief respite during Dia de los Muertos, the souls of the dead are hers. None must defy her will, attempt to steal the bones of the dead, or try to escape her icy grasp, lest they face the blood-spattered talons and burning gaze of her beloved husband.

Mictecacihuatl's Scions promote death, darkness, and the Underworld, and work hard to expand their mistress' domain. They are members of enigmatic death squads, maintaining the status quo between the Underworld and the heavens above, organizers perpetuating Day of the Dead festivities, educators and lobbyists for indigenous cultural awareness, talented morticians specializing in Mēxihcah funeral rites, Day of the Dead revelers paying homage to their mistress, and fearless spelunkers who call darkness their home. Foremost among Mictecacihuatl's Scions is Santa Muerte. Drawing the adoration, prayers, and offerings of millions, Santa Muerte paved the way for her fellow Scions to tap the untrammeled power of death year round. Mictecacihuatl praises her in public, but some have begun to question whether Santa Muerte's popularity may eclipse that of Mictecacihuatl...

Callings: Guardian, Leader, Sage

Purviews: Beasts (Bats, Owls, Spiders), Darkness, Death, Passion (all)

Quetzalcoatl, the Feathered Serpent

Aliases: The White Tezcatlipoca, Lord of the West, The Wind Sun, Ehecatl, Kukulkan, Precious Twin

Quetzalcoatl is the morning wind that brings nourishing rainand the first light of dawn; he is protector of craftsmen, teacher of farming, inventor of the ritual calendar, friend of the learned, patron of the priesthood, and ultimate promoter of order and civilization.

Quetzalcoatl's appearance alternates between that of a formidable feathered serpent and a wizened Mēxihcah priest adorned with a red mask and black body paint. He often associates with his more monstrous, dog-like twin brother Xolotl who guides the evening sun on its journey through the underworld to be reborn at dawn.

Like their divine father, Scions of Quetzalcoatl engage in a tireless quest to promote justice, mercy, learning, and civilization. They show more compassion than many Teōtl Scions and work hand in hand with humanity to recover ancient codices, promote sustainable farming techniques and wind energy, and revive cultural awareness about the Mēxihcah and their heritage. They also participate in missionary endeavors to spread faith in the Teōtl. They are priests, artists, farmers, engineers, architects, astronomers, explorers, police officers, and educators of all stripes. Of all his Scions, Topiltzin and Nezahuacoatl were Quetzalcoatl's most beloved and set the standard for all that follow.

Callings: Creator, Liminal, Sage

Purviews: Artistry (Writing, Feathers), Beasts (all), Fertility, Journeys, Order, Sky, Stars

Tezcatlipoca, the Smoking Mirror

Aliases: The Black Tezcatlipoca, Lord of the North

Darkness, night, change through conflict, creation, deceit, vice, corruption, patron of rulers, sower of discord, bringer of hurricanes, and instructor of sorcerers.

Tezcatlipoca is all of these and much more. He will raise a person to glory today and bring them low tomorrow. Tezcatlipoca haunts roads at night, granting sorcerers wishes and inspiring the weak to acts of theft, adultery, and depravity. All who confront him during these sojourns are promised anything they desire, if they can defeat him in battle and claim his heart. None have succeeded.

In the rare instances when Tezcatlipoca reveals himself, he appears to be a fully armed young warrior, painted entirely black, with a yellow face intersected with horizontal black stripes. He has replaced the foot he lost to Cipactli with an ominously smoking black obsidian mirror that matches a similar one he wears around his neck. A single glance into either of their night-black surfaces can reveal the future, a distant place, or even the darkest motivations of the human heart.

Tezcatlipoca's Scions are sowers of discord, and granters of desires. They upset the balance and leave chaos, destruction, and ruined lives in their wake. They are not beyond noble deeds, but use far more oblique means to accomplish their ends. They are Jaguar Warriors, assassins, conmen, sorcerers, peddlers of secrets, fortune tellers, and all who walk in quiet places.

Callings: Trickster, Hunter, Leader

Purviews: Beasts (Jaguar, Turkey), Chaos, Darkness, Deception, Earth, Fortune, War

TLĀLOC, GOD OF RAIN

Aliases: The Rain Sun

Ancient and powerful, Tlaloc is the supreme God of rain and fertility. His favor sends life-giving rain, healing, and bountiful harvests, while his wrath brings drought, hail, flood, and terrible storms of lightning and thunder. Loved and venerated by the common people, mighty Tlaloc was the only member of the Teōtl beyond Huitzilopochtli honored with a shrine at the apex of the Templo Mayor in Tenochtitlan. Ruling from Tlalocan, his realm of eternal spring, Tlaloc is assisted by a host of lesser servants known as Tlaloques. Each Tlaloque inhabits a mountaintop and occupies its time collecting water in sacred vessels and dispensing rain or storm at their master's will.

Tlaloc's face and body are entirely black and he affects a blue goggle-like mask with coiled serpents that form a sort of mustache. He often wears a headdress of white heron and quetzal plumes and dons back banners made of paper and sprinkled with rubber representing the rain. Tlaloc is very active in the modern age, and while he maintains a formidable penthouse temple in Mexico City, he favors his traditional abode atop Mt. Tlaloc when visiting the World.

Scions of Tlaloc are often calm and compassionate, but can be merciless as a storm when they, or those they love, are threatened. They honestly seek to aid the Mēxihcah and are often good-natured healers, honest farmers, eerily accurate meteorologists, and stalwart hunters and guardians. They often forge ties with the local Tlaloque and those truly blessed with Tlaloc's favor may earn gifts in the form of cornstalks that become lightning bolts or jars of sacred water that bring rain, drought, plague, or frost.

Callings: Guardian, Healer, Hunter

Purviews: Death, Earth, Fertility, Frost, Health, Sky

XĪPE TOTĒC, OUR LORD THE FLAYED ONE

Aliases: The Red Tezcatlipoca, Lord of the East, Youalahuan, Camaxtli

Few Gods are older than Xīpe Totēc, and fewer still wield his power. The eldest of the Tezcatlipocas, he stood in the primordial waters of creation at the dawn of time and holds dominion over agriculture and goldsmiths. He is the herald of rebirth, new growth, and renewal, wearing a flayed skin over his perfect golden form to represent the first covering of vegetation that envelops the World during spring. His blessing brings new life and creation, raises fresh crops from barren earth, cures disease, and inspires goldsmiths to legendary feats of artifice.

While generally well-inclined toward humanity, Xīpe Totēc has a darker side. He is the originator of war and can inflict horrific diseases when angered. As an old God, he prefers older sacrifices in the form of flayed human skins. These are largely acquired during the Tlacaxipehualiztli festival in March, where his victims are shot with arrows, their blood nourishing the seeds of spring, and in reclusive fight clubs where his God impersonators fight five fearsome opponents to the death. The fallen in both ceremonies have their skins flayed to be worn in Xīpe Totēc's honor. Some whisper that those who wear these skins are granted miraculous regenerative abilities and have the capacity to cure any disease. Truly pious Scions receive visions leading them to ancient caches of hidden Mēxihcah gold.

Xīpe Totēc's Scions are warriors, farmers, goldsmiths, talented healers, and cunning hunters. Their penchant for wearing flayed skins alienates them from other Scions, so they often congregate in the Yopico, a cave-like temple deep beneath Mexico City, to commune with their God and gain access to the Otherworld.

Callings: Creator, Healer, Hunter

Purviews: Fertility, Forge, Health, War

XOCHIPILLI, THE FLOWER PRINCE

Aliases: Chicomexochitl ("Seven Flower"), Macuilxochitl ("Five Flower")

Similar to his twin sister Xochiquetzal, Xochipilli is the picture of mirth and youthful exuberance. Ecstasy is his pedigree and no one can tell him otherwise. He is the living personification of youth, love, beauty, music, and flowers. Hedonistic as a rule, Xochipilli represents all the beauties of youth and spends his time in song, dance, gaming, and sating his unquenchable passions.

A ceaseless patron of authors and painters of all stripes, Xochipilli fires their hearts with divine inspiration, supplying them with all they need to practice their art.

Xochipilli is the physical manifestation of passionate love and botanicas; his floral love potions are always effective. Xochipilli's appreciation of love and beauty is far from constrained by mortal convention and has led him to become the patron deity of the gay community and male prostitutes. His "Chicomexochitl" and "Macuilxochitl" online dating and escort sites offer safe rendezvous guaranteed to provide everything their patrons seek. Gay clubs and bars touched by Xochipilli are always safe, and he reserves a special vengeance for those who interfere with his chosen community.

Not entirely remiss in his Godly duties, Xochipilli is more than happy to visit venereal diseases upon those who fail to abstain on days of fasting (but will happily remove them if they make amends).

Xochipilli's Scions are always the life of the party. They are artists, musicians, models, professional escorts, botanica owners, writers, dancers, florists, rave organizers, bar/club owners (and frequent patrons), and anyone who likes a good time.

Callings: Lover, Guardian, Trickster

Purviews: Artistry (all), Beauty, Fortune, Passion (all), Prosperity

XOCHIQUETZAL, THE MAIDEN OF BLOSSOM AND FEATHER

Aliases: Ichpochtli

Xochiquetzal is perhaps the most tragic of the Teōtl, for she knew paradise and lost it forever. As patroness of feminine beauty, fertility, and artistry, Xochiquetzal ruled the heavenly realm of Tamoanchan where she reveled in its splendor with an entourage of attendants and entertainers. But Xochiquetzal grew covetous of Tamoanchan's forbidden fruit and was forever banished to the World by Tonacacihuatl upon her first bite.

Filled with sadness and weeping, Xochiquetzal made the best of her lot and adapted to her new home with wild abandon. She often manifests as a wealthy socialite, model, or elite fashion designer. She holds court every eight years during a major fashion event in Mexico City, but is just at home in New York, Paris, or Milan. As patron of weaving and artistry, Xochiquetzal weaves garments of unparalleled beauty sought by mortal and Scion alike.

Xochiquetzal is sensuality incarnate, lust absolute, and seduction manifest. None can resist her charms and few would want to. Scions born to her (and they are many) are naturally alluring and rarely have trouble finding romantic partners.

She is also a patron of fertility, blessing the barren with children and protecting young mothers in childbirth. Fertility clinics blessed by Xochiquetzal are always successful, and mothers giving birth under her protection find a quetzal feather and small spindle in their child's hand when they awaken.

Xochiquetzal's Scions tend to emulate their divine mother. They are playful, strong willed, wealthy, seductive, and talented in a variety of arts. They love being the center of attention, high fashion, and don't take no for an answer. Xochiquetzal's Scions are wealthy socialites, celebrities, telenovela stars, fashion designers, runway models, doctors, fertility clinic workers, midwives, and prodigal artists of all stripes.

Callings: Creator, Guardian, Lover

Purviews: Artistry (all), Beauty, Epic Dexterity, Fertility, Fortune, Passion (all), Prosperity

COSMOLOGY

The universe is composed of a vast disk with mighty Tenochtitlan (now Mexico City) at its heart. Ascending skyward from the World are the 13 heavenly realms of the Overworld, with an additional nine layers of the Underworld stretching downward to Mictlan, the abode of the dead.

The Overworld

The 13 heavens of the Overworld are filled with wonder and horror alike. They comprise the realm of the sun, moon, stars, and the private domains of the Primordials, Gods, and Titans. The heavens are largely inaccessible by any but the Teōtl and their chosen servants, but can be reached via Axes Mundi situated throughout Mexico (and beyond).

Tonacateuctl ichan, the 13th Heaven: Tonacateuctl ichan's rarified air is seldom tasted by any but the mightiest of Gods. It is seat of Tonacacihuatl and Tonacatecuhtli's power, where they create human souls from a palace that coruscates with the raw power of creation.

Tamoanchan: Tamoanchan is a paradisiacal realm where sunlit forests laden with the sweetest fruit compete with a riotous profusion of flowers that perfume the air. It is here that the Gods met Quetzalcoatl upon his return from the Underworld to create the first humans of the present age. But while humanity was created here, it may never return, for Tamoanchan is reserved for the Gods.

Tlalocan: Tlalocan is the personal realm of Tlaloc and Chalchihuitlicue. It is a verdant paradise blessed with eternal rain and lush vegetation laden with fruit and cacao beans. Tlalocan is also the final destination of those who die under Tlaloc's care, including victims of water-based diseases, drowning, and lightning strikes.

The Underworld (Michtlan)

One need not look far to find Mictlan, for the gates of death are always open. For those seeking less permanent passage, a variety of Axes Mundi are available, including enigmatic caves deep in the earth, ruined temples, modern cemeteries, and even the ofrendas of Dia de los Muertos.

Scions traveling to Mictlan must face each of the Underworld's trials in turn; with each level they descend, they find a new test. Wise Scions enlist the aid of Xolotl or

one of his dog-like psychopomps and come well-equipped for their journey with gifts for the lords of the dead. Barring an extraordinary circumstance, only those who surmount these trials are permitted entrance to Mictlan.

Mictlan is a cold, bleak place inhabited by souls that have not died in battle or ascended to Tlalocan. These souls huddle in darkness except for a single day's respite each year where they are allowed to visit their families above. The lords of the dead inhabit a windowless palace in the center of this dim realm, filled with innumerable grave goods in addition to human bones from prior ages. The masters of this realm expect nothing less than proper gifts and obeisance, lest Mictlantecuhtli rend them asunder with his massive claws.

Titans

As long as a sun shines, there will be war with the Titans, for the Titans are the night and stars, the eternal darkness that would swallow the world.

The predominate Primordials of the Teōtl are the creator couple Tonacacihuatl and Tonacatecuhtli, who reside in the 13th heaven. The ancient primordial Coatlicue also plays an important role as mother of the moon and stars, and by extension, the Titans.

Coyolxauhqui is the daughter of Coatlicue and few Titans hate the Teōtl with greater vigor. When Coyolxauhqui discovered that her mother was pregnant, she confronted Coatlicue and scorned her story about becoming pregnant from a bundle of hummingbird feathers she discovered while sweeping. In her fury, Coyolxauhqui assembled her brothers, the stars of the south, and resolved to avenge Coatlicue's dishonor by slaying her. The confrontation went poorly when Huitzilopochtli burst forth from Coatlicue fully armed, buried Xuihcoatl in Coyolxauhqui's chest, and scattered her brothers to the wind. Huitzilopochtli proceeded to decapitate Coyolxauhqui and hurtled her dismembered limbs from Coatepec Mountain. Imprisoned for ages, the unearthing of the Coyolxauhqui stone in Mexico City in 1978 unraveled the potent magic that bound her and Coyolxauhqui began the agonizing process of resurrection. Her rage undimmed, Coyolxauhqui gathers her brothers anew as she prepares to claim her vengeance.

Purview: Moon.

Virtues: Dominance, Hunger.

The **Centzonhuitznaua** or "400 Southerners," are the Titans of the southern stars, children of Coatlicue, and brothers of Coyolxauhqui. Evil by nature, they were more than happy to raise the banner of rebellion against their mother and continue their assault upon Huitzilopochtli and the Teōtl to this day. Warriors to a man and endless in number, the eldest have become Titans in their own right, while the youngest remain titanspawn.

The **Tzitzimime** are skeletal demons who bathe in malevolent silvery light as they stare hungrily down at an unsuspecting world. It is foretold that the Tzitzimime will descend upon humanity at the end of the world to consume humanity. Until then, they descend during eclipses and the five unlucky days known as the Nemontemi on the Mēxihcah calendar to rend humanity with their taloned hands. Only through great effort do the Scions of the Teōtl repulse them, and each year sees the Tzitzimime grow more and more impatient for their great feast, going so far as to slip into the World during times outside their normal purview. Like the Centzonhuitznaua, the mightiest have achieved Titan status, while the rank and file are mere titanspawn.

The **Giants of the First Sun** survived the destruction of the Jaguar Sun and are trapped in an Axis Mundi with only darkness and the growl of hungry jaguars for companionship. They nurse a rage that burns brighter with each passing day and should their metaphysical cage ever break, the World will tremble at their fury.

The **Monkeys of the Second Sun** still reel from their abandonment, but unlike their giant ancestors, have channeled their rage into cold, focused, hatred. They have explored the boundaries of their Axis Mundi prison and found cracks that allow them to slip into the World. Using the lessons of Tezcatlipoca well, they subtly disguise their appearance as they work to deconstruct everything Quetzalcoatl and the Teōtl have accomplished.

RELIGION

The Mēxihcah are a deeply religious people, steeped in ancient traditions as diverse as they are hierarchal. Their relationship with the Teōtl colors every aspect of their lives, from birth to death. The guardians of this relationship in the World are members of the priesthood. Priests and priestesses serve as advisors, educate the young, administer temples, preserve ancient knowledge, interpret omens, perform divinations, and form a crucial link between the Teōtl and their people. This final duty involves an exhaustive regimen of daily prayer, supplication, and sacrifice.

Each God has its own temple and set of rituals, complete with a dedicated host of priests and priestesses to attend them. Easily recognizable by their black body paint, blood-matted hair, and elaborate regalia, Mēxihcah clergy are a fearsome sight to behold. Their days are spent attending their duties and their evenings in deep prayer and self-mortification. Mēxihcah clergy are not unfamiliar with the battlefield, and more than a few titanspawn have learned to fear their screaming, black-clad forms. The clergy have an elaborate hierarchy of ranks, titles, and positions; most priests start as a tlamacatzon ("little givers of things") until they attain the rank of full priest or tlamacazqui ("giver of things"). Priestesses follow a similar progression until they become a full priestess or cihuatlamacazqui ("female giver of things"). The apex of the religious hierarchy are the high priests of Huitzilopochtli and Tlaloc in Mexico City, the Quetzalcoatl Totec tlamacazqui and Quetzalcoatl Tlaloc tlamacazqui. All priests are required to live immaculate lives; woe to those who fail in their calling, for the only acceptable answer is a great sacrifice on their part. No mere apology will suffice.

Mēxihcah ceremonies are extremely elaborate and largely governed by two principal calendars. The *xiuitl* (solar year) is organized into 18 months of 20 days and features 18 major ceremonies. The remaining five days of the solar year, or *nemontemi*, are ill-omened and best forgotten. The second calendar of 260 days, or *tonalpohualli*, is a complex ritual calendar containing a dizzying array of day/number combinations that move throughout the year. These combinations are captured in the *tonalamatl* or "book of days," and contain the key to divining one's fate, foreseeing the future, and discerning the best day for key rites and ceremonies. Interpreting the tonalpohualli is complex at the best of times and the specialized services of a professional calendar reader, or *tonalpouhque* are vital. Prominent ceremonies involve grand processions, singing, dancing, fasting followed by feasting, self-mortification, and at times human sacrifice.

The core of Mēxihcah faith in the World is built around sacrifice. This sacrifice can take a variety of forms, from fasting and abstinence to offerings at the temple, but the Teōtl require strength to maintain the universe, and strength requires blood. The Teōtl have long recognized that large-scale human sacrifice draws too much attention, so they have adapted by creating new sources of sacrifice that are just as painful. A Scion may have to destroy a friend's reputation, shatter a cherished memento, or even abandon a true love in their greatest time of need.

The Teōtl of the World have also found new ways to obtain the blood they so greatly need. They organize blood drives from enigmatic blood mobiles, work as phlebotomists, and operate blood banks. Of course, the Teōtl have not entirely forgotten the old ways. Priests and lay people offer their blood and pain to the Teōtl by piercing their flesh with maguey spines. Soldiers and gang members bearing hummingbird tattoos fight "flower wars" with cartels and rival gangs to claim "prisoners" that are never seen again. Others frequent the terminally ill to offer release. The only rule the Teōtl hold inviolate is that all human sacrifice must be willing: The bond between the sacrificial victim and captor is more intimate than family, and any who challenge this dictum face the wrath of the Teōtl as a whole.

BIRTHRIGHTS

The most common Birthrights of the Teōtl are Followers and Relics, although they are best known for their elite warriors.

CREATURES

Dogs of Xolotl: The red dogs of Xolotl are vital guides for any Scion seeking passage to Mictlan.

Nagual: Some Scions access and amplify an animal-like portion of their self to create potent spirit guides or transform into mighty beasts.

FOLLOWERS

Eagle Warriors: Dedicated to Huitzilopochtli, these ferocious Special Forces operatives form an enigmatic branch of the Mexican military specializing in daylight raids. They often join Scions in their fight against the Titans and are easily recognizable by the eagle device on their helms and ubiquitous Xuihcoatl assault rifles. Those who fall in battle rise at dawn to join Huitzilopochtli's war against the night.

Jaguar Warriors: Jaguar Warriors emulate their patron, Tezcatlipoca, by striking silently and vanishing into the night. Their motives are as inscrutable as their master's and they are as likely to fight against a given Scion as assist them, but while their morality is questionable, their lethality is not.

Priests: Faith colors every aspect of a Teōtl Scion's life. Priests ensure that they make the correct sacrifices to propitiate their divine parent.

Shaman: Priests assist the Mēxihcah on a grand scale while shamans focus on the individual. Scions employ shamans' magic to counteract the effects of evil sorcery and perform divinations.

GUIDES

Tonalpouhque: Scions of all stripes employ these professional readers of the tonalpohualli to interpret omens and divine their future.

RELICS

Tezcatlipoca's Mirror's: Tezcatlipoca's polished obsidian mirrors allow the user to see the future, distant places, and the darkest desires of the human heart.

Xolotl's Lowrider: This cherry-red 1964 Impala allows a Scion to ride to Mictlan in style by simply shifting through any of the nine available gears.

Xuihcoatl of Huitzilopochtli: A flaming serpent forged from the essence of Xiuhtecuhtli, the fire God. Xuihcoatl strikes like lightning and leaves flaming ruin in its wake.

RELATIONSHIPS

The Teōtl and their Scions maintain a close relationship with a variety of beings from the Overworld, including Xolotl's dogs, Tlaloque, Xuihcoatl, and a variety of lesser spirits. This same cordiality is not maintained with the denizens of the four prior suns. For them, the Teōtl reserve a unique sense of apathy and have abandoned them as a symbol of their greatest failures without a second thought.

The current priorities of the Teōtl are what they always have been, expansion of their empire and protecting the world from darkness. While their empire fell, their duty lives on, and the Teōtl have done much to rebuild their influence in the world from their seat of power, Mexico City. The Teōtl and their Scions work daily to recover ancient relics, lost codices, and cultural artifacts, while spreading increased awareness of their culture across the world. Every year, Dia de los Muertos and other Mēxihcah festivals gain influence and through this influence the Teōtl grow stronger.

PANTHEON PATH OF THE TEŌTL

Path Skills: Culture, Empathy

Virtues: Hunger and Sacrifice

The path of the Teōtl is a precarious balance between hunger and sacrifice. During the two centuries of Mēxihcah dominion in Tenochtitlan, they consumed massive quantities of flesh, blood, and tribute. Wherever the tlatoani's gaze fell, there was war, and that war consumed the resources of their fallen foes and supplied sacrificial victims to satiate the Teōtl's ravenous hunger. But when one eats, another is eaten; for one to take, another must give. To accept a sacrifice is to demand obedience, resources, and even human life. These things grant a Scion great power, but at what price? To sacrifice others is necessary, but can ultimate hunger give way ultimate sacrifice?

The Teōtl hunger. A hero does not sit idly by and await victory's invitation; he seeks it out like a starving jaguar. Teōtl heroes are never idle, constantly seeking more, whatever more may be. They are often raw, kinetic, and savage in aspect, barely containing their lust to take one more hill, plant one more banner, or capture one more sacrifice. This hunger makes Teōtl hero's implacable foes and feared opponents, but it must be carefully restrained lest it consume them utterly.

The Teōtl sacrifice. A hero cannot simply dress someone up as a Teōtl and sacrifice them in their stead, a Teōtl's sacrifice must always be his own. While always hungry, Teōtl heroes have an immense sense of duty to their chosen cause, the Teōtl, and their friends and allies. They will be the first to help a friend, volunteer for rear-guard actions, or participate in suicide missions. They will offer their very heart's blood to save the one they love or defeat a chosen foe.

Teōtl Scions must balance their lust for conquest against the greater good because the greatest victory often requires the greatest sacrifice. It is the Teōtl themselves who best embody this balance. Tezcatlipoca sacrificed his foot to distract Cipactli, who in turn had to die to create the World. Huitzilopochtli led the Mēxihcah away from Aztlan in his hunger to found Tenochtitlan, but had to sacrifice his nephew Copil to achieve his dream. When Tēucciztēcatl's hunger failed and he retreated from the sacrificial flame necessary to create the current Sun, it was venerable Nanāhuātzin who selflessly took his place. Only then, did Tēucciztēcatl feel the weight of his shame and hurl himself onto the pyre.

Signature Purview: *Nextlahualli*. The act of sacrifice binds the Teōtl and their worshippers in an eternal cycle of reciprocity and mutual assistance. The Teōtl sustain the World so that humanity may endure, while their worshippers sustain the Teōtl through fervent prayer and sacrifices of flowers, goods, animals, significant relationships, and human lives. Nextlahualli literally means "debt repayment," and describes the cyclical relationship of offerings and obligations at the heart of Teōtl worship. Through this Purview, the Teōtl and their Scions draw sustenance and empowerment from sacrifice and wield that power on behalf of their worshippers.

OTHER PANTHEONS

The Teōtl are still recovering from the Spanish conquest and have only recently begun to forge ties with foreign pantheons. They feel a sense of kinship and mutual respect with the Manitou, for they share the idea that there is a proper place and time for everything, concepts of duality, and maintain a similar calendar. The have renewed their ancient ties with the Mayan pantheon and their history of shared trial and foreign conquest have brought them closer to the distant Inca.

While their contact has been limited, the Teōtl took an almost immediate dislike to the Theoi for their treatment of mortals. The Devá rank a marginal point behind the Theoi in their scorn for the way they conceal their appetites. Thus far, only the Æsir have impressed the Teōtl, for they share similar martial ideals and manner of life.

GREATEST WEAKNESS

The concept of Teōtl is the pillar of belief that unites the Gods. It represents divinity, numinosity, and power. Teōtl gave believers the fire to embrace the blood and pain necessary to forge an empire, but it was this same Teōtl that caused the empire's fall, for Teōtl can also denote a sense of mystery or the inscrutable. When Hernan Cortez and his conquistadors took Tenochtitlan, it was because Montezuma II failed to grasp what was new and inscrutable, and called it Teōtl. Cortez was no God, and the Mēxihcah knew it, but his arrival created a moment of uncertainty where the Mēxihcah failed to separate the unknown from divinity. This confusion disrupted the vital link between the Mēxihcah and their Gods, which prevented them from intervening in their time of need.

THE THEOI, THE GREEK & ROMAN GODS

But let us now go to bed and turn to love-making.
For never before has love for any goddess or woman
so melted about the heart inside me, broken it to submission,
as now: not that time when I loved the wife of Ixion
who bore me Peirithrous, equal of the gods in counsel,
nor when I loved Akrisios' daughter, sweet-stepping Danaë,
who bore Perseus to me, pre-eminent among all men,
nor when I loved the daughter of far-renowned Phoinix, Europa
who bore Minos to me, and Rhadamanthys the godlike;
not when I loved Semele, or Alkmene in Thebe,
when Alkmene bore me a son, Herakles the strong-hearted,
while Semele's son was Dionysos, the pleasure of mortals;
not when I loved the queen Demeter of the lovely tresses,
not when it was glorious Leto nor yourself, so much
as now I love you, and the sweet passion has taken hold of me.
— Zeus to Hera, The Iliad, Book 14

The World was born of the great chasm, Chaos, from whence arose Gaia, who birthed her equal, Uranus, to enshroud her in the sky. To Uranus, Gaia bore 12 great Titans, the Cyclopes, and the Hundred-Handed — but Uranus, fearful of his children's power and hateful of their appearance, confined the Cyclopes and the Hundred-Handed in Tartarus, far beneath Gaia, which caused her great pain. She fashioned a knife of flint and bestowed it upon her son, Cronus, who castrated his father and flung his genitals into the sea. Now preeminent, he took his sister Rhea for a wife, and to Cronus she bore six children — three daughters, and three sons.

But Cronus, who had learned well the lesson of his father Uranus, had no desire to be overthrown himself. Though at first he freed them, in time he reimprisoned the Hundred-Handed and Cyclopes in Tartarus, fearful of their power. Told he was destined to be overthrown by his own issue, he swallowed each of his six children, three daughters and three sons, as they were born. But Rhea, with the aid of Uranus and Gaia, tricked Cronus — swaddling a great stone that Cronus unthinkingly devoured, she spirited her youngest son, Zeus, to safety. When he was grown, he returned and overcame Cronus, who was made to vomit up his five children and a single stone.

Cunning Zeus freed the Hundred-Handed and the Cyclopes from Tartarus, and they in turn gave him thunder and lightning, the greatest of weapons. The terrible decade-long war between the Titans and the Theoi that followed came to be known as the Titanomachy, and when it ended triumphant Zeus imprisoned the Titans in Tartarus, setting the Hundred-Handed to guard its gates that they

might never escape. Zeus then drew lots with his brothers, Hades and Poseidon, to determine how to split the rule of the world between them: Zeus drew the sky, Poseidon the sea, and Hades the dread realm of the dead — the earth itself was left in common between them.

From high on Olympus, Zeus still reigns over the Theoi, ever-watchful of his many, many children — for after all, he too bears a certain destiny.

PRINCIPAL MEMBERS

Many are the Gods of Greece and Rome, but the greatest among them are the Dodekatheon, who reside atop Mount Olympus. Which deities are reckoned among their number has varied over time and in different cultures (and has traditionally excluded Hades, who dwells in the Underworld, and Persephone, who dwells there half the year), but membership in the Dodekatheon should not be confused with influence, power, or the devotion of their faithful.

APHRODITE, GODDESS OF LOVE AND BEAUTY

Aliases: Venus

Aphrodite is by tradition ascribed parentage from Uranus, the sky, whose genitals Cronus threw into the sea, from whence Aphrodite rose fully grown from the foam and spray. From the very moment of her birth, she was indescribably beautiful, and was sought after by men and women alike. She is the Goddess of love and of lust, of high-minded devotion and base carnal desire, and while the prudish may call her by two names to try to separate the two, she is but a single Goddess. Wedded to Hephaestus by Zeus, she and Ares have carried on an affair for millennia that has more than once resulted in humiliation for all concerned. Eldest of all the Theoi, she does not chafe beneath Zeus' rule—for after all, does not lust often rule the mind of the greatest among the Theoi?

In Rome, she was called Venus, and though little about her changed she was greatly honored as the mother of the Roman people, opposite Ares, here called Mars. Divine mother of the hero Aeneas who was said to have predated even Romulus and Remus, she was also claimed as an ancestress by none other than Julius Caesar himself — a claim that his heir, Augustus, played to the hilt in the struggle to become Rome's first emperor.

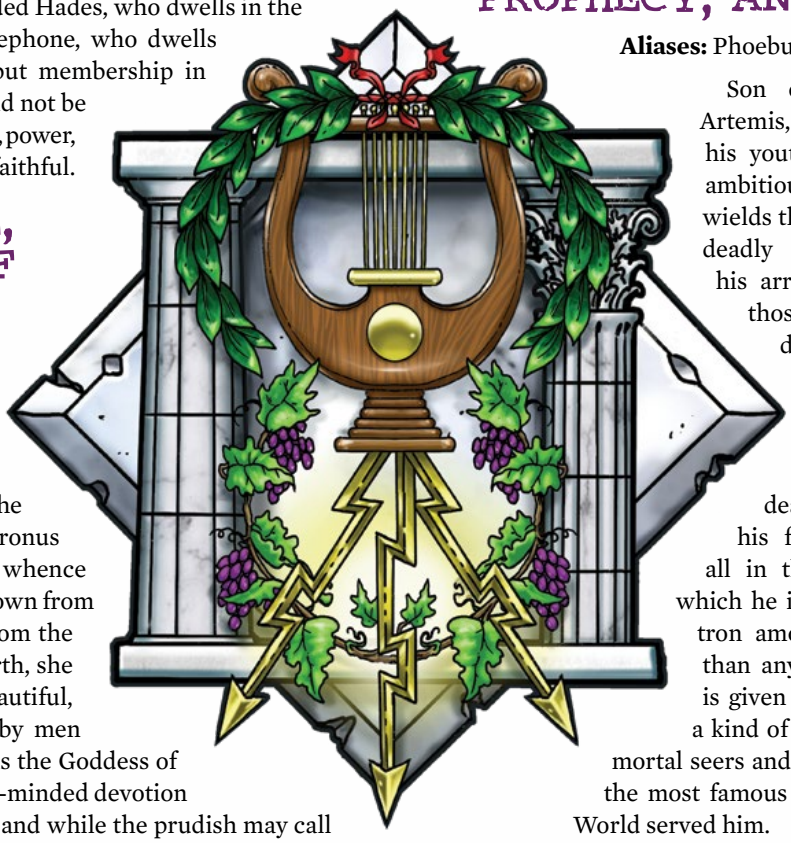
The modern World reveres Aphrodite in 1,000 different ways each and every day. The symbol of Venus may be found on labels for cosmetics, used in advertising, and even used to denote women as a whole (something which frustrates the other Goddesses to no end). Beauty is king in the worlds of fashion and film, and if it is not the same beauty that was celebrated long ago, Aphrodite is more than able to adapt. She is beloved, if by proxy, and Aphrodite in turns loves the World back.

Callings: Lover, Guardian, Creator

Purviews: Beauty, Fertility, Passion (Desire), Passion (Love), Prosperity

APOLLO, GOD OF MUSIC, PROPHECY, AND HEALING

Aliases: Phoebus



Son of Zeus, brother of Artemis, Apollo is defined by his youth — vigorous, active, ambitious. Like his sister, he wields the bow and arrow with deadly accuracy, and where his arrow lands plague fells those mortals who have displeased him — but when called upon to heal, Apollo's powers are no less great, and he exchanges his deadly bow for a lyre, his favored instrument of all in the musical realm (of which he is also the primary patron among the Theoi). More than any of the Theoi, Apollo is given to prophecy, inspiring a kind of controlled madness in mortal seers and priestesses — many of the most famous oracles in the ancient World served him.

Unlike the other Theoi, Apollo took on no new name among Romans — tradition holds that they were consulting his oracle at Delphi as far back as the kings of distant antiquity, who were overthrown in favor of the republic that collapsed into empire.

It is Apollo's way to kill from afar; mortals have learned well from the young God, pleasing him little. The modern World teems with means of dealing death from a great distance, from cruise missiles to tailored pathogens. Little angers Apollo more than the idea of biological warfare, for he sees it as hubristic intrusion upon his domain and has been known to punish mortals for it — perhaps this, more than anything else, has kept it from ever being used on a large

scale. The World has given him one thing to be glad for, though — far more music, and of a greater diversity, is being created than ever before in human history, and Apollo is in the thick of it. One of the easiest ways to get his attention is to invoke him following a really amazing guitar solo.

Callings: Healer, Judge, Sage

Purviews: Artistry, Epic Dexterity, Health, Sun

ARES, GOD OF WAR

Aliases: Mars

Son of Zeus and Hera, and least beloved of all the sons of the Lord of Olympus, Ares commands the wild and bloody chaos of the thick of war, madness and noise and death alike. He is not a wise general, nor is he a reserved soldier — he is a warrior, brilliant and terrifying in his art. Mortals rarely propitiate him, and if they do, it is to beg him to restrain his gifts, for a soldier who sees red is far less likely to live through the battle.

To the Romans, who called him Mars, Ares embodies the Legions, stern and unyielding, the very engine of war that brought greatness to Rome. He is respected and propitiated more than any other God save Jupiter and is attributed with the ultimate parentage of the Roman people, through Romulus and Remus. In this aspect, he is less the brute and more the cog, or rather the sum of all cogs, finely oiled and precise in his application of force — yet still, Minerva is his superior in the realm of strategy, and it rankles Ares to this day.

Bearing twin Mantles, the God of War acts thus upon the World — when chaos and strife run rampant, Ares is there hacking and slashing; and when war becomes a thing of industry and precision, Mars watches over it all with a cool gaze. Though he still disdains the higher realms of strategy and thought, and holds a particular hatred for armed drones, he is nonetheless the most accomplished warrior among the Theoi, and when the Titanomachy comes to Olympus, he will stand before the enemy with a smile on his face.

Callings: Warrior, Lover, Guardian

Purviews: Chaos, Fertility, Order, Passion (Rage), Passion (Valor), Prosperity, War

ARTEMIS, GODDESS OF THE HUNT

Aliases: Diana

Sister of Apollo, daughter of Zeus and Leto, Artemis stands forever between the wilderness she so loves and the women of the World, whom she is sworn to defend. Disdaining the love of men, she has never married, and by the assent of Zeus she never shall. She surrounds herself with maidens to serve her, guarding her hunting dogs and bow as she rests. When she descends from the mountains and forests, it is to watch over the rites that usher young girls into womanhood, and to bring relief to women in childbirth — or to take their lives, for as a Goddess of healing she is also a Goddess of plague.

Diana's cult in Rome is ancient, dating back to the founding and perhaps before. Similar in many ways to her Greek identity, among Romans she ensured succession as well as childbirth, and her temples were sanctuary to plebeians and slaves.

The modern World, though, is quite different from ancient Greece. More and more, the works of man impinge upon her sacred wilderness — more and more, she must travel to distant lands to hunt. So too has the World given her tenfold and more women to watch over. Any who claim womanhood are hers to defend, and Artemis is no slouch. Her hand can be seen at work in 1,000 struggles for liberation — more than any other Goddess of the Theoi, she is apt to throw herself into the fray. She has changed subtly in that time, a little older and a little wiser, but ever the huntress, and ever ready to draw back her bowstring and let fly vengeance and justice.

Callings: Hunter, Guardian, Healer

Purviews: Beasts, Epic Dexterity, Health, Moon, Wild

ATHENA, GODDESS OF HEROES, WISDOM, STRATEGY, AND LAW

Aliases: Minerva

Daughter of Zeus and Metis, emerging already an adult from Zeus' forehead, bearing a spear and letting out a great war cry — so goes the story. Other, more staid tales, tell of her childhood tutelage under Triton, and of Triton's daughter whose name she took in penance for accidentally killing her: hence, Pallas Athena. She is a great warrior, and a greater general, for unlike Ares she has studied well the art of strategy, and while Ares may lead the armies of Olympus, it is Athena's plans he implements, for he well knows that she is wiser than he. She is the patron of Heroes, and often involves herself even in the lives of the progeny of other Gods (and, occasionally, those descended from other pantheons).

In Rome, she was Minerva, and though revered for skill in strategy and for her great wisdom, she was also considered the patron of trade and commerce. Here began the tradition of dedicating places of learning to Minerva, a practice that continues to this day — universities, fraternities and sororities, and in California's case an entire state, are ritually marked with her likeness.

Athena's wisdom makes her well adapted to the modern age — the World has changed, and she has changed with it, drinking down new knowledge and methods and adapting them for her own use. Democracy's spread from her beloved Athens pleases her; corruption within it, all too common, infuriates her. She rarely acts directly, but it is Athena's hand pulling the strings of 100 organizations with their hands in the inner workings of power. Her schemes are far-sighted, and actions seemingly at cross-purposes have a way of working out exactly as she desires.

Callings: Guardian, Warrior, Sage

Purviews: Artistry (Weaving), Beasts (Owl), Epic Dexterity, Order, War

DEMETER, GODDESS OF AGRICULTURE

Aliases: Ceres

Sister of Zeus, mother of Persephone, Demeter's bounty gives mortals security and ease. No more must they hunt and gather to feed their families, but cultivate from the very earth itself. In her honor they offer up the first and best of every harvest — for antiquity teaches what will happen if her gift is ever withdrawn permanently. When Zeus gave Persephone to Hades in marriage without Demeter's consent, when the Lord of the Underworld leapt up from a great chasm and abducted her as was the custom, Demeter denied the world a harvest, and civilization very nearly collapsed. The Theoi desperately entreated her, but she would not be moved by anything save Persephone's return. In the end, Zeus relented, and Demeter would have her beloved daughter, but only for half the year — and so for half of each year, she lets the land lie fallow to remind the Theoi not to trifle with her or hers.

In Rome, she was Ceres, Goddess of grains and fertility alike, preeminent among all the agricultural deities. She was a popular subject of worship not only for these reasons, but because of the Eleusinian Mysteries, imported from Greece, in which she was a central figure. Rome's prosperity was attributed to her blessing, and her protection was given to the Tribunes, who were inviolate guardians of the plebian class.

In the modern era, Demeter's power waxes high. The Green Revolution — the development of chemical fertilizer and 100 other technologies—has driven food production to heights unthinkable even a few centuries ago. The advent of organized labor reflects Demeter's power in a different way — the withholding of power resonates strongly with her denial of the harvest, and it pleases Demeter that mortals can take such a lesson. Yet, so many go hungry despite her gifts, so many are powerless despite her blessing, and for all her divine majesty Demeter cannot save everyone.

Callings: Creator, Guardian, Judge

Purviews: Earth, Epic Stamina, Fertility, Order

DIONYSUS, GOD OF REVELRY

Aliases: Bacchus

Dionysus is the God of revelry, of religious epiphany, and especially of wine. He is the youngest of the Olympians, born to Zeus and a mortal mother, Semele — who was later obliterated by Zeus' glory when she demanded to see his true form. Zeus sewed the unborn Dionysus into his thigh, and when the child was born a second time, gave him up to Hermes to raise far from Hera's jealous eye. Revered throughout the ancient world through the widespread (and occasionally dangerous) Dionysian Cult, he has served ever since as a harbinger of foreign revelation, of merriment, and of madness.

The Romans call Dionysus Bacchus, but like Apollo he differs little — a name is only a name, after all. As the quintessential foreign God who brings strange wisdom, no changes were needed, for there are always new lands to bring wild celebration to.

All these things and more, Dionysus finds in the modern World. No longer merely content with alcohol, he serves as the divine exemplar of every kind of high under the sun. When new chemicals are brewed, drugs no ancient Greek so much as dreamed of, Dionysus is there to sample it, to make it his own. When the children of the idle rich indulge in conspicuous consumption, Dionysus is there, presiding over the very moment that control is lost and things go a little too far. His is the two-edged blade of wisdom and excess, the line invisible until one has dashed across it — and he wouldn't want it any other way.

Callings: Lover, Liminal, Sage

Purviews: Artistry (Theatre), Chaos, Deception, Fertility, Passion (Ecstasy) , Wild

HADES, GOD OF THE UNDERWORLD

Aliases: Plouton, Pluto

Dread Hades, son of Cronus, Lord of the Underworld. The unseen one, who sits forever upon his throne from whence he rules over the land of the dead. No tormenter or torturer he, he offers his hospitality to all those who no longer live, and if that lot is so terrible, there is little he can do about it, for death is death. He is the shepherd of Elysium, where heroes dwell after their exploits have ended. When he ventures forth to the World — a rare occurrence — he wears the Cyclope-forged helm that renders him invisible to all.

The Romans knew him by the common Greek pseudonym Plouton, or Pluto, a word meaning "wealth-giver." Like the Greeks, few propitiated him directly, though the Eleusinian Mysteries gave him much fame as the abductor and husband of Persephone, the Maiden.

The modern World vexes Hades so, for there is so much of it. Tied as he is to his realm, he is robbed of experience after experience, and though his wife Persephone often acts as an intermediary for that half of the year she lives, it is a poor substitute. His realm grows ever larger by the day, for far more have lived and died than yet live in the World. Mortals greedily scratch the surface of the Underworld in their search for vast wealth—the wise mollify him with sacrifice first. He is not so cruel as mortals may believe, but neither is he a kindly God.

Callings: Judge, Leader, Liminal

Purviews: Darkness, Death, Earth, Prosperity

HEPHAESTUS, GOD OF CRAFT AND INDUSTRY

Aliases: Vulcan

Son of Hera, rejected by Hera, Hephaestus mans his great forge, turning out wonders without equal day

and night. His great strength cannot hide his pocked and scarred face, nor his withered legs — and it was for these reasons that his mother hurled him from the heights of Olympus. For his vengeance, he crafted for her a fine throne that bound her tightly the moment she sat upon it — and it was only through the intervention of Dionysus (and a copious amount of wine) that he relented and freed her. Wed to unfaithful Aphrodite more as a joke than anything, he endured her flagrant dalliances until she lay with his brother, Ares — whence he wove a net and trapped her astraddle Ares. Vindictive? Oh yes. Brilliant? Even more so.

Vulcan to the Romans, here too he was the patron of smiths and metalworkers, of the fires of the forge, but he was also attributed the terrible and unfathomable flames of volcanic eruptions, and the destructive as well as the constructive elements of fire itself. The Vulcanalia, an annual harvest festival, began to propitiate him to withhold wildfires that might ruin an entire region's crop.

Onward marches the work of mortalkind, and over it all Hephaestus watches. Though mortals cannot yet match his automata, they scratch ever closer, bit by bit. Circuitry and programming, so recently of mortal make, Hephaestus has claimed for his own as well — where once he crafted silver clockwork owls, he now forges mosquitos of steel that whisper stolen secrets in his ear. The modern day gives him leave to move around much more than he did before — no more do his wheelchairs provoke awe, even if they operate from very different principles and with very different capacities than those mortals make use of. Some people don't even stare anymore, and this Hephaestus is not accustomed to.

Callings: Creator, Trickster, Sage

Purviews: Epic Stamina, Fire, Forge, Fortune

HERA, GODDESS OF MARRIAGE

Aliases: Juno

Hera, jealous Hera, sister and wife of Zeus, Queen of the Gods. Her watchful eye is forever on Zeus, yet always he slips away for another conquest, and then the Gods know well to give Hera leave, for her fury is the stuff of literal legend. She claims marriage as her personal fiefdom, and married women in particular, and so marriage rites in ancient Greece were carried out in her name, shepherding young women from Artemis' patronage to her own. Spurned wives call upon her for restitution, and her vengeance descends upon the offending husband.

In Rome she was Juno, wife of Jupiter and queen of the Gods, Goddess of marriage and of the community. Men and women alike fell under her domain here, of youthful energy and action. Unlike in Greece, here she bore a martial character, and was often portrayed bearing the goatskin Aegis. The kalends of every month of the Roman calendar were hers, Goddess of beginnings and birth as she was.

The modern World pleases Hera little. As mortalkind multiplies, so too do opportunities for Zeus to be unfaithful — seven billion and counting. Meanwhile marriage declines in social importance, particularly in the West, despite every attempt (both on her part and by mortal government) to encourage it. The institution has fundamentally changed in so much of the World from what it was even a few hundred years ago, with the partners making their own decisions in who to marry, doing so out of love of all things, and separating a few years later! Hera has been digging in her heels against this trend in every way imaginable — after all, if she's stuck with Zeus, why should mortals be allowed to leave spouses they hate? So far, she's had little success, and while she blames Zeus for this, it's mostly out of habit.

Callings: Judge, Lover, Leader

Purviews: Beauty, Fertility, Health, Order, Passion (Fidelity), Prosperity

HERMES, GOD OF BOUNDARIES AND TRAVEL

Aliases: Mercury

Fleetest of all the Gods, Hermes is the patron of those who travel as well as those who steal, for he is the remover of obstacles and an inveterate trickster. In ancient Greece, borders and crossroads were marked with his likeness (almost universally a bust with prominent genitals, many of which survive to the modern day). Emissary of Olympus, he is an intercessor between the Gods and mortals, and conducts the souls of those who have died to the Underworld. It was by his hand, and not fair Apollo's, that the lyre was created; under his gaze, open commerce was born in the agora. In his wide travels, he accrued much knowledge, and so became known as a God of great wisdom and magical power — the Hermetica is, supposedly, a dialogue given by either Hermes or Thoth, enlightening a mortal student as to the true nature of reality (whenever asked, both Gods cheerfully affirm that it was, in fact, the other).

Mercury in Rome, here too Hermes was the patron of trade and journeys — however, the two-faced God of beginnings and endings, Janus, assumed much of the role of boundary God, being the master of doors in the enormous city.

The modern World, so quick and flexible, was seemingly made for Hermes. He can take breakfast, lunch, and dinner in three different cities thousands of miles apart, or run a confidence game in Hong Kong from Milan. Borders, once vague and ill-defined, are now a thing measured to the millimeter by satellites hurling through space so quickly they rise and fall in mere hours. The works of mortals dedicated to foiling theft have doubled and redoubled 100 times over, growing ever more complex — and, to Hermes' joy, thieves across the world have responded in kind.

Callings: Trickster, Liminal, Sage

Purviews: Death, Deception, Epic Dexterity, Journeys, Prosperity

HESTIA, GODDESS OF THE HEARTH AND SACRIFICE

Aliases: Vesta

Eldest and youngest daughter of Cronus and Rhea, Hestia tends the hearths of sacred Olympus itself. As mortals sacrifice, they honor her first, and she apportions the fat and bone they offer up to the Gods. Dutiful to the last, she is the calm center around which the chaos of the Olympian court revolves; she does not scheme, does not seek any greater power, is seemingly unoffended when she is not counted among the Dodekatheon in favor of young, wild Dionysus. Yet Hestia is ever-present, both among the Gods and among mortals. In antiquity, she was honored at every hearth in the Hellenic world. When cities founded new colonies, a sacred flame was carried to the new hearth many miles away. Should the flames in a hearth be smothered or die of carelessness, the hearth would be ritually purified and Hestia invoked before the flame was rekindled.

To the Romans, she was Vesta, guardian of hearth and family alike, honored in sacrifice and served by a full-time order of priestesses, the Vestal Virgins — it was believed that without the maintenance of the eternal flame in her temple, Rome itself would decay and collapse. Correlation is not necessarily causation, but the Western Empire did fall less than a century after the Vestal Virgins were forcibly disbanded by Theodosius I.

Today, Hestia is present still, her power reflected in every cooking flame, every comforting kitchen table, every power plant — a distant hearth, but a hearth nonetheless, for it provides heat and light. Engineers carry out quiet rituals and ensure sacred geometry is present when bringing new power stations online — much of the sacred has been lost, but they can recognize a pattern, and none wish to have an overheated generator or a jammed turbine on their hands.

Callings: Guardian, Healer, Judge

Purviews: Fire, Fortune, Order, Prosperity

PERSEPHONE, GODDESS OF THAT WHICH RISES FROM THE EARTH

Aliases: Kore, The Maiden

Condemned to an existence torn between Hades and Olympus, Persephone has nonetheless prospered, for she has her mother Demeter's strength of will. Each year she dies, and each year she is reborn, marking the calendar with her innumerable transitions across the veil of death. From her mother, she has inherited power over all things that grow from the earth — from her dread husband, power over that which dwells within and beneath it. For Hades, who so rarely has the chance to leave his kingdom, she is the very breath of life and light itself. To the dead, she is Hope that they too may live once more, but Persephone knows well that such a gift is double-edged, and she does not often bestow it.

Worship of Persephone arrived in Rome with the popular Eleusinian Mysteries, and it took little time for the Romans to recognize the daughter of Ceres, Prosperpina — a Latinization of Persephone. The story of her abduction

lived on through the Renaissance in art and sculpture that has survived to the modern day.

In the modern World, her fame has scarcely ebbed: Through the Eleusianian Mysteries, Persephone is yet revered by millions. Her name still blesses symphonies, dramas, novels, and other works of art interpreting the tale of her abduction, a story that is known to women across the world. As she blesses the world with life when she rises, so too she signals its ebbing when she dies — as she ever has, as she ever shall — but she is always Persephone, be she Persephone of the Spring or Persephone of the Dead.

Callings: Judge, Leader, Liminal

Purviews: Death, Fertility, Health

POSEIDON, GOD OF THE SEA

Aliases: Neptune, Earth-Shaker

Son of Kronus and brother of Zeus, Poseidon is king of the seas, which surround the earth of the World. His fury shakes the foundations of the land, shattering rock and opening great rents into which those who displease him plunge headlong to their deaths. Upon the seas, he stirs great storms with his trident, battering the tiny ships humans put such faith in to flinders. Fishermen and sailors revere him and beg his pardon for sailing upon his seas, but those who raise horses also pay him homage, for it was Poseidon who gave mankind the horse by spilling his seed upon the ground. For this reason, horses are offered up to him in sacrifice as well as bulls. Yet, he is not a God of ordered things — it was Athena broke horses to mortal will, showed mortals how to craft ships. When Poseidon moves, everything is changed in one great, terrible moment.

In Rome, he was Neptune — patron not only of Mare Nostrum ("our sea") but of lakes, rivers, and springs, fresh or salt. He assumed the role occupied by the native God Consus, becoming patron of horses and horseracing under the name Neptunus Equestris.

So it was, so it remains. The sea is more massive than mortals can truly conceive of, has stood unchanged for eons. Only in the last few centuries have things begun to turn. Whaling was the first industry to truly upset the delicate balance of the oceans — now, even after it has all but ceased, overfishing continues to destroy populations of fish worldwide. Carbon sequestration has already begun to alter average oceanic salinity. For far less than this, Poseidon has annihilated cities — it is Zeus' will that holds him back, that keeps him from obliterating the works of mortals that so offend him. Poseidon is not a subtle God, and when he finally informs humanity of his displeasure, it will almost certainly not be hard to miss.

Callings: Guardian, Hunter, Leader

Purviews: Beasts (Horse), Epic Strength, Earth, Water

ZEUS, GOD OF THE SKY

Aliases: Jupiter

Patriarch of the Theoi, son of Cronus who overthrew Uranus, Zeus is the youngest of his five brothers and sisters — yet it was he who went unswallowed, he who triumphed

over his crooked, scheming father, and he who won the sky when lots were drawn among he and his brothers. His children are almost without number, yet he alone has succeeded where his father and grandfather failed — Zeus has yet to be overthrown by his own descendants, and if he has his way, he never will be.

Rome called him Jupiter (or Jove), king of the Gods and of the sky, and patron of the royal family once the Republic became an empire. It was he who came before the second king of Rome to establish the practice of sacrifice, he who became central to the state religion of the city — the Temple of Capitoline Jupiter dates to before the Republic's founding, where he was worshipped in triad with Juno and Minerva. Oaths were sworn in his name; it was believed that those who broke such an oath would be struck down by lightning.

Said to be the greatest and wisest of the Gods, he is also notoriously unable to remain faithful to his wife, and long-suffering Hera has never forgiven him for his endless philandering. Yet, his monumental history of cheating has also left him with dozens of living Scions, and as dangerous as children are for him, they may also be his greatest weapon, if only he can manage them properly — and Zeus has a great deal of practice managing the never-ending argument that is his family.

Callings: Leader, Lover, Trickster

Purviews: Deception, Epic Strength, Epic Stamina, Fortune, Order, Sky

COSMOLOGY

The Terra Incognitae that the Theoi inhabit are tied closely to geographical features, the most prominent of which are mountains and caves, any of which may ultimately lead to Mount Olympus or the Underworld. They are far from the only such lands, though — many of the isles in the Aegean have a mythic counterpart that no longer exists in the World, and the Titan River Okeanos surrounds them all in an eternal rushing torrent.

Mount Olympus

Haven of the Theoi, this Overworld is patterned on the Mount Olympus the World knows, riddled with deep gorges that seat the palaces of the Olympians, those Gods and Goddesses rule from this shining mountain. Here, they consume ambrosia and nectar; here, they attend prayers, the sacrifices dispensed by ever-vigilant Hestia who guards the hearth; here, they needle at each other until, inevitably, someone snaps.

- Pantheon, Agora of the Gods: Atop the peak of Olympus sits the Pantheon, a palace dedicated to all and to none. Here is the hearth of Olympus, and the thrones for all the Gods and Goddesses who live in its gorges. Here is where the arguments take place, where humiliation is inflicted, and — when the time is right — war is planned.
- The Forge of Hephaestus: Less a palace and more an enormous metalworking complex, by night the Forge casts the whole of the mountain in a warm, red glow. Here, Hephaestus labors to create works of brilliance and beauty, gifts or traps alike for his family and those of their descent — not to mention those he makes solely for himself.

The Kingdom of Hades

There are many ways to visit the dread kingdom of the God Hades. The simplest is to die — regrettably, there is little chance of leaving once one arrives, for Kerberos, the three-headed dog, guards its gates and allows none to pass from within. Many caves lead here as well, most famous the one through which Orpheus made his tragic journey, and many tales tell of sailors who set out to cross the River Okeanos and found themselves on the shores of the land of the dead. The Underworld of the Theoi is a dark, drab place — many of the shades there are but echoes of themselves, who only regain their past vigor with a gift of blood.

- The Rivers: Five rivers wend their way through the Underworld, of which the Styx is perhaps the most famous, as it serves as the boundary of Hades' domain — those who drink its waters lose their voice for nine years. The others are the Phelegethon, a river of running flame; the Cocytus, river of lamentation; Acheron, born from the confluence of the Cocytus and Phelegethon, which purges souls of wickedness; and Lethe, the river of forgetful oblivion, which annihilates the memories of all who drink from it.
- Elysium: Home to the virtuous dead, who distinguish themselves by merit or heroism in life — Heroic Scions often find their way here, should death claim them. Elysium is better by far than the lot of the average shade in Hades' domain, an afterlife of ease and relative happiness, though even those who dwell here would rather be alive. Indeed, tales tell that those who enter Elysium may choose to be reborn, and those who live three virtuous lives in succession may gain entrance to the Isles of the Blessed — but such are rare souls indeed.

Tartarus

It is said that an anvil dropped from Heaven would fall for nine days before it struck the World, and that such an anvil would have to fall for another nine days from the Underworld before reaching Tartarus. Here stand for all time the Hundred-Handed — Briareos, Kottos, and Gyges — who guard the gates in Zeus' name, for only they may overpower the Titans trapped within. It is not only Titans who are consigned to this terrible prison, however — other Gods, and even the souls of particularly wicked mortals, have been imprisoned here. Sisyphus still tries, in vain, to push his boulder up a hill, and Tantalus, mad with hunger and thirst after thousands of years imprisoned, still desperately reaches for fruit and water that are always just beyond his reach.

Delphi

When Apollo slew Python, its body tumbled into a chasm in Delphi, the fumes rising from its body. Over time, an order of priestess-prophets grew up around the chasm. The Pythia, always a woman chosen from the local population, would inhale the fumes to enter a trance and allow Apollo to speak through her — her fellow priestesses would translate the ecstatic ravings. The Oracle and Delphi was renowned for its incredible accuracy, famed throughout the ancient World, bringing even Roman emperors seeking foreknowledge of events. In this Terra Incognita, the line of priestesses has remained unbroken, and the Delphic Oracle still gives her curious but inerrant prophecies, speaking with the voice of Apollo himself to those who know the secret ways to reach her.

Titans

The Theoi have a complicated relationship with their Titans — unsurprising, considering that they are descended from those very beings that they overthrew and, by and large, imprisoned deep in the Primordial Tartarus. There is no clear dividing line between God and Titan or titan-spawn among the Theoi, and some so-called Titans behave more like Gods (or, in some cases, Primordials!) while some Gods more closely resemble Titans. Some few roam free, unbound despite their power, though well aware that their children could change that on a whim. More than one has born children to Zeus, who now stand as Gods and Goddess beside him. This close and unclear relationship makes for misgivings in dealings with some other pantheons, especially those who have a history of strife with the Theoi.

Cronus: Imprisoned within Tartarus, Cronus' fury shakes the very foundations of the World. Once, he ruled a Golden Age, and he believes he shall once more, if only he can escape the watchful eyes of the Hundred-Handed. A mere stomach will not suffice for what he plans to do to the Theoi should he make good on his ambition. Purview: Fertility. Virtues: Rapacity, Dominance.

Phoebe: Mother of Leto who bore Apollo, Phoebe was the first and is still perhaps the greatest of oracles, her memory of events yet to come a powerful weapon in the Titanomachy — yet, even her great foresight was insufficient to match the schemes of Zeus. Her sight still fuels the schemes of many a Titan, but Phoebe's own, none but she can foresee. Purview: Fortune. Virtues: Foresight, Kinship, Dominance.

Rhea: Five of her children, Rhea watched Cronus swallow, and then she said "no more." Hers was the will that ultimately broke the Titans, freeing Zeus who freed his siblings and led them in battle — like her daughter, Demeter, she too nearly destroyed the world for the sake of her children. Purview: Earth Virtues: Fecundity, Kinship

Typhon: Something halfway between a Titan and a half-withered Primordial, the beast Typhon nearly ended the reign of the Theoi altogether. A hundred snake heads emerge from his shoulders, emitting every sound known to the World along with a firestorm that scours all it touches. Sundered and terribly burned by Zeus' thunderbolts, its flames still boil up from the Earth, melting stone and turning mountains into volcanoes. Purview: Fire. Virtues: Fecundity, Submission

RELIGION: HELLENISMOS

In antiquity, the Theoi were worshipped in hundreds of ways, differing from city to city. In Athens, Poseidon and Athena competed for the favor of mortals — Poseidon brought up a saltwater spring, and Athena a great olive grove, and in the end the mortals chose olives over salt. The city remains Athena's namesake, and her Incarnations are often spotted walking its streets. The Spartans would invoke Artemis at the beginning of every military campaign, or at Ortheia where their youth submitted to terrible floggings in her name. A common theme in religious ceremonies was sacrifice of animals, ranging from chickens to bulls; the bones and fat would be burned in the Gods' honor, and the meat cooked and eaten by the community. In the modern day, many in Greece keep shrines to the Theoi in their home, and a few cult sites still exist. Two widespread faiths were born in this era, however, and may still be seen in the World — the Dionysian Mysteries and the Eleusinian Mysteries.

The Cult of Dionysus is, as one might expect, an ecstatic faith, one fueled by excessive doses of alcohol and entheogenic drugs. There is a deeper meaning, however, reserved for the initiated, a higher state of consciousness that the celebrant might reach by abandoning any sense of self-control whatsoever. Flagellation was not uncommon, nor debauched sexual practices of every stripe. Indeed, much carnal activity is carried out in the cult's name that has little to do with seeking Dionysus, and governments throughout history have often attempted to bar the practice — Rome, in particular, did everything it could to eradicate the cult, but only succeeded in driving it underground, where it survived to the modern day. It can be found across the World, springing up seemingly overnight only to vanish just as quickly when persecuted.

The Eleusinian Mysteries are a different sort of mystery cult, and one closer to the modern and Western conception of religion in the World. Originating in an ancient agricultural cult, the Mysteries are centered around the tale of Persephone's abduction by Hades, and Demeter's subsequent search for her and struggle to free her from the Underworld. Adherents of the Mysteries revere Demeter and Persephone in particular, the latter of whom they refer to with the reverential name Kore ("the Maiden"). While the tale of Persephone's abduction is well known outside the cult, the inner Mysteries, revealed only to those initiated by hierophants, are to this day a secret — though, supposedly, the Mysteries promise life eternal after death, free from the suffering of the Underworld. The cult's adherents number in the millions, spanning the World but (as

one might expect) concentrated mainly in Greece or areas that have seen a great deal of Greek immigration. Smaller remote temples exist in such enclaves, such as the Temple of Astorian Demeter in Queens, New York, but the restored cult site at Eleusis still attracts hundreds of thousands of Worldly pilgrims every year.

BIRTHRIGHTS

Many Scions of the Theoi attract Followers, and most have at least one Guide who may well be a meddling aunt or uncle no less potent than their divine parent. The following are example Birthrights for the Scions of the Theoi.

CREATURES

Kerberoi: Kerberos has his own Scions, who Persephone may adopt out to suitable homes. Caution is advised, though — at least one of the heads is usually ill-tempered.

Pegasi: While Pegasus is inextricably tied up in Bellerophon's myth, that great winged horse has sired many a foal. Catching and breaking a horse that can fly is no easy task, but it can be done.

FOLLOWERS

Amazons: These tribes of warrior women frequently take up with the Scions of the Theoi, especially if it involves a good fight. They are, however, highly unlikely to follow male Scions, unless the Scion proves he can keep up.

Centaurs: While they have a reputation for being exceptionally rowdy, once you've earned the loyalty of a centaur herd you have drinking buddies for life. Just don't ask to ride them.

GUIDES

Athena: Patron of heroes, Athena frequently makes it her business to interfere with the lives of Theoi Scions. She can be an incredible resource, but she will also micromanage you to Tartarus and back.

Satyrs: While their primary concern is having a good time (and encouraging others to do so), Dionysian revels do bring a certain wisdom along with madness.

RELICS

Golden Fleece 2000: A jacket lined with the wool from the famous ram of Colchis, shining with its own golden light and marking the wearer as one who has the favor of the Gods.

Helmet of Shadow: Cyclops-forged, this helmet renders whosoever wears it unseen. This helm has ever belonged to Hades, but he has loaned it out before.

Icarian Wings: A refinement of Daedalus' original design courtesy of Hephaestus, these golden wings allow the wearer to fly without concern for seafoam or sun.

Thunderbolt: While nothing so magnificent as Zeus' own, this frozen shard of lightning (which can be cast into the clouds for safekeeping when not needed) still packs quite the punch, and always returns to the wielder's hand.

RELATIONSHIPS

Scions of the Theoi are frequently pillars of their mortal community, standing out even if they aren't in a position of authority. As the children of a very tightly-knit pantheon, many grow up with at least some inkling of who they are and the mythic truth of the World. A rare few are even raised by Avatars of their divine parents.

From time to time, the Titans trapped in Tartarus have rattled the bars of their cage — but never so much as they are now. The rest of the World seems to be on the verge of another Titanomachy, and the Theoi are not taking it sitting down. The Cyclopes have been stockpiling thunderbolts for Zeus, and Hephaestus' clockwork servitors watch from the skies for signs of Titanic activity.

The unstated concern, of course, is the low regard that many other pantheons hold for the Theoi. As ever, when the family as a whole is threatened, the Theoi are drawing together, watching each other's backs lest ancient rivals try to take revenge for past slights.

OTHER PANTHEONS

The Gods of Egypt, with whom they sheltered while Typhon ravaged Greece, have never quite let them forget their ancient hospitality. To all appearances they maintain a cordial relationship, but the Theoi eagerly await the chance to turn the tables — less to discharge a debt and more to lord it over the Netjer for the next few thousand years. Hermes and Thoth have perhaps the best relationship between any two deities of either pantheon, their roles and interests overlapping in a rivalry-friendship that has persisted for millennia.

In the wake of Alexander's conquests, however, the Theoi found their influence spread wider than ever before. The adoption of the Theoi by the Roman Empire spread their influence yet further, and so the Devá, Tuatha, and Æsir all know the Theoi by the mortals who came before them, shouting their names at the point of a sword as they laid into their followers. The Devas in particular have been, at best, patronizing ever since Alexander's decade-long advance was halted, but some in other pantheons — the ones that have survived, at any rate — still hold the Theoi as little better than the Titans that birthed them.

GREATEST WEAKNESS

As ever, however, the Theoi's greatest enemy remains themselves, or rather, each other. The Theoi work together well when faced with an external threat, but even in such times they are never quite free of their monstrous egos. A wise opponent would exploit divisions among the Dodekatheon, turning Hephaestus against Ares and Hera against Zeus, without revealing their hand in the matter — for if it were known to be a trick, that opponent would pay a heavy price indeed.

PANTHEON PATH OF THE THEOI

Path Skills: Empathy, Persuasion

Virtues: Egotism and Kinship

Bound by Legend-rich ichor, the Theoi are also a literal family. They may squabble and backstab and cheat and lie, all to fulfill some urge or vice or desire of their own, but the one thing they can never do is leave — for good and ill, they are stuck with each other. Being divine, of course, their squabbles can and have spelled the doom of great cities and even entire cultures, to say nothing of what happens to mortals caught up in the fray. Egotism drives them to terrible ends, but it also pushes them to be great. In mortals, hubris is never a safe thing, but for the Gods, it's business as usual. The Theoi can be some of the pettiest and most self-interested beings in existence, meting out terrible punishments on the flimsiest of pretexts (or even, sometimes, if they just feel like doing so).

On the other hand, if they count you as family, may the ferryman come swiftly for whosoever wishes you ill. Storge, familial love, is not a word many would use to describe the Theoi, given their penchant for abusing each other, but what they may lack in stability they make up for in tenacity. They may alternately loathe and love each other, but to them, Kinship is sacred — if you are family, you will never be abandoned. The Theoi have been living with each other for thousands of years, and they're still a solid, powerful pantheon, one of the best known in the western World.

As Zeus is the patriarch of the Theoi, so are the Gods and Goddesses the patriarchs and matriarchs of their own lines of descent, to say nothing of the myriad Gods and Goddesses beneath them. Scions of the Theoi who know their parentage are often forced to grow up very young indeed, while those who come to the pantheon a little older and a little wiser often recoil from the toxic behavior that seems pervasive in every relationship. A few do end up quitting the family, either by taking up with another pantheon or doing something so vile that even the family won't forgive them for it (which, for the Theoi, is a very high bar to clear). Any who do this find that they have earned an entire divine family's enmity — at best, the most they can expect from their blood relations after that is to be used as a pawn by one against another, and what they will probably receive is far, far worse.

Signature Purview: *Metamorphosis*. The Theoi are perhaps unique among all other pantheons for their facility with shapechanging — both their own, and that of others. Indeed, rare is the story of any of these Gods and Goddesses that does not involve a transformation or a disguise or some sort, even as things that bear not even the slightest resemblance to the humanoid form. While the half-mortal form of young Scions is not quite so fluid, they are nonetheless far more malleable than any ordinary mortal, and as they grow in power they will be able to slip between forms with ease — or trap others in forms not their own.

The Theoi are mighty, but they are also very human, and are known for intervening in mortal affairs at a rate almost unheard of in some other pantheons. When one's own powers have come up short, the Gods may well be inclined to tip the scales. Of course, the Theoi are mighty, but they are also very *human*. Pettiness is one of their chief attributes, and while they listen for prayers they are hardly at the beck and call of every schlub on the street. Wasting a deity's time is an excellent way to offend them, and in such a case the best possible outcome is the Gods simply ignoring the petitioner.

Scions of the Theoi have less to worry about when invoking the favor of the Gods, who are usually inclined to smile on their children. The downside is, of course, that the Theoi are, generally speaking, not good parents, and even when they mean well are moody and unpredictable when angered — Demeter may have pulled out all the stops to get Persephone back, but she almost killed the World to do it.

THE TUATHA DÉ DANANN OF IRELAND

That was the most handsome and delightful company, the fairest of form, the most distinguished in their equipment and apparel, and their skill in music and playing, the most gifted in mind and temperament that ever came to Ireland. That too was the company that was bravest and inspired most horror and fear and dread, for the Tuatha Dé excelled all the peoples of the world in their proficiency in every art.

— The First Battle of Mag Tuired

Other pantheons think of the Tuatha Dé Danann — the People of the Goddess Danu — as simply the eldest of a host of whimsical fairy creatures. They're not *wholly* wrong, but the Goddess' children won their place with blades and words of power. The Irish pantheon stands atop a bloody heap of vanquished Gods and conquered monsters.

Since the time before reckoning, the titanspawn *Fomhóraigh,* or Fomorians, and their Titanic monarchs have claimed the Emerald Isle. Time and again, others came to drive them out and steal their wild land, but none succeeded permanently until the Tuatha Dé Danann.

The Tuatha and their cousins, the Fir Bolg, descended from a tribe the Fomorians had driven off centuries before. The exiles' descendants returned to reclaim their ancestral homeland — first the Fir Bolg, then Danu's children. The Tuatha rode not in ships as the Fir Bolg did but atop magical storms rolling with thunder across the sea. The two tribes spilled much blood between them until the Tuatha emerged victorious and claimed the land.

But Bres, their new half-Fomorian king, cruelly subjugated the Gods and usurped all their wealth for his titanspawn brethren. The Tuatha rebelled and won another war. They imprisoned the Fomorians beyond the edges of the World, but not before the land was soaked in divine blood on both sides. Finally, the Gaels invaded and defeated the Tuatha. The victors claimed the World while the People claimed the Otherworld. From the Gaels descended the Irish people, and the Tuatha Dé Danann became their Gods.

PRINCIPAL MEMBERS

The Tuatha Dé Danann are a fierce, proud pantheon of warrior-poets who revel equally in love and battle. Fate and family ties — both by blood

PRONUNCIATION GUIDE

In the below guide, "th" sounds are pronounced as in "the" and "ch" sounds are pronounced as in the Scottish "loch."

Badb: bahv
Brigid: *bree*-yid
Claíomh Solais: kleev *saw*-lish
Cú Chulainn: coo *chuh*-lun
Dian Cécht: *dee*-un kaycht
Eochaid Ollathair: *oh*-cha *ull*-a-hair
Fomhóraigh: fo-*voh*-ruh
geis: gesh
Goibniu: *gohv*-nyu
Imbolc: *im*-mulk
Lugh Lámhfhada: loo *law*-va-thuh
Lughnasadh: *loo*-nuh-suh
Mag Mell: mah mell
Manannán mac Lir: mah-nah-*nawn* mahk leer
Nemain: *nev*-in
Nuada Airgetlám: *noo*-uh-thuh *ar*-get-lawv
ogham: *oh*-um
Samhain: *sah*-win
Samildánach: sah-mul-*daw*-nuch
sídhe: shee
Teach Duinn: tyuch duhyn
Tuatha Dé Danann: *too*-ah-ha day *dahn*-un
Uaithne: oo-uh-nyeh

and by fosterage — tangle them in rigid systems of arcane rules, but their potent magics and myriad arts make them foes fearsome and wild. They adhere to only a loose organization, with queens and kings who rule the *sídhe*, or fairy mounds, that divide the Otherworld into fiefdoms. A few Gods, like Donn, also have particular functions to perform, but most of them are too busy doing whatever (and whoever) they want.

The Tuatha are more likely than most Gods to adopt Scions born of others, hearkening back to their ancient tradition of fosterage. Thus, it's common to find Scions of the Tuatha who inherit Callings and Purviews from multiple divine parents, or even strange powers from Fomorian ancestry.

The Gods of the Irish pantheon include: Aengus the Mac Óg (love and youth), Brigid (fire and inspiration), the Dagda (All-Father of knowledge and magic), Dian Cécht (healing), Donn (the dead), Ériu (land and sovereignty), Goibniu (crafts and hospitality), Lugh Lámhfhada (excellence and skills/arts), Manannán mac Lir (the sea and passage to the Otherworld), the Morrígan (prophecy and war), Nuada Airgetlám (wise rulership), Ogma (strength and language).

AENGUS THE MAC ÓG, GOD OF LOVE AND YOUTH

Aliases: Oíngus, Óengus, Aonghus

The Mac Óg, as Aengus is often called, earned that title by the peculiar circumstances of his birth. His father, the Dagda, forced the sun to stand still for nine months during the mystical feast of Samhain so that Aengus would be born within a single day. Thus he is the Mac Óg, the "young son." His Scions are often born with strange timing or created outright.

While the Tuatha all have their rampant passions, only Aengus counts love itself among his Purviews. Others call upon him to play matchmaker, employing clever schemes to help them woo their would-be paramours. Aengus' incarnations are masters of wordplay and cunning, using divine looks and witty tongues to aid his Scions and manipulate people. He takes the forms of the birds that adore him, especially swans and others known for their beauty. Aengus is a vengeful sort, fiercely protective and harboring no mercy for treachery. He'll go to the wall to save lovers from those who would separate them.

In the modern age, some claim the Mac Óg has blessed a particular hard-to-find dating website, where hate speech and trollish behavior are grounds for immediate (divine) retribution, and relationships that begin there last a lifetime. Late at night in every time zone, the same radio show broadcasts out of cities across the world, and a soothing voice that hasn't changed in decades takes calls from lonely hearts and miraculously solves their problems. A law firm with no listed number takes tough divorce cases if a plaintiff can find it, helping wronged parties *pro bono* — its attorneys never lose.

Callings: Guardian, Lover, Trickster

Purviews: Beasts (Birds), Beauty, Deception, Moon, Passion (Love)

BRIGID, TRIPLE GODDESS OF FIRE

Aliases: Saint Brigid

From the three sisters Brigid issue the year's spring dawning and the health of offspring. The wise know she's also directly descended from the Primordial of the sun. None know how much of that primal being lives on in her divinity, and none wish to brave unknowable forces to find out. Rumors that she's really a Titan burn to ashes whenever she hears them.

Brigid is one and three-in-one. As a single deity, she married Bres to forge an accord between the People and the Fomorians. When war broke out anyway, she fought alongside the Tuatha, and originated the mystical call of

the keening when she lost her traitorous son to her own tribe's spears.

As a triple deity, each sister holds sway over a different aspect of fire. As the sacred hearthflame, she acts as a healer of bodies, minds, and souls. As the spark of inspiration, she acts as muse to poets, artists, and musicians of all stripes. As the fires of the blazing smithy, she forges great wonders to grace the hands of her Scions.

Brigid's children reflect her multiple nature in their births, circumstances, and deeds. They're firebrands, impossible to ignore. They Incarnate as often as they're born, and some say many more than three Brigids have actually walked

TRIPLE DEITIES

The Irish pantheon abounds with deities that encompass three in one: the three Brigids, the three sovereignty Goddesses, the three *Morrígna*. Scions argue over whether each is one God with three common incarnations, or three close sisters, or three separate Gods that are somehow *also* the same God — or something even weirder. In the Morrígan's case, she's not even always the *same* three Gods, depending on who you ask and the day of the week. To further muddy the waters, this doesn't even take into account potential cross-pantheon triples, like Lugh's murky relationship to the Welsh Lleu Llaw Gyffes and Gaulish Lugus. The Tuatha don't care to discuss it. Many a too-curious Scion has ventured into the *sídhe* boldly demanding answers only to end up cursed for her trouble.

While three Scions of Brigid can access the same Purviews and Callings, they may feel as though their divine mothers are different people. One may inherit nothing but the forge fire, while another is a healer and the third pure muse. Then a fourth sibling appears with aspects of all three, tearing the nice neat boxes to shreds. The Morrígan's Scions have an even stranger time of it, some even claiming the bloodline of a Goddess no one's ever heard of, yet clearly wielding the battle-crow's power. "Sibling rivalry" takes an alarming turn when Scions of Ériu, Banba, and Fótla take it upon themselves to decide who *really* deserves to claim the Hill of Tara's Axis Mundi.

Ultimately, the Storyguide can decide how relevant it is to the game to determine the exact metaphysics of these triple-deity relationships. Keep it mysterious if you want to, or craft a whole tale based on getting to the bottom of it!

the Otherworld over the millennia as her children become her over and over again. Her Scions act as instigators, catalysts, and caretakers. They fill mortals' hands with weapons and mouths with provocative words one day, while the next they soothe ruffled feathers and salve wounds. They're graffiti artists, opera patrons, record producers, and hip-hop legends. Brigid's most famous Scion was Oscar Wilde, a master of magical satire who protested injustice with his writing.

Callings: Healer, Sage, Trickster

Purviews: Artistry (Poetry), Fertility, Fire, Forge, Health

THE DAGDA, RUADH ROFHESSA (RED LORD OF GREAT KNOWLEDGE)

Aliases: Eochaid Ollathair (Eochaid All-Father), the Good God

The Tuatha revere their father figure even while they mock him as an oaf, sometimes in the same breath. The Dagda is a seed at the fuzzy center of the Tuatha/Fomorian family tree, and thanks to his prodigious list of lovers no one's sure exactly how. He's commonly acknowledged as Elatha's son, and father of Brigid and Aengus among others. He fosters many divine orphans, as well.

Few outside the pantheon understand the Dagda's lofty position. He eats, drinks, sleeps, and ruts with abandon, hardly the sagacious and mysterious figure they expect from the most powerful *sídhe* sorcerer. Yet he, like his Scions, knows much more than he lets on. The Tuatha call him Dagda, the "good God," not as a statement of morality but one of talent, for his ability to perform any magical feat claimed by any druid in history. Unlike Lugh, the Dagda's breadth of expertise is innate and effortless. His Scions are prodigies and savants who need no training to eclipse their rivals.

The Dagda embodies Enech as a battle God of fertility and plenty. His famed cauldron, one of the Tuatha's Four Treasures, feeds all comers to satisfaction no matter how numerous. He singlehandedly builds fortresses and walls to protect his people. He fights and leads armies, acting as advisor and strategist as well as front-line warrior with his enormous club that both slays and heals. People seek out his Scions for advice, tutoring, and training of all kinds, and they cheerfully provide — for a price. Those in the know can perform certain favors for the Fair Folk to access hidden libraries connected to the Dagda's Otherworld realm.

Callings: Guardian, Leader, Sage

Purviews: Epic Stamina, Epic Strength, Fertility, Forge, Prosperity, War

DIAN CÉCHT, PHYSICIAN OF THE GODS

Aliases: Cainte, Canta

Prideful Dian Cécht, grandfather of Lugh, is the pantheon's most prominent healer, a God of medicine. One of the eldest, he keeps Tuatha warriors alive after

even the most grievous wounds by enchanting wells with herbs and magic so the water can heal almost any injury. When Nuada lost an arm fighting the Fir Bolg, Dian Cécht worked with the craft Gods to replace it with a shining silver one, giving Nuada his best-known epithet. To the leech God's dismay, his son Miach displayed greater skill with medicine when he grew Nuada a new arm of flesh. Dian Cécht killed Miach in a jealous rage. Since then, relations between the two have been strained.

The physician likes to create Scions from divine prosthetics as well as fathering them by mortals. While primarily a healer, Dian Cécht fights alongside his more warlike brethren and sits among the inner circle of strategists when called to battle. His Scions are peerless doctors, keen scientific innovators, and occult ritualists. They solve problems and meddle in other people's business as a matter of course. Sometimes they're asked to do it, and other times they just do it because they can.

Wells, sewers, canals, and other manmade waterways are sacred places for Dian Cécht and can serve as entrances to his Otherworld domain. In this capacity they have healing properties for any who drink or bathe there, though some say that to anyone found unworthy, such waters are poison instead. Hospitals with his blessing produce prosthetics with impossibly lifelike qualities and employ some of the finest surgeons in the World.

Callings: Creator, Healer, Judge

Purviews: Fertility, Health, Water

DONN, LORD OF THE DEAD

Aliases: Éber Donn

Donn is the black sheep of the family. He's not truly Tuatha at all, but the Gael who originally led the invasion that drove the Gods into the Otherworld. He showed them no respect and insulted Ériu when she greeted the invaders. She retaliated by politely cursing him so he would never enjoy the Emerald Isle's hospitality. When he tried to fight dirty, his ship wrecked in a storm and he drowned. He washed up on a promontory known thereafter as Teach Duinn, the House of Donn, and became a shepherd of dead souls for the Gael's descendants. A lighthouse stands there on what is now Bull Rock, serving as an Axis Mundi to the Underworld to which he holds the keys.

Donn is a regal but petty God who resents his kin for claiming Ireland while he became a dark lord of the *síd-he*. Souls that get lost on the way to Mag Mell inevitably stumble upon his doorstep. They stay as his guests until he pronounces his judgment: worthy to sail Manannán's path to the Otherworld, or sentenced to roam the World as a sluagh. He doesn't explain his reasoning; most believe it comes down to first impressions. He has a violent temper and sulks when he doesn't get his way, but the pantheon grants him grudging respect for his dedication to hospitality and proper kingly behavior.

Donn's Scions play every kind of host, from managing hotels and founding shelters, to organizing events and running murder mysteries, to acting as spirit mediums and leading séances. Others call on them to deal with hauntings or settle personal disputes. The *aes sídhe* mock the children of Donn behind their backs as pretenders, but change their tunes soon enough when they come face to face with these elegant, vicious Scions.

Callings: Leader, Liminal, Trickster

Purviews: Darkness, Death, Journeys, Sky

ÉRIU, TRIPLE GODDESS OF SOVEREIGNTY

Aliases: Banba, Éire, Fótla

The sisters Ériu, Banba, and Fótla are the Goddess-queens of Ireland, personifications of the island itself. The country's modern name is Éire, an evolution of the Goddess' own, and of the pantheon she walks the World most often. She has a vested interest in the prosperity — and reputation — of the Irish people, and by extension anyone with familial connections to them, blood or otherwise. Her incarnations across the globe labor tirelessly to spread cheer, do good works, and take down anyone who needs it for the good of the many.

Ériu's collective of three-in-one governs sovereignty and homeland. The sisters fought in the vanguard against the Fir Bolg, although why they allied with the Tuatha is a secret they've never revealed. Ériu took the handsome Fomorian Elatha as a lover and her son from that union was Bres the Beautiful, who thus had legitimate claim to the throne after Nuada stepped down. Since then, those she chooses as rulers and leaders find their Fates pushing them in that direction. She became the Gods' primary instrument for influencing power dynamics in the World after Lugh's Scion Cú Chulainn smashed the magical Stone of Fál, one of the Four Treasures, for failing to recognize his foster son as High King.

Ériu's Scions are sometimes politicians, but just as often they play kingmaker instead, maneuvering those they prefer into power. Their territorial tendencies extend to their hometowns, bands, and loved ones. They answer insults with curses and threats with definitive action. Others entreat them to pass judgment on rightful claims to land, property, inheritance, and status. Ériu and her sisters bless those who tame nature to benefit communities.

Callings: Guardian, Judge, Leader

Purviews: Earth, Fertility, Order, Prosperity

GOIBNIU, SMITH OF THE GODS

Aliases: Gaibhne

Goibniu the weaponsmith supplies arms that never miss and always kill, aided by Creidhne the metalworker and Luchtaine the carpenter. The three craftsmen comprise a triple deity working in tandem, but Goibniu also sits on the People's war council. Though he works with

hammer and anvil more often than sword and sling, the Fomorians consider him and his Scions the greatest threats to their victory, and try to destroy them at every turn. When Brigid's treacherous son ran him through with a spear of his own making, he yanked it out to slay his attacker with it, took a dip in the leech God's well, and went back to his forge without so much as a complaint.

The smith hosts a grand feast in his Otherworld realm, where the Tuatha quaff his magical ale that cures all ails and keeps them immortal. He upholds hospitality as the highest form of honor, though mortal visitors to his table should beware; his fae brew prevents drinkers from returning home until they've fulfilled all their duties as guests — and these ancient rules weren't written to accommodate humanity's limitations. When more prideful Gods wanted to oust the Gaels from Ireland, Goibniu helped Ériu convince them to accept Honor's dictates and leave the World to those who'd won fair and square.

Goibniu shapes Scions on his anvil as whole-cloth creations as often as he fathers them. They work as hard as they play. They're tough cookies: hearty, hale, and difficult to kill, with a resourceful streak. They're generous providers and enthusiastic hosts who make friends easily, but don't take well to slights and betrayal. They tend bar and fix cars, volunteer in soup kitchens and run guns for honorable causes, manage boarding houses and ply artisanal trades. They like to be in the thick of things, which only emboldens the titanspawn who paint targets on their backs, knowing they're just as dangerous as their maker.

Callings: Creator, Sage, Warrior

Purviews: Artistry (Brewing), Epic Stamina, Forge, Health

LUGH LÁMHFHADA, THE LONG-HANDED

Aliases: Samildánach (Many-Skilled)

Lugh's Scions like to say their divine father isn't God of anything — he's God of *everything*. It's an exaggeration, but not by much. Lugh was born of Dian Cécht's son Cian and the Fomorian Ethniu. Lugh's parentage was another deliberate attempt to forge peace between the peoples, but while Bres stood with the titanspawn, Lugh stood with the Tuatha. He was raised by foster parents, Manannán mac Lir and the Fir Bolg Tailtiu, who showered him with gifts that he passes down to his Scions as Birthrights, including the water-striding horse Aenbharr and the truth-seeking sword Fragarach. His keen eye and strong arm with his legendary spear earned him the name *Lámhfhada*.

Lugh earned his other title, *Samildánach,* and his position as the Irish God of excellence when he asked for admittance to Nuada's court while the People were planning their strategy against the Fomorians. Master of all skills and arts, he offered his services one by one but the court already had a God of each. Finally, he challenged them to produce someone else who was God of *all* of them. Once he proved he could best the Gods at their own games, Nuada not only accepted him, but let him lead them to victory against the titanspawn.

The *Samildánach* knows the secret art of sorcery as well as mortal ones. He can assume the mystical posture of his Fomorian cousins by covering one eye, using one hand, and standing on one foot. His Scions inherit this Titanic magic too, in various forms. Lugh's most famous child, Cú Chulainn, could undergo a hideous battle transformation and wield a terrible rage against which none could stand.

Lugh's Scions are constructive sorts who make, do, and win. They're overachievers, champions, athletes, helpers, and enablers. They work hard but make it look easy. Scions of other pantheons grow uneasy around those children of Lugh who display obviously Fomorian powers, but the Irish Gods see nothing strange about it.

Callings: Creator, Leader, Warrior

Purviews: Artistry (All), Epic Dexterity, Epic Strength, Forge, Health, Order, Prosperity, War

MANANNÁN MAC LIR, GOD OF THE SEA

Aliases: Manann

The Tuatha sea God commands great respect from a pantheon whose Worldly home and multifarious Otherworld realms are all islands. Manannán usurped the position from his father, the Fomorian Ler, and now governs passage to Tír na nÓg. He claims the Isle of Man, to the east of Ireland, was named for him. It's hard to argue the point with several Axes Mundi leading to the Irish Otherworld hidden in the mists there.

Manannán fostered Lugh as a son and entrusted him with several of the magical treasures in his copious cache. All Scions, not just his own, may benefit similarly from the sea lord's generosity if they travel to the Otherworld and suitably impress him, though what impresses him is never clear. His incarnations manifest as merchants, sailors, guides, and jesters with hidden agendas. When the Gaels drove the Tuatha into Tír na nÓg it was Manannán who divided the fairy realms between them, for he knew them better than any. He splits his time between ferrying worthy souls across the ocean to the Underworld and wandering the World disguised to show off his pranks to mortals.

People call upon the Scions of Manannán for guidance in travel and adventure, and especially as chaperones to the Otherworld or messengers to the dead. Dealing with them is rarely a straightforward affair, though, whether because the Scion herself has ulterior motives or because she gets caught up in someone else's shenanigans by accident. The sea God's children stumble across deeper mysteries with alarming regularity, consistent with rumors that Manannán predates most of the Tuatha and has seen realms long vanished into the fog of prehistory. The Gods whisper that if anyone could discover a lost God-realm and claim it for the Irish — or discover the truth of

Danu and Domnu's murky history — it would be a Scion of Manannán mac Lir.

Callings: Guardian, Liminal, Trickster

Purviews: Deception, Journeys, Prosperity, Stars, Water

THE MORRÍGAN, TRIPLE GODDESS OF PROPHECY AND WAR

Aliases: Morrígu, the Morrígna, Badb, Macha, Nemain, Anand, others

Battle-Crow. Phantom Queen. Bloodthirsty meddler. Harbinger of doom. The Tuatha have as many names for the Morrígan as she has curses for those who cross her. Three she is and three she'll always be, but *which* three changes with the wind and the stars. She is Morrígu, the nightmare Goddess. She is Badb, the red-haired raven-hag in her chariot of war. She is Macha the mare-queen and Nemain the battle-frenzy. She is Anand the earth mother. She is the collective *Morrígna,* the sisters who together speak omens of death.

The Morrígan presides over the battlefield, stretching out her bloody talon to influence war's tides. Her prophecies foretell dire outcomes, while her magic sows confusion and fear. She changes shape at a whim, taking the forms of beasts, crones, seductresses, and queens. She appears sometimes as dire fairy creatures, like the *bean sídhe,* to deliver her portents. Her favor is dangerous too, as she turns her machinations on her allies out of spite if they offend her.

Nevertheless, she was instrumental in winning Ireland from the Titans. She meddles on behalf of her own Scions and others when the mood strikes her, or when Fate suggests she ought. Soldiers and biker gangs dedicate their tanks, fighter jets, and motorcycles to her in honor of her traditional war chariot and the steeds that pull it. Her Scions manipulate vicious boardroom negotiations, egg on internet trolls only to cruelly rip them apart, and champion the freedom to express desires without shame.

The Morrígan's children are unapologetic forces to be reckoned with. They straddle the line between acting in their own best interests and letting Fate guide their hands. They rarely make their true motives known until after the fact, and other Scions find it difficult to trust them, but the Morrígan counsels her chosen thus: Never begin a war, but always end one. Their tidings may be dark and cryptic, but their loyalties, once won, are unwavering — for good *and* for ill.

Callings: Liminal, Lover, Sage

Purviews: Beasts (Crows, Cattle, Horses), Chaos, Death, Epic Dexterity, Fortune, Prosperity, War

NUADA AIRGETLÁM OF THE SILVER HAND

Aliases: Nuadu, Airgeadlámh ("Silver Hand")

The Tuatha Dé Danann know their first king as a wise leader who commands from the front lines and inspires loyalty as easily as breathing, upholding Enech in spades.

Nuada was king when the People came to Ireland and led them to victory against the Fir Bolg. Long would he have held the throne of Tara, had he not lost an arm in the battle. At the time, the law insisted that such an injury barred him from ruling, forcing him to step down. In his place, the Tuatha chose Bres the Beautiful as their new king, but Bres betrayed them. Dian Cécht gave Nuada a new arm fashioned of silver and he took the name *Airgetlám*, "silver-hand." He assumed the throne again while Bres gathered his forces for war, but when Lugh Lámhfhada proved his mastery of a vast array of skills, Nuada relinquished command of the Tuatha to him to better their chances of victory.

Nowadays, Nuada rules only his *sídhe* domain, where the inhabitants of the Otherworld love and respect him. Others come to his Scions for counsel, or to ask blessings for wealth and success. Ever since Dian Cécht's son Miach regrew Nuada's original fleshly arm, the kingly God uses his silver one as a gauntlet of war to appease the physician's wounded ego, and lends it out to Scions when their need is great.

Nuada's Scions pursue justice and prosperity. They're judges and police officers, activists and therapists, philanthropists and entrepreneurs. In particular, they champion rights for the disabled, citing the disaster of Bres' kingship as proof that some of the old traditions are garbage, despite the anachronistic way the Fomorians and fae cling to them.

Callings: Leader, Sage, Warrior

Purviews: Order, Prosperity, War

OGMA, CHAMPION OF THE GODS

Aliases: Oghma

Some conflicts are decided by duels and contests in the name of Honor rather than by all-out battle. The champion who takes up such challenges for the Gods is Ogma, son of Elatha and half-brother to Lugh, on his mother Ethniu's side. Though this makes Ogma technically a full Fomorian, he has always stood with the People of the Goddess. He was Nuada's champion first and then Lugh's, after pitting his strength against the *Samildánach's* and admitting defeat. Ogma is a God of physical might and impressive feats, and his Scions attach themselves to causes and leaders on whose behalf they can show off their prowess.

But no one would mistake Ogma for a musclehead. He's also the Irish God of writing and eloquence, a patron of poets, archivists, and historians. Ogma created the mystical runic script of ogham, written by inscribing lines along the edge of a vertical surface, usually stone or wood. It can also be written on paper by drawing a *fleasc* (pronounced "flask"), or a long horizontal line, across the page and then turning the script on its side as though the fleasc were the edge of a pillar. Ogham allows druids and bards to communicate in secret, marks the graves of heroes with potent blessings, and can bind oaths through dire warnings when Scions craft Marvels with it. Each ogham rune is associated with a tree or a plant that has semiotic

meaning, flowing from Ogma's own power over the sacred flora of Ireland.

Ogma's Scions champion personal responsibility, taking it upon themselves to preserve records and relics for posterity and fight for causes or organizations. They rarely lead, preferring the position of right hand, enforcer, or chronicler. They act as modern bards, campaign as environmentalists, or work as bodyguards and security officers. They're competitors and heroes, but prefer putting their power to use for something larger than themselves.

Callings: Guardian, Sage, Warrior

Purviews: Artistry (Oration, Poetry), Epic Strength, Fortune, Wild

COSMOLOGY

The Otherworld of the Tuatha Dé comprises a series of mystical islands, reachable through a few Axes Mundi on land and a whole host of them on the sea. Collectively these islands are called Tír na nÓg, the "Land of the Young," where aging and death hold no sway and no one wants for anything. Idyllic as it sounds, the fairy realms are dangerous to visitors who planned to go home again. It's easy to get lost in reverie, or caught up in the arcane rules of hospitality and obligation the Tuatha live by. Taking a fairy lover or accepting fairy gifts is a good way for a traveler to lose track of time and memory, until he realizes the World has moved on without him and years have passed in what seemed like hours. Not all fairy creatures are benign, and some gleefully trick mortals into deals that end poorly for everyone but them. Others mean no harm but don't understand what humans value, and take offense at the strangest things.

Common wisdom suggests the beauteous fairy folk are all descended from the Tuatha Dé, but not everyone believes it. Some say the fairies have lived in Tír na nÓg since before anyone else came to the Emerald Isle. Some say they're actually descendants of the Fomorians, while others claim the Titans were originally fae cast out of the Otherworld and cursed to monstrosity for some crime. Some think a Primordial embodying magic itself birthed the Fomorians, the fae, and the Tuatha all. All Scions of the Irish pantheon know for sure about the fairies is that through Marvels, they can call upon those fickle creatures for aid — at their peril.

Tír na nÓg

Among the Otherworld islands is Mag Mell, the "Plain of Joy." Mag Mell is technically the Underworld, reachable with Manannán mac Lir's guidance, but it's far from unpleasant. Here, the souls of the dead gather to enjoy an afterlife of happiness and plenty, where the sun shines always and all manner of green things grow. Heroes, warriors, and poets make their way to Manannán's sea-chariot on their own after death. Others may lose their way and end up at Teach Duinn first.

Close to Mag Mell is Emain Ablach, the Isle of Apples, where Manannán mac Lir holds court and once fostered young Lugh Lámhfhada. Tantalizing orchards stretch as far as the eye can see, offering their luscious bounty to any the sea God makes welcome. Occasionally, travelers stumble onto Emain Ablach directly from the Welsh isle of Avalon, causing fistfights over why the two seem so closely connected. The mysterious Hy-Brasil, vanishing isle of mists, falls in and out of the World according to inexplicable whims, although some say Manannán knows and just isn't telling. The Irish Otherworld also boasts four island kingdoms far to the north, where the Tuatha Dé learned the secrets of their peerless magic before they returned to reclaim Ireland. These are Falias, Gorias, Findias, and Murias. Here, the shattered ruins of a wilder time stand as testament to the adventures of the young Tuatha. Beyond the Island of Joy lies the Land of Women, to which fairies occasionally invite men to sail. The women of the island maintain friendly relations and a cross-realm social media network with the Amazons and shieldmaidens, and with Womanland in China.

The rest of the Otherworld is split into domains accessible through Axes Mundi known as *sídhe,* or fairy mounds. Each of these God-realms falls under the jurisdiction of one of the Tuatha Dé, as decreed long ago by Manannán mac Lir after the Gaels drove the Gods out of the World. Scions can bargain with the sea God or fae under his command to win the right to visit the Otherworld's shores. Other means of entry are more direct but always more perilous; Manannán doesn't take kindly to people circumventing his authority.

Titans

The Irish Gods and their Fomorian cousins have been quarreling ever since the Tuatha drove the *Fomhóraigh* first out of Ireland and then out of Tír na nÓg, into murky subterranean and subaquatic Titanic realms. The relationship leans more toward "dysfunctional in-laws" than existential enmity. Intermarriage and interbreeding between the two is so rampant that no one can win a game of six degrees of separation from the other side. Even during the Titanomachy, members of both sides defected to support relatives in such numbers that ultimately the war could be likened to a disastrous family reunion.

The Fomorians, driven out of their homeland *twice* by the Tuatha Dé and relegated to Titan status, resent their close relationship with the Gods they disdain but simultaneously wield it as a bludgeon to lend their claim to Ireland legitimacy. They've styled themselves the "Tuatha Dé Domnann," taking on the name of their collective mother and insisting they're the *true* Irish pantheon.

Despite the stark contrast between the beauty of the Tuatha and the monstrous appearance of the Fomorians, some theorize the two groups were *always* related. Perhaps they were once one, but some of them angered the fae, who cursed them with hideousness and cast them out of their original home. Scions of Manannán and the Dagda who probe the deep places for answers have found some evidence to suggest that Danu and Domnu share a history

— broken shards of a Primordial that split itself in two and died, perhaps, or vast Incarnations of the same deity, or two sisters from a triple Goddess whose third face is long gone...or still out there somewhere. Detractors point out the differences between the Tuatha's poetry-magic and Fomorian sorcery, fueled by the omens of one eye, one hand, and one foot — but these could just as easily be two different expressions of the same power.

Most Fomorians are mere titanspawn, but their leaders are notable Titans.

- **Balor of the Evil Eye**, grandfather of Lugh. Balor led the Fomorians against the Tuatha in the war, and his single Evil Eye wreaks plague, poison, and destruction when opened. It takes four people to pry back the seven layers of his massive eyelid, and as each layer is revealed, a new terror shakes the land. He's never forgiven Lugh for turning his Eye against the Fomorian host with a sling-stone and killing him in battle. Purview: Chaos. Virtues: Rapacity, Dominance.
- **Bres the Beautiful**, son of Elatha. He's only half-Fomorian and ruled the Tuatha as king until he betrayed them, running Ireland into the ground and pressing the other Gods into servitude. Poets exposed his miserly ways with satire, sealing his Fate. The Gods demanded he step down, so he called on his Titanic brethren to make war on them. Some among the pantheon suspect Bres, as former king of the Gods, still creates Scions of his own. Purview: Beauty. Virtues: Dominance, Prowess.
- **Crom Cruach** isn't Fomorian at all, but something alien that serves as a strange sort of third party to the Tuatha/Fomorian rivalry-with-benefits. He craves adulation and blood, gathering cults to worship him through terror and demanding firstborn cattle and children as sacrifices. He transforms 12 among the herd into terrible stone servitors that enforce his bidding, using 12 idols of power. Crom Cruach embodies agriculture and rots crops in the ground if the people don't keep him appeased. When he shows his true form, he bursts up from under the earth as a ravenous worm with a gigantic maw. He slumbers fitfully in his Titanic realm, after the decisive thrashing he received from a Scion named Patricius centuries ago. Purview: Fertility. Virtues: Rapacity, Dominance.
- **Domnu, Mother of Titans**. Whether she literally birthed the Titans or her role is more symbolic, Domnu is Danu's counterpart and a mysterious lord of the deep. She stokes the fires of resentment in her offspring, scheming to overthrow the Tuatha and become the mother of a new Irish pantheon. Most Scions — and titanspawn — never have the perspective to discover that Domnu is but one facet of the Primordial of isles, and Danu is another. Purview: Darkness. Virtues: Fecundity, Submission.
- **Elatha the Golden-Haired**, father of Bres, the Dagda, and Ogma. Of the Titans, Elatha was the only one to refuse Bres' demand for aid in fighting the Tuatha for dominance, and is the only full-blooded one who is beauteous rather than hideous. He's relatively beneficent, as Titans go — a noble but whimsical figure whose true motives are impossible to fathom. Elatha sails in a silver ship and dresses all in gold, seducing whoever he likes whenever it strikes his fancy. Purview: Prosperity. Virtues: Fecundity, Honor.

Primordials

The Tuatha believe most of their Primordials perished in a flood that drowned everything in Ireland before the series of invasions culminating with the Gaels' arrival. Only one remains: Danu, the Primordial Goddess for whom the Tuatha Dé Danann are named. Scholars believe this being likely has another name, since Danu is but one of her faces, but none know it if so.

Danu manifests as a vast deity of rivers and earth in the Otherworld, a mother figure who occasionally chooses Scions from among the mortal host or crafts them out of soil and rain. These Scions never speak with their mother directly, experiencing Visitations through visions at the swimming hole or messages brought by fairies or selkies.

Callings: Creator, Guardian, Healer

Purviews: Earth, Fertility, Water, Wild

More often seen than the elusive and distant mother of the Gods is Domnu, her Fomorian counterpart. She, too, is part of this Primordial, in ways no one remembers. It isn't lost on the Tuatha that the Titan of the Deeps happens to embody the dark ocean when the rest of the Primordials died in a flood. Perhaps Danu was meant to perish as well, but persisted to birth the Irish pantheon and foil Domnu's plans.

RELIGION: IND IRESS

Worship of the Tuatha Dé in the World is known as *ind iress*, which in Old Irish simply means "the faith." This unassuming name reflects the religion's regional character and focus on small groups rather than any kind of international organization. The words "priest" and "poet" are interchangeable. These priests are scholars and wise teachers who preserve knowledge using ogham script and oral storytelling. They know the myriad sacrificial preferences of the Gods and how to appease the fairy folk, including local deities of rivers, forests, and other landmarks in the World whose favor is just as important to any given group as that of the pantheon's greatest leaders. Priests carve ogham runes into wooden wands they cast to read omens and divine the future. They determine when and how a God's blessing would be best sought, or curse best avoided. Worshippers use certain sacred trees and plants to house shrines and adorn homes. They make votive offerings by leaving sacrifices in groves, wells, lakes, natural pits, and other such places. The Gods generally prefer objects of

war, such as shields and helms, or objects of beauty like jewelry, artwork, and precious metals.

The pantheon celebrates four seasonal festivals each year. Brigid presides over the feast of Imbolc, the welcoming of spring and paean to fertility. Beltane marks the beginning of summer, and is holy to no one God but instead recalls the day the Tuatha Dé first arrived in Ireland. The harvest festival of Lughnasadh is sacred to Lugh, since he first declared it in honor of Tailtiu upon her death in the fields. Finally, Aengus claims the mystical night of Samhain when the barriers between the World and the Otherworld sputter and wane.

BIRTHRIGHTS

The most common Birthrights of the Tuatha are Relics and Guides, although they're perhaps known best for their elite warrior bands, the Fianna. The following are example Birthrights for Scions of the Tuatha Dé Danann.

CREATURES

Hounds: Scions of Lugh in particular take after him in possessing fierce and loyal war hounds.

Steeds: Favored by Manannán and the Morrígan, fine horses are prized by Irish Scions as mounts and companions.

FOLLOWERS

Bards/Filid: Few Irish heroes leave home without a bard or a fili to chronicle their victories and satirize their rivals. Bards are a more ordinary class of poet, while filid are rarer and can accomplish more powerful feats.

The Fianna: Irish Scions lead independent companies of between 10 and 30 highly skilled and rigorously tested warrior-poets who hunt titanspawn, patrol the borders between the World and the Otherworld, and venture into Terra Incognita to deal with troublesome fae.

GUIDES

Crows of the Morrígan: The prophetic war Goddess' favored birds love to follow Scions around and deliver dire warnings.

Divine Foster Parents: It's common for incarnations of the Tuatha to raise other Gods' Scions as their own. They bestow gifts, teach magical secrets, and meddle in their foster children's lives.

RELICS

Claíomh Solais: One of the Four Treasures the Tuatha Dé brought to Ireland from their exile, Nuada's sword shines like a torch and pursues its foes unerringly.

Irish Muscle Car: The modern Scion's answer to the traditional Irish war chariot is a roaring muscle car bedecked with ways to clear the road of any who would oppose her.

Spear of Lugh: Lugh's legendary spear is another of the Four Treasures. None can endure for long against it or its wielder in combat.

Uaithne, harp of the Dagda: Also called Dur da Blá, the Oak of Two Blossoms, or Coir Cethar Chuin, the Four-Angled Music. It plays only at the command of its master and attacks anyone who comes between her and it.

RELATIONSHIPS

Scions of the Tuatha have a close relationship with the Otherworld's fairy creatures, who consistently interfere in mortal affairs. The Gods' chosen fascinate them and make them jealous, so even a Scion who stays out of Tír na nÓg runs into the people of the *sídhe* sooner or later.

The Irish Gods sense shifting tides in the Otherworld, as the Fomorians loose more and more titanspawn to harass the *sídhe* and build cults to their monarchs. The so-called "Tuatha Dé Domnann" are a gross offense to Enech and the Gods refuse to stand for it. They send their Scions to disrupt Fomorian plans, spy on their ceremonies, attack their strongholds, and steal their magic.

The Tuatha also support and spread traditional Irish culture across the World, especially in language, music, and stories. They task Scions with reclaiming ruins and relics from the clutches of Titans and other pantheons. Since most of those stories are *about* them and their heroes, of course, they get to enhance their reputations and enrich the World at the same time.

OTHER PANTHEONS

The Tuatha treat the Æsir like long-lost bedfellows, believing the northern islands of their exile to have once been Norse Terra Incognita. By contrast, their contentious relationship with the Welsh pantheon is overblown by pride; most view that pantheon as siblings or even incarnations of the People, along with the dead Gaulish pantheon that Rome crushed under its heel. The Tuatha think the Welsh Gods are trying to outdo them at every turn, one-upping Emain Ablach with Avalon and overtaking them in popularity with their young upstart Arthur. Some think the three Celtic pantheons were once an enormous Band of Scions from some larger, now-extinct pantheon who ascended and split the Gaelic lands between them, binding them together through Fate. If true, this connection could hold the key to someday restoring the Gaulish Gods to their former glory.

The Tuatha act belligerently toward the Theoi, too, holding a millennia-old grudge that may not even be accurate. Their cousins the Fir Bolg were enslaved during their exile to Greek lands and the Irish just assume it was Zeus' brood that did it.

GREATEST WEAKNESS

The double-edged sword of the Irish Signature Purview puts the onus of geasa on the heroes and their Gods as well as their enemies. Their oaths, taboos, and obligations grant power, but also bind them to fateful dooms and create no-win situations when their foes discover how to ensnare them with their own rules.

PANTHEON PATH OF THE TUATHA DÉ DANANN

Path Skills: Close Combat, Culture

Virtues: the two sides of Enech, *Honor* and *Prowess*. The Irish Gods place utmost importance on the concept of Enech, or "face." It incorporates both their outward reputation with others and their internal sense of self-worth and integrity. Enech is why one of the deadliest weapons of the Tuatha Signature Purview is magical satire: the ability to expose a hero's darkest secrets and tarnish her name so thoroughly that Fate itself punishes her for it.

Honor is the Virtue of the wise ruler — strength of character. The Honorable hero shows generosity, extends hospitality, and provides for her people. She plays and fights fairly, and never breaks her word. She extends her allies and enemies alike every courtesy. She knows her reputation is predicated upon the success of her companions and the prosperity of those depending on her. She shoulders responsibility for preserving the Honor of her countrymen, her friends, her siblings-in-arms, and her family — no matter how much she'd otherwise like to kill them herself. She is grace under fire and loyalty under duress.

Prowess is the Virtue of the bold warrior — strength of arms. A hero with Prowess is victorious in all things and shows pride in her accomplishments. She never backs down from a challenge and shows no fear. No offense may go unanswered. She is peerless in skill and excels at everything she touches: combat, yes, but also art and music, athletics and dance, poetry and academics. She acts with courage and confidence, on and off the battlefield. Prowess does not allow a hero to remain neutral — she must choose a side decisively and stick with it no matter what. Prowess leaves no room for hesitation and demands action. It means a hero brings her A-game or goes home; there is no in-between.

Scions of the Tuatha get caught between their Virtues when a situation demands tactically questionable action to uphold Enech from one side or the other, pits the two sides against each other, or forces a choice between two extremes of the same Virtue. In the story of Fianna warrior Diarmuid Ua Duibhne, famed chosen of Aengus, Honor sealed the hero's Fate. Grainne, the betrothed of beloved Fianna leader Fionn mac Cumhaill, decided she'd rather have the young and handsome Diarmuid than the aging Fionn on the eve of her own wedding. She forced Diarmuid to choose between upholding the geis she laid upon him to elope with her and staying loyal to his commander. In the end he followed his geis, betraying the Fianna and becoming a fugitive from the retribution Fionn was himself compelled to seek, thanks to Prowess.

Signature Purview: *Geasa*. A geis (plural: geasa) is a ban or taboo that provides power when upheld and spells doom when broken. Geasa can take the form of blessings and curses, sworn oaths, mandates, and prohibitions. They range from Cú Chulainn's inability to pass up hospitality or eat dog flesh to nonsensical rules one must follow to avoid mortally offending a fairy lord. Scions can inflict geasa on others, manipulating Fate to entangle their foes in webs of impossible promises, but they also must contend with permanent ones of their own.

Eric Donner
Part One

I.

Eric Donner drove into town as the storm rolled up. The day had gone from aggressively, cheerfully sunny to apocalypse gray in the space of 20 minutes. He was fairly certain the storm *wasn't* a harbinger of the end times. That was the sort of thing he figured he'd know. No, this was a plain old thunderstorm, the air heavy with impending rain, the breeze picking up and becoming a wind.

The sky opened up 10 miles outside of Dayton. Buckets of it dumped on the highway, slowing traffic to a crawl. Eric downshifted, let the GTO purr away and cruise forward on the sheer power of being an ornery old hunk of iron. All around him was flatland, making the buildings in the city ahead the best targets for lightning. He had quite the show, when he could see through the rain. Bolts stabbed at the tallest of them, leaving bright afterimages in his vision.

When he was little, long before he'd learned he was the son of an honest-to-gosh God of thunder, Eric used to daydream about storms like this. He pictured himself hiking into the middle of a field and raising his arms to the sky. Even then, he'd been tall for his age — why wouldn't the lightning come to him? In those fantasies, he called it down from the heavens, held the crackling blue bolt in his hands, and shaped it into anything he fancied: a sword, a shield, a jagged pair of wings to fly him around his hometown.

Now, he *could* do those things, or some of them, and it was just as exhilarating as his six-year-old self had imagined.

Of course, his younger self would have wrinkled his nose at all the running around that went with the job. Turned out, even when you could fling lightning about, you still had to run errands and do the shit jobs your parents didn't want to do, and earn enough money to put gas in your car.

But overall?

Net positive.

When he hit junior high, his daydreams turned from being the center of the storm to more mundane and achievable things: grand romantic ideas about road trips, about getting his license, then a car, and taking off across the country to see what the highways had in store for him. Now, of course, he'd been all over the states. He knew people who could get him to the other side of the world with a gesture and a chant and bit of blood.

He'd visited several of the Nine Worlds, gotten frostbite in Niflheim, sought the counsel of the dead in Helheim, and skirmished with frost giants in Jotunheim. Yet somehow, even with the promise of Valhalla and all the glory it could offer, he preferred Midgard to them all. Home. The realm he'd been born in and spent these last few years protecting. His younger selves would likely be sorely disappointed in this predilection, but there it was. Much as he loved wielding the power that came from his father, it was his mother's realm he called home.

The rain let up enough that he could shut off the flashers and climb back up to normal speeds. He wanted to get to the airport well before the flight he was meeting was due to land — he had it on good authority that his father would be on it, and Eric wanted to be in the terminal when he deplaned.

It was useful sometimes, having friends who were the Scions of Heimdall and whose divine parents were patrons of travelers.

Dropping in on your father unannounced was probably not the way to get on his good side, but considering as Eric's father had never dropped in on him *at all,* he wasn't too concerned about it. The old man owed him some explanations, some guidance, some *goddamned recognition.*

He pulled into the airport. He checked the trunk once, making sure Giantsbane was secure in the spare tire well. He hated leaving it, but security didn't look too fondly on that sort of thing coming into the terminal, even if he wasn't going through the scanners to the gate.

Eric checked the arrivals screens, saw his father's flight was on time, and settled himself down where he wouldn't be able to miss the passengers streaming through.

The flight changed from ON TIME to LANDED.

People streamed past, weary travelers on their way to baggage claims or rental cars.

His father wasn't among them.

Eric waited another hour, in case there'd been a mistake, in case his dad was just slow to deplane, stopped to flirt with a stewardess or grab a beer in one of the post-security bars.

Nothing.

He thought back to the storm he'd driven into, and those great forks of lightning. The clouds had moved off to the east; the plane would have passed right through it coming in. Maybe it hadn't been an apocalypse-level storm, but it had let the God of thunder hitch a different ride.

Damn it. He wondered if Heimdall himself had told Thor his son was coming.

II.

Sights you expect to see on a perfect summer's twilight in the park:

Children playing.

Couples stealing kisses.

Dogs catching frisbees, or snuffling about tree trunks and fenceposts and other dogs.

Parents and caretakers chatting, checking their phones, digging snacks out of backpacks.

But a giant, pissed-off serpent winding its way around the now-abandoned playground? Not so much.

Eric had heard about it on the radio, as he was driving through town. The local newscaster had tried hard to keep his cool, but the gibber kept threatening to break through his dispassionate reporter tone. The mic picked up the faint screams in the background, from parkgoers who were, inexplicably, still in the vicinity. He brandished Giantsbane, a comically-oversized revolver with a fragment of Mjolnir in the hammer, his father's first and final gift.

Probably staying to film it all, he'd thought, as he'd set the GPS to direct him to the park in question.

The police had cordoned off the playground, which was good. They had apparently forgotten the part where the serpent had dug its way out of the ground to start, which was bad. If it decided to tunnel out, the sawhorses and waving hands weren't going to keep it penned in. But at least they were keeping *people* out, for now, and the serpent was busy winding itself around swings and slides and issuing forth the occasional terrifying shriek.

Eric wasn't big on cashing in on what fame he'd earned, but this time, when one of the officers said, "Oh, you're that godling" and waved him and Giantsbane through, he didn't give him the old *aw-shucks.*

The serpent saw him coming. Gods, it was ugly — 20 feet long, the pale blue of a frostbite victim's fingernails, and scales that resembled the same. It had several sets of stubby legs, each ending in a set of wicked, clawed feet. It didn't so much have a face as it had a mouthful of fangs, and several of them dripped with venom.

Eric couldn't help but watch as a drop of drool hit the playground sand and hissed. Was this the day, then? He'd been hoping he could avoid the death the Sagas had set for his father, the serpent's poison that would finally fell the mighty Thor. Was there a Norn even now singing the end of his tale?

Then he heard the soft cry from the plastic spaceship thing, a space for kids to crawl around in and, in this unfortunate kid's case, fall asleep.

No time to wonder where the kid's parents were. The serpent had heard him, too, and slithered towards the sound.

"*Hey*. Over here, you asshole." Eric ran for the serpent, caught the tip of its tail in one hand, and yanked. The serpent spun, hissing, its maw wide

open. It struck lightning-quick, but what was that kind of speed to the God of thunder's son? Eric dove sideways, keeping his grip. A dozen reptilian feet scrabbled for purchase in the gravel but got no traction.

Too bad he hadn't taken the seesaw into account. Eric's feet tangled in the supports, sending him sprawling. The serpent whipped its tail out of his hands and planted two pairs of front feet on his chest, pinning him to the ground.

That awful mouth opened, filling his vision with teeth and poison.

Giantsbane roared.

The top half of the serpent's head disappeared into a cloud of pale blue scales and black ichor. Eric rolled away as the body collapsed, careful to avoid what remained of the mouth and its deadly venom.

The kid climbed out of the spaceship and made a break for his dad, who'd finally shoved his way past the line of officers. He caught Eric's eye after he'd given the kid the first of many once-overs and mouthed *thank you.*

Eric nodded. He wanted to get out of this park, pick the gravel out of his skin and wash the serpent's clammy touch from his skin, but he couldn't help but feel a surge of pride in a job well done. *This* was why he'd never leave Midgard. It was his to protect.

III.

You save one little kid from a titanspawn's pet, and suddenly you're the media's darling.

Eric got tired of seeing his own face after a couple of days. It was the slowest of news weeks, and no new feats of strength and heroism sprang up to replace the fight in the playground. He couldn't buy a cup of coffee or stop for gas without gathering a crowd. Someone was always sneaking a picture, or exclaiming "Oh wow, you're the guy who shot that snake thing in the *face.*"

They wanted to know if he knew this Goddess or that, if he'd ever tasted ambrosia, and whether he thought Ragnarok would begin in his lifetime.

He could handle most of them: *I went hunting with an Incarnation of Maudjee-Kawiss once; yes, and I'm never drinking with one of Dionysus' kids again;* and *I watch for signs of it every day.*

The one he hadn't figured out how to answer yet was, "What's your father like?" He had stock answers for it, things other people had told him about Thor. How he's protective of the people of this realm, how he's quick-tempered but jovial, about his penchants for good ale and classic cars. He describes the man in the picture his mother left behind: red hair like Eric's own, his grin showing through his big red beard, the way he looked at the camera like he'd just heard the best joke ever, and as soon as the picture was taken, he was going to share it.

But they weren't *enough.* Eric could hear the way his tone changed in the telling, even if the people asking him didn't notice. The words rang hollow to him, because that's precisely what they were. The Thor he talked about wasn't *his* father, wasn't the Incarnation Jordan Donner had met and fallen in love with. He'd never been able to coax stories about his dad out of his mom, so he told stories about someone else's Thor. Someone else's dad.

Other Scions, he knew, would be eating this attention up — the ones whose parents held sway over beauty, over fame, over stories, the ones who treated Twitter mentions like invocations, and Facebook posts like paeans. Eric sent a text to a friend of his, a Scion of Nana'b'oozoo, that read *help I'm internet famous.* The response back was *oh boo-fucking-hoo* and a string of emojis whose meaning Eric couldn't decipher.

People on YouTube posted reaction videos to the cell-phone footage of him shooting at the serpent. Stills from the video became fodder for caption contests and memes. A company that sold replicas of Hrunting, Excalibur, and Mjolnir added a pretty decent facsimile of Giantsbane to their inventory.

Eric visited the hospital where the kid was taken after the fight. He received a clean bill of health, but you can never be too careful when you've been in proximity to the bodily fluids of otherworldly creatures. The doctors wanted to observe him for a few days, ruling out a delayed reaction in case he'd been hit by the serpent's blood or venom. In the children's wing, Eric reenacted the fight for the young patients, borrowing a stuffed dragon for his foe. The kids swarmed over him at the end, demanding piggyback rides or shyly offering high fives. It was the best day he'd had in a long time.

It had its upsides, too: he didn't pay for a single drink those first three days. He got more phone numbers and email addresses than he knew what to do with. In general, people were pretty great.

He thought maybe, just maybe, he'd hear from his father. He didn't expect him to come thundering down from Asgard to sing his son's praises. Just… a clap on the shoulder. A punch on the arm. Something, *anything,* that said "good job."

Instead, he got a message delivered by a squirrel, sending him on yet another errand. At least no one had caught *that* exchange on tape.

On the fourth day Omolara Muḥammād stole the headlines, and within a week, Eric faded back to the land of *don't I know you from somewhere?* He didn't mind. It made it easier to go on his father's errand.

It didn't sting, the way the note was written. It didn't feel like a drop of serpent's venom in his heart. *Go here. Do this.* Not a word about his success.

It didn't sting at all.

CHAPTER THREE
CHARACTER CREATION

It is convenient that there be gods, and,
as it is convenient, let us believe there are.

—Ovid

Heroes are reborn at the moment of their Visitation, that moment they first encounter the divine and their divine patron gifts them with weapons, guides, and blessings. In this section, you'll learn how to channel that moment of divine revelation into the mechanics of the Storypath system.

READY-MADE CHARACTERS

If you want to skip the character-creation process, or simply jump right into a game of **Scion: Hero** as quickly as possible, we've provided five characters made with the rules you'll find later in this chapter. Simply copy the relevant information to a character sheet and start playing!

Two of the Scions are both of the Æsir, the Norse Gods, and two others share the same Calling (or divine archetype) — just because characters share a few traits doesn't meant they need to be carbon copies of one another!

VISITATIONS AND ORIGIN CHARACTERS

The rules in this section provide you with the tools you need to create a Hero-tier Scion from scratch, though you'll need **Scion: Origin** for the full kit. If you've already been playing a pre-Visitation Scion or Denizen from **Scion: Origin** and want to convert that character to a full-fledged Hero or Legendary creature, apply the following steps:

- Choose two additional Callings. Assign four additional dots (five total) to Callings appropriate to the character. The character's primary Calling, or highest-rated, doesn't have to be the Calling the character already had. At least one Calling must match one of the divine parent's.
- Choose additional Knacks, as described in Step 5. If your pre-Visitation Scion already knows more than five Knacks (except for ones added in Finishing Touches), don't take any additional Knacks.
- Assign seven dots worth of Birthrights if you haven't already, as described in Step 6. If you've spent some, spend the rest.
- Choose innate Purviews, as described in Step 7.
- Assign Boons, as described in Step 8.
- Note your character's Legend rating of 1.

Without divine patronage to grant them Scion-hood, creatures of Legend fall a bit behind at Heroic tier, but they're still viable. To update an Origin-tier creature of Legend, follow the character-creation steps in **Scion: Origin**, p. 94 with the following changes:

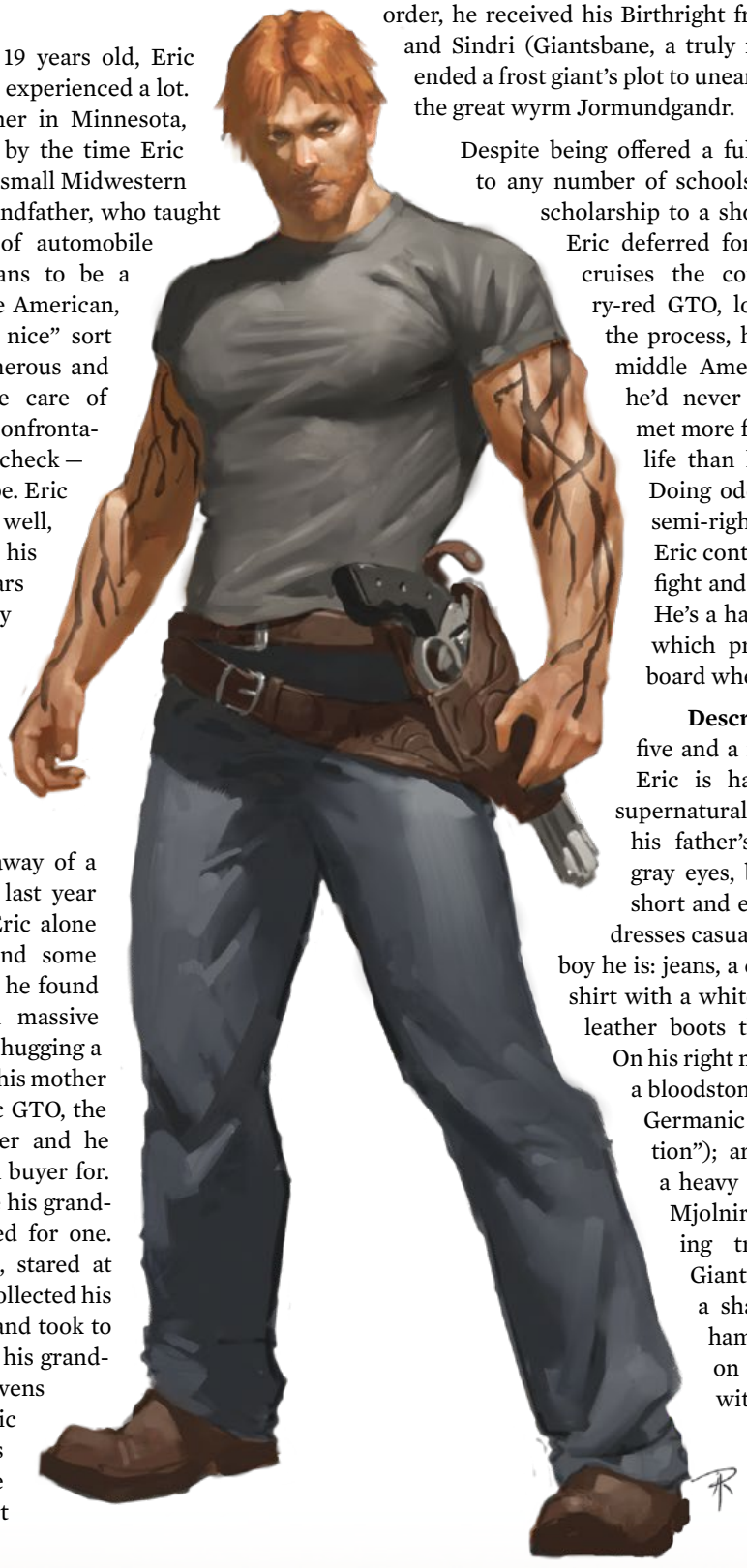
- For each Denizen Calling, choose a number of Knacks equal to the character's Calling dots. Immortal Knacks count as two Knacks for this purpose. Denizens don't get access to the "Any" Knacks, unless they're also Scions.
- Choose one of the following benefits: Four dots worth of Birthrights or a single area in which the character's actions are at +1 Scale. Denizens who are not Scions may not channel Purviews without a relic.
- Note your character's Legend rating of 1.

Some deities *do* actually make Scions out of Denizens; many of Inari's children are kitsune, for example, and Loki's dalliances with giants are only marginally less famous than Zeus' with nymphs.

ERIC DONNER

Scion of Thor

Background: All of 19 years old, Eric Donner is young, but he's experienced a lot. Born to an unwed mother in Minnesota, who took sick and died by the time Eric was 10, he was raised in a small Midwestern town by his maternal grandfather, who taught him the ins and outs of automobile repair and what it means to be a stand-up guy, in a middle American, occasionally "Minnesota nice" sort of way: Be polite, be generous and community-focused, take care of your family, downplay confrontation, and keep yourself in check — by self-mockery, if need be. Eric learned those lessons well, passed down as he and his grandfather fixed old cars into hot rods for wealthy West Coasters. Football, a limited focus on his studies, and evenings in the garage with his grandfather: These were the best times of Eric's life. Unfortunately, his grandfather passed away of a massive stroke in Eric's last year of high school, leaving Eric alone with a small stipend and some pictures of his father. All he found were photographs of a massive man with bright red hair hugging a much younger version of his mother in front of a 1969 Pontiac GTO, the same one his grandfather and he fixed up but didn't find a buyer for. Eric knew then and there his grandfather never really looked for one. Eric finished his degree, stared at the empty seat when he collected his diploma, sold the house and took to the road. With the aid of his grandfather's ghost and the ravens Huginn and Muninn, Eric learned the identity of his father: Thor, the Norse God of Thunder. In short order, he received his Birthright from the dwarves Brok and Sindri (Giantsbane, a truly massive revolver) and ended a frost giant's plot to unearth one of the spawn of the great wyrm Jormundgandr.



Despite being offered a full football scholarship to any number of schools (and an engineering scholarship to a shocking number more), Eric deferred for a year, and now he cruises the continent in his cherry-red GTO, looking for trouble. In the process, he's seen the sights of middle America, walked in cities he'd never been to before, and met more folks from all stripes of life than he imagined possible. Doing odd jobs and acting as a semi-righteous muscle-for-hire, Eric continues to fight the good fight and to help those in need. He's a handy mechanic as well, which provides his room and board when nothing else will.

Description: At six foot five and a muscular 220 pounds, Eric is handsome, though not supernaturally so. He inherited his father's red hair and steel-gray eyes, but he keeps the hair short and eschews facial hair. He dresses casually, like the blue-collar boy he is: jeans, a denim jacket, a flannel shirt with a white T-shirt beneath, and leather boots thumping the ground. On his right middle finger, he sports a bloodstone ring etched with the Germanic rune algiz ("protection"); around his neck hangs a heavy medallion shaped like Mjolnir. When he's expecting trouble, he produces Giantsbane, a revolver with a shard of Mjolnir in the hammer, but mostly relies on his ability to shit-kick with the best of them.

Divine Parent: Thor

SCION HERO

Eric Donner
Name

Player

Chronicle

Thor (Born)
Parent

SKILLS

☐	Academics	OOOOO	☐	Medicine	OOOOO
■	Athletics (Feats of Strength)	●●●●O	■	Occult	●OOOO
■	Close Combat (Bareknuckle Boxing)	●●●●O	☐	Persuasion	OOOOO
☐	Culture	OOOOO	■	Pilot (Cars)	●●●●O
☐	Empathy	OOOOO	☐	Science	OOOOO
■	Firearms (Pistols)	●●●●O	☐	Subterfuge	OOOOO
☐	Integrity	●●OOO	■	Survival (Camping)	●●●OO
■	Leadership	●●OOO	☐	Technology	OOOOO

ATTRIBUTES

	MENTAL	PHYSICAL	SOCIAL
POWER	Intellect* ●●●OO	Might* ●●●●●	Presence* ●●●●O
FINESSE	Cunning ●●OOO	Dexterity ●●OOO	Manipulation ●OOOO
RESILIENCE	Resolve ●●OOO	Stamina ●●●●●	Composure ●●●●O

PATHS

- Blue-Collar Football Kind of Town ☐
- Muscle Car Boy Scout ☐
- Scion of Thor, God of Thunder ☐
- ☐

DEEDS

- Short ☐
- Long ☐
- Band ☐

BIRTHRIGHTS

- Giantsbane (Relic 4)
- Algiz Ring (Relic 1)
- Grandfather's Ghost (Guide 2)
- Legendary Title: Guardian of Midgard ☐

VIRTUE

Audacity OOOOO Fatalism

KNACKS

- Close the Gap
- A Fortress
- Enhanced Impact
- Reverse Engineer
- Tempered
- (A Sentinel, Trick Shot)

CONTACTS

LEGEND

● O O O
☐ ☐ ☐ ☐

MOMENTUM

☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐

HEALTH

- ☐ Bruised +1
- ☐ Bruised +1
- ☐ Bruised +1
- ☐ Injured +2
- ☐ Maimed +4

Taken Out

Movement Dice: 9

Defense Roll: 5

CALLINGS

- Creator ●OOOO
- Guardian ●OOOO
- Warrior ●●●OO

BOONS/PURVIEWS

- Sky (Bolt from the Blue)
- Epic Strength (A World of Glass)

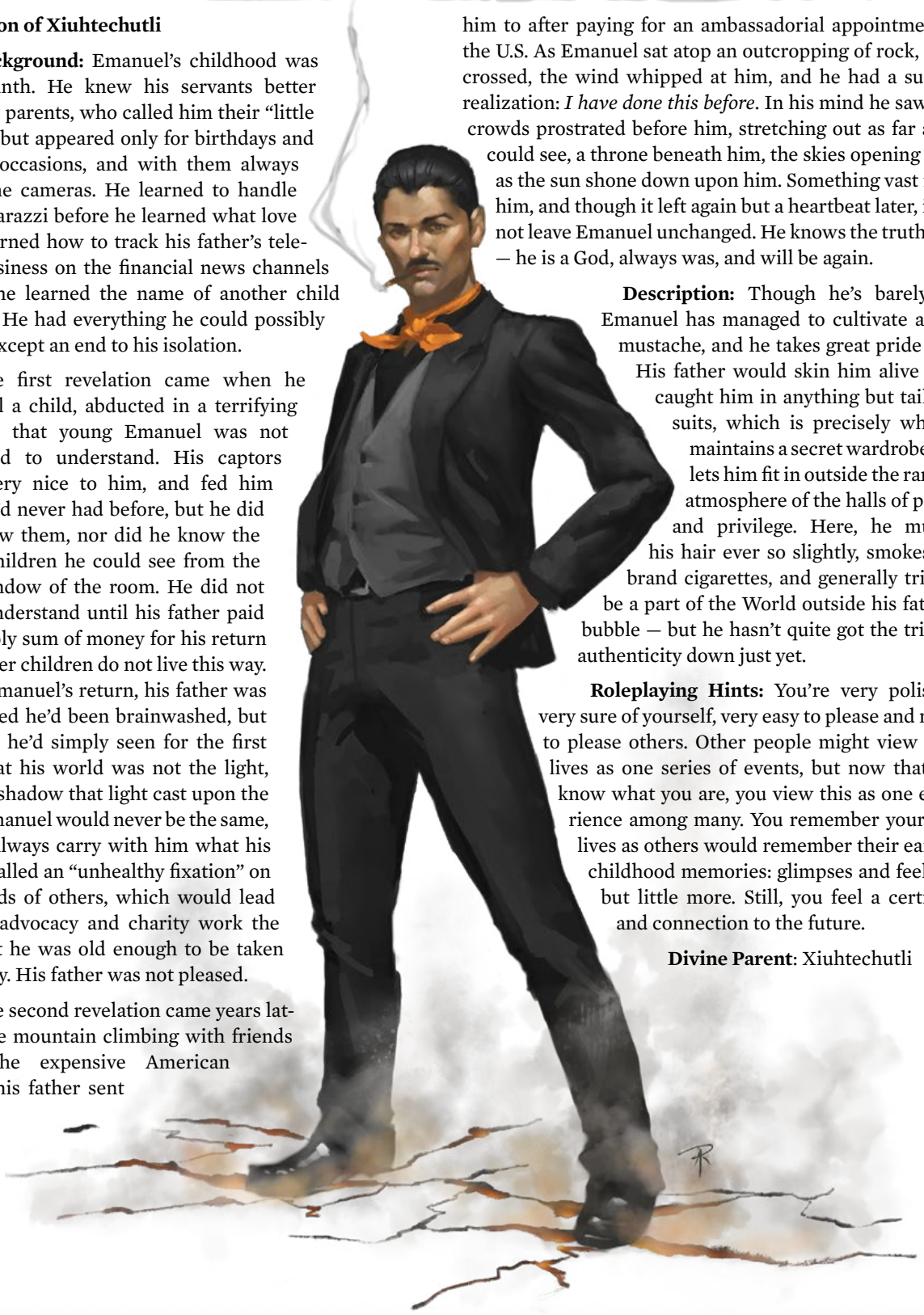
EMANUEL MONTERO

Scion of Xiuhtechutli

Background: Emanuel's childhood was a labyrinth. He knew his servants better than his parents, who called him their "little prince" but appeared only for birthdays and special occasions, and with them always came the cameras. He learned to handle the paparazzi before he learned what love was, learned how to track his father's telecom business on the financial news channels before he learned the name of another child his age. He had everything he could possibly desire except an end to his isolation.

The first revelation came when he was still a child, abducted in a terrifying firefight that young Emanuel was not equipped to understand. His captors were very nice to him, and fed him food he'd never had before, but he did not know them, nor did he know the other children he could see from the tiny window of the room. He did not quite understand until his father paid an unholy sum of money for his return that other children do not live this way. Upon Emanuel's return, his father was convinced he'd been brainwashed, but in truth he'd simply seen for the first time that his world was not the light, but the shadow that light cast upon the wall. Emanuel would never be the same, would always carry with him what his father called an "unhealthy fixation" on the needs of others, which would lead him to advocacy and charity work the moment he was old enough to be taken seriously. His father was not pleased.

The second revelation came years later, while mountain climbing with friends from the expensive American school his father sent him to after paying for an ambassadorial appointment to the U.S. As Emanuel sat atop an outcropping of rock, arms crossed, the wind whipped at him, and he had a sudden realization: *I have done this before*. In his mind he saw vast crowds prostrated before him, stretching out as far as he could see, a throne beneath him, the skies opening wide as the sun shone down upon him. Something vast filled him, and though it left again but a heartbeat later, it did not leave Emanuel unchanged. He knows the truth now — he is a God, always was, and will be again.



Description: Though he's barely 20, Emanuel has managed to cultivate a thin mustache, and he takes great pride in it. His father would skin him alive if he caught him in anything but tailored suits, which is precisely why he maintains a secret wardrobe that lets him fit in outside the rarified atmosphere of the halls of power and privilege. Here, he musses his hair ever so slightly, smokes off-brand cigarettes, and generally tries to be a part of the World outside his father's bubble — but he hasn't quite got the trick of authenticity down just yet.

Roleplaying Hints: You're very polished, very sure of yourself, very easy to please and ready to please others. Other people might view their lives as one series of events, but now that you know what you are, you view this as one experience among many. You remember your past lives as others would remember their earliest childhood memories: glimpses and feelings, but little more. Still, you feel a certitude and connection to the future.

Divine Parent: Xiuhtechutli

SCION HERO

Emanuel Montero
Name

Player

Chronicle

Xiuhtechutli (Incarnate)
Parent

SKILLS

■ Academics	●●●OO	☐ Medicine	OOOOO
☐ Athletics	OOOOO	■ Occult	●OOOO
■ Close Combat	●OOOO	■ Persuasion (Dealmaking)	●●●●O
■ Culture (Mexican Culture)	●●●●O	☐ Pilot	OOOOO
■ Empathy (Sympathy)	●●●●O	☐ Science	OOOOO
☐ Firearms	OOOOO	■ Subterfuge	●OOOO
☐ Integrity	OOOOO	☐ Survival	OOOOO
■ Leadership (Bodyguards)	●●●●●	☐ Technology	OOOOO

ATTRIBUTES

	MENTAL	PHYSICAL	SOCIAL
POWER	Intellect* ●●●●O	Might* ●●●OO	Presence* ●●●●●
FINESSE	Cunning ●●●OO	Dexterity ●●OOO	Manipulation ●●●OO
RESILIENCE	Resolve ●●OOO	Stamina ●●OOO	Composure ●●●●O

PATHS

- Xiuhtechutli Reborn ☐
- Charismatic Leader ☐
- With the Future in His Wake ☐
- ☐

DEEDS

- Short ☐
- Long ☐
- Band ☐

BIRTHRIGHTS

- Eagle Warriors (Followers 3)
- The Flint Knife (Relic 3)
- Elder Nahual (Guide 1)
- Legendary Title: The Lord of Obsidian Reborn ☐

VIRTUE

Hunger OOOOO Sacrifice

KNACKS

- Grand Entrance
- Not a Fighter
- Unobtrusive Visitor
- Invulnerable Master

(Inspirational Aura, Experienced Traveler)

CONTACTS

LEGEND

● O O O
☐ ☐ ☐ ☐

MOMENTUM

☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐

HEALTH

- ☐ Bruised +1
- ☐ Bruised +1
- ☐ Bruised +1
- ☐ Injured +2
- ☐ Maimed +4

Taken Out

Movement Dice: 3

Defense Roll: 3

CALLINGS

- Leader ●●●OO
- Liminal ●OOOO
- Lover ●OOOO

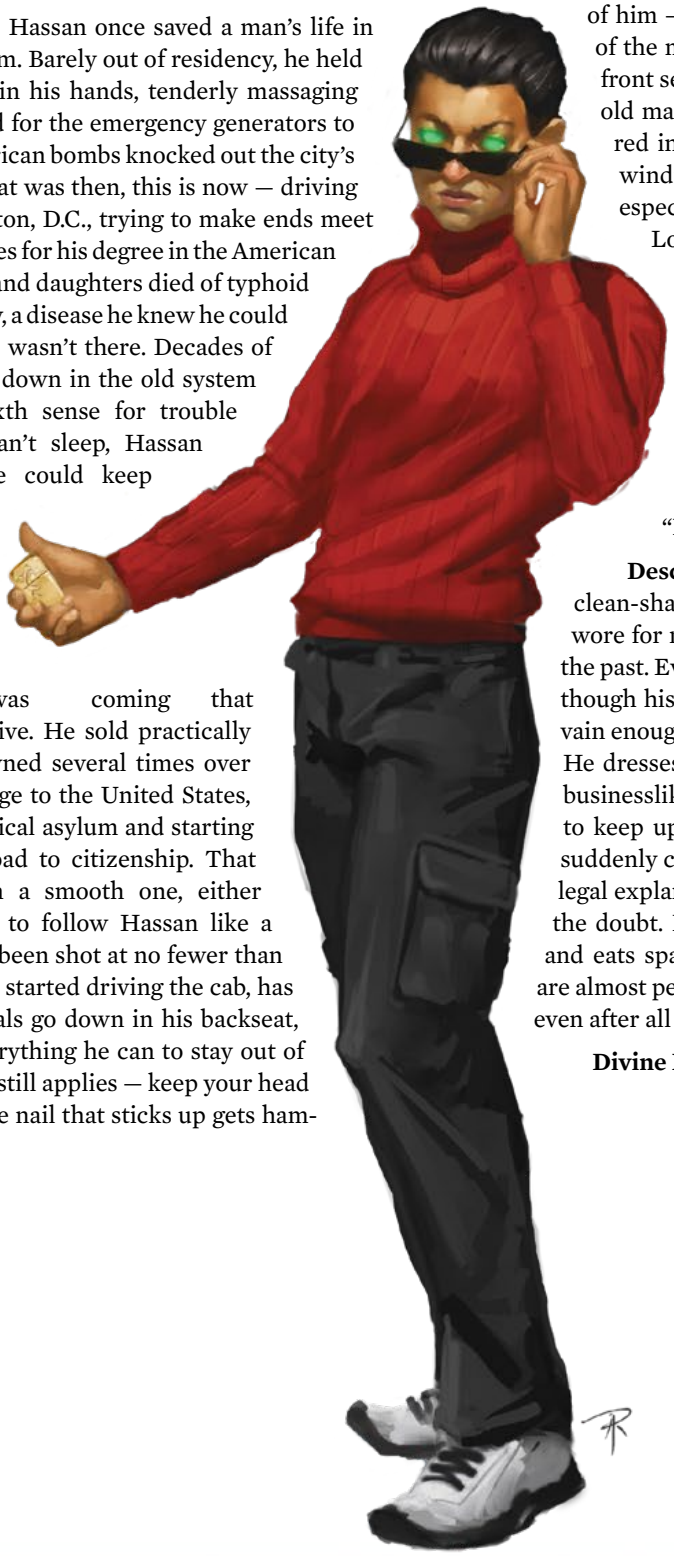
BOONS/PURVIEWS

- Nextlahuali, Prosperity
- All That Glitters (Prosperity)
- Repay the Debt (Nextlahuali)

HASSAN AL-HAKIM

Scion of Loki

Background: Hassan once saved a man's life in the operating room. Barely out of residency, he held that man's heart in his hands, tenderly massaging it while he waited for the emergency generators to kick in after American bombs knocked out the city's power supply. That was then, this is now — driving a cab in Washington, D.C., trying to make ends meet while he requalifies for his degree in the American system. His wife and daughters died of typhoid when he was away, a disease he knew he could cure, save that he wasn't there. Decades of keeping his head down in the old system gave him his sixth sense for trouble (but when he can't sleep, Hassan ponders how he could keep being so lucky) and when the Iraqi government fell and the Americans swept in, he knew a storm was coming that he wouldn't survive. He sold practically everything he owned several times over and bought passage to the United States, applying for political asylum and starting the long, slow road to citizenship. That road hasn't been a smooth one, either — trouble seems to follow Hassan like a hungry dog. He's been shot at no fewer than six times since he started driving the cab, has watched drug deals go down in his backseat, and has done everything he can to stay out of it. The old lesson still applies — keep your head down, because the nail that sticks up gets hammered down.



An old man — that's how Hassan still thinks of him — flags him down every third Thursday of the month, drops a wad of $100 bills on the front seat, and tells Hassan to "just drive." The old man, a white fellow with a few strands of red in his gray hair, always spins a long and winding myth about the Norse Gods, and especially about Loki, poor misunderstood Loki, who isn't nearly so bad as the Eddas would have it. Except this last time, when the old man dropped a lighter into his lap with an engraving of a wolf eating the sun...and showed his face, which looked like an aged version of Hassan's father. "We've got a long way ahead, my boy," he said, rainbows shining outside the car. "Drive, lad."

Description: Hassan keeps himself clean-shaven, the Freddie Mercury mustache he wore for most of the 90s long-since consigned to the past. Even without it, he's still quite handsome, though his age is beginning to show, and he's just vain enough to dye his sideburns to cover the gray. He dresses well — slacks, loafers, a jacket over a businesslike shirt—but not too well, as one has to keep up appearances, and Iraqi refugees who suddenly come into a great deal of money with no legal explanation generally don't get the benefit of the doubt. He still smokes, though not in his cab, and eats sparingly to keep a lean body. His hands are almost perfectly steady — a surgeon's hands, still, even after all he's been through.

Divine Parent: Loki

SCION HERO

Hassan al-Hakim
Name

Player

Chronicle

Loki
Parent

SKILLS

■ Academics	●●●OO	■ Medicine (Surgery)	●●●●●
■ Athletics	●OOOO	■ Occult	●●OOO
■ Close Combat	●●OOO	☐ Persuasion	OOOOO
■ Culture (Medical Culture)	●●●OO	■ Pilot	●OOOO
■ Empathy (Bedside Manner)	OOOOO	☐ Science	●OOOO
☐ Firearms	OOOOO	☐ Subterfuge	●OOOO
■ Integrity	●●OOO	■ Survival	●●OOO
☐ Leadership	OOOOO	☐ Technology	OOOOO

ATTRIBUTES

	MENTAL	PHYSICAL	SOCIAL
POWER	Intellect ●●●●O	Might ●OOOO	Presence ●●OOO
FINESSE	Cunning* ●●●●O	Dexterity* ●●●●O	Manipulation* ●●●●●
RESILIENCE	Resolve ●●●OO	Stamina ●●●OO	Composure ●●OOO

PATHS

War-Torn ☐
Medical Practitioner ☐
Rising Above ☐
☐

DEEDS

Short ☐
Long ☐
Band ☐

BIRTHRIGHTS

Loki (Guide 3)
Hel (Guide 2)
Swallowed Sun Zippo (Relic 2)
Legendary Title: Doctor Without Borders ☐

VIRTUE

Audacity OOOOO Fatalism

KNACKS

The Bare Minimum
Lie Detector
Complete Privacy
Doctor's Kit
Surgeon with the Hands of God

(Neither the Minute nor the Hour, The Truth Arises)

CONTACTS

LEGEND

● O O O
☐ ☐ ☐ ☐

MOMENTUM

☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐

HEALTH

☐ Bruised +1
☐ Bruised +1
☐ Bruised +1
☐ Injured +2
☐ Maimed +4
Taken Out

Movement Dice: 5
Defense Roll: 3

CALLINGS

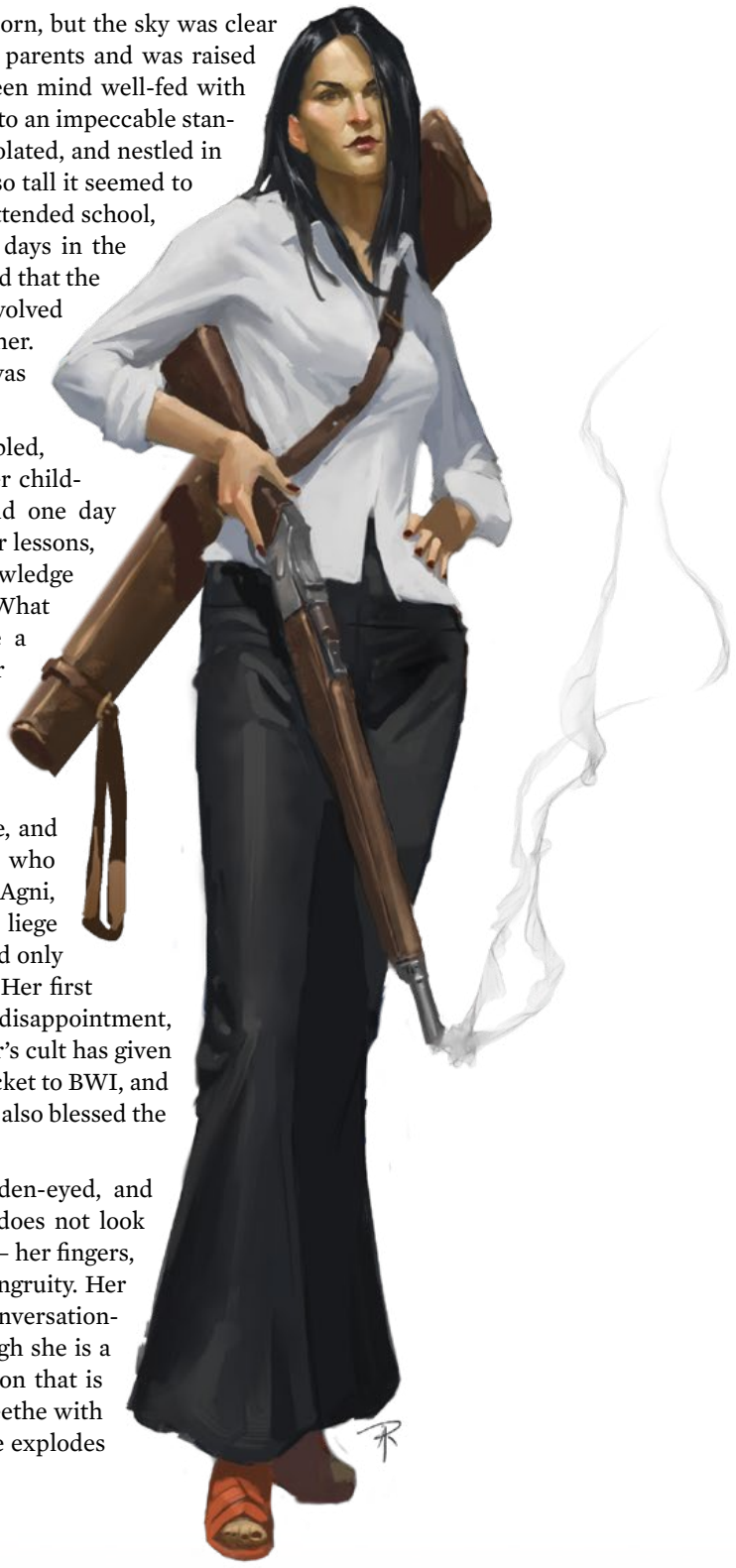
Healer	●●●OO
Judge	●OOOO
Liminal	●OOOO

BOONS/PURVIEWS

Chaos, Fire, Deception, Wyrd
No Masters (Chaos)
Walk Unnoticed (Deception)

RASHMI BHATTACHARYA

Scion of Agni



Rain fell upon the earth when Rashmi was born, but the sky was clear and cloudless. Though she never knew her true parents and was raised in a foster home, she wanted for nothing, her keen mind well-fed with wide-ranging disciplines as her body was trained to an impeccable standard. The community she lived in was remote, isolated, and nestled in the foothills of a magnificent mountain that was so tall it seemed to have no peak, but her life was not unusual—she attended school, trained in shooting competitions, meditated for days in the forests. She was 11 years old when she first realized that the man she called "father," distant but nonetheless involved in her life, was nothing but a priest of her true father. The man smiled, and later told her that Agni was pleased she understood at so young an age.

From that moment on, her training redoubled, taking on a more intense and dangerous tone, her childhood sacrificed to create the woman she would one day become. Science and mysticism intertwined in her lessons, the secrets of the atom combining with the knowledge of how to sing to neutrons in their own tongue. What had once been tough but fair training became a gauntlet of tests that were very real threats to her life. Rashmi understood now the purpose of the community she lived in, in a part of India separate from any road, far from any map — it was to prepare her for the World, to enable her to walk unnoticed among mortals, to speak as they spoke, and to be Agni's hidden javelin. She does not know who her parents were, only that they gave her up to Agni, who has become her father, her mentor, and her liege — though she has only met him the once, now, and only then as an exquisite equation of nuclear physics. Her first concern is to not fail him—it would gut her to be a disappointment, after all that has been provided for her. Her father's cult has given her an American passport, a first-class airplane ticket to BWI, and a card tied to a brimming-over bank account; they also blessed the weapons she's always had.

Description: Fair-skinned, dark-haired, golden-eyed, and dressed in the best the West can offer, Rashmi does not look like a woman who could kill with her bare hands — her fingers, callused from her rifle training, are the only incongruity. Her voice is soft and measured, rarely rising above a conversational tone. When she stands still, it's almost as though she is a statue carved in place, with an economy of motion that is frugal to say the least. For all this, she seems to seethe with a hidden energy, which is only revealed when she explodes into action with unparalleled ferocity.

Divine Parent: Agni

SCION HERO

Rashmi Bhattacharya
Name

Chronicle

Player

Agni (Chosen)
Parent

SKILLS

■ Academics	●●OOO	☐ Medicine	OOOOO
■ Athletics	●●●OO	☐ Occult	●●OOO
☐ Close Combat	OOOOO	☐ Persuasion	OOOOO
■ Culture	●OOOO	☐ Pilot	OOOOO
☐ Empathy	●OOOO	■ Science (Nuclear Physics)	●●●●O
■ Firearms (Rifle)	●●●●O	■ Subterfuge	●OOOO
☐ Integrity	OOOOO	■ Survival	●●●OO
☐ Leadership	OOOOO	■ Technology	●●OOO

ATTRIBUTES

	MENTAL	PHYSICAL	SOCIAL
POWER	Intellect ●●●●O	Might ●●OOO	Presence ●●OOO
FINESSE	Cunning* ●●●●O	Dexterity* ●●●●●	Manipulation* ●●●OO
RESILIENCE	Resolve ●●●OO	Stamina ●●OOO	Composure ●●●OO

PATHS

- Potemkin World ☐
- Technology Expert ☐
- The Hidden Javelin of Agni ☐
- ☐

DEEDS

- Short ☐
- Long ☐
- Band ☐

BIRTHRIGHTS

- Preceptor Drona (Guide 4)
- Mount Meru Copy Rifle (Relic 2)
- Bodhisattva (Guide 1)
- Legendary Title: The Physicist-Priestess ☐

VIRTUE

Duty OOOOO Conscience

KNACKS

- Immortal Mastermind
- Innate Toolkit
- Most Dangerous Prey
- Worrying Hound
- (Wireless Interface, Master of the World)

CONTACTS

LEGEND

● O O O
☐ ☐ ☐ ☐

MOMENTUM

☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐

HEALTH

- ☐ Bruised +1
- ☐ Bruised +1
- ☐ Bruised +1
- ☐ Injured +2
- ☐ Maimed +4
- Taken Out

Movement Dice: 8
Defense Roll: 3

CALLINGS

Sage	●●OOO
Creator	●OOOO
Hunter	●●OOO

BOONS/PURVIEWS

- Journeys, Yóga
- Eyes of Knowledge (Yóga)
- Here There Be Dragons (Journeys)

RHIANNON JERNIGAN

Scion of Brigid

Background: Rhiannon went without a home for the first 20 years of her life — or, perhaps it's more accurate to say that she had a surfeit of them. The youngest in a military family with roots stretching back to the Revolution on both sides of the war, there was no doubt where Rhiannon was going once she finished high school. It wasn't the 50s anymore, and Rhiannon's father made it perfectly clear that being a woman was no excuse — not that Rhiannon was looking for one. The Army trained Rhiannon, first breaking her down in boot camp before building her back up, and within the year she boasted a 68W MOS — combat medic. Only a few months later, she shipped out, part of Operation Iraqi Freedom.

Rhiannon may not have been literally baptized in fire, though she's come pretty close on several occasions, what with mortars, IEDs, and a plethora of small arms aimed in her general direction as she tried to drag comrades into cover to stabilize their vitals. She spent three tours saving lives before her discharge — she never wanted to go career, no matter what her dad said—and then came home to spend six months relaxing. They turned out to be the worst six months of her life. The transition back to living as a civilian did nothing to soothe her jangled nerves. She managed to find work as an EMT and firefighter, and that helped — the sirens got her blood rushing, and the thrill of swooping in and saving a life never wore off, but something still itched behind her eyes, something desperate to escape, to show itself.

The ride-along was where things changed — it was a quiet night, and the redhead from hospital administration was chatty, and she and Rhiannon hit it off well. It wasn't until their shift was over, in the early hours of the dawn, that Brigid revealed herself to her daughter over a greasy plate of scrambled eggs and pancakes at an all-night diner. "Just you take care of yourself, now," she said, "for you've got a fire in you, and if you're not careful it'll burn you right up."

Description: Rhiannon has a fireplug build; short, stocky, and just a hair on the soft side of muscular to belie her strength, capped with an undercut recently dyed fire-engine red, highlighting her bright green eyes. Unless she breaks out her suit and tie, tattoos peek out from under her sleeves and collar — mostly abstract, though there's the name of an ex-girlfriend in there somewhere. When she's not driving the ambulance, she drives a late-model muscle car, and her wardrobe matches it impeccably, ever so slightly distressed.

Divine Parent: Brigid

SCION HERO

Rhiannon Jernigan
Name

Player

Chronicle

Brigid (Born)
Parent

SKILLS

■ Academics	●OOOO	■ Medicine	●●OOO
■ Athletics (Carrying Others)	●●●OO	☐ Occult	OOOOO
■ Close Combat (Disarming)	●●●OO	☐ Persuasion	OOOOO
■ Culture (Rescue Organizations)	●●●OO	■ Pilot (Evasive Driving)	●●●OO
☐ Empathy	●●OOO	☐ Science	OOOOO
■ Firearms	●OOOO	☐ Subterfuge	OOOOO
■ Integrity	●●●OO	☐ Survival	●OOOO
☐ Leadership	OOOOO	☐ Technology	●OOOO

ATTRIBUTES

	MENTAL	PHYSICAL	SOCIAL
POWER	Intellect ●●OOO	Might ●●●OO	Presence ●●●OO
FINESSE	Cunning ●OOOO	Dexterity ●●●OO	Manipulation ●●OOO
RESILIENCE	Resolve* ●●●●O	Stamina* ●●●●●	Composure* ●●●●●

PATHS

- Military Brat ☐
- Combat Medic ☐
- The Flame that Marched Against the Smoke ☐
- ☐

DEEDS

- Short ☐
- Long ☐
- Band ☐

BIRTHRIGHTS

Hot Key (Relic 4)
Crow of the Morrigan (Guide 3)

Legendary Title: The Purifying Flame ☐

VIRTUE

Honor OOOOO Prowess

KNACKS

Living Pillar
Combat Medic
Damage Conversion
Perfect Poise

CONTACTS

(A Fortress, A Vigil)

LEGEND

● O O O
☐ ☐ ☐ ☐

MOMENTUM

☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐

HEALTH

- ☐ Bruised +1
- ☐ Bruised +1
- ☐ Bruised +1
- ☐ Injured +2
- ☐ Maimed +4

Taken Out

Movement Dice: 6

Defense Roll: 5

CALLINGS

Guardian	●●OOO
Healer	●●OOO
Leader	●OOOO

BOONS/PURVIEWS

Geasa, Fire, Forge
Reclaim from Ruin (Forge)
Tongue of the Bard (Geasa)

CHARACTER CREATION

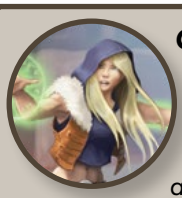
Character Creation has nine steps: concept, Paths, Skills, Attributes, Callings and Knacks, Purviews, Birthrights, Boons, and finishing touches.

STEP ONE: CONCEPT

The first and most basic element of your character is their concept. Think of this as a short phrase encapsulating the basic essence of the character — the sort of thing you might see in a movie synopsis or on the back cover of a novel. Maybe they're a "Mercenary to the Gods" or "High Priestess of Santa Muerte." If you're having trouble encapsulating a good concept, try

Part of a Hero's concept is their divine patron and genesis (p. 17). Even if you don't explicitly call them out in the concept, you should settle on them now.

This concept doesn't have any direct mechanical effects, but any time you find yourself stuck further on in this process, returning to your concept can help you figure out the best choice for your character.



Character Creation Example:

Vera wants to create her Scion, Sigrún Askrdöttir. She wants Sigrún to be a bit of an ancient Norse goddess, powerful and puissant but a fish-out-of water in the modern day. Sigrún was carved by Loki as a Viking Adonis from a living ash tree, but she spat her first breath back in the God's face, cursing them for giving her a masculine shape. Taking her other parent's name — the ash tree she once was — she ventured out across Vanaheim, eventually making her way to the World through an ungarded Axis Mundi.

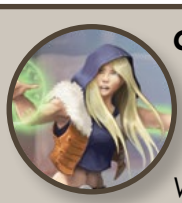
Vera chooses two Deeds for Sigrún: a short-term ("Seal the gate to Vanaheim") and long-term ("Master the subtle magics of seidr"). The third Deed she leaves up to the group to determine during their first session together.

STEP TWO: PATHS

Define three Paths (**Scion: Origin,** p. 95) for your character. The first Path corresponds to your character's **origin**, who they were before the story started. The second corresponds to their **role**, who they are now (your character's concept is usually a good fit here). The third corresponds to their **pantheon**, how they relate to the gods and myths of their patron's pantheon.

Each Path consists of the following elements:

- A short description of the Path (e.g. "Moscow Ballet Veteran" or "Field Primatologist")
- Three Skills associated with the Path. Which three Skills you choose are up to you, but you should be prepared to justify non-obvious choices like Culture for "Raised by Wolves." Two of the Skills you choose for your character's Pantheon Path *must* be the Pantheon Skills for divine patron's pantheon. Any given Skill can be associated with at most *two* of your Paths.
- A Path Condition that triggers when you invoke the Path too often. You can choose one of the example Conditions or use them as a template to create your own.



Character Creation Example:

Vera knows Sigrún's history, but the future eludes her. Sigrún spent her time drinking and gaming amongst the mortals of Vanaheim, foretelling their futures and driving beasts away with nothing more than a word. She's a bare-knuckled fighter with bark on her hands, and she garners subtle magics to remake herself and carve herself into a more feminine form over time.

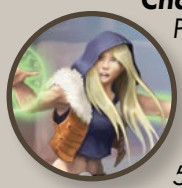
Sigrún's first Path is "Loki-Carved", to represent both her tie to her parent and her original existence as a tree. For her role in the group, Vera goes with, "She to Whom the Woods Whisper". Finally, she's tied to the rest of the Norse Gods by her defiance, so she's "Loki-Defying".

She chooses three skills for the first two Paths and takes the Aesir Skills with the third. Close Combat, Medicine, Survival for the first; Academics, Occult, Subterfuge for the second; and the third nets her Close Combat and Occult, and she chooses Academics again for her third Skill. Sigrún's well-learned, but knows little of the true ways of the World.

STEP THREE: SKILLS

Prioritize your characters' Paths as primary, secondary, and tertiary. Your character receives three dots in *each* Skill associated with their primary Path, two dots in each Skill associated with their secondary path, and one dot in each Skill associated with their tertiary path. These dots are cumulative for Skills associated with two Paths.

For every Skill that ends up with three or more dots, choose a Specialty (**Scion: Origin**, p. 59).



Character Creation Example:

Prioritizing her Paths, Vera makes Sigrún's Origin primary, Pantheon secondary, and Role tertiary. This leaves Sigrún with Academics 3, Close Combat 5, Medicine 3, Subterfuge 1, Survival 3, Occult 3. She's an incredible fighter, and wields a staff made from her former self, and she's skilled at surviving in the woods and possesses an intuitive knowledge of magic. Since Academics, Close Combat, Survival, and Occult are all at or above 3, Vera chooses five specialties: "Norse

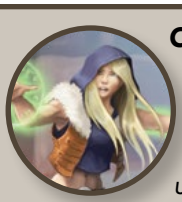
History", "Staves of Ash", "Herbal Medicine", "Woodlands", and, "Runes".

STEP FOUR: ATTRIBUTES

Your character begins with a single dot in all Attributes for free.

Prioritize the three Arenas (**Scion: Origin,** p. 97) as primary, secondary, or tertiary. Assign six dots to Attributes in the primary category, four to the secondary, and two to the tertiary. Divide these dots however you like, but no Attribute can be higher than five.

Next, choose one of the three Approaches (**Scion: Origin,** p. 97). Add two dots to each Attribute in that Approach; any Attribute dots beyond 5 may be reassigned elsewhere in the high Attribute's Arena.



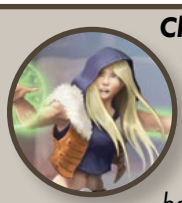
Character Creation Example: *Building off the results of her Skills and the strength of a tree, Vera's tempted to prioritize Power, but she ultimately decides Sigrún's just tough, despite not being socially skilled. Vera arrays her character's Arenas Mental, Physical, and Social. Each Attribute starts with one dot. Vera places three dots in Intellect, two in Cunning, and one in Resolve. Then, for Physical, she puts two in Might, one in Dexterity, and one in Stamina. For Social, she places two in Presence; the other two Attributes in this Arena remain at one. Vera concludes that, as a former tree, Sigrún's Favored Approach is Resistance. Her final Attributes are: Intellect 4, Might 3, Presence 3; Cunning 3, Dexterity 2, Manipulation 1; Resolve 4, Stamina 4, Composure 3.*

STEP FIVE: CALLINGS AND KNACKS

Choose three Callings (p. 190). At least one of your character's Callings *must* come from their divine patron's three Favored Callings.

Your character receives five dots among all their Callings, but each must have at least one dot.

For each Calling, choose a number of Heroic Knacks equal to the Calling's rating; while they can learn more, they may only have as many active as they have Calling dots. Alternately, you may choose a single Immortal Knack instead of two Heroic Knacks for any Calling two dots or higher. If your character is also a creature of Legend, they replace one Calling with one appropriate to their nature (see p. 310).



Character Creation Example: *Callings should be loosely based on Paths, and if there's one thing that daughter and parent share, and that's a mischevious nature under all her gruffness. Sigrún matches Loki's Trickster Calling with her defiance. She to Whom the Woods Whisper sounds a Hunter Calling to Vera, while Loki-Carved could very*

well be Creator, Vera ultimately decides her fine features are the result of a twisted act of love, and it draws her to humanity. She might hate Loki and feel disconnected from humans, but this aloofness allows her to analyze them, so Vera chooses Lover as the third Calling.

Sigrún's Knacks reflect her keen insights: Apex Predator, Lover's Intuition, Smoke and Mirrors, Keen-Eyed Predator, and Takes One to Know One.

STEP SIX: BIRTHRIGHTS

Your character receives seven dots to allocate to Birthrights (p. 201). You may choose from the example Birthrights in this book, or design your own.

Most Scions receive Birthrights tied to their patron's pantheon, but the Overworld is a cosmopolitan place — not only do the pantheons routinely talk and trade amongst themselves, many Gods are members of multiple pantheons. If you have an interesting idea for a story about, say, a Scion of Sun Wukong who carries the Spear of Lugh, don't let pantheon affiliation stand in your way.

Character Creation Example: *Sigrún's spent time imbuing her staff-self with the magic of Vanaheim; the native eagles of the realm liked to alight atop it. In the World, her staff has power, and channels the raw Beauty of Vanaheim and the Fortune of mortality. The Eagle Staff is four dots with a motif of, "Seeing Far, Seeing All". Vera reserves the other three dots for later in the character creation process.*

STEP SEVEN: PURVIEWS

Your character gains their Pantheon Specialty Purview as an innate Purview (p. 264). In addition, choose one of your divine patron's Purviews as an innate Purview. All other Purviews must be drawn from Relics or Guides.

Character Creation Example: *Sigrún has the natural Deception of Loki, but she's also got Fortune and Beauty from her staff, and Wyrd from her pantheon. She can use either the PSP motif or her Relic motif to channel any marvels.*

STEP EIGHT: BOONS

Choose two Boons from any of your character's Purviews, whether innate or granted by Birthrights.

Character Creation Example: *Vera decides that Spin the Thread of Wyrd and False History of Deception fit Sigrún best. She still benefits from the innate benefits of Beauty and Fortune, however.*

EXPERIENCE

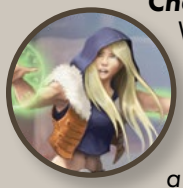
EVENT	XP COST	RECIPIENT
The character's player attends the game.	1	Solo
A player achieves their short-term Deed for their character	1	Solo
All players achieve their short-term Deed in the same session	1	Group
A player achieves their long-term Deed for their character (all players must achieve their long-term aspirations before a player can earn this experience again)	3	Solo
The players spend half the Momentum pool in a single scene (the amount spent must be greater than 1)	1	Group
The characters reach a story milestone	1	Group
The characters complete a group Story	5	Group

STEP NINE: FINISHING TOUCHES

To finish out your character, fill in the following:

- Legend: 1
- Virtues: From the appropriate pantheon. Your character begins in the center of the Virtue track.
- Health: One slot each for Bruised, Injured, Maimed, and Taken Out; add an additional Bruised slot if your character's Stamina is 3-4, or two additional Bruised Slots if their Stamina is 5.
- Defense: Based on a character's Physical Resilience Attribute (Stamina, Resolve, and Composure). Just note the Defensive pool the character will roll when they take a Defensive action; generally, this is based on Stamina, but determined or calm and collected characters may avoid attacks with equal alacrity.

Each player character receives 5 extra Skill dots, an extra Attribute dot, and either two additional Knacks or four points of Birthrights at this point in character creation.



Character Creation Example: *Vera records all of the above on Sigrún. Vera spends one dot of Skills on Sigrún's Firearms, one on Medicine, one more on Survival to bring it to 5 (she's a tree...), and two on Athletics (she's a limber tree). She takes one of the last dots for the Birthrights and spends it with her earlier dots to purchase a vicious disir as a Guide. Two other Birthright dots are spent on an iGjaller, a belated reconciliation gift from Loki; the last is spent on a pistol loaded with fae-shot ammunition. She spends her additional Attribute dot to increases Sigrún's Resolve to 5.*

That finishes the mechanical aspects of your character, but now is a good time to think about the things that make your character a *character*, not just a bunch of dots on a sheet. What do they look like? How do they dress? Who are their family and friends? Do they have any rivals? What's their name?

You may spend experience to purchase dots in Skills and Attributes. If your character has access to supernatural powers via her Path, you may spend Experience to purchase Knacks.

The below table lists the costs for each change. The table does not include prerequisites, such as having access to Knacks from a Path before purchasing. Players may spend their Experience at the end of an Arc.

OBJECT	CHANGE	COST
Attribute	Add one dot to a single Attribute	10 Experience
Birthright	Add one dot in a new or existing Birthright	5 Experience
Favored Approach	Change a character's Favored Approach	15 Experience
Skill	Add one dot in a new or existing Skill	5 Experience
Knack	Purchase a new Knack	10 Experience
Specialty	Add a Specialty to a Skill	3 Experience

CHAPTER FOUR
TRAITS

> The (...) gods had personalities like those of humans and struggled with one another for position and power. They did not love humans (although some had favorites) and did not ask to be loved by them. They did not impose codes of behavior. They expected respect and honor but could act contrary to human needs and desires.
>
> — Barry B. Powell, Classical Myth

Heroes are mortal. Yet they have, through dint of bloodline and recognition, become part of something grander and greater than themselves. Some are stronger, or quicker, or smarter than others by virtue of raw talent or hard work, but also through connection to the archetypes that shadow the collective mind of humanity. Some are gifted with mythic animals that walk alongside them, or powerful mentors who inform their journeys. As they venture further into the world of myth, Heroes collect attributes that make them more, and less, than what they were.

LEGEND

Scions and Gods are creatures empowered by divine legend, whose Deeds shape the World around them. Tumult and conflict surround a Scion as the forces of Fate act to shape her power in turn, until her divine identity — the **Mantle** — begins to dictate her actions. Until that time, however, her Deeds defy the physical laws that bind ordinary mortals; as she grows in power, her mythic weight distorts the very fabric of reality. Waves of improbability spawn wonders — and, increasingly, eerily familiar disasters — wherever she goes. She walks as the Gods do, until the World entire is treaded by her feet.

The Legend trait is the measure of the Scion's mythic weight, reflecting the favor of her divine parent and the glory of her epic deeds. As a Scion's Legend grows, she gains access to greater Boons and Knacks. She also becomes better-known in her pantheon and the World. This isn't a function of fleeting mortal fame, however, as simply having millions of social media followers won't increase a Scion's might. Legend represents a shaping of humanity's unconscious to accommodate the Scion and their Deeds. Having a high Legend nets you a lot of social media followers, not the other way around.

A Scion's Legend rating generates a pool of Legend points equal to the character's Legend dots. These points may be **imbued** — temporarily allocated to power Boons, and returning to the Scion's Legend pool when the Boon is terminated — or **spent** — a powerful expenditure of divine might that temporarily weakens the Scion, requiring him to immerse himself in the narrative strands of Fate or receive sacrifices in order to grow strong once more.

Legend is rated from 1 to 12. Scions of Legend 1 through Legend 4 are considered Heroes — an ethics-neutral term here meant to separate Scions from mortal humanity. Scions of Legend 5 through Legend 8 are considered true Demigods; characters of Legend 9 through Legend 12 are themselves Gods. Most Gods have a Legend of 9, while particularly strong Gods with diverse Purviews may be Legend 10. Legend 11 is generally reserved for the foremost members of the pantheons who occupy specific roles (God of War, God of the Harvest), while the three or four mightiest deities of the pantheon have Legend 12.

LEGEND TRAIT EFFECTS

Your character receives a new Boon per dot of Legend they possess. Heroes at Legend 1 possess 5 Calling dots, and thus may have five Knacks "active" at any one time even if they've purchased many different Knacks; additionally Calling dots increase the number of "active" Knacks. Your character receives a new Boon per dot of Legend they possess past Legend 2.

FEATS OF SCALE

Scion is a game of doing big things, so the protagonists have an innate ability to handle doing things on a epic scale. Whether throwing a car, fighting an army, wrestling a giant, solving an quantum equation, or seducing a room, a Scion or God may *spend* a point of Legend and add [Legend rating/2, round up] of Scale for the round or an action, so long as that action fits with their Legendary Title. If Consuela Romero, a former *sicario* and Legend 2 Scion of Tezcatlipoca with the Legendary Title "Our Lady of the Assassins", attempts to assassinate someone, or sneak around, or evoke a sense of religious awe, she could add Scale 1 to her action. Once she ascends to Legend 3, she would add Scale 2 instead, allowing her to act as an avenging angel towards Heroes without Scale or any number of trivial targets with ease.

Knacks and Boons grant the ability to invoke Feats of Scale with a greater bonus or at a lower cost, such as imbuing Legend. Knacks of this type are always Immortal level, and typically allow a Scion to imbue Legend on an action that corresponds to one of the Calling's keywords.

• *Remarkable.* The Scion's Deeds are spoken of among her cult and the neighborhoods. Her power begins to grow, but she's still barely capable of anything resembling true divinity. *2 Boons.*

•• *Well-known.* Among her chosen people and select others, the Scion's name is often spoken of. *2 Boons, +1 Calling dot.*

••• *Celebrated.* More than talked-about, the Scion's Deeds are emulated. At this level, she develops an **omen**, a cosmetic supernatural effect that marks her nascent divinity whenever she imbues or spends Legend: flaming eyes, a spinning disc of gold, a flock of ravens, or something without true mechanical weight (though using Stunts to play off them is appropriate). This omen manifests whenever she imbues or spends Legend. She also gains a +1 Enhancement to the Attitude of any worshipper of her pantheon. *3 Boons.*

•••• *Famous.* YouTube videos, Wikipedia pages, magazine covers, instant recognition in a religion — at this level, the Scion begins to amass cultural inertia. She is changing the World through invention, discovery, or some other mighty Deed that imprints her identity on the consciousness of humanity. *4 Boons, +1 Calling dot.*

RAISING LEGEND

Raising Legend requires the Scion to complete one *set* of Short-term, Long-term, and Band Deeds. Mark the box next to the Deed once this has been completed. As a reminder, while the Scion may choose a new Short-term Deed with a tweak between sessions (and a Long-term one with a similar tweak, once it's been completed) and gain Experience for completing new ones, they may not choose a new Band Deed until the entire band has completed one set of Deeds: in other words, once everyone's on the same level of Legend once again. Once you've completed a set, erase the marks over the boxes; any new Deeds completed count towards a new set.

Upon gaining a new Legend dot, the Scion may rearrange which Boons she knows "permanently" among any Purviews she has access to.

REGAINING LEGEND

Scions and Gods may regain spent Legend points in one of two ways: by receiving an appropriate sacrifice, or by accepting a Fatebinding (see p. 195). Either generally requires a dedicated scene of play.

FATEBINDINGS

When you accept a Fatebinding in accordance with one of your Callings, the energies generated by acting in accordance with Fate replenish a point of Legend.

SACRIFICE

Gods and Scions can also replenish their Legend points through sacrifice. For Heroes, this involves making

STORYGUIDING SACRIFICES

When playing through scenes of sacrifice to their parents and to the Gods, be mindful of real-world religious practices as they manifest in the World. Feel free to portray a Shinto temple, but take care in describing a full Shinto religious ceremony. Take the advice in the Storyguiding chapter about playing characters of a culture different from your own to heart! As in all things **Scion**, a bit of research with trustworthy sources will garner enough details for the Storyguide to portray the scene of sacrifice respectfully. Keep in mind that Scions don't, themselves, typically perform religious rites for congregants. Unlike **Origin**, the Scions in **Hero** have a more direct and personal connection to the divine, and thus their sacrifices are more personal. Sacrifice is meant less to affirm the character's innate divinity than their infinite connection to the Fate of their pantheon and their divine progenitors.

a ritual offering to your divine parent or your pantheon as a whole in a holy place or shrine and in accordance with the pantheon's motif (see p. 237), a ceremony which takes one scene to complete. At the conclusion of the sacrifice, you regain a point of Legend. If your Legend pool is already full, you can instead immediately spend or imbue that point in a Boon or marvel.

Sacrifices are divided into two types — minor and major — depending on the narrative challenges posed by acquiring and offering them. A Scion can only benefit from a minor sacrifice once per arc, while there is no limit to how many major sacrifices they can gain Legend from. Note that this alone is not enough to assure a sacrifice's value — you gain nothing from offering a God something they do not desire, even if it qualifies as a major sacrifice.

- **Minor sacrifices** can usually be obtained offscreen during downtime or between scenes, and carry little or no consequences: garlands of flowers, cigars left at crossroads, and animal offal (ask your local butcher).
- **Major sacrifices** tend to involve multiple scenes (sometimes entire sessions) of effort to acquire, and/or have potential consequences severe enough that even a Scion would not undertake them lightly.

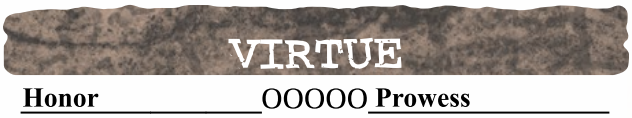
Human sacrifice is major, but so is burning a masterfully crafted handmade effigy or offering the last cigar from a box that formerly belonged to an Incarnation of Eshu. Scarification, bloodletting, and other ritual self-mutilation are minor sacrifices, which result in accepting an Injury Condition.

VIRTUE

All Scions gain a Virtue track. The Godly are bound to their Pantheon by blood and by Fate, but these metaphysical societies are often riven by conflict and a long shared, history. Virtues are a reflection of this, an attunement to philosophical divides resonating within the Scion's ichor. Those in tune with divinity feel these Virtues imposed upon them as well (see Saints in **Scion: Origin**, p. 162).

Every point of Momentum you spend to augment a roll with a Virtue receives an additional die per point of Virtue track that doesn't come out of the pool — more bang for your buck.

Virtues exist on a track, with one Virtue on one end against the other.



Virtues are relatively philosophical, but an action deliberately taken in support or service to them strengthens

VIRTUOUS

You are suffused with the philosophy of your pantheon's ethos. While this grants you additional power and puissance, it also limits your ability to act freely.

Effect: Every point of Momentum you spend to augment a roll with a Virtue receives an additional die that doesn't come out of the pool. However, you must *continue* to act and fulfill the pantheon Virtue, and you cannot act *against* it -- an Aesir Scion must attack a foe (even one far greater than they) with Audacity when they're confronted, while a Shen suffused with Yang must indulge his passions at every opportunity.

Momentum: Every time your Virtue rage causes trouble or stops the Scion from acting rationally, add another point of Momentum into the pool.

Resolution: Reinforcing the opposing Pantheon Virtue resolves the Condition. Note that this can only occur with an action that reinforces the opposing Virtue without contradicting the Condition's effect. The Aesir must indulge in melancholy and Fatalism without missing an opportunity to be Audacious, while the Shen must calm his chi with contemplative, cold yin.

the hold on the character's soul. Reinforcing a Virtue slides your character closer to that Virtue every time you reinforce it, while acting against it (or towards the other Virtue) forces you away. If you're not at the far ends of the track, acting against the Virtue doesn't carry any particular penalties than loss of self-respect. When you're at the end of the Virtue, however, you gain the Virtuous Condition.

VIRTUES

Aesir: Audacity vs. Fatalism

Every Aesir is doomed to die, and even the newest members of the pantheon wed themselves to the dire Fate the elder gods will meet. Yet is not the greatest heroism to be found in the darkest of moments? The Aesir vacillate between railing against their fate and succumbing to the gloom of it.

Deva: Duty vs. Conscience

Devá Scions must uphold the Duty expected of them by their society, religion, and pantheon, but cannot ignore when it conflicts with their individual Conscience. Like Arjuna, who balked at fighting his own kinsman, they must choose between doing their duty even when they know it is wrong or doing the right thing even when it's a terrible idea.

Kami: Sincerity vs. Right Action

All things have a place under Heaven, and all things must be done with a full and sincere heart. However, sometimes the right thing is at odds with one's wishes, and sincerity is difficult to achieve.

Manitou: Pride vs. Dream

All people and things have places and times, and there is no greater calling than to find and fulfill one's place, time, and purpose. Scions of the Manitou are eminently proud and punctual, placing a great value on being at the right place in the right time, but this leads them to being easily manipulated.

Netjer: Balance vs. Justice

The Netjer are concerned with the proper and orderly flow of the world, yet all things demand an accounting. Justice pursued too vigorously leads to vengeance and the lack of Balance, but over weighting Balance permits injustice to flourish.

Orisha: Tradition vs. Innovation

The sacred practices of the Òrìshà are steeped in history and Tradition, but their devotion has perpetually changed through Innovation as historical progress and colonial oppression affected their worshippers. Which is more important: the old, or the new? Are they a harmonious dialectic, or are there places where the two come into conflict?

Shen: Yīn vs. Yáng

The Shén must balance the yielding passivity of Yīn with the activeness of Yáng, knowing when to refrain from acting and when to act with total force.

Teotl: Hunger vs. Sacrifice

The Teōtl hunger. During the two hundred years when the Mēxihcah ruled Tenochtitlan, they consumed massive quantities of flesh, blood, and fire, their empire's warfare practices based around capturing sacrificial captives to kill and offer to the ravenous teōtl. But for one to eat, another must be eaten; for one to have, another must give something up.

Theoi: Egotism vs. Kinship

The Theoi struggle between their individualistic arrogance and the demands of storge, familial love. The former means they occasionally tend towards truly monstrous overreactions. The latter means they're quite good at ignoring the outrageous outbursts from the former Virtue.

Tuatha: Honor vs. Prowess

Honor is your internal self-worth, and Prowess is your ability to back it up. The Irish Gods are consumed by pride and face: how others think of them. This spurs them to great deeds and greater prowess, but often causes a great deal of trouble.

CALLINGS

Human beings are vast, and contain multitudes. Not so the Gods, who by their very nature are archetypal beings: warriors and heralds, tricksters and psychopomps.

DESIGNER'S NOTE: VIRTUES

Virtues exist because Gods in myth are creatures of passion and emotion, and this often leads them astray. They also exist because many pantheons and mythologies feature dual themes playing through them.

Virtues are meant to be a bit wobbly; many actions can be interpreted as "audacious" or "upholding honor". Something like "hunger" can be a bit hard to play if always done literally; the Teotl aren't craving bloody hamburgers constantly (well...maybe Huitzilopochtli's kid). The Storyguide has the final veto on what constitutes a Virtuous action, but they're encouraged to interpret these things literally.

From a certain point of view, a god is nothing but her Purviews reflected through these archetypes, refined by Legend. That may or may not be true, but the gods have difficulty thinking or acting out of "character." Odin is a Leader, a Sage, and a Trickster, but without some fundamental shift in his nature he will never grow to encompass the role of Lover or Hunter. His role is defined, his dominions assigned by myth and the weight of his own Legend. He is a god of sacrifice because he hung from an ash tree. He is a Sage because this ordeal gave him wisdom.

Scions feel the pull of these mythic roles, the ichor in their veins pulled by Legend as the tides are pulled by the moon, but where the gods are defined by the myth cycles that give them form, Scions (at least, Hero- and Demigod-level Scions) are still very much human, capable of defying their own archetypes or even changing them altogether. A child of Ares might begin her heroic career as a brute warrior in the image of her father, but as she quests and builds her Legend she might grow into a clever tactician, a mistress of the chaos of the battlefield, or even a pacifist who only draws her weapon when there's no other choice. The summation of a divine being's Legend, God, Demigod, or Hero, is her collection of Titles. Each title reflects a Deed in her past, dedication to a task, an accomplishment, or authority over a subject. When a Hero acts in accordance with a Title, his ichor responds and grants his efforts Legendary weight. If, in time, he becomes a Demigod or God, his Titles will become the basis of his divine Mantle.

SYSTEMS

Divine characters — Scions and Gods — define their mythic archetypes by dot ratings in three of the 11 possible **Callings**. Every Divine character also has a **Legendary Title**, which defines the circumstances in which he may invoke a Feat of Scale.

CALLINGS

- Callings are rated between one and five dots. A Legend 1 character has five dots of Callings, with each Calling having at least one dot.
- One of your Callings must be one your divine parent's three, but the other two are free choice.
- Each Calling is associated with three Fatebinding roles (p. 197.)
- At Legend 2, 4, 6, 8, and 10 you gain an extra dot of Calling, which can be applied to any of your three chosen Callings as long as it does not take that Calling over five dots.
- When buying Legend 3, 5, 7, and 9, you may reassign your character's Calling dots, as long as the new ratings leave at least one dot in each Calling per keyword you've incorporated into your Legendary Title (see below). Even if you haven't used any keywords from a particular Calling, you must retain at least one dot in each of her chosen three Callings.
- You may exchange a Calling for one of the seven unused Callings by performing a pair of Deeds — a **Failure Deed** to shed the existing Calling by denying its nature, and an **Adoption Deed** to mark the character's ichor with the new Calling. Once both Deeds have been completed, the dots in the old Calling move to the new one. A character cannot adopt a Calling she already has dots in. Both Deeds must take place within the same story.
- Each Calling informs the character's choice of **Knacks**. Your character can have *one* Knack active *per dot* of each Calling, and they must correspond to the specific Calling dots. They can buy additional Knacks, but may only have as many Knacks active as they have dots of Callings.

LEGENDARY TITLE

An old Parisian man, his legs and sanity lost in some far-off war, smiles at passerby for the first time in decades. Ask him why, and he says that he finally has a lord — *"Le Roi des Thunes,"* the King of Beggars.

The neighborhood has been trending downward for decades and was a target for gentrification not six months ago. Now music booms from the rooftops, commingling with the scent of food and commerce. Hope has returned, and when you ask why, it's because the Harlem River has a new Òrìshà.

Legendary Titles are an accumulation of a character's keywords from their Deeds, and also act as special Paths. They may be invoked as such — including activating Twists of Fate in an obviously supernatural manner.

Each Calling has a list of associated keywords used to build a character's Legendary Title. These lists are not exclusive; if the group is in agreement, a player may choose a keyword not on the list that nonetheless seems appropriate for a Calling. Choose one keyword per dot in each Calling: These provide your particular Legendary focus within the Calling.

For every Legend dot you have or gain, you may invent a new Title that incorporates one of her keywords. The collection of a character's Titles forms her Legendary Title. The first Title (for Legend 1) is often related to a character's Visitation.

A character who reassigns a Calling used in her Titles through Failure and Adoption Deeds does not lose those Titles, though can't use the former Calling's keywords to build any further Titles. Loki is legendarily the parent of several monsters, and retains those dubious accomplishments among their Titles, but they haven't been a Creator for centuries, exchanging the Calling for Lover after consuming their rival god Logi and taking his wife.

Feat of Scale: When a character attempts an action covered by one of her Titles, her player may spend one Legend to increase Scale by (Legend/2, round up) for that action as a Feat of Scale.

Invoking the Calling: When you attempt an action covered by one of her keywords but *not* one of her Titles, you may spend one Legend and two Momentum to increase Scale by one for that action.

EXAMPLE OF CALLINGS AND LEGENDARY TITLES

Chris is creating Badru, Scion of Anubis. Anubis has the Guardian, Judge, and Liminal Callings, so one of Badru's three must come from those. Chris chooses the Guardian, Judge, and Leader Callings for his character, assigning two dots in both Leader and Guardian and the fifth dot in Judge.

Looking through the keyword lists for the three Callings, Chris chooses "Master" and "Inspiration" from Leader, "Protector" and "Shepherd" from Guardian, and "Merciful" from Judge.

In Badru's backstory, he worked as a veterinarian at an animal shelter, destroying unwanted dogs but rescuing and taking in as many as he could until Anubis, attracted by the choosing of worthy animals, visited him in jackal form. Chris wants Badru's Title to reflect the pack of dogs he's followed by, and decides on "Hounds" for his first subject. Using this, he builds "Master of Hounds" as Badru's Title.

During a story, Badru and his band are confronted by Cerberus while exploring the Theoi Underworld. Badru attempts to pacify the beast, and the Storyguide calls for a Composure + Survival roll. Chris invokes Master of Hounds by spending a Legend, and the action's Scale is increased in addition to the normal benefits of invoking a Path.

Later, Badru increases in Legend. He gains a new subject, and a new Title. The Legend increase came at the end of a story in which Badru decided which of two prisoners he'd rescue and which he'd have to leave behind. He chooses "Merciful to His Chosen" as his new Title.

LIST OF CALLINGS

Scions feel the influence of hundreds of legendary archetypes, but in the Storypath system these roles are grouped into the 11 Callings presented here.

CREATOR

Almost every religion in the World has an explanation for where the universe, or its contents, came from. While the initial act of genesis is usually (though not always) ascribed to a Titan or Primordial, most pantheons include at least one member responsible for bringing something new into the World and giving shape to its myriad forms. Some Creators shape raw Primordial chaos and bring the World itself into being, some bring life or fertility as gardeners, child-bearers, and lifegivers, and still more consume or use raw materials as divine artists, craftsmen, builders, and artisans. Finally, some Creators don't make anything physical at all, but instead inspire or guide others as inventors or architects. Many Creators are destructive in equal measure, taking a balance for their gifts from the World, but by no means all.

Skills: Academics, Culture, Technology

Example Keywords: Fertile, gifting, generous, inspired, inventor, deft, hammer, maker, shaper, sculptor, painter, demiurge, builder, blacksmith, crafter, mother, father, farmer, gardener, growth, designer, architect

Fatebinding Roles: Apprentice, Jinx, Rival

Example Gods: Het-Heru, Khnum, Wesir, Ptah, Re, Parvati, Sarasvati, Obàtálá, Òrúnmìlà, Ògún, Yemoja-Oboto, Fuxi, Huangdi, Nǚwā, Inari, Okuninushi, Benzaiten, Dian Cécht, Goibniu, Lugh, Aphrodite, Demeter, Hephaestus, Kitchi-Manitou, Tawiscara, Sif, Njörðr

Failure Deeds: Design something with an intentional flaw that sees it fail in its purpose at a crucial time, allow your own creation to be used against you, accept an impossible commission knowing you'll fail.

Adoption Deeds: Pass on a creation to another in support of their Legend, reshape Terra Incognita, construct a Legendary item, invent a new technology that becomes part of your Legend.

GUARDIAN

Many Gods and lesser Scions become associated with a territory, concept, class of people, or a place, acting as its defender, patron, or steward. Where the Legendary being has authority over her protectorate as a participant, a Scion who is king of a small nation, for example, the Leader Calling is more appropriate, but those who stand back from their charges and promote them, protect them, and act on their behalf are Guardians. A Guardian's protectorate can be as specific or general as her Legend dictates; a patron goddess of a city is a Guardian, but so is a Scion known as the defender of children, or a Demigod who fights for anyone lost in darkness.

Skills: Athletics, Close Combat, Empathy

Example Keywords: Defender, steward, shield, protector, patron, den mother, rescue, warden, shepherd, guide, shelter, aegis

Fatebinding Roles: Canary, Martyr, Nemesis

Example Gods: Anpu, Bast, Heru, Aset, Set, Sobek, Djehuty, Agni, Durga, Ganesha, Indra, Varuna, Vishnu, Morèmi, Oya Iyansan, Yemoja-Oboto, Erlang, Guan Yu, Guanshiyin Pusa, Nezha, Nǚwā, Takemikazuchi, Bishamon, Kisshōten, Hotei, Aengus the Mac Óg, The Dagda, Ériu, Manannán, Ogma, Aphrodite, Ares, Artemis, Athena, Demeter, Hestia, Poseidon, Geezhigo-Quae, Winonah, Thor, Frigg, Hel, Baldr, Heimdall, Freyja

Failure Deeds: Sacrifice your charge for your own ends, see the destruction of a place you hold dear, have to choose between two harms

Adoption Deeds: Stay behind and fight when you could run, eliminate a threat to a holy place, fight on behalf of someone not because of them, but what they represent.

HEALER

Any animal can destroy, injure, or kill, but to take the broken and repair it is divine. Healers are those divine beings whose Legends feature restoration in any form — godly doctors, true, but also Scions who purify the corrupted, repair broken treasures, and *put things right*. Many Healers demand conditions or repayment for their miracles (an altruistic attitude is also common, but not necessary), but this isn't the Calling for charlatans or quacks. A Healer's Legend comes from success, turning back the clock to make something as it once was.

Skills: Empathy, Medicine, Science

Example Keywords: Restoration, renewal, health, balm, succor, doctor, nurse, vet, repair, purifier, rebuild, cure, treat

Fatebinding Roles: Boon Companion, Canary, Rival

Example Gods: Het-Heru, Aset, Khnum, Sarasvati, Surya, Ìbejì, Òrúnmìlà, Òsanyìn, Òshun, Sònpònná, Chang'e, Guanshiyin Pusa, Nǚwā, Yandi Shennongshi, Tsukiyomo, Susano-Ō, Inari, Fukurokuju, Kisshōten, Brigid, Dian Cécht, Apollo, Artemis, Hestia, Geezhigo-Quae, Muzzu-Kumik-Quae, Winonah

Failure Deeds: Withhold treatment, ruin something beyond repair, leave the person you're healing diminished

Adoption Deeds: Restore the lost, cure an epidemic, purify a titanspawn

HUNTER

Truly the world's oldest profession, mortal hunters gave the very first Gods their Legends, calling on now-forgotten deities for assistance and telling tales of Scions who brought down impossible prey. Guardians fight to protect, Judges to punish, and Warriors simply to fight, but the violence of the hunt's end is only part of the divine Hunter's Legend. This Calling is held by Scions and Gods who pursue prey or a quarry, whether traditional (a God Legendary for skill with a bow, who brought down an infamous titanspawn) or more metaphorical (a Scion private detective that always finds her missing person).

Skills: Athletics, Firearms, Survival

Example Keywords: Ranger, tracker, tireless, pursuit, unshakable, surveying, all-seeing, shadowing, relentless

Fatebinding Roles: Boon Companion, Paramour, Rival

Example Gods: Bast, Sobek, Durga, Shiva, Ògún, Òrìshà-Oko, Òsanyìn, Oshóssí, Sònpònná, Erlang, Fuxi, Ebisu, Artemis, Poseidon, Muzzu-Kumik-Quae, Maudjee-Kawiss, Cheeby-aub-oozoo, Nana'b'oozoo, Heimdall, Skaði, Njörðr

Failure Deeds: Take pity and allow a target to escape, realize that your quarry has as much right to live as you

Adoption Deeds: Stalk a great beast, follow a quarry into another world, turn someone's own assets against them.

JUDGE

Someone has to enforce the rules. Cultures all over the World have stories of divine Judges, Gods, Demigods, and Scions who weigh mortal lives. Sometimes, the Judge herself creates the laws she imposes. Others are dispassionate enforcers of cosmic (or pantheon) law, or serve another character of the Leader Calling. Either way, a Judge is Legendary for finding transgressors against her rules and what she does to them, which doesn't have to be horrific punishment. Some religions praise their Judges for their mercy, or for dutiful neutrality.

Skills: Academics, Culture, Persuasion

Keywords: Mercy, punishment, weigher, assessor, adjudicator, advocate, test, ordeal, legal, law, commandment, oath, fair, even-handed

Fatebinding Roles: Balm, Worshipper, Traitor

Example Gods: Anpu, Wesir, Re, Lakshmi, Varuna, Yamaraja, Ìbejì, Obàtálá, Òrìshà-Oko, Òrúnmìlà, Oshóssí, Confucius, Amaterasu, Tsukiyomo, Dian Cécht, Ériu, Apollo, Demeter, Hades, Hera, Hestia, Persephone, Kitchi-Manitou, Cheeby-aub-oozoo, Hel, Tyr, Skaði

Failure Deeds: Pronounce a deliberate injustice, break the rules you uphold, abandon your beliefs

Adoption Deeds: See to the heart of corruption, swear to a code of behavior, define commandments for others to follow.

LEADER

All Gods command respect, with authority over their purviews, but some divine beings are Legendary for leadership itself. Divine kings, queens, CEOs, and motivational speakers, Leaders are those Gods, Demigods, and Heroes who make decisions for others, lay down laws, inspire their followers, and lead from the front. Although some Leaders are Judges, the two Callings are distinct; Leaders show their subordinates what's expected, while Judges discern if they've followed it.

Skills: Culture, Empathy, Leadership

Example Keywords: Ruler, wise, inspiration, orisha, commander, lawgiver, code, proclaim, director, rank, officer, authority

Fatebinding Roles: Boon Companion, Traitor, Worshipper

Example Gods: Heru, Wesir, Re, Set, Indra, Karttikeya, Lakshmi, Surya, Varuna, Yamaraja, Obàtálá, Òrúnmìlà, Shàngó, Yemoja-Oboto, Guan Yu, Huangdi, Confucius, Laozi, Yandi Shennongshi, Amaterasu, Hachiman, Takemikazuchi, Okuninushi, The Dagda, Donn, Ériu, Lugh, Nuada, Hades, Hera, Persephone, Poseidon, Zeus, Maudjee-Kawiss, Odin, Thor, Tyr, Freyr, Njörðr

Failure Deeds: Deliberately lead them to catastrophe, exalt someone else above you, deny your authority

Adoption Deeds: Seize the reins of power, lead them to triumph, be recognized for your authority

LOVER

Gods marry, Gods fuck, Gods cheat on one another. The pantheons are extended families of parents and Scions, with complex relationships between members. When those relationships become central to a God or Hero's Legend, they're a Lover. The Calling encompasses Legendary seductresses and divine cads, but also those famous for commitment to a single partner, those who fall into serially deep love affairs, or even the asexual but romantic.

Skills: Culture, Empathy, Persuasion

Example Keywords: Seductive, devoted, romantic, beauty, dedication, marriage, husband, wife, sex

Fatebinding Roles: Balm, Paramour (or Unrequited), Rival

Example Gods: Het-Heru, Sobek, Lakshmi, Parvati, Shiva, Vishnu, Èshù Elègbará, Morèmi, Òshun, Shàngó, Chang'e, Ama-no-Uzume, Sarutahiko, Benzaiten, Fukurokuju, Kisshoten, Aengus the Mac Óg, The Morrígan, Aphrodite, Ares, Dionysus, Hera, Zeus, Winonah, Pukawiss, Frigg, Sif, Loki, Freyr

Failure Deeds: Do something that causes others to reject you, take a lover into a situation that could get them killed, cut someone out of your life because you'll never love them like they love you.

Adoption Deeds: Fall in love, support young lovers, start an affair that dooms a nation

LIMINAL

In any large gathering of divinities, at least one will stand apart. Most pantheons have a member or two defined by being on the outside of the social order, either metaphorically (a Hero in a legalist pantheon who represents lawbreakers, for example) or literally (the God of a particular Underworld or Overworld separate from the pantheon's usual meeting grounds). Liminals are Legendary for crossing boundaries and thresholds, venturing out of the pack, rejecting society (rather than subverting it as a Trickster) and going on journeys.

Skills: Athletics, Pilot, Subterfuge

Example Keywords: Traveler, Underworld, Overworld, boundary, threshold, portal, sailor, driver, guide, messenger, alone, transition, change, difference, separation, outsider

Fatebinding Roles: Canary, Jinx, Unrequited Paramour

Example Gods: Anpu, Ptah, Djehuty, Agni, Ganesha, Yamaraja, Èshù Elègbará, Oshóssí, Oya Iyansan, Sònpònná, Sun Wukong, Tsukiyomo, Inari, Ama-no-Uzume, Sarutahiko, Ebisu, Okuninushi, Hotei, Donn, Manannán, The Morrígan, Dionysus, Hades, Hermes, Persephone, Cheeby-aub-oozoo, Hel, Baldr, Loki

Failure Deeds: Arrive too late to save them, refuse the call of adventure, cling to the safety of home

Adoption Deeds: Survive a harrowing journey, go into exile, claim another world.

SAGE

The pen — or the thought — is mightier than the sword. To teach, or to learn, is divine. Sages are Legendary for their use of thought; teachers and students, custodians of knowledge and wise fools, riddle-solvers and namers. Being Legendary for knowing many secrets does not necessarily imply that a Scion must pass those secrets on, only that the Scion's Deeds include using that knowledge effectively.

Skills: Academics, Occult, Subterfuge

Example Keywords: Pupil, teacher, mentor, wise, riddle, puzzle, conundrum, clever, expert, academic, learned

Fatebinding Roles: Apprentice, Jinx, Traitor

Example Gods: Khnum, Ptah, Djehuty, Agni, Ganesha, Karttikeya, Sarasvati, Shiva, Surya, Òrìshà-Oko, Òrúnmìlà, Òsanyìn, Òshun, Fuxi, Guanshiyin Pusa, Huangdi, Confucius, Laozi, Yandi Shennongshi, Amaterasu, Hachiman, Bishamon, Benzaiten, Fukurokuju, Hotei, Brigid, The Dagda, Goibniu, The Morrígan, Nuada, Ogma, Apollo, Athena, Dionysus, Hephaestus, Hermes, Kitchi-Manitou, Geezhigo-Quae, Muzzu-Kumik-Quae, Pukawiss, Odin, Frigg

Failure Deeds: Get someone killed because you think you're cleverer than you are, fail to solve a riddle, keep a secret at the expense of another.

Adoption Deeds: Save the day with your intelligence, encounter something completely new, pass on knowledge vital to another's Legend.

TRICKSTER

Some Scions never take the expected route, but see and take the unexpected path out of a problem. Tricksters succeed by breaking conventions, solving situations with cleverness, flouting society's rules, and often tricking others into going along with it. They survive by their wits, empowered by transgression. Some pantheons (especially those led by Leaders or Judges) dislike Tricksters for flouting heavenly law; others take a more pragmatic view and use them as problem-solvers and tests of their ideals, the exceptions that prove the rules. A Trickster's schemes can sometimes cause more problems than they solve — more than one Trickster God is Legendary for leaping from frying pan to fire and dragging others in their wake.

Skills: Culture, Persuasion, Subterfuge

Example Keywords: Transgression, subversive, antinomian, devil's advocate, cunning, liar, disguise, rascal, wit, chaos, criminal

Fatebinding Roles: Boon Companion, Nemesis, Traitor

Example Gods: Aset, Set, Parvati, Vishnu, Èshù Elègbará, Ìbejì, Morèmi, Chang'e, Laozi, Nezha, Sun Wukong, Susano-Ō, Ama-no-Uzume, Ebisu, Aengus the

Mac Óg, Brigid, Donn, Manannán, Hephaestus, Hermes, Zeus, Pukawiss, Nana'b'oozoo, Tawiscara, Odin, Loki

Failure Deeds: Get caught in your own trick, cause collateral damage, be outsmarted

Adoption Deeds: Trick the bad guy into topping themselves, escape an inescapable situation, make another Scion act against their own interests but add to their Legend in doing so.

WARRIOR

The World teems with the enemies of the pantheons, enemies for whom force is the only answer, and Warriors are Legendary for applying that force. The Calling encompasses fighters, combatants, and soldiers of all sorts, as long as they fight themselves. Legendary strategists are more often Sages (and sometimes Leaders), while Warriors are the Scions who get their hands bloody. Whether by individual martial prowess or leading thousands into battle, killing their opponents outright or accepting surrender, Warriors perform Deeds of violence.

Skills: Athletics, Close Combat, Firearms

Example Keywords: Fighter, martial artist, bloody, weapon, soldier, killer, murderer, insurgent, terrorist, sniper, undefeated, sharp, threatening

Fatebinding Roles: Balm, Nemesis, Rival

Example Gods: Bast, Heru, Durga, Indra, Karttikeya, Òrúnmìlà, Ògún, Oya Iyansan, Shàngó, Erlang, Guan Yu, Nezha, Sun Wukong, Susano-Ō, Hachiman, Takemikazuchi, Bishamon, Goibniu, Lugh, Nuada, Ogma, Ares, Athena, Maudjee-Kawiss, Tawiscara, Thor, Baldr, Heimdall, Tyr, Freyr, Skaði

Failure Deeds: Lose a physical contest or test of skill when death is on the line, lay down your arms and find another way, succumb to cowardice.

Adoption Deeds: Stand between the enemy and your friends, overcome incredible odds, defeat a foe greater than yourself.

FATE

A Scion's actions ripple throughout the world, creating subtle eddies and powerful riptides that ensnare mortals caught in the Scion's pull. This is Fate at work: the inexorable weaving of a nascent divinity's mythology. The Gods call the process by which mortals become drawn into the stories of the divine **Fatebinding**, and many of their greatest triumphs and tragedies can be traced back to it.

Fatebindings latch to a Hero and Demigod directly, but tend to attach themselves to a God's Mantle, or their divine oversoul. They act to define a God and how the God's relationships will play out in the future, which is another reason many Gods are careful to stay in the Overworld (which is devoid of the trappings of Fate, and where they feel the tug of Fatebindings but rarely) and act through intermediaries (like Scions).

The Gods refrain from direct action because doing so shakes up the ordered destiny of the cosmos, and because it alters the way her divine power might manifest itself in the future (not to mention her very conception of self). By embracing this radical change, Gods who interact with their peoples during a Failure Deed can find themselves and their mantle radically changed — as happened to the Òrìshà during the Middle Passage.

FATEBINDING

When a Scion draws on the deepest reserves of her Legend, nearby mortals are sometimes caught up in the Scion's story. Much the way an improvisational storyteller spontaneously weaves a new character into her tale, Fate decrees that the mortal will have a role to play in the Scion's epic. The mortal in question might become a bit player for a brief time or a defining pillar of the Scion's life as Fate chooses an archetypal role and guides the Fatebound mortal into it.

It's *very* important to note that Fate is *not* "mind control." It doesn't override a mortal's will, force them to do things they don't want to do, or otherwise turn them into puppets. What it does is find people who were already predisposed to fill a particular role in the Scion's Legend and makes it very, very easy for them to go along with it. Someone Fatebound to a Scion as a Paramour isn't suddenly struck with a compulsion to love her; rather, Fate finds someone who was either already romantically interested in (or at least attracted to) the Scion, or whose "type" the Scion fits, and manipulates events such that they encounter each other in settings conducive to furthering a romantic relationship. Either party can turn away from the path if they have a compelling reason to. Think of it like going for a walk in the woods. If you're not consciously trying to get somewhere in particular, you'll probably pick the path of least resistance: downhill, out of the hot sun, etc. Fate just makes sure that the path of least resistance is the one that leads to the Fatebound role.

Example: *Two Scions, Boyd Calhoun (Scion of Sobek) and Henrietta Belle (Scion of Hermes) have both triggered a Fatebinding on a French battlefield in WWII (it's a long story). Both are fighting their way through the Axis lines to recover an artifact buried beneath an old church, but Boyd's Fatebinding tangles him up with a Paramour, while Henrietta's brings her a Boon Companion.*

Taking shelter in a foxhole, Boyd finds himself face to face with Corporal Fumero, a medic he'd previously had a spark with. As they make their way across the battlefield together, Fate conspires to throw challenges at them that allow each man to display character traits the other finds attractive. It might even ensure that the German shelling stops just in time for them to see a beautiful moon, full and bright, hanging above the trees — Fate is not above low cliché. Even any injuries they might suffer on their quest are conducive to romance: the sort of thing that requires the removal of shirts and tender bandaging, and certainly nothing that would impede an impassioned kiss at a dramatic moment.

Henrietta, meanwhile, marches through hell with a local freedom fighter. Sucking mud and howling chaos force them to rely on each other, and each is presented with opportunities to abandon the other and press on — which, naturally, neither of them takes because they're not that sort of people. By the time they reach the church, they trust each other more than some people who have known each other their whole lives.

Once an SGC has been Fatebound to a character, he enters a nebulous sort of realm where he's not quite a full, independent character any more. He can take some actions as appropriate when he's present in a scene, and the Storyguide might give him relevant dice pools, but his main interaction with the game mechanics is through Fatebinding Conditions.

FATEBINDING BASICS

- **Legend Limit:** A player character may not have more Fatebinding Conditions than she has dots in Legend.
- **Storyguide Characters Only:** Only Storyguide characters may be Fatebound, and only to characters of *higher* Tier.
- **Acquiring Fatebindings:** Once per session, youf may acquire a new Fatebinding at Strength +1 (from a minimum of 0) to regain 1 point of Legend. You and the Storyguide must work together to decide on an appropriate Fatebinding Condition and Storyguide character to be Fatebound; this can be a new character if no extant characters seem to fit.

FATEBINDING OTHER PCS

Don't. Fatebinding is a tool to tie Storyguide characters into a Scion's story, not a tool to force potentially unwanted relationships on other players. While Storyguide characters exist to serve the story, PCs are solely under the control of their own players. Even though Fatebinding isn't mind control and any character can resist Fate's path, it's still potentially coercive to dictate another PC's relationship to your own.

Even if the other PCs are mortal, by virtue of being the protagonists they're immune to being Fatebound to other PCs. Effectively, they're already Fatebound to themselves.

HIGHER-LEVEL FATEBINDINGS

The relationships created by Fatebinding as described here are specific to Hero-level Scions. As a Scion's Legend grows, Fate takes a more direct hand in shaping her.

At Demigod level, Scions still find themselves bound to relationships with mortals, though those relationships are just as often with whole groups or societies as with individuals. Demigods can also become Fatebound to mythical beings, but the biggest difference is that Fate actively punishes Demigods who try to step outside their Fatebindings. This level is where you start to see things like Cú Chulainn being brought low by breaking his geasa or the Æsir going willingly to their deaths at Ragnarok.

Gods are far more dramatically affected by Fatebindings. Not only can they become bound to entire peoples and cultures, Gods find themselves (or at least, their Godly Mantles) changed by their Fatebindings just as much as those they're bonded with. You can see this in the character of Ares/Mars, who is variously a vainglorious coward, a rampaging brute, or the model of martial virtue, depending on what Mantle he wears and what societies (e.g. Athens vs. Sparta, Asia Minor vs. Rome) those Mantles are Fatebound to. It's for this reason that Gods are reluctant to engage directly with the World, preferring to act through intermediaries like their Scions.

Full rules for these higher-level forms of Fatebinding are presented in **Scion: Demigod** and **Scion: God**, respectively.

MULTIPLE FATEBINDINGS

Most of the time, an SGC can only be Fatebound to one character, and only as one archetype at a time. If you've got a large group or your players are triggering Fatebindings often, though, that can lead to supporting cast bloat. In that case, it's okay for one character's Paramour to be another's Rival, for example. Be mindful of creating schisms within the group, and avoid it unless party infighting is your desired goal.

Also, any Resolution of a Fatebinding Condition that removes the character from play must have the consent of all players whose characters are Fatebound to that character.

Fatebindings are represented as a pair of Persistent Conditions. The Storyguide character receives the Fatebound Condition, while the Scion she's Fatebound to receives a Condition representing the **role** of the Fatebound character.

Role Conditions look a little different than other Conditions. Instead of simply having a system and a means of resolution, they have three components:

- **Invoke:** Once per session, a player may **invoke** one of her character's role Conditions for a minor benefit. If the Fatebound character isn't present in the scene already, she's assumed to fortuitously show up in the nick of time. The Storyguide may disallow invoking a Fatebinding if the character's presence is totally implausible (e.g. the Scion is in solitary confinement in the dungeons of Jinnistan, or it's already been established that the SGC is present in another scene happening on the other side of town at the same time), but should err on the side of allowing it. Invoking a Fatebinding is always a reflexive action.
- **Compel:** Once per session, a player *or* the Storyguide may **compel** one of the character's role Conditions to introduce an obstacle or difficulty related to the Fatebinding. The Scion gains a point of Legend for his trouble.
- **Resolve:** A player may **resolve** one of her character's role Conditions for a more dramatic benefit than invoking. Resolving a Condition has permanent, long-lasting effects on the Fatebound: either removing them from play or changing the nature of the Fatebinding.

Note: "Once per session" here means you can invoke *and* compel *each* of your character's role Conditions once per session.

CONDITIONS

FATEBOUND

The character is Fatebound to a Scion, and destiny has begun to subtly encourage him to fall into a particular role in the Scion's myth. This Condition is always linked to a role Condition on the Scion; ending either Condition ends the other.

Fatebound has a **Strength** value, which determines both the raw power of the Fatebinding and its duration, as follows:

STRENGTH	DURATION
1	Current Episode
2	Current Arc
3	Current Season
4	Series
5	Eternity*

* Strength 5 Fatebindings last even beyond the death or apotheosis of either party; if the Scion's player creates a new character who is the reincarnation of her previous character, the Fatebinding transfers over. Likewise, if the Fatebound mortal dies, his ghost wakes in the Underworld of the Scion's pantheon and remains Fatebound — though at the Storyguide's discretion, the SGC's role might change (usually, though not always, to Jinx, Nemesis, or Rival). The Fatebound character may never be removed from play by the resolution of a role Condition.

System: Each time the linked role Condition is invoked, the Storyguide rolls the Fatebinding's Strength + the Scion's Legend as part of a complex action. When the number of milestones reached exceeds the current Strength of

the Fatebinding, increase its Strength by 1 and reset the accumulated milestones to 0.

Resolution: The Fatebound Condition ends (without resolving) when its duration expires. If its Strength is less than 5, it also ends (without resolving) when the Fatebound character dies or is otherwise permanently removed from play.

IMPERILED

Some external force has put the Fatebound character (or the relationship itself) at risk. This Condition is normally applied by compelling a role Condition, but the Storyguide may apply it in other instances to generate plot or bring a neglected character back into the story.

System: The Storyguide defines a **Peril** that the Scion must remove. This can be literal, physical peril ("the asuras captured Steve!"), a favor the Fatebound character needs ("I'm in deep with Sigrun Leg-breaker, can you spot me?") or a problem in the relationship itself ("that's the fourth time you've blown off date night!"). Whatever the Peril, addressing it shouldn't take more than a scene (an action-adventure scene against the asuras, intrigue with the loan shark, or a complex action to arrange a perfect date), but it *should* require a hard choice or risk on the character's part.

Resolve: The character successfully addresses the Peril. The Storyguide rolls the Fatebinding's Strength + the Scion's Legend, as if the Fatebinding's role Condition had been invoked.

If, by the end of the current Arc, the character has made no attempt to address the Peril, this Condition ends without resolving and the Peril comes to pass. This could mean any of the following, depending on the Peril:

- The Fatebound character dies.
- The Fatebinding's Strength drops by 1.
- The Fatebinding ends immediately.
- The Fatebound character's role changes, probably to Jinx, Nemesis, Rival, or Traitor.

If the character tried but failed to address the Peril by the end of the story, this Condition persists (and the Storyguide should probably make the Peril worse). It's only if the character makes no serious attempt at all that disaster falls.

APPRENTICE

Fate encourages the Fatebound mortal to learn from the Scion, whether that's a particular skill, a philosophy, or just general life lessons.

Invoke: Apprentices learn by blundering into mistakes their teachers know to avoid. Invoke this Condition after a failed action; the Storyguide must offer a Complication rather than Consolation. If the Complication's rating is equal to or less than the Fatebinding's Strength, it affects the Apprentice instead.

Compel: Apprentices choose the worst times to try to "help." The Scion gains 1 Legend, and her next action is a mixed action: whatever she was originally trying to do, plus stopping her Apprentice from doing something disastrous. The Storyguide decides on a dice pool for the second action and consequences for failure, but it has a Difficulty equal to half the Fatebinding's Strength.

Resolve: Wisdom comes from the mouths of babes. Thanks to the Apprentice's timely efforts, one complex action automatically achieves a number of Milestones equal to half the Fatebinding's Strength. The Scion's player then chooses one of the following options:

- The Apprentice dies, or is otherwise taken out of play permanently. The Scion fulfills a Deed, and suffers a Failure Deed for an appropriate Calling.
- The Apprentice decides he's learned all he can from the Scion; convert this Fatebinding to a Rival of the same Strength.

BALM

The Fatebound is in the right position to calm the Scion, to balance her extremes and to keep her centered.

Invoke: The Balm pulls the Scion back from the brink of her most extreme behavior: Her Virtue rating slides toward the center of the track. This counts as resolving the Virtuous Condition (p. 189). This Condition can't be invoked if the Scion is already in the center of the Virtue track.

Compel: The Balm's soothing presence makes the Scion question her Virtues. Compel this Condition when the Scion reinforces a Virtue: She gains 1 Legend, but earns no Momentum and only slides her Virtue if it would move her toward the center of the track.

Resolve: A dramatic display of Virtue either changes the relationship forever or ends it catastrophically. The Scion immediately sets her Virtue to either the far left or the far right of the track and gains Momentum as though she'd just fulfilled that Virtue. The Scion's player then chooses one of the following options:

- The Balm dies, or is otherwise taken out of play permanently. The Scion fulfills a Deed, and suffers a Failure Deed for an appropriate Calling.
- The Balm's relationship with the Scion deepens; convert this Fatebinding to a Boon Companion, Paramour, or Unrequited Paramour of the same Strength.

BOON COMPANION

The Fatebound and the Scion share a deep bond of friendship, camaraderie, and trust.

Invoke: The Boon Companion offers a timely bit of assistance. The Scion's next action benefits from teamwork as though the Boon Companion had rolled a number of successes equal to the Fatebinding's Strength.

Compel: Boon Companions expect their friends to return the favor. The Scion gains 1 point of Legend, while

the Boon Companion gains the Imperiled Condition. The Condition represents a favor the Boon Companion needs help with, and it resolves by reducing the Fatebinding's Strength by 1.

Resolve: The Fatebound swoops in at a dramatic moment to help his Scion friend. Resolve this Condition after rolling an action: The Scion passes the action with Enhancements equal to the Fatebinding's Strength. The Scion's player then chooses one of the following options:

- The Boon Companion dies, or is otherwise taken out of play permanently. The Scion fulfills a Deed, and suffers a Failure Deed for an appropriate Calling.
- The relationship deepens; convert this Fatebinding to a Paramour (or an Unrequited Paramour).
- The Boon Companion turns against the Scion; convert this Fatebinding to a Nemesis of the same Strength.

CANARY/MARTYR

The Canary stumbles right into problems the Scion might otherwise miss or blunder into. Alternately, this Condition can represent the Martyr, who is ready and willing to sacrifice for the Scion.

Invoke: Invoke this Condition after a botch: The Scion's player may reroll the action she's just botched. The Canary suffers any drawbacks or consequences of the botch in her place — perhaps wandering into a Jotun ambush or blurting out a faux pas.

Compel: Canaries tend to get derogatory nicknames related to being taken hostage. The Scion gains 1 point of Legend and the Canary gains the Imperiled Condition. The Peril is always some form of imminent threat of death or grievous bodily harm.

Resolve: The Canary's sacrifice is great, but never in vain. The Canary removes a single dramatic, life-threatening obstacle in the current scene: a powerful enemy, a bomb counting down, etc., at the cost of his own life. The Scion fulfills a Deed, and suffers a Failure Deed for an appropriate Calling.

JINX

The Fatebound is singularly unlucky for the Scion. This might be inadvertent, like the eager would-be sidekick who always screws things up, or it might be deliberate, like an angry ghost that has cursed the Scion.

Invoke: The Scion suffers a Narrative Disadvantage, exactly as though she had evoked a Path. She gains bonus Momentum equal to the Fatebinding's Strength. The

Narrative Disadvantage is related to the Fatebound character in some way.

Compel: The bad luck spreads. The Scion gains 1 point of Legend, and one of her *other* Fatebound characters gains the Imperiled Condition. If the Scion has no other Fatebindings, the Storyguide chooses an SGC to suffer the Condition.

Resolve: Resolve this Condition before a roll: The Jinx's bumbling provokes consequences for the Scion equivalent to a botch. The Scion fulfills a Deed. The Scion's player then chooses one of the following options:

- The Jinx dies, or is otherwise taken out of play permanently. The Scion fulfills a Deed, and suffers a Failure Deed for an appropriate Calling.
- The Jinx's bad luck is finally too much. The Scion tells him to get out of her life forever, and the Jinx doesn't take it well; convert this Fatebinding to a Rival of the same Strength.

NEMESIS

The Fatebound becomes a sworn enemy of the Scion, and vice versa.

Invoke: The Scion's player defines how her Nemesis is involved in some oppositional element of the story: perhaps he hired the Oni mercenaries that attacked the band or is actually the killer they're hunting. Because the Scion knows her Nemesis so well, she gains a reserve of Stunts equal to the Fatebinding's Strength. These Stunts last until the end of the episode, and she can use them exactly like Stunts generated by threshold successes.

Compel: The Nemesis is always meddling in the character's affairs. Compel this Condition before making a roll: The Scion gains a point of Legend and automatically fails the roll with a Consolation.

Resolve: The Scion forces a dramatic confrontation with her Nemesis. Add the Bond's Strength to both the Momentum and Tension pools. Depending on how the scene plays out, one of the following happens:

- If the Scion kills her Nemesis, at the start of the next Episode, she automatically gains another Nemesis Fatebinding with a Strength 1 higher than the current one (maximum 5).
- If the Scion defeats her Nemesis but spares him, the Fatebinding increases in Strength by 1.
- If the Scion finds a way to make peace with her Nemesis, the Fatebinding becomes a Balm, Boon Companion, or Paramour.
- If the Scion loses, the Nemesis achieves a major story goal, introducing a complication that will have to be addressed in a future Episode. The Scion fulfills a Deed, and suffers a Failure Deed for an appropriate Calling.

PARAMOUR

The Fatebound and the Scion are drawn to each other romantically.

Invoke: The Scion makes a single use of a Lover Knack. If the Fatebinding's Strength is 1-3, this must be a Heroic Knack. If the Strength is 4+, it may also be an Immortal Knack. If the Knack only works on a character the Scion loves, that has to be the Paramour.

Compel: Love is hard work. The Scion gains a point of Legend, and the Paramour gains the Imperiled Condition. In the modern age the Peril is most likely a bit of conflict within the relationship, but sometimes Fate is a traditionalist and the Peril represents capture by the Scion's enemies.

Resolve: True love accomplishes miracles. When the Scion and her Paramour undertake a Teamwork action, they increase the action's Scale by the Fatebinding's Strength. The Scion's player then chooses one of the following options:

- The Paramour dies, or is otherwise taken out of play permanently. The Scion fulfills a Deed, and suffers a Failure Deed for an appropriate Calling.
- Happy endings are boring, and Fate decides to throw some tragedy into the mix; convert this Fatebinding to a Canary or Traitor of the same Strength, *or* the Paramour gains the Imperiled Condition, with the Peril being serious relationship drama that threatens to end the relationship altogether.

RIVAL

Fate casts the mortal as a rival to the Scion in some arena; maybe they end up competing in business, or for the affections of the same third party.

Invoke: When the Scion's Rival is around, she does her best to show him up. The Scion gets Enhancements equal to the Fatebinding's Strength on an action to best, outfox, or otherwise show up her Rival. The Rival doesn't even have to be in the scene — just knowing he'll hear about it is enough.

Compel: The Scion's Rival is also trying to show *her* up. The Scion gains 1 point of Legend, and the Rival gets Enhancements equal to the Fatebinding's Strength on an action to best, outfox, or otherwise show up the Scion.

Resolve: The Scion and the Rival put aside their differences momentarily, working together to deal with a greater threat. Resolve this Condition before rolling: For this roll only, the Scion's player spends Tension from as though it were Momentum. She may spend a number of Tension equal to the Fatebinding's Strength.

- The Rival dies, or is otherwise taken out of play permanently. The Scion fulfills a Deed, and suffers a Failure Deed for an appropriate Calling.
- That smoldering rivalry turns into sexual tension. This Fatebinding becomes a Traitor (Apparent: Paramour, Actual: Rival) with the same Strength.

TRAITOR

The Fatebound has a knife to the Scion's back. When this Fatebinding happens, the Storyguide, working in concert with the player, chooses an apparent Fatebinding and an actual Fatebinding. The Traitor acts as the apparent Fatebinding with a Strength of 2. Note that, unless the player actively chooses to let the Storyguide surprise her, this is not a secret, "gotcha" Fatebinding. The *character* remains ignorant of the coming betrayal, but the *player* does not.

Invoke: Each time the Scion invokes the apparent Fatebinding, make a tick mark on some scratch paper. When you have ticks equal to the apparent Fatebinding's Strength, resolve this Fatebinding.

Compel: As the compel effect of the actual Fatebinding.

Resolve: Fill the Tension pool to its maximum value, reveal the actual Fatebinding, and replace the apparent Fatebinding with the actual one. The Scion fulfills a Deed, and suffers a Failure Deed for an appropriate Calling.

WORSHIPPER/UNREQUITED PARAMOUR

The Fatebound stands in awe of the Scion, *or* the Fatebound is in love with the Scion, who does not reciprocate. Either way, he will do whatever he can to advance the Scion's agenda.

Invoke: The Scion can evoke the Resources or Narrative Advantage effect of one of the Worshipper's Paths as though it was her own.

Compel: The Worshipper turns his jealousy on the Scion's other relationships. The Scion gains 1 point of Legend, and one of her *other* Fatebound characters gains the Imperiled Condition. The Peril relates to the Worshipper stalking or otherwise harassing the character. If the Scion has no other Fatebindings, the Storyguide chooses an SGC to suffer the Condition.

Resolve: The Worshipper is willing to become whatever the Scion wants him to be. The Scion's player chooses the Resolve effect of any other role Condition to resolve the Worshipper Condition. No matter what choices that Condition offers, the Scion's player chooses one of the following options:

- The Worshipper dies, or is otherwise taken out of play permanently. The Scion fulfills a Deed, and suffers a Failure Deed for an appropriate Calling.
- The Worshipper becomes even more fanatical in his devotion; convert this Fatebinding to a Martyr of the same Strength.
- The Worshipper turns against the Scion; convert this Fatebinding to a Nemesis of the same Strength.

BIRTHRIGHTS

The gifts of the Gods are many and varied. When the Visitation occurs, many Gods grant their children Birthrights, powerful tokens of their esteem that become tied to the Scion's Legend.

Birthrights for Heroes come in four forms: **Creatures**, **Followers**, **Guides**, and **Relics**. Demigods and Gods have access to more rarefied Birthrights in the form of mythic associations and personal Terra Incognita.

CREATURES

Several of the most prominent Gods and pantheons in all of myth have been aided by Legendary creatures. With the Creature Birthright, the Scion has been given an extension of their pantheon's influence over this creature type or they may have developed their own unique affinity. The creature can be mundane in nature, such as Odin's ravens or one of Bast's many cats she calls her children, but others may call upon mythological creatures like basilisks, dream-eating baku, or even a dragon they can mount into battle.

Whether the creature possesses human-level intelligence or not should be a discussion between the player and Storyguide, depending on how much this choice will impact the story. Legends tell of many mythic beasts having said intelligence, like a sphinx or a dragon, while others not so much, such as Odin's eight-legged horse, Sleipnir. Some creatures even skirt the line, like unicorns who have intelligence in some myths and don't in others. If the creature is too intelligent, however, it may fall better under the Followers Birthright instead.

The connection between Scion and creature is a mythic one, making them companions. The creature is assumed to be loyal to the Scion for most purposes; their Fates are tied together, after all. Creatures will fight to the death for their Scion, though not if they don't also feel the Scion would do the same for them. Creatures aren't any more prone to suicidal missions than anyone else, and their lives (or deaths) should reflect a caliber of heroism similar to the character.

Communication with the creature is not assumed unless the Scion has a Purview or Knack that allows for such. Creatures assumed to be trained in number of tricks or commands equal to their Creature dots, thus reflecting a stronger connection with higher number of dots, though fully intelligent creatures can be negotiated with normally.

Players should remember that their creature becomes another character in the story. Charging a cadre of titanspawn with a flaming sword is one thing, but if the Scion's also mounted upon a nightmare steed blazing a trail of broken dreams behind them, that's going to be quite the signature Deed. Enemies and allies can target the creature with any number of divine effects, and the creature seldom enjoys any resistance.

BUILDING THE CREATURE

When selecting this Birthright, the player should consider what type of creature they want connected to their Scion. Examples have been provided in Chapter 6: Storyguiding (p. 294), listed by how many dots in the Creature Birthright would be required to obtain that creature as a companion. In general, a Creature • animal would have three dice to act with, whereas a Creature ••••• beast would enjoy 15 dice for their actions. By sacrificing two dice from these pools, the player may purchase an Antagonist Knack or Flair from this book or **Scion: Origin** to add to the creature. For instance, if the player wanted to have a Creature •••• (a phantom death spirit), she could sacrifice four dice to give it Incorporeality and Miasmic Presence (**Scion: Origin**, pg. 148), and still have eight dice for the creature's primary actions (defined as stealth, perceiving threats, intimidating others, and attacking).

The following dot descriptions are guidelines only; Odin's ravens Huginn and Muninn ("Thought" and "Memory"), while appearing quite mundane, are actually immortal and can transfer their senses to any Incarnation of their master. These abilities make them much stronger than a Creature • beast. Likewise, taking a powerful basilisk, but deciding the Scion only has a hatchling, would make it lower than a Creature ••••• animal.

•	Generally, these creatures are small, mundane, or otherwise mostly ineffectual. They are great for scouting ahead or being used to create a horrific appearance, such as a god who always has a vulture on her shoulder or another who wears his snake as a necklace. Player-created creatures have three dice in their Primary Pools.
••	The creature may be a larger mundane creature, such as a tiger, crocodile, wolf, or dangerous

TENSION, HEALTH AND PLAYER CREATURES

Many Antagonists make use of the Tension Pool, a sort of narrative fuel for a player's nemesis, the dark counterpart to the Momentum Pool. For PC creatures with traits that use the Tension Pool, substitute Momentum instead. For Health, use either the Creature dot rating or the sample creature's Health, whichever is higher.

bird of prey. Likewise, it could also represent weaker mythological creatures like the Chinese fox, serpopard, or a variety of different nature spirits. Player-created creatures have six dice in their Primary Pools.

••• The creature now possesses modest power, such as a hellhound, golem, or nightmare steed (or pegasus). Player-created creatures have nine dice in their Primary Pools.

•••• The beast is even more powerful, such as a manticore, Chinese guardian lion, or the anka. Player-created creatures have 12 dice in their Primary Pools.

••••• These creatures possess a unique quality and strength that makes them truly terrifying and particularly dangerous, including such beasts as a sphinx, basilisk, or kirin. Player-created creatures have 15 dice in their Primary Pools.

FOLLOWERS

Hercules and Aeolus. Fionn mac Cumhail and the Fianna. Xuanzang and his compatriots, Pigsy and the Sand Monk. Heroes often find themselves with loyal companions, bands of warriors, and students drawn to their glory. Though they are not the protagonists of the tale, their roles are no less ordained by Fate, and though they rarely strike the fatal blow against the monster, their assistance often paves the Hero's way to victory.

The Followers Birthright reflects the forces Scions have arrayed behind them, whether inherited from their pantheon or forged by their own wit and skill. In either case, the Followers can come from almost any background that fits with the Scion's concept: zombies, hoplites, amazon warriors, or even faerie knights. Followers are assumed to be loyal to the Scion, either because a greater deity has commanded their service or because the Scion has earned obeisance own loyalty and leadership. Followers are often, but not always sentient beings; if their loyalty is mistreated, they might eventually wise up and abandon the malevolent Scion.

Followers can take many forms, from a remarkably loyal manservant to an entourage of flunkies. They can be mortal, but they're more often creatures of Legend, or at least touched by Fate. A Hero's Labrador retriever probably isn't a Follower, unless it's a Cu Sith in disguise. A high-school quarterback Scion of Ullr might have his teammates as Followers, but it's likely that at least a few are Alfar in disguise.

Whatever their nature, Followers are Storyguide characters, but they don't make rolls or act on their own. Instead, they grant their Hero additional options, and function as a sort of living equipment.

CREATING FOLLOWERS

First, describe your Follower in a short phrase. This works a lot like a Path, in that it gives your followers the ability to do things that fit with their description: A flock of ravens can fly, peck, and croak ominously, a shieldmaiden can fight by your side, and so on. Followers can use equipment if it makes sense for their description, and start with whatever fits their nature. (e.g. berserkers have swords, axes, and probably armor, Alfar club kids have flash clothes and designer drugs, etc.)

Followers start with one of the following archetypes, which determines what Arena they can act in:

- **Heavy:** Physical
- **Entourage:** Social
- **Consultant:** Mental

In addition, Followers have one **tag** per dot. Followers can take one Bruised and one Maimed Injury Condition before being Taken Out. Their Defense is equal to half their dot rating.

TAGS

Much like tags on weapons or armor, Follower tags describe the important elements that distinguish one Follower from another. Some have specific mechanical effects, while others serve as cues for the Storyguide to create Complications and Consolations.

If a tag says it **requires** another tag, the Follower must have the requisite tag. If a tag says it **replaces** another tag, you still have to buy the requisite tag, but the new one supersedes it.

- **Archetype:** The Follower gains an additional archetype (Heavy, Entourage, Consultant).
- **Group:** The Follower is actually a group of 5-10 individuals. You can use a mixed action to command your Followers to take two actions at once.
- **Mob:** Replaces Group. The Follower represents 20-50 individuals. Your Followers have Scale one level higher than the Hero they serve when raw numbers come into play. You can use a mixed action to command your Followers to take two actions at once.
- **Savage:** The follower is especially brutal. On actions meant to harm others (physically or emotionally), the Follower gains Enhancement +2. Creatures often have this tag.
- **Access:** The Follower can get their Hero (and the rest of her band) into some otherwise-difficult-to-reach locale. Specify what access your Follower grants: either a single Terra Incognita, Overworld, or Underworld (e.g. Valhalla or Hades), or a broad class of mortal institution (police stations, the hottest clubs, etc.). Followers can have multiple instances of this tag.
- **Smooth:** The Follower improves the Attitude of Storyguide characters by 1, as long as they're present and the character is receptive based on the Follower's description. Against particularly opposed characters

(e.g. a hair-metal band against a classical-music snob), they might worsen the Attitude instead.

- **Helpful:** As long as a complex action fits with the Follower's description, you gain one additional Interval to complete it.
- **Knack:** Choose a single Knack that fits your Follower's description. Your Follower may use it on your behalf. If the Knack requires a dice pool, it uses your Attribute + the Follower's dot rating. Followers can have multiple instances of this tag. If the Follower's dot rating is • - •••, the Knack must be Heroic. If the rating is •••• - •••••, it may be Immortal.
- **Terrible:** Choose one area in which the Follower has Scale (e.g. Size, Speed, Intellect). The Follower's Scale is one level higher than the Hero's.
- **Unruly:** The Follower doesn't take orders well. All Difficulties on actions to command the Follower increase by 1, but you add Momentum to the pool whenever you fail to meet the Difficulty.
- **Tough:** The Follower adds 1 Armor.
- **Defensive:** The Follower adds 1 to their Defense. Alternately, if it fits their description, this can add 1 to the Difficulty of intrigues or other opposed actions instead.

USING FOLLOWERS

When you command a Follower to do something, the dice pool is one of your Attributes + the *higher* of the Follower's rating or your Leadership. Commanding your followers is a Simple action, but you can take a mixed action to act yourself while commanding them. Followers don't get a spot in the initiative roster and don't act independently — they always act on your turn, and their action always takes up your turn. If you're Taken Out, your followers can keep acting on your turn, but their dice pool becomes your Attribute + their rating.

If you're present in the scene and you or your Followers suffer an Injury Condition, you can decide whether the Condition affects you or your Follower.

Followers that are Taken Out typically return to form at the beginning of the next session. If being Taken Out means they're permanently removed from play, you can reassign any dots in Followers to other Birthrights (including new Followers, if you want).

ROLEPLAYING FOLLOWERS

The player is the one who dictates what Followers do when the dice come out. Otherwise they're Storyguide characters, and the Storyguide is free to use them to inject drama into the story at regular intervals. Grumbling, dissatisfaction, and even outright mutiny can result from Complications, but unless the table is actively interested in stories of operatic betrayal, Followers are generally assumed to stay loyal.

For groups of Followers, the player is encouraged to name and describe a few key members of the group. The Storyguide should flesh them out and use them mercilessly as reasons to make players care.

Single Followers can't be Fatebound to characters other than their own Hero, but individual members of a group or gang can. Anything that permanently removes such a character from play requires the consent of both players.

PAYING TRIBUTE

The Scion pushed his luck with his mentor and now she's pushing back.

System: The Storyguide gives the character a new Aspiration in addition to those he already has, representing the favor he owes his guide. The character feels the eyes of Fate upon him until the debt is paid, taking a Complication of a severity equal to the guide's dot rating to any action that doesn't make progress toward achieving the new Aspiration.

Resolution: The player achieves the Aspiration as above.

TEMPTED FATE

The Scion's mentor took time out of her busy schedule to call down the wrath of the Gods for him. He's used up his goodwill for a while.

System: The Scion immediately compels one of his Fatebindings when he gains this Condition, in a way that's appropriate to the situation. Until Tempted Fate is resolved, he has no access to any benefits normally granted by the guide who caused this Condition, including access to Boons or Knacks from the guide's Purview or Calling.

Resolution: Tempted Fate resolves after the Scion has separately resolved a number of Fatebinding role Conditions equal to (6 – the guide's dot rating).

GUIDES

The Gods are by necessity distant parental figures, watching their Scions' deeds and struggles from the Overworld except when circumstances demand an Incarnation's intervention. Even then, such circumstances are usually too dire to include a few hours of quality time and advice over beers. Scions rely on other mentors in the day-to-day quest to find their destinies and learn a few tricks their parents never knew.

Guides can be Godly Incarnations, usually when another God has a particular fascination or liking for the character, or when Fate has insisted she play the role. They can be Legendary creatures like kitsune and dwarves, Titans and titanspawn, or arcane figures like oracles and witches. They can be other Scions with more or specialized experience, willing to play the part of older sibling for a time. Guides are usually characters, but they *can* be even stranger things: spirits of the dead, disembodied souls, sapient relics, the touch of prophetic dreams or visions, or even half-remembered hints and legacies left by the fingerprints of past lives.

The dot value of a guide is an indicator of its overall usefulness to the character, though that doesn't necessarily translate into raw power. A guide with a low rating could be a mortal prophet, or it could be a potent imprisoned Titan who just can't — or won't — get much help to the Scion very often.

BENEFITS

A guide is both a character and a resource. The Storyguide may or may not give a guide real character traits, depending on whether he expects it to play a more active role in the story. Either way, a guide functions similarly to the way a Path does, granting an array of related benefits as the result of the Scion having earned or inherited its help. The player can invoke a guide like a Path, and can push its benefits to even greater limits in exchange for a Condition that makes the guide unavailable until it's resolved.

The Path Condition for invoking a guide more than once is **Paying Tribute**.

The Scion may also call upon his guide for a *deus ex machina* once per arc. Only one *deus ex machina* may be in effect at a time. Whether by literal divine intervention, occult ritual, the fulfillment of a dire prophecy, or some other method within the guide's power, the Scion gains the following for the rest of the scene: He acts in all ways as though he were one Tier higher than he is, and may use one boon he doesn't know in a Purview to which he has access. In exchange, at the end of the scene, he gains the **Tempted Fate** Condition.

By default, a guide has the following elements.

- **Asset Skills:** as Path Asset Skills, but the Scion doesn't gain +1 to these. Instead, they grant access to the guide's Stunt (see below). One-dot guides grant one Asset Skill, while those at 2+ dots grant two.
- **General Benefits and Invocation:** Guides can grant access to equipment, locations, allies, contacts, and narrative editing the same way Paths do, using the same guidelines for what requires invocation and what doesn't. Narrative editing usually takes the form of the guide showing up or pulling strings to help the Scion out.
- **Guide Stunt:** Every guide grants access to a unique Stunt, accessible by invoking the guide when the player rolls one of the guide's Asset Skills; the player may wait to invoke until after he makes such a roll.

For each dot above two, the guide also gains one of the following elements; a guide can only have one each of these elements:

- **Purviews:** A guide can grant a Scion access to a Purview just like a relic, although never a Pantheon Signature Purview. The Scion can learn Boons in this Purview, and can use marvels through her own native pantheon motif with that Purview as long as it's possible for the guide to have taught their tricks that way. Scions with guides from other pantheons may need to bridge the divinity gap with lessons of their own — perhaps a child of Lugh must teach an Incarnation of Tsukiyomi the scathing ways of satire before he can pass on his secrets, while Netjer guides must adjust to hearing Scions of the Theoi shout at them. If the Scion ever loses her guide's favor, either through Tempted Fate or through story events, she also loses access to these marvels until she makes amends.
- **Callings:** The Scion can learn Knacks in the guide's Calling.
- **Legendary Titles:** The Scion can invoke the guide to make use of her Legendary Title as though it were his own.

A guide with a rating of 3+ may also grant access to a unique Knack in her Calling. Depending on the power of the Knack, it may preclude the inclusion of some or all the above elements, such as a Purview or Calling.

EXAMPLE GUIDES

The following are example guides that you can pick up and play with as is, or use as templates to help design your own guides.

Bodhisattva (•)

A bodhisattva works not only for his own enlightenment, but for the enlightenment of all, and enjoys helping Scions of the Devá explore their own paths toward divinity. Bodhisattvas can provide guidance on philosophical and ethical issues, particularly when it comes to questions of Conscience and Duty.

Asset Skill: Culture

Guide Stunt (1-3 successes): Gain an Enhancement equal to successes spent to the next roll you make in the current session while taking an action that slides you away from the center of your Virtue track.

Tengu (•)

While the tengu are quite powerful, they're picky about who they'll apprentice, and they refuse aid — or worse — for the slightest of perceived affronts. These corvid kami live on secluded mountain peaks in remote areas, and on the top floors of skyscrapers or in penthouse lofts in urban environs. They wear red masks with enormous, elongated noses, and only take them off in the presence of those who have earned their respect. They're masters of the sword and of ruthless negotiation tactics, and to those Scions who show them proper deference, they teach their arts.

Asset Skill: Close Combat

Guide Stunt (successes equal to opponent's Defense): Next time your opponent attacks you at close range, you may immediately make a reflexive Close Combat counterattack afterward.

Tonalpouhque (•)

These expert calendar-readers decrypt and interpret the *tonalpohualli* for agents of the Teōtl. They can divine the future, read Fates and the stars, translate obscure signs from the Gods, and advise a Scion about the best timing for a divine ritual.

Asset Skill: Occult

Guide Stunt (1-3 successes): Gain an Enhancement equal to successes spent to the next roll you make in the current session to address a Peril for one of your Fatebindings.

Animikii (••)

These shapeshifting thunderbirds serve Muzzu-Kumik-Quae, and can appear in human form or in their natural eagle-like form. They command the wind and rains, and can strike with lightning from their eyes. They protect their chosen Scions, teach them how to read weather patterns and prepare for disasters, and occasionally bring messages from the Gods.

Asset Skills: Firearms, Survival

Guide Stunt (1-3 successes): Increase or decrease the rank of a Field feature by successes spent in the Field where you currently stand.

Crane (••)

Among Scions of the Manitou, the crane is a common personal dodaem. One that attaches itself to a Hero as companion and guide appears larger and haler than its mortal bird counterparts, lending its talents as she needs them and teaching her the ways of grace, beauty, and fluid movement.

Asset Skills: Athletics, Pilot

Guide Stunt (2 successes): Gain a +1 to your Defense against the next attack that targets you this scene, or a +2 Enhancement to the next action you take to impress someone with your moves, either your own or while operating a vehicle.

Ifá Diviner (••)

A babaláwo (male) or iyálawo (female) is a priest who has memorized and mastered Òrúnmìlà's most sacred divinatory method, known as Ifá. These diviners use palm nuts to read patterns based on a canon of sacred poems they know, and they'll share their counsel for a fee.

Asset Skills: Academics, Occult

Guide Stunt (2 successes): With the diviner's insight, you roll twice for the next roll you make and keep the better result.

Satyr (••)

These fun-loving goat people, favored of Dionysus, can be a bit perverse in choosing Scions to help out — they're drawn to those who like to have a good time, of course, but they also aren't above deliberately taking serious, stoic Scions under their wings to try to loosen them up. Their revels don't look much like guidance at first glance, but where hangovers lurk in the morning, epiphanies follow.

Asset Skills: Medicine, Persuasion

Guide Stunt (3 successes): Immediately shift your target's Attitude toward you by one in whichever direction you choose for the scene, even if you've already succeeded at a Shift Attitude action this scene.

Crow of the Morrígan (•••)

The Phantom Queen's favored birds open the Scion's eyes to signs and portents, whether he asked for them or not. They like to hang around looking mysterious wherever he goes, speaking dire warnings that only make sense when battle begins.

Asset Skills: Pilot, Subterfuge

Guide Stunt (1-5 successes): Gain an Enhancement equal to successes spent on your next initiative roll in the current session.

Purviews: Fortune

Dverg (•••)

The dvergar (singular: dverg), or dwarves, are skilled artisans who insinuate themselves into mortal societies as workers for hire or teachers of ancient crafts, in exchange for wealth and services. A Scion taking one as a mentor should prepare for grueling days at the forge or hunched over a workbench, but he'll come out of it with a singular eye for how things are made.

Asset Skills: Science, Technology

Guide Stunt (1-3 successes): Gain an Enhancement equal to successes spent to your next roll in the current scene to destroy an object, pick a lock, or perform another non-crafting action that would benefit from knowing how something is put together.

Purview: Forge

Ghost of Duat (•••)

Anubis is a busy God, so when he wants to send Scions of the Netjer some guidance, he releases souls of the dead from Duat to travel to the World for a time in his service. They teach Heroes sacred funerary rites, reveal hidden paths, whisper obscure names from the depths of the Underworld, and pass messages between the living and the dead.

Asset Skills: Empathy, Survival

Guide Stunt (1 success): The Storyguide reveals to you the presence of one non-verbal deception, mystery, or concealed secret present in the scene, although you don't learn any details about what's deceptive about it or what it hides.

Calling: Liminal

Scarab Beetle (•••)

Scarab beetles are sacred to Re, helping him roll up the sun each night to renew it in preparation for its journey across the sky the next day. Scions can gain wisdom and revitalizing power from such a guide.

Asset Skills: Academics, Medicine

Guide Stunt (1-4 successes): Ignore any detrimental effects from one of your Injury Conditions until the end of the scene, with a severity equal to successes spent.

Purview: Sun

The White Eyebrow, Betrayer of Shaolin (•••)

The Scion who became a Titan through treachery and dark alchemy can't keep his nose out of other people's business, constantly looking for his next avenue to power. The Shén have disavowed him, but a Hero of any pantheon might strike a deal with him, favor for favor. Of course, with a reputation for betrayal, he's not exactly reliable... but he's always willing to strike another deal once all that messy backstabbing is in the past.

Asset Skills: Close Combat, Subterfuge

Guide Stunt (1 success): Reduce the rank of the Critical Strike Stunt to 2 for the next Close Combat attack you make during the current session while betraying someone who trusts you.

Legendary Title: Fist of the White Lotus

Demigod of Confucius (••••)

Children of the Philosopher God take his teachings squarely to heart, mentoring younger Scions as a matter of course. These Worldly guides see Heroes of the Shén as little siblings who need tutoring in the ways of familial piety and ethical duty, and often go out of their way to offer themselves up for this role without being asked (or necessarily wanted).

Asset Skills: Academics, Leadership

Guide Stunt (1-3 success): Gain an Enhancement equal to successes spent to the next action you take in the current session to either follow instructions or advice from someone of higher Tier than you, or lead or advise someone of lower Tier than you.

Calling: Sage

Purview: Order

Dis (••••)

The disir (singular: dis) are ancestral spirit women that act as tutelary guardians of families and clans, particularly heiresses and other women who carry on legacies. They often protect someone until she has daughters of her own, and then move on to protect those daughters instead. Disir are warrior spirits who can predict when people Fatebound to their charges will die.

Asset Skills: Close Combat, Leadership

Guide Stunt (1 success): Choose one character within close range and apply your own Defense against any attacks targeting that character until your next turn; you suffer the consequences of successful hits as well.

Calling: Guardian

Unique Knack: Whenever you resolve a Fatebound Condition in such a way that the Fatebound character was removed from play, gain a point of Momentum.

Égún (••••)

Spirits of the dead that have ascended to Heaven and become honored ancestors are known to the Òrìshà's followers as égún. They possess their descendants during festivals and sacred rituals to dispense advice and pass judgment on their actions.

Asset Skills: Culture, Persuasion

Guide Stunt (1-3 success): You allow your ancestor to possess you briefly, guiding your hand. Gain an Enhancement equal to successes spent to your next roll in the current scene to perform an action that slides you further toward your Tradition Virtue.

Unique Knack: When you attempt to convince titanspawn or a Titan to lay down arms and negotiate or work together with you, imbue a point of Legend, rather than spending, to invoke your Legendary Title as a Feat of Scale.

Ītzpāpālōtl, the Obsidian Butterfly (••••)

Like everything about Ītzpāpālōtl, having one of her Incarnations as a divine mentor is a double-edged sword. The savage maneuvers and disguise tricks she teaches are invaluable, but she's overprotective of her charges and tends to want to murder anyone who threatens them.

Asset Skills: Close Combat, Subterfuge

Guide Stunt (3 successes): Become invisible, gaining a +3 Enhancement to avoid detection, including by cameras and other devices. This lasts a number of rounds equal to your Legend.

Purview: Beasts (all)

Calling: Hunter

MUSE (••••)

The inspirational Goddesses of the Theoi have long been patrons of the arts and sciences for deity and mortal alike. Nine in number, each with her own specialty, they usually choose one among them to foster creativity and grant blessings for a Scion who seeks their aid.

When you purchase this guide, choose one Skill specialty in an Asset Skill that relates to the particular muse your character calls upon.

Asset Skills: Culture, Science

Guide Stunt (1-3 successes): Gain an Enhancement equal to successes spent to the next action you take in the current scene using your chosen Skill specialty. If that action fails, gain an extra Momentum.

Purview: Artistry (all)

Calling: Creator

Kodama (•••••)

When a tree grows to be a century old, a kodama may take root within it, inflicting baneful curses upon those who mistreat it. Kodama are hoary Kami with a symbiotic relationship to nearby mortals — they remember the people's long histories going back to their beginnings and keep the land green and vital, while the people protect the trees with sacred *shimenawa* ropes and ensure their continued longevity. A Scion may make offerings to the kodama's sacred tree to receive blessings and learn ancient secrets, and in return it expects her to defend it, at any cost.

Asset Skills: Academics, Survival

Guide Stunt (1 success): The Storyguide provides you with one insight or historical fact about the current situation that you didn't already know, even if you have no way of gleaning it yourself.

Unique Knack: You possess a nigh-perfect memory, reducing the number of required milestones for complex research actions by one and reducing the rank of Complications based on remembering things by 1.

Calling: Judge

Purview: Wild

Lugh Lámhfhada (•••••)

Lugh is the Tuatha God of Excellence, and his favor as a foster Godparent or mentor grants a portion of this excellence to all who follow him. He's known to favor Irish and Welsh Scions, but other pantheons' chosen have occasionally received his fortunate eye; and with the return of the Gaulish Gods, Lugh may favor their children as well.

Asset Skills: Athletics, Leadership

Guide Stunt (Any number of successes): Once per scene, gain a number of relevant temporary Skill specialties equal to successes spent, which persist until the end of the scene. You can assign them to any Skills, not just the one that generated the Stunt, and can keep them for yourself or distribute them among your allies in any combination.

Unique Knack: Lugh's favor grants you a +3 Enhancement to any one Skill roll per scene involving a Skill in which you do not already have dots, but only if you haven't rolled that Skill yet in the current scene.

Purviews: Epic Dexterity

Preceptor Drona (•••••)

Once the martial-arts instructor for the Kauravas, Preceptor Drona teaches still at the military academy he founded in Gurgaon, India. He knows the secret ways of divine weaponry and many ancient techniques no one else in the World remembers.

Asset Skills: Firearms, Technology

Guide Stunt (4 successes): You study your opponent and find their secret weakness, gaining the Battle Wisdom Condition. It has no innate effect, but you may resolve it to upgrade one Injury Condition you inflict on the same opponent in a later scene by one level, including from Maimed to Taken Out.

Unique Knack: Reduce the clues required to uncover a combat-related Relic's secrets by one.

Calling: Warrior

Legendary Title: Battle Guru

RELICS

Second only to the names of great Heroes in the eyes of Legend are the names of their Relics, the tools of their divinity. Entire arcs can hinge on the search — or war — for a single piece of the Gods' panoply. The name *Excalibur* excites as much fervor as the name of the Scion who wielded it, and Relics from that famous sword to the Golden Fleece to the Stone of Fál have been used to claim worldly power as well as divine. A Relic can represent a Scion's inheritance, but it can also set her apart. It's an obvious visible symbol of her growing Legend, one the World learns to associate inextricably with her. More practically, it grants her access to powers beyond those she earns from her parent pantheon. Thus, Relics are how a Scion forges her own unique identity as a fledgling God, mixing and matching power and theme to craft her personal divinity.

ACQUIRING RELICS

Most Scions receive Relics during their Visitations, as tangible expressions of the destiny they've inherited. Their divine patrons may bestow more of their treasures upon them as their Legends progress. Beyond this, a Scion might quest for a Relic in the far reaches of the Terra Incognita, or unearth one in the World's own forgotten places. She might steal one from another Scion, or a Titan, or even the Gods themselves. She could commission one from divine craftspeople, like Legendary creatures or titanspawn. Given the right Purviews and a hell of a workshop, she could even forge her own Relics.

A Relic could also be handed down from heroic forebears. A Scion might leave a Relic deliberately for a successor via prophecy, or she might inherit one naturally through the workings of Fate. Perhaps she and the Scion who went before were Incarnate from the same God, or perhaps she's even a direct reincarnation of that Scion. Perhaps the Relic was stolen from one of her divine parent's previous children, or that Scion betrayed his pantheon and sold the treasure to Titans, and she's meant to restore its rightful lineage.

Whenever a player purchases a Relic, she and the Storyguide should work together to decide how it works and what form it takes. Below is a list of example Relics that players can easily pick up and use, based on the pantheons presented in this book. A player can also design her own, as described on p. 212. Look at the individual pantheons in Chapter 2 for more guidelines on what sorts of Relics are associated with each pantheon and its Gods.

Relics come in five varieties, although a single Relic might fit more than one.

- **Classic:** Classic Relics are original artifacts from myth and legend, ones the Gods themselves or their previous Scions used or owned that are already known for those associations. Example: Kusanagi-no-Tsurugi.
- **Archetypal:** An archetypal Relic is one made to resemble an original artifact and call upon its legend directly. It might be a replica or an homage. Archetypal Relics more or less keep the forms of their predecessors. Example: Twofold Guise.
- **Modernized:** A modernized Relic is one that indirectly calls upon the legend of an original artifact but greatly alters form and function to fit in with the modern World. It might contain an actual piece of the original, might have been reforged from it, or might simply inherit its power through Fate and association. Example: iGjallar.
- **New:** A brand new Relic is one designed to follow the themes of a Scion's parent pantheon and Callings while expressing her own growing Legend, with no specific ties back to existing Gods. A Scion might craft her own new Relic, or might have someone else do it for her. A new Relic is just as much a Birthright as any other — a Scion is entitled to such wonders as a matter of Fate and inheritance, regardless of where they come from.
- **General** or **Mass-Produced:** one of a series of identical or similar Relics, either copied from a unique and more powerful artifact or designed to be generic. They might allow an army or cult access to the pantheon's power in a small way, or they might

THE FATEBOUND RELIC CONDITION

A Scion may Fatebind someone else's Relic to claim it as his own Birthright. If he does, it gains this role Condition as an archetype.

Invoke: The Scion's player chooses a Storyguide character present in the scene. That character recognizes the Relic he wields by its reputation or its original owner's, and the Scion may benefit from one of that owner's Legendary Titles or relevant Paths as though it were his own while interacting with that character in this scene.

Compel: As invoke, but the Storyguide chooses the character who recognizes the Relic, and instead of benefiting from it, the Scion experiences the backlash of Fate tugging the Relic's strings. He gains one point of Legend and the Difficulty of his next task while interacting with the character increases by one.

Resolve: Ordinarily, a Scion wouldn't resolve this Condition, instead simply invoking and/or compelling it to increase the Fatebinding's Strength until the Relic became his Birthright. But no Scion's life is bereft of dramatic twists of Fate. The Scion may resolve this Condition to boldly renounce the Relic, giving up any claim to it and instead immediately acquiring a new Fatebinding to another character in the scene equal to the Strength of this one, with an archetype appropriate to the way in which the Scion renounced the relic. The Relic is either returned to its original owner or abandoned to be claimed by another.

allow Scions of the same God or pantheon to each have a piece of a larger pie. Example: Amulet of Resurrection.

BENEFITS

A Relic may allow a character to channel one or more Purviews he can't access innately or through his pantheon. Much as Pantheon Signature Purviews (p. 264) do, Relics grant the ability to purchase boons in their associated Purviews, and allow a Scion to perform marvels through a motif particular to the Relic. A character may only use these Boons while he has the Relic on his person and can use it as intended. He may only channel a Purview the Relic provides and his Pantheon Signature Purview through its motif for marvels. Some Relics also provide access to unique Knacks, or alter the use of Knacks or Boons the character already has. A Relic often contains an innate Enhancement to make it an exemplar of its type.

Relic effects that require non-reflexive actions can't be included in mixed actions.

ANATOMY OF A RELIC

Every Relic has a dot rating and an associated Deed. It *may* have the other listed traits.

- **Rating:** Each Relic is rated from 1-5 dots. Its rating informs how powerful and/or versatile it is.
- **Deed:** Upon acquiring a Relic, the player chooses one of his character's Deeds — personal or band — with which to associate it. If he begins the game with it, it's associated with the character's Visitation instead. Whenever the Scion uses or flaunts the Relic while interacting with someone who knows about that Deed, he gains a social Enhancement based on his Tier: +1 for Hero, +2 for Demigod, +3 for God. This stacks with the Relic's usual Enhancement where applicable, to a maximum of +3. Using a borrowed Relic this way grants an Enhancement based on the *original* owner's Legend.
- **Purview(s):** The Purview or Purviews this Relic allows a Scion to channel for marvels and learn Boons in. A Scion can't gain access to a Pantheon's Signature Purview through a Relic. If a Scion already has innate access to a Purview a Relic would provide, or gains it over the course of play, then using the Relic to access that Purview grants the ability to eliminate one point of relevant Complication per dot of the Relic's rating.
- **Motif:** A short phrase that determines the scope of the marvels that a Scion can — and thus, can't — perform through the Relic. For instance, Eric Donner's Giantsbane has a motif of "the flash and fury of the thunderstorm." It can perform Sky marvels that are forceful and flashy, but couldn't call up a gentle breeze or cause the sun to shine. A Relic's motif describes the concept of its Legend, like a Legendary Title does for a Scion.
- **Enhancement:** The rating of the equipment Enhancement that the character enjoys when he uses the Relic for its intended purpose, including for rolls to activate Boons in its Purviews.
- **Knack:** A Relic may provide access to a unique Knack. The Scion can access a Relic Knack anytime she has the item on hand. Depending on the Knack, she may need to actually use the Relic, or it may be enough just to have it on her person.
- **Flaw:** A Relic may have a Flaw that allows for more powerful effects at a price.

Some Relics also have weapon traits, armor traits, or vehicle traits.

DOT VALUE	FLAW
•	Relic only functions if user inputs a password or speaks a particular phrase, takes an action; once confirmed, Relic functions for the scene
• •	Relic must be reloaded, refueled, or recharged after each use, which takes an action
• •	One function or tag's numerical value is randomized and works differently each time Relic is used, subject to a dice roll or Storyguide's discretion
• •	All Difficulties to use Relic increase by 1 for the scene if it's exposed to a particular weakness, e.g. submerged in water, used to take a life, etc.
• •	Reduce one tag's numerical value by one or remove one effect at the end of each scene in which Relic was used as intended without its user fulfilling a Virtue; restore to full functionality as soon as user fulfills a Virtue while using it.
• •	Once per arc, Relic's divine patron requires a favor; gain the Paying Tribute Condition (p. 204)
• • •	Each time Relic is used, roll a die with target number 4 to determine whether it functions or not
• • •	Relic is volatile and causes an attack of some kind on everyone within short range if destroyed or pushed beyond its normal limits, or if user rolls a botch for its use
• • •	Relic is jinxed; each time it's used, the Storyguide adds one point to the Tension Pool.
• • •	Reduce one tag's numerical value by one or remove one effect at the end of each scene in which Relic was used as intended without its user fulfilling a specific *type* of Virtue; restore to full functionality as soon as user fulfills a Virtue while using it.
• • • •	Relic is cursed; each time it's used, it takes an influence action against her using her own traits to urge a certain behavior or change her Attitude about someone. If the character succumbs to the urge, she earns a point of Momentum.
• • • • •	Relic is unstable or has an unstable power source; each time it's used, it makes an attack against its user with either its normal traits or traits determined by the Storyguide
• • • • •	Relic is inextricably Fatebound to its user somehow and requires 2 Momentum to use each time; if Relic is stolen or harmed, Scion suffers consequences determined by player and Storyguide when Flaw is chosen, e.g. fatigue penalties, hallucinations, a geis, etc.
• • • • •	Scion must imbue Relic with a *dot* of Legend; access this dot as normal while in possession of Relic, but without it lose access to that dot and all its benefits
varies	Weapon or armor gains a tag with a negative point value equal to this Flaw's dot rating, such as Loud, Two-Handed, or Weighty.
varies	Relic has a built-in Complication with a rank equal to this Flaw's dot rating, e.g. "Heavy," "Complex," "Flashy," etc.
varies	Relic is strongly tied to Fate; in each scene it's used, the Scion must resolve a Fatebinding of the player's choice with Strength equal to this Flaw's dot rating

BORROWED TREASURES

Relics can be stolen, lost, given away, abandoned, sold, or bartered. A character using a Relic that isn't his own Birthright gains its benefits as long as he has the traits necessary to use them.

The downside of such purloined power is that each use of the borrowed Birthright costs Momentum equal to the Relic's dot rating. Relics that have passive abilities cost that much Momentum per scene to benefit from them, instead. A Scion can fully claim a Relic that didn't initially belong to him to eliminate this Momentum cost

CRAFTING RELICS

The basic rules for a character crafting her own Relics are found on **Scion: Origin**, p. 75, though doing so is restricted to Demigods and Gods. Generally, Flaws generated from Relic design and Flaws generated from the crafting process are compatible, and you can translate one over to the other in either direction when figuring out how to design traits for something you've made, or how to make something you've designed. Full rules can be found in **Scion: Companion**.

by Fatebinding the Relic as though it were a character (p. 195). When the Strength of the Relic's bond exceeds its dot rating, it becomes his Birthright in truth and the Fatebinding ends. For five-dot Relics, the bond must reach an effective Strength of 6.

DESIGNING A RELIC

A player can work with her Storyguide to design her own Relic rather than take one of the given examples, using the following guidelines. Players can design *any* type of Relic this way, not just new ones created for or by the character. If a player finds a reference to a legendary artifact in a mythic story and wants to claim it — or something based on it — for her Scion, the Storyguide can help her design it in quick-and-dirty fashion, as follows.

- **Enhancements:** A one-dot Relic can have a situational +1 Enhancement that only applies to certain types of rolls. A two-dot Relic can have a general +1 Enhancement that applies all the time. Add one dot to the Relic's rating for each situational Enhancement you add. Add two dots for each general Enhancement you add. General Enhancements can't exceed +3, and situational ones can't exceed +4.
- **Purviews and Motifs:** A one-dot Relic can't grant a Purview unless a Flaw balances it out (see below). A two-dot Relic can grant one Purview. Add two dots to the Relic's rating for a second Purview. Add *three* dots to the Relic's rating for a third Purview; to do so, you must offset the dot value with Flaws. A Relic can't grant more than three Purviews. If the Relic grants at least one Purview, it also gains a motif.
- **Weapons and Armor:** Start with the standard tags for a mundane weapon or piece of armor of the type you want. Each additional point of tags adds one dot to the Relic's rating; you can also *remove* a negative tag, like Loud, by adding dots equal to the tag's negative point value. You can add tags with negative point values as Flaws with dot values equal to the tag value (see below).
- **Other Effects:** Custom Knack effects add a number of dots to a Relic's rating based on how powerful or broad the effect is. Generally speaking, an effect that's broad enough to apply any time the Relic is used should add one dot more than one that only applies in certain situations. Use the example Relics and the Calling Knacks (p. 223) as a gauge for how many dots a custom effect should add.
- **Flaws:** Adding a Flaw to a Relic *decreases* its dot rating based on the severity of the Flaw, so that its benefits can exceed five dots' worth of effects and tags. See the chart below for sample Flaws.

EXAMPLE RELICS

The following are example Relics that you can pick up and play with as is, or use as templates to help design your own relics, as detailed above.

Soma (• - •••••)

Soma is the moon deity among the Devá, and his blood is the plant sap that makes their favorite drink. A soma plant is sacred, and by mixing its sap with milk and other sweet ingredients, a Scion may brew an intoxicating divine beverage that grants health, wealth, and success. Those who imbibe experience euphoria and a burst of confidence.

One soma plant yields enough sap to make one batch of the drink per session. Each batch provides the Scion with a number of soma points equal to the Relic's rating, which disappear if he doesn't use them by the end of the session. If he shares the drink with others, he can spread these points out among as many characters as he likes, but one batch only ever produces (rating) points per session.

Knack: The beneficiary may spend a soma point at any time to do one of the following:

- Gain one additional Injured Condition level for the scene
- Reduce a Complication's rating by one
- Break a tie on an opposed roll in your favor
- Experience a minor convenient stroke of luck, such as stumbling across someone you wanted to find or guessing a lock's combination on the first try

Fae-Shot Weaponry (•)

The *aes sídhe* use weapons of bronze harder than the finest steel that cause paralysis and painful, seizing injuries when they strike their targets. Scions of the Tuatha Dé Danann (and more rarely, the Æsir, who call these relics "elf-shot" instead) wield ranged weapons of bright shining bronze, graven with leaf-shaped designs and inlaid with silver, that possess the same properties. A weapon must have the Ranged or Long Range tag to be a fae-shot Relic.

Knack: The Scion may perform the Paralyze Stunt, as follows. If he does, his attack may not inflict any Injury Conditions.

Paralyze (1 success): Your target's muscles seize up and their nerves scream in agony. **Result:** Your target suffers Complication 2 on her next turn. If she doesn't buy it off, she can't take any movement actions until the end of her next turn. Healing Knacks and Boons can't alleviate this Complication, though the victim can buy it off normally.

Red String of Fate (•)

Red strings of Fate connect people across space and time, ensuring they'll be important to one another at some point regardless of how. Both the Kami and the Shén may distribute them to their Scions, in some cases before a Scion even experiences her Visitation — she can't use the Relic yet, but she can see it and knows it's momentous somehow. Red strings of Fate are invisible to anyone who doesn't have a direct connection to the divine, so mortals can only guess at their influence based on auspicious

events or seeming coincidences. As a Relic, the red string needn't be a literal string; it might instead be a bracelet, a shoelace, or a belt. A Hero who wears such a Relic tied around part of her body, like a finger or an ankle, or perhaps as a ribbon in her hair, chooses to entangle herself further in the complex webs Fate weaves across the World.

Knack: The Scion may have one additional Fatebinding Condition beyond her dots in Legend. The benefits of multiple red strings don't stack.

Twofold Guise (•)

Purview: Deception

Motif: *Everything is a matter of perspective.*

Enhancement: 1 when used to deceive or as a disguise

Once, Eshu Elegbara walked through a village wearing a hat that was black on one side and red on the other. Half the village saw only one side and insisted the hat was black, while the other half insisted the opposite. Eshu let them come to blows before he stepped in to show them that differing perspectives can both be right. Scions wear all manner of dualistic garments that embody the archetype of Eshu's black-and-red hat: scarves that display different patterns depending on the light, caps in two colors, reversible jackets, and so on. Through marvels, these help a Scion provoke conflict from nothing, see a situation from a new angle, don two disguises at once, and perform feats of a multiform nature.

Flaws: Once per arc, Eshu requires the Scion's service; gain the Paying Tribute Condition (p. 204).

Wayang Kulit (•)

In traditional Indonesian theater, masters of puppetry perform tales of the Devá's exploits and those of their Heroes by crafting *wayang kulit,* or shadow puppets, in the shapes of figures from the stories. By manipulating the puppets behind a backlit screen, the *dalang* creates shadows that bring those stories to life. In the hands of a cunning Scion, a wayang can literally project these shadow figures into life, creating servants to lend helping hands or serve as cannon fodder.

Knack: By imbuing the wayang with a Legend point for up to a scene, the Scion may create shadow figures that rise from the surface on which they're projected to become featureless physical beings. These figures are trivial characters and can perform only physical tasks, with dice pools equal to the Scion's Legend x 2. It takes a simple action to create one wayang figure, and the Hero may have up to Legend x 2 figures at a time.

Flaws: The wayang kulit doesn't work if no shadows can be cast, whether because the Scion is in total darkness or too much light.

Amulet of Resurrection (••)

Osiris fashions these golden amulets in the shape of the *djed* pillar, a symbol representing stability and the spine

of the afterlife god himself. A Scion who knows the right ritual can place the amulet upon a mummified corpse and perform the spell, allowing the mummy to regain the use of its spine for a short while and do the godling's bidding.

Knack: A Scion can use one of these amulets to animate a properly mummified corpse as a complex action rolled with Occult + Intellect at Difficulty 2, with an interval of one round and a goal of eight successes. If successful, the Scion temporarily gains the Mummy Follower (p. 203) at one dot per corpse animated for the scene, to a maximum of five dots. These followers can take up to *two* each of the Bruised and Maimed Injury Conditions.

Icarian Wings (••)

Once, Daedalus the master artisan crafted artificial wings that allowed a person to fly like a bird. But his son Icarus came to a tragic end when he failed to heed his father's warnings. He flew too close to the sun, melting the wax that held the wings together and falling to his death.

Since then, Hephaestus has improved upon Daedalus' design and taught Scions how to make wings that function without fear of sun or sea. These relics can take on various appearances, from traditional feathered wings to leather bat wings to modern mechanized wings of shining metal or clockwork wings with whirring gears. They're always golden, no matter their form. A Hero straps them to her back, and can fold them up whenever she's not using them.

Knack: The wearer spends a point of Legend to activate the wings for the day. For the duration, she can fly — she can take reflexive move actions vertically as well as horizontally, and for a point of Momentum she can move two range bands instead of one with a single move. She can't rush or disengage while flying. She can also glide safely down from great heights at no Legend cost, by simply spreading the wings and letting them slow her descent.

iGjallar (••)

Enhancement: 1 when used to gather, summon, or coordinate others

The great sounding horn of Heimdall is the Gjallarhorn, a clarion with a blast audible in all worlds that summons Gods and signals doom. Prophecy holds that when Ragnarok comes, the Gjallarhorn will herald its beginning. The iGjallar is the modern Scion's tribute to the mighty call of the Æsir's hawk-eyed sentinel: a smartphone with a direct uplink to the Overworld. It requires no service contract or battery and can communicate across boundaries between realms, including from the World to almost any Terra Incognita and vice versa.

Knack: In addition to all the functions of a normal smartphone, the iGjallar has crystal-clear reception no matter where the Scion goes and never loses signal except when brought to realms that have no connection to the Overworld or other locations sacred to the character's divine benefactor. With it, the Scion can call anywhere as long as there's a phone or similar device on the other end to receive it.

Jade Seal (••)

Purview: Order

Motif: *"I'm going to need that in triplicate."*

This seal, reminiscent of the ancient Heirloom Seal of China, is a small, rectangular cylinder made of jade with the bearer's personal name and Legendary Title embossed on the end. The Shén give them to their Heroes with great frequency, to legitimize a Scion's duties within the Celestial Bureaucracy and grant her a measure of judicial authority. Most Shén Scions grow used to carrying around forms on silk paper, dashing off quick prayers to work their marvels.

Oyohualli (••)

Purview: Passion (varies)

Motif: *Stop and smell the flowers.*

The oyohualli is a teardrop-shaped pendant made of mother of pearl. Xochipilli the Flower Prince hands them out to anyone who, in his estimation, needs to chill out and enjoy life — or who agrees to spread the good word to everyone around her. This relic can be made into jewelry of various kinds, or can adorn weapons or clothing. Marvels and Boons it channels can apply to a variety of Passions, as long as they're the kind that get people having fun and following their hearts.

Sacred Boombox (••)

Enhancement: 1 while using Gún/Cheval boons or dealing with ancestor spirits

Percussion instruments and music with heavy, complex beats are the core of worship and ritual for the Òrìshà. A Hero blasting music from one of these enormous portable sound systems can call Gods and spirits from anywhere, regardless of distance or the depths of the Terra Incognita they inhabit. It's not unheard of for street performers to accidentally summon up a deity or an ancestor with a sacred boombox, as the music pumps through the hidden places of the World with irresistible energy.

Knack: When performing summoning rituals, acting as a medium, using Gún/Cheval Boons, or with other similar actions, your ritual reaches across any barrier and into any realm, and prompts a Clash of Wills against any magic that would oppose it.

Tears of Re (••)

When the great sun God of Egypt weeps, his tears fall down to the World as honeybees, providing sweet nectar to humanity. Bottling the tears before they get that far, however, can give Scions a potent weapon to wield in battle. The Tears of Re come in a tiny clay jar, tightly stoppered with wax and engraved with hieroglyphs. When spilled in battle, they unleash a swarm of bees under the Hero's command.

Knack: With the Tears of Re in hand, a Scion may take a simple action to spill them onto the ground, emptying

the jar and creating the Bee Swarm Field feature (below), which only affects her enemies. It lasts for the scene. The character may take the swarm with her as she moves or leave it in place at her option.

Bee Swarm (rank 3 Complication): Countless bees swarm around you, buzzing interminably and stinging with abandon. This Complication applies to all physical actions, and moving away from it requires successfully disengaging; the swarm uses the Scion's Presence + Occult to oppose. **Result:** Take an Injury Condition and reduce your Defense by 1 until your next turn.

Flaws: A jar of Tears of Re refills in the next session after it's emptied, but only if the Scion's player succeeds at a Presence + Occult roll with Difficulty 2 to appeal to Re in a sacred ritual that takes an hour to perform.

Winonah's Jingle Dress (••)

Winonah lends her jingle dress out to Scions when they face the daunting task of clearing out dark and dangerous spirits. The ornate, buckskin medicine dress is covered all over with tin cones that make a jingling sound whenever its wearer moves. By simply walking through a place where twisted titanspawn lurk, she frightens the least of them away and gives even the strongest some pause.

Knack: The Scion may imbue the dress with a Legend point and take a simple action to roll Presence + Occult, performing a sacred dance with a Difficulty of the highest Legend among all titanspawn and other malignant spirits present. Success forces those within short range to flee the scene outright if they are of lesser Tier than she is. Those of an equal or higher Tier instead suffer a rank 2 Complication for the scene that applies to aggressive actions; failing to buy it off makes them unable to come within close range of her until the end of their next turn.

Bear-Warrior's Bludgeon (•••)

Enhancement: 1

Once, the great warrior Maudjee-Kawiss coveted the wampum sashes of the Bear Nation and, on a sudden impulse, stole one. When the bear people pursued him, he used his peerless might to slay one in a single blow. Rather than punish him for his transgression, the Bear Nation offered to make him their champion — an opportunity to make up for what he'd done in service to their people.

Maudjee-Kawiss still acts brashly, but he learned something that day about responsibility and justice. When he blesses a Scion's weapon, he ensures his chosen will learn the same lesson. Any Relic with the Bashing tag can be a Bear-Warrior's Bludgeon.

Knack: The Scion may imbue the weapon with a Legend to gain access to the Dizzying Blow Stunt for the scene, as follows.

Dizzying Blow (4 successes): Your attack packs enough of a punch to dizzy your opponent. **Result:** The opponent must spend a point of Tension (or Momentum) per attack they wish to make against you for the rest of the scene, unless they spend a Legend instead to end this effect.

Flaws: If the Scion kills a non-trivial character with this weapon, he gains the Making Restitution Condition: Until he performs a service to make up for his actions, perhaps by aiding the deceased's loved ones or putting her restless spirit at ease, he suffers a +1 Difficulty to all acts of violence or aggression.

Green Dragon Crescent Blade (•••)

Enhancement: 1 vs. trivial foes; 1 while mounted

Enshrined at the Purple Heaven Palace in the Wudang Mountains, this massive *guandao*, or Chinese polearm, belongs to Guan Yu and fits best in the hand of a Scion with truly heroic strength. It's best known for its ability to singlehandedly mow down armies, and many a Hero charging into the fray on horseback with it has seen even the most disciplined troops scatter like so much dust on the wind. Guan Yu allows Scions to sign it out when they need it, provided they go through the proper approval process first.

Tags: Lethal, Melee, Reach, Two-Handed, Versatile

Knacks: This weapon also has the Shockwave tag, but only when every target in the range band is a trivial character.

Flaws: If the wielder's Might is less than 5, he suffers a −3 Complication on all attacks with a value equal to (5 − his Might). This Complication doesn't apply to characters with at least one Boon in the Epic Strength Purview. **Result:** You may only take reflexive actions on your next turn.

Hill-Striding Moccasins (•••)

Purview: Epic Dexterity

Motif: *No hill too steep, nor too far.*

A Scion who wears a pair of these leather moccasins becomes incredibly fleet of foot, overtaking prey and outrunning pursuit with equal swiftness. Each pair is decorated with beads in the shapes of clouds, birds, and bolts of lightning, all to speed the Hero's steps.

Knack: The wearer reduces the rank of all Complications by one to avoid difficult or dangerous terrain features.

Kusanagi-no-Tsurugi, the Sword that Cuts Grass (•••)

Purview: Sky

Motif: *Who controls the battlefield rises on wings of valor.*

Susano-Ō pulled Kusanagi-no-Tsurugi from the tail of the dragon he slew and gifted it to his sister Amaterasu as an apology for his irresponsible behavior. Later, numerous emperors wielded it, until it fell into the hands of the prince Yamato Takeru. The sword earned its name when Yamato was trapped by an enemy warlord in a large

field that burned on every side. He sliced at the grass to remove the fuel from the flame and discovered Kusanagi's power to control the winds. Corralling the fire toward his ambushers, he soundly defeated them as they fled. Scions to whom the blade falls gain control of the field of battle in clever ways, using the environment to gain advantages and slipping away from unwinnable fights like leaves on the breeze.

Tags: Lethal, Melee, Versatile

Knack: The character may use the Grass-Cutter Stunt whenever he inflicts a successful hit with Kusanagi on an opponent or inanimate object, as follows.

Grass-Cutter (1-3 successes): Create or suppress one feature in the Field in which the Scion stands, with a value equal to successes spent. This effect lasts for a number of rounds equal to successes spent, and only one such effect can exist at a time. The feature must make sense within the bounds of what controlling the wind or cutting with a blade could accomplish.

Mead of Poetry (•••)

Long ago, the Æsir and the Vanir created Kvasir, a God of poetry and wisdom, as a symbol of their truce. Dwarves murdered Kvasir and mixed his blood with honey, creating a divine drink they called the mead of poetry. Odin later stole it back for the Gods, and shared it with his buddy Ogma of the Tuatha Dé Danann while they devised runes together. Today, Scions can find rare meaderies hidden away in the World's stranger niches that produce bottles of poet's mead and distribute them through divine channels. Those who get a taste gain a honeyed tongue that speaks beautiful, wise words.

Knack: If a Scion drinks a dose of poet's mead, he gains the ability to imbue a point of Legend rather than spending it to invoke his Legendary Title as a Feat of Scale on a roll to recite poetry, convince someone his advice is sound, or otherwise speak eloquently, until the end of the scene. This doesn't apply to using speech or poetry to perform marvels or use Boons.

Once per arc, a mortal who drinks a dose may add 1 Scale to the next roll he makes to do one of the above tasks. If he does, he immediately becomes Fatebound to the nearest Scion, or increases the Strength of a nearby Scion's Fatebinding to him by one.

Flaws: Each bottle of poet's mead holds a number of doses determined by rolling a die when the Scion comes into possession of it. Once it's empty, it stays empty unless the Hero accepts the Paying Tribute Condition (p. 204) from one of the Norse or Irish Gods and then resolves it, at which point the bottle fills back up to its full 10 doses.

Quill of Ma'at (•••)

In the Hall of Two Truths, Osiris weights the hearts of the dead against the feather of Ma'at to judge their worthiness. When Ma'at lends the feather out to her Scions, it takes the form of a tall, crisp quill pen that generates its own ink. Her Heroes use it to discover the truths others hide deep in their hearts, and leverage them to get what they want out of people.

Knack: If the Scion uses the quill to write the true name of someone with whom she's interacted in the last 24 hours, it will leap from her hand to scribe the following truths about that character: their Callings, and general information about any Crises of Calling they've undergone recently; their Virtues, and where they currently lie along their Virtue track; and their most destructive or dishonest current Aspiration or Drive.

Knack: The Scion may imbue a Legend point and write someone's true name. While the Legend remains imbued, the Scion reduces the Scope of any attempt to influence that character by 1, as long as the influence relies on judgment, shame, blackmail, or other such approaches that bank on information she knows about her target. This effect can be indefinite so long as the name remains readable and the surface upon which it's inscribed remains intact.

Tezcatlipoca's Mirror (•••)

Purview: Fortune

Motif: *Secrets beg for revelation; mysteries beg for solution.*

The obsidian mirrors of Tezcatlipoca unveil many secrets, even those a Scion may not wish to know. These come in many shapes and sizes — some are massive discs of polished, night-black glass set in heavy frames to hang upon a wall, while others masquerade as compact mirrors or grace the inner surfaces of pocket-watch cases. A Hero may consult such a mirror to see what has not yet come to pass, to scry upon faraway places, or to read the heart's darkest desires.

Through Fate, the mirror always finds a way to return to the Scion whose Birthright it is, even if she loses it or deliberately abandons it. It keeps turning up regardless, and no one else may use its powers until they Fatebind it completely to claim it as their own.

Knack: The mirror's wielder can learn Blurt It Out (p. 257) as a Fortune boon, but rather than speaking aloud, the subject is reflected in the mirror and their thoughts are clear to anyone who can see them in the glass.

Knack: By imbuing the mirror with a Legend point, the Scion may view what's happening in a given location from anywhere, as long as she's been there before. She may do this indefinitely, but can't take any non-reflexive actions while she does so and can't apply her Defense.

Flaws: Tezcatlipoca's favor is as fickle as fortune itself. Each time the Scion scries with the mirror or channels a Purview through it, the Storyguide adds one point to the Tension Pool.

Uaithne, Harp of the Dagda (•••)

Purview: Passion (Joy, Sorrow)

Motif: *Music sways the heart and defies the enemy.*

Ireland's coat of arms bears a noble harp, the most beloved musical instrument of the Tuatha Dé Danann, and it long ago adorned the banners of the High Kings of Ireland. The harp has been, at times, a symbol of righteous rebellious spirit. Bards and filid use them to accompany their scathing satire and beauteous poetry. The Dagda's enchanted harp has many names: Uaithne; or Dur da Blá, the Oak of Two Blossoms; or Coir Cethar Chuin, the Four-Angled Music. When the Fomorians dared steal the harp from the Irish All-Father, he set out with Lugh and Ogma to retrieve it. He called to the harp in poem and song, and it flew to his hands, cutting down nine titanspawn on its way there. A Scion trusted with such a rare treasure must be favored of the Dagda, indeed.

Knack: Uaithne allows its player to play the three sacred harp tunes: that of laughter, that of weeping, and that of slumber. In addition to using Passion Boons to coax joy and sorrow from listeners, the Scion can use Irresistible Impulse (p. 257) to fill someone with the urge to fall asleep immediately.

Knack: If the Hero speaks or sings the secret words as a simple action, Uaithne responds to the call if it's within medium range, flying to his hand. It makes an attack against anyone who tries to stop it or who stands in its way, and if the attack hits, it flies unhindered; the attack uses the Scion's Might + Close Combat and has the following tags: Lethal, Loud, Melee.

Flaws: The Scion must speak or sing the secret words that activate the harp's powers at the beginning of any scene in which he wishes to use it; otherwise, it won't play.

Designated Constellation (••••)

Purview: Fortune, Stars

Motif: *All Fates are reflected in the stars.*

While modern science knows that stars shine from light-years away in space, Heroes of the Shén know they're also Relics the Gods hand out in heaven as rewards for services well-rendered. A Scion can't hold his constellation in his hand, but he can manipulate its glittering bounty through the threads of his Fate as long as it shines overhead. The Theoi and other pantheons with zodiacs of their own occasionally dole out constellations as well, but the practice is uncommon for anyone but the Shén.

Knack: The constellation's ruler can learn Muse's Kiss (p. 240) for any kind of art as a Stars Boon.

Knack: The Scion can spend a point of Legend to make his constellation impart a specific message to anyone in the World who divines or navigates by the stars. The message must be brief, no more than a sentence or two, and lasts until the character changes it to a new message.

Flaws: This Relic's abilities, and all Boons and marvels channeled through it, may only be used when the constellation itself is visible in the sky.

Giantsbane (••••)

Purview: Sky

Motif: *The flash and fury of the thunderstorm.*

Enhancement: 1 general, or 2 vs. foes of larger Size

Anyone who's ever run afoul of the Æsir knows the thunderous power of Thor's hammer Mjolnir, probably far better than they ever hoped to know it. The Norse guardian doesn't like to part with his hammer, but he once broke off a small piece of its stone and gave it to the dwarves for use in forging a new weapon with its potent magic, destined for his child's hand. That weapon was Giantsbane, the prodigious revolver with a barrel as long and as thick around as the forearm of the Scion who wields it. As the gun's wielder cocks back the hammer, anyone nearby feels the thrill of ambient static electricity. With extraordinary stopping power and a deafening crackle, Giantsbane tears through a Hero's enemies like a force of nature.

Tags: Firearm, Lethal, Loud, Piercing, Pushing, Ranged

Knack: If the wielder knows the Boon Bolt from the Blue (p. 259), he may fire the bolt from Giantsbane rather than calling it down from the sky, thus potentially getting around roof cover or aiming it in a specific direction. He may substitute Firearms + Dexterity for the Boon's normal roll.

Knack: The Scion can use Giantsbane to call down a tempest from a sunny sky as a complex action rolled with Firearms + Presence at Difficulty 2, with an interval of one round and a goal of eight successes. If successful, the weather shifts to a wild thunderstorm, a hurricane, a tornado, or similar in an area with a one-mile radius, centered on the character. It lasts for the scene and imposes Complications appropriate to the type of storm, at the Storyguide's discretion.

Flaws: Like many Relics of the Æsir, Giantsbane is inextricably tied to dire Fates. Each time the Scion successfully calls a storm down with the gun, the Storyguide adds three points to the Tension pool.

Irish Muscle Car (••••)

Purview: Chaos

Motif: *The road is my battlefield.*

The chariot is the traditional conveyance of battle for the Tuatha Dé Danann, favored by the Morrígan. A sturdy chariot pulled by noble steeds and bristling with weaponry could make a simple drive-by deadly in the hands of a skilled charioteer. Modern Scions prefer to pay homage to this tradition with a different kind of horsepower. The Irish muscle car is usually a Mustang or Charger, tricked out with gadgets, guns, hidden blades, and more to make chases a dicey prospect for a Hero's enemies. Souped-up engines that roar like lions and stylish paint jobs are practically required — no stealthy spy vehicles receive Badb's blessing.

Knack: This vehicle constitutes a rank 2 Hazard Complication for any other vehicle involved in a chase or race (**Scion: Origin**, p. 73). Once per scene, the driver of the Irish muscle car may gain one Momentum whenever the driver of another vehicle spends from the Tension Pool.

Knack: This vehicle never runs out of fuel, and its driver always begins any chase or race with the Head Start Enhancement at rank 1, reflecting its ability to go from zero to breakneck in mere seconds. It applies only to the first lap.

Flaws: Reduce the car's Head Start Enhancement or Hazard Complication by one rank at the end of any scene in which it was used in a chase or race without its driver or another occupant fulfilling his Prowess Virtue. Restore these traits to full value as soon as Prowess is fulfilled this way. Other similar Virtues may substitute at the Storyguide's discretion.

Oshe of Shàngó (••••)

Purview: Epic Strength

Motif: *Go big or go home.*

Enhancement: 1 when deliberately showing off

In the SLB (Scion League of Baseball), where the World Series is a true *World* Series and games are hosted by various Godsrealms in turn, Shàngó's Heroes walk away with the MVP trophy more often than not and they don't let the other pantheons forget it. One reason is that the God himself likes to lend out his oshe — his double-headed axe, which is also a wooden baseball bat decorated with red and white beads — for the post-season. The *crack* of its home runs lingers in the air like thunder, and nobody in her right mind tries to catch one without magic of her own. In battle, the bat may become an axe with the fury of the storm behind its powerful swings.

Tags: Lethal, Loud, Melee, Piercing (axe); Bashing, Loud, Melee, Pushing, Versatile (bat)

Knack: The oshe's wielder can take a simple action to change the bat to an axe or vice versa.

Knack: The Critical Strike Stunt costs only four successes with either version of the oshe.

Flaws: If the Scion doesn't spend a simple action "calling his shot" with the bat or axe, making his intent in the scene 100% clear ahead of time to all present, it functions only as a mundane weapon. Once activated, it retains its abilities for the scene.

Magatama (••••)

Purviews: Order, Prosperity

Motif: *By the grace of the Kami do I claim the right to lead.*

The magatama is a comma-shaped bead, made of precious stone or glass, that denotes high status and the authority to lead. The Japanese Gods use magatama for all manner of divine miracles. The most sacred set is the

TAKING RELICS TO THE NEXT LEVEL

A Relic in the hands of a Hero is plenty wondrous already. How much more, then, should mortals stare in awe at the panoply of Demigods and Gods?

As a character grows in Tier, her Relics grow with her. Their existing benefits increase in power, scope, or flexibility, and they may gain new ones as well. Other Relics may become more effective in her hands even if they belong to a Hero. In Relic-design terms, Demigods and Gods get more effects out of each dot of a Relic's rating. Full rules for how this works are presented in **Scion: Demigod Second Edition** and **Scion: God Second Edition**, respectively.

Yasakani no Magatama, which Izanagi originally gave to Amaterasu as a symbol of her rulership of the Kami, and which she in turn gave to her grandson Ninigi as a symbol of his rulership of Japan. To this day, this necklace plays a role in the enthronement ceremony for Japanese emperors.

Many magatama are lesser charms that merely bestow minor blessings of wealth or success. A true magatama Relic, however, is made of jade and allows a Scion to access the Order and Prosperity Purviews, marking her as unequivocally chosen for greatness by the Gods.

Golden Stag (•••••)

Purview: Journeys

Motif: *Swift and agile as the deer.*

Enhancement: 2 general, or 3 while attempting stealth

When Artemis was young, she captured four golden-horned deer and bade them pull her golden chariot. Though she sometimes travels this way still through Olympus' steep passes, some of her Incarnations prefer to cruise in more modern style. When she lends her wheels out to her Scions, it's this custom chopper bike they ride. Painted a bright gold, it sits low to the road, with an elongated frame and an engine that hums too quietly — until revved up for effect. Faster and more maneuverable than any mortal motorcycle, the Golden Stag boasts a pair of deer antlers made of solid gold and comes with a sleek full-face helmet which acts as armor with the Armored tag.

Flaws: During any scene in which the Scion rides the Golden Stag, other characters gain Enhancement 2 to convince or urge her to exact vengeance for any slight — real or imagined.

Ternion (•••••)

Enhancement: 3 vs. targets marked for destruction

Once, the brave Scion warrior Barbarika carried three arrows in his quiver, the Teen Baan, and they were the only three arrows he would ever need to win a battle. He proved his worth — and theirs — to Lord Krishna by collecting together every leaf from a tree with just one arrow. Legend tells that the first arrow could mark every target Barbarika wanted to destroy; the second arrow could mark every target he wanted to save from harm; and the third arrow would wreak merry violence, as the marks dictated, before returning to his quiver.

Today, the Teen Baan together take the form of a single sleek sniper rifle called Ternion, which only fits one special bullet that always returns to its chamber at the end of the round in which it's fired.

Tags: Firearm, Lethal, Long Range, Piercing, Returning, Two-Handed

Knack: The wielder may spend a simple action aiming through the rifle's scope to mark a target for destruction. Targets remain marked for the scene or until he successfully hits them, whichever comes first.

Knack: The wielder may spend a simple action aiming through the rifle's scope to mark a target for protection. Targets marked this way gain Enhancement 1 to take cover and upgrade light cover to heavy. They remain marked for the scene or until they're hit by an attack, whichever comes first.

Knack: The wielder may split successes on an attack roll to apply the attack to as many targets as he likes with a single shot, as long as they're marked for destruction. This can't be part of a normal mixed action.

Tideshaper (•••••)

Purviews: Earth, Water

Motif: *Great and terrible are my works.*

The Greek God of land and sea shakes the World with every step he takes, and those to whom he lends his power are no less monumental in their miracles. Poseidon's own weapon is a trident, but the Tideshaper Relics that call upon its Legend can take the form of any polearm, or any three-pronged weapon, such as a pair of sai or even a pitchfork. One Scion famously wielded a Tideshaper dessert fork in battle.

Knack: The Scion need only imbue the weapon with a Legend point for the scene, rather than spending one, to perform upheaval marvels (p. 238) with the Tideshaper as rank 4 Stunts.

Flaws: A Tideshaper weapon carries a built-in Flashy Complication, as follows.

Flashy (rank 2 Complication): Whenever you use this weapon to attack or channel a Purview, the effects are obvious and attention-catching in some way appropriate to the action. **Result:** Using this weapon obviates mundane stealth of any kind and requires a Clash of Wills to maintain magical stealth (even potentially against yourself). In general, all eyes and ears are on you.

Tyrfing (•••••)

Purview: Passion (Spite)

Motif: *Relentless bringer of perfect destruction.*

Enhancement: 1 general, or 2 when used to damage or destroy objects

The gleaming blade Tyrfing has a long and bloody history. The Scion king Svafrlami, grandson of Odin, forced a pair of dwarves to forge for him a sword that would never rust and never miss its mark. They did that, but spite led them to also curse the sword so it would always kill when drawn in battle. Tyrfing in fact killed Svafrlami himself before changing hands many times, ending each of its conflicts in tragedy. Its reign of violence ceasing after it perpetuated its first three great evils is just a rumor Hel spread to ensure the blade's continued work in her indirect service.

Tags: Lethal, Melee, Piercing, Versatile

Knack: Tyrfing never rusts or dulls, and can swing just as easily underwater, through mud, or against other similar impediments without difficulty. Its wielder never suffers Complications related to these issues.

Flaws: Tyrfing is a cursed blade, married to dire Fates. Once per scene in which the Scion wields it in combat, his player *must* resolve one Strength 1 Fatebinding Condition if he has any. Once he has resolved three Fatebinding Conditions this way, the Scion has a choice. He may give up the sword to someone else, relinquishing it as a Relic and gaining a different Birthright (or Birthrights) of the same dot value in its place. Alternatively, he may keep it and increase the Strength of the Fatebinding Condition that must be resolved whenever it's used by one. Once Tyrfing's curse has resolved three Strength 3 Fatebindings, the character *must* give the Relic up.

Xiuhcoatl, the Flaming Serpent (•••••)

Purview: Fire

Motif: *A flame's light banishes all darkness.*

With this *atlatl*, or spear-thrower, the war God Huitzilopochtli banishes night and incinerates his enemies, slinging not spears but bright tongues of flame from its carved turquoise shaft. These are the *nagual*, or spirit form, of the fire god Xiuhtecuhtli made manifest, conjured by relentless aggressive intent. A Hero who commits fully to her fight may ignite her foes and dispel darkness with abandon.

The *atlatl* throws projectiles using the wielder's strength of arm, but propels its ammunition farther and faster than most thrown projectiles can go, giving it the Ranged tag.

Tags: Arcing, Lethal, Ranged

Knack: Xiuhcoatl's wielder can learn Blinding Glory (p. 261) as a Fire boon.

Knack: The Scion can sling thin spears as normal with the *atlatl*, but she can also throw serpent-shaped flames, adding the Aggravated tag to these attacks and always causing burn-related Injury Conditions. Each point of Momentum she spends per attack grants it Enhancement 1, to a maximum of +3.

Knack: If the Hero uses the Heaven's Fire boon (p. 251) through Xiuhcoatl, she may *spend* a Legend instead of imbuing it for the scene to make a single attack that adds the Shockwave tag to the boon's usual traits.

Flaws: Once Xiuhcoatl's wielder makes a flame attack with it, she can't back down from the fight. She must continue until she or all her opponents are Taken Out.

CHAPTER FIVE
POWERS

"Being a god is being able to recognize within one's self these things that are important, and then to strike the single note that brings them into alignment with everything else that exists. Then, beyond morals or logic or esthetics, one is wind or fire, the sea, the mountains, rain, the sun or the stars, the flight of an arrow, the end of a day, the clasp of love. One rules through one's ruling passions. Those who look upon gods then say, without even knowing their names, 'He is Fire. She is Dance. He is Destruction. She is Love.' (...) they do not call themselves gods. Everyone else does, though, everyone who beholds them."

— Roger Zelazny, Lord of Light

KNACKS

Scions are capable of great feats, from abilities that border on exceptional human capability to truly divine miracles. These are Knacks and Boons. **Knacks** give life to a character's Calling, allowing her to become a living archetype. **Boons** stem from Purviews, facets of the World that Gods embody and control.

Knacks are divided into two categories: **Mortal Knacks**, which are impressive displays of human ability, and **Immortal Knacks**, which are Godly powers.

Characters begin play with five Knacks from their Callings, one for each Calling dot the character begins with. Additional Knacks may be purchased with Experience, but a character may only have five Knacks "active" at a time, corresponding to their Calling dots, until they gain more by rising in Legend. Knacks may be swapped out for another during a minor milestone. Immortal Knacks are worth two Calling dots to keep active; thus, a Scion with a Warrior Calling of 4 can have two Immortal Knacks, four Heroic Knacks, or two Heroic and one Immortal Knack active at a time.

KNACK SKILLS

Many Knacks reference Knack Skill rolls. The Storyguide and player choose the most appropriate Skill for each Knack, based on the character's Legendary Title and Paths, but also on the Skills listed in the Calling section.

MOMENTUM EXPENDITURE AND ENHANCEMENT

Knacks and the following section on Purviews and Boons reference imbuing and spending Legend. The only Knacks you will see that reference imbuing and spending Legend are those that interact with Feats of Scale. Boons are powered by Legend. To reiterate: imbuing Legend commits the point until the effect expires, at which point the Legend returns to the Scion's available pool. Spending Legend removes the point entirely, until action is taken to recover it (see p. 188). Otherwise, Knacks are powered by Momentum. You spend from the communal pool as usual, except instead of adding dice, you gain the ability granted by the Knack.

Enhancements add bonus successes equal to the Enhancement rating, which apply after a roll has been made and met the Difficulty, thereby transforming what might be an ordinary success into a legendary one. Some Knacks bend this rule, allowing the Enhancement to apply ahead of time. When this is the case, the text will state it. In the event of two effects stacking, where one applies before the roll, only the Enhancement from that Knack applies before the roll. As stated previously, Enhancements may only stack up to 5.

CLASH OF WILLS

As a general rule, Knacks cannot be applied to anyone two Tiers higher than you. If a Knack (but not Boons) breaks this rule, it will say so within the mechanical text. In the event that two supernatural abilities are in opposition with each other, this is called a Clash of Wills. For the purposes of Knacks, a Clash of Wills is resolved by making opposed rolls of [Knack Skill] + [Legend or Calling dots, whichever is high]. If no Knack Skill applies, substitute Integrity.

Boon Clash of Wills are Legend + Attribute with ties favoring the defender, but most are unrolled, as effects can cancel one another out or even out in other ways. Summoning a tidal wave of water and meeting it with a titanic firestorm will probably result in a tremendous amount of steam and collateral damage, at the Storyguide's discretion.

Example: *A Scion of Eris has used a Knack to incite a crowd to riot. They're in danger of trampling each other and causing massive property damage. Yomiko, Scion of Amaterasu, uses Lighthouse of Society to instill calm in the crowd and get them to leave in an orderly fashion. Her player makes a Leadership + Leader Calling roll opposed against the enemy's Subterfuge + Legend roll. She gets 3 successes and the Storyguide rolls 2, and Lighthouse of Society succeeds.*

If a character is Tier 1 (Mortal) but possesses a Knack, they may apply their Knack for the scene with a Clash of Wills roll against another mortal. Applicable Calling is equal to 1 for this purpose (for a roll of Knack Skill + 1).

If a Knack references a Clash of Wills, refer to this ruling. Trivial targets do not make Clash of Wills rolls.

I CAN SENSE YOU, HIGHLANDER

If no character specifically purchases Scent the Divine, the Storyguide should feel free to randomly grant this effect whenever a Scion is near a divine being belonging to one of the pantheons.

Pantheon	Scent and Possible Sound
Æsir	Burning amber, with a snap of electricity
Kami	Cherry blossoms, with a roaring wave
Teōtl	Fresh blood, accompanied by the sound of a heartbeat
Shén	Ink and old paper, with a sound of rustling silk
Devá	Incense, with a low humming
Theoi	Olives in hot air, with a murmuring crowd
Òrìshà	Rum and tobacco, with a drumbeat
Netjer	Dry dust and sand, with a sound of wind
Tuatha Dé Danann	Fresh grass and clover, with a sound of creaking wood
Manitou	Fresh tobacco smoke, impossibly high- and low-pitched voices whispering

ANY

Characters of any Calling can choose one of these Heroic Knacks.

- **Aura of Greatness:** Something about you affects everyone around. You can be radically inspirational, the perfect confidant, or horrifically scary, depending on your origin and demeanor. Choose one Social Skill (Leadership, Empathy, or Persuasion); you may add Enhancement 2 as a bonus to that type of roll once per session, reflecting your Godly heritage.
- **Born to be Kings:** Scions are masters at enforcing their will upon the World, if it means serving their parents diligently. The first time each Scene that the character would add points to the Momentum pool, they instead add 2.
- **Scent the Divine:** Having a touch of divinity, you have an innate sense of anything divine near you. With a sniff or a knowing listen, you may detect another Scion (or God, or Legendary Creature, etc.) of a particular pantheon.
- **Somebody's Watching Me:** A Scion's Godly parent has eyes and ears everywhere, and even if they don't Visit their child, they're often ready to lend a hand to aid their child in need. During a scene where the Scion would be in danger, their parent sends in reinforcements, usually resulting in either two Mooks or one Professional (see **Scion: Origin** p. 143 for more on Archetypes) to fight on their side. These allies leave at the end of the scene, however.

HEROIC CREATOR

Mortal Creator Knacks enhance your ability to craft, shape, and even destroy things. Creator Knacks are driven by the concepts of building and shaping.

Keep in mind that the crafting rules don't necessarily apply to material objects but to plans and other esoteric effects. Creator Knacks can apply to these as well — Reverse Engineer applies to computer code just as well as car engines.

- **Innate Toolkit**: You are always able to work your craft, regardless of whether or not you have the appropriate tools available. When you use your bare hands to build or create something that would otherwise require special equipment, you suffer no penalty or any kind of Injury. For example: If you were to pound your bare fist against a railroad spike like a hammer or plunge your exposed fingers into a heated forge, you would not break bones or suffer burns.
- **Perfect Rendition:** You are a master artist, able to illustrate or recreate an image of a person, place, or object you have seen with photo-perfect clarity, allowing you to flawlessly identify suspects, create detailed maps, or forge signatures. You do this without needing to roll, and can recreate these things in scant instances. If something you observed has been obscured by a supernatural power, make a Clash of Wills.
- **Reverse Engineer:** When you take apart an object, you instantly gain an understanding of how to rebuild it, or create new versions.
- **Flawlessly Platonic Ideal**: When you work to improve an object, you make it as flawless as possible.

When creating an object using this Knack, you may ignore up to your Creator dots (1) in points of Flaws. In combat, you can upgrade light cover to heavy cover by making a Knack Skill roll. If materials are available, you may also spend Momentum and use an action to transform items that would not normally be protective (stacks of newspaper, empty cardboard boxes, curtains, etc.) into light cover.

- **The Unlimited Quartermaster:** You never need to roll to acquire mundane crafting supplies, as you always know where and how to find them. Unless the item is exceedingly rare (or being blocked from access by a rival), you get what you need with little complication — this does not make materials cost less, or arrive any faster should they need to be transported to you. If someone or something is preventing you from acquiring materials, make a Clash of Wills.
- **We Go All Night:** When working on a creative project, you can work without ceasing for a number of days equal to your Creator Knack Skill. After this period, you must rest for a day before resuming your work.
- **Wireless Interface:** Electronic devices respond you without needing to touch them. They must be powered on and functional, but you can use a number of devices in the same Field as you equal to your Knack Skill with your hands free. If you try to do other things while communing with technology, you must make a mixed action roll.

IMMORTAL CREATOR

- **Afternoon of Fortnights:** When you begin a creative project, spend Momentum and make a Knack Skill roll. For each success earned on this roll you decrease the amount of time required to work on the project by one unit. This is measured in either units of dramatic time (a project that would take a whole session can be downgraded to a scene) or in in-game units of time (years become months, months become weeks, etc.) whichever is more appropriate for the game's approach.
- **Lifted from Dust:** When you work on a creative project that would cover a massive Scale (planning a city or designing a civilization), imbue a point of Legend, rather than spending, to invoke your legendary Title as a Feat of Scale.
- **Raise the Pillars of the Earth**: Make a Creator Skill roll. With any successes, you create a small building, structure, or monument in a matter of minutes, which grows from nothing but rocks and dirt. To raise a creation in a scant instant, spend Momentum.
- **Touch of the Muses:** When working on an artistic project, double the successes earned on each roll made by an artistic partner. You have the option to spend Momentum and lend this benefit to yourself.

HEROIC GUARDIAN

Mortal Guardian Knacks gift you with the vast fortitude and sharp senses, to better protect those you have sworn to guard. Guardian Knacks are driven by the concepts of durability and protection.

Guardian Knacks revolve around choosing a specific person to protect. When choosing who is worth of your divine protection, bear in mind that — unless they've completely neglected to invest in any sort of combat abilities — your bandmates do not need you to be the wall between them and your enemies. They should, for the most part, be able to handle that themselves. This is not to say that the Storyguide should forbid you from using these abilities on your bandmates, especially when it would be cool or dramatic, but that the intent is that a Guardian Scion protects those who are weaker than herself.

- **A Fortress:** At the start of a combat scene, roll your Knack Skill with 1 Enhancement. Gain the following Stunts which you may spend the resulting successes on, each time you successfully Defend (e.g. an attack targeting you does not hit).
    - Get Out of Here (1s): A target you are protecting immediately makes the Disengage action.
    - Second Wind (2s): Heal a –1 Injury you have taken, including Injuries sustained by your Armor.
    - My Turn (1s) Make one additional attack action against an opponent that attacked your charge this round.
- **A Purpose:** Dedicate yourself to an ideal of your choosing (fight for love and justice, defend the weak, save the World from invasion). When you take action to defend this ideal, gain +1 Enhancement to all applicable rolls and to any Stunts you may have gained from Knacks.
- **A Sentinel:** Choose a person or group of trivial targets to be your charge. When you guard your charge, you both gain +1 Defense so long as you stay in the same range band. You also gain +1 Enhancement to rolls to keep track of or defend your charge.
- **A Talisman:** Bless an object (usually belonging to someone you wish to protect, but not required) and make a Knack Skill roll. If any successes are achieved, it then grants the bearer 2 Enhancement to rolls made to defend or protect against a particular person, thing, or situation as defined at the time of blessing. If you are making a talisman for your charge, this happens automatically without needing to roll.
- **A Vigil:** When you stand guard over a person, place, or thing, you do not need to eat or sleep so long as your vigil persists. This benefit extends so long as the protected target remains within your sight. You may do other things — talk, interact, move around,

etc. — but must devote most of your time to keeping your vigil. You may only keep vigil over one thing at a time.

- **A Warning:** You sense the presence of danger before it emerges. Spend Momentum and double the successes on any roll to detect ambushes or to discern whether a person means harm. If you are protecting your charge, you do not need to pay the cost.

IMMORTAL GUARDIAN

By Your Side: Spend a point of Momentum to move to be next to someone you are protecting in an instant, regardless of the distance between you. You receive an innate warning whenever this Knack would come into play. If you are protecting your charge, you do not need to pay the cost.

- **Eternal Guardian:** When you protect a person, place, or thing that can be measured with Scale (standing guard at the entrance of your pantheon's afterlife, keeping a watchful eye on a city all night), imbue a point of Legend, rather than spending, to invoke your legendary Title as a Feat of Scale.
- **Living Pillar:** When you protect someone else with your body, you are immune to environmental hazards: The flames of a burning building do not scorch you, a landslide does not crush you, water cannot drown you, and so on. As long as you keep your charge close (within arm's reach), they benefit from the same immunity, but still need to eat, sleep, etc., so it's best to leave a hazardous area as quickly as possible.
- **They Cannot Be Touched:** Spend a point of Momentum and designate one person to be immune to all source of damage until the end of the session. This only applies if the character is someone you have a Bond with, or is of a lower Tier. If a target does not need to be protected (such as your best friend, the Warrior-Calling Scion), this Knack does not apply.

HEROIC HEALER

Mortal Healer Knacks improve your ability to heal and help your allies with mundane medicines. Immortal Healer Knacks endow you with the power to stay death itself. Healer Knacks are driven by the concepts of purification and restoration.

- **The Bare Minimum:** You are always able to safely tend to someone's wounds even if you have no sanitary medical tools available. Even if all you have are twigs and dirt, you'll be able to perform surgery at no increased Difficulty and at no risk to your patient.
- **Combat Medic:** When you tend to an ally's wounds in the heat of battle, once per turn remove any –1 Injury they may be suffering — including damage sustained to armor — without needing to roll. You may not make Mixed actions when utilizing this Knack.

- **Damage Conversion:** When you administer medical attention to a patient or yourself as an action, convert any Injuries one lower: Maimed becomes Injured, Injured becomes Bruised, and Bruised injuries heal completely.
- **Doctor's Kit:** At the start of a combat scene, roll Knack Skill. Spend the resulting successes on the following Stunts whenever a bandmate or allied character in the same range band as you takes an Injury:
  - Ice Pack (1) — Remove a –1 Injury, including those sustained by armor
  - Swift Bandaging (2) — Remove a –1 Injury
  - Emergency Operation (4) — Remove a –4 Injury until the end of the scene
- **Immunization Booster:** Designate up to your Knack Skill in targets to be **under your care**. While under your protection, they get +2 Enhancement to all rolls to resist disease and poison, and to recover from injuries. Storyguide characters you protect in this way are automatically protected — that is, the Storyguide does not need to make rolls when they would be affected by disease or poison.
- **Instant Diagnosis:** When you spend time interacting with an ailing target, you diagnose what is wrong with him, as well as any other pertinent medical information. In the event that she is diagnosing a patient suffering from a supernatural disease, this may require a Knack Skill roll, which is opposed by whomever afflicted the victim.
- **Surgeon with the Hands of God:** Halve the time you need to undertake any kind of medical procedure (such as surgery). You never face any increased Difficulty to treat a critically ill or injured patient.

IMMORTAL HEALER

- **Breath of Life:** If you touch a target within three minutes of their death, you can spend a point of Legend and bring them back to life with all Injuries filled. Any longer than three minutes and the target cannot be revived.
- **Internal Refinery:** When exposed to a poison or disease, make a Knack Skill roll. A success instantly cures yourself. By spending a point of Momentum, you then also generate one dose of a cure or antidote, which you can secrete and administer to another person.
- **Panacea:** When you work to cure a disease or fight an illness on a large Scale (curing cancer, stopping a God-driven plague), imbue a point of Legend, rather than spending, to invoke your legendary Title as a Feat of Scale.
- **Reconstruction:** Once per day, make a Knack Skill roll. If any successes are achieved, remove any one Condition a target may face that is not necessarily an illness or ailment. Examples include ending a character's blindness, restoring a limb with a perfect prosthetic, and ending paralysis or PTSD. You may cure additional ailments by spending 1 Momentum each. As an additional effect, which does not cost Momentum, at the beginning of the session you have the option to reassign your Attribute dots in any order as long as they remain within the same original categories. You cannot move Resistance dots into Power dots, for example.

HEROIC HUNTER

At the Mortal level, Hunter Knacks improve your ability to pursue and track a target and avoid detection when on the hunt. Hunter Knacks are driven by the concepts of pursuit and perception.

Like Creator Knacks, Hunter Knacks do not need a literal stalked target. Figurative stalking — be it chasing down a malevolent kami hidden in construction blueprints or pursuing a black hat hacker through a mainframe. So long as there is opposition, it's sufficient for Hunters to pursue.

- **Apex Predator:** When a target of lower Tier who you have been pursuing attacks you or otherwise attempts to hunt you in return, increase the difficulty of all Stunts they apply against you by 1. If this target is your *quarry*, increase it by an additional +1.
- **Eyes in the Blinds:** Spend Momentum to invest a fraction of your power into a small token (a coin, a figurine, dice, an arrowhead, etc.). Place this token anywhere in a Field you are aware of, and for as long as it remains in place you have the power to observe the goings-on in the Field as if you were present. This lasts for the duration of a day in-game time, or for a session of play, whichever is longer. You do not have to deliver the token yourself, and may send an ally or animal companion to deliver it instead. If the token is destroyed or otherwise removed from the Field, the effect ends. The Difficulty to notice the token is equal to your Hunter Calling dots.
- **Internal Compass:** You always know your precise direction — whether that be navigating while on foot or driving a car, or working your way out of a petty God's labyrinthine prison. You do not ever have to roll to navigate somewhere, or to find your way out of being lost. If you are entrapped in a magical maze, make a Clash of Wills with 2 Enhancement.
- **Keen-Eyed Predator:** When you enter a Field, you extend your senses to determine what might await you. Ask one question from the following list for free. You may roll your Knack Skill and spend one success per additional question. The Storyguide must answer these questions honestly:

- What kinds of hazards (such as terrain) are present?
- Where is the nearest exit?
- Where is the safest way in?
- How many hostile enemies are present?
- Who (or what) is the biggest threat?

- **Most Dangerous Prey:** Choose an enemy to be your *quarry*. When you pursue your quarry, gain Enhancement 1 to all rolls made against the target (including attack rolls) until the end of the session or until you catch them, whichever comes first. You gain access to the following Stunts, which may be applied to any attack action made against your quarry:
  - Stalk (1s): After resolving your attack, spend a success to take an additional Move action.
  - Snare (any successes above Defense): You trap the target in place. They may not make Move, Rush, or Disengage actions. To end the effect, the target must make Athletics + Dexterity rolls vs. your Knack Skill until they succeed or until you choose to end it, whichever comes first.
- **Silence in the Woods:** When pursuing a target, you make no noise at all, adding +2 Enhancement to avoid detection based on hearing/sound (including things that can perceive vibrations without specifically hearing) and to set up ambushes. This Enhancement applies before you roll. Recording equipment is also unable to pick up your sound.
- **Worrying Hound:** While pursuing a target, you do not face any increase in difficulty to track down your target, even if they were to take flight, hide in a body of water, or attempt to disappear into the back alleys of a crowded city. You always have some idea of where your target has gone, and gain +1 Enhancement to keep up with him and to apply any Stunts you may have access to from Hunter Knacks. When you hunt your quarry, add another +1 Enhancement.

IMMORTAL HUNTER

- **Always There:** Anyone of a lower Tier cannot escape you. You always find them and can always track them down no matter how far they go.
- **Perfect Camouflage:** You blend in seamlessly with your surroundings, granting +3 Enhancement to avoid notice by the person you are pursuing, which applies before you roll. Targets of a lower Tier simply cannot spot you. Gain access to the following Stunt:
  - Vanish (successes equal to the target's Composure): After resolving an attack, you vanish from the target's line of sight. They may not target you with any action until the start of your next turn.
- **Relentless:** When you pursue or hunt a target on a massive Scale or of great Size (chasing your target across dimensions, hunting a mountain-sized titanspawn), imbue a point of Legend, rather than spending, to invoke your legendary Title as a Feat of Scale.
- **Send the Pack:** Make a Knack Skill roll. On a success, designate a target that you can see with unaided sight. Friendly characters you designate up to your Legend can pursue them without ceasing and at no increased difficulty.

HEROIC JUDGE

Mortal Judge Knacks give you power over the truth and analysis, and enhance your ability to be just. Immortal Knacks bind you and others to powerful oaths and use the force of someone's guilt against them. Judge Knacks are driven by the concepts of judgment and scrutiny.

- **Eye for an Eye:** When you suffer an Injury, spend Momentum and inflict the same Injury on the target that attacked you. The target must have attacked you directly; you cannot reflect attacks that targeted someone else. If the target does not have the ability to take a similar Injury (having your arm bitten by a giant snake, for example), inflict an Injury of similar severity instead, such as a festering, envenomed bite mark. This also applies to Critical Hits inflicted.
- **Indisputable Analysis:** You spend a moment observing the scene you wish to analyze and the player makes a Knack Skill roll. You then apply the successes on this roll as Enhancement to all rolls made to analyze and investigate the incident for the rest of the scene. These successes apply before you roll.
- **Lie Detector:** Anyone of a Tier lower than you suffers +2 Complication to lie to you. If you are currently casing and they are somehow involved, they simply cannot lie to you at all. The Storyguide should also notify you when a lie has been told, though it does not automatically reveal the truth, and also reveals nebulous truth, such as "he has been convinced this is true" — which should always be a means for characters to pursue the person who manipulated the target in the first place.
- **Objection!:** You mark a target, and anyone targeting them with an action gains +1 Enhancement to all rolls. This bonus applies before you roll. Gain access to the following Stunt, which you may apply to any of your attack actions:
  - Terrify (any successes above Defense): After applying this Stunt, the target must make a Clash of Wills roll. On a failure, they must flee the fight or suffer +2 Difficulty to attack rolls until the fight is over.
- **On the Case:** When you investigate an event or scene, you are casing. While casing, gain +1 Enhancement to rolls to discern motives and search for clues,

which applies before you roll. Casing lasts until the end of the session.

- **Quick Study:** You sweep your eyes over a crime scene and collects clue almost immediately. Halve the time you would need to perform an investigation. Quarter it if you are also casing.
- **The Truth Arises:** When you engage in conversation (or other such interaction) with an alleged perpetrator of a crime, make a Knack Skill roll. On a success, if the target is guilty, he will leak a piece of information that connects him to his crime. Before expending effort on using this Knack, let the Storyguide know, and she should tell you if the target does not have any valuable information to leak — which in itself can be helpful in an investigation.

IMMORTAL JUDGE

- **Bound by Oath:** When someone swears an oath to you to perform a task of your choosing, you bind it with your choice of swearing ceremony. As long as they work towards the sworn oath, they gain +1 Enhancement to all rolls until the task is complete. This bonus applies before the roll. If the target breaks your oath, the next roll they would make botches automatically.
- **I Am the Law:** When you reshape laws or challenge the structure of society on a wide Scale (rewriting a country's constitution, smashing the patriarchy), imbue a point of Legend, rather than spending, to invoke your legendary Title as a Feat of Scale.
- **The Pain of Dishonesty:** Spend Momentum and anyone who lies directly to you suffers 1 Health damage or a –1 Injury Condition of your choosing. You choose whether or not to inflict the damage, automatically alerting you of the lie (though it does not automatically reveal the truth). You also know the severity of the lie, and therefore can choose not to harm someone who is lying to preserve someone's feelings as opposed to lying to obstruct a criminal investigation.
- **Terror of the Guilty:** Anyone guilty of a wrongdoing of your choosing who is of lower Tier than you cannot bear to be in your presence and will flee in panic and terror or break down weeping and confessing. To apply this to anyone of the same Tier or higher, spend Momentum and win a Clash of Wills.

HEROIC LEADER

Mortal Leader Knacks grant you the power to hold sway over your followers and keep order in the midst of chaos. Leader Knacks are driven by the concepts of charisma and control.

This section references characters that "follow" the Leader Scion. Followers are typically not bandmates, and are often trivial targets (though not necessarily). Use this as a metric for determining whether or not a character is a follower.

- **Captain of Industry:** When you take charge of a group, roll Knack Skill. With two successes, you need only spend 2 Momentum to add an interval to a complex action. With five successes, you need only spend 1 Momentum.
- **Cloak of Dread:** You project an aura of menace that terrifies and intimidates anyone who would dare cross you. Spend Momentum and double your successes on any Knack Skill rolls to intimidate targets. Enemies of a lesser Tier and extras simply will not attack you.
- **Good Listener:** When you make casual conversation with an SGC, that character will reveal information or an important detail that the Leader is looking for, if they know it. Before using this ability, tell the Storyguide what you're seeking; if the SGC doesn't know it, you immediately become aware that the character isn't relevant to your quest. Even the most recalcitrant of characters eventually opens up and reveals a clue — this power requires no roll.
- **Grand Entrance:** When you make a first impression, roll your Knack Skill. On a success, the target remembers you favorably, granting you +1 Enhancement to all Social rolls made towards them until the end of the session.
- **Inspirational Aura:** When you take charge of a group, roll Knack Skill. For every two successes rolled, reduce the Difficulty of all actions taken by the group you command by 1. You can inspire a number of people equal to her Leadership + Leader Calling, or can spend a point of Momentum to apply this to a much larger group, multiplying that number by 10 for each Momentum spent. The decrease in difficulty does not apply to you, though while you are inspiring others, you gain 2 Enhancement to apply to social rolls involving leadership, and any Stunts you may have gained from Knacks.
- **Lighthouse of Society:** In a tense, heated, or chaotic situation, you stand as a beacon of certain leadership. Your presence is a bulwark against fear and panic. As long as a crowd has not been frightened directly by magical means, you can get a group of people to act calm and do as you ask (such as evacuating a dangerous area) in an orderly fashion without needing to roll. A supernatural situation requires a Clash of Wills. For example, if an enemy Scion of Eris sows panic into a crowd of mortals so they'll bolt and trample each other, a roll would be made against her. If Poseidon creates a tidal wave that happens to scare people because natural disasters are terrifying, a roll would not be made against him.
- **Perfect Poise:** You cannot be shaken by panic or fear unless it is from another supernatural source — in which case, you gain 2 Enhancement to resist it (such as making Clash of Wills rolls) that applies before you roll. You also gain 1 Enhancement to all Social rolls involving grace, poise, or composure, and to keep a "poker face." This also applies before you roll.

IMMORTAL LEADER

Fearless Presence: As long as they can see you, your followers of lesser Tier are fearless and do not panic or flee. They will walk into the Underworld or plunge into a Titanic monster's mouth or face down a wrathful storm brewed up by a petulant god so long as you lead them.

- **Invulnerable Master:** While leading followers loyal to you (Storyguide characters, not bandmates), you can spend Momentum and shrug off a −1 Bruised injury or a −2 Injured injury when they're suffered.
- **Masterful Efficiency:** When you lead people in a task, make a Knack Skill roll. They increase in Scale by 1 for every success achieved, up to half your Legend rating, for one action (which may be part of an extended task, though not combat). A team of five people can build a skyscraper, or a small band of warriors can hold a chokepoint against an entire army, etc. You may spend Momentum for the task to increase Scale one for one above the number of successes achieved, again to a maximum of half your Legend rating.
- **Not Today, Friends:** When you command others or stir the hearts of many on a huge Scale (commanding an entire army, calling a whole city to your aid), imbue a point of Legend, rather than spending, to invoke your Legendary Title as a Feat of Scale.

HEROIC LIMINAL

Liminal Knacks at the mortal level grant you the power to send messages, to ease your travels, and to draw upon the silence at the edges of mortal perception. Liminal Knacks are driven by the concepts of boundary and distance.

- **Beyond Memory:** You bend the boundaries of cognition, fading from memory after an interaction. Anyone trying to describe you or recall the details of your interaction must make an Occult + Composure roll at Difficulty 2 to remember anything at all, with a 1-point Complication. If they fail to meet this Complication, your identity is safe, though the details of their interaction are not. If this is magically contested, make a Clash of Wills. You may spend Momentum and double successes on any Liminal Skill rolls to avoid passive detection, notice, or stealth otherwise; this does not work against active searching.

- **Complete Privacy:** By reinforcing the importance of your personal boundaries, any interactions you take cannot be listened in on, your lips cannot be read, your phone can't be tapped, etc. by use of mundane means. Add +2 difficulty to attempts to tail you. This protects only against covert attempts to invade your privacy and offers no protection against airport security going through your luggage or rivals breaking into your apartment.
- **Experienced Traveler:** When you travel to a new place, no matter how remote, you quickly pick up the social mores and behaviors, along with enough of the language to get by. Add +1 Enhancement to any applicable rolls to blend into the culture, if the Storyguide feels a need to call for a roll at all. This bonus applies before you roll. Additionally, when you attend a social ritual (such as a wedding or a funeral or a birthday party) you always know exactly the right social mores to follow, and how to appropriately dress. Even if you were not invited, you will not read as out of place.
- **Flatlander:** When you make a close combat, thrown, or ranged attack, you gain access and 1 Enhancement to apply any of the following Stunts to your action, in addition to the default set:
    - Glimpse the Other Side (any successes above Defense): Make a Clash of Wills. If the target fails, they are removed from reality (leaving play entirely) until the start of their next turn. They roll initiative as normal and reappear where they were standing on their action. An opponent removed from reality in this way cannot be targeted by any actions until they reappear.
    - Stutter Time (any successes above Defense): You force the target of your attack to suffer a penalty to their Initiative equal to the successes you spend on this Stunt. This pushes a fast opponent further down the initiative roster. If you are targeting an opponent who has already gone, they take this penalty at the start of the next turn.
    - Bend Space (any successes above Defense): Reduce the target's Range by 1 for each success spent on this Stunt, to a minimum of Close, which lasts until the end of the target's next action.
- **Neither the Minute nor the Hour:** You make a prediction about the details of your target's inevitable death (which does not have to be true) and make an opposed Knack Skill roll. If successful, the target suffers a +1 Difficulty to all actions for the rest of the scene.
- **Unerring Delivery:** Send a message via another person — a stranger you choose on the street, a spirit or ghost of your pantheon, etc. — to someone in an instant, which can be done even if you are not present in the World, or somewhere else where a simple text or email might not reach.
- **Unobtrusive Visitor:** When you would observe or infiltrate a location where you do not belong, spend a Momentum and blur the line between what is expected and unexpected. You take on the aspect of someone unassuming and invisible: a janitor, gardener, housekeeper, etc. So long as you collect information or remain an observer and do not take hostile action, anyone in the same Field as you overlooks your presence. This lasts until you take violent action, or until you leave the Field, whichever comes first.

IMMORTAL LIMINAL

- **Enforcing the Boundary:** Make a Knack Skill roll — on a success, create a barrier of force that protects you and all allies within short range of you. It moves with you, but you may not take the Rush or Disengage actions. The force field lasts until the end of a fight scene, until you are Taken Out, or until you choose to end the effect — whichever comes first. While enforcing this boundary, characters under its protection may not be targeted by attacks by weapons or abilities with the Firearms or Arcing tags. It adds your Legend in Enhancement to any rolls you make to resist the Rush action. This applies before you roll.
- **The Long Road to Anywhere:** You make an extended journey without stopping but must rest upon arrival. When you arrive, you can ask hospitality of anyone of a lower Tier than you, and if they refuse you have the option to make the target suffer +2 Difficulty to all actions until you choose to remove the penalty.
- **Pierce the Veil:** When you cross boundaries on an epic Scale (descending into the afterlife on foot, driving your way across the globe), imbue a point of Legend, rather than spending, to invoke your Legendary Title as a Feat of Scale.
- **Step Sideways:** When you take a Move action, cross the distance instantly. This movement ignores hazardous and difficult terrain and crosses distance where there may not be a safe place to walk — such as across a chasm. So long as you can see your destination and it is within a distance you can Move, you appear there unharmed. This may only be used to augment the reflexive Move action, and does not apply to Rush or Disengage.

HEROIC LOVER

Mortal Lover Knacks bestow upon you domain over relationships, attention, and other's emotions. Lover Knacks are driven by the concepts of emotion and relationships.

- **Fluid Appeal:** When interacting with someone, gain knowledge of whatever floats their boat. At any subsequent interaction, you can shift your features to be more appealing, adding +2 Enhancement to any persuasive social action including but not limited to seduction. This bonus applies before the roll is made. Note that this does not conceal your identity in any way.
- **I am a Fire:** You stoke the affection one person has towards another — including yourself — which impels them towards a relationship. If it is between two Storyguide characters, work with the Storyguide to determine how their suddenly passionate relationship takes shape. If the target is one of your bandmates, this Knack does not work unless you obtain permission from the character's player. If the target is yourself, you gain +1 Enhancement to all Social rolls involving your partner of choice until the end of the session.
- **Lover's Intuition:** When touching another character, which may be as brief as a handshake, you gain an understanding of your target's romantic life. Ask one question from the following list for free. You may roll your Knack Skill and spend one success per additional question.
    - Who or what does the character love?
    - Who is the character romantically involved with?
    - Who is the character close to?
    - Who would the character like to be romantically involved with?
    - This may be used on your bandmates with consent from the player.
- **On Your Side:** When you make a teamwork action with a person with whom you have a devoted, intimate, or romantic relationship, add your Lover dots in Enhancement to spend on Stunts including any you may have gained from Knacks.
- **Not a Fighter:** When you are engaged in a fight, as long as you do not make attacks, enemies will not target you directly with their attacks. Additionally, gain +1 Enhancement to disengage and withdrawal rolls. You must also have a partner or Followers present for this effect to apply.
- **Perfect Partner:** You know how to work perfectly in sync with someone, down to the timed beats of their hearts. Double the usual benefit you would provide from any teamwork rolls.
- **Soothing Presence:** When you enter an initial social encounter, reduce Attitude by 1. For any other interaction in which you attempt to get someone else to relax, calm down, or be welcoming, you have 1 Enhancement to all applicable rolls and to apply to any Stunts you may have gained from Knacks.

IMMORTAL LOVER

- **Center of Attention:** You're where the people want to be. You are a centrifuge of social attention, automatically pulling anyone of lesser Tier than you into your social wake. If you are at a party and need to meet someone of political or social importance, they are there. If you need the attention of supernaturally powerful individuals, spend Momentum instead. At Storyguide discretion, you may need to make a Knack Skill roll to attract the attention of the Gods themselves — and this may not always work out the way you'd like it to.
- **For You, I Will:** Regain 1 point of spent Legend when you perform an impressive feat that positively impacts a character whom you love (which expressly includes the platonic bond of close friendship) — this can be a Storyguide character or a bandmate, but the feat must be suitably impressive depending on the target. What impresses an ordinary mortal is not the same as what impresses a Demigod.
- **Hearts Aflame:** When you inspire passion or promote relationships on an epic Scale (inspiring an audience of millions, changing a culture's attitudes on consent), imbue a point of Legend, rather than spending, to invoke your Legendary Title as a Feat of Scale.
- **Lover's Oath:** You and a consenting partner enter into an agreement to bind yourselves together forever as lovers. Both parties spend a point of Legend (if applicable). From that moment on, it takes only a moment's concentration to know the location and general state (emotional wellbeing, health, etc.) of your partner. You have the option to accept Injuries for the other, and can imbue points of Legend for each other's abilities (assuming your partner has a pool of Legend to pull from). This is a pact that binds you together by Fate, and while it does not necessarily have to be made out of romantic love, ill fortune befalls those who mistreat their partner whom they have sworn an oath to before the Gods.

HEROIC SAGE

Mortal Sage Knacks boost your command of academic knowledge, including your ability to learn and teach. Sage Knacks are driven by the concepts of information and observation.

- **Blockade of Reason:** You readily deflate the arguments of hucksters and con men with a sharp application of reason, or blunt denial (usually calling out the person for what they are trying to do). Targets of lower Tier cannot trick, coerce, swindle, or con you, and any supernatural attempts to do so trigger a Clash of Wills. You add 2 Enhancement to the Clash of Wills roll.

- **Master of the World:** While inside a Field, you may define up to three points of Enhancements or Complications (or a combination of each) that are readily apparent to your perceptions (which may be enhanced by other abilities) but not obvious to other observers. They must conform to the Features of the Field, however — it makes sense for a shotgun to be behind the bar, but not a rocket launcher. The hardwood floors of a burning building could be expected to be weak, but the flames can't be cold. Only three total Enhancements or Complications can be applied to a Field at a time, regardless of how many Scions possess this ability.
- **Palace of Memory:** When you recall past events that you have experienced or studied, you are able to recall the details flawlessly, never missing out on any clues or dropping the ball on any details you might remember. This allows the player to bypass the need to roll to remember salient details or facts, and also to declare a narrative advantage she may have remembered without needing to invoke her Path. If you missed a Procedural Clue in a prior scene, you may attempt to rediscover it.
- **Presence of Magic:** You always know when you are near an object or place of true magical or sacred power. How this manifests is up to you. Ask the Storyguide if an object is magical or sacred, and she must tell you honestly "yes" or "no." This bypasses the need to make any kind of Occult roll to identify a place or object of magical or sacred power.
- **Office Hours:** When someone approaches you with a problem that you can solve, they gain +1 Enhancement to resolve it themselves if you work them through a solution. If you can't solve it, you gain the same bonus to all rolls to solve it on your own. These bonuses apply before rolls are made. Spend Momentum to impel a Storyguide Character to come to you with a problem in need of solving.
- **Omniglot Translation:** When you converse in or read a foreign language, your communication is flawless, without a trace of an accent. You can turn out translations in your native language in a matter of minutes without needing to roll. If you are translating mystical runes or the handwriting of Gods, you still do so swiftly, but must make a Knack Skill roll.
- **Speed Reading:** When you read materials for your research, you do so at lightning speed, devouring thick tomes in a matter of minutes and flipping through electronic documents in the blink of an eye. Halve the time you need to do any kind of academic research. Once a scene you may establish that you've read up on a subject and gain 1 Enhancement to the next applicable roll. This bonus applies before the roll.

IMMORTAL SAGE

- **Cipher:** You are never stumped by any codes or encryptions set in place by a character of a lower Tier. When you converse in or read a foreign language, your communication is flawless, without a trace of an accent. You can turn out translations in your native language in a matter of minutes without needing to roll. If you are translating mystical runes or the handwriting of gods, you still do so swiftly, but must make a Knack Skill roll. When you create your own encryption, it also cannot be resolved by anyone of a lower Tier. You add your half your Legend, round up, in Enhancement to rolls to prevent decryption by your peers and those of higher Tiers. This bonus applies before you roll.
- **Eternal Genius:** When you unravel a mystery or tackle a complex, scholarly problem on a massive Scale (untangling the secrets of quantum physics, solving a trickster God's cipher), imbue a point of Legend, rather than spending, to invoke your Legendary Title as a Feat of Scale.
- **Immortal Mastermind:** When you make a plan of action and direct others to follow, it grants them 1 Enhancement to all actions. Anyone who doesn't follow your plan gains +1 Difficulty to all actions. Bandmates are not under any obligation to follow your every word, but do gain the benefit if they opt to participate. When dealing with an enemy, you are free to create a plan in order to bait your opposition into suffering the Difficulty — just as planned.
- **Overworld Knowledge:** Once per scene, make a Knack Skill roll. For each success, ask a question of the Storyguide relevant to the events transpiring — something you would know or have studied — and receive a truthful and applicable answer. For example, "What stratagem is the enemy general using?" or "What are Kane Taoka's true motives?" If you have remaining unasked questions, spend Momentum to roll over the remaining questions into the following scene.

HEROIC TRICKSTER

At the Mortal level, Trickster Knacks help you lie, cheat, and steal. Trickster Knacks are driven by the concepts of deception and larceny.

- **Blather and Skite:** When you spout nonsense at your target, they must spend a moment trying to figure out what the heck you just said — buying you or someone else more time to accomplish any kind of underhanded task: sneaking into a place, slipping past a posted sentry, lying your way through security, and so on. This works automatically on any character of same or lower Tier, but requires a Knack Skill roll to work on someone of higher Tier. For each success rolled, you buy five minutes of in-game time or one turn of combat (whichever is more immediately applicable) before enemies realize

you've infiltrated and go on high alert. If you use this on one of your bandmates, you only succeed with the consent of the other character's player.

- **In Sheep's Clothing:** When you disguise yourself, you do without needing to roll. You have the option to change your hair, skin, and eye color, apparent gender, and height within a few inches, but cannot assume the exact appearance of someone else. The disguise cannot be seen through, though your mannerisms and turn of phrase may give you away. At Storyguide discretion, Knack Skill rolls may be required to blend in.
- **Light Fingered:** When you steal an object or pick-pocket someone, you do so without needing to roll, so long as the object is something you can conceal in your hands. If you use this ability to lift something from a member of your band, you must do so with the consent of that character's player. You cannot steal an item that is currently in use. Stealing a weapon from an enemy would first require the Disarm or Seize stunt.
- **Rumor Miller:** Your lies catch on like wildfire, and you need only make the smallest post on social media to get a wild rumor circulating. Make a Knack Skill roll — any successes delivers the rumor about the target to those who should hear it — his boss, his husband, his best friends, etc.
- **Smoke and Mirrors:** Once per scene, when you would be Taken Out, you instead spend Momentum, negate the damage that would have taken you out and move one range band away from your attacker — but leave behind a brief afterimage of your outline, which crumbles into dust seconds later.
- **Takes One to Know One:** When you are the target of a scam or a lie, you recognize that a deception is taking place. You do not know what the truth is, but you instinctively understand that you are in the company of liars and cheaters. Whether or not you call out the cheat on his dishonest actions is up to you.
- **Wasn't Me:** When you do something with legal or social consequences, you delay the consequence by transferring blame to someone else of the same or lower Tier. This delay lasts until the end of the session by default, but may be delayed further by making a Knack Skill roll, and spending 1 success per scene of delay. To push blame onto a member of your band, you must do so with the consent of that character's player. Once the delay ends, anyone of higher Tier than you who had been duped by this Knack realizes they've been tricked, and will likely seek revenge.

IMMORTAL TRICKSTER

- **Doppelganger:** Make a Knack Skill roll and with any successes, make an exact copy of yourself. The copy has all your Attributes and Skills, Knacks and Boons, and is controlled by you. This doppelganger may be sent to perform any social or investigative task independently of you, though you are aware of the outcome (and the player is free to roleplay her character in two places at once). It cannot benefit from teamwork actions and dissipates into dust if attacked. Otherwise, the copy lasts for a number of days equal to your Trickster Calling.
- **One Man's Trash:** Spend Momentum and make an ordinary piece of junk seem extremely rare and valuable. This item will sell or trade as if it had real value. Anyone of lower Tier buys this deception instantly, squabbling over themselves for who will get to buy this unique thing. Targets of the same Tier or higher must make an Empathy roll to see through this lie, but face +Legend Difficulty to convince anyone else that it is not just trash.
- **Surprise!:** Voluntarily be Taken Out (for all intents and purposes, you appear to be dead or unconscious) and come back later, unharmed, at any point in time during the session to make a surprise attack or otherwise set up an ambush with +4 Enhancement, which applies before you roll. If someone has seen you pull this trick before, they resist the ambush as normal (you do not gain the bonus) and instead gain +4 Enhancement on combat rolls against you for the first round if they succeed. If it would better suit you, you may return dramatically in the middle of a social scene instead, adding the same Enhancement to the next most appropriate Social roll.
- **Woven from Lies:** When you spin a story or craft an elaborate deception on an epic Scale (spreading a vicious rumor across the world via social media, convincing a whole society of people that you're someone you're not), imbue a point of Legend, rather than spending, to invoke your Legendary Title as a Feat of Scale.

HEROIC WARRIOR

The most direct of the Callings. Warrior Knacks make you a master of weapons and a crusher of foes. Warrior Knacks are driven by the concepts of conflict and violence.

- **The Biggest Threat:** When you make a show of force or intimidate your enemy, make a Knack Skill roll. On a success, the target must focus its efforts on dealing with you first, suffering +2 Difficulty to attack anyone else.
- **Close the Gap:** The first time you make a combat movement roll, make a Knack Skill roll instead. Spend successes on the following Stunts for the rest of the fight:
  - Charge! (1s): You make the Rush action without needing to make an opposed roll. This is negation is limited by the rules for applying Knack abilities — i.e. you may not apply it to anyone two Tiers higher than you.
  - Inescapable (1s): Opponents of a lower Tier than you who are engaged with you in combat may not make the Disengage action. You must spend a success on this Stunt each time a different opponent would try to escape you, but only need to apply it once per target.
  - Sure-footed (1s): Apply this Stunt to a combat movement action; Difficult terrain does not apply to this movement.
- **Death by Teacup:** When you use an improvised weapon, it becomes as deadly as anything designed for the job. It takes on the profile of any existing weapon of a similar size or shape: A teacup becomes brass knuckles or a punch dagger; a shard of glass becomes a knife; a thrown shoe becomes a throwing hatchet, etc. It must appropriately fit something of a similar size and shape, as described in the examples listed. This benefit lasts until you no longer hold the object, or until it breaks, or until you are no longer using the object with any Warrior Skill — whichever comes first. In the case of thrown objects, the benefit extends until impact. A hurled shoe strikes with the force of a tomahawk and then becomes ordinary footwear when it hits the ground. This is compatible with Master of Weapons, though still adheres to the set limitations.
- **Enhanced Impact:** Whenever you successfully deal Injury with your Knack Skill, you also knock the target back one range band. This does not do any extra damage, but can put someone in a tight spot.
- **Master of Weapons:** At the beginning of the session, choose one of your weapons to be your favored weapon. When you use your favored weapon, add a number of additional Tag points to it up to your Warrior Calling. These do not have to fit the weapon's existing profile: A sword can be made to strike at Far range, for example. Spend Momentum to switch the benefit to another weapon. Negative cost Tags cannot be purchased with this Knack.
- **Trick Shot:** When showing off with a ranged weapon, convert any additional Difficulty imposed because of your showmanship into Enhancement instead which may be spent on any Ranged Attack

Stunt besides Inflict Damage. This applies before your roll.

- **Tempered:** When you wear no armor, you are considered to have the Armored (Soft) Tag. This benefit stacks with the increased difficulty of the inflict damage Stunt granted by any other armor you wear when you fight lesser foes (minor characters, or anyone a Tier lower than you).

IMMORTAL WARRIOR

- **Army of One:** When you fight outnumbered, you do not take any penalties or increased difficulty that being outnumbered would cause. You gain half your Legend, round up as an Enhancement to all attacks so long as there are more opponents present than you and your band. When fighting a greater force as a Feat of Scale, invoke your Legendary Title and imbue Legend instead of spending it.
- **Hurl to the Moon:** Imbue a point of Legend instead of spending Legend to lift and throw objects with a Size rating higher than yours when performing a brute force Feat of Scale. Objects thrown this way can also be hurled to medium range. Outside of throwing a huge object, this Knack allows you to make all Thrown attacks at long range, regardless of the range tag on any weapon. You roll the attack as a normal for Thrown.
- **Perfect Defense:** Once per fight, declare that an attack made against you by an enemy of the same Tier or lower does not affect you in any way. To do this a second time, spend Momentum. This may not be used more than twice a fight.
- **They're Everywhere:** The Field you are fighting in becomes *divine territory*. When an enemy enters divine territory, you have the option to make one attack against them, regardless of which range band they have entered and which may not be boosted by any Knacks that allow you to make extra attacks. You use this ability even if you have already taken your action this round and may do so no matter how many enemies enter your divine territory, but you may only make one attack per enemy.

PURVIEWS

Through conquest, the Gods seized authority over the World. They call, and its elements must answer. They move, and its mysteries move with them. Yama's judgements fall with the surety and weight of death. Mixcoatl hunts as fiercely and hungrily as fire. Oya casts aside the status quo like an oncoming storm. Mercury travels at the speed of wit. When humanity refers to a deity as a "God of" something, that something is usually a Purview — an elemental force over which they have authority, such as Fertility, War, Passion, or the Stars. These are the Purviews of the divine realm, and Scions inherit them by right of birth. A Scion gains power merely by claiming mastery over a Purview, awakening an innate divine power and the ability to command their domain through freeform marvels. With dedication, they may master Boons that confer specific powers drawn from their Purview.

GUIDES, RELICS, AND PURVIEWS

All Scions gain intrinsic access to one of their divine parent's Purviews, chosen at character creation, as well as the Signature Purview of their pantheon. In order to gain access to other Purviews, they must either channel it through a suitable Relic or the blessings of a Guide. If you lose access to the Relic or falls out of favor with a Guide, you cannot use any powers of the Purview they provide, including their innate powers.

LEGEND COSTS

The Scions use the power of their Legend to work their divinity. Sometimes, the text of a Boon or marvel will instruct you to imbue it with a certain number of Legend points. Legend imbued in a Boon or marvel is committed to that effect for the specified duration, and you cannot use it for other purposes during that time. However, when you reclaim imbued Legend from a Boon or other effect, it is immediately added back to your pool of Legend points. Reclaiming Legend is instantaneous and can be done at any time.

More rarely, Boons may require you to spend points of Legend. These are spent from your pool until you recover them naturally (see p. 188).

MARVELS

A Scion who masters a Purview may wield divine authority over it, performing acts of divine power that shape, summon, or influence their Purview through her Motifs. These marvels are flexible and free-form powers compared to Boons and Knacks. If you want to perform an act of divine power, and nothing else on your character sheet allows it, marvels exist to let you do it.

The nature of your marvels and what you can do with them is determined by the two elements that go into performing them. One is the Purview used to perform the marvel, whose power, substance, or symbolism you're drawing on or manipulating to shape the World to your will. The other element is a motif, a magical paradigm or set of metaphors through which you explain how you control your Purview to achieve the desired effect. Most of the time, you'll use the Motif associated with the pantheon you belong to. Relics also have their own motifs, which you can call upon when you perform marvels of the Purviews associated with that Relic. Finally, it's also possible to gain motifs from miscellaneous sources, such as a sacred animal chosen through the Beasts Purview (p. 241).

SUCKS TO BE TRIVIAL

Trivial characters are the fodder on which Scions demonstrate their miraculous power. Using a Marvel on a trivial target doesn't cost the usual Legend required for that effect. The Storyguide may still require the normal cost if the Marvel also affects non-trivial characters in meaningful way — using a trivial target as a vector to get to a stronger foe shouldn't award a discount.

KEEP IT MOVING

A word for the Storyguide — don't let the game grind to a halt as a player tries to figure out if they can get a certain marvel out of a Purview or motif. It's better to let a conceptually shaky marvel through than to sit around debating semantics instead of playing. You can "balance out" a thematically shaky marvel by applying a Complication to the action it benefits or imposing a thematically related drawback on the player's character.

PANTHEON MOTIFS

- **Æsir:** By drawing runes or weaving threads, one may perform a jarteign.
- **Devá:** By chanting spells and undergoing austerities, one may create or become a miracle.
- **Kami:** The kami are all things, and can be bidden to work wonders.
- **Loa/Òrìshà:** Those who understand plants can use them in magic and medicine.
- **Manitou:** An offering of tobacco, prayers, dance, and song convinces the myriad, unseen manitous to work their magic in your favor.
- **Netjer:** Speaking the sacred ritual words releases sekhem, lending power to the soul.
- **Shén:** Alchemy manipulates the energies both within and without the body through exercises and concoctions associated with the five elements.
- **Teōtl:** Offerings of flowers, food, effigies, and blood empower the Gods to sustain the World with miracles.
- **Theoi:** The most high may grant their favor to those who beseech them.
- **Tuatha Dé Danann:** Magic flows from verse and satire.

In system terms, you can use a marvel only once per scene as a Simple action. Tell your Storyguide the Purview and motif you're using to create it, and choose the effect you wish to create from below. Marvels can't be included in mixed actions.

BLESSINGS

You empower yourself or another character. Imbue 1 Legend to either grant Enhancement 2 on a single action of a specific type, or ignore up to 3 points of Complication spread out across one or more actions. These benefits are lost if not used by the end of the scene. The imbued Legend returns once the bonus has been fully used or the scene ends.

Detective Sergeant Sugio, Scion of Amaterasu, asks the kami of some broken glass at a crime scene what they reflected to gain an Enhancement on his roll to find a clue as a Sun marvel.

COMPLICATION

You turn your Purview against a character or use it to create obstacles. Imbue 1 Legend to impose a +3 Complication on the next action of a particular type that a character takes this scene. The consequences of not buying off the Complication are determined on the Storyguide based on how you describe the marvel affecting the world. The imbued Legend once the Complication has applied or the scene ends.

James, Scion of the Morrígan, mocks a hired security guard's life choices to impose a Complication on their next attack roll with a Chaos marvel.

IMPOSE CONDITION

Spend 1 Legend to inflict a Condition on a character. You can choose a Condition listed in this book or use them as a template to create a new Condition that reflects the Purview, motif, and description of the marvel. A generic your-life-sucks Condition increases the difficulty of all actions a character takes by +1, and must be resolved by taking a challenging or risky action that's thematically tied to the nature of the marvel.

*Anil, Scion of Indra, chants a spell incantation to deafen a foe with a thunderclap as a Sky marvel. His player works with the Storyguide to make a Deaf Condition based on the system for the Blind Condition (**Scion: Origin**, p. 67).*

RESOLVE CONDITION

Spend 1 Legend to resolve a Condition that is related to or opposed to the nature or symbolism of your Purview. This can break curses and other magically inflicted Conditions.

Gabriel, Scion of Xochipilli, crushes a fistful of roses as a sacrifice to free one of his bandmate's from a siren's call with a Passion marvel.

ATTACKING

You wield the forces of your Purview to strike down an enemy. Spend 1 Legend and you can make either melee attacks or ranged attacks for the rest of the scene as simple actions, with up to 3 points of weapon tags to reflect the specific nature of the marvel. Melee attacks are rolled with Close Combat + Might, while ranged attacks are rolled with Occult + Cunning. The Storyguide may let you roll an alternative pool if it fits your marvel.

Nanyamka, Scion of Shàngó, drinks an herbal potion to breathe out gouts of flames with a Fire marvel. Her player and the Storyguide decide that Stamina + Athletics makes the most sense for the attack roll to breathe fire, and assigns it the Aggravated and Long Range tags.

EQUIPMENT

You can magically create or summon an item that is symbolically tied to your Purview, or simply declare that you find it or have had it all along. Imbue 1 Legend to obtain a mundane but useful item, like a handgun, cellphone, or police officer's uniform. You keep the item for as long as you imbue the Legend — once you reclaim it, the item either literally vanishes or "fades" between scenes. If you want an item that would normally be significantly difficult or expensive to obtain — a car, a rocket launcher, a steamroller — spend 1 Legend instead, and the item fades at the end of the current scene or the next one, depending on what timing the Storyguide feels is most appropriate.

Nikasios, Scion of Athena, offers up a prayer to Uncle Ares asking to borrow some firepower as an Order marvel, and receives a police-issue riot taser.

OFFSCREEN ACTION

Imbue 1 Legend to "cut" from the current scene to a nearby mortal or animal, and describe how they take some action that has an impact once you cut back to the scene you and your bandmates are currently in. If that action has long-term effects that last beyond the current scene or if you want to literally summon a mundane character into existence ex nihilo, spend 1 Legend instead.

Edony, Scion of Heimdall, manipulates destiny by weaving colorful strands of yarn as an Artistry marvel. Her player cuts away from the scene to a nearby apartment, and describes an art major drunkenly shouting at his ex's window, distracting everyone from her band's attempts at stealth.

UPHEAVAL

Spend 1 Legend to make a dramatic change to the terrain or circumstances of a scene — set a building on fire, call down a rainstorm, or spread some love. Depending on what you're doing, this can add a significantly advantageous feature (**Scion: Origin**, p. 67) to the Field the scene is set in, create difficult terrain or a hazard (**Scion: Origin**, p. 73), create an obstacle that imposes a +3 Complication on everyone caught in it, or other dramatic, large-scale effects.

GODS OF THE ARTS

Some Gods express divine mastery over a single form of art. When you first pick the Artistry Purview, you may choose to narrow its thematic focus to a single form: music, poetry, dance, theater, cuisine, manga, storytelling, or a similar kind of art. Your Scion's Artistry Boons and marvels can only draw upon and be expressed through the chosen art form. In exchange, you may create a motif (p. 210) based on the chosen art, which you can use to work marvels with any Purview. For example, music could yield either "composing a perfect harmony" or "losing yourself to the rhythm."

Artistry in **Scion** is generally a craft action, using Culture, Athletics, Academics, or potentially any combination of Skill.

Haven, Scion of Muzzu-Kumik-Quae, beckons the manitou with dance and song to create a seismic tremor with an Earth marvel, creating difficult terrain around his enemies as the ground shakes and shatters and opening up a fissure between them and his allies.

EMULATE BOONS

You can use a marvel to replicate the effects of a Boon you don't know — even one that belongs to another Purview, as long as you can describe how your Purview and motif let you emulate the effect.

The cost of this marvel depends on that of the emulated Boon.

- If it requires spending Legend points, you must spend an additional point.
- If it requires imbuing Legend, you must instead spend Legend (indefinite-duration boons have their duration reduced to one scene).
- Free Boons cost 1 spent Legend.

Oufei, Scion of Chang'e, uses a Moon marvel to emulate the Water Boon Changing Tides as she moves through tai chi postures to direct her inner energies.

ESOTERICA

Anything else you might want to do. Work it out with the Storyguide. If your marvel does cool stuff but doesn't provide a real mechanical bonus or narrative impact, it's free. Beyond that, work with the Storyguide to determine how much Legend an effect should require you to spend or imbue, using the other marvel effects as a comparison.

Zahra, Scion of Anubis, invokes the ritual names of the dead to manifest their Akh in spectral forms as a Death marvel, convincing a crowd of mortals that she is truly a child of the Gods. The Storyguide decides that the crowd is suitably awed that Zahra doesn't need to make a roll, and so doesn't make her spend any Legend.

THINGS GET WEIRD

Each Purview provides a description of the elements and forces it governs, which in turn inform the conceptual scope of that Purview's marvels. However, over the course of your game, you may expand on what a Purview is to your character personally, ascribing new meanings to them. As new themes and meanings emerge in play, mention them to the Storyguide and let them know if you want to base marvels off them later on. Get creative with your Purviews, and make them your own.

BOONS

Boons are formalized miraculous powers drawn from Purviews. Each Boon provides a unique power that can be used consistently and reliably, usually without needing to roll dice. Boons are presented in the following format.

NAME

Cost: If a Boon requires you to imbue or spend Legend, the cost will be listed here.

Duration: The length of the Boon's effect. Boons with indefinite duration last for as long as you choose to imbue them with Legend, and end when you reclaim it. Boons with other durations can't be ended early. A Boon's duration is listed as Condition if it inflicts a Condition and lasts until the target resolves it.

Subject: The people or things the Boon targets or affects.

Clash: This Boon requires a Clash of Wills to affect non-trivial targets, and lists the roll you make vs. the roll made to resist it.

Range: The maximum range that you can target characters with this Boon at (usually close, short, medium, or long). Once you have used a Boon, moving out of range will not end its effects unless it specifically says so.

Action: The type of action needed to use the Boon: usually Simple, Reflexive, or Complex. Using a Boon can't be included in a mixed action.

ARTISTRY

The Artistry Purview belongs to Gods renowned for their mastery of poetry, dance, storytelling, and other forms of art, as well as those who fill the hearts and minds of mortal artists with inspiration.

Innate Power: You can express yourself through an artistic performance to communicate with those who experience it as though you were speaking to them, even if they

SACRED ANIMALS

Many Gods have a strong symbolic connection to a single type of animal — Athena's owl, the Morrígan's ravens, the animal-headed forms taken on by many members of the Netjer, and so on. When you first pick the Beasts Purview, you may choose to narrow its thematic focus to only a single sacred animal. When you use Beasts Boons that evoke animal traits, such as Tooth and Claw or any Beasts marvels, you must base them on your sacred animal. In exchange, you may create a motif (p. 210) based on your choice of animal, which you can use to work marvels with any Purview. An owl could provide "the swift silent hunter" or "the wisdom of the night" as a motif, while a dog might yield "the ever-faithful companion" or "hunter and tracker of prey."

don't share a language. This can also bypass Complications that would apply to rolls made through ordinary conversation, like trying to avoid being overheard, but not to the specific art form you use. Only the intended recipient of the message (which can be "everyone") can perceive it.

ENTHRALLING PERFORMANCE

Cost: Imbue 1 Legend

Duration: Indefinite

Subject: All characters

Clash: Presence + Legend vs. Composure + Legend

Range: Medium

Action: Complex

No one can look away from your art. When you put on a performance, all affected targets in range that witnesses your performance cannot stop paying attention to you. If they wish to take another action, they must do it as a mixed action combined with an Integrity + Resolve roll at Difficulty 2. Putting on a performance with this Boon is a complex action that can last multiple rounds, but doesn't require a roll.

HEARTFELT EXPRESSION

Cost: Imbue 1 Legend

Duration: Indefinite

Subject: All characters

Clash: Presence + Legend vs. Composure + Legend

Range: Short

Action: Reflexive

Your emotions overflow into the souls of your audience. When you perform or create a work of art, you can instill it with your current emotional state or the personal feelings that inspired it. Any affected character that witnesses the performance or artwork is deeply affected, raising their Attitude by one point. This does not stack with other magical Attitude bonuses.

This Attitude shift lasts even after you reclaim the Legend from this Boon. However, once you do so, your painting, music, or other artwork won't inspire any more characters with emotion. Seeing multiple pieces of art made with this Boon doesn't stack their Attitude boosts.

MUSE'S KISS

Cost: Imbue 1 Legend

Duration: Indefinite

Subject: One character

Range: Short

Action: Simple

You breathe inspiration into a character's heart, granting them Enhancement 3 when they roll to create art, put on a performance, or some other creative and expressive activity. You can set a single requirement the character must meet to maintain your blessing, like "tithe a tenth of your earnings to my cult" or "spend eight hours a day writing," which ends this Boon immediately if it is not met. This Boon is free to use on trivial targets.

Ox-Head and Horse-Face barred the gates of Diyu. Owen O'Shea (or Eoghan Ó Séaghdha) had explained his plight to the distinctly Chinese animal-headed guardians, but they remained intransigent. "I don't care how important it is that you rescue the king's ghost. No entry without the proper paperwork!" Ox-Head brayed.

So it came to this. Owen pulled out the small lump of metal, grasped his silver hammer, and began to shape it cold. Within moments, the lump of metal was as silver as the hammer, a small visage of two guardians doomed to stay by a gate for eternity despite their hearts full of wanderlust and hope. Horse-Face's stern lip wavered; Ox-Head's eyes grew misty. Each of them looked away from the other, pretending they weren't crying.

"Okay, okay," Horse-Face finally relented, "go ahead." The gate to Diyu opened, and Owen continued his quest. "We're going to have to fill out so much paperwork on this one," Ox-Head sniffed.

BEASTS

This is the Purview of divine authority over the animal kingdom. It holds sway over all animals, as well as the iconic and mythological symbolism which humanity has given to them: the lion's courage, the eagle's swift wings and sharp eyes, and the owl's wisdom are all part of the Beasts Purview.

Innate Power: Animals will never attack or harm you, unless they are compelled by magic or Legendary creatures themselves.

ANIMAL ASPECT

Cost: Imbue 1 Legend

Duration: One scene

Subject: Self

Action: Reflexive

You choose an animal and emulate one of its iconic traits. Pick one of the following benefits:

- Mobility: You can swim like a dolphin, burrow like a termite, or emulate flight with graceful leaps. You can ignore any dangerous or difficult terrain) or complicated passages, barriers, or hazards that form of movement could reasonably bypass.
- Senses: Choose a specific circumstance in which the animal's senses give an advantage — an eagle's eyes can see clearly from far away, a bat can echolocate in total darkness, while a dog can track by scent for miles. You have Enhancement 3 on sense-based rolls where that advantage applies.
- Other: Pick a miscellaneous trait, like an octopus's camouflage, an anglerfish's bioluminescence, or a peacock's magnificent plumage. You either have Enhancement 2 on actions that trait benefits, or ignore up to 3 points of Complication it negates, whichever best represents the chosen trait.

LEADER OF THE PACK

Cost: Imbue 1 Legend

Duration: Indefinite

Subject: Self

Action: Simple

You can speak to and understand all animals. Animals that don't have a Legend rating treat their Attitude towards you as one point higher when determining whether you can persuade them to take on a task. This does not stack with other magical Attitude bonuses.

TERRIBLE TO BEHOLD

For many Gods, such as Hel, Kali, and Sun Wukong, their monstrous or frightening appearance is central to their Legend. If you are the child of one of these Gods or have a Legendary Title that describes your own monstrous appearance, you can choose one of your Purviews to easily access Visage Great and Terrible. Its cost isn't increased when you emulate it with a marvel of the chosen Purview, and you may learn it as one of that Purview's boons. A Scion of Kali might channel it through War; a Scion of Hel through Death; or a Scion of Sun Wukong through Beasts.

Once you reclaim the Legend from this Boon, your animal helpers will still try to complete your requests, but may become distractible or less reliable, at the Storyguide's discretion.

TOOTH AND CLAW

Cost: Imbue 1 Legend

Duration: One scene

Subject: Self

Action: Reflexive

Choose an animal whose natural ferocity you wish to evoke. Your brawling attacks gain the Lethal tag and up to three points of other weapon tags appropriate to the chosen animal, such as Grappling and Piercing for an alligator's bite or Pushing and Piercing for a rhino's charge.

"Flee, little godling," the titanspawn serpent hissed. "Apep has sent me to poison the waters, and my venom is death itself. Do not think the scant divinity that runs in your veins will spare you. You are still all too human."

Jon Carlsen, Scion of Odin, laughed, his good humor showing too-sharp teeth. "Did Apep not tell you who my father is, worm?" she asked, his smile revealing canines, his fingers lengthening into claws. The serpent lunged, but Jon was faster, side-stepping and seizing the giant snake's spine in a fluid motion. He twisted, and vertebrae snapped as a pack of wolves surrounded the titanspawn. "I am the leader of the pack."

BEAUTY

The Beauty Purview depicts the transcendent grace and allure of those Gods known for their epic appearance. In addition to divine heights of physical appeal, this Purview is also capable of wielding and reshaping beauty itself as a fundamental force, granting blessings that manifest their recipient's inner beauty or stripping away the good looks of foes.

Innate Power: You may attempt a Feat of Scale when you roll to influence a character using your beauty, appearance, and body language. This includes seduction, but also cutting someone down with a withering glare or using body language to convince a guard you're not a threat.

DRAW BACK THE MASK

Cost: Spend 1 Legend

Duration: Condition

Subject: One character or multiple trivial characters

Range: Short

Action: Simple

You can bestow blessings that reveal a person's true beauty, or curses that mar them with ugliness. Your blessing or curse takes the form of a Condition imposed on one character, or on all trivial targets within range. Using this Boon on trivial targets is free.

A blessed character may use their beauty once per scene to add Enhancement 2 on any roll made with a Social Attribute. This Condition resolves once its benefit has been applied a total of your (Legend + 1) times.

A cursed character suffers a +2 Complication on all Social rolls where their distorted appearance is a disadvantage. This Condition can be resolved by making a sincere and heartfelt apology to someone the target has wronged in a significant way, or with curse-breaking magic.

LASTING IMPRESSION

Cost: Imbue 1 Legend

Duration: Indefinite

Subject: One character or multiple trivial characters

Range: Medium

Action: Simple

You know how to flaunt your looks to kindle an irresistible infatuation. This takes the form of a Condition that you can impose on either a single target, or on all trivial targets within range. The Condition raises the target's Attitude towards you by two points, which does not stack with other magical Attitude bonuses. It can be resolved by enjoying a moment of physical intimacy (e.g. sex, a passionate kiss, a really good hug) with you, or when you reject the target's advances. Reclaiming the Legend imbued in this Boon also resolves the Condition.

VISAGE GREAT AND TERRIBLE

Cost: Imbue 1 Legend

Duration: One scene

Subject: Self

Action: Reflexive

The line between beauty and monstrosity is drawn by your hand. Your very appearance instills your enemies with the absolute terror of confronting your divinity. Trivial targets automatically flee from you, while other characters face a +2 Complication on any action that does not somehow help them flee your presence.

Donnie shot the Titan cultists his most winning smile over the dozen or so handguns pointed in his face. "Ladies, fellas, please. There's no need for violence." His eyes were deep pools of emerald, his teeth gleamed like mother of pearl, his skin smelled like honey and wine.

A few minutes later, he walked back out of the compound to regroup with his band. "It's clear." Eric shot Donnie a quizzical look, not sure what to make of the lipstick and hickeys covering him. "Yeah, well you should see the other guys."

CHAOS

Chaos is the unshaped formlessness which preceded the World, and the entropic dissolution that will follow. Chaos encompasses all forms of disorder, both physical and social. Mishaps, mechanical accidents, and unintended consequences with disastrous results all fall under its Purview, as do the human experiences of confusion, social unrest, revolution, and anarchy.

Innate Power: You walk untouched through chaotic situations, taking no harm from random or haphazard dangers such as debris in a tornado, a freak traffic accident, or being trampled by shoppers on Black Friday. This does not protect you from damage that results from an action performed with intent to cause harm, like gunfire in a shootout, or environmental situations. This immunity extends to any non-magical dangerous terrain, unless a character in the scene actively created that peril with intent to harm. You still face any Complications that such situations would normally impose — you're simply guaranteed to come through unscathed.

HORNET'S NEST

Cost: Spend 1 Legend

Duration: One scene

Subject: Multiple characters

Range: Medium

Action: Simple

You create an instant riot. All trivial characters in range, plus up to (Legend x 3) non-trivial mortals, will stop whatever they're doing and create a wild and disruptive frenzy, mob, or protest — whichever is most appropriate to the circumstances. If the Storyguide has specific plans for what a mortal character is doing in the scene (for example, the hired security you're trying to distract with a riot), he can declare them unavailable as targets. You have no control over the mob, but they're reckless and loud and provide a good distraction.

NO MASTERS

Cost: Imbue 1 Legend

Duration: One scene

Subject: One character

Clash: Manipulation + Legend vs. Composure + Legend

Range: Medium

Action: Simple

You strip a character of their authority over others. This suppresses any positive Attitudes or Bonds that any other character within long range has towards the target based on any kind of political, social, or economic authority he holds over them for the duration of the scene. Negative emotions are unaffected — employees may lose all loyalty they have to their boss, but they'll still carry the resentment from long hours or shitty wages. Using this Boon on a trivial character is free.

OVERWHELMING CHAOS

Cost: Imbue 1 Legend

Duration: One scene

Subject: One machine or character

Range: Short

Action: Simple

You overload a machine's gears or a person's mind with concentrated entropy. A targeted character must struggle simply to maintain coherent thought. On each turn, if they wish to take an action, they must combine it with a Stamina + Athletics roll at Difficulty 2. Non-trivial characters are rendered catatonic for the scene.

Machines up to the size of a car can be targeted, breaking down completely until they receive maintenance. This damage is permanent, but the Scion cannot reclaim the Legend imbued in this Boon until the next scene.

Maeve Whelan ran, clutching the stolen briefcase tight to her chest. She'd gotten the vials of dragon's blood out of the Apollyon Foundation's labs, but hadn't been expecting their security to be that good. She had a few minutes before the serious-looking guards with semiautomatics caught up to her, and her sniper rifle was no good here. Unless—

"Morrigan bless football." It was Sunday, and the bars were filled with fans either celebrating their team's win with a round of drinks or drowning the

sorrow of defeat. She couldn't have asked for more. All it took was a whisper of her mother and the Unseelie to stir the chaos in their hearts, to stoke their drunken joy or sorrow into a raging frenzy.

By the time the Apollyon guards reached the scene, it was a full-blown riot. There were cars burning on the streets, shattered glass on the sidewalk, bloody-knuckled brawls that made the day's game look tame by comparison. Maeve was long gone.

DARKNESS

This Purview rules over the dark of night and those things it conceals, the shadows, and all other forms of darkness that blind or deceive the eye. Lords of the night may manipulate or command the darkness and shadow, or wield its spiritual essence to confound or mislead perception. Light is antithetical to darkness, and so can be snuffed out, just as the sun inevitably falls below the horizon to plunge each day into night. This Purview is also associated with dream Gods, and has power over sleep and dreams.

Innate Power: You can see in total darkness, even magical darkness. You can also see into someone's dreams by watching them while they sleep.

BLINDING VEIL

Cost: Imbue 1 Legend

Duration: One scene

Subject: Multiple characters

Range: Short

Action: Simple

You can strip away the vision of any number of characters in range, imposing a blinded Condition on them for one scene. If you choose only trivial targets to blind, using this Boon is free.

DREAM WEAVER

Cost: Spend 1 Legend

Duration: Until the target next sleeps

Subject: One character

Range: Long

Action: Simple

You shape a dream, and send it after someone you know — not necessarily personally, but at least well enough to provide a unique description. The next time that character goes to sleep, this Boon triggers. You can make an influence roll against the target by shaping and controlling the events and appearance of their dream. You choose how you appear in their dream, which may allow you to avoid a negative Attitude towards you or exploit a Bond or Attitude towards another character. If you appear as yourself, the intimacy of the dream still raises their Attitude by one point. This doesn't stack with other magical Attitude bonuses.

NIGHT'S CARESS

Cost: Imbue 1 Legend

Duration: One scene

Subject: One character or multiple trivial characters

Range: Short

Action: Simple

You can lull a character to sleep over the course of a few seconds, as long as they are not in combat or a similarly high-stakes situation. They remain asleep until at least the end of the scene unless attacked by enemies or magically awakened. You can put multiple trivial targets to sleep as long as they are in this Boon's range, and can do so even in combat.

The sun outside was sweltering, but in the headquarters of the Centipede Gang, it was midnight. Panicked guards scrabbled for their night-vision gear, but to no avail. The goggles turned on, but still, only darkness. Infra-red was no use when the shadows were inside your eyes.

"Hello, gentlemen." Mitcham's voice was calm, almost gentle. He didn't need to posture to be menacing. "I hear you're the ones flooding the streets with heroin. I take exception to that." A shot rang out as a thug fired blindly, hitting one of his compatriots in the thigh. Mitcham laughed. "Don't bother. You're going to quit dealing drugs, you're going to tell me where I can find your boss, and then I'm going to take care of that nasty wound."

DEATH

You do not need to be told what Death is. Whether they fear it, ignore it, or embrace it, all mortals live in the shadow of their mortality. Those with this Purview hold sway both over the end of life and that which comes after death, wielding divine authority over corpses, funeral grounds, the undead, and underworlds.

Innate Power: You can see and communicate with ghosts, shades, and other forms of the undead that are normally imperceptible or incomprehensible (the Storyguide should feel free to send plot hooks your way in the form of the dead seeking favors or aid). In addition, you can perceive entryways to the Underworld.

UNQUIET DEAD

Cost: Imbue 1 Legend

Duration: Indefinite

Subject: One corpse or ghost

Action: Simple

You can cause a corpse to speak, or summon a person's ghost, shade, or other culturally appropriate remnant (**Scion: Origin**, p. 31) from the site of their grave for one scene. The corpse or shade cannot act except to speak, but you can try to influence it just like anyone else. It starts with Attitude 3 towards you. The undead retains all memories it had in life, except for a blank space of about five minutes leading up to the time of their death. As long as you imbue Legend in this boon, the undead's answers provide Enhancement 3 on any applicable rolls, such as tracking down the person who killed them.

You can only use this Boon on the same undead once per session.

THE WAY OF ALL FLESH

Cost: Imbue 1 Legend or Free

Duration: One scene or Instant

Range: Short

Subject: One character

Action: Simple

You sap a character's life force. All attacks against this gain the Aggravated tag for one scene. When they take damage, they treat their (Defense + Armor) total as one point lower than it actually is to determine the Injury Complication.

Alternatively, this Boon can be used to destroy or banish all trivial undead targets in range. Doing so is free.

YOUR FAULT

Cost: Imbue 1 Legend

Duration: Condition

Range: Medium

Subject: One character

Action: Simple

You burden a character with the guilt of knowing they were responsible for the last death they witnessed (attending a funeral or reading about a death on the media counts). This is a Condition, with precise effects that depend on that character's personality and their relation to the deceased. A political activist who feels responsible for assassinating an opposition party candidate might have a hard time not bragging about it, while someone who thinks they let the love of their life die will be devastated. As a default, the Condition increases the difficulty of all actions that character takes by +2, except actions that have the potential to harm them or otherwise traumatically expiate their guilt. The Condition resolves when the affected character confesses their responsibility to someone who trusts them or when you reclaim the Legend imbued in this Boon.

Brigitte de la Croix sat on the headstone that marked a freshly dug grave, pouring an offering of rum onto the soil. "Come on out, Louis. I need to know who pulled off that bombing, and you were there. Got some questions for you."

Louis' shade rose from the graveyard soil. "Damn good rum," he said, giving Brigitte an appreciative nod. "And strong. I don't even remember that I'm dead!" They shared a laugh. "I remember a guy in a

creepy-looking mask, like a gas mask. Shrimpy guy, 5'5" tops. He was carrying...something. Didn't see exactly what. After that, it all goes black."

Brigitte sighed. "Thanks, Louis. Good seeing you again." Her heart wasn't in it. The Night Doctors were in town. She was going to need reinforcements for this one.

DECEPTION

Gods of Deception are masters of illusion and misdirection, confounding the mortal mind and senses. This Purview holds sway over appearances, disguises, and mirages in addition to lies and deceit.

Innate Power: Other characters face a +3 Complication on all Empathy rolls and Assess Attitude rolls against you. If they don't spend enough successes to overcome the Complication, you choose the result they get.

EPHEMERA

Cost: Imbue 1 Legend

Duration: Indefinite

Range: Medium

Clash: Manipulation + Legend vs. Cunning + Legend

Action: Simple

You create an illusory image of a person, animal, or object, up to the size of a car. The illusion is lifelike and seems completely authentic — a person breathes, a car's engine throbs, a fire gives off heat — but it has no physical substance and cannot exert force or cause harm. It can move, but must remain within this Boon's range. A non-trivial character who wins the Clash of Wills can see through the illusion. Attempts to touch or physically interact with an illusion go right through it, letting anyone who sees this recognize it as unreal in the absence of extraordinary circumstances.

FALSE HISTORY

Cost: Imbue 1 Legend

Duration: Indefinite

Subject: One character

Clash: Manipulation + Legend vs. Resolve + Legend

Range: Close

Action: Simple

You can make a single, discrete change to the substantive content of a character's memories of the last five minutes or so, such as "me and my friends were never here," "all you saw were some feral dogs," or "the room you were in was ornately furnished." Once you reclaim the Legend, their memory reverts to normal. You can alter trivial characters' memories permanently, and only need to imbue Legend until the end of the scene to do so.

WALK UNNOTICED

Cost: Imbue 1 Legend

Duration: One scene

Subject: Self

Clash: Manipulation + Legend vs. Cunning + Legend.

Action: Reflexive

You slough off your identity and vanish. You do not become literally invisible — instead, people's minds simply fail to process any distinguishing information about you. A non-trivial character that wins the Clash of Wills can see through this, but still cannot distinguish your identity or any identifying features, and face a +3 Complication on rolls to notice you.

No one noticed Robert Dunn walking through the hospital's antiseptic corridors. He was just another nurse, or maybe a patient's family member — no one of any importance, not a Scion of mac Lir. There were security cameras, but the guard watching the feed took no notice, his eyes slipping off the monitor whenever Robert came on screen. Pakhan Sokolov had his own men, Bratva, posted at the door, but they either didn't notice the sound of the doorknob turning or were too preoccupied with their cellphones to care.

The mafia boss in his hospital bed struck Robert as a pathetic sight, riddled with IV drips and electronic monitors. But pathetic did not deserve pity. "Who are you?" he asked weakly, trying to fix his eyes on Robert's face and failing.

"Nobody," Robert said, sticking a syringe into the man's arm and pressing down on the plunger. "If your men ask, tell them Nobody killed you."

EARTH

This Purview governs and shapes the elemental stuff of Earth, such as stone, soil, sand, metal, and crystal. It embodies the inexorable resilience with which the mountains and canyons weather the passage of centuries and the fury of the elements, but also the terrible strength of the avalanche and the earthquake.

Innate Power: As long as you are standing on the ground (the bottom floor of a building counts) or an earthen surface, you cannot be forcibly moved from your location by any amount of physical force, and gain Enhancement 1 on Might and Stamina rolls.

SHAPING HAND

Cost: Imbue 1 Legend

Duration: One scene

Subject: Self

Action: Simple

You can shape and mold stone, metal, and other earthen substances with your bare hands as though it were as malleable as clay. When this assists in an action, like climbing a sheer cliff overhang or pulling a steel wall open, you gain Enhancement 3.

SKIN LIKE STONE

Cost: Imbue 1 Legend

Duration: One scene

Subject: Self

Action: Reflexive

Your soft armor rating increases by one. If you aren't wearing any armor (or other protective gear that provides a soft armor rating), it increases by three instead.

STONY HEART

Cost: Imbue 1 Legend

Duration: One scene

Subject: Self or one character

Range: Short

Action: Reflexive

You can harden someone's heart, setting them in their ways against impassioned pleas for help or sweet words of seduction. This imposes a +3 Complication on any Social actions targeting the character whose heart was hardened, unless the Storyguide determines that the interaction is completely devoid of any appeal to emotion. She can use this Boon on herself or her allies to fend off the blandishments of others, or use it to undermine other character's attempts at intrigue.

The titanspawn cultists unloaded a barrage of automatic gunfire in Harry Roth's direction, firing rounds fitted with orichalcum casings. Harry had no desire to find out if the rumors of the metal's God-killing potency were true and end up another statistic as a dead Scotland Yard detective — he sunk his hands into the warehouse's concrete floor and pulled it up, raising a barricade as easily as a potter sculpting clay. Orichalcum or not, the bullets weren't getting through that.

He took a deep breath and parted the concrete beneath his feet, tunneling his way beneath the floor while the cultists kept up their fire. They wouldn't expect him to burrow up from behind them.

EPIC DEXTERITY

This Purview defines the prowess of Gods renowned for their speed, agility, and precision, elevating mortal action to feats of Legend. It encompasses the impossible swiftness of fleet-footed deities, and miraculous feats of grace and agility.

Innate Power: So long as you continue to move towards a destination, you walk, run, or leap with effortless grace. Any surfaces solid or liquid hold your weight as if you weighed no more than a feather, and you may effortlessly scale or descend vertical surfaces without a need for a handhold.

THE FALLING STAR

Cost: Imbue 1 Legend

Duration: One scene

Subject: Self

Action: Reflexive

Your speed is a powerful asset in battle. In combat, you can use your reflexive Move action to cross two range bands, and gain Enhancement 3 on rolls to Disengage. You cannot take damage from falling.

HEAVENLY STRIDE

Cost: Imbue 1 Legend

Duration: One scene

Subject: Self

Action: Reflexive

You can cross great distances in a scant matter of minutes, zooming past passersby in a blur of motion. Add Enhancement 3 on Rush actions and any action you take in a race. Once per scene, you may make a Feat of Scale to enhance any action based on physical speed without having to pay a point of Legend.

UNERRING FLIGHT

Cost: Imbue 1 Legend

Duration: Instant

Subject: Self

Action: Reflexive

In your precise hands, ranged weapons become extraordinarily deadly. You may make a ranged attack against any enemy in your line of sight, even out to extreme range. You can roll the attack with Dexterity in place of the Attribute normally associated with that range band, and do not face an increased difficulty for using weapons with the Ranged or Long Range tag at any range band. You can use this boon to attack an enemy behind full cover.

The streets were filled with panicked civilians, scrambling to run or hide as the dragon flew over the city, or holding up their cellphones to record its mighty wings eclipsing the sun. "Not to worry, everyone!" Meiling shouted over the crowd. "I have a rocket launcher."

The dragon was miles in the air above the city — an easy shot for the daughter of Hou Yi. She braced the rocket launcher against her shoulder, took aim, and fired. The explosion took out the dragon's left eye, and there were cheers from the crowd as it roared in pain. "That was a warning shot," she announced. "Don't press your luck."

EPIC STAMINA

This Purview encompasses the vitality, endurance, and resilience of invincible warriors and legendary ascetics, immortals among immortals. A Scion with this Purview can withstand deadly weapons and overwhelming danger as a mortal might ignore a housefly, and draw on nigh-infinite reserves of vital energy.

Innate Power: You are immune to poison and disease unless they come from a source whose Legend is equal or greater than yours, and never face Complications or risk death from hunger, thirst, or exhaustion.

ADAMANT BODY

Cost: Imbue 1 Legend

Duration: One scene

Subject: Self

Action: Reflexive, when applied

Your skin becomes as hard as adamant, granting you +1 soft armor and the benefit of the Resistant armor tag against a specific type of damage, such as bullets, fire, or acid.

When you purchase this boon, choose one kind of damage that you are naturally resistant to. You can use it to resist the chosen damage type without having to imbue Legend in it.

PUT YOUR BACK INTO IT

Cost: Imbue 1 Legend

Duration: Until the task is complete

Subject: Self

Action: Reflexive

You labor with tenfold endurance, enhancing a Complex action to perform strenuous physical labor or other exercise. Any time you roll a Physical Attribute as part of the action, you may roll two times, keeping the higher result.

UNBREAKABLE

Cost: Spend 1 Legend

Duration: Instant

Subject: Self

Action: Reflexive

You are beyond injury. When you are hit and an enemy uses an Inflict Damage Stunt, spend 1 Legend to negate it. This Boon can also be used to defend against being affected by any other Condition based on debilitating injury or physical incapacity, such as a Severed Limb or Broken Spine.

"Let's see what you've got, little man."

Eric seethed, but wasn't going to give the Jötun the satisfaction of seeing him take offense. A drinking contest was easier than fighting his way through an entire biker bar of Jötnar, although he wouldn't mind putting a fist in some of these leering faces.

The first round, of course, was mead. Then vodka. Whiskey. Tequila. Ouzo. Grappa. Absinthe. Malört. Ethanol. Gasoline. Jet fuel. Fermented varg's milk. Finally, shots of Jörmungandr's venom.

The last round did the Jötun in. "Okay," Eric said, slurring just a little. "Now, who's gonna tell me how I find Loki's brat?"

EPIC STRENGTH

This Purview encompasses the divine might of the Gods. It is supreme raw physical power, allowing those Scions with Epic Strength to utterly overwhelm their lessers by force of arms, accomplish deeds of impossible strength, or show up any gym rat who dares try to out lift them.

Innate Power: You have +1 Scale for purposes of lifting, breaking, or carrying large objects. You can use Might in place of Presence for intimidation, seduction, or building Bonds of camaraderie.

HEAVY LIFTER

Cost: Imbue 1 Legend

Duration: One scene

Subject: Self

Action: Reflexive

Add Enhancement 3 on rolls to lift or carry heavy objects. When you attack by throwing an improvised weapon, the range increases by a single band and it gains the Arcing tag. You choose whether it's Bashing or Lethal.

A WORLD OF GLASS

Cost: Imbue 1 Legend

Duration: One scene

Subject: Self

Action: Ordinary

You are capable of tearing down walls, ripping up concrete, or rendering brick structures to powder in moments. Once per scene, you may make a Feat of Scale to enhance any Might-based action without having to pay a point of Legend.

PISTONS FOR FISTS

Cost: Imbue 1 Legend

Duration: One scene

Subject: Self

Action: Reflexive

Your Close Combat and Athletics attack rolls strike with incredible force. On a hit, you can either send an opponent flying back one range band, or knock him prone. Felled enemies must succeed on a Dexterity + Athletics roll at Difficulty 3 to Rise from Prone even if you are not threatening them. This attack can scatter a group of trivial targets, gaining the Shockwave tag as long as all characters in the targeted range band are trivial.

The Wendigo's mouth was still stained red from its last meal, its last victim. Rose was a merciful woman, but this titanspawn deserved no mercy. She grabbed a parked pickup truck and spun it like a shotput, hurling three tons of metal at the Wendigo. It hit home with a satisfying crunch. The titanspawn staggered back, but it was still standing. That was fine. Rose was just getting started. She uprooted a streetlamp one-handed and tossed it casually, then followed it up by sending a dumpster flying. Buried beneath her barrage, the monster struggled to pry its way free. That wasn't happening. Rose put a boot on its giant throat, and ended its miserable existence.

FERTILITY

Fertility Gods hold power over the soil in which crops take root, the bonds of family, and sexuality and childbirth. This Purview holds sway over the vitality of plants, animals, and mortals, capable of bestowing powerful blessings on fields or families. However, it also governs famine, blight, and infertility, and can lay terrifying curses by withholding the gifts of Fertility.

Innate Power: Once per session, you can radiate an aura of vitality, causing flowers and other plant life to bloom and grow. All allies out to long range may resolve a single Bruised or Injured Condition. This cannot heal Maimed Conditions.

BLESSED HARVEST

Cost: Spend 1 Legend

Duration: Condition

Subject: One character

Range: Close

Action: Simple

You can confer great vitality on another character with the fruits of Fertility. To use this Boon, you must prepare a meal that your target eats, offer them support in a familial role, or share a moment of physical intimacy. This blessing takes the form of a Condition. Once per scene, the target may call upon the blessing to add Enhancement 3 on a roll made with a Force or Resilience Attribute. This Condition resolves once its benefit has been applied a total of (your Legend + 1) times.

A Scion who benefits from this condition may call on it to undertake a Feat of Scale without having to spend a point of Legend. Doing so resolves the condition.

FAVOR OF NATURE

Cost: Imbue 1 Legend

Duration: Indefinite

Subject: One piece of land or one family

Range: Close

Action: Simple

Yours is the power to bless or blight, granting or withholding the nature's favor at your whim. This Boon can be used on a contiguous piece of land that is recognized as a single locale by human reckoning — "the Hampstead Farm" or "this forest" would be valid targets, but "the 312 acres of land around me" would not.

- Blessed land rapidly blooms with plant life, undergoing a rapid surge of growth over a matter of seconds, and eventually an entire growing season's worth of development over the course of a week. The land remains fertile enough to provide Enhancement 3 on rolls to cultivate or harvest it for (Legend x 10) years after this Boon ends.
- Blighted lands undergo rapid decay. Crops become inedible instantly, and almost all plant life dies out within a week. Structures made from wood or other plant-based materials decay as well, suffering a single level of Health damage each day (or rotting damage sufficient to reduce it to a ruin within two weeks). The blighted land remains infertile for (Legend x 10) years after this Boon ends.

Alternatively, you can use this Boon on a family. You must target a single member of the family, and can only affect characters that are their direct ancestors, direct descendants, or are married or otherwise joined to the targeted character. A grandfather, daughter, or husband would all be affected, but a cousin or sister-in-law would not be.

- All members of a blessed family have Enhancement 2 to resist poison or disease. They never suffer from infertility or complications relating to pregnancy. Any children conceived or born during this Boon's duration are hale and hearty, guaranteed to survive through adolescence unless harmed by unnatural causes. Such children often have a sensitivity or affinity for the supernatural and are likely to grow up to become Prophets or Saints, or even Scions.
- A blighted family suffers from total infertility. They are unable to conceive children, and any ongoing pregnancies end in miscarriage. Weaker members of the family — usually children or the elderly — that are trivial targets will most likely die of natural causes within a day, capable of being prevented only through intensive medical care throughout the duration of this Boon.

HAND OF BLIGHT

Cost: Spend 1 Legend

Duration: Condition

Subject: One character or multiple trivial characters

Range: Medium

Action: Simple

Invoking the negative aspects of Fertility, you afflict your target with a curse of uncontrolled growth, causing them to develop spontaneous cancers and malignant growths. They suffer the Blighted Condition, adding +2 Difficulty on all physical actions they attempt. Resolving this Condition requires magical healing or extensive mundane treatment such as a course of chemotherapy. This Boon can be used to target multiple trivial characters within range for free.

At your option, trivial targets may die on the spot from agonizingly rapid cancerous growth over the course of the scene.

The minotaur laughed, paused to take another sip of his beer, and laughed some more. "Apollo Soranus' kid! I thought they were gonna send, you know, a guy with super-strength and a magic sword, or one of those Scions that can throw lightning bolts. What're you going to do, grow corn at me? Carry some entrails to me?"

He didn't notice the other patrons discreetly fleeing the bar, or the wicked grin that crossed Phoebe Marino's lips. The minotaur's laughter grew difficult, broke off into coughing. He hacked phlegm and blood into his beer.

"The guy with the sword and the lightning lady were busy. You get to deal with me. And lung cancer." The minotaur's eyes bulged wide with fear. "Don't worry, I can take it back. But only if you promise to be polite."

FIRE

The Purview of Fire holds sway both over literal flames, which hold power to destroy and create, and the metaphorical flames that burn in the mortal heart, from the fires of sultry passion to the illumination of enlightenment. In addition to creating and controlling literal fire, heat, and light, the miracles of this Purview can also cause sudden outbursts of passion, intense emotion, or inspiration.

Innate Power: You and your personal belongings cannot take damage or suffer any form of harm from fire, heat, or smoke inhalation. You can walk through wildfires or industrial microwaves unharmed, swim in magma for as long as you can hold your breath, and perform similar feats of fireproof heroism. Extreme cold is likewise harmless to you.

ETERNAL FLAME

Cost: Imbue 1 Legend

Duration: Indefinite

Subject: One fire

Range: Medium

Action: Simple

You imbue a fire with a spark of your divine power, making it a part of yourself. The flame expands, spreading out to the size of a large campfire if smaller. It burns indefinitely without needing additional fuel and can't be extinguished by non-magical means. As a Simple action, you can extend your senses through the fire, letting you see, hear, and smell things as though you were there. Previous uses of this Boon end if you use it to bless a new fire.

HEAVEN'S FIRE

Cost: Imbue 1 Legend

Duration: One scene

Subject: Self

Action: Reflexive

You gain the ability to attack enemies with fire. Each Scion can choose a unique manifestation of Fire for their attack: throwing firebolts, heat ray vision, or triggering spontaneous combustion with an incantation or a finger snap. You can make these attacks as Simple actions for the scene, rolled with Athletics + Dexterity. They have the Aggravated, Ranged, and Pushing tags.

MUSE OF FIRE

Cost: Imbue 1 Legend

Duration: One scene or Condition

Subject: One character

Range: Short

Action: Simple

You inspire another character with flames of enlightenment and creativity. The next Cunning, Presence, or Intellect roll they make gains Enhancement 3. However, if they don't find the opportunity to make an applicable roll before the end of the scene, the inner fire overwhelms them, imposing a Condition that raises the difficulty of any Social or Mental actions by 1 unless that character is completely open and honest about everything on their mind. Expressing a deeply personal truth, a potentially provocative opinion, or something similarly inflammatory resolves the Condition.

The vargar pack had Dwayne Masters surrounded, snarling and snapping at his heels. The paths through Jötunheimr were never safe, but it would take more than frozen otherworlds and giant wolves to keep him from saving his sister. He held out both hands, making the shapes of a pair of guns with his fingers. He mimed a gunshot, and the closest varg erupted into flames. The rest of the pack lunged for him, but too slowly. Dwayne spun in a full circle, lighting the monsters up with shot after blazing shot. "Bad doggies."

FORGE

This is the Purview of divine smiths and craftsmen, those who created legendary Relics or taught the secrets of crafts and technology to mortals. It encompasses ancient arts such as blacksmithing, carpentry, and masonry, as well as crafts of the modern era like mechanical engineering and computer programming.

Innate Power: Your handiwork is infallible. Whenever one of your craft projects would suffer Flaws due to the Complications of delicate work or any other source, subtract one point from the total amount of Flaws, down to a minimum of 0.

CELESTIAL ARTIFICE

Cost: Imbue 2 Legend

Duration: Until project is completed

Subject: Self

Action: Reflexive

You lower the Tier of a crafting project (**Scion: Origin**, p. 76) by 1. This doesn't let you undertake projects of a Tier you normally couldn't accomplish.

RECLAIM FROM RUIN

Cost: Imbue 1 Legend

Duration: Until project is completed

Subject: Self

Action: Reflexive

You can repair an item no matter how badly it is ruined. You can recreate items from their remains alone, up to the level of outright reversing entropy — reconstructing a burnt book from a pile of ashes, repairing a sword melted to slag by a dragon's fiery breath, or retrieving files from a hard drive that's been through a nuclear detonation.

WHILE THE IRON IS HOT

Cost: Spend 1 Legend

Duration: Instant

Subject: Self

Action: Reflexive

Where others see a box of scraps, you see potential. Add Enhancement 3 on a roll to jury-rig a craft project. You can roll to rig together contraptions that a mortal would normally be unable to attempt due to feasibility constraints. As long as it is notionally possible that you could complete the project with (Legend) days of ordinary work, you can roll to attempt it.

"They've got one intense system," Donnchadh MacFergal said, accent thick, his fingers dancing across the keyboard as his blonde hair fell into his eyes. "Encryptions got goetic sigils coded into it. Some kind of William Gibson Black ICE shit. I don't know who the intrusion detection system notifies, but it's routed through an Axis Mundi, so no one good."

Ajax sighed. Donnchadh the Reckless, indeed. "How long's it going to take you to crack it?"

"Oh, I finished that already. Just wanted to make sure you appreciate my talents."

FORTUNE

The Purview of Fortune exerts its power through blessings and curses, manipulating that which mortals call chance and the Gods know as destiny. It exerts the subtle power of coincidence and synchronicity, contriving events and changing the World. It is not prophecy, but it can tug at the threads of Fate to arrange improbable scenarios and enable deeds that defy belief.

Innate Power: You can sense the presence of Fatebindings when you interact with someone. If you later meet the other "half" of a binding that you have already sensed, you can tell the two characters are bound together. You can also sense when a Prophet or Sorcerer manipulates Fate with their Knacks or other powers, identifying them as the one responsible even if the effect cannot normally be perceived.

DIVINATION

Cost: Spend 1 Legend

Duration: Condition

Subject: One character

Range: Medium

Action: Simple

You divine a character's luck in the near future. Out of character, you decide whether they will enjoy good or suffer bad luck as a Condition. Once per scene, before that character makes a roll, you can declare that their luck intervenes — good luck lowers the target number by 1, while bad luck increases it by 1.

You can invoke their luck even if your character is not in the scene.

A character's good luck runs out once this benefit has been applied a total of your (Legend + 1) times. Bad luck runs out at the end of a scene where a failure on the penalized roll led to significant consequences, or if the victim accepts a botch offered by the Storyguide on any action.

FATEFUL CONNECTION

Cost: Spend 1 Legend

Duration: Instant

Subject: One character Fatebound to you

Range: Infinite

Action: Simple

You invoke the Fatebinding of a character tied to you to cause them to appear in the narrative and provide a benefit based on their Fatebinding role without it counting against the usual once per episode limit. Synchronicity arranges for that character to be near enough to arrive rapidly with a completely plausible explanation — maybe they're visiting their family, or stalking you, or their plane had to make an emergency landing nearby. If the Storyguide agrees, this can even bring characters into Terra Incognitae and other realms of existence (maybe they tripped through a portal).

NINE LIVES

Cost: Imbue 1 Legend

Duration: One scene

Subject: Self

Action: Simple

Your luck is strong enough to survive impossible accidents and deadly firefights. You add +1 Defense against attacks and have Enhancement 2 on any roll where you could suffer physical harm as a direct result of failing it.

It had not been James' day.

His alarm never went off. As he hurried through the morning commute, the truck in front of him kicked up a rock and cracked his windshield, and the sheer surprise of it made him dump a mug of hot coffee all over his pants. At work, his keycard wasn't working, and the security guy who was supposed to let him in was out on vacation. After 20 minutes, he finally got Sally to let him in, but only after she'd laughed in his face. He couldn't connect to the office wi-fi. He had to work through lunch to make up for getting in an hour late, which gave him the chance to overhear Sally and some other coworkers laughing at his expense. At the end of the day, he needed a drink badly. He could almost taste the bottle of scotch he had back at home when his tire blew out. That was when he got a call from his boss, asking if he could come back in to discuss his performance.

Lesson learned. Never cheat on a Scion of the Morrígan.

FROST

This Purview governs snowfalls and blizzards, the season of winter, and all nature of frozen climes. In addition to elemental cold and ice, it holds power over things symbolically associated with cold, such as inaction or cold-heartedness, or with the season of winter, like the death of plants or hibernation.

Innate Power: You never suffer harm from extreme cold, nor difficult terrain or Complications due to snow, hail, or ice. You may walk over water or even clouds, as it turns to solid ice underfoot long enough to support you.

COOLER HEADS

Cost: Imbue 1 Legend

Duration: One scene

Subject: Multiple characters

Clash: Composure + Legend vs. Presence + Legend

Range: Medium

Action: Simple

When tempers flare and action comes before thought, you can cool things down. This Boon can be used against characters engaged in combat, intense argument, reckless decision making, or similar emotionally agitating scenarios. They grow cold-hearted, almost emotionless. Whatever they were doing, they stop, and won't return to it for the rest of the scene — they'll walk away from brawls, take a moment to reconsider whether they should be having an emotional argument, take the time to think their plans through more thoroughly, or similar. They can still defend themselves if others try to harm them, but will not initiate any kind of hostilities.

FLASH FREEZE

Cost: Spend 1 Legend

Duration: Instant

Subject: All enemies in one range band

Range: Medium

Action: Simple

You can drain away the heat of the world, icing over landscapes and freezing enemies from the inside out. Roll this as an attack using (highest Power Attribute) + Occult. It has the Bashing, Piercing, Ranged, and Shockwave tags. All water in the targeted range band is also instantly frozen solid. Ground becomes ice-slick difficult terrain, as well as other environmental changes such as bodies of water freezing over or pipes bursting.

GLACIAL PACE

Cost: Imbue 1 Legend

Duration: Indefinite

Subject: One character or multiple trivial characters or multiple objects

Range: Medium

Action: Simple

Things slow to a halt as you strip away the speed from the world. If you use this Boon on a character that has Scale with regard to speed, like a cheetah or a Scion using a Feat of Scale, their Scale is reduced by one. Characters without Scale add +2 Difficulty to all rolls based on physical speed. This Boon can be used against all trivial opponents in range for free.

Alternatively, you can slow any number of moving objects of the same general type within this Boon's range, reducing their Scale with regards to speed by one. For example, you could bring traffic to a grinding halt by slowing all cars in range.

The dead marched on Times Square. The shambling corpses moved slowly, but the herd of tourists they advanced on was panicked, some fleeing down dead ends while others froze on the spot. Parents were separated from children, screaming and sobbing over the hungry moans of the undead.

"Calm down, everyone," Isak said. And they did. A chill wave passed over the crowd. They began an orderly evacuation, moving quickly but without fear to put distance between them and the dead. Crying children wiped their eyes and toddled away with steely resolve.

Once the civilians were out of the way, the white-haired Scion stepped forward, his hands rimed with ice. "Now, let's see if you can stand some freezer burn."

HEALTH

The Health Purview governs the well-being and life force of humanity, with power to mend infirmity, cure disease, and cleanse toxins. Gods who hold this Purview are capable of great miracles of healing, but also hold sway over illness, pestilence, and the ravages of age, and can wield them to smite their enemies.

Innate Power: Once per session, when you successfully provide treatment to a Storyguide character ally that resolves an Injury Condition, Poisoned Condition, or disease, you gain one Legend.

HEALING HANDS

Cost: Spend 1 Legend

Duration: Instant

Subject: One character

Range: Close

Action: Simple

Touching a character, you heal their wounds. This Boon can be used to instantly resolve any Injury Condition a target suffers from, even Maimed Conditions. You can also use this Boon to resolve Conditions such as Poisoned, Disease, or similar ailments of physical or mental health, even if they are inflicted by magic.

FLAWLESS DIAGNOSIS

Cost: Imbue 1 Legend

Duration: One scene

Subject: Self

Action: Simple

Ask the Storyguide one of the following questions

- What's wrong with this person, and how could I help them?
- What were this person's last moments like?
- How can I end this [disease outbreak, mass poisoning, or similar crisis]?
- Who is responsible for this harm?

Following the Storyguide's answer grants Enhancement 3 on applicable rolls.

MASTER OF DISEASE

Cost: Spend 1 Legend

Duration: Condition

Subject: One character

Range: Medium

Action: Simple

You can withhold the benefits of Health from your foes, magically inflicting disease upon them. This imposes both a +5 disease Complication and the Divine Plague Condition. Until the Condition is resolved with magical healing, the target cannot buy off the Complication or have it treated mundanely. A mortal target who fails to resolve the Condition within (12 − Legend) months suffers automatic death.

Dayo wasn't a doctor. He'd healed the sick and tended to the wounded, but he couldn't name the esoteric bits of the human anatomy and had never even thought about applying to medical school. He'd also never sworn the Hippocratic Oath. That had never come in handy, until now.

The cyclops towered over him, but for all its strength, it was still just flesh and blood. It was no match for the God-plague that Dayo spread within it. It stopped mid-rampage as the cold sweat hit, and

expelled the contents of its monstrous stomach on the pavement. That explained where Farmer Ramirez's cows had gone.

JOURNEYS

The Gods of Journeys hold power over the roads and routes that cross the World, from the tar and asphalt of the highways to the secret gates that lead to otherworldly realms. It governs not just movement, but also vehicles, roadways, trade routes, and the increasingly sophisticated transit infrastructure of the modern World.

Innate Power: You have an unfailing sense of direction, allowing you to find a route that leads to any point in the World as an unrolled action, unless its position is obscured by magic. You can sense the presence of an Axis Mundi or other gate between realms of existence from (Legend) miles away.

CHARIOT OF THE GODS

Cost: Imbue 1 Legend

Duration: One scene

Subject: One vehicle

Range: Close

Action: Reflexive

You imbue a vehicle with divine power, raising the Scale of all speed-based actions taken with it by 1. Opposing characters that try to steal, damage, or otherwise impede your chosen chariot face a +2 Complication.

HERE THERE BE DRAGONS

Cost: Imbue 1 Legend

Duration: Indefinite

Subject: One character

Range: Medium

Action: Simple

You strew obstacles before an enemy's path. Any time they roll to travel or navigate, the Storyguide inflicts a +3 Complication on the roll — parades in the way of their morning drive, flights delayed by mechanical troubles, and so on. If the character is attempting to move across difficult terrain that already exists, your curse also increases the difficulty of their movement actions by +1.

UNBARRED PASSAGE

Cost: Imbue 1 Legend

Duration: One scene

Range: Medium

Action: Reflexive

You can negate a single Complication that obstructs your travel. Locked doors open at a touch, traffic parts around your car, and rough patches of turbulence disperse as the plane you're on flies through them. This benefits not only you, but any other character traveling with you.

The Asura had risen up from the bowels of the earth, spewing lava in its wake as it burst through. Jiya had a moped. Its tiny motor puttered as she advanced, weaving between the cars and trucks strewn about by the titanspawn's rampage. Her wheels hit the lava and did not burn, nor did the molten stone impede her. She had removed all obstacles between herself and victory. She drew her father's axe, and ramped up a lava flow in an arc hurtling straight for the Asura's neck.

MOON

This Purview holds sway over the moonlight, creating eerie light that reveals or distorts the truth. It also rules mutability and change, embodying the cyclicality of the moon's phases through profound or subtle transformations.

Innate Power: You can radiate an aura of moonlight that cuts through darkness out to long range as a reflexive action. Only you and those you designate can perceive this illumination — others do not benefit from it. You may pay 1 Legend to attempt to reveal the true form of any shapeshifters or other transformed characters within the moonlight, rolling Cunning + Legend against the Manipulation + Legend of a character that wishes to conceal the truth.

ENCHANTING EVENING

Cost: Imbue 1 Legend

Duration: Indefinite

Subject: One character

Clash: Manipulation + Legend vs. Resolve + Legend.

Range: Medium

Action: Simple

Cast in the light of the moon, things that once seemed familiar take on new meanings and reveal hidden beauty. The target of this Boon reconsiders their feelings for someone or something they see, gaining Attitude 2 towards the designated person or thing, or changing the rating of an existing Attitude by +2 or −2. The target's player chooses the exact nature of their change of heart — this Boon simply forces them to make a change. This doesn't stack with other magical Attitude modifiers, but can cancel out an opposing bonus or penalty.

PHASE CLOAK

Cost: Imbue 1 Legend

Duration: One scene

Subject: Self

Action: Simple

You vanish into ephemeral darkness, becoming completely invisible. You have Enhancement 3 to avoid being seen. This applies against electronic surveillance and even magical scrying based on sight.

THREE-FACED MOON

Cost: Free or Imbue 1 Legend

Duration: Indefinite

Subject: Self or one character

Range: Short

Action: Simple

Drawing on symbolic ties between the waxing and waning of the moon and the cycle of human age, you transform your appearance or someone else's. You may change their apparent age, making them seem younger or older as you choose. This does not physically age the target's body, although they may face age-based Complications on Social actions.

If you use this Boon on yourself, you gain a bonus on rolls with a specific Skill depending on your apparent age.

- *Youth*: As a young child, you seem full of innocence, adding Enhancement 2 on Empathy rolls.
- *Adult*: As a mother or father, you provide comfort, adding Enhancement 2 on Medicine rolls.
- *Elder*: You know the secrets of your people, adding Enhancement 2 on Occult rolls.

Ariamaki walked through the Palace of the Oni King, invisible as the moon on a moonless night, a man all in grey. The demon crime boss had packed his lair with guards, both mortal and yokai, since he'd laid his hands on one of the tide jewels, but Ariamaki walked past all of them unnoticed. Laser tripwires were undisturbed by his passage. He had no clue what the huge green eyeballs embedded in the walls were, but luckily, they took no notice of the admittedly-nondescript man.

By the time the sun rose, Ariamaki was getting some much-deserved sleep, the liberated tide jewel manju locked safely away in his magic vault.

ORDER

The Order Purview holds power over those things which bind civilizations and societies together in order: the sovereignty of kings and queens, the wisdom of judges and the justice of lawgivers, codes of law, social customs, and hierarchical authority.

Innate Power: You can sense the laws that govern any jurisdiction you stand in, letting you tell whether any action you witness or contemplate would be legal according to them. Any mortal law enforcement acting in their official capacity that attempts to take action against you for a lawful act or overreach the bounds of authority is physically unable to do so — their body betrays them in the face of true justice.

CODE OF HEAVEN

Cost: Imbue 1 Legend

Duration: One scene

Subject: Self

Action: Simple

When you explain laws to people, as long as you're truthful and accurate, they know that you are correct. If, as part of your explanation, you declare a person or group to be innocent, then the protection of this Purview's innate power extends to them for this Boon's duration. On the other hand, if you condemn someone as guilty, you and those who hear you have Enhancement 2 on any actions taken to bring them to justice.

DIVINE RIGHT

Cost: Imbue 1 Legend

Duration: One scene

Subject: Self or one character

Range: Close

Action: Simple

PASSIONS PERSONIFIED

The Passion Purview rules every emotion that sways the hearts of mortals. Some Gods and Scions manifest their divine authority over only a single, specific emotion. Aengus is Love; Phobos is Fear; Hotei is Joy. When a Scion first gains access to the Passion Purview, she may choose to narrow its thematic focus to only a single such emotion. Her Passion marvels and Boons can only create, manipulate, or draw from that one emotion. In exchange, you may create a motif based on the chosen emotion, which you can use to work marvels with any Purview. Love could grant a motif like "sensuality, pleasure, and desire" or "a mother will do what is best for her children," depending on what fits your character concept best.

You anoint yourself or another character as divinely proclaimed sovereign, making all who look upon them see proof of their immanent authority. All characters treat their Attitude towards the sovereign as 1 point higher. This doesn't stack with other magical Attitude bonuses. In addition, for the purpose of Order Boons and marvels that care, such as Code of Heaven (p. 256), it is unlawful to harm or betray the sovereign.

NOTHING BUT THE TRUTH

Cost: Imbue 1 Legend

Duration: Indefinite

Subject: One character

Clash: Presence + Legend vs. Manipulation + Legend

Range: Short

Action: Simple

Your imposing presence strikes divine terror into the hearts of liars. An affected character can't lie, omit the truth, or make any misrepresentation of a material fact, and consequently never imposes a misleading Complication on any information they give.

The plea hearing was a bad joke. Sure, he did it, but with a dad so rich the mega-rich envied him, what did that matter? The fucker had grinned and preened for the adoring tabloid paparazzi when he walked up the courthouse steps, flanked by the best legal team that money could buy. Of course he wasn't worried. All he had to do was say two words.

The courtroom audience stood as the judge entered and sat as she took the bench, going through the motions of the formality. Horace Farrow watched from the back row, staring through the back of the slimeball's head with his one good eye.

"How does the accused plea?"

The defendant's mouth opened, but no lies could come out. "Guilty, your honor. I plead guilty."

PASSION

Gods of Passion rule over the hearts of mortals. This Purview holds sway over love, jealousy, sorrow, anger, and every other shade of human emotion, and is capable of stirring them up until they overwhelm the rational mind.

Innate Power: You see into the hearts of others, gaining Enhancement 3 on Assess Attitude rolls. If you observe someone who has a Bond towards another character present in the scene, you intuit the Bond's existence.

BLURT IT OUT

Cost: Imbue 1 Legend

Duration: One scene

Subject: One character

Clash: Presence + Legend vs. Composure + Legend

Range: Short

Action: Simple

You overwhelm a character with a sudden burst of emotion. They exclaim without realizing it, unwittingly vocalizing whatever they are thinking. Everyone who hears it gains Enhancement 3 on Assess Attitude actions or other Social rolls to understand the utterance's context for the duration of the Boon.

IRRESISTIBLE IMPULSE

Cost: Imbue 1 Legend

Duration: Condition

Subject: One character

Range: Medium

Action: Simple

You fill a character's heart with an emotion of your choice. They gain a Condition based on that emotion — Mad as Hell, Lovestruck, Too Sad to Function, or something similar. The exact effect of the Condition may vary based on the chosen emotion, but as a generic effect, the target takes +3 Difficulty when they take an action that the Storyguide deems is directly contrary to the emotion — it's hard to treat someone politely while Mad as Hell, or to commit to a fist fight while Lovestruck. Other characters gain Enhancement 3 on rolls to detect the inflamed emotion. This Condition can be resolved by taking a significant action with the potential for consequences that is motivated by the emotion — starting a bar fight, asking someone out, or skipping work would count. It also ends if you reclaim the Legend imbued in this Boon.

TUGGING AT HEARTSTRINGS

Cost: Imbue 1 Legend

Duration: One scene

Subject: One character

Range: Long

Action: Reflexive

Once you have identified a character's Attitude towards you or someone else, you can either intensify or stifle the emotions from which it is derived, raising or lowering its value by 1 point. This doesn't stack with other magical Attitude modifiers, but can cancel out an opposing bonus or penalty.

The Seven-Pointed Star Cult guarded their secrets fiercely: passwords, en-crypted emails, thaumaturgic wards, the works. Llazar's band had been trying to get inside their headquarters and find out their leader's name for weeks, but to no avail.

They had found out one thing. Every Friday, after the weekly meeting, the neonates went out for drinks at the Black Goat. This week, Llazar was there when they came in, discreetly sipping on a vodka tonic.

Their conversation seemed normal enough, cult business hidden away behind code words. One of them seemed unhappy with the orders they'd been given (or rather, "had a clogged gutter") while the others tried to rally his spirits ("just listen to the roof guy!"). Llazar had his in. He added just the slightest tinge of fear to the reluctant neonate's heart...

"God, I'm terrified of Ned Sanders."

"Dave, what the hell? Code words!"

"Shit, my bad. Don't know what came over me."

PROSPERITY

The Prosperity Purview governs wealth and commerce, the prosperity of peoples and cities, and the blessings of providence laid upon a God's chosen people. Many Gods who hold it are tutelary deities, appointing themselves as the divine patrons of a kingdom or tribe that has won their favor.

Innate Power: Whenever you exploit your wealth or financial status to influence someone, treat their Attitude towards you as one point higher. This does not stack with other magical Attitude bonuses.

ALL THAT GLITTERS

Cost: Imbue 1 Legend

Duration: One session

Subject: One object or location

Range: Close

Action: Simple

You never have to worry about your wealth or gifts going unnoticed. You can use this Boon on either a luxury good that you've bought this session, like an elegant necklace or brand-new SUV, or an object or locale that you have either concretely or symbolically dedicated to a group of people, like a shrine built for your cult or a shopping mall you've cut the ribbon to.

The blessed object or location catches the attention of anyone who sees it, and provides Enhancement 2 to influence that plays off a character's feelings towards it. You could use your shiny new jewelry to seduce a handsome-but-penniless bachelor, or give it away to an enemy, and then convince a crew of notorious thieves to rob their house once they've seen the goods.

BLESSED WEALTH

Cost: Spend 1 Legend

Duration: Instant

Action: Simple

You call forth wealth, conjuring up roughly $10,000 worth of riches (though you don't need to bother keeping track of precise sums). This wealth takes the form of your choosing: a fresh wad of $100 bills in your wallet, coins of precious metal minted with your divine parent's visage, a discreet deposit into your online bank account, or similar. Regardless of the form it takes, money conjured with this Boon wants to be spent — any that remains in your possession once the session ends vanishes.

The money retains your blessing once it has been given away, giving a mortal Enhancement 3 on a single roll to run a business successfully or maintain a comfortable home and lifestyle (above and beyond the usual benefits of having money to spend). If it becomes divided among multiple characters, only the first one to roll gets the Enhancement.

DIVINE PROVIDENCE

Cost: Imbue 1 Legend

Duration: Indefinite

Subject: One group or city

Range: Long

Action: Simple

You give your blessing to a specific group of mortals that belong to an organization or live in the same place, such as the employees of a business, the members of your cult, or the populace of a city. Your benevolence wards away economic misfortune, negating any mundane Conditions that arise from poverty or stabilizing larger-scale economies. A blessing on a city's homeless population ensures they will fortuitously find enough resources to maintain their basic needs of sustenance and accommodation, while your favored city will weather recessions or other misfortune slightly better than others in the region. If you have a relationship to the group or city that benefits from this that is represented by a Path, you can evoke that Path an additional time each session.

Adi walked into the ring weighed down with several kings' ransoms in gold and jewelry. The ref made him take off the rings — supernatural underground fight clubs had some rules, after all — but he kept the necklaces, talismans, and chains around his neck.

The kid in the other corner was scrappy, maybe had a gandharva somewhere in the family tree. Definitely had the speed advantage. He couldn't keep his eyes off the jewelry. "My good luck charms," Adi joked.

The bell rang, and the bout began. Adi took his share of punishment, but his plan was working. The kid was distracted, focused on the glint of gold instead of the Scion's hands.

It was the last round of the bout, and Adi wanted to impress the crowd. He took one of his necklaces, and tossed it out into a corner of the ring. His opponent went for it, lunging out of instinctual avarice, and Adi hammered the opening. It was a knockout.

Adi basked in the crowd's roaring adulation, took his prize money, got his rings back from the ref. He left the amulet for his opponent to keep when he came to. Kid deserved a good luck charm of his own.

SKY

This Purview is held by Gods of weather, winds, and lightning. It rules over every aspect of the sky: the soft rains that water the fields, the gentle breeze that cools, the fury of the tempest and the flashing power of the thunderbolt.

Innate Power: You have perfect foreknowledge of the weather and climate around you up to at least a day in advance, and may ignore any Complications imposed by rain, wind, or other hazardous weather.

BOLT FROM THE BLUE

Cost: Spend 1 Legend

Duration: Instant

Subject: All enemies in one range band

Range: Medium

Action: Simple

You call down a bolt of lightning, rolling an attack with (highest Power Attribute) + Occult. It has the Aggravated, Ranged, and Shockwave tags. You can use this Boon to attack enemies inside a building, but it provides a Defense bonus: from +1 for a one-story building with a light wooden roof to +5 for a skyscraper with a lightning rod affixed to it.

FLIGHT

Cost: Imbue 1 Legend

Duration: One scene

Subject: Self

Action: Simple

You can fly, using movement actions to ascend upwards into the air or horizontally through it. You cannot rush or disengage (**Scion: Origin**, p. 72) while flying. When this Boon ends, you descend gracefully to the ground, taking no falling damage.

VOICE OF SEVEN THUNDERS

Cost: Imbue 1 Legend

Duration: Indefinite

Subject: Self

Action: Reflexive

Your voice booms like a crashing storm. You can be clearly heard by anyone out to far range, and do not need to

spend threshold successes or Legend to use the Esoterica marvel when using your voice. If you are threatened, the Enhancement you receive is increased by one, maximum 3.

Omolara rose through the air, drawing gasps from the crowds of pedestrians that packed the city streets. No adrenaline rush could compare to flying, and she needed every drop of it. That bastard Gabriel had stolen Shàngó's Crown out of her penthouse, and now he thought he could smuggle the Relic out of town by helicopter. As the flying woman came into view, Gabriel tried desperately to shake her off, but the sky belonged to the daughter of Oya. Matching pace, she knocked on the helicopter door, just to mess with him. "I think you have something that doesn't belong to you."

STARS

The Stars shine in the eternal firmament, infinitely distant from the World and yet inextricably bound to the most fundamental patterns of its existence. They offer guidance to mariners lost at sea and farmers following the cycle of the seasons, tracing out and defining the contours of both space and time through their celestial movements.

Innate Power: As long as you are beneath the open sky, you can take a simple action to shift your senses to a God's eye view, looking down on yourself and your surroundings out to long range from a top-down perspective.

COSMIC PERSPECTIVE

Cost: Imbue 1 Legend

Duration: One scene

Subject: Self

Action: Simple

To look up at the stars is to peer into the past, witnessing light that was shed countless eons ago. You can observe the past, specifying either a point in time or an event that occurred as far back as 1,000 years, but no more recently than the last dawn. If you use this Boon to make an interval roll for an investigation or a similar action, you can ignore up five points of Complication resulting from the passage of time since the event you view occurred.

GUIDING STAR

Cost: Imbue 1 Legend

Duration: Indefinite

Subject: One character

Range: Infinite

Action: Simple

You create a mystical beacon that leads either directly to you, to the location that you are in when you use this Boon, or to any locale that you know well. The target of this Boon can sense the beacon from anywhere within the same realm of existence, and can navigate the way to it with a flawless sense of direction.

Once a character has chosen to follow the beacon, you can divine their location as a simple action, determining the exact distance and direction to them.

STARRY PATH

Cost: Spend 1 Legend

Duration: Instant

Subject: Self and other characters

Action: Complex

As you focus on a specific location, motes of starlight wink into existence around you. You must maintain your focus as a Complex action as they build over the course of a few minutes, and can't use this Boon at all while in combat or similarly fast-paced action. Once the action is complete, you disappear in a burst of starlight and instantly reappear anywhere in the World, regardless of distance. You can bring up to (Legend) additional willing characters with you when you teleport. Other Scions and mortals Fatebound to you don't count towards this limit.

This Boon can't be used to pass directly from one realm of existence into another. In Terra Incognitae, Overworlds, or Underworlds, the distance you can teleport with a single use is limited to the equivalent to five days and nights of travel within that realm.

The high-rise had never been built to withstand an earthquake; the city wasn't anywhere near a fault line. But nonetheless, the earthquake had come. The fire department had tried to rescue who they could, but there was no reaching the top floor.

Alejandra appeared from nowhere in a burst of stardust, all the colors of her father's feathers. The trapped inhabitants were so startled by her arrival that they forgot the ground quaking beneath them for a moment. "Come with me," she said cheerily. "We're all making it out of here."

SUN

This Purview holds sway over the Sun in all its aspects, both the life-giving rays that drive back winter and nourish the harvest and the scorching heat that brings drought and desert barrenness. This Purview also draws on the symbolism of the setting and rise of the Sun to promise rebirth, fulfill the hopes of those in the darkness, and purify the World of that which stalks in the night.

Innate Power: You can radiate an aura of sunlight that pierces through darkness out to long range as a reflexive action. You may spend 1 Legend to increase this radiance to blinding brilliance, imposing a +2 Complication on any attack rolls against you or an ally within the light.

BLINDING GLORY

Cost: Spend 1 Legend

Duration: Condition

Range: Medium

Action: Simple

You unleash a flash of brilliant light, inflicting a blinding Condition on all enemies in range. When you spend Legend with this Purview's innate power, you may also use this Boon reflexively and for free. In addition, if all targets are trivial, this Boon's cost is waived.

HOPE REBORN

Cost: Imbue 1 Legend

Duration: One day

Subject: Self

Action: Simple

You embody the glory of the sun and the promise of the dawn. Mortals will instinctively see you as the answer to any hopes they may have, and you have Enhancement 3 when you try to identify these hopes or use them as leverage in influence.

PENETRATING GLARE

Cost: Imbue 1 Legend

Duration: One scene

Subject: Self

Action: Reflexive

Your see through the darkness of lies and confusion. Add Enhancement 3 on any rolls to determine whether a character is lying, see through a disguise, pierce an illusion, or otherwise see through deceptions. If you face the Misleading complication, its rating is reduced by one point.

No one in town wanted to talk about it, even though they all knew it was happening. Friends, loved ones, children gone missing from bed in the middle of the night, never to return. Strange sigils graffitied on the sides of building that hurt your head if you looked at them too long. A sickly green light that lit the forest mists. The town was sick with fear, and it had only bred silence.

Clarissa hadn't been planning on making a stop. She was going to see family — mortal family — but the gas indicator on her car must have been broken. It lurched to a stop almost as soon as she got off the exit going through the middle-of-nowhere town.

She was in the middle of fueling up when a young man approached her, gangly and awkward, staring at her like he was seeing his first sunrise. She knew that look. It was a cry for help.

"Tell me what's wrong. I can help."

"... they took my sister last year. The... the people in the forest. I don't know what they want with her, but I can show you—"

"Don't worry. We'll find her."

WAR

As long as there has been humanity, there has been war. From the earliest skirmishes between tribes to the great wars that shaped the course of history, mortals have looked to the Gods of war for their blessing. This Purview governs strife on a conceptual level as well as armed conflict. It may shape the tide of battles, uplift the destinies of soldiers and generals, or shatter fragile edifices of peace.

Innate Power: You can grant a group of Heavy followers the Savage tag with your blessing as an ordinary action. This lasts indefinitely, but only one group can benefit from this at a time.

HERALD OF VICTORY

Cost: Spend 1 Legend

Duration: One scene

Subject: One side of a battle

Range: Long

Action: Simple

Your blessing promises victory. All characters on the side of your choice in a fight (whether physical or not) gain Enhancement 1 on all actions. If you are passively observing a battle between unrelated parties (i.e. none of her allies are involved), you can use this Boon for free to favor one side.

MARCHING ORDERS

Cost: Imbue 1 Legend

Duration: One scene

Subject: You or One character

Range: Short

Action: Reflexive

You grant Enhancement 2 to yourself or another character on rolls to command Heavy Followers (p.203) for one scene. If the target interacts with a character who is his subordinate in a military or paramilitary group, the subordinate's Attitude is treated as one point higher. This does not stack with other magical Attitude bonuses.

UNDERSTANDING THE BATTLEFIELD

Cost: Imbue 1 Legend

Duration: One scene

Subject: Self

Action: Simple

Ask the Storyguide one of the following questions:

- What is the best way to provoke a fight (not necessarily lethal, but definitely ugly) in the current scene?
- What's the best way out of (or into) this room?
- Where should I look to find a tactical advantage? (e.g. a shotgun beneath the bar, corridors too narrow for a full security squad to move through, a war God's blessed altar)
- What should I be on the lookout for?

Following the Storyguide's answer grants Enhancement 3 on applicable rolls. This never directly benefits attack or defense — if the Storyguide told you about a machine gun hidden in the scene, you would get an Enhancement to find it and get it, but not to shoot with it.

"I'm not going to lie to you," Aldric Lacan said, brandishing his godly great sword and addressing his cult like a scene out of Patton. He glimpsed his lover, Hélène, in the crowd. She nodded to spur him on. "This isn't going to be like any fight you've had before. You're going to be mortals going up against monsters. Demons. The things you've had nightmares about since you were kids." There were grim nods. The cultists knew the odds they were up against.

"But mark my words — you aren't just any mortals. You are heroes, every one of you. You wouldn't be here if you weren't. Monsters and demons don't mean shit against that. I'll be right there with you. We're going to fight. And we're going to win."

WATER

From ancient wells and municipal waterworks to flowing rivers and vast oceans, all Water is governed by this Purview. It rules the ebb and flow of the tides, the sustaining and cleansing power of fresh water, and the untold perils of crashing waves and the deep sea.

Innate Power: You can breathe water like air and swim with flawless grace, ignoring any Complication for moving or acting underwater. You are also immune to harm from the pressure or temperature of water.

CHANGING TIDES

Cost: Imbue 1 Legend or spend 1 Legend

Duration: One scene or Instant

Subject: Body of water

Range: Long

Action: Simple

You exert your will over water, controlling the tides or currents that move through it. You can calm all water out to long range, making it still and placid even in the face of a hurricane, or change the direction that currents flow in, letting you reverse the direction of a river or cause a riptide to drag lost swimmers back to shore. Reclaiming the Legend imbued in this Boon causes the water to revert to its natural behavior.

Alternatively, if you spend Legend instead of imbuing it, you can call up a great wave to crash down on your foes. You roll this attack with (highest Power Attribute) + Occult. It has the Bashing, Long Range, Pushing, and Shockwave tags.

REBORN IN THE DEPTHS

Cost: Imbue 1 Legend

Duration: One scene

Subject: Self

Action: Reflexive

You can heal by submerging yourself in a body of water, resolving an Injury Condition at the end of a scene spent immersed in water. You can only benefit from this healing once per session. In addition, you extend your senses through the water. As a simple action, you can displace your perspective to any point out to long range within the same body of water, seeing through that point as though you were physically there.

SINK HOPES

Cost: Imbue 1 Legend

Duration: Condition

Subject: One character

Range: Short

Action: Simple

You overwhelm a character with the sensation of endless drowning as a Condition. Even though they know they can breathe, they either panic or despair as they feel suffocated by an endless crushing darkness. All rolls they make with Social or Mental Attributes are at +2 difficulty. If they are submerged in water or at risk of becoming so, this also applies to Physical Attribute rolls. This Condition resolves when the target suffers near-drowning or a comparable mortal peril due to water, or when you reclaim the Legend imbued in this Boon.

Yukiko rested at the bottom of the sea, saltwater soothing her aches and pains. She let her mind's eye wander with the tides. She smiled as she caught the elegant ballet of a school of manta rays chasing after food. The umibōzu she'd dealt with last month was still sulking, but true to its word, it hadn't given any trouble to the fishermen since then. Her smile faded as she heard a cry for help — a young boy struggling hopelessly against a riptide, his panicked parents screaming from the shore. Up from the sea-bed, Yukiko hastened to his rescue, casually breaking Olympic swimming records. Relaxation would have to wait. This was what she lived for.

WILD

This is the Purview of untamed lands and the flora of the wilderness, wielded by Gods of nature or plants. It rules all wilderness, from forests and jungles to desert cacti to taiga evergreens. Its miracles can animate or control plant life, preserve the wilderness against human settlement, or draw on symbolic associations of wildness to unleash the inner beast of domesticated animals or humans.

Innate Power: You move through the wilderness with a dryad's grace, ignoring any difficult or dangerous terrain based on dense undergrowth, fallen trees, briar patches, or similar plant-based hazards. Add Enhancement 2 on all rolls to establish stealth while in a wilderness area.

CALL OF THE WILD

Cost: Imbue 1 Legend

Duration: Condition

Subject: One character or multiple trivial targets

Range: Medium

Action: Simple

For all that human civilization has progressed, it is not so far from returning to the wild as it might like to think. You can use this Boon on a human, human-like being, or domesticated animal. Alternatively, this Boon can be used against all trivial targets within range for free. You inflict a Condition that awakens atavistic instincts, adding +2 to the Difficulties of all Academics, Culture, Firearms, Medicine, Pilot, Science, and Technology rolls, but grants Enhancement 2 on Athletics, Close Combat, Integrity, and Survival rolls. This Condition resolves when failing a roll with one of the penalized Skills leads to significant consequences.

LAY OF THE LAND

Cost: Imbue 1 Legend

Duration: One scene

Subject: Self

Action: Simple

Ask the Storyguide one of the following questions in a wilderness area:

- What happened here recently?
- What should I be on the lookout for?

- Where's my best escape route/way in/way around?
- What here is useful or valuable to me?

Following the Storyguide's answer grants Enhancement 3 on applicable rolls.

OVERGROWTH

Cost: Spend 1 Legend

Duration: One scene

Range: Medium

Action: Simple

You cause plants to sprout and rapidly grow from the soil, cracks in concrete, or any other surface that can support them. You can create difficult terrain anywhere within range and create one or more terrain features that provide a total of 3 points worth of Complications or Enhancements.

For the rest of the scene, you direct the plants to attack an enemy as a simple action, rolling Presence + Survival. These attacks have the Bashing, Grappling, and Versatile tags.

The behemoth spawn of Crom Cruach stomped through the valley, blighting the earth with every footstep. As it neared the edge of town, its taint began to spread into the populace. If it reached them, they would all be dead within the night. Siobhan wasn't going to let that happen.

At his will, thick vines sprouted from the earth. Siobhan felt their presence like they were his own limbs, and sent them coiling around the Titans-pawn's dozen legs. As they twisted its legs out from under it, Siobhan summoned huge thorns up from the ground to skewer it, trapping it in place.

PANTHEON SIGNATURE PURVIEWS

Each pantheon has its own unique Signature Purview, encompassing the unique qualities and cultural magic of the pantheon and its followers. Scions gain access to the Signature Purview of their divine parent's pantheon (a Scion whose parent is in multiple pantheons, or has parents from two different pantheons, must choose one). Relics and Guides cannot grant access to a Signature Purview.

ÆSIR SIGNATURE PURVIEW: WYRD

The Wyrd Purview encompasses the magic used by the Æsir and their worshippers to foretell and manipulate the fates spun by the Nornir. These include galdr (spells and charms) cast through runes or chanting, spá (prophecy), and the practice of seiðr in emulation of the Nornir.

Innate Power: You have a personal fate that you know you are destined to meet. This might be a death whose circumstances mirror those of your divine parent's fated doom in Ragnarok, a betrayal by those closest to you, the failure of an ambition, or some similar dramatic downfall. Whenever you encounter narrative difficulties that advance your fate or echo its circumstances, or because you are trying to avoid your fate, add 1 Momentum to the pool.

CAST THE RUNES

Cost: Free

Duration: One session

Action: Complex

Once per session, you may perform a divination by casting runes etched onto stones, strips of bark, or other objects in a ritual that takes a handful of minutes to complete. The Storyguide gives you a lead or a clue about what will happen in the near future (i.e. what they expect to happen in the current session).

If you use a Boon or marvel later in the same session, and the Storyguide agrees that it will help in bringing about the foretold events, you may draw on the divination to waive the cost of imbuing or spending a single point of Legend. Each use of this Boon only provides this benefit once.

SPIN THE THREAD

Cost: Imbue 1 Legend

Duration: Condition

Subject: One character

Range: Infinite

Action: Complex

You use the art of seiðr to lay a blessing or curse on another character, entering into a ritual trance that lasts one scene and envisioning their future. You predict a specific triumph or downfall the character will face, and impose a Condition that represents this destiny on them. If an action is likely to bring about the foretold fate, the Condition provides Enhancement 2. Actions that struggle against this destiny have their Difficulty increased by 1, or by 2 if they would make it outright impossible for it to come to fruition. These effects cut both ways — a blessing might make it more difficult for a warrior to undertake a plan if it would lead to his defeat, while a curse might give a foe an Enhancement on actions that lead to their downfall.

This Condition resolves once the outcome you have predicted comes to pass, the Storyguide deems that it is no longer capable of being fulfilled, or you reclaim the Legend imbued in this Boon. It can also be lifted by magic capable of altering destiny, such as marvels of this Purview or the Fortune Purview.

"I'm going to die one day," Victoria said. "It's my fate." She held a battle-axe in either hand. "I will fall in battle to the jaws of a great wolf, and that will be

the end of me. Or maybe something like a wolf. Fate's unclear, sometimes." The cultists surrounding her didn't make a move, as if entranced by her words.

"But I have cast the runes, and today is not the day I die. You are not the wolf that defeats me. So stand aside, or I will cut down. That is your destiny."

DEVA SIGNATURE PURVIEW: YÓGÁ

The yogás are disciplines that cultivate the liberation of the spirit and realization of the ultimate self through selfless action (kárma yóga), personal devotion to divinities (bhakti yóga) and the pursuit of understanding the divine (jñana yóga). With this Purview, the Devá and their Scions may acquire divine favor and blessings through the practice of these austerities and selfless service. Conveniently, the scriptures and epics in which the Devá feature are full of tales in which the reward of selfless service just happens to be, say, a bow that shoots nukes.

Innate Power: Once per scene, when you act selflessly despite hardships in order to uphold a duty or serve someone else, you may allow another player to spend Momentum on an action without having to draw on one of their Virtues. Every point of Momentum they spend also adds another free die, as though they had the Virtuous Condition.

DEVOTION'S REWARD

Cost: Free

Duration: One session

Subject: Self

Action: Complex

You call upon the power of a Devá through an act of devotion that lasts at least a scene: undergoing austerities, putting on an artistic performance, making sacrificial offerings pleasing to the God (even one's own limbs), or performing some other passionate act of devotion.

You may choose to gain a specific power or make an open-ended request for a Devá's favor. If you make a specific request, you must contend with a limitation imposed its use by the Devá — a gift of invulnerability might apply against Gods, Titans, and their progeny, but not against mortals, while a loaned weapon might cease to work if you treat a child with less than full respect. If you make an open-ended request, the Storyguide chooses the power you receive, but it carries no restrictions.

Usually, power granted by a Devá comes in the form of one of their Purviews' Boons, one of their Callings' knacks, or the temporary usage of one of their Relics, all of which last for one session. The Storyguide can also offer customized blessings. You can't gain a power beyond your ability to learn normally, such as a God Boon while you are only a Hero.

This Boon can also be used to call upon the favor of an asura (i.e. a Titan that possesses one of the Devá Pantheon Virtues). At the Storyguide's discretion, it is possible to gain the favor of Gods and Titans from other pantheons with this Boon, although you may need to research what would please them or convince them to reciprocate your devotion.

EYES OF KNOWLEDGE

Cost: Imbue 1 Legend

Duration: Indefinite

Subject: Self

Action: Simple

Ask the Storyguide one of the following questions about a God, Scion, Titan, titanspawn, or other divine being you can see:

- *What do they intend to do?*
- *How are they really feeling?*
- *What do they wish I'd do?*
- *How could I get them to do [a certain thing]?*

The Storyguide should try to give this answer in the form of a spontaneous, in-character poetic speech, villainous monologue, or other form of expository dialogue by the character in question (but they can just give you the answer out of character if that's too much work). Following whatever guidance this reveals provides Enhancement 3 on applicable rolls for the duration of this Boon.

Annie X danced with divine fervor, danced like her life depended on it, all four arms moving in time to the beat. Sweat drenched her clothes, exhaustion drowned out her thoughts, the middle-aged screenwriter in the apartment below hers banged on the ceiling with a broom, but she did. Not. Stop.

And Durga smiled her terrible smile.

Down from the heavens flew the world-destroying trident Trishula, bestowed upon Durga by Lord Shiva that she might slay Mahishasura. Now, the Mother of Victory granted it to another. Annie struck a final pose, her entire body pulsing with pain, and seized the reward of her devotion.

KAMI SIGNATURE PURVIEW: YAOYOROZU-NO-KAMIGAMI

Every physical object, animal, and even human soul is one of the kami. Even natural phenomena, abstract concepts, and ideas are kami. This Purview holds sway over the proverbial "Eight Million Gods," allowing them to be spoken with and propitiated in order that they might perform miracles at the Scion's request.

Innate Power: You can speak with the kami of objects and animals, allowing you to communicate and attempt to influence them. They have Attitude 2 towards you by default.

LEADING THE DANCE

Once you become a God, you're the one dancing with Scions, not the other way around. Instead of using this Boon to invite other Gods into yourself, you use it to answer the invitations of Heroes and Demigod, granting them one of your Purviews and gaining access to all their senses, which you can tap into reflexively.

The kami of objects have a limited degree of agency, primarily taking unrolled actions to do things the object might have done anyway. Sweet talking the kami of a car could convince it to start without keys, but not to drive around by itself.

APPEASING THE KAMI

Cost: Imbue 1 Legend

Duration: Indefinite

Subject: One object

Range: Short

Action: Simple

You entreat the kami of an object with a show of respect and decorum. The object's Enhancement is increased by one point when you or an ally uses it. When an enemy uses it, they face a +2 Complication. Failure to buy off the Complication causes the object to "misbehave," avoiding causing harm or disadvantage to you.

THE WATCHFUL SPIRIT

Cost: Free

Duration: Until task is completed

Subject: One kami

Range: Close

Action: Simple

You can ask the kami of an object or animal to watch for intruders, keep a lookout for a specific person or event, or perform some other passive task. Once the kami finds what it is looking for or otherwise completes its task, it can notify you regardless of distance, either whispering into your ear or sending a divine portent. This warning or sign can provide +2 Enhancement if it benefits an action.

If you use this Boon again before the watchful kami has completed its task, its duty is discharged and the previous use of this Boon ends.

The museum's security system was the top of the line — it even had the thing with the lasers, which, until now, Tsubaki thought were only in movies. He wasn't going to make it past those, but he didn't have to. All it took was asking politely.

"Excuse my intrusion, kami of the security systems, but I must request your permission to pass through. There is a Relic here that rightfully belongs to my mother, and she has sent me to retrieve it." The kami appeared before Tsubaki, flickering like lightning as it considered his request. He gave it a polite bow.

The lasers shut off. The red "on" lights of the security cameras winked out. When Tsubaki lifted the glass case that covered the jeweled mirror, no alarm rang out. As he left the building, he thanked the kami once more.

LOA AND ÓRÍSHÁ SIGNATURE PURVIEW: CHEVAL/GÚN

This Purview is shared by the Òrìshà and the Loa, allowing them to take possession of their mortal worshippers. Through sacred drumming and dance, worshippers enter into a sacred trance state that makes room for the Gods to enter into them. The Òrìshà use the Yoruba word for this possession, Gún, while the Loa refer to it as Cheval to describe the way they "mount" the possessed person, as though they were a horse.

Innate Power: You can tell whether any mortal you see is possessed by a spirit or deity and identify the nature of the possessing entity. You can attempt to drive out a possessing enemy with a Clash of Wills using Presence + Legend against its Resolve + Legend.

DANCE WITH THE DIVINE

Cost: Imbue 1 Legend

Duration: Indefinite (Special)

Subject: Self

Action: Complex

You invite one of the Gods of your pantheon to share your body at the end of a scene-long ritual. You choose one of the God's Purviews, gaining access to its innate powers and marvels. Alternatively, you can invite possession by one of your ancestor spirits — called **égún** by the Òrìshà and ghede by the Loa — to gain the benefits of having them as a Guide. In exchange, the spirit can experience the World vicariously through you, although they won't actually interfere with your control over your body.

You can only end this Boon once the spirit is ready to leave you. They never overstay their welcome out of malice, but some will press for just one more meal or one last smoke. The usual method for dealing with these spirits is to go off somewhere calm and quiet with a priest (or one of your bandmates, in a pinch), who can politely ask them to depart.

MOUNTING THE HORSE

Cost: Imbue 1 Legend

Duration: One day

Subject: One willing mortal character

Range: Long

Action: Simple

You send a part of your spirit and consciousness into the body of a mortal who's willing to share. You can use their senses to experience the world, dictate their actions, and even use your Boons and knacks through them. The mortal remains aware of what's going on, and can communicate mentally with you. You retain consciousness and control of your body while possessing someone else, and can take actions through either body, sometimes simultaneously: If you're wrestling a rival Scion while guiding a possessed mortal through a first date, you'll need to roll for both of them as a mixed action.

This Boon can be used with infinite range — even across realms of existence — if the target is Fatebound to you or is a member of your cult and invites you in with a scene-long ritual.

Nova Nailo had thanked his father Damballa for the blessing of creation every day, but today, he prepared for battle. The blessings of an evening's carousing and honeyed love would be of little use to him in a full-on brawl, and his slender frame would be rather fragile. Instead, he listened to the pounding of drumbeats over the headphones nestled within his shoulder-length dreads and danced, inviting the aid and presence of a different Òrìshà. When the spirit arrived, it was as unmistakable as thunder.

A few hours later, Nova sent the gate to the militia's compound crashing down with a solid kick. "Come at me, you motherfuckers!" he yelled, in a voice that was his own and not his own. "Shàngó is in the house!" His usual windfall of peace arrive, just not in the usual way.

MANITOU SIGNATURE PURVIEW: DODAEM

Scions may use this Purview to commune with the totemic dodaem manitou of all things: people, animals, places, and events. It allows personal communion with one's own dodaem manitou, which brings meaningful dreams and can act as an intermediary with other manitou. It can also be used to enter into conversation with the World, asking the manitou for their favor in exchange for making offerings or abiding by a taboo. A Scion who has cultivated a strong relationship with a manitou can manifest or borrow its powers in exchange for performing a service.

Innate Power: Once each scene, you can ask a manitou for its favor as a simple action. It grants Enhancement 3 on relevant rolls for the scene, such as those to hunt a bear or pass through a forest safely. In exchange, it will either ask you for a favor (e.g. the bear's manitou needs a new charge after the hunt) or impose a restriction (e.g. the forest manitou forbids you from harming living things). You lose the Enhancement if you don't honor the bargain, and the offended manitou may favor your foes until you make amends with it.

DREAM QUEST

Cost: Imbue 1 Legend

Duration: Indefinite

Subject: Self

Action: Complex

As you sleep, your dodaem manitou shows you meaningful visions. Ask the Storyguide one of the following questions:

- Where do I need to be?
- What should I be on the lookout for?
- What is the cause of this problem?
- What is disturbing the dodaem manitou of this area?

Following the Storyguide's answer provides Enhancement 3 on actions that help get you to where you need to be in order to do what you must, but not on rolls to actually do it. If your dreams show you that you must slay a wendigo, the Enhancement would apply on rolls to investigate its victims and track it down, but not to do battle with it.

SACRED MEDICINE

Cost: Spend 1 Legend

Duration: Instant

Subject: One character

Range: Close

Action: Complex

You tend to someone's physical, mental, or spiritual health by appealing to their dodaem manitou in a scene-long ritual. This can resolve any Condition that character is currently suffering from, including Injury Conditions. However, in exchange for the manitou's aid, it will request a favor from or impose a restriction on either you or that character (if that character is a PC, the responsibility is almost always on them). Failure to abide by this request either causes the cured ailment to return in full force, or imposes a Condition that represents the manitou's disfavor.

"I know why the sickness is spreading," Makwa told his bandmates. "Last night, I dreamed I was back in high school. You were all there with me. We were taking the final exam for biology, but couldn't write down our answers, because we had no tests. One of the other students had taken them. I can't remember his face, but he wore a red suit."

His bandmates listened patiently. A few months back, they would've scoffed, but they knew better now than to laugh at the visions Makwa's dodaem granted.

"The sickness isn't an ordinary disease. Someone is stealing these people's vitality, just like our bio tests were stolen. The red suit? Diamondheart Industries is the biggest business in town, and diamonds and hearts are both red suites. Let's get moving."

NETJER SIGNATURE PURVIEW: HEKU

Heku is a tradition of magic that originated in ancient Egypt, practiced by the Netjer and their followers. It holds dominion over rebirth and the afterlife, exerting outward power in the form of sekhem, external life force, and through the many-part soul: Ren (name), Ib (heart), Sheut (shadow), Ba (personality), Ka (vital essence), and Ha (the sum of all these).

Innate Power: You hold power over those whose ren, or true name, you know. For most mortals, this is their full given name, while the ren of mythical beings, cautious occultists, or Gods require more extensive research or subterfuge to uncover. Knowledge of a character's ren grants Enhancement 2 on rolls to gain knowledge or understanding of them.

REN HARVEST

Cost: Free

Duration: Instant

Subject: Self

Action: Reflexive

As your name spreads across mortal lips and thoughts, your Legend grows. Once per session, when you hear someone talk about you by name and describe your exploits, you gain 1 Legend. Reading a published written description of your exploits that attributes them to you by name in a newspaper, blog, or other similar document can also trigger this reward.

In order for you to use Ren Harvest, the speaker or writer must be praising you out of genuine awe or admiration. Attempting to coerce or trick someone into praising you won't trigger it.

SEKHEM BLAZE

Cost: Imbue 1 Legend

Duration: One scene

Subject: One character

Clash: Presence + Legend vs. Resolve + Legend

Range: Medium

Action: Simple

You manifest the power and energy of your living soul as a brilliant light shining in your eyes, exerting your dominance over all you behold. The target must either flee from, or is cowed into submission and ceases hostilities — your choice. If you know their ren, you treat their Attitude as two points higher for the rest of the scene. This does not stack with other magical Attitude bonuses.

Rana's eyes burned with golden light, piercing straight to the heart of the Aten cult's leader. "Tell them to free the hostages. I know your true name, Joseph Beauregard Anderson the Fourth, and by your ren I command you." He had no choice but to obey, relaying Rana's orders over walkie-talkie.

"You sure about that, boss? We let them go, what's to stop the feds from coming in?" Rana's stern gaze made the cult leader's answer clear. "Let 'em go, boys. Let 'em all go."

SHÉN SIGNATURE PURVIEW: TIANMING

The Shén order heaven, hell, and the World through a great celestial bureaucracy. At its head is the Jade Emperor, and from him all power flows downward in the form of positions and titles, privileges and responsibilities: the Tianming, or Mandate of Heaven. This Purview holds sway over the hierarchy of the heavens as well as all mortal bureaucracies, which are seen as Worldly extensions or reflections of the celestial model.

Innate Power: You ignore all Complications from bureaucratic delay, corrupt officials, missing paperwork, long lines at the DMV, or similar obstacles that impede the right functioning of bureaucratic and official institutions.

CELESTIAL PROMOTION

Cost: Imbue 1 Legend

Duration: Condition

Subject: Self or one character

Range: Short

Action: Simple

You name yourself or another with a title imbued with the authority of heaven: "Great Sage, Equal to Heaven," "Protector of Dogs," "That One God No One Likes," or something similar. The bestowed title is a Condition. The target's title is self-evident to anyone who meets him, and people who need aid related to the title's duties will tend to come to them for help. The title provides Enhancement 2 on rolls to influence characters or form plans whenever the target is able to take advantage of it, but imposes Complication 2 where it incurs the displeasure of those they're working with — cats don't like the Protector of Dogs, and no one likes That One God No One Likes.

A character who finds their title disagreeable can resolve this Condition by undertaking a dramatic action that carries significant potential consequences in the service of their title's duties, finally releasing themselves from its obligations. A spurned lover

named "King of the Poorly Endowed Assholes" might resolve the Condition by rounding up a gang of fellow assholes and establishing authority over them with shows of strength and intimidation. If the Scion recovers the Legend imbued in this Boon, the Condition also resolves.

VERMILLION TAPE

Cost: Imbue 1 Legend

Duration: Indefinite

Subject: One organization

Range: Long

Action: Simple

You place a curse on a bureaucracy or similarly structured organization from within range of either its leader or its headquarters. Any member of the organization conducting its official business faces a +4 Complication. If the Complication is not bought off, the task either takes significantly longer than intended — enough that it occurs narratively "too late" — or it turns out to be misunderstood, resulting in an end product or accomplishment that is not what the character originally intended.

When you use this Boon, you can specify a behavior, such as holding weekly prayer rituals or wearing fancy suits, that lets a character ignore this Complication.

Little Mao had no patience for bullies, and Sheriff Miller was the worst kind — high on his own authority, not caring who got hurt as long as he got off on it. Mao could've laid him out with some Eight Trigram Palm, but that kind of punishment wouldn't last nearly long enough (not to mention Mao didn't need any trouble with the law).

Instead, the Scion showed up in Sheriff Miller's office, wearing his most expensive suit. Few people questioned you when you wore a suit that nice. "Congratulations, Sheriff. I hear you're up for a promotion." Miller responded with a grunt that ended in a question mark. "By the Mandate of Heaven, I grant you the title of Spineless Receptacle of Complaints and Excrement."

It took him a little less than a week to resign, although the newspapers would never let that story die down. They say he skipped town, looking for somewhere nobody knew his name. Little Mao wished him good luck finding it.

TEŌTL SIGNATURE PURVIEW: NEXTLAHUALLI

The act of sacrifice binds together the Teōtl and their worshippers in reciprocity and mutual gratitude. The Teōtl sustain the World so that humanity can live in it, and in turn their worshippers sustain their Gods through sacrificing flowers, goods, animals, and human lives. Nextlahualli, literally meaning "debt repayment," describes the cyclical relationship of offerings and obligations at the heart of Teōtl worship. Through this Purview, the Teōtl and their Scions draw sustenance and empowerment from sacrifice and wield that power on behalf of their worshippers.

Innate Power: Each time you gain Legend from sacrifice, add 1 Momentum to the pool. Whenever you helping mortals who have sacrificed to you directly or the Teōtl causes narrative difficulties for you, you also add 1 Momentum to it.

FLESH OF THE WORLD

Cost: Free

Duration: Instant

Subject: Self

Action: Reflexive

Sacrifice sustains your vital essence as well as your Legend. Once per session, when you receive Legend from a major sacrifice, you may resolve a single Condition affecting you. Additionally, you can survive off sacrifice alone, ignoring any harm or Complications from starvation, dehydration, or suffocation in a session where you have received at least 1 Legend from sacrifice.

REPAY THE DEBT

Cost: Free

Duration: Instant

Action: Reflexive

Whenever a mortal makes a sacrifice to one of the Teōtl or directly to you within (Legend x 25) miles

I STAB THE CLOUD

Theoi Scions can't become invulnerable by taking on forms that are normally invalid targets for attacks — they still use their Defense and suffer Injury Conditions like normal. The resulting Injuries can be more abstract to suit the form — a cloud might be "Dissipated" — but revert to more mundane injuries upon returning to human form. If you want to emphasize the difficulty of attacking what you've turned into, represent that with increased Durability.

or at one of your Sanctums, you become aware of their identity and their reason for the offering. You can answer the request by using a Boon or marvel, extending its range to the location of the sacrifice.

Once per session, you may reduce the cost of a Boon or marvel used in response to a sacrifice by one point of imbued or spent Legend.

The villagers took shelter in Ītzpāpālōtl's temple, huddling together as the Tzitzimime ravaged their homes. An old man emptied out a pack of cigarettes onto the altar and set them afire — a paltry sacrifice, normally, but in the moment, it was all he had. Together, they prayed for salvation.

And Javier heard. He was hours away, no matter how much rubber he burned, but he could send a miracle to keep them safe until then. As the old man led the prayer, dozens of jaguars burst forth from the cloud of tobacco smoke, sleek and emerald-eyed. Most of them rushed out of the temple to fight off the Tzitzimime; a few stayed behind to nuzzle the frightened children.

Javier's motorcycle blazed down the highway, a Relic maquahuitl slung across his back. "Don't worry," he said through a jaguar's mouth. "I'm coming."

THEOI SIGNATURE PURVIEW: METAMORPHOSIS

The mythos of the Theoi is replete with tales of transformation, old forms changed into new entities. Gods take on the shapes of animals and humans, weather and geography, even abstract forms such as thoughts or emotions. They also transform others, turning foes into beasts, lovers into flowers, and heroes into constellations. This Purview governs both kinds of transformations, allowing Theoi Scions to emulate their parents' mutability.

Innate Power: Your mutable nature lends itself to disguise. When you conceal your identity by any means, trivial characters automatically fail to see through your deception. When you roll to disguise yourself or present yourself as someone else, you ignore any Complications from changing height, size, race, sex, or even species.

CHANGE SHAPE

Cost: Spend 1 Legend

Duration: One scene

Subject: Self

Action: Simple

You take on a form that is symbolically associated with one of your other Purviews. For example, Zeus drew on the associations of the Sky Purview to become all sorts of birds, a shower of gold, and a bull (which sounds a great deal like thunder, up close). This transformation is perfect in the details and undetectable through non-magical means, but doesn't alter any of your Attributes, Skills, or other traits. However, depending on the form you assume, you can gain the following benefits:

- +1 Scale on all actions with a single Physical Attribute of your choice
- Any special forms of movement that shape possesses.
- Any natural attacks that shape possesses.
- Any miscellaneous abilities the Storyguide decides the shape should have, like a cloud being able to rain.

TRANSFIGURE

Cost: Spend 1 Legend

Duration: Instant

Subject: One character

Clash: Cunning + Legend vs. Resolve + Legend

Range: Short

Action: Simple

You transform another character into an animal or a similar animate form, as long as it does not completely prevent a character from acting (like being turned into stone) or effectively kill them (like being turned into a fish on dry land). Using this Boon on trivial characters is free, and they can be turned into trees, statuary, or other forms that incapacitate them.

Transformed characters retain their normal traits, but face Complications if they attempt a task their form is unsuited to: using a computer keyboard as a chimpanzee faces a +1 Complication, while firing a machine gun as a dog incurs a +4 Complication. The advantages of the character's new form, such as a dog's sense of smell, can provide Enhancement 1-3 on actions they apply to.

At the end of this Boon, Scions and other characters with Legend 1+ instantly revert to their true form. Mortals gain the Transformed Condition, which they must be resolved through magic before they return to normal. Trivial targets can be transformed permanently.

Meghan's patience was rapidly running out. Inflicting miraculous punishment on mortals over petty slights was rude, bordering on hubris, but so was dressing down the barista because you ordered the wrong damn thing and she took your order correctly. The guy was red-faced, wearing a three-piece suit and a silk tie, hollering about how this wasn't worth his time and did she know who he is, and so on. And he was keeping her from her morning coffee. He deserved it.

A flash of light, and the asshole turned into a peacock. The other folks in line burst out into some light applause — apparently, Meghan wasn't the only one sick of this guy. She gave the barista a smile and a wave, and enjoyed her cappuccino.

CONDITION: GEIS

Being under a geis is a Condition that requires you to obey a prohibition on certain behavior or follow a specific rule. You gain a 1 Momentum whenever obeying your geis causes trouble. Breaking a geis resolves the Condition, and causes you to lose all points of Legend (including those imbued in Boons and marvels). Mortals who break a geis are instead drawn into a life-or-death situation by Fate.

TUATHA DÉ DANANN SIGNATURE PURVIEW: GEASA

Geasa (singular geis) are rules, requirements, and prohibitions written into the fabric of Fate. This Purview binds the Tuatha and their Scions to geasa of their own and lets them lay geasa on others. It can influence the behavior of those under a geis, granting the power to uphold them or tempting Gods or mortals into breaking their geasa.

Innate Power: You are under a geis. If you break it or otherwise resolve the Condition, the Storyguide should arrange for you to fall under another — either from a Tuatha or fellow Scion, one of the sidhe, the biting words of a poet, or simply mythic circumstance. You take on a second such geis upon becoming a Demigod, and a third upon becoming a God.

LAY GEIS

Cost: Spend 1 Legend

Duration: Condition

Subject: One character

Range: Short

Action: Simple

You place a geis on another character, speaking to them to explain the prohibition or obligation they must now obey. The only limitation on the geis is that the target must be capable of upholding it at the time you place it — if someone's currently wearing a red shirt, you can't geis them not to wear red. You regain the Legend spent on this Boon once the geis is broken.

TONGUE OF THE BARD

Cost: Imbue 1 Legend

Duration: Indefinite

Subject: One character

Action: Simple

Your bard's tongue speaks of a character's prowess and deeds. Ask the Storyguide one of the following questions about a character you can see:

- What is this character's lineage (mortal and divine)?
- What is a geis they are under?
- What is a Deed they are best known for, are currently working on, or want to hide?
- What is a Quality or Knack that they possess?

In order to receive the answer, you must speak it aloud. The Storyguide gives you an answer in the form of a speech or poem that you can perform. This information grants Enhancement 3 to any actions that benefit from it. Discovering that a good-looking stranger in a bar is descended from the Theoi would give an Enhancement on a roll to work out which of the Gods he is descended from, but not on a roll to impress him with a pick-up line. Against trivial targets, you may use this Boon for free.

The Fomorian had six feet and 300 pounds on Eileen, but she refused to be intimidated by the titanspawn. Her father had blessed her with a bard's tongue, and she needed no other weapon. She opened her mouth, not knowing what she would say, but knowing it would be true.

"O handsome cousin, I have heard

From bear and cat and fish and bird,

Of secret shame you wish to hide —

You slew your father and your bride!"

Her words struck him sharper than any blade. Tears welled up from the Fomorian's eyes, and all his proud posturing crumbled to nothing. "Take whatever you need," he said, "but please, I beg you, keep my secret."

CHAPTER SIX
MYTHIC STORYTELLING

It would seem that mythological worlds have been built up only to be shattered again, and that new worlds were built from the fragments.

— Franz Boas

INTRODUCTION

This chapter is here to give Storyguides an introduction to some traditional features of myth and legend. It's especially about how to move those features from academic concepts to playable and exciting plots. Stories in **Scion: Hero** take the limit-pushing characters of **Origin** over those limits. They hunt for world-changing treasures, fight monsters that could destroy cities, and sway masses through divinely inspired social media.

Before getting into the patterns that run through myths, there are a few things to say about the word itself and how it applies to these stories. In our modern world, logic and myth are easily divided: One is demonstrably true and the other is demonstrably false. *Logos* and *mythos,* however, weren't originally separated that way. *Logos* did cover reason and theory, but it also meant talk, story, rumor, and even legend. It covered both the true and the untrue, and *mythos* did the same.

It's that ancient blurring that **Scion** strives for: The World is made of stories, with Scions at the heart of them. If every myth is true, then the subtle structures that are their foundations have a real impact on the World: The way that people tell stories shapes what is true. That's why this chapter spends so much time on the way that people remember, recite, and write myths. Scions have to live them or try to escape them.

Preferably while things blowing up along the way.

NARRATIVES AND STRUCTURES

This is the simplest form of a folktale: initial situation, lack, lack liquidated. The hero starts the story in a static life, then finds herself in need of something — wealth, revenge, love, or any of 100 different things — and by its conclusion, she gains it.

Psyche, newly married to Eros (initial situation), loses him when she looks upon him (lack). To prove herself worthy, she must accomplish a series of impossible tasks, all of which she accomplishes (lack liquidated).

Indra, having defeated a great enemy (initial situation), feels immense pride (lack) and so commands the architect of the gods to build him an ever-grander palace. It is only when an avatar of Brahma shows Indra his insignificance in the grand scheme of the cosmos that he learns humility (lack liquidated).

Kullervo swears revenge on the people who slaughtered his tribe (initial situation and lack combined). After suffering attempts on his life and years of slavery, he discovers that his family is still alive, but still pursues his revenge. He achieves it at last, only to find that his family has been killed as well (lack liquidated).

These three elements aren't the entirety of any stories worth remembering, of course, but they're useful to make one point: Myths, folktales, and fairytales are often formulaic. That's fine for telling familiar tales to an audience that expects nothing more, but Storyguides have the responsibility to make stories new and different.

Telling stories for **Scion** means being able to balance the Storyguide's and players' creativity with some of the traditional features of myth. Ideally, these stories can feel mythic without adhering so much to its structures that there's no room for change. Understanding how to do that requires at least some familiarity with those structures.

THE WESTERN STRUCTURE

Begin at the beginning, with what took place before the game started. Was the player's Scion ever something else, or was he created? If he was created, does he have any sense of being something before? Was he a mummy on display in a museum until Osiris chose to return him to life, or an automaton so perfectly crafted that Hephaestus granted it life? These questions matter because of a basic

EUROPE IS NOT THE WORLD

European-influenced heroic stories are the most frequently examined, and therefore best known, structures in the English language. They're so popular that authors often try to force the stories of other cultures to fit their model, pretending that they're universal. They aren't, but that doesn't mean that they are only applicable to Western myths. In some cases, the structure really does work, which means that Storyguides can use it for stories involving Scions from anywhere in the world. The reverse is also true: Non-Western styles can be applied to Western-based myths.

rule of being a Storyguide: Anything in a character's past is fair game for future complications.

It's also because of what it means for characters who weren't created. The circumstances of the conception and birth of a hero are almost always unusual ones. Her mother could have miscarried time after time until she was born. She could have been conceived through a dream, a falling flower, or by an enchanting stranger that her mother never saw again. And what about her parents? Did they hide some secret that distinguished them from other people, something that they had to conceal for fear of being hunted by the forces that wanted their child dead, or were they ordinary people unaware of what the baby they nourished and raised would be?

HEROIC TROPES: LOSS, DANGER, AND FORESHADOWING

These stories start with a loss. Whether the hero has started in a place of stability or one of danger, something happens that upsets that and compels her to take action. The Seeds they best suit are ones on the personal level.

A Parent Leaves Home: There are many ways that this can manifest. It could be as simple as having him leave home one day for work and never returning. There is no explanation, no apparent cause, no resolution. It could mean that the parent vanishes overnight, either in complete absence or leaving behind some token of her fate: a flower, an animal, or a shining stone. The reason for the departure could be more straightforward as well, such as the need to go to war or travel to a distant country.

Whatever the reason, the important part of this step is to leave the hero with fewer connections to her family life. It's significant precisely because it unmoors her and forces her to think about what those connections meant. It also drives her to reach out to others to discover meaning in her life again.

Story Seeds

- *Haunted by the Past*: A mortal parent returns, but changed by an experience they cannot describe.
- *The Changeling:* Something returns in the shape of the parent, but is clearly not what it appears to be.
- *Dreams and Portents:* The hero begins to dream of the lost parent being trapped in an unfamiliar realm.

A Parent Dies: Like the last example, this one upsets the life of the hero. For Scions, this is always going to be the mortal parent, and again, it forces him to question what his place is in the world. With a divine parent who is at a distance, it means that the hero is left alone. It means that he not only has to deal with the meaning of his life without family bonds, but also to deal with the mundane problems of living without a parent. How does he pay the bills? How does he take care of the rest of his family, if there is a family to care for?

Story Seeds

- *Descent into the Underworld:* The hero tries to bargain with the Gods of death for the return of a mortal parent.
- *Theodicy:* The hero searches for justification from the Gods for the parent's death.
- *Extended Family:* The hero searches for other Scions with the same divine parent to replace the loss of family.

Someone Leaves and Does Not Return: Having a parent leave is entirely different from having someone of the hero's own generation do it. If a brother or sister leaves home and doesn't come back, it's a piece of her childhood that she's lost. Losing a parent means losing a source to depend on. Losing a sibling means losing a confidant or maybe a rival. Does that mean more to her than losing her father or mother, or does it mean less? Is it a source of relief or of anguish?

Story Seeds

- *Evil Twin:* The hero's jealous twin discovers powers of his own and decides to become her nemesis.
- *False Hero:* The hero's sibling starts to take credit for his deeds, and has enough influence to make it a possibility.
- *The Search:* The hero goes in search of one or more siblings who have been imprisoned, transformed, or enchanted.

Danger: One of the elements of the heroic cycle is the idea that the child was threatened at birth. Maybe it was for mundane reasons, like abandonment or being born in a situation that could easily result in death. Maybe it was because another God or Scion wanted to kill the child before she grew up to be a threat. Maybe it was because of a prophecy about what the Scion would do when she came into her power. Moses in the cradle, Lugh being born despite the prophecy that he would kill his grandfather, Oedipus surviving wounding and abandonment — these are all the beginnings of heroic tales.

Story Seeds

- *The Relentless Threat:* Whatever put the hero in danger when he was a child continues to pursue him. If it began as a mortal threat, it is revealed to be connected to one of the Gods.
- *Dire Prophecy:* The hero discovers that it was her own divine parent who tried to kill her, but could not because he was Fated to fail. He knows that someday, his child will overthrow him.
- *Scars:* The danger that the hero was put in left a physical mark of some kind. When she comes into her power, she sees it in graffiti, mortals' tattoos, and corporate logos.

Foreshadowing: Childhood after the initial threat is rarely a subject for traditional stories. There may have been omens at birth that hint at future greatness, but from childhood to adulthood, there's nothing. Hera sent snakes to kill Heracles when he was in his cradle, but what did he do as a 10-year-old? There's nothing wrong with skipping

WHAT ABOUT...?

There are myths that delve into the childhood of Gods and heroes. Hermes invented the lyre and stole Apollo's cattle. Cú Chulainn was a terror to other children because of his strength and ferocity. There's always room to flesh out the childhood signs that a hero is destined for greatness. For a Scion threatened at birth, these deeds also draw the attention of others, including the threats that nearly killed him originally.

those parts of a character's background unless the player wants to fill them in. Unlike the tropes described above, these examples do not often connect to the hero's current situation. Instead, they are a subject for flashbacks or memories that the character has.

Story Seeds

- *Teaching the Teachers:* A Scion with an Epic Attribute demonstrates it in random bursts as a child. Depending on how it manifests, it is a source of amazement or fear.
- *Past Obsession:* Someone who witnessed the hero's powers as a child can't forget that moment and fixates on him through adulthood. Now she stalks his every move.
- *The Empty Grave:* Visiting the grave of a boy that the Scion accidentally killed when she was young, she finds it empty. The boy has risen, either because his Fate is linked to hers or because some other entity wants to use him.

HEROIC TROPES: RULES AND PLEAS

For most Scions, the real epic begins when she is an adult. The larger arc of the story is straightforward: She discovers her place in the world, conquers obstacles, and triumphs to become a ruler (whatever that means in the context of her story). But it is up to the Storyguide to consider just what that place, those obstacles, at the triumph could be.

There are two common heroic tropes that come into play here: Either the hero breaks an important rule or he is asked for help by someone in need. These are suited for personal or group Deeds, depending on the scope of the threat.

A Rule is Broken: "You must not open the chest," "you must not question my actions," "you must not strike me three times." In some cases, the breaking of an important rule marks the end of the story, not the beginning: The opening of Pandora's box does not lead to a quest to capture all of the evil that it contained (but for Scions, it could).

By setting the rule in place at the beginning, the Storyguide gains an easy way to start the plot. A character makes a terrible mistake that causes some calamity around him. The rest is the effort to undo what he has done. It doesn't need to be one of the players' characters, either. Just having a Scion of Loki or of Aengus the Mac Óg in the area is sure to stir up enough trouble that something will go wrong eventually.

Story Seeds

- *Breaking the Seal:* The hero or someone around hero unwittingly lets loose a powerful being and its minions.
- *Collateral Damage:* Failing to heed a warning brings a blight or plague to an entire country. The hero must find the cause to find the cure.
- *When the Stars Are Right:* Mortal sorcerers discover a way to make one of the Terra Incognitae "crash" into the World, mistakenly believing they will be rewarded for it.

A Plea for Help: There are giants to slay, princes to rescue, and plagues to lift. In each case, this kind of story begins with the hero being directly approached by someone in need or discovering the situation by accident. It's an old and well-worn trope, but even Fate has a fondness for the classics when they're appropriate.

It also means that it's the kind of plot most quickly recognizable to Scions and their players. That makes it a good choice for a Storyguide wanting to kickstart the action, but it doesn't mean that it can't lead to intrigue. The person asking for help could be a rival in disguise, trying to get the hero to retrieve a Relic that she can't get herself. It's not necessarily even a person: Many of the other beings of the World can disguise themselves quite well.

Story Seeds

- *The Old Man in the Tavern:* A respected Scion approaches the band to perform a task he is too Fatebound to do himself. He may be an imposter, lying, or have ulterior motives, but whatever the request, it is a dangerous one.
- *Save the Whales:* Animals that fall under a hero's Purviews approach them with news of a grave threat to their species. The danger may come from mortals or from a titanspawn that wants to know what it's like to devour an entire species.
- *Revolution:* A Scion is using her power to rule over and oppress an entire society. The hero cannot simply kill the unjust ruler, but find a way to convince the people to rise up themselves.

MOVING FORWARD

Obstacles and triumphs are in the next section of this chapter. The first element that the Storyguide can consider is what place the Scion is looking for, the Fate toward which he is moving. Heroes' stories don't, however, always end with lasting victory. It can come, certainly, and they can ride the wave of confidence that comes with getting what they want, but there are just as many stories that end in tragedy. Heracles was poisoned and maddened. Lugh was murdered by other Gods over an affair.

The tragedy is almost as certain a part of the heroic cycle as the victory. Players can still feel that, even when they think they've finally reached the peak of their power. Getting to the top means there's only one way to go.

Of course, given that there are Scions who can reach into Underworlds and pluck back those who have died, there's no reason for the ultimate tragedy to be the end. It also doesn't mean that a Scion who dies has finished her story. The Underworlds are as vast as any other realm, and can offer as many possibilities.

NON-WESTERN STRUCTURES

The formula given above is not the only one that appears in world literature and myth. While it's beyond the scope of this chapter to go into them all in detail, here are two other possibilities:

Japanese **kishōtenketsu** stories divide narratives into four basic parts: an initial situation, introducing the setting and characters; an elaboration of that situation, revealing more about what was told before; a twist in the story that changes the way that characters understand the first two parts; and a final reconciliation of all three.

One of the advantages of this structure is that it's well suited for multiple characters, with the first part of the story covering their separate lives, including seemingly chance encounters with future Antagonists or characters who know about the destinies that await them. The second part is where they're drawn together as a group, learning more about each other and what connects them. In the third part, they discover that their meeting has been orchestrated by an outside force, whether that means to fight a great evil or because that evil arose because of the actions of one or more of the characters. In the fourth, they bring the world back into order, reflecting on the ways their bonds can be a source of both good and evil.

Igbo èzè (king) stories can take two forms. In the first, the initial situation is one of oppression: A king or other figure of authority misuses his power, and by doing so, causes the people over whom he has power to suffer. That oppression gives rise to resistance in the form of a hero or heroes, who use their own strength or cunning to turn the king's status against him (for example, by forcing him to uphold a promise or lose status). It ends with the heroes' triumph, and with it, a restoration of the people's own power.

In the second form, the pattern is reversed, with a respected figure being challenged by an event that undermines her authority and threatens to cause her to lose it, and ends with her discovering a solution to that threat through the virtues that made her respected in the first place.

Although this structure has some of the same problems as Western heroes' journeys, namely that they're better suited to one character as a focus, the elements of oppression and

authority give them a broader emphasis on the hero's society. He's not fighting for himself alone, but for the people around him, too — Birthright followers, for example, or simply those groups for whom he has come to care.

SPECTACLE AND DRAMA

Scion is a game that lends itself to vivid imagery on a grand scale. When describing the World, it's up to the Storyguide to convey that sense of spectacle. As players engage with it, it opens the way for them to immerse themselves in the setting further and to embrace the magnified experiences that accompany it.

SET THE STAGE: ICONIC LOCATIONS

Because the lives of Scions are so intimately connected with the mythic and with Fate, their adventures manifest themselves in places that resonate with the archetypal. That may mean ones drawn directly from myth — Mount Meru or the River Styx — but it can also be ones that are their mundane echoes. The heroes' story, especially for band Deeds, can carry them from the ordinary to the legendary with the same symbols repeating themselves in subtle or blatant ways.

As with any other general structure, these examples don't apply universally. If they don't seem appropriate for the heroes' pantheons, the Storyguide can still look into how landscape plays a role in different myths from those pantheons and adapt appropriately.

SAMPLE LOCATIONS

- **Mountains:** Mountains are the places where the World is closest to the divine realms. They are the places for sacrifice and communication, but also the ones where a displeased God is most likely to make its feelings known. Mundane manifestations: skyscrapers, pyramids, towers.
- **Rivers:** Rivers represent travel and transition. They can aid in journeys or hinder them. They can carry a person to a new world or purify them of their past deeds while letting them remain. Mundane manifestations: highways, subways, airports.
- **Forests:** Forests are the wild places of beasts in which a traveler can easily become lost. They can either represent that danger or be where hidden things of the World (monsters and treasures alike) can be found. Mundane manifestations: alleys, the winding streets of old cities, mazes.
- **Sacred Grounds:** Sacred grounds are microcosms of the World. Their importance lies in being places that represent the structure of all things and act as boundaries against chaos. Creatures and Scions who embody that chaos may find them difficult to tolerate for long. Mundane manifestations: churches, temples, sacred groves.
- **Sacred Times:** A location does not only have to be in space. It can be a significant time as well. Depending on the particular time and the pantheon with which it is associated, it can mean a renewal of the World or a temporary descent into chaos. Entire myths can play out over the course of a year, retelling the story of a God. Mundane manifestations: midnight, the summer solstice, New Year's Day.

INTO ACTION: BEYOND THE LOCATION

Setting the scene for stories, however, does no good if the stories themselves are mundane. It would take a great deal of work to make a compelling quest out of going to the corner store to get a bottle of milk. (It's not impossible, but it's not easy.) Heroic stories are also elevated by the sense of drama that accompanies them.

To begin with, their scope is greater. The Scion may not be saving the World at this point, but is saving her city or her loved ones instead. She does not strike down Titans, but slays dragons and defeats giants. The Scion's reach — his ability to travel to and to influence more distant locations — also increases, allowing world-spanning adventures to be easier to pursue.

The stakes increase as well. If the heroes fail, something terrible will absolutely happen, something they either know from the outset or discover early in the story. Their failure will have lasting effects on them, their homes, or the people around them. These are the kinds of stories that either reinforce a Scion's sense of self or make him question who he is and his place in the World.

When heroes fail to stop the dragon chasing them on the Autobahn, even if they escape with their lives, the lash of its tail sweeps away dozens of other cars and causes a massive pile-up that leaves hundreds — perhaps including some Birthright followers — dead. Does a Scion of Odin shift further toward Fatalism or Audacity? Were the victims already doomed or could she have done more? What about a Scion of Nuada, sworn to protect his companions during their escape? Does the failure make him question his Prowess or convince him that it is more important than his Honor?

These are the moments that can transform the weight of a Scion's Virtues from one position to another. They can lead to Crises of Callings as well. Crafting situations that force those kinds of questions is another part of the Storyguide's job.

REPETITION, REINFORCEMENT, AND OPEN CYCLES

There's a feature of oral traditional tales in the West called the Law of Three: three brothers, three wishes, three repetitions of the same point. It doesn't apply all

around the world, and even in Europe, there are variations. What it does do, though, is give Storyguides a tool to strengthen the images of the stories they want to tell. (See "The Rule of Three," **Scion: Origin** p. 140.)

Providing a sign once to players can easily be missed. Providing it twice in different forms reinforces the idea, and a third time should make it clear that something significant is going on. They don't need to be (and shouldn't be) the same thing three times. There are different levels on which to base these concepts.

The first is the legendary level. That's the one that encompasses myths as they are, the ones that appear in their oral or written versions. It's the purest version of those stories, with all the Gods fighting, quarreling, or sleeping with each other.

The second is the heroic level. That's where legendary images repeat themselves on a mortal level magnified by the stature of the characters. It's the one where most **Scion: Hero** stories take place, neither representing pure myth or fully human experiences.

The third is the human level. This is where mythic stories echo in ordinary human experience, scaled down to represent day-to-day life. That doesn't mean that they're commonplace, just that they're the sorts of things that could happen to anyone without them noticing that they have a resonance in the mythic world.

The fourth is the parodic level, also called the demonic (if people didn't have to worry about actual demons). This is the level that twists the story into something familiar but wrong. It's where enemies act as funhouse-mirror versions of the drives of heroism or work to destroy everything that heroes want to accomplish.

In real-world literature, Odin sacrifices himself on a tree to gain wisdom and power — that's the legendary level. On the heroic level, he travels the World to search for clues about Ragnarok. On the human level, Odin offers advice in the sayings of the Hávamál. On the parodic level, his blood-brother Loki reveals truths about the Æsir in the Lokasenna. All of these stories are about the same general concepts of truth and knowledge, but they manifest in very different ways.

That's a case of stories that have already been written, but for a Storyguide to develop her own, it takes further creative leaps. She can begin with the mythic inspiration, then come up with a form of it for Hero-level characters to take part in. Alternately, she can begin with an idea from one of the other levels and imagine the repercussions across the rest.

Which one to choose? That depends on what ideas spring to mind first. A good Antagonist covers the parodic level. A story from the week's newspaper covers the human. Reading the Ramayana covers the heroic, while going straight to the Rig Veda is the legendary. From there, extrapolate the rest.

Another example: Cronus castrates Uranus. That's the myth. The heroic version is still something that involves phallic and violent imagery, but without the world-changing impact of its original. Dragon-slaying, beheading, rescuing someone who represents sexual innocence — these are all appropriate. On the human level, there are tensions in relationships, especially in the form of who has power in those relationships. On the parodic level, there's the Antagonist defined by his sexuality and his willingness to use violence to express it.

If the Storyguide combines this multi-level style of storytelling with the Law of Three, it adds flexibility by letting her choose only three elements to incorporate: Legendary/heroic/parodic, for example, lends itself to divine machinations, hero-level intrigue, and cunning Antagonists.

A Storyguide should not feel bound by these structures of repetition. Used too often, they teach players to predict the next step based on what their characters have already experienced. Here, however, is where another feature of myths — especially heroic tales — is helpful: chaining stories together.

In the Welsh story, Culhwch ac Olwen, the hero Culhwch is told by a giant that he cannot marry the giant's daughter, Olwen, unless he completes a lengthy set of tasks. Looking at the entire story, it's simple: A hero falls in love with a woman but must persuade her monstrous father that he is worthy but completing several trials. With an assortment of magical helpers, he completes them, kills the giant, and lives happily ever after.

But for each task that he agrees to, he is told that another challenge accompanies it. To find a certain supernatural boar, he must acquire a dog to hunt it, a leash to hold the dog, a collar for the leash, a chain to reinforce the leash, a houndsman, a horse for the houndsman, the houndsman's cousin who knows how to find him, an entire host of huntsmen and -women, and a sword to kill the boar. Each step (and this list is only a small part of what Culhwch must do) is a brief adventure of its own, a Minor Deed. Combined, they can become a personal or even band Deed, taking many sessions of play to complete.

Those adventures follow their own structures, leaving the greater quest unfinished until each of the lesser ones has been. Rather than being a linear progression, stories like Culhwch ac Olwen are nested, with sub-tales that act as simplified versions of the whole. A Storyguide can construct similar stories, either beginning on the outside with an overarching plot or on one of the inner layers that reveal greater and greater forces at work.

CRAFTING LAYERED AND INTERWOVEN STORIES

The basic form of the heroic journey has an important limitation: It is intended for one character. Others take the roles of helpers, secondary figures whose purpose is to offer assistance in challenges that the hero alone cannot overcome. When playing games that involve a band of Scions, the Storyguide must take a different approach.

One option is to have the entire band follow a common course, fighting adversaries and overcoming obstacles as a

single group. In effect, they act as one hero with an extensive array of abilities and share victories and losses together. These kinds of stories emphasize the unity of the band. Robin Hood's Merry Men are a good example of this on a mortal level: There are only a few examples of individuals developing their own tales. While easy to plan, however, this approach robs players of the chance to have their characters follow their own paths and their own Fates.

Another option is for each of them to follow their own destinies, coming together when another member of the band needs their particular talents. In effect, they become each other's helpers, taking a backseat to the character who is the focus of the story at that moment. The band is, instead of a tight-knit group, a loose confederation of individuals with their own personal destinies. King Arthur and his knights illustrate this approach. Although they are a single group, they have their own stories or ones that only involve a few members of the whole. The disadvantage of this option is the Storyguide needs to plan many different plots at once, to the extent that it may seem that she is running separate games for every player.

The third option is probably the most difficult to prepare for, but also the most satisfying, and combines elements of the first two. Characters in the band begin with separate stories or the Seeds of separate stories, but gradually realize that they are all connected. While they may pursue some elements of the story on their own, the climax brings them all together against a common enemy.

EXAMPLES

The Scions of the Netjer: a group of heroes, bound together by the shared pantheon of their divine parents, discover that the Titan Apep is sending its serpentine followers to corrupt the Egyptian government and poison the population. They see the signs of it together, although through the lenses of their own natures: The Scion of Horus notices bureaucratic corruption, the Scion of Sobek discovers a marked increase in black-market weapons coming into the country, and the Scion of Isis sees cases of poisoning increase in hospitals.

The first two take it as indications of a coming political upheaval, but the last of them wonders if the third is somehow connected. When they locate a criminal network whose members are both within the government and outside it, a group marked with serpent tattoos, the Scion of Isis makes the connection. Further investigation brings them face to face with a mass of monstrous serpents that poison the bodies and minds of their victims. After defeating them, the band follows signs that lead them to a vast chamber beneath the Sphinx where a single hydra-like creature sleeps, commanding its lesser servants through its dreams.

The Band of Wastes and Wilds: A band allied by their associations with the places beyond civilization only meet if they face threats that none of them can face alone. The Scion of Mixcoatl spends her time as an astronomer, preferring the tranquility of the constellations to the chaos of the World. The Scion of Sun Wukong is a perpetual tourist whose carefree days are spent on the roads and railways of Europe. The Scion of Pan is a radical environmentalist who has brought logging in the Pacific Northwest virtually to a halt.

Mixcoatl's daughter, on the day of an eclipse, must face the descent of tzitzimime from the stars to the World, creatures that try to devour humans as they devoured the sun, all while trying to ensure further funding for her studies. The son of Sun Wukong finds once-familiar roads twisting in unexpected ways and crosses the Atlantic to get advice from the orderly astronomer. Arriving in time to aid in her battle, the two return to Europe to investigate the strange phenomena there. Meanwhile, the daughter of Pan is surprised that not only have all efforts to cut down the trees of her favorite forests stopped, but that there are reports of great trees sprouting in cities. She's unsure whether to be glad of the encroachment of wilderness on civilization or disturbed that the balance between the natural and artificial has been upset. She finds the rest of the band in Europe, deep in the Black Forest, where a forgotten Celtic god is trying to regain his power by shaping Europe's roads into a vast spiral that was once his emblem. All that remains is to resolve the question of the Seattle trees...

Twilight of the Dogs: A Scion of Heimdall, keen-eyed like her father, observes that dawn and twilight are lasting longer than they should in the city she calls home—as if the sun were reluctant to rise and fearful of setting. Meanwhile, a Scion of Hermes has several of his meticulously planned local heists fail, sending into mild depression that he eases by jetting around the World. Finally, a Scion of Cheeby-aub-oozoo grows more and more anxious when her favorite virtual-reality games suffer repeated crashes.

Gathering together, the band agrees that something is wrong with the sun, fortune, or the technological crafts of the modern world — or maybe all three. While the Scions of Hermes and Cheeby-aub-oozoo gather information from Horn & Ivory, makers of the VR games, the Scion of Heimdall consults with a Scion astronomer that she knows in order to find out if the phenomenon has reached to the stars. While Cheeby-aub-oozoo's daughter talks with various computer specialists, the son of Hermes slips through the corporate headquarters — only narrowly avoiding being caught by both mortal security and the computer-generated guard dogs that the company's owner, a Yaoguai experimenting in digital immortality, created.

When the three regroup and share information, they conclude that it is the sun whose movements are changing, lengthening dawn and dusk. The shift has thrown time off enough to disrupt both planned-to-the-second heists and computers' internal clocks. If the effect spreads beyond the city, it could eventually encompass the World. After further investigation and consultation with powers of other pantheons, they learn that Sköll, the wolf who hunts the sun, has produced an offspring from one of the city's dogs. The young pup has been playfully nipping at the sun each night, dragging it back when it tries to rise and frightening

it with its barks when it tries to set. The question for the Scions is: Do they try to kill it or tame it? Whichever they choose, how do they explain afterward why the clocks in the city are off by 99 seconds from the rest of the World?

MYTHIC OBSTACLES

With all the power that a Scion possesses, the obstacles to his success must be appropriately challenging. These obstacles can take the form of powerful Antagonists, but that is not the only way that they do. Herakles' Twelve Labors don't all involve defeating monsters; they also include sweeping out stables, herding cattle, and stealing Relics. Hero-level obstacles border the impossible, but can still be accomplished with enough strength, wits, or help.

If there are multiple obstacles ahead of the hero (like the ones faced by Culhwch), each one can mark a Minor Milestone. For a band working together, they could divide these up among them, with each character facing one obstacle alone. (The story of Jason and the Argonauts has many examples of this, with certain heroes being best suited for specific tasks along the way.) If there is only one obstacle, it should require enough effort to be a long-term Deed.

MINOR OBSTACLES

- Settle a feud between two ogres whose argument threatens to destroy their surroundings.
- Collect water from all the oceans in the world.
- Build a skyscraper overnight.
- Move the hills that are blocking the view of a sidhe lord's view of the ocean.
- Find and shatter the World's largest diamonds to satisfy the jealousy of a rakshasa whose diamond necklace has smaller stones.
- Pass through the Forest of Snakes without being bitten, and slay the Snake King on the way.
- Climb to the top of Mount Olympus and taunt Zeus on behalf of a bitter centaur.
- Sober up Silenus, the drunken companion of Dionysus, long enough for him to teach one of the Scions a forgotten dance.

PERSONAL OBSTACLES

- Raise an army of warriors from the lands of nine warring Amazon clans and arm them appropriately.
- Design and build a city to the exact specifications of a dragon, including populating it.
- Collect water from the River Lethe to help a melancholy vampire forget a tragic affair, then do the same for his ex-lover.
- Map the Wandering Isles, whose position changes each night and which are filled with strange inhabitants.
- Reconstruct the long-lost Second Book of Thoth, whose pages are hidden around the World and well-guarded.

VILLAINY

Villainy, in myth and folklore, encompasses more than the existence of an antagonist. It's about the motives behind an Antagonist's actions and how it tries to carry those actions out. It's entirely possible for the motive to be "because I'm evil." In fact, it's quite common. No one delves into the psychology of the Minotaur.

Other common motives include envy of the hero, lust for power, a desire to possess a treasure or person, cowardice, or a need to prove superiority. They can even include ones that would otherwise be heroic, but driven by Fate, personal bonds, or honor. When Elatha, father of Bres, learns that his son has lost the kingship of Ireland, he tells his son that it was his own fault. Still, he raises an army to take the land back.

Traditional villains are foreshadowed before they take action. They spy on the hero, test her by sending weaker minions, or befriend her. They can do the same to a hero's followers or mortal friends, using them to discover his weaknesses. Once they strike, their deeds can constitute Story Seeds on their own, or they can be part of a larger plot.

FORMS OF VILLAINY

- **Abduction:** The villain captures a person or group of people important to the hero. The reason for the abduction can be malice, lust, or revenge, but the most common one is to use it to force the hero into performing a task on the villain's behalf.
- **Theft:** The villain takes something of value from the hero or the World. In Hero-tier games, the scale of thefts is always grand. These villains don't rob banks. They steal faces, dreams, shadows, or mountains. If they do take an object, it is one of unique significance and power.
- **Expulsion:** Through the villain's status or by trickery, she forces the hero away from his territory. This is only effective against heroes with a strong attachment to a place or group of people, and again, should be a major-enough loss to drive the hero to find a way to return.
- **Transformation:** Someone of value to the hero is changed into another shape. The villain might claim that only she can undo the transformation, again using that threat as leverage to compel the hero to serve her in some way. Some villains don't offer any means to reverse the change, making the hero have to find the cure himself.
- **Imprisonment:** Similar to abduction, imprisonment can involve capturing someone of value to the hero. It can also mean imprisoning the hero herself by trapping her in a seemingly inescapable place. On a larger scale, it could mean putting a city in a bottle or having a great monster swallow the hero's followers whole.
- **Threat:** The villain does not act immediately, but threatens to do something unless the Scion agrees to a demand. The villain should be clever enough not to put himself in a position where the most obvious solution is to kill him on the spot, of course. That can mean relaying the demand through an (expendable) underling or putting some sort of safeguard in place.

EXAMPLES OF VILLAINY

- A Korasu-Tengu starts to hoard people, carrying them off to its hidden nest on top of the Tokyo Skytree. It promises to return them if the hero can bring it one person of perfect beauty.
- A Yaoguai steals one of the Peaches of Immortality with the intention of planting the pit (after he has eaten the rest, of course). Unless the pit is recovered before a tree sprouts, Yaoguai all over the world will become immortal.
- A fearful rakshasa entreats the hero for a place of refuge where he will not go, pointing to a nearby hill or cave. If he accepts, the creature points out that all land is connected and demands that the hero retreat to the sea or sky.
- A Scion transforms the hero's Birthright Guide into a dollar bill and deposits it in a bank. She must find which dollar bill in circulation has the Guide's face on it.
- A Jötun swallows someone dear to the hero and will not release him until she answers three riddles.
- A mummy approaches the hero to tell him that its unnamed master will turn a city full of mortals into creatures like it unless the hero captures and delivers a Sphinx.

TRIUMPH AND TRAGEDY

A hero's story often begins with loss. Just as often it ends the same way. That's not to say that it always happens, or that Scions whose divine parent suffered tragedy are doomed to suffer in the same way, but it is always a risk. Freyr knows how he dies at Ragnarok, and even knows who will kill him. His daughter does not have to succumb to the same fate.

The *triumph* is self-evident from the arc of the plot. The thing that the hero pursues, he acquires. Whether it is peace, love, a drink from the Fountain of Youth, or revenge against his enemy, it is his. What then? "Happily ever after" is only an option if the Storyguide and players don't intend to pursue their story further.

Because myths overlap and interconnect, they don't need to resolve every question at the same time. Minor details along the way — people encountered, things altered, monsters slain — act as the loose ends of plots for the Storyguide from which to develop future Milestones. For example:

FUTURE MINOR MILESTONES

- The now-allied ogres gather minions around them and act as the heads of a criminal network.

- The intermingled waters of the oceans attract dangerous sea creatures until someone can find a way to separate them.
- The skyscraper becomes home to a minotaur that regularly feeds on its inhabitants.
- The hills moved for the sidhe lord turn out to impinge on the borders of a different lord's land, triggering a war.
- The rakshasa's jealousy extends to more and more aspects of his life, and he calls upon the heroes to deal with all of them.
- Without a king, the serpents of the Forest of Snakes move en masse into the nearest human settlement. They will not leave until the heroes pick a new king from among 1,001 candidates.
- Zeus demands compensation for the taunts directed at him.
- Another Scion learns Silenus' dance and puts it on YouTube. Its popularity among mortals leads to strange and magical effects.

FUTURE PERSONAL MILESTONES

- The army of Amazons that the hero raised decides to use its newfound strength to march across Europe.
- In the city built for the dragon, people begin to exhibit draconic features themselves.
- The vampire lovers rediscover each other, this time as enemies who terrorize a city while trying to defeat each other.
- Inhabitants of the Wandering Isles sail to another part of the World, puzzling or frightening the humans that encounter them.
- Several cabals of rival sorcerers attempt to steal the Second Book of Thoth for themselves.

None of these are examples of heroic tragedy (although they may lead to it). They are the consequences of the heroes' actions, a karmic ripple whose effects do not manifest until well after their cause. *Tragedies* are more personal and more immediate. In one version of the Ramayana, for example, Rama is forced to exile the wife he fought so hard to rescue because his people do not believe she was faithful during her imprisonment.

Tragedies are something for players to choose rather than have forced upon them. If they want their heroes to go from adventure to adventure without the sudden loss that these events bring, the Storyguide should let them. As mentioned above, they are not a feature of every myth or folktale.

The nature and scope of the tragedy is for the player and Storyguide to work out, tailored for the characters' relationships and drives. Common ones in myth include being directly or indirectly responsible for the death of a loved one, having to surrender something of great importance for the sake of honor, or discovering that the impetuous hero's deeds have only made the original situation worse.

SAMPLE TRAGEDIES

Eye on the Ball: A hero who single-mindedly pursues an enemy to avenge a wrong done to her loved ones fails to notice an entirely different threat to them. When she returns in triumph, it is too late to save them.

Puppeteer: The hero discovers that his recent, strangely easy, victories have been orchestrated by a previously unknown enemy. The enemy wants him to become bound more and more with a particular Fate, since her own Fate requires her to defeat him.

Balancing the Scales: A Scion of Thoth's passion for Balance over Justice leads her face to face with the lover of a sorcerer that she killed. He demands the death of one of the Scion's loved ones in compensation for his loss.

A TOOLKIT FOR CHARACTERS AND PLOTS

Some days, a Storyguide hasn't had time to craft a brief story and needs a little inspiration. This section is here to help spark her imagination for Storyguide characters and for plots. Each step on the lists that follow is arranged in groups of 10 for the Storyguide who wants to generate things randomly.

THE OUTLINE (WESTERN STRUCTURE)

The initial Antagonist is...

1. a Scion Rival with a large group of Foe-level minions
2. a Scion Rival with unexpected abilities
3. a Scion Rival with a potent Relic
4. a monstrous Rival with access to unusual abilities and allies
5. a monstrous Rival with extensive social influence
6. a Scion Nemesis
7. a monstrous Nemesis
8. a small (3-4) band of Scion Rivals acting in concert
9. an alliance of different monstrous Rivals
10. a weakened or imprisoned titanspawn directing a Rival and Foe-level minions

...motivated by...

1. love for an unattainable person.
2. an honor-debt to a greater power.
3. greed for a Relic in another character's possession.
4. desire for revenge.
5. envy of a hero's reputation.
6. desire for power in the political realms of the World.
7. desire for power in the divine realms.

8. the need to prove worthiness to a superior.
9. devotion to causing mischief.
10. evil, pure and simple.

The Antagonist's scheme begins by...

1. rampaging among mortals to draw out the hero.
2. undermining the hero's reputation to separate him from his allies.
3. attacking the hero's friends and allies at a distance.
4. leaving clues to mislead the hero and divert her attention from the real plan.
5. stealing a valuable treasure.
6. sowing chaos in the political realm.
7. releasing a Nemesis-level monster into the world.
8. allying with Scions who have a grudge against the hero.
9. kidnapping a person indirectly connected to the hero.
10. testing the hero's skills by sending Foe-level minions against him.

It is complicated by...

1. the presence of an unaligned Scion.
2. the unwitting involvement of one of the hero's allies.
3. the risk of great danger to mortals.
4. forcing the hero to choose one Virtue over another.
5. the objections of the hero's or Antagonist's superiors to getting involved.
6. the chance of massive environmental damage.
7. the realization that the only chance for success is by following a different Calling.
8. the presence of a dangerous entity that hinders the hero's progress.
9. a fixed time limit.
10. a lack of knowledge about the Antagonist.

The main obstacle is...

1. finding appropriate resources to defeat the Antagonist.
2. solving a complicated puzzle.
3. a series of monsters between the hero and success.
4. convincing a God to lend assistance.
5. convincing an unfriendly Scion to lend assistance.
6. uncovering information hidden around the World.
7. appeasing someone that the hero wronged in the past.
8. finding a way past a supernatural barrier.
9. the machinations of an enemy from the past.
10. the unwitting involvement of a loved one.

The unfolding of the story is reflected in...

1. mortal events that begin to mimic the conflict.
2. rapid changes in popular culture.
3. the iconic locations where major scenes play out.
4. shifts in the natural World.
5. the sudden appearance of omens related to it.
6. the mention of words and phrases related to it — by strangers.
7. artwork appearing around the World.
8. the activity of spirits.
9. the restlessness of Relics with symbolic connection to the story.
10. increased activity among monstrous beings.

If creating a story for long-term or band Deeds, the process repeats one or more times. After creating this initial frame, the Storyguide should go through the list again to choose the final Antagonist, of the same or different kind as the initial one. She raises the challenge of that Antagonist by a step (Rival to Nemesis, Nemesis to titanspawn) as she does. Like the final Antagonist, the ultimate motivation can be the same or different as the initial one, but it should be magnified, as should the complications, obstacles, and echoes. Based on the elements of the story so far, the Storyguide can then choose a suitable place for the climactic confrontation to occur.

THE OUTLINE (KISHŌTENKETSU STRUCTURE)

In this style of story, an Antagonist is optional, although it is recommended for anything greater than a Minor Milestone. If one is included, use the same list as for the Western structure to decide on its nature, but not its motivation or scheme.

The heroes meet at...

1. an isolated temple
2. a crossroad far from any city
3. the celebration of a day sacred to one or more of their pantheons
4. the heart of a bustling metropolis
5. the funeral of a Scion
6. the site of an old battle between other Scions and a titanspawn
7. a monument sacred to mortals and respected by Scions
8. the edge of an ocean
9. the center of a large-scale mortal conflict
10. the home of a Scion who disappeared a century ago

...where...

1. spirit-possessed mortals are gathering.
2. something is transforming animals into dangerous monsters.
3. a powerful spirit torments local mortals.
4. a lost Relic calls out to be found.
5. the weather grows more violent.
6. the dead are rising.
7. an ominous warning for the heroes appears.
8. the ground opens to reveal something.
9. the landscape twists into something unfamiliar.
10. a procession of monsters arrives to watch the heroes in silence.

The story turns when the heroes discover that...

1. a friend trusted by one or more of them is involved.
2. another Scion of the same parentage as one of the heroes is involved.
3. something has caused the mundane World to blend with another realm.
4. the events are caused by a transgression that must be set right.
5. one of the heroes' past failures is involved.
6. a titanspawn is responsible.
7. the disrespect of local mortals is responsible.
8. the cause is the combination of the place and time where the event occurs.
9. a transgression by a previously unknown Scion is involved.
10. the events have been planned by an enemy to draw the heroes together in one place.

The resolution of the story is not something that can be chosen at random. The heroes can solve the problem by recognizing how the third element connects to the first two, and from there, taking appropriate action.

WHERE TO FROM HERE?

In a roleplaying game, heroes moving from story to story gradually increase in power to face threats that are ever more dangerous and greater in scope. In myth, this is not necessarily the case, and a Storyguide can discuss with his players whether they would all prefer to put a limit to the amount of power that they gain. On the other hand, they may choose to pursue Apotheosis, leaving the realm of Heroes to enter that of Demigods.

HEROES FOREVER

There are exceptions, but for the most part, heroic stories don't end with them becoming Gods. They go from adventure to adventure, perhaps gaining some new knowledge, relationships, and tricks along the way. If they acquire treasures (Relics in this case), they only rely on one or two of them unless the tale requires them to have access to another one. It's more likely that they give away the treasures that don't suit them to their followers or enshrine them in an appropriate place.

Players can decide how far they want to progress, and stop gaining Legend at any point along the way. (If they choose Apotheosis, it should be agreed among the group so that one or two Scions don't dwarf the others in power.) Instead, whenever they complete a Season, they can look back at their heroes and choose to rearrange any of their characteristics and abilities that they like at no cost. Doing so should come with a narrative explanation for why it occurs. It could be that the hero is moving from one stage of her life to another, or that a lesson learned along the way of recent adventures has changed his outlook on the World. It could be that some skills have faded from disuse while others have developed, or even that her divine parent has chosen to grant different gifts for inscrutable reasons.

STORYGUIDING AND PLAYING THE PANTHEONS

Scion is a game about mythology, but it also involves religion. Many religions featured in this game might not be practiced by the players, or are associated with cultures and nationalities that aren't theirs. Speaking from a diversity of religious and cultural backgrounds, it's important to affirm, enthusiastically, that you may portray characters with different racial, ethnic, national, and religious backgrounds from your own; after all, the Storyguide is pretty much required to. While certain religions and cultures don't, properly speaking, exist anymore (the Kemetic Egyptians), some are heavily reconstructed (Greco-Roman polytheism) and one religion was made up whole-cloth for this work (the *Laukr* Norse faith, which differs in tone and style from reconstructed Germanic Heathenism), many others are vibrant and still practiced around the real world, not just the World. The guidelines below should help you approach this challenge respectfully and productively, even around strangers at conventions or game stores.

Several themes run through **Scion**. One is *intentional choice*: Purposeful, thoughtful creative decisions both enrich roleplay and reduce offense. Another is *prioritizing out-of-character comfort and safety over in-character concerns*: Your right not to experience discrimination supersedes my right to align the game with my personal creative preferences.

Think over stereotypes associated with your character's culture and demographics. Even positive stereotypes ("Jews are good at math") can make someone's life a living hell if they're forced to live up to an unreasonable or irrational standard. If your character matches a certain stereotype, even for good reasons, consider other options or be prepared to provide context quickly and efficiently.

- Avoid ethnic accents you haven't worked on with a voice coach.
- Don't describe people of color's appearances in food terms (mocha skin, almond eyes, etc.).

For **Scion**, we paid scholars and creative consultants to check our work; failing that, you might ask a friend from a certain demographic to look over your portrayal of that demographic (or just look it up yourself on the Internet; there's a ton of writing out there on the topic, seriously). Ask gently and politely, take no for an answer if they don't feel like it, listen generously to their criticism, and please buy your friend a drink to show your gratitude.

Scion's "all myths are true" idea matters out of character as well as in. A pernicious trope plagues speculative fiction in which some group's deep-seated religious tenets turn out to be false, perhaps the result of some fictional entities' machinations: for example, John Milton's "Egyptian Gods were actually Judeo-Christian demons in disguise." The non-religious variant of this trope ascribes real humans' defining successes or failures to supernatural phenomena: for example, "vampires caused 9/11" or "ancient astronauts built the pyramids." Eschew fiction that writes off entire worldviews; many real people are sick of being told their beliefs are bullshit (in some cases, shortly before being run out of town at gunpoint, or worse). There are many machinations and secrets within the World, but false faith isn't typically one of them, even for the monotheistic religions.

Q: But I didn't mean to offend anyone!

A: We're glad to hear, but often the issue with offense was with what you said, not what you meant.

Q: I'm not racist, but this PC or NPC I made up is racist. Is that OK?

A: Racism is endemic even for fictional characters, so yes, you can make up and portray racist PCs and SGCs — but, again, choose consciously. How and why is this character racist? Do they portray some ancient enmity between the Devá and Yazatas, for example? Be ready to step out of character and describe their words or actions in third person — for example, say something like "I insult you and call you some racial slurs" instead of acting it out, which can be extremely discomfiting for all involved. Pace yourself slowly and attend to players' discomfort and reactions both in- and out-of-character. Leave space for players to ask you to slow down or take a break, or suggest fast-forwarding a scene.

Q: May I play a character whose pantheon affiliation does not match their personal background?

A: You can, and we even show off an example (Hassan in the sample characters is ethnically Iraqi Arab, raised Sunni Muslim, and is descended from the Norse pantheon) but keep in mind how frustrating this archetype can be when a character from an empowered demographic adopts a disenfranchised one's signifiers. Ask yourself: "Why have I decided to play a character from a less obvious background? How does their presence affect culturally typed spaces? Does their situation rob marginalized peoples of agency or economic opportunity?" Your answers determine whether this instance is positive cultural exchange or racist exploitation.

Q: Do I need to do research to prepare for this situation?

A: Not necessarily, no, but we might be the wrong ones to ask because we wouldn't have written **Scion** if we didn't geek out over the research process. The pantheon chapters give you a lot of the feeling of the culture and faith we're going for. Keep in mind that while **Scion**'s pantheons are themselves fictional constructs, they're born out of real history. Museums and libraries and Wikipedia are fun, and we've included a research list in the introduction for this very reason.

Q: What if I make a mistake?

A: This is the most important question! If (really, when) you make a mistake, whether it's offending someone at the table or getting into an online argument, set aside ego.

- Listen to the criticism charitably, especially if it comes from a source personally familiar with the kind of damage that's at stake.
- Apologize for the harm you caused, intentionally or otherwise.
- Correct your course going forward. Even if you ultimately disagree with the critique, find something to learn.

If you observe social media and the news for instances of racial or religious injustice, you'll notice public figures' biggest mistakes often aren't their initial offensive expressions; we all offend each other from time to time. Their downfall is responding gracelessly to criticism, instead doubling down on hackneyed defenses, excuses, or deflections of blame. Instead, give your critics the benefit of the doubt, even if they don't offer you the same. Err on the side of listening too well, being too kind. Prioritize the thoughts and feelings of those with the most at stake.

Scion is fundamentally a game about how alike we are and how small our World is, even when it's unimaginably vast and diverse. Cultural exchange is as old as humanity. Don't be afraid of it — when you want to celebrate another culture, do so with a full heart and an informed portrayal.

THE BIGGER THEY COME: HEROIC ANTAGONISTS

With greater challenges come greater foes to go with them. The following Archetypes, Qualities, and Flairs are suitable for **Hero**-scale Antagonists, with a new set of example Antagonists afterwards to discuss their interplay with systems for large-scale enemies that Scions will be much likelier to face.

HEROIC ARCHETYPES

FOE

In any other fight, the Foe would be an opponent to be reckoned with. Against a Scion, however, he has bitten off far more than he can chew, and is likely to be baffled by the sudden turn in his fortunes. The Foe Archetype corresponds to the Mook Archetype in **Scion: Origin** — like the Mook, a Foe can be dispatched with a single solid hit — but unlike the Mook, the Foe is very likely to have a Quality or two associated with him, meaning he will hit much harder.

Primary Pool: 7

Secondary Pool: 5

Desperation Pool: 3

Health: 1

Defense: 1

Initiative: 4

Extras: +1 Enhancement (Storyguide's choice)

RIVAL

The first real challenge for a Scion comes from their fellows — or from those roughly equivalent in mythic power, be they divine or mortal, flesh or spirit. These enemies will be forces to be reckoned with, and far more flexible than their mortal counterparts.

Primary Pool: 9

Secondary Pool: 7

Desperation Pool: 5

Health: 3

Defense: 3

Initiative: 6

Extras: +2 Enhancement for Stunts other than Inflict Damage

NEMESIS

A player character will likely defeat an Antagonist with the Rival Archetype — that much is given. The Nemesis, on the other hand, exists for a real challenge, for an opponent who is at the very least the equal of any

A HIGHER CALLING

For the purposes of fulfilling Quality and Flair prerequisites, any Archetype of a higher Tier suffices. For example, a Rival could take Villain-or-higher Qualities or Prerequisites, reflecting her greater station in the scheme of things. Such Qualities and Flairs may be slightly underpowered compared to Qualities and Flairs of her proper Tier, but this can be used to adjust the difficulty of any given encounter downward, if so desired.

one of your player characters. They, too, may be Scions, or even the weakest and rawest of Demigods, and they are not likely to go down easily.

Primary Pool: 11

Secondary Pool: 9

Desperation Pool: 6

Health: 5

Defense: 4

Initiative: 9

Extras: Mystic Arsenal (if appropriate)

TITANSPAWN

Sometimes, the gods descend, and all hell breaks loose. Sometimes, a terrible beast slips its bonds and charges headlong into the World, ravening and furious at its captivity. Sometimes, something terrible just shows up. That's what the Titanspawn Archetype is for. Like the Monster Archetype in **Scion: Origin**, the Titanspawn is intended to be a more-or-less solo fight, because it can easily take on an entire band and still pose a serious threat. Such an Antagonist need not be a literal titanspawn — after all, Titans and Gods have far more in common than they'd want their children to know.

Primary Pool: 13

Secondary Pool: 11

Desperation Pool: 7

Health: 10

Defense: 4

Initiative: 10

Extras: Apocalyptic Presence; Most Titanspawn will make use of Segment or Size rules.

HEROIC QUALITIES

The following Qualities are suitable for Heroic-tier Antagonists.

ATTACK

ARMOR PIERCING

Prerequisites: Rival or higher Archetype

Attacks made by the Antagonist do not suffer increased Difficulty to Inflict Damage due to Soft Armor.

Collateral Damage

Prerequisites: Rival or higher Archetype

Whenever the Antagonist successfully deals damage, the surrounding area out to Short Range automatically becomes Difficult Terrain, as the ground is torn up, walls collapse, and so on. The Storyguide may spend 1 Tension to completely destroy any object or structure (up to the size of a house or small apartment building) using such an attack, and is encouraged to give florid descriptions of the aftermath.

LIFE DRAIN

Prerequisites: Rival or higher Archetype

The Antagonist's blows drain the life out of victims, sapping their strength even as it kills them, and empowering the Antagonist to boot! Whenever a character takes damage from the Antagonist's Close Combat attacks, the following occurs: The target character suffers marks off a Health box as usual, and suffers a cumulative +1 Complication on all rolls involving physical exertion for the remainder of the scene for each blow taken (this does not include attack rolls). The Antagonist gains a +1 Enhancement to any Close Combat roll for every successful attack made, to a cap of the number of player characters in the scene.

MARTIAL ARTIST (HEROIC)

The Antagonist's martial-arts training goes beyond the mundane application of force and enters the realm of the fantastic. In addition to the benefits listed below, choose an effect associated with the Antagonist's attacks, such as causing flame to erupt wherever her punches land or being able to strike foes in near range as though they were in close range. This effect is always on — it is a natural ability that the Antagonist has honed until it has become second nature. She gains a +2 Enhancement to Barehanded Combat. Select a specific weapon, such as a tonfa or a sword. This weapon counts as barehanded for the purposes of this Enhancement. She also gains +1 Defense and +2 Health.

PERFECTED SOLDIER

Even among legendary warriors, there are those who inspire awe or terror. Beyond the level of Super Soldier, the Perfected Soldier Antagonist is a terrifying thing to behold. She gains a +2 Enhancement to any Combat Ability, Soft Armor, and +3 Health. In

addition, whenever she successfully inflicts damage, she may reflexively inspire a nearby ally, giving them a +1 Enhancement toward their next action.

DEFENSE

REGENERATION

Prerequisites: Nemesis or higher Archetype

The Antagonist heals one Health box per round, starting from the left and moving right. Antagonists with this Quality must also take the Vulnerability Quality (**Scion: Origin**, p. 149). Damage from the defined source is not regenerated. If the Antagonist survives the fight, the damage heals at a rate of one box per day.

SWARM

The Antagonist is not a single being, but a swarm of smaller creatures. Damage to this Antagonist's Health boxes represents individual creatures dying or the swarm being dispersed. Normal attacks against Swarm Antagonists suffer a +2 Complication to the Inflict Damage stunt, unless the attack strikes an area or is suitably broad in scope (a Molotov cocktail would work, for example, as would a shotgun at close range).

UNSTOPPABLE

Prerequisites: Rival or higher Archetype

The Antagonist is blessed with a truly massive physical form, likely standing at least eight or nine feet tall and at least half that across. She automatically succeeds on any Feat of Strength rolls appropriate to her Tier. Additionally, any allied characters within close range of the Antagonist receive the benefit of the Antagonist's Armor (but not her Defense).

TOUGH AS NAILS

Prerequisites: Rival or higher Archetype

When the Antagonist takes damage, raise the Antagonist's Defense by 1 for a number of turns equal to the number of Health boxes currently filled. If she takes damage again before her Defense returns to normal, reset the countdown.

UTILITY

DISEMBODIED

Prerequisite: Nemesis or higher Archetype

The Antagonist lacks a body — instead, she uses the bodies of others, hopping between them the way most people change their socks. This may be dangerous or even deadly to the victim being ridden — this is left to Storyguide discretion. Killing the ridden victim will not kill the Antagonist, only force her to take a new body. However, exorcism rituals can force the Antagonist out, bindings can trap her, and purification rituals may be able to destroy her. Antagonists with this Quality may not possess player characters.

FLIGHT

This Antagonist ignores any Difficult or Dangerous Terrain, unless that Terrain represents atmospheric conditions. Additionally, if this Antagonist chooses to Disengage vertically, she cannot be followed unless the pursuer has some means of matching her, such as flight or superhuman leaping abilities.

UNSEEN

The Antagonist is invisible. She cannot be detected by visual means. She receives +3 Defense and a +3 Enhancement to any stealth action. If other characters employ some method of tracking the Antagonist (throwing flour into the air, for example, or using superhuman hearing to follow her heartbeat), her Defense and Stealth Enhancement drop to +1. For 1 Tension, the Antagonist may make a surprise attack even after combat has started. All Antagonists with this Quality must take the Vulnerability Quality (**Scion: Origin**, p. 149) — in the presence of their weakness, this Quality does not function.

WALL WALKER

The Antagonist may Move up vertical surfaces at normal speed, and may even move across ceilings or other such overhangs. Attacks while clinging to such surfaces must be made as a Mixed Action if the Antagonist is attempting to Move while doing so.

SOCIAL

DIPLOMYTHIC IMMUNITY

Prerequisite: Rival or higher Archetypes

The player characters may be the children of Gods, but some people are still off limits. The Antagonist is related to someone — almost certainly a God — who is powerful, dangerous, or well-connected. Whatever the reason, others will be unwilling to give evidence about her, higher-ups in the player characters' own pantheon will discourage further investigation, and so on. All intervals spent directly investigating the Antagonist incur a +2 Complication.

This Quality may be specified to include only a single pantheon, and will only affect intervals relying on anything associated with that pantheon.

A THOUSAND SHIPS

The Antagonist is stunningly beautiful — whatever that may mean for the present cultural milieu. While wars are no longer typically fought over extremely attractive individuals, competition for the Antagonist's affections is practically certain, and bitter hostility between competitors is not

unlikely. The Antagonist may induce any two Storyguide characters to come to blows over their besotted passions, or for 1 Tension cause a Storyguide character to attack a player character, even in situations where violence would not normally be expected or tolerated.

BY DIVINE RIGHT

Prerequisites: Nemesis or higher Archetype

The Antagonist is a leader or ruler, perhaps of a Worldly sect or nation, perhaps from Terra Incognita. In any case, she has tremendous resources to draw upon — if she needs something, she has it, unless it's one of a kind and already claimed or plot-important (in which case, she's probably coming for it as part of the story!). In addition, she has bodyguards — two Rivals and three Foes, whose design is at Storyguide discretion. For 1 Tension, she can instantly summon these bodyguards even in situations where it wouldn't be reasonable for them to be at hand.

OBLIGATION

Prerequisites: Rival or higher Archetype

The Antagonist is steeped in the power of reciprocity, of exchange and obligation. Any agreement made with her is supernaturally binding. When used against player characters, the Storyguide may spend 1 Tension to force the issue in a number of ways — Fate will conspire to see the accord carried out, the character feels a compulsion to do so (represented by a Condition such as Addiction), or retribution awaits the oathbreaker.

WILLFUL

Prerequisites: Rival or higher Archetype

The Antagonist is made of sterner stuff than her fellows. When she engages in a Clash of Wills, she adds three dice to her Desperation Pool.

OCCULT

APOCALYPTIC PRESENCE

Prerequisite: Rival or higher Archetype

The Antagonist is something deeply otherworldly — there is no way it can pass itself off as a something mundane, let alone mortal. It is terrifying and wondrous to behold, an awesome-in-the-literal-sense revelation that leaves even the most stalwart of mortals utterly befuddled. Only beings with a Legend rating (or those doing so from a great distance, where proper apprehension of the Antagonist is impossible) may oppose or attack the Antagonist.

BALEFUL TOUCH

The Antagonist seethes with some kind of energy or substance inimical to life — anything from fire to acid to the touch of death itself. Any attack made by this Antagonist fills in an additional Health box, unless that Health box would inflict an Injury Complication greater than the one marked normally. For example, if a character only had one Bruised and one Injured Condition remaining, she would only mark Bruised. For 1 Tension, the effect lingers — the target's clothes catch on fire, the acid clings and keeps eating away, etc. If the target does not take an action on her next turn to ameliorate the effects (which can be Mixed), she will take one additional damage.

MYSTIC ARSENAL

Prerequisite: Rival or higher Archetype

The Antagonist is experienced with mythic forces, wielding them like the finest and most sophisticated of weapons. She likely possesses a Relic — if not, she has some other form of signature weapon or item that greatly empowers her. Any actions undertaken with this item receive a +2 Enhancement, and if the Storyguide spends 1 Tension, she may raise that to +4 for a single action. Choose a Purview — when wielding the item, she may channel it to create marvels at the cost of 1 Tension.

Play fair — if the player characters defeat the Antagonist and take her stuff, they get a totally cool Relic or other mystical object. No takebacks. Of course, that doesn't mean the Antagonist's friends won't try to get it back! Work with the players to design an appropriate Relic using the rules provided for player characters.

VENGEFUL BLOOD

Prerequisite: Nemesis or higher Archetype

Whenever the Antagonist takes damage from a source that would spill blood (typically blades, but also bullets or particularly vicious beatings), create a number of Foes equal to the number of the Health boxes currently filled. Such beings (who may or may not be human) often spring from the very ground wherever the drops of blood fall.

FLAIRS

The following Flairs are suitable for Heroic-tier Antagonists.

ATTACK

CURSE

Cost: None

Duration: One Scene, unless broken

Subject: One character

Range: Medium

Action: Simple

Cooldown: End of Scene; *or* the curse is broken

The Antagonist is able to place curses on other characters. The effects of the curse may vary, and the

Storyguide is encouraged to be highly descriptive. Non-trivial characters may resist Curse with a Clash of Wills. Purifying or healing magic is able to break curses. Possible curse effects might include:

- Enfeeblement or the feeling of a great weight on one's body; +2 Complication to all Might and Dexterity actions.
- Inflicting an Injury Complication directly; the player chooses which Injury Complication is marked, and breaking the curse removes the complication. This cannot Take Out a character.
- Increase the Difficulty of a specific Stunt by 2.

DETONATION

Cost: None

Duration: Instant

Subject: All opponents within medium range of the target

Range: Varies

Action: Simple

Prerequisites: Rival or higher Archetype

Cooldown: End of Scene; or the Antagonist has only one Health box remaining.

The Antagonist is capable of making an attack that deals damage to all targets within close, near, and medium Range of the epicenter. The attack may be Ranged or Close Combat — choose one when selecting this Flair. If Close Combat is chosen, the Antagonist is immune to their own attack. This attack cannot be combined with any effect that grants the Shockwave tag.

SHADOW STEP

Cost: None

Duration: Instant

Subject: Self

Range: N/A

Action: Simple

Cooldown: End of Scene; or, the Antagonist's stealth roll fails.

The Antagonist is able to reestablish stealth during combat, allowing her to make a surprise attack on her next turn. She must still succeed at a stealth roll in order to do so — this Flair simply makes it possible.

PENETRATOR

Cost: None *or* 1 Tension

Duration: Instant

Subject: One target

Range: Long

Action: Simple

Cooldown: The Antagonist takes damage.

The Antagonist makes an attack: This attack negates Armor and Defense bonuses from Cover, as it pierces everything in its path. For 1 Tension, this attack can strike a second character, if that character is reasonably in the line of fire behind the first.

PETRIFYING GAZE

Cost: None

Duration: Indefinite

Subject: One character

Range: Short

Action: Simple

Prerequisites: Rival or higher Archetype

Cooldown: End of Scene *or* the Antagonist successfully petrifies a target.

The Antagonist's gaze does more than merely shock or stun — it can kill. To use this Flair, the Antagonist must make eye contact with the target, which may necessitate a roll if the target is aware of the Antagonist's power. Once eye contact is made, the target cannot break it — only the Antagonist may choose to do so. The Antagonist cannot take Mixed actions while using this Flair and cannot Move without using a Basic Action — otherwise, she loses eye contact, and her target is freed. If the Antagonist takes damage while using Petrifying Gaze, she must succeed on a Desperation Pool roll against Difficulty 3 to retain eye contact.

For every turn of eye contact, inflict 1 Injury Condition to the target. If the target is Taken Out in this manner, she is turned to stone (or a similarly solid material). Trivial characters are instantly petrified. This is usually fatal, but beings with a Legend score have a talent for bending rules — the remedy for petrification is left to Storyguide discretion, but players should always have the option. Player characters Taken Out by Petrifying Gaze revert to flesh and blood at the end of the scene, but retain their injuries — being turned to stone *hurts*, and the pebbles and flakes of rock take forever to pull out of the skin.

PLAGUE TOUCH

Cost: None

Duration: Indefinite

Subject: One character

Range: Touch

Action: Reflexive

Cooldown: End of Scene *or* the Antagonist takes damage.

Most common in Antagonists who are either spirits of ill health or servants of plague and sickness gods, this Flair allows the Antagonist to inflict a disease via

simple touch, chosen by the Storyguide when this Flair is assigned. Use the normal rules for disease once the sickness has been delivered.

DEFENSE

MASS CONCEALMENT

Cost: None

Duration: (Player Legend) + 3 rounds

Subject: Self and allies

Range: Medium

Action: Reflexive

Cooldown: The Antagonist exposes or otherwise calls attention to herself unnecessarily — lowering her Defense by 1 for a round.

The Antagonist creates a massive shroud, the nature of which may vary — a thick fog will do as well as supernatural darkness, for example. This shroud extends to medium range from the Antagonist, and within its bounds all characters gain +2 Defense for the purposes of resisting Ranged Attacks. Additionally, all rolls for stealth within the shroud receive a +2 Enhancement.

MIRROR, MIRROR

Cost: None

Duration: Instant

Subject: An attacking character

Range: Varies

Action: Reflexive

Cooldown: The Antagonist evades an attack normally.

When the Antagonist uses this Flair, the attack is resolved as usual, using the Antagonist's Defense and Armor ratings, but the effects are inflicted upon the attacker rather than the Antagonist.

SECOND WIND

Cost: 1 Tension

Duration: Instant

Subject: Self

Range: Self

Action: Reflexive

Cooldown: One Scene

Prerequisite: Rival or higher Archetype

The Antagonist has hidden reserves of energy she can call on at a moment's notice, refreshing her and giving her the will to continue even against staggering odds. If all of the Antagonist's Health boxes are filled save the rightmost one, the Storyguide may spend 1 Tension to clear her entire Health track. When she does so, the Antagonist receives a Enhancement 2 to be assigned at the Storyguide's discretion, which persists until the end of the scene or until the Antagonist is defeated. If the Antagonist is a Titanspawn Archetype, this Flair's effect costs 2 Tension.

SUCK IT UP

Cost: None

Duration: 3 rounds

Subject: Self

Range: Self

Action: Reflexive

Cooldown: End of Scene; or the Antagonist has a single Health box remaining — when this is marked, she gains the effects of the Flair for 3 turns, then is Taken Out.

This Flair may be activated when the Antagonist takes damage. The Antagonist gains an Enhancement equal to the number of Health boxes currently marked (to a maximum of +3), and clears the Health box affected by the attack that triggered Suck It Up.

TRIPWIRE

Cost: None *or* 1 Tension

Duration: Indefinite

Subject: One element of the scene

Range: Close

Action: Simple

Cooldown: 3 turns

The Antagonist may suspend an attack; roll her attack pool and note successes, but don't apply it to any character. Instead, designate a certain element of the scene, such as a specific car, a doorway, or a ladder — should another character interact with that element, the attack is applied to her immediately, using her Defense and Armor if applicable. For 1 Tension, the attack will continue to persist until triggered a second time. Multiple traps cannot be stacked on a single element. Players may detect a trap with a reflexive Cunning + Subterfuge roll, difficulty of the Antagonist's successes on the Tripwire roll.

If Tripwire is used to prepare an ambush, it can only be used a single time, effectively creating a sneak attack unless noticed by the player characters. When combat begins, Tripwire immediately refreshes.

UNDER PRESSURE

Cost: None

Duration: One round

Subject: Self

Range: Self

Action: Reflexive

Cooldown: The Antagonist is not attacked at all for one round.

The Antagonist may use this Flair if she attacked by two or more characters in a single round, even if those attacks deal no damage. She receives +2 Defense against the second attack, and against all other attacks that round. In the next round, the Antagonist receives a +3 Enhancement to her Primary combat pool.

UTILITY

KNOCKOUT

Cost: None

Duration: Varies

Subject: One character

Range: Varies; maximum of medium

Action: Simple

Cooldown: A roused target makes an attack on the Antagonist.

The Antagonist makes an attack — if successful, the attack deals no damage, but the target is Taken Out immediately, knocked unconscious. However, any other character may bring the target back into the fight, with a Basic or Mixed action to rouse her taken at close range. If no such action is taken, the target awakens at the end of the scene.

WEATHER TYRANT

Cost: 1 Tension

Duration: One Scene

Subject: Area

Range: Long

Action: Simple

Cooldown: One Session

Prerequisites: Nemesis Archetype

The Antagonist can alter the weather, generating dangerous conditions. While in many cases this effect is narrative in scope, in combat it often results in Field Conditions, or may inflict Conditions on player characters per the Storyguide's discretion.

WORLD SHAKING

Cost: 1 Tension

Duration: Indefinite

Subject: Terrain

Range: Medium

Action: Simple

Cooldown: End of Scene

The Antagonist is able to disrupt the ground, transforming it into Difficult Terrain out to medium range. She may center the disturbance anywhere within her line of sight. This is not a subtle Flair: Using it significantly damages the ground and any nearby structures.

SUPPORT

EYE OF THE SWARM

Cost: None

Duration: One Scene

Subject: Summoned swarms

Range: Self

Action: Simple

Cooldown: All summoned swarms are Taken Out.

This Flair generates a number of swarms of small creatures (insects, rodents, etc.) equal to the Antagonist's successes on an appropriate roll — charm or leadership, occult knowledge and summoning, and the like. These swarms function as Foes with the Swarm Quality.

MOLON LABE

Cost: None *or* 1 Tension

Duration: Varies

Subject: All allied characters

Range: Medium

Action: Reflexive

Cooldown: End of Scene

The Antagonist gives a defiant sign or speech, which need not be complex — a few words will do. All allied characters receive +1 Health, +2 Defense, and a +2 Enhancement to their Primary combat pool. The normal duration for this Flair is a single round — however, for every character Taken Out while under its effects, the duration is extended for another round. When the effect lapses, all benefits, including extra Health, fade. When marked Health boxes fade, do not shift the damage to other Health boxes. For 1 Tension, extend the effects of this Flair for an additional round.

TOUCH OF ASCLEPIUS

Cost: None; 1 Tension; *or* 2 Tension

Duration: Instant

Subject: One ally

Range: Touch

Action: Simple

Cooldown: The Antagonist takes damage.

The Antagonist clears half the Health track of another Antagonist (round down). For 1 Tension, she may clear the entire Stress track. Not only can this bring Antagonists back into a fight they were Taken Out of, it can even resurrect explicitly dead Antagonists — gaping wounds knit, severed limbs (or heads!) reattach themselves. Resurrecting a Titanspawn-level Antagonist always costs 2 Tension, and only restores half of its Health track.

SOCIAL

HAIL ERIS!

Cost: None; *or* 1 Tension

Duration: One Scene

Subject: One social milieu

Range: Medium

Action: Simple

Cooldown: End of Scene; *or* if a player character rejects the Antagonist's influence

The Antagonist is able to reverse normal reactions to social influence and events. A tearjerker movie might cause uproarious laughter, or a heartfelt statement of support might be interpreted as a threat of murder. When determining Attitudes, reverse whatever relationship or belief that Attitude reflects.

Player characters may be affected by this Flair at the cost of 1 Tension. However, they still receive the chance to clear their clouded thoughts with a Cunning + Subterfuge roll. Attitudes regarding Fatebound Storyguide characters cannot be reversed with this Flair.

MASTERMIND

Cost: 1 Tension

Duration: Instant

Subject: One investigation

Range: Indefinite

Action: Simple

Cooldown: End of Session; *or* the player characters confront the Antagonist directly

Prerequisite: Nemesis or higher Archetype

The Antagonist has shielded themselves from scrutiny, be it through cutouts, agents, or magical means. Investigations looking into her find themselves going subtly awry — they'll find someone involved, who appears to be directing affairs, certainly, but it will never be the Mastermind herself. For 1 Tension, the Antagonist may alter the clues in a single Investigation, so that they appear to implicate someone working for her rather than the Antagonist herself.

REFLECTED INTENT

Cost: None; *or* 1 Tension

Duration: Instant

Subject: One attacking character

Range: Long

Action: Reflexive

Cooldown: End of Scene; *or* a target is Taken Out by attacking himself

Prerequisite: Rival or higher Archetype

The Antagonist may reflexively activate this Flair when an attack is made against her, regardless of whether she can perceive the attack directly. If the attacker fails the Clash of Wills, he is stunned momentarily, forfeiting his action for the round as he is confronted with an image of his own violent death. Player characters targeted by this Flair who wish to attack the Antagonist on subsequent rounds suffer a +3 Complication; Storyguide Characters remain helpless against the Antagonist for the remainder of the scene. Alternately, the Storyguide may spend 1 Tension, and the attacking character, instead of rolling Initiative or for a Surprise Attack as usual, immediately rolls an attack against himself instead, his violent intent rebounding back against him — Armor applies, but Defense does not. Characters compelled to attack themselves do not suffer the scene-long Complication. If the character is Taken Out by his own attack, Reflected Intent immediately refreshes.

Reflected Intent does not function if the Antagonist has openly joined a battle.

RAGE OF HERAKLES

Cost: None *or* 1 Tension

Duration: 5 – Composure rounds; minimum 1

Subject: One character

Range: Long

Action: Simple

Cooldown: End of Scene *or* the target of the Flair does not Take Out any characters

Prerequisite: Rival or higher Archetype

The Antagonist is able to inspire blinding fury in another character, effectively bestowing the effects of the Seeing Red Flair (**Scion: Origin**, p. 149). This is resolved easily enough for Storyguide characters; for 1 Tension, the Storyguide may apply it to a player character, causing the Berserk Condition. The character must make an attack with every action for the duration of the rage — players may choose the targets, but if no enemies are present, they must make an attack nonetheless.

RETCON

Cost: 1 Tension

Duration: Indefinite

Subject: The World

Range: Extreme

Action: Simple

Cooldown: One Session

Prerequisite: Nemesis or higher Archetype

Some beings just won't (or can't) respect causality — the Antagonist is one of these. For 1 Tension, she may alter the recent past in a subtle way. This can either grant a +3 Enhancement to the Antagonist or a +3 Complication to a targeted character, as things are suddenly not what they seemed to be a moment ago. Non-trivial characters always remember the previous course of events.

EXAMPLE ANTAGONISTS

As in **Scion: Origin**, the following example Antagonists are intended to be guidelines and tutorials rather than hard-and-fast rules to live by. Storyguides should design Antagonists to fit their chronicles and players, not vice versa!

BASILISK

King of serpents, the basilisk is a snake crowned with a feathered crest, and is one of the deadliest animals in the World. Toxic to the touch and venomous, the basilisk need not bite to kill, but paralyzes and eventually petrifies with its terrible, fiery stare. It can be tracked by the dead and calcified vegetation it invariably leaves in its path, and by the die-offs that surround wherever it makes its nest.

Basilisks vary in size, as they grow throughout their lives. The largest recorded basilisk, slightly under 30 feet in length, was killed in 1948 — its gaze possessed such a range that it had to be destroyed with aerial bombardment, and what little of the creature survived is currently held under careful guard at the Smithsonian Museum of Natural History.

Archetype: Rival

Qualities: Miasmic Presence, Natural Weapon, Twitchy

Flairs: Petrifying Gaze

Drive: Hunt. Consume. Grow.

Primary Pool (9): Hunting, Biting

Secondary Pool (7): Grappling, Stealth

Desperation Pool: 5

Health: 3

Defense: 3

Initiative: 6

DAITENGU (BIRD PEOPLE)

Kings of the mountain peaks, ascetics both wise and dangerous, the tengu are a hybrid of bird and human — to what degree and which traits predominate vary. They are often portrayed with human faces, albeit with comically long noses, though some hold that these may simply be masks covering their true faces. Daitengu are powerful beings, able to stir up terrible winds with their enchanted fans or swoop down and snatch up humans in their claw-like feet, carrying them far away. Some returned possessed — others were dropped from a great height or tied to the tops of trees and left to the elements. Other tales tell of tengu who serve as protectors rather than tormenters, particularly of mountains and forests. Kotengu, or Karasu-Tengu, are those tengu without great wisdom or power; far more birdlike than their superiors, they are also far more numerous and less likely to be polite or safe. Like the crows they resemble, they are inveterate hoarders, and great devotees of mischief and mockery.

Archetype: Rival

Qualities: By Divine Right, Flight, Mystic Arsenal (Storm Fan)

Flairs: Weather Tyrant, Possession, I Have Friends

Drive: To watch over my land and protect it by any means necessary.

Primary Pool (9): Flight, Cryptic Wisdom, Grappling

Secondary Pool (7): Scratching & Pecking, Woodlore, Occult Knowledge

Desperation Pool: 5

Health: 3

Defense: 3

Initiative: 6

HYDRA (SEA MONSTERS)

The Lernean Hydra is well-known — lesser known are the others of its kind that were not so famously slain. Hydras are amphibious beasts native to the Aegean, though they can now be found in almost any large body of water — the carcass of one famously washed ashore in Nova Scotia in 1877, contaminating the beach for years. They are possessed of bodily fluids so venomous that even their breath is toxic (to say nothing of their saliva or blood itself) and a regenerative healing process so powerful that it will grow two heads for every one severed. Solitary creatures, hydras (thankfully) breed rarely, always bearing single live pups which mothers raise for some years before separating. Young hydras are born with a single head, but hydra mothers will decapitate their offspring a few times once they're strong enough to survive the process, usually when they're a few months old.

Archetype: Titanspawn

Qualities: Apocalyptic Presence, Regeneration, Toxic, Vulnerability (Fire)

DESIGN PRINCIPLES: BIRD PEOPLE

Kotengu are simple enough — strip a Daitengu of most of their powers (save Flight, perhaps) and substitute a Mortal-tier Archetype if you want to make them particularly unthreatening. The harpies of Greece are another well-known example of bird people, with the heads and torsos of women but the legs, wings, and tails of enormous birds; many serve the Erinyes, the goddesses of vengeance, and would carry off kinslayers on their behalf. They cannot create terrible windstorms, but those serving the Erinyes can travel between the World and the Underworld to deliver their quarries.

DESIGN PRINCIPLES: SEA MONSTERS

Special Systems: The hydra is composed of three Segments, each of three Health, plus an additional Health box, the rightmost. If a Segment is destroyed by filling its three Health boxes, that Segment cannot act until it fully regenerates. Segments in the process of regenerating cannot be targeted. Add one Health box each time a head fully regenerates — once three have been added, they form a new Segment as the hydra grows a new head.

The hydra can be a stand-in for virtually any great sea creature, like a kraken or leviathan, without its phenomenal capacity for Regeneration. With some additional modifications, the hydra can also serve as the model for lesser dragons. The lindworm of Scandinavia, for example, cannot boast the tremendous regenerative powers of the hydra, and only its bite is toxic. The zmei, common to eastern Europe and Russia, is not poisonous, but rather spits fire. They often have additional heads (which they are sometimes said to regrow), and unlike the hydra or the lindworm, the zmei can fly with its massive wings.

Flairs: Spray n' Pray (Breath), Under Pressure

Drive: Hunt. Feed. Sleep. Repeat.

Primary Pool (13): Bite Attacks, Swimming

Secondary Pool (11): Breath Attacks, Hunting

Desperation Pool: 7

Health: 10

Defense: 6

Initiative: 10

JÖTNAR (GIANTS)

The giants who dwell in Jötunheim, cast there of old by the Æsir, are as many and varied as the mortals who dwell in the World. Some are lovely, inspiring jealousy or drunken attempts at seduction; others are hideous, bearing claws or other features not best suited to the human form. However they appear, all are enormous, ranging from a dozen feet to several stories tall — some few grow even larger, echoing Ymir, the giant whose corpse formed the World itself, but none have yet equaled his stature. Not all Jötnar are at odds with the Æsir, more than one of whom are descended from the giants — Loki is one. The Jötnar who dwell in Muspelheim, fire giants ruled by Surtr, will rise up and set the World aflame when Ragnarok comes.

Archetype: Nemesis

Qualities: Apocalyptic Presence, Collateral Damage, Mystic Arsenal

Flairs: Get Back, Second Wind, World Shaking

Drive: Wreak havoc!

Primary Pool (11): Smashing Attacks, Feats of Strength

Secondary Pool (9): Endurance, Temperature Tolerance (cold or hot, depending on origin)

Desperation Pool: 6

Health: 5

Defense: 5

Initiative: 9

Extras: Jötnar are usually Size 2-3, but some impressive individuals may be larger — consider building them as Titanspawn.

KERBEROS HOUNDS

Many legends speak of Kerberos, the great hound who guards the gates of Hades. Three-headed and enormous, he is not easily swayed from his duties, for he is ever loyal to his master and mistress, Hades and Persephone. Once, though, he was dragged bodily away from his post by Herakles, who was bade to retrieve the dread hound as his Twelfth Labor, and while he walked the World he seems to have made the time to create a few Scions of his own.

The Kerberos Hound is a rare breed, descended (or so it is said) from Kerberos himself. The size of an overlarge mastiff, with a broad build even when they do not possess the breed's signature extra heads, they are intelligent, loyal, and very trainable companions. They are not, however,

DESIGN PRINCIPLES: GIANTS

Giants will, naturally, make frequent use of Scale, varying according to their size. While it can be tempting to adhere to mythological attestations, in practice this will mean a lot of giants with blanket +4 or +6 Enhancements running around. Save such gargantuan foes for later, or for high-stakes boss battles, and apply the rule of thumb about fish stories — they're rarely as big as people claim.

Jötnar are known for their connection to nature — storms, earthquakes, and floods are all attributed to their actions. Fire giants are, unsurprisingly, associated with smoke and flame — consider distinguishing them with Miasmic Presence (if they don't have Apocalyptic Presence already!) or Baleful Touch. Like the Jötnar, other giants around the world are generally known for their fantastic strength. The Cyclopes of Greece, semi-divine descendants of the Cyclopes borne by Gaia and Uranus, are particularly renowned for it, and for their skill at crafting; however, they have a particular Vulnerability — their single eye, a flaw that sees many a Cyclops blinded in ancient stories. The Gashadokuro of Japan are enormous (invisible!) skeletons, eternally hungry and constantly emitting a terrible, high-pitched whine, that snatch up the unwary and bite their heads off to drink their blood. Unseen and Unnatural Hunger are obvious choice here.

for the faint of heart, and no few have compared the experience of keeping a Kerberos Hound to that of raising a wolfdog — descended from a godlike canine, these dogs are not usually house-friendly. For this reason, few are familiar with the breed, and fewer still make it their business to keep the bloodline going. Scions, however, usually don't have a hard time finding the appropriate connections, should they want a canine companion, though they are warned not to mistreat the pup, for Hades and Persephone have been known to visit their terrible wrath on those who are unkind to Kerberos Hounds under their care.

Archetype: Rival

Qualities: Group Tactics, Natural Weapon (Teeth), Stand Tall

Flairs: None

Drive: Be loyal to my master.

Primary Pool (9): Biting, Chasing, Being a Good Dog

Secondary Pool (7): Grappling, Athletics, Tracking

Desperation Pool: 5

Health: 3

Defense: 3

Initiative: 6

NEMEANS

For the first of his Twelve Labors, Herakles slew a lion at Nemea whose golden fur could not be pierced by any mortal instrument, and whose claws raked through armor as though it wasn't there. Ever Herakles strangled this famous beast, and used its own claws to skin it, such seemingly indestructible creatures have been referred to as "Nemeans."

Lions are not the only animals who have demonstrated the Nemean quality, of course. Many examples have been recorded throughout history — Nemean bears, Nemean tigers, Nemean crocodiles, and once (and *only* once, blessedly) a Nemean hippopotamus. Any animal that is aggressive, territorial, and dangerous might produce a Nemean variant, which are only more so than their progenitors.

In the premodern era, a Nemean's appearance could spell disaster for a local economy, but with the advent of gunpowder and cannons settled societies could finally inflict injuries upon and even kill such creatures. Modern firearms can occasionally penetrate Nemean hide, especially with a lucky shot that hits the comparatively unarmored mouth or eyes, but only the most high-powered rifles can do so with any reliability. Of course, with the modern taste for environmentalism, Nemeans are not always killed on sight, but captured and relocated or held in captivity — the Sacramento Zoo currently has a very photogenic Nemean jaguar.

The set of Traits listed below are for a good old-fashioned Nemean lion.

Archetype: Rival

Qualities: Armor Piercing (Claws), Invulnerability (Cutting or piercing weapons), Heavily Armored (1 Soft, 2 Hard)

Flairs: None

Drive: Dominate my territory.

Primary Pool (9): Clawing, Intimidation

Secondary Pool (7): Biting, Hunting

Desperation Pool: 5

Health: 5

Defense: 3

Initiative: 6

OCTAVIAN GAIUS CAESAR, SCION OF DIVUS IULIUS (SCIONS)

His birth presaged by a comet that shone brilliantly for seven days, the son of the deified Julius Caesar was marked for greatness from the moment he first drew

HOGZILLA

Hogzilla is a Nemean wild pig infused with Titanic power and unleashed in the woods of America's southern Georgia. Hogzilla is about four meters from snout to tail. She has half-meter tusks, despite being a sow, and weighs just under a ton. Hogzilla has no mate; despite there being no male boar big enough to impregnate her, Hogzilla goes into estrus once a year and produces a single piglet of incredible size. The hunter who caught her first piglet was lucky — with another few weeks of growth in him, the offspring would have been bulletproof. If a Scion doesn't find Hogzilla, she could unleash a plague of gargantuan, man-eating Nemean boars on the whole American southeast.

DESIGN PRINCIPLES: SCIONS

We can hear you saying it now: "Hold on, there's an entire book before this section that tells you how to make a Scion!" And you're right, there is! If you intend to keep an Antagonist Scion around and make them a major part of the story, using the Character Creation system to build them and the Advancement system to maintain and improve them is an entirely reasonable thing to do.

But the Antagonist system *can* handle Scions, and it can handle them fairly easily. Knacks translate well to Qualities, and Boons translate well to Flairs (in the above example, Knacks and Boons have been italicized for clarity). Both obey the same rules as if a player character were using them, replacing Legend with Tension if needed. Imbued Tension is set aside and reclaimed with the effect's end, as usual. If a roll is called for, use the most appropriate pool, or default to the Desperation Pool if none fit.

You'll note the addition of Callings and Purviews to the typical Antagonist sheet. Callings are included for Fatebinding and any other effects the Storyguide may wish to emulate. Purviews, meanwhile, may be used to create marvels as usual, replacing Tension for Legend.

If you're using the Antagonist system to create a Scion, don't worry too much about trying to match up to expectations of a player-character Scion. From the players' perspective, you're rolling dice and making strange effects go off, just as usual. The goal is, after all, to make less work for the Storyguide.

breath. One could be forgiven for not seeing the signs, though, for from a young age he devoted himself not to his studies or his community, but the sole pursuit of personal power through intimidation, violence, and bribery. Only 20, he rules a criminal empire that rivals some countries for complexity and power, and he has not lowered his sights one bit. He means to better not only his divine father, but the great Alexander, and to come out of the shadows and conquer the known World by force of arms by the age of 30. When pressed, he claims this is for the sake of the war against the Titans, to protect humanity by unifying them, but his constant smirk makes him seem awfully insincere.

Archetype: Nemesis

Qualities: By Divine Right, Mystic Arsenal (an evergreen laurel wreath, worn by Caesar himself in a triumphal procession, and representing Order), *Fearless Presence, Perfect Poise, Pain of Dishonesty, Center of Attention*

Flairs: *All That Glitters, Divine Providence, Transfiguration*

Drive: To conquer the World.

Primary Pool (11): Intimidation, Schemes, Administration

Secondary Pool (9): Combat (Short Sword), Athletics

Desperation Pool: 6

Callings: Leader 3, Judge 2, Lover 1

Purviews: Metamorphosis, Order, Prosperity

Health: 5

Defense: 4

Initiative: 9

ASHER, SCION OF ANANSI

Description: After spending a penniless childhood in Harlem and nearly starving to death, the man known as Asher is now a famous lobbyist for Big Tobacco...and a secret Scion of Anansi.

When he came into his powers, the World became his plaything. Using guile, magic and deception, he acquires wealth and searches for every mystical artifact he can find, even if that's at the end of a dead Scion. Asher is frequently at odds with other Scions over Birthrights and Relics. He never kills another Scion, though he'll frequently lead them into dangerous situations. He vastly prefers to leave a trail of embarrassed and vengeful Godlings in his wake. Asher's promised himself he'd never be powerless again; more of talker than a fighter, he is always ready to summon in friends to do his fighting for him.

ASHER'S SCHEMES

Win/Win: Asher's relationship with the characters could be a difficult one to pin down. He could easily be the bane of a band of Scions by selling them to Titans for some long-forgotten artifact or their scoundrel friend that swaggers in and distracts the dragon with a humorous tale and pointing out a chink in its armor.

Asher always tries to sell people with win/win options, even though he is frequently the only winner at the end of the day. It does not become apparent until after he has left. If anyone can get him to promise something, he always keeps to the exact wording of that precisely chosen promise. When he finds a kindred spirit, he can't help but play questions to test their mantle and always pays his debts.

Hooks: The players are hunting for a powerful artifact, Hermes' Slippers, for another mission. They may notice him researching, as they are in a library. He arrives the moment before they can grab the slippers from the sleeping wyvern, waking the sleeping creature to distract the party while he steals the precious artifact.

Archetype: Nemesis

Qualities: Twitchy, the Napoleon of Crime, Mystic Arsenal (a spider pendant granting access to Deception)

Flair: Shroud, Illusions, I Have Friends

Drive: The acquisition of power

Primary Pool: (11): Deception, Magic, Politics

Secondary Pool (9): Computers, Tactics, History

Desperation Pool: 6

Callings: Liminal 2, Lover 1, Trickster 3

Purviews: Deception, Fortune

Health: 6

Defense: 4

Initiative: 9

Extras: Get Out of Jail Free, Buy One Get One Free, Mystic Arsenal

SPHINX (CHIMAERA)

The sphinx, a winged lion with a human face, is native to the greater Middle East. Famed in Greek tradition for its riddles (and its lethality, should the person so tested answer incorrectly), in Egypt the sphinx was known more popularly as a guardian of temples — great statues from antiquity still survive across Egypt, most famously at Giza. In ancient Assyria, sphinx were known as lamassu or shedu — associated with the stars and the zodiac, they were universally regarded as protective deities. Some lamassu possessed a bull's body rather than a lion's, or occasionally a combination of both: The prophet Ezekiel described one such creature.

Sphinx are unfortunately rare — for much of recent history they were seen as dangerous animals, and either driven away or hunted near to extinction in the World. Surviving populations do remain in the more rural parts of the Middle East, particularly in the Red Sea Hills on the eastern coast of Egypt, the Armenian Highlands of Asia Minor, and the Caucasus Mountains. Their wisdom and cleverness has enabled them to survive what other apex predators could not.

Archetype: Rival

Qualities: Flight, Honor Bound (cannot attack those who answer riddles correctly), Natural Weapon (Claws)

Flairs: None

Drive: To guard my home; to test travelers with riddles.

Primary Pool (9): Quick Wits, Wisdom, Riddles

Secondary Pool (7): Claw Attacks, Flight

Desperation Pool: 5

Health: 3

Defense: 3

Initiative: 6

VAMPIRES (THE LIVING DEAD)

We live. We die. Some live again, sometimes by design, and sometimes not. Almost every culture has tried to cheat death in one way or another, trying to weasel out of crossing that final veil and descending to whatever Underworld lies in store for them. Some beat the odds; others become abominations that violate the natural order of things. Scions will often be called upon to put things right, but sometimes mortals must deal with such beings themselves.

Archetype: Nemesis

Qualities: Life Drain, Wall-Walker, Unnatural Hunger (Blood), Vulnerability (Fire, Sunlight)

Flairs: Hypnotic Charm, Naptime, Shadow Step, Swarm

Drive: Feed.

Primary Pool (11): Grappling, Athletics, Seduction

Secondary Pool (9): Things Long Forgotten, Survival, Stealth

Desperation Pool: 6

Health: 5

Defense: 5

Initiative: 9

YAOGUAI

Chinese folklore is rife with accounts of strange beings, drunk on mystical powers attained from Daoist studies, attempting to achieve immortality through unvirtuous practices. Sometimes hybrids of animal and human, sometimes fallen Gods, sometimes stranger things still (living skeletons, for example), the term Yaoguai is a very wide umbrella, but the quest for deification and immortality is universal. The Shén believe in rehabilitating beings that other pantheons might brand as Titans — in their eyes, redemption is a matter of choice, and open to any who are willing. Still, in the heat of the moment, that is an ethical stance easier claimed than adhered to.

Archetype: Nemesis

Qualities: Apocalyptic Presence, Imperfect Disguise, Martial Artist (Heroic), Sorcery or Mystic Arsenal.

Flairs: Curse, Reflected Intent

Drive: Immortality, and nothing less!

DESIGN PRINCIPLES: CHIMERA

Magical beings composed of different features of mundane animals and even humans are a common sight in myth. Consider Pegasus, the Minotaur, and the namesake Chimaera from Greek mythology; the Nue of Japan; the Simurgh of Persia; or the Fenghuang of China. They tend towards the extremes of the good-evil spectrum — many are considered wise and regal, but some are terrible beasts that threaten all around them. When it comes to designing such a creature mechanically, consider what sorts of animals are in the mix, and what sorts of unique traits they have — claws, venom, the ability to fly, and so on. Greek Sphinx, obsessed with riddles, are nonetheless Honor Bound to spare a victim if they answer correctly!

DESIGN PRINCIPLES: THE LIVING DEAD

Living dead is a wide tent, covering everything from mummies to zombies to vampires and beyond. Many will have Unnatural Hunger (which can cover other compulsions as well) or Miasmic Presence. Some may be thralls to the will of another, greater being; others might be the ultimate mastermind, wise and puissant beyond mortal ken. The Mook Archetype is appropriate for the typical zombie — a human reanimated through ritual — and even for some mummies and vampires. More powerful mummies may be sorcerers or command other terrible powers and, being the sort to chain their soul to a desiccated body, they are unlikely to have a friendly or equitable outlook towards mortals. As for vampires — well, they eat mortals, either by dining on their blood, flesh, or breath. Are you on a first-name basis with every loaf of bread you've ever eaten?

All this said: Pop culture has had its way with virtually every example of the living dead, twisting it into versions that have all but replaced their mythological inspirations. We encourage you to do a little reading — there are versions of all of these stories that are both weirder and more interesting than anything you're likely to see on a screen.

DESIGN PRINCIPLES: YAOGUAI

Yaoguai is a blanket term describing virtually any kind of potentially malevolent spirit — as a result, they defy easy description. Many will be Martial Artists, perhaps even of Heroic caliber, and many will have knowledge of Daoist sorcery — those who don't likely attained their power by stealing an elixir. Beyond that, it's a matter of what sort of Antagonist you want to create. A scorpion Yaoguai will be Toxic (requiring a successful attack with its tail), and probably no slouch at grappling; a Yaoguai of smokeless flame will possess Baleful Touch; and a Yaoguai born of a tree will likely have Stand Tall and Heavily Armored. Yaoguai who collect souls will possess Life Drain.

Primary Pool (11): Martial Arts, Forbidden Knowledge

Secondary Pool (9): Scheming, Trickery

Desperation Pool: 6

Health: 5

Defense: 5

Initiative: 9

Eric Donner
Part Two

IV.

It *probably* wasn't possible to grow a new World Tree from a cutting of Yggdrasil. *Probably* not. The Æsir were, for the most part, in agreement on that fact. But the Nornir were maddeningly closed-mouthed about it, by all accounts, and that meant leaving it be wasn't a chance the Gods could take.

Of course, most of them preferred to stay in Asgard, rather than risk coming down among the humans and feeling the chains of fate tighten about their chests, so they did what they always did, and sent their children to take care of it.

It was a strange kind of family reunion, with no one exactly related by blood, but everyone doing the mental gymnastics required to figure out where everyone else fit in the divine family tree. Four of them had been sent: Eric, daughters of Sif and Heimdall, and a young man with rust-red hair and a tattoo of algiz on his bicep.

"Who stole the branch, do we know?" the young man asked. His name was Nate, and Eric shoved down a million awkward questions.

"Titanspawn," said Sif's daughter. Her name was Lucy, and she'd arrived first. "They're ahead, looking for soil from my mother's garden." The four of them stood at the edge of a field, neat rows of early summer crops stretching on for acres. "If you know the path to walk, it'll take you to her fields in Asgard."

Eric nodded. "Well, it's not like she leaves maps lying around, right? So we just have to find them, take the branch, and kick them off the property?"

Heimdall's daughter, Chelle, shook her head. "They're not alone. One of ours is helping them." She cocked her head, and Eric knew she heard more than just the wind rustling through the tender new growth. "The trickster."

That declaration was met with resigned groans all around. When you had a shitstorm on your hands, chances were high Loki or one of his offspring was involved. It explained why Asgard was hedging their bets. If anyone could coax a piece of Yggdrasil to sprout, it would be Loki.

"Follow me." Lucy strode off into the field, picking her way between the rows. She led them along a complex route, one Eric at first mistook for random. As they went, though, he imagined himself watching their progress from above, mapped out the turns and switchbacks. Their steps traced a symbol through the rows, a rune that meant *bounty.*

He liked the double meaning of it, plentiful crops and the quarry they were chasing.

He opened his mouth to mention it, but Lucy held up a hand, halting the group. The air had changed. The smell of tilled soil still hung on the air, but it was richer now, more potent. Eric caught the faint scent of apples, though the trees were faint skeletons on the twilight horizon. Lucy had led them to Asgard.

It wasn't hard to find the thieves. The titanspawn — four of them — were shoveling dirt into sacks and loading them onto a wheelbarrow. Atop it sat a thin man Eric had never seen before. His demeanor

was bored and smug at the same time, and when the four of them approached, he lit up with glee.

"Oh, just who I'd hoped to see," he said.

Beside Eric, Nate hissed. "Max? But… you..." Above, storm clouds began to gather. The hair stood up on Eric's arms, and the pleasant smell of fresh earth was replaced by the sharp tang of ozone.

Eric put a hand on Nate's shoulder. "Easy, now." He could tell the kid was new to this, something in the betrayal tingeing his tone. Most Æsir Scions he'd met swapped *the first time Loki or his kin fucked me over* stories once the liquor started flowing. Eric had a feeling Nate's was happening right now.

"You call down that bolt, kiddo, and you'll make this whole thing ten times worse." He held up a long, sturdy branch. "Strike me while I'm holding this, and it'll hit Yggdrasil itself. You want to be in charge of splitting the World Tree?"

The pressure in the air let up. Nate hung his head.

Loki's son grinned and said, softly, "Get 'em."

The titanspawn charged.

V.

The ground turned slick with blood and ichor and rain. Eric felt the storm surge again, and this time, when Nate sent a bolt of lightning stabbing into the group of titanspawn, Eric joined in, forking it off to hit not one, but two of their attackers. The stench of charred flesh filled the air. The two shared a grin, quick as the lightning they'd just wielded, and pulled another bolt down from the sky as one of the Jötunn clambered back to his feet.

Lucy and Chelle had engaged the remaining titanspawn, their war cries bellowing forth to match the thunder. Chelle moved in with the utmost grace, catching one of the approaching Jötunn's four arms and using its weight against it to throw it to the ground. Lucy stood waiting, one hand outstretched. As Chelle's victim lay gasping for breath, Lucy curled her hand into a fist. The Jötunn screamed as a fist of earth took shape around it, the dirt solidifying into fingers, crushing the life out of the titanspawn. Eric would hear cracking bones and tearing flesh in his dreams for weeks.

The last of the Jötunn stood uncertainly, looking from the Scions to its fallen brothers. It fixed its bloodshot gaze on Eric. Before it could take its first lumbering step, he raised Giantsbane and fired. The ground shook as the body hit, and then there was nothing but the patter of rain on the earth, the fading rumbles of thunder, and the rasp of four Scions catching their breath.

When the rain let up (when Nate *let* it let up), Loki's son was nowhere to be seen. Eric had spied him high-tailing it just after the fighting began, but their shovel-wielding enemies had demanded the group's full attention.

No way he was up to anything good. They didn't linger by the bodies, instead setting off in Max's muddy boot prints. He hadn't even bothered trying to cover his tracks.

Eric felt the grim elation that comes after a battle well-fought. He suspected Lucy and Chelle were much the same — Lucy came up with a handful of couplets about their prowess versus the titanspawn, and they were good enough to coax a smile out of the otherwise stoic Chelle.

Nate, however, held his fists clenched so hard the veins stood out on his arms.

Eric slowed down, let Lucy and Chelle get a few paces ahead. Nate took the hint and matched his stride. "You know him, huh?"

"We hung out a few times. He showed up after my dad revealed…" Nate waved a hand around. "All of this. He helped me through some things. Shit, we fought together. I thought…"

Eric nodded. It wasn't lost on him that Nate's father had appeared to him, but that wasn't important right now. "You thought he was your friend."

"Yeah."

"You know, he might have been. And he might be again. It's complicated when it comes to Loki and us. Loki and all of the Æsir, really, but Thor's kids especially."

"Or he was using me from the start." A muscle worked in Nate's jaw. "We…we talked about something like this once. We were drinking, and he was talking about fate. About knowing the things that are supposed to kill off our parents, and how we're susceptible to those things, too." Nate shuddered. "Loki's is pretty awful. Max was, he *pretended* to be freaked out about it. I made a joke about growing a new World Tree and, I don't know. Something about seeing if the branches of fate would grow differently." He let out a little laugh. "That's not even how it *works.* But here we are."

Eric frowned. "He'd know that." It wasn't Yggdrasil's branches that determined their fates. It was what the Nornir spun out that mattered.

Snap.

Nate and Eric froze. Lucy and Chelle turned around, the next verse of her saga dying on Lucy's lips. "What was that?" she asked.

Eric bent. When he stood, he held two halves of a broken branch. In his hands, the pieces looked small, but they all knew what he had. "Why would he throw this away?" asked Eric. "It's what he was after, wasn't it?"

Chelle took one of the pieces from him. "There's no magic left in it. It's just a stick. So why…?"

A breeze skirled past them, carrying with it the crisp scent of apples. "Oh no," said Lucy. "Oh, he wouldn't."

But of course he would. Chelle pointed, wordlessly, to the row of apple trees ahead of them. To the ones on the border between Sif's garden and Iðunn's orchard, where the branches of the closest trees had been completely stripped of their fruits.

Max was nowhere to be seen.

VI.

Eric got itchy in big cities. New York was the worst of them all. Everything and everyone in them was constantly on the move. The sidewalks were crowded, the roads doubly so. He'd left the GTO parked at a commuter rail station in Jersey, and spent his ride into the city on one cramped train after another. When he finally came up out of the subway, he still felt too closed in to be able to catch a proper breath. Give him open fields and never-ending skies any day.

Elevators weren't any better, especially not the ones that were programmed to cram as many passengers into them as possible, in the name of efficiency and energy-saving. Eric was all for saving the planet, but he didn't think the 10 other people crammed into the space with him were particularly appreciative of their building's efforts. It likely didn't help that they were all in suits, dressed for power lunches and corporate ladder-climbing, and he was in jeans and a T-shirt, tattoos crawling around his arms.

At least Omolara had told her assistant to expect him. Eric wasn't sure how he'd have gotten around security if she hadn't put him on her calendar.

When he stepped into her office, though, Eric almost wished the assistant had taken one look at his nowhere-near-business-casual outfit and thrown him out. He'd rather face down a whole security team than the two women who turned to face him.

They stood by the window, looking out at New York City from 63 floors up. Omolara turned first, and one look at the Yorùbá woman made the power brokers from the elevator look like shabby penny-stock traders. She wore a charcoal-gray pantsuit, understated and elegant. Her hair was styled in tight cornrows, their ends capped with small gold adornments. From the glower on her face, Eric was glad the whip he'd seen her wielding in pictures was nowhere to be seen.

Brigitte de la Croix was as tall as Omolara, though the top hat she wore gave her a few extra inches. She held an unlit cigarette pinched between her fingers, and looked none too happy to see Eric. "You want to tell us what that call was all about?"

He'd left Brigitte a rambling message when he'd returned to Midgard, asking her to meet him so they could do something about Max and the stolen apples. Not that he had any idea what that something *was*.

"There's a Goddess," he said, after he'd told them about Yggdrasil's cutting being a red herring, and the fight with the titanspawn. "Iðunn." He looked beseechingly at the desk and its two guest chairs, but neither Omolara nor Brigitte made a move towards them. "She grows these apples, that grant the Æsir their youth? We think maybe he's going to try selling them. It's not immortality, exactly, but…"

"But it would upset a whole lot of balances," finished Brigitte.

"Yeah. Probably a whole lot of death Gods that won't be very happy when this gets out."

"You think?" Brigitte was a master of the slow burn. "How could you have taken your eyes off this Max guy, even for a second?"

"There were four of us," said Eric. It was an awful defense. He knew it, and Brigitte wasn't going to let it pass.

"You're the one I know. And you're smarter than that."

"Apparently not," said Omolara. She abandoned her post at the window and settled in behind her desk. "I'll see if anyone's talking about something hitting the market that sounds like it fits." She

began tapping away at her laptop, muttering keywords like a spell.

Brigitte followed her and sank into one of the guest chairs. Eric had the distinct impression he wasn't invited to sit. Instead, he strolled to the window and looked out.

Out… and down. He didn't consider himself afraid of heights, and there were far taller buildings all around them. They were high enough that clouds formed only a few floors up, the sky and the buildings' peaks lost in gray. Still, he felt uneasy so close to the glass, like some massive bird might come plunging through the clouds, shatter the glass, and carry him off.

Eric stepped away, and turned his back on the sky. To find Omolara and Brigitte watching him, amused. He wasn't sure how long he'd been standing there.

"Found him," said Omolara.

VII.

Omolara spun her laptop so Eric could see. He took that as permission to sit beside Brigitte, who regarded him grimly. "How bad is it?" he asked. It had been less than two days since Max had made off with Iðunn's apples. The four who'd chased him to the orchard — and lost him — had set off to follow their own leads, but so far had all come up empty. Whatever Omolara had found was their first lead. *How much damage could he have done in two days?*

He hadn't realized he'd asked the question aloud until Omolara let out an exasperated sigh. "Your mistake is in thinking he had no plan beforehand. You assumed stealing those apples was the *first* step, not the *last.*" She tapped the screen, drew Eric's attention to the slick-looking website full of beautiful, vibrant, *young* people. "He's been taking preorders for a month."

Eric scrolled through a page of testimonials, written by people who, before they'd taken Max's Instant Youth Supplements, had been showing their ages. Overnight, their crows' feet and liver spots had disappeared. He decided not to watch the before-and-after videos, but the still pictures were enough to make his stomach sink. Some of the

pictures were probably retouched, but the ones that had been uploaded in the last couple of days? He was pretty sure those were real.

He'd figured Max might have tried offloading the apples to the highest bidder, that he'd be tracking down a couple of burlap sacks full of whole apples and be done with it. This, though… Max (and the shell company he'd set up) was selling some kind of apple-based supplements. A hundred pills for $149.99, payable in three easy installments plus shipping and handling. A blinking burst in the top corner of the page offered a two for the price of one deal for the first 100 takers. "I don't…" He cleared his throat. "I don't know where to begin with this."

A look passed between the women. "Come again?" said Omolara.

"He means he doesn't know what to do with something he can't just hit until it stops moving." Brigitte patted his bicep. "Thought we were going to tell you where he was, then you could just go find the place he had the apples, punch him out, and take them back, huh?"

"…I was hoping."

"Well. Here's the good news." Omolara took her laptop back and started typing. "I can call in some favors and disrupt the business. Everything that *can* go wrong for his little startup is about to. And I'll have their business address for you by the time you get out of the city. Which leaves going to his warehouse and doing the whole punching and stealing back the inventory part to you."

"I'm not sure I heard any bad news in that." He tried out a grin, glad his part of this plan put him on familiar ground. "I'm good at that." He made a fist and flexed. It was mostly a joke.

Omolara stood. She wandered back to the window and looked out over the city. Brigitte watched her go, hushing Eric with a look when he opened his mouth to ask a follow-up question. Outside, the storm clouds gathered, gray upon gray upon gray. Even safely away from the window, Eric had a sudden sensation of vertigo. He was up *too damned high,* and wanted nothing more than to be back on solid ground. Lightning stabbed down, turning the room a searing blue-white. He was sure it must have hit their floor, could feel the energy dissipating as it found its way down the building to the ground.

First, though, all that power had gone through Omolara. As Eric's vision cleared, he focused on her, still standing calmly and looking out over New York. "The bad news," she said, "is now you owe *me*."

VIII.

The warehouse job went smoothly. Eric might have wondered if it had gone *too* smoothly, but the truth was, the team was just that good. He and Nate went barreling in and handled the small security force Max had left in place. Lucy and Chelle covered the exits.

Although Max was nowhere to be found, it was likely he'd realized that his sudden business problems weren't just dumb luck and cut his losses. Omolara had been thorough.

They'd confiscated the supplements and collected laptops, hard drives, and every USB stick they could find. Eric and Nate fried the hell out of the electronics, and the job was done. Within a few hours, while the four of them were out celebrating at a little hole-in-the-wall diner, Nate got the call that said the Æsir were pleased with how it had all turned out.

They drifted away after that, one by one. Chelle first, then Nate, then Lucy. She shrugged at Eric as she dropped her cash on the table. "Sometimes we just get it right," she said. "They can't all be YouTube sensations."

"It's not that," he said. And it wasn't. He couldn't quite figure where this melancholy was coming from, but it had started when Nate's phone went off. Nate hadn't said who'd called. He didn't have to. "I'm all right," he told Lucy. "I'm going to have one more cup of coffee and hit the road. You don't have to stick around."

He wondered for a moment if she might stay, but she double checked that she'd left enough for the tip and was gone.

Ten minutes later and Eric was out the door himself. He pulled up short when he saw the hulking figure circling the GTO. Taller than Eric himself, more muscular. The parking lot lights lit up his bright red hair. He felt 10 times bigger than he was, like he ought to have taken up half the parking lot. You could *feel* the divinity emanating from him. Like the tang of lightning about to strike.

Eric's mouth went dry; his heart attempted to pound its way out of his chest. Was this how people felt when they met movie stars?

Then the man turned, and Eric was right back where he'd started. He'd seen pictures of his father,

just a handful left in a shoebox in his grandparents' attic, but he'd memorized that face all the same. This man's eyes were too wide set, his nose crooked but bent to the wrong side, like the haymaker that broke it was thrown by a lefty rather than a righty.

"Nice car," said the man who wasn't his dad. "Did you restore it?"

"Yeah. My grandfather and I did."

The man ran a hand over the hood, nodding. "How's she run?"

He didn't know *which* Thor this was — Nate's dad, some other Incarnation, it suddenly didn't matter. It was a warm night, they'd just thwarted a plan by one of Loki's Scions, and the goat had a full tank of gas. "You, uh. You wanna find out?"

"Hell yes I do." The man considered him for a moment, then broke into an infectious, toothy grin. "In fact, I know just where we should go."

The road stretched out ahead of them, one long ribbon of moonlight and asphalt. It was late enough that they were the only car on the road, the roar of the GTO's engine echoing across the fields. Eric let the speedometer creep up, which seemed to please his passenger. They'd been driving for about 10 minutes when the road ahead shimmered. Eric thought it might have been a trick of the moonlight, or his headlights against a slick patch, but then it happened again, and colors began seeping into the tar.

"Have you ever driven on the Bifrost before?" asked his companion.

"I can't say I have."

"Look around, then. This is a rare sight."

Eric did as he was bid, peering out into the night. On either side of the road, the fields had disappeared. Far ahead, he could see the shining lights of Asgard. If he kept going, would his father be in one of the halls, drinking and boasting and singing of his victories?

But then his gaze was drawn below, through Yggdrasil's branches, to where Midgard's cities shone. He couldn't have named them all if he tried, but seeing their glow stole his breath.

Home.

Down there were the people he protected, the ones who needed him.

He turned to tell his passenger it was time to go back, but the seat beside him was empty, and when Eric faced forward again, the road was just a road in northern New Jersey, beneath a bright summer moon.

IX.

It was the hottest day of the year, and Eric was freezing his ass off. He wasn't sure how long he'd been fighting — felt like hours, was probably minutes — but now that he'd been knocked on his back and had a moment to think, he noticed it was long enough for a crowd to have gathered. They were a good distance away, which was nice, but if the frost giants noticed them, the humans wouldn't be able to scrabble far enough away fast enough.

It should have been easy: Distract them from the spell they were attempting, lure them away from the ritual space, stop them from ever trying again.

Turned out, they were a lot smarter than they looked. They sort of had to be, from the glimpse Eric had gotten at the ritual prep. Whether they'd been trying to steal the heat from the nearby town or the sun itself, at least he'd bought himself some time.

But not only were they smart, they were strong, and quick, and they'd kicked his ass for a quarter of a mile.

"Maybe you're just not cut out for this, kid." The raspy voice came from just above his head. Eric suppressed a groan as a feathered head peered down at him.

Where there was one raven…

"Yeah. Give it up now, maybe they'll just leave you alone." That one landed on his chest, its talons digging holes in his shirt.

"We don't know what you were thinking, taking them on all by yourself. You're good, but you're not *that* good." Huginn was the bigger one, the one not using him as a perch.

"They want to steal the summer. That's hardly even your problem." Muninn squawked as Eric pushed himself to sitting. The giants stood several yards off, watching.

"It is if they kick off Fimbulwinter."

"Eh. Not likely. It's just one town's summer." Muninn resettled on Eric's knee. Huginn hopped around so they were both regarding him.

"Why are they waiting?" Eric cut a nervous glance toward the spectators, but the giants were intent on him.

Huginn pecked at the ground before looking up again. He stretched a wing at a lump in the distance: the corpse of a fallen giant. "You killed the one that was powering the ritual. About now, they're debating whether to get revenge, or use a thunder God's spawn to give 'em the juice they need."

"Sucks for me either way."

"Yep," said Huginn.

"Yep," said Muninn.

He pawed for Giantsbane, which lay a few feet away, thrown when that last giant pasted him across the face. He was pretty sure all his teeth were still in place, but at least one seemed precarious in its socket. "I don't suppose you have any advice?"

"Don't die," said Huginn. Muninn shrugged, or at least, that's how Eric interpreted the gesture.

"Super helpful. Thanks." He shook the rime of frost from his hands, displaced the bird once again, and stood. Clouds gathered above — high up, it was still summer hot and humid — and Eric drew them down. When they hit the cold air the frost giants had ushered in, the moisture in them froze.

It began to snow.

Eric raced through the whiteout, wind whipping around him. He didn't hear the rumble of thunder so much as he felt it all through his bones. The giants felt it, too. They shifted back into battle stances and got ready for him. In Eric's hands, Giantsbane lived up to its name: three shots, three dead giants. Then he was upon them, the last pair standing, and Eric charged.

He was the *son of Thor.* Every winter, his father led parties against these creatures' invading cousins, keeping them out of Asgard with a battle-song on his lips. Eric shouted more than sang as he swung at the first giant, but there was triumph in the note. The ground shook as the giant went down. The second tried to flank him, but Eric was ready. Perhaps knowledge of frost-giant battle tactics were hereditary, because every move felt familiar, and his every countermove felt *right.*

Then it was over. The snow stopped falling. The clouds blew away on the breeze — now the hot breath of summer, as it should be. All around him, the frost giant's corpses set to melting.

In the distance, the crowd cheered.

Flapping wings behind him. The ravens alit on a dry patch of ground, careful not to get their wingtips or tailfeathers in the ichor. "Maybe you're not so bad after all," said Huginn.

"Are you here for a reason, or just to heckle?" Eric pulled a talisman off a corpse, crushed it in his bare hands. He needed to go scuff out the runes they'd drawn for the ritual.

"Got a message for you, since you didn't bite it," said Muninn. "From a guy named Max."

&.

They met in a dive bar whose logo was a wolf gnawing on the sun. Max found it hilarious. Eric refrained from commenting. He'd come alone, like the ravens had said he should, though he had an SOS text ready to send if it all went south.

When they each had a glass of beer in front of them, Max raised his glass. "To you and your crew. That was well played, at the warehouse."

Eric raised his own and drank. "Are you saying 'no hard feelings' here?"

"Life's too short to dwell on these things. Especially now that you four wrecked the merchandise that could have made it a bit longer." He laughed, and Eric could see why Nate had befriended him. The man radiated an aura of good humor, a sort of no-worries vibe that put you right at ease.

"What now, then? I can't imagine you asked me here just to say we aren't fighting. Or why you asked me rather than Nate." Eric almost wished he was Heimdall's son, so he could see through whatever trick Max was trying to pull.

"He turned me down. I guess he's still mad at me." Max shrugged. "I'll make it up to him sometime, but this can't wait." He pulled an envelope from his pocket, shook its contents out on his palm. "You got the supplements, but I kept some seeds. Work with me. I'm under the impression Nate's thumb is greener than yours, but either way, your dads are both about the harvest, when they're not laying about with that ridiculous hammer. You must have picked up some of it."

Eric had watered a friend's plants once, while she was away. They hadn't died, but she'd only been gone a couple of weeks. It wasn't exactly proof of

his gardening prowess. "Why not ask Lucy? She's more in tune with it than I am."

"She's not my biggest fan. Listen. I'm not trying to chop down Yggdrasil here. I'm not opening a gate and letting frost giants take over Manhattan. I'm attempting to grow some trees that buy us a little time to get out of…whatever those asshole Nornir weave out for us. That's all." He closed his fist around the seeds. "You've heard the stories. What happens to us."

"And you think you can stop it?"

"I have to *try.* All these other pantheons, they go about their lives not knowing if someone's going to gut them and feed their innards to, I don't know, a ravenous fish one day. Us? We know who's doing the gutting and that oh, by the way, it'll take the fish 1,000 years to finish eating. *And we can't stop it.* That's… That's the rawest of deals. I refuse to just let it happen. We're down here, guarding the world they created, that they once ruled, and they're sitting back waiting for Ragnarok to come."

Max tapped at his phone. The screen lit up, queued to the video of Eric fighting the serpent in the park. The next related clip was him in the distance, with the frost giants. That one had gone up while he was on the drive here. "We can make our own destinies. There has to be a way. We can be bigger than they ever were."

Eric sipped his beer. In the years since the ravens told him who his father was, he'd never once heard from the man. No, from the *God.* He suspected he never would, even if he took Loki's son up on his offer. Sometimes the Gods just didn't care.

But that didn't mean he had to be like them: uncaring, aloof. He glanced at the video again, remembered how it had felt to save those people. He thought about the times he'd gone up against titanspawn that hadn't been captured on camera, and the feats he'd accomplished with his band, who he really ought to check in on. Sometimes, you did important work and no one ever knew about it.

Even your father.

And that was just fine.

"Thanks, but I'm going to have to pass," Eric said. He polished off his glass and rose.

"You sure?" Max asked, palming the seeds. "You won't need them for, what, 20, 30 years, but I can grow some for you. In case you change your mind."

"I'll let you hang on to them for now. But you start causing trouble, I'll hear about it." He leaned down, towering over Max. For the first time, Loki's son looked afraid. "Then I'll come for you myself, and won't *that* be a tale for the ages."

APPENDIX LEGENDARY CREATURES

Humans dominate the World, but they not the only creations of the Gods. Ordinary people share the cities and the wilds alike with beings of Legend, whose lives can be as quiet or as eventful as anyone else's. Most humans go through their days without noticing what walks alongside them, but nearly everyone has heard stories of shapeshifters, sorcerers, talking animals, or nature spirits. They may even have a few in the family.

GENERAL RULES

Denizens are hampered by the unavoidable fact that Fate prefers humans. Even Denizens destined for a path of divine greatness have to overcome obstacles like a compulsive hunger for blood or being a dog. Most Denizens, therefore, have a Persistent Condition that both hinders their progress and provides a steady source of Momentum. These Conditions are never resolved; they are a part of the characters' existence in the World, and Fate grows annoyed if they are circumvented.

If you choose to play a Denizen, their supernatural nature is considered both a Calling and a Role Path. If the Denizen is also a Scion, these Callings replace one of their three, though it may not replace the one their share with their divine parent.

Scions can be Prophets, though this is *extremely* rare — and often a sign of a blessing prior to their Visitation. Scions cannot be Cassandras.

KITSUNE

Example Calling Keywords: subtle, daring, playful, beautiful, fickle, wild, seducer, enchanter

Path Asset Skills: Persuasion, Subterfuge

Path Contacts: former lover, current lover, shrine attendant, hotel clerk

Persistent Condition: Fox With a Lingering Tail.

Your natural condition is being a fox, with all that implies: you cannot speak, you have no opposable thumbs, and people are going to look at you very suspiciously if you walk into their store. You can, however, take on a single human appearance at will and maintain that form as long as you are conscious and awake. Any beings with a Legend score will recognize you for what you are when you appear as a human. Mortals who see your tail (see below) can recognize you on a successful Difficulty 2 Occult + Intellect roll.

You can learn Knacks to expand on your shapeshifting abilities, but no matter what form you take, no matter what disguise you wear, you cannot completely conceal your tail. Gain Momentum if your tail is discovered at a time that greatly inconveniences you, such as when it risks damaging a relationship with someone who thought you were human or when an enemy notices the fluffy tail sprouting from the antique vase you just turned into.

HEROIC KNACKS

Do You Feel Lucky?: When you threaten someone with a harmless object**,** you gain Enhancement 1 on your attempts to intimidate him. If the object is one that is realistically dangerous, like an unloaded gun or a dud explosive, the Enhancement is 2 instead. If your attempt to intimidate fails for any reason, you cannot bluff the same target again in the same way.

Dress for Success: When you disguise yourself as a type of person by wearing appropriate clothes, others will not question your authority in that role. Whether your disguise is a legitimate uniform or something you bought at a Halloween supply store, it's equally convincing while you wear it, but cheap or minimal costumes require you to spend a point of Momentum to be plausible.

Kindness of Strangers: When trying to convince someone to provide for your basic needs, like paying for food or giving you somewhere to live, reduce the Difficulty of the action by 1. The Storyguide decides what form this largesse takes, depending on the situation and circumstances of your request.

Not a Fighter: As the Lover Knack of the same name (see p. 232). When you are engaged in a fight, as long as you do not make attacks, enemies will not target you directly with their attacks.

LEGEND, RELICS, AND DENIZENS

Several Denizens can gain Legend in a similar manner to Scions, by assuming Band-term Deeds in line with their particular legendaria. Unless otherwise specified, however, most can't progress to the level of Demigods without some other force intervening and granting them a measure of supernatural might. They "cap out" at Legend 4, unless upgrade Paths are given in another book.

Like Scions, Denizens can use relics. However, they don't receive Boons for free — they can channel Purviews through an appropriate relic (like the syrinx of the satyrs channeling Passion), but must create a marvel each time they want to use miraculous powers. Other Birthrights can be used normally.

Additionally, gain Enhancement 1 to disengage and withdrawal rolls. You must also have a partner or Followers present for this effect to apply.

Set the Stage: Spend Momentum to create an illusion. When you use props to prepare a space and occupy it, you can convince others that it has the function you claim it does. Putting a microscope on a table makes it a laboratory. A bookshelf turns it into a lawyer's or professor's office. The pretense only lasts while you are in the place you've created: Anyone entering it when you are not there quickly recognizes the truth.

Tongue of the Fox: You can speak to any canine, and they will answer you in their language. Most animals can reason in the manner of a young child, they just don't care for much beyond sniffing things and eating unguarded hens.

Under the Table: When you spend a scene indulging in a vice with someone, you steal some of their vitality. For the next scene, they have +1 Difficulty on tasks involving one Arena of your choice and you gain Enhancement 1 in the same Arena. You can only use this Knack on another player's character with that player's consent.

IMMORTAL KNACKS

Endless Masks: You are no longer restricted to appearing in a single human form. In fact, you can take on any human, animal, plant, or inanimate shape up to the size of an elephant. Whatever shape you take, your Attributes and Scale remain the same. You can turn into a tiger, but you will be no heavier or stronger than you are as a human.

Kitsune Tsuki: You can inflict someone with the Condition **Fox-Possession** for a number of days equal to your Legend. Fox-Possession makes the victim ravenously hungry (especially for tofu) but otherwise lethargic, suffering +1 Difficulty on any actions that require force or concentration. The Condition resolves either at the end of its duration or by having the victim spend a night in the company of a dog.

Tableau: Spend Momentum to transform a single room into whatever appearance you wish. Unlike Set the Stage, you do not need to occupy the space to preserve the effect, but it will revert to its normal appearance on the next day if you do not choose to maintain it.

SATYR

Example Calling Keywords: drunken, free, wise, mocking, outrageous, beast, counsellor

Path Asset Skills: Athletics, Culture

Path Contacts: bartender, philosophy professor, gambler

Persistent Condition

Hooves. They're noisy when you walk and mark you as distinctly non-human unless you find a pair of custom-made boots. Gain Momentum when they give you away when you're trying to be sneaky, when they reveal your true nature at a time you want to keep it hidden, or when they otherwise make your life more complicated.

HEROIC KNACKS

Baser Instincts: As the Lover Knack, Lover's Intuition (p. 232), except that you learn what the target craves or covets instead of loves. When touching another character, which may be as brief as a handshake, you gain an understanding of your target's desires. Ask one question from the following list for free. You may roll your Knack Skill and spend one success per additional question.

- Who or what does the character covet or crave?
- Who fuels this addiction, or who can satiate it?
- Who else close to the character feels the need or effects of this addiction?

This may be used on your bandmates with consent from the player.

Blind Luck: As the Sage Knack, Master of the World (p. 233), except that you may only use it when you are hindered by a Complication (not including Hooves). While inside a Field, you may define up to three points of Enhancements or Complications (or a combination of each) that are readily apparent to your perceptions (which may be enhanced by other abilities) but not obvious to other observers. They must conform to the Features of the Field, however — it makes sense for a shotgun to be behind the bar, but not a rocket launcher. The hardwood floors of a burning building could be expected to be weak, but the flames can't be cold. Only three total Enhancements or Complications can be

applied to a Field at a time, regardless of how many Scions possess this ability.

Cup of Wisdom: You drink heavily to obtain knowledge. When you try to solve a complex problem, take the Drunk Condition for the rest of the scene to gain a +1 Enhancement on your rolls to solve it.

Fruit of Passion: Choose a form of art as your driving passion. For the rest of the session, add an extra Success on rolls involving the creation of that art. After producing a work that you deem satisfactory, you can switch to another art form.

Give Me Another: It's easy to convince others to keep doing something that they enjoy. Roll Subterfuge + Manipulation to make a target repeat their current willing activity for another iteration. Spend a point of Momentum if doing so would put the target at risk of harm.

Party Animal: While you pursue a passion**,** you can stave off the need for food, drink, or sleep for a number of days equal to your Resistance without suffering any negative effects. At the end of that period, or when you have satisfied your need, you fall into an undisturbable slumber for an equal amount of time.

Revels: While you take part in any performance, celebration, or friendly gathering**,** the Scope of social actions for everyone involved is reduced by 1. You must remain present and participate actively for this ability to work.

Wild at Heart: When you intimidate someone with your ferocity**,** spend Momentum to double the number of successes on the Knack Skill roll.

IMMORTAL KNACKS

Panic: Spend Momentum to make the Field that you occupy terrifying to lower-Tier beings. The power is indiscriminate, and causes all those affected, anyone lacking a Legend score, to flee out of the Field as quickly as possible. Once outside, they will not return for the remainder of the scene.

Too Clever: When engaging in a nonviolent contest with another being for defined stakes, spend Momentum to make your die pool for the contest equal to hers. Modifiers from other factors apply after the pools are equalized.

Hair of the Goat: You are immune to all forms of poison and venom. If you spend a point of Momentum, you can mix whatever available liquids you have to make one dose of an antidote to any poison you know of.

SATYR VARIANT: HULDER

Example Calling Keywords: protective, hidden, secretive, watcher, warder, householder

Path Asset Skills: Athletics, Empathy

Path Contacts: land surveyor, construction worker, quiet café owner

Persistent Condition: unchanged

HEROIC KNACKS

Liminal: Choose a Liminal Knack.

Go Around: You can declare a street intersection, a natural formation, or a structure up to the size of a house as your domain for one scene. Beings below your Tier will avoid it instinctively, and you have +1 Defense against all others while you remain within its bounds.

My Home is a Fortress: If you choose to make a house your home, it will constantly repair itself from any damage it sustains and strengthen its walls beyond normal. Treat as if you possessed the Flawlessly Platonic Ideal (Creator) Knack, but only applicable to that structure. You can only have one home at a time.

IMMORTAL KNACKS

Watcher of the Hidden: choose a Liminal or Guardian Knack.

SATYR VARIANT: DEER WOMAN

Example Calling Keywords: vengeful, trampling, strict, defender, oath-keeper

Path Asset Skills: Close Combat, Empathy

Path Contacts: domestic violence shelter, free clinic, public defender's office

Persistent Condition: unchanged

HEROIC KNACKS

Trample: Your unarmed attacks against a prone opponent gain the Bashing and Lethal tags.

Laws of the Land: When you enter a new location, you instinctively know the appropriate cultural values and what actions would violate them. If applicable, you gain a 1 Enhancement on rolls related to those values.

DRUNK

Effect: You suffer Complications on nearly every action you take, especially those involving fine motor skills.

Momentum: Every time your drunkenness causes social or physical trouble, add another point of Momentum into the pool.

Resolution: Purge the alcohol, or simply wait until the next day and endure a killer hangover. This may involve Complications, or your character may simply be used to it.

Quick Study: As the Judge Knack (p. 229).

IMMORTAL KNACKS

Arbiter: Choose a Heroic or Immortal Judge Knack.

CENTAUR

Example Calling Keywords: untameable, laughing, mighty, savage, gentle, raider, wanderer, roamer

Path Asset Skills: Close Combat, Survival

Path Asset Contacts: herdmates, pastoral humans, veterinarians

Persistent Condition

Centaur. You have the upper body of a human and the lower body of a horse. Gain Momentum when hindered by environments made for humans: travel by car, narrow hallways, revolving doors, and so on. You cannot pass as human, which makes you memorable to any mortals whose paths you cross. Finally, you have Scale 1 speed when running on relatively level ground.

HEROIC KNACKS

Lash Out: Your unarmed attacks gain the Bashing and Pushing tags.

Tireless: You can run for an indefinite length of time on level ground.

A Taste of the Wild: Choose a Heroic Satyr Knack.

IMMORTAL KNACKS

None.

CENTAUR VARIANT: KINNARA

Example Calling Keywords: intriguing, graceful, devoted, pure, companion

Path Asset Skills: Culture, Persuasion

Path Asset Contacts: your lover, artistic community, dance troupe

Persistent Condition: unchanged

HEROIC KNACKS

Soothing Presence: As the Lover Knack (p. 232)

Graceful Leap: Spend Momentum to move instantly to Close range of any person in your line of sight, ignoring any obstacles between you.

IMMORTAL KNACKS

None.

CENTAUR VARIANT: NUCKELAVEE

Example Calling Keywords: venomous, salt-blooded, tormented, deep-dweller, devourer

Path Asset Skills: Athletics, Survival

Path Asset Contacts: fishers, sailors, terrified locals

Persistent Condition

Monster of the Sea. You superficially resemble a centaur—upper body of a human, lower body of a horse—but also have translucent skin and fins atop your hooves. Like centaurs, you gain Momentum when hindered by environments made for humans. You cannot pass as human, and your appearance makes you both monstrous and memorable to any mortals whose paths you cross. Unlike centaurs, you do not have increased speed on land, but you can breathe underwater, ignore underwater obstacles, and swim as fast as you can run.

HEROIC KNACKS

Lash Out: As the base centaur Knack.

Poison Skin: If you touch another being barehanded, or they touch your skin unprotected, you inflict a poisoned Condition. This Knack does not work while you are immersed in water. While you are out of water, you also kill all natural plantlife in your immediate vicinity.

IMMORTAL KNACKS

None.

WOLF-WARRIOR

Example Calling Keywords: steadfast, brave, ferocious, unyielding, champion, berserker, soldier

Path Asset Skills: Athletics, Close Combat

Path Asset Contacts: former opponents, allied warriors, former mentor

HEROIC KNACKS

Favored Weapon: As the Warrior Knack Master of Weapons (p. 235), except that you may only add one tag. At the beginning of the session, choose one of your weapons to be your favored weapon. When you use your favored weapon, add a single additional tag point. This does not have to fit the weapon's existing profile: a sword can be made to strike at far range, for example (but good luck running over to pick it up). Spend Momentum to switch the benefit to another weapon. Negative cost tags cannot be purchased with this Knack.

Helping Hands Make Idle Work: When you look for help among people who support your cause, you can always find someone willing to offer it. Their aid is humble and limited, but can include providing shelter, sharing supplies, gathering information, or providing a distraction for your actions. Where applicable, treat this help as a 1 Enhancement.

I Love It When a Plan Comes Together: When you formulate a plan for a Complex Action that furthers your cause and involves your allies, roll the appropriate Knack skill. Your number of successes on that roll become a pool

of Enhancement bonuses for anyone taking part in the plan to draw from when playing their part in it.

Inspiring Act: When you demonstrate how to perform a task by doing it yourself, you can give an ally a 1 Enhancement to do the same action.

One of the Crowd: When you hide in a group of people, anyone trying to locate you must roll at +1 Difficulty to identify you through any means (direct observation, record searches, divinations, etc.).

Rallying Presence: When you lead a group in combat, spend Momentum to give every member of the group an additional Bruised damage slot for the duration of the battle. The bonus does not apply to you, and goes away if you are Taken Out or otherwise defeated.

Still Kicking: Once per scene, when you would normally be Taken Out by damage, you may spend Momentum to ignore all effects of the attack that did so, including suffering an Injury Condition.

Strength in Numbers: When using Teamwork, you increase the maximum number of successes you can add from 3 to 5 and can have multiple people rolling to assist you. To get the benefit of more than 3 successes, you must have a number of helpers at least equal to the number of successes rolled.

IMMORTAL KNACKS

Exemplary Deed: Spend Momentum to allow an ordinary mortal who supports your cause to use your dice pool for one action. Any given person can only receive this benefit once in her life, but gains a 1 Enhancement on that action.

Champion of the Cause: Choose one Heroic or Immortal Knack from the Guardian, Leader, or Warrior Knacks. You may select this Knack more than once to take multiple Knacks.

WOLF-WARRIOR VARIANT: CLASSICAL AMAZON

Example Calling Keywords: unchanged

Path Asset Skills: unchanged

Path Asset Contacts: unchanged

HEROIC KNACKS

Instead of **I Love It When a Plan Comes Together** and **One of the Crowd,** you have access to the Knacks listed below. You have access to all other Wolf-Warrior Knacks.

Armorbound: As the Warrior Knack (p. 235)

Shield Wall: Against opponents in front of you and within your line of sight, your allies in the same range band as you gain +1 Hard Armor.

IMMORTAL KNACKS

Unchanged.

WOLF-WARRIOR VARIANT: MINO ("DAHOMEY AMAZON")

Example Calling Keywords: replace "berserker" with "bride"

Path Asset Skills: Firearms, Survival

Path Asset Contacts: ruler, battalion, ex-husband

HEROIC KNACKS

Instead of **One of the Crowd** and **Strength In Numbers,** you have access to the Knacks listed below. You have access to all other Wolf-Warrior Knacks.

Apex Predator: As the Hunter Knack (p. 227)

Every Target: Spend Momentum to make a Firearms attack against your target. For every success you roll, you can also hit one other target in the same range band.

IMMORTAL KNACKS

Unchanged.

THERIANTHROPE

Example Keywords: moon-bound, howling, unrelenting, devouring, predator, stalker

Path Asset Skills: Athletics, Survival

Path Asset Contacts: game wardens, hunters, occultists

Persistent Condition

Lycanthropy. When you gain your first point of Legend, choose one set of circumstances under which you transform into a wolf, such as under the full moon, when you are injured or become angry, or when you don a wolf skin. Choose a related set of circumstances that allow you to change back to human form again. Gain Momentum if you change for reasons beyond your control. The change takes one round, but if you wish, you can delay it for a number of rounds equal to your Resolve by spending 1 Momentum. As a wolf, you gain the following abilities:

1. Your unarmed attacks gain the Lethal tag.
2. You can take one additional Bruised and one additional Injured Condition.
3. You gain the Apex Predator (Hunter) Knack.
4. You have an urge to hunt prey, whether that means small animals or other people. You can resist the urge to hunt for one Scene on a successful Resolve roll.
5. You are vulnerable to silver: whenever you take an Injury Condition from a silver weapon, take an additional Condition of the same severity.

HEROIC KNACKS

Bloody-Minded: You gain an additional Injured slot. If your Stamina is 5, you also gain an additional Maimed slot. This bonus is cumulative with the Bruised slots from having Stamina 3+.

Feral Grace: You gain 1 Enhancement to all Athletics rolls that do not involve using tools or weapons.

Howl: When you display your bestial side to intimidate another person, you gain a 1 Enhancement.

Keen-Eyed Predator: As the Hunter Knack of the same name (p. 227).

Predator's Bond: As the Kitsune Knack, Tongue of the Fox (**Scion: Origin**, p. 164), except that you can only use it on predatory animals (which may be of any genus or species).

Scent of Blood: You automatically know when you are in the presence of someone with a Bruised or greater injury and the level of her injury. You have 1 Enhancement to follow the trail of that person until she either washes away the scent or covers it with something stronger.

Unleash the Beast: When you fight unarmed, spend Momentum to add the Lethal tag to your attacks for the remainder of combat.

Wary Beasts: Unless compelled by supernatural means, ordinary animals will not approach or harm you. An observer can make an Occult skill roll with Difficulty 2 to recognize your true nature if he sees animals react.

IMMORTAL KNACKS

Feral Hunter: Choose a Heroic or Immortal Hunter Knack.

NEW MORTAL PATHS

Mortals cannot help but be puppets of Fate, but a rare few are able to see the strings. Lacking the full power of Scions or other creatures of Myth, they are nonetheless a cut above ordinary, ignorant mortals—at least insofar as their ability to get themselves into trouble is concerned. They are **Prophets** when their abilities manifest as a gift, or **Cassandras** when it appears as a curse. Though seldom the heroes of their own sagas, they often appear as Guides or Companions to Scions, operating on the principle that, if one can see the horrible monsters that lurk in the shadows of the World, one should make friends with someone capable of fighting them at one's earliest opportunity.

PROPHET

Whether "blessed" by a God or born under a Fateful signifier (being born with a caul or with one or more teeth are common marks of a Prophet), the Prophet sees the skein of Fate laid out before him and reads it like a book. It's not the ability to see the future, precisely; rather, it's the ability to understand the weird narrative logic that Fate operates under, to recognize symbolically-relevant details, and thereby get a sense of where events are heading. Just like a student of cinematography can tell which elements in a shot are important by the composition and lighting or a student of theater can predict the course of events in a play thanks to her understanding of dramaturgical archetypes, a Prophet can glimpse, however briefly or incompletely, the courses Fate sets in motion.

PATH EFFECT

Prophets can automatically recognize creatures of Myth and those touched by Fate, including but not limited to Scions, manifest Gods, Titanspawn, and Fatebound mortals. They can likewise recognize portals to Terra Incognita, Underworlds and Overworlds. This Effect requires no roll (and indeed, Prophets are incapable of turning it off), but it is defeated by Knacks or similar powers that conceal the subject's mystical nature.

KNACKS

Glimpses Forward: A Prophet can learn to read the symbolism Fate spins into the world, assembling cues and signifiers to glean an understanding of the future Fate holds. Once per session, the Prophet may ask one of the following questions about a particular topic (an individual, group, or course of action, for example):

- *What is the greatest peril the subject faces?*
- *What must be done to ensure the subject does not come to disaster?*
- What must never come to pass, if the subject is to prosper?
- How will the subject change the World, in ways great or small?

Obnoxiously Prepared: Once per session, the Prophet can remove all complications from a single action by retroactively having the foresight to prepare just the right tool, circumstances, etc.

Failure of Virtue: Once per session, the Prophet can foretell a Scion or God's fall to a Virtuous rage. The next time that Scion spends Momentum (or at Storyguide's discretion for NPCs), they enter the Virtuous Condition and move their Virtue track to one end or another, weighted by whichever end they happen to be near. If they're in the middle of the track, the prophecy hangs over their head for the rest of the session.

As the Prophecy Foretold: Once per session, the Prophet can declare that events happening in-game match a previously-made prediction and completely refill the Momentum pool.

Inauspicious Signs: Once per session, the Prophet may remove up to 5 dice from the Tension pool, and remove half that amount (rounded up) from the Momentum pool.

CASSANDRA

Named for the figure in Greek mythology (though gods of nearly every Pantheon have created them), Cassandras are a special kind of Prophet cursed by the gods to speak absolute truth, but to never be believed by those who hear their prophecies. Where Prophets understand the structures of Fate and thus glimpse what *must* happen next, Cassandras see how the World flows within those structures, understanding what *is happening*. Theirs is a more immediate gift of prophecy, but no less useful—the problem is getting other people to act on it.

Cassandras often find themselves pulled into the orbit of Scions for the simple fact that those of divine blood are immune to the curse. They make excellent Guides, and are often fiercely loyal to those rare few people who believe them.

PATH EFFECT

Once per session, the Storyguide tells the Cassandra the absolute truth of a situation. This includes, but isn't limited to, the agendas of those present, anything concealed or hidden nearby, and the immediate outcome of whatever is happening around her. This gift doesn't extend to anything outside the Cassandra's immediate vicinity.

Example: The original Cassandra, for whom this Path is named, saw the Greek army bring the Trojan Horse to the gates of Troy as a "peace offering." This triggered her Path effect, making her immediately aware that the Greeks were not seeking peace and that many soldiers were hiding within the Horse. As the Trojans brought the Horse into the city, she was also aware that the immediate outcome would be ambush and slaughter. She was not able to perceive the rest of the Greek fleet waiting just beyond the horizon, nor was she able to predict that the long-term consequences would include Aeneas fleeing the city's destruction and ultimately founding Rome.

No matter the information a Cassandra gleans from this effect, no one she tells will believe her until it's too late to change the outcome of events. No amount of persuasion or social skill short of God-level Knacks can make someone believe a Cassandra's prophecies, but it is possible to force people to act in accordance with the Cassandra's warnings. It's only the prophecies gleaned from the Cassandra Path effect that evoke this effect; general statements and inferences aren't automatically disbelieved.

Continuing the example of the Trojan Horse, the Trojan soldiers didn't continue disbelieving Cassandra's warnings when the Greeks sprung their trap, but by then it was far too late to do anything about it. If Cassandra remarked that the

Trojan Horse was certainly large enough to hold a phalanx of angry Greeks, the Trojans would likely agree, but would immediately discount the possibility that it actually was. *If Cassandra had managed to get some leverage (say, a knife at King Priam's throat), she might have been able to force the Trojans into destroying the Horse anyways, but they'd still steadfastly refuse to believe there was any point to it.*

This curse doesn't affect with divine blood. Post-Visitation Scions, Gods, and anyone related to them are free to believe or disbelieve a Cassandra's warnings as they see fit.

BIRTHRIGHTS

- **Creature or Guide •:** Cassandras may be accompanied by snakes, who whisper wisdom and sage counsel into their ears. Some merely have tattoos of snakes, hearing the sibilant whispers in their minds.

KNACKS

The Ties That Bind: Once per scene, a Cassandra reads someone's Fate at a glance and discern their strongest Fatebound relationship (if any). If the subject has more than one Fatebond at the same strength, this Knack reveals the oldest one first. Subsequent uses of this Knack on the same subject reveal sequentially younger and weaker Fatebonds. Each time the Cassandra uses this Knack, they suffer a Path Condition on an unrelated Path, related to their reputation as a liar who can't be believed.

Truth, Lies, and Alibis: Sometimes there are advantages to nobody believing you. Once per session, a Cassandra automatically succeeds on a simple Manipulation by telling the simple, unvarnished truth. This is a conscious manipulation of the effects of the Cassandra curse, making whatever the Cassandra says seem utterly ridiculous and inconsequential in the moment (and the Cassandra herself, therefore, not worth bothering with). Once the Cassandra leaves the scene, this Knack's effects end. For example, a Cassandra caught by a police officer while en route to the Pine Barrens to dispose of a body might use this Knack in response to the cop's questioning her presence and answer "I'm here to bury Sal Gemino's body." The Knack's effect will make the cop dismiss the story and the Cassandra herself as inconsequential, but later, when Mrs. Gemino files a missing persons report for her husband, he'll remember the story. ("At the time I thought she was joking, but now...")

This Knack doesn't affect anyone with divine blood.

Self-Consistency Principle: If you can't warn people about the future, you can at least take perverse joy in guaranteeing your predictions will come to pass. Once per session, after using her Path effect, the Cassandra adds a Complication equal to her Cunning to *all* actions that would prevent her prophecy from coming true. Maybe those Trojans would have checked inside the Horse, just to be 100% sure, but once Cassandra starts raving about hidden Greeks, it seems like a terrible idea.

Self-Consistency Principle *does* affect those with divine blood.

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Name _____ Chronicle _____

Player _____ Parent _____

SKILLS

☐ Academics	OOOOO	☐ Medicine	OOOOO
☐ Athletics	OOOOO	☐ Occult	OOOOO
☐ Close Combat	OOOOO	☐ Persuasion	OOOOO
☐ Culture	OOOOO	☐ Pilot	OOOOO
☐ Empathy	OOOOO	☐ Science	OOOOO
☐ Firearms	OOOOO	☐ Subterfuge	OOOOO
☐ Integrity	OOOOO	☐ Survival	OOOOO
☐ Leadership	OOOOO	☐ Technology	OOOOO

ATTRIBUTES

	MENTAL	PHYSICAL	SOCIAL
POWER	Intellect ●OOOO	Might ●OOOO	Presence ●OOOO
FINESSE	Cunning ●OOOO	Dexterity ●OOOO	Manipulation ●OOOO
RESILIENCE	Resolve ●OOOO	Stamina ●OOOO	Composure ●OOOO

PATHS

_____ ☐
_____ ☐
_____ ☐
_____ ☐

BIRTHRIGHTS

_____
_____
_____

Legendary Title: _____ ☐

CONTACTS

_____
_____
_____

DEEDS

Short _____ ☐
Long _____ ☐
Band _____ ☐

VIRTUE

_____ OOOOO _____

KNACKS

_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____

LEGEND

O O O O
☐ ☐ ☐ ☐

CALLINGS

_____ OOOOO
_____ OOOOO
_____ OOOOO

MOMENTUM

☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐

BOONS/PURVIEWS

_____
_____
_____
_____

HEALTH

☐ Bruised _____ +1
☐ Bruised _____ +1
☐ Bruised _____ +1
☐ Injured _____ +2
☐ Maimed _____ +4
Taken Out

Movement Dice: _____
Defense Roll: _____

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