The Gauntlet's monthly RPG zine

GLAMOUR2 A FLASH OF FASHION, FANTASY, AND FACE, FACE, FACE!

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Fire Island Pines (or The Pines, Pines, or FIP) is an opulent beach town that no one can afford to live in. In fact, in 2004, there were only 12 recorded all-year residents. During summer, however, it will host up to 3,000 vacationers. You and everyone else at the table (save for one, who will be everyone's Auntie—a GM or MC in another game) are one of those vacationers—one of the impeccably-washed masses who flock to this tiny island paradise in July to get drunk, ogle boys, and bask in a cis-normative, homosexual Eden.

INTRODUCTION



Importantly for the setting. FIP is cis-normative: the primary vacationers are cis, male, gay men between the ages of 20 and 50. There is racial diversity and more of it than this scenario will imply—truly, the main division in the Pines is an economic one: FIP is expensive. Regardless, Fire Island Pines is a normative vision of a gay utopia; it harbors assimilationist ideals and, by enabling these (socio-) economic standards through real estate and both physical and sociocultural access, uplifts assimilationism as the mode of queer ideology: the primacy of white, masculine beauty, alcohol as the crux of queer socialization, and normalized promiscuity counterweighted by idealized monogamy.

This game uses the mechanics of Cthulhu Dark and tropes of Lovecraftian horror to interrogate assimilationist ideals by leveraging a stereotypically gay setting to explore issues surrounding loss of identity and agency and complicity in hegemonic structures that inculcate willing and unwilling participants in institutionalized whitewashing.



So, how are you going to do this? By trying to find your missing friend. Chad.





SCENARIO

You are on vacation to Fire Island Pines, a gay beach town off the coast of New York City. Everyone here is gay or a drag queen. You are gay and you do not have enough money to afford a house in the Pines, but you have to vacation—it's summer! And you just bought cute, new swim trunks. So what's a girl to do? Split the rent of a house with 4 or so of your best Judys and then lay out in the sun so you can forget how much you could've paid off on your students loans with what your split of the rent cost.



It's been a few days, and all you know is that it is hot. You're not even sure if it's been 1, 2, or 3 days, but it has been hot, and it will continue to be hot—in more ways than one: you watch finer and finer men walk off that ferry and settle into house shares of their own. Everyone is here for the Pines Party at the end of the weekend. And you? You're no exception.

But the days are starting to bleed together. In fact, you can't even remember if you had a Bloody Mary or a mimosa last brunch. How many brunches have you been to...? It's all a blur and—what's that? Who? Oh... Chad is missing. You remember your friend, Chad, right? Tall, blond, blue-eyed, and tanned. Was he at brunch? You mean he's not at John's house, just down the walk? Do you think he likes rosé or chardonnay?

No, sorry... you need to find Chad. It's almost the Pines Party and, well... you can't let him go alone now, can you?

You've been in the Pines long enough to know your way around. You've got your favorite bars, and you know the Meat Rack leads to Cherry Grove—no one stays in Cherry Grove except for the drag queens. You also know the Meat Rack is actually called the Judy Garland Memorial Pathway, but no one is thinking about the number one Judy when they're hooking up in the bushes.







You are sharing the rent of a house for a week with your best friends. all whom also know Chad. He's a ditzy twunk. He goes out wandering, and maybe you catch sight of him at a club later, but it's almost like he isn't here at all-except for brunch, the most important meal of the day. He wasn't at brunch this morning, though, and you're all starting to worry.

YOU KNOW CHAD 1-being single, LOVES THREE THINGS:

2 - hooking-up, and $3 - \cos mos$.

He's never had a steady boyfriend, and he balks whenever the topic of long term relationships come up.





The following locations are the primary places for you to investigate Chad's whereabouts. You've only got a few days before the Pines Party, the main event this week at FIP—no one is going to miss it. Remember: you wake up late and stay up till nearly sunrise, but you can always day drink, and there's always some sort of event going on somewhere, no matter what time it is.

Aside from these locations, nearly everyone is hosting a barbecue, pool party (yes, even though it's a beach town—these houses are decadent enough to have their own private pools), or just some kind of social at their house.

The Blue Whale

The Blue Whale is a bar and restaurant that does a weekend brunch. You're probably here for Low Tea, a late afternoon club event where pretty much everyone starts their night. They have a regular DJ rotation for the dance floor. But this early in the evening, people are mostly just socializing—dancing comes later. You've often run into Chad at Low Tea, but you won't be able to find him this time. Strange: Chad practically has a routine at this point and, before he disappeared, he always tried to get everyone in the house on his strict schedule of partying.

Low Tea gets more and more packed as the week goes on. Eventually, there's nowhere to stand—you can't even get in. As you look over the crowd, you see similar cuts of straight, blond hair: some cropped, some undercuts... If you keep staring, eventually all eyes turn on you. The din dies down. Will you join them?

Canteen

A beachside diner known for being... the only option. Vacationers debate over whether or not the food is good, but usually everyone stocks their kitchens and cooks for themselves. Sometimes, though, you're out and the house is far and you just need... a salad, you know?

The later in the week it gets, the emptier the Canteen becomes. If you're there before Pines Party, you feel as if you're being watched. When you turn, a tall, pale figure in swim briefs seems to just turn around a corner out of sight. "Summertime Sadness" by Lana Del Rey plays on repeat from a radio you can't find.

The Meat Rack

Officially named the Judy Garland Memorial Pathway, the Meat Rack is an infamous cruising spot that connects Fire Island Pines with nearby hamlet Cherry Grove. Who knows who you'll meet in the winding shrubbery and beach trees? The longer you wander and the later it gets, the stranger your experience becomes. Have you seen that guy before? Perhaps you recognize someone from your past... Eventually every shadowy body starts to look the same—the same blond hair and blue eyes. In fact, you could've sworn you saw Chad...

Pavillion

The dance club on the Pines. The dance floor is never not packed and usually spills out onto balconies and patios, into pathways, and onto the beach. The music is throbbing, the beat is heavy and... is it the same song? Who cares, the dance floor is so packed you hardly move anyway. It's suffocating, all these shirtless bodies pressed in together. All these same bodies. You could get lost in here.

Sip'n'Twirl

Open every day of the week, Sip'n'Twirl is the other dance club on the Pines. One goes to Blue Whale for Low Tea, Pavillion for High Tea and Sip'n'Twirl for Middle Tea—all are club events, just at different times of day and in different spaces. If you do them all in a row, you lose days, somehow, even though they all happen on the same day. Right? Or maybe it is multiple days... If you're looking for Chad, best not dawdle.



PEOPLE

ARTHUR – he is high. Probably on ecstasy, but there's really no telling. You and your group met him early in the week, and you learned fast his reputation for always having that little bit extra to make the party just that much better. He's been banned from a few houses. He's obsessed with Pines Party, though, and only wants to talk about that.

 Personality: Very touchy-feely. Uses a lot of euphemisms for anything and everything, and loves to gossip.

How does he know Chad?

Chad brought him to the house-share, to one of your own parties. Every time you run into him, he has some story about hooking Chad up with something new each night.

Where can you find him?
Pavillion; the Blue Whale; the Meat Rack.

AUNT ELIZABETH – a regular

throughout the Pines. Rumor has it he's one of the few all-year residents. Everyone knows Auntie E. He refuses to tell anyone his real name.

- Personality: Quiet and very wise. Always puts a hand on your knee, hand, or shoulder. He seems to be talking about another time entirely whenever he answers questions.
- How does he know Chad? He doesn't, but he knows someone named Bradley who, decades ago, walked right into the ocean. He hates telling that story, though. If he's pressed, he'll reveal that it wasn't just Bradley who walked into the ocean.
- Where can you find him? Canteen; the Blue Whale (before 5pm); Northwell Health.

DADDY – a middle-aged biker who comes to FIP just to hook up with younger, fit men. No one knows where he stays, but he can always be found in the Meat Rack. No one knows his real name, either: he won't hook up with anyone who won't call him Daddy.

- Personality: Rough and gruff, wears leather (primarily a harness). Will probably pull your hair.
- How does he know Chad? 0 He hooked up with him, naturally, but the most unbelievable part is that Chad would've called him Daddy. Actually, Daddy's not sure it was Chad after all... he never got his name. Or, maybe it's just the same name as someone else? He's not sure, after all. Everyone's starting to look the same.
- Where can you find him? The Meat Rack.

DJ DORADO — an incredibly popular DJ who has been in high demand this year at every club in FIP.

- Personality: Wears a mesh tank top (which, frankly, says enough about his personality); incredibly nice, probably high, wants to be helpful. Always bobs his head to a beat, real or imaginary.
- How does he know Chad? He hooked up with Chad one night while he was DJing. He wants to hook up with him again, but he can never seem to spot him at his gigs. To Dorado, Chad seemed totally normal, like any other guy at FIP—pretty (and) vacant.
- Where can you find him? The Blue Whale (after 5pm); Sip'n'Twirl; Pavilion.



JUAN – a devastatingly beautiful bartender and well-known heterosexual. He works at a different bar every year and comes to FIP because he gets tipped so well.

- Personality: Knows just the right thing to say in his perfectly affected accent. You probably are too distracted swooning to know what he's saying. Whoops, I guess you left a \$20 tip on a \$5 drink...
- How does he know Chad? He swears he just served him a drink, but Chad drank it quickly and walked away. If someone can be particularly charming (while withstanding Juan's own charm), he'll tell you that Chad came on to him pretty hard and didn't really back off when Juan insisted he's straight. "He said he was really into that," Juan might say.

 Where can you find him? Canteen; Pavilion; Sip'n'Twirl.

Whoops, I guess you left a \$20 tip on a \$5 drink...

THAT GOGO BOY — a muscular man in a jockstrap, gyrating from a platform in very comfortable sneakers. He doesn't talk.

- Personality: His hips don't lie, the dollar bills stuffed into his underwear are very distracting, and he'll kiss you if you tip him well enough.
- How does he know Chad? He looks exactly like him. It's uncanny.
- Where can you find him? Pavillion; Sip'n'Twirl; Pines Party.

LADY PISS — a jaundice-chic drag queen from Cherry Grove. She comes to Low Tea to complain about the usual FIP crowd and get boys to buy her drinks. Everyone thinks her shitty attitude is a gag, and she milks that for all it'ts worth.

Personality: Very bitchy and very tall. She demands a drink from whomever she's talking to. She loves to perform: give her a stage and she'll give you the finest Liza Minnelli lip sync you've ever seen. Occasionally hosts brunch; very popular as a host.

How does she know Chad? Chad bought her a drink and would not stop talking to her about gay marriage. That's all she'll tell the players unless they buy her a drink, and then she'll lie and tell them about Chad's fiancée—apparently he was proposed to on the Meat Rack and they've already got plans to buy a house.

• Where can you find her? The Blue Whale; Pavilion; the Meat Rack.

THOM BLANCH – a photogra-

pher working in both Cherry Grove and Fire Island Pines. He's here every summer and always has a camera around his neck. At any party, at every house, you can hear the click of a camera and you'll see Thom behind it. His work can be found in galleries across New York City—something about the generic, lookalike beauties that inhabit the Pines really draws in the art crowd.

- Personality: Disarming. Somehow his syrupy sweet cadence can con any vacationer to take off his shirt and pose—on the beach, at the pool, in the bedroom...
- How does he know Chad? He photographed him in your house! You must have been out. He also photographed him in the Meat Rack, with some other vacationers. He'll show you some pictures if you're nice and pose for him. You'll notice all the models look the same, but all of their faces are just cropped out (eroticism and anonymity go hand-in-hand).
- Where can you find him? The Blue Whale; Canteen; house parties.

PINES PARTY

The Pines Party is the premier event of Fire Island Pines – an all night, beachside rave, nominally for charity. But that doesn't matter. There's a theme every year; some of the past years have been Time Machine, Labyrinth, Xanadu, Emerald City, and Island of Lost Boys. You come dressed to theme in the best way you can theme a swim brief (maybe you put a harness on, if you're feeling fresh). Something different is happening this year, though, something that hasn't happened in decades...

...A SACRIFICE

Everyone on the island can feel the call, like the waves ebbing on the coastline. It has been pulling you undeniably to the Pines Party and it is there where, after a week, everyone has been perfectly shaped and reformed into the ideal body. When there is a teeming mass of assembly line beauties—tall, blond, blue-eyed, pale and muscular—the dark ocean will open and the call that has been nagging just behind everyone's ear will be crystal clear. Every single body will be swallowed whole, one by one, as each descends beneath the waves.

SUGGESTED RESOURCES

Logo's Fire Island reality series: https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PLekZPD1g54 g5siH6B2tIzFfQutDem83YY

NYT Fashion: https://www.nytimes.com/2017/08/01/fashion/mens-s tyle/fire-island-pines-style.html

FIP Historical Preservation Society: http://www.pineshistory.org

CTHULHU DARK RULES ADAPTATION

YOUR VACATIONER

Choose a name and occupation. Describe your Vacationer. Take a white Assimilation Die.

ASSIMILATION

Instead of Insight, you have Assmilation. Your Assimilation starts at 1.

When you see something disturbing, roll your Assimilation die. If you get higher than your Assimilation, add 1 to your Assimilation and roleplay your complicity.

DOING THINGS

To know how well you do at something, roll:

• **ONE DIE** if the task is within human capabilities.

• ONE DIE if it's within your occupational expertise.

• YOUR ASSIMILATION DIE, if you will risk your identity to succeed.

If your Assimilation die rolls higher than any other die, make an Assimilation roll, as above. Then, your highest die shows how well you do. On a 1, you barely succeed. On a 6, you do brilliantly.

EXAMPLE: you're escaping from the window of a Pines house-share. On a 1, you crash on an adjoining roof, attracting the attention of everyone around. On a 4, you land quietly on the roof, but leave traces for pursuers to follow. On a 6, you escape quietly, while your pursers continue searching the house.

When you investigate, the highest die shows how much information you get. On a 1, you get the bare minimum: if you need information to proceed with the scenario, you get it, but that's all you get. On a 4, you get whatever a competent investigator would discover. On a 5, you discover everything humanly possible. And, on a 6, you may glimpse beyond human knowledge (and probably make an Assimilation roll).

EXAMPLE: you're investigating your auntie's journals. On a 1, you find the address "7 Thomas Street" (the next location in the scenario). On a 6, you find that, from June 30 to August 2, many vacationers had dreams of countless men walking purposefully into the ocean. Simultaneously, Castro Clones throughout California took PTO. The dreamers included Uncle Elizabeth of 7 Thomas Street.

FAILING

If someone thinks it would be more interesting if you failed, they describe how you might fail and roll a die. (They can't do this if you're investigating and must succeed for the scenario to proceed.)

If their die rolls higher than your highest die, you fail in the way they described. If not, you succeed as before, with your highest die showing how well you succeed.

Returning to the example above: you're escaping from the house's window. This time, someone thinks it would be more interesting if your pursuers caught you. When you both roll, they get the higher die. You are caught.

REROLLING

If you included your Assimilation die in the roll and you're not happy with the result, you may reroll all the dice. If you didn't include your Assimilation die before, you may add it now and reroll.

Afterwards, look at the new result. As before, the highest die shows how well you do.

If your Assimilation Die rolls higher than any other die, make an Assimilation roll, even if you made one after your previous roll.

COOPERATING AND COMPETING

TO COOPERATE: everyone who is cooperating rolls their dice. The highest die rolled by anyone determines the outcome.

TO COMPETE: everyone who is competing rolls their dice. Whoever gets highest wins. If it's a tie, the person with the highest Assimilation wins. If Assimilation is tied, reroll. As before, if your Assimilation die rolls higher than any other die you roll, make an Assimilation roll. And, if anyone is not happy with their roll, they may reroll, using the rules above.

SUPPRESSING HEGEMONY

When your Assimilation reaches 5, you may now reduce it by suppressing hegemony. For example: tearing down iconography, crashing parties, destroying yourself, or impeding the investigation.

Each time you do this, roll your Assimilation Die. If you get less than your current Assimilation, decrease your Assimilation by 1. You may continue suppressing hegemony when your Assimilation drops below 5.

ASSIMILATING

When your Assimilation reaches 6, you irrevocably buy into the hegemonic ideal. This is a special moment: everyone focuses on your character's last moments as their identity is lost. Go out however you want: fight, scream, run, or collapse.

Afterwards, either make a new character or continue playing, blandly, but retire the character as soon as you can.

OTHER CLARFICATIONS

IF YOU PHYSICALLY fiGHT ANY HEGEMONIC IDEAL you meet, you will be assimilated. Thus, there are no combat rules or health levels. Instead, roll to hide or escape.

SOME HEGEMONIC IDEALS: marriage equality, straight-acting bros, evil twinks, being required to come out...

THINGS WITHIN HUMAN CAPABILITIES INCLUDE: picking locks, deciphering code, remembering something, spotting something concealed, rationalizing something horrific. THINGS OUTSIDE HUMAN CAPABILITIES INCLUDE: understanding hidden meaning, doing things in dreams. You can try such things if you have the opportunity. For example, if you sense patterns, you can try to follow them. However, you won't get the "within human capabilities" die, and might just roll your Assimilation die.

A HIGH SUCCESS NEVER SHORT-CIRCUITS THE INVESTIGATION: that is, it never takes you to the end of the scenario, skipping everything in-between. Thus, in the example above, even if you rolled a 6 while searching your auntie's personal effects, you would not find the exact spot of the all-night party, where the hegemony is consumed and reborn unto itself.

WHEN YOU MAKE AN ASSIMILATION ROLL AND SUCCEED, getting your Assimilation or lower, this means you keep it together, not that you are fine. When you fail, getting higher than your Assimilation, you fail to keep it together.

TO PLAY WITHOUT A CHARACTER SHEET. use your Assimilation die to keep track of your current Assimilation by keeping the die face turned to that level.

Fellow Travelers

Random characters to meet on your journey.

A List of Regretful Bargains

Devil's Bargains for various predicaments.

The Decadent Ascent

An incursion to a secluded manse of gold and greed.

LUIZ PAULO FERRAZ

TROPH

Fellow Travelers

The forest is rich in both monstrosities and treasure. It is the latter which draws in those just foolish and desperate enough to venture into certain danger. Occasionally, your treasure-hunters' travels will bring them face-to-face with one or more of these poor souls. When you want to randomly determine some qualities of the enounter, roll a dark and light die to choose their attributes, then roll again and add the two dice to find out what they are doing.

You might meet a/an...

·	old •	pair of	• muscula	r	•• ••	unkempt
	young	familiar	sickly			disfigured
•	scarred	beautiful	•• robust			richly dressed
.per	rson/people who is	/are currently	. j			
per 2	son/people who is	· · ·	ng treasure	10	eating fl	lesh
.per 2 3		6 carryir		10 11		lesh g a corpse
2	insane	6 carryir	ng treasure g a monster	11	draggin	



A List of Regretful Bargains

This list includes Devil's Bargains and things that could go wrong during a Risk Roll. The word *opponent* here can be used to refer to hostile side characters and creatures as well as other companions, depending on the situation.

WHEN TRYING TO INJURE AN OPPONENT...

- \diamond you will seriously hurt your good arm.
- \diamond you will twist a foot.
- \diamond you will hurt a companion as well.
- \diamond you will destroy an object you were hoping to collect.
- \diamond you will be seen as an easy target, and focused-on by the opponent.

WHEN PERFORMING A RITUAL...

 \diamond you will temporarily lose touch with reality.

♦ you will negatively affect one of your companions.

♦ an opponent will become entirely devoted to killing you.

 \diamond you will suffer the effect of the ritual, if it is negative.

 \diamond an opponent will receive the effect of the ritual, if it is positive.

WHEN TRYING TO EVADE DANGER...

 \diamond you will pull a companion to act as a shield.

♦ you will leave an important item behind to be destroyed.

 \diamond you will roll down a slope/run blindly for your life and get lost.

♦ you will crash into a companion, entangling you both.

 \diamond you will twist a foot.

WHEN REACHING FOR SOMETHING YOU WANT...

 \diamond you will strain your shoulder.

♦ you will be blindsided by an envious opponent.

 \diamond you will earn the distrust or disapproval of another character.

 \diamond a useful item will fall into the hands of an opponent.

 \diamond you will see something else you also desire.

INCURSION

The Decadent Ascent

Off among the woods outside the Tirollis Perimeter lies the Forgotten Duquisse's lost estate. Many years ago, the eccentric noble isolated themself from the world, and rumours about the massive amount of wealth that was kept inside their estate's pristine buildings are frequently talked about by those of a greedier persuasion.

You've finally managed to put together a group that was able to reach the secluded location, and even from a distance you can see the Duquisse's opulent domain. Even the smallest bit of plunder from those magnificent halls would be enough to let an average person live very comfortably for a while... but why settle for a little, when you can have a lot?

THEME

Opulence

MOMENTS

- A massive flower bush blocks the sun from dozens of sprouts that are dying beneath it.
- ♦ Exuberant white peacocks with pink feathers stroll aimlessly in the yard, stepping over malnourished sparrows that litter the ground.
- An overflowing water fountain turns the ground around it into foulsmelling mud.
- ♦ You smell a deeply pleasing perfume that gradually makes your nostrils burn.
- ♦ You hear a delicate clinking that turns into the grating sound of metal scratching metal.
- \diamond The mocking laughter of dozens of people fills the air.
- ♦ You come across a deeply stuffed fainting couch. Lying on it sends pleasure chills down the spine, and it's difficult to get up without help.
- \diamond You hear whispered conversations behind you, but there's no one there.
- ♦ A large cat wearing a diamond-studded collar lazily pads along a high spot, looking down with scorn, out of reach.

- ♦ You hear desperate sobbing, but at the source you only find an empty coin bag filled with small bones.
- The dirty footprints you leave behind disappear when you're not looking, leaving only a spotless piece of floor.

CONDITIONS

- \diamond You feel as if you own everything around you.
- ♦ You are overcome with an intense feeling of superiority.
- \diamond You find it hard to muster the will to do anything.
- If another character owns something similar to one of your belongings, you feel the urge to discard yours.
- ♦ You develop a deep desire to accumulate pretty objects.
- You have difficulty focusing on anything other than your own needs and feelings.
- ♦ Every time you speak, you can't help but raise your voice.
- ♦ You become obsessively fixated on superfluous flaws, like a small stain on a piece of clothing or a crooked decoration.
- ♦ You are filled with existential despair, as if your life is meaningless.
- ♦ You can only speak in "I think" or "I feel" statements.
- ♦ You feel the need to replace everything you are carrying with new belongings.
- \diamond You become deeply envious of others.
- ♦ You get an uncontrollable urge to state your opinion regarding any given topic or event.
- ♦ You start acting as if you expected someone to pick up after you.
- \diamond You feel inadequate, underdressed, and out of place.
- ♦ You involuntarily smile derisively whenever someone looks at you, and look at others with disgust when nobody is watching.

RING 1

TERRORS: The treasure-hunters are circling the estate's vast outer perimeter, a series of golden, metal bars that extend impossibly high, ending in sharp spikes. From outside, they can see the exuberant buildings of the estate, surrounded by a massive garden. They can't find a gate, and attempts to climb the bars prove fruitless, the metal too smooth to get a grip. The treasure-hunters are surprised by a group of three beautiful, well-kempt young men wearing brightly-colored guard uniforms. They attack using spears and swords, but their motions are strange, as if their bodies are being moved against their will, and their faces are locked in a hauntingly neutral expression. Upon death, each of their bodies becomes old and withered, and their faces take on an expression of deep sorrow.

TEMPTATIONS: One of them has a key hanging around his neck with the Duquisse's crest. One of the characters remembers they'd seen the crest on one of the bars, and when bringing the key there, they see a discreet keyhole.

RING 2

TERRORS: The garden is a labyrinthine arrangement of exuberant flower bushes and several carefully trimmed hedges shaped like people dancing. The air is filled with an inebriating mixture of smells that evoke all sorts of sensations, drowning the treasure-hunters' senses as they get lost in memories that aren't entirely their own. They recall moments of joy and plenty in their lives, as well as extravagant ballroom dances they never participated in, and delicious food they've never tasted. Each time one of these memories fade, they try to keep their balance before falling knees-first on the ground, and as soon as they get up, another smell overtakes them. They stumble through the garden, trapped in a cycle of delirious pleasure and painful prostration.

TEMPTATIONS: Just as they hit the ground one last time, the treasure-hunters find themselves kneeling before a mighty arch framed with dozens of golden sculptures of beautiful, smiling people. The estate's buildings lie just beyond the passage.

RING 3

TERRORS: They can see the main palace off in the distance, a huge white building with golden accents. It is connected to a couple of slightly less impressive buildings that are closer to the group. Suddenly, it starts hailing, and the treasure-hunters are pelted by what appears to be small chunks of bronze and silver. One of the characters realizes the door to one of the buildings is wide open. This building is an extremely long gallery lined with statues, mirrors, and paintings. A faint golden glow can be seen from the very end of it, where it would connect with the main palace. As the characters walk through the long hall, they can hear whispered remarks about themselves, veiled critiques that sound as if they come from their companions. Each mirror also offers a false glimpse of a companion reaching into another's bags or pockets.

TEMPTATIONS: The faces on the tall paintings look down on the group with a spectrum of undermining expressions, reminding the characters of those who doubted their worth. The statues depict people that are beautiful and frail, and evoke memories of those the treasure-hunters love, desire, or wish to protect. The group is surprised to see a passageway between two mirrors that leads to a vast dining room with a single, long table that is set with the characters' favorite foods, all fresh. The many eating utensils and trays are all made of solid precious metal that is cold to the touch. This room doesn't lead anywhere else and is entirely empty, except for the statues of solid silver that line its walls, each a lifelike depiction of a laughing noble.

RING 4

TERRORS: Loud, upbeat orchestral music starts playing and the statues come alive. They pair up and start dancing around the table, the unsettling cacophony of their disembodied laughs mingling with the overwhelming music echoing inside the huge hall. Moving through the mass of dancing statues is very dangerous, as their movements are broad and they seem to be actively interested in crashing with the treasure-hunters while ignoring their existence. Every time their solid metal limbs crash into the fleeing characters, bruising skin and cracking bone, they laugh louder. They keep dancing around the group and moving as they flee, filling the gallery outside and cutting off the hallway so the characters are forced to delve deeper towards the main palace to survive.

TEMPTATIONS: As they dance, the silver nobles snap at the table to grab silverware, and when they do, it turns into beautiful gold jewelry set with shiny gems that they messily drape around themselves. During their dance, pieces of the golden jewelry fall to the ground and get stepped on, turning into broken chunks of precious metal. Greedy characters might be tempted to grab the jewelry and the gold chunks, even with the risk of coming into contact with the hard, fast-moving limbs of a silver noble.

RING 5

TERRORS: After closing the massive double doors of the gallery behind them, the treasure-hunters find themselves in a vast hall. The entire floor is a life-like mural of agonizing people covered in blood and injuries, fighting with each other in a dark, desolate field while trying to get to a point in the middle of the room. The ceiling is another mural, depicting impossibly beautiful people resting on golden clouds amidst a clear blue sky. In the middle of the room is a tall, large, and smooth gold pillar, atop which is the Duquisse themself, lounging on a huge sofa, draped in hundreds of furs, fabrics, and treasure, to the point where only their face is visible. It's impossible for a single treasure-hunter to climb or break the pillar to get to them. The Duquisse starts laughing and throwing necklaces and bracelets at the characters that latch onto them when they hit, making the wearer float just a little while twisting their brain. Every new piece of jewelry increases the effect, raising the character a little higher and corrupting their mind a little more. Also, the people on the mural start slowly coming alive, moaning and extending their hands to grab at the treasure-hunters' feet.

TEMPTATIONS: Any treasure-hunter can realize that to get away from the awful ground and rise to the Duquisse's level, they have to amass as much of the jewelry as possible, and that the only way to do that is to violently remove the tightly-latched accessories from their companions. Every time a treasure-hunter gets hit with another piece of jewelry, call for a Ruin roll to see whether their mind becomes more corrupted by the desire to gather material wealth. The reality is that by the time a character amasses enough jewelry to be able to rise to the Duquisse, their personality will have been entirely overwritten and they will forget whatever goals they had as they aimlessly float through the air in a senseless haze of self-satisfaction.



BY PATRICK KNOWLES

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ILLUSTRATIONS BY MINERVA FOX EVERY 90 YEARS, 12 GODS RETURN AS YOUNG PEOPLE.

THEY ARE LOVED. THEY ARE HATED. IN 2 YEARS, THEY ARE ALL DEAD.

IT'S HAPPENING NOW. IT'S HAPPENING AGAIN.

WELCOME TO ONCE AGAIN, WE RETURN (OAWR),

a supplement for *Monsterhearts 2* made to emulate the comic book world of *The Wicked* + *The Divine* (Image Comics; Gillen, McKelvie, Wilson, Cowles). Don't worry if you're not familiar with the comic, you won't be playing in the world of WicDiv; instead, you'll use it as a framework to build your own world of Inspiring Divinity & Teenage Angst. You play to explore the effects of unearned celebrity, the fickle demands of a worshipful public, and the impact of reality-altering powers on the ego. Those themes will juxtapose with ideas of ancient mystery, loss of self-control, & impending mortality. This text only covers changes and additions to the rules of *Monsterhearts 2*—you'll still need Avery Alder's brilliant text to play the game.

WHAT IS THE RECURRENCE?

Every 90 years, 12 gods reincarnate in the bodies of teenagers, melding with the teens' personalities rather than overwriting them. The returned gods are beautiful & brilliant, burning with divine power-power thev can channel into awe-inspiring Miracles & rapturous Performances. Mortals flock to the gods to adore them & denounce them, fetishizing & twisting their every word & deed. Within 2 years they're all dead, burned out by the power inside them-some of them won't even make it that long. No one here gets out alive.

EXAMPLE PURVIEWS:

Animals, Chaos, Darkness, Death, Earth, Fire, Guardian, Health, Ice, Justice, Moon, Plants, Prophecy, Psychopomp, Sky, Sun, War, Water, Any Emotion, Any of the Seven Deadly Sins/Heavenly Virtues, A Color, An Action, An Occupation, or any other concept that fits.

WHO AM I?

You are of the Pantheon, one of the 12 returned gods; you're also a young adult (16 - 22 years old) who has led a completely mundane life until recently. Start by choosing a god (or demigod, folk hero, mythological creature, etc.) from any religion, mythology, or folklore, and write down 2 Purviews that describe the divine traits of your god-the things they are "the god of." These will help to color & define your uses of godly power. A 10-30 minute Wikipedia dive should give you all of the information you need for this game-no one's going to worry about absolute mythological accuracy. Remember that playing a deity from any faith practiced today, especially by players at your table, potentially could lead to problematic moments in play. This holds just as true for any NPC gods who fit these criteria. Take some time during character creation to discuss these issues, specifically what themes or tropes people would like to either play into or avoid.

You look like a perfected version of your former self (however you would define that). Your fashion is always on point, and you have absolute, constant control over your appearance-hair, makeup, outfit, special effects, etc. Think about how you present your personality or mood visually. Does your style mirror another icon or celebrity, or do you follow your own fashion bliss? Do you have a signature look that you always wear, or do you sport a new outfit in every scene? Use the Expanded Look Pick Lists (below) for inspiration.

Underneath all the glitter and magic, however, you're still playing a normal young adult-one with relationships & histories that shape them and fuck them up, just like everyone else. Find ways to ground your character in the mundane world; find times to undercut their divinity by tripping them up with entanglements from their past. Unlike other games of Monsterhearts you may have played, the mundane connections and pressures of your pre-Pantheon probably won't life take center-stage in OAWR; if you want to focus on a relationship or family

tie, you should flag that bond to the rest of the table.

With all of that in mind, *read through the available Skins & look for one that matches up thematically with your god.* If you're having trouble finding a good fit, take a step back from the specific fiction of a Skin to consider the broader archetype that it's trying to evoke—e.g.

The Werewolf is a teen who sometimes turns into a wolf-creature, but more broadly speaking they're someone with anger-control issues who's violent & abusive to those closest to them.

Reading a Skin's Darkest Self often shows you the heart of its archetype. In this way the Ghost skin could certainly represent a death god, but it could also represent a god of wisdom whose advice is always ignored. Maybe you decide that your god feeds off of the attention of mortals, craving their presence as much as they crave hers, so you choose the Hollow.

The Infernal may have sold his soul to the Ancient One; the Mortal might sub themself to another god; the Vampire could be a god of slumber, consuming the dreams of mortals and leaving them drained. Your MC will tell you what Skins are available for your game, but here are some Skins that work particularly well for OAWR: the Ghoul, Hollow, Mortal, Queen, & Witch (Monsterhearts 2); the Wyrm, Cuckoo, & Unicorn (Second Skins by Jackson Tegu); the Bedlam, Devil, Dragon, Leshy, Prometheus, Tengu, & Veela (Skin Deep by Sawyer Rankin); the Glamour (Codex - Glamour 1 by David Rothfeder) & the Harpy (Codex -Emerald by Topher Gerkey).

WHERE ARE WE?

Discuss as a table where your game is set, but by default you're playing in a major modern-day city. This world is exactly like the real one except for the Recurrence, which has always been more of a folktale than historical fact. The most recent Pantheon was 90 years ago and evidence from that, or any previous, Pantheon is sparse at best-not so moving forward, as social media has turned the current Pantheon alobal celebrities. This into Pantheon has gathered together in one place to construct a massive temple to (or headquarters for) themselves-somewhere they can feel safe, adored, and powerful. Crowds from all over the world flock to see the Pantheon in person, since the gods' transcendental Performances don't carry over video.

WHAT'S HAPPENED RECENTLY?

One day, within the last 6 months, you were visited by the Ancient One who explained that they were a god who had traded away their youth & power for an eternity of service. They told you how they had been searching for you-how much they'd missed you. Then they awakened the divinity lying dormant within you; your 2 halves finally whole as you became were reforged in the fires of your apotheosis. Then they told you about the legacy of the Pantheon, revealing the tragedy of your impending and untimely death. The Recurrence was a ritual designed, they said, to keep the lights of Hope & Inspiration alive for humanity; without the Pantheon, the Great Darkness would drown humanity's souls in Banality & Despair. Not all of your "siblings" have awakened yet, but the Ancient One assured you that they'd find the rest of your Pantheon soon. You started giving Performances-in small, intimate venues at first-now to packed clubs, theatres, & stadiums. As your audience's hunger for you grew, so did your addiction to their attention.

Just because you're immortal doesn't mean you're going to live forever. How will you spend your life, knowing you have less than 2 years to live? Is there any point to holding back anymore?

DUETS, COLLABORATIONS, & SUPER GROUPS

Monsterhearts requires everyone at the table to work together, even (especially!) when their characters are at each other's throats; OAWR requires an even closer collaboration, as several of the Special Moves allow you to twist the fiction of the world unexpectedly. Remember that the game is an ongoing conversation and you should always feel free to bring up—and always be open to—questions or concerns about newly introduced or evolved storylines.

Always strive for enthusiastic consent over grudging acceptance, especially when you're handling another player's story. Take some time before beginning play to discuss how to handle these negotiations when they come up. The text of Monsterhearts 2 discusses the use of safety tools at the table (X-Card, Fade To Black, and Breathing); OAWR works best if you also bring the Script Change tools to your table (https://briebeau.itch.io/script-change). With these discussions & tools at your disposal, hopefully you'll be ready to approach the collaborative nature of this game with confidence and excitement.

EXPANDED LOOK PICK LISTS

FASHION (LOOK)

- Robot Rock Revolutionary
- Club Kid Extravaganza
- Electro-Tribalism
- Glam Rock Royalty
- Nouveau Operatica Realness
- Armor-Plated Armani
- None More Goth
- My Chain Hits My Chest
- Thrift Store Savior
- Bondage Couture
- Harajuku Maximalism
- My Crotch Is Down Here
- Bohemian Bombshell
- So Much Prada I'm A Prodigy
- Velvet Underworld

EYES

- Supernova eyes
- Mirrorball eyes
- Animal eyes
- Kaleidoscope eyes
- Your eyes
- Inferno eyes
- Electroclash eyes
- Oubliette eyes
- Button eyes
- Soulgazing eyes
- Sacrificial eyes
- LCD eyes
- Confessional eyes
- Pixelated eyes
- Vinyl eyes

INCARNATION (ORIGIN)

- Raised By A Cult
- Somebody Else's +1
- Begged For It
- Bartered Soul
- The Ultimate Fan
- Born Of The Fire
- Never Meant To Be
- Refusals Unheard
- Terminal Case
- Pantheon Peripheral
- Stole The Gift
- Nothing From Nowhere
- Runs In The Blood
- Truthseeker
- My Truest Self Unleashed



WORK A MIRACLE

When you work a miracle to solve your problems, describe how your miracle manifests and then deal with the consequences. If you choose to describe the consequences, pick 2 below; if you instead allow the MC to choose the consequence, they will only pick 1 to describe:

- Describe who sees a true piece of you—their player (or the MC) will ask you a question that you must answer honestly, in or out of character.
- Describe how you hurt someone you care about – deal them 2 Harm & give them a String on you.
- Describe what draws your god's personality to the surface—they lead you into your Darkest Self.

- Describe how you catch the public's attention—you must make a 7-9 pick off the Trending move.
- Describe how it takes on a life of its own right now—the MC will then write down your miracle as a new Reaction.

Miracles occur when you shape the divine fire inside you to change the world around you. Miracles may be lasting or fleeting, but they are never insignificant or subtle—feel free to describe over-the-top light shows or other special effects when you unleash your miracles. Use your Purviews (the things you are "the god of") to inform your descriptions of, as well as what you do with, your miracles. You can Work A Miracle to solve any problem you might face: use them to build, summon, transform, destroy, empower, banish, travel, control, blight, enlighten, discover, etc. But, inexperienced as you are, twisting the web of fate always comes with a cost—be sure your prize is worth it.

You can always incorporate miracles into the description of other moves without using Work a Miracle. If, for example, you're summoning a flaming sword simply to kick someone's ass, then just roll Lash Out Physically. Work A Miracle is for those times when you want to "solve" an immediate problem all at once, without necessarily fixing anything in the long term.

DROP A SURPRISE COLLABORATION

When you unveil a divine wonder, choose which god you collaborated with to realize your dreams. Then spend Strings you hold on each other—you must both spend the same number. For collaborations between PCs, you may spend 1 to 3 Strings; PC/NPC collaborations cannot rise above the 1 String level. Choose Wonders & Consequences below, as indicated by the number of Strings you both spent—you may each pick different Consequences, but must agree on the same Wonder(s). Finally, work together to describe a flashback or montage that shows your shared creative process.



1 STRING = 1 Wonder, 2 Consequences 2 STRINGS = 2 Wonders, 2 Consequences 3 STRINGS = 2 Wonders, 1 Consequence

WONDERS

- You both gain influence over a new Purview, reflecting your divine collaboration.
- Name the next NPC member of the Pantheon—you may both choose to be present whenever their incarnation occurs.
- Create something transcendent that will long outlive the both of you.
- Summon previous incarnations of your gods, either to help you or to answer your questions—they will fade away by the end of the scene.
- You saw all of this coming in advance—rewind the current scene back to the start & play it out again with only your two gods remembering the way things could have gone.

CONSEQUENCES

- The wonder taxes your divinity—gain the Condition: Lost Purview [one of your Purviews].
- Your god was waiting for this moment & takes over, pushing you into your Darkest Self.
- The wonder takes something vital from you—lower one of your stats by 1.
- You manically ride the highs and lows of your own emotions—take a -1 Ongoing to Keep Your Cool and Trending moves until you next enter or leave your Darkest Self.
- Your collaboration has unforeseen consequences—the MC will tell you what they are.

Nothing gets a fan-base hyped like a surprise collaboration between two of their favorite artists. Use this move to reveal unexpected partnerships, complete long-term projects, bring something new into the world, or save yourself from a dire situation. Working together to build up more Strings will obviously lead to less costly wonders, but even on-the-fly collaborations can be fruitful.

Gaining influence over a new Purview means either delving deeper into your god's mythology or adding new layers to it—let your new Purview color your future godly or miraculous activities. Taking the Condition: Lost Purview [one of your Purviews] (e.g. Lost Purview [Fire]) means you lose all influence over that Purview until you get rid of the Condition (which can be dealt with like any other Condition).

Replaying a scene should be a little quicker the second time around—don't feel the need to repeat every little beat. Ask the collaborating gods what they do differently this time—other characters' actions & rolls should play out the same way until these changes impact them. They may then join the collaborating gods in describing actions different than they took the first time around.

TRENDING

When you speak your truth to the masses—in person, over the airwaves, or online—your message instantly goes viral. Mark experience & roll with a stat appropriate to your message. *On a hit,* they take your message to heart—give your audience a Condition. *On a 10 up,* their attention & feedback rekindles your inner fire—clear a Condition OR gain influence over a new Purview OR do both if you also choose 1 below. *On a 7-9,* choose 1 below:

- They doubt your divinity and their faith wanes — gain the Condition: Lost Purview [one of your Purviews].
- The comments section gets ugly, filled with conflict & backlash—take 1 Harm.
- You become the opening act as another god arrives & steals your spotlight.
- Someone wildly misinterprets your message & will act on it soon.
- They now equate you with your message—gain the same Condition you gave your audience.

The Pantheon has brought real magic back to the world and people everywhere are hungry for any feeling of connection with them. They are the hottest influencers, the most imitated style icons, and the most gossiped-about people in the world. Having such an elevated platform—having the ability to speak directly to so many people and to make them listen—can sometimes feel more like divinity than all the light-shows & miracles. While the rush of connecting with so many fans is addictive, be wary—you never know when a perceived misstep might turn your audience against you. Use Trending if you want to work out your Conditions in public, reclaim ownership of your persona, push back against the haters, or expand upon your personal mythology. Remember to note your audience's new Condition and push on it the next time you interact with any of them.

GIVE A PERFORMANCE

Every session, we will explore one of your god's iconic Performances: those times when you bare your godly soul to an audience & share in their ecstasy. At the start of the session, the MC will choose a theme for the performances—each player will get a chance, at some point in the session, to describe one of their Performances (past or present) that fits the theme. Remember, there is no such thing as "over the top" for a god on stage—think like a superstar diva who has a \$1 million special effects budget and also magic! You may get a question or two from the table afterwards—answer them. Let inspiration wash back & forth between the Performances and normal scenes. Find ways to mirror themes and visuals from the Performances in the rest of the session, or to incorporate elements from earlier in the session into your Performance.

At the end of the session, the MC will ask each player if they brought an element of someone's Performance into the rest of the session (or vice-versa); if you answered yes, mark experience.

EXAMPLE THEMES

- Your first Performance.
- The Performance you wish everyone would stop talking about.
- That time when people got hurt.
- The best Performance you've ever given & how you plan to top it.
- How you took your Darkest Self out on an audience.
- The time you & another god collaborated on a Performance.
- The night you lost yourself to your god's influence & the scene you woke up to.

A Performance is when you throw open the doors to your divine center & bathe a crowd in its light—it is a moment of joyful release for you, a moment of transcendental bliss for them. People dance to silent music, wonder at ephemeral lights, bow under the weight of impossibly pure emotions, weep with existential despair, or faint as they dream of futures brighter than the sun. When the MC announces the theme at the beginning of a session, they'll also tell you when, and in what order, they'll call on you for those scenes. Usually, they'll be structured either before & after bio breaks or as epilogues at the end of the session.

UPDATED MOVES

The following two <u>Monsterhearts</u> Basic Moves work a little differently in OAWR—the additional text is <u>underlined.</u>


PULLING STRINGS

When you spend a String on someone, choose one:

- = Tempt them to do what you want
- = <u>Tempt them to answer a question honestly</u>
- **Give them a Condition**
- = Add 1 to your roll against them
- Add 1 to the harm you deal them

While "answer a question honestly" is technically covered under "Tempt them to do what you want," breaking it out into its own option tends to nudge players towards exploring each other's inner lives. A dramatic moment can always be made a little bit juicier by whispering a painful question in someone's ear while you're stabbing them in the back.

SKIRTING DEATH

When you take your fourth harm, die. To avoid death, erase all harm & choose one:

- **Become your Darkest Self**
- Lose all Strings you have on everybody
- If you instead choose to die, you can accomplish any one impossible thing as you do.

Your gods have all been told they'll definitely die in 2 years, but no one said anything about not kicking it sooner. Between teenage egos, divine power, and a god's voice whispering in your mind, there's no guarantee that your character will make it to the end of the story. Monsterhearts always gives you a way to Skirt Death, but if you think that your character dying would make a better story, then the last line is for you—grab the spotlight and make your death scene mythical & memorable. Your character's impossible accomplishment could change other characters (Skin, god, Darkest Self, moves, etc.), change the world (physics, history, culture, etc.), change what it means to be a god, or anything else you can think of.





PRINCIPLES

Add this to your list of MC Principles:

There's always another secret.

No one's ever really who they say they are when the cameras are rolling. Everyone lies—especially in public—and no one more so than a supposedly flawless "god" who doesn't want the world to see that they're really a scared, confused kid sometimes. Well, no one except maybe the Ancient One, who's been scheming and manipulating Pantheons for millenia. Every truth has a little lie in it. There's always more context. It can always get worse. And there is definitely always another secret.

REACTIONS

Add these to your list of MC Reactions:

Turn the camera on them.

One of the dangers of living your life in front of the camera is that, eventually, some of your most embarrassing or painful moments will be immortalized online. Have someone whip out a camera-phone at the worst possible moment and trigger the Trending move. Mob them with the press/their fans/angry protesters and see how they react. Twist their message with critics & pundits-take their message too far with heretics & zealots.

Bring back a living miracle or wonder.

Sometimes the gods spin their power out into new creations—often through the Work A Miracle or Drop A Surprise Collaboration moves. These little divinities wander the world, changing it and being changed by it. Consider how the god's original working could be warped or twisted over time—how it might surprise even its creator when it returns. Think about times when NPC gods may have created living workings, too. This is only one of your Reactions though, so don't reach for it too often; let it fade into the background when its time has passed.

Reveal the past to re-contextualize the present.

If those who forget the past are doomed to repeat it, then the gods are doomed indeed: most details of past Recurrences have been lost to the mists of time or to the Ancient One's obfuscations. Reveal vignettes from past Pantheons, in or out of character, when they would illustrate a danger the gods face or when they would cast the present in a different emotional light. Do the same thing on a more personal scale by inviting the players to describe flashbacks from their characters' lives before the Pantheon.

MAKING THE WORLD

If you have a strong sense of where your game should be set, then go with that; if you're less sure—or want to open the decision up to the table—there is a Setting playbook included. You can fill out the playbook yourself as part of your pre-game prep or with your players after character creation. If you want to do both character creation and the Setting playbook all in one session, you should plan for it to be a "Session Zero" with little to no play at the end.



PLAYING THE ANCIENT ONE

The Ancient One has been around for millenia, so try to take the long view when thinking about their plans. *Think carefully about what you want them to represent—whatever it is, they should embody everything that the Pantheon aren't.*

The gods are doomed to die, but your Ancient One has found the trick to true immortality. The Pantheon barely understands their purpose, but your Ancient One was there when the Recurrence began (or claims they were, at least). Good or evil, they're always conniving; kind or cruel, they're always looking down on the young ones.

Keep the Ancient One's motivations obscure—they should never be working completely for or against the Pantheon. They have some long-term plan for the Recurrence and the current Pantheon are just so many more tools, as expendable as their predecessors. Keep the details of the Ancient One's plans flexible, especially in the first few sessions, so that you can react to the players' plans.

As the PCs come to represent something, find ways for your Ancient One to embody the opposite. Inflict the consequences of the Ancient One's plans on your NPC gods before turning them on the players.

MAKING NPC GODS

An easy way to flesh out your NPC gods is to base them on real-world musicians. Think about music that's inspiring you right now and build your own musical Pantheon. You'll have plenty of pictures to choose from, a public persona to emulate, and hopefully a few songs or help embody videos to them in everyone's minds. NPC gods should be attention-hungry & over-the-top, just like the PCs-after all, you deserve some of the melodramatic fun too, right? Your gods should claw for every scrap of fictional "spotlight" they can, but they shouldn't divert too much of the table's spotlight ("screen time" for the players) away from the PCs. Your gods should shine bright, but only so that the players' gods can shine brighter.

BEING YOUR PLAYERS' FAN-THEON

OAWR is a game about celebrity & fandom, so *let your obsessions show.* Make playlists, make pinterest boards, research real-world locations they might go to on Google Earth, mimic ancient myths beat-for-beat, design graphics or iconography, make snarky recaps of previous sessions—whatever form of creative prep-work gets you excited.

Find ways to show your players that you're a die-hard member of their fan-theon and they'll start sharing their obsessions with you. Share some inspirational material at least once between each session to maintain maximum hype levels.

MUSIC IN GAMES

Music is an endless well of inspiration, especially in OAWR, which draws many of its tropes from pop music mythology. Take this game as an opportunity to explore and deepen your relationship with music.

Make short playlists to represent your NPCs, find a way turn a music video into a scene frame, make discovering new music into a part of your session prep, start a collaborative playlist and invite your players to add their own inspirations to it, try listening to a playlist through your headphones while you MC—keep experimenting and keep sharing the results with your group.

Incorporating background music into online gaming can be challenging, but try this approach: *instead of planning a whole evening's worth of music, restrict yourself to just a handful of especially evocative songs.* Have links to the songs ready and share 1 or 2 of them before each bio break—make sure you add a few minutes to your breaks to account for the music, more if you tell your players you want them to watch a particular video rather than just playing it in the background.

Once they get used to the idea, your players will probably be eager to add their own songs to the growing soundtrack; after the first session or two, limit yourself to only 1 or 2 songs for the whole session and invite your players to share their own songs.

THANKS TO THE FOLLOWING FOLKS FOR HELPING BRING OAWR TO LIFE:

Avery Alder - *Monsterhearts 2* Whitney Beltran, Marissa Kelly, Sarah Richardson - *Bluebeard's Bride* Jason Cordova - *The Between* Fraser Simons - *The Veil/Never Knows Best*

Playtesters: Lauren McManamon, Alex McManamon, Ryan McNeil, David Rothfeder, Barry Cook, Sarah Jacobson, Chris Newton, Sawyer Rankin, Leandro Pondoc, Joshua Gilbreath

Tyler Lominack, Lowell Francis, Rich Rogers, Bobby Holtzclaw





In all cases, choose as many as apply

THE CITY: (NAME)

Our game takes place in or near a major city, real or imagined. What do we call it?

As a group, discuss the City and reach a consensus as to what elements drew the Pantheon to the City.

- Prophecies & Predictions
- Tech Innovations
- Music Scene
- College Town
- = A Labyrinthine Underground

- Movie Studios
- Fashion District
- Ancient History/Wonders
- Museums & Monuments
- (Write your own)

GATHERING PLACE: (NAME)

The Pantheon also has a communal gathering place—this place of power could be a building, complex, or location. It can be newly built or repurposed. What do we call this place? Where is it?

After you make your picks, Paint the Scene about the miraculous features of the Pantheon building—at least one per player.

- Mobile, with a [predictable/ unpredictable] path
- Visibly in the City, but closed to the public
- Hidden location outside the City

- Reachable only via a Pilgrimage
- Admission for those who can "pay"
- A public space
- = (Write your own)

What is the place of news media/social media in our game? Who are our connections in the media?

THE RECURRENCE:

Before the beginning of this Pantheon, the Recurrence was:

- Lost to history
- An urban legend/historical oddity
- A conspiracy theory/cult

And now that it's here, the Recurrence is:

- Strangely overlooked
- A pop-culture Mecca
- Breaking new grounds in para-scientific research
- A geyser of artistic inspiration

- Scheduled & anticipated
- Popularized in fiction/media
- (Write your own)
- Morally irresponsible/spiritually dangerous
- Changing the way people see the world
- A marketing goldmine
- (Write your own)

THEMES & SUBJECT MATTER:

What are some cultural/moral/coming of age themes that we'd like to either explore or avoid in our game?

Anyone should feel free to check a theme, describing what intrigues them about the theme. Anyone should feel free to strikethrough a theme, even if another player has already checked it. If you'd like to talk about what aspects of that theme turn you off, please do, but don't feel obliged. We will save time to talk about themes that fall into a grey area for anyone.

The first 4 items are the default themes of Monsterhearts & will definitely be included to some degree.

- = Sexuality & Infatuation
- = Cruelty & Bullying
- = Violence & Fear
- **=** Confusion & Mystery
- Alcohol/drug abuse
- Toxic fandom
- Social media fame
- The good we leave behind
- Mental illness/depression
- Racial inequality & racism
- Sexualism, "wrong" attraction, sexual shame

- Separation & connection through technology
- Exploring/discovering gender
- Impending mortality
- Violence from adults
- The evil we leave in our wake
- Suicidal thoughts or actions
- Gender inequality & sexism
- Toxic/violent relationships
- Romantic/sexual relationships between adults & teens
- = (Write your own)

The Mutha

AN APOCALYPSE WORLD PLAYBOOK BY SAWYER RANKIN ILLUSTRATION BY AMANDA LEE FRANCK

MODELS: IZZIE CONTAGIOUS, D'MANDA DONATION, AND TIPSY BUBBLES CHECK OUT KIKIQUEENS.ORG AND SUPPORT CHICAGO-AREA LGBTQ+ NON-PROFITS!

— The House —

By default you have a place of residence and about 10-15 wayward souls under your care. If the Hardholder is in play, maybe your place is in their hold. If someone has a gang, maybe they protect your place for some cool reason.

House Name (underline 1)

Royale – Labeija – Ninja – O'Hara – Davenport Bomb – Xtravaganza – Airline – Mizrahi Ornacia – Make your own

Who's in your House (choose 1or 2)

Your blood kin – Your drag children – Your precious society dregs – Your bohemian freaks Your fashion acolytes – Your misunderstood geniuses

What does your House bring the locals (choose one or two)

Intense, tortured art – Glamorous renditions of golden age songs – Hope for the future – Scenes of such opulence pain can be forgotten – Protection from the Psychic Maelstrom – Nothing

Your House has several individuals, but only a handful you can really rely on. Choose 1-4 of the following and name them. If you have 4 total, tell the MC to make at least one an Ally. She'll know what you mean.

- O My blood child, young in body but loyal of heart
- O My exotic pet, fierce and loving but primal in nature
- O My diva drag child, itching to prove themselves
- O My troubled genius, forever striving for the stars
- O My brash truth teller, always throwing shade
- O My viper, willing to kill anyone I ask
- O My duplicitous waif, skilled at weaving stories
- O My weirdling riff-raff, discarded by today's society
- O My good-natured freak, who sees beauty in anything
- O My lost one, communicating by proxy while gone
- O My (write your own)

Introducing The Mutha-

They needed you before it went to shit. They need you now more than ever.

Some people crumple and fold before the terror. Fuck them, hunty. It's the beautiful few you care about, the bright souls shining all glitz and glam in the grime that you collect. A family of outliers in a world looking to crush them.

Don't worry, love. Mutha has arrived.



- Echidna's Wrath -

When someone kills a described member of your House, take +1 ongoing to all rolls to see that person brought low or killed, MC discretion. When the last described member of your House dies, your life immediately becomes Untenable. If you do not change playbooks, name and apply descriptors to 1-4 new House members.

-Barter -----

At the beginning of the session, spend 1 or 2 barter for your lifestyle. If you can't or won't, tell the MC and answer her questions.

If you need jingle during a session, tell the MC you'd like to work a gig. Your gigs:

- Perform for a public audience.
- Perform for a private audience.
- Appear at the side of a wealthy NPC.
- Others, as you negotiate them.

As a one-time expenditure, and very subject to availability, 1-barter might count for: a night in high luxury & company; any weapon, gear or fashion not valuable or hi-tech; repair of a piece of hi-tech gear; a session's hire of a violent individual as bodyguard; the material costs for crash resuscitation by a medic; a few sessions' tribute to a warlord; a few sessions' maintenance and repairs for a hi-performance vehicle well-used; bribes, fees, and gifts sufficient to get you into almost anyone's presence.

For better stuff, you should expect to make particular arrangements. You can't just wander around the commons of some hardhold with oddments ajangle and expect to find hi-tech or luxe eternal.

- CREATING A MUTHA-

To create your mutha, choose name, look, stats, moves, gear, and Hx.

— Name ————

Lasseindra, Inxi, Pepper, Bunni, Amber, Dolly, Avril, James, Saint, Kallist, Tyrene, Helena, Willie, Maximum, Okkur, Mori, Juli, September, Goldie

-- Stats ------

- O Cool +1 Hard 0 Hot +1 Sharp +2 Weird -1
- O Cool +2 Hard -2 Hot 0 Sharp +2 Weird 0
- O Cool -2 Hard -1 Hot +2 Sharp +2 Weird +1
- O Cool -1 Hard +1 Hot +1 Sharp +2 Weird 0

- Moves -

You get all the basic moves. Choose 3 Mutha moves.

You can use all the battle moves, but when you get a chance, look up *keeping an eye out, stand overwatch, and seize by force* (especially the *defend someone* variant).

---- HX ------

Everyone introduces their character by name, look, and outlook. Take your turn.

List the other characters' names.

Go around again for Hx. On your turn ask everyone the following:

Are you a threat to me and mine?

If they answer yes, Hx + 3 - you're watching. If they answer no, Hx + 1 - you got their backs. If they answer anything else but yes or no, Hx - 2 what even is this?

On the others' turns, answer their questions as you'd like.

- Looks -----

Woman, man, ambiguous, transgressing

Luxe fashion, artistic fashion, vintage fashion, opulent fashion, fashion more for show than the environment, no-nonsense fashion

Painted face, glowing face, harsh face, weathered face, smooth face, stunning face, beaten for the gods

Tinted eyes, fiery eyes, merciless eyes, squinting eyes, judgmental eyes, appraising eyes, golden eyes

Glamorous hands, calloused hands, fine hands, veiny hands, skeletal hands, gloved hands, porcelain hands

Glamorous body, voluptuous body, hard femme body, dynamite masc body, gender fuck body, statuesque body

🗕 Gear -

2 Diva weapons

Fashion worth 1-Armor at your discretion 4-barter

If there is no Skinner in play, look at the Luxe gear list and take something from it.

- Diva Weapons

- O Pearl-handled straight razor (2-harm hand valuable)
- O Precious metal chain (2-harm hand area valuable)
- O Gem-encrusted eye-gougers *jeweled rings not* removed in a fight (3-harm intimate valuable)
- Silk-stringed shortbow (2-harm close reload valuable)
- O Heirloom sleeve pistol(2-harm close loud reload valuable)
- O Lizard leather garrote (D-harm [air] intimate valuable)

— Mop It Up -

New Brainer Gear

- O Void Restraints (worn hi-tech valuable) Put these on someone else (or yourself) to use them as an antenna for **augury.**
- O Symbiote (implanted alive hi-tech) A funny little friend in your blood; if anyone would gain Hold on you they get one less, minimum 1.
- O Meridian Tattoos (implanted hi-tech valuable) These tattoos amplify your mind; you may do (Psi)-Harm or S-Harm when using a Brainer move.
- O Crystal Hallucinogens (applied hi-tech valuable)

Crystals that exude smoke when different liquids are dropped on them; inhale for +1 Weird forward.

New Luxe Gear

- O Artful Banners (tag valuable) If your heraldry invokes your legend get an additional Hold on Skinner moves.
- O Clean Drugs (applied valuable) Bring these out to give any scene +party.

- O Golden Age Fashion (worn valuable)
- O Friendship Charms (worn valuable) You have 4 charms; when worn by anyone else you may roll to Help them at a distance.

— Mutha Moves —

- O **Glamazon Realness:** You know your body, darling. You move like the silk you wear! When wearing normal fashion, treat it as being 1-Armor armor. When you're dolled up in valuable fashion, it counts as 2-Armor. If you're wearing actual armor, stick with that rating.
- O Not Without My Daughters: When you are in battle, anyone you deem an ally takes +1 Armor forward which stacks with all types of armor sources, max 3-Armor.
- OPULENCE: When fighting with a weapon that has the +valuable tag, you may use +Sharp instead of +Hard to do single combat and seize by force.
- That's My Jush: Look at the following list and pick one. It's yours now & forever, death do you part.
 - A Battlebabe custom weapon
 - A single piece of Brainer gear
 - A single piece of Luxe gear
- O **Purse First:** You may Help and Interfere with session begin moves. If someone gets a 10+ because of you, mark xp. If someone gets a miss because of you, they mark xp.
- Yass, Kween: When the MC would choose your Highlight for the session tell them "Hold up, henny, I got this!" (or something shady) and choose it for yourself.
- O **Clock the Mug:** When you read a person you can always ask "What does your character intend to do?" for free.
- O **Reading is Fundamental:** Get Sharp +1 (Max Sharp +3).





A GAME OF PUTTING ON M A K E U P TOGETHER ONLINE

> By Gerrit Reininghaus Illustration by Cecilia Ferri

THIS IS A LAOG (A LIVE ACTION ONLINE GAME) of 90 minutes

maximum, including time for learning the game and debriefing afterwards). *It is for 1 to 4 players, though 2 is optimal.*

YOU PLAY PEOPLE WHO GO OUT TOGETHER AND PUT MAKEUP ON FOR THAT PURPOSE. To play this game, you as players will actually put makeup on. So, you'll need some mascara, lipstick, rouge, etc., and possibly materials to remove the makeup afterwards.

Being a laog, this means players play in front of a video camera, connected through a video call. We stay in-character and impersonate our characters with our full bodies the entire time we play. This mostly means using mimics, facial expressions, and voice.

The side chat is used for safety while playing. Before you begin, discuss which topics you want to exclude from play. Safety, tone, and taste are all legitimate reasons to exclude a particular topic.

Although you will make an effort to do great makeup, this is not about perfection and nobody will judge you on your skills. This game is about celebrating each other for your ideas and who you are. Your characters are together, putting on makeup for an important event. You have been to a similar event together before. Having great makeup is important for you at the event, either because it's what others expect or it's important for your self-expression or self-confidence. You are each skilled in putting on makeup and experts in your field.

FOR SETUP, CHOOSE ELEMENTS FROM THE TABLE BELOW OR ROLL:

D 6	EVENT	RELATIONSHIP	MAKEUP STYLE	TENSION
1	Nightlife	Formal rivals	Extravaganza	Last chance
2	TV show	Lovers	Elegant	Breakthrough
3	Theatre	Best Friends Forever	Flashy	Blossoming intimacy
q	Escort	Siblings	Seductive	Old wounds
5	Band gig	Mentor / Mentee	Shocking	Us vs the world
6	Societal event	Crew members	Transgressive	The big coup

THE EVENT is where you are going.

THE RELATIONSHIP

is between you and the other characters. (*For more than 2 players, pick several.*)

YOUR MAKEUP STYLE

can be individual or inform the general nature of your role at the event.

THE TENSION

brings in the tone and a topic to discuss.

Discuss WHAT EACH OF THE ELEMENTS MEANS IN YOUR SET-UP. For example, is it the *Last chance* for the ensemble of your theatre before the production is shutdown, or is it the *Last chance* for one of you before the director makes a decision about who will play the black swan? What does the makeup style you are aiming for tell you about the event you are going to?

At this point, don't define your characters too rigidly. Relationship and Tension should suggest the setting in broad terms. Everything will be defined more precisely during character creation.

Character creation

FOR YOUR CHARACTER:

- Your favourite colour is your name.
- Choose a nickname.
- Come up with a quick idea of your background (e.g. profession, heritage, gender, class, and so forth)
- What about you impresses others most when at an event like the one you are going to?
- What you are most afraid could go wrong at the event?
- What does putting on makeup mean to you?

INTRODUCE YOUR CHARACTERS TO EACH OTHER. IN A SECOND ROUND, TELL EACH OTHER WHAT YOU ENVY AND/OR ADMIRE ABOUT EACH OTHER.

Play Structure

After character creation, confirm everyone is ready to start playing. If so, switch your cameras and mics off and take a 2-minute break. When you switch your camera and mic on again, you are in-character until the end of the actual play time.

ACTUAL PLAY TIME

Actual play lasts a maximum of 40 minutes. Note the stop time before you begin actual play.

The actual play time can also end when someone says: "I'm nearly done. Let's get our beautiful selves out there!" At that point, everyone has 2 more minutes to finish things up. Finish the game in this manner when you feel a climax has been reached and your emotional journeys have been long enough. An abrupt ending is often the best way to conclude the story. There is no need to hesitate when you feel the time is right to end the game.

IN PLAY

Having up to 40 minutes of play means you have plenty of time to do your makeup. You can take breaks, if needed, by leaving your camera on while the other players continue. You can also include test items from your wardrobe (like a shirt, a tie, a hat, etc.).

Have your camera locked on you most of the time and use your screen as a mirror. Take care that you have enough light for doing so. In most video call software, you can lock onto somebody by clicking on the thumbnail. Change the view to other players to be able to appreciate their makeup efforts when necessary.

Check the Guides & Prompts section for what you can do when running out of ideas. Ideally, you have a print-out of them available.

The side chat of your video call shall be visible all the time to everybody in the game and is used for out-of-character discussions, such as safety questions, ret-conning established facts, etc.

TIME IS OVER

When play is over, check-out in-character: you will now go to the event. It's time to wish each other luck, say farewell, or whatever feels appropriate from what you have established in the fiction.

Everyone switches off their cameras and mutes themselves for 2 minutes. Stretch for a moment, mentally leave your character. When you switch your camera on again, you are out-of-character.

Guides & Prompts

ESTABLISH FACTS

As this is a laog, you won't have many chances in play to confirm your story ideas with others. Just go ahead and establish a lot of facts. Think especially about the following:

- What happened last time you went to such an event.
- *How you remember the first time you got to know each other.*
- *How you remember the first time you put on makeup together.*
- Who you will meet at the event.
- What will happen at the event to be feared / excited about / bored about?
- *What you dream will happen.*

If you don't feel comfortable with something someone brought in, use the side chat of your video call to tell other players what you want to see changed. We continue play as if that fact was never established.

EMOTIONAL JOURNEY

When doing makeup together, imagine that everything that has happened leading to this moment, as well as whatever the future holds, is going through your mind. These minutes are an emotional journey and lead to greater-than-life moments between you, your makeup collaborators, and the mirror.

Think about which emotions could be part of your emotional journey while doing makeup and how to express them to the other players. For example:

Intimate	Jealous
Excited	Powerful
Scared	Inadequate
Sexy	Proud

TALK MAKEUP

Talking about putting on makeup together is an important part of the activity. Use any opportunity you find. We are all experts of makeup while in-character and treat each other as such. While in play, you can use these prompts to talk about makeup:

- Make a compliment about someone's makeup efforts.
- *Mark for an opinion about a makeup decision.*
- Complain that it's just not turning out the way you want it.
- *Give yourself a kiss or smile through the mirror / webcam.*
- *Pro-actively help someone with an idea for their makeup.*
- Celebrate a makeup tool you are using.

SOLO PLAY

If you play solo, your mirror / webcam is a great conversation partner. Talk to past selves, to your better self, to your arch-enemy, or your parent. There is a lot to discuss without anyone physically present.

Take a selfie. Compliment and celebrate each other for your makeup. If you dare, post the selfie to your social media and compliment and celebrate each other on social media right now.

USE THE HASHTAG #MAKEUPMOMENTSLAOG

Go around the table to reflect on your play experience. Take one round asking yourself what felt familiar compared to real life, and one round asking yourself what felt different. What does makeup mean to you?

If you are interested in discussing more about the game, think about what you would like to see next time. Exchange ideas and tell the world afterwards.

Treasured Guests of the Fae

New occupations, backgrounds, drives and rituals.

Throne of the Forest Queen

A fairy tale-inspired incursion without a happily-ever-after.

TROPHY

DAVID MORRISON

Treasured Guests of the Fae

The following are new options for treasure-hunters for use with the Incursion *Throne of the Forest Queen*, or any other session of Trophy.

OCCUPATIONS

Artist (skilled in expression, observation, symbols)

Child (skilled in innocence, wonder, smallness)

Goatherd (skilled in beasts, climbing, alertness)

Spouse-to-Be (skilled in charm, innocence, curiosity)

Trickster (skilled in deception, escaping, legerdemain)

BACKGROUNDS

Byronic Hero (skilled in brooding)

Frightened Runaway (skilled in escaping)

Lured Innocent (skilled in following)

Stouthearted Quester (skilled in determination)

DRIVES

Seek a cure for your ailing mother in Muckling

Escape your awful family ties in Deverain

Break the geas placed by the Witch of Nevask



Glamour (appear more charming and attractive)

Hospitality (maintain peace while you share food & drink)

Messenger (send a message via a woodlands creature)

Sleep (send a person or animal into a deep slumber)

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INCURSION Throne of the Forest Queen

Content warning: This incursion explores themes including hunting and body image issues, and may feature sexual content.

The constant drizzle that has accompanied you through the tangled woods abates as you come into a clearing, golden sunlight streaming down. The stink of mud and leaf mold is cut through with a cleaner scent of pine and crisp mornings. A stag at the edge of the clearing casts a lazy glance at you before trotting further into the wood, its flashing tail an invitation to follow. You have reached the Queensweald, rumored home to salvation, inspiration, cures to fantastical diseases, and the stuff that dreams are made of. Only the stout of heart enter the realm of the Forest Queen; fewer still return.

Why then, if her favor is so hard to claim, do so many mortals seek it? Quite simply, it has value beyond gold. The Queen's power is nearly limitless. She controls the fae court of the forest, and can make the dreams of mortals into reality if she so chooses. For so long as people desire the impossible, they will venture in search of her.

THEME

Glamour

MOMENTS

- ♦ A ring of mushrooms in improbably lush grass, a sweet scent in the air, and the lazy drone of flies.
- The moon hangs low in the sky; twisted shadows grasp for you as wolves howl in the distance.
- ♦ A perfectly ripe green apple with red blush drops to the floor, a single bite taken out of it.

- ♦ A light sunshower breaks out, the soft rain pleasant against your skin, a rainbow forming ahead.
- Wind gently whispering through reeds, fog rising from the marsh, odd lights moving in the distance.
- Warm, dry fingers in the small of your back, the scent of pine, a loving whisper.
- Thundering waters drowning out speech, cool spray in your face, treacherous rocks below.
- Solution Flower petals brushing your lips, the sun warming your hair, the throb of desire.
- ♦ The rush of wind past your ears, claws sinking into flesh, thick copper
- blood on your tongue.
- ♦ A pretty cottage in the woods—currently empty—but warm, welcoming, and suffused with the scent of fresh baked bread.

CONDITIONS

- \diamond You are transfixed by the sheer beauty of life.
- ♦ Little antler nubbins start growing from your forehead.
- \diamond Benign forest creatures flock to you, clumsily assisting with basic tasks and
- following you everywhere.
- ♦ Food from outside the forest tastes like bitter ashes, and water is brackish.
- ♦ Your clothes grow itchy; you long to tear them off and bare yourself to the forest.
- ♦ Your senses sharpen, scenting prey, and you long to chase and hunt and devour.
- Flowers appear in your hair and cannot be removed; if you cut them out, you bleed and they regrow.
- Slowly but surely your features are becoming someone's ideal of beauty. What flaws are corrected?
- ♦ You realize a memory you once held precious is trivial. Forget it.
- ✓ ◇ For just a moment, you cannot think how many days have passed, or when last you slept.
 - Something about one of your companions appearance repulses you. What is it?
 - The touch of iron on your skin burns. You discard any iron on your person, and will not willingly acquire more.

♦ Every time you try to lie, you feel your heart being crushed.

♦ If you are given a gift, you must give something of value to you in return.

♦ You can hear music in the air, and it compels you to dance.

RING 1

TERRORS: A winsome young goatherd sits on a rock in a forest clearing, crying. He beseeches the party to look for his three missing goats. The rest of his herd watch the party with undisguised caprine disdain. As the party searches for the missing goats, they will come across three other individuals in need: a fox with its leg caught in a poacher's trap, an old woman whose sackful of honeypots has been stolen by ruffians, and two lovers who have been separated by a collapsing bridge. Unless the party go in search of the bandits, they are unlikely to encounter violence, but assisting those in need should provide challenges. Perhaps they will be rewarded for their kindness further in the forest?

Questions to ask the treasure-hunters:

- What in particular makes you empathize with this person's plight?
- What do you hope for their future, and how does this mirror your own dreams?

TEMPTATIONS: If the goats are returned, the goatherd will offer the party rewards from his meager possessions: a well-worn set of panpipes, a sturdy goathorn comb, and a perfectly ripe green apple with red blush. He will show the party a hidden goat trail leading further into the forest, and offer warnings against the wiles of the fae, while telling of the great boons previous seekers have gained. The apple is faerie food; it is delicious, and eating it will provoke a Ruin check. The panpipes and comb are mundane, but if a treasure-hunter truly believes using it will have some mystical effect, it may amuse the forest to allow the item to be the focus of a Ritual.

- Why do you think you will succeed where others have failed?
- Why do you help those who are in need?

RING 2

TERRORS: As the party presses further into the Queensweald, the landscape becomes more dramatic and difficult to traverse. There are alpine hills rising into mountains that must be scaled. Large, fast-flowing rivers to be forded. Dense, dark forest in which they become turned around and lose their direction. These varied terrains meld into one another with little rational explanation. Any attempt to examine their backtrail will be confusing and make no logical sense. They seem to be navigating on dream-logic. They will be stalked and hunted by wild beasts—bears, boars, wolves—all larger, sleeker, and smarter than they have any right to be. The world is full of primal, deadly beauty.

Questions:

- What are you really running from?
- What was standing in your way back home, and how does this obstacle remind you of it?
- What do you fear the most?

TEMPTATIONS: The landscape is more beautiful than anything the party has seen before. Let them be warmed by the sun, never dimmed by cloud. Refresh them with cool mountain waters. And if they hunt any creatures, or forage for berries and mushrooms, describe just how delicious everything tastes, though killing a majestic deer or eating the strange, vibrant plant-life will surely require a Ruin roll. The forest may be trying to kill them, but if they can survive it they will see it is truly a paradise. For each obstacle they overcome, show them they are on the right path—distant elf-song, a plume of hearthsmoke rising above the trees, a secure cave to rest the night. Reward them with moments of peace and beauty.

- What does the wilderness provide that you were lacking at home?
- What was the most beautiful place you had seen before, and how is the landscape here more beautiful?
- What here gives you comfort?
- What tells you that you are on the right path?

RING 3

TERRORS: As the sun begins to set, the party will reach a forest glade, strewn about with faerie-lights and glow-worms, giving it a festive air. The inhabitants of the glade—playful fauns, willowy dryads, minor lords and ladies of faerie—will invite the party to a banquet. Refusing would be most rude. The scent of the food is intoxicating, its taste better, with all their favorite dishes laid out for them; the heady wine and sweet mead provide the soft warmth of drunkenness, with none of the ravages of excess. Their hosts are beautiful and attentive, catering to the whims of their guest without question or expectation of payment. They will ask only for tales of their past, and laugh at how foolish life is outside the forest. If the treasure-hunters wish to eat their own supplies rather than the faerie-food, their hosts will demand it be shared. There will not be enough, and it will not last. Again, eating the faerie-food will require a Ruin check. The fae are all monstrosities of the forest, and should be treated accordingly. They will take unkindly to any disrespect.

Questions:

- You spy your favorite food on the table. What is it?
- What is the most welcoming thing about this glade?
- Despite the beauty and grace of your hosts, what unnerves you about them?
- What about your appearance do you wish were more like your hosts?

TEMPTATIONS: The fae host are universally alluring, and bedecked in fine silks and glimmering jewels. The cutlery is made of precious metals, extravagantly sculpted, and even the plates carved of rare woods. Exquisite artworks hang from trees, like a sylvan gallery. If anyone shows interest in an item—or a person—offer it as a gift. Please. Insist. They simply must take it. These are, after all, mere baubles compared to what can be offered to them by the Queen. And there is not far to travel. They will give directions to the Queen's palace, and warn of the need to traverse the domain of the Horned Knight. If anyone has made a particular impression on one of the host, explain how they may extract a boon from the Knight if they manage to capture him in his own hunt.

- What is your most treasured possession? What here would you trade it for?
- Who here fills you with desire? Who do they remind you of?
- What tale do you tell the fae to justify your search for the Forest Queen?

RING 4

TERRORS: The last obstacle between the party and the Queen's domain is the territory of the Horned Knight, a powerful, wild, and gorgeous monstrosity. The party will see him stalking the woods, walking like a man, crowned in antlers, entirely naked. He will smile lovingly as he chases them down with his wild hunt of twisted goblins and warped beasts. Those he catches will be gently embraced before being dismembered and eaten, or turned into hunting-beasts themselves. Those quick or crafty enough to evade him will earn his respect, and passage to the Queen's court.

Questions:

- How do you see the features of the one you love the most in the Knight?
- The Knight's musk stirs lustful thoughts. How does he smell to you?
- Which of the hunting beasts terrifies you the most? How do you know it was once human?

TEMPTATIONS: The luscious pelts of the hunting beasts would make fine trophies for those able to best and skin them. If a treasure-hunter does so, ask them how they begin to take on aspects of the pelts they wear. Ask them to describe what one wish they would ask of the Horned Knight if they were able to catch him. If they try, be prepared to describe the exquisite release as his antlers pierce their flesh and leave them dying on the forest floor. Give a cunning treasure-hunter who comes up with a plan to catch the King everything they ask for and more besides—except an exit from the forest.

- What would you ask of the Knight if you were able to catch him?
- Have you ever killed before? Who? What?
- How does it feel to have the powerful at your mercy?

RING 5

TERRORS: The party finally reach their destination, the court of the Queen. She will graciously extend her invitation to them, indefinitely. Abusing her hospitality—for example, by trying to leave early—will result in gradual but inescapable punishment. The Queen is no mere monstrosity; monstrosities serve her. While she is personable and curious of mortals, she will brook no disrespect. Her wrath is swift, sudden, and creative. Attempts to oppose her desires are all but doomed to failure. She wishes to bestow her love and gifts upon the greatest of the petitioners, and will not hesitate to play the treasurehunters against one another until only one remains worthy. Only one can be the greatest, after all.

Questions:

- Why are you better than your compatriots, more deserving of the Queen's favor?
- How far will you go to prove your superiority?
- What can you give the Queen no one else can?
- What makes you realize you will never leave here, alive or dead?

TEMPTATIONS: In the center of a large clearing, there is a lake and, despite the soft warmth of the sun, a palace made of ice rises from the center of it. The palace is exquisite, and glitters in the sunlight like diamonds. It is filled with material wealth beyond the dreams of mortals. The Queen will offer great prizes for those who entertain her in contests of skill, wits, and valor. It is within her power to grant the party literally anything they may wish, and any such wishes are granted generously though not necessarily without consequence.

- What do you really want from the Queen, more than anything else?
- Does your Drive really matter anymore?
- How could you serve in the Queen's court?
- What about the Queen makes you love her?

THREE DOZEN DANGEROUS FASHON RENDS

A crowdsourced miscellany

- ONE -

1) The third eye plague decimated the population. But now that survivors, including the crown prince, are seen wearing the third eye with pride, some people can't stop trying to get sick.

2) The gentlefolk of the Merchant Array tinkle like teacups, their backs upright, their lips stiff, their cheeks lacquered and luminous. The effect is achieved primarily through mirrors silvered in tincture of gorgon's hair, though more than one noble is known to carry a living eye, clouded by seaglass and shuttered in silver. Beauty so statuesque renders one quite constrained and fragile. But for those eager to demonstrate, they can pay their lessers to manage such earthly concerns as movement that's rather the point.

3) Young adults across the globe have started suturing their lips against their faces. When reached for comment, the originator of the fad was quoted saying...

4) Entwining the quills of the desert porcupine into the hair of a loved one is a sign of truest devotion among the rebellious youth. The neurotoxin that paralyzes the lungs is seen as a way to represent "the one who takes your breath away."

5) These days it is quite the done thing at the Imperial Court for venomous snakes, scorpions, and spiders to be worn about the person as a signifier of their wearer's unflappable sangfroid. Some have filigree cages, while the more daring wear simple chains to prevent escape. The infighting at court has gotten especially biting.

6) This season's hottest high-society accessory: a live, albino stoat carried in a handbag! Coincidentally, veterinarians are issuing warnings about a virulent new strain of Mustelid Flu...

– TWO –

1) The Yardstick[™] brand and the style named for it enjoyed a brief but intense popularity. The spike-heeled flipflops caused many sprained ankles, and the brilliantly glowing underwear inflicted chemical burns, but the most common injury was to the wearer's pride. Only the extremely attractive could look good in Yardstick; everyone else looked utterly ridiculous.

2) WASHINGTON DC—The FDA has issued an involuntary recall of Moonlight Cosmetics' popular fragrance NightmuskTM. In a written response to the recall order, the makeup giant states, "While we send our condolences to the victims, we are certain that the courts will find no causal relationship between wearing NightmuskTM and the recent increase in werewolf attacks."

3) Mycelian Grass from the oceans of Mora is very much like human hair in texture and feel, but it comes in a variant of vibrant colours. Now there are wigs, hair extensions, fake beards, and even chest hair made from it. The slightly higher incidence of paranoia and hallucinations experienced by wearers of those products is nothing but a statistical glitch.

4) The drab Mourning Beetle's carapace is the key ingredient in a wildly popular shade of iridescent blue. The preparation method is a fiercely guarded secret, but some imitators' products are nearly identical, albeit with much higher chance of toxicity when exposed to sunlight.

5) The workers and the slum dwellers are plotting revolution, and those who openly commit to the cause wear dark red caps upon their head. For some, this dye is crushed berries or soaked in wine; but for those who wish to enter the true heart of the conspiracy, their cap is dyed in the blood of their oppressive overlords.

6) A thin layer of Thalux—now available in a convenient spray—will transform you into a radiant creature of the deep, featuring an all-natural bioluminescent formula that can withstand sweat and water to last all night. (Side effects may include dry mouth, skin irritation, and shortness of breath. With regular use, Thalux effects may become permanent.)

- THREE -

1) There's a orange-and-black pattern of makeup that invariably causes facial recognition devices to glitch out—it's been outlawed and those who are brought in for wearing always seem to get the roughest treatment from the cops. But if you can convince the whole crowd of protesters to wear it, what a statement you'll make! They can't arrest all of you, right?

2) The septuagenarian Lady Terwilliker was the first of the Debutantes Eternal to be found dead at the end of a ball after no one realized she had passed. The current rage for "architectural accoutrement"meant that she remained standing, thanks to her foundational skirts and her mirrored mask—which merely reflected other ball-goers' looks of concern back at them. We've assigned servants to keep a closer eye on the other ladies.

3) The hottest fashion amongst diplomats is wearing a small colony of mindbeetles. They are truly dazzling, creating intricate, ever-shifting patterns as they move around the wearer's body. But they're also a way to show off, as it takes a brilliant diplomat to get a colony to agree to work for them for even a short event. Should they decide the contract is broken midway, it'll be a gaffe that'll never be lived down.

4) FaceVaultTM is a brand new app that uses holographic technology to let you change your face for the day. You'll receive a random face from our other FaceVault customers. Take a vacation from you! Note: management accepts no responsibility for mistaken identity, arrest, or angry spouses as a result of using FaceVaultTM.

5) Some of the most outlandish of the Court have taken to sewing bits of iron onto their finery. Whether to show a contempt for death or their power in the face of its effects, who can say?

6) The Beehive is back in vogue, as the cause of the local apiary is now the cause d'celebrity after Madam Maddy showed off at the CET Art Gala! Now everyone's caught the buzz, and emergency rooms have caught the brunt of the allergic reaction cases.



1) SpaceFleet's new uniforms were issued for barely a year before being replaced with the previous version. While initially hailed as highly functional, the one-piece design was universally derided by those forced to wear them as "terribly uncomfortable, especially while sitting at a control station." The final straw was the near-loss of the USS Li Jing when the helmsman accidentally bumped the inertial controls during high-speed maneuvers while adjusting his pants.

2) Printing out the best insults from Twitter and having them ironed onto t-shirts was supposed to be a funny little fad, but this is what started the university riots in the Northeast.

3) The Panku of Gentu 7 believe that the cold environment helps fortify their constitution, and that the length of an icicle on one's features is proof of their virility. Some daring individuals even splash copious amounts of liquid on their face before stepping out into a chilly average temperature of -47C.

4) With the increasingly mainstream appeal of piercings and other body modifications, the Unchained Demon Motorcycle Club have taken to hammering nails through spare skin, and even (ironically) riveting chains directly to bone. Needless to say, this does not make coming off a bike at high speed more pleasant, and they are incentivised to ride well.

5) Reflective clothing and makeup are not only striking, but are unparalleled in thwarting passive surveillance technology. Rumors of people going further and using theirs to focus light into heat rays are almost certainly scaremongering gossip.

6) Stiltettos are among the more ludicrous fashion accessories this season. Boots that lace past the knee with platform heels a metre or more in height. As the elevation arms race advances apace, the fashion pages have reported the first stiltetto-related death—from a broken neck.



1) It's widely agreed that the odious Duke Felchington was the first nobleman to decorate his codpiece with an actual, functional blade as opposed to the horn-like protuberances and baroque spikes that have increasingly become the fashion among his universally-loathed coterie of oafish young aristocratic second sons. 2) Enormous ruffles, trains, and many-layered hats prove both vast disposable wealth and a luxurious ability to ignore such mundane concerns as fitting into a coach, an ordinary chair, or even too small a room. Fabrics thin and delicate enough to allow breathing through one's garb while still retaining a suitably impressive volume are the envy of all. However, enduring a stifling if not outright suffocating ensemble does speak to one's dedication to fashion.

3) "You know what? I don't hold much with the trend to have venomous snakes as pets. What do you mean, they're not pets, they're 'fashion statements'? Sure I can show you how to find a rattlesnake in the desert, but you shouldn't try to catch them! These aren't Pokémons, kid, never mind the pretty sound they make!"

4) Laserwear produces dazzling light displays, often programmed into animated patterns and keyed to the wearer's mood. They do carry a risk of temporary blindness so that savvy onlookers tend to avert their gaze.

5) While popular among the nobility for avoiding assassination, steel neck sleeves have contributed to a rise in deaths due to asphyxiation and constrained blood flow.

6) "Retro" or "Glitch" ware is coming into vogue. However, it is delicate work keeping limbs and implants generating the desired sparks and stutters without equally retro side effects, such as melting components and nerve damage.



1) The Witches of Gonbar punish the criminals in their demesne by giving them the ears of donkeys, rabbits, or other animals. They did not foresee that this would become a fashion statement in the neighboring state of Chlar. Now they must deal with foolish fops trampling across their land, committing minor infractions of the law, and demanding "cat ears" or "lion ears."

2) Toon lenses are crafted to make the wearer's eyes appear enormous. Devotees sacrifice a great deal of visual acuity, resulting in several cases of mistaken identity and more than one bad fall.

3) Competition for the most lifelike funerary statues was a contributing factor in the decline of the Kingdom of Aldria. Skilled sculptors billed so much for their services, that one noble house secretly brought in a medusa to gain bragging rights... at the expense of less-loved members. As few sculptors could match such perfection, other houses came up with the same idea.

4) Repeated sublethal exposure to grisane root causes whitening of the hair, eyes, and gradual tremors. Royalty wear all these with pride as proof of their ability to endure any attempt on their lives. Minor nobles unlucky enough to have attracted no assassination attempts of their own have taken to dosing themselves to keep up appearances.

5) The rapid evolution of AI DermaPets has resulted in an unforeseen complication. When pets whose historical ancestors were adversarial (predator/prey, alpha male pairs, etc.) come into close enough proximity, the mechanized implants exhibit behavior outside their programmed parameters. Thus far, no one has been hurt, and the SkinPets megacorp has issued a brand-wide recall. Any DermaPets implantees should immediately report for removal of the malfunctioning accessories.

6) Caught sneaking from the bedroom window of the Duc de Nimes by his wife, with nothing to protect his modesty and good name but his quick wit and a bouquet of roses (thorns intact), the Chevalier d'Aubry started a new fashion trend. The skill lays in making an arrangement that skirts the edges of obscenity and incapacitating pain, while still capturing the drama of the look.

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