

SCION™

H E R O



Seventeen years ago, Jordan Donner moved back home to live with her father, Randall. She was single and six months pregnant at the time, but she never spoke of the baby's father. Three months later, Jordan took sick from unforeseeable complications resulting from the birth of her son, Eric. She lived until Eric was 10, and she died in her sleep during a thunderstorm. Randall raised Eric after that. He taught Eric how to play football. He taught Eric how to tune, deconstruct and rebuild the engine of his fully restored '67 Pontiac GTO. When Eric turned 16, Randall bought him a stripped-down GTO of his own. The old man promised Eric they would rebuild and restore that car just as Randall and his late wife had restored the other decades ago. Yet, one year and nine months later, Fate broke that promise. Randall Donner died in his bed of a massive stroke as black clouds crawled overhead on legs of crooked lightning.

When Eric finally found the body after football practice, two oily black ravens that had gotten in through Randall's bathroom window were standing on opposite sides of Randall's pillow. One of them had plucked out the old man's left eye, and they both regarded Eric without shame or guilt. For a long time, Eric didn't trust his memory of that day. He knows he came home to find his grandfather's alarm clock still blaring in the back bedroom. He knows he hesitated at the threshold for 10 full minutes before finally opening the bedroom door. He'll never forget the exact state of Randall's body when he first saw it, and he'll remember the two ravens for as long as he lives. What he couldn't admit at first, though, was that when he opened that door and saw those ravens, they looked him in the eyes and spoke.

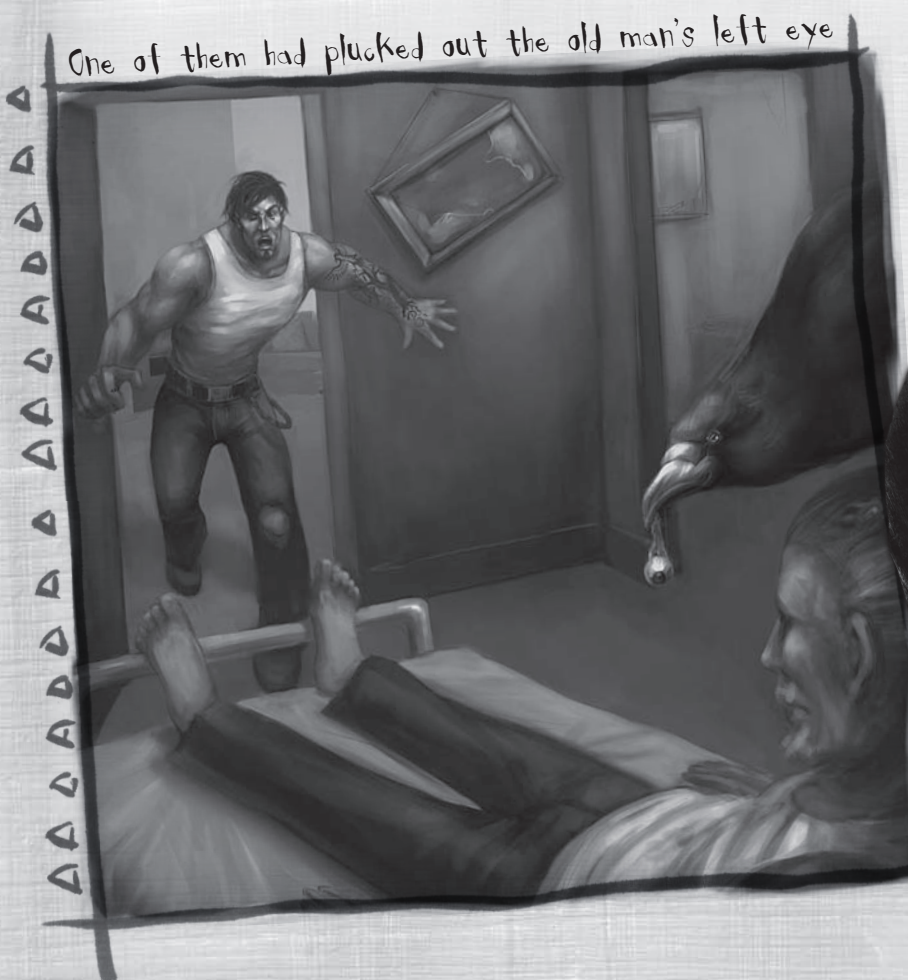
"This is your grandfather," the first one said, its voice bright and clear.

"As we know him," the second one added. "As you must remember him."

All Eric chose to remember initially was that he screamed and passed out. The ravens were gone when he woke up, but his grandfather was still dead and still missing one eye.

* * *

One of them had plucked out the old man's left eye



Grandpa? $\Delta\Delta\Delta$ Come on inside, I need to show you something. $\Delta\Delta\Delta$ Before you open this, $\Delta\Delta\Delta$ I want you

she with you? $\Delta\Delta\Delta$ I can't find her! $\Delta\Delta\Delta$ I can't find anybody! $\Delta\Delta\Delta$ Not Jordan! $\Delta\Delta\Delta$ Not Elizabeth! $\Delta\Delta\Delta$ Everything's a mess here! $\Delta\Delta\Delta$



For weeks after the funeral, Eric tried to live as if nothing had happened—made easier by the fact that he somehow slipped through the cracks of his state DFACS office. He went to school and football practice, telling no one of his loss. His guidance counselor, Mister Talfee, tried to excite him about the upcoming SATs. Coach Wooten hollered at him to get his head out of his rear end on the field if he wanted to start Friday nights. Scouts would be watching, Wooten assured him. Scouts didn't offer scholarships to lollygaggers who couldn't protect the quarterback.

Eric didn't care—he'd buried his entire family before he could even vote. Every night, he sat alone, drinking Randall's dwindling supply of beer, trying not to think. When things got bad, he dug out his mother's photo albums and remembered better times. When things got worse, he sat out in Randall's red GTO in the carport feeling the soothing rumble of the powerful engine and listening to the radio. It was there that Fate found him and gave him his first direct push toward his destiny.

Eric was dozing behind the wheel when the carport light clicked on and the kitchen door opened. Blinking a sleepy haze out of his eyes, he sat up to look out the windshield. Randall Donner stood just inside the kitchen, holding the door open. The man was dressed in the blue jumpsuit he'd worn to work at the garage every day. He beckoned Eric toward him.

"Grandpa?" Eric murmured. He killed the engine and got out.

"Come on inside," Randall said. "I need to show you something."

Eric's mind sputtered in first gear, unable to name what seemed so strange about this. He followed his grandfather inside. In the hallway, Randall opened the trap to the attic and climbed up into the dusty darkness. Eric followed, cracking his jaws around a deep yawn.

In the attic, Randall knelt behind boxes of Christmas decorations, bags of old clothes and piles of disused toys, shoving everything aside to pull up a piece of plywood that wasn't nailed down. From below, he retrieved a small box no bigger than his old family Bible and came back into the light to sit down. He set the box on the gritty plywood floor and pushed it toward Eric.

"Before you open this," Randall said, "I want you to know I'm proud you're taking this so well."

"Taking what?"

"My being here, kiddo. You remember what happened, right?"

The words brought Eric fully awake at last, and a freezing shiver plunged through him.

"You're dead," he gasped. "Does that mean I am too? Did I choke on carbon monoxide?"

"What, under the carport?" Randall shook his head. "You're fine, Eric. Pay attention now. There's something I need to show you. I was going to wait until you were 18, but Fate had its way with me first."

Eric touched the lid of the box Randall had brought him but didn't pull it closer.

"This belonged to your mother," Randall told him. "She had it when she moved back home. She said the things inside reminded her of your father, and she used to come up here to look at them when you were at school."

Eric's head spun. "Why? She always made it sound like there was something wrong with my... my father." The notion that he actually had a father was so odd to Eric he could hardly say the word. "I thought that's why he wasn't in the picture when Mom came back."

Randall shrugged. "I never met him."

A surge of desperate hope suddenly crackled inside Eric as an exhilarating thought occurred to him. "Can you ask Mom?" Eric asked. "Where is she? Is she with you?"

Randall shook his head, and grief pinched his face into a sour grimace.

"Why not?" Eric demanded.

"I can't find her!" Randall thundered, slamming his hand down hard. The wooden box between them jumped. "I can't find anybody! Not Jordan! Not Elizabeth! None of my brothers or friends! Everything's a mess here!"

the things inside reminded her of your father $\Delta\Delta\Delta$ Why? $\Delta\Delta\Delta$ Can you ask Mom? $\Delta\Delta\Delta$ Where is she? Is

to know I'm proud you're taking this so well. ΔΔΔ Taking what? ΔΔΔ My being here, kiddo. ΔΔΔ You remember

"I'm sorry, Grandpa," Eric said, wide-eyed at the outburst. "I didn't..."

Randall hung his head, waving the apology away. He'd grown dimmer. "It's my fault, kiddo. Everything's so confused here. Nobody knows where they're supposed to be or what they're supposed to do. There's a path leading away from where I found myself when I died, but it doesn't go anywhere. It ends in rubble and torn-up earth like something huge broke out of the ground. I don't know what it was, but the path is completely blocked. We recover strange, ancient people from the rubble sometimes, but they're just as clueless as we are. I didn't know what else to do. But I remembered this box, so I came back."

"Can you stay?"

Randall sighed and shook his head one more time. Eric could see through him now in the 40-watt light. He wanted to reach out and pull his grandfather to him, but he was afraid he'd break whatever tenuous connection was making this possible.

"It's taking everything I've got just to touch things and make you see me," Randall said. "I can feel that broken path pulling me back there."

"Will you be able to come back?"

"I don't know. It wasn't easy the first time. If I can't, I at least wanted to show you this." Randall pointed at the box, and this time Eric did pull it toward himself. He ran a hand over the smooth, lacquered wood, wondering what secrets his mother had kept within. "And I wanted to tell you..."

Randall's voice trailed off, and the attic fell silent. Eric was alone once more. Randall's footprints were still there in the dust, but the old man was gone. Eric only ever saw him again once.

* * *

Eric spread the items from the box on his kitchen table. The first thing that caught his eye was a ring that gleamed like polished metal but was brittle like stone. Etched on it was a shape like the letter Y with an extra arm sticking up between top fork. Eric slipped the ring on his right middle finger and idly turned it with his thumb.

Next, he found a faded Polaroid of his mother as a young woman, standing next to a man who could only have been his father. The man shared Eric's tall, broad frame, and he wore a wool-lined denim jacket over a barrel chest. His hair was bright red, matching the beard around his square jaw. Eric wore his hair shorter, and he shaved, but his hair was the same flaming red as the man in the picture. Except for his eyes, which glowed with reflected light from the camera's flash, the man could have been Eric himself a few shaggy years hence.

Eric stared in wonder at how happy his mother seemed. She'd never looked like this in his recollection. Seeing this smile on Jordan's face made Eric all the more curious about why his father hadn't been part of his life. Had the man died? He flipped the picture over and found written there in his mother's hand, "Me and Don at the diner." He looked at the picture again and saw a window in the background with the words "Skirnir's Diner" stenciled in block letters around a picture of a hamburger.

A receipt from Skirnir's Diner with a note on the back came out of his mother's keepsake box next. The note, written only in small capital letters, read, "IF YOU NEED A JOB, BILL'S HIRING. IT'S A GOOD PLACE." Eric vaguely remembered Randall once mentioning that Jordan had worked as a waitress after college.

Also in the box was a lock of bright red hair that had curled into a figure-eight, and a couple of ticket stubs for the old movie Days of Thunder. One stub was a spider web of creases where it had once been wadded up. The most telling item in the box, however, was a note written on a square of blue paper. In handwriting that matched that on the receipt, it said, "JORD, FATHER NEEDS ME BACK HOME. SOMETHING'S HAPPENED. I MIGHT NOT SEE YOU AGAIN. YOU CAN KEEP MY RING. FARE YOU WELL."

Eric thought he understood now what his mother had gone through. After college, a



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It was the sort of thing that happened all the time. $\Delta\Delta\Delta$ two ravens on a

kind person had helped her get a job, and she'd gone out with him. The guy had then used her and vanished, leaving only a lame note and a parting gift. Shortly thereafter, Jordan had realized she was pregnant and come home to live with her father. It was the sort of thing that happened all the time. Nobody made too big a deal out of it anymore.

Eric didn't necessarily want to make a big deal himself, but just the same, he was tired of ignoring that missing piece of his life. Using what his mother had kept and what his grandfather had defied death itself to show him, Eric could finally fill in that missing piece. He made up his mind that very night to do whatever it took to find his absent father.

A bolt of lightning signed Eric's resolve across the heavens, and two ravens on a branch outside witnessed the decision through the kitchen window.

* * *

Eric quit the football team and arranged time off from school. He spent two weeks replacing his engine's worst parts with the best ones from Randall's car, blending the two engines into a finely tuned whole. When he finished, he sold what was left of Randall's Goat to a generous enthusiast.

He then began his search for his father online at the library. He could dig up no information on Skirnir's Diner, but the movie theater where his parents saw Days of Thunder was part of a national chain now. The chain's website provided everything from show times to driving directions, so he used it to get a general idea of where his mother had lived. The theater was in a town called Nastrond, so he'd start there. He found the town's one motel with an online presence, booked himself a room remotely and wondered how anybody ever found anything before the Internet came along.

* * *

Eric arrived in Nastrond well after nightfall on a Wednesday in early winter. The desk clerk at the motel was a tall, lanky young man named Sylvester, who seemed thrilled to have a customer to talk to. He praised Eric's car and chattered about some of the beat-down jalopies the college-kids drove out here for illicit weekend rendezvous. He asked Eric where he was from, how long he intended to stay and where he might be headed afterward. Eric deflected these questions with generalities, looking for a polite way to disengage and escape to bed.

"Hey, this is cool," the clerk said, capturing his hand as he gave Eric a room key. He tapped Eric's shining ring with a fingernail. "Did you get it here?"

"I'm not sure where it came from," Eric said. "Do they sell them around here?"

"Used to. College kids came out here for hematite jewelry all the time. Nouveau hippies, mostly."

"Hematite? That's what this is?"

Sylvester nodded. "Yep, or bloodstone, if you like. It's like red, powdery iron ore, but it polishes up nice. They used to strip mine it out of Dry Lake before I was born. It was the town's number-one export until we ran out."

"I'm sorry to hear that."

King. $\Delta\Delta\Delta$ Nobody could tell him about Skirnir's $\Delta\Delta\Delta$

branch outside witnessed the decision $\Delta\Delta\Delta$ where his mother had lived $\Delta\Delta\Delta$ a town called Nastrond $\Delta\Delta\Delta$ a

tall, lanky young man named Sylvester $\Delta\Delta\Delta$ He tapped Eric's shiny ring $\Delta\Delta\Delta$ bloodstone $\Delta\Delta\Delta$ do you know what this means? $\Delta\Delta\Delta$

The clerk blew air through his lips like a horse. "Hell, it was the best thing that ever happened to this place. When they played the bloodstone out of Dry Lake, they chased it up Dry Bed Road into the mountains. Know what they found there?"

Eric shrugged, trying to look interested. This guy was nice enough, but the longer this chat continued, the more he thought about how tired he was from driving all day.

"More hematite?" he guessed.

"Better. Real iron ore—the good stuff. There's a paradise of it up under the mountain. They've been pulling it out of there ever since. Not as much lately, maybe, but a new outfit's taken over at the mines, and—"

"Say, let me ask you something," Eric broke in. "If they used to sell these around here, do you know what this means? If it means anything..."

He twisted the ring around so Sylvester could see the symbol etched on it. The guy blinked and hesitated before finally shaking his head.

"I don't know. Peace symbol, maybe? Doesn't look familiar."

"Oh well," Eric said, backing away. "Thanks anyway."

He left the motel lobby and headed for his room, glad to make his escape at last. Yet something nagged at him. He was almost positive the clerk was lying about not recognizing the symbol on his ring. The question now was why, and what had made fear flicker across the young man's face, if only for an instant.

* * *

Sylvester wasn't working the next morning when Eric awoke, so Eric's lingering questions would have to wait. His plan was to drive out to the movie theater and start asking about Skirnir's Diner at nearby gas stations or businesses that looked like they'd been around a while. If that didn't work, he'd resort to Plan B: just driving around aimlessly looking for the place. Nastrond didn't seem all that big, so he figured he could scour the entire town before dark. If that didn't pan out, Plan C was to wait around town until Sunday, when he could hopefully talk up some of the old-timers after church. He could try to talk to Sylvester again between now and then.

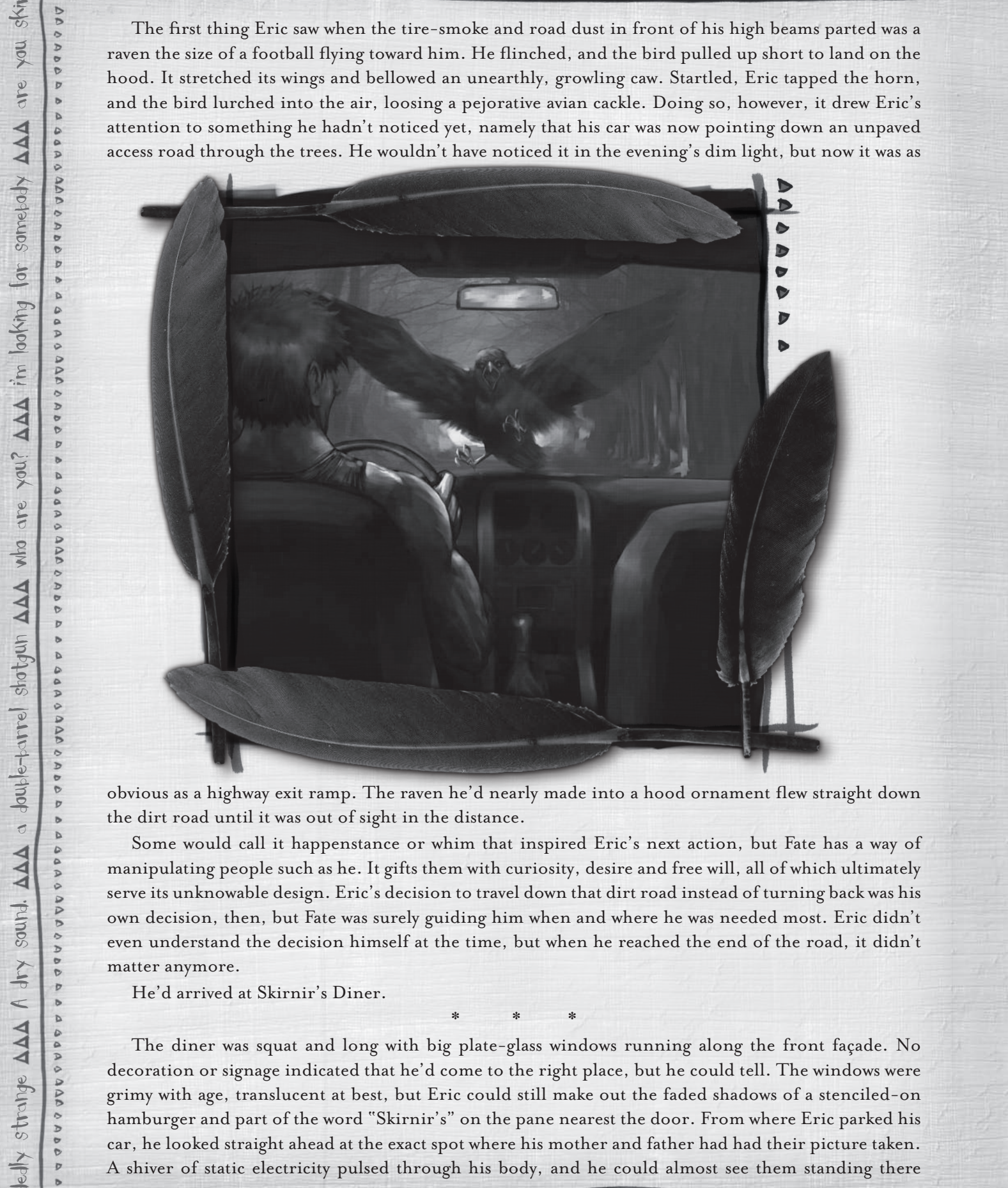
By nightfall, though, Plan A had given way to B, and C was looking pretty good. He'd visited every local gas station twice and talked to everyone on two different shifts, but nobody could tell him about Skirnir's Diner. He asked a few old-timers around town if he reminded them of anyone, but that desperate gamble paid off like most desperate gambles do. The only emotional reactions he got beyond blank stares or friendly shrugs came when he showed his ring around. People were pleased to see the polished hematite at first. Several said they didn't see such jewelry around town anymore. When he showed them the weird, forked symbol, though, they clammed up. Some fidgeted. Others pretended not to recognize it then made hasty excuses to leave. Still others got angry with him and told him to get lost. By the end of the afternoon, people were looking at him askance on the street and making a point not to speak to him if they could avoid it.

As a result of mounting frustration, he missed a crucial turn toward town on his way back from the last far-flung gas station and ended up on an unfamiliar road as the sun set. He didn't catch his mistake until the dashed lines down the road's center gave out and the pavement turned especially rough and cracked. High evergreens crowded close to the road on either side, cutting off the light of the falling sun, and the only landmark he could make out was the high, snowy mountain in the distance. It loomed over the foreshortened horizon as he rounded a wide curve, informing him at last that he was going the wrong way.

Cursing, he slowed down, pulled the car around in a tight loop—no mean feat, since his Goat didn't have power steering—and headed back the way he came. He'd gone no more than 100 yards when an oily black shape streaked into his peripheral vision from the left. It swooped in front of him to disappear below the edge of the hood. Eric stomped on the brake and clutch, squeezing the steering wheel so hard it hurt. The tires squealed, and the car skidded to a halt, its front end pointing perpendicular to the right.

If it means anything $\Delta\Delta\Delta$ Sylvester could see the symbol etched on it $\Delta\Delta\Delta$ Doesn't look familiar. $\Delta\Delta\Delta$ was

the bird pulled up short to land on the hood. It stretched its wings and bellowed an unearthly, growling caw.



The first thing Eric saw when the tire-smoke and road dust in front of his high beams parted was a raven the size of a football flying toward him. He flinched, and the bird pulled up short to land on the hood. It stretched its wings and bellowed an unearthly, growling caw. Startled, Eric tapped the horn, and the bird lurched into the air, loosing a pejorative avian cackle. Doing so, however, it drew Eric's attention to something he hadn't noticed yet, namely that his car was now pointing down an unpaved access road through the trees. He wouldn't have noticed it in the evening's dim light, but now it was as

obvious as a highway exit ramp. The raven he'd nearly made into a hood ornament flew straight down the dirt road until it was out of sight in the distance.

Some would call it happenstance or whim that inspired Eric's next action, but Fate has a way of manipulating people such as he. It gifts them with curiosity, desire and free will, all of which ultimately serve its unknowable design. Eric's decision to travel down that dirt road instead of turning back was his own decision, then, but Fate was surely guiding him when and where he was needed most. Eric didn't even understand the decision himself at the time, but when he reached the end of the road, it didn't matter anymore.

He'd arrived at Skirnir's Diner.

* * *

The diner was squat and long with big plate-glass windows running along the front façade. No decoration or signage indicated that he'd come to the right place, but he could tell. The windows were grimy with age, translucent at best, but Eric could still make out the faded shadows of a stenciled-on hamburger and part of the word "Skirnir's" on the pane nearest the door. From where Eric parked his car, he looked straight ahead at the exact spot where his mother and father had had their picture taken. A shiver of static electricity pulsed through his body, and he could almost see them standing there

decidedly strange ΔΔΔ A dry sound. ΔΔΔ a double-barrel shotgun ΔΔΔ who are you? ΔΔΔ i'm looking for somebody ΔΔΔ are you skirning?

electricity pulsed through his body ΔΔΔ the raven cawed ΔΔΔ It was cold inside. ΔΔΔ There was something

the bird lurched into the air losing a pejorative avian cackle flew straight down the dirt

together. Then the raven he'd followed cawed from atop the building, and the feeling vanished. Eric looked up to see that an identical second raven had joined the first. He got out of his car.

He couldn't see in through the dirty windows, but lights gleamed inside, and a ribbon of smoke rose from a metal chimney in back. There was no OPEN sign, but the door wasn't locked, and the outside lights on the corners of the building were just flickering to life. Apparently they were hooked up to sensors, and the sun had gone down far enough to activate them. A brass jingle bell rang as Eric let himself in.

It was cold inside. Outside it was early winter in the foothills of snow-capped mountains; inside, the air conditioner was running full blast. In addition, the room was only dimly lit, which made it harder to see in from outside. It was like the belly of a cave in here, and Eric wondered how anyone could stand to eat in a place like this. There was something decidedly strange about the way the dining area was furnished too. The open floor was dotted with tables and chairs like a normal restaurant, but most of those were much shorter than normal restaurant furniture. Only a handful of tables were full size, and they were all on one side of the room. The rest looked like furniture from an elementary school. Eric took all this in with a confused frown and scratched the underside of his scruffy chin. He hadn't shaved since he'd left home.

A dry sound like someone breaking a stick caught Eric's ear, and he looked across the room toward where it came from. A middle-aged man stood there behind a row of steam tables, wearing a grease-stained apron and pointing a sawed-off, double-barrel shotgun in Eric's direction. The fellow's face scrunched mostly into a scowl, but his wide eyes danced with suppressed fear.

"Is that—" he began, before suddenly dismissing the thought with a shake of his head. "Who are you?"

Despite the fact that no one had ever so much as pointed a knife at him before, Eric remained calm. He could see real fear in the older man's eyes, yet he'd heard something else in the man's voice. It was hopeful expectation, with a hint of desperation. Hearing it from the old man, shotgun or no, filled Eric with the calm assurance that the fellow wouldn't actually harm him. Well, probably wouldn't.

"I'm Eric," he said, taking a couple of careful steps toward the center of the room. "I'm looking for somebody who used to come here."

"Nobody comes here," the man said. For effect, he cocked the hammer on the gun's second barrel with another dry click.

"Are you Mister Skirnir?" Eric continued his slow approach, thumbs hooked in his belt loops like nobody was pointing a shotgun at anybody. "That's where I am, right? Skirnir's Diner?"

The man's eyes narrowed. "Used to be," he said. "Ain't in the family anymore."

Eric somehow found the nerve to chuckle at that. He now stood across the buffet line from the older man completely ignoring the weapon between them. "Which was that answer for? You or the diner?"

The fellow eased the hammers down and laid the shotgun across an empty steamer tray cutout. The scowl was completely gone from his face, replaced by bitter, weary resignation.

"Both," he sighed. "First the diner, then for me. The bank sold this place to the town's new mining concern when I missed a loan payment. Now it's just a glorified cafeteria for the workers."

"Sorry to hear that," Eric told him. He looked the man in the eye and said it with honest sincerity, and the guy visibly seemed to take comfort in the gesture. He stood up a little straighter, took a deep breath and nodded his thanks. When the moment passed, Eric spoke again.

"So what do people call you around here?"

"Tell the truth," the man replied, "it's been so long since anybody talked nice to me, I hardly care anymore." He paused to think it over. "My friends called me Bill."

"It's a pleasure, Bill," Eric said. "My name's—"

road Fate has a way of manipulating people gifts them curiosity desire free will Eric's decision

Fate was surely guiding him it didn't matter Ted arrived at Skirnir's A shiver of static

"Eric, yeah," Bill said. "I caught it when I was menacing you before. Eric what?"

Before Eric could answer, the bell over the door jangled. Bill flinched.

"Hey!" someone coming inside shouted. "Who are you?"

Bill's eyes widened in returning fear, and his hand crept back toward the shotgun. Eric locked eyes with him and shook his head. Without even looking, Eric could tell from the tone of speaker's voice that the guy was big trouble in a way few people truly can be. Bill put his hands by his sides and stood rooted to the spot. Eric turned around.

The opposite side of the room was a strange tableau. Three men in dirty coveralls, each carrying plastic miner's helmets under their arms, were crossing the center of the room. Behind them stood a crowd of stocky, sturdy, little people who were equally dirty and similarly attired. They had entered in an orderly line behind the three tall guys, but as they noticed that something odd was happening, their line snarled up around the front door. All the little guys looked strong and hardy for their size, and not one of them looked a day younger than 60. They all had thick beards, cut short, and close-cropped hair that ranged in color from white to iron gray to a salt-and-pepper mix. Their expressions were grim and dour and tired.

The three tall men put down their helmets and crossed the room to form a semicircle around Eric. They all were of a size with him, in girth if not in height, and they were all sweaty from a long day of work. They crowded him against the steam tables, trying to intimidate him as they peered and leered and flashed terrible gap-toothed grins. Each of them stank to high heaven, and they all emanated that same sense of big trouble. The one in the middle twitched with barely controlled excitement, and he was the first to talk.

"I asked you a question!" he snapped.

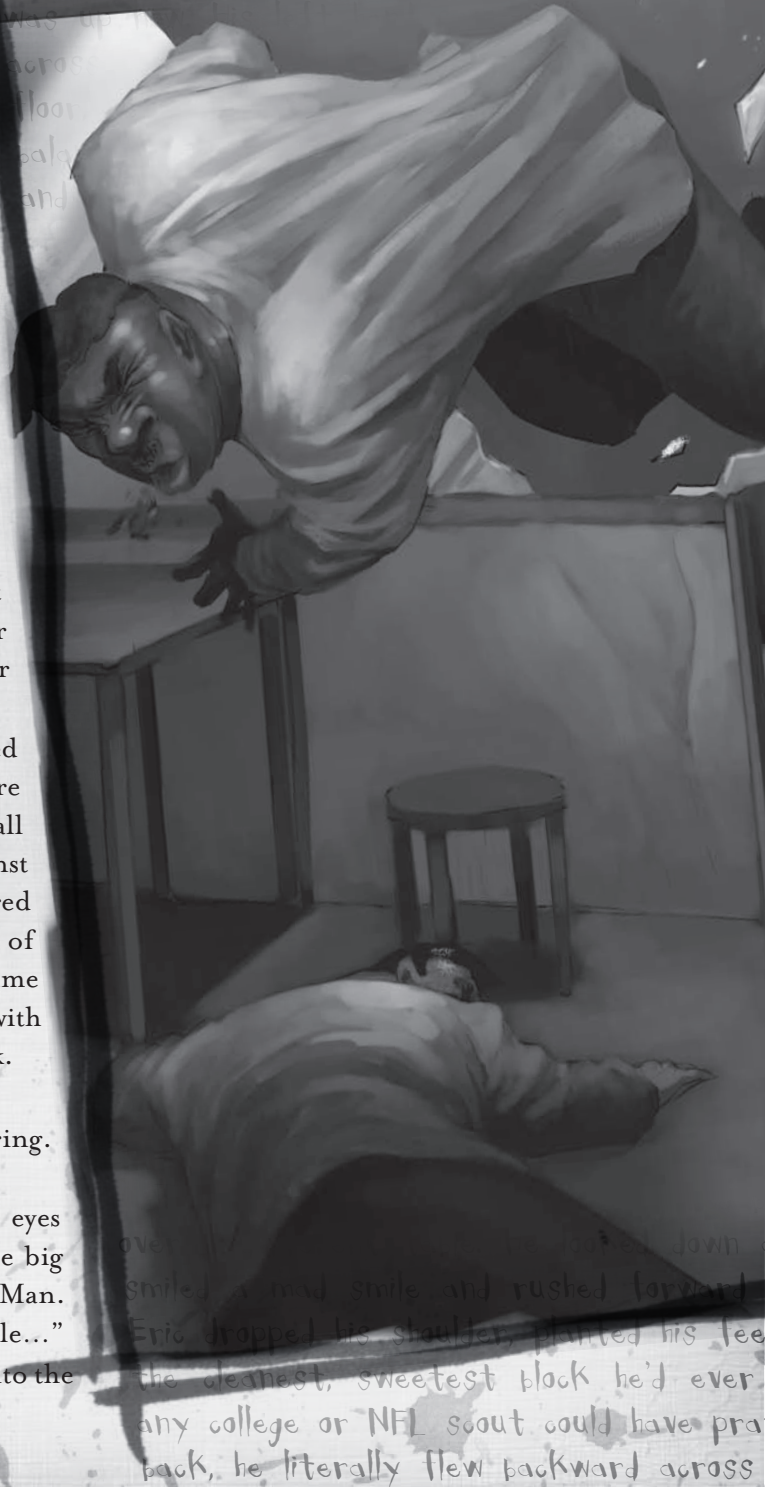
"He's nobody, Craig," Bill said, his voice quavering. "He's just lost. He's on his way back to town now."

"You hush," Craig barked, keeping his bloodshot eyes on Eric. Eric returned his stare, trying not to start the big trouble himself. "You're already boned, Lunch-Lady Man. Trays ain't out, food ain't ready, spoons ain't on the table..."

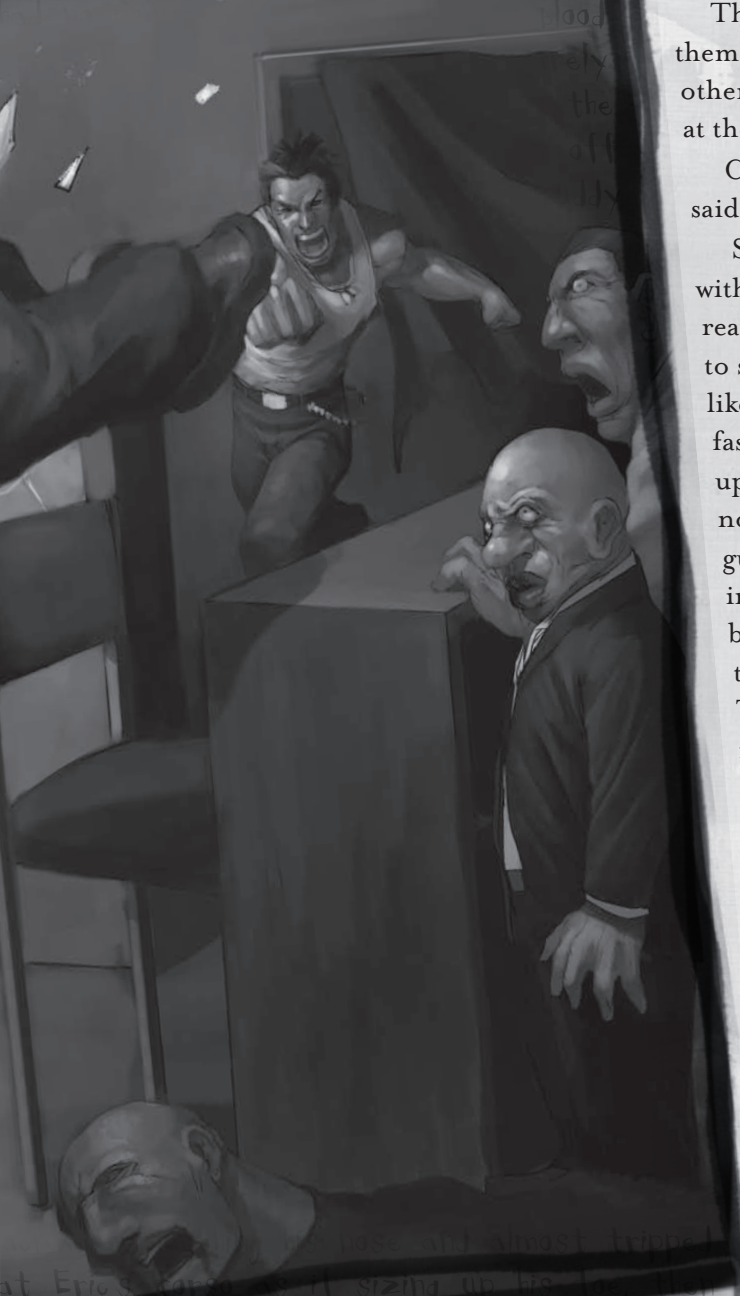
Spittle flew from Craig's lower lip and disappeared into the pale denim of Eric's jacket.

"We were talking," Eric said. "I—"

Stitch-Guy took that as his cue. He went up telegraphed a sloppy rabbit punch. Eric reacted lightning-quick to snare Stitch-Guy's hairy wrist. But Eric held him fast. Craig reacted second-fastest a gut punch or an uppercut. Eric shoved Stitch-Guy turning on Craig's back like a red jacket. The S...
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on his tiptoes with a big smile and without looking, his hand coming up. The man's muscles writhed like snakes, pulling back a meaty fist for either a gut punch or an uppercut. Eric shoved Stitch-Guy's fist forward into Craig's nose, turning on Craig's beak like a red faucet. The slowest guy picked his moment best of all but only punched Eric in the ribs. The punch had no power behind it, but Eric's blood was up now. His left hand swung out in a flat arc to catch the opportunist squarely across the left temple. The fellow spun around, fell and slid several feet across the floor, knocking little chairs out from under a little table. Eric yanked Stitch-Guy off balance and slung him in that direction too. Stitch-Guy landed on his unconscious buddy and got too tangled up with him to get immediately back to his feet.



at Eric, who'd staggered backward clutching his nose and almost tripped over a different table. He looked down at Eric's torso as if sizing up his foe, then smiled a mad smile and rushed forward with blood streaming over his mouth and chin. Eric dropped his shoulder, planted his feet and hit Craig dead center in the chest with the cleanest, sweetest block he'd ever put on anybody. The result was more than any college or NFL scout could have prayed for. Craig didn't just stop short or bounce back, he literally flew backward across the room, sailing over the little people's heads toward the front window. The glass exploded, and Craig rolled to a stop on the gravel somewhere in the dark.

"Don't make excuses for him," the guy on Craig's left said. He had stitches in a diagonal line across his forehead, and he leaned up on his tiptoes whenever he spoke. "Lunch-Lady Man knows when shift change is. He screwed up."

"I wasn't making excuses," Eric said, still holding eyes with Craig. "I was going to say that we were talking when you jerks interrupted us. You owe us both an apology."

The little folks in the back looked at each other, and a few of them dared murmur among themselves. The tall fellow on the other side of Craig opposite the guy with stitches looked back at them and snarled.

Craig's eyes lit up with the fire burning inside him, and he said, "What you plan to do if we don't, Carrot Top?"

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That left only Craig, who'd staggered backward clutching his nose and almost tripped over a different table. He looked down at Eric's torso as if sizing up his foe, then smiled a mad smile and rushed forward with blood streaming over his mouth and chin. Eric dropped his shoulder, planted his feet and hit Craig dead center in the chest with the cleanest, sweetest block he'd ever put on anybody. The result was more than any college or NFL scout could have prayed for. Craig didn't just stop short or bounce back, he literally flew backward across the room, sailing over the little people's heads toward the front window. The glass exploded, and Craig rolled to a stop on the gravel somewhere in the dark.

No one spoke. Eric could feel his jaw hanging open, and he saw similar surprise on several of the

laughed out loud...what do you want ~~AAA~~ to talk about why you're here ~~AAA~~ Something bad's going on ~~AAA~~ nobody wants to talk about it

Oh my lord, we need to get to County General right now ~~AAA~~ left side of his shirt ~~AAA~~ was painted in a

little guys' faces. An adrenaline surge could account for a lot, but not what he'd just done. He'd just fought three guys his own size and tossed them all around like rag dolls. Adrenaline didn't do that.

A clatter to his left drew Eric's attention, and he saw Stitch-Guy helping his groggy friend up. They overturned another table trying to get to their feet, and when they saw Eric looking at them, they ran for it, stumbling over low chairs in their haste. They snatched up their helmets and herded the dumbstruck little people back out the broken door and hustled on out into the darkness. Within minutes, they were gone God-knows-where, and Eric was still standing there unable to move. His stupefied paralysis didn't break until Bill came up on his left, breathing hard.

"Man, are you all right?" Bill gasped. He was trembling, and Eric realized the man was staring at a bloody switchblade knife on the ground at Eric's feet. "Oh my lord, we need to get to County General right now."

"Are you hurt?" Eric asked. His voice sounded strange in his ears. He found it hard to look away from the broken window. It had to be 20 feet away. "Which one got you?"

"Me?" Bill yelped. "He didn't stick me!"

Eric had no idea what Bill was talking about until the older man pointed at his midsection. Eric looked down to see that the left side of his shirt, from just below his last rib to the top of his pants pocket, was painted in a sloppy crimson arrowhead. Eric blinked, uncomprehending, until he remembered the guy on his left punching him. The punch hadn't hurt, but it had felt cold...

"You're stabbed, man," Bill said. He looked like he was going to pass out.

Wondering if he was in shock, Eric pulled up his shirttail. Sure enough, a hole big enough for his finger had been punched through the flannel and the T-shirt under that, and his palm came away bloody. Bill moaned.

"Weird," Eric said. The pain hadn't kicked in yet. Blood clotted in his curly red body hair, so he took the white towel from Bill's shoulder and gingerly scrubbed a layer of blood off. He fully expected more to flow immediately, but no more did. Instead, what he saw astounded and disturbed him.

"Bill, look at this," he said. Most of the blood was wiped off now, and they could see only a thin, red nick on his skin, no deeper than a paper cut. Eric raised an eyebrow, and Bill's eyes goggled like somebody had hit him in the stomach. While they watched, the nick thinned even more and finally vanished altogether. Unable to think of an encore, Eric stood up straight once again and pulled his shirt back down.

"Damn," he whispered, impressed.

* * *

Bill was useless for conversation after that. Eric tried to ask about Craig and the other two guys, but all Bill could say was they were crew bosses at the iron mine. The little people worked at the mine too, but they all worked for the big guys and the big guys' boss, Mister Jared. They only came around after sundown or before sunup to eat and rest before heading back to work. No, Bill had never seen the mine himself. No, Bill had never met Mister Jared, who ran the operation. He only ever met the crew bosses and the little guys.

Bill couldn't answer much more than that. He looked as upset and rattled as Eric was starting to feel, and it seemed he wanted nothing more than to clean the place up and for Eric to go as far away as possible. Still reeling from what he'd done, Eric could only quietly oblige. An hour later, he lay on his hotel bed dreaming of oak trees with ravens in the branches.

* * *

The next morning, Eric awoke hearing a conversation about wars in the Holy Land. The television was on and broadcasting the news. He sat up to blearily paw around for the remote and was shocked to find Sylvester, the desk clerk, sitting in the vinyl chair beside his bed. The lanky fellow clicked the TV off and smiled at Eric, as if his being there weren't at all strange.

"Morning!" Sylvester said. "I let myself in."

Sylvester cringed ~~AAA~~ Eric lowered his fist ~~AAA~~ lifted Sylvester completely off the ground ~~AAA~~ Sylvester

slippy crimson arrowhead **AAA** The punch hadn't hurt, but it had felt cold **AAA** stabbed **AAA** a hole big enough

for his finger **AAA** Blood clotted **AAA** was wiped off **AAA** thin, red nick... finally vanished **AAA** Damn **AAA** crew passes at the iron mine

"What are you doing in here?" Eric snapped. He jumped out of bed in his boxers to loom over the intruder. Sylvester cringed and tried to put on a charming smile. "Housekeeping?"

Eric snatched him up by the shirt in one hand and drew back a fist. "I said..."

"Okay, okay!" Sylvester said, pleading for peace with splayed hands. "I just wanted to talk. This seemed like the best way to get your attention."

Eric's eyes narrowed, but he lowered his fist. He realized he'd lifted Sylvester completely off the ground like the man weighed nothing. He set the clerk down.

"Out of curiosity," he said, "what seemed like the worst way?"

Sylvester laughed out loud and straightened his rumpled shirt, casually putting a few yards distance between himself and Eric as he did so. "It wouldn't have been pretty."

"So what do you want?" Eric asked. He pulled on some jeans and searched around for a clean shirt. "Make it quick."

"I want to talk about why you're here," Sylvester said, leaning back against the wall by the door. His eyes were bright blue, showing none of the deceptive vacuity he'd evidenced before. "Why we're both here, really. Something bad's going on around town, and nobody wants to talk about it."

"Not even you, night before last."

Sylvester flashed a self-deprecating smile. "Yeah, I was just being careful. I didn't know what sort of guy you are."

"But now you do?"

"A little better. I heard about what happened last night at the diner. That's the first time anybody's stood up for anybody else in this town in a long time."

"Word travels fast."

Sylvester shrugged. "Small towns."

"Fine. So why do you think I'm here? Better yet, why are you here? Your accent says you're not from here."

"That's right. I came here a few years ago and sort of accidentally settled down. I was looking for somebody, like you are."

"Who?"

"My dad. You?"

Eric nodded. "My dad."

Sylvester touched his lower lip and narrowed his bright blue eyes in thought. "Let me guess. He's a big, burly joker like yourself, with the same red hair and beard? Likes blondes? Calls himself Tony or Don or something like that?"

Eric nodded slowly, hope kindling in his heart. "Yeah. Don. Do you know him? Is he...?" He waved toward Sylvester, unable to form the words. "You know..."

"What? My dad?" Sylvester laughed out loud. "No way! My dad's an ugly old weasel like me. But I have heard of somebody who looks just like you. He used to come around here before Jared and his crew took over the iron mine. He was real popular. In fact, he's the reason we got so many midgets all down in the mountain."

"Hey, watch that talk," Eric said. Anytime Randall had heard someone use a word for a type of person that that type of person wouldn't use for himself, he wasn't shy about giving out a piece of his mind.

"Fine," Sylvester said. "Dwarves. Whatever." He rolled his eyes. "Anyway, from what I gather, it was this Don guy—your dad—who brought them here and opened up the tunnels in the mountains for them to live in. They used to come around some nights to shop in town or trade little handicrafts they made. That was before my time, though. Now they all work the mines."

"God knows why," Eric said. "The people they work for are jerks."

AAA never seen the mine AAA never met Mister Jared AAA nothing more AAA wars in the holy land AAA

Sylvester's face turned grave, and he gave Eric a hard look full of bitter sadness. "The parts of that you're wrong about are exactly the problem."

"Huh?"

"For one, the dwarves don't exactly work for the mining company. They're more like slaves. Those tunnels used to be their homes, but the bigger, stronger folks just came down there and made them start hollowing it all out. Nobody pays them. They barely feed them."

"And they just take that?"

"What else can they do?" Sylvester said. "It's not like they can leave the tunnels. And they can't complain to anybody, because the local cops don't want to get involved. Plus, hardly anybody knows they're still down there."

"That's just wrong," Eric said. Anger built inside him like black clouds massing into a thunderhead. "How do the miners get away with this?"

"They can because of the other wrong part of what you said before—when you said the people forcing the dwarves to work were jerks."

"You're right," Eric nodded. "They're much worse than jerks. They're... evil."

"True, but that isn't what I meant. I meant the other part. Jared and his crew aren't people. They're monsters."

Eric assumed Sylvester was being poetic, but the deadpan, neutral way he said it made him wonder. He sounded like he meant exactly what he said. "Monsters? What, like vampires?"

"No. Giants."

Eric didn't know how to respond to that, which curled Sylvester's lips into a wickedly smug smile.

"I bet that was about the last thing you expected me to say, wasn't it?"

"Giants?" Eric finally managed. "You honestly expect me to believe that?"

"You do already," Sylvester said in an irritating singsong voice. "You don't know why, but what I'm saying makes sense to you, deep down in your heart of hearts. It can't be the weirdest thing you've ever heard of."

An image of two ravens standing over his grandfather's shoulders flashed unbidden through Eric's mind, followed by a reprise of that night in the attic with Randall's ghost and the sight of a deep puncture wound in his own side sealing up unaided. The sound of Craig smashing through a plate-glass window echoed in his ears.

"Maybe not," he conceded. "Still, a giant..."

"It's a subjective term, believe me. I doubt Jared's actually over 10 feet." Sylvester stopped and shook his head. "Anyway, what he is isn't as important as what he's doing. He's got those poor dwarves enslaved down there with nobody to stand up for them."

"They got me."

"Somehow I knew you'd feel that way," Sylvester said, leaving his perch with a big grin and coming to stand directly in front of Eric. "You're strong and tough—probably more than you even realize. You're special, man, and these little guys need help from somebody like you."

"Special how?"

Sylvester laughed and playfully punched Eric in the shoulder. "I could explain it, but if you don't believe Jared's a giant I doubt you'd believe me about that. For now, just take my word for it."

"How about this..." Eric said. "I'll give you the benefit of the doubt that the little folks in the mines are being exploited and need help. As for the rest, I'm not going to believe it unless I see it."

"Now you're talking," Sylvester said. "I thought you'd never ask."

"Ask what?"

"Ask me to take you to the mine and show you in person."

"Now wait, I—"

"Okay, go ahead and get your shoes and stuff on. I'll meet you at your car." He opened the door and went outside, giving Eric a thumbs-up before the door shut behind him.

Baffled and off balance, but undeniably curious, Eric pulled on his socks and boots to follow Sylvester outside.

* * *

"It's not a peace sign, by the way," Sylvester said a couple of hours later, as they neared the distant mountain that overlooked Nastrond. "Sorry I lied to you before."

Eric glanced away from the road to ask Sylvester what he meant, and Sylvester pointed to Eric's hematite ring.

"Ah. So what is it really?"

"It's a rune: Algiz. It means 'protection.' That guy Don—your dad—had a ring just like this. One of the dwarves gave it to him when he relocated them here. According to them, he never took it off."

Eric rolled the strange-sounding word around in his head, saying nothing.

"Where'd you get yours?" Sylvester asked.

"My mother. It was in a box of keepsakes I found after she died. My dad gave it to her."

"Oh," Sylvester said. He was quiet for a long, thoughtful moment before he spoke again. "He must have really cared about her."

"Not enough to stick around," Eric mumbled. "Or call or write or visit..."

"Hey, it's a big world with a lot going on. I'm sure he had his reasons."

"Are you?" Eric huffed. "What do you know about it?"

"Plenty," Sylvester growled. "You should be glad your dad's at least a decent guy who helps people. Mine's probably back in prison by now, for all I know. And he didn't even have the decency to pass on any strong or tough or good-looking genes first. You're blessed, man, and you don't even know it."

Eric's anger melted away, and he cut Sylvester a sidelong look. The guy had a point.

"You know," he said. "If you didn't sound so pissed, I'd almost think you were hitting on me."

Sylvester did a double-take and let out a surprised laugh. "Well, quit pissing me off, then," he said, "and we'll see where this thing goes." That got both of them laughing, and the tension between them evaporated.

"You're a pretty weird guy, Sylvester," Eric said.

"My friends call me Sly," he replied. "And as for weird... You don't know the half of it."

* * *

They hid the GTO a few miles from the base of the mountain at an abandoned gas station. Eric worried about just leaving it in the middle of nowhere, but Sly's worries about the distinctive rumble of the engine outweighed that concern. They covered the rest of the trip on foot, striking out through the woods. Sly led straight to the tree line at first, stopping at the edge.

"Check it out," he said, gesturing for Eric to take a look. "Any idea what's missing?"

Eric wasn't intimately familiar with the daily ins and outs of industrial iron mining, but he gave it a shot. A dirt road led out of the forest to a high, rusty chain-link fence. Once through the fence's gate, the road led to a square building faced in corrugated

something was obviously missing ΔΔΔ do they live out here? ΔΔΔ Don't they ever want to leave? ΔΔΔ They've

aluminum, which was probably the office where all the business was done and the records were kept. The office building had only a few small windows, and lights shone inside behind Venetian blinds. From the office, the road led down to an empty black rectangle cut into the mountain's foot. Eric could just barely see a man sitting in a security booth in front of the mine's entrance. Yet for even the few people in evidence, something was obviously missing.

"No cars," Eric said. "Not even a shuttle bus. What, do they live out here?"

Sly nodded. "Yep. Everybody does. Crew bosses, shift foremen, medics, even the secretary. They don't go home anymore. The only time they ever leave is when they go down to Bill Skirnir's to eat, then it's right back here and back to work. It's been this way so long nobody from town even wonders about them anymore."

"Don't they ever want to leave?"

"They've got no choice," Sly said, backing away into the forest again. Eric followed. "Jared won't let them leave until the work's all done."

"What, when the iron's tapped out?"

"No. Jared doesn't care about the iron. He just has the crews pull out token bits of it to keep up appearances. Mostly, they're just digging."

"For what?"

Sly shook his head, and a note of deep, abiding fear resonated in his voice. "We'll see."

Offering nothing more, and answering none of Eric's questions, Sly moved off into the forest and took a long, curving path around the perimeter of the mining complex. They trekked without speaking for more than an hour, until the sun dropped behind the mountains and the woods grew dark. The only sound was leaves crunching underfoot as well as Sly occasionally whistling the theme music from *The Great Escape*—one of Randall's favorite movies. When at last they reemerged from the forest, they had traveled almost halfway around the mountain. Sly looked back and forth for several long minutes in the deepening gloom before finally deciding it was safe and walking out into the open.

He led Eric toward a particular tumbled-down set of boulders that looked no different than any other set of boulders in sight. As Sly hopped up onto a large rock and shimmied upward between two more, Eric wondered if maybe he intended for them to climb the whole mountain and sneak in through the top. This worry eased when Sly stopped climbing, motioned toward the ground ahead of him, and dropped out of sight. Eric climbed up to where Sly had disappeared and found a well-hidden cave entrance there, invisible from the ground or the tree line and impossible to find in the dark unless you knew what you were looking for.

"Okay," Sly whispered when Eric had descended into the cave. "I don't suppose you have a flashlight."

"Back in the car," Eric whispered, annoyed. "You didn't think to mention this until now? You knew where you were taking me."

"Didn't even occur to me, man. Sorry." Sly bounced on his toes in agitation and finally shook his head. "All right, nothing for it. I know my way around this part well enough to find the mine tunnels. Jared keeps those lit up, so we should be fine when we get there. Listen, though, if you do see lights ahead of us, stop walking and don't say anything. It might be the tunnels, but it could just as easily be some of Jared's trusties searching the place."

"Trusties? Like the jerks at Skirnir's?"

"Exactly. Jared's got a lot more down here than just those three, and they're all meaner than junkyard dogs. It takes a lot to keep a whole colony of dwarves under your thumb, and these guys have it."

"And these are people from the town?"

"Most of them. Some are outsiders who showed up looking for work in the mines."

"And they live here too and can't leave either?" Sly shook his head. "Why not? Is this Jared guy really that scary?"

ΔΔΔ Doesn't work on dwarves ΔΔΔ sounded like nonsense ΔΔΔ strangeness he'd seen ΔΔΔ nonsense needed a little updating ΔΔΔ

folks here by fear ΔΔΔ he feeds them his blood ΔΔΔ Makes them just plain crazy

e got no choice ΔΔΔ Jared won't let them ΔΔΔ Jared doesn't care ΔΔΔ he's not a guy ΔΔΔ he's a giant ΔΔΔ

"First of all," Sly said, counting on his fingers, "I told you he's not a guy, he's a giant. Second, he doesn't have to keep the regular-size folks here by fear. Them he feeds."

"Feeds?"

"Yeah, his blood. It makes them stronger and crazy-loyal to him. Makes them just plain crazy around everybody else, though."

Eric cocked an eyebrow. Only Sly's tone kept his words from sounding like the craziest thing Eric had ever heard. "I thought you said Jared wasn't a vampire."

Sly rolled his eyes. "He isn't. Giants' blood's always done that to people. I don't know why."

"So why doesn't this 'giant' just feed his blood to the dwarves and leave the townspeople out of it?"

Sly smirked, shaking his head. "Doesn't work on dwarves."

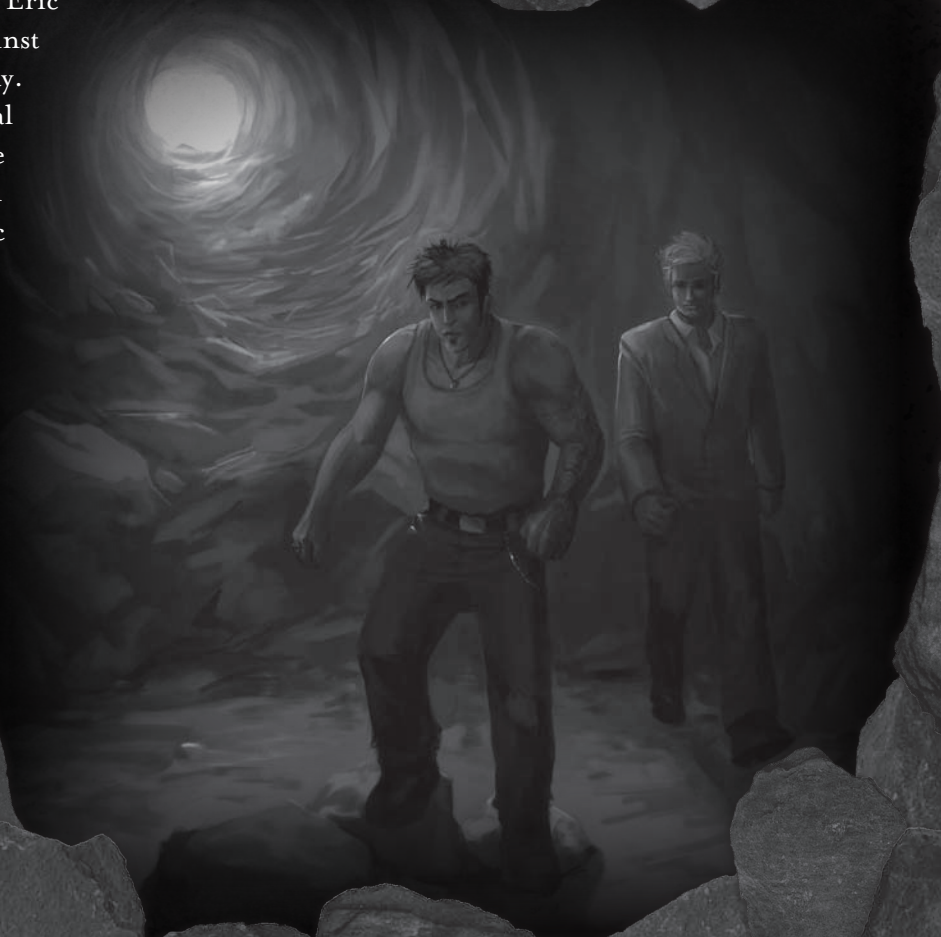
"Why not?"

"Dwarves ain't people."

"Right..." Eric sighed heavily through his nose. "Whatever, man."

He was still of a mind to give Sly the benefit of the doubt here, but the more Sly told him, the more this sounded like nonsense. Of course, considering some of the strangeness he'd seen since Randall's death, maybe his idea of what made something nonsense needed a little updating.

"Shall we, then?" Sly asked with a mocking bow. He directed Eric to put his right hand against the cave wall then led the way. Unconcerned with the total darkness and oppressive weight of the mountain closing in around him, Eric followed.



taller and broader than any man ΔΔΔ he was inhuman ΔΔΔ the giant reached for him ΔΔΔ

uncounted minutes ΔΔΔ jagged switch backs ΔΔΔ pounding silence ΔΔΔ never saw what tripped him ΔΔΔ so

Uncounted minutes—maybe another hour—passed as the natural tunnel proceeded in jagged switchbacks, trending slowly downward. The tiny rasps of their footsteps sounded like an avalanche in the pounding silence, and the blackness was a thick, suffocating presence all around them. Eric walked with his eyes shut to keep them from straining against nothingness. He opened one briefly every several dozen steps to check for light in the distance, but he never saw any.

He never saw what tripped him either.

One moment he was walking carefully along, mindful of his footing now that the path angled more sharply downward; the next, his right foot dangled out over nothing as something angular and soft rammed into his left ankle. All grace and balance vanished as he tumbled over the edge of an even steeper incline and rolled at least a dozen yards down a rocky slope into a shallow pool of cold water. The fall and the shock of sudden cold inspired a string of eloquent, echoing expletives.

"You okay?" Sly's voice asked in the distance behind him. Jerk sounded like was smiling.

Eric sat up on his hands and knees. "Just fine," he growled. "Why don't you—"

Something hissed behind him, and an explosion of white light filled the space. Eric turned and immediately had to shield his eyes against the brilliance of two magnesium flares. He lurched backward, splashing in the freezing-cold water, unable to see anything for a few seconds other than blinding white. Three shapes surrounded and moved past that light, then spread out to close in on him just as the bullies at Bill Skirnir's diner had done. The fierce incandescence made his eyes ache, but he could see what was going on well enough to realize he was in trouble. He'd rolled down a steep, crumbling stone incline into a deep chamber with only one other way out. That exit was a tall, narrow tunnel from which four husky thugs in dirty coveralls had just emerged. One of the men held a white-hot flare in each gloved hand, and the other three each carried heavy sledgehammers. To ward off the glare that was near to blinding Eric, the four men were all wearing black welder's masks with thin, tinted lenses to see through.

"It's him!" the thug with the flares shouted over his shoulder toward the tunnel. "He's here!"

Eric got to his feet as the armed men closed in and the one with the flares stayed back. He raised his fists to defend himself, sloshing backward in the water that covered most of the chamber's floor. The thugs gave him just enough time to be glad Sly hadn't stumbled down here himself, to simultaneously wish he had Sly down here covering his back, and then to wonder how Sly had failed to trip over whatever had sent him tumbling if Sly had been in the lead. Then the time for thinking was over.

The armed thugs rushed him all at once, two advancing from either side while the third charged him straight ahead. The first two got to him at the same time and both swung their sledgehammers in overhead arcs. Eric miraculously managed to grab each one by the haft, stopping them cold. The third guy tried to capitalize on the fact that Eric's arms were spread so wide, but Eric saw it coming and reacted in time. With a mighty pull, he hauled the first two attackers off balance toward each other and stopped the third guy's overhand swing on the crossed hafts of the others' weapons. When the first two attackers reflexively tried to pull away, their hammers' heads locked the haft of the other one perpendicular between them, trapping the thug who'd swung it. Eric kicked that guy in the stomach as hard as he could, sending him shooting backward across the chamber without his hammer. He slammed into the thug with the flares, knocking that guy backward as well and making him drop the flares. The two men crashed into the far wall together and slumped in a tangle of limbs. The blazing sticks splashed into the water to set it hissing and bubbling furiously, but even being submerged couldn't extinguish the burning magnesium. The light from the flares rippled and twisted through the water, making shadows writhe unnaturally.

With two men down, Eric let go of the other two thugs' hammer hafts to grab the head of the trapped hammer in one hand and its haft in the other. With a quick yank, he twisted both weapons out of the two remaining thugs' hands and found himself the

shaped like a man ΔΔΔ enormous ΔΔΔ Jared — the giant ΔΔΔ

something hissed ΔΔΔ unable to see anything ΔΔΔ

only armed guy in the room. The thugs both tried to pile on and bear him down under their combined weight, but he laid them both out with one long hammer swipe. Both men's masks shattered as the force of the blow hurled them in opposite directions across the chamber. They too crashed into stone walls and slid down. When no one rose, Eric hefted his hammer and bellowed his triumph in a wordless whoop that boomed like thunder. The part of him that had been raised by civilized people and should have been horrified at such violence was nowhere in evidence. At that moment, he was a warrior, victorious in battle.

The next moment, he was just a man again as a new enemy approached from the narrow tunnel at the far end of the chamber. Eric strode halfway across the space to meet this new danger, but he stopped dead when he saw who—rather, what—emerged. It was shaped like a man, but it was enormous in both breadth and stature. This, then, must be Jared—the giant about whom Sylvester had not actually been exaggerating.

Eric could only stare for a second as his brain spun its wheels trying to accept the reality of what towered over him. Not only was Jared simply taller and broader of shoulder than any man could be, he was inhuman in other ways too. His thick hair, beard and mustache were a bright, luminous white that hung straight and motionless in matted tangles reminiscent of icicles. His skin was blue-white, and his nose and ears tapered to sharp points. Tiny beads of ice dangled from those points like crystal jewelry, and billowing clouds puffed from his mouth and nose with every breath. As the giant approached, Eric could see that the monster's mouth wasn't full of teeth, but instead sported two rows of transparent cleats made of glistening ice. Perhaps most bizarrely of all, the giant was dressed in the knee-shorts, thong sandals and tank-top muscle shirt of a California beach bum, as if even this brisk winter climate was too warm for him.

"Hey, Jared!" Sly called down from his safe vantage high up in the wall. Chagrined realization and cold resentment coiled in Eric's stomach.

Ignoring the words, the giant locked his eyes on Eric and splashed into the water toward him. The water's temperature plunged, shocking Eric out of his momentary paralysis. He planted his back foot and stood up straight, determined not to show fear or to back down. What did he have to be afraid of? The monster wasn't quite twice as tall as he was. No problem.

"You've got a lot of nerve coming here," Jared said to him in a voice that made Eric's eardrums pound. "This is my mountain now!"

The giant reached for him, and Eric struck back as best he could. Shouting in adrenaline-fueled defiance, he knocked the giant's hand aside with the back of one fist and brought his stolen sledgehammer down onto the giant's collarbone. The weapon's wooden haft shattered like ice from the impact, and its metal head rebounded into the shadows. The giant flinched, but he might as well have been swatting a mosquito bite for all the damage the blow seemed to do him. The giant's flesh wasn't gouged or torn but chipped, and only slightly. Annoyed, Eric threw the useless, broken-off haft of the hammer at the giant. He missed.

Growling in bestial rage, Jared surged forward in a single long stride and kicked Eric under the chin. Eric danced backward seeing stars, wondering dazedly what miracle had kept his head attached. Another blow he never even saw coming slammed into his stomach, folding him up like a rag doll. A third punch, or maybe a kick, pulled his feet off the ground, and the wall rushed up into his back to knock the breath out of him. He landed on a dry part of the floor and rose as high as his hands and knees before his strength reached its limit. He was too dizzy to tell how hurt he might be. It was all he could do to lift his head to figure out where Jared was.

The giant stood across the chamber from him on a dry stone that stuck out from the wall. As Eric fought to regain his feet, Jared snarled in malicious good humor and stuck his hands into the water up to his wrists. The temperature in the entire cavern plummeted now as a crunching, crackling sound radiated from the rock where the giant crouched. Faster than the eye could follow, all the water in the room froze solid into

blinding white ΔΔΔ shapes surrounded and moved ΔΔΔ white-hot flare ΔΔΔ armed men

closed in ΔΔΔ rushed him all at once ΔΔΔ laid them both out ΔΔΔ no one rose ΔΔΔ boomed like thunder ΔΔΔ

a glaring white sheet. Balanced in a wavering three-point stance, Eric thought the giant had been trying to trap him with that trick and missed. Despite the taste of copper in his mouth, the thought brought a smile to his face.

Jared wasn't trying to trap him, though, which Eric realized only too late. With a rolling groan and a heave that made his muscles stand rigid, the giant lifted the entire frozen mass of ice up overhead in one solid sheet—solid, that is, except for the two holes where the magnesium flares had been burning in the water. Eric's eyes widened in awe as the giant took one long step forward and slammed the inches-thick sheet of ice down across his back. He collapsed again as the ice shattered, crushing him beneath its freezing weight. Too weak and dazed to move, he lay still at last. Jared had beaten him.

The giant didn't take long to celebrate his victory. He stomped over to Eric, kicking chunks of broken ice out of the way. He rolled Eric onto his back with one frigid foot and snatched him up by the front of his jacket to look at him face to face. The giant's breath was not only intensely cold, but it had an undertone of rotting meat that made Eric choke. Jared smiled at his beaten foe, peeling blue lips back from hideous teeth. In the brighter light of the now-exposed magnesium flares, however, Jared had a better look at Eric, and he didn't seem to like what he saw. He snarled in bitter disappointment and turned around toward the high entrance whence Eric had tumbled into the chamber.

"What is this?" the giant roared, shaking Eric like a bag of garbage. "This is not who you promised me!"

"Come on, Jared," Sly called down from his hole in the wall. "He's just as good."

"He's not who I wanted!" Jared leaned back and cocked his arm as if to throw Eric like a spear.

"Maybe not," Sly said quickly, "but look at him! Either that's his son, or I'm your daughter."

Jared paused and looked Eric over once more with narrowed eyes. Eric considered himself lucky to be able to hold his head upright and keep his eyelids from drooping.

"He does bear a resemblance," the giant conceded in a grating rumble.

"Resemblance?" Sly shot back. "Oh come on, man. He fooled you, didn't he? If this guy's not his son, he's his twin brother."

The giant considered for a moment, blowing his awful breath in Eric's face, before finally nodding. "Fine," he said. "He'll do for now. I'll find a way to force his father to come rescue him."

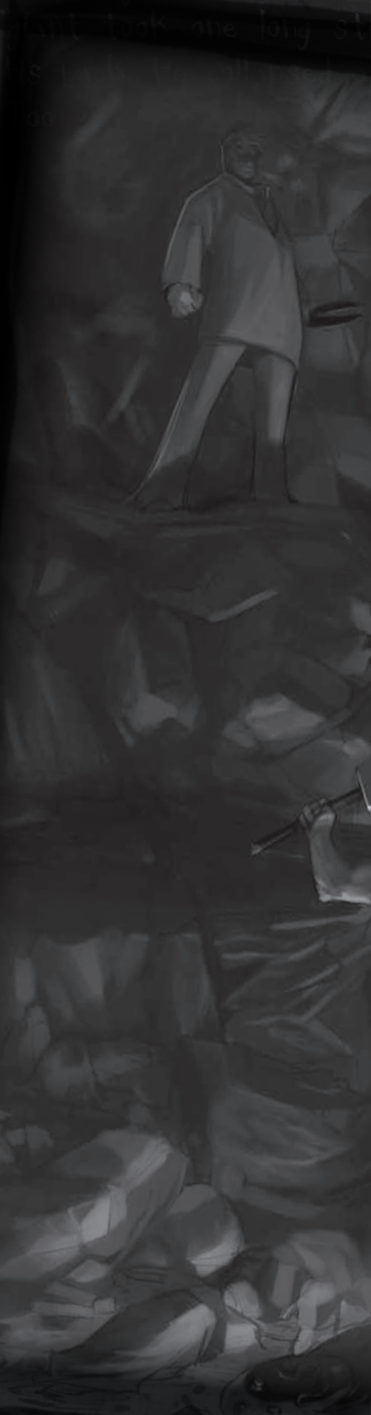
The giant turned to go then, shifting his grip to hold Eric by the neck. Eric hooked his fingers beneath the giant's frigid thumb, but he had no strength to pry it loose. Sly spoke again, and the giant stopped.

"So I can go then, right?" the slick traitor asked in a quavering voice Eric might have pitied under other circumstances. "We're done?"

"Yes," Jared said. "But know this: If I see you again before the end of days, not even your father's cunning will save you from me."

"That goes double for me," Eric wheezed. Darkness was closing off his field of vision, but he still had enough presence of mind to be mad at how

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t made his muscles stand rigid, the giant lifted the entire frozen
and in one solid sheet—solid, that is, except for the two holes where
had been burning in the water. Eric's eyes widened in awe as the
forward and slammed the inches-thick sheet of ice down across
the ice shattered, crushing him beneath its freezing weight.
Eric's first Jared had beaten him.



to celebrate his victory. He stomped over to Eric, kicking
the way. He rolled Eric onto his back with one frigid foot
out of his jacket to look at him face to face. The giant's
cold, but it had an undertone of rotting meat that made
beaten foe, peeling blue lips back from hideous teeth. In

Sylvester had played him.
He vowed then and there to
never let that happen again.

Laughing at the bravado
in Eric's words, the giant
dragged him from the
chamber into the dark tunnel
beyond. As the light from
the dwindling magnesium
flares dimmed and the giant's
eyes and hair began to glow
brighter in response, Eric spat
up a mouthful of something
that looked an awful lot like
blood and passed out.

* * *

Much to his own surprise,
Eric woke several hours later
lying on his back in a small,
frigid chamber of gray stone.
The chamber was hewn from
the mountain, and it bore no
decorations or furniture. A
heavily barred window dominated
the wall behind Eric's head, giving
him a view up through a long,
smooth tunnel that broke through
the mountain's skin a considerable
distance away. Two fat black ravens
had squeezed through the bars and
were sitting on the window ledge,
looking at him.

"Hold your horses," Eric croaked.
"I'm not dead yet."

His throat hurt, his jaw throbbed,
and iron bands of pain squeezed his
ribs, but still he smiled. At least he
was alive. After a false start or two,
he managed to hoist himself up into
a sitting position. His joints protested
like rusty gate hinges and his head swam,
but the longer he remained upright, the
more his pain subsided. A thick wooden
door with a barred window in it stood
before him, permitting yellow light from
an electric bulb outside. It flowed through
the door's window and from beneath its

ings) magnesium flares, however, Jared had a better look

rough edge. Eric hauled himself to his feet to open the door, but there was no handle on his side, and it was locked besides. He grunted and turned around to sit with his back to it.

"All right," he said, eyeing the two ravens across the cramped cell from him. They had hopped down from the window now and were standing on the floor on either side of his boots. "Either fly up that shaft and get me some help, or squeeze under this door and unlock it."

"What would that be worth to you?" the one by his left boot said. Its voice was steady and clear, with just a hint of a Brooklyn accent.

"The heck..." Eric gasped. "You can talk."

"Alas, how quickly they forget," the other bird said, looking across Eric's ankles to his colleague. This one had the crisp, cultured accent of an Englishman.

"We talked to you before, didn't we?" the first raven snapped.

"It wasn't so very long ago," his partner added.

"That guy must've hit my head pretty hard," Eric murmured to himself. "I'm hallucinating."

"Sure, yeah," the raven on his left said, tossing its head in agitation. "You talked to a ghost before and got your butt kicked by a frost giant just now, but we're the hallucinations."

"Calm yourself, Hugin," the right-hand raven said. "Perhaps he simply doesn't remember." The bird hopped up onto Eric's knee and regarded him with two jet-black eyes. "Think carefully now. Don't we look the slightest bit familiar?"

Eric opened his mouth to deny that, but his own memory betrayed him. Last night, he'd almost hit the raven on his left with his car. Then he'd followed it off-road to Skirnir's Diner, where it had settled atop the building with the one sitting now on Eric's knee. Before that, he'd noticed either one or both of them at random points along his journey from home to Nastrond. And before that... His rational self still wanted to decry the memory as false, but he could ignore his own mind no longer. He'd seen these two exact ravens in his grandfather's bedroom the day Randall had died, and they'd spoken to him then too. This is your grandfather, they'd told him. As we know him. As you must remember him.

"There now," the bird on his knee said, pleased.

"I've seen you," Eric said. His voice was flat in astonished confusion. "What are you?"

"We work for your granddad," the first bird, Hugin, said. He jumped up onto Eric's other knee beside his twin. "We were trying to tell you that the day you first saw us."

Eric's jaw trembled, and he had to swallow and start over before he could ask the next question in a steady voice. "You belonged to Randall?"

"We belong to no one," the raven on his right knee said. "We only work for your grandfather. That is to say, your paternal grandfather."

"I don't understand," Eric said.

"Let me explain," the bird continued. "My name is Munin. My esteemed colleague's name, as you've no doubt gathered, is Hugin. We work for the All-Father of Asgard, whose name approximates to 'Odin' in mortal tongues."

"Odin?" Eric breathed. He'd heard that name before. Even "Hugin" and "Munin" sounded familiar now.

"He's catching on," Hugin said.

"Indubitably," Munin concurred. To Eric, he said, "Odin is your paternal grandfather, Eric. He asked us to search you out on behalf of your father."

"My father..."

"Thor," Hugin supplied.

"Thor?" Eric echoed.

"Yes, Eric," Munin replied. "Your father is Thor, the God of Thunder."

When Eric didn't say anything for several long seconds, Hugin said, "If we're lyin' we're dyin', kid. You look just like him."

"But, that can't be right," Eric said, finding his voice again. "I thought Thor had long blond hair."

Both birds sagged in place and shook their heads.

"Oy," Hugin sighed.

* * *

Eric paced, and the ravens sat together on the window ledge, watching him. His incredulity at the sheer madness of what they had said was gone, but he still wasn't sure he wanted to accept it. He proved this by saying,

"Are you sure about this?"

"Yu-huh," Hugin said. It wasn't the first time Eric had asked since he'd started pacing.

"I've seen a picture of my dad that my mom had. She said his name was Don."

"He's introduced himself thus many times," Munin said. "It's short for Donar."

"Not Donner, like you," Hugin added, "but Donar."

Eric didn't hear a difference. "But Thor's a myth! Odin is too."

"Guess we're out of a job, then," Hugin muttered to Munin.

"They're legends, actually," Munin corrected. "Not myths."

"What's the difference?"

"Myths are fabricated from whole cloth," Munin said. "Legends are based on true events and real beings."

"But Thor's supposed to be a God," Eric protested. "If he's real and he's really my father, what's that make me?"

"What that makes you," Hugin said, "is his Scion. His blessed son."

"So I'm a God?"

"No," Munin said.

"Yes," Hugin said at the same time.

Eric stopped pacing and looked at them. They looked at each other.

"May I?" Hugin asked.

Munin bobbed his head in a quick bow and extended a wing toward Eric. "Very well."

"Thanks."

"Oh, indeed."

"Okay," Hugin said, turning back toward Eric. "You're actually only about half God. Your body's mortal; you get that from your mother's side. What keeps your body alive, though, is the ichor you get from your father's side."

"The what?"

"Ichor," Munin piped up. "It's the divine physical essence of which the Gods themselves are composed. When they take physical form here, their bodies consist entirely of it. When blended with the fibers of one's mortal coil, however, ichor magnifies human potential to supernal heights."

"Meaning," Hugin cut in, "that you could be smarter, tougher, stronger, prettier, quicker or sharper than any Joe Blow on the street because of that spark of the divine in your blood."



"Sylvester mentioned that," Eric said in quiet realization. "He said that's how Jared was keeping his thugs here."

Munin nodded. "Mister Guiler was referring to a quality endemic to the blood of giants, but the principle is similar."

"So, wait, how does he know about this stuff?" Eric asked. "Is he a demigod too?"

"Strictly speaking," Munin said, "neither of you is truly a demigod yet. That distinction will come in time as legends about you spread."

"But yeah," Hugin said. "Sly's like you."

"Who's his father then?"

"Loki," Munin said.

"Thor, Odin, Loki..." Eric murmured. "Do all the Norse Gods have—what was it, Scions—running around?"

"Most of them, yes," Munin said.

"And not just our guys either," Hugin added. "The Pesedjet, the Dodektheon, the Amatsukami, the Loa and the Atzlánti all get around among the mortals."

"The what, the who, and the I beg your pardon?"

"What are they teaching in school these days?" Hugin lamented.

"Paranoia," Eric said. "And computers."

"My colleague is referring to the Egyptian, Greco-Roman, Japanese, Voodoo and Aztec pantheons respectively," Munin told him. "Among the inhabitants of the Overworld, these six groups have intermingled with humanity the most... prolifically."

"For how long?"

"Since time on Earth began," Munin answered. "Ever since the Gods first cast the Titans into prison and walked among humankind. In those early days, the Gods regularly involved themselves in the affairs of their chosen tribes of humanity. They sired offspring, and those offspring became the leaders of the tribes. In time, however, those tribes expanded and traveled and came into conflict with each other. Those conflicts embroiled the Gods in conflict among themselves, which I'm sure you realize could prove disastrous."

"Oh, naturally," Eric said without sincerity.

"Therefore," Munin continued, "the Gods of the various pantheons forged an agreement. They would each keep to themselves, forswearing the temptation to overtly interfere in the lives of mankind. Nothing prevented them from coming here to sire more children, but from that point forward, humanity's fate would be its own concern."

Eric blinked a couple of times, and Munin gave a tiny bow.

"You finished?" Hugin said, glaring at his raven companion.

Munin looked around as if he were waking from a pleasant dream. "Dear me, my apologies for interrupting. I do get carried away when I wax nostalgic. You were saying?"

Hugin ruffled his feathers and resettled himself on his perch. He opened his beak to say something then shut it with a tiny click. Then, with a quick, annoyed jerk of his head toward Munin, he said, "Yeah, so... What he said."

"Why doesn't anybody know about this?" Eric asked. It mildly surprised him that he'd stopped wondering whether the ravens were telling him the truth.

"Some do," Hugin said. "Usually the reason people still remember stories about the Gods is because their Scions are out there occasionally reminding you."

"Still..." Eric said.

“Okay, sure,” Hugin said, shrugging his wings. “The fact of the matter is there just haven’t been that many Scions running around for a long time. And those who were out there didn’t always know who their divine parents were. Now, though, things have changed.”

“Changed how?” Eric asked. “Why?”

“An uncomfortable prophecy was revealed to the Gods,” Munin said when Hugin hesitated. “When they heard it, they knew something had to be done.”

the Gods of the various pantheons forged an agreement.



humanity's fate would be its own concern.

They would each keep to themselves,

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the temptation to overtly interfere in the lives of mankind.

“What’s going to happen that’s so bad it makes a bunch of Gods uncomfortable?” Eric asked.

“Not ‘going to,’” Munin said. “It’s what has happened. The Titans have escaped their eons-old prison at last to wage war against the Gods once more.” He looked over at Hugin, who was making a show of preening his black feathers. “Perhaps you would prefer to explain.”

“No, no,” Hugin said. “You go on. I’ll just sit here lookin’ pretty.”

“Right,” Munin said. He looked back to Eric. “The Titans are the Gods’ own ancient, terrible parents. When the Gods came of age at the dawn of time, they rose up and tried to strike the Titans down—just as the

Titans conspired to do to them. At first, the Gods made the mistake of trying to kill the Titans, but that had dire consequences.”

“Like what?”

“When your granddad struck down Ymir, for example,” Hugin said, “the Ice Age ended, and the whole World nearly flooded. Stuff like that. You can’t just kill a Titan and expect things to be fine and dandy.”

“Indeed,” Munin said. “That being the case, the Gods chose instead to defeat the Titans and lock them away somewhere they could do no further harm. Yet the Titans were crafty and powerful, and even the Gods’ best efforts could not hold them forever. It was only a matter of time before they escaped.”

"Hang on," Eric said, the wheels in his mind turning. Something Munin had just said reminded him of something Randall had told him several weeks ago. "This prison the Gods put the Titans in... It was in the Underworld, wasn't it? Wherever souls go when people die?"

Hugin let out an excited caw as Munin nodded. "He's quicker than his dad," the former chirped.

"They weren't locked away in the Underworld per se," Munin said, "but the seals to their prison were located therein. Their freedom caused no small disturbance among the dead, I'm afraid."

"I've noticed," Eric said. "But I'm confused. I've never seen anything that looks like Gods and ancient monsters fighting. Did this just happen recently or something?"

Munin shook his head. "No. Most of the Titans have been free for some years. Their war with the Gods has already been joined. The reason so few of you are aware of it is that the fiercest fighting goes on in the Overworld alone, on the Gods' very doorsteps. Some corners of the Overworld are so viciously besieged that their Gods can no longer slip away here in numbers. Asgard, Olympus and their neighboring regions aren't entirely cut off yet, so more of those Gods have been able to come here to give rise to the likes of you."

"But they can't stay," Eric said soberly, thinking of the note his father had left his mother before vanishing from her life. FATHER NEEDS ME BACK HOME, it said. SOMETHING'S HAPPENED. I MIGHT NOT SEE YOU AGAIN.

"No," Hugin said. "If they're lucky, they can get back once or twice to meet you kids and check up on you. They tell their Scions who they are and give them gifts that let them use some of the Gods' own powers. It doesn't always work that way, though. I'm sorry."

Eric shrugged and looked away, trying not to seem too disappointed. He didn't care about gifts or powers.

"So what are we supposed to do, then?" Eric asked. Hugin cocked his head in confusion. "Scions, I mean. Are we supposed to go join the fight or something?" He looked at Munin then. "You made it sound like the Gods started sneaking off and having kids to be ready once the Titans eventually broke out of their prison."

"Ah," Munin said. "I suppose I did imply that. While that isn't inaccurate, it isn't exactly accurate either. The Gods knew they would need to rely on you, their Scions, once the Titans broke free, but not standing by their side in the Overworld. I'm afraid the Titans would slaughter you posthaste if you confronted them now. There would be little your parents could do to save you."

"Don't make him too overconfident," Hugin murmured.

"No, Eric," Munin said. "Where the Gods need you—where your father needs you—most of all is here."

"As what, a last line of defense?"

"Nope," Hugin said. "A first."

"I don't understand."

"The Titans—" Munin began.

"Wait," Hugin said. "Let me do this one."

"Oh, would you prefer to—"

"I really would."

"Very well, then. Proceed, by all means."

"You don't mind, do you?"

"Perish the thought."

Hugin regarded Eric again. "You see, it's like this: Lots of Titans are fighting with the Gods right now, but they aren't all accounted for. Some probably devoured each other in their prison. Some are

trapped in the earth's crust. Some spawned hordes of lesser creatures, which then spread out across the World when their parents escaped."

"Lesser creatures?" Eric asked. "Like that... that giant that put me in here?"

"Indubitably," Munin said. "Jared is the last descendant of the only surviving child of a giant your father slew in ancient days."

"And the dwarves," Eric said. "Are they titanspawn too?"

"Yeah," Hugin said, "except they're okay. They've got free will because the Titan they spawned from is dead now. The frost giants have free will too, and for the same reason, but unlike dwarves, they tend to be jerks."

At this point, Munin could contain himself no longer.

"Don't forget to tell him about the others as well," he said. With barely a pause, he looked at Eric and said, "Aside from such creatures as the dwarves, there are others lurking about as well. Centaurs, kitsune, lindwurms..." A low caw from Hugin broke Munin's train of thought. "Ahem, yes. Such creatures were created similarly to the Gods long ago, but they are neither divine nor titanspawn, nor entirely mortal like human beings. They are simply what they are."

"But the titanspawn," Hugin said, "those guys are terrible. They're working to free any Titans who are still trapped here, and they'll kill anybody they can't use to spite the hated Gods. Given half the chance, they'd wreck the World and destroy everybody on it just because this is where the Gods' children are."

"That won't stand," Eric said quietly. "But what can I do?"

The ravens bobbed in excitement.

"What you do," Hugin said, "is gather up a Band of Scions like yourself and start hunting the titanspawn down one nest at a time. Most titanspawn don't try to overtly manipulate the regular people around them, but if you scratch the surface in places where something weird's going on, you'll almost always find them causing trouble. When you do, you'll be glad for the help."

"That sounds great," Eric said. "I do see one problem with forming a Band of Scions, though. I'm still a little bit trapped in a giant's dungeon under a mountain right now."

"Oh right..." Hugin said. "That reminds me of something I meant to tell you before."

"Must have slipped your mind, old boy," Munin chided him.

"Tell me what?" Eric asked.

As if in answer, a one-yard-square section of the wall in the rear corner of the cell popped open on a silent hinge and swung outward. The door was so cunningly designed that Eric hadn't noticed any hint of a seam. A gray-haired female dwarf emerged from the low tunnel behind it and set down a darkened lantern.

"Oh my goodness," she said to Eric in what sounded like a Minnesota accent. "Don't you look just like your father?"

Eric could only stare. Hugin and Munin both nodded to the dwarf. She waved to them and nodded back toward the door whence she'd entered.

"Well, now," she said, "looks like I've got the tunnel open. Ready to go?"

"Um..." Eric said.

"Almost," Hugin said.

"Okay then."

"Eric," Munin said, "this is Sindri. She and her husband are old friends of your father."

"He knows who that is, right?" Sindri whispered to Hugin. Hugin gave her a reassuring nod.

"Okay..." Eric said.



"While you were recuperating, we made certain arrangements with her. Hugin should have mentioned it sooner, I admit."

"Hey," Hugin squawked.

"So this is a rescue," Eric said.

"Oh yeah, you betcha," Sindri said. "And we'd better be getting to it. Jared will be coming back to check on you soon."

"Good point," Hugin said. "You guys ought to get going."

"Indubitably," Munin said.

Sindri picked up her dark lantern and moved back into the mouth of the tunnel.

"You're not coming?" Eric asked the ravens.

"I'm afraid not," Munin said. "We have other pressing engagements at the moment."

"Yeah," Hugin said. "The World's not going to fly around itself."

"Well, is there anything else I need to know about... any of this?"

"Nah," Hugin replied.

"Nothing you'd not be better off finding out on your own, anyway," Munin said. "Just remember everything we've told you."

"And try not to do anything too bone-headed from now on," Hugin added. "Like letting a complete stranger trick you into getting ambushed by a frost giant. That guy might have a knack for making himself seem trustworthy, but come on... His name's Sly Guiler for Pete's sake. You got to think, Eric."

Eric nodded with a rueful, embarrassed smile. "Fool me once..." He shrugged. "Fool me twice." He shook his head.

"Atta boy," Hugin said.

"Okay, then," Sindri said, glancing from Eric to the ravens to the cell's wooden door in agitation. "We should really get going."

"Wait," Eric said. He had crossed the room and crouched by the low stone door, but he stopped now and fixed the ravens with a nervous, hopeful expression. "My dad... Thor. Does he, you know, know about me?"

"We've told him all about you," Munin said.

"Yeah, and he couldn't be prouder," Hugin said. "Now get going."

"All right," Eric said. "And thanks." The raven's words filled him with pride and confidence, and he turned to Sindri with fearless conviction. "I'm ready. Let's go."

"Okee-dokee."

The two ravens hopped to the window ledge and looked at each other.

"Shall we?" Hugin asked.

"Yes," Munin said. "Let's shall."

Hugin gestured with his wing. "After you."

"Oh no, after you."

"Seriously, go ahead."

"I'm afraid I must insist..."

Eric ducked into the tunnel and disappeared into the darkness. The dwarf followed, pulling the door shut behind her.

* * *

The tunnel grew larger outside the cell, but Eric still had to hunch over to walk, and he had to follow Sindri in single file. The lady dwarf was remarkably quick on her feet, forcing Eric to work hard to keep

up. She held her now-glowing lantern before her, illuminating the tunnel's smooth walls. The passage wound back and forth, gracefully wending its way ever downward.

"How high up in the mountain are we?" Eric asked.

"Still up by the foot there," Sindri said.

Up by the foot?

"So that's pretty lucky this tunnel was there," he said. "Pretty unbelievable, too. I mean what are the odds Jared would put me a cell with an escape tunnel built in?"

"Oh, luck's got nothing to do with it," Sindri assured him. "That's the only cell Jared ever uses. We've been escaping from there ever since he took over."

"And what, he's never figured this out?"

"Oh, no," Sindri said, chuckling. "We always get the statues in there in plenty of time."

"Huh?"

Sindri glanced back at him without slowing down. "The statues. Whenever somebody gets in trouble and Jared locks him in the cell, we get together and carve a little statue of him. Not Jared, I mean, but whoever's in the cell, don't you know? Then we sneak it up the tunnel and pull the old switcheroo."

"Doesn't it tick Jared off, your rubbing his noses in it like that?"

"Goodness, no. As far as that old bully knows, he's getting exactly what he wanted."

"But... I mean... If all that's left is a statue..."

"Well we dwarves turn to stone if sunlight shines on us, yeah?" Sindri said with a perfectly straight face. "So if that's all Jared finds when he comes to check..." She shrugged. "That's why Jared only uses that cell. And why they only take us out for food at night."

"Oh," Eric said. Sure. Why not? "Still, he's never caught on?"

Sindri shrugged again. "Well, frost giants are tough, sure, and real strong, oh yeah, but they aren't the brightest bulbs in the chandelier. No siree. Especially not Jared."

"Well, there you go, then," Eric said.

"Yep. You betcha."

Eric walked along in silence for several long moments before he spoke again. When he did, he said, "So tell me... You knew my father, right?"

"Still do."

"So what's he like?"

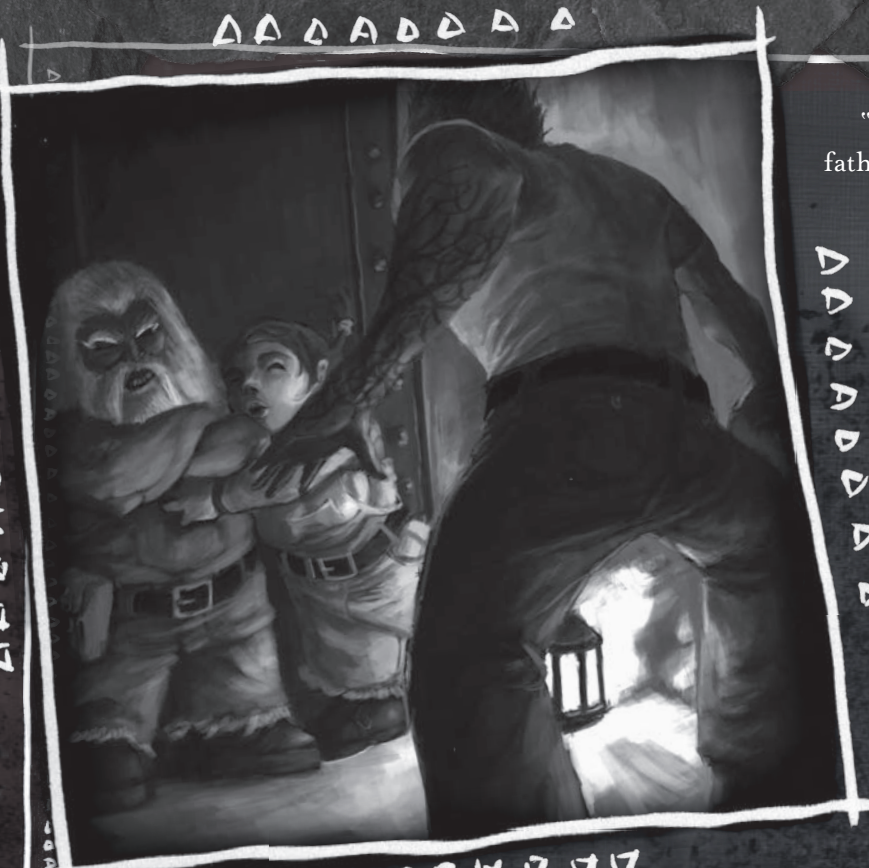
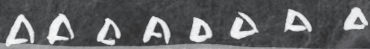
Sindri gave a wistful, girlish laugh at some fond memory. "Oh, he's a heck of a guy. A real heck of one. The stories I could tell you..."

Eric waited for Sindri to say more, but she disappeared around a sharp buttonhook in the tunnel ahead. He followed her to find that the passage ended in a stone door with an iron latch. Sindri motioned for silence, shuttered her lantern and uncovered a tiny peephole to check the space beyond the door. A moment later, she worked the latch and exited the tunnel. Eric squeezed through and emerged into a chamber facing an iron wall twice his height. Plain geometric shapes decorated its surface in complicated, repeating patterns. Sindri had set her lantern down and rushed over to a male dwarf only slightly taller than her. The dwarf had been waiting within, standing next to his own lantern. That lantern provided the chamber's only light.

"Okay, then," the male said as Sindri put her arms around him. He disengaged himself from her stiffly. "That's enough in front of company."

"Fuddy-duddy," Sindri said, backing off.

The dwarf looked Eric over with a skeptical frown then turned to Sindri once more. "So, that's him then?"



"He sure is. Doesn't he look just like his father?"

"Sure," the dwarf said, turning toward the iron wall. "Let's give him the thing and get him on his way, then."

"The thing?" Eric asked.

"Don't be rude, now," Sindri said. She took the other dwarf by the shoulders and turned him to face Eric. "Eric, this is my husband, Brok. Brok, this is Eric. Eric Donner, don't you know?"

"Donner, huh?" Brok said, clearly unimpressed.

"Hey," Eric said.

"Okay then," Brok said. He looked at his wife. "Can we go now?"

Sindri sighed and rolled her eyes. "Fine. Don't mind him, Eric. He's always a Grumpy Gus."

"No need to make a federal case out of it," Brok said.

Sindri gave Brok a domestic scowl, and the little man fell silent. For a long moment, the three of them stood around saying nothing, just looking at each other.

"So..." Eric said at last. "I understand there's a thing."

"Oh yeah," Sindri said. She looked at Brok. "Go on and open up the door, why don't you?"

"Yeah, okay."

Brok walked over to the iron wall and centered his stubby hand over one of the repeating geometrical patterns. He pressed one of the shapes and turned the entire pattern around in a circle. When it had completed its revolution, the depressed shape popped back into place and a hairline seam split the wall right down the center. It seemed to sigh as trapped air was released.

"Go on, then," Brok said to Eric as he stepped back. "Give her a push."

"Brok Alfrigsen!" Sindri snapped. "Do the counterbalances too."

"You hush now. If he can't move the doors, he won't be able to use the thing too well anyways."

"Fair enough," Eric said before Sindri could scold Brok again. He walked up to one door and laid his hands against it. It didn't budge for an experimental push, so he planted his feet and put his back into it. It took all his strength to get the massive construct moving, but once it began to swing on its hinges, it opened smoothly and settled into a niche cut into the inner wall. Brok and Sindri walked in behind him as he flexed his shoulders and his back to make sure he hadn't pulled any muscles.

"Okay, then," Brok said with just a hint less gruffness. "Pretty good."

Sindri smiled up at Eric. "Your father hung that door himself after we built it. You sure are strong like him."

Brok crossed what turned out to be a large chamber and plugged his lantern into a silvery apparatus. The apparatus magnified and reflected the light up into a similar construction on the ceiling that reflected it again to others all around the room. The mirrors and lenses illuminated the entire room



better than any fluorescent bulbs could. With the lights up, Eric looked around in wonder. Sturdy dwarf-sized tables and shelves lined the walls and cluttered the floor. On every inch of open space stood fanciful mechanical and clockwork items of all shapes and sizes, surrounded by metalworking and stonemasonry tools. It seemed like a workshop out of a science-fiction fairytale, boasting such wonders as a sectional sword that telescoped into its own hilt, a set of iron gloves with hydraulic fingers, a clockwork mole with an empty compartment in its belly, a mechanical spider with two seats and a steering wheel on its back, and much more. Blueprints surrounded half-finished items, and precisely trimmed and tailored slipcovers hid other ones. It was to one of the latter that Brok headed as Eric stared at his surroundings.

"What is this place?" Eric whispered.

"Our workshop," Sindri said. "Brok's a tinkerer, don't you know?"

"Not too much nowadays," Brok said as he untied the straps holding the slipcover in front of him closed.

"Yeah," Sindri sighed. "He hasn't come down here much since Jared showed up. Poor guy."

"Sorry to hear that," Eric mumbled.

"Yeah well," Brok said. "Anyways, here's the thing."

Brok pulled away the slipcover; beneath it was a metal stand on which rested the largest handgun Eric had ever seen. The handle, trigger and cocking hammer were only slightly larger than normal—proportioned nicely for Eric's large hand, actually—but the barrel and cylinder were monstrously oversized. Altogether, the thing was as big as a violin.

"Wow," Eric breathed.

"Get it," Brok said.

"Go ahead and try it out," Sindri said, nudging Eric's leg.

Eric lifted the weapon, finding it fit his palm perfectly and was deceptively well balanced. He held it out straight in front of him in one hand, sighting along the barrel at a ridiculous-looking mechanical owl on a nearby worktable. The piece was extremely heavy—too heavy for the average person to lift in both hands, much less aim with one. Eric pulled back the hammer with his thumb and noticed that the firing pin was not steel, but a fleck of gray-black stone. With the hammer back, the air tingled with a hint of static electricity.

"Careful now," Brok said. "That's no toy."

Eric eased the hammer back into place, and the electricity in the air dissipated. "This is an incredible piece of work," he said.

"We made it our own selves," Sindri said, beaming with pride. "Did you notice anything about the firing pin there?"

"It looks like stone," Eric said, unsure of the significance.

"Yeah, but that's not just any stone," Sindri said. "It's a piece of your father's hammer, Mjolnir. We made that too, don't you know?"

"So that's yours then," Brok said. He'd wandered to a shelf and was coming back with a wooden box the size of a loaf of bread.

"Mine?" Eric couldn't believe it.

"Yeah, you betcha," Sindri said. "When your father first heard about you, he sent that little piece of Mjolnir to us. He wanted us to craft you a weapon you could use when you got old and strong enough. Once Jared showed up, though, we had no way to get it to you."

"You're serious?" Eric asked. "My father actually had you make this for me?"



it's your birthright, boy ΔΔΔ a little present ΔΔΔ hint of mischief ΔΔΔ open her up ΔΔΔ the cylinder rolled out ΔΔΔ

at the bottom ΔΔΔ take this path ΔΔΔ all right ΔΔΔ

ΔΔΔ where's Jared ΔΔΔ like a spear ΔΔΔ cavern shaped like a spear ΔΔΔ eharmas ΔΔΔ saw for himself ΔΔΔ they finally broke through ΔΔΔ they found it ΔΔΔ found what? ΔΔΔ understand when he

it's your birthright, boy ΔΔΔ a little present ΔΔΔ hint of mischief ΔΔΔ open her up ΔΔΔ the cylinder rolled

"It's your Birthright, boy," Brok said. He set his long box down and unlocked it. When he opened it, Eric could see an alternating row of very large bullets within. "A little present of some of the old man's power."

"What kind of power, exactly?"

"You'll see," Sindri said, smiling with a hint of mischief.

"Just don't play with it," Brok said. He took six bullets out of the box and carried them over to Eric in a double handful. "Okay, open her up."

Eric thumbed a latch next to the handle, and the cylinder rolled out on a metal armature. He held the pistol down where Brok could reach it, and the dwarf dropped the six bullets into place. When he was finished, he popped the cylinder back. Eric put his thumb on the hammer to pull it back and spin the cylinder, but Brok laid a hand over his and shook his head.

"Sorry," Eric said. "Not a toy."

"Right."

"So how's it feel?" Sindri said, gesturing at the pistol and smiling up at Eric. "Balance okay there? It's not too heavy?"

"Feels great," Eric said, hefting the weapon and aiming with it once more. Even with the rounds in the cylinder, it wasn't appreciably heavier than it was unloaded. "Feels like it..." He stopped and smiled a little sheepishly, embarrassed. "Like it was made for me."

"Well now," Sindri said, her smile even brighter. "Okay then."

"Guess you'll be going now," Brok said, shutting the box of oversized ammunition.

"Already?" Eric asked.

"Sure," Brok said. "I can lead you back to the surface there and get you on your way."

"But I wasn't planning on leaving just yet," Eric said.

"I don't think we have any beds your size there," Brok said. "Maybe we can push some together—"

"Brok," Sindri chided. "Don't be such a hardhead."

"Listen," Eric said. "I guess you're not going to ask for my help, but you don't have to."

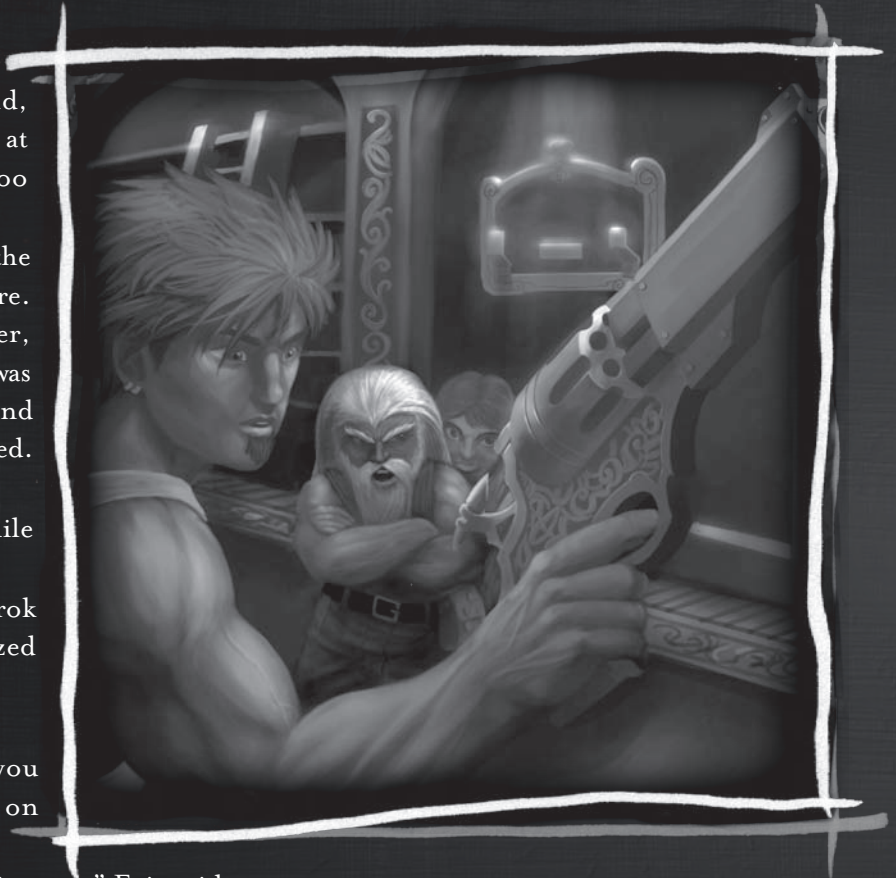
"Help with what?" Brok muttered, glowering past Eric at nothing. "We're getting by all right."

"Oh we're doing no such thing, and you know it," Sindri said. "Don't listen to him, Eric."

Eric smiled. "I wasn't. I know you've got a problem. Something about a frost giant invading your home with his lackeys."

"Maybe," Brok shrugged. Sindri crossed her arms and glared at her stubborn husband. "No concern of yours."

"Sure it is," Eric said. "It's what my dad would want, isn't it?" Sindri nodded, pausing in her glare at Brok to smile up at Eric. Only pausing, though. "Besides, it feels like Fate itself pulled me here to this very spot. I'd be a fool to ignore that, especially when people need my help."



to find Jared ΔΔΔ they finally broke through ΔΔΔ they found it ΔΔΔ found what? ΔΔΔ understand when he

d out on a metal armature ΔΔΔ thump on the hammer ΔΔΔ not a toy ΔΔΔ feels like it was made for me

"So what do you want to do then?" Brok asked.

"I want you to take me back to the mines to find Jared," Eric said. He propped the pistol barrel on his right shoulder and grinned. "I owe him a talking-to."

"Okay then," Sindri said. "I can do that. We're not that far from—"

"No, I'll do it," Brok sighed. "I know the tunnels better."

"You don't know any such—"

"Anyways," Brok cut in again with a sharp glare at his wife. "I said I'll do it."

Sindri looked at Brok with wide eyes, but she offered no more argument.

"Actually," Eric said, "there's somewhere else I need you to take me first. Sly told me your people aren't mining iron anymore, you're just digging. Is that true?"

Sindri paled, and Brok's frown deepened. Finally he managed a weak, "Sure, yeah."

"Then I want to see why," Eric said.

"Okay then," Brok said at last. "It's just as well. That's probably where Jared is anyways."

"Not necessarily," Sindri said quietly. "Not unless..."

"They did," Brok said. "They finally broke through this morning. They found it."

"Why didn't you tell me?"

Brok shrugged. "Well, you know... Didn't think you should worry."

Eric's eyes narrowed. "Found what?"

* * *

Brok wouldn't explain, and Sindri couldn't find the words, so all Eric could do was follow Brok out of the workshop and into the tunnels. All the dwarf said was Eric would understand when he saw for himself. In fact, that was all Brok had to say. He led Eric out into the antechamber and into a different tunnel than the one Sindri had used to lead him here, never saying a word. They proceeded on a level path to the epicenter of the mountain then took a connecting passage that led them steeply downward.

After an hour's descent, they emerged into an enormous cavern shaped like a spear-wound in the mountain's heart. It was a gouge many levels deep, and every ridge overlooking the empty drop was lined with wood-railed walkways. Large tunnels lit by generator-powered electric bulbs fed onto those walkways, and Eric could see people trudging in and out of those tunnels. Most were dwarves, but a few were full-sized men. They shouted and bullied and cracked whips over the dwarves, who took the abuse uncomplaining.

"So that's the mines there," Brok said.

"Where's Jared?"

"Probably at the bottom. Take this path around the edge until you get to the ladder cut in it. It'll do you."

"Thanks," Eric said. He took a deep breath and hefted the cannon Brok had given him—the Birthright Thor had left for him. "All right, here goes."

"Okay then," Brok said. He turned and headed back up the tunnel. "See you."

Eric made his way along the darkened path along the mineshaft's edge until he reached the stone ladder. What Brok had failed to mention was that said ladder was carved for dwarven proportions. It was well made and easily supported Eric's weight, but the grooves were barely deep enough to accommodate his long fingers or the toes of his boots. Worse, he had to make the trip down one-handed because he didn't have a holster for his enormous pistol. The descent into darkness was harrowing and ridiculously dangerous, but Eric was too brave to slow down or consider turning back. Nonetheless, he was relieved when the mine's lowest level came into clear view through the shadows.

That level was the narrowest point of the excavation, but it was still the size of a football field. In the center of the expanse, dwarf work crews emerged from a hole scooped out of the floor. The hole was easily

ΔΔΔ lead you back to the surface ΔΔΔ not going to ask for my help ΔΔΔ you've got a problem ΔΔΔ frost giant ΔΔΔ no concern of

ΔΔΔ yours ΔΔΔ feels like fate itself pulled me here ΔΔΔ id be a fool to ignore that ΔΔΔ take me back ΔΔΔ

as big as Eric's whole house, and he couldn't see the bottom from his angle. Each of the exhausted dwarves who emerged was rigged with an over-the-shoulder harness to which was attached a cargo net full of rough-hewn rocks. Beneath these harnesses, the dwarves all wore tool belts from which hung hammers, pickaxes, chisels and the like. Human overseers waited for these dwarves at the rim, exhorting them to hurry up and move their lazy bones.

Under the direction of their crew bosses, the dwarves staggered to enormous metal collection trays and shrugged the stones from their cargo harnesses into them. As the trays filled, workers on higher levels hauled on ropes that lifted them to where they could be emptied onto mine cars. While the trays were aloft and being unloaded, the dwarves who had disposed of their burdens made their way to nearby stone ladders and ascended.

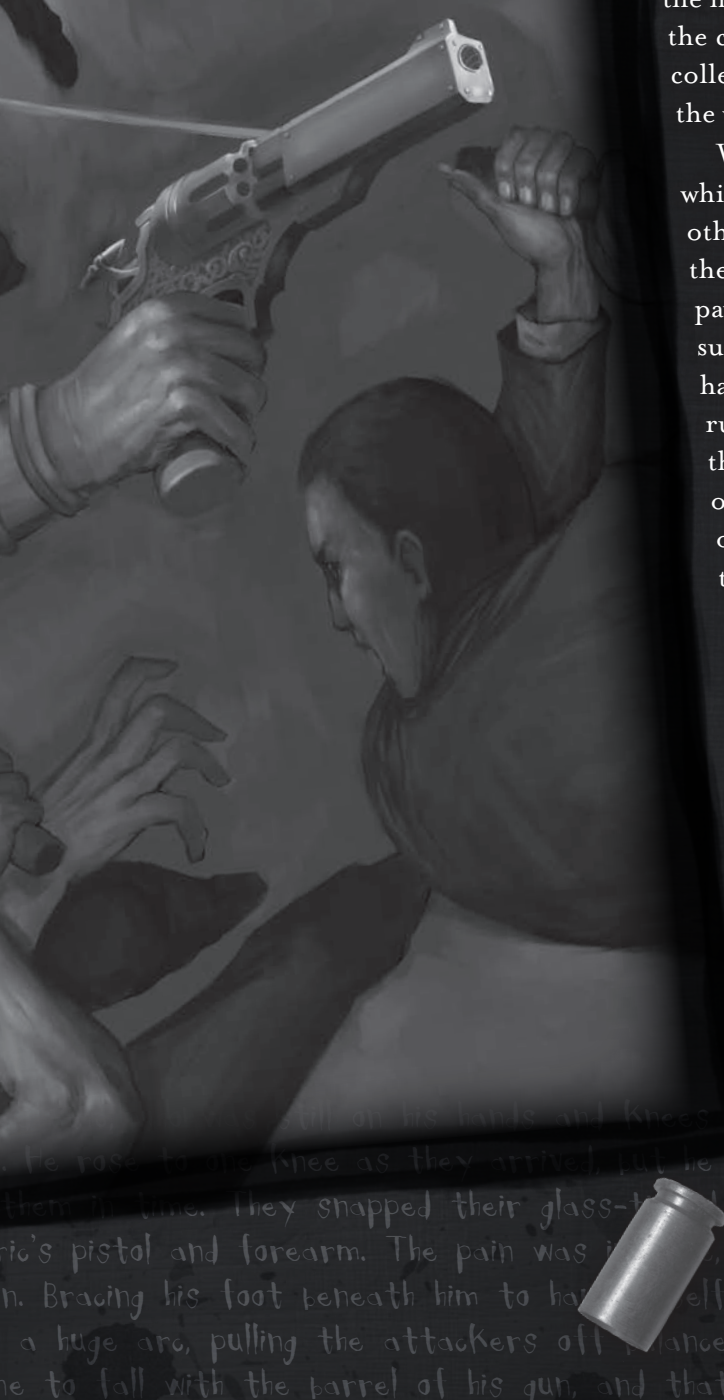
Those dwarves who still carried stones could only wait, though, and their overseers grew bored. One bully lashed out with his whip, trying to get a rise from his stoic charges. When close calls earned him no reaction, he sneered and actually popped one of the dwarves across the face, splitting the skin of his forehead. The dwarf toppled backward, spilling the stones from his harness and knocking several other dwarves over. These dwarves also dropped the stones they'd been carrying. This calamity enraged the overseer and his cohorts, and they all converged on the fallen dwarves, raising their voices and their whips.

Eric had seen enough. Bellowing in incoherent anger, he launched himself from his high vantage on the ladder and plummeted toward the knot of overseers. Opening fire with his pistol was risky with the dwarves still milling about, but he didn't need the pistol's firepower yet. (Besides, Brok had neglected to bring the box of ammunition with him, leaving Eric with only six bullets.) He landed on the cluster of converging overseers, driving his knees between the shoulder blades of the one who'd bloodied the dwarf. The thug crumpled beneath him without even a cry of pain, and two others fell to either side. The dwarves nearest whom those two fell stared at them in shock for a moment then, as if with one mind, threw their cargo harnesses down onto the groggy humans' heads. The fallen overseers twitched once and lay still.

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The four remaining bullies crowded around Eric, who was still on his hands and knees amid the ruin of the person he'd landed on. He rose to one knee as they arrived, but he couldn't bring his gun to bear on any of them in time. They snapped their glass-tipped whips in unison, coiling the ends around Eric's pistol and forearm. The pain was intense, but Eric didn't lose his grip on his weapon. Bracing his foot beneath him to haul himself upright, he jerked his gun arm around in a huge arc, pulling the attackers off balance as he stood. He clotheslined the first one to fall with the barrel of his gun, and that one's head knocked into the head of the man behind him. Eric crushed the third guy with a punch in the chest that sent him crashing backward into a half-full rock-collection tray. Finally, he cracked the fourth man's skull with the weighted handles of the whips the other three had lost.

When the space nearest him was clear, Eric shook all four whips into a pile at his feet and looked around. None of the other overseers on this level were still standing, even across the central excavation from him. Those who hadn't been paying attention had been pulled down by the dwarves that surrounded them and buried under the stones the workers had been forced to carry. Others fled for the stone ladders, rushing toward waiting dwarves with stones or hammers in their hands. Before Eric could even speak, a handful of overseers were hurled screaming back to the floor. Dwarves on the higher levels cheered, and the ones around Eric at the bottom returned that cheer.

"There's still more in the tunnels up there," the dwarf with the bleeding forehead said. He stood supported between two younger dwarves.

"Don't worry, though," one of the two supporting their wounded friend said. "We can handle them."

"You sure?" Eric asked.

"Oh yeah, you betcha," the wounded one said. "Brok's been telling us to be ready for this since he saw you over at Skirnir's. Truth to tell, we've been ready a lot longer."

"Brok, huh?" Eric murmured. At the edges of the room, the dwarves had begun to scale the stone ladders en masse.

"So you'll be looking for Jared then."

Eric nodded.

"He's down there," the wounded dwarf said. "Don't know what he's doing, but he hasn't come up since we broke through this morning."

"I'll deal with him," Eric said. The crowd around him had thinned considerably.

"Okay," the wounded dwarf said. "Bye."

With his friends' help, the dwarf made his way to the nearest stone ladder to join his fellows in retaking their home from their human overseers.

* * *

Boiling with adrenaline, Eric made his way to the deep central excavation scar. The pistol was a feather in his hand, and his earlier wounds pained him not at all. He looked into the house-sized hole and saw only one light glowing feebly in the darkness at the bottom. That light was the soft glow radiating from Jared himself, who rested on his hands and knees with his forehead pressed against the floor in an attitude of prayer. Ready to put an end to this at last, Eric leaped into the hole.

He landed in a three-point crouch, his pistol sticking straight out behind him, on what he assumed was a stone floor. Jared knelt unmoving ten feet away, his blue-white body glowing dimly in the darkness. As Eric rose, Jared lifted his head and sat back on his knees. The smile Jared wore when he looked up was serene, almost beatific. On that monstrous face, the expression was a horrific parody.

"You again," Jared said.

"Get up," Eric said, pointing the pistol at the monster's heart. He should have pulled the trigger right then, but he couldn't bring himself to shoot somebody who was only kneeling and smiling at him.

"You're too late," Jared said, making no move. "We've broken through."

"Whatever," Eric said. He cocked the pistol with his thumb, and a luminous thread of electricity stretched from the oversize shell to the splinter of Mjolnir in the hammer.

Jared's smile widened, and he extended his arms to his sides. "Shoot me, God-child. Martyr me in the glorious presence of the one who will destroy your world!"

Eric frowned in confusion, but that confusion lasted only a moment. With the new luminescence his pistol now provided adding to the faint glow emanating from the frost giant, his eyes had adjusted to the darkness enough to see his surroundings clearly. He saw only too late that he wasn't standing on the stony floor of a hole in the earth at all. The surface on which he stood, though hard as stone, had a greenish, reflective sheen, and it bulged slightly in the middle. It wasn't stone at all, he realized, but the glossy, green scale of some imponderably huge thing buried in the earth's crust.

"Fire, Scion of Thor!" Jared shouted. "Wake the destroyer if you dare!" The tiniest tremor tickled the soles of Eric's feet through his boots, and Jared's smile became a manic rictus of ecstasy. "Or have I awakened it already?"

Horrified, Eric froze, and a jolt from the ground nearly knocked him off balance. He looked down to see a long seam split what he thought was a scale directly beneath his feet, running from the wall behind him, between his boots and to within inches of where Jared knelt leering at him. Something foul and wet glistened beneath the crack, and Eric cried out in terrified realization. He wasn't

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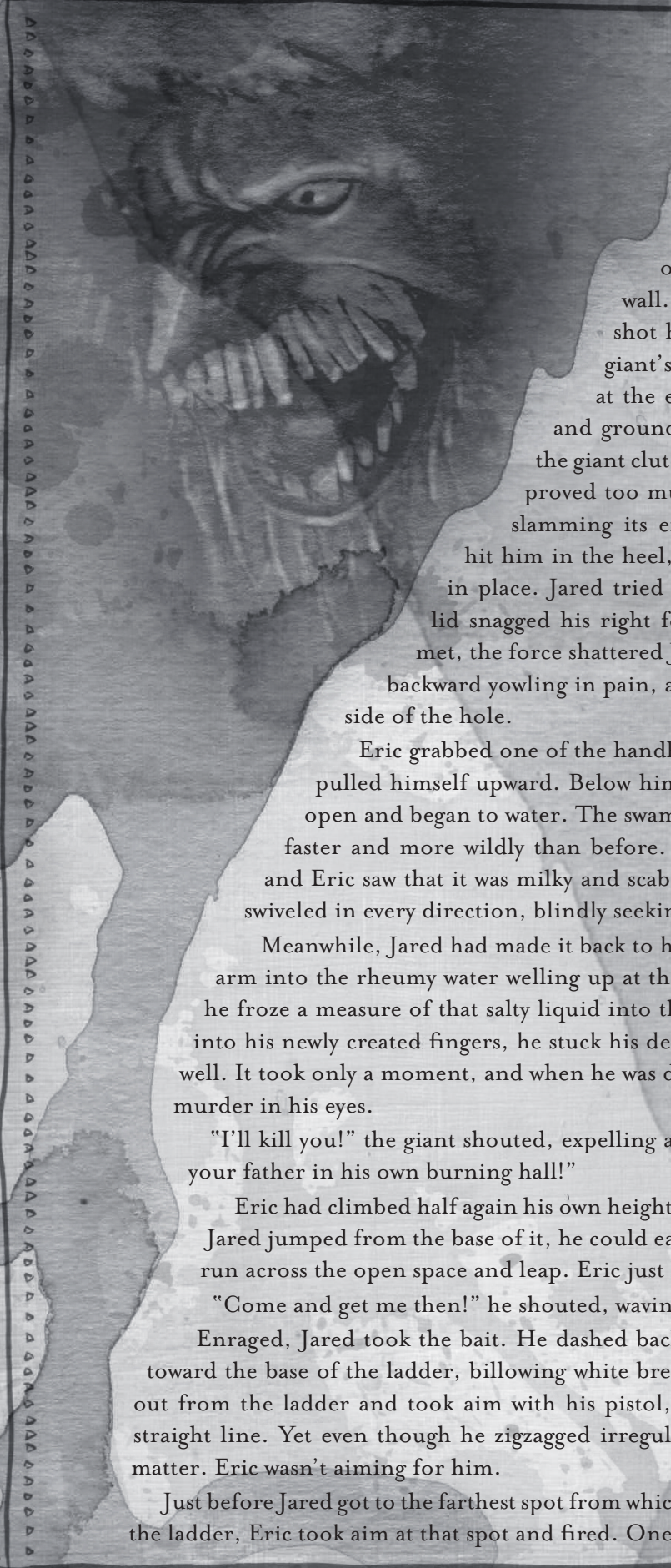
standing on just some random scale of the buried horror Jared's workers had begun to unearth, but right on top of one of its eyes.

Eric stumbled as the gruesome eyelids rolled apart, pulling his feet in opposite directions, and that's when Jared made his move. As Eric lost his balance, the frost giant sprang to its feet and charged at him. Eric fired off a shot over the giant's head, and the report shook the air like a thunderclap. A huge chunk of the wall imploded and fell in where the bullet hit it, but Jared was unharmed. Running along the vast beast's slowly receding eyelid, Jared punched Eric hard in the chest. Eric braced himself for the blow, but it threw him backward into the wall. Jared jumped across the wet chasm between the separating eyelids and met Eric as his body slid down the stone surface.

Only by ducking at the last second was Eric able to avoid the crushing elbow thrust Jared aimed at his head. Chips of stone flew and rained down the back of his neck as he crouched and leaped away from the wall past Jared. He tried to aim and fire another shot at the giant, but Jared kicked the barrel just in time and sent the booming shot wild. The bullet flew up into the larger chamber, shattering a dangling collection tray full of stones that had yet to be unloaded. Eric landed on his shoulder, rolled and came to a stop as Jared turned toward him. The giant shook his head to clear the thunderous gunshots' pounding echoes. Eric aimed again and tried to stand, but as he did, the eyelid beneath him snapped fully open, pulling solid ground out from under him like a rug in a slapstick comedy. Jared lost his footing too, bellowing out a great white yelp of frigid breath.

The sticky, yellow-white mass Eric landed on was shot through with red veins larger than his legs, and it was the most awful substance he'd ever touched. It sucked at him like clinging mud and smelled faintly of stagnant swamp water. Trying hard not to vomit, he pulled himself upright and





struggled for balance on its wobbling, semisolid surface. Across the eye from him, Jared was also rising, laughing maniacally. Before the frost giant could regain his feet, Eric cocked his pistol once more and fired. The eye rolled beneath him as he squeezed the trigger, however, throwing off his aim and making him stumble into the wall. He didn't miss altogether this time, but the shot he'd been aiming at Jared's heart only hit the giant's left arm. The thunderclap shattered the limb at the elbow, spraying frozen fragments on the walls and ground behind him. Staggering off balance anyway, the giant clutched his icy stump and fell over. This irritation proved too much for the buried beast's eye, and it blinked, slamming its enormous lids together. The lid nearest Eric hit him in the heel, knocking him onto his back and rolling him in place. Jared tried to stand up and leap out of the way, but the lid snagged his right foot and jerked him backward. When the lids met, the force shattered Jared's ankle between them. The giant flopped backward yowling in pain, and the opposite lid pulled him away to the far side of the hole.

Eric grabbed one of the handholds the dwarves had hacked into the wall and pulled himself upward. Below him, the eye blinked once more then stayed half open and began to water. The swampy odor intensified, and the eye began to roll faster and more wildly than before. Its horrid pupil rolled out of hiding at last, and Eric saw that it was milky and scabrous with tarpaulin-sized cataracts. The pupil swiveled in every direction, blindly seeking the source of the irritation.

Meanwhile, Jared had made it back to his knees and had plunged the stump of his left arm into the rheumy water welling up at the edge of the monstrous eyelid. With a touch, he froze a measure of that salty liquid into the crude shape of a new arm. As he flexed life into his newly created fingers, he stuck his destroyed ankle into the water and repaired it as well. It took only a moment, and when he was done, he turned to Eric and glared at him with murder in his eyes.

"I'll kill you!" the giant shouted, expelling a plume of white mist. "I'll feed your bones to your father in his own burning hall!"

Eric had climbed half again his own height on the crude stone ladder, and he knew that if Jared jumped from the base of it, he could easily tear Eric down. All the giant had to do was run across the open space and leap. Eric just hoped Jared realized this too.

"Come and get me then!" he shouted, waving with the barrel of his gun.

Enraged, Jared took the bait. He dashed back onto the surface of the hideous, buried eye toward the base of the ladder, billowing white breath like steam from a locomotive. Eric leaned out from the ladder and took aim with his pistol, but Jared wasn't foolish enough to run in a straight line. Yet even though he zigzagged irregularly across the intervening distance, it didn't matter. Eric wasn't aiming for him.

Just before Jared got to the farthest spot from which he could leap and grab Eric's boot down from the ladder, Eric took aim at that spot and fired. One more peal of thunder rang out, and the bullet

g, laughing maniacally ΔΔΔ the eye rolled beneath him ΔΔΔ the thunderclap shattered the limb

punctured the thick sclera covering the gruesome white of the beast's eye. A geyser of viscous white fluid shot into the air just as Jared tried to step down on the spot that had disintegrated beneath him. Helpless to stop himself, the giant screamed and plunged forward into the awful spray of matter, sinking into the gaping hole beneath. He caught himself at chest height, partially blocking off the flow of vitreous humor, but he couldn't find purchase to pull himself free. Nor did he have a chance to try as the eye rolled violently in its socket and the buried monstrosity tried to blink away the painful irritant. Its stone-heavy eyelids crashed into either side of Jared's chest, shattering his body into two uneven pieces. The lower half remained lodged in the beast's eye, but the top half slid down its eyelid in a slurry of filmy fluid. Just to be on the safe side, Eric took aim once more and put one more bullet through the back of Jared's neck, shattering the last of the giant into millions of pieces. Jared wouldn't be putting himself back together after that.

Of course Eric had a bigger problem now; he was staring down at its milky, thrashing oculus. As if to make the World aware of its presence, the beast finally managed to cry out in hate and pain at the wound it had taken. Tons upon tons of stone muffled the sound, but the fury and power of the outcry was undeniable. It started as a low moan in the air that built in volume and made the very walls shiver. That shivering built into a faint rumbling and on into a grinding tremor, while the sound intensified from a moan to a wail to a demonic roar. Eric wanted to clap his hands to his ears, but it was all he could do to keep hold of his pistol and cling to the shaking stone wall. When jagged cracks spread out from the stone all around him, Eric climbed for all he was worth, unaware that he too was screaming as the injured beast's roar battered his eardrums. He scrambled upward as fast as he could, feeling the sheer walls of the excavated hole crumbling beneath him. The climbing surface tilted to an easier angle but tried to pull him down as the stones disintegrated and sloughed downward. Even when he'd leaped clear of the hole, he still had to scrape and scuttle away as the once-solid ground sagged to fill in the gap Jared's operation had dug out. In desperation, he leaped toward one of the iron collection trays dangling nearby as the ground rolled away beneath his feet. He landed in it with a clang that was lost in the pervasive din and finally clapped his hands over his ears. The ground fell away beneath him, but the chains held the tray in place, and he swayed there, screaming and trying to shut out the awful noise of the wounded thing buried in the earth.

It was no use. The sound went on forever, until it finally overwhelmed him and plunged him into darkness.

* * *

He awoke once to find himself floating, semi-deaf, through tunnels that pulsed with electric light. A dozen hands bore him aloft. He tried to speak, but his throat was raw. The rumbling had stopped, though, and he still had the Birthright his father had left for him.

* * *

He awoke again later, better able to hear. Three small beds had been pushed together in a stone cavern, and he lay across them wrapped in blankets. Brok and Sindri were there, and Sindri gushed over him with effusive praise and congratulation. Eric could understand only every few words. His head pounded. His joints ached. His throat hurt. But he was alive and getting stronger. He just needed more rest. Brok told Sindri this. Eric agreed, and slept again.

* * *

He didn't know how long it had been when he next woke, but he could hear again, and he was only vaguely sore—no worse than any Saturday morning after a football game. He found Brok sitting in a squat chair beside his beds, smoking a wooden pipe. Brok told him the entire lower level of the mineshaft had collapsed, burying the horror Jared had wanted unearthed. Burying whatever was left of Jared too. When the beast's awful shriek had subsided, the dwarves had gone back to the hole and found Eric curled up in a collection tray, swaying safely above the rubble. They'd brought him back here to recuperate. It had been a week.

In that time, Brok explained offhand, the dwarves had gotten rid of all the blood-poisoned human trusties who'd been working for Jared. None had escaped.

ΔΔΔ too much for the buried beast's eye ΔΔΔ snagged his right foot and jerked him backward ΔΔΔ swampy odor intensif

ed ΔΔΔ !! Kill you ΔΔΔ feed your bones to your father ΔΔΔ burning hall ΔΔΔ Jared took the

Over the past few days, teams of workers had collapsed all the tunnels leading into the mineshaft, sealing the area off like a vast tomb. Doing so cut them off from half the area they had once claimed as their home, but nobody raised a fuss about it. They'd just carve new tunnels is all, only they'd carve them up into the mountain instead of down. After a while they'd even start coming back to town, Brok said, getting people used to seeing them around again. It sounded to Eric like the dwarves had things well in hand.

"Guess you'll be going soon then," Brok said, puffing smoke rings.

"I guess so," Eric replied. "Maybe after breakfast, though."

"We'll take you down to Bill Skirnir's. Haven't had a chance to stock up our own larders yet."

"Sounds good," Eric said. He stood up and found himself dressed in only a cut-off pair of dwarf pants that fit him like boxer shorts. "Um..."

Brok pointed to a short table where Eric's clothes had been mended and cleaned while he slept. Atop them sat his pistol, as well as the box of bullets he'd seen Brok carrying before. The dwarf stood up and headed for the door to give Eric some privacy. He stopped by the table to tap the wooden box with his pipe stem.

"We'll get you more of these when you need them," he said. "Least we can do, don't you know?"

"Thanks," Eric said, doffing the dwarf shorts and pulling on his own pants.

"Yeah, you too. I'll be down the hall."

"Okay then."

"Hey, one more thing," Brok said, stopping just outside the door. "Do you have a car?"

Eric nodded. "It's a black '67 GTO. I parked it a couple of miles from here and came in on foot."

"Okay. That's the one we found then. I'll get you the number of a good body shop in town after breakfast."

"Huh?" Eric's eyes widened. "What the heck happened to my car?"



SECTION

H E R O



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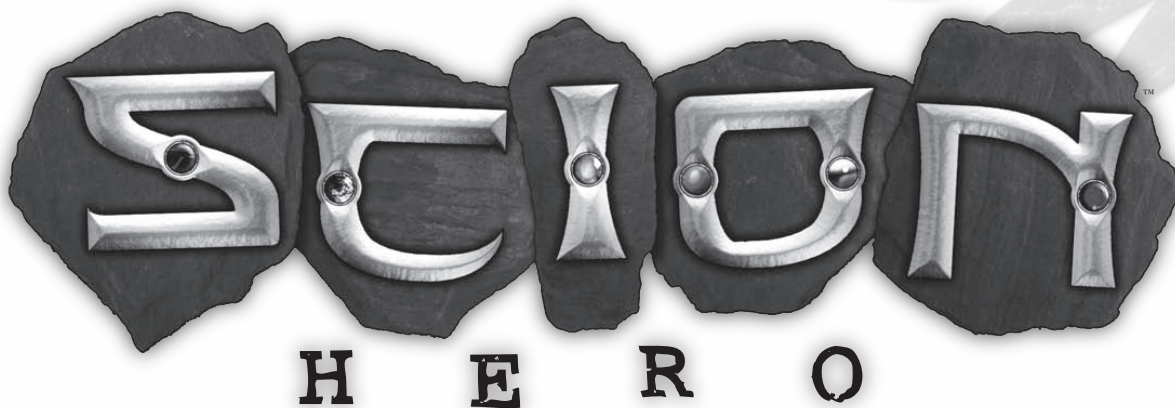
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SCION

HERO

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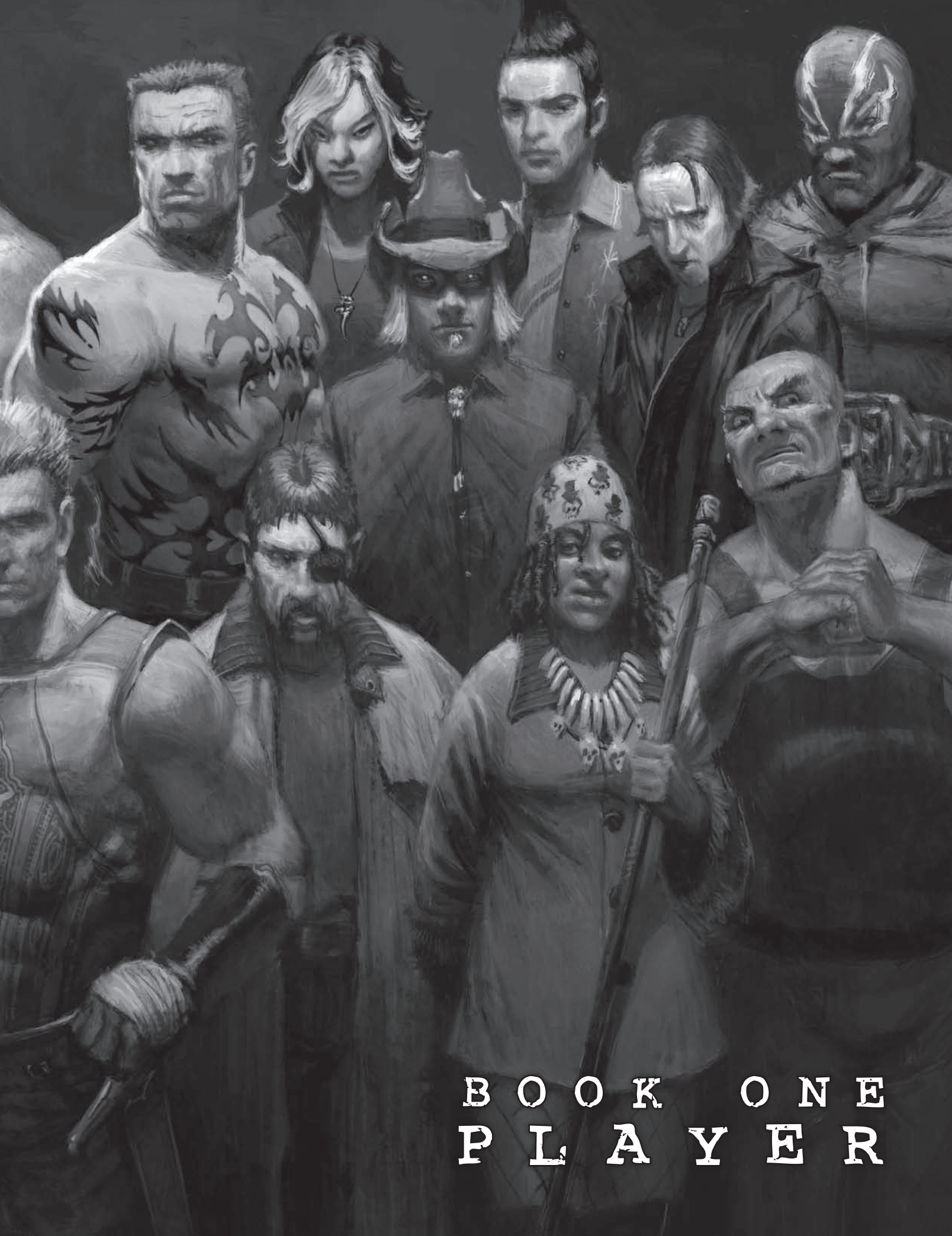
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BOOK ONE
PLAYER



INTRODUCTION

Since the dawn of man, the Gods have involved themselves in the affairs of humankind—and in affairs with humankind. Slaking their all-too-human desires with the flesh of mortal paramours, the Gods often sire half-breed offspring. These children, Scions, are invariably left for their mortal parents to care for. Though far weaker than their divine parents, Scions possess abilities far beyond those of any mere mortal. These abilities are often augmented even further by Boons and Birthrights provided by the Scions' godly parents. As a result, Scions tend to rise to positions of power and influence.

However, the life of a Scion is far from easy. Though bound by ancient pacts, filial loyalty and fear of Fatebinding from harming one another directly, the Gods are perfectly willing to strike at their rivals by killing or maiming a favored mortal son or daughter. The tales of Heracles, Onamuji and Sigurd are ample proof of that. The danger a Scion faces has only multiplied with the escape of the Titans, the progenitors and ancient foes of the gods. Like the agents of the Gods, titanspawn often go out of their way to slay Scions before they can grow into their full power.

In ancient times, the Gods interfered in human lives more directly, letting rampaging beasts, natural disasters, plague and famine speak of their displeasure with man.

In addition, the spawn of the Titans often lurked just outside civilization, ready to devour hapless mortals who stopped at the wrong spring to drink or took the wrong paths through the deep woods. It was to Scions that mortals looked for protection from supernatural predation, and it was Scions who often interceded with the Gods on mortals behalf, flattering them or moving them to feel pity, or offering the Gods service if they would spare the weaker mortals.

In due time, the Gods retreated from the World. With the titanspawn threat wiped out by the efforts of early Scions, the corresponding rapid growth of human civilization and the conflict between nations threatened through the chains of Fate to draw the pantheons of Gods into war. To avoid this eventuality, the heads of the various pantheons met and agreed that the Gods should leave mankind to its own devices before the massive Fatebinding effects either threw them into conflict or changed them beyond all recognition. In response, most Gods retreated to the Overworld, only visiting the World occasionally in mortal guises.

Despite their overall withdrawal from worldly affairs, the Gods are compulsive meddlers. Though seldom taking direct action against one another or overtly guiding the course of humanity, the Gods still possessed a means of interfering in human history, their Scions.

Over the millennia since the Gods' retreat, a myriad of Scions have lived and died, most ignorant of their fantastic origins. However, in every generation, a few Scions worldwide, seldom more than a handful, receive a Visitation from their divine parents, unlocking the power of the ichor flowing through their veins. One or two in a century might even be gifted with Birthrights. Prior to the present day, the last conflicts involving a large number of Birthright-armed Scions were the two World Wars (both of which are now regarded as fiascos by the Gods).

All that changed with a single event, the escape of the Titans. Somehow sundering their Underworld prison (and in the process, damaging the realms of the dead), the Titans have reentered the Overworld after eons of imprisonment, hungering to regain their former rule and revenge themselves on their wayward offspring,

the Gods. While a war between Gods and Titans rages in the heavens, the Titans have begun seeding the World again with their spawn. In response, the Gods have begun visiting their Scions in greater number and arming them with mighty Birthrights that they may stop the titanspawn from establishing a beachhead in the World of men.

Though humanity has long since tamed all but the most remote or dangerous areas of the mortal World, the return of the Titans and the unleashing of their monstrous titanspawn represents a threat beyond the ken of modern man. Only the Scions are equipped to deal with such threats, and are again filling their ancient role of guardians of man and human civilization.

Spawn of the Gods, nemeses of the Titans and protectors of humanity, Scions are all this and more.

LEXICON

Birthrights: Birthrights are gifts showered on the *Scions* by their *God* parents. These can include weapons, armor and equipment featured in myth—the armor of Achilles, the swords Gram and Kusanagi, the coco macaque, *The Book of the Dead*, or the shield Xiuhchimalli—or magical beasts—the winged horse Pegasus, the boar Gullinbursti, a nekomata, an ahuizotl, or even a dragon. It might even mean command over a supernatural retinue of Spartoi, Einherjar, tengu, jaguar knights, mummies or zombies, or access to the advice of a knowing guide, either a wise mortal or a benign supernatural being. Though many ancient Birthrights exist, new ones are being created all the time for today's Scions.

Boon: A Boon is a supernatural power inherited from a *Scion's* divine parent. The types of Boons available at character creation are limited by the patron *God's* *Purviews*. Heroic Scions are unable to directly wield these powers. They require *Birthright* weapons, armor or equipment to use Boons, and such relics may be stolen, depriving the hero of his Boons or even making them available to the thief, or destroyed.

Calling: Each Scion feels an almost inexorable pull to follow in the footsteps of her divine parent in some manner. By that, it's not meant that a son of Ares will, for instance, claim he's a war god and that all should worship him. Rather, such a Scion would likely be drawn to a career in the armed forces or as a mercenary or a weapons designer, and even as a child, he may have been a schoolyard bully or the head of a gang of toughs. The siren song of battle rings in the Scion's ear, even if his half-divine nature is never revealed to him.

Epic Attribute: This is a direct bonus to a mundane Attribute that arises from the power of the divine *ichor* that flows through a Scion's veins.

Fate: Fate is a powerful, unseen force that acts as a counterweight to the deeds (and misdeeds) of *Scions* and their patrons. In the game, Fate is a powerful force that fulfills two unique functions:

- **Fatebinding.** The power of a Scion's *Legend* allows him to perform wild feats by essentially bending the laws of probability in his favor. If a Scion uses this ability too much, however, individuals caught up in the Scion's actions can become inextricably bound to him forever afterward. This phenomenon, known as Fatebinding, ties the lives of the affected individuals together and shapes the course of everyday events in strange and unpredictable ways—their paths cross one another again and again, and their goals become intertwined despite their best efforts. Fatebinding can create boon companions that follow a Scion through thick and thin, or it can spawn nemeses who dog his every step. The presence of Fatebound individuals (be they friend or foe) can affect a Scion's abilities and modify the way he can draw upon his Legend. The greater a Scion's Legend, the more easily this phenomenon occurs. Fear of Fatebinding is one of the main reasons modern Scions work to avoid the fame one might expect them to covet.

- **Fateful Aura.** As a Scion's Legend grows he warps probability to such an extent that he becomes a literal magnet for calamity. Natural and man-made disasters (or miraculous events) occur wherever he goes. If there is a robbery that's going to happen, or a Titanspawn attack, or an attempted coup, the appearance of the Scion is guaranteed to make it happen. In a sense, the character's Legend becomes a self-fulfilling prophecy—where he goes, momentous things happen whether he likes it or not. By dealing with them, he increases his



Legend further, spawning an ever-increasing cycle of fateful events.

A number of divinities, from the Asgardian Norns to the Olympian Moirae, have become so tied to Fate as to be reduced to little more than mouthpieces for the inscrutable force. In addition, mortals and even Scions are sometimes possessed and used as the pawns of Fate in its efforts to forward its unfathomable agendas. As their Legend grows, Scions enjoy the tender ministrations of Fate more and more.

God: Born of the *Titans* but tied to *the World*, the Gods once blatantly interfered in the development of human civilization and, in turn, were shaped by the beliefs of man into the deities we recognize from Classical mythology. The Gods long ago retreated from the mortal world to avoid the dangers of being drawn into conflict via *Fatebinding* to their mortal followers. When one of the Gods visits the World now, it is almost always done incognito and for the purpose of reacquainting himself with humanity. In the course of “reacquainting themselves with humanity,” many Gods manage to sire *Scions*.

ichor: The divine blood that flows through the veins of *Scions*, giving them their power.

Knack: A Knack is a minor supernatural benefit tied to an *Epic Attribute*.

Legend: A measure of a *Scion's* power and renown, Legend has a variety of powerful effects on characters over the course of the game. A character's total Legend score determines the strength of his Fateful Aura, the likelihood of *Fatebinding* individuals, the progression of

his powers and the general outcome of any dice rolls. Additionally, Legend points can be spent to affect the outcome of actions during play, to power certain of their *Boons* and *Knacks*, and to power *magic* spells.

magic: Magic in *Scion* is the use of *Fate* (sometimes in conjunction with innate *Boons*) to either curse or bless a target in some way. Magic may also be used to tie an object's or person's fate to an outside object, effectively binding those things together. Finally, *Scions* (and *Gods*) may use magic to project their own powers onto a target by tying their two fates together momentarily and then projecting their power onto the target.

Overworld: The Overworld is a realm of limitless potential where both the *Titans* and the *Gods* were born and where the various *pantheons* now make their homes.

pantheon: A pantheon is a grouping of *Gods*, typically with an attitude and customs derived from a specific human culture. This book details six major pantheons: the Aesir, the Amatsukami, the Atzlánti, the Dodekaththeon, the Loa, and the Pesedjet.

Scion: A Scion is the half-divine offspring of *God* and man. Though they lack the raw power of their parent deities, Scions still possess abilities far beyond those of the mortals who surround them.

Titan: A Titan is an archetypal being of incarnate chaos. Though not necessarily evil per se, such beings are driven only to follow their primal, typically destructive, urges and to revenge themselves on their rebellious offspring, the *Gods*.

titanspawn: These are the monstrous offspring of the various *Titans*. The most powerful titanspawn are

equal in power to the *Gods* themselves. Currently only the weakest of the titanspawn are capable of forcing their way into *the World*, but these tirelessly strive to pave the way for their mightier brethren.

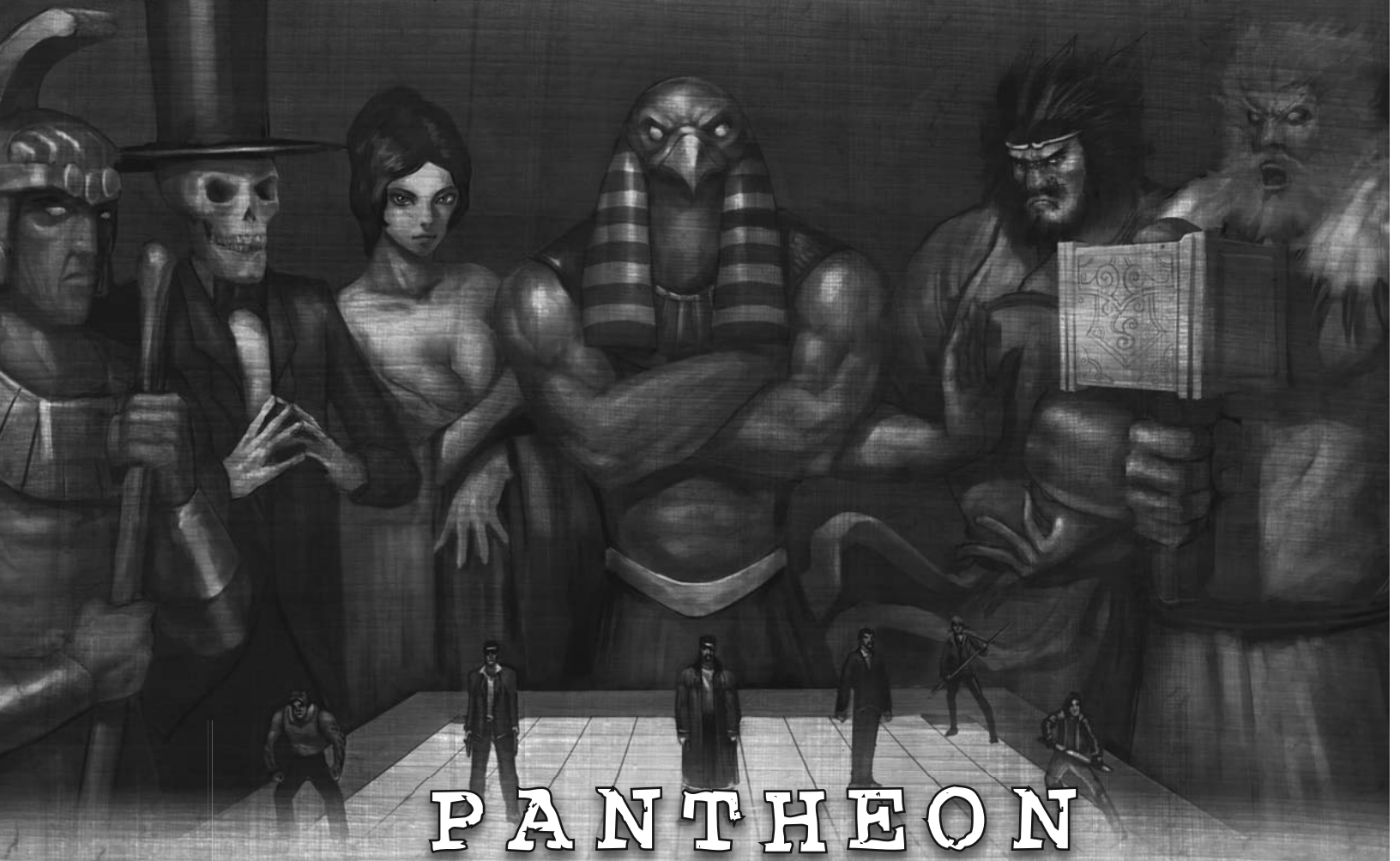
Underworld: The various underworlds of the individual *pantheons* were once connected to one another via the prison of the *Titans*, creating in fact one Underworld separated into distinct demesnes ruled by each pantheon's death god. It is to these realms that the shades of the dead who believe in the *Gods* of the various pantheons are drawn after death. With the escape of the *Titans*, the nucleus that anchored the pantheons realms together is shattered, the Underworld is fragmented, and many of the souls of the dead have been released to haunt the world of the living.

Virtues: A *Scion's* behavior is influenced by a set of four *Virtues* dictated by the *pantheon* to which he belongs. By their nature, the *Gods* of a specific pantheon espouse the *Virtues* that were important to the culture from which they once drew worship. In turn, these are the *Virtues* by which the worth of a pantheon's *Scions* are judged.

Visitation: The Visitation is a pivotal event in the life of a *Scion*. It is the moment when her true nature and divine lineage is revealed to her, typically by her divine parent, though occasionally through a divine herald such as Hermes, Legba, Hugin/Munin, etc. This is also the occasion where the *Scion* is gifted with her *Birthrights*.

World: The World of *Scion* is quite similar to our own. The main divergence from our own world that this one has experienced is that all of its ancient myths reflect real-world events. Now that both the *Titans* and the *Gods* have again become involved in the affairs of man, many of the *World's* ancient sites of power have again become supernaturally active. In addition, a large number of these ancient sites have been stripped of their contents, which now reside in museums and private collections around the globe. In the ancient sites and in the places where relics from those sites are held, links to the *Overworld* exist that the *Titans*, the *Gods* and the minions of both may use to more easily access the *World*.





PANTHEON

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Scions who are aware of their parentage recognize that the term *pantheon*, Greek for “all gods,” describes their divine and immortal forebears as a collective. Most Scions, however, know that their parents belong to one of several tribes or families of Gods, also described as pantheons, who together bring structure and order to the World and neighboring mythic realms. Most of the surviving Gods of the pantheons humanity have worshiped throughout history remain embroiled in an all-out war in the Overworld with the recently escaped Titans. The Gods of the six pantheons presented in this chapter are those who have found the most time in recent years to slip away from the Overworld briefly to sire Scion children. This is not to say that Scions of other Gods are not active in the World, only that they are comparatively rare.

Both Scions and their divine parents remain confused about whether human cultures brought Gods into being or Gods created the cultures. Both possibilities seem implausible but not impossible for beings that have lived longer than all of recorded history. (At least, so the Gods claim.) For certain, at least six such families of deities thrive today. Ancient Egypt, Greece and Rome produced two, the Pesedjet and the Dodekathemon. Northern Europe engendered the Aesir. Japan brought the Amatsukami to awareness. West Africa, the Caribbean and southern America together created the Loa. And Central America awakened the Atzlánti.

Each clan of divinities has its concerns and emphases, but its Gods all work to maintain the World. Their Scions help them achieve their aims, which may be defined as 1) prevent the Titans from destroying all that exists, 2) promote given agendas within human society, 3) ensure the pantheon’s survival, and 4) thwart plans of rival Gods. Most Gods also have a fifth priority: Keep the Scions from either siding with the Titans or overthrowing existing Gods. Each God approaches these priorities slightly differently and with varying degrees of attention. As immortal or semi-immortal beings, however, they have the advantage of long-term perspectives and a willingness to overlook short-term setbacks. Short-term perspectives and long-term setbacks infuriate them, so Scions guilty of both rarely last with both Gods and Titans gunning for them.

THE PESEDJET

THE EGYPTIAN GODS

The Pesedjet, originating in Egypt, is the oldest (though not necessarily wisest) of the pantheons. This family of Gods claims that its origins go back over 7,000 years to the banks of the Nile River in northeast Africa, and it has endured through cultural, mythic and physical changes in the World's very structure.

As a pantheon, the Pesedjet concerns itself with *ma'at*—justice expressed through social order. For the Pesedjet, everyone must know his or her place, and each post must be filled with the right person. In the times before time, the Titans destroyed appropriate relationships between people, and the Pesedjet created a social order in which people could live knowing their place in an established hierarchy.

Today, the Pesedjet's Scions tend to concern themselves with disruptions in social stability caused by the Titans' actions. Movements of refugees, discontent caused by spiritual poverty and unemployment, revolutionary movements—these come to the Pesedjet's notice as disturbances in the mythic realms. Other divine tribes view the Pesedjet as hidebound and conservative, but they grant that the Egyptian Gods really know how to impose long-lasting order in a chaotic world.

The Pesedjet's greatest weakness is its commitment to stability at any cost. The Egyptian Gods and their Scions prefer minimally disruptive solutions to problems, trusting in old patterns to maintain the status quo. Other Gods find this attitude frustrating. Old patterns allowed the Titans to break free in the first place; why perpetuate easily disrupted systems? Still, the Egyptian deities promote tradition and conservative attitudes as bulwarks against chaos, leaving close-knit but reactionary societies in their wake.

ANUBIS

AKA: YINEPU, ANUPU

Description: Anubis, judge of the Underworld and weigher of the souls of the dead, has the body of a Nubian man and the head of a jackal—though he reveals it only rarely these days. His enemies insist his soul is that of a jackal, too, but most who meet him consider him urbane and sophisticated, with a dark but pleasing sense of humor. In legend, he is the patron of embalmers and all who work with the dead. He sat with

his scales in the Hall of Two Truths in the Egyptian Underworld.

Anubis used to live as an undertaker, a judge, a lawyer, a jeweler and a bodyguard as the mood of the day struck him. None of his clients ever died while under his protection, though few lasted long after his angry departures.

The Scions of Anubis are similarly dedicated, and similarly fickle. Excellent judges of character like their father, these Scions frequently maintain an

intense loyalty to other Scions and Bands they deem worthy. However, if disappointed or disillusioned by the actions of their compatriots, Anubis's Scions will often abandon or even turn on their comrades if unable to convince them of the injustice of their recent activities.

Associated Powers: Epic Perception, Animal (Jackal), Death, Guardian, Heku, Justice

Abilities: Animal Ken, Empathy, Integrity, Medicine, Melee, Occult

Rivals: Set, Baron Samedi, Hermes, Izanami, Tezcatlipoca, Vidar

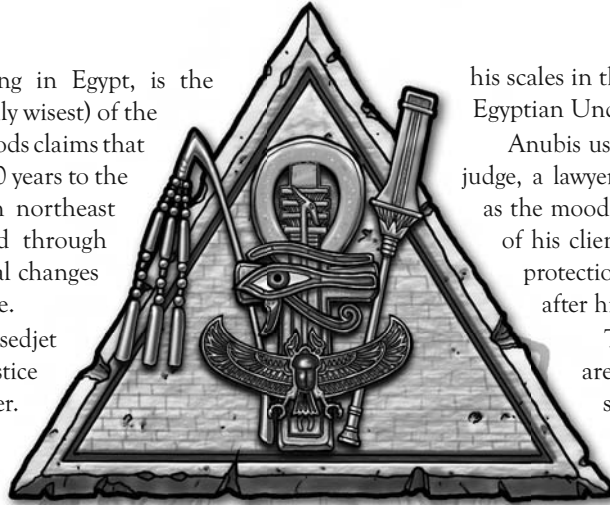
ATUM-RE

AKA: RA, ATUM, ATEN, TEM-RA

Description: In Egyptian legend, Atum-Re was the universe's creator, the sun God who rode across the sky in the sun barque, dispensing blessings on everyone. God of magic and all-powerful, nothing in Creation could harm him until Isis conned him out of his true name. After that, he was only as powerful as the other Gods. Atum-Re remains bitter, though he pretends to be above the Pesedjet's disputes. Other deities mock him for his aloof nature, manicured hands and cautious face.

Today, Atum-Re puts on a tall, slender male form, with long fingers, dark complexion and closely curled hair. He is mature without being elderly, and affects several personas, ranging from a dealer in Middle Eastern antiquities to a diplomat to a mosque imam to an executive from a solar energy co-operative. People remember him as a distinguished fellow, thoughtful and deliberate in all conversations, with great force of personality.

Atum-Re's Scions are also deliberate and thoughtful. They are strong without being overly strong, and they





are observers of the natural world. Few things that are out of place ever escape their notice.

Associated Powers: Epic Charisma, Epic Manipulation, Epic Perception, Animal (Falcon), Heku, Sun

Abilities: Academics, Art, Fortitude, Investigation, Politics, Presence

Rivals: Horus, Isis; Athena, Erzulie, Freyr, Huitzilopochtli, Susano-o

BASTET

AKA: BAST

Description: Queen of Cats, with a feline grace, Bastet is a Goddess of prophecy—though she's no pawn or puppet of Fate. Cat-headed, with skin the color of chocolate, covered with fine fur, Bastet has green eyes with vertical slits common to cats. What her chosen animals see, she also sees. Thoth made her keeper of his Book, a magical work that controls such powerful forces as time-space and life-death-rebirth, so that he could not undo the universe accidentally. Using it, Bastet keeps mortals in realms of mortal time. Her Scions help to keep such secrets from mortal, divinity and Titan alike.

In the modern day, Bastet appears as a slender woman with rounded hips and a graceful manner. She

has been a belly dancer and the madam of a brothel, the hostess of salons and a spy in Paris. She even took on a role as a geisha in Japan, as part of a special exchange program among Gods many years ago. Of the Pesedjet, she is most open to new experiences.

Her Scions are motivated to explore and interact with novelty. They usually begin with cautious observation before delving in deeply to their subject, as if it were an academic exercise. Once convinced that it is not dangerous, they leap in completely. It is at this point that they usually remember what killed the cat.

Associated Powers: Epic Charisma, Epic Dexterity, Epic Perception, Epic Wits, Animal (Cat), Heku, Moon, Prophecy, Sun, Vengeance

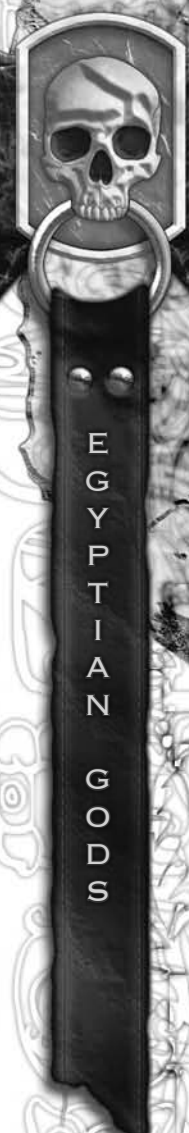
Abilities: Athletics, Awareness, Brawl, Larceny, Stealth, Survival

Rivals: Isis; Frigg, Hera, Ogoun, Raiden, Tlazoltéotl

GEB

AKA: KEB, QEB, SEB

Description: Geb is God of the earth, "son of Tefenet and Shu who have gone into dust" as the Pesedjet say. Once married to Nut, Titan of night, he constantly seeks dark-faced women with stars in their eyes. Geb has dark hair and skin the color of rich soil, and his brown



eyes hold gentleness and ancient knowledge. Father of Osiris and Set, he is second of the Pesedjet after Atum-Re. Forever separated from Nut, he gazes up at night with perceptible longing.

In modern times, Geb has played many roles: environmentally responsible agronomist, friendly stockist at health food stores, organic egg farmer, obsessed astronomer and champion bird breeder. Appearing to be between his late 20s and mid-30s, he rarely seems as old as his children. With only some moisture, he can plant gardens anywhere.

Geb's Scions are equally green-thumbed. They often live in oases of beauty and fair prospects hidden away on city rooftops, on ledges of arid mountains or in deep ravines in the desert.

Associated Powers: Animal (Goose), Earth, Fertility, Heku, Justice

Abilities: Art (Gardening), Command, Empathy, Fortitude, Politics, Science

Rivals: Sobek; Damballa, Dionysus, Hel, Izanagi, Quetzalcoatl

HORUS

AKA: HERU, NEKHENY

Description: Son of Osiris and Isis, the God Horus is one of the youngest of the Pesedjet. Falcon-headed with

skin the color of coffee, Horus is the most conservative of the Egyptian Gods. He likes to reminisce about his incarnation among mortals as a pharaoh of ancient Egypt, and he regularly visits the Cairo Museum to gaze on the objects buried with Tutankhamun. "Second-rate stuff," he is heard to scoff, and he can lecture endlessly on the glories of his country until people fall asleep.

That said, he is an implacable enemy and a great force for justice. In modern times, he often affects the appearance of a fair-skinned, athletic young man with an eye patch (in all forms, Horus is missing his left eye thanks to a battle with Set). He has been a uniformed police officer, a detective on the night beat, a marshal transporting prisoners, a judge on the bench, an agent with Interpol and a Canadian Mountie. Like the Mounties, he always gets his man—usually destroying his quarry in the process.

Horus's Scions are similarly dedicated and driven. Commonly pursuing careers in law enforcement, they often cross the line between law and vengeance, to the dismay of their superiors. In leadership roles, they emphasize their perks at the expense of their duties. They always have a fondness for fine and beautiful things and tend to prefer gold to silver.

Associated Powers: Epic Strength, Animal (Falcon), Heku, Justice, Moon, Sky, Sun





Abilities: Athletics, Awareness, Brawl, Command, Melee, Politics

Rivals: Set; Hachiman, Kalfu, Loki, Tlaloc, Zeus

ISIS

AKA: ASET

Description: Brave and cunning, dark-haired and narrow-faced, with small breasts and narrow waist, Isis is a Goddess of magic and guardian of families. She once set a snake on Atum-Re to weaken him and force him to share power with the Pesedjet by revealing his name. She also refrained from completely restoring her husband, Osiris, to life, in order to bring her son Horus into the Pesedjet. Isis is a manipulator of feelings and thoughts, turning everything to her advantage first, her immediate pantheon second, all the Gods third and the created order fourth. Everything and everyone else comes distinctly last.

In modern times, Isis takes on many roles and cannot be easily defined. She chooses her places in mortal life with an eye to being at the right place at the right time, rather than in a specific career or persona. As a housemaid or a matriarch, she is always in the proper place to do the most good, as she sees it. Unlike other healing Gods, she uses her powers only after she has won favorable concessions to her projects.

Few of Isis's own Scions are so relentlessly mercenary, partly by Isis's design. She prefers thoughtful but

biddable Scions who can be used to support her plans and then switched off until needed again.

Associated Powers: Epic Charisma, Epic Manipulation, Fertility, Guardian, Health, Heku, Magic, Mystery

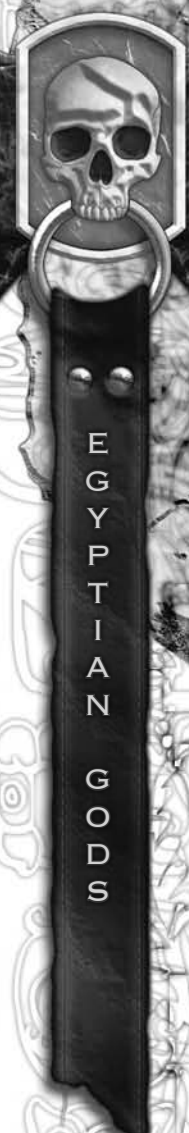
Abilities: Academics, Integrity, Investigation, Occult, Politics, Presence

Rivals: Thoth, Amaterasu, Hermes, Odin, Ogoun, Quetzalcoatl

OSIRIS

AKA: WESIR, SEPA, SERAPIS

Description: Osiris is a tall, long-limbed gentleman, not old but not young. He has curly black hair, dark green skin (less obvious when he walks secretly among mortals but a tint of green still exists), green eyes, and prefers linen suits to jeans or wool. In legend, he was the king of Egypt until his brother murdered him and hacked him apart. His wife Isis brought him back to life, but Set had already destroyed his genitals. Since eunuchs couldn't be kings, power passed to his son Horus, and Osiris was appointed king of the dead instead. When dealing with Scions and deities, he is forthright about his intentions to manipulate emotions and plans, but people love helping him because he appears so good and wise. It's not until after he's left that you realize how



much stupidity one has agreed to, and just how deeply in debt to him one really is.

Osiris has had something like 7,000 years to get over his anger and get used to ruling a realm of dead spirits. He has done his best to make them comfortable and relies upon their labor and assistance to make life pleasant in whatever part of reality or the Overworld he happens to inhabit currently. He comes across as a wealthy businessman or obscure European nobility, with more money in the bank than even Gods normally have. Osiris acts as a talent scout for the Pesedjet these days, chatting up newly awakened Scions over delicious meals in Paris or Kuala Lumpur and binding them more to the Gods' cause.

Osiris's Scions are not born in the same way as the other offspring of the Gods (see sidebar for details). They travel different roads, and Osiris can pick and choose. This gives them considerably more leeway in how they act, for they bring their mortal selves more fully into his realm and are less likely to be his pure creatures than he might like.

Associated Powers: Epic Charisma, Epic Manipulation, Animal (Centipede, Ram), Death, Earth, Heku, Fertility, Justice

Abilities: Awareness, Command, Fortitude, Investigation, Politics, Presence

Rivals: Horus, Set, Hades, Hel, Izanami, Kalfu, Miclántecuhltli

PTAH

AKA: PETAH

Description: Ptaah invariably appears as a bald-headed man with overly long arms and legs, a small pot-belly and laugh lines around his eyes, mouth and forehead. Gifted, clever and playful, he is the Egyptian God of artisans and artistry—work in stone, wood and cloth. Most of all, he is a God of wonderful toys: puzzle boxes, models, dolls, and games. The God brings such crafts to life and constantly seeks new techniques among mortals.

In modern life, Ptaah has been a wonderful game designer, a cryptologist of uncanny abilities, a master carpenter, a thoughtful sculptor and an ingenious architect. People recall him as giddy with excitement as his designs become reality. Ptaah is not just a toy designer, though. His tools and weapons are equally useful.

Ptaah's Scions are similarly motivated and excited by the sheer joy of creation. They tend to be imaginative and playful, while exuding an aura of competence and skill. The combination makes them dangerous when threatened.

Associated Powers: Epic Intelligence, Fire, Heku, Psychopomp

Abilities: Art, Craft, Investigation, Larceny, Science, Thrown

Rivals: Horus; Baldur, Dionysus, Raiden, Shango, Xipe Totec



SET

AKA: SETH, SUTEKH

Description: Lord of the salawa (a relative of the dog) and keeper of the house of disease, Set is the malignant and treacherous brother of Osiris. Where his brother is good and generous, Set is evil and grasping. What Osiris gives, salawa-headed Set takes away. Other Gods rarely trust him, since he murdered his brother and loves to stir up trouble. Yet, as guardian of the desert boundaries of the World, he keeps the Titans out.

To modern eyes, Set has played a tough Marine commando, a border patrol agent, an executioner and a professional torturer. Wherever he goes, he appears as a weasely foreigner (Americans see him as an Arab; Arabs see him as an American) with an exceptionally long nose and oddly squared ears. People remember him with distaste and note his rapid changes of mood and temper.

Set's Scions are equally emotional. They have been rock-throwing political activists, military types engaged in atrocity and bag men for criminal and political organizations. Few Gods like Set's offspring much, but they do not turn up their noses at any task or duty that the pantheon might need, as long as the price is right.

Associated Powers: Epic Manipulation, Epic Strength, Animal (Salawa), Chaos, Guardian, Heku, Sky, War

Abilities: Brawl, Command, Control, Melee, Presence, Survival

Rivals: Horus, Isis, Osiris; Athena, Erzulie, Quetzalcoatl, Sif, Susano-o, Tyr

SOBEK

AKA: SUCHOS

Description: Sobek, lord of crocodiles, is a God of ameliorated evil. Crocodiles were feared in ancient Egypt, but they were also regarded as an extension of the Nile's abundance and fertility. As such, crocodile-headed Sobek, with greenish scales instead of skin, acts in the World as a lessener of others' evil deeds. He also acts as the Pesedjer's expeditor. While he rarely gets things done himself, he is able to travel among the Gods and between the worlds to bring about positive and necessary changes in the least possible time.

In modern times, Sobek is remembered most for his perfect hair and toothy grin. Tall and lean in his human form, with a preference for fine clothes and good food, the crocodile God prefers cities to the countryside. He rarely goes anywhere without at least some jewelry. He plays at being a lawyer, but he's most often a troubleshooter of some sort, and it rarely matters to him whether the trouble is solved with a briefcase of money or a sawed-off shotgun. As long as his clothes stay clean and he eats well, Sobek keeps just about any project moving along.

Sobek's Scions are similarly inclined. They rarely make things themselves, preferring to act on others to get their pieces completed. They do not create plans of their own; rather they bring others' plans to fruition. They tend to gravitate toward such jobs as truck driver, bicycle messenger, law clerk, middle manager, bureaucrat and muckraking journalist.

Associated Powers: Epic Stamina, Epic Strength, Animal (Crocodile), Fertility, Heku, Water

Abilities: Athletics, Awareness, Brawl, Larceny, Presence, Stealth

Rivals: Thoth; Artemis, Damballa, Hachiman, Miclantecuhli, Odin

THOTH

AKA: A, A'AN, ASTEN, DJEHUTY, HAB, KHENTI, MEHI, SHEPS

Description: Few understand the power of words better than ibis-headed Thoth. Though he appreciates puns, jokes and riddles, Thoth never says anything other than exactly what he means. His words are precise the way a linguistics professor is precise, yet he speaks with a rapidity that is difficult to follow. Thoth is a keeper of secrets and a creator of languages to interpret those secrets. Magic is likewise his creation, as is record keeping. He can re-create in three dimensions any great event in the last 4,000 years, provided he can find his notes from the event.

A tall, pinched man in his mortal guises, with a head of black hair, Thoth has often appeared in academic professions in modern times. He's also been a Las Vegas magician, a bookstore owner, a seller of curiosities, a novelist and an astronomer. Preferring to work his magic behind the scenes, he tends to disguise his greater tricks in layers of prestidigitation, as an onion hides layers inside layers. Few ever get to the bottom of his plans and intentions.

Thoth's Scions are similarly subtle, with simple plans disguised behind complex façades. They show talent at being keepers of records and workers of wizardry. As storytellers, analyzers of language and its abuses, software designers and creators of systems, they are unmatched and unequalled. Most mortal computer security systems are open doors to the offspring of the ibis-God.

Associated Powers: Epic Intelligence, Animal (Baboon, Ibis), Heku, Justice, Magic, Moon

Abilities: Academics, Investigation, Integrity, Occult, Politics, Science

Rivals: Ptah, Set; Amaterasu, Athena, Erzulie, Hermes, Odin, Tlaloc, Vidar, Xipe Totec

HORACE FARROW

SCION OF HORUS

Horace Farrow grew on a farm in the small town of Thebes, deep in the Little Egypt area of Illinois. His father, Cyrus, was a hardworking man who instilled in him a strong work ethic, an infallible moral compass and a love of the outdoors. Likewise, his mother, Isola, was a quiet, kind-hearted woman who instilled in him a respect for life and a contemplative character. Unfortunately, Horace also had an uncle—a bad seed named Seth.

When Horace was only 14, Seth showed up one night with a gang of toughs. He explained that there'd been a "misunderstanding" with the police and that he needed a place to hide out until the heat died down. Cyrus, however, didn't want to put his family in danger because of Seth. The altercation that followed saw Horace's parents gunned down by Seth.

After completing his bloody work, Seth looked up, .45 pistol in hand, to see Horace pointing Cyrus's shotgun at him, vengeance in his eyes. The two fired simultaneously. Seth was hit in the groin; Horace in the left eye.

Darkness followed, and lasted a long time. Then, a light appeared, and from that light issued a voice, telling Horace it was not his time to die.

There was work to be done; the vengeance of two fathers to be visited. The voice was that of Horus—his true father. Horus told his son he'd come to Isola in the shape of Cyrus to sire a son, born to be the God's agent on earth. Seth had likewise been sired by the God Set to sow chaos and tragedy. It was Horace's job to stop him and others like him. Vowing revenge, Horace agreed to do as his father asked.

Healed and gifted with his Birthrights, Horace prepared for his mission, finishing high school, then trained for a career in law enforcement. Eventually, he served as a US Marshal, and though he quit the service, he still uses his badge and contacts to help the Band he's formed.

Horace Farrow is a tall, slim man who dresses in jeans and button-down shirts, with cowboy boots, a cowboy hat and a duster. Though he usually wears a patch, the socket of his missing eye is fitted with a white-marble sphere inlaid with the Eye of Horus. On his hatband is a relic known as the Falcon Amulet. When expecting trouble of the supernatural variety, Horace wields a khopesh, the Fang of Apep, seemingly carved from solid ivory and accented in gold, and he's always armed with a .45—the same one that killed his father. Horace often tools around on an Indian Chief motorcycle, wearing aviator goggles and gloves when he does so.

Roleplaying Hints: A sharp customer, your eye takes in the details of a scene in a moment, and your body reacts appropriately. You're a tactical planner and a clever improviser should a plan fall apart in the field. In most circumstances, you're the voice of restraint that keeps your Band from rushing headlong into danger. The only time you show faulty judgment is when Seth Farrow is involved. In the past, you've thrown caution and planning to the wind in attempts to take him down, something your Band has yet to experience. Hopefully, your friends will be able to stop you from getting yourself (or someone else) killed when the inevitable occurs.

Birthrights: The Eye of Horus allows Horace to access the Moon and Sun Purviews. The Falcon Amulet lets Horace access the Sky Purview. The Fang of Apep adds Accuracy +1 and Damage +1L to the khopesh template (see p. 202).



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SCION

H E R O

Horace Farrow

Name

Peace Officer

Calling

Pesedjet

Pantheon

Player

Architect
Nature

Horus
God

ATTRIBUTES

	Physical		Social		Mental
Strength	●●●○○○○○○○ ■□□□□□□□□	Charisma	●●●○○○○○○○ ■□□□□□□□□	Perception	●●●○○○○○○○ ■□□□□□□□□
Dexterity	●●●○○○○○○○ □□□□□□□□□	Manipulation	●●○○○○○○○○○ □□□□□□□□□	Intelligence	●●●○○○○○○○ □□□□□□□□□
Stamina	●●●○○○○○○○ ■□□□□□□□□	Appearance	●●○○○○○○○○○ □□□□□□□□□	Wits	●●●○○○○○○○ ■□□□□□□□□

ABILITIES

<input type="checkbox"/> Academics	○○○○○	<input type="checkbox"/> Craft (<i>Electronics</i>)	●○○○○	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Melee	●●●○○
<input type="checkbox"/> Animal Ken	○○○○○	<input type="checkbox"/>	○○○○○	<input type="checkbox"/> Occult	○○○○○
<input type="checkbox"/> Art	○○○○○	<input type="checkbox"/>	○○○○○	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Politics	○○○○○
<input type="checkbox"/>	○○○○○	<input type="checkbox"/> Empathy	●○○○○	<input type="checkbox"/> Presence	●●○○○
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Athletics	●●○○○	<input type="checkbox"/> Fortitude	●●●○○	<input type="checkbox"/> Science (<i>Forensics</i>)	●○○○○
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Awareness	●●○○○	<input type="checkbox"/> Integrity	●●○○○	<input type="checkbox"/>	○○○○○
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Brawl	●●○○○	<input type="checkbox"/> Investigation	●●○○○	<input type="checkbox"/>	○○○○○
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Command	●●○○○	<input type="checkbox"/> Larceny	●○○○○	<input type="checkbox"/> Stealth	●○○○○
<input type="checkbox"/> Control (<i>Motorcycles</i>)	●●○○○	<input type="checkbox"/> Marksmanship	●●●○○	<input type="checkbox"/> Survival	●●○○○
<input type="checkbox"/>	○○○○○	<input type="checkbox"/> Medicine	○○○○○	<input type="checkbox"/> Thrown	○○○○○

BIRTHRIGHTS

Relic (Eye of Horus-Moon, Sun) 2

Relic (Falcon Amulet-Sky) 1

Relic (Fang of Apex) 2

WEAPONS

Khopesh (Fang of Apex)

Acc 7, Dmg 9L, Parry DV 4, Sp 4

Colt .45

Acc 8, Dmg 5L, Rng 20, Clip 8, Sp 5, P

KNACKS

Benefit of the Doubt, Damage

Conversion, Holy Bound,

Instant Investigator, Opening

Gambit, Predatory Focus,

Subliminal Warning

BOONS

Ren Harvest, Sekem Blaze,

Sky's Grace, Smoking

Mirror

WILLPOWER

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SOAK

A 1 L 5 B 6

ARMOR

Bulletproof vest

A L 2 B 2

HEALTH

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□ □ □ □ □ □ □

VIRTUES

Conviction ●●●○○

Harmony ●●○○○

Order ●●●○○

Piety ●○○○○

LEGEND

● ● ● ○ ○ ○

○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○

Legend Points 9

EXPERIENCE

H O R A C E F A R R O W

H O R A C E F A R R O W

THE DODEKATHEON

THE GREEK GODS

Second oldest of the divine tribes, the Dodekatheon comprises the Olympian Gods of Greco-Roman legend. Their origins are murky, since the ancient Greeks already knew their Gods when they migrated to the Mediterranean Sea around 4,000 years ago, but they were still changing and growing 2,500 years ago, and their forms only became set around 1,500 years ago.

Where the Pesedjet emphasizes social and cultural stability over and against individual rights, the Dodekatheon has sought to impose patterns of individuality within the community on humanity. Arete—personal excellence in service to humanity—is the motivating urge of this tribe of Gods and Scions. It is important for most people to know their place, but it is equally important for some to rise above their stations and create new patterns for human life.

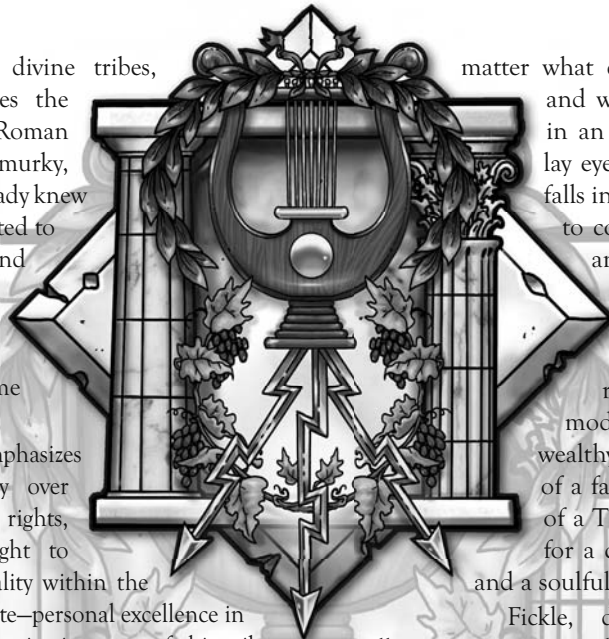
In modern times, the Dodekatheon's Scions seek to manifest and awaken great spirits in society—as artists, warriors, spiritual seekers, judges, leaders and poets. Extraordinary individuals can strengthen the fabric of reality so that Titans can gain no purchase on it or rip through illusion's curtains. Sometimes, the Scions of the Olympians challenge mortals, and sometimes, they are the mortals challenged by the Gods. Both routes lead to greatness—an exaltation of human endeavor that blocks the Titans from destroying the World.

The Greek pantheon's greatest weakness is hubris—belief that the individual is capable of winning out against Fate. Every God in the Dodekatheon believes that his most recent favored Scion is capable of surviving the titanspawn onslaught and changing the World. Investing time and training in Scion after Scion, the whole pantheon puts tremendous trust in its heroes, while acknowledging that all too many have only fallen into ruin and darkness. The next Scion, of course, will prove a worthy vessel for the trust and favor of the Gods...

APHRODITE

AKA: VENUS, TURAN

Description: As beautiful and capricious as the sea that birthed her, Aphrodite is impossibly gorgeous no



matter what disguise she puts on. Men and women fall in love with her in an epic way the moment they lay eyes on her. Aphrodite herself falls in love with equal fervor—only to come crashing out of love in an epic way a few months or occasionally years later.

To modern eyes, Aphrodite has assumed roles ranging from fashion model to arm candy to the super wealthy. She has been the executive of a fashion magazine, the hostess of a TV game show, a cheerleader for a championship football team and a soulful lounge singer.

Fickle, demanding, fascinated by intelligence yet never really seeing its use, Aphrodite keeps her attendant fans waiting on her, hand and foot, so that her every whim is supplied. Her indiscretions are always overlooked, laughed off or excused. Her paramours rarely get off so easily. When she vanishes suddenly, her former victims are usually left penniless and suicidal. In fact, finding her is merely a matter of tracking the string of failed relationships and ruined lovers she leaves behind.

Her Scions tend to follow one of two paths: Either they are genuinely loving and communicative with their partners, while providing inspiration and guidance to all their friends in matters of love and relationships; or they tend to leave a string of broken hearts and ruined people behind them. Usually incredibly beautiful themselves, they still have difficulty wielding that beauty in the presence of their mother.

Associated Powers: Epic Appearance, Epic Charisma, Epic Manipulation, Arete

Abilities: Animal Ken, Art, Empathy, Integrity, Larceny, Presence

Rivals: Hephaestus; Amaterasu, Bastet, Erzulie, Freya, Sif, Tlazoltéotl

APOLLO

AKA: APLU

Description: Lord of music, the sun, art and beauty, Apollo is the healer and the sender of plague. He can cure with a touch or smite with his golden bow.



Blond, blue-eyed, with muscled olive-tan skin, his smile sends quivers through half of both male and female populations, yet his love affairs seem fated to be short lived and touched by tragedy. Apollo's tendency to speak truths others are unwilling to face is guaranteed to win respect from half the room and make the other half want to start swinging.

In modern times, Apollo has been a New Age massage therapist and a Piccadilly Circus pick-up boy, a brilliant neurosurgeon, a cruel film reviewer and a ponderous academic. Whatever his role, he is invariably a well-known and respected (if controversial) figure.

His Scions tend to take after him. Classically handsome or beautiful, muscular and active, they tend to follow careers in the arts, music or health professions. Many are entangled in the machinations of Fate, owing to their father's long-standing interest in and control of prophecy.

Associated Powers: Epic Appearance, Epic Charisma, Arete, Health, Prophecy, Sun

Abilities: Art, Athletics, Medicine, Marksmanship, Presence, Science

Rivals: Hades; Baldur, Raiden, Shango, Thoth, Xipe Totec

ARES

AKA: MARS, MARIS

Description: God of war, Ares has a profound ability to incite murderous rage in almost anyone around

him. His screams are enough to terrify hardened Army Rangers—one general who's seen him in action thinks atomic weapons are less dangerous. Dark and hirsute, Ares does not conform to anyone's idea of a perfect warrior—until he raises his weapon. What that weapon is from day to day hardly matters. All that counts is that he has one.

In modern times, Ares has been a weapons manufacturer, a black-budget accountant, a Special Forces commander, a psychotic deserter, a militia leader in the mountains, a survivalist and a renegade Soviet officer. Hardened veterans go pale when reminded of him, and women tend to cry or spit at the sound of his name. Most of his methods rely on going to strange places, meeting lots of interesting people, and killing them.

His children are rarely as fierce as he. Ares is not above motivating his Scions with negative reinforcement, but he knows that his children are called to a different kind of war than he was. They need skills of cool calculation and battle-tested reason more than the rage of war. Therefore, he tests them constantly for he knows he might need them someday.

Associated Powers: Epic Stamina, Epic Strength, Arete, War

Abilities: Brawl, Command, Marksmanship, Melee, Presence, Thrown

Rivals: Artemis, Athena, Hephaestus; Hachiman, Horus, Ogoun, Thor, Tlazoltéotl



ARTEMIS

AKA: ARTUME, CYNTHIA, DIANA, LOCHEIA

Description: Sister to Apollo and Goddess of the moon, Artemis eschews the company of men, preferring the companionship (and touch) of women. Dark-haired and white-skinned, Artemis always has a predatory gleam in her eye, whether she's chasing deer or skirts. Like her brother, her hands can heal, while a shot from her silver bow brings comatose sleep for as long as she wishes. Vain and proud, she rarely lets anyone gaze upon her without changing their lives forever. Fierce and sensual, she resolves to change as many lives as she can.

In modern life, Artemis has played a rock guitarist in black leather, a senator in a power suit, an erotic dancer in feather fans, a dominatrix and a doctor. It has not, in fact, proved beyond her ability to assume all five of these roles in a single disguised lifetime. More than any other Goddess, Artemis has the power to change her form and shape more or less at will, while remaining true to herself.

The adopted Scions of Artemis are no less changeable. Assuming one role in youth, they tend to become something else in their rebellious teenage years, only to shake off that chrysalis in favor of a new form in young adulthood, and still other roles in maturity and declining years. Artemis herself likes her children to pass through various stages and life patterns, and she finds ways to encourage change among her more settled offspring.

Associated Powers: Epic Dexterity, Epic Perception, Arete, Health, Moon

Abilities: Animal Ken, Awareness, Empathy, Fortitude, Marksmanship, Survival

Rivals: Hera; Freyr, Isis, Legba, Susano-o, Tezcatlipoca

ATHENA

AKA: APHAEA, MINERVA, MENRVA

Description: Honey-haired and well-rounded—voluptuous, some would say—Athena is the best at everything, perpetually wise except when her ambitions reduce her to foolish actions. As Goddess of wisdom, Athena has the power to mediate disputes, to resolve them by force or to create new techniques that render the argument irrelevant. She has no patience for those who rely on aggression alone to solve their problems. Athena tends to be proud, however, and she can be misled into risky contests by challenging the depth and breadth of her skills. She does not lose gracefully.

In modern times, Athena has been a devoted middle school teacher, a waspish librarian, a first-rate artist and a popular motivational speaker. Those who see her often use terms such terms as “old soul,” “many-layered” and “quick-witted.” Her sharp-tongued intelligence scares off many potential partners, but though chaste, she has proven a devoted patron to many a Scion who's impressed her with their cleverness and quick wits, regardless of those Scions parentage.



Her adopted Scions are similarly well endowed with graces of art and artistry. Skilled at languages and fine crafts, they tend to become famous artists and performers—unless their mother pulls them away to other tasks and projects, such as saving the World.

Associated Powers: Epic Intelligence, Epic Wits, Animal (Owl), Arete, Health, Justice, War

Abilities: Academics, Command, Craft, Melee, Investigation, Science

Rivals: Ares, Hephaestus; Bastet, Huitzilopochtli, Kalfu, Legba, Thor, Tsuki-yomi

DIONYSUS

AKA: BACCHUS, FUFLUNS, LYAEUS

Description: The wildest and craziest of a wild pantheon, Dionysus is a Scion of Zeus who was elevated to godhood about 3,000 years ago. God of wine and celebration, he is the perfect party boy, whether you want to stage a sedate wine tasting, a drunken orgy or a drug-fueled rock concert in the back of beyond. Invite him, and a party will usually show up in his wake. Dark-haired and slender while still being soft, Dionysus is capable of persuading even the most straight-laced prude to loosen his tie and party down.

Dionysus has dabbled in being a rock impresario, a club owner, a wine merchant, a food critic, a *grand cordon* chef, a drug dealer, a microbrewery manager and a restaurant owner. He also likes to take on short-term

roles as the handsome stranger with the really good pot or the really good bottle of wine at the concert. It's telling about Dionysus's abilities as a father that he much prefers to create Scions during casual encounters than as part of some long-term disguise.

His Scions are similar. Wherever they go, they tend to establish a party around themselves. If they stay too long in one place, it congregates around them, attracting the missing elements of that celebration. This happens partly because the Scion is fun to be around, but also because Fate finds it useful to create such events around the Scion. The more potent the Scion is, the larger and more raucous the soiree.

Associated Powers: Epic Charisma, Epic Stamina, Arete, Chaos, Fertility, Mystery

Abilities: Art, Empathy, Integrity, Fortitude, Occult, Presence

Rivals: Hades; Damballa, Hachiman, Hel, Horus, Xipe Totec

HADES

AKA: AITA, DISPATER, ORCUS, PLUTO

Description: Gray all over and heavy-set, Hades is the dour God of death and the Underworld. Joy claims him every six months when Persephone comes to his realm. Although she is a springtime Goddess, Hades found her to be as devious as he, and discovered love rarely granted to Gods of doom and gloom. But Persephone's mother



ripped his fair bride from him and contrived to keep her away from Hades for half of every year. The result is a tormented and angry soul who occasionally beds mortals to assuage his sense of being lost in the currents of eternity.

In modern times, Hades plays roles within a narrow band: the miserly commodities broker, the tight-fisted rich old uncle, the suspicious Treasury Department official, the aggressive IRS agent and the Mafia don looking for his missing tribute. Hades is always looking for the return of his missing wealth, whether it be lost souls trying to find their way to the Underworld or more material wealth mined from the ground without his permission. He seeks mortal partners who remind him of his queen. Of late, he is angry about his planet being demoted.

Hades Scions often come off almost as manic-depressive. Their moods shift on a dime from doom and gloom to hopeful and humorous (though it's often the black humor of the gallows). These Scions commonly act as Hades' agents in the World, reclaiming his lost property (be that wealth or souls) and forwarding the Unseen One's agendas.

Associated Powers: Epic Charisma, Epic Manipulation, Arete, Darkness, Death, Earth

Abilities: Academics, Command, Occult, Presence, Stealth, Thrown

Rivals: Dionysus; Baron Samedi, Frigg, Izanami, Osiris, Quetzalcoatl

HEPHAESTUS

AKA: VULCAN, SETHLANS

Description: Lord of the forge and all manufactured things, Hephaestus is a mountain of a man, bearded and barrel chested. He is capable of creating automatons sophisticated enough to imitate human beings, weapons capable of bringing down Titans and Gods, palaces to surpass the greatest of those of the World's kings, and tools that can refashion the universe. His software can rewrite civilizations or engineer the collapse of one. All things that depend on mechanical or artificial design are within his purview, and he can effect startling changes in all of them. His two great disadvantages are his crippled legs, which prevent him from moving easily from place to place. He's also become reliant on his workroom of tools and equipment, which were crafted from his own power and strength as a God. Without them, he is rarely as capable of moving mountains as some would like him to be.

In modern times, Hephaestus is the absent-minded professor or the engineer who loses his glasses. People who recall meeting him are always astounded at the combination of theoretical comprehension and practical applications that meet in his head. So few builders understand the metaphysical underpinnings of their works, while few theoreticians grasp how their mental gymnastics can be used in the real world. Hephaestus understands both, usually with great trepidation at what his knowledge could unleash upon the World.



His Scions tend to be similarly distracted, yet are excellent at assembling odds and ends into formidable tools. Most tend to inherit either his theoretical brilliance or his mechanical aptitude, but not both. The smith-lord prizes and favors those few who do most avidly and insistently.

Associated Powers: Epic Intelligence, Epic Stamina, Epic Strength, Arete, Earth, Fire

Abilities: Art, Control, Craft, Investigation, Melee, Science

Rivals: Aphrodite, Ares, Athena; Anubis, Damballa, Heimdall, Raiden, Xipe Totec

HERA AKA: JUNO, UNI

Description: Wife of Zeus, Hera is the Goddess of marriage. Famed as perpetually loyal and faithful to her husband despite his infidelities, Hera engages in her current philandering ways for the sake of the Gods' continued survival. Her rationalizations make the other Gods uneasy, but they bite their tongues. Dark-haired with gray streaking her temples and possessing a matronly figure, Hera is regal in a way that few Greek Gods are. Busy men pause to open doors for her, and she keeps them waiting while finishing a few parting thoughts. No one dares interrupt her.

In modern life, Hera prefers roles that grant her access to the good life. She is the chairman's wife, or the mayor's. She is the president of the exclusive women's college in New England or the matron of a political family that has ruled the highest echelons of the nation. She is rarely without her pearls, her peacocks and her dogs. Make her angry, and she'll ruin your day—possibly your epoch.

Her Scions have a complex position in divine society. No one can deny that they are strong and potentially great assets in the war against the Titans. As the bastard children of the queen of the Gods, however, few know how many Birthrights to grant them. Is Zeus planning on destroying them, despite their usefulness? Can they ever be Gods? Will they overthrow their mother and stepfather?

Associated Powers: Epic Charisma, Epic Manipulation, Animal (Peacock), Arete, Health, Magic

Abilities: Academics, Command, Fortitude, Investigation, Politics, Presence

Rivals: Aphrodite, Athena, Zeus; Amaterasu, Erzulie, Isis, Sif, Tlazoltéotl

HERMES AKA: MERCURY, TURMS

Description: Lithe, tanned, dark-haired Hermes is the swift-footed messenger of the Gods. He has gone everywhere and done everything. A master trickster and illusionist, he tricked Apollo out of his cows and paid him back with music made with a harp of cow-guts. He

stole his magic from Hera, wealth from Pluto, and his traveler's wits from Artemis. The other Gods are not always fond of him, but they can't deny he has a certain playful usefulness. Hermes more often plays tricks on Titans and titanspawn than on his fellow Gods, and that makes him useful.

In modern life, Hermes has been an upstart head of a computer start-up, a three-card monte con man, a bicycle messenger, an M&A lawyer and the man who sold the Eiffel Tower—twice. The herald of the Gods also makes a good diplomat and trouble-shooter, both for Gods and mortals, and he enjoys making deals that leave everyone but the Titans happy. As a God of merchants and travelers—concepts unfamiliar or even alien to the Titans—Hermes loves the mortal World and travels in it far more often than the other Gods do. He serves as the principal agent of the Dodekathion in delivering Birthrights and is often a Scion's first contact with the divine hierarchy.

Hermes' Scions are often impressed into similar roles. In a world where communications are frequently intercepted, mouth to ear becomes the safest form of information dissemination. Therefore, the children of Hermes risk life and limb to become couriers and spies for their aunts and uncles among the Gods. Not accidentally do the Scions of Hermes also run life insurance services for the God-born. They are well aware of the risks of being a Scion in the first place.

Associated Powers: Epic Dexterity, Epic Intelligence, Epic Wits, Arete, Magic, Psychopomp

Abilities: Athletics, Awareness, Larceny, Occult, Stealth, Survival

Rivals: Apollo, Poseidon; Huitzilopochtli, Izanagi, Kalfu, Legba, Odin, Tlaloc, Thoth

POSEIDON AKA: NEPTUNE, NETHUNS, RODON

Description: Legends say Poseidon was the happiest of Zeus's siblings. He married well, had a horde of children, ruled a vast dominion, received offerings from dozens of cities, had hundreds of temples and shrines, and married a young woman from land in every port for the better part of four millennia. It was a divinely good life.

In the modern age, Poseidon is a passionate but difficult man. White-bearded, half-bald, grizzled and wrinkled, he appears as a startlingly spry and well-preserved man in his 70s. Even in mortal guises, his skin has an almost blue tinge to it. Over the years, the sea God has taken the role of a shipping agent, an underwater archaeologist and a naval officer. He still gambles at the horse races. Most of all, however, Poseidon is an environmentalist. He rages at what humans are doing to his ocean, and he has plans to make them stop.

Triton, Poseidon's son and favorite Scion, does most of the work of contacting his father's progeny these days.

ADOPTING SCIONS

Virgin Goddesses such as Artemis and Athena find the concept of mating with men disagreeable. Osiris cannot procreate Scions of his own. Set has difficulty doing so as well. Uniquely ugly Gods such as Miclántecuhtli have problems of their own. Yet, for these Gods—and for all Gods—adoption remains a viable alternative.

When a God adopts the Scion of another, he claims that child so completely that the child thereafter treats the adopting God's associated powers and Favored Abilities as his own. The Gods can't simply poach one another's offspring, however, even when one divine parent is unaware of a child's existence. In order for the adoption to be formal and binding, the child's true parent must first formally disinherit him in the Overworld, utterly renouncing his filial connection and responsibility. After that, any God or Goddess who has a mind to can claim the child—the culmination of which claim is a Visitation and a bestowal of Birthrights. After the Visitation, it's too late for any divine being—even the child's true divine parent—to claim the child. It's also too late for the adopting parent to renounce his claim. The child is now his in the eyes of Fate.

A God cannot adopt a mortal and make him a Scion in this way. Only a being whose body combines mortal flesh and divine ichor—regardless of whose divine ichor it is—can be adopted thus. Also, no Scion who has already received a Visitation can be adopted by another God, even if that God should later grow to despise his Scion and renounce him before all the Gods of the Overworld.

Finally, while this terrifying possibility is rare, it is known that the Titans themselves can also adopt formally disinherited Scions. Some Titans will even take a Scion under their wings regardless of the current relationship between that Scion and his parent God—all the Scion has to be is willing.

These Scions are a tsunami building across the World, transforming nations and civilizations, wreaking havoc on a World that forgot Poseidon and forgot to take care of the ocean. The Scions of the Horse Lord will make everyone remember.

Associated Powers: Epic Charisma, Epic Manipulation, Animal (Horse), Arete, Earth, Water

Abilities: Animal Ken, Control, Fortitude, Integrity, Melee, Thrown

Rivals: Zeus; Damballa, Frigg, Geb, Quetzalcoatl, Susano-o, Tyr

ZEUS

AKA: JOVE, JUPITER, TINIA

Description: Zeus, Sky Father, King of Heaven, Titan-Slayer, Many-Splendored, Crowned in Lightnings. He has many titles, all expressing his strength and power. Legends say Zeus was stronger than all the other Gods of the Dodektheon combined; some Gods believe he might be stronger than any other two *pantheons* combined. This very strength could, in fact, be his undoing, for Fate has decreed that a son of his own siring will overthrow him in time. The other Gods caution him to be careful in spreading his divine seed, yet Zeus cannot help himself. His very potency and the heroic nature of his children and the great deeds they do in the

World push him to father yet more Scions and bring more soldiers to the side of the Gods in the battle with the Titans and the titanspawn. That his very eagerness could result in the ruin of the World weighs little on his mind. Some suggest he might actually be addicted to the sexual rush or even to the act of procreation.

To modern audiences, Zeus has played many roles: irreplaceable senator, undefeatable mayor, obscure European prince, sharp-eyed president (elected or not, political or corporate, it matters not). He is always in charge, always on top and always in control. When he's wrong, the results are bad; when he's right, the results are good. Either way, the results are always epic in scope and scale.

His Scions are a diverse and unruly bunch. Dionysus, Ares, Hephaestus, Apollo, Artemis and Hermes are all his children. So were Heracles, King Minos of Crete and Helen of Troy. That his children are capable of spreading order and justice is undeniable. That they are capable of great destruction and ruin is equally undeniable. Yet it is difficult to explain that to Zeus without giving offense.

Associated Powers: Epic Charisma, Epic Manipulation, Epic Strength, Arete, Justice, Sky

Abilities: Awareness, Command, Integrity, Presence, Politics, Thrown

Rivals: Apollo, Hades; Amaterasu, Atum-Re, Horus, Huitzilopochtli, Odin, Shango

DONNIE RHODES

SCION OF APHRODITE

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Born and raised in Olympia, WA, Donnie Rhodes has led what casual observers would consider a charmed life. His father, Donald Sr., is a wealthy shipping magnate, so Donnie's never wanted for anything... except perhaps love. Like many before him, the elder Rhodes loved Aphrodite not wisely, but too well. Her leaving after their whirlwind romance devastated the man. The appearance of their son on the doorstep nine months later merely added insult to injury.

As a result, Donnie was neglected by his father. Yet to those outside the household, it seemed Donnie enjoyed an enviable childhood, which made his descent into delinquency and tabloid headlines harder to fathom.

His activities led to 10 arrests on three continents and rumors of romantic links to two pop stars, a model twice his age and a famed hotel heiress. But Donnie took little joy in his actions, only using them to try to gain the attention of his estranged parent. He finally succeeded, though not with the parent he expected.

Making a play for the girlfriend of a young Mafia thug in a New York nightclub, an inebriated Donnie was nearly killed. Fortunately, his mother was at the club in disguise and snatched him away to safety.

Donnie later returned to twist the hearts of the criminal's wiseguy associates into a Gordian knot of love and hate, destroying the thug in one long night of betrayals and spiteful reprisals. Donnie's since reserved his cold rage for titanspawn, eventually hooking up with his Band in Vegas.

With a tanned muscular body, sandy blond hair and piercing blue eyes, Donnie moves with the sinewy grace of a jungle cat and tends to set fashion trends rather than follow them with his casual-chic style. In dangerous situations, he's always girded for battle, bearing his twin automatics Eros and Anteros in paired shoulder holsters hanging from the harness to the fantastic Daedalus Device.

Roleplaying Hints: You come off as cold and aloof but crave genuine friendship... though you'd never admit it. After years of disappointment, you aren't willing to take a chance at being shot down, so you play it cool, heaping scorn and sarcasm on friends as often as enemies. Woe betides those who harm the people you care about, though. Your fury in such cases is cold, and your vengeance sure. Because of your wealth, it's often up to you to finance your Band's adventures.

Birthrights: The Daedalus Device allows Donnie to channel the Sky, Animal and Sun Purviews and adds +2 to his DVs. Eros and Anteros are Berettas, each fitted for a silencer and adding Accuracy +1 and Speed -1 to the template (see p. 203) and each also possessing a unique power.

When Donnie activates its power and shoots someone with Eros, his victim suffers no damage but falls madly in love with the next person she sees. (The attack must still succeed, and a bullet is still used. This bullet's impact leaves no physical sign, however.) If Donnie activates Anteros's power instead and shoots a person with it, she develops a deep hatred toward the next person she sees.

Activating either requires spending a Legend point, as well as making a contested roll of Donnie's (Charisma + Presence + Legend) versus the victim's (Willpower + Integrity + Legend). If Donnie's player scores more successes, the love or hate effect lasts for a number of days equal to the number of successes scored in excess of the victim.

SCION

H E R O

Donnie Rhodes
Name

N'er-Do-Well
Calling

Dodekatheon
Pantheon

Player

Cynic
Nature

Aphrodite
God

ATTRIBUTES

	Physical		Social		Mental
Strength	●●○○○○○○○○ □□□□□□□□	Charisma	●●○○○○○○○○ □□□□□□□□	Perception	●●○○○○○○○○ □□□□□□□□
Dexterity	●●●○○○○○○○ ■□□□□□□□	Manipulation	●●●○○○○○○○ ■□□□□□□□	Intelligence	●●○○○○○○○○ □□□□□□□□
Stamina	●●○○○○○○○○ □□□□□□□□	Appearance	●●●○○○○○○○ ■□□□□□□□	Wits	●●●○○○○○○○ ■□□□□□□□

ABILITIES

<input type="checkbox"/> Academics	●●●○○	<input type="checkbox"/> Craft	○○○○○	<input type="checkbox"/> Melee	○○○○○
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Animal Ken	●○○○○	<input type="checkbox"/>	○○○○○	<input type="checkbox"/> Occult	○○○○○
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Art	●○○○○	<input type="checkbox"/>	○○○○○	<input type="checkbox"/> Politics	●●○○○
<input type="checkbox"/>	○○○○○	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Empathy	●○○○○	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Presence	●●●○○
<input type="checkbox"/> Athletics	●●●○○	<input type="checkbox"/> Fortitude	○○○○○	<input type="checkbox"/> Science (Psychology)	●○○○○
<input type="checkbox"/> Awareness	●●●○○	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Integrity	●●●○○	<input type="checkbox"/>	○○○○○
<input type="checkbox"/> Brawl	●○○○○	<input type="checkbox"/> Investigation	○○○○○	<input type="checkbox"/>	○○○○○
<input type="checkbox"/> Command	○○○○○	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Larceny	●●○○○	<input type="checkbox"/> Stealth	○○○○○
<input type="checkbox"/> Control (Automobiles)	●●●○○	<input type="checkbox"/> Marksmanship	●●●○○	<input type="checkbox"/> Survival	○○○○○
<input type="checkbox"/>	○○○○○	<input type="checkbox"/> Medicine	○○○○○	<input type="checkbox"/> Thrown	○○○○○

BIRTHRIGHTS

Relic Pistol Set (Eros/ Anteros) 4

Relic (Daedalus Device - Animal, Sky, Sun) 5

WEAPONS

Eros/ Anteros

Acc 9, Dmg 4L, Rng 20, Clip 15, Spd 3, P

KNACKS

Center of Attention, Come

Hither, Overt Order, Rabbit

Reflexes, Trick Shooter,

Untouchable Opponent

BOONS

Arete (Marksmanship) 1, Arete

(Presence) 1, Wind's Freedom

WILLPOWER

●●●●●●●●○○
□□□□□□□□

SOAK

A _____ L 1 B 2

ARMOR

A _____ L █ B _____

HEALTH

0 -1 -1 -2 -2 -4 I
□ □ □ □ □ □ □

VIRTUES

Expression ●○○○○

Intellect ●○○○○

Valor ●●●○○

Vengeance ●●●○○

LEGEND

● ● ● ○ ○ ○
○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○

Legend Points 9

EXPERIENCE

DONNIE RHODES

DONNIE RHODES

The AESIR

The NORSE GODS

Born in the wastes and ruin of Northern Europe, among Germanic warriors and Nordic pirates, the Aesir compose the fourth-oldest of the divine families. Their pantheon is the product of a shotgun wedding around 1,000 years ago, when the Aesir and the Vanir (an earlier pantheon) were both devastated by the Titans during a war in the North. Relying on the safety of numbers, the Aesir absorbed their rivals into their ranks and thus preserved themselves in difficult times.

The Aesir represent a third option apart from those espoused by the Dodektheon and the Pesedjet. Aesir Scions promote community stability as a hedge against modern life's harshness. Yet, they also emphasize personal rights and individual honor. Therefore, while family and nation are important, injustice against a single person is cause for action and even vengeance.

Of all the divine tribes, the Aesir are the most directly affected by Fate. Nearly every Norse God and Goddess is fated to end badly at Ragnarök, the prophesied ending of the nine worlds. Both individually and as a group, the Aesir motivate their Scions to find ways around that ugly doom. They challenge both specific people and whole communities, striving for greater justice and firmer commitments to order. On the other hand, their entanglements with Fate cause many complications for the Aesir and their Scions alike.

The Aesir's great weaknesses are a preponderance of enemies, an obsession with Fate and a fondness for aggressive solutions (which is how they acquired so many foes in the first place). Titanspawn are to be killed first; questions can be asked later using magic, if necessary. At the same time, the bindings of Fate urge these Gods to ask for prophecies from nearly everyone, as they seek to avoid their



doom at Ragnarök. Invariably, their enemies grant them foreknowledge of their ruin, with oracles that further constrain their possible courses of action.

BALDUR aka: phol

Description: The handsomest of the Aesir, Baldur is a genial and orderly fellow, in keeping with his role as God of the sun. His blond hair is always just a little longer than custom allows for while still being perfect. His white teeth, incredible physique, graceful dexterity and sincere eyes make it impossible to deny him anything he asks for. He can be persuasive and charming, fierce and intimidating, clever and generous, but he rarely strays from his intended course. That course is usually predictable and clear.

Baldur is a valiant warrior, loved by everyone except Loki. Even Hel has a crush on him. His legendary hall had a golden roof and silver walls, and he could shoot a man from the other side of the World with one eye closed. In modern times, Baldur takes on roles that suit his everyday good-guy projection and Nordic good looks. He's been a movie star, a fireman, an alternative energy expert, a veterinarian, a lifeguard and a sports star. Yet his greatness and goodness tend to make him the best and greatest man in the room. Baldur is fated not to share the stage with anyone, which leads him (and his Scions) into roles where they engender jealousy and envy.

Baldur has many Scions, not because he necessarily wants many, but because he likes to make women happy. It is virtually impossible not to like him and lust after him. His children are genuinely good folk, destined to help the World. Their very goodness, of course, tends to bring them to unspeakably unpleasant ends, just like the one their father is destined to suffer.

Associated Powers: Epic Appearance, Epic Charisma, Guardian, Jotunblut, Sun

Abilities: Art, Athletics, Brawl, Melee, Marksmanship, Presence

Rivals: Hel, Loki; Apollo, Horus, Izanami, Kalfu, Miclántecuhtli

FREYA AKA: FRAU, FREYA

Description: One of the Vanir who merged their divine tribe with the Aesir, Freya is a red-headed woman of clear skin and clearer eye, older and matronly yet still in possession of great beauty. A great sorceress and warrior queen, she was still capable of weeping when caught in tragedy. Her tears are always pure gold. Legends describe her as being beautiful enough to cause several titanspawn to propose marriage, and she won her necklace and her cat-drawn chariot by giving her body to dwarves. She was also fierce enough to stir up war among mortals for no reason other than to take joy in the combats of men.

In modern times, Freya has assumed disguises ranging from a fortune-teller or psychic to a modern life-coach or martial arts instructor. Sometimes she's kind and matronly, a baker of cookies and a dryer of eyes. Other times, she's just the right person to kick you into gear. Her principle concern is for women and their achievements and safety, but she is not so much of a feminist that she'll refuse to help men.

Freya's Scions are beautiful, regardless of gender, and typically wield that beauty as their most potent weapon. Though Freya tends to dote more on her female Scions, the boys are neither ignored nor underappreciated. It's just that in such a male-centric pantheon, her daughters' victories mean more to her.

Associated Powers: Epic Appearance, Epic Charisma, Fertility, Health, Jotunblut, War

Abilities: Art, Craft, Empathy, Integrity, Melee, Presence

Rivals: Hel, Sif; Athena, Bastet, Erzulie, Raiden, Tezcatlipoca

FREYR AKA: ING

Description: The most powerfully fertile of the Norse fertility Gods, the Vanir, Freyr has power over both plants and mortal lives. Brown-haired with a football linebacker's build, he has power to control the sun and the rain, and he is capable of increasing someone's wealth and prosperity without limits. Married to Gerd, a giantess of great power, Freyr

nonetheless wanders far and wide in the World of which he is the God. His magical ship and boar, both powerful symbols of fertility, bear him on his travels.

In modern times, Freyr takes on roles ranging from pornographic film star to dairy magnate. Wealth, prosperity and land-ownership tend to hang about him as Fate decrees. Although he's rarely directly in the spotlight, few can resist the charisma that radiates from him whenever he is in the room. Whether he's naked or clothed, he's always the best-dressed man in the room.

Freyr's Scions are similarly endowed, with both wealth and fierce fertility. They have a difficult time stopping up floods of coinage and children, and Fate conspires to bring them many opportunities to make both. As caught up in the World as they become, though, it is sometimes difficult for them to muster the energy to go beyond it, or to leave it for the mythic realms where they can achieve so much.

Associated Powers: Epic Charisma, Fertility, Health, Jotunblut, Sun, War

Abilities: Animal Ken, Brawl, Control, Fortitude, Investigation, Presence

Rivals: Thor, Erzulie, Izanagi, Poseidon, Set, Sobek, Tezcatlipoca

FRIGG AKA: FREJA, FRIGE

Description: Wife of Odin and similarly knowledgeable about mortal destinies, Frigg is an old power of the earth. Some of the Gods think she is of the Vanir; others believe she is a Titan herself, but allied with the Gods. Whatever her origins, she is powerful enough to be counted a great sorceress among divine beings and a powerful predictor of the future. Her falcon-skin can change anyone into a falcon with no chance of getting lost in the animal role. For all that, she has blind spots. What appears inconsequential to her is *usually* so, but she's not always right.

In modern times, Frigg has taken on roles as diverse as gynecologist, women's rights activist, coven leader, swimsuit model, military wife, financial planner and gypsy fortuneteller. Her predictions are eerily accurate, which unnerves people who know and remember her. Frigg often travels with three younger women, her handmaidens Gna, Fulla and Hlin, though now she uses more appropriate language, such as "personal assistants" or "associates."

Frigg's Scions tend to be women, and the few males usually have more in common with Baldur than with her. From all her Scions, Frigg extracts a



formal Fatebound promise not to harm Baldur, her son. Swearing this oath is necessary before she will endow her children with any power at all, yet many have died regretting that very promise.

Associated Powers: Epic Charisma, Epic Intelligence, Jotunblut, Magic, Prophecy, Sky

Abilities: Academics, Command, Fortitude, Medicine, Occult, Science

Rivals: Freya; Huitzilopochtli, Ogoun, Poseidon, Susano-o, Thoth

heimdall aka: hama, rig

Description: Heimdall is the guardian of Bifröst, the rainbow bridge that joins the mortal World to Asgard, the Overworld home of the Aesir. As the warden of the paths between the worlds, and the Gods' first line of defense, he is capable of seeing and understanding almost as much as Odin or Loki. Dark-haired, buff and possessed of a warrior's bearing, Heimdall has eagle eyes, a wolf's nose and a sixth sense about danger. He is fated to be the slayer of sly Loki at Ragnarök, and in the meantime, he makes a point of getting into everyone's business while keeping everyone out of his own.

In modern times, Heimdall has been a security expert, a photojournalist with a reputation for getting into difficult places, a high-ranking Special

Forces operative, a freedom fighter, a mercenary, a spy, a code-breaker and a hacker.

Heimdall's Scions are many, and their father pulls strings to put them in interesting places. This is not so much because he likes them, as that what the son sees, so does the father. What the daughter hears, the father hears also. Heimdall uses his children as part of his divine security network, often without letting his children know he's doing so. Usually, the other Gods have to inform his Scions of their father's interest in managing their careers.

Associated Powers: Epic Perception, Guardian, Jotunblut, Sun

Abilities: Awareness, Command, Investigation, Marksmanship, Melee, Stealth

Rivals: Loki; Hermes, Izanagi, Legba, Ptah, Shango, Xipe Totec

hel aka: hell

Description: Hel, queen of the Underworld, is profoundly disgusting. Her face and body are fair on the right-hand side, while her left profile is a mass of putrescence and corruption. Rarely leaving her hall and its collection of dead souls, she wanders among mortals only with great difficulty. Humans who look



upon her true shape are permanently scarred by the experience.

Hel is a fierce guardian of the dead, cold and unforgiving. It is prophesied that she will not let even Baldur, the fair and beautiful God, depart her halls once he arrives in them. The Norse Underworld is cold, and Hel, as its queen, is colder yet.

In modern times, Hel becomes the archetypal ice queen. She has assumed roles as diverse as financial advisor, lawyer, judge and prison psychologist on one hand and gothic beauty queen, model, singer and undertaker on the other. She never deigns to accept disguises that are beneath her. She is never anyone's servant, no matter what mortal aspect she puts on.

Hel's Scions are few and far between. Few men can stand to be with her long enough to allow her to father a child, and those who stick around are rarely comfortable with the resulting children. Yet Hel's halls are crowded with powerful and ghostly servants, at least some of whom she lends to her children when it serves her interests.

Associated Powers: Epic Appearance, Epic Manipulation, Death, Jotunblut

Abilities: Command, Control, Fortitude, Investigation, Melee, Presence

Rivals: Freya; Baron Samedi, Dionysus, Izanagi, Osiris, Quetzalcoatl

LOKI AKA: LOFTUR, LOGE

Description: Loki the Sky Traveler is a God of fire and mischief. Traveling in disguise and sometimes even shapeshifting, he is capable of being on anyone's side—or no one's. He once sheared off Sif's hair as a practical joke, before tricking the dwarves into replacing it with hair of spun gold. He kidnapped Idun and her apples of immortality, only to rescue her by trickery and bring her back to safety in Asgard. He is blood-brother to Odin, yet the son of giants, and the Midgard Serpent and Fenris Wolf—the two most fearsome titanspawn in the Norse cosmology—are his children. The stories say he will be bound under the earth with poison dripping into his face because of the betrayals he's committed against the Gods, and that he will side with the Titans at the end of the World.

In modern times, Loki's sharply angled face haunts boardrooms and BDSM clubs. His tight goatee is equally at home in undercover police operations as in revolutionary camps. He is never in charge, but he's always the clever and capable assistant who makes things happen. For all that, many see him as cowardly even in his cleverness, for he never seems to be around when things go sour. The double-cross is an art form to Loki, and few



things please him as much as leading both sides of a conflict into “accidental” ambushes.

Loki’s Scions are rare. He is seldom out and about on his own, but usually in the company of a minder—usually Thor if not Odin himself. Failing that, another of the Aesir keeps him on a tight leash. The fact that some of Loki’s extant children are clearly on the side of the Titans means that the Aesir themselves sometimes hunt his Scions to extinction, just to avoid the possibility of them fighting against the Gods.

Associated Powers: Epic Intelligence, Epic Manipulation, Epic Wits, Chaos, Fire, Jotunblut, Magic

Abilities: Brawl, Empathy, Larceny, Occult, Politics, Stealth

Rivals: Heimdall, Odin, Thor; Amaterasu, Baron Samedi, Geb, Hachiman, Hermes, Quetzalcoatl, Shango, Thoth, Zeus

ODIN AKA: WOTAN, WODEN, VAK, VALTAM, YGG

Description: Odin, called the All-Father, is the supreme deity of the Norse pantheon, by virtue of his great power and even greater wisdom. He crucified himself for nine nights on the World Tree,

Yggdrasil, to gain the power of the runes. He bested giants in contests of skill, strength and poetry in the dawn of the World and fought epic battles with his warrior host across all the nine worlds of the Nordic Overworld. Plucking out his own eye, he gained perfect wisdom. His throne allows him to see all occurrences in all of the nine worlds. Accompanied by two wolves and two ravens and riding an eight-legged steed, Odin is a cunning and terrifying enemy to the Titans and their spawn.

He’s no great shakes as a father, though.

In modern times, Odin’s disguises have ranged from a telecom cable magnate, to a programmer working with a search-engine corporation, to an ordinary telephone repairman. Always bearded, always lacking one eye, he has a tendency to seduce his mortal bedmates and vanish shortly before his child is born. When he returns to introduce himself to his Scions, he rarely gives Birthrights without strings attached.

As a far-seeing God, all-knowing and all-understanding, Odin could be more sensitive to his Scions’ needs. Yet the sacrifice of his one eye and its accompanying foreknowledge of Ragnarök, “the Doom of the Gods,” has brought Odin to the point of obsession. The only thing he cares about is whether the Aesir survive the final battle with the giants and Titans at the World’s end. The sacrifice



of his Scions to that end is not only acceptable, it is *purposed*. If one or two of them manage to rise as Gods themselves, so be it, but Odin's own survival is always paramount in his mind.

Associated Powers: Epic Charisma, Epic Intelligence, Epic Manipulation, Epic Perception, Epic Stamina, Epic Wits, Death, Jotunblut, Magic, Mystery, Prophecy, Psychopomp, War

Abilities: Art, Fortitude, Integrity, Investigation, Occult, Presence

Rivals: Loki; Apollo, Horus, Huitzilopochtli, Ogoun, Susano-o

SIF

Description: Sif, a Goddess of fertility and waving grain among the Vanir, is the wife of Thor. Beautiful and youthful, her hair is made of spun gold that the dwarves made for her after Loki cut off her real hair. Blonde and blue-eyed, she has mythic proportions made real. Even the giants lusted over her regularly, the maiden with golden hair.

To modern eyes, she often plays cheerleader to Thor's football star, and movie starlet to his action hero. She also takes on solo roles from time to time: celebrity chef, runway model, businesswoman, philanthropist, teacher, librarian, cattle heiress, obscure European nobility and gardening columnist.

People tend to remember the sharp nose and the keen intellect, especially when she travels with her lovable lug of a husband.

Her children are a diverse lot, ranging from feminist activists to stay-at-home mothers, from sensitive metrosexuals to lumberjacks and miners. Hearth and home are important to them, but so is having it all, in terms of children, careers and active social calendars. Rare is the Scion of Sif who doesn't work to fill every minute and moment with vigorous activity.

Associated Powers: Epic Appearance, Epic Charisma, Fertility, Jotunblut

Abilities: Athletics, Empathy, Integrity, Melee, Science, Survival

Rivals: Loki; Artemis, Bastet, Erzulie, Huitzilopochtli, Susano-o

THOR AKA: DONAR, THUNOR

Description: Thor is the right hand of Odin and his chief enforcer among the Gods. The Norse thunder God is quite simply an army unto himself.

Legends say that his hammer was so powerful it could shatter mountains, and it unerringly killed every giant who faced him without magical protections. Fierce, angry and prideful, he was as

dangerous to his allies as to his enemies. Red-haired with lightning-blue eyes, and massively built with fists like sledgehammers, Thor was strong enough to lift the Midgard Serpent and thirsty enough to drink the sea. His regular companion Thjalfi is the best runner and scout in the nine worlds, and Thor traverses the sky in a cart drawn by two golden goats.

In modern times, Thor has assumed guises as an electrical technician, a rock musician, an iron miner, a club bouncer, a motorcycle repairman, a sound engineer at a recording studio and a fireworks specialist. People who encounter him tend to remember a big-hearted, passionate lug with a crushing handshake; someone quick to anger but quick to forgive. No one describes him as smart, though, and addictions seem to latch onto him quickly.

Thor has fathered large numbers of Scions, but tends to reward them with Birthrights less frequently than other members of the Aesir do. His own abilities tend to center on battle and war rather than creation, and his ability to persuade others to create legendary objects for his children is limited.

Associated Powers: Epic Charisma, Epic Stamina, Epic Strength, Guardian, Jotunblut, Sky

Abilities: Athletics, Brawl, Control, Melee, Presence, Thrown

Rivals: Loki; Hermes, Izanami, Kalfu, Set, Tlaloc

TYR AKA: TIU, ZIU

Description: One-handed Tyr, God of justice and war, is the son of Odin. For a brief time, before he lost his hand, he was chief of the Aesir. Sturdy, well built, but rarely laughing, he regards the World with turquoise eyes. He gave his right hand to Fenris so that the great wolf would agree to be bound, and the wolf bit it off. The stump is constantly red and inflamed, and no mechanical hand will fit upon it. Yet only by sacrificing Tyr's hand could the Aesir constrain their greatest enemy.

In modern times, Tyr appears as a short, sturdy man, with salt-and-pepper hair. He tends to be fit but jowly, and his career paths tend to wander the gamut from weapons designer to statesman, from judge to bishop, from civil-rights activist to conservative blogger. He is always on the right side of the question, a thoughtful and careful observer of what is just and good in the long run. His stance often makes him wildly unpopular.

Tyr's Scions are no less devoted to justice, if less clear of vision. They tend to work within existing systems rather than tear down established orders, but they still seek to constrain chaos and promote social cohesion and harmony.

Associated Powers: Epic Charisma, Epic Stamina, Epic Strength, Epic Wits, Jotunblut, Justice, War

Abilities: Academics, Command, Integrity, Investigation, Melee, Politics

Rivals: Loki; Dionysus, Legba, Set, Susano-o, Tezcatlipoca

VIÐAR AKA: VIÐARR

Description: Other Gods look with suspicion on Vidar Odinson because he is destined to avenge his father's death and to survive Ragnarök. Many modern Scions believe him to be a former Scion himself, elevated to godhood and immortality. He is a model and exemplar for many Scions of the Aesir. Yet as a God of vengeance—vital and necessary in Nordic legend—Vidar is not a nice fellow. He's stronger than all the Gods but Thor, he's more steadfast than Odin, and he's more patient than Loki in laying his plans. He's also an implacable enemy. Vidar sees his Scions as pawns who should serve his purpose before they die.

In modern times, as in the ancient, Vidar appears as a bearded man in his late 20s or early 30s, lean but well built. He takes on identities as diverse as police officer, detective, criminal prosecutor, Mafia hit man, gang leader, advertising executive, political hatchet-man, terrorist and cult leader. People who have met him tend to use such words as "obsessive," "paranoid" and "methodical" to describe him.

Vidar's Scions are driven, focused and methodical, though not usually paranoid at first. (That comes later.) Military backgrounds are common among Vidar's Scions, but almost as common are cutthroat businesspeople. These Scions hold grudges against even allies and can identify people with a need for revenge just by shaking hands with them. Some such Scions claim that a handshake compels them to pursue vengeance on that person's behalf; most see this as a thin justification for violence.

Associated Powers: Epic Stamina, Epic Strength, Jotunblut, Justice

Abilities: Awareness, Brawl, Fortitude, Investigation, Politics, Stealth

Rivals: Loki; Hades, Izanami, Kalfu, Set, Xipe Totec

ERIC DONNER

SCION OF THOR

At 18 years old, Eric Donner is the youngest Scion in his Band, but he's experienced a lot in that short time. Born to an unwed mother who took sick and died by the time Eric was 10, he was raised in a small Midwestern town by his maternal grandfather, Randall. Randall taught him the ins and outs of automobile repair, as well as what it means to be a stand-up guy. Eric learned those lessons well.

Unfortunately, Randall passed away of a massive stroke in Eric's 17th year, leaving Eric alone... though not for long. With the aid of his grandfather's ghost and the ravens Hugin and Munin, Eric learned he is the son of the Norse God of thunder. In short order, he received his Birthright from the dwarves Brok and Sindri and ended a frost giant plot to unearth the great wyrm Jörmungandr, though he was nearly killed thanks to the betrayal of Sly Guiler, Scion of Loki.

Since then, Eric has traveled the continent in his GTO, led by Fate (and occasionally the ravens of Odin) to upset the plots of various titanspawn. In the process, he's come to work with the other members of his heroic Band, a diverse group featuring Scions of six separate pantheons. Now, with his Band or solo, Eric continues to fight the good fight and to help those in need.

At six foot five and a muscular 220 pounds, Eric is handsome, though not supernaturally so. He inherited his father's red hair and steel-gray eyes, but unlike Thor, he keeps the hair cut short and eschews facial hair. He usually dresses casually, like the blue-collar boy he is, in jeans, a denim jacket and a flannel shirt with a white T-shirt beneath. On his right middle finger, he sports a bloodstone ring etched with the Germanic rune *algiz* ("protection") and when he's expecting trouble, he carries, Giantbane—quite possibly the largest revolver ever made.

Roleplaying Hints: Like your father, you're a brave and likeable lug who strives to smite evil and protect the weak. Unlike Thor, you're both more clever and slower to anger. When something does rile you, though, the familial resemblance is uncanny. You've never met your father in person, but you crave his approval and work hard doing things you think will make him proud.

Birthrights: Eric's bloodstone ring allows him to channel the Guardian Purview. Giantbane is an oversized supernal Peacemaker. It adds Damage +3L to the Peacemaker template (see p. 203). It also allows him to channel the Sky Purview.

ERIC
DONNER

SCION

H E R O

Eric Donner
Name

Athlete
Calling

Aesir
Pantheon

Player

Gallant
Nature

Thor
God

ATTRIBUTES

	Physical	Social	Mental
Strength	●●●●○○○○○○ ■□□□□□□□	Charisma	●●○○○○○○○○ □□□□□□□□
Dexterity	●●●●○○○○○○ □□□□□□□□	Manipulation	●●○○○○○○○○ □□□□□□□□
Stamina	●●●●○○○○○○ ■□□□□□□□	Appearance	●●●●○○○○○○ □□□□□□□□
		Perception	●●○○○○○○○○ □□□□□□□□
		Intelligence	●●○○○○○○○○ □□□□□□□□
		Wits	●●●●○○○○○○ □□□□□□□□

ABILITIES

<input type="checkbox"/> Academics	○○○○○	<input type="checkbox"/> Craft (<i>Automobiles</i>)	●●○○○	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Melee	●●○○○
<input type="checkbox"/> Animal Ken	○○○○○	<input type="checkbox"/>	○○○○○	<input type="checkbox"/> Occult	○○○○○
<input type="checkbox"/> Art	○○○○○	<input type="checkbox"/>	○○○○○	<input type="checkbox"/> Politics	○○○○○
<input type="checkbox"/>	○○○○○	<input type="checkbox"/> Empathy	●●○○○	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Presence	●●○○○
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Athletics	●●○○○	<input type="checkbox"/> Fortitude	●●○○○	<input type="checkbox"/> Science	○○○○○
<input type="checkbox"/> Awareness	●●○○○	<input type="checkbox"/> Integrity	○○○○○	<input type="checkbox"/>	○○○○○
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Brawl	●●○○○	<input type="checkbox"/> Investigation	●○○○○	<input type="checkbox"/>	○○○○○
<input type="checkbox"/> Command	●○○○○	<input type="checkbox"/> Larceny	○○○○○	<input type="checkbox"/> Stealth	○○○○○
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Control (<i>Automobiles</i>)	●●○○○	<input type="checkbox"/> Marksmanship	●●○○○	<input type="checkbox"/> Survival	●●○○○
<input type="checkbox"/>	○○○○○	<input type="checkbox"/> Medicine	○○○○○	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Thrown	●○○○○

BIRTHRIGHTS

Relic (Giantbane-Sky) 4

Relic (Algiz Ring - Guardian) 1

WEAPONS

Giantbane

Acc 8, Dmg 8L, Rng 20, Clip 6, Spd 5, P

KNACKS

Damage Conversion, Holy

Rampage, Self-Healing,

Uplifting Might

WILLPOWER

●●●●●●○○○○
□□□□□□□□

SOAK

A 2 L 4 B 6

ARMOR

A _____ L _____ B _____

HEALTH

0 -1 -1 -2 -2 -4 I
□ □ □ □ □ □ □

VIRTUES

Courage ●●○○○

Endurance ●●○○○

Expression ●○○○○

Loyalty ●●○○○

LEGEND

● ● ● ● ○ ○
○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○

Legend Points 16

EXPERIENCE

ERIC DONNER

ERIC DONNER

THE ATZLÁNTI

THE AZTEC GODS

Coming into being sometime between 3,000 and 4,000 years ago, the Aztec Gods have no name for their pantheon. Other divine tribes usually call them the Atzlánti. Capricious and cruel in a way that the other pantheons are not, the Aztec Gods are bloodthirsty, aggressive and violent. They most often sire Scions with mortals descended from the tribes that spoke Náhuatl, wherever such native peoples exist.

For the Atzlánti, continuity is more important than community or individuality. A specific human is unimportant. Likewise, a specific village, family, clan or nation is equally unimportant. The most important issue for this tribe is that the sun continues on its daily course, that the moon follows the sun in its appointed rounds and that the stars continue to shine on their proper schedule. Yet astronomical normality and regularity require bloody sacrifice, and even if the other Gods deplore the Aztec Gods' methods, they cannot deny that at least the calendar proceeds in its usual and expected way.

Of all the divine tribes, the Atzlánti are the least concerned with the dictates of Fate or the potential doom of the Gods. They are the most mutable of form, the most mutable of apparent purpose and the least suspicious of the ambitions of their Scions. Of course, part of the reason for their carefree attitude toward their children is their attitude toward pain and death. What better blood to spill to ensure the continuation of the sun's course than the blood of a glorious child of the Gods?

The Atzlánti have weaknesses, naturally, and their greatest stumbling block is their desperate need for blood. Blood fuels and expedites all Aztec magic and divine powers, and while Quetzalcoátl might need only a drop for most of his workings, Huitzilopochtli seems to need bucketsful. The other Gods wonder how much of this kind of sacrifice is personal preference, and how much is genuine necessity. Nonetheless, the Atzlánti need blood, recently spilled animal or human blood, to do their part in preserving reality. Their Scions are similarly affected.



HUITZILOPOCHTLI

AKA: UITZILOPOCHTLI

Description: Black-faced, covered with blue tattoos and with a red-and-yellow-feathered left leg, Huitzilopochtli is the Aztec God of war and the sun. He defeated the Four Hundred Southerners in his armor of cotton and with his four spears tipped with eagle's down, a turquoise serpent torch and a shield of reeds. Fond of earrings and gold jewelry, he *loves* blood that comes from dishonored warriors.

The Aztecs were his chosen people, for he roused in them a maddening love of battle and sacrifice.

In modern times, Huitzilopochtli has worked as a blood bank technician, a professional kidnapper, a mercenary and a death squad commander. People who live through encounters with him recall cold eyes, a stern demeanor and a dangerous rage barely kept in check. Even as a man, he exudes a heroic, feral wildness.

Huitzilopochtli's Scions are usually similarly frightening. Even in relatively peaceful careers as ornithologists and ethnologists, their potential for rage is always near the surface. The Gods regard the Hummingbird of the Left's children as assassins and storm troopers—front-line blunt instruments, not tools of great subtlety.

Associated Powers: Epic Charisma, Epic Stamina, Epic Strength, Animal (Hummingbird, Eagle), Death, Guardian, Itzli, Magic, Sun, War

Abilities: Athletics, Awareness, Brawl, Marksmanship, Melee, Thrown

Rivals: Tezcatlipoca; Ares, Horus, Ogoun, Susano-o, Thor, Tyr

MICLÁNTECUHTLI

AKA: SANTA MUERTE

Description: Mictlántecuhtli is the lord of Mictlán, the realm of the dead and the spirits in the Aztec world. Skeletally thin, with black hair peppered with white stars, the God's claw-like hands are strong enough to rip souls to shreds. He wears suits made of bark paper, and his liver hangs out of a gaping hole in his abdomen.



In modern times, Miclântecuhtli has been a petty bureaucrat in governments and customer assistance branches of major corporations. The Aztec death God suffers from a permanent case of schadenfreude, and he adores the soul-destroying power that comes from confronting people with impossible barriers to actual help. Health care and insurance organizations are particularly delightful to him, and he loves making a mortal fight for something she wants, only to discover that she didn't really want it in the first place. Even in human form, his florid, disease-spotted face usually causes mortal to flinch when first meeting him.

Miclântecuhtli's Scions are slightly less bitter and angry, but all of them seem to take pleasure in causing some degree of suffering in others. It's part of their charm and essential nature. Few understand how miserable they are or that their father has made them in such a way that he can delight in their unhappiness.

Associated Powers: Epic Appearance, Epic Charisma, Animal (Dog), Death, Guardian, Itztl

Abilities: Command, Investigation, Larceny, Politics, Presence, Thrown

Rivals: Quetzalcoatl; Amaterasu, Athena, Frigg, Prah, Shango, Thoth

QUETZALCOÁTL

AKA: ÉHECATL, GUKUMATZ, KUKULKÁN

Description: Quetzalcoatl, the cleverest, most peaceful and least bloodthirsty of the Atzlánti, has been a priest and

a king, a builder and a lawgiver, an engineer, an astronomer and a doctor—and that is his legendary persona. Pale, silver-haired and bearded, Quetzalcoatl is tall and athletic, garbed in the brilliant green and red feathers of his namesake bird. Requiring a blood sacrifice but once a year, the God of the feathered serpent pushes mortals to create beauty and art, to live joyfully in the present moment and to achieve their highest ambitions both individually and as societies. He specializes in creating golden ages.

In modern times, this means that he rarely sticks with one identity for very long. He might be a painter in the morning, an elderly engineer in the afternoon and a first-time lover in the evening. He enjoys dancing until dawn while a digital calculator rides in his hip pocket, so he can calculate the tensile strength of a new skyscraper's steel beams on the job site the next morning. He is always beautifully dressed for the occasion (whatever it is).

His Scions are similarly energetic, with a hundred projects all racing to completion simultaneously. They inspire others to feats of artisanship and have an easy time creating worldwide cultural phenomena, from new trends in fashion to revivals of old musical forms. They are always on the edge of the next new and hip thing. They are also almost always exhausted, and their successes inspire bitter jealousies.

Associated Powers: Epic Charisma, Epic Intelligence, Animal (Resplendent Quetzal), Fertility, Guardian, Earth, Health, Itztl, Justice, Psychopomp, Sky, Water

Abilities: Academics, Command, Investigation, Medicine, Melee, Science



Rivals: Tezcatlipoca; Athena, Dionysus, Loki, Ptah, Susano-o, Thor, Thoth

TEZCATLIPOCA

AKA: TAHIL, YAOTL

Description: Called the Lord of the Smoking Mirror, Tezcatlipoca is the God of Fate and the bringer of discord and vice. Possessing great creative powers like Quetzalcoatl, yet using them for negative purposes, Tezcatlipoca draws mortals into cycles of destruction and new creation wherever possible. His mirror, made of obsidian, shows the future and can predict famine, yet its images are distorted views, just as obsidian itself reflects distorted colors. He is always youthful, with jaguar eyes and a missing right foot, always devastatingly handsome and always trouble.

In modern times, he has often appeared as a gang leader, luring young people into dangerous adventures. Other roles include work as a performance artist or an actor, a soldier fomenting rebellion, an engineer plotting to start a new company, a corporate lawyer and a talk-radio host. His principal goals are always to stir up controversy and dismay, and he is very good at achieving his objectives.

Tezcatlipoca's Scions are inclined toward similar labors, but usually for slightly different ends. Controversy for the sake of controversy is rarely good enough; most choose controversy in order to achieve particular goals. They make good social activists and political operatives—attack dogs for the causes they choose to represent. Like their father's animal patron, the jaguar, they operate

without being noticed until it is too late for their victims to avoid them. Few of Tezcatlipoca's offspring ever understand that they choose these roles to strengthen the fabric of reality, not as ends in and of themselves.

Associated Powers: Epic Appearance, Epic Charisma, Epic Dexterity, Epic Manipulation, Epic Wits, Animal (Jaguar), Darkness, Itztli, Magic, Moon, Mystery, Prophecy, Sun, War

Abilities: Athletics, Brawl, Fortitude, Occult, Presence, Stealth

Rivals: Quetzalcoatl, Damballa, Geb, Hachiman, Hephaestus, Odin

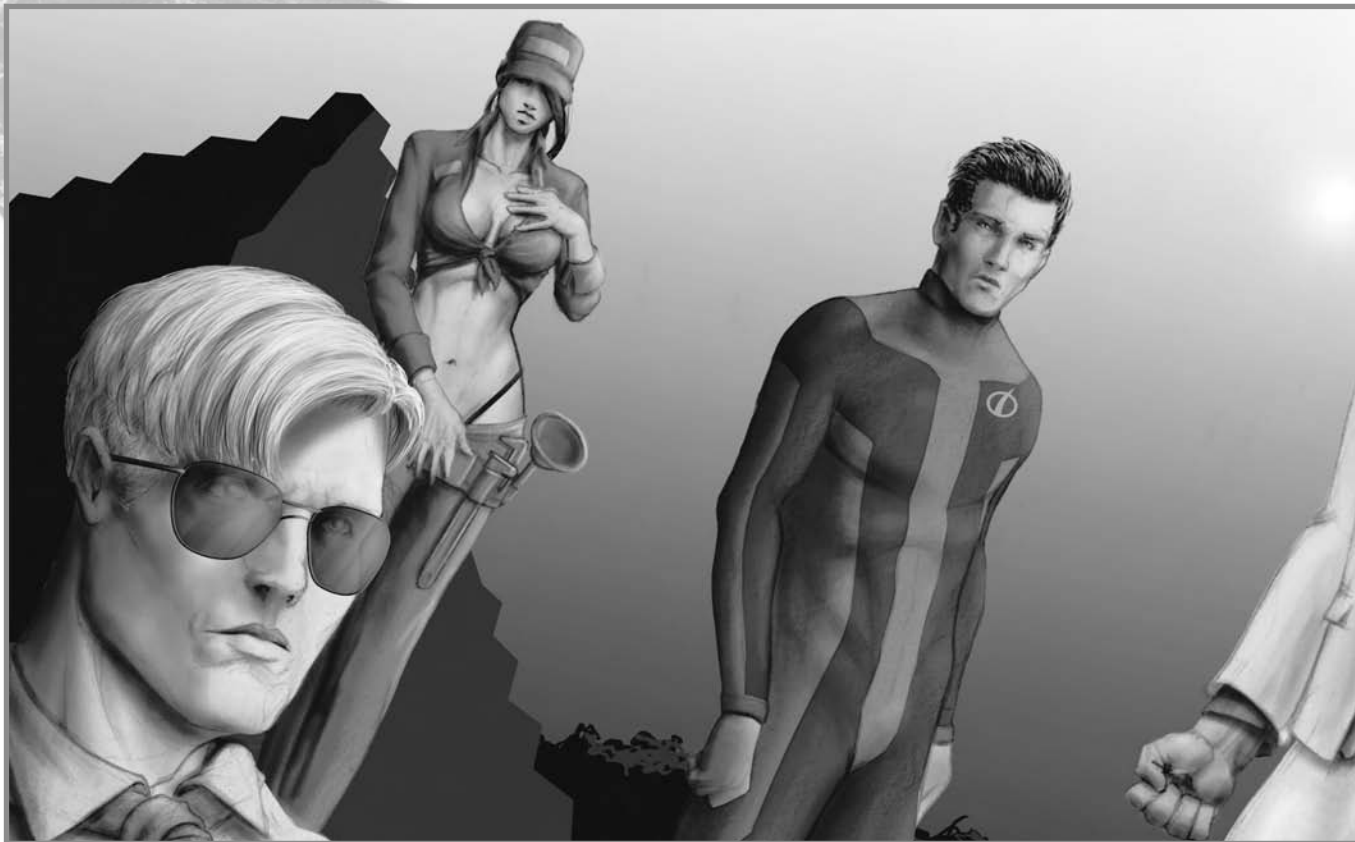
TLALOC

AKA: CHAC, COCIJO, NUHUALPILLI

Description: Tlaloc, God of the rains and clouds, has been around forever. The Aztecs inherited him along with Xipe Totec, and they have never quite been able to get rid of him. Goggle-eyed, big-nosed, with long canine teeth and a fondness for earrings, Tlaloc stands on the earth, in legends, to show the relationship between earth and rain for the production of crops and food. Unlike the other Gods, the rain deity receives sacrifices: not merely to slake his bloodthirst, but to give him power to maintain equilibrium—floods at the right time, and drought at the right time, too.

Thoroughly delighted with the modern era, Tlaloc likes to travel. He's been a tourist in Europe and Asia, all





through the Americas, Africa and even Australia. He likes talking about where he's been and what he's seen, but he becomes angry if you disbelieve him or try to put him off. He's worked as a cave guide, an archaeologist, an engineer, a doctor and a teacher—just about any job that allows him to get close to children and preteens. (Their hearts are more tender and easier to eat.) He loves drowned sacrifices most of all, so SCUBA instructor is one of his favorite professions.

Tlaloc's Scions tend to share their father's love of modern life and make use of the most up-to-date technologies, but they also believe strongly in supporting tradition. "The best of the old and the new" would make a good family motto for most of them. They genuinely like helping people, often taking jobs that allow them to be of service to others. Yet, they also suffer from dark desires and disturbing nightmares, which they feel almost invariably compelled to enact.

Associated Powers: Epic Appearance, Earth, Fertility, Health, Itzli, Sky

Abilities: Academics, Brawl, Command, Medicine, Stealth, Survival

Rivals: Quetzalcoatl; Heimdall, Hera, Izanagi, Legba, Osiris

TLAZOLTÉOTL

AKA: IXCUINA, TETOINNAN,
TLAELQUARNI, TOCI

Description: Tlazoltéotl is a Goddess of filth, whether it involves water-treatment systems, physical

human waste or the mental detritus of psychological baggage. She has the power to clean it all up and sweep it all away with her magic broom. Her favorite position is squatting, whether to defecate or to give birth to a child or to fornicate, and she can get anyone at all to tell her their life story, including all the evil and nasty bits. She is young enough and beautiful enough to tempt the most pious mortals to sexual lust and emotional ruin. That she is so eager to hear all the details of their lusts and darker emotions only makes her power greater.

Tlazoltéotl has worked in modern times as a clothing designer, a psychologist, a bartender, a social worker, a prostitute, a lounge singer, a kiddie-pop superstar, a garbage woman, a plumber and a cleaning lady. Do people explain or expose their most intimate desires to a particular profession? That's what she wants to be. People tend to idealize her when they remember her, but they recall that she was always emotionally distant. She never revealed much of herself while constantly asking questions about her admirer-victims. No one ever got to know the real Tlazoltéotl; she was too busy stripping them of their most personal and most horrific excrement.

Tlazoltéotl's Scions are similarly able to wring secrets out of the dark places in people's consciousness. They are excellent Dumpster-divers, finding it easy to locate useful things amid mountains of trash. Seductive yet emotionally unattached, they typically have great sex lives but have difficulty establishing genuine relationships.



Associated Powers: Epic Appearance, Epic Charisma, Epic Manipulation, Earth, Itztli

Abilities: Art, Craft, Empathy, Investigation, Medicine, Politics

Rivals: Huitzilopochtli; Aphrodite, Bastet, Erzulie, Freya, Raiden

XIPE TOTEC

Description: God of maize and of seeds growing in the earth, Xipe Totec represents death transforming into new life. Like all the Atzlánti, he requires at least some blood to do his work, but he also needs a human or animal skin. Indeed, many of his most powerful arts rely upon wearing the skin of a sacrificial victim. Once he wears this gruesome garment over his own golden flesh, Xipe Totec is able to make gold out of nothing, to bring seeds to fruition in the ground, to command disease and health, to turn the seasons and to drive any titanspawn—or even Titan—from his way. In addition, he is able to take on the mortal attributes and skills of the specific being whose skin he wears. When laced into the skin, as a woman might be laced into a corset, he is able to become that person fully and completely.

In modern times, Xipe Totec likes being an actor and a musician. He likes being on stage and performing for people, though his acts are usually shocking to the audience and bloody, as he prefers to show the process of

life, death and rebirth of which he is the God. He's also labored as a gardener, a landscape architect, a farmer and a rancher. People remember him as a loner who tends to keep to himself for long stretches in wintertime, while becoming gregarious and open in the spring, summer and autumn. Usually, he throws a huge party in mid-to-late March. One of his guests goes missing from this party for a time—at least until Xipe Totec can get comfortable in his new skin. He's got a million of them.

Xipe Totec's children are equally interested in natural cycles of death and rebirth. They work with DNA and longevity treatments in laboratories, write poetry and novels designed to bring them a kind of immortality, engage in sexual acts specifically to bring forth as many children as possible and seed riotous gardens designed to produce as many hybrid plants as possible. They also chew their fingernails and bite their cuticles, and engage in deep psychoanalysis and past life regression therapy, looking to find out who they *really* are. They take on new roles and discard them easily, often becoming the spies and informants of the pantheon, but are never really quite comfortable in their own skins.

Associated Powers: Epic Stamina, Death, Fertility, Guardian, Health, Itztli

Abilities: Craft, Fortitude, Integrity, Larceny, Medicine, Survival

Rivals: Quetzalcoatl; Anubis, Shango, Sif, Susano-o, Zeus



DR. AARON TIGRILLO

SCION OF TEZCATLIPOCA

Aaron Tigrillo was born in a small New Mexico town called Aztec. He was always driven, even as a child. From a poor family and with five siblings, he knew he was going to have to work hard to succeed. So he did, graduating valedictorian of his high school class and winning a full scholarship to Emory University in Atlanta, where he went on to gain his doctorate in medicine.

After completing his residency, the young, idealistic Dr. Tigrillo volunteered for the Doctors Without Borders organization. While operating in Iraq, the doctor was kidnapped and very likely would have died had not the God Tezcatlipoca, his father, come for him. Apparently, the God had seduced his mother during a visit to the Aztec Ruins National Monument for which his town had been named and he was the result of that union. Tigrillo used his newfound power to escape the kidnappers and has worshiped his father ever since.

Returning to the States, Tigrillo quickly established himself as a gifted cardiac surgeon. His surreptitious sacrifice of his transplant patients' defective hearts to his God came to light, however, and Tigrillo very nearly lost his medical license and did lose his position. Since then, the good doctor has taken a sabbatical in order to serve his God in an even more visceral way.

Aaron Tigrillo is a dashing figure, with sleek shoulder-length black hair, a well-trimmed goatee and eyes the color of mahogany. Dr. Tigrillo dresses impeccably. Usually, he wears designer suits, Versace and Armani being his favorites. He's always armed with an array of obsidian scalpels, which he uses to great effect given his knowledge of where they'll do the most damage. He also keeps a translucent Crystal Skull in his medical bag. If he knows he's going into trouble, he'll sometimes go for something more substantial, like a maquahuitl-and-Aztec-shield combo or a tepoztopilli. Tigrillo drives a Jaguar S-Type.

Roleplaying Hints: You feel blessed that your father is the great Smoking Mirror, Tezcatlipoca, and you do all in your power to please him, offering him sacrifice after sacrifice of both yourself and of those titanspawn or Titan cultists who fall into your expert hands. You understand that it is your father and the other Gods who stand between the world of man and total annihilation, and you'll take whatever steps are necessary to ensure victory. You appreciate everything the members of your Band do to mitigate the Titan threat, but if the blood of heroes is what Tezcatlipoca demands, you will not hesitate to sacrifice them and yourself to save all humanity. These are the sorts of calls you made every day as a surgeon, just on a larger scale.

Birthright: Doctor Tigrillo's Crystal Skull relic allows him to channel his Magic, Mystery and Prophecy Purviews. It can also speak to him, offering him sage advice and counsel.



SCION

H E R O



Dr. Aaron Tigrillo
Name

Surgeon
Class

Atlánti
Pantheon

Player

Fanatic
Nature

Tecatlípca
God

ATTRIBUTES

	Physical	Social	Mental
Strength	●●○○○○○○○○ □□□□□□□□	Charisma	●●○○○○○○○○ □□□□□□□□
Dexterity	●●●○○○○○○○ ■□□□□□□□	Manipulation	●●●○○○○○○○ ■□□□□□□□
Stamina	●●○○○○○○○○○ ■□□□□□□□	Appearance	●●●○○○○○○○ ■□□□□□□□
		Perception	●●●○○○○○○○ □□□□□□□□
		Intelligence	●●●○○○○○○○ ■□□□□□□□
		Wits	●●●○○○○○○○ ■□□□□□□□

ABILITIES

<input type="checkbox"/> Academics	●●●○○	<input type="checkbox"/> Craft	○○○○○	<input type="checkbox"/> Melee	●●●○○
<input type="checkbox"/> Animal Ken	○○○○○	<input type="checkbox"/>	○○○○○	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Occult	●●●○○
<input type="checkbox"/> Art	○○○○○	<input type="checkbox"/>	○○○○○	<input type="checkbox"/> Politics	○○○○○
<input type="checkbox"/>	○○○○○	<input type="checkbox"/> Empathy	○○○○○	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Presence	●●●○○
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Athletics	●●●○○	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Fortitude	●●●○○	<input type="checkbox"/> Science (Pharmacology)	●●●○○
<input type="checkbox"/> Awareness	●●○○○	<input type="checkbox"/> Integrity	●●○○○	<input type="checkbox"/>	○○○○○
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Brawl	●●○○○	<input type="checkbox"/> Investigation	○○○○○	<input type="checkbox"/>	○○○○○
<input type="checkbox"/> Command	○○○○○	<input type="checkbox"/> Larceny	○○○○○	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Stealth	●●○○○
<input type="checkbox"/> Control (Automobiles)	●○○○○	<input type="checkbox"/> Marksmanship	○○○○○	<input type="checkbox"/> Survival	○○○○○
<input type="checkbox"/>	○○○○○	<input type="checkbox"/> Medicine	●●●○○	<input type="checkbox"/> Thrown	●●○○○

BIRTHRIGHTS

Guide (Crystal Skull) 4
Relic (Crystal Skull-Magic, Mystery, Prophecy) 4

WEAPONS

Obsidian Scalpel
Acc 6, Dmg 4L, Parry DV -, Spd 4
(thrown) Acc 5, Dmg 4L, Rng 15, Spd 4

Tepoztopilli: Acc 5, Dmg 7L, Parry DV 5, Spd 5

KNACKS

Blurt It Out, Cat's Grace,
Holy Fortitude, Know-It-All,
Meditative Focus, Serpent's
Gaze

WILLPOWER

●●●●●●●○○○
 □□□□□□□□□□

SOAK

A 1 L 2 B 3

ARMOR

A _____ L _____ B _____

HEALTH

0 -1 -1 -2 -2 -4 I
 □ □ □ □ □ □ □

VIRTUES

Conviction ●●●○○
Courage ●●○○○
Duty ●●○○○
Loyalty ●●○○○

LEGEND

● ● ○ ○ ○ ○
 ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○
 Legend Points 4

EXPERIENCE

A A R O N T I G R I L L O

A A R O N T I G R I L L O

THE AMATSUKAMI

THE JAPANESE GODS

The Amatsukami are the heavenly divinities of ancient Japan. When asked how long they have been around, they are certain to reply “forever.” Other tribes usually estimate their age as falling between that of the Dodekatheton and the Aesir, though it is possible that the Amatsukami are not lying about their age. Regardless, the Amatsukami certainly have a different way of working in the World.

The Atzlánti work to ensure the continuity of the Overworld in synchronicity with the World. The Dodekatheton, the Aesir and the Pesedjet work to ensure the continuity of human communities. The Amatsukami, however,

emphasize the continuity of Nature—the reality of the World and all of its natural wonders, the interactions between the living and the non-living to create beauty and the mutable beauty formed by states of permanent change.

For the Amatsukami, to light a candle is to cast a shadow, and to kill a butterfly is to cause a drought. No action is truly separate from any other; all choices occur within a seamless framework of Now. Therefore, this pantheon works for the right and proper balance

of all being: human individuality in cooperation with community in cooperation with nature in cooperation with divinity. Its Scions work



to establish “ecological” solutions to complex problems, believing that only many-leveled, beautiful answers will keep the Titans at bay.

The downside of such elegant and serene natural resolutions is that they take time to implement, and there’s a fair amount of dithering about what exactly to do. The Amatsukami tend not to take the most direct route to whatever their solution is, so as to gain more time to perfect that effort. In situations where time is an issue, the Scions of the Japanese Gods all too often run out of it.

AMATERASU

AKA: OMIKAMI, TENSHO OAIJIN

Description: Amaterasu is the Queen of the Heavenly Plain, Goddess of the sun and mother of the imperial family of Japan. She was the most powerful of the Japanese deities, and when she went into hiding in a cave, the World was plunged into darkness. Only by positioning a mirror before the cave entrance and staging an elaborate and noisy entertainment outside were the other Gods able to draw her from her seclusion. Once she looked in the mirror, she realized how beautiful and elegant, how glorious and how delightful, she truly was. She resumed her duties more radiant and wonderfully confident than she had been before.

It was a more than adequate preparation for modern life. Amaterasu knows her own beauty so well that she

can use it as a mirror to reflect others’ beauty. She helps mortals understand their own appearance and their own beauty, because she knows how to use her own. As a fashion and artistic photographer, she has sought to turn her lens on the poor and the powerful alike, to reveal their dignity, their honor and their strength of character. As a dancer, she moves in ways that lift people’s spirits. As a jeweler, she’s made pieces that complement and elevate their wearers in the eyes of others. Anything to which she puts her hand becomes ever more beautiful and refined. And, more than anything else, what she puts her hand to is Japan.

Since the other Gods and the US Army quashed metaphysically and physically her maternal relationship with the rulers of Japan, Amaterasu has taken to strengthening her whole people. Great artists—be they sculptors, painters or designers—become her partners and help give birth to new generations of Scions who will make Japan great and beautiful. She raises them to be engineers, doctors, artisans, martial artists, musicians—all sorts of people who are capable of making her land great. The Scions of Amaterasu are called upon to make their homeland in truth the land of the rising sun.

Associated Powers: Epic Appearance, Epic Charisma, Epic Strength, Fertility, Sun, Tsukumo-Gami
Abilities: Art, Awareness, Craft, Empathy, Integrity, Presence

Rivals: Susano-o, Tsuki-yomi; Apollo, Kalfu, Sif, Thoth, Tlaloc, Xipe Totec





ハチマン

AKA: ヲアヒロヤチス、ウジノ、
ヤマチノカミ

Description: Hachiman, lord of fishing nets, fertile fields and war, is a changeable and flexible God. His symbol, the *tomoe*, is three teardrops circling in a vortex, signifying the forces of change and transformation that he brings to any occasion. In legends, he could be a warrior with a topknot, a bald-headed priest or a long-haired fisherman. As a divine protector of all social classes, he is able to shift even his divine form, becoming fat or thin, tall or short, bald or hairy, as the moment takes him. Unfortunately, he is unable to shift forms on the fly; whatever shape he takes for a given encounter, he must retain. In addition, the dove and his eight traditional banners are present wherever he goes. They are inviolable symbols of his presence.

In modern times, Hachiman sees Amaterasu's obsession with Japan as needlessly focused. As a martial artist and Buddhist monk, he has brought the benefits of Japanese ideals to the West. As a dexterous chef, he's served up the benefits of its cuisine. As an anime producer, he's touted its storytelling and its culture. He laughs early and often, and enjoys family gatherings where he can sit as the wise old uncle, spinning tales about life after the war or in the internment camps. Most of all, he carries on war against the enemies of reality by other means: tying

together networks of people and ideas, fertilizing the open fields of hungry minds and campaigning for good education in science and technology. Like all generals, he knows that logistics, not glory, wins battles and wars.

Hachiman chooses which of his children he will reveal his true nature to for exactly the same reasons. The most aggressive and difficult ones he tends to ignore, in favor of those with practical goals and achievable ends. His Scions need to be officers and leaders of soldiers, not cannon fodder on the field, especially now that the theater of battle is the World. Rarely are his Scions dull or unintelligent, for the Lord of Eight Banners wants an army that loves its country with eyes open to both its benefits and its flaws. His Birthrights are often books—manuals of battle tactics or business management, designed to shift a reader's consciousness.

Associated Powers: Epic Charisma, Epic Dexterity, Epic Wits, Animal (Dove), Fertility, Guardian, Tsukumo-Gami, War

Abilities: Athletics, Command, Investigation, Marksmanship, Melee, Science

Rivals: Raiden, Ares, Freyr, Horus, Ogoun, Xipe Totec

IZANAGI

AKA: IZANAGI NO MIKOTO

Description: Izanagi, the first man of the Amatsukami, was the father of Amaterasu and the creator of all the lands and islands of Japan. He was the



parent, with Izanami, of many deities and spirits, and most continue to pay court upon their father. As lord of the sky, he helps maintain both the motion of the stars and planets, and keeps the weather flowing in orderly patterns. He has some responsibility for assuring the fertility of human beings, as well. After his wife Izanami died in childbirth, he beheld her putrescent form during an ill-fated rescue from Yomi. Embarrassed and enraged, she swore vengeance, saying she would destroy 1,000 of his people a day; Izanagi retorted that 1,500 of his people would thus be born each day. Tall, with black hair, moustache and beard, graceful hands and a regal bearing, Izanagi appears as a mature Japanese man whose eyes hold a look of grim determination touched with sadness.

In modern times, Izanagi often appears as a lonely businessman. He spends a lot of time in bars and graveyards, lingering in both on his way to and from his workplace every day. Whether he plays at being a middle manager, a train conductor, a bank branch manager or a shop salesman, he really lives for those few minutes in the graveyard when he can talk to his dead wife. (Or those few minutes in the bar when he can sing karaoke mournfully about the love he had and lost.) The other Gods put Izanagi in charge of monitoring and minimizing changes in the atmosphere, but he has no real heart for the work and neglects vast amounts of his duties.

Izanagi's Scions are often at loose ends in the World as a result. Not yet tasked with any specific function by their father, they are often contacted first of all by other divinities, trying to shake their old man loose from his maudlin behavior (which has been going on at least six or seven thousand years). Some feel that Izanagi could soon fall to the rage and aggression of a Titan or worse.

Associated Powers: Epic Charisma, Epic Strength, Psychopomp, Sky, Tsukumo-Gami

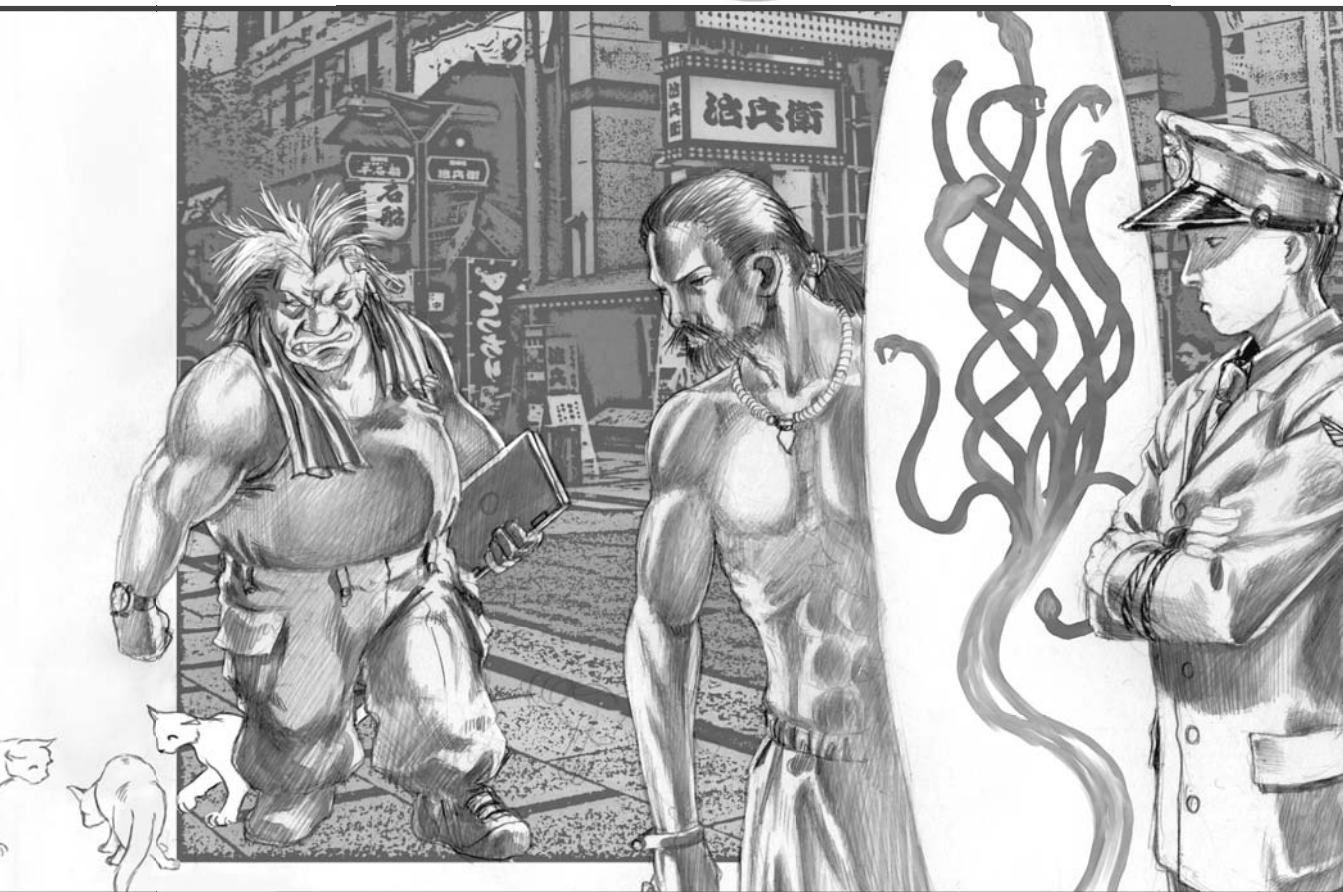
Abilities: Academics, Awareness, Fortitude, Melee, Presence, Thrown

Rivals: Izanami, Atum-Re, Baron Samedi, Dionysus, Loki, Quetzalcoatl

IZANAMI

AKA: IZANAMI NO MIKOTO

Description: Izanami is Izanagi's dead wife, queen of the Underworld and the first woman of the Amatsukami. In the days when she was alive, she helped give birth to all the Gods and islands of Japan. She died giving birth to a child, and her husband immediately killed the boy out of anger and frustration after the woman he loved was taken from him. Izanami became Queen of Yomi, the Japanese Underworld. Her horrific appearance there—half-rotted and swarming with maggots—causes her to choose darkness and death over life and light. She and Izanagi are forever separated and cannot bear to look on each



other any more. The shikome, Izanami's handmaidens, are almost as terrifying to look on as she is.

Izanami doesn't get out into the World much. She tends to be reclusive; a common disguise is as old lady living with 47 cats in a house that smells of formaldehyde and dust. Even then, though, a search of her history turns up great achievements in the past—as a biologist, a mother, an ethicist, a philosopher and a campaigner for family values. Her history tends to latch onto her and find a way to express itself, as it does for all the Gods. Fate catches up with everyone eventually.

Izanami's Scions tend to be children of either her creative, light phase or her dark and deathly phase. The creative children are clever and happy, capable of beautiful works of great energy. The other Gods usually shower them with artistic Birthrights in memory of their living mother, but keep them away from any real power or place where they might do genuine damage or good. Her dark Scions, on the other hand, tend to receive their power directly from their mother's hand. Izanami does not always love the Gods who could not save her in childbirth, and she picks out her aggressive offspring to be scourges to the other divinities. Some wonder if she intends to side with the Titans in the current conflict.

Associated Powers: Epic Appearance, Epic Charisma, Darkness, Death, Earth, Tsukumo-Gami

Abilities: Brawl, Command, Fortitude, Integrity, Occult, Stealth

Rivals: Izanagi; Bastet, Freyr, Poseidon, Shango, Thor, Tlaloc

RAIDEN

AKA: NARUKAMI, RAIJIN

Description: Red-skinned, with clawed feet and a demonic visage, orbited by a set of drums and wielding a mighty bow, Raiden is the God of thunder and lightning. A guardian against invaders and invasions, he so effectively turned back the Mongol fleet sent against Japan that only three sailors survived. Many fear him because of his terrible face and his often-angry opinions about the state of the World and the nation. Yet if you can get him to calm down long enough (usually through the application of sake in copious quantities), he proves to be quite a likeable fellow who can offer advice on just about any subject. Whether you take that advice depends on how drunk you made yourself in the process. Raiden is a famous admirer of belly buttons, and he has been known to steal them from people. Current fashion trends favoring bare midriffs please him tremendously.

These days, Raiden is a pig. He is ugly by anyone's standards, no matter what disguise he puts on. So, other than hiding his teeth, muting the red of his skin and sheathing his feet in boots, Raiden tends to not hide very much of his amiably disgusting behavior. He eats too much, belches and farts publicly, drinks soda in the

white rooms and server rooms (of course he works in the computer field—harnessed lightning is always interesting to him) and leers at pretty women. He openly disdains ugly ones. When he plays at being a college student, he wins invitations to fraternities simply because he can be so boorishly funny. After graduation, though, everyone discovers how difficult it can be to have him as a roommate camped on the couch for weeks on end.

Raiden's Scions are often lesser versions of their father. They might not be *quite* as appalling, but the apple here never falls very far from the tree. Inclined to indecent behavior and possessing great skill with modern technology, they tend to become the Gods' programmers and hackers, finding information and defending the soft places in reality's defenses. Having access to one of the World's most primal forces, they also have some command over plant life, a powerful, root-level network for change and communication in the World.

Associated Powers: Epic Appearance, Epic Dexterity, Guardian, Sky, Tsukumo-Gami

Abilities: Athletics, Brawl, Fortitude, Marksmanship, Presence, Science

Rivals: Amaterasu; Artemis, Athena, Erzulie, Freya, Hera, Isis, Sif, Tlazoltéotl

SUSANO-O

AKA: SUSANOO NO MIKOTO

Description: God of the sea and of storms, Susano-o is a fiery-tempered, bearded young man, full of rage. He is always haring off on some wild adventure—usually because he is unwelcome where he currently resides. In one legend, he found himself sent out of Takamagahara—the Amatsukami's region of the Overworld—on some thin pretext, so he decided to visit his sister, Amaterasu, before he left. They had a contest in which they both made people. She made beautiful women from fragments of his sword, and he made men from the jewels of her necklace. Yet Amaterasu was clearly the winner. In anger, Susano-o killed one of her attendants, destroyed her rice fields and finally flung a flayed horse into her weaving room. He was banished to the World, where he had to slay an eight-headed dragon, marry a peasant girl after many trials and give up his sword to his sister before he was allowed to return to Takamagahara.

Given how exciting the World can be, Susano-o sometimes wonders if the apologies were worth it. He likes marching in parades and protests, fighting guerrillas in deserts and jungles, blowing up buildings, setting off fireworks (both physical and metaphorical), jumping out of airplanes, surfing in hurricanes and starting revolutions. It's an exciting time to be alive, plus there are all sorts of incredibly beautiful women around. What's not to like? And it's not nearly so stuffy and orderly as the Overworld. Humans are into chaos, and they like people who can create it, especially in front of TV cameras.

Everything is that much better if it's possible that his current idiocy could be seen by millions of people.

Susano-o's Scions tend to seek thrills in similar fashion. They behave badly in public, commit atrocities in battle, make fools of themselves in restaurants and manage to get back in people's good graces by doing amazingly stupid things that succeed beyond anyone's wildest expectations. They always have a wonderful time, unless there's no one around to see their exploits after the fact. There's no point in achieving amazing results if there's no one to confirm them afterward. Nobody likes a braggart, after all.

Associated Powers: Epic Strength, Epic Wits, Chaos, Psychopomp, Sky, Tsukumo-Gami, Water

Abilities: Awareness, Brawl, Craft, Fortitude, Melee, Presence

Rivals: Amaterasu; Athena, Hel, Legba, Odin, Quetzalcoatl, Thoth

TSUKI-YOMI

AKA: TSUKIYOMI NO MIKOTO

Description: Tsuki-yomi, the God of the moon, is the brother of Amaterasu, though the two of them are forever separated. Tsuki-yomi went to a feast as Amaterasu's representative but killed the hostess—the Goddess of food, Uke Mochi—because she created food by looking at the land or sea from which a particular kind of food came and then vomiting up the food. Tsuki-yomi was so revolted that he simply could not help himself, but drew his sword and slew her. Appalled by his conduct, Amaterasu sent him to the other side of the sky and will not look at him directly ever again. As a result, Tsuki-yomi sits and sulks much of the time. Eager of any excuse

to be out of his disdainful sister's presence, Tsuki-yomi spends the rest of his time acting as a messenger between the worlds above and the worlds below.

Such coming and going suits Tsuki-yomi well. As a diplomat, a courtier, an airline pilot, a jet-setter, a quality inspector and a management guru, the moon God's traveled all over the World, interacting with people and changing lives. Fortunately, he has learned better table manners than when his sister became so furious, but he still watches over offenses committed by hosts on guests, and in those cases, his judgment is swift and terrible. To improve his own manners and impeccable credentials, he has run a whole series of restaurants, and in the process, he's discovered that he really does like to cook.

Tsuki-yomi's Scions are motivated to be movers and shakers in the World. While they rarely produce art themselves, they might run galleries and promote the paintings of others; start publishing companies to produce books; edit and distribute magazines of photographs and important news; or sponsor literary nights or poetry readings to further the cause of the arts. Because of the pull of their father, however, their involvement in projects tends to follow a tidal cycle, swinging toward mania during one part of the day and into depression during others—circling from brightness to darkness over the course of every month. Always very good at helping others reach for their dreams, they rarely achieve their own.

Associated Powers: Epic Charisma, Darkness, Moon, Psychopomp, Tsukumo-Gami

Abilities: Academics, Awareness, Empathy, Investigation, Marksmanship, Politics

Rivals: Amaterasu; Artemis, Freyr, Ogoun, Sobek, Tezcatlipoca



YUKIKO KUROMIZU

SCION OF SUSANO-O

YUKIKO KUROMIZU



Yukiko Kuromizu came to the States fairly recently to attend school in Hawaii. Born in Shirahama, Japan, to a single mother (an ama diver named Sakura), Yukiko endured a lot of taunting as a child about her mother's lack of virtue and her own illegitimacy. This only worsened when Yukiko's mother failed to return from a dive in calm seas, leading townsfolk to assume the woman had committed suicide in shame. Yukiko became a ward of the state, and her treatment at the orphanage was no better than her treatment at home.

Despite these hardships, or perhaps because of them, Yukiko grew up strong, excelling in physical activities, such as jujitsu and kendo, as well as more creative outlets such as photography, which she grew to love. Although her grades weren't the best, a professor at the University of Hawaii was impressed with her work and suggested a career in photojournalism, even helping her get the financial aid she needed to attend the school and arranging for her to travel via cruise ship to Hawaii working on the ship's service crew.

Those dreams were dashed when a powerful typhoon struck the ship en route. Yukiko was hurled when an enormous wave struck the ship. She hit the water hard and sank like a stone. Looking up from the depths, she thought of her mother diving so deep daily... how strong she must have been.

She awoke in the bedchamber of a fabulous palace. Miraculously, her mother was there, standing beside a strong man with fierce eyes. The man explained he was her father, Susano-o, and he'd saved her life—just as he'd once saved her mother's. In return, Yukiko now owed him that life, and he would use her as a weapon. He explained that horrors once contained had escaped and now wreaked havoc.

The storm that struck her vessel was evidence of that, in fact, and only his intervention had saved her. Now, it was her turn to do the saving. Gifting her with Birthrights, he transported her to Hawaii, where the trail of titanspawn eventually led her to the American West Coast and her Band.

Yukiko is a young Japanese woman with black hair, green eyes and a beautiful smile she seldom shows. Having discovered a love of motorcycles since her Visitation, she often wears leathers where feasible, since they also afford her a degree of protection from what she battles. About Yukiko's neck dangles a blue-green jade magatama, and she wields the Kusanagi, an ancient sword of green-tinted metal.

Roleplaying Hints: Though obligated to your father for saving you, as well as for trusting you with your mission, you hope one day to be able to pursue your own dreams. Still, you love the excitement of what you do and aren't sure you could return to a "normal" life. Inexperienced in the ways of love, you tend to make a fool of yourself around handsome men—especially Donnie, who graciously pretends you don't exist when that happens. In battle though, you focus like a laser and are a frighteningly talented fighter, making up in finesse what you lack in raw power.

Birthrights: The Kusanagi adds Accuracy +1 and Damage +1 to the spatha template (see p. 202) and allows Yukiko to channel the Sky and Water Purviews. It also has a unique power that allows Yukiko to strike a distant target without having to close that distance. This attack shares the combat traits of a close-combat attack with the Kusanagi, but Yukiko cannot parry with it. She can attack a target out to a distance of (Legend x 5) yards.

SCION

H E R O



Yukiko Kuromizu
Name

Player

Photographer
Calling

Visionary
Nature

Amatsukami
Pantheon

Susano-o
God

ATTRIBUTES

Physical		Social		Mental	
Strength	●●●○○○○○○	Charisma	●●●○○○○○○	Perception	●●●○○○○○○
Dexterity	●●●●○○○○	Manipulation	●●○○○○○○	Intelligence	●●○○○○○○
Stamina	●●●○○○○○	Appearance	●●○○○○○○	Wits	●●●○○○○○

ABILITIES

<input type="checkbox"/> Academics	●●○○○	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Craft	○○○○○	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Melee	●●●●●
<input type="checkbox"/> Animal Ken	○○○○○	<input type="checkbox"/>	○○○○○	<input type="checkbox"/> Occult	●●○○○
<input type="checkbox"/> Art (<i>Photography</i>)	●●●●○	<input type="checkbox"/>	○○○○○	<input type="checkbox"/> Politics	○○○○○
<input type="checkbox"/>	○○○○○	<input type="checkbox"/> Empathy	○○○○○	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Presence	●○○○○
<input type="checkbox"/> Athletics	●●●●○	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Fortitude	●●○○○	<input type="checkbox"/> Science	●○○○○
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Awareness	●●●●○	<input type="checkbox"/> Integrity	●●○○○	<input type="checkbox"/>	○○○○○
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Brawl	●●●●○	<input type="checkbox"/> Investigation	●○○○○	<input type="checkbox"/>	○○○○○
<input type="checkbox"/> Command	○○○○○	<input type="checkbox"/> Larceny	●○○○○	<input type="checkbox"/> Stealth	○○○○○
<input type="checkbox"/> Control (<i>Motorcycles</i>)	●○○○○	<input type="checkbox"/> Marksmanship	○○○○○	<input type="checkbox"/> Survival	○○○○○
<input type="checkbox"/>	○○○○○	<input type="checkbox"/> Medicine	○○○○○	<input type="checkbox"/> Thrown	●●○○○

BIRTHRIGHTS

Guide (Kono, p.297) 4

Relic (Kusanagi-Sky, Water) 5

WEAPONS

Kusanagi

Acc 11, Dmg 9L, Parry DV 5, Spd 4

(ranged) Acc 11, Dmg 9L, Parry DV -, Spd 4

KNACKS

Lightning Sprinter, Rabbit

Reflexes, Untouchable Opponent

WILLPOWER

●●●●●○○○○○
□□□□□□□□□□

SOAK

A _____ L 2 B 5

ARMOR

Biker Gear

A _____ L 0 B 2

HEALTH

0 -1 -1 -2 -2 -4 I
□ □ □ □ □ □ □

VIRTUES

Duty ●●●○○
Endurance ●●●○○
Intellect ●●●○○
Valor ●●●○○

LEGEND

● ● ● ○ ○ ○
○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○

Legend Points 9

EXPERIENCE

YUKIKO KURUMIZU

YUKIKO KURUMIZU

BOONS

Sky's Grace, The Wakeful

Spirit, The Watchful Spirit,

Water Breathing, Water

Control



THE LOA

THE VOODOO GODS

The Loa are divinities of ancient West Africa, transplanted through slavery to the Caribbean and North and South America. They make up the most mixed of the pantheons in terms of age. Gods only a few hundred years old dwell by Gods who walked the earth millennia ago. Other Gods might mock the Loa as mere spirits elevated above their rank and station, but their actual power and authority certainly matches that of their detractors. Much of the mockery against them, therefore, is social rather than metaphysical. Of all the pantheons, the Loa remember their origins as Scions. They tend to treat their progeny with respect and honor. Indeed, the divinities of Voodoo



seem to believe that their pantheon has not yet finished growing, and each God has an array of spirits, minor divinities and borrowed Catholic saints to call upon as messengers, allies and companions for their Scions.

The Loa form an interesting complement to the Amatsukami. Where the Japanese pantheon works for the benefit of the totality of nature in all of its diversity, the Loa concentrate their energy on retaining the energy and holiness of local places. The whole of nature is not nearly so important as the wholeness of the here-and-now to the Loa. The Voodoo divinities are ardent believers in the idea that small is beautiful. A house where the



inhabitants live in peace, prosperity and happiness is a good and beautiful goal for the Loa. One prosperous village or town ranks as a greater achievement than saving an island or even the World. In this attention to detail, the Loa mock the greater pantheons. Why bother saving the World if the people die and their towns are in ruins? What's the point if your temples are aesthetically pleasing but spiritually dead?

Because the pantheon is still growing, the Gods rely on an active community for worshippers who fill them spiritual energy. As a result, the Voodoo deities suffer from a degree of myopia. In the pursuit of unity, prosperity and peace at the local level, they sometimes lose sight of bigger issues, such as vanquishing the Titans.

BARON SAMEDI

AKA: THE BARON, BARON CIMITIÈRE, BARON LA CROIX, BARON KRIMINEL, UNCLE SKELETON

Description: Baron Samedi would have you believe he spent a Saturday night in a drunk tank in the Underworld, drinking Jesus under the table with shots of rum. Then, he'll grin at you like a crack addict in the middle of a mescaline overdose, and you wonder who's really taking the drugs. Outfitted with sunglasses, a stylish black shirt or a white shirt and an undertaker's swallowtail coat, silver jewelry and a top hat, the Baron loves to entertain children and frighten the living daylights out of adults. In legend, he walks right up to

dictators and tells them to put their affairs in order. He mugs for the cameras in New Orleans. He strolls between nightclubs everywhere, putting AIDS on the tip of every seventh needle.

Of all the Gods, only Baron Samedi never disguises himself. He is always Saturday's lord, always dressed for a party, always ready to live unlife to the fullest. His entourage, the ghede—the dead, who are ghosts and zombies and revered ancestors—trail along in his wake like the groupies of a rock star or the entourage of a Hollywood celebrity. This is, of course, what the Baron is, the notorious star of the most dangerous and psychotic boy-band that ever prowled the concert hall that is the World.

A similar infamy attaches itself to Baron Samedi's Scions. Ghosts approach them with messages for the living; goth teenagers drink in their every word before they hang themselves; photographers snap their portraits for inclusion in books of freaks. Like the children of the famous everywhere, Samedi's offspring go through difficult teenage years, experimenting with either rigid self-discipline or utter abdication of responsibility. The Baron is a family man, though. He takes all the necessary steps to see that his Scions follow him in the family business.

Associated Powers: Epic Charisma, Cheval, Darkness, Death, Earth, Health, Psychopomp

Abilities: Command, Fortitude, Integrity, Occult, Politics, Presence

Rivals: Kalfu; Hades, Hel, Izanami, Miclantecuhtli, Osiris



DAMBALLA

AKA: BON DIEU, DANBHALA MEDDO, MOSES

Description: Damballa is the father of the other Loa, and the most powerful and important God of the pantheon. Appearing as a huge green-and-black snake, and associated with parental duty as well as primal sexuality and creativity, Damballa marries many women and sleeps with all of them every Thursday. He leaves behind money for them, and gifts for the children he has with them. He is associated with the Catholic/Jewish Moses, and dresses in white and silver.

Of all the Loa, Damballa most rarely assumes a mortal, human form. He prefers the snake aspect and loves to eat raw eggs. When he mounts a horse—that is, a mortal vessel—he makes that horse writhe on the ground with his hands above his head and speak in a sibilant, hissing susurrus. Any woman who handles a snake while naked risks his sensual and sexual embrace.

Damballa's Scions are likewise sensual and primal people. They attend festivals in the desert and go dancing in hot jungle nights. Whatever else they do (and they have great leeway in that from their father), they are regarded as particularly lively and energetic. Not for them the drudgery of a desk job, but contact with primal nature and celebration in the rain—whether they want it or not.

Associated Powers: Epic Charisma, Animal (Snake), Cheval, Health, Mystery

Abilities: Animal Ken, Awareness, Brawl, Empathy, Medicine, Science

Rivals: Baron Samedi; Artemis, Atum-Re, Hachiman, Huitzilopochtli, Loki

ERZULIE

AKA: ERZULIE FREDA, ERZULIE DANTÒ,
ERZULIE JE WOUJ, MARY

Description: Beautiful, dressed in pinks and reds, loving sweet foods and perfumes, Erzulie is a Goddess of love in all its forms. Assuming three faces depending on need, as Freda she is the coquettish young girl, as Dantò, she is the matronly protector of children (and homosexuals), while as Je Wouj (literally “red eye”) she is the angry old lady no one loves anymore. Associated with the Virgin Mary and the Black Madonna from Catholic tradition, Erzulie is a girly girl, flirtatious and sexy while being very gracious and kind at the same time.

In modern life, Erzulie has been a prostitute, a mother, a community activist, a cook and a dressmaker. She always wears the three wedding rings symbolizing her marriages to Damballa, Ogun and Agwe (a busy loa of the sea), no matter which face she currently wears.

Erzulie's Scions often choose their own paths. They are often very sexually active, which sometimes leads to tangled family trees in the Voodoo pantheon of heroes. Erzulie doesn't mind. She has her children to love... provided they obey her when she needs them.

Associated Powers: Epic Appearance, Epic Charisma, Cheval, Guardian, War

Abilities: Art, Athletics, Empathy, Integrity, Presence, Survival

Rivals: Kalfu; Amaterasu, Aphrodite, Bastet, Freya, Tlazoltéotl



KALFU

AKA: MIAÛT CARREFOUR

Description: Kalfu is Legba's dark twin. While some Voodoo practitioners see them as the same deity, the Loa themselves know the truth: Kalfu is the master of the malevolent spirits of night, just as Legba rules the beneficent spirits of the day. They stand on opposite corners of all crossroads and on opposite sides of all doorways. Where you find one, the other is never far away. Even their clothes are the same, which means that the only way to tell them apart is to observe them closely, for Kalfu is more muted in color, as if he were lit by moonlight instead of sunlight.

In modern times, Kalfu is the fundamentalist preacher who visits prostitutes by night, and the drug dealer who sells enlightenment but offers addiction. His mere arrival summons up darker spirits, and it is best to keep silent in his presence. Discontent and animosity follow him everywhere, yet he is also a force for creative ambition. That this ambition sometimes leads to murderous rage is not always Kalfu's fault.

Kalfu's Scions are similarly troublesome. They are troublemakers and irritants to many of their neighbors; the police always seem to know who and where they are. Most have rap sheets, regardless of whether or not they've actually *done* anything. Such negative attention often drives Kalfu's offspring into lives of crime, but the Gods recognize that the dichotomy between good and evil, as mortals see them, is one of the creative forces that keep the World whole and out of the clutches of the Titans.

Associated Powers: Epic Charisma, Chaos, Cheval, Darkness, Magic, Moon

Abilities: Animal Ken, Athletics, Occult, Presence, Stealth, Survival

Rivals: Legba; Amaterasu, Artemis, Bastet, Freya, Miclantecuhtli

LEGBA

AKA: ESHU, ST. LAZARIUS, ST. PETER, ST. ANTHONY

Description: Legba, keeper of the spirit gate, watches over crossroads and doorways. An old black man with a pipe filled with tobacco wedged between his teeth and leaning on a cane, he is associated with the Catholic saints Peter, Lazarus and Anthony, as well as the color red. Wearing a broad-brimmed straw hat and attended by his dog, he can speak and understand any mortal language. He can cause his horse to walk and dance, and he can send any mortal down the right path—or the wrong one. No one enters the mythic realms without his permission.

In modern times, Legba plays at all sorts of roles. He's been a drug dealer on the corner selling enlightenment, and a pastor who preaches against the demons of addiction. He's worked as a UN translator and a Caribbean dictator; a taxi driver and an informal butler. People recall his love of jokes and his infectious laughter, but they always suspect he was laughing *at* them.

Legba's Scions are similarly inclined. Masters of transportation and opening pathways, they act as





wilderness scouts and tourist guides. Each is an opener of doors, a great people-person, capable of making introductions and connecting people with diverse interests to common goals. As tricksters and practical jokers, these Scions play great con games, parting fools from their money on a regular basis.

Associated Powers: Epic Charisma, Epic Wits, Cheval, Prophecy, Psychopomp, Sun

Abilities: Command, Empathy, Integrity, Larceny, Occult, Politics

Rivals: Kalfu; Frigg, Hachiman, Hermes, Huitzilopochtli, Sobek

OGOUN

AKA: GII, OGUIN, OGUIM, ST. GEORGE, ST. JAMES, ST. SEBASTIAN

Description: Lord of power, authority and triumph, Ogoun is a spirit of iron—iron spines in battle, iron in weapons and fearlessness in personal action. Dark eyed and dark skinned, he likes the contrast of a sharp white military uniform and red sash with his curly headed visage. He often makes use of the Catholic identity of St. James the Greater and always carries an iron knife, sword or machete. He's a smoker and a rum drinker, but he's always the pirate hunter and never the pirate.

In modern times, Ogoun takes on paramilitary and military roles more often than not. He's always an officer, never an enlisted man, although his records always show he advanced through the ranks. Ogoun always gets his position through merit, never through connections. He's a craftsman in metal, particularly iron—motor vehicles and weapons alike obey his commands. He's also been a high-steel worker and a shipbuilder. People remember him as plain dealing and direct in his speech.

Ogoun's Scions are similarly inclined. They are forceful personalities, artists and responsible patriots. Loyal to their father, they have worked as fireworks and demolitions experts, aggressive businessmen, dictators' henchmen and jungle-hidden freedom fighters. No one calls them cowards and lives.

Associated Powers: Epic Manipulation, Epic Strength, Cheval, Fire, War

Abilities: Art, Craft, Fortitude, Melee, Politics, Presence

Rivals: Baron Samedi; Athena, Heimdall, Isis, Izanagi, Xipe Totec

SHANGO

AKA: XANGÔ, ÇHANGÓ

Description: Shango, lord of thunder and priest-king of the Loa, is the God of initiation and justice and royalty. He resists oppression on behalf of his people, and he fights the good fight everywhere. Dressed in red and white, he hunts liars and thieves with a stone axe made by his friend and colleague Ogoun. Legends say he had three wives and produced sons by each of them. Some, his legitimate children, became kings and community leaders. Others became great priests, pastors and spiritual advisors. His remaining children lived as bandits who preserved the moral order by robbing the rich and giving to the poor. So it is with Shango's Scions.

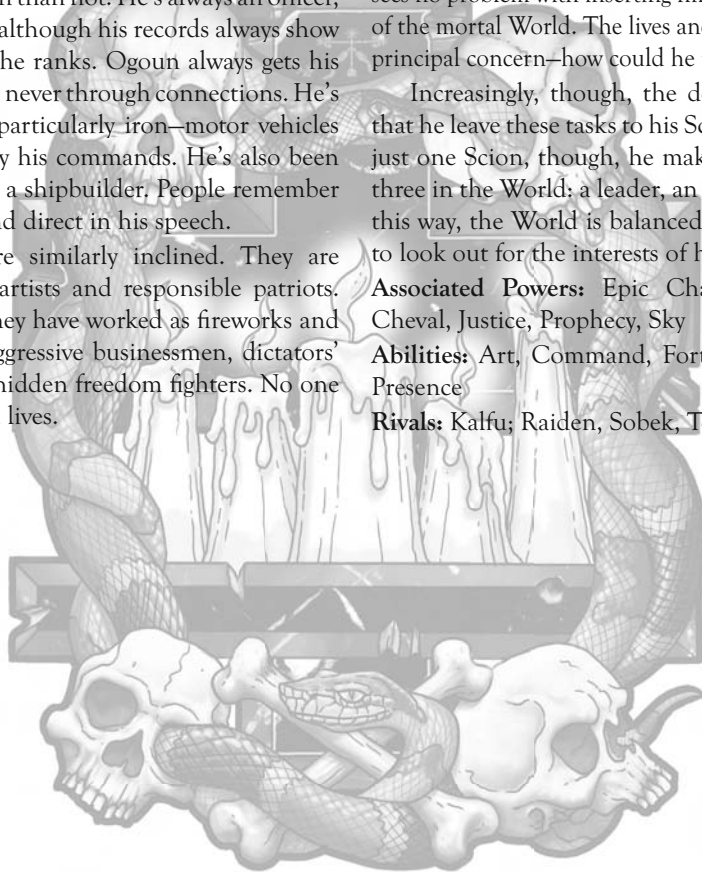
In modern times, the thunder God marched with Dr. Martin Luther King and with Gandhi; he was also a member of the Black Panthers and a bodyguard to Malcolm X. He's been a vigilante, a prizefighter, a lionized athlete and a black judge in a white town. Unlike many Gods, Shango sees no problem with inserting himself into the great events of the mortal World. The lives and rights of mortals are his principal concern—how could he not help them?

Increasingly, though, the demands of Fate require that he leave these tasks to his Scions. He never raises up just one Scion, though, he makes sure there are always three in the World: a leader, an advisor and a bandit. In this way, the World is balanced, and Shango continues to look out for the interests of his community.

Associated Powers: Epic Charisma, Epic Strength, Cheval, Justice, Prophecy, Sky

Abilities: Art, Command, Fortitude, Integrity, Melee, Presence

Rivals: Kalfu; Raiden, Sobek, Tezcatlipoca, Tyr, Zeus



BRIGITTE DE LA CROIX

SCION OF BARON SAMEDI

Brigitte De La Croix was born in New Orleans, LA, of a *maryaj loa* between Baron Samedi and a mortal *serviteur* named Aimée. Brigitte's father was a constant presence in her life, often visiting her in dreams or riding a horse. Regardless, although her childhood was odd, she didn't grow up in a broken home like many of her fellows. Her mother married a mortal funeral director named Jack De La Croix when Brigitte was five, but this was not unusual. Baron Samedi had many wives, after all, and demanded Aimée's attention only a few days a month. In fact, Brigitte's stepfather's occupation intrigued the girl, and when she was old enough, she went to work for him. She only drove the hearse at first, but she later learned the embalmer's art, for which she has a natural talent.

Two other talents she inherited from her father were the ability to smoke and drink more than anyone on the Mississippi Delta—talents she exploited during her off hours in various bars and pool halls in the Big Easy. After a long bender, Brigitte returned home to find her parents dead and the funeral home overrun with zombies. Thanks to a timely Visitation from her father and the Birthright he provided her, Brigitte was able to fight her way to the man responsible, a twisted *bocor* attempting to use the recent unrest in the Underworld to his advantage. She sent him straight to Guinee, gaining a handful of his zombies for her own, but the battle burned her home to the ground.

Taking only the clothes on her back and the zombies in the family hearse, Brigitte hit the road. Following the advice of her father, she's been traveling the South, putting the dead back where they belong and fighting weirder things besides. She's only recently joined up with her Band after a misadventure at Georgia's Etowah Indian Mounds.

Brigitte is a long and lanky woman with eyes the color of grave soil, skin like dark chocolate and curly black hair. She typically favors black vests, jeans, denim shorts, miniskirts, fishnets and the occasional swallowtail coat, all accented in purple. Regardless of her other accoutrements, she always wears her black top hat and a pair of cheap sunglasses missing one lens, with the *veve* for Baron Samedi etched on the remaining lens. When she's out to make an impression, be it on other Scions or titanspawn, she paints her face to resemble a skull. Invariably, Brigitte carries with her a pack of cigarettes, her custom pool cue (which doubles as a coco macaque) and a bottle of Captain Morgan's. She travels in a tricked-out 1941 Cadillac hearse.

Roleplaying Hints: You are a sultry woman with a tomboy streak. You like to drink and shoot pool and brawl and make love—always to excess, rarely simultaneously. Those who are put off by your morbid dress are usually won over by your gregarious, balls-out nature. As someone who's well aware of both how short life is and how long death is, you live every moment like it might be your last, which with the Titans free and the dead roaming the World, might well be true.

Birthrights: Brigitte's top hat allows her to channel the Darkness Purview. Her ghede glasses allow her to channel the Death and Health Purviews. Her (coco macaque/pool cue) allows her to channel the Psychopomp and Earth purviews. She can also use it to summon her zombie followers up out of the ground. When necessary, Brigitte can sometimes summon one of her father's retinue, to offer his advice.

BRIGITTE
DE
LA
CROIX

SCION

H E R O



Brigitte de la Croix
Name

Player

Mortician
Calling

Cambler
Nature

Loa
Pantheon

Baron Samedi
God

ATTRIBUTES

Physical		Social		Mental	
Strength	●●○○○○○○○○ ■□□□□□□□	Charisma	●●●○○○○○○○ ■□□□□□□□	Perception	●●●○○○○○○○ □□□□□□□□
Dexterity	●●●○○○○○○○ □□□□□□□□	Manipulation	●●○○○○○○○○○ □□□□□□□□	Intelligence	●●○○○○○○○○○ □□□□□□□□
Stamina	●●○○○○○○○○○ ■□□□□□□□	Appearance	●●●○○○○○○○ ■□□□□□□□	Wits	●●●○○○○○○○ □□□□□□□□

ABILITIES

<input type="checkbox"/> Academics	●○○○○	<input type="checkbox"/> Craft (<i>Embalming</i>)	●○○○○	<input type="checkbox"/> Melee	●●○○○
<input type="checkbox"/> Animal Ken	○○○○○	<input type="checkbox"/>	○○○○○	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Occult	●●○○○
<input type="checkbox"/> Art	○○○○○	<input type="checkbox"/>	○○○○○	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Politics	○○○○○
<input type="checkbox"/>	○○○○○	<input type="checkbox"/> Empathy	●●○○○	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Presence	●●○○○
<input type="checkbox"/> Athletics	●●○○○	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Fortitude	●○○○○	<input type="checkbox"/> Science (<i>Chemistry</i>)	●○○○○
<input type="checkbox"/> Awareness	●●○○○	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Integrity	●●○○○	<input type="checkbox"/>	○○○○○
<input type="checkbox"/> Brawl	●○○○○	<input type="checkbox"/> Investigation	○○○○○	<input type="checkbox"/>	○○○○○
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Command	●○○○○	<input type="checkbox"/> Larceny	●●○○○	<input type="checkbox"/> Stealth	●●○○○
<input type="checkbox"/> Control (<i>Automobiles</i>)	●○○○○	<input type="checkbox"/> Marksmanship	○○○○○	<input type="checkbox"/> Survival	●○○○○
<input type="checkbox"/>	○○○○○	<input type="checkbox"/> Medicine	●○○○○	<input type="checkbox"/> Thrown	●○○○○

BIRTHRIGHTS

Followers (Zombies) 2

Guide (Ghede) 5

Relic (Coco Macaque-Earth, Psychopomp) 3

Relic (Ghede Glasses-Death, Health) 2

Relic (Top Hat-Darkness) 1

WEAPONS

Coco Macaque

Acc 7, Dmg 6B, Parry DV 4, Spd 6

KNACKS

Charmer, Crushing Grip,

Dreadful Mien, Inner Furnace

WILLPOWER

●●●●●●●●○○○
□□□□□□□□□□

SOAK

A 1 L 2 B 3

ARMOR

A _____ L _____ B _____

HEALTH

0 -1 -1 -2 -2 -4 I
□ □ □ □ □ □ □

VIRTUES

Harmony ●●○○○
Order ●●○○○
Piety ●●○○○
Vengeance ●●○○○

LEGEND

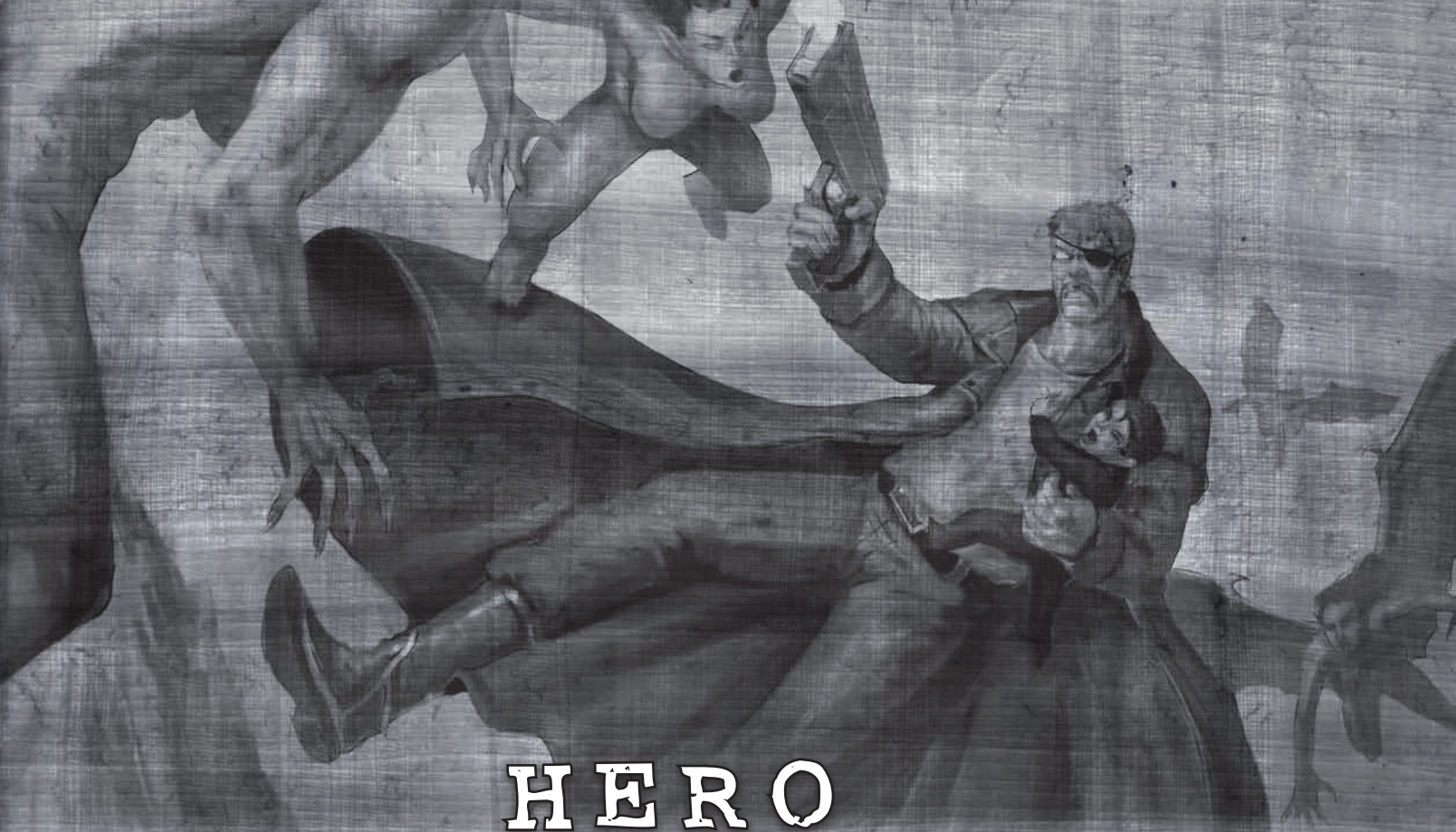
● ● ○ ○ ○ ○
○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○

Legend Points 4 | _____

EXPERIENCE

BRIGITTE DE LA CROIX

BRIGITTE DE LA CROIX



HERO

So, you dig **Scion**, and you're ready to invest your creativity in unique legendary heroes who suit your tastes a little better than the pregenerated ones we've provided. Well, you're in luck, because that's what this chapter is all about: building a hero.

STEP ONE: CALLING

It's in the nature of the Scions of the Gods to be drawn into lifestyles and careers that hint at the purviews of their divine parents. The power of the ichor that flows through their veins urges them into those lifestyles, and their natural talents tend to keep them there.

When designing a Scion, the first step is to come up with your character's Calling, a brief statement of the character's concept. Remember, a character's Calling is typically influenced by his divine parent's own predilections. A Scion of Athena might be a "Shrewd Corporate Lawyer," a "Brilliant Small-Unit Tactician," a "Slick Defense Contractor" or even a "World-Renowned Chess Champion." He's less likely to be a "Crass Rodeo Clown." He lacks the natural inclination to pursue such a Calling, and it's a waste of the talents at which he naturally excels.

Next, choose the character's divine parent and note the pantheon to which she belongs. These choices are often intrinsically tied to a character's Calling. As noted in Chapter One, each deity has a group of six Abilities that her Scions enjoy as Favored Abilities. These Abilities are intrinsically tied to that being, so they pass through the ichor to the Scion. Additionally, each pantheon has a unique Purview that is accessible only to the Gods and Scions of that pantheon. (See pp. 149-153 for more information on these pantheon-specific Purviews and their Boons.)

Finally, you need to decide on your character's Nature, which is a personality archetype that helps define your Scion. A Scion's Nature provides a starting point for the player to portray that character's interaction with others in the game. (See pp. 112-117 of the Traits chapter for detailed descriptions of all 22 Natures and their mechanical effects.)

Example: Conrad decides he wants to play a character from the Japanese pantheon, the Amatsukami. A big fan of samurai films such as Yojimbo, Zatoichi and Seven Samurai, Conrad would like to portray a Scion of Hachiman, the samurai patron. After clearing his choice with the Storyteller, Conrad begins to construct his character.

Conrad chooses "Modern Samurai" as his character's Calling, seeing his character as a rising star in the Japanese action movie biz. He notes Hachiman as the Scion's divine parent and the Amatsukami as the pantheon from which he descends. Looking at Hachiman's write-up, Conrad notes the Favored Abilities for the deity: Athletics, Command, Investigation, Marksmanship, Melee and Science.

This just leaves the character's Nature to be decided. Looking at the choices available, Conrad goes with Gallant, figuring that in the case of Hachiman's progeny, the apple would not fall from the tree.

STEP TWO: ATTRIBUTES

Now it's time to jump into the actual mechanical aspects of character creation. Don't panic, though. It's all pretty straightforward.

The first aspects you need to nail down are your character's nine Attributes. These traits define the Scion's innate capabilities and natural aptitudes, from how strong he is to how smart and all points in between.

The first thing you need to do is to prioritize your character's three Attribute categories: Physical, Social and Mental. Decide at which category your Scion most excels (primary), at which he is somewhat better than average (secondary) and at which he is just at the norm (tertiary). Is he a strapping athlete, a charming dilettante or maybe a brilliant thinker?

- Physical Attributes define your character's physical potential—how much he can lift, how fast he can move and how tough he is. If you're building a Scion who kicks ass and chews gum, but happens to be all out of gum, this should be the character's primary category.

- Social Attributes define the character's social aptitude—how charming, persuasive and attractive he is. If you're building a Scion who's a lover or a cunning manipulator, not a fighter, this category should be primary.

- Mental Attributes define a character's intellectual capacity—how perceptive, smart and mentally agile he is. If you're designing a clever trickster or a brilliant scholar, this should probably be that Scion's primary category.

Each Attribute tops out at five dots, and a character begins with one dot in each Attribute before adding any. A character receives eight dots to divide among his primary Attributes, six to divide among his secondary and four to divide among his tertiary. (For a better idea of what each dot in an Attribute means, see pp. 103-105 of the Traits chapter.)

If you lack the dots necessary to raise an Attribute to the level you believe your concept requires, you can always spend bonus points to raise it later in the process. In addition, Attributes may be raised through experience points after play begins.

Example: Conrad sees his character as every bit the real-life martial-arts hero the character portrays in his films. Therefore, he decides to make the Scion's Physical Attributes primary. Conrad also figures that the character is a successful film star not just thanks to his physical prowess, but because of his rugged good looks and natural charm. Therefore, he decides to make the character's Social Attributes secondary. That leaves Mental Attributes as tertiary. The Scion might be a star, but because the character doesn't know his way around a contract, it's the filmmakers and his agent who are raking in the majority of the money.

Conrad fills in Strength 3, Dexterity 5 and Stamina 3 on his character sheet, using his eight dots (plus the one dot each Attribute possesses). The character is reasonably tough and well built, but his speed and hand eye coordination are nearly superhuman—terrific for an action-movie star. Moving to his character's secondary category, Conrad decides the character is handsome and charming, but

straightforward in his dealings. He divides six dots into Charisma 4, Manipulation 2 and Appearance 3. (Remember each Attribute has one dot at the start.) That leaves the tertiary Attributes. Conrad sees the Scion as possessing good reflexes but no more book smarts or insight than the average Joe. He gives his character Perception 2, Intelligence 2 and Wits 3, putting half of his four dots into Wits and dividing the other two equally between the other Attributes (again, don't forget that each has one dot to start).

STEP THREE: ABILITIES

Abilities are traits a Scion learns through hard work and study, unlike the raw natural aptitudes of Attributes. Like Attributes, Abilities are rated from one to five dots. When performing actions in **Scion**, an Ability is usually added to an Attribute to determine the number of dice rolled. All Abilities begin at 0.

Each Scion character receives 30 dots to be divided as the player wishes among the 24 different Abilities. Note that no Ability may be raised above three dots at character generation without the expenditure of bonus points.

As noted in Chapter One, each God passes on six particularly relevant Abilities to her offspring in the form of Favored Abilities. These Favored Abilities are cheaper to purchase with both bonus points and experience points.

SPECIALTIES

A handful of Abilities are so broad that they require specialization to further define what portion of the broader Ability a character has mastered. The Art Ability, for instance, includes such varied pursuits as sculpture, painting, music and writing. Most artists are not equally skilled in all such pursuits—they focus instead on one or only a few. For such Abilities, which are noted in Chapter Three, the player must choose a particular specialty to which his rating applies. His dots apply *only* to the area covered by his specialty. If an artist character chooses painting as his specialty, his dots in Art (Painting) apply only to his attempts to paint a picture. If he tries to sculpt a monument, he cannot apply his Art dots to that effort unless he also has a *separate* rating in Art (Sculpture).

Example: Conrad tries to divide his dots in such a way that the Scion's focus clearly falls under combat, but that facet of the character isn't the only one he possesses. He purchases Animal Ken 2, Athletics 3, Awareness 3, Brawl 3, Control (Automobiles) 2, Fortitude 3, Integrity 2, Larceny 3, Melee 3, Presence 1, Stealth 3, Survival 1 and Thrown 1. Looking at the spread of Abilities, Conrad mentally notes that he'd like to come back and tweak some of these stats later with bonus points.

STEP FOUR: ADVANTAGES

Advantages aren't ranked or prioritized, merely given special values. Like most traits, they may be increased with bonus points.

BIRTHRIGHTS

Birthrights are gifts given to Scions by their patron Gods, typically upon a Scion's Visitation. A Scion character receives five dots to divide among four separate



types of Birthright: Creature, Followers, Guide and Relic. No Birthright may be rated higher than three dots before spending bonus points. More information on these Birthrights appears in the Chapter Five, pp. 156-169.

EPIC ATTRIBUTES, KNACKS AND BOONS

Epic Attributes are innate traits that manifest almost immediately after a Scion's Visitation, as the latent ichor in his blood wreaks sudden, dramatic changes on his physiology. Knacks are quirks of the Epic Attributes that manifest in different Scions with differing frequency. A Scion receives one Knack free with every dot purchased in an Epic Attribute. (Additional Knacks may be purchased with bonus or experience points.) More info on Epic Attributes and Knacks appears in Chapter Four.

Boons are supernatural powers granted to Scions by their divine parents. Most come from the Purviews for which those Gods are best known, but none are off limits. Boons differ from Epic Attributes and Knacks in that they aren't innate. In fact, to use a Boon, a heroic Scion must possess a Birthright relic that allows access to the Purview from which that Boon comes. A complete explanation of Boons appears in Chapter Five, pp. 139-156.

A Scion receives 10 dots to divide between Epic Attributes and Boons. Each dot in an Epic Attribute costs one of those 10 dots at character creation. Each Boon costs the same number of dots as its rating (i.e., taking a three-dot Boon at character creation uses up three of those 10 dots). No score in a Scion's Epic Attribute may equal or surpass his Legend score. Similarly, no Scion may possess a Boon rated equal to or greater than his Legend.

VIRTUES

Virtues are beliefs of great import to the cultures from which the various pantheons emerged. Each pantheon has a set of four Virtues that define proper behavior. The sets are as follows:

Aesir: Courage, Endurance, Expression, Loyalty

Amatsukami: Duty, Endurance, Intellect, Valor

Atzlánti: Conviction, Courage, Duty, Loyalty

Dodekathemon: Expression, Intellect, Valor, Vengeance

Loa: Harmony, Order, Piety, Vengeance

Pesedjet: Conviction, Harmony, Order, Piety

Similar to Attributes, each Virtue begins with one dot. Each Scion then has five dots to divide between the four Virtues of his divine parent's pantheon. (A Storyteller might allow a Scion to choose a different Virtue combination, but don't count on it.) A Virtue can't be raised above 4 at character creation without the expenditure of bonus points.

More information on Virtues can be found in Chapter Three (pp. 117-122).

Example: Conrad purchases two Birthright relics for his character using his available five dots of Birthright: a jade tomoe necklace (a two-dot relic offering access to the War and Guardian Purviews) and the Fudo Masamune, a tanto made by famed swordsmith Masamune Okazaki and dedicated to the fire deity Fudo Myo. (This blade is a three-dot relic offering access to the Fire Purview and giving +2 Defense.)

Knowing that Hachiman was renowned for his lightning reflexes and prowess in battle, Conrad decides to devote two dots to Epic Wits and one to Epic Dexterity. He also takes

two dots of Epic Charisma. That makes the character eligible for two Epic Wits Knacks, two Epic Charisma Knacks and a single Epic Dexterity Knack. He chooses to go with Opening Gambit, Rabbit Reflexes, Blessing of Importance, Charmer and Untouchable Opponent. Conrad then decides to spend his remaining dots on Boons, namely Battle Cry (War ••), Fire Immunity (Fire •), Vigil Brand (Guardian •) and The Wakeful Spirit (Tsukumo-Gami •).

The Amatsukami's Virtues are Duty, Endurance, Intellect, Valor. Therefore, Conrad sets his Scion's four Virtues at Duty 2, Endurance 2, Intellect 2, Valor 3.

STEP FIVE: FINISHING TOUCHES

On this step, you determine your character's final traits and finish rounding him out.

WILLPOWER

Willpower represents a character's strength of purpose and determination. As a trait, it is used for a variety of purposes. A Scion's Willpower may override an instinctive response borne of one's Virtues, create an automatic success on an important roll, allow that Scion to resist a mental assault, power certain Boons and spells or activate a Virtue. (More information on Willpower and its uses can be found on pp. 111-112 of Chapter Three.)

A character's starting Willpower equals the sum of his two highest Virtues, though Willpower may be raised with bonus points.

LEGEND

Legend is the measure of a Scion or other supernatural being's spiritual puissance. Most mortals have no Legend rating (or a rating of 1 at most). Scions start the game with Legend 2, and that trait may be raised with bonus points.

LEGEND POINTS

Legend also generates points, which may be spent for automatic successes, to reroll a failed action and to power certain Boons and spells. A Scion's pool of Legend points is equal to the square of his Legend dots.

HEALTH LEVELS

Despite the great body of evidence to the contrary, Scions are ultimately only human. They possess the same seven health levels that other mere mortals possess: one -0 health level, two -1 health levels, two -2 health levels, one -4 health level and a single Incapacitated health level. For more information on health levels, see Chapter Seven, p. 195.

BONUS POINTS

Finally, the Scion gets a pool of 15 bonus points that may be spent to improve various traits. The expenditure for trait increases is outlined on the "Bonus Points" table on page 101.

Example: Entering the final stretch of creating his hero, Conrad adds the character's two highest Virtues together, garnering the Scion a starting Willpower of 5. Realizing that

he bumped two of his Scion's Epic Attributes to 2 and bought a two-dot War Boon and that the character can't have that without a higher Legend than the starting score of 2, Conrad spends 7 of the character's 15 bonus points to raise it to Legend 3. That gives him a pool of nine Legend points.

Conrad decides to spend six of his remaining bonus points to raise the Scion's Athletics to 5, Brawl to 4 and Melee to 5. (Raising Athletics and Melee costs only one point apiece because they are Favored Abilities.) He spends the last two points to bring his Willpower up to 6.

And that's it for the mechanical side of character creation. All that's left now is to turn that bunch of numbers into more than the sum of its numbers, a real character.

THE SPARK OF LIFE

And that's it for the mechanical side of character creation. All that's left now is to turn that bunch of numbers into a real character. The most important things about a character can't be defined by his traits. These things make a character take on a life of his own in play. It's important when making up a character to consider who that character is, where he comes from, what he looks like and what his hopes and aspirations are. Knowing the answer to these and similar questions will make all the difference when you bring him to life in a Scion game. Shades of characterization may often be gleaned from the scores you put in a Scion's various traits, by reading between the lines.

Example: Conrad names his Scion character Jiro Hata and decides that he's a minor Japanese action star on the verge of making it big. Thinking about the character and checking out his Appearance and his Physical Attributes, Conrad figures Jiro's a ruggedly handsome Japanese man in his early 20s with the build of a martial artist. He's not a big guy, but his body is toned and well defined, and he possesses a winning smile. Conrad sees Jiro as charming, but guileless, naïve and not too shrewd (backed up by his above-average Charisma and his merely average Manipulation, Perception and Intelligence). Therefore, his studio and his agent tend to take advantage of the Scion, pocketing most of the money from his budding movie career.

Conrad then ponders Jiro's life a bit. He's already decided that the noble Hachiman is Jiro Hata's father, but that leaves a lot of character history to explore. Conrad figures the Scion was born in Kamakura to a single mother. His father was a constant presence in his life, however, appearing whenever his heavenly duties permitted and making sure the family had enough money to get by (though little more).

While he grew up on the mean streets of Kamakura, Jiro was his father's son, so he fought to defend those who were victimized by the ubiquitous thugs and gang members that effectively ruled the poorer sections of the city. His attempts to better his neighborhood brought him to the attention of an aging martial arts master, who elected to teach the young man his unique brand of kenjutsu. His real-life exploits against the criminal underworld drew the attention of first the media and then venerable Jinrikisha Productions. Once a major Japanese movie studio, Jinrikisha had faced hard times in the late '90s and early 21st century and now viewed the charismatic and dynamic Jiro Hata as an action star

who might reinvigorate the studio. (Jinrikisha's ties to the yakuza, which wanted Jiro taken out of the hero game, only offered extra incentive to the indebted studio execs.) Drawn in by the promise of action, celebrity and respect, Jiro had found his Calling, which resonated with the blood of his divine parent.

Conrad decides that the Scion's life of fame and fortune was short-lived, however. After making a number of successful films with its new star, Jinrikisha was in danger of recouping the money it needed to break with the yakuza—not what the organization had in

mind when Jiro was hired on. So the criminals decided to eliminate Hata in an “accident” on the set of his latest feature, a plan that backfired thanks to a timely Visitation by Hachiman. Armed with divine might and righteous fury, Jiro Hata took down the yakuza thugs and, unfortunately, Jinrikisha Productions with it. Now, Jiro works in bit parts and as a stuntman while trying to regain his status as a film icon. Maybe he'd have better luck in Hollywood...

And that's that. One **Scion** character fleshed out and ready for play.

CHARACTER CREATION SUMMARY

CHARACTER CREATION PROCESS

- **STEP ONE: CALLING**
Choose calling, pantheon, God and Nature.
- **STEP TWO: ATTRIBUTES**
Note that all Attributes start with one dot before you add any.
Prioritize the three categories: Physical, Social, Mental (8/6/4)
Choose Physical Traits: Strength, Dexterity, Stamina
Choose Social Traits: Charisma, Manipulation, Appearance
Choose Mental Traits: Perception, Intelligence, Wits
- **STEP THREE: ABILITIES**
Note Favored Abilities (6)
Choose Abilities (30—at least 6 must go into Favored Abilities; none may be higher than 3 before spending bonus points).
- **STEP FOUR: ADVANTAGES**
Choose Birthrights (5—none may be higher than 3 before spending bonus points), Boons and Epic Attributes (10), and Virtues (5—none may be higher than 4 before spending bonus points).
- **STEP FIVE: FINISHING TOUCHES**
Record Legend (2), Willpower (total of two highest Virtues), Legend points (square of Legend dots).
- **BONUS POINTS**
Bonus points (15) may be spent at any time during character creation.

BONUS POINTS

Trait	Cost
Attribute	4
Ability	2 (1 for Favored Ability of divine parent)
Birthright	1 (2 if the Birthright is being raised above 3)
Virtue	3
Willpower	2
Legend	7
Epic Attribute	5 (4 if associated with divine parent)
Knack	3
Boons	5 (4 if associated with divine parent)
Additional Spell	5 (4 if Magic is associated with divine parent)

CHARACTER CREATION SUMMARY (CONTINUED)

NATURE

- **Architect**—You are a methodical planner.
- **Autocrat**—It's your way or the highway.
- **Bravo**—You live life on the edge.
- **Caregiver**—You are a wellspring of compassion.
- **Competitor**—You are driven to be the best.
- **Cynic**—You are quite familiar with Murphy's Law.
- **Fanatic**—You zealously champion your beliefs.
- **Gallant**—You protect those who can't protect themselves.
- **Gambler**—You risk all to win.
- **Judge**—You are the law.
- **Libertine**—You live each day like it's your last.
- **Loner**—You rely on yourself alone.
- **Pacifist**—You endeavor to solve problems peacefully.
- **Pedagogue**—You live to teach.
- **Penitent**—You seek to expiate the wrongs you've done.
- **Perfectionist**—You strive for flawlessness in all your endeavors.
- **Rebel**—You constantly seek to challenge authority.
- **Rogue**—You believe laws were made to be broken.
- **Survivor**—You persevere against everything life throws at you.
- **Traditionalist**—You believe that the old ways are the best ones.
- **Trickster**—You live to deceive.
- **Visionary**—You see the World for what could be, rather than what it is.

BIRTHRIGHTS

- **Creature**—An animal companion.
- **Followers**—Allies who look to you for leadership.
- **Guide**—A teacher and instructor.
- **Relic**—Wondrous gifts of the Gods.

VIRTUES

- **Conviction**—Devotion to one's beliefs.
- **Courage**—Drive to prove oneself in battle.
- **Duty**—Doing what's expected of one.
- **Endurance**—Standing tall in the face of adversity.
- **Expression**—Bringing art into the World.
- **Harmony**—Belief in the natural order of the universe.
- **Intellect**—The exaltation of reason.
- **Loyalty**—Repaying the trust put in one.
- **Order**—Belief in the rule of law.
- **Piety**—Faith in the Gods.
- **Valor**—Willingness to fight for what's right.
- **Vengeance**—The redress of wrongs.



TRAITS

In **Scion**, as in real life, people are individuals. Some are stronger, or quicker, or smarter than others by virtue of raw talent or hard work. Some give in easily to temptation, while others govern themselves with an unshakable will. Some spend years devoting themselves to mastering a particular set of skills or field of study, while others acquire a broad range of abilities according to their shifting interests. These characteristics, referred to in the game as traits, define how a Scion interacts with her fellow heroes and with the World around her.

This chapter details the mundane traits common to every character in **Scion**, from the nine Attributes governing physical, mental and social capability to the 24 Abilities that represents a character's education, training and life experience. The second part of the chapter explains how Willpower is used in the game and how a character's Nature is used to recoup Willpower points spent during play. The chapter concludes with information concerning Scion-specific traits such as pantheon-specific Virtues and the effects of a Scion's Legend.

ATTRIBUTES

Characters in **Scion** have nine Attributes that represent their innate talents and capabilities. Every action a character takes begins with an Attribute. Lifting a heavy object requires Strength, puzzling out the provenance of a rare relic requires Intelligence, inspiring other Scions to great deeds requires Charisma, and so forth.

Attributes for ordinary mortals are rated from one to five dots. A rating of 2 is considered average, while a rating of 5 represents the pinnacle of human capability. Powerful animals or monsters might possess Attribute ratings greater than 5, and Scions have access to Epic Attributes that enhance their capabilities to supernatural degrees. (For more information on Epic Attributes, see Chapter Four, pp. 126-136.) A Scion cannot have an Attribute rated higher than 5 until he achieves Legend 6. From that point on, no Attribute can rise higher than his Legend rating.

For detailed information on how Attributes are used to resolve actions, see Chapters Six and Seven.

PHYSICAL ATTRIBUTES

A character's three Physical Attributes define how strong, swift and resilient she is.

STRENGTH

As the name implies, Strength represents a person's raw muscle power. Characters use Strength for physical activities such as lifting, jumping, climbing and throwing, as well as inflicting damage in hand-to-hand combat or breaking inanimate objects.

Trait Effects: Without dots in Athletics, a character with Strength of 1 is weaker than average and can lift a TV set (40 lbs.) with effort. A character with Strength 3 works out regularly and can lift a large man (220 lbs.). A character with Strength 5 is prodigiously strong and can lift a small motorcycle (450 lbs.) with effort.

A character can carry 25 pounds per dot of Strength or Athletics without difficulty. For each additional 25 pounds over this limit, the difficulty to all physical actions the burdened character takes increases by one.

DEXTERITY

Dexterity is a measure of a person's reflexes, balance and hand-eye coordination. Characters use Dexterity to determine how fast they run, how easily they hit their opponents in combat, and how well they operate tools, instruments and vehicles.

Trait Effects: A character with Dexterity 1 fumbles basic physical tasks if rushed. She drops her keys trying to open her apartment door, knocks over lamps or trips over her own feet. A character with Dexterity 3 is agile. She has a sure and steady hand and can dance rings around her opponents. A character with Dexterity 5 is almost inhumanly swift and graceful. She could be a world-class surgeon, a legendary musician or a master martial artist.

STAMINA

Stamina represents a person's overall hardiness and resistance to illness and injury. Characters use Stamina to resist the effects of sickness, poisons or injury. It also governs tests of physical endurance, such as long-distance running, swimming underwater or mountain climbing.

Trait Effects: A character with Stamina 1 becomes sick easily and succumbs to pain or exhaustion quickly. One powerful blow can leave him incapacitated. A character with Stamina 3 rarely gets sick and can suffer numerous blows before being knocked out. A character with Stamina 5 is a veritable force of nature. She almost never gets sick, she can go for days without sleep, and she shrugs off injuries that would kill an average person.

SOCIAL ATTRIBUTES

A character's Social Attributes define her powers of charm, persuasion and sheer physical magnetism.

CHARISMA

Charisma is a measure of a person's social grace and strength of personality. Characters use Charisma to charm their enemies, to win friends and allies and to inspire people when things look bleak.

Trait Effects: A character with Charisma 1 is socially inadequate and uncomfortable around other people. She has difficulty making friends and opening up to others. A character with Charisma 3 is adept at dealing with people and has no trouble making friends or moving through society. A character with Charisma 5 is effortlessly charming. She wins people over with a few well-chosen words and is a naturally inspiring figure.

MANIPULATION

Manipulation represents a person's talent for persuasion and leadership. A character uses Manipulation to convince people to do what he wants, whether by trickery, deceit or force of will.

Trait Effects: A character with Manipulation 1 is brutally straightforward and honest. She either has no taste for persuasion or is unwilling to impose her will on other people. A character with Manipulation 3 is skilled at the art of getting her way. She might be a slick talker or an overbearing bully who rides roughshod over weak personalities. A character with Manipulation 5 is a consummate con artist or a natural leader. People would follow her to Hel and back if she wanted them to.

APPEARANCE

Appearance measures a character's capacity to influence peoples' reactions by virtue of her physical looks and demeanor. It's not an absolute measure of a character's attractiveness. Rather, it represents how adept she is at using her looks to affect those around her. Characters use Appearance when they want to intimidate, inspire or attract others using their physical looks alone.

Trait Effects: A character with Appearance 1 is the classic wallflower. People don't pay her any attention unless she says something. A character with Appearance 3 is poised and physically arresting. She can speak volumes with a single look or a cocked eyebrow. A character with Appearance 5 is unnerving to be around. People have a hard time paying attention to anything else when she's in the room.

MENTAL ATTRIBUTES

A character's three Mental Attributes define how observant and rational she is, as well as how quickly she thinks on her feet.

PERCEPTION

Perception represents a person's awareness of her surroundings and her ability to notice telling details that others might miss. Characters use Perception to gather and process information and to remain alert for signs of danger.

Trait Effects: A character with Perception 1 doesn't pay attention to anything beyond her immediate needs. She is easily caught off guard and takes everything at face value. A character with Perception 3 is sharp-eyed and observant. It's difficult to catch her unawares because she's adept at picking up on subtle clues in her environment. A character with Perception 5 is constantly alert and rarely, if ever, caught by surprise. She can infer a wealth of data from the smallest details.

INTELLIGENCE

Intelligence is a measure of a person's reasoning ability, memory and imagination. Characters use Intelligence when they must draw upon their memory, creativity or powers of logic to find solutions to complex problems.



Trait Effects: A character with Intelligence 1 is dull and unimaginative. She isn't capable of thinking ahead or tackling deep, abstract issues. A character with Intelligence 3 is a brilliant thinker. Even if she isn't especially well educated, she has a wide range of interests and areas of knowledge and is capable of incisive, innovative thought. A character with Intelligence 5 is a visionary. Her thought processes operate on such a high level that she likely has a difficult time relating to other people.

WITS

Wits represents how well a person can think on her feet and react to unexpected situations. Characters use

Wits to talk their way out of tight spots, to reach the right decision in a moment of crisis or to react quickly in the face of danger. It is also used to determine how quickly a character acts in combat.

Trait Effects: A character with Wits 1 is slow of mind. She is easily confused in hectic situations and is almost always caught off her guard by unexpected developments. A character with Wits 3 has a quick mind and can react nimbly to unforeseen circumstances or sudden challenges. A character with Wits 5 is almost completely unflappable. Nothing seems to rattle her, and she has an answer for anything that's thrown her way.

ABILITIES

Abilities are skills that characters learn by study or experience. When a character performs a task, the player typically combines an Attribute with an Ability the character possesses in order to determine the task's dice pool. Unlike Attributes, Abilities in *Scion* are rated from zero to five dots. Players who attempt a task using an Ability in which they have no dots suffer a +2 difficulty to their roll. Depending on the complexity of the task, the Storyteller can increase this penalty further or declare that the task can't be performed at all. A reasonably intelligent character with no medical knowledge might be able to set a broken bone with some difficulty, for example, but successfully performing open-heart surgery would be impossible.

The following Abilities are available to mortal and divine characters in *Scion*. Most Abilities represent general bodies of knowledge or experience. A few, such as Science, require specialization in a chosen field of study, though the Storyteller can choose to waive this requirement.

ACADEMICS

Academics is a wide-ranging Ability that represents the sum of a person's higher education in the Arts and Humanities—everything from history to linguistics, literature, theatre and the study of law. Characters don't necessarily have to be college graduates in order to possess this Ability. An inner-city kid with access to

a library and a voracious appetite for knowledge could have a high rating in Academics. A college graduate who spent more time partying than studying could have a very low rating.

Characters use Academics to better understand the World around them. Knowledge of history and divine legend are crucial to the children of the Gods, for example—and familiarity with the legal system couldn't hurt, either. This Ability is also used to research topics with which the character is unfamiliar, using either the library or the Internet.

Trait Effects: A character with Academics 1 has a basic, working knowledge of the liberal arts. She's familiar with the basic disciplines (English, history, art, etc.), and can find her way around a library with difficulty. A character with Academics 3 is a well-read and knowledgeable individual, and she can learn what she doesn't know in a few hours of focused research. A character with Academics 5 is highly educated or extremely well read. She's a veritable font of information, able to speak knowledgeably on a wide variety of subjects.

Note: A multilingual character can speak a maximum number of languages equal to his (Intelligence + Academics). A character must still actually *learn* the additional languages he speaks, though—whether doing so is part of his upbringing or happens over time in game. He does not spontaneously understand new languages each time he gets a new Academics dot.

ANIMAL KEN

Reading an animal's state of mind and reacting accordingly can sometimes mean the difference between life and death. Animal Ken represents a person's experience in dealing with wild or domesticated animals. Perhaps she was raised on a ranch and has spent most of her life working with livestock and hunting predators. Maybe she chose a career in veterinary medicine or zoology. This Ability covers animal-handling techniques, care and feeding, and basic veterinary medicine.

Characters use Animal Ken when attempting to handle or train a wild or domesticated animal. This Ability is also used when a character is trying to befriend or calm a hostile animal such as a stray dog or a wild horse, or to treat an injured or sick animal.

Trait Effects: A character with Animal Ken 1 has a basic understanding of animal health and behavior. She can avoid getting bitten by strange dogs and can teach pets basic tricks. A character with Animal Ken 3 is an experienced animal handler and can work safely with even wild animals, from horses to tigers. A character with Animal Ken 5 has an almost supernatural connection with animals, able to win the trust and acceptance of even the most skittish or hostile creatures.

ART

Producing—or performing—works of art demands both imagination and skill. It requires both the spark of

creativity and hard-won technique to carve a sculpture, write a song or deliver a moving soliloquy. This Ability represents the physical skill required to create or perform works of art and entertainment. By the same token, this Ability can also be used to gauge the merit of a work of art and critique it objectively.

Characters use Art to sculpt, to compose or perform music, to act or to write.

Specialty: This Ability requires the character to specialize in a given artistic field, such as painting, sculpture, music, et cetera. This Ability can be selected multiple times to represent experience in a variety of artistic pursuits, but each rating is independent.

Trait Effects: A character with Art 1 has a basic understanding of her craft. She has reached the stage where she can produce polished, effective work most of the time. A character with Art 3 is an experienced and capable artist. She is familiar with all of the tricks of the trade and can produce work that is much valued and admired. A character with Art 5 is an icon in her chosen field. Her work is the standard against which all others are measured.

ATHLETICS

It's one thing to say that someone is strong but another thing entirely to say that she is *athletic*. This Ability describes a character's physical fitness, coordination and endurance, as well as her skill in applying herself to strenuous physical activity. It's the difference between someone who can lift a heavy box and someone who has honed her strength and coordination to climb sheer rock walls.

Characters use Athletics to climb walls, to leap from rooftop to rooftop and to swim across swift-moving rivers. The more dots of Athletics a character has, the more he can lift. (See p. 181.)

Trait Effects: A character with Athletics 1 is moderately fit. She can swim, she can run a mile without getting winded, and she is adept at one or more sports. A character with Athletics 3 is in excellent shape. She runs five miles a day and enjoys a variety of challenging sports or activities. A character with Athletics 5 is in the peak of human physical condition. She could be an Olympic athlete or a world-class sports star.

AWARENESS

Most people are reasonably alert and aware of their surroundings, but those with the Awareness Ability have honed their powers of observation to an exceptional degree. Constant alertness might be a part of their profession, as it is with a police detective or a bodyguard, or it might be a matter of survival, as it is with a soldier or a gang leader.

Characters use Awareness when they are searching a room or observing a person and looking for telltale clues about his intentions. It's also used to detect hidden enemies or to foil sneak attacks.

Trait Effects: A character with Awareness 1 is fairly alert at all times. She can notice simple clues

and uncover poorly hidden objects most of the time. A character with Awareness 3 is sharply observant. She has an eye for telling details and is constantly aware of potential dangers in her environment. A character with Awareness 5 is almost supernaturally alert. Her senses are sharpened to such a keen edge that almost nothing escapes her notice.

BRAWL

This Ability governs all types of hand-to-hand combat, from boxing to Kung Fu to no-holds-barred street fighting. A character can pick up this Ability from a wide variety of sources. Maybe she was a martial arts student for years. Maybe she learned some techniques in the military. Maybe she simply learned how to use her fists on the rough streets where she grew up.

Characters use Brawl when they fight using their hands and feet (and knees, elbows, teeth, etc.).

Trait Effects: A character with Brawl 1 knows how to fight. She's skilled enough to hold her own on a Friday night at the local roadhouse. A character with Brawl 3 is a skilled and dangerous fighter. She's knocked out her share of tough guys and has the scarred knuckles to prove it. A character with Brawl 5 is a master martial artist or champion Ultimate Fighter. Most of her opponents never know what hit them.

COMMAND

Command represents a person's skill and experience in leading people, whether it's managing work teams in a corporate environment or guiding raw recruits into battle. This Ability can be learned through training or won through hard experience. A young officer in the military is taught how to motivate and lead soldiers in the most stressful situations, while a teenager who has to raise her younger brothers after their parents die has leadership thrust upon her whether she likes it or not.

Characters use Command when they need to direct or lead other people, especially in crisis situations.

Trait Effects: A character with Command 1 can keep a cool head in an emergency and has an aura of self-confidence that people respond to. A character with Command 3 is an experienced and capable leader to whom people naturally defer. A character with Command 5 has the legendary "look of eagles"—people gravitate to her in a crisis and will follow her to the ends of the earth if that's what it takes.

CONTROL

This Ability governs driving, piloting or riding any and all types of transportation, from horses to cars to helicopters. In the modern day, most forms of transportation (cars, motorcycles, bicycles, etc.) are common and relatively easy to obtain, and most people have some basic familiarity with their use. Control doesn't cover mundane tasks such as driving to the corner market, however. This Ability represents the skill and training to

put a vehicle through its paces and perform maneuvers under difficult or desperate situations.

Characters use Control when they are in a high-speed chase in the middle of rush hour, when they want to show off at the local half-pipe or when they want to fly a helicopter through the open decks of a parking garage.

Specialty: This Ability requires the character to specialize in a given type of vehicle, such as cars, motorcycles, planes, riding animals, et cetera. This Ability may be purchased more than once to represent experience in a variety of vehicle types, but each rating is independent.

Trait Effects: A character with Control 1 has steady hands and sharp reflexes and could be a decent street racer if she chose. A character with Control 3 has ice water in her veins and could be a professional racer or stunt driver. A character with Control 5 can do things with her ride that other drivers fear to contemplate, much less attempt.

CRAFT

Craft is the Ability to make and repair useful objects, from chairs to clothing to car engines. Most people learn these skills in a kind of apprenticeship, starting at a job doing small tasks and working their way up as their aptitude increases. Some people learn their trade as part of a family business. Others begin with a hobby that becomes a full-time pursuit. Most of these trades require an extensive set of tools and a workshop in which to operate, but some craftspeople get by with just a box of tools and whatever flat surface is handy.

Characters use Craft when building or repairing objects or equipment.

Specialty: This Ability requires the character to specialize in a particular kind of craft, such as carpentry, blacksmithing, electronics, automotive, et cetera. This Ability can be purchased multiple times to represent experience in different types of craftsmanship, but each rating is independent.

Trait Effects: A character with Craft 1 is good with her hands and has a basic understanding of her trade. With the right tools and enough time, she can turn out well-made, useful items. A character with Craft 3 is a highly skilled, experienced craftsman, capable of making high-quality objects quickly or improvising repairs with whatever resources are available. A character with Craft 5 can do wonders with her hands and a simple set of tools. She can build objects from improvised materials and whip a total wreck into working order with a paper clip and a roll of duct tape.

EMPATHY

This Ability represents a person's skill at gauging the mental and emotional state of others and picking up clues about their motives or intentions. Many people possess this Ability in differing degrees, from poker players to corporate negotiators to police interrogators. Regardless of the application, the technique is the same: Human beings give away clues about their mental state

in the tone of their voice, their body language and myriad other tiny details often referred to as “tells.” By asking a few questions or observing a subject’s actions and reading these tells, characters with this Ability can learn a lot about what someone is thinking—or trying to hide.

Characters use this Ability to tell if they are being lied to, to aid in a negotiation with a hostile party or to convince someone to open up to them.

Trait Effects: A character with Empathy 1 is fairly sensitive to other people’s emotional states and can gauge their motives some of the time. A character with Empathy 3 is keenly attuned to the emotions of those around her and can read most people like a book. A character with Empathy 5 is so perceptive that it’s almost as though she can read a person’s mind—a degree of insight that can make people profoundly uncomfortable.

FORTITUDE

Where the Stamina Attribute reflects a person’s innate endurance, Fortitude represents training and experience in deliberately hardening the body to resist physical punishment. Different people have different reasons for hardening their bodies to suffering, whether they are marathon runners, professional athletes, soldiers or monks. Some simply learn Fortitude the hard way, having been brought up in hostile environments such as the desert or the Arctic Circle.

Characters use Fortitude when they have to keep going in the face of pain, fatigue, sickness or intoxication.

Trait Effects: A character with Fortitude 1 is reasonably tough. She can drink all night, go to work the next morning and function reasonably well with a pounding hangover. A character with Fortitude 3 is hard as nails. She can go for days without sleep or shrug off debilitating illness or painful injuries that would send lesser mortals to the hospital. A character with Fortitude 5 is a machine. She can keep going on nothing but willpower and spite long after everyone else around her is dead.

INTEGRITY

Holding fast to one’s principles in the face of deceptions, threats—even torture—is the stuff of which heroes are made. This Ability governs a person’s capability to resist the mental and physical manipulations of others and not be swayed by tricks, temptations or peril—be it as mundane as a slick car salesman’s pitch or as dire as a Titan cultist’s skinning knife. Integrity keeps a person from selling out herself or her friends to her enemies.

Characters use Integrity to resist deception, persuasion or manipulation or to keep from breaking under interrogation or torture.

Trait Effects: A character with Integrity 1 has courage and strong convictions, and is able to recognize and resist

most attempts at manipulating her. A character with Integrity 3 has an unshakable faith and a willingness to suffer for her beliefs. A character with Integrity 5 has the stuff of martyrs in her. She would rather die than compromise her principles.

INVESTIGATION

Investigation is the science of piecing together information from disparate sources to explain a mysterious event or expose the perpetrator of a crime. It is equal parts observation, research, interrogation and surveillance, gathering facts like puzzle pieces until the mystery is solved. This Ability typically comes as the result of training or on-the-job experience as an investigator, but some individuals with an insatiable curiosity and a knack for recognizing patterns can sometimes see things that seasoned investigators miss.

Characters use Investigation when piecing together clues at a crime scene, tracking down a missing person or looking into the financial records of a suspected cultist.

Trait Effects: A character with Investigation 1 is a rookie detective or an amateur sleuth. She knows basically what sort of clues to look for, and her theories are usually sound. A character with Investigation 3 is highly skilled at zeroing in on the relevant clues to solve a mystery or hunt down a fugitive based on the trail he left behind. A character with Investigation 5 is a master detective. There is no puzzle she can’t solve, no person she can’t find, no subterfuge she can’t penetrate given enough time and effort.

LARCENY

Larceny is a broad-based Ability covering a wide range of illegal activities, from breaking and entering, to theft, forgery and fencing stolen goods. These are skills learned on the street, picked up in prison yards or taught at police academies all over the World.

Characters use Larceny when they want to break into a building, steal a car, forge a driver’s license or buy contraband on the black market.

Trait Effects: A character with Larceny 1 is a competent street criminal with decent connections and a rap sheet to go with them. A character with Larceny 3 is a longtime criminal, possibly with prison time under her belt, and is very experienced at what she does. A character with Larceny 5 is a career criminal, well-connected and influential—and well-known to local crooks and cops alike.

MARKSMANSHIP

This Ability governs a person’s capacity to operate and maintain ranged weapons, from bows and arrows to pistols, rifles and machine guns. Marksmanship can be learned in a variety of ways, whether as a hobby, part of a profession or a matter of day-to-day survival.

Characters use Marksmanship to shoot at a target, to assemble or disassemble a ranged weapon, or to fix one that has been jammed or damaged.

Trait Effects: A character with Marksmanship 1 has a basic familiarity with her weapons and knows how to operate and maintain them. She is fairly accurate under most conditions. A character with Marksmanship 3 is an expert shot and is familiar with a wide assortment of weapons and their characteristics. A character with Marksmanship 5 wields her weapons with near-supernatural skill. Hitting a nickel-sized target from hundreds of yards away in high winds is as easy and natural as breathing.

MEDICINE

Medicine governs the myriad skills necessary to diagnose and treat human illness and injury. Some people come by this Ability by absorbing folk knowledge and remedies passed down through generations of healers and midwives. Others spend years in medical school and emerge with a white coat and many years of loans to repay.

Characters use Medicine to diagnose illnesses and injury and to treat them. It can also be used to determine the cause of a person's death or to identify the properties of medicines and pharmaceuticals.

Trait Effects: A character with Medicine 1 has a basic understanding of first aid. She likely knows CPR and can treat minor injuries. A character with Medicine 3 is a skilled practitioner, possibly a general practitioner or a resident at a local hospital who is familiar with treating serious illnesses and major injuries. A character with Medicine 5 is a world-renowned doctor or surgeon, capable of performing the most difficult and demanding medical procedures.

MEELE

Melee governs the skill and experience to use close-combat weapons in a fight, whether it's a broken beer bottle, a knife or an ancient bronze sword. In a world of firearms, Melee is an Ability that can be difficult to come by. Some people learn the techniques as part of a martial art, while others pick up a little bit here and there in street fights and bar brawls. When it comes right down to it, handling a baseball bat isn't all that different from swinging a broadsword or an axe.

Characters use Melee when they want to hit someone with a hand-to-hand weapon, such as an iron bar, a two-by-four or a blade.

Trait Effects: A character with Melee 1 knows how to fight with a weapon in his hands. He's skilled enough to be more dangerous to his opponents than to himself. A character with Melee 3 is deadly with a knife or an axe handle; he can hold his own against multiple opponents if need be. A character with Melee 5 would have been considered a master swordsman or knife fighter in another age. The most mundane items—pool cues, table legs, tow chains, etc.—become deadly weapons in his capable hands.

OCCULT

This is a broad-based Ability that governs a person's familiarity with the supernatural, from the practice of magic to legends about Gods, ghosts and monsters. Some people learn Occult through the stories of their grandparents or the folk tales of their people. Others pursue the subject out of morbid fascination or pure



curiosity, poring over library resources and surfing Internet sites in pursuit of arcane secrets.

Characters use Occult to identify magical objects or rites, to research ways to deal with ghosts or monsters, or to find information necessary to infiltrate the closed circle of a Titan cult.

Trait Effects: A character with Occult 1 is familiar with the basic elements of her area of study. She knows basic magic rituals or can identify the different types of ghostly phenomena, etc. A character with Occult 3 is a serious student of the supernatural. She has deep knowledge of the supernatural and likely possesses a considerable library of sources she can draw upon. A character with Occult 5 is an acknowledged expert in esoteric study. She is knowledgeable about the most arcane aspects of her subject and likely has a vast library of information to draw upon when needed.

POLITICS

This Ability governs a character's skill and experience in dealing with government bureaucracies, as well as her knowledge of how the political process works. She may have gained this Ability from years as a public servant or a member of a national political campaign, or she might be a journalist on the City Hall beat.

Characters use Politics when they want to run for office, to influence an election or to try to get things done through official channels without going through any red tape.

Trait Effects: A character with Politics 1 knows her way around City Hall and has a good idea of who to call when she needs something done. A character with Politics 3 is a seasoned political operative with connections in government offices and the knowledge of whose palms to grease to get things done in a hurry. A character with Politics 5 is a mover and shaker in national politics, with knowledge and connections at the highest levels of power.

PRESENCE

Presence is a person's ability to use her charm and appearance to sway the opinions of others. She can be an inspiring figure of courage and determination, spurring those around her to greater efforts, or she can instill fear and loathing in her enemies, driving them before her. People often cultivate this Ability as performers, orators or entertainers, but some use it to inspire the faithful or keep their minions under their thumb.

Characters use Presence when they want to terrify their foes, motivate their allies or give hope and courage to the downtrodden.

Trait Effects: A character with Presence 1 is capable of turning heads and capturing people's attention with her force of personality and physical magnetism. A character with Presence 3 is a magnetic figure. Her demeanor speaks volumes to the people around her. A character with Presence 5 is a spellbinding orator and a

towering physical presence. When she speaks, the whole World seems to stop and take notice.

SCIENCE

This broad-based Ability covers the natural and physical sciences. Most people with this Ability acquired it through study in school, but a keen mind and high school science classes could be enough for a person to continue her studies without ever getting a college degree.

Characters use Science when they are identifying chemical compounds, making homemade explosives, plating metals or creating an electric field.

Specialty: This Ability requires the character to specialize in a given field of study, such as physics, chemistry, biology, geology, et cetera. This Ability may be purchased more than once to represent experience in a variety of fields, but each rating is independent.

Trait Effects: A character with Science 1 knows the fundamental scientific laws. Basically, she knows just enough to be dangerous. A character with Science 3 is a skilled scientist or technician, with a solid foundation of knowledge and experience in her field. A character with Science 5 is a visionary theorist with unparalleled knowledge in her area of expertise.

STEALTH

Stealth governs a person's skill and experience at avoiding detection. This Ability is about more than just walking softly. It's possible to remain unseen in broad daylight or in a crowded room simply by knowing how to blend in with one's surroundings and not attract notice.

Characters use Stealth to sneak past guards, monsters and the occasional landlord.

Trait Effects: A character with Stealth 1 is careful and quiet, and can generally avoid notice unless someone is actively looking for her. A character with Stealth 3 knows how to blend in so well with her surroundings that guards can pass within arm's reach and not notice her. A character with Stealth 5 is like a ghost. In the right conditions, she can practically vanish in front of a person's eyes.

SURVIVAL

This Ability governs a person's skill at surviving in a hostile environment with minimal assistance. She knows how to find food and shelter, cope with the elements and treat her injuries using local resources. Some characters gain this Ability via specialized training, whether through the military or as members of a wildlife service or zoological organization. Others become adept at Survival by virtue of growing up in a wilderness environment or spending years hiking and exploring in such regions.

Characters use Survival to live off the land in wilderness surroundings, to track people and animals in the wild or to stay alive when stranded in hostile terrain.

Trait Effects: A character with Survival 1 has enough experience to survive in the wild for a couple of days with minimal equipment. A character with Survival 3 can spend as much as a month in the wilderness with little more than a compass and a sturdy knife on which to rely. A character with Survival 5 is a wilderness expert, more at home in the wild than in civilization. She can walk into the wilderness empty-handed and survive for as long as she needs to.

THROWN

This Ability represents a person's skill at hitting a target using a thrown object, whether it's a rock, a

baseball or a knife. Most people who possess this Ability pick it up casually, having learned the basic hand-eye techniques as children, though specialized weapons such as throwing knives and hatchets require dedicated practice to use well.

Characters use this Ability when they want to hit a distant foe with a thrown knife, a spear or a loose brick.

Trait Effects: A character with Thrown 1 can hit what she aims at most of the time. A character with Thrown 3 has a keen eye and a powerful throwing arm. She can kill people with a well-aimed stone, much less a knife. A character with Thrown 5 is as deadly with a rock or a shuriken as most people are with a pistol.

WILLPOWER

Willpower measures a character's determination, self-assurance and emotional resilience. A character with a high Willpower is focused and highly disciplined, able to exert tremendous self-control in order to achieve her goals. She can resist outside influences and temptations, and she can push her mind and body to accomplish extraordinary things.

Willpower is rated from 1-10 and has both a permanent and a temporary rating. A character's permanent Willpower rating is initially determined at character creation by adding together the character's two highest Virtues (and potentially using bonus points to increase it further). Thereafter, it doesn't change except by spending experience points on Willpower directly. (That is, increases in Virtues do not automatically grant increases in Willpower.) When a Willpower roll must be made for a character, the dice pool is determined by the permanent Willpower rating. A character's temporary Willpower rating serves as a pool of points that the player may spend to fuel certain Knacks and Boons or to gain other special effects. A character's temporary Willpower rating cannot normally be higher than her permanent Willpower rating.

Trait Effects:

•	Spineless
••	Weak
•••	Timid
••••	Certain
•••••	Confident
••••••	Resolute
•••••••	Driven
••••••••	Determined
•••••••••	Iron-willed
••••••••••	Implacable

USING WILLPOWER

In addition to using a character's temporary Willpower to fuel certain of her divine gifts, the player

may also spend one point of temporary Willpower per action to receive one of the following benefits.

Automatic Success: The player may spend one temporary Willpower point to receive one automatic success when performing an action. This is in addition to any successes generated by the player's dice roll and counts toward the total number of successes rolled to perform the action. Further, the dice roll cannot result in a botch. The player must declare that she is spending a Willpower point for an automatic success before making her roll.

Activate a Virtue: When appropriate, the player may spend a temporary Willpower point to gain a number of bonus dice for her action equal to the Virtue's rating. See the "Virtues" section later in this chapter for more details.

Act in opposition to a Virtue: The player may spend a temporary Willpower point in order for her character to take an action that violates one of her four Virtues without requiring a Virtue roll.

Resist mind-influencing powers: The player of a sentient supernatural character may spend a temporary Willpower point in order for her character to automatically resist the effects of supernatural or divine powers that attempt to influence her mind or emotions.

COMPULSION

A character with no temporary Willpower remaining is mentally and emotionally exhausted. His reserves of spirit have been spent, and he succumbs to listlessness and depression until those reserves replenish themselves. Further, he is subject to a compulsion: In his vulnerable state, his Virtues become the bedrock he clings to for stability. Until a character regains at least one point of temporary Willpower, he may not act in a way that runs counter to any Virtue rated 3 or higher, or fail to act when his Virtue demands it.

REGAINING WILLPOWER

Characters regain their Willpower when they act in a way that restores their self-confidence and determination. The following are suggested ways in which a character may recover spent Willpower points, but the Storyteller is the final arbiter on when and how many points a character can regain.

Acting according to one's Nature: When a character makes a decision or performs an action in accordance with her Nature that has a significant effect on the story, the character receives a Willpower point. (See the following "Nature" section for more details.)

Spectacular deeds: When a character performs an exceptional action or behaves in a heroic manner that befits her role as a Scion, she receives a Willpower point.

Phenomenal stunts: Rather than receiving Legend points for performing a two-die or three-die stunt, the player can choose for the character to receive a Willpower point instead. (See Chapter Six, pp. 174-176 for more details on stunts.)

End of story: At the end of every story (not chapter), each character's temporary Willpower is completely restored.

NATURE

Nature is a trait that describes, in a very general sense, a character's core personality and outlook on the World. It acts as a touchstone for players to use when creating their characters and informing their actions and goals during play.

During character creation, each player chooses his character's Nature and notes it on his character sheet. During play, if the character performs an important action or makes an important decision that validates his Nature, he regains a temporary Willpower point as his sense of self and his worldview is affirmed. Note that this action or decision must be significant and must apply directly to the story. A Judge can't regain a Willpower point by exacting justice on the guy who cuts in front of him in the grocery line, for example. Deciding to go after the mayor, who is a Titan cultist, is another matter entirely. The Storyteller is the final arbiter of what actions or decisions warrant regaining Willpower points.

Generally a character's Nature doesn't change over the course of a cycle, but it's not impossible. If a character's actions over the course of a story (or several stories) justify a change in a character's outlook or personality, the Storyteller may grant such a change at the player's request.

The following are a list of suggested Natures from which players may choose or use as inspiration in designing their own.

ARCHITECT

An Architect has a plan for everything, whether it's her academic career, her weekend trip to the mountains or her campaign against the titanspawn threatening her city. She is methodical, systematic and organized, and once she sets out her plans, she acts on them. The Architect lives to see her plans come to fruition, for good or ill.

Architects are careful and thoughtful. They don't do anything spontaneously, and that means they're rarely caught unprepared when things go wrong. By the same token, they are sometimes accused of overanalyzing

people and situations and being unwilling to take gambles that a more spontaneous person might.

Trait Effects: Architects recover one point of temporary Willpower when they successfully execute a major plan of action, whether it's a raid on a cultist hideout or organizing a social event for several hundred guests.

AUTOCRAT

An Autocrat believes in order, stability and control. She manages every aspect of her life, from her career to her relationships, and is often the person other people turn to when they need help in a difficult situation. Autocrats are assertive, take-charge personalities. The way they see it, if they want something done right, it's better that they do the job themselves.

Autocrats are natural leaders and are stalwart souls in a crisis. They don't fold under pressure, and they don't hesitate to step in to help those in need. By the same token, they have a hard time dealing with authority themselves, and their stubborn insistence on pushing their opinions on others makes them seem domineering at times.

Trait Effects: Autocrats recover one point of temporary Willpower when they resolve a crisis or face a difficult challenge by taking charge and implementing their own solution to the problem.

BRAVO

Bravos are thrill-seekers and risk-takers. They live life as fast and as close to the edge as possible. Whether it's leaping from rooftop to rooftop 100 feet off the ground or facing down a raging monster with nothing but a small knife and a Devil-may-care smile, the Bravo dances with death every chance he gets. Sometimes, the gamble doesn't pay off, but the Bravo has no regrets. Any landing he can walk away from is a good one, and if he can't walk away, he's likely beyond caring.

Bravos are born heroes. They always rush in where angels fear to tread and come out of the fire smiling like fiends. They are impetuous and fearless and don't pay

much attention to the consequences of their actions, which means that those around them sometimes pay the price for their recklessness.

Trait Effects: Bravos recover one point of temporary Willpower when they take extreme physical risks and survive the experience. The Storyteller is the final arbiter of what constitutes an extreme risk, but it should be an action that has a better than even chance of resulting in death or serious injury.

CAREGIVER

Caregivers nurture and protect those in need. They are healers or patrons or providers who share of themselves for the benefit of others. Sometimes, they work in soup kitchens or do volunteer work in their spare time, or they have careers as emergency responders or social workers. Others simply do what they can for friends and family, often putting the needs of others before their own.

Caregivers bring hope and relief to others. They change lives with a single act of generosity or compassion and don't expect anything in return. This generosity doesn't come without risk, however, as they are often taken advantage of by selfish or unscrupulous individuals. Additionally, not everyone wants to be saved. Sometimes, a Caregiver's concern can be overbearing or suffocating, causing more harm than good.

Trait Effects: Caregivers recover one point of temporary Willpower when they help another person overcome a major crisis or challenge. This can be recovery from a serious injury, providing food and shelter for someone without a home, teaching someone a new Ability, et cetera.

COMPETITOR

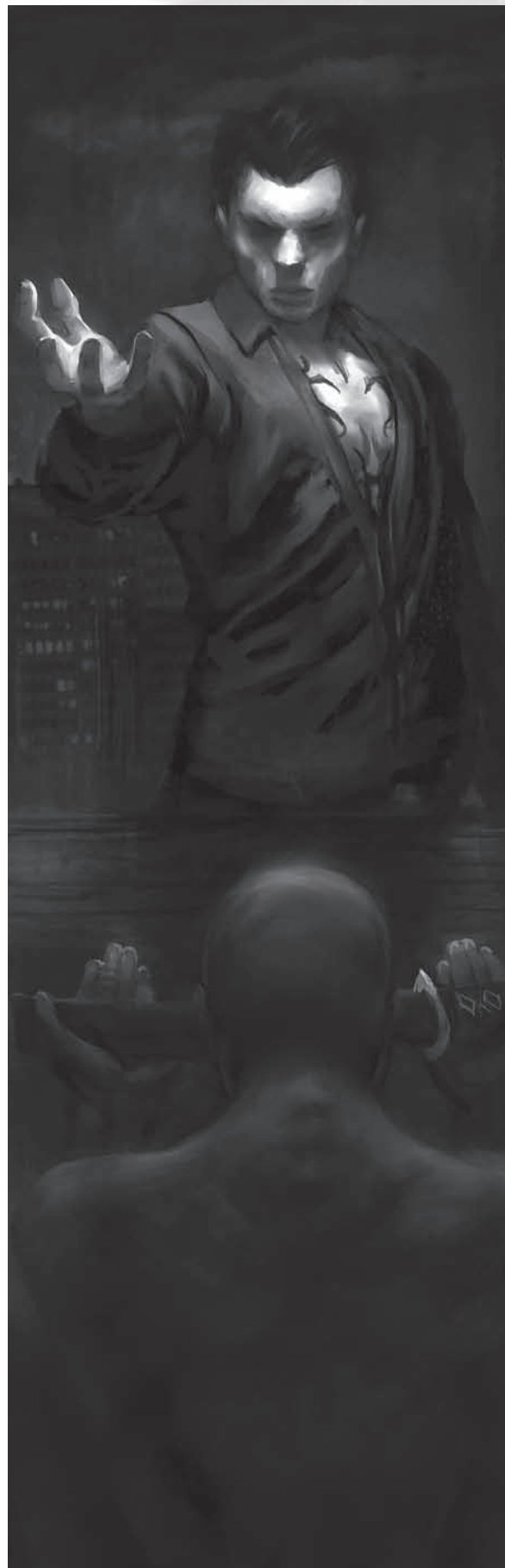
Competitors are constantly driven to be the best at everything they do. It's not so much about proving their superiority to others—though the worst Competitors do just that—but about validating their own self-worth by constantly testing their abilities. Some Competitors are small-scale. There are only a few areas in which they feel they must excel in order to be happy. Others strive for excellence in everything they do. It's a degree of self-discipline and determination that often leads to personal success, but it can alienate the Competitor from her friends and family if she isn't careful.

Competitors are driven, goal-oriented individuals who attack difficult challenges enthusiastically and refuse to give up. They can be inspiring, but at times, their ruthless drive to excel taints their relationships with others.

Trait Effects: Competitors recover one point of temporary Willpower when they decisively win a difficult contest of skill against one or more opponents.

CYNIC

Cynics have seen it all. They consider themselves brutal realists, possessing no illusions about justice, fairness, love or human decency. Maybe they've suffered



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many setbacks over the years or have been in a position to experience the worst excesses of humanity for a long period of time—whatever the reason, they typically expect the worst out of people and life in general.

Cynics are rarely disappointed or discouraged by the failures of others. They knew things were going to go wrong at some point, so they're prepared with a backup plan for just such an emergency. Unfortunately, this bleak and unforgiving worldview makes it difficult for them to put their trust in others or to place themselves at risk unless something is in it for them.

Trait Effects: Cynics recover one point of temporary Willpower when their pessimistic expectations are proven correct by the actions (or inaction) of others.

FANATIC

Fanatics are driven by an unshakable faith in their beliefs, whether it's a social ideal, a political creed or a religious doctrine. The actual belief is less important than the total dedication that the Fanatic gives it. Fanatics aren't born. They are trained and indoctrinated in the selfless devotion to their cause, or they dedicate themselves after a traumatic episode that opens their eyes to their new belief.

A Fanatic holds nothing back in the pursuit of his cause. He is willing to sacrifice anything and everything for the sake of a higher purpose. Such absolute devotion and selfless courage breeds legendary heroes and unspeakable villains in equal measure, however. Other people can be sacrificed just as easily if the Fanatic deems it to be in the best interests of his faith.

Trait Effects: Fanatics recover one point of temporary Willpower when they further their cause in a significant way.

GALLANT

A Gallant places others before herself at all times. She defends those who can't protect themselves and crusades on behalf of those who are less fortunate. She might be a social activist, a rape counselor or a firefighter—the Gallant is drawn to causes and occupations that let her help those in need. She might do so as a result of her upbringing, or to gain redemption for past evils, or because, at one time, she was a victim herself.

The Gallant is the romantic hero of Western legend: the dashing knight in shining armor who rescues those in distress, often at great cost. For all its heroism, however, it can be a lonely and self-destructive pursuit at times, as the would-be savior loses herself in her crusade and winds up begging herself and hurting those she cares about.

Trait Effects: The Gallant recovers one point of temporary Willpower when she successfully protects or aids someone in need at significant cost to herself.

GAMBLER

Gamblers always believe luck is on their side. They take risks few others would contemplate because they would rather take a chance on failure in hopes of

reaping a staggering reward instead. And many times, these Gamblers fail, but it doesn't stop them from trying again. All they need is for the dice to break their way just once, and sooner or later, they know their number will come up. You can't win if you don't play the game.

Gamblers are daring souls who live life right out on the ragged edge. They aren't as reckless as most people think, however. Most times, they carefully and shrewdly weigh the odds against them before committing to a course of action, and they are philosophical when things don't break their way. The problem is that most Gamblers don't know when to quit. All too often, they push their luck until they—or those close to them—pay the price.

Trait Effects: Gamblers recover one point of temporary Willpower when they take a significant risk or gamble that pays off for themselves or their allies.

JUDGE

Judges believe in rules and the power of law, so much so that they can't stand idly by and do nothing when someone crosses the line. Whether it's something as serious as theft or as minor as vandalism or acting out in public, the Judge won't hesitate to call people on their behavior and take steps to mete out justice. A Judge's response is always proportional to the crime—rules are rules, after all—and she works within the bounds of the law whenever possible. When calling the cops isn't possible, however, she isn't afraid to take matters into her own hands.

Judges are the bonds that hold society together. They protect the weak and the innocent and say the things that many people are afraid to say. Yet a danger lies in the Judge's letting her authority go to her head. A very fine line separates protectors from tyrants.

Trait Effects: Judges recover one point of temporary Willpower when they confront a serious injustice and make sure the perpetrator is punished for his crimes.

LIBERTINE

Libertines enjoy life to the fullest, indulging their ravenous appetites for pleasure in every conceivable form. Some Libertines have specific tastes, from wine to food to romance, while others simply give themselves wholeheartedly to every temptation that presents itself. Most Libertines don't consider themselves gluttons despite their appetites, though some admit that there are aspects of life of which they just can't ever get enough. Others believe that the World should be taken in big bites. Anything less would be a tragic waste.

A Libertine is more than just the life of the party—his verve and enthusiasm for life is potent and irresistible. Libertines can find a way to wring joy from the darkest of situations. At the same time, such a long pursuit of pleasure takes its toll. Many Libertines flirt with deadly addictions that eventually grow to consume them.

Trait Effects: The Libertine recovers a point of temporary Willpower when she finds a way to indulge her appetites (whatever they may be) under difficult or challenging circumstances.

LONER

Loners occupy the fringes of society, keeping to themselves by choice or necessity. Even within a tight circle of friends, there are often those who are moody or introspective and prefer to trail along in their comrades' shadows and observe rather than participate. From their vantage, they often have a clear perspective on situations that their compatriots lack. They prefer their own company much of the time, but they value the few friends they have and won't hesitate to act on their behalf.

Loners are typically quiet and thoughtful. They can sometimes be antisocial, even moody, but when push comes to shove, they stand up for the things that are important to them.

Trait Effects: Loners recover one point of temporary Willpower when they resolve a major challenge or crisis on their own.

PACIFIST

Pacifists deplore the use of violence. Perhaps as a result of a religious or philosophical upbringing, or because of a lifetime of conflict and suffering, Pacifists believe that violence begets nothing but pain and destruction, no matter how noble the intentions of the warriors involved. Combat is something to be avoided at all costs, and the Pacifist is willing to take any steps and make any sacrifice to find a constructive solution to a conflict. This is not to say they aren't capable of fighting. Violence is a tragic, evil thing, but if forced into a corner, they will shed bitter tears and do what they must.

Pacifists are voices of reason and diplomacy who hope to build a better World by example. Like any ideology, however, pacifism followed blindly can lead to even greater tragedy, as innocent lives are lost to the bestial hunger of titanspawn and monsters.

Trait Effects: Pacifists recover one point of temporary Willpower when they succeed in defusing a major conflict through negotiation or sacrifice rather than combat.

PEDAGOGUE

Pedagogues live to acquire and share knowledge. They are always curious, perceptive and studious, eager to try new things or to give the benefit of their experience to others. They might be scholars or teachers, researchers or librarians, or they might simply be people with sharp, inquisitive minds and a great deal of time on their hands. To the Pedagogue, a thing worth knowing is a thing worth learning, and a thing worth learning is a thing to be shared with others.

Pedagogues are educators and instructors who enrich those around them—and often know just the right thing to do when faced with a crisis. By the same token, possessing so much knowledge sometimes makes Pedagogues pompous and pedantic. If they aren't careful, they turn casual answers into long, dry lectures

or hold their education over others' heads as a means of showing their superiority.

Trait Effects: The Pedagogue recovers one point of temporary Willpower when her store of knowledge is instrumental in solving a major challenge or defeating a difficult opponent.

PENITENT

A Penitent lives to expiate his sins. Perhaps he committed a terrible crime—or crimes—in the past, or he lived a violent life that now haunts his every waking moment. Whatever the cause of their guilt, Penitents now try to live their lives in such a way that they can one day atone for the terrible things they've done. Such redemption might eventually come at the cost of the Penitent's life, but what is the loss of one unworthy life compared to the purity of a single, selfless act of heroism?

Penitents are living proof that evil is not absolute. Their efforts to redeem themselves not only offer hope for their own future, but inspire others as well. The danger many Penitents face is the temptation for self-flagellation. By continually punishing themselves for their sins, they only succeed in hurting themselves—and possibly those around them.

Trait Effects: Penitents recover a point of temporary Willpower when they suffer a great loss or commit a dramatic, selfless act on behalf of another.

PERFECTIONIST

Perfectionists are devoted to excellence in everything they do. If it's not done perfectly, it's simply not worth doing at all, and to that end, they are constantly exercising their capabilities to become the absolute best at what they do. They might take longer to get things done than others or go to far more effort on seemingly insignificant tasks, but such is the cost of perfection.

Perfectionists are paragons of hard, conscientious work. Their dedication and skill can be an inspiration to those around them, encouraging friends and acquaintances to redouble their own efforts. Conversely, many Perfectionists maintain an unhealthy disdain for those whose standards fall short of their own, which can alienate them from others.

Trait Effects: Perfectionists recover a point of temporary Willpower when they perform a task flawlessly under difficult conditions. The Storyteller is the ultimate arbiter of the quality of the task performed.

REBEL

Rebels have an innate animosity and distrust of authority, preferring to trust their own moral and ethical compass over rules imposed on them from above. The harder they are pushed by the powers that be, the harder they push back, breaking laws and flaunting their independence out of sheer spite as much as anything else. Some people become Rebels after spending years under the thumb of a tyrant, be it a domineering parent,



superior officer or boss. Others simply crave the freedom of living by their own rules, regardless of the cost.

Rebels are the agitators that sweep away old, ossified ways of thinking. They can be harbingers of the future, lighting a fire of change whether the rest of the World wants it or not. That being said, a Rebel without a purpose to her actions is little different from an outlaw, inflicting suffering for no good reason other than to feed her sense of outrage.

Trait Effects: Rebels recover a point of temporary Willpower when they take a major risk to subvert or combat a law or authority figure.

ROGUE

Rogues are a law unto themselves, existing by their own rules and taking what they need to survive. Some are con men, lotharios or simple, petty thieves, or they may be as murderous and cold-blooded as gangsters. Others are simply ordinary people who aren't afraid to bend or break a rule in order to enjoy life a bit more. Some people are born Rogues, raised with an appreciation for the finer things in life and few scruples to hinder them. Others become Rogues just trying to stay alive. Laws are well and good, but when you're out of money and there's nothing to eat, what else can you do?

Rogues at their best are hero-thieves, such as Robin Hood or Ali Baba. They steal or commit crimes to counter even greater injustices, sharing their bounty with those less fortunate. At their worst, Rogues are rapacious predators who believe that if something can't be properly protected, their victim deserves to have it stolen.

Trait Effects: Rogues recover a point of temporary Willpower when they get what they need without paying for it, at significant risk to themselves.

SURVIVOR

Survivors look out for themselves, first, last and always. Perhaps they grew up in a harsh, unforgiving home where only the strong survived, or perhaps they're simply driven by such single-minded ambition that nothing else matters to them. They're typically very cold and cunning individuals, always with a plan for when things go sour, and they're ruthless enough to abandon anyone they perceive as dead weight. Others might be driven by fear or trauma and be perfectly compassionate and rational—until they are threatened. Then, it's every man for himself.

Survivors can take the worst that life throws at them and come through alive. Their endurance and fortitude in the face of adversity sometimes rises to the level of heroics. Sadly, it is often a very self-serving brand of heroism, as Survivors will sometimes climb over the bodies of their friends in order to escape their fate.

Trait Effects: Survivors recover a point of temporary Willpower when their actions allow them to escape a deadly threat or crisis.

TRADITIONALIST

Traditionalists believe the old ways are the best. They resist change, preferring the certainty of precedent and custom over the risk of progressive ideas. Perhaps they grew up in a strict, hidebound family or culture, where the lessons of the past were handed down from mother

to daughter, or perhaps they've come to embrace the traditions of their forebears after a lifetime of rebellious liberalism. Regardless, the Traditionalist draws strength and wisdom from unchanging, immutable custom.

Traditionalists are wise and methodical. They have decades, even centuries of accumulated custom to draw upon when faced with life's challenges. By the same token, they are slow to adapt to new and changing situations and tend to stifle creative thinking rather than accept it unless they feel they have no other alternative.

Trait Effects: Traditionalists recover one point of temporary Willpower when they use the lessons of the past to solve a current crisis or challenge.

TRICKSTER

Tricksters are mutable. They are ever changing, reinventing themselves with every new person or situation they encounter. For them, strength and survival lie in deception. They win the game by changing the rules, pitting their nimble minds against the credulous wits of friend and foe alike. Nothing is sacred; nothing is off-limits. To the Trickster, anything is fair game, and the only truth she knows is what she believes at the moment.

A Trickster is a mercurial creature. One minute, he's your best friend, and the World is your plaything. The next moment, he's gone, leaving you holding the bar tab and wondering where your car keys went.

Trait Effects: Tricksters recover one point of temporary Willpower when they successfully deceive another person or group of people at great risk to themselves. Walking into a police station and convincing them you're the assistant commissioner would be one example; conning the local crime boss into believing you're a lieutenant from an out-of-town outfit is another.

VISIONARY

Visionaries live for their dreams. They see the World in new and exciting ways and are driven to make those dreams a reality. Visionaries can be teachers, scientists, businesspeople, sales clerks... anyone can have a spark of inspiration that changes his life forever. Sometimes, this dream is so great that it becomes the work of a lifetime. In other cases, the Visionary is a font of new ideas, creating and discarding radical plans almost as fast as he conceives them.

Visionaries are creative and intuitive; they are always open to trying new ways to tackle old challenges. At the same time, their vision can make them seem flighty and impractical, unable to relate to the mundane lives of those around them.

Trait Effects: Visionaries recover one point of temporary Willpower when they find a way to tackle a major challenge or crisis in a new and inventive way.

VIRTUES

The children of the Gods do not feel as mortals do. With the ichor of their divine parent burning in their veins, Scions are driven by passions both heroic and terrible. These passions, or Virtues, are what drive Scions to perform their epic deeds. Sometimes, when their passions run away with them, it can lead to terrible tragedy as well, as many heroes of legend learned to their regret.

A character in Scion begins the game with four Virtues, determined by the pantheon from which she descends. Like Attributes, each character automatically has one dot in each of her Virtues and can increase them further during the course of character creation. Virtues are rated from one to five dots, and a character can have high or low ratings in all of her Virtues.

THE BENEFITS OF VIRTUES

Virtues represent the core values of a Scion, those deep-seated beliefs that propel her to perform deeds worthy of legend. It is the strength of a Scion's Virtues that drive her to take action, and when she channels her Willpower in service of her beliefs, she gains an increase in power and effectiveness.

Once per story per dot her character possesses in a particular Virtue, a player may spend a Willpower point to add a number of bonus dice equal to the Virtue rating to the character's dice pool for actions that relate to that specific Virtue. For example, a Norse Scion with a rating of 3 in her Courage Virtue would gain three bonus dice for a combat-related dice roll by spending a Willpower point. She could gain these bonus dice up to three separate times during the same story. Performing a stunt that strongly reflects the values of a given Virtue can restore one use of this benefit. (See pp. 174-176 in Chapter Six for more information on stunts.)

Naturally, these benefits become more cost-effective as the Scion's Virtue ratings increase, but there are disadvantages to high Virtue ratings as well.

THE DISADVANTAGES OF VIRTUES

A high Virtue rating represents a Scion's deep commitment to the ideals of her divine parent. The deeper the commitment is, however, the harder it becomes for a Scion to resist acting according to her beliefs, even when such action might be dangerous or unwise.

ALTERNATE VIRTUES

Although each of the six pantheons detailed in **Scion** has a specific set of Virtues that best embodies its version of the heroic ideal, some degree of overlap exists. The Gods and Goddesses of Japan, for example, hold the Virtues of Intellect and Valor in high esteem, just as the Greek pantheon does. As a result, it is more likely that the deities of both pantheons might look more favorably on Scions who share the same values.

If a Scion has the opportunity to gain a Boon from a pantheon other than her own, and she possesses a Virtue common to that pantheon, the cost to purchase and increase it is one point less.

Characters are not required to possess the default Virtue set of their pantheon. You can choose other Virtues listed in this section (or create your own) that better represent the kind of character you'd like to play, as long as at least one of her Virtues is drawn from her pantheon's Virtue set. Scions that break from the heroic ideal fostered by their divine parents run the risk of alienating themselves, however. What use does Odin have for the Virtues of Expression or Harmony, for example? As a result, characters who possess one or more Virtues that are not part of their pantheon's Virtue set pay one additional point when gaining or increasing Boons granted by their parent God or pantheon.

When a Scion wishes to act in a way that runs counter to the tenets of one of her Virtues (or wishes to refrain from acting in line with one of her Virtues), the player may spend a point of Willpower to allow the character to do so. If he has no Willpower points to spend (or simply doesn't want to spend Willpower), he must roll a number of dice equal to the character's Virtue rating instead. If the Virtue roll generates even one success, the Scion cannot resist behaving as her Virtue demands.

For example: Kachiko, a Scion of Amaterasu, has a Valor rating of 5. She is badly wounded after a fight with a titanspawn, but now the monster's minions have taken hostages from a nearby home and are attempting to escape. Kachiko is in no shape to fight, but her Valor demands that she act to protect the helpless. Kachiko's player makes a Virtue roll to try to stay out of the fight. She rolls five dice and gets two successes. Despite her grievous injuries, she finds that she cannot live with the knowledge that she failed to do everything in her power to save the hostages from the cultists, so she prepares herself for what might be her last battle.

When a Scion struggles against her Virtues, she is not only betraying herself but the expectations of her divine parent. Her ichor seethes in her veins as she tries to act in a way that she knows is wrong. The stronger her beliefs are, the greater the pressure brought to bear against her becomes. If her resolve fails, she risks losing control of her actions, as she's carried away in a storm of grief and remorse.

When a Scion attempts to suppress one of her Virtues with a die roll and the resulting Virtue roll generates more successes than the character has points of *temporary Willpower*, the Scion suffers a Virtue Extremity. Under the effects of a Virtue Extremity, the character takes the demands of her Virtue to potentially tragic lengths. See the individual Virtue descriptions for information on the duration and effects of each Virtue Extremity.

VIRTUES AND NATURE

When choosing your character's Nature, think carefully on how it will interact with the Virtues of the character's pantheon. A Nature that is in opposition to the character's Virtues can make for some interesting roleplaying opportunities, but it can also be frustrating. A Survivor with the Virtue of Duty, however, has the potential for being an interesting character—a sort of reluctant hero who is driven to serve others even though he just wants to be left alone—but the dictates of the Nature and the Virtue are at cross-purposes. Either the character is going to require a lot of Virtue rolls as her rating increases, or she won't get much Willpower back because she's constantly acting against her Nature. If that kind of internal conflict appeals to you, go for it. Otherwise, you might want to choose a Nature that complements your character's Virtues.

VIRTUE DESCRIPTIONS

This section describes each of the Virtues found in **Scion**, as well as their trait effects and Virtue Extremities. Storytellers and players are encouraged to use these Virtues as inspiration when creating their own custom Virtues and pantheons.

CONVICTION

Conviction represents a person's selfless devotion to a cause, as well as her willingness to take any measures necessary to further her cause or to take action against those who oppose her beliefs. The exact nature of the cause varies from Scion to Scion. It could be a passionate belief in environmental issues or social justice, or a belief in the supremacy of one's pantheon above all others, for example. Whatever the cause, it must be something that will have a major impact on the lives of mortals or other Scions. Players are encouraged to work closely with their Storyteller to determine the exact nature of the character's Conviction.

Characters use Conviction to: win converts to their cause, resist acts of persuasion or compulsion that go

against their beliefs, determine the best course of action in support of their cause, commit heinous acts in support of their beliefs

A failed Conviction roll allows a character to: not respond to attacks on their beliefs, act in a way that violates the tenets of their cause, refuse to take an action that would clearly benefit their cause (even if it results in the suffering of others)

Virtue Extremity: *Fanatic Zeal.* When overcome by the strength of her Conviction, the Scion goes to extreme lengths in defense or support of her cause, regardless of the danger to herself or the suffering she inflicts on other people. No one—friend or foe—will stand in her way. Fanatic Zeal lasts for a number of hours equal to the Scion's Virtue rating.

COURAGE

A hero's worth is measured by the foes he defeats in battle, and Courage measures a Scion's drive to test his mettle against the deadliest opponents he can find. Further, the Scion holds other warriors to his own high standards. Heroes must fight their battles alone and live or die by the skill of their sword-arm. Death is something to be faced stoically, even embraced, for it is better to die in an epic struggle with a worthy foe than to live a callow life without struggle.

Characters use Courage to: fight powerful foes, resist the effects of supernatural fear or compulsion, take death-defying risks

A failed Courage roll allows a character to: avoid the prospect of battle, resist a physical challenge, surrender to an opponent, give aid to another warrior in battle, accept such aid when offered

Virtue Extremity: *Berserker Fury.* The Scion is so overcome with shame at his perceived weakness that he flies into a murderous rage, hurling himself at his foes without regard to his own safety. If there are no foes left to fight, the Scion will attack any other living thing he can reach, seeking to expiate his cowardice in violence and bloodshed. Berserker Fury lasts for the duration of the scene.

DUTY

Duty is the Virtue of service to one's community, respecting authority and upholding the laws that govern a decent society. Civilization is part of a divine order that flows from the Gods themselves, so it is a Scion's duty to put aside personal ambition and devote herself to maintaining and contributing to a healthy society. Personal sacrifice for the greater good is to be expected and celebrated, for a prosperous and safe society reflects its glory on each one of its citizens.

Characters use Duty to: help those in need, build or repair objects vital to a community, uphold the laws of a community, serve an authority figure in a time of crisis

A failed Duty roll allows a character to: steal from a community, break a community's laws, defy legal

authority, place personal ambitions above the greater good of the whole

Virtue Extremity: *Morbid Self-Sacrifice.* The Scion is so mortified at having contemplated violating the divine order that she goes to extreme lengths of personal self-sacrifice to atone for her selfishness. She might donate personal possessions or wealth to the community, break ties with her family, seclude herself from the community she "failed," turn herself over to the authorities to confess any crimes she's committed, et cetera. Morbid Self-Sacrifice lasts for one full day.

ENDURANCE

Endurance is one of the hallmarks of the epic hero. She endures hardship beyond mortal limits in order to overcome the challenges arrayed against her. Scions who espouse this Virtue embrace this stoic ideal, taking strength from the suffering they must endure. Instead of wasting time and energy trying to avoid any form of hardship, they grit their teeth and accept what comes. The blows of Fate and foe harden them like hammered iron.

Characters use Endurance to: resist fear, survive extended bouts of hard physical labor, function for days without rest, endure pain, hunger, thirst and fatigue

A failed Endurance roll allows a character to: fail to act because of risk to life or limb, attempt to rest or relax during a time of crisis, avoid a course of action due to injuries, fatigue or lack of resources

Virtue Extremity: *Self-Destruction.* The Scion is so horrified at her own weakness that she attempts to purge it through acts of extreme self-punishment, pursuing her goals without regard to personal health, safety or survival. Self-Destruction lasts for one full day.

VIRTUES ACCORDING TO PANTHEON

The following list details the four Virtues that exemplify each of the six pantheons in **Scion**.

Pantheon	Virtues
Aesir	Courage, Endurance, Expression, Loyalty
Amatsukami	Duty, Endurance, Intellect, Valor
Atzlánti	Conviction, Courage, Duty, Loyalty
Dodekatheon	Expression, Intellect, Valor, Vengeance
Loa	Harmony, Order, Piety, Vengeance
Pesedjet	Conviction, Harmony, Order, Piety

EXPRESSION

Great things are expected of those gifted with great power, and Scions have many gifts that can enrich mortal civilization. Expression is the Virtue of artistic excellence, which venerates the musician, the painter, the skald and the storyteller. It is the belief that the creation of art in all its forms is a way of sharing the gifts of the Gods with the mortal World. Many Scions who espouse this Virtue believe that their creations act as a vehicle by which the Gods continue to interact with mankind and continue to nurture their faith in the divine.

Characters use Expression to: create works of art, repair or restore damaged works of art, assist in musical, theatrical or oratorical performances

A failed Expression roll allows a character to: deface or destroy a work of art, refuse to create or perform a work of art, repress or discourage works of art or communication presented by others

Virtue Extremity: *Visceral Shock.* The Scion's extreme reaction to stifling her art (or another's) pushes her to the opposite extreme. She pours her guilt and self-recrimination into her efforts, pushing the performance into the realm of the vulgar and grotesque. She bends her energies to creating art that scars and horrifies her audience. Visceral Shock lasts for a number of days equal to the Scion's Virtue rating.

HARMONY

The essence of Harmony is the belief in a cosmic design, engineered by the Gods, that governs the forces of creation. Even the Gods themselves form but a part of a grander design, fulfilling their roles just as mortals do as part of the cycle of existence. Yet, despite its complex intricacies, the cosmic order is not infallible. The actions of Gods, Titans or even mortals can disturb its movement, creating rippling imbalances that spread conflict and suffering. Scions who espouse this Virtue see it as a sacred trust to keep the divine order in balance. For them, good and evil are arbitrary terms that can cause more harm than good in the long run. What matters is keeping the scales even, answering order with chaos, violence with peace, death with new life.

Characters use Harmony to: determine a balanced solution to problems, act in ways that maintain or restore balance in a situation, convince others to alter their actions in the interests of maintaining a balance of forces

A failed Harmony roll allows a character to: knowingly act in a way that creates an imbalance of forces, counsel action that creates an imbalance

Virtue Extremity: *Tyranny of Balance.* The Scion goes to extreme measures to restore the balance of outcomes in a given situation, even going so far as to inflict harm or suffering on herself or her compatriots if necessary. Tyranny of Balance lasts for the duration of the scene.

INTELLECT

Intellect is the Virtue of the mind. It exalts the power of reason as the link that joins the mortal to the divine. Scions who espouse this Virtue believe that raw power must be harnessed to the engines of logic and imagination in order to truly master the secrets of the cosmos. They hone their minds through diligent study, relentless inquiry and vigorous debate, constantly grappling with the myriad riddles of creation and the complexities of everyday life.

Characters use Intellect to: find new solutions to persistent problems, investigate mysterious phenomena, acquire knowledge, persuade others to accept their ideas or theories

A failed Intellect roll allows a character to: destroy or delete sources of information or knowledge, suppress or censor knowledge, silence debate, promote ignorance in any form

Virtue Extremity: *Obsessive Analysis.* The Scion's attempt to blind herself to reason forces her to atone by overanalyzing everything. She becomes powerless to make important decisions as she wracks her brain trying to imagine every contingency and every conceivable outcome from every given course of action. Obsessive Analysis lasts for one full day.

LOYALTY

The abstract ties of citizenship, culture or even religion are nothing compared to the bonds of love, family and friendship. Scions who espouse this Virtue reserve their trust, support and devotion for those who share their blood or have shared in their suffering, from parents to kinsmen to tried-and-true friends. Loyalty is a bond stronger than iron; even the Gods themselves test it at their peril.

Characters use Loyalty to: fight on behalf of a friend, defend a friend who has been unjustly accused, aid a friend in need

A failed Loyalty roll allows a character to: betray a friend's trust, refuse to answer the call of a friend in need, desert a friend who has been accused of a crime

Virtue Extremity: *Blind Devotion.* The Scion is so horrified by her attempted betrayal that she will go to extreme lengths to support her friend or kinsman, suffering alongside that person even if said person is proven to be in the wrong. Blind Devotion lasts for a number of days equal to the Scion's Virtue rating.

ORDER

Scions who espouse the Virtue of Order believe that the rule of law is a gift from the Gods that forms the foundation of mortal civilization. As the bulwark against the threat of anarchy and chaos, laws must be upheld and enforced, even when their applications seem harsh or unjust. For society to function, it must trust in the impartiality of its laws, which demands courage and steadfastness on the part of the lawgivers. To those

who believe in Order, there is no relativism or moral ambiguity. There is only the law.

Characters use Order to: investigate crimes, determine wrongdoing, assess penalties, pursue fugitives, deliver lawbreakers to justice

A failed Order roll allows a character to: commit a crime, turn a blind eye to a criminal act, allow a criminal to escape, bend the rules, selectively apply the rules to herself or anyone else

Virtue Extremity: *Summary Judgment.* The Scion takes the law into her own hands, ruthlessly passing sentence—and executing judgment—on those she perceives to be criminals. Summary Judgment lasts for the duration of a single scene.

PIETY

Scions who espouse this Virtue exalt and respect their God, their ancestors and the traditions of their forebears, taking strength from the wisdom of the ancients. There is no situation that can't be addressed by heeding the commandments of the Gods and the deeds of one's ancestors. Those who break with tradition insult the hard work and sacrifice of their predecessors and show a reckless arrogance that can only lead to misfortune.

Characters use Piety to: employ well-worn ideas or tactics to solve a problem, act in accordance with the wishes of one's God or family, uphold tradition and custom over innovation, impose the dictates of tradition on another

A failed Piety roll allows a character to: defy the wishes of one's God or family, break with tradition or custom, allow others to break with tradition, advocate new ideas over tried-and-true precedent

Virtue Extremity: *Self-Righteousness.* The Scion withholds her support or aid from those she deems insufficiently pious, even going so far as allowing others to suffer or die as a result. Self-Righteousness lasts for the duration of a scene.

VALOR

Valor is the Virtue of the noble warrior. She believes in using her martial skill to defend the helpless, to fight with honor and to offer up her life if necessary in service to a worthy cause. Scions who espouse this Virtue don't believe in fighting for its own sake. Indeed, they would rather avoid battle unless absolutely necessary, for they're all too aware of its awful cost. They master the arts of battle so that warlords and tyrants cannot impose their will upon decent folk. They pay the price in blood so others don't have to. Peace and prosperity are built upon the sacrifices of the valorous.

Characters use Valor to: defend the helpless, defeat those who prey upon the innocent, fight an honorable opponent in battle, resist the effects of fear, pain or fatigue

A failed Valor roll allows a character to: strike a foe from ambush or other underhanded means, avoid battle out of fear for personal health or safety, allow



others to suffer from the depredations of monsters, criminals or tyrants

Virtue Extremity: *Valorous Sacrifice.* The Scion is so horrified by her perceived cowardice that she must atone for her sins by seeking an honorable death in battle. She attacks her foes with no regard for her personal safety or survival, and fights until she or her opponents are destroyed. Valorous Sacrifice lasts for the duration of the Scion's next battle.

VENGEANCE

This Virtue dictates that those who offend the Gods or commit crimes against mankind must be made to suffer in kind, regardless of the cost. Vengeance is not about petty revenge, but a redressing of the cosmic balance, paying back a debt incurred by violating the divine order in some fashion. Scions who espouse this

Virtue act upon their beliefs as they see fit. Some take an eye for an eye in straightforward, Biblical fashion. Others find more creative punishments for those who have committed crimes against Heaven.

Characters use Vengeance to: hunt down and punish criminals, discern wrongdoing and assess penalties, investigate crimes and defeat those who oppose her efforts

A failed Vengeance roll allows a character to: let a criminal go unpunished, forgive a crime against herself or another, show mercy or leniency to a criminal, give up the pursuit of an offender for any reason

Virtue Extremity: *Implacable Nemesis.* The Scion will go to extreme lengths to punish an offender, making any sacrifice necessary—or committing any atrocity—in order to see justice done. Implacable Nemesis lasts for a number of days equal to the Scion's Virtue rating.

LEGEND

Like the Gods who spawned them, Scions are creatures born of divine legend whose deeds shape the World around them. Their actions defy the physical laws that bind ordinary mortals, and as they grow in power, their mythic weight distorts the very fabric of reality, causing waves of improbability that spawn wonders—and freakish disasters—wherever they go. Tumult and conflict surround them as the forces of Fate act against their power, until the physical realm can no longer contain them.

The Legend trait measures a Scion's power, reflecting the favor of her divine parent and the glory of her epic deeds. As a Scion's Legend grows, she gains access to greater Epic Attributes, Knacks and Boons, as well as the ability to perform fantastic stunts worthy of her name. But a Scion's legend is a two-edged sword. As her energies increase, the forces of Fate act against her in corresponding strength, creating a vortex of conflicting influences that warp the laws of probability in increasingly fantastical ways.

Trait Effects:

•	Remarkable
••	Well-known
•••	Celebrated
••••	Famous
•••••	Renowned
••••••	Heroic
•••••••	Epic
••••••••	Legendary
•••••••••	Mythical
••••••••••	Godlike
•••••••••••	Transcendent
••••••••••••	Divine

Legend is rated from 1 to 12. Scions of Legend 1 through Legend 4 are considered heroes—an ethics-neutral term here meant to separate Scions from mere mortals. Scions of Legend 5 through Legend 8 are considered true demigods. Characters of Legend 9 through Legend 12 are themselves gods. A Scion's Legend rating generates a pool of Legend points equal to the character's Legend dots *squared*.

USING LEGEND

As well as acting as a measure of a Scion's power, Legend can be used during play in a number of different ways:

Legendary deeds: A character's Legend allows her to regularly perform amazing deeds that defy the laws of physics or probability. Once per story per dot the Scion has of Legend, the player may add a number of bonus successes equal to the character's Legend rating to any action. (A Scion with Legend 4 could add four bonus successes to any four actions during the course of a single story.) The player must spend one Legend point to access these bonus successes.

Rerolling an action: The player may spend one Legend point to reroll a failed action, even if the action resulted in a botch. This ability is most cost effective when used to reroll exceptionally difficult actions or stunts. Only one reroll may be attempted per failed action.

Defensive do-over: By spending one Legend point, the player of an attacked character may retroactively increase his character's DV against a successful attack by an amount equal to his (Athletics ÷ 2). The player can do so only after the attacker's player makes his attack roll.

Using powerful Boons: Some Boons are so potent that they must be activated by spending points from a Scion's Legend pool. See Chapter Five, pages 139-156 for more details.

Fueling magical spells: Magic, regardless of its origin, requires the expenditure of Legend points for it to take effect. See Chapter Five, pages 153-155 for more details.

REGAINING LEGEND

Characters regain spent Legend points when they perform epic deeds or act in a way that brings honor and glory to their divine parent. The following are suggested ways in which a character may recover spent Legend points, but the Storyteller is the final arbiter on when and how many points a character can regain.

Performing a Stunt: Characters recover one or more Legend points when they perform larger-than-life deeds. As a rule of thumb, if the character performs an epic deed that sounds like something out of a classical legend or heroic saga, then it's worth one or more Legend points. Typically, stunts offer Legend points equal to their dice bonuses.

Setting a virtuous example: Characters recover one Legend point when they perform a significant action in a way that is dictated by one of their Virtues. If a character possesses one or more Virtues that do not correspond to her God's pantheon, the Storyteller may declare that those Virtues do not restore the character's Legend points.

Beginning of a new story: Characters begin each new story with their full pool of Legend points.

NEGATIVE EFFECTS

As a Scion's Legend increases, her power grows to rival that of epic heroes and ultimately the Gods themselves, until the very fabric of reality is warped by her presence. The greater a Scion's Legend is, the more she is subject to the vagaries of Fate, as the cosmos

attempts to counterbalance her influence. Ultimately, the Scion's Legend will grow so potent that the cosmos can no longer bear her, and she'll be forced to depart the physical World altogether.

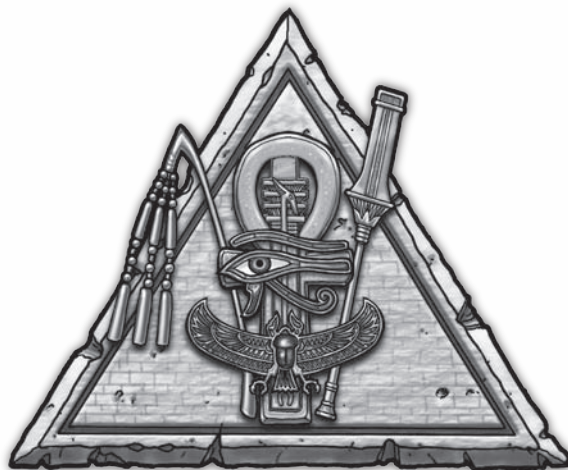
As a character's Legend increases, she becomes subject to the following effects:

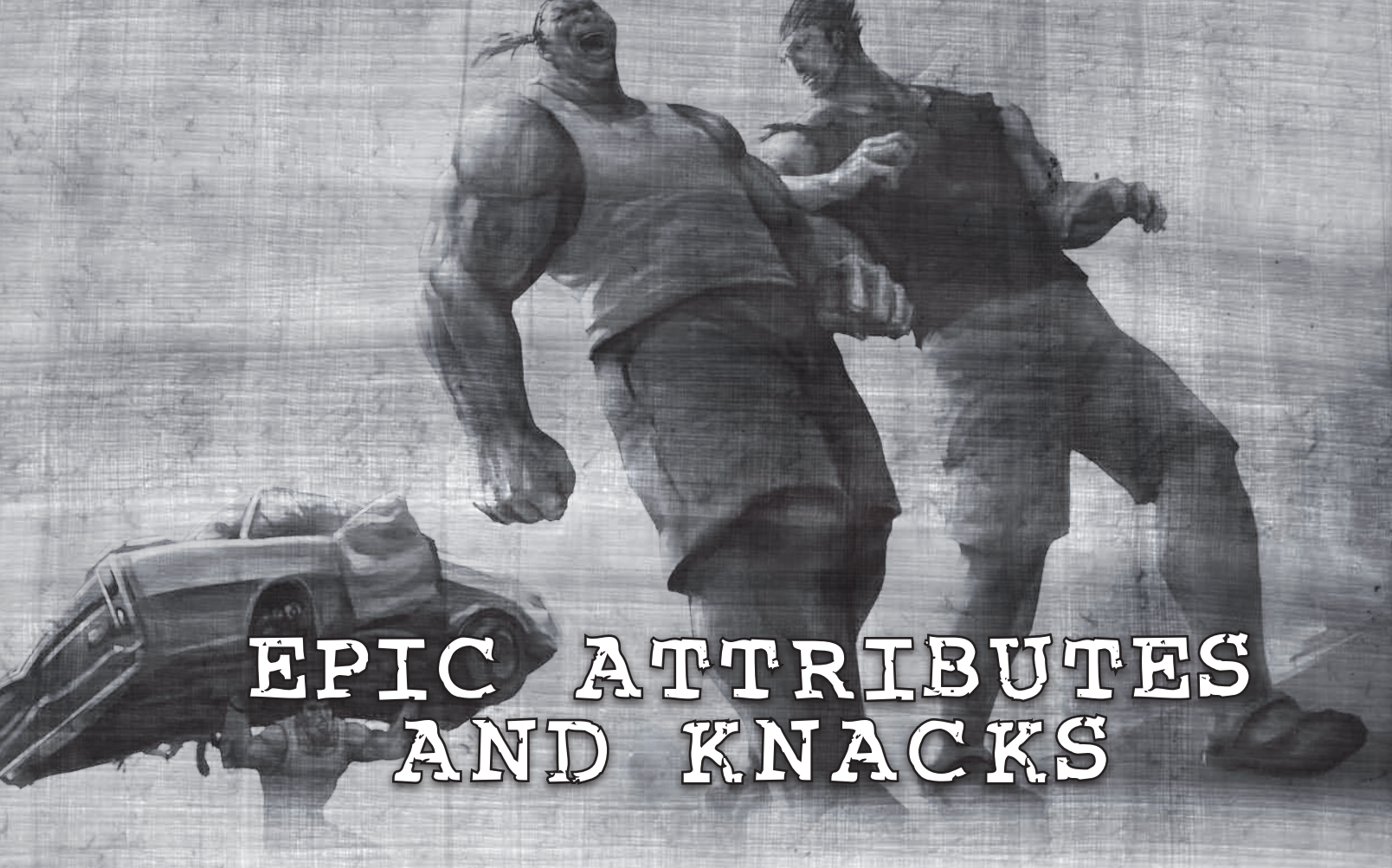
Fateful Aura: A Scion's Fateful Aura represents the vortex of probability that swirls around her, drawing conflict and calamity to her like a lightning rod. Wherever she goes, chaos and upheaval quickly follow, as her presence awakens monsters, causes natural disasters, draws enemies or rival Scions, et cetera. For more information on the effects of a Scion's Fateful Aura, see Chapter Ten, pp. 226-227.

Fatebinding: Such is the force of a Scion's Fateful Aura that sometimes it can entrap the destinies of individuals who cross the character's path, creating lifelong companions, allies or arch-foes. For more details on the effects of Fatebinding, see Chapter Ten, pages 221-226.

REDUCING THE LEGEND RATING

Because of its potentially disastrous effects at high levels, Legend is the only trait in *Scion* that can be *reduced* if the player so desires. The only way to do so is for the Scion to dissociate herself completely from her past actions—becoming the archetypal Nameless Hero or adopting a new name and identity altogether. This act effectively requires the character to turn her back on her legacy, something likely to earn the ire of her divine parent. For each month that the character goes without using any of her Boons or Knacks or drawing upon her Legend, her Legend rating decreases by one. The character may still use her base Epic Attributes without risk.





EPIC ATTRIBUTES AND KNACKS

Every God across all the pantheons has at least one Epic Attribute associated with him or her, and it is those Epic Attributes that the Gods' Scions develop most easily. Scions of Baldur or Aphrodite naturally inherit their divine parents' symmetry and clean lines, which manifests as Epic Appearance. Children of Athena, Ptah or Quetzalcoátl are all naturally inclined to mind-expanding epiphanies that blossom into Epic Intelligence. The most versatile Gods—such as Odin, Amaterasu or Atum-Re—pass on natural aptitudes for several Epic Attributes.

Epic Attributes derive from a Scion's ichor, however, rather than solely from the legacy of his divine parent. Therefore, every Scion character can develop any Epic Attribute. Those associated with the divine parent come more easily to the child, but none are denied him. It wouldn't be out of the question for Scions of Loki or Legba to turn to Epic Strength to get themselves out of trouble should their clever schemes go south on them. And woe be unto the titanspawn who doesn't account for just that possibility.

THE COSTS

Epic Attributes are cheapest at character creation. They're available from the 10-dot pool from which the player chooses his character's divine powers. (Boon dots come from this pool as well, though, so keep that in mind when choosing Epic Attributes.) The player can put dots in any Epic Attribute, with just a few simple limits.

The first limit is that no character may have more dots of an Epic Attribute than she has dots in the same mundane Attribute. Second, a character must have at least one more dot of Legend than she has in her highest-rated Epic Attribute. If she has Epic Strength 3, she must have at least four dots of Legend. If she has only Legend 3, the most dots she can have in any Epic Attribute is two. Finally, no Scion can have more than three dots in any single Epic Attribute at character creation. Scions grow into greater power—some quite quickly—but it's simply not possible for a Scion to awaken to her true heritage with more raw power than that. Whether this limitation is a physical governor imposed by human physiology or a psychological safeguard implanted by the Gods, no Scion knows.

Once the player has allocated dots among her character's Epic Attributes, she has one last chance to add a handful more by spending bonus points. Epic Attributes cost five bonus points apiece unless they are associated with the character's divine parent. Those so associated cost only four points. Once game play has begun, a character may develop any Epic Attribute she feels would help her defend the World from the titanspawn. Doing so is just a matter of hard work and faithful practice in game, as well as spending the requisite experience points out of game. Increasing an Epic Attribute a character already has costs five times the number of dots the character has in that

Epic Attribute. (The cost is only four times that number if the Epic Attribute in question is associated with the Scion's divine parent.) Buying the first dot in a new Epic Attribute costs 10 experience points (or eight for one associated with a divine parent).

THE EFFECTS

Having Epic Attributes provides automatic successes on rolls of the related mundane Attribute. The more dots of an Epic Attribute a character has, the more automatic successes the player has available. The only exception applies to rolls that call for Abilities a character does not have. In order to perform an emergency tracheotomy, for example, the roll is (Dexterity + Medicine). If the character performing the procedure has Epic Dexterity but has no dots of Medicine, he cannot apply his Epic Dexterity automatic successes to the attempt. He has to rely on his mundane Dexterity alone.

At the heroic level (i.e., the levels of Scions with four or fewer dots of Legend), the number of automatic successes per Epic Attribute dot is as follows:

Epic Attribute Dots	Automatic Successes
1	1
2	2
3	4

Beyond this basic setup, some Epic Attributes provide other benefits or have other specific effects on the game mechanics detailed in Chapters Six and Seven. Those effects are detailed in the write-ups of the Epic Attributes in question.

KNACKS

Epic Attributes are mighty enhancements, but the straight-up mechanical effects the dots provide are not their only benefits. Each Epic Attribute also grants a Scion certain exceptional feats known as Knacks. Each dot you put into an Epic Attribute entitles your character to one new free Knack of your choice. (In game, these Knacks develop naturally as the character's capabilities increase. The character himself does not choose them.) You may also purchase additional Knacks at character creation (for three bonus points per Knack) or with experience points (for five experience points per Knack). You may purchase Knacks for only those Epic Attributes that your character actually has.



EPIC STRENGTH

As the number of automatic successes available to a Scion with Epic Strength increases, so too does the distance over or across which he can jump. One dot of Epic Strength adds one to his Strength for purposes of determining jumping distance, two dots adds two, and having three dots of Epic Strength adds four to the character's mundane Strength for that calculation. (See "Movement" on p. 180.) The same goes for objects the Scion throws as a feat of strength. The distance he can throw a heavy object is affected by Epic Strength the same way the distance he can jump is. The distance a Scion can throw an object that doesn't require a feat of strength, such as a baseball or a normal-sized throwing weapon, increases dramatically. The first dot the Scion has in Epic Strength doubles the listed Range of that thrown object. The next dot doubles that value again. The third dot doubles that new value yet again. As a result, a Scion with two dots of Epic Strength can throw a normal-sized object four times as far as he could without Epic Strength; one with three dots can throw it eight times as far.

Epic Strength also adds to the amount of weight a Scion can lift. When a Scion attempts to lift something heavy as a feat of strength, first compare his mundane (Strength + Athletics) total to the number on the Feats of Strength table on page 181. The character's dots of Epic Strength then increase that limit by ever-increasing amounts as follows:

Epic Strength Dots	Additional Weight
1	+500 lbs.
2	+1,000 lbs.
3	+2,000 lbs.

Bear in mind that the additional weight listed on this table represents the total additional weight a Scion can lift, as added to the base amount he can lift without Epic Strength. For example, if a Scion has five dots of Strength and three dots of Athletics, he can lift 800 pounds. If he has one dot of Epic Strength, he adds 500 pounds to that amount. If he has two dots or three, though, he adds only 1,000 or 2,000 pounds (respectively) to the base 800 pounds. If this character has three dots of Epic Strength, the total value he can lift is 2,800 pounds.

Associated With: Amaterasu, Ares, Hephaestus, Horus, Huitzilopochtli, Izanagi, Ogoun, Set, Shango, Sobek, Susano-o, Thor, Tyr, Vidar, Zeus

Dots Effects

- Adds one automatic success to Strength rolls, as well as one extra yard to jumping or feat-of-strength throwing base distances. Doubles the Range of a normal thrown item. Adds 500 lbs. to base lifting capacity
- Adds two automatic successes to Strength rolls, as well as two extra yards

to jumping or feat-of-strength throwing base distances. Quadruples the Range of a normal thrown item. Adds 1,000 lbs. to base lifting capacity.

- Adds four automatic successes to Strength rolls, as well as four extra yards to jumping or feat-of-strength throwing base distances. Multiplies the Range of a normal thrown item by eight. Adds 2,000 lbs. to base lifting capacity.

EPIC STRENGTH KNACKS

Crushing Grip

The Scion is a fearsome wrestler and grappler not to be trifled with. When he's locked in a clinch and has taken control of it, the character can not only inflict the normal amount of damage (see p. 202), but that damage is now lethal as well. A character can still choose to hold an opponent without inflicting damage, or he can choose to break the hold. He can even soften his touch and inflict bashing damage instead. The damage the character can inflict when his temper gets riled, though, is tremendous and often quite messy.

Holy Bound

Only characters whose Boons include the Sky Purview have more freedom to flaunt the laws of physics. Simply having Epic Strength enables a Scion to perform prodigious leaps that leave mortals standing slack-jawed with wonder. For example, if a Scion has Strength 5, Athletics 3 and Epic Strength 3, she can jump 12 yards straight up or 24 yards forward. (See "Movement" on p. 180.) This Knack, however, doubles a Scion's vertical and horizontal jumping distances. With it, the aforementioned character could leap an amazing 24 yards straight up (from the ground to a seventh-story balcony, for instance) or 48 yards forward in a single bound.

Holy Rampage

The Scion is especially good at breaking inanimate objects. When he spends a point of Legend and applies his full might to breaking something—whether he's punching it, kicking it or throwing his shoulder against it—the item's Hardness is halved against the attack. This bonus applies only when the character attempts to break an inanimate object that is either freestanding or under his control. If someone else has control of the object in question, the Scion must take it from him first.

Hurl to the Horizon

Baseballs, manhole covers, beer kegs and other thrown objects become tiny specks in the distance when the Scion throws them. Having this Knack doubles the distance she can throw something as a feat of strength. It also doubles the Range of a normal thrown item after calculating the standard increase in Range granted for having Epic

EPIC LIFTING

As Scions' power grows, the sheer size of what they can lift increases rapidly. The merry laws of physics dictate that a human-sized body lacks the leverage to lift large, ungainly objects and that trying to do so would likely succeed in tearing the object apart or making it break under its own ill-supported weight. Yet, due to little-understood properties of the interactions between physical matter and the metaphysical divinity of a Scion's ichor, that doesn't happen when a Scion with Epic Strength lifts a large object. It's unknown which of the Gods wrote this signing statement onto the laws of physics, but it hasn't proven to be much of a bone of contention among Scions. Those who recognize it are thankful for what they can get away with; those who don't aren't inclined to question it in the first place.

(Besides, which would you rather do, tear the bumper off an abandoned car and wale on a gang of rogue spartoi with it, or pick up *the car* and scatter them like crows?)

Strength. This Knack doesn't make the character any better able to see or hit a target, however. Nor does it impart extra damage to an attack committed with a thrown weapon.

Uplifting Might

The Scion can lift and hold tremendous loads that would stagger even other Scions with Epic Strength.

After checking the character's lift capacity on the "Feats of Strength" table then adjusting that capacity based on the character's Epic Strength, this Knack (and the expenditure of one point of Legend) doubles that lift capacity. This Knack doesn't affect a character's ability to break or throw an object.

EPIC DEXTERITY

In addition to the automatic successes Epic Dexterity grants, it also increases the distance one can cover in a single action. The first dot adds one extra yard per Move action, the second adds two, and the third adds four. Double that is added for a Dash action. (See pp. 192 and 191 of Chapter Seven for Move and Dash actions.)

A Scion's Epic Dexterity also adds a like amount directly to his Defense Values. The first dot adds one to his DVs, the second dot adds two, and the third dot adds four. (See pp. 192-194 for an explanation of Defense Values.)

Associated With: Artemis, Bastet, Hachiman, Hermes, Raiden, Tezcatlipoca

Dots	Effects
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- Adds one automatic success to Dexterity rolls as well as one extra yard to base Move and two extra yards to base Dash distances. Increases a character's Defense Values by one.
- Adds two automatic successes to Dexterity rolls as well as two extra yards to base Move and four extra yards to base Dash distances. Increases a character's Defense Values by two.
- Adds four automatic successes to Dexterity rolls as well as four extra yards to base Move and eight extra yards to base Dash distances. Increases a character's Defense Values by four.

EPIC DEXTERITY KNACKS

Cat's Grace

This Knack imbues a Scion with the uncanny ability to remain on his feet despite treacherous terrain or an enemy's best attempts to knock him down. For instance, a character with this Knack never suffers knockdown (see p. 198) from an attack. The player need not even roll. The character still suffers the damage, but he remains on his feet. Furthermore, a character with this Knack ignores all difficulty penalties based on unstable footing and treacherous terrain. He still suffers speed penalties for moving through ankle- to knee-deep water or mud, but his dice pools for actions taken on such terrain suffer no penalties.

Lightning Sprinter

The Scion is a lightning bolt on two legs, zooming past in a blur, trailing leaves or grit or loose debris from the ground he's already covered. This Knack doubles the amount of distance he can cover in a Dash action, after calculating the new Dash distance based on his Epic Dexterity. What's more, it negates the movement penalties a character should accrue for dashing through water or mud that is from between ankle- to shoulder-height in depth as long as A.) the character began his Dash action on terrain with no such penalty, and B.) the character continues to perform consecutive Dash actions. As long as he keeps dashing, his feet skim the surface of the water or muck like a skipping stone. If he should slow down or stop, however, he sinks into the sucking terrain to suffer the normal penalties.

Activating this Knack costs one point of Legend.



Monkey Climber

As long as she has sufficient hand- and footholds, the Scion scuttles up vertical surfaces with cavalier ease. Where a normal climber can cover only half the distance she could cover in a normal Move action on a successful climbing roll (see p. 180), a Scion with this Knack suffers no such restriction. Furthermore, as long as the Scion has at least one hand (or both of her feet) on the surface she's climbing, she can take a second action at the same time (per the multiple action rules on p. 179) while still moving along the climbing surface. The Scion cannot "Dash" while climbing, but the bonus to her movement granted by her Epic Dexterity still applies.

Trick Shooter

Not only do the Scion's Epic Dexterity bonus successes add to (Dexterity + Marksmanship) dice rolls, he now doubles the bonus he receives from taking an Aim action (see p. 190) as well. What's more, the player ignores the difficulty penalty for the character to either disarm an opponent with a ranged special attack or mark his opponent without causing damage. (See "Special Attacks" on p. 199.) A character must take an Aim action in order to be able to ignore such penalties, though. If a character fires from the hip or blazes away in a cordite-reeking, brass-raining, muzzle-strobing gunfight, only the regular bonus successes from his Epic Dexterity apply.

Untouchable Opponent

The Scion might as well be a ghost for all her enemies can lay a hand or a weapon on her. The Scion doubles the benefit that her Epic Dexterity dots add to her Dodge DV. She also ignores an amount of DV penalties due to unstable terrain equal to her Epic Dexterity dots. Only the normal Epic Dexterity bonus applies to the character's Parry DV, though, and this Knack's bonus to Dodge DV doesn't apply if the character is merely hiding behind cover or tucked in behind a scutum like a lowly turtle. Only if the character is physically dodging the attacks that are coming her way does this Knack help her out.

Activating this Knack costs one point of Legend. Its effects last for one scene.

EPIC STAMINA

Having dots in Epic Stamina deadens pain and cancels out a character's wound penalties. The first dot mitigates one point of wound penalties, the second dot mitigates two points, and the third dot mitigates four points of wound penalties. (See p. 195 for an explanation of wound penalties.) Dots of Epic Stamina add a like amount to a character's bashing and lethal soak. They even provide a limited aggravated soak. (See pp. 194-195 for an explanation of soak.)

Epic Stamina also increases the amount of time a Scion can perform fatiguing activities or resist environmental hazards (see pp. 182 and 184). A character can go without food or sleep for one week for one dot of Epic Stamina, two weeks for two dots and four weeks for three dots. The character can go for half that long (rounding up to the nearest week in each case) without drinking water. The character can work at a strenuous activity for a number of consecutive days equal to (Stamina + Fortitude).

The amount of time a Scion can hold his breath (see p. 182) increases dramatically. The first dot the Scion has in Epic Strength doubles the listed time limit. The next dot doubles that value again. The third dot doubles that new value yet again.

Finally, a character with Epic Stamina needs never worry about his open wounds becoming infected. (See p. 198 for the rules regarding infection of wounds.)

Associated With: Ares, Dionysus, Hephaestus, Huitzilopochtli, Odin, Sobek, Thor, Tyr, Vidar, Xipe Totec

Dots	Effects
•	Adds one automatic success to Stamina rolls. Eliminates one point of wound penalties. Adds one to the character's bashing and lethal soak. Provides a single point of aggravated soak. The character can go one week without food, water or sleep. He can hold his breath for twice as long as normal.
••	Adds two automatic successes to Stamina rolls. Eliminates two points of wound penalties. Adds two to the character's bashing and lethal soak. Provides two points of aggravated soak. The character can go two weeks without food or sleep, or one week without water. He can hold his breath for four times as long as normal.
•••	Adds four automatic successes to Stamina rolls. Eliminates four points of wound penalties. Adds four to the character's bashing and lethal soak. Provides three points of aggravated soak. The character can go four weeks without food or sleep, or two weeks without water. He can hold his breath for eight times as long as normal.

EPIC STAMINA KNACKS

Damage Conversion

The Scion can spend a single point of Legend to convert all the lethal damage from a single attack into bashing damage, though an overload of bashing

damage still upgrades existing bashing damage to lethal (see p. 197). This Knack cannot convert aggravated damage into anything less grave. The character cannot convert old lethal damage into bashing damage. The Knack works only on incoming damage from a single attack.

Holy Fortitude

The character is the epitome of the holy ascetic. The periods for which she is able to go without food, water and sleep all double. The amount of time she is able to work at a strenuous task without stopping also doubles.

Inner Furnace

The character rarely lacks for sustenance. As long as he can find some sort of organic substance (from rotting quail eggs to a piece of notebook paper on which someone blew her nose), the Scion can eat it and survive. And as long as he finds a source of water (no matter how stagnant or polluted it might be), he can drink it and survive. Any pestilence or poison lurking in what he consumes burns in the fires of his superior constitution, without even requiring a Fortitude roll. The same goes for drugs or poisons he ingests on purpose, or for any Mickey Finn a ne'er-do-well might try to slip him. He's still just as susceptible to airborne toxins and any drug injected into his bloodstream, but any drug that has to go through his stomach first stops there.

This Knack does nothing to suppress the gag reflex or make an unappetizing meal taste better.

Self-Healing

The Scion's player spends a point of Legend to repair a single level of damage. That damage can be bashing or lethal, and the healing takes place in an instant without leaving a scar. (Aggravated damage is beyond the power of this Knack to heal.) Scions who are interested in building their reputation and spreading their legends quickly find this Knack to be one of the more effective tools of doing so, as bruises, lacerations and bullet holes vanish before astonished onlookers' eyes.

Solipsistic Well-Being

The philosophy of solipsism holds that only the self exists. Accordingly, if a solipsist isn't aware of something, that something doesn't exist. With this Knack, a Scion applies this odd philosophy to damage that surprises her. For a single attack that the Scion doesn't see, hear or otherwise perceive coming, the Scion can spend a point of Legend and a point of Willpower to completely ignore it as if it never happened (thereby suffering no damage from it). Of course the attack *does* actually happen—any ammunition used is spent, onlookers might be covered with the Scion's blood, the would-be assassin might be standing right there holding a dripping knife—but such concerns are immaterial to the Scion victim.

The Scion can use this Knack only once per scene.

EPIC CHARISMA

No Scion's Legend spreads farther faster than that of one possessed of Epic Charisma. Such Scions become leaders of humankind and heroic Bands, inspiring everyone to rise to the challenges set by the vicious spawn of the Titans. Should the Scions ever be called to battle at their parents' side in the Overworld, those with Epic Charisma will surely lead the way.

Associated With: Amaterasu, Aphrodite, Apollo, Atum-Re, Baldur, Baron Samedi, Bastet, Damballa, Dionysus, Erzulie, Freya, Freyr, Frigg, Hachiman, Hades, Hera, Huitzilopochtli, Isis, Izanagi, Izanami, Kalfu, Legba, Miclantecuhtli, Odin, Osiris, Poseidon, Quetzalcoatl, Shango, Sif, Tezcatlipoca, Thor, Tlazoltéotl, Tsuki-yomi, Tyr, Zeus

Dots	Effects
•	Adds one automatic success to Charisma rolls.
••	Adds two automatic successes to Charisma rolls.
•••	Adds four automatic successes to Charisma rolls.

EPIC CHARISMA KNACKS

Benefit of the Doubt

Sometimes, for a Scion to be able to help people—or convince them to stay out of harm's way—those people have to accept ideas that would seem patently ridiculous if they weren't true. The player of a Scion with this Knack spends a point of Legend, and something in the Scion's bearing or expression convinces a single listener not to dismiss what he's saying. Maybe it's the fact that the Scion is taking his words so seriously, or maybe he just has an honest face. Maybe he came highly recommended by a respected colleague. Whatever the reason, the listener gives the Scion the benefit of the doubt in regards to what the Scion next tries to explain, despite what he might be otherwise inclined to believe.

Blessing of Importance

The Scion is especially good at winning people over by making them feel special and wanted. By spending a point of Legend and either sticking up for a person, calling out to him in a crowd or just giving him a secret smile, the Scion refills the person's spent Willpower points for the scene. The Scion need not necessarily believe that the person is important or special herself.

This Knack works very well on mortals, but it's less effective on Scions, who are usually wise to their charismatic peers' ways. For Scion recipients, the Knack refills only one point of Willpower per dot of Epic Charisma the Scion with this Knack has. A character can receive this Willpower boost only once per scene from the same Scion.

Charmer

With the sheer, raw charm this Knack represents, the Scion can smother an upwelling of panic, suspicion or utter hatred directed at her for one scene. The player need only spend a point of Legend. One scene is usually long enough to convince a person that it would be in his best interest to help the character, but it's up to the Scion (and the player's roleplaying) to actually say the right words. During the scene in which this Knack is in effect, the suppressed emotion doesn't go away. It merely remains beneath the surface. If the Scion can't set the person's mind at ease by scene's end, the suppressed emotion returns in full force the next time the Scion leaves the affected person's presence.

Inspirational Figure

The Scion's well-chosen words can play on humankind's social mentality, giving hope and courage to not just one listener, but a group. The Scion gives a speech to gathered listeners—whether he's calling upon them for help, raising their spirits after a local disaster or strengthening the bonds of community among them—and spends a single point of Legend. As long as his words are intended to inspire them in some way, every person who can hear him listens spellbound and receives a point of Willpower at the speech's end. The only limit is that the listeners must be able to hear him clearly without him using the aid of any amplifying or broadcasting equipment.

This Knack inspires other Scions as easily as mortals, but it doesn't inspire titanspawn. Nonetheless, titanspawn are compelled to at least let him finish his speech before carrying out whatever they're up to.

Never Say Die

Not every Scion can knock down foes like bowling pins and scatter titanspawn body parts in her wake. Yet some are just so full of optimistic *joie de vivre*, even when they take a beating for some spectacular failure, that you just can't help but love them. A Scion might be accident-prone or have an infuriating talent for picking fights with titanspawn that are out of her league, but she takes her lumps with a smile and inspires her fellows with her can-do attitude. All she has to do is flash a thumbs-up, holler an "I'm okay!" or show a smile full of dangling teeth. When she does, all the Scions in her Band who can see her gain one Willpower point per health level the character has suffered (i.e., however many are marked on her character sheet at that moment). The character can inspire her fellows thus only once per scene, but she can do so even if she's knocked to Incapacitated or killed—after which, she collapses.

EPIC MANIPULATION

A Scion with Epic Manipulation doesn't have to be attractive. He doesn't have to be smart. He needn't even be charming. Those qualities belong to Scions who want either to be liked or to feel superior to everyone else. A Scion who relies on Epic Manipulation doesn't care about that. He just gets results by any means, be it reverse psychology, intimidation, deceit, blackmail or what have you.

Associated With: Aphrodite, Atum-Re, Hades, Hel, Hera, Isis, Loki, Odin, Ogoun, Osiris, Poseidon, Set, Tezcatlipoca, Tlazoltéotl, Zeus

Dots	Effects
•	Adds one automatic success to Manipulation rolls.
••	Adds two automatic successes to Manipulation rolls.
•••	Adds four automatic successes to Manipulation rolls.

EPIC MANIPULATION KNACKS

Blurt It Out

This Knack represents a gift for making people speak their minds. Scions who have it normally corner a person who has information they want, strike up a conversation, direct that conversation toward the information in question, then pry it loose when it's top of mind. Others confront victims who are surrounded by family, friends or coworkers, in order to make those victims admit damning information when it will do the most harm. The Scion's player must spend a point of Legend to activate the Knack, and the information must have legitimately come up in conversation. The Scion cannot simply shout "J'accuse!" then use Blurt It Out to force a random confession from a guilty person. (The declamatory French comes only after the Scion uses Blurt It Out effectively.)

Regardless, a victim still has a slim chance to catch himself before bringing disaster crashing down. The victim's player rolls (Willpower + Integrity + Legend) against a difficulty equal to (the Scion's Epic Manipulation + 1). If this roll succeeds, the player may then spend a point of Willpower to avert the slip of the tongue.

Gods' Honest

When she's trying to convince someone of something, the Scion puts her hand to her heart, puts her hand on a stack of Bibles, holds up her right hand with her pinkie and thumb crossed in the palm, or performs some other gesture of sincerity. (Her player also spends a point of Legend.) When she does so, her would-be mark accepts that the Scion is telling the truth about the subject at hand, no questions asked, for the rest of the story. Only solid, incontrovertible proof showing that what the Scion said was undeniably false will convince the mark he's been fooled. Even then, whoever's showing him the proof will have to convince him that the proof is genuine and not some clever forgery.

A Scion with this Knack doesn't have to lie when she uses it. She can also use it to convince a recalcitrant skeptic of the actual truth. If the Scion does so, no mortal force can convince that person that the Scion was lying (not even professionally faked "proof" to the contrary).

Overt Order

Sometimes, the direct method is more effective than the cleverest of intricate schemes. With this Knack, a Scion barks out a command that the target must obey. Doing so costs one Willpower, and the command must be one the Scion can give and the victim can perform in a single action. "Freeze!" is acceptable, as is, "Don't shoot!" or, "Shoot him!" Ordering someone to go home and shoot his wife won't work because doing so would take longer than a single action.

PANTS ON FIRE

When a Scion using Gods' Honest tries to lie to a Scion with Takes One to Know One, neither Scion automatically gets a free advantage over the other. In such a case, resolve the dispute as per a normal attempt to detect lies (see "Reading Motivation" on p. 185).

When two Scions attempt to use Gods' Honest on the same victim to convince him of different or mutually exclusive "facts," the victim believes the Scion of higher Legend. If the Scions have equal Legend ratings, the victim believes the character with more Epic Manipulation dots. If the Scions are equal in Legend and Epic Manipulation, the victim believes the one with more Manipulation dots. If the Scions are matched in all three categories, the victim believes whichever character genuinely believes he's telling the truth. If both believe they're telling the truth but only one of them is, the victim believes the one who actually is telling the truth. If both equally matched Scions know they're lying, the poor victim comes down with a terrible headache and refuses to believe either one of them.

If a Scion has both Takes One to Know One and Stench of Guilt, he is instinctively able to tell apart the wordless sensations each Knack gives him.

A victim of this Knack can interpret the command loosely to make it not directly suicidal, but not if all he's trying to do is keep out of trouble. For example, if a victim draws a gun and the Scion commands him to shoot himself, the victim can shoot himself in the hand or the foot rather than blowing his own brains out. Same thing goes if a Scion uses this Knack at a seedy pool hall to command a smarmy drug dealer to pick a fight with a burly ex-con at the next table. The dealer might reasonably believe that the ex-con could kill him, but he still can't weasel out of the command. He doesn't have to walk up and take a swing at the guy, but he still has to do *something*, such as singing out a racial slur or throwing a beer bottle at the guy's girlfriend. The dealer can cheese it immediately, but he's still got to pick the fight first.

Stench of Guilt

This Knack gives a Scion an insight into the workings of a victim's mind. If the Scion hears a topic come up while the victim is speaking that reminds the victim

of a misdeed he's keeping secret, the Scion senses the presence of that secret. The victim needn't feel guilty about the wrongs he's done, but as long as he's taken, or is taking, pains to hide them, the Scion catches on. This Knack can't reveal what secret the victim hides, nor does it point out specifically what was said in the conversation that reminded him of the transgression. Conversational context is usually enough for a crafty Scion to figure out where to start looking, though.

Takes One to Know One

Liars and tricksters know their own. If some matchstick man tries to run a scam, Scions with this Knack know exactly what sort of person they're dealing with. Whenever the Scion hears a person knowingly tell a lie, the Scion is automatically aware of the deception. This Knack doesn't reveal what the truth actually is. Nor does it work on text written by someone who knows it's false or when someone speaks untrue words in a language the Scion does not understand.

EPIC APPEARANCE

Epic Appearance represents the extremes of both divine beauty and monstrous ugliness. The player must decide which aspect his character's Epic Appearance represents, and it cannot change thereafter. In addition to its standard automatic successes, for every Epic Appearance dot a Scion has, his player is allowed one free reroll per scene of a failed use of Presence in a social situation. That use of Presence must be appropriate to the nature of the Scion's Epic Appearance, though. A divinely gorgeous Scion's player can't reroll the character's failed attempt to intimidate the leader of a mob of soccer hooligans. Likewise, a hideous Scion's player can't reroll his character's failed attempt to seduce an NFL cheerleader.

In any case, the granted reroll doesn't receive bonus successes from Epic Appearance unless the original roll was (Appearance + Presence). Also, a player cannot reroll a failed activation of a Boon or Birthright item that requires the use of Presence. The reroll applies only to direct social applications of that Ability. Finally, if a character is entitled to more than one reroll per scene, the player can apply them to the same failed roll or to separate failed rolls in any combination he wishes.

Associated With: Amaterasu, Aphrodite, Apollo, Baldur, Erzulie, Freya, Hel*, Izanami*, Miclántecuhtli*, Raiden*, Sif, Tezcatlipoca, Tlaloc*, Tlazoltéotl

(Note: Gods marked with an asterisk are known for being monstrously ugly, whereas the rest are considered especially attractive even among the Gods. A character need not take after his parent in this fashion, however. A Scion of Miclántecuhtli can have a divinely gorgeous Epic Appearance, or a Scion of Aphrodite can be a horror to behold. A Scion of an "average-looking" God can be either if he has Epic Appearance.)

Dots Effects

- Adds one automatic success to Appearance rolls. The character receives one free Presence reroll per scene.
- Adds two automatic successes to Appearance rolls. The character receives two free Presence rerolls per scene.
- Adds four automatic successes to Appearance rolls. The character receives three free Presence rerolls per scene.

EPIC APPEARANCE KNACKS

Center of Attention

Whether he's Hugh Jackman on the set of *The View* or the Phantom of the Opera going unmasked at the masquerade ball, the Scion commands the attention of everyone in the room. This Knack is best used when making an important entrance, but it can also serve as a wonderful broad-spectrum distraction. The character walks into a room, the player spends a point of Legend, and all eyes in the room (as well as the eyes of people watching remotely via live security camera broadcast) turn the character's way. For every Legend point spent, the character can hold everyone's attention for a number of minutes equal to his Epic Appearance dots. The onlookers can carry on with what they're doing and keep talking among themselves, but their attention remains fixed on the Scion.

Titanspawn and Scions can resist this Knack. They may spend a point of Willpower to direct their attention elsewhere. Should the Scion with Epic Appearance spend another point of Legend to continue the effect over subsequent sets of minutes, the resisting party must

spend matching amounts of Willpower to keep from being distracted.

Come Hither

Some Scions are so beautiful you can't help but be drawn to them, and a Scion with this Knack makes that compelling attraction inescapable. Whether she beckons across a crowded room, emails a picture of herself along with an invitation or sends a picture message from her phone with the text caption "GYAOH," the object of her desire makes all due haste to reach her. The Scion's player spends a Legend point, and she must single out one recipient at a time. The intended target must be able to see an image of the Scion, he must understand that the message is intended for him, and he must have a reasonable idea of how to find her.

Scions whose Epic Appearance represents divine ugliness cannot use this Knack. Also, it doesn't work on beautiful Scions with more dots of Epic Appearance than the one using the Knack.

Dreadful Mien

Some Scions are so hideous that seeing them spurs the primitive centers of the human brain toward reckless flight. Most humans can clamp down on this instinctive response and remain in such Scions' presence, but this Knack overrides that social nicety. When the Scion's player spends a Legend point, the character directs his unholy monstrosity at a single unlucky victim in his presence. Overwhelmed, the victim runs for his life and hides somewhere until the next sunrise. People affected by this Knack run away with self-preservation in mind, though, so they won't sprint blindly into traffic or try to swim across a shark tank to safety.

Scions whose Epic Appearance represents divine beauty cannot use this Knack. Also, it doesn't work on hideous Scions with more dots of Epic Appearance than the one using the Knack.

Lasting Impression

The Scion has an effect on a subject that's slow to fade away. Thoughts of the Scion creep into the victim's mind unbidden either to undermine his concentration or to uplift his spirit. A beautiful Scion can use her Epic Appearance to make a character feel good about himself, granting him an extra Willpower point (which may exceed the character's maximum) and an extra die on any Art, Athletics, Command, Craft or Integrity dice pools. A hideous Scion inflicts quite the opposite effect. The fear she instills robs her victim of a Willpower point that he cannot regain until the effect wears off. The Scion also unsettles him so deeply that he loses one die from all Academics, Awareness, Control, Politics or Presence dice pools.

Using this Knack costs the Scion a single point of Legend, and its effects last for 24 hours. The Scion can use the Knack on only one person at a time, and the target must be able to see her in person.

Serpent's Gaze

When the Scion spends a point of Legend, the person whom she's trying to affect locks eyes with her and is unable to look away. For combat purposes, the victim is rendered Inactive until the Scion breaks eye contact. The Scion can still act, but she must take a second action in order to do so, maintaining eye contact as a diceless action. (As a result, she suffers a -2 penalty for any other action she takes.) This Knack works equally well whether the Scion's Epic Appearance involves beauty or its opposite.



Characters of lesser Legend are unable to break the Scion's gaze on their own, but those with an equal or greater Legend are not so vulnerable. After the Scion using the Knack takes one full action, the equal- or

higher-Legend victim may spend a point of Willpower to negate the effect. In so doing, he remains immune to the effect from the same Scion for the rest of the scene.

EPIC PERCEPTION

Many Gods are aware of everything that happens in the parts of the World they call their own. No offering goes unnoticed, no prayer goes unheard, no transgression goes undetected. The Gods don't always answer when mortals' actions address them, but no such action passes them by in total obscurity. Scions inherit a portion of this awareness as well, filtered through their mundane senses. Yet, those senses are mundane only in comparison to the Gods' own. Compared to the children of the Gods, regular mortals might as well be deaf, numb and blind.

Associated With: Anubis, Artemis, Atum-Re, Bastet, Heimdall, Odin

Dots	Effects
•	Adds one automatic success to Perception rolls.
••	Adds two automatic successes to Perception rolls.
•••	Adds four automatic successes to Perception rolls.

EPIC PERCEPTION KNACKS

Perfect Pitch

The Scion can be a musician's best friend or worst nightmare, as she has the innate ability to detect even the subtlest variation in musical pitch. Her sense is so refined that she could catch a single missed note in an otherwise flawless performance of a Rachmaninoff concerto. The lone flub in the middle of the performance rings as clearly in her ears as if someone's cell phone had gone off during it playing the *Spongebob Squarepants* theme song. The Scion's sense of hearing is also refined enough to be able to identify with absolute certainty a phone number or security code just by hearing the distinctive key tones.

Predatory Focus

The Scion is a hunter par excellence. With a successful (Perception + Survival) roll, he can track his prey by scent alone or by almost-invisible physical signs. With this Knack, the hunter can follow his prey across any sort of terrain as long as the prey continues to flee and does not take significant pains to mask its scent or minimize the disturbance its passing causes. (The former entails such extremes as swimming a mile upstream in a rushing river or taking refuge inside a functioning hog-rendering plant. The latter includes little short of levitating or flying.) Picking up a lost trail with this Knack requires a

new (Perception + Survival) roll. If the prey has Epic Wits or a Stealth Arete (see pp. 149-150), the hunter's roll is contested against the prey's (Wits + Stealth).

Refined Palate

The Scion has exceptionally precise senses of taste and smell (as the latter enhances the former). With a faint sniff or a tentative taste, the Scion can figure out what ingredients compose a certain concoction, and in what proportions. She can also sniff out drugs or poisons that have been added to what she was about to wolf down, as well as detect airborne toxins by the way they make the air taste. This Knack doesn't tell a Scion what an ingredient is if she isn't already familiar with it. (She would realize that what's making her iced tea sweet isn't sugar, for instance, but she wouldn't know if it was Equal or Splenda if she'd never had either artificial sweetener before.) Instead, the Knack registers each component separately and provides an indication whether such components would be dangerous to consume. The Scion also remembers the taste and smell of various ingredients she experiences so she can recognize and identify them if she's exposed to them again.

Subliminal Warning

Whenever the Scion enters an area where an ambush is waiting, even if he has no reason to suspect he's in danger, certain tiny clues set his subconscious on edge, preparing him for an attack. When the attacker finally springs the surprise assault, the Scion hears the tiniest rustle of fabric, sees the slightest flicker in his peripheral vision or feels the gentlest twitch of displaced air, and the clues he already noticed all add up. As a result, the Scion gains an extra number of dice equal to his Epic Perception on the standard (Wits + Awareness) roll to detect the ambush.

Unfailing Recognition

The Scion can automatically recognize any people to whom she is Fatebound. She can pick their faces out of a crowd with just a glance. She can recognize their voices despite electronic distortion or overpowering background noise. She knows their scents and their body language and even the exact feel of the way they shake hands. She can also recognize an imposter when someone tries to mimic the voice or appearance of someone to whom she is Fatebound.

Recognizing others is not quite as easy. If, when a Scion encounters a character to whom she is not Fatebound, she makes a concerted effort to try to remember that

character's looks and mannerisms, the player may spend a point of Willpower to lock that image in the Scion's mind. After that, she retains the ability to recognize him despite all obfuscation for the rest of the story as if they two were Fatebound. Thereafter, the Scion loses any supernatural ability she had to recognize that character. (She doesn't forget what the character looks like, mind you. It's just that the Knack no longer applies to that person.)

The timing of when the Scion recognizes a person is entirely up to the Storyteller as dictated by the needs of the story. If the private investigator who's been dogging the Scion's heels tries to slink up to the character in disguise at a crowded charity fund-raiser, the Scion might see the

gumshoe coming a mile away (even despite the fake beard, the fat suit, the spray-on tan and the sex change). If a Scion of Loki who's a rival to a player's Scion of Anubis arrives in disguise to deliver a cryptic warning, the Scion of Anubis might not recognize her old foe until the trickster disappears with a wink behind the elevator's closing doors.

Finally, as a side effect of this Knack, a Scion can always recognize when someone who is not in disguise is biologically related to a person she knows well (regardless of whether that person is Fatebound to her). She cannot intuitively grasp what that relationship is, but she knows it's there—even if the person in question doesn't.

EPIC INTELLIGENCE

Scions with Epic Intelligence are the scholars, the inventors, the schemers and the strategists of the Gods' children. They might not be the best thinkers under pressure (unless they also have Epic Wits), but when they set their minds to a problem, their methods are impeccable, their observations are insightful, and their conclusions are undeniable.

Associated With: Athena, Frigg, Hephaestus, Hermes, Loki, Odin, Prah, Quetzalcoatl, Thoth

Dots	Effects
•	Adds one automatic success to Intelligence rolls.
••	Adds two automatic successes to Intelligence rolls.
•••	Adds four automatic successes to Intelligence rolls.

EPIC INTELLIGENCE KNACKS

Fast Learner

By buckling down and intently studying certain subjects, the Scion internalizes them in a fraction of the time it would take a lesser intellect. In so doing, he cuts the experience-point cost for purchasing dots in Academics, Medicine, Occult, Politics or Science in half, rounding down.

Know-It-All

The Scion is widely read and has a ridiculously well-rounded education. She might not be a master of any single subject, but she knows a little bit about a wide range of disparate, esoteric subjects. (She could explain the intricacies of the Teapot Dome Scandal in terms of the interpersonal dynamics of the Justice League, then explain why typing "while one fork" into a UNIX system is a bad idea, before wrapping up with an explanation of how a Venus's-flytrap works.) Normally, the burden of portraying this Knack falls to the player, so it behooves her to keep an ear to the ground for obscure trivia she can work into her character's dialogue during the game. The Storyteller shares a bit of that burden as well, though. During a scene in which the characters seem to

be stumped or hopelessly out of options, the Storyteller should "remind" the player of some pertinent bit of obscure trivia her character knows that bears a direct, helpful relevance to the problem at hand. It behooves the Storyteller, then, to make a list of a handful of such helpful hints when he's designing his story. Just in case.

Math Genius

The Scion is a walking, talking calculator. She can divide up a 10-party restaurant bill so everyone pays only what they owe or calculate the standard deviation of oil prices over the last 15 years, all while holding an intense conversation about whether Republicans or Democrats are worse tippers. As long as she knows all the figures involved, she can crunch the numbers in her head with only a moment's pause. She can also use mathematical shorthand and rapid calculation to estimate things like how many jellybeans are in a glass jar at the State Fair or how many titanspawn-possessed Civil War re-enactors are currently rushing toward her across the picnic grounds.

Perfect Memory

The character remembers everything about his past from before the game started to the current moment in the story. If ever the player forgets a salient point or key bit of

NO SCION LEFT BEHIND

When a Scion teacher with Teaching Prodigy teaches a Scion student with Fast Learner about Academics, Medicine, Occult, Politics or Science, the experience-point cost is cut in half once (and rounded down) then cut in half again (and rounded down again). When that same teacher teaches the same student about any other subject, though, only the instructor's Teaching Prodigy discount applies.



information from previous sessions, he has but to ask the Storyteller and the Storyteller will remind him. It's a good idea for the character's player to take copious notes on each session's events and double-check them with the Storyteller, if only to alleviate some of the stress on the Storyteller.

Teaching Prodigy

With this Knack, a Scion can help someone else become a fast learner (per the eponymous Knack). When she makes significant efforts to tutor a student in

a subject—a distinction best left up to the Storyteller—the experience-point cost for purchasing dots in the Ability the teacher teaches is cut in half, rounded down.

The catch built into this Knack is that a Scion cannot teach a student an Ability that she (the teacher) doesn't have. Nor can the teacher help a student surpass her in mastery of a subject—which is to say, the Scion cannot teach her student more dots in an Ability than she (the teacher) has.

EPIC WITS

Scions with Epic Wits might not be smarter than their peers and rivals, but they think faster on the fly and can play even seemingly disastrous unforeseen consequences to their ultimate advantage. Be they children of war Gods or tricksters, or be they agents of sheer, seething chaos, these cunning Scions never lack for options—even in the thick of a life-or-death struggle.

Associated With: Athena, Bastet, Hachiman, Hermes, Legba, Loki, Odin, Susano-o, Tezcatlipoca, Tyr

Dots	Effects
------	---------

- | | |
|-----|--|
| • | Adds one automatic success to Wits rolls. |
| •• | Adds two automatic successes to Wits rolls. |
| ••• | Adds four automatic successes to Wits rolls. |

EPIC WITS KNACKS

Instant Investigator

The Scion can take an intuitive “read” of a crime scene and make a reasonably accurate assessment of what transpired there. By spending a point of Legend and taking a single, sweeping glance around the scene of a crime, the Scion entitles his player to a reflexive (Wits + Investigation) roll. If the roll succeeds, the Scion can tell what crimes were committed at that scene (if it was more than one), how many perpetrators were involved, how long ago it happened, roughly the sequence of events that took place and what means the perpetrators employed to cover up evidence. The difficulty of the roll should reflect how long ago the crime occurred, how contaminated the crime scene has been since then and how thorough the criminals were in covering their tracks.

This Knack doesn't reveal specific, plot-sensitive information that isn't readily apparent (such as who the perpetrators actually are), but it should provide enough clues in a single glance for the character to develop solid leads that further the story.

Meditative Focus

Whether she's hunkered down behind a burning car in a war zone, caught out on the yard during a prison riot, stranded on the crowded deck of a storm-tossed ship or just mall-walking during the frenzied heights of the Christmas rush, the character never loses her cool. No matter what's happening, she keeps her mind on what she's doing while

maintaining sufficient vigilance to avoid getting caught up in the hubbub all around her. As such, the character is able to eliminate one point of environmental distraction penalty per dot she has of Epic Wits.

Opening Gambit

Sometimes, victory in conflict is all about being the guy who makes the first move, and the Scion is usually that guy. When he joins battle, his player can either make a Join Battle roll like everyone else, or he can simply spend a point of Legend for his character to automatically go first in the reaction count. This Knack cannot automatically preempt an otherwise unexpected attack, though, as the character must actually be able to join battle for this Knack to function. If more than one character involved in a combat scene has this Knack, the character with the highest (Wits + Epic Wits) total goes first. If characters with this Knack have equal totals, default to a separate Join Battle roll to see which of them acts first.

Rabbit Reflexes

When an unexpected attack targets the character with this Knack but the character's player fails to get enough successes on the (Wits + Awareness) roll to notice the attack coming, the Scion instinctively defends herself with double her highest applicable DV. The character cannot preemptively attack her attacker or even shout out a warning to her comrades, as she's reacting to an attack that's already taking place, but she is much more likely to dodge or parry that attack. Nonetheless, the character cannot actually join battle herself until everyone else does after the unexpected attack is resolved.

Social Chameleon

Being thrust into a situation full of strangers who have bizarre customs and weird manners (such as a sorority house at the height of rush) can be disorienting, but the character with this Knack handles herself with remarkable aplomb. By observing the behavior of the people around her and reacting preternaturally quickly to their reactions to her behavior, she can fake like she fits in just about anywhere, with any class of people. She still has to dress the part, and the language barrier might pose its own problems, but she won't embarrass or draw attention to herself unless she goes out of her way to do so on purpose.



BOONS AND BIRTHRIGHTS

Boons and Birthrights make up the true might of the arsenals of the Scions, even more so than the Epic Attributes and Knacks to which they have access. It is in them that the full favor of the Gods is most evident.

HEROIC BOONS

When Gods sire children with mortals, they give those children the ability to stack up and knock down the building blocks of reality. Yet, whether these gifts—these “Boons” in modern Scions’ neo-archaic parlance—are truly blessings or vile curses on the World depends on how a Scion uses them.

PURVIEWS

Groups of Boons that affect the same fundamental force or concept (such as fire or death or fertility) are said to be part of the same Purview. Purviews come in three overarching categories. The largest consists of all-purpose Purviews, which are associated with certain Gods but are available to any Scion. The next category includes pantheon-specific Purviews. Only Scions from the pantheon to which the Purviews belong may use these Boons. The smallest category covers special Purviews that don’t all have Boons per se but still grant divine power. Like the all-purpose Purviews, these Purviews are associated with certain Gods but are available to any Scion.

BIRTHRIGHTS

When the Gods grant Boons, they do so by giving their children items known as Birthrights. A Birthright could be a stone hammer, a mirrored shield, a motorcycle that can travel on water’s shimmering surface, a jeweler’s loupe with a voodoo *veve* etched on the crystal lens... whatever seems most appropriate and useful. Be these items constructed in hidden dwarven enclaves, by loa-possessed craftsmen or by the God Hephaestus himself, the true power of a Scion’s Boons lies in these Birthrights. Therefore, a Scion cannot use a Boon except through the Birthright to which it’s attached. (The only exception to this rule applies to the pantheon-specific Purviews: Arete, Cheval, Heku, Itzli, Jotunblut and Tsukumo-Gami.)

Fortunately, most Birthrights are given freely with no strings attached. Unfortunately, if a Scion loses a Birthright, he also loses his ability to use its associated Boon(s). If the item is stolen, however, not only does the Scion lose access to the Boons, but the thief *gains* access to them for as long as he possesses the stolen Birthright.

For deeper information on Birthrights, see pages 156-169.



BOON COSTS

At character creation, Boon dots come from the same 10-dot pool as Epic Attributes. Similarly, a character must have at least one more dot of Legend than he has dots in his highest-rated Boon. If he has the three-dot Darkness Boon: Shadow Refuge, for instance, he must already have at least four dots of Legend. If he has only Legend 3, the highest rated Boon he can have under any Purview is a two-dot Boon.

Finally, no heroic Scion (i.e., no Scion with Legend rated 4 or less) can have a Boon worth more than three dots at character creation. The Gods want to trust their children, but they can't just frivolously dole out power. After all, the Gods ascended to their lofty position by throwing down their predecessors, and they're wary of the same thing happening to them.

(All experience costs for Boons are listed on the table on p. 207.)

ALL-PURPOSE PURVIEWS

Every Boon from the all-purpose Purviews must be purchased separately. They need not, however, be purchased in order. If the player wants only the three-dot Boon from, say, the Sky Purview, he doesn't have to buy the one- and two-dot Sky Boons first. (He must have four dots of Legend, though.) If he does want the one-, two- and three-dot Boons, he has to allocate a total of six dots from his 10-dot pool to cover them all. (One for the

one-dot Boon, two more for the two-dot Boon and three more for the three-dot Boon.)

Boons from all-purpose Purviews associated with the character's divine parent cost four bonus points per dot at character creation. Those associated with different Gods cost the character five bonus points per dot. Once play has begun, Boons associated with the character's divine parent cost four experience points per dot, while those associated with other Gods cost five points per dot.

PANTHEON-SPECIFIC PURVIEWS

A Purview that belongs to a specific pantheon is available only to Scions born of that pantheon. The Boons under the pantheon-specific Purviews must be purchased in sequence, but not separately (meaning that you need only buy the next dot in a growing Purview rating to get the next Boon). If you have two dots in the Purview, you get the first-dot Boon and the second-dot Boon. If you want the third-dot Boon, you need only purchase the third dot in the Purview.

Each dot of a pantheon-specific Purview costs four bonus points at character creation. Once play has begun, the cost to increase a pantheon-specific Purview with experience points is four times the current rating. (If the character has two dots in a pantheon-specific Purview and wants to buy the third dot, doing so costs eight experience points.) New dots in pantheon-specific Purviews must be purchased one at a time

with experience points. One can't jump from the first dot to the third in play without paying separately for the second. Buying the first dot in a pantheon-specific Purview with experience costs three experience points.

SPECIAL PURVIEWS

The three special Purviews (Magic, Mystery and Prophecy) fall slightly outside the cost structure for the others. The number of dots the character has in these Purviews is a rating that represents his overall mastery of the Purview. Each new dot the player allocates or purchases simply adds onto the rating, rather than standing alone like a new Boon. Also, with each dot of the Magic Purview the player buys, his character gains one free new spell of the increased value. He can buy additional spells with experience points (but not with bonus points at character creation).

Each dot of a special Purview a player buys for his character costs four bonus points, provided the Purview is associated with that character's divine parent. Those associated with other Gods cost five points per dot. The cost to increase a special Purview with experience points is four times the current rating (or five times if the Purview is associated with a different God). New dots in special Purviews must be purchased one at a time with experience points. One can't jump from the first dot to the third in play without paying separately for the second. Buying additional Magic spells costs four experience per

dot if Magic is associated with the character's divine parent (or five experience per dot otherwise).

PURVIEWS NOT THEIR OWN

Scions may have Boons from Purviews not associated with their divine parents. As long as a character has the proper Birthright and his player has allocated the dots or spent the points—and cleared it with the Storyteller—no all-purpose or special Boon is off limits.

Gods don't usually grant Boons to other Gods' children, though, so your character's background must provide justification for why one would do so now. Maybe your character's divine parent asked (or forced) a fellow God to do so. Maybe that God hates your character's divine parent but hopes to plant the seeds of a future betrayal. Maybe she's just a virgin Goddess who's fallen in love with your character. The reason doesn't matter as long as A.) you *have* a reason and B.) the Storyteller accepts it.

ALL-PURPOSE PURVIEWS

These Purviews are the most common ones. Although they're associated with specific Gods, they're available to Scions of any heritage. Each Boon may be purchased separately and out of sequence. Using all-purpose Boons requires a Birthright.



ANIMAL

This Purview expresses the totemic power to which a Scion's ichor grants him access. Its Boons work on only one type of animal, chosen by the player when he purchases

the character's first Boon. That animal needn't be the same one associated with his divine parent.

Associated With: Anubis (Jackal), Athena (Owl), Atum-Re (Falcon), Bastet (Cat), Damballa (Snake), Geb (Goose), Hachiman (Dove), Hera (Peacock), Horus (Falcon), Huitzilopochtli (Hummingbird, Eagle), Miclantecuhtli (Dog), Osiris (Centipede, Ram), Poseidon (Horse), Quetzalcoatl (Resplendent Quetzal), Set (Salawa), Sobek (Crocodile), Tezcatlipoca (Jaguar), Thoth (Baboon, Ibis)

ANIMAL COMMUNICATION (ANIMAL •)

Dice Pool: Intelligence + Animal Ken

Cost: None

The Scion can understand and make himself understood by an animal as he speaks his native language and the animal responds with its own postures, scents and/or vocalizations. This Boon doesn't make animals smart, calm or loyal, but most are curious enough about having a person address them that they'll hear a Scion out before defaulting to aggression, panic or indifference.

ANIMAL COMMAND (ANIMAL ••)

Dice Pool: Charisma + Animal Ken

Cost: 1 Willpower

The Scion spends one Willpower and names one task that the animal must perform. The task cannot seem suicidal or impossible to the animal, but the animal cannot balk at an order that doesn't immediately seem so. "Hey rabbit, go rip that lion's throat open," would seem impossible to the rabbit so commanded. "Run to that grass across this street," would be a fine order for that same rabbit, though, even if cars were zipping by. The order can describe a single

immediate action (“Bite that guy!”) or one with a single condition (“Come find me when a blue car stops here.”). If he lacks the previous Boon, the Scion can deliver his command only through simplistic nonverbal signals.

ANIMAL ASPECT (ANIMAL •••)

Dice Pool: Stamina + Animal Ken

Cost: 1 Legend per action

By meditating for one action (Speed 3) on a token representing his animal, the Scion takes on a metaphorical characteristic associated with it, creating a dice bonus for rolls involving the Attribute most closely associated with that characteristic. A Scion might take on a snake’s sinuous grace (Dexterity), a peacock’s beauty (Appearance), an elephant’s proverbial memory (via Intelligence) or any other justifiable characteristic. The bonus dice are equal to the number of successes on the activation roll, and the benefit lasts for one action per Legend point spent up front to fuel the Boon.



CHAOS

Chaos is the Purview of confusion, anarchy and formlessness.

Associated With: Dionysus, Kalfu, Loki, Set, Susano-o

EYE OF THE STORM (CHAOS •)

Dice Pool: None

Cost: 1 Legend per scene

When the Scion finds herself caught up in a chaotic situation unrelated to her—whether she’s dodging a tornado’s debris or emerging from a bar to find a berserk mob rushing toward her to clash with a line of riot cops down the street—she can activate this Boon and become an island of calm in the tumult. She is miraculously untouched in the confusion, and she remains so for as long as she doesn’t actively involve herself. She still suffers normal environmental movement penalties, but environmental dangers such as falling rocks, stampeding beasts or thrashing rioters all fail to touch her.

HORNET’S NEST (CHAOS ••)

Dice Pool: Intelligence + Awareness

Cost: None

If the Boon’s activation roll succeeds, the Storyteller should determine and reveal in general terms what action the Scion can take to either cause the most chaos in the scene or defuse the potential chaos inherent in the situation. The revelation should be something simple like “opening the parrot cage,” “staying in the hallway,” “winking at the Scion of Sif” or “calling the Scion of Ptah’s cell phone.” The Storyteller should explain only which action will lead to which outcome, not how.

PARALYZING CONFUSION (CHAOS •••)

Dice Pool: Wits + Empathy

Cost: 1 Willpower

This Boon turns a person’s rational thoughts into seething, chaotic noise. On a successful activation roll, the victim freezes in place, suddenly unable to think, speak or act. He’s unaware of what goes on around him, and he has no memory of the moments before or after the use of this Boon.

The effect lasts for a number of actions equal to the successes on the activation roll, and it erases the victim’s memory for an equal amount of time before the roll. If the victim has more dots of Legend than the user, the power doesn’t work. If the victim has an equal Legend rating, the activation roll is contested against the victim’s (Willpower + Integrity + Legend).



DARKNESS

Characters who inherit this Purview are as at home in the dark as in the light (if not more so), either protecting humanity from unseen terrors or harrying hapless mortals from the shadows.

Associated With: Baron Samedi, Hades, Izanami, Kalfu, Tezcatlipoca, Tsuki-yomi

NIGHT EYES (DARKNESS •)

Dice Pool: None

Cost: None

Darkness no longer inflicts visibility penalties on the character. He can see in pitch-blackness almost as well as he can see in bright sunlight, losing only the ability to perceive colors. (Objects he sees in darkness are black-on-black yet perfectly distinguishable in a way that’s conveniently impossible to describe to someone who doesn’t have this Boon.) The Scion cannot see through physical impediments, however.

SHADOW MASK (DARKNESS ••)

Dice Pool: Dexterity + Larceny

Cost: 1 Legend

The Scion pulls a shadow down from the brim of his hat or up from beneath his collar and wraps it around his head, rendering him completely unrecognizable to human eyes or electronic surveillance equipment (even equipment designed specifically to see in darkness). His voice becomes an unidentifiable whisper. The Scion can see through this mask, and other Scions using Night Eyes can recognize him through it.

The shadow mask lasts for a maximum of 24 hours. The Scion can will it to disperse before that period elapses, but otherwise, it remains in place the whole time even if the Scion is unconscious. It doesn’t disperse even if someone shines a bright light in the Scion’s face.

SHADOW REFUGE (DARKNESS •••)

Dice Pool: Dexterity + Stealth

Cost: 1 Legend

The Scion can hide within any shadow into which his body fits. He need only position himself within

the three-dimensional area of the shadow as his player succeeds on the activation roll and spends the point of Legend. If he does so, mundane attempts to find him—even those aided by electronic equipment—fail automatically. Supernatural attempts aided by Epic Perception or an Arete in Awareness (or both) proceed as normal, contesting the searcher's (Perception + Awareness) against the Scion's activation roll.

The Scion can hide within the shadow as long as it remains large enough. He can move with it as it moves, but doing so might require a new (Dexterity + Stealth) roll depending on the circumstances.



DEATH

The Gods don't share mortals' instinctive dread of death, but they know its power well. Likewise, as a Scion's mastery of this Purview grows, his fear of death diminishes.

Associated With: Anubis, Baron Samedi, Hades, Hel, Huitzilopochtli, Izanami, Miclantecuhtli, Odin, Osiris, Xipe Totec

DEATH SENSES (DEATH •)

Dice Pool: None

Cost: None

The Scion can see ghosts even when those ghosts don't choose to manifest. To her, ghosts are livid, physical presences, sensible to feeling as to sight (as well as smell and hearing). She still can't harm the fragile ectoplasmic shell of a ghost who hasn't manifested, however. The sense of touch this Boon grants is illusory. If the Scion tries to exert enough pressure to cause damage or restrain the ghost, her hand passes through it.

The Scion can also look at a dead body and know what killed it, if that cause isn't already obvious. The answer she gets is somewhat generic (the reading would tell her a person had been poisoned, for instance, but not by what poison), but it's conclusive despite the presence of falsified or misleading evidence. Generic causes of death include suffocation, drowning, poison, burns, internal trauma, bleeding, hunger, thirst, exposure, illness, heart attack and old age.

EUTHANASIA (DEATH ••)

Dice Pool: Perception + Empathy (to gauge willingness)

Cost: 1 Legend

When a living being is at the Incapacitated health level with lethal or aggravated damage due to wounds or a terminal illness, the Scion can end that being's suffering. The Scion must touch the being for one action (Speed 6) and spend one Legend point. If the Scion wants to know whether the victim is truly willing to die, her player can roll (Perception + Empathy) while the Scion touches the victim. Animals usually answer in the affirmative and titanspawn usually do the opposite, but human beings and Scions are unpredictable.

Regardless, the subject's willingness is ultimately immaterial unless the subject is another Scion. The power doesn't work on a Scion unless that Scion is actually willing to die. (Even then, however, Fate or the Scion's divine parent might intervene to keep the Scion alive a little longer.)

UNQUIET CORPSE (DEATH •••)

Dice Pool: Charisma + Command

Cost: 1 Willpower + 1 Legend

By touching a corpse or its grave with her hand or her Birthright, a Scion can raise that corpse as a mindless zombie (or its pantheon-appropriate equivalent) under her control. Only those limbs that are present and firmly affixed to the zombie's torso (if only by leather straps and wood staples) function when the zombie rises. The zombie remains animated until either it is destroyed or the Scion who created it dies.

(Traits and rules for such undead appear on pp. 293-294.)



EARTH

In most Creation legends, the Gods or their forebears shaped the World from the proto-matter of the Void. In other legends, they tore down impenetrable walls, sunk islands

and reshaped landmasses. This Purview is the legacy of that power.

Associated With: Baron Samedi, Geb, Hades, Hephaestus, Izanami, Osiris, Poseidon, Quetzalcoatl, Tlaloc, Tlazoltéotl

SAFELY INTERRED (EARTH •)

Dice Pool: None

Cost: None

Whether the character is caught up in a landslide, buried in a shallow grave by the roadside or trapped in the rubble of a collapsing building, he need not fear the earth's embrace as long as he has his Earth Birthright. No amount of collapsing rubble can break the Scion's bones (or the Birthright itself), and he won't suffocate no matter how much dirt piles onto him. If he lacks the strength to free himself, however, he does run the risk of either starving to death or dying of thirst if no one digs him out. Yet, it would not be the earth that kills him, but his own lack of fortitude.

ECHO SOUNDING (EARTH ••)

Dice Pool: Perception + Awareness

Cost: None

By stomping or otherwise knocking on the earth, the Scion gets a sense of its general composition and density, as well as finding holes or caves beneath the surface. If he's looking for something specific in the earth—such as gold, oil or a human body—this Boon reveals its distance from him and depth from the epicenter at the expense of the other information.

The Boon works only at ground level or on the up-thrust surface of a mountainside, but it works through floors and

pavement. It gives the Scion a semispherical reading with a radius equal to one half mile per dot of Legend.

SHAPING (EARTH ●●●)

Dice Pool: Dexterity + Craft (to shape)

Cost: 1 Legend

The Scion can sculpt stone, concrete, fired clay or metal with his bare hands. When he spends the point of Legend, the substance becomes malleable like wet clay for as long as he touches it. With a successful (Dexterity + Craft) roll by his player, the Scion can shape it into any form his nimble fingers can produce.

The Scion can affect up to one cubic foot of material at a time. Once he breaks contact with the substance he is shaping, it loses all malleability and sets in its new form.



FERTILITY

This Purview deals with plant life, from the smallest dandelion seed to the largest sequoia. The concept of fertility as pertaining to animal reproduction is covered under the Health

Purview (see p. 144).

Associated With: Amaterasu, Dionysus, Freya, Freyr, Geb, Hachiman, Isis, Osiris, Quetzalcoátl, Sif, Sobek, Tlaloc, Xipe Totec

GREEN THUMB (FERTILITY ●)

Dice Pool: None

Cost: 1 Legend per plant/patch per year

The Scion need only touch a large plant (such as a tree or bush) or a one-square-yard patch of smaller plants (from a window box of daisies to a sheet of algae) and spend a point of Legend. That plant or patch can then survive for a whole year (or for its whole life if its natural span is shorter) without food or sunlight or water. The Scion's ministrations keep the plant healthy through drought, nutrient deficiency, unnatural darkness or other environmental shortfall. The plant's surroundings must be within its natural tolerances for the plant to survive, though. (This Boon can't nurture seaweed on the desert floor, for instance.) Also, this Boon doesn't protect against or cure any blight or damage from herbivorous noshing.

CLEANSE (FERTILITY ●●)

Dice Pool: Stamina + Survival

Cost: 1 Legend

Every gardener and farmer has to deal with blight or vermin sometimes, but doing so is easy for a Scion with this Boon. The player rolls (Stamina + Survival) and spends one Legend, and any blight or infestation ends immediately. Blight clears up as if it had never occurred, and vermin suddenly find the affected plants unappealing. This Boon affects a number of large plants (or a number of square yards of a patch of smaller plants) equal to the successes achieved on the roll. This Boon

"PLANTS"

We use the term "plants" here to refer to all life forms that aren't animal, bacterial or viral—including even algae, fungi, lichen and ferns. We know we've grossly oversimplified the vast, interesting, complicated field of biology. We've done so intentionally, and we beg the indulgence of every biologist.

doesn't protect against future blights, and it stops only the current generation of vermin infestation.

BLESS OR BLIGHT (FERTILITY ●●●)

Dice Pool: Stamina + Survival

Cost: 3 Legend

With a blessing, the Scion protects a patch of land from all natural blights and vermin infestations for one year. Alternatively, she can curse the land with a blight that either kills the plants within it outright or makes them so attractive to vermin that the resulting infestation has the same effect. The Scion's player spends three Legend and rolls (Stamina + Survival). The number of successes she rolls determines how many acres she can affect with this power.

If one Scion wants to use an aspect of this Boon on a patch of land on which another Scion has used the opposite aspect, a contested roll is called for. Whoever achieves more successes spreads her effect over the larger area, canceling out the lesser effect.



FIRE

For sharing fire with humanity, Zeus punished the Titan Prometheus. Yet, it's never been clear whether Prometheus meant to uplift humankind with his generosity or destroy it with an insidious, forward-thinking act of sabotage.

Associated With: Hephaestus, Loki, Ogoun, Ptah

FIRE IMMUNITY (FIRE ●)

Dice Pool: None

Cost: None

The Scion takes no damage from fire, he need never worry about suffering from smoke inhalation, and even the most intense heat is nothing more than a comforting warmth to him. This immunity remains in effect regardless of what substance is burning. It doesn't, however, extend to his clothes or to any item except the Birthright through which he channels the Boon.

BOLSTER FIRE (FIRE ●●)

Dice Pool: None

Cost: 1 Legend per scene

Normally, fire needs oxygen to breathe and fuel to consume. With this Boon, a Scion removes both



necessities from a single flame for one scene. He could keep a single torch (or even a match) lit for hours as he explores a dark labyrinth. He could cause the tiny spark at the end of a fuse to burn in place without moving. This Boon is also good for keeping a source of flame from consuming the breathable air in an enclosed space.

The Scion must be able to see the flame he intends to bolster, but once he uses the Boon, he can leave its presence without canceling the effect. The fire he bolsters with this Boon can be no larger than that of an average campfire (roughly a yard in diameter).

If no source of flame is available, the Scion can create a fire the size of a candle flame from thin air. It burns at the end of his finger or from some point on the Birthright he uses to activate the Boon. The flame isn't strong enough to cause damage in combat, but it can ignite a flammable substance easily enough.

FIRE'S EYE (FIRE ●●●)

Dice Pool: Perception + Awareness

Cost: 1 Legend

The Scion can see out of any fire that A.) is already within his line of sight or B.) he affected with Bolster Fire. The Scion cannot hear what is happening around a distant fire, and his field of vision remains the same through the fire as it is through his eyes. He may physically move his head or turn his body in place to change his remote perspective, though.

While he looks through the fire, the Scion can't see from his own perspective. He may maintain his remote perspective for as long as he wishes.



GUARDIAN

It is every God's and Scion's responsibility to protect the World, but some take this duty more seriously than their fellows. It's from them that this Purview arises.

Associated With: Anubis, Baldur, Erzulie, Hachiman, Heimdall, Huitzilopochtli, Isis, Miclantecuhtli, Quetzalcoatl, Raiden, Set, Thor, Xipe Totec

VIGIL BRAND (GUARDIAN ●)

Dice Pool: Perception + Empathy (to check up)

Cost: 1 Legend (to brand)

The Scion touches a person, an object or the entrance to a location and lays a mystical brand there that marks that subject as being under her protection. (Doing so costs one Legend.) Thereafter, whenever that subject is in physical danger (as determined by the Storyteller), the Scion receives a reflexive intuition to that effect. Should her player then succeed on a (Perception + Empathy) roll, she gains a clearer understanding of the subject's condition, location and current situation. The Scion can also use this Boon to check up on a subject at any time, but only one subject at a time.

A Scion cannot brand herself with this Boon, but she can brand as many other subjects as she pleases. A subject can be branded by more than one Scion at the same time. Each brand is unique to the Scion who made it.

AEGIS (GUARDIAN ••)

Dice Pool: Stamina + Fortitude

Cost: 1 Legend + 1 Willpower

By touching a mortal or an object, the Scion grants it a measure of divine physical protection. Her player spends one Legend and Willpower then rolls (Stamina + Fortitude), adding her usual bonuses. Successes on this roll then apply to the subject of the Scion's protection as a temporary Hardness rating for the next 24 hours.

WARD (GUARDIAN •••)

Dice Pool: Stamina + Fortitude

Cost: 1 Legend + 1 Willpower

By touching the entrance to a location, the Scion lays a ward on the area that bars entrance to a certain type of threat. Such a ward could bar ghosts, walking dead, a breed of titanspawn, human beings, lesser animals or Scions. The ward acts as a sphere with a circumference area equal to 500 square feet per dot of Legend the Scion has. It lasts for one day per success garnered by the (Stamina + Fortitude) roll.

The Scion can ward an area against as many different types of threats as she wants, but each threat requires its own activation roll and expenditure. (In effect, she must stack multiple wards on the same area.) Characters with more Legend than the Scion who laid down the ward can attempt to batter their way through the perimeter, thus destroying the ward. The ward can take a number of health levels of damage equal to $(\text{the Scion's Legend} \times 5) + [\text{activation roll successes}]$, and it has a Hardness rating equal to the Scion's Legend.



HEALTH

This Purview pertains to the physical well-being of beasts, mortals or other Scions. Titanspawn and supernatural creatures are also legitimate subjects of these Boons, but a Scion cannot use these Boons on himself.

Associated With: Apollo, Artemis, Athena, Baron Samedi, Damballa, Freya, Freyr, Hera, Isis, Quetzalcoatl, Tlaloc, Xipe Totec

ASSESS HEALTH (HEALTH •)

Dice Pool: None

Cost: None

The Scion can instantly, automatically assess the current medical condition of a single living patient in his presence. He can tell how many levels of damage the patient is suffering, as well as any physical addictions he suffers, any illnesses or diseases with which he is infected and any genetic defects that afflict him.

BLESSING OF HEALTH / CURSE OF FRAILTY (HEALTH ••)

Dice Pool: Stamina + Medicine

Cost: 1 Legend

The Boon can take away a patient's reproductive capabilities or restore them, provided the patient already has all the necessary organs. This effect lasts for one year per success on the activation roll.

Used on a pregnant patient, the Boon can make her unborn child come into the World strong and healthy or sickly and deformed. The Boon can cure or create any of the following conditions: a physical deformity, a life-threatening birth defect, a chemical dependency, an illness contracted from the mother, physical damage suffered in utero or a non-specified immune system effect (representing a ± 2 dice modifier in rolls to resist illness). Each separate condition increases the difficulty of the roll by one. A Scion can also use this Boon on an infant within the first 24 hours after its birth.

HEAL / INFECT (HEALTH •••)

Dice Pool: Stamina + Medicine

Cost: 1 Legend or 1 Willpower

The Scion can repair a patient's injuries or inflict harm directly. On one hand, he can heal as many health levels of bashing damage as his player gets successes on a (Stamina + Medicine) roll. Doing so costs one Legend. Alternatively, he can downgrade a number of health levels equal to successes on the roll from lethal to bashing damage. Doing so costs one Willpower.

On the other hand, he can inflict as many health levels of bashing damage as his player gets successes on the (Stamina + Medicine) roll. Doing so also costs one Legend. Alternatively, he can upgrade a number of health levels equal to successes on the roll from bashing to lethal damage. Doing so costs one Willpower.

The Scion can use this Boon on the same person only once per day. He can use it on as many different people in the same day as he can afford to spend the points.



JUSTICE

The Purview of Justice covers all forms of redress of slights, from the meanest of petty vengeance to the most grandiloquent of karmic poetry.

Associated With: Anubis, Athena, Geb, Horus, Osiris, Quetzalcoatl, Shango, Thoth, Tyr, Vidar, Zeus

JUDGMENT (JUSTICE •)

Dice Pool: Perception + Empathy

Cost: None

This Boon aids a Scion immensely in determining guilt, one of the foundations of meting out justice. When she confronts someone she suspects committed

an injustice and accuses that person of having done so, her player rolls (Perception + Empathy). (This roll isn't modified by supernatural powers or contested by the suspect's player.) On a success, the Scion can intuitively tell whether the suspect is guilty as charged. A failure yields an indeterminate reading and means that the Scion can't try to determine the same subject's guilt for 24 hours. A botch yields a false reading.

GUILT APPARITIONS (JUSTICE ••)

Dice Pool: Manipulation + Integrity

Cost: 1 Legend

When a Scion knows that someone is guilty of an injustice but she lacks either the evidence to prove it or the leverage to make him admit it, she can rely on this Boon instead. To use it, she accuses the guilty party of the injustice (be it in person, in a letter, over the phone, via skywriting...), and her player spends a point of Legend and rolls (Manipulation + Integrity). If the roll succeeds, the accusation causes the victim to periodically hallucinate like Macbeth or his wife. These hallucinations occur randomly, torturing the guilty party with the knowledge that justice hasn't been served. They also render him unable to regain Willpower.

The effect lasts for a number of days equal to the activation roll's successes, or until the offender makes fair amends, or until the offender confesses his crime to someone who can force him to make fair amends—whichever occurs first.

SHIELD OF RIGHTEOUSNESS (JUSTICE •••)

Dice Pool: None

Cost: 1 Legend + 1 Willpower

This Boon can protect an innocent victim from suffering someone else's due punishment. The Scion cries out against the injustice—a simple “He didn't do it!” will suffice—and spends the Legend and Willpower point. Doing so, she renders the next action that would inflict harm on the innocent victim completely impotent, obviating any damage that action should inflict. Whether the victim is being stabbed by a jealous wife, shot by a firing squad, lynched by a mob, hurled off a cliff by a duped Scion vigilante or whatever, he suffers no damage from that action.

For the Boon to work, the Scion must be present at the site of the unjust punishment, and the victim must actually be innocent.



MOON

This Purview represents the moon's tidal effects, its ever-changing nature and its celestial serenity.

Associated With: Artemis, Bastet, Horus, Kalfu, Tezcatlipoca, Thoth, Tsuki-yomi

SMOKING MIRROR (MOON •)

Dice Pool: None

Cost: 1 Legend

By looking up at the moon and spending the requisite Legend point, the character sees reflected in it a bird's-eye view of the surrounding terrain. This perspective allows a clear view of a radius in miles equal to the Scion's Legend. The Scion may focus on any point in the reflection and see it clearly, but he can't see through physical objects or change the angle from the top-down perspective. This Boon doesn't function on new moon nights, but it *can* see down through thick clouds on any other night. If the moon is visible during the day, the Scion can use this Boon then as well.

TIDAL INTERFERENCE (MOON ••)

Dice Pool: Strength + Presence

Cost: 1 Legend per point of DV penalty

The Scion exerts a pull on all enemies with whom he's in close combat. A success on a (Strength + Presence) roll activates this Boon, and the Scion spends a set number of points of Legend (the maximum that may be spent is the value of the Scion's permanent Legend). The Boon then inflicts a DV penalty on his close-combat opponents equal to the number of Legend points he spent. This effect lasts for the rest of the combat scene.

PHASE CLOAK (MOON •••)

Dice Pool: Dexterity + Stealth

Cost: 1 Legend

The Scion turns himself away from his enemies much as the moon turns its face away from the earth. The player decides which “phase” of the character's body he wishes to leave visible then rolls the Scion's (Dexterity + Stealth) against a difficulty determined on the table that follows. If the roll succeeds, the intended portion of his body fades from sight. If the roll fails, the Legend point is still spent, but nothing happens. If the roll botches, the character assumes the full-moon phase, garnering a -3 penalty on any mundane attempt to hide.

A character can attempt to use this Boon only once per scene, and the effects last for the entire scene.

Phase	Difficulty	Effect
Gibbous	1	Stealth rolls receive two bonus successes
Half	2	Stealth rolls receive four bonus successes
Crescent	3	Stealth rolls receive six bonus successes
New	4	Mundane detection attempts fail automatically. Stealth rolls against supernatural detection receive eight bonus successes
Full	Botch	Stealth dice pools suffer a -3 penalty



PSYCHOPOMP

The Psychopomp Purview comprises every aspect of conducting subjects from one place to another, whether the destination is across town or in the deepest pits of the Underworld, and whether those subjects are dead souls or snot-nosed preschoolers.

Associated With: Baron Samedi, Hermes, Izanagi, Legba, Odin, Ptah, Quetzalcoátl, Susano-o, Tsuki-yomi

UNERRING ORIENTATION (PSYCHOPOMP •)

Dice Pool: None

Cost: 1 Legend

In a locale she knows well, such as her hometown or a national park she visits every autumn, the Scion knows how to get from any point within to any other point. In an unfamiliar locale, her sense of direction defaults to a standard compass rose. Should someone give her correct directions in an unfamiliar locale, she retains them thereafter. If she studies a map of an unfamiliar city for five minutes, that information remains imprinted on her mind until she leaves that city for longer than a week.

For the cost of one Legend, the Boon can also reveal to a Scion how far away and in what direction the location she considers home lies. Alternatively, if the Scion finds herself in a strange place—if she's been drugged and kidnapped, for instance—this Boon can tell her how far she is and in what direction she traveled from the last place she wasn't lost.

WHERE ARE YOU? (PSYCHOPOMP ••)

Dice Pool: Intelligence + Awareness

Cost: None

If someone makes remote contact with a Scion (by telephone, instant messenger, telepathy...), the Scion gets a sense of how far away he is and in what direction. She might not be able to direct the person to her location, but she can follow her nose right to the location whence the contact originated. The sensation remains even after the period of contact ends, but it doesn't follow the person around if that person moves. It can only lead a Scion to where the communication ended.

UNBARRED ENTRY (PSYCHOPOMP •••)

Dice Pool: None

Cost: 1 Legend

The Scion can pass through a solid surface as if either she or it were intangible. She can pass through only as much space as she could cross in a single step—through a wall or a locked door, for instance—and doing so is a simple action. All the Scion's clothing and items make the transition with her, but she can't pull anyone

else along behind. If the solid surface is too thick for her to be able to pass through, it remains as solid to her as it does to everyone else. This Boon doesn't literally make the Scion intangible, however, so she can't use it in combat to avoid damage or to step through a ring of fire without being burned.



SKY

The Sky Purview is one of wind and storms and lightning and flight. Its Boons offer a Scion unparalleled freedom and majesty.

Associated With: Frigg, Horus, Izanagi, Quetzalcoátl, Raiden, Set, Shango, Susano-o, Thor, Tlaloc, Zeus

SKY'S GRACE (SKY •)

Dice Pool: None

Cost: 1 Legend

By spending a point of Legend, the Scion takes no damage from falls of any height. Alternatively, the Scion can use that point to double the distance he can jump either straight up or horizontally. If the Scion has the Holy Bound Knack—see p. 126—as well as this Boon, the base distance he can leap doubles, then doubles again if the player spends a point of Legend.

Also, Sky's Grace can mitigate knockback the character suffers from successful attacks. If an attack knocks the character back, he may spend a point of Legend to stop himself in a sudden gust of wind. The attack still knocks the character back at least one yard, but the character may stop himself at any distance he chooses beyond that.

WIND'S FREEDOM (SKY ••)

Dice Pool: None

Cost: 1 Legend + 1 Willpower per scene

The Scion laughs in the face of gravity. For the rest of the scene, the distances the Scion can move or dash per action remain normal, but they now apply to the Z-axis as well as the X- and Y-axes. All the normal rules for movement remain in place, except that the character can now move freely through all three dimensions (i.e., he can fly). He can even hold still in midair if he wants to. The only thing a character can't do in midair that he could do on the ground is jump, as there's nothing to jump off of.

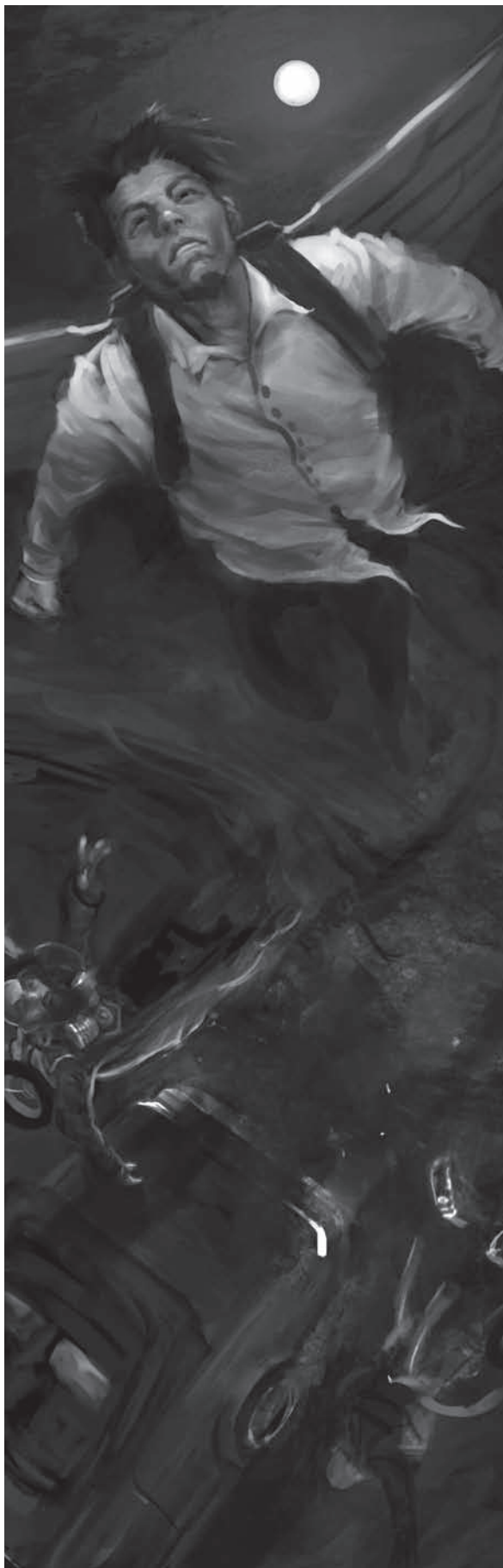
If the character drops the Birthright that makes this Boon possible or allows it to be destroyed, the effect ends immediately.

STORM AUGMENTATION (SKY •••)

Dice Pool: Appearance + Presence

Cost: 1 Legend per attack

For a number of actions equal to the successes the player rolled to activate the Boon, jagged threads of lightning coil around the Scion's fists or weapon, or skirling winds sweep around him as he moves. On any



successful attack he makes in the subsequent duration, he may spend a point of Legend to make thunder crash or winds gust violently. Doing so automatically doubles any knockback the attack applies. Furthermore, if the attack inflicts even one level of damage, have the victim's player roll (Stamina + Fortitude) against a difficulty equal to (raw damage - victim's Legend). The minimum difficulty for this roll is 1. If the victim's player fails this roll, the victim is stunned, losing two dice from all non-reflexive rolls until the attacker's next action.

This Boon's effects apply to any attack the character makes—be it in close or ranged combat—for which he spends the requisite point of Legend.



SUN

This Purview represents the sun's radiance, its constancy and its celestial glory.

Associated With: Amaterasu, Apollo, Atum-Re, Baldur, Bastet, Freyr, Heimdall, Horus, Huitzilopochtli, Legba, Tezcatlipoca

PENETRATING GLARE (SUN •)

Dice Pool: None

Cost: None

As sunlight only dims when it passes through thick clouds, so too can a Scion's vision cut through physical occlusions. When the Scion receives this Boon, she sees clearly through such physical impediments as smoke, fog, murky water (if the Scion is in said water) or even translucent barriers through which other people can see only silhouettes. The character can even see perfectly clearly in dim light (i.e., light no less intense than a single birthday candle). In total darkness, however, she's just as blind as the next person.

DIVINE RADIANCE (SUN ••)

Dice Pool: None

Cost: 1 Legend

This Boon allows a Scion to emit sunlight. She can either radiate a glow from her entire body, shining with the intensity of a 100-watt incandescent light bulb, or focus that light to a narrower beam. For instance, she could narrow the focus of the light to come from her palm or her eyes to act as a high-powered flashlight. The Scion can emit soft light thus for one scene.

Alternatively, the character can concentrate her light into a single intense burst that gleams from some reflective surface on her person, be it from the steel edge of her weapon, the metal buttons on her jacket or the surgical-steel head of her tongue stud. (Such a burst imposes a -2 distraction penalty on the victim's non-reflexive actions until the Scion's next action, and it ends the Scion's use of this Boon.) The Scion could even focus the light down to a pinpoint intense enough to scorch an object or ignite a flammable accelerant.

(The pinpoint is not intense enough to damage a victim in combat, though.)

HEAVENLY FLARE (SUN ●●)

Dice Pool: Appearance + Presence

Cost: 1 Legend

Concentrating for one action (Speed 4), the Scion builds up and releases a flash of sunlight that's impossible for anyone within line of sight to miss. When she does so, the player of anyone who was looking at her, even through expensive sunglasses, must roll (Stamina + Fortitude). If the victim's roll nets more successes than the Scion's activation roll, he sees only a sudden flash that has no effect on him. If the victim gains an equal number of successes, he still suffers a -2 distraction penalty on all non-reflexive actions until the Scion's next action. If the Scion gets more successes to activate this Boon than a victim does to resist it, the victim is both blinded and rendered Inactive until the Scion's next action. After that, the victim suffers a -3 distraction penalty on all non-reflexive actions for a number of actions equal to the Scion's Legend rating. Extras are automatically assumed to fail the resistance roll.



WAR

This Purview covers all ideologically inspired battles from the smallest house-to-house raids to the most impressive land, sea and air campaigns to the largest cosmic clash between God and Titan. The ideology in question must be religious, political, geographical or cosmic for the conflict to qualify.

Associated With: Ares, Athena, Erzulie, Freya, Freyr, Hachiman, Huitzilopochtli, Odin, Ogoun, Set, Tezcatlipoca, Tyr

BLESSING OF BRAVERY (WAR ●)

Dice Pool: Charisma + Command

Cost: None

Intoning a benediction over a person or group prepared to engage in battle, the Scion bolsters their courage and determination. Every character on the Scion's side of the conflict who hears the benediction gains a point of Willpower as well as two temporary bonus dots of Valor that last until the battle ends. The Scion may amplify his voice electronically, but he must be present at the battle and give the blessing live.

BATTLE CRY (WAR ●●)

Dice Pool: Charisma + Presence

Cost: 1 Legend

During a battle, be it a pitched field engagement or an alley fight between a Band of Scions and a gang of frost giants, the Scion can loose a horrible battle cry that unnerves his foes. Every fighter on the Scion's enemies' side who hears the unearthly shriek loses one die from

all attack rolls for a number of attacks equal to the Scion's Legend rating.

The Scion may use electronic equipment to amplify this battle cry so every enemy present can hear it, but he must be present on the battlefield himself for it to work. He can let out this battle cry only once per combat scene, and it doesn't affect enemies whose Legend rating is higher than his.

WARRIOR IDEAL (WAR ●●)

Dice Pool: Charisma + Presence

Cost: 1 Legend

The Scion adopts some idealized warrior aspect, from howling berserker to unquestioning enlisted man to fearless officer to pitiless samurai. This attitude unnerves and intimidates any opponent who faces him in combat, inflicting a penalty equal to the Scion's Legend on any attack roll the opponent makes. This penalty applies to any character with a lesser or equal Legend rating who attempts to attack the Scion. This idealized aspect lasts for a number of consecutive actions during the battle equal to the successes the Scion's player rolled to activate it, and he can invoke it only once during any given battle.



WATER

Water is arguably the single most important and versatile substance in the World. Only a rare few Gods claim dominion over this Purview, and they keep its secrets from all but their most trusted Scions.

Associated With: Poseidon, Quetzalcoatl, Sobek, Susano-o

WATER BREATHING (WATER ●)

Dice Pool: None

Cost: None

The Scion need never fear drowning, and she is no longer affected by extremes of water temperature. She can breathe water as easily as air, and she is neither scalded by boiling water nor subject to debilitating frostbite from ice. Having boiling water poured on one's flesh still hurts, mind you, and being bound in ice or cast adrift in frigid water can still numb and paralyze a Scion. Neither of those extremes can cause the Scion actual physical damage, though.

When the Scion moves from air to water or vice versa, she must spend one action Inactive in order to purge one substance from her lungs and breathe in the other. She can forestall this necessity via the normal rules for holding her breath (on p. 182). If the Scion is breathing water, any toxins in that water affect her just as breathing in airborne toxins would on land.

WATER CONTROL (WATER ●●)

Dice Pool: Dexterity + Craft

Cost: 1 Legend

For a number of actions equal to the successes on the activation roll, the Scion can exert limited physical control of any water that is touching her. She can remotely manipulate a hand-held object she can see in the water with her full dice pool, although she can take no other physical actions at the same time. She can stiffen the water beneath her feet in order to walk on its surface. She can even have the water push her along from all sides, allowing her to take a full Move action while swimming, rather than half (see p. 180 in Chapter Six). Alternatively, moving through the water thus could increase her Dodge DV by an amount equal to her Legend as long as she does nothing but dodge incoming attacks. The Boon also allows such random tricks as having the Scion instantly dry off by flinging all water off her body or creating a water bridge so an aquatic creature can swim from one container to another.

This Boon works only on liquid water, and a Scion can affect five cubic yards of water at a time per dot of Legend he has. (If she's walking on water, she can affect one 30' x 15' rectangle on the surface per dot of Legend she has. The affected area supports only her and anything she can carry unaided.) Her command is not such, however, that she can use water to restrain or inflict direct physical damage against an opponent with a liquid shape of her creation.

CHANGING STATES (WATER ●●●)

Dice Pool: Dexterity + Craft

Cost: 1 Legend + 1 Willpower

Defying the laws of thermodynamics, the Scion can instantly change the state of a body of water just by touching it. With this Boon, she can take liquid water, steam, ice or fog and change any one into any of the other three. The amount of water she can affect is the same as per Water Control, and the water remains in its

WATER DUELING

If two opposed Scions try to control the same water, the Scion with more dots in Legend wins out and determines the effect. If the Scions are equally matched, the players make opposed (Dexterity + Craft) rolls. Whoever gains more successes has his effect win out, but the duration of that effect diminishes based on the number of successes his opponent's roll took away.

new state for a number of actions equal to the successes rolled to activate the Boon. Water under this effect is also subject to the Scion's Water Control as long as the Scion maintains contact with some portion of it. The Scion can now inflict damage against a single opponent with blasts of steam or with ice projectiles, using her regular traits. (The damage for a steam blast is always lethal environmental damage [Damage: 2L/action, Trauma: 3], but damage can be bashing or lethal for an ice projectile.) The character may also create a club, axe, knife or sword out of ice and use it as a normal weapon of that type.

Water in an altered state doesn't melt, freeze, boil or condense as it normally would in its current environment for the duration of the effect. As altered steam, it maintains a constant temperature of 220 degrees; as altered liquid water or altered fog, it stays at 70 degrees; as altered ice, it stays at 14 degrees. (That's all Fahrenheit, by the way.) When the effect ends, the water instantly resumes its original state and temperature.

PANTHEON-SPECIFIC PURVIEWS

These Boons are passed down through a Scion's ichor—similar to Epic Attributes—so using them doesn't require Birthright items. No Scion can purchase or use a pantheon-specific Purview from outside his pantheon. Scions must buy these Boons in sequence but not separately. The Scion's player pays the experience for the next dot in the progression to receive the next individual power or increase in power.



ARETE

Arete is a Greek word meaning "excellence," a quality highly valued among the Greek Gods. In fact, showing off one's surpassing skill or total command of a field of study is a recurring theme throughout many legends about them. Granted, most of those legends involve some pompous mortal

claiming to be the best there is at what she does and an offended God's reaction to that claim not being very pretty. Nonetheless, the Greek Gods and the society that venerated them held the concept of excellence in such high regard that it became a Purview specific to them.

This Purview doesn't bestow specific powers, exactly, as much as it magnifies one's talents to divine proportions. When a Scion takes an Arete, he assigns to it one of his Abilities. (That Ability must be rated at three dots or higher first.) Thereafter, whenever the Scion's player rolls a dice pool that includes that chosen Ability, the pool receives a number of bonus dice based on the number of dots he has of Arete. Alternatively, the Scion may sacrifice two of those bonus dice (provided he has at least two available) in exchange for a potential reroll in case his first roll fails. If the roll on which he sacrificed two bonus dice doesn't have the good sense to fail, however, the player doesn't get to roll those bonus

dice after the fact. Nor does he get to reroll a successful roll in hopes of scoring even more successes.

A character may have an Arete in any Ability (or as many Abilities as) he wants, but he must purchase the dots for each Ability's Arete separately. The dots-to-bonus-dice exchange is as follows:

Arete •	One bonus die
Arete ••	Two bonus dice (or one potential reroll)
Arete •••	Four bonus dice (or two potential rerolls)



CHEVAL

With this Purview, a Scion can assume the role of “*met tet*” or head spirit in a person’s life. Scions of the Voodoo Loa are expected to be responsible and use their powers only in service of their community, but these

Boons raise an awful temptation to do otherwise.

RADA’S EYES (CHEVAL •)

Dice Pool: Perception + Empathy

Cost: 1 Legend

The Scion can experience another person’s perceptions as if they were her own. These perceptions include input from all five senses, though not the character’s subjective reactions to that input. To use this Boon, the Scion must have a picture of her victim, some genetic token of the victim’s (such as a lock of hair or several drops of blood) or something the victim created (from a printed-out email to an ice sculpture). By meditating on the item and relaxing her own perceptions—as well as spending a point of Legend after a successful (Perception + Empathy) roll on the part of her player—the Scion experiences the victim’s perceptions clearly and distinctly. The victim is unaware of the Scion’s attention, but the Scion remains semi-aware of her own surroundings. The Scion’s player is entitled to a (Perception + Awareness) roll to realize if something obvious is happening around her character, such as if a zombie comes shambling toward her with a sizzling stick of dynamite. If something less obvious happens around the Scion, though—for instance, anything that would require a (Perception + Awareness) roll to notice if she were paying full attention—the Scion doesn’t notice while her perceptions are distracted.

A Scion can experience the perceptions of a mortal human being without being noticed as long as she has at least one of the requisite items. The same goes for a fellow Scion who has fewer Legend dots than she does. If that fellow Scion has more dots of Legend, the character cannot experience his perceptions. If that fellow Scion has an equal number of Legend dots, the Voodoo Scion needs a genetic token that belonged to the victim.

Also, the victim’s player is entitled to a (Perception + Awareness) roll. If that roll succeeds, his character gets the eerie, vague sensation of being watched. Should that character then spend a point of Willpower, the Voodoo Scion loses her connection and cannot experience remote perceptions for the remainder of the scene.

PETRO’S HANDS (CHEVAL ••)

Dice Pool: Intelligence + Control

Cost: 1 Willpower

The Scion can now exert some control over a victim whose senses she’s observing. The Scion must be actively experiencing her victim’s perceptions with Rada’s Eyes, and her player must spend a Willpower point to activate this Boon. If the Voodoo Scion’s victim is a mortal or a Scion with fewer dots of Legend than she has, activating this Boon takes only that Willpower expenditure. If the Scion victim has an equal number of Legend dots, the Voodoo Scion’s player must also succeed in a contested roll of her (Intelligence + Control) against the victim’s (Willpower + Integrity + Legend). Should she succeed, the Voodoo Scion can then perform one physical action through the victim’s body. She can do anything from simply forcing the victim to hold still and look intently at something the Scion wants to study to making the oblivious victim jump out of the way of a shinobi assassin’s leaping kick. The dice pool for the action the Scion forces the victim to take is based on the Voodoo Scion’s mundane traits. (Epic Attributes do not aid in the action.)

A Scion can exert this control over a victim only once per scene.

HORSE (CHEVAL •••)

Dice Pool: Intelligence + Control

Cost: 1 Willpower + 1 Legend

The Scion can now exert total control over her victim for a limited time. She must be using Rada’s Eyes to share the victim’s perceptions, and she must spend a point of Willpower and a point of Legend to assert full control. (The victim’s chance to resist is the same as for Petro’s Hands.) If the Scion succeeds in her possession attempt, she can “ride” around inside her victim’s body for one scene (or less if she chooses to end the effect early). She exerts all of her own mundane traits, except for Appearance, through the effectively empty husk, losing all sense of the situation around her own body. If the body she’s riding suffers damage as a result of her actions, she feels the pain and suffers the wound penalties, but it’s only a phantom psychosomatic pain. Her own body suffers no damage. Once the spirit horse body suffers enough damage to render it Incapacitated or to kill it (based on the host’s own traits, not the Scion’s), the Scion loses her connection with it and returns to her own body. If the Scion’s real body suffers damage as a result of something going on around it, the Scion remains unaware of it until her spirit returns



home. If someone or some event destroys the Scion's body while her spirit is away, her spirit simply winks out of existence.

A victim of possession has only dreamlike, half-glimpsed memories of what his body did when he was possessed. If the actions the Scion took were especially traumatic to the victim, the victim might block them out altogether.



HEKU

This Purview derives from the ancient Egyptian understanding of the metaphysical composition of the soul. According to that belief, the soul consists of the *ren* (name), *sekem* (energy), *ba* (soul/personality), *ka* (corporeal life-force), *akh* (postmortem union of *ba* and *ka*), *khaibit* (shadow) and *sekhu* (the body's physical remains).

REN HARVEST (HEKU •)

Dice Pool: Charisma + Empathy

Cost: None

Whenever someone speaks of the Scion's deeds, or whenever he sees news of his exploits in print somewhere, his player makes a (Charisma + Empathy) roll. The Scion gains a number of Legend points equal to the number of successes rolled. The story must pertain specifically to the Scion, which the context should make clear. Also, it must be uttered or written without the Scion's direct knowledge. He might reasonably expect to see or hear it, but he cannot literally command someone to say or write it so as to reap the benefits. This Boon pertains only to evidence that his legend is spreading—hence the Legend-point reward.

SEKEM BLAZE (HEKU ••)

Dice Pool: None

Cost: 1 Legend

Sekem is the light, the power and the energy of the Scion's soul. With this Boon, he channels that powerful light through his gaze to intimidate a foe. Such a foe can be an animal, a person, a Scion or even one of the titanspawn, and the Scion need only look it in the eyes and spend a point of Legend. An animal who sees the Sekem Blaze in the Scion's eyes immediately ceases any aggression toward the Scion and flees. A mortal or ghost so affected calms down and remains cowed for the rest of the scene. A Scion or titanspawn with fewer dots of Legend than the Scion using the Boon is as affected as a mortal, but a Scion or titanspawn with an equal number of dots may spend a point of Willpower to counteract the effect. Anyone with more dots of Legend remains unaffected.

A Scion can attempt to affect only one victim per action with this Boon. If the Scion attacks a victim he has cowed with this power, the effect ends after the aggressive action.

SEKEM BARRIER (HEKU •••)

Dice Pool: Appearance + Command

Cost: 1 Legend

The character spends a point of Legend and his player rolls (Appearance + Command). If the roll succeeds, the radiance of the character's divine heritage illuminates his entire body, affecting all who look upon him. Use the same rubric as for Sekem Blaze to determine whether nearby characters are affected. Those who are affected react as those affected by Sekem Blaze.



ITZTLI

The Aztecs practiced many sacrificial rituals, from personal observances performed in private to public spectacles performed on stone altars high atop massive step pyramids. They did so to both empower and placate the Gods so that the Gods would have the means and the motivation to continue to do their jobs. Being both mortal and divine, an Aztec God's Scion can straddle the line between performing and accepting a blood sacrifice.

MAGUEY STING (ITZTLI •)

Dice Pool: None

Cost: 1 lethal health level

By piercing her flesh with a maguey thorn, an obsidian blade, a surgical scalpel or even just a rusty straight pin, the Scion sheds a portion of her blood. This blood serves as a token offering to her divine parent, who rewards her with a single point of Legend. The Scion may perform this sacrifice only once per day.

COMBAT SACRIFICE (ITZTLI ••)

Dice Pool: None

Cost: 1 Willpower

The Scion stands unflinching before her raging enemies, sacrificing her safety in the name of her Legend. In combat, the character spends a point of Willpower to psych herself up for an action that might seem damn foolish. The player then sacrifices points of DV against an incoming attack, effectively making the character easier to hit. She can sacrifice no more points of DV than she has dots of Legend. If the attack hits her as a result of this reduced DV and inflicts even a single point of damage, the Scion receives a number of points of Legend equal to the DV penalty she forced upon herself. (Only those points of DV the player intentionally sacrificed count.)

The character can use this Boon as many times as she wants in combat—if she's a masochist—but the granted Legend points cannot exceed the character's standard maximum.

OBSIDIAN MUTILATION (ITZTLI •••)

Dice Pool: Conviction

Cost: 1 lethal health level per Legend

As with Maguey Sting, the Scion ritually sheds her blood and receives a concomitant reward in Legend. Unlike Maguey Sting, though, this sacrifice doesn't top out at one health level and one point of Legend per day. If her player succeeds on a Conviction roll, the character may inflict as many health levels of lethal damage upon herself as she wishes, earning a point of Legend for every health level she suffers. (These points may exceed the normal maximum, but any extra points disappear after one week.) The character may perform this ritual only once per week.



JOTUNBLUT

"Jotunblut," which means literally "giant's blood," describes a quality peculiar to the Gods and Scions of the Norse pantheon. In ancient days, the Norse Gods intermingled with the giants from whom they took the World, blending their ichor with their enemies' blood. Today, that legacy breeds true in the ichor of those Gods' Scions. By shedding a measure of her blood (i.e., suffering a single health level of lethal damage) and spending Legend, a Scion can use that blood to bestow a hint of the giants' legendary strength and toughness.

Mortals and animals who receive this endowment from a Scion remain loyal to that Scion thereafter, though they become surly and short-tempered with everyone else. This loyalty lasts for a limited time and must be renewed periodically by a fresh infusion of the Scion's blood. If the limited time lapses and the Scion doesn't renew the recipient's loyalty, the recipient turns feral but keeps the physical bonuses. Once that happens, any Scion with appropriate Jotunblut Boons can re-endow the feral being and claim its loyalty for his own.

The endowments granted by these Boons cannot be stacked on the same character, even if a Scion is re-endowing a feral being. They can, however, be replaced by higher-dot Boons under this Purview. That is, a Scion cannot endow the same person twice with this Purview's two-dot Boon in order to give the person four free Attribute dots. (That would cost more Legend points anyway.) If he wants the person to have more free Attribute dots, he'll have to re-endow that person with a Jotunblut Boon rated at three dots or higher. If the Scion re-endows a person with a Jotunblut Boon rated less than or equal to the last one that affected the character after that person's previous loyalty lapses, the Scion claims that person's loyalty but has no effect on the recipient's Attributes.

Finally, Scions cannot use these Boons to bestow free Attribute dots on (or to claim the loyalty of) titanspawn, their fellow Scions or other supernatural beings.

BESTIAL ENDOWMENT (JOTUNBLUT •)

Dice Pool: None

Cost: 1 lethal health level + 1 Legend

The Scion grants a beast a single extra dot in either Strength or Stamina. The beast becomes loyal to only the Scion, who can also train him as normal, but that loyalty must be renewed once every month.

HUMAN ENDOWMENT (JOTUNOLUT ••)

Dice Pool: None

Cost: 1 lethal health level + 2 Legend

The Scion may imbue a human with two free Attribute dots that can be spent into the human's Strength and/or Stamina. The human remains loyal to the Scion for a single month but grows irritable around other people. A Scion cannot use this Boon on a beast.

HEROIC ENDOWMENT (JOTUNOLUT •••)

Dice Pool: None

Cost: 1 lethal health level + 3 Legend

The Scion can now imbue a human with three free Attribute dots to be spent into the human's Strength and/or Stamina. The person remains loyal to the Scion for three months (roughly one season) and remains equally irritable with other people. A Scion cannot use this Boon on a beast.



TSUKUMO-GAMI

It's a fundamental Shinto understanding that every physical object has a spirit. Those spirits, known as kami, vary as widely in grace and power as the objects they represent vary in size and importance. A Scion who's inherited this Purview is not only aware of these spirits, but she's able to coax them out of hiding and bargain with them for information and favors.

THE WAKEFUL SPIRIT (TSUKUMO-GAMI •)

Dice Pool: Charisma + Presence

Cost: None

With a little persistence, a Scion can capture the attention of the spirit of an inanimate object and speak to it for a few minutes. When she does so, the object takes on anthropomorphic features—the grains in a wooden door, for instance, might flow into the shape of a face—

and speaks in a way befitting the size and importance of the object. Unremarkable, unimportant objects have dim-witted, semi-conscious spirits, whereas unique objects to which people form emotional attachments are eloquent, knowledgeable and charming.

In speaking to a spirit, a character can find out information the spirit has directly experienced. A car's spirit can talk about where it's been or who's been in it. A lamp's spirit can talk about the last time the master of the house used its light. A wishing well's spirit can talk about how many people have wasted their pittances on false hopes. The older and more interesting the object is, the farther back and more clearly its spirit can remember key information. Spirits don't differentiate easily between non-spirit beings, though, and they consider it rude to talk about the goings-on of other spirits if the spirits in question are doing their jobs properly. Also, most don't pay too much attention to their surroundings unless something truly unusual happens.

THE WATCHFUL SPIRIT (TSUKUMO-GAMI ••)

Dice Pool: Charisma + Presence

Cost: 1 Legend

The Scion can not only coax information from a kami, but also set it to some passive task on her behalf. She can, for example, have the kami watch out for a specific person, observe any titanspawn who approach, or remember and repeat anything another Scion says to it. This period of duty lasts for a number of days equal to the number of successes the character amassed on the activation roll.

THE HELPFUL SPIRIT (TSUKUMO-GAMI •••)

Dice Pool: Charisma + Occult

Cost: 1 Legend per die of improvement

With the proper shows of respect and decorum, a Scion can convince the kami within an object to enhance the mundane function of that object. In so doing, she gains a dice bonus equal to the number of Legend points she spends on the effect, which lasts for a number of days equal to number of successes on the activation roll. Be it anything from a weapon to a baby grand piano, the item must be one that requires a dice roll to use with skill. If the character uses this Boon on one of her Birthright items, she can enhance only its mundane function.

SPECIAL PURVIEWS

These Purviews are associated with specific Gods, but they are available to Scions of any heritage. Their dots are bought in sequence, representing a growing mastery of the Purview. A Scion must have a Birthright relic to use these Purviews.



MAGIC

In a sense, every power a Scion's Boons, Epic Attributes and Knacks grant her could be considered magic. Yet, one power seems magical even to them—namely the ability to

direct and influence the mysterious force of Fate. All Scions (and even the Gods themselves) are subject to Fate, but only a select few are graced with the power to read and influence it.

A Scion gains one free new spell of the increased value for each new dot of the Magic Purview he gets. Additional spells of equal or lesser value are purchased individually as Boons of the all-purpose Purviews are (for the same bonus point or experience point cost). Some sample spells are provided here, but in theory, the number of possible spells is limitless.

Scions with this Purview may design their own spells, but examples are given for each level of advancement. Inherent in each of these spells is the power to undo someone else's application of the same spell. The target of a spell is automatically Fatebound to the spell's caster (see p. 222).

Associated With: Frigg, Hera, Hermes, Huitzilopochtli, Isis, Kalfu, Loki, Odin, Tezcatlipoca, Thoth

SPELLS

Spellcasting requires a dice roll by the casting character's player. The character must also pay a cost, listed in the spell's description. If he cannot pay the cost, or does not desire to, he can perform a sacrifice instead (see the "Sacrifices" sidebar). Otherwise, he cannot cast the spell. The cost must be paid for Fate to bend.

Unless otherwise noted in a spell's description, the effects of a successfully cast spell last for one scene (or one hour).

ARIADNE'S THREAD (•)

Dice Pool: Perception + Survival

Cost: 1 Legend

The caster declares a target (a person, place or thing) and can thenceforth unerringly track where that target has gone by following the perturbations he leaves in the threads of Fate. If the target is a place, the caster can always find his way back there, no matter how disoriented or lost he has become. This spell's effect lasts for one day per success rolled, but it can be increased on a daily basis by spending one Legend point.

THE UNLIDDED EYE (•)

Dice Pool: Perception + Occult

Cost: 1 Willpower

This spell allows its caster to see magic and supernatural powers that are normally invisible to mortal sight. It also faintly reveals the threads of Fate that entwine people, revealing strong or thick threads and allowing the caster to determine a Scion's or other supernatural being's Legend score.

BONA FORTUNA (••)

Dice Pool: Wits + Occult

Cost: 1 Legend

The caster calls upon Fortune for a good luck streak. Each success gives him one die that he can "spend"

to add to any dice pool for any rolls he makes for the remainder of the scene. Once he spends all of his Bona Fortuna successes, they are gone; he must cast this spell again if he wants more. He can apportion multiple successes however he wishes, but the maximum Fortune dice he can add to any single roll cannot exceed half his Willpower score.

EVIL EYE (••)

Dice Pool: Manipulation + Presence

Cost: 1 Legend

The caster curses a single target with a withering glance or insulting gesture. Success levies a dice penalty on the dice pool for the target's next action (i.e., the next action for which dice need to be rolled). One die is subtracted per dot of the caster's Presence (or one die if the caster has no rating in this Ability). Each success on the casting affects one additional roll. For example, if the caster rolls three successes, he affects the next three rolls made for the target.

TRADING FATES (••)

Dice Pool: Wits + Presence

Cost: Dice penalties (see below) + Fatebinding

The caster grants another person a good luck streak, as he can do for himself with the Bona Fortuna spell. The cost for casting this spell, however, is that the caster must himself accept a concomitant penalty at some future time ("stored" by his Legend until spent). If the player rolled three successes, granting the spell's target a pool of three dice to spend on one or more future rolls, his character suffers a -3 penalty, which he must levy all at once against a single roll—in fact, the next roll he makes for which he spends a Legend point.

DEUS EX MACHINA (•••)

Dice Pool: Charisma + Presence

Cost: 1 or more Legend + Fatebinding

The caster calls for help—and Fate answers in its own way. The most improbable—even impossible—escapes can be delivered by this spell. If the caster hangs from a cliff by his fingernails, a sudden earthquake might cause a ledge to jut out beneath him, catching his fall. If he's tied to a train track before a speeding train, the train might leap the track over him, continuing on its way as if he weren't there. The caster cannot choose the manner of help he gets; he has thrown his lot in with Fate and gets whatever destiny brings. Basically, the Storyteller can get as dramatic and creative as he wishes, but he is under no onus to do so. He can choose a quite mundane rescue if he so desires (the Scion hanging from a cliff is pulled to safety by a boy scout).

The caster is Fatebound to the person, place or means of his rescue. The strength of the binding is 3, unless the caster spends extra Legend points—on a scale of one point per -1 strength—during the casting to lower it (minimum strength of 1).

DEMAND A LABOR (•••)

Dice Pool: Manipulation + Presence

Cost: 1 Legend + Fatebinding

The caster can demand that a person perform a task for him. This is called a labor, or sometimes a geas, and until the target of the spell completes the task, he is not whole. Until he is victorious, he cannot spend Willpower points on any action except one that aids the completion of his task.

The difficulty of this casting depends on the type of labor requested. The caster cannot, however, demand a labor with a difficulty higher than half his Willpower score.

Difficulty Labor

1	Mundane (easy): Fetch an item attainable in a common store; perform light manual labor; write a book report
2	Mundane (hard): Fetch a hard-to-find item; perform hard manual labor; solve a puzzle
3	Supernatural (easy): Deliver a message to a dryad; defeat a weak monster
4	Supernatural (hard): Defeat a tough monster
5*	Herculean: Clean the Augean Stables; fetch an apple of the Hesperides

* Beginning Scions cannot demand a labor with a difficulty higher than 4. Only demigods or Gods can cast such magic.

The player of this spell's target can attempt to have his character resist its compulsion during casting by rolling Willpower. If the roll garners more successes than the casting roll, the target is unaffected by the spell.

Higher dot ranks of this spell exist that allow the caster to levy multiple labors upon a target.



MYSTERY

The Purview of Mystery represents an understanding of the interconnection of bizarre, seemingly random events—an understanding mortal minds are unequipped to achieve. Gods and Scions with this Purview not only recognize this interconnection, but they can read significant clues from it.

Associated With: Damballa, Dionysus, Isis, Odin, Tezcatlipoca

Dice Pool: Intelligence + Mystery

To use this Purview, the Scion clears her head and looks at the World around her without analysis or expectation. Based on what she sees, the character makes heretofore-denied intuitive leaps of logic as objects in the World around her spark off subconscious connections. The player then rolls her character's (Intelligence + Mystery), *without* adding bonus successes from Epic Intelligence. The player may then ask her

SACRIFICES

If a caster doesn't wish to pay the listed cost for a spell, he can choose to make a sacrifice instead. Certain deeds yield Legend points. These points can only be spent to cast magic; they are recorded as part of a special pool, and once spent, they are gone.

Self-Sacrifice

Casters get more power from sacrificing part of their own bodies than they do by sacrificing others.

- Self-scarification: 1 Legend point
- Bloodletting: 1 Legend point per three lethal wounds he suffers.
- Cut off own finger, toe or ear: 2 Legend points
- Take out own eye: 3 Legend points (6 points if completely blinded)
- Cut off own hand or foot: 5 Legend

Sacrificing Others

Whenever a caster uses another being as his sacrifice for a casting, that person is Fatebound to him with a strength equal to the amount of Legend points gained.

- Bloodletting (others): 1 Legend point per five lethal wounds inflicted.
- Cut off another's finger, toe or ear: 1 Legend point
- Take out another's eye: 1 Legend point (2 points if completely blinded)
- Cut off another's hand or foot: 2 Legend points
- Kill an animal: 1 Legend point
- Kill a human being: 3 Legend points

Storyteller pointed, specific questions about various events that have occurred in game—one question per success on the roll. The Storyteller need not expound upon his answers (they can be quite terse and to the point, in fact), but he must answer them as honestly and directly as he can.

Using this Purview cannot reveal facts about things that will happen in the future, nor can a character use it to gain insight into events that don't concern either her or the members of her heroic Band. The player can use this effect to gain knowledge only once per story. She can reroll a failed roll until she gets a success, but on a botch she gets no information and she cannot use Mystery again until the next story.



PROPHECY

The Purview of Prophecy offers the Scion who masters it glimpses into the machinations of Fate itself. The warnings of future events that the Purview offers are invaluable, but the Scion who relies on them overmuch risks becoming an unknowing agent of Fate itself.

Associated With: Apollo, Bastet, Frigg, Legba, Odin, Shango, Tezcatlipoca

Dice Pool: Intelligence + Prophecy

The player of the Scion with this Purview rolls his (Intelligence + Prophecy)—without Epic Intelligence benefits—and he may do so once per story. If the roll fails, nothing happens, and the player may try again. If the roll succeeds, the Storyteller reveals some prophetic hints about events that will play out in the future. These hints should pertain to either significant plot points in the current story or large, overarching issues that affect the cycle as a whole. The more successes the activation roll garners, the less obscure and more directly helpful the prophetic hints should be. The Storyteller can give out a number of hints equal to the number of successes

PREPARING FOR PROPHECY

Considering how this power works, it behooves you, the Storyteller, to always plan for its use if your players' characters have it. The best time to do so is when you're plotting out an upcoming story so as not to get caught flat-footed. Just make a few notes about the key plot points as you come up with them and couch them in enigmatic language that leaves room for interpretation. Make sure you've noted how many dice your player has for the activation roll, and come up with at least that many hints or details. That way you'll know how much to parcel out based on how many successes he gets, and you won't have to wing it.

on the roll, or he can simply reveal a more detailed prophecy as the player gains more successes.

BIRTHRIGHTS

The Gods do limit their involvement in the mortal realm, but they don't send their children to war unarmed. A Scion's Visitation by his or her divine parent invariably involves the bestowal of Birthrights—legendary servants, mentors or even creatures and relics of great power. Of these categories, the relics are the most important, for they are the media through which Scions access their divine Purviews.

Without the crutch of Birthrights, the progeny of the Gods are unable to draw upon their Boons. Even worse, possessing no Birthrights is a sure sign that a Scion has not yet met her divine parent—a status that tends to attract titanspawn for the purposes of recruitment or “preemptive disposal.” But for those Scions who have already received their Visitations, sages, beasts, armies and relics await.

GIFTS FROM THE GODS

Scions begin the game with five dots of Birthrights, which can be divided among the Creatures, Followers, Guide and Relic traits. A player may purchase the same Birthright multiple times and assign differing amounts of dots to each, possessing several distinct relics or multiple legendary creatures, for example. No single trait usage can have a rating higher than five. By spending bonus points, a character could begin play with two five-dot creatures, for example, but not a single creature with a rating of

10. Regardless of how players choose to distribute their Birthright dots, they must do so judiciously. Additional Birthright traits can be acquired only through roleplaying, not the expenditure of experience points.

The use of a Birthright trait, in and of itself, never requires any dice rolling. Determining the results of, say, a consultation between a Scion and his guide should be arbitrated by roleplaying instead. Dice rolls for actions involving Birthrights might still be necessary (using a relic weapon to attack an opponent, for example), but such rolls never involve dots of the Birthright trait directly.

CREATURE

The Creature Birthright represents a Scion's close tie to a creature of legend, usually provided by a divine parent as a mount or companion. A player has all of mundanity and literature (especially the stories of his character's chosen pantheon) to draw upon when choosing a creature for his Scion. This Birthright might represent a coatl, benu bird, crocodile, wolf, snake or other creature. With enough dots invested in this Birthright, a Scion could have an even more impressive creature at her disposal, such as a kirin or a young dragon.

Chapter Twelve provides some example creatures, along with their total value as represented by dots in the Creature Birthright. These examples are just the tip of the iceberg, though. Using the guidelines here and the example monsters, players can work with their



Storytellers to develop traits for other creatures they have in mind.

Although the line between animal and human intelligence is often blurred in the realms of legend, this trait typically represents creatures of roughly animal intelligence. For more intelligent beings (centaurs or tengu, for example), the Followers or Guide Birthrights are more appropriate.

The entities covered by the Creature Birthright are assumed to be quite loyal, though not necessarily to a suicidal degree. If a creature would die to protect its master, that will become clear through roleplaying. It's not assumed merely by allocating dots to this Birthright. Communication is likewise not taken for granted. At the start of a cycle, Scions and their pets might share a limited form of communication (a few simple commands), and they can expand on this limited repertoire as the cycle proceeds. The Creature Birthright does not endow an otherwise unintelligent creature with telepathy or the ability to discuss higher level concepts, though Scions proficient in the Animal Purview might have some advantages in this regard.

Note that the dot descriptions here are merely guidelines. A very powerful nekomata, for example, would certainly rate more than a single dot, while an infant dragon would cost less than five. Use the following descriptions as rules of thumb. For the sake of game balance, refer to

the creatures described in Chapter Twelve to gauge the power of different creatures for a given dot rating.

Trait Effects:

- The creature is small, weak, somewhat fragile or perhaps entirely incorporeal—a weak nekomata, a monkey, a scarab, an owl or a raven, for example. Such creatures are useful for warning their owners of dangers and providing some limited reconnaissance, but little else.
- The creature is a somewhat larger or more powerful mundane beast—tigers, wolves, boars, large birds of prey. Weak entities can also be included here—a serpopard, Stymphalian bird, or various and sundry nature spirits would fall into this category.
- The creature is a beast of modest power, such as a golem, coatl or a pegasus.
- The creature is a more powerful one, such as the Taureau-Trois-Graines or a valkyrie horse.
- The creature is a unique beast of legend (such as Gullinbursti) or a particularly dangerous monster such as a kirin, a roc or a basilisk.

FOLLOWERS

Many heroes of legend stood at the forefront of mighty armies, and the Followers Birthright reflects that heritage.

This trait represents the number and quality of sentient beings who are extremely loyal to the Scion—making allowances for the variety of “sentient” beings found in classical legend, of course. Followers might consist of a small cadre of human warriors or servants, though they can also be recruited from the denizens of the realms of legend, including zombies, spartoi and even more exotic folk. As a rule of thumb, a being with intelligence and communication abilities roughly comparable to or surpassing humans are covered by the Followers Birthright, while creatures of animal intelligence (or those with limited communication abilities) fall under the auspices of the Creature Birthright. Given the breadth of human legend, this is a fuzzy line at best—the Storyteller gets the final say.

Though the trait effects listed here all assume five followers, a Scion isn’t limited to this number. A player can opt for a greater number of weaker followers. In essence, doing so amounts to purchasing the trait multiple times. Using the listed examples, a player might allocate five dots to the Followers trait to represent 25 hoplites, four dots to represent 10 myrmidons, and so forth.

Although a Scion’s player purchases this trait at character creation, having the dots does not imply that the character will always have access to that number of followers. If a follower dies in battle, note this on the Scion’s character sheet in the Birthrights section. Barring a trip to the Underworld (not out of the question, considering the milieu), the follower is lost to the Scion forever, or until other events arbitrated through roleplaying give the Scion access to new followers.

Use Chapter Twelve as a guide for determining the trait values for various followers, using the examples in the following chart as a benchmark:

Trait Effects:

- Five cops, hoplites or jaguar warriors.
- Five zombies or berserks.
- Five spartoi, samurai or amazons.
- Five myrmidons, einherjar or tengu.
- Five valkyries or shinobi.

GUIDE

In Greek legend, the heroes Achilles, Heracles, Jason, Aeneas, Asclepius and Peleus learned archery and the arts from the centaur Chiron—quite a list of students, considering that Chiron himself was the titanspawn child of Cronus. Military mentors, spiritual guides and other gifted advisors often figure prominently in legends from other parts of the World as well. Perhaps the ancient Gods find power in the form itself, because even in modern times, they are known to bless their children with guides.

Potential guides come in many forms: sagely mortals, fellow Scions or even legendary beings. A Greek Scion might visit a particular grove to commune with one of the “rural ghosts.” Japanese Scions might do the same at remote Shinto shrines. Loa guides have the jarring habit of dispensing wisdom through convenient passersby, often at inopportune or embarrassing moments for their students.

Purchasing this trait is no guarantee that a Scion’s guide will always be available to answer questions. Indeed, the most powerful and knowledgeable guides usually have the most distractions. Scions with guides that can be reached through a relic (see “Relics and Other Birthrights,” p. 160) will usually find their mentors easier to communicate with.

In the same vein, no guide is unerringly accurate or completely honest about all subjects. They are characters with limitations and ambitions of their own. In general, however, a guide can be relied on to fulfill his archetypal role: sometimes confusing, sometimes preoccupied, but ultimately delivering a crucial education in the way of the hero.

Because the interaction between a Scion and his divine parent is so fundamental to the game, the Guide Birthright cannot be used to define this relationship. A few Gods contact their children almost daily, some are complete absentees, but most fall somewhere in between. Regardless, an immortal mother or father is always more than just a guide (though Gods occasionally fulfill the guide role for Scions who aren’t their children).

Trait Effects:

- A wise mortal. The guide can offer useful advice about several aspects of mortal life (Ability specialties, the conduct of war, finances, etc.). Such guides might be knowledgeable in certain areas relating to the Gods—the mystic practices of their worshipers, unconfirmed accounts of titanspawn, and so forth—though they rarely have firsthand experience with Scions or their divine parents. In fact, many guides at this level have no idea how or why a deity would select them to mentor their children.
- A very wise and/or powerful mortal. The guide is either an extremely knowledgeable mortal—the World’s foremost expert in his or her chosen field, for example—or one who wields wide influence. The more power guides possess, the less time they have to guide their charges. A guide at this level could also be one of the rare individuals who is aware of the struggle between the Gods and the Titans. Such guides often have direct experience with other Scions or titanspawn.

••• An experienced Scion. The guide can offer considerable insight into all things semidivine. She might know other Scions from several pantheons, or even a few Gods. Many have experience fighting various strains of titanspawn. Unfortunately, Scions mentoring Scions can sometimes resemble the blind leading the blind. Even experienced Scions sometimes misunderstand the inscrutable intrigues of their parents. Another drawback to having a Scion for a mentor is that she's often involved with her own heroic Band, leaving her less time to guide her pupil.

•••• A legendary being. The guide could conceivably be any sort of creature or being. Many kami and loa serve in this capacity, as do the numerous nature spirits that crop up in Greek and Norse legend. Although they aren't outright Gods, such creatures are particularly attuned to the workings of divinity. These guides often have considerable experience with titanspawn, and might even have a rudimentary knowledge of the Titans themselves. Such creatures typically have limited knowledge of the mortal World, however. Sirens know lots about sailors, for instance, but their knowledge of cars and stock exchanges is limited.

••••• A minor God or Goddess. The guide possesses considerable firsthand knowledge of the Overworld, the Underworld and destinations in between, though he is often preoccupied with his divine duties. Some Gods are notoriously cryptic or find it difficult to communicate with mortals. Such deities confound (inadvertently or otherwise) as often as they guide.

RELIC

Humans are creatures defined largely by their tools, and this relationship shows up time and time again in the legends they pass on. The tools of the Gods play a major role in defining Scions as well. The children of the divine must have access to relic Birthrights in order to use their Boons. No relic, no Boons.

The Relic trait rating represents how many of the divine Purviews can be accessed through a single Relic. If a character has a particular Boon, she may activate it as long as she has an appropriate Relic. The Wind's Freedom Boon (see p. 146), for example, can be used if the Scion possesses a relic of the Sky Purview—assuming, of course, that the character's player purchased that

Boon at character creation or through the expenditure of experience points. Each dot spent on the Relic trait allows access to an additional Purview, as shown in the Trait Effects table.

Trait Effects:

- Access to one Purview.
- Access to two Purviews.
- Access to three Purviews.
- Access to four Purviews.
- Access to five Purviews.

A Relic is often based on some object that possesses typical traits in terms of game mechanics. The traits of various sorts of weapons and armor, for example, can be found in Chapter Seven, pages 201-205. Dots of Birthright can be spent to improve upon these base templates (see "Traits for Relic Items").

Unless a legend specifically refers to a certain item as fragile, it can be safely assumed that relic objects will not break during the course of ordinary use. Destruction of a relic could certainly take place given certain turns of Fate, but in general, the loss of a relic should be a result of roleplaying, not a random flub of the dice.

Dots in the Relic trait can be used for other purposes than just accessing Purviews, such as modifying the traits of the base item, using the relic to contact or summon a guide, a creature or one's followers, or even granting access to a unique power. Relics have a number of special rules attached to them, which are explained under "Rules for Relics." Note, however, that a single dot cannot cover both Purview access and other purposes. That is, a dot spent to enhance the Accuracy of a weapon would not also cover access to a Purview.

RULES FOR RELICS

Of all Birthrights, relics possess the most interesting possibilities for defining a character. The rest of this chapter concerns special rules that pertain to the Relic trait. Using these sacred relics in conjunction with other Birthrights, accessing Boons, using the Relic trait to enhance otherwise mundane items, and other topics are covered in the following sections.

The application of the rules in this section is straightforward although they might seem a bit abstract at first. Rest assured, examples are on the way. Check out "Relics of Legendary Power" at the end of this chapter to see how the various relic-generation rules are put to use.

BIRTHRIGHTS AND BOONS

Though ichor flows in their veins, Scion lack the raw power necessary to channel the powers of the Gods directly. They require relics to focus the Boons granted by their parents. Each relic allows a Scion access to any Boons she possesses that fall under a Purview governed by this trait. If the Scion loses a relic, she cannot access any Boons in a Purview associated with that relic (unless,

MAKE MINE MYTHIC!

A classic problem in roleplaying games is how to make powerful, mythic equipment seem... well, powerful and mythic. In some games, even the most potent items seem to be found amid random piles of treasure, becoming merely a collection of traits rather than myths made real.

A similar phenomenon can invade games of **Scion**. A Birthright should be more than some dots on a character sheet—indeed, it is the Scion's connection to his divine inheritance. One way to make players feel attached to their characters' Birthrights is to feature them prominently in the Visitation of a Scion by his or her divine parent.

The Golden Fleece, for example, isn't merely a five-dot Birthright relic. It is the coat of the winged ram Chrysolmallos. It is the treasure for which the Argonauts died. The Fleece is a powerful item in terms of **Scion's** game mechanics, but far more important is the fact that it's one of the most famous objects in the collective subconscious of Western civilization.

Scion allows players a brush with saga and legend—don't waste this opportunity for good storytelling.

of course, she has another relic that happens to cover that same Purview).

Mere possession, however, is insufficient. The Scion must also be able to use the item, which depends on the nature of the relic. Books must be read, swords must be wielded, bags of gris-gris must be opened and sprinkled. A Scion who is unconscious, restrained by rope or chain, or has her sacred Relic buried deep inside a backpack and out of easy reach won't usually be able to access her Relics or their associated Boons.

An important caveat: A particular relic might allow a Scion to use Boons from a certain divine Purview, but that doesn't mean the Scion now has access to every Boon of that sphere. The character may use only those powers his player purchased at character creation or through the expenditure of experience points.

For example, a Scion might possess Talaria, the famed winged sandals of Greek legend. This character's player has also purchased Sky's Grace and Wind's Freedom from the Sky Purview (the first and second Boons for this Purview, respectively). Talaria allow the Scion to use Sky Boons, but he may activate only those Boons he currently possesses. In this example, the Scion would not have access to Storm Augmentation (the level-three Sky Boon) unless the character acquired it later in the cycle.

TRAITS FOR RELIC ITEMS

Chapter Seven describes a number of mundane items, including swords, guns, armor and other objects often chosen as relics. The normal versions of these items have particular ratings in traits such as Damage and Accuracy. Items that are fit to be relics, though, are rarely "normal." Indeed, they are often paragons of fine craftsmanship or ancient items that have weathered the centuries without deteriorating.

To represent such extraordinary creations, dots in the Relic Birthright can be used to enhance the normal traits associated with a mundane item. Each dot spent in this

manner can be used to add one to a trait such as Damage, Accuracy, Speed or Defense. A dot can also be spent to lower a penalty, such as Mobility or Fatigue, by one.

Keep in mind that a single relic—like all Birthrights—cannot have a rating higher than 5. A katana with five additional dots of Damage would be deadly indeed, but it wouldn't allow the Scion wielding it to access any Purviews.

RELICS AND OTHER BIRTHRIGHTS

By purchasing an additional dot for a relic (or allocating points for a new one-dot relic), a different Birthright can be accessed conveniently through that relic. As long as the Scion is in possession of the relic and able to use it (as per the conditions described in "Birthrights and Boons"), she can summon or dismiss the entity or entities associated with the relic. Rather than summoning the entity, the player might opt instead to merely open a channel of communication—useful for consulting a guide without dragging him into a dangerous situation, for example. This decision must be made at character creation. One dot of Relic cannot both summon and remotely communicate (though two dots spent on a relic would allow this arrangement).

A few examples should make this use of the Relic Birthright easy to understand:

Example 1: A player has purchased a three-dot Guide Birthright. By spending another dot on a new Relic trait, the player's character could have a crystal ball through which she can contact her guide.

Example 2: A player creating a Voodoo Scion buys three dots of the Creatures trait to give his character access to a minor loa. He also allocates dots to a particularly powerful bag of gris-gris. By spending another point on the gris-gris relic, the character's bag of magic powder can now be used to summon the loa (and dismiss it, when the time comes).

Example 3: A Scion of Ares has a three-dot Followers trait that represents a group of five spartoi. If the Scion's player purchases a dot of Relic, the character could attach these followers to a set of Dragon's Teeth. When these teeth are thrown upon bare earth, the five spartoi spring forth, fully armed for war. (This is exactly the Dragon's Teeth relic described on, p. 166.)

UNIQUE POWERS FOR RELICS

The totality of human legend is diverse and complex—far too diverse and complex to be covered by this short chapter. In particular, the list of Boons presented previously is just a small sampling of the powers exhibited by the Gods and heroes of legend. In some cases, it might be necessary for a player and Storyteller to design a “unique power” associated with a relic described in legend.

Depending on the number of dots allotted to the Relic Birthright, a unique power could be a small, once-per-day bonus (an extra success on a Perception roll), a constant but limited advantage (an additional attack die against a certain variety of titanspawn), or even a major influence over the forces of life and death (see *The Book of Going Forth by Day*, p. 164, for an example).

Of course, the Storyteller should take great care before allowing a player to create novel powers for her relics. Here are a few guidelines to maintain balance in a game of **Scion** that includes unique powers for relics:

1. If the player proposes a power that is roughly similar to a Boon described in this book, just use the existing Boon, allowing for a slight change in aesthetics, perhaps. Don't reinvent the wheel.
2. Use the Boon ratings in this chapter as a rough measure of how much a new power should cost. If a proposed ability seems far more powerful than Boons of comparable expense (or far weaker, for that matter), alter the cost accordingly.
3. With great power come great limitations: A perfect example of this can be found in the description of *The Book of Going Forth by Day* (see p. 164). This tome allows a Scion the power of resurrection—a potent act, indeed—but the ritual requires a month to complete and involves a dangerous journey through the Egyptian Underworld. A Scion who possesses the book must do a lot more than simply whip out that handy resurrection book every time one of her followers drops in combat.
4. No game-wreckers: This should be obvious, but don't allow a player to design relics that are capable of killing anything with a single blow, controlling the minds of any titanspawn it is used against or activating some other power that will unbalance an entire **Scion** cycle. Such items certainly exist in legends (and some players might argue that this is justification enough), but they don't make for particularly fun games. Precedent or no, don't allow overpowered relics to ruin the game.
5. As a final caveat, Storytellers who have never run a **Scion** cycle before should simply disallow unique



powers for relics belonging to players' characters. There's enough to learn without the vagaries that unique powers introduce. The same advice applies to new Scion players. Sticking to the published Boons will greatly simplify the creation of your first character.

Numerous examples in the "Relics of Great Power" section provide examples of relics with unique powers.

DESIGNING NEW RELICS

In the war between the Gods and their Titan progenitors, Birthrights are the missing weapons of mass destruction. Relics in particular, since they are the sole means through which a Scion employs his Boons, are coveted items indeed. Since the Titans themselves cannot travel to the mortal World (at least, not yet), it is often in the best interests of a God to let a particularly potent relic "lie low," in the care of a Scion.

The form a particular relic takes during its exile from divinity, however, presents several interesting possibilities, such as the following:

In many cases, an object draws much of its potency from the power of its own legend, and would lose much of its effectiveness if it were re-purposed or reshaped. The Golden Fleece, for example, would make for a particularly impressive—but much diminished—pullover sweater.

In rare cases, however, a particularly powerful relic is so highly sought by titanspawn that it must be reshaped to conceal its true nature. It is rumored, for instance, that a Scion of Thor carries a gun that hurls bolts of lightning.

Not all relics are featured in well-known legends. Some aren't even particularly ancient. Scions are themselves "legends in the making," and so are the weapons they wield. Many Gods create for their children relics in the form of modern objects, to better allow the Scion to understand the relic's use. Rifles, skateboards, laptop computers, syringes and other trappings of the 21st century could all conceivably be suitable forms for new relics.

The possibilities presented by the breadth of human legend, as well as the cleverness of the average roleplaying enthusiast, can hardly be fully explored in the examples listed in this chapter. Using the example relics as a basis, players are encouraged to work with their Storytellers to design equipment suited to their characters. Legends abound with relics to borrow or redesign, and modern times are full of objects with mythic correspondences.

FORGING NEW RELICS

Some readers might have been disappointed by the prior section. "Where are the rules for actually constructing new relics—actually smelting and forging the damn things?" a player of a Scion of Hephaestus might well ask.

Sorry to disappoint, but the acquisition of new Birthrights is far more difficult than simply firing up

the bellows and forging a new sword about which epic poetry will one day be written. Without a doubt, Scions are capable of fabricating wondrous items (especially those possessing an Art or Craft Arete), but a true relic of power requires the hand of a God or a supernaturally skilled titanspawn such as a dwarf or dai-tengu. Ichor flows in their veins, but Scions lack the stuff of true creation.

That said, the Gods often enlist their children to aid in the fashioning of new relics. The process might require a rare or even legendary material in the possession of a titanspawn. Perhaps certain occurrences must come to pass before Fate allows the relic to exist—and your Scion must manufacture those events. The design or forging of an item might require the expertise of another God or a particularly talented member of one of the races associated with artifice—the dwarves of Niðavellir, for example. In both legends and roleplaying games, securing such cooperation always seems to involve more than just asking politely.

Since new Birthrights become available only through roleplaying rather than the expenditure of experience points, it seems appropriate that the creation process of a relic should take on the grandeur of an epic in its own right, rather than seeming like a list of chores.

Although Scions can assist their parents in creating a relic—or perhaps recover other relics lost to time or titanspawn—only a God can forge Gram or write *The Book of Gates*. Like most aspects of the relationship between Gods and Scions, a definitive result demands divine intervention, but the Scions get stuck with the grunt work along the way.

STOLEN RELICS

Relics allow for direct access to a small portion of the power of a God—a dangerous connection, especially when used by those for whom such power was never intended. Nevertheless, the thief gains a direct channel to the divine, which she can manipulate for her own ends. A character who comes into possession of a Scion's relic can use it just as a Scion would—including to gain access to all Boons possessed by the Scion that fall under the Purviews governed by the stolen Birthright.

Using another Scion's relic, however, can be a dangerous proposition. In the hands of someone unfit to wield its power, a relic can backfire. To represent this, use the following system: Each time a character attempts to use a stolen relic, roll a number of dice equal to the user's Legend versus a difficulty equal to the object's Relic rating. If the roll results in even a single success, the relic functions as it would for its true owner. If no successes are rolled, the intended effect does not take place, and the outcome will actually work against the user—attempting to use a Health Boon to heal a wounded follower, for example, might permanently injure him instead. In the event of a botch... well, the Storyteller is encouraged to be particularly cruel.

Example: Sly Guiler has stolen Donnie Rhodes' winged relic the Daedalus Device and leapt from Donnie's second floor hotel room with the relic strapped to his slight frame. Sly has three dots of Legend, and the Daedalus Device is a five-dot relic. Sly's player rolls three dice. If he manages to garner five successes (his player should pray for 10s), he successfully accesses the stolen Wind's Freedom Boon—i.e., the Boon Donnie normally channels through the Daedalus Device. In the event of a failure, Sly plummets two stories after dramatically failing to become airborne. If Sly's player botches, the Scion of Loki soars ever higher, eventually leaving the World's atmosphere unless he's willing to plummet to the ground before that happens.

Some titanspawn will gladly liberate relics from their Scion opponents—a few might regard them as trophies—but more intelligent titanspawn tend to avoid this activity. If the children of the Titans find themselves in possession of a relic, they tend to save its power for a crucial moment (a ritual or the like) or avoid using it altogether—dodging undue attention and thereby depriving the enemy of its use.

Because relics contain a fraction of a God's own power, the Gods typically take a dim view of their theft and misuse. This is doubly true among the Gods and their children. A Scion who steals the relics of a fellow Scion risks major diplomatic disruption between pantheons, a possibility that few Gods (on either side of the argument) would allow to exist for long. Thefts within the same pantheon are usually resolved even more quickly. The parents have known each other far longer than their flash-in-the-pan offspring, after all.

RENUNCIATION

The burden of heritage is a recurring theme in many classical legends; during the making of modern legends, it might come to pass that a Scion decides to renounce his divine inheritance. Such events typically involve a legendary act in their own right, or at least a dramatic one—tossing a sacred blade into the ocean or smashing an orb used to contact a mentor, for example.

If the act of renunciation is appropriate to the epic nature of the Scion, the deed earns him an additional point of permanent Legend but costs him all access to the Birthright's powers. Creatures no longer obey, guides no longer offer advice, followers no longer follow, and relics no longer allow use of their associated Boons or unique powers.

If a Scion later chooses to reverse his renunciation... Such an undertaking would truly be the stuff from which legends are made.

RELIQS OF LEGENDARY POWER

The rules presented for relics in this chapter are flexible enough for players to design Birthrights well suited to the characters they have in mind. Although the numerous special cases are actually very simple, the possibilities can be confusing without some solid examples.

The rest of this chapter contains descriptions of relics inspired by legendary artifacts and can be selected for a new Scion. At the very least, these examples suggest the different sorts of wonders the Relic rules can generate.

Each relic listed here includes a Relic trait cost. Since there are many ways to allocate these points, each entry includes a breakdown of that cost:

“Purview” denotes access to the Boons of a divine Purview.

“Birthright Connection” indicates that the item allows remote communication with or summoning of a creature, followers or a guide.

“Item Enhancement” denotes an additional trait over the base item template—a sword that inflicts additional damage, for example. This might also indicate a reduction of a penalty such as mobility for armor (see Chapter Seven, p. 204).

“Unique Power” signifies that the relic possesses a power not covered by the usual selection of Boons. Rules for the power are described in the relic description itself.



AZTEC RELICS

More than in any other pantheon in **Scion**, the traditions surrounding Aztec legend focus on the need for humans to serve their Gods lest the order of the cosmos collapse—a notion that led to widespread human sacrifice during certain periods of the Aztec empire. The notion of servitude continues among the Scions of the pantheon. The old Gods are forgotten and existence teeters on uncertainty, requiring the Scions to be even more loyal. In exchange, their divine parents grant them some of the most potent relics to be found in any pantheon—relics as dark and majestic as the Atzlánti themselves.

CHAC MOOL

Relic •••• (1 Purview, 1 Unique 3-Dot Power)



Spanish exaggerations aside, much of Aztec religious life centered on the ritual sacrifice of human beings. The most commonly used vessel in these ceremonies was the Chac Mool—an enormous stone statue depicting a reclining man with a bowl on his stomach. In the bowl went the hearts of the day's sacrifices.

Although some Aztec Scions maintain the rituals of their ancestors, others take advantage of the magic of sacrifice without resorting to such extreme ends. Both camps often rely on the Chac Mool statues—either

ancient ones located in Central Mexico or modern statues suitable for the purpose. (Since “borrowed” statues often double as public monuments, an Aztec Scion must be discreet.) Certain Aztec Gods have been known to charge their children during their Visitations with the maintenance of a particular sacred site containing such a relic.

Chac Mool statues weigh several tons and aren’t portable without the intervention of industrial equipment. Despite their inconvenience, they remain relics with a unique three-dot power—they double the Legend reward given by any Itztl Boon if the blood resulting from the ritual is placed in the Chac Mool’s bowl. A Chac Mool also grants its protector access to the Sun Purview.

OCELOTL ARMOR

Relic •••• (3 Purviews, 1 Unique 1-Dot Power)



According to legend, an Aztec warrior who captured many living opponents for use as slaves or ritual sacrifices proved himself worthy of donning jaguar armor—an outfit made from a jaguar skin and lined with a dense mesh of cotton. It might not have offered the protection of the metal armor used by other cultures, but it allowed for quiet movement through the jungles and struck fear into the hearts of enemies.

Aztec Gods sometimes grant their children use of these outfits, usually passing along suits used by powerful jaguar warriors of centuries past. The essence of the capable fighters remains, as does a trace of the spirit of the animal in whose skin the Scion will do battle. Ocelotl armor allows its owner to use Boons from the Animal (Jaguar) Purview, as well as the War and Moon Purviews (the moon being closely associated with the jaguar in Aztec legend). The armor also holds a unique power that adds bonus dice equal to the wearer’s Legend to all (Dexterity + Stealth) rolls.

XIUHICHIMALLI

Relic ••••• (1 5-Dot Item Enhancement)



In 1473, Moquiux—now thought within certain circles to be a Scion of the Aztec pantheon—defeated the Aztec ruler Axayacatl and declared Tlatelolco to be independent from the rest of Tenochtitlán. His victory was short lived, but his army’s survival against overwhelming odds is still

remembered as a crucial turning point in the long, bloody history of what is now Mexico City.

Xiuhichimalli is the name of the shield Moquiux carried into battle during the struggle. Although it was merely a wicker frame covered by animal skins, legend has it that it could deflect even the mightiest blows.

It is not associated with any particular Purview, but Xiuhichimalli grants an additional +5 DV bonus over the +1 of a standard Aztec shield (see page 204.)

EGYPTIAN RELICS



The Gods of Egypt are perhaps the best-informed of any pantheon, with deities devoted to intelligence, magic, numbers, secrets, truth, measuring and other erudite pursuits. It comes as no surprise, then, that some of the most sought-after relics handed down by the divinities of Egypt are those in which they recorded their methods.

THE BOOK OF GATES

Relic •••• (4 Purviews)



Where does the sun go at night? *The Book of Gates* provides the answer, describing the journey of Atum-Re through Duat, the Egyptian Underworld. The tome records each hour of a journey undertaken by every newly dead soul, a journey that requires passage through 12 gates, each of which is associated with a different Egyptian deity. After the 12th gate, the sun (and by implication, the soul) is reborn to a new day.

Although translations of *The Book of Gates* are available even in modern times, the story contains insights into the Underworld useful to those who share the powers of the divinities of ancient Egypt. Access to *The Book of Gates* provides Scions use of the Guardian, Health, Psychopomp and Sun Purviews.

THE BOOK OF GOING FORTH BY DAY

Relic ••••• (1 Purview, 1 Unique 4-Dot Power)



More commonly known as *The Book of the Dead*, *The Book of Going Forth by Day* is a collection of 192 spells and an account of the resurrection of Osiris.

Many scholars believe that the story of how the soul of Osiris was reborn to defeat his enemies and once again “go forth by day” is an allegory for the cycles of the Nile, but the truth is a much more literal matter for Scions of the Pesedjet. Aside from being a collection of



useful magic, *The Book of Going Forth by Day* also grants a Scion the power to return the dead to life.

This unique power can be used on normal humans, as well as on Scions (and supernatural creatures) possessing fewer dots of Legend than the book's user. The knowledge contained in the book is insufficient to resurrect Gods or Titans, however. Its effects on titanspawn, if any, are unknown.

Regardless, the book allows the Scion who possesses it to undertake a journey into the Egyptian Underworld in order to reclaim a recently departed soul. The trip consumes about a month of actual earthly time, though the passage of time might seem different in Duat. Typically, such a voyage culminates with the weighing of the deceased's heart against the feather of truth, after which the God Anubis will usher the dead soul (and its Scion rescuer) into the Hall of Two Truths.

Some Scions of the Egyptian pantheon, however, report different accounts of their visits to Duat. Although the book provides some guidance, the voyage to the land of the dead could conceivably take multiple forms. Some accounts hold that other Scions may assist the ritual that allows access to Duat, and that they too may accompany the possessor of the book if she will vouch for them before the Gods.

There are no explicit game mechanics associated with the use of this unique power. What awaits Scions undertaking a resurrection is ultimately in the hands of the Storyteller. This ability to reclaim the dead is a powerful one, but it offers no guarantees of success.

The Book of Going Forth By Day also grants access to the Magic Purview.

THE BOOK OF THOTH

Relic ••••• (4 Purviews, 1 Unique 1-Dot Power)



The scrolls that constitute *The Book of Thoth* are said to contain secrets recorded directly from the Egyptian God of magic and wisdom himself. Supposedly recovered from the tomb of Prince Neferkaptah in the City of the Dead, it is a collection of animal languages, formulae for spells and knowledge of the Earth and Sky. The book was re-purposed by the English mystic Aleister Crowley (likely a Scion of an obscure or even forgotten pantheon, or else the offspring of a Titan or titanspawn) into the Thoth Tarot deck. It is likely that a few versions of this relic exist in card form.

While a Scion of the Egyptian pantheon possesses Thoth's book, she gains access to the Animal, Earth, Magic and Sky Purviews. In addition, *The Book of Thoth* carries a unique power to dissuade thieves who might be tempted to steal its wisdom. Aside from the book's Scion owner, anyone who reads the book will be subject to a particular punishment at the hands of the ancient deities of Egypt. Once per week, one of their loved ones will die until the book is returned. The deaths can take a variety of forms, from freak accidents to sudden illness to random violence. No game mechanics are associated with this unique power; its effects should be executed through roleplaying.



GREEK RELICS

Nowhere in classical legend is the connection between powerful relics and divine powers more prominent than in the stories of the Greeks. It is the rare Hellenic hero who is not showered with gifts by his divine sponsor. Even the Gods themselves are reported to wield relics, though their powers must far surpass those of treasures belonging to Scions. Hermes travels with his Kerykeion, Zeus wields the shield known as Aegis, and Talaria are the most popular footwear among the denizens of Mount Olympus.

DRAGON'S TEETH

Relic • (1 Birthright Connection), Followers •••



Cadmus, following a path described to him by the oracle of Delphi, eventually came upon a dragon that belonged to Ares. Cadmus slaughtered the dragon, though not before losing many soldiers in the process. In order to replenish his ranks, Athena advised Cadmus to sow the dragon's teeth in the ground. He followed the Goddess's suggestion, and an army of spartoi, or "sown men," arose from the earth. Fearing the uncanny origins of his new army, Cadmus threw a stone into the crowd. The newly formed warriors, thinking that stone was tossed by one of their own, turned upon one another. All but five of the spartoi were slain in the confusion. These survivors, the toughest soldiers of the group, joined Cadmus in the founding of Thebes.

The Scion who possesses the Dragon's Teeth gains valuable assistance indeed from five such spartoi. These terrifying warriors now count as two dots of Followers who spring forth fully armed for combat whenever the dragon's teeth are hurled to the ground and one point of Legend is spent. Spartoi revert to dragon's teeth at the end of the scene.

Note that the Scion who possesses the dragon's teeth must purchase both one dot of Relic and three dots of Followers to use this item. More dragon's teeth, and thus more available spartoi, may be gained by increasing both the Relic and Followers Birthright traits.

Traits for spartoi can be found on page 288.

THE GOLDEN FLEECE

Relic ••••• (5 Purviews)

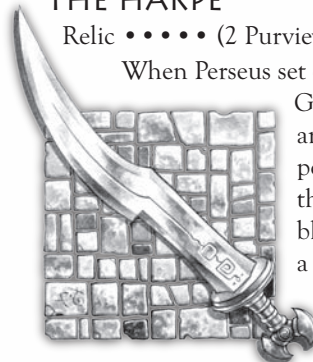
Perhaps the best-known relic in the Western World is the coat of the winged ram Chrysomallos—the Golden Fleece. The tale of Jason and the Argonauts seeking the legendary relic at the behest of King Pelias has been told many times down the centuries, gaining power with each telling.



Although the Fleece has no powers of its own, it is a favored treasure among the Gods of the Greek pantheon. It is also a favorite of Fate itself, perhaps as a result of the widespread knowledge of the legends surrounding it. The Fleece grants its owner access to five different Purviews: Fertility, Health, Sky, Sun and Water.

THE HARPE

Relic ••••• (2 Purviews, 3 Item Enhancements)



When Perseus set out to slay the Gorgons, the Gods Hermes and Athena armed him with several powerful relics, among them the Harpe—a crescent-shaped blade similar to a scythe. Like a wild boar, he entered the Gorgon's cave and used the crescent blade to slay the creature.

Through the centuries, Scions who wielded this weapon have often suffered particular attention from various titanspawn. The Harpe is a favorite weapon of the Titan Cronus, who is often depicted wielding the curved blade—which, according to legend, he used to castrate his father Uranus. Whether this Harpe is the same sword used by Perseus, and whether it currently resides with the Gods or servants of the Titans, both remain matters of conjecture.

The Harpe grants its wielder access to the Chaos and War Purviews. It has traits identical to a khopesh with a +3 bonus to Damage.

TALARIA

Relic • (1 Purview)



Talaria are the winged sandals of Greek classical legend. Talaria are classically depicted as being sandals fashioned from gold, but modern Scions might possess Talaria in the form of flip flops, Birkenstocks, high tops or even combat boots. Talaria are a favorite

Birthright among the Gods of the Greek pantheon, though they are most closely associated with fleet-footed Hermes or Iris, personal messenger to Hera.

Talaria allow their Scion owners access to the Sky Purview and are most closely tied to the Boon known as Wind's Freedom.



JAPANESE RELICS

Relics from Japan most commonly take the form of the possessions of samurai or members of the Imperial family. Japanese folklore is rife with magical weapons stolen from spirits, blades forged by expert sword-makers, and enchanted trinkets given to an emperor by the Gods of the island. It is quite likely, therefore, that at least some members in the Japanese royal line have been Scions themselves.

KONGO

Relic ••• (2 Purviews, 1 Unique 1-Dot Power)



The trident called Kongo was originally the property of the Japanese mountain God Koya-no-Myoin. A bright light shines from its three points. Kongo is also supposed to imbue its wielder with insight into the world of spirits.

Kongo grants its owner access to the Earth and Sun Purviews, and is most closely associated with the Sun Boon Divine Radiance. In addition, it doubles the duration of any Tsukumo-Gami Boon.

TONBOGIRI

Relic ••• (3 Item Enhancements)



Tonbogiri translates to “Dragonfly Cutter,” earning its name from a story in which a dragonfly landed on the blade and was cut in two. It is one of three spears created by the legendary smith Masamune. Tonbogiri is a weapon of such

power that it has been used by daimyo and Scions alike down through the centuries.

The spear also enjoys a +3 Damage bonus over the basic naginata template described on p. 202.

YASAKANI NO MAGATAMA

Relic •••• (4 Purviews)



Magatama are small curved beads of jade that have been a part of Japanese culture for three millennia or more. Perhaps the best-known example of these beads is the necklace Yasakani no Magatama, now part of the Imperial Regalia of Japan. In

legend, this relic was hung atop a mirror outside the cave of Amaterasu. The beauty of the jewels lured the Goddess out of hiding.

It is believed that the Yasakani no Magatama that currently resides in Kokyo, the Japanese Imperial Palace, is not the original jade necklace used in imperial coronation ceremonies through the centuries. Some stories suggest that the original was broken during bombing raids during World War II, or perhaps even earlier. No doubt the shards of such an object (or the intact original) would be a relic of great power.

Possession of the Yasakani no Magatama grants access to the Fertility, Sun, War and Water Purviews.



NORSE RELICS

Norse legend abounds with relics of warfare, in particular enchanted blades. One such blade, Tyrfting, is described here, but readers are encouraged to research some of the many others that appear in the lore, bearing names such as Almace, Durandel, Hrunting, Gram (an unhappy weapon indeed), Kurt, Naegling and Skofnung, just to name a few. By mixing Purviews and equipment enhancements (and perhaps more exotic uses of Relic dots for unique powers), players of Norse Scions should have no difficulty developing a suitable blade for their sword-wielding berserks.

The sagas also abound with magical bits of armor, including Thor’s famous belt and bracers. More than perhaps any other Gods, the Aesir make sure their semidivine offspring are well equipped for war.

TARNHELM

Relic •• (1 Purview, 1 Item Enhancement)



In the realm of Niðavellir, one of nine affixed to the World Tree Yggdrasil, live the dwarves of Norse legend. They have a reputation for master metalworking and are known to imbue some of their creations with strange magic. Among their most popular exports are the concealing helms each known as a *huliðshjálmr*, or more simply tarnhelm. Aside from being sturdy in combat, these pieces also grant their users invisibility. As such, they are a favored Birthright of those Norse Gods who value cunning as much as fighting prowess, for example Loki and Odin.

A tarnhelm allows its wearers to access the Darkness Purview and is closely associated with the three-dot Boon Shadow Refuge. These helms also grant an additional level of soak (treat the tarnhelm as “biker gear” for the purposes of the armor chart on p. 204).

TYRFTING

Relic ••••• (5 Item Enhancements)

The sad history of the blade Tyrfting—the version passed down to mortals, anyway—appears in the *Elder*



Edda: King Svaflami, grandson of Odin, kidnapped two dwarves and forced them to craft him a gold-hilted sword that would never miss or rust and would cut through almost anything. The dwarves complied, but they placed a curse on the weapon so that it would kill someone every time it was used. As a result of this

malediction, King Svaflami was soon murdered by the berserker Arngrim, and Tyrfinng continued to change hands through years as its curse continually brought harm. Eventually Angantyr, King of the Goths, used it against his Hun enemies in a battle that caused a flood because a nearby river was choked with the corpses of horse and men.

This tragedy was enough to break the curse. At least, that's the version told in the *Edda*. Tyrfinng is associated with no particular Purviews, but it adds a +2 Damage bonus and a +3 Accuracy bonus to the basic spatha template on p. 202.



VOODOO RELICS

The modern practice of Voodoo was carried throughout the World by slaves kidnapped from West Africa, and its contemporary paraphernalia still retains those humble roots.

Ordinary, easily available components such as dirt, sticks, cloth and common household spices account for the majority of Voodoo implements. Most followers of the Loa use these objects for healing or good luck, while the practitioners of black magic (known as *bocor*, “those who serve the loa with both hands”) are known for using the same implements for selfish and destructive ends.

Most Scions who beseech the loa belong to the former category, but a number of them fall into the latter, especially those who serve the ghedes, the loa of death, sex, excess and buffoonery (the most famous of which is Baron Samedi).

GOVI

Relic ••• (or ••••) (2 Purviews, 1 Unique 1-Dot Power, 1 Birthright Connection [Optional])



In the practice of ritual Voodoo, anything from a clay pot to a soup tureen to a jar for preserves can function as a container for a departed spirit. Benevolent practitioners often use their govies to protect and invoke the spirits of dead ancestors, while less well-meaning ritualists might use

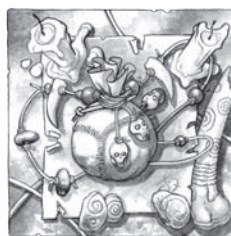
one to imprison a soul of the recently deceased and use this power for their own ends.

Govies grant their owners access to the Death and Prophecy Purviews, and carry a unique power. The difficulty rating for a Boon usage undertaken as part of a ritual decreases by one, to a minimum of 1, when a govi is used in the ceremony (regardless of whether the ritualist is the owner of the govi himself).

With the four-dot version of the govi, the container can hold the spirit of the Scion's guide (assuming his player has allocated points to the Guide Birthright, of course). The fourth dot allows the Scion to communicate with the spirit in the jar.

GRIS-GRIS

Relic •• (2 Purviews)



Sometimes made from children's dolls or more traditional images of Gods or spirits, gris-gris is typically a small cloth pouch that contains a sampling of common items with magical correspondences, among them herbs, colored stones, scraps of sweat-soaked cloth, gunpowder, salt, red pepper, chamois and, occasionally, human hair, nails and blood. The contents of the bag are usually dictated by the desires of their creator. Magnets in red-flannel pouches remain a favorite among gamblers in New Orleans, for instance.

Gris-gris pouches have many purposes in the world of Voodoo, though they are inextricably tied to the concept of luck—as tokens of good luck for their wearers, or as tools to “put the gris-gris” on an enemy.

Almost all gris-gris allow access to the Health and Mystery Purviews, but the contents of such bags are highly personalized, potentially granting their users access to other Purviews (represented in the game mechanics by purchasing additional dots of Relic to cover new Purviews).

VOODOO DOLL

Relic • (1 Purview)



Although they are fundamental to most stereotypes surrounding Voodoo, the famous “voodoo doll” is more marketing than magic. Nevertheless, a poppet made to depict a certain individual (perhaps including a personal possession such as hair or a bead from a necklace) can be used to channel good fortune, cure ailments or—as the popular imagination would have it—inflict pain and sickness.

Voodoo dolls allow Scions to use Boons from the Health Purview, and can be sold to superstitious tourists at an outrageous markup.

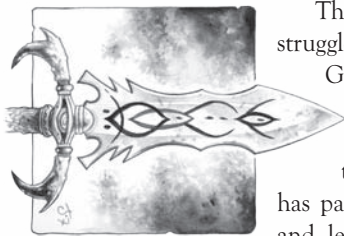
THE COMPLETE RELIC

The relics described in the previous section demonstrate the various ways that dots of the Relic trait can be combined to design distinctive items. Take, for example, the Voodoo govi—two dots allow the owner to use Boons from the Death and Prophecy Purviews. A third dot covers a unique power (to reduce the difficulty of rituals, a minor and therefore inexpensive ability). If the Scion's player has also purchased dots in Guide, the four-dot version of the govi associates the character's Guide Birthright with his Relic Birthright. The Scion's guide can travel with him, remaining accessible as long as the Scion has the govi close to hand.

To clear up any lingering confusion, we conclude with a relic that employs all five possible uses of the Relic Birthright: access to a Purview, enhancing an item, allowing remote communication with another Birthright, summoning a Birthright, and a unique power:

TITAN-SEEKING SPEAR

Relic Level ••••• (1 Purview, 1 Item Enhancement, 2 Birthright Connection, 1 Unique 1-Dot Power)



Throughout the eons of struggle between the children of Gods and Titans, extending perhaps back to the time of the Titans themselves, the Titan-Seeking Spear has passed from Scion to Scion, and legend follows in its wake.

Every pantheon has possessed the weapon at some point in history, leading some to the conclusion that several such spears exist. There is no record of its use in Egypt, though one such spear is rumored to reside in a Pharaoh's tomb. In ancient Greece, it was stained with the blood of drakons and lamia, and was kept in a place of honor for centuries before being stolen by barbarians. In Northern Europe, a berserk carried a spear purported to be Gungnir itself into hopeless battle against dark-skinned elves. In the wastes of Western Africa, where the forebears of modern Voodoo honored the snake Gods, the spear sought the hearts of witches and gigantic, terrible water beasts. In

the floating capital of the Aztecs, an eagle warrior whose name is lost to the ages used it skewer many hundreds of tzitzimime. The World-spanning origins of the spear might also explain the brief reign of a Japanese Scion in the 1830s, who gathered legions by claiming to wield the heavenly spear Amenonuhoko.

Regardless of its origins or past, the Titan-Seeking Spear is a six-foot polearm made of bronze or brass (depending on the account). The tip of the spear is stained with blood that can never be wiped clean.

Among those who are familiar with Scion lore, the spear is believed to be handed down to the mightiest warrior of each generation of Scions. Another theory holds that it signifies sacrifice—that its wielder, like those who came before him, will face a hopeless battle in which he will administer punishing damage to his titanspawn enemies before succumbing to his foes.

According to the scattered legends of the spear, it is reputed to confer five specific abilities:

1. The wielder of the spear is deadly in battle. The spear grants access to the War Purview.
2. The spear is perennially sharp and hungers for new blood. It adds a +1 Damage bonus to the base pilum template on p. 202.
3. If its owner wills it, his guide can always be seen (and somehow heard) in the reflected light of the spear's shaft. This connection allows the wielder to communicate with his guide (requires purchase of the Guide Birthright).
4. The blood on the spear's tip belongs to a slain Titan, a being of violence and warfare. When the spear is driven into the ground tip-first, the blood causes five warriors to spring forth, fully armed and ready for combat (requires purchase of the Followers Birthright).
5. The spear is anathema to titanspawn. At the moment of truth, the wielder cannot miss her mark, though the effort will sap his own strength. This is a one-dot unique power. Once per day, the spear's owner can choose to invoke this ability. If the target is a titanspawn, the attacker can choose to reroll a failed attack as though she were using a point of Legend (see p. 122). Doing so does not, however, risk a Fatebinding (see p. 222).



RULES

Much of the rest of this book sets out the fundamentals of the shared world in which your group plays. This chapter is the groundwork laid so that your group storytelling doesn't devolve into "I shot you!" and "No, you didn't!"

Rule 0: More important than any rule about how much your Scion can lift or whether or not he shoots the bad guy is this rule: **Have Fun.** If you and your friends aren't enjoying yourselves, something's got to change. Maybe even how you play.

Corollary: The corollary to Rule 0 is that it's okay to change the game—meaning the setting *or* the rules—in order to have more fun. It is, in fact, better than not playing the game. After all, *somebody* bought this book, so you might as well get your money's worth.

THE BASICS

Before you get to the details about how to do this and that, you need to be familiar with the very basics of playing Scion.

TIME

When you're sitting down playing, you might take an hour to cover the minutiae of a nail-biting combat, but you'll probably skip through the scene when the characters go shopping (unless something interesting happens). Since game time is different from real time, and to make some rules work, some terms must separate the two.

Tick: About one second of in-game time, this little sliver of time is necessary only when resolving combat. One tick is the discrete moment in which a character acts. Ticks get a lot more attention in Chapter Seven: Combat.

(Even smaller than a tick, an *instant* is the moment in which dice rolls are resolved. An instant isn't so much a measure of in-game time as it is a pause of in-game time that characters never notice. Multiple instants can occur in a single tick of combat—one per dice roll—but instants also occur in slower-paced scenes. When a player makes the roll to determine if her character finds any clues at a crime scene, doing so represents an instant.)

Action: An action is the variable length of time between when a character performs some task (usually associated with a dice roll) and when she gets to act again. Actions are important only when fine divisions are necessary, so they get a lot more attention in Chapter Seven: Combat. In combat, it takes a single tick to perform an action, after

which a certain number of ticks of game time must pass before the character can act again. The time from when a character begins to act and when he can begin to act again is one action.

Scene: A period of game time characterized by a common theme or a single important event. One long night spent club-hopping with friends and rivals could be a single scene, even though the game's focus cuts between characters and might skip hours at a time. One combat is usually one scene.

Session: The period beginning when you and your friends sit down to play and ending when you wrap up for the night (or morning, or whatever). It might be enough to tell an entire short story (commonly known as a one-shot), or it might be part of the dramatic arc of a longer story.

Story: One story covers one or two plot points, from beginning to resolution. Stories usually include exposition, rising action, climax and denouement, and they can take a few sessions of playing. Stories usually benefit from a higher degree of planning than a cycle, because it really helps if at least one of you has some idea why the titanspawn is trying to destroy the Denver Public Library.

Cycle: This is the course the entire game takes as you and your friends play, usually with the same characters or an overarching theme that ties the sessions and stories together. It could take weeks, months or years to finish a cycle. Some groups sketch out their cycles or themes ahead of time, but planning isn't for every group. It's equally valid to just set the ball rolling and watch where it ends up.

TO PLAY...

You need this book and dice that have 10 sides to them. You've clearly found the former, and you can pick up the latter at some hobby and game stores, or online. (White Wolf even sells its own.) You also need to know the rules.

First, pick up a handful of your dice and roll them. Any die showing a 7, 8, 9 or 0 (usually considered a 10) counts as a *success*. When you roll a single success, your character succeeds at a simple action. When you roll more, he does better, achieving further goals or succeeding with panache. In *Scion*, each 10 you roll actually counts twice, meaning that even an ordinary number of dice (three to five dice is human average in this game) can produce extraordinary results.

Some tasks are more difficult than others, however. To represent this fact, the Storyteller assigns a *difficulty* to every action a character attempts. Many will be *difficulty 1*, which means that you need to roll only one success for your character to get it right. Any action that calls for a dice roll but has no listed difficulty is difficulty 1.

Harder actions have higher difficulties. A difficulty 2 action requires that you garner two successes for your character to accomplish his goal—one success just won't cut it. There is no limit to how high difficulties can go, but a difficulty 5 task is one of extraordinary difficulty, which

even experienced Scions can have trouble doing.



Unfortunately, things remain pretty up in the air unless you know how many dice to roll, and “a handful” is a little too vague. You’ve read about character traits in Chapter Three. Now it’s time to apply them.

First, figure out which Attribute governs your character’s action, and pick up a number of dice equal to the character’s dots in the Attribute.

- **Strength:** Use this for things that require sheer muscle. If it makes your character’s biceps ripple as he does it, use Strength.

- **Dexterity:** When your character has to be fast, nimble, flexible or physically accurate, use Dexterity.

- **Stamina:** If it deals with having a solid body, healthy immune system, strong lungs or anything else responsible for keeping you physically able and energized, use Stamina.

- **Charisma:** When your character is just being friendly, gosh-darn-it, and when he means everything he says, use Charisma.

- **Manipulation:** This is the other side of the coin. When your character’s lying, fast-talking, debating or otherwise playing someone else with his words, use Manipulation.

- **Appearance:** If your character’s using his looks to seem innocent, trustworthy, strong, confident, cowardly or brave—whether he is those things or not—use Appearance.

- **Perception:** When your character is trying to detect something, from noticing the assassin’s reflection to picking up a fugitive’s trail—almost anything that centers around one of the five senses, really—Perception is key.

- **Intelligence:** Here is a character’s mental brute force, used for any task in which pure brainpower is important. If it requires lots of thinking, use Intelligence.

- **Wits:** Anything that requires *speed* of thought is covered by Wits, so when reaction time or quick responses are important, instead of just fast muscle memory (Dexterity), use this.

Second, you decide which of the 24 Abilities is most relevant. There are too many of these to fit them all in this chapter, but they are, for the most part, divided well enough to make the decision easy. Use Marksmanship if your character is taking a ranged pot shot and Politics if the Mafia boss needs to understand where he stands with the other crime families.

Some Attribute/Ability pairs are more natural and come up more often than others. Perception goes naturally with Awareness, for example, because both are mostly about taking in your surroundings. Others are less common: How often do you need to have a high Strength to do well in using your Academics? Something could come up, of course, but it’s uncommon.

Third, since you know which Attribute and which Ability your character is using, you know how many dice to roll. Your character has a certain number of dots in the Attribute (every character has at least one). Pick up that

many dice. Your character *might* have dots in the Ability. Pick up that many *more* dice. Those dice make up your *dice pool* for that action. That’s how many dice you roll to determine how well your character performs at this task.

Now, roll them bones. Count up the dice that show 7, 8 and 9, and count 10s twice (remember, 0s are 10s, and 10s count as two successes). That’s how many successes you got for your character’s action. That’s the mechanics of playing **Scion** in a nutshell. Once you get the hang of that, move on to “Bonuses and Penalties” to learn what other factors affect the number of dice you roll, and “Success and Failure” to see what happens when things do or don’t go according to plan.

WARNING! WHEN NOT TO ROLL

Rolling dice is a dramatic mechanism that **Scion** uses to determine which way the story goes. It can determine if a fantastic blow hits or misses, if your character jumps the bus over the incomplete bridge and if the titanspawn-banishing ritual succeeds or ends in disaster. The dice are part of what adds “game” to this collaborative story. But sometimes, you need to put the dice down.

Don’t use the dice when the possibility of failure isn’t dramatically interesting. No one thinks it’s interesting if a character gets to work a little late, so don’t roll (Wits + Control) to see how well the character handles traffic. Don’t use the dice when you don’t want the outcome to be in doubt. If completing the ritual should banish the deranged kami, period, make it so. Likewise, if traffic means the character arrives just in time to see his workplace explode without being killed, that’s what happens. A roll to see if the hero gets to work in time to be blown up would be poor planning.

In short: Roll dice when the outcome should matter and be interesting *either way* a player rolls. Storytellers and players should work together to achieve this end.

SUCCESS AND FAILURE

Rolling successes *equal to or greater than* a roll’s difficulty means the action succeeds. For most actions, this means one success; more when the difficulty is higher. When this happens, your character manages to do whatever he was trying to do: break down a door, pick the cultist’s pocket or anything else.

Of course, there’s a gradation of success. A petty thief is nothing next to a Scion of Loki when it comes to picking pockets. Subtract the roll’s difficulty from

the number of successes rolled: The result is called the *success threshold* (or just *threshold*). The higher the threshold of a roll is, the better a character does. Maybe you don't just scoop a guy's keys, you get his wallet and his lucky lighter too. Maybe you don't just repair a pistol, you straighten out its aim and give it a temporary +1 Accuracy bonus.

In some cases, combat especially, threshold successes have well-defined meaning. When that is so, the rules will explain that meaning.

Sometimes, rolling a high threshold just means your character accomplished an action with a lot of style. If you're trying to hit the center of a bull's-eye with an arrow, a high threshold won't make you somehow hit the center... *more*. In such cases, your character simply looks awesome while doing it—which is a benefit all its own.

Keep in mind, though, that *difficulty* is determined by the desired goal, while *threshold* represents the icing on the cake. If the aforementioned pickpocket is trying to steal a victim's keys, wallet and lighter from the start, his player should roll against a greater difficulty instead of just going for the keys and hoping for lots of threshold successes. A player can't say he wants the keys and then depend on getting a certain number of threshold successes to get everything else. The benefits a high threshold provides are up to the Storyteller on the spur of the moment, not a player's gamesmanship.

This is a good place to mention that difficulty should, for the most part, be transparent to the players. **Scion** assumes that a character who's about to climb a brick wall or tame a horse has a decent idea about how hard it is. For some rolls, such might not be the case. Stating the difficulty of rolls to discover information, for instance, can accidentally reveal too much about the nature of the information. Providing a high difficulty on many Perception-based rolls immediately tells the players that something is hidden for them to find.

Other times, the situation might not be clear to the character. The bricks in the wall the Scion wishes to climb might be old and the mortar crumbled, making the chance for a nasty fall that much higher, or the door he's trying to force might actually be steel with only a wood veneer. In such cases, the difficulty might be much higher than the player suspects (i.e., the task might be harder than it looks).

When you garner fewer successes than the roll's difficulty, the roll fails. Per the "Warning! When Not to Roll" sidebar, though, failure can (and should!) have interesting consequences.

Some actions have simple consequences. When trying to punch out a titanspawn, write a convincing letter or fix the television set, failure is pretty straightforward. The titanspawn remains standing, the letter convinces no one, or your character has to buy a new TV. Sometimes, the stakes are higher. Not being able to decipher the cultists' secret cipher means the heroic Band has to

guess at the cult's plans. Failing to beguile and tease the secret password from the cult leader forces the heroes to find another way in.

Success moves the story along, but so should failure. There are many examples in fiction when the characters exhaust their options and find themselves forced to take undesirable or disadvantageous actions. Seeking to redress a failure can also introduce new characters and story options. For example, your character might take the cult cipher to a code expert, but is he trustworthy?

Even when they fail, characters can always try again, but their players face a +1 difficulty to the roll for every failure they've already suffered for that effort. If you can't break a code, frustration or intimidation makes successive attempts more difficult.

Failure should rarely cause immediate and inescapable death. Having everything depend on the results of a single roll *can* be fun, but never when it's arbitrary. A hero who is thrown from a cliff and gets one chance to save herself always makes it in the stories—not the case when dice rule the game. In combat, sure, every player knows there's a chance that every swing will go poorly and the Storyteller's dice will burn up the table, killing her beloved character. But when it comes out of nowhere, a single dice roll shouldn't mean death. Even when the character is holding onto a chain above the lava that will incinerate him instantly, failing the (Stamina + Athletics) roll to hang on shouldn't kill him. Maybe he loses his grip and slides several feet down the chain, encouraging him to spend some of his precious Willpower or Legend on the next roll.

Botches are another matter. A botch is when the roll has no successes (counting automatic successes from any source) and at least one die shows a 1. Rolling a botch indicates that nothing went according to plan, everything went wrong or the worst possible thing happened. Botching a battle plan suggests that the character's unit will be massacred, while botching a television repair roll might ruin the picture quality or give the character a shock.

Botches have a limited amount of script alteration power. Since they usually mean that things go poorly for the character, botches invite the Storyteller to change the scene a bit against the heroes' favor. Perhaps they timed the infiltration just right, but it's their bad luck that a guard really has to pee *right now*. Or, whoops, the restaurant you and the titanspawn are trashing has a SWAT commander's retirement party in the back room.

USING TRAITS

This book mentions specific actions throughout and sometimes gives you a specific combination of Attribute and Ability to roll. The text references specific dice pools by writing (Attribute + Ability) in that format. You won't always need to roll this number of dice, however. Sometimes you use the number to figure something out but don't have to pick up the dice. When you don't need to roll a listed (Attribute + Ability), the total is called a *static value*.



ROUND ROUND GET AROUND

Here's what you do when you have to round a number—be it a dice roll, a static value or what have you. Scions and other beings with a Legend score round *advantageously*. Lesser characters round *disadvantageously*.

Something to keep in mind when rolling dice is that the Abilities are fairly abstract. They indicate a person's complete experience with a discipline. A character's Control score suggests experience with vehicles or horses, not just the ability to guide them skillfully. For this reason, odd combinations of skills can sometimes make sense.

Carrying a great deal of anything is almost always a (Strength + Athletics) roll, or even an unrolled action for some characters. On the other hand, Alvin the librarian might not have any dots in Athletics, but he has a great deal of experience carrying books. Therefore, when he has to carry 17 ancient tomes out of an Egyptian pyramid, he knows how best to pile up all the books so they don't fall. His player substitutes Academics for Athletics, in this case. As in most things, the Storyteller is the final arbiter of whether or not a particular use of an Ability is valid, but he is encouraged to be flexible.

Being able to substitute one Ability for another doesn't mean the first Ability isn't valid or is less useful. The librarian can carry one small category of items; the bodybuilder can carry anything.

BONUSES AND PENALTIES

There's more to a dice roll than a character's (Attribute + Ability) combination and the difficulty. *Bonus dice* represent some advantage that the character uses to make it easier to succeed, and *dice penalties* represent something that hinders the character by reducing his capabilities. Some advantages are so great that they manifest as bonus *successes*. The most common sources of bonus successes are Willpower expenditure and Epic Attributes.

Add bonus dice for any circumstances or helpful tools that aid your character. A fine-tuned pistol adds one or two dice for high accuracy, a cool breeze or drizzle adds one die to a long-distance running attempt, and a convenient Dumpster adds one or two dice to concealment. The Storyteller is usually the adjudicator of these bonuses. Bonuses from tools and circumstances should not exceed dice. Circumstance is helpful, but raw potential and skill rule the day. (Note: Magic sources of extra dice may exceed this limit.)

Apply dice penalties when something trips the character up. That sword's really poorly balanced (not like the one Ares gave you), so it subtracts a couple of dice from the attack. After hiding in the Dumpster you

really stink, taking a couple dice away from your attempt to blend in at the fancy soirée. Wound and fatigue penalties are common sources of dice penalties.

In most cases, you apply a dice bonus or penalty when a condition affects the *character* instead of the *situation*. Likewise, if a condition affects the situation instead of the character, that condition should affect the difficulty of the action. When a character attempts a task that requires an Ability in which he has no dots, however, he suffers a +2 difficulty penalty rather than losing dice from his already small dice pool.

Example: Winnifred is going to perform at the Mobsters' Union's secret gala. The assembled made men are all hard asses, every one, but they're also soused and Winnifred is an attractive woman. The Storyteller assigns difficulty 2 to Winnifred's action of winning over the crowd with her performance.

If something changes the situation, that change affects the difficulty. Spiking the booze with something happy could drop the difficulty to a 1; taking away the booze entirely could raise the difficulty to a 3.

Coming prepared or unprepared—conditions specific to Winnifred herself rather than the situation—might grant dice bonuses or levy penalties. Learning the boss mobster's favorite routine ahead of time is worth a couple of bonus dice, as is choosing a nice, revealing costume. Getting splashed by a car on the way over, however, could impose a two-die penalty if Winnifred's dress or makeup is ruined. Forgetting the boss's name or referring to him by the name of a rival crime lord when talking to him from the stage could impose a five-die penalty. Winnifred's singing will really have to knock the mobsters' socks off to erase her faux pas from their minds.

Teamwork can apply a bonus to your character's roll when he has people backing him up on his action. See "Teamwork," page 180 for details.

Legend provides significant bonuses to actions. For each dot a character has in Legend, the player may add that many bonus successes to that many rolled actions in a single story. Players may also spend Legend points to reroll a single failed roll, even a botch. (See p. 122 for more information on Legend.)

Stunts grant a special sort of bonus. You earn this bonus when you describe your character's action in a fun and engaging way. The Storyteller might award this bonus because your daughter of Athena just did something right out of a Jackie Chan picture or because your description grabbed everyone's attention.

Like normal bonuses, stunt bonuses range from one to three dice. The Storyteller adjudicates the value of a stunt. The most basic stunt adds a bit of color to the game, filling out the scene for everyone at the table in a fun way. Doing so adds one die to the dice pool. A one-die stunt also broadens the definition of what is possible just a little bit. The cooler you look, the better you are.

Example: Prometheus Adams drops the musty old book on the table with a loud thump, then adjusts his glasses as it falls open to a very interesting page.

For adding a fun description to the game, the player adds one die to what is probably an Investigation or Academics roll. It also might allow the character to flip right to the answer he seeks, saving several hours of research.

Two-die stunts have a solid benchmark: Not only do they have to have an engaging and fun description, but they should also interact with the setting in a relevant way. This can be a fun use of the physical scenery or the utilization of setting or character details to bring everyone deeper into the game.

Examples: Jordan hefts his shining golden sword and leaps toward the dictator, revealed to be thrall of the Titans. At the apex of his arc, his blade passes through the dictator's statue, sending the head flying even as Jordan's sword hurtles toward the man himself.

Prometheus Adams swings his grandfather's heavy elephant gun around to point it at the demon. "This belonged to the man who let you into this world," he growls, bracing his aged body for the shock, "and it's going to send you right back out!"

For adding depth and fun to the game, these players add two dice to what are probably Melee and Marksmanship rolls, respectively. The first stunt also allows the character to cleave straight through the statue, something that normally requires its own attack roll, as an inconsequential part of a more important action.

As a general rule, players should have freedom to manipulate or utilize the environment as a part of

their stunts. While many Storytellers have the urge to make players roll for the more acrobatic stunts they describe, doing so only serves to slow down the game and discourage stunts (especially if the extra roll fails and the "stunt" doesn't work).

Here's the rule of thumb: If it has no mechanical benefit, it doesn't require a roll. Running up the wall to flip over someone is something that might need a roll normally, but it's part and parcel for a kung-fu battle. If causing the entire roof to cave in and crush a clutch of titanspawn is an *incidental* part of the stunt, however, maybe it should be a separate action instead.

Three-die stunts are indefinable. There's only this guideline: If everyone at the table sits up and says, "Wow," that's a three-die stunt. These stunts are the ones that are such spectacular ideas or such perfect descriptions that everyone thinks they're awesome. Or at least the Storyteller does. (There's no example for a three-die stunt here. These really depend on the individual cycle and on the people playing it.)

Be careful when using stunts, however. Try not to get long-winded or overly tied up in your idea of what's cool. The point of stunts is to make the game more fun, not turn it into an interminable blow-for-blow description of a Scion's every eye twitch. Brevity is key. Keep stunts short and relatively simple for the win.

(You, too, Storytellers.)

After earning dice for a stunt, players may choose one of the following benefits to the character:



- Regain a number of Legend points for his character equal to the dice value of the stunt.
- (Two- and three-die stunts only) Regain a point of Willpower.
- (Two- and three-die stunts only) When the stunt resonates with a character's Virtue, regain one channel of that Virtue (see below).
- (Three-die stunts only) When the stunt fits a character's Nature particularly well, or in games where three-die stunts are particularly *rare*, earn one experience point.

For values that are unrolled, such as (Strength + Athletics) for feats of strength, stunt dice add directly to those values without being rolled.

Willpower allows characters to exceed their normal limitations by focusing all their effort on a particular action. Players spend Willpower points on character actions in one of two ways: First, they may purchase an automatic success. Doing so prevents the character from botching and increases by one the number of successes the player rolls.

Second, players may spend Willpower points to channel their characters' Virtues. Spending one point of Willpower allows the character to add a number of dice equal to the chosen Virtue to a dice roll. Players may choose this option only when the action affected by the dice roll resonates with a given Virtue. A character cannot channel Intellect to slaughter an enemy or Vengeance to perform successful surgery. In general, anyway—certainly not without a great reason.

A character may not channel a Virtue more times in a single story than he has dots in the Virtue, though stunts that strongly reflect that Virtue for a character can help refill this pool. Otherwise, it refreshes completely at the start of a new story. (You usually know when a new story begins because the characters get bonus experience as a "story award.")

Only one point of Willpower can be spent on a single roll, either to purchase a single success or to channel a Virtue.

These are most of the dice modifiers you'll encounter in *Scion*. Dice bonuses (and penalties) from tools and circumstances, stunts and Willpower all stack with each other (which can make for some enormous dice pools) to provide the final number of dice you roll to see if your character succeeds.

OTHER ROLLS

Not every roll is a pile of dice in your hand against a flat difficulty, one shot, winner takes all.

Contested Rolls: Some actions your character chooses to take might be directly contested by another character, either another player's or the Storyteller's. This is the case when both characters are working against each other or in direct competition with each other. In this case, the player of each character rolls an appropriate number of dice and compares successes. Whoever gets more successes also gets his way.

Here are some examples: Two characters compete in a marathon, so the players both roll (Stamina + Athletics) to see who has the energy to last longest. In a chess match, the players of both competitors roll (Intelligence + Academics) to determine whose strategy is superior. When a corporate spy tries to sneak past the secretary into the CEO's office, her player rolls (Dexterity + Stealth) while the secretary's player rolls (Perception + Awareness). A tired God uses (Intelligence + Occult) to stump someone with an ancient riddle, and the Scion's player rolls (Wits + Occult) to come up with a fast answer.

In the event of a tie, the characters actually tie (they draw in chess or both cross the finish line at the same time). Some conflicts have no "tie," though: The spy and secretary cannot both win! You have a couple of options. You can simply "roll off," with both players rolling one die simultaneously until one gets a success (and that one wins). Or you can decide that neither person wins, but neither person loses. The spy realizes he can't get past the secretary's eagle eyes, but she doesn't spot him. The Scion's answer to the riddle doesn't quite satisfy the God, but it's too good for the God to just smite the bastard. Characters may try again, or a tie can lead to a new event in its own right.

Not all participants in a contested roll are equal. Some people might be at a disadvantage for these competitions, which manifests as dice penalties or increased difficulties, as appropriate. A marathon runner who insists on drinking and whoring all night before the run will lose a few dice. If the corporate spy also has to contend with lasers, heat sensors and other high-tech intrusion detection equipment, her player's roll is going to be a higher difficulty than the secretary's.

Contested rolls are not restricted to two characters. There are thousands of competitors in some city's big marathons, some wiseass invented three- and four-player chess (not to mention other multi-player board or video games), and a spy might have to sneak past multiple people at once—giving them all (Perception + Awareness) rolls.

Extended Rolls: Every action *can* be represented with a single, instant roll, but not every action *should* be. For instance, when you want to know exactly how long a long-term task takes, such as fixing a school bus so you can tour the country fighting monsters and playing gigs. This is the sort of thing you can approximate with a single dice roll by giving an approximate time frame and letting threshold successes speed it up (or letting the player increase the difficulty for faster results), but sometimes, it helps to be more accurate.

You can also use an extended roll when it is dramatically appropriate for a task to be interruptible, to have partial successes or to go on in the background relative to other events. For example, researching a mysterious God's history might allow a player to roll once per night that his character spends reading ancient

tomes. Making this research an extended roll can allow titanspawn to burst in and destroy the library just as the Scion's getting close, thus creating the opportunity for partial answers that cause the characters to jump to conclusions or provide the backdrop for the adventures that go on during the day by revealing more information as more events happen outside the library.

Every extended roll also has a *cumulative difficulty* and a *roll interval*. Cumulative difficulty is the total number of successes the character must accumulate in order to finish the task satisfactorily. The roll interval is how much time passes between individual rolls, assuming the character is using that time to put effort toward the final result. Just like a normal roll, each individual roll of an extended action has a difficulty, usually 1. On each roll, the player earns one success for beating the difficulty (regardless of what the difficulty is), and one extra success per threshold the individual roll achieves. That is, if the action has a difficulty of 3 per roll interval and the player rolls five successes, he puts one success toward the cumulative difficulty for beating the difficulty of 3, then adds two more for getting a threshold of two. Botching during an extended roll ends the entire attempt in failure, usually disastrously.

Examples: When the enemy is getting close to finding your character, it matters how fast she can climb a tall tree to get her bearings. This action might have a cumulative difficulty of 12 (it's a pretty tall tree) and a roll interval of five minutes (even at her best, it'll take at least a few minutes to get up the tree).

Can your character finish boosting his hot rod before the big race on Friday night? Call it a cumulative difficulty of 20 (since he's really juicing it up) and give it a roll interval of eight hours (a full day's work). He has three days to the race, and if he's going to make it, he might have to stay up late in the garage.

If you want to cut down the roll interval for whatever reason but don't want to make the task too easy or over too quickly, just increase the required cumulative difficulty. Halve the roll interval, double the cumulative successes.

Always remember this about extended rolls: Without a time limit, a character can almost always eventually succeed. If this freedom is inappropriate for a given action, the Storyteller may limit the number of roll intervals before a character must achieve success. Still, this restriction is hardly required. With enough time and effort, a person can accomplish almost anything humanly possible. Scions typically need less of both.

Contested and Extended Rolls: For some rolls, the result depends not just on how fast the character works, but also on who happens to do better. When the German polizei are chasing a car full of Scions down the busy streets of Berlin, or when a hacker and sysop are struggling for control of a bank's computer, the Storyteller might call for a contested and extended roll.

Keep in mind that these actions are not just races to a set finish line. You can represent them with two

ORDER OF MODIFIERS

Here's how you figure out whether or not you actually have something to roll. If, after you follow these steps in this order, you have zero dice, you cannot take a given action.

Step 1—Add Non-Magical Bonuses: Take your base dice pool and add dice from any of the non-magical bonuses mentioned under "Bonuses and Penalties" on page 174.

Step 2—Subtract Non-Magical Penalties: From that number, subtract any dice penalties, including wound penalties. This may reduce the dice pool to zero or even a negative value.

Step 3—Add Magical Bonuses: Add in any dice bonuses from magical sources, such as Arete (see p. 149).

Step 4—Subtract Magical Penalties: Subtract any dice penalties from magical sources. This might reduce the dice pool to zero or even a negative value.

Step 5—Determine Minimum Pool: Characters with Legend 2+ have a minimum effectiveness, even in the face of incredible adversity and personal hardship. If, after all the preceding penalties, such a character's dice pool is less than her Legend rating, she rolls a number of dice equal to her Legend instead.

This minimum pool cannot be greater than a character's original, unmodified dice pool. Characters with Charisma 1, Presence 0 and Legend 3 are not as personable as characters with Charisma 2 and Presence 1.

Step 6—Apply Bonus Successes: After you determine how many dice to roll, go ahead and roll them and add any bonus successes from Willpower expenditure, Epic Attributes or other sources.

separate (i.e., not contested) extended rolls to see who finishes building the death ray first. Rolls that are both contested and extended happen when one character needs to get a certain lead on the other character in order to succeed.

Players of involved characters roll their dice. Just like in normal contested rolls, different characters might have to contend with different difficulties. For example, a cop chasing a thug through unfamiliar territory has a higher difficulty than the perp, who's on his home turf. Just like in normal extended rolls, both players roll their dice pools at the same roll intervals and accumulate successes as written.

YOU INTERRUPTED MY ROLL!

So your character is in the process of a dramatic action—be it a single or an extended roll—you’ve already rolled for the whole thing or for a single roll interval and then something happens when you’re only halfway done. What does that mean? Well, you have a couple options that could be appropriate at different times.

Delayed Success: The character is partway done, and interruption might not change that. If your character’s repairing your car and his neighbor throws an impromptu kegger across the street, the character’s attending that party doesn’t change the fact that he was about halfway done with his work. Any effort that isn’t ruined by the interruption can be picked up where the character left off. Keep the accumulated successes, and just complete the action later. For extended actions, complete the rest of the roll interval before you roll again.

Partial Success: You can’t always go home again. An interruption might end the character’s ability to continue the effort she was making. If she sees the kegger from her library window and runs out to join the fun, but somebody steals the book she was reading while she’s out, she can’t continue her research. If, while a character is examining a scene for fingerprints and whatnot, someone runs in and breaks everything, the evidence is contaminated and the collection process is done.

In these cases, the action ends. Keep a number of successes proportional to the time spent before the interruption. If the character would spend 30 minutes searching a room for evidence and someone ruins it all after 10, you get a third of your rolled successes. For extended actions, the character may continue to pursue the end goal but gains only a fraction of the successes rolled for that roll interval.

You Fail: Sometimes, stopping means failure. When the Scions have to perform the summoning counter-ritual just right, or when a character’s baking a very special soufflé, an interruption means it just doesn’t work. The ritual is flawed or the soufflé falls, no matter how many successes were rolled. Or your character comes back from the kegger, and his car is a smoking ruin. Yeah, nobody knows how that happened.

Here’s the difference from a normal extended roll: These rolls are open-ended. It usually doesn’t matter who reaches 20 successes first—it matters who gets a certain number of successes *above* the other guy first. This is called *competitive difficulty*. With a competitive difficulty of, say, five, whoever gets five successes above the other person wins. For foot races and car chases, this value might stem from the starting distance between competitors or the lead space necessary to completely lose the guy.

Contested and extended rolls can represent a whole mess of situations, so feel free to tweak them to better fit yours. When your Scion is chasing a Titan cultist, the prey might be home free when he reaches the cult’s compound and the gates close behind him. In that or similar cases, you might say that four successes over the other party achieves victory, but that the cultist has a cumulative difficulty of 20 successes to reach the compound and safety. When there’s a stricter time limit—say, a hacker has 30 minutes before he’s locked out of the system—you can set a limit in roll intervals (a maximum of six five-minute roll intervals) for the hacker to overcome his opposition.

These contests don’t always need to be equal, either. When the two parties in a downtown car chase start out one car length apart, the pursuer might need only two successes above the prey to catch up, while the prey needs more to get away. If they start farther apart, the situation might reverse: The lead driver needs only two or three successes above his pursuer to disappear into traffic.

Placing different competitive difficulties on the two parties isn’t the same as giving their actions different (regular) difficulties. The first represents the lead necessary for either group to achieve an objective, the second represents how hard it is. To ground the difference in an example, bring back up a car chase. The two cars might be only half a block apart on a town street without much cover (giving the lead car higher competitive difficulty), but if the pursuer is in a cluster of traffic that the lead car avoided, that driver suffers a higher normal difficulty.

It’s possible to have more than two competitors. There have been some fantastic multi-car chases in cinema, for example. One player’s character is being chased by another’s who is also being chased by someone else entirely, or two people are both chasing the same person, and so on. Everyone involved still rolls only a single dice pool per roll interval; each player compares his running total to every other player with whom he is directly competing.

AUTOMATIC SUCCESS

Sometimes, a given action is so far beneath a character’s competence that there’s no reason to roll the dice. As a general rule, a player with seven dice to roll (bonuses included) automatically succeeds at a standard difficulty roll. Increasing the difficulty by one increases the number of dice necessary for an automatic success by three (difficulty 2 requires 10 dice, difficulty 3 requires 13, et cetera). Automatic successes have success thresholds of zero.

Don't use the rules for automatic success when a character is under significant strain. Combat is certainly one such time, as is any time the character is willing to spend Willpower. Don't use automatic success in contested rolls; even difficulty 1 rolls have to contend with the opponent's successes. Extended rolls can benefit from automatic successes, but they will take a while without any threshold successes.

Use your discretion for automatic success. Sometimes, it's dramatically interesting how well a character performs a certain action, and in those cases, you want to roll the dice. Players may also opt out of automatic success, and are likely to when hoping for bountiful success thresholds.

Add sources of bonus successes after applying the automatic success rule. Some Scions are so adept that they can treat an action as negligibly difficult and still absolutely rock it.

DICELESS ACTIONS

Some actions require time or effort but do not actually have a chance for failure. Any action performed with the automatic success rules counts as a *diceless action*. So do other actions that characters can perform but never require a roll to do, including drawing weapons, getting up (assuming the character just fell down), tying one's shoes or driving in normal circumstances. You'll no doubt think of others.

REFLEXIVE ACTIONS

Other actions are very quick or require no conscious effort on the part of the character but still require a dice roll. These are called *reflexive actions*. Reflexive actions

are rarely voluntary. Usually, the Storyteller tells a player when to roll a reflexive action for her character. Making a (Perception + Awareness) roll for a character to notice the shinobi's sneak attack in time to dodge it is reflexive, assuming you don't declare that your character is very carefully looking around. When a Scion's body fights off the effects of a disease or drug, that's a reflexive (Stamina + Fortitude) roll.

MULTIPLE ACTIONS

Characters may attempt to do multiple things at once. Driving and shooting, helping a friend off the ledge while fencing, and researching two different things at once are just a few examples. Here's how this works.

In effect, the character is doing two things as a single action. But a player can make only one dice roll at one time. So, doing multiple things comes in two flavors. Performing a diceless action while performing a normal action is relatively easy: A character may drive, as long as she doesn't pull any fancy or emergency moves, while also doing the crossword (you've seen them) or firing a submachine gun at the cops. Or a hero can draw a sword and attack with it in one smooth motion.

Performing a diceless action with a normal action inflicts a -2 dice penalty on the normal action. (An action that benefits from the automatic success rule can be considered a diceless action for this purpose.)

The other flavor is combining two normally rolled actions into one. A character may fire two guns at two targets, or swing a sword while running across a tightrope, or throw a shuriken while hacking a database.



Performing two actions simultaneously requires only a single dice roll at a -4 penalty. If the two actions use the same dice pool, just apply the -4 dice penalty and roll once. The number of successes applies in full to both tasks. When the actions use different dice pools, though, you must roll the smaller one at the -4 penalty.

DRAMATIC ACTIONS

This is the term for actions that take longer than just a few moments to perform. Combat is full of instant actions. So is everyday life, really, but who wants to roll for getting out the pan, cracking open the eggs and every few moments of watching them to make sure the yolk doesn't get too hard? Thence come dramatic actions, which are really just dice rolls that represent a period of time longer than a few seconds. One roll to make breakfast is a dramatic action, as is one roll to search a room or a roll to process forensic evidence. Extended rolls are almost always dramatic actions.

TEAMWORK

Two heads are better than one, so clearly, two characters should add more dice, right? Pretty much.

There are two kinds of teamwork in **Scion**, *full teamwork* and *limited teamwork*. When more than one person lends a hand without redundancy, as many people as can do so roll the appropriate dice pools and add up the successes. That is full teamwork.

Examples: Hauling or lifting something heavy, as long as there's a way for everyone to exert force; changing all a car's tires really fast; building a house.

Limited teamwork is when not everyone can be effective at the same time. Usually, there has to be a primary operator and assistants. In most cases, the primary operator will be the person with the highest dice pool. This arrangement is most advantageous, but it might not always be the case (for whatever reason). Roll the primary operator's dice pool and add one bonus die for every assistant. There may be a limit to the number of assistants a character can have before they become redundant, which limits the number of bonus dice from teamwork.

Examples: Surgery, with one doctor and many aides; research, unless there are enough duplicate books for everyone; building a computer.

SPECIFIC RULES

It's not too hard to use the descriptions of the Attributes and Abilities in Chapter Three and the earlier part of this chapter to figure out what you need to roll when. Still, here are some guidelines for how to use them and for things not yet covered. (Remember, combat is in Chapter Seven.)

PHYSICAL THINGS

MOVEMENT

Walking and running normally don't require dice rolls. The exact distance he can cover while moving normally or dashing all-out is based on Dexterity as shown on pp. 192 and 191. (Dots of Epic Dexterity affect this speed as well, as shown on p. 127.) If obstacles (such as hurdles or crowds of people) or adverse conditions (such as ice or tornado winds) make crossing an open space especially difficult, however, a roll (Dexterity + Athletics) might be called for. If the roll succeeds, the character covers the full distance to which he is normally entitled. If the roll fails, he can move only half that distance, at most. If the roll botches, he trips and falls prone.

Any Scion can jump (Strength + Athletics) yards vertically or twice that horizontally, which requires no roll. Remember that bonus dice and successes (from stunts or other sources) increase the character's (Strength + Athletics) for determining jumping distance. Characters without a Legend rating use the same value, but count jumping distance in *feet* instead of yards.

Climbing is also a form of movement. When a character ascends, descends or moves left or right along a vertical surface, his player rolls (Dexterity + Athletics). If this roll succeeds, the character can cover half the distance that he could cover on the ground in a normal Move action (see p. 192). Failure on the (Dexterity + Athletics) roll means the character makes no progress at all. A character whose player botches a climb roll is likely to fall. While climbing, a character cannot engage in multiple actions.

If a character has at least one dot of Athletics, he can swim. Swimming in calm water requires no dice rolls, and the character covers half the distance he can cover in a normal Move action (see p. 192). To swim in rough water or adverse conditions, the Scion's player rolls (Dexterity + Athletics). If the roll succeeds, the character covers half the distance of a normal Move action. If the roll fails, the character makes no progress. If the player botches the roll, the character suffers one level of unsoakable bashing damage as he goes under briefly, choking on water.

When a character swims, climbs, runs or even walks for a long time over a long distance she is considered to be performing a "fatiguing activity." See p. 182 for the rules concerning fatiguing activities.

FALLS

Falling hurts. A character who falls onto something not designed to catch him safely suffers a number of

levels of bashing damage equal to half the yards the character fell. This damage has the Piercing quality (see p. 203). Damage from falling caps out at 25 levels, thanks to terminal velocity. Some surfaces, such as pits full of spikes, are particularly dangerous and inflict lethal damage; other surfaces are particularly yielding and halve the normal damage value (after taking the maximum damage into account). Falling damage can be soaked normally.

Sometimes, players may make rolls to reduce falling damage. (Dexterity + Athletics) represents a character's ability to "roll with it," if that's possible. Each success reduces the damage by one level.

(See Chapter Seven for explanations of damage, piercing damage and soak.)

LIFTING AND BREAKING

Also called "feats of strength," this is what Scions can lift or break with a diceless action. That is, the

player does not need to roll, just compare (Strength + Athletics) to the chart. Breaking something in this way is a dramatic action that takes a couple of minutes as the character tears the object apart. Breaking things in a single blow requires an attack. (See Chapter Seven.) Remember that bonus dice and successes (from stunts or other sources) increase the character's (Strength + Athletics) for determining feats of strength. In addition, Epic Strength allows for much greater feats than those described here (see pp. 126-127).

Characters who do not have a Legend score have a more difficult time lifting huge objects or breaking strong things. Their players must roll (Strength + Athletics) and compare the number of successes to the chart.

ENDURING HARDSHIP

Even Scions need air, water, food and sleep, in order of diminishing importance. So what happens when your character goes without?

FEATS OF STRENGTH

(Str. + Ath.) total	Lift (lbs.)	Sample Feat
1	40	Lift two microwaves, rip tough plastic
2	80	Lift a grown man, kick through a wooden plank
3	220	Punch through a wooden door
4	350	Lift a refrigerator, bend an iron bar
5	450	Lift a calf, lift a motorcycle or kick a wooden door to flinders
6	550	Punch through a reinforced wooden door
7	650	Snap an iron bar over one knee
8	800	Lift a light horse, rip a chain-link fence apart
9	1,000	Pull a car in neutral by yourself as fast as you can run
10	1,200	Lift a heavy horse or full-grown cow
11	1,400	Pull a car with the parking brake on, knock down a brick wall with repeated blows
12	1,600	Kick a reinforced wooden door to pieces, rip a fence from the ground, rip iron bars out of the wall
13	1,800	Lift ten adults (or five sumos), punch through a <i>metal</i> door
14	2,000	Break out of handcuffs, knock down supporting walls through sheer strength
15	2,200	Punch through a stone wall, kick a metal door to pieces
16	2,500	Lift an average car, kick nearly any door open
17	3,000	Punch through a metal door, pull down walls
18	3,500	Flip an SUV, hold a muscle car in place while the engine revs
19	4,000	Tear steel with your bare hands
20	4,500	Knock semis over with a well-placed shove
21+	+500 per	Incredible things—do your best to extrapolate!

Going without sleep, a character suffers a one-die penalty to all actions for each full night's rest she misses after the first. This penalty caps out at three dice. When a sleep-deprived character is not active, her player must roll (Stamina + Fortitude) to refrain from conking out. The difficulty of this roll increases by one every three days. After sleeping for a full eight hours, all penalties fade.

A character can go without food for a number of days equal to $([Stamina + Fortitude] \div 2)$ without penalty. For every day that passes without food after that, the character suffers a cumulative one-die penalty to all actions. When the total penalty exceeds the character's (Stamina + Fortitude), he dies of hunger. A character can last just over $([Stamina + Fortitude] \times 1.5)$ days without food. If a character has something but not enough to eat, double all durations. One full day of normal nourishment reduces the total penalty by one, so it can take some time to return to full health.

Dehydration is a quick killer. For each day a character goes without water after the first, she suffers a -1 penalty to all dice pools. When this penalty is greater than her (Stamina + Fortitude), she dies. Each day of drinking proper fluids reduces this penalty by two until she returns to full health.

Without air, you die faster than without water. Characters can hold their breaths for $([Stamina + Fortitude] \times 30)$ seconds. Reduce this static value by one to three when circumstances make things difficult—if a character tries to tear open a rusted ship, if the water is ice cold or if an oni punches him in the belly. A character who passes his limit suffers one level of unsoakable bashing damage for every 30 seconds, which cannot heal until the character can safely breathe again. Afterward, it heals as normal (see Chapter Seven: Combat, p. 196).

Just in case it comes up in your games, pregnancy can also impair characters physically. A pregnant character suffers a two-die penalty to physical actions in the second trimester and a four-die penalty to such actions in the third trimester. Reduce this penalty by

one for every automatic success the character receives from Epic Stamina.

Remember that bonus dice and successes can increase these static values.

FATIGUING ACTIVITY

A character can perform strenuous exertion for $([Stamina + Fortitude] \div 2)$ hours without rest before she begins to suffer penalties from fatigue. Example activities include running, fighting, frantic searching, high-impact sex or any other athletic activity. For every two hours the character works beyond the normal limit, she suffers a -1 cumulative dice penalty. One hour of rest reduces the penalty by one, and a half hour of rest before any penalty kicks in resets the timer. Once a character accumulates a fatigue penalty that's higher than her (Stamina + Fortitude), she passes out for at least one hour (at which point her penalty drops by one).

Some environments, especially extreme hot or cold ones, can penalize the relevant static value. This rarely imposes a dice penalty of more than -3.

RESISTING DISEASE/POISON/ DANGEROUS ENVIRONMENTS

These all fall under (Stamina + Fortitude), though each has its own subsystem.

Diseases have five qualities: Virulence, Incubation Period, Untreated Morbidity, Treated Morbidity and Difficulty to Treat. When a character is exposed to the disease, his player reflexively rolls (Stamina + Fortitude) at a difficulty equal to the disease's Virulence. If this roll fails, the character then has the Incubation Period—which might be as much as a couple weeks or as little as several hours—before the disease is really dangerous to him. He often develops symptoms much sooner.

If the character goes without treatment, his player reflexively rolls (Stamina + Fortitude) at a difficulty equal to the Untreated Morbidity. Assuming the character has successful treatment, the roll's difficulty is instead set by the Treated Morbidity. Treating an ill

SAMPLE POISONS

Name	Tolerance	Damage	Toxicity	Penalty
Alcohol	(Stamina + Fortitude)	2B/hour	2	-1
Batrachotoxin	—	8L/action	4	-4
Arsenic	(Stamina)	2L/day	3	-0
Marijuana	—	1B/4 hours	2	-2
Titanspawn Venom	—	6L/action	3	-5
Jörmungandr's Venom	—	10A/minute	5L	-5

character requires an (Intelligence + Medicine) roll with a difficulty determined by, surprise, its Difficulty to Treat. A character must correctly diagnose the disease in order to treat it. Once the Incubation Period is up, the Difficulty to Treat increases by two.

Failure on any morbidity roll kills mortals, at a speed and comfort level that varies by disease. Scions suffer only a -2 penalty to all actions due to weakness, but their players get to roll again each day to throw off the disease.

See page 185, “Medicine,” for more details on treating illness (also poisons).

Poisons have four qualities: Tolerance, Damage, Toxicity and Impairment. To suffer the effects of a poison, a character must consume the poison, inhale it, have it injected into the bloodstream or otherwise appropriately absorb the poison. A poison’s Tolerance represents how many doses of the substance a character can have in her system before it begins to deleteriously affect her. (The Storyteller decides how much of a poison constitutes a given dose.) Most deadly poisons have no Tolerance rating, so a single dose is enough to affect a character. If a Tolerance is listed, it’s written in terms of the affected character’s traits as a static value. Using arsenic as an example, its Tolerance is listed as (Stamina) on the “Sample Poisons” chart. That means that a character can have a number of doses of arsenic less than or equal to his Stamina in his system before he begins to suffer the poison’s effects. No matter how high his Stamina is, however, one dose of Jörmungandr’s venom is enough to affect him.

Damage has two values, written as “(injurious potential)/(duration).” The first value describes how much damage a single dose of the poison has the potential to inflict, and the second tells you how often the poison inflicts a single die or level of that damage. Each time a poison inflicts damage, its current Damage rating drops by one. When a poison reaches zero Damage, the character’s system is clear of it. A poison with a Damage of 5B/minute inflicts one die of bashing damage when it first enters the character’s system and one more every minute until it has inflicted a total of five dice of damage. Multiple doses of the same poison add their Damage values, so two doses of that poison would be 10B/minute. Some poisons have special Damage effects, ranging from paralysis to unconsciousness to vomiting or others.

Each time a character suffers damage from a poison, his player reflexively rolls (Stamina + Fortitude) at a difficulty equal to the poison’s Toxicity. Success on this roll reduces the effect of the poison: First, poisons that inflict *levels* of damage become *dice* of damage. (When a poison’s Toxicity has an “L” after the number, the poison inflicts *levels* of damage.) When that is not a concern, aggravated damage becomes lethal damage, lethal damage becomes bashing damage or bashing damage inflicts no damage at all. This is the only way to reduce damage



SAMPLE ENVIRONMENTAL EFFECTS

Effect	Damage	Trauma
Blistering Heat/Numbing Cold	1B/hour	1
Severe Sandstorm	1L/minute	2
Bonfire	4L/action	3
Acid Bath	5L/action	5
Titan's Withering Howl	6A/action	5L

from poison, because it cannot be soaked. Every amount of threshold successes on this roll equal to the poison's Toxicity reduces the damage by yet another step.

Example: Succeeding on the (Stamina + Fortitude) roll against a single dose of Jörmungandr's venom would change the nature of the damage from automatic levels to dice. Succeeding on the roll with 10 successes (five to beat the high difficulty, and another five to equal the Toxicity) would not only change the nature of the damage but also reduce it from aggravated damage to lethal. Succeeding on this same roll with 15 successes (beating the high difficulty and getting a threshold that doubles the Toxicity rating) would reduce an automatic 10 levels of aggravated damage to 10 dice of bashing damage.

As long as a character is under the effect of more doses of the poison than he has dots in the static value listed for the poison's Tolerance, he suffers a dice penalty equal to the poison's Impairment due to ill feelings, hallucinations or other causes. If the difference between the number of doses and the character's appropriate static value is greater than the poison's Impairment, the character suffers a dice penalty equal to the larger number. The only dice pool this penalty does not affect is the (Stamina + Fortitude) roll to resist the poison's effects.

Dangerous environmental effects function much like poison, but only have two qualities: Damage and Trauma. An environmental effect's Damage is the same as that for poison with only two differences: All the damage is applied at each interval, and it continues as long as the character remains in the damaging environment. A Damage of 5L/action inflicts five dice of lethal damage on each of the character's actions. Remember that even taking a Guard action or being Inactive (see Chapter Seven: Combat, p. 191), which is as close as one comes to taking no action at all, triggers this damage.

Trauma is the equivalent of Toxicity. It is the difficulty on the (Stamina + Fortitude) roll to reduce damage to nothing. Unlike poisons, environmental effects can be soaked (although they ignore armor).

DRIVING AND PURSUIT

Characters with no dots in Control trigger a roll for nearly every action when piloting a car or creature under duress. Otherwise, only extreme maneuvers require rolls, from the bootlegger's reverse to jumping a pool

of sharks. Bad road conditions, such as crappy weather or oil slicks, can increase the difficulty of a roll, while damage to the vehicle inflicts dice penalties.

Racing is a straightforward contested roll between drivers. Actual pursuit is an extended, contested roll between drivers. The farther ahead the lead car is, the lower that character's competitive difficulty is and the greater the chaser's competitive difficulty is. Competitive difficulties generally range from 3 at the low end to 8 or 9 at the high end.

For information about damaging vehicles and ramming people with them, see Chapter Seven: Combat.

SOCIAL

WORKING THE CROWD

The core Attributes and Abilities for enforcing your character's will on others are Charisma, Manipulation, Command, Empathy and Presence. Which one a player ends up rolling depends on the character's methods. Use the descriptions of these traits on pages 104, 107 and 108 for guidelines.

You don't always need to get the dice out for persuasion attempts. When the player is having a good time interacting with a Storyteller character, whether or not the target is being convinced, everything is fine. But the time will come that a player wants to convince a Storyteller character who seems intractable. That's when you pick up the dice, representing a concerted (and mechanically backed) effort to elicit a specific response from someone.

Players of characters targeted by such tactics contest with a roll of (Willpower + Integrity + Legend). Rolling more successes than the target's player elicits the desired action from the target, successfully convincing the target of something or tricking the target into taking an action. Players' characters and important Storyteller characters may spend a point of Willpower to ignore what feels like their better judgment and not perform the action; they then become immune to that argument or impulse for the rest of the scene. When rolling against multiple targets (with Command, for example), roll against the target with the highest (Willpower + Integrity + Legend) total. If affected, all targets must spend Willpower

to resist or take the action. (Note: Only important characters have this option.)

READING MOTIVATION

With several minutes of interaction or examination, a character can attempt to determine the truth of a subject's façade. The player rolls (Perception + [Investigation or Empathy]), and the target's player contests with (Manipulation + Empathy). Not everyone tries to hide their thoughts, however. When targeting someone who's being frank, the roll is not contested. Success on this roll allows a character to discern how the character is feeling about the current events and some notions about relationships between people. The character can also detect lies.

MENTAL

HACKING

Controlling computers that aren't yours when someone else doesn't want you to requires an (Intelligence + Science) roll, or occasionally a (Wits + Science) roll. The difficulty is usually determined by the sophistication of the target system's security software. When actual people are on the other end actively protecting a system, the roll becomes contested.

MEDICINE

Diagnosing a patient requires a (Perception + Medicine) roll at a difficulty determined by the affliction's rarity. Truly perplexing cases may use (Intelligence + Medicine). Success on such a roll tells the character what diseases or poisons might be affecting the target,

as well as how many health levels (and of what type) the target currently suffers. Without a diagnosis, a character cannot treat any affliction.

Treating wounds with surgery (removing bullets, setting bones and the like) is a (Dexterity + Medicine) roll at a difficulty equal to the levels of damage inflicted with a given wound. If a gunshot inflicts three lethal wounds, the roll to remove the bullet and aid the healing is difficulty 3. (See Chapter Seven for more information on battle wounds.)

The ability of a doctor to treat poisons and diseases varies widely. Some poisons, especially the strange ones a Scion might encounter, have absolutely no antidotes, and some diseases must be allowed to run their course. Still, modern medicine has a way to deal with almost anything. Diseases have a Treated Morbidity (see p. 182) to make them easier for a patient to survive. Poisons have no such value and often cannot be treated. When they can be treated through antivenin and such, the difficulty to treat them is equal to their Impairment. Successful treatment reduces the nature of the poison's Damage by the success threshold plus one.

TRACKING

While tracking people down in a city requires contacts and lots of footwork, following a physical trail left by someone requires a sharp eye and a lot of experience. Doing so takes a (Perception + Survival) roll at standard difficulty. One roll can put a character on the right track, but long-term tracking is an extended roll, where the distance to reach the target sets the cumulative difficulty. When the prey tries to cover up

VISIBILITY CONDITIONS

Condition	Clear Vision Ends	Murky Vision Ends
Bonfire*	10	20
Flashlight*	10	15
Fog, Day	10	30
Fog, Night	0	3
Full Moon, City or Forest	0	3
Full Moon, Grass or Leafless Forest	25	50
Full Moon, Snowy Ground or Desert	50	100
Headlights*	15	30
Heavy Snow, Day	0	20
Heavy Snow, Night	0	0
No Moon, City or Forest	0	0
No Moon, Grass or Leafless Forest	0	3
No Moon, Snowy Ground or Desert	5	25
Torchlight*	3	5

* Indicates a light source that supplants visibility within its radius.

her trail, this act becomes contested and her player rolls (Wits + Survival) in opposition. The pursuer's competitive difficulty is determined by the distance to the quarry, and the prey's competitive difficulty is determined by the lead necessary to completely lose the hunter.

VISIBILITY

Sometimes, and for any number of reasons, a Scion's vision can be obscured or even cancelled entirely. The way this is handled in game depends on the source of the loss of sight. If the penalty comes from outside the character, say as the result of fog in the dark of night, kraken ink in clear water or Darkness Boons, the darkness adds to the difficulty of any action that is dependent on being able to see clearly. In situations where that is the case, add +1 to the difficulty in cases where visibility is poor and +2 to the difficulty when there is no visibility whatsoever. The "Visibility Conditions" chart uses two divisions to illustrate how this concept works in game. At the distance in yards where clear vision ends, the penalty for poor visibility cuts in. At the point where even that

penalized, murky visibility ends, the penalty for no visibility comes to bear. Without the aid of appropriate Boons or stunts, a character can't make a ranged attack against anything farther away than twice the "murky vision ends" distance unless her target is individually illuminated (by carrying a flashlight, for instance).

Flashlights and similar light sources supplant the regular illumination within their area, granting sufficient illumination to read within the "clear vision" zone. A significant drawback, however, is that such a light source is visible for several miles, alerting anyone (or anything) that might be lurking in the dark to the location of the character bearing the light and allowing for ranged attacks against such a character as if she were in poor visibility.

Characters who can't see as a result of their own full or partial blindness suffer a different penalty. A character who can't see clearly (perhaps having lost her all-important glasses in a classic Velma botch) loses two dice from all actions that require vision. Someone who is rendered truly blind suffers the loss of four dice.





COMBAT

Sooner or later, your characters are going to have to fight. Face it, there's a lot of bad shit going down in the World, Scions are going to be at the heart of it, and they're not always up against someone who'll let them past when they say pretty please.

So that's where this chapter comes in.

HOW COMBAT WORKS

When your characters get into a fight, everything drops into combat time. The smallest division of combat time is one tick, equal to approximately one second. Combat time passes one tick at a time until the end of the fight. On some ticks, one or more characters act. You resolve those actions on the tick in which they are declared (by rolling dice, usually), then continue moving forward, tick by tick.

Every character defends himself on the battlefield unless he chooses to do otherwise. Taking actions penalizes one's defense for the ability to stab someone, jump onto a flying horse or something else. Characters who can act on the current tick reset to their best possible *Defense Value*—clearing all defense penalties—until they choose to take another action.

JOIN BATTLE

Before you can kick ass, you have to be ready. When physical violence becomes imminent, the player of each character involved rolls to join battle. **The Join Battle action is a (Wits + Awareness) roll, representing how quickly combatants react to the instant in which combat becomes inevitable.** In brief, the more successes you roll, the better a drop your character gets on everyone else.

When all players involved in the battle have rolled for the relevant characters and applied any bonus successes from Epic Wits, take the largest single number of successes rolled. That number sets the *reaction count*. The first tick on which a participant can act is equal to the reaction count minus the number of successes the player rolled to join battle. The person who achieved the highest number of successes (i.e., the person who sets the reaction count) acts first on tick zero. No character can begin later than tick six, though, even if her player rolls six fewer successes than the player who set the reaction count. Botching the Join Battle roll indicates that a character begins on tick 6 as well, regardless of the reaction count.

To join a battle that's already in progress, a character's player rolls the same dice pool as normal. Subtract the successes rolled from the established reaction count or from six, whichever is greater, with a minimum result of zero. The result is the number of ticks the character must wait until he can take his first action.

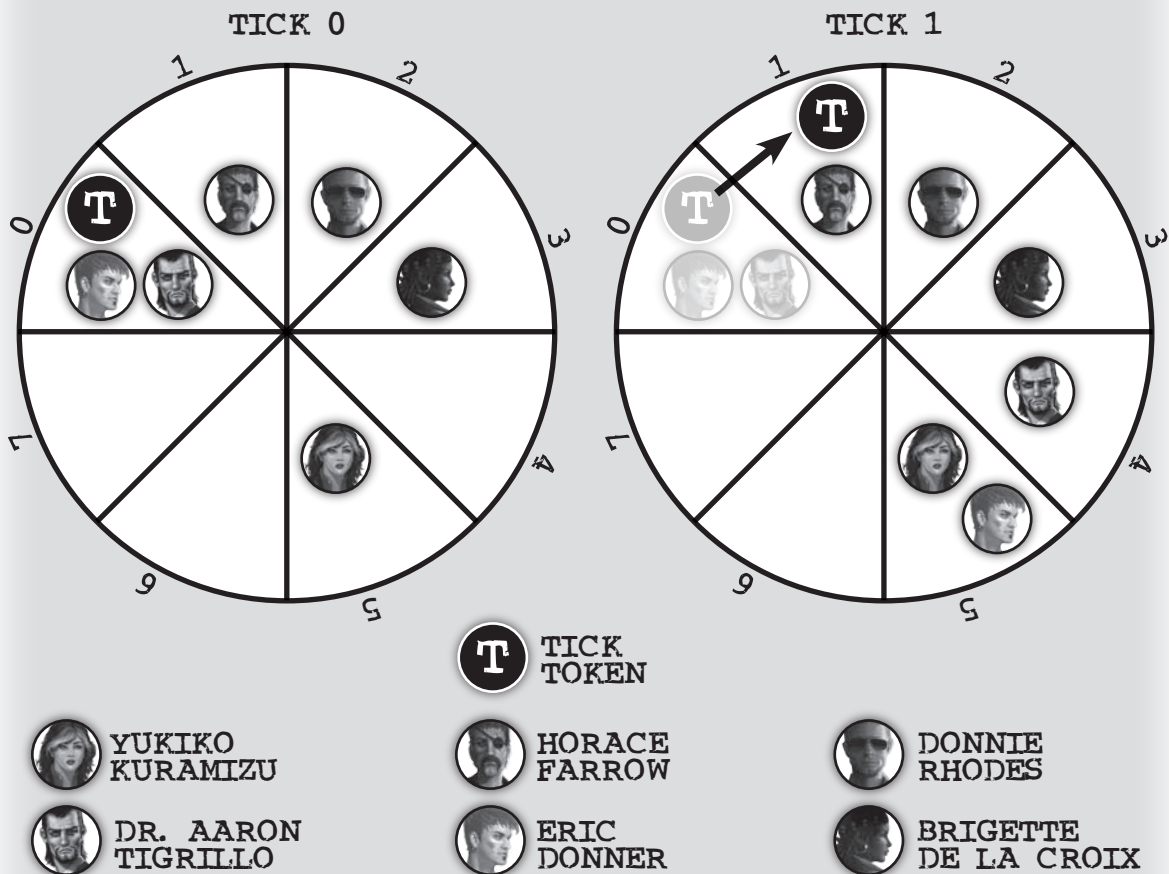
TRACKING TICKS

If you have trouble tracking the ticks of your character or of Storyteller characters in combat, here are a couple suggestions to make it easier.

Dice: Each player uses a single 10-sided die (with the 0 representing zero instead of 10) to track the time until his character's next action. At the start of combat, a die reads the tick number when the character first acts. As each tick passes, all tick-tracking dice are reduced by one number. When a die turns up a 0, it is that character's turn to act. When that tick passes, the player then sets his die to the number equal to the Speed of the action his character just took. (See p. 189 a description of Speed.)

Battlewheel: For this method, you need a token for each character, a piece of paper and one more token. The extra token should be immediately distinguishable from the others. You can call it the tick token, because it indicates which characters act on a given tick. Now draw out a circle on the paper and divide it into seven or eight "pie slices." Put the extra token in one slice. When combat starts, put tokens of characters who act on tick zero on the slice with the tick token. Put any tokens acting on tick one on the next slice to the right or left, tick two on the next slice along and so on.

When a character acts, move his token a number of slices equal to his action's Speed around the battlewheel (counting upward). Once there are no more character tokens in the same slice as the tick token, move the tick token one slice upward. Repeat the process from the beginning of this paragraph until the end of combat. Some groups might want something more permanent than a scrap of paper with a scrawl on it. You can cannibalize board game spinners or make your own.



Paper: This method puts all the onus on the Storyteller, who keeps a sheet of paper marked with all relevant characters and with ticks. You can place the characters' names across the top and mark ticks downward (starting with tick zero). Place an "X" on each character's first tick of action, determined by the Join Battle roll. When a character acts, mark his next action (Speed ticks later) with another "X" farther down the sheet. Check off each tick-row after everyone acting on that tick is done.

ACTIONS

Now you're ready for the ass-kicking. When a character may perform an action on a tick, she has several options. The "Action Options Summary" sidebar sums up the actions a character may take, along with each action's *Speed* and *defense penalty*.

Actions work like this: Your character's tick comes up. You declare the character's action. That action is resolved (and dice may be rolled). You then check the action's Speed. That value shows how many ticks later your character may act again. For example, if your first action occurs on tick two of the reaction count and your character takes a Speed 5 action, you may not act again until tick seven.

Actions also have a defense penalty. The DV (or Defense Value, see p. 192) represents the character's effort to avoid harm in combat. Because taking actions distracts the character from this goal, most actions impose a penalty on the character's DV. The character's DV refreshes (i.e., these DV penalties from actions go away) when the character's next action begins. If your character takes a Speed 5 action on tick two, his DV doesn't refresh until tick seven.

SIMULTANEOUS ACTIONS

In *Scion*, you'll run into many times when multiple characters act on the same tick. Their actions end up happening at the same time, in such a thin blink that no one can tell which came first. There are two things to keep in mind when this happens.

First, all actions taken on the same tick happen at *exactly* the same time. No action benefits from another action that happens on the same tick, no matter which action you resolve first. Second, the Defense Values of any characters acting on that tick almost always reset to maximum. Therefore, if your character and a titanspawn attack each other on the same tick, each character benefits from his full DV. If both characters hurt each other on that same tick, neither one loses dice to wounds until both attacks are over.

This means it is possible for two swordsmen to draw their blades, slash each other once and drop dead at the same time. It happened to samurai all the time.

REFLEXIVE ACTIONS

In combat, reflexive actions do not have to occur on a tick when your character has an action. If they *do*, they don't consume your character's action. In short, *reflexive* actions are not *real* actions. If a reflexive action is voluntary, your character can perform it on any tick (and potentially every tick). When the reflexive action is involuntary, your character performs it when situation dictates.

Some reflexive actions require dice rolls, and some don't. The Move action is voluntary and diceless, for example. Resisting poison is involuntary and requires a roll. Reflexive actions that require rolls don't take dice away from a character's normal actions (though the results might).

INTERRUPTING ACTIONS

Most actions cannot be interrupted. Even though real-life actions take time, *Scion* represents most actions as instantaneous and resolves them immediately in the same tick. An action's Speed (i.e., the number of ticks a character must wait before he can act again) represents only recovery time. Yet, in the rare case when an action represents a state of waiting or readiness, the character can choose to break away from that action and do something else before the number of ticks represented by the action's Speed has elapsed. If an action can be interrupted, its description says so. **The Aim and Guard actions may be interrupted to perform another action.** When a character interrupts an action, his DVs do not refresh. Instead, the new action's defense penalty stacks with the old defense penalty, if any. After performing the new action, the character must wait a number of ticks equal to the interrupting action's Speed before his next action. That's also when his DVs next refresh.

ACTION OPTIONS SUMMARY

Sample Action (Speed/defense penalty):
Description.

Aim (3/-1): Spend time maximizing the effect of an attack upon a specific target. Each tick spent aiming adds one die to an attack on that target, to a maximum of three dice.

Attack (Varies/-1): Attempt to harm a single target. See page 194 for resolving an attack.

Dash (3/-2): Run all-out. Move up to (Dexterity + 6) yards each tick until next action.

Guard (3/-0): Wait, watch, be on guard. This is the optimum choice for a character on the defensive or waiting for the right moment.

Inactive (5/Special): Be incapable of taking actions. This state represents characters who are sleeping, unconscious, bound or otherwise unable to act or defend themselves.

Miscellaneous Action (5/Varies): Perform one of several tasks, which may be only tangentially related to combat. **Using a Boon is a miscellaneous action with Speed 5 unless otherwise noted.**

Move (0/-0): Run at a controlled speed. Move up to (Dexterity) yards in a single tick. Move actions are reflexive, so characters may take move actions every tick without penalty.

ACTIONS IN FULL

This section describes actions important to combat in full. Every action has a Speed and a defense penalty. The action's Speed determines how long it takes a character to recover from performing that action. Reflexive actions are Speed 0. Taking many lower-Speed actions allows your character to act often in combat, while taking greater-Speed actions means your Scion acts less often. The average Speed is 5.

An action's defense penalty is the amount by which taking that action reduces your character's Defense Values. (Characters have multiple DVs, and all are affected identically by an action's defense penalty.) Taking an action with a high defense penalty is a risk—the character is opening her guard in order to accomplish a goal. Your character takes actions with low DV penalties (or no defense penalty, such as the Guard action) when she is trying to protect herself.

AIM (SPEED 3, DV -1)

When she really needs to hit Achilles' heel, or when she just has the leisure, your character can take the Aim action. **Aim is a Speed 3 action that can be interrupted.** The player declares a target, which his character must be able to see. For each tick spent aiming, the player adds one die to the attack his character unleashes upon that target, to a maximum of three. This bonus applies to only the next attack on the declared target, not on more than one roll or on any other target.

A character may interrupt the Aim action to perform another action. If that action is an attack upon the target of the aim, the player gains a number of dice equal to the ticks spent aiming. A character may perform the Aim action again at the end of an Aim action; the player doesn't gain more bonus dice or suffer greater defense penalty than -1 (at least from taking the action). This is equivalent to holding a bead on a target, just waiting for the perfect moment to strike. If the character loses sight of his target for three or more ticks, the bonus disappears and must be reestablished.

ATTACK

(SPEED VARIES, DV VARIES)

Your character tries to hurt somebody. **Attack Speed varies by weapon.** Detailed rules for how to resolve attacks begin on page 194. **The normal defense penalty for attacking is -1.**

A character may choose to make two attacks as a single action. **Making two attacks is one action with a defense penalty of -2 and a Speed equal to the greater Speed of the two attacks.** This incurs a four-die penalty on the one dice roll made, which is always the lesser of two dice pools if the character is making two different kinds of attacks. The character may attack two targets at one time or one target twice.

When the character levels both attacks upon one target, he may choose to reduce the target's DVs against both attacks by one or to reduce the target's DVs against only one attack by two. The former represents that two attacks are harder to evade than one, and the latter represents using one attack to make the other more likely to hit—like throwing a punch to open the opponent's guard for the dagger. Each attack causes damage separately if it hits.

COORDINATE ASSAULT (SPEED 5, DV -2)

A number of warriors can work together to better bring down their enemies. In fact, this tactic is often a necessary one against the mighty Scions or against the massive Titans. The player of the character who's taking this action rolls (Charisma + Command). Each success on the roll allows her to coordinate two people (including herself) in an assault against a single individual. Her player designates all affected individuals immediately after the roll. Against all attacks in the coordinated assault, the target suffers a DV penalty equal to the number of coordinated attackers or the number of successes on the original roll (whichever is the lesser).

To contribute to and benefit from a coordinated assault, a person designated must attack the target on the *coordinating character's* next action. Only people declared by the coordinator may contribute to and benefit from a coordinated assault, and only coordinated individuals who actually attack the target contribute to the DV penalty. The coordinating character need not designate herself as a part of the attack.

Example: Prometheus Adams, who's used to bossing librarians around, sees a weakness in the titanspawn's tactics. His player rolls to coordinate an assault and gets three successes. The player could designate as many as six people to participate in the attack, but there are only four (including himself) present, so he only marks them. In order to get any benefit, they must all attack five ticks after Adams took the action to coordinate them.

When all four attack, each treats the monster's DVs as three lower than normal—the number of successes on the roll. (If Prometheus's player had rolled four successes, each would treat the monster's DV as four lower.) If one person fails to attack on that tick, the DV penalty would still be three. If only two people managed to attack, though, the imposed DV penalty is only -2.

Because actions generally take from four to six ticks, people designated for a coordinated assault generally find it beneficial to take Guard or Aim actions while waiting for the moment to all strike as one. Note that coordinating an assault typically requires lots of yelling and pointing unless the coordinated fighters have practiced their combat tactics. Also, some enemies make it a point to take out effective leaders—provided they survive said leaders' coordinated assaults.

DASH (SPEED 3, DV -2)

This is as fast as your character can run, a flat-out sprint. **Dash is a Speed 3 diceless action.** At its standard, the character runs up to (Dexterity + 6) yards each tick until the end of the action. Remember that each dot of Epic Dexterity adds extra yards to the distance a character moves in a single tick (see p. 127). A character may not take a Dash and Move action in the same tick. A character knocked prone cannot dash until she uses a miscellaneous action to stand.

As a diceless action, a character may perform a rolled action simultaneously with a Dash. As normal, doing so inflicts a -2 penalty on the rolled action.

GUARD (SPEED 3, DV -0)

Your character tries her best to avoid harm. **Guard is a Speed 3 action that can be interrupted.** This is a tactic for delaying, waiting or just holding off 100 titanspawn while your Band closes the portal.

INACTIVE (SPEED 5, SPECIAL DV)

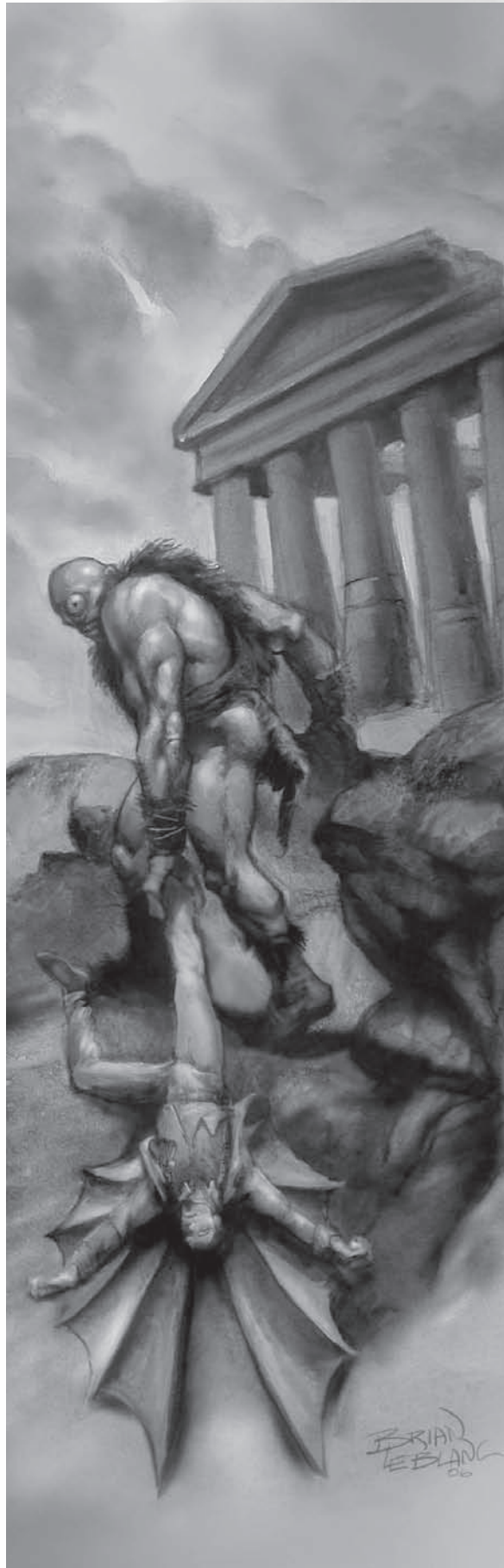
When your character is incapable of taking action, because he is unconscious, paralyzed, frozen in carbonite or whatever, he takes the “Inactive” action. Characters do not choose to be inactive, inactivity is thrust upon them. This is a necessary contrivance for **Scion**, enabling unconscious characters to be affected by effects that occur “every action”—such as taking damage from certain environmental effects (see p. 184). Some effects might keep a character unconscious for only a limited period of time, and that could also be measured by inactive actions. **Inactive characters do not take notable actions and cannot defend themselves.** Their DVs effectively drop to 0 against all attacks.

MISCELLANEOUS ACTIONS (SPEED 5, DV VARIES)

Not every possible action can be categorized here, so miscellaneous actions take up the slack. Anything not listed in this section is a miscellaneous action, including the few listed examples that follow. The most common use for a miscellaneous action is to perform non-combat actions during a combat—picking the lock while your friend holds off Grendel’s cousins, for example, or fixing the engine before the horde of androphagi eats through your line of defenders.

Most miscellaneous actions are DV -1. It depends on how strongly the character focuses. She might choose to focus completely on the action, in which case her DV drops to 0 as she ignores the raging battle. If she instead chooses to be wary while performing her task, she suffers a two-die penalty to the miscellaneous action. (Treat the character like she’s performing a diceless action while she performs the miscellaneous action.) Other miscellaneous actions may have higher DV penalties.

Boons are considered miscellaneous actions if they create their own action. Assume using a Boon incurs a -1 DV penalty and is Speed 5 unless the Boon



notes otherwise. Some Boons affect existing actions, altering the nature of an attack, attempt to pick a lock, et cetera. Those Boons use the supplemented action's Speed and defense penalty.

Sample Miscellaneous Actions

These actions are all Speed 5, DV -1 unless otherwise noted.

Driving: Normal driving is a diceless action. As long as the road is smooth and your character's not trying anything crazy, you don't have to roll. This means your character can also fire a gun, toss a grenade or maybe play a tune on his mystical panpipe. If you do have to do something difficult, such as swerving around an out-of-control baby stroller, driving requires a dice roll. Refer to "Driving and Pursuit" on page 184 for information about catching or losing someone. For ramming people, using cars as cover or destroying the mechanical beasts, see page 200.

Get Object: Pulling a sword from a sheath, a gun from a holster or a training staff from the wall is a diceless action, as is lifting a shield or grabbing an idol. One use of this action is enough to draw as many objects as the character can hold—a sword and shield, two guns or both bottles of precious, precious booze. Some situations make it a rolled action. It's hard to pick up your gun after you dropped it in that olive oil. Likewise, wrestling the scroll out of the cultist's hand is an action all by itself (and should probably be resolved as an attack).

Your character will often use this action for drawing or retrieving weapons. More, characters often draw and fire, or cut off an opponent's head straight from the sheath. Remember that, as a diceless action, your character can get an object simultaneously with performing a normal action. Drawing and attacking at the same time places the normal two-die penalty on the rolled action.

Get Up: You get knocked down, but you get up again. Standing is a diceless action unless circumstances make it merit a roll. Try standing up on the wing of a biplane in flight, sometime.

Hide: This is a (Dexterity + Stealth) action to conceal the character from her opponents. Hiding usually precedes an escape attempt or an unexpected attack (see p. 199). In the middle of combat, this roll usually incurs a two-die penalty because of everyone's heightened awareness. Players of the character's opponents all reflexively participate in the contested roll (Perception + Awareness) to keep track of the character. Those who fail no longer know where the character is, and they might fall prey to an unexpected attack if not apprised of the character's location.

Jumping: The rules for distance in jumping are in Chapter Six: Rules, on page 180. Jumping in combat is a diceless action (but it's not reflexive). Jumping and performing a rolled action inflicts a -2 penalty on the

action, as normal. Minor hops and jumps that aren't mechanically relevant (i.e., they don't take the character over a chasm or allow the character to exceed normal movement) need not, at the Storyteller's discretion, be considered jumps. They fall under then normal Move action and become little more than fun window dressing.

MOVE (SPEED 0, DV -0)

This is the character's normal running speed in combat. **Move is a reflexive action that may be performed on every tick.** This reflects that participants in battles are constantly moving, trying to get an advantage. The character moves up to a number of yards equal to her Dexterity on any tick in which she takes a move action. A character may not take a Dash and a Move action in the same tick. A character knocked prone cannot take a Move action until she uses a miscellaneous action to stand.

DEFENSE VALUE

You've heard a lot about it, so now's the time to learn what it means. Your character has multiple Defense Values, usually abbreviated "DVs" (singular "DV"). These static values are derived from the character's Attributes and Abilities. When someone attacks your character, you get to apply one of your character's DVs (usually her highest) as a penalty against the attack. Add the DV to the difficulty of the attack (usually standard difficulty). Effectively, you are subtracting your character's DV from the number of successes the attacker's player rolls. If you reduce that number to 0, your character escapes unscathed.

Dodge DV: A character has only one Dodge DV (Dodge DV). This is the DV you use when your character defends herself by getting the hell out of the way. Dodge DV is equal to $([Dexterity + Athletics + Legend] \div 2)$. Some attacks might be listed as undodgeable, making Dodge DV inapplicable. An example of an undodgeable attack might be a fired titanspawn quill that multiplies until it completely fills the air. **Remember that dots of Epic Dexterity increase DVs as shown on p. 127.**

Parry DV: A character can have many Parry DVs (Parry DVs). You use Parry DV when your character knocks an attack aside with a weapon or blocks one with his arms or legs. Characters automatically have an unarmed Parry DV, and most have additional Parry DVs based on their weapons. Calculate Parry DV by $([Dexterity + Brawl or Melee + weapon's Defense] \div 2)$. Some attacks might be listed as unblockable, making the Parry DV inapplicable. An example of an unblockable attack might be a gust of hot steam from a broken pipe. **Remember that dots of Epic Dexterity increase DVs as shown on p. 127.**

Without a stunt, unarmed defenses cannot parry attacks that inflict lethal damage. Bullets cannot be parried without some special ability.

DEFENSE VALUE MODIFIERS

Situation	DV Modifier	Type	Explanation
30% Hard Cover (Using a Shield)	+1	C	p. 193
60% Hard Cover	+2	C	p. 193
90% Hard Cover	+3	C	p. 193
Higher Than Attacker	+(1–3)	C	p. 193
Lower Than Attacker	-(1–3)	C	p. 193
Onslaught Penalty	-1/(Legend) attacks	L	p. 193
Prone	-1 melee/+1 ranged	C	p. 198
Suffer Multiple Attacks	-(1 or 2)	I	p. 193
Taking Actions	-(Defense Penalty)	L	p. 189
Under Coordinated Assault	-(varies; see p. 189)	I	p. 190
Unstable Terrain	-(1–3)	C	p. 199
Wearing Armor*	-(Mobility Penalty)	C	p. 204
Wound Penalties	-(1–4)	C	p. 195

C: Conditional penalties. Effective until cause removed.

L: Lasting penalties. Effective until DV refreshes.

I: Instant penalties. Effective for one instant, the duration of one attack.

* Mobility penalties apply only to Dodge DV.

Inapplicable DVs: When an attack is unblockable or undodgeable, it renders the relevant DV inapplicable. In the simplest terms, this means you can't use that DV. In practice, you can *choose* to use an inapplicable DV, but the attacker treats it as 0 for all purposes. Some effects are undodgeable *and* unblockable. Without powerful magical defenses, they treat your character as if all his DVs were 0.

DV Bonuses: Stunts performed as a Guard action add their stunt dice directly to DVs on a one-for-one basis. Height advantage, from being higher on the hill or fighting from the back of a flying steed, adds some bonus to DV. Finally, shields and cover increase DVs. DV bonuses apply *after* inapplicability, meaning that a character with a shield, some cover and a good Guard-action stunt still gets *some* protection from that unblockable, undodgeable attack the Titan just unleashed.

DV Penalties: Penalties to DV are common. The foremost source is a defense penalty from an action. A character's DVs usually hover a point or two below maximum because of this.

Other sources of penalties come from attackers. Even Scions have limits. After a number of attacks equal to a character's (Legend + 1), the character's DV drops by one against all attacks until his DV refreshes as he takes his next action. This is called *onslaught penalty*. A person who

makes two attacks at the same time against a single target who's suffering an onslaught penalty either decreases that target's DV against both attacks by one or decreases the target's DV by two against only one attack.

Coordinated assaults (see p. 190) can reduce DV against a small number of attacks. Armors have mobility penalties (see p. 204), which reduce Dodge DV directly. Unstable terrain of any sort (see p. 199) can penalize both DVs. Being unable to move freely can restrict DV significantly, even to the point of dropping it automatically to 0.

When a character is unaware of an attack, he is unable to use any DV. Similarly, when a character is surrounded by five attackers in melee combat (the maximum number that may attack in melee at once), he cannot pay full attention to all of the attackers. His player chooses one of the five attackers against whom the character cannot defend. Whether unaware of the attack or surrounded, the character's DVs are effectively 0 against this attack.

It is important to remember that DV penalties are either *conditional*, *lasting* or *instant*. Conditional penalties affect the character constantly until the condition that caused the penalty is removed, like wound penalties and mobility penalties. Lasting penalties, like action DV penalties and onslaught penalties, remain until the character's DV refreshes. Instant penalties apply against

only a single attack, and include most other sources, from coordinated attacks to multiple attack penalties.

Which DV to Use: In general, you may use the highest of your character's available DVs. Some characters have many to choose from. A character standing on the street with a sword in one hand has three: Dodge DV (almost always available), Parry DV with the sword and unarmed Parry DV.

Automatic Defense: When a character's final DV is twice an attacker's final dice pool or greater, the attack automatically misses without a roll. The attack still counts toward onslaught penalty, though.

ATTACKING

Here's how you resolve an attack, from declaration to damage. Don't worry, it only *looks* complicated.

VALID TARGETS

A valid target is basically a thing that can be targeted by an effect. For the purpose of attacks, a target becomes invalid if the attack can in no way reach the target. A target not in range of the attack (a few feet for melee combat) is invalid, just as someone safely behind a thick steel door is an invalid target for a gunshot (though characters are welcome to shoot at the door).

STEP ONE: DECLARE ATTACK

A player declares that her character is going to attack. She names a valid target for the attack and describes the attack. The player declares any Boons or other powers benefiting the attack and describes any special attacks the character is attempting. The Storyteller tells her the (Attribute + Ability) combination to use for the attack, though the player usually knows it beforehand. The Storyteller also awards dice for stunts.

STEP TWO: DECLARE DEFENSE

The target's player declares which Defense Value he is using and any special effects that benefit his defense. The Storyteller awards DV bonuses for stunts if the target performs a particularly noteworthy Guard action.

Unless declared otherwise, assume that the character uses the best Defense Value available to him. A player may also declare the character is not defending (dropping effective DV to 0), but doing so forces the character to depend upon soak and his other defenses to resist the damage. An attack the character chooses not to defend against does not count toward onslaught penalty (see p. 193).

When the attacker's dice pool is half (or less than half) the target's DV, the attacker's player does not roll. The attack automatically fails, though it still counts toward onslaught penalty.

STEP THREE:

ATTACK ROLL VS. DEFENSE

After the declaration of defense, the attacker's player rolls his dice—most often [Dexterity + (Brawl, Melee, Marksmanship or Thrown)]—and counts successes. Remember, results of 7, 8 or 9 equal one success, while a 10 equals two successes. Also, Epic Dexterity adds bonus successes to this total, as shown on p. 127. If the number of successes equals or exceeds the difficulty of the roll (base difficulty + target's DV), the attack hits. The target is going to take damage.

It is also in this step that a character may spend Legend for her player to reroll an attack roll. Players may also call for a "defensive do-over" (see p. 122) in the same way. Doing so has the retroactive effect of increasing the character's DV versus that attack by (Athletics ÷ 2).

STEP FOUR:

CALCULATE RAW DAMAGE

After a successful attack, the attacker's player adds up (weapon's Damage + attacker's Strength + threshold successes + 1). This is the *raw damage* of the attack—i.e., the number of dice of damage the attacker's player gets to roll. (In write-ups for pregenerated characters and antagonists throughout this book, the + 1 has been accounted for in the characters' Combat Traits.)

Damage comes in three types: *bashing*, *lethal* and *aggravated*. Crushing and blunt-impact attacks cause bashing damage. Attacks that cut, pierce or shatter inflict lethal damage. Aggravated damage is reserved for attacks that rend the target's soul or are somehow inimical to the target's nature. For more information on taking damage (or dishing it out), see "Damage" on page 195.

STEP FIVE: APPLY HARDNESS

If the target has a Hardness value that is greater than or equal to the raw damage, the attack inflicts *no damage whatsoever*. Hardness is a source of protection that derives from wearing powerful armor or wielding great magical power. Hardness, like damage, splits up into bashing, lethal and aggravated categories. Compare bashing damage to bashing Hardness and so on. If the raw damage is greater than the appropriate Hardness, continue to the next step.

STEP SIX:

ROLL DAMAGE, APPLY SOAK

The attacker rolls a number of dice equal to the attack's raw damage (and adds any bonus successes granted by his Epic Strength). The target of the attack then compares the number of successes on that roll to his appropriate soak value (bashing, lethal or aggravated—whichever applies to the type of damage the attack inflicts).

All characters have some amount of soak, even if it's just a little bit of bashing soak. Even naked, a

ORDER OF ATTACK

1) Declare Attack: The attacker's player states that the character is attacking and what Boon or knacks (if any) he will use to enhance the attack. The Storyteller tells her the (Attribute + Ability) combination to use for the attack and awards any dice for stunts.

2) Declares Defense: The defender defends using best option of Parry or Dodge DV, unless he declares otherwise. The defender's player must declare the use of any defensive Boons or knacks. The Storyteller awards any dice for stunts.

3) Attack Roll vs. Defense: The attacker's player rolls the dice pool that governs the method of attack used at a difficulty of (base difficulty + target's DV). Epic Dexterity successes add to this roll. An attacker may spend Legend for her player to reroll an attack roll in this step. A defender may also spend Legend for his player to make a defensive reroll.

4) Calculate Raw Damage: If the attack hits, it has a raw damage equal to (weapon's Damage + attacker's Strength + threshold successes + 1). Effects modifying the raw damage of an attack apply accordingly.

5) Apply Hardness: If the victim has a Hardness rating against the attack's raw damage type, compare the Hardness with the raw damage. If Hardness is equal or greater, the defense absorbs the attack without effect. Otherwise, the damage ignores the defender's Hardness.

6) Roll Damage, Apply Soak: Roll dice equal to the raw damage of the attack. Next, remove the target's appropriate soak rating from the damage of the attack. Apply post-soak successes as health levels of the appropriate type of damage to the defender.

7) Apply Results: Any non-damage effects of an attack occur at this stage.

character has bashing soak equal to his Stamina. Scions and other supernatural beings also have lethal soak equal to half their bashing soak (rounded up). Some tough or hardy animals have a limited lethal soak as well. **Remember also that each dot of Epic Stamina adds to soak and adds limited aggravated soak, as shown on p. 129.** Wearing armor (or protective thick clothing) also adds to soak. Aggravated damage cannot be soaked by a character's natural Stamina. Any armor the character wears grants aggravated soak equal to its granted lethal soak.

Subtract the target's soak from the number of successes on the attacker's damage roll. The result is called *post-soak damage*—that's how much damage the target suffers.

Note: These rules assume that the attack is inflicting raw damage *dice*, but some effects inflict raw damage directly to one's health levels instead. In effect, the attacker's player doesn't roll for damage in Step Six. When a target has to soak *levels* of raw damage, rather than *dice*, soak reduces the raw damage as normal.

STEP SEVEN: ADDITIONAL EFFECTS OF THE ATTACK

Attacks sometimes have other effects, such as injecting a poison into the bloodstream or knocking the target off the Empire State Building. This is when those things happen.

For the results of taking damage, read on.

DAMAGE

Before you learn what happens once it's gone, you should know how much health your character has to lose.

Characters typically have seven health levels, each represented as boxes on the character sheet. When all the boxes are unmarked, your character's right as rain. For each health level of damage your character suffers—whether a foul ball hits him at a baseball game or a kitsune bites him—mark one box. Each health level belongs to one of five increasingly severe categories: -0, -1, -2, -4 or Incapacitated. Marking the -0 means she's a little battered or lacerated, but still functioning at top capacity. From there, things go downhill.

The character suffers wound penalties—a dice penalty to all actions—equal to the number associated with the *highest marked wound box*. Having one or both of your "-1" boxes marked takes one die from all the character's actions and reduces the character's DVs by one. **Each point of wound penalty reduces all actions by one die, reduces movement (Move and Dash actions) by one yard per tick and reduces DVs by one.** Wound penalties do not go away when a character's DV refreshes. They remain until the wounds heal.

Wound boxes fill from the top down. That means that the first wound you take fills your -0 box, the second wound fills a -1 box and so on. Always mark wounds in empty boxes with the *lowest* associated wound penalty. The more wounds you take, the greater the penalties you experience. Your character suffers a wound penalty equal to the greatest



penalty associated with a wound box filled with damage; wound penalties are not cumulative.

To tell the difference between bashing, lethal and aggravated wounds, mark them differently in your wound boxes. It's useful to use marks that can easily be upgraded to show worse damage. Use one slash (/) for bashing damage. You can add another slash (//) to represent lethal damage. Add a vertical line to that (//|) to show aggravated damage.

Lethal wounds are always “on top” of bashing wounds. That is, if your character already has one level of bashing damage then takes a level of lethal, you mark the lethal damage in the -0 spot and “push” the bashing into the -1 spot. Likewise, aggravated wounds are always “on top” of both lethal and bashing wounds. It's actually better this way, because characters heal faster. (You'll see in a bit.) An example is in order.

Example: When Urmand the cyclops kicked in the door, right onto Jordan's face, Jordan took two levels of bashing damage. His player marks bashing with a slash in his -0 and first -1 wound boxes. The Scion now suffers a -1 wound penalty, losing one die from all actions and one from his Defense Values.

After a brief scuffle, Urmand manages to stab a soup spoon into Jordan's belly while quoting an old action film. Jordan takes one level of lethal damage. His player puts another slash through his -0 level, marking its change to lethal damage, then marks bashing damage in his second -1 wound box. He had two bashing wounds before the attack, and that hasn't changed. Now, though, they've been pushed down by the one lethal wound he just received. Jordan is still suffering only a -1 wound penalty.

Jordan recoups valiantly and hurts Urmand enough to chase the cyclops off. Before the titanspawn leaves, however, he invokes a deadly spell that inflicts two aggravated wounds on Jordan. These two aggravated wounds push down both the lethal and bashing wounds Jordan took earlier. The player marks aggravated damage in his -0 box and first -1 box. He turns the bashing wound in Jordan's second -1 box into lethal and fills his two -2 wound boxes with bashing. He still has two bashing wounds and one lethal wound, he's just added two aggravated wounds. And, going from top to bottom, the wounds go aggravated, lethal, bashing. Perfect. Jordan now suffers a -2 wound penalty.

Ignominiously, on the way to warn his friend Prometheus Adams, Jordan slips and hits his head. He takes one more level of bashing damage. His player marks this in the lowest empty wound box, associated with the -4 wound penalty. He suffers a -4 penalty to all dice rolls and to his DVs—good thing the fight's over. He's also lucky he didn't take one more level of damage, because he'd be Incapacitated right now and unable to go to or call for help.

Bashing Damage: Bashing is when something tenderizes your character a bit but doesn't cut him up or inflict long-term injuries. Normal people heal bashing damage at a rate of one level every 12 hours. A few days after a brawl, a guy'll be fine. Luckily for you, Scions and other special individuals heal faster: **Your character recovers one level of bashing damage every three hours.** When a player marks the Incapacitated wound box with bashing damage, her

character is unconscious. She remains unconscious until she heals at least one level of damage (generally three hours).

Lethal Damage: Serious cuts, bullet wounds and really pulverizing smashes cause lethal damage. It heals much more slowly than bashing, and that healing time depends on the severity of the wound. (See the chart.) It assumes the wounded character is taking it very easy—bed rest, for the most part. If the character moves around and acts as if he weren't wounded, healing each level takes twice as long. Note that characters can't actually take actions as long as they're at Incapacitated, so bed rest for that level is enforced.

When a character's Incapacitated wound box is marked with lethal damage, she is dying. See "Surviving It... Or Not."

Wound Level	Mortal Time	Scion Time
-0	one day	six hours
-1	one week	two days
-2	two weeks	four days
-4	one month	one week
Incapacitated	one month	one week

Aggravated Damage: When your character's soul gets burned, she might just need to take some time off. Aggravated wounds are those that only time and nature can heal, not mortal medicine or any but the most powerful magic. Aggravated levels heal at the same rate as lethal levels but cannot be aided or sped by most any agency.

SURVIVING IT... OR NOT

What happens when you fill your character's Incapacitated level with damage? Well, he's in trouble. If it's bashing damage, he falls unconscious where he stands. He becomes Inactive (see p. 191) until that level of damage heals and he wakes up. The player should feel free to have his character gasp out some last warning or challenge. Should the character take additional bashing damage, it instead upgrades one level of bashing damage to lethal. When the character takes additional *lethal* damage, it pushes the character's bashing damage down (as usual), and every bashing wound that "falls off" upgrades an existing bashing wound to lethal. As usual, lethal damage is on top of bashing damage.

This means that a character who takes 14 levels of bashing damage ends up with seven levels of bashing damage and then seven upgrades to lethal damage. He's dying just as surely as the guy who takes seven levels of lethal damage.

When you fill the character's Incapacitated box with lethal damage, he's *dying*. The character remains Inactive, but this is much worse than being knocked unconscious from bashing damage. Dying characters won't heal without help; they'll die in 10 to 20 seconds. A character has a number of Dying health levels equal to his Stamina. He loses one such box every action (i.e., every five ticks) after his player first marks lethal damage in the Incapacitated box, and taking lethal damage from other sources also eliminates these. (At this point,

ignore bashing damage—the character is so far gone that a few bruises don't make any difference.) When he loses his last Dying box, he dies.

To forestall this trip to the undiscovered country, a character needs help. This is one reason why it's great to have friends. Emergency surgery is the only way to save the character. With appropriate medical tools, a medic can stabilize a dying character. It requires a (Wits + Medicine) roll at difficulty equal to (4 + current Dying wounds). Success heals all the wounded character's Dying levels and brings him back to the brink at Incapacitated. Failure kills the character. Magic that heals any number of wounds automatically stabilizes the character—the first wound healed fixes all Dying levels, while other healing levels function as normal.

EXTRAS

In **Scion**, combat between epic heroes and lesser opponents is often a one-sided affair. Put bluntly, Scions are the protagonists in a cosmic drama arranged by the forces of Fate itself. They are meant to fall in battle with mighty supernatural creatures—Gods, titanspawn, their fellow Scions—not with minions or ordinary mortals. Therefore, Fate often sets up such lesser foes to be taken down with ease by the heroes of the tale, relegating them to the roles of extras in the Scions' cycles. This is actually a minor transient form of Fatebinding (see pp. 221-226) that effects those in combat with a Scion who are insignificant to the Scion's ongoing drama. Such extras are affected by the following conditions:

Reduced Health: Extras possess only three health levels. They are either unhurt or at -1, -3 or Incapacitated/Dead (depending on the type of damage inflicted, bashing or lethal).

Automatic Damage: Damage isn't rolled against extras. Rather, take the final raw damage and divide it by three, rounding up, then subtract the extra's soak. Apply the result as levels of the appropriate type of damage.

Not Heroic: Extras don't count 10s as two successes, nor are they capable of performing stunts. Extras also never spend Willpower for bonus successes.

Those typically counted as extras are marked as such in the Antagonists chapter. The effect of being an extra only counts when one is up against a Scion or other mighty supernatural being. When not going up against such things or caught in the sweep of their dramas, one would follow the normal rules of the game.

IN ADDITION

Suffering health levels isn't the only result of getting hit. A few others include:

Bleeding: A character who takes a lethal or aggravated wound is bleeding. Over time, significant blood loss can be just as deadly as being stabbed another couple of times. Unless a character (or a friend) binds the wound to stop the bleeding, the character loses another level of lethal damage every (Stamina) minutes. Stanching a wound requires a (Wits + Medicine) roll at difficulty equal to the number of lethal or aggravated levels associated with that wound. **A player of a Scion may make a (Stamina + Fortitude) roll at difficulty 2 to stop his character's own bleeding. Doing so is an involuntary, reflexive action a character performs on her normal action.** Mortals, on the other hand, need attention, lest they bleed to death.

Infection: Any open wound is likely to become infected if not sterilized. A character who suffers an attack that opens a wound (any lethal damage, some aggravated wounds) runs the risk of infection. The ubiquity of antibiotics in the modern day makes it fairly easy to avoid infection: Any character treated with a regular first-aid kit or by a trained medic with proper tools is safe. Also, any character with Epic Stamina is immune to infection from wounds.

Removed from such conveniences, however, a character could be less lucky. Infection from wounds inflicts a disease effect with Virulence 3 (4+ in conditions that encourage disease), Untreated Morbidity (1 + days since the wound was received), Treated Morbidity (equal to Untreated Morbidity) and Difficulty to Treat (equal to Untreated Morbidity). See Chapter Six, pages 182-183, for full details on disease. Wounds that are quickly treated require only one check against contracting the infection. Exposing a wound multiple times triggers multiple checks against infection.

Crippling Wounds: Most wounds cause bleeding, bruising and maybe some breakage but are ultimately temporary. These are the types of wounds that health levels are designed to model. Yet some wounds never heal properly, their effects lingering the rest of the person's life.

Mortals who survive a single injury that inflicts four or more levels of lethal or aggravated damage suffer a crippling wound. Mark the worst wound penalty associated with that injury. Even after the health levels heal, the character retains that penalty on relevant actions—using the wounded arm or wounded leg, for example. Repairing this damage requires surgery, an (Intelligence + Medicine) roll with a difficulty equal to the number of health levels the crippling injury inflicted, and inflicts a like number of lethal wounds in the process. *These* lethal wounds, however, do not impose the crippling effect.

Scions and other magical beings do not suffer a crippling wound in most circumstances. They can be

crippled by an injury, but the handicap typically heals naturally with the wound levels that caused it. A character can inflict a crippling wound by choice by performing a crippling attack (see "Special Attacks," p. 198). Only aggravated wounds leave lasting marks on Scions, and even these fade over time. Only by actually losing a body part can a Scion be permanently inconvenienced.

Knockdown/Knockback: There are some heavy hitters out there. When a character suffers greater raw damage than her unmodified (Stamina + Fortitude) total, the attack knocks her to the ground prone. Her player may make a reflexive (Dexterity + Athletics) or (Stamina + Fortitude) roll at difficulty 2 to keep the character on her feet. See below for information on being prone, and page 200 for special attacks that inflict knockdown.

Knockback is an optional supplement to knockdown that emphasizes the cinematic nature of **Scion** combat. A character who would suffer knockdown instead flies in the direction of the attack one yard for every three dice of raw damage the attack inflicts. She falls prone at the end of the flight. Being knocked into walls, trash cans, crowds of people and other scenery halts her travel but does not cause damage—at least not to her. Knockback is often deleterious to the scenery, causing a great deal of property damage.

SITUATIONS

Not every fight is a toe-to-toe slugfest on a featureless plain. In fact, most fights shouldn't be. These guidelines should help you run truly wild combat scenes and come up with your own situational modifiers.

AGAINST SUPERIOR MOBILITY

Harpies can fly. Shinobi can strike out of any dark spot and disappear as quickly. Some titanspawn just move really, really fast. When your Scion is up against such enemies, he might not be able to reach them at his leisure. To effectively strike such entities, he must usually take the Guard action until the moment they attack, then interrupt his own action (see p. 189) in order to counterattack.

Further, most flying creatures add a +2 DV bonus for their height advantage, and inflict a -2 DV penalty on their opponents. This advantage can decrease if a flyer chooses to drop altitude, but increasing it requires weapons with longer reach—such as a lance or a gun.

When all involved combatants are flying, assume that they naturally negate the height advantage.

BEING PRONE

Characters can be knocked prone after an attack, fall prone in slippery circumstances or intentionally hit the deck. Being prone does the following: A prone character cannot take Move or Dash actions (see pp. 192 and 191) until she spends an action to rise (see p. 192). Prone characters gain +1 DV against ranged attacks and explosives, this being the key reason for a character to throw herself prone. (This bonus does not apply to

stupidity. Throwing oneself to the ground in the middle of the street doesn't protect one from the sniper on the rooftop. Throwing oneself on a grenade offers no protection from it.) Prone characters suffer a -1 DV penalty to close-combat attacks and a two-die penalty to attacks and most other actions.

UNEXPECTED ATTACKS

When the target has no idea an attack is coming, both his Dodge and Parry DVs become inapplicable. They effectively drop to 0 against the attack. This usually happens when an assassin or opponent gets the drop on the character. The sneak's player rolls (Dexterity + Stealth) in a contested roll against the (Perception + Awareness) of the target and any other characters who could notice. Characters who see the assassin may alert others if they choose.

Attacking a target who is unaware of you or the attack gains the benefits of an unexpected attack. Although it's harder to hide from a foe in the middle of combat, it is possible. See "Hide," page 192, for more info.

UNSTABLE FOOTING

If your characters are shooting at each other while running across girders at a construction site, if they're dueling on the back of a charging elephant, or if they're wrestling in a Jell-O pit, the footing is unstable. The Storyteller applies a difficulty from 1-3 to remain upright in the circumstances. This number also serves as the penalty to attacks and DVs for characters in that environment.

Characters also have a chance to fall once they make any action. If a character can automatically succeed at this difficulty with his (Dexterity + Athletics) dice pool (see "Automatic Success," p. 178), he may attack with no fear of losing his balance.

Those who are not so lucky must try to remain standing if they take an action. Their players make a reflexive (Dexterity + Athletics) roll at the assigned difficulty after any action the character takes. Move actions at -2 yards per tick do not trigger the roll. Characters whose players fail a roll fall prone, which can sometimes be more deadly than the enemy they're fighting. The effects of botches are left up to Storyteller discretion, but should always prove appropriately disastrous.

WATER, MUCK, GOO

Standing deep in quicksand or fighting against nemean stingrays in the surf is difficult. Apply a one-die penalty to actions based on Dexterity and movement for each foot of liquid in which the character stands while he fights. Some other actions can reasonably be penalized, as well. This penalty tops out at -5 once the character is submerged, regardless of the character's height or the body of water's depth. At that point, the character might also need to deal with visibility penalties (see "Visibility" on p. 186) and the risk of suffocation or drowning (see "Enduring Hardship" on p. 181).

SPECIAL ATTACKS

Some special attacks increase the difficulty of the attack, which stacks with the normal difficulty increase from the target's DV. All special attacks must be declared by the player in Step One of attack resolution.

AUTOFIRE

Some firearms have the capacity for extended fire with a single squeeze of the trigger. Such attacks increase the chance that the character will hit a target, though they significantly decrease accuracy and use more ammunition.

A *short burst* fires three bullets with a single squeeze of the trigger. It adds one die to the attack and cannot be part of a multiple attack action.

A *long burst* fires 10 or more bullets with a prolonged trigger pull. It adds two dice to the attack and can be part of a typical multiple attack action (two attacks on one or two individuals).

CRIPPLING ATTACK

This special attack increases the attack's difficulty by two. The character attacks to disable. In Step Six of attack resolution, the player rolls damage as normal. As in "Pulling a Blow" (see p. 200), she may choose how many levels of damage she actually inflicts, but if she rolls enough levels of damage to kill the target, she may choose to inflict a disabling wound instead. Doing so ranges from rendering limbs or hands useless to cutting out an eye or severing a toe. See page 198 for more information on crippling wounds.

DISARMING

This special maneuver increases the attack's difficulty by two; when used with a ranged attack, the difficulty increases by four. As usual, the attack targets an individual and must overcome that individual's DV. If the attack is successful after Step Three, skip straight to Step Seven. The additional effect of the attack is to send the target's weapon one foot away for every die of damage the attack would inflict. If the attacker beat the total attack difficulty by five or more, he may dictate the direction of the weapon's flight. Retrieving a weapon is a diceless miscellaneous action (see p. 191), though fighting on a ledge of Mount Olympus could make retrieval difficult.

FIERCE BLOW

This special attack increases the attack's difficulty and DV penalty by one. The character attacks all-out, trying to inflict the most damage possible. The raw damage of the attack increases by +3B or +2L/A (based on the attack's normal damage type).

FLAT OF THE BLADE

The character inflicts bashing damage with a lethal weapon, turning it or otherwise using it awkwardly to avoid dealing lasting wounds. Doing so increases the attack's difficulty by one and decreases the raw damage

of the attack by two, but the weapon inflicts bashing damage if it hits.

GRAPPLING

To grab hold of someone and hold him down, to throw him or to squeeze the life out of him is called a grapple and requires a clinch attack. A clinch attack is a ([Dexterity or Strength] + Brawl) roll against the target's chosen DV. If it hits, the target character immediately becomes Inactive (see p. 191). The grappler has the following choices of maneuver.

Break Hold: The character separates from the other grappler. She may throw her victim in any direction over a number of yards equal to her Strength (which triggers a check against knockdown, see p. 198) She may also throw the victim straight down (making the victim automatically prone) or release the victim without further violence.

Crush: The character squeezes, twists and otherwise inflicts harm with wrestling maneuvers. Her player inflicts damage as per the clinch attack (see p. 202).

Hold: The character pins the victim without inflicting harm.

On the grappler's next action, her player and her target's player both roll contested grapple checks: ([Dexterity or Strength] + Brawl). Whichever character wins that roll takes or keeps control of the clinch and chooses which of the three maneuvers to execute. The other character remains (or becomes) Inactive until released. Once

released from a clinch, a victim may defend herself immediately and may take a normal action once her current Inactive action ends.

PULLING A BLOW

This special attack increases the attack's difficulty by one. The character controls her strike carefully. After his player rolls damage, the character may reduce levels of damage inflicted to a minimum of one. If she didn't want to do at least a little damage, she shouldn't be attacking.

SWEEP

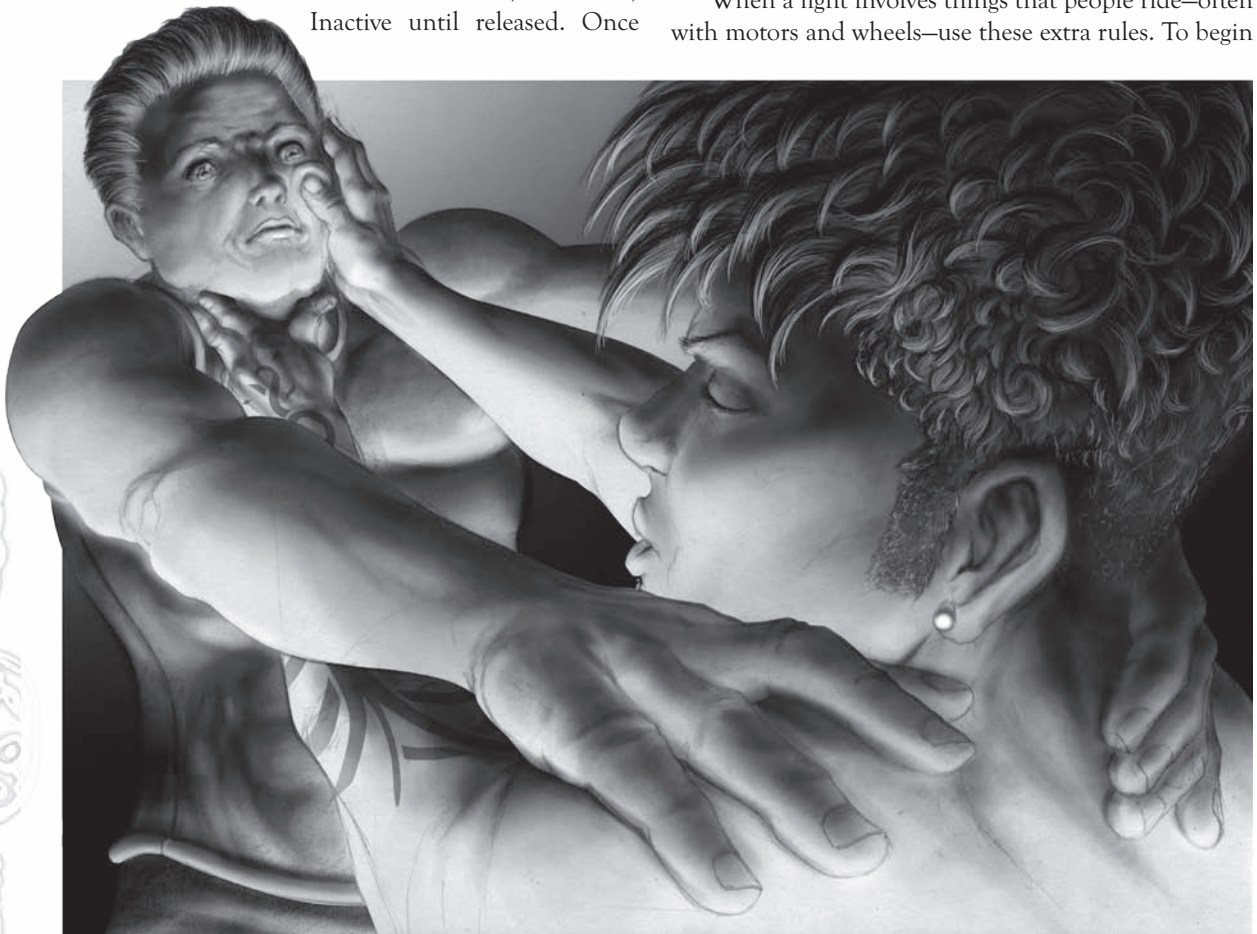
The character pulls, kicks or knocks the feet out from under someone or otherwise knocks him down. The attack inflicts no damage but causes automatic knockdown if it hits.

THE "ZORRO"

This special attack increases the attack's difficulty by two. The character pulls off some fantastic or very difficult attack. It does not harm the target, though. This maneuver is for when the character wants to shoot off his enemy's waxed mustache or impose a custom scar on the target's backside. If the attack hits, it inflicts no damage but accomplishes the desired effect. Very difficult tasks, such as pricking an opponent's arm through very heavy armor, may have greater difficulty increases.

VEHICULAR COMBAT

When a fight involves things that people ride—often with motors and wheels—use these extra rules. To begin



with, most vehicles act as full or near-full cover for people inside. Obviously, motorbikes and horses offer only partial cover—60% from the front and 30% from the sides or back.

Second, a character may choose to *attack* with a vehicle. In that case, the player rolls (Dexterity + Control + Maneuverability) to attack. Vehicular attacks do not use the character's Strength, they use the vehicle's Mass and take into account its speed. Vehicle Mass is given (see p. 205) in numeric ratings from 1 (motorcycle) or 2 (Geo Metro) all the way up to 10 (tank) and higher. (Feel like crashing an aircraft carrier, anyone?) For damage, roll the vehicle's Mass once for every 10 miles per hour difference in speed between the vehicle and its target, and then roll dice for extra attack successes.

The *attacking* vehicle takes damage equal to the Mass of its target plus one for every 10 miles the attacking vehicle is moving different than its target. This means that a car can ram another car from behind for a few points of damage *or* step on the brakes to hurt a car behind it.

Speaking of which, replace the driver's Dodge DV with $(\text{Dexterity} + \text{Control} + \text{car's Maneuverability}) \div 2$ while operating a vehicle (or riding a horse). Use this same DV for attacks against the vehicle. Running a car off the road or otherwise manipulating the target car's movement is such an attack made at +2 difficulty.

ATTACKING INANIMATE OBJECTS

Objects are less vital than humans (and titanspawn and the like) but often tougher. Inanimate targets of attacks have soak depending on their structure and

composition, and all inanimate objects have an *equal* Hardness. This means that attacks that do not surpass the object's soak/Hardness inflict no damage. Damage against objects, on the other hand, is not rolled. Each die of raw damage in excess of the object's soak becomes an automatic level of damage.

Inanimate objects can take a set number of health levels of damage before they are destroyed. When they have lost half of those health levels, they are considered "damaged," which inhibits their natural functions. If a tool, it functions at a penalty. If a wall, it no longer keeps things out. The object is not a complete failure until it is destroyed—a damaged wall keeps the flow of intruders to a trickle, for example—but sometimes characters need do no more than damage an object.

Of course, inanimate objects do not heal (unless somehow enchanted to do so). They must be repaired with an extended Craft roll, which generally takes from an hour to a day per roll.

Object	Soak (L/B)	Health Levels
Cell Phone	0/2	2
Gun	4/5	4
Window	0/1	3
Safety Window	0/3	5
Bulletproof Glass	3/5	8
House Door	1/3	10
Heavy Door	3/5	20
Iron Door	10/15	40
Blast Door	18/30	80
Chain Link Fence	2/4	6
Brick Wall	8/14	40
Stone Wall	12/18	60

WEAPONS AND ARMOR AND CARS — OH, MY!

MELEE WEAPONS

Finally, here's what you get to equip your character with when he beats on the bad guys. Every melee weapon has ratings in *Accuracy*, *Damage*, *Defense* and *Speed*. Accuracy adds to your character's dice pool with attacking with that weapon. Damage is a component in determining raw damage in Step Four of attack resolution. This entry also determines if the weapon inflicts bashing (B) or lethal (L) damage. Add Defense to the character's (Dexterity + Melee) before dividing by two to calculate Parry DV with that weapon. Speed is the number of ticks the character must wait before acting again after using the weapon. Note that some values may be negative and that some weapons are faster than others, allowing more attacks but generally inflicting less damage.

Also included in this list are three types of barehanded attacks: the clinch, the heavy unarmed attack and the light unarmed attack.

Bo: A wooden staff about as tall as a man.

Clinch: Grabbing a person and doing what you want with him requires getting him in a clinch. Once you have control, you can throw the person around, twist him up or just pin him.

Hadseax: A single-edged knife usually used for cutting food but usable for combat in a pinch. (Also: seax or sax.)

Hasta: A wooden spear, about six feet long, with an iron head.

Kama: A sickle—a wooden rod with a small, curved blade attached to it perpendicularly. It's generally about the length of a forearm.

MELEE WEAPONS

Weapon	Accuracy	Damage	Defense	Speed	Tags
Bo	+2	+3B	+2	6	—
Clinch	+0	+0B	—	6	P
Hadseax	+1	+2L	+0	4	—
Hasta	+1	+3L	+0	5	—
Kama	+0	+2L	+1	4	P
Katana	+1	+5L	+1	5	—
Khopesh	+0	+4L	+2	5	—
Kontos	-1	+5L	-2	6	—
Labrys	+1	+8L	+0	6	—
Macana	+1	+3B	+0	4	—
Machete	+1	+3L	-1	4	—
Maquahuitl	+0	+3L/B	+0	5	—
Naginata	+1	+4L	+1	5	—
Scutum	-1	+2B	+1	6	—
Skeggox	+1	+6L	+0	5	—
Spatha	+1	+4L	+1	4	—
Tepoztopilli	+0	+4L	+2	5	—
Tonfa	+1	+1B	+1	4	—
Trident	+0	+3L	+2	5	—
Unarmed, Heavy	-1	+3B	-2	5	—
Unarmed, Light	+1	+0B	+1	4	—
Quauhjolli	+0	+7B	-1	5	P
Wakizashi	+1	+2L	+1	4	—
Xiphos	+1	+3L	+1	4	—

Katana: A curved, very sharp slashing blade two to three feet in length. Traditionally made of steel folded many times, it is resilient and flexible. Often paired with a wakizashi.

Khopesh: A sword with a kink in its blade, giving it a more sickle-like shape and making it ideal for sweeping motions.

Kontos: A Roman lance, usually three to four meters long, with an iron head. It is very unwieldy in personal combat, requiring two hands and too much maneuvering space, so it is usually used as part of a charge from the back of a mount (or motorcycle). Double the weapon's Damage when used in a charge.

Labrys: A large, double-headed axe that inflicts a great deal of damage.

Macana: A short club, useful for knocking people out or beating them to death.

Machete: A single-edged blade, almost two feet long, weighted toward the tip to make it good for chopping.

Maquahuitl: Rather than a typical flat-bladed sword, this weapon features a club with obsidian shards set into opposite edges. It normally inflicts lethal damage but can inflict bashing damage without using the "flat of the blade" rules (see p. 199).

Naginata: A spear with a long shaft, about as tall as its wielder, and a fairly long blade measuring from two to three feet.

Scutum: A semi-cylindrical Roman shield sporting a heavy boss in the center, excellent for bashing enemies while remaining protected.

Skeggox: The "bearded axe"—a single-headed axe with a blade much wider than its neck. It's equally useful for splitting skulls as it is for splitting or shaving wood.

Spatha: Roman long(er) sword about three feet long. This sword type was also adopted by the Vikings and used to great effect against their enemies.

Tepoztopilli: A slashing spear as tall as a man. Its head ranges from one palm-length to two and is studded with

obsidian shards. The lack of any dangerous point makes it a weapon not ideal for thrusting.

Tonfa: A wooden baton with a perpendicular handle. A contemporary police nightstick basically a tonfa.

Trident: A three-tined forked spear developed for fishing but wielded to great effect by ancient gladiators.

Unarmed, Heavy: These are unarmed blows given maximum force. This usually represents a full-on kick, but can also be a two-handed hammer-fist blow or anything else that inflicts more damage.

Unarmed, Light: Faster, lighter punches and kicks.

Quauhloholli: A heavy mace with a stone head, excellent for crushing bones and heads.

Wakizashi: A curved, very sharp slashing blade one to two feet long. Often paired with a katana.

Xiphos: A traditional Greek sword, about two feet long and equally good at stabbing and slashing. The Roman gladius uses the same traits.

RANGED WEAPONS

Ranged weapons are a little different. They have a Range, sometimes have a Clip and never have a Defense. Within the given Range (in yards), the attack is normal. Within double that Range, the difficulty of the attack increases by two. From there to four times the Range, it increases by four (total). Outside that distance, the attack is impossible without magic. Clip represents how many rounds of ammunition fit in the weapon's clip at one

PIERCING

Piercing weapons—noted with a “P” tag—halve the soak a target gains from armor. All firearms have the Piercing quality, except against armor with the Bulletproof quality—noted with a “B” tag.

time. Ranged weapons have no Defense because, without a good stunt or magic, they can't be used to parry attacks. Most ranged warriors depend on their Dodge DV.

Atlatl: The atlatl, or “throwing stick,” appears in many cultures. It allows a warrior or hunter to launch javelins or long darts farther than he could normally throw them. The atlatl uses the Damage ratings and modifies the Ranges of the dart and the javelin (yaomitl).

Crossbow: A bow with a stock and trigger, the crossbow allowed people to “point and click” with a bow and arrow long before guns came along. Crossbow ammunition can be quite dangerous and often punctures armor.

Daikyu: This bow is usually as tall as the person firing it and uses proportionate arrows.

Dart: The fighting dart is basically an aerodynamic stick with a sharp end. It can be used with an atlatl for extended range and accuracy.

RANGED WEAPONS

Weapon	Acc.	Damage	Range	Clip	Speed	Tags
<i>General Ranged</i>						
Atlatl	+0	as missile	as missile x 3	—	6	—
Crossbow	+1	+2L	30	—	6	P
Daikyu	+0	+3L	40	—	6	—
Dart	-1	+1L	10	—	6	—
Hankyu	+1	+2L	30	—	5	—
Pilum	+0	+2L	10	—	6	P
Yaomitl	+1	+2L	15	—	6	—
<i>Firearms</i>						
Beretta/Glock	+1	+3L	20	15	4	P
Desert Eagle	+0	+5L	50	7	5	P
Peacemaker	+2	+4L	20	6	5	P
FN P90	+1	+3L	50	50	5	P
H&K MP5	+0	+3L	30	30	5	P
Remington	+3	+7L	200	4	6	P
M16	+0	+5L	150	30	5	P
AK-47	-1	+5L	125	30	5	P
Mossberg	+0	+6L	20	8	5	P

ARMOR

Armor	Soak	Mobility Penalty	Fatigue	Tags
Biker Gear	+0L/2B	-1	0	—
Bulletproof Vest	+2L/2B	-0	1	B
Heavy Clothing	+0L/1B	-0	0	—
Hide/Leather	+1L/3B	-1	1	—
Lamellar	+2L/4B	-2	1	—
Riot Gear	+5L/8B	-2	2	B

Hankyu: The hankyu is a shorter bow than the daikyu. About half to three-quarters the height of its wielder, the hankyu is a little more accurate but with less range.

Pilum: The Roman javelin stands six to seven feet tall from butt to tip. The iron point takes up about a foot of this length and narrows to an occasionally barbed tip.

Yaomitl: Yaomitl are a few feet long and can be used as short stabbing spears or thrown javelins. Use the same statistics for the yaomitl when used in melee combat with a Defense of +0.

Firearms

Unlike other ranged weapons, firearms do not include Strength in the calculation for raw damage. Use (weapon damage + threshold successes + 1) to calculate raw damage for a handgun.

Beretta/Glock: The range of standard 9mm contemporary handguns very common the World over.

Desert Eagle: The heavy-hitter of the autoloading pistol world. It fires large rounds to inflict a lot of damage.

Peacemaker: The Colt .45 and its variants, the most famous revolvers in the World.

FN P90: It looks funny, but it's a comfortable and reasonably accurate gun. It's capable of automatic fire.

H&K MP5: The stereotypical SMG. Small enough to fire with one hand and big enough that it's a really bad idea to try.

Remington: An excellent example of the standard rifle, potentially useful for hunting or for covert operations.

M16: The standard assault rifle for the US military. After decades of evolution, it is a dependable weapon. Some models are capable of automatic fire, others offer only semiauto and burst fire.

AK-47: A less accurate—but very reliable, hardy and cheap—assault rifle.

Mossberg: Classic pump-action shotgun, good for heavy damage at close range.

ARMOR

Every sort of armor has *Soak*, *Mobility Penalty* and *Fatigue*. Soak provides the armor's lethal and bashing soak values, which stack with soak from most other sources. Mobility Penalty deducts dice from actions

that would suffer because of flexibility loss or extra weight (climbing, acrobatics and the like). It also subtracts directly from Dodge DV. Fatigue is the penalty to the character's (Stamina + Fortitude) value that determines how long the character can operate in the armor without accruing fatigue penalties (see "Fatiguing Activity" on p. 182).

Biker Gear: A biker's "armor" is her heavy leather duds and a helmet, at least usually. It doesn't offer a great deal of protection, but it can mean the difference between getting bruised and becoming a long red smear.

Bulletproof Vest: A vest designed to protect against bullets. This is standard wear for many police officers.

Chain Mail: The main purpose of chain mail is to diffuse the force of a blow, preventing deep and deadly wounds.

Heavy Clothing: Mere clothing helps little in a serious fight, especially between demigods, but it can help out in a brawl.

Hide/Leather: Cured hides wrapped around the body or stiff leather bent into human shape. Neither one is great, but both are better than nothing.

Lamellar Armor: Plates of lacquered leather, iron, steel or bone wrapped horizontally around the body protected it adequately from contemporary weapons.

Riot Gear: Riot gear is the full plate of the modern day.

Shields

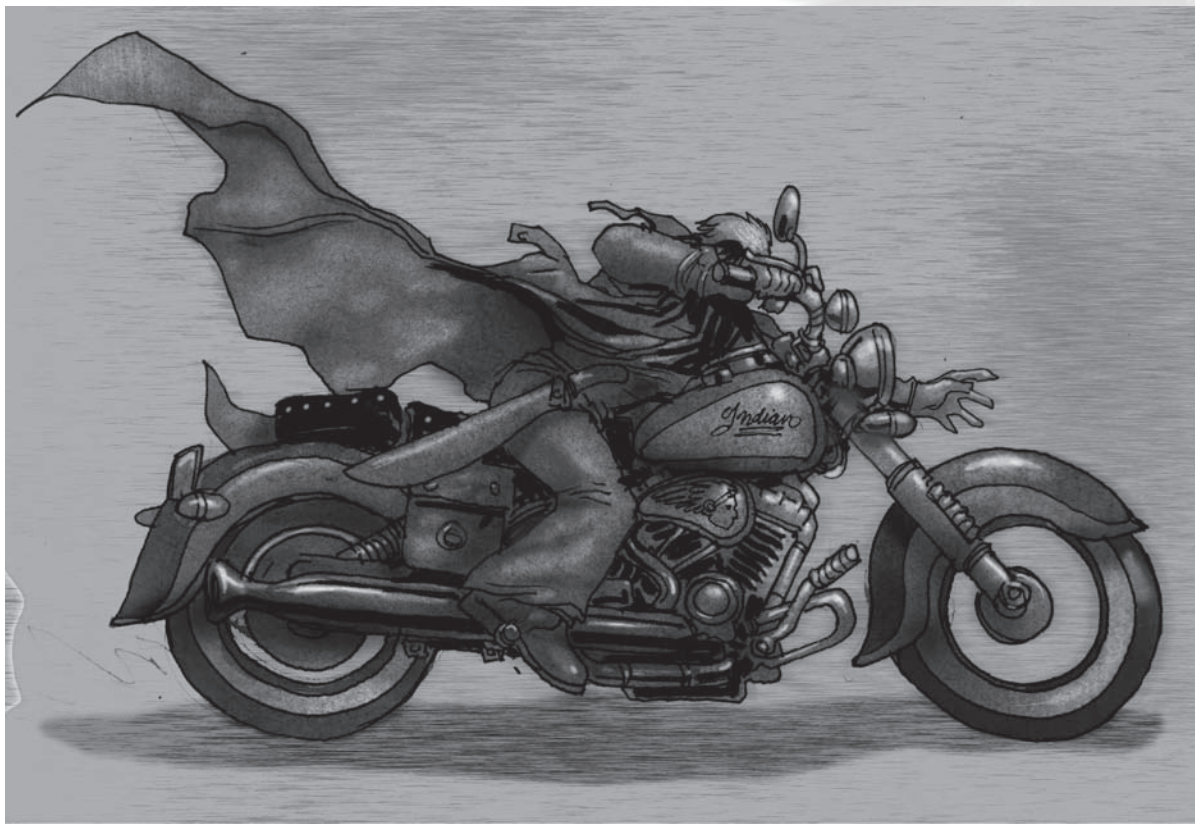
Shields add +1 to both of a character's DVs by virtue of providing cover.

Aspis: A wide shield, usually wood, with a layer of beaten bronze to deflect attacks.

Aztec Shield: A durable shield made of wicker and strong leather.

ARMOR TAGS

There is only one tag for armor: B, for Bulletproof, which trumps the Piercing quality of firearms.



Kite Shield: The evolution of the popular circular shield developed into a reverse teardrop shape to protect a rider's or a soldier's leg. This shield provides 60% cover but applies a -1 mobility penalty to the user.

Riot Shield: The riot shield is made of modern polycarbonates and offers a great deal of protection. Some have a small window of clear plastic inset, allowing the warrior to protect his face while facing his opponents.

Scutum: A shield made of bent wood, intended to better protect its bearer by more easily covering the sides. Its heavy boss in the center makes it a suitable bashing weapon (see "Melee Weapons," p. 202).

Viking Round Shield: This shield is about three feet in diameter and made of strong wood.

VEHICLES

Vehicles have *Armor*, *Mass*, *Maneuverability* and *Health Levels*. Armor is their soak. Mass represents the general size of the vehicle. Maneuverability represents the vehicle's handling and its ability to accelerate quickly for chases—it is a bonus/penalty applied to Control rolls. Health Levels is the number of levels of damage necessary to destroy the vehicle.

As inanimate objects, vehicles take levels of damage instead of dice. They also ignore raw damage less than their Armor value, and they become damaged when they have lost half their health levels. A damaged vehicle suffers a -3 Maneuverability penalty and drops its acceleration and max speeds by 20%.

VEHICLES

Vehicle	Armor	Mass	Maneuverability	Health Levels
Armored Truck	12	4	-1	30
Car	6	2	+1	18
Motorcycle	4	1	+2	10
Pickup Truck/Van	6	3	+0	20
Police Car	8	2	+2	20
Rickshaw	1	0	+0	4
Semi	10	6	-2	40



ADVANCEMENT

In *Scion*, a character's advancement is measured through numerical points provided to players by the Storyteller. In gaming parlance, these points are referred to as experience points. Experience points are awarded by the Storyteller and then banked by the player for use in advancing her character's existing traits or buying new ones.

EXPERIENCE AWARDS

The Storyteller awards experience at the end of each session of play. There are four main sources of experience in *Scion*:

- **Basic Awards (4 experience points):** Every player who shows up to a game session receives this reward just for participating. Four to five hours of play is about standard for a session of play, so if a session runs significantly shorter or longer than this benchmark, subtract or add a couple of experience points as appropriate.
- **Bonus Award (1 experience point):** If a player contributes significantly to the fun or success of the game as a whole—be it a creative solution to a problem, a moving portrayal of her *Scion* that affects everyone, or even a joke that sends everybody into hysterics—she deserves to be rewarded.
- **Stunt Award (1 experience point):** Once per gaming session, a player may opt to receive this experience award when the Storyteller confirms a three-die stunt for her character. A player who opts for this award *does not* also regain Legend or Willpower for the stunt. A player can receive no more than one such award per session, no matter how many three-die stunts her character might perform. (The Legend or Willpower award should still be more than enough to encourage such epic deeds.)
- **Story Award (5 experience points):** At the end of each story, each player receives this award for her character's participation in the ongoing narrative. This award should come in addition to the basic award.

SPENDING EXPERIENCE

Okay, so you know how you earn experience points for your character. Now you're probably wondering what to do with them. Spend, baby, spend.

Experience points may be exchanged for trait increases or used to purchase all-new traits according to the cost structure in the accompanying "Experience Costs" table. Increasing an existing trait usually costs a number of experience points equal to a multiple of the trait's *current* rating—i.e., the rating before you raise it. The strident

EXPERIENCE COSTS

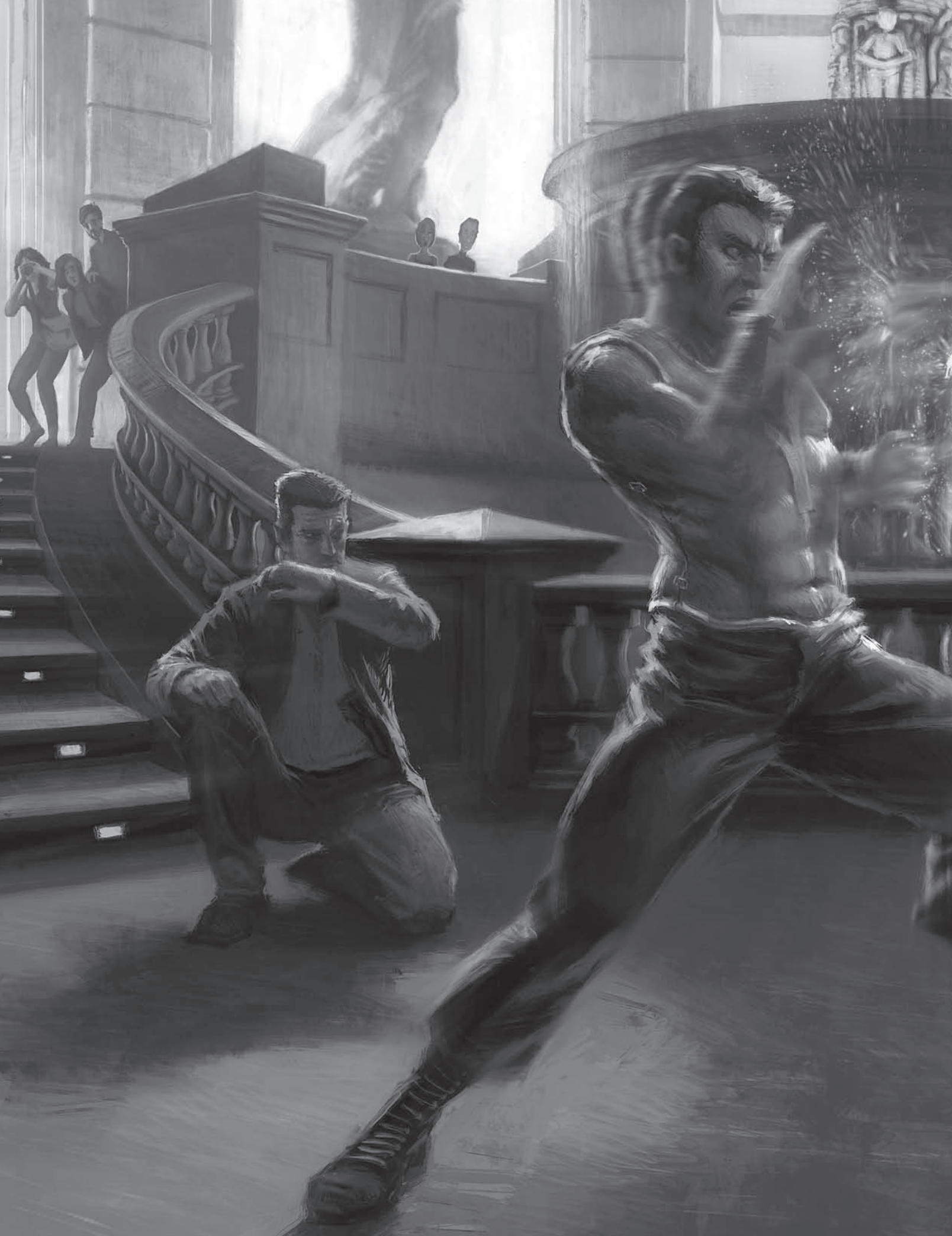
Trait Increase	Cost
Attribute	rating x 4
Ability favored by divine parent	(rating x 2) – 1
Ability	rating x 2
Virtue	rating x 3
Willpower	rating x 2
Legend	rating x 8
Epic Attribute (associated with divine parent)	rating x 4
Epic Attribute (not associated with divine parent)	rating x 5
Pantheon-Specific Purview	rating x 4
Special Purview (associated with divine parent)	rating x 4
Special Purview (not associated with divine parent)	rating x 5
New Trait	Cost
Ability	3
Epic Attribute (associated with divine parent)	8
Epic Attribute (not associated with divine parent)	10
Knack	5
All-Purpose Purview Boon (associated with divine parent)	rating x 4
All-Purpose Purview Boon (not associated with divine parent)	rating x 5
Pantheon-Specific Purview	3
Special Purview (associated with divine parent)	3
Special Purview (not associated with divine parent)	4
Spell (Magic associated with divine parent)	rating x 4
Spell (Magic not associated with divine parent)	rating x 5

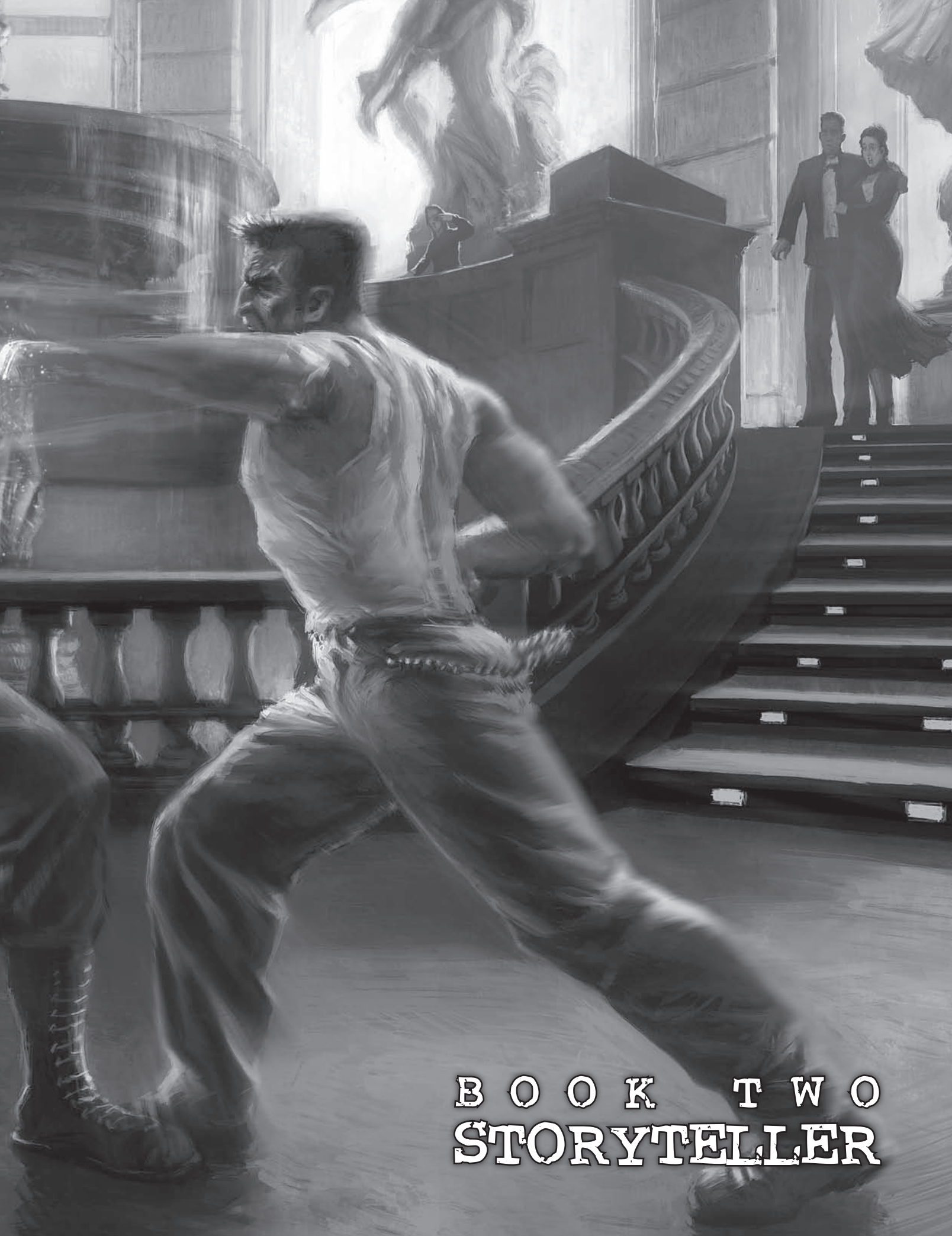
exception to this simple system is the purchase of Boons. (See the text under “Boon Costs” on p. 138 in Chapter Five for a full explanation of the table entries listed here.)

You should always inform your Storyteller before increasing any trait or buying a new one, as he might insist that you justify the purchase. After all, if your Scion has been spending all her time fighting in the last several game sessions, the idea that she somehow earned an online degree in Early Childhood Education (representing a purchase of a new Academics dot) stretches credulity a bit.

LEGEND AND TRAIT MAXIMUMS

Remember, a Scion must possess a Legend rating higher than that of any Epic Attribute or Boon he possesses, so it is often necessary for you to raise a character’s Legend prior to raising those traits. Also, a Scion can never have a higher rating in an Epic Attribute than he has in its mundane equivalent, so bear that in mind as well when spending experience. Finally, when a Scion reaches the plateau of Legend 5, he legitimately becomes a demigod at last. What that entails for the character in question is covered in detail in **Scion: Demigod**, the second book in the **Scion** series.





BOOK TWO
STORYTELLER



EPIC STORYTELLING

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

These are just a few of the epic deeds performed by the Gods and their descendents in the epic folklore of humankind. Each tale is a memorable event; each carries within it one of the fundamental truths espoused by the cultures in question. Each tale shows the precarious relationship between Gods, mortals and those who find themselves somewhat between the two. In the parlance of the game you hold in your hands, these are the Scions. These are the demigods and nigh-divine offspring whose adventures you'll relate in your storytelling sessions around the table.

The thrust of **Scion** is the opportunity to revisit the epic tradition in the context of our modern times. That's easier said than done, however, especially when it comes to the duties of the Storyteller. Let's face it: Being the Storyteller involves a lot of work. That's not going to change here—you're taking part in an epic!—but hopefully our advice will let you get started a little more easily and add something to your cycle along the way.

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HEEDING THE EPIC TRADITION

As you might expect in a game that draws on cultural epics, certain aspects of those epics should be central to that game's stories. From such a vast and varied body of theme-setting source material, a few commonalities arise. These commonalities form a good foundation for the cycle, letting the players know what sort of experience they'll be in for and guiding your plots toward a climax worthy of the name "legend."

CREATE A SENSE OF WONDER

The reason the epics have survived, whether they're as old as Gilgamesh's travails or as recent as the *Kalevala*, is that they allow the audience to peer into a world of amazing events greater than their own lives. Whether an epic serves to explain human origin, the formation of a kingdom or the defeat of a monstrous menace, the events of an epic are greater than the audience's normal lives. "Beowulf went out and farmed one day, and a mouse ran from him" would not have survived nearly as long as his victories over the hellish Grendel and the vengeful dragon.

Your troupe's **Scion** stories should offer the same sense of wonder. Don't think small. The characters begin the game as the offspring of Gods, and their adventures should ring true with all of the grandeur that suggests.

As Storyteller, your control over this sense of wonder lies in two distinct methods: scope and setting. (The story line of most epics is remarkably simple. The heroes go and retrieve a relic, or win their lovers' hearts, or make war

on a hated enemy, or defeat a dire threat. It's the scope and setting that makes these simple quests worthy of their tales' retelling.)

A wondrous scope means that important things hang in the balance. Your Band should face down horrendous titanspawn that threaten an entire city block, they shouldn't be pounding skinheads in a bar's parking lot. If they *are* pounding skinheads in a bar's parking lot, those skinheads should probably be Titan cultists. Your characters should be collecting a comet-stone from marauding monsters because that comet has metals in it that might allow them to forge a sword like the Honjo Masamune! They shouldn't be sent to pick up a ring from a small-time pimp because a cranky old drunk at a pub told them to... unless, of course, that cranky old drunk had only one eye and needed to get the ring back before the pimp sent it to his foster brother. Even if this latter were the case, the circumstances need to be turned up to 11.

Making the setting wondrous not only keeps your players interested in the scenery, it gives them something with which to interact. A battle with titanspawn occurs on the hazard-fraught 30th floor of a construction site,

where a pool of noxious chemicals roils hundreds of feet below and vicious power tools lie near at hand. Agents of two scheming pantheons conduct a shady deal in the private room of a five-star restaurant while a gang of soldiers in the employ of a third pantheon that's caught wind of their liaison raids the place, crashing in through the marbled lacunar ceiling. The heroes pursue the green, scaly-skinned fiend who has stolen their Birthrights into an abandoned sewer—which has been mysteriously renovated into a subterranean cathedral with baroque appointments, ready for the smashing. You're the director, and your budget is infinite, limited only by your powers of description. Spend all you want on elaborate set pieces.

While **Scion** certainly lends itself to over-the-top combat between Scions and monsters, especially during the current conflict, there's also a place for subtle machinations and sublime counter-ruses (which plays into the strengths of certain Gods' Scions). Run the cycle according to the strengths of the players' characters, whether those strengths are slanted more to the battlefield prowess of Achilles or Beowulf or the shrewdness of Odysseus or Imhotep.

READING THE EPICS

Though it's certainly easy enough to play **Scion** by drawing inspiration from modern takes on heroic myth, as depicted on TV, in the movies or in comics, don't discount the original epic sources. Luckily, what would count as research in any other environment counts as entertainment when preparing to run a game of **Scion**. Those old epics are anything but dry—they're rife with murder, betrayal, loves both fulfilled and unrequited, scandal, schemes, moral victory, ethical failure and a healthy dosage of ass-kicking. They're the ground-setting narratives that helped define the modern storytelling tradition, both in the context of storytelling games and in the larger sense of communicating a tale to an audience. Would *The Lord of the Rings* have been as vital without *The Saga of the Volsungs* stirring the same primal urges before it? Would *American Gods* have been as compelling without the significance of the Norse pantheon and impending Ragnarök behind it? As you read or reread the epics, you'll even see them feeding on and fueling each other: The Loa syncretizes both Christian canon and African folklore through a filter of Haitian slave culture. And how different is the serpent Jörmungandr from the Egyptian Apep or the Greek Apophis?

Before long, you'll have a bubbling cauldron of symbolism and epic reference at your immediate disposal. Your own creativity can augment this further, using myth as the foundation for your new epics. You're the Storyteller, after all, and if you decide that Nidhogg and Apep are one in the same, who's to say you're wrong? More importantly, what dangerous, challenging new twists and turns might that make for your players' Bands of heroes?

Where to start? Well, the World is full of epics that have stood the test of time. If you haven't read one that's already your favorite, we recommend the following as an introduction to the epic tradition: *The Odyssey*, *The Iliad*, *Beowulf*, *The Saga of the Volsungs* and the *Nibelungenleid*, *Kojiki*, *Nihon Shoki*, *Shintoshu*, and the *Prose and Poetic Eddas*. You'll probably also want to take a look at secondary sources for certain pantheons such as those of the Egyptian, Voodoo, and Aztec Gods, which don't have the extant body of primary source material that other pantheons do. You might also consider reading up on epics that are outside the scope of the pantheons included in **Scion**, such as the *Epic of Gilgamesh*, the *Kalevala*, the *Rigveda*, *Ramayana*, *Mahabharata*, *Le Morte d'Arthur*, and even *The Song of Hiawatha*.

GIVE THE CHARACTERS THE LIMELIGHT

Epics are about heroes (or perhaps antiheroes) who undertake the perils of the Gods in order to fulfill their destinies. Such being the case, the players' characters should have the story's "camera" on them at all times.

That's actually a bit of relief for you as Storyteller. Quite frankly, you don't need 60 pages of back story, historical politics between the Gods and Titans, or recitations of who slew who way back when. What's important is *here and now*, where the heroes do their heroic business and receive the accolades of deities and men for it.

That's not to say plot and motivation aren't important. You'll certainly want to do some amount of preparing before you begin your story, or the characters will simply be interacting with two-dimensional antagonists for its own sake. Why did Sigurd slay the dragon Fafnir? *Because it was a dragon.* Regin's tale told him who the dragon was, but a dragon needs slaying regardless of who it is—Regin's tale merely added detail. The same goes for *Beowulf*. Beowulf and Wiglaf stomped into the dragon's lair because the dragon had killed one of Beowulf's subjects. For that, the dragon had to die. The *Beowulf* epic spends perhaps four lines talking about the dragon killing the man because he was a thief, and that's for context. Most importantly, there's a dragon for Sigurd and Beowulf to kill, so they commenced to it.

We're interested in their stories, the human drama, not the peevish desires of some wicked dragons.

Every now and then, as a change of pace, you might want to delve into a peripheral character's details, as with Chaucer's *Canterbury Tales*, or the psychology behind one of the antagonists, as in John Gardner's *Grendel*. Those are diversions, though. For the vast majority of the cycle, the attention should be on the players' Band and how marvelous the heroes in it are.

CHEAT IN THE CHARACTERS' FAVOR

Heroes need to do heroic things. They need to succeed in their heroic endeavors, or they're just well-meaning dead suckers wrangled into an impossible cause by nonplussed Gods.

The legendary scale of **Scion** means that tremendous stakes ride on the heroes' success, but that's what makes the tale worth telling. If the Argonauts were shipwrecked on a reef one day out of port, what would have been the point? If Xipe Totec didn't need to flay himself so mortals could grow food to eat, why would anyone bother to pay attention to him?

When you challenge the characters in a **Scion** story, they should have a chance to succeed. Indeed, they should accomplish their tasks. If this means you have to fudge a dice roll in their favor, that's okay. If you have to neglect a special Knack, Boon, or Birthright that an antagonist would normally employ, so be it. Remember



that your role as Storyteller isn't in direct opposition to the players. You're working together to tell a collaborative tale of newly birthed legend.

That doesn't mean it needs to be easy, however. Mythology is rife with trials, ordeals and Pyrrhic victories. Push the challenge to the limit if that's what the story deserves, but remember that the Argonauts returned with the Golden Fleece and Heracles went on from there to face his Twelve Labors.

As a word of warning, don't let the players come to *depend* on you working occasionally in their favor. If you find that you consistently have to scale back encounters you've planned for the Band, you might want to take a little more care in creating those challenges. If the players catch you cheating or grow lax, they'll either lose interest in the cycle or they'll come to depend on such ersatz "divine intervention." You expressly don't want this, because your players will lose the emotional investment they have in the epic. If there's one thing the heroes of legendary narratives lack, it's an, "Eh, the Gods will help me eventually," attitude.

BREAKING FROM EPIC TRADITION

While all of those aspects of epic storytelling serve to make for fascinating tales of godlike derring-do, some characteristics of mythic tales don't suit the storytelling-game format. Knowing when to leave key epic traditions behind is important to maintaining a dynamic story.

While it might seem odd to dismiss whole characteristics of the epic tradition, remember that the format isn't quite the same in a storytelling game as it is in a single teller's tale. The whole troupe works together to create a legend in **Scion**, and all of their tastes and input need to be considered. True, the methodology differs a bit from the classical sage relating his epic in the agora, but the result—a compelling story full of larger-than-life heroics—is the same.

LET YOUR SUPPORTING CAST BE COOL

All too often, characters who aren't the lead character in the epics receive only tertiary consideration. Even that comes only when the epic deigns to pay attention to them at all. Consider how negligible anyone who's not a knight or king (or Merlin incognito) is in Sir Thomas Malory's *Le Morte d'Arthur*. Villeins are chattel along with land in the *Mabinogion*. Anonymous workers built the Egyptian pyramids. Hundreds of thousands died in the exodus to Haiti that eventually produced the Voodoo pantheon. Japanese dynasties are synonymous with their emperors, not the soldiers who fought in their names.

That doesn't make for memorable roleplaying experiences, however. A sergeant at arms, a nervous messenger, a thieving lickspittle, and the unknowing dupe who starts a war between the Gods should all have distinct personalities. This is doubly true if you plan to

make them recurring characters in the cycle. Players by nature have more emotional investment in Storyteller characters who are more distinct than "he looks like a priest." Their heroes' interactions with the World and characters you provide are what keep them coming back to the table week after week.

An exception to this rule exists, however. When the players' characters legitimately need to mow through fodder—when, as Malory mentions a story-defining state of "numerous casualties suffered by both sides"—let the body count provide its own drama. Mooks are born to die. Everyone else deserves a fair chance to make his mark on life, though.

LET LANGUAGE FLOURISH

Perhaps it's a result of the young states of language in which epics arose, or perhaps it's an artificial way of making sure bards, skalds and tale-tellers remembered the stories, but many epics, even poetic ones, are light on detail and repetitive with language. Although they hint at a larger world of action and adventure, they do so through scope and setting rather than through vibrant detail.

You can't do that. You have to engage your players' senses. You have to present every scene as a new and thrilling experience, rather than another slog through Scandinavian carnage. If the characters witness a battlefield, let them feel the air humid with spilled blood. Let them smell the reek of dead men and hear the cries of carrion crows. Let them taste the madness of Dionysus's wine at an orgy or the musk of a lover sworn to Isis. They should hear the roar of titanic demons bursting out from the Overworld, feel the frost as their breath steams on a winter morning and smell the corruption when one of their followers' wounds festers.

Even beyond sensory input, Storytellers should vary their descriptions, lest one godling's forested domain seem exactly like another's. In many ways, this storytelling guideline is a close companion to epic scope and setting. A skilled Storyteller will always challenge herself to come up with compelling new details or environments, unless the repetition serves some purpose. When describing a minotaur's maze, for example, the similarity of all the walls becomes a key feature, as do the wispy clouds that drift unceasingly through the dreams of a slumbering demigod.

TWEAKING THE EPIC TRADITION

Where a skilled Storyteller can truly turn **Scion** into his troupe's own personal mythology is in the adaptation of the classical trappings of epics to their modern interpretations.

The epics from which **Scion** draws are all written and complete, or at least as much as we're likely to know them. In creating new epics, though, you're not bound by any previous written format. You and your troupe are undertaking an altogether new mythic journey. You don't

have to worry about translating an existing legend from its primary source. As such, you have an enormous amount of leeway in which to mix traditional legends and entirely original myths.

REINVENT THE FANTASTICAL

Here again, you have the opportunity to spend some of that infinite special effects budget. With a solid grounding in the legends of the game's pantheons, you should have no difficulties creating modern monstrosities or wonders from the raw material of their original epic ideals.

Perhaps that minotaur mentioned above isn't in a redundant stone maze at all. Perhaps he's at the center of a Midwestern cornfield, more goat than bull, and he moves through the daunting sea of cornstalks without betraying his location, all under the bloody eye of a bloated harvest moon. Is that—! No, that's a scarecrow. What's that smell? Oil from a tractor overturned in the field, when the hapless farmer first discovered the beast. Crows croak as they fly overhead, "Kill! Kill!"

Maybe a herd of centaurs is a modern-day biker gang, made up of half-men, half-Harley hellions who thirst for blood and cheap beer purchased with money stolen from their victims. There is no sylvan glade of natural splendor. Their lair is a roadside campsite with a well-deserved evil reputation. Those kids who disappeared last year on their way back from that high school band retreat? These psychos probably had their way with them and then plundered the bus for gas and spare parts.

A yokai might be a shutterbug tourist, whose telltale third eye is actually his camera lens. Anyone caught within the frame of his photographs dies within the week, her soul harvested by the silent, oblivious monster she never knew was there. For his part, the yokai doesn't even know what he does. He knows only hunger and the desire to take photographs to show off back home—a home he'll probably never make it back to once the players' characters find the increasingly bizarre trail of photographs that depict their victims in no state of distress shortly before their deaths.

A zombie might not be an animated, rotting corpse bound to a sorcerer but rather an outwardly normal individual who has suffered some internal "death," whether of hope, of faith, or any other personal value. She doesn't prowl the streets, seeking brains and blood, but rather the nightclubs, trying desperately to fulfill that necrotic portion of her personality that can never be satisfied. In a fugue state, this black widow leaves the broken bodies of lovers found wanting—or perhaps she makes zombies of them as well, a parasite of the soul rather than the traditional shambling revenant.

THEMES

As might be expected, the themes suitable to a Scion story arc are those found to recur throughout the epics and folklore of many cultures. Indeed, since many

legends are so similar, the themes that endear them to their cultures can serve to unite them around the gaming table.

GENERATIONAL CONFLICT

At the core of almost every epic is the conflict of the old versus the new, and in most cases, that conflict bears out in the relationships between the Gods and their issue. The "current" Greek pantheon emerged from its victory over the Gods' forebears, the Titans, who themselves slew their parents, God and Goddess of the sky and earth. The Aesir emerged from a war against its predecessor giants and waits for the cycle to complete itself in the form of Ragnarök, "the fate of the Gods" when the World will end and monsters will rampage. The Loa incorporates the suffering of the Christian saints with the 21 nations of spirits, then further divides those spirits into the "hot" and "cool" distinctions of the Petro and Rada.

Regardless of which real-world pantheon you look at, conflict occurs between the old Gods (or godlike progenitors) and the new. The back story built into Scion synthesizes that epic cornerstone, pitting the Gods against the Titans, but also acknowledging the Gods' own wariness of the nascent Scions. If the Gods don't play their cosmic ruse wisely, they'll find themselves cast down by their Scion offspring much in the same way the Titans were imprisoned by the Gods. Or so they think. Whether or not this is true depends on the motivations of your players' heroes and the story you're trying to tell.

Whether it's true or not, the suspicion is there, and that suspicion breeds conflict. Conflict, naturally, is at the heart of any good story, and the mistrust between generations gives plenty of story hooks upon which to create thrilling tales. Have the Gods sent the players' Band on a legitimate quest, or is it a wild goose chase intended to distract the titanspawn and keep the Scions occupied? If it resolves safely, will the Scions catch the Gods in the act of crying wolf? If so, can they trust the Gods again? They know they can't trust the Titans and their minions. Worse, what if some Gods prove trustworthy and some Gods don't? How will the players tell the honest ones from the deceitful ones? And what if one of the Titans, in all its alien mindset, tells the characters the truth when they come into conflict with it? What if a Titan is engaged in something that might have a positive outcome—stopping an epic storm one of the Gods set in motion, say, or leveling a mountain that a plane's on a collision course with? Are the characters right in heeding their divine parents, trusting in the unknowable Titans, or making their own way in a world that's not so morally absolute?

Welcome to the quandaries from which epic stories are spun.

ORDER AGAINST CHAOS

In many cases, epics depict the imposition of order in place of an extant chaos. Whether this comes as

a result of Gods making worlds in their image, setting their champions to certain tasks, or conflict between divine personalities doesn't matter as long as the heroes undertake their legendary quests. Regardless of the motivating factors, the heroes—and in the context of the game, the players' Bands of heroes—stand to gain much.

Heroes in epics often gain rulership over a land conquered in the name of their God. They might gain a special tool or weapon that assures them of their place in legend, such as the swords Gram and Excalibur or the flute of Marsyas. They may inherit the ability to pass their exalted blood down through their lineage, or their own personal tragic fate may mark the turning point for the betterment of humankind, as with the son of one of Huitzilopochtli's sisters, whose disembodied heart marked the site of Tenochtitlán.

Order Against Chaos is a theme central to **Scion** because it defines what the characters do as well as why they do it. The Gods wish to curtail the activities of the Titans, but their own powers are too vast and gross to succeed in reshaping the World. Indeed, if the Gods turned their efforts directly to the World, they'd only succeed in doing the Titans' work for them. Thus, the Scions stand between inchoate Titanic carnage and the fate of humankind. Chaos itself is trying to force itself upon the World, and the Scions are the bulwark against that horror.

POWER CORRUPTS

In a game in which the players portray the children of Gods themselves, could this theme possibly not make an appearance? You have the power of a God—what do you do with it?

The weight of this theme permeates the source material for the game, and it should thoroughly color the interactions among the characters, each other and their environment. The Titans, obviously, have no morality with which to temper their raw power. As such, they are the ultimate display of power that serves its own purposes. The Gods have vast power but exist in roles defined for them by greater cosmic function. That is to say, if they seem petty, vengeful and immature, it's because they are, and that's what the universe has ordained for them. The Scions occupy a unique role, then, because they are more evolved and ethically better than their divine parents, even if they choose paths of comparative "evil" for their lives. Even though they have less unadulterated power available to them, they possess the ability to choose what they do.

It is no surprise, then, that some Scions turn their backs on their divine calling and instead revel in the luxury and excess their potential affords them. This needn't be a case of black and white; Scions need not constantly behave like Caligula to demonstrate the moral weight of power. Indeed, it's made all the more poignant when a single lapse or two punctuates a character's life as a Scion. Is it out of the question to think that the daughter of a God might want to have a night out with the girls instead of facing a howling horde of banshees roaring into the World from the realm of the dead? That Aphrodite's son might want to pass a few carnal hours in his lover's embrace instead of beseeching the Scion of Amaterasu not to leave the World swathed in darkness?

The significance of this theme is one that works best in turning some of the outcome of a story over



GODLY REWARDS AND MOUNTING CHALLENGES

This is a particularly enjoyable theme for Storytellers to explore with their players because players always like to “get stuff” as a result of their heroics and the epic tradition justifies the precedent. Few of the Gods are stingy with their blessings and rewards, though they might expect additional service for such bestowments. Therefore, giving them things is appropriate and makes the players happy, which in turn allows the Storyteller to turn up the challenges posed by the opposition. After all, what good is having a set of Raiden’s drums if the hero can simply play them and scatter his foes like petals in the wind? A foe who is affected by the drums but can circumvent them or lessen their effect will be a much more memorable enemy than another legion of faceless mooks who fled in terror.

The epics are full of these tales of flawed Boons or items that worked... until they didn’t. The sword Gram slew all foes after Sigmund pulled it from the log where Odin had placed it until Regin re-forged it to allow Sigurd to kill the dragon Fafnir. Heracles gave the Minotaur’s labrys to the Queen of Lydia, who passed it down through her generations of successors until Candaules gave it away in disdain and was thereafter slain by Arselis and Gyges. The sword Muramasa that belonged to one (or more...) of the Japanese “dog warriors” caused problems of its own, owing to its veracity or falsehood. In one of Malory’s tales of Arthur, Excalibur breaks in a fight with King Pellinore and is restored by the Lady of the Lake. (Of course, Malory also states that the broken sword *wasn’t* Excalibur, and that the sword in the stone was another blade altogether, but such inconsistency is one of the beauties of myth.) Alberich’s ring. Izanami’s spear. Erzulie’s wedding bands. Thor’s hammer.

Those are just a few of the examples that actually exist in real-world mythology and legend. Add to these your own Storyteller interpretations and created Birthright relics, and you’ll soon be telling epics as vibrant as any of those throughout history.

Additionally, don’t be afraid to have the characters earn their rewards directly instead of having the Gods grant them. A Birthright relic could show up in the hands of an enemy who must be defeated before the heroes can use the weapon. It might not even be a relic proper at the time of recovery, but could become one afterward, as with Perseus taking Medusa’s head to later turn Atlas the Titan into Mount Atlas. How *did* Maugris come by Durendal, anyway, to make it a gift to Roland?

to the players, rather than highlighting it as a fable’s moral. The players decide whether their characters give of themselves and work to save God- and mankind by sacrificing their own happiness on the altar of selflessness or instead indulge their base but incessant desires for temporal power and glory. As the stories of Heracles, Gilgamesh, and Jesus Christ demonstrate, the journey toward godhood is fraught with tragedy and hardship.

GENESIS: THE CREATION OF MYTH

One of the notable characteristics of myth is that we rarely know who, precisely, codified the myths that we know and love in the first place. Frequently, in fact, myths haven’t been codified at all, and conflicting stories involving the same heroes have arisen throughout time. Pantheons blend into others or evolve out of previously existing pantheons—the Greek pantheon ultimately became the Roman pantheon, but not before co-opting aspects of the Egyptian pantheon and leaving its own hallmarks within that pantheon as well. The Voodoo pantheon adapts Christian canon to African folklore. Christian canon itself often incorporated pagan faiths, holidays and figures in order to make itself more palatable to those who followed those other beliefs.

We still read these ancient legends or modern myths because they say something about the human condition. The key principle, then, is not who made the myths, but what the myths say. That’s tremendously empowering as a Storyteller, because it validates the new myth the troupe creates co-operatively. You’re just as valid a tale-spinner as Homer or Aristes. Indeed, because we usually have no idea where the myths originated, we can’t tell if they’re the creations of insightful spiritual commentators or if they’re the products of some half-crazed devotee of *oinos* and have just been garnished over the course of time. (“Athena sprang from Zeus’s forehead, fully formed, with an axe in her hand! *You should’ve seen it!*”)

Such being the case, you have vast license to create your own mythologies, pantheons and legends to use in your games of **Scion**. It’s inevitable, in fact, because of the equal screen time and validity we’re devoting to multiple pantheons, and the additional layer of titanic conflict we’ve built into the setting. Every tale you tell is going to be a new twist on the legends of yore, but don’t let that intimidate you. View it instead as an opportunity to blow the roof off established legendry and make it your own. Just as Tyr never really crossed swords with Hachiman, your players’ characters were

never a previous part of the World's cultural legends. But so what? They are now, because you want them to be. Now, take that opportunity and make one hell of a hero's journey out of it!

THE OTHERS

Other divinities walk in the world, in addition to the six pantheons presented in **Scion: Hero**. Hindu deities still strut in the streets of Mumbai and Calicut. African spirits wander in the jungles of the Congo. Thunderbirds and the White Buffalo Calf Woman still hover above the medicine lodges of the Lakota. Spirits still stranger and less well-known circle every village in the morning fog rising from the Orinoco River.

The gods are alive. They are walking in the world.

Of course, it is not so simple as that. Some of the gods are, in fact, dead. They have fallen in the wars with the Titans and gone down into the dust. It's possible that your Storyteller will decide that some of the gods listed here have already returned to the shadows and are no more. That's for him to decide.

Or it may be that your Storyteller will create an entirely fictional pantheon, which appeals to her sensibilities. Or she will ask each player in her group to choose two from the list we have given you, and those are the only ones who still survive. It may be that the "gods" with whom you work in your game are Roman Catholic patron saints, or Native American animal totems, or fictional characters drawn from the works of William Blake and Howard Phillips Lovecraft.

It's just a matter of naming your gods and their relevant stories. Then, you can write them up and make clear their strengths and weaknesses, their myths and their realities, their foibles and their rivalries.

MAKING MYTHS REAL

It's best to start with a core myth rather than a specific deity or character you want to endow with the ability to create Scions. Rather than start with a being whose Scion you want to play—let's say, Coyote from Native American legend—start with a sense of what the whole collection of myths say together. Norse mythology focuses on the struggle of individuals and communities against the titanic forces of nature and primal chaos, and the emergence of order from wrack and ruin.

Yet, Native American mythology begins somewhere else. Often, it begins with people choosing to serve the tribe and receiving reward and status; or it begins with people turning their backs on the tribe or trying to win status, without being particularly deserving. Those folk are punished for their selfishness or ambition. The power of community becomes the governing order from which a pantheon based on this structure grows, and it is community that the primal forces of the Titans will seek to destroy.

Coyote can't stand alone, in other words. He needs a group to belong to. How can he play tricks on strangers, who don't know his ways? He needs Rabbit, Fox and Bear to be his foils. He needs Eagle and Owl, who look down on him and ignore him. In the modern world, he may even need a certain swift and funny-looking bird to keep him on his toes. Similarly, the Algonquian



God Glooscap might have joined a Southwestern-themed pantheon to stand for the amalgamation of traditions because of the destruction of native cultures after AD 1492.

CHARACTER COUNTS

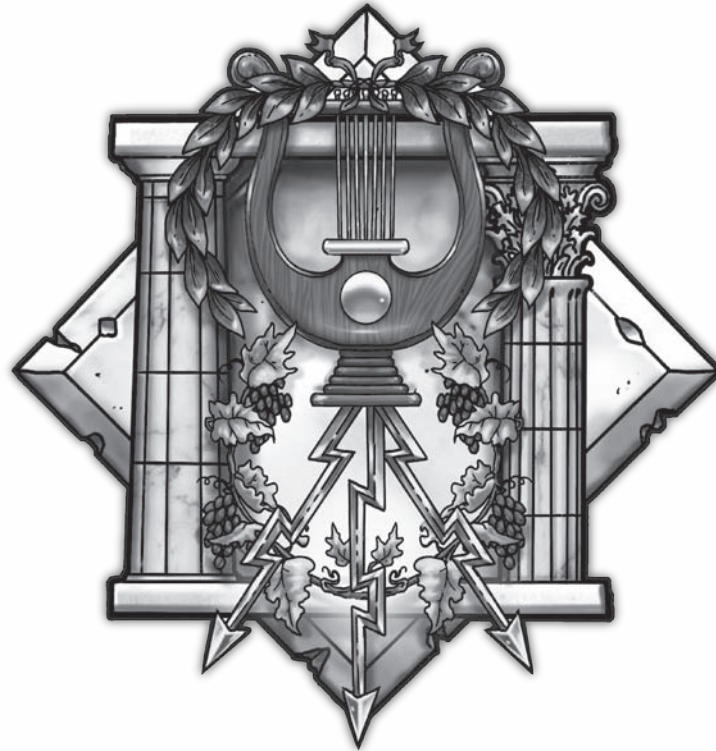
The characters you choose will become part of your story. It's important to choose wisely, because if Glooscap (from Algonquin myth, in the Northeast) and Coyote (from the Southwest) are in the same pantheon, it means that Titans have already destroyed a great number of deities and spirits, and the war is already half-lost. If you reconstruct two or more North American pantheons and throw in the Celts and the Chinese for good measure, then the World is a lot more robust than we present it here, and the rivalries between gods become more important than the wars with the Titans beyond.

Simply be conscious that you are playing with myth, and that there are people around you—both gamers and

non-gamers—who take these materials very seriously. The gods themselves aren't going to hand you any Birthrights for bringing their stories back to life, but it's possible for you to make other people very happy, or very angry, by how you tell and interpret their tales.

WAKING A GOD

Each god should have a short text piece associated with him or her; feel free to use the basic template we've provided in Chapter One. Each god gets a brief description of what he's done in myth already, what he's doing in the world now and what his Scions might be up to. Each also gets some appropriate purviews, a set of six Favored Abilities and a group of rival gods drawn from across the existing pantheons. We recommend that a pantheon include at least six gods, and one or two of them should be argumentative and difficult people. What family, after all, doesn't have a black sheep or two hanging around?





FATE

Even the Gods must bow to Fate.

Whether it is called Destiny, Kismet, Karma, Judgment or the Way of Heaven, nothing in the universe can escape it. Fate is the loom that weaves all elements of Creation into a unified whole. Even chaos has a place in its pattern, and it often seems to some that destruction—Armageddon, Ragnarök, Apocalypse, the End of the Kali Yuga—is its ultimate end point.

Or is it? Legends from around the World tell that Creation does not end, it only changes. The End of All leads to the birth of the new, even if Gods such as Baldur are the only ones who live to see the new World. The Age of the Titans gave way to the Age of the Gods, which gave way to the Age of Man. Is this current era, with the release of the Titans, the beginning of yet another Age—the Age of Heroes—or is it the last days of the old Age, leading to an epic doom for Gods, men and heroes alike? Only the servants of Fate—the Moirae, the Norns the Morrigan and others—might know. *Might* know, for they do not answer when asked these questions. They do not smile, but neither do they frown. Perhaps the truth is to be determined not by their weaving, but by the deeds of heroes.

THE LOOM OF FATE

The most common metaphor for Fate is that of a loom from which the pattern of history—including mortals' lives—is woven. The Greek Moirae, the three Fates, were called the “apportioners,” for they spun, measured and cut the threads that make up mortal lives. But this brings us no closer to understanding just what Fate is and how and why it operates as it does. Grasping the whole of Fate—or even many of its parts—is like trying to understand a higher-dimensional object. Imagine if a two-dimensional line were conscious. It could not reasonably understand a higher-dimensional object, such as a three-dimensional sphere. Trying to understand Fate is similar, for it is intimately tied to time, the fourth dimension.

Some thinkers have posited what a three-dimensional being might look like from a fourth-dimensional perspective: a single object, perhaps like a tube, with the being's “birth” at one end and its “death” at the other, with all the moments of its life in linear sequence down its middle. The tube curls back and forth throughout space, weaving complex knots on top of places to which the being often returns.

In fact, it'd be much like a thread in a woven pattern, with the whole pattern only visible to those with fourth-dimensional consciousness.

Or this thread might instead be envisioned as a serpent, such as the Titan known to the Greeks as Ananke, or “Necessity,” who was birthed at the beginning of Time. In this view, history is not an inert thread that is set in place



once it has been woven, but a nest of wriggling, writhing snakes ever changing their positions—and continually changing both the past and future as they do so. But such thinking leads to madness, so perhaps the loom analogy is easier to grasp for mortal minds.

Fate influences all, from Gods to mortals to even Titans. Understanding its manipulations is vital to predicting its ordained results. Where does one begin? With the measure of all things: Man. While the Gods do not fully understand Fate, they know that it is somehow tied to mortals. Before they began interfering in the lives of these beings of clay, the Gods were relatively free of Fate's invisible hand, but now, their very essences are entwined with mortal expectations. Their forms rely on mortal beliefs to keep them coherent and free from merger with their Titan parents. What is this amazing power that mortals have, of which they are entirely unaware?

In short, it's Story. The human mind craves stories. It makes stories out of the chaos of events, carving order from randomness. Not simply order characterized by reason and efficiency, but the loose, metaphorical, poetic order of the imagination, the unfettered free association of the mortal mind. "This happened, then that, and it ended like this..."

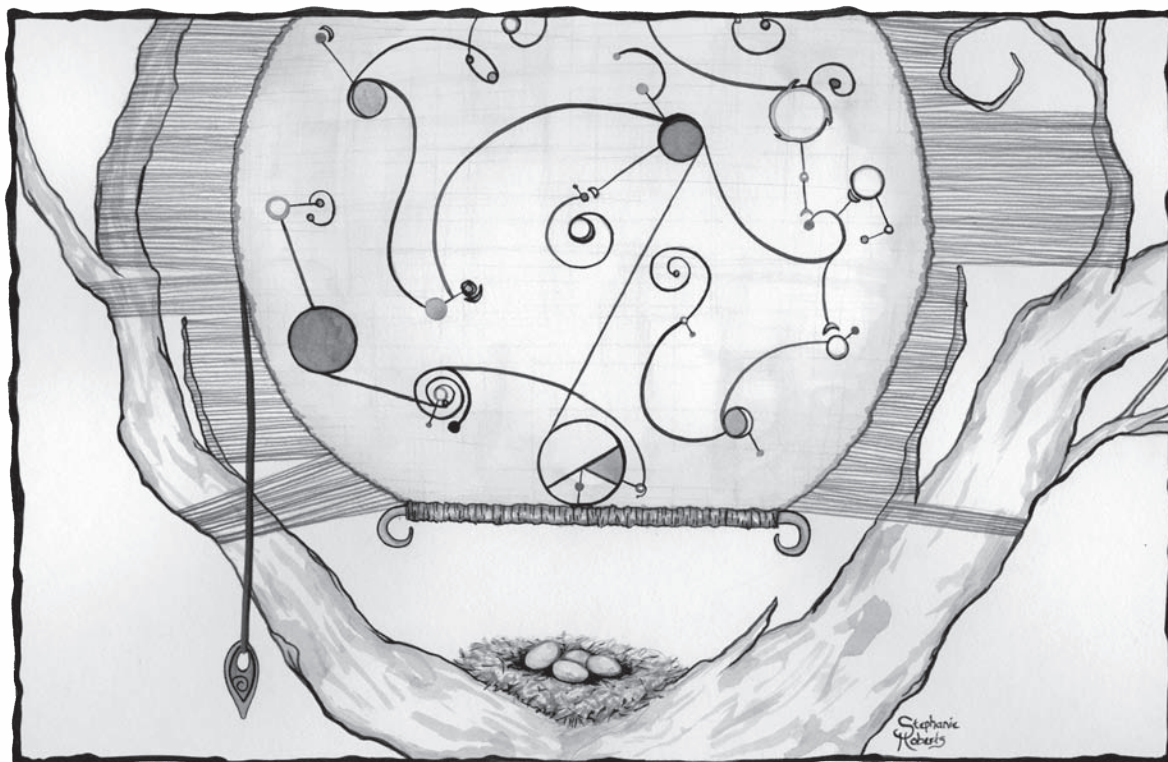
Mortal egos are tragically fragile, as paper boats bobbing on a huge sea of greater human consciousness—of *unconsciousness*, a vast realm of imagination unknown to the waking mind. As Sigmund Freud, Carl Jung and other 20th-century psychologists discovered, the human mind is often a puppet to its own hidden influences, deeply buried instincts and repressed desires. Both Freud and Jung linked this vast region with divine legendry, for

it seemed that here the Gods still spoke to mortals, in dreams and visions welling up from within. Jung went further and posited that not only did each individual have his own unconscious region of the mind, but there was a collective unconscious shared by all members of the human race. This repository of ancient instincts was the source of the recurring motifs of classical legend, so similar the World over.

Jung did not realize how right he was, and not in the way he suspected. The Gods certainly still spoke to mortals now and then through dreams, or in actual encounters that were only remembered later, uncovered through hypnosis or meditation. But deeper still, the collective unconscious itself guided the Gods, ensnaring them in its story-making net. They had become interwoven with Fate, the vast, hidden collective psyche of all mortals.

In a universe born under the rule of Titans, mortals need to make the cosmos their own. They do so with their imagination, the collective expression of which is Fate, and once someone gets caught in Fate's story, she is no longer in full control of her destiny. The story of which she is now a part works to determine what happens to her, even to the point of turning her decisions against her own desires and showing how actions that at first seemed to be expressions of free will were, in the end, secret agents for Fate.

Fate is not a conscious agenda on the part of human beings, directed by them to make the World into what they want it to be. Indeed, what Fate demands and what mortals want is often at odds, just as an individual's unconscious instincts and emotions can war with his conscious reason. The question arises: Is Fate directed



by anybody? Nobody knows. Not Gods, not Titans, not the servants of Fate itself. Its ultimate reasons are beyond the scope of what any single mind can grasp, and even the collective musings of the Gods has yet to yield any tangible clues. Fate transcends the known cosmos, as the third dimension transcends the second dimension.

THE STORY-MAKING FUNCTION

Humans can't help but make narratives out of the events of their lives, no matter how random things seem. It is part of how the mind functions. It might be an illusion, an evolutionary coping mechanism, or it might be a means of tapping into the wellsprings of the universe itself, the hidden meaning that is actually there if one has the perspective to view it. In the real World, the former viewpoint, that of scientific materialism, is currently winning the debate. In **Scion**, the latter view is truer, although the question of what came first, the chicken (Fate) or the egg (the random, chaotic universe) is still a mystery.

Fate is the personification and expression of this narrative or story-making function, of the human need for *meaning*. As such, it serves the Story, not the human beings whose collective unconscious works to craft stories from the stuff—people, places, things, events—of the universe. Humans are the victims of Fate as much as they are its secret movers and shakers. They are ignorant of their race's glory—weaving legends that ensnare the Gods—and wouldn't believe it if it were revealed to them. While Fate is *of* mortals, mortals are *within* Fate.

The Story is the end goal of Fate, as played out in thousands of legends. It cares not whether the whole of history is played out to reveal a tragedy or a comedy. That it is a story—with a beginning, middle, end, theme, plot and characters—is what is important. The universe must have meaning, as given in the framework Fate imposes on its happenings. Otherwise, all is for naught. Life, death, love, hate—all rendered useless, mere data with no context in a soup of bubbling chaos. In this sense, Fate works against the nature of the Titans. Even if the Titans were to win, at least it'd make an epic story.

Fate performs its story-making function through a variety of means. In the lives of most mortals, it is invisible and its existence debatable. Indeed, most contemporary

citizens of First World nations no longer really believe in such concepts as Fate, destiny or predestination. It is only when coincidences begin to stack up that they might momentarily entertain the idea, before going back to their materialistic, predictable, enchantment-free lives.

For Scions, however, such denial is a luxury. Their heritage opens their eyes to the secret workings. While Fate is as much a mystery to them as it is to their parents, they cannot long deny its existence and force in their lives. A Scion's Legend trait is proof of his entanglement in the threads of destiny, and the greater it grows, the more deeply he is woven into the workings of Fate.

There is no doubt that a Scion has free will. His own actions are what build his Legend. Fate, however, takes his choices and winnows the sheer range of possibilities that will henceforth confront that Scion, channeling his choices down to those that will best express a narrative. Put another way, it alters probability around the Scion based upon the Scion's actions, increasing the odds of certain outcomes that fit the script of the Scion's life and decreasing the odds of events that might conflict with it. Even when something happens that radically alters the script, Fate adjusts future events to make it seem, in hindsight, to have been part of the plot all along.

A Scion's Legend can, therefore, be considered a story co-written by the Scion and a ghostwriter, Fate. The Scion writes the script, but Fate keeps sending in revisions or demands with which the Scion must contend, causing him to alter his own plans for the story of his life. He can try to steer it back, but it's ever a struggle of give and take. The result is a collaborative story that might stand the test of time as a work of art.

This all makes the hand of Fate seem heavy and oppressive. Its influence is not so direct, however. It's really only seen over time, as one looks back at how things turned out and marvels about the strange coincidences that now make everything seem to have been planned from the start.

As for exactly how Fate exerts its pull on Scions, there are two pertinent phenomena: Fatebinding and the Fateful Aura. In addition, the mysterious Purview of Magic (see pp. 153-155) allows a Scion to recognize and influence the strands of Fate to his advantage—and to his peril, if he's not careful.

FATEBINDING

A Scion's Legend exerts a sort of gravity around which people, places and things might be drawn into orbit, turning them into a supporting cast or props for his exploits and deeds. This doesn't just happen by accident; the Scion himself initiates it, though not directly. Whenever he draws upon his Legend to bend Fate for his benefit or to power a Boon, those affected

by or witness to his action might be caught up in the strands of his epic life, for good or ill. They become Fatebound to him, even if he doesn't like it. He can't control who or what is Fatebound to him—that's up to the whim of Fate.

Fate is forging a story about the Scion's exploits, and probabilities (and people's behavior) will be altered to fit

the story. The Scion still has free will, but those affected by his Legend don't. Fate moves them like chess pieces. They might consciously realize this and resent it, and even try to resist it, but Fate gets its way in the end.

While a mortal might occasionally exert such an effect on others, it's rare. A Scion's divine lineage and connection to the Overworld provides the metaphysical force needed for him to stand out in the skein of destiny and draw others to him. As he treads the World, he inadvertently bends and tears the threads of others' lives, sometimes getting tangled in them and pulling them with him on his forceful march through history.

The following conditions might cause a Fatebinding to occur:

- *When a Scion spends his Legend points to alter the outcome of an action.* The target of the action (or possibly a bystander who is affected by the outcome, such as someone the Scion saves by attacking the bystander's oppressor) might become Fatebound.

The Storyteller—not the Scion character's player—secretly rolls the Scion's Legend as a dice pool. The difficulty for any given scene begins at 5. If any character present in the scene spends Legend points and the resulting Fatebinding roll yields at least one threshold success (that is, five or more dice showing a 7 or higher, with 10s counting twice), the difficulty for everyone on the scene drops to 4. The same thing happens again the next time a Fatebinding roll achieves a threshold success, this time reducing the difficulty to 3. The difficulty can go no lower than 3.

If no Fatebinding roll equals or exceeds the difficulty, no Fatebinding occurs. If any rolls do succeed, however, one or more people (or things, or even the place in which the action occurred) become Fatebound to the Scion. The Storyteller allocates the number of successful rolls between the Fatebinding's strength and the number of people it affects. The Fatebound individual is called the Fated.

The Storyteller might deem that a given scene is already weighted with the gravity of Fate. Perhaps the Scion's rival has lured him to the scene of his mother's murder or the place where he first discovered his heritage. In such places, pregnant with classic story motifs, the Storyteller might begin the scene with a lower difficulty for Fatebinding rolls.

Example: Carla, a daughter of Hermes, spies an unconscious child lying on the train tracks at an intersection with a train is barreling right toward him. She launches forward, hoping to beat the train and snatch the child out of the way. The odds are against her, but she spends Legend points to more than even them, giving her automatic successes. She saves the child and rolls to safety as the train rockets past, horn blaring.

Since Carla spent Legend points to alter the odds of an action, she has effectively challenged Fate. The Storyteller rolls her Legend score of 3 as a dice pool and gets 7, 10, 10—matching the difficulty of 5, since 10s count twice. Since there's only one reasonable target here (the child she saved), the Storyteller assigns one point (for the number of successful rolls) to the strength of the

Fatebinding. Doing so ensures the child's connection to Carla for the rest of the day. (See the "The Pull of Destiny" sidebar.)

- *When a Scion spends Legend points to power a Boon or Knack.* The Storyteller secretly rolls the Scion's Legend score against difficulty 5. This difficulty does not change, as when a Scion spends Legend to alter the odds of an action; it is always rated at 5. The Storyteller divides the number of successful rolls between strength and the number of affected people, as described previously.

- *When a Scion uses magic spells.* The target of the magic is automatically Fatebound to the magic's caster with a strength of 1.

THE PULL OF DESTINY: FATEBINDING STRENGTH

The strength assigned to a particular Fatebinding is a measure of the range and duration of the bond.

Strength	Effect
1	The Fated assumes his Fatebound Role (see "The Fated" for the odds of this occurring) only in the Scion's presence and only for the next 24 hours at the most.
2	The Fated might assume his Fatebound Role when the Scion is within the same vicinity (a small town or city district). He is subject to the binding for one month.
3	The Fated might assume his Fatebound Role when the Scion is within the same region (a state or geological watershed). He is subject to the binding for one season (three months).
4	The Fated assumes his Fatebound Role for as long as the binding lasts (at least one year), no matter where the Scion is (or even if he is alive).
5	As with Strength 4, except the binding is permanent, although it is dissolved when the Fated dies (his ghost is no longer Fatebound).
6+	As with Strength 5, except that the binding lasts beyond death. The Fated ghost maintains its Fatebound Role even in the Underworld (although it can do very little to help or hinder the Scion from there).

THE FATED

The lives of the Fated are tied to the Scion to whom they are bound in ways both subtle and grand. The course of everyday events brings them—seemingly coincidentally—into contact with the Scion again and again, no matter how much distance they try to put between themselves and the godling. Although the Fatebond's strength applies only within a certain range, the Fated are often simply unable to travel outside that range for as long as the binding is active. They might take a bus out of town, only to wind up walking back in after the bus has broken down. Their plane flight might be indefinitely delayed, or they might find themselves on the "No Fly" list, but only for as long as the Fatebinding has put them there.

Once a mortal has been Fatebound to a Scion, he assumes a certain role in relation to that Scion's exploits. The Storyteller chooses the role based on the context in which the Fatebinding occurred. Some examples are listed below, but this is in no way an exhaustive list. Storytellers are encouraged to create new roles as needed.

The Fated mortal is not always under the spell of this role. He acts in accordance with it only under certain conditions, as explained in the "The Pull of Destiny" sidebar. When those conditions are at hand, the Storyteller can assume that the Fated mortal will assume the role. If he wants to add some variability to the matter, he can roll the Scion's Legend as a dice pool to see whether or not the role is activated. The difficulty is usually 1, but if the stars don't feel aligned, he can raise it to make it more unlikely that Fate will play a hand in the Fated's behavior.

Once a Fatebound Role is active, the Fated mortal behaves according to that role's motivations rather than his own (although they don't necessarily always differ). He believes that the role's motivations *are* his own. He is unaware that he is a puppet to Fate and believes he is exerting his own will and desires. If the conditions are right and the Scion spends a Legend point for any reason, it might be enough excuse to activate the Fated's role, even if a great distance separates the two.

It's not just mortals who can become Fatebound to a Scion. Anyone can be Fatebound—a Scion, a titanspawn, a God. Unlike mortals, however, supernatural beings don't succumb to Fatebound Roles; they retain their free will. Sort of. Odd "coincidences" still conspire to bring such a being into the orbit of the Scion to whom she is Fatebound, regardless of her own opinion on the matter. At the Storyteller's discretion, certain supernatural creatures or beings might come under the effect of a Fatebound Role, but Scions and Gods never do.

FATEBOUND ROLES FOR MORTALS

(Note that while these roles are given handy titles for the Storyteller's use, neither Scions nor the Fated use said titles in-setting.)

Apprentice: The Fated greatly respects the Scion, so much so that he wants to follow in his footsteps.

He models his own behavior and ideals on the Scion's (as he understands them), sometimes to an annoying degree. Examples: The fresh-faced kid, the guy with the mid-life crisis, the over-achiever.

Backup: The Fated is ready and willing to aid the Scion if things get tough, though he might not be any good at it. He might have the courage but lack the skill. Nonetheless, he'll follow the Scion's orders and do as he's told. Examples: The biker thug, the plucky boy/girl scout, the courageous nerd.

Balm: The Fated is a balm for the Scion's raging emotions. Something about him calms the Scion and makes him feel at peace. The Scion might not know why—he might even despise the idea—but, for whatever reason, the person makes the Scion comfortable enough to let his guard down. Examples: The innocent little girl, the granny, the plain-suited accountant.

Boon Companion: The Fated considers himself the Scion's best friend. He'll do whatever he can for the Scion, even if it means telling him what he doesn't want to hear. While the Scion's cold reception or harsh words might hurt him, he won't give up his friendship, no matter how much it's unwanted. What makes this different from other friendly roles is that the Fated will travel with or behind the Scion, even if it means taking time off work or quitting his job. Examples: The childhood friend, the grateful hobo, the rescued suicide attempt.

Canary: The Fated is the proverbial canary in the coal mine. If something bad is happening, it happens to this guy first (thanks to Fate), serving as a possible warning to the Scion. Examples: The selfish jerk, the materialistic fashion queen, the faceless janitor.

Catastrophe: The Fated always causes problems—big problems—that the Scion has to fix. He might not mean to (he might be akin to the Jinx role), but he can't seem to help it. Or perhaps he does intend to do harm, and is now further prodded by Fate. Maybe it's as banal as accidentally dumping toxic waste in the city's water reservoir, as creepy as setting houses on fire or as malicious as firing a shoulder-mounted rocket into a teeming shopping mall. Regardless, it's always in a place or situation that somehow involves the Scion and is sure to make him leap into action (even if it's just to save his own skin). Examples: The fire bug, the klutz, the bottom-line CEO.

Contrary: This Fated seems to be playing another role than he actually is. The Storyteller should choose his real role (such as Lover) and then his cover role, what others *think* he is (Rival). At some point, when it's most advantageous or deleterious to the Scion (depending on the nature of the real role), the Fated will reveal his true role. Examples: The two-faced scoundrel, the long-lost friend, the embarrassed lover.

Fan: The Fated is the Scion's biggest fan. Unlike those of certain other friendly roles, the Fated is content to adore the Scion from afar, and is extremely nervous and giddy in his presence. If the strength of the bond is



such that the role can be assumed when the Scion is not present, the fan works to convert others to the Scion's fan club, even though most people refuse to believe what he's telling them. Examples: The sci-fi geek, the sports fan, the gushing gossip columnist.

Herald: The Fated acts as a PR flack for the Scion, trumpeting his deeds and/or character to others. The Fated isn't necessarily obsessed with the Scion himself; he's merely thinking tactically, like an ad exec. He's quite willing to bend the truth about the Scion, if it makes his "client" look better. Examples: The ad exec, the inspirational coach, the influential society maven.

Jinx: The Fated is decidedly unlucky for the Scion. If he's near, he's sure to do something that will screw up the Scion's plans, even if he's utterly well intentioned. He might try to fix the Scion's car, only to break it worse. He might call 911 to bring aid, only to give the police the impression that the Scion must be taken down. Examples: The overconfident son-in-law, the know-it-all, the hapless stooge.

Lover: The Fated falls in love with the Scion. The Scion rarely reciprocates the emotion, but he might use it to his advantage (if he's a cad). In fact, the Scion's mortal parent might have been playing out such a role when the divine parent came calling. The Fated will do whatever she *reasonably* can to get the Scion to love her back. Examples: The rescued maiden, the besotted blue-collar worker, the intrepid reporter.

Martyr: The Fated is ready to die for the Scion. Actually, he might *want* to die for the Scion (if the Fatebinding's strength is 4 or higher) and will seek out a way to do so. He might jump in front of a bullet meant for the Scion, trigger a deadly trap to warn the Scion of its presence, drink the poisoned draught before the Scion can... Examples: The miserable screw-up, the distraught widower, the guilty turncoat.

Mentor: The Fated seeks to impart his wisdom to the Scion. This doesn't mean his "wisdom" is worthwhile, but he thinks it is. It is imperative to him to instruct the Scion in the proper way to do whatever it is the Scion is attempting to do. Examples: The autodidact, the bookseller, the gamer.

Nemesis: The Fated has a vendetta against the Scion. He is Ahab, and the Scion is his White Whale. He might be foolish and headstrong, ready to jump the Scion when he next sees him, or crafty and patient, concocting all manner of slow and complex plots against him. His ultimate goal is the Scion's demise. Examples: The foiled noble, the spurned lover, the jealous athlete.

Rival: The Fated can't stand to see the Scion succeed, or he desires to prove himself the better of the two. He is in competition with the Scion for fame, glory or some more specific goal (acquiring a lost Boon) and won't rest until he can claim victory. The Rival doesn't necessarily seek the destruction of the Scion or even hate him; he simply wants to be the winner. Examples: The professional peer, the greedy executive, the shamed ex-hero.

Patron: The Fated tries to help the Scion economically, by providing goods and services or cold hard cash. He won't volunteer money, but he will step in to help when asked or when the Scion is obviously in need (but might be too proud to ask). He won't go beyond his means, but he will give what he's reasonably capable of giving. Examples: The dilettante, the heir, the Mafia captain.

Preacher: The Fated sees it as his mission to convert the Scion to his way of belief, whether it's religion, politics or a simple hatred of a rival whom he wants the Scion to also hate. He might simply use words and reasoned arguments, backed up now and then by evidence, or he might concoct situations that somehow prove his point. Said situations might even be dangerous, such as arranging to have a rival mob boss take out a hit on the Scion just to prove the man's a crook. Examples: The fundamentalist zealot, the newspaper editor, the disgraced investigator.

Traitor: The Fated is the Scion's best friend—until he really needs him, at which point the Fated stabs him in the back, either figuratively or literally. He might do it for profit or simply because he's come to hate the Scion's sanctimonious speeches. For whatever reason, he really seeks the Scion's downfall (although not necessarily his death). Examples: The jealous half-sibling, the greedy crook, the spiteful fan.

Trickster: The Fated seeks to screw up the Scion's day. His maliciousness is all intentional, even if only he thinks it's funny. He won't usually risk life and limb himself, but he doesn't mind if his pranks could prove dangerous to the Scion. Examples: The bully, the science nerd, the social outcast.

Unrequited Lover: This person is too nervous or scared to admit he's infatuated with the Scion. He watches from the wings, hoping for a moment to show his love, but he rarely takes it when it comes. He's too afraid of rejection, which would crush him. He might stalk the Scion, spying from afar, and finally move to act only if the Scion is in clear danger. Examples: The naïve poet, the best friend, the closet gay.

Victim: The Fated is someone the Scion has to save over and over again. Somehow, by intention or accident, he keeps getting into dangerous situations whence the Scion is in the best position to extricate him. If the Scion does not at least try to save him, Fate levies a Bane on him equal to the strength of the Fatebinding. At some future point of the Storyteller's choosing (although it should be apropos to the context of the Fated's death), the Scion suffers a single, whopping dice penalty equal to the Bane's strength on a prominent action. This penalty comes in addition to those imposed by mortal Reverence, as well as the loss of his ability to spend Legend for the scene (as mentioned on p. 226). Examples: The intrepid reporter, the curious kid, the FBI mob witness.

Weak Link: The Fated appears to be a friendly role of a different sort, but when it comes time to deliver, he just doesn't have what it takes. He's got a glass jaw in combat, his speeches bore people to tears, his money's

FATEBINDING OBJECTS AND PLACES

Although people (or even animals) are more common targets for Fatebinding, it's not unusual for an object or even a place to be Fatebound to a Scion. These subjects can assume Fateful Roles similar to those mortals do. A wrench can become a Weak Link (breaking at the wrong time) or a Martyr (it stops a bullet for the Scion, but is broken by doing so), while a place might cause Catastrophes or be a Balm to the Scion.

no good... Examples: The self-proclaimed jack of all trades, the nervous rookie, the inveterate gambler.

MORTAL REVERENCE

The Fated hold certain opinions and beliefs about the Scion to whom they are Fatebound. This quality is called Reverence, and it can actually have an effect upon the Scion's abilities. There are basically two types of Reverence that mortals hold toward Scions: They perceive them as heroes or villains. The logic behind the Reverence they hold for any given Scion might have nothing to do with that Scion's actual character or deeds—the rhyme or reason behind a mortal's beliefs doesn't always have a discernable cause. One man's hero is another's villain, even if all the Scion has ever tried to do is to help the person who sees him as an enemy. Even a friendly Fated can envision the Scion as a villain but still play out his friendly role for him out of fear or hope of reward.

Of course, all mortals who encounter a Scion probably come to some opinion of him, but only the opinions of the Fated that truly count as far as Fate itself is concerned. When they revere him as a hero or villain, it can alter his abilities, for good or ill.

The Fated are not the only ones caught in a web of predestination—the Scion to whom they are bound is likewise bound. Unlike a mortal Fated, the Scion does not come under the spell of a particular role. He retains free will, at least as far as his decision-making goes, but his capabilities are affected by Fate. The odds of his actions change based upon how the Fated perceives him. In other words, he is drawn into the same script that the Fated is, but as the *object* of the mortal Fated's own role, probabilities bend to help him live up to the mortal's revered ideal of him, as hero or villain.

The greater the Scion's Legend is, the more likely he is to suffer the drag of Fate upon his will and limbs. The Gods became even more prone to these chains, so much so that they decided to remove themselves from common interaction with humanity, lest they be changed far beyond their own desires, warped by mortal expectations and beliefs until they became

unrecognizable to themselves. The pantheons, fearing this effect even within the Overworld, avoided other pantheons, fearing the hidden, subtle threads of Fate that trailed behind and often preceded them.

Over time and with repeated use of Legend, Fatebinding can cause a Scion to play out someone else's goals rather than his own, making him essentially a slave to mortal desires. To avoid this degrading destiny, Scions often shy from fame and prefer to remain incognito when moving among mortals.

The bonds of Fate can affect a Scion in the following ways:

- Whenever a Scion lives up to the Reverence a Fated (who is currently under the spell of a particular role) holds for him, he gains a +1 bonus die for that action or the following action (whichever is most appropriate to the deed) per every two points of the Fatebinding's strength (+1 at strengths 1 and 2, +2 at strengths 3 and 4, etc.).

- Whenever a Scion acts in contradiction to the Reverence a Fated (who is currently under the spell of a particular role) holds for him, he suffers a -1 die penalty for that action or the following action (whichever is most appropriate to the deed) per every two points of the Fatebinding's strength (-1 at strength 1 and 2, -2 at strengths 3 and 4, etc.).

- If a friendly Fated (Apprentice, Backup, Lover, etc.) is harmed and the Scion might have been able to prevent it, but *chose not to act*, he loses the ability to spend Legend points for the remainder of the scene. Even if the Scion does not like the friendly Fated and wishes him ill, he is nonetheless drawn into the drama that Fate is weaving and is expected to play the role allotted him. If he does not, he suffers the consequences.

- If, following a confrontation with the Scion, a Fated foe (Nemesis, Rival, Trickster, etc.) escapes defeat by the Scion's hand, the Scion loses one Willpower point. (If he currently has no Willpower points, there is no effect.)

FATEFUL AURA

Even when a Scion doesn't actively use his Legend, it can still bend probability to enact his story upon the World. Calamity follows him, making sure that he will live up to his Legend... or be destroyed by it.

Since the moment they become aware of their legacy, Scions live without respite in "interesting times." Great events happen around them, no matter how incognito or withdrawn they wish to be. They are like planets exerting the pull of gravity on all other stellar bodies. People are drawn into orbit around them through Fatebinding, and great happenings are likewise drawn to them like distant asteroids or comets, rocketing to their ends near to a Scion's path.

Natural disasters and upheavals. Manmade calamities and war. Miraculous occurrences and impossible phenomena. All these and more seem to dog a Scion's footsteps or await him at the next crossroads. If something momentous *can* happen when a Scion comes to town, it almost certainly *will* happen. Bank robbers plan a robbery and spontaneously decide to move up their schedule a day early, timing their strike just as a Scion enters the bank. A titanspawn awakens from its ancient slumber under a lake just as a Scion moves into his rented lake house for a relaxing weekend getaway. The island volcano, dormant for centuries, suddenly erupts just as a Scion arrives to rescue a kidnapped heiress.

This propensity to attract—or even generate—momentous events is called the Fateful Aura. A Scion's Legend draws the attention of Fate, which then uses the Scion as a protagonist in epic dramas of man vs. nature, man vs. supernatural, man vs. the Gods, et cetera. The themes taught in high school English class come to life around the Scion as real life-and-death conflicts.

The great irony is that, in dealing with these events, Scions most often wind up increasing their Legend, which only further spawns new cycles of momentous events around them. Those mortals who know about Scions are rarely happy to see them, for they know that something big—and dangerous—is surely soon to occur. Sometimes, if a Scion's Legend is great enough (if his Legend dots outnumber his Charisma), mortals might instinctively sense this and give a Scion the cold shoulder when he enters the local watering hole. They don't know the stranger, but they somehow see *big trouble* written all over his face. A character with Epic Charisma might be able to counteract this effect, but only after he's spoken to the locals and put their fears at ease. A character with Epic Appearance can either counteract or intensify the onlookers' first impression based on whether the trait represents divine beauty or monstrous ugliness.

In game terms, there are no hard rules for dealing with a Scion's Fateful Aura. A **Scion** cycle, like the chronicles and campaigns of many roleplaying adventure games, is about a series of amazing coincidences that dog a group of individuals—the players' characters—from week to week as they go about their lives. If this were real life, it would be beyond belief. Nobody runs into that much conflict with such regularity. But Scions aren't like mere mortals. The Fateful Aura is a means within the logic of the **Scion** game universe to explain why these legendary events occur to the same people so often. They can't help it—they can't even avoid it. Greatness finds them whether they want it to or not.

The Fateful Aura is the Storyteller's excuse for introducing what might otherwise seem like an entirely too-convenient plot device. Fate takes an active hand

in **Scion**, using such plot devices as tools in crafting story and meaning from events. So if it seems odd that something interesting is always ready to happen wherever the **Scion** characters go, that's just destiny.

THE STORYTELLER AS FATE

The whole concept of Fate might seem like a meta-game concept, where the Storyteller is given a place in the game. This isn't so. The Storyteller should be as mystified by Fate as any mortal caught in its threads. Although he "plays" the role of Fate as needed in a **Scion** epic, he should avoid letting it become a mouthpiece for his own agenda. It's like writing fiction. The best examples of it often come in a sort of trance, surprising the writer as much as the finished product surprises the reader. In other words, the writer channels a Muse, who speaks through him. Although the Muses were not the same as the Fates, the Fates can "speak" in similar fashion, as they did to the Sibyls of the ancient World.

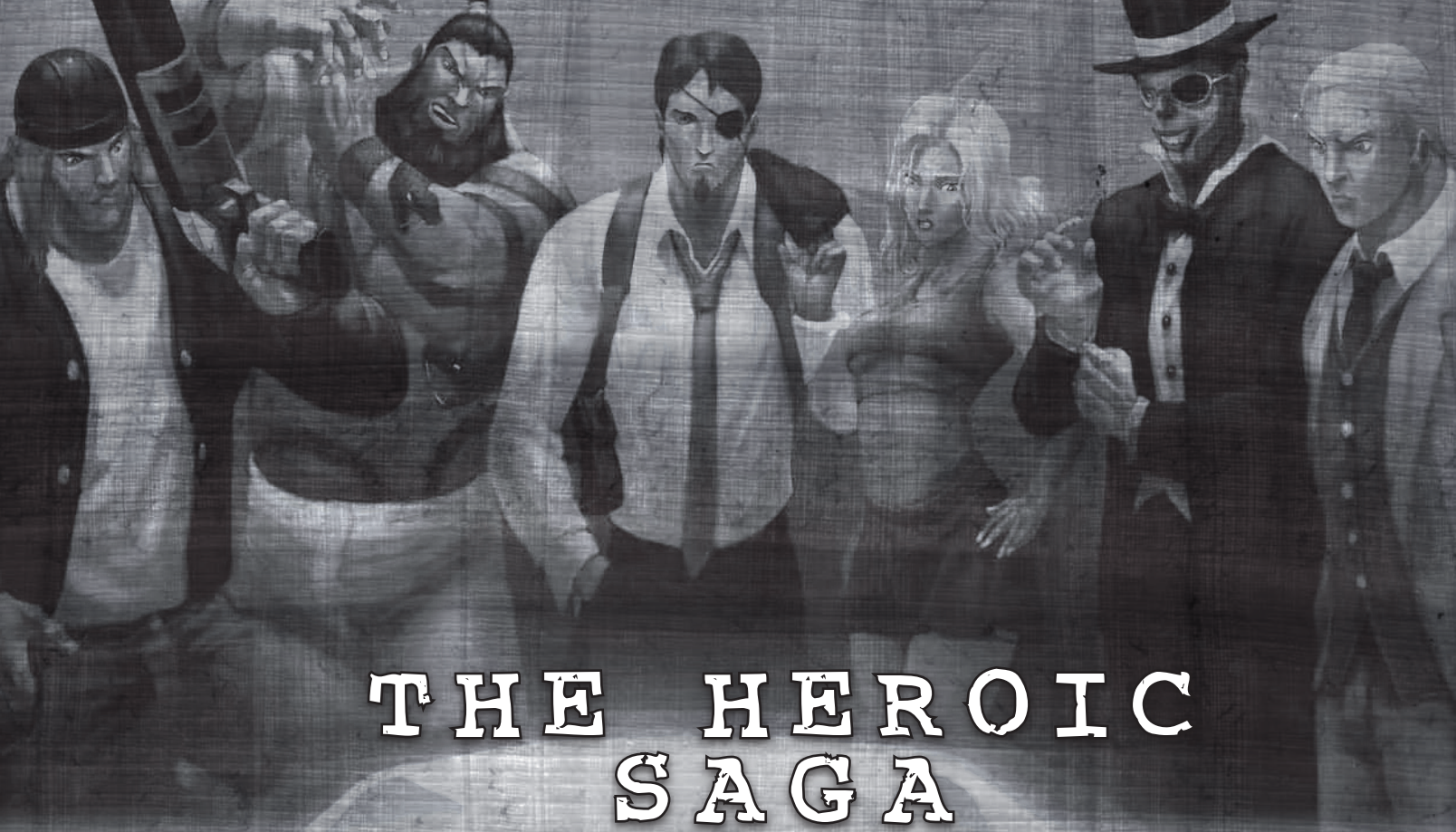
Storytellers should think similarly about Fate's goals for a particular **Scion** cycle. Just let Fate speak, without imposing any opinions on it. Doing so is a kind of skill, similar to daydreaming. Just let the imagination wander, and when an image arises, go with it. Let that be the prompting of Fate, the goal toward which events are moving. This vague image should concern the cycle as a whole, not just a single epic within it. That way, the Storyteller has time to figure out, over the course of a series of games, just what the image means in relation to the events that unfold. Once he is comfortable with it, he can then subtly steer events toward the fulfillment of that image.

Example: Before beginning a cycle, the Storyteller idly wonders what Fate might want out of it. As in a daydream, an image pops into his head of a broken and ruined building. Vines cover the crumbling bricks and weeds jut from the cracked pavement around it. Seen from outside the building, something is glowing within the walls. He might get more details, but none are really necessary. He decides that this will represent what Fate wants, although he has, as yet, no idea what it means. As he runs a number of games, he notices a recurring pattern: Many of the characters have wound up causing property damage to buildings. Is this linked to the image he conceived? It's up to him to decide.



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THE HEROIC SAGA

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Every hero has his tale, and every Band of brave Scions has the destiny to which they've been raised. As you and your players convene for a session of **Scion**, you'll be creating those epic stories mutually. You play the role of Homer, and the players assume the roles of Achilles, Beowulf, Ninigi no Mikoto, Maahes, Clérmeil, Popocatépetl and other offspring of the Gods, placed in the World to face their trials and either satisfy their patron deities or die in the ordeal.

This chapter presents a complete, ready-to-run story arc that involves all the pantheons. By using it and the pregenerated Scion characters depicted in Chapter One, you can be up and playing **Scion** as soon as you have a basic understanding of how the rules work. *The story as written assumes that the players are portraying the pregenerated signature characters.* If that's not the case, Storytellers, you're going to have to do a little bit of extra work, but the bulk of the story should still work for your Band in a broad sense.

THE LONG ROAD TO HEAVEN

This story, "The Long Road to Heaven," is part of a larger **Scion** cycle, one that spans the three core rulebooks and allows the characters to progress from being the offspring of Gods, through demigodhood, up to the potential achievement of godhead itself. Along the way, characters face the full panoply of challenges **Scion** has to offer—Titans, titanspawn, the ravenous dead, other Scions and even the jealous Gods themselves. Exactly what outcome they negotiate is up to them, of course, but since when have true heroes balked from the charges of the Gods?

Players, if you're reading this, cut it out. This isn't for you. Although the heroes of the epics might have had clues as to what Fate had in mind for them, they could never be sure. Likewise, you should save the story's twists and turns for your enjoyment around the gaming table. Anytime henceforth the text says "you," it's referring to the Storyteller.

Storytellers, bear in mind that these are just words on a page, printed for your convenience. They're not the Ten Commandments. You've got free reign to adjust this story, change its major players, move it to a different city or push it all to the background when one of your players finds a plot tangent that takes everyone's interest and won't let go. We're not writing to entertain ourselves. We're creating this story arc to help you in your **Scion** cycles. If you come up with something you like better, don't hesitate to use it.

SYNOPSIS

In rough summary, “The Long Road to Heaven” tells the tale of heroes who are selected to protect a caucus of the Gods. In so doing, they fight a legendary beast and recover a powerful relic with the ability to make oneself a God. The Gods then charge their Scions with a variety of minor quests, which help contribute to the growth of their Legends. A cultic threat to the Gods then turns up a hideous titanspawn in need of thrashing, after which the characters obtain the secret of apotheosis. This combative climax leads to the story’s emotional and ethical climax, offering Scions and their rivals the chance to become a God. Assuming he takes the chance, an act of divine duplicity strips the Scion of his newfound status, leaving him with egg on his face before the Gods.

STORYTELLER’S TOOLBOX: THE RIVAL BAND

One of the conceits of **Scion** is that the pregenerated characters have a rival Band competing with them for the same things. They might not actively try to accomplish the exact same thing in every scene, but the players’ characters are often trying to do one thing while the rival Scions try to prevent that thing from happening (or try to accomplish some goal of their own first).

This section, then, discusses how to use those foil characters. In the interests of saving space, we’re not going detail what those other Scions are doing in every scene. It doesn’t make sense to have them beginning operations at the same time the characters do, given that the players’ Scions are working on something at their own Gods’ behest and those rival Gods aren’t necessarily savvy to it. As well, we’re telling the players’ story here, not that of your Storyteller characters. The plot of this story assumes the heroes find the relic first. The rival Band, then, reacts to their heroic achievements, as opposed to holding all the cards and forcing the characters to react from a position of weakness.

That doesn’t mean the characters are invincible, however. That’s what this section is designed to do: give you guidance on when and how to use those rivals for dramatic impact.

More information on the rival Scions can be found in the Antagonists chapter, on pages 302-308.

DOGGING THEIR HEELS

One way to use the rival Band is to have them arrive on the scene *just after* the height of the action. That is, the rivals show up just in time to see the characters claiming their spoils and they try to pilfer some of those spoils for their own. It’s classic villainous behavior, and it’s certainly appropriate for a group of opportunistic rogues such as these guys.

Pros: It’s a long-honored story device, and one with ample precedent in folklore and legend.

Cons: Players can get frustrated having to defend the treasures and accolades they’ve already legitimately fought for. Overplaying this device can also become predictable if the players always expect their rivals to show up when all the hard work’s done and it’s time to bask in the glory and riches.

Suggestions: Use this device only once or twice during the course of the story, and only once during the flow of major events.

Twists: Let the players’ characters get the jump on the rivals. Perhaps the rivals don’t have all the information they need or arrive a day too late. “They’re digging in the wrong place...!” in the context of *Raiders of the Lost Ark*.

DIFFICULTY SCALING

Sometimes, the players’ dice are really hot. Sometimes, the characters come across a solution to a challenge that confounds both Storyteller and adventure writer with its brilliance. That’s okay. Never let them see you sweat. You see, while those characters are busy being inconveniently awesome, the rivals kick in the doors, ready to ruin everything good the characters have going.

Pros: This tactic allows you to “shift on the fly,” modifying the difficulty of a given scene by adding to it incrementally. If the heroes are running away with the scene, maybe all of the rival Scions show up at once, cracking their knuckles and ready to seize victory for themselves. Maybe only a single rival shows up, doing reconnaissance of her own, to add just a hint of additional difficulty to a scene. Three-way confrontations always make for good drama, as the players’ characters have to choose who they believe to be the greater threat and split their resources over multiple enemies with ostensibly different agendas.

Cons: Again, it’s easy to overplay this device. Saying, “Well, we’re about to win—any moment now, those other jerks are going to show up again,” is not the way a player expresses appreciation for an oppressively recurrent plot hammer.

Suggestions: Keep the word “scaling” in mind. Add rival opposition in an amount that’s enough to increase the difficulty but not completely overwhelm the players’ characters. Also, vary the opposition. Each different rival has different Boons, Birthrights and other abilities. Tailoring the interlopers to the situation can go a long way toward making this device seem fresh and unexpected.

Twists: Have the rivals show up and inexplicably *help* the characters when they’re on the ropes. Thereafter, let the characters and their rivals duke it out. Alternatively, have the rivals vanish into the horizon after offering help, with little or no explanation. Then, the next time the rivals show up, the characters will have no idea whether their rivals are trustworthy or not. Of course, they’re ultimately not, but that’s only borne out in the events of the story.



BEHIND THE SCENES

Every rival plot has its mastermind and henchmen. In the case of the Scions, the mastermind is almost always some rankled or altruistic God, and the henchman is almost always a put-upon mortal or godling who's just doing what he's told to do. That doesn't mean he's not morally accountable for his actions, but neither does it mean that the rivalry begins and ends with him.

This device works well as either a red herring or a bit of foreshadowing, depending upon what's in your notes. Sometimes one of those rival Scions is there, watching, waiting to deliver a report back to his God, and the heroes catch a glimpse of him when he's supposed to be hiding his conniving self from them. At other times, dumb luck just happens to place the rival Scion in the vicinity at the exact same time the players are doing something cool, but that rival Scion has more sense than to leap into the fray and be dealt a drubbing for his villainy.

This is a great way to repay characters for their vigilance, by offering them a chance to see who's trying to pull whose strings. It's also a great way to ratchet up the paranoia for players who look for layer upon layer of conspiracy in events as mundane as taking a cab to the casino.

Pros: This device offers a good way to *potentially* complicate a scene without necessarily engaging the complication right away. If the players' Scions see the rival, that gives you a hook to use later. In other words, if the characters make unexpectedly short work of a given task, having a rival show up suggests that there's more to that task than initially meets the eye. You can detail what that is later, when you've had more time to think

about it, but for the time being, it keep players on their toes and wary of what else might be happening.

Cons: As always, overplaying this device can detract from the cycle's overall direction. If the characters are always looking over their shoulders for masterminds who might or might not be there, the action slows to a crawl. It also hurts the tone if the players have been trained to expect an espionage thriller and you actually intend to run an action-packed romp.

Suggestions: If you plan to use this device more than once, be sure to allow the players' characters to catch their rival in the act. When they get their hands on him in the end, they'll feel that they've accomplished something significant. Thereafter, they can question him, beat him senseless, try to get his to change his wicked ways—whatever they want, which provides an additional story hook or plot tangent for you to entertain.

Twists: Smoke and mirrors can sometimes serve just as well as (if not better than) actually having a rival character show up on the scene. Simply make a meaningless die roll for any character who mentions that she's looking out for that rival pack of Scions. Then look pointedly at the dice, and reply, "Why, no, you don't notice anyone there." Then return to the scene as normal.

INDIVIDUALLY

Now that we've seen examples of what roles the rival Scion Band might take in general, consider what individual motivations they might have that could cause them to cross paths with the heroes. Remember also that few people, even in legends, actually consider themselves evil. They might not want what the rest of



the world wants, but in their eyes, that's just because everyone else's perceptions are flawed. Only beasts and Gods are inherently driven to a moral imperative. Men—and Scions—always have the luxury of choosing their own courses of action.

Kane Taoka: What better way to express the notion of good gone bad than to have a potentially good-aligned character instead fall to the dark side? Kane serves as a revenge force, a free-willed Scion striking out against the tyrannical apathy and selfishness of the Gods. Of course, he's deluded, since he's in the thrall of the Titan Mikaboshi and doesn't have the free will he believes he does. He might cross the characters on orders from Mikaboshi or as a gesture of defiance against the Gods. He's especially appropriate to use against a Band with Scions of Amaterasu, Susano-o or Izanagi as members.

Seth Farrow: Obviously, the family connection is a prime motivator here. Since killing Horace's family, Uncle Seth hasn't exactly been popular with his nephew, and the feeling's mutual. As well, since Seth serves as Kane's right-hand-man, an order from his higher-up can serve to intersect him with the heroes on their business.

Marie Glapion: Serving as the femme fatale of the rival Scions, Marie's custom-made for use in a cycle with mature players. Setting her up in a doomed affair with Donnie Rhodes (or whatever fertility or love-God-affiliated character exists in the players' Band) offers a great opportunity for tragic romance. Just like Sigurd was fated to lose Brynhild, just as Paris and Helen's affair ruined Troy, relationship complications can make for profound stories and even more profound betrayals in the course of the plot.

Sly Guiler: The trickster also poses a great archetype with which to confound the best-laid plans of the players'

characters. At the very least, Sly can serve as a force of chaos that seems to follow the heroes' Band around. As a Scion of Loki, Sly practically demands to be involved, for when that God becomes particularly interested in the actions of other Gods, he's not going to waste any time in sending his agent provocateur to see what he can gain for himself. Selfishness is probably the greatest motivator here, as neither Sly nor his patron have any qualms about improving their lot at the expense of others.

Victor Fingers: Easy as pie: He's the Scion of the God of war, and any storytelling game about conflict between Gods is eventually going to see some epic combat. Victor's a great shock troop in this idiom, and his battle-hungry spartoi are ready to kick as much ass as their leader commands them to. Whether Victor makes his appearance commanding a pack of mooks to be mowed down or a savage battalion of seasoned mercenaries with whom to stage a battle the bards will sing about for centuries, combat challenges are Victor's stock in trade.

Orlanda Elliot: Using Orlanda is good for both a twist and an introduction to the rival Scions. Assuming the characters haven't met their rivals at the beginning of "The Long Road to Heaven"—since this story is the starting point of a new cycle—the heroes' Scions won't know that Orlanda's one of the "bad guys." She won't necessarily know who they are either. As such, Orlanda works to set up a little sympathy and foreshadowing. The players can meet her as she's in her doldrums, or perhaps even run across her as a suitable objective in one of Act Two's quests (such as Barons Samedi's). They find out at first that she's unsuitable to fulfill those quests, then they'll have a moment of recognition when they encounter her again, as she's actively working against them.

THE VEGAS CONNECTION

The events of "The Long Road to Heaven" occur in Las Vegas, Nevada—"The Entertainment Capital of the World," "Sin City," "a modern-day Gomorrah." The choice is deliberate. Not only is Vegas host to a variety of hotels and resorts that bring to mind the pantheons of old, but it's also a quintessentially American city that practically writes its own legendry with the dawn of every new day. Each morning, a million new disciples of Hope walk the streets, wide-eyed with the potential of making the big score. Each night, city visitors invoke the favor of a million new Gods of Chance or curse those same Gods for capriciously withdrawing their support. Vegas welcomes orgies that would make Caligula blush and drunken rampages that would give Dionysus pause. It's where the American Dream is real and vital, and he might be standing next to you when you throw your dice at the craps table or offering to buy when you swig down one last shot of whiskey to keep desperation at bay.

Obviously, Vegas gives plenty of opportunity for the sorts of craziness that often occurs in storytelling games to take place against a backdrop where such things, while not commonplace, can easily be pardoned as spectacle. Are those really Roman centurions brawling through the cocktail lounge at Caesar's Palace? Of course not. They're actors. No need to call the cops. And so the schemes of the Gods play out amid the lives of men.

AT A GLANCE

We're not going to go fully into a description of Las Vegas, as we're less concerned with its demographics and statistics than we are on the general feel of the place. In fact, the Las Vegas facts relevant to "The Long Road to Heaven" make for a convenient list of bullet points.

- **It's Open All the Time:** In the State of Nevada, an individual may purchase an alcoholic beverage for consumption at any point during the day. Gaming—that is,



STORY SEEDS APLENTY!

As any experienced Storyteller knows, players are fiendish rogues who rarely adhere to structured stories as written. Hey, it's their prerogative. They get to make the decisions.

Here and there, you'll find sidebars that offer tangents toward which an enterprising Storyteller might wish to lead the players if they diverge a bit from the written cycle. At worst, these story seeds will give you something to think about, hopefully allowing you to anticipate the players' taking the story in a new direction. At best, you'll have a new angle for your players' heroes to explore for which you've already considered the outcomes.

Alternatively, you can use these story seeds preemptively to change the flow or outcome of "The Long Road to Heaven." We're the first to recognize that it's your cycle and that you know your players better than we do. If you know they're not going to jump into a gig playing security while the Gods whisper among themselves in the back room without first doing a little research on what the Gods are whispering about, by all means, let them sneak and snoop beforehand.

gambling—is also legal in Nevada, and likewise unrestricted in hours of operation. What that means is that *people are always drunk and betting their money in Las Vegas*. This "anything goes" atmosphere is much of what makes for Las Vegas's reputation—and also much of the reason that, well, almost anything goes. If a Scion's battle with titanspawn spills over into the streets, those people who do see it for what it is are likely to ignore it, acknowledge it along with the other pink elephants in their mind, or assume it's part of some resort's themed events. Therefore, you have a little bit of leeway regarding the general attitude of discretion that typically punctuates the activities of divine entities trying to protect the public at large from rampaging divine horrors. Scions shouldn't take this for granted, as collateral damage is collateral damage and someone's going to have to have all this exploded zombie flesh cleaned off the upholstery, but by and large "anything goes" applies to the children of Gods here, too.

- **Prostitution Is Legal (Sort Of):** While Las Vegas legally forbids the sale of sexual acts, prostitution is legal in Nevada as a state unless city governments rule otherwise. Effectively, while prostitution is illegal in Las Vegas, it's also commonplace and readily available. Those communities that allow prostitution require sex-trade workers to regularly obtain health screenings in an attempt to minimize the effects of sexually transmitted diseases. While the "Vegas whore" is a standard archetype for the city, it's not entirely accurate. (She's probably cleaner than those junkie-sluts in LA, anyway.)

- **Wedding Bells:** The Marriage License Bureau of the Clark County Courthouse is open for marriage license approvals from 8 AM until midnight, Sunday through Thursday, and 24 hours on Friday, Saturday and holidays. There's no waiting period or required blood test, and it costs \$50 for the application process (cash or traveler's check). Fifty bucks and zero minutes into the process, you're ready to get married. Unsurprisingly, one of Las Vegas's thriving side industries is in quick weddings, for when some over-his-head insurance salesman from Iowa

decides drunkenly that he wants to marry the hooker who solicited him right after he won a thousand dollars at the blackjack table. Various chapels in town specialize in different wedding packages, from the cheap, fast and sordid, to the expensive, gauche and sordid. It's probably possible to have a respectable, urbane wedding in Las Vegas, but it hasn't happened in the course of human history to date. When the magic (and hangover) wears off, annulments may be filed for as little as \$150.

- **No One Really Lives There:** Okay, maybe it's a bit dismissive to say that "no one" really lives there, but the city has a population of just over half a million (a million and a half metro). By comparison, over 38,000,000 people visited Vegas as tourists in 2005, according to the Las Vegas Convention and Visitors Authority. People come and people go, and that means a lot of people from strange places might be just passing through. Keep this in mind when you want to introduce an intriguing Storyteller character. He could be from anywhere, pantheon affiliations notwithstanding. The massive transient population means it's also easy to get lost among the human throng, so if anyone's trying to hide out (or does something that will eventually involve a period of hiding out), Las Vegas is probably a great place to do it. In the paraphrased words of a former Assistant District Attorney for Clark County, "So long as you don't leave a body, you'll probably get away with whatever."

- **It's in the Middle of the Goddamn Desert:** And sometimes, if you do have a body, you can just drive it out past where anyone regularly goes and leave it beneath the dunes. That said, Las Vegas lies near the southern tip of Nevada, among the sands of the Mojave Desert. Local flora and fauna naturally reflects the fact that it's in the middle of the desert, with snakes, lizards, birds of prey, carrion birds and small mammals dwelling among the hardy cacti and wildflowers of the rocky, dusty area. Scorpions? You know it. Spiders and freakier bugs, too. It's not uncommon for temperatures to rise above 100 degrees during the day in the summer and winter

daytime temperatures hover near 60 degrees, dropping to around 40 degrees at night. The local climate is also fairly dry, as might be suspected with desert geography.

A WORD TO STICKLERS AND STUDENTS

Reader beware. “The Long Road to Heaven” blends real-world legends with its own burgeoning legend, so don’t refer to this section of **Scion** as any kind of authoritative source. Several of the concepts herein are drawn from (or cross-pollinated with) sources of greater veracity than a storytelling game about the children of Gods. Some of the material herein is just plain made up, because either it works well for the story or no folkloric analogue exists. Don’t get into a big academic huff because we’re playing fast and loose with classical references here. That’s the whole point of the game, after all.

STORYTELLING ADVENTURE SYSTEM: A CRASH COURSE

The Storytelling Adventure System is the architecture by which we build the adventures written for our storytelling games. We use a concrete system that emphasizes the flow of events, characters and conflicts rather than going first to a sheet of graph paper and creating the site for the adventure. In other words, we keep the emphasis on the story.

THE IDEA

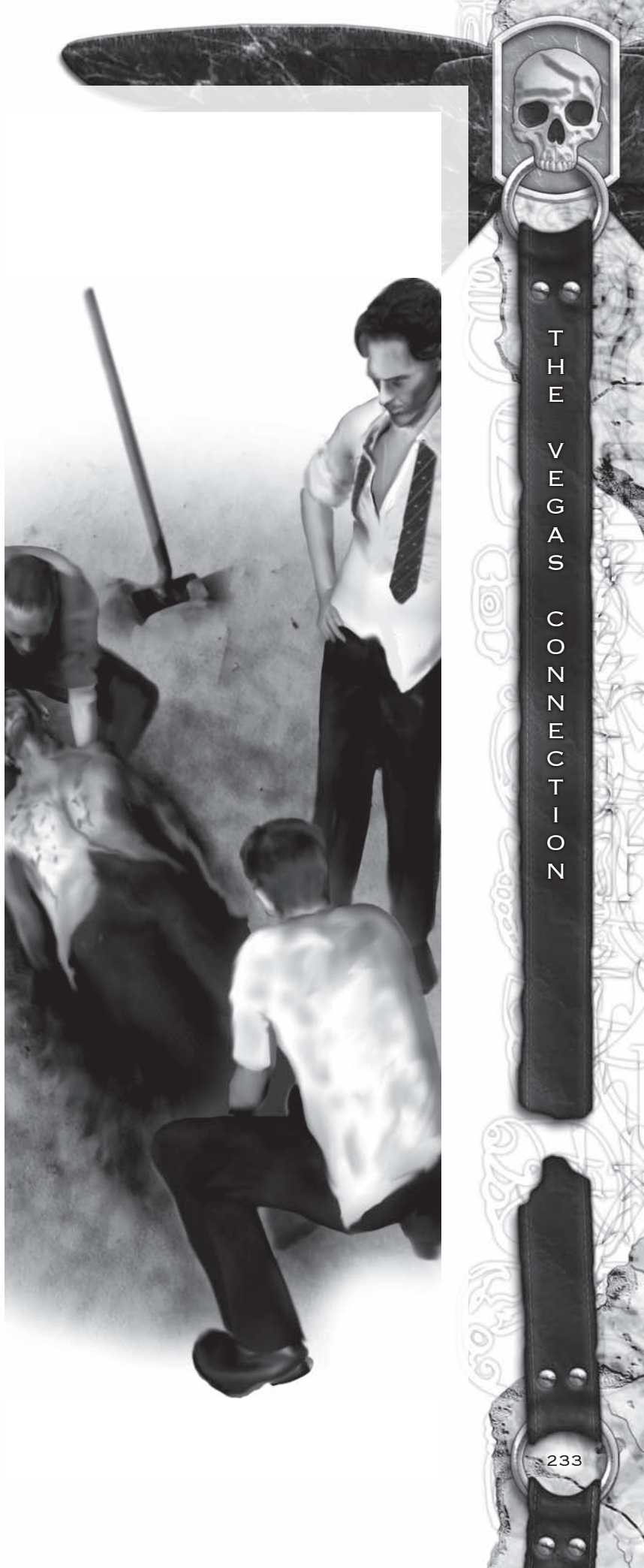
All stories begin with a specified premise. Is this a story like a movie or play, with a series of scenes that build upon each other? Or is it more freeform, with events that might occur in a variety of sequences? Or is this a traditional adventure with events tied to locations, in which the players’ characters travel from one to the next like the archetypal fantasy-genre dungeon?

The idea upon which “The Long Road to Heaven” is built is a combination of scene types. Acts One and Three are sequentially arrayed, with the characters taking certain actions followed by a presentation of the outcomes of those actions. Act Two follows a non-sequential model, with each scene forming a self-contained “snapshot” of action that nonetheless contributes to the greater flow of the story. The intent here is to create a synthesis of the epic tradition. The characters undertake their divine task (Act One), we learn more about them as individuals (Act Two), and we understand why they make the choices they do in the culmination (Act Three).

SCENES:

BUILDING BLOCKS OF ADVENTURE

Scenes are the basic plot components of every story, and what **Scion** stories are divided into. They are finite pieces of the plot wherein the heroes achieve a single objective. If, while preparing a scene (whether reading it, planning



the cycle or playing through it with your troupe), you find that your particular Scions might see more than one objective, consider adjusting the outcome of the scene so those objectives form a single new objective. For example, if the scene consists of each character learning about the strange desert markings that lie outside Tecuhtli's lair, even though the characters aren't all in the same place, then you can group those all together under the objective of "The characters learn the location of Tecuhtli's lair." If, however, the scene has an interrogation that yields information that enables the heroes to find the Black Feather Shroud in Tecuhtli's dank cavern beneath the desert sands—which means they have to travel to the cavern and overcome its challenges—then that scene should be broken into two separate scenes. The first scene would be the interrogation, with the objective of "The characters learn the location of Tecuhtli's lair." The second scene is the expedition into the cavern with the objective "The characters raid Tecuhtli's cavern and gain the relic within."

Now, to add another element. In the Storytelling Adventure System, every scene has the potential for two objectives: the players' and yours. We're saying potential here because it is possible that both objectives are the same in some scenes. For example, in the scene in which the Scions interrogate the subject they suspect knows about the "crop circles" in the desert, the characters' objective is to discern that information. Your objective might be for them to get the information, or perhaps different information that's more relevant to the plot that needs to "slip out." In some cases, your objective could be wildly different. For example, the interrogation scene might be designed to show how far the characters will go to find the information they want—a morality test of sorts.

Furthermore, two aspects of a scene are what elements of the scene help the achievement of the objective and what elements hinder the players' characters. These can be Storyteller characters, natural events, items, whatever.

Finally, each scene has a Mental, Physical and Social rating that represents the difficulty of the tasks and encounters the characters must face in the scene. The rating ranges from 1 to 5 dots, although some scenes might have no significant rating ("—"), meaning that there exists no significant challenge to those Attributes in that scene. Mental tasks or encounters involve research, investigation or some other mental Attribute- or Ability-related task. Physical tasks involve combat or athletic prowess, while Social ones involve interaction with Storyteller characters, perhaps gaining information from them or swaying them to the player characters' side. A scene with a rating of, say, Mental •• is best accomplished by characters with at least two dots in some relevant Mental trait. This doesn't mean that a character with one or no dots can't succeed in the scene; it's just harder for that character. In addition to each scene's rating, the adventure as a whole lists the number of scenes it includes and a total rating for all the dots involved in each scene.

Some Storytellers find graphic representations of scenes useful, making room for jotting down the four elements: helps, hinders, the characters' objective and Storyteller's objective. Each scene of "The Long Road to Heaven" includes this visual plot aid. You may wish to create your own blank form (3x5 note cards work remarkably well) for your own scene-writing use, and you should of course feel free to copy the ones herein for use while running "The Long Road to Heaven."

GROUPING SCENES

Of course, no matter how cool any given scene is, it alone does not make a great adventure. It's how the scenes combine into groups that builds the excitement in the adventure, and just like we discussed in making the scenes, there are many variations on how to combine them.

For the purposes of "The Long Road to Heaven," scenes fall into one of two arrangements. The cinematic or literary adventure can be broken into scenes in the same way a film, play or sequential novel is written: One scene leads to another. In a non-sequential adventure, the scene functions independently of other scenes, but taken together, all the scenes add up to tell the story.

(Of course, these are only two examples of how scenes can be arranged. In a locale-based adventure, for example, the scenes occur in sequence, but tied to the locale where they play out. This would be a room in the dungeon in the case of *The Keep on the Borderlands*, for example. As you create your own Scion stories, feel free to experiment with scene grouping and placement.)

WHAT'S AT STAKE

As with many epic tales, an important relic plays a central role in the events of "The Long Road to Heaven." The relic itself—the Black Feather Shroud, forgotten among the Gods—surfaces in a clash with a horrendous monster. Simply obtaining the relic isn't the end of the legend, however. Given that the Black Feather Shroud has been forgotten by men and Gods alike, so has the most potent of its powers. Over the course of their trials and tribulations obtaining the Shroud and serving their patrons, the Scions learn its amazing secret. Then, once they have the knowledge, they're faced with a question of immense gravity: Do they use its fantastic power, or do they devote it to some other purpose? They'll have plenty of impetus to put it to use themselves, and they'll also have plenty of outside parties interested in obtaining it for themselves. Exactly what comes of its discovery, well, only Fate can say.

THE BLACK FEATHER SHROUD

One of the most important aspects of this story is the characters' discovery and eventual use of an immensely powerful relic, the Black Feather Shroud. The history of the Shroud itself is a mystery, though many cultures have legends regarding relics like it. The Voodoo pantheon, while comparatively light on relics, has methods of both revivifying the dead and communing with the

upper echelons of its deities (albeit most often at the discretion of those Gods). Also, a black-feathered rooster is the traditional offering given to Baron Samedi. Welsh legend speaks of a black cauldron in the employ of King Matholwch of Ireland, which he used against Bran the Blessed. The Norse draugr (see p. 294) were sometimes tied to their graves, which held treasures they esteemed in mortal life. As well, both the valkyries and Odin himself are often identified with the black-winged ravens that flocked to the bloody aftermath of battles in order to feed. The lanterns carried by Japanese kanshi held the flame that was part of their soul, returned from beyond death.

We discuss the Shroud here to let prospective Storytellers know what sort of significant relic they'll be dealing with, and to illustrate the direction of this portion of the cycle. The Black Feather Shroud has the following miraculous properties.

- A corpse wrapped in the Black Feather Shroud will return to a semblance of life at midnight each night. This restoration is imperfect in that it does not return the corpse to true life. Rather, it animates the corpse in a fashion similar to a zombie—the revenant corpse has no will of its own and follows the orders of the last living person to pluck a feather from the Shroud. These corpses also have no Abilities or Mental or Social Attributes. Scions may not be reanimated this way. Because the restorative magic works at midnight, only one corpse per day may be reanimated in this manner. A corpse doesn't have to keep wearing the Black Feather Shroud once it has been reanimated.

- A mortal or Scion who wears the Black Feather Shroud as the first nightly ray of moonlight strikes her earns a limited, temporary state of invincibility. In effect,

the character earns an amount of extra health levels equal to her normal, unwounded health levels. Poetically, this is a “second life,” and the character suffers no wound penalties as she loses health levels from the “second life.” Characters who obtain healing do indeed earn back health levels of the “second life.” This invincibility dissipates when the sun rises, whether or not the character witnesses the sunrise. Any health levels the character has suffered in the “second life” up until that point also vanish, though if the character has suffered any damage to her own, natural health levels, that damage remains. A character may benefit from the “second life” only once per night, and the vanishing of invincibility at sunrise negates the possibility of cumulative invincibility. That is, the character will not acquire a “third life,” a “fourth life,” et cetera. The character need not continue wearing the Black Feather Shroud to continue enjoying its benefits for the night. Only the initial contact with the moon's light is necessary, and only one individual each night can be protected by the Shroud in this manner.

- An ill individual who dons the Black Feather Shroud and is sprinkled with pure or holy water is immediately cured of whatever disease plagues him. This effect doesn't apply to physical damage, nor does it apply to damage caused by severe debilitation from disease. In other words, a car crash victim cannot wrap himself in the Shroud and sprinkle himself with water and have all of his wounds healed, nor can a character ravaged by leprosy wear the Shroud and sprinkle herself and thereby regain the use of her atrophied legs. In the latter case, use of the Shroud will prevent future atrophy or debilitation from occurring, though.



Each of the aforementioned powers causes a single black feather to desiccate and fall from the Shroud when it is used. (Each zombie revivification requires one feather.) Exactly how many feathers remain on the Shroud is up to you, but once they're all gone, that's it. This isn't so much an attempt to limit use of the Shroud, but rather an explanation of why the Shroud won't be suitable for use in ending worldwide plagues and epidemics, for example. Also, remember that the Black Feather Shroud has been around for thousands of years, and the heroes and favored mortals who used it before the players' characters probably used it more than once. It's hardly an attractive raiment, being an ancient cowl adorned with seemingly rotting animal plumage as old as the Gods themselves that spalls off from the cloak with repulsive frequency.

Additionally, the Black Feather Shroud has one ability that remains a secret, forgotten as it has been by men and God alike over the centuries or even millennia since the Shroud was last seen. If the Titans know about this ability, they certainly haven't told any of their more able titanspawn.

- If a living person, a Scion included, wraps herself in the Black Feather Shroud and anoints herself with the "essence of a God," she will herself become a God at the next new moon. She remains a God for as long as she continues to wear the Black Feather Shroud. Doing so, she takes the place in the pantheon of the God whose essence she used to perform the ritual. In game terms, this is accomplished by spending a Legend point. As such, it is comparatively easy for a Scion to potentially ascend to godhead. The moral

quandary comes in the death or negation of the God she replaces, since that God is her parent. If the God is on poor terms with his Scion, woe to him if that Scion finds the Black Feather Shroud and learns of this potential.

How a mortal might achieve this feat is up to your discretion, as our concerns are largely with the players' Scions. A quantity of a God's blood or some other associative aspect of that God—Xipe Totec's flayed skin, Tyr's hand, Papa Legba's crutch, the shard of Mjolnir that acts as the hammer on Eric Donner's revolver—would almost certainly suffice as the "essence of a God." That raises the question, though, of how the mortal might come into possession of such a thing.

The fate of the erstwhile God whose Scion replaces him is likewise in your hands. While it makes thematic sense for the God to die, since the Black Feather Shroud is a death-related relic, it's more in keeping with the epic tradition for the ousted God to somehow steal back the Shroud and reclaim his divine status. It will be a bad day to be the treacherous Scion at that point. (See "Falling from Heaven" on p. 271 for more on this.)

- Finally, the Black Feather Shroud cannot physically be destroyed by normal violence. The only way to destroy the Shroud is for a living person (not an animated corpse) to swathe himself in the Shroud and tear it asunder from within. Doing so will kill the person. His soul thereafter becomes irretrievable. He cannot be returned to life, nor will he haunt the World or the Underworld restlessly as a shade. He's simply gone forever.

THE LONG ROAD TO HEAVEN

Scenes 13

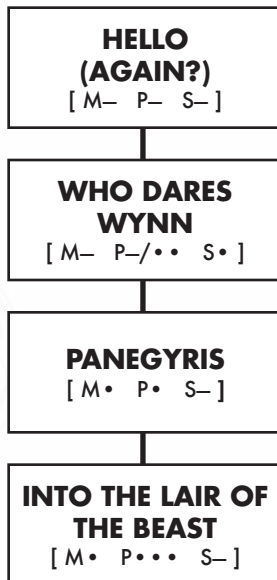
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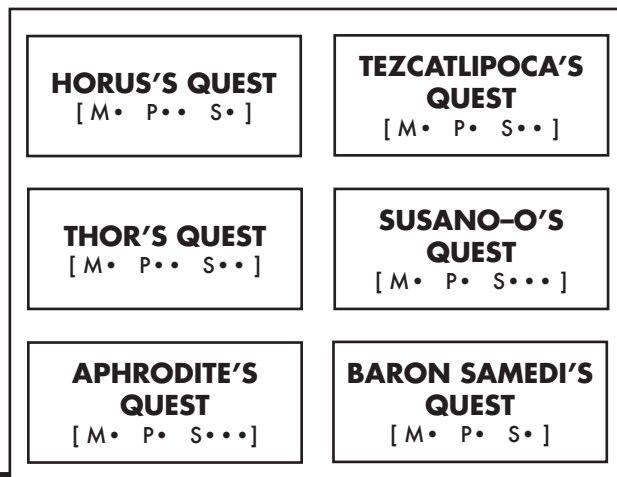
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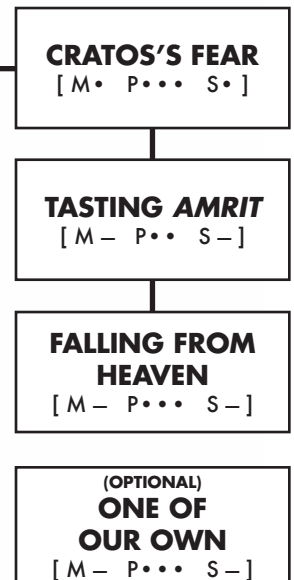
ACT ONE: CIRCLE IN THE SAND



ACT TWO: AT DIVINE BEHEST



ACT THREE: AMONG THE AUGUST



ACT ONE

CIRCLE IN THE SAND

It happens every now and then. Sometimes the Gods convene to discuss matters of mutual import, issues that cross the boundaries of pantheon or culture, or that overlap, such as when matters of love, death or war concern multiple Gods of differing pantheons. Messages travel between deities. Pacts are made. Secret communiqués arrive. The Gods might come to a reality-defining decision in an afternoon or in a year. Whatever the timetable, however, the fabric of reality always changes after one of these concordats. Whether it results in changes great or small, such meetings' effect on the World is undeniable. It's like big business, only... bigger. Occasionally, the World is even at stake.

That's the situation in which the characters find themselves as "The Long Road to Heaven" begins. They're young, notable up-and-comers in the pantheons vying for influence in these times when Gods again walk among men. As such, they've been handpicked by the coalition of deities attending this function.

At some point in the not-too-distant past, each character was approached by an emissary of the appropriate pantheon or God to whom she's connected. (You may play out this contact as a sort of prologue or flashback scene, or you could simply say it's happened already. For the sake of expeditiousness, we assume it's a done deal here.) The emissary told the character that her patron (or a member of her patron's pantheon) has a diplomatic liaison to keep here in the World, and that the deity specifically requested her as part of the security detail for that meeting. The meeting is scheduled to take place in Las Vegas, where a little outside and perhaps otherworldly weirdness is acceptable, and anything the Scions might run across can be dealt with in a manner that results in little more than sidelong glances or a few incredulous questions.

Yes, Scions, plural. Each of the other attendant deities will also select a Scion to represent her pantheon in the security detail. It's the only way to guarantee that no one pantheon's interests can be unfairly advanced or neglected.

STORY SEED: WHY THE WORLD?

Savvy Scions might wonder why this handful of Gods has chosen to meet here, in the World, when they have the entirety of the Overworld to gallivant about in without the hairy eyes of reality and mortal unbelievers to look askance at them. 'Sagood question. Here are a few possible answers. As Storyteller, you should choose the answer that best fits the tone of your cycle, or the answer that comes as a logical result of the characters' efficacy in doing their research. Gods can be secretive creatures, and puzzling out their motives has often been more than even the other Gods can handle.

- **It's Hooey:** The meeting between the Gods at this juncture is bunk, a false story contrived to force the heroes into companionship to see what results. If this is the case, each of the Gods is probably aware of the existence of the Black Feather Shroud, if not the finer details of its function. Some Gods might be using this as an opportunity to flush out the Shroud itself, while other Gods want to dig up dirt on what exactly the Shroud can do.

- **Skullduggery:** These Gods have chosen to convene in the World in order to cover their own asses. They're up to no good, or at least something selfish, which makes keeping their schemes out of earshot of the other Gods necessary. Maybe they want the Black Feather Shroud for their own. Maybe they're planning an inter-pantheon play for power. Maybe they're making good on a favor promised in the past. Maybe one of them is a mole for other Gods who have caught wind of this furtive alliance and want to find out what's going on. Whatever the case, they're here so the eyes of those who remain in the Overworld don't fall on them.

- **Renegades:** If you want to significantly alter the common assumptions of **Scion**, this particular faction of Gods might have been banished from the Overworld for some real or imagined crime. This adds a degree of political complication, which isn't necessarily what every troupe is after, but it also adds a potentially interesting third front to the established conflict between the Gods and the Titans.

Scene

HELLO (AGAIN?)

MENTAL — PHYSICAL — SOCIAL —

With the request for security made, all that remains is for the various pantheons' representatives to see with whom they'll be working. If the members of your players' Band already know each other, you can move ahead to the next scene, or you can just use this portion as a briefing rather than an introduction.

For Gods, the characters' patrons are thrifty, and so, the Scions first contact with one another is at the distinctly unfashionable Earl's 24 Hour, a greasy-spoon diner off the expected glamorous Strip, in mostly suburbanized North Las Vegas. Earl's caters primarily to the late-night crowd of local residents, mostly dealers or croupiers who live in the city, and it also takes into account the city's large Hispanic population, offering such menu items as *migajas* and *menudo*. Inexplicably, the time the Gods' agents specified for the Scions to make each other's acquaintance was at three in the morning. The staff on duty when the characters arrive includes a world-weary waitress (Fern) and a short-order cook who doesn't really give a shit what goes on in the restaurant as long as it doesn't bother him in his kitchen (Jose). They've both seen it all and will turn a blind eye toward any antics short of physical violence. A drunken drag queen sleeps in a booth, leaning against a window. A wiry guy who looks like he might be a truck driver sips coffee and smokes Lucky Strikes on a stool at the bar. Neither of them gives a damn, either.

The scene itself should play out a bit like *Reservoir Dogs* meets book two of *The Odyssey*, with characters presenting their credentials to one another warily after a divine charge to settle the affairs of the Gods. It's possible that some low-level tension, threats and interpersonal drama takes place between the Scions at this point, and more's the better. This is a sketchy time to be given a duty and a weird way for the Gods to show any esteem for their offspring.

After the characters make their initial meeting and introductions, they hear the bell ring as the door opens and admits a balding old man, whose remaining hair is a fringe of curly white around his pate. He wears a soiled raincoat and carries a weather-beaten brown attaché case. As he approaches the characters' table, he smiles at them and introduces himself as Leo, here to deliver something that the characters need. At this range, the characters can see that Leo's a bit overweight and that his eyes are somewhat bloodshot and teary. Gin blossoms mark his nose.

He opens his bag and produces a tiny lapel pin for each character, fashioned in the form of a holy symbol or other representative icon for each character's parent God. The pins are poorly made, looking like little

more than throwaway promotional items from some consumer-electronics convention that took place in town who knows how long ago.

"They're not much, but issa thought that counts," Leo remarks. Storytellers, make a note of who wears hers, or at least keeps it in her possession, as the pins are a way for the Gods to communicate with their Scions in later stages of the story.

At this point, the characters probably have questions about where they're supposed to be, when, and what they're supposed to do. Leo shrugs and says, "I guess you're just supposed to be... around. You know. Pay attention. Look out for weird shit. Keep your eyes open. Trust me, if they need you, they'll get in touch with you." He then orders a plate of eggs over hard ("Have that Meskin back there stand on 'em, honey."), bacon and a cup of coffee. He smokes while waiting for his eggs and smokes while he's eating. When his coffee comes, he pulls a flask out from his raincoat pocket and adds a double-shot of cheap, reeking bourbon to the cup with a wink to anyone who might be watching.

With any luck, the characters will still be unsatisfied with his answers and prod him for a little more as to their purpose in town. Leo offers what he knows: That the "bigshots" (he makes a face at any characters using the word "Gods") are staying at their respective hotels, and that they'll be convening every day for maybe a week or so at function space at the Wynn. The delegate from the Egyptian pantheon is staying at the Luxor, the delegate from the Voodoo pantheon is reluctantly staying at the Orleans, the delegate from the Greek pantheon is unhappily staying at Caesar's Palace, and the delegate from the Japanese pantheon is staying at the Imperial Palace. The Aztec pantheon's delegate is somewhat indignantly staying at the Rio, and the Norse delegate is making a grand show of his sacrifice in staying at the Excalibur. (Remember, Storytellers, that you'll choose which delegates these are if your players are portraying their own created characters. If they're using the pregenerated signature characters, those characters' patron Gods are described in their write-ups in Chapter One.)

As to where they're supposed to stay, Leo says he never really thought about it, and the delegation never told him. "Just pick a place that works for you. I'm sure it'll all be taken care of," he advises. With that, he concludes his breakfast, belches smoke up toward the ceiling fan and staggers out the door.

It's up to the characters how they pay for the check, which comes to \$11 regardless of what they ordered (if anything).

As the characters leave, they see two hawks engaged in a fight over a bit of carrion on the highway. The hawks dive and swoop at one another, clawing and tearing with their beaks. Feathers fall, blood drips, and they eventually both kill each other—over a bit of already-dead rabbit in the road. An ill omen, indeed, to anyone who places stock in such things. Even outside the context of omens, it's certainly odd that these daytime predators are active so late at night.

And so, left to their own devices in a potentially dangerous city with no real hosts to speak of, the characters embark upon their legendary journey. Where will they stay? What will they do? How will they get

there? Will they see the army of advancing undead that's converging on them as we speak in time to turn back the assault? Only the Gods know, or at least think they do.

On the plus side, obtaining lodging (or another meal, or entry to clubs and shows still open to the public at so late an hour) is preposterously easy. For some unknown reason, the characters can simply walk up to the hospitality desk (or whatever) and say they'd like to stay. Whichever hotel they choose, whichever club they visit, waves them right in, no questions asked, no credit card necessary, no ID to be checked, "Oh, and here's your key, sir, you're on the 21st floor."

Scene
WHO DARES WYNN
MENTAL — PHYSICAL —/•• SOCIAL •

At this point, the characters at least know where their ostensible patrons will be holding the mysterious meeting they're supposed to be providing security for: the Wynn. They also know where the individual members of the pantheons are staying, but that doesn't help much: If they go to the Imperial Palace and ask to be connected with Susano-o's room, they'll be asked, "Susan who?" Likewise, "Are there any Gods staying here tonight?" will elicit laughter at best, and security guards' attention at worst.

Attending the Wynn, on the other hand, causes the holy-symbol trinkets to behave in a distinctly wondrous manner. Whenever the character comes within a quarter-mile proximity of the Wynn *and her patron deity is there*, the trinket responds in a manner suitable to its cultural or divine origin. That is, Thor's holy symbol might emit a quiet electrical crackling, felt only by Eric Donner when he wears the pin. Tezcatlipoca's symbol might suppurate blood or waft smoke, while a holy symbol of the Japanese pantheon may resonate with a cultural chant that only a Scion of the pantheon can hear. Whatever the signal, it's perceptible only to the Scion, so as not to make a spectacle or otherwise alert outsiders to the presence of the divine.

For the story's sake, it's easiest to assume that the Gods are indeed at the Wynn at whatever time the characters decide to visit the resort. (If they're not there, the characters might justifiably feel as if they're being led on a wild goose chase, or that they simply don't have enough information to continue.)

In following their divine beacons, the characters are led through a surprisingly Byzantine maze of hallways, even passing through what seem to be service corridors, hospitality-only entrances and delivery docks. Ultimately, however, they find themselves standing before an ornate pair of double doors that terminate the once-again-

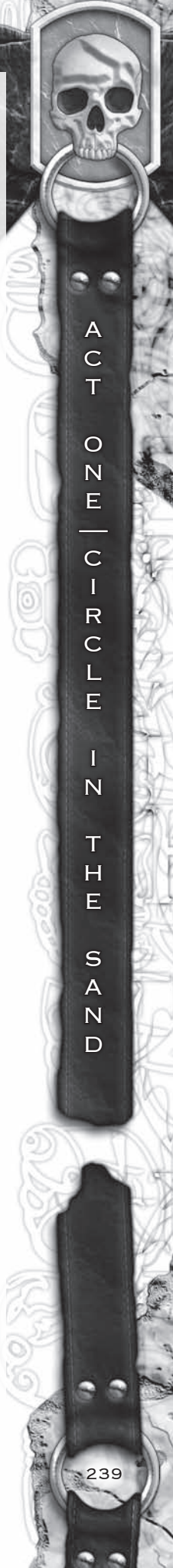
gleaming-marble hallway. A camera above the doors peers down on them and an ultra-modern security card lock adorns the wall. Naturally, the doors are locked. As the characters fiddle with the lock (which won't bleep green and grant them access, even if they cajoled rooms at the Wynn), the camera follows them. As far as cameras go, it's a very expressive model, looking almost amused as the characters ineffectually try various modes of gaining entry.

That said, there are two ways to gain entry. The first is to just be patient. That camera is the Gods' eye, and they're inside just waiting to grant entrance to the room. The second is to be extraordinarily strong. Yanking the doors from their hinges requires an extended roll with a cumulative difficulty of 25 and a roll interval of 10 seconds. It's certainly not a subtle entrance, but it is indeed an entrance. Those who enter in this way might be surprised that they don't receive a colder acknowledgment of their entry (unless you rule otherwise). Exceptional strength is one of the common powers among the Gods, and the patron of the Scion in question might even beam like the proud father he is at his child's effective use of his Epic Attribute.

MEETING THE GODS

Your decision as to which Gods, exactly, are present and their motivations trumps the general description here.

By default, we assume that the Gods in attendance are Horus, Baron Samedi, Thor, Susano-o, Tezcatlipoca and Aphrodite. By default, we also assume that the Gods' agenda is straightforward: They simply want the characters there because they're Scions on the rise and they don't want to divert their divine attentions from their meeting. (The subject of the meeting remains a cipher to the characters, however, as the doings of the Gods are inscrutable.)





That said, much of the inter-pantheon drama one might expect from emotionally underdeveloped and inhuman forces of unstoppable supernature exists, and in spades. Gods taunt other Gods or mock their Scions. Bons mots, such as they are, drop from divine lips. Ostentatious Gods might bestow new Birthright relics upon Scions in blatant overtures of favor... or they may grant them in this introduction and then demand them back later. Whatever the case, each God is likely to treat his Scion with immense regard, so the ultimate result is a vast ego-stroke both for the characters and the Gods themselves, who surely have never arrayed such a brilliant Band of ultra-capable offspring before.

The Gods are plain in their requests—handle anything that comes to hassle them. Whether it's jealous minions of other Gods, bile-spewing hordes of titanspawn or that insatiably nosy hotel services director, *don't let anyone bother us*. Now, get to work!

The double doors slam (or are mystically apported back to their hinges). The camera pans (and smiles a bit, or at least looks like it does). The passkey lock blinks and bleeps. And here comes that insatiably nosy hotel services director.

A SURFEIT OF KARMA

The services director attached to this group of guests is Karma Jenkins, a graduate of the Kendall College School of Hospitality Management, and she's fascinated by the weirdoes who requested the most out-of-the-way function space the dazzlingly beautiful Wynn has to offer. *If you want the best, why hide it?* she wonders to herself, often aloud. In fact, Kendall didn't even know this

secondary presentation room existed until the strange, gravelly voiced guy who brokered this convention told her it did. It wasn't on any of the blueprints or fire-control documents. *Tres chic. Tres exclusive.*

As a result, Karma's made it her goal to find out exactly what's going on down there. She won't be rebuffed by anything other than magical means. She won't take "no" for an answer, and she uses her title as hotel services director to justify her occasional (and numerous) visits. She's a bit like a Scion herself, empowered by the God of Hotels and charged with the divine quest of satisfying her hospitality responsibilities so that none might have an unpleasant stay.

Needless to say, Karma is a minor threat—not even a threat at all, really, unless something untoward happens—but one who always seems to appear at the least opportune time. On the positive side, Karma is well disposed toward the characters, at least until they offend or attack her or otherwise do something so inexcusably rude as to dampen her enthusiasm for the mystery guests. She'll gladly help the Scions get out of sticky situations up to and including brazenly illegal acts, such as by making alibis for them to police, hiding damning evidence in the hotel safe and doing everything she can to launder dirty money through the casino. *She just wants to know that badly.*

Karma isn't solely a bother to the characters, should they begin to trust her through her small actions. She will, for example, send down refreshments via a bewildered room service runner, free of charge, as well as the day's newspapers and other creature comforts. Most notably, she sends down tickets to the hotel's



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STORY SEED: THERE'S NO SUCH THING AS GOOD KARMA

At your discretion, Karma Jenkins can serve as a bit more than she needs to be. As written, she's a potentially helpful ally who's just a bit over-enthusiastic (to the point of being a pain in the neck, it must be said).

Should you wish to cast her in a worse light, however, she might be an unwitting or even willing spy for an outside party. The most sensible choice here is to have her report back to one of the present Gods' rivals. To make her even more insidious, though, she might be a member of a Titan-worshipping cult, feeding her esoteric information back to those chthonic, malfeasant forces of nature.

gala show, "Panegyris," which is sold out every night. It's important to get the heroes to attend this show, so emphasize how difficult the tickets are to get. Perhaps the papers Karma sends down offer a rave review. Characters who visit the casinos, buffets or other resort amenities might overhear an enthusiastic couple talking

about how thrilling the show was. If the characters give the tickets to the Gods, the Gods generously allow them to keep the tickets and even allow the Band a break from their duties to watch it. Whatever the case, however you do it, leave no question that the characters should attend the show.

STORY SEED: LAIR OF THE LINDWURM

For those players who crave some action, the pace of the story might prove a little slow up front. For such troupes, you are encouraged to allow the Band to fulfill their bodyguard duties by springing a monstrous threat on them. This optional scene can occur at any time, but will probably serve action-hungry players best by taking place before the "Panegyris" performance.

Here, deep beneath the surface of the Nevada sands, legendary monsters prowl and burrow. The construction of the Wynn a few years ago disturbed the lair of one such beastie, and the angry creature has emerged from the sandy soil into the sub-basement where the Gods conduct their meeting. The creature in question is a lindwurm, a serpent distantly related to the dragons of Western legend.

Larger than a man, the lindwurm is an "ensnaring serpent" in its native Germanic etymology, and it fights by constricting its prey and swallowing it whole. It is largely savage and bestial in mindset, killing for food only, but it's been driven into a hungry rage by men dropping this giant concrete obstacle directly upon its den. In its anger and hunger, it erupts from the marble walls of the hall and attempts to crush and drag away one of the Scions.

Naturally, the Scions should have little trouble dispatching this solitary hunter, but the opportunity for combat can sate some players' urge for carnage for the time being. Optionally, the Wynn's construction might actually have disturbed a den of several lindwurms, which turns up the degree of challenge facing the characters.

Part of the challenge is also hiding the aftermath. While the characters can probably dispatch the serpents themselves in short order, repairing the ruined marble hallway presents a larger problem. Karma can help the characters do this, by sending a small construction crew to do the repairs, but how will the Gods feel about all that clanking and crashing taking place outside their secret convocation? Also, while Karma's happy to help, she's not going to foot the bill for architectural reconstruction. She knows better than to ask questions (except when she's in an especially inquisitive mood), but these things cost money.

According to folklore, the shed skin of a lindwurm granted an individual vast knowledge of nature and medicine. At your option, consuming the skin of a defeated lindwurm might increase a character's Medicine and/or Survival Abilities by two for the duration of the scene.

Traits for the lindwurm may be found on pages 313-314.

Scene

PANEGYRIS

MENTAL • PHYSICAL • SOCIAL —

“Panegyris” is a show not unlike the performances of Cirque du Soleil or other stage acts taking place in Las Vegas at any given time. It’s a combination musical performance, theatrical story, acrobatic exhibition and flight of fantasy, intended to wow its audience as it unfolds. Marked with dazzling costumes and larger-than-life characters, “Panegyris” is not unlike the telling of an epic itself. That’s why this scene takes place with the performance as the backdrop.

SEEING THE SHOW

“Panegyris” is the Greek root word of “panegyric,” which is a eulogy praising its subject, intended for delivery to an assembled audience. The performance “Panegyris” is actually the tale of a hero, narrated by a character on stage, who relates the hero’s journey, which is performed behind him on stage by the actors, acrobats and musicians. Describe the performance in brief terms for the players’ characters as you will, but keep two key ideas in mind.

First, remember that “Panegyris” is effectively a legend unfolding before the audience. Clever Storytellers will mix in parts of the characters’ own patron Gods’ stories, so that the characters can identify with what’s occurring on the stage. In this sense, the performance is a bit like

an omen, or perhaps a consultation of an oracle. This is very much in keeping with the epic tradition, which is full of episodes in which legendary heroes consult with seers to prophesy their fates (such as the Oracle at Delphi, or Brynhild’s foretelling of Sigurd’s betrayal in the *Volsungs Saga*). It’s also in keeping with Scion’s own take on Fate and its agents.

Second, an important image recurs as a motif throughout the performance of “Panegyris.” The performance itself is a recounting of the hero’s story, an honoring of him as he passes from his heroic life into an epic death. The symbol that depicts this, as an illustration on the performance’s playbill and on all of its advertising materials, is a primitive-looking man descending a staircase into what looks like the mouth of a cave. During the performance, this image appears on silk screens and curtains on the stage, is cast by stenciled lights onto the floor of the stage and marks flags that actors, dancers and acrobats carry across the stage. Don’t beat the characters up with the symbol, but make sure they notice it. Likewise, don’t linger too long in your description of the show itself. Just give the players the impression that their heroes witnessed the show and took notice of the motif. Attending these gala performances is one of the key attractions of Las Vegas, after all.

STORY SEED: DEADLY DESERT DANCERS

Some troupes like combat. Lots of combat.

At your option, the show “Panegyris” can take on a more sinister cast. Instead of merely telling the tale and displaying the symbol, the “Panegyris” might be a dark carnival, soaked in blood and cultic ritual all disguised under a thin layer of sophisticated entertainment. The following few ideas can serve as a way to allow you to spooky up the performance. As the characters investigate, they face the malicious agents of the dance, no doubt resulting in some righteous beatdowns.

- **Ritual Sacrifice:** At some point in the performance, the dancers pull a member from the crowd. Embarrassed, nervous, but proud at being selected, this audience member bounces through the scenery, tossed by trapeze artists, flipped by acrobats and careened between dancers. At the end of the audience-participation segment, the audience member is placed in a giant wicker basket and it’s run through with Saracen swords. The basket itself disappears in a puff of smoke at the end of the performance, to much applause. While the audience assumes it’s all an illusion, it’s actually not. The dancers have absconded with the audience member, who will be later used in some equally exotic but much more deadly ritual to placate some mysterious figure.

- **Titanspawn Treachery:** Classical legend is filled with mystic dancers, from the Mevlevi dervishes of Turkey to the Korybantes of Phrygia to the loa-ridden dancers of Voodoo ceremonies. The dancers of the “Panegyris” may well be warrior-performers of a distinctly ominous cast. While they don’t attack the characters overtly, they can make an appearance later in the cycle, or they might try to cure inquisitive Scions of an overabundance of curiosity.

PROPHECY FULFILLED

After the characters see the show, allow them some unstructured time to do with what they will. Over the course of them taking that time—perhaps visiting the casinos, perhaps going on patrol in their guardians' duties, perhaps relaxing in the hotel spa—they witness a symbol strikingly like that “descent into death” motif that they saw at “Panegyris.” In fact, this works best if each character encounters the symbol while she's alone, if the Band splits briefly for its own entertainment.

What the characters see in the form of the symbol is a sort of negative crop circle in the sands of the Mojave Desert that surrounds Las Vegas. There, in the middle of the desert, a curious and uncharacteristic growth of flora depicts a symbol that they've seen recently. The characters could witness this striking symbol in any number of places: in the newspapers Karma brings them, on any of the televisions in the sports bars or lounges in the hotel, on the giant television screens that advertise acts or concerts appearing at the resorts. A character might even dream of the symbol, or perhaps have an “out of body vision” while overlooking the desert from one of the Wynn's top floors. Allow the players to notice the symbol as a peripheral part of a news story or photograph. The television article or newspaper bit they read isn't about weird crop circles in the desert; it's about, say, a police pursuit or a bit on local drought with a camera shot that reveals the symbol subtly but undeniably in the background.

However the characters see the symbol, in however many ways, the similarity to the “Panegyris” motif is undeniable. The only difference is that, in the desert symbol, the direction is reversed. That is, the man seems to be ascending, climbing up from death to return to the World of the living.

It shouldn't take too much rumination for the characters to understand that “something returning from the dead” is probably worth a bit of investigation on their part.

FINDING THE LANDMARK

Chasing down the location of the symbol in the undergrowth can be as complicated or as simple as you think your players will enjoy. If the characters just want to get there and kick the ass of whatever demonic entity is awaiting them, hey, it's just a half-hour's drive outside of the city limits.

If you want to make the search for the site a bit more involved, the players might take any number of paths to research the location.

Perhaps the most direct route is to charter a helicopter or some other maneuverable aircraft (or just to fly using Wind's Freedom). A ground search

probably takes significantly longer and requires much more thoroughness, but comes with the benefit of less visibility (in case the characters think anyone might be watching them, or expecting them once they actually find the site). Simply scouring the desert on foot might not work... but it might, in the way that heroes occasionally just stumble across the objects of their destiny. Naturally, this last is up to you, and should require a bit more epic framing than saying, “We wander around the desert until we find what we're looking for.” If the characters can remember a few of the details from the news story they saw or some of the other landmarks in the vicinity, their search decreases in difficulty.

By default, finding the location requires an extended (Intelligence + Survival) or (Intelligence + Investigation) roll with a cumulative difficulty of 18 and a roll interval of 30 minutes. A helicopter or skilled desert guide might add two bonus dice to the search, while a map or details remembered from the news story might add a single bonus die. Certain Scion powers might aid the search as well.

You should also keep your mind open to creative solutions and players' clever suggestions. The symbol seems to have something to do with death—perhaps a character with a Death Purview could attune himself to any latent death-energies emanating from the area. The Prophecy and Mystery Purviews might offer some insight as well. The characters might even be able to have the Gods “recalibrate” their holy symbol trinkets, linking them to an inverse of the symbol provided on the cover of the “Panegyris” playbill. Encourage analytical thought, especially when it's in keeping with the epic tradition of searching and discovery.

WHAT'S THERE?

Unless you decide otherwise, the site of the symbol is half an hour to 45 minutes west-north-west from Las Vegas proper. The symbol is perhaps 300 yards off the lonesome highway that rolls on through the desert.

When the characters eventually discover the location of the plant symbols and arrive there, their purpose is clear. Near the mouth of the “underworld” in the symbol is a great crack in the ground, the entrance to a cave or other underground structure. If the characters find the cave by day, hot air escapes the crack, creating a shimmering “mirage” effect in the air like a dragon's hot breath escaping its fanged mouth. If the characters approach the cave in the dark of night, the opening seems darker than anything else around them, a portal into a great and void unknown beneath the surface of the World.

Two or three black feathers lie on the ground near the opening, unmoving in the desert breeze. Within the cave, something breathes... something *big*.



Scene

INTO THE LAIR OF THE BEAST

MENTAL • PHYSICAL ••• SOCIAL —

The cave descends perilously into the depths of the Mojave, with nothing for light but the glow of whatever sun still beats down on the desert from above. Bear that in mind as the characters descend: Unless they bring some sort of light source with them or have a mystical way of seeing in the dark, they're going to be effectively blind.

A rough sandstone decline leads the characters down, down, down until they lose sense of time. Notably perceptive characters or characters knowledgeable in geology will come to the conclusion that this cave formation is relatively new. It has none of the sedimentary rock deposits associated with long-standing subterranean formations, as water simply doesn't seem to have had time to deposit minerals here. Likewise, the cave seems to have been formed from the bottom upward, as if whatever chambers lie below have somehow been forced upward through the earth, as opposed to eroding downward. The tunnel itself is low and very wide, and one could easily drive five cars side-by-side into the depths. Here and there, small lizards, snakes and toads crawl among the cave's crevices, but otherwise, the whole place seems empty.

Empty, that is, except for the surprisingly moist air that seems to be driven by an unknown breeze. Normally, the desert air is still and dry, but the air in the cave is humid. Surprisingly for moving air, it's also a bit foul, smelling charnel at some times, like fresh rain at others. The current seems to move in two directions, deeper into the cave, and away from it. Intelligent characters will probably surmise that whatever's down there is breathing, causing the air movements, and that means it's probably something enormous.

"AND, LO, THE EARTH WAS RENT..."

Before they have a chance to see what monstrosity lies below them, however, another geological anomaly draws them to a halt. The descending cave opens into a huge cavern, part of the floor of which has entirely given way, creating an immense gorge, 1,000 feet across, that looms between the characters and the landing where the tunnel descending further into the darkness winds away.

How to cross? Well, that's up to creative problem solving. A character who has the Wind's Freedom Boon could make short work of the gap. A Scion with the Shaping Boon could carve handholds in the ceiling, build a bridge across the center or excavate a ledge along the side of the chasm. The Animal Command or Animal Aspect Boons could certainly result in ways of crossing the gorge.

This chasm exists for two reasons, really. It's a non-combat challenge for the characters to overcome, first of all. As such, the characters can take their time and experiment with different uses of their Scion abilities—since this is the first scenario in the ongoing cycle, players probably won't be fully versed with the ins and outs of their characters' powers, and this serves as an introduction to those. Second, it's a chance to indulge those superhuman powers in a way that mortal heroes simply couldn't. This is a job for the Gods, or their Scions at least, and in these tasks, the average human being simply couldn't get past this first obstacle. Those chosen by Fate or deliberately sired by divine personalities are a cut above the lesser human stock around them, and it is just this greatness that entitles them to the greater rewards of their station. Quite simply, no one less than a hero could circumvent the chasm and continue his quest.

That said, you might want to take the opportunity to cheat in your characters' favor here, or perhaps rewrite the challenge in advance. If none of the characters possesses a suitable Boon or Birthright device that would allow the group to continue its forward progress, it's time to adjust the hurdle. After all, if they simply can't clear the chasm, there's no way for them to challenge Tecuhtli in her lair or reclaim the Black Feather Shroud. A possible alternative is to give the chasm a "leap of faith," a barely visible walkway that spans the distance but isn't immediately visible (like the chasm in *Indiana Jones and the Last Crusade*). Perhaps a species of large but benign flying creatures lives in the cavern, and characters can hitch a ride on these beasties. Good, old-fashioned technology is a choice, as well, and if the characters come up with some way to span the gap—some kind of bridge, a cable to climb across, etc.—well, then, the challenge has met an adequate resolution. It's not necessarily a *heroic* resolution, but it certainly affords more dignity than riding out of a cyclops's cave on the underside of a sheep.

THE MANY MOUTHS OF TECUHTLI

Once the characters cross the chasm, they rejoin with the path that continues to descend into the darkness. Again, the path takes them on a journey that distorts their sense of time, and the sulfurous fumes rising from the depths of the World do nothing to help them keep their heads cleared.

If the characters brought a light source of their own, it reveals that the vast tunnel opens into an even more voluminous cavern—and it catches a wicked glint from the far distances of the underground vault. That glint is a reflection of the light off the horrid, glassy eye of the beast Tecuhtli!

TECUHTLI

Tecuhtli is titanspawn. Tecuhtli is hungry. Tecuhtli seeks to grind the meat from the Scions' bones!

Attributes: Strength 14, Dexterity 2, Stamina 12; Charisma 1, Manipulation 1, Appearance 1; Perception 2, Intelligence 1, Wits 4

Virtues: Ambition 2, Malice 3, Rapacity 4, Zealotry 1

Abilities: Athletics 3, Awareness 3, Brawl 2, Fortitude 4, Integrity 2, Presence 3, Stealth 1, Survival 4

Supernatural Powers:

Flawless Escape: Any time Tecuhtli is feeling particularly overwhelmed, she can take one action (Speed 6) to sink into the sand of her lair, completely escaping from any combat in which she's involved. Up to three actions thereafter, she resurfaces anywhere within her lair and takes a normal action. This power doesn't work outside her subterranean lair. Using this power costs one Legend point.

Join Battle: 7

Attacks:

Rubbery Bite: Accuracy 4, Damage 18L, Parry DV —, Speed 5

Hefty Stomp: Accuracy 4, Damage 14L, Parry DV —, Speed 6

Sticky Tongue (Ranged Grapple): Accuracy 5, Damage 10, Parry DV —, Range 25, Speed 2

Soak: 6L/12B

Health Levels: -0/-0/-0/-1/-1/-1/-2/-2/-2/-4/-4/Incap

Dodge DV: 4

Willpower: 7

Legend: 3

Legend Points: 9

Other Notes: A successful attack with her sticky tongue allows Tecuhtli to initiate a grapple at range (see p. 200). If the fight seems too easy, you might wish to have Tecuhtli receive backup from her young. Also, Tecuhtli and her young uphold Dark Virtues. (See pp. 309-310 for details.)



STORY SEED: TECUHTLI'S TALE

Tlaltecuhltli was a ravenous monster, a female creature nonetheless described as the “earth lord” in Aztec legend. She was vast and hungry, always desiring fresh flesh to feast upon. Her head was a fanged skull, and many more gnashing mouths opened at her elbows, knees and other joints.

As Quetzalcoátl and Tezcatlipoca remade the World, they agreed that this horrid monster was too dangerous to leave alive, as she would sate her hunger on man and God alike. In their agreement, they conspired to kill her. Transforming themselves into snakes, Tezcatlipoca and Quetzalcoátl wrapped their length around her left hand and right foot and right hand and left foot, and pulled with all their might. Between them, Tlaltecuhltli was rent asunder, and her bottom half they threw into the sky to create the heavens. The top half became the World as we know it.

The destruction of the creature was imperfect, however, and a few of Quetzalcoátl's feathers, left behind, mingled with the spilled blood of Tlaltecuhltli on the ground. Under the moonlight of the mother-Goddess Tontazin, these bloody feathers became toads and hopped away into the night. It is their lot in life to hide between the earth and the sky and away from the light of the moon, hungrily devouring what sustenance they can. The light of the mother-Goddess moon is like fire to them, for she is ashamed at their birth under her watch.

These children of Tlaltecuhltli are simply called Tecuhtli, and it's entirely possible that there are more of them out there in the World than this aberration dwelling under the sands of the Mojave Desert. This creature could be the greatest of them (if you desire a group of lesser titanspawn for future use with a thematic connection to an earlier phase of the story), or the least of them (if you want a sort of recurring enemy who's not a clever mastermind in and of herself).

In the darkness, surmising Tecuhtli's full form can be difficult. She has the head, body and forelegs of a toad, but her mouth displays horrible fangs, each half again as long as a man. The back of her body tapers away not to a toad's muscular legs, but rather to a feathered abdomen. When Tecuhtli moves, she doesn't hop, as other toads do, she drags herself forward. At the back of her head, where her short neck meets her bloated body, another fanged mouth opens, as do two at her elbows. Each of these ghastly mouths issues forth rank breath, and this foul respiration comprises the breeze that circulates through the cave.

While the landscape of the cavern in which Tecuhtli makes her lair is fairly simple, plenty of cracks and fissures in the floor can offer characters some degree of cover (as Sigurd hid in a trench when he killed the dragon Fafnir). Likewise, the sandstone cavern offers numerous shelves and columns upon which characters can climb to gain better lines of sight or from which to leap in kamikaze attacks. While the cavern has no proper stalagmites or stalactites, it is filled with jagged boulders and other punishing geographical weapons. Bear in mind that this is Tecuhtli's lair, and though she's titanspawn, she's not stupid. She's clever enough to use the geography against the characters in any way she can. For example, if they use group tactics, she might try to separate them on either side of a crack in the floor, or she might pin individual Scions beneath otherwise immovable stones. She might flail her hindquarters to make a sandstorm effect or pound her abdomen on the ground, breaking up the sandstone to create treacherous

footing. Storytellers and players alike are encouraged to use every bit of the environment for the battle with Tecuhtli, with the goal of making the fight more than smash-the-monster, grab-the-treasure.

Storyteller's Option: If the characters are particularly combat savvy (or just rolling well) and they're mopping the cavern floor with Tecuhtli, consider introducing several of her “young” to take the heat off her. They'll divert the attention from her and give her a precious few actions to gather her wits, organize a counterattack, or whatever she needs to do. This might be something you wish to do from the moment the heroes meet Tecuhtli, as preventing them from focusing their attacks on her immediately will prolong her life considerably. In this case, have Tecuhtli “shed” her young, which she carries embedded in her skin like a Surinam toad. Doing so can certainly allow for a surprise appearance by such young if you decide to use them.

The following traits may be used for Tecuhtli's young.

Attributes: Strength 6, Dexterity 2, Stamina 6; Charisma 1, Manipulation 0, Appearance 1; Perception 2, Intelligence 1, Wits 2

Virtues: Ambition 1, Malice 2, Rapacity 3, Zealotry 1

Abilities: Athletics 1, Awareness 3, Brawl 1, Fortitude 4, Integrity 2, Stealth 1, Survival 3

Supernatural Powers: None

Join Battle: 5

Attacks:

Biting Maw: Accuracy 4, Damage 7L, Parry DV —, Speed 5

Stompy Foot: Accuracy 4, Damage 7L, Parry DV —, Speed 6

Soak: 3L/6B

Health Levels: -0/-0/-1/-1/-2/-2/-4/-4/Incap

Dodge DV: 3 Willpower: 5

Legend: 2 Legend Points: 4

CLAIMING THE TROPHY

Scattered about the stony, sandy nest where Tecuhtli laired lie a mass of egg fragments, discarded bones and multi-colored feathers. Some of these feathers are also black and comparatively small, as perceptive characters will notice.

At the back of the nest stands a cluster of boulders. The way to move these boulders (and thus continue searching the nest) depends on the characters' acumen. If the characters have a heroically strong Scion among them, a boulder must be moved. If the characters have an exceptionally dexterous Scion among them, the boulders are closely arrayed, and the nimble character

must contort herself to move between them. Whatever the characters' proclivities are in your opinion determines how the obstructions must be dealt with.

And dealt with they should be, for Tecuhtli's lair contains a relic of great power, the Black Feather Shroud. When the characters recover the Shroud from the nest, they can feel its power. It glows with a purplish, almost black light, but the light doesn't seem to suggest corruption or evil. Rather, it feels like power from a greater source than the World. Indeed, Scions should be no strangers to power of this type. The Shroud emanates the potency of the Gods themselves. It's obviously an item of legendary proportion.

WONDROUS! HOW DOES IT WORK?

Now that the characters have recovered this unknown relic, they have to figure out what it does. Have they stumbled across some great treasure, or the bane of a

STORY SEED: WHOSE DOING?

For skeptical characters, it all seems too easy: Defeat the monster in its lair and earn the treasure in return. How did the Shroud get there, though? Why is an item of this power lying, forgotten, beneath the desert sands? The epic answer is that such is simply how heroes find their mystic Birthrights. Phrixus just left the Golden Fleece on the tree, where Jason eventually retrieved it. Fergus mac Róich just found the sword Caladbolg. Amaterasu just gave Japan's Three Sacred Treasures to Ninigi no Mikoto. No one even knows what the Sampo was—a compass, a treasure chest, the World Tree—except that it existed to be found. That's what heroes do: They find legendary objects.

Clever Storytellers might want to justify the Black Feather Shroud's presence in the desert cave, however. That's fine and good, as sussing out its origin can give the characters a new mystery to explore. Here are a few suggestions:

- **Tecuhtli's Own Treasure:** The simplest answer, if you need a justification, is simply to say that the Shroud comes from Tecuhtli's feathered carcass. This explanation takes some of the legendary history away from the Shroud, but it places emphasis of its acquisition on current events, which might be just as valuable, if not more so, if you're focusing on the modernity of the Band's epic.

- **Forgotten by Another God:** It may be that one of the Gods, or perhaps a fallen Scion, once counted the Black Feather Shroud among his Birthrights. If it was a Scion, that explains the issue right away—it was given to a hero who fell in mortal combat. If it belonged to a God, well, then, who was it? Since it's in the possession of an Aztec monster, it was probably among the Aztec pantheon. Many of the Aztec Gods are suitable: Huitzilopochtli or Miclántecuhtli for their Purviews of Death (and obviously suitable for Miclántecuhtli...), Quetzalcoátl for his history with Tecuhtli and his feathers, Tlaloc and Tlazoltéotl for their Purviews of Earth, which was created from Tlaltecuhli's remains. Alternatively, a God from another pantheon might have lost a Scion to Tecuhtli or lost the Shroud to the creature itself or dropped the Shroud while sleeping, stopping to eat or having a conversation with some other entity. You can justify any sort of heroic or divine loss in this fashion.

- **Placed There On Purpose:** The Gods can be clever manipulators and subtle schemers. As such, this explanation works best if one or more Gods concocted the whole scenario as a ruse (see the "Why the World?" sidebar on p. 237 for more possibilities on this angle). If this is all part of a scheme to determine the source or abilities of the Black Feather Shroud, having someone else "accidentally" find it and determine its powers is entirely in keeping with several trickster or deceitful Gods' *modi operandi*. Almost every pantheon seems to have one, and even if the God isn't explicitly a trickster, *per se*, any slight, sibling rivalry or grudge against another God can serve as a suitable motivator. If the relic is benign, well, the God in question might come after it himself. If it's malignant, he simply plants it on his rival and then tips others off to its presence and function, and to hell with the Scions if they get in the way of the Gods' vendettas.

fearful God? The answer, of course, is a bit of both, and what happens next depends on what the characters do.

Research

Scholarly characters might choose to hit the books on this one. You can be as thorough or as brief in this regard as you choose. If you like a bit of sleuthing to take place in your cycles, feel free to discuss several of the previously mentioned legendary antecedents for the Black Feather Shroud. The Shroud itself is a bit of an obscure item; it won't appear in Bulfinch's or Edith Hamilton's mythologies.

Researching the Black Feather Shroud requires an extended (Intelligence + Occult) roll with a cumulative difficulty of 8 and a roll interval of an hour to yield one piece of information and one power possessed by the Shroud. Each additional success yields one more bit of information and power of the Shroud.

The seemingly most valid references to the Black Feather Shroud come from a collection of Scandinavian sources. Shostokovich's *Volsung Saga* refers to a valkyrie—not Brynhild—returning from the dead “in the wings of a raven.” An obscure fragment of the *Kalevala* that Lönnrot leaves out of his definitive version refers to a time when “the ravens ate the sickness from Lemminkainen's heart and bones.” Both the *Heimskringla* and the *Prose Edda*, though not Sturlson's, refer to kings taking to the battlefield “cloaked in the feathers of those birds that haunted the dying” and how “the feathers turned blows away.”

These passages simply outline the most basic powers of the Black Feather Shroud. For information on destroying the Shroud, an illuminated 19th-century version of the *Mabinogion* describes Matholwch of Ireland's “cauldron” (from the most accepted version of the tale) as “a pair of wings wrought from the feathers of Bran's namesake.” It then goes on to describe Efnisien destroying it in the traditional manner, by climbing inside and breaking it apart from within. This version of the *Mabinogion* goes on to later describe Lleu repairing the “feathered vestment” with the aid of Gwydion son of Don and using it to “become more than a man” after Gronw Pebyr kills him. Cross-referencing Lleu with other cultural pantheons relates him to both Hermes and Loki (as well as Lugus and Lugh, Gods whose pantheons aren't discussed in this core **Scion** book). This last passage seems to imply that Lleu somehow used the “feathered cauldron” to become a God.

Granted, this is all a bit esoteric, and if your players don't like digging deeply to resolve the meaning of clues presented in the course of a story, you'll probably want to find some other way to communicate these references than by having them raid the library. A guide works well in this regard, as does the drunken contact the heroes met at the diner, Leo, if they had an amicable parting with him.

Trial and Error

This method works best if your troupe favors jumping immediately back into the action. For continued story

flow, you might rule that simply putting on the Black Feather Shroud communicates to its wearer the salient abilities it has. In all likelihood, however, the Shroud won't expose the power to transmute a Scion into a God, nor will it detail how to destroy itself. Those things simply aren't in the Shroud's best interests, and if we assume that the Shroud can speak to its wearer, we should assume at least a bit of intellect or personality on its part.

That's fine in the short term. It gives the characters a little bit of newfound power to indulge as well as a few mysterious potential powers to continue probing. Indeed, if they'd like to find out more, they'll probably have to pursue one of the other methods described in this section.

Asking the Gods

This is a bold solution, but it's one that can have great impact later in the story at the expense of some freedom now.

If the Scions let the Gods in on the fact that they've discovered a powerful relic and need a little help figuring out what it does, those Scions can probably kiss the Shroud goodbye. At least, that's the case with the assumed convocation of Gods who are patrons to the signature characters. If everyone has a beneficent God as a patron, things might be different, but even those Gods will certainly want to know the potential of this heretofore unknown relic.

If the characters don't cop to actually having the relic, go ahead and let the Gods be duped. After all, it's better to give the characters the information and let them undo themselves with their knowledge than to have the Gods be their own *deus ex machina* and swat it out of their hands. Savvy characters might present the Black Feather Shroud as a legendary treasure spoken of by Tecuhtli in her death throes, or they might claim to have seen a bit of primitive art on her cavern walls depicting such a thing. So long as the characters don't come right out and say, “Hey, we found this relic,” let the Gods be forthright with information but a little suspicious.

As to what the Gods know, feed the characters all of the information presented in the Black Feather Shroud's overview on pages 234-236 except the part about attaining godhead. Naturally, you'll want to put it in terms that the Gods would actually use. Don't just recite mechanical descriptions to the players. Look to the section on “Research” for examples of flowery or symbolic description. Whether the Gods simply don't know about the Shroud's power of apotheosis or they're wisely omitting it depends upon decisions you've already made as Storyteller, based on what sorts of behind-the-scenes activities, agendas and motivations are going on.

In all cases, let the characters experiment with the Shroud for a bit, in the next scenes or in some short interstitial scenes you improvise for that very purpose. In these intervening scenes, however, give the impression that the characters are using but a portion of



the power the Shroud has at its disposal. Again, symbols and analogies work well here. Perhaps the Shroud feels like a dam about to burst when a character uses one of its powers, the power in question bleeding off only a fragment of the pressure. Maybe it beats like a heart, increasing in speed and intensity as the character

invokes the power, and gives all indications of being able to beat faster and stronger. Whatever the description you use, the characters should be intrigued by what else the Shroud has to offer, what their patrons aren't telling them... and what awaits them next in their divinely appointed duties.

STORY SEED: GETTING IT BACK

If the characters have recklessly or foolishly copped to having the Shroud in their possession, put it back in their hands somehow. This can be accomplished in any number of ways.

Minions or even fellow Scions of another God might be willing to snatch the thing when the Gods in question aren't looking, in exchange for a favor or consideration down the road. They won't even want to keep the thing for themselves—it's obviously a troublesome hot potato if the Gods want it and the Scions are bold enough to attempt to steal it back for their own use.

A God might lose track of it, and it may turn up later in the hands of another titanspawn, who pilfered it from the deity's hoard. Alternatively, the heroes might face another one of Tlaltecuhтли's brood, whose hide provides them with another Black Feather Shroud. See the "Whose Doing?" story seed sidebar for more on this possibility.

Leo might prove another useful go-between here, as well, especially if he provided the characters information on what the relic does in the first place. Indeed, if you use Leo in both of these capacities, he'll be shaping up to be quite a useful resource for the characters in the future. In such a case, you might wish to bring him into a more prominent role in the rest of the story, instead of having him simply be the Gods' messenger.

Finally, what about Karma? Since the Gods probably lost track of the Shroud in the first place, there's no reason to think it couldn't happen again, especially in a heated argument between divinities during their secret meeting. If the guest services liaison picked up the cloak thinking it was someone's misplaced accouterment, she'd probably come to the characters to have them give it back to their fascinating employers.



ACT TWO AT DIVINE BEHEST

Act Two of “The Long Road to Heaven” changes the pace of the story a little, in effect becoming a gallery of brief, epic encounters that serve to build the characters’ legends (and Legends) as well as reinforce their relationships with their Gods. The events of this act are far less linear than those of Acts One and Three. Each of Act Two’s scenes can occur at any time you choose to set them in motion, and you could even decide you don’t even necessarily want to run all of them.

As Act One concludes, shift at your own pace and at the pace of the Band into the events of Act Two. Players who are used to a traditional story format will probably need a bit of guidance. Players who like a little more open-endedness in their storytelling experiences shouldn’t have any problem taking this act in stride. The scenes in Act Two are like the episodic adventures heroes of old had between their greater quests.

Further, these scenes aren’t intended to take too much time away from the other action. They’re simple “limelight” scenes in which each character has a chance to step into the role of the main character. Ajax’s story is just as interesting as that of Achilles, even if he’s not as widely known. This act is an opportunity to let every player’s character concept shine. (It’s also the excuse *not* to use one of these scenes. If one character has been taking center stage more than the others, these side quests allow you to objectively share some attention among the other characters.)

These scenes each originate with one particular God and Scion. Again, we’re assuming that the pregenerated signature characters are the subjects of your troupe’s cycle, so those characters and Gods’ motivations are addressed here. If your players are portraying characters of their own creation, you’ll need to do a little creative work on your own here, designing appropriate challenges for the Gods and Scions in question.

HANDLING NONLINEAR SCENES

Although “The Long Road to Heaven” is considered an introductory adventure for the purposes of **Scion** and the Storytelling Adventure System, it’s suitable for all levels of Storyteller skill, and nowhere is that fact more apparent than in Act Two.

Novice Storytellers should present the scenes of the act one at a time. The story and the dice are easier to keep track of that way, and they make sure everyone has an equal opportunity to enjoy center stage. Novice Storytellers should still decide the sequence in which you want the scenes to happen, and, indeed, if you want to use every scene in the act, but aside from that, just take things one step at a time.

Intermediate Storytellers should take the opportunity to blend two scenes into each other so that the flow of the act shifts between characters at logical and dramatic moments. The scenes themselves offer a few suggestions on how to do so, but no written story is going to understand the group dynamic around any single troupe’s game table, nor can it account for the oft-unforeseen actions players might have their characters take. If something comes up that makes for a good “camera pan” to another character’s limelight scene, by all means, take it! In effect, you’re allowing the story to take its own course and following its natural development rather than forcing an external structure to dictate who does what when.

Expert Storytellers, here’s your chance to blow your players’ faces off their heads by sheer force of awesomeness. “At Divine Behest” is effectively six mini-stories, each with its own hindrances, help, reveals and conclusions. If you’re so adept, you can weave them together in the manner of the intermediate Storyteller, only you’ll be juggling the events of six different scenes at once. It’s daunting, but with a deft hand, you’ll be able to pull it off and have an epic tale woven in the postmodern style of *Pulp Fiction* or *Kill Bill*, or perhaps the avant-garde perspectives of *Rashomon* or *Memento*. Expert Storytellers might also want to play a bit with the boundaries of the acts themselves, perhaps having the events of Act One “bleed” into Act Two or having one or more scenes from Act Two actually conclude during the opening monster hunt of Act Three. Hey, you’re expert Storytellers for a reason, so we don’t mean to tell you your trade—we just want to give you a hearty thumbs-up to ply your craft here.

HORUS’S QUEST: THE EYES OF HORUS

MENTAL • PHYSICAL •• SOCIAL •

Horus’ most acute eye—or perhaps his only eye, depending on which legend is true—is the sun. The weaker, or lost, eye is the moon. Thus it occurs every 28

days that Horus, on the night of the new moon, is blind. In this state, he is known as Mekhenty-er-irty, “he who has no eyes.”

HORUS'S CHARGE: TREASURE VIGIL

As it so happens during the course of “The Long Road to Heaven,” that new moon occurs while Horus has met with the other Gods for their secret convocation. Taking his Scion, Horace Farrow, into his confidence, Horus reveals that he has brought with him a valuable treasure. While he is without eyes, Horus will be unable to guard this treasure, so he asks Horace, who is here to serve as a guardian of the Gods, to protect it.

The treasure itself is a great, gilded egg, about the size of a basketball. Horus has hidden the egg in his palatial suite at the Luxor. The period of duty is not a long one, a mere night, from sundown on the night of the new moon to sunrise the next day. During that night, Horus will be gone himself, hidden so that his enemies won't be able to find him. He doesn't want to bring the egg with him because, in the event that his nemeses do find him, he doesn't want to lose his own life and the egg together in his state of diminished ability.

During the time when Horace is on guard duty, he has full access to Horus's Luxor suite and may avail himself of every amenity the hotel has to offer. Naturally, Horus requires that his Scion remain alert and capable of defending himself and the treasure, but aside from that, the God encourages his offspring to luxuriate.

Nothing so seemingly simple ever is, however, and indeed, Horus's enemies know that the treasure may be within their grasp. Thus it is that a handful of scheming cultists and Scions want to use the opportunity to make the treasure their own.

MEETING THE CHALLENGE

Horus's rivals, while numerous, nurse grudges among themselves and lack the ability to operate in

concert. That's the good news. The bad news is that Horus's rivals are in fact numerous, so multiple attempts against the egg's security will occur on the same night. All Horace has to do is repel these advances.

It's probably prudent for Horace to enlist the aid of the other Scions, as well. Although he doesn't have to, he knows neither how many potential enemies he faces nor how powerful they'll be. If Horace's player overlooks this, it might be wise to drop hints to the other players. Maybe they see a dubious individual exiting the elevator just as they leave Horace's company. Perhaps they stumble onto a decidedly Egyptian-seeming “theme party” that's actually a cultic rite in progress. Maybe one of them is even ambushed and questioned by her captors as to Horace's whereabouts and if he has the relic they seek. (Of course, Horace might not have told the other Scions about the relic he's been tasked with guarding, and the Scion in question can probably handle a small group of crazed cultists, but the potential is there nonetheless. The mysterious attackers don't need to succeed in their ambush. They just need to tip off the other Scions that something devious is afoot.)

Over the course of the night, the following groups will attempt to seize Horus's treasure for themselves. That's a lot of action to have happen on a single night, so if you want to reduce the intruders to a less over-the-top number, that's perfectly reasonable. On the other hand, if you really want to turn up the heat under Horace, you can no doubt find a few more people willing to make a reckless attempt at thieving an item a God needs protected.

- **Room Disservice:** Assuming that Horace's player took the bait (ha ha ha!) and Horace availed himself of some of the room's amenities—room service, a masseuse, a big-spender spread of booze, an in-room poker or



TOMMY LI



A Scion of the infamous Monkey King of Chinese legend, Tommy Li has been tricked into stealing the golden egg by agents of the Titan Mikaboshi. Having not heard from his divine parent in months, it was easy for the evil cultists to convince the rash Scion that the item in question was a magical stone in which his father, Sun Wukong, had been imprisoned. If he cannot steal the relic, he will likely try to destroy it in order to free the God. He wears about his neck a shard of the stone from which Sun Wukong was born as well as his magical staff, the Ru Yi Jin Gu Bang.

Calling: Wuxia Hero

Pantheon: Celestial Bureaucracy

God: Sun Wukong

Nature: Rogue

Attributes: Strength 3, Dexterity 5, Stamina 3; Charisma 4, Manipulation 2, Appearance 3; Perception 2, Intelligence 2, Wits 4

Virtues: Duty 3, Harmony 1, Loyalty 4, Order 1

Abilities: Animal Ken 2, Athletics 5, Awareness 3, Brawl 5, Control 2, Fortitude 3, Integrity 2, Larceny 3, Melee 4, Presence 1, Stealth 3, Survival 1, Thrown 1

Birthrights: Creature (Qilin) 5, Relic (Rough Stone Necklace—Chaos) 1, Relic (Ru Yi Jin Gu Bang—Sky, War) 4

Supernatural Powers

Epic Attributes: Epic Strength 2 (Holy Bound, Holy Rampage), Epic Dexterity 2 (Lightning Sprinter, Monkey Climber), Epic Stamina 1 (Inner Furnace); Epic Charisma 0, Epic Manipulation 0, Epic Appearance 0; Epic Perception 0, Epic Intelligence 0, Epic Wits 0

Boons: Battle Cry, Hornet's Nest, Sky's Grace

Join Battle: 7

Attacks:

Unarmed, Heavy: Accuracy 9, Damage 7B, Parry DV 6, Speed 5

Unarmed, Light: Accuracy 11, Damage 4B, Parry DV 8, Speed 4

Clinch: Accuracy 10, Damage 4B, Parry DV —, Speed 6, P

Ru Yi Jin Gu Bang: Accuracy 11, Damage 7B, Parry DV 8, Speed 6

Soak: 1A/3L/4B

Health Levels: -0/-1/-1/-2/-2/-4/Incap

Dodge DV: 9

Willpower: 7

Legend: 3

Legend Points: 9

Other Notes: Tommy Li's "qilin" has the same traits as the kirin on page 326. Also, the Ru Yi Jin Gu Bang staff is capable of altering its size (length and/or width) by 100% per dot of its bearer's Legend.

blackjack dealer—he gets more than he bargained for. The people sent to the room are none other than clever agents of Thoth, each fully intent on distracting any present Scions while the other absconds with the egg. Thoth's agents come in whatever guise Horace ordered. For example, if the Scions ordered dinner, one agent

comes as the food server while the other comes as the sommelier. If they ordered a private gambling suite, one agent comes as the dealer while the other is a security guard or gambling-commission representative. These are normal, mortal cultists as described on pages 280-281, though they work more subtly than the glassy-eyed,

knife-wielding lunatics who normally devote themselves to archaic Gods. This conflict should be played quietly and tensely, and you should reveal that the egg is missing only if the characters have been so dense as to not pay any attention to it. Vigilant characters should see that the wine steward is spending a little too much time over on that side of the table, or that the security guard is standing too close to the precious egg.

- **Corrupt Scion:** A lone-wolf Scion under the sway of a Titan has learned of the coveted treasure of Horus and wishes to give it as tribute to his monstrous patron. This is a good character to use as a sort of surprise foe, as he can come at the characters from angles they won't necessarily be watching. For example, he might fly up the outside of the resort, just outside the suite's balcony, and sneak in that way. He might turn himself invisible and creep in with the Thoth cultists (making for a potentially interesting three-way standoff for the egg that the other parties assume to be a two-way standoff). He might be hopelessly suborned by the vile Titan's will, or he might be a work in progress for the Titan, effectively a rogue out solely for his own interests.

- **The Cult of Set:** Hey, yeah, big surprise that minions of Set want to steal something that belongs to Horus. The Cult of Set is the most overt threat, and probably the one best saved for the last encounter, assuming you want "The Long Road to Heaven" to run with its assumed level of action and adventure. While the cultists are standard, fanatical mortals (see pp. 280-

281 for traits), they're not afraid to go head to head with a potent godling. Twenty cultists show up for the assault, and they use their numbers to their advantage. The suite at the Luxor consists of three adjoining rooms, each with access to the hallway and each with a door that can be closed to isolate it from the next room. The cult's plan of attack is to kick in all three doors, see where the egg is, snatch it and then close off access from the other rooms while they make off with the treasure. It's a sound plan, but it's not exactly subtle. By the end of the inevitable fight, the police will be en route and the Scions will have a lot of explaining to do. They're in the right, and will ultimately be freed of any charges (especially if any of them have bothered to be civil to hotel staff), but can they keep the egg from being taken as evidence? Horace had better hope so.

Obviously, the scenarios described here assume that the characters will be staying in Horus's suite. If they move the egg to a different location, these antagonists will eventually find them, but only with a bit of (off-screen) investigation of the suite where they thought the egg was supposed to be. When it's not there, assume that they learn of the egg's location through divine communiqué and hassle the Scions from there. Whether that's in an unmarked white van blasting across the desert sands or in the basement of a local resident's home is up to the characters.

Changes of plans also necessitate changes of tactics, so that each would-be thief will keep the nature of its

STORY SEED: WHAT'S IN THE EGG?

Gwyneth Paltrow's head!

No, seriously, it's not important. Unless you want to add a dimension or story hook to this scene, the egg is its own treasure, valuable because it belongs to a God. It's like a Ming vase only... more so. If you do want to add significance to the egg, options abound.

- **It's Actually Horus:** In the Ogdoad legend of Thoth, Horus and Atum-Re (as opposed to the Pesedjet legend), a youthful Horus was known as Neferhor, "beautiful Horus," and was actually created by Thoth in the form of an egg. Thus, Thoth was Horus's father, and his son was born from an egg. This story ties in neatly to Horus's own absence from the scene. He's gone during the night of his blindness and simply waiting for the next day so he can be reborn. Obvious complications can arise, then, if Horace fails to adequately defend his father's about-to-be-reborn self. Do you have any idea what an infant God can fetch on the black market?

- **A New Scion:** If this is the case, the egg contains a not-yet-born Scion, who might hatch at any time. This is a good way to gauge Horace's emotional investment in his divine father. Does he look at the unborn Scion as a loved sibling, or does he resent the intrusion of an unasked-for little brother? The value of the egg remains obvious if you decide to use this story seed, and who knows—maybe the Scion hasn't yet been "formatted" and might be a potential new Scion for whichever God ends up in possession of the egg.

- **A New Boon or Birthright:** Horus was just testing Horace to see if he proved himself worthy of the God's continued favor. If Horace passes the test, you should reward him with some minor increase in power or ability. If Horace fails, well, there's nothing worse than seeing the present that was supposed to be for you opened and then given to someone else.

methods the same, varying only the implementation. For example, if the characters end up hiding in a local home, the agents of Thoth might come to the door dressed as local policemen. The Cult of Set might surround the house and force entry by the front and back doors, systematically shutting down egress points as they rush inside.

CONCLUDING THE QUEST

The next day, as the sun rises, Horus returns to his suite, rubbing his temples as if he's trying to sweep the cobwebs of a particularly hellish hangover out of his head. He's in a foul mood—you try having the sun and moon for your eyes—but his temper abates once he sees his precious treasure sitting unmolested where he left it. If

it's not sitting there, unmolested, his foul mood turns to one of searing rage. Instead of taking it out on his Scion, however, he'll hold it over Horace's head. He'll either demand that Horace fulfill some future quest on his terms (isn't that a great thing to record among your Storyteller notes?), or he'll spend a period of time not showering his Scion with the divine gifts that would normally be his. That is, he might withhold a Boon the player would otherwise like to acquire for the character, or he might keep (or even take back) a Birthright that Horace would reasonably expect in any other circumstances.

Do not fail the Gods, for they are immortal and bear eternal grudges.

TEZCATLIPOCA'S QUEST: THE QUEEN OF FLOWERS

MENTAL • PHYSICAL • SOCIAL ••

In the times before the Gods had been relegated to the Overworld, Tezcatlipoca, the Smoking Mirror, knew no equal. When he wanted something, he took it. When he grew angry, he raged, even destroying the World once. He is the Night Wind, the Enemy on Both Sides, the Mocker and the Capricious Creator. Tezcatlipoca does not ask, he demands.

Thousands of years ago, he demanded Xochiquetzal, the Goddess of flowers and love. It meant nothing to him that Xochiquetzal was married to Tlaloc—in fact, it meant less than nothing, since Tlaloc was old and Tezcatlipoca was a vibrant God of war and magic. Xochiquetzal was simply one more conquest to attain. So conquer her he did (though both Xochiquetzal and Tlaloc both remarried and Tezcatlipoca eventually moved on to other interests).

Perhaps impassioned by the numerous lovers thronging to Las Vegas to expedite their own marriages, or perhaps simply feeling the resurgence of his long-dormant powers as the age of the Gods dawns again, Tezcatlipoca yearns once more for the tender caress of a woman's touch. He doesn't want Xochiquetzal back, though, as he's already had her. Like many men, he just wants someone who reminds him of his past love.

TEZCATLIPOCA'S CHARGE:

RETRIEVE THE QUEEN OF FLOWERS

Iseldia Alvarado married Dr. Geoffrey Raines, a prominent reproductive endocrinologist with a successful practice in Phoenix, Arizona, four years ago. They met at a party hosted by one of Dr. Raines' colleagues and, despite Geoffrey being 18 years older than Iseldia, they began a relationship and eventually fell in love. This year, they decided to take a trip to Las Vegas for vacation. Iseldia and her husband have been having a wonderful time at the resorts, in the casinos, at the shows and even at the nightclubs.

There's something not quite right about Iseldia Alvarado Raines, however. Perhaps that wording is a bit imprecise—there's something *more than* right about Iseldia. It's surely what drew Dr. Raines to her, as well as part of the reason she draws appreciating stares from men and women alike during the course of her life. She's no Scion herself, but she seems to give off some sort of mystical charge. Wherever Iseldia goes, the flowers in the room seem a little more vital, as if they bloom a little bit more, just for her. When she's outside, butterflies cross her path or follow in her wake more than they do for anyone else. This doesn't happen in any overt way—flowers don't spring out of the walls where there were none before, nor do swarms of butterflies chase her down the street. It's just a subtle, beautiful effect. Perhaps she's favored by nature. Perhaps she's touched by the Gods, but not of them.

Whatever the cause, Tezcatlipoca saw her in a vision, *and he wants her*. He demands that his Scion, Dr. Aaron Tigrillo, offer this beauty to him. Tezcatlipoca doesn't care who gets hurt in the process, physically or emotionally, as long as it's not Iseldia and as long as he possesses her in the end.

It can't end well. Dr. Tigrillo knows this, but what can he do?

MEETING THE CHALLENGE

This scene is designed primarily as a test of morality for Dr. Tigrillo. The Aztec pantheon by nature is bloody and complex. Tezcatlipoca is both "He Whose Slaves We Are" and the Patron of Princes. Tezcatlipoca is one of the greatest examples of how the Gods don't translate into (or even understand) mortal ethics. He's widely understood to be an "evil" God, but he's also the God of Change and the favored of royalty. He's even the God who oversees the birth of children in some cultures. Exactly where his followers choose to place themselves

on any sort of moral barometer is up to them. In which aspect do they revere him?

Dr. Tigrillo himself is set up as a bit of an antihero (see his write-up on p. 80). He's the son of a God, true, and he's nominally aligned with the "heroes" of the setting, but his divine patron asks much of him that would give the Scions of more traditionally "good" Gods pause.

Still, this goes beyond bloody sacrifice. This goes to the point of kidnapping, coercion, potential adultery and worse. As such, if you want a more conventionally "heroic" tale, you should probably cut this scene from the cycle. On the other hand, if you prefer a more morally gray story, or you enjoy the presence of such an antihero type among your players' Band, you'll find that this scene in particular imparts a gravity that just decapitating hordes of titanspawn doesn't offer. If Tigrillo goes through with this, is he good or evil? Or is he neither, and defined by the sum of his actions, rather than a select few of them? What if Dr. Tigrillo chooses not to heed Tezcatlipoca's charge?

As well, what reactions do the other characters of the Band have to this charge? An enterprising Storyteller can make this just as much a test of their moral fiber as Dr. Tigrillo's. Assuming Tigrillo even tells them about it, do they help him? Do they stand in his way? If they don't help him but don't oppose him, is their inaction effectively permission? These are all questions that can arise over the course of the scene.

- **Pacing and Priority:** Of all the scenes in Act Two, this is perhaps the best suited for slow pacing, and even running in the background, a little at a time, as an interlude among the other scenes. Although you can certainly change this and make it a focal scene of its own, the slow build and moral dubiousness intrinsic to the action make for a good "pressure cooker" type of plot arc. It can build with even Dr. Tigrillo not knowing what he's going to do in the end, or it can progress as more of a thriller, with Tigrillo inexorably closing in on Iseldia Raines with the ultimate goal of offering her up to his God.

- **Making Acquaintance:** An introduction to Iseldia Raines should occur as a brief distraction for Dr. Tigrillo during another scene. He shouldn't meet her face-to-face first. He should become aware of her presence through those odd natural quirks of her presence. Perhaps a butterfly inexplicably flutters across the floor of the casino. Maybe the centerpiece on the buffet table where the characters are eating suddenly opens up its petals. Whatever the case, the characters notice this first, and then, they're smitten by the appearance of one of the most beautiful women they've ever seen in their lives. Again, this is a natural beauty, not a divine effect or Epic Attribute. Iseldia Raines is just a stunningly attractive woman of her own, mortal accord.

- **Surrogate Seduction:** After Dr. Tigrillo becomes aware of Iseldia's presence, he can go about his proxy



wooing of her however he deems appropriate. Naturally, it's going to present a problem if he simply snatches her away from Dr. Raines and just tries to deliver her, distraught and kidnapped, into Tezcatlipoca's hands. Ideally, he should befriend the couple over the course of a few scenes, earning their trust, which finally allows him to lure Iseldia away. He might approach Iseldia as a long-lost acquaintance, someone with whom she went to school, or some other sort of "remember me?" ruse. He might attempt to gain Dr. Raines' trust as a fellow doctor, using the professional connection to diffuse the suspicion that Geoffrey Raines feels when strange men approach his wife (which happens often, especially here...). A clever player might even be able to enlist Dr. Raines' or Iseldia's aid in some other aspect of the story, such as by introducing Dr. Raines to Lillian Brewer (hey, it could work) or by having Iseldia tell him when his friend's "brother," Sly Guiler, leaves his hotel room. (See pp. 257 and 261 for the appropriate context.) Again, the slow build works best, and the trust Dr. Tigrillo betrays or honors at the end of forging the relationship makes for the true climax of the scene.

CONCLUDING THE QUEST

The conclusion of this scene is a fairly open-and-closed affair. Either Tigrillo delivers Iseldia to Tezcatlipoca or he doesn't. If he does, his God offers him a degree of patronizing gratitude. If he doesn't, he's probably got

a few things to atone for before he finds himself in the God's good graces again. Doing so might involve having to undertake another quest, or it could involve a certain loss of Birthrights or other divine benefits as described on page 162.

As to what happens to Iseldia and Geoffrey Raines, well, that's beyond the scope of "The Long Road to Heaven." If you want, you can have some sort of epilogue involving the Dr. and Mrs. Raines, or they might even become occasional supporting characters over the course of the cycle. In all likelihood, though, Dr. Raines develops an intense hate for Dr. Tigrillo and probably attempts to turn the police on to him, for what it's worth. Tezcatlipoca understands the value of his Scion, though, so he's not going to hang Dr. Tigrillo out to dry. If Raines calls in his wife as missing, the God will prop her up before police in Tigrillo's presence. At that point, the cops won't have much to do other than assume Dr. and Mrs. Raines probably won't be married for much longer and he's just having a hard time accepting that. Afterward, though, we probably won't see Iseldia again. Tezcatlipoca probably enjoys his fling with her and then discards her, as the fickle Gods are apt to do with mortal paramours. Who knows—Dr. Tigrillo might one day find himself the godfather to a certain step-Scion born from the union of Tezcatlipoca and Iseldia Alvarado Raines.

STORY SEED: COMPLICATING THE SCENE

While "The Queen of Flowers" makes for a good scene built on social interaction between the players' Scions and Storyteller characters, it might seem a little slow or anticlimactic for players who prefer more fast-paced action. By changing a few of the circumstances, you can make for a more thrilling interaction between Tigrillo and the would-be apple of his God's eye.

- **More Than Love:** It's possible that Tezcatlipoca wants more than Iseldia's physical affection and attention. He might want her heart and blood as a sacrifice. Note that this pretty much puts any question of Tigrillo's morality to rest if he goes through with it, but if the player portrays him as particularly anguished over the situation, it could be worth it for the extra gravity it affords the character. Storytellers beware, though, this option isn't intended as an excuse to turn up the splatter factor or to indulge in the wanton murder of innocents.

- **Convergent Scions:** At your discretion, Dr. Geoffrey Raines might be a Scion of Tlaloc. His name and occupation—"rains" and fertility doctor—are both suitable hallmarks for one of Tlaloc's line. Indeed, this interaction could make a valuable ally of Raines and Tlaloc at the expense of Tezcatlipoca's wrath, or it could force Raines into the company of the rival Scions (see pp. 229-231) when one of this Band absconds with his wife and gives her to his patron.

- **Film At Eleven:** If your troupe likes action, there's no shame in that. In fact, if they prefer to simply grab Iseldia and run away with her, that's fine for an action-oriented story. Have police give chase, and have a pack of freelance crime photographers and camera jocks pursue *them*. The characters will have to deal with the hostage situation/kidnapping/whatever they've gotten themselves into.

THOR'S QUEST: CARRY ON, WAYWARD SON

MENTAL • PHYSICAL •• SOCIAL ••

It's not too often that one manages to get the drop on Loki Liesmith, the arch-confidence man of the Norse pantheon. That's precisely what happens in this scene, however.

Thor's antagonism toward Loki (and Loki's toward Thor) is no secret. Therefore, when Thor comes into a bit of information delivered to him by Hugin while the raven is returning to Odin with the same information, it's a feather in the cap of the God of Thunder. As it turns out, Loki's Scion, Sylvester Guiler, is on a quest for his own patron God, and Thor just can't resist the opportunity to snatch success from Loki's grasping hands. Apparently, Sylvester has been collecting some sort of lore or relic for Loki, and when Thor sees the opportunity to seize it, he sends his faithful son. What exactly is the relic? Well... Thor doesn't know. But he knows Loki wants it, and that's good enough for him.

THOR'S CHARGE: GO GET... WHATEVER IT IS

This quest is actually a bit of a turnabout of conventional heroic plot structure. In many legends, the Gods task the hero with attaining some wondrous relic and the agents of evil or adversary Gods hound the hero's every step. In this case, however, the agent of the adversary has actually obtained the relic (or relics... or whatever) in question and it's up to the (ostensibly) good character to take them away. No doubt it serves some greater good, Eric Donner thinks, because he can trust Thor. After all, the God of Thunder is right: If Loki wants it, it can't possibly do other people any good if the trickster gets his hands on it. As well, this will allow Eric to get even with Sly after the trickster-Scion's earlier betrayal (as told in the opening story "Birthright").

Thus enticed by the righteousness of the quest, Eric goes forth with his intrepid Band of heroes to stop this nameless malfeasance in its formative stages.

In communion with Thor, attended by the raven Hugin, Eric learns some precious intelligence. For whatever reason—likely because Loki has heard that Thor is attending the Gods' conclave here—Loki's Scion Sly has been seen in Las Vegas. He's staying at the Mirage, and he's left something in a briefcase in the hands of the resort's security. Exactly what's in the briefcase, Hugin can't say, but the fact that it's in security's possession marks it as valuable.

To Hugin's knowledge, Sly doesn't know Hugin knows he's there, and therefore doesn't know that Thor knows and has let Eric know. So, obviously, the situation is ripe for exploitation by the God of Thunder and his offspring. All Eric has to do is recover the briefcase and its contents. Then, he and Thor can decide what to do with the prize.

(Information for Sylvester Guiler can be found on p. 305.)

MEETING THE CHALLENGE

While this might seem like a simple smash-and-grab operation, it can be more than that. In all likelihood, it *will* be a smash-and-grab, given that we're talking about Eric Donner here, but let's keep open minds.

- **The Takedown:** It's true. Thor and Eric know where Sly is, and Sly knows nothing about their activities. Therefore, it's probably not too difficult for Eric to stake out the Mirage with a little help from his fellow Scions and catch Sly as he leaves his room to go gamble, meet his contact, go for a swim—whatever he might leave the room for. Sly's no stooge, though, and Eric probably knows that the quick-witted rogue has plenty of ability to confound him, so he either needs to make the hit quick, or he needs to trust in his own Band to fast-talk the fast-talker into complicity. Just pounding Sly doesn't do the trick, though. He'll claim no knowledge of the briefcase. Rifling his belongings, however, will turn up a receipt of deposit with hotel security. Another "explanation" that he should probably help the Band will intimidate Sly into turning in the receipt and giving the briefcase to the characters. That's not the only way it can be done, however. A Scion might impersonate a security officer or persuade an officer to give her access to the safe-deposit room. Characters might ransack the room without accosting Guiler at all, retrieving the receipt and claiming the briefcase with all the style and grace of *Ocean's 11*. They might wait until he retrieves the briefcase himself on the way out and ambush him in the parking lot or some other out-of-the-way spot. Whatever the case, resolve the combat or intrigue quickly and in the characters' favor—but if you cheat on their behalf, don't let them know. For his part, Sly Guiler isn't going to undertake any doomed heroics. He'll do what the characters ask him to when they have him overpowered, and then, he'll make a sneaky exit as soon as the opportunity presents itself.

- **Changing the Angle:** If the characters enjoy action more than intrigue, it's a simple matter to have them learn of Sly's briefcase just as he's turning it over to a pack of monsters in Loki's employ. In this scenario, Sly's done the espionage work in recovering the briefcase's contents and he's turning the case over to the cadre of monsters for safe conduct back to Loki's lair. Here, the characters have the opportunity to slap Sly around a bit and engage in a little good-natured mayhem. As with the previous point, though, be sure they beat Loki's brood and recover the briefcase.

- **What's in the Briefcase?:** It's a MacGuffin, of course. It's not a true MacGuffin, because it's something specific, but it's certainly there to facilitate the plot. Okay, enough already. It's a big bundle of cured lizard-

LOKI'S WOLF-WARRIORS: THE ULFHEDNAR



If you choose to have Sly pass the briefcase off to some of Loki's other agents for safety, use these half-man, half-wolf shock troops. These wolf-soldiers have been loaned to Loki by the monstrous Fenris Wolf. The Ulfhednar don't actually look like wolf-man hybrids, they simply look like exceptionally feral men, hunchbacked and hirsute. Remember, here in the World, they need to conform somewhat to an appearance that keeps people from running shrieking into the hills as they witness the "monsters." They might appear as island savages (remember, Sly's staying at the tropical-paradise-themed Mirage), or they might look like a pack of wandering desert vagrants who stumbled onto the Strip on some kind of peyote-binge-vision-quest. Have fun with it, but give them a distinct aura of menace.

Attributes: Strength 3, Dexterity 2, Stamina 3; Charisma 2, Manipulation 2, Appearance 1; Perception 2, Intelligence 2, Wits 2

Virtues: Courage 2, Endurance 4, Expression 1, Loyalty 2

Abilities: Athletics 3, Awareness 2, Brawl 2, Command 3, Craft 1, Fortitude 2, Larceny 2, Marksmanship 2, Medicine 1, Melee 3, Occult 1, Presence 2, Stealth 2, Survival 2

Join Battle: 4

Attacks:

Unarmed, Heavy: Accuracy 3, Damage 7B, Parry DV 1, Speed 5

Unarmed, Light: Accuracy 5, Damage 4B, Parry DV 3, Speed 4

Clinch: Accuracy 4, Damage 4B, Parry DV —, Speed 6, P

Skeggox: Accuracy 6, Damage 10L, Parry DV 3, Speed 5

Soak: 2L/6B (Tough skin, 0L/3B)

Health Levels: -0/-1/-1/-2/-2/-4/Incap

Dodge DV: 4

Willpower: 6

Legend: 2

Legend Points: 4

Other Notes: Remember that these wolf warriors need to appear at least superficially normal. As such, they should carry their axes in some kind of concealment until the moment they plan to use them. Local law enforcement won't look too kindly upon a pack of savages wandering the street, armed to the teeth.

and snakeskins. What does it signify? Nothing yet, but savvy players and characters will probably be able to parse the mystery in Act Three.

CONCLUDING THE QUEST

Let's be honest. Thor isn't going to have any idea what that rattlebrained trickster wants with a bunch of scaly scraps. Maybe he's making a set of boots?

Don't let the God's ignorance get in the way of some good, old-fashioned speculation, however. If the players want to spend a little time hazarding guesses at the significance of the bundle of reptile carcasses, let them do it. In fact, if you'd like to encourage them or at least give them a little clue, you can have Munin arrive in the wake

of Hugin's visit. Munin—"memory"—can impart that in the distant past, snakeskins were sometimes used to record secrets. The wily serpents hid the written secrets from prying eyes even after their deaths. (A character with the Know-It-All Knack might "remember" this fact instead.)

That doesn't mean, though, that *these* snakeskins have anything written on them. Allow the players to conduct any kind of research they want, but don't let them waste too much time. After all, this is a red herring intended to throw them off the trail of another mystery they have in their possession. It's not supposed to be a brick wall erected to frustrate the players when they come up with clever ideas.

STORY SEED: THE PLOT THICKENS

As the Scions will discover later, sometimes a serpent's skin does indeed record a hidden mystery. See "Claiming the Heroes' Trophy" on page 269 for more information on this. Once you've read that section and decided how you want to handle Loki's intercession at the end of "The Long Road to ," you might want to stir the pot at this stage too. Hereafter are a few suggestions for doing just that.

- **Play It Straight:** Loki's looking for information on the Black Feather Shroud, which he has divined is written on a serpent's skin. If this is the case, Sly has been gathering up promising but ultimately useless bits of serpent skin in hopes that they're what his God wants. Of course, he doesn't really know *what* his God wants, so he's grabbing up anything that fits the broad description and conveying them back to Loki.

- **The Double Cross:** Loki knows that the serpent skins he has Sly gathering are useless. Sly doesn't know that. What Loki wants is for the Scions to accost Sly and waste a lot of their time trying to figure out just what the heck he wants with these reptile skins. While the players' characters are hassling his son and scratching their heads over these scaly tatters, Loki's managed to buy himself more time to search for the real snakeskin that contains the information he's after. In this case, Loki's kept Sly in the dark so that even if the characters torture him, he can't spill the beans and put them on his father's trail.

- **The Triple Cross:** As with the preceding option, but this time, Loki *wants* the characters to know that he's looking for a serpent's skin because it contains some important information he's after. As such, this time Sly knows what his patron's looking for and allows the characters to extract that information from him. In this scenario, Loki wants the players' Scions to know what he's up to because he wants them to decide they want to keep it out of his hands. If that's the case, they'll proactively go searching for this snakeskin with mysteries written all over it, and Loki will be able to swoop in at the last minute and take it from them. Why should he do the work when a bunch of do-gooders will happily lead him right to what he wants to find anyway?

SUSANO-O'S QUEST: RECOVERING THE GIFT

MENTAL • PHYSICAL • SOCIAL •••

When the World was young, before Amaterasu hid the sun in the rock cave, Susano-o and his sister's rivalry began. Izanagi exiled Susano-o from Heaven, and when he went to bid farewell to Amaterasu, she regarded him with suspicion. He offered to have children with her, to allay her skepticism. She agreed, and each took one of the belongings of the other and crafted children from it. Amaterasu made three lovely girls from Susano-o's sword, while Susano-o created five handsome men from Amaterasu's necklace. (One of these children, the Hachioji or "Eight Princes," eventually founded the first Imperial line in Japan, but that's another story.)

SUSANO-O'S CHARGE:

GATHER THE CURVED JEWELS

Passions flare and siblings war and Susano-o is once again angry with his sister Amaterasu. He wants to rescind his gesture of solidarity. He wants to return Amaterasu's necklace to her.

To this end, he tasks Yukiko Kuromizu with collecting the five curved jewels of the necklace. That's the easy part, Susano-o says. After all, *he's* the one who

has to put them back together so that they once again form an unflawed necklace.

Susano-o, of course, either fails to realize or deliberately ignores that fact that the five men born from the necklace are surely long dead, and thousands of years of history have passed since their movements might have been followed.

That's Yukiko's worry, not Susano-o's. Gather the jewels!

MEETING THE CHALLENGE

There comes a time in almost every Scion's life when the labors the Gods ask of him are just plain impossible to achieve. Some Gods relish this, enjoying it when their Scions acknowledge that they are, indeed, the divinities and the Scions aren't even true demigods (yet). Other Gods use these opportunities to bequeath potent Birthrights upon their offspring, wanting to provide a challenge to complement their patronage. Some Gods are just too detached to understand the trials their Scions face and have no idea that satisfying a particular quest is any more difficult than catching a fish from a river.



Such is the case here with Susano-o. He simply doesn't understand that Yukiko can't possibly fulfill this charge without some additional assistance. That's one of the primary lessons of this particular scene: A little humility before the Gods isn't a bad thing. Yukiko just needs to swallow her pride and ask her father for a little help.

How does Susano-o react? That's up to you. If he wants the quest satisfied, he's going to have to give a little bit, but he doesn't have to be noble about it. In fact, it's probably appropriate, especially with fiery Susano-o, to see just how petulant and emotionally immature a God can be. Remember, the Gods aren't human. They reflect aspects of humanity or they embody human ideals, but they're not human themselves and they've had none of the crucible of learning that develops real people from children into adults. Susano-o in particular is known for his tantrums, his pride and his overreacting to certain events (at least in his "early" incarnation). Such being the case, go ahead and have the God bluster and rage and rail against his Scion's incompetence, if it serves the story. Don't bully the player, though, so mind the vitriol you put into the interaction.

In order to allow Yukiko to succeed, Susano-o grudgingly gives his Scion a necklace of copper threads that bears a fine green patina. This is the necklace band from which Amaterasu's curved jewels originally hung. The bearer of the necklace sees any errant "jewels"—i.e., people descended from the Hachioji's line—limned by a jade-green glow. That should make finding the jewels easier than delving into several thousand years of Asian genealogies and hoping some descendents of some of them just happen to be in Las Vegas this weekend.

Beyond granting the ability to find the curved jewels, you have a few variables you can adjust in the interests of making this scene more or less difficult.

- **The Rarity of Jewels:** At your discretion, the "jewels" may have fragmented over time, passing a bit of their essence down through the lines that descend from them. Alternatively, the line might have remained comparatively pure. What this decision determines is how many people in Las Vegas at the current time fit the requirements of being a "jewel." If you want to devote a good deal of time to this quest, or make it very difficult for Yukiko's player, or even thread this scene through the chronology of other scenes, you may determine that only five very specific individuals satisfy the criteria for being a "jewel." If you want to make it easy, the Hachioji line might have wound its way through all of Asian culture, and the only thing a person has to be to be considered a "jewel" is a person of Asian ancestry. Between these two ends of the spectrum lie other considerations you might wish to employ. For example, the Hachioji bloodline might be comparatively rare but certainly widespread through history, meaning that perhaps 100 Asian visitors or residents of Las Vegas might be suitable. That number might increase to 1,000 if you want to be a little more lenient but don't want to simply give the scene's completion away for free. A truly twisted Susano-o (or a similarly twisted Storyteller) might know that only three of the original five jewels survived, with the intent of reinforcing the scene's theme of humility. Yukiko might have to go back empty-handed and learn to accept that some things in a Scion's life are bigger than herself. Controlling the rarity of the

jewels is also a good way to involve other Scions in the scene—if everyone’s watching somewhere or pursuing someone, everyone can participate with equal value.

• **I Found a Jewel. Now What?:** Once Yukiko finds a person who qualifies as “jewel,” how does she collect the... stuff... that makes that person a gem? What, exactly, needs to be harvested so that Susano-o might be able to reconstruct the necklace? Again, the variable here depends on how difficult you want to make this quest. The scenario default assumes that anything Yukiko can convince the jewel to freely give—a teardrop, a lock of hair, a fingernail—will serve as an adequate gemstone for the necklace. In such a case, convincing the “jewels” to part with some substantial portion of themselves becomes the thrust of the scene. (It should probably take more than, “Hey, man, you’re glowing green. Lemme have some of your blood....”) This makes for a persuasion- or diplomacy-intensive scene. If your players enjoy more physical threats, you might require that the gem-stuff be taken from jewels, whether in combat, through trickery or any other method of obtaining what the legitimate owner doesn’t want to part with. This is a good opportunity to test the character’s ethics, to see how much pain she’s willing to inflict on others in order to satisfy her God. Making this more morally black and white is also an option. Perhaps the Hachioji line has become cruel (or at least the ones in Vegas have), and each “jewel” is engaged in some criminal or evil activity that the Scion can avenge and then reap the benefit of. Clever players will hopefully take the opportunity to see how closely they can adhere to the letter of the quest while preserving their own spirit. For example, a character who opposes senseless bloodshed might be able to make a “jewel” cry in remorse for some action and harvest the tear instead of severing the poor guy’s head.

• **Fool’s Gold:** A devious Storyteller might prolong this quest by having some of Yukiko’s collected jewels be “false jade” or some other unsuitable material. The rationale here can play into any interpretation. Perhaps the Hachioji line grew corrupt or impure over time and only a “true” descendent of the line will serve as a jewel donor, even though the necklace points out true and false jewels with equal aplomb. Maybe the jewels last only a few hours before turning into useless stone or crumbling to dust, requiring Yukiko to collect all five in a single night. Perhaps they’re very valuable, and a black marketer (or the agent of a rival God) wants to collect them for his own use and profit. The options are limitless.

CONCLUDING THE QUEST

This is a fairly straightforward quest once the Scion overcomes the initial hurdle, whether you choose to complicate the difficulty or not. Find the items, collect them, return. That’s okay, though, as classical legend is full of such seemingly simple directives that turn out to have significant impact on other events down the road.

For the time being, Susano-o is overjoyed at retrieving the five curved jewels. With almost childlike glee, he scampers away into the Overworld, pausing only briefly to thank Yukiko (and perhaps her Band, if he can be bothered to notice those Scions). Although he can be mean-tempered, Susano-o isn’t stingy, and he leaves behind a few small tokens of his appreciation. If you decides that this happens, he should grant Yukiko and perhaps her Band a few mystical Birthright items that have one-time functions. These gifts even work for characters of different pantheons. Depending on the disposition of a Scion’s patron, though, Scions should probably keep quiet about these, as they imply that Susano-o has some sort of influence over that God’s Scion. Ah, the petty politics of Heaven.

APHRODITE’S QUEST: SUNDERED HEARTS

MENTAL • PHYSICAL • SOCIAL •••

Zeus, knowing his daughter Aphrodite was the fairest and most desirable among the Gods and Goddesses, contrived a plan. He worried that Aphrodite’s beauty would cause a furor in Olympus, with jealous Gods all seeking her hand in marriage and throwing his court into tumult. To head off the scandal before it became one, Zeus married Aphrodite to Hephaestus, the dour God of smithing and the forge.

Needless to say, Aphrodite’s marriage was not a happy one, and she took many lovers both from among the Gods and mortals. To this day, she harbors ill will toward her father and toward the notion of marriage without love.

Therefore, we find Aphrodite’s interests piqued by a loveless couple spending a long weekend in Las Vegas.

Jimmy and Lillian Brewer, a labor union delegate and a cosmetics hostess from Wilkes-Barre, Pennsylvania arrived two days ago for a romantic getaway that both of them knew was doomed from the beginning. The Brewers aren’t young anymore, but they’ve both resigned themselves to the fact that they’ll probably never have another chance at real love, so each thinks the other is good enough. This isn’t a one-sided relationship or a disaster waiting to happen, it’s just an empty marriage built on comfort instead of passion.

APHRODITE’S CHARGE

Oh, the meddling Gods, who treat mortals as pawns and toys as long as they prove entertaining! Aphrodite tasks her Scion, Donnie Rhodes, with splitting

up the husband and wife, Jimmy and Lillian. His task doesn't end there, though, for Aphrodite is not cruel. No, Donnie must also find "a suitable love" for each of them after separating the two with as little grief as possible.

MEETING THE CHALLENGE

Donnie's player can make this task as complex or as simple as he wishes. The easiest way to wrap the whole thing up is to give Jimmy and Lillian the one-two from Eros and Anteros: Make them hate each other, make them fall in love with the next person they see, and then put them in a cab toward the courthouse to file for divorce. Too easy, though. No points for style. That's the tools doing the work, not the Scion.

On the other hand, we don't want to spell out the possibilities too plainly, because that defeats the purpose of having the player think creatively around the character's quest. A few things to consider, though:

- **Breaking up is Hard to Do:** The first thing Donnie needs to do is convince Jimmy and Lillian to admit that they're unhappy with one another. That's easier said than done, of course. Are they going to believe him if he saunters up while they're at the steak-and-lobster buffet and tells them, "Listen, I'm the son of the Goddess of Love, and she says you guys need to just move on." Donnie might try to interpose himself as "the other man," which should be easy enough (given his appeal) on Lillian's side, but that's sure not going to do much for Jimmy's disposition toward him. Perhaps he plays the part of an old friend? A newly divorced bachelor who's having a hell of a time in Vegas? Or, hey, maybe he plays the part of a Wim Wenders angel, *Wings of Desire*-style and leaves it ambiguous as to how he knows the couple's plight? This is going to be the crux of some potentially intense roleplaying, and it truly rewards the player who entertains the role of Donnie with more than a hack-and-slash play style. This is also an excellent method by which to involve the other Scions in the Band, who can sow the seeds of doubt in the Brewers' hearts as they come into contact with them, and then divert Jimmy and Lillian's attentions to whomever their "suitable loves" are.

- **Tugging the Heart's Strings:** Aphrodite specifically doesn't demand that Jimmy and Lillian get a divorce. While it might seem immoral in American culture to encourage adultery, remember that these are the whims of the Gods. Aphrodite herself took many lovers while married to Hephaestus, and found in their arms the love and adoration that was absent in her relationship with her soot-stained husband. The ensuing affair may ultimately result in a divorce (and will, in all likelihood), but who knows? Maybe Jimmy and Lillian really do love each other, but just don't know it yet. Perhaps by placing an outside strain on the marriage, they'll come to realize what they have in each other and understand that their suitable loves are actually each other. *In your face, space coyote.*

- **Lust Isn't Love:** The task set before Donnie is to match both Jimmy and Lillian up with "a suitable love."

That doesn't mean Jimmy needs to fall into the sack with the next topless showgirl he can convince to follow him back to his hotel room. Lillian might be attracted to a high-rolling young venture capitalist from San Francisco, but is she really going to find fulfillment by cougaring him over appletinis and double whiskeys? This is an excellent way for to reward the player's creativity, and to up the level of challenge. It's easy to con someone into bed. It's harder to find a true and suitable love. Especially in Sin City.

- **A Suitable Love:** Aphrodite never said that Jimmy or Lillian had to fall in love with a person. In these cynical times, maybe Jimmy falls in love with hard liquor after Lillian tells him to get bent. That certainly wouldn't be a happy ending, but there's a reason Greek theater is known for its tragedies. It doesn't have to be so bleak, though. Maybe Lillian discovers a love for singing when a date Donnie arranges for her takes her to see the "Legends in Concert" impersonators' revue at the Imperial Palace. Sure, she doesn't hit it off with the date, but now she's got a new expressive outlet that provides her with the joy she never found in her marriage to Jimmy.

CONCLUDING THE QUEST

This type of quest is fairly uncommon in storytelling game scenarios because its ultimate conclusion is outside the scope of the story and the cycle. Will Jimmy and Lillian really split? Will whatever Donnie turns them on to prove, in the long term, to be their suitable love? We don't know. The curtain normally falls on scenes like this with the coda "and they all lived happily ever after," even though Jimmy probably loses his retirement money to some real-estate scam artist and Lillian probably contracts hepatitis C after getting one of those ill-advised and age-inappropriate lower-back tattoos.

That notwithstanding, it's entirely within the Greek pantheon's idiom to resolve in the present, because the Gods' attention is short and they're engaged in their next intrigue already. As well, among the Greek pantheon, who really cares about mortals? Jimmy and Lillian are there to placate the Gods' wills when they feel like paying attention to the sheep down there at the bottom of the mountain. Jimmy and Lillian are (probably) lucky to be alive and not drowned at the bottom of a whirlpool or chained to a rock in the Overworld where vultures eat their livers each day. Aphrodite may well have forgotten that she even sent Donnie to satisfy this quest.

Still, it's important, especially at this stage of the Scions' development (that is, at this stage of the Scion story cycle) for the human element to receive its exaltation. Helping Jimmy and Lillian achieve happiness—even if it's fleeting—is important here. Aphrodite's disinterest is almost a sign that Donnie has performed exceedingly well, because at least Aphrodite's no longer there mucking about with the Brewers' lives, like by seducing Jimmy or by smiting Lillian in a fit of jealousy.

BARON SAMEDI'S QUEST: KILLING THE DEAD

MENTAL • PHYSICAL • SOCIAL •

The duty of the psychopomp is plain: bring the newly deceased to their proper place in the afterlife. On occasion it happens, though, that while the spirit goes to its greater reward, the body doesn't yet know it's dead. Baron Samedi, as a psychopomp, takes care of the spiritual portion of the transaction. What remains can sometimes get complicated.

With the Baron in attendance at the Gods' convocation, his attention to his traditional duties has waned a bit. He's not slacking or anything. He just doesn't have the time to make sure that everything's in its proper place. If pressed, he might even suggest that such is the job of his lesser psychopomps, the ghedes. The Baron is the grave, while the ghedes just lie in it.

That's the problem. Someone's not seeing the duty through, and an alarming number of the dead are still up and about in Las Vegas, drinking and gambling and whoring and a host of other things dead people aren't supposed to do.

BARON SAMEDI'S CHARGE:

LAY THE DEAD TO REST

When the souls of the dead depart, the body remains in World. Sometimes, though, these bodies don't go to the graves where they belong—they sometimes continue to haunt the World, empty shells of the people they once were. In fact, this very thing happens while the Scions and Gods are in Vegas. All that remains is to grant final peace to the precious few animate bodies that wandered off before Death laid their final reward on them. The Baron can't leave the Gods' assembly, so he asks his Scion Brigitte De La Croix to handle this menial but important duty. In exchange, and to help the effort along, Samedi offers two minor Birthright items: a pack of unfiltered cigarettes and a battered, brassy flask of peppered rum.

The cigarettes come in a crumpled pack marked with a pair of sunglasses missing one lens. The pack is never empty. Even if some doubting fool managed to smoke 25 of them in a single sitting—they're strong and unfiltered and even thinking about smoking 25 in a single sitting is enough to kill most people—it always turns out that there's *just one more* hiding in the crinkled liner, just waiting to be shaken out. If the Scion to whom this Birthright item is linked smokes a cigarette within 100 feet or so of one of the walking dead, the smoke will form a dense cloud above the head of that dead individual. The rum works in a similar fashion: If the Scion pours a bit of rum on the ground, it will pool at the feet of any dead individual within 100 feet of the spilled liquor. The flask works like the pack too. Although it should hold only 10 shots, it's never empty. There's always *just another swig* inside. There's something

else inside, too. It's something solid, and seems to be about the size of a human finger from the way it sounds and the heft it adds to the flask.

Don't be so squeamish. It's just a pepper.

To Baron Samedi's knowledge, three of the restless dead still stalk the World. With a bit of cajoling, he'll confide that they're all probably dancing. Indeed, their bodies have probably been taken over by mischievous loa who just want to take the bodies on a bit of a joyride before they return to their duties. In fact, they're probably dancing with reckless abandon, performing the salacious banda dance with any partner they can convince to take to the floor with them.

MEETING THE CHALLENGE

How hard can it be to find a few people dancing lewdly in Las Vegas? It's probably best to start with the nightclubs. Or maybe the lounges. Or maybe the rum mills with live bands. Wait, maybe these dead people aren't tourists at all, and are Las Vegas locals attending a house party.

Yeah, it's going to be a real pain in the neck.

The Death Senses power (Death •) is enough to reveal the presence of these lingering dead in the general area where they are, but it's not enough to pick them out individually, as they're dancing just beyond the reach of eternal rest. Indeed, what Death Senses reveals here is the proximity of the dead, not the dead persons themselves. That's where the cigarettes and rum come in. Certain creative uses of Where Are You? (Psychopomp ••) may likewise orient the Scion to the presence of someone she knows to be one of the dead.

The best way to handle this scene is to remember that this whole act is intended to be a montage of sorts. To that end, you can run a few reconnaissance-type vignettes to represent Brigitte's due diligence in tracking down where these dead people might be, and thereafter commence to the action of killing them swiftly, 'cause they're wrong. Likewise, other members of the Band might have powers that can contribute to the hunt, which makes for an excellent visual element of the search montage. As well, those other members of the Band will likely come in handy when the dead men walking realize they're being hunted and try to escape.

• **The Creep at the Roulette Wheel:** Gary Vinson has been dead for almost 24 hours, and in that time, he hasn't left the roulette table. None of the dealers have noticed, since they turn over every 20 minutes. The pit bosses think he's got amazing stamina and a bladder the size of Lake Las Vegas. The guys watching the security monitors know that this guy hasn't taken a bathroom or meal break in just under a day, nor has he partaken

of the complimentary drinks the cocktail waitresses keep offering. Something's obviously wrong with the guy—but he keeps spending money and he's not even costing the house its free drinks, so they'll check it out when he finally gets up to go. The only problem is that he's bothering the other patrons a little bit. They've complained that he smells like BO, and he insists on dancing to the canned music that's barely audible above the din of the casino sound effects while the wheel's spinning. He particularly likes dancing with "Lady Luck," which is apparently any poor woman who has the misfortune to sit next to him at the table.

• **Cougar on the Prowl:** It was supposed to be a weekend with the girls, a chance for six friends in their late-30s to take a break from their demanding careers and just cut loose and maybe meet some young studs looking for a little NSA sex. Tina'd had too much to drink, though, and didn't see the taxi that was going to take them to ghostbar and then everyone was screaming and people were running everywhere. In the chaos, Tina got back up, dead as a doornail, and hailed another cab when she couldn't find her friends (the bitches). She was going to ghostbar, whatever it took, and now that she's here, she's going to find Mr. Right Now. It's been more difficult than she remembered, though, even though she's been dancing with anyone and everyone on the floor. Doesn't anybody want to take her home?

• **Graveyard Shift:** The 11-to-seven is the worst shift, because it starts with the drunks and ends with the desperate old people throwing away their Social Security checks on two cards that just aren't going to beat the house. Still, it's where a tenured dealer makes the most tips—as if the cards had anything to do with him!—so Andre stays on that schedule. What Andre doesn't know is that he choked to death trying to wolf down a gristly roast beef sandwich on his second break. When the break was over he just coughed it up, wiped off his vest and went back to his table. Now that shift's over, though, he needs to get some breakfast even though he's not feeling very hungry. He's not supposed to eat at the casino proper, though, so it's probably going to be some fast-food drive-through on the way home.

These three individuals are just suggestions. If you have someone in mind who might work better, so be it. In fact, maybe someone the Scions killed previously has failed to stay down and even comes after them to even the score. Unless you have some kind of nasty surprise like this in mind, these dead folks are just like the ones described on pages 293-294 of the Antagonists chapter. The difficulty is finding them and re-killing them in a way that doesn't send everyone in the vicinity into a screaming panic. Note that these poor people haven't been dead long enough to be rotting zombies—they still look functional and human, though the longer they stay active, the more their non-circulating blood will pool and the more rigor mortis will inhibit their mobility.



CONCLUDING THE QUEST

Unless you choose to complicate this quest with more dead people or more powerful dead people, or shift the focus from dealing with the dead to the search for them, this quest shouldn't be too difficult for the Scions to complete.

That's kind of the point. Being a God isn't all orgies in Babylon, debauches upon Olympus or ass-kicking rampages across the plains of Valhalla. (That's why "The Long Road to Heaven" is set in Las Vegas, which is all about excess.) The Gods have specific duties

and responsibilities for which the cosmic order birthed them. With power comes responsibility—see pages 214-216 for a discussion of Scion's themes—and sometimes that responsibility rises to the fore.

For what it's worth, Baron Samedi is more than happy to allow Brigitte to keep the pack of cigarettes and the flask of rum. The supply in each is now full and finite, but they both still work as long as supplies last. It's a minor reward, sure, but it's the thought that counts. And who knows? They might come in handy later.

ACT THREE AMONG THE AUGUST

After concluding the episodic scenes of Act Two, the time comes to ease "The Long Road to Heaven" back into a more traditional epic narrative. We've seen *why* the Scions are doing their Gods' bidding, we've learned a little more about those Scions and Gods, and now, it's time to see just what's at stake.

Compared to the casual pacing of the last act, *Among the August* should gradually increase in pace and tension. After all, this is the act in which one of the characters has a chance to become a God himself and feel all that power and responsibility, and then lose that omnipotence in an immediate, debilitating stroke of treachery.

Scene CRATOS'S FEAR

MENTAL • PHYSICAL ••• SOCIAL •

Cratos, the constant companion of Zeus, the brother of Nike, Zelus and Bia, the child of Pallas and Styx, is the personification of strength and power. He devotes himself utterly to Zeus's rule, and as his name means "force," he represents the inarguable nature of Zeus's rule.

At Zeus's will, Cratos faced tests of strength challenges of force, and he performed great feats of might. Some say he could lift weights as great as those borne by Atlas and shake the pillars of Olympus itself. In all his time at Zeus's side, Cratos failed only one challenge: a pankration with the serpent Canopus.

As the pankration commenced, Cratos demonstrated that he was obviously the stronger of the two by crushing a giant stone between his hands. Canopus the serpent coiled around a stone of similar size, but failed to crush it. As the two turned their attentions to each other, nearly all of the Gods in attendance thought that Cratos would win the match. Hephaestus thought differently, however, and as an extremely strong God himself, he knew the limits of untempered brawn.

The pankration match lasted for three nights, with both Cratos and the serpent unable to gain absolute advantage over the other. Cratos despaired, as his strength had never failed him before. Each time he thought he had Canopus in his grasp, though, the serpent slithered from

between his arms and coiled itself about him, constricting him with its own vast strength. At the end of the third night, proud Zeus called a halt to the battle, declaring Cratos the winner, much to the surprise of the other Gods. Thereafter, they whispered behind the backs of Zeus and Cratos that the serpent had won, and that fear should overcome Cratos should he face Canopus again.

Thousands of years later, as the crack between the Overworld and the World formed with the Titans' escape, the cosmic and Titanic energies it bled spilled all over the World, and specifically Las Vegas, where they coalesced near the Stratosphere Tower. In modern times, only comparatively weak entities have crossed the failing border between worlds, such as Tecuhtli, but even those "weak" entities can bear striking resemblance to the epic legends of times past.

The Stratosphere Tower in Las Vegas is a thrill-ride themed casino. At the top of its tower construction stands the High Roller, a roller coaster suspended some 900+ feet in the air. The High Roller closed on December 30, 2005, as the casino plans to replace it with a different thrill ride.

The structures for the High Roller still exist, however: the tracks, the supports and, most importantly, the coaster train itself. The swirling vortex of multidimensional

STORY SEED: CANOPUS'S ORIGINS

Whence came this great wyrm, this bane of Titans' sons? If you want to add a degree of depth to the story, you can use one of the following suggestions to add a layer of mystery, treachery or simple significance to the serpent's appearance. Canopus doesn't need this back story to justify his presence—sometimes the monsters of legend are just *there*—but if an added element of divine manipulation might add to the story, consider these possibilities.

- **The Captain Transformed:** Canopus was the name of the ship's captain of King Menelaus of Sparta. According to legend, Canopus was bitten by a serpent and died. If you choose this element, perhaps Canopus never died at all—perhaps the serpent's bite transformed him into a serpent himself. If this is the case, you might choose to have the serpent Canopus morph back into his human form upon defeat, freed from the ophidian curse. The newly human Canopus might indeed make for a fine retainer or ally by way of gratitude.

- **The Egyptian Connection:** Canopus is also the name of an ancient Egyptian port town found on the Nile Delta, supposedly where Menelaus's captain died. If this is the case, the serpent Canopus might be an Egyptian titanspawn, lured into conflict with Cratos (and later to the top of the Stratosphere) by a jealous Egyptian God or other evil entities.

- **Other Pantheons' Ties:** Canopus need not be "Canopus" at all if you'd rather feature another pantheon or have some other plot thread come to fruition here. Canopus is merely the serpent we use because the legend of Cratos intersects with the near-homonym of the Stratosphere Tower. You could substitute a descendent of Orochi for Canopus if the Japanese pantheon plays a more active role in your version of "The Long Road to Heaven." The presence of Tecuhtli might encourage you to keep the Mojave Desert legend more Aztec, perhaps suggesting a change from Canopus to one of the brood of coatls (see p. 325). (In this case, you can change the lindwurm to something more Aztec as well.) All of the pantheons feature enough serpent beasts to easily make the change.

energies that focused on the top of Stratosphere Tower have warped the now-forgotten remains of this ride into a threat worthy of the Scions' attention. Here, atop the tower, the serpent Canopus—Cratos's fear—now dwells, the only beast that had the strength to resist the might of Cratos.

Therefore, it falls to the characters to avenge (knowingly or otherwise) Cratos's single failure. Hopefully, the Scions will be able to exact their vengeance on the wily beast in its current, weakened state as a refugee from the Overworld.

FIGHT WHO WHERE, NOW?

First and foremost, the characters must learn about Canopus's presence in order to search out its lair. Fortunately, this falls under the purview of the Scions' original purpose in Las Vegas: securing the safety of the desert locale for their patron Gods.

The Gods can tell the characters, or the characters can find out for themselves, that a mysterious new temple has opened in the Stratosphere Hotel. Known as the Chapel in the Clouds, this temple hides beneath a mortal guise as a unique wedding chapel, a tourist attraction where couples can be married 800 feet in the sky. The Gods feel a unique and... chaotic resonance from the direction of the chapel, however. Some Gods are nervous they're being spied upon. Other Gods fear an incursion of titanspawn from the mysterious power nexus. Others are simply curious and want to know the

nature of this anomaly they can feel out there on the edge of their perceptions.

There's more to the Chapel in the Clouds than the Gods realize, however. Since it falls to the characters to investigate, they'll probably want to go there and take a look around. This can provide an amusing sub-scene in which two characters pretend to be a betrothed couple. (Imagine just how hard it would be for Donnie Rhodes to resist toying with Yukiko Kuromizo as they pretend to consider the chapel for their own bogus wedding. Imagine the look on the chapel salesperson's face when a follower of Freya declares that *right now* is the most portentous time for conception—in hopes of embarrassing him into leaving she and her lover alone so they can scope the place out.)

A cursory glance at the chapel indicates that it's nothing more than it purports to be. A more thorough survey of the chapel, however, turns up some disturbing clues. In truth, the Chapel in the Clouds is a front for a titanspawn-worshipping cult, the Scales of the Great Serpent. The cult's secret symbol is a snake's scale, which looks a bit like a shield. The center of the scale depicts a drop of blood, and a pair of leering snake's eyes peer over the top of the scale-shield. This symbol appears in inconspicuous places on the chapel's printed sales materials and on a few pieces of furniture and accouterments in the chapel proper, such as on the sides of pews, on centerpieces or worked into the cornices of the chapel dome.

A few other clues lie scattered about the chapel that should definitely indicate that something unwholesome is taking place within:

- The kitchen used by the caterers has a five-gallon jug of viscous red liquid mixed in with its wine stores. Analysis of the fluid reveals it to be the blood of a snake. (Exactly how the Scions might smuggle a five-gallon jug of snake blood out without being noticed is up to them.) Of course, the Scions could simply smuggle out a smaller portion of the fluid, but that leaves the remainder of it in the hands of whomever put it there, and for whatever unwholesome purpose.

- Included among the silverware used for receptions is a decidedly vicious-looking dagger. This is a ritual athame with a small amber globe set into its hilt. Characters might discover this while looking at the place settings the chapel offers for receptions.

- Snakeskin motifs occur here and there in places that seem just a little odd for a wedding chapel. Examples include snakeskin-patterned napkin holders, scaled piping on table runners and snakeskin surfaces on matted and framed wedding photographs offered by the chapel's service department.

The employees of the chapel, from its sales staff to the ministers who perform the services to the optional Elvis impersonators, have no idea that the Scales of the Great Serpent operate here. The cult does a diligent job of keeping its operations entirely secret from the front that provides it with money and temple facilities.

ALTERNATIVE MOTIVATIONS

You have a variety of alternative methods of imparting information related to Canopus's presence, depending on what sort of feel you want the story to take.

Simplest, and perhaps the truest to epic tradition, is to have the characters hear about and investigate some awful catastrophe involving the High Roller. Like the heroes of old, they learn of something oppressing the common folk and they then rout it from its lair. The roller coaster itself has been shut down by the Stratosphere Hotel, and this bit of local knowledge will automatically cast any occurrences there in a suspicious light. Perhaps a handful of tourists disappeared while staying at the Stratosphere and the only clues police or crime reporters have mentioned seeing is a dropped purse or wallet at the site of the defunct coaster. More action-oriented Scions might chase some lesser titanspawn up to the Stratosphere Tower and find themselves unwittingly in the lair of a rampant monster. A deranged casino thief might take a hostage up there; a missing child might turn up in the sealed-off loading station. Whatever the simple impetus, just give the players enough to go on, and they'll head up there to investigate.

Some Storytellers and troupes prefer more story-driven rationales to explore, however. That's fine, and perfectly in keeping with the modern idiom of storytelling games. In such cases, you should present a few clues that will eventually lead the characters to the lair of Canopus. A few suggestions for this type of scenario follow.

- **Vengeance:** Scions of the Greek pantheon, such as Donnie Rhodes, might receive a request from their Gods to bring vengeance to the object of Cratos's fear. This serves as a bit of a *deus ex machina* because it literally hands down the quest from God to Scion, but the epics are full of such divine charges.

- **Supremacy:** On the other hand, Scions of other pantheons' Gods might hear of the return of Canopus through their own patrons. The Gods are petty, and if one among them could convince his Scion and her Band to claim victory over Cratos's fear, that would earn them honor and glory that ranking members of the Greek pantheon were unable to achieve. This works best if the Band in question has no Greek Scions, or if the Greek Scions are at odds with Zeus or are perhaps the Scions of Hephæstus.

- **Divination or Oracular Ability:** Those characters with the ability to see their fates might witness a vision or have a dream in which they see themselves contesting the great serpent Canopus. In their visions, they see only a few landmarks that allow them to determine that, wherever they are, it's in a place far, far above the landscape and within sight of several of the other Las Vegas casinos. (Such landmarks should, of course, appear as their mythic counterparts in the vision—the Luxor as a giant pyramid, for example.)

NON-WEDDING CRASHERS

Having obtained enough information to inform them that something weird is going on at the chapel, the Scions will likely keep an eye on the place. Their actual methodologies for doing so are up to them, but as long as they maintain at least a token degree of surveillance, they'll see strange lights from the chapel between the hours of two and four AM on Sundays and Wednesdays.

Getting near the chapel is easily done, as it's part of the hotel. The only thing preventing immediate access to the chapel is a sign stating "The Chapel in the Clouds is closed for a private service"—as well as a lock on the chapel facility door and a bored hotel security guard listening to a rebroadcast baseball game on a portable radio. None of these should pose any difficulties to the Scions, who have a wide array of supernatural abilities at their beck and call, though they may be interested to learn (if they don't know already) that the Cleveland Indians defeat the Kansas City Royals 5-4.

Once inside the chapel, it becomes another matter. If the characters entered with much crashing of doors and punching of security guards and brandishing of relic weapons, the cultists will be ready for them, and swarm over them. If they entered more subtly, they'll have the drop on the cultists, who are in the middle of their rites.

The chapel itself, if the characters have time to notice, looks like a more macabre version of its daytime appearance. All of the lights have been augmented with red- or amber-colored bulbs, creating weird pools of over-saturated light that forms coarse shadows. The seats and tables have all been

stowed, and the attendant cultists, some 30-plus deranged individuals, prostrate themselves before what looks to be a human sacrifice occurring on the garden terrace.

Conduct the combat as normal, with the characters either having the element of surprise, or the cult aggressively attacking them otherwise. In either case, the priest, a stocky, balding man dressed in a very Hollywood interpretation of Greek-Egyptian vestments, leaves his flock to fend for itself and bolts through one of the service doors leading back into the bowels of the Stratosphere Hotel.

At this point, three things need to happen. If the players neglect one of the first two, that's fine, but you should allow the Scions to achieve the following items:

- The characters can deal with the cultists as they wish. If they want to fight them, great. If they want to subdue or charm them, fine. If they explode the entire reception area of the Chapel in the Clouds in a cascade of glass and drywall that rains down upon the Las Vegas Strip... that's okay, too, but they're probably going to have to answer to someone. Eventually. But keep the pace racing for the time being!
- If the characters examine the "human sacrifice," it's already dead. Incisions have been made on the body that lead the characters to think that something was being taken out. No organs are missing (on a cursory or invasive investigation), but all the blood is.
- Ultimately, the Scions should be able to follow the fleeing priest. Even if he has a head start on them, he's

carrying a sloshing vessel of human blood as he recklessly hauls ass away from a pack of heroes who probably aren't too happy with what he's up to. Pace the chase as best excites the players, but eventually, allow the characters to catch up with the priest—"He's running to the elevators? He's headed up? What's this guy doing?"—as he makes a desperate dash for Canopus's lair over 900 feet above the desert floor.

As mentioned before, the High Roller is closed. The characters negotiate a maze of temporary construction, caution tape, scaffolding and dismantled equipment to find their crazed priest, brandishing a chalice half-filled with blood and dripping like a Camaro's engine block, shouting pidgin Greek *into the train station* where the roller coaster used to load.

Unless the characters know a little bit about Las Vegas, they're probably confused at this point—what's a roller coaster doing on one of the upper floors of the resort? Help them piece it together, if you wish. The Stratosphere's theme is thrill rides, and three other rides—Insanity, Big Shot and X-Scream—are operational (though closed at the moment, because it's the middle of the night). The platform they're standing on looks to belong to a ride that's either being built or... no, it's definitely been closed down, as the parts still present look to have seen use.

As the characters figure out just where the hell they are, *an enormous snake erupts from the train station, swallowing the manic priest whole*. Its tongue flicks in and out of its mouth as its alien, reptilian eyes turn to them while the snake's head bobs hypnotically. *Then, it strikes!*



(In game terms, allow Canopus a single action of surprise attack. Characters who have Epic Dexterity may react defensively, but may not take any offensive actions. Likewise, any player who wishes to spend a point of Willpower for his character may have that character react defensively. Other characters must simply weather the assault.)

CLAIMING THE HEROES' TROPHY

As the monstrous serpent makes its lightning-quick attack, attentive characters hear a “clack-clack clack-clack” sound, not unlike a rollercoaster moving along its track. This sound persists through the battle as it issues from Canopus. Indeed, the serpent Canopus has merged itself with the abandoned roller coaster train of the High Roller. Its body is segmented like a train, and its scaly skin looks like an airbrushed paint job on some parts of its body but yields to actual scales on other parts. Its slitted eyes issue forth light, as they're where the headlamps of the coaster car were, and its fangs glisten with oil and hydraulic fluid.

Adjudicate the battle with Canopus as per the normal combat rules, but be sure to portray Canopus as the wily, serpentine monster it is. The beast uses its great size to its advantage, in that it's large enough to crush two opponents in its coils every action. This doesn't grant it an extra attack, though. Rather, after it makes its first grappling attempt against a character, if it succeeds, continuing that grapple doesn't count as an action. It simply squeezes that grappled opponent and moves on to the next. Canopus may have up to two victims in its coils in this manner and continue making its normal attacks. That is, Canopus can trap two enemies in its coils, crush them, and take whatever normal action it wishes (such as attacking, defending, using a supernatural power, etc.). Canopus may not, however, move around the terrain while it has victims bound in its coils.

If it's not in a position to constrict, at least initially, play up the danger inherent in staging a battle 1,000 feet above the ground. The great serpent is in favored environment: It can glide along the tracks, climb up or down a level with surety, and slither into concealment in the train station with ease. It doesn't have to make any (Dexterity + Athletics) checks to see if it loses its balance or accidentally goes tumbling off the coaster tracks into oblivion.

The Scions likely have no such benefit (unless one of them has some Boon or Knack that allows him exceptional balance). Characters who fight Canopus where it enjoys the home field advantage suffer a -2 DV penalty as well as a +2 difficulty penalty to any physical actions they undertake, with the exception of breaking free from Canopus's coils (but only after it has successfully grappled them).

As the fight progresses, or perhaps afterward as the Scions take stock of themselves, sharp-eyed characters will notice something curious about the serpent's “skin.” Under certain light conditions, such as when the skin appears at a certain angle or when a patch of light is exceptionally bright, Canopus seems to have words, sentences, entire passages written beneath the surface of its scales. Characters won't be able to read the writing in the throes of combat, but they will notice the elusive words with a successful (Perception + Awareness) check. If no one notices this anomaly during the fight, the character with the highest Perception automatically notices it after the combat concludes.

After the battle, the characters might wish to skin Canopus, or they might wish to read the writing there in the serpent's lair. However they choose to study the strange writing is up to them. If they simply read it on the fallen body of the serpent, reading the message takes two hours. If they skin the snake, doing so takes an hour (with a successful [Dexterity + Medicine] or [Strength + Survival] check) and reading the message takes only half an hour, but at least they'll have the “document” with them. As well, the writing is in Greek, so someone in the Band will have to be fluent in that language. (If you tied Canopus to a different pantheon, though, the language might be something else. It might even be an arcane message of unknown origin that disappears after the characters read it, if that's more suitable to the characters' demeanors or concepts.)

The message, as the Scions decipher it, is an explicit instruction on how to use the Black Feather Shroud's ultimate power—attaining apotheosis. The message appears couched in a fable regarding a soldier named Echion, who used the Shroud to briefly usurp the power of Cratos himself, before Zeus sent Hermes to recover whatever nefarious relic had caused the two to switch places.

STORY SEED: COINCIDENCE OR CONSPIRACY?

Echion is also the name of one of Jason's Argonauts, who was himself a demigod—the son of Hermes and a mortal woman. If you want to add a layer of divine intrigue, you could say that the Echion who once used the Black Feather Shroud was indeed that Argonaut and son of Hermes. If such is the case, perhaps “Cratos's” original encounter with Canopus might have actually taken place with Echion in the stead of Zeus's companion. Did Hermes encourage this? Did Hephaestus know about it? If the answer to either of these questions is yes, well, something must have been brewing in Olympus around that time, and the score might have yet to be settled.

Scene

TASTING AMRIT

MENTAL — PHYSICAL •• SOCIAL —

When the time comes for one of the characters to consider the Black Feather Shroud in context with the scales of Canopus, draw the previous scene to a close and allow the players the opportunity to change their location. This is a chance for the players to choose the locale for the story's climactic confrontation. Let them set the scene as much as you feel comfortable. You want them to have everything in its proper place, with the "set pieces" exactly as they want them, so they can impart the scene with as much memorable context as possible. After all, one of the Scions is about to become a God.

When the characters have settled in to a location that's appealing to them, give them some time to talk among themselves about what to do with the cloak. Surely, some among them won't be tempted by the power it offers. For example, Eric Donner seeks his father's approval, and is unlikely to want to leave Thor powerless or dead. On the other hand, some of the Band's Scions don't necessarily feel that obligation. Although they're ostensibly the "heroes" of the cycle, that doesn't necessarily mean the chance to taste apotheosis won't entice them.

Kane Taoka is one such Scion who hates his divine parent, and the significance of the Black Feather Shroud isn't lost on him. After Sly Guiler learned what his father was up to (see p. 259), he went back to his Band and told them all about the relic that lay within their grasp. Taoka seized upon the opportunity, and sent either Seth Farrow or one of Victor Fingers' spartoi to stalk the heroes and find out where they were headed. (It's your choice as to which, and that also gives the villains a chance to find out where the players' Scions relocated themselves.)

Thus it occurs that, as the characters discuss the Black Feather Shroud and what to do with it, the rival Band of Scions kicks the doors in (literally or metaphorically) and proceeds to wreck the joint. Their goal isn't the characters' destruction—yet. Right now, they want the Black Feather Shroud.

Give the evil Scions an action of surprise, which should hopefully be enough to procure the Shroud. If it's not, play them intelligently through the course of the battle, focusing on the character who has the Shroud in his possession. They'll use whatever tactics are necessary: They'll split the heroes' Band, they'll leave incapacitated characters to lie instead of going for killing blows, they'll call in reinforcements (such as more of Victor's spartoi), and they'll fight dirty. Translate that last as "You can

fudge dice rolls to give the evil Scions an edge." Just don't get caught doing it.

The outcome of the fight should be heart-rending, as Kane takes the relic and throws it over his shoulders. Music hits its crescendo! Onlookers wail, tear at their hair and gnash their teeth! Lightning courses across the suddenly blackened sky!

When Taoka puts the Black Feather Shroud on and invokes the God's essence (that is, he spends Legend), apotheosis begins. As Kane, cloaked in the Shroud, begins the transition, he gulps at the air as if drinking some substance no one else present can see. What he's drinking is *amrit*—the drink of the Gods in Hindu and Buddhist legend, the substance that grants them immortality. (It is similar in concept to the Greek ambrosia, but it differs in that *amrit* confers godhead while ambrosia is simply what established Gods eat and drink.) A divine power, a holy fire scorches his throat and visibly burns its way into his belly, where the fire grows into a great conflagration. The Scion of Amaterasu is wreathed and consumed from within by its terrible flames. He screams, and his voice carries like a terrible thunder.

Characters with Epic Perception hear an additional scream accompanying Kane's. It lasts exactly as long as Kane's own scream and seems to issue from him, like a sound effect "double-tracked" for greater resonance. This is actually the scream of Amaterasu, who is simultaneously losing her own state of godhood. While there's no way for any of the characters to know this definitively, if the characters have had an audience with Amaterasu before or have received any communications from her, you may tell those exceptionally perceptive characters that the voice sounds familiar. Whatever the appropriate remembrance is, tailor that to the sound of the scream.

Kane is then suddenly and briefly at the center of a supernova of power as liquid Legend washes across him. Describe this in a manner appropriate to Amaterasu's sphere of influence: Kane radiates light and heat like a man-sized sun, and a chorus of children's voices—distorted by his own corruption and the wickedness of Mikaboshi—screams a visible sound wave. The special effects should be obvious and overwhelming, the literal stuff of divine potency showering uncontrolled from Kane as his stolen potential exceeds his lesser Scion's limits.

Scene

FALLING FROM HEAVEN

MENTAL — PHYSICAL ••• SOCIAL —

When “Tasting Amrit” has gone on *just long enough*, as Kane is truly beginning to exult in his newfound powers or—worse for the proud!—he comes to feel entitled to them, the karmic bill comes due. The Black Feather Shroud can be taken away as easily as it was found, as Kane Taoka is about to learn.

Who does the taking? This depends on the characters’ reaction to the scene. If they’re truly the stuff of heroes, they’ll mount an offensive against the new deity in a desperate attempt to prevent the fledging God from destroying the World, despite what it might mean for their wellbeing.

Allow them to strike at Kane, or his Scion allies. Most importantly, allow them to do so meaningfully. Don’t just let them break themselves against his omnipotence. If everything the characters fought for evaporates in this last scene of futile opposition, the players will feel both screwed and railroaded. Let them take down an enemy Scion. Indeed, let them strike down Kane for a moment so that he falters to his knees, as yet unused to how to wield his vast power. Present them with a harrowing, terrible enemy, and give them the hope of halting the holocaust.

Strangely, they’re about to receive aid in that cause from a long-time rival.

STAGING THE FALL

The default for “The Long Road to Heaven” assumes that Loki will be the God retrieving the Black Feather Shroud, and that he’ll be sending a stealthy contingent of dead minions from Niflheim. Again, by default, this is because the story assumes that Kane Taoka will be the one to claim godhead, and because Sly Guiler played mole for his father and told him where the Black Feather Shroud would be. Loki simply won’t be able to resist finally claiming the relic for himself, and all he’ll have to do is take it away from a handful of upstart Scions.

Of course, Loki himself doesn’t want to get his hands dirty, so he plans to trick the dead into assailing whatever place the heroes have been using as a forum for their discussion of the Black Feather Shroud. Once he becomes aware that the Shroud is capable of changing the divine guard, he’ll leave a trail of discarded black feathers that lead directly to the place where Eric is staying. After that, he’ll casually remark to his daughter Hel that he’s heard of an ancient relic that confers divinity upon its owner, and that someone has used the relic to bring low the mighty Amaterasu. Why, Odin himself must have heard about this relic and sent his ravens to spy out its location... their discarded feathers may well be found around the place where this relic is located. (Such

patently simplistic ruses often serve to confound the Gods, if the epics are to be believed.) At that point, it’s simply a question of pointing out the first of the black feathers to Hel and leaving it to her. Loki plans to let the dead do all the hard work so he can abscond with the Shroud amid the confusion of the fight.

The characters have numerous ways to foil the plot. They might, of course, discover the feathers that lead to wherever they’re staying. (Indeed, this might convince them that Odin is on their trail, for the same reasons Hel believes Loki’s lie.) Characters who are sensitive to the presence of death might feel an early warning impulse as the dead approach from the Underworld. Baron Samedi’s cigarettes and rum (from Act Two) might provide a bit of early warning. Especially perceptive characters, or those who make overt claims of their vigilance, might have a chance to notice the approach of the dead. Characters who have followers such as spartoi, myrmidons or the like might have posted them to stand guard and serve as a front line of defense (assume that the more capable evil Scions managed to sneak past them). If the characters don’t notice the invasion of the dead, that’s fine, too. More carnage for the Scions! Why not? They’re already fighting a God.

The dead attack at night, and an unseasonable chill wind blows through the air. Alternatively, if your heroes dwell in a windy location, the air becomes uncharacteristically still. Give the characters just a few moments to let their hackles raise and then deluge them with death.

The raging undead can appear in one of two ways. The more dramatic and overt manner is to have a ship like the storied Naglfar crash directly through from the Underworld into the heroes’ lair. The ship veritably claws its way in from the nether realm (as the vessels of Niflheim are built from the fingernails of the dead), where it disgorges a marauding crew of deathless sailors armed with spears and axes. You could, instead, have the rip in reality’s fabric occur via a gigantic, dead tree branch falling in on the lair. This is a limb of the mighty World Tree, Yggdrasil, weakened by the gnawing of the serpent Nidhogg at the root that draws sustenance from Niflheim. As the withered branch collapses, leafless, into the characters’ previously safe haven, a howling throng of the damned erupts into their environs. These dead aren’t too visually different from the sailors aboard Naglfar, and they’re mechanically the same. Whether coming by land or sea, these deathless Vikings are attired as warriors and spoiling for bloodshed.

The dead fight to the death (again) because they have nothing to lose. Send wave after wave of these ruined

ACT
THREE
—
AMONG
THE
AUGUST



soldiers against the characters, the rival Scions and the young God Taoka—the objective is to force them to flee, or distract them so that Loki’s dupes can grab the relic.

As the battle rages—and you pull out every trick in the book to convey the epic mayhem and Overworld-shaking chaos of the fight—one of the wraiths extends a clutching claw that grasps the Black Feather Shroud and tears it from Kane Taoka’s shoulders. Before Kane can say anything, he’s overwhelmed by a debilitating bout of nausea. If the characters witness his collapse, they’ll probably assume it’s one of the horrid effects of Death’s touch. They’re wrong, but it’s moot. With all of the carnage erupting around them, they’ll probably want to continue getting the Hel out of there.

As the heroes make good their escape or valiantly stand their ground, the short-termed God’s nausea turns to actual vomiting. This is the *amrit* forcing its way out of Kane’s guts, spewing the half-digested stuff of immortality all over the place. At your discretion, it can serve as a (disgusting) delaying factor for the dead, who collapse upon the pools of vomit and suck it down for themselves. If continued combat seems to preserve the tension of the situation, however, the dead may pursue until the characters shake them of their own accord, or fight until their numbers seem to dwindle before a new wave of them bursts onto the scene.

ESCAPE AND EVASION

Ultimately, the Scions should flee, as the dead are potentially infinite. As they do so, allow them to use

whatever Boons or other benefits they have at their disposal to facilitate the escape. You may add tension by having a few especially diligent pursuers hound their steps, or you may halt the harrowing dead entirely, given that they have what they want.

The characters should be able to retreat to wherever they’re comfortable or feel safe. They’re potentially going to have a lot to answer for, so it’s unlikely that they’ll return to the Wynn, at least immediately. As you wind this scene to a close, let the characters feel like they’re between two waves in a stormy sea—they’ve evaded their attackers, but they’re surely about to receive a dressing-down from the Gods whose very divinity they’ve put at stake. Whether the characters know that Amaterasu won’t necessarily have reclaimed that divinity may play a part in the aftermath. Potential repercussions for those who didn’t even want to use the Black Feather Shroud themselves might also come up in conversation. Remember, the Gods are petty, and guilt by association can become a prime factor in the Band’s dynamic.

Since you’re the Storyteller, this is your chance to sit back for a few minutes and see how deeply the characters believe they’re in trouble and what their first ideas are for atoning for or avoiding that trouble. Let their loose lips sink their ships. They might come up with an idea you haven’t considered, or they might find a way to negate any divine retribution you have scheduled for them. Forewarned is forearmed, after all, and nowhere does it say that you can’t benefit from a little of that action.

EPILOGUE

Once the characters have calmed down and decided on their next course of action, head them off at the pass and give them a choice. Characters of honorable inclination might decide to return to the Wynn and face their due justice. Scurrilous characters might choose to either play dumb about the whole affair or pretend it didn't happen. Self-interested characters might want to skip town or otherwise go on the lam from the Gods they've arguably betrayed, even though they're not the ones who stole godhead to begin with. If the story's played out smoothly and with panache, the poor slob who had the Black Feather Shroud stolen out of his hands might even want it back personally, to taste the draught of *amrit* for himself.

So the characters are en route to whatever their next plan is, whether it involves shoe-gazing abasement or across-the-board denials. On their way to wherever it is they're going, Leo meets them. He has a glint in his eye and a crooked smile he's fighting to keep off his face. Leo carries a familiar brown attaché case, which he opens. From its depths, he produces a manila envelope marked with a flame sigil. (This assumes you're continuing to

use Loki as the God who ultimately retrieved the Black Feather Shroud. If you've changed it to another God, be sure the envelope bears one of the God's symbols.)

Inside, the envelope contains a single, black feather and an index card. On the card, in spidery writing, are the words, "I have something that belongs to you. I'll be in touch."

That's it. The events of "The Long Road to Heaven" up to this point are but the first story in a three-story cycle that continues in **Scion: Demigod**. The action doesn't stop cold here, though. The characters are, of course, free to do whatever they want next, whether that's reporting in to the Gods still at the Wynn (potentially asking for permission for a recuperative leave of absence) or deciding that things are too hairy for the time being and going their own direction entirely.

In the interim before the story continues, you can create self-contained scenes like those of Act Two, explore a story arc of your own creation or have your characters investigate some of the expanded story seeds suggested in the text of "The Long Road to Heaven." The choice is yours!

Optional Advanced Scene

ONE OF OUR OWN

MENTAL — PHYSICAL ••• SOCIAL —

It may turn out that one of your players' characters decides to use the Black Feather Shroud himself. Well, okay... It's not really heroic, and he's going to be asking for it, but it's entirely possible. If such is the case, the character feels all of the onrush of power described for Kane Taoka, only it comes in the form of his own God's Purviews.

What comes next depends on how much you trust your troupe. The important part of the character's doomed-to-be-brief period of divinity is to give her the addict's taste, the sampling of divine wonder that keeps her coming back to the wellspring of *amrit*, however it manifests, at whatever opportunity she has.

The simplest way to handle this is to treat it like any other scene, but increase the amount of input required from the player. That is, don't present a situation and allow the character to react to it, but rather ask the pointed question of the player: "Okay, your character has become a God. You have power that feels nigh infinite. *What do you do?*" It's surprising how few people are able to answer this plainly, or who exalt in petty aspects of their powers without taking the responsibilities of

their divinity seriously. That's okay—most people are new to the whole becoming-a-God thing. (That's what leaves Kane vulnerable.) Whether petty or profound, the character's actions are entirely suitable. Clever Storytellers well versed in classical legend or who can improvise deftly can draw parallels to other miraculous acts, such as Christ's changing of water to wine, his feeding the multitudes with but a few fish and loaves of bread, Atum-Re's forcing his own birth from primordial water or Tlazoltéotl's spawning the sun. Play heavily with symbolism. Make each action resonate with importance. It's also important to allow the other members of the Band an opportunity to participate in the character's newfound divinity. Don't shift the limelight entirely onto the fledgling God at the others' expense. They can be part of his legend, too. Certainly, they'll be there by his side when the evil Scions attack and try to take the Shroud themselves. If anyone has ever been inclined to feel sorry for the bad guys, this scene probably triggers that urge, as the heroes probably slap them around like Irish boxers.

If you want to share a bit of the epic legend-building exercise with your players, you can exercise another option here. Instead of relating brief vignettes of the new God on the block's learning curve, you can instead briefly turn creative control of the story over to individual players. It then falls to each player other than the one depicting the new God to tell a brief "fable" involving her character and the new God. Brief is, of course, the operative word here (as even a half-hour for each player around the table becomes almost three hours in total), so if you think one of your players might ramble or divert attention from the rest of the cycle, this might not be the best option. Additionally, since the players will briefly be becoming Storytellers themselves, they'll have to do all the things Storytellers do, such as involving the other players' characters and not upsetting the balance or direction of the story. If you worry, for example, that a player might have the new God traipsing into the Overworld and murdering the rest of the old Gods so that her fellows might replace them, this likewise might not be the best way to handle the period of divine grace.

The result of the scene should be a montage of vignettes that showcase some aspect of the apotheosis. You can plan these vignettes in advance (which allows you to control when they occur and for how long) or improvise them (in case you don't want to sketch out a series of potential fables for each character who might want to use the Black Feather Shroud). If you cede story control to the players, they need to know you have veto power over runaway tales, and you need to use it when appropriate. Think of this scene as a similar technique in a movie, where the protagonists of the film acquire a new ability and brief glances of them using it are set to a compelling piece of music. That's the effect you're trying to achieve.

If you *really* trust your troupe, don't even bother with dice or rules. Let the dynamics of what makes for a good story and the understanding the players have of the epic tradition shape the godly anecdotes they create. In this case, these parables of godhead become like a dream sequence, where cause and effect have little interconnectivity but the lesson of the fable rises quickly to the top.

STORY SEED: A GROUP EFFORT

One is the loneliest number, and a God or former God going it solo to reclaim his divinity against a Band of several Scions and a new God—all of whom are probably exceedingly nervous as the ill-gotten grandeur hangs in the balance—might seek to enlist aid. If you choose to exercise this option, it can add a little depth and history to an ongoing cycle, as it creates a new secret for the characters to discover and potentially use against the God in question. In all likelihood, the old God will have to call in a favor from another member of her pantheon. Worse, the God might have to enter into a new debt with his potential ally, and when promises between Gods are exchanged, few can predict the long-term effects of those promises, assuming they're fulfilled at all.

The following examples offer some suggestions for a God seeking help in reclaiming his power.

- **A Fellow of the Pantheon:** This option makes the most sense, as many Gods have siblings or parents with whom they share their pantheon. In this case, a promise might not even need to be made, and a Scion who scoffs at retribution from a powerless Athena might not find it so funny when Zeus's Cretan kouretes kick in his door. A fellow pantheon member might hold this favor over the erstwhile God's head, however, making for one of the sticky social situations described previously.
- **A God of Similar Influence:** While dignity might preclude a proud former God from asking for aid outside his immediate pantheon, commonalities between Gods whose bailiwick include similar responsibilities might sweeten that humble pie. Freya might pledge a favor to Hachiman, for example, in hopes of keeping the repayment distant and unlikely to be recalled. Also, since few of the Norse Gods have many dealings with the Japanese pantheon, news of Freya's request and debt probably won't come to the fore. Gods can be such proud creatures, and knowing their shortcomings causes them no end of shame. Having a war God angry at you is not a good way to live your life.
- **Outside Agents:** Those Gods who don't want news of their inability to reclaim their divinity might try to pit a third party against the treacherous Scions. One might leak word to titanspawn about this new, upstart God in hopes of having them seize upon her. One might lead a contingent of hungry dead to the new God's lair. One might even enrage a legendary creature and flee from it in hopes of delivering it to the new God's door. Such complicated plots have much potential for failure, but the God in question probably plans to steal away the Black Feather Shroud in the ensuing confusion and won't really care which side is successful. With any luck, she'll be back in her own corner of the Overworld by then, performing the ritual of investiture herself.

This scene is wide open as to its ultimate content. The goal here is to allow individual troupes to custom tailor growing legends into forms that will stand on their own. It's also a place to get as creative as you or the players want, perhaps retelling existing legends with new participants, or potentially creating entirely new legends from the ground up.

This "scene" can last as long as you wish to pursue it, as long as all of the players are entertained and the new godling wonders at her own power. It may actually become a number of scenes, each taking on the characteristics of a parable or minor legend itself. That's fine. Remember, you're building new legends with **Scion**. Each of these experiences should be episodic, concluding at their logical end. Eventually, the character is going to lose this godhead and should want to recapture it. Don't allow the cycle to refocus on what's supposed to be a pastiche of amazing experiences.

CONSEQUENCES

What becomes of the usurped God from whom the character stole her power? Again, you'll need to make a decision as to what best fits the cycle. If you decide against killing the old God when the character steals his power, it's almost certainly that God trying to settle the score. Indeed, this option presents the most resonant poetic justice, as the slighted God, with infinite more experience, savvy, wiliness and perhaps vengefulness, creeps into whatever passes for the new God's lair and steals his godhead back.

That needn't be the case, however. In pantheons that include trickster-, mystery- or vengeance-type Gods such as Loki, Hermes, Hera, Bast and the like, it might be one of these individuals who comes to collect the debt. These Gods might be helping out their fellow pantheon members (see the "A Group Effort" sidebar), or they might have heard news about this new God and swipe the divine spark to hold over the new (or old...) God's head. Loki is especially appropriate for this, as other events of the story illustrate.

For further consideration, if you have determined that the old God died when the character appropriated his power, that sets a scary precedent for the character. You might, in this case, simply knock the Scion into a catatonic state for a brief time, inflicting a number of health levels of damage suitable to remind the character of her fragility. Such damage is divine in origin, so don't bother messing with DV or any other opportunities to avoid the damage. Cosmic justice is blind and always scores a direct hit. See page 197 for more information on recovering from wounds over time.

Whatever the case, the fact that a different Scion claimed godhead than Loki originally planned for doesn't disrupt his scheme. After the players and their characters have had a sufficient opportunity to enjoy the finer points of playing God, the ship from Niflheim arrives as originally planned, and the dead spew out to claim the Shroud themselves.





SCENE: HELLO (AGAIN?)

MENTAL —
PHYSICAL —
SOCIAL —

HINDRANCES

HELP

- Leo
- Omens as needed

STs Introduce the Scions' job: bodyguard the Gods.

PCs Meet fellow Scions.

SCENE: WHO DARES WYNN

MENTAL —
PHYSICAL —/••
SOCIAL •

HINDRANCES

HELP

- Karma Jenkins
- Possible encounters: Lindwurm

- Karma Jenkins

STs Introduce the Gods and Karma Jenkins.

PCs Meet the Gods.

SCENE: PANEGYRIS

MENTAL •
PHYSICAL •
SOCIAL —

HINDRANCES

HELP

- Recurring omens of cave image

STs Lead Scions to the desert lair of Tecuhtli.

PCs Take in a show.

SCENE: INTO THE LAIR OF THE BEAST

MENTAL •
PHYSICAL •••
SOCIAL —

HINDRANCES

HELP

- Darkness: +2 difficulty to Perception rolls
- Rough footing: -1 die on Athletics-related skills

- Rocks to throw: Strength +1B damage

Reseraching the Shroud

STs Challenge the Scions with Tecuhtli.

PCs Defeat the monster, win the spoils.



SCENE: HORUS'S QUEST

HINDRANCES	HELP
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Mortal Set cultists - Mortal Thoth cultists - Tommy Li, Scion of the Monkey King 	

MENTAL .
PHYSICAL ..
SOCIAL .

STs Present a series of challenging encounters as various parties attempt to steal the relic.
PCs Guard Horus's egg.

SCENE: TEZCATLIPOCA'S QUEST

HINDRANCES	HELP

MENTAL .
PHYSICAL .
SOCIAL ..

STs Present a moral dilemma.
PCs Capture mortal Iseldia for Tezcatlipoca.

SCENE: THOR'S QUEST

HINDRANCES	HELP
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Possible encounters: Ulfhednar wolf-warriors 	

MENTAL .
PHYSICAL ..
SOCIAL ..

STs Provide a red herring to keep the Scions' distracted from Loki's true motives.
PCs Get Sly's briefcase.

SCENE: SUSANO-O'S QUEST

HINDRANCES	HELP

MENTAL .
PHYSICAL .
SOCIAL ...

STs Teach the Scions humility before the Gods.
PCs Recover "jewels" from modern descendants.





SCENE:

APHRODITE'S QUEST

MENTAL •
PHYSICAL •
SOCIAL •••

HINDRANCES

HELP

STs

Provide a human dimension and display the fickleness of the Gods' requests.

PCs

Help Jimmy and Lillian to find their true loves.

SCENE:

BARON SAMEDI'S QUEST

MENTAL •
PHYSICAL •
SOCIAL •

HINDRANCES

HELP

– Baron Samedi's flask and cigarettes

STs

A little lesson in godly responsibility.

PCs

Put the dead to rest.



SCENE:

CRATOS'S FEAR

MENTAL	•
PHYSICAL	•••
SOCIAL	•

HINDRANCES

- Breaking into the chapels
- Security guard
- Scales of the Great Serpent cultists

HELP

- Fighting on tracks: - DV and two-success penalty on Physical actions (except for escaping Canopus's coils)

STs	Provide an action-packed scene that leads to the revelation written on the snake's skin.
PCs	Defeat Canopus.

SCENE:

TASTING AMRIT

MENTAL	-
PHYSICAL	••
SOCIAL	-

HINDRANCES

- Kane Taoka and his minions

HELP

STs	Show the Shroud's apotheosis power on Kane Taoka.
PCs	Decide what to do with the Shroud.

SCENE:

FALLING FROM HEAVEN

MENTAL	-
PHYSICAL	•••
SOCIAL	-

HINDRANCES

- Legions of undead Vikings

HELP

STs	Overwhelm the Scions with the forces of the dead and force them to flee.
PCs	Escape with their lives.

SCENE:

ONE OF OUR OWN (OPTIONAL)

MENTAL	-
PHYSICAL	•••
SOCIAL	-

HINDRANCES

- The enemy Scions.
- Legions of undead Vikings

HELP

STs	Overwhelm the Scions with the forces of the dead and the enemy Scions and reclaim the Shroud.
PCs	Escape with their lives.



ANTAGONISTS

Okay, you've learned the secret history of the Scions, you've learned how the game is played, and you've learned what cool powers your Scion has. Your next question is probably "Okay, when do I get to hit something?" Good question. Luckily for you, the world of **Scion** is one of almost constant peril. Titanspawned monsters lurk in hidden places, ready to strike. Earthbound lesser immortals dwell in their ancient abodes, eager to involve a naïve, young Scion in Byzantine plots. Even the Gods themselves can be your enemies, holding you personally responsible for some crime your sire committed when the World was young. Buck up, young Scion. There's a lot of ass-beating to do.

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MORTALS

A young Scion's most common adversaries are likely to be mortals. She doesn't yet have the power to flout mortal authority with impunity or even to reveal her holy might when, for example, a cop pulls her over for speeding. Show off your divine strength in front of the wrong people, and they won't see a child of Zeus preparing to slay a monster, but more likely just some thug high on PCP. Security personnel guarding a private building or compound will not simply let a Scion inside just after hours because she claims a dragon is hiding on the premises.

Other mortals might be peripherally aware of the Scions' nature, but probably misunderstand it. A devout fundamentalist minister might consider divine Boons to be signs of demonic possession, while a greedy corporate overlord or a government agent might consider them to be signs of some mutation to be harnessed, either for profit or for national security. Of course, still other mortals might be well aware of what your character is, as they are actively in the service of the Gods or even the Titans. Such mortals might be cultists in the service of some strange religion or thralls who have been enslaved and empowered by the blood of a titanspawn.

GENERIC MORTAL

(FOLLOWERS • TO •••••, GUIDE • TO ••)

The following template can be used for any adult mortal encountered by a Scion, from a gas station attendant to a bank president to the lawyer who has come to bail the Scion out of jail after a bit of monster-slaying gone wrong. Such mortals are almost never a serious threat to a Scion on a one-to-one basis, but even a Scion should be concerned about the proverbial torch-bearing mob. Similarly, your Scion might want to hold off on smashing a group of innocent

ANTAGONIST TRAITS

Antagonists are described using the following traits.

Attributes: The antagonist's Attributes.

Virtues: The antagonist's Virtues, if any. Only supernatural beings and creatures have Virtues. Many titanspawn possess their own Virtue set—Dark Virtues—which are described on page 309-310.

Abilities: The antagonist's relevant Abilities and specialties (if any).

Join Battle: Roll this many dice for the antagonist's Join Battle roll.

Attacks: These are the different ways the antagonist can attack a character. Each attack has its own **Accuracy** (in this context, the total of the relevant Attribute + Ability + Accuracy bonus, if any, of the attack), **Damage** (the number of bonus dice added to threshold successes in calculating the raw damage pool; most commonly the sum of antagonist's Strength + attack's Damage + 1), **Parry DV** (the Parry Defense Value of the antagonist when using this attack; close combat attacks only), **Speed** (the number of ticks the attack takes) and **Range** (the basic Range increment for a ranged attack; see "Ranged Weapons" on page 203). If an attack has the Piercing quality (see p. 203), that quality is noted with a "P" tag.

Soak: The antagonist's bashing and lethal soak. Subtract these numbers from damage rolled for a successful attack. A creature with a soak of 6 lethal and 9 bashing would be described as having 6L/9B. Some antagonists even have a soak versus aggravated damage.

Health Levels: The antagonist's health levels. The default for a human or humanoid creature is seven levels (-0/-1/-1/-2/-2/-4/Incap). Some antagonists have more or fewer health levels.

Dodge DV: The antagonist's Dodge Defense Value.

Willpower: The antagonist's Willpower rating.

Other Notes: Any weaknesses, special attacks or other relevant information.

mortals seeking his blood because they've been mind-whammied into attacking by Aphrodite's magic boobs or something similar. On the other hand, Titan cults typically consist of such mortals, so sometimes, smashing the guys is just fine.

Attributes: Strength 2, Dexterity 2, Stamina 2; Charisma 2, Manipulation 2, Appearance 2; Perception 2, Intelligence 2, Wits 2

Abilities: Academics 1, Athletics 1, Awareness 1, Brawl 1, Control 1, Fortitude 1, Marksmanship 1, Science 1, Stealth 1. (The aforementioned Abilities are fairly common among most adult mortals. Specific mortals often have significantly more Ability dots, and any competent professional has at least three dots in any Abilities essential to her job.)

Join Battle: 3

Attacks:

Clinch: Accuracy 3, Damage 3B, Parry DV —, Speed 6, P

Unarmed, Heavy: Accuracy 2, Damage 6B, Parry DV 0, Speed 5

Unarmed, Light: Accuracy 4, Damage 3B, Parry DV 2, Speed 4

Soak: 0L/2B

Health Levels: -0/-1/-1/-2/-2/-4/Incap

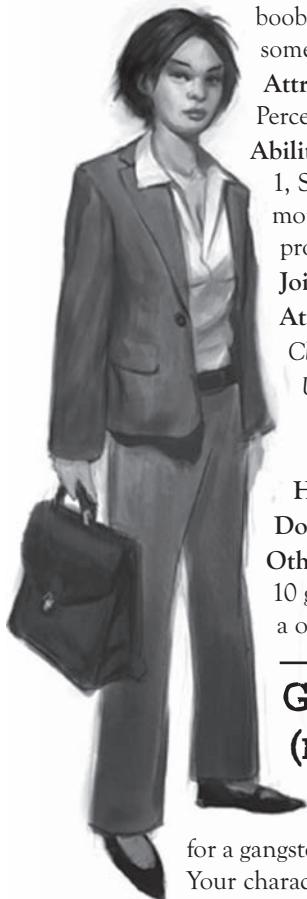
Dodge DV: 1 **Willpower:** 4

Other Notes: Generic mortals are almost always extras. Each dot of Followers is equivalent to 10 generic mortals. A generic mortal with appropriate Abilities and influence might work as a one- or two-dot Guide. Such a Guide would most likely *not* be an extra.

GENERIC THUG

(FOLLOWERS • TO •••••)

The generic thug is a mortal with above-average combat skills and a generally surly disposition. You might encounter a thug working as a bouncer for a club, as an enforcer for a gangster or simply as a street punk who picked the wrong girl to pull into an alley for a little fun. Your character might have a little trouble with this guy, especially if circumstances prevent you from bringing your full power to bear.





Attributes: Strength 2, Dexterity 3, Stamina 2; Charisma 2, Manipulation 2, Appearance 2; Perception 2, Intelligence 2, Wits 2

Abilities: Athletics 2, Awareness 2, Brawl 2, Control 1, Fortitude 1, Larceny 2, Marksmanship 1, Melee 1, Stealth 1, Survival 1

Join Battle: 4

Attacks:

Clinch: Accuracy 5, Damage 3B, Parry DV —, Speed 6, P

Unarmed, Heavy: Accuracy 4, Damage 6B, Parry DV 1, Speed 5

Unarmed, Light: Accuracy 6, Damage 3B, Parry DV 3, Speed 4

.38 Special: Accuracy 5, Damage 4L, Range 20, Speed 4, P

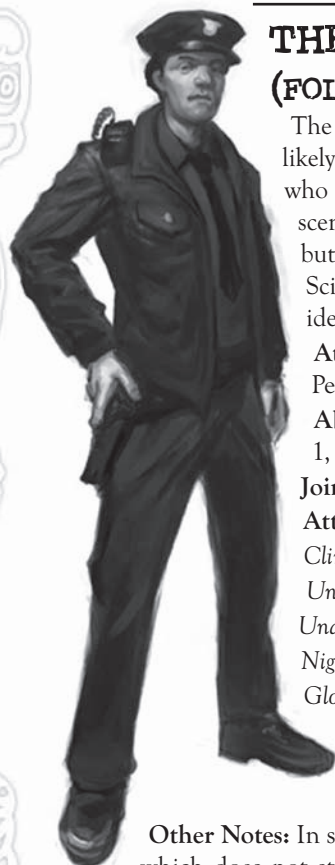
Switchblade: Accuracy 5, Damage 4L, Parry DV 2, Speed 4

Soak: 0L/4B (Biker's gear, +0L/2B, -1 mobility penalty)

Health Levels: -0/-1/-1/-2/-2/-4/Incap

Dodge DV: 2 **Willpower:** 4

Other Notes: Generic thugs are almost always extras. Each dot of Followers purchased is equivalent to five generic thugs.



THE BEAT COP

(FOLLOWERS • TO •••••)

The beat cop is the law-enforcement official a Scion is most likely to encounter. This template applies to redneck deputies who might pull your character over in a speed trap, to patrol cops who show up at the scene of her brawl against a titanspawn that has inconveniently left no bodies behind but lots of property damage, or even to professionally trained security guards. Even a Scion occasionally has to worry about mall cops. Okay, not really... but it's still a bad idea to wale on one of these guys if you can avoid it.

Attributes: Strength 2, Dexterity 3, Stamina 2; Charisma 2, Manipulation 2, Appearance 2; Perception 2, Intelligence 2, Wits 2

Abilities: Academics 2, Athletics 2, Awareness 2, Brawl 2, Command 1, Control 2, Fortitude 1, Integrity 1, Marksmanship 3, Medicine 1, Melee 1, Stealth 1

Join Battle: 4

Attacks:

Clinch: Accuracy 5, Damage 3B, Parry DV —, Speed 6, P

Unarmed, Heavy: Accuracy 4, Damage 6B, Parry DV 1, Speed 5

Unarmed, Light: Accuracy 6, Damage 3B, Parry DV 3, Speed 4

Nightstick: Accuracy 5, Damage 4B, Parry DV 2, Speed 4

Glock: Accuracy 7, Damage 4L, Range 20, Speed 4, P

Soak: 2L/4B (Bulletproof vest, +2L/2B)

Health Levels: -0/-1/-1/-2/-2/-4/Incap

Dodge DV: 2 **Willpower:** 4

Other Notes: In some situations, a police officer might be assigned riot gear (+5L/8B, -2 mobility penalty), which does not stack with a bulletproof vest. Beat cops are almost always extras. Each dot of Followers purchased is equivalent to five beat cops.

SEASONED COP OR GRUNT SOLDIER

(FOLLOWERS •• TO •••••, GUIDE • [COP ONLY])

The same generic template applies to both seasoned police officers and military grunts. The former might include an experienced town sheriff, a federal law-enforcement agent or a SWAT officer. The latter might include any character with significant military training but not yet at the "Rambo" level. These guys are potentially dangerous even to a Scion. They're experienced with combat, and they don't freak out when confronted by weirdness. Even more experienced (and deadly) soldiers should use the "Experienced Soldier or Mercenary" template.

Attributes: Strength 3, Dexterity 3, Stamina 3; Charisma 2, Manipulation 2, Appearance 2; Perception 3, Intelligence 2, Wits 3

Abilities: Academics 2, Athletics 3, Awareness 3, Brawl 3, Command 2, Control 2, Empathy 1, Integrity 3, Investigation 2, Larceny 1, Marksmanship 3, Medicine 1, Melee 2, Stealth 1

Join Battle: 6

Attacks:

Clinch: Accuracy 6, Damage 4B, Parry DV —, Speed 6, P

Unarmed, Heavy: Accuracy 5, Damage 7B, Parry DV 2, Speed 5

Unarmed, Light: Accuracy 7, Damage 4B, Parry DV 3, Speed 4

Nightstick: Accuracy 6, Damage 4B, Parry DV 3, Speed 4

Glock: Accuracy 7, Damage 4L, Range 20, Speed 4, P

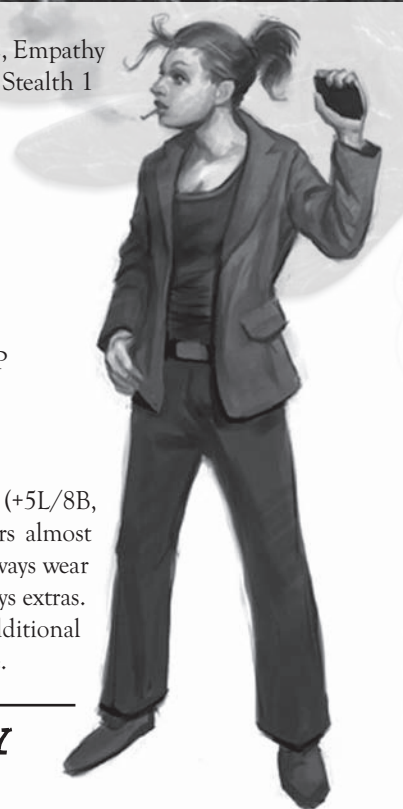
M16 (soldiers and SWAT only): Accuracy 6, Damage 6L, Range 150, Speed 5, P

Soak: 2L/5B (Bulletproof vest, +2L/2B)

Health Levels: -0/-1/-1/-2/-2/-4/Incap

Dodge DV: 3 **Willpower:** 5

Other Notes: In some situations, a police officer might be assigned riot gear (+5L/8B, -2 mobility penalty), which does not stack with a bulletproof vest. SWAT officers almost invariably wear such gear. Soldiers engaged in military combat situations almost always wear armor the equivalent of riot gear. Seasoned cops and grunt soldiers are almost always extras. Two dots of Followers purchases five seasoned cops or grunt soldiers, with each additional dot purchased adding five more followers. A seasoned cop works as a one-dot guide.



EXPERIENCED SOLDIER OR MERCENARY

(FOLLOWERS ••• TO •••••, GUIDE • TO ••)

These guys are serious. Army rangers. Navy SEALs. Professional assassins. That guy that Arnold Schwarzenegger played in *Predator*. Like the alien in that flick, your character can bleed, and they can kill you. Mortals with this level of experience and combat training are a legitimate threat to any individual Scion, particularly one who wishes to avoid overt public displays of her power. Experienced soldiers are often assigned to guard secure locations to which a Scion might need admittance, places like the Pentagon, Area 51 or Ground Zero of the Tunguska Event. Mercenaries might provide protection for tyrannical South American dictators or corrupt corporate overlords, and a Scion might be compelled to fight a group of mercenaries who had taken over a town as part of some elaborate scheme ripped from an episode of *The A-Team*.

Attributes: Strength 4, Dexterity 4, Stamina 4; Charisma 3, Manipulation 2, Appearance 3; Perception 3, Intelligence 3, Wits 4

Abilities: Academics 2, Athletics 4, Awareness 3, Brawl 4, Command 3, Control 3, Fortitude 3, Integrity 3, Investigation 1, Larceny 1, Marksmanship 4, Medicine 2, Melee 4, Presence 2, Stealth 3, Thrown 1

Join Battle: 7

Attacks:

Clinch: Accuracy 8, Damage 5B, Parry DV —, Speed 6, P

Unarmed, Heavy: Accuracy 7, Damage 8B, Parry DV 3, Speed 5

Unarmed, Light: Accuracy 9, Damage 5B, Parry DV 4, Speed 4

AK47: Accuracy 7, Damage 6L, Range 125, Speed 5

Beretta: Accuracy 9, Damage 4L, Range 20, Speed 4, P

Desert Eagle: Accuracy 8, Damage 6L, Range 50, Speed 5, P

M16: Accuracy 8, Damage 6L, Range 150, Speed 5, P

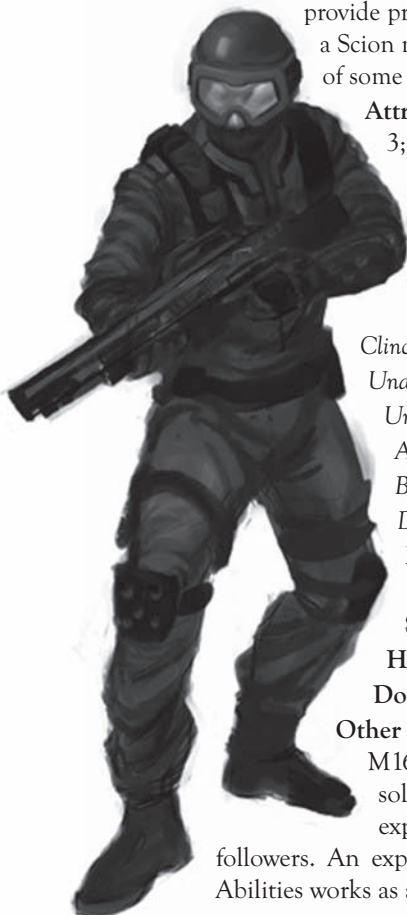
Peacemaker: Accuracy 10, Damage 5L, Range 20, Speed 5, P

Soak: 2L/6B (Bulletproof vest, +2L/2B)

Health Levels: -0/-1/-1/-2/-2/-4/Incap

Dodge DV: 4 **Willpower:** 6

Other Notes: A soldier or mercenary will possess only one service rifle, the AK47 or the M16, and one sidearm, the Beretta, the Peacemaker or the Desert Eagle. Experienced soldiers and mercenaries are seldom extras. Three dots of Followers purchases five experienced soldiers or mercs, with each additional dot purchased adding five more followers. An experienced soldier or mercenary with moderately higher Command and Presence Abilities works as a one- or two-dot guide.



MORE HUMAN THAN HUMAN

Let's face it, most mortal adversaries are beneath your character's notice. True, a few rare mortals can thwart your Scion's divine majesty in certain situations, but most such individuals lack any real knowledge of the true nature of the World or any capacity to defy the will of a child of the Gods. Most, but not all. There are some mortals who have exceeded the limitations of humanity. By hook or by crook, these mortals have gained abilities that make them a credible threat to any Scion they encounter... or possibly potent allies instead.

AMAZON

(FOLLOWERS ••• TO •••••)

Amazons are mighty female warriors, originally associated with Greek legend. Warrior women similar to the original tribe of Greek Amazons exist elsewhere in the World as well. The Norse sagas speak of the *skjalmö*, women who served as shieldmaidens to the heroes of legend. African warrior women served in special divisions of the kingdoms of Dahomey and Ashanti until the end of the 19th century, and European soldiers often referred to these warriors as "amazons."

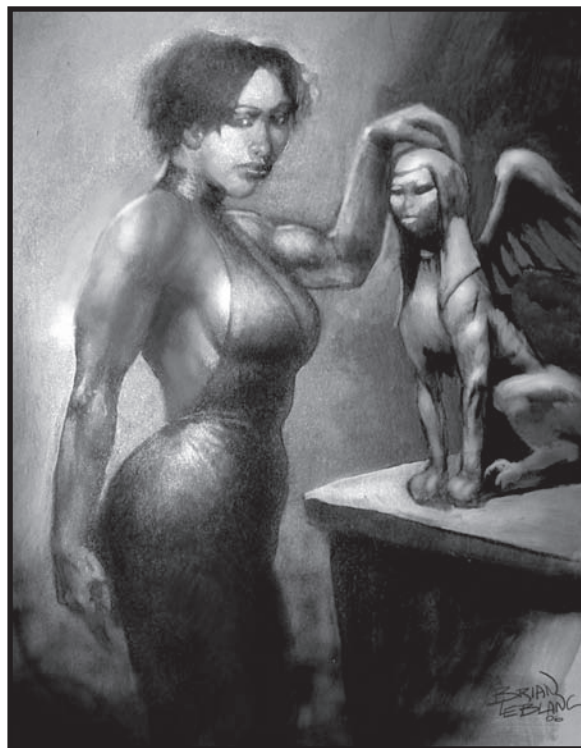
The characteristics of an amazon are identical to those of an experienced soldier save that the amazon is invariably female and begins with one extra dot in Strength, Dexterity and Stamina, as well as two extra dots in Appearance. Amazons age normally, but they retain their stunning looks for almost the entirety of their lives. Most amazons have the Virtues associated with the Greek pantheon (most commonly with Valor or Vengeance as primary). However, those who descend from the *skjalmö* or the Dahomey amazons have the Virtues associated with the Norse or Voodoo pantheons, respectively.

In terms of personality, amazons can best be described as bisexual misandronists. Amazons are perfectly willing to breed with men and are capable of showing appreciation for both attractive male forms and skillful lovemaking. Furthermore, all amazons are eventually expected to become pregnant and bring another amazon child into the World. Most amazons consider men to be intellectually and spiritually inferior, though, and they view long-term heterosexual relationships with a degree of disgust.

Amazons also practice a form of controlled breeding. All amazon offspring are invariably female, but the children of more powerful fathers are themselves more powerful. In particular, the amazon daughter of a male Scion is notably more powerful than a typical amazon (gaining one additional Attribute point for each point of Legend her father possessed at the time of the mating). Accordingly, some amazon tribes have actively attempted to capture and enslave male Scions for breeding purposes. Some Scions might even volunteer for such "slavery," but even the most virile of Scions will eventually balk at spending a lifetime as a stud horse for a collective of insatiable warrior women.

Although Greek legend suggests that amazons live in remote areas away from the prying eyes of men, modern amazons are fully integrated into Western society. Surprisingly, given their feminist leanings, amazons thrive in societies that view beautiful women as sex objects. (They consider such attitudes as a weakness in the patriarchy to exploit.) Many of the "trophy wives" of some of the World's richest and most powerful men are actually amazons who control their husbands either through sexual domination or outright intimidation. Today, the amazons move through the highest levels of mortal society, either twirling men around their fingers with sex appeal or snapping their necks like twigs. Whatever the situation calls for. They are women—hear them roar.

With Storyteller permission, amazons may be taken as followers, but only by female Scions. Amazons will never follow male Scions, though in rare situations, they might ally with one against a mutual threat or in hopes of securing the Scion as breeding stock. Taking amazon followers adds two dots to the Birthright cost.



BERSERK AND THRALL

(FOLLOWERS •• TO •••••

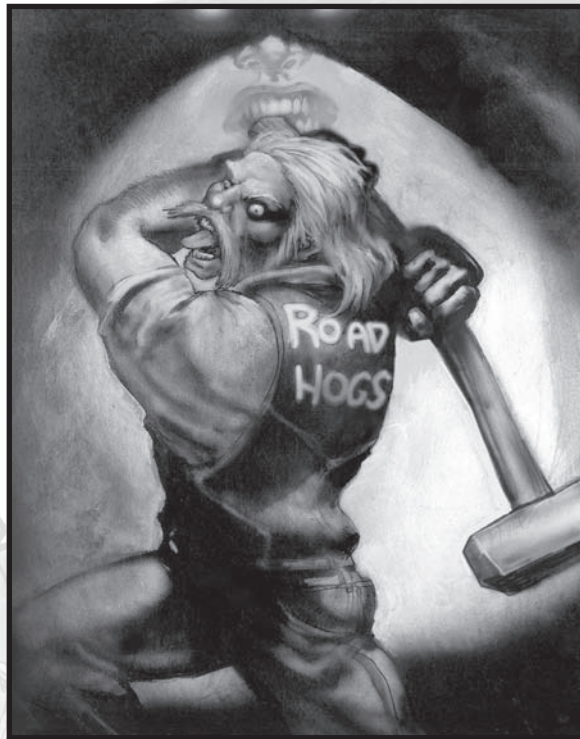
[BERSERKS ONLY])

Berserks are mortals who have been granted superhuman strength and stamina by a Norse Scion's use of the Jotunblut Purview. Similarly, thralls are mortals granted power by the blood, or "eitir," of giants. In either case, the Strength and Stamina enhancements are permanent. The two types of beings are virtually identical with the following exceptions.

First, thralls are typically more powerful than berserks, as eitir is functionally equivalent to Jotunblut ••••. While berserks created with the third dot of Jotunblut can be as powerful as thralls, those empowered through the second dot are not as strong. Second, while eitir is no more intrinsically potent than a Scion's ichor, giants have a lot more of it at their disposal. A Scion must spend one point of Legend and release enough blood to cause one point of lethal damage in order to yield enough ichor to empower a single berserk. A giant who does the same produces enough eitir to empower three mortals. Third, a Scion must periodically feed more ichor to a berserk in order to retain the berserk's loyalty, while a thrall's loyalty to the giant who fed him eitir lasts as long as that giant lives. Finally, eitir adversely affects the intellect of the thrall who consumes it. On becoming a thrall, a character permanently loses one point of Intelligence (dropping to a minimum of 1). Ichor does not adversely affect the intelligence of berserks.

Berserks automatically gain the Virtues associated with the Norse pantheon upon becoming empowered. The Virtues of a typical berserk are Courage 3, Endurance 2, Expression 1 and Loyalty 3 (4 while the berserk remains bound to a Scion). Berserks may be taken as normal followers, the Scion must have Jotunblut 2 or higher and be prepared to regularly feed ichor to each berserk. Berserks are typically based on the template for the generic thug.

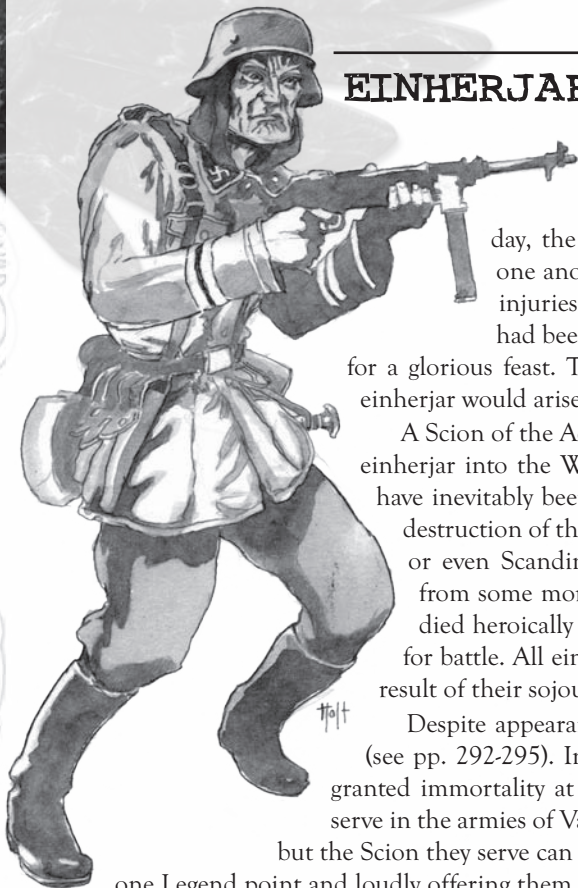
Thralls may not be taken as followers, but can serve as minions to a giant antagonist (see "Giants," p. 314). Some thralls have Norse Virtues comparable to those of berserks, while others have Dark Virtues (see pp. 309-310).



CHEVAL

(FOLLOWERS • TO •••••)

A cheval, also known as a horse, is a mortal who is exceptionally skilled at permitting a God to take over her body and possess her. Chevals are most common among practitioners of Voodoo and its sister religions, but ancient history is replete with examples of mortals who became vessels for some divine presence. The Delphic and Pythian oracles prophesied with the voice of the Olympic deities, for example, and the Atzlánti guided the high priests of Mesoamerica as they tore the bloody hearts from their human sacrifices. The characteristics of a cheval are identical to the template for the generic mortal on pages 280-281, except that attempts to use a Cheval Boon against such a character gain three bonus dice and each dot of Followers nets five chevals, not 10. Chevals have the Virtues associated with the Voodoo pantheon.



EINHERJAR

(FOLLOWERS •••• TO •••••)

In Norse legend, the einherjar were warriors who died heroically in battle and were admitted into Valhalla. Every day, the einherjar rode out to the great battlefield of Idavoll to fight one another in grand conflict. When the sun set, however, all of their injuries would miraculously heal, and the einherjar, even those who had been brutally attacking each other all day, would return to Valhalla for a glorious feast. Then, after eating and drinking themselves into a stupor, the einherjar would arise again the next morning to begin again.

A Scion of the Aesir with the appropriate Birthright can call one or more of the einherjar into the World to fight on her behalf. In the past, such warriors would have inevitably been Viking warriors who actively worshiped the Aesir. Since the destruction of the Underworld, however, einherjar have not always been Vikings or even Scandinavian. Instead, summoned einherjar are usually combatants from some more recent military conflict, typically a battle-hardened unit that died heroically (in the Viking sense of the word) and possessed a genuine lust for battle. All einherjar have the Virtues associated with the Norse pantheon, a result of their sojourn in Valhalla, with Loyalty primary.

Despite appearances, einherjar are not considered ghosts or the walking dead (see pp. 292-295). In fact, they never truly died at all. Instead, each einherjar was granted immortality at the very instant of death and then transported to Asgard to serve in the armies of Valhalla. Einherjar are not invincible and can be slain in combat, but the Scion they serve can resurrect them, healing all of their injuries, simply by spending one Legend point and loudly offering them food and drink. The Scion must actually come through on the food and drink, however, as the einherjar feast is an essential part of the magic that preserves them. Keeping einherjar well-fed and happy requires the Scion to either have a significant reserve of cash or else be prepared to continually lead them on raids for food and liquor.

When an einherjar is summoned from Valhalla, he appears wearing whatever clothing, armor and weaponry he wore in life. Players are free to choose what military conflict led to the death of their einherjar followers. As a practical matter, though, einherjar come from one of three periods: pre-Enlightenment, in which soldiers typically had armor and melee weapons but no firearms; Enlightenment to World War I, in which soldiers had melee weapons and simple firearms, but neither armor nor automatic weapons; and World War II to the Vietnam era, when soldiers had automatic weapons and simple melee weapons (knives, most commonly) but neither armor nor swords. No warriors have been chosen to join the einherjar since the mid-1970s, presumably due to the interference of the Titans.

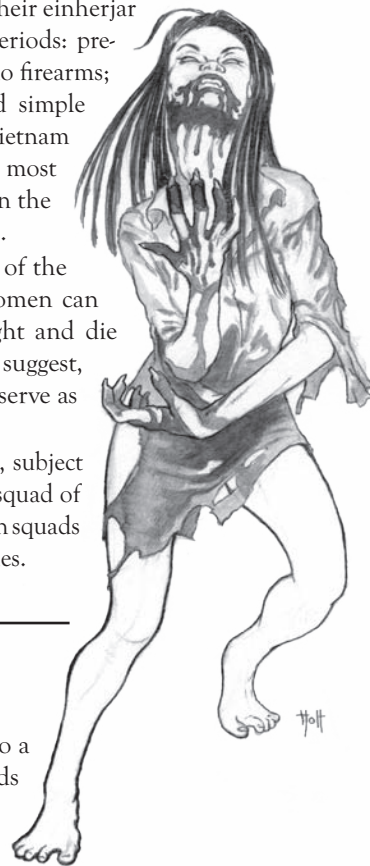
Each einherjar is a distinct individual with a unique personality. The use of the male pronoun in the previous sentence was deliberate. While individual women can certainly be great fighters, historically women have not been allowed to fight and die in active military units in sufficient numbers to become einherjar. Rumors suggest, however, that more powerful Scions can summon the valkyries themselves to serve as shieldmaidens.

Einherjar are based on the template for experienced soldiers or mercenaries, subject to the weaponry and armor restrictions outlined previously. A Scion may have a squad of einherjar as followers, but the cost of the Birthright increases by one (two for modern squads armed with automatic weapons) above that for experienced soldiers or mercenaries.

MAENAD AND SHIKOME

(FOLLOWERS •• TO •••••)

The term “maenad” was originally derived from Greek legend and refers to a female worshiper of Dionysus who exists in a state of ecstatic madness. Maenads



were wild women who tore their prey apart and devoured the pieces in their devotion to Dionysus, and legends credit them with the murder of the Scion Orpheus among others. Japanese legend identifies a similar breed of wild women known as the shikome, who were sent by Izanami to attack her husband, Izanagi.

Whether referred to as a maenad or a shikome, the creature is the same. A maenad is invariably a wild woman who possesses enhanced strength and speed, as well as an insatiable hunger for male flesh, particularly that of a Scion. Although they are individually rather weak, maenads are able to create more of their number easily. Any mortal woman who is bitten by a maenad becomes a maenad herself and joins an ever-increasing throng of hunger-crazed females. An infected mortal can be cured of this condition, but only if the maenad who bit her is slain or cured within 72 hours.

The maenad ability to spread the curse to others makes them formidable opponents for Scions. Also, maenads are stronger than normal women, adding one dot to Strength and Dexterity. In combat, maenads ignore all wound penalties and automatically succeed on all rolls to resist fear or mind-control.

Fortunately, they also suffer significant weaknesses. First, maenads have a strong psychological aversion to sunlight, suffering a +2 difficulty penalty for all actions taken while the sun shines on them. A maenad will never voluntarily go outside during the day, and most pursue a strictly nocturnal life. Second, maenads cannot resist the scent or taste of red wine, and if a bottle is opened nearby, roll their (Wits + Integrity) at difficulty 3. Failure indicates the maenads forget whatever they are doing and begin fighting over the wine. Finally, all maenads are psychopaths (which might or might not be a weakness depending on the Scion).

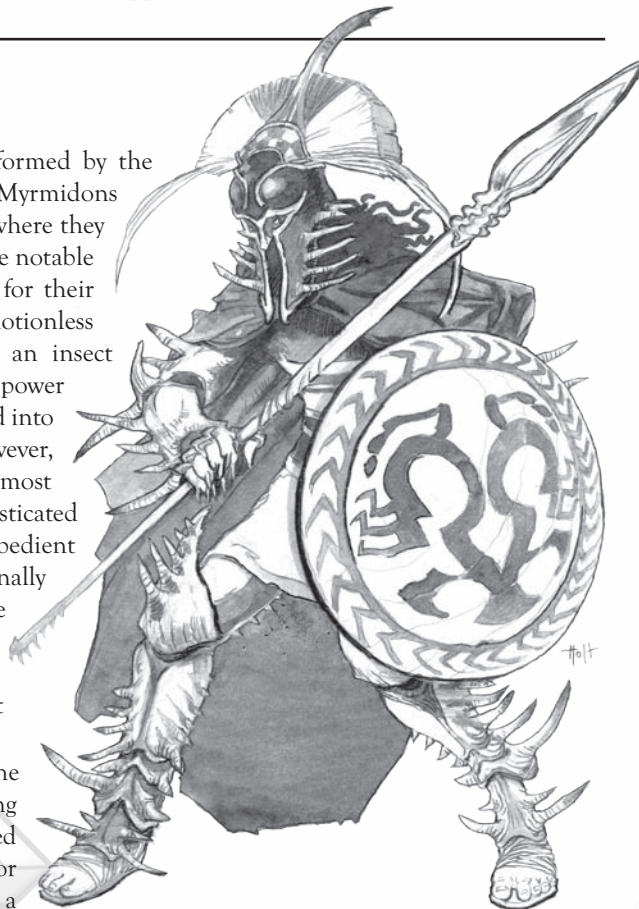
Maenads and shikome are most commonly encountered as antagonists. They may serve as followers to a Scion who has the Chaos Purview (at a +1 Birthright cost), though they are unpredictable servants at best. Maenads and shikome are most commonly based on the template for the generic mortal (see pp. 280-281).

MYRMIDON

(FOLLOWERS •••• TO •••••)

In Greek legend, the Myrmidons were ants transformed by the Gods into men to serve as the perfect soldiers. The Myrmidons accompanied the hero Achilles during the Trojan War where they served with distinction. Historically, the Myrmidons were notable not only for their indomitable fighting spirit but also for their unmatched loyalty to their leader, as well as a certain emotionless detachment. For the modern Scion, a myrmidon is an insect transformed into a man by divine magic. Naturally, the power of the Gods is such that any animal might be transformed into a human being (or vice versa). As a practical matter, however, all myrmidons are fashioned from social insects, most commonly ants. While higher animals have more sophisticated and independent thought processes than orderly and obedient worker insects, even the best-trained dog will occasionally forget what he was supposed to be doing whenever the poodle across the road goes into heat. Many insects, however, have regimented hive-based social structures, and they obey their superiors without question. That trait makes a myrmidon the ideal soldier.

The template for a myrmidon is identical to that of the experienced soldier (see p. 283), subject to the following details. First, all myrmidons have identical Virtues associated with the Greek pantheon: Expression 2, Intellect 2, Valor 4 and Vengeance 2. Second, a myrmidon is bonded to a particular character whom it views as leader—most commonly a Scion. If this leader is slain and is survived by only one myrmidon, that myrmidon will typically commit suicide. On the other hand, if the leader is survived by multiple myrmidons, the group will choose one of its number as the new “leader,” most commonly the oldest or most physically powerful. The new leader will develop independent thought and will become a human being in all respects. Therefore, while myrmidons are normally in the service of a Scion, it is not uncommon to find bands of myrmidons who have “gone rogue.” Third, each myrmidon is fiercely loyal to his leader and can never be induced to betray the leader while this loyalty is in effect. Myrmidons are created to function as soldiers, however, and can lose respect for a leader who does not conduct herself according to the principles of military honor. Whenever the leader of a myrmidon band



refuses to fight in a battle or otherwise displays dishonorable combat techniques, roll each myrmidon's Valor. If the roll succeeds, the myrmidon's loyalty to his leader is damaged. When a particular myrmidon's loyalty is damaged five times, the myrmidon will remain with the others—as he still retains a sense of loyalty to his brother myrmidons—but will actively try to break his fellows' loyalty to the unfit leader. When all the myrmidons have broken their loyalty, they will mutiny against the leader, killing her if they can. Failing that, they will simply leave her and choose a new leader from among their number as if the previous leader had died.

Myrmidons do not age and are immortal unless slain. Yet they also do not grow intellectually as individuals after they are transformed into people. Therefore, a myrmidon who is 200 years old will be functionally identical to one who was created yesterday. Myrmidons can reproduce normally with mortal females, although they are marked by a very low sex drive. The offspring is invariably male and, if raised by the mother, will grow up to be emotionless and borderline sociopathic. Once a young myrmidon encounters another of its kind, however, it instantly develops the emotional characteristics of all myrmidons and joins the others. A myrmidon born of a human mother ages normally until it reaches the age of 21, at which point its aging ceases.

Myrmidons have the characteristics of the experienced soldier or mercenary (see p. 283), except for the stated differences. Myrmidons may be taken as Followers, but doing so adds one dot to the cost of the Birthright above that for experienced soldiers or mercenaries.

SPARTI

(FOLLOWERS ••• TO •••••)

Spartoi are warrior servants summoned into existence by the power of a Scion Birthright. Historically, the first spartoi sprang from the ground fully grown and fully armed when the hero Cadmus slew a dragon and planted some of its teeth in the earth. Later, Jason and the Argonauts were forced to fight another group of spartoi in order to win the Golden Fleece. In both cases, the spartoi were mighty warriors but rather unintelligent. (Each hero defeated the spartoi by throwing a stone into their midst from a place of hiding.

Each sparti thought that one of his fellows threw the stone and attacked the nearest sparti. They quickly killed each other.) Fortunately, despite being such dim bulbs, spartoi make effective warrior-servants for a Scion who's aware of their shortcomings. As long as a character clearly delineates their duties and doesn't expect much in the way of independent thought, spartoi are quite useful. Even better, as your character improves, so do his spartoi. Mechanically, regardless of his other traits, each sparti has an Intelligence equal to the Legend rating of the Scion who summons him into existence.

Spartoi have the characteristics of a grunt soldier (see pp. 282-283). Spartoi may be taken as followers, but doing so adds one to the cost of the Birthright above that for grunt soldiers.

Spartoi are never proficient with firearms or any modern weapon, however. Consequently, spartoi have no dots in the Marksmanship Ability, but three dots in the Melee Ability.

A sparti springs from the ground wearing an ancient but still effective breastplate (+4L/2B), bearing an aspis and wielding a xiphos. Spartoi have effective Valor ratings of 4, but never need to make any other type of Virtue roll.



AGENTS OF FATE

While Fate can seem like a vast, impersonal force moving events to vex both mortals and Gods, it has its faces. A number of beings have become so deeply enmeshed in its mysteries as to be synonymous with it. These beings, be they Gods or mortals, stand apart from their own kind. Their agendas often seem alien or unfeeling. They watch but rarely act. They utter prophecies but refuse to explain their meanings.

Not all the agents of Fate are so distant. A passionate few attempt to use their special knowledge to bend Fate toward their own preferred outcomes. They rarely hesitate to enlist or use Scions as pawns to achieve these ends. Those whom Fate chooses often forget that free will is a virtue to mortals, rather than an obstacle to be overcome.

CASSANDRA

Some mortals have actually managed to foil Fate. Sometimes, Fate strikes back at them for their hubris and makes them agents of its destructive plots. “Cassandras” are cursed by Fate to know what bad things will happen, but when they tell anyone, others will act to ensure that the Fate actually comes about instead of working to avoid it. Cassandras cannot speak falsely about this destined bad event—that is, they can’t say the opposite will occur, to try to get people to then make sure the opposite comes about. To speak of it at all is to help it come to be. And yet, they can’t stay silent. Something within them (or outside them) keeps this dread knowledge from remaining bottled up inside; they need to shout it to the World.

FRANK BELLTOWER

(Guide ••)

A nationally syndicated opinion columnist, Frank Belltower has no idea he’s a Cassandra—he just knows that his pessimistic outlook on life is always proven correct. He’s often accused of being a cranky curmudgeon with no heart, but he has a loyal following of doomsayers and those who think their glass is half empty. So what if he knew the war was a mistake before the troops even shipped off, and said so in his column? He was right, wasn’t he? Sure, nobody liked it when he said Timmy would never get out alive from the well he fell into, but hey, he was right then too. If Frank were ever to be convinced that his rants and rages in his printed column are actually helping bad things to come true, he’d probably just light a cigar and opine that it still makes him correct.

Nature: Cynic

Attributes: Strength 3, Dexterity 3, Stamina 3; Charisma 1, Manipulation 4, Appearance 1; Perception 2, Intelligence 4, Wits 3

Abilities: Academics 1, Athletics 1, Awareness 3, Brawl 2, Command 1, Integrity 3, Investigation 3, Politics 1, Presence 3

Supernatural Powers:

Doomspeaking: Frank can cause others to adopt his pessimistic imagination and act accordingly. His usual vehicle of transmission is his written column, but he’s just as effective at the bar. Spend one Willpower and roll his (Intelligence + Presence), contested against a victim’s (Willpower + Integrity + Legend). If Frank’s roll gets more successes, the victim is affected.

Join Battle: 6

Attacks:

Clinch: Accuracy 5, Damage 4B, Parry DV —, Speed 6, P
Unarmed, Heavy: Accuracy 4, Damage 7B, Parry DV 1, Speed 5

Unarmed, Light: Accuracy 6, Damage 4B, Parry DV 3, Speed 4

Soak: 0L/3B

Health Levels: -0/-1/-1/-2/-2/-4/Incap

Dodge DV: 2 **Willpower:** 8

Other Notes: None





PAWN

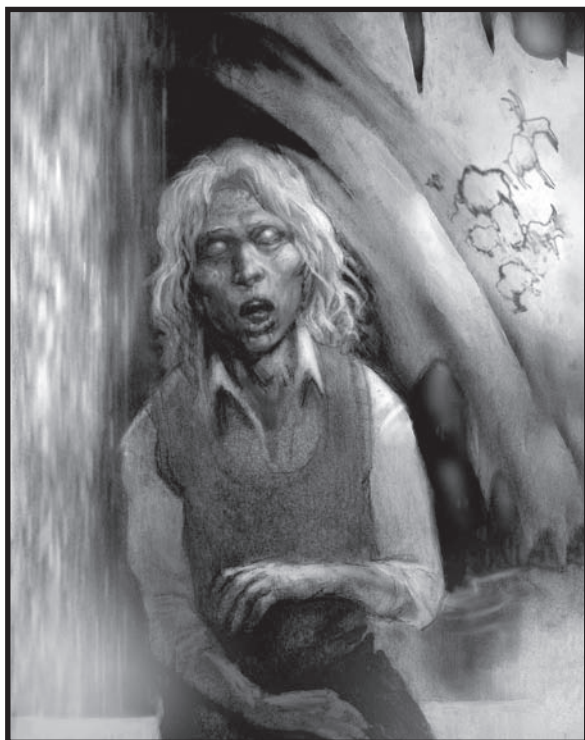
At times, Fate can take control of people, places and things, even if it doesn't involve a Scion's Legend or Fateful Aura. There are deeds Fate needs to see accomplished, though none can truly say why. When events threaten to derail the fulfillment of these deeds, Fate steps in and recruits agents to steer things back on course. In most cases, these agents are unknowing and unwilling, ignorant generic mortals caught in a web they cannot sense. Sometimes, Scions wind up fulfilling this role, often to their own anger when they realize they've been used by Fate. Nobody likes it when he realizes he's not the master of his own destiny, even if Fate's intervention only consisted of bringing a particular fact to the Scion's attention, in seeming awareness that the Scion would then act on that fact in a manner consistent with Fate's end goal.

The Storyteller—as the Hand of Fate—can choose to nudge events one way or another. He does so not so much through the manipulation of probabilities on dice rolls (though he may do that), but through engaging agents to interfere in events in order to move them in accordance with Fate's plans. Nearby mortals might be chosen—the passing truck driver, the short-order cook, the instant Lottery winner—or animals (see pp. 328-332) can act as harbingers, perhaps giving a message to Scions to change their plans. A black cat crosses their path, a crow circles three times and heads to the east, a rabbit bolts into the road and is hit by a car. How a Scion interprets these omens is up to him, but the traditions of his pantheon might act as clues.



SIBYL

A number of legendary prophetesses showed up in ancient legends. Among them was the Sibyl, from whom later prophetesses took their title. They still exist now and then in the modern day—mortals gifted by Fate with the power to foresee the shadowy shape of things to come and speak of it to others in baffling wordplay that the sibyls themselves rarely understands.



A sibyl is always female, and her power of prophecy is tied to a particular location, most often a cave, the mouth of a stream or some remote natural wonder. Many sibyls do not realize that they are prophets, especially if others never witness their speaking in tongues when they go to their "special place." Others who realize it are afraid of it and avoid the place where they can foretell the future. Still others, a rare few, learn to exploit it, usually for petty profit but sometimes for the benefit of the children of the Gods.

Those who hear the prophecy of a sibyl feel a chill down the spine, or the hair on the nape of their neck stands up. They somehow sense the words have meaning, even if they are unequipped to decipher them. Scions usually realize that what they are hearing is the Voice of Fate.

AUNT JERE

(Guide ••)

Aunt Jere is the 78-year-old caretaker of an all-but-abandoned roadside attraction that hosts a cave with an underground waterfall and cave paintings allegedly made

by Indians. (These markings were actually drawn by the attraction's original creator, Jere's long-dead husband.) She charges \$5.00 for admittance to the cave; \$20.00 for those who want to see her "go under the water's spell."

Nature: Caregiver

Attributes: Strength 2, Dexterity 3, Stamina 2; Charisma 3, Manipulation 3, Appearance 2; Perception 4, Intelligence 3, Wits 4

Abilities: Animal Ken 1, Athletics 2, Awareness 3, Craft 2, Empathy 2, Integrity 4, Occult 4, Presence 3, Stealth 2, Survival 3

Supernatural Powers:

Prophecy: When Aunt Jere sits behind the waterfall in the cave, she can enter a prophetic trance and utter strange, poetic hints about the future. Roll (Wits + Occult) and spend one Willpower. More successes garner more information.

Join Battle: 7

Attacks: None

Soak: 0L/2B

Health Levels: -0/-1/-1/-2/-2/-4/Incap

Dodge DV: 2 **Willpower:** 7

Other Notes: None

THE THREE (MOIRAE, NORNS)

(GUIDE ●●●●)

The Indo-European trinity of Goddesses are the most well-known agents of Fate in the West. They are often depicted as old crones, although sometimes one will be young, another of middle age, and the third an elder. Shakespeare's three witches in *Macbeth* are a shadow of the real Goddesses. They rarely appear, but their presence is known to the Gods, and many of Fate's more inconvenient interventions are blamed on them. They have, for the most part, withdrawn like the rest of the Gods and now watch from afar, although some whisper that they might have birthed their own Scion children in the World.

Of the Greek Moirae, Clotho spins the threads of Fate, Lachesis measures them, and Atropos cuts them with her shears, ending a mortal's life. The Norse Norns consist of Urd, the past; Verdandi, the present or "being"; and Skuld, the future. They, too, are spinners and weavers.

The Three, regardless of pantheon, serve Fate. While they sometimes participate among the Gods of their pantheons, and follow the dictates of the leaders of those pantheons, all the other Gods know not to test their patience or show them disrespect, for they stand apart, close to the tides of Fate. Too much interplay with them might draw the Gods into a Fatebinding with the Three's mortal agents, a terrible prospect for any God who deems himself his own master.

The Moirae or Norns may act as five-dot guides, but having them as such is dangerous.



THE DEAD

When the Titans broke free from their prison, they really made a mess of the Underworld. Before their escape, the Underworld was, if not orderly, then at least predictable. The spirits of the dead, regardless of their religious backgrounds, were drawn to a place beyond human reckoning. Whether they traveled by boat or were conveyed by angelic beings or simply walked, the spirits of the dead all felt the siren call of the Underworld, a place where they would be judged according to the quality of their lives and then sent on to whatever reward awaited them.

All that has changed. The wreckage of the Titans' prison has blocked the ancient pathways to the Underworld, and the dead can no longer easily get through. Most such ghosts remain at the prison site, tirelessly working to clear the way to the Underworld. A few, however, have given up on the Underworld and made their way back to the land of the living. Some are ghosts who seek to avenge their own deaths or to provide wisdom for their loved ones. Others have much darker, more selfish purposes—to gain a new life (of a sort) as the restless dead. There are as many names for the restless dead as there are cultures across the World, but the ones most commonly encountered by modern Scion heroes seem to fit into one of four categories: ghosts, spectres, zombies and hungry corpses.

GHOST (GUIDE ●●●)

Ghosts are spirits of the dead who can appear in the World only for limited periods of time and only in areas important to them in life. Despite what the stories would have you believe, most ghosts are not particularly threatening. Only a few have the power to interact with the World to the degree necessary to actually harm anyone directly. The kind of ghosts most commonly encountered by a Scion are loved ones who seek to help the Scion master her powers so that she, in turn, can defeat the Titans and restore the Underworld to its proper state. Scions who specialize in the Death Purview, on the other hand, make contacts among a wide variety of ghosts, especially the Scions of the Voodoo pantheon for whom ghosts, or ghede, are often representatives of the Loa. A few particularly selfish and evil ghosts, however, act as spies for the Titans in hopes of being rewarded with new living bodies.

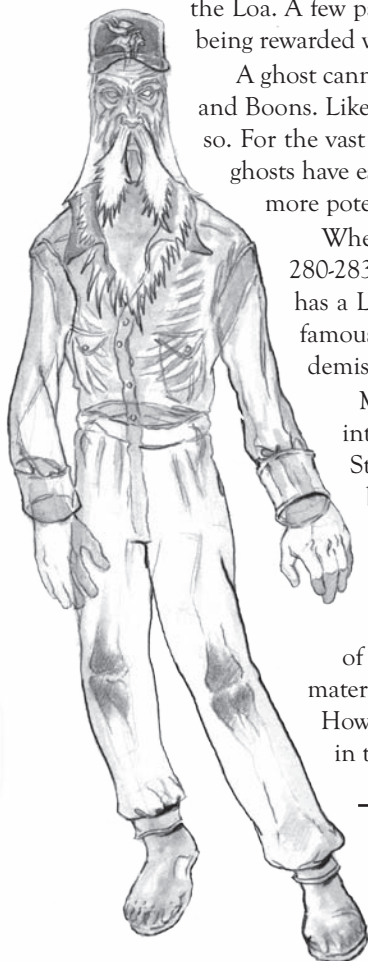
A ghost cannot be perceived or affected absent magical means, such as appropriate Birthrights and Boons. Likewise, a ghost cannot affect the World unless it uses its own magical powers to do so. For the vast majority of ghosts, these powers are extremely limited, though some malevolent ghosts have established relationships with agents of the Titans whereby the ghost has access to more potent ghostly abilities in exchange for doing the Titan's will.

When using a ghost as an antagonist, use a mortal template listed previously on pages 280-283 appropriate to what sort of mortal the ghost was in life. A ghost, however, typically has a Legend rating of 1 for every 250 years since his death. The ghost of an extremely famous (or infamous) mortal might have a Legend rating of 1 for every 50 years since his demise. Most ghosts do not have Virtues.

More importantly, whatever the ghost's Attributes are, the ghost himself is normally intangible and invisible. Accordingly, absent special circumstances, a ghost fails all Strength-related rolls automatically and cannot initiate any social rolls against living beings who are unable to perceive him. A ghost can, however, temporarily overcome these limitations. First, a ghost can cause minor poltergeist-like phenomena. To use this power, the ghost must spend Legend points (up to a maximum equal to his Strength). For each point spent, he gains one effective point of Strength with which to affect the World as if he were solid. This effect lasts for the duration of the scene. Alternately, he can spend one *permanent* point of Legend to become material and visible, appearing as he did when alive, for the duration of one scene. However, a ghost who has permanently expended all of his permanent Legend points in this manner ceases to exist. A ghost may act as a three-dot guide.

SPECTRE

While their limitations severely curtail the activities of most ghosts in the World, malicious ghosts who have allied themselves with the Titans gain access to additional powers that make them far more dangerous. When a ghost swears



allegiance to a Titan, the ectoplasm that makes up her ghostly form is permeated with the chthonic energy of the Titans, and she becomes a *spectre*. A spectre has all the characteristics of a ghost, but also gains access to the following special powers.

Inspire Hallucination: This power allows the spectre to create illusions that are designed to frighten or manipulate the weak willed. Spend one of the spectre's Legend points per target to be affected, and then roll the spectre's (Manipulation + Empathy + Legend) in a contested roll against the victims' (Willpower + Integrity + Legend). Any witness whose roll generates fewer successes absolutely believes in the illusion the spectre seeks to create. Those victims whose rolls generate equal successes perceive the illusion but know it to be a mere phantasm. Those victims whose rolls generate more successes can't even perceive the illusion at all.

Poltergeist's Rage: This power augments a normal ghost's ability to affect the World. By spending only one Legend point, the spectre can affect the World with his full Strength for an entire scene.

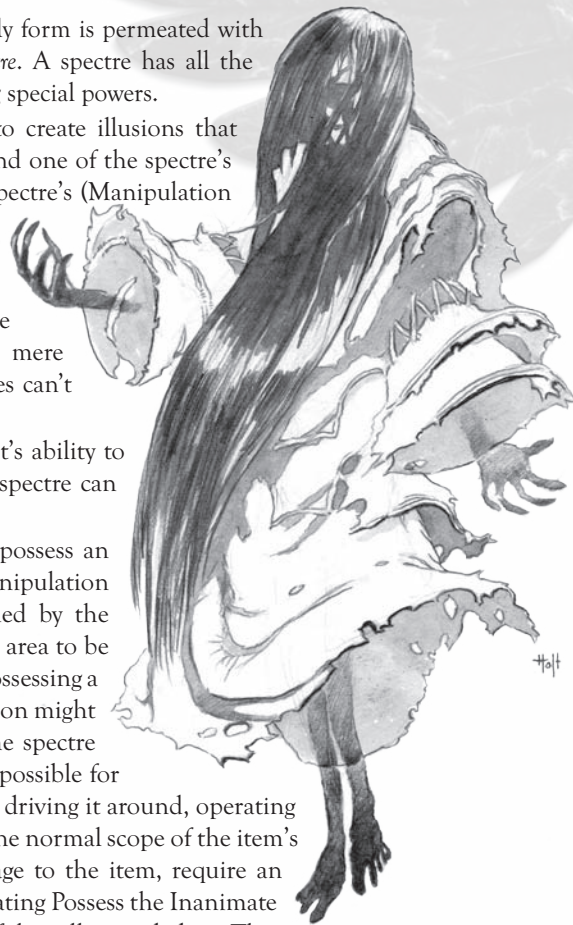
Possess the Inanimate: This power allows a spectre to possess an inanimate object and control it totally. Roll the spectre's (Manipulation + Craft + Legend). The difficulty of the roll is determined by the Storyteller based on the size and complexity of the object or area to be controlled. A gun might require only a single success, while possessing a car might require three successes. Possessing a decrepit mansion might require six. While in possession of an inanimate object, the spectre can cause the object to perform any action that is normally possible for it, such as causing doors to open, putting a car into gear and driving it around, operating any kind of machinery unaided, et cetera. Activities beyond the normal scope of the item's function, such as causing walls to bleed or repairing damage to the item, require an expenditure of one Legend point per "spooky" activity. Activating Possess the Inanimate costs a number of Legend points equal to half the difficulty of the roll, rounded up. This power lasts until the spectre voluntarily abandons its host or is driven out by some means, whether supernatural power or cunning trickery.

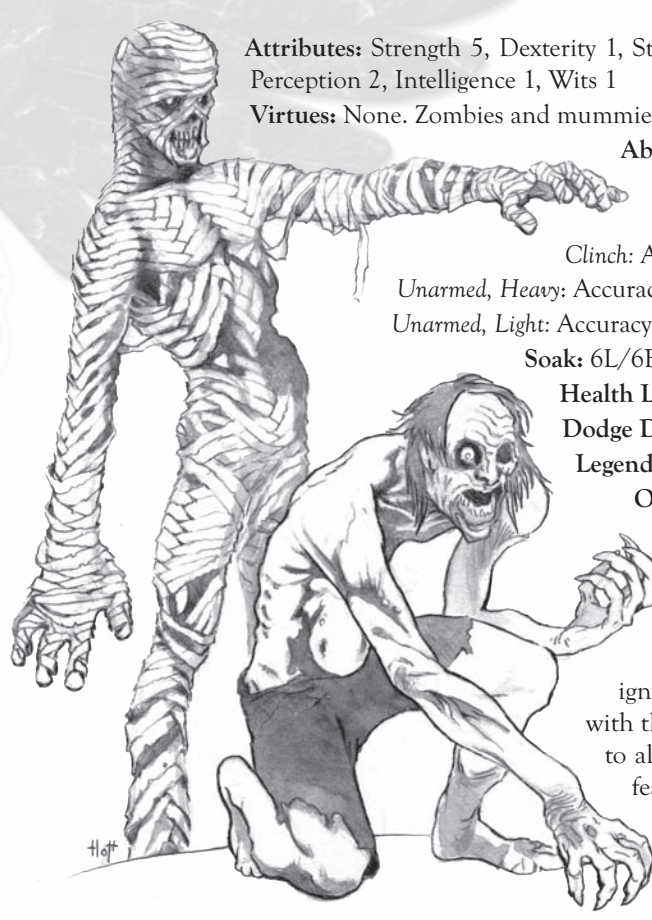
Possess the Living: With this power, a spectre can possess the body of an animal or a mortal. The spectre must roll her (Manipulation + Presence + Legend), contested against the target's (Willpower + Integrity). If the spectre gets more successes than the victim, her spirit enters the body of the possessed creature and takes control of it. This power automatically fails against any creature with a Legend rating. Activating Possess the Living costs a number of Legend points equal to the Integrity of the target. This power lasts until the spectre voluntarily abandons its hosts or is driven out by some means, whether supernatural power or cunning trickery. Finally, a spectre in possession of a host can spend Legend points to create "spooky" effects at a cost of one Legend per effect. Examples include causing the host's head to twist around 180 degrees (with no harm to the host), levitation, glowing eyes, et cetera. These effects do not directly harm the host unless the spectre so wishes. Any harm inflicted is automatically healed if the spectre is expelled before killing the host. These effects can never be used offensively against another character.

Dark Virtues: Unlike ghosts, spectres do have Virtues, specifically Dark Virtues (see pp. 309-310).

ZOMBIE AND MUMMY (FOLLOWERS •• TO •••••)

The term "zombie," while originally associated with the Voodoo Pantheon, is now generally used by modern Scions to refer to any form of mindless animated corpse. A zombie is created when a corpse is animated through magical power without the implantation of any controlling spirit. Zombies are most commonly used as servitors for Scions who specialize in the Death Purview, especially Scions of the Loa, although Scions of the Egyptian and Aztec death Gods are also skilled at resurrecting mummies as powerful, simple-minded servitors. Many agents of the Titans also use such grotesque servants in their activities. Zombies and mummies are quite strong and resistant to damage but are very slow and clumsy. They are also profoundly stupid and ugly, unable to take any action beyond their orders and incapable of even basic communication. As a practical matter, the only difference between a zombie and a mummy is in its physical appearance, which is determined by what funerary practices were used on the corpse before its animation.





Attributes: Strength 5, Dexterity 1, Stamina 6; Charisma 1, Manipulation 1, Appearance 0; Perception 2, Intelligence 1, Wits 1

Virtues: None. Zombies and mummies are never required to make Virtue rolls of any kind.

Abilities: Athletics 1, Awareness 2, Brawl 3,

Join Battle: 3

Attacks:

Clinch: Accuracy 4, Damage 6B, Parry DV —, Speed 6, P

Unarmed, Heavy: Accuracy 3, Damage 9B, Parry DV 1, Speed 5

Unarmed, Light: Accuracy 5, Damage 6B, Parry DV 2, Speed 4

Soak: 6L/6B

Health Levels: -0/-0/-0/-0/-1/-1/-1/-1/-2/-2/-4/Incap

Dodge DV: 1 **Willpower:** 3

Legend: 1

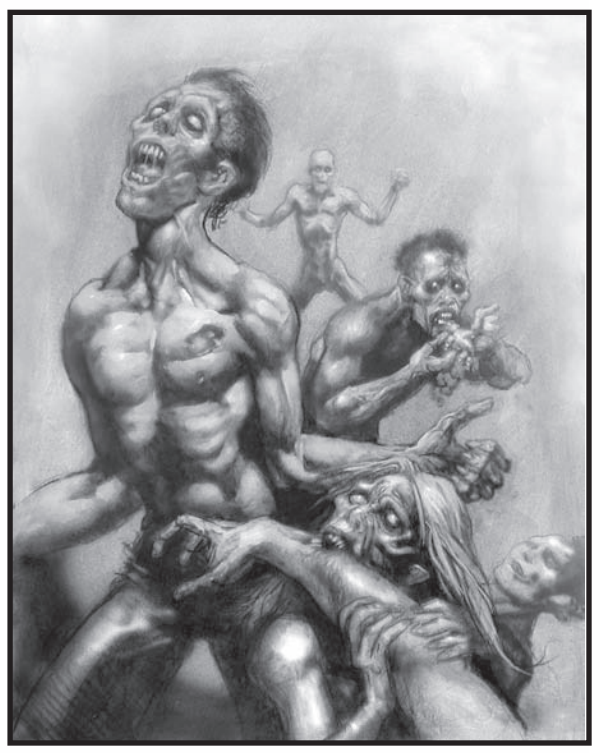
Other Notes: Zombies and mummies automatically fail all Social rolls other than intimidation. When a zombie or mummy initiates a Presence-based roll to intimidate someone, treat his relevant Social Attribute as 5. Also, zombies and mummies suffer only bashing damage from firearms attacks and they ignore all wound penalties. They also soak lethal damage with their full Stamina. Zombies and mummies are immune to all mind-controlling effects and all effects that generate fear. Zombies and mummies may be purchased as followers, costing two dots for the first five zombies and five more for every dot spent beyond that. They are often extras.

HUNGRY CORPSE

A hungry corpse is a ghost who has been bound into her mortal form, reanimating it as a feral, cannibalistic creature. The process that creates a hungry corpse uses only the lower atavistic part of the soul, what modern psychology might call the id. Although the hungry corpse's body is still dead, she retains a small portion of her former intellect, but none of her former morality. These vile creatures lack the capacity to either naturally heal wounds or to maintain their decaying bodies. To survive—to the extent that being a cannibalistic animate corpse is “survival”—the creature must steal vital energy from the living, most commonly by devouring human brains.

Hungry corpses are most commonly created through the machinations of the Titans and their earthly agents, although rumors persist that a zombie (or mummy) can be turned into one if it is possessed by a malevolent ghost that then forces it to devour human brain tissue. Hungry corpses are not as strong as zombies but are much faster and more intelligent. Hungry corpses are rarely smart enough to actually engage in intelligent conversation, however. Satisfying their aching hunger for gray matter is all most think about, and few consider conversation skills to be good for anything other than luring prey into a trap. Hungry corpses were known by many names in classical legends. Norse legend calls the hungry corpse a “draugr,” while Japanese legends call it a “gaki” or a “nyobo.” The Aztecs referred to a similar creature called a “civatateo,” while Greek legends refer to the “androphagi.”

Hungry corpses have Dark Virtues (see pp. 309-310).



Attributes: Strength 4, Dexterity 4, Stamina 3: Charisma 1, Manipulation 1, Appearance 1: Perception 2, Intelligence 2, Wits 3

Virtues: Ambition 1, Malice 2, Rapacity 3, Zealotry 1

Abilities: Athletics 3, Awareness 2, Brawl 2, Survival 3

Join Battle: 6

Attacks:

Clinch: Accuracy 6, Damage 5B, Parry DV —, Speed 6, P

Unarmed, Heavy: Accuracy 5, Damage 8B, Parry DV 2, Speed 5

Unarmed, Light: Accuracy 7, Damage 5B, Parry DV 4, Speed 4

Soak: 2L/3B

Health Levels: -0/-0/-0/-1/-1/-1/-2/-2/-2/-4/Incap

Dodge DV: 5 **Willpower:** 5

Legend: 2

Other Notes: Hungry corpses suffer only bashing damage from firearms attacks. A hungry corpse cannot heal damage normally. Instead, whenever a hungry corpse kills a person and devours her brains, the hungry corpse regains a number of health levels equal to the victim's Intelligence. Hungry corpses can intuitively sense which member of a group of mortals is most intelligent and will preferentially attack that person. Hungry corpses are immune to all mind-controlling effects and all effects that generate fear. They are often extras.

LESSER IMMORTALS

When the pantheons rose up against the Titans so long ago, not all Gods answered their call to arms. Many weaker Gods refused to fight in the Titanomachy, either because they were too weak or because they felt the rebellion was sure to lose. When the rebellion, against all odds, succeeded and the Titans were bound (supposedly for all eternity), the pantheons refused to admit into their number those who were technically “Gods” but who they considered unworthy of true deification. Accordingly, these “lesser immortals” were bound to the World rather than allowed into the Overworld and were forced to build legends for themselves as best they could without the authority of the high Gods.

Over time, many of these lesser immortals forged legendary identities for themselves, either as allies or enemies of the heroes of legend. In the modern age, however, most of the lesser immortals are as removed from the World as the Gods themselves. Indeed, many of them cannot function outside the presence of legendary beings. In the absence of such reflected glory, a lesser immortal might even enter a completely dormant state, lacking any capacity for independent action until the arrival of an unwitting Scion wakes the sleeping being up and prods him to action.

Each lesser immortal is an independent being, but few actually have identities that are well known among mortal society. Instead, these beings are most often identified by type, as a member of some legendary race such as “kami” or “dryads.” Generally, each race can be represented by a generic template, but individual members of a particular race are often more powerful than the template would suggest, and each lesser

immortal is an individual capable of proving to be either ally or antagonist to any Scion who crosses her path. Indeed, a particular lesser immortal might be an ally to one Scion and an enemy to another, depending on the pantheons with which the characters are associated.

Listed here are some of the more commonly encountered lesser immortals, including a description of their common supernatural powers and weaknesses. A sample member of each race is also provided as a representative of a common member of each species.

WHATEVER YOU DO, DON'T CALL THEM ELVES!

The first and perhaps most common category of lesser immortals encountered by Scions generally manifests as tall, thin and regal beings with pale or golden skin, large eyes and slightly elongated ears. Such creatures are often referred to as “elves” by young Scions, much to the chagrin of these proud beings. In truth, the subset of lesser immortals referred to thus has no group name, and each subspecies of “elf” is actually a separate type of lesser immortal. Furthermore, the word “elf” is a linguistic corruption of the Scandinavian “alfar,” which is only one specific breed of “elves.” In the modern era, however, the majority of these creatures resemble elves as they are depicted in popular culture, and most elves found in Western society, regardless of their traditional name, are resigned to being called “elves” by ignorant Scions.

The lesser immortals described here are the most commonly encountered type of being regularly referred to as an elf.

ALFAR

The alfar are lesser fertility deities of the Norse pantheon. Unlike many other breeds of lesser immortals, the alfar largely developed positive relationships with the Gods of Asgard. The most powerful of the alfar, the Vanir, even ascended to join the ruling Aesir after a protracted cold war between the two groups. Those alfar who were not among the Vanir remained among the Scandinavian peoples, eventually spreading with them across Europe. After the Gods of Asgard withdrew from mortal affairs, the alfar largely did the same, eschewing outright worship for the ability to manipulate events from behind the scenes.

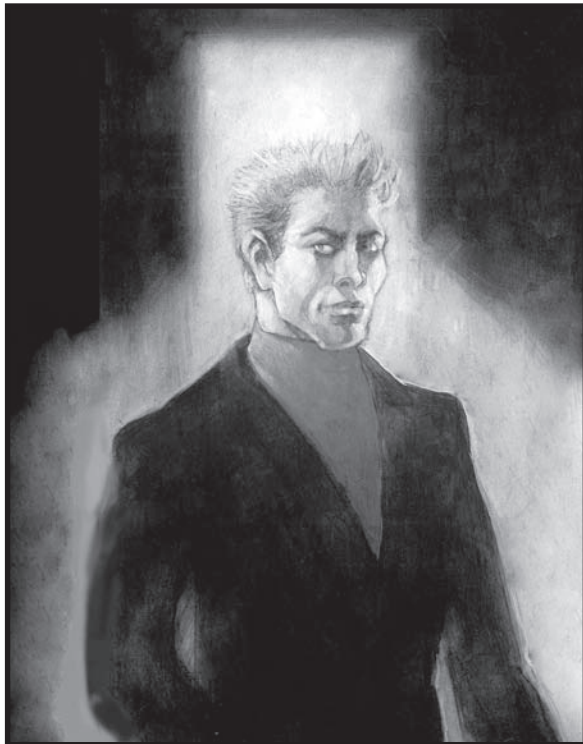
Mortals perceive alfar as incredibly beautiful people with stunning Nordic features. A number of alfar, male and female, have amused themselves from time to time working as fashion models, but most try to stay out of the spotlight while still living the extravagant lives to which they feel accustomed. Any being with a Legend rating can perceive an alfar as she truly is: a radiant beauty whose golden hair glows with the light of the sun, whose pearlescent skin shimmers with the light of the moon and whose laughing blue eyes seem to reflect the raging seas.

Supernatural Powers: All alfar are gifted with at least some Epic Appearance, and even mortals who cannot truly perceive their glory can still be ensnared by it. Most also have Epic Dexterity, Charisma or Perception. The alfar are also ancient deities of fertility, the earth, the sea and the sun. Many still have a limited command over one or more of those Purviews.

Weaknesses: All alfar take aggravated damage from weapons forged of “cold iron,” which is wrought iron that has been hammered into shape without heating. The mere touch of cold iron causes an alfar to become unable to use any of his Epic Attributes or any other supernatural abilities for the remainder of the scene. Such contact does not cause any injury, however, unless the cold iron is actively used as a weapon to inflict damage.

AURIC BRODER, the Toast of Milan (Guide ****)

Auric Broder, widely renowned fashion model, is an alfar. His name is a loose transliteration of his true name, Golden Brother. Long, long ago, he was worshiped under that name in a few isolated Viking settlements. Today, he is worshiped by fashionistas around the World. This alfar awoke from a centuries-long slumber some 20 years ago and decided to see what changes had been wrought in the World. He discovered that, while he could no longer seek outright religious veneration from mortals, he could still attain worship of another sort, as both men and women who had never seen an immortal made flesh instantly became enamored of his perfect features and hypnotic eyes. As much out of boredom as anything else, the Golden Brother accepted work as a male model and rocketed to stardom.



He has not forgotten his roots, however. While most who meet Auric Broder find him jaded or vapid, Scions of any Norse Gods save Loki or Hel can count on his support, albeit in the form of large cash loans or invitations to the most exclusive parties.

Auric is still a God, if only a lesser one. He has some command over the Purviews of Fertility and the Sun, as well as powerful social skills and the effortless grace of the alfar.

Nature: Libertine

Attributes: Strength 3, Dexterity 4, Stamina 4; Charisma 4, Manipulation 3, Appearance 5; Perception 2, Intelligence 2, Wits 2

Virtues: Courage 2, Endurance 2, Expression 3, Loyalty 3

Abilities: Academics 2, Art 4, Athletics 3, Awareness 3, Brawl 2, Command 4, Control 1, Craft 2, Empathy 3, Fortitude 3, Integrity 3, Occult 2, Presence 5

Supernatural Powers:

Epic Attributes: Epic Dexterity 2 (Cat's Grace, Untouchable Opponent), Epic Appearance 3 (Center of Attention, Come Hither, Lasting Impression)

Boons: Blessing of Health/Curse of Frailty, Cleanse, Divine Radiance, Green Thumb, Penetrating Glare

Join Battle: 5

Attacks:

Clinch: Accuracy 6, Damage 4B, Parry DV –, Speed 6, P

Unarmed, Heavy: Accuracy 5, Damage 7B, Parry DV 4, Speed 5

Unarmed, Light: Accuracy 7, Damage 4B, Parry DV 6, Speed 4

Soak: 2L/4B

Health Levels: -0/-0/-0/-1/-1/-1/-2/-2/-2/-4/Incap

Dodge DV: 10 **Willpower:** 6

Legend: 4 **Legend Points:** 16

Other Notes: If taken as such by a Scion of the Aesir, Auric Broder would be a four-dot guide.

KUNITSUKAMI

In Shintoism, the kunitsukami were the Gods of the World, as opposed to the Amatsukami, or the Gods of the Overworld. In truth, the kunitsukami were the lesser immortals of ancient Japan who were charged with remaining on Earth and representing some material facet of it rather than ascending to Amaterasu's kingdom and taking dominion over some higher concept of existence. The reasons for this division of labor vary according to the telling. Some tales claim that the kunitsukami refused to aid Amaterasu against the Titans, and she punished them by exiling them to the World. Others say that the kunitsukami came after the fall of the Titans and that they were actually ancient Scions who ascended to godhood but who were denied entrance into the Overworld due to Amaterasu's jealousy and paranoia.

In any case, the kunitsukami exist today as lesser immortals of Japan, each of whom assumes a guardianship role over some geographic feature important to Japanese society, be it a river, mountain, forest or even shrine or important building. Consequently, kunitsukami are rarely found outside of Japan, although a few have traveled along with Japanese immigrants and assumed dominion over important Shinto shrines outside of Japan. Kunitsukami rarely appear to mortals, though individual kunitsukami often appear to those who are dedicated to the being's place of influence.

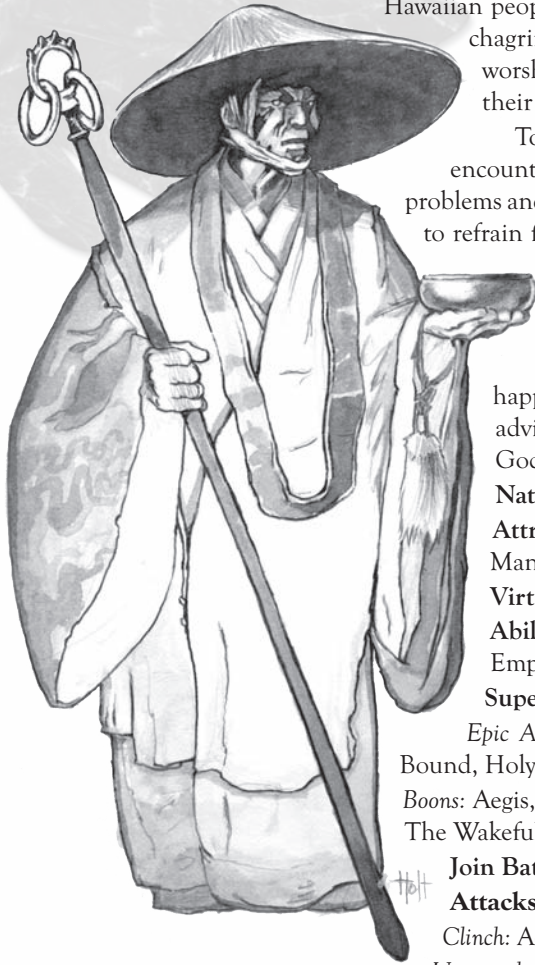
When one does appear, he almost invariably has Japanese features and is typically dressed in simple, traditional Japanese clothing. When viewed by a character with a Legend rating, a kunitsukami is surrounded by a glowing nimbus of a color appropriate to the area he guards and is dressed in ornate clothing appropriate to feudal Japan. While most kunitsukami appear in "civilian" clothing, all kunitsukami can transform their clothing into what appears to be stylized Shogunate-era armor.

Supernatural Powers: Each kunitsukami is unique, with Purviews and Epic Attributes appropriate to her area of influence, but all kunitsukami are considered guardian spirits, and all of them consequently have influence over the Guardian and War Purviews. When a kunitsukami is forced to defend herself, she manifests traditional Japanese armor of incredible resilience, along with a personal weapon, usually a katana, that is actually an extension of the kunitsukami's own divine might. In some cases, this weapon can never be taken from a kunitsukami even if she is slain. In other cases, however, the spirit's weapon is left behind and can be used as a Relic weapon (with appropriate Purviews) by any Scion who acquires it (regardless of what role the Scion played in the kunitsukami's demise). This weapon has the normal characteristics of a weapon of its type, but gains additional Accuracy, Damage and Defense bonuses equal to the kunitsukami's Legend. A kunitsukami's battle armor grants a bonus to both bashing and lethal soak equal to (Legend x 2) and a bonus against aggravated damage equal to his Legend.

Weaknesses: Kunitsukami suffer from a magically enforced sense of honor that manifests in one of three ways. First, the lesser immortal is incapable of lying. Second, he is incapable of breaking an oath once he has sworn it. Third, he is compelled to commit ritual suicide (*seppuku*) if he fails to protect what place or object he has chosen to guard.

AMARATSUKAMI KAPUAKONO, Hawaiian Kunitsukami (Guide ****)

Amaratsukami Kapuakono, or simply "Kono" as he likes to be called, is perhaps the most unusual of all kunitsukami, and one of the few to make his home outside the Japanese mainland. Over a century ago, the Daijingu Shinto Temple was founded in Honolulu, Hawaii for the benefit of the large number of Japanese immigrants who made their home on the Hawaiian islands. Soon after, a kunitsukami then named Amaratsu was dispatched by command of Amaterasu to watch over this new temple. Over time, the kunitsukami acclimated himself to his new home, to the point of adopting the Polynesian surname of Kapuakono in reference to legendary Gods of the



Hawaiian people. Indeed, to an extent, Kono even “went native,” much to the chagrin of the Amatsukami, by subtly encouraging Japanese-American worshipers at the shrine to remain loyal to America over the land of their ancestors during World War II.

Today, visitors to the Daijingu Shrine still report occasional encounters with a portly but friendly Shinto priest who listens to their problems and gives helpful advice. Criminals in the area also warn one another to refrain from trying to rob the shrine due to the ghostly samurai warrior who attacks those who try to break in.

Although Amaterasu doubts Kono’s loyalty, he remains a kunitsukami with all that entails. He simply no longer equates the duties of a kunitsukami with Japanese nationalism. He will happily aid any Amatsukami Scions who come to him, but he will also advise them to think for themselves and to remember that neither Gods nor parents always know what is right.

Nature: Rebel

Attributes: Strength 4, Dexterity 4, Stamina 4; Charisma 2, Manipulation 2, Appearance 2; Perception 3, Intelligence 2, Wits 2

Virtues: Duty 4, Endurance 3, Intellect 2, Valor 3

Abilities: Academics 3, Art 1, Athletics 4, Awareness 4, Brawl 2, Empathy 4, Fortitude 3, Integrity 4, Melee 5, Occult 3, Presence 3

Supernatural Powers:

Epic Attributes: Epic Dexterity 1 (Cat’s Grace), Epic Strength 2 (Holy Bound, Holy Rampage), Epic Stamina 2 (Damage Conversion, Self-Healing)

Boons: Aegis, Battle Cry, Blessing of Bravery, The Helpful Spirit, Vigil Brand, The Wakeful Spirit, Ward, The Watchful Spirit

Join Battle: 6

Attacks:

Clinch: Accuracy 6, Damage 5B, Parry DV –, Speed 6, P

Unarmed, Heavy: Accuracy 5, Damage 8B, Parry DV 3, Speed 5

Unarmed, Light: Accuracy 7, Damage 5B, Parry DV 5, Speed 4

Katana: Accuracy 14, Damage 14L, Parry DV 8, Speed 5

Soak: 2A/4L/6B (with armor 8A/14L/18B)

Health Levels: -0/-0/-0/-1/-1/-1/-2/-2/-2/-4/Incap

Dodge DV: 7 **Willpower:** 7

Legend: 4 **Legend Points:** 16

Other Notes: If Kono is killed, his katana will remain behind (Accuracy +5, Damage +9L, Defense +5, Speed 5). If he is taken as such by a Scion of the Amatsukami, Kono would be a four-dot guide.

NYMPH

Nymphs are another species of “elfin” creature, exclusively female and most commonly associated with the Dodekathemon. These lesser immortals appear, when they deign to appear at all, as ravishingly beautiful women who are spiritually associated with some kind of natural ecological phenomena, such as glades, rivers, lakes or even individual trees. Nymphs are primarily protective fertility deities, and the Greeks subdivide nymphs into a dazzling array of sub-categories depending on what type of phenomenon the nymph protects. Just a few examples from classical legends include the *napaeae* (glen nymphs), the *oreads* (mountain nymphs), the *dryads* (nymphs of oak trees), the *nereids* (sea nymphs) and the *naiads* (nymphs found in bodies of fresh water).

While most nymphs are associated with Greek legend, other cultures have similar lesser immortals. Germanic legend identifies the *nixes* as beautiful mermaids who protect the rivers (and, in the case of the “Rhine maidens” made famous by Wagner, the priceless magical *Rheingold* that is hidden within the Rhine River). In Japan, Shintoism recognizes a similar type of guardian spirit known as an *ujigami*, while the Aztecs called such nature guardians the *chaneques*.

Any mortal who encounters a nymph sees her as a woman of hypnotic beauty and irresistible sex appeal. Few mortals can resist the beauty of a nymph, whatever her cultural background. Beings with a Legend rating can see

the hints of a nymph's true nature in the details. A dryad might have tiny tree branch sprigs growing from her hair and a slight greenish cast to her skin, while a nixe could have a bluish tint and perpetually wet hair.

Supernatural Powers: All nymphs have Epic Appearance, and most have Epic Charisma or Manipulation as well. A nymph might have access to any Purview powers logically associated with her area of influence. A naiad, for instance, might have Boons of the Water Purview but be able to use them to influence only bodies of fresh water, while a nereid might be able to affect only salt water. While within her area of influence (underwater, physically merged with a tree, buried within a sacred grove), a nymph can heal herself or someone else by spending one Legend per health level to be healed. A nymph can instantly teleport to any place within her domain, although in some cases, this area might be quite small.

Weaknesses: No nymph can survive being away from her area of influence for more than one day. Also, serious damage to the area of influence itself (damming a river, starting a forest fire, poisoning a sacred garden) can directly harm a nymph. Total destruction of that area can kill her outright.

PEGGY BLUEWATER, the Lady in the Lake (Guide **)**

Peggy Bluewater was once known as Pegaea, a nymph who dwelled in an artesian well near the ancient Turkish city of Mysia. She and her sisters, Calliphaeia, Synallasis and Iasis, blessed the waters of the spring with the power to cure disease. One day, however, a beautiful young man named Hylas, companion of Heracles and one of the Argonauts, came to the spring. Greek legend says that Hylas chose to remain forever with the four sisters. The truth is that Hera had commanded the four sisters to murder Hylas as a way of punishing his friend Heracles, and they tricked Hylas into their pool to drown him. Hera then helped the sisters flee Heracles' wrath and led Pegaea to a new land with no name. Strange, red-skinned natives discovered the properties with which she blessed the waters of her new home, and she offered them a deal.

"Whenever one of your warriors is ready to become a man, send him to my waters so that I may teach him. Do this every year on the longest day of the year, and I will bless you with my healing waters. If I choose to keep him, I will reward you further. Deny me my pleasure, and pestilence will rain down upon you."

The locals, a small Native American tribe in what would later become the state of Maine, accepted the bargain, and once a year, a young brave was sent to Pegaea's spring to lose his virginity, and occasionally more than that. The natives prospered until white men came from across the oceans and drove Pegaea's worshipers away. Her spring was soon discovered by the new settlers of the area, who initially rejected native tales of the beautiful lady of the spring as pagan superstition. In time, faced with the threat of disease versus the promise of health and longevity, the settlers were forced to make the same deal the natives had.

Today, Peggy Bluewater is an urban legend repeated by school children throughout upstate Maine. In the tiny village of Sagonquit, not far from the Canadian border, she is more than that. Every year, on the summer solstice, a virgin boy between the ages of 14 and 17 is chosen by lottery and sent into the woods to find Peggy's spring where he loses his virginity to the nymph. In exchange, she gives him a jug of spring water that will heal any diseases or injuries among the townspeople. Peggy has told the townspeople that only virgins can be sent to her and return safely, and that any boys who have already lost their virginity she will keep for herself. In fact, Peggy keeps her visitor regardless of the state of his virginity if she considers that suitor particularly handsome or skilled at lovemaking.

Nature: Survivor

Attributes: Strength 2, Dexterity 3, Stamina 2; Charisma 4, Manipulation 3, Appearance 4; Perception 2, Intelligence 2, Wits 2

Virtues: Expression 3, Intellect 1, Valor 2, Vengeance 3

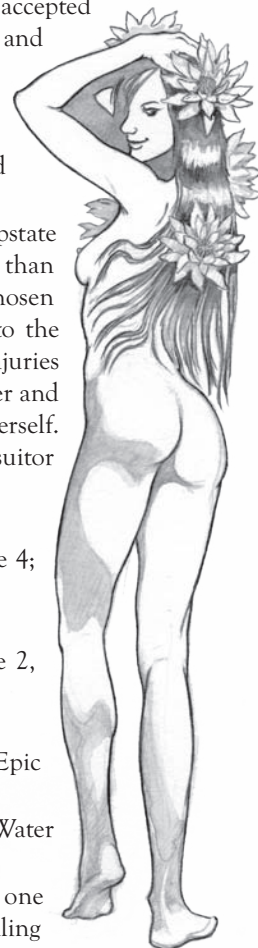
Abilities: Animal Ken 3, Art 1, Athletics 3, Awareness 5, Brawl 1, Empathy 3, Fortitude 2, Medicine 4, Occult 3, Presence 5, Survival 2

Supernatural Powers:

Epic Attributes: Epic Appearance 3 (Center of Attention, Come Hither, Serpent's Gaze), Epic Charisma 2 (Blessing of Importance, Charmer)

Boons: Assess Health, Blessing of Health/Curse of Frailty, Changing States, Heal/Infect, Water Breathing, Water Control

Imbue Water: Peggy can enchant any quantity of water with healing properties at a cost of one Legend per gallon of water. Any mortal who drinks a cup of this water will find that his healing



times double for the next week and that his Stamina triples for the purpose of resisting diseases for the same time period. The effects are less impressive on a Scion, lasting only one day per cup of magical spring water.

Water-Breathing: As a reflexive action, Peggy can grant any mortal the ability to breathe water for a day with the expenditure of one Legend point.

Join Battle: 7

Attacks:

Clinch: Accuracy 4, Damage 3B, Parry DV —, Speed 6, P

Unarmed, Heavy: Accuracy 3, Damage 6B, Parry DV 1, Speed 5

Unarmed, Light: Accuracy 5, Damage 3B, Parry DV 3, Speed 4

Soak: 1L/2B

Health Levels: -0/-0/-0/-1/-1/-1/-2/-2/-2/-4/Incap

Dodge DV: 5 **Willpower:** 6

Legend: 4 **Legend Points:** 16

Other Notes: Although she is unlikely to act as such to any but a handsome Scion of the Dodektheon, Peggy Bluewater would be a four-dot guide.

OTHER LESSER IMMORTALS

The alfar, the kunitsukami and the nymphs represent the most common types of lesser immortals who can easily pass for human. Although such beings may be described as having a fey, otherworldly appearance, they certainly do not appear to be inhuman, at least until they reveal their divine might. Other types of lesser immortals are more obvious in their divinity and wear forms that inevitably draw unwanted attention unless the immortal takes steps to conceal himself.

KITSUNE

In Japanese folklore, kitsune are impossibly clever foxes who have mastered the art of shapeshifting and can assume a human form. The kitsune are easily distracted, however, so they sometimes forget to transform some part of their body, most often leaving a tail sticking out from underneath their robes. Kitsune are considered a form of kami (a Japanese divinity) and are known to serve Inari, a hermaphroditic deity associated with rice.

It is said that all foxes have the potential to become kitsune if they live long enough. A fox who lives for 100 years becomes a kitsune and learns the art of changing her shape. Each century thereafter, the kitsune gains an additional tail so that after 1,000 years, the fox would have nine tails and be impossibly powerful and wise.

In practice, kitsune are clever and cunning beings with a mordant sense of humor. Kitsune fully support the Amatsukami and the rest of the Gods against the Titans, but their capricious nature compels them to offer this support in such strange and unpredictable ways that many Scions cannot tell whether they are friend or foe. More than one Scion has endured an embarrassing if not potentially lethal kitsune prank only to realize that the trick caused him to learn some secret or gain some advantage that later helped him against the titanspawn.

In their true form, kitsune appear to be anthropomorphic foxes who wear human clothing, most commonly traditional Japanese clothing, but occasionally Western dress. They can take the form of a normal fox or of any mortal person with up to Appearance 5, although if the kitsune is not cautious, she could reveal parts of her true form to astute observers.

Supernatural Powers: Kitsune are natural tricksters with high levels of Epic Charisma and Manipulation, as well as some control over the Chaos Purview. A kitsune can assume the form of any person with the expenditure of a Legend point and a successful Legend roll. Only a single success is necessary to assume a human form. If the kitsune fails to get a number of successes equal to the mortal's Appearance, though, she displays vulpine characteristics ranging from a few out-of-place whiskers to a full-length tail to fox paws in place of hands, depending on how short of the mortal's Appearance she falls. Kitsune also have powers of suggestion and can compel any mortal to obey a command. Doing so requires a contested roll of the kitsune's (Manipulation + Command + Legend) versus the victim's (Willpower + Integrity + Legend).

Weaknesses: Kitsune have great difficulty resisting the temptation to drink sake. When a character offers sake to a kitsune, roll the kitsune's (Wits + Integrity), at difficulty 3. If this roll fails, the kitsune is compelled to drink and will immediately become drunk after a single sip. While drunk, a kitsune suffers a -4 penalty on all rolls and is giddy and highly suggestible.

NURIKO ROTHSTEIN, the Black Widow of San Francisco (Guide ••••)

Nuriko Rothstein is a beautiful young woman of Japanese descent who has sadly just buried her fifth (and wealthiest) husband. Of course, none of her friends know about the first four since her name and face were both quite different back then. In addition to being a grieving but still wealthy widow, Nuriko is also a three-tailed fox who enjoys the good life and sees nothing wrong with giving wealthy, elderly men a few last years of passion in order to get it. Her primary goal is to secure her own wealth and happiness, but she rationalizes that her actions put her in a better position to aid Scions of the Amatsukami who come to her for help. Besides, none of her husbands were Japanese, so it hardly even counts as murder. And to her credit, Nuriko does have tremendous assets to offer a Scion. Of course, like any kitsune, she always wants something in return.

Nuriko normally appears to be a thoroughly Westernized Japanese-American who dresses in the latest Paris fashions and enjoys the jet-set lifestyle. Although she deliberately presents herself as a somewhat ditzzy, gold-digging bimbo, she is fiercely intelligent. Among Scions or her fellow kitsune, Nuriko appears to be a feminine, humanoid fox wearing Western clothing, and somehow, she makes it work. Even in her fox form, men can't help but find her alluring.

Nature: Trickster

Attributes: Strength 3, Dexterity 3, Stamina 3; Charisma 4, Manipulation 4, Appearance 3 (varies when shapeshifting); Perception 3, Intelligence 4, Wits 3

Virtues: Duty 1, Endurance 2, Intellect 4, Valor 2

Abilities: Academics 3, Animal Ken 2, Art 3, Athletics 5, Awareness 4, Brawl 3, Command 1, Control 1, Empathy 4, Fortitude 2, Integrity 3, Investigation 2, Larceny 4, Occult 2, Presence 4, Stealth 4, Survival 2

Supernatural Powers:

Epic Attributes: Epic Dexterity 1 (Cat's Grace), Epic Charisma 3 (Benefit of the Doubt, Charmer), Epic Manipulation 3 (Gods' Honest, Overt Order, Takes One to Know One)

Shapeshifting: Nuriko can assume the form of any mortal for the duration of one scene with the expenditure of a Legend point and a successful Legend roll. Physically, the kitsune is a perfect copy of the mortal, although she doesn't have the mortal's memories or knowledge. Although one success is enough to perfectly copy any mortal, it is harder for Nuriko to copy extremely attractive mortals. For every point by which her new Appearance exceeds her successes on the Legend roll, Nuriko displays one notable fox feature.

Suggestion: Nuriko can suggest a course of action to a mortal or Scion and compel the victim to follow it. Roll her (Manipulation + Command + Legend) versus the victim's roll of (Willpower + Integrity + Legend). If Nuriko's roll garners more successes, the victim follows her suggestion. This power automatically fails if the kitsune attempts to use it against a target with a higher Legend rating than herself or if she attempts to use it to compel a suicidal course of action.

Join Battle: 7

Attacks:

Clinch: Accuracy 6, Damage 4B, Parry DV —, Speed 6, P

Unarmed, Heavy: Accuracy 5, Damage 7B, Parry DV 3, Speed 5

Unarmed, Light: Accuracy 7, Damage 4B, Parry DV 5, Speed 4

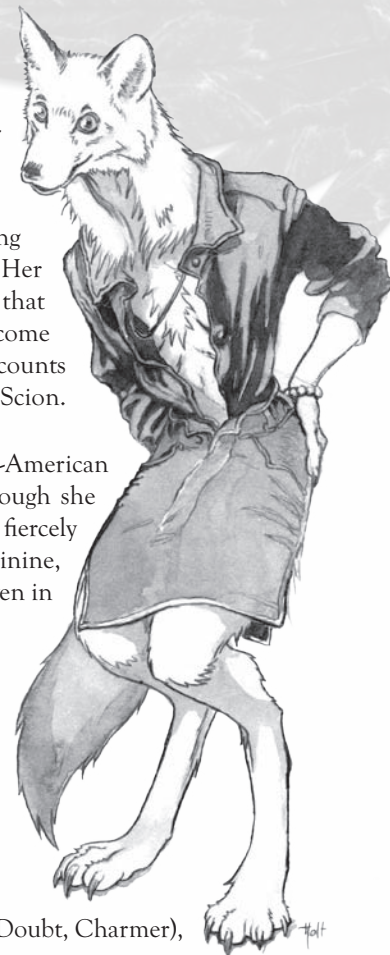
Soak: 2L/3B

Health Levels: -0/-0/-0/-1/-1/-1/-2/-2/-2/-4/Incap

Dodge DV: 7 **Willpower:** 7

Legend: 4 **Legend Points:** 16

Other Notes: If taken as such by a Scion of the Amatsukami, Nuriko Rothstein would be a four-dot guide.



SCIONS

Of all the potential threats to confront Scions, perhaps the most dangerous and unpredictable is that posed by other Scions. There are as many different agendas for Scions as there are Gods in the Overworld, and any of them could pit one Scion against another. As a result, the children of the Gods are driven by Fate and the will of the Gods to become boon companions or bitter enemies, with little chance for compromise. Whenever Scions meet for the first time, the outcome is in question. The scope of their legends' interaction is invariably epic, though.

SHINSENGUMI

The Shinsengumi is a Band of Scions brought together and led by Kane Taoka, a powerful and influential Scion of Amaterasu. Ostensibly founded to

advance the causes of its members' patron Gods and to thwart the machinations of the Titans and their agents (common goals for Scion Bands), the Shinsengumi secretly works for the Titan Mikaboshi, who is Kane Taoka's secret patron. Orlanda Elliot knows the truth (and Seth Farrow likely suspects it). The rest are effectively dupes who would be horrified to know whose cause they're advancing.

The membership of this Band is as follows:

- Seth Farrow, Scion of Set
- Marie Glapione, Scion of Eruzulie
- Sylvester "Sly" Guiler, Scion of Loki
- Kane Taoka, Scion of Amaterasu and Mikaboshi
- Orlanda Elliot, Scion of Xipe Totec
- Victor Fingers, Scion of Ares



SETH FARROW

SCION OF SET

Uncle to Horace Farrow (p. 55), Seth is a bad man through and through, a real bad seed. He led a gang of mortal thugs before his Visitation, and now he acts as a sadistic lieutenant to Kane. Always jealous of his older brother, Cyrus, Seth killed him in the heat of passion and, in so doing, created his own nemesis in Horace. That's hardly the worst of his crimes, however, and his behavior has only gotten worse in the years since his Visitation.

Kane (and his shinobi) saved Seth from capture by Horace Farrow in Phoenix a few years back and offered him a chance to indulge his sadism and live the high life if he'd become Kane's strong right hand. Seth jumped at the chance.

Seth dresses in black most of the time, and his wardrobe is quintessential modern Western outlaw, with Egyptian accents. Seth possesses a cane (actually a *was*) as his Birthright; its gold head is modeled on that of Set. In addition, it conceals a Bowie knife for the stabbing of unsuspecting folks. He also wields a high-caliber revolver, which he wears on his hip.

Calling: Outlaw

Nature: Rogue

Pantheon: Pesedjet

Patron: Set

Attributes: Strength 3, Dexterity 3, Stamina 3; Charisma 2, Manipulation 3, Appearance 2; Perception 4, Intelligence 2, Wits 5

Virtues: Conviction 5, Harmony 1, Order 1, Piety 2

Abilities: Athletics 2, Awareness 3, Brawl 2, Command 3, Control 1, Fortitude 2, Integrity 2, Larceny 3, Marksmanship 3, Melee 3, Presence 3, Stealth 2, Survival 2

Birthrights: Followers 2, Relic (Was—Animal, Guardian, War) 3

Supernatural Powers:

Epic Attributes: Epic Appearance 1 (Serpent's Gaze), Epic Dexterity 1 (Trick Shooter), Epic Perception 2 (Predatory Focus, Subliminal Warning), Epic Wits 1 (Opening Gambit)

Boons: Ren Harvest, Vigil Brand, Warrior Ideal (Gunslinger)

Join Battle: 8

Attacks:

Clinch: Accuracy 5, Damage 4B, Parry DV —, Speed 6, P

Unarmed, Heavy: Accuracy 4, Damage 7B, Parry DV 3, Speed 5

Unarmed, Light: Accuracy 6, Damage 4B, Parry DV 4, Speed 4

Bowie Knife: Accuracy 7, Damage 6L, Parry DV 4, Speed 4

Peacemaker: Accuracy 8, Damage 5L, Range 20, Speed 5

Soak: 2L/3B

Health Levels: -0/-1/-1/-2/-2/-4/Incap

Dodge DV: 6 **Willpower:** 7

Legend: 4 **Legend Points:** 16

Other Notes: Seth possesses 10 thugs as followers (see pp. 281-282).



MARIE GLAPION

SCION OF ERZULIE

A distant relation of famed Voodoo Queen Marie Laveau, Glapion grew up a spoiled heiress unaware of her heritage. She was quick to capitalize on both her parentage and her ancestry after her Visitation, however, setting herself up as the power behind the throne in New Orleans politics. After the devastation wrought by Hurricane Katrina and the resultant political fallout, Marie found her influence and interest in the Big Easy waning. Kane Taoka's offer to keep her in the manner to which she'd become accustomed in return for her service convinced her to join his Band.

Marie is the quintessential femme fatale. She's beautiful and she knows it. And she uses her feminine wiles (and Scion powers) to get whatever she wants, which currently coincides with what her Band wants. She's a loyal(-ish) member of the group, but she prefers to use manipulation and magic to make things go her way and is quick to make herself scarce if fighting starts. As she describes it, she's "a lover, not a fighter." Marie possesses a Voodoo doll Birthright relic, through which she channels the Health and Magic Purviews.

Calling: Femme Fatale

Nature: Libertine

Pantheon: Loa

Patron: Erzulie

Attributes: Strength 1, Dexterity 3, Stamina 3; Charisma 3, Manipulation 4, Appearance 4; Perception 3, Intelligence 3, Wits 3

Virtues: Harmony 2, Order 2, Piety 2, Vengeance 3

Abilities: Academics 2, Art (Painting) 1, Athletics 2, Awareness 2, Brawl 1, Command 1, Empathy 3, Fortitude 1, Integrity 3, Investigation 2, Larceny 2, Medicine 1, Melee 1, Occult 3, Politics 3, Presence 4, Stealth 1, Survival 1

Birthrights: Guide (Marie Laveau) 3, Relic (Voodoo Doll—Health, Magic) 2

Supernatural Powers:

Epic Attributes: Epic Appearance 2 (Center of Attention, Lasting Impression), Epic Charisma 2 (Blessing of Importance, Charmer)

Boons: Blessing of Health/Curse of Frailty, Magic (2), Petro's Hands, Rada's Eyes

Spells: The Unlidded Eye, Bona Fortuna, Evil Eye

Join Battle: 5

Attacks:

Clinch: Accuracy 4, Damage 2B, Parry DV —, Speed 6, P

Unarmed, Heavy: Accuracy 3, Damage 5B, Parry DV 1, Speed 5

Unarmed, Light: Accuracy 5, Damage 2B, Parry DV 3, Speed 4

Soak: 2L/3B

Health Levels: -0/-1/-1/-2/-2/-4/Incap

Dodge DV: 4 **Willpower:** 5

Legend: 3 **Legend Points:** 9

Other Notes: To contact her ancestor's ghede and guide, Marie must travel to the woman's tomb in New Orleans and draw three crosses on the outside.



SYLVESTER GUILER

SCION OF LOKI

Sly's a crafty confidence man descended from perhaps the craftiest of all Gods, Loki. Growing up on the mean streets of Chicago and doing whatever he had to do to survive, he has become quite good at what he does (especially since his Visitation) and is almost completely amoral. That said, he's not so much evil, like Seth or Kane, just selfish and arrogant. He works with the Shinsengumi because Kane's paying him well to do so.

Sly possesses as his Birthright the very pair of shears his father used to cut off the blond tresses of Sif. He occasionally uses these as a weapon as well as a focus for his Boons. As the saying goes, "God wouldn't have created sheep if he didn't want them to be shorn." This aphorism speaks volumes about Sly Guiler's outlook.

Calling: Con Man

Nature: Trickster

Pantheon: Aesir

Patron: Loki

Attributes: Strength 2, Dexterity 3, Stamina 2;
Charisma 3, Manipulation 4, Appearance 2;
Perception 3, Intelligence 4, Wits 4

Virtues: Courage 2, Endurance 3, Expression 3,
Loyalty 1

Abilities: Academics 2, Athletics 1, Awareness
3, Brawl 2, Empathy 3, Fortitude 2, Integrity 2,
Investigation 3, Larceny 5, Marksmanship 1, Melee 2, Occult
1, Politics 1, Stealth 3, Survival 2

Birthrights: Relic (Shears—Chaos, Fire) 5

Supernatural Powers:

Epic Attributes: Epic Intelligence 2 (Know-It-All, Math Genius), Epic
Manipulation 2 (God's Honest, Takes One to Know One) Epic
Stamina 1 (Solipsistic Well-Being), Epic Wits 2 (Rabbit Reflexes, Social
Chameleon)

Boons: Eye of the Storm, Fire Immunity, Hornet's
Nest

Join Battle: 7

Attacks:

Clinch: Accuracy 5, Damage 3B, Parry DV —, Speed 6, P

Unarmed, Heavy: Accuracy 4, Damage 4B, Parry DV 2, Speed 5

Unarmed, Light: Accuracy 6, Damage 3B, Parry DV 3, Speed 4

Shears: Accuracy 7, Damage 6L, Parry DV 3, Speed 4

Soak: 1A/2L/3B

Health Levels: -0/-1/-1/-2/-2/-4/Incap

Dodge DV: 4 **Willpower:** 6

Legend: 3 **Legend Points:** 9

Other Notes: None



KANE 十咫カ

SCION OF AMATERASU AND MIKABOSHI

Kane is the brains behind the antagonist Band and a prime example of a Scion who has been thoroughly corrupted by a Titan. Kane lost his father and adopted mother at a very young age and spent the remainder of his youth in orphanages, with abusive foster families or on the street. When Mikaboshi revealed to Kane that his mother was the Goddess Amaterasu and that he need not have endured a life of hardship but for her indifference, Kane vowed revenge. Now empowered by Mikaboshi in addition to possessing the divine gifts of his parentage, Kane plots to drag his mother screaming from Takamagahara before finally destroying her, no matter what the cost.

Kane dresses as a conservative Japanese businessman, in dark suits. He has his mother's relic mirror, Yata No Kagami, which was used to coax her from her cave and became part of the Japanese Imperial Regalia before an agent of Mikaboshi stole it. He also possesses living shadow tattoos and commands an army of shinobi (see p. 322-323). In addition, he is the CEO of his own multinational corporation Kuroko Industries—a front for the yakupza organization he heads.

Calling: Harbinger of the Titans

Nature: Autocrat

Pantheon: Amatsukami

Patrons: Amaterasu and Mikaboshi

Attributes: Strength 2, Dexterity 3, Stamina 2; Charisma 3, Manipulation 4, Appearance 2; Perception 3, Intelligence 4, Wits 4

Virtues: Ambition 3, Malice 2, Rapacity 2, Zealotry 2

Abilities: Academics 3, Art 4, Athletics 3, Awareness 3, Brawl 4, Command 3, Fortitude 2, Integrity 3, Larceny 2, Melee 3, Occult 3, Presence 5, Stealth 4, Survival 1, Thrown 4

Birthrights: Creature (Shadow Dragon) 3, Followers (Shinobi) 5, Followers (Yakuza Thugs) 5, Guide 5, Relic (Tattoos—Darkness, Sky) 3, Relic (Yata No Kagami—Sun) 5

Supernatural Powers:

Epic Attributes: Epic Charisma 3 (Blessing of Importance, Charmer, Inspirational Figure), Epic Stamina 2 (Holy Fortitude, Self-Healing), Epic Strength 1 (Crushing Grip)

Boons: The Helpful Spirit, Night Eyes, Shadow Mask, Shadow Refuge, The Wakeful Spirit, The Watchful Spirit, Wind's Freedom

Join Battle: 7

Attacks:

Clinch: Accuracy 7, Damage 3B, Parry DV —, Speed 6, P

Unarmed, Heavy: Accuracy 6, Damage 6B, Parry DV 3, Speed 5

Unarmed, Light: Accuracy 8, Damage 3B, Parry DV 4, Speed 4

Katana: Accuracy 7, Damage 8L, Parry DV 4, Speed 5

Wakizashi: Accuracy 7, Damage 5L, Parry DV 4, Speed 4

Black Shuriken (10): Accuracy 9, Damage 6L, Range 20, Speed 4

Soak: 2A/3L/4B

Health Levels: 0/-1/-1/-2/-2/4/Incap

Dodge DV: 6 **Willpower:** 7

Legend: 5 **Legend Points:** 25

Other Notes: Kane has 25 yakuza followers available at any one time and 15 shinobi. Kane's shadow dragon is a black dragon tattoo that circles his torso, which may animate and flow off his body to fight, growing in size as it does so. Despite the fact it appears physically to be a Japanese dragon made of pure shadow, its traits are identical to those of a coatl (see p. 325). When Kane activates his Wind's Freedom Boon, the stylized wing tattoos that adorn his shoulders grow to become enormous wings composed of pure shadow. In addition to the Purview access it provides him, the Yata No Kagami allows him to communicate through any mirrored surface within (Legend x 5) miles and to use his Boons through such a surface as if he were there. He may also use the mirror to contact Mikaboshi, the August Star of Heaven, his Titan patron and guide, as long as the star Polaris is in the night sky.

ORLANDA ELLIOT

SCION OF XIPE TOTEC

Orlanda Elliot is a mestizo girl who is severely scarred as a result of obsessive body modification and self-mutilation. Yet despite her disturbing appearance, many people still find her weirdly attractive.

Growing up in South Texas, Orlanda never really fit in at school and was practically ignored by her drug-addicted, former-model mother, the girl's only family. When her mother did pay attention, it was usually to deride her daughter's intelligence and appearance, leaving Orlanda ashamed of her body and convinced that she others would accept her only if she fixed her many "flaws." After seriously injuring herself in an attempt at self-improvement, she ended up being institutionalized, which is where she received her Visitation. Going on the run after "operating" on two of the institution's staff, Orlanda was found by Kane who convinced the young lady to join his cause. She has since become Kane's lover.

Orlanda is a sad young woman who used to cut herself even before her Visitation. Now it just gives her more tangible benefits. Her Birthright relic is an obsidian sacrificial dagger whose hilt is a carved human thighbone.

Calling: Disturbed Emo Girl

Nature: Penitent

Pantheon: Atzlánti

Patron: Xipe Totec

Attributes: Strength 3, Dexterity 3, Stamina 5; Charisma 3, Manipulation 2, Appearance 4; Perception 2, Intelligence 3, Wits 2

Virtues: Conviction 3, Courage 2, Duty 2, Loyalty 3

Abilities: Academics 1, Athletics 3, Awareness 1, Brawl 1, Craft (Self) 2, Empathy 3, Fortitude 4, Integrity 1, Larceny 1, Medicine 2, Melee 3, Occult 1, Presence 3, Stealth 2, Survival 2, Thrown 1

Birthrights: Relic (Obsidian Dagger—Fertility, Guardian, Health) 5

Supernatural Powers:

Epic Attributes: Epic Stamina 3 (Damage Conversion, Self-Healing, Solipsistic Well-Being)

Boons: Combat Sacrifice, Green Thumb, Heal/Inflict, Maguey Sting, Obsidian Mutilation

Join Battle: 3

Attacks:

Clinch: Accuracy 4, Damage 4B, Parry DV —, Speed 6, P

Unarmed, Heavy: Accuracy 3, Damage 7B, Parry DV 1, Speed 5

Unarmed, Light: Accuracy 5, Damage 4B, Parry DV 3, Speed 4

Obsidian Dagger: Accuracy 7, Damage 4L, Parry DV 3, Speed 4

Soak: 3A/6L/8B

Health Levels: -0/-1/-1/-2/-2/-4/Incap

Dodge DV: 5 **Willpower:** 6

Legend: 4 **Legend Points:** 16

Other Notes: None



VICTOR FINGERS

SCION OF ARES

Vic's a divinely gifted super soldier. While a part of the US force in Iraq, the rest of his Special Forces unit was wiped out by a titanspawn attack. Vic survived only because of his divine father's timely Visitation. Going AWOL in order to fight this greater menace, Vic now operates as a soldier for his father, attempting to aid him in defeating the Titans once and for all. It was at his father's behest that Victor joined with Kane's Band.

Victor is a ruggedly handsome, well-built man in his early 20s, with dark-brown hair and eyes. Vic possesses the Armor of Achilles, forged by Hephaestus and once worn by the ancient hero of the Trojan War. He also wears combat-fatigue pants and combat boots, as well as a web belt complete with sidearm and large combat knife. In addition to his military dog tags, Vic wears a Birthright signaculum (the Roman equivalent to the modern dog tag), through which he channels his War Boons. He commands a small unit of spartoi given to him by his father.

Calling: Ultimate Soldier

Nature: Bravo

Pantheon: Dodekathemon

Patron: Ares

Attributes: Strength 4, Dexterity 3, Stamina 4; Charisma 3, Manipulation 2, Appearance 4; Perception 2, Intelligence 2, Wits 3

Virtues: Expression 1, Intellect 2, Valor 3, Vengeance 3

Abilities: Athletics 3, Awareness 3, Brawl 3, Command 1, Control 2, Craft (Demolition) 2, Fortitude 3, Integrity 2, Marksmanship 4, Melee 2, Presence 2, Stealth 2, Survival 3

Birthrights: Followers (Spartoi) 4, Relic (Dragon's Teeth) 2, Relic (Armor of Achilles) 2, Relic (Signaculum—War) 1

Supernatural Powers:

Epic Attributes: Epic Dexterity 1 (Lightning Sprinter), Epic Stamina 2 (Damage Conversion, Self-Healing), Epic Strength 2 (Holy Rampage, Uplifting Might), Epic Wits 2 (Opening Gambit, Rabbit Reflexes)

Boons: Battle Cry, Blessing of Bravery

Join Battle: 6

Attacks:

Clinch: Accuracy 6, Damage 5B, Parry DV —, Speed 6, P

Unarmed, Heavy: Accuracy 5, Damage 8B, Parry DV 3, Speed 5

Unarmed, Light: Accuracy 7, Damage 5B, Parry DV 5, Speed 4

Combat Knife: Accuracy 6, Damage 7L, Parry DV 4, Speed 4

Beretta (M9): Accuracy 8, Damage 4L, Range 20, Speed 4, P

FN P90: Accuracy 8, Damage 4L, Range 50, Speed 5, P

M16: Accuracy 7, Damage 6L, Range 150, Speed 5, P

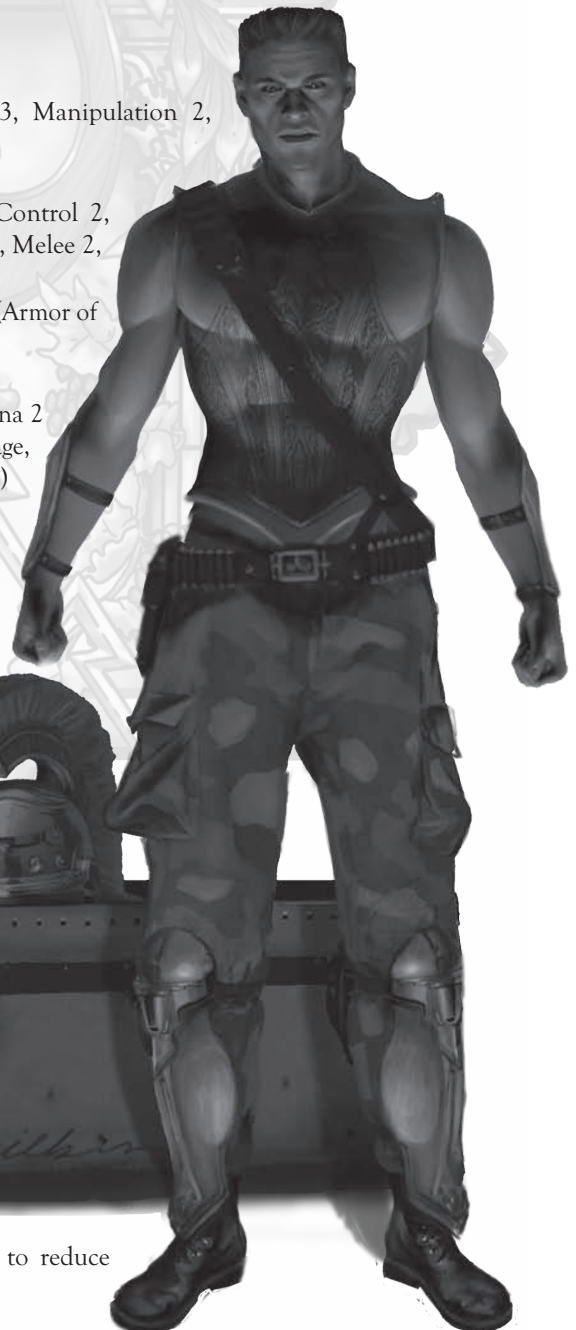
Soak: 2A/8L/8B (Armor of Achilles, +4L/2B)

Health Levels: -0/-1/-1/-2/-2/-4/Incap

Dodge DV: 6 **Willpower:** 6

Legend: 3 **Legend Points:** 9

Other Notes: The Armor of Achilles augments the power of the Damage Conversion Knack to reduce damage. It reduces lethal damage from any attack to bashing and bashing to nothing at no cost. What's more, while wearing the armor, Victor may spend two points of Legend to reduce aggravated damage to lethal.



TITANSPAWN

The titanspawn are the greatest earthly enemies of the Scions. Formed directly by the power of their chthonic masters, some titanspawn are unique creatures, while others are members of hidden races of Titan-worshipping creatures. Scions with a bookish nature tend to categorize titanspawn into one of three general categories. *Chimerae* are amalgamations of different creatures into one horrific form. Scions have encountered a dazzling number of chimerae, but most are unique creatures unable to breed easily. *Giants* are typically enormous humanoids fashioned from the power of the Titans out of the very elements, although some few are mundane creatures grown to incredible size. Giants are among the most common enemies of the Scions, typically providing muscle for more powerful or intelligent titanspawn. *Minions*, on the other hand, are entire servitor races created by the Titans. Minions exist in greater variety than giants do, and they often fulfill specific roles for their Titan creators to which the crude giants are ill suited. Some minions have far more autonomy than others. A significant number of Japanese tengu have rejected their titanspawn heritage to aid the Scions, and almost all of the dwarves swore allegiance to the Aesir after the destruction of their creator, Ymir.

While titanspawn are dangerous adversaries, a Scion who defeats one can receive a benefit much more tangible than simply the thrill of beating up a big, ugly monster. Just as the Gods took power from the Titans after defeating them and made it their own, Scions can take part of the chthonic energy that fuels a titanspawn and gain supernatural benefits from it. The exact nature of what power can be drawn from a particular titanspawn varies according to the creature. Each titanspawn described here is associated with a particular “trophy,” which a Scion can use for supernatural purposes. In some cases, the trophy yields an actual Birthright weapon or object that permits the Scion to use a Boon once he has spent the appropriate experience for it, such as the skin of the Nemean Lion did for Heracles. In other cases, a particular titanspawn’s corpse might yield some substance that gives the Scion a short-term supernatural benefit. Generally, the more powerful and unique a titanspawn is, the more potent and permanent the trophy is.

DARK VIRTUES

Like Scions, titanspawn (or at least those titanspawn with some degree of intellect) have Virtues that govern their behavior. The titanspawn do not, however, have any of the Virtues associated with the Overworld pantheons. Instead, creatures who serve the Titans directly have Dark Virtues, which serve them in the same way that

conventional Virtues serve the Scions. Each Dark Virtue drives the titanspawn to serve the Titans with greater devotion and to hate the Gods and their children with greater intensity. Not all titanspawn have Dark Virtues, though. Some titanspawn, most commonly renegade minions, have the Virtues of the pantheon with which they have become associated. Others are mindless beasts with no Virtues at all.

AMBITION

To the titanspawn, love, family and friendship are alien concepts. Communal instincts are sins against one’s own self, the only being a titanspawn should ever care about. Titanspawn who espouse the Virtue of Ambition reserve their trust, support and devotion only for themselves and their own advancement. Even the Titans themselves are not truly worthy of the titanspawn loyalty except as a means to greater personal power. Everyone and everything that exists is merely a potential sacrifice on the altar of the titanspawn’s quest for glory.

Titanspawn use Ambition to: fight against an enemy who threatens one’s goals, defend a valuable pawn, risk danger or death in pursuit of advancement, stab a rival in the back

A failed Ambition roll allows a titanspawn to: demonstrate compassion when doing so disadvantages him, refuse to take a risk that is outweighed by the potential rewards, refuse to usurp his superior’s authority when given the chance to do so

Virtue Extremity: *Overweening Arrogance.* The titanspawn becomes so consumed by his own sense of superiority that he fails to see the limits of his power. He refuses to show any respect to all but the most dangerous of superiors, and he puts his own lust for power above the goals of his masters.

MALICE

To the titanspawn, compassion is a form of madness unique to Gods and the pathetic humans who choose to emulate them. It is the natural desire of all thinking beings to revel in the fear that those beneath them show. Deliberate cruelty and even outright sadism are not deficiencies in one’s character, but rather evidence of one’s natural superiority. The weak enslave themselves, and suffering is the natural consequence of one’s own inferiority.

Titanspawn use Malice to: fight against any enemy, attack the innocent and helpless, interrogate and torture captives, intimidate others

A failed Malice roll allows a titanspawn to: honor a truce, release a prisoner from captivity, administer a coup de grace on a fallen foe rather than toying with him, ignore any opportunity to torment a Scion

Virtue Extremity: *All-Consuming Hatred.* The titanspawn's contempt for all life exceeds all bounds of common sense. The titanspawn cannot ignore any opportunity to inflict suffering that comes his way, even when doing so diverts him from his true goals. A titanspawn in the grip of such a hatred would delay his enemy's execution to pull the wings off a fly. Indeed, such a titanspawn might delay the execution indefinitely, stretching out his enemy's torture as long as possible even though doing so increases the chance of his enemy's rescue or escape.

RAPACITY

The gratification of the senses and the satiation of hunger are the sole motives for action. That is the creed of the titanspawn ruled by Rapacity. Such a hunger need not be for food; indeed, it rarely is. Instead, the titanspawn might be driven by a lust for the flesh of nubile virgins or an insatiable avarice. What matters is that the titanspawn has found something that she must have at all costs or die in the attempt.

Titanspawn use Rapacity to: fight against anyone who seeks to end her depredations, overcome an enemy who defends the object of her desire, avenge herself against one who has robbed her of her prize

A failed Rapacity roll allows a titanspawn to: give away a possession (especially one that is the object of the titanspawn's obsession), resist bribery or blackmail attempts involving the object of her desire, ignore a chance to satisfy her desires when the reward outweighs the danger

Virtue Extremity: *Reckless Hunger.* The titanspawn's obsession overwhelms all capacity for rational self-

interest. She will take any risk to secure the object of her desire and accede to any request by one who can provide her with what she wants.

ZEALOTRY

All titanspawn draw their strength from the vast power of the Titans, but not all are grateful enough to risk their lives working to allow their masters access to the World, particularly when confronted by wrathful Scions. Such dangers are insignificant to those who cherish the Virtue of Zealotry. Filled with the unholy spirit of the Titans, these zealots serve their creators with an unquenchable religious fervor. When the chance to serve comes their way, such titanspawn serve with all their hearts and souls.

Titanspawn use Zealotry to: fight against the Gods and their Scions and allies, work toward their Titan's goals, cling to life after a near-fatal encounter with their enemies

A failed Zealotry roll allows a titanspawn to: ignore the chance to capture or kill a God or a Scion, ignore any command believed to come from their Titan, surrender even when confronted by a superior Scion force

Virtue Extremity: *Religious Mania.* The titanspawn's quasi-religious loyalty to the Titans evolves into full-blown religious mania. The titanspawn becomes so convinced in the inevitable victory of her chthonic master that she ignores obvious threats to the fruition of her plan, convinced that Fate itself is on her side. Whenever confronted with anyone showing disrespect to one or more Titans (or by the mere presence of a Scion challenging her authority), the titanspawn flies into a rage.

CHIMERAE

Like the original Chimera of Greek legend (a three-headed monster slain by the hero Bellerophon), most chimerae are unique creatures, each usually (and mercifully) the only one of its kind. Chimerae are primarily rampaging beasts, but some are intelligent. While all chimerae are unique creatures, some chimerae, such as the dreaded Horsemen of Southern California, are so similar that they might be considered examples of a common breed. Chimerae can only breed with great difficulty, unlike minions (who are less powerful but far more common). All chimerae are united by their instinctive hatred for Scions. Even completely unintelligent chimerae can scent a Scion in their vicinity and react accordingly.

THE HORSEMEN

In Greek legend, the centaurs were a race of beings with upper bodies of men attached at the waist to the withers of horses. Centaurs sprang from the union of the mortal Ixion with a cloud that had been shaped into the form of Hera by Zeus in order to test Ixion's morals. For attempting to cuckold the king of the Dodekathion, Zeus cast Ixion into Tartarus and bound him to a flaming wheel that would spin for all eternity.

In fact, Ixion was more than a mere mortal. He was actually one of the earliest Scions, a child of Ares. He betrayed the Gods and chose to serve the Titans who offered him power on par with the Gods themselves. To Ixion the Titans gave the power to reshape life and to combine the characteristics of man and beast into titanspawn. Ixion used this power to create the original centaurs from a group of rough bandits he encountered in Thessaly, crudely binding the bandits directly to their steeds and then sending them out as his agents of chaos. When the Gods were finally victorious, most of the centaurs were slain, and Ixion himself was condemned to Tartarus with his masters.

After the Titans escaped, however, Ixion found himself free for the first time in millennia. At the behest of his Titan masters, he decided to pick up where he'd left off.

The Horsemen were originally an offshoot of the Hell's Angels active in Southern California, who were kicked out after their extreme brutality became too much for even the Big Red Machine to tolerate. The small group, named for the Biblical Four Horsemen of the Apocalypse, numbered no more than 15 at the time, but it still terrorized small towns across the American Southwest. Then, Ixion discovered the Horsemen and found them perfect for his needs. He easily defeated the mortal bikers and, after weeks of soul-rending torture, succeeded in physically attaching the torsos of the bikers directly to their bikes in a crude parody of his ancient centaur warriors. Only 12 of the bikers survived the procedure, and each of them was driven insane by the process. Having finished his work, Ixion set his new creations loose to wreak havoc. They roam the highways and roads of the Southwest still, looking for drugs, liquor, women or anything else to take their minds off the horror of their existence.

The "centaurs" of the Horsemen are not half-man and half-horse. Rather, each is half-man and half-machine—a human torso physically attached to a Harley-Davidson motorcycle. The point of connection varies. Ixion considers himself an artist, so some of centaurs connect to their bikes at the gas tank while others do so at the bike's seat depending on which configuration Ixion considered more elegant and efficient. Each of the 12 centaurs is a unique individual, but each is also a maniac and a complete sociopath. The motorcycles, thanks to Ixion's magic, never need gas, but they do need occasional repairs, at which point, the gang simply rounds up mortal servants to perform any maintenance that the centaurs cannot perform themselves. These servants are usually killed after repairs are made, although some are released for some mercurial reason. Very rarely, a captive is kept alive and a prisoner of the gang. A few such captives even become members of the gang, and travel with it for a while, either on their own bikes or as passengers on a centaur bike.

The gang currently numbers 17: 12 centaurs and five mortal followers. Three of the centaurs and two of the followers are female, and the rest are male. The centaurs have experimented with making more of their number out of mortals (both willing and unwilling) and discarded bikes. Thus far, every attempt has resulted only in a mutilated corpse and a bloody motorcycle.

Nature: Rogue

Attributes: Strength 4, Dexterity 4, Stamina 3; Charisma 2, Manipulation 2, Appearance 2; Perception 3, Intelligence 2, Wits 3

Virtues: Ambition 1, Malice 3, Rapacity 3, Zealotry 1

Abilities: Athletics 3, Awareness 3, Brawl 3, Control 5, Fortitude 3, Larceny 3, Marksmanship 3, Melee 3, Survival 2

Supernatural Powers:

Epic Attributes: Epic Dexterity 1 (Easy Rider—This Knack is unique to the Horsemen and totally negates any Brawl, Melee or Marksmanship penalties any Horseman might face for being grafted to a Harley-Davidson chopper), Epic Perception 1 (Predatory Focus), Epic Wits 1 (Opening Gambit)

Join Battle: 6

Attacks:

Clinch: Accuracy 7, Damage 5B, Parry DV —, Speed 6, P

Unarmed, Heavy: Accuracy 6, Damage 8B, Parry DV 4, Speed 5

Unarmed, Light: Accuracy 8, Damage 5B, Parry DV 5, Speed 4

Chain Saw: Accuracy 5, Damage 10L, Parry DV 3, Speed 5, P

Iron Wrench: Accuracy 7, Damage 6B, Parry DV 3, Speed 5

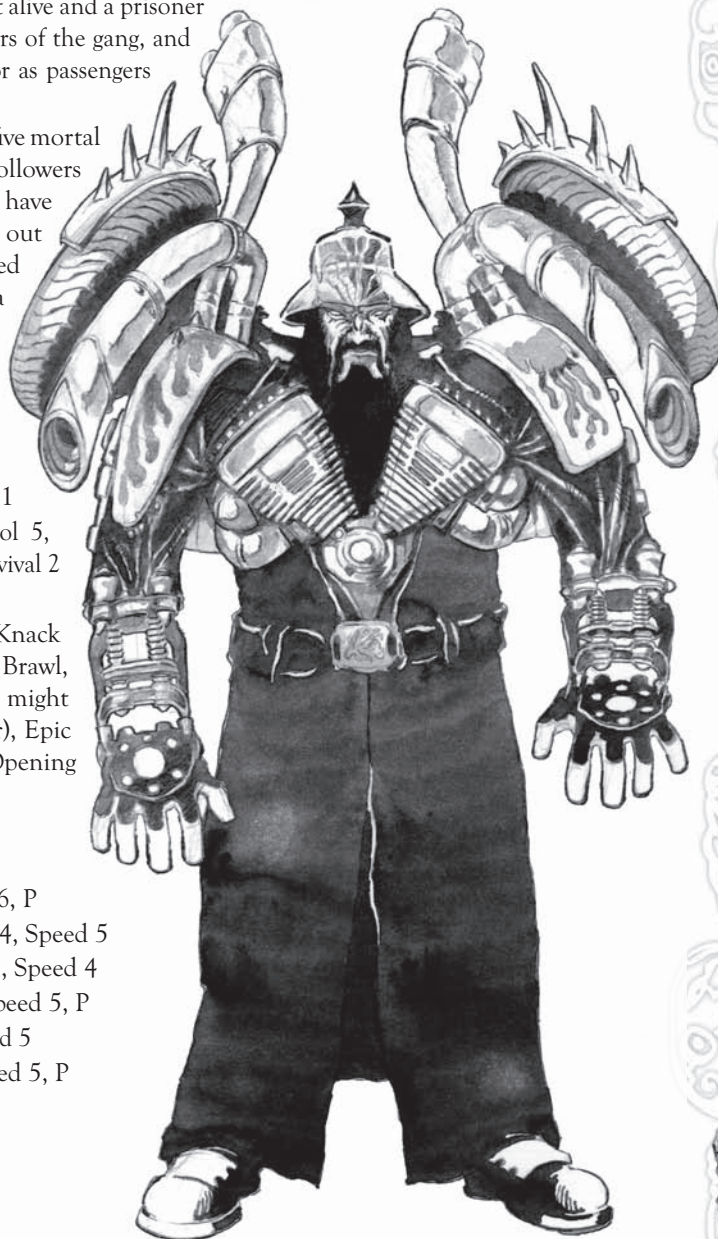
Desert Eagle: Accuracy 7, Damage 6L, Range 50, Speed 5, P

Soak: 2L/5B (Biker gear, +0L/2B)

Health Levels: -0/-0/-0/-1/-1/-1/-2/-2/-2/-4/Incap

Dodge DV: 7 **Willpower:** 4

Legend: 2 **Legend Points:** 4



Trophy: If a Horseman's gas tank is removed and then attached to another bike by someone with *Arete* (Craft), the second bike will no longer require gasoline. It is impossible to remove the gas tank from a centaur while he is still alive. Also, each centaur carries one (and only one) article of clothing bearing the Harley-Davidson logo. A Scion who takes this article of clothing from a slain centaur and wears it gains a one-die bonus on all rolls pertaining to maintaining or operating a motorcycle. A Scion can benefit from only one such talisman at a time. Taking a centaur's Harley-Davidson talisman will not kill him but will cause the rest of the gang to expel him from their number until he recovers what he has lost.

Other Notes: Motorized centaurs can move very quickly when they have room to maneuver. A Horseman's Speed is multiplied by 10 except in enclosed spaces. The Horsemen never need gasoline, but they eat, breathe and sleep normally. Horsemen substitute Control for Athletics when calculating Dodge DV and substitute Control for Athletics on all movement-related rolls.

NEMEANS

The tale of the Nemean Lion is well known. As the first of his 12 labors, Heracles fought and killed the deadly Nemean Lion, a great beast whose hide was so tough that arrows bounced off it. Undaunted, Heracles simply grappled the beast and choked it to death. Then, he stripped the lion's skin with its own claws and wore it as a cloak for protection.

Today, Scions often use the term "nemean" to denote any mundane animal, usually a predatory or otherwise aggressive one, that has been infused with the power of the Titans. This infusion causes the creature to become much larger than a typical specimen of its type and also to gain incredible toughness. A nemean beast is twice as large as a regular animal of its type, and doubles its Physical Attributes and health levels. A nemean also gains two dots to be distributed among Physical Epic Attributes, plus one dot for every point of Legend it has. Finally, the creature's hide gains supernatural toughness, adding +4A/8L/8B to its normal soak. A sample nemean is described here, but the effects of being a nemean can be applied to any sort of animal. (A list of common animals can be found on pp. 328-332.)

HOGZILLA

In July of 2004, newspapers around the country carried humorous reports of "Hogzilla," a gargantuan 12-foot-long wild hog killed on a hunting reserve near Alapaha, Georgia. The reserve's owner claimed that the hog weighed over 1,000 pounds and had nine-inch tusks, but the creature was buried before it could be measured by an independent source. Scientists who exhumed Hogzilla for *National Geographic* in 2005 declared that the creature actually weighed less than 800 pounds and was less than eight feet long. Although less impressive than original reports suggested, Hogzilla was still a remarkable specimen, the largest wild pig ever discovered. Of course, the scientists from *National Geographic* would be shocked if they ever learned the truth—that the creature dubbed Hogzilla was actually still young, barely more than a piglet, and that its mother is still on the prowl in the woods near Alapaha.

The *real* Hogzilla is an adult sow, a nemean wild pig infused with the power of the Titans and unleashed in the woods of South Georgia. Hogzilla is about 20 feet long from snout to tail. She has 22-inch tusks—despite being a sow!—and she weighs just under a ton. Hogzilla has no mate; there's no male boar big enough to impregnate her. Instead, once a year, Hogzilla goes into estrus and produces a single piglet of incredible size. The hunter who caught her first piglet was lucky—with another few weeks of growth in him, the offspring would have been nearly bulletproof. If a Scion doesn't find Hogzilla and soon, she could unleash a plague of gargantuan, man-eating nemean boars on the whole Southeast.

Attributes: Strength 8, Dexterity 6, Stamina; Charisma 0, Manipulation 0, Appearance 1; Perception 2, Intelligence 1, Wits 3

Virtues: Ambition 1, Malice 3, Rapacity 4, Zealotry 1

Abilities: Athletics 2, Brawl 3, Survival 3

Supernatural Powers:

Epic Attributes: Epic Stamina 2 (Damage Conversion, Inner Furnace), Epic Strength 2 (Holy Rampage, Knockback Attack)

Nemean Hide: Hogzilla's bristly hide adds 4A/8L/8B to her soak.

Join Battle: 3



Attacks:

Gore Accuracy 8, Damage 12L, Parry DV 7, Speed 5

Trample: Accuracy 10, Damage 14B, Parry DV —, Speed 5

Soak: 4A/12L/16B

Health Levels: -0/-0/-1/-1/-1/-1/-2/-2/-2/-2/-4/-4/Incap

Dodge DV: 6 **Willpower**: 3

Legend: 2 **Legend Points**: 4

Trophy: Hogzilla provides two potential trophies. The easiest to use are her two tusks, each of which, if used as a weapon, ignores the magical soak of any nemean's enchanted hide. Her hide itself, if properly cured and tanned, can be made into an article of clothing that grants a soak bonus of 4A/8L/8B. However, working with nemean hide is very difficult, and only someone with at least one dot of Arete (Craft), the supernatural power Forge Birthright or some other similar gift can properly fashion it into wearable clothing.

Other Notes: None

LINDWURM AND TATZELWURM

The lindwurm is a large serpent-like creature from Germanic legend. In the Middle Ages, it was considered a type of dragon, although virtually every legendary reptilian creature ever encountered has been called a dragon by someone. For their part, the few genuine dragons consulted on the subject sniff dismissively at the suggestion that the pasty, brainless lindwurm could be one of their exalted breed. Unlike most titanspawn who have been relegated to the status of myth humanity, lindwurms were considered to be real animals as late as the 19th century. Ironically, this was due to "physical evidence" which actually had nothing to do with the creature. In the 14th century, a strange skull was discovered in Austria in a cavern that had previously been the lair of a notorious lindwurm. The skull was believed to be that of an actual lindwurm and was considered proof of the creature's existence until modern paleontology properly identified it as that of a Neolithic woolly rhinoceros.

In truth, the lindwurm, along with its cousin the tatzelwurm, is a fairly common species of titanspawn that blends the traits of the common earthworm with those of various reptiles, most notably the anaconda and the Gila monster. The result is an enormous serpentine creature with glistening, pale-white skin, typically between 30 and 50 feet long. Although traditionally associated with Europe and especially Sweden, lindwurms and tatzelwurms have been found all over the World. The two creatures are essentially identical except that the tatzelwurms have two vestigial limbs that give them a one-die bonus on all climbing rolls. Lindwurms have no limbs at all. Both breeds are eyeless and hunt through sound vibrations. The mouth of a wurm is like that of a lamprey, circular and ringed with jagged teeth. The preferred attack of a wurm is to ensnare and crush its prey to death, but it also has a highly effective bite attack.

Attributes: Strength 10, Dexterity 7, Stamina 10; Charisma 0, Manipulation 0, Appearance 0; Perception 3, Intelligence 1, Wits 3

Abilities: Athletics 2, Awareness 3, Brawl 3

Supernatural Powers:

Burrow: Both lindwurms and tatzelwurms can dig effortlessly through earth and rock, moving underground at their normal movement rates. The tunnels left behind are typically sturdy enough for pursuers to traverse for at least a day after the wurm has passed through, after which point they collapse.

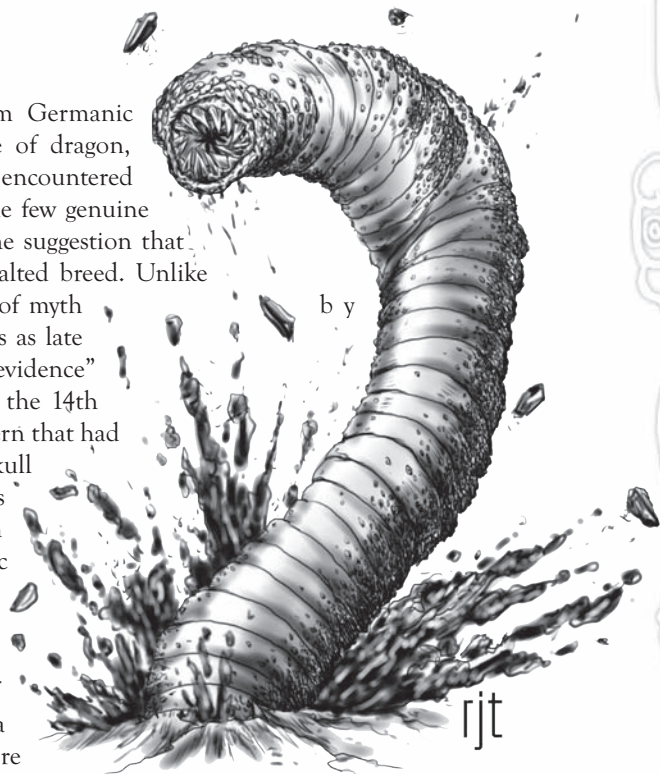
Join Battle: 6

Attacks:

Bite: Accuracy 10, Damage 12L, Parry DV —, Speed 5

Clinch: Accuracy 11, Damage 14B, Parry DV —, Speed 5

Soak: 5L/10B



Health Levels: -0/-0/-0/-1/-1/-1/-2/-2/-2/-4/Incap

Dodge DV: 5 **Willpower:** 3

Legend: 1 **Legend Points:** 1

Trophy: The trophy for either a lindwurm or a tatzelwurm is in its skin, which it sheds about once a year. Wurm skin gives anyone who devours it strange insights into nature and the medicinal arts. Anyone who devours a sufficient quantity of wurm skin gains a two-die bonus on all Medicine- or Survival-related rolls for the rest of the scene. A shed skin is large but very thin, almost gossamer, and a common technique for preparing the skin is to boil it into a broth and then bottle it. A typical shed wurm skin provides enough for 10 doses. Actually removing the skin from a slain lindwurm requires a successful (Dexterity + Survival) roll to properly skin the beast, with each success yielding enough skin for two doses.

Other Notes: None

GIANTS

Giants are probably the most commonly encountered of all titanspawn. A giant appears to be a human being but of immense stature, ranging from eight to 15 feet in height. Even larger giants are rumored to exist, but no modern Scion has found one yet and lived to tell the tale. In addition, there are several distinct breeds of giants, each of which has additional supernatural properties. Most giants, however, are profoundly stupid creatures. With a few rare exceptions, a giant's Intelligence cannot exceed half his Legend (rounded up). Most giants are associated with the Aesir, as the Norse Titans Surtur and Ymir both manifested as giants of colossal size. However, similar creatures are found in other cultures, such as the Greek cyclops and the Japanese oni. While there are minor differences between each breed discussed here, the standard giant template is as follows:

GENERIC GIANT

Attributes: Strength 6, Dexterity 3, Stamina 5; Charisma 2, Manipulation 2, Appearance 2; Perception 2, Intelligence 1, Wits 2

Virtues: Ambition 2, Malice 2, Rapacity 1, Zealotry 3

Abilities: Athletics 3, Awareness 4, Brawl 4, Fortitude 4, Melee 3, Presence 4 (Intimidation only), Survival 4

Supernatural Powers:

Eitr: All giants, regardless of the pantheon with which they are associated, have magical blood called "eitr" that confers the equivalent of three dots in the Jotunblut Purview, regardless of the giant's Legend rating. To grant these benefits to a mortal or an animal, the giant must feed his eitr to the recipient. A being enhanced by eitr is called a "thrall" (see p. 285). Eitr has a significant drawback not associated with Jotunblut: Any mortal enthralled by a giant's blood loses one dot of Intelligence (to a minimum of 1).

Epic Attributes: All giants have Epic Strength and Stamina ratings equal to their (Legend - 1). The Knacks associated with each Epic Attribute dot vary from giant to giant.

Join Battle: 6

Attacks:

Clinch: Accuracy 7, Damage 7B, Parry DV —, Speed 6, P

Unarmed, Heavy: Accuracy 6, Damage 10B, Parry DV 3, Speed 5

Unarmed, Light: Accuracy 8, Damage 7B, Parry DV 4, Speed 4

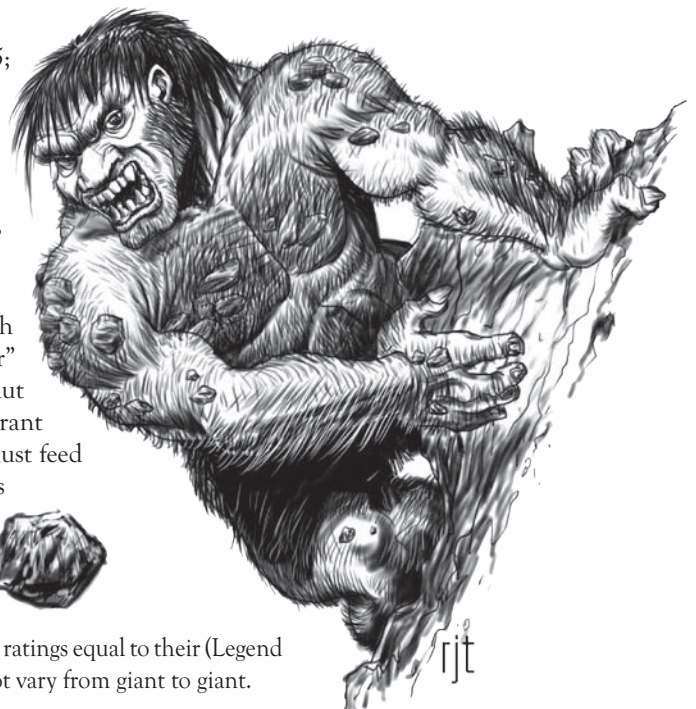
Club: Accuracy 9, Damage 11B, Parry DV 3, Speed 4

Soak: 2A/5L/7B

Health Levels: -0/-0/-0/-0/-0/-1/-1/-1/-1/-1/-2/-2/-2/-4/Incap

Dodge DV: 5 **Willpower:** 5

Legend: 3 **Legend Points:** 9



Trophy: Unless stated otherwise, the trophy for a giant is his heart, which remains behind after death. If recovered promptly, the heart will still hold a quantity of the giant's eitr, which can be poured into any suitable receptacle. Once consumed, this eitr confers three bonus dice that can be allocated to either Strength or Stamina as the player wishes for the duration of a scene. Once the giant has been slain, his eitr no longer imposes a supernatural loyalty on any who drink it. However, anyone who drinks this eitr does lose one point of Intelligence for the duration of the scene and also suffers a -2 penalty on all rolls to keep his anger under control during that time. A typical giant heart contains enough blood to supply (the giant's Legend x 3) doses. The blood stays fresh indefinitely as long as it is kept in a relatively airtight container. An empty three-liter soda bottle would work just fine as long as the Scion doesn't lose the cap.

Other Notes: None

CYCLOPS

Greek legend describes cyclopes as one-eyed giants who were the children of Gaia and Ouranos. Both Ouranos and Cronus kept the cyclopes bound within Tartarus until Zeus freed them. Later, the cyclops Polyphemus threatened the hero Odysseus during his long journey home after the Trojan War and was blinded for his troubles.

In truth, the cyclopes, like all giants, were creations of the Titans, who fought on the side of the Titans during the Titanomachy. After the Titans were bound, a few of the cyclopes were bound into slavery by the victorious Gods and forced to use their natural proficiency for crafting magical weapons on the Gods' behalf. Others escaped and continued to plague the Gods and their Scions to the present day.

A cyclops appears as a one-eyed giant, usually at least eight feet tall. Mortals tend to glance such a giant's face, with a trick of shadow making it seem as if he is just a large man with an eyepatch. Scions can see the creature's true face, with one unblinking enormous eye in the middle of his forehead, easily four inches across. All cyclopes are male.

Cyclopes possess typical characteristics of the giant template, except as follows. First, a cyclops's Appearance is reduced to 1. Second, all cyclopes are skilled craftsmen, and each cyclops gains Arete (Craft) at a level equal to his Legend. Also, while cyclopes cannot reproduce normally,

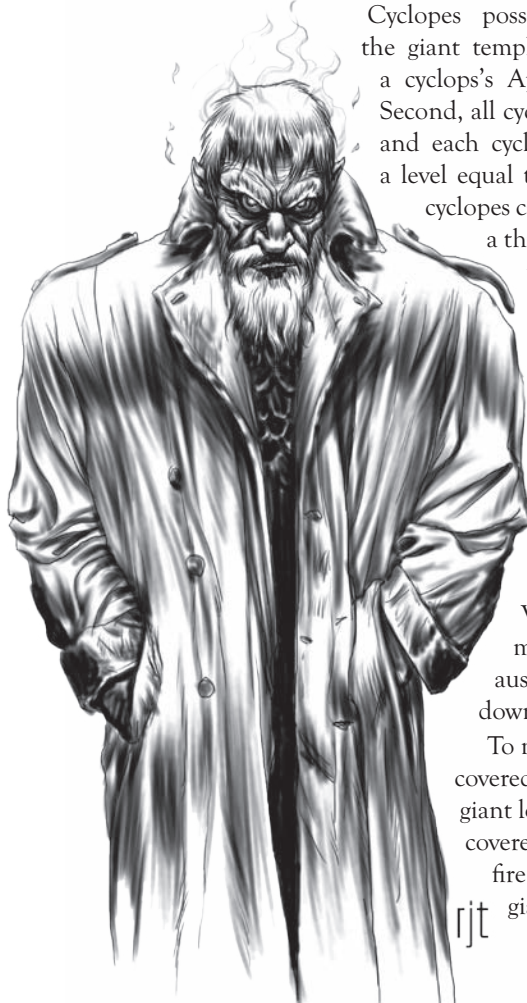
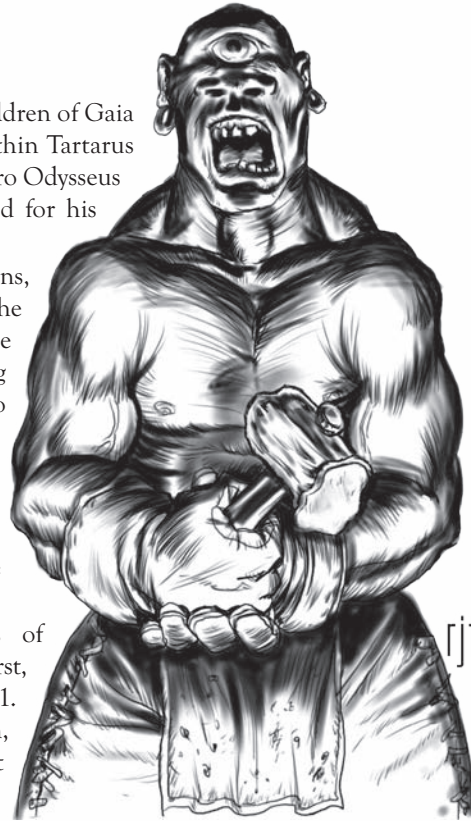
a thrall who drinks the blood of a cyclops seven times in seven days will be transformed into a cyclops with a Legend of 1.

Scions of the Amatsukami sometimes encounter a related species of one-eyed giant known as the ao-bôzu. The ao-bôzu is identical in all respects to the cyclopes except that its features appear vaguely Japanese and its skin is tinted green.

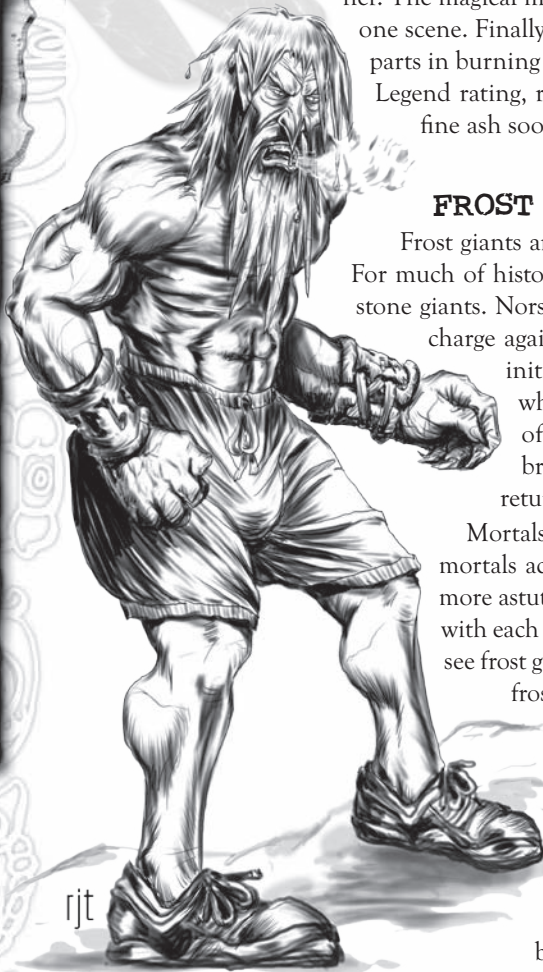
FIRE GIANTS

Fire giants are creatures of Norse legend. Created by the Titan Surtur in the fiery realm of Muspelheim, the fire giants are destined to bring about the final destruction of the World by setting fire to the World Tree, Yggdrasil, during Ragnarök. Whatever role such creatures might eventually play in Ragnarök, today, they serve the Titans less auspiciously, using their physical prowess and command of fire to hunt down and slay as many Scions as they can.

To mortal eyes, a fire giant appears as a huge person, at least eight feet tall, covered in soot and hideous burn marks. To anyone with a Legend rating, a fire giant looks exactly as his name implies: a giant with skin like banked embers, covered in a corona of flame that somehow does not burn his clothing. This fire is magical and does not burn normally unless the giant wishes. Fire giants can be male or female and can breed normally with one another.



Fire giants possess the typical characteristics of the giant template except as follows. First, all fire giants have an Appearance of 1 due to their crispy exterior. Second, all fire giants have the Boons of the Fire Purview at a level equal to (Legend - 1). Third, by spending a Legend point, a fire giant can cause the corona of fire around her body to ignite any flammable thing she touches. Doing so adds (Legend x 2) lethal damage to any physical attacks she makes and inflicts (Legend x 2) dice of lethal damage to anyone who makes a successful brawling attack against her. The magical fire harms neither the giant nor any of his possessions. This effect lasts for one scene. Finally, a fire giant can also heal herself of wounds by placing the injured body parts in burning flames. The giant must spend one Legend point and roll his unmodified Legend rating, regaining one health level per success. A slain fire giant transforms into fine ash soon after death, to be blown away by the slightest breeze.



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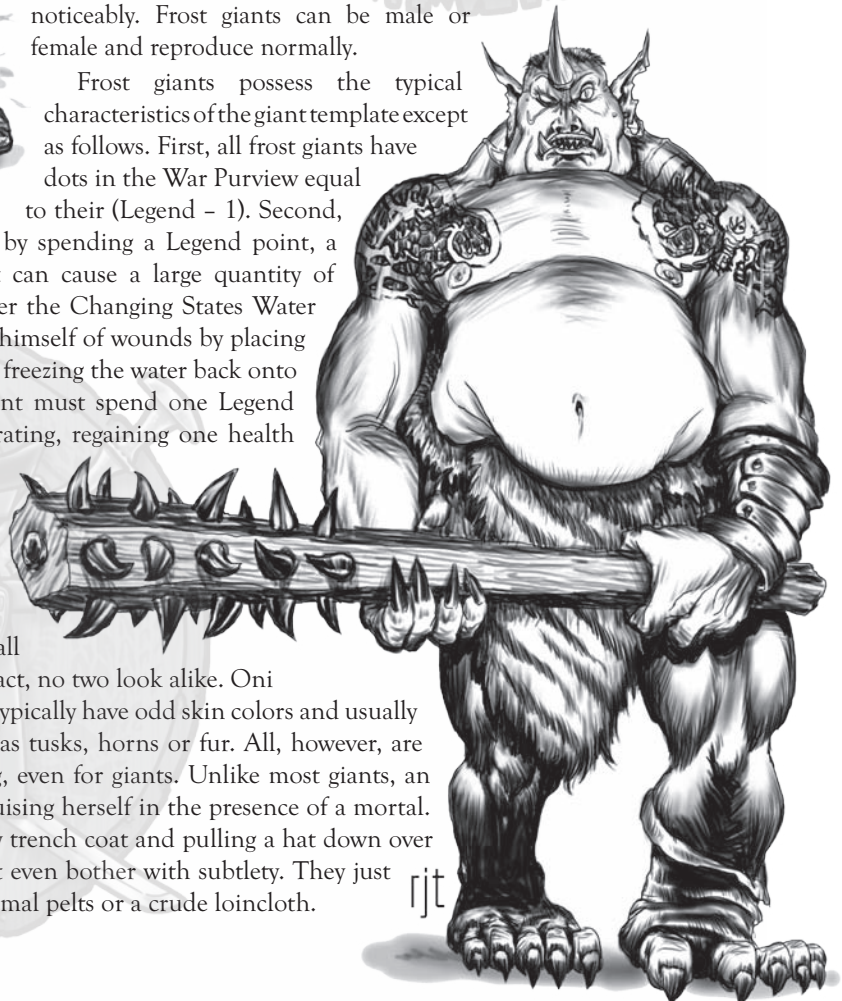
FROST GIANTS

Frost giants are the spawn of Ymir, one of the few Titans slain outright by the Gods. For much of history, they remained in their realm of Jotunheim with their brethren, the stone giants. Norse legend says that on the day of Ragnarök, the frost giants will lead the charge against the Aesir and destroy them. Indeed, it will be the frost giants who initiate Ragnarök by bringing about Fimbulwinter, a never-ending winter in which ice and snow blanket the World. There is much truth in the tales of Ragnarök, as frost giants are among the most commonly encountered breed of titanspawn, and many of them work tirelessly to bring about the return of the Titans and the end of the World.

Mortals perceive frost giants as impossibly large humans with pale skin. While few mortals actually realize that the eight-foot-tall figure towering over them is a giant, more astute mortals might notice the puffs of frost that come out of a giant's mouth with each breath, regardless of the ambient temperature. Beings with a Legend rating see frost giants as huge mortals made of ice or snow. Windowpanes frost over when a frost giant walks past, and wherever one goes, the ambient temperature drops noticeably. Frost giants can be male or female and reproduce normally.

liquid to freeze solid with a touch, as per the Changing States Water Boon. Finally, a frost giant can also heal himself of wounds by placing the injured body parts in water and then freezing the water back onto his body to repair the damage. The giant must spend one Legend point and roll his unmodified Legend rating, regaining one health level per success. A deceased frost giant quickly melts away.

Frost giants possess the typical characteristics of the giant template except as follows. First, all frost giants have dots in the War Purview equal to their (Legend - 1). Second, by spending a Legend point, a frost giant can cause a large quantity of



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ONI

An oni is a giant or ogre from Japanese legend. Oni are considered to all be members of the same species, but in fact, no two look alike. Oni have the standard height for a giant, but typically have odd skin colors and usually some form of animalistic features, such as tusks, horns or fur. All, however, are uniformly hideous and incredibly strong, even for giants. Unlike most giants, an oni has no reasonable possibility of disguising herself in the presence of a mortal. At best, an oni could try wearing a heavy trench coat and pulling a hat down over his head. Against Scions, most oni don't even bother with subtlety. They just wade into battle wearing nothing but animal pelts or a crude loincloth.

Oni possess the typical traits for giants but always have Appearance 0 (which is considered Appearance 5 when trying to intimidate someone). Oni are much stronger than typical giants, however, adding one dot to their Epic Strength and Epic Stamina over the normal template. In other words, an oni's cap for Epic Strength and Stamina is equal to (Legend) instead of (Legend - 1). Oni often wield huge iron clubs called tetsubo that possess the following traits: Accuracy -1, Damage +12B, Defense -3 and Speed 6. These clubs are so heavy that no one with less than Strength 5 (or Epic Strength) can wield them.

FENRIR

Fenrir are the offspring of the legendary Fenris Wolf. Norse legend identifies Fenris as the offspring of Loki and the giantess Angrboda. A ferocious wolf of incredible size, Fenris was tricked into captivity by the Aesir (at the expense of Tyr's hand) and forced to remain bound until Ragnarök, when he will escape and devour Odin. Whatever the ultimate destiny of Fenris might be, his numerous offspring have more immediate concerns—killing as many Scions as possible before Ragnarök arrives.

A fenrir is a titanspawn wolf of enormous size and power. Fenrir have no distinct coloration, and specimens with black, red, brown and even white fur have been encountered. A typical fenrir stands about eight-feet-tall at the shoulder and twice that in length. Fenrir possess incredible strength and endurance, remarkable tracking ability and the power to bite through almost anything. Mechanically, the bite of a fenrir inflicts aggravated damage, and fenrir suffer no penalties for trying to bite through metals or other hard substances. Only supernatural items are immune to the bite of the fenrir.

All fenrir have at least giant-level intelligence, and many are actually highly intelligent creatures (ignoring the normal limit on giant Intelligence). All fenrir can talk. Most disturbingly, fenrir grow more powerful with each Scion they kill. Each devoured Scion heart grants a fenrir an additional dot in an Epic Attribute, and every five hearts increase the creature's Legend rating by one. The following template represents a young fenrir that has not yet tasted the blood of a Scion.

Young Fenrir

Attributes: Strength 5, Dexterity 4, Stamina 5;
Charisma 2, Manipulation 2, Appearance 2;
Perception 4, Intelligence 2, Wits 3

Virtues: Ambition 2, Malice 1, Rapacity 3,
Zealotry 1

Abilities: Animal Ken 3, Athletics 5,
Awareness 3, Brawl 5, Fortitude 4, Integrity
2, Presence 3, Stealth 4, Survival 4

Supernatural Powers:

Epic Attributes: Epic Dexterity 1 (Lightning Sprinter),
Epic Perception 1 (Predatory Focus), Epic Stamina 2
(Damage Conversion, Self-Healing), Epic Strength
2 (Holy Bound, Holy Rampage)

Boons: Animal Communication (Wolf), Battle Cry

Sense Legend: Fenrir have amazing tracking abilities, particularly where Scions are concerned. A fenrir can detect the presence of a Scion within a range of one mile with a successful (Perception + Awareness) roll. If the Scion is from the Norse pantheon, the fenrir gains two bonus dice to the roll. Once a fenrir has the scent of a Scion, he never loses it and gains three bonus dice on all attempts to track the Scion. These benefits stack with the benefits of Predatory Focus.

Join Battle: 6

Attacks:

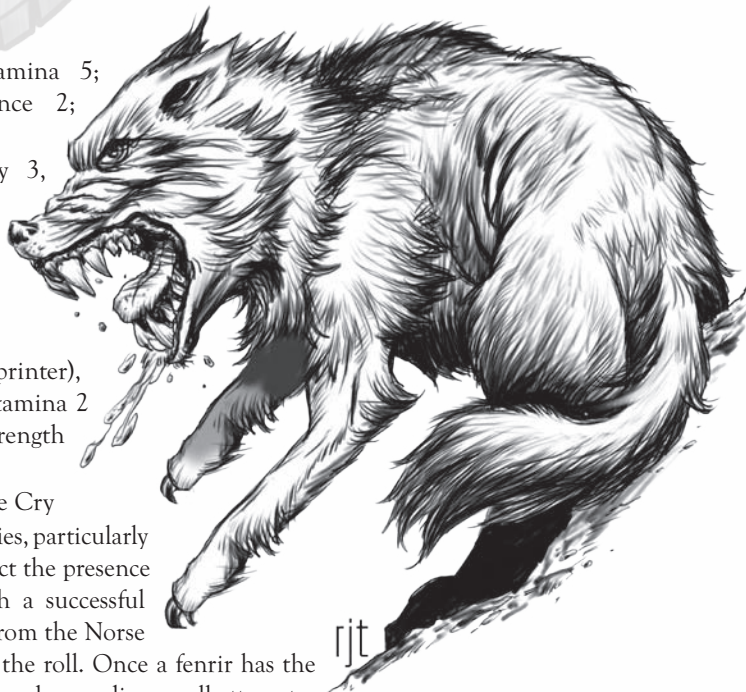
Bite: Accuracy 10, Damage 7A, Parry DV —, Speed 5

Soak: 2A/9L/11B (Tough hide, +4L/4B)

Health Levels: -0/-0/-0/-0/-1/-1/-1/-1/-2/-2/-2/-2/-4/Incap

Dodge DV: 7 **Willpower:** 6

Legend: 3 **Legend Points:** 9





Trophy: The blood of a fenrir has the normal power to augment Strength and Stamina associated with all giant eitr. In addition, the fenrir's fangs make a potential trophy. A Scion who removes the teeth from a fenrir she has slain and fashions them into a necklace can use that jewelry as a Birthright for any Boon taken from the Animal or War Purviews. If a fenrir fang is incorporated into a weapon, that weapon takes on the Piercing quality if it did not already have it. Only one of these benefits can be derived from a single set of teeth.

Other Notes: As noted, this template applies to a young fenrir. For every Scion that a particular fenrir has killed and devoured, give the fenrir an extra dot in any Epic Attribute or in either the Animal or War Purviews

MINIONS

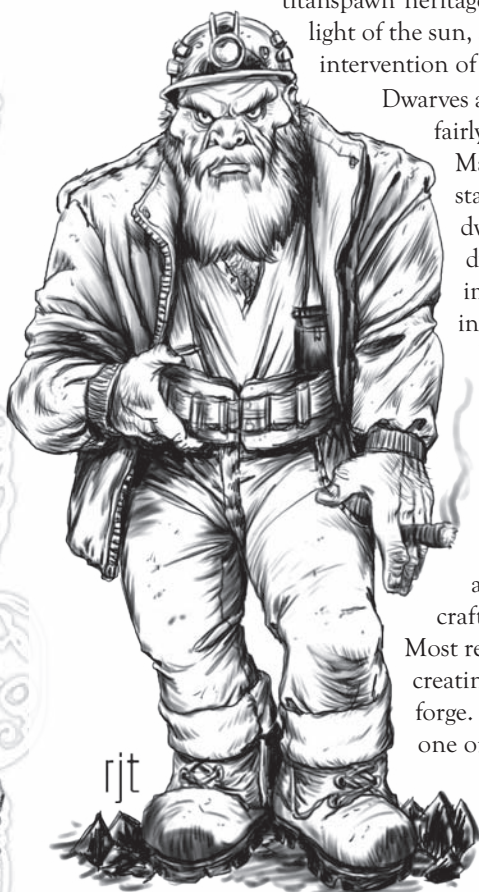
Minions are distinct races of titanspawn. Minions are far more human than any other type of titanspawn, often to the extent of developing true sentience and independence and defying their Titan creators. For example, virtually all the dwarves rejected the Titans and swore allegiance to the Aesir after the cataclysmic destruction of their creator, Ymir. Similarly, some Japanese tengu refuse to serve the Titans and often aid the Scions of the Amatsukami. Regrettably, the Titans learned from the perfidy of those minion races that defied them, and many of the more recently fashioned minion races are so bestial and unintelligent that disobedience to the Titan cause is virtually impossible.

DWARVES

According to the *Voluspa*, the first and most famous poem of the *Edda*, the first dwarves grew from the flesh of Ymir like maggots, bursting forth from the dead giant's skin. At first, the Aesir were uncertain of what to do with these strange creatures, but in time, they judged the dwarves worthy of life and granted them the right to continued existence despite their unsavory origins.

After Ymir's destruction, the dwarves discovered that they were free of Titan control, and the vast majority of the race swore allegiance to the Aesir and actively aided them against other titanspawn. Not all the dwarves did so, however, and some remained hostile to the Aesir and the other Gods throughout history (most famously the dwarf Andvari whose hatred for the Aesir supplies much of the plot to Richard Wagner's opera cycle *Der Ring des Nibelungen*).

Dwarves are among the most populous of (former) minions, but they are also reclusive, in large part because their titanspawn heritage curses them with a vulnerability to sunlight. When struck by the direct light of the sun, a dwarf is instantly petrified into a stone statue. Nothing less than the direct intervention of a God can undo this effect.



Dwarves appear as short humans, between three and four feet tall. The typical dwarf is fairly stocky though, and all dwarves are stronger and more durable than they look. Male dwarves tend to grow very thick beards, and other than their diminutive stature, the majority of dwarves appear to be of Nordic stock. Although most dwarves today are found in Scandinavian or Germanic territories, small dwarven colonies can be found in any place that Scandinavian or German immigrants have settled. Outside of Europe, the largest population of dwarves in the World is the United States, in a large colony near Nastrond, Minnesota. Most of these dwarves have become thoroughly Americanized and speak English with a "Minnewegian" accent.

Slain dwarves provide no trophy, although it is a rare dwarf who carries no magical items on his person—items that can easily serve as Birthrights for nearly any Purview. Most dwarves subscribe to Aesir Virtues. Those few "dark dwarves" who remain loyal to the Titans uphold Dark Virtues.

Supernatural Powers: All dwarves have one or two dots of Epic Stamina, and males typically have a dot of Epic Strength. Also, dwarves are incredible craftsmen, adding their Legend in automatic successes to all Craft-related rolls. Most remarkably, dwarves possess the ability to forge Legend into physical objects, creating in a few hours permanent Birthrights that would take a Scion months to forge. Finally, dwarves have a strong affinity for stone and earth, often possessing one or more Boons in the Earth Purview.

Weaknesses: Dwarves permanently turn to stone when exposed to direct sunlight. Also, male dwarves suffer from a near addiction to gold. When bribed with gold, a dwarf's (Willpower + Integrity + Legend) dice pool is halved.

BROK ALFRIGSEN, **Jarl of Nastrond Mountain (Guide ****)**

Brok Alfrigsen was born untold centuries ago in what is now Norway, but considers himself a patriotic American (and a Reagan Republican to boot). Brok was the son of Alfrig, who forged Freya's enchanted necklace, Brisingamen, and Brok himself participated in the forging Thor's hammer, Mjolnir, among many other legendary artifacts. Brok and his clan immigrated to Minnesota in 1910 at the direction of Thor himself, and they made their way to a small town called Nastrond, so named after a location in Hel where the roots of the World Tree reach. Whether Yggdrasil reaches to Minnesota, Brok has never discovered, but he did set up a mining operation in a nearby mountain range that was rich in iron ore and hematite. Brok remained under the mountain as leader of the colony since its inception, except for a period from 1942 to 1945 when Brok and some of his best craftsmen left the mountain to work at a munitions plant in Minneapolis. As a patriotic Norwegian-American, Brok was only too eager to do what he could to help both his former and his adopted homelands against the Nazi menace. Due to his handiwork, not one shell from that factory ever failed to hit its target.

After World War II, Brok continued to lead the Nastrond colony for many years and even provided lodgings for Thor himself when the Thunder God came to Nastrond in the guise of a mortal. Later, after Thor returned to Asgard, a frost giant named Jared seized control of the colony and forced the dwarves to dig, correctly theorizing that a portion of Jörmungandr, the legendary Midgard Serpent, was located directly beneath the mountain. With his friends and family held hostage, Brok reluctantly acquiesced while secretly slowing the work as much as possible. Fortunately, Brok was able to delay the awakening of the buried horror until the arrival of Eric Donner, Scion of Thor, who defeated Jared before Jörmungandr could be freed. In gratitude, Brok has put his entire colony at the disposal of Eric's Band.

Nature: Architect

Attributes: Strength 4, Dexterity 4, Stamina 5; Charisma 2, Manipulation 2, Appearance 2; Perception 3, Intelligence 3, Wits 3

Virtues: Courage 3, Endurance 3, Expression 2, Loyalty 4

Abilities: Athletics 2, Awareness 3, Brawl 3, Command 4, Craft 5, Fortitude 4, Integrity 3, Larceny 1, Marksmanship 3, Melee 3, Occult 4, Politics 3, Presence 3, Stealth 1

Supernatural Powers:

Epic Attributes: Epic Strength 1 (Crushing Grip), Epic Stamina 3 (Damage Conversion, Inner Furnace, Solipsistic Well-Being)

Boons: Echo Sounding, Safely Interred, Shaping

Forge Birthright: Brok is a master craftsman of Birthright relics, capable of fashioning a permanent Birthright within a few days of work provided that he has some amount of legendary material with which to work. Forging a Birthright requires the expenditure of one Legend point.

Join Battle: 6

Attacks:

Clinch: Accuracy 7, Damage 5B, Parry DV —, Speed 6, P

Unarmed, Heavy: Accuracy 6, Damage 8B, Parry DV 3, Speed 5

Unarmed, Light: Accuracy 8, Damage 5B, Parry DV 4, Speed 4

Foe-Cutter: Accuracy 9, Damage 15L, Parry DV 3, Speed 6

Soak: 3A/6L/8B

Health Levels: -0/-0/-0/-1/-1/-1/-2/-2/-2/-4/Incap

Dodge DV: 5 **Willpower:** 7

Legend: 4 **Legend Points:** 16

Other Notes: Brok's preferred weapon, recently retrieved since the frost giant Jared's death, is his two-handed battleaxe called Foe-Cutter (Accuracy +2, Damage +10L, Defense -1, Speed 6). If taken as such by a Scion of the Aesir, Brok Alfrigsen would be a four-dot guide.

HARPY

The harpy is a minion type that combines the characteristics of birds and mortal women, with the rough scales of a reptile thrown in as well. Despite their crude humanoid appearance, harpies are unintelligent and think about little besides food. A harpy appears to be a rough female humanoid with skin covered in both motley green scales and decayed feathers. Her legs bend like those of a human, but they end in powerful eagle talons capable of both supporting her standing weight and also tearing an enemy apart while she is airborne. Her torso and arms appear

as that of a nude woman, covered in green scales, but her fingers end in talons of burnished brass. On her back is a set of enormous black eagle wings capable of bearing her aloft. Her head looks, at first glance, like that of a woman, but her eyes are those of an eagle, her hair is mottled with the blood of her victims, and her mouth is filled with razor sharp teeth. All harpies give off a rancid stench that is so sickening to mortals and Scions alike that it is nearly incapacitating.

Harpies make up a distinct race of minions, despite the fact that they are exclusively female. Harpies reproduce by capturing human males and forcing them into breeding. After mating, the harpies invariably kill and eat their mates. Each mating results in a single harpy egg, which will hatch after six weeks. The resulting harpy chick will be fully grown within another six weeks. Harpies are strict carnivores that prefer the flesh of humans—and especially Scions. They are unintelligent but cunning predators and will withdraw if confronted by superior numbers or power.

Attributes: Strength 3, Dexterity 3, Stamina 2; Charisma 1, Manipulation 1, Appearance 0; Perception 3, Intelligence 1, Wits 3

Virtues: Ambition 1, Malice 3, Rapacity 3, Zealotry 1

Abilities: Athletics 3, Awareness 3, Brawl 3, Fortitude 3, Stealth 2, Survival 3

Supernatural Powers:

Flight: All harpies can fly at five times their normal movement rates, applying the normal DV penalties for Move and Dash actions in combat. Out of combat, a harpy can fly at about 40 miles per hour.

Mephitic Stench: Harpies give off a repulsive odor that greatly hampers anyone trying to fight one. The player of anyone within 30 feet of a harpy who is capable of smell must roll (Stamina + Fortitude) against a difficulty of 5 in order to avoid having his character vomit uncontrollably. Even those who succeed suffer a -2 dice pool penalty on all actions taken while in the vicinity of the foul creature.

Join Battle: 6

Clinch: Accuracy 6, Damage 4B, Parry DV —, Speed 6, P

Unarmed, Heavy: Accuracy 5, Damage 9L, Parry DV 2, Speed 5

Unarmed, Light: Accuracy 7, Damage 6L, Parry DV 4, Speed 4

Soak: 5L/10B (Tough scales, +4L/8B)

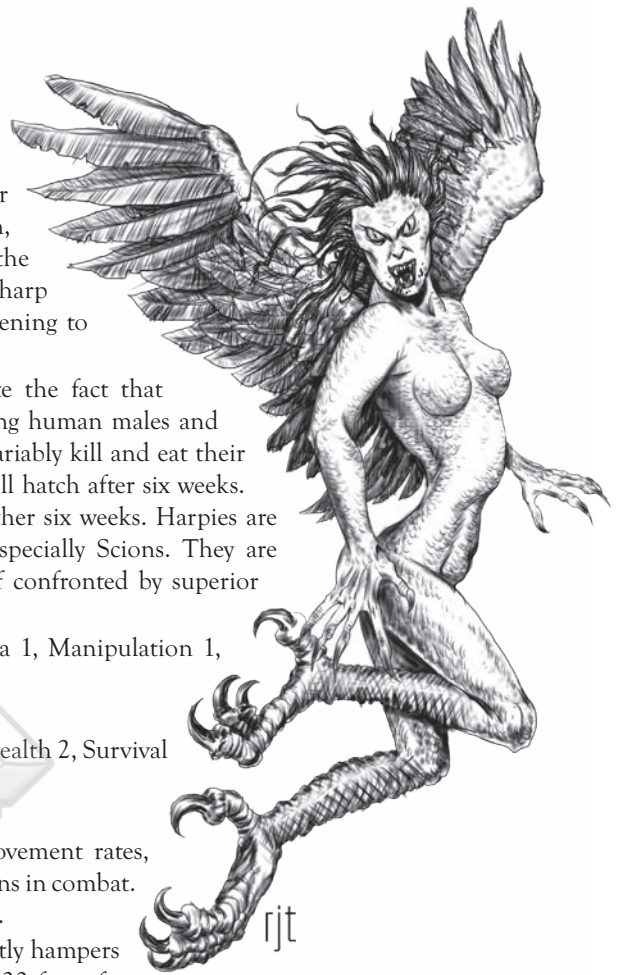
Health Levels: -0/-0/-0/-1/-1/-1/-2/-2/-2/-4/Incap

Dodge DV: 4 **Willpower:** 4

Legend: 1

Trophy: The talons of a harpy are made of solid brass and can be fashioned into throwing knives or small daggers by anyone with Arete (Craft). A weapon forged from a harpy talon gains a +1 bonus to Accuracy and doubles its Range when thrown.

Other Notes: Harpies have talons that add +2L to all unarmed attacks.



MEDUSA

The ancient Greeks told many tales of the hero Perseus and how he slew Medusa, a monstrous woman who had snakes for hair and whose appearance was so hideous that it could turn mortals to stone. In truth, Medusa was one of the Gorgons, three sisters who swore allegiance to the Titans and were rewarded with both power and immortality. After the Titans fell, the other two sisters, Stheno and Euryale, switched their loyalty to the victorious Gods and were allowed to retain their immortality. Medusa, however, spurned the Gods, and Athena gave Perseus a mirrored shield that allowed him to approach her safely, as well as a scythe capable of slaying even an immortal. Perseus succeeded in removing Medusa's head, which was still powerful enough to petrify any living being with its gaze and whose blood could spawn any number of creatures. Later, he gave it to Athena, who incorporated its powers into Zeus's personal shield, the Aegis.

After Medusa's death, Stheno and Euryale hid from the eyes of men and grudgingly obeyed the edicts of the Dodekaththeon... until the Titans broke free. Since then, the two surviving Gorgons have returned to the service of

their former masters. They have also sworn vengeance against all Scions for the death of their sister. Now, to honor the fallen Gorgon's memory, they created the medusae. The Gorgons themselves rarely interact directly with young Scions, and only the most foolish or ignorant of Scions seek out one of the Gorgons, both of whom are immensely powerful titanspawn who cannot be killed by anything less than a God. The medusae, however, are another story.

Wrapped in illusions to conceal their hideous visages, the Gorgons recruit future medusae from among mortals. Specifically, they recruit from homely, unattractive people—mainly but not exclusively women—who are jealous of the benefits modern society conveys to “the beautiful people.” Once she drinks the blood of a Gorgon, the recruit instantly gains an Appearance of 5... temporarily. With the Gorgons, however, as with most drug dealers, only the first taste is free. The mortal's awe-inspiring beauty lasts for about a month before it transforms into unspeakable ugliness, reducing her Appearance to 0. The mortal, now a medusa, can restore her good looks for another month with another taste of the Gorgon's blood, if she can find one of the two sisters.

If not, then the medusa has a ghoulish alternative, and for her, beauty truly is in the eye of the beholder. A medusa can restore her Appearance to 5 by devouring the eyes of someone who is naturally good looking—i.e., someone with an Appearance of 3 or better. Victims with Appearance 3 will make the medusa beautiful for one month, and each additional dot extends the effect for an extra month. If a victim has Epic Appearance, each dot of that Attribute extends the artificial beauty for six months. Consequently, good-looking Scions are the preferred targets of medusae.

Even after a medusa has fed and thus can maintain her beautiful features, she can choose to switch to her hideous true form at will, and she will typically do so when entering combat. In her true form, a medusa appears as a normal human being covered in green scales with long talons and fangs. The medusa's hair consists of writhing green snakes, but unlike those of her legendary namesake, the snakes themselves are not poisonous and do not attack. The attacks of the medusa herself is poisonous, however, and both her bite and claw attacks require the victim's player to make a reflexive (Stamina + Fortitude) roll for his character after the medusa's damage is rolled and soaked. If that roll is unsuccessful, the attack's post-soak damage is doubled (*tripled* on a botch).

The most dangerous power of the medusa, however, is in her hideous visage. Fortunately, the modern medusa is not as dangerous as her legendary namesake. Where the original Medusa could turn men to stone, the modern version can only paralyze or terrorize, though that is little consolation to most victims.

While the medusa is in her true form, this power is always active. Anyone seeing the medusa's face engages in a contested roll of (Willpower + Integrity + Legend) against the medusa's (Appearance + Presence + Legend). (The medusa's Appearance is considered to be 5 for this purpose, despite her true form's normal Appearance of 0.) If the medusa wins, the victim is paralyzed by horror for the remainder of the scene. Even if the medusa's roll fails to beat her victim's roll, her power has a secondary effect. If the medusa's successes simply exceed the observer's Integrity, the observer flees in mindless terror. Scions can spend a point of Willpower to resist the temptation to flee. Mortal observers who successfully resist the medusa's visage are still at a two-die penalty to all actions due to their revulsion, but Scions who resist are not.

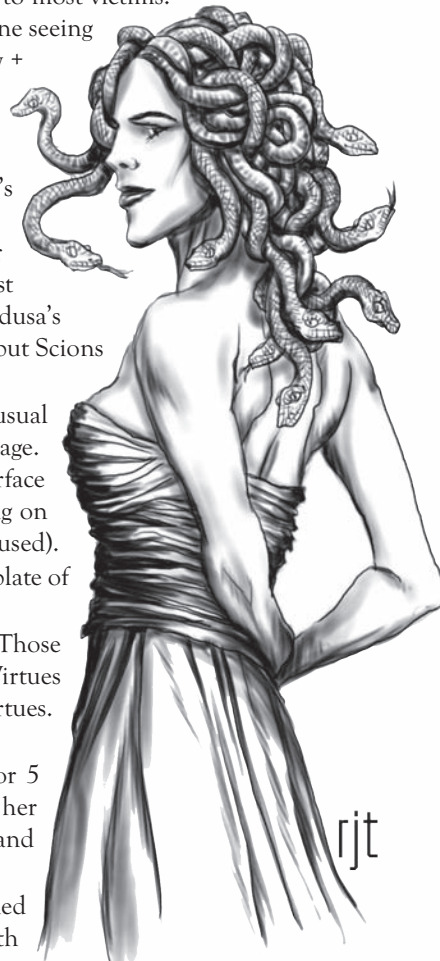
Characters who fight a medusa with their eyes closed suffer the usual penalties (see “Visibility” on p. 186) but are immune to her paralyzing visage. Characters who fight a medusa while watching her in some reflective surface are also immune to her visage but suffer a penalty of -1 to -3 depending on the circumstances (such as the size and nature of the reflective surface used).

Medusae cannot be taken as followers. Most medusae have the template of a generic mortal (see pp. 280-281) with the following alterations.

- Newly created medusae, like most mortals, do not have Virtues. Those who have been fully corrupted by the Gorgons either have the Virtues associated with the Greek pantheon or, more commonly, Dark Virtues. Among the latter group, Malice is always primary.

- A medusa either has an Appearance of 0 (in her true form) or 5 (when disguised by the magic of the Gorgons). However, a medusa in her true form has an effective Appearance of 5 for intimidation purposes and to paralyze and terrify opponents.

- In her true form, a medusa has claws that add +2L to all unarmed attacks and fangs that add +1L to all bite attacks. A successful attack with



either claw or fang requires the victim to roll (Stamina + Fortitude) to resist being poisoned (which doubles the damage actually inflicted on a victim).

- A medusa in her true form is covered with green scales that add 4L/6B soak.
- Every medusa has a Legend rating, which starts at 1 and rises slowly as the medusa's fearsome reputation grows.

Trophy: The trophy for a medusa lies in her blood, which, after her death, becomes a potent antitoxin. When a Scion slays a medusa and tries to harvest this trophy, her player rolls (Wits + Medicine). She recovers two doses from the creature's body per success. Each dose, when injected as an antivenin, renders the recipient totally immune to mundane poisons and toxins for one day and confers a +2 bonus to all Fortitude rolls against unnatural poisons. The recipient is also totally immune to the poisonous effects of medusa claw and bite attacks for the next year (but not any poisons associated with the more powerful Gorgon sisters).

SHINOBI

The shinobi are the dark assassins of the Titan Mikaboshi, who was recognized in Japanese legends as the primordial darkness that preceded the creation of the universe. The word "shinobi" means essentially "to act without being perceived by others," and this term was originally one commonly used as a synonym for "ninja." While ninjas were actually assassins and martial artists from Japanese history, the modern shinobi are more than ninjas—they are mortals who have become one with the shadows themselves as they are bound into Mikaboshi's service.

When a suitable mortal accepts servitude to Mikaboshi, he must cut himself with a ceremonial dagger and let the blood fall into a shadow. All the shadows in the room then move and creep on their own, swirling about the hapless mortal and pouring into his body through every orifice. After a few moments, the screaming stops, and the new shinobi will never make another sound again. Indeed, he is incapable of doing so. His footsteps never echo, his voice is forever stilled, and if he smashes a window with his fist, the breaking glass is inaudible. However, this aura of silence only extends to the intentional actions of the shinobi himself. If he grapples someone without muzzling her, that victim is free to cry out. If a Scion dodges his shuriken and the weapon knocks over a vase, the vase's shattering will be heard.

Shinobi appear as jet-black mortals, quite literally three-dimensional animated shadows. At night or in a darkened room, all shinobi gain five dice on all Stealth attempts. Even in normally lit rooms, a shinobi still gains a two-die bonus on Stealth rolls. Shinobi have a strong aversion to daylight, however, suffering one automatic level of aggravated damage for every five ticks spent in direct sunlight. Finally, all shinobi can literally move through the shadows, stepping into one patch of darkness and emerging from another some distance away.

Shinobi appear to share a collective intelligence. They never need to communicate with one another and are incapable of communicating verbally with anyone else. When dealing with allies of Mikaboshi, shinobi rely

on a supernatural sign language that allows them to communicate with hand gestures in a way that is automatically understood by anyone capable of seeing them. Shinobi typically travel in packs of five to 10, acting according to the mysterious commands of their shadowy patron.

Attributes: Strength 3, Dexterity 5, Stamina 3; Charisma 2, Manipulation 2, Appearance 2; Perception 4, Intelligence 2, Wits 3

Virtues: Duty 3, Endurance 2, Intellect 2, Valor 3

Abilities: Athletics 5, Awareness 3, Brawl 5, Fortitude 3, Integrity 3, Larceny 4, Melee 5, Stealth 5, Thrown 5

Supernatural Powers:

Complete Silence: All shinobi are completely incapable of making a sound through their own deliberate actions. Shinobi cannot deliberately make a sound of any sort, and any actions a shinobi takes that would normally produce sound are completely silent. There are two limitations to this power. First, a shinobi's *unintentional* actions can produce sound. Second, sounds caused indirectly by a shinobi's intentional actions are not silenced. For example, if a shinobi pulls a fire alarm, only the sound of him actively breaking the glass and



pulling the lever is silenced. The fire alarm itself is not. (Indeed, the distracting alarm might make it harder for others to detect the shinobi's approach.) This supernatural ability confers three bonus dice on all Stealth-related rolls.

Shadow Walking: A shinobi can effectively teleport through shadows, stepping into any darkened area large enough to contain his body and then reemerging from any similarly darkened area within 500 yards. Activating this power costs one Legend point.

Join Battle: 6

Attacks:

Clinch: Accuracy 8, Damage 4B, Parry DV —, Speed 6, P

Unarmed, Heavy: Accuracy 7, Damage 7B, Parry DV 4, Speed 5

Unarmed, Light: Accuracy 9, Damage 4B, Parry DV 6, Speed 4

Kama: Accuracy 10, Damage 6L, Parry DV 6, Speed 4, P

Ninja-to: Accuracy 10, Damage 6L, Parry DV 6, Speed 4

Shuriken: Accuracy 12, Damage 7L, Range 20, Speed 4, P

Soak: 4L/7B (Shozoku armor, +2L/4B)

Health Levels: -0/-0/-0/-1/-1/-1/-2/-2/-2/-4/Incap

Dodge DV: 6 **Willpower:** 6

Legend: 1 **Legend Points:** 1

Trophy: When a shinobi is slain, her body dissipates into shadow, leaving behind a single jet-black shuriken (traits outlined below). These shuriken are particularly dangerous to shinobi and indeed to any titanspawn, doubling the Scion's raw damage pool.

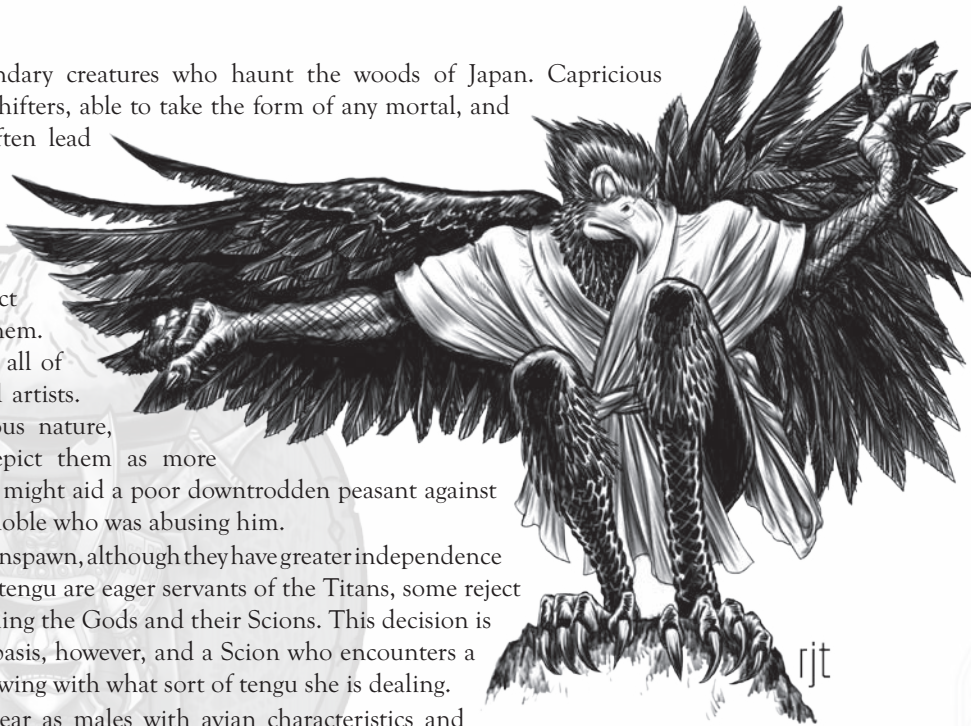
Other Notes: Shinobi appear to be wearing the shinobi shozoku costume used by prop managers in Noh theater and traditionally associated with ninjas of Japanese folklore. The shozoku is formed of solidified shadow and dissipates with the shinobi's body. Shinobi have an infinite supply of black shuriken formed of solidified shadow (Accuracy +2, Damage +3L, Range 20, Speed 4, P). Despite their status as titanspawn, shinobi possess the Virtues associated with the Japanese pantheon.

TENGU

The tengu are legendary creatures who haunt the woods of Japan. Capricious beings, tengu are shapeshifters, able to take the form of any mortal, and while disguised, they often lead travelers into danger. They also have the power to manipulate the memories of mortals or to inflict minor insanity upon them. All tengu are male, and all of them are superb martial artists. Despite their mischievous nature, some tengu legends depict them as more benevolent, and a tengu might aid a poor downtrodden peasant against a corrupt and arrogant noble who was abusing him.

Tengu are actually titanspawn, although they have greater independence than most. While many tengu are eager servants of the Titans, some reject the Titans in favor of aiding the Gods and their Scions. This decision is made on an individual basis, however, and a Scion who encounters a tengu has no way of knowing with what sort of tengu she is dealing.

Tengu normally appear as males with avian characteristics and almost comical, sausage-shaped noses. Tengu society is divided into two tiers. The younger tengu are called *karasu-tengu* and are extremely bird-like in appearance, with powerful wings, claw-like hands ending in talons, and a red-skinned body covered in feathers. As a tengu grows in power, he loses his avian characteristics and becomes more human, although he always has some bird traits. The more powerful *dai-tengu* appear as virtually human save for their red skin and long, beak-like noses, and while they still have wings, the tengu can magically



cause them to disappear when not needed. Dai-tengu also have potent illusion powers and make superb martial arts instructors.

These traits represent a karasu-tengu.

Attributes: Strength 4, Dexterity 5, Stamina 3; Charisma 2, Manipulation 2, Appearance 1; Perception 4, Intelligence 2, Wits 3

Virtues: (*Titan-loyal tengu*) Ambition 1, Malice 2, Rapacity 1, Zealotry 1 (*Rebel tengu*): Duty 2, Endurance 2, Intellect 3, Valor 3

Abilities: Academics 2, Athletics 4, Awareness 4, Brawl 5, Empathy 2, Integrity 3, Investigation 2, Occult 4, Presence 3, Melee 5, Stealth 3

Supernatural Powers:

Befuddle: A tengu can manipulate a mortal's short-term memory or even cause limited amnesia. Doing so requires a (Manipulation + Command + Legend) roll contested against the victim's (Willpower + Integrity + Legend). For every success the tengu's roll gets in excess of the victim's roll, the tengu may alter up to one hour of the victim's memory. This power automatically fails if the tengu attempts to use it against a target with a higher Legend rating than himself.

Epic Attributes: Epic Dexterity 2 (Lightning Sprinter, Untouchable Opponent), Epic Intelligence 1 (Teaching Prodigy)

Flight: All tengu can fly at five times their normal movement rates, applying the normal DV penalties for Move and Dash actions in combat. Out of combat, a tengu can fly at about 40 miles per hour.

Martial Arts Mastery: All tengu are natural martial artists. In combat, a tengu can spend a point of Legend, and for the rest of the scene, he can add his Legend rating in automatic successes to any Brawl or Melee related roll.

Shapeshifting: A tengu can assume the form of any mortal or animal for the duration of one scene by spending a Legend point. Tengu can never perfectly copy a specific individual, but they can appear as any type of normal human. They can assume the form of any animal from the size of a housecat to that of a bull.

Join Battle: 7

Attacks:

Clinch: Accuracy 10, Damage 5B, Parry DV —, Speed 6, P

Unarmed, Heavy: Accuracy 9, Damage 8B, Parry DV 6, Speed 5

Unarmed, Light: Accuracy 11, Damage 5B, Parry DV 8, Speed 4

Katana: Accuracy 13, Damage 9L, Parry DV 8, Speed 5

Soak: 2L/3B

Health Levels: -0/-0/-1/-1/-1/-2/-2/-2/-4/Incap

Dodge DV: 10 **Willpower:** 3 or 6 (depending on loyalty)

Legend: 3 **Legend Points:** 9

Trophy: When a karasu-tengu is slain, his body dissipates instantly, leaving behind a wooden mask that resembles the dead tengu's face, complete with a leering grin and a six-inch-long nose. When a Scion wears this mask and spends a point of Legend, he gains a one-die bonus on all Brawl or Melee-related rolls for the duration of the scene.

Other Notes: The typical tengu carries a katana with the following traits: Accuracy +3, Damage +4L, Defense +2, Speed 5. Dai-tengu often carry legendary weapons.

SUPERNATURAL ANIMALS

Many Scions are aided in their struggles by remarkable animals. Born in times of legend, these creatures have returned to the World to fight in the struggle against the Titans and their vile servants. Any of the following creatures can be taken as a supernatural Birthright with Storyteller approval.

BENU

(CREATURE ••••, RELIC •)

To Egyptian legend, the benu bird was an aspect of Atum-Re himself, the founder of the Pesedjet. The benu bird (or Egyptian phoenix) was a great heron whose cry broke the primordial silence and began the World. When it was time for the benu to die, the bird built a nest for itself out of aromatic boughs and spices, which became its funeral pyre. Then, a new benu bird arose from the ashes to symbolize the cycle of death and rebirth. After the Titans were defeated, Atum-Re chose the heron as a symbol of his authority, and ever since, Scions of the Pesedjet have

called upon the legendary benu birds as Birthright creatures. Most commonly, a benu Birthright relic takes the form of an amulet that depicts the Egyptian hieroglyph of a benu. When the Scion throws the amulet into the air, calls down the blessings of Atum-Re and spends a point of Legend, the amulet transforms into a benu, which takes the form of a heron the size of a condor. This enormous bird is capable of easily bearing aloft a large human being at great speeds.

The benu uses the template for the Bird (Raptor) on page 329. In addition to its normal characteristics, the benu also has Epic Strength 1 (Uplifting Might), Epic Dexterity 1 (Lightning Sprinter), one additional -0, -1 and -2 health level each and the following Virtues: Conviction 3, Harmony 3, Order 2 and Piety 2. Its maximum flight speed is equal to 100 miles per hour out of combat or five times its normal movement rate in combat. A benu cannot be permanently killed. If the creature is slain, the Scion to whom it is attached can burn its carcass, and a new amulet will be found in the ashes. Each benu has a Legend rating of 2. Only Scions of the Pesedjet may possess benu birds as Birthright creatures, although Scions of the Dodekathemon may possess similar phoenix Birthrights.



COATL

(CREATURE ●●●, RELIC ●)

In the Náhuatl language, the word “coatl” means serpent. While the word originally applied to all serpents, with the near extinction of the Náhuatl tongue, modern Scions use the term coatl to refer to a specific kind of serpent—the flying feathered serpents sent by the Atzlánti to aid their children.

A coatl appears as a snake stretching around 30 feet in length with brilliant green and gold scales and matching feathers. The coatl is intelligent and capable of speech. It is also capable of flight, despite being wingless. Scions of the Amatsukami claim that coatls strongly resemble elder Eastern dragons, but there appears to be no connection between the two.

Coatl Birthright relics typically manifest in the form of brilliant green feathers. When a Scion draws the feather tip across her body hard enough to draw blood and spends one Legend point, a full-sized coatl bursts forth from the ground. Only Atzlánti Scions can possess coatl Birthrights.

Attributes: Strength 7, Dexterity 6, Stamina 7; Charisma 3, Manipulation 2, Appearance 2; Perception 3, Intelligence 2, Wits 3

Virtues: Conviction 2, Courage 3, Duty 2, Loyalty 3

Abilities: Athletics 3, Awareness 2, Brawl 2, Integrity 2, Investigation 2, Presence 3, Fortitude 2

Join Battle: 5

Attacks:

Bite: Accuracy 8, Damage 9L, Parry DV 4, Speed 5

Clinch: Accuracy 8, Damage 8B, Parry DV —, Speed 5, P

Soak: 6L/9B (Coatl scales, +2L/2B)

Health Levels: -0/-0/-0/-1/-1/-1/-2/-2/-2/-4/Incap

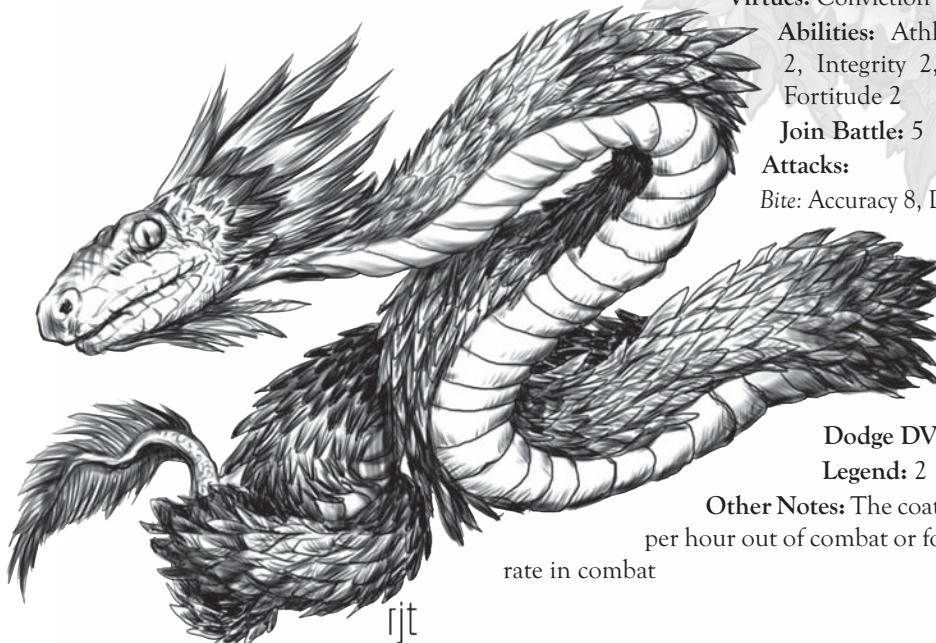
Dodge DV: 6

Willpower: 7

Legend: 2

Legend Points: 4

Other Notes: The coatl flies at a top speed of 60 miles per hour out of combat or four times its normal movement rate in combat



KIRIN

(CREATURE ●●●●)



Join Battle: 5

Attacks:

Bite: Accuracy 8, Damage 7L, Parry DV —, Speed 5

Gore: Accuracy 8, Damage 9L, Parry DV 6, Speed 5

Soak: 4A/7L/10B (Scales, +4A/4L/4B)

Health Levels: -0/-0/-0/-1/-1/-1/-2/-2/-2/-4/Incap

Dodge DV: 6 **Willpower:** 8

Legend: 3 **Legend Points:** 9

Other Notes: Kirin horns have powerful medicinal properties. Ground-up kirin horn adds three automatic successes to any Medicine-related rolls in which they are used. A kirin cannot survive the loss of its horn, and many unscrupulous people would hunt these magnificent beasts to extinction for the benefits they confer.

Originally associated with Chinese legend under the name “qilin,” the kirin later became known to the Japanese as a noble and wise animal who aided the Gods in their struggles. The Japanese kirin has the characteristics of a large deer, with the head a dragon. The creature is covered with green, red and golden scales, and it usually has a single horn located in the center of its forehead, although many have two antler-like horns instead. Kirin scales grant a 4A/4L/4B soak bonus. Also, kirin are blessed with remarkable healing gifts. Scions of the Amatsukami may acquire a kirin as a Birthright creature.

Attributes: Strength 6, Dexterity 6, Stamina 6; Charisma 3, Manipulation 2, Appearance 2; Perception 3, Intelligence 3, Wits 3

Virtues: Duty 3, Endurance 3, Intellect 3, Valor 3

Abilities: Athletics 3, Awareness 2, Brawl 2, Fortitude 3, Integrity 2, Investigation 2, Occult 2, Politics 5, Presence 3

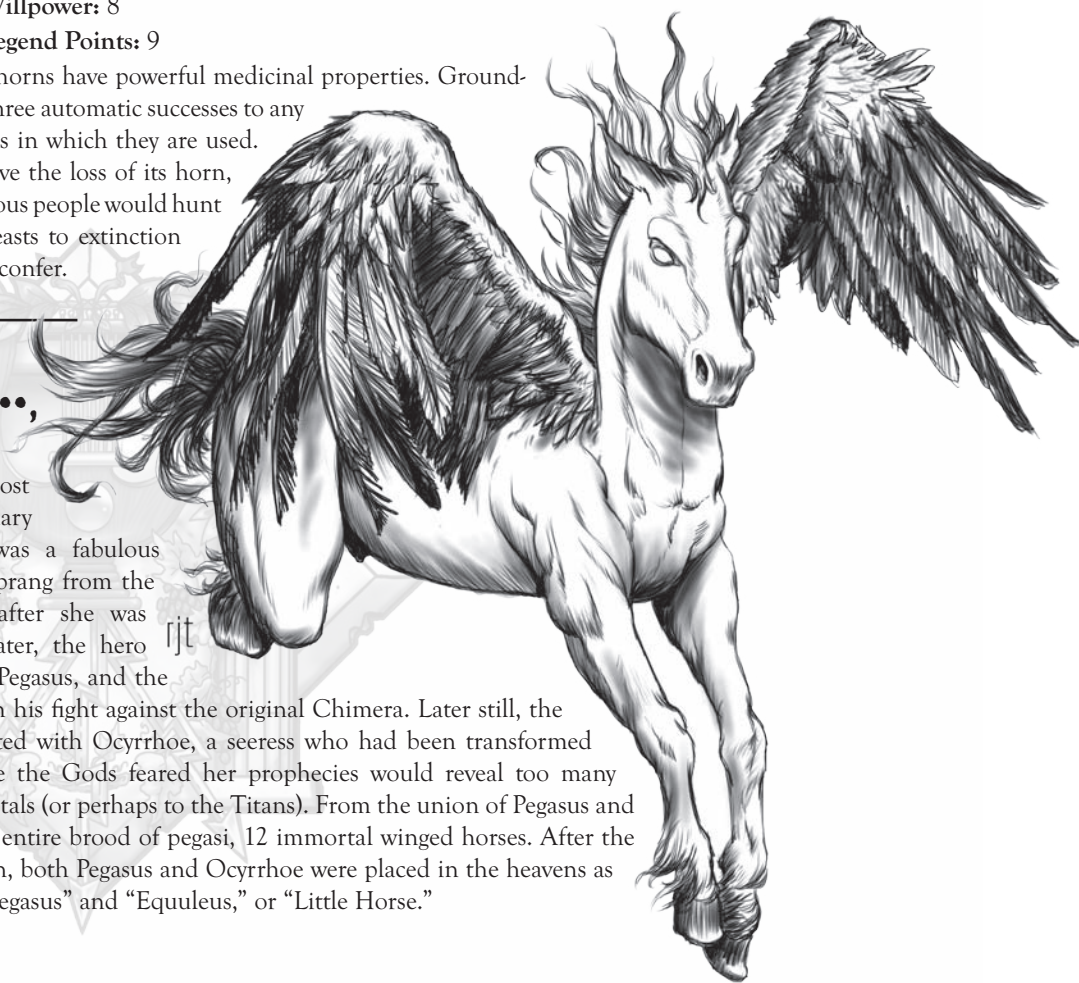
Supernatural Powers:

Healing: A kirin can touch a sick or injured person with its horn in order to heal that person. Roll the creature’s (Intelligence + Occult + Legend). The patient heals one lethal health level or two bashing health levels per success. Each healing attempt costs one Legend point.

PEGASUS

(CREATURE ●●●,
RELIC ●)

One of the most famous of legendary creatures, Pegasus was a fabulous winged horse that sprang from the blood of Medusa after she was slain by Perseus. Later, the hero Bellerophon tamed Pegasus, and the stallion aided him in his fight against the original Chimera. Later still, the original Pegasus mated with Ocyrrhoe, a seeress who had been transformed into a mare because the Gods feared her prophecies would reveal too many divine secrets to mortals (or perhaps to the Titans). From the union of Pegasus and Ocyrrhoe sprang an entire brood of pegasi, 12 immortal winged horses. After the first pegasi were born, both Pegasus and Ocyrrhoe were placed in the heavens as the constellations “Pegasus” and “Equuleus,” or “Little Horse.”



Unlike many Birthright familiars, only a finite number of pegasi exist—12 in fact, one for each of the Gods in the Dodekathemon. To summon a pegasus, a Dodekathemon Scion must hold one of 12 sacred golden horseshoes that were forged by Hephaestus and spend a point of Legend. Then, the Scion throws the horseshoe to the ground, and in a flash of lightning, a fully grown winged horse appears, its four hooves all shod with gold. Each pegasus draws its power from its divine parents, both of whom now reside in the sky as constellations. It is said that when a pegasus returns to the World, the stars that make up those constellations dim perceptibly. Some Scions worry that if too many pegasi returned at the same time, those stars would dim to invisibility, to the shock of astronomers around the World.

Each pegasus has the characteristics of a standard horse (see p. 331) except that the pegasus also has a set of enormous wings capable of bearing it and a rider aloft easily. A pegasus can fly at up to 70 miles per hour out of combat or at three times its normal movement rate in combat. Each pegasus has a Legend rating of 3 and the following Virtues: Expression 1, Intellect 1, Valor 4 and Vengeance 4.

TAUREAU—TROIS—GRAINES (CREATURE ••••, RELIC •)

The fearsome Taureau-Trois-Graines, or simply Taureau, is a minor loa of Haiti. The creature's full name means "the bull with three testicles," and this bull is certainly full of vigor. When the Taureau manifests, it appears as an enormous black bull with red glowing eyes and bloody horns. The creature will consent to carrying a Scion of the Loa, but will otherwise never serve as a beast of burden. Although some use them for transportation, the Taureau is primarily a rampaging engine of destruction. The Taureau's characteristics are identical to those of any normal bull, save that this bull is practically bulletproof and can ram its way through reinforced concrete. A Scion of the Loa most commonly summons the Birthright creature by lighting candles and making an offering to Papa Legba of one live chicken while spending a Legend point. The creature then bursts up out of the ground. A Scion who knows he is going into battle can perform the sacrifice in advance and hold part of the sacrifice—a chicken claw, for example—in reserve, saving it until he needs the Bull with Three Testicles to get him out of his predicament.

Virtues: Harmony 2, Order 1, Piety 2 and Vengeance 4.

Attributes: Strength 7, Dexterity 3, Stamina 9; Charisma 1, Manipulation 1, Appearance 2; Perception 2, Intelligence 2, Wits 2

Virtues: Harmony 1, Order 1, Piety 3, Vengeance 4

Abilities: Athletics 4, Awareness 3, Brawl 3, Fortitude 5, Integrity 1, Presence 5, Survival 2

Supernatural Powers:

Epic Attributes: Epic Strength 2 (Holy Rampage, Uplifting Might)

Tough Hide: The Taureau's hide grants a 3A/3L/3B soak bonus.

Join Battle: 5

Attacks:

Gore: Accuracy 7, Damage 10L, Parry DV 7, Speed 5

Trample: Accuracy 8, Damage 8L, Parry DV —, Speed 3

Soak: 3A/8L/12B

Health Levels: -0/-0/-0/-1/-1/-1/-2/-2/-2/-4/Incap

Dodge DV: 5 **Willpower:** 6

Legend: 3 **Legend Points:** 9

Other Notes: None





VALKYRIE HORSES

(CREATURE ●●●, RELIC ●)

The term “valkyrie horse” as used in Nordic poetry is something of a misnomer. The steeds of the valkyries were actually ferocious wolves big enough to carry a person and capable of flight. Today, many Scions of the Aesir ride them as well. More than a few titanspawn have big wolves of their own—not even the largest valkyrie steed wolf is as big as a typical fenrir (see pp. 317-318). The Scion most typically summons a valkyrie steed by blowing on a war horn specially crafted for him and spending a point of Legend.

Virtues: Courage 3, Endurance 2, Expression 1 and Loyalty 3.

Attributes: Strength 5, Dexterity 3, Stamina 5; Charisma 2, Manipulation 1, Appearance 3; Perception 4, Intelligence 2, Wits 3

Virtues: Courage 3, Endurance 2, Expression 1, Loyalty 3

Abilities: Athletics 4, Awareness 2, Brawl 4, Investigation 1, Presence 2, Fortitude 3, Stealth 2, Survival 3

Supernatural Powers:

Epic Attributes: Epic Strength 1 (Uplifting Might)

Flight: A valkyrie horse flies at 70 miles per hour out of combat or at three times its normal movement rate in combat.

Join Battle: 5

Attacks:

Bite: Accuracy 11, Damage 7L, Parry DV —, Speed 5

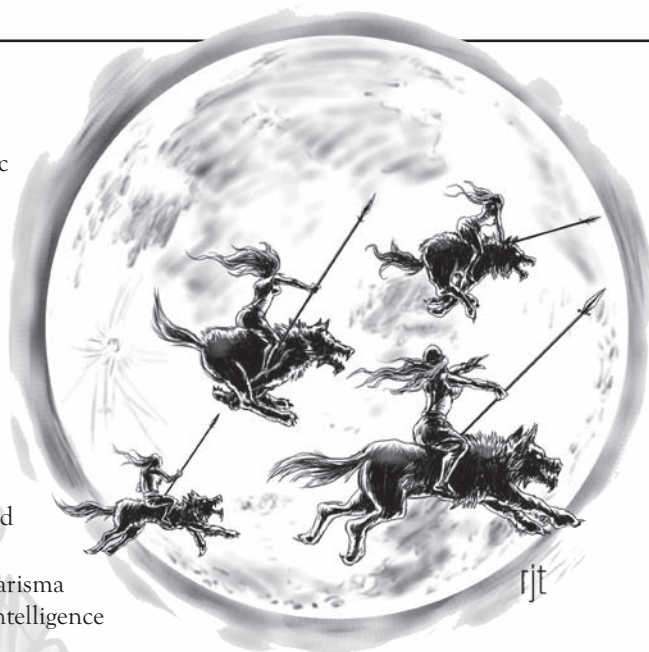
Soak: 3L/5B

Health Levels: -0x2/-1x2/-2x2/.4/1

Dodge DV: 5 **Willpower:** 6

Legend: 3 **Legend Points:** 9

Other Notes: None



COMMON ANIMALS

The following templates represent mundane animals commonly encountered by Scions. These creatures are perfectly normal specimens of their type. Any of these animals, however, could become a nemean (see p. 312) or might otherwise develop supernatural properties. Also, any of the following animals could be taken as a Birthright creature.

APE

Attributes: Strength 4, Dexterity 3, Stamina 4; Charisma 0, Manipulation 0, Appearance 1; Perception 2, Intelligence 2, Wits 3

Abilities: Athletics 3, Awareness 3, Brawl 3, Investigation 1, Presence 2, Fortitude 3, Stealth 2, Survival 3

Join Battle: 6

Attacks:

Bite: Accuracy 6, Damage 5L, Parry DV —, Speed 5

Clinch: Accuracy 8, Damage 5B, Parry DV —, Speed 5

Soak: 2L/4B

Health Levels: -0/-1/-1/-2/-2/-4/Incap

Dodge DV: 3 **Willpower:** 4

Other Notes: None

BEAR

Attributes: Strength 7, Dexterity 2, Stamina 6; Charisma 0, Manipulation 0, Appearance 2; Perception 2, Intelligence 2, Wits 2

Abilities: Athletics 2, Awareness 2, Brawl 3, Integrity 3, Investigation 2, Presence 3, Fortitude 3, Stealth 3, Survival 3

Join Battle: 4

Attacks:

Bite: Accuracy 6, Damage 8L, Parry DV —, Speed 4

Claw: Accuracy 5, Damage 7L, Parry DV —, Speed 5

Soak: 3L/6B

Health Levels: -0/-0/-1/-1/-1/-2/-2/-4/Incap

Dodge DV: 2 **Willpower:** 3

Other Notes: None

BIRD (SMALL)

Attributes: Strength 1, Dexterity 3, Stamina 1; Charisma 0, Manipulation 0, Appearance 1-5; Perception 2, Intelligence 1, Wits 3

Abilities: Athletics 3, Awareness 3, Brawl 1, Integrity 2, Investigation 2, Presence 1, Fortitude 3, Stealth 3, Survival 4

Join Battle: 6

Attacks:

Peck: Accuracy 4, Damage 1L, Parry DV —, Speed 6

Soak: 0L/1B

Health Levels: -0/-1/-2/Incap

Dodge DV: 3 **Willpower:** 3

Other Notes: Most small birds may fly up to 30 miles per hour out of combat or twice its normal movement in combat.

BIRD (RAPTOR)

Attributes: Strength 3, Dexterity 2, Stamina 4; Charisma 0, Manipulation 0, Appearance 0-5; Perception 3, Intelligence 3, Wits 3

Abilities: Athletics 3, Awareness 4, Brawl 3, Investigation 3, Integrity 3, Presence 2, Fortitude 2, Stealth 3, Survival 3

Join Battle: 7

Attacks:

Bite: Accuracy 5, Damage 5L, Parry DV —, Speed 5

Talon: Accuracy 7, Damage 6L, Parry DV —, Speed 5

Soak: 2L/4B

Health Levels: -0/-1/-1/-2/-2/-4/Incap

Dodge DV: 2 **Willpower:** 6

Other Notes: Most raptors may fly up to 70 miles per hour out of combat or three times its normal movement in combat.

BOAR

Attributes: Strength 4, Dexterity 3, Stamina 4; Charisma 0, Manipulation 0, Appearance 1; Perception 2, Intelligence 1, Wits 3

Abilities: Athletics 3, Awareness 1, Brawl 1, Fortitude 3, Stealth 1, Survival 2

Join Battle: 4

Attacks:

Gore: Accuracy 6, Damage 5L, Parry DV 6, Speed 6

Soak: 2L/4B

Health Levels: -0/-1/-1/-2/-2/-4/Incap

Dodge DV: 3 **Willpower:** 3

Other Notes: None

CAT (BIG)

Attributes: Strength 6, Dexterity 3, Stamina 5; Charisma 0, Manipulation 0, Appearance 2; Perception 3, Intelligence 1, Wits 3

Abilities: Athletics 4, Awareness 3, Brawl 3, Integrity 2, Investigation 2, Presence 3, Fortitude 3, Stealth 4, Survival 3

Join Battle: 6

Attacks:

Bite: Accuracy 6, Damage 7L, Parry DV —, Speed 6

Claw: Accuracy 7, Damage 6L, Parry DV —, Speed 4

Soak: 2L/5B

Health Levels: -0/-1/-1/-2/-2/-4/Incap

Dodge DV: 3 **Willpower:** 5

Other Notes: None

CAT (DOMESTICATED)

Attributes: Strength 1, Dexterity 3, Stamina 2; Charisma 0, Manipulation 0, Appearance 1; Perception 3, Intelligence 1, Wits 3

Abilities: Athletics 3, Awareness 3, Brawl 1, Investigation 2, Presence 1, Fortitude 1, Stealth 3, Survival 2

Join Battle: 6

Attacks:

Claw: Accuracy 4, Damage 2L, Parry DV —, Speed 5

Soak: 0L/1B

Health Levels: -0/-1/-1/-2/-2/Incap

Dodge DV: 3 **Willpower:** 3

Other Notes: None

COBRA

Attributes: Strength 2, Dexterity 3, Stamina 2; Charisma 0, Manipulation 0, Appearance 2; Perception 2, Intelligence 1, Wits 3

Abilities: Athletics 3, Awareness 3, Brawl 1, Integrity 1, Presence 1, Fortitude 1, Stealth 1, Survival 2

Join Battle: 6

Attacks:

Bite: Accuracy 6, Damage 3L + poison, Parry DV —, Speed 4

Spit: Accuracy 6, Damage — + poison, Parry DV —, Speed 4

Soak: 0L/2B

Health Levels: -0/-1/-2x2/I

Dodge DV: 3 **Willpower:** 3

Other Notes: Cobra venom is a neurotoxin. A character bitten by a cobra resists as if the poison were equal to titanspawn venom (see p. 182). If a cobra spits its venom at a character and hits, the attack inflicts no damage. Instead, a player must get at least three successes on a reflexive (Stamina + Fortitude) roll to keep his character from being blinded for the scene. If this roll botches, the blindness could be permanent absent immediate medical treatment.

CROCODILE

Attributes: Strength 5, Dexterity 2, Stamina 5; Charisma 0, Manipulation 0, Appearance 2; Perception 1, Intelligence 1, Wits 2

Abilities: Athletics 3, Awareness 1, Brawl 3, Presence 2, Fortitude 3, Stealth 1, Survival 3

Join Battle: 3

Attacks:

Bite: Accuracy 9, Damage 8L, Parry DV —, Speed 5

Tail: Accuracy 6, Damage 6B, Parry DV —, Speed 6

Soak: 4L/7B

Health Levels: -0/-1x2/-2x2/I

Dodge DV: 3 **Willpower:** 3

Other Notes: None

DOG

Attributes: Strength 3, Dexterity 3, Stamina 3; Charisma 0, Manipulation 0, Appearance 2; Perception 2, Intelligence 2, Wits 3

Abilities: Athletics 2, Awareness 3, Brawl 1, Integrity 1, Investigation 1, Presence 2, Fortitude 3, Stealth 1, Survival 4

Join Battle: 6

Attacks:

Bite: Accuracy 5, Damage 4L, Parry DV —, Speed 5

Soak: 0L/3B

Health Levels: -0/-1/-1/-2/-4/Incap

Dodge DV: 2 **Willpower:** 3

Other Notes: None

DOLPHIN

Attributes: Strength 4, Dexterity 4, Stamina 3; Charisma 0, Manipulation 0, Appearance 2; Perception 3, Intelligence 2, Wits 3

Abilities: Athletics 4, Awareness 3, Brawl 1, Integrity 2, Investigation 2, Presence 1, Fortitude 3, Stealth 1, Survival 2

Join Battle: 6

Attacks:

Ram: Accuracy 7, Damage 6B, Parry DV —, Speed 5

Soak: 4/1L/3B

Health Levels: -0/-1/-1/-2/-2/Incap

Dodge DV: 4 **Willpower:** 3

Other Notes: None

ELEPHANT

Attributes: Strength 13, Dexterity 2, Stamina 10; Charisma 0, Manipulation 0, Appearance 2; Perception 2, Intelligence 1, Wits 2

Abilities: Athletics 1, Awareness 2, Brawl 3, Presence 1, Fortitude 5, Survival 2

Join Battle: 4

Attacks:

Gore: Accuracy 7, Damage 16L, Parry DV 6, Speed 6

Trample: Accuracy 5, Damage 14L, Parry DV —, Speed 6

Soak: 5L/10B

Health Levels: -0/-0/-1/-1/-1/-2/-2/-2/4/Incap

Dodge DV: 1 **Willpower:** 3

Other Notes: None

HORSE

Attributes: Strength 4, Dexterity 3, Stamina 3; Charisma 0, Manipulation 0, Appearance 2; Perception 2, Intelligence 2, Wits 3

Abilities: Athletics 3, Awareness 2, Brawl 1, Integrity 1, Investigation 1, Presence 1, Fortitude 2, Survival 2

Join Battle: 5

Attacks:

Bite: Accuracy 5, Damage 2L, Parry DV —, Speed 5

Kick: Accuracy 2, Damage 6B, Parry DV —, Speed 2

Soak: 0L/3B

Health Levels: -0/-1/-1/-2/-2/4/Incap

Dodge DV: 3 **Willpower:** 3

Other Notes: None

MONKEY

Attributes: Strength 2, Dexterity 4, Stamina 2; Charisma 0, Manipulation 0, Appearance 1; Perception 3, Intelligence 2, Wits 3

Abilities: Athletics 5, Awareness 3, Brawl 3, Investigation 1, Presence 2, Stealth 3, Survival 3

Join Battle: 6

Attacks:

Bite: Accuracy 7, Damage 2L, Parry DV —, Speed 5

Soak: 0L/2B

Health Levels: -0/-1/-2/-2/-4/Incap

Dodge DV: 4 **Willpower:** 4

Other Notes: None

RAT

Attributes: Strength 1, Dexterity 2, Stamina 1; Charisma 0, Manipulation 0, Appearance 1; Perception 2, Intelligence 1, Wits 2

Abilities: Athletics 2, Awareness 2, Brawl 1, Investigation 2, Stealth 3, Survival 4

Join Battle: 4

Attacks:

Bite: Accuracy 4, Damage 1L, Parry DV —, Speed 5

Soak: 0L/1B

Health Levels: -0/-1/-2/Incap

Dodge DV: 2 **Willpower:** 3

Other Notes: None

SHARK

Attributes: Strength 5, Dexterity 3, Stamina 5; Charisma 0, Manipulation 0, Appearance 2; Perception 3, Intelligence 1, Wits 3

Abilities: Athletics 5, Awareness 3, Brawl 3, Fortitude 3, Stealth 3, Survival 4

Join Battle: 6

Attacks:

Bite: Accuracy 9, Damage 9L, Parry DV —, Speed 5

Soak: 2L/5B

Health Levels: -0/-1/-1/-1/-2/-2/-2/4/Incap

Dodge DV: 4 **Willpower:** 3

Other Notes: None

WOLF

Attributes: Strength 4, Dexterity 3, Stamina 4; Charisma 0, manipulation 0, Appearance 2; Perception 4, Intelligence 2, Wits 3

Abilities: Athletics 2, Awareness 2, Brawl 3, Investigation 1, Presence 2, Fortitude 3, Stealth 2, Survival 4

Join Battle: 5

Attacks:

Bite: Accuracy 7, Damage 6L, Parry DV —, Speed 5

Soak: 2/2L/4B

Health Levels: -0/-1/-1/-2/-2/-4/Incap

Dodge DV: 2 **Willpower:** 5

Other Notes: None

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SCION

H E R O



Name _____ Calling _____ Pantheon _____
 Player _____ Nature _____ God _____

ATTRIBUTES

Physical		Social		Mental	
Strength	●○○○○○○○○○ □□□□□□□□□□	Charisma	●○○○○○○○○○ □□□□□□□□□□	Perception	●○○○○○○○○○ □□□□□□□□□□
Dexterity	●○○○○○○○○○ □□□□□□□□□□	Manipulation	●○○○○○○○○○ □□□□□□□□□□	Intelligence	●○○○○○○○○○ □□□□□□□□□□
Stamina	●○○○○○○○○○ □□□□□□□□□□	Appearance	●○○○○○○○○○ □□□□□□□□□□	Wits	●○○○○○○○○○ □□□□□□□□□□

ABILITIES

<input type="checkbox"/> Academics	○○○○○	<input type="checkbox"/> Craft	○○○○○	<input type="checkbox"/> Melee	○○○○○
<input type="checkbox"/> Animal Ken	○○○○○	<input type="checkbox"/>	○○○○○	<input type="checkbox"/> Occult	○○○○○
<input type="checkbox"/> Art	○○○○○	<input type="checkbox"/>	○○○○○	<input type="checkbox"/> Politics	○○○○○
<input type="checkbox"/>	○○○○○	<input type="checkbox"/> Empathy	○○○○○	<input type="checkbox"/> Presence	○○○○○
<input type="checkbox"/> Athletics	○○○○○	<input type="checkbox"/> Fortitude	○○○○○	<input type="checkbox"/> Science	○○○○○
<input type="checkbox"/> Awareness	○○○○○	<input type="checkbox"/> Integrity	○○○○○	<input type="checkbox"/>	○○○○○
<input type="checkbox"/> Brawl	○○○○○	<input type="checkbox"/> Investigation	○○○○○	<input type="checkbox"/>	○○○○○
<input type="checkbox"/> Command	○○○○○	<input type="checkbox"/> Larceny	○○○○○	<input type="checkbox"/> Stealth	○○○○○
<input type="checkbox"/> Control	○○○○○	<input type="checkbox"/> Marksmanship	○○○○○	<input type="checkbox"/> Survival	○○○○○
<input type="checkbox"/>	○○○○○	<input type="checkbox"/> Medicine	○○○○○	<input type="checkbox"/> Thrown	○○○○○

BIRTHRIGHTS

WEAPONS

KNACKS

WILLPOWER

○○○○○○○○○○○○○
 □□□□□□□□□□

SOAK

A _____ L _____ B _____

VIRTUES

○○○○○
 ○○○○
 ○○○○
 ○○○○

BOONS

ARMOR

A _____ L _____ B _____

LEGEND

○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○
 ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○
 Legend Points _____

HEALTH

0 -1 -1 -2 -2 -4 I
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EXPERIENCE



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