

ENEMY GODS

Ένα μικρό παιχνίδι των μεγάλων δυνάμεων
(A little game of big powers)



BY JOHN WICK

ENEMY GODS

WRITING & LAYOUT

John Wick

EDITING & COVER

Annie Rush

INVALUABLE DESIGN CONTRIBUTIONS

Jess Heinig

PLAYTESTERS

Jess Heinig, Sean Mooney, Annie Rush,
Baron Silverton, Vachon Simien, Robert Telmar,
and Josh “the Cursed” Wasta

INSPIRATION
(DIRECT AND OTHERWISE)

Jared Sorensen, Unheilig,
Scott “Thrym” Knipe, Annie Rush;
Michael Moorcock, Robert E. Howard,
Homer, Joseph Campbell

SPECIAL THANKS

To Ganesha, Lord of Categories, He who bestows Good Fortune on Long Journeys.

To Athena, Goddess of Craft, who guided our hands on this endeavor.

To Caliope, Muse of Epic Works, whose Song never left our ears.

To Snake, Fire-Bringer and Trickster, who's tongue tickled our ear as he whispered to us.

And to Prometha, Lady of Imagination. We are your humble servants.

Enemy Gods and all its contents are ™ and © 2004 by John Wick. Used by permission. No part of this book may be reproduced (except the character sheets) without the author's written permission. The mention of any trademarks or copyrights not owned by the author is not a challenge to those marks.

No characters, situations, or events depicted in this book are real.

Except the Gods. They're real.

Table of Contents

Introduction	5	<i>Devotion and Hubris</i>	12
What is Enemy Gods?	5	<i>Devotion</i>	12
Sword and Sorcery	5	<i>Hubris</i>	13
What Do I Need to Play?	5	<i>Advantage Dice</i>	13
		<i>Risk Difficulty</i>	14
		<i>Re-Tries</i>	14
1. Creating Characters	6	Contested Risks	14
One: Your God	6	Mythic Risks	14
<i>Creation by Design</i>	6		
<i>Creation by Accident</i>	6	3. Devotion & Divinity	15
<i>Creation by Will</i>	6	Starting Divinity Points	15
<i>Make Your Own!</i>	7	Domain	15
The Pantheon	7	<i>Divine Authority</i>	15
<i>God of the Battlefield: Falvren Dyr</i>	7	<i>Contesting Domain</i>	16
<i>God of Craft: Aelon Valeron</i>	7	<i>An Optional Rule:</i>	
<i>God of Fortune:</i>		<i>Divine Convocation</i>	16
<i>Ashalim Avendi</i>	7	Divine Inspiration	17
<i>Goddess of the Hearth:</i>		<i>Within Your Domain</i>	
<i>Manna Renay</i>	7	<i>Outside Your Domain</i>	17
<i>God of Justice: Jonan Drax</i>	7	Divine Intervention (Miracles)	18
<i>Goddess of Love: Talia Yvarai</i>	7	<i>Step One: Devotion Rank</i>	19
<i>God of Wisdom: Tyane Bran</i>	7	<i>Step Two: Influence</i>	19
<i>Lesser Gods</i>	7	<i>Step Three: Help and Hindrances</i>	19
Two: Your Hero	8	<i>Step Four: Making the Roll</i>	19
<i>Step 0: Description</i>	8	Divine Retribution (Smiting)	19
<i>Birth & Youth</i>	8	<i>Step One: Using the Hero's Hubris Against Him</i>	20
<i>The Call to Adventure</i>	8	<i>Step Two: Determine the Curse's Strength</i>	20
<i>The Wastelands & Transformation</i>	8	Blessings	20
<i>The Underworld & The Beast</i>	9	Ranks of Faith	21
<i>Step 1: Backgrounds</i>	10	<i>Devotion 4: Acolyte</i>	21
<i>Step 2: Devotions</i>	10	<i>Prayer</i>	21
<i>Step 3: Heroic Flaw</i>	10	<i>Devotion 5: Anointed</i>	21
<i>Step 4: Hubris</i>	10	<i>Mystery Rites</i>	21
<i>Step 5: The Game of 20 Questions</i>	10	<i>Devotion 6: Champion</i>	22
<i>Step 6: Divinity</i>	11	<i>Requirements</i>	22
		<i>Benefits</i>	22
2. Playing the Game	12	The Hero's Flaw	22
Taking Risks	12		

Table of Contents

4. Combat	23	<i>Master Parry</i>	32
Combat Phases	23	<i>Two-Weapons</i>	32
Initiative	23	<i>Slash</i>	32
Action	23	God of Craft: Aelon Valeron	32
Heroes vs No Names	24	<i>Allies & Rivals</i>	33
Heroes vs Heroes	24	<i>Relics (Aelon's Blessings)</i>	33
Gaining Wounds	24	<i>The Sword of Elder Fire</i>	33
Additional Successes	25	<i>The Shadow Kiss Medallion</i>	34
Gaining and Losing Advantage	25	<i>The Dead Man's Eye</i>	34
Winning the Fight	25	God of Fortune: Ashalim Avendi	34
Fighting More Than One Opponent	26	<i>Allies & Rivals</i>	34
Divine Intervention	26	<i>Blessings</i>	34
Winning and Losing	26	<i>Disguise</i>	34
Combat Details	27	<i>Lucky Coin</i>	35
<i>Melee Weapons</i>	27	<i>Glamour</i>	35
<i>Ranged Weapons</i>	27	<i>Lucky Shot</i>	35
<i>Maneuvers</i>	27	<i>"Trust Me"</i>	35
<i>Healing</i>	27	Goddess of the Hearth: Manna Renay	35
Non-Violent Combat	27	<i>Allies & Rivals</i>	35
<i>Optional Repartee Rules</i>	28	<i>Blessings</i>	35
Getting Hurt Other Ways	28	<i>Beast's Tongue</i>	36
<i>Falling</i>	28	<i>Circle of Protection</i>	36
<i>Fire</i>	28	<i>Hearthbread Cookies</i>	36
<i>Poison</i>	29	<i>Hearthward</i>	36
<i>Knock Outs</i>	29	<i>Outpost</i>	36
		God of Justice: Jonan Drax	36
5. Making Your Hero Better	30	<i>Allies & Rivals</i>	37
Hubris	30	<i>Blessings</i>	37
Defining Moments	30	<i>Vow of Compassion</i>	37
		<i>Vow of Fidelity</i>	37
Appendix 1: The Pantheon	31	<i>Vow of Truth</i>	37
God of the Battlefield: Falvren Dyr	31	<i>Vow of Valor</i>	37
<i>Allies & Rivals</i>	31	<i>The Final Vow</i>	38
<i>Blessings</i>	31	Goddess of Love: Talia	38
<i>Battle Cunning</i>	31	<i>Allies & Rivals</i>	38
<i>Berserk</i>	31	<i>Blessings</i>	38
		<i>Befuddling Kiss</i>	39
		<i>The Black Kiss</i>	39
		<i>The Enchanting Kiss</i>	39
		<i>Goodnight Kiss</i>	39
		<i>The Muse's Kiss</i>	39

Table of Contents

God of Wisdom: Tyane Bran	39	<i>Blessings</i>	50
<i>Allies & Rivals</i>	39	<i>The Darkest Fear</i>	51
<i>Blessings</i>	40	<i>The Malice Hammer</i>	51
<i>A Moment of Insight</i>	40	<i>The Sweetest Sting</i>	51
<i>Wisdom's Clarity</i>	40	<i>Wit's Teeth</i>	51
<i>The Softest Spot</i>	40	<i>Da'fhill: Afhil's Children</i>	51
<i>The Heart's Riddle Revealed</i>	40	<i>Allies & Rivals</i>	51
<i>The Most Evident Truth</i>	40	The Lord of Demons: Sorcel Shem	52
Lord of Death: Uhmume	41	<i>Blessings</i>	52
<i>Blessings</i>	41	<i>Allies & Rivals</i>	52
<i>Allies & Rivals</i>	41		
<i>The Fell Gods</i>	41		
Appendix 2: The Shanri		Appendix 4: Creating Your	
Primer	43	Own Pantheon	53
The Ven	43	Define Your Pantheon	53
History	43	Two Examples	53
Government	43	The Four Elements	54
Castes	43	Death	56
Technology	43	Finally	56
Commerce	44		
Moderation	44	Conclusion	57
Citizenship	44		
Mages and Sorcerers	44	About the Author	57
Baliven: The Mountainmen	44	Character Sheets	58
Appendix 3: The Fell Gods	45	Blatant Plug	60
The God of Murder: Ikhalu	46		
<i>Blessings</i>	46		
<i>The Ikhalu Knife</i>	46		
<i>The Hidden Blade</i>	46		
<i>The Deepest Cut</i>	46		
<i>False Death</i>	46		
<i>The Stolen Mask</i>	46		
<i>Avalli: Sacred Murder</i>	46		
<i>Allies & Rivals</i>	47		
The Bloody-Eyed Widow: Mahl	47		
<i>Allies & Rivals</i>	47		
<i>Blessings: Monsters</i>	47		
The Grinning Man: Afhil	50		

Introduction

Introduction

"Let's play Gods!"
— Me, circa 8th Grade

Way back in junior high school, when I was playing *Dungeons & Dragons*, the ultimate goal was "uplifting" our favorite characters to "god status." Now, we heard all kinds of ways to do that: become 36th level, kill a god to assume his mantle, or even sleep with a god (something my boys never believed, no matter how much verisimilitude I employed). And so, many years later, I'm thinking back to those days, wondering the same thing I was wondering then: "How would a roleplaying game for gods work? After all, can't gods do anything?"

Well, as it turns out, that isn't exactly true. A college mythology course taught me that most gods are just as limited as human beings are. That is, gods are limited by the imaginations of the men who create them. (Mythological gods, that is. Not real gods. You know, the gods you worship, as opposed to other people's gods.) And so, here's *Enemy Gods*. A roleplaying game for those of us who aren't content with just playing heroes, but want a step up into the heavens, to play what may be the world's most dangerous game...

WHAT IS *ENEMY GODS* ?

It's a role-playing game where you play two characters: a God and a Hero. The Hero is a mortal trying to win the favor of the Gods by doing the kind of things Heroes do. In exchange, the Gods help the Hero out with acts of divine intervention, trying to win enough favor from him (or her) the Hero. The more the God helps the Hero, the more the Hero helps the God, and it all goes round and round in a big symbiotic circle.

SWORD AND SORCERY

While *Enemy Gods* is a fantasy game, the setting is more in line with the Conan and Elric genre of fantasy than the high romance of *The Lord of the Rings*. The world of *Enemy Gods* is steeped in the "age from before the fall of Atlantis;" pre-historic times that man does not remember, except sometimes in dreams. For a real world comparison, the world of *Enemy Gods* is closer to 500 BC than 1300 AD.

While you can play *Enemy Gods* in just about any culture – including a high fantasy world – the

default setting provided with the game is definitely more Elric than Aragorn. For more information on the world of *Enemy Gods*, take a look at Appendix 2.

WHAT DO I NEED TO PLAY?

You need this book, pencils and 6-sided dice. Tasty beverages help.



1: Creating Characters

Gods and Heroes share a very special relationship. As a Hero performs fabulous acts of unbelievable heroism (or despicable villainy), he increases a God's fame in the mortal world, thus increasing the God's power and influence. But he can't do it alone; he needs divine help. The more assistance the God gives the Hero, the more the Hero can accomplish. The more the Hero accomplishes, the more power he gives back to the God, which is more power the God can use to help the Hero.

If your Hero wins enough favor from one of the Gods, he becomes that God's Champion (and gains access to even more powers). The Greeks had this game down to a science: the whole Trojan War was about battles between the Gods and their Champions. In the myths, Athena's Champion was Odysseus, Zeus' was Heracles and Aphrodite's Champion was Hector. You need a Hero to further your cause in the world of mortals.

Most players assume their Hero and God get along famously, but more daring players even go so far as to make enemies of their Hero and their God. Whatever relationship you have, consider it carefully.

So, with all that in mind, think of all the classic heroes from mythology. There's Arthur, the reluctant King of Britain; Roland, Charlemagne's noble knight; Siegfried, the Norse dragon-slayer; and Manabozho, the Algonquin trickster.

(Okay, maybe you don't know about Manabozho. That's okay – I didn't either until a month ago.)

ONE: YOUR GOD

The first step in playing *Enemy Gods* is picking out a God for each player in the game. Is your God the God of the Battlefield? The God of Craft? The Goddess of Love?

Because there can only really be one God of the Battlefield, you'll need a method for choosing who gets to play who in the Pantheon. Here are a few ways to pick Gods for the game.

CREATION BY DESIGN

The GM assigns Gods to the players based on their personalities and player types. The guy who always plays fighters gets the God of the Battlefield, the guy who always plays bards gets the God of Love, the guy who always plays thieves gets the God of Fortune... you get the picture.

CREATION BY ACCIDENT

The group throws all the God names in a hat. Everybody picks out one and you get what you draw. Whether or not everybody gets to trade afterward or not is up to you.

CREATION BY WILL

The GM says, "We're playing *Enemy Gods!*" and lets the players decide among themselves who gets to play which God.

THE PANTHEON

Here are the Gods. Choose them in whatever method you see fit. A more detailed description – along with rituals, miracles, allies and enemies – is in Appendix 1.

Creating Characters

God of the Battlefield: Falvren Dyr

Falvren Dyr is also known as the Blood God. He is a strong God who demands nothing from his followers but self-reliance. He despises the weak and favors the strong. He never bestows blessings on those who ask: only those who deserve it.

God of Craft: Aelon Valeron

Brother to the Bloody God, Aelon Valeron is the master forger, the master craftsman, the master tradesman. He taught men how to cultivate fire, struck the very first coin, and gave men the skills they needed to rise above the beasts.

God of Fortune: Ashalim Avendi

When a coin is tossed, he knows how it will fall. When a card is drawn, he knows its face and rank. There is no Fate, no Destiny... only the whim of the God of Fortune.

Goddess of the Hearth: Manna Renay

She is the Mother of the World, the one who taught men to tame the beasts, who taught them how to make the crops grow, taught them the rituals to bring the world back to life after the long sleeping death of winter. She is Mother To Us All.

God of Justice: Jonan Drax

It was he who gave men laws and the will to enforce them. It was he who gave men the promise of justice. Jonan Drax and his devoted paladins walk the earth for the sole purpose of bringing justice to the wicked and to protect those who cannot protect themselves.

Goddess of Love: Talia Yvarai

More than just the Goddess of Love, Talia is the world's muse. Through her divine inspiration, all great works of art are made. It is by her hand that artists paint, with her voice that singers sing, with her passion that lovers love.

God of Wisdom: Tyane Bran

Whenever man asks a question, Tyane Bran is there. When he wonders, Tyane Bran is there. When he dreams, Tyane Bran speaks to him. The world is full of secrets, but the God of Wisdom knows them all... and reveals them to those worthy of his knowledge.

MAKE YOUR OWN!

Finally, if you want to make up your own Pantheon, there's some free advice in the Appendices (and we all know what free advice is worth) on creating your own Gods. Enjoy!

LESSER GODS

There are other Gods in the world, although they do not have the same power as the Gods listed above. These "City Gods" are worshipped locally and sometimes are just different manifestations of Greater Gods. The Lady of the Well, for example, is a minor Goddess in the city of T'jir. Often called the "Patron Saint of Thieves," she protects the lower classes (pick pockets, burglars, confidence men, etc.) from the tyranny of the corrupt monarchy and merchant class. While she does protect the criminal classes, she is a lesser manifestation of the God of Justice.

Also, in the city of Shurr, tales of the "Cookie Queen" (obviously, a manifestation of the Goddess of the Hearth) are abundant. This goddess manifests once a year, delivering cookies to the children of the city. They leave out a cup of milk for her at night and wake to find a plate of cookies in the morning.

TWO: YOUR HERO

Once you have your God figured out, it's time to figure out your Hero. Heroes in *Enemy Gods* aren't your typical adventurer types; instead, they are touched by the divine, selected by the Gods themselves for greatness. Also, they are characters with pasts. Your Hero isn't some "first level" nobody; he's a great and mighty symbol of what is best in humanity. A conquering warrior, a sly trickster, a subtle seductress; these are all the kinds of characters you'll be making for *Enemy Gods*.

STEP 0: DESCRIPTION

Mythic Heroes have many traits in common, all of which you should consider while creating your Hero. Listed below are some of the most common characteristics about mythic heroes. Read through and answer the questions at the end of each section. When you're finished, you'll have a better idea of not only who your Hero is, but *why* he's a Hero.

(This, of course, is a *very* abbreviated and truncated version of Joseph Campbell's "hero's adventure" cycle. Let's give the man a tip of the hat, shall we?)

Birth & Youth

Some sort of miracle often marks a Hero's birth. Whether it is an omen, a blessing, or even divine conception, the Hero's birth is miraculous, isolating him from the rest of the world. Because he is marked as different, the Hero is often a loner in his young life and must spend it in self-reflection, learning how to rely on his own strengths to survive.

Often, the Hero is an orphan, ignorant from his true heritage until he is called upon to fulfill his destiny. A reoccurring theme is the Hero being sent down the sea (the world's biggest symbol for the human unconscious). Think about your Hero's birth. What marks

it as unique? Does he have a divine heritage? Was he abandoned by his real parents, only to be discovered later?

The Call to Adventure

A Hero spends most of his life isolated from the rest of his community. He's seen as an outsider, a dreamer, a stranger. It's only when adventure invites him away does the Hero find his true calling. Often, the Hero's community is endangered by some terrible evil and only the Hero has the courage (and imagination) to confront it. He isn't always enthusiastic about the adventure, sometimes refusing it outright. However, deep in his heart, he knows he's the only person who can save the community from danger. He goes forth – even halfheartedly – to save the people who have treated him like an outsider all this time.

Your Hero has heard and answered this call, going forth from his homeland into the great unknown to confront an evil only he has the imagination to understand and defeat. What called your Hero away from his home and what did he find when he left everything behind?

The Wastelands & Transformation

Far from his home, the Hero wanders through the Wastelands, a vast wounded world of strangers. The world is wasting away, an open and festering wound in need of healing. The Hero will heal it, although he doesn't know that yet. Walking through the Wastelands, he encounters beasts of all kinds and men who are strong and cunning enough to live in such an awful place. There, in the middle of the world, the Hero finds a mentor who teaches him the skills he needs to survive in the world.

With the mentor's help, the Hero wanders the Wasteland, encountering and overcoming dangers as he goes. It is also here he learns a deep secret: in order to fully succeed in his mission, he must drink a magic potion made

from the blood of the creature he must ultimately defeat. This potion takes many forms, but the theme remains: in order to defeat the beast, you must see through its eyes, live in its skin, and walk in its footsteps. To know its secrets, you must *be* the thing you fear the most. Only the Hero is strong enough to survive such an ordeal, and by surviving it, he is no longer the young fool who wandered away for home in search of adventure. He is transformed into something greater, something powerful and not entirely of this world. He is finally the Hero he was born to be.

What kind of skills did your Hero learn in the Wastelands? Who was his Mentor? What was the greatest lesson he learned? How was he transformed by his experiences?

The Underworld & The Beast

Finally, he reaches the darkest part of the journey – the Underworld. It is here the Hero typically loses his mentor and must face the darkest challenge all on his own. Whether or not he succeeds in the challenge is up to him. The creature waiting for him is "the dragon;" the ultimate metaphor for the sickness of the world. The Hero must confront and slay the dragon, but more often than not, once the deed is done, the dragon turns out to be another Hero... one from the past who reflects the future waiting for our current protagonist.

Slaying the dragon represents destroying the traditions of the past; those rites and rituals whose meaning has been forgotten by current generations. The Hero represents the present, the action of the moment. He kills the tradition of the past and makes the *new* tradition. And, perhaps one day, he will face another Hero and face the final confrontation with his own future. The old King must give way to the new King.

That is the way of the world.

What was the nature of your Hero's "dragon?" What did he represent to you? What did you learn from defeating him?

Now that you have a better understanding who your Hero is and what he's capable of doing (and what he *isn't* capable of doing), let's start writing numbers down on the sheet.

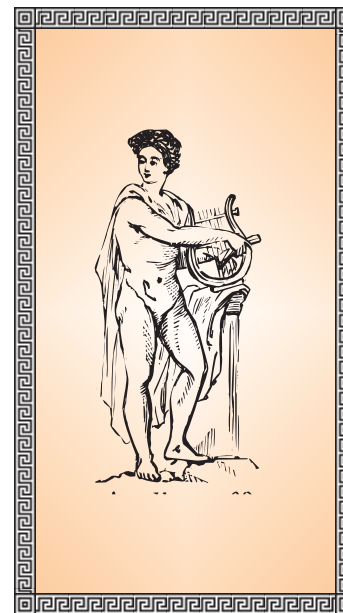
STEP 1: BACKGROUNDS

Backgrounds represent skills and talents from your Hero's past. You get

7 points of Backgrounds, each representing an additional die to roll for Risks. You can divide them up any way you see fit, however, no Background can start higher than rank 4. You could have one four-point Background and one three-point Background, seven one-point Backgrounds, three one-pointers and two two-pointers, or however you want to split them up.

STEP 2: DEVOTIONS

On the sheet, you'll see a number of spaces for DEVOTIONS. List all the Gods in the game (including Non-Player Gods in the



Pantheon). Your Hero begins with one point of Devotion to every God. You have 10 additional points to customize your Devotions. No Devotion can be higher than 4 at this point.

Every point of Devotion is another die you can roll when taking an action in that God's Domain. In other words, if you're in a fight, you call on the power and blessings of the God of the Battlefield. Or, if you want to connive your way by a guard, you want to call on the eloquence of the Goddess of Love. If you're making a boat, you call on the God of Craft. The higher your devotion to the God, the more dice you can use.

STEP 3: HEROIC FLAW

Your Hero has one Flaw. This can be nearly anything you like. Achilles had the most famous Flaw in the world, Lancelot had his blind devotion, and Oedipus suffered from an entirely different kind of blindness (his Flaw is a dark secret from his past). Your Flaw can also be someone who depends on you or someone you owe fealty to. For example, Gwenevere could be considered Arthur's Flaw (Lancelot, too, for that matter). It's up to you. There's a mechanic for bringing your Flaw into the game, and we'll talk about *Calling on the Flaw* in **Chapter 3: Devotion & Divinity**.

STEP 4: HUBRIS

The Greek word *hubris* means "dangerous vanity" or as the Merriam-Webster likes to say: "exaggerated pride or self-confidence." In *Enemy Gods*, Hubris is a trait measuring your Hero's self-confidence; his ability to rely on his own skills rather than the blessings of the Gods.

Every Hero begins the game with two points of Hubris. We'll take a better look at Hubris, and what it does for you in **Chapter 2: Playing the Game**.

STEP 5: THE GAME OF 20 QUESTIONS

Finally, take another moment and answer these questions.

What social caste does your Hero come from? Is he poor, rich, a landowner? Your social caste has a lot to do with your attitude toward others; describe whether or not you fit the cliché of your caste.

Which of the five senses is most important to your Hero? Which of the five senses are the least important?

How does your Hero feel about her parents? Her family in general? Does she have any siblings? Did she lose any siblings or family members before now?

What are your Hero's favorite foods? Drinks? What does he like to wear?

Does your Hero hold any grudges or vendettas? Does he owe any favors or boons? Does he have any obligations at all?

What kind of person is your Hero most attracted to? What kind of person drives you to fits of rage?

How does your Hero define "love?"

If given the opportunity, would your Hero kill for profit? If not, what would your Hero kill for?

What is more important, to be feared or to be loved? ("Yes," is not an acceptable answer.)

Who does your Hero trust most? Why does she trust this person above all others?

Which God does your Hero revere most and why? Which God does he revere least?

To whom does your Hero owe the most loyalty?

What are some of your Hero's reoccurring mannerisms? Figures of speech, physical habits, etc.?

How would your Hero's parents describe him?

If you could give one piece of advice to your Hero, what would it be?

What would be the most appropriate death for your Hero?

What quality about his personality does your Hero like most?

What quality about his personality does your Hero like least?

Rank the Seven Deadly Sins in order from deadliest to most benign: Lust, Greed, Anger, Pride, Jealousy, Sloth, and Gluttony.

Rank the Seven Beautiful Virtues from most noble to least noble: Prudence, Temperance, Fortitude, Justice, Faith, Hope, and Charity.

STEP 6: DIVINITY

Now, as your God, ask each Hero how much Devotion he has to you. Write all those down and add them up. The total Devotion the Heroes have for your God is your God's starting Divinity. This is how many Divinity Points you start with at the beginning of the game. If a Hero's Devotion to you increases, so do the number of Divinity Points you start with at the beginning of each game.

There are spaces on your God's sheet for Heroes' Devotion to your God.

CHARACTER CREATION EXAMPLE

I have 7 Background Points. My Hero has a bit of training with a sword, so I take Swordsman as one of my backgrounds. I put three points into that.

He's also a Duke's son, so he has Nobleman as his second background. I put four points into that.

Finally, he's a bit of a romancer, so I put Silver Tongued Devil as his final Background. He has three points in that.

Looking at the Hero Sheet, I spend my points on Devotions like this:

Battlefield: 3	Justice: 2
Craft: 2	Love: 3
Fortune: 3	Wisdom: 2
Hearth: 2	

My Hero has a bit of combat training, so his Devotion to the God of Battle is a bit higher than usual. As a Duke's son, he's also learned the art of romance, so he's got a little bit of Devotion to the Goddess of Love. Finally, he also tends to get into rough spots and puts a bit of faith in the God of Fortune.

My Hero's Flaw is his wandering heart. He just can't fall in love or trust anyone. He won't stay in one place for too long and he won't let anyone get too close to him. One day, this will cost him. Not today, and probably not tomorrow, but one day.

2: Playing the Game

First off, playing *Enemy Gods* is just like playing any other role-playing game. You've got a character sheet, you've got dice and a Game Master. All you do is play as usual. Go delve into dungeons, go wander through shadowy cities, or go maneuver your way through the intrigue of kingly courts. It's all the same, just a switch of perspective. This time, you have a God's-eye view.

TAKING RISKS

"The only time a thief should have to bother rolling dice to pick a lock is if there's a big monster chasing him." – Jared Sorensen

Most days, a Hero can get by without ever rolling a die. He doesn't need to roll dice for most actions, just the ones that are really risky. Eventually, Jared's aforementioned thief above *will* pick the lock; otherwise, the story sits still with the thief on one side of the door and the adventure on the other.

Rolling dice should only occur if:

The success of the Hero's action is in question, and/or

Rolling dice adds tension and drama to the situation.

So, instead of using the standard "Task Resolution System" cliché, I've chosen to call it "Taking Risks."

DEVOTION AND HUBRIS

When your Hero takes a Risk, he must make a choice: either he may rely on the blessings of the Gods or he can rely on his own skills and talents. When he invokes the Gods, you roll dice based on his Devotions. When he

relies on his own skill, you roll dice equal to his Hubris. Here are examples of how both work.

Devotion

If your Hero wants to call on the power of the Gods to guide his hand through his Risk, roll a number of d6s equal to your Hero's Devotion to the appropriate God. If you are fighting, roll your Devotion for the God of the Battlefield; when you are building a wall, roll your Devotion to the God of Craft, when you're trying to seduce the Queen of the Black Mask, use your Devotion to the Goddess of Love.

There's a trick, however. The player of the appropriate God decides how many dice you may roll. He may allow you to roll your total Devotion or he may allow you to roll only a portion of that number.

For example, if you're in a sword fight with one of the Assassin-Priests of Ikhalu, you call upon the God of the Battlefield for strength in the fight. Your current Devotion to the God of the Battlefield is 5, so the player of that God can allow you to roll up to 5 dice for the fight. He may, however, allow you *less* dice. It all depends on what you've done for him lately.

You may choose to call upon a God whose powers are not appropriate to your roll. For example, calling on the Goddess of Hearth and Home in a fight for your life or calling on the God of Justice for picking a lock is invoking a God outside that God's sphere of influence. If you choose to call upon a God

whose influence does not cover your current Risk, they may only lend you dice up to *half* your Devotion, rounded down.

Hubris

You may choose for your Hero to rely on his own skills rather than call upon the favor of the Gods. If you do so, you roll a number of dice equal to your Hubris (plus any Advantage Dice).

Your Hero's Hubris increases and decreases during the course of the game. See **Chapter 3: Devotion & Divinity: Curses**, and **Chapter 5: Making Your Hero Better**, below.

ADVANTAGE DICE

One of the most important elements of the *Enemy Gods* system is Advantage Dice. These are dice the GM hands out to players for showing initiative and for good roleplaying. Each Advantage Die is another die the player can roll for a chance of rolling another success.

Advantage Dice represent advantages your Hero has in any given Risk. GMs should not be shy about giving Advantage Dice; they are here to reward good roleplaying, planning, and innovative thinking. Here are some examples of when the GM should award Advantage Dice.

A player says, "I have three advantages over my opponent. My Hero has a sword. Also, I'm on higher ground. Finally, my Hero has the sun behind him, shining in my opponent's eyes."

The GM agrees and says, "Okay. You have three advantages. You can roll three additional dice on your attack."

In many ways, a Hero's Backgrounds are like permanent Advantage Dice. Because a Hero has a past, he can use the skills he learned from that past as Advantage Dice.

Playing the Game

ADVANTAGE DICE

Hey, Mr. and Mrs. GM! Don't skip on the Advantage Dice! They're what make the world go 'round.

Advantage Dice came out of a response to watching another system in action. (The system shall remain nameless, but its initials are DAD.) In that system, all the advantages a character could have were pre-loaded: right there on his sheet. The player didn't have to think about how to gain bonuses because all his bonuses were already in front of him. Besides, the wimpy circumstantial bonus (+2) didn't match the Feats he had on his sheet.

This led to the classic "I roll to hit" syndrome that drives me crazy. So, I decided to come up with something I liked more.

Advantage Dice make the player engage the world around him, make him look for any advantage his character can get. Rather than rely on his sheet, the player has to think outside his sheet and think of ways to gain advantages. The advantages aren't front loaded and calculated ahead of time.

When all the thinking is already done for the player, he resorts to "I roll to hit." He doesn't even address the situation with an in-character voice. "I roll to hit."

With advantage dice, he must think about the fight in-character. He must address the situation going on. If he just "rolls to hit," he's missing out on all the goodies. As the GM, it is your job to reward his creativity. Do it. You might be surprised at the response.

Chapter 2

RISK DIFFICULTY

Each Risk has a degree of Difficulty. You roll your dice – whether they're from Hubris or Devotion – and count the number of evens you roll and compare it to the Difficulty assigned by the GM (see below).

Your GM picks the Risk Difficulty depending on how hard he feels the Risk is. A Hard Risk is something that requires an incredible amount of effort; a Mythic Risk that the Hero only makes once or twice in his lifetime (or game session, depending on how "heroic" you want your campaign to be). We recommend most actions be set to a 3 Difficulty or even a 2 Difficulty. That way, most Heroes (who are *heroes*, after all) succeed most of the time on most of the tasks they want to accomplish.

All mundane tasks – such as tying sandals, picking up a piece of paper and successfully sneezing into a handkerchief – are actions requiring no dice roll: they're just not risky. You should only roll dice if the success of the Hero's action is either important, or in doubt. In other words, if the success of a simple action means the life and death of thousands, by all means, force a roll. But if it means stalling the game for an hour while we determine if Bill the Barbarian can count to three, ignore it and move on. There are many more important (and dramatic) actions in store for our Heroes and we've only got until midnight before the GM's girlfriend starts calling on his cell phone.

Re-Tries

If your Hero screws up on his first attempt, he can try again, but he loses one die from his original die total. For every subsequent re-try, subtract an additional die.

CONTESTED RISKS

Actions that directly test your skills against another Hero are called Contested Risks. Here's how they're handled.

First, both contestants roll dice (add any Advantages) and keep the evens. The Hero with the most successes gains a **Moderate Success**.

If the successful Hero gets double the successes of the other Hero, he gains a **Complete Success**.

You will find rules later on in this book for **Moderate** and **Complete Successes**, but in general, just what Complete and Moderate Successes mean is up to the GM and the players. They are just a handy tools to make the process less binary and more colorful.

MYTHIC RISKS

Mythic Risks are the kind of actions that defy logic. Everything Heracles does in his twelve tasks is a Mythic Risk. But Heroes *should* be taking on Mythic challenges from time to time. Re-routing rivers, holding up the world and fooling the God of Fortune isn't the bread and butter of Heroes, but... well, actually, it is. So, every once in a while, Heroes get to do something spectacular. Isn't that why they're heroes afterall?

TARGET NUMBERS

Easy Risks = Diff 1

Normal Risks = Diff 2

Difficult Risks = Diff 3

Hard Risks = Diff 4

Mythic Risks = Diff 8

3: Devotion & Divinity

Every once in a while, a Hero needs your help, and what's a God for if it isn't answering petitions of prayer? Your Divinity Points are sitting right in front of you, and they are your key to helping Heroes out in their times of need.

STARTING DIVINITY POINTS

Gods start each session with a number of Divinity Points equal to the total Devotion the Heroes have for your God. Go around the table and have each Hero tell you how much Devotion he has for you. The total Devotion is the number of Divinity Points you gain at the beginning of the game. You retain any Divinity you saved from last game, so add these new points to your old points.

Divinity can be used in many ways. You can spend Divinity to assert your divine authority, help a Hero, curse him, create miracles, or bestow blessings. Each is discussed below.

DOMAIN

A God has a certain amount of power based on whether or not he has authority on a matter. For example, when you seduce the barmaid (again), the Goddess of Love has Domain. When you fight a villain with knives, the God of the Battlefield has Domain. When you call on your knowledge of poisons and venoms, the God of Wisdom has Domain.

Domain is an important concept to understand because it is the lynchpin for using Divinity. Using a God's Divinity is easier within his or her Domain. Using Divinity outside your Domain is much more difficult.

DIVINE AUTHORITY

In most RPGs, if players have questions, they ask the GM. In *Enemy Gods*, if players have questions, they consult the proper authority: the Gods.

If a question is ever raised during the game and a God can answer the question, he spends one Divinity to assert his authority over reality.

When a God has Domain, it is easier for the God to give inspiration, bestow miracles, and otherwise use Divinity.

For example, a group of Heroes are standing in a village. Raiding trolls are stealing away villagers. They come in the night, attack a single homestead, leaving no one alive to tell the tale. One of the Heroes asks, "I'm a hunter. What do I know about trolls?"

Usually, this question would go to the GM, but in this circumstance, the God of Wisdom – the font of all knowledge – can answer the question. The God of Wisdom spends one Divinity and answers the question. "You know very little," he replies. "But you do know trolls cannot simply be killed. They must be burned or they rise up again under the light of the moon."

Chapter 3

Another example: two armies stand ready to match skills and swords. A player has a question: who has the advantage? The GM turns to the God of the Battlefield. "Who does have the advantage?" The God of the Battlefield spends a Divinity and answers, "The army of the Yellow Moon. They have the advantage."

A final example: a player asks, "How long would it take me to forge a sword?" The God of Craft spends a Divinity and answers: "One month."

The GM always has final say over Divine Authority, but if he does veto a God's answer, the God does not have to spend Divinity.

For example, the God of the Battlefield has just answered, "The army of the Yellow Moon has the advantage." The GM replies, "No. They don't." The God of the Battlefield does not have to spend Divinity because the GM has vetoed his Authority.

CONTESTING DOMAIN

Sometimes, an issue of Domain isn't quite clear. For example, if a man is fighting for his true love, does the Goddess of Love or the God of the Battlefield hold Domain? If a group of farmers want to better their crops, does the God of Wisdom or the Goddess of the Hearth hold domain?

If the issue of Domain is contested, both Gods have the opportunity to spend Divinity to assert their right of Domain. The God who spends the most Divinity is the one who may assert his authority on the matter.

AN OPTIONAL RULE: DIVINE CONVOCATION

For players who want to emulate the disagreements between Gods and play some of the political game between Deities, the following rules are recommended.

If two Gods ever disagree on an issue of authority, a Divine Convocation can be called. Either the GM or a God may call a Convocation. When it is called, all mortal activity ceases while the Gods gather to discuss the issue of authority.

When the Convocation is called, each God has the opportunity to spend one Divinity. He does not need to spend a Divinity to attend the Convocation, but he *does* need to spend a Divinity to vote at the end of it. If a God does not spend a Divinity, he may speak at the Convocation, but he may not have a say in its decision.

During the Convocation, all the Gods discuss the matter at hand, deciding the issues presented. At the end of the Convocation, all the Gods who spent Divinity at the beginning of the gathering are allowed a single vote. The winning side has Divine Authority over the matter.

At any time during the Convocation, if the GM feels the meeting is going too long or the arguments are getting stale, he may call for an immediate vote.

For example, in the instance of the villagers and the trolls above, one Hero prays to the God of Justice, asking if the trolls' actions against the villagers are just. The God of Justice spends a Divinity and says, "Yes." The Goddess of the Hearth, on the other hand, spends a Divinity and says, "No, it is not."

Because two Gods have spent Divinity to assert authority, a Convocation is called. Now, all the other Gods have an opportunity to spend Divinity for an opportunity to vote on the issue.

The God of Justice argues the trolls are, in fact, making justice by attacking the villagers. Long ago, the trolls lived here and the fields and crops belonged to them. But, humans moved into the land and drove out the trolls. Now, many generations later, the

trolls are taking their land back. By declaring that the trolls' actions are just, the God of Justice is saying the battle is under his Domain, and not any other Gods' Domain.

The Goddess of the Hearth argues that the people living on the land now should not be punished for what their ancestors did. She also brings up the fact that the God of the Battlefield should be careful – the God of Justice is trying to usurp the Bloody God's authority and Domain in this circumstance. The God of the Battlefield agrees and snarls at the God of Justice.

Finally, the GM announces there's been enough discussion and all the Gods should vote. Each God secretly votes and in the end it is decided the God of Justice is wrong; the trolls' action is not just and the Goddess of the Hearth is correct. The villagers are protecting their homes, and thus, the Goddess of Hearth and Home has Domain over the matter.

DIVINE INSPIRATION

Heroes use their Devotion to a God to determine how many dice they roll for a Risk, but sometimes, that isn't quite enough. When a Hero needs it, Gods reach down into the world and touch that Hero, giving his abilities a little *umph*. This moment of Divine Inspiration augments the existing strengths of the Hero, making him a little stronger, a little faster or a little smarter than he already is. We call this Divine Inspiration and it allows you to give your Hero additional dice to roll for any action. Divine Inspiration costs differently depending on the circumstances.

Within Your Domain

If you help your Hero in a field that falls under your influence, every Divinity Point you spend gives that Hero a number of dice equal to his Devotion to you. That is, if the

Devotion & Divinity

Goddess of Love wants to help a Hero seduce the barmaid (there she is again), every Divinity Point she spends gives that Hero a number of dice to roll equal to his Devotion to the Goddess.

Outside Your Domain

Helping Heroes outside your sphere of influence costs a bit more. Inspiring your Hero outside your Domain costs one Divinity Point per die rolled. Thus, if the Goddess of Love wants to help a Hero in a sword fight, she has to spend one Divinity Point to give him one bonus die.

Quick Note

Gods do not use Divinity Points to give Heroes dice for Risks; those are part of the basic system. The dice Gods give out as Inspiration are a separate mechanic all together. Just in case you were confused.

INTERVENTION & RETRIBUTION

Gods are powerful beings, capable of ripping up mountains, draining oceans, creating rivers, and making lead into gold. At the beginning of this game, we talked about defining the nature of your pantheon, and what your Gods were capable of doing. Can they directly manipulate nature? Can they turn the sky black and make the clouds rain blood? Can they send manna down to feed their hungry people? It's all up to you and the GM. Talk about it.

There is one rule about Divine Intervention that really should not be broken, and that's killing a Hero. This is strictly forbidden. You can smite down an army of ten thousand with thunderbolts from the sky if you like, but you cannot kill a God's Hero.

Only another mortal can do that.

Chapter 3

If you are Poseidon and you want to keep Athena's Champion away from home for twenty years (thus drawing Athena's wrath), that's all right. Just remember: never make an enemy who you can't kill.

Odysseus is actually a good example to bring up right about now, because being lost at sea for twenty years is exactly what he deserved. After the Trojan War, Odysseus looted the temples of Troy, destroying altars of all the Gods. Poseidon didn't like that, so he punished Odysseus by keeping him away from home for two decades.

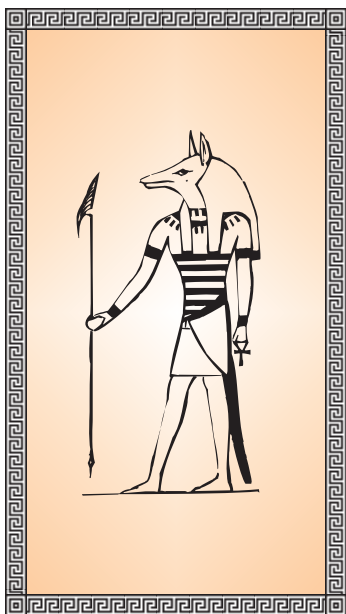
At the end of the Odyssey, he asks Athena – his patron – why she didn't help him (a common question for Heroes; they never notice when you're around). Athena just shook her head and said, "I couldn't help you."

This implies rules mortals are not aware of, rules that bind even the Gods. Come up with a set of rules for your pantheon. What happens to a mortal who offends them? Do the Gods have the right to meddle with them, even if they are Heroes of a rival God? And can the patron of that Hero aid their beloved mortal, or must they watch from the sidelines and hope? Athena did. And at the end of it all, she got the greatest Greek Hero of them all.

Most curses can take the form of a simple die penalty related to the God's sphere of influence.

You may also forbid a Hero from touching a specific material. A Hero who cannot touch iron, for example, would put out any combat-oriented Hero quite well. On the other hand, a scholarly Hero who can't touch books without suffering a Wound is in a whole different world of pain.

Using a Hero's vanity against her is a classic method of divine punishment. Medusa's curse is the most famous, of course, but there are so many examples of Gods punishing Heroes with curses related to their greatest strength. Be creative and just a little cruel. But, be warned! If you are too cruel, you may lose the Devotion of the other Heroes.



DIVINE INTERVENTION (MIRACLES)

Every once in a while, a God has to really pull off some serious mojo to help his Hero out. Whether this is parting the Red Sea, knocking down arrows flying at the

Hero's back or saving his ship from sinking between the Scylla and Kharibdis, we call this blatant use of divine power Divine Intervention.

Any God can push his Hero a little here and there, but it takes some serious power to change the world, even for just a moment. Divine Intervention is a little trickier than simply inspiring a single person, and it requires a lot of Divinity Points.

Step One: Devotion Rank

When performing a miracle, determine the target Hero's Devotion Rank. For every Divinity Point you spend, you can roll a number of dice equal to the Devotion of the Hero.

For example, the Hero you want to target has 3 Devotion to you, so every Devotion Point you spend gives you 3 dice to roll for your miracle.

If the miracle does not affect a specific Hero (or NPC), you must spend 1 Divinity for every die.

Step Two: Influence

If your miracle falls within your sphere of influence, there is no penalty. If it does not, the miracle's Divinity cost is doubled.

For example, the God of the Battlefield wants to prevent a Hero in a Duke's court from drinking a cup of poisoned wine. The Hero has a 4 Devotion to the God of the Battlefield. Because this miracle does not fall within the God's sphere of influence, Dyr must spend two Divinity to gain four dice (based on the Hero's Devotion of four.)

Step Three: Help and Hindrances

Finally, other Gods can either help or hinder your miracle.

Gods with more Divinity Points than you (before you started spending them for your miracle) can spend one Divinity Point to subtract or add a number of dice equal to the Hero's Devotion to *them*. A God can only do this once per Divine Intervention.

If a God has less Divinity than you, the cost to interfere is doubled.

For example, the Goddess of Love wants to aid one of her priestesses by making another Hero fall in love with her. The priestess has a 5 Devotion to the Goddess of Love, so every Divinity the Goddess spends gives her 5 dice for her miracle.

Devotion & Divinity

But the God of Craft doesn't appreciate the Goddess's meddling, so he decides to interfere.

At the moment, the Goddess of Love has 12 Divinity and the God of Craft has 14. Thus, the God of Craft has more Divinity than the Goddess of Love, so interfering with her miracle will not cost double.

The priestess has a 2 Devotion to the God of Craft, so every Divinity he spends subtracts 2 dice from the Goddess of Love's miracle roll. He may only spend one Divinity to interfere, but there is nothing stopping him from convincing the God of Fortune to interfere as well...

Step Four: Making the Roll

The GM assigns a Target Number, you roll the dice, and see if your God succeeds:

TN 5: Small Interventions such as healing wounds, stopping a fatal blow, or letting a Hero walk on water.

TN 7: Major Interventions such as moving a Hero across the world overnight, making a marching army get lost in the woods, or draining a lake.

TN 10: Vast Interventions such as raining fire and ash down an entire city, parting a sea, leveling a mountain range, or making every first-born child in a city die.

If you succeed, your miracle works. If not, your miracle fails.

DIVINE RETRIBUTION (CURSES)

Sometimes, Heroes get out of line and need to be reminded of their place in the world (which is worshiping the Gods, of course). When it's obvious a Hero has become too big for his britches, you may decide to give him some Divine Retribution – also known as Cursing the Hero. (Smiting is a good word, too.)

Chapter 3

Mythology is full of Gods who take offense at the littlest things and punish mortals mercilessly for it. (There's even a story about one God who did it for nothing more than a bet.) You may choose to smite a Hero at any time; you're a God, there's nothing stopping you from being jealous, wrathful, and belligerent if you feel a mortal has offended you.

When you choose to smite a Hero, use a formula similar to the formula for performing a miracle.

Step One: Using the Hero's Hubris Against Him

When casting a curse, every point of Divinity you spend gets you a number of dice equal to that Hero's **Hubris**.

Step Two: Determine the Curse's Strength

Roll your dice, and if you roll higher than the Hero's Devotion to your God, your curse is successful. If not, it doesn't affect him. Tell the hapless Hero what Doom has befallen him, and tell him the number of successes you got on your roll. The Hero writes down the curse and your number of successes.

Whenever a God successfully curses a Hero, the Hero decides if his Devotion to that God falls by one. He doesn't have to drop his Devotion; the choice is his.

For example, the Goddess of Love wants to curse a Hero for performing a poem without invoking her (he used his Hubris rather than invoking the Goddess). The Hero has a 3

Hubris and a 3 Love Devotion. She spends three Divinity for 9 dice (3 Hubris x 3 = 9). The Goddess' player rolls the dice and gets 4 successes. Because she rolled more successes than the Hero's Devotion, the curse is successful. The player of the Hero writes "Cursed by the Goddess of Love: 4" on his Hero's sheet. The Hero decides not to lower his Devotion to the Goddess, hoping he can win her favor again.



Burning a Curse

There are two ways of getting rid of a curse.

At the end of each game, a Hero is given 2 Devotion Points to put toward increasing his Devotions. He may burn one of those Devotion Points to burn one Curse Rank.

The Hero may also burn one Hubris Rank to burn one Rank of the Curse.

BLESSINGS

A God can also use Divinity to give a Hero Blessings. These are permanent bonuses on the Hero's sheet – permanent

until that Hero loses favor with you and you take them away, that is.

The rules for Blessings are as follows:

A Hero may call upon a number of Blessings from a God equal to his Devotion to that God.

The Blessing should adhere to the God's theme.

The Blessing can do *one thing*. The berserker rage, the lustful kiss, the knowledge to make a specific kind of weapon or item are all good examples of Blessings that do a single thing.

Blessings cost 5 Divinity to bestow and 5 Divinity to revoke it.

For example, a follower of the God of the Battlefield has a Battle Devotion of 3. He may use up to 3 Battle Blessings per game session. So far, the God of the Battlefield has given this follower two Blessings: Berserk and Slash. The follower may use Berserk three times in one day and never use Slash at all, or he may use Slash three times. Or, he may choose to use Slash twice and Berserk once.

A God of the Battlefield who gives his warriors the ability to become bloodthirsty berserks on the battlefield; a Goddess of Love who's priestesses can make any man fall in love with them with a single kiss; a God of Craft who teaches his followers the secrets of metalworking no other living soul knows; these are just some examples of Blessings that Gods can give to the faithful.

Again, if you'd like to see some sample Blessings, check out the sample Gods in *Appendix 1*.

RANKS OF FAITH

As a Hero's Devotion increases, his relationship to that God also increases, allowing for more potent uses of Divinity.

Devotions up to 3 are typical for Heroes and do not bestow any special benefits.

Devotions of 4 or higher, on the other hand, give a Hero and the God in question a few notable advantages.

DEVOTION 4: ACOLYTE

If a Hero has a 4 Devotion to a God, he is known as an *acolyte*. He is considered favored by that God who listens to his

Devotion & Divinity

prayers more intently. A Hero may be an acolyte of many Gods, but be careful; those Gods are known to be both jealous and wrathful. Your Hero may also choose *not* be an acolyte of a God. The same warnings apply.

Prayer

When the Acolyte calls upon the God in question, he may re-roll one die per Risk.

For example, an Acolyte of the God of Wisdom calls upon the God of Wisdom for knowledge about a specific region's history. When he rolls his dice, he may re-roll any one die for the chance of rolling another success.

DEVOTION 5: ANOINTED

At Devotion 5, the Hero is considered an anointed *priest* or *priestess* of the God and may be initiated in the mystery rites of the God. A Hero may only be a priest of one God at a time, regardless of his other Devotions. In other words, a Hero can have multiple Devotions of 5, but he can only be a Priest of one God at a time.

Mystery Rites

When a priest calls upon a God, his Devotion to the God provides great power. Once per game, a priest can perform rites to give his God power. Performing the rite takes an entire night, leaving the priest exhausted at the end of the ritual (an Advantage to any opponents). At the end of that time, the God gains Divinity equal to the Devotion of his Priest.

DEVOTION 6: CHAMPION

A champion is a Hero who has so much Devotion for a single God, he becomes a living symbol of that God's power. Becoming a Champion is not easy; the Hero needs more than just Devotion to be a God's champion.

Chapter 3

Requirements

In order for a Hero to become a Champion, she must first accomplish a few minor tasks.

The Hero must have at least 5 Defining Moments.

The Hero's Devotion to that God must be at least 6 and no other Devotion can be higher than 5. As soon as a Hero becomes a Champion, all other Devotions higher than 5 drop to 5.

Finally, a God may have only one player character champion at a time. Although, there may be other Champions out there, somewhere...

Benefits

There are many benefits to being a God's Champion:

When your God Divinely Intervenes on your behalf, it costs other Gods *double* to interfere.

If your God wants to give you a Blessing, it costs only 3 Divinity Points rather than 5.

Finally, if your God wants to invoke a miracle, he can do so by channeling Divinity *through you*. Under normal circumstances, Gods have to use Divinity 1-for-1 for miracles that do not directly target you. Because you are a living avatar of your God, he can send the Divinity through you, allowing you to call upon his power and perform miracles at the usual cost (1 Divinity = your Devotion in dice).

THE HERO'S FLAW

At some time during the game, a Hero's Flaw will come into play, either by chance or fate. No God can spend Divinity Points to protect him. They can't summon floods to wash her away from danger, they can't lift her onto a cloud away from poison arrows... nothing. At some time in every myth, the

Hero must face her worst fears alone, without the help of the Gods. This is that time.

In order for a Hero's Flaw to come into play, a God (PC or NPC) must *Call the Flaw*. A God spends five Divinity Points to call a Hero's Flaw. By spending five Divinity Points at the beginning of a game session, before anything else happens, a Hero becomes destined to encounter his Flaw during that game session. When it happens is up to the player (or GM) who spent the Divinity Points. When your Hero's Flaw is invoked, no God may spend any Divinity Points to help her in any way. The Hero must overcome the situation without any divine help. There is an upside to all this, by the way. If your Hero survives the situation, it is automatically considered a Defining Moment. If your Hero doesn't survive encountering her Flaw... well, its time to get a new Hero.

A NOTE ON DEATH

*"Don't let me go out like a sucka."
- attributed to Samuel Jackson
speaking to George Lucas*

Character death can be senseless, but a Hero's death is almost never without reason or meaning. We're talking about *mythological heroes* here, folks. *Everything* about them has meaning. How they were born, how they live, how they brush their teeth, and yes, how they die. Killing a character because some punk gets a lucky roll is not only "unfun," it also flies in the face of everything myth is about. A Hero's death is just as important as his life. Don't waste it on an unlucky dice roll. Make something of it.

4: Combat

This combat system is designed to encourage the kind of epic battles found in Greek, Roman, and Norse myths. Where bigger-than-life Heroes duke it out in earth-shattering, pulse pounding battles until one makes the killing blow. In order to do that, we had to throw out a few standard fantasy conventions (hit points, for example) and replace them with a system that *feels* mythic and encourages players to keep that feel alive – rather than resort to the standard "I roll to hit" cliché.

Don't worry, there's still an initiative and to hit rolls, so you're not completely in the dark. The biggest change here is one of timing. Instead of announcing your action, then rolling to see if you succeeded... you roll for successes, then use those successes to describe your character's actions. It's a little different, and it requires a little bit of explaining, but it's also a lot simpler than a lot of other systems.

COMBAT PHASES

Every combat consists of the following phases:

1. Initiative
2. Action
3. Resolution

INITIATIVE

At the beginning of the round, everyone involved in the combat rolls a number of dice equal to their Battle Devotion. The Hero with the most successes acts first, followed by the second-highest number of

successes, right down the line. If two characters roll the exact initiative, the one with the higher Battle Devotion goes first. If there is still a tie, their actions are simultaneous (or the God of Battle decides; your choice).

The God of Battle may spend a Divinity to put a character (Hero or otherwise) at the front of the initiative order.

ACTION

When it comes time for your Hero to do something, he can take one action. That action can be any number of things, but it all boils down to doing *one thing*. You could run across the room, jump over a table, use your sword to slice open a guy's artery... whatever you like. It just has to be *one thing*.

HEROES VS. NO-NAMES

Before we get any further in the combat procedure, let's talk a moment about Heroes and No-Names. You already know about Heroes – the Chosen of the Gods. But No Names are characters in the world who are just walk on characters. They're extras. They really aren't an essential part of the script.

When a Hero attacks No-Names, he rolls a number of dice equal to his Battle Devotion + any Advantages he may have. The number of successes he gains is the number of No-Names he can dispatch with a single action.

HEROES VS. HEROES

When a Hero faces another Hero, the combat system is a little different.

The Hero with the higher initiative goes first. He rolls his Battle Devotion + any Advantages he has. His TN is his opponent's Battle Devotion + any defensive Advantages he may have.

If the attacker succeeds (hits his TN), he gains one Advantage Die for his *next* action and must explain how he gained some kind of advantage over his opponent. It could be as simple as "I throw sand in your face," or "I kick your feet out from under you," or "I parry your sword so it's out to the side," or any other kind of advantage the player describes. The GM can veto any advantage as "too advantageous."

For example, Jallan is attacking Borvir. Jallan's Battle Devotion is 4 and Borvir's Battle Devotion is 3. When Jallan attacks Borvir, he needs to roll at least 3 evens to gain an advantage in the battle. To make matters worse, Borvir has a large shield which gives him an additional defensive Advantage. This increases Jallan's TN to succeed by 1, making his total TN 4.

Jallan knows he cannot get 4 successes with just 4 dice, so he looks for advantages to give him some Advantage Dice.

"I have a sword," he says. That's worth 1 Advantage Die.

"I have a Soldier Background of 3," he says. That's worth 3 Advantage Dice.

"I also have the sun behind my back," he says. Borvir disputes that advantage, so they consult the God of Battle. The God of Battle shakes his head. "No," he says. You do not have that Advantage."

So, Jallan has the following advantages:

4 Battle Devotion

1 Sword

3 Soldier

He has a total of 8 Advantages, so he can roll 8 dice to beat the 4 TN. He rolls his dice and gets 1, 2, 2, 3, 4, 5, 5, 6. Four evens! Jallan's strike succeeds! Jallan's player explains that his sword strikes Borvir on the shoulder, making a deep slash.

Because Jallan succeeded in his attack, he gains one additional Advantage die on his next attack.

ADDITIONAL SUCCESSES

If the attacker gains additional successes above and beyond the TN, he may exchange each success for an Advantage Die for his next roll as well. *However*, he must explain how he gained each Advantage.

For example, it is now Borvir's turn to attack Jallan. He has the following Advantages:

3 Battle Devotion

2 Spear (it is a weapon; and it has reach on Jallan's sword)

4 Barbarian Background

That's a total of nine Advantages to roll against Jallan's 4 Battle Devotion. Borvir rolls 9 dice and gets: 1, 2, 2, 3, 4, 4, 5, 6, 6. Six successes! Not only did he roll his required 4, but he got two additional successes. So, Borvir says, "When you cut my shoulder, I hit you in the face with the butt of my spear, spinning you around." That's for his one Advantage for succeeding. However, Borvir also has two additional successes. So, he says, "When your back is turned to me, I slash your heel." That's one success. "Then," he says, "I slash your back as well."

Because he described the two advantages he gained from the fight, Borvir gains two additional Advantage Dice on his next attack (for a total of three Advantage Dice).

GAINING AND LOSING ADVANTAGE

As the fight proceeds, you keep all Advantage Dice you gained from the previous rounds. That is, if you gain 1 Advantage in the first round, 2 in the second, and 1 more in third, you roll 4 additional dice for each subsequent attack, gaining even more Advantage Dice with each round... *as long as your attack succeeds.*

If any of your attacks fail, you lose *all* Advantage Dice you gained from the combat. You do not lose Advantage Dice from weapons, armor, or Backgrounds; just the Advantages you gained from successful attacks.

WINNING THE FIGHT

There are two ways to win a fight. First, if your opponent cannot overcome his Wounds (the number of applicable Wounds is greater than the dice he can throw), your opponent falls and has lost the fight.

Second, as soon as one combatant rolls a number of successes equal to his opponent's Battle Devotion + 5, he wins the fight.

The winner has the choice to kill the loser or spare him; he determines how the fight ends. This could be as simple as "I kill my opponent," or it could be, "I slam my shoulder into you and you fall to the ground, losing your sword. I step on your chest and put my sword at your throat."

The winner can also give the loser any number of Wounds he chooses.

FIGHTING MORE THAN ONE OPPONENT

If your Hero is fighting more than one opponent, each opponent gets a number of Advantage Dice equal to the additional opponents. So, if three people are attacking your Hero, each gets 2 additional Advantage Dice.

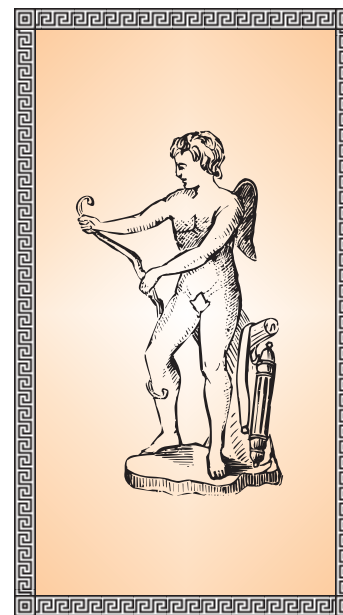
DIVINE INTERVENTION

The Gods may interfere in a battle, but they need Divine Authority to do so. If a God has Authority, he may give Divine Inspiration, create Miracles, or otherwise interfere. The God of Battle and the Goddess of the Hearth, however, *always* have Divine Authority over a battle in two very specific ways.

The God of Battle has Domain when giving Advantage Dice to the attacker; he is always eager to see more bloodshed. He may spend 1 Divinity to give the attacker a number of

Advantage Dice equal to the attacker's Battle Devotion for one round.

The Goddess of the Hearth has Divine Authority when protecting the Defender; all the creatures in the world are her children, and she will protect them to the end. She may spend 1 Divinity to increase the TN to hit the defender for one round. The TN increase is equal to the defender's Devotion to her.



When other Gods try interfering in a battle, they must justify their action. For example, if the Goddess of Love wants to interfere in the battle, she must have a reason to assert her authority; either the Hero is protecting his true love, or two lovers are fighting to the death, or some other excuse. Likewise, the God of Fortune or the God of Craft must justify their meddling in the God of Battle's Domain.

WINNING & LOSING

If a combatant's Wounds are equal to or outnumber the number of dice he would roll for an action, he may not take that action. For example, if a Hero has 3 Wounds and a 2 Devotion to the Goddess of Love, he may not take any actions that would call upon the Goddess of Love – unless she provides him enough dice to overcome his Wounds.

If a Hero is confronted with an attack and has no dice to defend himself, the attacker automatically wins and determines what happens to the loser. Yes, this means your opponent can say, "I kill him."

Remember: all effects of combat do not occur until the end of the current combat round. That means the effects of "I kill him" do not occur until everyone has taken their action. This gives other Heroes the opportunity to pull your fat out of the fire at the last moment.



COMBAT DETAILS

Weapons, armor, tactics... all of these are represented by Advantage Dice. Here are the details.

Melee Weapons

When it really comes down to it, a knife can kill you just as quickly as a sword can. The whole notion of a knife doing d4 hit points while a sword does d8 or d10 is really very silly. In the hands of a professional (and let's

assume our Heroes are professionals; they do get paid for what they do), a knife and a two-handed bastard sword are really the same thing. They're just means to the same end: piercing your opponent's heart or cutting his throat.

A weapon provides an advantage. If you have a weapon, it gives you an advantage. Swords, knives, pole arms and back-of-the-hand claws all provide your character an advantage, you get Advantage Dice: one, two or three, depending on the circumstances. If you have a knife and your opponent has a pole arm,

one of you has a definite advantage – and it ain't you. On the other hand, if you can get by your opponent's pole arm and get into some tight fighting, the advantage of a pole arm disappears.

In a fight between professionals, the advantages weapons give are entirely circumstantial, depending on the fight, the fighting ground and the fighters. A good GM will take that into account when the fun starts and apply the bonuses as necessary.

Ranged Weapons

On the other hand, there's no doubt a skilled archer shooting at a target from three hundred yards has a definite advantage.

When a Hero uses a ranged weapon, give him 3 Advantage Dice and his opponent, if he doesn't have a ranged weapon of his own, can't do anything about it but try hiding. Ain't ranged weapons cool?

Maneuvers

An ingenious playtester came up with the idea of incorporating maneuvers into the above system. A maneuver involves dropping a die from your current roll to make your opponent drop a die from his subsequent roll.

For example, if you want to get cancel an opponent's Advantage Dice he gets because of weapon reach, drop one die from your roll. If you make the roll, your opponent has to drop one Advantage Die out of his *next* roll.

The same can work to cancel Advantage Dice gained from armor, advantageous ground, etc. Dropping dice allows a more naturally skilled fighter to cancel the circumstantial advantage of his opponent.

If your Hero's Wounds cancel out any dice he'd get to use for a Risk, he cannot take that Risk and must choose to do something else.

Healing

How do I get rid of my Wounds? Well, a good night's rest will take care of little Wounds like cuts and abrasions, but more serious Wounds stick around a lot longer. Like everything else in this section, there's "reality" and "how it is in the books." I personally like characters having to deal with Wounds; I think it adds drama to the

situation. However, a more heroic campaign should emphasize the hero's ability to overcome his Wounds.

NON-VIOLENT COMBAT

Not all contests are physical; some are mental or even social. For example, let's use the classic fantasy RPG contest, better known as "seducing the barmaid."

My character has 3 Devotion for the Goddess of Love. The GM (playing the barmaid) decides this buxom wench has 2 Devotion for the same Goddess. We both roll dice and we keep rolling using the same method just described above: We keep making "attacks" (me, flirting; her rebuking) until my character gets a kiss or a slap, depending on the outcome of the contest.

OPTIONAL REPORTEE RULES

Now, some players are very witty and some are not. Some can be funny on the fly while some get a good line in every once in a while, and there are a few you just have to pry out of their shells with a big, fat character reward crowbar. While this is a roleplaying game, which intimates good roleplaying should be rewarded with bonuses and bad roleplaying punished with penalties, I don't see why a player who isn't clever or crafty can't get a reward for trying. So, here's what I do to make sure everybody gets a chance to get a kiss from the barmaid.

Bonus Dice

First, if the player just rolls dice for the exchange with the barmaid without even trying to be clever, charming or witty, he gets no help from me. (If you don't try, you don't get the prize.) If he makes even a simple attempt at being witty, I give him one bonus die for the effort. If he lives up to his own abilities at being clever, I give him two dice (that way, both the clever and non-

clever player both get the same reward for living up to their own potential). If the player goes above and beyond his usual level of performance, I give him three bonus dice to roll. But, that's just me. You may like giving "roleplaying bonuses" or you may not. That's why this here is what we call an "optional rule."

The Repartee Reserve

This is a pool of dice the player adds to whenever he's clever, witty or just plain funny. In other words, if the player roleplays well, actively contributes to conversations and otherwise makes his character seem "real," I give him one Point to add to his Repartee Reserve at the end of each session. He keeps these Points between sessions and can trade them in for dice he uses during any verbal exchange. And once they've been spent, you can't get them back unless you earn yourself more.

VERBAL AND CEREBERAL DUELS

Duels of wit and intellect can be just as much fun - and just as dangerous - as a fight with sword and shield. Tales of samurai playing Go with the loser bowing his head for a quick slice of his opponent's katana are rampant through Japanese folklore. Arthur's knights were faced with puzzles just as often as jousts. And what knight's tale would be complete without a run-in with an enchantress, looking for a few knights to fill her bedcha-I mean, *court, court!*

GETTING HURT OTHER WAYS

Now we come to all the nitty gritty details. How much damage does fire do? How about poison? How about falling damage? Well, to be honest, I usually handle this stuff on the fly when I'm the GM, even in games that give me specific rules for it (I don't like pausing the game to look up a rule). So, I'll give you a few guidelines and encourage you to be creative and treat every circumstance as its own specific rule.

FALLING

If you have to wonder if a hero can survive a fall, he probably can't. My buddy the forensic specialist tells me if the human body takes a 20 to 30 foot fall, it generally doesn't get back up on its own. Anything higher than that is risking internal hemorrhaging and a slow, painful death. If you want something a bit more "heroic," roll one die per ten feet the character falls. Every odd is a Wound.

FIRE

Getting burned for real isn't like getting burned in the movies. You can't out-run an explosion: you have mass, fire has next to none. However, it is fun to watch the hero run down the corridor away from the tumbling pillar of flame, so let's work something out. Once fire hits you, it continues to burn. You've got to get any burning clothes or accoutrements off before they get to your skin (as opposed to real life where the fire just melts your clothes and skin together). I'd say roll dice equal to the size of the fire and every odd does one Wound until the fire is put out. A small fire (campfire) is three dice. A large fire (like your classic fireball) is five dice. For every item of clothing, the GM gets to roll once for the fire. Thus, if your shirt and pants are on fire, the GM gets to roll twice.

POISON

Most poisons kill you right on the spot, rather than just make you sick or kill you over time. But in fantasy literature, there's a rich tradition of the slow poison, giving the hero ample opportunity to find an exotic cure for his impending doom. Thus, I'd suggest giving each poison a deadline and divide the amount of time between contact and that deadline into even segments. For example, if a poison has a twenty-four hour deadline (you get poisoned on Saturday at noon, you die on Sunday at noon), divide those twenty-four hours into 4 segments. Each segment gives the character a cumulative -1 to all actions. So, every 6 hours he gets another penalty. If the deadline is one month (now that's a slow poison), divide into days. If the deadline is minutes, divide the penalties into seconds. That's how I'd do poisons.

KNOCK OUTS

If someone hit me over the head with something heavy, I wouldn't be checking for hit points, I'd be on the floor, bleeding from the head, suffering from a concussion, throwing up all over myself. Of course, we want a system that simulates the literature that inspired it, so if you successfully sneak up and hit someone over the head, they're knocked out and won't wake up until it's absolutely the least opportune time for them to do so.

LAST WORD ON WOUNDS

Like everything else on a character sheet, Wounds are a method of communication between the player and the GM. "I want to be strong!" the player says; he communicates this to the GM by having a strong character. "I want to be a social character!" the player says; she communicates this by having lots of social skills.

Wounds are a way for the GM to communicate to the player. They indicate a general degree of health the player's character is in. The more Wounds a character has, the more it communicates to his player that he'd better keep an eye on his character.

Use Wounds as a guide; not as an absolute. Not all Wounds are the same: a broken leg is not on the same level as a gash across the forearm. Use Wounds to tell stories, not keep track of gory details.

DEADLY COMBAT

This rule is put here at the end for those of you who like a deadlier combat system.

Use it at your own risk.

If you ever succeed at an attack against your opponent, you deliver one Wound. A Wound is a description of a cut, bruise, bump or otherwise slightly incapacitating injury. Wounds not only give your character scars, they also affect his actions. Whenever your Hero gets a Wound, the person who gives it to you gets to describe the nature of the Wound. "A cut over your right eye," "a broken wrist," "a spained ankle," are all examples of Wounds. Whenever your Hero takes a Risk, check her Wounds to see if any are applicable to the Risk. If the number of applicable Wounds is equal to or greater than the number of dice you can generate for that Risk, you can't take that Risk. You must either find more dice (by praying to a God or finding more Advantages) or fail at the Risk. In case you're wondering, the effects of multiple Wounds can apply to one action.

5: Making Your Hero Better

At the end of every game session, your Hero and your God both receive two “Devotion Points.”

Your Hero’s sheet has a place for “Devotion Points.” Every point invested in a Devotion represents you trying to increase your relationship with that God.

First, your Hero spends his Devotion Points. He has two, so he can put them both in one Devotion or one point in two Devotions.

Second, your God gives his two Devotion Points to a Hero or Heroes. He may only put Devotion Points toward his own Devotion (the Goddess of Love can only put Devotion Points on your Devotion to her, not your Devotion to the God of War). Likewise, he can give two Devotion Points to one Hero or one Point to two Heroes.

If a Hero has a number of Devotion Points equal to three times his current Devotion, that Devotion increases by one.

For example, at the end of a game, my Hero has 2 Devotion Points to spend. Likewise, my God has 2 Devotion Points to give away. I decide my Hero spends one Devotion on the God of the Battlefield and one on the Goddess of Love. Likewise, I decide my God (the God of Wisdom) grants two Devotion Points to a single Hero. These points are automatically allocated to his Wisdom Devotion.

HUBRIS

Hubris increases differently. Every time you use your Hubris, it gains a point. When you gain six Hubris points, your Hubris increases by one. Also, whenever your Hubris increases, you gain another Background point. You may increase a current Background, or create a new one as you see

fit. Your Hubris can also fluctuate depending on other circumstances. See *Devotion & Divinity*, above.

DEFINING MOMENTS

There are moments in a Hero’s life that are so remarkable, so memorable, that they become part of his legacy. These are his Defining Moments. Theseus defeating the Minotaur in the heart of its own labyrinth, Odysseus slaying all the suitors, Thor winning back Mjolnir from the Frost Giant Thrym (in a dress, no less); these are moments for a Hero that live on throughout Eternity. When a Hero does something so remarkable that even the Gods must pause and gape in awe... game mechanics must be invoked!

As a player, you know these moments. When everything is right, when every player stands up and cheers, when the GM stands slack jawed at the unexpected brilliance of a player’s actions – this is a Defining Moment. When such a moment occurs, the Gods have an opportunity to reward the Hero appropriately. Each God may give up Divinity Points in recognition of the mighty deed. A God may only give a number of Divinity Points equal to the Hero’s Devotion to that God. If 5 Divinity Points are given up in this way, the Hero earns a Defining Moment. Write it down on his Hero sheet.

At the end of each game session, if a Hero had a Defining Moment during that game, he gains one free point to allocate to any Devotion *or* Hubris.

Appendices

Appendix 1: The Pantheon

The Pantheon below is the default set of divinities for *Enemy Gods*. If you’d like to use a different pantheon or even make up your own, consult **Appendix 4**.

GOD OF THE BATTLEFIELD: FALVREN DYR

“I don’t need your help, Bloody One! Stay up there in the sky and don’t get in the way!” – Typical prayer to Falvren Dyr

Falvren Dyr (*dire*) appears as a large man with flowing red hair. His armor shines like the sun, his blade carved from the moon. On his shield is the head of the God of Darkness whom he slew in personal combat at the beginning of Time. The scars he bears are from every war ever fought.

Dyr’s followers espouse a life of self-reliance; a strange dichotomy for those devoted to a God. Dyr despises prayer and those who ask for assistance. Rather, he blesses those who survive on their own wits, cunning, and strength. Dyr only drops his hand to protect those who show courage and prowess in battle; he never assists those who ask for it.

A God who doesn’t like being relied upon, worshiped by heroes who don’t like relying on anyone. It’s a perfect fit.

ALLIES & RIVALS

Dyr doesn’t like anyone, but his brilliant tactician mind knows well enough that he can’t stand alone. He tries to maintain alliances with the other Gods, but the fact of the matter is his temper always gets the better of him.

He has a brotherly hate-love relationship with the God of Craft (his true brother) and doesn’t tolerate the God of Fortune’s tricks. He is always trying to impress the Goddess of Love (who does her best to dissuade him from doing so), and thinks the God of Wisdom is a sissy. But, if called upon, he would fight to the death to defend any of them. That’s Dyr. And he wouldn’t want to be any other way.

BLESSINGS

Praying to Falvren Dyr is always a tricky task; he despises those who ask for help and rely on others for strength. Therefore, prayers to the God of the Battlefield sound more like curses and boasts than petitions of humility. Below are listed some of the most common blessings Dyr has been known to bestow. Each costs 5 Divinity.

Battle Cunning

During a battle, the Hero may subtract dice from his attack to subtract dice from his opponent’s Advantages. This effect lasts until the end of the battle.

Berserk

In order to invoke this Gift, the Hero must taste blood (it may be his own). Roll a die at the beginning of each round, noting the roll.

If any subsequent roll is lower than the previous roll, the Berserk is invoked. This means a Hero cannot, by default, berserk on the first round.

Berserk lasts until the end of the current combat scene. During that scene, the Hero has 4 Advantage Dice to attack and does not suffer the effects of any Wounds. At the end of the combat, he drops unconscious from exhaustion. Also, his Wounds finally take effect.

A berserk has no control while under the blood rage, attacking friend and foe alike. While berserking, the God of the Battlefield directs the Hero. That is, Falvren Dyr chooses whom the Hero attacks. The player of the Hero makes all the rolls and chooses how to attack his opponent, but the God of War directs the Hero's hand.

For example, Thyn has the Berserk Gift and bites his own tongue to taste blood before going into battle. On the first round, he rolls a die and gets a result of 3. Because there was no previous round, he cannot roll lower than his first roll. On the second round, he rolls a 5. Because this is not lower than his previous roll, his Berserk is not yet active. On the third round, he rolls a 1. Because this roll is lower than his previous roll, his Berserk is now active.

Master Parry

If the Hero has any weapon in his hand (including an improvised one), he can cancel four successes in any roll to hit made against him.

Two-Weapons

Your Hero has gained enough skill with a weapon that he may employ one in each hand. This grants him two Advantage Dice in combat.

Slash

You may make two attacks in a row.

GOD OF CRAFT: AELON VALERON

"He has only one arm, but he has no need for two."

Aelon is often called "the Wounded God" for he is missing his right arm. He gave it up to forge an anvil, Urdrazen. His blood and flesh cooled the hot metal from the center of the world, his divine essence blessing the hardened iron. Now, anything made from the anvil is stronger than any material found in the world. Blood iron weapons made upon it are the desire of every warrior in the world – as is any item Aelon Valeron creates.

But Aelon is more than just a blacksmith; he is a God of many means. As God of Craft, he is skilled in nearly every endeavor. He is a master sailor, a cooper, a tailor, and a brewer without peer. Creation is his trade, and any who seek to better their skills need seek no further than the temples of Aelon Valeron.

ALLIES & RIVALS

Valeron is often depicted disagreeing with his headstrong, bloodthirsty brother. Of the two, Valeron is obviously the more "cerebral." While the two don't quite get along, they are brothers.

It is also said Aelon has a particular fondness for the Goddess of Love. Some claim the two were lovers, although the affair ended poorly. Followers of Valeron say she still pines for the Blacksmith, although the followers of the Goddess of Love know a different ending of the story.

RELICS (AELON'S BLESSINGS)

Valeron does not act much in the world; heroes go to seek him out. He believes in self-reliance, in making one's own way in the world. It is said that when a follower of the Wounded God dies, Valeron's angels, the *valere*, come to bring the hero to him. There,

the hero must prove his worth to join the warriors who drink at his table. If he does not, he is cast out into the world as restless dead, forever lamenting he was not cunning enough to sit at Valeron's table.

But Valeron does not leave his followers helpless; he assists them in subtle ways. He gives them insight into their own abilities, shows them their own strengths and helps them overcome their own weaknesses. His *valere* also appear from time to time, carrying weapons made from Aelon's mighty anvil.

Relics are Blessings bestowed by the God of Craft. He does not grant the usual Blessings, but items of great power to aid those who revere him. Whether it is Excalibur, the Aegis Shield, Stormbringer, or the Ancestral Sword of the Crane Clan, as far as game mechanics go, a Relic is a pool of Advantage Dice linked to thematic advantages and weaknesses.

Giving a Relic to a Hero costs the God of Craft 5 Divinity per Advantage. For every 5 Divinity spent on the Relic, it must also have a drawback.

The most typical drawback for an Item is "Can Be Taken Away" or "Can Be Broken," but there are more creative drawbacks to give Relics. Michael Moorcock's Elric has the world's most wicked Relic: the willful runeblade Stormbringer. That thing is chock full of drawbacks – the fact that the blade likes killing Elric's closest friends and loved ones is just a start.

So, if Aelon give a Hero an Relic or weapon that gives him +3 Advantage dice, it costs 15 Divinity. Whether that Relic is a Sword of Elder Fire or a Shadow Kiss Medallion or a Dead Man's Eye is irrelevant. All we're looking for is how many Advantage Dice it gives the Hero.

There are many ways to interpret "Advantage" and "Drawback." We

encourage players to be creative with the kinds of powers an item can have, as seen from the examples below.

The Sword of Elder Fire

An enchanted blade that burns when drawn, the Sword of Elder Fire provides three Advantages:

When in the dark, the Sword lights the Hero's way.

It can also set anything flammable on fire.

When striking, the heat and flickering flames are distracting and can burn an opponent. (1 Advantage Die in combat.)

These three advantages are set-off by the sword's three drawbacks:

If the sword is wet with water, it will not burn.

The sword can be broken.

The sword can be taken away.



The Shadow Kiss Medallion

This Relic – said to have been made for the high priestess of the Goddess of Love – allows the one who wears it to move between shadows without being seen. (+2 to all Stealth rolls.)

Unfortunately, the item also has two drawbacks:

Once someone has seen the medallion's magic, they are never affected by it again, and

The Relic's power will not work in brightly lit areas.

The Dead Man's Eye

This item, a golden eye set with sapphires and rubies, is one of the Blacksmith's finest creations. The one who uses it must close his eyes to do so. When he does, he can see if a man or woman is in league with the Fell Gods. He may also see any invisible creatures (or people) within his area of vision. (Two Advantages.)

Unfortunately, the Eye has two drawbacks:

The eye is very fragile and easily broken.

The wielder must shut his eyes to use it and completely concentrate, taking no other action.

GOD OF FORTUNE: ASHALIM AVENDI

"Thank Avendi for small favors, for his wrath is never so small."

Ashalim Avendi typically appears as an old, blind man, although he has many forms. A story tells of a rich man who was accosted by a poor, blind churl sitting on the side of the road. The rich man shook his purse of coins at the poor man, mocking his poverty and ill fortune. The beggar smiled and said, "What you give is what you get." As it turned out, the beggar was none other than the God of Fortune, and the story ends with

the rich man on the side of the road, blind and penniless, holding out a cup, pleading for coins from his own servants who no longer recognized him.

The followers of the God of Fortune remind the world that the Avendi is a fickle god whose favors can turn on the toss of a coin.

ALLIES & RIVALS

No God would openly call wrath on Avendi; his followers would face an endless river of bad fortune. On the other hand, no God openly adores Avendi, for they are very aware Avendi is easily offended and his wrath is ten times worse than his blessing.

BLESSINGS

Avendi's miracles appear as wild luck. A good hand of cards, the flip of a coin, a chance encounter with an unclaimed bag of gold, a cart of hay that happens to pass by when a Hero jumps from a tall window: these are all miracles attributed to Ashalim Avendi. Avendi provides for his followers, but such miracles are not without a price. Avendi only blesses those who realize their fortunes are easily lost and those who assist others who have lost their own good luck. A toss of a coin to a beggar, assisting a helpless lady in distress, or even helping an old woman across the road are small prices to pay for Avendi's blessings.

The Cloak Deceivous

The Hero may disguise himself in a general way: a soldier, guard, innkeeper, etc. The blessing requires a cloak. The blessing causes any to look upon the blessed as if he naturally belonged. That is, if he is disguised as a guard in a castle, the other guards would look at him as if he was supposed to be where he was, doing what he was doing.

The Cloak Deceivous only lasts until the disguised Hero takes off the cloak or tells a lie. Once he tells a lie, the disguise is over.

Glamour's Veil

The Hero can make himself or an item appear differently than they normally appear. He cannot change the nature of the item, only alter its appearance. Thus, a copper coin could appear to be a gold coin, a rusted knife could appear to be a silver knife, or a beggar could appear to be a king. The glamour remains until midnight.

Lucky Coin

The Hero finds a coin in his pocket worth one night's stay in a good inn. The coin can be used to purchase other things as well, the night's stay is just a relative value.

At midnight, the coin disappears. This Blessing may be used once per day (rather than the standard once per game session).

Lucky Shot

When invoked, this Blessing gives your Hero 3 automatic successes on any roll.

"Trust Me"

The Hero says one sentence, beginning or ending with the phrase "Trust me." When he invokes this Blessing, anyone listening to the sentence will believe it to be sincere. Please note the difference between "sincere" and "true." This Blessing cannot be used to convince someone the sky is orange, but it can be used to convince someone of the Hero's integrity.

This Blessing also cannot be used to convince someone out of something they know to be true. For example, if a guard

sees the Hero picking a pocket, the Hero cannot convince the guard he did not see what he thought he saw, but he can convince the guard that the other fellow is a "rotten, scabby, foul thief who deserved it."

GODDESS OF THE HEARTH: MANNA RENAY

"All the world is her child."

Appearing as a round, happy, middle-aged woman, Manna Renay is commonly known as the Goddess of Hearth and Home. A shrine to her sits in a prominent place in every household. While some may dismiss her as "the cooking goddess," she is, in fact, the goddess of Motherhood, Childbirth, Medicine, and Safety. She is often pictured with a cat and dog at her feet or under her hands as she was the one who taught men to domesticate these little guardians.

She is also the protector of children and it is known that she whispers the secret language of her protectors (cats and dogs) in an infant's ear when it is still in its mother's womb. Those who revere Manna Renay remember this language; those who do not, forget it.



ALLIES & RIVALS

Manna Renay's chief rival is the Goddess of Love whom she sees as a harlot invader who has swooned the hearts of men and women

away from her worship. Meanwhile, she maintains a healthy relationship with the God of Craft.

BLESSINGS

Manna Renay's miracles are subtle and powerful. Her priestesses teach the delicate arts of mothering. Those who revere her find allies among the guardian animals and may speak their secret language. Children are most often witness to her divine interventions as she looks out for them – especially orphans.

Beast's Tongue

When invoking this Blessing, the Hero may hold one conversation with any animal. The conversation cannot be longer than five minutes. Once hearing Manna Renay's name, the animal will also perform a single task for the Hero. If the task is life-threatening, the animal may refuse, depending on the situation and the conversational skills of the Hero.

Circle of Protection

The Hero must draw a circle on the ground to invoke this Blessing. Drawing a circle takes one round. The circle must be drawn on a solid surface. It cannot be drawn on gravel. If it loses its integrity, the magic of the circle is broken. Drawing the circle on sand, for example, is dangerous. The Hero must also know the True Name of the person inside the circle. Once the circle is drawn, nothing may enter it. *Nothing*. No arrows, no fire, no swords, nothing. Nothing may damage the circle but the person inside and the Hero who drew it. The circle lasts until dawn the next day.

Hearthbread Cookies

A Blessing originally given to Renay's most famous high priestess, a single Hearthbread cookie heals all Wounds when eaten. The cookie also feeds a person for a day.

A Hearthbread cookie may be split in two to share with one other person. It may not be split further.

Hearthward

When the Goddesses' name is written on the door of a house, no one may secretly enter. As soon as any stranger of the house (someone who is not within the house when the ward is written) enters, the priestess knows someone has violated the home and knows the intruder's True Name. Once the ward is broken, it must be re-cast.

Outpost

When her name is written on an object and left behind, the object will warn the Hero whenever anyone passes it by. If the Hero who inscribed the outpost is asleep, he will waken. The Outpost can only send one warning, then it's magic is gone.

GOD OF JUSTICE: JONAN DRAX

"There is only One Law, and it is His Law."

The god who is closest to the people is Jonan Drax, sometimes called "the compassionate," sometimes called "the lawmaker." It was Drax who handed down the first formal Code of Laws people lived by. This 7-article code outlined a basic system of law and justice. It was because Drax so loved the world he gave it law and the realization that with introspection, compassion and understanding, men could become better than what they were.

Those who follow Jonan Drax are called "paladins." These warrior-monks wear the Code of Law on their bodies: the very words tattooed to their flesh. The ritual – which takes several days and is painful beyond description – empowers the paladin with blessings. It is said those who wear the code need not eat, sleep, or drink. They cannot be infected by disease or suffer the effects of

poison. They are also completely bound by Drax's laws, and even a slight slip jeopardizes the blessings bestowed by their god.

A paladin of Jonan Drax seldom – if ever – uses weapons. His body is a weapon – infused with the power of his god. Draxian paladins are often called upon by judges of the Empire for their ability to sense truth and dispatch villainy. And while they do not stand above the legal system (their god was the one who enacted it), they sometimes operate outside of it, to make sure justice prevails even when law might fail.

ALLIES & RIVALS

No God calls Drax an enemy. His Paladins fight for justice regardless of the cost. Only a fool would openly call the God of Justice an enemy. Openly.

BLESSINGS

The Paladins of Jonan Drax do not rely on their God for miracles, but rely on His Word to give them strength. The Laws tattooed to their bodies give them tremendous power over evil, protecting them from evil magics that influence the mind and body. Each Law is also a Vow: an oath the paladin makes to uphold the laws of Jonan Drax.

Unlike other Blessings, the Vows are not "invoked." The Words of Jonan Drax are burned onto the paladin's body, scaring him and changing him forever. Once he's taken a

Vow, only his own actions can break it. Vows last until they are broken. At this point, the tattoo fades.

Vow of Compassion

It is said that a noble heart recognizes the pain in others and cannot turn from it. The Vow of Compassion makes it impossible for a paladin to turn from those in need. Whenever he is asked for help, a paladin must give whatever assistance he can. As long as he maintains this Vow, he may –

once per game – demand the assistance of another. This person *must* do everything in their power to meet the paladin's request for aid.

Vow of Fidelity

When a paladin takes a Vow of Fidelity, he vows to "stay true" to one person, protecting that person from all harm. The person in question is usually an honorable soul, although not always. As long as the paladin maintains his Vow – always protecting the subject of his Vow – he gains 4 Advantage Dice on any action that directly protects that person.

Vow of Truth

Like the other Vows, the Vow of Truth is tattooed to the paladin's body: this one to his chest. He swears to uphold the virtue of truth over lies, willing his heart to never suffer falsehood. Once the Hero makes this Vow, he may never again tell a lie or the Vow is broken. Also, as long as he never breaks the Vow, he can always tell when someone is telling him a lie.



Vow of Valor

The paladin makes a promise to never turn from meting out Jonan Drax's justice. As long as he never turns from a battle against evil, he can never be the target of emotion-based magic.

The Final Vow

This Vow may only be given if the paladin has been branded with all of Jonan Drax's other Vows. The paladin makes a personal Vow, "I shall do ____." Once this Vow is made, it *will* come to pass, although the paladin will die accomplishing it.

The Vow cannot be used to violate physical laws or to create unrealistic or absurd situations. Rather, it is meant to allow a paladin to set right a great wrong; his ultimate sacrifice is what gives the Vow its power.

GODDESS OF LOVE: TALIA

"She is the Muse of All Muses, the Inspiration for All Beauty."

Talia's temples are exotic and foreign. Her priestesses (she accepts no priests) are beautiful, witty, and well versed in the arts. All the arts.

A common misconception of Talia's followers is that belong to a sex cult. This is incorrect. Talia's priestesses are skilled lovers, but they are also painters, poets, sculptors, and musicians (as well as composers). All artists revere Talia, seeing her as the archetypal muse of all muses. Talia's priestesses know the proper methods of preparing and eating elegant meals, the techniques of banter and debate, as well as the high holy art of love.

In return for their devotion, the followers of Talia learn secret arts no other school or academy in the entire world knows. In addition, she bestows blessings and magic

that are secret... and seldom seen. The use of magic for any mundane purpose is taboo. Even if only to save her own life, Talia's priestesses are reticent to their secret magics outside the confines of Talia's Domain.

ALLIES & RIVALS

It is said her chief enemy is the Goddess of the Home who views Talia as an usurper; a foreign Jenny-Come-Lately who seeks to steal away the faithful followers of the All-Mother. Meanwhile, Talia has been romantically linked to nearly every other God in the Pantheon. Allegedly, her favorite lover is the God of Craft, while her recent dalliance with the God of War has created a bit of tension between the two.

BLESSINGS

Talia almost never uses miracles, finding them vulgar. Instead, she prefers the rigorous use of rituals and ordeals to make her followers stronger. While she will dip her hand occasionally to protect a particularly devoted follower, she generally lets them fight (and win) their own battles with cunning, skill, and charm. And kisses.

Priestesses are taught the Seven Secret Kisses; powerful magics that have been known to enslave kings. While they are called kisses, the powers are actually invoked by any particular kind of contact. Each kiss requires only a moment of contact and another vital element: the target's trust. Contact between the priestess and the target cannot be initiated by her; the target himself must touch the priestess. The priestess may extend her hand, but the target must put his own hand in hers. Without this, she cannot invoke any of her powers.

If the target touches the priestess, she may then activate any of the effects at any time. It could be immediately or the following week or later that night, just as she invokes the power of the kiss within the current

month. If the moon has passed through her phases and the priestess has not invoked the power of a kiss, she must re-invoke it with another touch.

Befuddling Kiss

When activated, this Blessing causes the subject to become confused and bewildered with an overwhelming tide of emotions. The subject loses a number of dice from each action equal to half the priestess's Love Devotion. The effects last until the next sunrise.

The Black Kiss

Talia first gave her priestesses the Black Kiss in response to violence against them in her temples. The Black Kiss may only be given under specific circumstances; it is the exception to the aforementioned rules. The priestess' lips must be blooded (either by her own blood or another's) and she must know the true name of the target. If she gives the Kiss with blood on her lips, whispering the target's name, he receives a Wound. The Kiss may be maintained with the target gaining an additional Wound every round.

The Enchanting Kiss

When activated, the priestess can make the target feel the pangs of any emotion she deems fit – except love. It can be anger, jealousy, nervousness, or even heart-break, but none can cause a heart to feel untrue love... not even the Goddess herself. The effects of this kiss last until the next sunrise.

Goodnight Kiss

When activated, the Kiss sets the target to sleep until the next dawn. Nothing will wake him except a touch from the priestess who originally kissed him.

The Muse's Kiss

When invoked, the target feels the pure inspirational power of the Goddess of Love fill his heart. He gains four Advantage Dice on his very next action. The effects of the kiss fade thereafter.

GOD OF WISDOM: TYANE BRAN

"The world is an imperfect place... only reason is pure."

His followers call him "the Patient One," or "Tyane Bran, the Indefatigable." He is always portrayed as a small man with long, well kept hair and diligent eyes, standing to the side of an event, watching from a distance. He is always watching, never acting. In the tales of the Patient One, even the smallest actions are viewed as monumental and full of meaning. He only chooses to act when it is most appropriate, when it is most necessary, when it is most effective.

His devoted follow his example, watching and listening, providing their knowledge when it is needed, acting only when it is most necessary. They distain what they view as "the corrupt world of temptation" preferring the world of thought and reason, the world of spontaneous and immediate action.

ALLIES & RIVALS

Tyane Bran and his followers are too isolated to have enemies or allies, although the Fell Gods despise him more than any other diety – more than they do Jonan Drax.

BLESSINGS

Tyane Bran's miracles take the form of bursts of enlightenment and insight in those who revere him. They see connections between disparate facts, spot tiny details most miss and gain an awareness around them unparalleled by any other.

A Moment of Insight

The monk suffers a moment of pure insight, a moment both painful and powerful. He is immobilized by the moment, in touch with the mind of Tyane Bran. Once he recovers – with a few moments – he awakens with a new perspective.

When invoked, this power allows the player of the monk to ask the GM or God of Wisdom one question which must be answered truthfully.

Wisdom's Clarity

When invoked, this power allows the monk to sense falsehood. He may not see through illusions and the like, but he knows when things are not true. If he sees one of Ashalim Avendi's glimmers, he knows something is wrong with the item; that it is not what it appears to be. Likewise, if a person is cloaked with Ikhalu's shadow magic, the monk can sense that something is in the room that cannot be perceived.

The Softest Spot

This Blessing requires one full action to invoke as the monk observes his target. On his next action, the monk knows exactly where the weakness of an object or person lies. Even the weakness of an argument. Using this knowledge, he gains a number of Advantage Dice equal to his Wisdom Devotion. He can also reveal this weakness to another (watching a fight and shouting out the weakness to one opponent, for example), but the person he is communicating to does not have his complete understanding. Another can only gain half his Wisdom Devotion if the monk reveals the weakness to him.

The Heart's Riddle Revealed

By spending an action, the monk can contemplate upon a person he knows or has knowledge of (the target cannot be a

complete stranger). When the moment is over, the monk knows that person's motives exactly and what he plans on doing next. The person may be in another town; distance is not an issue. Because the monk knows the target, he can deduce from his knowledge of that person what his plans may be.

The Most Evident Truth

A monk must have at least three other Blessings before he receives this one.

When invoked, the monk declares one fact to be true... and he is right. Whether that truth is that ogres cannot walk in sunlight without turning to stone or that the Duke of Belshavay is really a sorcerer, the monk reveals this truth and it is fact.

The truth revealed may only be *one truth*. It cannot be a number of truths linked by a theme. For example, the monk could declare that the Duke is indeed a sorcerer, but he cannot declare that the Duke is a sorcerer plotting to overthrow the Temple of Dyr. One truth. That's all you get.

The monk's truth may be disputed by the Gods, but it requires three Divinity to do so. The God of Wisdom can spend one Divinity to cancel the truth, or he can spend one Divinity to cancel out any other God's dismissal of that truth.

LORD OF DEATH: UHMUME

"Uhmume comes when his duty calls. No sooner, no later."

Uhmume is not a God; he is something else entirely. There are legends of the entities known as "Lords and Ladies" that pre-date the Gods, but no historian has ever found any other Lord than Uhmume.

Stories involving the Lord of Death are many and varied. It is said no man may look upon Uhmume (*uh-moom* or *uh-moom-ay*; depending on dialect) and live. Others say any living man who sees is struck blind, his

hair turns white and his skin turns ashen. While there are many stories of men who have seen Uhmume and lived to tell the tale, no one has ever actually met one. Perhaps that is the most telling thing about these tales.

There are many tales of Uhmume's appearance. Some say he is a tall figure with a skull for a face, standing in black robes that billow like smoke. Others say he is a beautiful boy who kisses those doomed for death. Others suggest Uhmume can appear as any form he likes. Whatever he may appear to be, Uhmume is the Lord of Death, the inevitable end for all creatures. The world is full of ghosts who still cling to the living lands; the priests of Uhmume assist those ghosts, completing business the ghost feels needs to be resolved before it can move on.

Blessings

Uhmume does not give out miracles to his followers. In fact, the Lord of Death doesn't have "followers" as he has priests who serve the needs of the bereaved. Uhmume's followers assist those who are haunted by departed souls unwilling to move on to their rightful resting place (or unresting place, as it may be). It is also said he sometimes visits omens on those who have been targeted by his evil brother, Ikhalu, the Lord of Murder (see *The Fell Gods*, below).

Allies & Rivals

The priests of Uhmume tend are devoted solely to the service of the Lord of Death. This devotion earns them no favors from the Gods, although followers of Uhmume care little for what Gods think or do. "Uhmume comes to all," is the typical answer for those challenging an Uhmume priest for his fanatical devotion to a single God. This does not mean followers of Uhmume never pay

reverence to other Gods; they just make no secret of the fact that their true devotion lies with the Lord of Death.

THE FELL GODS

The Fell Gods are dark entities who were defeated and driven from the world into the Land of Shadows. Worship of the Fell Gods is forbidden but that doesn't give the desperate pause. Those who want the kind of power the Fell Gods offer will always find a way to contact their evil devoted.

While the names of the Fell Gods are never uttered, their names are well known. They are Ikhalu, the Lord of Murder; Mahl, the Bloody-Tearful Widow; the Grinning God... These dark, foul entities are listed in Appendix 3, far away from curious players' eyes.

Appendix 2: The Shanri Primer

This is just a brief overview of the world of Shanri: the default setting for Enemy Gods. More in-depth articles can be found at our website, free for download. As time passes, we'll be adding more articles to the Encyclopedia Shanri (until we've got a book big enough to market on its own).

The world of the ven is called "Shanri," which literally means "little lands." It is a circular chain of islands surrounded by a vast and dangerous ocean, filled with dragons and other foul beasts. Only the sea between the island is safe for sailors; the reefs are too shallow for the foul beasts to enter.

The chain consists of seven major islands and several dozen minor ones. Dominant families rule over the major islands, snatching up territory whenever possible.

The islands are volcanic in nature; each island made up of at least one primary volcano, although many islands are composites of more than one. Just to the west of a larger chain of islands, largely uninhabited... by humans, that is. These larger islands have small outposts, but the creatures living there don't make exploration easy. Expeditions have brought back reports of gold, silver, copper and ancient ruins.

The ruins appear to be from a civilization long gone, but the treasures uncovered have proven to be beyond imagination. It is said an entire city of gold rests somewhere in that jungle... if only someone had the courage to find it.

More important than gold, however, are the iron ore deposits found on the larger islands. These have proven to be invaluable to the noble class who are the only ones on the island with iron weapons. All other weapons are forged from bronze. Iron weapons have been a part of Ven culture for almost a century, but the noble class has kept the material (mostly) to themselves for that time. Laws forbid common citizens to touch, let alone own, iron weapons; a crime punishable by dismemberment (removing the offending hand).

Sailing ships move from island to island, carrying supplies for trade. Risking the dangerous creatures that skim the waters, sailors are regarded as some of the bravest men in the world.

Shanri's temperatures range from highs in the '80's to lows in the '50's. Rain falls mostly in the winter months, an average of 10.5 inches a year.

Although most of the wildlife on the small islands has been hunted to near extinction, the islands' native life includes boar, monkeys, deer, bison, goats, lynx, cats, dogs, lions, leopards, wolves, bears, snakes, lizards, and a horde of different kinds of insects. Birds are also abundant and regarded as holy animals to the native peoples. Hawks, falcons, owls, raptors, and other creatures fill the skies over the islands.

In the sea, whales and dolphins are abundant, as are crabs, lobsters and other crustaceans. Accompanying them are the many Leviathans: great beasts that prowl the sea, looking for ships to devour.

THE VEN

The average adult male ven stands about six feet tall with olive skin, dark eyes and black, curly hair. The female stands a little smaller at around five foot ten inches. They are a slender people, spending most of their time in the sun and shallow waters surrounding the islands.

HISTORY

Long ago, the ven worshipped the elements: the sun, the moon, the sky, the earth. They communed with these elemental forces, appealing to their power. This was the birth of the sorcerer-kings, men of great power and wisdom. The word the ven used to describe the elements best translates as "dragon." It was believed (and still believed by some) that dragons manifest when critical moments occur: when a battle between brothers is about to begin, when new knowledge is discovered, and when true lovers kiss for the first time. Because the elements can only speak in a symbolic language, the only way to communicate with them was through dreams, omens and deep semi-lucid trances.

Occasionally, the elements would enter a body and communicate directly to the ven. So was the way of the world for thousands of years.

But then, the priests came, bringing named Gods the people could look upon and understand. Religion was no longer a mystery, and worship of the elements fell aside to worship of the new Gods. The sorcerer-kings were discarded as well, bringing in the new aristocracy who carried the banners of the divine into battle. And now, there is no high king, but a government of nobles guiding the fate of the ven.

GOVERNMENT

While the modern ven government is a confederacy of city-states, it wasn't always so. Long ago, ten thousand years or more, sorcerer-kings ruled the known world. But a few brave nobles were able to overthrow the sorcerer-kings and establish a new regime. Now, a independent states govern the people of the known world. There are no more kings: only dukes and barons who meet once a year to vote on matters of state between their lands.

The dynastic power of the royalty is still recognized by the people, but the voice of the populous must be represented in government as well. Thus, the ruling noble makes regular visits to the elected Senate, discusses his plans, and the Senate votes on which course of action to take, as prescribed by the noble. The noble is forbidden from taking any action not approved by the Senate, but is given leeway in executing their recommendations.

CASTES

There are three distinct castes in ven society: the priest caste, the warrior caste, and the peasant caste.

The warrior caste is made up of the warlords who overthrew the sorcerer-kings thousands of years ago. They are the land-owners of ven society and hold the most authority. They make laws, collect taxes and protect the peasants from dangers both seen and unseen.

The peasant caste is the workers; mining iron, tilling farms, building roads, etc. The only way a peasant can win his way out of his life is by fighting for his noble lord. Serving ten years in the local army makes a peasant a free man, no longer bound to the land he works on. If he performs well enough, he may even gain noble title and land.

Finally, the priests are those who commune with the Gods. There are many churches in ven culture (to house the many gods), but the church is forbidden from owning land. Nonetheless, the church holds powerful sway in noble courts; they are the direct line to the ever-present deities who look over mortal society. A single harsh look could bring a mountain of curses on a noble's head, so the nobles do all they can to keep the priest caste happy. Peasants may join the priest caste, although only those who show the most promise. Just as families buy their way into the military with commissions, they also buy their way into seminaries to better their lots in life. This makes the church a powerful (and profitable) force in ven society.

TECHNOLOGY

Ven cities have plumbing providing hot and cold running water, advanced blacksmithing, medicine, surgery and beautiful architecture.

Most weapons are made of bronze; it is forbidden from any non-noble to handle weapons made from iron.

With high roads, the nobles travel by chariot from city to city while the peasant class moves on foot.

Ven medicine relies on herbal lore and blessings from the Goddess of Hearth and Home, so not much progress has been made there. (Who needs penicillin when a Goddess is willing to do it without needles?)

COMMERCE

The ven use coins, credit notes and good old fashioned bartering to maintain their economy.

The coins they use are very small (about the size of a dime).

MODERATION

The ven believe in balance and moderation; excess of anything leads to ruin. If a man is excessive with his drinking, he runs the risk of destroying his life. Excess of food also has obvious consequences, as does excess of sex, excess of reading and excess of business. Notice the word is “excess,” not “enjoyment.” The ven love pleasure, and that is why they try to avoid overdoing it. Enjoying good food and drink is pleasurable, but eating and drinking for hours on end, until your stomach aches and your head hurts isn’t eating for pleasure. Likewise, ven believe sex is something to be enjoyed, not a sinful act to be kept in the dark. On the other hand, if one is reckless with his sexual partners, unthinking of the consequences, the conclusions bring pain and sorrow to all.

You could say the ven are cautious, but that’s simplifying the matter. They believe in temperance and restraint in their pleasures because they *enjoy* them. Indulging too much in eat and drink on Monday means you cannot enjoy again on Tuesday, and that’s something the ven *don’t* believe in.

CITIZENSHIP

The ven are also great proponents of citizenship and pride. Although they are almost isolated in their city-states, they do recognize themselves as one people, united

by common convictions and beliefs. A ven will go a long way to help another ven because they are one people. However, there is a kind of “friendly rivalry” between the city-states, as each tries to prove its citizens are the strongest, fastest and most capable ven in the world.

MAGES AND SORCERERS

Sorcery is a forbidden art, taught by the Fell Gods (see below). Sorcerers summon demons, bind them with secret magics, and use the power they gain to further the goals of their dark masters.

A sorcerer must keep his true nature secret from the rest of the world or he will be hunted down and killed by the Heroes of the land.

BALIVEN: THE MOUNTAINMEN

Not all ven appreciate civilization, and a few who have chafed against it have found solace in solitude. Living alone in the mountains are the bal’luri, men who have abandoned ven culture to live free and alone.

It all began with a book written by Sansh Truday, a mountaineer who was injured in a climb through the Ballur mountains. He was saved by what he first thought was an ork, but he quickly discovered his savior to be a fellow ven. He learned the man’s name was Agruth Brenchur, and he came to the mountains, in his own words, “to get away from ven like you.”

Truday’s leg was broken, and he could not get back to civilization. Brenchur cared for him, nursing him back to health, all the while, Truday asking questions. He learned the man was not alone in the wilderness, but one of many men who heard the call of a mountain god they called Balladur (“King of the Mountain”). He called his newfound friend a “mountainman” and after many adventures with Brenchur, he returned, wrote his book and made his reclusive friend a

celebrity. Suddenly, becoming a mountainman was the “in-thing” for young nobles who also found their souls being called by the King of the Mountain.

It was estimated there were as many as fifty baliven living outside the reach of civilization before the Cataclysm. They left seeking peace, but what they found was hardship. Many found the other baliven wouldn’t help them, even refusing to speak to them, let alone give them advice on living off the land. Some baliven took in the naïve youngsters, teaching them what they’d need to know to survive, but most returned when the first months of winter hit the mountainside or died trying to survive.

What they learned was a simple philosophy: a man has to stand on his own. The King of the Mountain respects men who can take care of themselves, wandering the mountainside, testing his followers. When they’re ready, he takes them back to his hall, where they eat food and drink wine that lets them live forever.

This belief in the King of the Mountain flies in the face of another fundamental element in baliven philosophy: don’t believe in anything you can’t see. The baliven don’t believe in the Pantheon of Gods, nor the “philosophy” wise men teach youngsters in the cities. They don’t believe in a “soul” or a “spirit” or anything so ridiculous as that. “I know ven who have seen the King of the Mountain,” a baliven may say. “But I haven’t seen him myself. So I don’t believe in him. Yet.”

Mountainmen know blacksmithing, but detest any skills that work with precious metals. “A smith makes tools,” Brenchur told Truday. “Not baubles.” They capture and make skins from mountain and subterranean creatures and occasionally traded skins and organs to wizards looking for dangerous magical components for tools and supplies they could not make themselves

in the mountains, such as medicine, books... and wives. Most women sign up for the trade in exchange for a life of freedom, far away from the evils of the city. Although, the lure of going with your mountainman husband into the immortal halls of Bal’lur to drink his wine and eat his meat is certainly a lure in itself.

Appendix 3: The Fell Gods

I told you they were back here.

The Fell Gods can be used with just about any standard fantasy pantheon. They’re nasty, wicked, evil, dirty, cunning, and all together *eeeeeviiiiiii*. Use them at your own risk.

Note that the Fell Gods are *not* openly worshiped and most cities consider revering these Gods a crime punishable by death. Therefore, their temples are hidden away, their cults remain secret, and a Hero who reveres a Fell God takes his own life in his hands.

PLAYERS BEWARE!!!

The information that follows is for the Game Master alone! Taking a peek at the Fell Gods will not only ruin the surprise, but will also make them a lot less scary. The less you know about the Fell Gods, the more...

Oh, what am I doing? You know this routine by now.

Don’t be a wanker. Stop reading unless you’re the GM. You’ve been warned.

THE GOD OF MURDER: IKHALU

At the beginning of time, two Gods petitioned Men for the right to be the God of Death. Uhmume created a vast palace open to any and all while Ikhalu created a fortress so terrifying only the most courageous could climb its walls. Men chose Uhmume's luxurious palace and Ikhalu has been making Mankind pay for it ever since.

The assassin-priests of Ikhalu steal the souls of the living, sending them to their dark lord. Priests of Ikhalu are promised that when they die, they will go to their master's dark fortress where every soul they murdered serves them until the end of time. This promise keeps the assassin-priests very busy. They are masters of disguise and strange shadow-powers their dark lord bestows upon them. He also learns a martial art specifically designed to immobilize targets, the fundamentals of disguise, stealth and infiltration. Also, every Ikhalu priest carries a magical dagger; any person killed by this dagger has their soul sent to Ikhalu's fortress where they serve those who are faithful to the God of Murder.

BLESSINGS

Ikhalu assists his followers with powers devious and diabolical. Every assassin-priest is given an unholy dagger that steals souls and sends them to Ikhalu. His shadow-magic helps hide his assassin-priests, giving them the ability to hide in plain sight and disappear into shadows. Ikhalu also

intervenes directly on his follower's behalf, knowing he must protect what little Devotion he has. This makes him one of the most active Gods, but it also means his Devotion is always low. He protects those he can... but more often than not, he doesn't have enough Devotion to go around.

The Ikhalu Knife

An Ikhalu knife is a sacred item given to the most trusted assassin-priests. All of Ikhalu's Blessings are bestowed through the knife.

The Hidden Blade

All Ikhalu knives are bestowed with one Blessing: if the priest hides it on his person, it cannot be found. No man, woman, or child can find the knife if the priest hides it.

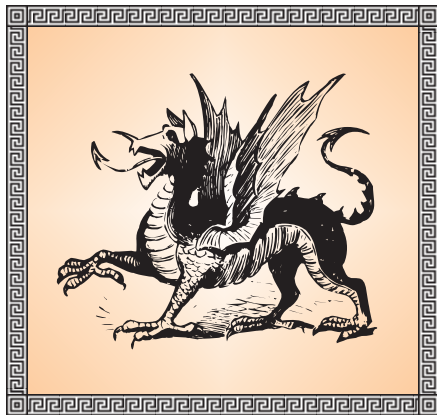
The Deepest Cut

By invoking this Blessing, the priest gives his opponent a permanent Wound. This Wound cannot be healed by normal means.

False Death

One of the greatest secrets of the Ikhalu assassin-priests is their ability to feign death. By invoking this Blessing, the

priest tells Ikhalu "I am not yet ready, Lord," and appears by all accounts to be dead. His wounds appear fatal to any onlookers. Only if his heart is removed from his body is the priest actually killed. He remains in this false death until midnight. Then, under the moon, he rises again.



The Stolen Mask

By invoking this Blessing upon a body he's murdered, the priest may steal the face of his victim. By stealing the face, he steals the demeanor of the victim as well. The priests' clothes appear to be his victim's clothes, his voice sounds the same, even his possessions are identical. The deception is true until the mask is removed; the face then shrivels and cannot be used again.

Avali: Holy (or Sacred) Murder

Whenever an Ikhalu priest commits "holy murder" with his knife, he sends the soul to Ikhalu's palace rather than the God of Death. The knife immediately gains an Advantage Die. The knife may have a number of Advantage Dice equal to the Devotion of the assassin-priest.

To commit *avali*, the assassin-priest must strike his enemy without the enemy knowing he's present. The priest slices the throat of the victim or pierces his heart. Then, the priest utters a small prayer to Ikhalu, telling his dark Lord that a soul is on its way.

Again: the *avali* ritual may only be committed if the target has no clue the priest has intention to kill the target. The priest could be in disguise or hidden. Then, once the priest is in place, he rolls his Devotion to the God of Murder. If he gains a number of successes equal to or greater than the target's Hubris, the attack is successful; the target is doomed to die in three rounds.

ALLIES & RIVALS

All Gods of the Pantheon are enemies of Ikhalu and would see him murdered with one of his own daggers.

THE BLOODY-EYED WIDOW: MAHL

She walks the streets when there is no moon, snatching up children who have no home, drinking their blood, holding them close to

her bosom as she looks for more. Blood bleeds from her eyes as she weeps and those who hear her wails are doomed to know her deadly kiss.

Children who fall under her care are transformed into awful beasts. Mahl's Children are the monsters of the world: vampires, specters, ghouls and the rest. She is the Mother of All Monsters, claiming those society casts away as her own.

Allies & Rivals

While all the Gods view Mahl as abhorrent, the Goddess of Hearth and Home is (obvious) a particular enemy. She despises Mahl and her children and encourages her followers to destroy them wherever they can be found.

BLESSINGS: MONSTERS

Mahl's worshipers revere their dark mother at hidden altars, capturing wayward children to drink "mother's milk." A priestess is chosen, and after an exhausting ritual (involving painful ordeals), Mahl possesses the priestess. She then bestows her milk on the children (a combination of blood and breast milk). Slowly, the children are transformed into the horrors associated with Mahl.

The followers of Mahl don't have Blessings: they have Monsters. Mahl sends creatures to her devoted; horrible creatures from the worst part of the Nightmare Realm. As a GM, you'll need to build Monsters for your Heroes to fight. Monsters are made up of their Parts. For example, some Monsters have one hundred eyes, claws, a tail, and venomous teeth. Other Monsters have wings, scales, and hypnotizing eyes. Each of these descriptors is a different ability the Monster can use against Heroes.

Making Monsters

A Monster can have any number of Parts, but Mahl typically rewards her followers based on their Devotion. A follower of Mahl may have a number of Monsters equal to her Devotion to Mahl. Each Monster cannot have more Parts than double their master (or mistress') Devotion. For example, the Witch-Queen of Falvthrough has a 4 Mahl Devotion. She may have up to 4 Monsters and those Monsters may not have more than 8 Parts.

All Monsters only have Devotion for Mahl equal to the number of Parts they have. For example, if a Monster has 4 Parts, it has a 4 Devotion to Mahl.

Parts

A Monster's Parts each have a special ability – like a Blessing. A Monster may only use each Part once per game. Some Monsters may have a Part more than once, which means they can use each one once. For example, if a Monster has two Claws, it may use each Claw once per game session.

If Heroes want to damage specific Monster Parts, they may try to do so as a Contested Action. If the Hero gains a Complete Success, the Part is damaged and the Monster may not use its advantages. If the Hero gains a Moderate Success, the part may not be used for two rounds (including the current round).

Camouflage

This Monster gains 3 Advantage Dice when trying to hide from opponents.

Claws

This Part allows a Monster to deliver a Wound on any successful combat roll. Remember, this Part may only be used once per game.

Extra Heads

This Monster has an additional head. For each additional head, the Monster gains an additional action per round. It also adds 1 to the number of successes that must be rolled to defeat the Monster in combat. For example, if a Monster has two heads, the TN to defeat the Monster is: Mahl Devotion + 5 + 1 (additional head).

Eyes of Stone

This part is *very* deadly and should be reserved for only the most powerful Monsters. This Monster can turn Heroes into stone statues. The Hero and Monster make a Contested Roll (most appropriate defense: Goddess of the Hearth, God of Fortune). If the Monster gets a Complete Success (not a Moderate Success), the Hero is turned to stone. The only way to turn a Hero back to his usual state is by covering him with the

USING MONSTERS

The reason Monsters are back here in the GM only section should be obvious: so the players don't know what Monsters can do. However, clever players will begin to notice that Monsters with similar physical features (scales, claws, etc.) have similar powers.

Use the Parts to give physical descriptions of Monsters. Don't call a Monster by its name; use its Parts. "It's big and has seven legs. Its one hundred eyes look at you with malice and its forked tongue strikes out at you!" That way, players will begin to learn how Monsters work by recognizing their physical features. They'll learn what different beasts do, and know the best way to fight them.

blood of the Monster who turned him to stone. A Monster has enough blood to turn only one victim back to normal.

Giant Size

When multiple opponents fight this Monster, they gain one less Advantage Die for outnumbering the Monster. If the Monster buys Giant Size more than once, he cancels an additional Advantage Die for each time he buys it.

Hypnotic Eyes

The Monster may paralyze one opponent for one round. The opponent can do nothing but gaze at the Monster.

Iron Stomach

This Monster can eat anything: wood, stone, brick, people. Anything. This Part is not activated, it is "always on."

Many Legs

This Monster gains 3 Advantage Dice when chasing or running away from Heroes.

Night Eyes

This Monster may see in the dark.

Paralyzing Tongue

The poison of this Monster's tongue knocks an opponent on the ground. The Monster must get a successful Contested Roll (most appropriate: Goddess of Hearth, God of Fortune, God of the Battlefield) to use his Tongue. Once struck, the Hero gains a Wound and is paralyzed until that Wound is healed.

One Hundred Eyes

If a Monster has One Hundred Eyes, it cannot be surprised. It also gains three Advantage Dice when trying to find a hidden opponent.

Rhino Hide

This Monster may, once per game, cancel one of his opponent's successful combat rolls.

Scales

A Monster with scales cannot be effectively attacked with sharp weapons. It must be rolled over to expose its soft underbelly. This Part does not need to be activated. To roll a Monster over, you must make a Contested roll (most appropriate: God of Battle or Fortune) against the Monster's Mahl Devotion.

Siren Song

This Monster may use its voice to lure Heroes to their doom. The voice mesmerizes any Heroes who fail a Contested Roll (most appropriate: Goddess of Hearth, Goddess of Love) against the Monster. Once they are enchanted by the song, the Hero will do *anything* to get find the source of the song. Once enchanted, the Hero is considered helpless for the purposes of the Monster taking liberties with the Hero's health and

MONSTERS & THE GOD OF WISDOM

The God of Wisdom (and his most blessed followers) has the power to define things, but does this include defining what Monsters can do? Well... maybe.

Priests of the God of Wisdom may know many things, but the Bloody-Eyed Widow keeps secrets even the Great Wise One doesn't know. Monsters fall under the Domain of Mahl, not Tyane Bran. That means, in order to define a Monster, Tyane Bran must challenge the Queen of Beast's Domain.

Appendices

welfare. While this power may only be used once per day, it can effect a large group of Heroes – even a whole ship full of them.

Small Size

This Monster gains 3 Advantage Dice during Contested Rolls when trying to avoid being caught.

Spiked Tail

This Monster may grab an opponent, wrapping the Hero up in its tail, squeezing tightly for the chance at additional Wounds. The Monster and Hero make Contested Rolls (most appropriate: God of War, God of Fortune). If the Monster gains a Moderate Success, the Hero is caught in the Monster's Tail and may only try to escape. He may make no other actions. If the Monster gains a Complete Success, the Hero takes a Wound for every round he remains trapped. At the end (not beginning) of each round, the Hero may try to escape making another Contested Roll with the Monster. If the Hero gains a Moderate Success, he escapes. If he makes a Complete Success, he escapes and the Monster takes a Wound.

While the Monster holds a Hero in its Tail, any other Hero gains an Advantage Die to chop off the tail. A Hero needs a Complete Success to chop off the Tail. If a Hero is attacking the Tail while another Hero is held in it, the held Hero should gain an Advantage Die when trying to escape.

Spy Eye

The Devotee may see what this Monster sees. This Part is “always on;” it doesn't need to be activated. Whenever the Monster takes a Wound, the Devotee takes a Wound as well.

Troll Blood

The boiling, oozing blood of trolls runs in many Monsters. A Monster with Troll Blood regenerates all Wounds in one hour and all

severed limbs grow back at midnight. The only way to kill a creature with Troll Blood is to completely destroy it (with fire or acid, for example).

Venomous Fangs

This Monster delivers a poisonous bite when it makes a successful attack roll. Roll a die; if the die roll is odd, the Monster's venom inflicts the Hero. He loses one Advantage Die at the end of each round.

Wings

This Monster can fly.

THE GRINNING MAN: AFHIL

Aphil is a tall, spectral figure dressed in immaculate black robes, his fingers are slender and groomed, his hair is black and wet against his skull, his aggressive brow hides his eyes. And his grin... any who look upon it risk madness. Under his black robes are barbed whips, butcher's knives and other instruments of pain. Aphil's followers understand their dark lord's master: pain is the path to strength, the truth only the devoted can follow.

Aphil's followers hide deep scars under their clothes for such scarification is a tell tale sign of Aphil worship. What makes the Grinning God's worshipers dangerous isn't that they seek wisdom in their own pain, but that they seek wisdom in the pain of others as well. Torture is a routine occurrence in the hidden shrines to the Grinning God.

BLESSINGS

The followers of Aphil seem completely impervious to most injuries. This is due to their aggressive torture/training and Aphil's blessings. Aphil is also capable of striking down enemies of his followers with incredible wracking pains.

The Darkest Fear

Followers of Aphil are distorted creatures so awful to look upon, only the bravest may do so. When he activates this Blessing, the Follower of Aphil causes a Fear Effect equal to his Devotion to the Pain God. He rolls a number of dice equal to his Devotion and counts his evens. Any Hero looking upon him when he activates this Blessing loses a number of dice from their next action equal to the evens the disciple of the Pain God rolled. If a Hero cannot muster any dice, he cannot take any action.

The Malice Hammer

A devastating curse put upon those who are Aphil's enemies, the Malice Hammer makes the target revisit his most tortuous moment. The priest calls upon the power of this Blessing and looks upon the target. In that moment, he knows the one thing that pains the target most. Whether this is a lost love, an estranged parent, a villainous act committed long ago; the priest knows it... and the target knows he knows it.

The Sweetest Sting

This Blessing does not need to be invoked; it is always active.

Followers of the Grinning Man suffer for his wisdom. They swallow glass, carve their bodies, distort their features, and make themselves cruel mockeries of happiness. This makes pain an empowering experience, not a debilitating one. For every Wound a follower of Aphil gains, he also gains a Bonus Die.

Making Your Own Pantheon

Wit's Teeth

The Grinning Man is the twisted jester, the God of Pain and Malice. He delights in causing sorrow and misery; he even draws strength from it. His followers follow his example, and by using this Blessing, are capable of bringing even the greatest warrior to tears.

The priest invokes this Blessing and rolls a number of dice equal to his Pain Devotion. The Hero may roll any Devotion he deems

fit. If the priest succeeds (even a moderate success), the target falls into a whimpering, sobbing mess. The target is completely helpless and cannot even defend himself for a number of rounds equal to the successes of the priest.

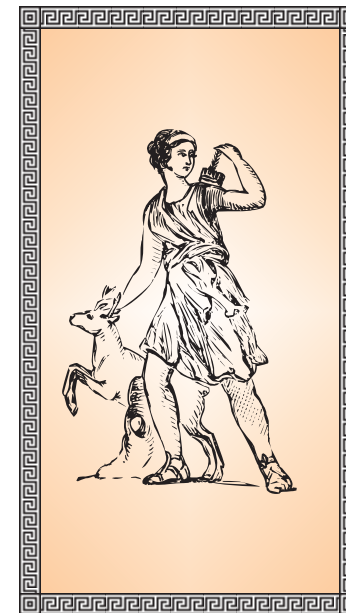
If the priest fails, the target's eyes well up with tears and anyone taking any action against him (physical, social, or mental) gains 2 Advantage Dice.

Da'phil: Aphil's Children

Woe to those who are captured by the followers of Aphil, for they are

taught the ultimate lesson in pain.

The body is bound and rituals cast upon it. The secret name of Aphil is written in spiral patters along the skin; written with razors. The spiral patterns forbid the spirit from leaving the flesh. The body is wrapped in sacred garments, then slowly smothered to death. The process takes many months. Finally, when the body dies, the soul remains within the rune carved skin. The



creature is called Da'phil: a Child of Pain. The wretched creature suffers eternal pain so blinding, all it can do is strike out at others.

A Da'phil has only one Devotion and that is to the Grinning God. Its Devotion is 8 and it has all the Grinning Man's Blessings.

ALLIES & RIVALS

It's no joke that nearly every other God of the Pantheon would like to see Aphil suffering under the sharp edges of his own tools... if only they weren't so certain he'd enjoy it.

THE LORD OF DEMONS: SORCEL SHEM

Wizards in their isolated towers making deals with demons eventually encounter Sorcel Shem: the Lord of Demons. It is this dark lord who made "selling your soul" popular on Shanri (the word "sorcerer" comes from his name). Many have sold their souls to Shem for the power he promises; and that power is great, indeed.

Many speculate that Shem is not actually from this world at all, but from another one where the rules are not the same. He is often depicted as a tall, swarthy, beautiful man with long, straight black hair, braided down the back. His eyes are like the rainbows of oil mixing with water and his voice is pleasant and almost musical. His charms have deluded many ambitious men and women, and the gifts he gives them always leave them wanting more.

BLESSINGS

Shem does not give miracles to his followers, but instead teaches them spells of power. These are written in accursed black books, bound in demonic flesh. The spells he teaches are, in actuality, the secret names

and bindings of demons. By knowing the name of a particular demon, the sorcerer may bind it and put it to service.

In this way, a sorcerer is always surrounded by "magic items;" sorcerous tools containing bound demons. Each demon gives the item particular powers: a cloak that protects from fire, a ruby eye inserted into the skull that sees the intents of those it looks upon, or even a black bladed sword that drinks souls are all good examples of demonic items a sorcerer would have in his forbidden tower.

Sorcerers may learn *any* Blessing listed in this book by summoning demons to their side, binding them, and forcing them to act. Sorcery does have a price, however, and that price is blood and time.

A binding requires blood. That blood may be the sorcerer's blood or another's, but it must be spilled: enough blood to draw a circle and write the demon's name (about two pints). Any ritual takes about one hour to perform.

Once a demon has been summoned, it performs a single action, then leaves. If the sorcerer wishes another Blessing, he must summon another demon, going through the motions again.

The demon bestows the Blessing on the sorcerer who may then call upon its power as he sees fit. The power remains until used, then is gone. A sorcerer may call multiple demons to gain the same Blessing many times.

A sorcerer may only have a number of Rituals active equal to twice his Devotion to the God of Sorcery.

ALLIES & RIVALS

All the Gods despise Sorcel Shem for he provides the quickest route to power – thus stealing potential followers for himself. Even the other Fell Gods despise him (for the very same reasons). If Ikhalu could get his knives on Shem, he would.

Appendix 4: Creating Your Own Pantheon

If you want to create your own Pantheon of Gods (You Go Girl!), here are some suggestions on God Titles. Just remember, the Greeks never thought of Athena as "the Goddess of War," nor did the Norse consider Thor to be "the God of Thunder." They were just Athena and Thor. Sticking a God a title limits him, but it is a good starting place to give your God theme and character. Look the over the list to the right and talk about it.

DEFINE YOUR PANTHEON

Your first step is to define the nature of your Pantheon. Get together with the Game Master and other players, and decide what kind of Pantheon you'll be playing. It could be a dualistic Pantheon, absorbed in the concepts of Good vs. Evil, Order vs. Chaos. Or, it could be that the nature of your Pantheon is more complicated than that. As an example, take a look at two Pantheons we all know from our Mythology class.

TWO EXAMPLES

Many interpret the Greek Pantheon as an extension of the human psyche, a statement on the human condition, but they didn't start that way. At first, the Gods were personifications of power: the God of War, God of Making, God of the Waters, all very masculine figures. However, as the Greeks conquered other cultures, they added the conquered pantheon to their own, re-interpreting it to fit into their belief

structure. At first, the Greeks worshiped a Thunder God called "Zeus," but when they conquered an agrarian culture, they adopted their Earth Mother, marrying her off (in a subservient role, of course) to their own Thunder God. Thus, Hera and Zeus were wed, and always at odds with each other. When the Greeks encountered a people who worshiped a goddess of erotic love, they had her arrive in a shell, off the waters to the East. Thus, Aphrodite was added to the pantheon. When the Greeks encountered Athena's people, it must have been a struggle (the higher up on the divinity chain you are, the tougher you were to conquer – supposedly). She is "born" of Zeus, but not born, bursting from his skull after he devoured (conquered) another God, fully dressed in her armor, helm and spear,

GOBS AND GOBS OF GODS

Art, Beauty, Birds, Birth (usually Motherhood), Chaos, Courage, Craft, Dance, Darkness, Dawn, Deserts (or, if you like, desserts), Destiny, Destruction, Direction (East Wind, West Wind, etc.), Disease, Famine, Fate, Fatherhood, Fertility (again, Motherhood), Fire/Earth/Wind/Water, Flowers, Forests (Trees), Guardianship, Hate, Healing, Hearth & Home, Hunting, Judgment, Justice, Knowledge, Learning, Light, Love (not Sex), Luck (Chance, Fortune), Marriage, Mercy, Moon, Motherhood, Mountains, Music, Night, Order, Plants, Poetry, Politics, Profession (Sailors, Tailors, Blacksmiths, etc.), Seas/Waters, Sex (not Love), Sky, Snakes, Spring, Storms, Sun, Time, Tricks, Volcanoes, War, Winter, Wisdom

shouting a wild war cry that was heard across the universe. She's a remarkable figure, and one of the most popular Greek Gods... even though she probably came from an enemy culture.

The Norse Gods are a little different from their Greek counterparts, although very similar in many respects. The chief god is male, married to a subservient female (although not as subservient as Hera), and Odin (or, Wotan) is a God of Wisdom rather than a Thunder God. His son, the mighty THOR (just have to write his name in all caps like that, he would have demanded it) takes up the role of angry Thunder God. The Norse Gods are less "Gods of..." and more like actual characters than their Greek counterparts, and far more mortal. They can be killed, and will be killed in the Final Battle at the end of the world. This doom casts a shadow over all the stories, a foreboding aura you cannot ignore. The Norse Gods are more human than their Greek companions as well, each with his own quirks and mannerisms. The Greek Gods are almost infallible, while the Norse Gods are getting fooled all the time.

So, while both Pantheons have their similarities (God of Thunder, God of Wisdom, God of War), they are also very different. It is important to decide what kind of Pantheon you and your other players want to make before dishing out titles and responsibilities. Think about the character of your myths, think about the mortality of

your Gods, think about all of it. Don't just slap "God of War" on your character sheet. Think about it. Are you like Athena: a quick-witted, clever and crafty God of War? Or are you a bloodthirsty, reckless warmonger like her brother Ares and their distant cousin THOR? Consider carefully. The character of your God says a lot about how you'll be able to use your Divinity Points.



THE FOUR ELEMENTS

The four classic Greek elements – Earth, Wind, Fire, and Water – all carry symbolic meaning. The God of Fire carries the connotation of God of Wisdom. For a primitive people, making fire is a tricky wicket, not something just anyone can do. It requires a specific knowledge that must be learned, and sometimes even stolen. Thus, many Gods "steal fire" for humanity, bringing it from the other side of the world, to help man conquer his fear of darkness, teach him cooking and tool-making

as well. Often times, the Firebringer is punished for stealing fire and marked in some way. In many myths, animals steal fire for man, and the coloring on their furs or wings shows where the fire burned them as they carried it. In Greek myth, Prometheus steals fire for man and gets chained to a rock, his liver eaten away by a giant bird for all eternity. In many Native American traditions, it is Crow or Raven who steal fire, thus their black "burned" feathers. Odin is considered a God of Wisdom, and is wounded for his gaining of that wisdom – he

must pluck out his own eye to learn the secrets of the world. Thus, fire and wisdom are forever linked: wisdom burns you and scars you. It steals your innocence, changing you forever. That is the nature of fire: a dangerous tool that must be used carefully. Thus, if you choose to be a Fire God, think about what sort of God of Wisdom you'll be.

There are many Earth Gods, and they are all aspects of the same thing: the circular nature of the world. All things come from the Earth, walk upon the Earth, and return to the Earth. Birth, Life, Death are the true holy trinity, and every day, mankind goes through that cycle. He is innocent, he is experienced, he is stagnant, and he is born again into innocence. The Earth deity is typically female, often represented as the Maiden-Mother-Crone. The innocent girl, full of life and vigor, full of the magic of womanhood who gives her life to the baby in her womb, changing from dynamic life-force to protector. Then, finally, she is the old woman whose wisdom cannot be taught, only learned with personal experience. The girl who was mother who now watches her own girl-child as mother, knowing all the experiences her daughter will have. Because the Earth moves through its own cycles, represented by the four seasons, the Earth deity also represents all four of those seasons, including the Season of Death: Winter. The Earth God is often the Death God, far under the ground in his silent subterranean kingdom, greeting the mortal dead. In primitive cultures, snake is often



seen as a servant of death: the creature that goes under the ground, receives messages and commands from his master, then returning again to the surface to do his bidding. Almost any creature that burrows can be associated with the Earth God. Finally, any creature that "sheds" in the winter and "blossoms" in the spring is also associated with the magical life cycle. Think of antlers that fall off in the winter and regrow in the spring, bears who sleep the long death-sleep through the winter, only to become re-born when the snows thaw and you'll be thinking of "Earth animals."

The Water God is a creature of mystery, emotion and change. "Still waters run deep" is the cliché, and in this case, the cliché is true. Water deities are often Goddesses, keepers of secrets, almost associated with the moon (another symbol of secrets). There are so many Goddesses associated with water and the moon, including Arthur's Lady of the Lake and the Greek sorceress Circe. Generally, Sun-Worshipping Pantheons vilify Water Goddesses, but they are a part of nature, just as fire and earth. Water conceals. Waters are always deeper than they appear. It is the element of creative thought (poets are seldom stable creatures), dreams and nightmares. It is the element of madness and the secret insight it brings. Water is turbulent, mercurial, ever-changing. Water is also the element of purity, the most primal of all the elements. The human body needs water to survive, it is the essential element of life. It may be volatile, protean and ever

changing, but water is the essential stuff of life. Poetry, music, stories and all come from magical energy of water. We cannot live without art, anymore than we can live without water. And it can only truly be mastered by those who understand it. It can only be captured by those with minds as volatile, protean and ever-changing as the element that guides them.

Wind is the element of thought, the element of concepts. It is too inclusive to say wind is the element of intellect, for it is also the element of intuition. It is the element of things that are true, but cannot be seen or explained. It is the element of gnosis, of “knowing,” not “understanding.” The belief that some things cannot be taught in books or by teachers, but can only be understood by direct experience. Anyone who’s never been to the Grand Canyon cannot explain the sheer awe of standing at the lip of something so enormous, so spectacular. Words fail to capture the sight of a baby and new-born mother, moments after the birth. Men who fly high above and beyond our own Earth, looking down, seeing the whole of our blue globe in one glance. How can words capture these moments? They can’t. They must be experienced. You cannot learn them, you must know them for yourself. This is the truth of wind, the element of gnosis, the element of magic. So much knowledge is available for the one who is willing to sit, be quiet and listen. The wind is calm, it is serene. It carries secrets and is willing to share them to anyone who will listen. Wind is power. It powers the windmill, it powers the sail. It carves away the mountain, little by little, year by year. In the end, wind is patient, and that is why its energies never fail.

DEATH

Death is an important subject to discuss. Is death simply a mortal concern, or are the gods subject to its whims as well? Is there a

God of Death, responsible for claiming souls and returning them to his dim kingdom? If so, Death Gods are often isolated in some way, set apart from the other Gods. Either the Pantheon shuns him or he just keeps his distance, uninterested in the affairs of Gods or men, his mind set on keen indifference.

Is Death even personified at all? In the Hebrew tradition, there may be One God, but there is no Heaven or Hell. In fact, there really isn’t a soul! (There’s a lot of different kind of Jews; your faith mileage may differ.)

Carefully consider the role of Death in your Pantheon and place him well. We strongly discourage the God of Death be handled by one of the players; generally, it’s just too much responsibility for a God to handle, let alone a mortal.

LASTLY

When making your own Pantheon, keep in mind all the stuff that makes mythology neat. The ambiguous, fast-and-lose rules; the melodrama; the tricks; the Doom Waiting at the End of the World. Make it all part of your own Pantheon. If you don’t feel comfortable making up your own, grab an existing one and play with that. There’s nothing wrong with using *Enemy Gods* to play with the Norse or Greek Pantheon, or even the Egyptian or Roman Pantheons. In the end, the point is to have fun, so do just that.

Conclusion

That’s about it: everything you need to play your first game of *Enemy Gods*. If you have any questions or run into any problems, feel free to drop me a line at www.wicked-dead.com. I’ll be happy to answer any questions, clarify rules, or just take shameless compliments.

But remember this: a roleplaying game is a game of imagination and make-believe. It is one of the only types of games in the world where the players are encouraged to make up things as they go. This not only includes the world but the rules as well. No RPG can suit every group’s needs. I *encourage* you to change rules, make up your own, and modify this game to suit your group’s tastes. Believe it or not, I *love* hearing how players change my games – hearing about house rules shows that gamers are still thinking people who don’t just follow rules, but make up their own. So, if you do come up with your own set of house rules, be sure to drop by the Brewery and let me know what you came up with.

We’ll also be putting all kinds of new background material up on the site. You’ll get to read about the myth cycle, Shanri history, and some new Blessings as well. Maybe even some new Gods...

Finally, thanks for picking up *Enemy Gods*. I hope you enjoyed the read, but more importantly, I hope you enjoy playing it.

Take care,

John W

About the Author

John Wick is the co-creator of the Legend of the Five Rings and 7th Sea games, and the author of the Orkworld roleplaying game. He currently works full time for www.neopets.com and writes roleplaying games for The Wicked Dead Brewing Company with his buddy Jared Sorensen.

In his spare time, he is also currently studying Kabala (which will drive him insane, he’s told), Theurgy, Theosophy, Tarot, Blake, Crowley, Arthur Machen, Yeats, the OTO, the Golden Dawn, Rosicrucianism, the Craft of Masonry, and has considered creating his own secret esoteric society, just because it would be fun. If you want to learn the secrets of the First Degree, send a reasonable donation to john@wicked-dead.com.



ENEMY GODS

HERO SHEET

 Name	 Alias																																				
Backgrounds																																					
																																					
 Flaw	 Hubris																																				
<table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th colspan="3">Devotions</th> <th colspan="3">Devotions</th> </tr> <tr> <th>God</th> <th>Rank</th> <th>Pomis</th> <th>God</th> <th>Rank</th> <th>Pomis</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr><td> </td><td> </td><td> </td><td> </td><td> </td><td> </td></tr> <tr><td> </td><td> </td><td> </td><td> </td><td> </td><td> </td></tr> <tr><td> </td><td> </td><td> </td><td> </td><td> </td><td> </td></tr> <tr><td> </td><td> </td><td> </td><td> </td><td> </td><td> </td></tr> </tbody> </table>		Devotions			Devotions			God	Rank	Pomis	God	Rank	Pomis																								
Devotions			Devotions																																		
God	Rank	Pomis	God	Rank	Pomis																																
																																					
 Blessings	 Curses																																				
 Defining Moments	 Wounds																																				

ENEMY GODS

GOD SHEET

 Name	 Domain																								
Divinity																									
																									
<table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th colspan="4">Devotion to You</th> </tr> <tr> <th>Hero</th> <th>Rank</th> <th>Hero</th> <th>Rank</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr><td> </td><td> </td><td> </td><td> </td></tr> <tr><td> </td><td> </td><td> </td><td> </td></tr> <tr><td> </td><td> </td><td> </td><td> </td></tr> <tr><td> </td><td> </td><td> </td><td> </td></tr> </tbody> </table>		Devotion to You				Hero	Rank	Hero	Rank																
Devotion to You																									
Hero	Rank	Hero	Rank																						
																									
 Blessings Given	 Curses Given																								

*This Summer
The Wicked-Dead Brewing Company
Invites you to try its first Import Brew*

*At Gen Con 2004
Get Ready...*

...to Run!

RUN ROBOT RED

*A funny little game
about funny little robots!*

A world of dark fantasy
Ruled by Gods and Heroes
You play both

Enemy Gods is a new roleplaying game from the author of *Legend of the Five Rings*, *7th Sea* and *Orkworld*. Players take the roles of both Gods and Heroes, fighting for devotion and power. Each player picks a God from a pantheon and designs a mythic Hero. Gods try to win the Heroes' favor and the Heroes try to appease the wrathful and jealous Gods. As the Heroes' Devotion grows, so does the Gods' power and influence.

But Gods are jealous and petty things...

And there's only so much Devotion to go around...

Enemy Gods is a complete roleplaying game. Other than dice, pencils and snacks, you don't need anything else to play.

It includes:

- * Quick and complete character creation for both Heroes and Gods.
- * Rules for Divinity, Devotion and Heroic Flaws.
- * A sample pantheon so you can get started right away.
- * A simple but engaging system of advantages that rewards player ingenuity and creativity.
- * Guidelines and advice for creating your own pantheon.
- * A sneak peek at a brand new fantasy world.

WICKED DEAD
BREWING COMPANY

The Game, The Whole Game, and Nothing But The Game!

\$12.00