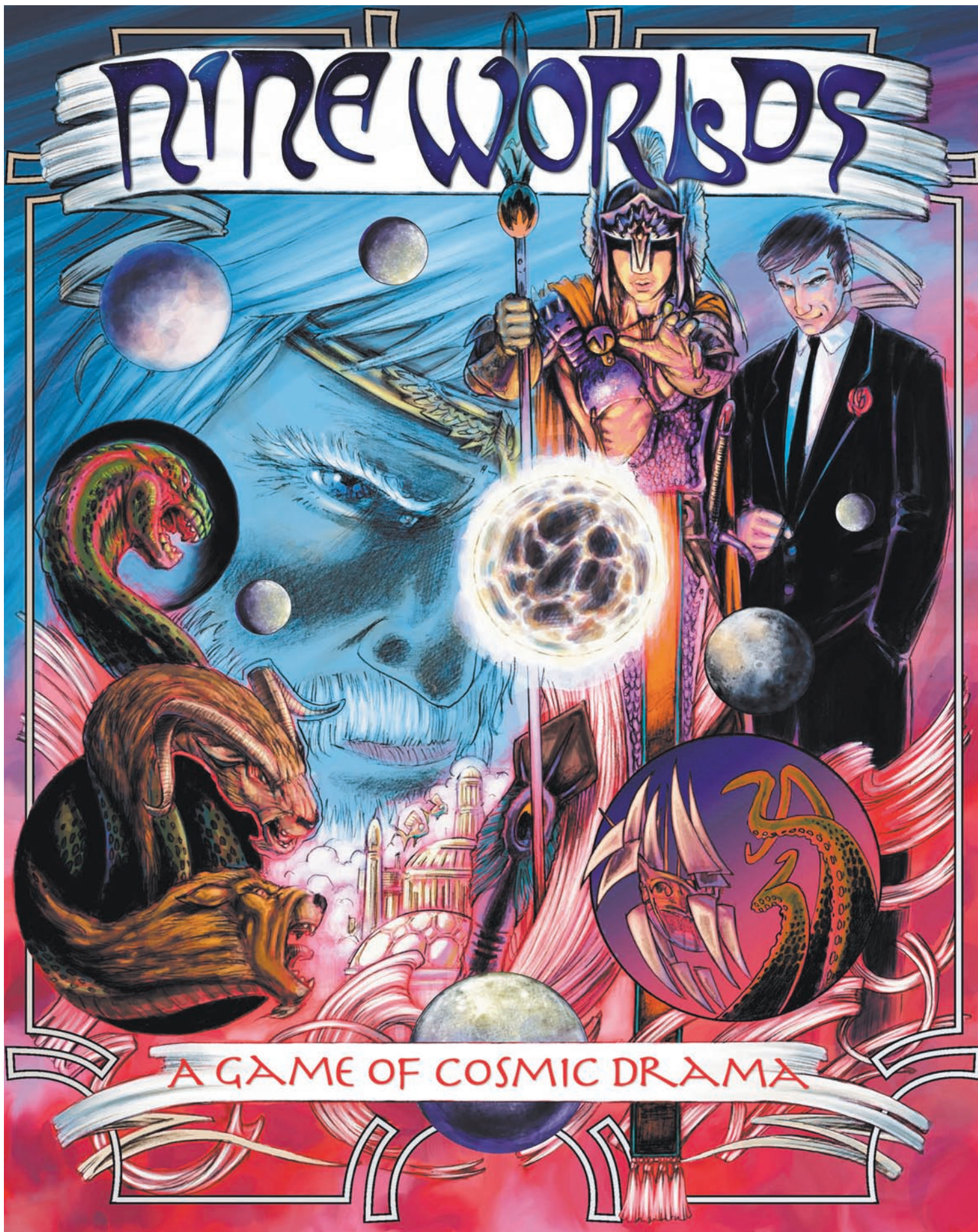




By MATT SNYDER

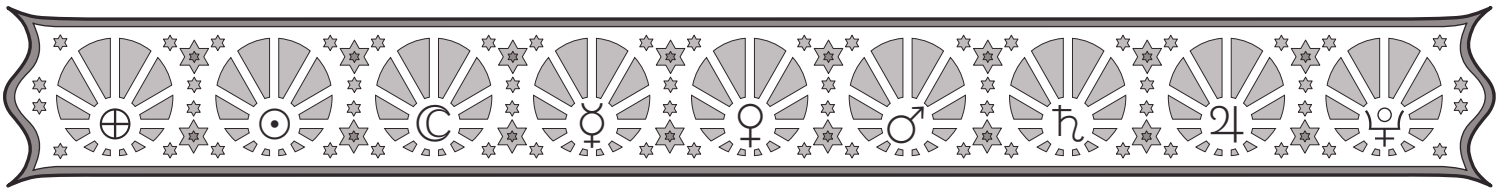
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ILLUSTRATIONS

Eric Lofgren

Chris Martinez



ILLUMINATION

I know what you're thinking, Alex," Prometheus said. "Everyone wants to know two things when illuminated. First, you're going to ask me how this all started." He waved his hands. "How the universe came to be like this. How you have any awareness or power at all in the first place."

"You're right. I was going to ask you that. So, can you read my mind?"

"No. No, I can't do that. Let's just say I've done this before. The questions are always the same." Prometheus' lip curled in a wry grin. "Why should you be any different?"

Alex had no reply, and silence crept between them. He looked out the rosy glass window of the strange piscine vessel they had boarded in the train station. People were everywhere. Most raced to meet their connections. Some waited along the wall reading newspapers, eating sandwiches, or drowning out the world with headphones.

Not a soul seemed to acknowledge the huge bronze and glass fish hovering in the steam near Terminal 3A. No one except for a small boy who stood staring, mouth agape at the glassy red eyes of the fish, from where Alex surveyed scene. Alexander waved at the child, and the child cowered behind the legs of a woman that must have been his mother. He heard Prometheus chuckle.

"What about the second thing?" Alexander asked coolly, still staring at the boy.

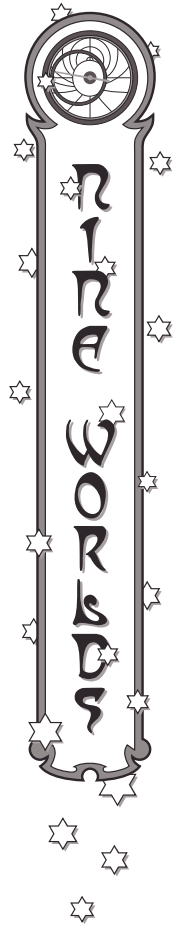
"You don't miss much, do you?"

"Not much."

"That's good for you. The second thing you're going to ask me is what you should do about it — about the hidden war, the powers that be, the ignorant masses of humanity. . . ." Prometheus motioned to the bustling travelers outside.

"Right again. So? You're the big, bad Titan, right? Surely you have some advice for what I should do now. Or, maybe what you'd like me to do?"

"You'd think so, wouldn't you, Alex? I'm loathe to disappoint you. The choice is yours." Prometheus leaned back and sighed. "I have no earthly idea."



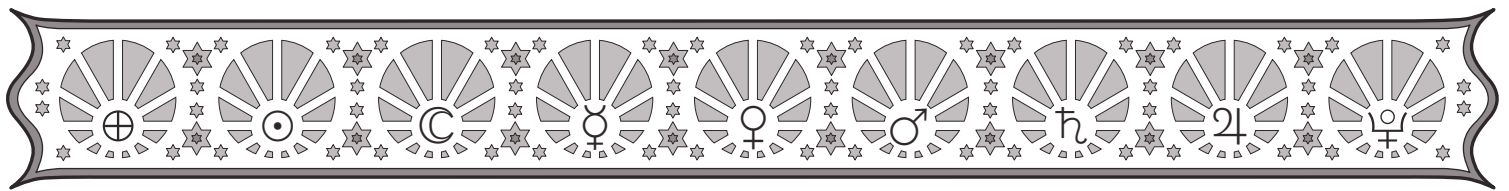
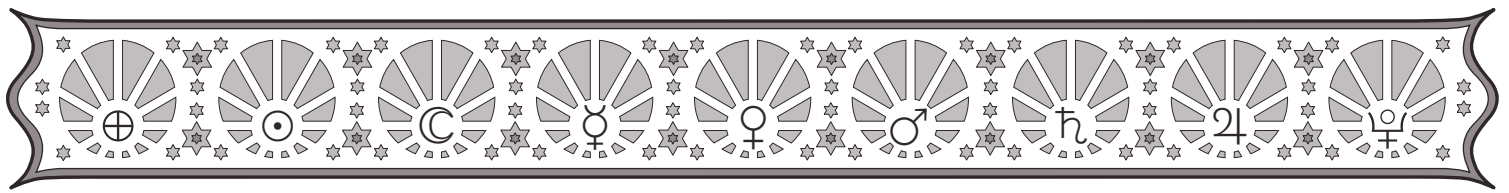


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INTRODUCTION

“The unexamined life is not worth living.”

— Socrates in Plato’s *Apology*

There exist among mortals individuals who remain ignorant of their power. These men and women work and play upon the nations of Earth, guided by what they know and what they’ve experienced in life. They may ask questions about their world. They may pray to divine powers. They may doubt. They may pretend they don’t care about it all. Like all mortals on Earth, they exist in a lie. Their world is an illusion crafted of science and ignorance and faith and dreams made almost-real.

Yet there are moments of grace and fortune in their lives that they cannot explain with what they have lived and learned. These moments are crucial points in their lives. They are the decisions that shape who and what these individuals are, whether by loss or by gain. So it goes for all of humanity, ever struggling with its mortality to win or lose or simply to live well.

However, for these individuals there is a difference. They do not experience fortune. The cause it. They do not answer to fate. They guide it, one moment at a time. These few possess a grace and power they do not yet comprehend. They are Archons, and they possess the power to shape the universe.

So they continue living a lie. Everything they know is wrong. The world is not the place they thought it was. Until one day a man—or what appears to be a man—shows up in their lives and peels back the illusion of the universe as they know it. He shows them a passage to experience worlds they’ve never known.

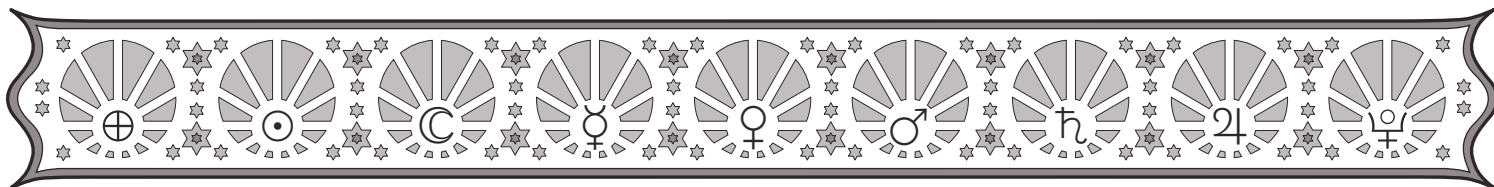
He explains to these often-skeptical individuals that he is called Prometheus, the Titan of ancient myth. He reveals a universe governed by immortals, the gods and titans they know from myths and legends. He unveils the Nine Worlds, and shows them vistas of hidden worlds they never imagined to exist outside the fanciful minds of thinkers and dreamers.

But, there remain some things Prometheus cannot show them, some things he cannot unmask. These newly awakened Archons may have a new worldview and awareness of their power, but their hearts and minds remain very much the same. There are greater truths they cannot answer knowing the truth paths and patterns of the universe. They are mortals who love and hate, who dream and lust, and who cheat and avenge. They are fallible men and women with a fabulous gift. They have the power to change the way things are. They can judge for themselves what is virtuous and what is good. And, though mortal, they can execute that judgement like gods.

With all their power to shape the universe, to bend and break the rules as they desire, the Archons possess no greater insight to answer: Should they?

On that question, Prometheus provides little insight; he offers no spark of inspiration. He can, for reasons of his own, only show the Archons the journey. He knows nothing of the destination.





LEXICON

The following lexicon explains many terms and setting elements of Nine Worlds.

Æther—The æther is a cosmic sea of stars and currents of swirling mist. It is the corpus of the fallen Titan Oceanus and the Eternal Poseidon. It acts as a medium that connects all the Nine Worlds, as well as other lost domains like Atlantis. Travelers, both mortal and immortal, navigate this medium on ætherships to journey among the Nine Worlds.

Æthership—Ætherships are wondrous ships and crafts that can traverse the æther. They vary widely in appearance and function, some looking like traditional sailing vessels, others like strange metallic scarabs, fish, and stranger things.

Aphrodite—The Eternal who rules Venus. On her tropical paradise world, Aphrodite acts as divine match-maker, inspiring love, hate, jealousy and lust in grand games of the heart in which she delights greatly.

Apollo—The Eternal who rules the Sun. Apollo is second only to Zeus in power and influence among Eternals and illumined mortals. He rules Heliopolis, golden city of the Sun, as an ambitions, sophisticated, and erudite politician and scholar.

Ares—The Eternal who rules Mars. Ares is a fickle emperor who pits warring citystates against one another, giving and taking away his favor and support to encourage violence and war, and above all keep himself in position of ultimate warlord in the universe.

Arete—One of the Archon character virtues. Arete is excellence according to the judgment of the Eternals. This virtue represents thoughts, words, and deeds that adhere to natural order of the universe. This attribute determines how many cards a player draws for his character's action in a conflict phase.

Archon—Mortal agents of the Demiurge. Archons are humans who possess extraordinary talents and supernatural power. All players except the game master portray one Archon. Rarely, the game master may control an Archon supporting character.

Artemis—The Eternal who rules the Moon. Artemis is an unforgiving warden who deals harshly with those who interfere with her wilderness domain on the moon. She maintains a careful ecology of mythic flora and fauna.

Atlantis—Atlantis is the lost city of myth. The city is now adrift on the æther like a floating island. Atlanteans are mortals who have been isolated for centuries. They now terrorize the æther at the behest of their king, Atlas the Titan.

Blind—Slang for mortals on Earth who remain unaware of the true nature of the Nine Worlds or the potential of the Demiurge.

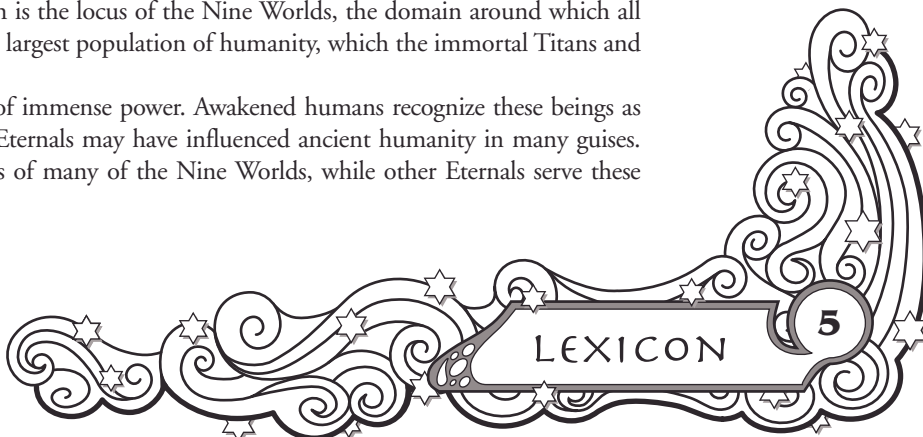
Chaos—One of the four Urges. Chaos is the power to dismantle or destroy matter and thought. Chaos is related to the playing card suit of spades.

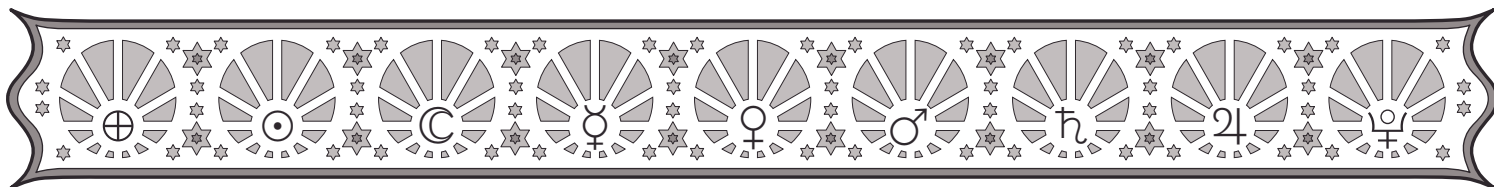
Cosmos—One of the four Urges. Cosmos is the power to organize or create matter and thought. Cosmos is related to the playing card suit of clubs.

Demiurge—The penultimate force in the Universe. The Demiurge is represented by all the words and deeds, all the acts and decisions made by Archons. It is the embodiment of the ebb and flow of reality as shaped by the empowered denizens of the universe.

Earth—One of the Nine Worlds. Earth is, essentially, the 21st century world readers of this book know and live in. It is different in that Earth is the locus of the Nine Worlds, the domain around which all other worlds revolve. It is home to the largest population of humanity, which the immortal Titans and Eternals both desire to rule.

Eternals—Eternals are immortal beings of immense power. Awakened humans recognize these beings as the gods of Greek myth, though the Eternals may have influenced ancient humanity in many guises. Several Eternals act as the ruling lords of many of the Nine Worlds, while other Eternals serve these





planetary lords. There may exist other Eternals from myth, while others, like Poseidon, have fallen in the second Titanomachy.

Fate—The force that decides the ultimate path of experience that all beings pursue. In game terms, Fate is the numerical measurement of a character's success in conflict. Fate may also grace a character with Tricks, with which he or she can use to affect characteristic ratings, thereby altering characters, objects or other entities.

Force—Metaphysical currency the game master uses to improve attributes, create Talismans, and bid for Trump for supporting characters she controls.

Furies—Spirits that violently enforce the natural order. Typically perceived as a trinity of female spirits, they descend upon mortals who offend the Eternals with excessive Hubris.

Hades

- 1) One of the Nine Worlds. Hades is the "Ninth World," or the Underworld. It is the land of the dead, and the realm is divided into three main realms. Hades proper is the eternal home of shades, the tormented souls of dead mortals. The second realm is Tartarus; it is a hellish black cavern with walls of bronze. Tartarus is a place worse than hell. It imprisons many terrible beasts, vile souls, and even a few Titans remain imprisoned there. Finally, Hades includes Elysium, a pastoral paradise for the graceful souls of mortals who live there in eternity. Elysium is their reward for greatness and excellence in life.
- 2) The Eternal lord of the Underworld. Hades is brother to Zeus, and he rules the Ninth World that bears his name and all its strange and dark inhabitants. Hades is reclusive, and he rarely travels beyond his domain.

Hermes—The Eternal lord of Mercury. Hermes governs Mercury like a shrewd businessman, though he often does so remotely as he travels constantly among the Nine Worlds.

Hubris—One of two Archon virtues. Hubris is outright defiance of the natural order as a means of personal expression, independence, or judgment. It is the way characters create supernatural and magical effects. This characteristic determines how many cards a player draws for his character's action in a conflict phase.

Illumined—Term for any mortal who recognizes the true nature of the Nine Worlds, rather than the cosmologies mortals typically acknowledge by science, religion or other means.

Jupiter—One of the Nine Worlds. Jupiter is the largest of the Nine Worlds, though it remains less populated by far than Earth. Its terrain varies as greatly as Earth's, and upon its majestic mountains sits Zeus' throne. He rules Jupiter from his high-altitude capital, the bustling city Olympia.

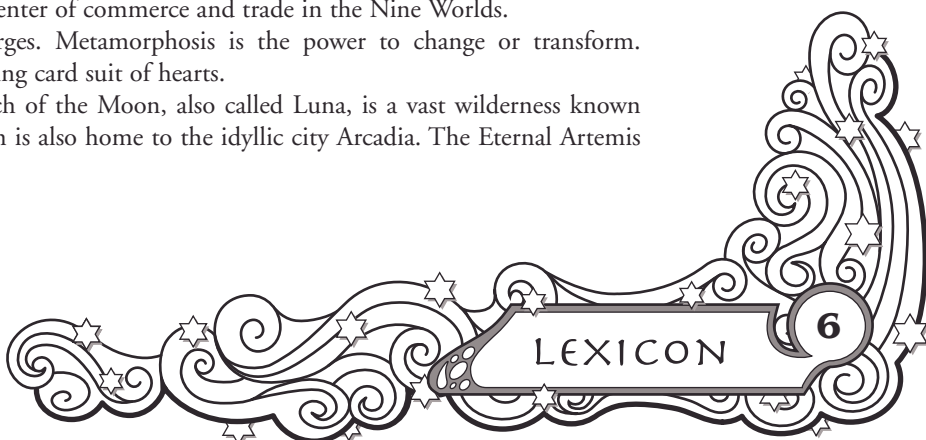
Kronos—Chief of the Titans. Kronus is an extraordinarily powerful Titan who led the Titans' escape from Tartarus and the subsequent struggle known as the second Titanomachy. He rules Saturn, one of the Nine Worlds.

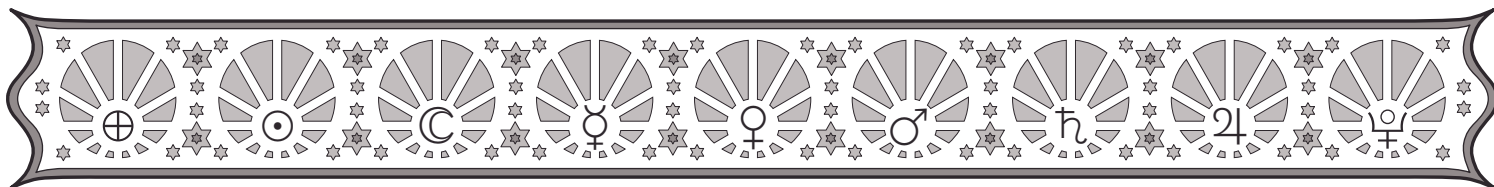
Mars—One of the Nine Worlds. Mars is a world of sprawling deserts and badlands populated with independent citystates like Thracia and New Sparta. These citystates war constantly, to the delight of Mars' Eternal lord, Ares.

Mercury—One of the Nine Worlds. Mercury is dominated by the mutable Mercury City, which changes constantly like a living organism, with new buildings and lanes shifting and reforming frequently. Mercury City is a thriving center of commerce and trade in the Nine Worlds.

Metamorphosis—One of the four Urges. Metamorphosis is the power to change or transform. Metamorphosis is related to the playing card suit of hearts.

Moon—One of the Nine Worlds. Much of the Moon, also called Luna, is a vast wilderness known as the Wild Lands, though the Moon is also home to the idyllic city Arcadia. The Eternal Artemis rules as lady of the Moon.





Muses—One of the three character attribute groups. Each Archon (and most supporting characters) has one or more Muses, which motivate the character to act and make decisions in the game.

Ninth World—A common phrase for the underworld, Hades.

Points—The metaphysical currency of Fate. Victors may earn Points from Aces, Face cards and Jokers they play in conflict. They can then use the Points to affect the attribute ratings of any Archon or supporting character participating in the conflict.

Power—Power is the supporting character attribute that supplants virtues. Power represents a supporting character's potential to affect change by whatever means he or she can. This characteristic determines the number of cards a supporting character receives in a conflict phase.

Pride—Metaphysical currency players use to bid for Trump and to acquire Talismans.

Primarch—The metaphysical ruler of one of the Nine Worlds. The Primarch uses the world itself as a Talisman.

Prometheus—A rogue Titan who awakens Archons and guides them as they discover their power. Prometheus is a renegade immortal who acts only according to his own agenda. He seems to have a benevolent interest in humanity.

Saturn—One of the Nine Worlds. Once a water-world governed by Poseidon, Saturn is now a barren, brutal wasteland governed by Kronos, his Titan kin, and many of the terrible beasts of myth.

Sun—One of the Nine Worlds. The whole of the world of the Sun—also called Sol—is a huge city of silver and gold called Heliopolis. Apollo reigns as sun king over the world.

Supporting character—Any character, being or entity controlled by the Game Master.

Talisman—An artifact, entity, character, ally, or other device or benefit characters may possess. Talismans act as a kind of “sidekick” for Archons and supporting characters.

Titans—The Titans are immortal beings who ruled the universe upon its creation. They are primal forces incarnate, and capable of extraordinary power and insight, but also terrible rage and destruction. They were usurped and imprisoned by the Eternals in ancient days, but have recently re-emerged from their imprisonment. Titans active in the Nine Worlds currently are Kronos, Atlas, Coeus, Crius, Hyperion, Iapetus, Menoetius, Ophion, Pheobe, and Rhea.

Titanomachy—Titanomachy is the term for the cataclysmic battles between the Titans and the Eternals. In the first Titanomachy, the Eternals overthrew the Titans and cast them into the hellish prison of Tartarus. In the second Titanomachy, the Titans escaped Tartarus and captured Saturn from the Eternal Poseidon. This second Titanomachy remains unresolved, and the war between the Titans and Eternals is ongoing after more than a century of Earth's time.

Trump—Declaration of one suit of cards (and therefore one type of Urge) as superior to all other suits and Urges in a conflict.

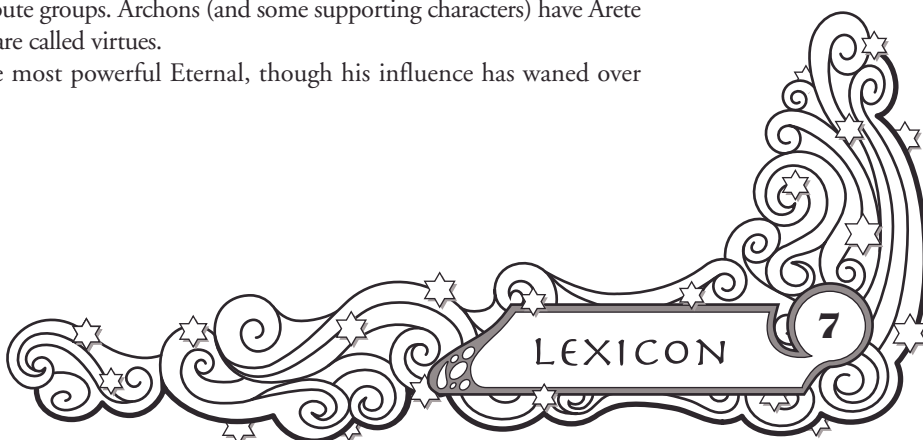
Urges—One of the three character attribute groups. Every character in this game has four Urges: Chaos, Cosmos, Metamorphosis, and Stasis.

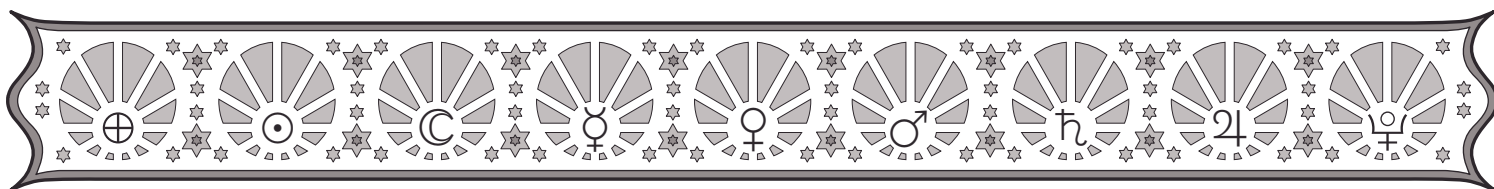
Valor—Metaphysical currency players use to bid for Trump or permanently increase their Archon's attribute ratings.

Venus—One of the Nine Worlds. Venus is a tropical paradise world of cerulean seas, sandy beaches, and luscious forest and jungles. Aphrodite rules as queen of this often-tumultuous paradise.

Virtues—One of the three character attribute groups. Archons (and some supporting characters) have Arete and Hubris attributes. Together, these are called virtues.

Zeus—King of the Eternals. Zeus is the most powerful Eternal, though his influence has waned over the ages. He rules as lord of Jupiter.





ARCHONS

*"No man, against my fate, sends me to Hades.
And as for fate, I'm sure no man escapes it."*

—Hector in Homer's *Iliad*

In this game, players take on the role of Archons, the human agents of the Demiurge who shape the universe according to their whim and will. Archons are mortal humans who possess incredible power, potential, and awareness.

The game master guides these Archon players through the game and takes on the roles of the supporting characters in the story. (See *Being the Game Master*, page 113.)

The Archons' great potential is both their blessing and their curse. Inevitably, their actions catch the attention of the immortals. Archons threaten the primacy of the Eternals, who were once gods to humans and now rule as lords of the worlds beyond Earth. The Eternals strive to manipulate the Archons to maintain their dominance. Archons also challenge the terrible ambitions of the Titans, who seek to once again to rule the universe with their supernatural tyranny. The Titans are less subtle than the Eternals; they seek to destroy the Archons or anyone who challenges their violent ascension.

Ultimately, it is this struggle against the immortals, and even against fellow Archons, that guides each Archon's fate. This is the plight of being an Archon—power, responsibility and difficult choices. Players explore this dilemma via their Archons, the "main character" each player portrays. Players guide the Archon's fate and making significant choices about how he or she affects the fate of the Nine Worlds.

SHAPING THE CHARACTER

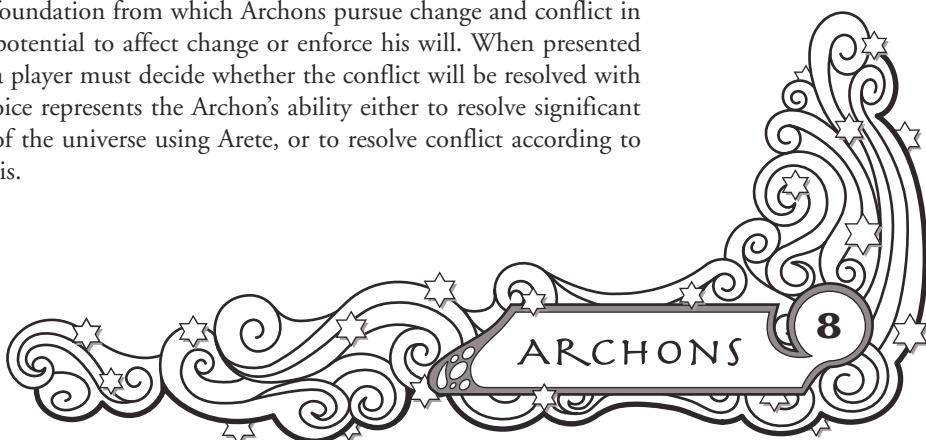
The first step in creating an Archon is crafting a concept. A concept can begin anywhere—an inspiring picture, a character from a novel or movie, or maybe a gimmick or hook like "I want to play a trickster-type character." But, from that initial idea the concept must be molded into a developed character whose background and ambitions fuel conflict in the game. This development will be especially vital when creating an Archon's Muses (see *Step Three: Muses* on page 11). Players may wish to write a brief backstory or concept paragraph for their Archons, which may be helpful in defining the character's Muses.

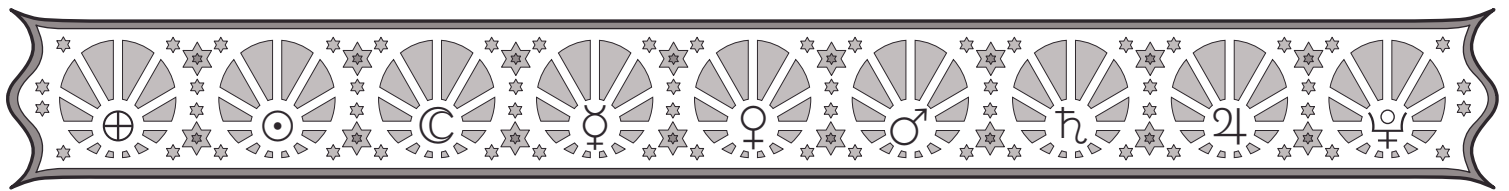
The Rule of Nines

Creating an Archon in game terms is a straightforward, three-step process. First, players assign 9 points between their Archons' virtues, Arete and Hubris. They then distribute 9 points among the four Urges—Chaos, Cosmos, Metamorphosis, and Stasis. Finally, players allot 9 points among one to nine Muses, which are the primary motivators that propel a character to act.

Step One: Virtues

Every Archon has two primary virtues—Arete (pronounced AIR-uh-tay) and Hubris (pronounced HEW-briss). These two virtues are the foundation from which Archons pursue change and conflict in the game. Each represents an Archon's potential to affect change or enforce his will. When presented with challenge or conflict in the game, a player must decide whether the conflict will be resolved with Arete or with Hubris. In effect, this choice represents the Archon's ability either to resolve significant conflicts according to the natural laws of the universe using Arete, or to resolve conflict according to his own supernatural means using Hubris.





POWER

Most supporting characters that the game master controls do not have virtues as characteristics. In place of Arete and Hubris, supporting characters have only one attribute called Power.

Power represents a supporting character's capacity to achieve victory in conflict, by any means possible for that character. Such victories may be natural or supernatural, as appropriate to the situation. For example, a common human on Earth could not act in some magical, supernatural way during a conflict. However, an Eternal like Hermes could perform amazing supernatural feats because he is immortal and godlike. In both of these examples, the supporting characters acted according to their Power ratings.

Note that the game master may control supporting characters that are Archons (rather than mortals, Titans, Eternals or other entities, for example). The game master may assign Arete and Hubris ratings to such supporting characters if she feels the characters are particularly significant or important to the game's themes. Alternatively, she may opt to assign a single Power rating for the sake of simplicity.

When making an Archon, a player assigns 9 points between Arete and Hubris as he sees fit. For example, a player might assign 3 points to Arete and 6 points to Hubris. These points are the ratings for each virtue, and the player records the appropriate ratings on his character sheet.

Players must have at least 1 point in a virtue. (Having a rating of 0 indicates death or oblivion!) Therefore, a player may choose to set one of his Archon's virtues at rating 8 and the opposing virtue at rating 1. However, doing so can be dangerous, because while the higher rating is quite effective, the lesser attribute can be easily lost. If that happens, the character can meet an untimely demise. Players, especially new players, should consider assigning virtue ratings a bit more moderately.

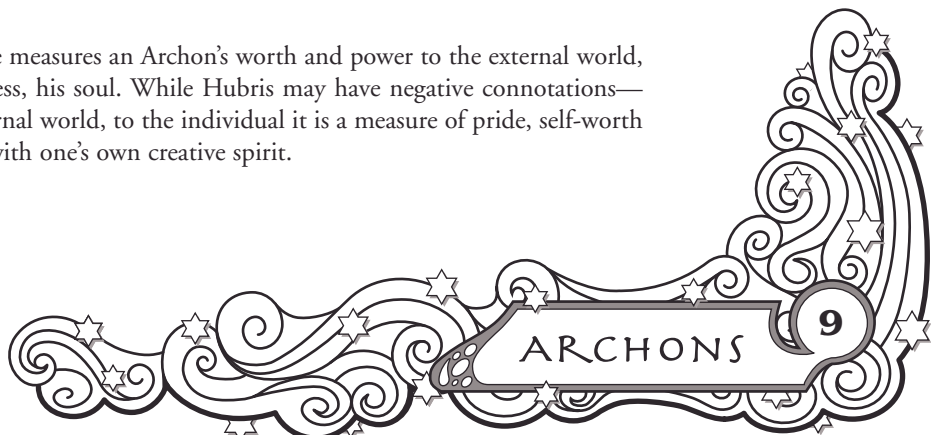
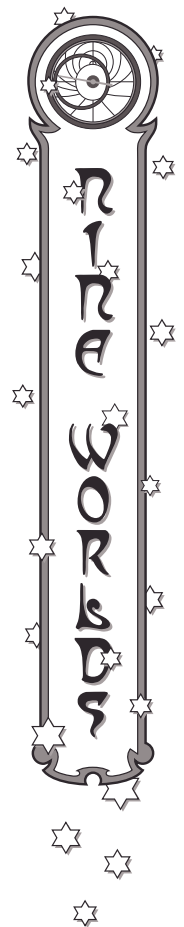
Arete

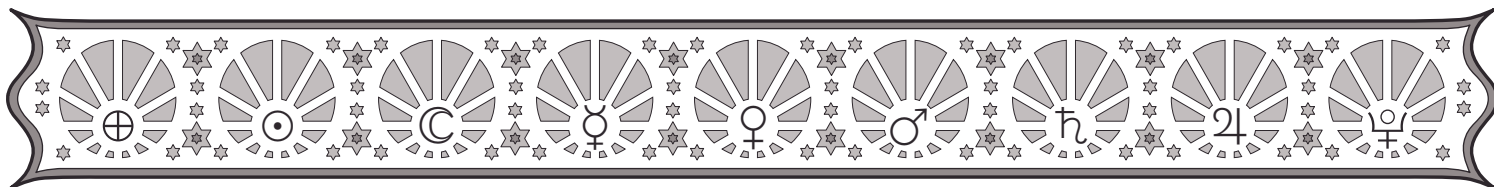
In a word, Arete is excellence. It is the sum of an Archon's merit and worth in relation to the universe and its immortal masters. The Eternals have long defined and judged what is great in mortals, and Arete is the singular representation of that ultimate virtue.

Players use their Archons' Arete to perform actions and resolve conflicts in natural, plausible ways. This means they describe their Archons' victories without including supernatural or magical elements or effects in the telling. For example, an Arete-driven victory might be an amazing display of hand-eye coordination in firing a gun accurately. Or, it could be knowing just the right thing to say to seduce a married woman.

Hubris

Hubris is Arete's counterpart. If Arete measures an Archon's worth and power to the external world, then Hubris defines his internal greatness, his soul. While Hubris may have negative connotations—especially excessive Hubris—in the external world, to the individual it is a measure of pride, self-worth and the capacity to affect the universe with one's own creative spirit.





Players use their Archons' Hubris to perform supernatural feats or affect the universe in a supernatural way. This means the players include supernatural, magical, or fantastical description of events when narrating victories. For example, a Hubris-driven victory might be accurately firing a gun using only one's mind to pull the trigger. Another example would be concocting a potion that will cause a married woman to fall in love with another man.

Step Two: Urges

Urges are the four aspects of the Demiurge in Nine Worlds. They are Chaos, Cosmos, Metamorphosis, and Stasis. These forces represent an Archon's power to change—or prevent change in—the universe itself, even among its mortal and immortal denizens.

When creating an Archon, a player distributes 9 points among these four powers as he sees fit. The player may choose to assign zero points to any Urges. For example, a player could assign 5 points to Chaos, 3 points to Cosmos and 1 point to Metamorphosis, thereby leaving his Archon's Stasis Urge at 0. He records these scores on his character record under the listings for each Urge.

Chaos

Chaos is the urge toward destruction and oblivion. It is entropy, the disintegration of patterns through force of will. With this Urge, Archons can ruin thought, substance, or action, reducing or destroying the capacity of these things to function or even exist in the Nine Worlds.

With the Chaos urge, an Archon might: dismantle a car's engine; destroy someone's self-confidence with stinging insults; steal away someone's memory with a kiss; or unleash a debilitating plague on a healthy mortal.

Cosmos

Cosmos is the urge to create and make whole. This urge is the power of craft, of forming patterns from the primordial elements of thought, matter, and motion. With Cosmos, Archons can create wholly new forms or even ideas and emotions that assume a new pattern and place in the universe.

Cosmos might enable an Archon to fix a broken-down engine, mend wounds with skill and knowledge of medicine, create a simulacrum of his dead lover, or procure a flaming sword from thin air.

Metamorphosis

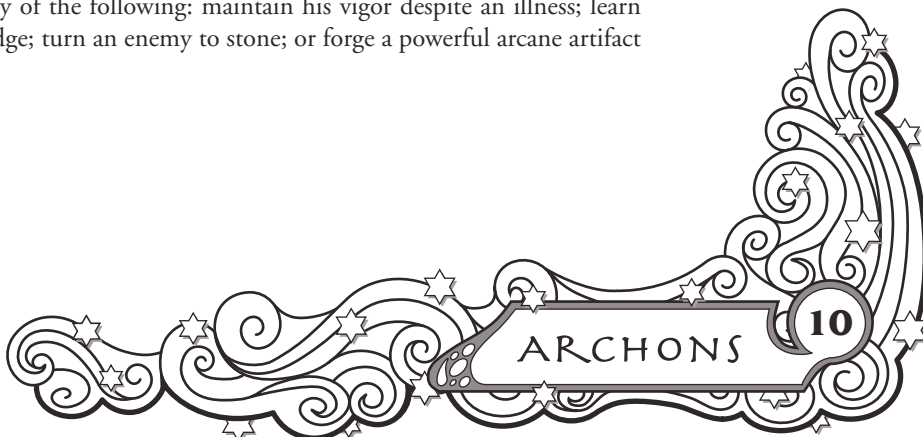
Metamorphosis is the urge to transform or change. It neither creates nor destroys. Rather, Metamorphosis alters the pattern of an object or idea, and transforms it into some other pattern with the same relative value or virtue.

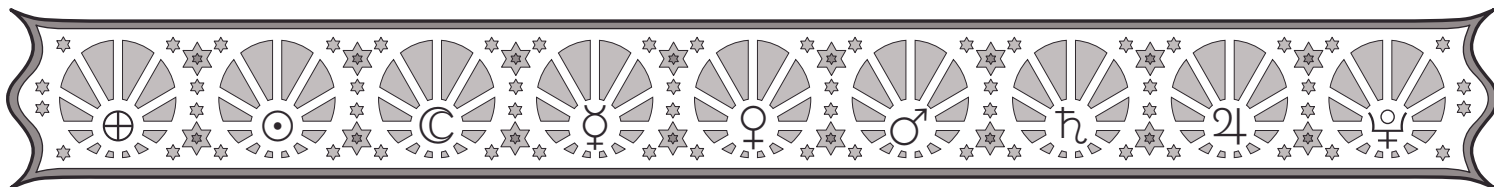
Metamorphosis could help an Archon: falsify his ID card; change someone's mind or opinion with sharp rhetoric; turn lead into gold; or shapeshift into a small, swift bird.

Stasis

Stasis is the urge to paralyze change. It is the urge of constancy, preservation and permanence. Archons use this power to trap a pattern of matter or thought in its current state to prevent the pattern from changing.

An Archon might use Stasis to do any of the following: maintain his vigor despite an illness; learn and retain a very complex set of knowledge; turn an enemy to stone; or forge a powerful arcane artifact from mundane components.





Step Three: Muses

Muses are specific goals and situations that motivate players to create action and conflict in play.

Muses inspire every Archon (and most supporting characters as well). They help players know where to go and what to do with their Archons in the game. In addition, Muses are an Archon's reason for being. Without Muses, the Archon has nothing to live for, and he or she may succumb to death or oblivion.

Archons may have anywhere from one to as many as nine separate Muses at any time. Each Muse may have a rating from 1 to 9 (Muses can never exceed a rating of 9), and the rating will vary during play. When a Muse reaches 0, it is lost. An Archon may acquire a new, similar Muse, but his player should remove from his character sheet any Muse that reaches 0.

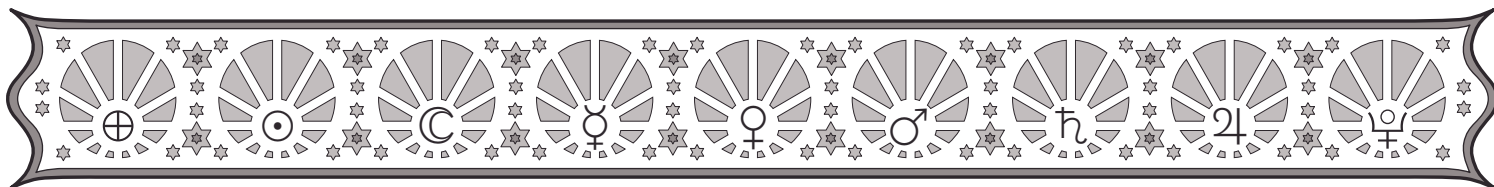
When creating an Archon, a player must define his Archon's Muses. This is the most important step in Archon creation. The player is free to choose any Muses he desires. However, creating Muses with one's fellow players often produces the best game set up.

Players write Muses as a single sentence or phrase, and they record them on the character sheet. The Muse should be written such that it invites the player to action, usually by setting a goal or creating an obvious conflict to confront in play. Also, there must be some way to resolve the Muse. This is very important; players must be able to resolve their Archons' Muses in play. This does not mean the resolution is a given, or that there must be only one way to resolve the Muse. There are many possibilities, including failure to achieve the goal.

Once the player creates his Archon's Muses, the player allots 9 points among the Muses as he wishes. The player should record the Muse rating on his character record (remember, the ratings and even the Muses themselves will change during play).

For example, a player could devote 5 points to his Archon's Muse "Seeks to rescue his wife, Maggie, from slavery on Saturn." He then





allocates 3 points to the second Muse “Discover which of his Aegis colleagues betrayed his wife to the Titans.” Finally, he assigns 1 point to his third Muse “Prove his and his wife’s innocence, and regain Zeus’ approval as a member of Aegis.”

These rules do not prevent players from selecting only one Muse at rating 9. However, such a choice is likely to produce an Archon with less depth and possibility. Similarly, nothing prevents a character from selecting nine separate Muses at rating 1. here, though, the Archon will likely be complicated to play, and the player likely will receive less benefit from low ratings in his Muses. Players—especially beginning players—should consider taking two or three Muses to make a more versatile, interesting and playable Archon with clear convictions and obvious paths for action when play starts.

This game encourages players to be creative and ambitious in writing Muses. Players should not shy away from Muses that involve powerful immortals and other cosmic goals. Players should create “built-in” conflict with their well-crafted Muses. These help create situations that require players to make powerful decisions and exciting, dramatic stories.

Muses that involve relationships with mortal or immortal supporting characters are optimal. The more players involve family, friends, fellow Archons, allies like the Eternals, and enemies like the Titans, the more likely the Muse will help create rewarding drama in play. Similarly, Muses that involve the events and places of the diverse Nine Worlds help make the game an exciting, drama-rich exploration. For more information on the game’s universe and events, see *Cosmology* starting on page 50.

Also, specific Muses are often better than vaguely worded ones. Such Muses work better because they help players know exactly what to do when they begin playing. Vaguely worded Muses can leave players uncertain about what to do; they tend to inspire less action and drama in play.

Example Muses

Here are some examples of both well-crafted and poorly crafted Muses:

Example Muse: “In love with a woman.”

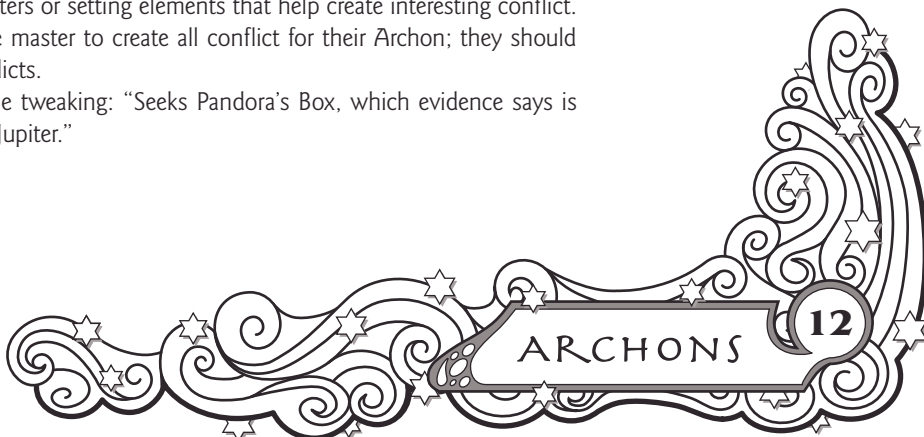
This is an example of particularly bad Muse for an Archon. There is no clear means to resolve this Muse. There is nothing specific or obvious for the character to venture out into the ætiverse and do. And, the Muse involves no other supporting characters beyond some vague woman. This Muse is too vague, and it doesn’t propel the Archon into any conflicts. The player very likely will feel a bit lost when play begins, and that means he and his fellow players aren’t as likely to have fun.

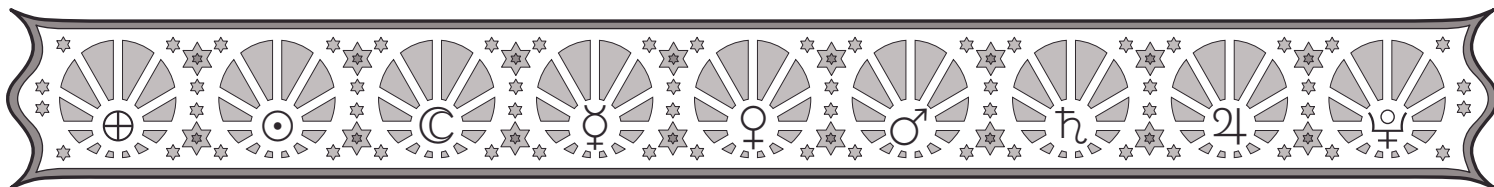
Here is the Muse revised to work better: “Plans to escape with his lover Ellen, the wife of a Martian warlord in Thracia.” Now the Muse has a clear conflict and resolution, and the Muse includes other supporting characters and setting elements.

Example Muse: “Looking for a lost Talisman.”

This Muse is better than the previous one, but barely so. Clearly, the player can resolve this Muse by finding the artifact. But, the player has not specified anything beyond this vague quest. The player may not have a good idea of what to do when play begins. Also, this Muse does not include any other supporting characters or setting elements that help create interesting conflict. Players should not expect the game master to create all conflict for their Archon; they should use Muses to set up their own conflicts.

This Muse could work with some tweaking: “Seeks Pandora’s Box, which evidence says is housed in Zeus’ secure archives on Jupiter.”





Example Muse: “Will not use magic in the presence of humans unaware of the true nature of the Nine Worlds.”

This Muse is merely descriptive. In fact, it’s merely prescriptive. It prevents an Archon from behaving a certain way. There is no specific conflict in the Muse, and there are no other relationships or places involved. This Muse doesn’t help a player in the game; it does little more than tell the player what he can’t do in the game by limiting the player to Arete-based actions in many situations. This won’t work well; the player should simply write a new Muse that contains imbedded conflicts and supporting character relationships.

Example Muse: “Dedicated to the preservation of the Wildlands of Arcadia on Luna.”

This Muse isn’t bad, but it needs work. The main problem is that there is no obvious means to resolve the Muse. The Archon could protect the Wildlands for eternity. Muses aren’t meant to be permanent duties or burdens. They’re meant to incite action and drama in the game. This Muse does a good job of incorporating a specific setting element, but it might also benefit from some specific supporting characters or relationships.

Here is the same Muse reworked: “Defend against Kronos’ latest attempt to ravage the Wildlands of Arcadia, where his lover, a dryad named Alia, lives.”

Example Muse: “Owes an eternal debt to Hermes, whose intervention and reprieve saved her from the terrible Furies.”

Like the previous example, this Muses has no clear means of resolution; players may not be sure when the Archon’s debt to Hermes is realized. However, this Muse is otherwise acceptable.

Fortunately, this Muses is very easily modified: “Owes one last favor to Hermes, who once saved her from destruction at the hand of the Furies.”

Example Muse: “Seeks a cure for her daughter’s illness, brought on by disfavor from Apollo.”

This is a well-crafted Muse. It has an obvious goal; the Archon could find a cure for his daughter and resolve this Muse. The Muses also includes Apollo, a major player in the ætherverse, as one of this Archon’s key antagonists. Finally, note that the Muse includes the Archon’s daughter. This is a good way to make the Muse more pressing and emotional. Players will be very eager to see whether this character can save his own beloved daughter.

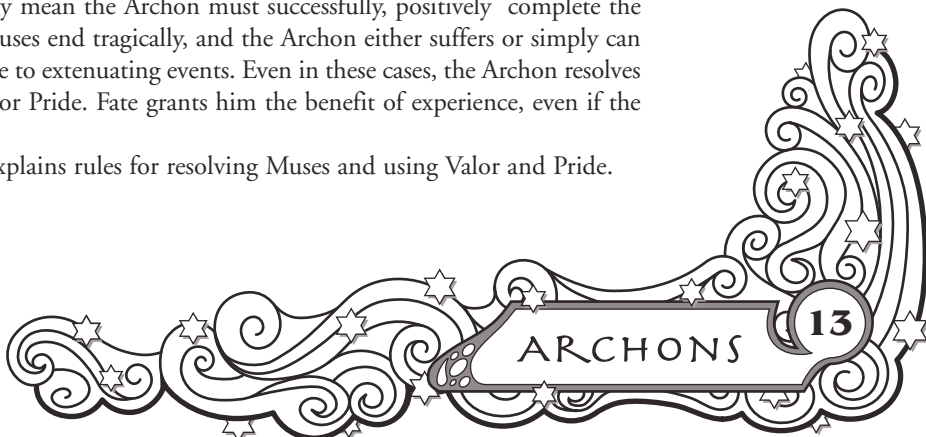


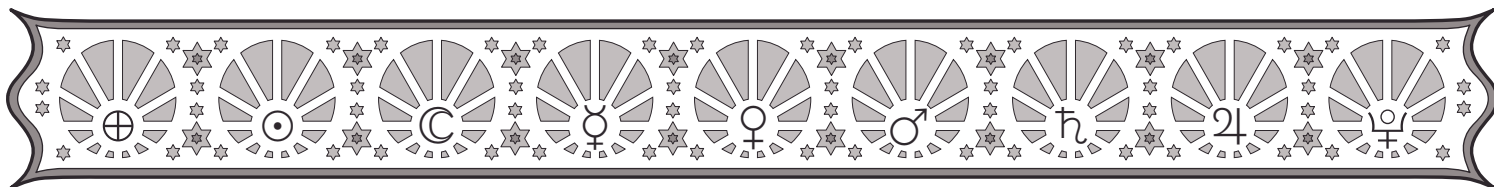
RESOLVING MUSES

When a player resolves one of his Archon’s Muses in play, he earns potent rewards. Upon resolving any Muse, the player records a number of either Valor or Pride points on his character record equal to the Muse’s current rating. The player’s prior decisions determine whether he earns Valor or Pride. (See *Resolving Muses*, page 37.)

Note that resolved does not necessarily mean the Archon must successfully, positively complete the Muse to the character’s benefit. Some Muses end tragically, and the Archon either suffers or simply can no longer successfully resolve the goal due to extenuating events. Even in these cases, the Archon resolves the Muse and earns his reward in Valor or Pride. Fate grants him the benefit of experience, even if the events are tragic.

The following chapter, *Metaphysics*, explains rules for resolving Muses and using Valor and Pride.





A SAMPLE CHARACTER

The examples throughout this book primarily feature an Archon named Alexander. These examples begin here with the following “walk-through” explanation of how Alexander was created as a Archon character.

Shaping the character

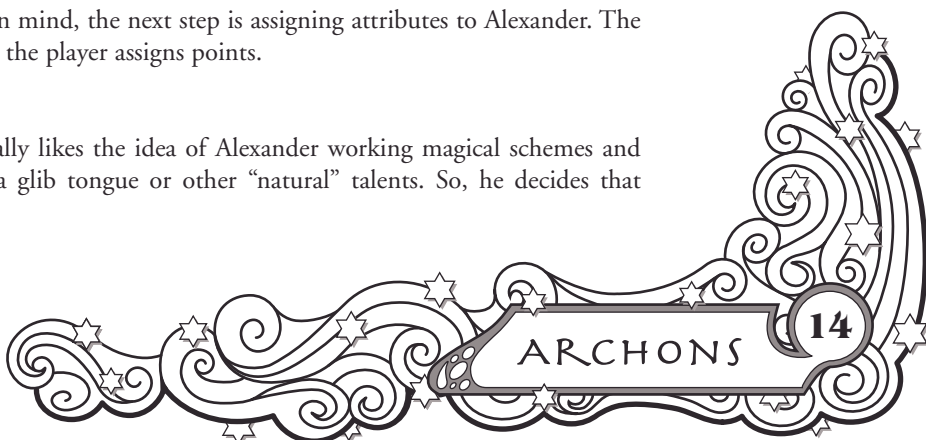
The first step in making an Archon is to come up with some concept. The concept for Alexander is fairly simple—the concept is “cosmic gambler.” Alexander is a world-hopping, smooth-talking rogue who shapes the world more by whim than by will. He’s shrewd and clever, but he doesn’t much like getting his hands “dirty.” Alexander is always well dressed, and he’s a hopeless romantic.

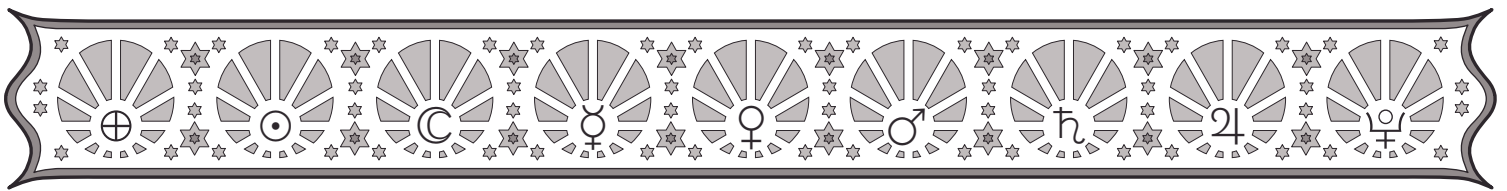
The Rule of Nines

With the “cosmic gambler” concept in mind, the next step is assigning attributes to Alexander. The brief concept above will help shape how the player assigns points.

Virtues

Alexander’s player decides that he really likes the idea of Alexander working magical schemes and ploys, even more so than just having a glib tongue or other “natural” talents. So, he decides that





Alexander should have a higher Hubris than Arete so that he'll be more potent with supernatural effects—and accidents. The player assigns 6 points to Hubris and 3 to Arete, and records this on Alexander's character record accordingly.

Urges

Keeping in line with the concept that Alexander is a cosmically lucky fellow, his player decides that Alexander should have knacks for Cosmos and especially Chaos to help events “go his way.” Metamorphosis would also be helpful in causing fortunate changes that reinforce Alexander's “charmed” life. But, his player is less interested in permanent effects because Alexander frequently “lives for the moment” and cares less so for long-term planning and results.

So, the player distributes points to the Urges: He assigns 4 points to Chaos, 3 to Cosmos, 2 points to Metamorphosis, and 0 points to Stasis. The player records these on Alexander's character sheet, but he keeps in mind that Urge ratings especially are likely to change during conflicts.

Muses

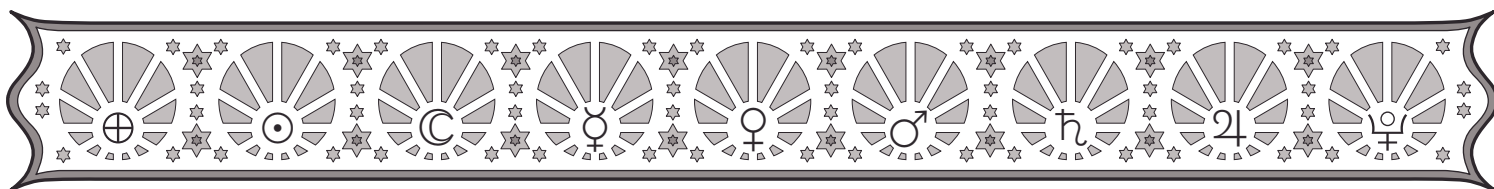
While the basic concept of Alexander is fun and interesting, the player knows he'll need a bit more backstory to choose some proper Muses. Here's what he comes up with: “Alexander is a sardonic and shrewd fellow, but he's not without compassion. For years, he loved a fellow Archon named Hannah, who was the only person that saw through his schemes. But, she was daring and independent—dangerously so. One of her spying schemes invoked the rage of Zeus, and his agents killed her, sending her cursed soul to Hades. Athena took pity upon distraught Alexander, admiring his keen intellect, and now he steers an æthership with Athena's charter. He hopes to one day guide the ship to Hades and free his lover's soul.”

From this backstory, the player assigns 9 points to three Muses and records them on Alexander's character sheet as follows:

- ★ *Free Hannah's soul from the Underworld and return her to the mortal universe before Hades sends her to Tartarus (4).*
- ★ *Avenge the death of his lover, Hannah, by finding her killers on Jupiter (3).*
- ★ *Recover his æthership, the Wayfarer, after losing it to Hermes for smuggling quicksilver (2).*

With this last step, Alexander is complete and ready for play. His Muses are such that the player knows how to make decisions as conflicts erupt, and he will likely pursue paths of his own in play, rather than wait for the game master to throw something at him.





METAPHYSICS

*“Is that which is holy loved by the gods because it is holy,
or is it holy because it is loved by the gods?”*

— Socrates in Plato’s *Euthyphro*

This chapter explains the rules you use to play Nine Worlds. Each player, including the game master, must use a standard deck of playing cards—52 cards plus the two joker cards. Each deck represents a player’s Fate, the path of power and influence before him. Players and the game master use the cards they draw to resolve conflicts and create stories.

This chapter is divided into three main sections.

- ★ The first section, Conflict, details how to resolve events in the game. It explains how to use cards and character attributes to make the story happen.
- ★ The second section, Options, shows expanded opportunities players may use during conflict scenes.
- ★ The third section, Development, explains how to resolve Archon Muses and use the rewards earned, how to escalate conflicts to the level of immortal gods, and ultimately how to bring an Archon’s story to a close.

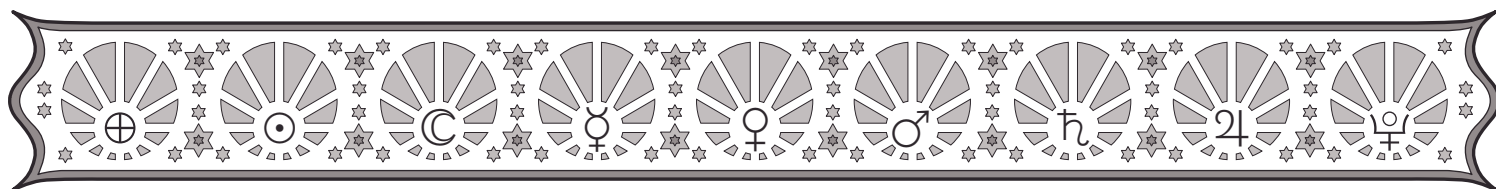
SHARING STORIES

When playing this game, the players and the game master are creating a story together. Usually, this process is cooperative. Everyone contributes to the narrative directly. Any player is free to suggest a new scene, describe the setting and surroundings, introduce supporting cast characters, and even narrate what other Archons are doing as long as the players who control those Archons agree with the idea.

Each player (except the game master) controls an Archon. The player portrays his Archon, describing the Archon’s actions or even acting “in character” as the Archon would act. But, a player is not limited to portraying his Archon. He is also welcome to help everyone else tell the story, even when his Archon isn’t present in a scene.

Meanwhile, the game master is the guide for the story, acting as a director who decides which scenes to play and resolve. She does this primarily by controlling the *supporting cast*—the other characters and entities the players’ Archons interact with, friend and foe. She also helps decide which ideas from other players to use for the group’s story. For more advice on being the game master, see *Being the Game Master*, page 113.





PART 1: CONFLICT

Conflict examined

By cooperating, players and game master can create an entertaining narrative as they talk among one another, describing what the Archons do and what happens to them. But, conflict is both necessary and inevitable for a good story.

Conflict occurs often during this game, and it is the most important event of game play. Conflict is the result of players disagreeing about “what happens next” during an important point in the story.

When at least one player declares a goal for his character, and at least one other player declares a conflicting goal, conflict begins. Usually, this happens when the players try to fulfill their Archons’ Muses, and the game master complicates the process with his supporting cast. But, conflict can erupt between players’ Archons as well, with no involvement of the supporting cast necessary.

Conflict resolution, then, is the process players use to negotiate “what happens next.” Using their Fate decks, players decide which player goals are fulfilled, and which fail. All players, including the game master, must abide by the results that inevitably make story happen right then and there! It is often surprising, and always entertaining. This section explains how this happens in detail, with several helpful examples.

Make it count

Conflict means the players have put something at stake. Usually, it’s something personal at stake for the Archons or the supporting cast involved—loves, rivalries, quests, vendettas, hopes, dreams and more. The characters risk losing out on their personal goals, and they may lose stature or power. But, through conflict they can also fulfill their deepest desires, and gain power and influence in the process.

A good rule of thumb is to pay attention to Muses. Conflicts should involve character Muses, or perhaps the creation of new Muses for a character. If a conflict occurs during play and no Muses are relevant to the conflict, then it’s likely players simply need to just talk through the situation, and continue narrating the story together without using any cards.

It’s important to note that there is no mechanical limit to a conflict’s scope or scale. Conflicts can be small and personal, even individual actions. However, a conflict can also involve epic events, many characters, and multiple actions. Players may determine the scope when a conflict begins (they can even divide a conflict into separate phases), and their successes or failures will resolve issues large and small.

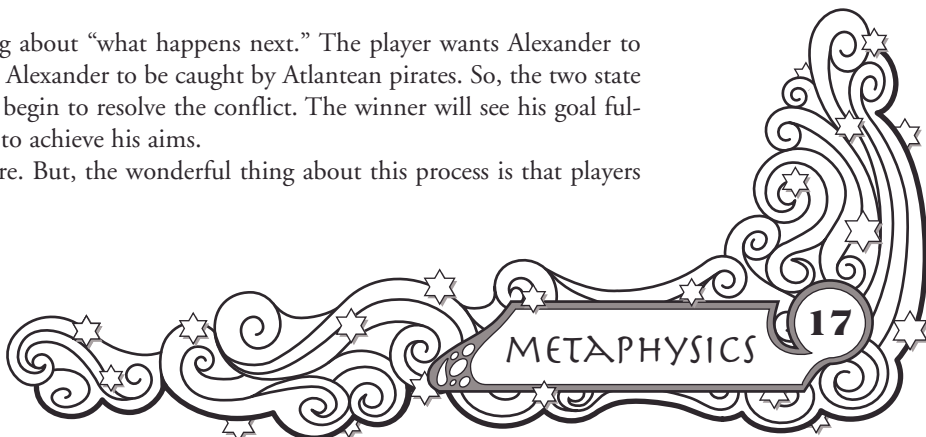
An example of conflict

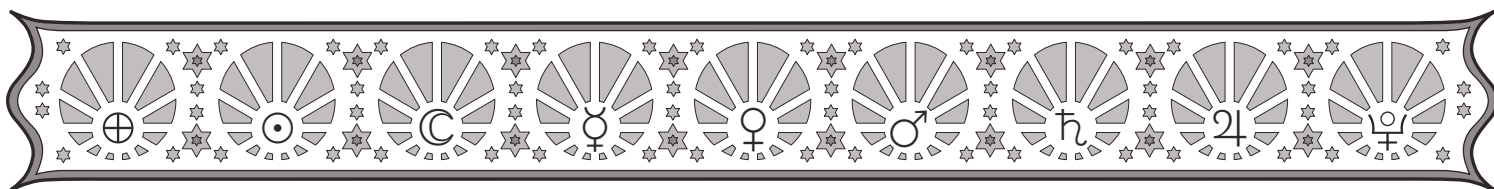
Alexander, the sample character from the previous chapter, is stranded on the deserts of Mars. His player decides that Alexander is going to build an æthership from the scraps and debris of a forgotten battlefield so he can escape Mars. Why? Because he needs to rescue his deceased lover, Hannah from the clutches of Hades!

The game master thinks this is a great, fun idea, but it definitely conflicts with goals she has set *against* Alexander. She decides that Alexander’s old enemies, the Atlanteans, still pursue him after he cheated them with a shipment of counterfeit coins.

Here, we have two players disagreeing about “what happens next.” The player wants Alexander to escape Mars, but the game master wants Alexander to be caught by Atlantean pirates. So, the two state these intentions as their goals, and they begin to resolve the conflict. The winner will see his goal fulfilled; the loser almost certainly will fail to achieve his aims.

Conflict can result in success or failure. But, the wonderful thing about this process is that players





BASIC CONFLICT RESOLUTION

Basic conflict resolution follows these steps:

- 1. Declare goals**
Players announce their intended goals for the conflict.
- 2. Designate opponents**
Players specify whom their characters are in conflict with.
- 3. Choose virtue**
Players choose Arete or Hubris and draw cards equal to the virtue's rating. The game master draws cards equal to each supporting character's Power rating.
- 4. Apply Muses**
Players draw additional cards equal to any relevant Muses ratings.
- 5. Select Urge**
Players select a suit and the related Urge.
(♠ = Chaos, ♣ = Cosmos, ♥ = Metamorphosis, and ♦ = Stasis)
- 6. Play Fate**
Players reveal all cards of their chosen suit.
- 7. Compare Fates**
Players announce their Fate value (Urge rating + the number of cards revealed) and compare it to opponents.
- 8. Narrate Outcome**
Victors describe the conflict in order from lowest Fate value to highest Fate value.
- 9. Cease or Continue**
Victors decide whether the scene ends, or whether the conflict continues in another phase. Repeat these steps if the conflict continues.

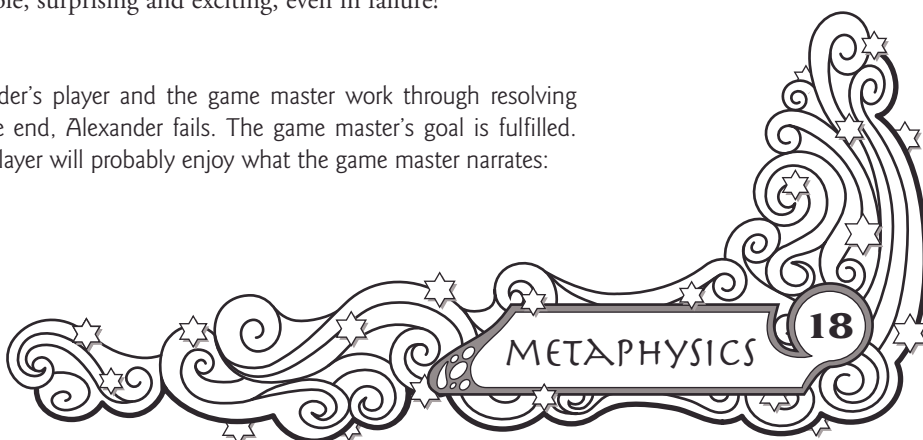


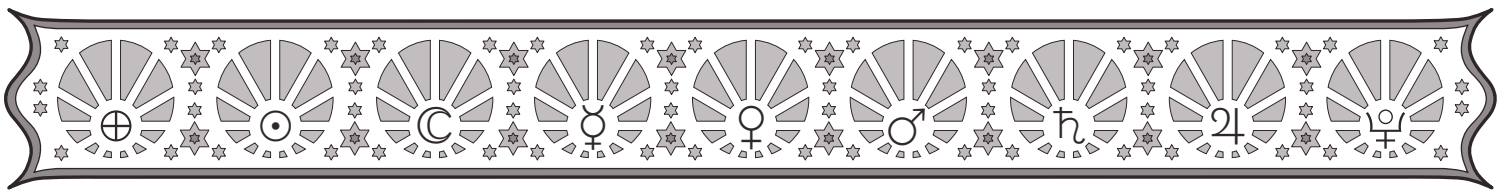
can narrate both success and failure in dramatic and enjoyable ways. Failure can be fun! The trick is recognizing what the players' real goals are in each conflict.

In the example above, the goal is not whether Alexander is able to create an æthership from scrap. The goal is whether Alexander can escape Mars in time. The rules in this game will help players resolve that goal. But, the fun part is describing *how* that goal resolves. Events may not happen as the player intends. But, they are often very enjoyable, surprising and exciting, even in failure!

The example continues ...

After stating their goals, Alexander's player and the game master work through resolving the conflict with their cards. In the end, Alexander fails. The game master's goal is fulfilled. Alexander will suffer a bit, but his player will probably enjoy what the game master narrates:





The game master narrates: “Alexander labors for days in the Martian desert, lashing together the scraps of war engines and bones into a macabre, but able æther vessel. As he launches into the æther, the craft spews out a moaning, foul wake. It’s not long before Atlantean reavers follow the ghostly trail. It’s the *Star Kraken*, the ship of those pirates you cheated off Sol! Alexander can’t outrun their craft, and he surrenders. He awaits the Atlantean captain’s revenge in the brig.”

Despite Alexander’s failure, everyone enjoys the story development. There’s no need for Alexander’s player to become frustrated at his failure. Alexander performed well, putting together an amazing æthercraft. Fate was simply too much for him in this scene, but the story continues, and the players are eager to see what happens next.

Basic conflict resolution, step-by-step

Here is a closer look at how conflict proceeds. Subsequent sections in this chapter offer expanded options and details available to players during conflicts.

Conflict phases

Conflict in this game occurs in phases. Rather than a set amount of time, a phase is the time in which all characters or entities may act to resolve the current conflict. Players will narrate the scene as they use cards and rules to resolve the conflict. Once all narrators have finished, the phase ends.

Often, a phase represents one scene, similar to a scene in fiction or film. That scene may span a long period of time, or jump from location to location, but the tension of the conflict will tie it together into a single scene. Occasionally, players may opt to continue a conflict through multiple, linked phases. The scene is complete only when players resolve all phases.

Declare goals

First, when a new conflict begins, each player must decide if he is involved. He does so by stating his Archon’s goal (or the supporting character’s goal, in the case of the game master) to the other players. This is a simple and often free-form discussion among players and the game master. Players can, and often will, adjust their goals after discussing it with the group and hearing other players’ goals. Once set, however, a goal is the guidepost for conflict, and players will use the following steps to fulfill their goals.

A goal might be a simple statement such as “My character tries to lie” or “I protect myself.” Or, a goal can be more complicated, such as “Alexander befriends the Atlantean guarding him in hopes the guard will convince the captain to free him, or maybe he’ll start a mutiny.”

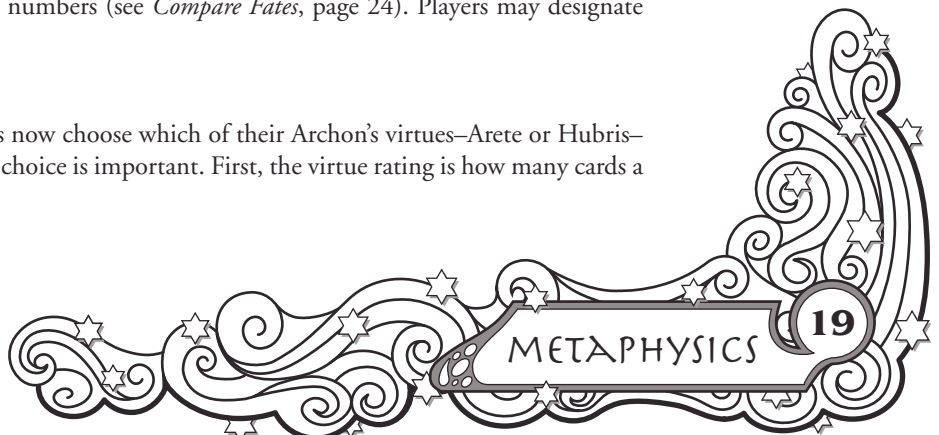
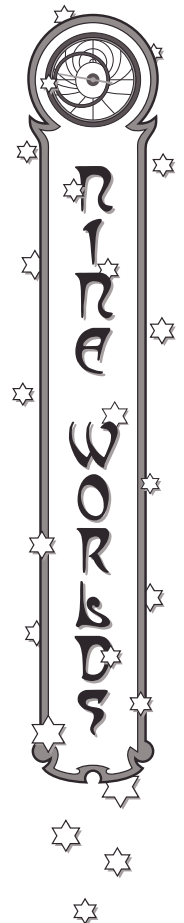
Players do not need to be overly specific, nor must players know exactly how their characters will achieve their goals. Often, players cannot foresee the surprising twists and turns the story will take during a conflict scene. That’s part of the fun of conflict resolution!

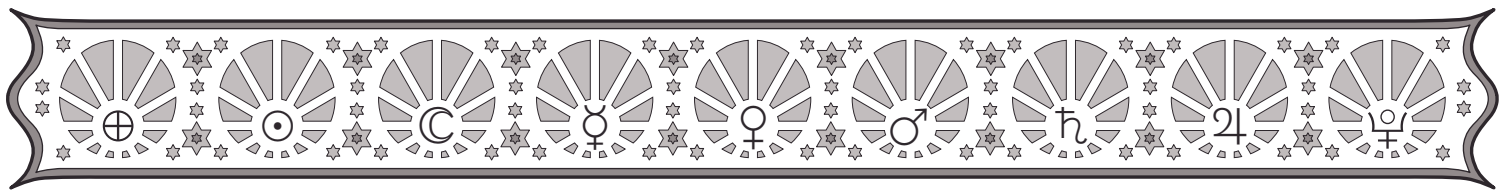
Designate opponents

Next, each player must designate which supporting characters or other Archons have goals in conflict with his own. These are *opponents*. This helps each player realize who he’s up against, and which players he’ll need to beat when comparing Fate numbers (see *Compare Fates*, page 24). Players may designate any number of opponents they wish.

Choose virtue

With goals and opponents set, players now choose which of their Archon’s virtues—Arete or Hubris—they will use to resolve the conflict. This choice is important. First, the virtue rating is how many cards a





THE IMPOSSIBLE GOAL

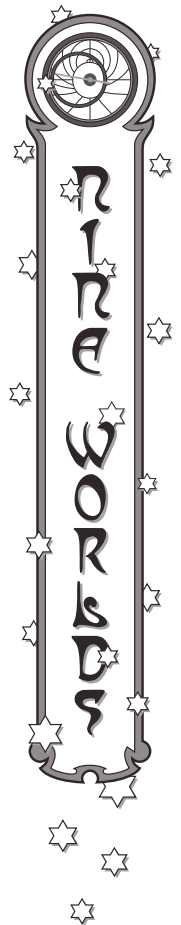
When players declare a goal, and then earn a victory, they should expect to see the goal fulfilled in narration. However, in certain cases, player goals cannot be completed without additional options. Primarily, this happens when a player announces a goal to kill or eliminate an opponent.

Victory alone does not permanently kill an opponent, even though a player may have stated it as his goal. To kill an opponent, a victor must also reduce the opponent's Arete, Hubris, or Power attribute to rating 0. (See *Death & Oblivion*, Page 45.)

So, what happens when a victor narrates his deadly victory, but can't reduce the opponent's attribute rating to 0? The victor should narrate his victory as he sees fit, bearing in mind that this isn't the opponent's final scene. He might even describe the apparent death of the opponent, and a glorious victory for their character. But, the victor then has the opportunity to get creative in describing the opponent's survival. For example, he might include a "cutaway scene" where Hades makes a bargain with the opponent's dead soul to return to life ... for a price.

What's important is that the opponent is not out of the game. The opponent may be at a disadvantage—one that requires a victory to overcome, likely. However, the victim's survival indicates the group's collaborative story isn't done with that character yet.

The impossible goal shouldn't be a frustration for players. Rather, players should view this arrangement as opportunity for tense drama and more exciting, developed stories for their characters.



player draws from his Fate deck for the conflict. Second, the choice reveals where the characters loyalties lie and how he wants to affect the universe. Finally, the choice influences how players will narrate the scene, and whether mundane or magical events will occur in the story.

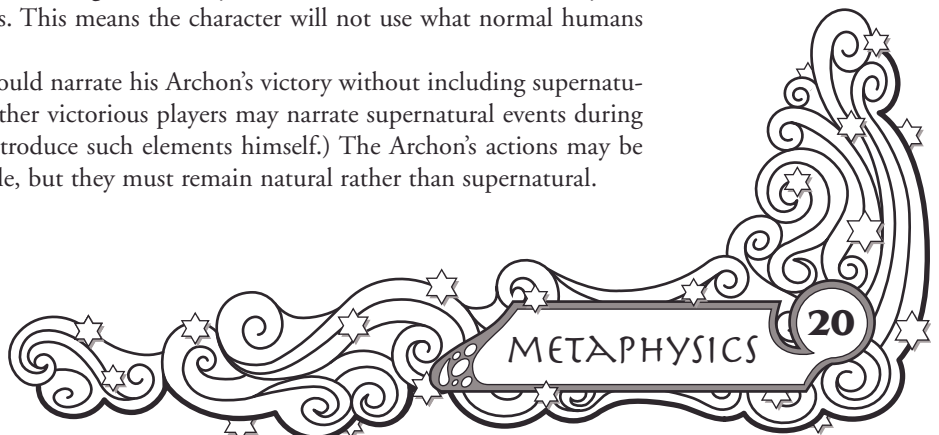
Either choice is valid; there is no "right" and "wrong" choice each time. Each virtue has its own significance and meaning, and each choice has its own benefit over time.

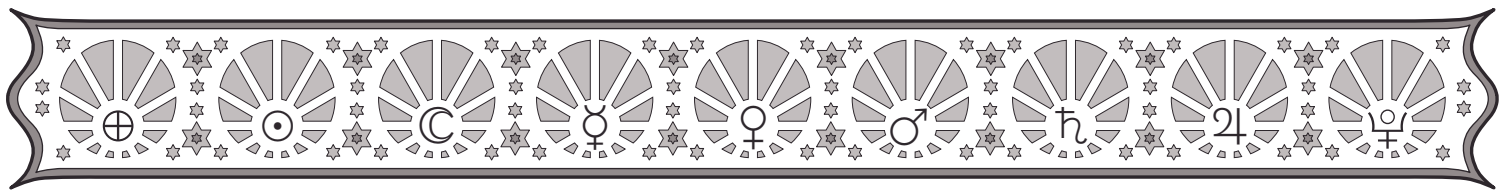
Choosing Arete

A player may choose to resolve a conflict using his Archon's Arete virtue. He then draws a number of cards from his Fate deck equal to his character's current Arete rating.

Choosing Arete represents the Archon's willingness to obey the laws of nature, the rules set by the immortal Primarchs of the Nine Worlds. This means the character will not use what normal humans would view as supernatural or magical.

Therefore, if victorious, the player should narrate his Archon's victory without including supernatural or magical elements in the story. (Other victorious players may narrate supernatural events during the phase, but the player should not introduce such elements himself.) The Archon's actions may be extraordinary, heroic, or even improbable, but they must remain natural rather than supernatural.





ABSOLUTE POWER

As explained in the Archons chapter, supporting characters controlled by the game master do not have Arete or Hubris. Instead, they have Power. Rather than choose between virtues like players do with their Archons, the game master always uses Power. This means she draws Fate cards based on his supporting characters current Power rating.

Supporting characters actions may be natural or supernatural, depending on the situation and the character. The game master is free to interpret and narrate victories involving Power as she desires.

Supporting characters should have Muses, and they may draw additional cards from relevant Muses just as players do for their Archons. (See *Apply Muses*, page 22)

Choosing Hubris

Alternatively, a player may choose to resolve a conflict using his Archon's Hubris virtue. In this case, the player draws a number of cards from his Fate deck equal to his character's current Hubris rating.

Choosing Hubris represents the Archon's ambition to defy the metaphysical laws of the universe and defy the reigning Primarchs. This means the Archon's action will be supernatural and magical—an unpredictable, often wondrous event.

Should he be victorious, the player will include magical events in his narration. The events described may include some mundane tasks or actions, but the essence of the action should be supernatural.

An example of the choice

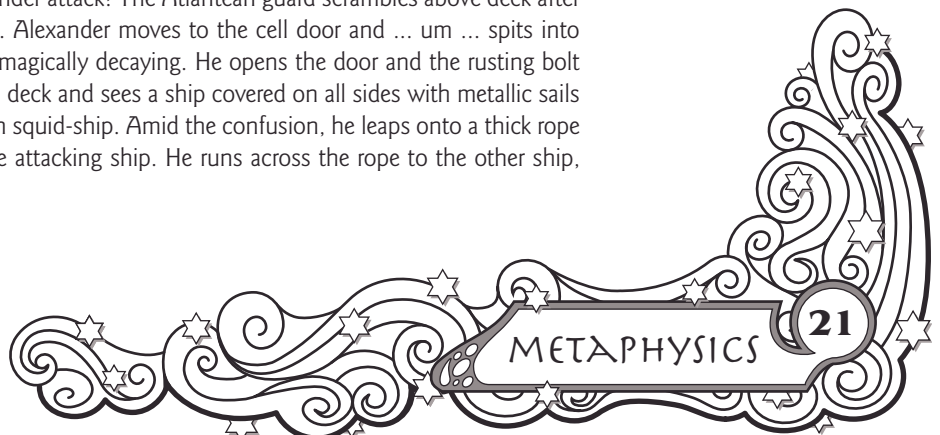
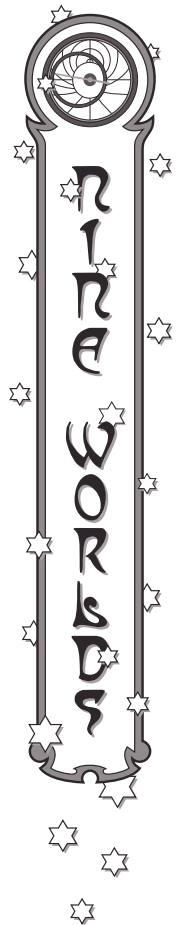
Alexander finds himself as a captive of the Atlanteans. Now he has a new, and perhaps more dangerous conflict. He must escape so he can continue his quest to save his lover's soul from Hades.

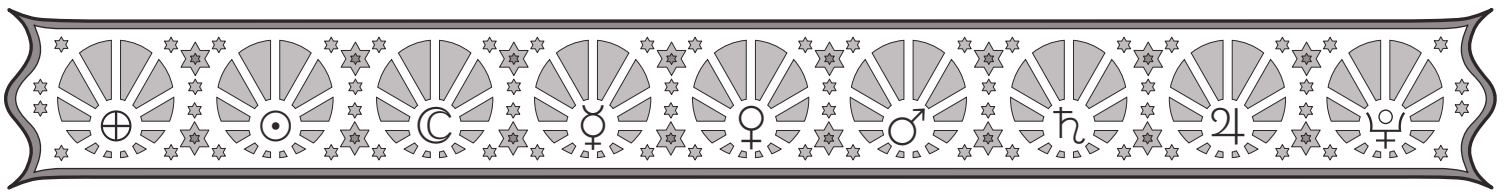
Alexander's player decides escape will be his goal in a new conflict, and he says so to the game master. He also says that his opponents are the Atlanteans.

Now, his player must decide whether to use Alexander's Arete (3) or Hubris (6). He chooses Hubris because Alexander's rating for that virtue is higher, and therefore success is more likely. Plus, he's eager to have Alexander do something magical.

Fortunately, Alexander is victorious. His player narrates the escape:

"Ok, here's what happens. Alexander has nearly given up hope of escape when the ship lurches violently. The æthership is under attack! The Atlantean guard scrambles above deck after a call to all hands from the captain. Alexander moves to the cell door and ... um ... spits into the lock! It rusts in a few seconds, magically decaying. He opens the door and the rusting bolt falls to the floor. Alexander races on deck and sees a ship covered on all sides with metallic sails blasting its cannons at the Atlantean squid-ship. Amid the confusion, he leaps onto a thick rope line tethering the *Star Kraken* to the attacking ship. He runs across the rope to the other ship,





while a pair of Atlanteans chase after him. But, the rope begins fraying under Alexander's feet. Before the Atlantean pirates can reach the other side, they tumble into the æther as the rope decays beneath them. Alexander's made his escape!"

Note that the victory in this example includes some supernatural elements—Alexander rusts the lock and frays the rope, magically decaying the world around him to his advantage. This is because his player chose Hubris to resolve the conflict (and used the Chaos Urge to do it—more on that in *Select Urge* on page 23). Had the player chosen Arete instead, the narration might have been very different. Alexander would have to escape without bending the rules of physics and entropy like he did in this example.

Apply Muses

After drawing cards for Arete or Hubris, each player may draw additional cards equal to his relevant Muse ratings. A relevant Muse is one that relates to the conflict situation in some way. It may be a situation involving characters named in the Muse. Or, it may be an obstacle the character must overcome to complete the goal in his Muse. Usually, recognizing a relevant Muse is intuitive. The game master may act as final authority to decide whether a Muse is relevant.

For each Muse relevant to the conflict, the controlling player draws a number of cards equal to the Muse's current rating. Players may use any number of Muses in a conflict, so long as each Muse is relevant to the situation.

An example

Following his lucky escape from the *Star Kraken*, Alexander finds himself aboard *The Wayfarer*, his former smuggling ship! Unfortunately for him, Athena now commands the ship! Alexander has a lot of explaining to do, but at the same time he can't believe his luck. As *The Wayfarer* leaves the *Star Kraken* adrift on the æther, Athena tells "her" crew to throw the stow-away overboard with the defeated Atlanteans.

Alexander's player wants to remain on board, so a new conflict begins. Alexander's player chooses to use Arete, in part to impress Athena. His Arete rating is only 3, but Alexander's chances of victory will improve with some help from his Muses.

Currently, Alexander's Muses are:

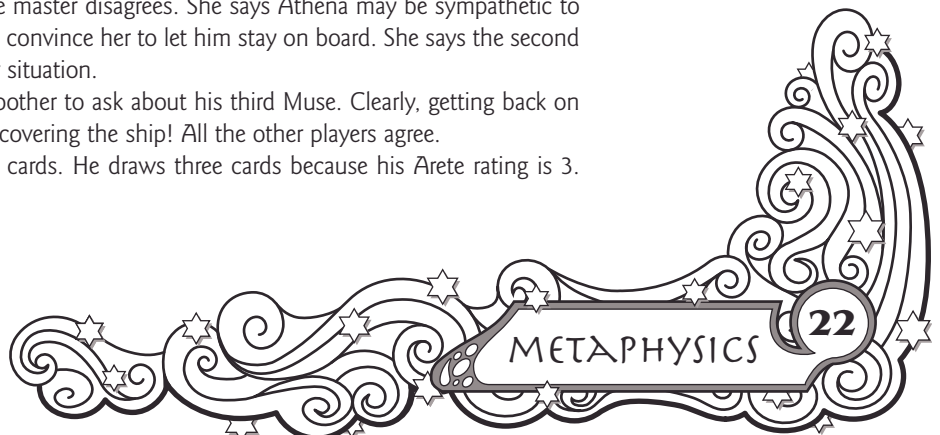
- 1) *Free Hannah's soul from the Underworld and return her to the mortal universe before Hades sends her to Tartarus* (4).
- 2) *Avenge the death of his lover, Hannah, by finding her killers on Jupiter* (3).
- 3) *Recover his æthership, the Wayfarer, after losing it to Hermes for smuggling quicksilver* (2).

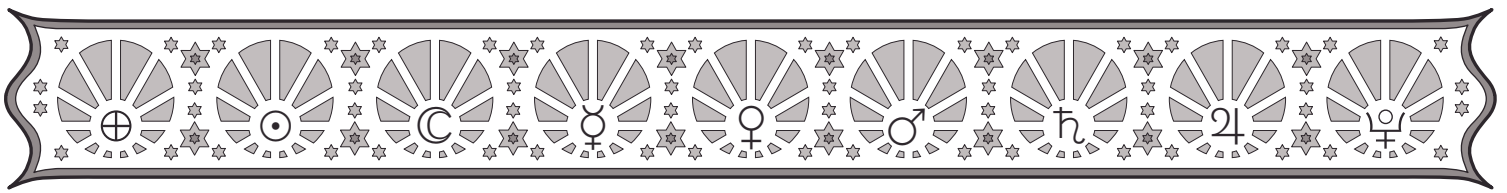
Alexander's player wants to use all of them. He tells the game master that Alexander can't risk losing time adrift on the æther he must get to Hades quickly, and remaining on board is his best option. The game master agrees that the first Muse is relevant, and she tells him to draw cards for that Muse.

Then, Alexander's player argues that Athena will be interested in seeing justice done on Jupiter, her former domain. He thinks the Muse is relevant, in part because Athena will be sympathetic to his cause. The game master disagrees. She says Athena may be sympathetic to his cause, but Alexander first has to convince her to let him stay on board. She says the second Muse isn't relevant in this particular situation.

Alexander's player doesn't even bother to ask about his third Muse. Clearly, getting back on board the *Wayfarer* is relevant to recovering the ship! All the other players agree.

So, Alexander's player draws his cards. He draws three cards because his Arete rating is 3.





Then, he draws four more cards thanks to his first Muse rating, and he draws another two cards because of his third Muse rating. His Fate draw against Athena is a sizable hand—nine cards total (3+4+2=9).

The extra cards help him to victory, and Alexander's player narrates:

"Since he knows that Athena is extremely perceptive and wise, Alexander does something extraordinary. He tells the truth. Alexander explains his predicament to Athena, including the fact that the *Wayfarer* was his ship and her crew was once his. To the amazement of the crew, Athena accepts Alexander's plea. In fact, she's so taken with Alexander's virtue in telling the truth that she promises to help him save his love. But, she sternly reminds Alexander that the ship is hers, and that he should not get any ideas."

Select Urge

Once each player has drawn his cards based on one virtue and relevant Muses, he then selects from his hand any number of cards with the same suit to represent his character's activity for the phase. The player should also keep the unused cards close by to help break ties.

The suit he selects indicates which Urge the character will use in the conflict. Recall that each Urge is associated with a particular card suit. Chaos relates to Spades (♠); Cosmos relates to Clubs (♣); Metamorphosis relates to Hearts (♥); and Stasis relates to Diamonds (♦). Jokers are "wild cards" that act as any single suit of the player's choosing. So, for example, choosing to play Clubs (♣) cards means a player intends to use his character's Cosmos Urge. And, if the player holds a Joker, the Joker counts as a Club as well.

Each Urge helps inform the action and events in narration. When a player selects an Urge, he also decides how his character behaves or how the events surrounding the character will occur. Each Urge indicates a different dynamic for the phase:

- ★ Chaos—the conflict will involve destruction, disintegration or some other kind of loss.
- ★ Cosmos—the conflict will include creation, repair or innovation.
- ★ Metamorphosis—the conflict will feature some kind of transformation or change.
- ★ Stasis—the conflict will involve preservation or protection of some nature.

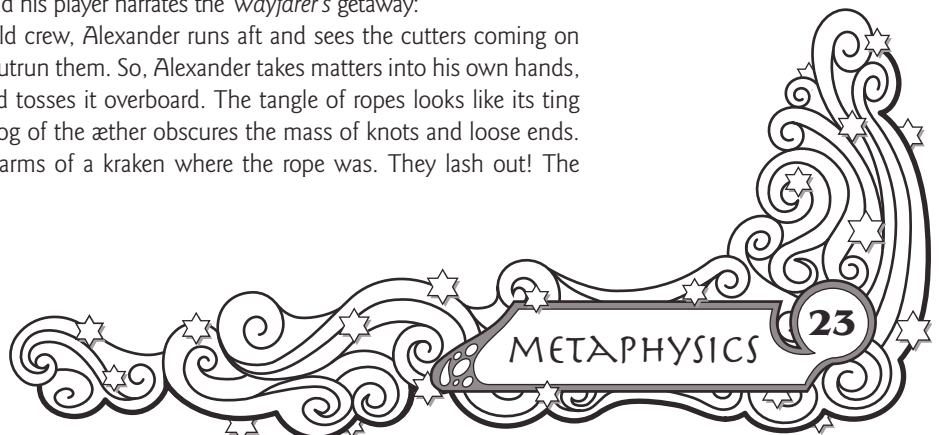
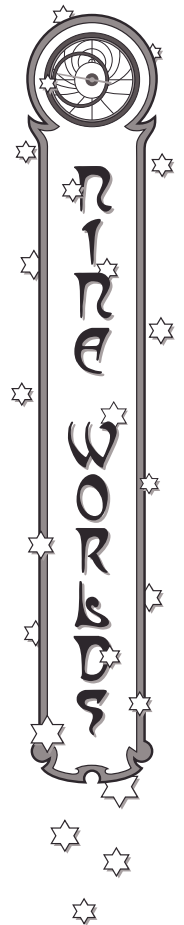
An example

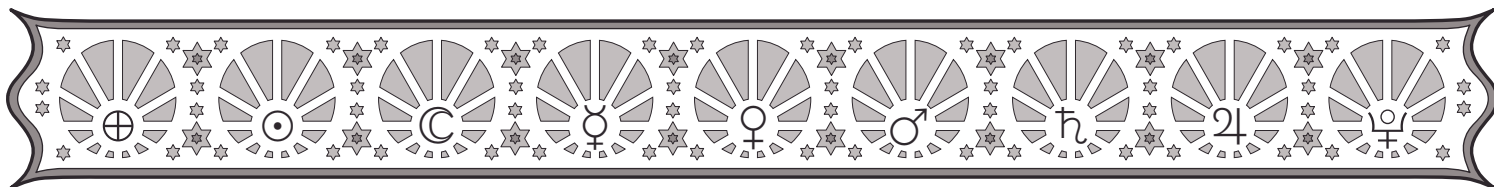
As the *Wayfarer* hurtles through the æther toward Jupiter, the ship is hounded by Order of Hermes cutter ships. Hermes wants to capture the rogue ship and return it to Pegasus Yards for "inspection."

Of course, Alexander's player resists this idea. In a new conflict he draws several cards based on his Hubris and some relevant Muses. Most of the cards in his hand are hearts, so he selects that suit. This means Alexander's Metamorphosis Urge will be active in the scene; some kind of transformation will likely occur—in this case magical transformation because Alexander's player uses Hubris as well.

Alexander's player is victorious, and his player narrates the *Wayfarer's* getaway:

"As Athena barks orders at his old crew, Alexander runs aft and sees the cutters coming on fast. He knows the *Wayfarer* can't outrun them. So, Alexander takes matters into his own hands, literally! He grabs a nearby rope and tosses it overboard. The tangle of ropes looks like it's ting itself in knots. Then, the mist and fog of the æther obscures the mass of knots and loose ends. Flashes of light reveal the rubbery arms of a kraken where the rope was. They lash out! The





kraken monster grapples one of the cutters before it can veer away, and it careens off course, smashing into the other ship. The *Wayfarer* sails on.”

In addition to inspiring dynamics like the Metamorphosis example here, Urges have other uses detailed in *Options*, the next section of this chapter. See *Manipulating Attributes*, page 31.

Play Fate

Simultaneously, each player then plays his selected cards—usually by laying cards in front of him face up—and announces his Fate value. The Fate value is the number of same-suit cards played plus the current rating of the corresponding Urge.

Compare Fates

At this point, each player compares his Fate value each of his individual opponents. If the player’s Fate exceeds *at least one* of his opponents’ Fate value, he is a *victor*. This means the player’s declared goal is at least partially successful. Of course, other opponents could defeat him in turn, which is why the victor may only be partially successful. Should a player’s Fate exceed all his opponents’ Fates, he will be wholly successful; his goal will be realized completely.

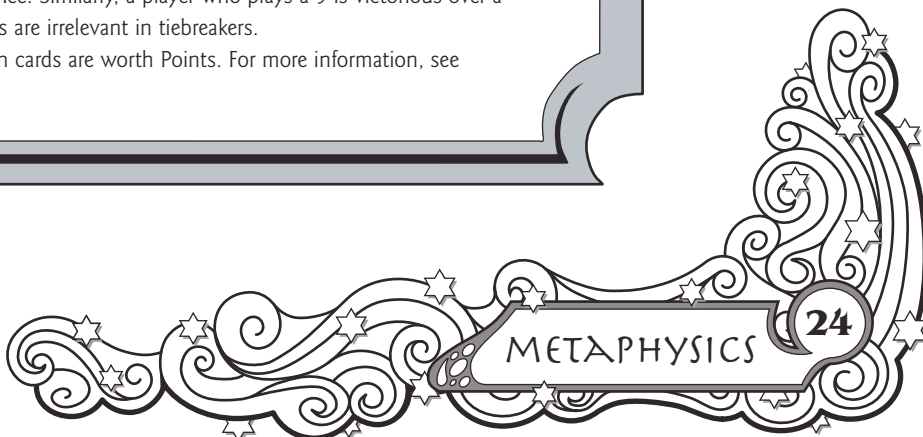


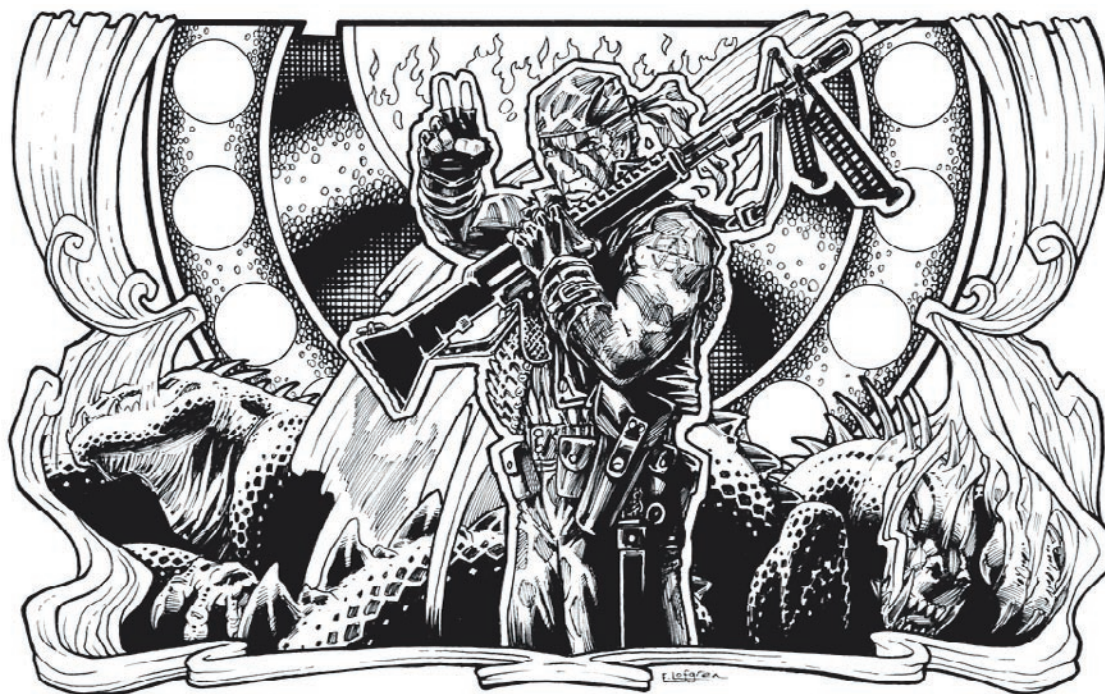
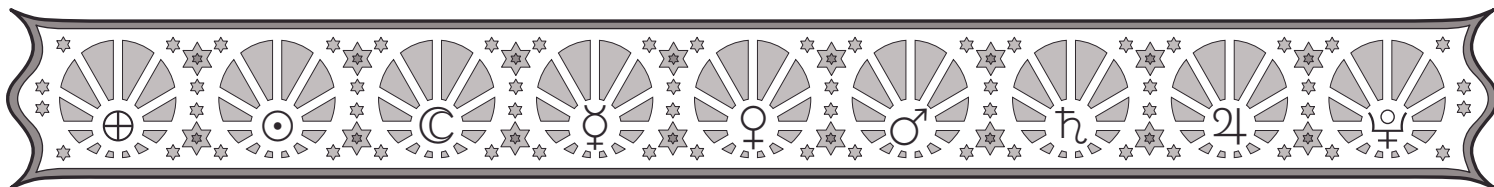
CARD VALUES

Card/Rank	Point value
King	1 Point
Queen	1 Point
Jack	1 Point
10	-
9	-
8	-
7	-
6	-
5	-
4	-
3	-
2	-
Ace	1 Point
Joker	1 Point

This list shows card values from highest to lowest rank, top to bottom. For example, to resolve a conflict when Fate values tie, a player who plays a King is victorious against a player who plays an Ace. Similarly, a player who plays a 9 is victorious over a player who plays a 3. Card suits are irrelevant in tiebreakers.

The list also indicates which cards are worth Points. For more information, see *Points*, page 29.





When Fate values tie, opposing players select any single card from the unused cards in their hands and reveal it. The player with the highest value card is the victor (see the chart on the previous page for card value rankings). If card values are equal, players select another single card to compare. Should any player run out of cards before his tied opponents do, he loses. If all players run out of unused cards simultaneously, they draw cards from their Fate decks until the highest card determines the victor.

Narrate outcome

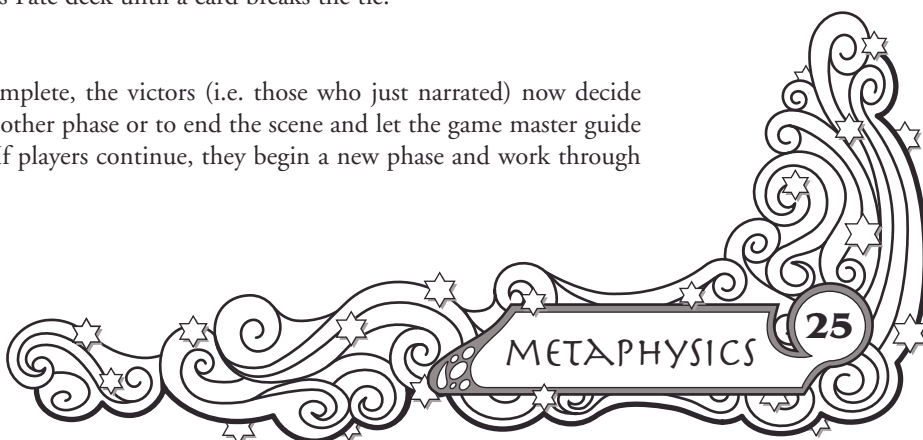
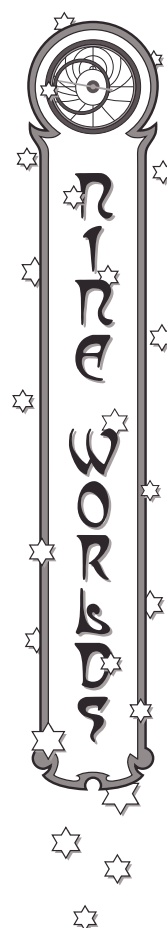
When a player is victorious against at least one opponent, he has earned the right to narrate the conflict's resolution, in cooperation with any other victorious players in the conflict. Only victors narrate. The victors explain how their declared goals are fulfilled, partially or completely.

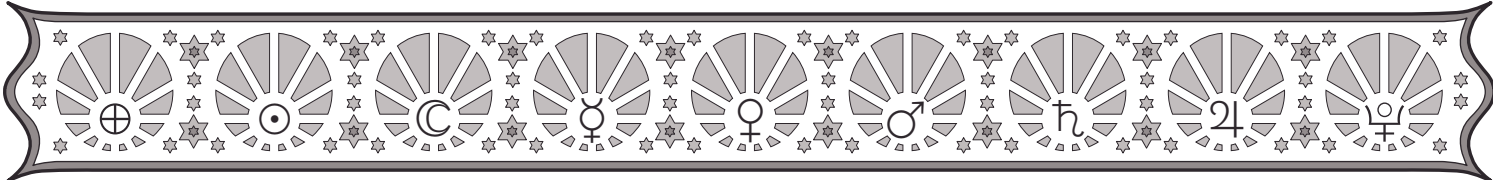
The victor with the lowest Fate value narrates first, followed by victor with the next lowest, and so on until all victors have contributed to the description and narration of the conflict phase.

If victors' Fate values tie, the victors can either agree who narrates first, or they may break ties by revealing a single unused cards from their hand. The victor with the lowest single card narrates first among the tied victors, followed by the victor with the second-lowest single card, and so on until the victor with the highest card narrates last. If the single cards played are also tied, players may continue to play one unused card from their hands until they resolve the tie. If any player runs out of cards from his hand, he simply draws cards from his Fate deck until a card breaks the tie.

Continue or cease?

Once narration for the conflict is complete, the victors (i.e. those who just narrated) now decide whether to continue the conflict into another phase or to end the scene and let the game master guide players into new scenes and situations. If players continue, they begin a new phase and work through





HOW TO NARRATE

When narrating, a victor should describe, as colorfully and enjoyably as he can, how his Archon (or supporting characters, in the case of the game master) accomplishes his goal for the conflict.

Victors have considerable control of the story as they narrate. They may include existing characters, introduce new characters, add props and details or even change locale and setting of the scene. Their narration may span any amount of “in-game” time.

Winning the right to narrate does not mean that the player must come up with every single detail and description alone. Players are welcome to consider suggestions and fun ideas from other players, and they may even solicit feedback from other players, including players who did not earn a victory. But, in the end, the victor’s narration is inviolable—other players may not alter the actions, events and descriptions of the narration once complete.

Similarly, victors should not expect the game master to keep them “in check.” The game master should react and adapt to narrations, rather than limit or predetermine the outcome of scenes. (Of course, the game master may be a victor herself, and she has the same authority to narrate as other players when she is a victor.)

However, players need to remember that they often share narration of the conflict with other players. For that reason, narrators should try to accommodate fellow victors, leaving sufficient opportunity for them to contribute to the scene. Because narration happens in sequence, players should also incorporate story elements described by previous victors.



the conflict resolution process again. Players may use the same goal, or modify their goals based on events in the previous phase.

Basic conflict resolution, a detailed example

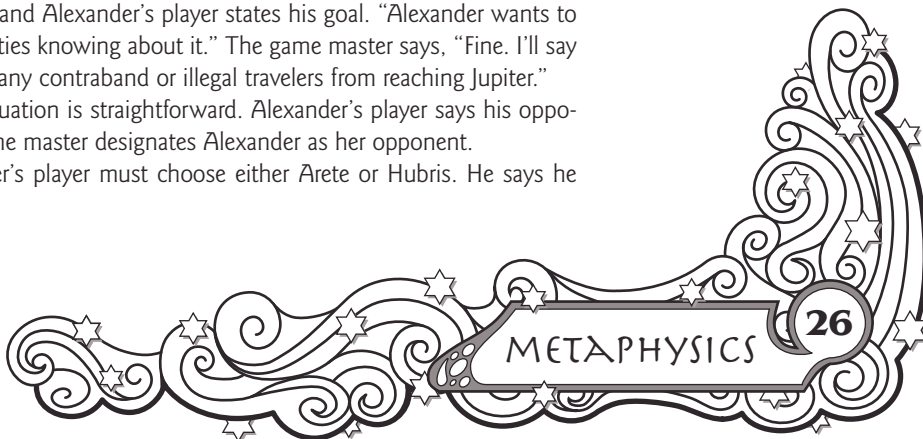
Days pass, and the *Wayfarer* approaches Jupiter. Alexander is in his cabin when he realizes Zeus’ Aegis agents have boarded the ship to inspect cargo and crew. Alexander suspects that Aegis agents killed his lover, Hannah, and he doesn’t want them to know he’s here.

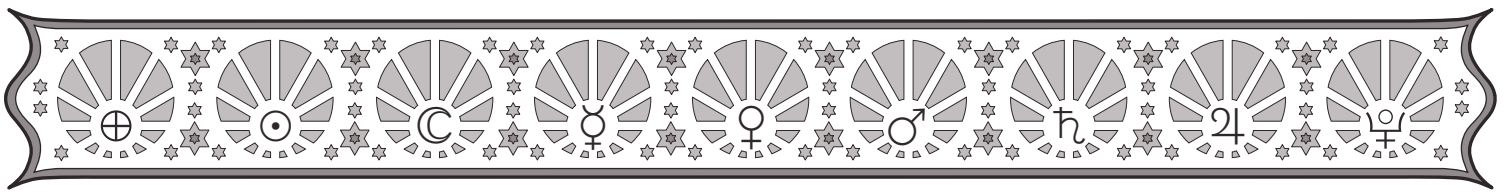
The game master tells Alexander’s player that there are several Aegis agents inspecting the *Wayfarer*, but all will be represented by one set of scores. In essence, the group of agents acts as a single supporting character with a single Power rating, one set of Urge ratings, and one Muse.

Declare goals: Conflict begins, and Alexander’s player states his goal. “Alexander wants to arrive on Jupiter without the authorities knowing about it.” The game master says, “Fine. I’ll say the Aegis agents’ goal is to prevent any contraband or illegal travelers from reaching Jupiter.”

Designate opponents: This situation is straightforward. Alexander’s player says his opponents are the Aegis agents. The game master designates Alexander as her opponent.

Choose virtue: Now, Alexander’s player must choose either Arete or Hubris. He says he





wants to avoid raising suspicion with magical effects, so he chooses Alexander's Arete with a rating of 3. Meanwhile, the game master will simply use the Aegis agents' Power rating, which is currently 6.

Apply Muses: Alexander has three Muses, and his player tells the game master that all are relevant.

His first Muse (*Free Hannah's soul from the Underworld and return her to the mortal universe before Hades sends her to Tartarus*) is relevant because time is running out to redeem Hannah's soul; he can't get caught.

His second Muse (*Avenge the death of his lover, Hannah, by finding her killers on Jupiter*) is relevant because he suspects Aegis agents are the people who killed his lover.

Finally, he argues that getting caught on the *Wayfarer* will spoil his chances to earn back the ship, which is his third Muse (*Recover his æthership, the Wayfarer, after losing it to Hermes for smuggling quicksilver*).

This means he'll draw a total of twelve cards from his Fate deck—three cards from his Arete and nine cards from his Muses.

The game master accepts his arguments. But, she reminds him that the Aegis agents, who have a sworn duty to Zeus and their homeland, also have a relevant Muse: *Prevent interlopers from sabotaging or subverting Zeus' secret war plans* (4). So, the game master will draw a total of ten cards—six for the agents Power rating and four for their Muse.

Select Urge: Alexander's player draws his cards: A♣, 3♣, 7♣, 4♦, 6♦, J♦, 3♥, 4♥, 9♥, Q♥, 7♠, 8♠. He notices a lot of hearts cards, and he thinks Metamorphosis would be a fun choice for the situation—maybe he can mask his identity somehow.

Meanwhile, the game master draws her cards: 4♣, 3♦, 5♦, 8♦, A♥, 4♥, Q♥, 4♠, K♠ and a Joker. She decides to use her diamond suit (she can also use the wild card Joker as a diamond), which means the Agents will use their Stasis Urge. That makes sense, she reasons, because they're trying to keep the status quo on Jupiter.

Play Fate: Alexander's player sorts out his hearts cards. He has four cards to play, and he lays them on the table. He adds Alexander's Metamorphosis Urge rating (2) and says, "I've got a six," he says.

The game master also tallies up her Fate. She has three diamond cards, plus a Joker. She adds the Aegis agents' current Stasis Urge rating of 2 to the four cards.

"I've got a six, too."

Compare Fates: The players realize now their Fate values are tied.

"We need to break the tie," the game master says. "Play one more card."

They each grab the highest card remaining in their hands. Alexander's player reveals his J♦. The game master shows her K♠, which is higher.

"Wow, a close one!" she says. "The Aegis agents have Alexander beat, but just barely."

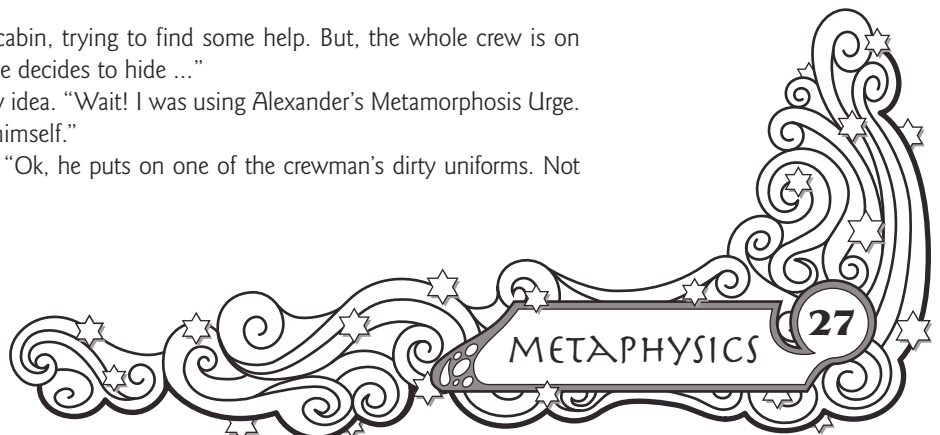
Narrate outcome: The game master is victorious. This means her goal for the conflict is fulfilled, and it also means she narrates the scene.

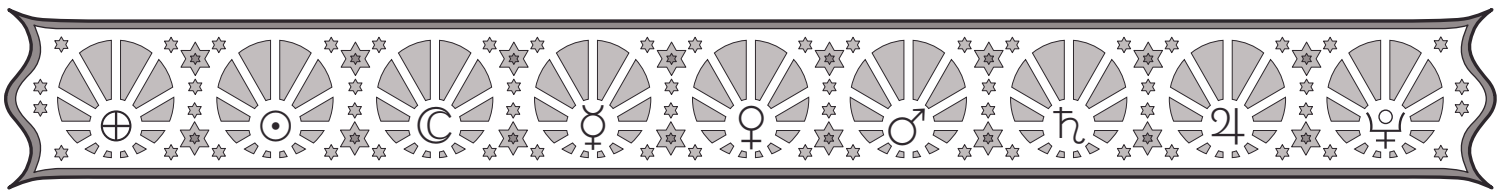
"Ok," she says, "my goal was to prevent any 'illegal travelers' from reaching Jupiter. So, here's what happens.

"Alexander races from cabin to cabin, trying to find some help. But, the whole crew is on deck. All the cabins are empty, so he decides to hide ..."

Alexander's interrupts with a new idea. "Wait! I was using Alexander's Metamorphosis Urge. I was thinking he'd try to disguise himself."

"I like it," says the game master. "Ok, he puts on one of the crewman's dirty uniforms. Not





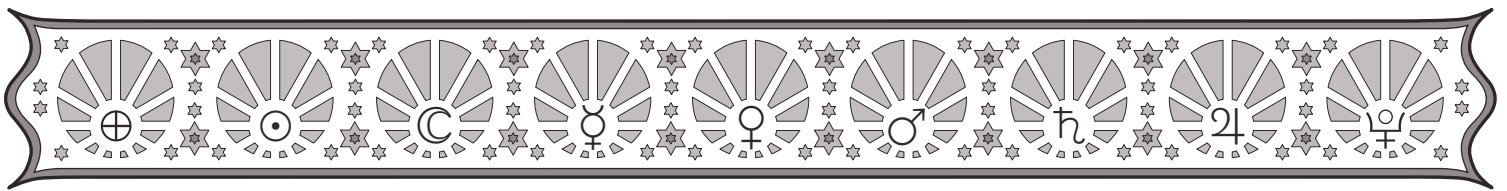
exactly his style, but it'll do. Or so Alexander thinks. When he goes above deck to stand in line with the crew, one of the Aegis officers notices him. 'You look familiar, somehow,' he mumbles. Before Alexander can answer, the officer has him on the floor and shackles his arms and feet. As the agents escort him to their patrol craft, Alexander looks over his shoulder at his gloomy crewmates and wonders where Athena is. But it's too late. He's a captive once again!"

Continue or cease?: In this conflict, the game master is the only victor, and the only narrator. It's up to her to decide whether the conflict, and thus the scene, ends now, or whether it continues into another phase.

"I'd say that's a good place to close this scene," she says. "Let's narrate through Alexander's interrogation with the Aegis agents. Some new conflict is bound to happen soon!"

This example demonstrates how players can use basic conflict resolution to make story happen in their games. Conflict resolution is the most important and most fundamental thing players will do to create fun and exciting drama in this game.





PART 2: OPTIONS

This section explains several options players may use during conflicts to manipulate their characters' Muses and attribute ratings.

Points

During conflicts, players can earn Points. Players may think of Points as the product of good fortune or destiny for their characters. Points originate from certain cards players reveal for their Fate values. This means the cards played or revealed during conflict, not the unused cards remaining in players' hands or cards used to break ties.

A player accumulates Points by the following means:

- 1) **A victor may capture any Points his defeated opponents put into play.** Each face card, Ace or Joker card the opponent played is one Point. (Face cards are Kings, Queens, and Jacks.) This happens after players compare Fates, but before any victors narrate.

Players capture Points according to their Fate values. The player with the highest Fate value first captures as many Points as he wishes from his any of his defeated opponents. Then, the player with the next highest Fate value captures any remaining Points from his opponents, and so on until all Victors have an opportunity to capture Points.

Resolve ties using the usual method—players compare single cards from their unused Fate hands or Fate decks. (See *Compare Fates* on page 24.) The winner of the tie-breaker may capture as many Points from the defeated opponent as he wishes, followed by the runner-up in the tie breaker, and so on.

- 2) **In addition, the victor retains any Points in his own hand unless a different opponent captures the Points from him.** Again, Points result from Face cards, Aces or Jokers revealed. This also happens after players compare Fates, but before narration begins.
- 3) **Finally, in desperate situations, a victor may expend his character's Muse ratings to generate Points in a conflict.** Each Muse rating point sacrificed becomes 1 Point the player may use. This happens after players capture or retain Points; opponents cannot capture Points generated from sacrificed Muses. If a player expends a Muse and reduces its rating to 0, he must immediately eliminate the Muse from the character. He cannot ever resolve the Muse if this happens (see *Resolving Muses* on page 37).

Using Points

Once acquired, a victor must then *spend* his acquired Points during his narration in any of three ways (Points unspent are lost; players cannot keep them in reserve):

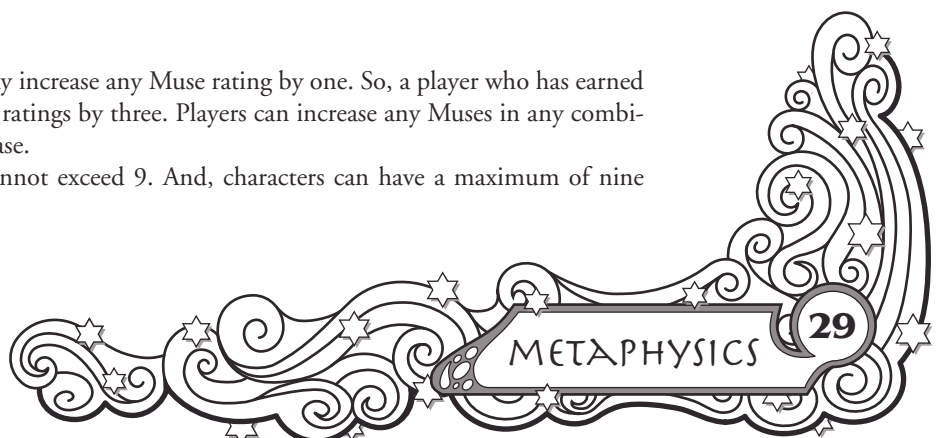
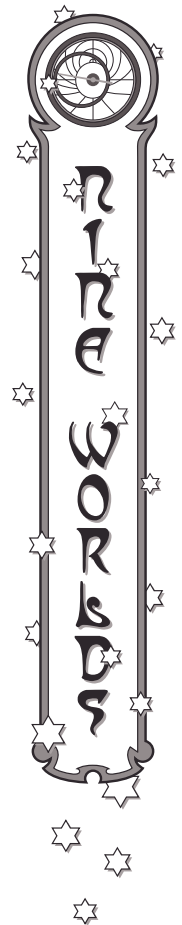
- 1) **First, a victor may use Points to increase his character's Muses.**
- 2) **Second, a victor may use Points to create new Muses for his character.**
- 3) **Third, a victor can use Points in conjunction with his character's Urges to manipulate attribute ratings of any characters in the conflict.**

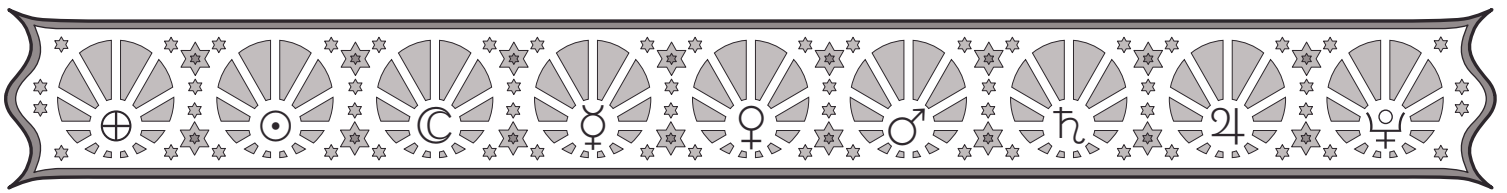
Players may mix and match any of these three options at any time, using Points in any combination. Here is a closer look at each of the three options:

1. Increasing Muses

For each Point a player spends, he may increase any Muse rating by one. So, a player who has earned 3 Points could increase any of his Muse ratings by three. Players can increase any Muses in any combination with Points during a conflict phase.

However, recall that Muse ratings cannot exceed 9. And, characters can have a maximum of nine





separate Muses, or a total of nine Muses and Talismans combined. (See *Talismans* on page 41.) Players cannot use Points to exceed these maximums; they must find another option to use any excess Points.

An example

A trio of Aegis agents shoves Alexander into a dingy cell on their patrol ship, and they take turns bloodying his face as they interrogate. The game master was right; conflict arises soon for Alexander. The agents want to know who he is and what he's doing on Jupiter. Alexander's player wants to stay silent and escape.

So, they work through the conflict and play their cards. The game master announces her Fate of 5 and reveals the following cards: A♠, 8♠, J♠. The Ace and the Jack mean she holds 2 Points.

Alexander's player announces his Fate of 7, and he reveals these cards: 2♥, 5♥, Q♥, Joker. With the Queen and the Joker, he also holds 2 Points.

Alexander's player is the victor with the highest Fate (7 vs. 5). Therefore, he can capture any Points his opponent holds. He captures 2 Points from the game master. In addition, Alexander's player retains his own 2 Points because no other opponent defeated his Fate value. Alexander's player now has a total of 4 Points.

"This is great," he says. "I can use these to help Alexander find Hannah and her killers. I'm going to use 3 Points to increase my Muse: *Avenge the death of his lover, Hannah, by finding her killers on Jupiter*. Now, that muse has a rating of 6. And, I'm going to use the remaining 1 Point to increase my Muse: *Free Hannah's soul from the Underworld and return her to the mortal universe before Hades sends her to Tartarus*. Now, that Muse has a rating of 5. I'll get to draw a lot more cards the next time I draw."

2. Creating new Muses

For each Point a player spends, he may create a new Muse with a rating of 1. Once the player creates a new Muse, he may spend any additional Points to increase to Muse. See guidelines for creating Muses on page 11. Players may create any new Muse they wish, so long as they follow these guidelines.

However, players must remember that Muse ratings may not exceed 9, and each character may have a maximum of nine Muses, or a combined total of nine Muses and Talismans. (See *Talismans* on Page 41.)

An example

Alexander tells his Aegis interrogators more lies, and they take him to Olympia for more questioning at Aegis headquarters. There, the agents surprise him. They bring out one of Hannah's old friends, Lydia. They threaten to torture her if he doesn't start talking. They're getting close to the truth. A new conflict begins.

Lydia is an Archon, controlled by another player. Lydia's player and Alexander's player decide to work together. They declare a goal for the conflict--they want to help each other escape. Both name the Aegis agents as opponents.

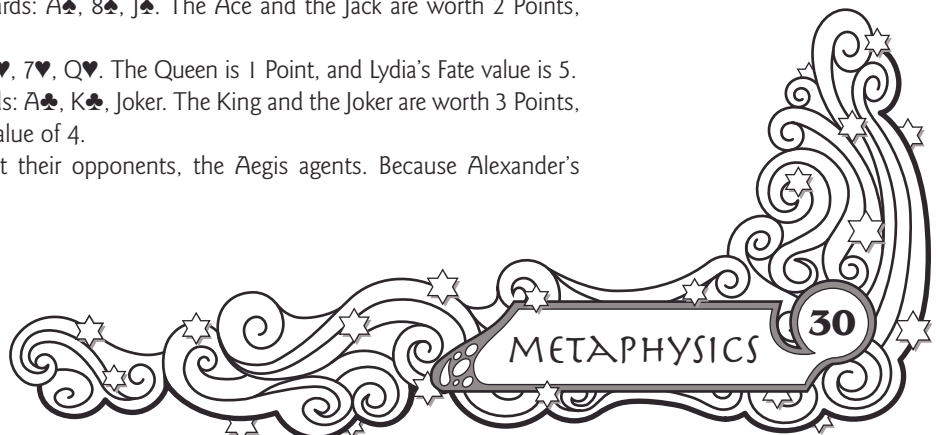
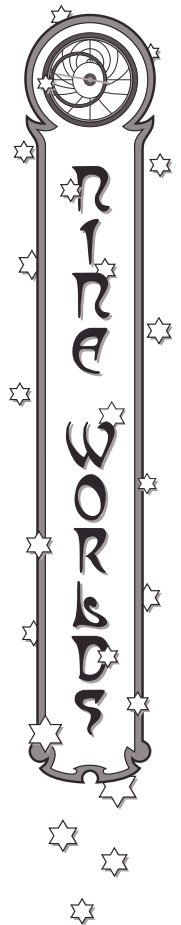
The players and game master draw their cards.

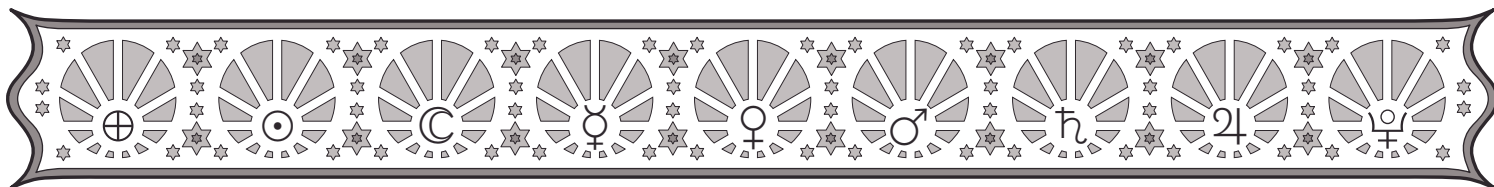
Alexander's player plays these cards: A♠, 8♠, J♠. The Ace and the Jack are worth 2 Points, and Alexander's Fate value is 7.

Lydia's player plays these cards: 2♥, 7♥, Q♥. The Queen is 1 Point, and Lydia's Fate value is 5.

The game master plays these cards: A♣, K♣, Joker. The King and the Joker are worth 3 Points, and the Aegis agents' have a Fate value of 4.

Alexander and Lydia both defeat their opponents, the Aegis agents. Because Alexander's





player revealed the highest Fate, he has the first opportunity to capture Points from his opponents. His opponents have 3 Points.

"I'm only going to take 1 Point," says Alexander's player. "Lydia can benefit from the others. I think she needs them more than Alexander will. With my own Points and this one I captured, I have 3 Points. I'm going to use them to create a new Muse with rating 3. The muse is: *Help Lydia get back to her Aquarian allies on Earth.*"

Lydia's player is next. "Thanks!" she says. "That's a good idea. I'm going to capture the remaining 2 points from the Aegis agents. That, plus my own Queen card means I get 3 points also. I'm going to do the same thing as you. I'll make a new Muse for Lydia: *Help Alexander, whom she now loves, rescue Hannah's soul in the Underworld.* The rating is 3. That should make things really interesting now, and we can help each other out more."

They then narrate the scene and spend their Points. Lydia's player narrates first, because she has the lower Fate value. Then, Alexander's player finishes off the scene describing their frantic escape into the streets of Olympia.

3. Manipulating attributes

With Points, a player can manipulate the attribute ratings—Arete, Hubris, Power, or any of the four Urges—of any Archon or supporting character participating in a conflict phase. Attribute ratings may fluctuate during a conflict, but the scores revert to their permanent ratings at the end of the scene. Players should remember: one conflict scene could contain only one phase or it could contain several linked conflict phases. Attribute ratings revert at the end of the *scene*, not necessarily the end of the *phase*.

The Urge a player selects during a conflict determines what kind of Points he'll use and how he can affect attribute ratings. Each Urge has a unique function:

- ★ Chaos Points reduce attribute ratings
- ★ Cosmos Points increase attribute ratings
- ★ Metamorphosis Points transfer attribute ratings
- ★ Stasis Points create special locks that freeze attribute ratings

A player must use the Urge he selects for his character. For example, if a player acquires Cosmos Points for one character he controls during a conflict phase, he must use the Cosmos function for that character during that phase. He may not decide instead to use the Points as Chaos Points, for instance.

Chaos Points

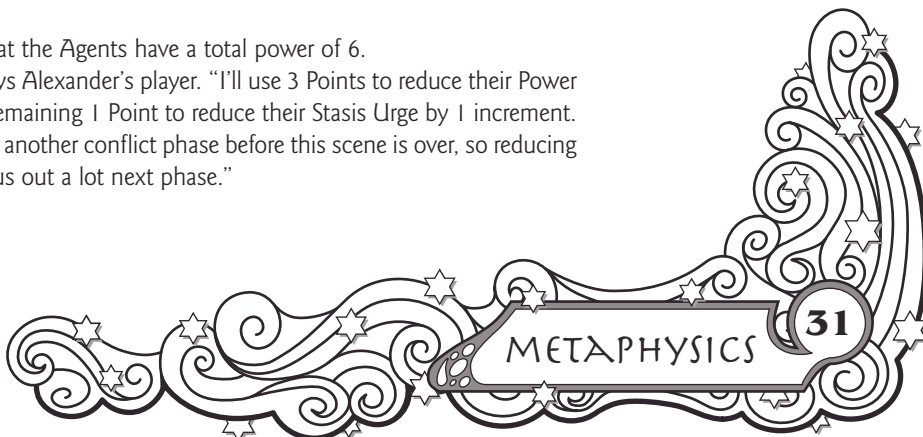
With Chaos Points, a player may eliminate or reduce the existing attribute ratings (Arete, Hubris, Power, or any Urge) of any Archon or supporting character involved in a conflict. The player may eliminate a number of rating scores up to the number of Points he accumulates in victory. The player may eliminate scores from any combination of target opponents and any combination of characteristics.

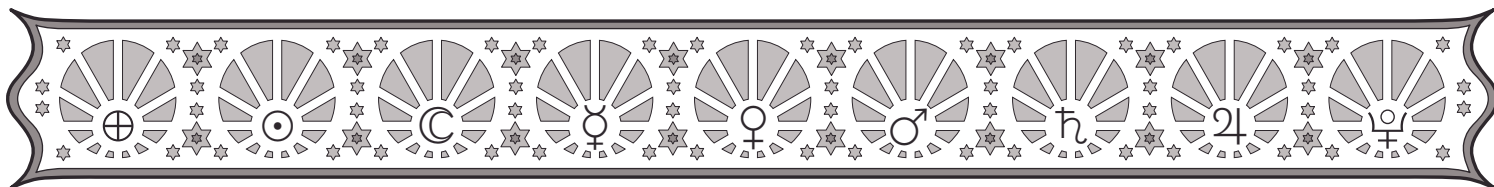
An example

During a chase through the streets of Olympia, Alexander's player has acquired a total of 4 Points in a conflict against the persistent Aegis agents. He wants to use them as Chaos Points to reduce the Aegis agent's power.

The game master informs him that the Agents have a total power of 6.

"I'm going to cut that in half," says Alexander's player. "I'll use 3 Points to reduce their Power by 3 increments. Then, I'll use the remaining 1 Point to reduce their Stasis Urge by 1 increment. I know we're probably going to have another conflict phase before this scene is over, so reducing their Power and Stasis should help us out a lot next phase."





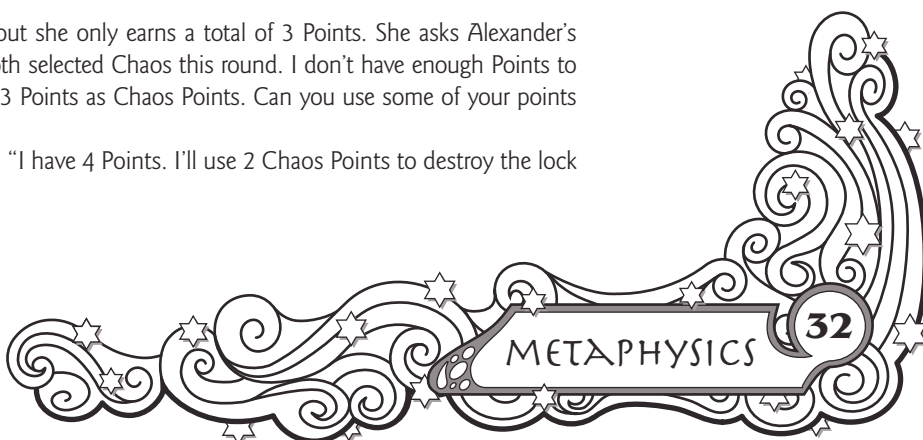
Players can also use Chaos Points to destroy Stasis locks (see *Stasis Points*, page 35). In order to eliminate a lock, a player must allot a number of his Points equal to the lock's rating. Failure to meet this threshold means the lock remains totally unaffected at the end of the phase. However, locks may be destroyed by different characters in a single conflict, so players may wish to coordinate. To coordinate, players must use the same kind of Urge Points (in this case, Chaos). Once a number of Chaos Points from any source equals a lock's rating, the lock is immediately destroyed. After destroying a lock, a player may use excess Points any way he wishes.

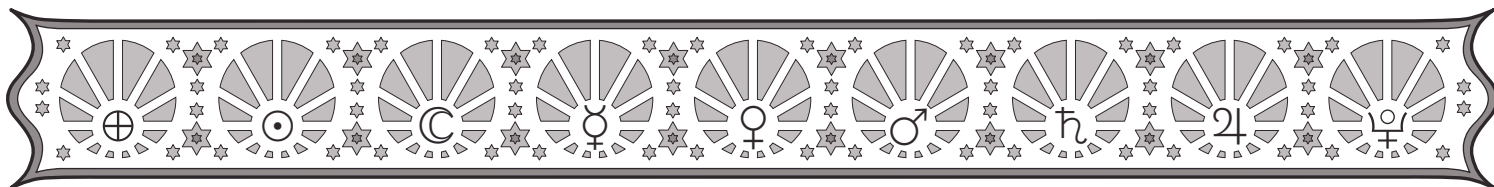
An example

Alexander and Lydia race to find somewhere to hide or flee. Unfortunately for Lydia, however, the Aegis agents locked her Hubris at a lower current rating in the previous conflict phase. The Stasis lock—which the narrator described as a pair of brass-colored handcuffs—has a rating of 5.

Lydia's player ekes out a victory, but she only earns a total of 3 Points. She asks Alexander's player if he can help. "I know we both selected Chaos this round. I don't have enough Points to get this lock off, though. I'll use my 3 Points as Chaos Points. Can you use some of your points to take care of the rest?"

"Sure," Alexander's player replies. "I have 4 Points. I'll use 2 Chaos Points to destroy the lock





for good. Then, I'll split my last 2 Points. I'll put 1 Point on my new Muse: *Help Lydia get back to her Aquarian allies on Earth*. Its rating is now 4. And, I'll use my last point to knock down the agent's Power rating one more tick. They're power rating is now 2, right?"

"Right," the game master says. "Now, you can take turns narrating how Alexander and Lydia break that lock, and more importantly how you fulfill your goals this phase. Spend your points when you do. So, what happens?"

Cosmos Points

A player can use Cosmos Points to increase the existing attribute ratings (Arete, Hubris, Power, or any Urge) of any Archon or supporting character involved in a conflict. The player may increase a number of rating scores up to the number of Points he accumulates in victory. The player may increase scores from any combination of target opponents and any combination of characteristics.

An example

Alexander and Lydia evade their Aegis pursuers, and make their way to Olympia Heights, Jupiter's great ætherport. There, they discover the *Wayfarer* under heavy guard. In his effort to get aboard the ship, Alexander's player has earned 3 Points.

He says, "Well, I don't want to get away just yet. I want to know what they did with Athena and the crew, but I doubt my Arete score is good enough to pull off my plan. I'm going to boost it. I'll use 2 Points to increase my Arete for this conflict. Then, I'll use the other 1 Point to improve by Metamorphosis rating by 1. Let's go into another phase so I can get these guards to tell me more before we set sail."

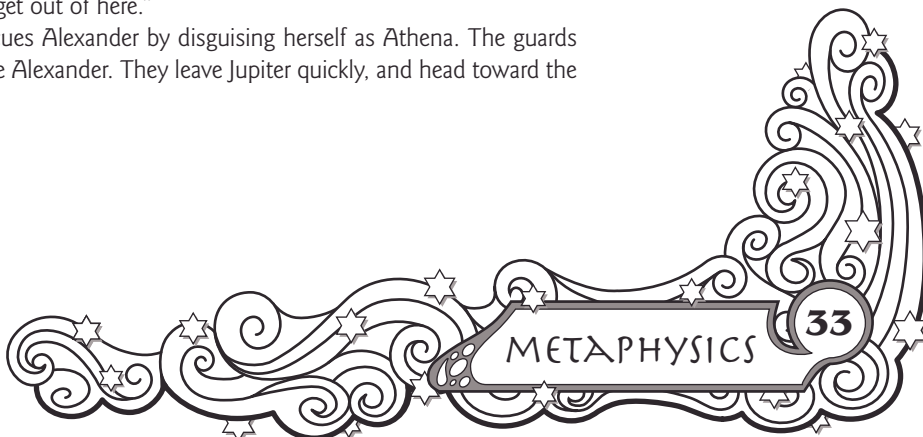
A player may also use Cosmos Points to overload, and thus destroy, Stasis locks (see *Stasis Points*, page 35). To do so, the player must allot a number of Cosmos Points equal to the lock's rating. Failure to meet or exceed the lock's rating means the lock remains unaffected at the end of the phase. However, locks may be overloaded in this manner by different characters in a single conflict phase. To coordinate an overload, all coordinating players involved must use Cosmos Points. If the sum of Cosmos Points allotted in any way equals the lock rating, the lock is immediately destroyed. Once the lock is removed, the player may use any excess Points any way he wishes

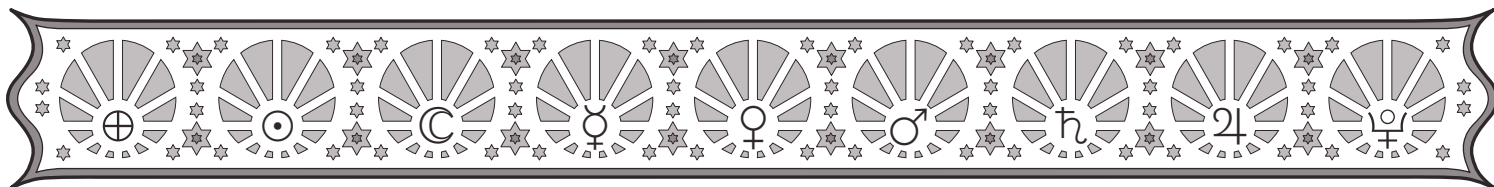
An example

Alexander's plan to find out more information from the guards goes awry. An officer recognizes him, and arrests him on the spot. Now, unfortunately, it's his turn to have attributes locked down. The game master creates a Stasis lock on his Cosmos and Metamorphosis Urges. Both locks are rating 2.

Lydia's player does what she can. She earns 3 Points in the next phase. "Well, I'll do what I can. I'll overload the lock on your Metamorphosis with my 2 Cosmos Points. I have 1 Point left, but it's not enough to break the other lock. Instead, I'll use it to add to that new Muse: *Help Alexander, whom she now loves, rescue Hannah's soul in the Underworld*. Now that Muse's rating is 4. Let's cut our losses and get out of here."

She then narrates how Lydia rescues Alexander by disguising herself as Athena. The guards respect and fear her, and they release Alexander. They leave Jupiter quickly, and head toward the Ninth World—Hades.





Metamorphosis Points

A player can use the Metamorphosis Urge to manipulate and rearrange the existing attribute ratings (Arete, Hubris, Power, or any Urge) of any Archon or supporting character involved in a conflict. The player may interchange a number of existing characteristic ratings up to his number of earned Metamorphosis Points among any combination of characteristics, and even among separate characters or entities. He cannot destroy ratings, nor can he create new ratings with this Urge.

An example

Alexander and Lydia arrive at the Ninth Gate after a lonely and difficult voyage. Now they're trying to bribe the Thanatoi officers to enter Hades' Necropolis.

Lydia's player gains 5 Points in the conflict, and she wants to use them as Metamorphosis Points to gain an advantage over the Thanatoi. Their Power rating is 7, while her Arete is 4.

"I'm going to really wipe these guys out for the next phase," she says. "I use 4 of my 5 Points to transfer their Power to Lydia's Arete. That boosts her Arete by four. And, I use the remaining 1 Point to transfer another of their Power ratings to Alexander's Chaos Urge rating. So, the officers now have a Power rating of 2—I stole 5 Points from them total. Lydia's Arete is now 8. Wow! And Alexander's Chaos is now 5. Let's go another round and put the hurt on these guys. Lydia's going to have them—and their creepy hounds—eating out of her hand!"

A player may also use Metamorphosis Points to distribute or combine Stasis locks (see *Stasis Points*, page 35). However, lock ratings cannot be "transformed" into attribute ratings. A player may use Metamorphosis Points to "move" locks, or portions of locks, and assign them as new locks on different attributes. Similarly, a player may use Metamorphosis Points to combine several locks into a single, larger lock. But, the player cannot "move" a lock and then transform it into an increase for his character's attribute ratings, for example. Locks always remain locks; they never become attribute ratings.

With sufficient Metamorphosis Points, Players may alter characteristics and locks in the same phase, but the Tricks used for each may not intermingle. As always, a player may affect Lock ratings up to the number of Metamorphosis Points the player acquired in the phase.

An example

Lydia player uses the same trick she did on Jupiter—she disguises herself as Athena and demands to enter the Underworld. It seems to be working, as the guards are scrambling to find paper work and passes for the Necropolis for Athena and her companion.

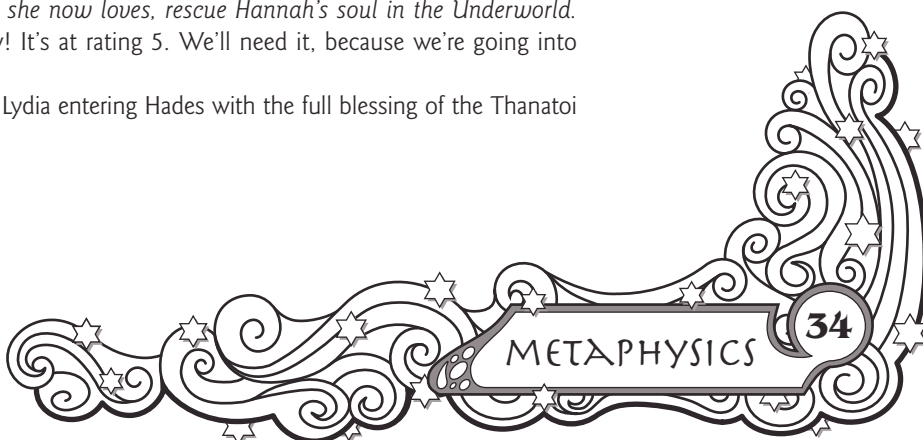
Lydia's player has a plan to keep up the ruse. With an easy victory she earns 3 Points.

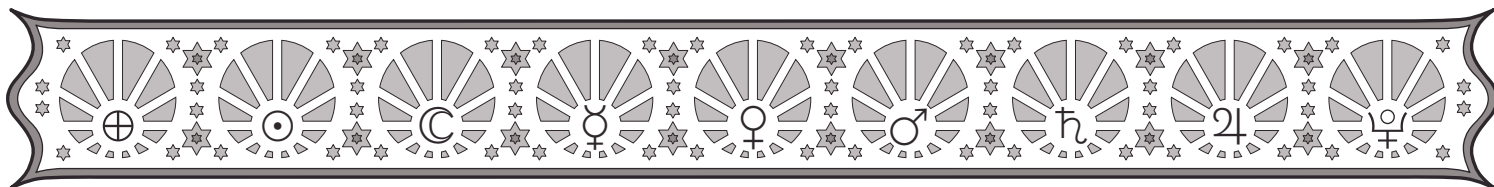
"Last phase I transferred all their Power to Lydia's Arete. But, if I can't lock the Arete in place, she loses all of that boost at the end of this conflict. So, I'm going to kill two birds with one stone. Alexander still has that lock on his Metamorphosis Urge, right?"

"Right," says Alexander's player. "The rating is 2."

"Perfect! I'm going to use 2 Metamorphosis Points to transfer the lock to Lydia's Arete. Since there aren't any other locks in play right now, I'll use the remaining Point to increase my new Muse: *Help Alexander, whom she now loves, rescue Hannah's soul in the Underworld.* That Muse is getting up there now! It's at rating 5. We'll need it, because we're going into Hell. Let's end this conflict."

She then narrates Alexander and Lydia entering Hades with the full blessing of the Thanatoi officers, and the scene ends.





Stasis Points

Unlike the Urge Points already described, Stasis Points do not affect attribute ratings directly. Instead, a player may use Stasis Points to create *locks* that are assigned to attribute ratings (Arete, Hubris, Power, or any Urge). The player may assign locks to any character involved in a conflict. The player may create new locks or add to existing locks by a number equal the player's Stasis Points. The player may create or increase locks in any combination among attributes or even among separate characters or entities involved in the conflict.

Stasis Locks act as barriers that resist change. A player must either defeat a lock's rating or move the lock entirely with other Points to affect the locked attribute itself. When a player creates a lock for an attribute, the number of Tricks assigned to it is the lock's rating.

To overcome this rating and remove the lock, players must meet or exceed the lock rating with a number of Chaos Points or Cosmos Points equal to the rating. Failure to do this results in no change on the lock—in subsequent phases the lock will retain its original rating. Locks may also be removed from a particular characteristic using Metamorphosis Points. Any number of Tricks may be used to “move” the lock to other characteristics. This may diminish or even eliminate the lock from the specific characteristic, but the Lock ratings are not destroyed.

Locks are the only means to make other Urge effects permanent after a conflict ends.

At the onset of a conflict, players should record or remember their *permanent ratings* (see *Attribute states* below). The attribute ratings may vary during the conflict. But, the scores will revert to their permanent ratings at the end of the scene.

However, any attribute with a lock on it is immediately frozen at its *current rating*. The attribute stays frozen at the current rating until the lock is removed or destroyed. Further, the attribute cannot



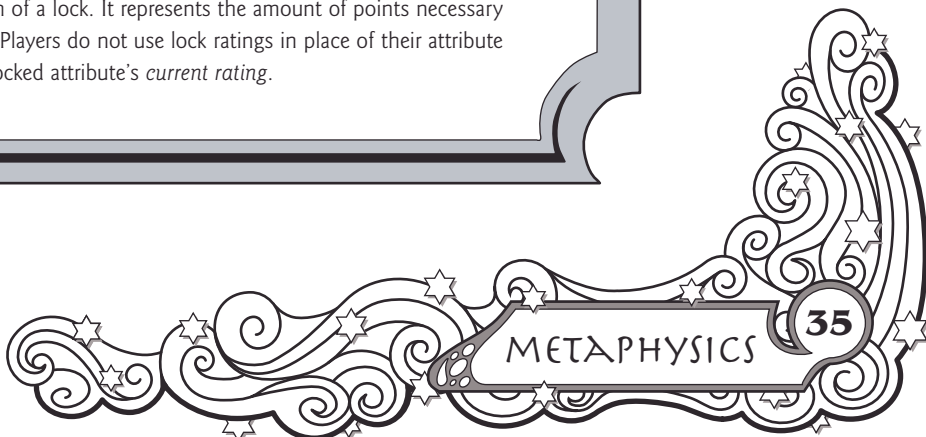
ATTRIBUTE STATES

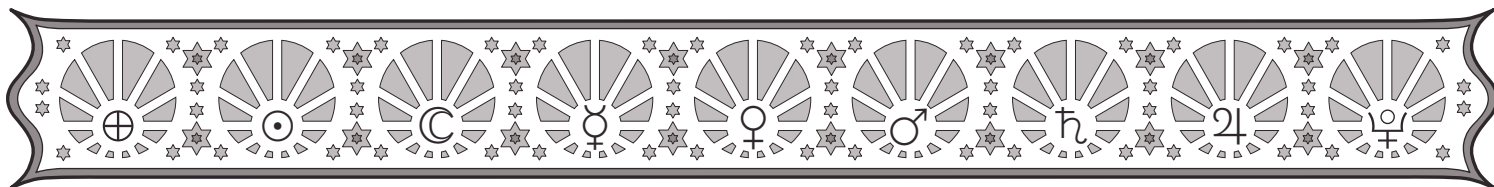
All character attributes have two possible values—*permanent rating* and *current rating*. Often, these two are equal. But, they may differ during and after conflicts. Attributes in this game are Arete, Hubris, Power, and the four Urges—Chaos, Cosmos, Metamorphosis, and Stasis.

Permanent rating is the default value for character attributes. As long as an attribute has no Stasis lock on it, the attribute's value will revert to its permanent rating after a conflict scene, despite any fluctuations during the conflict. For example, if an opponent uses Chaos Points to diminish a character's Arete rating by three, then the character's Arete would regain those three points at the end of the conflict scene.

Current rating indicates an attribute's value after it has been altered, possibly multiple times as victors use Urge Points and Stasis locks. A Stasis lock freezes the current rating in place, and that value remains active from scene to scene regardless of the character's permanent rating. The current rating remains active until the lock is removed or destroyed.

Lock rating is the strength of a lock. It represents the amount of points necessary to remove or destroy the lock. Players do not use lock ratings in place of their attribute scores. Instead, they use the locked attribute's *current rating*.





be altered with Points unless the lock is removed first.

If the lock is removed or destroyed during a conflict phase, the attribute rating returns to its *permanent rating* at the end of the scene. During the conflict, however, the unlocked attribute stays at the *current rating* until altered again by other Points or until the scene ends.

Note: When Arete, Hubris, or Power reaches 0, they do not revert to their permanent ratings. See *Death & Oblivion*, page 45.

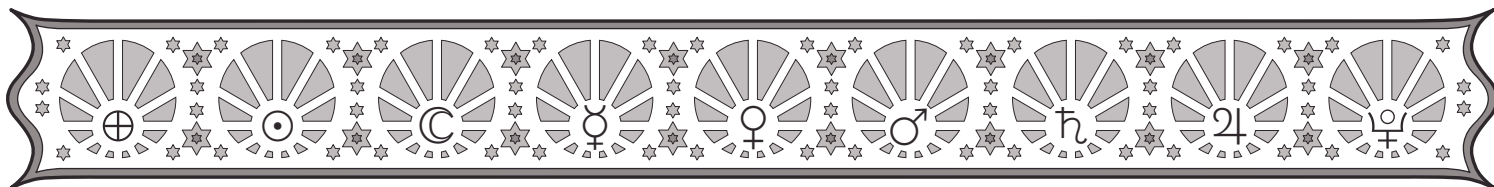
An example

Lydia and Alexander are lost amid the bureaucratic nightmare of the Necropolis. Alexander's player says he wants to find files that help him find Hannah. In a conflict against the city itself as a supporting character, Alexander's player wins 5 Points.

He announces his plans. "I have a feeling we're going to run into some scary characters soon. So, I want to use these as Stasis Points. I'm going to lock both my Arete and Hubris so Hades or his servants can't kill Alexander right away. I use 1 Stasis Point to create a lock on my Arete with a rating of 1. I use 2 Stasis Points to create a lock on my Hubris with a rating of 2. Finally, I use the last 2 Stasis Points to lock Lydia's Hubris with a rating of 2. Now, all our virtues are locked, and we'll be safer here."

Now, he narrates: "Alexander rifles through the archives in an old office building, but it starts a paper trail all around the city. It takes time, but in the end he has not only found Hannah's whereabouts, but also a good knowledge of how to avoid Hades worst enforcers. That fulfills my declared goal of finding information on Hannah, and that should explain the locks pretty well, too!"





PART 3: DEVELOPMENT

This section explains long-term rewards and developments players can earn. All of these developments are the result of players resolving their characters' Muses and earning specific rewards. This section also offers special conflict types players can use to escalate drama in their games.

Resolving Muses

Players will *resolve* their characters' Muses during play. Resolving Muses should produce some of the most dramatic and rewarding moments of play. This is what players strive for in Nine Worlds, and they'll earn significant rewards when Muses resolve. (See *Valor and Pride*, page 37.)

A Muse resolves either when the character attains the goal expressed in the Muse, or when the Muse is no longer an attainable goal in any conceivable way. This means a Muse resolves even if the character has failed to realize his goal.

If a player wishes to abandon a Muse, he may expend the Muse to rating 0 for Points during a victory. The player can then use the Points to create a new Muse, bolster his other Muses, or use the Points as Urge Points. This process does not resolve the Muse; it abandons the Muse. The player will earn no Valor or Pride (or Force, in the case of the game master—see *What is Force?*, page 38) for abandoning a Muse.

Marking victories

Whenever a player uses any of his Muses to achieve a victory, he must mark those Muses to indicate which virtue he used for the phase—Arete or Hubris. Players should use tally marks or other method to keep track of Arete Victories and Hubris Victories for each individual Muse. Players need not mark Muses when their conflict goals fail. When the player ultimately resolves the Muse, the victory marks indicate whether the player earns Valor or Pride.

Valor and Pride

Valor and Pride are the rewards for resolving Muses. With Valor and Pride, characters can win conflicts against incredible odds, and they can acquire superior abilities and allies.

When a player resolves a Muse, he first checks to see how many victories he marked for the Muse. Every time he earned a victory with that Muse, he should have marked on his character record whether it was an Arete Victory or a Hubris Victory.

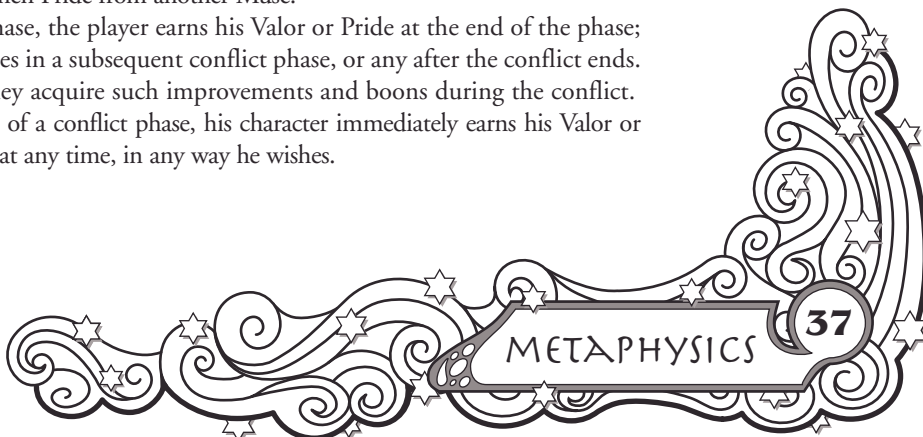
- ★ If the number of Arete Victories on the resolved Muse is greater, the character earns a number of Valor equal to the resolved Muse's current rating (maximum 9).
- ★ If the number of Hubris Victories on the resolved Muse is greater, the character earns a number of Pride equal to the resolved Muse's current rating (maximum 9).
- ★ If the numbers of Arete and Hubris victories are tied, the player may choose whether his character earns a number of Valor or Pride equal to the resolved Muse's current rating.

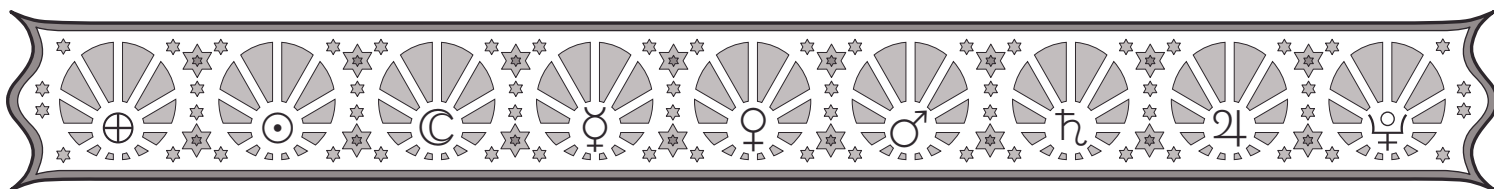
The player records the number of Valor or Pride his character earned, adding it to any previously earned. Then he eliminates the Muse (and its victory marks) from his Archon.

A character may possess any number or any combination of Valor and Pride at any time. For example, the character may win Valor from one Muse then Pride from another Muse.

If a Muse resolves during a conflict phase, the player earns his Valor or Pride at the end of the phase; he may use those points any way he wishes in a subsequent conflict phase, or any after the conflict ends. Players might consider narrating how they acquire such improvements and boons during the conflict.

When a player resolves a Muse outside of a conflict phase, his character immediately earns his Valor or Pride. The player may spend those points at any time, in any way he wishes.





WHAT IS FORCE?

Force is currency for supporting characters. Because supporting characters use Power alone in place of Arete and Hubris, they cannot earn Valor and Pride. Instead, they earn Force.

The game master may assign Force to supporting characters if she feels the need to elevate the challenge they pose to Archons. But, supporting characters may also earn Force by resolving Muses. The game master need not mark victories. When a supporting character resolves a Muse, it earns a number of Force equal to the Muse's current rating.

Players with Valor or Pride have three possible options. They can improve their Archon's attributes. They can create Talismans. Or, they may bid for Trump. The game master can also exercise these three options, but she does so with Force. See *What is Force?* above. These escalating options are explained in the following sections.

Resolving Muses & earning rewards: an example

Thanks to his paper chase, Alexander has found Hannah in Hades. He is almost too late. She's getting on a train bound for Tartarus. Worse, the game master says Thanatoi officers are at the station waiting to arrest Alexander and Lydia.

Alexander's player realizes this is probably his final chance to save Hannah. Fortunately, he wins a victory. But, so does the game master; her Thanatoi officers defeat Lydia.

The game master narrates first: "The train begins to move, and Hannah looks out the window with a cold stare. She doesn't see Alexander and Lydia as they run helplessly toward the platform. One of the officers grabs Lydia, and she stumbles. But, Alexander evades the Thanatoi and runs with the train just below Hannah's window. What happens next?"

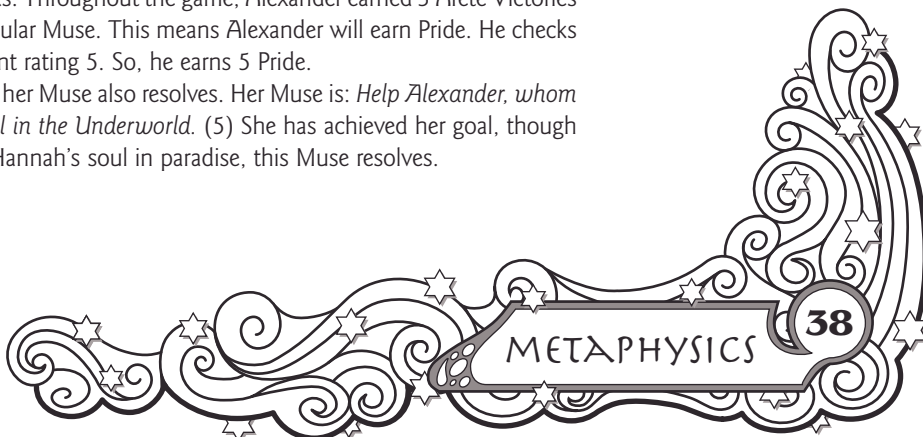
Now, Alexander's player has the last narration for the phase: "Alexander's running, pounding on the glass, but Hannah doesn't respond. Finally, just before he falls, he presses his hand up against hers, and she vanishes! The Thanatoi swarm Alexander, but not before he lifts his head. He sees a woman get on another train going the other direction. She has blonde hair. It's Hannah's beautiful blonde hair. The train is going to Elysium."

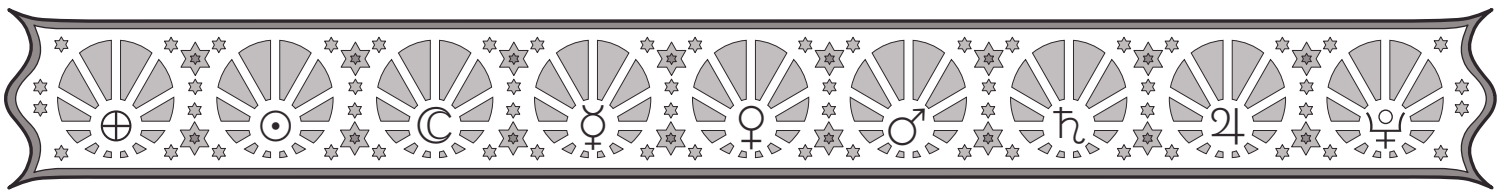
With that, Alexander's player has resolved the Muse: *Free Hannah's soul from the Underworld and return her to the mortal universe before Hades sends her to Tartarus* (5). Alexander didn't actually return Hannah to the mortal world, but he did save her from Tartarus. Clearly, he can pursue this goal no farther. The Muse resolves.

First, Alexander's player must mark the victory on the Muse. He used Hubris in this conflict, so he makes a tally mark next to Hubris Victories under the Muse on his character record.

Next, he adds up the victory marks. Throughout the game, Alexander earned 3 Arete Victories and 7 Hubris Victories for this particular Muse. This means Alexander will earn Pride. He checks the Muse's current rating. It is current rating 5. So, he earns 5 Pride.

Meanwhile, Lydia's player realizes her Muse also resolves. Her Muse is: *Help Alexander, whom she now loves, rescue Hannah's soul in the Underworld*. (5) She has achieved her goal, though not exactly as she expected. With Hannah's soul in paradise, this Muse resolves.





In this conflict, Lydia's player earned no victory. So, she doesn't mark any victories this time around.

But, she has other victories from previous conflicts. She adds them up. She has 4 Arete Victories and 4 Hubris victories. They are tied. Lydia's player may choose whether she wants Valor or Pride. She decides Valor would be best right now. She checks the Muse's current rating, which is 5. So, Lydia's player earns 5 Valor.

Trump

During a conflict, as players select Urges, they may bid any number of Valor or Pride to declare Trump. Trump is a way to make one suit (and its related Urge) stronger than all others, and players can use this to their advantage, even against superior opponents.

A player must bid Valor if he chose to use Arete in the conflict phase. Conversely, a player must bid Pride if he chose to use Hubris in the conflict phase. The game master may bid Force for Trump (see *What is Force?* above).

Players may bid for Trump by announcing how much Valor, Pride or Force they will wager. Force, Valor, and Pride are equivalent during bidding. For example, 3 Valor is the same as 3 Pride or 3 Force for purposes of bidding for Trump.

Often, bidding will be a boisterous, back-and-forth bidding war among players. Players may continue to bid as often as they like.

The player with the highest final bid wins. He must expend a number of Valor, Pride, or Force equal to his bid (losing bidders do not expend Valor, Pride or Force for their bid). He then can name any card suit as Trump.

If bids tie, the tied players choose any single card from their hands and reveal them. The player with the highest card wins the bid, and he must expend a number of Valor, Pride or Force equal to his bid. Should the single cards also tie, players continue to select and compare single cards to break the tie. If a player cannot or will not compare cards to competing bidders, he loses the bid. If all bidding players simultaneously run out of cards, they may then compare cards from their Fate decks.

Effects of Trump

When a player names a card suit as Trump, it means Fate values played in that suit automatically defeat all other Fate values in *different* suits. This is true for all participants in the conflict phase, regardless of which player won the bid. When opponents both play the Trump suit, they compare Fate values normally—the highest Fate value wins, and players compare single cards from their unplayed cards to break ties.

Also, Fate values in the Trump suit rank higher than any Fate values in different suits for purposes of capturing tricks and determining narration order. For example, a victor with a high, non-Trump Fate value narrates *before* a victor with a lower Trump Fate value.

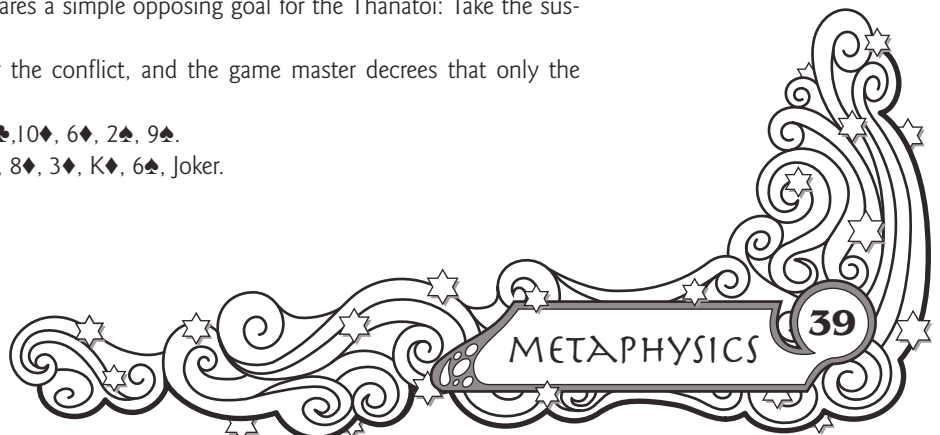
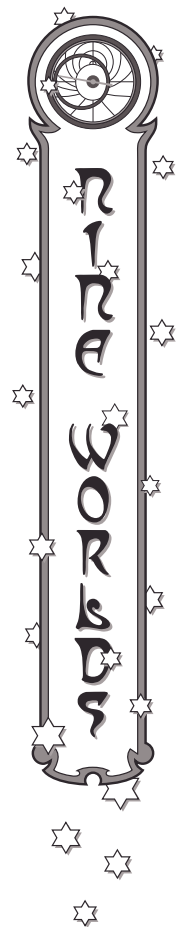
An example

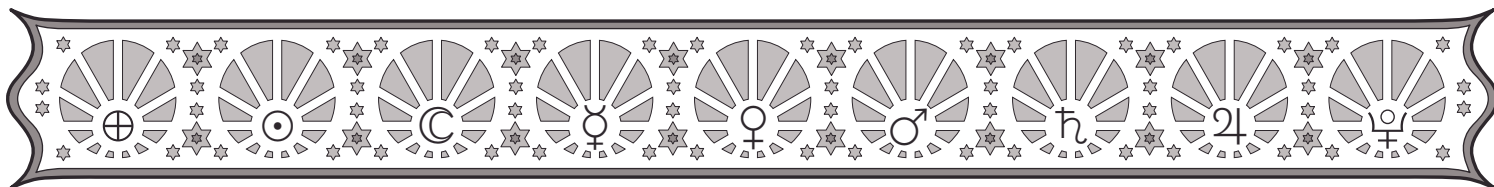
Hannah is saved, her soul resting in Elysium. But, Alexander and Lydia are prisoners once again. They wish to escape the Underworld before the Thanatoi take them before Hades for punishment. The game master declares a simple opposing goal for the Thanatoi: Take the suspects to Hades for sentencing.

The players draw their cards for the conflict, and the game master decrees that only the Thanatoi have a relevant Muse.

Alexander's player draws: 6♣, K♣, 10♦, 6♦, 2♠, 9♠.

Lydia's player draws: 5♣, J♣, A♦, 8♦, 3♦, K♦, 6♠, Joker.





The game master draws: 8♣, 4♦, 9♦, J♦, Q♦.

Alexander's player doesn't want to face a conflict against the big guy, so he decides to bid for Trump. He bids 1 Pride. In turn, the game master bids 2 Force, which is all the Thanatoi supporting characters have. Alexander's player increases his bid to 2 Pride. Lydia's player declines to bid, and no one wishes to bid higher.

With a tied bid for Trump, the two bidders reveal a card from their hands. Alexander player reveals his K♣. The game master reveals the 8♣ (she wants to use diamonds as Trump, so she keeps the Q♦).

With the higher card, Alexander's player wins. He declares spades as Trump, and removes 2 Pride from his character record for his bid. This means the Chaos Urge defeats all other Urges in this conflict.

Alexander's player lays down his 2♠ and 9♠ for a total Fate value of 7, but it's also Trump.

Lydia's player plays the 6♠ and the Joker. Her Fate value is 6, but it's also Trump.

Finally, the game master plays 4♦, 9♦, J♦, and Q♦. Her Fate value is 8, but it's not Trump.

Alexander's player and Lydia's player both earn victories against game master. Even though the game master had a higher Fate value than both of them, they used Trump, which beats any other suit played regardless of Fate values.

With their victory, first Lydia's player, then Alexander's player take turns narrating their harrowing escape from Hades.

Valorous Attributes

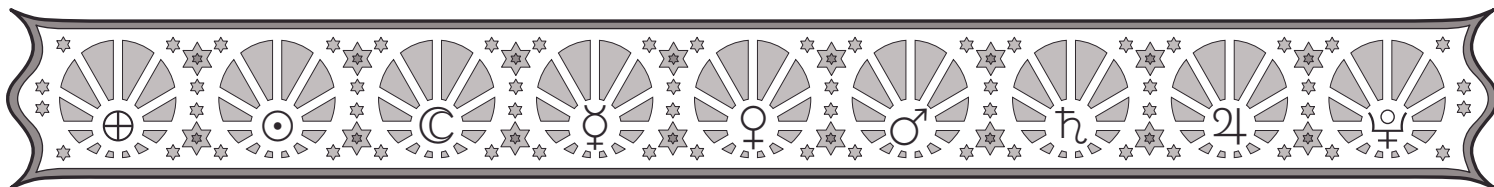
A player may spend Valor to improve the permanent ratings of his Archon's attributes. The players may increase his character's Arete, Hubris, or any Urges (Chaos, Cosmos, Metamorphosis, or Stasis). The game master may increase his supporting characters' Power attributes, as well as any Urges—she does so using Force, not Valor.

Players may increase any ability in increments of one by spending a number of Valor equal to the new rating. Players may earn as many increments as they desire at one time, so long as they have sufficient Valor points to spend. There is no maximum for any attribute ratings.

For example, to increase a character's Chaos Urge rating from 4 to 7, a player would have to pay in three increments. First, he increases the attribute to 5 at a cost of 5 Valor. Then, he increases the rating to 6 at a cost of 6 additional Valor. Finally, he increases the rating to 7 for a cost of 7 Valor. The increase from 4 to 7 costs the player a total of 18 Valor (5 Valor + 6 valor + 7 Valor = 18 Valor)

Increases purchased with Valor take effect regardless of any Stasis lock currently on the character's attributes. Simply increase the attribute's permanent rating. However, the current rating and the lock rating both remain unaffected until the Lock no longer affects the attribute. Once the lock is eliminated, the attribute should eventually revert to its new permanent rating.





VALOROUS ATTRIBUTES CHART

		New permanent rating								
Existing permanent rating		2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
	1	2	5	9	14	20	27	35	44	54
	2	-	3	7	12	18	25	33	42	52
	3	-	-	4	9	15	22	30	39	49
	4	-	-	-	5	11	18	26	35	45
	5	-	-	-	-	6	13	21	30	40
	6	-	-	-	-	-	7	15	24	34
	7	-	-	-	-	-	-	8	17	27
	8	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	9	19
	9	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	10

How to read this chart: Find the character's existing permanent rating on the left hand side of the chart. Then, cross-reference that with the desired new permanent rating across the top. The number at the intersection of these ratings is the amount of Valor required to increase the permanent rating to the desired number.

An example

Safely aboard the *Wayfarer*, Lydia can finally take stock of recent events.

Lydia's player wants to take the opportunity to spend some Valor. She wants to improve Lydia's Hubris. Lydia's Hubris has a permanent rating of 4. Lydia wants to increase it to 6. Going from rating 4 to rating 5 will cost 5 Valor. Then, going from rating 5 to rating 6 will cost an additional 6 Valor, for a total of 11 Valor. She doesn't have enough—she only has 5 Valor. So, she settles for one increase. Lydia's player spends 5 Valor. Now, Lydia's Hubris has a permanent rating of 5.

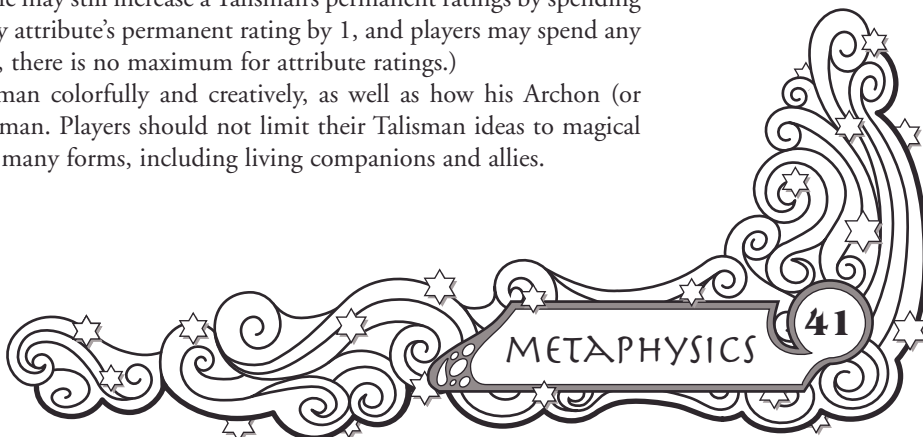
Talismans

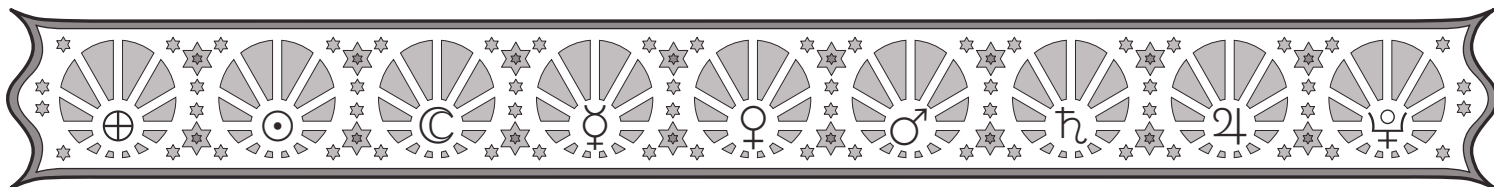
Players can spend Pride to create *Talismans*. Talismans take many forms: magical heirlooms, æther-ships, companions, allies, creatures, machines, enchantments, curses, and other boons. They are powerful tools for players, but they can also be destroyed, diminished, or lost.

To create a Talisman, a player spends any number of Pride and assigns the same number values among the new Talisman's five attributes—Power, Chaos, Cosmos, Metamorphosis, and Stasis—in any combination. These attribute values become the Talisman's permanent ratings. Talismans may not have any Muses.

After the player creates the Talisman, he may still increase a Talisman's permanent ratings by spending additional Pride. One Pride increases any attribute's permanent rating by 1, and players may spend any amount to do this. (As stated previously, there is no maximum for attribute ratings.)

The player should describe his Talisman colorfully and creatively, as well as how his Archon (or supporting character) acquired the Talisman. Players should not limit their Talisman ideas to magical objects and trinkets. Talismans can take many forms, including living companions and allies.





Talismans in action

A Talisman works like a supporting character controlled by the player who created it. He declares the Talisman's goals at the onset of conflict phases, and he freely selects any Urge for the Talisman's Fate; the Urge need not be the same as the Urge he selects for other characters he controls. The player draws a number of cards from his own Fate deck equal to the Talisman's Power rating. He should never combine cards drawn for his Archon (or other supporting character or other Talismans) with cards drawn for his Talisman. Also, the player may not use any of his character's Muses to increase the Talisman's card draw. Again, Talismans cannot have Muses.

Victors may use Tricks to affect Talismans in any way, including placing Stasis locks on a Talisman's attributes. Similarly, Talismans can affect other conflict participants much like Archons and supporting characters can.

Opponents may diminish or destroy a Talisman. If a Talisman's Power rating reaches 0 during a conflict phase, the Talisman is immediately destroyed.

A player character may possess a maximum total of nine Muses or Talismans in any combination. For example, a player could have seven Muses and two Talismans.

Talisman example

Alexander's player realizes he now has control of the *Wayfarer* once again. He decides to resolve his Muse: *Recover his æthership, the Wayfarer, after losing it to Hermes for smuggling quicksilver* (2). He earns 2 more Pride for doing this.

Now, he decides to make the *Wayfarer* a Talisman for Alexander. He spends his 5 Pride and distributes that among the Talisman's attributes. The Talisman attributes are:

Talisman: The *Wayfarer*

Power: 3

Chaos: 0

Cosmos: 0

Metamorphosis: 2

Stasis: 0

Later, when he earns more Pride, Alexander's player can spend additional Pride to improve those attributes.

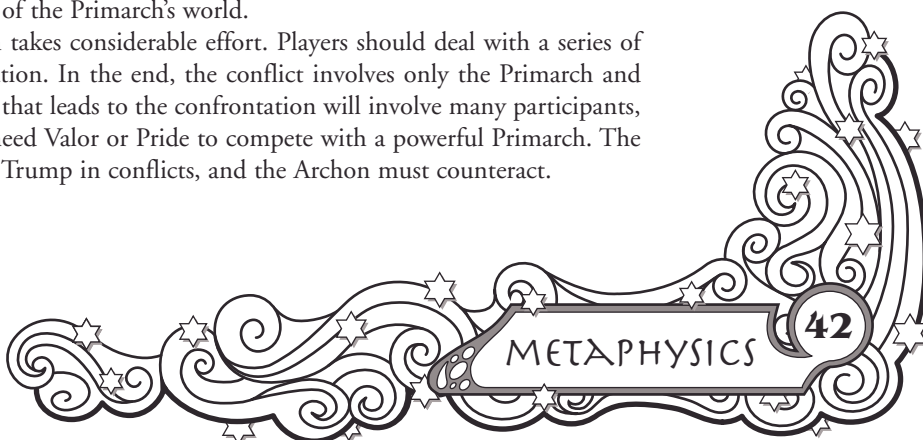
Champions & Usurpers

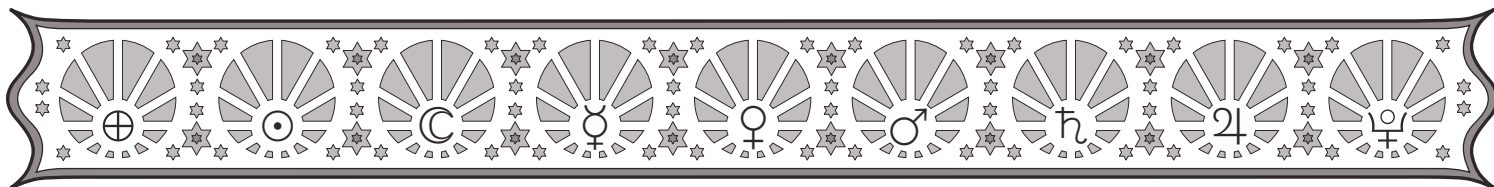
Once an Archon has built up enough power and resources, he may attempt to confront the ultimate authority in the Nine Worlds, the Primarchs. A player has two choices when confronting a Primarch.

First, he can have his Archon *champion* a Primarch. This means the Primarch tests the Archon and judges his worthiness as a patron. If successful, the Archon joins the Primarch as an immortal ally and champion of the Primarch's causes and ambitions.

Second, a player can have his Archon *usurp* a Primarch. This means the Archon attempts to overthrow the Primarch and assume control of the Primarch's world.

Either way, confronting the Primarch takes considerable effort. Players should deal with a series of conflicts that build up to the confrontation. In the end, the conflict involves only the Primarch and the Archon. But, the conflicts and story that leads to the confrontation will involve many participants, of course. To succeed, the Archon will need Valor or Pride to compete with a powerful Primarch. The game master will no doubt use Force to Trump in conflicts, and the Archon must counteract.





The processes for championing and usurping Primarchs are identical. In both, the Archon enters a conflict with the Primarch until either the Primarch's Power reaches 0 or the Archon's Arete or Hubris reaches 0. Both participants may use any Talismans they possess. However no other characters or entities can participate. While this process is the same for both confrontations, the results and consequences for each confrontation are different.

Championing a Primarch

When a character champions a Primarch, he attempts to prove his loyalty to the Primarch's vision and world.

The Primarch tests the Archon with a dangerous labor or contest, and the Archon strives to overcome the test, thus revealing himself as a champion. The type of test depends on the Primarch. For example, Apollo might challenge an Archon in a test of wits, or Ares might require the Archon to raid a Martian stronghold.

The test is a unique type of conflict, and it has special restrictions and consequences. First and foremost, the player must choose Arete in the conflict. Players may not use Hubris to champion. Secondly, the conflict is between the Primarch and the Archon only. Each may use Talismans, but no other Archons or supporting characters can participate. Narration of the scene may include descriptions of other characters and their actions, but they are not actually included in the conflict resolution.

The Archon becomes a champion of the Primarch when he reduces the Primarch's Power rating to 0. This may require several conflict phases as participants may choose to sacrifice their Muses to restore their Arete or Power ratings.

Even if the Archon reduces the Primarch to 0 Power, the Primarch is unharmed (his attribute ratings—even those with a rating of 0—revert to their permanent ratings immediately, unless locked). Neither the Primarch's mortality nor the Primarch's sovereignty is at risk. Rather, this conflict represents the limit of the Primarch's test.

However, the Archon risks everything. Should the Archon's Arete or Hubris reach 0 during the contest, he will perish unless his controlling player expends a Muse (see *Death & Oblivion*, page 45). If the player does sacrifice a Muse to avoid the Archon's demise, the Archon may exit the conflict safely. But, the Archon does not become a champion, and likely will be scorned by the Primarch.

The gift of immortality

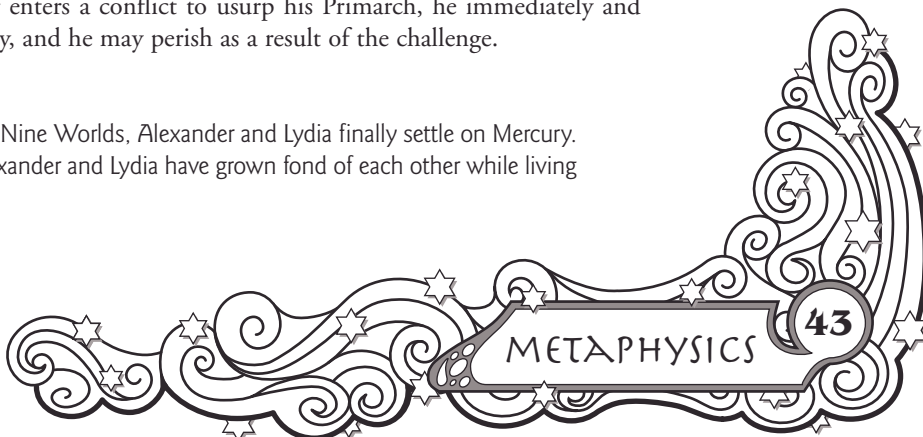
As a reward for successfully completing a Primarch's test the Archon earns immortality on that Primarch's world and its surrounding æther. This means that when the Archon's virtues reach 0 while on that world or its bordering æther, the character does not die. The champion character suffers no special effect upon reaching 0 in either of his virtues. His 0-rating virtue will revert to its permanent rating at the end of the scene. The champion may sacrifice a Muse to return his character's 0-rating virtue to its previous rating during a conflict phase, but the sacrifice is not necessary for survival as it is for other characters.

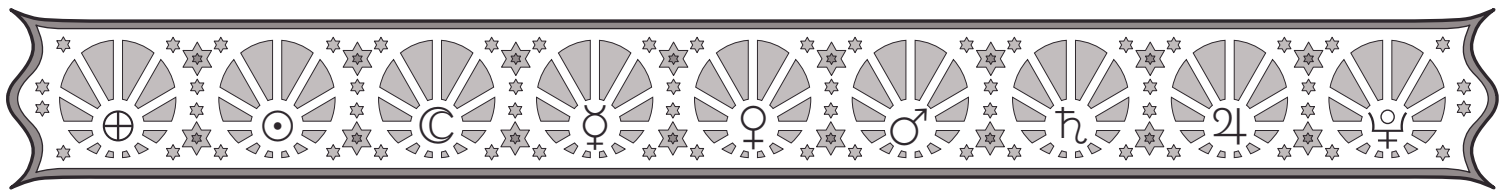
Should the 0-rating virtue become locked, the character simply carries on with his virtue at 0 until he eliminates the lock. He may still participate in conflicts normally, albeit less effectively.

Characters who have become champions may opt to later challenge the Primarch for the control of the world. When a champion character enters a conflict to usurp his Primarch, he immediately and permanently relinquishes his immortality, and he may perish as a result of the challenge.

An example

After more adventures across the Nine Worlds, Alexander and Lydia finally settle on Mercury. After their ordeal on Hades, and Alexander and Lydia have grown fond of each other while living





on Mercury. The frenetic world and its many merchants suit Alexander's tastes. In fact, he likes Mercury so much he decides to champion the Primarch, Hermes.

Alexander's player announces that he wishes to champion Hermes in a new conflict. The game master agrees, but she reminds Alexander's player that it will be a difficult conflict against Hermes, who is quite powerful. They begin the test. Hermes dares Alexander to pilot the *Wayfarer* to Saturn and retrieve a shipment of quicksilver pirated by Kronos. But, he has to do it before a bomb hidden in the quicksilver explodes.

Alexander's player and the game master begin the conflict. Alexander must use his Arete. After a first disastrous phase, Alexander's player realizes he needs to spend Valor to compete with Hermes. The conflict is a back-and-forth affair. Alexander's player narrates his speedy and stealthy trip to Saturn. But, then the game master wins a phase, and she describes a complication—Hermes has removed his navigation equipment as part of the test, so he becomes lost. Finally, after a few more phases, Alexander is victorious. He reduces Hermes' Power to 0, though Hermes is actually unharmed and his Power reverts to its permanent rating. Alexander's player narrates his return to Mercury with the shipment of quicksilver in tow.

Now, Alexander is one of Hermes' most trusted champions. Hermes graces Alexander with immortality; he cannot die while in and around Mercury. If his Arete or Hubris reaches rating 0 while on Mercury or in its nearby æther, it will revert to its permanent rating unless locked.

Usurping a Primarch

Archons may also usurp a Primarch. The character defies the Primarch's supremacy and attempts to become the new Primarch. The Primarch will resist with incredible power. Control of the world the Primarch rules is at stake.

Most usurpations will be violent, although some might be underhanded subterfuge or even a political contest of wits and popularity.

Like championing, usurping a Primarch is a unique conflict with special restrictions and consequences. Most importantly, the player must choose Hubris in the conflict. This is an act of defiance; the player must not use Arete. Also, the conflict is between the Archon and the Primarch alone. Each may use their Talismans, but no other Archons or supporting characters may participate. Narration may include descriptions of other characters, but those other characters are not actually involved in the conflict's resolution.

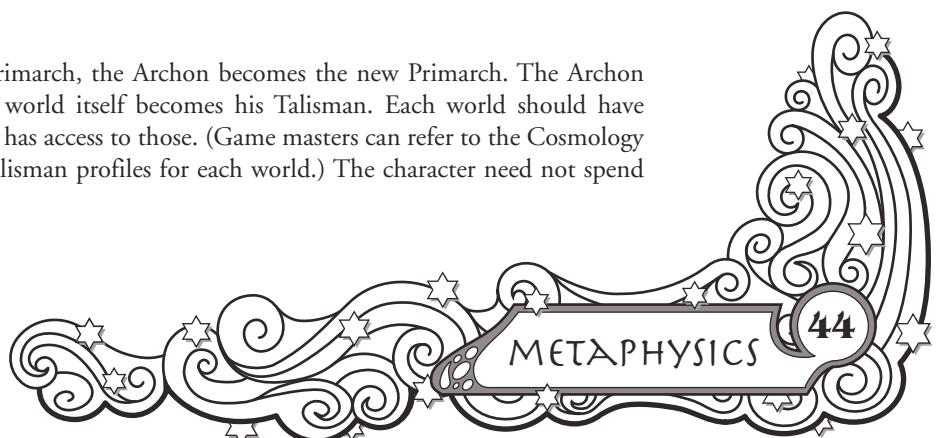
The Archon overthrows the Primarch when he reduces the Primarch's Power rating to 0. Like championing, this may require several conflict phases as participants may sacrifice Muses to restore their Hubris or Power ratings.

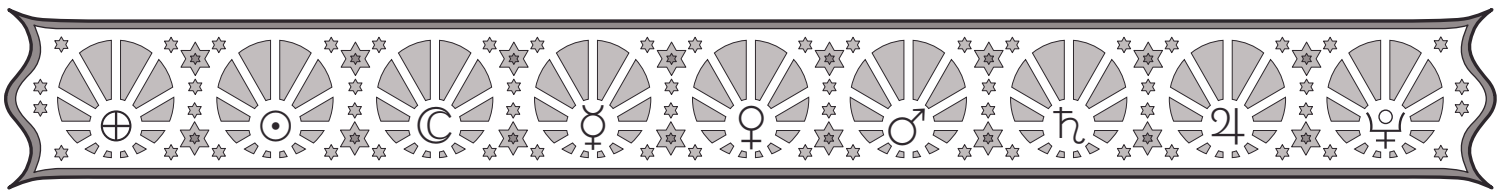
Unlike championing, however, Primarchs risk great loss from challengers. Most importantly, they lose their role as Primarch, and with it the world Talisman they controlled. The Primarch may also be destroyed, exiled, or otherwise severely disadvantaged. (See *Death & Oblivion*, page 45.)

The usurping Archon risks much. Should the Archon's Arete or Hubris reach 0 during the contest, he will perish unless his controlling player expends a Muse (again, see *Death & Oblivion* on page 45). If the player does sacrifice a Muse to avoid the Archon's demise, the Archon may exit the conflict. But, Primarch will surely pursue and try to destroy those who challenge their supremacy so defiantly.

Rule the world

If the Archon defeats the reigning Primarch, the Archon becomes the new Primarch. The Archon now literally rules the world, and the world itself becomes his Talisman. Each world should have Talisman attributes, and every Primarch has access to those. (Game masters can refer to the Cosmology chapter hereafter or create their own Talisman profiles for each world.) The character need not spend





any Pride to acquire the world as his Talisman; he earns it as reward for his victory.

The new Primarch character has many responsibilities as a world's metaphysical ruler. He can shape the world at his whim, literally redefining the landscape to his liking. (In some cases, the game master may require a conflict—perhaps against his mortal subjects—to enforce such changes.) Also, the Primarch character gains significant forces and mortal subjects, at the same time earning many enemies. Players may detail specific characters as allies, although the simplest way to represent all aspects and effects of the character's rule is the world's attributes as a Talisman.

Characters who champion a Primarch that is later usurped immediately lose their immortality on and around that world. They may champion the new Primarch to regain their immortality.

An example

Lydia and Alexander have drifted apart. Alexander has devoted much of his time to Hermes' cause. She resents the Primarch greatly for this. She despises Hermes so much, in fact, that she subverts his rule over time, with some help from her old allies, the Aquarians. Eventually, over the course of several conflicts, Lydia's jealousy and hatred of Hermes leads to a quiet coup attempt to unseat the Olympian and place herself in charge of Mercury.

Lydia's player declares the conflict; she wishes to challenge Hermes for Primacy. She must use Lydia's Hubris in the conflict, and she has already figured out she'll need to use Pride to win victories reliably. Unfortunately, she just can't keep up with Hermes' Force, plus a series of superb hands the game master draws. Hermes earns several Points, and the game master finally reduces Lydia's Hubris to 0. The game master narrates the loss, and he describes Order of Hermes spies among Lydia's organization turning on her at the last minute to halt the coup. Not a drop of blood falls, but Lydia is exiled.

Lydia's player must sacrifice one of Lydia's Muses to restore her Hubris to its permanent rating. But, she now has a choice. She may also bow out of the conflict and live another day. She sacrifices a Muse, and decides to exit the conflict.

Lydia is angry and broken-hearted. She hates Hermes even more now, especially because she must flee Mercury or face Hermes' inevitable retribution. Tragedy strikes again, and her relationship with Alexander is uncertain. She may try again to challenge Hermes. If she does, she'll gain Mercury itself as her Talisman. Then, she might keep Alexander by her side forever. . . .



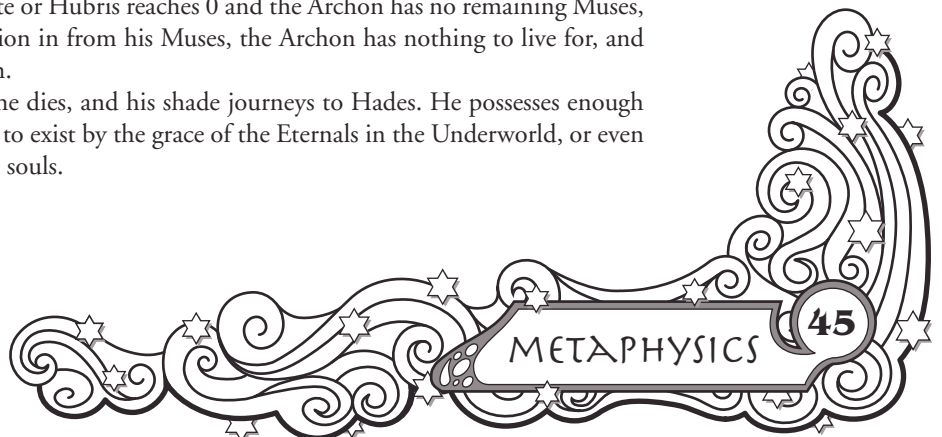
Death & Oblivion

If an Archon's Arete or Hubris rating reaches 0 during a conflict phase, the character will perish during the scene's narration. If an Archon or supporting character perishes, victors must narrate and explain the character's demise.

The Archon has only one means of survival. The player controlling the Archon must eliminate one of the Archon's Muses immediately. He removes the Muse entirely, regardless of its current rating or victory marks. The player may never resolve that particular Muse to gain Pride or Valor. Once the player eliminates a Muse, the Archon's 0-rating virtue immediately reverts to its permanent rating.

A player may continue to revitalize a 0-rating virtue during a conflict phase as long as he has remaining Muses. However, if the Archon's Arete or Hubris reaches 0 and the Archon has no remaining Muses, the character perishes. Without inspiration in from his Muses, the Archon has nothing to live for, and he finally succumbs to death or oblivion.

When an Archon's Hubris reaches 0 he dies, and his shade journeys to Hades. He possesses enough Arete, or excellence, from his mortal life to exist by the grace of the Eternals in the Underworld, or even glorious Elysium, paradise for immortal souls.



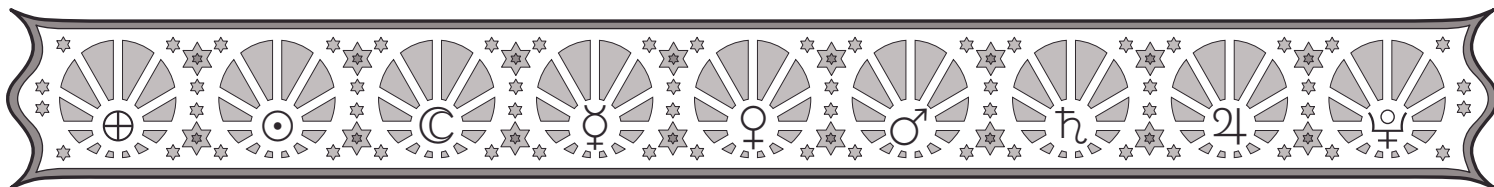


If mortal, the supporting character's shade journeys to Hades. If immortal, the character may remain alive, though perhaps weakened, imprisoned or in some state that may require a conflict victory to escape.

Distraught without Alexander, Lydia risks returning to Mercury to meet with him. But, nothing is as she remembers. Their flat is now a lively restaurant. She frantically races through Mercury City to find her beloved.

In the first phase of conflict, Lydia loses. Worse, the game master has 5 Points, and she decides to use them as Metamorphosis Points to reduce Lydia's Arete to 0 and increase the city's Power by 5.

Now, Lydia's player is desperate. Although she can't make the final decision, she asks the



completing that goal. The Muse resolves as Alexander's tragic love life continues.

Alexander's player tallies up the marked Victories on his new Muse. He has 4 Arete Victories and 3 Hubris Victories. This means the Muse awards him 5 Valor. It also means his end will be a Proud Aristeia.

Alexander has collected 21 Valor. He decides that his Points will go toward improving Hermes' Talisman, Mercury. He'll improve the world.

Alexander's player improves Mercury's Cosmos two increments and its Metamorphosis and Stasis Urges one increment each.

Cosmos increases from 3 to 5 (4 Valor + 5 Valor), Metamorphosis increases from 8 to 9 (9 Valor), and Stasis increases from 2 to 3 (3 Valor). The total cost is 21 Valor. (4+5+9+3=21)

He and the group work on a narration collaboratively. They decide that Alexander dedicates the remainder of his years walking the streets of Mercury City, and working to keep the busy city more beautiful. But, throughout it all he keeps the garden on the rooftop of his old flat unchanged.

Proud Aristeia

Conversely, if the designated Muse awarded Pride, the player may use *all* of his Archon's Pride to create one new Archon, supporting character or Talisman. He may even supply them with Muses and Talismans. This becomes his ultimate act of creation in—and defiance of—the Nine Worlds. A new character is one the Archon has never interacted with during his story, or a character who has been destroyed or killed. The player may resurrect an Archon with Arete 0 or Hubris 0, or he may revive a supporting character with 0 Power.

The player spends any number of Pride to create an equal number of attribute ratings or Muse ratings for one (and only one) completely new Archon, supporting character or Talisman. The player may award a Talisman to any Archon or supporting character.

An example

In the previous example, Alexander's designated Muse indicated a Valorous Aristeia. However, this example demonstrates how Alexander might have exited the game with a Proud Aristeia instead.

In the end, Alexander earned 18 Pride. Alexander's player decides that rather than create a new Archon or character, he'll resurrect an Archon. He spends his 17 Valor to resurrect Lydia.

He assigns her the following attribute ratings:

Arete: 4

Hubris: 5

Chaos: 0

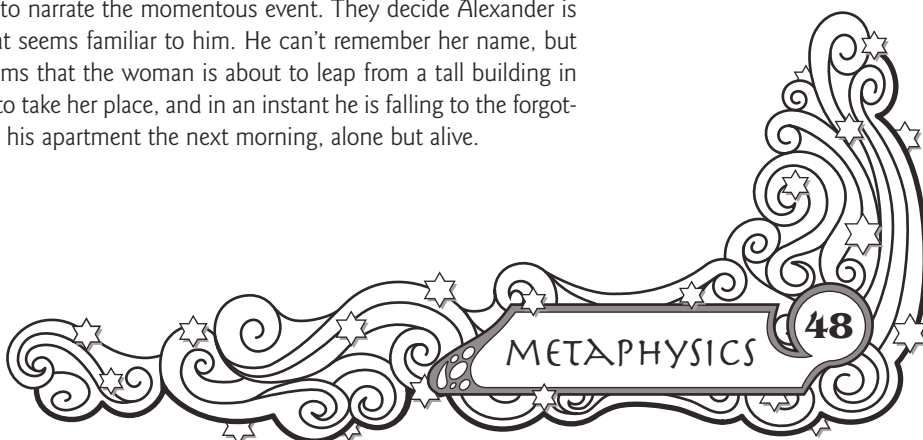
Cosmos: 3

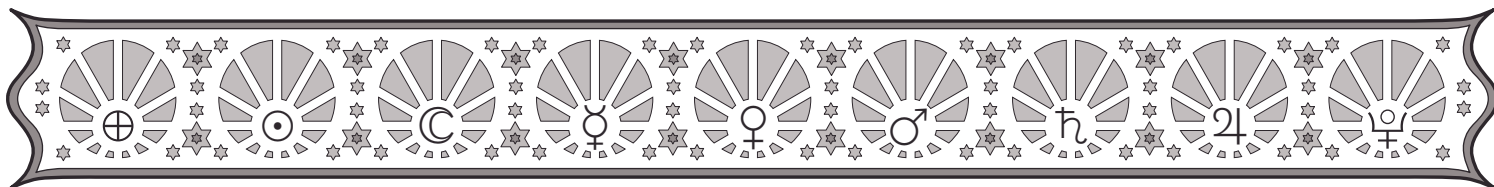
Metamorphosis: 2

Stasis: 1

With his remaining 2 Valor, Alexander's player also creates a new Muse: *Find a new lover and start a family* (2).

Again, the group works together to narrate the momentous event. They decide Alexander is haunted by dreams of a woman that seems familiar to him. He can't remember her name, but he sees her face. One night he dreams that the woman is about to leap from a tall building in Mercury City. He whispers his wish to take her place, and in an instant he is falling to the forgotten streets below. Lydia wakes up in his apartment the next morning, alone but alive.





Conflict, Options and Development

Now, players have the full range of options before them. Below is a complete guide to conflict resolution to help players work through conflicts. This guide is reproduced at the end of this book as well.

COMPLETE GUIDE TO CONFLICT RESOLUTION

1. Declare goals

Players announce their intended goals for the conflict. Players should also remember their attribute ratings, as the ratings may fluctuate during the conflict. They revert to the initial ratings.

2. Designate opponents

Players specify whom their characters are in conflict with.

3. Choose virtue

Players choose Arete or Hubris and draw cards equal to the virtue's rating. The game master draws cards equal to each supporting character's Power rating.

4. Apply Muses

Players draw additional cards equal to any relevant Muses ratings.

5. Select Urge

Players select a suit and the related Urge
(♠ = Chaos, ♣ = Cosmos, ♥ = Metamorphosis, and ♦ = Stasis)

6. Play Fate

Players reveal all cards of their chosen suit.
All Aces, face cards (Jacks, Queens, and Kings) and Jokers are worth Points.

7. Compare Fates

Players announce their Fate value (Urge rating + the number of cards revealed) and compare it to opponents. Allot Points revealed in played cards:

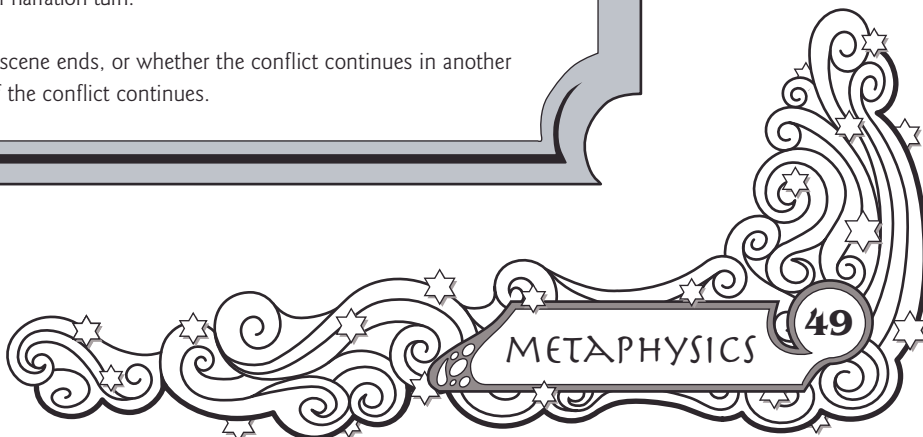
- Victors may capture Points in their defeated opponents' hands. Victors take turns capturing Points from highest Fate value to lowest until all available Points are captured.
- Victors also retain Points in their hands, unless superior opponents capture the points.
- Victors may expend Muses to generate additional Points.

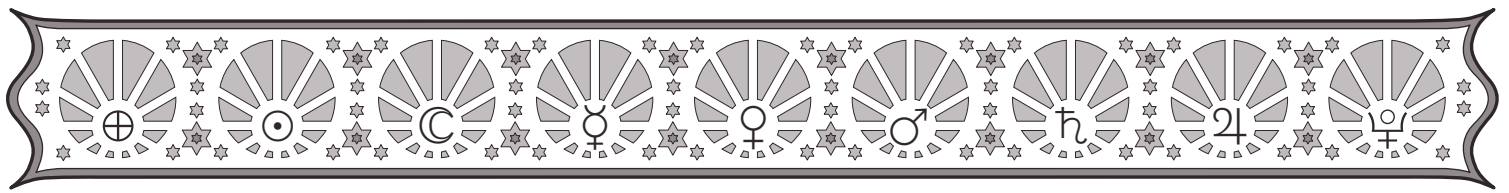
8. Narrate Outcome

Victors narrate the conflict in order from lowest Fate value to highest Fate value. Victors also spend Points during their narration turn.

9. Cease or Continue

Victors decide whether the scene ends, or whether the conflict continues in another phase. Repeat these steps if the conflict continues.





COSMOLOGY

*"We may say that the world became a living creature
truly endowed with soul and intelligence
by the providence of God."*

—Plato's *Timaeus*

A BRIEF HISTORY OF THE UNIVERSE

In the beginning, there was chaos. The universe was in its primordial state—matter unformed, thought unrealized, time uncounted. The Creator, the unknowable being humans might now call God, made the universe and with it everything that ever was or will be, but all was chaos. Reality was as molten iron in need of a mold to shape its tangible existence. That crucible was the Demiurge. God breathed life into an ideal that philosophers now term the Demiurge. Its purpose was to shape the universe, to guide reality as the agent of God's divine plan.

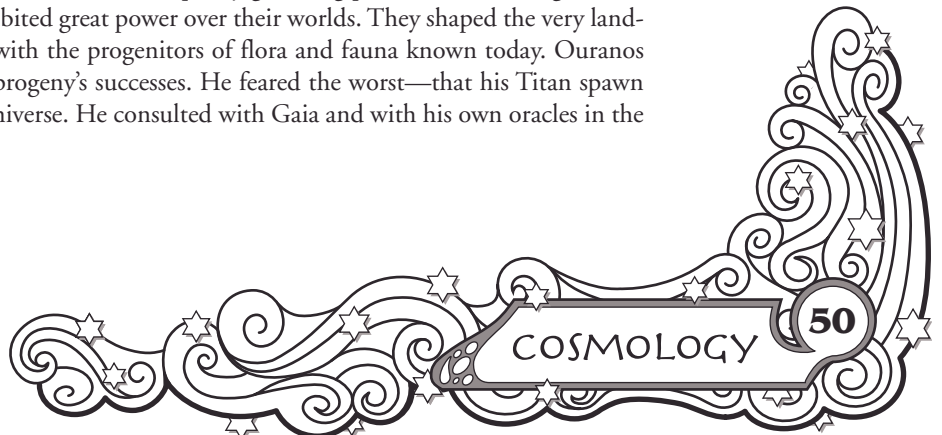
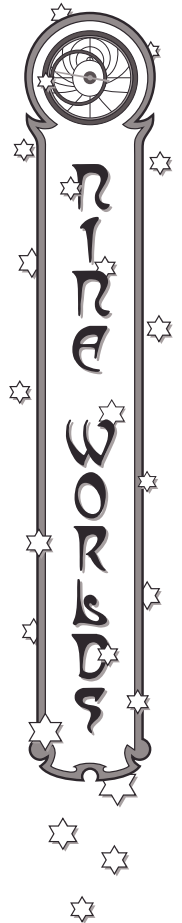
Then, the Demiurge was an idea, not a being or a god. It was the force behind fate. It guided and shaped inchoate madness into reason and order. The Demiurge organized primeval matter into nine distinct bodies and set them in motion. This order of nine worlds has defined reality for all time; the cosmology remains unassailable. The order of nine worlds remains fundamental to the workings of universe, despite eons of change and upheaval. At the center of these orbiting worlds is Earth, the heart of creation. Surrounding Earth in infinite compass are the heavenly worlds and the dark underworld. All were crafted, subtly and slowly, by the Demiurge, all shaped by its impulses and machinations.

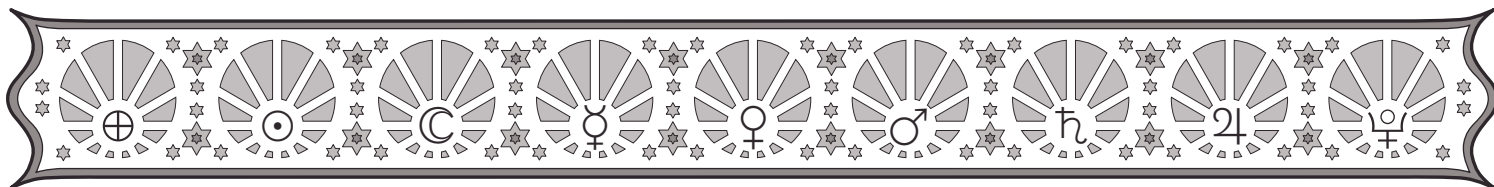
But, the Demiurge was not alone in the universe. From the chaos also came the first Titans. These beings emerged from the primordial confluence of creation. They were elementals with consciousness and desires. First among them were Ouranos and Gaia, self-proclaimed rulers of heaven and earth. They ruled when the world was young and the universe a simple place of dualities and precarious balance.

Together, Ouranos and Gaia brought forth the Titans, children born from the very primordial chaos from which their parents had sprung. Gaia and Ouranos hoped their children would expand their domain and enliven its evolution. They granted great vitality and power to their progeny, power that rivaled even that of the Demiurge. Together, Ouranos and Gaia planned greatness in their children. Such plans were their undoing.

The first generation of Titans were literal forces of nature, and their names still evoke fear in mortals today—Kronos, Iapetus, and Hyperion among them. Ouranos and Gaia granted several of their progeny the first primacies. Hyperion ruled as Primarch of the Sun; his sister Pheobe was Primarch of the Moon. Coeus reigned on Mercury, while Rhea ruled Venus. Towering over Mars was Iapetus. The Primarch of great Jupiter was Crius. Oceanus controlled Saturn. Gaia assumed for herself primacy of Earth, and Ouranos governed the Underworld. Kronos, the youngest of the first generation Titans, ruled nothing. He was a vagabond, hopping about the worlds of his kin and quietly gathering power and knowledge.

Over time, the Titanic Primarchs exhibited great power over their worlds. They shaped the very landscapes of their worlds, and filled them with the progenitors of flora and fauna known today. Ouranos recognized a threat to his power in his progeny's successes. He feared the worst—that his Titan spawn would destroy his supremacy over the universe. He consulted with Gaia and with his own oracles in the Underworld. All pronounced his doom.





THE PLAYERS' SETTING

This chapter presents the setting of NINE WORLDS. The setting is based loosely on Greek myth, philosophy, and other sources. It is neither a strict recantation nor an accurate interpretation of “proper” Greek myths and philosophy. Rather, it is fanciful interpretation to create a compelling and entertaining setting in which to create new stories.

NINE WORLDS includes many figures from Greek myth, but it excludes or ignores far more. This game encourages players to introduce mythic figures and to adapt the setting to their groups' liking.

Players should make the Nine Worlds their own. The setting presented herein is merely the launch point from which players and game masters can propel their games. This chapter details several characters, conflicts, and situations meant as suggestions for players to use in their games. Players should not shy away from changing or altering the course of this setting because it might challenge the “official” setting herein. Indeed, altering the course of this setting, especially during actual play of this game, is entirely the point of the game!

So, Ouranos set out to defy fate. With his incredible power, he swiftly recaptured the primacies from his children. Despite their power, the Titans could not resist Ouranos' sudden assault. They assembled armies of the creatures they had made. Ouranos destroyed them. With the death of those he destroyed, he bolstered the ranks of his own Underworld army. The march of Ouranos against his children ravaged the nine worlds. The Titans were helpless before him.

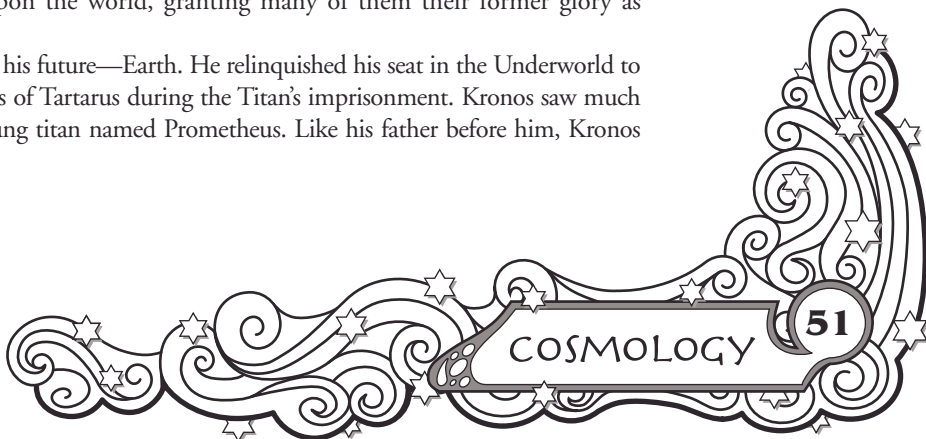
Sensing still the danger to his supremacy, Ouranos banished his immortal children to the darkest pit in his domain, Tartarus. Buried there, he believed his Titan children were no threat to his universal mastery.

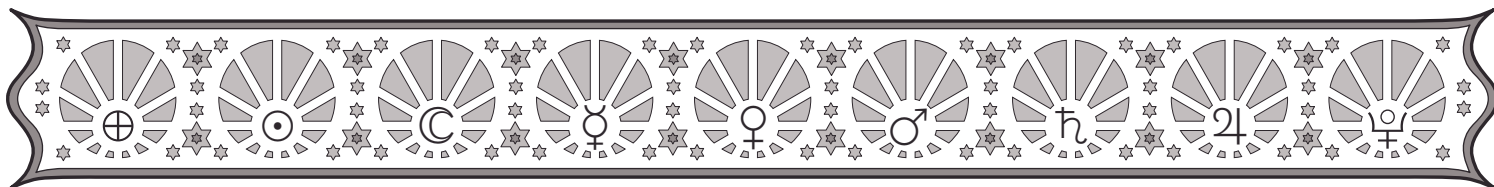
But, Ouranos had been fooled. He underestimated the youngest Titan, Kronos. Kronos avoided Ouranos' wrath, hiding away in Gaiā's domain, Earth. Kronos fooled Ouranos with a simulacrum, a body double sent to hell in his place. The ruse worked. Kronos remained free from Tartarus, and his father remained unaware of his grave miscalculation.

Kronos then set out for the Underworld, his power disguised and forgotten. Kronos knew his greatest weapon was Ouranos' fear of his fellow Titans. Disguised as a shade, he sowed doubt in Ouranos' mind. He whispered that all the Titans had escaped Tartarus, and urged him to inspect the pit himself. Ouranos began to doubt, and so lost his resolve. Wracked with nagging fears, he entered Tartarus, with Kronos' shadow following behind. Kronos' deception worked. He ushered his brethren out as the confused and fearful Ouranos became lost in darkness. Kronos tricked the lord of hell, and snared him in his own immortal trap.

With Ouranos imprisoned, Kronos became Primarch of the Underworld. With that power, he released his fellow Titans once again upon the world, granting many of them their former glory as Primarchs of the Nine Worlds.

Still, Kronos had a greater ambition for his future—Earth. He relinquished his seat in the Underworld to a new Titan that emerged from the depths of Tartarus during the Titan's imprisonment. Kronos saw much of himself in this powerful and clever young titan named Prometheus. Like his father before him, Kronos would one day regret such miscalculation.





To Earth Kronos came, determined to unseat his own mother, Gaia, who had harbored him from Ouranos' wrath. The other Titans expected and even supported Kronos' ascendancy. But Kronos was determined to do more than simply unseat his mother of Earth. He was determined to slay her. This his fellow Titans did not expect. Kronos knew that the brazen act would solidify his supremacy over all other Titans, and that it would instill fear throughout his dominion, even among fellow Titans.

In secret, Kronos brought with him a terrible artifact, one that Pandora, an Archon, would later make infamous. Within the small box he had captured from the darkest corners of the Underworld the essence of plagues and woeful hate. Opening the vessel, he unleashed the vilest pestilence and ruin upon Gaia's earth. It devastated the world, and Gaia was greatly weakened. Blight-ridden, Gaia called for her beloved Kronos, and she urged him to cleanse her domain and thus ease her suffering.

So Kronos' fulfilled his ambition. He slew Gaia, weakened by disease, and dismembered her corpse, scattering its primordial remains over the Earth. With her fertile blood and bones, he cleansed the plagues and evil emotions he had unleashed, saving their essence in the box for another time of need. With a renewed world, he became Primarch of Earth, the center of the universe.

The rise and fall of Atlantis

For the Titans, it was a golden age. Other generations of Titans came forth. Atlas, Menoetius, Ophion, and many others served their progenitors as cosmic vassals. During this time, the Titans rediscovered their powers of creation, and they again reshaped the Nine Worlds. The powerful Titan, Atlas, crafted one of the most remarkable creations. He founded Atlantis, a great city-state of Earth seated upon the Axis Mundi, the locus of the universe. With Kronos' aid, he brought life to the Atlanteans, the first mortal race granted awareness and intelligence.

For generations, the Atlanteans were Atlas' greatest achievement, earning him much power and influence among his fellow Titans. Kronos boasted in the Atlanteans the greatest army in the Nine Worlds. His fellow Primarchs dared not challenge Earth or its resources with Atlantean legions a threat.

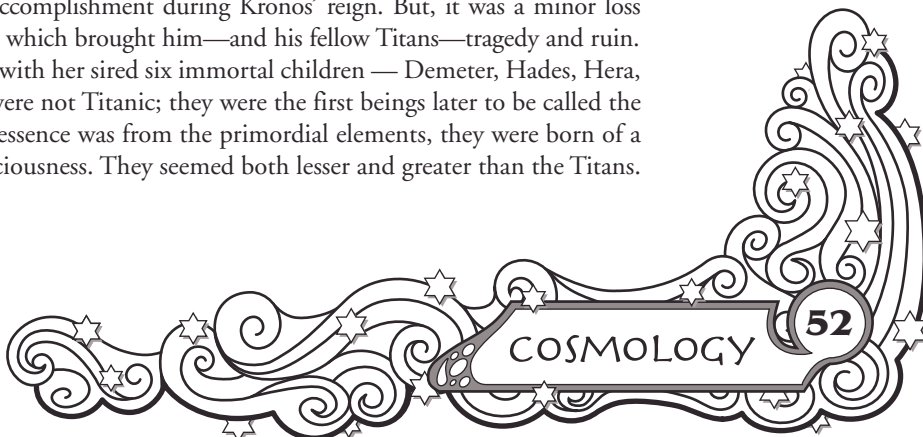
But, like their creators, the Atlanteans were possessed of great pride. The kings of Atlantis, while blessed with Atlas' untainted bloodline, did not earn Atlas' immortality. They sought to remedy their mortal shortcomings. The kings built a great orichalcum tower, a beacon to harness and channel the telluric power of Earth. With this power, they believed it possible to grant themselves eternal life.

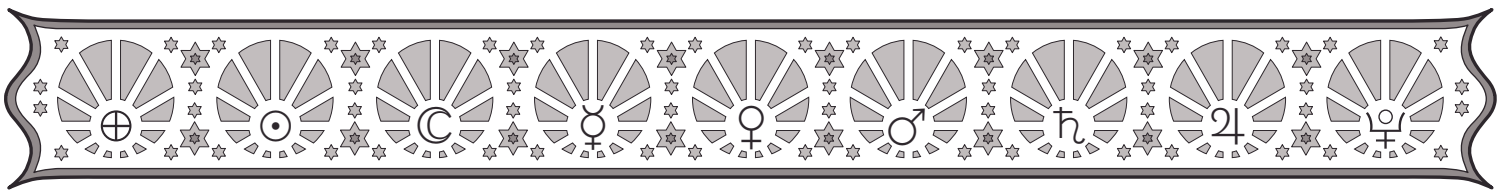
Kronos learned of the Atlantean's scheme; his punishment was swift and severe. Kronos loosed a cataclysmic wrath on Atlantis. He caused a great storm and tremor, killing hundreds in the region. His power literally tore the kingdom from the face of Earth, casting it out into the æther. The cataclysm shifted the Earth's axis, reorienting the very center of creation. Kronos made known his punishment: The Atlanteans would be forced to live forever as wanderers. They would beg, borrow, or steal their resources, and they would always remain mortal, living and dying without a home. Atlantis remains to this day a wandering island adrift on the æther. The once-great nation has become a notorious home-port to pirates, cruel warlords, and desperate negotiators. Its citizens have long sought to rejoin Earth's firmament and rise again as the universe's greatest empire.

The first Eternals

Atlantis was both a great and tragic accomplishment during Kronos' reign. But, it was a minor loss compared Kronos' next accomplishment, which brought him—and his fellow Titans—tragedy and ruin.

Kronos took Rhea as his consort, and with her sired six immortal children — Demeter, Hades, Hera, Hestia, Poseidon, and Zeus. These six were not Titanic; they were the first beings later to be called the Eternals. Unlike the Titans, whose very essence was from the primordial elements, they were born of a more complex order of matter and consciousness. They seemed both lesser and greater than the Titans.





They possessed less raw elemental power than the Titans, and yet they wielded abilities both subtler and more potent.

Kronos was proud of his progeny. With Rhea, he had succeeded in creating immortal beings greater than the sum of their parts. Kronos viewed himself as God, a creator of something complex and wonderful. His children demonstrated yet again to his fellow Titans that Kronos was powerful and supreme. He could create as well as destroy.

But, like his father before him, Kronos soon sensed the threat his offspring posed. Zeus and his siblings chafed under the base and brutal rule of the Titans, and they began to rebel. From their enclave on Olympus, a mountain stronghold on Earth, the Eternals gathered knowledge and power. Their awareness and understanding of the universe rivaled the Titan's primal might. Where they could not match the Titan's mastery over primordial matter, the Eternals could control the energies that shaped matter and life. The Eternals used this advantage as they schemed to their ultimate goal, primacy. But, they would need much help to challenge their masters, the Titans, in the coming conflict. War among the immortals was imminent.

Titanomachy

With Zeus as their leader the Eternals waged conflict against the Titans in a long war called the Titanomachy. They won few victories in the first cycles of the war. The Titan Primarchs controlled the very worlds on which battles occurred; the Eternals could not withstand such opposition. Early in the war, they launched an audacious attack on Kronos' Earthly stronghold, Othrys. The attack was a costly gamble. With the aid of his fellow Titans and their monstrous creations, Kronos defeated and banished most of the Eternals from Earth. Only Zeus remained. He retreated to Olympus to make a lonely defense against Kronos' wrath and maintain a hard-fought toehold on Earth.

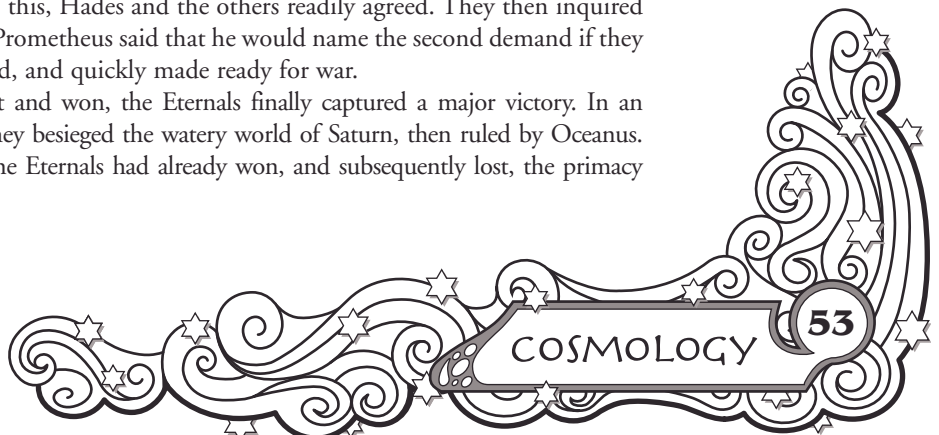
But Zeus' brethren were exiled, and they drifted upon the æther. They found refuge in the unlikelyst of places. As the Titans harassed and pursued the five homeless Eternals in a series of æthership battles, the Eternals finally fled to the Underworld. Then, the world was the demesne of Prometheus, who had thus far remained isolated during the war.

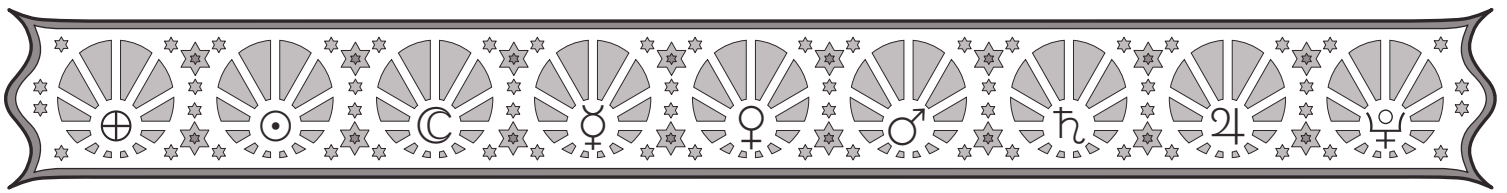
To their surprise, the Eternals found an ally in Prometheus. He was unlike his brutal and power-mongering kin. He was clever and subtle. Prometheus welcomed Demeter, Hades, Hera, Hestia, and Poseidon to his shadowy kingdom, where they immediately began planning the next stages of the war. Prometheus supported their rebellion, and offered the services of his greatest minions. Within Tatarus, Prometheus guarded giants. Like the Titans, these giants possessed primal strength and power. With such powerful servants, the Eternals could again assault the Titans.

But, before he would release them from the Underworld to fight, Prometheus met and spoke with each of the Eternals. In Hades, Prometheus found what he sought. He saw in Hades the right temperament and ability for a thankless, but powerful position. In private, Prometheus explained to Hades that the only thing he hated more than his Titan kin was being the master of hell.

For his aid, Prometheus demanded a confounding price. He would grant Hades primacy of the Underworld and with it the service of the giants imprisoned within. In return, Prometheus desired two things from the Eternals. First, he wanted nothing more to do with the war among immortals. He demanded to be freed and left alone. To this, Hades and the others readily agreed. They then inquired what Prometheus' second demand was. Prometheus said that he would name the second demand if they overthrew the Titans. Warily, they agreed, and quickly made ready for war.

After many skirmishes and battles lost and won, the Eternals finally captured a major victory. In an attack launched from the Underworld, they besieged the watery world of Saturn, then ruled by Oceanus. Throughout the early years of the war, the Eternals had already won, and subsequently lost, the primacy





of other worlds in several battles. However, this victory would be different. It accelerated the urgency and violence of the war.

Poseidon led the attack, thrust right into the heart of the world's seat of power. Armed with an arcane weapon crafted by the Cyclopes, Poseidon defeated Oceanus in his own palace and became Primarch of Saturn. His victory was extraordinary, for not only had he usurped Oceanus, he had also effectively slain the immortal Titan. Poseidon's weapon wounded Oceanus so deeply that his primordial body disintegrated. In a wash of immortal blood and corpus, Oceanus' immortality saturated Saturn and seeped into the æther beyond. Poseidon expelled the "unclean" Titan's remains from his world and cast them into the æther.

The tide turns

The effects of Oceanus' demise were profound. The Titans lost a world as their enemies, the Eternals, gained one. And, the Titans lost one of their own kin. Now, they began to fear their own similar demise. Their morale was shaken. What is more, Oceanus' corporeal effect on the æther itself changed the tide of war. In essence, Oceanus' blood had thickened the ætheric medium. The æther became far more turbulent and irregular, but it also became stronger, denser. Ætherships could travel much more rapidly on the enlivened medium. Poseidon's awesome victory provided a means for the Eternals to bring the war to Earth.

On Earth, Zeus had maintained his desperate defense on Olympus for years. Stubbornly, he resisted Kronos' assaults upon Olympus, driving back the Titans, their monstrous spawn, and the very Earth itself in constant, reckless attacks. He could not repel his tireless invaders forever, whatever casualties he inflicted in his defense. In time, Kronos would wither Zeus' defiant stand.

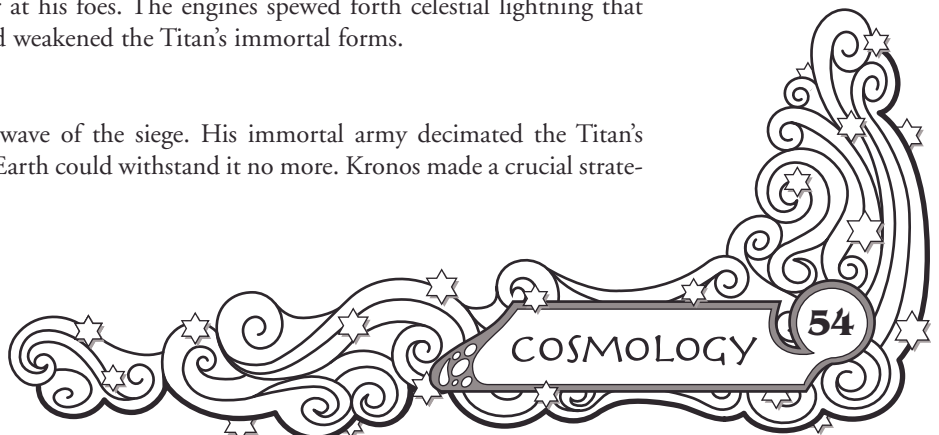
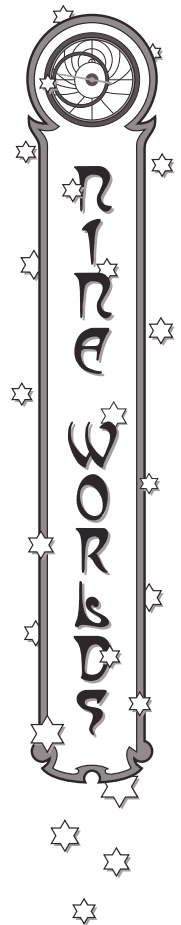
The Eternals knew well Zeus' need for support; they needed, in turn, his strength and leadership. They set out from Saturn and Hades, skirting the heavenly worlds and aiming their fleet and immortal army directly at Earth.

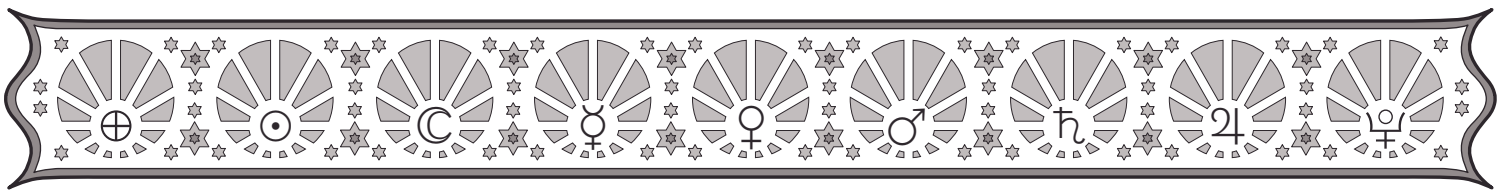
Zeus was near madness; he unleashed his defenses on the Eternals, fearing yet another onslaught from the Titans. Zeus' desperation nearly destroyed his one remaining chance for support and victory. It was Hera who calmed the raging immortal and soothed his violent defense. She brought new hope to Zeus; he swore to keep her at his side as queen of the universe.

The Eternals brought with them powerful allies—the giants. The Cyclopes were masters of war, and they set at constructing weapons and war engines to help defeat the Titans. The Hecatonchires had no crafty skills, but what they lacked in ingenuity they made up for in sheer might. The hundred-handed ones were lumbering armies. Each possessed the destructive might of a great legion; each was like a swarm of warriors made whole and gigantic. The Hecatonchires' power rivaled the Titans. With these two key allies, the Eternals launched a counter-attack on Earth. Zeus led the charge from Olympus. Flanked by the Hecatonchires, and followed by the Cyclopes war machines, Zeus attacked Othrys, Kronos' seat of power. The siege was furious. The Hecatonchires began to rend the earth, flinging matter as a weapon at the Titan's armies. Their destructive tactics disarmed one of Kronos' greatest defenses—his ability to command the firmament. Meanwhile, Zeus unleashed the Cyclopes' weapons. Their engines harnessed and amplified the telluric currents. With these strange, powerful conductors, Zeus directed destructive telluric power at his foes. The engines spewed forth celestial lightning that obliterated the Titan's mortal armies and weakened the Titan's immortal forms.

Onslaught

Zeus was unrelenting in wave after wave of the siege. His immortal army decimated the Titan's defenses. Kronos and the few Titans on Earth could withstand it no more. Kronos made a crucial strate-





gic error; they retreated from Earth to rally with their brethren on the Sun and mount a counter attack. There would be none. Zeus pursued the Titans to the Sun, where the Primarch, Hyperion, was among the first casualties of the battle and forced to retreat. Zeus' Telluric storms and the Eternals' relentless onslaught drove the Titans from another world.

And so the war raged on. The Eternals' offensive pushed the Titans into the worlds beyond. Luna fell, then Mercury and Venus. Again the Titans retreated, and Mars became the battleground for the most destructive battle of the Titanomachy.

The Titans, led by Primarch Iapetus, mounted a stalwart defense on Mars. They repelled every siege by the Eternals, and they inflicted great losses on the Eternals' mortal armies. With their offensive stalled, the Eternals faced another great problem. Ætherstorms erupted like boiling blood around their fleet. The storms threatened to destroy their offensive. Some speculated it was Oceanus' rage that caused the storm the lost Titan aiding his kin.

Zeus then made a bold strategy. He focused all his offensive might not upon the Titans, but upon Mars itself. His plan was simple and brutal. He would ravage the landscape, perhaps even destroy the world. If the Titans would not emerge to stop him, they would rule over a broken land. With his gigantic allies and his telluric weapons, Zeus razed Mars. He laid waste to all that the world had been. It became a desert of scars and ruin. Too late, Iapetus emerged to defend his domain. With his world weakened, Iapetus' power waned. Again the Eternals routed the Titans, and pursued them as they fled to Jupiter. They left Mars a blasted wasteland in their wake.

After the brutal battle on Mars, only Jupiter remained under the rule of the Titans. There, the Titans congregated to plan their last defense. They had few resources and too few minions to defend the vast world. Worse, Kronos' pride ignited infighting among the Titans. He demanded a reckless plan. The Titans would cede Jupiter, and instead attack the Underworld, hoping to recruit in hell an army fit for a counterattack. But, Crius, the Primarch of Jupiter, and others refused to leave their last world to fulfill Kronos' risky scheme. Kronos' might equaled his pride; he challenged Crius' primacy of Jupiter. With Kronos' easy victory, dissent silenced. Kronos earned the Primacy of Jupiter, and as quickly as he had gained it, he abandoned Jupiter. The Titans marched toward the Underworld.

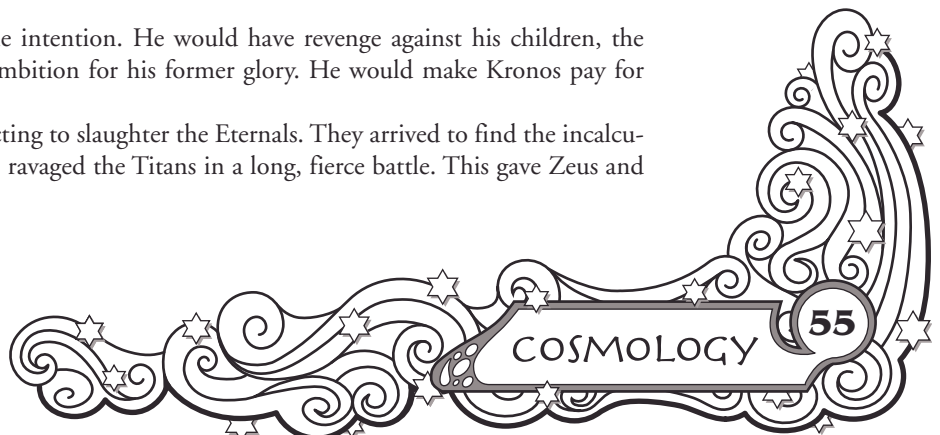
Meanwhile, Zeus and his comrades learned of the Titans' desperate plan. They prepared an ambush in the Stygian æther, the darkest region of the æther near Hades. But they were not alone in those dark reaches. In exile, Atlantis lay hidden among the shadowy currents. Once Atlanteans scouts and spies learned what was happening, the Atlantean kings saw great opportunity for their salvation. They would thwart Zeus and his brethren, and redeem themselves from Kronos' curse.

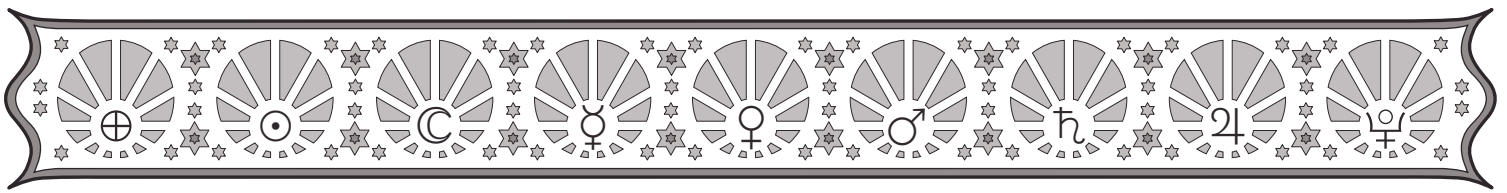
As the Eternals waited in ambush, the Atlantean fleet blindsided them with a devastating surprise assault. The Atlantean ætherships drove wedges between the Eternals, thus granting their old masters, the Titans, a last opportunity for victory. Divided, the Eternals lost their strength. Individually, they were no match for the powerful Titans.

The Titans drove the Eternals back to the gates of the Ninth World. Zeus and his allies pleaded with their brother, Hades, for aid. He had little that could withstand the onslaught of the Titans, especially outside his domain. Hades knew, however, that if the Eternals perished at his door, the Titans would see his downfall next. Hades chose a desperate course. He unlocked Tartarus and freed the only thing Kronos would fear—Ouranos' wrath.

Ouranos emerged from hell with one intention. He would have revenge against his children, the Titans. Gone from his mind was any ambition for his former glory. He would make Kronos pay for his trickery.

The Titans came to Hades' gate expecting to slaughter the Eternals. They arrived to find the incalculable vengeance of their father. Ouranos ravaged the Titans in a long, fierce battle. This gave Zeus and





his allies time to regroup. They first attacked the Atlanteans, then used the Atlanteans' vessels to mask a rear assault on the Titans.

Pressed between immortal foes, the Titans had few options. Defeat was certain, but against whom? Ouranos would destroy them, so great was his wrath. The Titans surrendered to the Eternals, hoping to outlast the Eternals' rule and return one day to challenge them again.

Zeus offered the humiliated Titans a bitter choice. They could return to the terrible confines of Tartarus, where they had spent miserable eons, or they could find refuge among the very people they had outcast—the Atlanteans. Kronos' pride again determined his fate. He chose imprisonment, rather than face greater humiliation before the kings of Atlantis. And, he knew that Tartarus was the one place in the universe Ouranos would not enter. So reasoned, Kronos faced no dissent from his fellow Titans. Defeated, the Titans descended into hellish Tartarus.

Aftermath

The Eternals won the war, but they had to pick up the pieces. Worlds lay empty and aimless. The æther churned with lost fleets and armies. But, the greatest and most immediate problem was Ouranos. The old Titan was loose upon the æther, and he posed a great threat to Zeus' supremacy. Ouranos and his endless rage were certain to trouble the Eternals.

Zeus and his fellow Eternals tracked Ouranos through the æther. They harried Ouranos, but the Titan was powerful. He would not be easily beaten. Zeus attempted to negotiate, but Ouranos' seething rage had not cooled.

For a solution, Zeus sought out the one Titanic ally he had—Prometheus. After aiding the Eternals in the Titanomachy, Prometheus left the Underworld and vanished, wanting nothing to do with war among the immortals. Zeus sent his Eternals across the Nine Worlds to alert Prometheus and request his aid. They found him wandering Earth, alone. Zeus implored Prometheus to help him banish or destroy the menace of Ouranos. Prometheus agreed to handle Ouranos, but in so doing he would teach the Eternals a lesson.

Prometheus met Ouranos upon the æther, and knew at once he could not destroy the old Titan. But, Ouranos was beyond reason, and he could not match Prometheus' cleverness. Prometheus offered Ouranos a means to quench his vengeance against Kronos. He observed that Hades would never allow Ouranos the immortal to enter the Underworld again. So, Prometheus advised, the only way to enter hell again was to give up immortality. As a mortal, he could die, and Hades could not refuse entry into his realm. Prometheus was willing to make this happen. Blinded by rage and the desire to get at Kronos, Ouranos agreed.

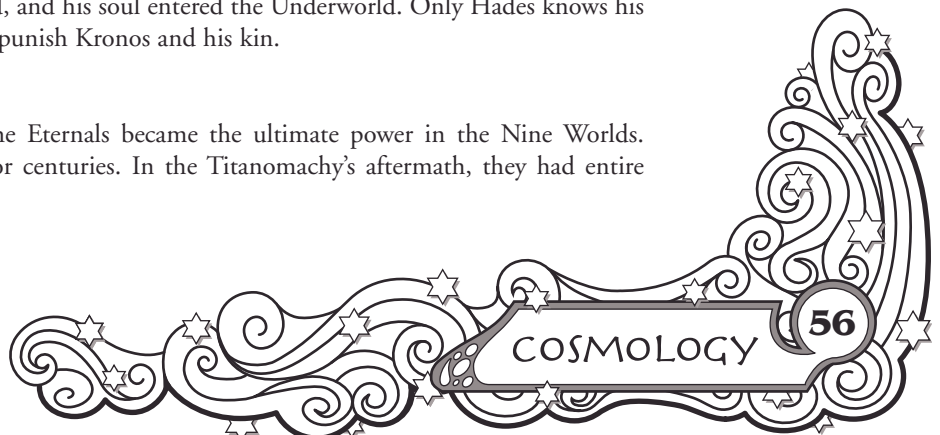
With that, Prometheus transformed Ouranos' primeval flesh to mortal form. But, much of his immortal power remained. With the remaining essence, like blood boiling with rage, Prometheus created the embodiment of rage against injustice. He believed the rage had a place in the universe.

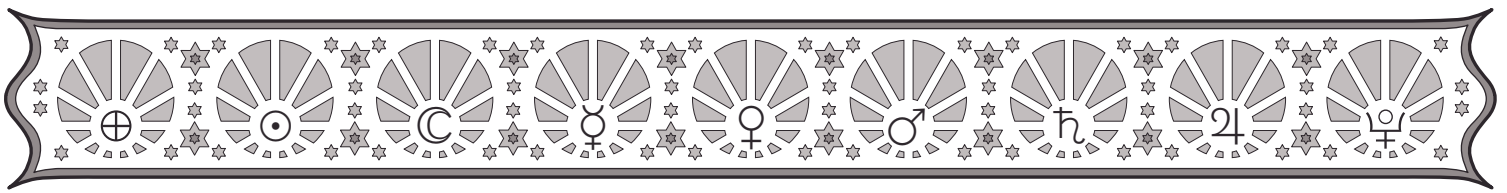
So the Furies were born. These immortal creatures raged at any transgression against the laws of the Primarchs. They became the enforcers of fate, and they exacted terrible punishments on any being who defied the natural order set forth by the Primarchs. To the Eternals, the Furies became a frightening aspect of their rule. To Prometheus, they were a reminder to the Eternals that promises should not be broken.

In time, Ouranos the mortal perished, and his soul entered the Underworld. Only Hades knows his fate, but it is clear he never was able to punish Kronos and his kin.

Reign of the Gods

With their greatest foes defeated, the Eternals became the ultimate power in the Nine Worlds. Nothing challenged their supremacy for centuries. In the Titanomachy's aftermath, they had entire





worlds upon which they could inflict their will, recast reality, and judge virtue.

As the chief victor in the Titanomachy, Zeus had his choice of the spoils. With Hera at his side, he became Primarch of Earth. He made Olympus the seat of his power and the source of his reconstructive vision.

Proving his own creative prowess and vision, Zeus sired more Eternals. These godlike progeny, along with Zeus and his sisters, became known as the Olympians. From among them, Zeus chose new Primarchs for the abandoned worlds beyond Earth. Zeus chose Apollo to reign on Sol. Apollo was wise and eager, and his enlightening influence on nearby Earth would be beneficial to the renewed world. To Luna, Zeus appointed Apollo's sister, Artemis. Her self-discipline, Zeus reasoned, would help regulate the telluric tides. For Mercury, Zeus chose Hermes, the innovator and communicator, to act as a gateway between inner and outer worlds. Zeus appointed alluring Aphrodite as Primarch of Venus. He expected she would host a retreat fit for gods. Zeus had waylaid Mars, and he knew it would take great fortitude to master. Therefore, he granted the wasted world to his furious and energetic son, Ares. And on the vast world of Jupiter, Zeus placed Athena, his favorite daughter, born of his own mind. Zeus trusted wise and powerful Athena to rule Jupiter just as he would.

On the two outermost worlds, Zeus' powerful brothers retained their primacies. Poseidon ruled the watery world of Saturn; Hades governed the Underworld.

Once enthroned, the Eternals recast their worlds with a new vision. They molded their worlds to reflect their temperament and ambitions. Apollo's Sol, for example, became a gleaming, civilized metropolis, to reflect its Primarch's brilliance and sophistication.

As the Eternals shaped their worlds, they defined reality. They were the authorities of the universe. They judged what was virtuous. They decreed the laws of space and time, physics, and life and death. The Eternals' rigid metaphysical worldview lasted for millennia, challenged only by a few notable heroes and villains.

During this time, the Olympians reigned as gods supreme. Any being who defied their worldview risked not only the wrath of the Olympians, but also the rage of the Furies, who inflict a fate worse than death upon offenders.

Even in the current day, at a time when the Eternals' power and influence has weakened, their worldview remains a hard and fast reality. Defiance of this reality remains a grave risk for any being.

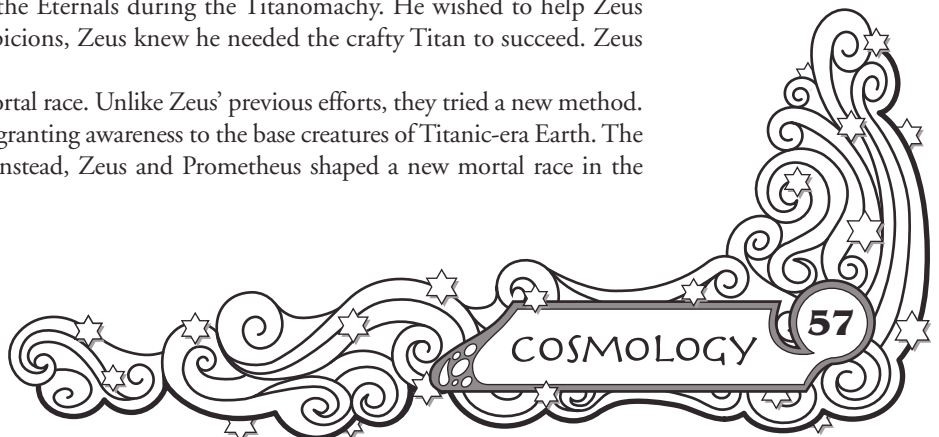
Humanity takes shape

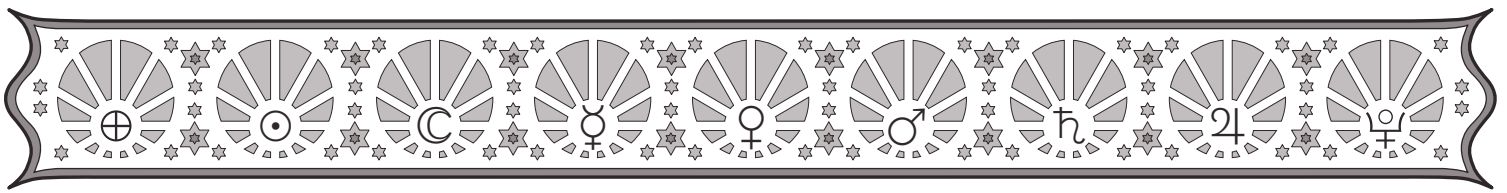
As his Olympian Primarchs shaped their worlds, Zeus recast his own. On Earth, he revived much of the flora and fauna that preceded the Titanomachy. He shifted the world's axis, placing its center near Olympus. Earth became the most glorious of the Nine Worlds, but Zeus wanted more. He wanted minions to admire his work, defend his realm, and carry out his works.

He tried and failed again and again to create mortal servants. The results were disastrous. Some lacked awareness and did nothing. Some were too prideful and defied their creator. Some were too hateful, and destroyed one another. All were doomed. Zeus became frustrated, and destroyed them all, consigning their twisted souls to Hades.

It was then that Prometheus came to Zeus to collect an overdue payment. Prometheus finally made known his second demand for helping the Eternals during the Titanomachy. He wished to help Zeus create a race of mortals. Despite his suspicions, Zeus knew he needed the crafty Titan to succeed. Zeus agreed to Prometheus' request.

The two immortals set at creating a mortal race. Unlike Zeus' previous efforts, they tried a new method. Zeus had transformed existing creations, granting awareness to the base creatures of Titanic-era Earth. The transformations became abominations. Instead, Zeus and Prometheus shaped a new mortal race in the





WHAT IS AN ARCHON?

Archons are humans with special metaphysical powers. Taken as a whole, the Archons are the means by which the Demiurge influences the universe. No single Archon represents the Demiurge at a given time. Rather, all Archons represent the Demiurge as a whole. They are like a metaphysical citizenry who “vote” for the Demiurge’s policy through their actions and choices.

The immortals have no special link to the Demiurge. They have long ignored its power, and now that it has emerged in the form of mortal humans, the immortals both fear and mock its power. However, they can no longer ignore the threat Archons pose to their universal dominance.

mortals. With confirmation of his suspicions from Prometheus himself, Zeus flew into a rage. He exacted a severe punishment on Prometheus.

Zeus banished Prometheus to a lonely, nameless rock adrift on the æther near Jupiter. Consigned to the lonely island far from his beloved humans, Prometheus might have found solace in his own thoughts. But, Zeus ensured the punishment squelched Prometheus’ love for philosophy, as well. He dispatched twin sentinels to harass Prometheus on every Solar cycle. These sinister machines eviscerated Prometheus daily. For Prometheus, immortal and one-time lord in hell, the wounds were not life-threatening. But the pain was severe, and each day the pain interrupted his thoughts. Zeus had created to perfect torture for Prometheus.

The flame flickers

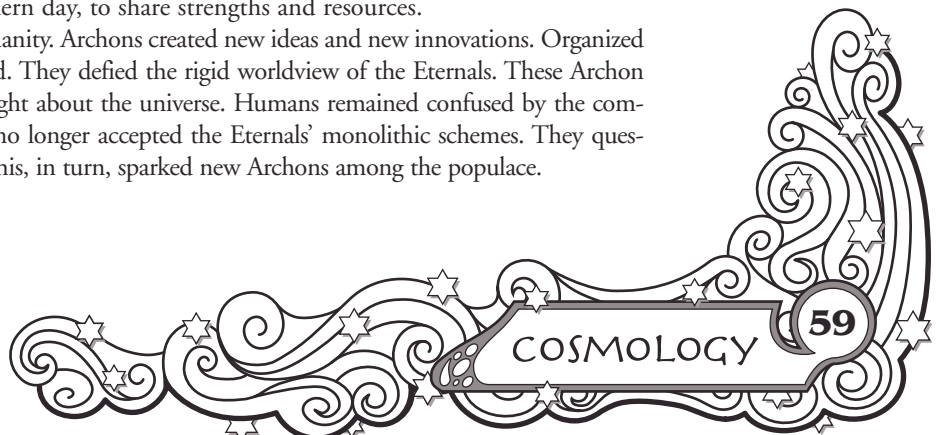
During his centuries of isolation, Prometheus was unable to help humans realize their power and potential. He could not illumine those humans who would become Archons, nor could he guide them and explain their role in the universe. Those humans had to discover their own potential. They had no reliable understanding of their power, no one to guide them.

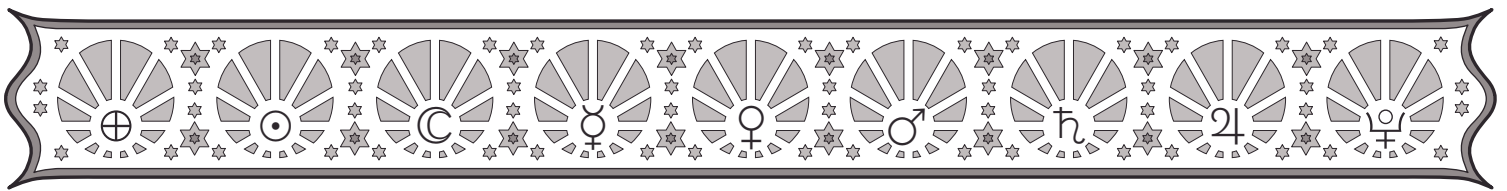
For many, life was filled with fear as they fled persecution from other humans. Some Archons abused their gifts, terrorizing their communities with supernatural power. But, most Zeus swayed with monolithic belief structures issued from his “divine” hand. Conformity ruled. On Earth, as on other worlds, it was a dark age for humanity. The Primarchs ruled their worlds as the voice of God, and Archons who denied their worldview posed only a minor threat.

The rise of the Archons

In time, those Archons who defied the Eternals began to find like-minded comrades. They formed secret societies, many extant in the modern day, to share strengths and resources.

It was an age of enlightenment for humanity. Archons created new ideas and new innovations. Organized groups, like the Daedalian Society formed. They defied the rigid worldview of the Eternals. These Archon factions changed the way humanity thought about the universe. Humans remained confused by the complexity of competing worldviews. Many no longer accepted the Eternals’ monolithic schemes. They questioned their world and their place in it. This, in turn, sparked new Archons among the populace.



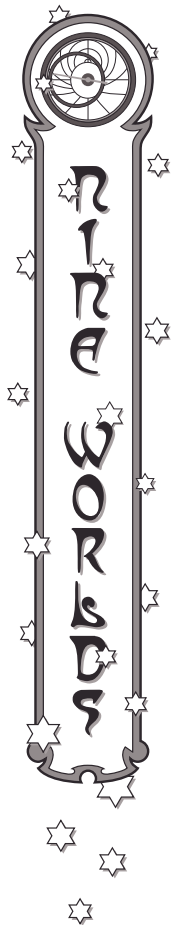


an Atlantean king. Unnoticed and motivated by intense jealousy and ambition, Gadeiros' shade escaped the confines of the Underworld for which he was destined. He quickly rallied fallen Atlanteans who perished in the battles of the Titanomachy, raids, and other skirmishes upon the æther. They recognized their leader, and followed him willingly as they marched to the gates of Tartarus.

The Hecatonchires guarded the gates. Gadeiros had little hope his Atlantean comrades could defeat the hundred-handed giants. Instead, his forces spread out, distracting the Hecatonchires with many ghostly targets. With the giants distracted, Gadeiros stole the key to open the gates. The Titans waited behind the thick bronze doors. With the locks undone, they burst from Tartarus with fury. The Titans were free and ready to bring their terrible vengeance back to the Nine Worlds.

The Titans made for the Ninth Gate. There, they fought Hades and his countless ghostly minions. The Titans could not defeat Hades in his own realm, so they turned their rage upon the gates. They tore open the Underworld's barriers, and desperate souls raced to escape. Hades retained his primacy, but he would pose little threat to the Titans' escape. Many souls escaped the Underworld, and Hades devoted his efforts to recovering his lost domain.

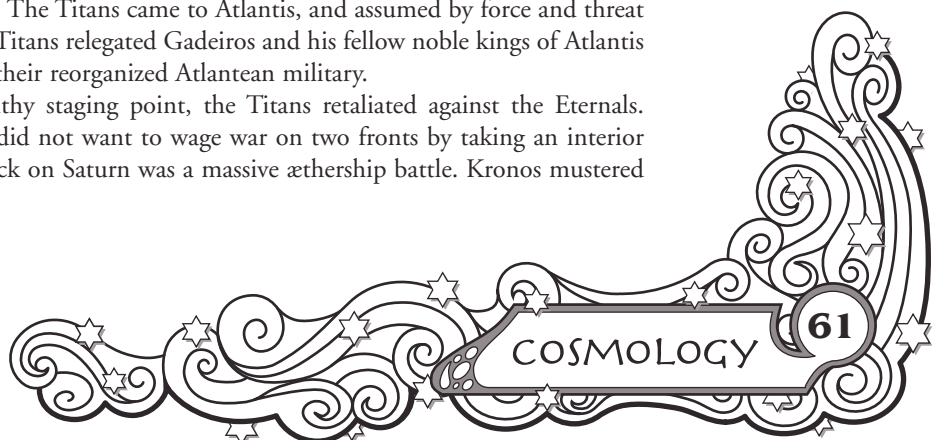
The Titan's clever tactic removed Hades as a threat to their plans. They escaped Hades, bringing with them Gadeiros and his comrades and defying Hades' mastery and right over their dead souls. Gadeiros' plan succeeded. He earned favor from the Titans, but their brutal return to Atlantis as a base of operations soured his relation with his people.

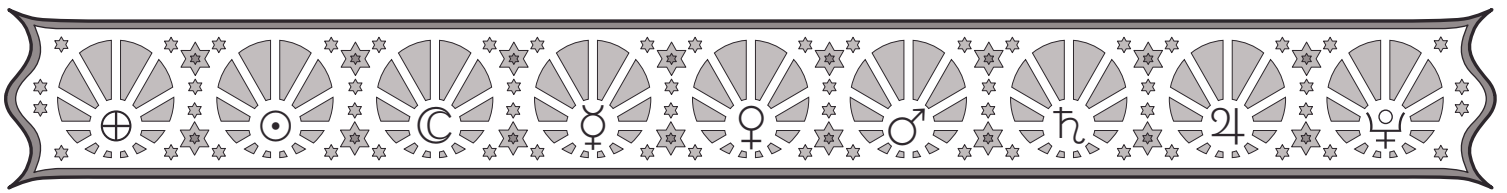


Titanomachy revisited

Thus began the second Titanomachy. The Titans came to Atlantis, and assumed by force and threat control of the vagabond kingdom. The Titans relegated Gadeiros and his fellow noble kings of Atlantis to the role of officers and enforcers for their reorganized Atlantean military.

With Atlantis as a mobile and stealthy staging point, the Titans retaliated against the Eternals. Kronos chose to strike Saturn first; he did not want to wage war on two fronts by taking an interior world surrounded by enemies. The attack on Saturn was a massive æthership battle. Kronos mustered





the entire Atlantean fleet that was scattered across the æther. Poseidon met the armada with his own Saturnian Navy, staffed by and captained by many Archons.

Hundreds of ætherships filled the æther and the seas of Saturn itself. The attack was swift and overwhelming. Each of Kronos' many Titan allies led more than a hundred ships, and they struck every port on Saturn.

Many met with staunch resistance from the Saturnian Navy. Losses for both the Atlanteans and the Saturnians were great, but the Titans were too powerful for the mortal navy. The human populace fled to submarine cities beneath the waves of Saturn, but there they drowned when the Titans crushed the cities' domes.

Poseidon and the remnants of his navy fought on. They concentrated their efforts on Kronos' fleet in the æthersphere of Saturn. With the same weaponry he had used to slay Oceanus, Poseidon struck Kronos' flagship. The old Titan anticipated the attack, and he returned the volley with his own war engines. The blow left Poseidon awash on the æther, and the remnants of his fleet scattered in defeat. Kronos waded in and found the dazed god. With his mighty hands, Kronos strangled Poseidon, drowning him in the æther, where Oceanus' spirit found its revenge. Poseidon choked on the Titanic waves of hate, and his body disappeared among the ætheric tides.

Kronos won Saturn, and again he became a Primarch. It was a crucial victory, and one that gave the Titans renewed hope of taking back command of the Nine Worlds. But, as he looked inward to the other worlds, Kronos knew he needed more resources. He began by stripping his own world of its bounty of life. Kronos blasted away the waters of Titan, and they became a permanent haze of dense clouds and steam that blotted out daylight. Saturn's dry seabeds became a barren, terrible landscape. But, it was a world rich in orichalcum and other newly accessible resources necessary for the coming war with the Eternals.

Kronos and the Titans then set their sights on two goals and divided their forces.

First, Kronos sent Atlas and the Atlanteans to terrorize the æther. Kronos had learned much about the strength and needs of the Eternals, and he knew that travel and commerce on the æther was vital to their rule. Humans shuttled resources and communication among worlds; without such exchanges, the Eternals would be greatly weakened. The Atlanteans lived for centuries raiding ætherships. The Titans encouraged such piracy, and the Atlanteans crippled traffic among the worlds with their random, violent raids.

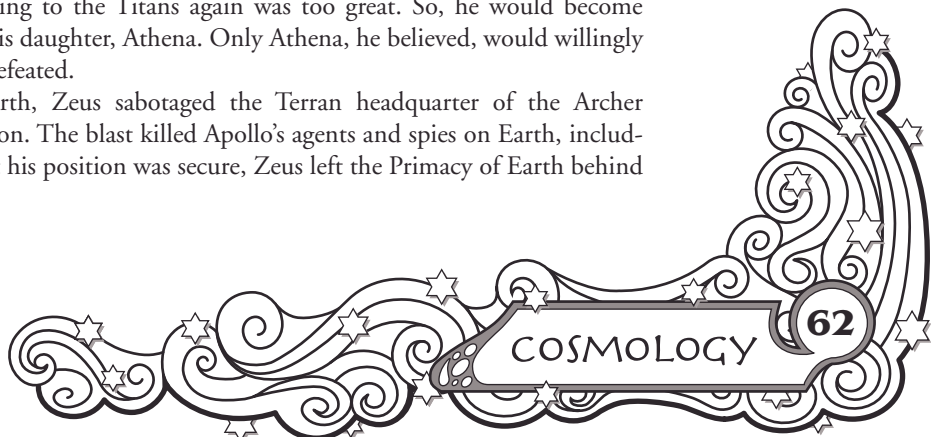
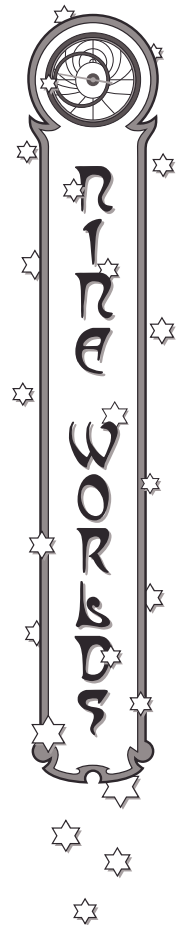
Second, Kronos and his fellow Titans prepared to take Jupiter, where Athena reigned. They assembled a host of Titan spawn. Monstrous creatures like the hydra and the chimera roamed the wastelands of Jupiter, anxious for bloodshed and chaos.

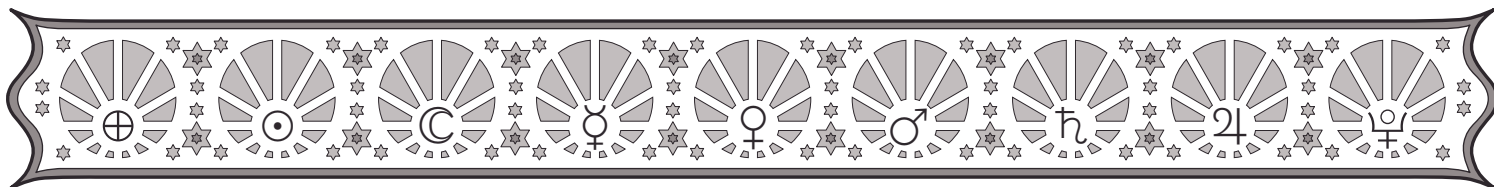
The center cannot hold

Zeus knew the siege of Jupiter was imminent. He could not afford to lose more ground to the Titans, least of all Jupiter and his favored Olympian daughter, Athena. Faced with that risk, he had to make a choice. If he stayed on Earth, the Titans would likely capture two worlds. But, if he defended Jupiter, he left Earth unattended. Zeus had long sensed another threat to his prominence from one of his own Olympians. Zeus knew Apollo's desire to outshine Zeus as greatest among the Eternals. He feared Apollo would try to snatch Earth's primacy in his absence.

Zeus devised a plan. The risk of losing to the Titans again was too great. So, he would become Primarch of Jupiter and leave Earth to his daughter, Athena. Only Athena, he believed, would willingly relinquish Earth once the Titans were defeated.

Before his final departure from Earth, Zeus sabotaged the Terran headquarter of the Archer Foundation, Apollo's premier organization. The blast killed Apollo's agents and spies on Earth, including one of Apollo's own sons. Confident his position was secure, Zeus left the Primacy of Earth behind





and journeyed to Jupiter to exchange titles with his daughter.

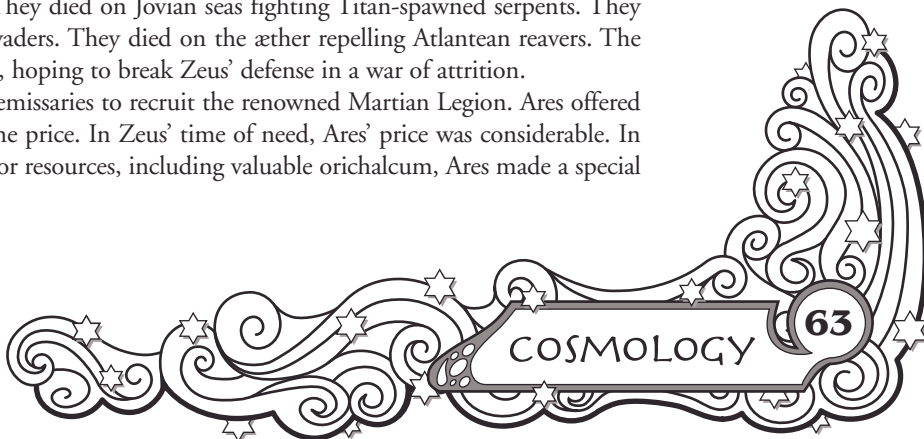
Zeus' action did prevent Apollo from gaining access to Earth, but the consequences cost him greatly in action against the Titans. Apollo sought revenge for Zeus' preemption. With the help of his agents, also eager for revenge, Apollo destroyed Zeus' greatest weapons. His agents assassinated the Cyclopes en route to Jupiter. The Cyclopes maintained Zeus' powerful telluric war engines. Without their expertise, the weapons were useless. The loss greatly weakened Zeus' prowess against the powerful Titans.

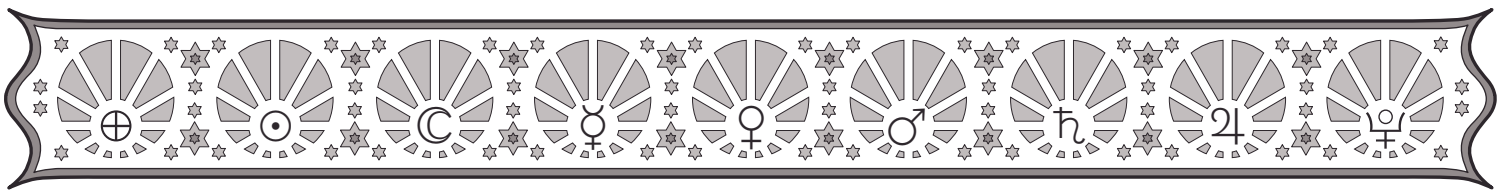
The Jovian front

Zeus arrived at Jupiter. Athena ceded her title to him, and she left for Earth. Without his war engines, Zeus realized he must find another means to fight the Titans. His immortal allies were too few, and his fellow Primarchs had their own worlds to defend. Reluctantly, Zeus turned to humanity. He was not eager to do so. Zeus admired his human creation, and he loathed hurling so many to their deaths against the Titans. Humanity had never known the destruction of the first Titanomachy, and Zeus doubted the mortals' effectiveness and resolve against the Titans. Still, he reasoned, their numbers might overwhelm the Titans, and the individual Archons among them possessed great power, even for mortals.

In little time, Zeus conscripted armies from the Jovian populace. During the first phases of the war, they were like stinging ants to the Titans, a mere nuisance. The Titans occupied key areas of Jupiter—the waterways, cities, and ætherports. But, the human soldiers fought on. They recaptured lost ground, and drove the Titans back to Saturn again and again. The Jovian armies repelled onslaught after onslaught to defend Jupiter. Zeus' successful defense was costly. With each attack, Zeus lost large numbers of his soldiers. They died on Jovian seas fighting Titan-spawned serpents. They died in the city streets resisting Titan invaders. They died on the æther repelling Atlantean reavers. The Titans continued their offensive for years, hoping to break Zeus' defense in a war of attrition.

Zeus needed reinforcements. He sent emissaries to recruit the renowned Martian Legion. Ares offered his elite army to anyone willing to pay the price. In Zeus' time of need, Ares' price was considerable. In addition to Ares' extraordinary demand for resources, including valuable orichalcum, Ares made a special





demand. He desired Aphrodite, his former lover who now favored Apollo. If Zeus could convince his amorous daughter to return to him, Ares offered to lead the Martian Legion against the Titans.

Love and war

Frustrated and angered by Ares' petty proposal, Zeus delegated the affair to Athena. He hired speedy Mercurian couriers to carry his orders to Earth. Using Hermes' messengers was the most reliable way to get word to Athena, but it also meant Hermes would know what was happening. Zeus did not mind the risk; he was far more concerned with raging battles in and around his world.

The Mercurian couriers delivered Zeus' orders to Athena on Earth. She immediately sent a plea to Aphrodite. Athena knew Aphrodite was no fool. Aphrodite's notorious, amorous affairs had more to do with courting power than to they had to do with lust or desire. Athena considered this as she penned her message to Aphrodite. The message encouraged Aphrodite to take advantage of Ares' desire. She could gain not only Ares' affection, but she would also gain Zeus' appreciation. With influence on Ares' military might and Zeus' supremacy of the Nine Worlds, Aphrodite had much to gain, Athena advised.

Athena's message intrigued Aphrodite, but it was not enough to convince her. Apollo's favor was powerful, and she had much to gain courting the increasingly powerful Primarch of Sol. If Aphrodite spurned his love, it would hurt her interests. So, she conceived a means to appease both parties. Aphrodite replied to Athena with a simple message that conveyed troubling consequences. It read, "I will love Ares again the day you, dear sister, love a Titan."

Aphrodite's aim was to ease Apollo's reaction. Suggesting that Athena, Zeus' favored daughter and Primarch of Earth, love a Titan suited Apollo's ambitions well. He had no love for the Titans, but he sought to usurp Zeus' supremacy. Should Athena seek a Titan, she might risk Earth or distract Zeus. Aphrodite's gambit proved her talent for shrewd politics.

Still, Athena would not be outdone. Loving Kronos or any of his terrible allies was unthinkable, but Athena did admire one of his Titanic kin — Prometheus. Prometheus was a Titan she could love, so she quietly left Earth to find the fugitive immortal, who was missing since his escape from Zeus' exile.

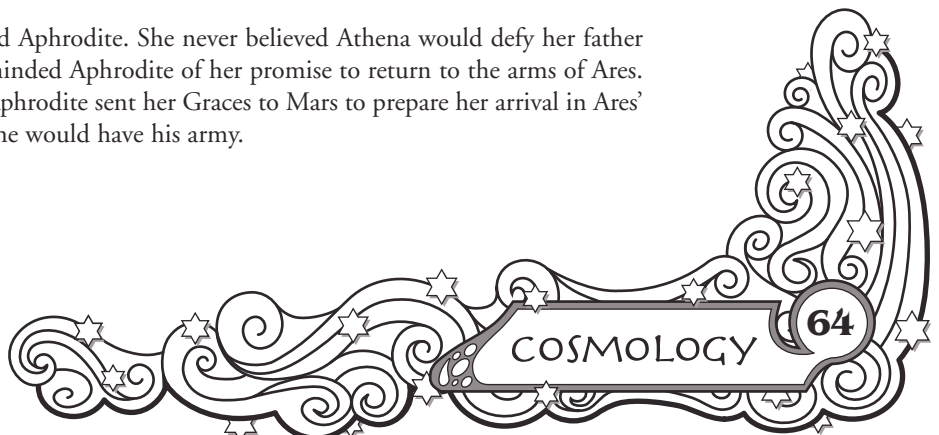
Prometheus concealed himself amid the shifting cityscapes of Mercury. There he had surreptitiously watched and listened to Hermes' spies and couriers as they revealed events of the new Titanomachy. He knew Athena's plight before she even left Earth's æther. He found her ambition and loyalty alluring. He would find her and see whether she was capable of love, or merely duty to her father.

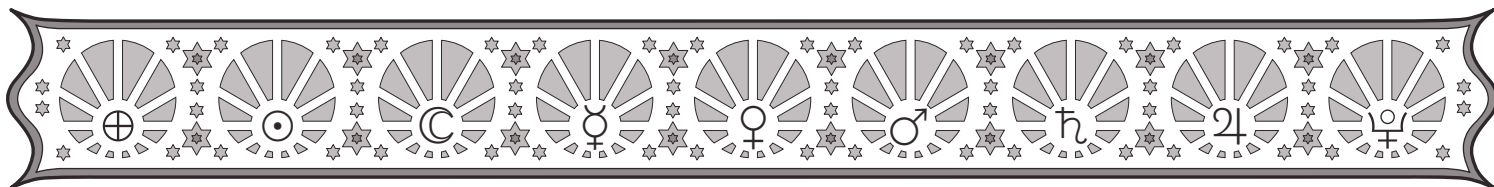
Athena began scouring the worlds, quietly traveling the æther on a privateer's ship. She and her few trusted agents first searched Sol, then Luna for any hint of Prometheus' whereabouts. They found nothing. Then, as Athena and her entourage arrived on the foggy docks of Pegasus Yards, Prometheus found them.

Athena and Prometheus remained together on Mercury. Prometheus penetrated Athena's cool, rational demeanor, and found in her profound emotion and compassion like he had never known in an immortal. She could love him, he determined. Athena admired Prometheus' independence and fearlessness; with him she felt free. Their love was sincere.

For weeks, the two immortals found blissful respite from the calamitous war around them. But their freedom could not last. At her request, Prometheus escorted Athena to Venus to prove their love to Aphrodite.

The couple's arrival on Venus stunned Aphrodite. She never believed Athena would defy her father by choosing to love a Titan. Athena reminded Aphrodite of her promise to return to the arms of Ares. Even wily Aphrodite could not refuse. Aphrodite sent her Graces to Mars to prepare her arrival in Ares' capitol. Athena sent word to Zeus that he would have his army.





A Titanic threat

Zeus' reply was swift and grave. He sent word that the Kronos had lost all authority with his fellow Titans. Zeus' Aegis agents reported that the Titans had apparently disbanded in disarray. Now, each Titan struck out from Jupiter to capture a world alone. Zeus warned his fellow Primarchs to protect their worlds. He angrily commanded Athena back to her seat on Earth; her absence from Earth put the entire universe in jeopardy.

The order distressed Athena greatly. Her worst fear arrived much sooner than she thought; she had to choose between her duty to Zeus and her love for Prometheus. She alone knew that an immortal child grew in her womb, and she would not risk the child in battle against Kronos or any one of his thuggish Titans. Athena chose her love for Prometheus and their child, defying the strict expectations of her powerful father, Zeus.

Prometheus and Athena set out for Earth, but Athena steered their voyage on a different course. She told Prometheus he would be a father. She also told him that if they had any hope for their progeny they must separate. She would go to Luna where she could find refuge to bear their child. Prometheus, then, would have to become Primarch of Earth and protect is populace.

Prometheus first protested, then agreed to Athena's plan. He watched from the deck Athena's ship as Luna, his lover and unborn child disappeared in ætheric mist. It remains his last glimpse of Athena. She spent the ensuing years hidden along with her immortal child, whose identity remains unknown even to his father.

Prometheus returned to Earth and assumed primacy of the central world. In little time, he heard reports of Titans assaulting the middle worlds. Iapetus attacked Mars, and Rhea waged a campaign of sabotage and subtle politics on Venus, trying to unseat Aphrodite. The inner worlds were next, and Prometheus prepared himself. His own favored Archons, a group called the Illuminati, learned the truth; the Titans' attacks were a distraction. Kronos still commanded his Titan kin. Their attacks were a ploy to divide the Primarchs and prevent them from cooperating. Thus, Kronos himself could strike at Earth, perhaps even capture the world in Athena's absence.

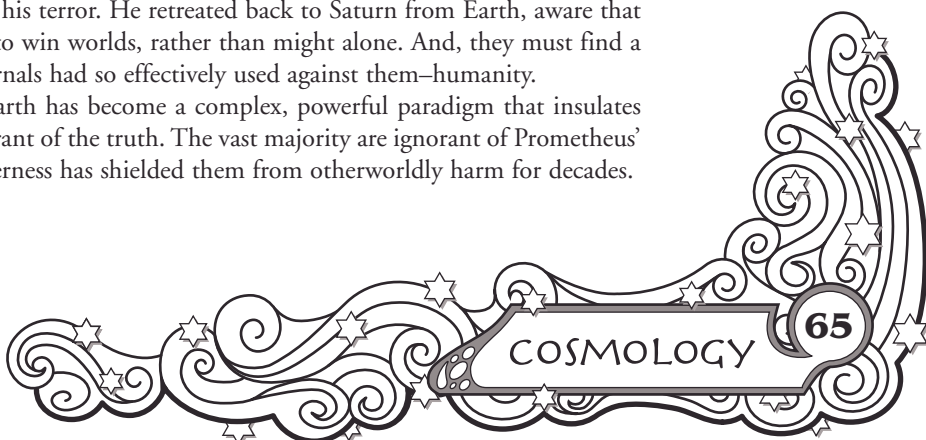
The shield of reason

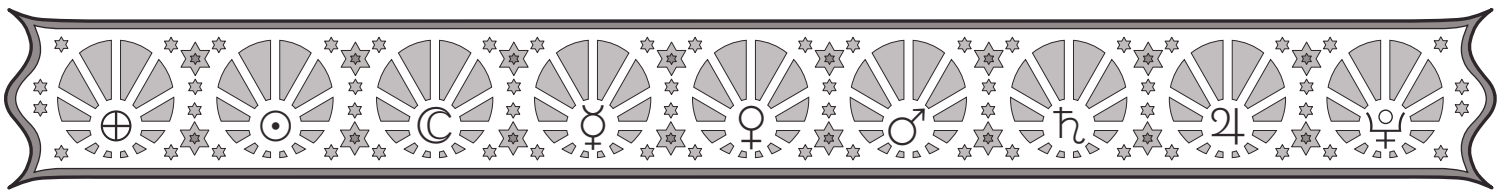
Prometheus knew he faced a dangerous, destructive enemy in Kronos. He doubted his own prowess against the powerful Titan, and he did not wish to send countless humans to their deaths against him as Zeus had. Yet, humanity was his best resource. Prometheus conceived an unprecedented defense for Earth, thanks to his superior understanding of humanity, Archons, and the Demiurge.

Earth's humans had begun to make incredible progress in science and technology. Prometheus' accelerated that progress and shaped it into an extraordinary defense. Rather than military force, Prometheus encouraged humanity's capacity for reason and skepticism. Terrans began to dismiss what it saw as superstition and myth. Their skepticism and reason shielded the Earth. Prometheus encouraged this mass delusion, reinforcing humanity's steadfast belief in science and reason that actually repelled the power of otherworldly beings. He fostered a barrier of thought.

Humanity's phalanx of self-reliance and intellectual pride confounded Kronos. He had relied on his overbearing might to regain the worlds. Kronos' direct, brutal tactics could still harm humans, but the rest of humanity dispelled the effects of his terror. He retreated back to Saturn from Earth, aware that the Titans must begin to use their wits to win worlds, rather than might alone. And, they must find a way to harness the one resource the Eternals had so effectively used against them—humanity.

In the modern day, the defense of Earth has become a complex, powerful paradigm that insulates much of humanity. Terrans remain ignorant of the truth. The vast majority are ignorant of Prometheus' role as Primarch. But, Prometheus' cleverness has shielded them from otherworldly harm for decades.





Calm before the storm

Kronos and the Titans withdrew from their offensive, and the war eased for many years. The Titans regrouped. They recruited many humans, especially Archons eager for power or independence. They enslaved even more humans. With their human allies and slaves and Atlantean cohorts, the Titans formed new armies, a workforce, spies, and operatives for their ongoing terror campaigns. Meanwhile, Zeus deployed the Martian Legion on the frontlines of Jupiter in preparation for the Titan's resurgence. The immortal powers prepared once again for war, and when conflict ignited it would be on an unprecedented scale. Thousands, if not millions, of humans would take part, and many of them would die.

The Titans' human spies scouted positions of the Martian Legion about Jupiter. Kronos developed a new plan; the Titan armies would skirt Jupiter and take Mars, which lacked its famous legionnaires for defense. Then, they could surround Zeus, cut him off, and crush Jupiter finally. To do that, the Titans needed means to traverse Jupiter's aetherspace unnoticed by Zeus and his scouts. So, Kronos sent an offer in secret to Apollo. Kronos knew Apollo's ambition, and he knew Apollo would be eager to get back at both Ares and Zeus for their political schemes. He offered a simple trade. In exchange for transport to Mars under Sol's banners, Kronos swore never to threaten Apollo's rule. In addition, Kronos offered Apollo the primacy of any other world except Earth.

Apollo did not believe Kronos' generosity. But, the opportunity gave him influence over the outcome of the war. If he assisted the Titans, Ares and Zeus would be weakened by battle. Apollo could then complete his rise to dominance. But, his ploy was risky. If the Titans defeated Ares and Zeus, they might then conquer the universe. Or, if the other Primarchs learned of Apollo's allegiance with the Titans, they would unite against him.

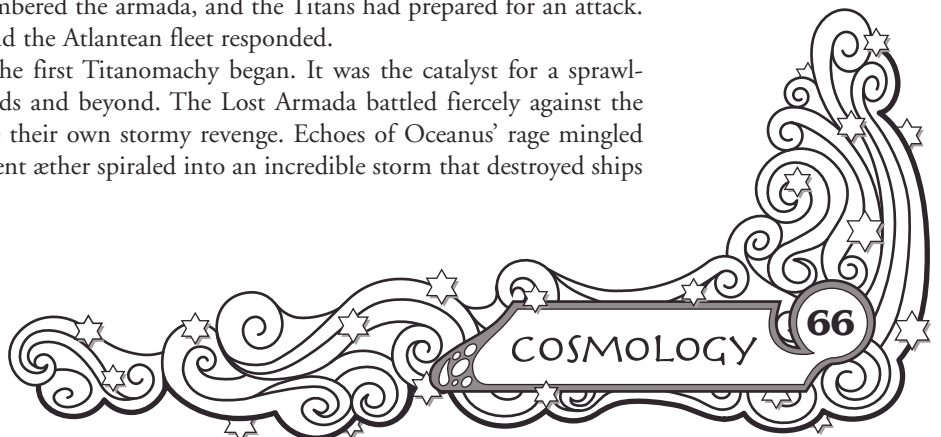
For the transport, Apollo turned to the Horizon Cartels in the undercity of Sol. He knew these organized criminals had worked for Hyperion in recent years to subvert his rule. But, they were human, and they could be bought. Apollo paid several members of the Horizon Cartels to smuggle the Titan invaders to Mars. Then, he could easily deny involvement, citing the cartels' affiliation with Hyperion.

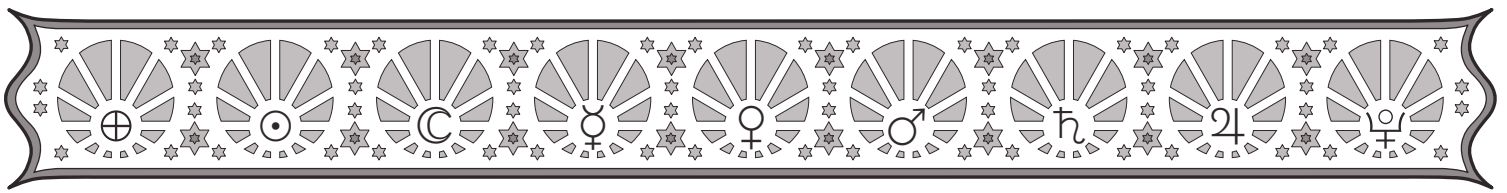
Apollo wished the secret invasion to be only partly successful. His wanted to cripple Ares and Zeus, but not see them defeated. He would let the Titans wreak havoc, then intervene at a desperate hour. His own military was too small, so he called on the so-called Lost Armada, the last members of the Saturnian Navy. Apollo assembled the scattered, veteran force and offered them a chance to avenge their world. They were eager to accept.

Clash of the tides

With his double-dealing plan prepared, Apollo accepted Kronos' offer. The two set the invasion in motion. The Horizon Cartels began shuttling Kronos' army in scores of aetherships. The convoy bypassed Jupiter without alarming Zeus' security. But, as the aetherships approached Mars an incredible aetherstorm stirred. Riding the front of the ferocious storm was the Lost Armada. They ignored Apollo's orders to wait for his lead; the Titans would be most vulnerable at this point, and they planned to avenge their lost world. With the vengeful spirit of Poseidon surrounding them, the captains of the Lost Armada broadsided the Titan convoy. The merchant vessels and transports were defenseless against the armada's warships. But, they outnumbered the armada, and the Titans had prepared for an attack. Iapetus, the invasion leader, signaled, and the Atlantean fleet responded.

The largest aetherspace battle since the first Titanomachy began. It was the catalyst for a sprawling conflict that would cover two worlds and beyond. The Lost Armada battled fiercely against the Atlantean cruisers. The Atlanteans rode their own stormy revenge. Echoes of Oceanus' rage mingled with Poseidon's angry spirit. The turbulent aether spiraled into an incredible storm that destroyed ships





and washed sailors from memory and time. Hundreds of ships exchanged fire, then slipped away in churning æther mists. The Atlanteans took heavy losses as they escorted the Titan marauders to a landing on Mars.

The battle expanded to the sands of Mars. There Ares faced the Titan invaders with a meager home guard. The Titans lost much of their primary invasion force in the æther battle, but, they landed enough of an army to outmatch Ares' defenders. Without the Martian Legion, Ares could not hold out. So, he did the unthinkable. He relinquished his world to Iapetus, the invasion force's leader. Ares left his world in the hands of the enemy and dashed to Jupiter to rally the Martian Legion for a counterattack.

On Jupiter, Zeus and Ares argued about deployment of the Martian Legion. Zeus was now surrounded; he believed the legion was his only way to survive on Jupiter. Ares believed only recapturing Mars guaranteed their mutual security. For the first time, Ares broke his contract, and with the help of a blockade formed by the Lost Armada, Ares brought the Martian Legion back to Mars. There they battled the Titan armies on familiar ground in weeks of bloody fighting against powerful enemies and inhuman monsters.

War is hell

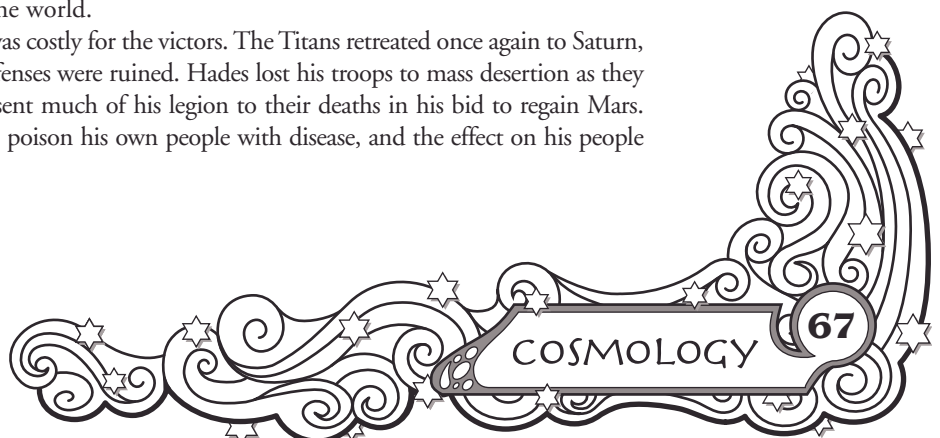
Meanwhile, Apollo watched the battles unfold. The armada failed to follow his orders, and the cartels would be reluctant work with him again. The fate of Mars was a bloody mess. If the same happened on Jupiter, Apollo feared the Titans would conquer the remaining worlds, including his own. He decided to help Zeus, his greatest rival, repel another Titan invasion.

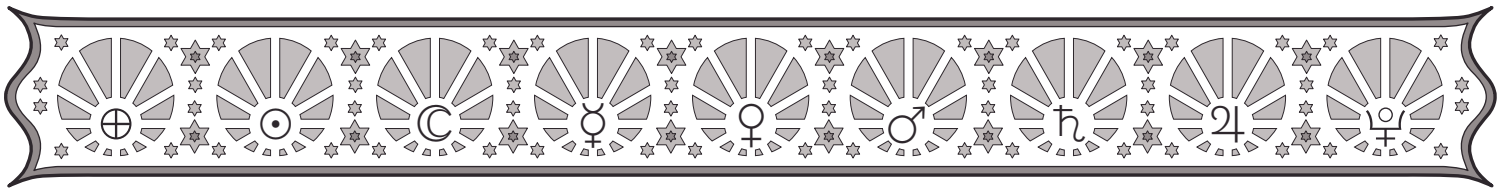
Apollo's Solar military was too far from Jupiter to help Zeus defend his domain. He had no steady allies on the outer rim. Only Hades could muster the means to stop the Titans from conquering Jupiter, but Apollo and Hades had their differences. Apollo's supreme healing powers and resources on Sol weakened Hades pool of loyal shades in the Underworld. The two Primarchs were ideologically opposed, and their relations were weak.

Lacking diplomatic favor with Hades, Apollo brought to Hades incredible wealth, including holdings on many worlds and contracts with the most enterprising companies. Hades wanted none of Apollo's treasure. Instead, he offered to harass the Titans on Saturn and prevent them from conquering Jupiter. In exchange, Apollo would help in bolster the ranks of his lifeless populace. He demanded that Apollo unleash a plague on Sol that would kill mortals and send their souls to the Underworld. The deaths must replenish Hades losses and expand his reserves as well. Apollo agreed to Hades' gruesome terms, and returned to Sol to prepare the plague. With the agreement sealed, Hades opened the Ninth Gate and sent swarms of shades to battle, backed by the powerful Hecatonchires who had fought the Titans many times before.

The Titans began their assault on Jupiter, but their army was now under attack itself. Shades harassed and haunted the Titan invaders. The Hecatonchires ravaged Kronos' minions, and fought the individual Titans directly. Zeus' defense forces fought back against the surrounded Titan army. Losses on all sides were overwhelming. Amid the confusion, Hades troops attacked anything and everything, and even Zeus' troops died of horror, sapped of life by Hades' specters. But, the Titans lost all control of their army, and their assault became a frenzy of aimless destruction. The Titans could not capture Jupiter without direction; their chances of surrounding Zeus were ruined. On Mars, Ares regained his capitol, and he banished Iapetus from the world.

The Titans were defeated, but success was costly for the victors. The Titans retreated once again to Saturn, but no army could pursue them. Zeus defenses were ruined. Hades lost his troops to mass desertion as they returned to the mortal worlds. Ares had sent much of his legion to their deaths in his bid to regain Mars. On Sol, Apollo oversaw the conspiracy to poison his own people with disease, and the effect on his people and economy was severe.





Stalemate

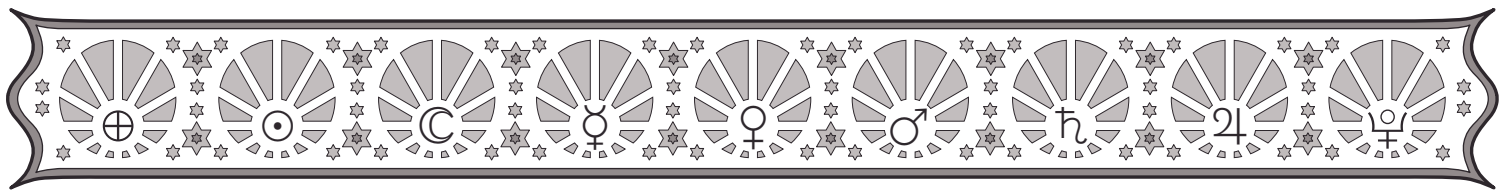
The battles on the outer rim brought the second Titanomachy to a stalemate. The major military powers and economies of the Nine Worlds were decimated. The Titans retreated, and the Eternals returned to their worlds to rebuild. The costly battle littered the main ætheric byways, and Apollo's manufactured contagion spread to other realms.

The Titans biggest mistake was recognizing too late the power of humanity, and especially the power of Archons. The Eternals were powerful enemies for the Titans, and they organized staunch resistance. But, without their human subjects and allies the Eternals may have lost everything to the Titans.

The stalemated Titanomachy seethes in the current day. While extraordinary battles flare up across the Nine Worlds, the war has cooled after years of attrition. The Immortals work subtly, cautiously; they employ mortal agents to carry out their schemes and fight their wars. Immortals on all sides of the great cosmic conflict care far more for their longevity and power than they do for the fate of individual mortals. But, in their struggle, many still do not recognize the power of the Demiurge.

This is the state of the universe today. When the war ends, who will then decide the fate of the world? The Immortals cannot conceive of a universe ruled by humanity. Perhaps they are right to think so. But for the first time, mortals will decide that fate. By their actions and through their allegiance and resistance, the Archons will determine who holds power. Humanity will shape the universe. Archons will cast the deciding vote.





THE UNIVERSE EXPLAINED

Life in the modern day 21st century of Earth is an illusion, a complicated fabric of truth and lies woven together to protect humanity from the dangers of immortal powers in conflict. These powers wish again to rule the Earth and its mortal citizens as they did once long ago, when humanity worshipped them as gods. Kronos and Zeus reigned as immortal gods in their times. Each guided the nature of all things according to his divine will and whim. Both wish to rule the center of the universe once again, and they are not alone in that ambition.

Earth's humans—the immortals' would-be subjects—believe the gods are merely myth. Few recognize the true nature of the universe. In truth, they live upon Earth, the center of all creation, innermost of nine different worlds. Earth is the greatest, most diverse planet. From its core emanate the telluric currents. These energetic strands of power course throughout the Nine Worlds like connective currents. They influence the tides of reality, charging the whole universe with vital power and dynamism. Prometheus, the a benevolent Titan, quietly serves as Primarch of Earth. His policy is to protect humanity long enough for humanity to realize its powerful potential and learn to protect itself.

Planet caravan

Earth's ancient astrologers rightly tracked the other realms beyond Earth.

Just beyond Earth is the Sun, or Sol. It orbits Earth and sheds warmth and illumination to all other worlds save Hades. It is the domain of enlightened Apollo, who has his own ambitions for glory and power. The whole of Sol is a vast and glorious city filled with beautiful classical buildings, gilded domes, and white towers.

Next in the concentric orbits beyond Earth is the Moon, or Luna. There, lady Artemis rules the Lunar wildlands. Much of the Moon remains untamed and unsettled, and its vast wilderness serves as refuge for all manner of flora and fauna, including creatures humanity would know from myth.

Mercury, Hermes' domain, lies outside Luna. It is the center of interplanetary commerce, travel, and communication. Mercury is a fast-paced world shaped by the expansion and contraction of commerce. The largely urban realm is in a constant state of renewal, as Hermes' "employees" reshape buildings, highways and waterways to best promote trade of currency, goods, and information.

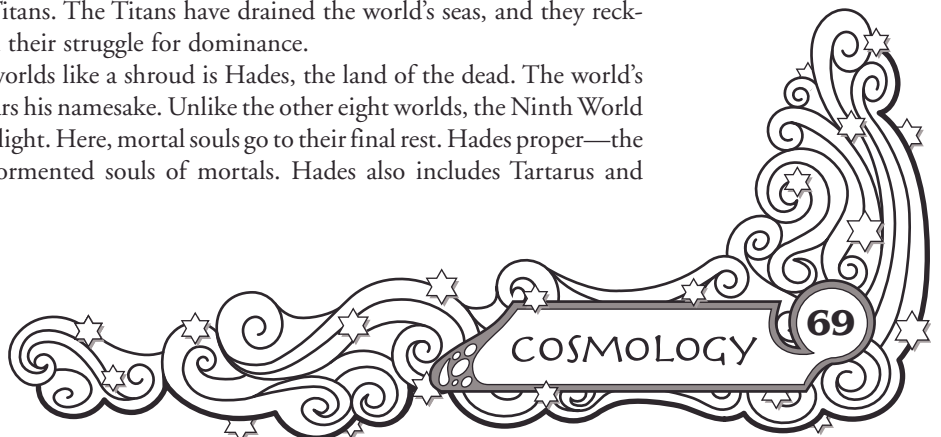
Beyond Mercury is Venus, a worldly paradise. This is Aphrodite's realm, an archipelago world of sandy beaches, sultry jungles, and volatile volcanoes. The social affairs of this rich world are as blissful and turbulent as its landscape.

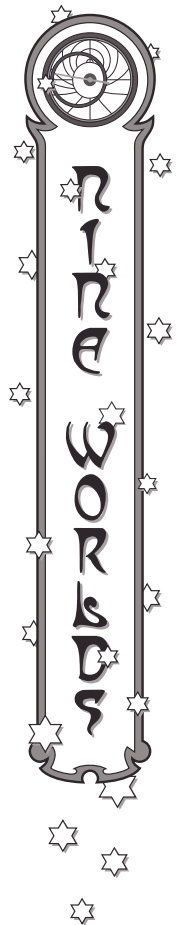
The next world is barren Mars. In stark contrast to Venus' fertile islands are Mars desert kingdoms. Ares rules the red deserts of Mars as emperor among warlords. Martian citystates war and feud over resources and land, and Ares seeks ever to find the strongest army for his ambitions and schemes off-world.

The orbit of Jupiter is next. This is the domain of Zeus, long the mightiest of Eternals. Jupiter is the seat of Zeus' power, and the world is second only to Earth in size. Like Earth, Jupiter's people are numerous and diverse, and so is its landscape. Jupiter is the main front in the ongoing war between the Eternals and the Titans. Jovians live and serve under the heavy-handed rule of Zeus.

Beyond Jupiter is Saturn, where the Titans take refuge. Once the water-world domain of Poseidon, Saturn is now a terrible, rocky wasteland of raging storms and shadows. It is overrun by terrible monsters and abominations born from the Titans. The Titans have drained the world's seas, and they recklessly strip its resources to fuel and fund their struggle for dominance.

Finally, surrounding the other eight worlds like a shroud is Hades, the land of the dead. The world's Primarch, Hades, rules the realm that bears his namesake. Unlike the other eight worlds, the Ninth World is a murky place beyond the reach of Sol's light. Here, mortal souls go to their final rest. Hades proper—the Underworld—houses the shades, the tormented souls of mortals. Hades also includes Tartarus and





Elysium. Tartarus is the blackest of hells, and it was once the prison of the Titans. Elysium, however, is a pastoral paradise for the dead. It is a peaceful heaven, a final realm in which noble souls can reside for eternity.

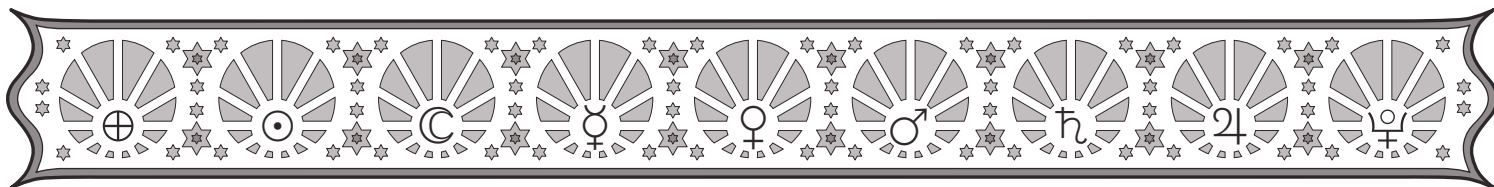
The worlds that never were

Earth's modern astronomers' observations of galaxies and stars are part of the complicated weave of illusion and truth that is modern science. Neptune, Uranus, and Pluto are planets according to Earth's scientists and schoolteachers. But, in truth, these planets do not exist as part of the Nine Worlds.

The Æther

Binding all these worlds together is the æther, the medium that connects the Nine Worlds. It is a cosmic, starry mist that occupies all spaces between the worlds. Telluric currents wind throughout the æther from Earth to Hades, sparking storms or the illuminating particles and clusters that are the stars and constellations.

The æther is not “outer space,” as modern humanity might call it. It is akin to a cosmic sea filled with currents of energy, mist, and sanguinity. Much of the æther is, in fact, the corpus of two immortals destroyed in cosmic wars. Oceanus the Titan, once Primarch of Saturn, was slain in the first Titanomachy. His body and blood made the æther as it now is, a cosmic and navigable sea. More recently, in the second Titanomachy, the Titans invaded Saturn and killed its Primarch, Poseidon. Their eager revenge consigned Poseidon to the same fate as their brother, Oceanus. The Titans drenched the æther with Poseidon’s bloodied remains.



Now, the æther is awash with the ghostly remains of two powerful immortals. Where they intermingle, ætherstorms rage. Neither possesses consciousness, and yet the æther seems possessed of some direction. It may be vengeance or an urge for rebirth that these immortals seek.

Whatever its ambition, the æther seems alive. Within its starry medium drift creatures of myth born from the blood of Oceanus and other Titans. Tentacled krakens, vicious harpies, serpents, and many beasts of the deep æther threaten would-be travelers. And now, Poseidon's wrath creates storms and ætherwinds that bless and curse ætherships. Offerings to the unconscious gods may be wise for those wishing safe passage.

Only by traversing the æther can one travel to other worlds. Passage is uncertain, given the tormented immortal ghosts that comprise the æther and the presence of Atlantean pirates and raiders who constantly terrorize byways. The method for travel is largely the same throughout the ætherverse. Mortals and immortals alike travel upon æthercraft, although some Titans can "wade" through the æther without mechanical means. The vessels vary widely in appearance. Some appear as sailing vessels, surrounded on all sides with sails to catch ætheric winds and ride telluric currents. Others are metallic beasts, ships crafted in the likenesses of fish, scarabs, nautiloids, or other creatures.

Whatever their form, ætherships rely on certain devices and components. Foremost among these is an orichalcum compass. Orichalcum, a rare and valuable element, resonates with telluric currents. The compass guides ships along such currents. The needle points the way to one's worldly destination, and the helm guided automatically or by a helmsman's hand adjusts course accordingly. The finest and most reliable of these devices include orichalcum instruments set upon a medium of quicksilver, another rare element.

Most ships also possess telluric sails or other means of propulsion. Sails are made from myriad materials Lunar spider silk, for example and usually have a scintillating, gossamer-like appearance. Other propulsion devices range from crude oars that slowly move æthercraft to complicated and expensive telluric impulsion devices made from orichalcum and other expensive materials. These engines, while useful and speedy, are temperamental and prone to malfunction following telluric overloads and ætherstorms.

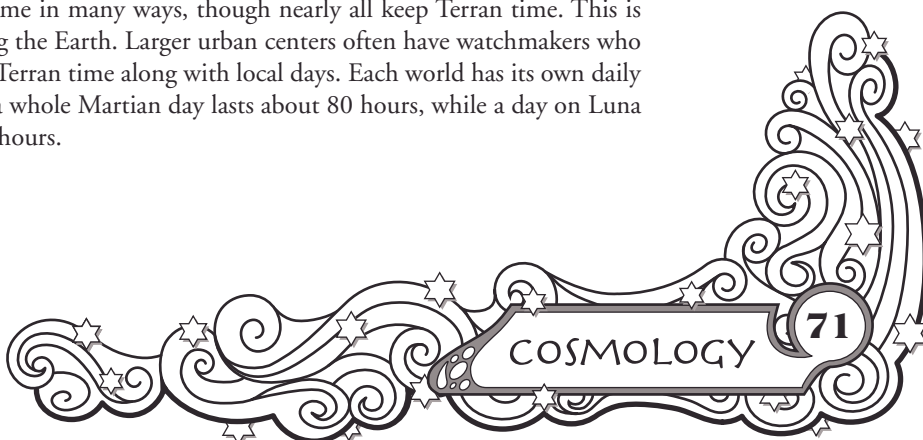
Finally, while not necessary for ætheric travel, an æthership hull lined with orichalcum greatly improves travel. Shipwrights reinforce an æthership's skeleton hull with orichalcum metal. The craft then becomes a great resonating coil for telluric current. This effect reduces the time required for interplanetary voyages.

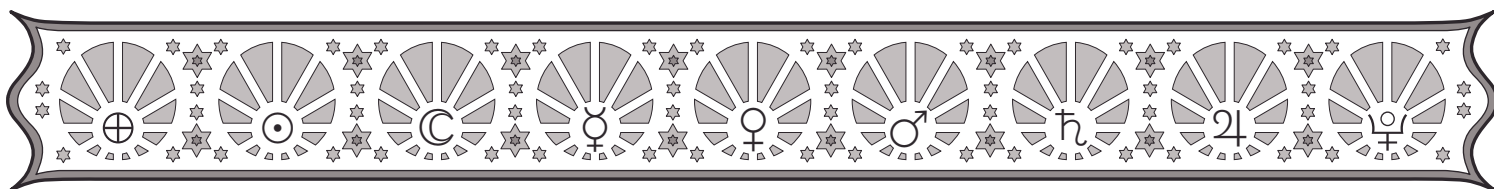
Travel and time

As one traverses the æther time passes, but it is often fluid and unpredictable. As the worlds orbit one another, navigators must keep careful track of their courses on complicated instruments. Depending on planetary alignment, voyages from one world to the next take only a day or two, or such travel may take weeks.

The æther folds and confuses time for those who cross it. Should travelers veer off course, even for what seems a few hours, they may lose many days of time when they reach their destination. In some rare occurrences, travelers have returned after years of wandering the æther. Some have aged considerably, others not at all. Modern day equipment is more reliable. Traveling from one world to the usually takes a couple days. On average, one can travel from Earth to Hades in the span of about a month.

Denizens of the Nine Worlds track time in many ways, though nearly all keep Terran time. This is the twenty-four hour cycle of Sol circling the Earth. Larger urban centers often have watchmakers who craft specially tuned timepieces to track Terran time along with local days. Each world has its own daily cycle, measured in hours. For example, a whole Martian day lasts about 80 hours, while a day on Luna is nearly in time with Earth—about 24 hours.





PASSING THE TIME

Playing Nine Worlds isn't about tracking the precise calendar of every world. This is a game about dramatic conflict, and nothing deflates drama like a boring narration of several days of æther travel or wasting time making sure it's Thursday on Jupiter. Conversely, time can mean everything to a tense conflict. Players should manage time accordingly.

For example, skip a long æther haul with a simple description like, "You spend the next several days in a leisurely trip from Sol to Mars. But, when you arrive on Mars, none other than your old enemy is waiting for you, right there at Lamda Prime. . . .

" Or, players may want to slow things down when the time is part of the conflict: "You're traveling from Saturn, and your supplies are low. You haven't seen the sun for days. Can you correct your course and return to Jupiter before your best friend dies from the Titan spawn's poison?"

Commerce and Communication

The æther hinders communication and trade between worlds. There are no means to communicate except by courier. Attempts to build ætherborne signal beacons or other transmitters have failed miserably. The æther seems to swallow any systems not sabotaged by pirates, and no "wireless" devices operate across the volatile medium. Similarly, the only means to transmit material goods from one world to another is by æthership. Most ætherships are merchant vessels that transport trade goods from buyer to seller. Many others are smugglers working as part of a vast black market network.

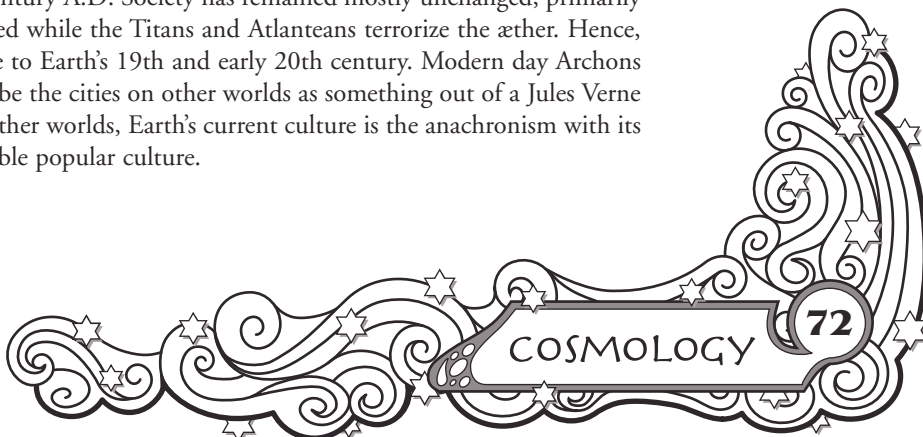
This situation places reliable æthership delivery and trustworthy couriers in high demand. Hermes and his fleet of swift merchants and speedy couriers dominate the Nine Worlds. This has made Mercury a wealthy urban center and one of the busiest places in the universe.

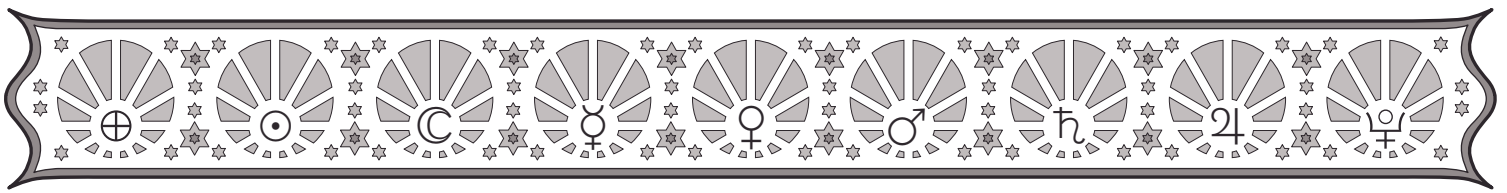
In the larger urban centers on each world, paper news bulletins like the Solar Chronicle and the Thracian Herald are very popular. Citizens are eager for news on the ongoing conflicts and volatile economics and politics of the universe.

State of the Arts

Over the span of millennia, humans toiled to build civilization throughout the universe. What began as primitive enclaves and communities worshipping gods has become a diverse, sophisticated civilization spanning worlds. Technology, arts, and crafts progress at roughly the same pace in the Nine Worlds. Rare spurts of innovation in fashion, art, transportation, propel one world ahead of the others, but in time the advancement spreads.

That steady progress slowed with the beginning of the second Titanomachy. The Titans emerged from hell near the end of Earth's 19th century A.D. Society has remained mostly unchanged, primarily because commerce and travel have slowed while the Titans and Atlanteans terrorize the æther. Hence, much of the Nine Worlds is comparable to Earth's 19th and early 20th century. Modern day Archons who hail from 21st century Earth describe the cities on other worlds as something out of a Jules Verne novel. Of course, to the citizens of the other worlds, Earth's current culture is the anachronism with its strange technologies and incomprehensible popular culture.





Across the worlds, technology emphasizes the mechanical marvel and mechanization. Music and the theatre are popular in most cities, as are less refined pursuits like dancehalls and gambling houses. The Art Nouveau movement remains in vogue in art, architecture and other media, though creative individuals like the Archons shape and reshape art and culture constantly in various locales. The larger cities, notably Heliopolis and Olympia, host universities where philosophy, physics, medicine, and æthercraft engineering are the highest academic pursuits.

Beyond the cities, cultures are less sophisticated. Many communities, like the nomads of Mars, rely on timeless, simple technology that has served humanity for millennia.

Humanity

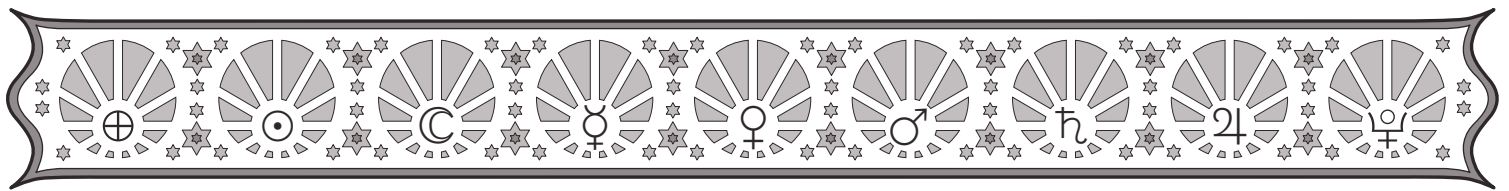
Since its creation, humanity has flourished throughout the Nine Worlds. The denizens of each world are diverse, ranging from superstitious primitive tribes to cosmopolitan interworld travelers. They live in villages, towns and cities.

The far-reaching Titanomachy made humans on most worlds aware of the cosmology of the universe and the influence of immortals over their worlds. Humans recognize their world's Primarch as a supreme emperor or political leader. A few still worship their Primarch as a god. Most also realize the starry skies are accessible via æthercraft, and that other humans exist on the planets beyond.

However, on Earth the situation is different. The humans of Earth are ignorant of the true universe. Prometheus' strategy to shield humanity from harm means that the vast majority of Earth's people do not recognize him as a leader. Indeed, very few are aware he exists outside of myth. Earth's humans are blind to the nature of the universe; they are ignorant of its leaders, its cosmology, and its events. Even when faced with some otherworldly activity, many simply do not see or believe the actual nature of the event. Their minds redefine the event, rationalize it into something they can explain.

Of course, humans on all worlds share many similarities. They have likeminded passions and faults. They love, they hate, and they seek revenge and redemption. They cherish family and companionship. They wonder about their place in the world, and many seek to make their mark in the universe. And, above all, they all share the most basic trait, mortality.





SURVEY OF THE NINE WORLDS

The following sections detail each of the Nine Worlds as they exist in the modern day. Included here are geographic and cultural descriptions of the worlds, supporting characters, current events, key organizations and recommended issues to explore during play.

Supporting Characters

This section includes several supporting characters. They serve two purposes.

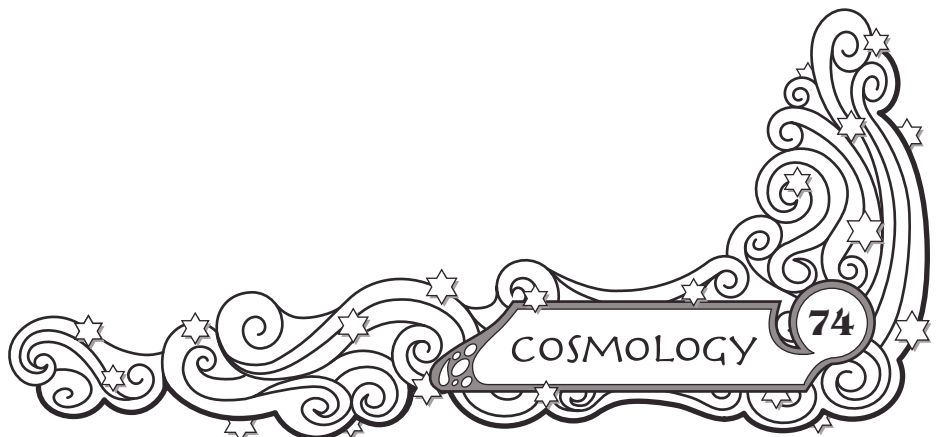
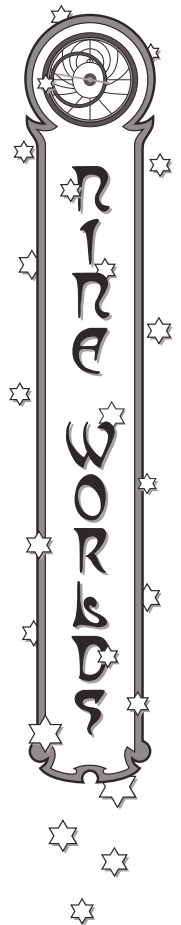
First, they are usable as important characters in the Nine Worlds. The game master can use these example characters to populate the universe with intriguing and often powerful characters. In all cases, these supporting characters should be customized according to the players and their Archons. Each supporting character in this chapter has suggested starting Muses, but the game master should add (or alter) Muses relevant to her fellow players' Archons. Muses are the key to superb supporting characters, and they lead to additional development for supporting characters as the game master earns Force by resolving these Muses.

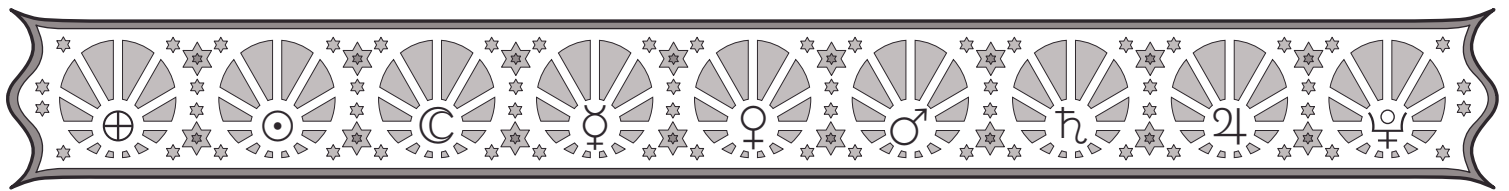
Second, the example supporting characters here serve as a guideline for the game master. By emulating their power level and style, including attributes, Muses, and backhistory, the game master can learn how to craft able supporting characters of her own. In each world's description herein, there are at least three supporting characters. They represent the range of power-level and effectiveness a game master can emulate. In each case, the lower powered supporting character is first, followed by a moderately powered supporting character, and ending with the most powerful figure on the world, the Primarch. The lower powered characters are suitable allies and adversaries for new Archons, but the highest powered characters should challenge Archons in conflicts only after the Archons have developed some advanced Muses and perhaps Valor and Pride.

People, places, & things

Supporting characters in Nine Worlds need not be characters per se. Other aspects of the setting are suitable as supporting characters as well. For example, this section details Mercury City as a supporting character. The city itself has Muses and motivations, as well as attributes usable in conflicts.

Game masters can create similar kinds of supporting characters, including mythical beasts, ætherstorms, ætherships, cities, rogue islands like Atlantis, or other abstract adversaries, like diseases.





Earth

Terra, the cradle of humanity

Overview

Earth is the world of the modern 21st century, a world of automobiles, digital technology, superpowers, diverse cultures, Coca-Cola and third world countries. Time passes in minutes and hours, and the seasons pass as huge populations of humanity bustle to and from work, war with one another, watch television, and go to church on Sunday.

However, the vast majority of humanity remains ignorant of the truth of the Nine Worlds. Very few of Earth's vast population are aware of the true cosmology of their universe. Earth's people, often called Terrans by off-worlders, are oblivious to the conspiracies and secret wars of the immortals.

Earth's geography, flora and fauna, are extremely diverse, although many fantastic species have disappeared, and many geographic features have been lost over the ages. Atlantis was once a geographical centerpiece to Earth. Knowledge of its former location has been lost for millennia. Earth also conceals a few remaining species that modern humanity would dismiss as myth, though these become increasingly rare as time passes and Earth remains isolated from the other worlds. The most common examples of such mythic life are the powerful exemplars of Earth's animals like lions, eagles, or even livestock (bulls and horses, for example). There are also more fantastic creatures hidden about Earth, like the Kraken's kin in Earth's deep oceans or satyrs stirring up trouble in disguise.

The people of Earth owe no allegiance or loyalty to a Primarch or other immortal power. When they encounter supernatural phenomena they often react emotionally. Some rationalize the experience as coincidence or superstition, while others react wildly. Terrans do not believe that extraordinary and supernatural events are anything but coincidence or elaborate hoaxes explainable by science or solvable through faith.

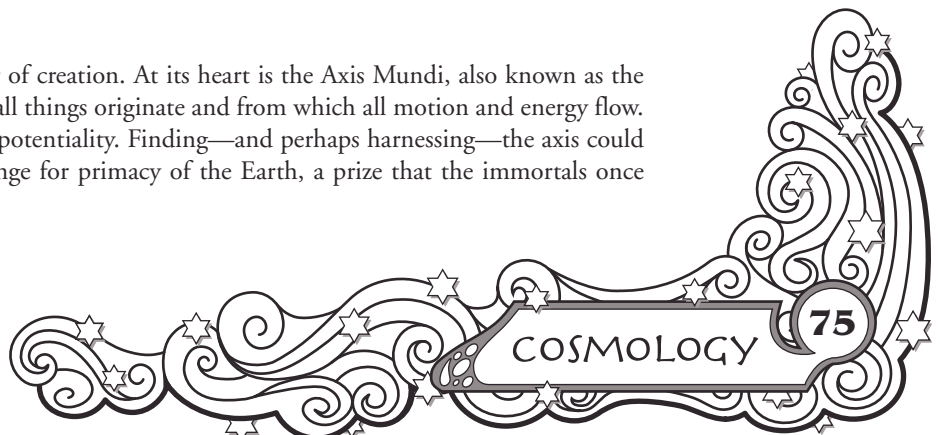
Current Events

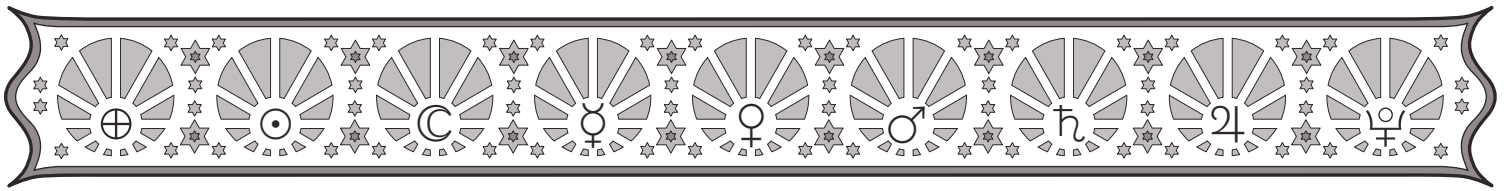
Important events on Earth are those found in everyday newspapers. The dynamics of the world are driven by and for blinded humanity—those unaware of the greater cosmology of the Nine Worlds. Companies compete with one another, and crime is a fact of life. Nations trade and war with one another for oil, land, ideals, and more. But these events exist for the most part on Earth, and they send relatively few rippling effects to the other worlds. They are the events of an unaware populace.

These are not the only events, however. Archons among Earth's vast populations awaken constantly, and the players in the Titanomachy seek to convert them to their cause while Prometheus and his allies try to protect the fledgling Demiurgists. This conspiracy is ongoing, and many players from across the universe participate. The Titans and their agents frequently try to interfere with newly illumined Archons. Some they try to recruit to their cause, others they try to kill. Also active on Earth are the Aquarians, an Archon group dedicated to opening the minds of all humans to the true cosmology of the universe. The Aquarians seek to lift the veil of reason erected by Prometheus. The Illuminati work against these groups in an effort to see that each Archon can learn to control his power and make his own choices.

Places of Interest

The Axis Mundi: Earth is the center of creation. At its heart is the Axis Mundi, also known as the Ouroboros. It is the center from which all things originate and from which all motion and energy flow. This axis isn't so much a place as it is a potentiality. Finding—and perhaps harnessing—the axis could allow an Archon or immortal to challenge for primacy of the Earth, a prize that the immortals once





held and wish beyond all things to hold again. Evidence indicates that Atlantis once sat upon the locus of the Axis Mundi.

Europa Major: This ætherport changes location according to the influence of the orbiting planets, jumping from city to city as planets move. In every incarnation it appears something like a quaint, old style subway station, often assuming a place alongside other underground stations where blind humans traffic to and from their homes and work. Ships of all shapes and sizes pass unnoticed by most humans, emerging from and dark tunnels that lead to ætherspace beyond.

Organizations

The Illuminati: This secretive group of Archons formed over 200 years ago on Earth. Individual Archons who struggled to realize their place and power joined with likeminded Archons to protect one another from hostile forces and seek enlightenment through the Demiurge. For years, the Illuminati conspired against what they viewed as the unjust elements of society erected by the Primarchs to bolster their own power.

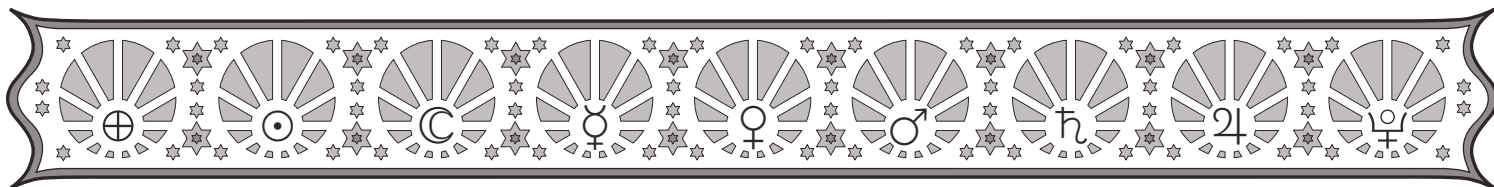
When Prometheus assumed primacy of Earth decades ago, the Illuminati admired his ideals and just treatment of Archons. They devoted themselves to his leadership, and they now act as his agents and enforcers on Earth and beyond.

Aquarians: The Aquarians are a newer association of Archons and humans who seek to illumine all of humanity and share the truth about the cosmology of the Nine Worlds. They view any deception as unjust, and they seek to empower humans with knowledge against the self-serving rule of the immortal Primarchs.

The Aquarians employ many tactics to achieve their aims. They have many spies operating in high levels through the universe. Aquarian agents stage flamboyant public stunts, especially on Earth, to demonstrate the true nature of the Nine Worlds. And, many Aquarians act as reporters and information gatherers to share freely the true events on many worlds with fellow humans.

The Aquarians are not a violent group, though some radical members exist. They are activists seeking attention and change, and they have a rebellious attitude toward the Primarchs and their established systems of rule and philosophy.





Supporting Characters

Cassandra Harris

Aquarian anarchist

Cassandra Harris wants humanity on Earth to know the truth. She would like nothing more than to see Prometheus and his Illuminati lackeys deposed. Cassandra's anarchist stunts are not violent ... yet. She and her fellow Aquarians target Earth's largest cities with demonstrations and attention-getting banners. But, they are often dismissed as fringe nutcases or performance artists. She believes the time has come to rid humanity of its blinders, and she would support anyone who will overthrow Prometheus. Unfortunately, in her idealism, she hasn't given much thought to who will lead the new age on Earth.

Power: 5

Chaos: 4

Cosmos: 2

Metamorphosis: 3

Stasis: 2

Suggested starting Muses

- ★ *Help dethrone Prometheus, who deceives humanity for his own ambitions (4).*
- ★ *Alert the American governments and media of the true nature of the Nine Worlds (2).*

Proteus

Illuminati mole

Proteus, the infamous shape-shifting immortal, currently disguises himself as Samuel Hyde, an Illuminati agent on Earth. In truth, he's spying on the Terran organization, providing valuable intelligence to Kronos and his Titan allies. Of course, he would turn on Kronos in an instant if he knew he could save his many daughters, whom Kronos holds captive in the gulags of Saturn. The daughters are among the last of Poseidon's line.

Power: 7 (Force: 5)

Chaos: 3

Cosmos: 4

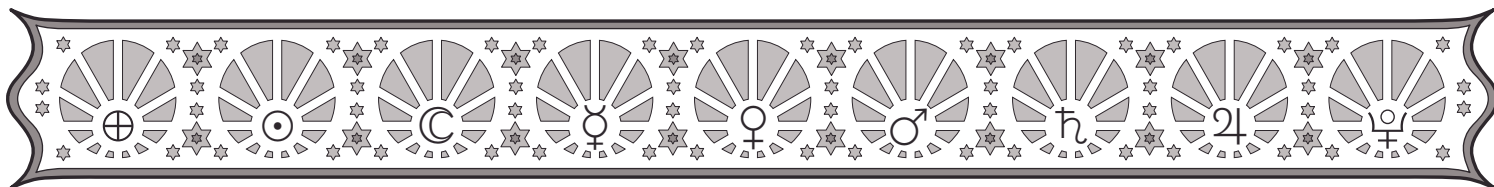
Metamorphosis: 7

Stasis: 2

Suggested starting Muses

- ★ *Provide intelligence to Kronos until he invades Earth (4).*
- ★ *Free his many daughters from the slavery of Kronos on Saturn (6).*





Prometheus

The Firebringer, Primarch of Earth

Prometheus is the reluctant Primarch of Earth. This rogue Titan has little interest in politics or power struggles. He loves humanity like a father loves his children, and his highest goal is to protect humanity from immortals who would abuse his beloved mortals.

Prometheus rules Earth at the request of his lover, Athena. He awaits her return and any word of their child, whom he has never seen. Prometheus would gladly give up his role as Primarch with the assurance that humanity would remain safe under a new leader.

He distrusts the Eternals, especially other Primarchs, and he conducts very little diplomacy with them. He despises the thuggish members of his Titanic bloodline; any contact he has with them is in defense of Earth and its residents.

Prometheus defends his realm in a unique way. He has allowed Earth's humanity to embrace its own novel ideas, creativity and scientific progress. He shields the world from otherworldly harm by means of a complex illusion that separates the reality of the Nine Worlds from the worldview of humans living in the 21st century.

Prometheus maintains a very low profile on Earth. Few of his subjects realize he exists, let alone that he is the metaphysical ruler of the realm. His Illuminati agents carry out his policies, and he personally seeks at nearly all new Archons who realize their powers. Prometheus does not judge Archons, nor does he guide their behaviors. Instead, he helps them understand their role and equips them to make their own decisions.

Power: 13 (Force: 10)

Chaos: 6

Cosmos: 4

Metamorphosis: 5

Stasis: 5

Suggested starting Muses

★ *Protect Earth's humans until Athena returns to the world (6).*

★ *Find the identity of his child with Athena (5).*

Earth, Primarch Talisman

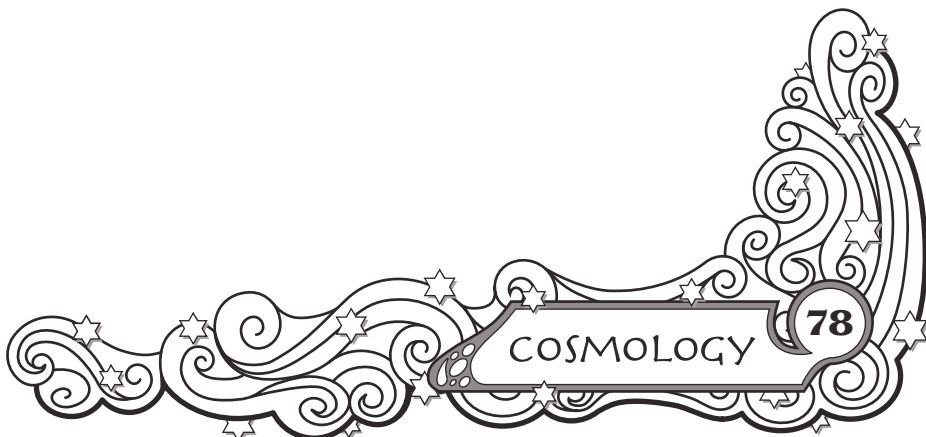
Power: 12 (Lock: 6)

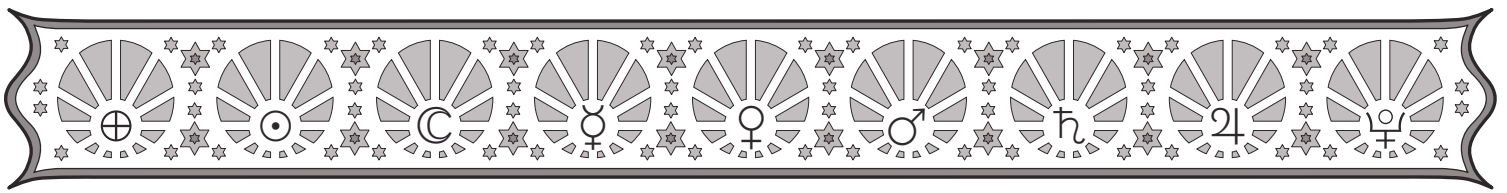
Chaos: 3

Cosmos: 5

Metamorphosis: 6

Stasis: 4





Sol

The Sun, light of the universe

Overview

The Sun is the most progressive, civilized planet in the Nine Worlds. The entire world is covered by a vast, radiant city called Heliopolis. This beautiful city features classical columns, gilded domes and shining spires. It is host to the most advanced university in the universe, and features an exemplary system of republican government. Heliopolis is the finest city in the Nine Worlds.

Or so it would seem, for Heliopolis has a dark underbelly. Beneath the golden spires and paved streets exists a darker element, an undercity called Horizon. Criminal cartels rule the undercity, making deals with republican senators and other distinguished members of Heliopolis society to maintain a stranglehold on their fellow citizens and exploit system of wealth.

Sol is a dual-natured world where the divisions of society are extreme. In Heliopolis, progressive lifestyles, wealth and civility are the norm. But, in Horizon people know squalor, crime, and hard labor. Apollo's realm is wealthy overall, but it relies heavily on trade to sustain urban lifestyles for all its residents.

The people of the Sun enjoy constant daylight as Sol's luminous skies literally brighten the entire mortal universe. Heliopolis never knows night, but Horizon remains in constant twilight. Citizens of both cities share a common language and remarkable literacy rates. The people of Sol are educated, but many work hard in Horizon to keep the world alive with energy and activity.

Current Events

A deadly plague has devastated citizens of Horizon. Thousands are dead or dying, and now the contagion has spread to Heliopolis and likely to other worlds. Physicians have never seen the rotting disease before, and they cannot understand its cause. Most call the disease Twilight Fever or Weeping Rot. Many citizens have pleaded with the republican senate to take measures to control the disease, and many senators have petitioned Apollo for aid. There is no cure, and the disease continues to spread among many of Sol's residents, regardless of social class or wealth.

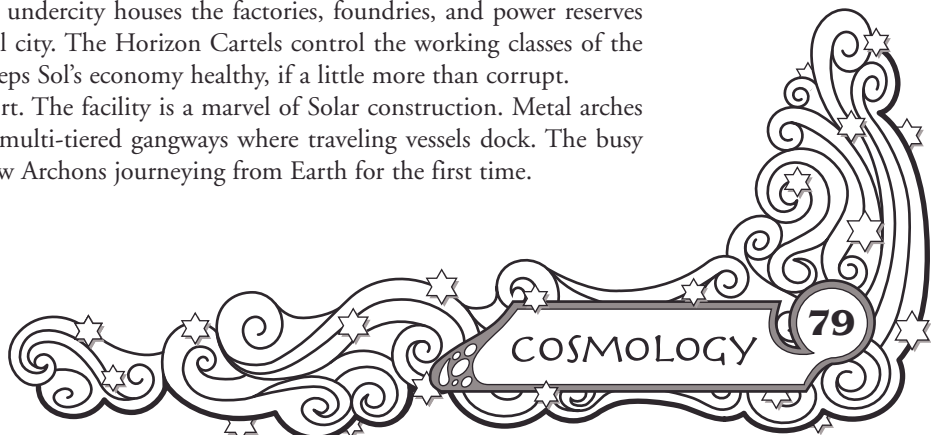
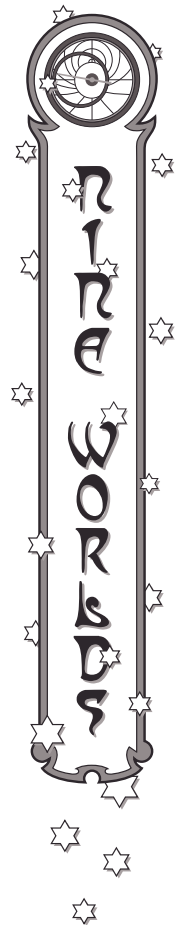
Meanwhile, the Horizon Cartels have taken the opportunity to extort more money during the crisis, particularly for medicines and treatments from the black market. The gangs continue to sow unrest and propagate the corruption that keeps them in power as a necessary element of doing business on Sol. Hyperion can't take credit for the ruin caused by the plague, but he is glad to take advantage of the situation.

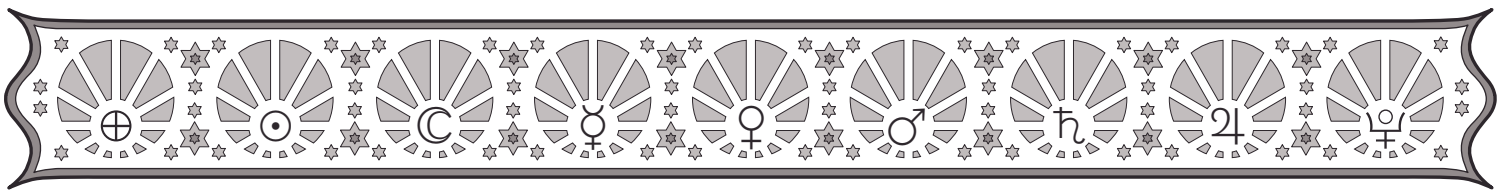
Places of Interest

The University of Delphi: The University of Delphi is the finest institution of learning in the Nine Worlds. It hosts an incredible library and schools the finest scholars in art, philosophy, physics, rhetoric, and æthercraft engineering. The school features an extensive museum collection of artifacts and innovations from across the universe.

Horizon: Horizon is the undercity of Sol. It is literally underground, comprised of many levels of brick pathways and dingy tunnels. The undercity houses the factories, foundries, and power reserves that keep Heliopolis a radiant, beautiful city. The Horizon Cartels control the working classes of the undercity, and their greedy influence keeps Sol's economy healthy, if a little more than corrupt.

Eos Gate: This is Sol's main ætherport. The facility is a marvel of Solar construction. Metal arches and huge colored glass exteriors house multi-tiered gangways where traveling vessels dock. The busy port is the first destination for many new Archons journeying from Earth for the first time.





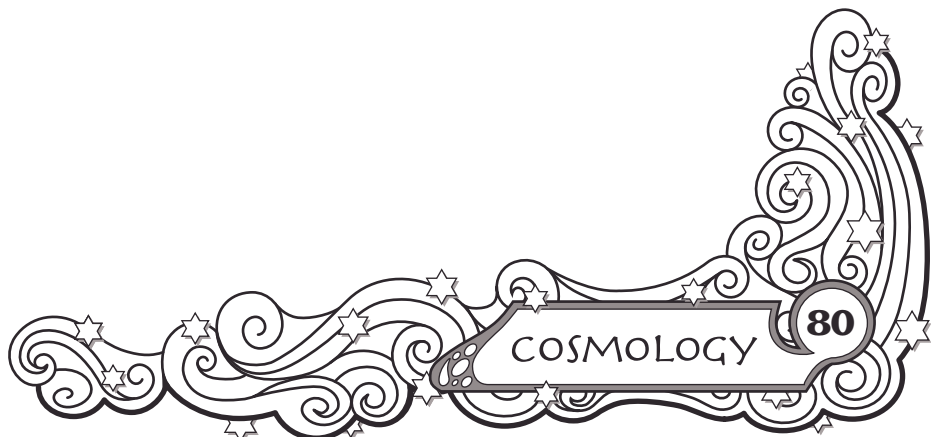
Hesperos Gate: This ætherport is the primary trade zone on Sol. Compared to its glorious counterpart, Hesperos Gate is lackluster port, but here is where merchants and smugglers shuttle their cargoes that keep Sol flush in currency and corruption. It is nestled in a large natural indentation in Heliopolis where some of Sol's daylight creeps into Horizon's many levels. The cavern walls are lined with many terraces where ætherships dock, loading and unloading their cargoes into the dark machineworks of Horizon.

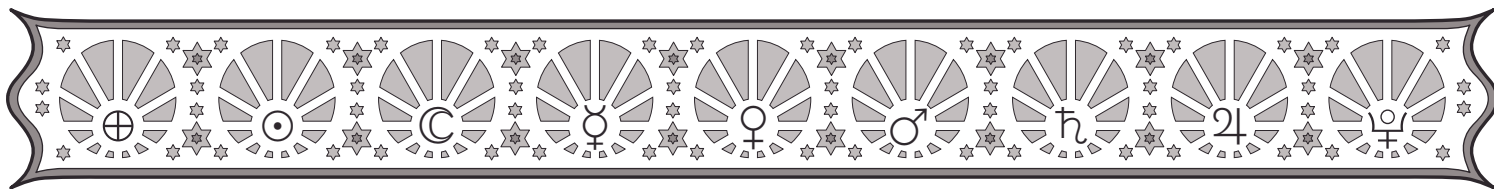
Organizations

The Archer Foundation: The Archer Foundation is Apollo's network of mortal agents. It is a multi-world entity with expertise in medicine, engineering, and especially espionage. Apollo employs several agents in Archer offices throughout the Nine Worlds to gather intelligence and conduct clandestine operations in his bid to become the greatest Primarch in the universe. Archer Archons are often well equipped and well educated. They have much autonomy to carry out their master's plan, and they are well paid for their efforts. In return, Apollo enjoys remarkable results from a few good agents. Their far-reaching efforts are vital as Apollo schemes toward dominance.

The Horizon Cartels: The Horizon Cartels are a loosely aligned collection of gangs and crime bosses who operate in the Sun's undercity. They conduct smuggling operations, extort merchants, and assassinate politicians to gather as much power and wealth as possible. In Horizon, they flagrantly ignore Apollo's governance; citizens know better than to cross the members of the cartels in protest to their crooked regime.

In recent years, Hyperion the Titan has become the major patron of most cartels and crime families. His influence is such that he hides out in Horizon with impunity. There he oversees criminal and subversive operations thwart Apollo's rule and recapture his ancient seat of power. Hyperion views the increasingly powerful and wealthy cartels as the means to unseat Apollo, whether by force or dirty politics, and he supplements their ranks with Titan spawn and Atlantean contracts and transport.





Supporting Characters

Max Ion

Archer special agent

Maximillian Ion is a loyal agent of the Archer Foundation. His work is as impeccable as his style. He's dressed to kill, and equipped for the same. His sharp clothes conceal the best espionage gadgetry available. He believes Apollo is the greatest mind in the universe, and he would very much like to see Apollo reign supreme among the Primarchs. Like many Archer agents, he still holds a grudge against Zeus and his Aegis goons for killing many fellow Archers on Terra years ago.

Power: 6 (Force: 3)

Chaos: 4

Cosmos: 4

Metamorphosis: 3

Stasis: 3

Suggested starting Muses

- ★ *Avenge the death of his uncle, who died when Zeus sabotaged the Archer Foundations Terran branch (4).*
- ★ *Find a cure for Twilight Fever before the conspiracy between Apollo and Hades goes public (5).*
- ★ *Steal the plans for Zeus' latest war machines from the Daedalian society on Jupiter (3).*

Helios

Titanic hit man

Helios is Hyperion's son and most trusted ally in the criminal underworld on Sol. Unlike his more primordial ancestors who take many forms, Helios appears much like a blonde, young man, though he has many scars and intimidating physique. Helios is the most deadly muscle the Horizon Cartels can employ; he almost never uses weapons to do his dirty work.

Power: 8 (Force: 5)

Chaos: 6

Cosmos: 3

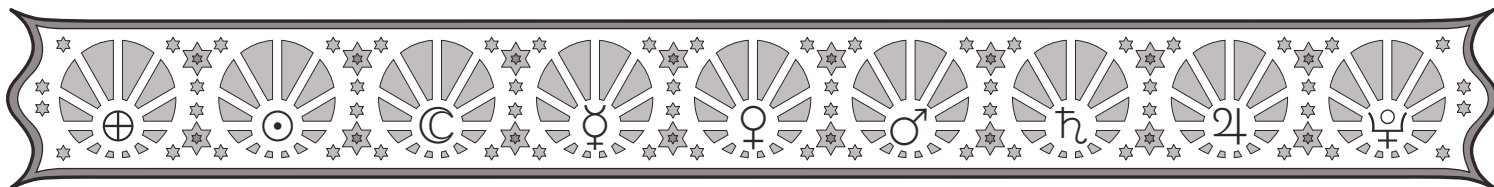
Metamorphosis: 4

Stasis: 5

Suggested starting Muses

- ★ *Help put his father, Hyperion, in his rightful place—Primarch of the Sun (5).*
- ★ *Assassinate Cyrus Agathon, the mayor of Heliopolis (4).*





Luna

The Moon, mythic refuge

Overview

In contrast to Sol's urban landscape, Luna is a vast wilderness of dense forests, rustic hills and aged mountains. These wildlands are a refuge for flora and fauna from bygone eras and forgotten worlds. Artemis, Primarch of Luna, makes her domain a haven for life threatened by the Titanomachy, human expansion, or primarchal world shaping.

Arcadia is the sole city on Luna. It, too, is a refuge. Artemis offers asylum to exiles and wayward fugitives. The city is filled with diverse humans from all over the universe seeking a haven and privacy in the pleasant city. Satyr and centaur folk also live in the city and the nearby wildlands. Luna is home to the last remaining communities of those mythical beings, and they are as much a part of the world as any humans.

Lunar days are comparable to those of Earth. However, its seasons are extraordinary. Luna experiences a full season every seven days, and a year passes in twenty-eight days. The rapid cycles precipitate wild swings in weather. Plants grow at astonishing rates in the Lunar cycle. Farmers brave enough to live and work in the wildlands reap huge profits from their abundant crops. They trade the finest foods available with merchants from other worlds, especially when food sources on other worlds are low and in demand. Even more famous are the moon's vintners. Their well-aged wines are found throughout the Nine Worlds. The potent and delicious wines intoxicate even immortals.

Current Events

In reaction to the spreading Twilight Fever, many explorers seek miracle medicines in the rare flora of the wildlands. Artemis frowns upon the trampling of her rare flora, but she has not directly acted against the trespassers. At the same time, there are reports of a vigilante attacking or driving off explorers and their armed guards. No one can identify the lone guardian, or even its gender. Everyone agrees, however, that this wanderer very skilled, clever, and dangerous. Lunars also share stories of a mysterious stranger who kills poachers and steals wine. Rumors indicate the vigilante and stranger are one and the same, and the stranger may be Athena's immortal child, now grown.

Places of Interest

Arcadia: Arcadia is an ancient city. Delicate moss covers the old stone buildings and homes, and lush gardens, fountains and groves decorate the city. Merchants and farmers occupy the milky white cobblestone streets to sell and trade their wares and foodstuffs.

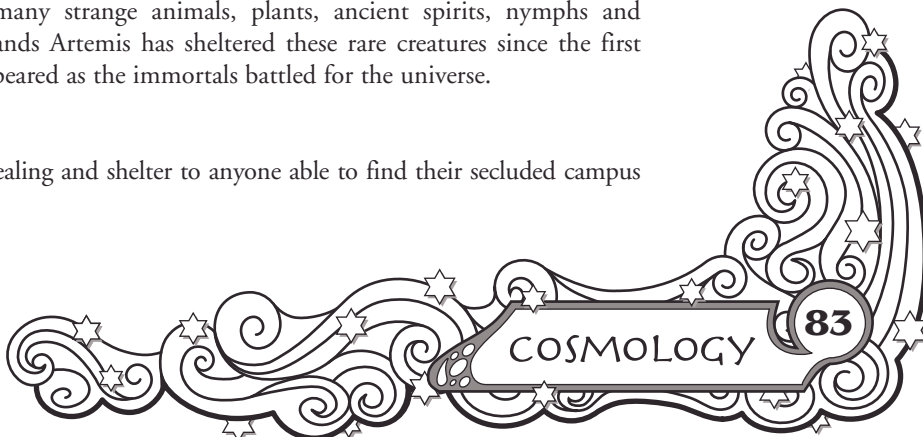
Arcadia Park is Luna's only ætherport. Ætherships dock in the large open plaza, tethered to towering timbers cut from existing trees. Security in the park is lax, and black marketeers trade openly with farmers and fellow merchants.

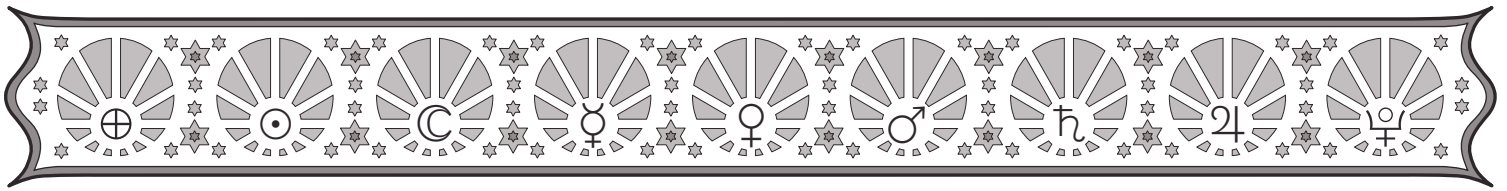
The Wildlands: Most of Luna is a dense forest interrupted by worn mountains, rolling hills and clear lakes and streams. Animals from lost eras, including many legendary creatures liked winged horses and firebirds, roam the wilderness. There are also satyr and centaur communities in the wildlands.

Few humans could recognize the many strange animals, plants, ancient spirits, nymphs and other mythical folk living in the wildlands Artemis has sheltered these rare creatures since the first Titanomachy when whole species disappeared as the immortals battled for the universe.

Organizations

Amaltheans: The Amaltheans offer healing and shelter to anyone able to find their secluded campus





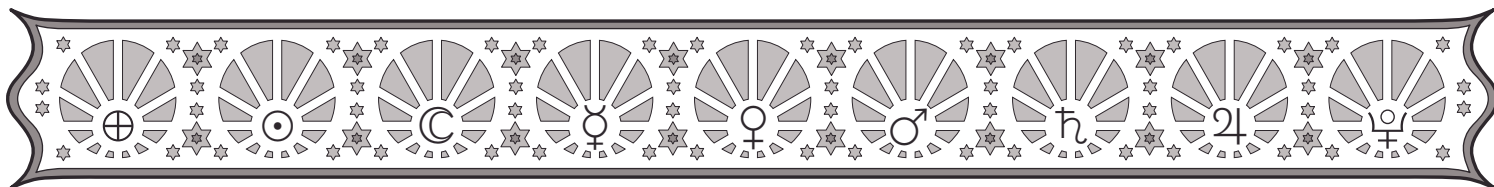
in the wildlands. They are expert healers of the body and soul, and they are able guardians of the helpless when violence threatens. During the height of the second Titanomachy, the Amaltheans warded Athena and helped deliver and raise her immortal child. They have sworn never to reveal the child's identity. Athena left their company recently, but she traveled alone. Many suspect the Amaltheans still shelter her progeny.

Many Amaltheans also travel the Nine Worlds seeking to offer aid to those in need. They often risk the most dangerous hotspots in the universe, like the arid battlegrounds of Mars or the slave camps on Saturn, to ease suffering, protect the weak, and help however they can.

Proteans: The Proteans are a group of shapeshifting Archons who operate from headquarters on Luna. Their overtly magical talents defy the Primarchs' laws. Yet, Artemis tolerates the organization, perhaps because of their affinity for animals.

The Proteans exhibit no obvious agenda, but they often travel to other worlds on cryptic errands. They easily bypass security measures with their shapeshifting powers. Rumors persist that they conspire for toward some unknown goal. Many believe they work for the exiled immortal, Hecate, who seeks to replace Artemis as Primarch of the Moon. Other groups and governments frequently seek to hire the Proteans because of their superb abilities to spy and circumvent security measures.





Supporting Characters

The Stranger

Child of Athena

The Stranger is the child of Prometheus and Athena. The Amaltheans have protected the Stranger's identity (few even know its gender), and he or she is now ready to leave their shelter. The Stranger is the first immortal Demiurgist, gifted with the same powers Archons possess. The Stranger has unequalled promise. But, he or she also has many enemies, especially Hecate. And, the Stranger is young and relatively vulnerable.

(Game masters should flesh out the Stranger, including adding a name, choosing its gender, and adding relevant Muses. The game master can include the Stranger as a supporting character when Archons have Muses related to Prometheus, Athena, or any of Luna's denizens. Or, the Stranger may interfere in other matters, particularly given its unique abilities.)

Arete: 6 (Valor: 5)

Hubris: 5 (Pride: 5)

Chaos: 2

Cosmos: 6

Metamorphosis: 3

Stasis: 1

Suggested starting Muses

- ★ Reunite with father and mother, but only when Luna is safe from Hecate's ambitions (5).

Hecate

Exiled goddess

Hecate has long desired to rule Luna, but her nefarious ways have long alienated fellow immortals who might aid her ascension. She flaunts her supernatural power, and this disturbs Zeus and other Primarchs. But, she has considerable power. Artemis has banished her from Luna, but Hecate works behind the scenes with the Proteans to subvert Artemis' power. Archons who would ally with Hecate should not be fooled; she lusts for power and will think nothing of using mortals to get it.

Power: 10 (Force: 7)

Chaos: 4

Cosmos: 3

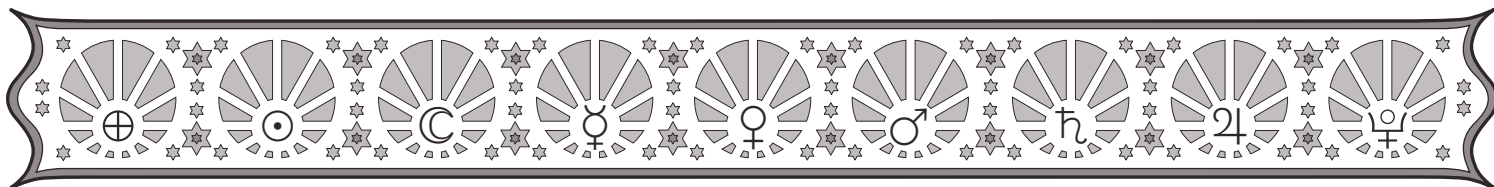
Metamorphosis: 6

Stasis: 5

Suggested starting Muses

- ★ Usurp Artemis' feckless rule of the mighty Moon and bring magic back to the universe (6).
- ★ Slay the Stranger before the denizens of Luna forget their true mistress (4).





Artemis

The Virgin Queen, Primarch of Luna

Artemis is an isolationist. She does not participate in most political activity among the Primarchs, communicating only enough to maintain her world's needs. Artemis does maintain relations with her brother, Apollo, and their worlds benefit greatly from mutual trade and commerce.

Artemis loves her organic world, and she will punish severely any who contravene her laws. Foremost of these laws is the preservation of life. She seems to value the animals, creatures, and plants of her wild domain more so than the lives of humans. Artemis has no qualms killing humans in her lands, especially when she views them as a threat to her Lunar refuge.

Most of Artemis' subjects respect her, but she is a distant ruler. Many appreciate her offer of asylum, but others grow to resent her stern rule as the very oppression that they came to Luna to avoid.

Artemis' rule isn't well organized. She does not police Arcadia well; the people tend to govern themselves. However, Artemis recognizes her growing need for security and administration as threats emerge from the Titans and her persistent rival, Hecate. Artemis has begun to organize a security staff to enforce her rule and better defend her realm.

Power: 12 (Force: 6)

Chaos: 6

Cosmos: 3

Metamorphosis: 6

Stasis: 5

Suggested starting Muses

- ★ *Punish the trespassers seeking miracle cures from her lands without authority (4).*
- ★ *Organize security to protect Luna from political and military threats (5).*
- ★ *Uncover the Proteans' conspiracy (4).*

Luna, Primarch Talisman

Power: 9

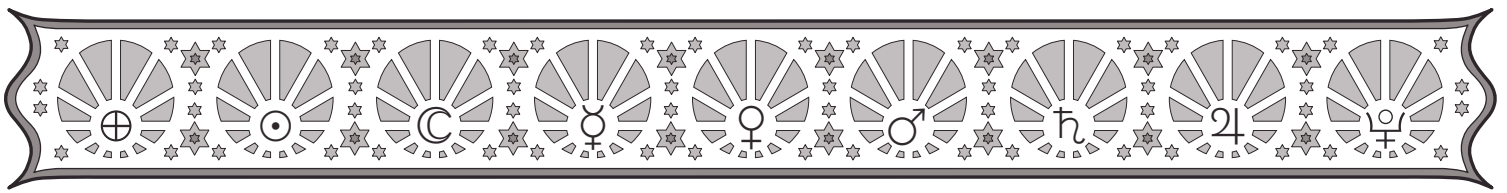
Chaos: 4

Cosmos: 4

Metamorphosis: 7

Stasis: 2





Mercury

The ever-changing realm

Overview

Much like Sol, Mercury's topography is predominately urban. However, unlike Sol, Mercury City is much less grand and glorious. Its meandering streets and incongruous collection of buildings clash in a jumble of function over form. These urban scenes shift with the volatility of cosmic supply and demand. The world is quite literally mercurial; the landscape constantly changes, adapting to the needs and desires of Hermes, Mercury's Primarch, and his cadre of shrewd merchants.

Mercury suffers from the constant upheaval and rampant industry. The world has become a dingy mess and industrial wasteland. Short Mercury days are often overcast and hazy, and rain is nearly constant. When an area suffers from waste and ruin, Hermes simply reshapes the zone and recycles the mess into something more efficient.

Mercury City is the prime center of commerce and travel in the Nine Worlds. The bustling hosts commodity exchanges, multi-world company headquarters, and the largest ætherport in the universe, Pegasus Yards. What Hermes lacks in military might he compensates for in wealth and economic influence.

The people of Mercury are generally sharp witted and strong willed. They rely on Hermes to keep the environment competitive for steady employment. Most admire Hermes' talents, and they strive to earn a piece of his wealth. But, many have suffered greatly from his sudden shifts and volatile market reactions. Little is certain on Mercury; what's here today may be literally gone tomorrow.

Hermes and his companies mine quicksilver, a fluid metal with extraordinary properties, in the few non-urban areas of Mercury. He has a monopoly on quicksilver, and he therefore has a stranglehold on modern æthercraft construction. Without quicksilver, ships lack crucial instruments that speed travel times and improve navigation. While not as valuable as orichalcum, Hermes' quicksilver is in high demand.

Current Events

The Titans and their Atlantean allies have devastated world markets. Hermes' couriers are still reliable, but customers fear losing their deliveries or valuable information to piracy and terrorism. Hermes' wealth has taken a considerable cut, and he seeks to recapture key æther channels.

Meanwhile, industry on Hermes has suffered from the volatility. Fewer ships launch from Pegasus Yards. Now, many working Mercurians have joined guild unions to rally against Hermes policies in times of economic strife. Hermes dislikes the unions. His agents work to infiltrate union leadership and subvert the organization.

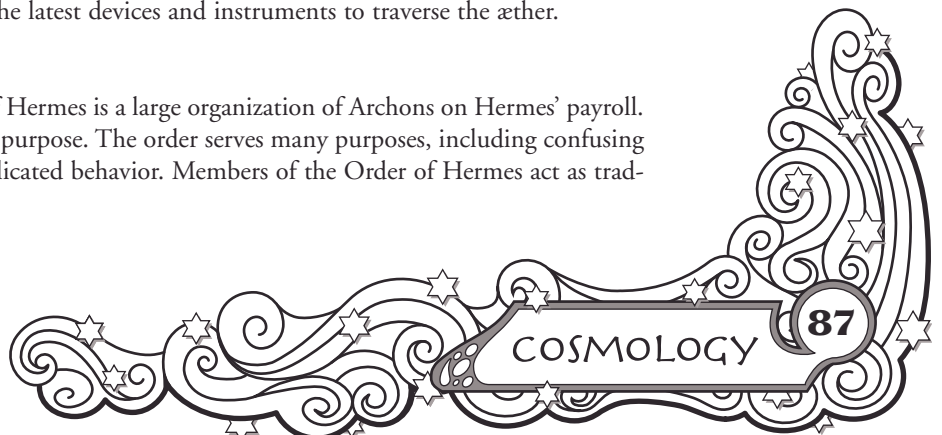
Places of Interest

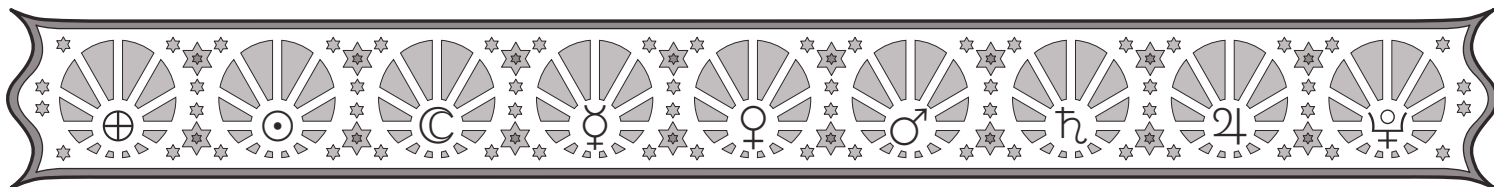
Pegasus Yards: The Pegasus Yards are almost a city within a city. This ætherport is a huge harbor crowded with dozens of æthership landings and launches daily. Merchants, transports and military ships constantly pass through the busy port, and Mercury's residents work and play in the huge marketplaces and entertainment halls. Large hangars hold dozens of ætherships, and warehouses flank the harbors.

Pegasus Yards also host the largest concentration of æthership builders. Workers build new vessels and repair older ones, frequently installing the latest devices and instruments to traverse the æther.

Organizations

The Order of Hermes: The Order of Hermes is a large organization of Archons on Hermes' payroll. The group has a dizzying hierarchy and purpose. The order serves many purposes, including confusing competitors and enemies with its complicated behavior. Members of the Order of Hermes act as trad-





ers, business managers, spies, couriers, bodyguards, diplomats and even soldiers. Hermes works closely with the group, directing its many functions and duties. The order is a superb means to keep him one step ahead of his rivals.

The Telluric Navigation Society: This group of explorers, surveyors, and scholars travel throughout the universe to chart planetary orbits, map telluric currents and events, and seek out ancient artifacts and devices that attract telluric energy. The society's members are often daring and reckless thrill-seekers who venture into dangerous territories.

Hermes hosts the group to improve his own navigational techniques and devices, but the group holds no special loyalty to Hermes' goals. Many members of this adventurous club are Archons who value freedom over loyalty, especially to the Primarchs.

Supporting Characters

Titus Shepherd

Pegasus Yard union boss

Titus Shepherd truly knows what it's like to be caught between Scylla and Charibdys. He was a veteran æther navigator renowned for quick thinking, but now he's retired. He leads a bold conglomerate of organized workers in Pegasus Yards, the most important hub of commerce in the universe. Pressure mounts as he works to negotiate fair compensation from the master businessman, Hermes. He's wary of Order of Hermes spies and agitators trying to sabotage his union, take his job, or worse ...

Power: 5 (Force: 8)

Chaos: 2

Cosmos: 5

Metamorphosis: 3

Stasis: 3

Suggested starting Muses

- ★ Negotiate a new contract with Hermes for the Pegasus Yard workers before they strike (4).
- ★ Root out Order of Hermes interlopers before they oust him as union boss (3).

Mercury City

Mutable metropolis

Mercury City serves its master, Hermes, much like his many mortal lackeys do. The city is alive with motion and transformation. The city literally alters itself to facilitate commerce and foster competition among the traders, workers, and entrepreneurs bustling throughout the Nine Worlds. While the changing city is a marvel, its architecture and beauty often suffer with constant change and construction. The city transforms like a market, supplying the demands of the populace.

Power: 8 (Force: 12)

Chaos: 3

Cosmos: 4

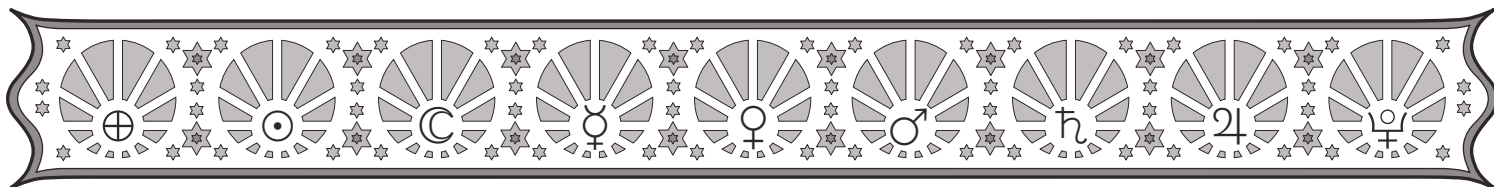
Metamorphosis: 8

Stasis: 0

Suggested starting Muses

- ★ Quash the Pegasus Yards unions, an obstacle to commercial dominance (5).
- ★ Protect Hermes, Primarch of Mercury, from Union usurpers until the contract is renewed (3).





Hermes

Quicksilver Tycoon, Primarch of Mercury

Hermes is a shrewd ruler who has amassed extraordinary wealth. He frequently travels the æther to secure holdings, negotiate deals, and meet with political leaders and Primarchs. His reputation across the worlds is that of a sharp business mind who constantly outpaces his competitors and immortal rivals.

Hermes makes political decisions and associations based on what will secure his position of wealth. He is a pragmatic ruler, though some would say greedy. And, he has a lot of information about current events as his couriers share information they glean from messages they carry and rumors they encounter while traveling. Hermes maintains good relations with nearly all other Primarchs who rely on his couriers and merchant fleets and on his supply of quicksilver for their own æthership fleets. Like all Primarchs, he despises the Titans. Hermes' fleets skirmish constantly with Atlas and his Atlantean reavers. He would pay handsomely for secure byways through the æther for his fleets.

Thanks to his attentive couriers, Hermes has dirt on practically every power player in the Nine Worlds. He is very careful about when and where he divulges his sources. Lately, Hermes has uncovered some very interesting details about a deal between Apollo and Hades involving a deadly plague. He waits for the ideal time to utilize the powerful information.

Power: 13 (Force: 10)

Chaos: 4

Cosmos: 5

Metamorphosis: 6

Stasis: 4

Suggested starting Muses

- ★ *Blackmail Apollo with evidence he plagued his own people with a deadly disease (6).*
- ★ *Quash dissent among Mercury's trade worker unions and reach a beneficial agreement with them (7).*

Mercury, Primarch Talisman

Power: 10

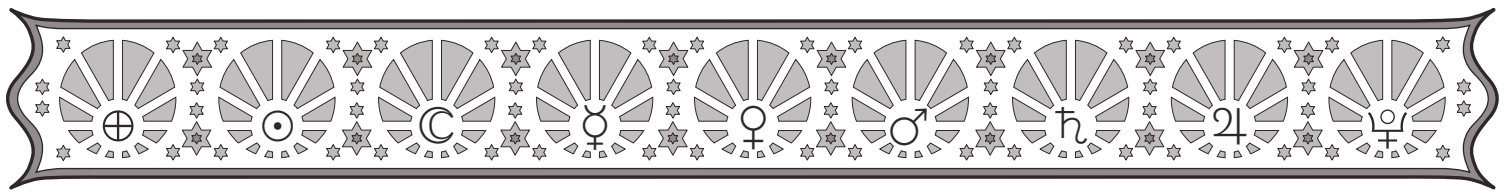
Chaos: 4

Cosmos: 3

Metamorphosis: 8

Stasis: 2





Venus

Mortal paradise

Overview

What happens on Venus, stays on Venus. So goes the popular catch phrase about the tropical paradise and entertainment wonderland ruled by Aphrodite. She has created a mortal paradise on Venus. Her archipelago world features luxuriant resorts that host travelers and diplomats from across the universe.

Venus is a large string of volcanic islands. The islands have beautiful beaches and coastal communities, as well as lush jungles and active volcanoes. Venusian days are unusually long and warm; and nights are steamy and restless. The pleasant tropical climate frequently transforms into tumultuous sea storms, and volcanoes often threaten inhabitants and reshape geography. At the center of the world's spiral of islands is Venus Isle, a luxurious island city. Here, the revelry never ceases, nor do political affairs.

For Aphrodite, the luxury and debauchery are all business. She has made Venus the ultimate destination for travelers. And, her expert diplomacy makes Venus the meeting ground for political summits among the Primarchs. Of course, war is bad for business. The Titans and Atlanteans terrorizing the æther have reduced holidays to Venus, so Aphrodite has adapted. She and her troupe of Graces have begun to export their entertainment. They have created a new medium for sharing alluring stories and dramas, and they frequently travel to worlds beyond and bring their expert diplomacy (and espionage) to former guests.

Current Events

Aphrodite recently left her amorous affair with Apollo to be with her old lover, Ares. The move has proved a disaster for her in nearly every way. Ares' influence suffers because his Martian Legion, and he is busy rebuilding his military. Apollo has cut his financial and political support. Times are tough for the self-proclaimed mistress of diplomacy, and she seeks new political allies, to say nothing of lovers.

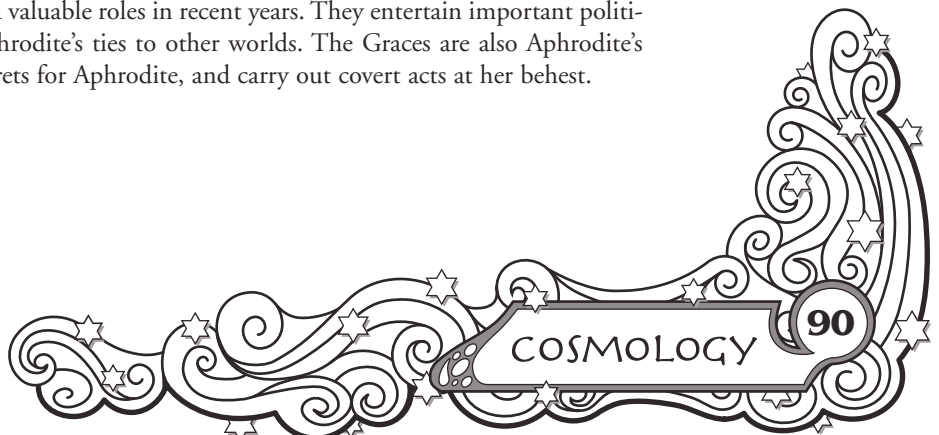
To cope with the decline in traffic to Venus, Aphrodite has begun to export her entertainment expertise with a device she calls the dramascopes. These fantastic portable dramas are a sensual delight and a popular sensation throughout the Nine Worlds. Venus Isle's wealth has grown considerably with dramascopes' popularity. The Graces have also used the medium to encrypt messages to their mistress, Aphrodite, as they spy on those they entertain.

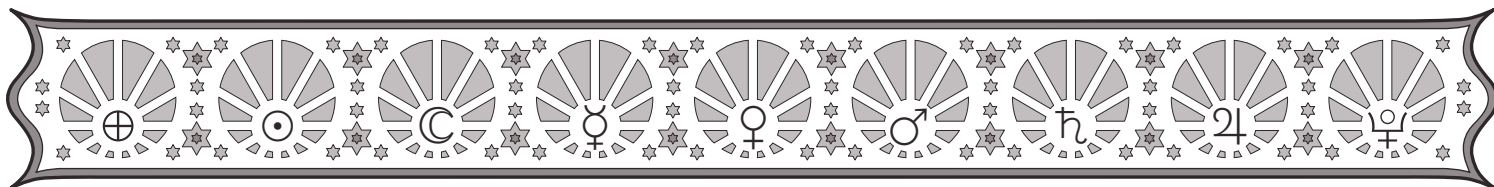
Places of Interest

Venus Isle: Venus Isle is the heart of Aphrodite's domain. The city is the ultimate destination for travelers seeking a decadently good time. It hosts wealthy hotels, decadent brothels, high-rolling casinos, theatres, and many other delights. The city also has a growing number of dramascopes producers and celebrities who increasingly wield influence as their wealth grows. Some of these creative masterminds are Archons. Venus Isle has a growing criminal element that organizes gambling houses and brothels, traffics drugs, and bilks tourists.

Organizations

Gratae: The Gratae, or Graces, are Aphrodite's emissaries and entertainers. The group includes courtesans, artists, socialites, and actors all loyal to Aphrodite and her aims. It was a strictly a female organization, but many males have filled valuable roles in recent years. They entertain important politicians and dignitaries, strengthening Aphrodite's ties to other worlds. The Graces are also Aphrodite's spies and provocateurs. They gather secrets for Aphrodite, and carry out covert acts at her behest.





Supporting Characters

Helena Charis

Venus Isle madam

Vivacious Helena Charis was a successful dramascoper actress until she realized she could make twice the money for half the work as a madam. She attracted the attention of Aphrodite, and became one of the Gratiae. Now, her Gratiae escorts are the best in Venus Isle, and they have dirt on everybody. For Helena, that's just more opportunity, and it pleases her boss, Aphrodite. But, her best girls and guys keep disappearing, and she's heard a lot of rumors about some awful murders.

Power: 5 (Force: 4)

Chaos: 1

Cosmos: 4

Metamorphosis: 4

Stasis: 2

Suggested starting Muses

- ★ Convince Aphrodite to crack down on the recent murders before her business collapses (5).
- ★ Find a way to blackmail Apollo now that her women have learned about his deal with Hades (3).

Eros

Mad immortal

Eros was the toast of the town in Venus Isle until his broken heart pushed him over the edge. Now, the former heartthrob and urban playboy has become a serial rapist and murderer. His immortal talent leaves a cold trail, but some in the city begin to suspect his handiwork.

Power: 9 (Force: 5)

Chaos: 5

Cosmos: 3

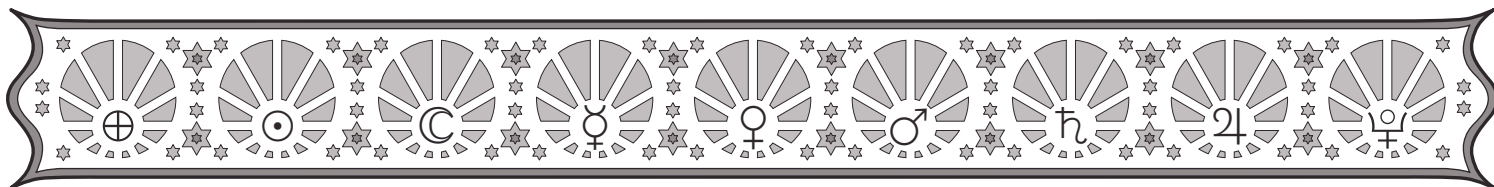
Metamorphosis: 5

Stasis: 2

Suggested starting Muses

- ★ Find a woman he can love to cure him of this madness (6).
- ★ Prevent Aphrodite from finding out about his awful crimes (5).





Aphrodite

Political Mistress, Primarch of Mercury

Aphrodite is a savvy Primarch who knows how to make the most of her unique talents and resources. She has mastered diplomacy and public influence. Thanks to her immortal allure, Aphrodite maintains superb relations with the male Primarchs. Her allure is often lost on Artemis, however, as well as other female immortals.

Aphrodite's rule is far more lax than the other Primarchs' regimes, but her subjects are less productive and more prone to crime, especially in Venus Isle where anything goes. Still, Aphrodite is well loved by her human population. She maintains their tropical paradise, and they adore her laissez-faire policies and hedonistic spirit.

If Aphrodite has a weakness it is vanity and her infamous romantic affairs. She loves to be loved and lusted after, and the beautiful Primarch knows how to use her extraordinary sexuality to gain power and influence. She considers the Titans a threat, but then she doesn't often confront a threat with violence. She has subtler, more sensual techniques, should the need arise.

Power: 13 (Force: 10)

Chaos: 4

Cosmos: 5

Metamorphosis: 6

Stasis: 4

Suggested starting Muses

- ★ *Blackmail Apollo with evidence he plagued his own people with a deadly disease (6).*
- ★ *Quash dissent among Mercury's trade worker unions and reach a beneficial agreement with them (7).*

Venus, Primarch Talisman

Power: 10

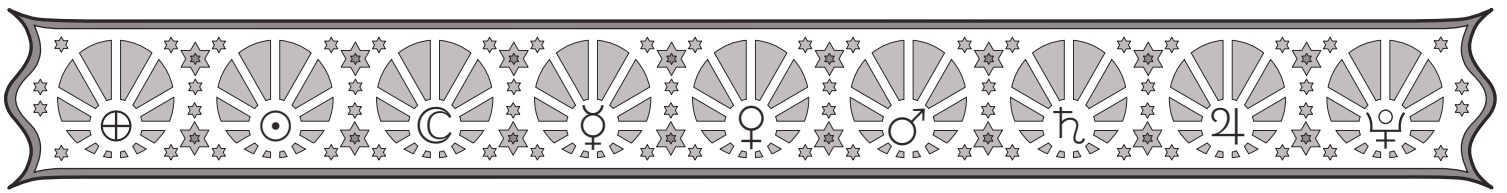
Chaos: 4

Cosmos: 3

Metamorphosis: 8

Stasis: 2





Mars

Desert battleground

Overview

Mars is a desert planet with a long history of strife and war. The red planet is a mix of rocky scrub and seas of sand, punctuated with oases and thin waterways. Martian days are forty hours of blazing sun followed by an equal span of chilling cold. The barren, arid environment is harsh and inhospitable, but Mars boasts abundant resources, including orichalcum and other valuable ores.

The people of Mars live in citystates or wander the deserts in nomad tribes. These tribes and communities are constantly battling one another. Ares, Primarch of Mars, pits communities against one another. He delights in the conflicts, and he plucks from the struggles the finest warriors for his Martian Legion, the largest, most tenacious military in the Nine Worlds.

Mars is among the poorer and more primitive worlds in the universe. The people of Mars use technology unchanged for centuries. But, as he rebuilds Mars after the Titan incursion, Ares seeks to improve the technology level across Mars.

Current Events

Ares briefly lost his realm to Iapetus the Titan. When he recaptured the world, he sacrificed huge numbers of his Martian Legion. He has since struggled to rebuild the legion. Ares constantly orchestrates feuds between communities to recognize the best veteran warriors and officers to recruit for the Martian Legion. He also hopes to update the army with newer weapons and technologies, including the widespread use of firearms on Mars.

Ares' brutal policies have backfired. During Iapetus' reign, the citystate of New Sparta held out against the Titanic forces until Ares returned. Emboldened by their successful defense, they resisted Ares policies and formed the Free Spartan League. This political and military organization renounces Ares' rule, and it openly resists his war-mongering tactics to rebuild the legion. They struggle for an all-volunteer legion and the choice to participate in Ares' mercenary politics.

Places of Interest

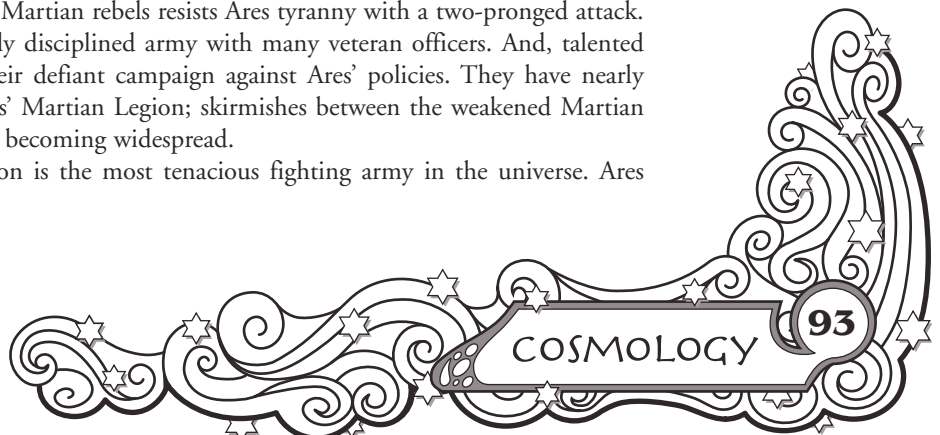
Thracia: This city is the capitol of Mars. It hosts the Martian Legion headquarters, and Ares oversees his battle plans and political judgments from the plateau city. Thracia's main feature is a large arena where Ares organizes games and bloodsport for his entertainment. The city also houses the primary Martian ætherport, Porta Martius. The station is a series of interconnected canals and courtyards where traders can exchange goods.

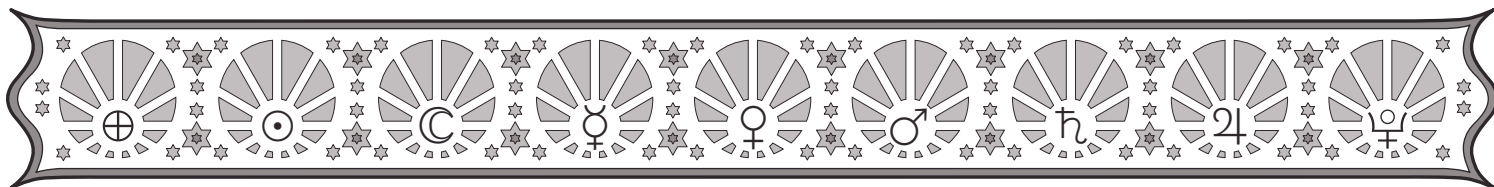
New Sparta: New Sparta is a large walled city in a rocky desert. This citystate is the home of the rebellious Free Spartan League. These hardy people have fought against their neighbors for centuries, but they now seek to cease hostilities and focus on a united Mars with a strong, volunteer army and more freedom of choice for their young men and women.

Organizations

Free Spartan League: This group of Martian rebels resists Ares tyranny with a two-pronged attack. They field a superbly trained and highly disciplined army with many veteran officers. And, talented political leaders guide the group in their defiant campaign against Ares' policies. They have nearly launched a full-scale civil war with Ares' Martian Legion; skirmishes between the weakened Martian Legion and the Free Spartan League are becoming widespread.

Martian Legion: The Martian Legion is the most tenacious fighting army in the universe. Ares





recruits the finest Martian warriors and tacticians to join his military. Ares uses the legion as political currency among the Primarchs. Whoever hires the Martian Legion has the military advantage to conquer or deter almost any rival group or force. The hierarchical legion uses outdated armaments, but Ares works to update their arsenal.

Supporting Characters

Leonidas IV

Freedom fighter

Leonidas IV, like his forefathers, was an officer in the Martian Legion. That changed when he defended New Sparta, his home, from the Titans. Ares abandoned his subjects, and Leonidas will never forgive him. Now, he is proud to lead soldiers to make New Sparta free from tyranny and capricious rule. Leonidas is a good soldier, perhaps to a fault. He is self-disciplined and strict. But, his heart softens with every victory on his march to freedom and self-rule.

Power: 5 (Force: 3)

Chaos: 4

Cosmos: 2

Metamorphosis: 2

Stasis: 3

Suggested starting Muses

- ★ Resist Ares' armies until New Sparta become Free Sparta, likely under a new Primarch (5)
- ★ Protect his family—a wife, a son, and a daughter—in New Sparta (4).

Eris

Lady Discord

Eris has long been Ares ally and companion. She meddles in human affairs, and strife ensues. Then, Ares directs wars among the feuding city-states. Eris delights in spoiling any truces between war-torn city-states on Mars. They are, she finds, ever greedy for water, land, and whatever goods the arid soil can produce. To that effect, her legendary offerings—the Fruits of Discord—are luscious temptations for fools. Inevitably, the striking, sassy immortal turns humanity against itself.

Power: 7 (Force: 6)

Chaos: 5

Cosmos: 1

Metamorphosis: 4

Stasis: 3

Suggested starting Muses

- ★ Bed Leonidas IV and ruin his steadfast marriage and reputation (6).
- ★ See the Martian Legion home from Jupiter, so the sparse wars on Mars won't bore her anymore (4).

Fruits of Discord, Talisman

Power: 4

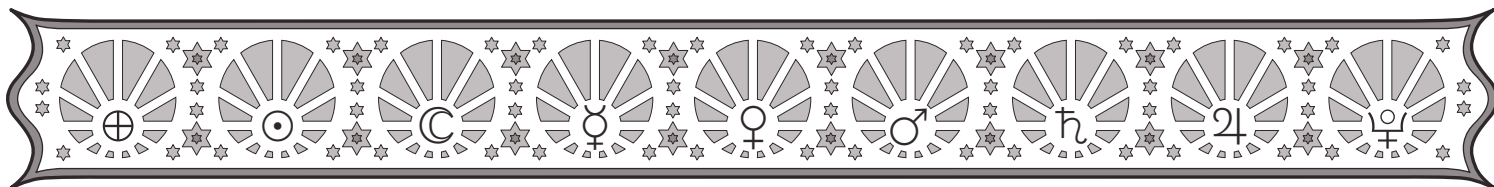
Chaos: 4

Cosmos: 1

Metamorphosis: 4

Stasis: 2





Ares

The Red Emperor, Primarch of Mars

Ares is the master of war and military might. He is a brutally effective leader who commands his people like a demanding general commands his troops. With his military clout, Ares has often become the arbiter of political negotiations among Primarchs. They petition and bid for his favor, hoping to hire Ares and his legionaries as a menacing deterrent.

For this reason, Ares now works to rebuild the Martian Legion. Without this army, his influence on fellow Primarchs and other important groups is weak. Ares understands diplomacy by intimidation far better than negotiation. But, he is no fool. He also now turns to his lover, Aphrodite, for subtler, gentler politics. Unfortunately, he has neglected her as he works vigorously to bolster his military.

Ares actually delights in such work. He pits his people against one another as though they are toy soldiers. He changes water rights, political boundaries, and mining holdings among groups to launch wars of territory and blood feuds. He then observes the battles, and recruits the outstanding warriors for his legion. His recruiting methods are bloody, but extremely effective as evidenced by the Martian Legion's superiority throughout the universe.

From his Martian Legion officers and troops, Ares earns fierce loyalty and respect. By contrast, most Martians struggle to survive; they have little time acknowledge their emperor until he arranges war in their communities. But, they generally dislike his violent policies and rule. Until the audacious uprising in New Sparta, few considered any alternative.

Power: 13 (Force: 9)

Chaos: 7

Cosmos: 2

Metamorphosis: 3

Stasis: 6

Suggested starting Muses

★ Convince Aphrodite to remain with him and help him reform relations with other Primarchs (6).

★ Crush the Free Spartan League rebellion on Mars (7).

Mars, Primarch Talisman

Power: 11

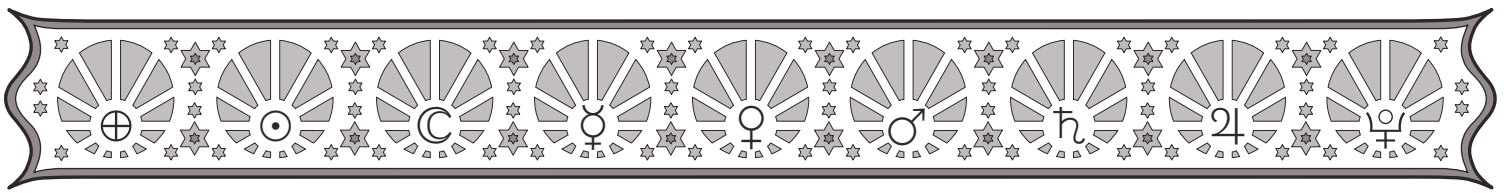
Chaos: 7

Cosmos: 2

Metamorphosis: 3

Stasis: 4





Jupiter

The people's frontier

Overview

Jupiter is a large world with diverse terrain very similar to that of Earth. It has majestic mountains, deep seas and rolling plains. The world has abundant resources, including rich reserves of orichalcum, oil, ores, and agricultural products. However, Jupiter's population is comparatively small. Many Jovians have flocked to the largest cities where they are safer from frequent Titanic assaults. Zeus, Primarch of Jupiter, cannot efficiently access many of his world's resources, leaving ample opportunity for trade, business, and intrepid workers.

Jovian days pass quickly with only sixteen hours per cycle. Winters are often long and cold so far from Sol's rays. Jovians have adapted well to the rugged land and climate; most pride themselves on resilience, hard work, and independence.

Zeus' regime is domineering and oppressive. He maintains strict curfews, and agents of Aegis monitor, arrest, and interrogate citizens in the name of security.

There is great need for security. However, Jupiter is the front line of the war between the Titans and the Eternals, and Titanic assaults and incursions are rampant on the world. Residents have abandoned many smaller cities and settlements to escape the Titan's violence. Open conflict has lessened in recent years, and the Titans now infiltrate Jupiter's cities in disguise or by organizing human agents and terror operatives.

Current Events

Now that open warfare on Jupiter has subsided, the Aquarians have begun a campaign to protest and subvert Zeus' tyranny over his people. Their interference angers Zeus, and he has directed many of Aegis' resources to driving the Aquarians off Jupiter. The escalating struggle has become violent, and the problem worsens.

Zeus has also requisitioned the Daedalian Society, an order of skilled Archon engineers who craft wondrous technology. What began as lucrative contracts for the society has transformed into almost slave labor to create tools for Zeus' military and secret police.

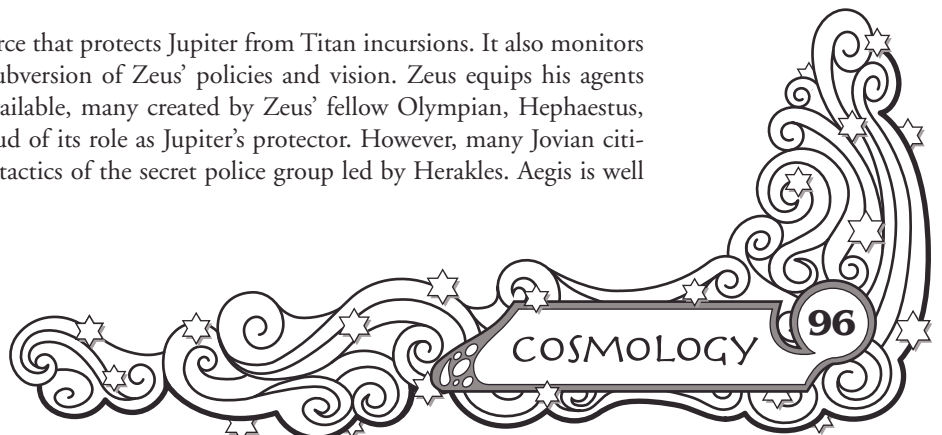
Meanwhile, the Titans continue to attack Jupiter, albeit more subtly. The Titans and their many minions, including human agents, now infiltrate and terrorize Jovian society from within. Their attacks are less brutal and destructive, but the devious tactics have spread fear and doubt among the population.

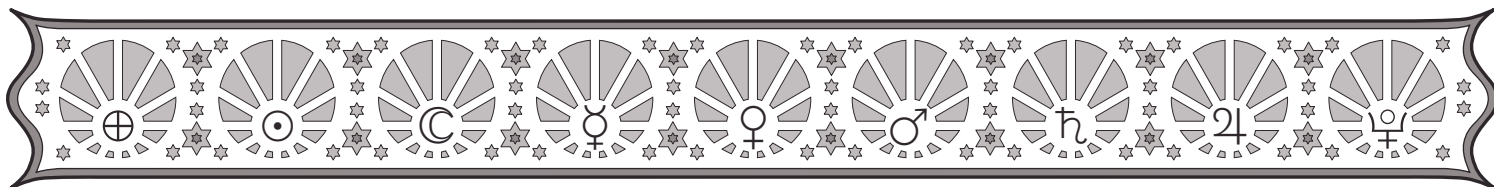
Places of Interest

Olympia: This is the capitol of Zeus' Jovian state. The city is clean and modern, though dissent simmers among the city's residents who have few freedoms and no voice except in support of Zeus' reign. Many long for the days of Athena's enlightened rule. The mountain city's main terminal is Olympia Heights, a modern ætherport with tight security. Merchants flock to the Olympia Heights borough, where selection is varied and customers plenty. Olympia has strict curfews to maintain security; the practically city shuts down at nightfall.

Organizations

Aegis: Aegis is Zeus' official police force that protects Jupiter from Titan incursions. It also monitors the residents of Jupiter to stamp out subversion of Zeus' policies and vision. Zeus equips his agents with some of the finest technologies available, many created by Zeus' fellow Olympian, Hephaestus, and the Daedalian Society. Aegis is proud of its role as Jupiter's protector. However, many Jovian citizens are not so proud of the Orwellian tactics of the secret police group led by Herakles. Aegis is well





funded, and it is active throughout the Nine Worlds to serve Zeus' far-reaching strategies and enforce his supreme will.

The Daedalian Society: The Daedalians are a secretive group of Archons dedicated to the creation of technology. Their fantastic designs have revolutionized engineering, travel, communication, warfare, and other arenas for centuries. The Jupiter-based order operated more openly under Athena's rule, but when Zeus assumed primacy of Jupiter the group's work became state liability. Its members have withdrawn from public discourse. They now toil to create weapons and security devices for Zeus' campaign against the Titans. But, they plan for the day to defy Zeus' oppressive contracts and design what their inspiration demands.

Supporting Characters

Milo Icarus

Daedalian Society tinkerer

Milo Icarus is a brilliant inventor. During his Olympia University studies, he became the youngest inductee into the Daedalian Society. But, now that Zeus demands production for machines of war, Milo has lost his love for his work. Almost inadvertently, he has discovered a way to harness Telluric currents as a weapon. But, Milo fears the devastating effects such a weapon might have, and he's desperate to flee Jupiter safely.

Power: 5 (Force: 3)

Chaos: 1

Cosmos: 5

Metamorphosis: 2

Stasis: 3

Suggested starting Muses

- ★ Prevent Zeus from acquiring a Telluric doomsday device (3).
- ★ Escape Jupiter before Herakles' thugs or Apollo's agents discover his secret (4).

Herakles

Aegis director

The popularity of Herakles, Zeus' mightiest champion, plummeted on Jupiter. He now leads the Aegis police with as much subtlety as his famous labors. Herakles is an iron-fisted commandant, hell bent on rooting out any Titanic or Atlantean infiltrators on Jupiter. Or, for that matter, any Archon interlopers as well. He is active throughout Olympia, and often leads raids on suspected dissidents and insurgents.

Power: 8 (Force: 9)

Chaos: 6

Cosmos: 4

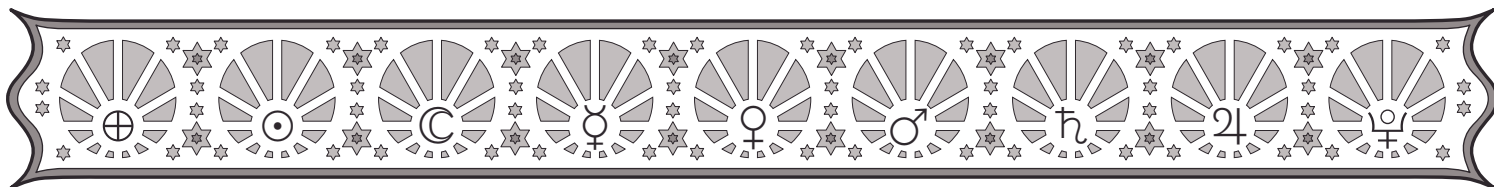
Metamorphosis: 3

Stasis: 4

Suggested starting Muses

- ★ Defeat the Titan incursions on Jupiter so he and Zeus may return to Earth (7).
- ★ Silence the Aquarian campaign that's subverting Zeus' image on Jupiter (4).





Zeus

Jovian Autocrat, Primarch of Jupiter

Zeus is the most powerful Primarch in the universe. He wields great authority over his own people and his fellow Eternals, even other Primarchs. He is a wise leader and careful strategist with millennia of success as the supreme leader of the Eternals. He was king of the gods in a time when humanity worshipped the Eternals.

Despite his immortality, the Titanomachy seems to have worn Zeus with age and worry. His demeanor is stern and severe, and his paranoia increases as the war wears on. The other Primarchs dare not question his authority openly, but many hold doubts and ambitions should Zeus be unseated as the prime power in the universe.

Zeus exhibits little concern for the liberty and happiness of his Jovian subjects. He views his primary role as that of defender of the universe from Titanic threats. Zeus' people dislike his heavy-handed policies, even though many appreciate the need for security in this second Titanomachy. Jovians hope for the end of the Titan menace so Zeus will either return to Earth or lessen his totalitarian policies and return to the wise and just ways he was known for long ago.

Power: 20 (Force: 16)

Lock: 4

Chaos: 6

Cosmos: 6

Metamorphosis: 6

Stasis: 7

Suggested starting Muses

- ★ Drive the Titans back to Tartarus (8).
- ★ End the Second Titanomachy and return to Earth as Primarch (6).

Jupiter, Primarch Talisman

Power: 11

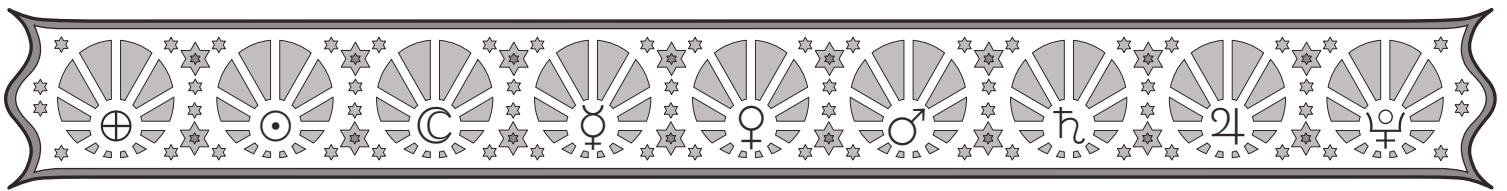
Chaos: 7

Cosmos: 3

Metamorphosis: 3

Stasis: 4





Saturn

Titanic wasteland

Overview

Saturn is the wasteland home of the Titans. It serves as their base of operations in the ongoing Titanomachy. Once a beautiful water-covered world, Saturn is now a rocky terrain cloaked in constant twilight and telluric lightning storms. The Titans have enslaved the few survivors of Poseidon's kingdom, and the world hosts relatively few humans—only Luna has a smaller population.

But, the world is home to myriad beasts and monsters spawned from the Titan's bloodlines. These mythic terrors roam Saturn's wastelands until summoned by the Titans for war and destruction. Among the terrible beasts are serpents, hydras, chimeras, gorgons, minotaurs and other fearsome abominations.

Thanks to the work of their human slaves, the Titans have mined and stripped Saturn's dry seabeds of vast resources. The world is a wreck of abandoned mines and industrial slag. Ruined cities once adrift on the seas or nestled on the sea's floors now tower above the barren landscape as empty shells of civilization where monsters now roam.

Current Events

The Titans have retreated to Saturn once again after significant military defeats on Jupiter and Mars. Now, Kronos and his followers prepare a new strategy to recapture their worlds. They hope to use humans and talented Archons to infest their enemies' homes and subvert rule from within.

Meanwhile, the Lost Armada works to liberate Saturn's slave workers. The navy sends rescuers to slave camps, then ferries any escapees to safety. Many slaves agree readily to join the armada, while others want freedom from the Titan's torturous rule.

Places of Interest

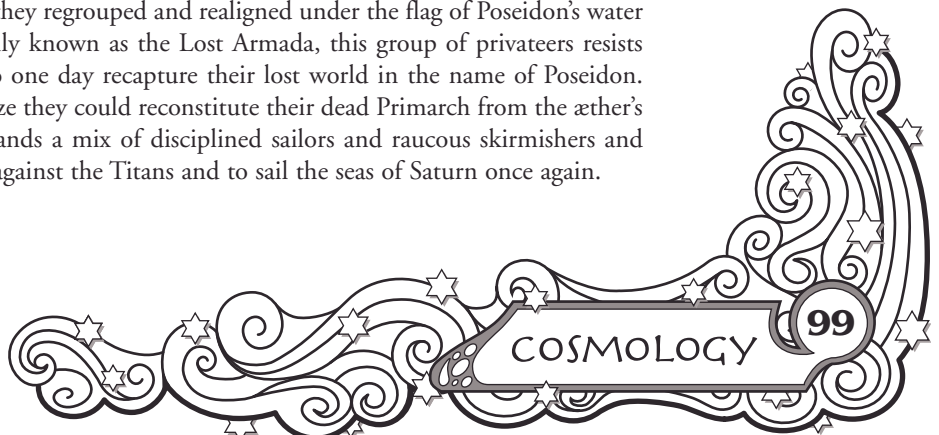
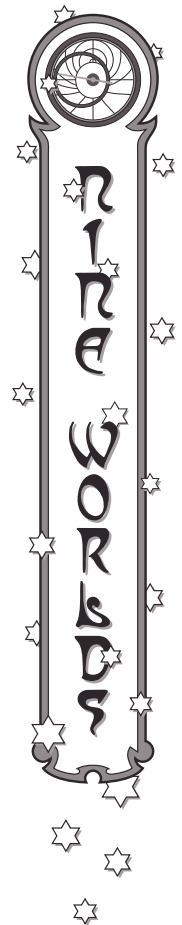
The Wasteland: The Titans have so ravaged Saturn that few recognizable landmarks remain. Most Titans dwell in the ruined cities of Saturn. The hemispherical settlements once sat beneath the oceans. Now, they are skeletal, rusted domes above washed-out bricks and stone. Mines, factories, and other facilities punctuate the landscape. Alongside these are terrible gulags where enslaved humans "rest" while not working to fuel the Titans' war.

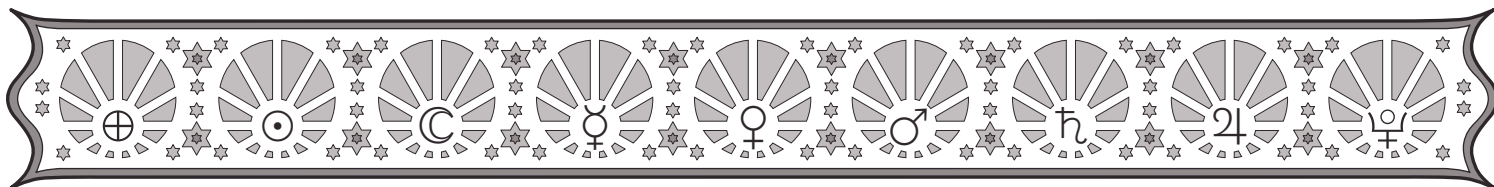
Atlantis: Atlantis drifts on the æther in between worlds. Recently, the drifting citystate was in the outer rim to support the Titan offensive, but Atlas directs his rogue nation inward to disrupt æther traffic once again.

Atlantis is an ancient city, an island lost upon the æther. It has long since exhausted its own resources, and the Atlanteans turn to piracy and theft to survive. Much of the city has been built and rebuilt many times. They layered amalgam of stone and brick architecture mocks its once glorious appearance. Ancient monoliths and dilapidated temples crumble next to modern æthership hangars and family dwellings.

Organizations

The Lost Armada: When the Titans killed Poseidon and captured Saturn, the remnants of Poseidon's navy scattered to the æther. Over time, they regrouped and realigned under the flag of Poseidon's water kingdom that was Saturn. Now generally known as the Lost Armada, this group of privateers resists the Titanic rule of Saturn and hopes to one day recapture their lost world in the name of Poseidon. Many members are Archons who theorize they could reconstitute their dead Primarch from the æther's essence. The armada's admiralty commands a mix of disciplined sailors and raucous skirmishers and pirates. But, the membership is united against the Titans and to sail the seas of Saturn once again.





Supporting Characters

Chimera

Titan spawn

The chimera is one of the myriad beasts that serve in the Titan armies. Others include serpents, hydras, krakens, harpies, and more monsters that many believed existed only in the ancient days. The Titans assign their monsters with a duty, usually to slay or terrorize mortals. The chimera is a shape-shifting beast that can better infiltrate other worlds than its monstrous kin.

Power: 7 (Force: 4)

Chaos: 6

Cosmos: 3

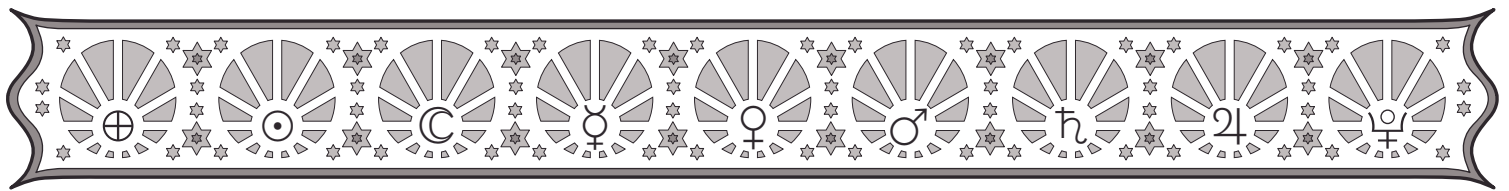
Metamorphosis: 6

Stasis: 0

Suggested starting Muses

- ★ *Titan spawn often have mandates to slay players' Archons, particularly those who meddle in Titanic or Atlantean affairs. Muse ratings could vary between 4-6. Other Muses might be protecting Kronos or other Titans, or kidnap individuals for torture and ransom.*





The Titans

Kronos and his fellow Titans operate from Saturn as they work to conquer the universe. The Titans are universally selfish and brutal beings, though each has unique qualities. Titans are powerful foes; game masters should consider all Titans as high power-level adversaries for Archons.

Atlas is the king of Atlantis. He leads the Atlanteans on a widespread campaign of piracy and terror to disrupt the æther and all traffic upon it. Atlas often joins Atlanteans on their æthership raids.

Power: 11 (Force: 6)

Chaos: 7

Cosmos: 3

Metamorphosis: 4

Stasis: 5

Suggested starting Muses

- ★ Gain Kronos' forgiveness by leading to Atlanteans on a conquest of Earth (6).
- ★ Serve Kronos on Earth as king of the Axis Mundi in Atlantis (5).

Coeus is loyal to Kronos and serves as his key adviser. Coeus is brilliant. Unlike many of his fellow Titans, he uses his intelligence as his greatest weapon. Many opponents underestimate his intelligence, but they don't often live long enough to regret their mistake.

Power: 13 (Force: 12)

Chaos: 5

Cosmos: 3

Metamorphosis: 6

Stasis: 4

Suggested starting Muses

- ★ Rule again as Primarch of Mercury (7).
- ★ Help Kronos end the stalemate on Jupiter (5).

Crius considers himself superior to other Titans, including Kronos. He plots constantly to overthrow Kronos' plans, and he often critiques his strategies, fomenting dissent among the Titans when he can. He wishes to lead the Titans as Primarch of Earth when they conquer the Eternals. Crius is eager to discredit or diminish Kronos' power, and he would gladly lead a rebellion with support from other allies.

Power: 14 (Force: 6)

Chaos: 8

Cosmos: 2

Metamorphosis: 3

Stasis: 3

Suggested starting Muses

- ★ Destroy Briareus and prove his greatness (5).
- ★ Regain the Primacy of Jupiter (6).
- ★ Overthrow Kronos as leader of the Titans (5).

Hyperion manages the criminal underworld of Sol. Among the criminal cartels and crime families, he is the ultimate authority. Hyperion is a prototypical gangster—his greed demands excess, and he directs lackeys to do his dirty work. He has no respect for authority or law beyond his own might.

Power: 11 (Force: 12)

Chaos: 7

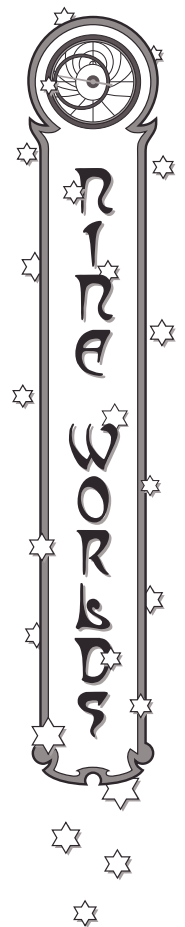
Cosmos: 5

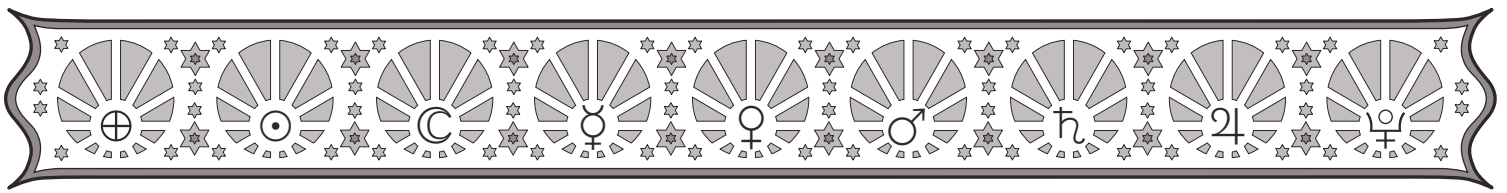
Metamorphosis: 4

Stasis: 3

Suggested starting Muses

- ★ Sit upon the throne in Heliopolis as Primarch of Sol (7).
- ★ Sabotage Apollo's plans for supremacy (6).





Iapetus is a violent brute. He often commands Titan spawn in frontal assaults. He delights in bloody battles, and few beings can challenge his martial prowess. He recently captured, and subsequently lost, his old seat of power, Mars.

Power: 12 (Force: 8)
Chaos: 8
Cosmos: 3
Metamorphosis: 4
Stasis: 4

Suggested starting Muses

- ★ Destroy all life on Mars (7).
- ★ Become Primarch of Mars and rebirth the world (7).

Menoetius is known for his brute strength and incredible Power. However, he is not a clever or creative opponent; he knows only how to overpower his foes.

Power: 10 (Force: 6)
Chaos: 9
Cosmos: 3
Metamorphosis: 2
Stasis: 2

Suggested starting Muses

- ★ Assault Jupiter and slay Herakles (6).
- ★ Earn Primacy of any world Kronos will give him (5).

Ophion is a monstrous beast of a Titan. The reptilian immortal sires many of Titan's monstrous minions.

Power: 13 (Force: 9)
Chaos: 3
Cosmos: 5
Metamorphosis: 6
Stasis: 4

Suggested starting Muses

- ★ Destroy humanity (6).
- ★ Aid Crius in his planned overthrow of Kronos (5).

Phoebe is a mysterious Titan, and her enemies know little about her. Phoebe assumes many guises. Sometimes she appears as seductive human woman, other times she is a living shadow. She is behind many of Kronos' subtle incursions to Jupiter and other worlds.

Power: 13 (Force: 11)
Chaos: 4
Cosmos: 5
Metamorphosis: 8
Stasis: 2

Suggested starting Muses

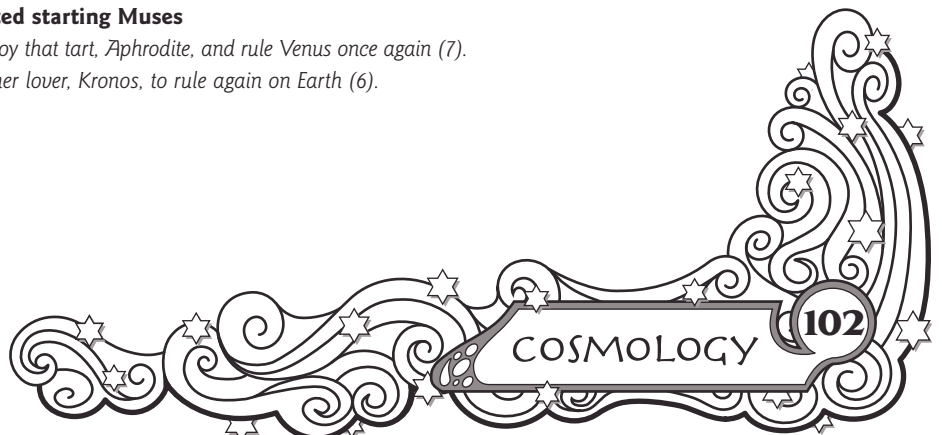
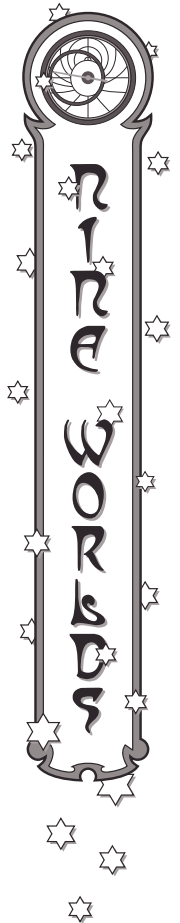
- ★ Rule again as empress of the Moon (8).
- ★ Undermine and destroy Aegis by scandalizing its leaders (6).

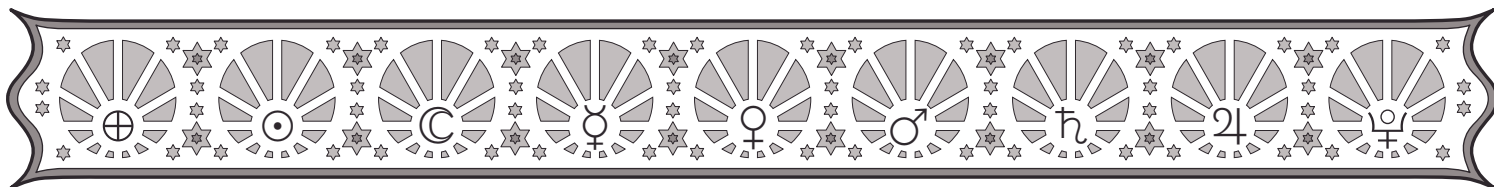
Rhea is Kronos' mistress and a devious opponent in her own right. She is the mother of the Eternals, and her generative powers remain. Rhea surrounds herself with her children, however monstrous or beastly. Rhea is a matronly figure among the Titans, and she carries the authority of Kronos in his absence.

Power: 14 (Force: 14)
Chaos: 4
Cosmos: 7
Metamorphosis: 5
Stasis: 4

Suggested starting Muses

- ★ Destroy that tart, Aphrodite, and rule Venus once again (7).
- ★ Aid her lover, Kronos, to rule again on Earth (6).





Kronos

Titanic terror, Primarch of Saturn

Kronos is the ruthless king of the Titans. He is extremely powerful and deviously clever. Through the painful and prolonged second Titanomachy he has learned many lessons. First, he learned patience and reason over ambition and rage. Kronos has suffered by letting his emotions drive his strategies to costly direct assaults. Second, he now recognizes the power and potential of humanity and the Archons. He has watched his brilliant plans disintegrate after he underestimated the power and resourcefulness of Archons resisting his efforts.

Kronos will not make those mistakes again as he employs a new strategy of subversion, espionage, and terrorism to conquer the universe again. He works to assemble Archons against the Eternals, often by concealing his identity with front organizations and untraceable funding.

Kronos leads the Titans with unforgiving force and unrelenting fear. He will not show weakness for fear of facing revolt from the selfish Titan clan. The fractious Titans tire of one another after eons in Tartarus together, but they see in Kronos their best chance of regaining what was once theirs. For now, his role as leader is certain.

Kronos ultimately seeks to destroy Zeus as he did Poseidon and to take his rightful seat in the center of the universe as Primarch of Earth. He is willing to negotiate almost anything in exchange for those goals.

Power: 18 (Force: 16)

Lock: 4

Chaos: 8

Cosmos: 5

Metamorphosis: 4

Stasis: 4

Suggested starting Muses

- ★ Destroy Zeus (7).
- ★ Regain the Primacy of Earth (7).
- ★ Root out Crius' mutinous conspiracy (5).

Saturn, Primarch Talisman

Power: 11

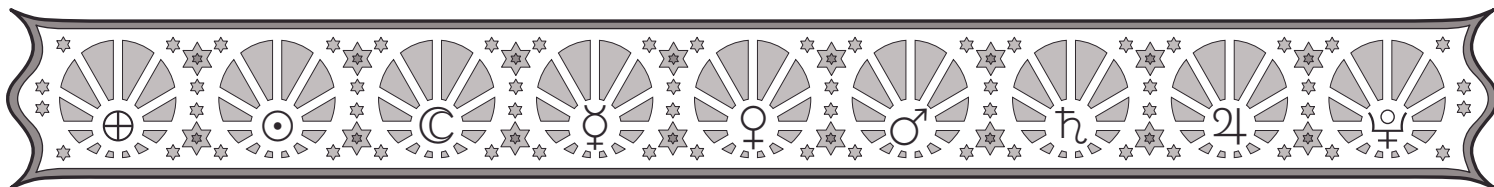
Chaos: 7

Cosmos: 3

Metamorphosis: 3

Stasis: 4





Hades

The Underworld

Overview

Hades is the underworld, the realm of the dead where mortal souls come to rest ... or toil forever. Hades is unlike the other worlds. There is no day and night in Hades; time is irrelevant. The world does not orbit other worlds. Rather, it envelops the universe like an infinite shroud.

Much of Hades is a vast Necropolis. Shades reside in this large, ever expanding city to work for redemption. Mortals can visit the Underworld on special passes, but few do so willingly unless urgent business calls. The Necropolis is a haunting, silent city of bone-white buildings and streets. There is no sky, only oppressive darkness above. Most trade and contact with Hades occurs at the Ninth Gate, the entrance to hell. Hades constructed an ætherport and marketplace outside the gates. The fog-shrouded port is the last boundary of the mortal world.

Hades traffics information and lore in exchange for material wealth that Hades desires for his plans. Hades also makes contracts offering his unique resources and services in exchange for an unusual commodity—fresh human souls to populate his expanding realm.

In addition to the Ninth Gate and the Necropolis, Hades guards Tartarus, the black, labyrinthine prison where a few Titans and many other lost souls waste away. Tartarus is the blackest, foulest place in the universe, a hole in reality where time stands still and torture seems infinite. He also protects Elysium, the paradise where only a few virtuous souls find eternal solace and peace. Elysium is inaccessible to even the immortals; only the grace of the Creator grants entry to this transcendent realm.

Current Events

When the Titans escaped Tartarus and launched the second Titanomachy, they demolished the Ninth Gate. In the ensuing chaos, thousands of souls escaped into the mortal world. These ghosts terrified other worlds, and Hades suffered greatly with the loss of his labor force. To manage the mess, he deputized the Thanatoi. Hades assigned these Archon agents to retrieve the lost souls and ensure that future quotas would continue uninterrupted. The detectives and enforcers roam the worlds to capture fugitive shades and to “investigate” future murders and deaths, often times to ensure their occurrence. More rarely, they halt the deaths.

At the same time, Hades has enjoyed a swell of new members thanks to his secret arrangement with Apollo. The Primarch of Sol created an all-too-effective plague that has killed a number of his citizens and therefore increased the population of shades in the Underworld. Hades approaches his contractual quota of souls, but he has plans to broaden the deal.

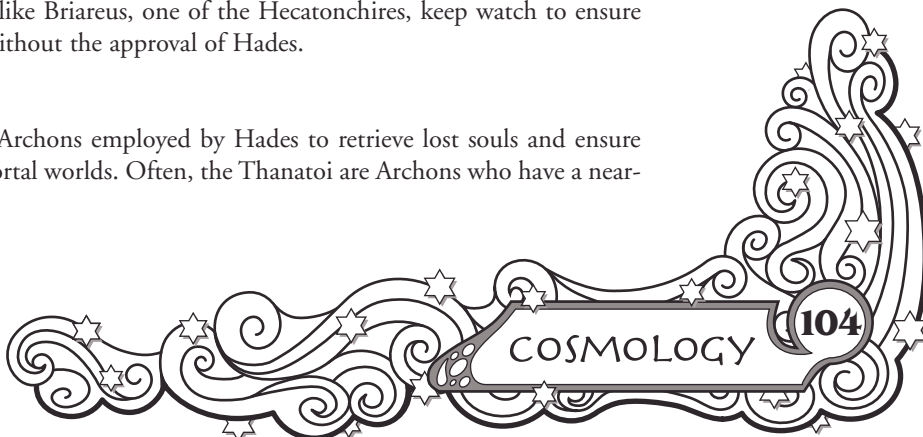
Places of Interest

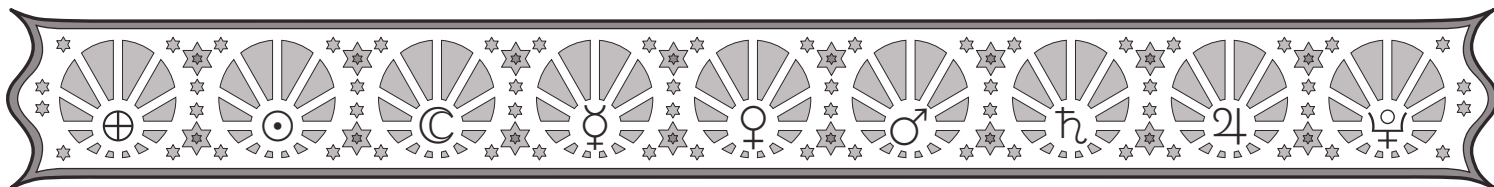
The Ninth Gate: The Ninth Gate is a large harbor cloaked in the mist of Styx, the dark æther surrounding Hades’ exterior. The port is a quiet, disturbing locale heavily policed by Thanatoi and their hell hounds. Crime and smuggling is rarely a problem here.

Tartarus: Tartarus is the blackest pit of hell guarded by giants. Hades imprisons powerful beings in the deep, bronze-walled cavern. Giants like Briareus, one of the Hecatonchires, keep watch to ensure that no one enters or escapes Tartarus without the approval of Hades.

Organizations

Thanatoi: The Thanatoi are mortal Archons employed by Hades to retrieve lost souls and ensure the mortal fates of those living in the mortal worlds. Often, the Thanatoi are Archons who have a near-





death experience. Hades grants them a second chance at life in exchange for their loyal service to police his realm. They are part detective, part assassin, and part guardian to humanity's souls. The Thanatoi have standing passes to enter Hades at will.

Supporting Characters

Charon

Keeper of the Ninth Gate

Whether he likes it or not, Charon is now the mayor of the shantytown outside Hades. The Ninth Gate is the oldest ætherport in the Nine Worlds. Despite the Underworld's sinister reputation, much trade and travel passes through the gate. Lately, Charon and his Thanatoi colleagues are overseeing the return of escaped souls. Charon is also busy smuggling souls from Sol into Hades without proper documentation. Hades has no interest in letting his bargain with Apollo be reversed by greater powers like Zeus.

Power: 6 (Force: 6)

Chaos: 5

Cosmos: 2

Metamorphosis: 2

Stasis: 4

Suggested starting Muses

- ★ *Keep the passage of shades from Sol a mystery to anyone who inquires (5).*
- ★ *Prevent any shade from leaving Hades until all the escaped souls are accounted for (4).*

Briareus

Hecatonchires bounty hunter

Since the disastrous release of souls when the Titans broke out of the Underworld, Hades charged Briareus with the retrieval of his losses, including the Titans themselves. Briareus is one of the Hecatonchires—the hundred-handed ones. Briareus possesses the prowess and greatness of a hundred men. He often appears as an incredibly large, dark-skinned man. He overwhelms foes with dizzying blows and blinding speed. Some say he is more than one being, and that swarms of figures surround him in battle.

Power: 11 (Force: 7)

Chaos: 5

Cosmos: 3

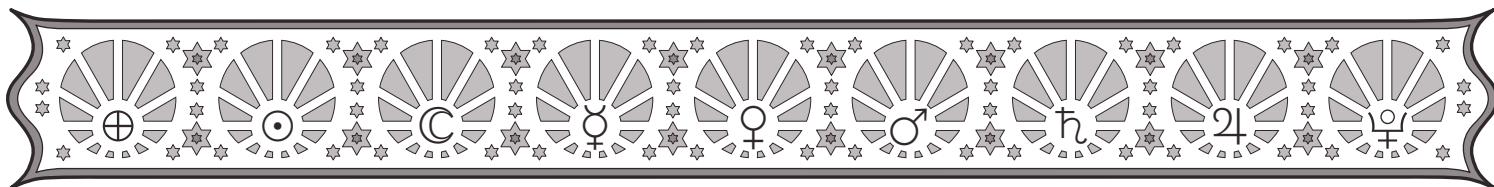
Metamorphosis: 4

Stasis: 6

Suggested starting Muses

- ★ *Secure Kronos, once again, in the depths of Tartarus (7).*
- ★ *Regain the favor of Hades, who blames him for the escapes (4).*





Hades

King of the Ninth World, Primarch of Hades

Hades is the lord of hell. He is a fearless ruler and conducts policy with little consideration of political consequence or retribution. Hades is a cold, rational being who enforces his contracts to the letter. Of course, he also arranges contracts to sate his covetous need for souls and other resources to maintain his isolated realm.

Hades is eager to recapture the Titans and lock them away forever in Tartarus, but he lacks the means and power. He works to acquire more shades and increase his power. To do so, he bargains with the Primarchs offering his services, resources and knowledge in exchange for “improved mortality rates” on other worlds. Unsurprisingly, his relations with other Primarchs are distant and cold.

Hades oversees the dead souls of mortals, called shades. They work to fulfill his political and financial needs, and he decrees whether they earn the right to exist and work in the Necropolis or whether they deserve damnation in Tartarus. The shades respect Hades as a fair ruler, but they cannot love the master of hell and his strict laws. Few can, as the nature of Hades’ role makes him the most unpopular Primarch in the universe, except perhaps for Kronos. This does not trouble Hades; he is content with his role so long as he can acquire enough resources to remain confident in his security and position of power.

Power: 14 (Force: 9)

Lock: 4

Chaos: 8

Cosmos: 2

Metamorphosis: 6

Stasis: 6

Suggested starting Muses

- ★ *Extend his contract with Apollo to acquire more souls (6).*
- ★ *Recapture all lost shades that escaped with the Titans during the second Titanomachy (7).*

Hades, Primarch Talisman

Power: 13

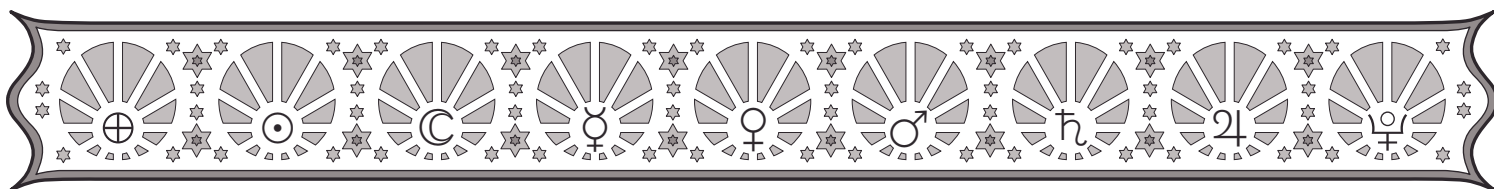
Chaos: 5

Cosmos: 2

Metamorphosis: 3

Stasis: 7





PHILOSOPHY

*"You can discover more about a person in an hour of play
than in a year of conversation."*

—Plato

This brief chapter offers some advice for playing Nine Worlds. Both players and game masters should read this section to recognize the ways in which Nine Worlds may challenge their expectations for a role-playing game and discover techniques to help make the game more enjoyable.

NARRATION AND DRAMA

Fundamentally, this is a game about creating exciting, meaningful dramas in a fantastic setting. It is about creating stories as a group.

Like many role-playing games, Nine Worlds does include ways to improve player characters and increase their power as they play. But, here the process is a little different. To acquire power, players must achieve goals they set for themselves, and the way in which they choose to fulfill those goals says something meaningful about their characters and the situations they are in.

The reason this game helps characters become more powerful over time is so that characters can work toward conflicts of varying scope, ultimately arriving at cosmic-level conflicts that challenge the Primarchs. Players need not champion or challenge a Primarch during play, but they may work toward that highest scope of conflict.

Players will find they can defeat many foes with clever, creative narration and a bit of luck. While that can be very entertaining, this game emphasizes the reasons a player character acquires power and how he intends to use it. Will he answer to a higher power like the Primarchs? Or, will he defy that authority and use his powers for his own aims, good or bad? Those questions are the core of this game. If players answer those questions in play, then they are likely to develop powerful, meaningful stories that pack emotional punch. That's exactly what this game tries to help players accomplish.

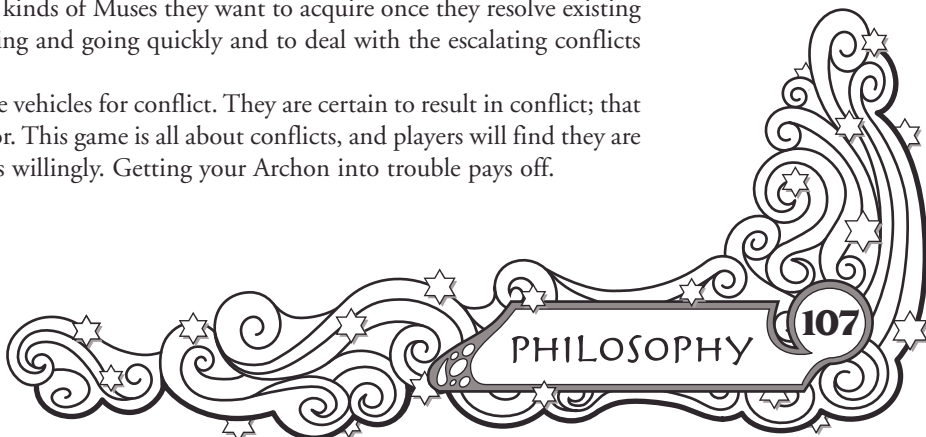
Muses

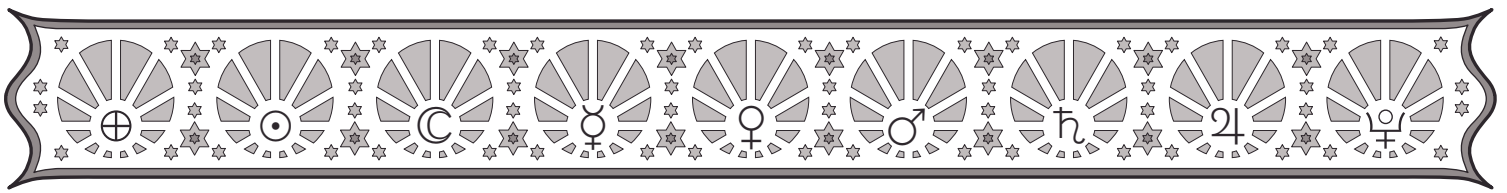
As stated in the Archons chapter, Muses are the most important part of playing an Archon. Muses are the fuel that fires the engine of drama in this game. Muses help players set up new scenes. They help players decide what conflicts to become involved in (and what conflicts to avoid).

Muses are also the primary channels for players to earn rewards and develop their Archon characters. Players earn valuable currency and game influence on many levels thanks to their Muses. Their value as tools of fun storytelling and play cannot be overstated!

Players should frequently resolve Muses and acquire new ones. They may do so "on the fly" during play; resolving a Muse is almost always a memorable event. Players should always be thinking about what's next for their character, and what kinds of Muses they want to acquire once they resolve existing Muses. Be prepared to have Muses coming and going quickly and to deal with the escalating conflicts that result!

Remember, though, that Muses are the vehicles for conflict. They are certain to result in conflict; that exactly what players should be looking for. This game is all about conflicts, and players will find they are rewarded most when they enter conflicts willingly. Getting your Archon into trouble pays off.





Values and The Choice

As players narrate their victories, they make The Choice. They must choose to use their character's Arete or Hubris. That choice determines whether the character's victory is natural or supernatural, mundane or magical.

This choice is not superficial. It is not just a choice about of fun description and colorful special effects. The Choice really does matter. It says everything about what the character will do to achieve his goals. Choosing Arete means a player will use normal events without magical elements to describe his character's victory. It also means his character has chosen to accept the authority of Primarchs. He's making a choice to submit to their rules. This says a lot about what he values as he works toward his goals in life.

Conversely, if a player chooses Hubris, it means his narration of events will include fantastic, magical elements. It also means his character has chosen to defy the authority of the Primarchs. He's thumbing his nose at their rules because they interfere with the best means to achieve his own goals. This also says a lot about the character and what he values.

Sometimes conforming with the Primarch's worldview is the strong and just thing to do. Sometimes it's a cowardly path. Similarly, rebelling against their worldview can be selfish and foolish. Or, it can be a statement of freedom and creativity.

Either choice is valid. This game is not meant to always sway players into rebellion more so than conformity, or vice versa. Rather, play is about exploring situations where conformity is the right choice, and examining different situations where rebellion is the right choice. Archons should walk that line, and players should enjoy the issues their Archons reveal.

Playing as a group

Players should spend their first game session creating characters cooperatively and writing character Muses that interrelate with other player characters. When characters have interlinked Muses, or even share the same Muse, game play will be much more enjoyable. The characters have relationships to one another, and they take on the role of multiple protagonists in a story or drama (or, for longer games, a string of stories or dramas).

This means players can make suggestions for Muses for other player characters. When a player creates something for another player's character (like a Muse), he becomes very interested in seeing that character face conflict and resolve the Muse. This technique helps players pay better attention to game events and care more about issues outside just their single player character. This helps players craft better dramas.

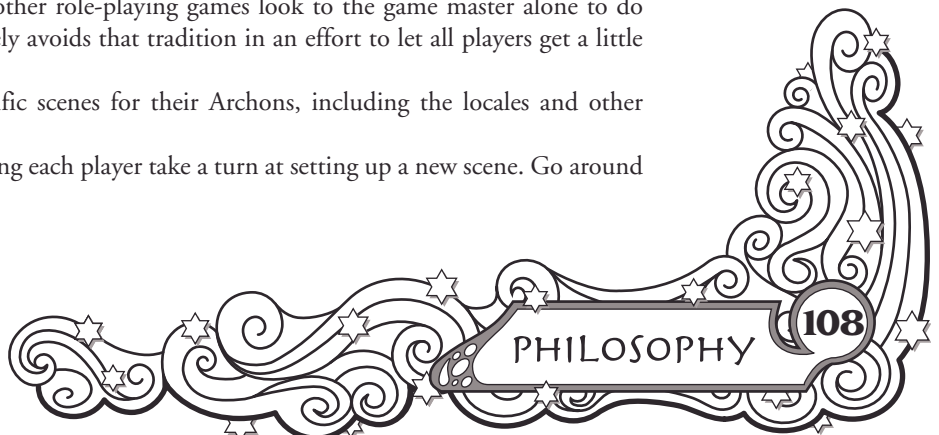
Players should discuss the guidelines for whether their characters might conflict with one another. The people playing the game should agree whether character vs. character conflict is acceptable, or whether players really should be focusing their conflicts on other antagonists and mutual opponents. Both options allow for interesting dramas, but it's best to understand what players want form the game.

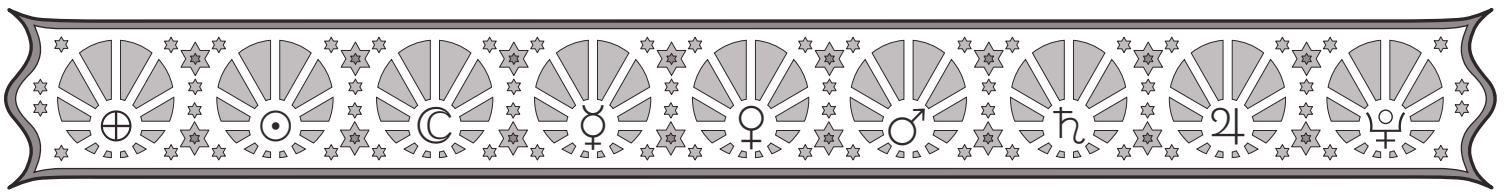
Setting up scenes

As play continues, players must also collaborate as storytellers. All players should take part in setting up scenes and narrating events. Many other role-playing games look to the game master alone to do that creative work. This game deliberately avoids that tradition in an effort to let all players get a little more creative.

Players are welcome to request specific scenes for their Archons, including the locales and other participants in the scene.

One technique that works well is letting each player take a turn at setting up a new scene. Go around





the table or room. Each player in turn announces a new scene, including the setting, who is there, and what's happening. Other players may chime in to add similar elements, especially which other characters will participate. When the scene ends, the next player sets up a new scene, and so on. This technique works wonderfully in Nine Worlds.

Pacing

One way to help set up scenes is to think in two modes. A scene should have one of two functions. A scene should either develop the Archon characters by reveal something about them, or the scene should be a conflict involving one or more Archons.

If you find yourself playing through a scene, think about these two things.

- 1) Does the current scene tell us anything new about the players' Archons?
- 2) Is it a conflict?

If not, it's probably time to close the scene and move on to a new scene where those things are happening. The game master should pay special attention to these questions, but the duty is not hers alone. All players should be vigilant against languishing, dead-end scenes. Keep the story moving!

Scenes should neither be too short nor too long. Too often, role-players make scenes too long, and drama tends to dwindle into boredom. The group should sense a good cut-off point.

Try to start new scenes with some interesting angle or development, then exit the scene with something interesting twist that results. Often times, cliffhanger endings to scenes are a great way to pace the game and keep players very interested and attentive. As the group strings these scenes together, the drama develops wonderfully.

On secrets and surprises

All people playing this game work to craft an enjoyable string of stories and dramas. This means everyone has a say in how events unfold. It also means that no crucial events are predetermined.

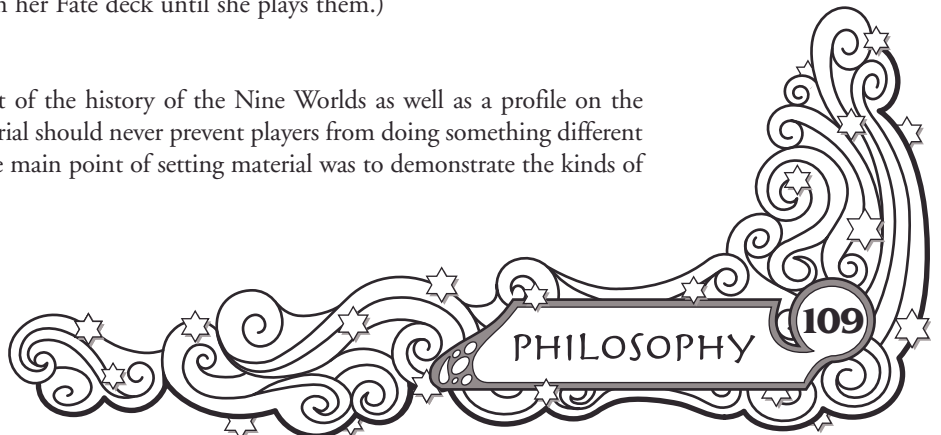
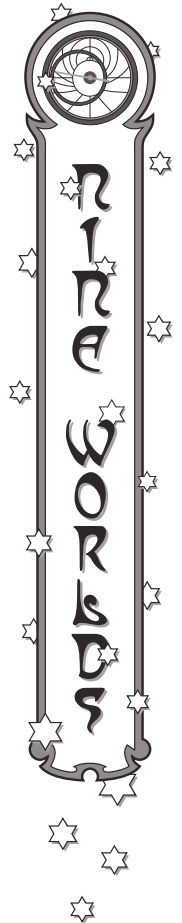
The game master should not try to craft a plot or mystery that his fellow players must unfold, solve, or discover. This simply will not work. Players have too much narrative power in this game. The game master will inevitably become frustrated as players alter the details and future sequences of the mystery or plot.

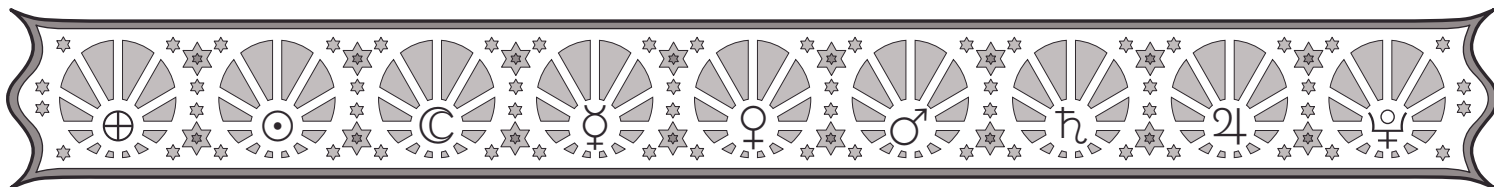
Likewise, players should not expect to wait for the game master's brilliant plot to unfold. Players should take a more proactive role in this game. They should not react to challenges and mysteries the game master presents. Instead, they should participate in describing as their characters unmask conspiracies, make decisions about how to solve problems, combat enemies, and confront extraordinary challenges. In essence, players can describe their own brilliant plots as play progresses! Players looking for mystery and surprise will find it as their fellow players make new and exciting suggestions they didn't expect. Trust your fellow players. They will do an extraordinary job providing you with delightful surprises as they narrate victories, request new scenes, and create new Muses.

This game encourages players to share all game numbers and attributes. The game master should not conceal any non-player characters' or entities' attribute ratings. Players need to know those values so they can make decisions about using Tricks, bidding for Trump and other game tactics. (Of course, the game master may conceal cards from her Fate deck until she plays them.)

Shape your cosmos

This book presents a detailed account of the history of the Nine Worlds as well as a profile on the "current" status of each world. This material should never prevent players from doing something different or altering the setting to their liking. The main point of setting material was to demonstrate the kinds of





conflicts and themes this game encourages.

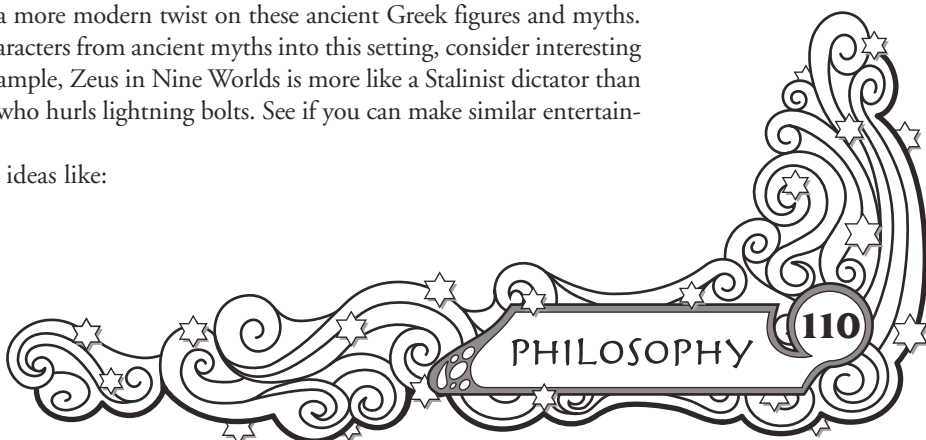
That said, it helps significantly to have all players read the Cosmology chapter, especially the nine world entries. Players who embrace the setting are likelier to get proactive. That's just what they need to do to have fun in this game. As players explore the setting, it will help them a great deal to know what the worlds are like, and what they might be able to do on the different worlds.

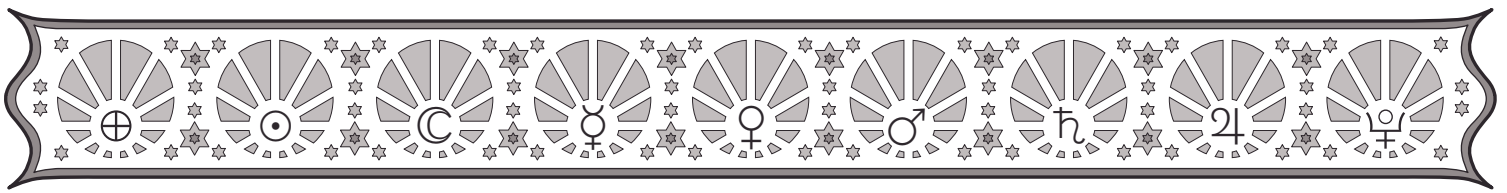
It's all Greek to you

The setting material herein should spark some ideas for your games. But, do not limit yourself to only this text. Players should look for inspiration in Greek myths, which are full of wonderful characters, themes, and ideas for your game. Excellent sources include the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey* (translations by Robert Fagles are superb), Ovid's *Metamorphoses*, and Greek plays by Aeschylus, Aristophanes, Euripides, and Sophocles. Educational textbooks are excellent sources for quick information about the myths and stories, and they often provide the family trees of Greek myth, which is a great tool for creating supporting characters. Also, there are many helpful Web sites like the Encyclopedia Mythica (www.pantheon.org) and the WikiPedia (www.wikipedia.org) that have good overviews of Greek myth.

Nine Worlds is a game about putting a more modern twist on these ancient Greek figures and myths. Rather than trying to find a way to lift characters from ancient myths into this setting, consider interesting ways to "modernize" those figures. For example, Zeus in Nine Worlds is more like a Stalinist dictator than he is the wise, amorous ruler of the gods who hurls lightning bolts. See if you can make similar entertaining reinterpretations.

Other players have come up with fun ideas like:





- ★ Portraying modern descendants of mythic figures, like the progeny of Hector.
- ★ Mixing modern historical figures with mythic figures. Hyperion as an Al Capone-like gangster is one example.
- ★ Toning down supernatural features. For example, instead of actually having 100 eyes, Argus is a perceptive man who wears a peacock necktie (an actual play group example).

Numbers game

Similarly, the attributes listed for each Primarch and their world Talismans are suggestions for how a game master might size up the denizens of the universe. Game masters will create a host of attribute profiles for characters and entities they create, and they may wish to alter the “official” Primarch attributes presented in this book.

It's in the cards

When using the Fate deck, players should note some simple strategies that will help make conflicts more effective for their characters.

The first issue in a winning a phase is choosing the highest Fate value. Players generally should choose the suit + Urge combination that results in the best Fate value.

For example, a player holds four spades cards: A♠, 4♠, 9♠, J♠, and his Chaos rating is 1. At the same time, he also holds only two diamonds cards: 3♦, 8♦, but his Stasis rating is 4. Clearly, playing the Diamonds cards is the best Fate value (6) the player can use.

However, if the player uses the Diamonds cards, he won't get be playing any Points at all. The player now has to weigh that decision.

Sometimes, that's the smartest move a player can make. Opponents may capture the player's Point, so he won't hurt himself as much should he lose.

Other times, players really need Tricks to make conflicts go their way. Choosing a lesser Fate value that includes Tricks is a good, if slightly risky, way to put Tricks into play when needed.

Players should size up their characters' opponents. If the opponent is apparently inferior, then a lower Fate hand with more Tricks may be the better option. But, if the opponent is clearly superior, the higher Fate value is best. Players will have to judge the risk of facing roughly equal opponents.

Another tactic players should consider is resolving Muses. Certainly, players will want to resolve their own Archon's Muses. But, they may wish to delay until their Archon's Muse rating is higher and results in a bigger reward.

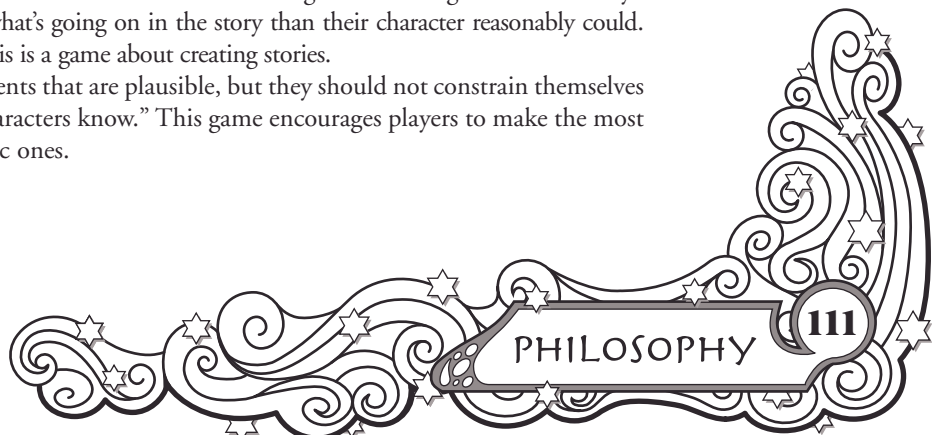
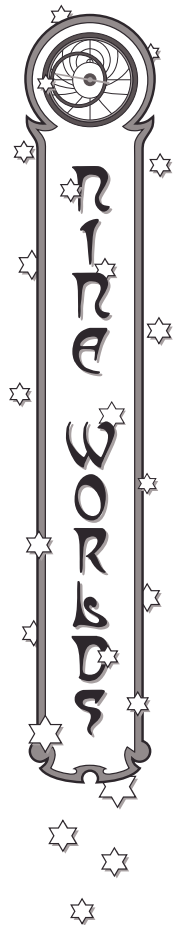
Resolving other character Muses may also be advantageous. While the opponent can earn Valor or Pride (or Force) as a result, he also loses those extra cards when he draws from his Fate deck. Undercutting opponents' Muses in this way can be a clever tactic. It also works well when players coordinate or when players use their Talismans to undercut opponents' Muses.

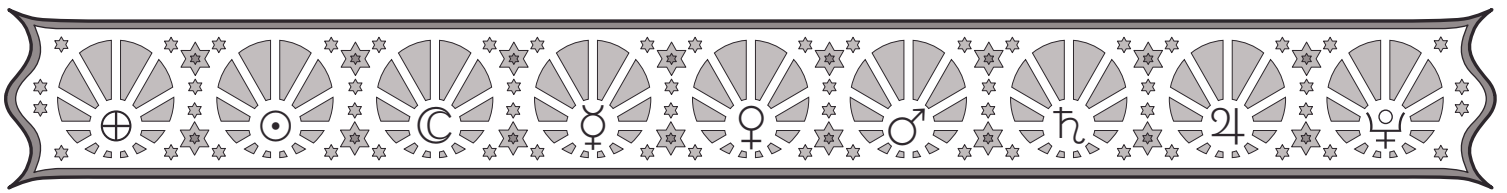
Player, know thyself

When players narrate their character victories, they earn a lot of powerful rights to decide how the story evolves. They also earn the right to introduce new story elements, characters, scenes and setting, props, and many other things that exist “outside the character.” This game encourages such creativity.

Players will know much more about what's going on in the story than their character reasonably could. That's perfectly acceptable. Remember, this is a game about creating stories.

Of course, players should strive for events that are plausible, but they should not constrain themselves to being “realistic” about “what their characters know.” This game encourages players to make the most interesting choices, not the most realistic ones.





For example, a player who knows what the villain is up to (perhaps because the game master explained it “out of character”) can make interesting decisions about putting his character in the villain’s path, even if the character “should” have been somewhere else. The only place a character in this game “should” be is in a situation that makes exciting, meaningful drama happen.

Mum is not the word

Some players, especially those new to this game, may feel lost and “uncreative” when they win a victory and being to narrate the events surrounding their character. The player simply freezes up or stammers and says, “Um, I don’t know what else to say.”

First of all, that’s a normal reaction, especially for many role-players who aren’t sure whether they are stepping on the game master’s toes. In fact, they are not doing that in this game. This game explicitly grants players the rights that many other role-playing games grant to the game master alone.

Players who aren’t sure what to say are fooling themselves. They actually have lots to say, but it’s likely they are too afraid or too shy to say it.

The issue is likely that they do have an idea, but they think other players will think it is a silly, stupid, or not stupendously cool enough idea. They’re afraid to say it out loud because they think other people will think poorly of them.

Such players should just say it out loud anyway! It takes guts, especially the first few times, but players who say the first idea that pops in their creative brains will find their fellow players will react with comments like “Cool!” “Neat idea,” or “That kicks ass!” Even reactions like plain old “Ok,” are fine. Players shouldn’t worry about dazzling their fellow players with the most amazing, well-spoken narration since Homer first shared the Iliad. Instead, they should worry about stalling the game because they’re too afraid to speak with people they chose to play the game with. Just say it!

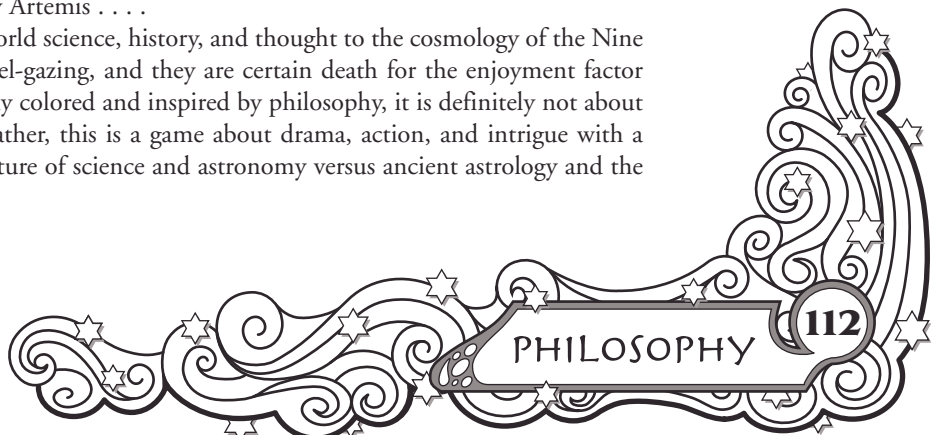
Remember, other players can suggest cool ideas to narrators. Helping the narrator expand his options with suggestions is a great way to craft better stories. Players just need to remember that only the victorious narrator finally gets to decide what happens, and he or she should share that decision verbally with the other players.

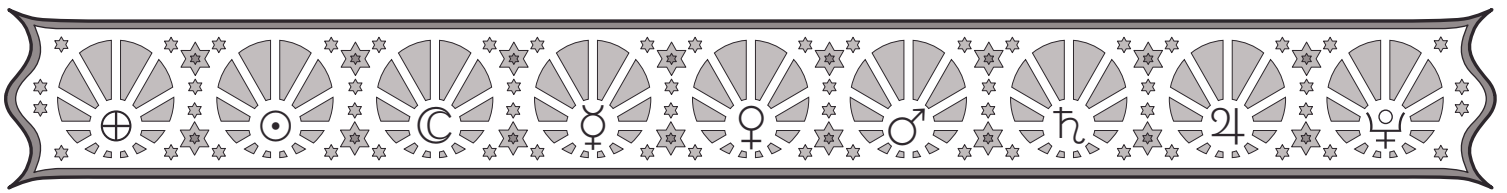
Getting too philosophical

During some Nine Worlds game sessions, the players may begin to question the differences between their real world and the realistic elements in the Nine Worlds setting. This is especially true when player characters are dealing with the veil of reason on Earth in some way. The conspiracy to keep modern Earth isolated from other worlds in this game’s setting can be a very enjoyable situation. The tension of the “big secret” can build up wonderfully dramatic situations.

However, the game master must avoid letting these sessions devolve from the “big secret” to the “big question.” The nature of the Nine Worlds cosmology poses paradoxical questions for players who are dealing with a realistic Earth. Players are likely to wonder whether pedestrians in New York City notice their battle with the hydra in the alleyway. Or, they may begin to ask and—worse—explore in play the nature of “truth.” For example, the players may wonder whether the moon (the one Neil Armstrong stepped on in 1969) is “real” because the evidence says so. And if it is real, they may want to know if it’s the same place as the Moon ruled by Artemis . . .

Players should avoid matching real-world science, history, and thought to the cosmology of the Nine Worlds. Such situations amount to navel-gazing, and they are certain death for the enjoyment factor of this game. While this game is certainly colored and inspired by philosophy, it is definitely not about conducting philosophy in the game. Rather, this is a game about drama, action, and intrigue with a meaningful resolution. Debating the nature of science and astronomy versus ancient astrology and the





Nine Worlds cosmos is often a dead end. If this occurs in play, the game master should make a judgment, perhaps giving the players a quick answer to their questions, and then move on to other exciting things in play. When in doubt, the game master should throw some powerful conflict at the players that will make them think fast rather than think hard!

BEING THE GAME MASTER

Taking on the role of game master in Nine Worlds is a challenge, but a rewarding one. Managing a session of Nine Worlds is different from overseeing many other kinds of role-playing games. Players with experience being game master in other role-playing games will find that Nine Worlds demands a different set of skills. But, game masters will find the role in this game a familiar one quickly. Likely, the game master will enjoy the level of supporting character development the game offers. Supporting characters in Nine worlds come alive under the guidance of a thoughtful game master!

Because the game grants so much creative power to all players, prepared scenarios and plots don't work well at all. Players will dismantle plots quickly because they likely have little to do with their creative ideas for the story. Similarly, the game master cannot easily prepare or frame scenes alone because other players will constantly request and set up different scenes. Many of the techniques game masters employ in other role-playing games—especially storytelling techniques she may have mastered—just won't work well in Nine Worlds because this game is much more collaborative and improvisational.

Fortunately, because the game master won't need to spend time preparing plot or inventing dozens of supporting characters, she can spend time focusing what will be useful.

Color the universe

The game master has a unique opportunity to paint the Nine worlds with colorful description and narration. Outside of conflict, the game master often acts as the primary narrator, describing scenery, events, characters' appearances, and so on. The game master should be very familiar with the Cosmology chapter to inform her descriptions, but she will have much more fun coloring the world with her own ideas and interpretation of the Nine Worlds.

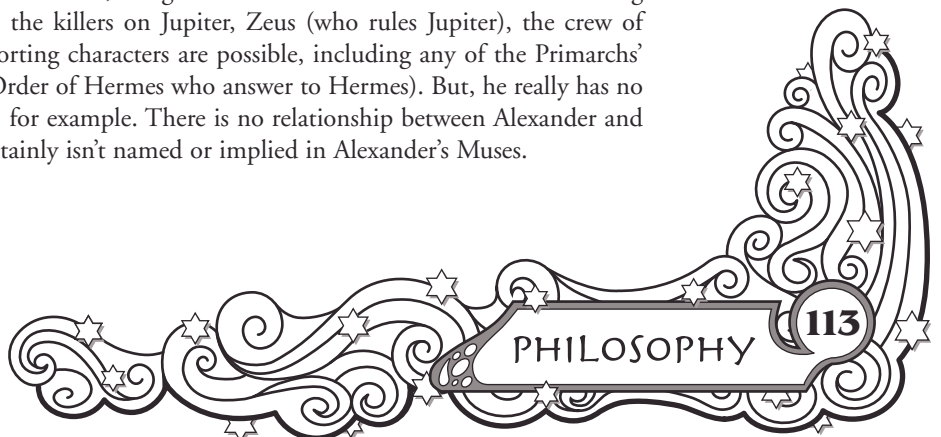
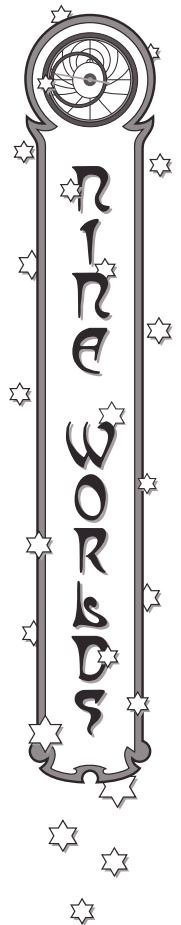
Portray supporting characters

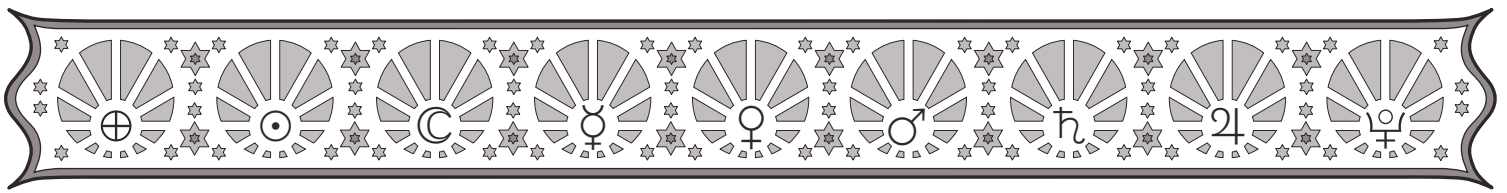
To introduce supporting characters, the game master should pay careful attention to Archon Muses. They act as a "permission slip" from the Archon's player to the game master, indicating which supporting characters the Archon should encounter.

For example, Alexander—the sample character in the Archons chapter—has three Muses. They are:

- 1) *Free Hannah's soul from the Underworld and return her to the mortal universe before Hades sends her to Tartarus.*
- 2) *Avenge the death of his lover, Hannah, by finding her killers on Jupiter.*
- 3) *Recover his æthership, the Wayfarer, after losing it to Hermes for smuggling quicksilver.*

Given just these three Muses from one Archon, the game master can now introduce the following supporting characters: Hannah, Hades, the killers on Jupiter, Zeus (who rules Jupiter), the crew of the Wayfarer, and Hermes. Other supporting characters are possible, including any of the Primarchs' subjects (for example, members of the Order of Hermes who answer to Hermes). But, he really has no reason to throw Hyperion into the mix, for example. There is no relationship between Alexander and Hyperion, even indirectly. Hyperion certainly isn't named or implied in Alexander's Muses.





Other players will expand the web of supporting characters with their Muses, and as players resolve Muses and create new ones, the game master can inject more supporting characters into the game.

Once introduced, supporting characters should have Muses of their own. More importantly, they should develop new Muses as the story evolves. Supporting characters should be living, breathing characters in the same way the Archons are. For example, even supporting characters that are allies of the players' Archons should have their own motivations; they will not benefit the Archons solely because players wish it.

Their Muses are the key to this. Through Muses, supporting characters express their hopes and fears, and they inevitably collide with the Archons in conflicts.

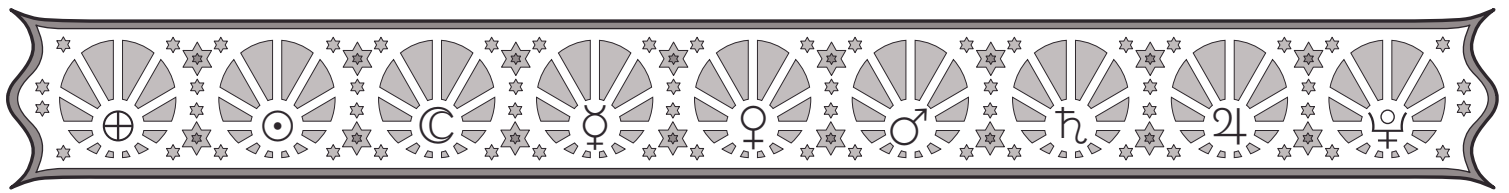
Managing the supporting characters' Muses is one of the most challenging jobs for the game master. She should keep a separate record for each supporting character and its Muses. Separate index cards for each supporting character are a handy technique to manage the web of supporting characters.

Narrate victories

When the game master's supporting characters earn victories, she will narrate just as other players do. Her supporting characters have the same options to use Points and other developments. She can bid for Trump using Force, and advance characters using Force as well.

Remember, the game master can initiate conflicts just as other players can by challenging "what happens next." Her plans can surprise, frustrate and delight fellow players, and narrating a victory fundamental to changing the direction of the group's story.





DESIGNER'S NOTES

First and foremost, I owe this game to Michael Moorcock. His imaginative fiction has inspired me for years. Many people know him for the sword and sorcery sage of Elric of Melniboné. Indeed, that's how I first found Moorcock, and I've remained an Elric fan ever since. But, as I read other works by Moorcock, I found new vistas and new revolutionary ideas. His fiction astounds and subverts. It defies categorization.

A few years ago I anxiously picked up a Moorcock novel I had never seen. In a used book store in Chicago, I found a trade paperback volume of *Blood: A Southern Fantasy*. This book was unusual. It described the jugadors, like Jack Karaquazian, who created whole worlds in competitive games with high stakes. *Jugadors*—that's gamers to us gringos. I was hooked, especially because of my fondness for role-playing games.

Blood unveiled other strange delights, like the Second Ether and the tales of the Spammer Gain. I knew when I read this novel that I wanted to create a game in homage to Moorcock's wonderful novel and his other works. *NINE WORLDS* is that game. I humbly dedicate it to Michael Moorcock to give back some tiny bit of all the imagination he's given me for years.

Nine Worlds has a whole legacy of other inspirations and Muses. I have many to thank and acknowledge for this edition of the game. This text is an extensive revision written and released one year after the original game debuted at GenCon 2005 in Indianapolis, Indiana.

Many other role-playing games directly influenced this game. They include, among others, *Mage: The Ascension* by White Wolf Publishing, *Sorcerer* and *Trollbabe* by Ron Edwards, Adept Press, *The Riddle of Steel* by Jake Norwood, Driftwood Publishing, and my own *Dust Devils*.

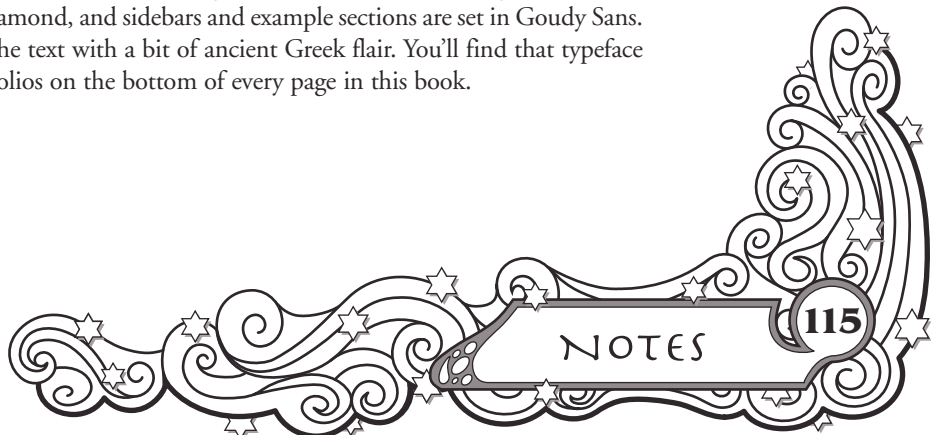
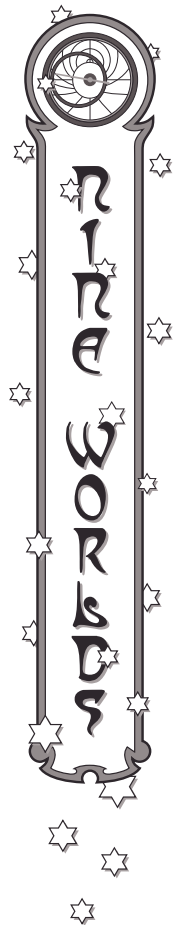
I thank my friend, Ron Edwards. I am indebted to his comments and enthusiasm for Nine Worlds. Without him, and his role-playing group (thanks Julie, Tod, and Maura!), this revision would not be possible.

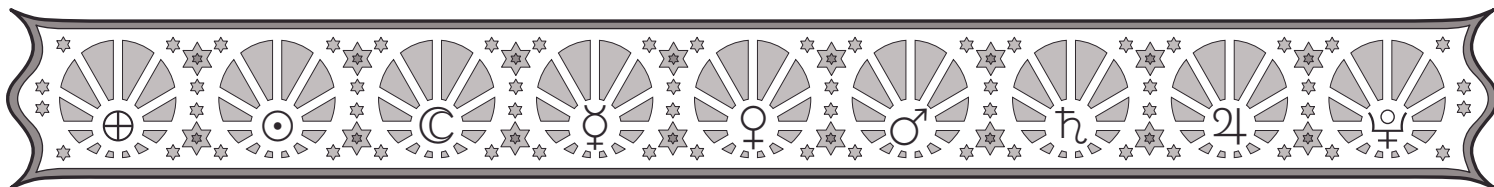
I also want to thank the following for their honest and eager comments and advice for this new edition: Robin Laws, Jonathan Tweet, Ken Hite, and Chad Underkoffler. Finally, thanks to the Forge community (www.indie-rpgs.com) for its support of indie role-playing games.

COLOPHON

This book was designed in the tradition of the Art Nouveau movement, which is known for its sinuous lines and decorative elements. I commissioned artwork from artists Eric Lofgren and Chris Martinez. These dedicated artists took my blathering notes and transformed them into astounding visions of the Nine Worlds. I used Eric Lofgren's decorations to craft many of the page borders and sidebar material in this book.

I also assembled a family of typefaces to convey the Art Nouveau tradition. The titling used on the cover and on each chapter heading is called Moravia. It is modeled on the hand-crafted lettering of Art Nouveau artist extraordinaire, Alphonse Mucha. Other headings in this book are set in Benguiat. The text is the wonderfully curvaceous Adobe Garamond, and sidebars and example sections are set in Goudy Sans. Finally, I used Herculanum to decorate the text with a bit of ancient Greek flair. You'll find that typeface on the bottom of the cover, and on the folios on the bottom of every page in this book.



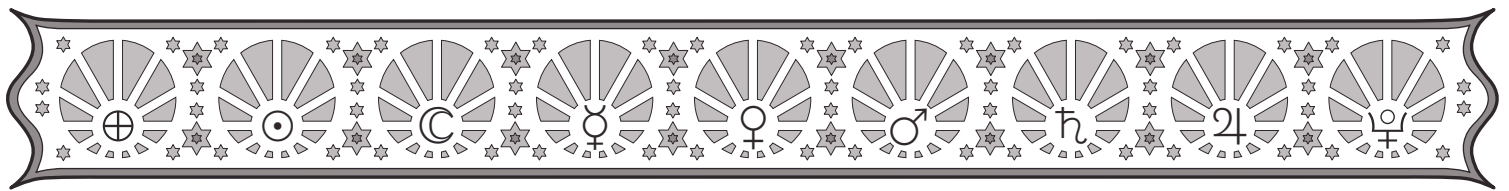


RECOMMENDATIONS

If you like independent role-playing games, you owe to yourself and your fellow players check out the following role-playing games. They are excellent, amazingly fun games:

- ★ *Dogs in the Vineyard* by Vincent Baker / lumpley games. (www.lumpley.com)
- ★ *Little Fears* and *Wyrd is Bond* by Jason Blair / Key 20 Press. (www.key20.com)
- ★ *The Burning Wheel* by Luke Crane (www.burningwheel.org)
- ★ *My Life With Master* by Paul Czege / Half Meme Press (www.halfmeme.com)
- ★ *Sorcerer, Elf, and Trollbabe* by Ron Edwards / Adept Press (www.adept-press.com)
- ★ *The Mountain Witch* by Tim Kleinert / Timfire Publishing (www.timfire.com)
- ★ *Polaris* by Ben Lehman / These Are Our Games (www.tao-games.com)
- ★ *Universalis* by Ralph Mazza & Mike Holmes / Ramshead Publishing (universalis.actionroll.com)
- ★ *With Great Power ...* by Michael Miller / Incarnadine Press (incarnadine.indie-rpgs.com)
- ★ *The Shadow of Yesterday* by Clinton R. Nixon / Anvilwerks (www.anvilwerks.com)
- ★ *The Riddle of Steel* by Jake Norwood / Driftwood Publishing (www.theriddleofsteel.net)
- ★ *Conspiracy of Shadows* by Keith Senkowski / Bob Goat Press (www.bobgoat.com)
- ★ *Dust Devils* by Matt Snyder / Chimera Creative (www.chimera.info/dustdevils)
- ★ *InSpectres*, *octaNe*, and *Lacuna Part I. The Creation of the Mystery and the Girl from Blue City* by Jared Sorensen / Wicked Dead Brewing Company (www.wicked-dead.com)
- ★ *HeroQuest* by Greg Stafford, et al. Issaries Publishing (www.issaries.com)
- ★ *Dead Inside* and *Truth & Justice* by Chad Underkoffler / Atomic Sock Monkey Press (www.atomicsockmonkey.com)
- ★ *Enemy Gods* and *Thirty* by John Wick / Wicked Dead Brewing Company (www.wicked-dead.com)
- ★ *Prime Time Adventures* by Matt Willson / Dog-Eared Designs (www.dog-eared-designs.com)





COMPLETE GUIDE TO CONFLICT RESOLUTION

1. Declare goals

Players announce their intended goals for the conflict.

Players should also remember their attribute ratings, as the ratings may fluctuate during the conflict. They revert to the initial ratings.

2. Designate opponents

Players specify whom their characters are in conflict with.

3. Choose virtue

Players choose Arete or Hubris and draw cards equal to the virtue's rating. The game master draws cards equal to each supporting character's Power rating.

4. Apply Muses

Players draw additional cards equal to any relevant Muses ratings.

5. Select Urge

Players select a suit and the related Urge

(♠ = Chaos, ♣ = Cosmos, ♥ = Metamorphosis, and ♦ = Stasis)

6. Play Fate

Players reveal all cards of their chosen suit.

All Aces, face cards (Jacks, Queens, and Kings) and Jokers are worth Points.

7. Compare Fates

Players announce their Fate value (Urge rating + the number of cards revealed) and compare it to opponents. Allot Points revealed in played cards:

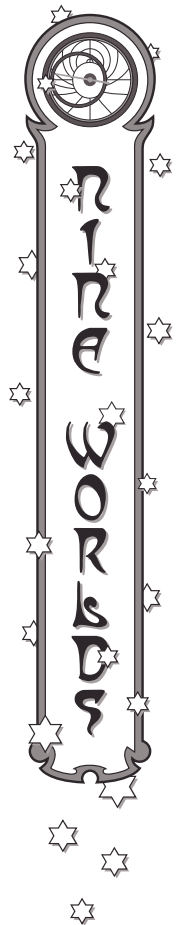
- Victors may capture Points in their defeated opponents' hands. Victors take turns capturing Points from highest Fate value to lowest until all available Points are captured.
- Victors also retain Points in their hands, unless superior opponents capture the points.
- Victors may expend Muses to generate additional Points.

8. Narrate Outcome

Victors narrate the conflict in order from lowest Fate value to highest Fate value. Victors also spend Points during their narration turn.

9. Cease or Continue

Victors decide whether the scene ends, or whether the conflict continues in another phase. Repeat these steps if the conflict continues.



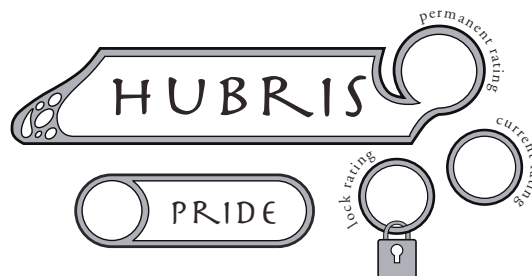
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Concept: _____ Aethershhip: _____

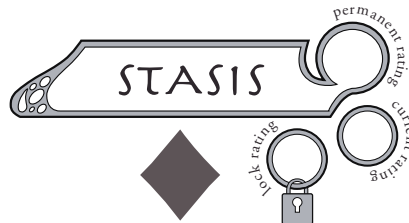
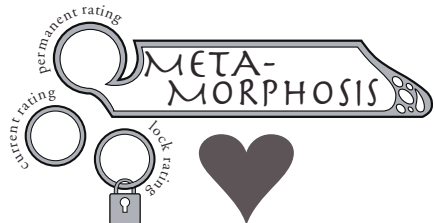
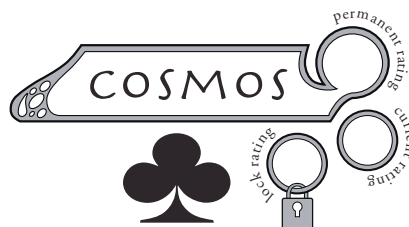
NINE WORLDS

A GAME OF COSMIC DRAMA

VIRTUES



URGES



MUSES & TALISMANS

_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
Arete Victories:	Hubris Victories:

_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
Arete Victories:	Hubris Victories:

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Arete Victories:	Hubris Victories:

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