

SECRETS  
OF



THE  
WORLD

PART FOUR



"Well," Claire Jefferson said, balancing the statuette in one hand and as she pointed a Browning 9 millimeter at the policeman in front of her, "this is something of a pickle, isn't it?"

Sergeant Ryan Smith was not amused. His own .38 service revolver had a perfect bead on the thief's pretty, dreadlock-ringed face. Smith's cap had been lost during the chase that had preceded the standoff, revealing a sweat-matted mop of receding black hair.

"Put the gun and the statue down, slowly," he said, struggling to keep his voice calm. He wasn't afraid of this punk girl and her pea-shooter, but he was worried that his temper would get him in trouble again. The blood of Ares ran through his veins, and it was all he could do to quiet its demands to smear this kid's brain matter across the well-polished marble of the museum floor. "Whatever you think you're gonna get from the sale," he said, "it ain't worth your life."

"And your beat cop salary's hardly worth yours, Jack." Claire kept her own gun steady. Who did this jackass think he was? Even if this statue was only what it appeared to be, Claire's degree in art history told her this icon was worth more than his precinct's entire operating budget. Not that she would ever be so crass as to steal it. But Erzulie didn't send her daughter on a petty thieving mission – a lot more than money was riding on this heist.

"This is your last warning," Smith began, but even as the words formed on his lips, Claire slid to the side, the world blurring into streaks and smears as she raced away down the hall.

She didn't have time for a yelp of surprise as Smith impossibly appeared in front of her, and even less time to try and stop herself. She slammed headlong into the policeman, whose body had become a brick wall. She flew across the room, managing to curl around the statue as she fell, protecting it with her body as she landed on the unforgiving marble floor. Her gun went flying across the room.

Smith towered over her. "Game ov—" he started to say, when Claire's legs swung out from where she lay sprawled and kicked his own out from beneath him. The two met halfway to the ground, exchanging blows and kicks faster than the security cameras could record. Somehow Smith's gun ended up in Claire's grip, pointed at his own temple, while his hands fastened around her slender throat.

"Back... where we started... eh?" she struggled to cough out.

"I didn't think you'd believe me," said Smith, "but since you're obviously... special... you should know that this statue's stolen property. The God of War wants it returned to his arsenal, for the fight against the Titans. I assume you're familiar with that?"





"Too damn familiar," she said as his grip relaxed slightly. "But your pappy's feeding you a line of horseshit. The statue's property of Erzulie, and she needs it to restore the beauty of the city of New Orleans."

"You got any proof?"

"A note on a handkerchief, signed by the Goddess herself. You?"

"A note from Ares, written in blood on the back of a shield."

The two stared at each other for a good long time.

"So where do we go from here?" she asked.

"I think," Smith said, acutely aware of the barrel digging into his temple, "we need a third opinion."

\* \* \*

Victor Praedico turned the statue over and over in his wizened, age-spotted hands. Then he placed it next to the handkerchief and the shield, three objects set off from a clutter of a thousand others in the claustrophobic bric-a-brac of his tiny curiosity shop in the West Village.

"Convincing," he said at last, "but in the end, forgeries. All three."

"What?" the thief and the cop cried in unison.

"That's impossible," said Claire. "I know my mother's handwriting..."

"The shield was the real deal..." began Smith.

Praedico raised a hand to silence both of them, lowering his dark sunglasses to reveal two hollowed-out eye sockets. "I know what I see," he said. "These notes and the statue, they all bear the mark of Miclantecuhli. This is Aztec magic at work." He replaced the glasses as a lost tourist wandered in, lowering his voice to a whisper.

"I'm afraid you've both been had," the old man said, with a chuckle that dripped with schadenfreude. "The Atzlánti lord of the Underworld obviously had some plan for you."

"Well, I think it's time we made some plans for him," Smith drew himself up to his full height. "I don't appreciate being tricked."

"Neither do I," Claire said. "What do you say? Feel like letting bygones be bygones, at least until we find out what's going on here?"

Smith adjusted his cap and nodded. "Let's do it. I'll pay you back for the bruises later."

"Bruises? Hell, you made me ruin a \$200 pair of shoes...."

Their voices faded into the din of 83rd street traffic, leaving Victor Praedico alone with the wandering tourist. Dressed in a Hawaiian shirt, with a camera slung around his neck like a lei, the Japanese man peered through enormous square glasses at the shopkeeper. Then he reached into the garish money-belt at his waist and pulled out a gold coin, then another, then another, until he had produced an impossible pile on Praedico's desk.

"My lord is too generous," Praedico bowed, his crooked spine creaking.

"You have a reputation for truth-telling." The tourist's voice, despite its low volume, sounded like a series of thunderclaps. "Your lies cost money."

The shopkeeper scooped the pile of coins into a sack beneath the counter. "They will, of course, eventually discover the deception."

The tourist smiled, his teeth looking like small jagged lightning bolts. "Perhaps. True enough, Miclantecuhli was not the one who forged those letters. But surely he is up to something. It is his nature. In their determination to find that something, those children will track him all the way to Mictlán, and what they see there will be of immeasurable value to me."

He turned the digital camera over in his hands, watched the small videoscreen reveal the two Scions hailing a cab.

"If I may be so bold, Lord Raijin," Praedico interrupted his viewing, "may I ask why the need for such deception? Why not send one of your own noble sons or daughters to the Aztec Underworld?"

"You are indeed too bold," the tourist's eyes flashed, "but then, soothsayer, I value boldness. Were I to send one of my own kin, Miclantecuhli would know immediately. This way, if... no, when... he catches the spies, he will look first to the Loa and the Dodekatheon."

Praedico remained silent. He was privy to many hidden mysteries, yet the schemes of the Gods were beyond even his comprehension....



# LEGENDARY POLITICS

Aristotle called man the “political animal.” Most folks spend a large portion of their lives living, conversing, fighting or just sharing the same space with other people. As long family car trips attest, close proximity and constant interactions can cause friction.

But what’s the alternative? Living in a cave? The Gods have that option. They can hole up in the bounded yet infinite space of their cozy little Overworld nutshells and never speak to another entity again. But as reflections of humankind, the Gods too are political animals. Not only can they not resist meddling in the affairs of humanity, but neither can they keep out of the business of their divine siblings, both within and outside of their pantheons. These interactions can be genial, competitive, amorous, hostile or all of the above, sometimes during the same week. When entire pantheons conspire, parley or war with one another, the consequences shake the World.

There can be any number of reasons for cross-pantheon interaction. In the beginning, the Gods had to unify to overthrow their Titan forbearers, and even now that they have drifted into separate pantheons they remain bound together in ever-shifting alliances and rivalries. Part of what makes this political landscape so muddled is that relations between the Gods are bound up with relations between humans in the World. A clash between two pantheons could spark a war between the cultures that worship them. A love affair between two Gods of separate pantheons could result in a sharing of culture and learning between their followers. Both could even happen simultaneously, for the Gods are nothing if not paradoxical.

But the Gods are (at times, anyway) greater than just manifestations of cultural nationalism. Gods operate under their own personal motives and agendas as well as the metaphysical ties that bind, or ensure conflict, between Gods of different pantheons. It’s enough to give the brainiest political analyst a migraine, but here are some ways of understanding divine politics.

## BIRDS OF A FEATHER

Gods of the same ilk and All-Purpose Purview will run into one another sooner or later. Occasionally, these run-ins can make for intense camaraderie. Stories recount the legendary team-up between War Gods Ogoun and Hachiman to rescue the Princess of the East from the clutches of a griffin. Loki and Set have been seen cruising down the streets of Las Vegas at midnight in a souped-up, open-top pink Cadillac causing all manner of mayhem.

More often, though, familiarity breeds contempt. One story claims the Chernobyl disaster was the grand finale to a knock-down, drag out brawl between Ares and the Slavic war God Svantavit. Gods of other Purviews are a little subtler, and arrange all manner of contests and games to determine supremacy. For example, although dead mortals tend to end up in the afterlife in which they always believed, “snatching” for your own netherworld a soul destined for another realm does happen (although extremely poor form). Similarly, “beauty contests” like the one the Dodekathemon posed before Paris happen between pantheons as well.

Metaphysically, Gods of the same Purview couldn’t escape such run-ins, good or ill, if they tried. When Susanno-O made Amaterasu hide her face, causing the sun to vanish, Apollo fell into a deep depression and locked himself in a cave. Like it or not, the Gods are bound by stronger ties than pantheon, and so are their children. Two Scions of Gods of the same Purview, sooner or later, are destined to become close friends, bitter enemies or both.

## WARS IN THE HEAVENS

The war against the Titans is probably the only thing that keeps the different pantheons away from each other’s throats at least *part* of the time. Humans make war on one another with hideous frequency, and a rivalry between pantheons may either cause or be caused by a war in the World.

As their followers match swords, bullets and bombs, so too do the Gods clash and grapple. Warfare not only carries drastic consequences that many Gods wish to avoid, but it is simply not in the nature of many deities to engage in open combat. For the Amatsukami, for example, all but the most surgical and calculated of wars upsets more than restores the balance of the cosmos. Aphrodite’s humiliating wound at the hands of the hero Diomedes in the Trojan War was proof enough that some Gods are far better at making love than war. A few louts like Ares and Svantavit aside, most Gods work out their rivalries subtly. Through agents and pawns (which inevitably include their Scions), the Gods fight their proxy wars within and between pantheons.

## THE ROLE OF SCIONS

Although face-to-face clashes happen, it is far more common for the Gods to work out their alliances and rivalries through pawns, particularly their Scions. This does not mean the Gods in question will feel any need to explain their strategy to their children. More likely, they will send them off on missions on only a “need to know” basis, promising boons for tasks completed.



These missions can involve thefts from Scions of rival Gods, reconnaissance both in the World and the Overworld, courier services or even stranger objectives. They will frequently be opposed in these missions by Scions acting on orders from rival pantheons.

Add the fact that many Bands contain Scions of multiple pantheons, and things get really interesting. A Scion may find her loyalties torn between her divine parent and her comrades over matters of pantheon politics. Whatever choice she makes will carry consequences. Refusing a divine summons could lead result in the withholding of favors or even direct punishment. But betraying a teammate leads to broken friendships (and sometimes, broken bones).

As such, it behooves a Scion to try to stay abreast of the politics of their parents. Knowledge is power, and truly crafty Scions, particularly those at the demigod stage, may even be able manipulate the rivalries and alliances of the different pantheons to their own advantage.

The workings of the Gods are mysterious and complex, but nevertheless, over the millennia, some general patterns and stereotypes have formed around and between pantheons.

**Pesedjet:** Law, order and the common good must be maintained. The Aesir and the Atzlanti, in their own way, understand this, as do the Amatsukami (although they're slow about doing their part). The Loa are wildcards, annoying at best and dangerously disruptive at worst. The Pesedjet consider the Dodekathemon to be their chief rivals, both metaphysically (the individual unchained is the greatest danger to the collective) and cultural-historically: despite the fact that Alexander's Macedonian Greeks actually helped *spread* the religion of the Pharaohs, the Pesedjet have never quite gotten over losing their place as the objects of adulation of mankind's most powerful and advanced civilization.

As one of the oldest of the pantheons, the Pesedjet can't help but treat Gods in other pantheons like children, which seldom endears them to those deities. But then, children never appreciate the sacrifices of their elders, do they?

**Dodekathemon:** With the exception of the Pesedjet, the Dodekathemon get along fairly well with the other pantheons. At least, that's what they'll say if you ask them. Who *wouldn't* appreciate the company of passionate, good-looking and interesting folk like them? Their goals and those of the Aesir are often compatible, and indeed many long-standing ties of friendship unite the Norse and Greek Gods. The Dodekathemon, if they are ever forced to admit it, don't really "get" the Atzlanti, the Amatsukami or the Loa, but at least those Voodoo Gods know how to have a good party.

**Amatsukami:** *Izanagi and Izanami* created Japan as the very first land, so it is only fitting that the Amatsukami carry themselves with a stiff-necked pride. They don't boast and preen like the Gods of the Dodekathemon, but any deity dealing with a Japanese God knows that, beneath the smiles and bows, she is being secretly mocked and disdained. That said, the Amatsukami don't *dislike* the other pantheons as a rule; they just place them in their proper slots in the hierarchy (which is, naturally, beneath themselves). The Pesedjet rank higher than most in their esteem, mainly because of their work ethic and good table manners. The Aesir and Dodekathemon, by contrast, are little more than barbarians. The Atzlanti and the Loa place somewhere in-between: they have an appreciation for the interconnectedness of the cosmos, but you cannot fix a delicate paper fan with a bloody mallet.

**Atzlanti:** None of the other pantheons understand the way of the cosmos, and the Atzlanti have given up trying to explain their ways to others. They don't need the approval. The Loa come the closest to understanding, and as a result, the Atzlanti tolerate them, even to the point of cordiality. The others are arrogant, ignorant and not worth their time. Other pantheons' Scions can be useful tools, so long as they are kept in the dark.

**Aesir:** The Aesir have a very simple way of determining who their friends are: when Ragnarok comes, who will stand shoulder to shoulder with them? Not that they need the help, of course, but it's a sign of character. The Dodekathemon have the fire in their belly for it, if not the discipline. The Amatsukami have warrior's hearts, but can they be trusted, in their divinations and prattle about "balance," to take the right side? The Atzlanti talk a good game, but are they brave enough to shed the blood anyone who isn't conveniently bound and gagged on their altars? The Loa - well, looks are deceiving. When the time comes, the Aesir have the feeling they want the Gods of Voodoo on their side.

**Loa:** The Loa are remarkable in that they maintain amicable relations with nearly all of the pantheons. They are not always treated with respect, but take it in stride. Let the other Gods strut and lecture about how the universe "really works." The Loa smile and remember the earliest days of mankind, when hunter-gatherers prayed to them for salvation while running from predators across the savanna. With age comes wisdom, good humor and tolerance. Which is not to say that their tolerance is limitless. Some of the more perceptive Gods of other pantheons have seen enough hints and glimmers or what the Loa could be like if pushed too far that they have begun to quietly re-assess the mettle of these "directionless children."



# FEATS OF STRENGTH

## EXPANDED STRENGTH TABLE

A Scion at the pinnacle of human strength and ability rolls 10 dice (five each for Strength and Athletics), with a potential of 20 successes, which would confer the ability to lift 4,500 lbs. That's more than two tons, and represents the greatest extremes to which an extraordinary person might go in moments of utter heroism.

But Scions are beyond extraordinary. Increasing levels of Epic Strength add increasing automatic successes to a Scion's attempts to lift, press or smash heavy objects. Recall that every one of these successes past 20 adds another 500 lbs of lifting capacity, and *in addition* the Scion gains whatever weight bonuses come from a particular level of Epic Strength. So for example, a Demigod with 5 dots of Epic Strength and 10 dots in (Strength + Athletics) would have the potential to roll 20 successes (lift 4,500 lbs), which then get an 11 success boost (11 x 500lbs each = 5,500 lbs), *plus* an additional 50,000 lbs to base lifting capacity, resulting in a grand total of 60,000 lbs or 30 tons!

So what can you do with all that Epic Might? The following table can act as a guide.

## EXPANDED THROWING RULES

Cúchulainn depended on his holy javelin Gáe Bulg in countless battles, Gilgamesh threw the thigh of the giant Bull of Heaven at the vengeful Ishtar, and Hercules tossed his false friend Lichas into the sea for attempting to poison him. A mighty throwing arm seems prerequisite for an Epic champion, yet the original **Scion** trilogy did not offer much detail on the game mechanics for such actions.

When it's time for your hero to start making objects (or other characters) fly, first check your (Strength + Athletics) against the Feats of Strength chart on p. 181 of **Scion: Hero** to see just how much she's capable of lifting. You can only throw objects up to half the weight of your maximum lift. Note that you can still pick up an object and simply drop it on an opponent, but you'll need Epic Strength to do truly heroic hurling.

Once you determine how much you can throw, make sure the item does not have a pre-established range, as many ranged weapons do (see **Scion: Hero**, p. 203). Assuming it doesn't, get the base range based on your lift limit:

- Items up to 10% of your lifting limit have a Range of 10 yards.

STRENGTH + ATHLETICS	LIFT/ PRESS (LBS.)	SAMPLE FEAT
20	4,500 (about 2 tons)	Knock Semis over with a well-placed shove
20 + Epic 1	5,500	Lift most cars
20 + Epic 2	6,500 (about 3 tons)	Pick up an SUV or pickup truck
20 + Epic 3	8,500 (about 4 tons)	Lift an adult elephant or a full truck
20 + Epic 4	58,000	Lift a bus
20 + Epic 5	60,000 (30 tons)	Rip off and lift a section of a big-city subway
20 + Epic 6	262,500 (about 130 tons)	Pick up a blue whale and spin it around in the water
20 + Epic 7	About 635 tons	Lift an empty oceangoing freighter out of the water.
20 + Epic 8	About 6,260 tons	Lift an entire freight train or a loaded iron boat.
20 + Epic 9	About 62,500 tons	Uproot or hold up the Brooklyn Bridge.
20 + Epic 10	About 625,000 tons	Hold the Empire State Building in one hand and the Sears Tower in the other.



- Items up to 25% of your lifting limit have a Range of 5 yards.
- Items up to 50% of your lifting limit have a Range of 3 yards.
- Items up to your lifting limit have a Range of 1 yard.

Then consider the following modifiers to Range, multiplied in order:

- +50% if the object is particularly aerodynamic (knives, baseballs, boomerangs)
- -50% if object is particularly non-aerodynamic (giant paper Chinese dragons)
- x2 for each dot Epic Strength
- x2 for Hurl to the Horizon (**Scion: Hero**, pp. 126-127)

If an object is particularly bulky, ungainly, or otherwise difficult to throw, then the Storyteller may apply a -1 to -3 penalty to the dice pool of (Dexterity + Thrown). Epic Dexterity still adds automatic successes.

Unless the Storyteller decides otherwise for particular objects, throwing is a Speed 6 Weapon attack.

## IMPROVISED WEAPONS

Possessing the Spear of Destiny doesn't do you much good if it's hanging in your armory and a fire giant jumps you in the kitchen. Sometimes a hero must make do with grabbing whatever is in reach, from pruning shears to a hockey stick to a coffee pot. In the right hands, anything from office equipment to a car door can become, if not a deadly weapon, something effective enough to buy you time to arm yourself better.

Rather than attempting to list every possible item a character could conceivably heft, toss or brandish, this quick-and-dirty system is designed to help a Storyteller quickly sort out damage in a Jackie-Chan style fight where anything and everything could become an implement of destruction.

**Step One:** Give any improvised weapon the following basic stats.

*Acc +0, Damage +1, Defense +0, Speed 5*

Note that the damage should be considered bashing if the improvised weapon is more or less blunt, and lethal if it is sufficiently sharp (a jagged piece of metal, a pointy javelin) or toxic (a breached acid battery, a radioactive control rod).

**Step Two:** Add or subtract as per the following modifiers. A single object may have more than one modifier.

- **First Use:** The first time that a character uses a particular improvised weapon, add a -1 Accuracy modifier. Subsequent uses do not suffer from this restriction as the character gets used to handling the object as a weapon. If the character has a specialization in improvised weapons, she doesn't suffer this penalty.
- **Long:** The item is at least five feet long (canoes, telephone poles), allowing you to strike from a distance (+2 to Parry DV).
- **Large:** You're swinging or hurling something so big, like a highway-side billboard, that your opponent really can't do much evade it (+2 to Accuracy).

- **Massive:** Not quite the same thing as a large object (although an object could certainly be both), a massive object carries greater inertia and therefore deals greater damage. For objects from 500 - 2000 lbs, add +1 die of damage. For objects weighing 2000 - 4500 lbs, add a second die. For extremely massive improvised weapons (tractor-trailers, cruise-liners, buildings) that require Epic Strength to lift, add the number of damage die equivalent to the level of Epic Strength required to lift the item (see chart on p. 6). This is in addition to the +2 dice already gained for the 4500 lbs or more that the object weighs.

**Example:** Josh Mizuzaka, Scion of Hachiman, tosses a Tokyo Metro subway car at a savage oni. This feat of requires an Epic Strength of 5, so 5 bonus dice are added to the damage roll, plus 2 for the bus being 4,500 lbs or heavier. Seven extra damage dice help ensure the subway car hits the oni for quite a wallop, demonstrating once again the benefits of public transportation.

- **Fragile:** The item is made of a delicate material like glass, balsa wood or cheap tin. The item will break after one use. If the item was long, large or massive, the Storyteller may allow it to be used in a diminished form (with diminished bonuses) for one or more additional turns.

- **Soft:** Even heroes have a hard time dealing damage with a pillow or stuffed animal. Any item with this modifier receives a -4 damage dice penalty. This means that, in most cases, only threshold successes and/or Epic Strength will result in damage being dealt.

- **Awkward:** If the Storyteller judges that an improvised item is particularly ungainly (a poorly-balanced U-Haul trailer, an asymmetrical modern art sculpture), floppy (a giant inflatable statue advertising a used car sale) or otherwise just plain difficult to manage, then the item is considered to have a Speed 6 attack, with a Defense -2 penalty to your parry DV.

## SPEARS OF DESTINY, CHARIOTS OF FIRE

It's a dangerous World out there for the sons and daughters of the Gods. **Scion: Hero** (pp. 201-205) gave you a good basic list of weapons, armor and vehicles that Scions and their enemies might employ. But when a titanspawn is breathing fire at your back, sometimes the basics don't cut it. Here are some additional tools of offense, defense and transport to add to the arsenals of your players, and perhaps their foes as well.

It would take an entire book to list all of the many weapons known to humanity, so we've listed some general categories as well as some particularly interesting examples. We've also listed some relic weapons and vehicles, available to any Scion with the wit to find them and the will to use them. Remember to apply the penalties for stolen relics (**Scion: Hero**, pp. 162-163), unless the character in question undertakes some quest or rite the Storyteller deems appropriate to gain rightful possession of it.





## MELEE WEAPONS

Weapon	Accuracy	Damage	Defense	Speed	Tags
Brass knuckles	+1	+2B	+1	4	-
Garrote wire	+0	+2L	+0	3	-
Flexible weapons	+1	+6L/B	+2	5	-
<i>Iklwa</i>	+1	+4L	-1	4	-
Weighted-end weapons	+1	+4L/B	+1	4	-

**Brass knuckles:** This covers a variety of “fist-load” weapons like the Japanese yawara and tekko, Greco-Roman cesti and other blunt or sharp objects concealed within one’s grip to make a punch pack more power.

**Garrote wire:** This Roman invention, made famous by the French Foreign Legion, is a tightly wound piece of wire used to strangle someone to death, often employed as an assassination device due to its silent operation.

**Flexible weapons:** This refers to blunt or edged weapons that are swung on a chain or flexible rope, using centrifugal force to add power to the blow. Examples include the Viking-derived medieval French flail (or morningstar) and the Japanese nunchaku and shoge.

The shoge’s chain in particular is long enough that the weapon can double as a grappling hook.

**Iklwa:** When Shaka introduced this stabbing spear, it revolutionized South African warfare and helped the Zulu army conquer all its neighbors. Made of wood with a long iron point, it can be used for quick, repeated close-range attacks (as opposed to the more traditional assegai, which is thrown like a javelin).

**Weighted-end weapons:** From the South American bola to the Japanese manrikigusari (“strength of a thousand men”), these easily-concealable weapons consist of two small weighted ends along a flexible cord. They can be used as close-range instruments of blunt attack, or as thrown weapons to ensnare a foe and louse up her maneuverability.

## RANGED WEAPONS

Weapon	Accuracy	Damage	Range	Clip	Speed	Tags
Boomerang	+0	+1B	10	-	6	-
Discus (razor)	+0	+2L	30	-	6	P
Pepper-Spray	+1	+3S	5	30	-	-
Shuriken	-1	+2L	10	-	5	P
Taser	-1	+6S	20	1 – 2	7	P

**Boomerang:** A curved wooden or plastic throwing stick used to great effect by warriors from around the world including Australia, Africa and the Indian subcontinent. It can deliver incapacitating blows to the head, neck or legs. When thrown properly, a miss simply returns the weapon to the thrower’s hand.

**Discus:** An ancient Greek piece of sporting equipment that can be deadly in the right hands. The stats in the table refer to a discus that whose edges have trimmed to razor-sharpness.

**Pepper spray:** A small, easily-concealable device that delivers a fixed number of emissions of a skin and eye irritating compound, usually oleoresin capsicum.

**Shuriken:** Small sculpted metal weapons designed for throwing, they include not only the popularized star-shaped pieces but also small lancets or even coins. Contrary to Western lore, shuriken are seldom deadly but rather used for distraction or the infliction of disabling pain.

**Taser:** The Taser is a small hand-held electronic device capable of delivering an incapacitating (but usually not fatal) charge of electricity. It does this by firing two small darts tethered to the device by conductive wires that bury themselves with barbs into the target’s clothing or skin. The charge is sufficient to ignore up to 3 levels of body armor (hence its Piercing quality).



## ARMOR AND SHIELDS

Armor	Soak	Mobility Penalty	Fatigue	Tags
Hazmat/NBC Suit	+0L/+1B	-3	2	NBC
Spectra-Shield	+7L/+10B	-2	2	B
Yoroi	+2L/+4B	-1	1	-

**Hazmat suit:** While it offers scant protection against physical attacks, a properly sealed hazmat suit grants immunity from nuclear, biological and chemical damage (the smallest breach, however, negates this protection). They also offer some protection from temperature extremes. Assume two hours of oxygen is available from the attached oxygen tanks (which are highly flammable if breached).

**Ishlangu:** A Zulu war shield made of lightweight oxide around a wooden base, a skilled wielder uses its unique shape not just for protection but for hooking and robbing an opponent of his own weapon or shield.

**Composite (UHMWPE) Armor:** Developed by the US Army when Kevlar proved insufficient protection from improvised explosive devices, this extremely

expensive synthetic weave feels like wax paper and is composed of tightly packed, high molecular weight polyethylene. Advertised as ten times stronger than steel, these composite fibers disperse most kinetic force applied against them.

**Yoroi:** Samurai armor. Lightweight, flexible, designed for maneuverability as well as protection, samurai armor uses a "fish scale" model where bamboo and leather plating cover the body except in the most vulnerable areas, where metal is employed. Armored samurai could make full use of ju jitsu, laido and swordsmanship while suffering only minimal movement penalties. In addition, many breeches in the armor can be repaired by mundane sewing tools, as opposed to having to visit an armor-smith.

## VEHICLES

Vehicle	Armor	Mass	Maneuverability	Health Levels
ATV	4	1	+3	10
Bicycle	1	0	+0	3
Canoe	1	1	-1	2
Hang-glider	1	0	-1	2
Helicopter	5	5	+2	20
Jet (commercial)	15	15	-3	60
Jet (private)	10	10	-1	25
Plane (single-engine)	5	5	+1	20
Racing Car	5	2	+1	15
Segway PT	1	1	+2	4
Sloop	5	4	-1	20
Speedboat	6	2	+1	15

**ATV:** A small, maneuverable ride-on vehicle for recreation or specialized tasks. Use these stats for jet skis and snowmobiles as well.

**Bicycle:** Human-powered locomotion, fragile but easy to fix and able to go where cars can't.

**Canoe:** Although modern Americans use them for sport and leisure, many island cultures have used canoes and kayaks effectively for long-range exploration or combat.

**Hang-glider:** A one-person glider composed from fabric stretched across a large aluminum or composite wing, the



harnessed pilot beneath controls his movement by shifting body weight. Modern hang-gliders can coast for hours and gain significant altitude by riding thermal currents.

**Helicopter:** Use these statistics for any civilian model of helicopter. Helicopters employ a pair of rotor blades that rotate around masts to revolve air, providing lift and propulsion. Helicopters have VTOL (vertical takeoff and landing capabilities), requiring no runways, and can hover in place for extended periods. Their maneuverability is far superior to fixed-wing aircraft, but they are not as fast and cannot reach as high an altitude as jets due to the need for high air density.

**Jet (commercial):** 747s and their ilk, these enormous planes (despite their sophisticated computer auto-navigation equipment) usually require one or two trained pilots to coordinate takeoff, landing and unforeseen developments in the air. Long runways are required for takeoff and landing. Cabin environments (although not cargo areas) are pressurized and climate controlled, with a breach resulting in a debilitating lack of oxygen for all passengers and a vortex that sucks out anything not nailed down. Would-be hijackers should note that the movements of such planes are carefully tracked in Western nations. A handful of commercial jets have been experimentally equipped with largely-untested anti-missile countermeasures.

**Jet (private):** Larger and faster than the hobbyist's plane, corporations and governments use these to ferry people and small cargo loads in comfort and style. Their cabins, like those of commercial jets, are pressurized.

**Plane (single-engine):** Refers to all small single-engine or propeller driven planes. They are not pressurized and therefore restricted as to how high they can fly without incapacitating those inside.

**Racing car:** Specialized automobiles like Formula One or NASCAR vehicles built to reach higher speeds and offer more protection for their drivers than their commercially available cousins. Racing cars are expensive and require specialized maintenance, not to mention specialized training in order to control them at high speeds.

**Segway PT:** This two-wheeled, energy-efficient ride-on device is mainly a tool of hobbyists, although some American police forces have begun economizing by using them. Sophisticated gyroscopes keep the ungainly vehicle balanced, and despite the presence of handlebars, an operator need only incline her body in one way or another to change direction.

**Sloop:** Use these statistics for any generic sailing vessel that requires a crew of no more than five.

**Speedboat:** Use these statistics for any small, motor-operated watercraft.

## RELIC WEAPONS, ARMOR AND VEHICLES

### TEZCATLIPOCA'S FOOT

Relic •••• (1 Purview, 1 Unique 3-Dot Power)



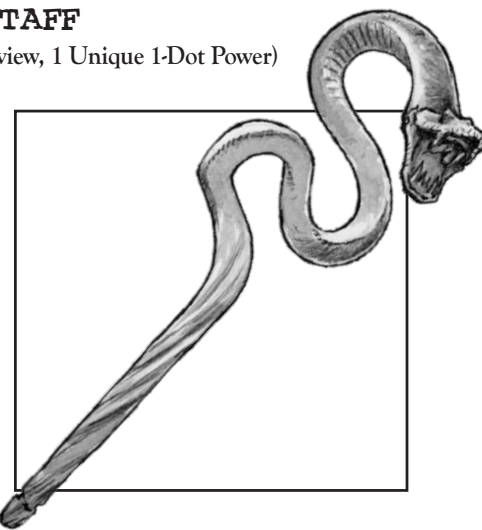
One Aztec myth describes the World as a creation of Quetzalcoatl and his twin brother Tezcatlipoca, who wasn't terribly careful and lost his foot in the process. This relic is a large stone foot that is remarkably light and flat, useable as a shield if one grasps the ankle and presents the foot-pad outward.

The flat part of the shield causes any physical objects that collide against it to immediately break up into their component molecules. The foot cannot be used as a ram to dissolve opposing forces as a weapon, nor will it accidentally sever the limb of someone who casually touches it. Only attacks directed against it trigger the effect. The foot also grants access to the Earth Purview.

### SERPENT STAFF

Relic •• (1 Purview, 1 Unique 1-Dot Power)

The Pharaoh Ramses was said to have employed magicians who could transform their staves into live serpents. This staff looks completely ordinary, but when thrown to the ground (and with the

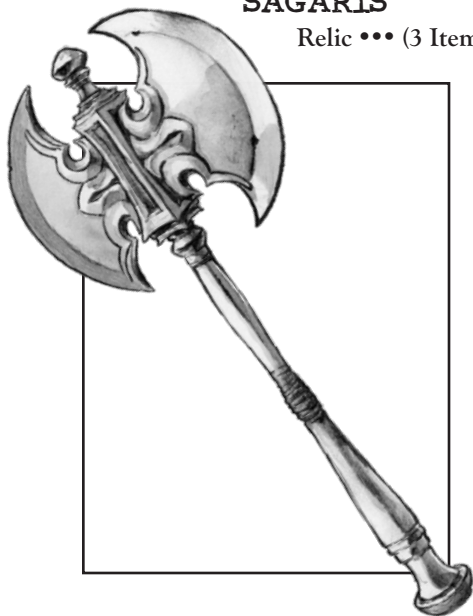


expenditure of 1 Legend point by its wielder) it transforms into a cobra (**Scion: Hero**, p. 330). Should the cobra be slain, it reverts back to a staff, which shatters and becomes useless. Untransformed, the staff grants its wielder access to the Animal (Snake) Purview.



## SAGARIS

Relic ••• (3 Item Enhancements)



The favored weapon of the Amazons, this double-edged battle-axe was lost to the ages, survived only by the single-edged version that Scythian designers stole and reverse-engineered. A true sagaris confers a +3 damage bonus over the basic skeggox template (**Scion: Hero**, p. 202).

It is enchanted specifically to be wielded by females; in the hands of a male, it not only loses its damage bonus but also adds a -2 Accuracy penalty.

## BENKEI'S ARMOR

Relic ••••• (1 Purview, 4-Dot Item Enhancement)



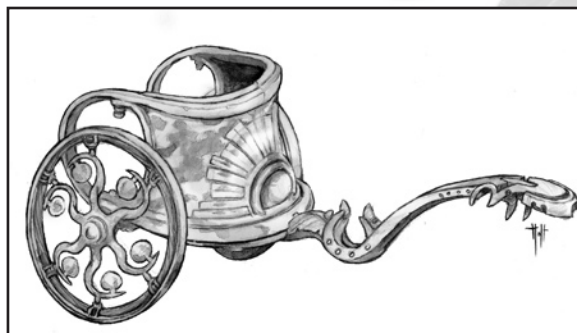
The demigod warrior-monk Benkei guarded the Gojo Bridge in Kyoto, collecting 999 swords from the 999 warriors he disarmed while they attempted to pass. On his 1000<sup>th</sup> duel he was defeated by the warlord Minamoto no Yoshitsune, to whom he swore allegiance. Benkei went on to win the crucial battle of Dannoura,

cementing his lord's power, only to be betrayed by Yoshitsune's elder brother Yoritomo. Benkei and his patron fled the evil Yoritomo's reign, becoming hotly pursued outlaws. Benkei fought off Yoritomo's army on another bridge to buy Yoshitsune the time to commit ritual suicide. Benkei took a seemingly endless number of arrow hits and finally died, his corpse still standing guardian on the bridge. Benkei's armor was rescued by his divine father, a minor temple god, who preserved it for use by future heroes.

The armor is a seemingly normal Yoroi suit (see p. 9) with a +4 Soak bonus that grants access to the Guardian Purview.

## SWEET CHARIOT

Relic ••••• (2 Purviews, 1 Unique 2-Dot Power, 1 Unique 1-Dot Power)



Shango, Loa God of Justice, could not bear the plight of his proud people bound in chains of slavery in the Americas. Although he had pledged long ago to withdraw from the World, at times he would secretly visit the plantations of the South in his golden chariot, flanked by the spirits of Masai and Yoruba warriors, and take particularly brave, noble or troubled slaves body and soul to Ville au Camp. Perhaps Shango was merely taking advantage of the Judeo-Christian Elijah myth, or perhaps the song "Swing Low, Sweet Chariot" secretly refers to the Shango's vehicle, but the fact remains that it has earned a place in the stories and songs of millions as a symbol of hope and deliverance.

With the official end of slavery in the US, Shango moved on to other goals and tactics, leaving his chariot behind where it could best be found by a new generation of heroes, to aid new victims of oppression.

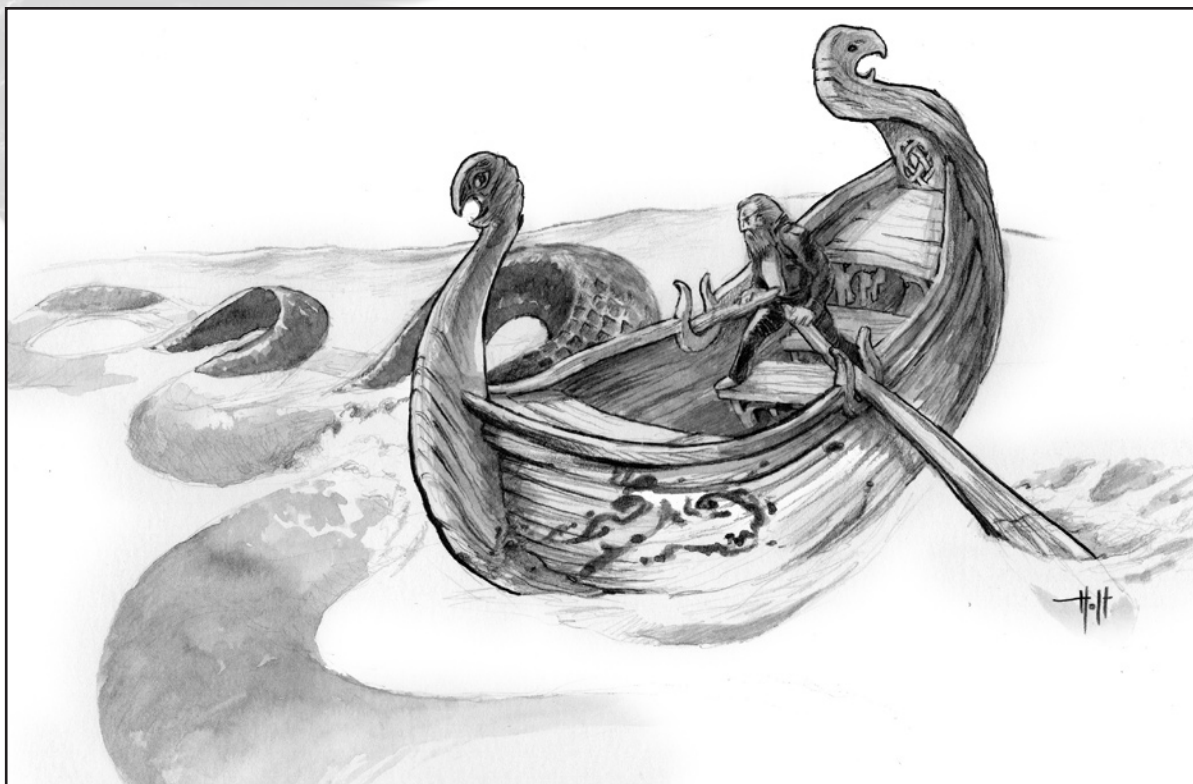
The Sweet Chariot has the power of flight and grants access to the Justice and Sky and Cheval Purviews. It can hold up to five people, although in times of need, *somehow*, there always seems to be room for "just one more."

## HYMIR'S BOAT

Relic ••••• (1 Purview, 2 Unique 2-Dot Powers)

The giant Hymir thought himself a fine fisherman until Thor paid him a visit one day in the guise of a young boy who begged to come along on a fishing trip. Hymir condescendingly agreed, provided the boy brought his own bait. Thor proceeded to rip the head off Hymir's finest ox, tie it to the end of his pole and row the baffled giant out to the edge of the World to go fishing for the Midgard Serpent. Terrified at the sight of Thor reeling in the enormous snake, Hymir cut the line, allowing the beast to escape. Thor in his rage hurled the giant into the sea and left Hymir's boat to drift.





The boat, already the handiwork of a giant, was now splattered with blood from the Midgard Serpent. Whoever finds this humble-looking, oar-driven vessel will find it capable of amazing feats. On sea it will never sink, no matter how much water it might take on. Furthermore, it can traverse hundreds of nautical miles in mere seconds, so long as the rower keeps a clear picture in her mind of where she wants to go. Possession of the boat also grants access to the Water Purview.

There is a cost, of course, to these powers: the Midgard Serpent *always* knows where Hymir's boat is. For now, its humiliation at Thor's hands makes it wary of approaching the vessel again, but should it become aware of the boat's new ownership it might well decide to wreak its vengeance on the new owners in lieu of the God. Finally, Hymir is out there, somewhere beneath the waves. Should he return and give the boat a command, it will always obey him instead of any other owner besides Thor himself.

## THE ORDER OF THE DIVINE GLORY

*"We understand that this is a confusing time for you. The world you know is coming undone, and a frightening new one beckons. We can help you understand your new abilities, your role in the divine plan. No, no more of that silly story about Gods. There is only one God, after all, and He works in mysterious ways, with signs and wonders and misdirection. Oh yes. Every Saint and Prophet started out just like you, right now. Take my hand and everything will become clear."*

About three thousand years ago, a small group began a movement to exalt the worship of one God above all others, and over the centuries "thou shalt have no other Gods before me" became "thou shalt have no other Gods, period." Evangelism has by today converted about half the world's population to some form of monotheistic faith, at least officially. Hidden within this diverse group is a secret organization called the Order of

the Divine Glory whose mission is to rewrite the legends of the Old Gods into the story of the One God.

### HISTORY

Sometime in the 1300s BC, the Pharaoh Amenhotep, later known as Akhenaten, raised the Egyptian empire to new heights, building massive temples that awed the world. Akhenaten was a Scion tempted over to the side of the Titan of the same name, and was rewarded handsomely by its sole avatar Aten. The Pharaoh, not content to be a mere pawn, embarked upon the audacious strategy of using Fatebinding to his own advantage - he composed a great hymn to the Aten, declaring not only that the Titan he worshipped was the supreme God, but the *only* God. In this way, he sought to make "Ra" all at once supreme and defined, inextricably tied to his rule in a way that excluded



all other possibilities. He hoped to wrap a lasso around Ra, binding its fate to him and his empire alone.

Whether the Pharaoh would have succeeded or not will never be known, as an uprising of unknown origin shattered his city, left its temples to be torn down by the Pharaoh's successors. But Akhenaten's secret plan of Fatebinding survived his death, however, through a Band of Hebrew slaves who fled Egyptian captivity. Their forbearers had already entered into a Fatebound covenant with a Sumerian storm God, to their mutual benefit. It took several centuries until the Hebrew King Hezekiah decoded Akhenaten's methods and began the Deuteronomic movement, expunging all belief in all of Israel's old Gods except the Sumerian storm God.

Other pantheons, from the Gods of Babylon to the Dodekathemon, moved their servants in to crush the upstart monotheists. The Hebrew temples burned, and they thought that was the end of that. But from Judaism, Christianity arose first to pester, then eventually take over the Roman throne. Having been crushed twice by jealous Gods, however, the inheritors of the Pharaoh Akhenaten's legacy, in hiding among the worshippers of the One God, grew more cautious.

In 731 AD, the Venerable Bede convened the first meeting of the Order of the Divine Glory, propagating its message through a supposed letter from Pope Gregory I. In it, he outlined a plan to convert pagans by incorporating their traditions into Christianity instead of attempting to eliminate them. "To the end that, whilst some gratifications are outwardly permitted them," Bede wrote, "they may the more easily consent to the inward consolations of the grace of God." Wherever Christianity traveled, the Order followed, seeking out the Scions of the old Gods and convincing them that, in fact, they were servants of One God. Scions were the stepping stones to the Gods themselves, after all. Proceeding in this manner, agents of the Order managed to slowly climb the rungs of Fatebinding, changing ancient stories subtly to avoid the punishments visited on Akhenaten.

The Order's agents are myriad, and they are not only tied to Christianity. Indeed, Bede and his original council depended upon contacts in the Jewish and Zoroastrian faiths, and later on among the ranks of Mohammed's followers. Wherever missionaries enjoined the people to worship just one deity and to deny the existence of all others, the Order was there to seek out the Scions of the indigenous Gods and co-opt them. Thus did the Scions of the West Germanic Goddess Eostre become administering seraphim of Christ's ascent on Easter, and the Gods of Yoruba become the saints of Santeria. As the stories changed, so too did the Gods and their children change to become servants of the One God, and by extension, servants of His followers.

The mainstream leaders of the Abrahamic faiths, of course, have no idea as to the Order's true purpose. If they are even aware of its existence at all, they consider the Order

to be a particularly eccentric band of missionaries. The Order keeps its agendas held tightly to its vest, unbeknownst even to their own rank-and-file. Those agendas are nothing less than the eventual Fatebinding of all the Gods into One, a God subservient to the Order's wishes.

## TACTICS

The key to the Order's power is that they have not only realized Fatebinding exists, but that the process can work both ways. To this end, they do everything they can to move their agents into positions where they will become as Fatebound as possible to Scions. The Order then does its best to tug on their end of the link. To this end, the Order employs a three-step approach.

- **Reconnaissance:** The Order employs skilled ethnographers, anthropologists and theologians to carefully research new cultures and the Gods they worship. While some of these fieldworkers harbor a missionary agenda, these days they are usually liberal-minded academics with a passion for preserving the "true culture" of these indigenous peoples. Order's agents promise them not only free travel and equipment but an interested, respectful audience for their work. These academics have no inkling that the Order will eventually use this material as intelligence for better insinuating their own narratives, reworking the native into their tale of the One God. It is the rare graduate student who questions the signer of her grant checks!

- **Recruitment:** Should reconnaissance turn up any Scions, the Order immediately moves its agents in to become close to them. If the prospects look promising, this close relationship moves to one of active recruitment. Agents use the tactics of any cult, offering young and confused individuals the promise of acceptance, prestige, sex, drugs – whatever it takes to win them over. Not all of the Order's recruiters are loon-faced kool-aid purveyors. Many of them are educated professionals who lead successful lives, folks from whom the recruit may suspect little harm until he starts getting urged to drop his old friends and steer clear of any psychologists.

- **Remastering:** The Order's long-term, big picture goals involve co-opting "pagan" religious symbols, deities and stories into their particular brand of monotheism. To this end, they produce pamphlets, teaching materials and other storytelling weapons in the propaganda war, as well as insinuating their teachers into village schools all over the developing world.

This is the slow road for the Order. Getting agents Fatebound to a Scion is the on-ramp to a pantheon-bound expressway. For some Scions, the offer of money and attractive groupies are all it takes to take up the mantle of sainthood. Others are genuinely convinced by the Order's offer of purpose and clarity, and take to their new roles with genuine fervor. Still



others find themselves Fatebound unwittingly – even active opponents of the Order are still part of the Order's story. A Scion who thinks she's the hero of her pantheon's story may actually be playing a bigger role in the grand tale of the Order's triumph.

Still, an ally is better than an enemy. The Order will make every effort to recruit Scions if they can, including using their staff of highly trained psychologists with theological degrees. Through drugs, sleep deprivation and other brainwashing techniques, the Order has many ways of helping "deluded" Scions see that they are children of the One God, not some headdress wearing, spear-chucking monster.

It should be made clear that most members of the Order believe that they are doing the work of God (or Allah, or whatever name they give "The One True God"), rescuing and recruiting those He has blessed and banishing the false notions that tempt them from the path. Most of the Order's propagandists are simply fervent believers in their own religion, concerned with spreading their particular faith. Mention "Fatebinding" to one of the Order's theologians and he will likely dismiss it with a puzzled stare. Even those Order operatives who come face-to-face with the amazing abilities of Scions generally reconcile them as miracles consistent with the teachings of their particular faith.

Only the innermost circles of the Order speak of placing chains around the legs of the Old Gods, rewriting their stories until, one by one, they merge into one deity sworn to the Council's own purposes. Ironically, if these agendas were ever discovered, the Order's own elders would be burned as heretics for acknowledging the existence of other Gods at all – their God would demand no less. Thus has the Order been Fatebound to its own vision.

The Order, despite its networks of influence, is in the end a mortal organization, and a small, hidden one at that. What challenge can they possibly pose to the children of Gods?

The Inner Circle is not stupid. They know that they will lose in a direct confrontation with Scions, so they do whatever they can to avoid such open conflict. When violence is deemed unavoidable, the Order will contract out to the more fanatical branches of the One God's followers. If a stubborn local shaman is causing mischief, it might be time for a fundamentalist militia to shoot up his village. A spiritual healer who clings to the old ways might find her clinic on the bombing list of a radical anti-abortion group. There are more than enough people willing to kill in the name of religion that the Order doesn't need to sully its hands.

## MIRACLES

In addition to the mundane methods detailed above, the Inner Circle does have a couple special tricks up its sleeve. After all, they have had many centuries to unravel and develop Akhenaten's techniques. These two "miracles" function like Knacks, but Knacks that can be taught to mortals, albeit not easily – an Order member must undergo months if not years of mental and spiritual training before accomplishing one miracle.

## WATER TO WINE

The One God reveals Himself to those who know where and how to look. With the expenditure of a Willpower point, this ability allows the wielder to perform one small miraculous act like making a dead flower bloom, turning water into wine or making a small plant burn without being consumed by flame. This act should not have any utility in combat; its purpose is to awe and instill a sense of wonder, usually for the purposes of making converts.

## DIVINE INTERVENTION

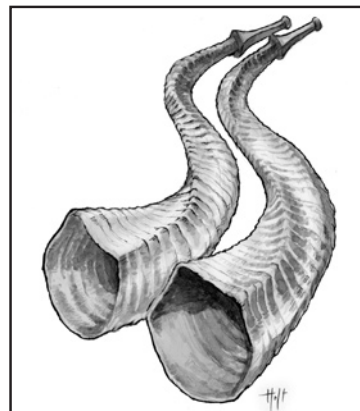
No mortal may command the One God nor even understand His ways, only pray for His mercy and the occasional dram of well-timed grace. This ability, successfully employed, gives the agent an extra bit of luck. Upon the expenditure of a Willpower point and a successful (Stamina + Integrity) roll, the agent can mitigate – but not entirely nullify – an immediate threat to her physical well-being. Examples include clinging to a ledge when by all rights she should have fallen, turning a direct hit which into a glancing blow and finding that the bible in their pocket took the bullet meant for their heart. Each success will reduce one Health Level lost in a single attack, down to a minimum of one.

## ORDER ARTIFACTS

On those rare occasions when violence is unavoidable, the Inner Circle does possess a small, carefully-guarded handful of mystical artifacts left over from the God-form of Ra, passed down and preserved to the present day. The Pharaoh himself may have been banished, but a few of the gifts granted to him by the deity he sought to enslave are still circulating and still puissant.

## AMON'S HORNS

Only five of these pairs of aurochs' horns remain extant today. When invoked, this artifact can erase the memory of anyone, mortal or Scion, within a line of sight distance of the user. There does not seem to be a limit to the number of people the horns can affect, or the number of times

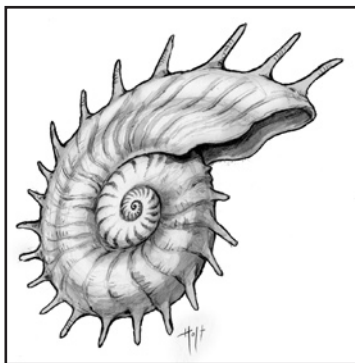


it can be used. The wielder must consciously determine the amount of time she wishes her victims to lose track of (the last day, the last year, the last ten years). The Order mainly employs the horns as a way of covering its tracks or as a last-ditch method in important "conversions." The horn is a poor combat weapon, as the ritual for using it takes many minutes to enact. The precise workings of the Horns are left to the Storyteller to determine.



## AMMONITE SHELL

Appearing to be little more than intricate seashells, these discarded carapaces of extinct cephalopods can, when activated, form an invisible shield around the wielder that provides +5L/8B soak in addition to whatever personal armor the user might be wearing. Should the shield be breached, the ammonite shell shatters and cannot be used again.



## SAL AMMONIACUS (SALT OF AMMON)

Be it Catholic holy water, the Jewish mikvah or Muslim Wudu and Ghushl ablutions, all of the Abrahamic faiths have rituals involving special liquids. Upper level Order members who come to bless these waters may sprinkle a little of this salt in, which causes the reservoir to smell faintly of ammonia. Any weapon (bullets included) dunked in this water deals +2 damage to any person or creature with Legend, but only for one day.



## SAMPLE CHARACTERS

### SASHA CHANG

#### UNWITTING ORDER AGENT

**History:** Sasha's parents lived a wild life of self-destruction, but when her father died in a car crash her mother hit rock bottom. When everyone else abandoned her, Jesus was there to lift her back on her feet. She brought Sasha up to dedicate her life to the Savior. Sasha's sunny disposition and genuine benevolence towards everyone she met won her many friends in high school and college, where an Order agent monitoring her Bible study group decided she would be ideal bait for Scions. To date, Sasha is not aware of these manipulations and suspects nothing of the multiple "special outreach trips" which her group pays for. She gets to meet so many interesting people and spread the Good Word at the same time! So far she has persuaded at least one Scion to join the Order, with a natural skill that rivals that of the Order's most hardened proselytizers.

**Appearance:** Sasha is a petite young Chinese-American woman of 19 with a perpetual smile and a lively, confident gait. She wears modest, loose-fitting but stylish clothing and large glasses that, when removed, reveal a disarmingly attractive face.

**Roleplaying notes:** You are the nicest person anyone will ever meet, utterly devoid of guile. Although it pains you to think of the unconverted roasting in the fires of Hell, they have to come to the light themselves. You convert by example, by being the best friend possible and doing your best to model the values God taught. You are truly at peace, a peace everyone could know if they accepted their Savior.

**Calling:** Missionary and Ambassador of Good-will

**Nature:** Gallant

**Attributes:** Strength 1, Dexterity 2, Stamina 2, Charisma 4, Manipulation 3, Appearance 2, Perception 2, Intelligence 3, Wits 3

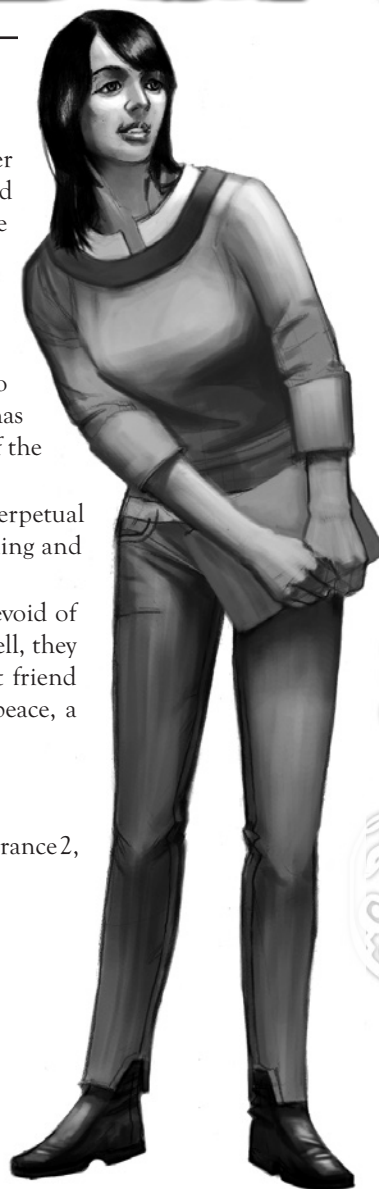
**Abilities:** Academics 4 (Theology), Art 3, Empathy 4, Integrity 5

**Join Battle:** 3

**Attacks:**

**Clinch:** Accuracy 3, Damage 3B, Parry DV -, Speed 6, P

**Unarmed, Heavy:** Accuracy 2, Damage 6B, Parry DV 0, Speed 5





Unarmed, Light: Accuracy 4, Damage 3B, Parry DV 2, Speed 4  
Soak: 0L/0B  
Health Levels: -0/-1/-1/-2/-2/-4/Incap  
Dodge DV: 1 Willpower: 6

## ABDER AHMAD KHAN

### INNER COUNCIL MEMBER

**History:** Born in the prosperous city of Herat, Afghanistan to a family of wealthy merchants, Abder received a traditional Muslim education at the Masjed-e Jame mosque. A gifted lad, he was on the fast track to becoming a great cleric until a Soviet invasion outlawed religious study. When the army in Herat mutinied, young Abder took up arms to help them, and was captured when the Soviets bombed the city to the ground, slaughtering thousands. Abder endured six months of torture before making his escape to join up with the Mujahadeen, fighting the guerilla war against the Russians. It was in one of these battles that shrapnel from a Katyusha rocket blinded him in his right eye.

When the last tanks of the Red Army withdrew ten years later, Abder yearned to return to the Mosque and the life of a scholar, only to find he could not put down his Kalashnikov just yet. His rebel cell found itself negotiating an uneasy alliance with the burgeoning Taliban against rival warlords. Abder admired the Taliban's zeal, but not their methods; Islam should be embraced by infidels, not forced down their throats. In one engagement, he watched the Taliban massacre a village of Muslims whom they accused of never entirely giving up the Buddhist traditions of their ancestors. Where the Taliban saw only heresy, Abder saw possibility. His arguments about the value of syncretism were answered by the rifle butt of a Talib soldier, and when he came to, his one eye witnessed a miracle: one of the "heretic" villagers wielding holy powers, driving the Talibs away. The mysterious stranger, calling himself only Ismail, told Abder an amazing story. Ismail claimed he had once believed himself to be the son of the fertility God Pancika but then learned that he was really one of Allah's special servants. Ismail introduced the fascinated Abder to the Order, and in the years since, Abder has risen to the Inner Council itself. Abder is now convinced that, once the world's heart beats in complete synchronicity with Allah's, then peace will finally envelop this devastated planet.

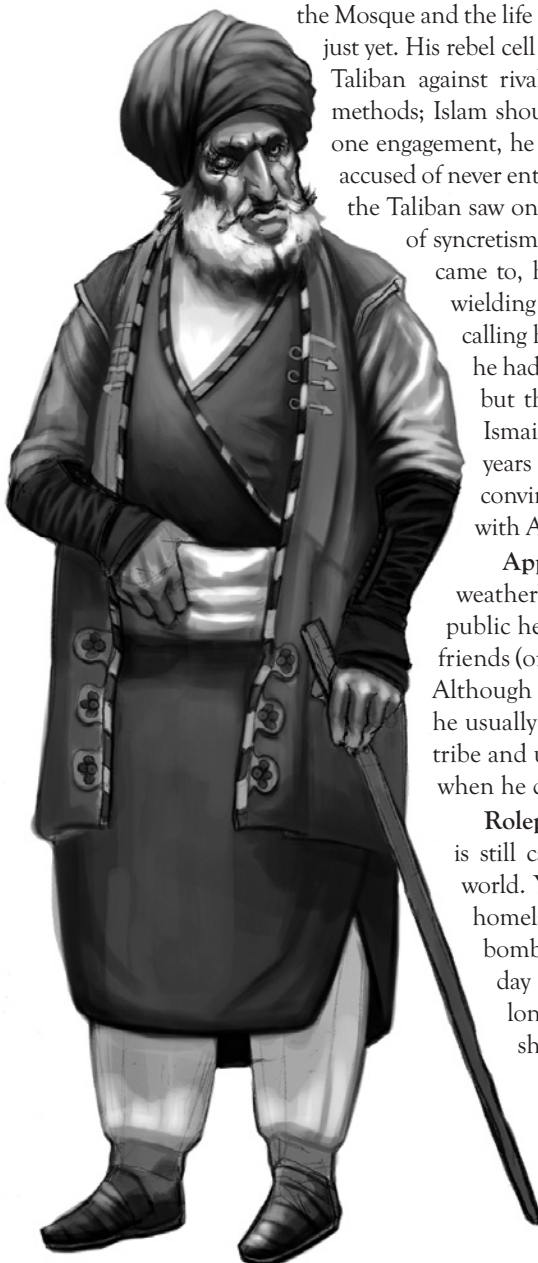
**Appearance:** Abder is a stout Pashtun man in his early 40s whose weatherbeaten appearance makes him look twenty years older. In public he covers his wounded eye with a plain cloth patch, but among friends (or to intimidate rivals) he reveals the gray, filmy orb for all to see. Although Abder adopts Western business attire when the need arises, he usually wears the traditional turban and dark shalwar kameez of his tribe and uses a cane for balance when he walks. He seldom smiles, but when he does, he radiates a sense of calm that borders on holiness.

**Roleplaying Notes:** Your one good eye has seen far too much, yet is still capable of viewing the sparks of the divine in the mundane world. You keep telling yourself that someday you will return to your homeland, but the days when you thought the bullet and roadside bomb could bring back the world you knew are over. Although every day the dark shadows of despair threaten to close in on you, so long as you keep following Allah's light, on the path the Order has shown you, then you still have something to live for.

**Calling:** Hidden Master

**Nature:** Visionary

**Attributes:** Strength 2, Dexterity 2, Stamina 3, Charisma 4, Manipulation 5, Appearance 2, Perception 3, Intelligence 5, Wits 5





**Abilities:** Academics 5 (Theology), Brawl 2, Command 4, Fortitude 4, Integrity 4, Marksmanship 4, Medicine 1, Melee 2, Survival 4, Stealth 4

**Join Battle:** 7

**Attacks:**

*Walking Stick:* Accuracy +2, Damage +3B, Parry DV 2, Speed 6

## COMPANIONS

Gilgamesh had Enkidu and Beowulf had Wiglaf. With every use of their Legendary powers, Scions pull the people around them into Fatebindings that ensure their continued meetings, for good or ill. Yet sometimes a Scion may choose take the process one step further, strengthening the bond between him and a Fatebound mortal through the sharing of the very ichor that runs in his veins.

Is heroism a transmittable condition? It was only after sharing a bed with Shamhat, Scion of Ishtar, that Enkidu developed his own heroic prowess. But when Icarus accepted knock-off wings from his heroic father, it didn't end so well for him. The benefits and the dangers of hand-me-down heroism are equally dramatic.

In game terms, there are three ascending levels of connection that Scions can establish with their Fatebound companions. Each brings increasing benefits, and increasing risks not only to the companion but also to her Scion benefactor.

### STAGE ONE: ICHOR COCKTAIL

The ichor of a Scion, much like a giant's heartblood (or eitr, **Scion: Hero**, p. 315), can confer temporary powers upon mortals when injected into their veins. The Scion must actively will this to happen during the distillation process – otherwise, the mortal is just freebasing ordinary blood. The Scion could also choose to use sexual intercourse as a vector, but once again, this must be a conscious act; no one accidentally picks up heroic powers from a one-night stand. Free will is a required ingredient; a Scion cannot be mentally compelled through the supernatural powers of another being to activate the process.

Effects can include, at the Storyteller's discretion, some or all of the following:

- Up to three dots may be distributed across the subject's Physical Attributes, up to a maximum of five dots in any Attribute. Two of these dots can be used to purchase one dot in an Epic Physical Attribute.

- The subject gains +2 bonus dice for Join Battle rolls.

- The subject gains a Legend score of 1 and a Legend point pool of 3. They also gain one dot in each of the Virtues of the Scion companion's pantheon, as well as three additional dots.

- The subject is never treated as an extra.

This boost lasts about a week, after which a new injection must be administered. Multiple injections within a week do not confer any cumulative benefits.

However, like any drug, this process comes with the price of addiction. Mortals who repeatedly partake in this process begin to experience withdrawal symptoms as the heroic powers wear off at week's end, symptoms which become increasingly debilitating the longer they have been "using." The Scion suffers no penalties herself at this stage, although having an addicted sidekick utterly dependent upon her ichor may well cause all sorts of complications in her life.

Do not forget, either, that the two parties remain Fatebound. Just because they are no longer sharing ichor does not mean that the Fates have not entwined the two together. Just the act of sharing ichor (at any stage of the binding) increases the strength of their Fatebinding by +1 for every month they do so, and these increases never go away.

### STAGE TWO: SYMPATHETIC LINK

If a mortal companion continues for several months to partake in heroic ichor in this manner, he and his benefactor proceed to this stage. Alternatively, the Scion donor may initiate this stage right from the get-go through conscious act of will, as enacted by a ritual appropriate to the pantheon of her divine parent. Scions of the Atzlanti, for example, may perform an elaborate blood-sharing ritual involving plenty of slit veins and offerings to the sun, while a Scion of the Aesir could swear a blood oath upon her weapon, mixing her blood and her partner's across the blade.

Stage two works like stage one, except fresh infusions of ichor are no longer necessary. The boosted attributes now last indefinitely, but a sympathetic link is also created between the Scion and her sidekick, affording the following abilities:



- **Empathy:** When one feels significant pain, so does the other. While no actual access to thoughts is granted, empathic “leakage” is common: if one partner is in a bad mood, his bad vibes may leak into the thoughts of the other. If either partner dies, the other goes into a deep depression and must make a (Stamina + Fortitude) roll against difficulty 4. If he fails, the character loses all temporary Willpower points, and remains in that state until he can overcome his depression.

- **Telepresence:** Scions and their companions with a bond of this strength can remotely piggyback upon the senses of their partner, regardless of the distance involved (even if one partner is in the Otherworld while another remains on Earth). By using this ability, a hero can be “present” while his unassuming sidekick does some reconnaissance, or the sidekick can be a hidden witness to the Scion’s adventures. The piggybacking party loses her own powers of sensory perception (engaging in telepresence while driving is not recommended), but instead experiences the sights, smells, sounds and tactile sensations of her companion. Her companion is aware of her presence but suffers no other penalties.

- **Legendary Cooperation:** A duo can become truly dynamic, solving a mystery or building a device with the kind of speed that only comes from the most perfect cooperation; treat any such action as “full teamwork” with +1 additional die.

## DRAWBACKS

A sympathetic link can be among the most intense and terrifying experiences for both participants. Imagine a pair of lovers who can feel one another other’s pleasure concurrent with their own, or a pair of fighters who never have to speak to coordinate their moves. On the other hand, much of human society depends upon us *not* knowing one another’s thoughts. Think of how many white lies, exaggerations and minor deceptions we use every day. Anyone who has wondered what his best friend or lover *really* thinks of him might not like the answer, or might misinterpret a given thought or emotion at an inopportune time.

If the sympathetic link is maintained for long enough, all but the most mentally-disciplined can become lost trying to untangle one set of thoughts and emotions from another. One partner may start to believe she is the other, with her own memories and reactions occasionally being overwritten by that of the other; once per week or at the Storyteller’s discretion, each character needs to succeed in a (Stamina + Integrity) roll or else suffer some Storyteller-determined penalty due to their mental cohesion.

## BREAKING THE LINK

Severing the sympathetic link is possible, through another conscious act of the Scion, accompanied by a ritual. The strength of the Fatebinding (which increases by +1 for every month they were linked) does not decrease after this parting. In addition, the mortal retains all of her previously boosted stats.

At this stage, however, there are significant consequences to both parties. While the mortal suffers withdrawal symptoms as per stage one, in addition both he *and* the Scion are plunged into a state of depression and numbness. On rare occasions, one or the other may develop other mental illnesses like bipolar disorder, schizophrenia or selective memory loss.

Also note that, however much a mortal may wish to discontinue his participation, only the Scion may break the bond. An irresponsible Scion who fails to do this sews disaster in his path: Dido pined away for Aeneas, unable to shut him from her mind until she was moved to take her own life. Medea, abandoned by Jason, did the same and took her children with her.

## STAGE THREE: TELEMANIPULATION

Should a Scion and mortal companion remain joined together for a year or more, then they proceed to stage three. Scions and their companions at this stage can now remotely *take over* the body of their partner. Much like with telepresence, the piggybacker’s body becomes inert and vulnerable until the spirit returns from its vacation in someone else’s flesh. The host retains her mental perceptions, but loses complete control of her body until the visitor decides to leave.

If a Scion’s mortal companion is in danger, the Scion can “step inside” his body, working it like a puppet. A shy companion can become a perfect public speaker if her Scion partner has Epic Charisma. Physical Attributes are non-transferable, but Mental and Social Attributes, not to mention all Abilities, can be expressed through the host body. Similarly, the companion can experience what it’s like to be a hero by stepping inside the body of her Scion companion for a while and benefiting from her divine abilities. This transaction can be willing, or it can be imposed with a successful Willpower contest by either party.

## BREAKING THE LINK

Needless to say, telemanipulation requires the strongest bonds of trust between both parties, as the potentials for abuse are staggering. Should the companionship sour, at this point breaking the bond requires the active conscious will of *both* parties. If one tries to sever the bond and the other doesn’t agree, the backlash may kill them both. Even if both agree and both survive the backlash, both suffer the same ill effects as a separation from stage two, and gain an *additional* level of permanent Fatebinding on top of the existing +1 per month.



## ANIMAL COMPANIONS

There are many noble four-footed or feathered companions who served a mythic hero admirably. While Titans make monsters out of ordinary animals by turning them into nemeans, a Scion can feed or inject his ichor into the body of a noble beast to make it a companion. The animal gains the same bonuses as a human recipient would, and a dot applied to Mental Attributes can raise the beast to human levels of intelligence (which will then accept further dots of Mental Attribute boosting, just like a human companion). An ichor-bonded animal's lifespan also dramatically increases (Odysseus' dog Argus lived over 30 years, through the Trojan war and two decades afterwards, until his master returned to Ithaca). Animals cannot develop stage two or stage three connections with their human hero, no matter how much ichor they ingest. Instead, after a month of regularly consuming ichor, the animal no longer needs fresh infusions – the effects become permanent.

While bonded human companions may rebel against the hero to which they are bound, an animal bound by ichor becomes infinitely loyal. She will perform any mission within her abilities, and even die for her human friend without hesitation. Should the Scion be so heartless, she will tolerate near limitless abuse (unless the animal has had her intelligence boosted to human levels; then she will not be ceaselessly forgiving). Should the Scion die, his trusted beast will utterly lose the will to live. Should the animal die, the Scion may sink into a deep depression as per a human companion's link-severing (p. 18).

### ARNIE BANK

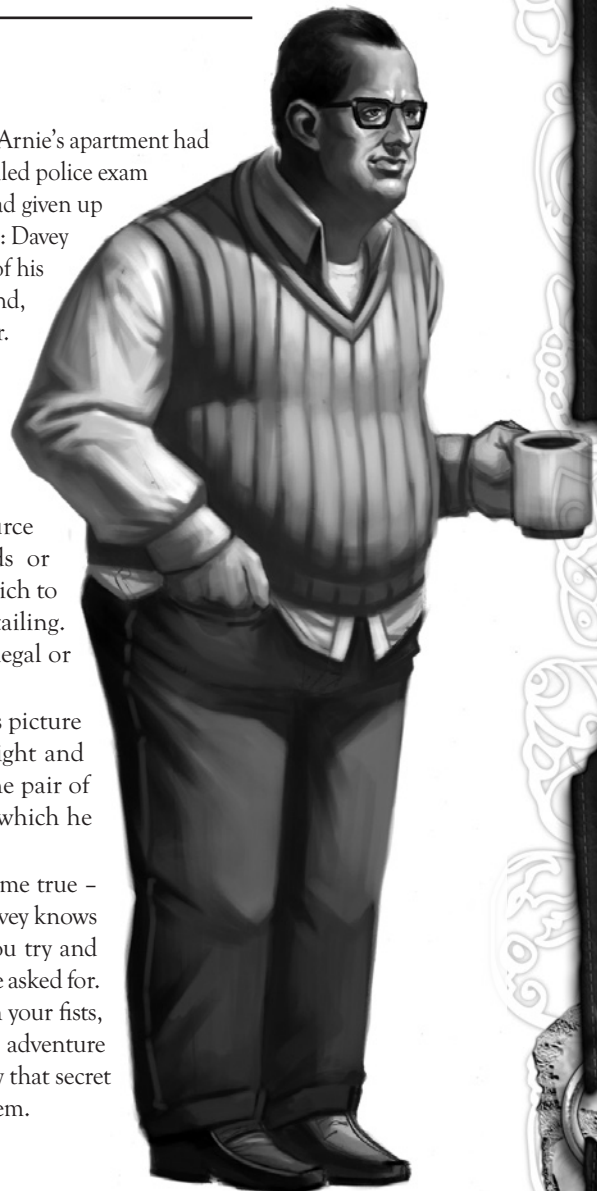
#### FAITHFUL COMPANION

**History:** Forty-something, unmarried and in a dead-end accounting job, Arnie's apartment had become a mausoleum to his unfulfilled dreams – a failed Army physical, a failed police exam and a stack of old fantasy and science fiction novels gathering dust. Arnie had given up his childhood dreams of adventure until one day Fate finally called upon him: Davey Gleason (Scion of Thor) and a titanspawn came crashing through the walls of his cubicle farm. As his coworkers fled in terror, Arnie bravely held his ground, raised his letter opener high and plunged it into the shoulder of the monster. The titanspawn laughed off Arnie's heroism and hurled him through several layers of cloth-covered anodized aluminum, but the distraction was all Davey needed to gain the advantage and smite his foe. Impressed by the unlikely hero before him, Davey helped heal Arnie's wounds, and ever since, Arnie has served as Davey's faithful sidekick.

Office-supply-wielding skills notwithstanding, Arnie's best resource now is time: at home collecting workman's comp, lacking friends or relatives to compete for his time, he has near-limitless free hours in which to do internet research for Davey or to do drive-by reconnaissance and tailing. Whatever Davey needs, Arnie procures through the many channels, legal or illegal, that the online world affords.

**Appearance:** Look up "unassuming" in the dictionary and Arnie's picture would be there... except even that would be too distinctive. Overweight and balding, Arnie dresses in drab collared shirts and khakis. He owns one pair of dress shoes, one pair of loafers and one pair of horn-rimmed glasses which he needs to wear when he uses the computer.

**Roleplaying Notes:** After waiting your entire life, your dream has come true – you are a part of a heroic story. Your role is important, and you're sure Davey knows that, but still, you do everything you can to prove that you're useful. You try and anticipate his needs before he asks and deliver three times more than you're asked for. Occasionally you daydream that you're the one out there fighting evil with your fists, but you're more than grateful enough for what you've got. You see more adventure than most "big tough hero types" could ever dream of, and you now carry that secret pride inside your chest every time your troubles press upon your self-esteem.



**Calling:** Sidekick

**Nature:** Bravo

**Attributes:** Strength 2, Dexterity 2, Stamina 2, Charisma 1, Manipulation 1, Appearance 1, Perception 3, Intelligence 3, Wits 3

**Virtues:** Courage 2, Endurance 2, Loyalty 3, Valor 1

**Abilities:** Investigation 4, Awareness 2, Computers 3, Integrity 3, Stealth 3

**Supernatural Powers:**

*Epic Attributes:* Epic Stamina 1 (Inner Furnace)

*Companion Bond:* Stage 2: Sympathetic Link

**Join Battle:** 5

**Attacks:**

*Clinch:* Accuracy 3, Damage 3B, Parry DV -, Speed 6, P

*Unarmed, Heavy:* Accuracy 2, Damage 6B, Parry DV 0, Speed 5

*Unarmed, Light:* Accuracy 4, Damage 3B, Parry DV 2, Speed 4

**Soak:** 0L/1B

**Health Levels:** -0/-1/-1/-2/-2/-4/Incap

**Dodge DV:** 1

**Willpower:** 5

**Legend:** 1

**Legend Points:** 3

## CREATING A PANTHEON

Wherever man treads, he does so beneath the watchful eyes of some Gods or other. Every civilization has created (or credited its creation to) its own pantheon of deities, indigenous to their region or borrowed and modified from those of other cultures. This gives you plenty of precedent for creating, borrowing and reshaping your own pantheons for use in **Scion**.

Gods aren't just like any character, created as a set of statistics. They are more than just characters – they are also ideas and concepts personified. For all their power, Gods are bound to specific roles that define them. Their personalities are intrinsically linked to these roles, and they create Scions in large part to further their ambitions and goals in the World. When you are designing a pantheon, you are also not only creating its Gods, you are establishing the flavor of all their Scions.

So how do you begin this ambitious act of theogenesis?

### STEP ONE: ESTABLISH A HISTORY

Maybe you are inventing your own pantheon entirely, based upon the religious beliefs of a society designed entirely by your imagination. If so, that's terrific – you are adding whole new dimensions of creativity to the game and giving your players a unique experience. It is likely, though, that you will base your pantheon on an existing culture or belief system. Even a cursory browsing through encyclopedias and online sites can help you become familiar with thousands of human cultures, both ancient and modern, and the Gods in which they believe.

For our example, we'll create an ancient Russian pantheon. Russian mythology extends back thousands of years and combines elements of pagan Norse, Wendish and Danish mythology (among others) before being further transformed by Christianity by the 1300s. There is no agreed-upon formal name for the Russian pantheon, so we'll call them "The Rus," after one of three mythological brothers who went on to found the three great Slavic peoples. Rus, as his name suggests, is the mythological progenitor of the Russian nation.

To incorporate the Rus into the **Scion** cosmology, we'll play upon their Norse roots, including belief in the World Tree. The Slavic Gods were also multi-headed fusions, so let's wrap that into the canon of the Titan war.

*Example. During the ancient battle that bound the Titans, the Aesir defeated the Titan Rod's two chief avatars (the three-headed Triglav and the four-headed Svantevit) by splitting them up into component Gods. These Gods, now liberated from the oppressive group mind of their Titan parent, changed sides in the war and joined the battle against the primal deities, becoming the Rus. Ever since, the Rus have struggled with issues of dual and paradoxical identities. As a reward for the Rus' bravery, the victorious Gods gave over the realm of Mount Meru to become Svarga, the Slavic pantheon's new home.*

Think about who your Gods are, how they came to be and where they live now. There will be stories behind all of that, and as you learn – or create – those stories, you will come to understand your pantheon better.

Once you've done that, think a little bit about how your Gods have adapted to the modern World and the reality of the war with the Titans. Some details might





require you to flesh out which Gods are in your pantheon first (in step three, p. 22), but you can get a sense of where you want the history to go, and go back to fill in details later. Here's a completed version of the Rus' modern history as an example.

*Example: No event has scarred the Rus as much as the Russian Revolution. Perun and Veles had been locked in competition since their genesis: Perun ruled Svarga from atop the world tree, while the serpentine Veles crept up and down the trunk, harassing the Thunder God by stealing his cattle, children and occasionally his wife. Perun, his patience at an end, defeated Veles in personal combat and hurled him to the base of the tree. Veles spent millennia plotting his vengeance, and finally brought his scheme to fruition when he invaded the dreams of Vladimir Lenin while disguised in Perun's form, convincing him that communism would transform Russia into a land of honor and justice. The revolution gave birth to a new God: The Citizen, the spirit of the people.*

*Just as the Russian people were swept up in overthrowing the old authority, The Citizen turned upon Perun and the other Rus. Several of the Gods in the pantheon transformed into their darker aspects: Belobog became Chernobog and Dievas became Marzanna. Together, with the secret aid of titanspawn, they managed to overthrow Perun, sending him and the remaining Slavic Gods into exile. Although The Citizen sat on the treetop throne, Veles secretly ruled as the God of corruption, twisting the Citizen's noble values. Svarga soon fell into shambles. Perun, drunken, fat and disheveled, is trying desperately to get back into shape, reassemble the pantheon and restore justice and order to the realm.*

## STEP TWO: DETERMINE VIRTUES

Here we come to another important part of designing a pantheon: deciding their philosophical outlook (and thus, their Virtues). The Pesedjet are defined by their devotion to social order, while the Aesir are consumed by preparations for Ragnarök. Even Gods need something to believe in. What beliefs guide your pantheon?

In creating the Rus, we can look over the old myths as well as Russian history. The universe is a cruel place, and the lot of humanity is particularly cruel, but the Rus did not make the universe – they just have to live in it. They are at once a passionate and melancholy group of Gods, bitterly conflicted with one another and yet intensely social and bound by family ties.

The closest matching Virtues in the *Scion* books would seem to be Courage, Expression and Valor. Yet Slavic culture tends to incorporate these values into a thoroughly fatalistic worldview that denies the possibility for such things, to the point of ridicule, so the Rus should embody that aspect as well. Thus the Rus are at the same time wonderful company and implacable enemies, to each other and to the World. The war with the Titans is just one more struggle in an eternal series, to be born with both dignity and black humor. Endurance would seem to be an appropriate Virtue to capture this idea. As such, we decide that the Virtues of the Rus are Courage, Endurance, Expression and Valor.

## STEP THREE: CHOOSE YOUR GODS

One thing you are likely to discover is that even a single, isolated culture produces many, many Gods – the Hindu pantheon alone supposedly contains 330 million deities! Clearly, you will want to pick and choose those that will represent your own pantheons.

To help you in this process, most pantheons have Gods that represent the following concepts that are universally important to all cultures: the sun, the moon, creation, fertility, love, death, the underworld, war, law and justice, the arts and sciences, the seasons and the harvest. Different religions may make one God responsible for many of these, or have several Gods responsible for just one, but usually most of these concepts will be present. Six to twelve Gods is a good number to aim for.

From the dozens of Slavic Gods, let's pick the following roster for our example:

- **Chernobog:** God of winter and darkness. At times he becomes **Belebog**, God of spring and light.
- **Marzanna:** Goddess of the harvest and reaping, including the reaping of dead souls. Also the Goddess of the marketplace. At times she becomes **Dievas**, Goddess of spirit and purity.
- **Perun:** God of lightning and thunder.
- **Poerewit:** God of the woods and travelers.
- **Sieba:** Goddess of fertility and love.
- **Veles:** Perun's great rival, God of wealth and trickery.
- **Zislbog:** Goddess of the moon and seedlings.

We didn't include Jarilo the harvest God or Krsnik the fire God, but you can. Unless you're starting from scratch, your source material will likely contain far more possibilities – many of them contradictory – than you could ever include, and the Gods you ultimately choose will determine how players view it. Adding Krsnik, for example, means that there will be Scions of his acting in his name, which may be something you want for your cycle or something you want to avoid. Make some decisions, create your pantheon the way that best suits your cycle and discuss your decisions with your players.

## STEP FOUR: CREATE DETAILS FOR YOUR GODS

You should create details for your Gods, but you don't need to create statistics. Creating game statistics for a God can defeat its purpose as a literal *deus ex machina* for you to use in your stories (until the time comes for your players' Gods to challenge them, of course). It's best to begin with a basic outline of your Gods' personalities and general powers.

**Aliases:** Because they have been worshipped in different eras by different cultures in different languages, most Gods go by multiple names.

*Example: Perun, the chief God of the Rus, is known alternately as Perkunas, Perkons and Perkwunos.*

**Description:** Describe each God's appearance and *raison d'être*, both in the Overworld and in the variety of guises she might undertake when cavorting with modern mortals. Think about her relationships with the other Gods in her pantheon, and any Fate to which she may be bound.

*Example: Perun is a noble protector, lord of order, justice, lightning and thunder. He appears in dazzling golden armor, a mighty eagle riding astride his shoulders. Perun wields a bow with stone arrows that turn into lightning bolts, and also possesses magical golden apples that explode into ball lightning when tossed. He has battled many titanspawn and other entities that seek to harm the World, including his divine brother Veles, whom he once hurled into the watery underworld with the command, "Well, there is your place, stay there!" Although he has fallen on hard times of late, he is destined to make a comeback and defeat the forces of darkness.*

All of the above was culled from existing legends about Perun, with the easy conversion of Slavic monsters into titanspawn. To develop Perun's manifestations in a modern setting for our game, we'll think of roles that evoke Perun's qualities of bravery and order. The Gods know such values are not tied to any particular social class (Aristotle recognized that "even a slave" could embody heroism), so try and keep that in mind.

*Example: In the mortal World Perun has appeared as a military officer, a judge, a factory foreman and a crusading journalist. Even in humble clothing, he is always regal.*

Finally, map out the qualities of the Scions your God tends to give birth to, and how she relates to them once they are born (including how she may Visit them or how she handles her Relics and Birthrights).

*Example: While an absent father to his Scions (his duties to the universe must take precedence over personal desires), Perun is not stingy with Boons and Birthrights when he does make an appearance. His Scions tend to be similarly obsessed with justice, or at least order. They will defend what they believe is right and never flinch from a confrontation. They may not be subtle or nuanced, but at least you always know where they stand.*

**Associated powers:** Think about what qualities are this God's personal trademarks. Look to existing legends for cues. If you are creating your God from whole cloth, consider writing some stories featuring that God first to see if any patterns or personality traits emerge. Epic Abilities should be extensions of these traits.

*Example: Perun is always displaying leadership and martial bravery in Slavic legends, which seem to call for Epic Charisma, Epic Stamina, Epic Strength, Guardian, Justice and War, with the addition of Sky for his association with storms. We'll also give him the Rus pantheon Purview of Duality, which we'll create in step five.*

**Abilities:** What six abilities is your deity really known for?



*Example: It's tempting to give Perun every physical ability in the book, but since we're limited to six, we'll decide that Brawl and Melee are more appropriate than Athletics, since most of the tales have the Slavic Thunder God duking it out as opposed to doing handsprings around the room. Not forgetting those apples, we'll add Thrown. Since Perun is no mere bruiser but a noble leader as well, we'll add Presence and Integrity. Finally, Fortitude seems appropriate given the general Rus Virtue of Endurance.*

**Rivals:** This includes enemies both within the pantheon and Gods of a similar Purview in other Pantheons.

*Example: In Perun's case, he is rivaled by Veles, Chernobog and Marzanna in the Rus, as well as Thor, Tyr, Izanami, Ogoun and probably others as well outside of it. Perun may be courageous and just, but he's hardly diplomatic or compromising!*

## STEP FIVE: CREATE PANTHEON-SPECIFIC PURVIEWS

Now that you have your pantheon mapped out, it's time to think of some of the cool stuff they can bestow upon their Scions. Think of the nature of your Gods and how that nature colors the powers they would confer. Is there a core value that seems to be intrinsic to your pantheon, something that goes beyond physical abilities and speaks instead to a group culture? Think of trends and stereotypes, both positive and negative. Look to the existing Purviews for inspiration: the Dodekathemon's focus on personal excellence translates into their purview of Arete, while the soul-stewarding nature of the Loa manifests itself in Cheval.

*Example: The Rus-specific purview will be called Duality. Several of the Russian Gods are actually two Gods in one, a yin-yang duo that represent opposing concepts, both necessary to the universe but only one of which is dominant at any given time. What better symbol of Endurance than to be both sides of the coin, able to change to fit the needs of the situation? A Scion employing Duality Boons can overcome obstacles by taking on their very properties. Where others might see this as paradox, Scions of the Slavic Gods merely consider their approach to fit with a more realistic picture of the universe.*

Now we have to break Duality down into its component powers. It can be useful to begin by dividing your Purview into power levels accessible to heroes, demigods and Gods, and then order them from there. Powers that confer only slight advantages should have low costs. As the benefits increase, so too should the requirements, not only in terms of Willpower and Legend points but also the rituals required to enact them, and possibly some kind of flaw or downside; the Fates have decreed that with power comes a price, and as a Storyteller you will want to have at least some check on rampant power-gaming.

In each case, think of appropriate dice pools based on the mortal abilities that these powers seem to enhance. For example, Transmute Pain is all about boosting one's own physical and mental endurance, so (Stamina + Integrity) is a good combination of Attribute and Ability to roll. Since Know Thy Enemy requires one to do just that, Perception and Empathy are required. The first three levels of Duality are given below as an example.

### Transmute Pain (Duality •)

**Dice Pool:** Stamina + Integrity

**Cost:** 1 Willpower

The life of a hero can be painful, full of loss and disappointment. The Scion employing this Boon can reduce the amount of physical pain he feels by inflicting physical pain upon others. In game terms, for every blow he lands on a foe, the Scion can ignore any health-related modifiers that are reducing his dice rolls. The Boon is enacted through drinking a shot of strong alcohol (traditionally vodka) and lasts for one scene. Since pain can be suppressed but never entirely destroyed, this Boon comes with an additional cost: the next scene, those modifiers return with an additional -1.

### Know Thy Enemy (Duality ••)

**Dice Pool:** Perception + Empathy

**Cost:** 1 Legend

The Scion can, through meditation and study, assume the personality of her foe. She will need some token from the foe to activate the Boon: a scrap of clothing, a treasured possession or a piece of hair or skin. Use of this Boon does not grant access to the thoughts of the Scion's opponent – she is only becoming a simulacrum of her enemy, not actually touching his mind – but for the duration of the effect she thinks like he does, reacts to stimuli like he does, can ascertain with reasonable certainty the kind of plans he would make. Frequent use of this power demands Willpower rolls to not lose her own personality and become a permanent copy of her enemy.

Uses per Story	Difficulty
2	3
3	4
4+	5

### One with the Storm (Duality •••)

**Dice Pool:** None

**Cost:** 1 Willpower + Legend

In hostile environmental conditions (extreme cold, driving rain, parching heat), the Scion can actually alter the properties of her body to reflect the climate around her. Her body temperature raises or lowers to match the world around her, or her skin takes on tough and rain-resistant properties. This ability lasts for one scene.

## STEP SIX: CREATE BIRTHRIGHTS (OPTIONAL)

What other kinds of gifts might your Gods have to offer? Think of the traditional creatures, weapons and vehicles associated with your pantheon. Each should have its own story and mythical gravitas. When studying existing myths, always be thinking about potential game functions. Think about the things that benefit player characters – boosts to Abilities and Attributes, means of delivering more damage or recovering more health, or access to powers that they wouldn't otherwise have. Then couple one or more of these bonuses to the mythical item.

*Example: In Slavic mythology, there is something called "live water" which flowed from the source of the World Tree and was tended to by the three fates. Live water conferred courage, wisdom and precognition, while "dead water," despite its name, healed wounds and diseases. A bottle filled with either of these waters could give the same powers to Scions – in game terms, live water gives access to the Prophecy Purview, perhaps, while dead water gives access to the Health Purview.*

## STEP SEVEN: ROUND OUT YOUR MYTHIC WORLD

Once your pantheon is ready, populate its universe with heroes and monsters. Slavic mythology

is full of the latter, from giant beasts like the dragon-like Zmey to the infamous witch Baba Yaga who lives in a house on chicken-feet-stilts. Feel free to tweak the nature of some of the creatures if you like – the Slavic vodyanoi, or water sprites, appear in some stories as helpful sprites and others as wicked tricksters: Decide which role (if not both!) they will play in your stories. Include some entities that are neither good nor evil, like the Gamayun, a woman-headed bird that doled out prophecies to Slavic Gods and heroes alike.

As far as heroes go, Russian skazka or fairy tales offer plenty of examples. There is Ivan Tsarevich (Ivan the Wise), who befriended mythic beasts like the firebird and the grey wolf to the extent that they even brought him back from the dead once so he could defeat his wicked brothers. The beautiful and crafty peasant girl Vassilisa outwitted Baba Yaga herself and won the heart of a prince. Scions of the Rus are modern versions of these heroes who embody the values of familial loyalty, duty and quick thinking. Keep in mind that your players will want to feel like they are taking on roles that are enjoyable to act out, but as long as your players know what they're in for ahead of time, they will likely take up the mantle of your new pantheon and be ready for epic questing in no time.

# CREATING TITANSPAWN

What are heroes without monsters to fight? In epic tales, monsters are more than just opponents; they *define* the heroes who face them. How can we understand Beowulf's fealty and determination to defend his people without comparing him to Grendel, the embodiment of antisocial rage? Snow White's purity and innocence are better understood by contrast with the vanity and calculating nature of the Black Queen. But a good monster also darkly reflects the hero's own traits. Beowulf's second opponent, Grendel's mother, is fighting to avenge her son, just as Beowulf has been fighting to avenge his kinsmen.

The Titans, the ultimate enemies of the characters in **Scion**, are nothing *but* metaphysical concepts. Although your players will tackle their minions (the titanspawn) on a physical level, even the minor monsters among them should be more than just a collection of claws, jaws and tentacles. Sure, the players should enjoy bashing frost giants – that's part of why they come to your gaming table. But what the giants represent on a symbolic level should matter as much as the stats on their page. That way, when the players defeat them, they have not just racked up experience points and looted the corpses; they have triumphed over some metaphysical challenge as well.

As a Storyteller you shouldn't necessarily hit your players over the head with this symbolism – sometimes a bunch of ogres to beat up is just a bunch of ogres to beat up – but **Scion** gives you the opportunity to design titanspawn with an eye towards the larger themes of the game.

## STEP ONE: DECIDE ON A CONCEPT

The story you're telling will likely dictate the kinds of titanspawn you'll want to create. A desert scenario is perfectly suited for giant sandworms, scarabs and carrion birds. An underwater mission may call for some kind of multi-tentacled horror or seductive-yet-deadly mermaids. Of course, you don't want to just play to stereotypes (your players have probably seen all the same movies you have). Instead of the unstoppable man-eating shark, why not throw them some kind of evil dolphin? Dolphins are mischievous, highly intelligent and able to communicate silently over vast distances – they could be diabolical nemean creatures in the right setting. Or maybe you already have a monster in mind from existing mythology. Books or websites can help you find all sorts of traditional foes associated with any pantheon. For our sample titanspawn, we'll plumb the depths of Russian and Eastern European mythology, and there we find the Indrik.



The Indrik is an enormous bull with the tail of a mouse and the head of a horse, ending in a snout bearing a long and deadly horn. Because of its similarity to the Western European myth of the unicorn (indeed, the name Indrik is an anagram for the Russian word for that noble horse), this creature will potentially have the benefit of playing with characters' expectations. In some myths the Indrik is a helpful beast who saves humans from drought, but for his reinvention as a titanspawn we'll focus on another aspect of the Indrik myth, his fanatical territoriality.

## STEP TWO: PICK A POWER LEVEL

Be sure to adjust your monster's power level to be a "fit" with the player characters and the kind of adventure you want to send them on. A sewer rat morphed into nemean proportions might challenge a novice Band full of characters at Legend 1 or 2, but Legend 6 demigods will quickly make ratatouille out of it. However, if you're planning on throwing a Typhonian ratzilla at bush-league characters, there is not much they can do except run. Maybe that's what you want them to do – just be sure your monster fits the needs of your story.

Our Indrik will be designed to fight mid-to-high range Scions, so we'll keep him a nemean, but a powerful one, with a Legend of 7.

## STEP THREE: DETERMINE THE TITAN'S ORIGINS

If you have adapted your monster from existing mythology, then you have some ready-made traits and

supernatural abilities to convert over to the game system. If you have created your own titanspawn, or if you want to play with your players' own expectations of a well-known mythic creature, you will likely add some of your own twists.

According to Slavic legends, the Indrik Zvier is the lord of all animals, who lives (depending on the story) underground or on "saint mountain" in the Altai range in Central Asia. Perun went underground to fight the Indrik and, upon winning, secured the beast's loyalty as an ally. Since we're designing the Indrik as an enemy, we'll say that the beast has reverted to his old loyalties now that the Titans are loose again. As far as its parent Titan, despite the many associations of the Indrik with waterways and streams, his ties to the Earth seem to align him with the Titan Terra, as one of the many monsters birthed by Gaia.

## STEP FOUR: CREATE STATISTICS FOR YOUR TITANSPAWN.

A titanspawn, just like any other character, needs Abilities, Attributes, Traits and Powers. In the case of the Indrik, legends already provide for inspiration for those powers. An entirely self-created monster should have powers consistent with whatever origin you've designed for it.

### THE INDRIK

**Attributes:** Str 10, Dex 8, Sta 10; Cha 4, Man 0, App 1; Per 3, Int 3, Wits 4

*These statistics reflect the Indrik's awesome physical prowess and his somewhat less impressive intelligence. The beast is not stupid by any means, but neither is he a great thinker. His high Charisma*



score reflects his legendary ability to command beasts, but his non-existent Manipulation score shows he's not terribly subtle or crafty.

**Virtues:** Ambition 3, Malice 4, Rapacity 4, Zealotry 5

*These are typical virtues for a titanspawn. Our Indrik's high Zealotry score reflects his identity as guardian of the Earth and all animals, in undying allegiance to Terra.*

**Abilities:** Animal Ken 10, Athletics 4, Awareness 4, Brawl 4, Survival 10, Stealth 3, Fortitude 3, Presence 4

*The Indrik is a master of all animals and nature in its native land, hence his unearthly scores in Animal Ken and Survival. A king of beasts definitely needs a high Presence score.*

#### Supernatural Powers:

**Epic Attributes:** Epic Strength (Holy Rampage, Uplifting Might, Divine Wrath, Mighty Heave, Knockback Attack), Epic Stamina (Damage Conversion, Body Armor, Inner Furnace, Devourer, Divine Fortitude), Epic Dexterity (Lightning Sprinter)

**Nemean hide:** The Indrik's tough skin provides 6A/10L/10B to its soak.

**Fire snort:** The Indrik is able to shoot a burst of flame from its nose. The roll for the attack is (Dexterity + Athletics), and it has an accuracy bonus of +3 and a damage bonus of +5L. The attack is a Speed 4 action.

**Create water:** With a stamp of his hoof, the Indrik can command any ditch, pothole or ravine to fill with water. Every round brings another thousand gallons of water until and unless the Indrik stops the process.

**Earthquake:** The Indrik's hoof can also produce tectonic reverberations with its power. Treat this as Shaping (Earth) (**Scion:** Hero, p. 142), but only for the purposes of destruction, not creation.

**Boons:** Animal Command (all), Animal Communication (all), Night Eyes, Safely Interred.

**Join Battle:** 8

#### Attacks:

**Trample:** Accuracy 10, Damage 15L, Parry DV -, Speed 5

**Gore:** Accuracy 10, Damage 20L, Parry DV 10, Speed 8

**Flame Snort:** Accuracy 10, Damage 7L, Parry DV -, Speed 4

**Soak:** 8A/16L/20B

**Health Levels:** -0 x20/-1x10/-2x10/-4x5/Incap

**Dodge DV:** 11, **Willpower:** 9

**Legend:** 7, **Legend Points:** 49

**Other Notes:** The Indrik-beast, along with its fantastic powers, has a few fantastic weaknesses as well. He cannot leave his underground cave by day, because broad sunlight will cause him to turn to stone.

*Giving your titanspawn its own special weakness gives your players the opportunity to strategize, as opposed to just wearing down your monster in a protracted brawl. Of course, finding out the beast's weakness should be no easy matter.*

**Trophy:** The Indrik legend speaks of the horn's healing powers. The horn can cure any disease and serve as an antidote to any poison. It can be used an indefinite number of times, but if exposed to sunlight, the horn turns irreparably to stone and becomes nothing more than an impressive-looking paperweight.

## STEP FIVE: FINISHING TOUCHES

Now to make our Indrik more than just cannon fodder. As an aspect of the Titan of the Earth, the Indrik represents the concept of territoriality, of the notion that this piece of land is *mine* and not *yours*, and therefore you can't come play here. He embodies the principle behind every sign that says "no trespassing" or "keep off the grass," at a much more primal level. Even his own flaw, the inability to come outside in the light of day, is in keeping with this principle – the Indrik has his own boundaries which must remain inviolate.

A Storyteller seeking to use the Indrik will find him a good opponent to place as a guardian, a gatekeeper who forbids passage. When roleplaying the Indrik, give him the personality of every officious security guard or self-important hall monitor, petty in his defense of a patch of ground because that's all he has to give his existence meaning. Imagine titanic power in the hands of such a stooge, and you awaken everyone's worst experiences at the hands of some authoritarian thug – and that's exactly what a monster should do, remind us of old nightmares. Only then is the hero's rage both realistic and justified, and we cheer her on as she goes on to smite the foes that we only dream about overcoming. Do the same with your monster, and your players will walk away more satisfied than if they just mowed over yet another crowd of hideous mutant squids.

## RELIC DESIGN

Relics are very freeform in design, but sometimes it's a little unclear on how many dots a particular aspect of the Relic's powers are worth. Below is a list of various aspects of a Relic and suggested dot amounts. Simple choose which aspects are appropriate for the Relic in

question and add the dots together. Note that these are just suggestions – some of the Relics we've created may not conform to this list because it was felt that the Relic in question should have more or less dots. Feel free to adjust your Relics in the same way.



## PURVIEWS

Dots Effect

- 1 Purview: Animal, Chaos, Darkness, Death, Earth, Fertility, Fire, Guardian, Health, Justice, Moon, Psychopomp, Sky, Sun, War, Water; Magic, Mystery, Prophecy.

## BIRTHRIGHT CONNECTION

Dots Effect

- Link a single Birthright to the Relic's use; must expend 1 Legend.
- May completely regenerate any Followers or Guides destroyed that are linked to it.

## ENHANCEMENT

Dots Effect

- Gain a +1 to an equipment bonus.
- Gain a +1 to a weapon's Accuracy, Damage or Defense.
- Gain a -1 to a weapon's Speed (max. 4, or 3 if the item normally has a 4).
- Add Legend x5 yards to the weapon's Range.
- Gain a +1/+1 to an armor's bashing and lethal soaks.
- Gain a -1 to an armor's Fatigue or Mobility rating.

## POWERS

Dots Effect

- Add wearer's Legend to any single (Attribute + Ability) roll.
- Dissuade thieves who steal the item, killing one of their loved ones until it is returned.
- Doubles the Duration of a given Purview of Boons.
- Reduce the Difficulty of activating a Boon performed ritually using the Relic by -1.
- Once per day may reroll a failed roll as though using Legend, though does not Fatebind.
- May mimic the effects of a single one-dot Boon.

- Create an emotion within a target struck by a weapon or touched by item. Requires a (Charisma + Presence + Legend) roll, opposed by target's (Willpower + Integrity + Legend), and lasting for a number of days equal to the number of successes over the opponent's roll.
- Melee weapon can strike at a distant target out to Legend x5 yards away.
- Increase efficiency of one aspect of a Knack.
- Add +1 to DVs.
- Item may alter its basic shape, length, color or some other physical attribute.
- Reduce die penalty for multiple actions by 1.
- An ammunition-based weapon never needs reloading.
- A fuel- or energy-dependent machine no longer needs either.
- Add wearer's Legend to any roll using a single Ability.
- May mimic the effects of a single two-dot Boon.
- Covering that completely regenerates a single item placed under it overnight.
- Item may be used by a ghost or other intangible creature.
- Add wearer's Legend to any roll using a single Attribute.
- Double the Legend award given by an Itzli Boon if the blood resulting from the ritual is placed within.
- May mimic the effects of a single three-dot Boon.
- May communicate via a medium (mirrors, fires, television sets, etc) and use Boons within Legend x5 miles.
- Undertake an Underworld quest to return a mortal or Scion (of lower Legend than user) back to life.
- May mimic the effects of a single four-dot Boon.
- May mimic the effects of a single five-dot Boon.

RELIC DESIGN — STORY IDEAS

## STORY IDEAS

You have read everything we've put out for **Scion**. The Aztec gods' names now roll easily off your tongue and you can rattle off the Ranged Weapons table from memory. You have a great, well-rounded troupe of players chomping at the bit to don the robes and weapons of Epic Heroes and set off on quests that bards will sing about for centuries to come.

So what do you do now?

Any roleplaying game is only as good as the tales its Storyteller weaves, and even the most experienced of Storytellers has her dry spells or needs some occasional garnish to her otherwise well-prepared feast of adventures. This section provides a panoply

of potential story ideas, divided first by pantheon and then into two story types.

**Seeds** – These are designed to be short, interchangeable blocks of action or intrigue that can be modified to add an extra hurdle or encounter to a plot you’ve already written. Alternatively, you can keep them in reserve for those times when players unexpectedly race through a session ahead of schedule and you don’t want to be caught with nothing to give them. Seeds can serve as subplots and tangents, or they can be expanded into complete stories.

**Plotlines** – Although designed as a detailed plotline for a complete story, these can easily be modified to fit as a session in a larger story or cycle.

Even though these story ideas are organized by pantheon, they are designed so that Scions of any group of Gods can take part – indeed, some of the most interesting stories arise when Scions of one faith have to mop up another pantheon’s mess. However, you are encouraged to mix, match, modify and combine any or all of the ideas in a way that best suits your troupe and your plans.

## SEEDS FOR ANY PANTHEON

- Two pantheons are on the brink of war because of the careful manipulations of a crafty titanspawn. Why take the fight to your enemies if you can get them to kill each other for you? The Gods have enough hubris and suspicion to make such a task all too easy – unless their Scions, who uncover the plan, find a way to stop it.

- A God is a little nervous about a visit to another pantheon’s Overworld domain (or is possibly planning an eventual betrayal of his host’s hospitality), so he sends his Scion to go scout out the territory first, possibly under false pretenses.

## THE AESIR SEEDS

- A character on watch encounters a Fenrir that vanishes when he calls for help. His fellows begin to suspect either his honesty or his wits. But the wolf is very real, waiting until the time when no one will come when the hero calls.

- As part of his tireless preparations for Ragnarok, Heimdall wants to test out a new security system he has built to guard an important location from titanspawn attack. He wants the player characters to attempt to break in, either by force or subterfuge. The location and the nature of the system (magical, technological or both) is up to you, but it should be virtually impregnable. For added complication, perhaps an actual group

of titanspawn simultaneously attack, or worse, get *control* of the security system, turning this test into deadly reality.

- A frost giant has fallen in love with one of Freya’s Scions and has abducted her. Freya asks the characters to perform a rescue mission. Play with the characters’ expectations: perhaps the love is requited, and the two have staged the abduction in order to elope. Perhaps the giant feels genuine love and the Scion is a cruel, unsympathetic jerk. Regardless, there are few ways this seed can end in anything other than tragedy for someone, but perhaps *your* Scions are clever enough to find a way.

## PLOTLINE: REYKJAVIK 101

**Background:** Reykjavik, capital of Iceland, is a city where it rains two hundred days a year, the young population finds weekly release on all-night-long pub crawls called *rúntur* and near-complete darkness reigns for several months at a stretch. Luckily, abundant geothermal power keeps Reykjavik well-lit, but all of subterranean drilling has pissed off a community of dwarves (**Scion: Hero**, p. 318) who have chosen to unleash havoc upon Reykjavik’s citizens. What started out with vengeful pranks, however, has escalated beyond the dwarves’ control when they accidentally unleash a ravenous Fear Pig, a titanspawn with a taste for human blood.

**The Challenge:** The characters are summoned to Iceland by Tyr, who has heard the dwarves’ suit for justice and asks his Scion and her Band to investigate. The dwarves’ pleas “forget” to mention the release of the Fear Pig. Alternatively, the Band may have another reason to be in Reykjavik – it is, after all, a popular vacation spot, and perhaps the heroes are merely trying to enjoy some downtime. In either case, they start to notice weird happenings during the *rúntur* – screams cut short, unexplained crashes and sobbing lovers insisting their partner was carried off by a monster. Some time during the *rúntur*, make sure the Band encounters drunken, depressed college student Hlynir Olaffson. Use him for comic value now, but later he comes to play a major role.

**Pig Hunt:** The Fear Pig is elusive prey; use the mechanics for Hogzilla (**Scion: Hero**, p. 312), plus an ability to inspire fear similar to the Serpent’s Gaze Knack (**Scion: Hero**, pp. 133-134). The creature is large but intelligent and cowardly. Practicing hit and run tactics, it uses its ability to instill paralytic fear with its gaze and then drag victims underground for a snack. Sunlight is deadly to the creature, but sunlight is a rare commodity in Reykjavik during the winter. For powerful Bands, add additional Fear Pigs; maybe the dwarves unleashed a whole den.



**Seeking the Hidden World:** Many Icelanders believe in elves, dwarves and other hidden creatures. Sooner or later, the heroes will have to consult an expert, and Iceland's suburb of Harfnarfjordir has many. Gulla, a portly woman with a jolly countenance, will be happy to help. Unfortunately, she's a huckster: she will charge the heroes inordinate sums and lead them on one wild goose chase after another, insisting the whole time that she has special powers that let her communicate with entities the characters can't perceive. Meanwhile, the Fear Pig claims more lives.

Fortunately, there is a real medium around. Unfortunately, it's wasted college student Hlynir Olafsson. Arrange enough run-ins during the story that it eventually becomes obvious to the characters, if not Hlynir himself, that the boy has a genuine ability to detect Legendary creatures. It's up to the heroes to sober him up, convince him of his potential and get him to help.

**Help from my Little Friends:** With the aid of Hlynir, the characters should be able to locate the dwarves. While eager to share the tale of their own ill-treatment, the dwarves are more reluctant to admit their role in the Fear Pig's release. While ornery, they are not murderers, and if convinced of the extent of the horror the Fear Pig is wreaking, they will help the heroes track it down, even offering special weapons and items to assist in its slaying or recapture.

**Dwarf Summit:** Once the Fear Pig has been dealt with, the original problem remains: the Dwarves' complaint about human geothermal explorations. The Scions will have to arrange a dialogue between the bureaucrats at Iceland's national power company and a representative from the Dwarf Council. Whether you spend time role-playing out the intense negotiations or end the main thrust of the adventure when the pig-thwomping is done depends entirely on the preferences of you and your players.

## AMATSUKAMI

### SEEDS

- One of Izanami's children has gone missing, a reclusive young computer prodigy who had achieved international fame in the online gaming world, although he hadn't stepped out of his house in months. Has he been kidnapped by mortal rivals? Titanspawn? Servants of Izanami's husband, Izanagi? Maybe all three factions are fighting over him, and the Scions are caught in the middle.

- The Amatsukami saddle one of the player character Scions with another of their children (a Storyteller character) whom they have designated an "ambassador" to learn from Scions of other pantheons' Gods. The visitor is with them for the

purposes of cultural exchange and learning; it soon becomes clear that this so-called diplomat's business seems to involve a lot of ordering everyone around and making all manner of arrogant, unreasonable demands. The Amatsukami character will have to walk a fine line between keeping the dignitary happy and keeping her friends from pounding the ambassador's face in, which would anger her divine parent to no end.

- A giant titanspawn (or two!) from Japanese mythology is storming through some city, the military rallies futile defenses and only the Scions can find the secret to slaying it. Play up all the conventions of the giant monster genre: brave reporters, annoyingly precocious kids, mass panic and massive destruction.

### PLOTLINE:

#### OLD WOUNDS, NEW WOUNDS

**Background:** For over a hundred years, dozens of "friendship societies" have existed between sister-cities in the United States and Japan. A high school band from the rural northern island of Hokkaido is visiting a small American town to play a joint concert with the school kids there. Mikaboshi has learned that one of the American students is, unknowingly, a Scion of Amaterasu. The Titan has dispatched a small army of shinobi (**Scion: Hero**, pp. 322-323) to assassinate him. To make matters worse, the older generation in town boasts several World War Two veterans who are uncomfortable with the Japanese visitors. Any attacks on American schoolkids could ignite the flames of mob violence.

**The Challenge:** Amaterasu is aware of the threat to her child, but because of her son's youth and gentleness has chosen not to reveal herself to him just yet. She makes it exceedingly clear to the Scions that, while they are to protect him, they are to shield him from any knowledge of his divine destiny until a time that she determines is auspicious. Blending into a small town is never easy – if you like, you can make it a little easier on your players by establishing at least one character's ties, through family or friends, to this community. Still, a gang of adults will arouse suspicion poking around a high school under any circumstances unless they create an excellent cover story.

**Warm-Up:** Creatures of shadow, the shinobi wait until nightfall to attack. Because this is the biggest event to hit town in ages, both high school bands are practicing well into the evening. Using their powers of stealth, Mikaboshi's minions will seek to spirit their target away unless the Scions are extremely watchful. In any kind of serious fight, they will flee at the last possible moment, leaving the Scions potentially holding smashed musical instruments and having

to explain themselves to irate school personnel and parents.

**Drumbeats:** After one or two shinobi attacks, the veterans in the town spring into action, coming out into the streets – sometimes in wheelchairs, many in uniform – to protest the Japanese visitors' presence. They stir up enough trouble that local drunken louts begin threatening the Japanese school kids; the Scions will have to act fast to prevent beatings and harassment of the visiting kids and their chaperones, all while repelling attempting shinobi assassinations. Note that the shinobi will put up a good fight, but are actually under orders *not* to kill their target just yet; Mikaboshi wants the town stirred up into a cauldron of hatred first.

**On the March:** Assuming the Scions can keep the town from exploding into violence, the joint band concert proceeds on schedule with a jubilantly musical march down Main Street. Protestors will be present. Here is where Mikaboshi plays his trump card: the shinobi attack in spectral fighter planes, strafing and performing kamikaze attacks on the town. The concert descends into chaos as the students run for cover and the protestors decide to take the defense of their town into their own hands, going after anyone who looks remotely Asian. In all of the confusion, the shinobi will make a genuine attempt on their target's life. The young boy – who looks Caucasian – will be making a heroic effort to save a Japanese girl from the mob. Whether Amaterasu chooses this moment to activate his powers or not, giving the Scions a new ally, is up to you.

**Coda:** There are any number of ways this adventure could end badly for some party present, but if the Scions handle the situation well, they will have the gratitude of the Japanese delegation, the town and Amaterasu herself. Truly skillful orators, combat leaders or diplomats among the Scions will even find a way to bring reconciliation between the protestors and the Japanese visitors.

## ATZLANTI

### SEEDS

- Huitzilopochtli assigns his Scion the mission of assassinating a brutal South or Central American dictator on his visit to the US (or, for a high powered group of Scions, maybe they will track down the dictator on his home soil). The tyrant is a scumbag, but getting away with an assassination is no easy task and Huitzilopochtli doesn't appreciate how severe the repercussions will be for his son or daughter. For a twist, perhaps the dictator is actually a decent man trying to do his best to reform his country from within, or is seen being kind and caring to his small children. Will that change the Scions' mind?

- A Zipcana (**Scion: Demigod**, p. 273) is stalking the city sewers. Finding even a giant in miles and miles of dark, twisty tunnels should be a claustrophobic, terrifying challenge. Remember the horror movie rule: show as little of the monster as possible, have victims disappear suddenly, and just when they think it's over, the worst happens.

- A single Atzlánti Scion is waging a one-demigod war against any Scion of another pantheon who he meets. Whether he has truly gone rogue or is acting on some directive from the Aztec Gods is unclear. When the Band tries to take him down, he will appeal to the loyalty of any Atzlánti among them, confide in those characters that he has evidence that another pantheon is planning a war on the Atzlánti, and urge them to join his a pre-emptive strike.

## PLOTLINE: JA-CUZE!

**Background:** Hip-hop artist Alejandra Cruz, aka "Ja-Cuze," has finally caught her big break. Her internet videos have propelled her reputation beyond the *barrio* and into the mainstream, and she's due to sign a recording contract shortly. Her music is edgy and critical of politicians local and national, as one would expect from a daughter of Tezcatlipoca. Unfortunately, her lyrics also call out the leaders of Los Comemierdas, the local drug-dealing gang, for their crimes. They've killed three other promising vocal artists in the city, and Ja-Cuze looks like their likely next target.

**No way, José:** The players can enter the story in any of several ways – they could asked by a concerned mutual friend to intervene, or they could be fans of her music and catch rumor of the threat. If they try to offer their services to Cruz as a bodyguard, however, she flat out refuses. She tells them she's not scared, and will even reveal (if there are no prying mortal eyes around) that she's a Scion and can take care of herself. If any of the player characters is a singer or performance artist, however, she will warm up to him or her immediately and try to befriend them.

**No ordinary hit:** At the moment she convinces the player characters (or, if she never does, at the moment she's separated from them), a hit squad attacks – and no ordinary hit squad, either. They are supported by a camazotz (**Scion: Hero**, p. 258) and other undead creatures. Cruz has little choice but to accept the heroes' aid, and as a reward gives them backstage passes to see her next big show. She is especially generous to any artists among them, requesting a private meeting at a later point (it can have romantic connotations if appropriate).

**Skeletons in the Closet:** At some point backstage, or perhaps in Cruz's apartment, one or more players should stumble upon various clues that they



eventually have to assemble into the singer's dark secret: the bones and remains of those rival vocal artists supposedly killed by Los Comemierdas. Cruz herself has been behind the assassinations, draining both their blood and their talent. Once she has the artist player character alone, she will attempt to seduce or otherwise subdue him and perform the ritual. Make every effort to isolate the victim and hinder the other Scions' efforts to effect a rescue, including forcing them to deal with renewed gang or camazotz attacks, possibly including other undead South American monsters.

**The Show Must Go On:** Cruz should escape retribution long enough to make it to the concert, where by now she has advised security that the Scions are out to get her. Mortal thugs and police won't give the heroes much pause, but a fight at a packed public concert where security is heightened would be disastrous. Do they players negotiate with Los Comemierdas who themselves seem to have struck a deal with titanspawn (or, alternatively, with other Atzlánti elements who don't like the rapper) to take down Cruz? Do they try a subtle approach, sneaking in to deal with her backstage? Or in true hip-hop style, do they take the stage mid-concert and duel her with "free-styling," using rhyme to reveal her as a murderess in front of all her fans?

## DODEKATHEON


### SEEDS

- One of the two surviving Gorgons infiltrates a powerful corporation and has it begin marketing a line of deadly cosmetics that slowly turn their users into medusae (**Scion: Hero**, pp. 320-322). At first they are irresistible, but soon they become hungry for blood. Beloved Storyteller characters of the Scions (or maybe even one of the characters themselves) fall victim, and must be saved even as the Scions figure out a way to thwart the larger plan.

- Hermes needs a hand making deliveries. In exchange for the promise of rewards (or just intrigued by the chance to travel), the Scions will race from one end of the Earth to the next and beyond, ferrying all manner of bizarre cargoes and keeping them safe from ne'er do wells.

- A Scion of the Greek Gods is ordered to find a Scion of the Aztec, Japanese or Voodoo pantheon and pump them for information about their parents. If such a Scion is already in the hero's Band, the task may be easier, although some of the questions will be awkward and personal enough to raise even a friend's hackles. The more information the hero brings back, the more his





parent will present him with additional, even more intruding questions. The Scion may begin to wonder if provoking a conflagration isn't the true purpose of this mission.

## PLOTLINE: MAN OF THE YEAR

**Background:** Creon was content to be the number two man in ancient Thebes, enjoying the benefits of rule without any responsibilities. Then Oedipus had to go and reveal his own incest, the queen killed herself and the two heirs to the throne managed to get Thebes into a civil war that led to an invasion and near-genocide. When the dust settled, Creon was left to pick up the pieces – could anyone blame him for instituting some tough laws withholding burial for traitors? Then his ungrateful niece Antigone had to go stir up rebellion, and by the end she, Creon's wife and Creon's son had all committed suicide. Political careers don't get more disastrous than Creon's. But Creon wants a second chance. The escape of the Titans gave him the chance to flee the Underworld and return to Earth, where he is making a run for governor of the state where the player characters live. He has had thousands of years to study political thought, and he has masterful leadership abilities. He has vision. This time, he is going to get his rightful place as head of state.

**Dirty Campaigning:** The Dodekathemon despise Thebes and Thebans, going way back to Cadmus' crimes, and Oedipus' actions hardly helped. Any players who are Scions of a Greek God will be enlisted to thwart Creon's aims. Blatantly killing a popular candidate for governor, though, wouldn't be a wise move. Not only will it put the heroes on the run from the law, but Creon has also hired some excellent security, both mortal and Titan-spawned, to keep him safe. They will have to resort to political and social means of opposition: muck-racking, slander, political sabotage and even campaigning for an opposing candidate (who may be dishonest, unelectable or even one of the player characters).

**A king's ambition:** Creon will be using the same tactics against any political opponents, including the Scions if they are public about their opposition. The Theban king is a master of political tricks and intrigues, and he has had no problem adapting to the modern age of television campaign ads, slogans and sound bites. Furthermore, he is charismatic and genuinely appealing to many voters, pushing a tough "law and order" stance on crime, security, borders and so on. Creon's weakness, as in ancient times, is his inability to compromise or see nuance. Unfortunately, today's political landscape hardly rewards nuance. Creon may well get elected, and from there on in he'll set his sights on nothing less than the presidency. Perhaps Creon is being used as a front-man by a powerful titanspawn. Every politician has his problematic allies, but Creon's hubris is such that, if convinced he is being used as a

pawn, he may well ally with the player characters to fight his would-be puppet-master.

**Wait until November:** Defeating Creon on the political battlefield works well as a long-term plot, perhaps in the background as the Scions tackle other, more physical opponents. Storytellers can include all manner of cameos and roles for real-life politicians, campaign strategists and journalists. This adventure can be played for laughs or with deadly, John Grisham-style intrigue, but either way, the players should be in for a protracted battle in the political trenches.

## LOA

### SEEDS

- Two warring Bands of Scions pick a Loa Scion to be the mediator between them, counting on her objectivity. Unfortunately, the Scion receives instructions in no uncertain terms from her parent that the Loa have a keen interest in this conflict being resolved in a certain specific way. This interest, of course, must be kept secret – no easy feat in such a climate of tension and paranoia. Will the Scion abuse the trust that has been put in her, and if she does, can she get away with it?

- Former New Orleans Pelicans' pitcher Robert William "Bad-Eye Bill" Whittaker died bitter and unfulfilled in his dream to play in the major leagues. In the wake of the Titans' upheaval, "Bad-Eye" busted out of Ville Au Camp with the shade of fellow New Orleans Pelicans alum "Shoeless" Joe Jackson; the two have assembled hell's baseball team and are determined to redeem their memory by playing a winner-take-all nine-innings against a suitable opponent. If they win, they not only get to live again, but claim the souls of the losers. Baron Samedi's soft spot for the old Southern League team (not to mention his own desire for entertainment) moves him to permit their little contest, but he taps the players, either as players or spectators, to ensure that Bad Eye's team doesn't emerge victorious. The Baron, as umpire, is very clear that the game must be proceed unmolested (i.e., the heroes can't just walk up to the pitcher's mound and pummel Bad-Eye into submission), but he allows the rules of the game to be "bent" here and there.

- Damballa has lost one of his favorite serpents, and commands the player characters to find and retrieve her. The snake in question is both sentient and magical, and has transformed herself into a human woman, intensely curious and determined to explore the mortal world. The characters will have their hands full tracking down the elusive shape-shifter, although her mischievous streak will tend to leave a trail of small catastrophes in her wake.



## PLOTLINE: PLUMBING THE DEPTHS

**Background:** Hurricane Katrina burst nearly every levee in metro New Orleans, plunging most of the city underwater. The dark waters that claimed so many lives and spread so much disease also washed in all manner of Otherworldly menaces, including a young hydra (**Scion: Demigod**, pp. 262-263). Deadly and intelligent, the creature has been hiding beneath the waters during the slow cleanup of the region, claiming victims with hit-and-run tactics. Ogoun or another Loa God sends the Band in to find and destroy this monstrosity.

**Where the ragged people go:** The Hydra doesn't want a fight, at least not yet. It just wants to feed and grow, claiming prey that won't be missed. This means that sleuthing around police reports and other official channels won't get the players very far; they will need to make friends with the homeless and the dispossessed, or at the very least, with the social workers and relief volunteers who know them. The Scions will have to work hard to establish trust, possibly by contributing to relief efforts themselves. Once the player characters do get access to stories of missing people, they should be able to track the Hydra's trail back to its hiding spot.

**Squid hunt:** The Hydra has secreted itself in a difficult-to-access underwater lair full of hazardous obstacles. The precise spot is up to the Storyteller, but it should be both cavernous and eerie – the flooded-out wreckage of a factory, a waterlogged hotel, an abandoned school. The theme here is paranoia: throw all sorts of red-herring noises, blurred motion just outside of a player's field of vision and suspenseful actions that lead to false alarms. The darkness here should be supernatural, affecting bonus modifiers that grant enhanced perception. Separate the players whenever possible – force them to split up to cover more ground or send crashing debris to create barriers between them. Only when the tension hits boiling point should you reveal the monster itself.

**Just when you thought it was over:** The battle against the Hydra on its own turf will be difficult enough (unless the players find an effective way of luring it into a more favorable location, in which case the fight could be only slightly easier). For additional complications, the Hydra may have taken prisoners for late night snacks, forcing the player characters to pull their punches for fear of the victims' safety. If you want the adventure to end at the battle's conclusion, that's well and good, but perhaps the Hydra has benefactors. Canny land-developers barely waited until the rains stopped falling before moving in on New Orleans and buying up the best deserted real estate to sell later to wealthy investors. Maybe one of these tycoons has been using the Hydra as a way of clearing out former tenants, and will send minions to try and rescue his

“pet.” For another twist, a private security firm was also employed during the worst days of the Louisiana looting to restore order – often with shoot-first-and-ask-questions-later tactics. It wouldn't take much for them to mistake the Scions' actions and attack them; even a band of Scions might be challenged by a mercenary group better-equipped than the average US military unit. And of course, there's always the possibility of a second Hydra, maybe even the mother out to avenge its fallen spawn.

## PESEDJET

### SEEDS

- In ancient times, Thoth brought King Thamus the secret of writing, but the king was wise enough to ask about the dangers of this new technology as well as its benefits. Today's cutting-edge trendsetters are far less cautious. Thoth, for the benefit of mankind (as he sees it), introduces some new, high speed, vastly powerful computer networking software that the business world leaps to adopt. Unfortunately, unscrupulous individuals (mortal, Scion or titanspawn) seize on its potential for destruction or mass control. It's up to the players to stop them and determine if the new technology can be adapted for good or whether it needs to be destroyed.

- The Pesedjet decide that a favored Scion of their archrivals the Dodekathemon needs to be taken down a notch, and they call upon their own Scions to do the job. It's all the more complicated if both sets of Scions are members of the same Band.

- Bastet has developed an infatuation with a struggling professor of Egyptology at the local university who is a friend, relative or important contact of the players, and decides to shower him with all manner of gifts. Unfortunately the poor guy, desperate to pass his tenure review, has been having panic attacks trying to explain the mysterious giant cougars that have appeared in his dormitory housing, or why the priceless Pharaonic-era relics that have disappeared from the Museum of Fine Arts have inexplicably materialized in his office. The players must somehow iron out this situation, pleasing the Goddess while also keeping their friend from having his career destroyed, not to mention from getting smitten by a snubbed Bastet.

## PLOTLINE: THE GOD WHO WOULD BE KING

**Background:** After 7,000 years, a rumor arises that an herb capable of restoring Osiris' ability to father children has been found in the World. Osiris had

long ago resigned himself to his brother Set's crime in robbing him of his genitals and thus his ability to be King of the Pesedjet, but now the long-dormant ambitions of kingship ignite in the normally gentle God. Osiris desperately commands his Scions to find this herb. Are the rumors true, or is this just more of Set's trickery? Osiris can't afford to pass up the chance, but, mindful of his earlier defeat and mutilation, he's not willing to risk himself. Promising unimaginable rewards, he sends his Scions and their Band out on a quest.

**Too many heroes:** Whoever leaked this rumor sure didn't work hard to keep a lid on it: everyone from rival Scion Bands (some of whom were also commissioned by Osiris himself) to titanspawn to unwitting mortal botanists and fortune-hunters are all on the case. You can string any number of encounters together at this stage of the game, involving research, following leads beating rivals to the punch and punching them out and taking the goods if they got to them first.

**Out on limbs:** Will the heroes even know the herb if they find it? If its location was obvious, someone would have stumbled upon it sometime in the last seven millennia. Maybe it's a lone sprout in the middle of an impenetrable rainforest. Maybe it's still in seed

form, mixed in with millions of mundane copies or maybe the herb has been ingested and is lying in the stomach of a person, animal or titanspawn. Maybe the herb is a metaphor, and all of Osiris' Scions actually have a small piece of their father's regenerative abilities within them. Can (or will) they give up this piece of their Sire willingly, or is the stage set for a series of assassinations until one Scion is left holding all the goods?

**Revelation:** Is this herb the real deal, or has this whole quest been some cruel joke on the part of Set, a Titan or some other rival God? (Osiris himself is not so sadistic as to knowingly send his children on such a deadly wild goose chase). If it all turns out to be a sham, your players will feel cheated unless they either get some other cool reward, or at the very least get to beat the crap out of whoever fooled them. If the quest was a genuine one, and the heroes (or someone else) do return to Osiris the ability to father children, it will vastly upset the balance of power in the Pesedjet. Osiris only consented to be King of the Underworld because of his neutered state. Horus may offer the Scions even bigger rewards to "lose" or destroy Osiris' herb as a means of preserving his own power. The heroes may find themselves in the role of kingmaker, a powerful and dangerous position to have.

