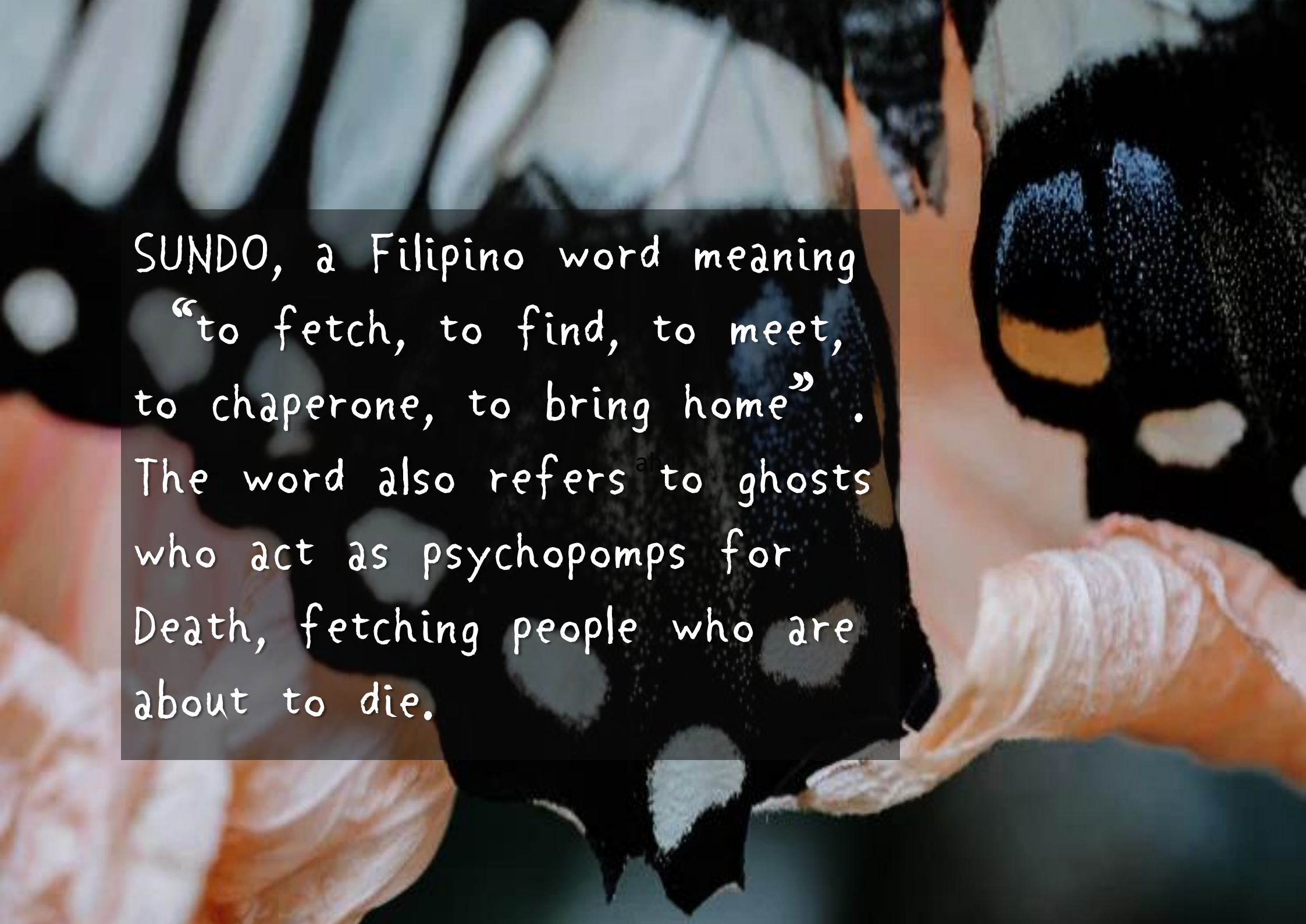


A small, vibrant yellow and black moth is perched on a dark, textured rock. Above the moth, a single, dark, elongated leaf lies flat. The background is a dense, dark forest floor with various rocks and foliage, creating a somber and mysterious atmosphere.

Sundo

A game about death, rebirth, memories, and letting go.

The First Flight, Designed by Pammu

A close-up photograph of a butterfly, likely a monarch or similar species, with black wings featuring white spots and orange markings. The butterfly is positioned on the right side of the frame, with its wings partially spread. The background is blurred, showing more of the butterfly's wings and some orange and white patterns.

SUNDO, a Filipino word meaning
“to fetch, to find, to meet,
to chaperone, to bring home” .
The word also refers to ghosts
who act as psychopomps for
Death, fetching people who are
about to die.

The Rules

These are the Rules all Psychopomps Must Follow.

I. All Things Must Have Their Time.

II. All Things Will Meet Their End.

III. All Souls Have Their Place.

IV. All Guides Exist to Show Souls the Way.

V. All Guides Must Remain Beyond the Living.

VI. All Ways Are One Way.

VII. All Masks Stay On.

VIII. All Burdens Must Be Shed.

IX. All Memories Must Fade.

X. No Rule Must Be Broken.

The Premise

Sundo is a roleplaying game about death, memories, what our dearly departed leave behind in their wake, and letting go. It is loosely designed under **Powered by the Apocalypse (PtbA)** and it requires someone to take on the role of Facilitator. **Players will get to take on the role of psychopomps under the command of Death. What complicates this situation is that psychopomps were once mortals, and do not remember their past.** Ferrying the dead to where they Belong, occasionally dislodges memories of What Once Was. To remember one's self, however, is against the Rules. Death always comes for those who break the Rules, even if the Breakers belong to Them.

At one point in the game, the players will be called upon to choose. Will they let go of who they were and stay as they are, or will they hold their memories close even if it could mean their destruction? Of course, it may be possible for their psychopomps to make their own Way. Tables are encouraged to be open to anything, especially since players of **Sundo** build everything about the game for themselves.

If you want some nice music for your campaign – as inspiration, or for use at your tables, check out the playlist for **Sundo** over on Spotify:
<https://open.spotify.com/playlist/6EBzr7uAaW4aK6MWNQMxjB?si=0GCh67E7Qh6G4Cl0NjTQkQ>

Remember

This is a game that focuses on personal relationships and personal experiences of loss, regret, and grieving. By design, Sundo focuses less on big, overt conflict – although it is possible, depending on the inclinations of your table, to touch on such things. **This game is also best played with a Facilitator who is at least nominally familiar with PtbA.** We have, however, included some basics on the system here in case there are Facilitators who wish to make this their first attempt at running PtbA.

Prepare safety tools. The realities of death and the human experiences around its occurrence sit at the core of Sundo's design. You will inevitably touch upon themes of grief and loss, and how such experiences can be traumatizing. **Make sure to have the full consent of your table before describing anything in graphic detail, or touching upon heavy topics.**

Given the nature of **Sundo**, making use of the safety tools **Script Change** or **Lines & Veils** may fit best. We've included things you can print out for both near the end of this book.

Barring that, there are some great safety tools for listed here, with link backs to their creators:

<https://www.bigbadcon.com/safety-mechanisms/>

PtbA x Sundo

For a game of **Sundo**, you'll need **six people**. One of you will have to take the role of **GM**, and the rest of you will be **Players**. It's possible, of course, to run a game with more than six players, but that's entirely up to your comfort levels as a group, and if your elected Facilitator is all right with managing more than five people. A character sheet has been included for your use, and there is an overview for both players and GMs close to the end of this book. Have some paper and some pencils or erasable pens on hand for noting things down.

In addition to using PtbA's usual dice system and Move Sets, **Sundo** runs on **a token economy**. As such, you'll need 2d6, and we'd highly recommend that everybody has their own set. You'll also need a handful of tokens – preparing 5-8 per person is best, just to be on the safe side. You can use anything you like as tokens: objects that are designed as game tokens (like what *Magic: The Gathering* players use), coins, stones, more dice... whatever suits your fancy, and seems easy enough for everyone to track.

Tokens are an integral part of the experience. As characters in the game have no stats and there are no "level ups", tokens take the place of character advancement. Advancement is directly tied to the recovery or denial of memories. This process will then reveal the world and the story that your table has chosen to explore together. We will go into this at length later.

Everything in **Sundo** is modular. Your group will build everything about the world of your game together. The Setting is comprised of four elements: **Death, the Flock, Psychopomps, and the City**. Checklists and prompts have been provided under each section, to serve both as guidelines and inspiration. After that, each player will create their psychopomps with three things in mind: **who they are as psychopomps, who they were in their previous life, and their Memento Mori**. Once that is done, the table can work on their **Bonds**, which represent relationships between characters, between characters and NPCs, and between characters and the City at large.

The final thing that the table must consider is their Story, which consists of two elements: **the Truths**, and **the Countdown**. The Truths will determine the "bigger conflict" that your psychopomps will end up confronting as they wrestle with the revelation of their nature. The Countdown represents the building tension that comes with your psychopomps slowly becoming entities that their own world seeks to reject.

The basic breakdown of results for Moves in **Sundo** is as follows:

2-5: Miss. Every case of a Miss across Player Moves leads to the Player taking 1 Token.

6-9: Hit. The Move works, but the results could have been better.

10+: Strong Hit. The Move works as intended.

Players, remember that choosing to fail a Move is also an option. Sometimes, having your character not succeed at doing something will make things more interesting for everybody. GMs are encouraged to change things up according to the sentiments of the table, and the needs at hand. On that note: **always remember that a tabletop roleplaying game is best treated as a conversation.** Nothing is set in stone, especially if dice roll results and other factors seem to be detracting from the collective fun, safety, and comfort of the group.

Keystones, Changes, and Tokens

Every time psychopomps in Sundo unlock one of their Keystones, they undergo Changes – physical, mental, or emotional – that illustrate the gradual return of their former identity into the present. These Changes also increase their powers as psychopomps, which permanently effects their dice rolls.

Collecting tokens have temporary effects on player rolls, and tokens can also be dispensed with to achieve additional effects during the game. Tokens are usually collected by failing to perform certain Moves, or because of events in the story, often related to the psychopomp's nature. Of course, players are welcome to choose to fail if they feel it is more interesting for their character, or for the rest of the table. They may also choose to collect a token if story circumstances seem to demand it, even if they would otherwise avoid collecting one entirely.

The moment a character has five or more tokens on hand, these tokens “explode”. **This means that their players must immediately clear five tokens, and mark down one Keystone.** The Facilitator and the player will then coordinate on how the psychopomp's memory is unlocked, and the Change they end up going through. **Once a character has five Keystones, they fully remember who they were before the Wheel transformed them into psychopomps.** From here, we must assume that the character's story – or, perhaps, the story of the entire table – will take some dramatically different turns.

A photograph of a pond with several large green lily pads floating on the water. A koi fish with orange and black markings is visible in the water. The background is dark and slightly out of focus.

Life is Inevitable. Death Goes On.

Sundo assumes that there is no afterlife after death – there is only the Wheel, which is their term for a never-ending cycle of birth, death, transformation, and reincarnation. The energies that constitute a “soul” occupy one form or another at any given point in time. They don’t necessarily occupy a “living” vessel either. Souls can, for example, be rocks, or islands, or inanimate objects. A soul’s vessel may actually be an ephemeral being or a force for a cycle or several– like, let’s say, a god, if gods or god-like beings even exist in the world that your play group has chosen to build.

If there is an afterlife, it is the transitory state that all souls go through: a period of “rest” as the cosmic forces of the world that the City occupies cleanses those energies as best as it can and prepares it to occupy a new vessel.

The stewards, guides, judges, mediators, and – yes – executioners – presiding over this process are Death, and the psychopomps under Their command. Invisible to the rest of the world unless they choose to Unmask themselves, psychopomps in **Sundo** collect the energies that get released after something dies and show them the Way to their next state. Unsurprisingly, the hardest energies to collect are the souls from flora, fauna, and mortal vessels (or your human/mortal equivalent in your game). **Sentient creatures perceive and remember things in ways that non-sentient entities do not. With remembrance comes attachment to a life that they must let go if they’re to move on, for the Wheel must keep turning.**

As far as all psychopomps remember, though, they have always been psychopomps, and Death has always been Death. They are, by their initial reckoning, the only creatures outside of the Wheel. They have to be, in order to be its Masters. They don’t remember who established the Rules or why, only that they must be followed for everyone’s benefit.

The Flock

The City is born, breathes, and dies every day of its existence. Even the most desolate spaces in this world have corners teeming with life. The affairs of the living do not concern you, however. It is those who are dying or already dead who matter to you, for they must be shown the Way.

THE DYING are mortals who are already at the end of their Time, yet their souls refuse to let go of their mortal coils. They lie within the shadow of Death's wings, sharpening their senses in their final moments. They may yet perceive what they would normally be unable to perceive or are able to bear witness to the miracles you could perform for them to help them find the Way.

THE ECHOES are souls of the departed who refuse to go on their Way and avoid Death's stewards as much as they can. Some of them passed only yesterday. Others passed years – maybe even centuries – ago. Their inability to let go has caused them to become obsessed over their anchors – that is, things or entities in the City who meant a lot to them while they were alive. Sometimes, they possess powers and abilities that can cause some trouble for psychopomps.

THE BROKEN are strange, shadowed anomalies brimming with chaotic energy. They fell out of the Wheel, barred permanently from any sort of Way. As such, Death's stewards often have no other recourse but to Reap them and allow the energies they were made out of to return to the Wheel. The Broken possess a frightening sort of animalistic intelligence. Sometimes, they bear striking similarities to psychopomps.

Building the Flock

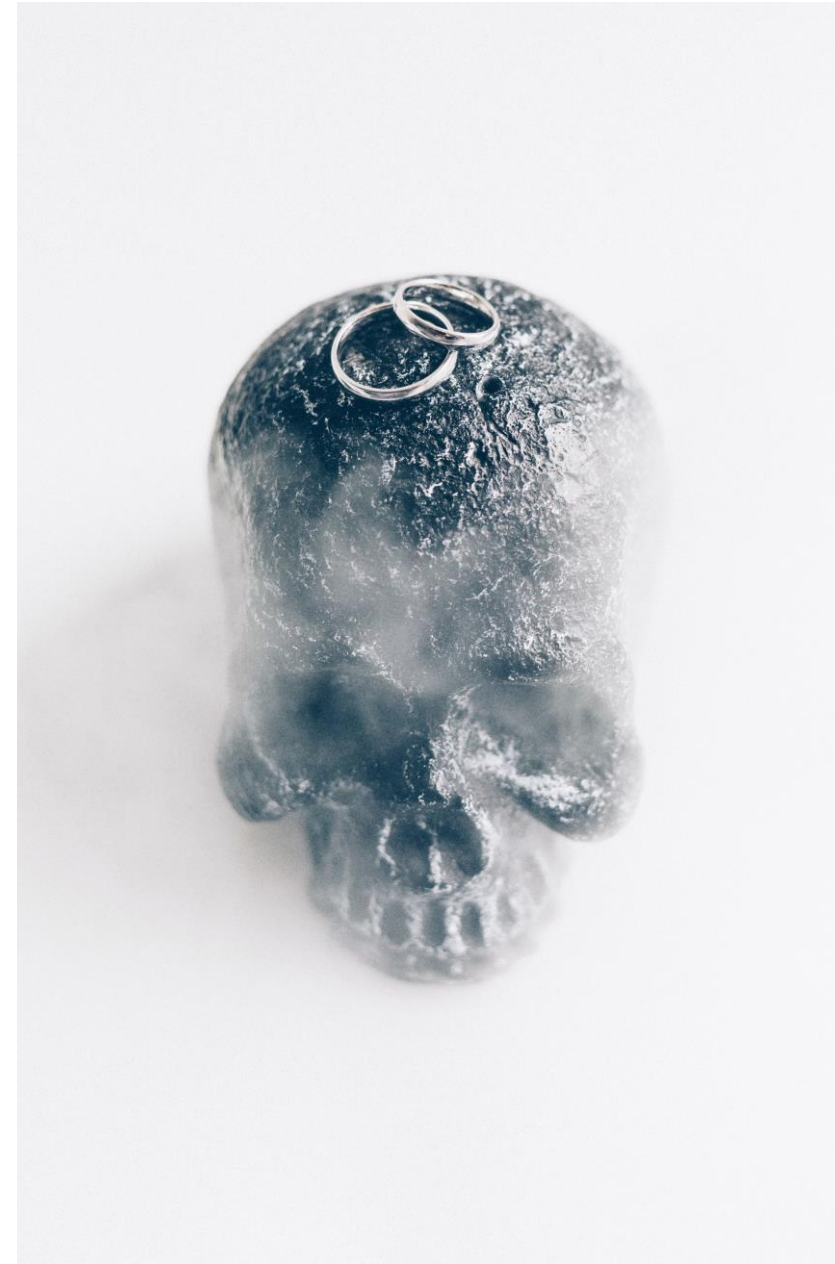
As a group, go through each section together and fill out the details according to their listed guidelines.

The Dying	The Echoes	The Broken
<p>Write three superstitions/beliefs that Mortals have about Death & their Psychopomps. Name beliefs or superstitions either about Death Themselves, Death's stewards, burial practices, funeral rites, souls, the Wheel... you name it. In the Philippines, for example, we believe that if the family of a murdered child wants justice, they must place a chick on the coffin.</p> <p>Write 2 things about the Mortals in the City. Give two phrases or sentences that characterize the people who populate your world. Are there more children than adults, for example? If so, why? Is dancing an important part of their culture? How do they, as a people, handle suicide?</p> <p>Write one thing that the Dying can do while they're under the Shadow of Death's Wings. What special thing can dying mortals do now that they're at the end of their life? Can they see psychopomps clearly? Do they gain flashes of divine clarity before they pass?</p>	<p><i>Choose one item on each of the lists below – or develop your own item of choice.</i></p> <p>Echoes are called Echoes because...</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><input type="checkbox"/> They are poor shades of what they were when they were alive, their memories slowly fragmenting under the pressure of staying past their Time.<input type="checkbox"/> They are stuck in a loop of events right before their End, not knowing they are already dead.<input type="checkbox"/> They call, often without realizing, to the ones they have left behind, threatening to bring their End too soon. <p>In general, Echoes look like...</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><input type="checkbox"/> How they were when they died.<input type="checkbox"/> Any other mortal on the street. Even psychopomps must check to be sure. <p>Echoes can harm psychopomps by...</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><input type="checkbox"/> Threatening their corpus by unraveling it with their gaze, or their screams.<input type="checkbox"/> Possessing them the same way they can possess mortals.<input type="checkbox"/> Knowing that psychopomps are Echoes themselves – and not being afraid to share this information.	<p><i>Choose one on each of the lists below– or develop your own item of choice.</i></p> <p>The truth is, the Broken are...</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><input type="checkbox"/> The “final” end, after a soul has reincarnated enough times within the Wheel.<input type="checkbox"/> Echoes who ignored the Way for so long that they can no longer find peace.<input type="checkbox"/> Creatures that formed from the residual energies of every Sending and Reaping – and slowly gain sentience as they “evolve”.<input type="checkbox"/> Psychopomps who discovered the truth of their nature, and rebel against the Wheel and Death. <p>The Broken can harm psychopomps by...</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><input type="checkbox"/> Being extremely resilient to their powers.<input type="checkbox"/> Being able to copy some of the powers that Death has vested within their stewards.<input type="checkbox"/> Disguising themselves as other psychopomps.<input type="checkbox"/> Taking the form of mortals or living creatures significant to a psychopomp's lost memories.<input type="checkbox"/> Loosening old emotions, thoughts, and impressions with any sort of contact.

Death

What Death is like in **Sundo** is in your hands. As a table, decide on:

- ☐ **Whether Death is a single entity or several.** It's entirely possible that your world has more than one being who is Death.
- ☐ **Their Name and their Pronouns.** How do psychopomps and mortals refer to Death in your world?
- ☐ **Their Form.** Death doesn't have to be personified, nor does it have to have a form like anything known to mortals in your world. What if your table's Death is simply a force that makes itself known to your psychopomps? What if it is a place?
- ☐ **Their Mask.** This is important if your Death is personified or has some sort of tangible form. As with their psychopomps, Death must wear a Mask It's in the Rules.
- ☐ **Their Countenance.** Assign 3-5 adjectives to describe what your Death is like as a "character". This will be a good guide for your GM, who will be handling Death as the major NPC of your campaign. This also ought to help the table outline its expectations a bit better.
- ☐ **Their Quirks.** Jot down 3-5 phrases on any peculiarities your Death possesses, as more guidance to your GM. How do They speak? Do They have a signature smell?
- ☐ **Their Domain.** How do psychopomps meet with Death? Where do they go? What is the place like? Does it even exist outside of, let's say, their dreams?



The City

THE CITY is where your krewe of psychopomps perform their dread work in Death's Name. It is assumed that this is not the *only* City in your world – but it is *your* City. Groups can do as they please when they conceptualize this City: name a real location or make something entirely new. Explore possibilities that appeal to you and your table. You don't even have to assume that you're on Earth to begin with.

Choose one item from each list presented below – or make your own entirely.

OUR CITY IS...

- ☐ A shining metropolis, bright as the future its citizens dream of.
- ☐ A patchwork of cities, villages and towns, rich with history; a strange blend of the old and the new.
- ☐ A war-torn capital. Its grave-like hush is occasionally interrupted by shocks of gunfire and missiles screaming across the skies.
- ☐ A grand old city, coquettishly revealing its secrets to those who have the patience to lose themselves in its winding streets.
- ☐ A sleepy enclave that grew well beyond anyone's expectations – but it has never stopped being the place where people come to live a quiet life, counting down the days.

THE MORTALS IN IT ARE...

- ☐ Human the same way us players are human, with Earthling-like experiences.
- ☐ Human the same way us players are human, without Earthling-like experiences.
- ☐ Anthromorphic creatures with "human" feelings and traits.
- ☐ Plant creatures with "human" feelings and traits.
- ☐ Robots or machines who possess what we would call "humanity".

OUR KREWE IS...

- ☐ One of the many krewes of psychopomps in our City.
- ☐ One of the few krewes of psychopomps in our City.
- ☐ The only krewe in our City.

Psychopomps

In the same way that your table conceptualized Death, you'll have to decide what psychopomps are like in your City. As a group, determine their:

- ☐ **Title.** Angels? Sundo? Shinigami? Watchers? Shepherds? Banshees? Reapers? Daena?
- ☐ **Base Look.** Long robes? Military-like uniform? No clothes at all? Do they radiate light?
- ☐ **Physical Features.** How different or similar are they to what they once were? Are they more "inhuman", for example? Are they "too perfect"?
- ☐ **Their Eyes.** Are they still like the eyes of the Living, or do they look like oceans of stars – or even oceans themselves?
- ☐ **Their Masks.** Are they ornate or crude? Made of wood, metal, or something else? Do they cover a psychopomp's whole face, or just part of it?
- ☐ **Their Portents.** Butterflies? Ravens? Crows? Cats? Dogs? Horses?
- ☐ **Their Wings.** Feathered? Mechanical? Insectoid? Light?

All psychopomps in **Sundo** possess a **Memento Mori** – we'll go into what this is in a bit. **Also, all psychopomps must also have been mortal in their previous life before becoming Death's steward.** They *cannot*, for example, have been an animal before, or a tree, or a rock, or any equivalent thereof of a "lesser" species from the established mortals in your setting.

In general, a psychopomp's physical appearance mirrors their mortal selves. If they had brown, curly hair and angular features when they were mortal, for example, they'll end up carrying that over as Death's steward. They may look healthier or may be a little too "perfect" or otherworldly, depending on the tastes of the table, but the similarities should be uncanny enough such that if they were spotted by a someone in the City who knew them when they were alive, that mortal may recognize them. (There's a reason why the Rules require that psychopomps wear a Mask.)

Players are encouraged to determine minor details that set their psychopomps apart a bit more from each other. All psychopomps in your City may have butterfly wings, for example, but perhaps one of you has black wings. Another may have blue.



They Lied About Death

This next section is where the GM, the players, or the entire table determines Three Truths for their game of **Sundo**. These are, in essence, the hooks that you're going to build your game around. They can revolve around the Wheel, Death Itself, the nature of psychopomps, the City, the Rules, the Memento Moris, the Echoes, the role of memories in your game... anything goes. Your table doesn't have to have Three Truths. One or two can do. You also don't need to feel restricted by having "just" Three. It all depends on the play experience you and your table wish for, and how long you would like your game of **Sundo** to last. One Truth, for example, may suffice for a single session of **Sundo**. Three may be best for a game that you'd like to stretch across several sessions.

The only requirement to consider in order to keep things interesting is that these Truths are hidden from the psychopomps at the beginning. They are dangerous Truths, ones that Death and the forces of the Wheel will punish the psychopomps for knowing. **Consider who or what knows these Truths as well.** The Death in your world might not even know them for Themselves.

We've given some examples of Truths that you can consider for your own games:

- ❖ *Death secretly encourages the recovery of memories in psychopomps. It waits for the stewards to grow in strength – then steals the power they have accumulated for Itself.*
- ❖ *The "end" of a psychopomp is not their destruction. They "end" by becoming the new face of Death.*
- ❖ *Echoes are psychopomps who refuse to let go. They want you to join them.*
- ❖ *Memories are dangerous because all Ways are One Way. You'll be the End of Us All by refusing to let go.*
- ❖ *The Wheel is falling apart. This is why you are all beginning to remember what you should not.*
- ❖ *The City was never real in the first place.*

And So Comes the Night

Every game of **Sundo** has a Countdown, which is a tracker that your Facilitator will construct after everyone has created their characters. This tracker advances forward, falls backward, or remains the same depending on actions taken by the table.

To create the campaign's Countdown:

- ❖ Add two ticks on the tracker for every psychopomp in the krewe.
- ❖ Add two ticks on the tracker for every Truth determined by the players.

For example: if you had 5 psychopomps in play ($5 \times 2 = 10$), and Three Truths ($3 \times 2 = 6$), you'd have a Countdown Tracker with 32 Ticks. The more psychopomps and Truths there are, the longer your campaign ends up becoming. You can adjust this final number according to the expectations of your table, especially if you don't want a campaign to have too many sessions – or, conversely, if you'd like to play **Sundo** together for a while. You may, for example, wish to multiply the total number of ticks you came up with by two for an even longer game.

The Countdown is meant to serve as a story guide for the table, most especially your Facilitator. It reflects how the world, most especially Death Itself, is starting to react to the way that the psychopomps are changing. When the Countdown ends, the campaign must proceed to the Finale. At that point, the table will determine the sort of fate their krewe will face.

The Countdown Advances When...

- ❖ A Rule is broken. Mark one tick.
- ❖ A Keystone is formed. Mark one tick.
- ❖ A Truth is discovered. Mark one tick.
- ❖ The Psychopomp's actions threaten the City. Mark one tick.
- ❖ The Psychopomp's actions threaten mortals. Mark one tick.

The Countdown Falls When...

- ❖ A soul is Sent along its Way. Mark one tick.
- ❖ One of the Broken is Reaped. Mark one tick.
- ❖ A Keystone is destroyed. Mark one tick.
- ❖ A Rule is defended at cost to the krewe. Mark one tick.

Making a Psychopomp in Sundo

Consider the following questions when you make a psychopomp in **Sundo**. We've arranged things to follow the flow of the character sheet at the end of this book.

WHAT IS THE NAME THAT DEATH GAVE YOU?

This is the name that your character goes by as a psychopomp. Psychopomps have no first name or last name. Any naming convention that suits the setting you've built will do. *At this point, it may be good to consider your pronouns.*

WHAT WAS YOUR TRUE NAME?

This is the name that your character had when they were alive and may eventually remember if they collect their Keystones. Any naming convention that suits the setting you've built will do. *At this point, it may be good to consider your pronouns.*

WHAT IS THEIR LOOK?

What do you look like as a psychopomp? Remember: even with the otherworldly features that come with being one of Death's, you're still the splitting image of your mortal self. You just don't know it yet.

Part of your Look is something that sets you apart from other psychopomps in the City. Maybe your Mask, for example, is gold while everyone else's is silver. Maybe your butterfly wings are blue, while one krewemate has white wings, and another has yellow.

WHAT ARE YOUR QUIRKS?

What are some of the things you do, say, or like as a psychopomp? This may or may not be like how you were when you were mortal.

WHAT WAS YOUR END?

Choose what kind of Rider you are out of the Four Ends. Also determine how you died in your previous life.

WHO WERE YOU WHEN YOU WERE MORTAL?

This is where you can go into your previous life. Write down as many details for yourself as you like. Consider what is different between your mortal self and your current self, and consider what has actually stayed the same. This will help you when you create your Memento Mori and your Keystones. This will also help you with determining your Changes, and other story triggers for your game.

WHAT IS YOUR MEMENTO MORI?

This is an object, physical trait, habit, figure of speech or quirk that is a "carry over" from your mortal life. It has, as far as you know, always been a part of you. Check the section on Memento Moris if you want to learn more before you start conceptualizing this.

The Four Ends

Psychopomps in **Sundo** can be divided into four "types". As they don't remember that they were once mortal, they're unaware of this. They are similarly unaware of the fact that their former death gives them two things: **an affinity for the dying who are suffering from a similar fate as they, and frailties related to what the fragments of their own soul recalls, even if they themselves do not.** These frailties may prompt a player to take a token (or more) for their character.

When you create a psychopomp, decide what their End was.

The Crimson Riders

Psychopomps reincarnated from mortals who died due to mortal injustice or violence: war, conflict, crime. **Their soul recalls the evil done upon them by those they should have been able to trust or perhaps love.**

The Crimson Riders take tokens when:

- ❖ They Send or Reap a soul they possess an affinity with. They take another Token if the circumstances of the death precisely match or greatly mirror their own death in their previous life.
- ❖ They roll a 10+ on "Reap a Soul" and "Do As Thou Wilt".
- ❖ They act in anger, bitterness, or vindictiveness.
- ❖ They act to right some sort of wrong on behalf of a krewe mate, in accordance with their duties, or in order to protect the Wheel.



The Viridian Riders

Psychopomps reincarnated from mortals who died due to natural causes, or forces of nature themselves: illness, old age, natural calamities. **Their soul recalls the strange ambivalence they faced as they found themselves succumbing to forces beyond their control.**

The Viridian Riders take tokens when:

- ❖ They Send or Reap a soul they possess an affinity with. They take another Token if the circumstances of the death precisely match or greatly mirror their own death in their previous life.
- ❖ They roll a 10+ on "Spread My Shadow" and "Unmask".
- ❖ They jeopardize themselves or their connections with others by acting aloof or callous.
- ❖ They act in defense of the Rules, the Wheel, their krewes, and Death Itself.

The Pale Riders

Psychopomps reincarnated from mortals who died due to neglect, or by their own hand. **Their soul recalls the deep, choking helplessness they felt over their situation – or the quiet resolve to find the Way for themselves.**

The Pale Riders take tokens when:

- ❖ They Send or Reap a soul they possess an affinity with. They take another Token if the circumstances of the death precisely match or greatly mirror their own death in their previous life.

- ❖ They roll a 10+ on "Ride" and "Reach Out".
- ❖ They act out of sadness or despair.
- ❖ They ease another's emotional burden by showing empathy and care.

The Gold Riders

Psychopomps reincarnated from mortals who died due to ill fortune, or completely by chance. **Their soul recalls the white hot flash of shock or suddenness they experienced before their End.**

The Gold Riders take tokens when:

- ❖ They Send or Reap a soul they possess an affinity with. They take another Token if the circumstances of the death precisely match or greatly mirror their own death in their previous life.
- ❖ They roll a 10+ on the Moves "Flight" and "Come to the Altar".
- ❖ They form a new Bond with Death or psychopomps from another krewes, or one of their preexisting bonds in these directions change.
- ❖ They stumble upon something related to .the Truth.

Remember that you will die.

A soul in Sundo is a sum of parts across all its previous life cycles. These parts remember even if the souls themselves do not. The residual energies from these buried memories resonate with each other and form a Memento Mori. **Memento Moris are things that reflect who the psychopomp was during their previous life – a cycle that they start the game not remembering.** Why Death would be so cruel as to have remnants of an existence lost to them attached to Their stewards is a mystery – or, perhaps Memento Moris exist due to the machinations of the Wheel, and even Death cannot prevent them from forming. The reasons could be something that your table will choose to explore during your Journey.

Memento Moris can be objects, like accessories that psychopomps wear or things they carry on their person while they shepherd the City. Perhaps it's a necklace of heavy gold. Maybe it is a dagger that you use as a focal point for the duties you perform. It could be a simple clip in your psychopomp's hair, or a silver ring on one finger.

Memento Moris may also be a distinguishing physical characteristic: a peculiar scar, the way your hair's been styled, a distinct mole, eyes that stand out against all other psychopomps in the City. **It could be a habit, or a figure of speech that your psychopomp often uses:** you always steal away to read a book in one specific Library after a Sending, or you've a fondness for the phrase *"When it rains, it really pours."*

Each player must decide Five Keystones that are attached to this Memento Mori. A Keystone is an important memory of their previous life; it may be viewed as a cornerstone of their identity. Once they have been collected, these Keystones make up the highlights of the psychopomp's Story. These Stories are centered around a significant person or group, place, or event in their previous life. Keystones are formed when your psychopomp's tokens explode.

More on Memento Moris

Here are some guidelines that players may wish to consider while they are conceptualizing the Memento Moris of their psychopomps. GMs are free to modify any of the information we've presented, especially if the world that their tables have conceptualized isn't really compatible with what we've put down.

Memento Moris that are objects...

- **Can get lost, albeit temporarily.** Psychopomps are attuned to their own Memento Mori's energy. Using Moves like "Psychometry" or "Spread My Shadow" can help a psychopomp locate their Memento Mori. The loss of the Memento Mori, however, will feel a bit like losing one's limb. *Your GM may consider having you roll at a disadvantage while you're compromised. Perhaps the loss of a Memento Mori may even merit a psychopomp receiving a token.*
- **Can be damaged, broken, or even destroyed completely.** Fixing a Memento Mori requires expending a great amount of energy. On a mechanical level, you or a krewé mate will have to spend Tokens for it. A damaged or broken Memento Mori is as bad as the psychopomp suffering from an energy themselves. A destroyed one is even worse. *Your GM may consider having you roll at a disadvantage while you're hurting. The damage, breaking, or destruction of a Memento Mori may even merit a psychopomp receiving a token.*

Memento Moris that are distinguishing physical characteristics or a notable figure of speech...

- **Are peculiarities that even other psychopomps will find strange.** It can be written off, perhaps, as "flaws" in a guide's design or some sort of mystery of the Wheel, but they ultimately feel like something "mortal" present on something

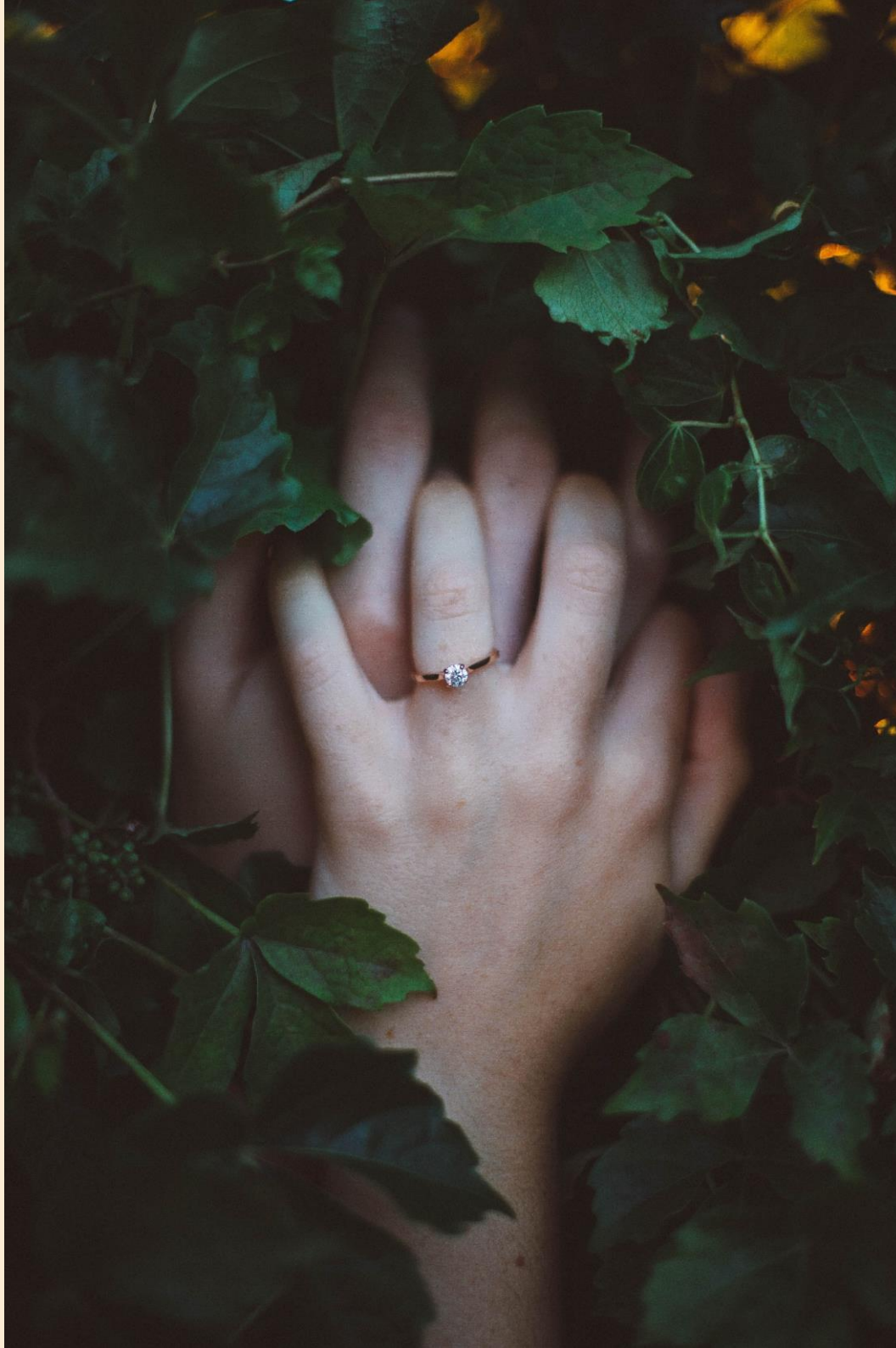
that is NOT mortal. As many other psychopomps seem to have these, it may yet be something that can be written off by your characters – up to a point, anyway.

- **May make a psychopomp recognizable to any mortals who knew them for who they were before.** It is, in essence, a walking story hook. *Unmasking or otherwise revealing yourself to mortals, then, may be riskier if there is a distinguishing physical characteristic that can tie you to who you were.*

Memento Moris that are habits or routines...

- **Consider how your psychopomp may feel if they are unable to go back to this habit or indulge in this routine for an extended period.** How will it make them feel? How will this effect them? *Your GM may consider having you roll at a disadvantage while you're compromised. Perhaps being barred in a lasting or permanent way from your Memento Mori may even merit a psychopomp receiving a token.*

○ **May be treated like a "sixth" Keystone.** You can, for example, build your five other Keystones around this one. It may also appear or be alluded to in the fragments of memories that you recover throughout the game.



Sample Memento Mori: The Ring

The ring is a simple, unobtrusive piece. Ciri has observed that she wears it, instinctively, on a different finger than the mortals she has seen with similar jewelry. She does not know why she can't bear to change it, though, or remove it completely.

The Story: the ring matches the family heirloom from the mother of the fiancé she had in her previous life. It was their engagement ring. They were supposed to get married in secret (neither of their families approved of their union), but Ciri – or the woman she was before she became Ciri, the psychopomp – became terminally ill.

Keystones:

- 1. The first time they met: huddled together by chance under the leaking roof of the same, isolated bus stop.*
- 2. Eyes meeting over some shelves in a bookstore close to home. She gets coffee; she gets tea.*
- 3. A year of courtship hidden from the harsh, judging eyes and wagging tongues of both their families. Don't wear the ring where it ought to be, but don't ever take it off.*
- 4. The diagnosis. They try everything. Hope becomes hard, and then it runs out.*
- 5. The warmth of those hands holding hers as it starts to grow dark, as it begins to get very, very cold.*

Players: don't stress out on making things too detailed for the Keystones, or even for your psychopomp's story. Help each other out; build things together. Ask your GM for their take too!

Tokens

As the players of the psychopomps who are wrestling with memories of their previous life, you collect Tokens that are meant to reflect the building revelation of your nature. They also reflect that your psychopomps are going through *actual* changes as these fragments resonate within their soul, affecting everything they touch.

Depending on how they died in their previous life, psychopomps possess “unique” conditions that trigger the acquisition of tokens. On top of that, there are general circumstances that will prompt your GM to give you a token. We go into the general circumstances on the next page. Unique conditions that you can take note of are listed under “The Four Ends”.

The more tokens you have, the more powerful your psychopomp is. However, having five or more will reveal a Keystone, and will also Change your psychopomp permanently. Managing your Tokens very well by collecting and dispensing them as you need – or, perhaps, invite the Change, and see where it takes you.

Conversely, you can use tokens to destroy Keystones, and reject the incoming Change for yourself or for a psychopomp in your krewes. Not everyone is ready to face the Truth of things, most especially if it is the truth written into their own souls. Besides: who can blame anyone – even a psychopomp – for being afraid of the End?

YOU TAKE A TOKEN...

- ❖ When your Memento Mori is compromised.
- ❖ When you have broken one of the Rules.
- ❖ When you are Sending or Reaping a soul whose death closely mirrors or exactly mirrors your own psychopomp's last death.
- ❖ When you form a new Bond, or when a pre-existing Bond changes.
- ❖ When you decide that an event or scene during the game has stirred something up within your psychopomp, jostling the memories sleeping within them.
- ❖ A Bond of theirs mirrors aspects of their previous life or is like one of their Keystones.

WITH TOKENS, YOU CAN...

- ❖ Dispense a token to add or subtract 1 to your roll. You can only dispense one token at a time.
- ❖ Change the individual pools of tokens you and the players of your character's krewes have. You can't make each other's tokens disappear, but you can, for example, opt to take somebody's token into your own pool, or they can take one of your tokens and put it in theirs.
- ❖ Destroy a Keystone of yours or – with the consent of their player, or in the case of the GM, with the consent of the GM – another psychopomp's Keystone. This takes 4 Tokens. Any advancement that your character possessed is lost, and any Changes that have happened disappear together with the memory.

Changes

As your psychopomp collects Keystones and draws ever closer to remembering who they really are, they mysteriously grow stronger as a shepherd/reaper under Death's command. It is almost as though they are less of who they supposed to be, and these "forbidden" memories complete them.

In addition to advancement, your psychopomp changes in a visible or tangible way, appearing or acting less like they did as a guide and more like they were when they were mortal.

The advancements listed below stack. They don't get replaced as your character collects more memories.

1 Keystone. Choose one Move. Permanently add +1 to all your rolls for that Move. List down a Change that reveals more of who you once were.

2 Keystones. You may add +1 to the roll of a krewe mate as long as you're within the vicinity. List down a Change that reveals more of who you once were.

3 Keystones. Choose between the Shepherd Move Set and the Reaper Move Set. Permanently add +1 to all of your rolls for that set of Moves. Take a permanent -1 to all of your rolls for the other set of Moves. List down a Change that reveals more of who you once were.

4 Keystones. A krewe mate of yours can make a roll at an Advantage as long as you're within the vicinity. List down a Change that reveals more of who you once were.

5 Keystones. Your chosen Move Set now rolls at Advantage. List down a Change that reveals more of who you once were.



Bonds

Death's stewards never work alone. When a table of players come together for a game of **Sundo**, they assume that all their characters are known to each other. Death has also required them to work together for reasons that they may not know or understand.

This section contains the Bonds that players consider during character creation. **You don't have to fill out all the listed Bonds, but you *must* make sure that your psychopomp possesses at least one Bond with another psychopomp under "The Krewe".** They also don't have to be the same Bond between the characters in question.

Each player must fill out **"The Krewe"** and **"Do Not Fear the Reaper"** sections on their own – although, you're always welcome to ask your tablemates or GM for suggestions. "The Krewe" represents the psychopomp's personal connections with the rest of the table. "Do Not Fear the Reaper" represents the psychopomp's personal connections with Death.

The table must fill out the **"In Their Shadow"** section together, perhaps with one player filling out one Bond each for the group. These Bonds represent the Krewe's relationship with Death and other krewes in the City as a group.

Communicate with each other and come up with fun and interesting things together. If there isn't something apt on any of the lists presented here, feel free to make your own.

THE KREWE	DO NOT FEAR THE REAPER	IN THEIR SHADOW
_____ and I work well together. We both understand how important our Work is. I don't approve of _____. They do not respect the Rules. It is hard to be around _____. I feel like I let them down because of _____. _____ makes me feel strange. My _____ around them. I don't understand why. One time, I covered for _____ because _____. They owe me one.	I am _____ to be a psychopomp because _____. My most significant encounter with Death is _____. The Rule I respect the most is _____ because _____. The Rule I question the most is _____, but I have not told anyone why. Sometimes, when I am guiding souls along their Way, I feel _____ because _____.	The area of the City our krewe handles is _____. We like it here because _____. Mortals _____ us because _____. Other krewes think we are _____. Perhaps it is because _____. We gelled together over this one time where _____. Even with our differences, nothing can shake our bond now. Our krewe's biggest failing was _____, yet Death has not punished us for it.

Player Moves

SHEPHERD (THE GENTLE APPROACH)

FLIGHT.

You spread your wings and take flight, moving speedily from one point to another. This Move may also be used to avoid danger or defend yourself.

2-5: The wind is not beneath your wings today. Take 1 Token.

6-9: You succeed, although by mortal eyes, you're not entirely invisible to them. They see Portents. If you were in danger, you have avoided it well enough.

10+: You blend perfectly into the space around you, and move with alacrity. Add +1 to your next roll.

REAPER (THE FORCEFUL APPROACH)

RIDE.

You step into the skin of a living creature, possessing them as though they were a ghost or spirit, occupying the spaces between their thoughts, seeing through their eyes.

2-5: Your chosen vessel rejects you. The both of you are shaken. Take 1 Token.

6-9: You succeed, and can remain within the vessel for one full day before they start to feel like something is amiss. The Ride is not a perfect one, though. Sometimes you can feel their emotions as though they are your own

10+: The ride is seamless. You can remain within the vessel for as long as you like.. They don't perceive you at all.

PSYCHOMETRY.

You extend your senses, sifting through the energies around you, trying to catch echoes of the past and present through impressions, and lingering emotions. Describe how you do this and the sort of impressions you gravitate towards (Touch? Sound? Color?).

2-5: Everything's a jumbled mess. Take 1 Token.

6-9: You succeed. Ask your GM one question. They will describe their answer to you using the impressions you've chosen.

10+: You succeed and glean much from your search. Ask your GM two questions. They will describe their answer to you using the impressions you've chosen.

SPREAD MY SHADOW.

You spread your will through the City, letting the cacophony of mortals reach your ears, seeking to connect with energies that are similar to yours: powerful echoes of death as it happens, and mortals who will need to feel the touch of your hand soon.

2-5: Everything dies a little every day. You don't know where you're needed the most. Take 1 Token.

6-9: You have found some places in the City, but you're uncertain where you're most needed. Your GM will describe 3 options to you. Go where you will.

10+: You know exactly where you must go. Your GM will describe what is happening, and where.

SHEPHERD (THE GENTLE APPROACH)

FUNERAL RITES.

You push a dying mortal in subtle ways, influencing their environment – their surroundings, the mortals around them – in order to make them turn towards you and seek the Way for themselves. Describe your plan.

2-5: Whatever you thought would help really didn't. The soul resists the Way even more. Take 1 Token.

6-9: You don't succeed as much as you would have liked. A bit more of a push is needed, although it can no longer come from you – unless you wish to risk breaking the Rules.

10+: What you've chosen to do is exactly what the soul needed to be ready. Gain +1 to your next roll. Gain +2 if you choose to Perform a Sending right away.

PERFORM A SENDING.

It is Time. You take a willing soul by the hand and show them the Way.

2-5: The lingering echoes of the soul you've sent off surround you, leaving you reeling. You know they will Return, as all things are part of the Wheel, but something is off. Describe these feelings to your table, and what you do about them. Take 1 Token.

6-9: You succeed, however even though you know they will Return – as all things are part of the Wheel – but something is off. Describe these feelings to your table, and what you do about them.

10+: The lingering echoes of the soul you've sent off surround you, giving you power. Describe your feelings over this, and the kind of empowerment you are feeling. Add +1 to your next roll.

REAPER (THE FORCEFUL APPROACH)

UNMASK.

You remove your Mask, revealing you for what you are in all your glory, for dying mortals cannot resist the siren pull of where they must go when they see it for what it truly is. Describe the comforting miracle or vision you wish to perform.

2-5: You enthrall the soul completely, but you went a bit too far with the miracle you've performed. Death is displeased with you. The GM will choose what you inadvertently revealed of yourself and your true nature to the City. Take 1 Token.

6-9: You don't succeed as much as you would have liked. A bit more of a push is needed, although it can no longer come from you – unless you wish to risk breaking the Rules.

10+: The miracle you have given them fills you with power. Gain +1 to your next roll. Death is willing to let your indiscretion slide.

REAP A SOUL.

It is Time, even if they refuse to acknowledge it. You grasp at a soul and show them the Way.

2-5: The violence of the forced Sending leaves you reeling. Perhaps you have marked that soul in a way that will carry over until its next life. How do you feel about this? Take 1 Token.

6-9: You succeed, but the lingering energies foul up the area. They will hover around you for a day or more, coloring things for those around you.

10+: You succeed. The lingering echoes of the soul you've reaped surround you, giving you power. Describe your feelings over this, and the kind of empowerment you are feeling. Add +1 to your next roll.

SHEPHERD (THE GENTLE APPROACH)

HELPING HAND.

You lend another psychopomp assistance. Perhaps you intercede on their behalf, or you're coming together with them to complete an important task.

2-5: You hinder your krewe mate more than you help them. Both players must describe how this plays out, and how it makes their characters feel. Take 1 Token.

6-9: You help well enough, although it comes at a cost. Your krewe mate gets +1 to their next roll. Your GM will determine what consequences you'll suffer.

10+: Things turn out wonderfully. Your krewe mate gets +1 to their roll. Both players must describe how this plays out, and how it makes their characters feel.

REAPER (THE FORCEFUL APPROACH)

COME TO THE ALTAR.

You invite Death to act through you, calling open Their power.

2-5: Death turns Their face from you in displeasure. For whatever reason, They feel like you reached for Them without due cause. Take 1 Token.

6-9: Death responds, but the connection between you is turbulent. Gain +1 to your next action, but you are, for the day, full of odd, disturbing memories of a mortal life. (You may or may not know, by this point, that it was your own.)

10+: Death responds. Your GM will describe how Death assists you. Describe how this makes your character feel. Gain +1 to your next action.

REACH OUT.

You attempt to emotionally connect to another krewe mate, perhaps because they are in need of it – or perhaps you are. Or maybe you both are.

2-5: What you did or said was precisely what your krewe mate did NOT need. At all. Players, work out what happened and why it went horribly wrong. Take 1 Token.

6-9: You mean well and it shows, but it's a little awkward. Players, work out what happened, and describe how this may or may not have changed things.

10+: What you did or said was precisely what your krewe mate needed. Players, work out what happened. Illustrate how this has changed things, and adjust any of your pre-existing Bonds that will get affected by this exchange.

DO AS YOU WILT.

You force your will with another krewe mate, because you believe they are in need of it – or perhaps you're the one who needs to act out a little.

2-5: What you did or said made things worse. Players, work out what happened and why it went horribly wrong. Take 1 Token.

6-9: You do have a point, or your actions can somehow be justified even if your krewe mate doesn't like it or approve. Players, work out what happened, and describe how this may or may not have changed things in the long run.

10+: You get your way. Players, work out what happened. Illustrate how this has changed things, and adjust any of your pre-existing Bonds that will get affected by this exchange.

GM Principles

The best tabletop roleplaying sessions are ones that treat the game as a respectful, compassionate conversation between loved ones or friends. Consider reading through some of the items we've put down here before you run sessions of **Sundo**.

SET THE STAGE FOR YOUR PLAYERS, DON'T UPSTAGE THEM.

Empowered players respond to events in the game all on their own – they simply need to be empowered to do so. Remember that it is about giving them the floor through describing, as vividly as possible, what is happening to their characters. Don't tell them how to feel. Let them decide that for themselves.

TREAT DEATH AND ITS REALITIES WITH DIGNITY.

While it is a fact that people die every day and that death in itself is simply unavoidable, this should not mean that we should be less empathetic since we can't do anything about it. Death is a topic that ought to be taken seriously. Portraying it together with what happens in the aftermath of the passing of a living creature should be tempered with empathy.

THIS SOUNDS IRONIC, BUT: BRING DEATH TO LIFE FOR YOUR PLAYERS.

Your table outlined the sort of NPC or force they wish Death to be. As Death is sort of the god figure in Sundo and stands at the center of your game, it's important to flesh out how Death is. Find ways to build upon the characteristics your group outlined.

THE CITY IS BOTH SETTING AND CHARACTER FOR YOUR GAME.

The City is as equally significant as Death is, especially since all the action in the campaign – including its finale – will take place within its bounds. Focus on the small things that identify the City for what it truly is. Talk about the sights, the smells, the way its denizens are, how its skyline is under different seasons, under different conditions. It is a character just like the psychopomps.

GM Moves

The Moves listed here are **PRESCRIPTIVE MOVES**, meant to illustrate how Game Masters of **Sundo** can do things at their own tables. Adjust what you will. Build on what we've started, remove what doesn't work. Anything goes.

WELCOME THE DAWN

The "start a session" move of Sundo. This is the beginning of "the day" for the krewe. If it's the first session, establish the City and the world that the psychopomps live in. If it isn't, pick up where everyone's left off.

TURN THE WHEEL

The introduction of the session's "conflict" – showing the psychopomps who or what they must attend to, as the Hands of Death. In essence, this is about presenting what needs to be shown the Way: the Dying, Echoes, or Broken Ones within the Flock. This move can also be toggled in response to the Player Move "Spread My Shadow".

DURING THE WAKE

The move that tracks the aftermath of a Reaping or Sending, especially after the use of "The Wheel Turns". Here is where the GM must answer the question *"What happens to those who have been left behind?"*. This is also where the table will take stock of how their actions affected the situation on hand, or the City as a whole.

BRING THE NIGHT.

The "end of session" move of Sundo. This is where you can give space to your psychopomps to interact with each other and explore how things are after the events of the in-game time covered by the session (i.e. the day, the week). Story hooks brought about by Moves like "During the Wake" and "" can be put front and center here. Don't forget to have an OOC sit down with your players afterward!

WALK INTO THE GARDEN.

The **“total recall” move of Sundo, triggered when Keystones are revealed by a psychopomp, or a Change occurs.** Remember to set the stage for your players. Describe, with as much vivid detail as you can, what their characters perceive as their soul recalls what their minds and hearts do not yet know. Don't determine their feelings for them. Let them respond on their terms.

BUILD THE STORM.

The **“fallout” from the GM Move “Walk into the Garden”.** The tension and strangeness of characters realizing that not all is well within them or the City – the “wrongness” of no longer knowing who they may really be – is something that must be explored at the table. This is also where GMs should establish how the acts of self-actualization – or in some cases, the denial of personal truths and memories – are affecting the krewe. This Move may be used in tandem with “During the Wake” or “Bring the Night”.

TURN THE HOURGLASS

The **advancement or fall of the Countdown in your game of Sundo, as the psychopomps behold the Truth or Truths of their game.** Here is where the GM must answer the question *“How will Death, the Wheel, and other external forces respond to the psychopomps now?”* The psychopomps are becoming disruptors of the established status quo. Any sort of disruptive element in any kind of environment – even in real life situations – always receives some sort of blowback.

DRAW THE CURTAINS.

The **“end of game” move of Sundo.** This brings your campaign to a close, where the table will explore the sort of end that the players will witness given all of the revealed Truths, the Countdown, and the personal decisions of the krewe.

Sundo

Remember that all things End. / Remember that you were alive, once.

We, Death's Hands

NAME:

PRONOUNS:

OUR END:

We, Once Mortal

TRUE NAME:

PRONOUNS:

HOW WE DIED:

What We See in the Mirror

Write simple descriptors, write a small essay, draw. Anything goes.

LOOK:

QUIRKS:

When We Walked the City's Streets

Write simple descriptors, write a small essay, draw. Anything goes.

LOOK:

QUIRKS:

Bonds

THE KREWE

DO NOT FEAR THE REAPER

IN THEIR SHADOW

Who Was I?

Our Memento Mori

Encircle or underline the status that applies.

STATUS: WHOLE || DAMAGED || BROKEN || LOST

Write simple descriptors, write a small essay, draw. Anything goes.

Changes

KEYSTONES UNLOCKED:



CHANGES:

Notes

A blue butterfly with white spots is perched on a small, spiky flower. The background is a soft, out-of-focus sunset with warm orange and yellow light. Silhouetted plant stems with buds are visible on the left side of the frame.

Sundo: The Second Flight

COMING SOON.

Credits, Acknowledgements, Legal Stuff

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