



THE FIST OF  
**Eshmaraddon**

A BEGINNER'S KIT FOR

**GODS**  
THE ROLEPLAYING GAME









**GODS is a dark fantasy roleplaying game  
published by Arkhane Asylum**

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# WELCOME TO GODS

The gods deserted the Wildlands. Destroyed, exiled, forgotten. Fought by the First Men, in their thirst for freedom and drunk with pride. It was the end of the First Age and the beginning of the Second. The time of Oblivion. Today, new civilizations clash with each other, among the ruins of ancient cities and abandoned temples, vestiges of an era of lost greatness.

The Cult of the Black Sun imposes its law, spreading the Sacred Words of the Prophet, folding empires under the obscurantist dogma of his Unique God. At the dawn of a new Dark Age, hesitating between the glorious ambitions of Men or the fall into barbarism, the characters of GODS shake the foundations of a new, brutal world. They are heroes and legends in the making, wielding legendary Shards containing the power of the gods. Chosen Ones who seek their destinies—respected by some, despised by others, and condemned and hunted down by the Cult through the Wildlands.

## WHAT IS GODS?

GODS is a Dark Fantasy pen & paper roleplaying game created by Bastien Lecouffe Deharme. The game invites the players to impersonate heroes seeking high adventure in the Wildlands, a brutal land abandoned and forgotten by the gods.

Created by fans of epic and dark Fantasy, GODS offers a variety of game experiences. From single one-shots adventures to big-scale campaign, the Oracle and the players can play the game the way they want to.

GODS is a love song to the writers who defined the Dark Fantasy genre, such as Robert E. Howard, Karl E. Wagner, Michael Moorcock, or Glen Cook, presented as a modern and adult gaming experience, supported by a d10 system that favors gameplay, narrative, and fun while including simulation and realism.

### What do we play?

The gods used to be part of life in the Wildlands. Now, they're gone, taking with them the symbols and the soul of the land. The Cult of the Black Sun takes advantage of this disappearance by spreading the words of its Prophet.

Yet, some swear they still hear the Old Gods in the whisper of the winds and the flames. In the echo of the hammer

hitting the anvil. These people are not only druids, witches and oracles. They are warriors or thieves, old captains, guardians of antique libraries, slaves and gladiators, sailors and explorers, adventurers and heroes of all kind.

The gods need the men and women of the Wildlands to remember them. They need them to believe in their names once again. The Gods choose their heroes. They choose those who are their voices and hands among the mortals.

GODS invites players to incarnate men and women of exception, who hear the call of the Old Ones. The characters, heroes, and Shard bearers, are the agents of the Old Gods' awakening. Through their actions, the Old Gods fight to regain their past power.

They hear the call of the forgotten gods.  
They are the Chosen Ones.

They bear a Shard, a symbol of the link between them and their gods. As the link evolves, the Shard becomes more powerful. The Shard is the instrument of their glory; and together, they are the messengers of the gods. The Chosen Ones face the dangers of the Wildlands and the Cult of the Black Sun. The time comes to carve the names of the old gods once again: by the steel, the fire, and the blood!





## MAGIC

*"There is no magic in this world. Only ashes and regrets. Or, is this what magic is?" – Khan*

### **The Shards**

*"Power. Gods. Destiny. Tell me more." – Doula*

To reach their chosen humans, the Old Gods project a fragment of their spirits in man-made objects called Shards: weapons, tools, jewelry or any type of artifact. Vectors of divine favors, they provide the Chosen Ones with a physical symbol of the god, an emblem, a link, and a companion that will help them fulfill their destiny.

Shards can be any objects created by men. Gods of war incarnate into weapons; gods of art, in writing tools or wonderful jewelry; gods of travel, a pair of boots or some directional device, etc. Each playing character encounters one of these rare and precious objects at some point in their adventure.

Through the Shards, the Chosen Ones develop a link with their gods, receive favors and powers, help them forge their legend, and wake their gods. In game, the Shards evolve and accumulate powers according to the choices of the characters and the strength of the link built between the Chosen Ones and their gods.

### **Sacrificial Magic**

*"I know magic. Gods only answer to pain. I know everything there is to know about magic." – Silence*

The wakening gods also provide magic to men by answering their calls through sacrifices and rituals. The relationship between men and gods was always built on exchanges between services and favors, pledges of reverence and signs of recognition, forbidden thoughts and encouraged acts. Priests and believers found communion with their gods through rituals and ceremonies. However, the gods disappearance broke the link between the divine and men.

Recently, men and women found a way to reconnect with the gods. The odd ones, the crazy, the shamans and the druids, the seers and the oracles, they all feel the energy of the gods rising. They can access their favors once again through the practice of sacrificial magic.

Sacrificial magic implies rituals that vary depending of the gods they are addressed to. From blood sacrifices to destruction of valuable materials, they sometimes require specific actions to be performed. The few who receive answers from divine energies through those rituals are also considered Chosen.



# THE WILDLANDS

*"Can you see it? Walk on it? Sleep on it? That's the Land. Everything is the Land." – Gamesh*

None return from beyond the giant, misty mountains of the North or from the humid and venomous jungle of the South. The Wildlands exist, brutal and unrelenting, between those regions and the thunderous seas.

The Wildlands are a dangerous and adventurous land breathing under the light of its Sun and its two Sisters: Sinla, the Silver moon and Akhat, the Bad one that corrupts the mind.

It is a land where humans build their new empires over the ruins of a past civilization of giants. They build upon the vestiges from a forgotten past of another scale. They build their cities to protect themselves from the wilderness and the dangers of the land.

## **A world forgotten by the gods**

*"Who gives a snot about the gods? They're dead. Skies are empty!" – Moonface*

The gods are silent, they no longer respond to prayers and rituals. Some say they deserted the Wildlands.

While the Vaelkyr warriors try to catch the attention of Mother North by reviving the ancient traditions in blood and fire, the Avhorean grow weary of the prophecies of the Mad Druids. The people of Sabaah witness the destruction of the statues and icons of the old gods, replaced by representations of the One and his Prophet.

Men and women fight for their survival, and civilizations collapse faster than they grow. The grim Cult of the Black Sun spreads like the plague, preaching the Words of the One.

## **A world to explore**

*"The Land is a playground. Dangers? Death? Bah! Children don't know fear. Fear is something you learn." – Doula*

The Wildlands call for new heroes; adventurers courageous or crazy enough to take on the roads and uncover the dark secrets left behind in forgotten ruins, unexplored deserts, deep forests, and inaccessible mountains lost in the misty horizon.

Humans build new civilizations on the remnants of the empires of the First Men, using the ancient ruins as their foundations: massive blocks of sculpted rocks, vertiginous arches, wonders rising to the sky as witnesses to the greatness of the past. Stairs with gigantic steps lead down to dusty corridors and impenetrable doors engraved with esoteric signs. Towers built and abandoned between mountains, harassed by crows whose silence sounds like a warning. Underground libraries containing impious knowledge. Tombs of exiled heroes, buried with their steel and their secrets. Shamans and hermits lost between dementia and knowledge. Remote temples and altars dedicated to forgotten gods.

These are the mysteries of the Wildlands.

## **A brutal world**

*"I don't remember the exact sound of her dying. It wasn't sad, not really. Well, I wasn't sad, not really." – Silence*

There are a thousand ways to die in the Wildlands. Smothered by the coils of a giant python in the mangroves of the great southern jungle. Impaled on the battlefield by an anonymous spearhead. Sacrificed on a stone table as an offering to a better future. Gnawed by the bites of the cold, lost on the endless pack ice of the North. Poisoned by a friend. Thrown over the guardrail of the hanging gardens of Sabaah. Trampled by the hooves of a steed even more terrifying than his rider. In this violent world, men and women give free rein to their most primitive instincts. Lucky are those who allow themselves the luxury of living. The others only survive.



# THE PEOPLE

*"Everywhere, loneliness and distrust. The Horde is no better or worse than anywhere else." – Khan*

## The North

*"You know what they say? The bigger the coat, the smaller the axe." – Moonface*

In the north, beyond the Pass of Exil, the known parts of the Wildlands collide with the sharp and impassable mountains. In these remote lands is Vaelor, the Land of Ice, fiery and irascible inhabitants learned to resist the rigors of the cold. Protected and covered with fur, metal, and bones, the imposing Vaelkyr warriors haunt the nightmares of the southerners.

West of Vaelor, the mountains slide into the sea, the snow disappears, and the ground crackles in fjords. In the cities of Helvegen and Krigsgaard, the Vaelkyr build their economy on agriculture, livestock, and travel, fleeing the violent way of life that their snow brothers embrace.

Further south, sharing the land with the cursed Divided Kingdoms, is Avhorage, the largest military and commercial power of the northern territories. With its castles and citadels of gray stones, its vast forests filled with wolves and ravens, Avhorage is a land of legends and old tales. Farmers, nobles, soldiers, merchants, thieves, or knights, Avhorage is a feudal and inflexible society. The islands of Aon stand in the furious Sea of Steel. Islands with cliffs and rocks full of a precious black metal that only the Master Blacksmiths know how to work.

## The South

*"My Siirh knows more than me. It runs its secrets to the South, and one day, I will follow it down. And I'll carry secrets too." – Mebuh*

The South extends from the dry center of the Land to the Mother, the impenetrable jungle which marks the southern border of the known world. The Siirh crosses the deserts and arid lands, flowing from north to south, and irrigating the villages and cities built on its banks. Babel controls the river traffic, emerging as the major civilization of the southern lands. The mythical city of Sabaah and its legendary queen rule over the dry lands and oases that surround them. The ziggurats rise to the sky, and the decadence of the nights in its hanging gardens, the arrogant wealth, and the excessive architecture of Sabaah all stir the legends and attract travelers coming from the most remote corners of the Wildlands.

To the west of Babel, beyond the dark rocks and burning sands bordering the ocean, is Khalistan—a kingdom of two sister-civilizations. One, Fakhar, focuses on trade by sea or by land,



sending its caravans across the desert to reach the market places of Sabaah. The other, Khashan, dedicates itself to knowledge, the study of the stars, and all the mysteries of the Wildlands. The Forbidden City can be found in the desert of Khashan.

Tuuhle, the jungle known as the Mother, extends as far as the eye can see on the southern border of the Wildlands. Various tribes of men and women call this inhospitable land with gigantic sprawling trees home. Stilt huts stand in the mangroves, infested with crocodiles. Colorful birds surround platforms built at the top of trees. Caverns without light sink between baobab roots. Tuuhlean tribesmen, guardians of an ancient and remote world, rarely venture outside the forest.

The Nine Cities of Ool are made of stone and worm-eaten wood, erected on a cursed river flowing into the Breach and the eastern sea. These cities attract the exiled and outcast, those seeking to disappear, and plenty of individuals full of dubious intentions. The Masters, masked necromancers and sorcerers whose identities remain carefully hidden, govern the Nine Cities

The Cursed Land of Saeth is located where the Siirh flows into the Gulf of Shadows and forms the delta of Zaron Teth. Within its boundaries exist pallid inhabitants; Dhaar, the vertical city and its black walls rising toward the clouds; and the Desert of Ashes. Saeth is a fatalistic and ritualized society, based on caste and slavery, that encourages suicide as a path to spiritual elevation.



## The East

*"When the wind blows from the East, you can smell the reeking of the Horde's horses, of those fishermen from Thalos. And the smell of the Cult and its priests. Bastards. I'd like to see them burn." – Gamesh*

The East and its fertile golden plains surround the Shining Sea, an ideally sunny land for agriculture and trade, saw the birth of the most powerful civilization in the recent history of mankind: The Empire of the Black Sun. The Empire's legions spread out all over the plains, punishing by the flames the villages and the people standing in their way. At the core of the Empire is Lux, glorious capital of black-marble columns, host of the original temple of the Cult of the Black Sun.

The Republic of Thalos is a society built on opposition to the empire and its values, highlighting the human virtues

expressed by the arts and philosophy. From its schism with the Empire, the Republic kept the legendary naval fleet and its powerful flat war ships built to sail and fight within close distance of the shore.

The Horde hunts across the High Plains. Originally a simple caravan of Katai warriors, the Horde became a giant and ever-moving army, roaming the dry plains of the Wildlands center and welcoming mercenaries from all over the world. The Horde is more dangerous, violent, and terrifying than the legends dare to tell. Its members modify their bodies in order to spread terror in the ranks of their enemies, and they do it well: scarifications, amputations, or sharp implants, anything goes.

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## BABEL AND THE CITY OF SABAABH

Babel. Where water is scarce. Where the orange rocks and the burning sands bite at the feet of the travelers. Babel. Land of scorching fire, but also of blooming oases that shelter the people and the cities. The Great River, Siirh, has its source in the mountains of the North and serpents south of the Wilderness, down to Zaron Teth where it dives into the Gulf of Shadows. A vein carrying the life of the land, the Siirh feeds Babel's heart. Babel, daughter of the sands, land of power.

The life of Babel's people is made in contrasts. Contrasts between the inhospitable desert and the quality of life within the cities, the poles of civilization built on the river banks and around the oases. The Babeliite population is mostly urban. Nomadic tribes wander through the desert, in search of relics and vestiges of the First Age, but become increasingly rare.

The people of Babel, however, have not broken the powerful bond that unites them with the desert. Most of them have activities that push them to brave the aridity beyond the gates of their cities or villages. Whether it is for hunting, scavenging, traveling, or to work in the massive quarries used in the construction of the cities. To this day, the desert remains the source of all of Babel's symbolic system. The ancient gods, now forgotten, were the gods of sands, rocks, and water and their influence remains at the foundation of Babel's culture.

In the middle of the desert, on the banks of the Siirh, stand the towers of the legendary city of Sabaah, seat of power in Babel, attracting Babeliites and travelers from distant lands.

Sabaah is the pride of mankind, it defies natural chaos and stretches straight among rocks and dunes. Two massive protective walls and buildings extending as far as the eye can see, mingle with mirages under the sun's fires. Sabaah the mighty, ruled by the bronze hand of Queen Taerhonis, Daughter of the South, from the High Quarters of the Black Stones. Sabaah, the impenetrable, pride of the Men of the South. Sabaah, where the waters rise. The hanging gardens, once green terraces, now welcome the black flowers of the Prophet of the One God. Sabaah, the city of mysterious towers, rising like stairs to the sky. Sabaah and the wonderful nights, when the air is refreshing within the city walls, and pleasures and sins come alive in a bewitching play of shadows and lights.

Today the Cult attracts men and women to the cities, where they build temples and effigies of the Prophet and the One God. Cities are a space of transition from one symbolic world to another. The desert to the city. The savage to the tamed. A space of comfort and security with fascinating architectures where the vestiges of the old-world clash against the new symbols of the One God. The Hanging Gardens of Sabaah are a perfect example of that transition: built by giants in honor of the ancient gods, but now filled with black flowers, re-decorated to the glory of the Prophet. No one really knows what happened to the ancient statues that once adorned the gardens, the ones the old tales sometime mention...





## THE CULT OF THE BLACK SUN

*"The Cult? Yes, I heard about those crazy men, but they are so far away! I do not fear them." – Mebuh*

The Cult of the Black Sun spreads like black ink on a blank parchment; its fanatical priests preach, by their words and their blades, the arrival of a new Prophet. For the cultists, the sun is the "Eye of the One". When men and women are finally worthy of the trust of the One, only then will the One God close his eye, and the sun will become black, and mankind will find the way to the creator... in the comfort of the "Primordial Darkness and the Holy Trust".

The Cult's original temple stands on the Cradle, the mountain overseeing Lux, the imperial capital. From there, the Cult extends within the Empire and beyond its borders. Its priests travel through the most remote roads of the Wildlands.

The Avhorean still resists the influence of the Cult, but the Dark Pilgrims become more and more numerous, engaging

citizens in the streets of the cities of gray stones. Taerhonis, the queen of Sabaah, pledges allegiance to the One and encourages the conversion of her people, while in the south of Babel, in the old city of Kabal, Commander Khep still opposes the doctrine of the Cult.

The cult extends its reach by interfering with the spheres of power and politics, using financial manipulation and intimidation. In the countryside, the Cult is far more brutal. It's now common to discover corpses displayed at the crossroads, impaled and offered to the vultures. The Cult exposes the bodies of the infidels or those who resist Him by leaving them to die in the open, the symbol of the Black Sun etched in their rotting flesh.

The Cult considers the Chosen Ones enemies of the One God, and the Cult actively tracks them. They consider any form of magic heresy, including the use of the Shards, and any individuals showing signs of curiosity toward the ancient traditions.





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# THE RULES

**GODS ROLEPLAYING GAME BEGINNER'S KIT**

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I am the One in the darkness. Resting. Biding. Never sleeping.  
I have been lost and found again. I have been broken and forged again.  
Make me flesh once more.







# GODS BEGINNER'S KIT

# THE RULES



## INTRODUCTION

GODS is a Dark Fantasy game about epic adventure, magic, exploration, and dangerous combat. It's also a collaborative game, in which the relationships between the Player Characters (PCs) allied as a Group play a major role. To survive in the Wildlands, one must come together... or die.

### **The Oracle**

This is what we call the "Game Master", both the storyteller and director of the GODS universe. She has the keys to the world, knowledge of the scenario, and acts as a referee when it's called for. While she must be fair and impartial, she must also listen to her players. The Oracle stages the adventure, but cannot dictate the actions of the players: player characters are the heroes of the tale.

### **The players**

The players' characters (indeed, Player Characters) are bound by common goals, and each player's decisions and actions have consequences, not only for themselves, but for the Group. In a game of GODS, players must stick together for survival in the Wildlands, where violence, cruelty, and betrayal are the daily lot of its various peoples and creatures.

### **What you need to play**

Each player needs their character sheet, a pencil, some paper, and at least six ten-sided dice ("d10" for short). GODS "advanced" rules require a few more d10s of two different colors, but that won't be necessary for the purpose of this Beginner's Kit.





# CHARACTERS

## Traits

Traits define the physical, manual, mental and social capabilities of a character. There are eight Traits which depend on four Attributes: Body, Hand, Mind, and Soul.

<b>Strength</b>	<b>Body</b>	The physical potential of a character, their athleticism, endurance, speed and indeed strength, as well as their capacity to fight with their bare hands or a melee weapon.
<b>Resistance</b>	<b>Body</b>	A character's resilience to hits, disease or deprivation.
<b>Accuracy</b>	<b>Hand</b>	The manual abilities of the character, their capacity to play an instrument, paint, sculpt, pick pockets and shoot with ranged or thrown weapons.
<b>Reflexes</b>	<b>Hand</b>	A character's capacity to be deft and react quickly, anticipate and dodge.
<b>Knowledge</b>	<b>Mind</b>	The intellectual potential of a character, their capacity to remember something specific, to speak other languages, to identify elements of the local fauna and flora.
<b>Perception</b>	<b>Mind</b>	The acuity of a character's senses, as well as its capacity to observe and be stealthy.
<b>Willpower</b>	<b>Soul</b>	A character's capacity to remain calm, to assert and impose their views, as well as to control a mount.
<b>Empathy</b>	<b>Soul</b>	A character's capacity to feel and interpret emotions, discern lies, appease a wild beast, establish a rapport based on trust.

When rules call for a "social" or "soul" action, it refers to an action calling on one of the "soul" Traits, either Willpower or Empathy. The same goes for Body, Hand and Mind.

## Trait value

Each character Trait is comprised of between 1D and 3D (although some exceptional beings or beasts have more). See the scenario for a description and examples of how to perform and resolve actions in GODS!

## Dice roll and difficulty

When a character acts, the Oracle announces the appropriate Trait to resolve the action through a roll, as well as the difficulty of the roll, taking several factors into account from distance to complexity.

There are several difficulty levels, each representing the target number to obtain on a dice for it to count as one success.

<b>Difficulty</b>	<b>Target number</b>
Easy	5
Difficult	7
Very difficult	9

## Success and opposition

Success is when a player gets a result equal or superior to the target number for the action on at least a single of their dice. When they get more than one such success, each of those results increases the positive effects of their action.

*Example: A player rolls three dice against a difficulty of 5, and gets 3, 5 and 8. Not only do they achieve their goal, but the 5 and the 8 count as two Successes.*

Some actions will often require more than one Success, in the case of combat, opposition or Handicap (see below).

## Opposition

When two characters oppose one another, the character who gets the highest number of Successes wins. This works for attack and defense, as well as avoiding being seen by a guard, lying to someone, competing in a race, or an archery contest. In case of a tie, the defender always wins the opposition. When there is no defender, all contestants reroll.





# TABLE OF SKILLS

The Man Society	The Tool Crafting	The Weapon Fighting	The Animal Beasts	The Land Outdoors	The Unknown Mystical
Arts	Blacksmith	Archery	Animalism	Athletics	Moons
City	Craft	Brawl	Riding	Awareness	Myths
Civilizations	Mechanisms	Melee	Territories	Plants	Pantheons
Healing	Symbols	Shield	Tracking	Stealth	Rituals
Social	Tricks	Throw	Wildlife	Travel	Shards

## Skills

In GODS, skills give a bonus when they become relevant to an action. They can even grant rerolls. Not possessing a certain skill never prevents a character from attempting a roll and even succeeding. The worst it can do is not give the player a bonus.

*Example: If a character attempts to treat a wound, shoot a bow, or ride a horse, they can make a roll even if they do not possess skills such as Healing, Archery, or Riding.*

## Skill level

Unlike Traits, Skills do not have a dice value, but a “mastery level” that indicates the character’s previous experience with that skill. The higher the level, the better the advantages it brings. Skills grant bonuses according to their level. These allow a player to roll one or two extra dice, as well as one or two rerolls once the roll is done.

*Example: A player whose character is Competent in Tracking and attempts to follow an animal’s trail will roll 1D on this action. They also can reroll one d10 of their choice once the roll is made.*

## LANGUAGES

The tongue of Babel is doubtlessly the most widespread among the Wildlands, even if there are many other languages. We assume all characters in Babel speak Babelite.

Level	Bonus	Reroll
Beginner	1D	None
Competent	1D	1D
Expert	2D	1D
Master	2D	2D

## Rerolls

When a character reaches the Competent level in a Skill, they can reroll a d10 once the dice is cast. Of course, players do not have to reroll or use all of their rerolls. Rerolls can also be made consecutively, so it’s possible to reroll the same d10 twice with a Skill at Master level. Note that rerolling a Success does not grant an extra Success: the last result must be kept, whatever it is, as it cancels the first result.

*Example: A player rolls 4D against a Difficulty of 6 and gets 3, 4, 6 and 7. The character has a Master level in that Skill, so they decide to reroll the 3 and gets a 2 (still insufficient to get another Success). With their second reroll, they can choose to reroll the same dice, or the 4.*





# LIST OF SKILLS

## The Man

<b>Arts</b>	Painting, sculpting, singing, dancing, tattooing, playing an instrument, and so on.
<b>City</b>	Legal knowledge, rumors, commerce, being streetwise, finding one's way in the city, including to a merchant or an inn, etc.
<b>Civilizations</b>	Geographical and historical knowledge, customs, traditions, cults, regions, and peoples.
<b>Healing</b>	First aid, medicine, surgery, hypnosis
<b>Social</b>	Lying, seduction, negotiation, and using one's authority.

## The Tool

<b>Blacksmith</b>	Crafting weapons and armor, making projectiles.
<b>Craft</b>	Woodworking and carpentry, working with leather, cloth, and so on.
<b>Mechanisms</b>	Making traps, gears, clockwork, systems, locks, and so on.
<b>Symbols</b>	Reading, writing and speaking different languages, practicing calligraphy, and cartography.
<b>Tricks</b>	Performing sleight of hand, use of ropes and knots, picking pockets, picking locks.

## The Weapon

<b>Archery</b>	Wielding bows, crossbows, blowpipes or ballistae, and keeping them in working order.
<b>Brawl</b>	Fighting with bare hands, dodging.
<b>Melee</b>	Attacking and parrying with melee weapons such as swords, axes, daggers, maces, and so on.
<b>Shield</b>	Using a shield properly.
<b>Throw</b>	Throwing and wielding thrown weapons such as knives, stones, nets, javelins and slings.

## Handicaps

When the Oracle decides that the way a character is acting or the circumstances surrounding an action warrant a certain degree of increased complexity, she may impose a Handicap to force the player to get more than one Success in order to accomplish their action.

*Example: Two characters are trying to jump across a chasm. One of them is wearing heavy armor, and the other only has light clothes. The action is the same for both characters, but the one in armor has a Handicap.*

The value of a Handicap is expressed by the number of extra Successes necessary for the action. This can generally go from (I) for a minor inconvenience (swimming with clothes on) to (III) for a major complication (swimming in full armor). Thus, when a character incurs a (II) Handicap, they will have to get two extra Successes on their roll (for a total of three) to succeed.

<b>Handicap</b>	<b>Situation</b>
Handicap (I)	Minor complication, risky action
Handicap (II)	Important complication, dangerous action
Handicap (III)	Major complication, insane action

When an action succeeds in spite of a Handicap, one still refers to the total number of Successes to interpret the result of the roll, not just the Successes exceeding the level of the Handicap.

*Example: With three Successes and a Handicap (II), the roll is interpreted as having three Successes and not just one. The player has surmounted the Handicap and enjoys all their Successes.*



## The Animal

<b>Animalism</b>	Taming animals, but also dissecting and extracting various parts (skin, venom, and so on). Also lets one imitate animal calls, postures, tracks and smells. In a limited fashion, may allow "communication" with animals.
<b>Riding</b>	Riding a mount, piloting a carriage or similar vehicle, maneuvering.
<b>Territories</b>	Identifying predators, tribes, symbols and dangers.
<b>Tracking</b>	Detecting, identifying, and following tracks or signs left by humans and animals.
<b>Wildlife</b>	Knowledge of animals, birds, fishes, insects. Identifying species, tracks, habitats, and behaviors.

## The Land

<b>Athletics</b>	Climbing, swimming, running, and other feats of strength and endurance.
<b>Awareness</b>	One's perception of environment, allowing them to anticipate and act accordingly. Used to stand guard, avoid projectiles, and act more quickly in combat. Also lets one install and detect traps, anticipate ambushes, and design tactics.
<b>Plants</b>	Knowledge of plants, flowers, fruits, mushrooms, and so on. Also used to grow and identify benign or toxic herbs to make drugs, medicines, or poisons.
<b>Stealth</b>	Hiding, moving, and acting without being noticed, hiding one's tracks, disguising oneself, and wearing deceiving makeup.
<b>Travel</b>	Camping, preparing itineraries, knowing routes and paths as well as common hazards, nomad customs and rumors.

## The Unknown

<b>Moons</b>	Divination, orientation, knowledge of tides, weather, and celestial phenomena.
<b>Myths</b>	Knowing the sanctuaries and legends of the ancient times.
<b>Pantheons</b>	Knowledge of the Old Gods and their peoples, as well as their traditions, customs, and superstitions.
<b>Rituals</b>	Performing rites, ceremonies, invocations, and sacrifices.
<b>Shards</b>	Identifying Shards, their powers, and Essences.

## Specialties

If a character possesses a Specialty in a Skill, they get a +1D bonus when it applies. Only one specialty bonus can apply to a single roll. A Specialty always applies to a single Skill.

**Examples of specialties:** Heavy bow (Archery), Light shield (Shield), Surgery (Healing), Camouflage (Stealth), Lockpicking (Tricks), Dancing (Arts), Sword (Melee), Horseback (Riding), Law (City), Lying (Social), Traps (Mechanisms), Tracking predators (Tracking), Leather (Craft), etc.

**Note:** You are free to create your own Specialties, but keep in mind that a Specialty must not apply to all the rolls made with its linked Skill. It should only apply to certain aspects of that Skill, otherwise it is too much of a bonus.





# DICE POOLS

To represent stress, fatigue, mental resources, and physical reserves, GODS uses Pools: a certain number of dice that decreases as a character gets weaker and dips into their own pools of strength. This dice pool replenishes when they eat, rest, and so on.

Each character has two dice pools, each with a number of dice: the Nerves Pool, indicating their stress level and ability to focus, and the Grit Pool, their energy, fatigue and physical stamina. Players also have access to a Group Pool, common to all (see below) which symbolizes the cohesion and team spirit uniting the player characters.

During the adventure, these pools lower when characters are fatigued, hungry, thirsty, wounded, afraid, or stressed. Eating, drinking, or taking a break allows the characters to regain dice from their Pools. A night's sleep gives them their full dice pools back, at least if they don't have to fight or flee during their rest.

## Dipping into the pools

These pools allow players to roll extra dice or to reroll some dice. These dice can be used at any time and during any action.

**The Nerves Pool:** Nerves dice can be used when declaring an action to roll extra dice. The maximum number of dice one can use is equal to the Trait used in said action.

*Example: A Player Character has a Strength of 2D. During an attack, the player can only spend up to 2D from their Nerves Pool, so they could roll 4D.*

**The Grit Pool:** Grit dice can be used after a roll, to reroll some of the dice. Each Grit dice spent grants one reroll, within the same limitations as for the Nerves Pool.

*Example: On this same attack, once the roll is made, the player can also spend up to 2D from their Grit Pool to reroll two of the dice they rolled.*

## Exhaustion

When a pool is empty, the character feels great fatigue, or can even break down mentally, as if their Strength or Willpower Traits were reduced to 0D.

Pool	Effect
Grit	-1D penalty to all their Body and Hand actions
Nerves	-1D penalty to all their Mind and Soul actions
Both Pools	-2D penalty to all actions

## The Group Pool

The Player Characters' Group has a common dice pool. These dice can be used as Grit dice or Nerves dice. Since this pool is common to all, a player wishing to draw from it must get the approval of the other players. They all get a vote (raising hands), even those with unconscious or absent characters. At least half the players must be in favor for someone to draw from the Group Pool. This Pool can vary from 0D to 10D.

The baseline Group Pool starts at 3D, plus 1D per character in the Group.

## Morale

If the Group is in high spirits (7D or more in the Group Pool), the characters get a +1D bonus to all their collective actions (actions that involve at least two members of the Group). If morale is low (2D or less in the Pool), their collective actions have a penalty of -1D. When the Group Pool is reduced to 0D, using the Group Ability becomes impossible.

Group Pool	Morale	Effects
7D or more	High	+1D bonus to collective actions
6D to 3D	Normal	None
2D or 1D	Low	-1D malus to collective actions
0D	Crisis	No Ability use.

## Group Ability

All members of a Group have access to the following ability:

**Unity:** When all members are involved, the Group's collective actions have a +1D bonus (for a total of +2D with the Morale bonus).







# WEAPONS AND ARMOR

## Weapons

Each weapon carries a base damage value, added to the number of Successes obtained by the attacker to determine the damage of an attack. Damage from ranged weapons is fixed; however, thrown and melee weapons have damage based on the attacker's Strength.

## Weapon Range

Every weapon has three Range values (between parentheses) that determine short, middle, and long ranges. The first number indicates the limit of the short range, the second number the start of long range, and the third number is the maximum range. Beyond the maximum range, it is impossible to hit a target (at least without special abilities).

*Example: If a character uses a sling (6/20/40), a target is in short range up to 6 yards, middle range from 7 to 20 yards, and long range beyond 20 yards. If the Oracle judges that the target is at 8 yards, the player makes a roll at middle range (Difficulty 7, see page 22). If the target was at 42 yards, beyond twice the long-range number, it is impossible to roll.*

**Note:** The range of thrown or shooting weapons can be influenced by a character's Strength.

*Example: For a light bow (10/25/50), ranges are multiplied by the shooter's Strength. With 2D in Strength, ranges become (20/50/100), and (30/75/150) with 3D.*

## Sample weapons

<b>Melee</b>	Damage	Ranges	Trait
Knife	Strength	-	
Sword/Axe	Strength +1	-	
Lance	Strength +1	-	Heavy (2)
Two-handed	Strength +2	-	Heavy (3)
<b>Brawl*</b>			
Fist	Strength -1	-	Fast (2)
Head butt	Strength -1	-	
Kick	Strength	-	
<b>Ranged</b>			
Sling	2	6/20/40	
Light bow	3	10/25/50**	Heavy (2)
Heavy bow	5	15/40/80**	Heavy (3)
<b>Thrown</b>			
Throwing knife	Strength -1	2/6/12**	Fast (2)
Knife	Strength	2/4/8**	
Lance/Javelin	Strength +1	4/8/16**	Heavy (2)

\* Armor protection value increases by 1 against brawl damage.

\*\* Range is multiplied by the attacker's Strength.

Heavy (X): The item is heavy or cumbersome and requires a minimum Strength of (X)D to be worn, wielded, or used correctly. If the character's Strength is inferior to X, they will get a -1D malus. If they carry several heavy items, penalties can add up.

Fast (X): The item is especially light, and allows for several consecutive attacks, in melee or at range. These (X) hits or projectiles are all managed by a single attack roll but impose a Handicap of (1) to the defender for dodge or parry actions. If the dodge or parry action is unsuccessful, the attacker inflicts two wounds and not just one.





## Armors and shields

The efficiency of an armor is measured by the Armor Protection Value. The amount of damage received is reduced by that amount.

*Example: A character gets hit for 6 damage, but they have an armor with a Protection Value of 3. They will only get 3 damage.*

## Shields

A shield's Protection Value doesn't add up with an armor's Protection Value but can reduce or negate the damage of attacks it was used to parry. A shield grants a +1D bonus to parry melee attacks and thrown weapons (but not ranged weapons).

**Note:** wielding a shield prevents one from using two-handed melee weapons and bows.

Armor	Protection value	Trait
Light	1	
Medium	3	Heavy (2)
Heavy	5	Heavy (3)
Shield		
Light shield (wood)	2	
Heavy shield (metal)	3	

## EQUIPMENT BONUS

Using appropriate equipment translates as a +1D bonus to the relevant rolls. This is cumulative with other bonuses, but only one equipment bonus can apply to a single action. Note, only equipment that can help with an action grants a bonus, not equipment that simply allows the action to happen in the first place.

*Examples: A rope equipped with a grappling hook grants a +1D bonus to climb rolls (Strength + Athletics), a detailed map of the area grants a +1D bonus to navigation (Perception + Travel), a healer's kit grants a +1D bonus on first aid actions (Accuracy + Healing), etc.*

Note: Equipment bonuses apply with some tools and accessories, but not items such as weapons or musical instruments. The action must be possible without the item, but said item grants a bonus to the character using it.



# COMBAT AND DEFENSE

## Combat reaction and order of play

At the beginning of combat, players calculate their characters' Reaction. This number determines the order in which they act. The higher the reaction, the faster they go. Reaction is set once at the beginning and doesn't change for the duration of combat. Reaction is equal to the number of Successes on a roll of Reflexes + Awareness against a Difficulty 7.

Example: With 3D in Reflexes and an Awareness Skill level of Competent, a player has 4D for their Reaction roll. Their character rolls against a Difficulty of 7 and gets 3 Successes. Their Reaction is 3 for the duration of this combat.

The Oracle only rolls one Reaction for all the opponents, who all act at the same time. They can also decide to roll separate Reactions for each opponent or separate them in groups. In case of a tie, Player Characters always go first.

## THE ORDER OF COMBAT

1. When their turn comes, each player describes their character's action and resolves it, with a roll if necessary.
2. In case of a tie between two characters, the players decide in which order they will act. The Oracle may decide if the players cannot decide. In case of a tie with one of the Oracle's characters, the players act first.
3. Once all characters have acted, the Oracle starts the reaction count once again from the highest to the lowest, and the previous steps repeat for another turn, until the end of combat.

## Attack Action

There are only two types of attack: melee (with bare hands or melee weapons) and ranged (with thrown or ranged weapons). The Trait, the Skill, and the Difficulty of an attack depend on the weapon type. The Difficulty of a ranged attack is determined by the weapon's range. The Difficulty of a melee attack is fixed.

**Note:** It is only possible to make one attack per turn.

## Ranged attacks

Ranged attacks use the Accuracy Trait. The Skill used is either Throw or Archery. The weapon's range determines the difficulty, depending on the distance to the target. This Difficulty cannot change, unlike for melee attacks (see below).

Range	Difficulty
Short	Easy (5)
Middle	Difficult (7)
Long	Very Difficult (9)

*Example: To shoot with a light bow (with Strength 2D) at a target 22 yards away, one rolls Accuracy + Archery against Difficulty 7, as the target is in middle range for a light bow (20/50/100). Beyond 50 yards, the Difficulty is 9.*

## Melee attacks

Such attacks always use Strength. The Skill depends on which weapon is used: Melee, for weapons, and Brawl, for bare hands. Base Difficulty is 7.

## Making an Attack

Combat actions are always resolved in the following way: If the defender gets at least as many Successes as the attacker, they manage to dodge, parry, or otherwise avoid the attack, and suffers no damage. If the attacker gets at least one more Success than the defender, or if the defender fails, they hit.

*Example: If the attacker gets 4 Successes on their Melee roll with a sword and the defender only gets 2 on their Dodge roll, the attack hits and inflicts damage.*



## OPTIONAL RULE

At the beginning of a turn, before announcing actions, players can spend Nerves dice (up to the character's Reflex Trait) to increase one's Reaction by 1 per dice spent. However, this only lasts for a single turn: Reaction reverts back to normal on the next turn.

### Damage

Whatever the type of weapon or attack, damage is always equal to the weapon's base damage, plus the number of Successes obtained on the attack roll.

*Example: With their sword (Strength 2D: damage 3), the attacker inflicts 3 base damage, plus 4 Successes, for a total of 7 damage.*

### Armor

If the defender has armor, it reduces damage by the armor's Protection Value before calculating the Wound threshold.

*Example: The defender only has medium armor (Protection Value 3), but that is enough for them to only suffer 4 Damage instead of 7.*

### Wounds

Once reduced by armor, damage is compared to the defender's Wound Levels. They suffer a wound corresponding to the highest Wound threshold reached (see page 24).

### Defending

There are two types of Defense actions: Dodge avoids an attack through body movement, feint, or sidestep and Parry deviates or blocks an attack with a weapon, shield, or body part. The Trait, Skill, and Difficulty depend entirely on the attack. It is possible to dodge any attack, but parry is only possible in certain cases.

Whatever the type of attack or defense, for the purpose of this Beginner's Kit, the base Difficulty of the roll is 7, +1 by Defense action after the first one in the same turn (max. 9).

### Dodging

Dodge actions always use the Reflexes Trait. The Skill depends on the type of attack: Brawl for any melee attack, Awareness for any ranged attack. A character can only attempt to dodge a ranged attack if they know they are targeted.



### Parry

Parrying always uses Strength, and the Skill depends on what is used to parry. Brawl is used when blocking with a body part, Melee when parrying with a weapon, and Shield to block an attack with a shield. Ranged attacks can only be parried with a shield.

### Effects of Dodging and Parry

If the defender gets at least as many Successes as the attacker, the attack is entirely blocked or dodged. If they don't, the parry or dodging is unsuccessful, and the defender suffers normal damage (after applying the Protection Value of their armor if dodging or their shield - and only their shield, not their armor - if parrying).



# WOUNDS AND CONSEQUENCES

Each character can suffer Light, Heavy, or Fatal wounds. They all have a number called "Wound threshold", and circles that the players tick. Wound thresholds indicate the amount of damage that corresponds to each type of wound. They are generally between 1 and 10. Circles indicate the number of wounds of each type that a character can suffer.

Each time a character suffers damage, the player compares the amount of damage (after reduction by an armor or parry) to their character's wound thresholds, and ticks one wound circle corresponding to the highest threshold equal or inferior to the amount.

*Example: A character has a Light wound threshold of 2, a Heavy wound threshold of 5, and a Fatal wound threshold of 9. The player ticks one of the "Heavy" circles if their character suffers 5, 6, 7 or 8 damage. Below 5 damage, the wound will only be Light. From 9 and above, the wound is Fatal.*

If the amount of damage is less than their Light wound threshold, the player doesn't tick any circles. If all circles of a wound type are ticked, the player must tick a circle one threshold above as the accumulation of wounds makes them more severe.

*Example: If the same character only suffers 1 damage, they ignore it, because it's less than their Light wound threshold: it's only a scratch. If all of their Light wounds are ticked, the next wound is a Heavy wound. If all Heavy wounds are ticked, any wound could be Fatal.*

## Consequences of wounds

Each time a player ticks a Wound circle, they immediately lose the same number of dice in each of their Pools. As long as one of their Wound circles is ticked, the character suffers the corresponding malus to all their actions. This only applies once, if a character suffers different types of wounds, only the highest penalty applies; they do not add up.

Wounds	Pool loss	Malus
Light	-1D	-1D
Heavy	-2D	-2D
Fatal	-3D	Unconscious/-3D

## Fatal wounds

When a player ticks a Fatal wound circle, their character falls to the ground in a critical state. The Oracle must decide if the character dies instantly or if they're simply "mortally wounded" and can try and fight death, allowing others a chance to help them. If the character does not die instantly, they immediately lose 3D from all their Pools.

A Fatal wound must receive emergency healing in order to avoid death within a number of turns equal to the fatally wounded character's Resistance + Willpower (see page 25).

*Example: Already wounded multiple times, a lance strikes a character, giving them a Heavy wound. They already ticked three of their Heavy wound circles, and the wound becomes Fatal. The character collapses! The Oracle determines that the piercing blow doesn't kill them instantly, but the character's state deteriorates and they will die in 5 turns: Resistance 2(D) + Willpower 3(D).*



# HEALING AND RECOVERY

Actions with the purpose of reducing ailments and wounds, from first aid to surgery, are all Healing per the rules. The Difficulty and Handicaps of Healing actions are determined by the severity of the wound. Successful Healing rolls do not simply “erase” wounds, but transform them into wounds of lower severity (wound threshold). Only one wound can be treated per Successful action, and a wounded character can only receive healing once per each wound. A wound that was already treated, successfully or not, cannot be treated again for 24 hours. The severity of the wound indicates the time necessary to treat it properly.

## Healing wounds

Healing actions to treat wounds are rolls of Accuracy + Healing against a Difficulty determined by the wound, which also imposes a Handicap (see chart below). If a character suffers from several wounds, the Healing player chooses which one they want to treat (Light, Heavy, or Fatal). The Handicap imposed by a wound only applies once, even if a character suffers from several other wounds of the same or different types.

*Example: If a character suffers from both Light and Heavy wounds, the Healer can decide to treat Light wounds against a Difficulty of 5 and with a Handicap (I), or Heavy wounds against a Difficulty of 7 with a Handicap (II).*

Wound	Difficulty	Handicap	Intervention time
Light	5	(I)	1 minute
Heavy	7	(II)	15 minutes
Fatal	9	(III)	1 hour

If the roll is successful, the healed character ticks a circle of the wound threshold directly below the one treated and erases the previous tick. If all inferior wound circles are already ticked, the player erases one tick from a circle directly below the threshold of the wound treated, but keeps the more serious wound. If a Light Wound was treated, the player simply erases the tick.

## Emergency healing

To stabilize a character and attempt to save them, another character must administer emergency healing. An emergency healing action takes one turn, or one minute out of combat. This is an Accuracy + Healing roll against a Difficulty of 9, with a Handicap (III) (see above) because of the Fatal wound.

If the roll is successful, the character's state no longer deteriorates. If the healer fails the roll, the character's state continues to degrade. A new roll can only be attempted on the next turn.

## Recovery

After a full night's rest, once their Pools are restored, the players can spend dice from their Grit and Nerves Pools to “downgrade” one Wound (and only one per day) of their choice into a wound of the type directly below. This can only be accomplished if a circle of the type below is available and not already ticked, or if it's only a Light wound (the wound is simply cured). This intention must be announced when the character wakes up (with a -3D malus on all their rolls if they suffer from a Fatal Wound), when players regain their Pool Dice. Dice can be spent from any Pool or both.

Wound	Dice Needed for Recovery
Light	3D
Heavy	6D
Fatal	10D

*Example: A character with two Heavy wounds and three Light wounds can spend 6D from their Pools to transform a Heavy wound into a Light wound, if they have a circle remaining. Otherwise, they could only spend 3D to make a Light wound disappear.*



# INSTINCTS, TENETS, AND FAULTS

Every character in GODS possesses an Instinct that defines part of their personality. Instincts impose Laws, and Laws impose Tenets and Faults. They also grant an ability. Laws punish the character when they break them and reward them when they follow them.

There are ten Instincts in GODS. You'll discover some of them and their abilities on the sample character sheets.

## Tenets and Faults

Each time a character attempts an action relevant to the Tenets or Faults of their Instinct, they feel either galvanized or, on the contrary, troubled. This translates, respectively, as a Pool Dice gain or loss.

*Example: A character of the Sword wins a duel. They regain 2D in each of their Pools. If they triumph over the chieftain of a rival clan after an epic battle, they regain 4D instead. However, if they flee, give up, or surrender, they lose 2D or 4D from their Pools, depending on the importance and consequences of the fight.*

When a character breaks their Fault, they can no longer use their Instinct's ability until they regain at least 2D in each Pool (through Tenets or rest), or 4D in each Pool if the action is especially serious.

Trivial, involuntary, or inconsequential actions aren't likely to break a Fault or to follow a Tenet. To have any impact, an action must be intentional and meaningful. Most daily actions, helping out, or being generous within the Group aren't taken into account. However, refusing to help a member of the Group or putting the Group's balance in jeopardy could break a Fault. Conversely, some Faults aren't broken when they apply to other members of the Group: so strong is their relationship that it transcends Tenets and Faults. The Oracle uses her better judgment to decide if a Fault is broken depending on the circumstances.

*Examples: A character of the Hand doesn't necessarily break their Fault by keeping a promise to a member of their Group. A character of the Traveler could risk their life for another member of the Group if it meant helping their survival in the long run.*

### Action

Character follows one of their Tenets

Character breaks one of their Faults

Especially serious or significant action

### Pool Dice Lost

+2D in each Pool (up to their maximum)

-2D in each Pool

+4D/-4D in each Pool





# ORACLE'S TOOLBOX

## Encounters and Non-player Characters (NPCs)

NPCs are characters played by the Oracle. To simplify action management, especially during combat, the technical description of each encounter (bandits, animals, or creatures) is less detailed than that of the PCs. It's reduced to the sole variables useful for play, except for certain very important NPCs, who are described in more detail.

NPCs usually do not possess any numbered Traits or list of Skills with mastery levels. Their chances of success at various actions are still managed the usual way, with dice rolls against a Difficulty, but the number of dice they roll is fixed. These fixed numbers take into account their profile, their experience, and their importance in the adventure.

*Example: If the Group encounters a lone huntsman with "Action 3D", all the huntsman's actions are resolved with a roll of 3D, be it hiding, climbing, hearing a noise, or having information on a precise subject.*

Human NPCs are defined by three criteria: Threat, Experience, and Role.

Criteria	Description	Example
<b>Threat</b>	Threat translates the lethality of the NPC, their physical strength, and their prowess in combat as an opponent or an ally of the PCs. It goes from Minor to Deadly.	The huntsman is a "Serious" threat. He always has 4D for attacks, but can only withstand one Fatal wound.
<b>Experience</b>	Experience is the skill mastery of the NPC, from Beginner to Expert.	If the huntsman possesses "Specialty 5D", all action clearly within the domain of his "profile" (such as hunting, tracking, identifying trails, or finding their way in a forest) are 5D rolls, and not 3D like other actions.
<b>Role</b>	Role is an NPC's importance in the scenario. It separates the anecdotal encounter from the notorious nemesis.	As a random encounter in a woodland setting, the young huntsman has a "Minor" Role.

## NPC Traits


<b>Attack</b>	This is the score for an unarmed attack or for the NPC's favorite weapon. Other attacks can be calculated from the Action score. Damage depends on the weapon used. Unarmed damage is equal to Attack -2. Base Strength for melee attacks is equal to Attack -2.
<b>Reaction</b>	Use this for combat, except if they use dice from their Pool on a turn.
<b>Action</b>	Use this value for the NPC's actions, except attacks and specialties.
<b>Specialty</b>	Use this value for all actions directly pertaining to the NPC's profile.
<b>Rerolls</b>	Usable only on attacks and the NPC's specialties.
<b>Pool</b>	Use only in combat or for specialty actions, up to 1D per roll.
<b>Wounds</b>	NPCs suffer the normal wound penalties, but they do not lose pool dice.

For examples of NPCs, see page 58.









Eshmaraddon,  
summon in the sturdy fingers of your clenched fist  
the strength that the gods  
instilled in your wild heart.

May the blood of the Hursagids cover your lips  
like wine mingled with honey.

May their cries reach your ears like sweet music.

---

# THE SCENARIO

GODS ROLEPLAYING GAME BEGINNER'S KIT

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# THE FIST OF ESHMARADDON

## A GODS ROLEPLAYING GAME SCENARIO



*Welcome to the world of GODS! This starter kit introduces the rules and helps you master the main principles of the game.*

This scenario is a quick presentation of the game mechanisms. The first part of this guide serves as a tutorial including the first epic scenes of an entire scenario. The second and less technical part opens the gates of the Wildlands to the players. The characters become masters of their destinies, leading the march to an unknown conclusion and sealing the fate of the Marad village.

Feel free to share your feelings! Tell us how your group experienced the adventure, and how it ended! Give your feedback about your feats at [oracle@arkhane-asylum.fr](mailto:oracle@arkhane-asylum.fr).

Get ready to step into the Wildlands!

## SCENARIO PRESENTATION

This scenario tells the story of a holiday celebrating the feats of Eshmaraddon, hero of old and founder of the Marad village. Unfortunately, dark horsemen dispatched by the Cult suddenly appear and disturb the good spirits. The villagers witness tragic events and the revelation of sinister secrets, and the characters face their very first Shard: a helmet connected to a deity awakening, furious and vengeful after its long sleep.

Several scenes make up the scenario. Some of them have a rigid structure, like the first one— “The Eagles’ Nest”—which is used as a tutorial. Others work like sandboxes, where the players have all the freedom they need, such as “Three Bloods”, which works like a short investigation. The description of each scene ends with a transition; the scene is over when requirements are met, and characters move to the next one. This scenario has a chronological system: scenes follow each other in a prescribed order and are not interchangeable.

## PLAYERS STOP

Don't read any further if you are a player, as the information in this section is intended only for the Oracle (Game Master).

## SCENARIO'S THEME

### **The Corruption of Innocence**

Every scenario of GODS has a theme, supporting the tones and goals of each adventure. Tone creates ambiance: The vocabulary describing the characters, surroundings, and events depends on the theme of the scenario. Here, we move from a festive and colorful field (the jubilant crowd, the joyful dancing, the cheerful singing, and the abundant libations) to a sick and macabre atmosphere (the colors fade away, merging with gray; the Cult reveals the worst aspects of human nature). Use strong images: seemingly fresh fruits turn out to be pale and infected with insects, the sad reality behind the veil, etc. This scenario contains a simple image conveying this theme: the eagles' eggs are, in fact, filled with foul blood. The most innocent image of a newborn is drowned by the promise of death.

What matters is how you steer your scenario and the events your players face. The theme remains dynamic, never frozen. It reveals the transition from jubilation to confrontation, from a festive lightheartedness to the obscure morbidity of a temple dedicated to a forgotten deity. The theme helps you develop what is at stake in the action, but also builds the challenge the characters face. In this scenario, the characters encounter situations representing the theme. If it's strong enough, it pushes them to react powerfully, creating memorable scenes.



## CHOOSING A CHARACTER

Every player must choose a character before the game begins. Use the information below to help them choose easily.



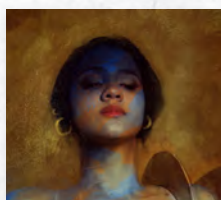
### **Moonface**

Do you want to play an uncommonly plain-speaking character who's also cantankerous and dangerous? Moonface is made for you!



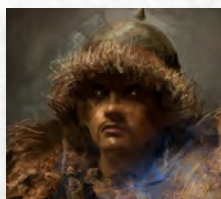
### **Doula**

Do you want your character to be a resourceful, hedonistic, and excellent hunter, but overly confident? Choose Doula!



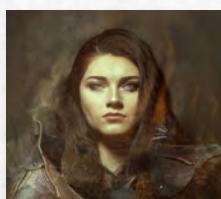
### **Mebuh**

Do you want to play a sociable and friendly character with little experience in life and human violence? Mebuh is for you!



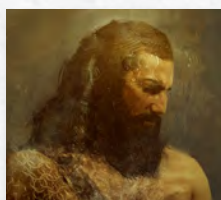
### **Khan**

Do you want your character to be loyal and infallible with his bow, but withdrawn because of past wounds? Khan is the one!



### **Silence**

Do you want to be a mysterious character with a threatening future, but who might attain redemption? Choose Silence!



### **Gamesh**

Do you want to play an extremely powerful and charismatic character whose hidden self is nervous and about to burst at any time? Gamesh opens his arms to you!

## INTRODUCTION TO THE WORLD OF GODS

Before starting the scenario in medias res, you can read this short text to your players to set the atmosphere, warning them of the world they enter.

### THE WORLD OF GODS

The world is a rough stone, a black gem that humanity has not yet carved in its own image, a splendid fruit on a poisonous tree. While this newborn world extracts itself from the corpse of the former, fatal dangers arise. Vast realms spread. Populations that once ignored or swore to forget about one another now cross paths on commercial roads and battlefields.

Adventurers rush to conquer the Wildlands. Moved by an exceptional thirst for travel, driven by a yearning to discover different heavens, or directed by a will that is not quite theirs anymore, they forge their fates at the fires of mortal ambitions.

These Chosen Ones carry the dreaded, yet coveted, Shards—strange objects full of immense powers. Respected by some, despised by others, and condemned and hunted by the Cult all over the Wildlands, they lie in wait to make this merciless world tremble under their footsteps. They rumble with their secrets, on the brink of making new legends.



## SCENE 1 – THE EAGLES’ NEST

**Setting:** The Eagles’ Peak, a summit in the outskirts of Marad, where most of the population gathers to witness the first trial of the day.

**Present characters:** An opposing team led by Yeth-Djazil (NPC) & cleft lacertas (creatures).

**Goal of the Oracle:** Present the context of the village’s holiday in a dynamic and perilous setting.

**Goal of the Characters:** To retrieve the egg from an eagle at the top of the peak and come back before their competitors.

**Transition:** The transition occurs when the characters return from the peak.

## IN MEDIAS RES

The scenario opens in the midst of an action scene questioning the survival skills of the characters in the situation.

The principle is simple and instead of detailing the scene in a long prologue, you gradually distribute information to the players. View these moments like the first scene of an epic movie: nobody knows what awaits the characters. Each shot, each gesture, and each dialogue line unveil aspects of the characters. Proceed in the following manner.

### Step 1. The Oracle Announces the Situation

Read or paraphrase what follows. You must present the situation in about a minute. Don’t add any details beyond what is listed because the players set the crucial elements.

*“You all cling to the slope of the mountain, not far from the Eagles’ eyrie. In the dry and burning air, you can only hear the gasps of your comrades that climb with you. Unarmed and dressed in the light, festive tunics the organizers gave you, you can only count on your own strength and daring to complete this trial.*”

You let out a sigh when you finally see the Eagles’ nest. You remember how, two days ago, your name was drawn from an amphora, naming you as a participant for the trials honoring the

village hero, Eshmaraddon. The day before, the first trial left a bitter taste in your mouth. You removed the fake cursed stone from the river waters, but the no-good Yeth-Djazil and his team won at the very last moment. Today, no one wins but you! You are only a few meters from the nest and the eggs you must seize. You gather your strength on the cracks of the stone...”

### Step 2. The Oracle Asks Six Questions.

The Oracle asks the following questions, one-by-one, to position the characters in the scene. No player can answer a second question before each other player answers at least one of the questions. Each question points out a player making an action or enduring an obstacle.

For each answer, the Oracle depicts one part of the situation as described under the question.

The first exchange at the table is quick, using questions and answers that outline the location of the players, and provide necessary information about their surroundings. Once a character answers the question, they make a roll. No player should miss the chance to throw a dice and learn the rules of the game.

#### Question 1 - Which one of you grabs the eggs?

When a player makes this choice, announce: ***“To win the trial, all you have to do is to bring an unbroken egg to the foot of the cliff. Stretch your arm out as far as you can to the peak of the mountain, so you can rummage in the nest above your head. You can feel three eggs with the tips of your fingers.”***

If the player intends to grab the eggs, they roll **Accuracy + Tricks, Easy (5)**. They roll a number of 10-sided dice equivalent to their Accuracy. They add bonuses issued from the Tricks skill:

- If the PC is a Beginner in this skill, they get 1 more dice (1D) to throw;
- If the PC is a Confirmed one in this skill, they get 1 more dice to roll, and can reroll 1D after the roll.
- If the PC is an Expert in this skill, they get 2 more dice to roll, and can reroll 1D after the roll.

They need to get a 5 or higher on at least one dice in order to succeed.

- Should they succeed, the character delicately grabs an egg.
- Should they fail, the egg slips from their hands and the contestant below catches it!
- That character who holds the egg must prevent it from breaking!



### Rolling Dice in GODS

GODS uses 10-sided dice. Players need to roll a number of dice equal to their Trait, which can receive bonuses from a Skill (cf. rules on page 15). To determine success, one of these dice rolls must be equal to or higher than the Difficulty.

### Successes in GODS

Each dice rolled with numbers equal to or higher than the Difficulty is a Success. Successes are the key to additional results. When more than one die gives an equal to or higher number than the Difficulty, each of them counts as a success. The addition of successes gives players more positive results.

### Question 2 - Which one of you just laid hands on a heavy, feathery body while reaching into the nest?

When a player makes this choice, announce: "You feel a heavy weight, that of a cliff eagle whose body is inert and cold. Yet, something brushes past you..."

If the player wishes to guess what they feel, by quickly inserting their hand and removing it, they need to roll **Reflexes + Wildlife, Difficult (7)**. Should they choose to pull themselves up and have a glance without being spotted by the creature that brushed past them, they must roll **Reflexes + Stealth, Easy (5)**. The player has two options. If they succeed, they see and identify the creature. If they score one more success (i.e. at least two dice equal to or higher than the overall Difficulty), they gain a bonus and won't be spotted by the creature!

- In case of failure, the player is unable to name the danger. However, they sense that something's wrong as long as they have at least the Beginner level in the Wildlife skill.
- If the roll is a success, the character understands what creature they are dealing with: a cleft lacerta—a particularly aggressive, big lizard more than a meter long, that doesn't think twice before attacking bigger prey. It slipped into the nest, and busily devours the mother eagle it just killed. The players just beneath the nest missed it when they clambered onto the cliff.
- If the character gets at least 2 successes (two dice whose number is equal to or higher than the Difficulty), the creature did not spot them. It won't be a part of future fights and goes on basking in the sun or savoring the eagle! Oracle, take note of this exceptional discretion as the group will later profit!

### Question 3 - Which one of you is barely holding on to the rock face, clutching to the very last crack before falling?

When a player makes this choice, announce: "*Down below, at the foot of the cliff, the villagers who came to witness the trial suddenly cry out in fear when they see you about to fall. You wish you were carrying climbing equipment. You try to compensate for the plain tunics and the lack of tools...*"

The player has no choice and must prevent their fall! Since the character's life is at stake, they must be informed that they can use bonus dice for this action. The Oracle must explain to the players how bonus dice work.

- They can spend 1D to 3D from their Nerves Pool, before the action. This adds one dice per number spent to the roll.
- They can spend 1D to 3D from their Grit Pool, after the action. Each dice enables them to reroll one dice used in the previous roll.

**Caution:** In GODS, whenever a bonus allows rerolling several dice, it can be used to reroll the same dice several times. For instance, a 2D Grit allows players to reroll two different dice, or to reroll the same dice twice if the first reroll isn't satisfactory. Whether using Nerves or Grit, pool dice are limited by the involved Trait. If you have 2D in Accuracy, you can use a maximum of 2D in Grit or Nerves on any action using this Trait.

The player rolls **Reflexes + Athletics, Difficult (7)**. They can add Nerves or Grit dice to this roll.

- If the roll is a success, the character recovers at the very last moment.
- If the roll gives more than one success, the character recovers with extraordinary dexterity. At the foot of the cliff, the crowd gasps in admiration! Whatever happens in the future, the spectators remember them, regularly asking them to tell the story of their exploits! This effect is purely narrative, but all of this is about gratification for the player!
- If the roll is a failure, the character starts their vertiginous fall, but it stops almost immediately. They feel a splintering pain in their fists as their body collides with the cliff face. Yet, they aren't dead! However, the player ticks a light wound on their sheet. They also lose 1D in each of their Pools (Nerves and Grit). They now have 1D malus for all their actions!

### Nerves Rolls and Grit Rolls

- Before making a roll, 1D to 3D of Nerves can be spent to add as many dice to the roll.
- After the roll, 1D to 3D of Grit can be spent to rethrow as many dice of the roll.



#### Question 4 - Who is the character closest to the one who was about to fall down?

When a player makes this choice, announce: *"You have the best grip, and the others use you as a human piton. In this situation, where a leather leash binds everyone together, the slightest mistake of one can mean death to the rest of the group!"*

Indeed, and you waited until now to announce it, leather leashes 2.5 meters long bind the characters together at their fists. Everyone is attached to their neighbor, which worsens things! Ask the players to define "the order of the line". The two characters who answered the first two questions are surely in the front. For the rest, it's up to the players. Only the first and last character have one hand free.

This character supports the whole group. Thanks to them, the other characters receive a safe support, and the consequences of small faux-pas are lessened. If the character who answered question 3 missed their roll, the one who answers this question is the one who saved them. Otherwise, the character answering this question just feels a good jolt!

Nevertheless, the character must move forward strategically and place themselves wisely to be an ideal pivot. All of this with a decreased mobility! This requires a roll of **Resistance + Athletics, Difficult (7)**. For the next roll, the character suffers a Handicap (I) because they lack freedom of movement. For their action to be successful, they must get at least 2 successes on their roll.

- If the character fails, 1 success or less, nobody can be expected to do the impossible! The character does their best, but they already struggle to remain on the cliff face. Until the end of the scene, rolls from all players suffer a Handicap (I). The only way out consists of breaking or untying the links; however, this immediately disqualifies the characters from the trial.
- In case of 2 successes, the character can truly be relied on! Thanks to them, their comrades progress, moving and acting confidently. As long as this character doesn't fall from the cliff face, none of their comrades suffer from a Handicap, due to the fact that they're all bound together.
- If the character gets more than 2 successes, whatever the number of additional successes, they really cling to the stones! This wonderful work is beneficial to the whole team and adds 1D to the Group Pool (cf. rules page 18).

#### Handicaps

Some situations impose a Handicap, which is quantified from (I) to (III). To succeed, you need to get the corresponding number of additional successes. A success in the context of a Handicap always remains an exploit (cf. Handicap, page 16).

#### Question 5 - Yeth-Djazil, leader of the team just below yours and the very team who won the trial the day before, hits one of you in the foot. Who is it?

When a character makes this choice, announce that Yeth-Djazil is a determined and tenacious opponent. Truly, nothing can stop him! He shouts: "O Nashee! Give my arm the strength to vanquish as Eshmaraddon would!" On his chest shines a half-moon carved opal he keeps fiddling with, all the while invoking a deity who, in his mind, gives him superhuman powers. This behavior is eccentric in the Wildlands as nobody really believes in gods anymore.

From now on, remember if the player from question 4 failed, all actions made by characters suffer a Handicap (I). Yeth-Djazil attacks the character. Announce that Yeth-Djazil declares an attack with a Difficulty of 7. In this action, he suffers a Handicap (I) due to his team lacking cohesion. As a result, he must get at least 2 successes to make an attack.

The PC rolls **Strength + Brawl** and Yeth-Djazil rolls Attack at 4D. The two rolls are Difficult (7). You calculate the successes they get.

- If Yeth-Djazil gets less than 2 successes, nothing happens. He misses his target and almost falls down. One of his comrades barely catches him and he shouts, "My goddess has saved me!"
- If Yeth-Djazil gets at least 2 successes and at least 1 more success than the PC, the PC slips and lightly hurts themselves. They tick light wound and receive the associated effects.
- If Yeth-Djazil gets at least 2 successes, but the PC gets at least as many successes than him, the PC easily dodges the blow.
- If the PC gets more successes than Yeth-Djazil, they have the opportunity to throw a scathing reply. If you find the reply appropriate, reward the player by adding 1D to the Group Pool for cheering them up!

Whatever happens, explain to the group that they have a common Pool containing 3D + 1D per character. To use the dice, at least half of the players need to agree they can be spent.



**Question 6 - Who's the first one to see the cleft lacertas pounce on you?**

If a character makes this choice, announce that two big lizards come from a breach in the cliff and rush toward the group. The player can roll **Perception + Awareness, Difficult (7)**. If they succeed, they can warn their closest neighbor, plus an additional person with each additional success.

Warned characters can immediately attack the two lacertas, even before the beginning of the fight. They need to roll **Strength + Brawl, Difficult (7)** but don't forget to apply any applicable Handicap. The characters kick downwards to reach the lacertas' muzzles and inflict damage points equal to Strength -1, plus their successes in the Strength + Brawl roll. As it's a collective action, every character who takes part gets a 1D bonus if the Group Pool is equal to or higher than 7. This is an advantage of acting collectively.

**Resolving Attacks**

The character rolls **Strength + Skill (Brawl or Melee) against a Difficulty of 7** (or other difficulty if assigned). If the attacker gets at least 1 more success than the defender, the attack is a success and inflicts damage. The complete fighting rules also contains subtleties, and the Oracle should consult them before more confrontations. However, they can approximate combat for this first scene.

**The Group Pool**

The Group Pool contains 3D + 1D per character. The dice included can be used like Nerves or Grit, but only with the players' consent (cf. rules page 18).

**Collective Actions**

When at least two members of the group make a common or identical action, it's a collective action. A bonus or a malus can be applied according to the actual Group Pool (cf. the Morale chart page 18 - 1D bonus if the Pool is 7D or more, 1D malus if the Pool is 2D or less).



*Lacertas are rock lizards whose survival depends on small animals; however, they frequently attack bigger prey when hungry. To attack, they bite and strike with their spiny tails or sharp crests. Around one meter long and weighing about thirty kilograms, these hunters are not a danger in a single combat on flat grounds. Still, in the mountains, they have an advantage over the PCs as they suffer no Handicap and come and go as they please. They do make an effort to kill one particular PC, usually the closest and the weakest one, so they can drag their corpse into a rock cavity to devour it in peace. Like all wild animals, lizards have no suicidal tendencies. They withdraw when they're seriously hurt and can be frightened.*



### Step 3: The Oracle Runs the Descent and Fight Against the Cleft Lacertas

Now, all players know the rules of GODS! They can now discover subtleties in the system and put into practice what they learned from climbing the cliff! For more information about the fighting rules, reference page 22.

To continue the fight after the initial warning and response, start a "countdown." After four combat turns (or six if you're feeling magnanimous), Yeth-Djazil's team grabs an egg and descends far enough to be certain of a win! At the end of the 4th turn of combat, the PCs lose the trial if they are still on the cliff.

#### Reaction Roll

All players roll Reaction: **Reflexes + Awareness, Easy (5)**. The Oracle rolls dice for the lacertas (3D). As the creatures do not attack the other teams, they take no part in the encounter, and no dice are thrown for them. You work in a decreasing order of successes with the highest success going first. In case of equality between the PC and the NPC, the PC is the winner. All NPC actions take place at the same time.

There is one lacerta per character, plus one who's feeding on the eagle in the nest. If characters disturbed its meal (cf. question 2), it will take part in the combat! To fully understand the NPC's and the creatures' profiles, reference the rules, page 27.

#### Wounds

The number of inflicted damage points is equal to the number of successes of the attack + the weapon damage. You subtract armor protection and compare the resulting damage points to the defender's Wound Levels. They suffer a wound corresponding to the highest Wound threshold reached (cf. rules page 24).

#### What actions can PCs take during combat?

**Difficulty:** attack rolls in this combat are Difficulty 7.

**Attacking:** Characters attack lacertas and avoid their blows. To attack, a character needs to roll **Strength + Brawl, Difficult (7)**, but don't forget the Handicap if the group pivot missed their roll. Damage is equal to Strength -1, and points are added for each success.

**Grabbing an egg:** The characters close to the nest can quickly grab another egg with a roll **Accuracy + Tricks, Difficult (7)**. In case of failure, throw 1d10. Upon a 1-2, the egg rolls away. Upon a 3-5, the egg falls and is caught by an opponent. Upon 6-10, if the lacerta is still in the nest, it's disturbed and bites the character for 1 automatic light wound.

**Ponder:** A character who wants to know more about the lacertas can roll **Knowledge + Wildlife, Easy (5)** to receive the following information: lacertas fear fast and noisy prey.

Gesticulating and yelling might be enough to frighten them. This method only works on lacertas with at least one light wound and the character must succeed on a **Resistance + Animals, Difficult (7)** roll so they do not lose their grip. It scares the lacerta away. Every additional success scares another lacerta away.

**Disturbing the other teams:** During this combat, Yeth-Djazil's team works hard to climb and grab an egg while the lacertas distract the characters. If some characters want to prevent their opponents from taking action, ask them to roll Traits and Skills according to their actions, such as Accuracy + Throw for throwing rocks at the opponents. If some players join forces to do so, they get a collective action bonus. Any success prevents an opponent from Yeth-Djazil's team from taking action. Let the players show creativity and reward them for their most treacherous efforts! Please note, Yeth-Djazil's team has as many members as the PC's team. After four combat turns, if the PCs take no action against them, the members of the Yeth-Djazil's team grab an egg and descend the cliff. They're far enough ahead to win the trial, unless the Oracle is magnanimous.

**Recovering:** If a PC falls down, they become vulnerable and the target of all attacks. As long as they did not untie their bonds, they can't smash to the ground. To regain their footing, they must succeed in rolling **Strength + Athleticism, Difficult (7)**. As long as they hang in the void, any character bound to them receives a Handicap (I). Note: The Handicap can't exceed I in this scene.

**Grabbing a rock and turning it into an improvised weapon:** Characters can grab a stone by rolling **Strength + Tricks, Easy (5)**. It becomes a weapon if they roll **Strength + Melee, Difficult (7)**. It inflicts a number of damage points equal to the PC's Strength.

**Passing the egg to another character without breaking it:** The two involved characters roll **Reflexes + Easy Tricks, Easy (5)**. Both get the collective action bonus. The character holding the egg suffers a Handicap (I) for all their actions. If they fail a physical action, the egg breaks. If they suffer damage, they must succeed in **Reflexes + Tricks, Difficult (7)** roll to prevent the egg from breaking.

**Descending the cliff:** The characters' goal is not to kill big lizards, but to get back down the cliff with an unbroken egg. To do so, the characters must spend two full turns doing nothing but climbing down. Each character rolls **Resistance + Athletics, Easy (5)**. This is a collective action that receives the associated bonuses. If all characters get 2 successes, it only takes them one turn to descend. Once the characters spend two turns descending, the lacertas can no longer reach them and crawl back into the cliff.



**Looking down below:** In every round, each character can give up on their action to look below. No roll is needed and the character glimpses a group of horsemen in the distance. Dressed in black leather armors, they all ride beasts as black as the night. If the character knows about the Cult, they recognize that they all wear the emblem of a stylized sun.

**What do lacertas do during combat?**

Lacertas systematically attack the PC to kill them or make them fall. To do so, they roll 4D—lacertas make actions with 3D and their specialty of biting gives them a 1D bonus—on the standard Difficulty check for this combat, which is 7. In case of success, the damage inflicted is equal to the number of successes obtained on the attack roll, plus 1. Any character who suffers a wound rolls **Reflexes + Athletics, Easy (5)** so they don't lose their grip or fall down. If a PC falls down, they can recover by rolling **Strength + Athletics, Difficult (7)**. Any attack against them automatically succeeds and they inflict a Handicap (I) on any character directly tied to them.

If a character hangs in the void, the lacertas attack in pairs. While one of them keeps attacking, the other one tries to cut the leather line with its tail and teeth (Very Difficult (9)).

**Planning the unknown**

What if a character falls down? That wouldn't be heroic, would it? But anything can happen! If one of the PCs falls down after their tie is loosened or broken, the fall immediately knocks them out. When they wake up, they find themselves in one of the village houses, with a priest of the Cult at their bedside. One of the agents of the Cult healed them. How? It's impossible for the character to know as they weren't conscious. In the rough-and-tumble after the contest, the Cult evacuated their body before anyone could intervene. The fact remains, the character recovered.

However, consequences remain. This discouraging misfortune removes 1D from the Group Pool, and the characters score no points in this trial. If the Pool is already empty, the PC loses 1D in another Pool of their choice. If their other Pools are also empty, the misadventure cripples the character. They suffer a Handicap (I) every time they make a physical action until the end of the scenario. Moreover, the Cult feels the PC owes them one, even if they feel less than indebted to the fanatics.

**Transition**

The scene comes to an end when all of the characters come back down, whether or not in possession of an egg.

The characters' opponents are on their way, too. There are three more teams in addition to theirs, including Yeth-Djazil's one. Even if the PCs are the first to arrive, Yeth-Djazil acts as if he won and loudly brags about the "miracles of his goddess Nashee, Daughter of the Treacherous ones." This behavior is uncommon; in the Wildlands, few believe in the power of the gods, either forgetting them or considering them myths. Even fewer claim to be followers.

At the end of this scene, Yeth-Djazil states loudly and clearly, even he didn't win the trial, that he's superior to the characters and his goddess favors him. If the characters want to contradict his statements, let them! The referee steps in and comes closer to the characters, alongside Dassid, the Seeker of the festival (cf. description of Dassid in the NPC section).

**Cleft Lacertas' Profile**

**Threat:** Minor / **Experience:** Beginner / **Role:** Minor

<b>Attack</b>	3D	<b>Reaction</b>	3D
<b>Action</b>	3D	<b>Specialty</b>	4D*
<b>Re-roll</b>	0D	<b>Dice pool</b>	0D
<b>Weapon</b>	biting, claws, damage 1		
<b>Armor</b>	thick skin, protection 1		
<b>Wounds</b>	Light (1)	Heavy (4)	Fatal (6)
	○	○	○

\* Climbing and biting



## Scene 1:

# CONTEXT

The action scene requires almost no context. Still, the Oracle must notate a number of elements for play in the rest of the scenario. This scenario brings several factions face-to-face with each other, their contradictory goals causing conflict. As the first scenes of the scenario passes, each faction shows what they're made of. Once all the elements are unveiled, including the past secrets of the village, the characters find themselves in the middle of an explosive situation. The conclusion relies entirely on them.

Therefore, your work as an Oracle consists of guiding the players along in essential scenes. After scene 7, you let the action unfold according to their choices, because this scenario has neither a determined end nor compulsory events. Once the scene 7 is reached, the fate of the characters, and Marad inhabitants' too, is in their hands.



## The Cult in the Region

A few years before, followers of the Cult of the Black Sun settled in Sabaah. The queen, Taerhonis, took an oath of allegiance to the monotheistic God. The Cult made itself comfortable in the big city over the following year. Construction started to build appropriate places of worship. Spotted from miles away, among the white towers of the city, black edifices now loom.

The presence of the Cult doesn't influence the surrounding villages, like Marad, yet; however, the situation is about to change. Once they moved into the capital of the Wildlands, the followers expand into neighboring areas. They seize any opportunity to intervene, engaging in an aggressive proselytism while hunting down, without respite, "infidels." The hunted directly or indirectly practice magic, but might also follow a different religion than the Cult. In Marad, where the Cult is an unknown force, the population retains its innocence. Their naivety may unfortunately cost them everything.

The council dispatched the Cult's followers as soon as the Merciful Sarpeliamon, a member of the Cult who can sense the "foul aura of heretical influences"—the power other gods

use through an intermediary of Shards—felt a strong presence in Marad. Sarpeliamon perceived power emanating from Ninsumû's Helmet.

A Shard associated with a deity of fertility and the river, the Helmet doesn't produce the power at all times. Its deity saves her voice for a listener in the best condition to fully understand her message. It already communicated with Dassid the Seeker, Hand of Eshmaraddon, the year before.

**Note:** In this scenario, the deity is named Ninsumû, the name her worshipers used to give her. The original name is lost in time.

The Cult's agents intend to extract any potential heresy from the little village, and will even put it to fire and sword. To do so, they asked the queen for a military unit and support, which she gave. She ordered Captain Radec, an honorable soldier from Sabaah, to rejoin the Cult's agents in Marad. His squad was on a patrolling mission when a rapid courier told them they must present themselves in Marad, so as to "enforce law and order, and, if necessary, nip any sedition in the bud, obeying the Merciful Sarpeliamon in the limits of the Sabaah rules."



## The Merciful Sarpeliamon

The Merciful Sarpeliamon, emissary of the Order of the Black Circle, is a seven-year-old, blond boy who could easily be a Chosen One. He can perceive divine emanations through what the Chosen Ones often name “The sense that is not a sense.” He wears a blindfold, for he lost his eyes during the ceremony that made him the “purveyor of absolute truth.” Like some members of the Cult’s clergy, his left hand is tattooed in black and he never uses it, except by pure, defensive reflex.

Sarpeliamon acts like a young messiah, not like a child of his age. He often uses catchphrases, quotes, and pompous sentences such as “Every being is unique, but the Unique is in every being”; and “The one who strayed from the right path and chooses that which takes him away from the Unique One cannot expect more than the Mercy of the Unique, which he finds in suffering, expiation, and death.” While his wording is gratuitous, this blind boy nonetheless seems to see things inaccessible to ordinary mortals. Sarpeliamon praises absolute love for the Unique God and pity for the infidels, who carry the burden of sin. The only way to redeem themselves is to abjure their fake gods and painfully expiate their sins.

A dissonant charisma emanates from this little boy who speaks like an old priest. He never refuses to settle a disagreement between village inhabitants and shows them absolute impartiality, except if the interests of the Cult must come first. He also always gives his blessing to someone or something, but often requires they listen to his sermons, presenting the religion to them and including them in the Cult as “sheep.”

**Character profile:** There’s no sheet for Sarpeliamon, for his interventions remain narrative. Neutralizing him, even killing him, would obviously be easy. Still, if the situation requires an intellectual or a relational roll, he rolls 3D, or 5D if the action has even the smallest connection with the Cult, its philosophy, and its means of action. Twelve members of the cult, also warrior priests, surround him at all times.

Sarpeliamon shows extreme rigor. To him, “One cannot let the witch live.” Heretics must be slaughtered or converted. Apart from that, he believes that the Unique One is a god of tolerance, love, and kindness, as even the worst criminals can be redeemed in suffering.

**How to describe Sarpeliamon:** He’s a blindfolded child, frail in the long, black dress of the Cult. Under his blindfold, cicatrized tissues can be glimpsed. He moves like a child, but whenever he speaks, his tone and gestures are those of a priest, which, considering his childish and flute-like voice, take people by surprise.

## Hershaad Stumble-Leg and the Priests of the Cult

A giant named Hershaad guides the priests alongside Sarpeliamon. Slightly hunchbacked, he walks with a limp. This does not prevent himself from displaying or wielding the long sword of his station. He’s always the first one to speak, but when it comes to mentioning the will of the Unique One, he leaves room for the strange charms of Sarpeliamon.

**How to describe the priests:** Twelve priests walk alongside Sarpeliamon. All about fifty years of age, they are seasoned veterans with hard stares, withdrawn faces, and tight lips—except when they intone prayers to the Unique One. What little of their muscled body can be seen beneath their robes is seamed with scars. They also wear the symbol of the cult: a five-ray stylized sun. They emanate lingering odors of sweat, used leather, and smoke, mingled with the sweet perfume of incense and the pungent metallic scent of blood.

## Marad Village

Marad is an average village on the banks of the Siirh, a day’s ride from Sabaah. Its inhabitants are relatively prosperous, mostly from weaving. In the largest and most productive part of the village, three-storied houses with only three walls stand tall. The fourth “wall” has tapestries, woven with splendid figures of all colors, hanging from the ceiling. Each house shows a different picture: a blue bird, the river, the face of a pensive old man, or something abstract that looks like the waves of a tender melody. High wobbly ladders rest on walls, which weavers climb to pass one another spools of thread. Scraps of threads of all colors cover the floors, and serve as material for birds to make their nests. In the village and all around it, nests are multicolored!

In the absence of Gods, the villagers have no religion, strictly speaking. However, like most places, superstitions stick. An old erected stone known as the Ninsum is the center of many superstitious activities. There, villagers practice fertility and other rituals associated with passage into adulthood with no particular codification. Once in a while, women come and rub their bellies on the stone to win the favors of the gods. Groups of young men from the village go there and practice different passage rites, such as wrestling or ritual hunting. Sometimes, lovers meet and marriages are celebrated there. The population believes this place used to be an ancient temple of the region. That’s not the case. The Ninsum was nothing more than a grossly-carved idol in the human form—even if today, the rock is now smooth, almost gleaming, from the touch of human hands. It was the marker for the road that led to the true temple, now hidden beneath the detritus of time.



## The Annual Feast in Honor of Eshmaraddon

Every year, the village celebrates Eshmaraddon, its "founding" hero. The feast lasts four days during which teams compete in the following four trials: extracting a stone from the river, collecting an eagle's egg and bringing it back without breaking it, returning the three bloods, and proving to be the strongest in an ultimate test that varies (tug of war, confrontations, etc.). One member of the winning team receives a trophy and becomes "the Hand of Eshmaraddon". The trials are open to everyone. Even outsiders can participate, in a tradition of welcome openness (which the real story refutes, cf. further down).

### History and the Winners

*"By the stone, I made the river an ally*

*Down to their nest, I seized the eagles' eggs*

*By my virtue, I opened the doors of your houses*

*In exchange for the kindness of your hips, we put our iron at your service*

*By the strength of my fist, shall our two people be one*

*One river, one blood*

### – The Chant of Eshmaraddon

The feats of Eshmaraddon conceal a lie elaborated on for centuries by the descendants of those who were only the second occupants of the village. A long time ago, the region belonged to the Hursagids, one of the first local, sedentary tribes. The Hursagids developed rudiments of agriculture, also living from fishing on the banks of the Siirh. They worshiped the river in the form of a deity they named Ninsumû—its real name lost into oblivion. She offered them beneficence and provided them with a physical mark: both the Hursagids' hands and feet had six digits, which granted them exceptional dexterity.

Then came the Eshmarads, nomads whose war leader was called Eshmaraddon, "the guide of the Eshmarads." Starving and exhausted, the Eshmarads asked for shelter from the Hursagids, who mistook them for invaders and pushed them away. Desperate but pugnacious, the Eshmarads launched a campaign of guerrilla warfare and terror upon the Hursagids.

Where the Hursagids were robust people, the Eshmarads were cunning and perfidious. Above all, a powerful god guided them—the god of beaks that tear asunder, talons that rip to pieces, and wings that subdue the sky. The god whispered deceitful tactics to Eshmaraddon. First of all, the Eshmarads threw toxic stones into the river to poison it. Then, under the cover of night, they launched stealthy attacks against the village, stealing stocks and slaughtering the Hursagid newborns. Eventually, they kidnapped the son of one of the inhabitants and promised to give him back only if his father agreed to open the doors to them. When the desperate traitor let them in, the Eshmarads exterminated the inhabitants and seized many Hursagid women.

The Hursagid survivors took refuge in the local temple, retreating to an underground cavern fed by a source as wrathful as their goddess. They crouched under the ground, waiting for a sign, for they dared not lash out at the Eshmarads who defeated them. Instead, time passed and the powers of the goddess faded away. She sank, like all the other deities, into oblivion.

Benefiting from the fruits of their crimes, the Eshmarads ended up creating a legend that made them the heroes rather than the invaders. To them, their neighbors persecuted the Eshmarads and they owed their salvation to Eshmaraddon. This title became a proper noun in their biased story of the events, where the victims were their own people. According to their legend, Eshmaraddon "withdrew from the river a stone poisoned by the enemies." Then, because of scarcity of food, he went to "fetch the eggs of the eagles down to their nest." In the end, his virtue "helped the people reconcile", "putting iron at their service in exchange for the kindness of their hips" (a euphemism renaming the massacre and enslavement of women), prevailing over lies and selfishness thanks to his great wisdom. The trials of the feast are the natural consequence of these fables.

## Dassid the Seeker, Hand of Eshmaraddon

Every year, the village elects the "Hand of Eshmaraddon". When trials are over, the members of the winning team appoint the most valiant, robust, and cunning player among them to the position. No rules apply to this choice beyond that. The whole village triumphantly welcomes to the Hand of Eshmaraddon, giving them the trophy of the festivities. Then, the Hand receives the title of Seeker of Marad, entrusted with completing a mission to find a new trophy worthy of the winners for the year to come. The Hand reveals their talents in this process, and the way they handle the task speaks to their philosophies and values.

Dassid won his title the year before. Even at a very early age, Dassid stood out from the crowd in physical prowess, crafts, and skills of the mind. Although vivacious and slender, the man who returned from his quest has nothing in common with a hero. He often feels lonely, and hardly socializes with other villagers. Villagers still show him the respect due to his titles, but many of those who used to like him now avoid him, as if he emits a foul smell. Dassid came back from his journey haunted by specters only he could see.

His whole life, Dassid kept a secret: he was born with six-fingered hands, a heritage of hursagids ancestors (cf. frame History and the winners page 40). Unlike most born with this deformity, Dassid stood away from the sword and did not have his supernumerary fingers cut off. He hid this secret beneath gloves he never removes.





During his quest, he found the Helmet of Ninsumû in an ancient sepulcher. The Shard briefly awoke, giving him visions of the past. He knows the real story of the local people. The Helmet wants to rejoin the descendants of past worshipers, but also, above all, seeks a capable Chosen One who can spread the word of the goddess. She showed Dassid's mind a sumptuous temple, the very one where the Hursagids once took shelter.

**How to describe Dassid:** He's a vigorous young man, with a haunted look and sunken eyes. His slender body shows traces of his journeys and peregrinations. He wears gloves to hide his supernumerary fingers, which are located between the thumb and the index finger. A character can make a **Perception + Healing, Difficult (7)** roll to perceive he's hiding this flaw. In fact, many of the villagers know about the deformity, but keep quiet about it. If the Cult found out, they would persecute him as an abomination in the eyes of the Unique One.

### The Real Temple and the Hursagids

The descendants of the Hursagids live in a dark, underground temple hiding a black water lake. In this remote cavern, far from all, a worn-out statue of Ninsumû stands. The temple suffers from decrepitude, and the place is distressing. The Hursagids made their dwellings out of the superficial rooms of the previous temple. They narrated their exodus, covering the walls with frescoes in clearly recognizable figures: the Eshmarads are smaller and the Hursagids show six fingers.

#### Chronologically, these frescos represent:

- Armed Eshmarads asking for shelter from the peaceful Hursagids, who wouldn't let them enter the city;
- Eshmaraddon's poisoning of the river. He's clearly identifiable due to his depiction with a raised fist,

surrounded by a flock of ravens. The frescos show the death of numerous Hursagids, of all ages, killed by the poisoned waters;

- Eshmarad marauders slaughtering the Hursagid children;
- An Hursagid traitor opening the gates of the city;
- The massacre of the Hursagid men, some of who flee as the Eshmarads seize the women;
- A last scene depicting the temple and the Hursagids imploring their deity, who's hiding her eyes and her mouth—a symbol of when gods stop communicating with their worshipers.

No matter their hardships, the Hursagids keep the faith. They believe, one day, their deity shall return and help them get their revenge upon the Eshmarads.

#### Description of the Hursagids:

About two-meter-tall with skin like the scales of a reptile, these humans gave rise to local legends evoking "lacertamen". Their sixth finger, far from being a handicap, offers them extraordinary manual dexterity and they easily handle a kind of two-bladed sword tied at the handle by leather straps. The Hursagids speak in an ancient dialect. To communicate with them, even to exchange elementary concepts, requires to roll **Empathy + Social, Very Difficult (9)** or **Knowledge + Symbols, Difficult (7)**. This roll could also include a Handicap based on the situation, such as during a confrontation, if the speaker is imprisoned, etc.

Once in a while, inhabitants of the village happen to walk near the temple. Some vanish. Others come back with spine-chilling tales, evoking monsters that prowl amidst old rocks and secret caverns, preying on human flesh. While most of this is conjecture, Hursagids aren't reluctant to occasionally eat humans.



## SCENE 2 – DARK HORSEMEN

**Setting:** At the foot of the eagle peak, just after the trial.

**Present Characters:** Yeth-Djazil, Dassid the Seeker, the followers of the Cult (including Hershaad Stumble-Leg and the Merciful Sarpeliamon), Jyvas the Village Referee (a public figure losing his marbles and far from a spring chicken).

**Goal of the Oracle:** To present the Cult and its agents, to make sure the Cult is delightfully detested, and help explain the Instincts principle.

**Goal of the Characters:** To ensure the good continuity of the trial, and avoid incurring the wrath of the Cult—at least this early in their adventure!

**Transition:** The crowd enters the village and declares the winner of the trial.

### The Eggs' Blood

Once the players descend the cliff, the crowd gasps in admiration. Their combat against the rock monsters wasn't unnoticed and they have tales to tell, even if they didn't fetch an egg! The ceremony referee, Jyvas, hands over the eggs to Dassid. They're supposed to be opened and given as an offering... but to whom?

The referee says a few words, "And so, you rose to the challenge and came back as winners, like Eshmaraddon feeding his children, our children! Now, we give these eggs as an offering to... to..." The referee gets carried away. The ritual might once have included offering the eggs to a deity, but today, it's senseless as gods disappeared centuries ago. The referee is no longer young, and he lost his ability to improvise. As he speaks, the dark horsemen work their way through the crowd. The characters are too far away to count them, but thirteen of them mingle with the villagers.

Ask the players if one of them would like to finish the referee's disjointed sentence, to save him from feeling ashamed.

- If one of the players makes a proposition, whatever it is, grant 1D to the Group Pool. This gesture of goodwill guarantees the coherence of the festivities.
- If the players take action, Yeth-Djazil interrupts them. If they don't hurry up and go for it, he speaks straight away, "Let us dedicate these eggs to my goddess, Nashee, who helped me stand out in this trial! O, Nashee, who presides over the multitude and daily carries the sun in her hands, take this offering of purity!".

Upon these words, Yeth-Djazil comes closer to Jyvas the referee and Dassid the Seeker. He takes an egg and breaks it. All of a sudden, a wave of disgusted cries spreads through the crowd. The first broken egg pours forth a dark and foul mush of blood, and its revolting smell reaches the characters. At the same time, the first dark horseman elbows his way through the crowd and gets close to the referee and the Seeker. He stands by Yeth-Djazil, who gapes at his hands, covered with the bloody substance.

### The Instincts in GODS

Invite the players to look at their Instinct on their character sheet. It is a useful tool, notably for their interpretation of this narrative scene.



## Yeth-Djazil in a Critical Situation

The first horseman, Hershaad Stumble-Leg, hails the referee, "Make room for Sarpeliamon the Merciful, emissary of the Sabaah temple, sent by the Cult of the Black Sun to bring you the light of the Unique One. Who presides over this ceremony?"

The referee does not dare to answer, and the Seeker is careful not to. Yeth-Djazil stammers, in a dazed and unresponsive state. The characters can now step into action. Unexpectedly, the agents of the Cult feign indulgence in this first conversation.

After the players speak a little—whether to explain this is a feast, to ask people to present themselves, or for other reasons—the dark horseman who first set foot on the ground, Hershaad Stumble-Leg, lets Sarpeliamon the Merciful silence the crowd.

"I have learned through the ways of the Unique One that your village is in great danger," says the delicate voice of a child, high pitched but full of self-confidence. One of the warrior priests helps the boy to set foot on the ground.

"The wind smells of rotting carcasses," adds the boy. "In her kindness, the queen Taerhonis agreed to let us come here and spread the good word, the word of the Unique One. Rejoice! The time of false gods, of sorcerers and lying prophets is over!" The boy raises his head as if smelling the wind, and goes to Yeth-Djazil. In fact, the boy smells the bloody eggs. They are one of the first manifestations that Ninsumû awakens, and one of the echoes transmitted by her Shard, carried in a trunk no one has seen yet.

"I sense the germ of malfeasance inside you," Sarpeliamon the Merciful declares. "This illness must be removed from you."

However hard he tries to protest, Yeth-Djazil starts praying to his god, which makes things much worse.

- If the PCs step in: The agents of the Cult immediately show the seal of queen Taerhonis, which makes them emissaries of her power. In the village, nobody rises against the immediate agents of the queen. The priests and Sarpeliamon won't listen to reason, and no one turns them away from their goal. Yeth-Djazil is an unfortunate being whose sole crime is believing in a god who undoubtedly only lives in his head. Yeth-Djazil is not a Chosen One.
- If the PCs allow this to happen: The agents take Yeth-Djazil away, and his teammates lose composure. The public figures of the village take the agents of the Cult to a house restricted to distinguished guests. They drag Yeth-Djazil behind them.

## Transition:

The referee, who improvises, declares that only a "pure" egg can lead to victory in this trial.

If the PCs failed the test and now wish to state their opponent is not in the race anymore, let them. The referee agrees if they provide him with convincing enough arguments. If the egg they fetched is unbroken, the referee breaks it to discover that this one also contains a mush of flesh and blood. After he opens all of the eggs—up to three of the teams may have fetched one—he finds the same thing. It's up to the players to present their arguments if they wish to be declared the winners. If they don't have any valuable arguments, the other team members win, after proving they brought back the egg whose shell is the cleanest!

The crowd gets back to the village and festivities start again. In the evening, when the watchtower gong rings, the participants see the trophy they can win!

## Being prepared for the unexpected

What if the characters attempt to attack the members of the Cult? In this scene, the members of the Cult are armed. Most of them ride on horseback, and are not exhausted by their journey. The characters don't have armor or weapons, and if they confront these opponents, they attack legitimate authority figures at their own risk. The agents of the Cult show themselves as friendly. Politely but firmly, they ask everyone not to take action. Then, Sarpeliamon wonders aloud about "those who rise against the priests and act as heretics."

However, the members of the Cult remain particularly permissive. Indeed, they want no conflict to happen! They only want to implant the Cult within the village, through a mix of feigned kindness (when one agrees with them) and coercion (making examples out of heretics). If the characters persist in their attack, the Cult neutralizes them and locks them up in jail. They're left to rot until they can find a way to escape, which the Oracle should let them try. They might then move about unnoticed in the village, where agents of the Cult make their rounds. The next day, they might face the soldiers of Captain Radec. You can use events from scenes 3 and 4, in which the characters get the chance to be acquitted by the village by saving a child.



## SCENE 3 - LIVING IN THE VILLAGE

**Setting:** The village of Marad and its surroundings.

**Characters:** Miscellaneous NPCs presented in any possible activity.

**Goal of the Oracle:** To present the scenery and link together the PCs and the villagers. The feelings of the PCs about the Marad inhabitants can bring some complexity to their decisions at the end of the scenario.

**Goal of the Characters:** To discover the village, take part of the feast by engaging in random activities, and benefit from the fame brought to them if their participation in Scene 1 was successful.

**Transition:** The scene ends once everyone takes part in at least one activity of their choice or decides to take a break. After, the gong invites everyone to witness the procession for the presentation of this year's trophy.

The players are on leave in this scene. The evening is ending, people dance and sing in the streets, and sell beautiful fabrics on the market. Several elements constitute this scene, and you can use as many as you like, even improvising other ones! We advise you play "Put One's Iron at One's Service", "The Missing Spindle", and "The Temple", so players can get information about the past of the village.

The members of the Cult can be introduced in any mini-scene. Here, they don't attack the PCs yet, but might have bad feelings about them, especially if they don't behave themselves. Their presence lingers over the festivities.

### To Put One's Iron at One's Service

A man called Yedzer comes to the least intimidating character of the group. He carries a small phial of perfumed oil that he offers straight away— he used to be one of their most fervent followers, who never ceased to encourage them. Yedzer needs their assistance, but dares not say more if people are around. He is especially cautious of the Cult; he needs to be brought to a character's home.

Chânn, Yedzer's son, is one of the village children who bear the "Hursagid mark": six fingers on his right hand. Yedzer asks the most compassionate character to "put their iron at Chânn's service", that is, to solve the situation by cutting off the supernumerary finger. The idiom "to put one's iron at one's service" comes from the story of the Hursagids' slaughter, and from the captivity of their women. The Eshmarads pretended that "in exchange for the kindness of your hips, we put our iron at your service." Instead, once they enslaved the Hursagid women, their conquerors cut off their supernumerary fingers, to "make them go back to the way the gods wanted them." Yedzer has no knowledge of this story, and to him, it's just an idiom.

To remove the fingers, the character must make an **Accuracy + Healing roll, Easy (5)** or an **Accuracy + Melee, Difficult (7)** roll. The two rolls suffer a Handicap (1).

- A roll with 1 success means they cut the finger off, but without discretion nor professionalism. The child starts to scream. If the PC can't soothe him, he might draw the unwelcomed attention of the Cult, who dislikes the least sign of "monstrosity". A **Knowledge + Healing, Difficult (7)** roll is now necessary to ensure that the boy lives. If the roll fails, he dies from infection within a few days. Characters are not aware of this consequence, and they might not be aware until they might meet Yedzer again, this time grieving.
- A roll with at least 2 successes means that everything went well. The wound is clean, and the boy survives with no after-effects.
- A failed roll means that the finger was badly cut off, and the blade opened the arm and reached an artery. The boy struggled at the very last moment, and the wound causes a serious hemorrhage. An **Accuracy + Healing, Very Difficult (9)** roll is required to save him. To silence him, as well as his parents, requires an **Empathy + Social, Easy (5)** roll. If the character does not succeed, the screams attract a member of the Cult. The characters witness an unexpected gesture of kindness from members of the Cult. They heal the boy straight away thanks to a mysterious ointment, saying prayers and making rituals they usually refuse to let anyone else see. However, the day after, they come back and tell the parents the boy now belongs to them, taking him back with them once their mission is complete. What awaits him? That's a mystery for another time.



## The Temple

Young people from the village form a joyful, dancing procession while they sing the praises of the PCs. They offer drinks, sour wine, and a kind of tea made with black leaves and honey that's very sweet and delicious. The young people even give the PC a bag of these leaves if they ask for it. If the PCs choose to stay with them, the partygoers drag them to the Ninsum (cf. Context), the stone the villagers mistake for the ancient temple. Everyone tells stories from the past, telling tales of the former villagers of legend: six-fingered giants and fearsome man eaters who established terror in the region. Then, either a young girl or young man (Oracle's choice) named Nahander moves away from the group. If a character watches Nahander at that moment, and succeeds on a **Knowledge + Healing, Easy (5)** roll, they realize that Nahander has the mark of an old scar between their thumb and index finger.

If the character talks to Nahander, this character tells them a strange story, "A long time ago, the day when someone put his iron at my service, I stopped believing in life. I traveled west, from the Ninsum on, heading towards the dark lands, among the sharp rocks and burning sands. There, I found houses of olden times built by inhuman hands. Among the houses, I glimpsed the specters of times gone by, abominations with six fingers, so I understood that the blood in me was impure. I was lucky that somebody put his iron at my service. When I came back to the village, I tried to forget about them, but without success. I can't help thinking about them every year..."

Although Nahander knows nothing in particular, they more or less know where to find the old temple where the Hursagids live, and that might come in handy at the end of the scenario.

## The Lambs

The PCs pass a street corner and see a long, open building; a sad crying emanates from within it and they discover that lambs are disemboweled there. The beasts still breathe, too weak to defend themselves and too small to fight. Workers extract handfuls of intestines, and when they spot the PCs, they raise their hands with a smile and hail, "Come over! It will bring you luck! Come and take a fistful!" When they see the looks on the characters' faces, the workers explain the intestines are cleaned, put out to dry, and then stretched. They're used as light, solid, and very flexible armor. As they speak, characters notice the blood in their hair and the smiles on their faces, "They bring luck, those armors, they bring luck. Would you like one?"

## The Missing Spindle

The PC will undoubtedly pass through the Weavers' district. As they do, they hear a long high-pitched shouting, "Piper! Piiiiiper!" and a small boy runs past them, racing along madly. If the PCs look to see what the small boy runs after, they see a tiny dog with an object (a... stick?) in its mouth. The small boy looks terrified. If one of the PCs runs after the small boy or Piper, they must make a **Strength + Athletics, Easy (5)** roll. The little dog, the small boy, and the PC hardly leave the village when Piper plunges down a burrow. If the PC asks what happened, the boy answers, with his cheeks covered in tears, that he's a weaver apprentice. He brought his dog to work and little Piper, bored to death, jumped up and grabbed the historical spindle of the village—a sacred, ivory object of olden times. The dog jumped through the window and vanished into the burrow. The burrow is hardly wide enough to let a character pass, and it certainly must be the slenderest one.

What will the characters do? The burrow is narrow and they have to get inside to retrieve Piper and the spindle. If one of the PC slips into the burrow, how will they see in the dark? A simple candle does the trick, but it can't be left behind. Once in the burrow, the character needs to crawl in a narrow tunnel. Fortunately, it's very short, so the PC must succeed a **Resistance + Athletics, Easy (5)** roll, or lose 1D from their Grit Pool. At the end of the tunnel, there is a small room that appears to be the corner of a formerly huge, but now collapsed, hall. Piper crouches in a corner with the stick in his mouth and shakes. The character only has to reach out and talk softly to get the dog to exit the burrow. However, the PC spots ancient paintings on the walls of the collapsed hall: men with scale-like skins, carrying two-bladed swords with their six-fingered hands. Their features are reptilian and their teeth sharp. What are these creatures? Nobody knows, but some elders from the village tell stories about lacerta-men prowling in the hills.



## On the Banks of the Siirh

Characters who have never seen the sea can take a closer look at the river, as it seems almost as vast as the ocean. They must narrow their eyes to even think they could catch a glimpse of the other bank. Water flaps under the sunshine, its transparency offering views of big quartz blocks shining like diamonds at its bottom. Fishes as long as humans swim lazily and blur the surface when they suck down the ducklings sliding between tufts of frothy algae. The characters quickly reach a small cove, surrounded by dunes of loose earth. The smell of silt is everywhere. A narrow path, meandering through slippery sludge clods, tattoos the ground. The PC hears someone sobbing. If they come closer with a **Reflexes + Awareness, Easy (5)** roll, so as not to fall into the water, they discover a young girl covered in mud. Her chin bleeds and she frantically digs at the mud, transferring it to the broken remains of an amphora.

If the PCs talk to her, she lifts up her eyes, and answers in state of panic that she is an Asahaa, a sacred water carrier. The water taken from Siirh must never touch the ground, and not only is the water sacred, but so are the amphoras that contain it. Ezoë faces a heavy sentence for breaking the amphora and spilling the water. At best, she'll never be given the right to touch the Siirh water again, even to drink. At worst, they speak of an ancient punishment inflicted upon Asahaa who spilled water: they squeezed a lanyard, used only for this, around the wrist of the culprit until the flesh necrotizes and the hand tears apart. Death usually follows. If the characters decide to abandon her to her fate, you can use that later in the scenario. A platform is hastily built, and an executioner assigned, even if they no longer understand the punishment - this "crime" is so rare! Ezoë's cries are ear-shattering, but she resigns herself to the fact that she deserves it.

If the character wants to help Ezoë by remaining silent, the PC must remember several things. While they might be moved by the young girl, her wounded chin, and her muddy clothing, they're not likely to be moved by the spilled water. Even Ezoë believes herself culpable. As far as Mebuh is concerned, as an Asahaa, she shares the same beliefs as Ezoë about the river water, so what will she say? The two women aren't friends with each other and they never spend time together.

The PCs can find another amphora; fix Ezoë's one by finding a potter's workshop and making a **Accuracy + Craft Very Difficult (9)** roll; set out their arguments to the angry villagers who see Ezoë coming back after her crime; stealing the punitive lanyard; or convincing Mebuh, a very famous Asahaa, to intercede in favor of Ezoë. They might frame this fall as a sign that a healthier and more beautiful cove is needed. In

short, reward original and workable ideas. If the characters succeed, the group receives 1D in the Group Pool.

If the PCs help Ezoë and the young girl survives, she avoids them and even refuses to speak to them. While she's grateful they helped her, she believes that spilling the sacred water was a betrayal to her village and her beliefs.

## Some Inspirations for Short Scenes

- The cook. An old cook bakes the feast cakes every year. She stands on the street and, if the PCs cross her way, they realize she has a badly infected cut on her hand. A **Knowledge + Healing Difficult (7)** roll will quickly help them understand she might poison the whole village.
- The thief. A teenager from the upper class of the village takes advantage of the crowd, robbing passers-by without being noticed. Is he going to target the PCs? Will the PCs see through his little game? Will his family even listen, due to their entitlement?
- The fortune teller. A fortune teller wanders among the passers-by. He grabs the hand of one of the PCs and maintains, overcome with emotion, that they're promised to a great future and that the ruins standing in the west will help them get their crown back. When the PCs cross his way again, he says exactly the same thing to a young girl and then to a farmer. The fact remains, there are indeed ruins in the west: it's where the Ninsum can be found (cf. Context).
- The runaway. One of the calves to be sacrificed and roasted at the end of the feast has run away. The farmer responsible asks the characters to help find it. Will they determine that the calf won its freedom, fair and square?
- The young people. A group of drunken, young people of the village crosses the paths of the PCs. The boys want to challenge the characters with arm wrestling, fighting, climbing, swimming in the boisterous waters of the Siirh, or whatever else suits them. If the PCs refuse, the boys become aggressive.

## Being prepared for the unexpected

What if the characters intend to go and visit Yeth-Djazil when he's in jail? The PCs can go to the house the members of the Cult stay in. If they do, the characters must convince Sarpeliamon to let them in to visit the prisoner. Yeth-Djazil is already in bad condition as the priests beat and tortured him. They tell the PCs that Yeth-Djazil is guilty of heresy and that they will execute him soon. The PCs might help him escape, but it would be a very bad idea. If they choose this route, reference the situation mentioned in "Being prepared for the unexpected - What if the characters attempt to attack the members of the Cult?", Scene 2.





## SCENE 4 – DISPLAYING THE TROPHY

**Goal of the Oracle:** Choosing the PC who is most in tune with the helmet, a Shard presented in this scenario, and giving hints to the catastrophes to come.

**Goal of the Players:** Answering the deity's call, reacting to an accident, and saving its victim.

**Transition:** When the PCs come out of the water, whether they brought back the child or not (cf. further down), the scene ends on a bitter discovery.

### Drop the Helmet, Drop the Masks

The entire village attends the display of the trophy. It's the highlight of the evening, accompanied with chants and dances. A procession walks through the village, carrying the helmet. They set it on a ceremonial shield covered by a splendid cloth depicting the fist of Eshmaraddon, a symbol of the victory over the village ancestors. Dassid and the referee of the festivities walk alongside the object. The PCs start the scene as observers, but should not be prevented from intervening. They have two main options.

- To participate in the chants and the dance. By making an **Empathy + Arts Easy (5)** roll, characters can show off their singing, dancing, and acrobatics talents, all the while accompanying the procession's displays of joy. One success grants them 1D in their Grit and Nerves Pools. If the PC gets 2 successes or more, the show galvanizes the group members and 1D is added to the Group Pool. If several PCs engage in this activity, the Group Pool can be raised by a maximum of 3D.
- Not to lose sight of the helmet. This doesn't require a roll. The trophy is well set on a solid display stand mounted on a shield. It's a splendid object, but as the PCs observe it, a



curious sensation takes over them. They briefly think they hear the helmet, that they can touch it and feel it. A metallic taste tickles their tongues, and it's as if the vision of the trophy monopolized their senses. They think the helmet vibrates and wobbles on its stand. This is not just a feeling.

### **The Deity Chooses the Human, the Human Chooses the Deity**

This moment is crucial in the scenario. The deity who uses the helmet feels the proximity of the characters, one of them bursting with the potential of a Chosen One. In this moment, one of the players establishes the first contact with their Shard, in its guise of the helmet.

To determine what player makes the connection with the helmet, ask the following:

"All of a sudden, the helmet falls down from the display stand it was previously firmly attached to. Under the gaze of the crowd, it rolls down to the ground, and to the feet of...Who? Whose feet does it roll to?"

It's a way for players designate themselves as a Chosen One without knowing what their choice means. The fastest, most audacious, or most determined player is rewarded. The deity becomes one with the character who answers the call... unless, in reality, they called out instead, and the helmet answered.

If no player designates themselves, insist, "Quickly, quickly!" If your players still hesitate, take a six-sided dice and announce, "This die will determine which character the helmet rolls to. Go!" Put the die in the middle of the table, among the players (who certainly believe that a roll of die is going to decide). In fact, it's the first character who puts a hand on the die that establishes a link with the deity!

### **The Sense that is Not a Sense**

As soon as one PC makes contact with the helmet, it produces a strange wave that only sensitive individuals are aware of— the PCs, Dassid, and Sarpeliamon. Only one form of perception, shared by all the potential Chosen Ones, and known as "the sense that is not a sense", can sense this wave. Each Shard "resonates" differently: distorting vision, sounding like the echo of a chant, invading the flesh in the most sensual manner, like the memory of a caress never given, etc.

The call of this Shard overwhelms the characters like a tidal wave. This stimulus deeply moves all of the PCs, and hearing one's first call is like a brand-new taste for a child or the rapture of all the first experiences that we know as essential. The PC nearest to the helmet stays frozen long enough for Dassid to jump on the helmet, and put it back on the shield. He also gives the character a dirty look before moving away from the procession. The wave is not only a call. It's also the manifestation of the deity's power. Once a peaceful creature

of waters and fertility, the goddess within now contains an unquenchable thirst for revenge.

### **Being prepared for the unexpected What if a PC wants to take hold of the helmet?**

None of the characters react in time. By the time they recover from the wave, Dassid and the carriers of the helmet are already a good distance away, among a dense and suddenly panicked crowd.

If the players insist and try to catch up with them, the child (cf. further down) drowns and the scene goes on. Dassid, the referee, and the carriers hurry to take the helmet back to the house, where they store it in its cedar trunk. The agents of the Cult step in too, as the reaction of the crowd arouses their suspicion. They wait patiently and don't rush at Dassid and the helmet. If necessary, they'll intervene after the feast; still, they immediately go and keep a close eye on whoever gets too close to the helmet.

If the PCS try at night to retrieve the helmet, they face not only Dassid and the village guards, but also the Cult. At that moment, they can give the helmet back or fight with the members of the Cult. Once obtained, the helmet attempts to drag them to the Hursagid temple. If the PCs flee, agents of the Cult and the villagers hunt them at dawn. Unfortunately, they also cross paths with Captain Radec, who's just arriving at Marad.

### **The Fist of Ninsumû**

Screams ring out behind the PCS. Not far from the passing procession, the river suddenly roils into a torrent. During the night, under the torchlight, its water looks like the scaly skin of a gigantic snake. The river bites the bank sharply, tearing away clods of earth and herbs. While several partygoers avoid being rushed under the waves, a child playing near the water wasn't so lucky. He tumbles into the eddies, taken away by the rushing water. Characters must make a **Reflexes + Athletics, Easy (5)** roll to sprint to the bank before the young victim disappears. If they fail or otherwise are not there to save him, the river takes him away and his tattered corpse is found downstream the morning after.

When they get into the water, the characters feel sensory dissonance; indeed, they feel the effects of Ninsumû's power over the river. The river water flows normally, taking the child away. Simultaneously, the river flows backwards, going back up its course, repelling and preventing them from catching up with the child. A **Resistance + Myths, Easy (5)** roll is necessary to overcome the feeling that they're going mad at the sight of one thing and its opposite! Silence is the exception, as she has already seen such things. Any PC who fails suffer from a Handicap (I) in all of their actions until the end of the scene.

To swim to the child and save him, one character must succeed at a **Strength + Athletics, Very Difficult (9)** roll. The



players can choose either to act together or to find another way. Reward ingenious solutions! If the child is saved, his mother runs to him and takes him back home.

#### **Transition:**

As soon as the players come out of the water, with or without the child, a strange sight awaits them. Many village women are suddenly feeling supernatural discomfort. The deity just enacted its next act of its revenge upon the village by targeting all pregnant women. The feast referee's wife, eight months pregnant, feels terrible and the referee implores the Cult agents to do something.

If the Oracle determines it is appropriate, other women of the village ask for help from the PCs. While they can provide little in terms of help, the characters can spend the night beside some women to provide care. By questioning them, they deduce that the evil attacks pregnant women only, and there is a connection with fertility.

If one or some of the characters already know about the fertility rites, or about a deity of old connected to the river and to fertility, they can make a **Knowledge + Pantheons Difficult (7)** roll. Should they succeed, they know the helmet could be connected to the deity in question. If a character spends the night to help one of the suffering women, they

lose 1D of Grit in their Pool, but can get this information with no roll. The people around the woman or the women they take care of talk about the "old deities" and, in particular, about a god or a goddess connected to the river and fertility. If followers of the Cult are present, the villagers speak of this deity in whispers. If a follower of the Cult hears anything, they conclude that a demonic spell is at work in the village. Otherwise, the Cult agents must wait until the next day to reach this conclusion.

#### **The Trophy: Ninsumû's Helmet**

Every year, the village sends a Seeker into the world to find a trophy worthy of the trial winners: a symbol of beauty and virtue. This year, Dassid the Seeker found an uncommon gift in the form of a Shard! Shards are objects resounding with the voices of ancient gods, the ones who wish to again share their will with mortals. In the middle of an old necropolis, far from Marad, Dassid discovered the armor of a female warrior of times gone by. The armor was rusted, its iron scales covered by blood-red corrosion, but the helmet was miraculously intact. As he took hold of it, he sensed the weak call of the deity.

Once in a while, the helmet speaks to Dassid. It shows him the tortures suffered by Yeth-Djazil. It also shows him an extraordinary temple, a safe refuge, in the west of the city. Beyond the Ninsum, in the sands and the black stones.

## END OF PART ONE

This is the end of the first part this scenario, explaining most of the universe of GODS. It's the perfect moment to take a break before playing the second part.

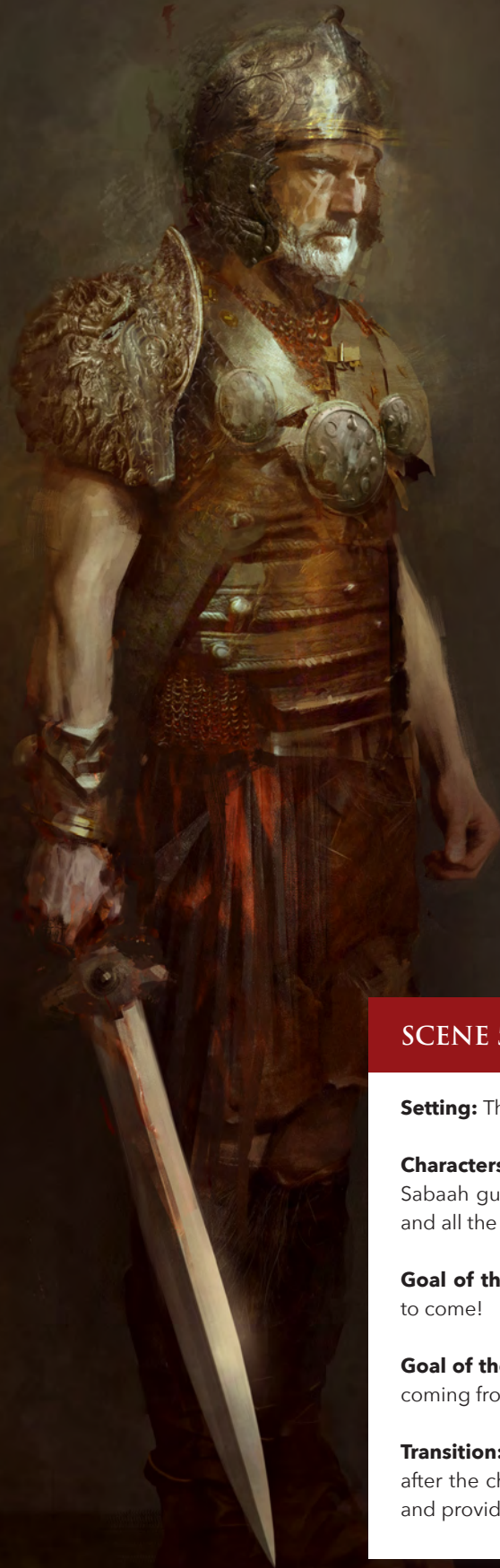
### **Development of Characters**

After going through their first scenes, the characters deserve a little reward. Maintaining the theme of discovery, we won't get into the details about the evolution of the characters, but you can grant players the following:

- Every player who fully participated in the scenario can move one of their character's skills from Beginner to Competent. From now on, they can roll another 1D on that skill roll.
- If the players save the child from the river, everyone who took part in the rescue can choose a specialty for one of their skills (cf. rules page 17). This specialty gives them a 1D bonus to rolls where it applies. Players can choose any specialty they want, but they should opt for a specialty related to their adventures. For example, a specialty in Climbing or Swimming related to the Athletics skills is completely appropriate.

Optional: At the end of the scenario, page 56, players can choose their group Instinct, which is useful for future adventures in the Wildlands. You can still make them choose now, especially if the group dynamics are already settled, and the players in front of you aren't scared to juggle with a few more rules.





## SCENE 5 – THE THREE BLOODS

**Setting:** The village.

**Characters:** Any, including Captain Radech from the Sabaah guard, the Cult agents, the other trial teams, and all the NPCs previously met.

**Goal of the Oracle:** Setting the powder for the fires to come!

**Goal of the Characters:** Providing the three bloods—coming from a wise man, a traitor, and an innocent.

**Transition:** As soon as the captain arrives in the city, after the characters reach the village's central square and provide the three bloods.



## PART TWO - THE ARRIVAL OF THE CAPTAIN

During this scene, the situation gets worse. The PCs participate in the third trial, the trial of three-bloods, but the Cult spoils the festive atmosphere by organizing the public execution of Yeth-Djazil.

When the players awake, after the excesses of the night before, the sun is close to its zenith. All that is left for them to endure is the third trial. The village's gong rings, and they meet on the central square, where the referee introduces their task. Dassid is not here; most assume he's getting ready by undergoing a purification ritual for the second display of the helmet, tonight. In truth, just before dawn, Dassid put on Ninsumû's helmet, sneaking into the apartments of the Merciful Sarpeliamon.

### The Third Trial: The Three Bloods

The third trial of the village feast is a symbolic one. It consists of finding a sealable container and filling it with a mixture of three bloods—the blood of a wise man, a traitor, and an innocent. When they reach this stage of the adventure, the characters have crossed paths with several characters who could match these descriptions: Yeth-Djazil could be mistaken for a traitor to the Cult's mind, the PCs met several innocent children, and any Asahaa, symbol of virtue, would look like a wise person. No defined answer exists to the "mystery" the three bloods represent. Let the players wonder and find, by themselves, the ideal candidates to persuade into giving their blood. They strain to convince anyone if they botched the improvised surgery the night before, in the mini-scene, "Put one's iron at one's service".

It's a symbolic scene: let the players play with symbols and find unprecedented solutions. A character could convince themselves they are a wise person, deciding their blood would be of help. Moreover, nothing says the blood must be the one of a human. If the PCs quickly succeed, they can linger in the village. Nothing prevents the Oracle from triggering unused scenes from the night before. If finding the three bloods proves too easy, throw a wrench in the gears, such as the last character they need vanishing or going somewhere else. You can also use members of the other three teams, as long as they were not previously disqualified, to steal the blood in question, causing a pursuit or fight. You can also pressure the players, by having them meet another, over-confident, team on their way to the referee's house also works.

### Preparation of the Execution

As the PCs try to find whoever will give them some blood, the Cult's priests build a stake, where they intend to burn Yeth-Djazil. If the Cult agents unearthed other heretics, they erect more stakes, planning to handle as many traitors to the cult as possible.

Marad inhabitants have never witnessed the execution of heretics. Children run around the priests, bringing them bundles of twigs. They hum happily, still in the mood of the feast, even as it turns into an abjection no one is conscious of. While the eleven priests led by Hershaad prepare the execution, Sarpeliamon has retreated to pray. One agent of the Cult assists and guards him.

Tonight, at least one heretic will burn on the stake.

### The Captain's Arrival

The queen dispatched a reinforcement warrior squad to support the religious needs of the Cult priests. She turned to one of the most loyal officers of Sabaah, Radec, nicknamed by his inferiors as "White Helmet" due to his prematurely white hair. Radec dedicates himself to order and peace. His mission is to "enforce law and order, and, if necessary, nip any sedition in the bud, obeying the Merciful Sarpeliamon in the limits of the Sabaah rules." The captain knows this idiom by heart and never hesitates to repeat it, or carry it out to the letter. In terms of the law, Sabaah forbids the execution of a criminal if no verdict was rendered.

**Description of the captain:** This officer has long, white hair and a thick beard. A veteran and a fearsome warrior, he is, above all, a man of honor. For the last five years, he witnessed the slow incursion of the Cult into Sabaah's affairs. He is not a religious man and strongly dislikes the Cult, calling them "ravens" without any affection. If he has any occasion to relax, he often eats fruit with a melancholic smile on his face, lost in the memories of past battles, or perhaps of the ones to come. He leads for reasons he doesn't believe in anymore. But, with the captain, he'll never depart from, nor disobey, the queen even if he remains free to interpret, to a certain degree, any orders she gives him.

### Being prepared for the unexpected

#### What if the characters cannot find the three bloods?

Insofar as the trial requirements are simple, this situation is unlikely to happen. But, what if it did? In that case, at the end of the afternoon, the gong rings. The referee waits for the characters on the central square, next to the stake, slightly embarrassed. Captain Radec arrives with his men. The results of this trial have no influence over the scenario to come.



## SCENE 6 – THE TROPHY VANISHES

**Setting:** The village square.

**Characters:** The referee, the Cult agents, Captain Radek, and Yeth-Djazil on the stake.

**Goal of the Oracle:** Making things worse for the characters as they deal with the different forces and reacting to the players' interventions.

**Goal of the Characters:** Deciding on the procedure to follow and maybe making a few alliances.

**Transition:** When at least one faction chases after Dassid.

From this scene on, the scenario undergoes some curves. The possibilities are now too numerous to define the course of the intrigue, and it's much more pleasant for the players (and for you, Oracle) to have almost absolute freedom. As soon as someone announces the disappearance of Dassid, you're free to improvise. You can still find a great number of trials to test the skills and motivations of the characters.

### End of the Third Trial

When the Captain arrives at the central square of the village, he stops. On one side of the square stands the trial referee, and on the other one a stake where Yeth-Djazil will be taken. The crowd gathered on the central square cannot decide between the two sights. Children dance and play, both around the platform where the referee stands and around the stake—where priests of the Cult kindly stroke their hair in passing while preparing for execution.

The captain arrives before the declaration of the trial winners and burning the heretic Yeth-Djazil occur. For the first one, the referee quickly looks at the blood mixture the characters brought him.

- If they're very fast, stole the blood from another team, knocked out some competitors, or did whatever was necessary to ensure their victory, he declares them winners.
- They can also resolve this trial by making a **Willpower + City, Easy (5)** roll to determine how long it took them to reach the central square. Each of the three other teams does the same, with a 3D dice pool and 1 reroll. The team that gets the most successes arrives first, with the other ones on their heels.
- If you want to add an action scene, tell the players that the moment they see the central square, they also catch sight of their competitors running in the same direction. The characters must either outrun them, or prevent the one carrying the container full of blood from reaching the finish line. Deal with this action as you'd like, as the PCs can act very quickly and creatively in this scene.

### The Merciful Vanishes

After the referee announces the results, a scream resonates in the square, "The Merciful has vanished!"

The two priests who went to fetch Yeth-Djazil for his execution found their counterpart dead in the room next to where Yeth-Djazil was held, tightly bound, with broken ankles. The child has vanished. A quick inspection of the room reveals a fight: someone killed the boy's guard then ran away, probably with him. Yeth-Djazil, who heard everything, confirms that he heard Dassid come in, and recognized his voice. Then he heard screams, the boy's and his bodyguard's, and inarticulate gurgling as a sword in the throat killed the bodyguard priest. Dassid probably escaped through the window with the boy. If the characters ask Yeth-Djazil, he thinks he heard something like "going to the temple." Otherwise, PCs can use a **Perception + Tracking Difficult (7)** roll to locate Dassid: it leads to the Ninsum. To follow him to the real temple, where the Hursagids live, characters can make a second roll. This roll determines how quickly they find Dassid (cf. scene 7).

If the PCs manage to convince the village, Captain Radek, or even (why not?) the Cult members to lend them horses, they suffer no Handicap. If they follow him on foot, each roll made to catch up with him (starting with the Perception + Tracking roll mentioned above) is coupled with a Handicap (I). Of course, the characters can see the tracks, but they can't compete with a horse.

Dassid, worried about the turn of events, decided to leave with the helmet. The Shard encourages him to reach the temple and the Hursagids. As Dassid fears that Sarpeliamon may have powers that would easily enable him to find it, he chose to take the child with him. Actually, the boy probably would be able to locate the Shard in a few miles' radius (which may prove useful).

### The Wrath of the Black Sun

Absolutely furious, the Cult priests immediately accuse the village of sheltering heretics. Hershaad asks Captain Radek to burn houses and the people inside them, until the Merciful is found. Obviously, Radek, who received the order to obey Sarpeliamon, and Sarpeliamon only, refuses to do so. If the characters don't think of it on their own, the referee, in a spark of coherence, offers to find the child to prove the good faith of the villagers: that is the fourth trial! The other participating teams take their chances too, and it's up to the Oracle if they step in later or they only follow false leads and get lost.

If the PCs don't decide to make the pursuit right away, the priests mount their horses and pursue Dassid. It isn't long before Captain Radek follows them. If the PCs do not lead them, the priests and soldiers get lost for hours in the surrounding desert, unable to track Dassid. In a few hours' time, they can retrace their steps and follow the characters' tracks, unless the PCs deliberately covered their path. The referee decides to open the cedar trunk containing the helmet, only to discover the trophy has also vanished.



## SCENE 7 – FINDING DASSID

**Setting:** The Wild Lands.

**Characters:** The agents of the Cult, Captain Radec and his guard, Dassid, the Hursagids (possibly all of them depending on the turn of events).

**Goal of the Oracle:** Resolving the events and dealing with the meeting between the PCs and the Hursagids.

**Goal of the Characters:** To find Dassid.

Dassid is on the run. The helmet makes him join the Hursagids, for the deity not only wants to join the descendants of those who used to worship it, but also find a Chosen One to use as its herald—which could arouse Dassid's jealousy if the Shard covets anyone else but him. Dassid took a horse from the Black Sun, and moves across secret paths and stretches of sand, beyond the Ninsum, to the west and to a temple of the past. After a while, he leaves Sarpeliamon alone in the desert, at the mercy of the wild beasts.

The information below applies to the second roll to find Dassid. Even if others accompany the PCs, it only changes the consequences of the roll.

- If the PCs fail: Dassid runs away and reaches the Hursagid temple, well before his pursuers. Wearing the helmet and prompted by the power of his deity, he communicates with the Hursagids and prepares them for war. He lets the deity's desire for revenge overwhelm him, thinking it legitimate. He and the Hursagids launch an attack on the village. More than two hundred imposing warriors armed with two-bladed swords march to the village and attack before dawn, while villagers sleep. They aim to slaughter the inhabitants, making the village a bloody battlefield. Then, they'll go back to their temple and restore the power of their ancient deity, Ninsumû. Of course, that is if the PCs do not stop them or if they do nothing about it.
- If the PCs succeed: They find Sarpeliamon in very bad condition; five lacertas attack him. Perched on a sloping rock, he's trying to repel them. The PCs can act as they please. However, if the captain is present, whether the other Cult members are there or not, Sarpeliamon flies into a rage, almost choking on childish hatred, and demands the Captain slaughters not only Dassid, but also the village inhabitants, "to set an example so never again such an indignity towards an emissary of the Unique One happens." Radec is bound to obey Sarpeliamon, unless the PCs come up with a way to calm the boy down.

Regardless of the outcome, one chance to catch up with Dassid exists before he reaches the temple and awakens the anger of the Hursagids. The PCs must make a **Perception + Tracking Difficult (7)** roll. One success is enough, but 1D of Grit and 1D of Nerves must be spent to ride at full tilt. Those who can't spend these dice drag behind and arrive later. Those who can meet him at the entrance of the Hursagids' temple.

- If the PC get 2 successes or more: They catch up with Dassid just as he's throwing Sarpeliamon to the ground. Cleft lacertas on the lookout jump on the boy. The PCs can choose between running after Dassid or protecting the child, or choose to split up and do both. If they choose to protect him, Sarpeliamon won't demand that the captain destroy the village, but he does claim Dassid's head.

To catch up with Dassid, a roll of **Willpower + Riding, Difficult (7)** is necessary, opposing Dassid's Resistance + Riding. If the PCs win, they catch up with Dassid long before he reaches the temple. If they fail, they find him at the gates, diving between the huge doors carved with scenes of the Hursagids' past. The PCs can also follow Dassid down to the temple at the distance. Dassid's goal doesn't change, whatever happens.

### The Fight with Dassid for the Helmet

The PCs must face Dassid. Will they negotiate with him? If they don't go along with what he says—joining Hursagids in the slaughter of village inhabitants and restoring the deity in all her splendor—Dassid fights them. If alone, he's not a fearful opponent; however, if he reaches the temple before the PCs do, three Hursagids, who think he is the emissary of Ninsumû, are with him.

Whoever wears the helmet can instantly give orders to the Hursagids, understand their language and, above all, see their past. The first time someone puts the helmet on, he or she instantaneously sees the true history of the village visually unfurl in their mind. Fighting with Dassid for the helmet is not easy. To tear it away from him, characters want to hit him, with either a weapon or a fist with a Difficulty (7) and a Handicap (I) (to aim). They must obtain at least 2 successes to take the helmet. Still, tearing the helmet away from him isn't enough. The PCs must make a **Willpower + Shards Difficult (7)** roll against Dassid's Will + Shards. If the PC trying to remove the helmet is not the one chosen in scene 4, the Difficulty becomes Very Difficult, with a Handicap (I). The one who wants to be Chosen by the Deity won't always be chosen back.

For now, Ninsumû's helmet settles for telling its story. However, it contains many other powers, which the PC will discover later. When a PC manages to harmonize with the helmet, the deity comes into contact with them and tells the story of the Hursagids through pictures. In addition, the PC can feel something out of the ordinary as the deity speaks



to them without uttering a single word, like a rough jewel cutting into their skin. A deep instinct pushes the character to project their will onto the deity. Tell the player, "The deity is like a worn-out statue in the temple. It is exhausted. You sense that your first responsibility towards the deity is giving it form. It's up to you to give the gender, whether male, female, or something else, to the deity that the Hursagids used to call Ninsumû, and whose real name sank into oblivion in the shadow of time. You understand that this is only the first step of a considerable road, a path that leads to the unknown..."

## CONCLUSION

### Ingredients for the Ending

**The Oracle's and the Characters' Goals:** To bring the tale to a close.

**Transition:** This scenario ends when no conflict remains. One of the forces succeeds, and the other is destroyed. Every faction of the scenario ends their aggression.

At this point of the scenario, no future exists in stone. Everything is in the hands of the diverse factions, in their goals, and in the methods used to achieve them.

### Dassid:

Dassid comes in contact with the deity, trying to restore the Hursagids' tribe and return their lands to them, even if it means slaughtering the village inhabitants. Negotiating with him is an option, but he refuses any sort of compromise that doesn't include compensation for the Hursagids. This doesn't please the Cult.

### The Cult:

The Cult wants to eradicate the heretics, as well as any kind of religion other than its own. It only ceases conflict when the last heretic, at least to its knowledge, is dead. The existence of the Hursagids, if they learn about it, makes their task harder, not easier.

### The Hursagids:

The very last Hursagid tribe, relying on 200 warriors and around a hundred children, wants contact again with their deity. If a character puts the helmet on and tells them that they are their messiah, they follow them, giving the PC who puts on the helmet an army. In the absence of a clear message, or if Dassid keeps the helmet, they slaughter the people from the village.

### Captain Radec's Squad:

Radec has two goals: to obey orders and to enforce order. He can only do the first thing if Sarpeliamon stays alive. Otherwise, he becomes an agent of the order who does anything to preserve peace, including negotiating, if needed, an alliance with the Hursagids. The fact that he hates the Cult justifies his goals to put a stake in its followers' wheels. With more than 50 men in his troops, he represents a considerable force.

### The Inhabitants of Marad:

All they want is safety and they fall in with the reason of the strongest party. If they learn about the existence of the Hursagids, there is an absurd and suicidal stampede. Everyone takes hold of random weapons and, "in the honor of Marad", marches to the temple. If nobody gets in their way, the Hursagids decimate them, resulting in 90% of the villagers dying. The village becomes a shadow of its past, deserted and considered cursed.

### Possibilities

The PC can turn to the Hursagids' side and help them survive, or even decimate the villagers. They can also fight against the Hursagids and against Dassid. Nothing prevents the PCs from trying and rallying the captain behind their cause, and from using more or less treacherous strategies, such as forcing Sarpeliamon to agree wholeheartedly with them or even making him disappear.

### Being prepared for the unexpected

#### What if the characters don't care about other people's conflicts?

Nothing compels characters to get involved in local conflicts. They could choose to favor their own interests, stealing the helmet and fleeing. In that case, things are quite simple. A few days later, the character who took the helmet has a vision that Cult members executed all of the villagers who made contact with the characters. They did this under the pretext that they're accomplices in heresy and they took part in an act of sorcery, as the agents of the Cult now grasp a part of the helmet's powers. If the Cult knows the whereabouts of the ancient temple, the vision goes on with the massacre of the Hursagids by a whole regiment sent by Sabaah, led by Captain Radec. Peace is back, and the Cult is now almost inescapable in Marad, with most villagers converting either by fear or real faith. As far as the PCs are concerned, it's better if they don't linger in the surroundings for too long. A price exists on their heads.



### **What happens if there's a mass combat?**

A mass battle is too complicated within the framework of this introductory scenario, but the chances are high for the story to end in a bloodbath.

If they're alone to face any faction, except the soldiers, the Hursagids win with few losses. If they're alone to face the soldiers, the Hursagids win with 50% of losses. Some soldiers can get away from it and sound the alarm, including Captain Radee. His strategy also enables him to inflict heavy wounds to the enemy, before retreating with the survivors.

If the village, the Cult, and the soldiers ally, they repel the Hursagids, who suffer 50% of losses before retreating to the temple, where they tend to their wounds. At least until a punitive expedition comes from Sabaah to slaughter them all.

In any other case: The PCs determine the course of the battle. Have them fight with a number of opponents equal to 1.5 times the number of the characters in the group, with each fearsome Hursagid counting for two characters. The battle turns in favor of the party they choose to represent if the PCs triumph. If they die, their enemies win the whole battle.

## ENDING OF THE SCENARIO

The end of the scenario isn't settled. Anything can happen: no one is invulnerable, nothing is forbidden, and no path is closed. This is the world of GODS.





## TECHNICAL EPILOGUE

After their adventures, the players glimpsed the dynamics of their team. Now, they know how their group works, and it's time for them to choose their group Instinct. Like every character, the whole group owns an Instinct. It guides the acts of the overall band and they act according to the associated instructions, giving them a special skill.

Depending on their acts during this scenario, the players can choose among six Instincts for their group. If they solved their problems by the sword and the fist, the Sword seems like a relevant choice. A will to protect the weaker ones (in particular, from the Cult) designates the Guardian. If the players only cared about their own interests, changing sides without scruples, the Hand seems appropriate. If they have an interest in the mysteries of the world (in particular those associated with the village story and the Shard), then the Mask is an excellent choice. If they intend to go and discover the vast world, seeing Marad as the beginning of many adventures, then the Traveler is for them. Lastly, if they only strove to destroy, despising the weak ones and preferring violence, then the Scourge guides their steps.

### Group Instincts

Tenets and Faults followed by a "\*" are considered the most significant, and either grant or subtract 4D from the Group Pool. This works in the same way as regular Instincts (as seen on page 27), only on the Group scale.

## THE SWORD

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**Tenets:** Successfully facing great challenges\*, winning a big victory for the Group, upholding a common code of honor (to be determined) even when the cost is high\*, facing a more powerful enemy, or holding out against numerous opponents.

---

**Faults:** Fleeing combat\*, betraying the Group's code of honor\*, refusing a challenge, failing, giving up.

---

**Group Ability:** Exhortation

---

Once per day, each member of the Group can spend 1D from each of their Pools to cancel any penalty another member of the Group receives as a result of wounds. This only lasts one turn. This ability can only be used once per member of the Group and per action, and both members of the Group must be able to see each other, speak to each other, or touch each other. Penalties and effects linked to Pool values still apply.

---

## THE GUARDIAN

---

**Tenets:** Risking the Group's survival to protect the meek\*, guiding a community on the "right" way, putting the needs of the many before the needs of the few\*.

---

**Faults:** Putting an allied or neutral community in danger\*, refusing to grant the Group's protection, gratuitously slaughtering people\*, betraying the word of the Group (even if some members disagreed).

---

**Group Ability:** Tactical Expertise

---

Once per day, each member of the Group can spend 1D from each of their Pools to grant one reroll on another member's defense action. If the defense action is a successful parry, the defender can counterattack (an immediate and "free" attack against their attacker). This can only be used once per defense action, and both characters must be able to speak to one another, see one another, or touch one another. Penalties and effects linked to Pool values still apply.

---



## THE MASK

---

**Tenets:** Acquiring rare knowledge, uncovering a great mystery\*, revealing a great secret\*, sharing important knowledge with worthy people.

---

**Faults:** Destroying rare knowledge\*, refusing to unveil a mystery or solve a riddle, refusing to share knowledge with those who have shown to be worthy\*.

---

**Group Ability:** Shared Experience

---

Once per day, each member of the Group can spend 1D from each of their Pools to grant a +1D bonus and a reroll to another member of the Group in a Skill the “sharer” is at least “Competent” in. The target benefits from this “shared experience” until the end of that turn and they don’t need to possess that specific Skill. This can only be used once per member and per turn, and both characters must be able to speak to one another, see one another, or touch one another. Penalties and effects linked to Pool values still apply.

---

## THE HAND

---

**Tenets:** Betraying and manipulating people to gain great advantages\*, stealing very valuable goods\*, quickly eliminating worthy opponents, elaborating cunning traps that help achieve success.

---

**Faults:** Sharing the Group’s resources and goods with others, cooperating without betraying or substantial earnings\*, keeping a Group promise when it becomes unpleasant, taking something by force\*.

---

**Group Ability:** Diversion

---

Once per day, each member of the Group can spend 1D from each of their Pools to grant the Fast (2) Trait to another member’s weapon during a “surprise” attack action. The target is distracted by the user of Diversion, and they’re incapable of defending themselves. The target must not be aware of the attacker’s presence (which can involve a Willpower + Stealth roll opposed to Perception + Awareness). The attacker must not be currently engaged in combat. If the target suffers at least a Heavy Wound from this attack, it becomes a Fatal Wound. This can only be used once per attack and per target, and both characters must be able to speak to one another, see one another, or touch one another. Penalties and effects linked to Pool values still apply.

---

## THE TRAVELER

---

**Tenets:** Surviving against great odds\*, adapting to the harshest conditions or circumstances, exploring forgotten places and discovering lost civilizations\*.

---

**Faults:** Losing a member of the Group\*, needlessly risking the Group’s survival\*, putting down roots somewhere, depending on an exterior group or community (those last two bans can become significant as they go on in time).

---

**Group Ability:** Assisted Healing

---

Once per day, each member of the Group can spend 1D from each of their Pools to grant one reroll and decrease the Handicap by (I) on another member’s Healing action. This can only be used once per healing action, and both characters must be treating the wound at the same time. Penalties and effects linked to Pool values still apply. This action still benefits from collective action bonuses, as both characters are treating the same patient.

---

## THE SCOURGE

---

**Tenets:** Pillaging, destroying an enemy or hostile community\*, overcoming more numerous opponents as a group.

---

**Faults:** Sparing those who are unworthy of survival, accumulating goods and supplies, long-term planning, negotiating\*, not regularly pillaging or not regularly giving in to bloodlust\*.

---

**Group Ability:** Strength in Numbers

---

Once per day, when a member of the Group successfully hits an opponent in close combat (Brawl or Melee), they can spend 1D from each of their Pools to grant a single extra attack to another member currently fighting the same opponent. The Difficulty is still fixed at 7. If the attack hit, it inflicts 1 extra damage. This can only be used once per opponent and per turn, and both characters must be able to speak to one another, see one another, or touch one another. Penalties and effects linked to Pool values still apply. This action still benefits from collective action bonuses, as both characters are ganging up on the same target.

---



# NPCS

## Typical Marad Villager

**Threat:** Minor / **Experience:** Beginner / **Role:** Minor

<b>Attack:</b>	3D	<b>Reaction</b>	3D
<b>Action:</b>	3D	<b>Specialty:</b>	4D*
<b>Rerolls:</b>	0	<b>Pool:</b>	0
<b>Weapons:</b>	None		
<b>Armor:</b>	None		
<b>Wounds</b>	Light (1) O	Heavy (4) O	Fatal (6) O

\*Depending on the villager's occupation.

## Marad Villager (competitor)

**Threat:** Serious / **Experience:** Competent / **Role:** Secondary

<b>Attack:</b>	4D	<b>Reaction</b>	3D+1
<b>Action:</b>	3D	<b>Specialty:</b>	5D*
<b>Rerolls:</b>	0	<b>Pool:</b>	1D
<b>Weapons:</b>	Knife, damage 2		
<b>Armor:</b>	None		
<b>Wounds</b>	Light (2) OO	Heavy (5) O	Fatal (8) O

\*Their Specialty is considered relevant to the competition (climbing, and so on).

## Cult Soldier

**Threat:** Serious / **Experience:** Competent / **Role:** Minor

<b>Attack:</b>	4D	<b>Reaction</b>	3D
<b>Action:</b>	3D	<b>Specialty:</b>	5D*
<b>Rerolls:</b>	0	<b>Pool:</b>	0
<b>Weapons:</b>	Sword, damage 2		
<b>Armor:</b>	medium, protection 3		
<b>Wounds</b>	Light (2) OO	Heavy (5) O	Fatal (8) O

\*Specialty is swordfight.

## Hershaad

**Threat:** Serious / **Experience:** Competent / **Role:** Secondary

<b>Attack:</b>	4D	<b>Reaction</b>	3D+1
<b>Action:</b>	3D	<b>Specialty:</b>	5D*
<b>Rerolls:</b>	0	<b>Pool:</b>	1D
<b>Weapons:</b>	Sword, damage 2		
<b>Armor:</b>	medium, protection 3		
<b>Wounds</b>	Light (2) OO	Heavy (5) OO	Fatal (8) O

\*Specialty is swordfight.

## Soldiers Under Captain Radec

**Threat:** Serious / **Experience:** Competent / **Role:** Minor

<b>Attack:</b>	4D	<b>Reaction</b>	3D
<b>Action:</b>	3D	<b>Specialty:</b>	5D*
<b>Rerolls:</b>	0	<b>Pool:</b>	0
<b>Weapons:</b>	Sword, damage 2		
<b>Armor:</b>	light, protection 1		
<b>Wounds</b>	Light (2) OO	Heavy (5) O	Fatal (8) O

\*Specialty is swordfight.

## Hursagid Scion

**Threat:** Deadly / **Experience:** Expert / **Role:** Secondary

<b>Attack:</b>	6D	<b>Reaction</b>	3D+1
<b>Action:</b>	4D	<b>Specialty:</b>	6D*
<b>Rerolls:</b>	1D	<b>Pool:</b>	1D
<b>Weapons:</b>	Double sword, damage 4, fast (2)		
<b>Armor:</b>	light and thick skin, protection 2		
<b>Wounds</b>	Light (2) OO	Heavy (5) OO	Fatal (9) O

\*Survival



## Captain Radec

**Threat:** Major / **Experience:** Expert / **Role:** Important

<b>Attack:</b>	5D	<b>Reaction</b>	3D+2
<b>Action:</b>	4D	<b>Specialty:</b>	6D*
<b>Rerolls:</b>	1D	<b>Pool:</b>	2D
<b>Weapons:</b>	Sword, damage 3		
<b>Armor:</b>	medium, protection 3		
<b>Wounds</b>	Light (2) OO	Heavy (5) OO	Fatal (9) O

\*Specialties are combat and command.

## Dassid

**PROFILE:** Fighter  
**INSTINCT:** The Sword  
**AGE:** Adult

### TRAITS

Body		Hand	
<b>Strength</b>	3D	<b>Accuracy</b>	2D
<b>Resistance</b>	3D	<b>Reflexes</b>	3D
Mind		Soul	
<b>Knowledge</b>	2D	<b>Willpower</b>	2D
<b>Perception</b>	2D	<b>Empathy</b>	2D

### POOLS

<b>Nerves</b>	8D	<b>Grit</b>	11D
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### WOUNDS

<b>Light</b>	3	OOOO
<b>Heavy</b>	6	OOO
<b>Fatal</b>	10	O

### SKILLS AND SPECIALTIES

**Beginner:** Brawl, City, Civilizations, Healing, Myths, Shards, Social, Throw, Travel

**Competent:** Archery, Awareness, Craft, Riding, Shield  
Expert: Athletics, Melee

**Specialties:** Climbing (Athletics), Heavy bow (Archery), Hursagids (Myths), Sword (Melee)

### DASSID NOTES

**Fatal Feint (technique):** Once per turn, before attempting a close combat attack action, Dassid can roll Perception + Melee (Difficulty 7) with a Handicap equal to his opponent's Reflexes - maximum (III) for 3D. If he succeeds, his weapon is granted the trait Fast (2) for this attack, and the damage is reduced by 1. If the attack roll is successful, the opponent suffers a -1D malus on their parry or dodge roll. If Dassid fails his Perception + Melee roll, he loses 1D from his Nerves Pool. Ever vigilant: Dassid is always ready to react, and his sleep is light. He gains a +1D bonus on his Awareness rolls (including Reaction rolls).

### INSTINCT ABILITY: For Glory!

When Dassid is facing at least two opponents at the same time in close combat, he gains a +1D bonus on his Melee or Brawl attack actions against these opponents. If he suffers at least a Heavy Wound during the fight, the damage he deals in close combat is increased by 1 (damage is only increased by 1, even if Dassid sustains several Heavy Wounds).

### EQUIPMENT

- Heavy armor, protection 5
- Heavy shield, protection 3
- Sword, damage 3
- Heavy bow, damage 5, range 45/120/240
- Arrows (12)





# ORACLE'S LOGBOOK

## THE FIST OF ESHMARADDON



<b>Theme</b>	The corruption of innocence
<b>Dassid the Seeker</b>	The winner of the year before, descendant of the six-fingered Hursagids
<b>Eshmaraddon</b>	Name of the village hero
<b>Eshmarads</b>	Travelers who, in the olden days, slaughtered the Hursagids to take hold of their village
<b>Ezoe</b>	A clumsy Asahaa (water carrier)
<b>Hershaad Stumble-Leg</b>	Main agent of the Cult
<b>Hursagids</b>	The former occupants of the village, deprived of their lands by the Eshmarads
<b>Jyvas</b>	The feast referee
<b>Marad</b>	Name of the village
<b>Nahander</b>	A inhabitant of the village who saw the real temple, beyond the Ninsum
<b>Nashee</b>	An obscure deity worshiped by Yeth-Djazil
<b>Ninsumû</b>	Name given to the river and fertility deity of olden times
<b>Sarpeliamon (the Merciful)</b>	A child and an emissary of the Cult
<b>Yedzer</b>	A villager whose son is six-fingered
<b>Yeth-Djazil</b>	Opponent of the PCs, self-proclaimed worshiper of Nashee, Daughter of the Treacherous Ones

### Scene 1 - The Eagles' Nest

The Eagles' peak, with an adverse team led by Yeth-Djazil, cleft lacertas (creatures)

**Oracle:** Present the context and explain the rules. The PCs must fetch an eagle's egg and get down the peak.

**Question 2:** If the PC was less than 2 times successful, one more lacerta in the fight.

**Question 3:** If the character (name: \_\_\_\_\_) gets several successes, some villagers will ask them to tell their exploit later.

- the pivot of the group has belayed them. No handicap
- the pivot of the group was unable to belay them. Handicap (!) on physical action all the scene long

**Rules:** The Difficulty of combat actions is 7.

### Scene 2: Dark Horsemen

At the foot of the eagles peak, just after the trial, with Dassid the Seeker, the Cult followers (including Hershaad Stumble-Leg and the Merciful Sarpeliamon) and Jyvas, the village referee

- Present the Instincts
- Scene of the blood inside the eggs
- Intervention of the horsemen (presentation of Hershaad and Sarpeliamon; Yeth-Djazil is taken away
- Determine which team has won the trial

**Oracle:** Present the Cult. The PCs must ensure that the trial unfolds correctly and not to make an enemy out of the Cult. Once the winner of the trial is declared, go back to the village.



### Scene 3 - Life in the village

In Marad village, with all its inhabitants (and perhaps the Cult).

**Oracle:** present the village (and bring the sub-plots To Put One's Iron at One's Service, The Temple, and the Missing Spindle into play). The PC must enjoy the feast until everyone has the chance to take part in an activity of their choice.

#### Possible mini-scenes:

- To Put One's Iron at One's Service \*
- The Temple (the Ninsum) \*
- The Missing Spindle \*
- On the Siirh Banks
- The Lambs
- The Cook
- The Thief
- The Fortune Teller
- The Runaway
- The Young People

\* Compulsory scenes

### Scene 4 - The trophy displayed

In the village.

**Oracle:** Determine the PC in tune with the Shard. PCs must make contact with the deity and save the child from drowning

- The helmet falls down, note the name of the PC chosen by the helmet: \_\_\_\_\_
- The child in the river
- The suffering pregnant women

**Interlude:** Every character moves from Beginner to Competent.

- Acquisition of a specialty if the child has been saved in scene 4.
- Possibility to choose the group Instinct straight forward.

### Scene 5 - The three bloods

The arrival of the Captain, in the village, with Captain Radec and his soldiers.

**Oracle:** Prepare for the conflicts to come. PCs must find the three bloods (a wise man's, a traitor's and an innocent's), then reach the village square to get acquainted with the captain.

- The wise man's blood
- The traitor's blood
- The innocent's blood
- Presentation of the execution to the PC
- The arrival of the captain

### Scene 6 - The trophy has vanished

In the village, with Radec, the Cult and Yeth-Djazil.

**Oracle:** Announce the disaster. The PCs must investigate until someone chases after Dassid.

- End of the blood trial
- The Merciful has vanished

### Scene 7 - Finding Dassid

In the Wild Lands, on horse or on foot

**Oracle:** Resolve the situations in a logical way. The PCs must find Dassid.

**Rules:** If the PCs go on foot, they suffer a Handicap (I) on the rolls to find Dassid.

**Grand finale:** to be determined. The scenario ends up when there is no conflict left.

**Rules:** resolution of the mass combat scenes (if necessary)

- The Hursagids against one faction (except the soldiers): the Hursagids win with a minimum of losses.
- The Hursagids against the soldiers: the Hursagids win with 50 % of losses (Radec survives alongside some soldiers)
- The Hursagids against an alliance Cult + Soldiers + Village: the Hursagids lose with 50% of losses.
- Any other scenario: the actions of the PC determine the victory or the failure of their camp.

### Epilogue - Choice of the group Instinct

Choose the group's Instinct (Sword, Guardian, Hand, Mask, Traveler, Scourge) if it's not been made before scene 5.

#### Did you enjoy this adventure?

Did you have a unique experience, did the ending surprise you, or did you find it utterly epic?

Write to [oracle@arkhane-asylum.fr](mailto:oracle@arkhane-asylum.fr) to tell us how you ended your game, or report your most memorable anecdotes!







# MARAD AND ITS REGION



## LOCATIONS

- 1 - Eagles' nest
- 2 - Old temple's road (almost invisible now)
- 3 - The Ninsum (25 minutes from Marad)
- 4 - Small Siirh's tributary
- 5 - Secluded houses



I AM THE ONE WHO TRAVELED THE LAND.  
I AM THE VOICE OF THE WILD.  
I AM THE FACE OF THE MEN.

I HAVE COME TO THE COLD NORTH AND THE LAND OF THE HORNS,  
WHERE ONLY THE STRONG CAN KEEP THE BLOOD FLOWING THROUGH THE  
COLD VEINS.

I HAVE COME SOUTH, AND I SAW THE FOREST. I HEARD THE ANCIENTS  
TALKING THROUGH THE BRANCHES IN THE WHISPER OF THE WINDS.

I HAVE BEEN TO THE WEST AND LOST MYSELF IN THE DESERT OF ASHES.

I HAVE COME TO THE EAST AND SAW THE EMPIRE. THE AMBITION OF MEN  
DEFYING THE GREATNESS OF THE SLEEPING GODS.

I HAVE SEEN LIFE IN THE EYES OF CHILDREN. I HAVE SEEN DEATH,  
GIVEN BY THE HANDS OF MEN, IN THE NAME OF A GOD WHO NEVER WAS.

AND I HAVE HEARD THE CALL OF THE OLD GODS,  
THE SLEEPING ONES, THE GREAT SILENCED.

I WAS FOUND. I WAS CHOSEN.

I AM AE-WHO-WAS-LOST  
AND I AM COMING HOME.







# DOULA

TITLE \_\_\_\_\_ INSTINCT The Sword  
 AGE Adult  
 GENDER Male DESCRIPTION \_\_\_\_\_  
 ORIGIN Tuuhle  
 OCCUPATION Hunter



BODY	HAND	MIND	SOUL
STRENGTH ♦♦♦♦♦	ACCURACY ♦♦♦♦♦	KNOWLEDGE ♦♦♦♦♦	WILLPOWER ♦♦♦♦♦
RESISTANCE ♦♦♦♦♦	REFLEXES ♦♦♦♦♦	PERCEPTION ♦♦♦♦♦	EMPATHY ♦♦♦♦♦
MALUS <input type="radio"/>	MALUS <input type="radio"/>	MALUS <input type="radio"/>	MALUS <input type="radio"/>

## ◇ THE MAN

- Arts
- City
- Civilizations
- Healing
- Social

MALUS

## ◇ THE ANIMAL

- Animalism
- Riding
- Territories
- Tracking
- Wildlife

MALUS

## SPECIALTIES

- Game (Tracking)
- Light Bow (Archery)
- Poisons (Plants)

## ◇ THE TOOL

- Blacksmith
- Craft
- Mechanisms
- Symbols
- Tricks

MALUS

## ◇ THE LAND

- Athletics
- Awareness
- Plants
- Stealth
- Travel

MALUS

## BONUS | MALUS

## ◇ THE WEAPON

- Archery
- Brawl
- Melee
- Shield
- Throw

MALUS

## ◇ THE UNKNOWN

- Moons
- Myths
- Pantheons
- Rituals
- Shards

MALUS

◆ 1D BONUS  
● ReRoll

WOUNDS

LIGHT	HEAVY	FATAL
3	6	10

3D  
-2D  
-1D

NERVES

GRIT
10





## INSTINCT

### The Sword

The Sword is moved by a desire for glory and conquest, a thirst for battle that must be quenched, no matter the fight. However, the Sword isn't a crazed murderer. A code of sorts prevents the Sword from falling into the destructive bloodlust of the Scourge. This code of honor, sometimes a very personal one, is probably the Sword's greatest weakness.

Doula seeks a different kind of glory, but he knows he will have to win many fights to taste it. He will bring back the sun and finally be able to find true happiness. He will have so many things to tell.

**TENETS:** To answer a challenge, to take the initiative, to achieve great victory\*, to act with honor.

**FAULTS:** To flee, to turn down a challenge, to give up, to act in a cowardly manner\*, to fail miserably.

**DEMEANOR:** Brave, determined, domineering, implacable.

Tenets and Faults followed by a "\*" are considered the most significant, and either grant or subtract 4D from the Nerves and Grit Pools.

## INSTINCT ABILITY

### FOR GLORY!

When Doula is alone facing melee opponent that represents at least a Serious Threat (or at least two opponents representing a Minor Threat at the same time), he gains a +1D bonus on his Melee or Brawl attack actions. If he suffers at least a Heavy Wound during the fight, the damage he deals in close combat are increased by 1 (damage is only increased by 1, even if Doula sustains several Heavy Wounds).

## ABILITIES

### HUNTER'S LINK

By successfully rolling Empathy + Animalism against a Difficulty of 7, Doula can calm a mammal predator, so that this animal will not attack him or the members of his Group (provided the animal isn't being threatened). If more than one predator is targeted, the roll suffers a Handicap (I) per extra predator, up to a maximum of (III). The Difficulty becomes 9 if the predator is supernatural (such as a giant version of an animal, or an extraordinary creature with animal instincts).

### SILENT HUNTER

Doula gains a +1D bonus on all actions to be stealthy.

## WEAPONS

Light bow  
Lance

## DAMAGES

3  
3

## RANGE

20 50 100

## TRAITS

Heavy (2)  
Heavy (2)

## EQUIPMENT

Arrows (12)

## ARMORS

## PROTECTION

## MOBILITY

## TRAITS



# DOULA

I met her under the trees—in the jungle called the Mother. She bit me when we kissed. We never spoke, neither of us felt that need. Her words filled me none the less when I tried to caress her, “Not until you bring me a piece of the sun.”

So, I'll bring her a piece of sun.

Passion, beauty, and talent fuel both Doula's life force and his vanity; he truly believes the world owes him something. His jungle was too tiny for him, in spite of its dangers. Monsters and venomous creatures? Doula found their secrets old news! The talents of his rivals – their poisons, their weapons, their weaknesses? Doula knew those too! He had nothing to learn of women and the art of love, either. Some people keep trying to reach for the horizon, and Doula is one of them.

Doula knows no fear. To him, his destiny is worth singing about and, yet, so much destiny awaits him. He only dreads monotony and blandness, knowing already he's strong, fast, and flexible enough for his fate. He's already survived many dangers, humans and animals, and even those strange traps that only Mother herself knows how to set...

Doula is a hunter that knows poisons, venoms, and wooden weapons. Give him a plant or a stick, and he can fix his gear or the gear of others. Give him a small rodent, he will find the gland and use it to make a toxin strong enough to kill a man. Even when Doula is far from home, he learns quickly, becoming a master of his environment.

Bringing back a piece of the sun is a challenge that excites him. It's a simple promise with so many adventures ahead. Doula will take this chunk of sun and the woman he intends to give it to. And after that, Doula will want more, and more again – all of the delights that can be won with teeth, muscles, flesh! Nothing less.

## THE WORLD

The world revolves around Doula. But, don't get him wrong, Doula has so much to give the world in return! Passion, victories, strength, beauty... the world can enjoy all of him! In return, Doula expects the world to open for him like a ripened fruit, like a kiss beneath the black ban-yan—juicy, hot, and tender.

## THE CULT

Asceticism is not Doula's taste, but neither is torture. Doula doesn't understand combat when it's not face-to-face, close enough to smile at life and death. Doula is a hunter and a lover of life, not a follower. He needs time alone, even if he chooses to be part of a group.

## THE GROUP

Doula prefers to stand alone, but he's been on his journey for a long time. His fistful of encounters was never enough to satiate his thirst. He's more than happy to join a group, to face bigger threats, and to build bonds with other adventurers.

## DEATH

Not before being old and worn! Not before being full!  
Never!

## FEARS

Doula fears boredom and its annoying routine and tasteless days. He fears that others won't see him for who he is: a wish made flesh and a living gift to the world!

## PHILOSOPHY

Doula will never fall in line! He must always be Doula! He wanted the exultation and challenge of an impossible quest, and he found it in this woman asking for the piece of sun. Doula knows himself and his desires, and doesn't wait for others to tell him what to do.







# GAMESH

TITLE \_\_\_\_\_ INSTINCT The Guardian  
 AGE Adult  
 GENDER Male DESCRIPTION \_\_\_\_\_  
 ORIGIN Babel (Sabaah)  
 OCCUPATION Warrior



BODY	HAND	MIND	SOUL
STRENGTH ♦♦♦♦♦	ACCURACY ♦♦♦♦♦	KNOWLEDGE ♦♦♦♦♦	WILLPOWER ♦♦♦♦♦
RESISTANCE ♦♦♦♦♦	REFLEXES ♦♦♦♦♦	PERCEPTION ♦♦♦♦♦	EMPATHY ♦♦♦♦♦
MALUS <input type="radio"/>	MALUS <input type="radio"/>	MALUS <input type="radio"/>	MALUS <input type="radio"/>

## ◇ THE MAN

Arts      ♦♦♦♦♦  
 City      ♦♦♦♦♦  
 Civilizations ♦♦♦♦♦  
 Healing   ♦♦♦♦♦  
 Social    ♦♦♦♦♦

MALUS

## ◇ THE ANIMAL

Animalism   ♦♦♦♦♦  
 Riding      ♦♦♦♦♦  
 Territories   ♦♦♦♦♦  
 Tracking    ♦♦♦♦♦  
 Wildlife     ♦♦♦♦♦

MALUS

## SPECIALTIES

Command (Social)  
 Standing guard (Awareness)  
 Sword (Melee)

## ◇ THE TOOL

Blacksmith   ♦♦♦♦♦  
 Craft        ♦♦♦♦♦  
 Mechanisms   ♦♦♦♦♦  
 Symbols     ♦♦♦♦♦  
 Tricks       ♦♦♦♦♦

MALUS

## ◇ THE LAND

Athletics    ♦♦♦♦♦  
 Awareness   ♦♦♦♦♦  
 Plants       ♦♦♦♦♦  
 Stealth      ♦♦♦♦♦  
 Travel       ♦♦♦♦♦

MALUS

## BONUS | MALUS

## ◇ THE WEAPON

Archery      ♦♦♦♦♦  
 Brawl       ♦♦♦♦♦  
 Melee       ♦♦♦♦♦  
 Shield       ♦♦♦♦♦  
 Throw       ♦♦♦♦♦

MALUS

## ◇ THE UNKNOWN

Moons       ♦♦♦♦♦  
 Myths       ♦♦♦♦♦  
 Pantheons   ♦♦♦♦♦  
 Rituals      ♦♦♦♦♦  
 Shards      ♦♦♦♦♦

MALUS

♦ 1D BONUS  
 ● ReRoll

WOUNDS

LIGHT	HEAVY	FATAL
3	6	10
-1D	-2D	-3D

NERVES

GRIT





## INSTINCT

### The Guardian

Every community needs a Guardian. Those who place themselves under the protection of their arm may well abandon some of their freedom, but they do so with humility, knowing their chances of survival greatly increase. The Guardian Instinct can inspire altruistic beings, such as the most devoted to their community, as well as the worst despots, convinced they are the shepherds of a flock incapable of surviving on their own.

Gamesh is torn between protecting the members of his Group and his desire to exact revenge against the Cult, which could put them all in danger..

**TENETS:** To organize, to protect, to watch, to guide, to place common good over personal interests\*.

**FAULTS:** To betray, to put one's community in danger\*, to refuse to protect someone, to kill for no reason\*.

**DEMEANOR:** Bossy, honest and upright, methodical, rigorous, stoic.

Tenets and Faults followed by a "\*" are considered the most significant, and either grant or subtract 4D from the Nerves and Grit Pools.

## INSTINCT ABILITY

### AUTHORITY

Gamesh gains a +1D bonus on Social rolls to issue orders, or on his Awareness rolls when devising tactics. If the roll is successful, Gamesh regains 1D in his Nerves Pool.

## ABILITIES

### EVER VIGILANT

Gamesh is always ready to react, and his sleep is light indeed. He gains a +1D bonus on his Awareness rolls (including Reaction rolls).

### PROTECTOR

Once per turn, Gamesh can use a "free" Defense action to parry an attack directed at another member of his Group situated next to him. This action is always Difficulty 7.

## WEAPONS

Sword  
Knife

## DAMAGES

4  
3

## RANGE

## TRAITS

## EQUIPMENT

## ARMORS

Heavy shield

## PROTECTION

3

## MOBILITY

## TRAITS



# GAMESH

*I was a hero until I fled my city, in shame. Who became the hero in my stead? The Cult. What do they have that I don't? Cruelty? Vice? Brutality? If that's what it takes to be a hero, so be it.*

Gamesh believed his future was written in stone. Beautiful, massive and strong, Gamesh was certain that as an officer in the guard of Sabaah, he would get married, have many children, and die old and honored by the people. Then, the Cult came to Sabaah and took his future from him. Gamesh couldn't stand the tortures and violence. He fled from the army, his career and Sabaah.

Gamesh used to see himself as a good man. After he fled, he knew he wasn't. A good man would have stayed and helped. Seeing the reflection of himself as a coward rather than a hero shattered him, ripping his soul apart. He now sees the violence in himself; he hid it behind a mask worn his entire life. This left him jealous of the Cult, for they wear no mask.

Gamesh's wounds are not ones of the flesh, just of the soul and the ego. Gamesh needs something, but he doesn't know what. To prove he's a good man? To prove he simply lost his way and can find himself again? Perhaps he needs to truly become a brutal beast trampling anyone in his path? All he knows is that he is a warrior among men. With his extreme strength, nothing can stop him and the rage boiling in his mind. Bitter and furious, he is ready to explode.

## **THE WORLD**

Gamesh was naive; he thought the world would give him what he deserved. Maybe that's exactly what happened, but Gamesh feels robbed of his life and of his destiny! If the Cult never had stepped into the streets of Sabaah, Gamesh would still be the man he used to be. He can't let go of that.

## **THE CULT**

The Cult is nothing but lies and treachery. For Gamesh, the Cult stole his life and his future. If the Cult never came to Sabaah, Gamesh would have never been forced to look at his own reflection, and that's exactly what became unbearable to him.

## **THE GROUP**

Gamesh wants to be the proud and kind man he used to be, but his rage consumes him. Gamesh would die for a chance to be part of a group and have them see him as the gentle man he once was. But how?

## **DEATH**

Just oblivion? Where? Nowhere. Just going. When? At any time. How? In fury, in rage, in flames! Tearing open flesh with bare hands! And... and at last, serenity.

## **FEARS**

The blade's edge of his tattered ego. This boiling anger he feels to the tips of his fingers. Gamesh inhales his terror, day after day, his very blood infused with it.

## **PHILOSOPHY**

Gamesh must take his revenge, but doesn't know who to blame for the pain? The Cult? Sabaah? The Group, who might already know he is a monster beneath the mask? Himself? The fates? His rage seeks something, or someone, to destroy.







# KHAN

TITLE \_\_\_\_\_ INSTINCT The Traveler  
 AGE Adult  
 GENDER Male DESCRIPTION \_\_\_\_\_  
 ORIGIN The Horde  
 OCCUPATION Archer



BODY	HAND	MIND	SOUL
STRENGTH ♦♦♦♦♦	ACCURACY ♦♦♦♦♦	KNOWLEDGE ♦♦♦♦♦	WILLPOWER ♦♦♦♦♦
RESISTANCE ♦♦♦♦♦	REFLEXES ♦♦♦♦♦	PERCEPTION ♦♦♦♦♦	EMPATHY ♦♦♦♦♦
MALUS <input type="radio"/>	MALUS <input type="radio"/>	MALUS <input type="radio"/>	MALUS <input type="radio"/>

## ◇ THE MAN

Arts      ♦♦♦♦♦  
 City      ♦♦♦♦♦  
 Civilizations ♦♦♦♦♦  
 Healing   ♦♦♦♦♦  
 Social    ♦♦♦♦♦

MALUS

## ◇ THE ANIMAL

Animalism   ♦♦♦♦♦  
 Riding      ♦♦♦♦♦  
 Territories   ♦♦♦♦♦  
 Tracking    ♦♦♦♦♦  
 Wildlife     ♦♦♦♦♦

MALUS

## SPECIALTIES

Dodge (Awareness) \_\_\_\_\_  
 Hiding (Stealth) \_\_\_\_\_  
 Light bow (Archery) \_\_\_\_\_

## ◇ THE TOOL

Blacksmith   ♦♦♦♦♦  
 Craft        ♦♦♦♦♦  
 Mechanisms   ♦♦♦♦♦  
 Symbols      ♦♦♦♦♦  
 Tricks       ♦♦♦♦♦

MALUS

## ◇ THE LAND

Athletics    ♦♦♦♦♦  
 Awareness   ♦♦♦♦♦  
 Plants       ♦♦♦♦♦  
 Stealth      ♦♦♦♦♦  
 Travel       ♦♦♦♦♦

MALUS

## BONUS | MALUS

## ◇ THE WEAPON

Archery      ♦♦♦♦♦  
 Brawl       ♦♦♦♦♦  
 Melee       ♦♦♦♦♦  
 Shield       ♦♦♦♦♦  
 Throw       ♦♦♦♦♦

MALUS

## ◇ THE UNKNOWN

Moons       ♦♦♦♦♦  
 Myths       ♦♦♦♦♦  
 Pantheons   ♦♦♦♦♦  
 Rituals      ♦♦♦♦♦  
 Shards      ♦♦♦♦♦

MALUS

◆ 1D BONUS  
 ● ReRoll

## WOUNDS

LIGHT	HEAVY	FATAL
2	5	9
1D	2D	3D

## NERVES

## GRIT

NERVES: 4x4 grid of 16 squares  
 GRIT: 4x4 grid of 16 squares





## INSTINCT

### The Traveler

The Traveler is a pilgrim whose sacred destination is under every rock, behind every leaf, hidden in the bed of any brook. They barely remember when their never-ending quest began, so long ago it was. They even forgot what they sought and why they started such a long journey. It doesn't matter anymore, anyway, for the journey is the only thing that matters now.

The Traveler is the Instinct of those who flee perpetually, those who seek a sanctuary they will never find, those who want to fill their minds with the wonders and the horrors of the world, those who seek the edge of an abyss in which they will finally be able to plunge. Some don't even have a purpose, content to walk ever onwards, ever further away.

Khan accompanies Moonface and follows his dreams, certain that a big promise awaits him at the end.

**TENETS:** To survive, to adapt, to explore, to discover new customs and traditions\*.

**FAULTS:** To sacrifice oneself\*, to risk one's life needlessly\*, to depend on someone, to remain in one place for too long.

**DEMEANOR:** Independent, self-sufficient, objective, reactive.

Tenets and Faults followed by a "\*" are considered the most significant, and either grant or subtract 4D from the Nerves and Grit Pools.

## INSTINCT ABILITY

### RESILIENT

Often exposed to the rigors of hostile environments, Khan's body has developed a good potential for adaptation and recovery. When he rests for a full night, he must spend 1D less to recover from a Light or Heavy wound, and 2D less to recover from a Fatal wound. If he heals one Light Wound, he heals two instead.

## ABILITIES

### SEIZE THE MOMENT

When Khan hits his target with a bow at short or middle range, damage is increased by 1.

### SILENT HUNTER

Khan gains a +1D bonus on all actions to be stealthy.

## WEAPONS

Light bow  
Knife

## DAMAGES

3  
2

## RANGE

20 50 100

## TRAITS

Heavy (2)

## EQUIPMENT

Arrows (12)

## ARMORS

Medium armor  
(Hide and fur)

## PROTECTION

3

## MOBILITY

## TRAITS



# KHAN

I'm an Ant. That's what the Horde calls us orphans since we die like ants: nameless and without glory. I didn't die, but I kept my Ant's heart, both motherless and sad.

That's the way it was.

Before Moonface. Before the dreams.

In the Horde, orphans have a quick and painful life. But not Khan. He fought with dogs to eat leftovers. He endured cold and rain without a shelter. Somehow, he found a way up when a goldsmith took him as an apprentice. His first piece of jewelry was an arrow, and that became all he ever crafted: arrows. Perfect arrows, that always struck their target. Years passed before someone gave Khan a bow. Khan took his first shot, killing one of the vultures flying far above the camp.

His adoptive father could have shown pride. But instead of keeping Khan close, he rented him to others like a beast. Khan quickly learned how to survive long days in dangerous places, far from the relative security of the Horde. He was never talkative, but in those places, he learned true silence, becoming almost invisible. Khan learned to follow without a sound, mount an ambush, and to shoot at the chosen moment. Even now, he prefers silence, and his thoughts are never clouded by his emotions.

Those days seemed to stretch into eternity, the only life Khan would ever know. That is, until the stranger came. Moonface wanted iron, and she asked Khan for any he had. Nobody understood what happened between them; it was not desire, not sex, some kind of odd companionship. They left together for their Çatal Uyük, the Horde's two years of freedom spent wandering the world. Two years together, a future of adventures, after which they must choose if they will return to the Horde or part ways with the only home, however brutal, Khan knows.

Once on their journey, the strange dreams began: a silhouette in a cloak, without a face, with a splendid bow on their back. When the silhouette opens their arms to Khan, he feels for once like he belongs somewhere.

## THE WORLD

The world is the enemy. Only violence, loneliness, and loathing. What really ignites Khan's passions is archery, and he uses his skill as a protection. He always makes sure he can keep an arrow between him and the enemy.

## THE CULT

The Cult is just another violent group, cruel, imposing their rules. What difference does it make, for an Ant? For someone who lived within the Horde for so long? Life is lived one day at a time, and the Cult is just another danger in a world of them— just another fight in a lifetime of struggle.

## THE GROUP

Khan might be secretive and silent, but he dreads being alone. He wants to find a family—to know what it's like to be part of something.

## DEATH

Khan just got out, away from the Horde and he wants to live his own life. What is death? Just an eternal sleep. If death is solitude and fear, Khan knows it already. He doesn't fear it, but avoids it at all costs.

## FEARS

Khan needs others. Their voices deafen the sound of his Ant's heart beating. If Khan was abandoned again, he believes his heart would dry up and he would die.

## PHILOSOPHY

Khan is secretive, he doesn't talk much. That's not a bad thing. His adoptive father rented him out like a dog, but a dog he is: loyal, determined, sturdy. He needs somebody to follow and protect. Moonface opened the world for him. And those dreams, they have to mean something, don't they?







# MEBUH

TITLE \_\_\_\_\_ INSTINCT The Man  
 AGE Adult  
 GENDER Female DESCRIPTION \_\_\_\_\_  
 ORIGIN Babel (Marad)  
 OCCUPATION Asahaa



BODY	HAND	MIND	SOUL
STRENGTH ♦♦♦♦♦	ACCURACY ♦♦♦♦♦	KNOWLEDGE ♦♦♦♦♦	WILLPOWER ♦♦♦♦♦
RESISTANCE ♦♦♦♦♦	REFLEXES ♦♦♦♦♦	PERCEPTION ♦♦♦♦♦	EMPATHY ♦♦♦♦♦
MALUS <input type="radio"/>	MALUS <input type="radio"/>	MALUS <input type="radio"/>	MALUS <input type="radio"/>

## ◇ THE MAN

Arts       ♦♦♦♦♦  
 City       ♦♦♦♦♦  
 Civilizations ♦♦♦♦♦  
 Healing   ♦♦♦♦♦  
 Social     ♦♦♦♦♦

MALUS

## ◇ THE ANIMAL

Animalism   ♦♦♦♦♦  
 Riding       ♦♦♦♦♦  
 Territories  ♦♦♦♦♦  
 Tracking     ♦♦♦♦♦  
 Wildlife     ♦♦♦♦♦

MALUS

## SPECIALTIES

Rumors (City)  
Seduction (Social)  
Traditions (Civilizations)

## ◇ THE TOOL

Blacksmith   ♦♦♦♦♦  
 Craft         ♦♦♦♦♦  
 Mechanisms   ♦♦♦♦♦  
 Symbols       ♦♦♦♦♦  
 Tricks         ♦♦♦♦♦

MALUS

## ◇ THE LAND

Athletics     ♦♦♦♦♦  
 Awareness   ♦♦♦♦♦  
 Plants       ♦♦♦♦♦  
 Stealth       ♦♦♦♦♦  
 Travel       ♦♦♦♦♦

MALUS

## BONUS | MALUS

## ◇ THE WEAPON

Archery       ♦♦♦♦♦  
 Brawl         ♦♦♦♦♦  
 Melee         ♦♦♦♦♦  
 Shield        ♦♦♦♦♦  
 Throw         ♦♦♦♦♦

MALUS

## ◇ THE UNKNOWN

Moons         ♦♦♦♦♦  
 Myths         ♦♦♦♦♦  
 Pantheons   ♦♦♦♦♦  
 Rituals       ♦♦♦♦♦  
 Shards       ♦♦♦♦♦

MALUS

◆ 1D BONUS  
 ● ReRoll

WOUNDS

LIGHT	HEAVY	FATAL
2	5	9
1D	2D	3D

NERVES

GRIT
1D





## INSTINCT

### The Man

The time is long past when humanity bended knee under their gods, seeking their favor or trying to escape their anger. Deities are gone, but the world did not crumble, nor did civilization. At long last, an emancipated humanity is at the dawn of great things, and it is now its own worst enemy. The Man is the Instinct presiding to humanity's grandeur, to its evolution, to its enlightenment. Of course, whole cities and civilizations rise and fall, but more will take their place. Humanity's survival isn't ensured by individual interests, but by collective actions. Those of the Man make sure of that.

Mebuh embodies all the positive sides of humanity: generosity, compassion, thoughtfulness, empathy. She likes helping others and it gives meaning to her life. However, she is terrified of the unknown and the Wild Lands that spread beyond civilization. But if her Group needs her, she'll be there!

**TENETS:** To be generous, to be compassionate, to reason scientifically, to work towards the survival of the human species and of civilizations\*.

**FAULTS:** To be cruel, to kill in cold blood, to promote ignorance and obscurity\*, to accept the inevitable, to further the extinction of humanity or the collapse of civilizations\*.

**DEMEANOR:** Diligent, devoted, fervent, amicable, tactful, open.  
Tenets and Faults followed by a "\*" are considered the most significant, and either grant or subtract 4D from the Nerves and Grit Pools.

## WEAPONS

Knife

## DAMAGES

1

## RANGE

## TRAITS

## EQUIPMENT

Small waterskin filled with water from the Siirh

Make-up box

## Azure balm

This bluish balm, sometimes used to paint areas of the body for cosmetic reasons, also possesses antiseptic and healing properties. Made from turquoise, lapis-lazuli, plants from the Siirh and a greasy paste obtained from crushing Karith almonds, azure balm grants +1D to all healing actions when applied on a wound. It isn't effective on bruises or broken bones.

## ARMORS

## PROTECTION

## MOBILITY

## TRAITS

## INSTINCT ABILITY

### EXALTATION

Mebuh has a gift for cheering up the members of her Group. Once per day, she can make an Empathy + Social roll against a Difficulty of 7. She cannot spend Pool Dice on this roll. If she succeeds, all characters within the Group each regain 1D in their Grit and Nerves Pools per Success on the roll. Furthermore, if the roll gets at least one Success and if the Group Pool has less than 2 dice remaining, the Group Pool regains 1D.

## ABILITIES

### GIFT OF GRACE

Mebuh possesses exceptional grace, beauty and elegance. When she rolls Arts (song, dance) or Social (charm or seduction), she gains a +1D bonus. Once per day, if the roll has a Handicap and succeeds, she regains as many dice from her Pools as the value of the Handicap. She also gains a +1D bonus on dodge rolls but cannot regain dice from those rolls.

### UNDETERRED SUPPORT

Mebuh can spend 1D from her Nerves Pool or Grit Pool to grant one automatic Success to a member of her Group that can hear her. This ability can only be used once the roll has been made, but before Grit can be spent.



# MEBUH

Am I too proud? Perhaps.

Everybody must drink and I'm the one giving water, so why shouldn't I be proud?

Mebuh is an Asahaa, a Water Seeker, one who draws water from the Siirh and takes it to the nobles' houses and the best workshops. The village respects her and her tasks, making Mebuh the favorite of all the village's Asahaas. Beautiful, hard-working, and kind, the entire village watched her grow from a babe in arms into a lovely woman.

They say her water is the freshest, the sweetest! Yet, Mebuh fills her amphoras at the same banks as the others Asahaas. But Mebuh uses every trick at her disposal to rise above the others, and the villagers love her for that. They make life easy for Mebuh, even if she never acknowledges it. While she has her own skills and talents, full of lovely qualities to envy, her community always protected her while she carried out her duties, from the banks of the Siirh to the sunny streets of Marad.

Mebuh knows her village by heart – every person, every rumor, every short-cut, every empty home, and every window that can be opened with the most gentle of pushes. She knows everything. Mebuh spent all of her life in a united community, and she drives her relationships like a queen.

She has every right to be proud of herself, but what will become of this pride if Mebuh steps away from home? Even the smallest of her actions were rewarded by a smile and thanks, and by love and admiration. Once the door of her gilded cage is opened, how will Mebuh learn to fly?

Today Mebuh dreams bigger and further: she is training to win Marad's annual competition. And once again, the people of the village stand behind her!

## THE WORLD

The world is the Siirh. Is there anything more than those sandy banks, than this majestic flood of pure water? Home is water: the water of the blood, the rains, the tears, the river. Mebuh is water, and all of it comes from the Siirh.

## THE CULT

Mebuh doesn't understand true cruelty. She's not naïve, but she sees the good in everyone. Even bad people need to drink, to eat, and to sleep. They're humans, too.

## THE GROUP

Mebuh is deeply social. She loves being helpful, and being recognized for it is even better. She can do neither if she's alone. She sees the best in everyone. While she's not always careful when she speaks to others, she's empathetic when listening and does try to understand everyone's point of view. Mebuh will always make herself indispensable. Does it serve her own goals? Well. Yes. Yes, it does.

## DEATH

Death is so far away—why even think about it? Death is for the old and for the tired. Mebuh is as fresh as pure water, and alive!

## FEARS

Mebuh is beautiful and proud. She's not stupid, nor cruel. Mebuh desires nothing more than to be part of a community. Being pushed away? That's her darkest terror.

## PHILOSOPHY

Mebuh is honest in what she offers; she is beautiful, lovable, and devoted. She demands for those around her to validate her qualities. Those who look down on her stoke her anger. However, in exchange for recognizing her skills, she brings peace, balance and stories to the group.







# MOONFACE

TITLE \_\_\_\_\_ INSTINCT The Scourge  
 AGE Adult  
 GENDER Female DESCRIPTION \_\_\_\_\_  
 ORIGIN Horde - Empire  
 OCCUPATION Ex gladiator



BODY	HAND	MIND	SOUL
STRENGTH ♦♦♦♦♦	ACCURACY ♦♦♦♦♦	KNOWLEDGE ♦♦♦♦♦	WILLPOWER ♦♦♦♦♦
RESISTANCE ♦♦♦♦♦	REFLEXES ♦♦♦♦♦	PERCEPTION ♦♦♦♦♦	EMPATHY ♦♦♦♦♦
MALUS <input type="radio"/>	MALUS <input type="radio"/>	MALUS <input type="radio"/>	MALUS <input type="radio"/>

## ◇ THE MAN

Arts      ♦♦♦♦♦  
 City      ♦♦♦♦♦  
 Civilizations   ♦♦♦♦♦  
 Healing     ♦♦♦♦♦  
 Social      ♦♦♦♦♦

MALUS

## ◇ THE ANIMAL

Animalism   ♦♦♦♦♦  
 Riding       ♦♦♦♦♦  
 Territories   ♦♦♦♦♦  
 Tracking     ♦♦♦♦♦  
 Wildlife      ♦♦♦♦♦

MALUS

## SPECIALTIES

Climbing (Athletics)  
 Fistfights (Brawl)  
 Sword (Melee)

## ◇ THE TOOL

Blacksmith   ♦♦♦♦♦  
 Craft         ♦♦♦♦♦  
 Mechanisms   ♦♦♦♦♦  
 Symbols      ♦♦♦♦♦  
 Tricks        ♦♦♦♦♦

MALUS

## ◇ THE LAND

Athletics     ♦♦♦♦♦  
 Awareness    ♦♦♦♦♦  
 Plants        ♦♦♦♦♦  
 Stealth       ♦♦♦♦♦  
 Travel        ♦♦♦♦♦

MALUS

## BONUS | MALUS

## ◇ THE WEAPON

Archery      ♦♦♦♦♦  
 Brawl        ♦♦♦♦♦  
 Melee        ♦♦♦♦♦  
 Shield       ♦♦♦♦♦  
 Throw        ♦♦♦♦♦

MALUS

## ◇ THE UNKNOWN

Moons        ♦♦♦♦♦  
 Myths        ♦♦♦♦♦  
 Pantheons   ♦♦♦♦♦  
 Rituals      ♦♦♦♦♦  
 Shards       ♦♦♦♦♦

MALUS

♦ 1D BONUS  
 ● ReRoll

WOUNDS

LIGHT	HEAVY	FATAL
3	6	10
1D	2D	3D

NERVES

GRIT





## INSTINCT

### The Scourge

The Scourge represents destruction in its most raw and ruthless form. Its hordes sweep across the world, crushing all those who don't belong with them under their frightening multitudes. Beings under the influence of the Scourge know that individuality is a weakness, and seek strength in numbers, for they are nothing without it. They follow only one rule: might makes right. The weak and the loners deserve only spite and death, and the Scourge will rid them of all that they have, including their dignity, when their corpses are left to the carrion traveling in their wake.

Moonface is unpredictable, but she has managed to calm her most destructive instincts for the good of her Group. Well, until rage overwhelms her again and she ruins all their efforts.

**TENETS:** To pillage\*, to destroy, to take by force, to find strength in numbers.

**FAULTS:** To spare someone, to negotiate\*, to save something for later, long-term planning.

**DEMEANOR:** Brutal, vicious, unpredictable, destructive, extreme.

Tenets and Faults followed by a "\*" are considered the most significant, and either grant or subtract 4D from the Nerves and Grit Pools.

#### WEAPONS

Sword  
Knife

#### DAMAGES

3  
2

#### RANGE

#### TRAITS

#### EQUIPMENT

#### ARMORS

Light shield

#### PROTECTION

2

#### MOBILITY

#### TRAITS

## INSTINCT ABILITY

### MIGHT MAKES RIGHT

When Moonface faces an opponent that has suffered at least one Heavy Wound, she gets a +1D bonus on her close combat attack actions against them (Melee and Brawl). Whenever Moonface inflicts a Fatal Wound to an opponent, she regains 1D from her Grit or Nerves Pool (her choice).

## ABILITIES

### LOW BLOW

Moonface has learned a lot of dirty moves from her fights in the arena, and she uses them well. If she spends 1D from her Nerves Pool and succeeds on a Willpower + Awareness roll against a Difficulty of 5, suffering from a Handicap equal to the Perception of her opponent - maximum (III) -, she wins any tied roll against that opponent if he tries to dodge. She also inflicts upon him a penalty of -1D on his parries. This lasts for the whole combat, or until she attacks another opponent (she can still defend against others). If her enemy target gets no successes on his Defensive actions (or doesn't defend), she inflicts 1 extra damage in case of a successful attack. If she fights with her bare hands, her opponent's armor doesn't increase by 1. These abilities do not add-up against the same opponent and can only be used against one opponent at a time.

### PATCH ME UP

Moonface has been around. She's seen many wounds, and she knows how to care for even the worst lesions. When she heals someone (including emergency healing), she reduces the Handicap by (I).



# MOONFACE

Did you SEE the cute redhead? That armor? How it fits so closely to his b... What? My sword? It almost poked out your eye? Yes, yes, I DO have to carry it on my shoulder like that, and you can go f... hey! The redhead's escaping!

Moonface is a tornado. One that shakes your body, empties your pockets, shreds your clothes, and bruises your bones. The source of those bruises? Hits, scratches, bites, or other things, depending on Moonface's mood. She used to be one of the Empire's gladiators with successes so impressive she was promised a fight in Lux, the Empire's capital city. One defeat ended her upward momentum. She broke her sword, struck the healer who came to help her, and threatened to kill the rich merchant who paid for the fight. As a result, she had to find a new career. Quickly.

She worked as a mercenary, until she came across the Horde. For the first time in her life, nobody cared about her explosive personality. She wasn't too intense, too strong, or too bad-tempered. Then Khan came, and somehow, they tamed each other; they remain at the other's side no matter what. Why? How? The panther and the dog, forever? Nobody knows, even them. They left together for their Çatal Uyük, a time to explore the world, living for two years outside of the Horde before choosing whether to return, or not.

Moonface calls attention to herself without ever trying. But her performances aren't everyone's cup of... blood. She always finds her way through the trickiest of situations, but she often leaves chaos and broken bones in her wake. It's not easy to return to an inn after you punched out two of the keeper's teeth. It's always a bit tricky coming back to a town where every cute man remembers you... good or bad.

## THE WORLD

The world is here and now! Yesterday is dead—it never even existed! And tomorrow? Well, tomorrow is so far away! We never reach tomorrow, if you really think about it.

## THE CULT

Moonface is not an idiot, but her intelligence never focuses on something as intangible as power, faction wars, and how they change the world.

## THE GROUP

Does the group have fun? Do they fight stuff? Can they spend their free time following cute redheads in skin-tight armor? Then, it's amazing! If there are drinks and food, why would she ask for more?

## DEATH

Death? Death comes no matter what. The only way to trick death is by living fully.

## FEARS

Waiting. Standing there. Doing nothing. Moonface is a dancer at heart, and dancing doesn't exist without movement.

## PHILOSOPHY

Moonface is a force of nature. Nothing breaks her, and nothing satiates her thirst for life. She is her only frailty: a deep-rooted terror grows in her heart when she is in a stable situation. Sharks must swim to breathe, and Moonface is that kind of creature, too. She must move. She must go. She must DO, even if it means taking risks, or destroying everything around her.







# SILENCE

TITLE \_\_\_\_\_ INSTINCT The Bone  
 AGE Young  
 GENDER Female DESCRIPTION \_\_\_\_\_  
 ORIGIN Avhorae  
 OCCUPATION Sacrificial Acolyte



BODY	HAND	MIND	SOUL
STRENGTH ♦♦♦♦♦	ACCURACY ♦♦♦♦♦	KNOWLEDGE ♦♦♦♦♦	WILLPOWER ♦♦♦♦♦
RESISTANCE ♦♦♦♦♦	REFLEXES ♦♦♦♦♦	PERCEPTION ♦♦♦♦♦	EMPATHY ♦♦♦♦♦
MALUS <input type="checkbox"/>	MALUS <input type="checkbox"/>	MALUS <input type="checkbox"/>	MALUS <input type="checkbox"/>

## ◇ THE MAN

Arts      ◊◊◊◊◊  
 City      ◊◊◊◊◊  
 Civilizations ◊◊◊◊◊  
 Healing    ♦◊◊◊◊  
 Social     ◊◊◊◊◊

MALUS

## ◇ THE ANIMAL

Animalism    ◊◊◊◊◊  
 Riding       ◊◊◊◊◊  
 Territories   ◊◊◊◊◊  
 Tracking     ◊◊◊◊◊  
 Wildlife      ◊◊◊◊◊

MALUS

## SPECIALTIES

Knife (Melee)  
 Self-sacrifice (Rituals)  
 Traditions of the  
 Old Gods (Myths)

## ◇ THE TOOL

Blacksmith   ◊◊◊◊◊  
 Craft         ◊◊◊◊◊  
 Mechanisms   ◊◊◊◊◊  
 Symbols      ♦◊◊◊◊  
 Tricks        ♦◊◊◊◊

MALUS

## ◇ THE LAND

Athletics     ♦◊◊◊◊  
 Awareness    ♦♦◊◊◊  
 Plants        ◊◊◊◊◊  
 Stealth       ♦♦◊◊◊  
 Travel        ♦◊◊◊◊

MALUS

## BONUS | MALUS

## ◇ THE WEAPON

Archery      ◊◊◊◊◊  
 Brawl        ◊◊◊◊◊  
 Melee        ♦◊◊◊◊  
 Shield       ◊◊◊◊◊  
 Throw        ◊◊◊◊◊

MALUS

## ◇ THE UNKNOWN

Moons        ◊◊◊◊◊  
 Myths        ♦◊◊◊◊  
 Pantheons   ♦♦◊◊◊  
 Rituals      ♦♦♦◊◊  
 Shards       ◊◊◊◊◊

MALUS

◆ 1D BONUS  
● ReRoll

## WOUNDS

LIGHT    HEAVY    FATAL

2    5    9

◊◊◊◊◊    ◊◊◊◊◊    ◊◊◊◊◊

-1D    -2D    -3D

## NERVES

## GRIT

◊◊◊◊◊    ◊◊◊◊◊





## INSTINCT

### The Bone

This Instinct only exists to spread Death without moderation. The life of the sacrificial victims pours between its fingers and feeds its power. When some people offer themselves to death in hope of a liberation, the Bone gorges on their suffering. The hope of the peaceful void of death becomes an existence of lonely wandering, or necromantic servitude. Death isn't the end, but the beginning of a new cycle, eternal and immutable. the source of unrivalled power, for they who know how to tap into it. Unlike the Void, many follow the way of the Bone, and they are just as evil.

Silence isn't as evil as most followers of the Bone, but she certainly doesn't have much respect for life. especially when sacrificing such life can bring her a little of that power she craves so much! It's as if she had become addicted to the sacrifices and their energy, so sweet, so intoxicating. She has recently discovered that a personal sacrifice granted her more power.

**TENETS:** To kill, to sacrifice others, to spread death and desolation\*, to enslave.

**FAULTS:** To spare someone, to feel pity, to have mercy, to feel attachment to a living being, to feel remorse\*, to create or save a life without ulterior motive\*.

**DEMEANOR:** Cold, aloof, cruel.

Tenets and Faults followed by a "\*" are considered the most significant, and either grant or subtract 4D from the Nerves and Grit Pools.

## WEAPONS

Knife

## DAMAGES

1

## RANGE

## TRAITS

## EQUIPMENT

## ARMORS

Medium armor  
(leather)

## PROTECTION

3

## MOBILITY

## TRAITS

## INSTINCT ABILITY

### A TASTE OF DEATH

The first time each day she kills a creature, the feeling is so intense that Silence regains a number of Grit and Nerves dice (distributed however she likes) depending on the Experience value (not Threat) of her victim: Beginner (1D), Competent (2D), Expert (3D), or Master (4D).

## ABILITIES

### QUICK BLADE

When Silence attacks with a knife, the weapon gets the Fast (2) trait only when she wields it. Furthermore, dodge and parry actions against Silence's knife attacks suffer a malus of -1D in addition to the Handicap (I).

### SPOILS OF SACRIFICE (RITUAL MAGIC, DEATH)

Once per day, when Silence practices a sacrifice (either by killing a human being in a ritual of at least 15 minutes, or by inflicting two Light Wounds to herself over 1 turn or 1 minute), she can roll Knowledge + Rituals against a Difficulty of 7. If she succeeds, Silence gets a +1D bonus to her Body and Hand actions for a number of hours equal to the Experience level of her victim: Beginner (1 hour), Competent (2 hours), Expert (4 hours) or Master (8 hours). If she has inflicted wounds upon herself, the bonus is +2D and persists as long as the wounds aren't cured.

When she sacrifices a victim, Silence can choose to suffer a Handicap to her rituals roll. If she succeeds, the duration of the effect is increased as per the following:

Handicap level: (I) Duration: x2

Handicap level: (II) Duration: x3

She cannot spend Pool Dice on the rituals roll for Spoils of Sacrifice. Once she has used this ritual, she seems to emit an aura that makes people near her uneasy. at least those not within her Group. Her skin also becomes noticeably icy to the touch. This effect ends with the ritual.



# SILENCE

...

Silence used to have a real name, but no one knows what it was. Where did she come from? That, too, is a mystery. She grew up in Avhorage, learning to read and write from the old tales of savage gods. During a harsh winter, when food became scarce – so scarce that Silence, her little brother, and their parents couldn't eat anymore – she prayed to the Tearful One for her and her brother's survival.

Each prayer has a price, and Silence knew her wish would come true at the cost of blood: her parent's blood. As her brother slept, Silence lured her father out into the blizzard. She cut his throat, crushing his mouth in her hand, whispering "be quiet now..." In his ear. Then she choked her weakened mother, still lying in her bed, murmuring again "be quiet...". The day after that, the blizzard lifted, and Silence went hunting. She and her little brother ate well after that.

Others guess at a difficult past, but Silence's surliness keeps them from asking her directly. And how would they get an answer? She doesn't speak, as far as they know. And even if she did, what would she tell them? She had a little brother who disappeared and she has been looking for him, following some unknowable trail of hints and clues. Her reputation for bad luck precedes her. Everywhere she goes, death, losses, accidents, and amputations follow her. Silence always has blood on her hands, whether curdled or fresh, red or brown under her nails. Some whisper she's a sorceress. At least they hope so, as any other explanation would be far darker.

When she was very young, Silence learned sacrificial magic. If one prays hard enough, long enough, and sacrifices those things they love, then perhaps their wish will come true.

## **THE WORLD**

Silence survived a winter of starvation and this trauma marked her. She thinks if she suffers or sacrifices enough, then she can protect those she loves. That said, who does she love apart from her mysterious little brother, who is nowhere to be found?

## **THE CULT**

The Cult holds no power over Silence. Unless they could offer her help, power, or better—tranquility. Then the Cult could groom her fractured soul.

## **THE GROUP**

Silence is suspicious of any group. Does she hide something? Yes. But what? Her past? The fate of her brother? Her strange magic? Her hands, always dripping with blood?

## **DEATH**

Death is the drip of blood on fresh snow. Death is frail arms, trying to fight off suffocation. Death is so... lively, when you think about it.

## **FEARS**

Not even Silence understands what she is afraid of. Perhaps the awareness of what she did is the true and only substance of her fears. That would be the one thing that makes her flee and hide in darkness.

## **PHILOSOPHY**

None. Her winter of misfortune destroyed much of her humanity. Only a very clever and daring person could bring back any small shard of her humanity.