





SECTION 8

SECOND EDITION



ROLLING DICE

1. Player picks a Skill relevant to the roll at hand.
2. Storyguide and player agree on which Attribute is most relevant to the way the character is approaching the roll.
3. Storyguide sets the Difficulty of the roll, and any Complications (optional).
4. Player rolls a number of d10s equal to the Skill + Attribute. Each die that rolls the target number or higher (usually 8 or 7) is a success. 10s count as a success and are rolled again. If roll has at least one success, player adds Enhancements to successes generated (optional). Mixed actions (two different actions) use the lower of two pools.
5. Player spend successes to buy off Difficulty. Remaining successes can buy off Complications and purchase Stunts (optional).

COMPLICATIONS

LEVEL YOU TALK YOUR WAY INTO A FAVOR FROM OGMA, BUT...

- | | |
|---|---|
| 1 | Minor: You upset him. He won't remember you fondly. |
| 2 | Notable: He's worked out what you're really after. |
| 3 | Significant: You got the bad end of the bargain, and owe him one. |
| 4 | Major: An invisible spy overheard your secret discussion. |
| 5 | Extreme: He's seriously pissed off with you. Watch out. |

MOMENTUM

- Consolation from a failed roll: 1
- Failed Specialty: +1
- Botch: +2
- Concede a fight: +3 per character

USING MOMENTUM

Add Dice: Any player can spend 1 Momentum per die to add a single die to anyone's dice pool, before it is rolled. Multiple dice requires multiple players.

Add Interval: Spend 3 Momentum to add another interval to a complex action.

Activate Knacks: Spend required Momentum to active Knacks, doesn't require say-so.

Complex Actions are rolled as smaller parts of a larger whole. For each **interval**, gain a milestone, representing major headway toward the final goal.

MILESTONES	INVESTIGATION	RACE
2	An awkward case	A short-distance course
3	A carefully hidden secret weakness	A three-lap chariot race
4	A treasure hunt with four keys	A rough and varied derby
5+	A multilayered conspiracy	An incredible marathon

RANGE TABLE

RANGE	DESCRIPTION	COMBAT ATTRIBUTE
Close	In range to trade blows with blunt objects and blades, or grapple and strike unarmed.	Might
Short	Close-quarter battle distance for reflexive shooting and thrown weapons.	Dexterity
Medium	Range to aim and shoot with a firearm or bow. Maximum modern pistol range.	Cunning
Long	Range to plan and execute long-range sniping and special weapon attacks (compensating for wind, etc.).	Discipline
Extreme	Range of heavy military weapons — must compensate for curvature of the Earth, speed of light delays.	Intellect or dice pool of guidance system
Out of Range	Beyond maximum weapon range.	N/A

ENHANCEMENT

LEVEL	CIRCUMSTANCE EXAMPLE	EQUIPMENT EXAMPLE
1	Minor: You have the high ground.	A finely balanced rapier.
2	Notable: You've studied your enemy's style.	An enchanted macuahuitl.
3	Significant: Your target doesn't know you're there.	A genuine Masamune blade.
4	Major: Your enemy labors under multiple divine curses.	A dagger made from the head of Gungir.
5	Extreme: A god of war guides your blade.	Excalibur.

MARVELS

Any action to perform a Marvel must conform to a motif granted from any source, usually relics or the Pantheon Path. Marvels don't cost Legend against trivial targets.

BLESSINGS

Imbue 1 Legend to either grant Enhancement 2 on a single action of a specific type, or ignore up to 3 points of Complication/

COMPLICATION

Imbue 1 Legend to impose a +3 Complication on the next action of a particular type that a character takes this scene.

IMPOSE CONDITION

Spend 1 Legend to inflict a Condition on a character: generic Conditions increase Difficulty by +1, and must be resolved by taking a challenging or risky action.

RESOLVE CONDITION

Spend 1 Legend to resolve a Condition that is related to or opposed to the nature or symbolism of your Purview.

ATTACKING

Spend 1 Legend to make either melee (Close Combat + Might) or ranged attacks (Occult + Cunning) the scene as simple actions; get 3 points of tags to reflect the specific nature of the marvel.

EQUIPMENT

Imbue 1 Legend to implausibly obtain a mundane but useful item tied to Purview, like a handgun, cellphone, or officer's uniform. Spend Legend instead for expensive or dangerous items.

OFFSCREEN ACTION

Imbue 1 Legend to "cut" from the current scene to a nearby mortal or animal, and describe how they take some action that has an impact on the current scene.

UPHEAVAL

Spend 1 Legend to add a significantly advantageous feature to the Field, create difficult terrain or a hazard, create a +3 Complication obstacle, or other dramatic large-scale effects.

EMULATE BOONS

Use a marvel to replicate the effects of a Boon you don't know by either spending Legend where it would be imbued or spending +1 Legend with the cost.

ESOTERICA

Anything else you might want to do; add color and flavor to the scene.

FATEBINDING

Once per session, acquire or reinforce a Fatebinding at +1 Strength to regain 1 point of Legend. Fatebound characters may be **invoked** for a minor benefit, **compelled** to introduce some difficulty in the Scion's life, or **resolved** to change or end the Fatebinding. For each **invoke**, roll the Fatebinding Strength + the Scion's Legend as part of a complex action. When milestones exceed current Fatebinding Strength, increase Strength by 1 and reset milestones to 0.

Creator: Apprentice, Jinx, Rival

Guardian: Canary, Martyr, Nemesis

Healer: Boon Companion, Canary, Rival

Hunter: Boon Companion, Paramour, Rival

Judge: Balm, Worshipper, Traitor

Leader: Boon Companion, Traitor, Worshipper

Lover: Balm, Paramour (or Unrequited), Rival

Liminal: Canary, Jinx, Unrequited Paramour

Sage: Apprentice, Jinx, Traitor

Trickster: Boon Companion, Nemesis, Traitor

Warrior: Balm, Nemesis, Rival

TENSION POOL

Base Tension: Number of Players + average Legend, refresh every arc.

Add Tension whenever resolving Conditions or overcoming Calling Crisis. Tension spent to improve a character persists across sessions.

ARCHETYPE PROMOTION (3 Tension): Remove the Antagonist Archetype and replace it with the higher; Mook to Professional, Professional to Villain, Villain to Monster.

ADD QUALITY (2 Tension): Add a Quality.

ADDING FLAIRS (1 Tension): Add a Flair, with cooldown automatically refreshed.

ACTION INTERRUPT (2 Tension): Insert a new Storyguide character slot for one round, even if the Antagonist has already acted.

DEFENSE BOOST (1 Tension per Defense): Raise Defense per round.

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POWER COST (Varies): Activate a power that costs Tension.

CONSOLATIONS

- **Fateful Encounter:** Another approach to the character's goals.
- **Chance Meeting.** Failure introduces a new character who can offer help or information.
- **Unlooked-for Advantage.** Failure results in a level 1 Enhancement to a future challenge.

WEAPON TAGS

Aggravated (2): Deals grievous magical damage

Arcing (1): Light cover is ignored, and heavy cover becomes light.

Automatic (2): Burst Attack: Enhancement 1 to applying the Critical Hit stunt.

Bashing (0): Blunt force damage

Brutal (1): Critical Stunt costs -1 successes

Concealable (1): Enhancement 1 to concealing weapon

Firearm (0): Guns

Grappling (1): This weapon grants +1 Enhancement to making the Grapple attack.

Lethal (0): Deals lethal damage, cannot deal minor injuries

Long Range (1): Long range band weapons

Loud (-1): Cannot be silenced

Melee (0): Close range only, Close Combat Skill only

Messy (-1): Distinctive damage pattern

Piercing (2): Reduce hard armor by 1 or soft armor value by 2

Pushing (1): Knock opponent prone after inflicting damage

Ranged (0): Difficulty at close range is +1

Reach (1): Can make Close Combat attacks at close range

Returning (1): Weapon returns to you

Shockwave (4): Strikes all targets within range band

Slow (-1): Must dedicate an action to reload

Stun (1): Can only inflict nonlethal damage

Thrown (0): Can be thrown out to short range

Two-Handed (-1): Requires two hands to use

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SCALE

Narrative scale indicates a multiplier to successes; feel free to handwave it a bit. Apply **dramatic scale** to non-trivial characters, always including the player characters. If Scale is 2+, automatically win contests against weaker opponent. Otherwise, apply difference in Scale to one another. Equipment, circumstances, vehicles, and supernatural powers can grant Scale.

Feats of Scale: Check Callings and Legendary Title for permissible actions; spend 1 Legend for [half of Legend Rating, round up] Scale on action. If action applies only to Calling keywords, spend 1 Legend and 2 Momentum for Scale 1.

SCALE RANK	NARRATIVE	DRAMATIC	EXAMPLE
0: Standard	n/a	+0	(0)
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2: Supernatural	x5	+4	A giant that hurls cars with ease
3: Incredible	x10	+6	Outrunning a car on the highway, a main battle tank
4: Godlike	x100	+8	Smashing said tank in half with a single blow
5: Supernal	x200	+12	Lifting a full aircraft carrier clear of the water
6: Titanic	x Lots	+16	The World's mightiest forces, weapons of mass destruction

STUNTS

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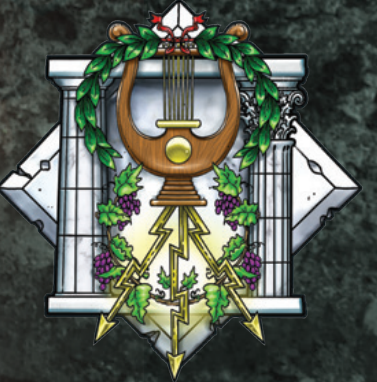
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SECTION

SECOND EDITION



THE WORLD

THE WORLD

The World is Tiamat, carved into shape and form by Marduk. It is Rangi and Papa, locked in an embrace while their children battle between them. It was also created by a wagtail swimming upon an infinite ocean, and by Q'uq'umatz and Tepeu speaking the word "Earth" while floating upon a similar infinite ocean. Atum existed in yet another such ocean, containing all The World within himself, taking the definitions and limits of existence from the Primordials and granting stewardship to the Ennead. The sons of Burr lifted the earth out of the sea, fashioned from the bones and flesh and maggots of dead Ymir. It is all these things, even in contradiction to one another, and they are all true.

ALL MYTHS ARE TRUE

Was Fionn mac Cumhaill a man or a giant? Was Aphrodite born from divine genitals cast into the sea or from Zeus and Dione? The answer is yes. Every mythology coexists with the others and The World spins on without a hitch. Where these mythic histories conflict, Gods and heroes collide with words and weapons. Cosmological certainty only matters insofar as a given God wants credit for deeds people attribute to his rival. Whether the earth quakes because Tuli's dogs scratch at their fleas or because Poseidon throws temper tantrums, it still happens regardless of which explanation has more proponents, and the only cosmic outcome to an Overworld scuffle about it is which pantheon wins bragging rights. Most people assume that Tuli causes some

NOT THE WORLD, BUT THE WORLD

This chapter has an agenda: to present a setting where things mostly resemble our world, while letting it be known that *just* beneath the surface you can find Scion worship and enormous religious diversity tinged with genuine supernatural influence. In real Rome, the seat of the Catholic Church lies across the river, and beyond certain modern revivals the old temples are historical remnants and not living faith sites. In **Scion**, Rome looks almost the same, and daily life is superficially similar, but some of the old ruins have well-kept annexes for cult rites, and even though the Pantheon is nominally a Catholic Church, everybody just knows you don't come here for Mass, and that at certain times the priests stand aside for *other* priests.

When you, as the Storyguide describe places in **Scion's** World, salt their superficial sameness with cultic undercurrents. We can provide examples, attitudes and an overview, but you should be willing to suspend disbelief to buy into this aspect of the setting. Accept it first, then come up with excuses for why it's this way.

earthquakes and Poseidon causes others with no particular need to choose just one legend. They pray for protection from a tremor to whichever God — or Gods — they feel will get the job done best.

In microcosm, though, these contradictions are more difficult to reconcile. If one relic is sacred to two separate Gods and their religions' practices are mutually exclusive, or one population of Legendary creatures chases another out of its ancestral home because its mythic history says it has every right to the place, conflict breaks out. The Gods send Scions and others authorized to speak for them to settle the dispute, peacefully or bloodily according to their tastes. Or they don't, and age-old grudges form that some Scion later down the line will have the honor of dealing with instead. Things get even hairier for followers of Gods who belong to more than one pantheon, as they try to navigate the pressures and demands trickling down to them from each side. These webs of mythological intersection become most tangled when one deity encompasses so many equally true, yet incompatible, personal histories that people can't agree on whether they even *are* the same God.

Is Lugh Lámfhada the same being as Lleu Llaw Gyffes? Are Kannon and Guanyin two faces of one God or two separate Gods entirely? The answers are "yes and no," and that "yes and no" is qualified and far from simple. The relationships might be muddled by different Incarnations working at cross purposes, hostile takeovers of divine Overworlds by other pantheons, Titanic conspiracies to undermine a God's claim to his Purview, or any number of other complexities — but all myths are true, one way or another.

For explorers of The World's vast reaches, its layers upon layers of paradoxical mythology and cycles of death and rebirth provide endless fragments of half-real places, things that both do and do not exist at once. Echoes of humanity's first flame burn in dozens of forgotten niches, each with its own story to tell about whose hand — or paw, or claw — carried it there. Axes Mundi that lead to nowhere flicker in and out of reality based on portents associated with long-dead pantheons. Powerful telescopes capture photographs of planets in deep space that change appearance periodically according to the tides of mutable creation histories. Intrepid pilgrims comb The World's every corner for hints to tales unspun and not yet spun alike.

HISTORY OF THE WORLD

In broad strokes, the history of The World is easily recognizable. All the major wars happened just as our world remembers them. All the geological and geographical shifts are familiar. Electricity still powers technology, Hollywood still produces multi-million-dollar films, and people still commute back and forth to work on traffic-clogged roads. It's in the details where The World starts to look more varied and strange. It's in the motivations behind significant events and the heavier hand of Fate in all things. Some events had different outcomes, where the Gods' more direct influence shifted a few pieces on the board here and there, and the dominoes fell in different patterns when the dust cleared. Far fewer people in The World believe in mere coincidence, and even randomness has meaning in a universe where Chaos is a demonstrable Purview of divine power.

RULERSHIP

Plenty of rulers and high-ranking politicians in the history of The World have claimed a divine right to leadership, and in the modern day it still happens with relative frequency. In some cases, it's true, or true enough. The Gods show their favor in



blatant blessings and obvious signs occasionally. Every so often, a prophecy's meaning becomes crystal clear. Some sacred relics expressly play kingmaker when the societies that keep them can agree to use them. Even prophecies and relics don't necessarily reflect the direct will of the Gods, though, and Incarnations that walk The World tend to stay out of situations where the masses could ask their intentions — not to mention the reality that two Incarnations of the same God might give different answers. More often, legitimate claims deal with with bloodlines and descent from Scions rather than direct appointment from on high.

In just as many cases, a leader's claim to heavenly backing is patently false, but the presence of Scions and a plethora of oracles makes such claims easy to make and easier to believe. Some of these false claims *become* true, whether because the Gods decided they liked the idea or because the ruler found a back door into celestial favor. On the other hand, a government's highest officer could call on Titanic powers and pass them off as divine. At times, the hubris of a mortal asserting Godly support where it doesn't exist calls down disastrous retribution, though unless a herald appears on the queen's doorstep and delivers an incontrovertible message straight from the Overworld, it's hard to prove anything.

Most commonly, no one can verify or dismiss the claim to divine right. Scholars and priests argue for generations over the minutiae of omens and cryptic tidings from faithful scribes' pens. Even Scions usually can't confirm whether their own divine parents had anything to say about a particular monarch, and they err on the negative side since the Gods don't like acting with such sweeping authority in The World. Gods are more likely to watch over the rulers of their favored peoples and nudge events to their liking than to express opinions outright on earthly leaders. A few Scions have thrown caution to

the wind and given up control over their personal legends to rule openly, but by no means do the actions of a God's chosen imply his approval. Only the pull of Fate is indisputable — a ruler may or may not have the Gods' backing, but if she's *destined* to sit on the throne, that destiny comes through in auguries and serendipity. Of course, nothing says Fate has to choose just one destined empress at a time, and beings with the ability to manipulate it don't have to agree with its mandates.

Ultimately, The World doesn't see many more global leaders claiming divine right than our world does. Most Scions and others with Godly connections have better things to do than tie themselves to the Fates of nations. Each destiny spins a tale of personal relationships, so even a ruler like Caesar ends up impacted more by the betrayal of a single friend than by a massive empire spread at his feet. The ambitions of the Gods' children lie in stranger fields than cold thrones and government offices.

RIPPLES

With the Gods' children wandering The World, it's easy to imagine that every luminary and revolutionary was a Scion. Some of them certainly were. Fate's influence reverberated throughout Europe during the Romantic period as Lord Byron built up and then shattered Fatebound connections one after the other, leading to whole new genres of literature and birthing the modern concept of "celebrity." Mongolian Scion Khutulun earned 10,000 horses from failed suitors who couldn't win a wrestling match against her and led her warriors in battle with unparalleled ferocity while simultaneously acting as her father's most valuable advisor. Imhotep, chancellor to the pharaoh and son of Ptah, was The World's first in an absurd number of constructive and artisanal fields. Then he built his own tomb and hid it so well that to this day, children of the Netjer seek its buried stones.

Scions might be bright as the sun, but that doesn't mean other stars don't shine. Mundane humanity is full of heroes too, and the Gods acknowledge that as well, showing favor in subtle nudges here and there. While Scions make huge splashes in Fate, ordinary humans can swim against the current and divert the waters a little to one side or the other if they get their hands on a relic or win the aid of a mystical mentor. Sometimes they get caught up in it instead, making their marks on The World despite their best efforts as some larger power sweeps them into its story. Mortals can command strange magics, lead cults, see the future, or wield faith like a weapon.

Because all myths are true and the ripples of Fate make them crash into one another on a regular basis, many violent upheavals in The World's history have divine motivations lurking behind their earthly facades. When Scions get involved, the facade is more of a clear glass window, but even then events remain more or less recognizable. These deity-driven wars and invasions more heavily impact Terra Incognita, the lands of myth, shifting the balance of power across the Overworld or changing the nature of a God-realm depending on who wins. Sometimes they begin in the Overworld only to spill out into The World through worshippers, and other times a Scion sounds the battle cry first and the Gods who would profit from her victory gather behind it. The American occupation of Haiti had dark overtones of Columbia, Goddess of America, warring against the Loa. The Knights Templar led Crusades to wipe out pantheistic worship altogether. Caesar's campaign in Gaul wasn't a dubiously legal quasi-war, it was a one-Scion campaign of annihilation and deification by the self-professed Son of Venus against the Gods of the Sacred Shrines. The Theoi killed most of the Nemetondevos while the Romans enslaved their worshippers, and Caesar finally

attained the requisite deeds needed to complete Divus Iulius' apotheosis after mortal death.

THE MARCH OF TIME

The globalization of The World that began in the 19th century with industrialization and barreled forward at an increasingly rapid pace with the rise of modern technology had a profound impact on the Gods and how they interacted with humanity. In the distant past, a God could reasonably expect to send an Incarnation to meddle in the affairs of mortals and only encounter mild Fatebinding as a result, since the story would spread at word of mouth's pace. By the time it reached the point of saturation to become a Legend, Fate's effects had already taken hold and diffused enough not to unduly rock the boat.

Once humans developed various means of instant communication and, especially, the unstoppable force of mass media, all bets were off. If Hera personally transformed some mortal into a bird for insulting her now, tabloids and Facebook would ensure that thousands of people would be Fatebound to her within the day. Openly dropping miracles on the populace to drum up worship garners such an overwhelmingly large response from so many people that a deity's self-image is pulled in a million directions, stretched to the breaking point by a million different interpretations of what he's done. The Gods thus have a strong incentive to take a backseat and stay behind the curtain. It makes The World a more jaded place than it used to be, but the pantheons still dip their toes in the water often enough and deeply enough that nobody forgets they're out there. Scions have an easier time of it, but they run into the same problem. Anytime a confrontation with titanspawn or a grand plan gone awry gets too explosive, a dozen iPhone cameras stream the scene across

A CASE STUDY OF THE WORLD'S HISTORY: THE ANAUŠA

With membership fixed at 10,000 troops, described in detail by Herodotus, the Anauša — the Persian Immortals — comprised a shock force of tremendous size for the ancient World. Stories say that whenever one fell in battle or to illness, a reserve was called up so their ranks would always be 10,000 strong. Immortals served as both heavy infantry and the special Imperial guard, a dual role that highlighted the Emperor's extreme importance as well as providing a boost in prestige that guaranteed that every Immortal fought to uphold the honor and discipline of the unit. Their symbol was a pomegranate.

After the eventual demise of the Achaemenid dynasty at the hands of Alexander the Great, the Immortals ceased to function as a historical unit, but the name lived on. Various royal guards, up to and including the Iranian Imperial Guard in the 1970s, claimed the moniker of "Immortals" to tie their fates (and Fates) to that legend (and Legend). In that sense, the Anauša are much like the einherjar: everyone who has died under their banner may be called upon to reincarnate and fight — if they take heavy losses in a conflict, the bodies vanish without a trace, and more Immortals simply walk in the door the next day, ready to fight. Without a pantheon to support them, though, the Anauša are in the position of being a mercenary force. They'll work for whoever can pay them; that payment might be in Worldly goods, or in Legend.

The Immortals have deployed all over The World, an elite paramilitary company that cannot truly die or be defeated, though it's rare and heinously expensive for all 10,000 to be called at once. By calling on the Immortals for aid, Scions and the Immortals can tie their respective Legends together. As the Scion performs great deeds, the Immortals reinforce their reputation. Soon, some other army or guard will call itself Immortal, and the myth will grow.

The Anauša will never serve a Scion of the Theoi (the Greco-Roman Gods), and look with disdain and hostility upon the Yazata, even though the Iranian pantheon should be friendly. At some point in the past, though, the Anauša and the Yazata broke ranks; neither group will recount the specific incident.

the globe in real time and Fate works its will. Some Scions don't care, choosing fame and impossible stardom over agency in their own stories, but most try to keep a slightly lower profile when it comes to leaping buildings and calling down lightning.

While the blinding speed of human progress strongly impacted the Gods, the same was not particularly true in reverse. Worship and blessings certainly provide inspiration and reduce obstacles, but ultimately humanity is miraculous on its own merits when it comes to the spirit of innovation and the will to break boundaries. Mortals, not Scions, were responsible for most major advances in science and technology — largely because Scions have fewer limitations that need conquering, and their burgeoning destinies keep them plenty busy. This is why the modern World looks more or less identical to ours from a broad perspective, rather than some hyper-advanced super society that runs on marvels. Many Gods, and to some extent their children, still think in patterns established long ago, when humanity had nowhere else to turn for answers and relied on the goodwill of their pantheons to survive harsh climates and rampant plagues. While mortals still ask the Gods for blessings in everything from agriculture to war to love, modern humanity has taken charge of its own destiny in ways the Gods never could have imagined a few hundred years ago, and it colors every interaction with the divine.

ALL THE WORLD'S A STAGE

No secret conspiracy schemes to shield fragile mortal minds from the divine and fantastical. Gods are as frank about

their relationship to humanity as they ever were, answering prayers in exchange for worship and pitching existential fits when they don't get their way. Everybody knows the Gods are there, even if they refuse to engage with divinity or believe it's all just a shared hallucination. People in The World today tell stories of an everchanging array of local Heroes in recent history as often as they tell ancient tales of younger times, although they usually haven't met them in person. The pantheons all have their own reasons for living in the Overworld — some were banished, while others just like paradise better than wading in among the hairy little mortals — but they all know the cost of imposing themselves upon The World too often or too boldly. Zeus learned his lesson when Hera tricked him into incinerating his mortal lover Semele with his full glory revealed. The Tuatha Dé Danann once lived in Ireland proper, and what did it get them? War, invasion, exile, and Fatebinding so powerful it turned their own geasa back upon them, ensuring they would always be just as compelled by taboos and oaths as their enemies. The more the Gods stand directly in front of the camera, the larger and brighter the spotlight that Titans use to choose their targets, and the more collateral damage piles up as their battles rage. They're not afraid to make their power known and aren't out to hide their miracles from The World — it's just bloody inconvenient to put them center stage.

Instead, The World is the game board for all the pantheons' grand agendas and petty grudges, a playground where their many plots and noble ideals trip over each other and demand each others' lunch money. Despite their cosmic power, Gods



are ultimately nothing without humans to define and validate them. Everything they do, they do for the sake of The World in some way, even if it's also for themselves. They have a vested interest in what happens on this spinning blue planet, and too much divine force unleashed on it would tear it to pieces. In the other direction, the fallout from the Fatebound masses would warp the pantheons beyond recognition. Scions, then, are the perfect expression of their Worldly desires tempered by their need to act at a remove. They carry just enough of their parents' themes and powers to push things in directions the Gods want them to go, and belong just enough to humanity to act as a workaround to cloying Fate — at least, until they grow potent enough to leave seismic footprints of their own.

MODERN MYTHOLOGY

The heartbeat of divine influence in The World is subtle but strong. A continuous line between ancient and modern mythologies means that though the Gods stay out of direct contact with humanity most of the time, they're the murmur in the background of everyday life, occasionally rising above the noise to sing out an important lyric before fading back into radio static. It means the water-cooler conversation is about Coyote's latest shenanigans as often as it is about which actor is dating whom. It means people attribute urban legends to particular pantheons or creatures, and conspiracy theorists are out to debunk them rather than prove them. Magic and miracles are a fact of life. They're wondrous, breathtaking, terrifying, awe-inspiring — but they're not unbelievable.

Like anything else, the exploits of the Gods and everyone associated with them makes for excellent media fodder. The ancient tradition of sitting around telling each other stories about the time Gayan knocked Krishna over with his chariot still goes on today, except now instead of a dozen people gathered around a fire, the audience is the entire World. Television, films, comic books, novels, and sensationalist news sources all regularly portray Scions and Gods performing great deeds just as they do in our world. In The World, though, the subjects are more varied. Prime-time dramas about minor third-string deities from every culture air with relative frequency, and superhero tales veer into religious territory as Scions and Godly Incarnations take up a larger chunk of public imagination when it comes to what makes a power fantasy. Children occasionally choose real-World Scions they've read about or even seen in person to emulate when they play. The Gods endure a small but steady stream of prayers and sacrifices from people desperate to be chosen for the gift of divinity, and a few more dedicated myth-hunters prowl the edges of rumor in hopes of coming face to face with a transformative experience.

Fate and the interconnected nature of the pantheons ensure that the Gods' relationships to each other and their stories written into The World's tapestry spill out into human institutions. Most don't consider superstition irrational or false, aware that the names of Legends have power in and of themselves, and that following in the footsteps of one can link a person to it with coincidences and leanings. The effects are subtle and unpredictable, but undeniable from a bird's-eye view. Two soccer teams named in honor of Gods who constantly war with one another find themselves vying for the same position in the rankings through happenstance. A company facing down bankruptcy rebrands with a respectful nod to Osiris or Xipe Totec to snatch desperately at a second chance. Nothing is certain, and

sometimes that renewal the CEO was hoping for turns out to be a reorganization of the board of directors that gets her and the entire executive team laid off. Then again, sometimes her ship comes in — which brings with it a host of new complications bearing vague resemblance to other parts of the myth she hadn't counted on.

Fate's ripples have more subconscious effects on the ordinary mortal, too, with millennia of Fatebinding shaping The World's expectations and those of the people in it like clay. They know that innocuous dreams can still mean something, *deja vu* can highlight an insignificant event as important, and their gut feelings can be right (or wrong) more often than not. Everyone accepts "tempting fate" and "just desserts" as real laws of nature that have a decisive impact. The World doesn't find it unduly strange when serendipity and misfortune strike like lightning. Many people are willing to take a chance on the fortune teller whose phone number they pulled from a paper tab on a telephone pole, and a good number of those don't mind admitting it, either. Lotteries prompt a quiet competition of arcane rituals between those who play regularly, as each entrant believes he knows the combination of prayers and meaningful associations that garners his best chances of winning. Tourists and groupies flock to celebrities in hopes of riding their coat-tails into not just 15 minutes of fame, but a brighter destiny — not that the average Jane would put it in those terms. She just has a feeling of being drawn to certain people or places and then makes excuses for why.

EVERYDAY SIGNS

Though The World is rife with modern mythology, everyday mortals take most of it on faith. Only the tip of the divine iceberg peeks out from behind the curtain, and its inherent mystery lets it defy easy categorization or industrialization. The rest explodes into vibrant color in Terra Incognita, but for the most part those are impossible to reach for anyone without a Legend of her own. But humanity *believes*, and that's powerful. In lieu of overbearing presence, the fingers of the Gods reach into The World in a million little ways.

Where a young woman might wear a gold cross around her neck in our world, that same woman in The World might instead wear a hammer amulet on a leather thong, or a small raven's claw. The statue of Christ the Redeemer standing tall in Rio de Janeiro isn't replaced by Shango on his throne, but signs of the lightning God of ruling are scattered throughout the city. OB-GYNs with silk shirts occasionally charge their patients a premium for the taurobolium, a word most don't quite grasp, smuggled as it is within overpriced American prenatal tests. It's a fashion among a few soldiers in the know to carve the *Tiwaz* rune into their rifles to ensure the weapons won't jam on them. Those who listen closely to the weather report over Caribbean radios hear a drumbeat reminiscent of Shango's. The sheer variety of homages to the unseen enriches every aspect of otherwise-humdrum life.

Mortal celebrities court the divine in their quests for fame and fortune, too, choosing patron deities to solicit for continued notoriety (and milk for continued press, when they can). A prime minister taking office includes a prayer to a local tutelary God as part of the standard spiel. When the Phillies win The World Series, they take a moment to sing a hymn to Ogma or Nike before the afterparty. Meanwhile, the San Francisco Giants have a literal giant as their mascot, and they only recruit



players the titanspawn thinks are worthy — at least, according to the general manager, who demurs as to whether it's merely a very tall man in a taller suit. The small-print legalese in movie credits includes clauses to protect the filmmakers not only from copyright infringement but from offending any *aes sídhe* whose names or domains happen to resemble the contents of the film.

Explorers with keen eyes and attentive students of history uncover a diverse plethora of shrines and temples tucked away in every corner of The World, built over continuous ages of worship that never completely died out. A colony of rune-shaped holes dug into the side of a mountain in mystical patterns shows where a Scion's cult once dedicated the rock face to her burgeoning Legend. Mausolea in Ireland are designed as tiny replicas of Teach Duinn tower with ominous landbound lighthouses above deep, stone-lined pits where layers of soil hide centuries of votive sacrifices. A series of carved wooden posts that never decay marks a path that winds through a hidden bog, laid to guide not people, but spirits, through treacherous lands to the safety of home. Every city in The World boasts an altar dedicated to its patron deity. In some cities it's displayed prominently at the center of a massive square downtown, while in others it's not listed on any map and would-be pilgrims must know the secret signs (or buy an expensive black-market global positioning system app) to find it. Hints of forgotten rites and miracles litter The World, lingering in caves and deserts, waiting in sunken shipwrecks and rusted armories, buried beneath graveyards and standing sentinel atop cliffsides. They may even stand in plain sight — Gods' faces carved into the mantels of mansions lining a particular avenue or prayers etched into the bricks of every third building on a college campus — and people view them as curiosities that only push past the periphery of their lives if something draws special attention to them.

Because religions and folk traditions of The World are continuous rather than reconstructed from ancient times, some of what the Gods expect of their worshippers and Scions is distasteful or even abhorrent to modern mores. The pantheons view human progress in different terms than the humans themselves do, in their roles as ageless and distant watchers. They consider philosophical shifts and the ever-increasing value of lives and freedoms to be novelties, worthy of observation but rarely of wholesale adoption, particularly since they go out of their way not to allow Fatebinding to change them too radically. Where humanity's standards clash with Gods' expectations, Scions are often the ones leading the charge to outright reject objectionable traditions from ages past, while the ships of mortal religions tack more slowly into the winds of change and gradually influence the Gods' own opinions on such matters.

TERRA INCOGNITA

Myths are too grand for our day-to-day World. Where legends describe nigh-unattainable virtues, suggest Platonic Forms, or otherwise evoke the transcendental, they create the Overworld, filled with realms where the Gods who honor and embody these things reign. Where tales talk of impurity, dissolution, final catharsis, and death, they conjure the Underworld, with its gloomy rivers, shades and morbid divinities. These heights and depths are seductive, and might draw our attention away from The World of balance, flesh, ecosystems, and nations, where life is messy, complicated, and filled with mortal complaints. Yet Gods live in The World, too, and not just young Scions questing for their heritage. Entire pantheons either live alongside humankind, or have made or found mythic folds on Earth, where they reign. Monsters

have secret lairs; giants have homelands. They're called *Terra Incognita* not because they're truly unknown, but because they're connected to the mysteries of legend.

LANDS OF THE WORLD

The World has the oceans, continents, and nations we know, but under the influence of meddling Gods, magic, and obscure, supernaturally twisted history, some of the deep details might be a bit different from what you're familiar with. You may not know of certain sovereign states — mere dots on a map — that go unrecognized by the UN, but are well-known to many mystics and Scions. Some rivers take different courses, or sprout obscure tributaries. Any country might have whole cities you've never heard of, and that's before getting into *Terra Incognita*.

HISTORY, SCIENCE, AND MYTH

The World has many histories. The World is a synthesis. The World is many creation myths and epics, collapsed and smoothed over by processes left for contemplation by the wisest Gods, or given to them by the Primordials. When scientists dig, they find flaked stone tools and pre-human hominid bones. When they study flesh and blood, they find mitochondria and DNA. The World's speed of light is a constant, and its physicists search for ways to unite General Relativity and Quantum Field Theory.

Yet they know myths have standing. The fact that The World rests on the Great Turtle is *literally true*, but you can only perceive it from a certain point of view. From another such perspective, some humans are descended from bears. This is more than a state of mind. From the right point of view, you can get a glimpse of the shell mighty enough to hold mountains, or see the fanged skulls of ancestors. History follows similar patterns. Archeologists find flint axes and copper helmets from the Achaean period of Greek history, but not the "anachronistic" tripod prizes and other elements mentioned by Homer, unless they also fit conventional history.

MYTHIC BLEED

Even though everyone knows myths represent a certain mode of reality, and they may contradict The World mortals share in common, neither Gods nor mortals can conclusively prove that a strict set of laws separate them, or determine their precise relationship. Philosophers, mystics, priests, and scientists have expended considerable effort in mapping the borders, without success. Leaving aside ethnocentric conceits that one

THE LANDS OF CHAINS

The Titans were imprisoned according to the myths of each pantheon, more or less. Gods lie, exaggerate, and omit inconvenient facts. There may be certain conditions the Titans' prisons have in common, but there's no single prison realm. The Titan ancestors of the Theoi are mostly imprisoned in the Underworld of Tartarus, beneath Hades, where their rage and suffering fuels the torments inflicted on the Shades of evil mortals. The Tuatha Dé Danann exiled Fomorians to a hidden underwater Midrealm. Even one pantheon may not condemn all their Titans to the same place, so Prometheus was spared Tartarus, so that he could be tortured in a Midrealm in the Caucasus Mountains until Heracles freed him.

The Titans' prisons all have a few elements in common. They almost always possess powerful, implacable, and incorruptible guards. Their gates are rare and secured with sentinels and safeguards. They don't connect to Touchstones, and Axes Mundi can't reach them. No matter what form their restraints take, the Titans can't break them unless they've already loosened them through their plots, or are aided by potent divine power.

mythic tradition is closer to ultimate truth than the rest, the two basic positions either declare that the natural World is the root of mythic reality, or that it's a degenerate version of mythic reality. It's a weird mixture of many myths, or the sub-creation of some theoretical "monomyth" that sets the patterns for all Gods and legends. None of the arguments or experiments for any of it have proven convincing enough to create a consensus.

Mythic Bleed injures any attempt to separate myth and nature. Sometimes, an archeologist in Turkey finds Achilles' helmet, and it looks nothing like anything else they dig up. Manticores stalk western Asia in defiance of evolution. Mythic Bleed may be partly responsible for Scions themselves, since most of them come from The World, and appear to be governed by mere nature until their divine sides rise. Sometimes Mythic Bleed represents migration from the Otherworlds or *Terra Incognita*, but in many cases, it's always been around.

