

Our Pantheon

a Dawn Of Worlds hack by D. W. O'Boyle

Alpha V2 - December 2019

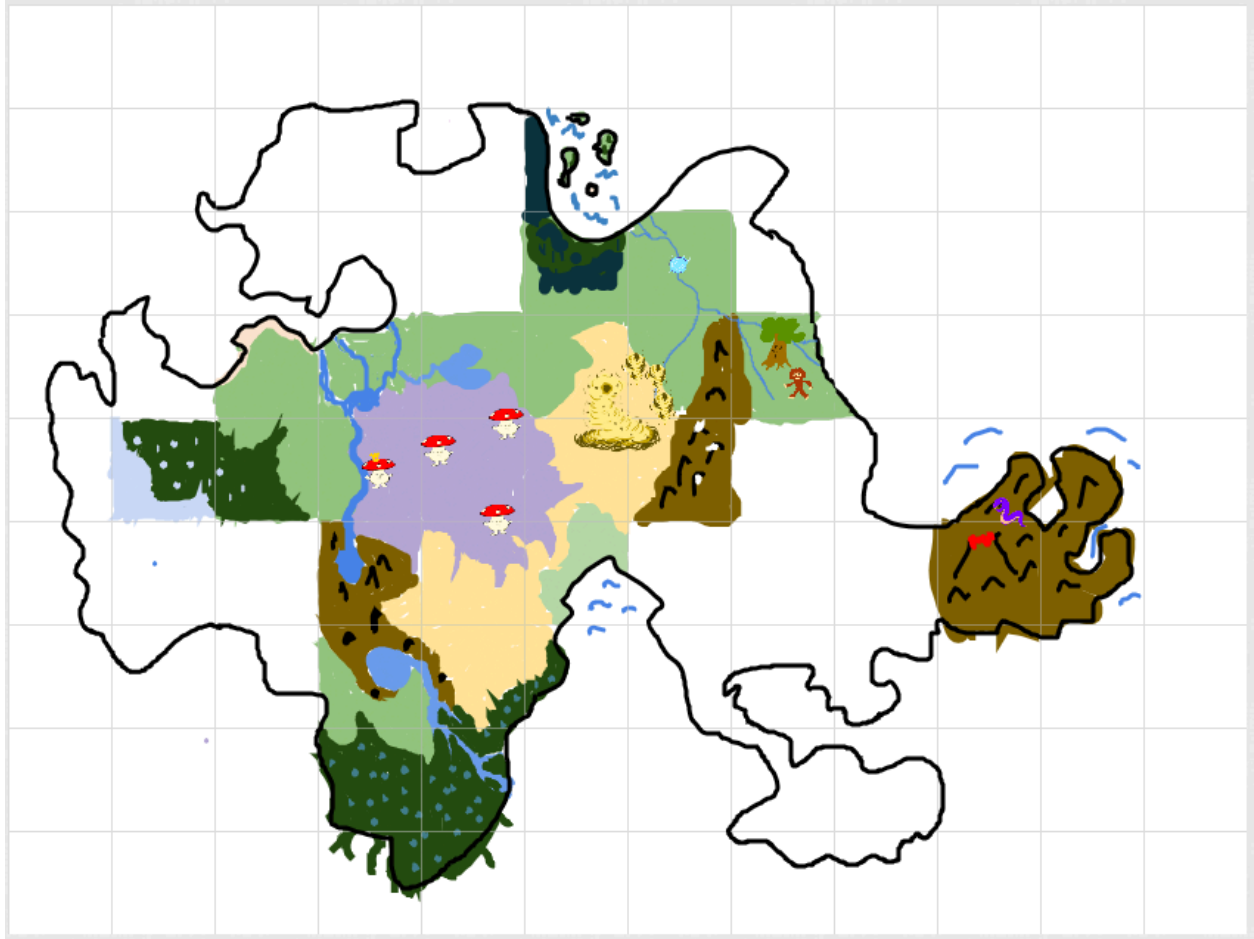


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Preface

I created this hack because one night I was curious if there were any tabletop RPGs about playing as deities creating a world. I found many great and interesting games about playing as gods, demigods, and godlike figures but were not about world creation, and games that were about world creation came at it with a more agnostic perspective. It wasn't until I stumbled upon Dawn of Worlds by N. Bob Pesall that I found something close to what I was looking for. I read through the short document and thought "Wow! This is great, but tabletop rpgs have come a long way since it 2005. This could use some modernization." After playing it for a few times I got a better idea of how to modernize it.

It is suggested that you download and read through the 12 pages of Dawn Of Worlds. As with this game, it's free, and will give you a better understanding of this game. You can find it here: http://www.clanwebsite.org/games/rpg/Dawn_of_Worlds_game_1_0Final.pdf

Introduction

In this game you play as Gods, and occasionally as their creations. This is a GMless game for 2 to 6 players. You will be drawing a shared map, setting scenes, rolling dice, and cooperatively creating a fictional world together. This is not intended to be a competitive game, but your characters will occasionally be at odds with each other.

Outside of modernizing some of the language and actions, this hack takes additional inspiration from PbtA dice mechanics, Microscope's GMless scenes, and its palette mechanic. It may take you a while to finish a complete game. Feel free to break it up over multiple sessions.

Feedback

For this playtest version, I am looking for feedback on the following topics:

- Resource cost and management.
- Actions and their language.
- Structure of the turns and rounds.
- The Chaos phase and its tables.

You can share feedback on the itch.io page here: <https://dwoboyle.itch.io/our-pantheon>

Or directly to me on twitter: @dwoboyle

Gods, Deities, and Things Beyond

Everyone at the table will play as a god. Perhaps your a bickering collection of immortal siblings, different aspects of the same god, a group of survivors from a dying realm trying to create the new world, scientists studying a collection of learning algorithms, or something else entirely. It is generally discouraged to claim to be a specific god of something. Usually the deity you play as will mean different things to the different cultures you create. They may even known with a completely different name and appearance. Play to find out what sort of god you are.

Regardless, you all have the same powers and will be making the world together. This means there will be some tensions and conflicts. Players will be able to affect and alter each other's creations. A city you create in one round might get covered in a plague in the next by a different player. Your powers are not limitless, however. Over the course of the game, players will earn points called "*Aether*". Refer to the **Aether and Actions** section to find out how to gain and spend these points.

You are all playing gods and have a perspective of the world as gods. The exact affairs of the mortals that will come to inhabit your world aren't things you largely concern yourself with. As such, there will come times when you can define things the mortals have done (like found a city, go to war, declare something clearly false as an absolute truth, whatever else mortals do.) When these times arise you can just say something that is true about the world and it makes it so. That city now exists, those people did that when the gods were doing something else. You don't need to define every single event of the world. You can always go back and add details later.

Play Structure

The game is structured in the following way.

1. Players create a "palette" to discuss the kind of world they want to create.
2. An initial map is drawn to define the world's starting point.
3. The first Age begins. Each Age is at least 5 rounds.
4. Rounds have 2 phases if playing with the Chaos rules.
 - a. A Deity Phase, where players playing as the deities take turns until they all use the Rest action. If you are not using the Chaos rules, then this is the only phase of a turn.
 - b. A Chaos Phase, where those playing as Chaos take a Chaos Action.
5. Once the third age ends, each player gives a short epilogue of their deity and what they created.

Starting the game

To play the game you will need the following:

- A large piece of paper or shared space (such roll20 or google drawing, etc) to draw the map on.
- A smaller piece of paper for each player, index cards, or shared document for note tracking.
- At least 2 six-sided dice or digital dice roller.
- An active imagination and desire to create a fantasy world cooperatively.

Record keeping

A summary of the events of each turn should be recorded for each deity in play. This can be done by an appointed person or by each individual player. When using paper, try to sum of the events on a single line with the player's name next to it. Write any civilizations, creatures, etc on index cards including all the relevant details and make sure everyone has easy access to them. Players will also have to track the amount of Aether they generate from the Aether Roll at the start of the round and how much they spend for each action they take during their turn.

If you're playing over the internet then I recommend using a shared spreadsheet to track all the information and roll20 to draw the map and dice rolling. See **External Resources** in the **Appendix** for links.

The Palette

Once you have all the players and necessary items assembled it is time to discuss the things you want to appear and not appear in the game. This is called the “**Palette**.” This concept is borrowed from the game Microscope by Ben Robbins and is very similar to how it appears in that game with one minor change.

Grab a piece of paper, a shared spreadsheet, etc, and make three columns. Label them as “Yes”, “Veils”, and “No”.

Things in the “Yes” column are things that everyone agrees COULD appear in the game. Anything in the “Yes” column is fair game to add in the world during your turns. You should add something here if you think it is cool, have plans for bringing it up later, or believe it fits the theme. Some examples: Airships, tea magic, threats from beyond the known world, non-heteronormative cultures.

Things in the “Veils” columns are things that probably exist within the fictional world, but will not be focused on if they come up in play. They will “have a veil thrown over them” as it were. Maybe they make you uncomfortable or are triggering in some way. Or maybe you just find it boring. Regardless, when things listed in this column appear in play then cut to black and move on. Examples: violent death, violence against animals, scatological topics, sex.

Lastly, stuff in the “No” column is stuff that’s **forbidden**. Anything in this column is agreed not to show up during play at all ever and does not exist within the world. Like the “Veils” column, there’s many reasons why you might not want to include something. Whether it’s trope you find boring or something you find really uncomfortable, its likely place is in the “No” column. Examples: magic without a cost, sexual violence, slavery.

Go around the table and add 1 thing to 1 column as you’d like. Discuss the reasons why and modify it based on the discussion. Then move on to the next person until everyone has at added at least one thing. The palette is complete when one player decides they have nothing else to add. No one player should add more than two things to the palette than any other player. During the rest of the game refer back to the palette frequently. Especially if you cannot think of something. It’s meant to be used for guidance and setting the limitations of your world.

If someone presses you on a matter you really want in the Veils or No columns, just say something like “Please respect my boundaries about this topic.” If they continue to persist about it then the only option may be to end the game before it begins. This is a game about cooperative storytelling and no one should be forcing anyone else to play with something they find uncomfortable. Not everyone plays well with everyone, so you may need to reconfigure the group if this problem arises.

Your table shouldn't spend more than about 15 minutes with the palette. It doesn't have to be exhaustive or extensive. It just has to have enough to draw from and get everyone on the same page.

If you know you'll be playing in the future then setting up the palette in advance via a shared messaging app over the course of a few days is not a bad method. When creating a palette this way you can be looser with the rules. Just make sure everyone has access to it and to spend a short amount of time going over it before you play.

The Initial World

Your world is an empty featureless plain to begin with. Perhaps it's a barren landscape of rocks and wind, an endless ocean with a sparkle waiting to be brought to the surface, or maybe it's just a tiny something waiting to be plucked from the vast enormity of the void.

Start by drawing a rough outline of the world to represent the coastlines and major features. During this time, you're welcome to throw down any significant feature you may want. Maybe someone really wants a tall mountain in the north, or a grand river that bisects the eastern continent. Don't get too detailed now as that will come with play.

Stick to a small amount of of continents and don't make one for each player. It's very easy to fall into chopping up the map by player. This will result in the game feeling too much like a game of Sid Meier's Civilization rather than a cooperative storytelling game. Draw together and leave spots for others to fill in.

Then each player should fill out some basic stuff on their character sheet.

- Come up with a name and appearance for the deity you're playing (if you want).
- Look over the list of actions.
- Set your starting Aether to 5.

Once you have something you've all agreed on, move on to the first round of the First Age.

Ages

Just like *Dawn of Worlds*, this game is broken into three Ages. Each Age represents a different period in history. The cost of your abilities will change depending on the Age you're in.

The First Age is primarily about geography. Actions that shape the landscape are cheapest to do here whereas actions that involve creating species and civilizations are more costly. This is the time to draw the majority of land of your world. It's okay if you don't fill in absolutely every inch of the map by the end of the First Age, but you should aim to get as much as you can.

The Second Age is more about populating the world with inhabitants. It is much less expensive during this Age to create species and start the ball rolling on civilizations. Feel free to create any wild fantasy species you would like as long as they fit with your established palette. Humans, elves, dwarves, etc are fine but consider things like cavernous dryads, stoic pallas cat folk, or squids what-walk-like-a-man. The only limit is your imaginations!

Lastly, the Third Age is about the politics and culture of the civilizations you created. In this age, creating new land and new species is more expensive, but actions that allow your deities to meddle in the affairs of mortals are cheaper.

Each Age should last a minimum of 5 rounds, but feel free to play each one as long as you feel you need to. If the table has got everything you all want done within those 5 rounds, move on to the next Age. If not, feel free to linger. If some do and others done, put it up to vote or coin flip. Once at round 10, any player may push the Age forward, dragging others with them.

The Scale of Time

A deity's view of time is much different than that of a mortal's. Ten thousand years may seem like an afternoon to them. In Our Pantheon time is on their scale. Or, more accurately, it's on the scale decided by the people playing it.

Generally, each round during the first Age is measured in the thousands of years, hundreds in the second Age, and decades in the third. But that's not required. For example, if you want each round to be a single day in the first Age to mirror the biblical creation story then go for it.

Typically mortal characters do not live passed a single round due to the timespan of a round. You should treat them as disposal and not as the focus.

Ending the Game

After the Third Age is ends, you enter the epilogue where you decide what happens to the deities you've been playing. Consider the following questions for possible outcomes. Each player may want a different outcome. That's fine.

- You are spent and tired. The cost of Aether has been too much and you must retreat or hibernate.
 - Where do you go?
 - Can you still contact your followers?
 - Do you plan on coming back?
- Your deities exhaust themselves and are at the end of their existence.
 - Do they die with a bang, a whimper, or something else?
 - How does this affect their followers?
 - How does it affect their avatars?
- You are feeling stronger than ever.
 - What do you attempt to take on/over? Are you successful?
 - What is something you missed that ultimately leads to your downfall?
- You decide you're done with this world and leave it.
 - Where do you go next?
 - Who do you bring with you?

Aether and Actions

Aether is how you deliver your power upon the world as deities. (Chaos does not use *Aether*.) At the start of each round, each player rolls two six-sided dice (2d6), and adds the result to their total Aether. This is called the “Aether Roll”. You will then use this pool of points to spend on the actions listed below. Aether is cumulative. It is not lost at the end of a round or Age.

When the game begins, each player starts with 5 *Aether* then rolls 2d6 and adds the result like the start of any other round.

Whenever you end a round with 5 or less *Aether* you start the next round with +1. Each time this happens add 1 to that number for a maximum of +3. So, if you end two rounds with 5 or less *Aether* in a row, then you would add 2 to your Aether Roll at the start of the next round. This is also cumulative with any additional bonuses you may have.

Most of the time, when you choose an action, you spend the *Aether* cost then describe what you do. However, no matter how powerful, all knowing, and infinite a deity is dealing with mortals on their scale is difficult. Mortals do not always do what they are told. They have their own will and desires. Actions that relate to manipulating them will require you to roll some dice. These are called “Action rolls”.

In these cases, you will always be rolling 2d6 plus any additional *Aether* you would like to spend up to +3. However, if you do not want to risk the fate of the dice, you can spend 5 *Aether* to get the effects of 10+ roll. You can also choose not to roll at all and take the 6- effect.

Lastly, other players may choose to spend their own *Aether* 2-for-1 to raise or lower your modifier. Rolls cannot be less than -2 or greater than +3.

When playing as a deity the **MOST** important thing to remember about these actions is that they are you, as a deity, altering the world and its people with your power. You are not some ill fated adventurer or evil emperor. You are not living day-to-day but epoch-to-epoch. You are a god when using these actions. When you speak the world changes itself to fit your voice. These actions do not represent the world just ticking along uninterrupted. For rules that will allow you to focus in on the actions of people and non-divinely influenced events of your world see the **Playing With Chaos** section.

Major Actions Chart

All of the following actions can be used as long as you have the *Aether* to spend on them.

Action	1st Age	2nd Age	3rd Age
Shape Land, 1"	2	5	12
Alter Biome, 1"	1	3	6
Catastrophe, 1"	10	10	10
Create Creature	10	3	12
Alter Creature	5	1	6
Create Civilization*	22	12	6
Alter Civilization*	12	8	4
Create Faction*	10	6	4
Alter Faction*	4	4	2
Create Orthodoxy*	12	8	6
Command Followers*	2	2	2
Demand Tribute*	0	0	0
Create Avatar	10	12	15
Command Avatar	2	2	2
Revive Avatar	12	15	25
Great Miracle	15	30	50

* Requires a roll.

Major Actions

Rest

At any point during your turn, you can choose to rest. You will keep any remaining *Aether* you have, but once you rest you cannot take any more major actions for the remainder of the round.

Shape Land

This action lets you create or alter the land of the world. This includes but is not limited to; mountains, forests, deserts, steppes, tundras, grasslands, lakes, rivers, valleys, islands, floating islands, etc. These features can be as realistic or fanciful as you'd like. Choose an area of about a square inch or single unit to fill out, or whatever is reasonable. Does it just appear instantly, or slowly change over decades?

When you shape the land you also are automatically determining the area's climate and what sort of life exists or will exist there. If you'd like to change the area's climate in the future, then use **Alter Biome**.

Alter Biome

The biome of an area is the complex relationship between what lives there and its climatic conditions. When you alter the biome, you are changing an area's determined climate to something else. This has to be done over land that is already created or agreed as existing. This includes but is not limited to; turning a forest into a desert, freezing a sea so it is covered with ice, or making rolling plains have regular thunderstorms where it rains of unusual objects (like frogs, fish, anachronistic stuff). Choose an area of about a square inch or single unit to fill out.

Catastrophe

Deities sometimes have to show their wrath. Make the earth quake, the mountains erupt, the field wither, the tides crash, the heavens fall. Whether it's from jealousy, justice, or jejunity is up to you to decide. It should be significant, but localized. It may end a city, civilization, or island, but should be about an inch or single unit. To affect the world on a larger scale see **Great Miracle**.

Create Creature

Animals and plants of all sorts will come into being from shaping the lands and climate, but sometimes you want to create something more specific. This can be for a single entity or an entire species. Feel free to do a quick sketch of the creature if you'd like.

Pick up to 3 traits from the list below:

- | | | |
|--|--|------------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Flying | <input type="checkbox"/> Long-Living | <input type="checkbox"/> Monstrous |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Subterranean | <input type="checkbox"/> Short-Lived | <input type="checkbox"/> Amorphous |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Armored | <input type="checkbox"/> Agile | <input type="checkbox"/> Elusive |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Ethereal | <input type="checkbox"/> Migratory | <input type="checkbox"/> Greedy |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Large/Massive | <input type="checkbox"/> Magical | <input type="checkbox"/> Passive |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Small/Tiny | <input type="checkbox"/> Psychic | <input type="checkbox"/> Parasitic |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Good | <input type="checkbox"/> Pack/Herd/Swarm | <input type="checkbox"/> Sapient |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Evil | <input type="checkbox"/> Shapeshifters | <input type="checkbox"/> Predator |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Aggressive | <input type="checkbox"/> Hive Mind | <input type="checkbox"/> Prey |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Docile | <input type="checkbox"/> Constructed | <input type="checkbox"/> Elemental |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Communal | <input type="checkbox"/> Fluid | <input type="checkbox"/> Nocturnal |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Solitary | <input type="checkbox"/> Beautiful | <input type="checkbox"/> Venomous |

Then answer any or all of the following:

- Where do they appear?
- What do they look like?
- What do they eat?
- How do they reproduce?
- What is their biggest threat?

Alter Creature

Use this to add a new trait or change an existing one of a creature. Fictionally this changes every individual of that creature. It could be over generations or instantly depending on how you want to frame it. When doing this choose 1 trait to add, change, or remove.

Alternatively you can use this action to create a variant of an existing creature. When using this action this way pick at least 2 traits to keep and 1 new one.

Create Civilization

These are the people of the world. Not just animals, or species, but the creatures with the capacity for culture and civilization. You should pick from creatures/species that have already been established and has a trait like “sapient” or “hive mind”. A single species can have multiple and wildly different civilizations. Likewise a single civilization can be made of multiple species.

Your civilizations will have traits, specialities, and lacks from the selections listed below. While individuals will deviate from these traits, they are meant to give a more defined idea of who these people are and what their culture values. You are welcome to come up with your own.

When you use this action choose where they show up on the map and roughly define the region they initially inhabit. Describe what they are like; how they appear, what you want their culture to be like.

Then roll 2d6+ the amount of Aether you’re willing to spend.

On a 10+: Choose 3 Traits, 2 Specialities, and 1 Lack. Also create both an Orthodoxy and Faction.

On a 7-9: Choose 2 Traits, 2 Speciality, and 1 Lack. Then the other players choose 1 Trait and 1 Lack. Create an Orthodoxy OR a Faction.

On a 6-: Choose 1 Trait, 1 Speciality, 1 Lack and let the other players choose 2 other Trait and 1 additional Lacks. Create an Orthodoxy OR a Faction.

These selections are broad and should be interpreted as literally or poetically as you’d like.

Regardless of what you rolled, the civilization will also start with an Orthodoxy dedicated to their creator deity and/or neutral Faction. This can be a religious order, form of governance, secretive cult, or whatever you’d like. See **Create Orthodoxy** and **Create Faction** for more information.

Traits:

These describe what the civilization broadly values and how it may function.

- | | | |
|--|---------------------------------------|------------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Good | <input type="checkbox"/> Competitive | <input type="checkbox"/> Nomadic |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Evil | <input type="checkbox"/> Cooperative | <input type="checkbox"/> Austere |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Preservationist | <input type="checkbox"/> Isolationist | <input type="checkbox"/> Civil |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Materialistic | <input type="checkbox"/> Diverse | <input type="checkbox"/> Tenacious |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Mercantile | <input type="checkbox"/> Doctrinal | <input type="checkbox"/> Adaptive |

Specialities:

These are things they are especially good at or known for.

- | | |
|--|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Artistry, Story Telling | <input type="checkbox"/> Bureaucracy |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Construction | <input type="checkbox"/> Exploration |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Faith/Religion | <input type="checkbox"/> Invention |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Magic | <input type="checkbox"/> Medicine |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Trade | <input type="checkbox"/> Agriculture |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Warfare | <input type="checkbox"/> Size (Expansive/Compact) |

Lacks:

These are what the civilization doesn't have access to or lacks in some way.

- | | |
|-------------------------------------|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Magic | <input type="checkbox"/> Happiness |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Land | <input type="checkbox"/> Connections |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Food/Water | <input type="checkbox"/> Order |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Might | <input type="checkbox"/> Health |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Population | <input type="checkbox"/> Safety |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Knowledge | <input type="checkbox"/> A Specific Resources |

Alter Civilization

Perhaps these people have splintered off from the main civilization. Or maybe you've just decided that they need to shift their culture. If the former, place new group somewhere near the original civilization or divide the region accordingly. Either way, roll 2d6+the amount of *Aether* you're willing to spend.

On a 10+: Change, add, or remove 1 trait, 1 speciality, and/or 1 lack as you see fit.

On a 7-9: Change, add, or remove a trait or speciality.

On 6-: Change a trait or speciality. Another player can also change one or add a lack.

Create Faction

Factions are largely neutral when it comes to the deities. Maybe they worship or are aware of some of the player's deities, but it's completely fine to have them have the wrong idea, be completely indifferent, or even completely unaware of the actual deities of the world.

Mechanically, these neutral factions do not offer any benefit or hindrance to the deities on their own. They can be made into Orthodoxies (See **Alter Faction**) which do offer a benefit. Their main function is to provide definition to the people of the world. These are the groups the people make up and they should be looked to when using the Chaos rules.

When creating a factions, you first need to choose what sort of faction it is. These groups can range from being a small group of about 10 people to an entire governing body of a society.

Choose a type:

- | | | |
|---|-------------------------------------|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Family | <input type="checkbox"/> Royalty | <input type="checkbox"/> Military |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Governing Body | <input type="checkbox"/> Collective | <input type="checkbox"/> Political Party |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Business/Venue | <input type="checkbox"/> Sect/Cult | <input type="checkbox"/> Gang |

Then roll 2d6+ the amount of *Aether* you're willing to spend.

On a 10+: Choose 2 Traits and a Want.

On a 7-8: Choose 2 Traits. Then another player chooses another Want.

On a 6-: Choose a Trait. Then the other players choose a Trait and a Want.

Traits:

- | | | |
|------------------------------------|---------------------------------------|--------------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Good | <input type="checkbox"/> Diplomatic | <input type="checkbox"/> Violent |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Evil | <input type="checkbox"/> Fanatical | <input type="checkbox"/> Adventurous |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Chaotic | <input type="checkbox"/> Bureaucratic | <input type="checkbox"/> Peaceful |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Lawful | <input type="checkbox"/> Deviant | <input type="checkbox"/> Revelers |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Ambitious | <input type="checkbox"/> Traveling | <input type="checkbox"/> Magical |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Valiant | <input type="checkbox"/> Dutiful | <input type="checkbox"/> Secretive |

Wants:

- | | | |
|------------------------------------|--|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Control | <input type="checkbox"/> Knowledge | <input type="checkbox"/> Freedom |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Glory | <input type="checkbox"/> Destruction | <input type="checkbox"/> To Overcome |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Resources | <input type="checkbox"/> To Dominate | <input type="checkbox"/> Protection |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Respect | <input type="checkbox"/> A specific item | <input type="checkbox"/> Survival |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Peace | <input type="checkbox"/> Cooperation | <input type="checkbox"/> Transformation |

Create Orthodoxy

For each Orthodoxy that a deity has, they gain +1d6 to their Aether Roll at the start of a round. Up to a bonus of +3. (You can have more than 3 Orthodoxies, but the bonus doesn't count for them.) These groups know about the deities (or at least what's told to them) and likely worship them. Whether that because they celebrate or fear the fear is up to you.

Create them as you would a faction then choose 2 things you require from them:

- Propagate - Spread the word about you or a specific idea, or increase their numbers.
- Defend - Protect or preserve something of your choice. (Choose a Location, Civilization, idea, object, etc.)
- Oppress - Smite a group of your choice. (Choose a Civilization, Orthodoxy, Faction, Creature, etc.)
- Indulge - Celebrations, feasts, revelery, ritual consumption of something.
- Atonement - Penance for their or someone else's sins. Describe the sins.
- Abstain - Abstention or avoidance of something, someone, or somewhere.
- Deference - They must put you before all else.

Also describe how you want them to practice their worship. What are some common rituals and rites? Do they have a centralized place of worship such as a church or temple?

When multiple deities create an orthodoxy together they all gain the +1d6 bonus to their Aether Roll for the sake of ease.

Alter Faction or Orthodoxy

Factions and orthodoxies can be altered just like Civilizations.

Roll 2d6+ the amount of *Aether* you want to spend.

On a 10+: Change or add 1 Trait and/or 1 Want as you see fit.

On a 7-9: Change or add a Trait or Want.

On 6-: Change a Trait or Want.

If you've changed a Want, how did you fulfil the previous one?

Using this action you can change a faction into an orthodoxy and vice versa. When a faction is changed into orthodoxy you choose 2 requirements from the list in **Create Orthodoxy**. Similarly if an orthodoxy becomes a neutral faction than it mechanically loses the requirements and no longer provides the bonus die to Aether Roll for the deity it used to serve. You may still use those requirements in the fiction.

Command Followers

Whether from your Orthodoxies or elsewhere, your deity will likely have people that worship them. This action allows you to gain *Aether* from your followers, or instructed them to do something specific like build something or travel somewhere.

When you demand they do something for you, describe what it is and roll 2d6 plus any additional *Aether* you'd like to. On a hit choose 1 and set a small scene. On a 10+ regain any *Aether* spent.

- Set a small scene around one of their requirements. Gain an additional 1d6 to your next *Aether* Roll.
- Undertake a great feat. Make something wondrous, embark on a pilgrimage, raise an army, search for something lost.

On a miss, still choose one from above and describe how it went wrong and choose 1 of the following:

- you are forced to Rest until the next round.
- You lose 2d6 *Aether*. You cannot have a negative amount of *Aether*.

Demand Tribute

If you have at least one orthodoxy dedicated to your deity this is another way to gain *Aether* from them. Describe what you're demanding according to the requirements you've selected for them. Then then roll. Add the highest result +4 to your total *Aether*.

On a 10+, take both the following. On a 7-9, choose 1.

- Your followers aren't overly taxed by your demand and can be called upon again this round.
- Your influence over them stays strong. You still get the bonus die for your next *Aether* Roll.

On a 6-, your followers are both taxed and your influence momentarily wanes. You cannot call on them again this round and they will not give you a bonus die to your next *Aether* Roll.

Create Avatar

When you create an avatar you are making something that bridges the gap between the divine and mortals. Your avatars aren't you, but an extension of you. They may have their own desires and ambitions, and even can be influenced by other deities.

For each round you have 1 free action that your avatar can perform. You can use this action at any point during your turn without spending any *Aether*. This action can only be used by the deity who created the avatar. See **Command Avatar** for more information about avatar actions.

Avatars and their creators may believe they are perfect beings, but they require some specifications to exist in the world. Choose 1 to 3 from the list below or make your own.

- They're overly concerned with the affairs of mortals.
- They have an insatiable hunger or desire. Describe it.
- They cannot enter heavily populated areas.
- They have an exceptional weakness to something mundane like silver, chocolate, or water.
- They're an inanimate object like a statue, jewel, mountain, etc. Do they have a will at all or are they more like a magic item?
- They're an object that must be wielded or used like a weapon, shield, book, or vehicle.
- They are immaterial. Such as a language, fable, or spirit.
- They are mortal and go through a cycle of reincarnation.
- They lack free will and must follow everything their creator tells them. Decide among the table whether this affects rolls or is just in fiction.
- There are many of them. (example: Angels) Use **Create Creature** to define more about them if you'd like.
- They do not know they are an Avatar.

Like anything else, a single avatar can be created by multiple deities. In this case, both deities have access to the avatar's free action, but it can only be used once per round.

Command Avatar

Avatars have access to the same powers that deities have and you can command them to use those actions. There are some caveats though.

- Great Miracle - if used the avatar is destroyed and must be revived.
- Create Creature - This can only be used once per Age.
- Create Avatar - This is allowed. Make it interesting and unique. Like a demigod or Heracles-like figure.
- Command Avatar - If you're commanding another deity's avatar have that player roll as well. Whoever roll is higher has narrative control, but also keep to the typical rolling rules.
- Revive Avatar - the Avatar using this action sacrifices themselves.

Regardless of the action you command them to take, you have to consider what their specifications are and then frame a short scene or description around them. If they are an avatar the deity your playing as created then you get 1 free action a round with them. Otherwise you have to spend the associated *Aether* cost for this action.

If an action requires a roll then do it as written but subtract 2 from the results and consider the following when describing the results:

On a 10+, the specifications of the avatar help the situation. Describe how.

On a 7-9, the specifications complicate things.

On a 6-, the avatar is unable to follow, rejects the command, or fails for some other reason.

Revive Avatar

There are many ways an avatar may meet an unfortunate end. When this happens this action is the only option if you want that avatar to still exist in the world. Revived avatars are always going to come back slightly different. When you choose to revive one, describe how they've been changed by death. Refer to the list under **Create Avatar** for ideas.

You can revive fallen avatars of other deities. Treat the avatar as now having multiple creators.

Great Miracle

Sometimes you might want to do something BIG that doesn't quite fit with any of the other actions. Perhaps you want to define something true all over the world like revive all those that died during the nuclear winter or make the entirety of a continent floating in the skies. There is no limit to the things that can be defined as this action. Use it when you want to go big, REALLY big.

Minor Actions

These actions you can use at any time when appropriate, whether it's your turn or not. They do not have an initial *Aether* cost.

Influence Mortals

Sometimes you may want to directly influence the course of history to meet your own ends. This action lets you set a scene like those you may set while **Playing With Chaos**. It's one of the few ways a deity can focus in on the mortal scale. The scene you set can be about anything you'd like, but think of it as an event and answer one or more of the following:

- What is your goal?
- Who are you trying to influence?
- What do you want to NOT happen?

Then roll. On a 10+, they do what their told and things come to pass as you intended.

On a 7-9, they misinterpret, stumble, or hesitate, or there are some unforeseen complications.

Choose another player and ask them to complicate the matter.

On a 6-, something goes wrong. Ask another player what happens.

Aid/Interfere

When another player decides to roll you can choose to spend your own *Aether* 2-for-1 to raise or lower their modifier. They cannot refuse this. Describe how you are influencing their situation.

Work Together

Players may pool together their *Aether* to achieve a single action. The cost must be split as evenly as possible with the deity whose turn it is spending the most if it is uneven. In cases where it matters, you all have equal ownership of the thing created. See individual actions for specific rules.

Transfer Power

You are free to give your *Aether* over to other deities if you so choose. Deities can ask others for *Aether* but it is up to the player to decide if it is given over. Feel free to set a small scene around the discussion if you so choose.

Grant Boon

During a scene, a mortal may pray to or request something of you or one of your avatars. Spent any amount of *Aether* you want and describe how you're fulfilling their request. Typically this action is related to a single individual or small group. It can be used to smite or curse as well.

Conflict Between Deities

You may have noticed there has yet to be a defined way to deal with direct conflict between deities. Generally, if this comes up you should resolve it in fiction without the need to spend *Aether* or roll any dice. Just set a short scene between the conflicting parties and resolve it through roleplaying.

If you really want to roll dice then use the following move:

When two or more deities clash in direct conflict, they all roll 2d6+ any *Aether* they would like to spend up to +3. Whoever rolls the highest ultimately wins the conflict. If there is a tie, then it is a stalemate. The players can choose to roll again, but the original roll is still part of the fiction. Additionally all rolls should be resolved according to the following:

On a 10+, the player(s) have narrative control and can determine the exact fate of their deity.

On a 7-9, there is an unforeseen consequence or complication. Pick 1 from the list below:

- Lose 5 *Aether*.
- You need to Rest at the start of your next turn.
- You cannot answer your followers. Let the players not involved in the conflict set small scene based around what happens to them in your absence.
- There is a **Catastrophe** related to your actions. Describe it.

On a 6-, you are put in a dire situation. Pick 2 from the list below:

- Pick 2 options from the 7-9 list.
- An Orthodoxy of yours becomes a neutral function.
- You lose all your remaining *Aether*.
- You lose contact with one of your avatars. They are out of the game for at least 2 rounds. Set a scene around them when they return.

Playing With Chaos

Chaos in this game is not some existential force of evil but rather the elements of the world that are not directly controlled by the player deities. Weather patterns, free will, and uncontrollable magics are all examples of what would be controlled by Chaos.

The Chaos phase is an optional phase that after the Deity phase. Players playing as Chaos do not gain or use Aether but instead use dice tables to determine what happens during their turn. You can either give each player a single “Chaos Action” and use their Aether Roll results to determine the chaos tables. Or, you divide up the roles and have some players play a deities and other players play as chaos.

This is where you can zoom in and focus on the people and events of your world. You’ll still cross the expansive timeline you’ve created, but it will be from the eyes of those who only see a part of it. Chaos is the Unpredictable, and it’s very likely the people of your world do not know what the future holds for them.

When playing as the people of the world assume they do not really know about the deities unless the person playing them has revealed themselves. Therefore, the people of your world may come up with their own names for your deities or may even assume there are more (or less) than the amount of players.

Chaos Tables

All Chaos actions require rolling dice and choosing options from the tables below. At the start of the Chaos Phase roll 2d6 (or use the results of your Aether Roll for that round) and choose which one represents an option on the category table. Then use the second die to represent something on the corresponding table.

Alternatively, they can use the action associated with the category table's roll. This action does not use *Aether* and is not associated with any of the deities. With these actions you can determine what the people of the world are doing without the influence of the gods. Only 1 action can be taken. If you take an action that would normally require a roll you can do any of the following:

- Roll it as normal allowing deities to spend *Aether* to alter the roll if they choose and follow the results as you would.
- Choose result (hit, partial hit, miss).
- Just decide how you want things to go and ignore the roll rules entirely.

A deity use the Minor Action **Influence Mortals** while questions are being answered putting that deity in the scene.

Questions

Each result of a table will ask you to choose to answer some questions. Not all the questions have to be answered. Depending on the circumstance they may not be appropriate. The questions listed are suggestions, and you are free and encouraged to come up with your own.

But how do you come up with good/interesting questions? Look at the established fiction. You can always refer back to something that happened during the round. If you have civilization of mushroomoid hivemind creatures that are both nomadic and known for agriculture, ask how those things influence the chaos events. How does that quiet moment at the river bank reverberate through their connected consciousness for generations?

When answering the questions you may need to create whole new creatures, civilizations, or factions. Create these as you would any others, but they are agnostic and do not follow any of the deities by default.

The Tables

Category Table

#	Type	Associated Actions
1	Region	Catastrophe, Shape Land/Alter Biome
2	Event	Catastrophe, Create/Alter Faction, Create Orthodoxy, Alter Creature
3	People	Create/Alter Civilization, Create/Alter Faction, Create/Alter Creature, Command Avatar
4	Magic/the Unknown	Catastrophe, Shape Land/Alter Biome, Revive/Command Avatar*
5	Culture	Create/Alter Civilization, Create/Alter Faction, Create Orthodoxy
6	Catastrophe	Create/Alter Creature, Shape Land/Alter Biome, Create/Revive/Command Avatar*

* Avatars created or revived this way are Avatars Of Chaos. They cannot be directly controlled by the deities, but can still be commanded. Any player can act as this Avatar during the Chaos phase or introduce them to a scene as a complication during a low roll.

Region Table

1. Shrink - the region's area decreases.
 - a. What's the cause? Is it trade, conquest, the weather, etc?
 - b. Who are the major players?
2. Grow - the region's area increases.
 - a. What's the cause? Is it trade, conquest, the weather, etc?
 - b. Who are the major players?
3. Plight - There is a terrible event that strikes the region. Plague, famine, destructive ideas, a volcano erupts, etc.
 - a. What is it?
 - b. Who does it affect the most?
 - c. What major cultural change comes of it?
4. Bounty - Something favorable happens to a region. A good harvest, new ideas/technology, a river changes course, etc.
 - a. What is it?
 - b. Who does it affect the most?
 - c. What major cultural change comes of it?
5. Exodus - A faction leaves the region.
 - a. Why?
 - b. Where do they go?
6. Influx - A large group of people enter the region.
 - a. Why?
 - b. Where do they come from?

Event Table

1. An Omen - A falling star, a coincidental lightning strike, the rustle of leaves in the wind. Something causes someone to believe something is up somewhere.
 - a. What is the omen?
 - b. Where and who does it happen to?
 - c. What do they believe it foretells?
 - d. What significant event does it eventually cause? (A holiday, a war, a misunderstanding, etc.)
2. A Meeting - There is a meeting between significant people.
 - a. Who are they?
 - b. What is it about?
 - c. Who doesn't keep their end of the bargain?
3. A Storm - A particularly heavy storm happens one night.
 - a. Where and what type?
 - b. Who is stuck inside and what are they forced to confront?
4. A Holiday - A new tradition around a specific day emerges.
 - a. Who celebrates it?
 - b. What is it a celebration of?
 - c. How is it celebrated?
 - d. Who is excluded from it?
5. A Conflict - War, battles, arguments, sport, etc.
 - a. What is it over?
 - b. Who wins and at what cost?
 - c. What is lost forever?
6. A Moment - A little moment of peace and quiet. A respite from something relenting.
 - a. What allows this to happen?
 - b. What's the storm that follows?

People Table

1. The Creative - an artist, bard, writer, sculptor, etc, has made some great work.
 - a. What and where is it?
 - b. What influence does it have over the greater culture?
 - c. Who is the creator, and how does the work affect their life?
2. The Leader - a charismatic leader appears in a civilization of your choice. Create a new faction focused on them and not connected to any of the players' deities.
 - a. What are their goals?
 - b. Who are their allies?
 - c. Who are their enemies?
 - d. Are they successful?
3. The Legend - stories of an individual or small group's triumph or plight inspire a legend or folktale.
 - a. What is told at taverns and campfires?
 - b. What really happened?
4. The Inventor - Someone or a group develop a new thing that makes life easier for some or most people.
 - a. What is it?
 - b. What problem does it solve?
 - c. Who does it help the most?
 - d. What problem does it create?
5. The Oracle - someone claims to have knowledge of the future without any connection to the deities.
 - a. Who are they?
 - b. What do they predict?
 - c. What connection do they really have?
6. The Convert - someone in a prominent position starts to worship or abandons a deity and inspires the rest of their group to follow. Turn a neutral faction into an orthodoxy, or vice versa.
 - a. Who are they and what group are they a part of?
 - b. Which deity do they start/stop worshipping?
 - c. What complications arise due to this?

Magic/the Unknown Table

1. The Drain - Something is causing magic to leave a region or people.
 - a. Where or who is it happening?
 - b. What is the cause?
 - c. Can it be fixed?
2. The Huckster - Someone claims to have the power of a god.
 - a. What can they do?
 - b. What does their supposed power get them?
 - c. How does it all go wrong from them?
3. The Hidden - An object of incredible power is made and hidden away.
 - a. Who makes it and what for?
 - b. Where and why is it hidden?
4. The Blessed - Someone believes they have figured out a way to talk with the deities.
 - a. Who are they?
 - b. Can they? How?
 - c. Which deity replies?
 - d. What do they do with this knowledge?
5. The Well - a fount of magical energy is discovered.
 - a. Where and by who?
 - b. What wondrous benefits does it have?
 - c. What terrors emerge from it?
 - d. Can it be contained?
6. The Forbidden - Someone finds something they're not ready for.
 - a. Who finds it?
 - b. What is it?
 - c. How does it change them?
 - d. Did it want to be found?

Culture Table

1. The Mirror Shatters - Choose a civilization or faction and break it up into at least 2 others. Create/alter these new civilizations or factions
 - a. What leads them to split apart?
 - b. How many groups do they split into?
 - c. What will bring them back together?
2. A Tower Falls - There is a disaster, or maybe things just decline. Choose a civilization and add an additional lack.
 - a. What lead to this disaster/decline?
 - b. What's the silver-lining?
3. The Winds Shift- there is a cultural shift away from something. Choose a civilization and change one of its traits or specialities.
 - a. Who or what sparked this?
 - b. How does it change the appearance of the civilization?
4. A Gap is Filled - A lack is meet. Choose a civilization and remove or change one of its lacks.
 - a. How do they overcome this lack?
 - b. What opportunities does this open up and who capitalizes on them?
5. The False One - Choose an Orthodoxy. It is now a neutral faction that has started worshipping a fictional deity or is now practicing some other concept.
 - a. What/who brought on this change?
 - b. Which deity did they abandon?
 - c. How does that deity feel about it? And, what do they do about it?
6. A Throne Usurped - The controlling faction of a civilization is overthrown, voted out, usurped, or otherwise disposed.
 - a. Why are they overthrown and what happens to them?
 - b. Who stands to benefit the most from this?

Catastrophe Table

1. Earthquake - An earthquake ravages a region.
 - a. Where does it happen?
 - b. Who is an unfortunate victim?
 - c. What blooms from the wreckage?
2. Fire - There is a great fire in a large population center.
 - a. Where does it happen?
 - b. What/who miraculously survives?
3. Flood - There is large flooding somewhere.
 - a. What's the scale? A specific building, a city, a region?
 - b. What's something important that was lost? Who was it important too?
 - c. How long does it last?
4. Swarm - A swarm of creatures, monsters, or an army descends upon a region.
 - a. What is it made of?
 - b. What is its cause?
 - c. How is it stopped?
 - d. Will it happen again?
5. Mundane - A small, personal catastrophe happens to someone.
 - a. What is it?
 - b. Who does it affect?
 - c. What butterfly effect does this cause?
6. It's Coming - It's all so clear now. All the omens were pointing to this. When it arrives, that's it. If you do not know what it is yet, you'll find out soon enough.
 - a. How many rounds from now will the game end?
 - b. Is it everything you feared?
 - c. Is it what you've wanted all along?
 - d. Is there anything that can stop it? ...or aid it?

Other Things You Can Do

Here are a few things to ensure the game is more civil and cooperative.

If a player decides to have their deity, avatar, etc do something that seems like it exploits the rules or is otherwise making you uncomfortable for any reason you can speak up by saying “STOP”, putting down an “X Card”, or some how signaling to the table that you would like to pause for discussion. When this happens you have a few options. You can put it to a vote, roll back a bit and take a different route, or have a short discussion.

If you feel a player is exploiting the rules then putting it to vote is probably the best option. What counts as exploitation? Well maybe a player has saved up a ton of Aether and are now creating Avatars then using the free action to use Great Miracle and thus drastically change the world to their will. This is technically within the rules, but it might not be in the spirit of cooperative storytelling.

Now if they're just being kind of an ass, constantly coming after you or undoing your fiction a discussion is probably worth having. It's likely they just don't understand that this is not a competitive game. Worst comes to worst it may be best to just not play with them again.

Glossary

2d6 - This is shorthand for two six-sided dice.

Aether - This is your power resource when playing as a deity. You need to spend *Aether* to use actions and alter the modifiers of dice rolls.

Roll - Anytime other than start-of-round-roll you would roll dice, it is called a “roll”.

Round - In fiction, a round is an amount of time where your deities enact their powers. The exact amount of time varies from Age and can be decided at the table. It roughly follows a few thousand years in the first Age, a hundred or so for the second, and about a generation for the third.

Unit - Some moves will say “an area about 1 inch or 1 unit”. If you're drawing your map on a standard sheet of printer paper than a unit should be about an inch. If you are using a larger piece of paper then increase the size of a unit to something everyone can agree on. If you're playing online via Roll20, then create a map of around 12 by 8 units. That size seems to allow a good amount of space while also letting the moves feel powerful.

Appendix

General Tips

Neutral Factions

Creating factions during the deity phase may not seem worth it as they exist mostly for flavor. You will likely find them pop up more during the Chaos phase.

Influence Mortals Examples

Sending an ill omen to that evil king, possessing the assassin's arrow and moving it off course before it hits your prophet, sending a thunderstorm to stop the army coming to sack your holy city, or appearing before a leader as burning shrubbery.

Connecting Chaos Actions

If you have multiple people playing Chaos, you can connect your actions. For example, Adam and Zoe are playing as chaos. They get the events 1,1 (Shrink) and 3,1(the Drain). They decide that the reason a civilization's region shrinks is due to magic being drained from it.

Bending the Rules

Sometimes you may find an action is too restrictive or your plan doesn't quite fit the scope of the action. This happens a lot with **Shape Land**. You might just want to create a river that goes through the whole continent rather than defining a single square or unit.

When situations like this arise just ask the folks around the table "Is it ok if I do this?" If they say "yes" then it's cool. If they say "no", then don't dwell or argue, just move along.

The game you're playing at your table is not something the designer of the system has much say over other than what's already written in this book. You are free to alter or not use anything in it if you feel it doesn't quite fit the story you're trying to tell.

Good and Evil

You, as a table, will have to decide what "good" and "evil" mean in the context of your game when these traits are chosen. Personally, I tend to be of the opinion that to be "good" you have to work towards sustainability and fairness, and to be "evil" you have to disregard any suffering you may cause to live in idle excess. But that is just my opinion and may not fit every fictional world. It's fine to just have a world where things can be objectively "good" and "evil" on a cosmic scale as determined by their soul juice or whatever. You're playing as deities for god's sake anyway. No need to get all philosophical or subversive about it.

Alternative Rules

These are some suggestions for alternative ways to play this game.

Flat Aether Roll

Instead of each player rolling their own dice for the *Aether* Roll. One player rolls 2d6 and everyone gains that much *Aether*. Orthodoxies now granted a flat 3 additional *Aether*.

Max Aether Bonus

Instead of having an Aether Roll at the start of each round all deities gain 12 *Aether*. Orthodoxies now grant a flat 6 additional *Aether*.

Limited Aether

Instead of having an Aether Roll, all deities start with 180 *Aether*. Once it runs out, the deity dies, turns mortal, is permanently resting, or can otherwise no longer use major actions unless they somehow gain more *Aether*. Orthodoxies give deities a flat +1 *Aether* at the start of a round for a maximum of +3. Players can still gain *Aether* in any other way.

If they so choose, a player can spend all starting *Aether* in a single round. If the table does not like this, then you can choose to limit the amount of actions a single deity can take per round to 5 or your choosing.

Single Action Turns

With this rule, a player plays a single action, then another player takes a single action, and so on until everyone chooses to or is forced to Rest. Who goes when can still be decided by who has the most *Aether* if the table wants, but no one can take two actions in a row.

No Aether

Instead of having Aether, just don't. Go with the fiction. describe what you want to do on your turn and determine which action it best fits and if something negative should happen because of it. Other players can add complications as they see fit.

External Tools

Official googlesheet for note taking:

https://docs.google.com/spreadsheets/d/1QSCNga0aml_s80MyJ2djv90UAQt82IbZrgjyTxFoSjQ/edit?usp=sharing

You can make a copy of the spreadsheet linked above help you keep track of information. It includes:

- A Timeline sheet for Ages and Rounds.
- An Aether Tracker that helps to crunch the numbers for you.
- Dedicated sheets for each type of thing you will create in this game.

Credits

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