

MESOPOTAMIANS

Inspired by "The Mesopotamians" by They Might Be Giants.
By Nick Wedig

Through some terrible black magic, the evil sorceress Azita has resurrected four kings of ancient Mesopotamian empires. She hoped to have these undead warlords lead her conquest of the modern world.

Instead, you decided to form a band. Now you're driving across the United States (or wherever) trying to break into showbiz, one way or another. You may not understand this strange new world, with its technological wonders and modern customs. But you have a set of used musical instruments you learned to play, an Econoline van and a desire to rock your way to music stardom.

Inspirations: Ancient history, *The Monkees*, any movie starring the Beatles, *Scooby Doo*, *The Blues Brothers*, *Psi*Run*, *Otherkind*, *Ghost/Echo*, etc.

GILGAMESH



The Rock Star



Tells people what they want to hear



Lead Guitar



Rotting Corpse



Always expects to be worshipped as a god

HAMMURABI



The Serious One



Understands modern laws and ethics



Bass



Won't stay dead for long



Overly honest at all times

ASHURBANIPAL



The Shy One



Understands modern science and technology



Drums



Big Tough Brute



Always has to rewire or fiddle with things

SARGON



The Wild One



Understands partying and socializing, how to make people like you



Rhythm Guitar



Undead Warrior



Doesn't know when to keep his mouth shut

ENZU, THE GOAT



Stubborn Goat



Understands modern life a lot better than these yahoos



Mascot



Can always find food



Can't (or won't) understand spoken language

MESOPOTAMIANS

A little game about undead warrior kings making it big as a rock and roll band.
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To Begin:

Every player chooses one of these five PCs. If you have a sixth player, he or she can act as a GM, portraying NPCs and such, but the GM role is entirely optional.

Take the dice described by your traits and roll them. Then place them in the boxes provided. Keep the dice showing the side you rolled; you'll use that die result later. Put a d12 on each of the 3 columns with a scale, set at the starting value for that scale.

Each player chooses one question to answer:

- What mundane problem do the PCs have to help out with before they can accomplish their goals?
- What unlikely or impossible problem is causing trouble in town?
- Why do the townsfolk immediately and irrationally dislike the PCs?
- What embarrassing music venue is the only one open to the band?
- Who is willing to help the PCs if only the PCs do them a favor first?
- What petty squabbles have the PCs been arguing about in the van?
- What criminal plot will the PCs accidentally get entangled in? How?
- What one chance at stardom will the PCs encounter in town?
- What do the townsfolk want from the PCs?
- What do the townsfolk have that the PCs want?
- What stops the PCs from getting what they want?

UTTARTU The Econoline Van

Place 4d6 on this card. After each conflict, put the dice back here. Swapping dice might mean that the van is full of other size dice. That's totally how it is supposed to work.

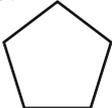


Your Goal

1: You fail spectacularly, losing a point of reputation or finances.
2-3: You fail.
4-7: You succeed.
8+: You do extraordinarily well and gain a reputation or finance level.

Finances

1: Down two levels.
2-3: Down one level.
4: No change.
5-6: Up one level.
7+: Up two levels.



11-Rolling in dough
10-Living the high life
9-Well-off
8-Comfortable
7-Barely Getting by
6-Not quite minimum wage
5-Unable to make ends meet (Starts here)
4-Penniless
3-Van's out of gas, we're out of food
2-Blood from a stone
1-Destitute (The band quits to get real jobs.)

To Play:

Roleplay out each scene until one or more PCs reach a crisis point. A crisis point is when a PC tries something risky or uncertain.

Collectively decide which PC is the primary PC for this crisis point. The primary PC is the one who is most central to conflict or action, and they get final say in how the crisis point plays out. The primary PC's player declares what their goal is for the crisis point. What are they trying to achieve? Other players can provide feedback and suggest alternatives and such to make sure everyone is on the same page.

Then the primary PC's player takes the four dice on "**Uttartu, the Econoline Van**" and roll them. After rolling, each PC gets a chance to help or hinder the primary PC by invoking one of their traits. Starting with the primary PC's player and going around the table, each player can describe how one of their traits changes the situation for the better or the worse. When a player uses one of their traits, they can take their die in that trait and trade it for one of the four dice rolled for the crisis point. Keep both dice still showing their result.

Most of the time, you probably want to help your bandmates by swapping low rolled dice for higher die results from your character sheet. But you might want to steal a high die for later crisis points or something.

After everyone has a chance to swap dice, the primary player puts one die on each of the columns of the step pyramid below. They then briefly narrate how the actions of the band affects their reputation, finances, etc. and how the PC's success or failure changes their situation. As they narrate, the primary player should increment the d12s up or down as appropriate.

Then you go back to freely roleplaying what happens to the band as a result, until someone reaches another risky or uncertain situation.

Popularity

Word of your deeds spreads quickly.

1-2: Down one level.
3-5: No change.
6-7: Up one level.
8+: Up two levels.



11-Beloved by all
10-Popular with many
9-I've got their album
8-Gets some radio play
7-Niche band
6-Really obscure
5-No one's ever seen us (Starts here)
4-Disliked
3-Despised
2-Everyone hates us
1-Self-loathing (If the scale gets down to this rating, the band calls it quits because they're never gonna make it as rock stars and agrees to be the sorceress's warlords.)

The Sorceress

1: She approaches; Down two levels.
2-4: She slowly approaches; down one level.
5-6: No change
7+: Up one level.



11-Vanquished
10-Her magic spell is broken
9-Fighting defensively, she turns into a giant snake
8-On the retreat
7- A moment of calm
6-Idle threats and bad omens (Starts here)
5-Minor bad luck and curses
4-Minions appear on the scene and cause problems
3-The sorceress herself appears and starts monologuing
2-Green lightning rains down from the sky, destroying everything
1-World conquest (If the scale gets down to this rating, the PCs lose the game as the sorceress conquers the world.)