

THE LAND WITHIN THE WINDS



A ROLEPLAYING GAME

By Nick Wedig

Once, you were beautiful and wondrous. Once, you lived eternally as one of the lords of the Lands Within the Wind, where the faeries dwelled. Once, you wielded powerful magic to fulfill your every whim.

But no more.

Something went wrong. You don't know what happened, but there was a cataclysm. Where once you were beautiful, now you are warped and hideous. Where once you lived in Faerie, now you are cast out to wander the desert wastes of the mortal world. Where once you were skillful weavers of enchantment, now your minds are delirious and confused.

Now you are belgoi, the terrors of the desert night. Your magic has faded. Your memories are unclear. But each time you slay and eat intelligent creatures, you regain some mental clarity.

If you can recover enough memories, you may be able to once more wield mighty magics. If you can remember, you may be able to mend the damage to the Lands within the Wind. If you remember, you may return yourselves to your former glory.

The Lands Within the Wind is a roleplaying game for 2-6 players. It should take 4-8 hours to play, possibly divided between multiple sessions. You'll need 30-40 six sided dice (d6s), some way of taking notes, and the cards and materials for the game (threat sheet, mystery sheet, element cards).



The pilgrim knew he could never reach the distant city before the terrifying belgoi fell upon him.

THE TRIBE

Belgoi wander the wastes as small tribes. Each player will play one member of a tribe of belgoi. There is no special GM role in this game, so everyone has a player character (PC) to control. First, you will determine some details about the tribe of the belgoi as a whole, then you create your characters.

Threats

Your belgoi tribe does not have life easy. There are several potential dangers looming on the horizon. The vast desert waste means that you can see danger coming from several days away. Belgoi also employ rudimentary divinations to foresee future problems. So you know of several problems that could strike at any time. Belgoi are experts at speedily traveling the desert to avoid threats, but nonetheless danger will catch up with you sooner or later.

There are six threats the belgoi tribe has to be aware of. For each threat, ask the associated question and decide as a group what the answer is.

Mortals The Mortal category governs the sapient humanoids that dwell in the city-states of the desert. Individually, ordinary humans and halflings and such are not any threat to you. Mortals are most dangerous when they band together. And the sorcerer-queen that rules the city-state will bring together large numbers of mortals to oppose you. *What sorcerer-queen claims this stretch of desert? What forces will she use to exterminate your tribe?*



Sorcery The Sorcery category governs supernatural, spiritual or magical threats. This is the category for ghosts, elementals, demons or other supernatural dangers. Belgoi usually have to use magical means to deal with these threats. *What magical or spiritual danger haunts this place? How will it destroy you?*

Desolation The mortal world is a vast desert. Tough you were immortal when you lived in the faerie realm, now you are fallen. You require food and sustenance and shelter like those native to this world. And it is difficult to find these in the wasteland. This threat governs how long until the belgoi die of thirst, starvation or lack of other supplies. *What necessary resource for life is the tribe in dire need of?*

Monsters The sand wastes are known to be full of weird monsters. Hideous creatures, warped by the magic, stalk the sand dunes. A few might even choose the belgoi to be their next meal. *What unstoppable beast is hunting you for its next meal?*

The Land Within the Winds The faerie realm is now nothing more than a mirage on the distant horizon. But you are not alone in your exile from the Mirage Lands. The elves also wander this desert, and they blame you for their current status. Their hatred runs deep, and they will exterminate the belgoi if given the chance. *What have the hated mirage elves stolen from the tribe, that they will destroy or turn against you?*

Frenzy The belgoi's minds instinctively are vindictive, violent and cruel. If you don't direct that anger outward, it will turn inward, on one another. This threat governs the cohesiveness of the group. If the threat comes to pass, the belgoi will go their separate ways, or perhaps they will turn on each other in fratricidal violence. Either way, you would end the game in failure. *What might cause the belgoi to turn on each other?*

Mysteries

Your tribe has an ultimate goal of returning to the Lands Within the Wind. But your memories of the faerie realm have been scrambled or lost. You don't recall clearly how you came to your current twisted, fallen status. In order to restore yourselves to your rightful glory, you must find the answer to 5 **mysteries**. (The rules will explain how to solve mysteries later.) Once you solve the final mystery, the belgoi can return to the faerie realm.

Two mysteries are predefined. As a group, the players should create new mysteries to fill in the remaining blank spots on the chart. You don't have to fill in all three blanks right away. You can define new mysteries at any time as you play. But you should create at least the first mystery, the one that costs 2 successes to solve.

Each mystery is a question. The mysteries you create should be questions where you, the player, don't know the answer. But you should be interested to find out through play. Ask questions that you find compelling, and that can lead toward bigger mysteries. Use details from other parts of the game as inspiration for new mysteries, such as the threats you previously defined.

10 *How can we reclaim the Lands Within the Wind?*

8

6 *Why do the elves blame us for the destruction of the Lands Within the Wind?*

4

2



CHARACTERS

Each person playing the game will control one of the belgoi tribe. Each belgoi is mechanically defined by two features, their role and their memory.

Role

Every belgoi has a role within their tribe. There are 4 roles. You can have any combination of roles within your tribe, from having one of each role to having all the PCs with the same role.

Your role tells us what you are skilled at within the fiction. Each role is tied to three elements that your PC has particular expertise with. When you roll a 6 on the die, you can reset that die to any of those three elements.

In addition, each role has a question for you to answer. Tell the other players what your question is, then tell them what your character's answer is. These questions help flesh out your character, making them unique even compared to other belgoi of the same role.

Secret Keeper

Enchantment, Corruption, Memory

What secret do you hide even from the other Belgoi?

Stalker

Frenzy, Enchantment, Corruption

What makes you the deadliest of the belgoi?

Slayer

Frenzy, Corruption, Memory

What threat to the tribe worries you the most? Why?

Caller

Frenzy, Enchantment, Memory

What prey do you most enjoy catching?

Stories

Your belgoi retains only one memory of life within the Mirage Lands. Choose one of the categories below that best describes your story. Each has a few keywords to give you an idea what is covered by that type of memory. Tell the other players what you recall, providing some detail beyond that given in the description.

Each story has two elements tied to it. When you roll a 5 on the die, you can reset that die to any of those two elements. Using your stories is painful, though; if you change the result of a 5 to another number, you also place one die on a random threat, or the die doesn't count as a success.

Luxurious Celebration (**Memory, Frenzy**)

Banquets, palaces, endless dancing, fabulous wealth and celebration.

Forbidden Sorcery (**Enchantment, Corruption**)

Witchcraft, potions, necromancy, wielding power beyond mortal understanding.

Beautiful Illusions (**Memory, Enchantment**)

On the surface, every person, place and thing in the Faerie realm was shining and beautiful.

Dangerous Bargains (**Memory, Corruption**)

Pacts, oaths, selling your soul, making promises you can't keep, swearing allegiances, complicated politics.

Deadly Decadence (**Corruption, Frenzy**)

Underneath the beautiful surface, the faerie realm hid a terrible cruelty. Elven nobles tortured and killed mortals for their own amusement.

Mind Games (**Memory, Frenzy**)

No one in the faerie realm could be trusted. No one was what they seemed. Did you delight in kidnapping mortal children from their parents? Or were you betrayed by one you foolishly trusted?

Monstrous Nature

Belgoi were once graceful and beautiful. But now you are hideous, twisted, and misshapen. Some begloi have animal like faces, or too many joints in their limbs, or flesh like spoiled milk. The only universal trait is that every belgoi is obviously monstrous, as soon as you see them.

Tell the other players how your belgoi's physical form reveals your abominable nature.

Names

Belgoi tend to have elaborate and strange titles instead of names. These names are along the lines of "She Who Sleeps Soundly After the Slaughter" or "The Blood Poet" or "The Final Empress Who Seeks the Whisperer" or "The Hidden Duke of Fortune and Suffering". They use these honorifics to cling desperately to their lost glory. You can invent your own titles, or use the name generator at <https://www.seventhsanctum.com/generate.php?Genname=weirdname>



The lost realms of Faerie

Finishing Setup

Take 24 d6s and roll them. Sort the results by the value that they rolled. Place all the dice that rolled 1 next to the Frenzy card. Place all the 2s next to Corruption, all the 3s next to Memory, and the 4s next to Enchantment.

The dice that you rolled that resulted in 5 or 6 will become threat dice. Reroll them all, and sort them by value once again. This time, though, you distribute them onto the threat sheet, placing each die onto the threat whose number corresponds to its value. If one of the threats has 7 or more dice in it after you do this, then the first scene of the game will be the belgoi facing that threat directly. (See the Threats section later in this document). If the Frenzy threat has 7 dice, reroll them all.

Choose one player to frame the first scene.



One of the repulsive forms the belgoi take

GAMEPLAY

Take turns framing scenes. When it is your turn to frame a scene, describe where it takes places, who is present and what is happening at the very beginning of the scene.

Every player is responsible for making sure the world feels real and the threats seem dangerous. The player who frames the scene has even more responsibility in this task: if no one else is creating details for the environment, they should step in to do so.

Once the scene has been framed, every player collaborates to describe what happens next. Each player has primary responsibility over their own PC. You can suggest ideas to other players, but they have final say over their character's behavior. Each player also is responsible for role-playing NPCs and describing the environment and the results of PC actions, as needed.

One useful technique is to ask questions about what is happening in the scene, and have the other players answer you in detail. If each player asks at least one question per scene, you will have a well fleshed out world to play in. Just make sure you only ask questions where you don't already know the answer, but are interested in finding one.

Sometimes during the game you will reach a moment of uncertainty. This is a place where the PCs act and things could go well or badly for them, or where the unpredictability of dice rolls would add to the enjoyment of the game.

When you reach a moment of uncertainty, you will roll the dice, following the instructions in the next section of this document.

ACTIONS

When you want to attempt something that is difficult or uncertain, you will need to roll some dice. When someone describe a character performing an action, any player can suggest that the task is difficult.

At that time, you determine which character is taking the action. This is usually obvious from the narration that went before. If it is not, discuss with your fellow players to determine which PC is most central to the action. NPCs never take actions themselves; instead you should have PCs roll to support or resist an NPC's action.

As a group, you should decide which element governs that action. Belgoi are governed by 4 elements, each of which covers a different area of activity. Each element has a predefined incantation, or magical effect it can produce. In order to succeed at producing that outcome, you must roll that many successes (see the section on rolling the dice, below).

You can perform any action a human-like being could reasonably attempt, not just those covered by incantations. For those actions, the group should discuss which element the action falls under. **Frenzy** governs all attempt to use violence, chaos or brute force to achieve your goal. **Corruption** governs deceptive, destructive or villainous behavior. Any time you're making the world worse through nonviolent means is probably handled by Corruption. **Memory** governs mental clarity, knowledge, figuring things out and other mental tasks. **Enchantment** is about enticing others to do things for you (though this is often difficult when people recognize you as a desert dwelling boogeyman). Enchantment also covers random strokes of luck, because Enchantment is about drawing to you the things you desire. If you need to determine whether a random event goes well or badly for the belgoi, then they should roll Enchantment.

When attempting a mundane task like this, the players decide how many successes it will require to get what you want. More difficult actions will require

more successes to complete. A typical task requires 3 successes. More difficult actions might require 4 or more successes. An easy task might only require 2 successes. (Starting incantations require only 2 successes, to make them easier than most mundane actions.) Any task that only would require 1 success is trivial enough not to bother rolling for. Simply narrate your action and move on.

Rolling the Dice

You are ready to roll the dice once you know who is rolling, which element governs the task, and how difficult the action is. Each element has a two sided card. One side is the primary goal side, while the other is the side effect side. Set the card for your action's element to the primary goal side. Set all the other cards to the side effect side.

Each element should have a pool of dice next to its card. Take the dice from your action's element and roll them all. So if you are taking a Memory action, you roll all the dice from the Memory pool, however many there are. Separate the dice you rolled by value. Then allocate them onto the 4 element cards. (Make sure you keep separate the dice you just rolled from those already in the element's pool.)

Each die that rolled the number of your element counts as a success toward your primary goal. If you rolled at least as many successes as was required, then you succeed in the action. If you rolled fewer successes than was required, then you fail at your primary goal.

Each other element produces side effects. Sometimes they will produce positive side effects, sometimes negative ones. The number of dice that rolled that element determines what side effect each element will produce, if any. If you rolled zero results for that element, you will have a bad side effect related to that element. If you roll 2 or more of that element, it will produce a positive secondary effect. Each element's card details the side effects it can produce.

The element that governs your primary goal will never produce side effects. The cards are designed to be two sided, with the goal on one side and the side effects on the other. That way, you can just turn up the side that makes sense for the action.

Fives and Sixes

Dice that tolled 5 and 6 have special rules for them. You as player have some choice which pool those dice go into, before you determine the results of your roll.

For each die that rolled a six, you can place it into an element of your choice, based on your belgoi's role. Each role is tied to three elements. When you roll a 6, you can change that die to any of the three elements tied to your role, whichever you choose. If you rolled multiple 6s, you can place them in different elements if you prefer.

Dice that rolled 5 are similar, but there is a cost involved. When you roll a 5, you can place the die into either element that is associated with your memory of the faerie realm. But when you do so, you must add 1 die to a random threat. Or, if you prefer, you can place the die directly into that element's pool, without counting it as a success toward the goal or side effect of that element.

As you distribute dice to each element, describe how the PC's actions produce that result. Go in order from the 1 results (Frenzy) up to 4 (Enchantment).



1: Frenzy

Side Effects:

- 0 Your action leads to personal injury. You or another PC are injured.
- 1 No effect
- 2 Violence begets more violence. Add 1 more die to Frenzy

As main goal:

- 2 You cause great harm to a person, place or thing
- 3 [blank]
- 4 [blank]
- 5 [blank]

2: Corruption

Side Effects:

- 0 Magic goes out of control (add 1 die to a threat of your choice).
- 1 No effect
- 2 The desert is harsh, and harms your enemies. Remove one die from a threat of your choice.

As main goal:

- 2 You drain the life force from a person, place or thing.
- 3 [blank]
- 4 [blank]
- 5 [blank]

3: Memory

Side Effects:

- 0 What you thought was true is misleading, mistaken or a red herring. Erase one clue to a mystery (one that makes sense in the fiction).
- 1 No effect
- 2 You recover a memory of life in the Mirage Lands. Add a new incantation to one of the elements

As main goal:

- 2 You read the thoughts, feelings or memories of a person you can touch
- 3 [blank]
- 4 [blank]
- 5 [blank]

4: Enchantment

Side Effects:

- 0 Magic slips away. Choose one incantation and increase its required number of successes.
- 1 No effect
- 2 Something unrelated goes well for you. You gain a clue toward a mystery of your choice

As main goal:

- 2 You draw a target close to you with the ringing of your enchanted bell
- 3 [blank]
- 4 [blank]
- 5 [blank]

5: Stories

Add this die to an element based on your story of the faerie realm. Each story will give you two places to place the die. Then add 1 die to a random threat, or place the die without it counting as a success.

6: Role

Add this die to an element based on your role. Each role gives you three options for where to place this die.



A Few Details

When you roll 2+ Memory results for a side effect, you gain a new incantation. New incantations can be any magical effect your fallen faerie lords could create. Discuss with your fellow players and invent something that sounds cool. Decide which element that incantation would fall under. When you create a new incantation, you establish a cost for the spell, in terms of how many successes it requires to cast. A new incantation must have a different cost than every other incantation you have for that element. So at the start of play, a new Frenzy incantation would require at least three successes, because the initial incantation to cause harm costs 2. If later on, a poor Enchantment roll raised the cost of causing harm, then you could create a new incantation that only costed 2 successes.

When you have a living creature captive, you can drain its life force with Corruption. When you do so, you can use the energy to heal your body (see the Injury section later on). Alternatively, you can use their life force to restore your mind, recovering lost memories of the faerie realm. In that case, you add 1 die to an element that makes sense for that victim's species. If you drain an elf, then add a die to the Memory pool, since elves are also connected to the Lands Within the Wind. Draining a human or halfling would provide you with a Corruption die. Draining a dragon, half-giant or monstrous insect person adds a die to Frenzy. And draining spirits, dwarves or sorcerer-tyrants would give you an Enchantment die.

THREATS

In the desert wastes, you can see danger approaching from miles away. With omens and oracular visions, the belgoi can foresee their doom coming. The belgoi know what danger waits for them in the future. And though belgoi are skilled at speedily walking the desert wastes, sooner or later trouble is going to catch up with them.

There are six threat tracks that monitor how close danger is to you. Each track represents one of the threat you defined during initial setup.

Each track has 7 spaces on it. During setup, you placed some dice onto randomly determined threat tracks. Throughout the rest of the game, you will be placing more dice on those tracks depending on your die rolls.

When the seventh die is placed onto a threat's track, then that threat becomes a reality. The belgoi must now confront the danger. For most threats, you frame a scene describing the belgoi attacked by the threat. At this point, each PC in the scene should attempt a difficult action (4 successes), going in whatever order they choose. If they fail, the PC is injured or killed, whichever seems to make sense for the situation.

The Frenzy threat is different. If that track fills with 7 dice, then the belgoi turn upon each other in squabbling and violence. The tribe breaks apart and possibly murders each other. The game ends immediately if that threat fills up.

Sometimes, you may have a situation where a threat has been completely defeated within the narrative of the game. If the PCs spend significant effort, then they may be able to assassinate the sorcerer-queen and burn her city-state to the ground, for example. This would leave the Mortal threat no longer a danger to the belgoi. In situations like this, then you should take the threat dice from that threat and roll them. Distribute the threat dice onto the five other threats. Any dice that roll the threat's number are instead placed into a belgoi element pool of your choice.



The belgoi laughed as it attacked the pilgrim

Then you define a new threat that goes in the category of the neutralized threat. The new threat doesn't have to match the old threat identically, and you don't have to answer the question used during setup. Just think of a similar threat that could endanger the belgoi. If the PCs defeat the sorcerer-queen's city-state, for example, then the replacement threat could be refugees fleeing the city, or a theocratic empire that moves in to seize the territory, or any other mortal humanoid group that would be a problem for the belgoi.

INJURY

Life can be dangerous for the belgoi. Belgoi can become injured for many reasons. If the players agree that an event in the fiction causes injury to a PC, then that player should mark their character as injured in some way. I like to use red glass beads or poker chips as tokens to show injuries. PCs can also become injured if they lose a violent conflict, or if they fail to roll enough Frenzy results.

If your character has been injured, then all 6s you roll count as 5s. If you are injured again, then any dice that are 5 or 6 are added to a random threat. Reroll the dice and place them on the threat that corresponds to their result. If you are injured a third time, your belgoi dies.

If the players believe a situation should be especially deadly, they can give a PC two wounds in a single action, or even kill a belgoi outright. A failed action in combat might give one injury, two injuries, or kill the PC entirely, depending on how lethal you imagine the opposition to be.

An injured belgoi can be healed through a difficult action, which thus usually requires rolling 3 successes

to remove a single injury. With 4 successes, you can remove two injuries from one PC, or one injury from multiple PCs.

If you have a living creature captive, the belgoi can drain the life force from them. This is your starting Corruption incantation, requiring 2 successes by default. (The incantation can be used for other purposes beyond healing, but healing is one use for the life force.)

No healing will help a dead belgoi. Dead is dead. If a PC dies, that may be a good sign to bring the game to a close. Alternately, the player could create a new PC, following the standard procedure.

Or that player could become the player in charge of the threats. They would be responsible for describing the environment, narrating the actions of NPCs, and making sure the dangers of the sand wastes feel real and threatening. Whenever a die is placed into a threat pool, the threat player can put it in any threat they choose. The threat player's goal is so make life more difficult for the remaining belgoi, to provide additional adversity and to make the game interesting.



MYSTERIES

Your memories were scrambled when you were exiled from the faerie realm. Whatever cataclysm happened in the Lands Within the Wind, it also left your minds confused. Large pieces of your past are missing. If you ever hope to return to the Mirage Lands, then you will have to find out what happened. You must recover the stories of your people that were lost in your fall from grace.

To restore themselves to glory within the Mirage Lands, the belgoi must solve five mysteries. This effort forms the overarching goal of the game. Solve the five mysteries and you “win” the game. Each mystery is phrased as an open question that no player knows the answer to. Through gameplay, you will collaboratively invent the answers to the mysteries, one piece at a time.

Two of the mysteries are predefined. The third mystery is *“Why do the elves blame us for the destruction of the Mirage Lands?”* The final mystery is always *“How can we reclaim the Lands Within the Wind?”* These two predefined mysteries give structure to the game’s narrative.



The belgoi attempts a divination ritual

The other three mysteries you as players will define in play. At the start of play, players must collaborate to decide what the first mystery is. If you have an inspired idea, you can define the other mysteries as well. If you don’t, you can leave the mysteries blank. Later on during the game, any player can suggest a question to ask as one of the blank mysteries. If the other players agree that it is an interesting question, they can write it on the mystery record sheet. Make sure you ask questions that are both interesting and unknown to you. If you have an answer in mind when you ask, then you’ll lose some of the collaborative spirit and sense of discovery that comes when players invent the story together. Make sure your mystery questions are open to several alternate interpretations when you ask them.

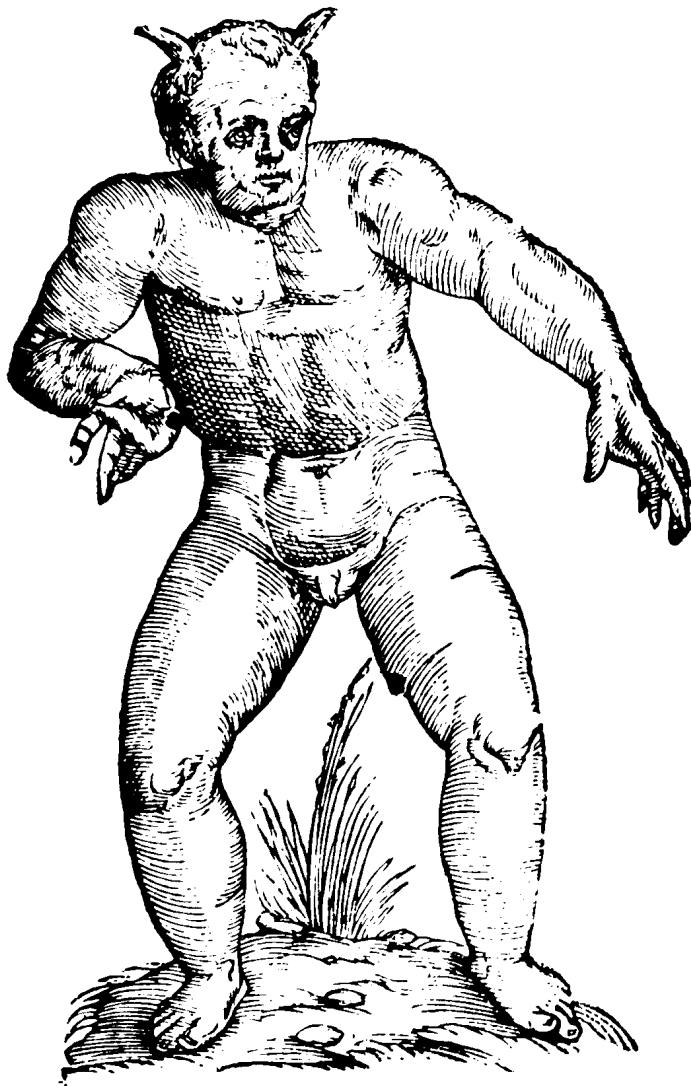
Investigating a mystery usually requires the belgoi perform some difficult actions searching for answers, interrogating people, exploring the desert or otherwise trying to find the truth. Each mystery requires a specific number of successes to solve. The first mystery is simple: it requires 2 successes to solve. The belgoi should be able to find an answer to that mystery with a small amount of effort. Each subsequent mystery requires 2 additional successes. So the second mystery requires 4 successes. The third requires 6, the fourth requires 8 and the final mystery needs 10 successes to solve.

Two successes is easily achieved, but 10 successes would require a lucky roll on a lot of dice. Luckily, you have some things that make it easier to solve the mysteries. You can acquire clues toward a mystery (see below).

In addition, each solved mystery reduces the difficulty of the other mysteries by one level. By learning the answer to one mystery, you come to understand the other mysteries better. So when you solve the first mystery, the difficulty of the final mystery drops from 10 successes to 9 successes. Solve the four mysteries leading up to the final one and you will have reduced the final mystery’s difficulty from 10 down to 6.

Eventually, your search for answers will yield fruit. You will acquire enough successes to solve the mystery, through a combination of clues, previously solved mysteries and rolled successes. When this happens, the players invent an answer to the mystery question, based on what they have learned about it so far. Reincorporate as many of the clues and fictional details of the mystery as you can. The player whose PC was investigating has additional authority on the answer. They can propose an answer, or they can choose between suggested answers from other players.

When you know the truth of the matter, write it on the mystery record sheet.



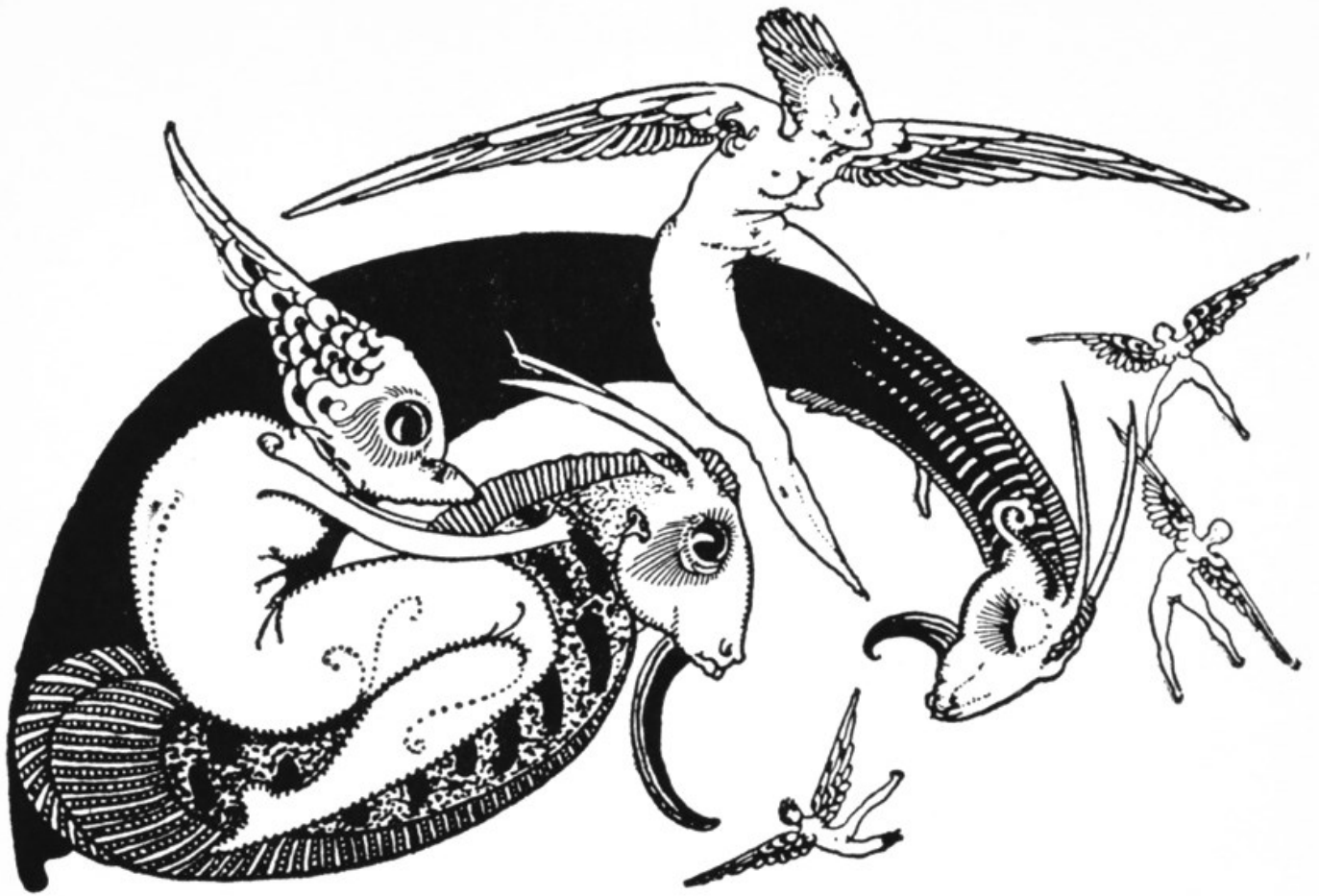
Clues

If you roll enough Memory results as a side effect of an action, you will gain a clue toward a mystery. Clues are not complete answers to the mysteries, but a step along the path toward a solution. Each clue suggests one possible truth, but does not definitively settle the question. So if you are seeking entrance to a hidden fortress, a solution would be to know exactly where it is and how to get it. A clue might only tell you that the fortress lies in the shadow of the mountains, or that the guards employ a mutant vultures to watch for intruders. Clues are a piece of the puzzle, an additional piece of data that will help you solve the mystery.

Each clue reduces the difficulty of one mystery by one level. So if you add a clue to the third mystery, its difficulty would drop from 6 to 5. Add another clue, and that mystery might only require 4 successes. Each clue only helps with a single mystery. When you gain a clue, make note of it on the mystery sheet, under the question it helps to answer. When you answer a mystery, you should explain how each clue fits into the solution, or at least as many clues s you can.

You usually gain clues by rolling multiples Memory side effect results on a die roll. To deliberately search for a clue as your primary goal will generally require 2 successes. Players can decide if the method of searching should be more difficult, but 2 successes is the default value.





This game owes a big debt of gratitude to many other games. These include the original *Dark Sun Boxed Set*, the 4th edition D&D *Dark Sun Campaign Setting* and *Dark Sun Creature Catalogue*, and *Psi*Run* by Meg Baker. In addition, the core mechanic of the game is based on an idea by Josh Mannon.

Playtesters Sabrina Zitzelberger, Kate Davoli, John Laslo, Nick Wedig

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If you play the game, or simply have any thoughts about it, I would love to hear from you. Contact me at nickwedig@yahoo.com

