



THE FIFTH WORLD

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In *The Fifth World* tabletop roleplaying game, you and a handful of friends explore what happens to your descendants living beyond civilization. You'll see the familiar places of your life transformed by four centuries of change. You'll trace the history of your family and learn the customs that helped them to survive and thrive, and then step into the lives of people in that family to see how they live in a neotribal, ecotopian future.

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The Fifth World roleplaying game presents an open source set of rules. As such, you will always find the most up-to-date rules online at <https://thefifthworld.com/rpg>. This document represents a “stable,” playtested snapshot of the rules as of the release date above. We release this document under a Creative Commons Attribution-ShareAlike 4.0 International License.



ROLEPLAYING

We can best explain what a roleplaying game looks like by presenting a small, simple one.

We play roleplaying games with our friends. Gather two or three of your friends and get comfortable. This game will take 15-20 minutes.

It lets us explore interesting scenarios. Tell your friends that you'll take on the roles of a band of hunters in the Fifth World, a neotribal, ecotopian future four hundred years after the fall of civilization.

It gives us a chance to put ourselves in someone else's life. Take turns asking each other three questions about your hunters. Which of you has the most experience? Which of you has the most to prove? Which of you has the most to learn?

It thrives on sticky situations. Start things off as you find yourself unexpectedly between a baby elephant and its mother. Which of you led the group into this situation? How and why? The biggest bull in the herd trumpets and charges at you!

It unfolds as a collaborative waking dream. Pick one player to take the focus.

She can only tell us what her hunter thinks, says, and does. The others can say what their own hunters say and do, as well as what happens in the rest of the world (like what the elephant does).

It gives you the chance to express your own sense of drama. When the player in focus says that she does something that sounds difficult (perhaps "I dodge out of the way of the charging elephant") say, "That sounds difficult." If she describes something that sounds dangerous (perhaps "I stand my ground and stab the charging elephant with my spear") say, "That sounds dangerous." She might even say something that sounds both difficult and dangerous (perhaps "I dodge out of the way at the last possible second to stab the elephant in its chest as it charges past me"), in which case one of you should say, "That sounds difficult" and someone else should immediately say, "That sounds dangerous."

It helps create something more interesting than we would on our own. If the player in focus said that she did something difficult, a third player describes what she'll need to do to succeed. If she did something dangerous, a third player describes who gets hurt and how badly.

You've done it all along. When you get out of one situation, pick another player

We copied shamelessly from Epidiah Ravachol's game, "What is a Roleplaying Game?" to create the introductory game above. We skinned it to better match the Fifth World, but all credit for the ingenious idea and simple design go to him. See the original astrorobber game at <https://dig1000holes.wordpress.com/what-is-a-roleplaying-game/>

to take the focus and set up a new situation. Keep playing until your hunters return home.

The Fifth World vs. Other Roleplaying Games

If you've played other tabletop roleplaying games, you might find *The Fifth World* a bit bewildering. It doesn't necessarily work like other games you might know. If you haven't played other tabletop roleplaying games, you don't need to worry about any of this — skip ahead to reading about our agenda.

It has no game master.

If you've played other tabletop roleplaying games before, you might notice that *The Fifth World* has no game master (GM). Rather than placing the responsibility for adjudication, running adversaries, and presenting the world in the hands of one person, here that responsibility belongs to the whole group. Authority shifts from one player to the next throughout the game, and in fact choosing who to give that authority to forms an important part of play.

Your role changes frequently.

The role you play in the game shifts frequently. Much of it revolves around when you play which role. One of the main skills used to play the game well lies in shifting gracefully from one role to the next.

Playing your character: When you play your main character, you act much as you would when you play any other

roleplaying game. You put yourself in your character's life and try to think and act as she would, to see the world through her eyes and experience it as she would.

Playing the Other: When you play the Other in an encounter, you play another character — one that we might not know very much about yet. You have some basic ideas about her, including the need that drives her at this moment, but possibly nothing more than that. This differs only slightly from playing your own character, in that you want to convey the character as you understand her based on everything we've seen or learned about her so far, but *you cannot make decisions for her*. She might speak, but only to reiterate or elaborate on things we already know. She might act, but not in any decisive way. If anyone wants to push the Other to make a substantive decision, they'll have to spend a moment of awareness to ask a question.

Asking questions: Anyone in the encounter can spend a moment of awareness to ask a question. In this role, you try to learn something definite about the world, which could include what the Other or any other secondary character (NPC) will do.

Answering questions: When another player spends awareness and asks you a question, you get to answer. That answer forms the truth of the story. You could think of it as becoming the GM for a moment. When you answer a question always say *what the principles demand*, *what the place demands*, and *what honesty demands*.

Serving as audience: When you don't play your character or the Other, ask questions: questions for more detail or color ("What did that smell like?"), provocative questions ("Which of them do you trust the most?"), leading questions ("Did you hear the tiger sneaking up on you?"), *any* questions. They don't have the gravity of truth like the ones you ask by spending awareness, but much of the game's fun and color comes from them.

You don't level up – your family does.

Most people in the Fifth World have skills that we, today, would consider impressive. Most can move through the forest like parkour runners. They live to over a hundred years old, and even the elders have more strength and endurance than most of their ancestors. They nearly all have expansive training with bows and other weapons, go about armed most of the time, possess expert hunting and tracking skills as well as a rapport with one another and their family territory so uncanny as to sometimes seem like telepathy. That just describes the average person in the Fifth World. But the game doesn't focus on them becoming more skilled or deadly. It focuses on the relationships between them and how those relationships change.

In saga play (what another roleplaying game would call a campaign), your characters grow up, grow old, and eventually die. You play an intergenerational story, so you'll play several characters throughout the saga. You might play more than one in the same generation, switching

between sessions, or you might just play a new character when your old one reaches the end of her life. Throughout that life, your character might change in many profound ways, but she won't necessarily become progressively more powerful, and certainly not in any way that the game's mechanics will focus on or reward. She might become an ancestor honored by your family, tying them more deeply to their territory, and so her memory might live on.

Over the long term, your family, rather than your characters, endure. You learn the names of places (a crystallization of the stories those places tell), and learning about those places unlock new questions to ask, with which you can learn new things. Over time your family becomes more powerful – and by "more powerful" we mean more deeply rooted in the land, dwelling more peacefully within it, more intimately bound to it.

Related Games

The Fifth World didn't come out of nowhere, of course. Like any other creative work, it has its own lineage. It takes great inspiration from *Archipelago*, *Vast & Starlit*, *Ganakagok*, *Shock: Social Science Fiction*, *Misspent Youth*, and *Apocalypse World* and several related games, including *Monsterhearts*, *Dungeon World*, and *Dream Askew*. If you've played these or similar games, then you might not find *The Fifth World* so surprising after all.

AGENDA

When we play *The Fifth World*, we work together to:

- ◆ See the Fifth World together.
- ◆ Reveal everyone's personhood.
- ◆ Hunt the wild story.

If you pursue other agendas — like challenging the other players or defeating them, or telling the story you planned ahead of time — the game won't go very well. If you stick to these goals, the game will help you and you'll have a much more positive experience.

See the Fifth World together.

When you listen to a story, you might feel yourself swept along by it, and you can almost feel yourself in it. This game offers a similar kind of immersion, one where we can all see the Fifth World together. We flesh it out more and more with rich descriptions and vivid details. We see familiar places transformed and reclaimed by a more-than-human world. Don't try to come up with something clever. Rather, tell us what you see. Even if everyone else considers it obvious, too, your description simply confirms that we all see it together and pulls all of us deeper into the world. Sometimes, though, you'll see something nobody else has noticed yet. Though it seems obvious to you, it might surprise everyone else, and flow naturally from the story so far.

Reveal everyone's personhood.

In many languages in the Fifth World, "person" verbs, rather than nouns. Humans can person, but so can animals and even plants, rocks, and weather patterns. Stories might person, and even "impersonal forces" like luck or memory might sometimes person. Not *everything* persons, though. Critically, persons relate to other persons. They can have relationships.

Persons do not embody stereotypes. Instead, they have motivations, histories, and concerns. If someone seems to act more like a stereotype than a real person, show us the parts of their lives where they break those patterns. Show us reasonable and understandable motivations for even your most hated adversaries and bitter rivals.

Hunt the wild story.

Don't think of your story as something you tell, but something you *hunt*. You and your friends each pull it in your own favored direction, and from time to time the rules intervene to introduce unexpected and even unwelcome developments. That makes the story a living thing uncontrolled by anyone at the table, and only possible here, now, with these people, and nowhere else. Stay on its trail, follow where it goes, and embrace its twists and turns as the expression of its own personhood. Resist the urge to domesticate it by trying to force it to follow your own plan.

PRINCIPLES

To help us pursue our agenda, we have a few principles:

- ◆ Rewild the domesticated.
- ◆ Feed the story with what you know.
- ◆ Address the Fifth World.
- ◆ Reveal understandable motivations.
- ◆ Give every person life.
- ◆ Listen to the spirit of the place.
- ◆ Defer answers.
- ◆ Draw lines.
- ◆ Ask questions and build on the answers.

Rewild the domesticated.

Take the things that seem normal and familiar and watch what happens to them as civilization collapses, the world changes, and other-than-human forces claim them as their own. Free them from purely human control and watch in your mind's eye as they rewild. Buildings, places, people, and institutions — let them all rewild, and tell us what you see.

Feed the story with what you know.

Real things you know about the world — in particular things like anthropology or ecology, or more practical knowledge like earth skills or tracking — can feed your story. It thrives on informed imagination. If you feel excited about an upcoming game and want to spend time



preparing, learn about your local area. Learn how the people native to your area make a living there. Learn about your local ecology. Learn about tracking or gathering wild edibles or herbal medicine. Don't turn the game into a lecture, but do feed the story with what you've learned to make it richer.

Address the Fifth World.

Rather than talking to your friends *about* the Fifth World, talk to their characters *in* the Fifth World. Address them by the names of their characters. Speak directly to the world you see together.

Reveal understandable motivations.

If someone in the story acts in a way that seems more like a caricature than a person, don't accept it. Rely on curiosity rather than contradiction. If this person seems two-dimensional, don't blame one of your friends for this portrayal. Instead, accept the mystery they've presented to you. What really motivates this person to act this way? Explore the question further, until you can understand and even sympathize with this person, even if her actions put her in direct conflict with your character.

Give every person life.

Our game tells the story of the particular people played by you and your friends, but that doesn't mean that no one else in the world matters. We focus on these characters in *this* story, but outside of that focus, the people whose paths we cross live their own lives and their own stories. When one of our characters encounters another person, those stories intersect. Show us that these people do not only exist in our story. Have them mention other things beyond the scope of our current story, hints and references to a wider world and an active life beyond our sight.

Listen to the spirit of the place.

Every place has a story to tell. You can hear it in the pattern and rhythm of life that unfolds there. Listen for it, and you'll hear it. You'll notice patterns and themes that keep recurring there – something that every animal seems to do there, regardless of species, or something that happens again and again in the history of that place, regardless of the differences of the people involved. Like many traditional peoples today, the people of the Fifth World do not think of intelligence or creativity as faculties that dwell within them. Rather, they think of them as belonging to places, which they partake in when they go there.

Heed the spirit of the places where the game unfolds. Remember each place's individual personhood, and treat them as you would any other person, with life and understandable motivations. What

does that mean for a place in general, or this place specifically? What does it mean for the way things unfold there right now?

Defer answers.

When another player spends a moment of awareness to ask a question, the answer you give establishes the truth. Don't contradict anything we already know (at least, not directly). With each established truth, the story takes form. If it takes form too quickly, we give it fewer opportunities to surprise and delight us. So choose your answers carefully to not close off too much too soon. Give answers that open new questions and possibilities. Put off making definitive statements until the last possible moment.

Draw lines.

Bonds of kinship bind the Fifth World together — including bonds of kinship between the human and other-than-human — but kinship does not always mean accord. What lines divide the family, or groups within the family? What lines divide your family from neighboring families? What lines divide your family from the other-than-human communities around them and those they depend upon? What lines divide you within yourself?

These divisions do not generally come from hatred, contempt, or disregard. Those would present relatively easy answers. They come from disagreement. Most of the people in your story will, to one extent or another, love and respect

you, but they may disagree about what you should do or which path you should follow. People in the Fifth World find ways to overcome these divisions and heal the rifts between them, but it does take effort and skill. Their stories focus on the people who struggle to do that, how they do it, and even, occasionally, how they fail.

Ask questions and build on the answers.

Constantly ask questions of the other players' characters — about the things they see, hear, smell, taste, and touch, about their feelings and perspectives, about their hopes and fears, about their past, about anything and everything about them that catches your attention. The answers remain uncertain until someone spends a moment of awareness, but these impressions provide the hints and signs that help us do that. Add what you see to their answers and build on them. When those answers pique your curiosity, pursue them in play.

AWARENESS

Places constantly generate moments of awareness. Your character can visit those places and, by acting in accordance with the particular spirit of that place, gather those moments. She can then spend moments of awareness to avoid danger, accomplish difficult tasks, and ask questions to learn the truth about the world around her.

Moments of awareness form the primary currency in the game. You'll need some kind of token to represent them, usually not more than 100. Pennies work well, but something that evokes the unique spirit of your place can add a great tactile element to your game.

Each place begins with one moment of awareness, and they generate more after each encounter. Places occur in sets of three, each of which has a different criterion that you'll have to meet to gather awareness there.

When you gather awareness you can take as much or as little as you like, with the exception of your home. There, you gather awareness by sharing a meal with others, and everyone present can take awareness – if you can all agree on how to split it. If you can't, then no one gets anything.

You can normally have up to five moments of awareness, until you take **scars**, each of which will reduce your limit by one.

You spend moments of awareness to ask questions during encounters and in response to certain **ritual phrases**, like “**That sounds difficult**” and “**That**

sounds dangerous.” Since you need awareness to protect yourself and to accomplish your goals, you'll need to consider going to some places to gather it.

You can help another player's character if you've come to the same place by spending your own moments of awareness on her behalf.

CARDS

The Fifth World roleplaying game uses a regular deck of playing cards divided into three decks:

- ◆ **The Needs Deck**, made up of the aces (four cards)
- ◆ **The Persons Deck**, made up of the kings, queens, jacks, and jokers (fourteen cards)
- ◆ **The Places Deck**, made up of the numbered cards (36 cards)

You can play with a standard, 54-card deck of playing cards (with two jokers) by looking up what each card means on the tables included here, but you'll probably have more fun with our custom deck, with all of the information printed on the cards, space to add place names that you discover, and beautiful art by Blake Behrens, Dani Kaulakis, Nick Pedersen, and Noah Bradley. Visit <https://thefifthworld.com/rpg/cards> to order one.



CLUBS

THE SUIT OF SPIRITUAL LIFE
EAST • CHILDHOOD • WATER

EXAMPLES OF SPIRITUAL NEEDS INCLUDE:

Authenticity, beauty, freedom, harmony, hope, integrity, justice, presence, purpose

Spirituality doesn't mean something supernatural. It refers to the magic that animates everything that lives, that gives us life and personhood, awareness and the ability to affect the world around us. We see spirit in everything that acts like a person: the spells sung by the songbirds who entice the world to bloom, the eloquence of trees creaking in the wind, or the slicing intellect of glass knapped to a perfect point.

When we face our own spirituality, we see where things begin. We see the things we value, the things we believe, the things we hold dear, the things that motivate and drive us. When we need things from the east, we face needs for honesty and authenticity, the need to act in a way more true to ourselves.



HEARTS

THE SUIT OF EMOTIONAL LIFE
SOUTH • YOUNG ADULthood • FIRE

EXAMPLES OF EMOTIONAL NEEDS INCLUDE:

Affection, excitement, humor, intimacy, joy, love, mourning, self-expression, warmth

What we value and believe in shapes the way we feel about the things that happen to us, leading us to our emotional lives. Emotion does not stand opposed to intellect or reason. It forms part of the same circle. Intellect and reason cannot exist without it.

Our emotions act as another kind of perception. They can help us notice patterns too subtle for our conscious minds. They can help us perceive the changes inside of ourselves. We don't dismiss them as ephemeral or "merely" subjective. We know that they point us towards things that we need to understand.

Our feelings often point us towards our unmet needs. As a sense, we cannot necessarily control how we feel any more than we can control what we hear. By the same token, what we feel needn't define what we do, any more than what we hear. It can tell us what we need, and it can alert us to what we might otherwise miss, but what we do with that always remains ours to decide.



DIAMONDS

THE SUIT OF PHYSICAL LIFE
WEST • MATURE ADULTHOOD • EARTH

EXAMPLES OF PHYSICAL NEEDS INCLUDE:

*Air, food, movement, rest, safety, sex,
shelter, touch, water*

Our emotions push us into our physical lives by demanding that we take action. Physical life forms part of the wheel. Without it, the wheel breaks. Even those other-than-human persons who lack a body have a physical form. We may not see the wind people, but we can still feel them. We may not see the bodies of the dead, but they still dissolve into the soil.

Our bodies have needs, of course. When one of us goes hungry, we all go hungry, but thankfully, that rarely happens. Pine nuts and grubs may not taste good, but they stave off hunger. No, more often when we face physical needs, it means dealing with injury, infection, exhaustion, or physical safety. We also take the need to excel seriously, so we would call a need to improve our health, strength, or stamina a physical need, too.



SPADES

THE SUIT OF MENTAL LIFE
NORTH • ELDERHOOD • AIR

EXAMPLES OF MENTAL NEEDS INCLUDE:

*Challenge, clarity, creativity, discovery, efficacy,
learning, legacy, mastery, understanding*

Our engagement with the physical world teaches us. We learn about the world by interacting with it and observing it, and so our physical bodies draw us into our mental lives.

We live in a world full of intelligence that we get to take part in. Different places think differently. If you go to a place quietly and observe, you'll find it thinking you, too. The intelligent person has a talent for taking in that intelligence and using it in the most artful way. Like conversation or song, we understand intelligence as an engagement, rather than an attribute.

When we face mental needs, we face our need for meaning, our need to make sense of what we have seen and learned, or our need to make decisions. Mental needs might address existential angst or simple curiosity. You can distinguish them from spiritual needs because they do not change values or beliefs, and from emotional needs because they do not change feelings or emotions.

The Persons Deck

The **persons deck** represent the people in your game, including your own primary characters and the secondary characters they encounter. Who each card represents will change from one game to the next.

- ◆ **Kings and Queens** have mastered the aspect of life represented by their suits.
- ◆ **Jacks** pursue the aspect of life represented by their suits, but haven't mastered them yet.
- ◆ **Jokers** transgress or subvert traditional life.

Places Deck

Most of the cards form the **places deck**. Each card in this deck represents a particular place in your family's territory. When you learn the stories of your land you'll learn the true names of these places, which will unlock new questions to ask and make it easier for you to move through your territory.

Learning the true name of a place allows you to draw that card from the deck instead of drawing a card at random. **Any time you would draw from the places deck, you can instead call out the name of a place whose true name you have learned.** Once you have taken it, reshuffle the remainder of the deck.

Ancestors

If you've discovered the true name of a place, you might have an ancestor associated with it — someone from your family's past whose legacy you still experience there. Ancestors connect you more deeply to that place, providing two benefits:

- ◆ At the end of each encounter, the place gains two moments of awareness instead of one. The ancestor's legacy may have made the place more abundant, or, just as likely, her influence helps you to appreciate the abundance there more deeply.
- ◆ In addition to the place's existing prompt for gathering awareness, you can also pay a moment of awareness to honor your ancestor to gather awareness there.



Persons Deck

Card	Archetype	Meaning	Concepts
King of Clubs	The Priest	Mastery of Spiritual Life	Ecstatic prophet, ritualist, hierophant, psychopomp, thaumaturge
Queen of Clubs	The Healer	Mastery of Spiritual Life	Doctor, seeress, witch, herbalist, wise woman
Jack of Clubs	The Seeker	Pursuit of Spiritual Life	Disciple, apprentice magician, ascetic, pilgrim, monk
King of Hearts	The Ambassador	Mastery of Emotional Life	Diplomat, big man, mediator, trader, herald
Queen of Hearts	The Grandmother	Mastery of Emotional Life	Matriarch, counselor, clan elder, matchmaker, midwife
Jack of Hearts	The Adventurer	Pursuit of Emotional Life	Champion, daredevil, romantic, explorer, rebel
King of Diamonds	The Guardian	Mastery of Physical Life	Berserker, experienced scout, protector, warchief, pillar of the community
Queen of Diamonds	The Huntress	Mastery of Physical Life	Amazon, hunter, provider, beast master, wild woman
Jack of Diamonds	The Apprentice	Pursuit of Physical Life	Student, tenderfoot, prodigy, innovator, craftsman
King of Spades	The Teacher	Mastery of Mental Life	Philosopher, mentor, scholar, logician, recluse
Queen of Spades	The Storyteller	Mastery of Mental Life	Bard, lorekeeper, artist, griot, musician
Jack of Spades	The Scientist	Pursuit of Mental Life	Researcher, investigator, tinkerer, empiricist, inventor
Red Joker	The Magician	Transgression of Traditional Life	Wizard, sorcerer, shapeshifter, warlock, mystic
Black Joker	The Fool	Subversion of Traditional Life	Trickster, wise fool, village idiot, comic relief, clown (sacred or otherwise)

Places Deck: Clubs

Set	Card	Description	Questions
Otherworldly Places Make a promise to someone who lives here to gather awareness.	2	Portal to the Other World	<i>At the start of the first encounter here, ask:</i> To what other world does this place connect? <i>Learning this place's name unlocks:</i> What does the other world want from you?
	3	The Magician's Hut	<i>At the start of the first encounter here, ask:</i> What kind of power dwells here? <i>Learning this place's name unlocks:</i> What debt do you owe?
	4	Place of Restless Spirits	<i>At the start of the first encounter here, ask:</i> What haunts this place? <i>Learning this place's name unlocks:</i> What torments you?
Honored Places Make an offering to gather awareness.	5	Abode of the Spirits	<i>At the start of the first encounter here, ask:</i> What manner of spirits make their home here? <i>Learning this place's name unlocks:</i> What do the spirits want from you?
	6	Natural Wonder	<i>At the start of the first encounter here, ask:</i> What makes this place so astonishing? <i>Learning this place's name unlocks:</i> What do you believe in?
	7	Shrine	<i>At the start of the first encounter here, ask:</i> What do you honor at this shrine? <i>Learning this place's name unlocks:</i> Whom do you serve?
Sacred Places Perform a religious ceremony to gather awareness.	8	Heart of the Wild	<i>At the start of the first encounter here, ask:</i> How did this survive the old world unscathed? <i>Learning this place's name unlocks:</i> What do you fear in yourself?
	9	Consecrated Ground	<i>At the start of the first encounter here, ask:</i> What makes this place sacred? <i>Learning this place's name unlocks:</i> What do you hold sacred?
	10	Axis Mundi	<i>At the start of the first encounter here, ask:</i> What marks this as the center of the universe? <i>Learning this place's name unlocks:</i> What does your life revolve around?

Places Deck: Hearts

Set	Card	Description	Questions
Melancholy Places Express your sadness to gather awareness.	2	Desolation	<i>At the start of the first encounter here, ask:</i> Why does so little grow here? <i>Learning this place's name unlocks:</i> What do you grieve for?
	3	Solitude	<i>At the start of the first encounter here, ask:</i> What makes this place so secluded? <i>Learning this place's name unlocks:</i> When do you feel alone?
	4	Ruin	<i>At the start of the first encounter here, ask:</i> What stood here before it fell into ruin? <i>Learning this place's name unlocks:</i> What have you lost?
Unquiet Places Spot an impending danger to gather awareness.	5	Watchtower	<i>At the start of the first encounter here, ask:</i> What here does your family keep vigil over? <i>Learning this place's name unlocks:</i> What makes you wary?
	6	An Ominous Place	<i>At the start of the first encounter here, ask:</i> What frightens you about this place? <i>Learning this place's name unlocks:</i> What do you fear?
	7	Scout's Nest	<i>At the start of the first encounter here, ask:</i> Why do your scouts camp here? <i>Learning this place's name unlocks:</i> What worries you?
Joyful Places Express your joy to gather awareness.	8	Playground	<i>At the start of the first encounter here, ask:</i> What sort of games do you play here? <i>Learning this place's name unlocks:</i> What brings you joy?
	9	Overlook	<i>At the start of the first encounter here, ask:</i> What can you see from here? <i>Learning this place's name unlocks:</i> What fills you with awe?
	10	Tryst	<i>At the start of the first encounter here, ask:</i> Whom would you hope to meet here? <i>Learning this place's name unlocks:</i> Whom do you love?

Places Deck: Diamonds

Set	Card	Description	Questions
Dangerous Places Express your sadness to gather awareness.	2	A Predator's Territory	<i>At the start of the first encounter here, ask:</i> What predator claims this place? <i>Learning this place's name unlocks:</i> Do you think of yourself as predator or prey?
	3	Ambush Site	<i>At the start of the first encounter here, ask:</i> What makes this a good spot for an ambush? <i>Learning this place's name unlocks:</i> What threatens you?
	4	Contested Ground	<i>At the start of the first encounter here, ask:</i> What disagreement revolves around this place? <i>Learning this place's name unlocks:</i> What enemies do you have?
Abundant Places Spot an impending danger to gather awareness.	5	Hunting Ground	<i>At the start of the first encounter here, ask:</i> What sort of animals do you hunt here? <i>Learning this place's name unlocks:</i> What nourishes you?
	6	Watering Hole	<i>At the start of the first encounter here, ask:</i> Where does the water here come from? <i>Learning this place's name unlocks:</i> What sustains you?
	7	Garden	<i>At the start of the first encounter here, ask:</i> What sort of plants do you grow here? <i>Learning this place's name unlocks:</i> What must you protect?
Creative Places Express your joy to gather awareness.	8	A Place for Making Tools	<i>At the start of the first encounter here, ask:</i> What sort of tools do you make here? <i>Learning this place's name unlocks:</i> What help do you need?
	9	A Place for Making Art	<i>At the start of the first encounter here, ask:</i> What sort of art do you make here? <i>Learning this place's name unlocks:</i> What beauty within you must you express?
	10	A Place for Making Luxuries	<i>At the start of the first encounter here, ask:</i> What sort of luxuries do you make here? <i>Learning this place's name unlocks:</i> What makes you feel wealthy?

Places Deck: Spades

Set	Card	Description	Questions
Mysterious Places Express your sadness to gather awareness.	2	Cave	<i>At the start of the first encounter here, ask:</i> What shaped this cave? <i>Learning this place's name unlocks:</i> How do you relate to the earth?
	3	Ancient Mystery	<i>At the start of the first encounter here, ask:</i> What mystery of the old world do you find here? <i>Learning this place's name unlocks:</i> What do you wish you knew about the past?
	4	Natural Mystery	<i>At the start of the first encounter here, ask:</i> What do you find here out of the ordinary? <i>Learning this place's name unlocks:</i> What makes you curious?
Unforgotten Places Spot an impending danger to gather awareness.	5	Archive	<i>At the start of the first encounter here, ask:</i> How does this place record your family's history? <i>Learning this place's name unlocks:</i> What do you think of your family's history?
	6	Burial Site	<i>At the start of the first encounter here, ask:</i> Who lies buried here? <i>Learning this place's name unlocks:</i> What does death mean to you?
	7	Monument	<i>At the start of the first encounter here, ask:</i> What does this monument commemorate? <i>Learning this place's name unlocks:</i> How would you like others to remember you?
Storied Places Express your joy to gather awareness.	8	A Secret Meeting Place	<i>At the start of the first encounter here, ask:</i> What secret society convenes here? <i>Learning this place's name unlocks:</i> How do you relate to this secret society?
	9	Historical Site	<i>At the start of the first encounter here, ask:</i> What happened here? <i>Learning this place's name unlocks:</i> What does the past mean to you?
	10	A Gallery	<i>At the start of the first encounter here, ask:</i> What sort of paintings do you find here? <i>Learning this place's name unlocks:</i> What does this art mean to you?

“I don’t see it.”

Most **ritual phrases** only have an effect during encounters, so we’ll cover them in more depth when we get to that part of the rules, but we have one that you can use even during family and character creation: **“I don’t see it.”**

Say **“I don’t see it”** any time someone contributes something that you don’t think fits the Fifth World, doesn’t strike the right tone, or pushes you too hard. You can offer an explanation or not, as you like. You might stop to discuss what happened or not. The other person must amend what she said. You can say **“I don’t see it”** to that, too, and keep using it until you find something that everyone likes.

Everyone should feel free to use this phrase as often as they like. Particularly early on in your game it will help your group to find a fun, fruitful space together. You’ll need to make good use of this ritual phrase to fulfill the first agenda, to **see the Fifth World together**.

CREATING A FAMILY

States, empires, and corporations died out centuries ago. In the Fifth World, the extended family forms the basic sovereign unit. Some families live as bands of hunter-gatherers, while others might live in small villages, but all conceive of themselves, first and foremost, as a family. In fact, they understand the whole world in terms of kinship. Nothing matters more than family and land, and with bonds of kinship tying the land to the family, the distinction between the two can become rather blurry.

In *The Fifth World* roleplaying game, you play members of a single family making a living together. Making a family can take some time, but they play a very important role in the game. We spend relatively little time coming up with individual characters who belong to the family.

You play the family that has claimed the area where you live as their territory four hundred years from now. They might descend from climate refugees who fled poleward, or from your own stubborn descendants who refused to leave, or a little bit of both. Think of who would have the best chance of survival. That usually has little to do with weapons or bunkers, and much more to do with strong community bonds and a willingness to look out for one another. Those people most likely become the ancestors of your family in the Fifth World. We’ll follow their history through four eras from the near future to the Fifth World.

Four Eras

Each era poses a question. For example, the first era asks, “What did your ancestors do?” Below that question, it shows a spectrum with “Pioneer” on one side and “Survive” on the other. For each of these questions, no one ever truly lived by practicing one strategy to the exclusion of the other. The truth always lies somewhere in between. Many leaned more heavily towards one or the other. In this case, some families descend from ancestors who had a very strong idea of the future they wanted to create, while others descend from ancestors who had very few plans besides making it through the day.

In the first era, you’ll start by placing a marker in the middle of the spectrum. If you live in an urban area, push it one space to the left. If you live in a rural area, push it one space to the right. If you wouldn’t describe the area where

you live as either urban or rural, leave it in the middle space.

Now, each of you will take a turn pushing the marker one space to the left, one space to the right, or leaving it in its current place. Whichever you choose to do, you must provide a reason for it – and a different one than any of your friends.

For example, while considering the first era, you might talk about a transition town, militia group, hippie commune, ecovillage, separatist movement, or permaculture community in your area and push the marker to the right towards “Pioneer.” Or you might talk about the lack of local disaster preparedness as you push the marker to the left towards “Survive.” You might reinforce why the marker belongs right where it lies with another line of reasoning. Whichever one you choose, you must add a new reason.

When everyone has taken a turn, where do you end up? If you end in one of the

Writing Good Customs

Your family customs will define a lot of the game, so take your time with them, especially for a saga. Good customs suggest something that a member of the family could pursue or dedicate her life to, like a group to join, a calling to follow, or a prestige to earn.

Balancing out the values that your customs reflect will give you access to more questions, whereas focusing on one or two customs will give you the ability to ask one or two questions much more often. Do you want to have a wider variety of options available to you, or do you want to have the opportunity to really focus on one thing? Which one better reflects the family you see developing?

three middle spaces, you landed between the two extremes. If you end in one of the two spaces on the left or one of the two spaces on the right, you land on that side of the spectrum. This will determine the prompts you'll answer to determine your family's customs.

Two Customs

Each side instructs you to describe a custom that your family adopted during this era. If your family chose one side over the other, you'll come up with two customs that answer that side's prompt. If you placed yourself somewhere in the

middle, you'll describe one custom for each side.

When you describe a custom, choose which **value** this custom reflects — **compassion, fairness, loyalty, honor, or purity**. Then provide a name for the family ancestor associated with that custom.

Discovering Place Names

When you have two customs from the era, pull a card from the place deck and discover its name. Locate it somewhere in your family's territory (in about a 30 square mile radius, though you might

Values

Families across the Fifth World have five core values. Some families place more emphasis on one as opposed to another, even to the point of some families neglecting one or more of them altogether. Disagreements rage between families and between individuals on what these values mean, how one should live by them, and which ones should take priority. Nonetheless, at least in principle, most people can agree that these form the most basic, broad strokes of ethical life.

- ◆ **Compassion**, a concern for the well-being of others and a desire to alleviate suffering
- ◆ **Fairness**, a concern for justice and a desire to ensure that everyone receives what they deserve
- ◆ **Loyalty**, a concern for fidelity and a desire to know that you can depend on your fellows and they can depend on you
- ◆ **Honor**, a concern for respect and a desire to ensure that everyone treats each other with the dignity due to them
- ◆ **Purity**, a concern for pollution of all kinds, even social or spiritual pollution, and a desire to avoid corruption

expand to up to 90 square miles if you discover that your family relies more on hunting and gathering). Then ask:

- ◆ What story does this place tell in its geology?
- ◆ What story does this place tell in its ancient past?
- ◆ What story does this place tell in the Fifth World?
- ◆ What story does this place tell to our family?

Finally, answer: *What name evokes all of these stories?* If you can answer that question, then you have discovered the place's true name. Your family has become a little more rooted in their land. If you find that you can't, draw again and use the new card.

Once you've discovered its name, name an ancestor associated with that place as well.

The Next Era

You'll then move on to the next era. Put the marker in the same space in the next era that you ended on in the previous era. For example, if you ended in the second-to-rightmost space in the first era, set the marker in the second-to-rightmost space in the second era.

You'll each take a turn to either move the marker one space or keep it where it lies, providing a new reason for your decision, as you did in the previous era.

Native Place Names

Normally you have an opportunity to learn the true name of a place as a reward at the end of a session. However, if you know the actual name of a place in the original, indigenous language of the area you can write it down at any time – even before your first game.

Thus, if you belong to an indigenous nation and want to play your descendants in the Fifth World, you could start with a significant advantage, at a level of play that others would take at least 32 sessions to reach, because your family begins with the deep history and connection to place that other families would take generations to catch up to.

THE END OF THE OLD WORLD

Civilizations do not end all at once. First come recessions and then depressions. Food lines become food riots. The people who live through such days might remember some watershed moment that “changed everything,” but looking back you can see that it began a long time before that, and it kept on for a long time after that. Like the changing of the seasons, the old world passed, and a new world began.

What did your ancestors do?



SURVIVE

Your ancestors adapted as the old world fell apart. The experience left them skilled and pragmatic, but sometimes suspicious and hard.

What custom helped keep your family alive?

Examples

COMPASSION

We provide medicine and aid for the sick and injured.

FAIRNESS

We make peace between families.

LOYALTY

We have a process for initiating strangers into our family.

HONOR

We use song duels to settle our differences.

PURITY

We mostly keep to ourselves.

PIONEER

Your ancestors prepared for the end. You have a strong history, but their ideals could become a rigid ideology.

What custom have you preserved from the old world?

Examples

COMPASSION

We perform sky burials.

FAIRNESS

We have judges who settle disputes.

LOYALTY

We maintain the faith of our ancestors, and understand its true, animistic nature better than they did.

HONOR

We use football to settle our differences.

PURITY

We keep kosher.

THE RUSTING AGES

Where good soil remained, neofeudal kingdoms would arise, deplete it, and collapse in a generation or two. When they could no longer extract metal from the earth, the ruins became the mines for an age of warlords and slavers. As miserable as life became in areas such as these, however, in the forests others made a life for themselves beyond their reach, and began to renew ancient pacts of kinship.

What did your family do in the Rusting Ages?



WITHSTAND

Your family endured the worst horrors of the post-apocalyptic age. It has left you wary but fiercely independent.

What custom made you ungovernable?

Examples

COMPASSION

We share everything we have.

FAIRNESS

When someone boasts, we respond with mockery.

LOYALTY

We consider trying to coerce someone a betrayal of the family.

HONOR

We have a secret society that stops would-be rulers by any means necessary.

PURITY

We gossip constantly.

WITHDRAW

In the surviving wilds, the Rusting Ages seemed far away. You have a long history with your other-than-human kin.

What custom binds you to your other-than-human kin?

Examples

COMPASSION

At 12 a child fasts until some spirit agrees to become her guardian.

FAIRNESS

Each person belongs to a place, with the right and duty to sing its song.

LOYALTY

You become a wizard when an other-than-human animal becomes your familiar and teaches you its magic.

HONOR

Our clans cut across families of humans and other-than-human beings.

PURITY

Failing to make a clean kill pollutes a hunter, requiring a period of fasting.

THE NEW WORLD

As the Rusting Ages ended and the warlords began to die out, even those who had resisted throughout could no longer deny that the world had changed, and they would need to change with it. Some turned to hunting and gathering. Others grew forest gardens and formed small villages. In truth, though, even the most ardent foragers threw some seeds, and the villagers still needed hunters.

How do you make a living?



FORAGE

You gather wild plants and hunt animals. You have an intensely intimate knowledge of your territory.

What custom do you follow to pay back the people who feed you?

Examples

COMPASSION

If you orphan an animal, you must raise it as your own child.

FAIRNESS

We leave a choice part of each animal we hunt as a sacrifice to the scavengers.

LOYALTY

We burn meadows for ruminants to graze.

HONOR

When you eat an animal's flesh, you must tell the story of the hunt to honor its life, given to you.

PURITY

You must never eat the flesh of your clan animal; to do so would count as cannibalism.

GARDEN

You cultivate plants or raise animals to provide for yourselves – perhaps a food forest, a semi-feral herd, or elaborate gardens.

What custom do you follow to keep the land fertile and abundant?

Examples

COMPASSION

We have two village sites that we alternate between every ten years.

FAIRNESS

We collect our waste, process it as manure, and give it to our gardens as payment for the food it produces for us.

LOYALTY

Each garden belongs to a specific matrilineal line, responsible for its care.

HONOR

We plant guilds together: plants that support each other and help each other grow.

PURITY

Once harvested, a garden becomes unclean. Only leaving it fallow for a year can cleanse it.

SUCCESSION

Every family has its own legends about how their ancestors emerged from the old world and learned to make a living in this new one. Often that process meant that they owed a debt to those who saved them. Sometimes, a new generation realized that they had a greater responsibility to the world than simply surviving in it. Eventually, though, they each came to understand their purpose in this world.

What duty do you bear?



HEAL

Things fall apart, and entropy forever gnaws at the world. Your family pushes against that, healing the world, bringing back life and beauty.

What custom do you follow to keep the world alive?

Examples

COMPASSION

We consider the creation of art a sacred task that feeds the spirit of the world.

FAIRNESS

We support the Vulture Priests with food and supplies, so that they can focus on containing our ancestors' nuclear legacy.

LOYALTY

Some of us seek out unquiet places to try to heal them.

HONOR

We each make a pilgrimage to a far-off holy place to bring back new ideas.

PURITY

Mycomancers breed new strains of mushrooms to eat ancient pollution.

PROTECT

Your family does not merely dwell in this land. They live in a sacred place, and they bear a solemn duty to protect and preserve it.

What custom do you have about honoring and protecting sacred places?

Examples

COMPASSION

We prepare feasts at burial sites to share a meal with our ancestors.

FAIRNESS

No human may enter the heart of the wild.

LOYALTY

We frighten animals away from the pools where ancient drugs have drained and mixed together.

HONOR

Members of a secret society dress as monsters to scare trespassers away from sacred places.

PURITY

We guard the ruins and make sure that no one enters them.

CREATING A CHARACTER

Once you have a family, you can create characters who belong to that family. Over the course of a saga you may play several members of this family from generation to generation or even from session to session.

Each player will need a copy of the character sheet, printed out on two sides of a single sheet of paper. You can fold the paper in half to create a booklet, which you can add to later on as your family unlocks new bundles.

To create your character, you'll begin by choosing a **card**, a **custom**, and a **name**.

Card

Choosing your **card** from the persons deck first can help you narrow down a broad, general concept into a unique character. Each suit represents a different aspect of life, so you can choose the *kind* of character you want to play. Then you can choose whether you want to play someone who has *mastered* that area of life (a king or queen), someone still *pursuing* mastery in that area (a jack), or someone who *subverts* or *transgresses* against it (a joker). The card will provide five concepts that you could use for your character, which may help you then decide her custom and how she relates to it, and her name.

Custom

You might instead start with your character she relates to her family by picking a custom. Pick one of your family's eight customs that your character has a particularly strong relationship with. Then decide on the nature of that relationship: does she **embody** that custom, **aspire to** it, **rebel against** it, or **subvert** it? That relationship might suggest a card and name, by first knowing how she fits into her family.

Name

If you already have an idea for a character, you might want to start with a **name**. Names in the Fifth World verb more than noun – they describe something important about the person. The right name, then, can establish a great deal about your character and her personality, which will help you decide her custom and how she relates to it, and her card.

Value

Once you have your name, custom, and card, choose which value you hold in the highest regard.

- ◆ If you **aspire to** or **embody** a custom, you hold the value associated with that custom in the highest regard.
- ◆ If you **rebel against** or **subvert** a custom, then you must pick any of the four values *other than* that custom's value to hold in the highest regard.

Age

Set your character's age by filling in dots on the aging track. Each dot represents about twelve years of life, and will place you as a child (0 or 1), young adult (2 or 3), mature adult (4-6), or elder (7-10).

Family Tree

Place yourself on the family tree, either related to someone else, or by adding your mother, father, and yourself.

Playing Close to Home

We can play *The Fifth World* as an imaginative exercise and nothing more, but it delivers its greatest rewards to those willing to play *close to home*. That begins with creating characters who deal with issues and problems that resonate with you on a personal level. Picking things that seem interesting can lead you to see your character from a cerebral, abstract distance. You might find it hard to really slip into her skin and see the world as she sees it, think as she thinks, and feel as she feels. If you invest her with some of your own problems and struggles, though, you'll more often find a deep, visceral connection to her.

You can't tell where her path will lead, though. You can't always tell who she'll meet, and you can never tell what might happen when she meets them. The tension of play comes from that uncertainty – your willingness to put what you care about on the table and see what happens. It requires honesty and vulnerability, but it can reward you with moments of incredible catharsis and even triumph.

This sort of play does require a commitment from everyone at the table to see it through. You should all know when you begin that you want to play this kind of game. The ritual phrase “**I don't see it**” plays an important role in this type of play. Use it as often as you like, especially early in your game, to establish the right tone for your group, what you want to see, and what you'd prefer to avoid. It will help all of you find a space you feel comfortable in together. You can also feel empowered to push for what your character wants, or what the Other wants, as hard as you like, knowing that if you go too far one of your fellow players will say “I don't see it” to rein you in.

Look

Finally, the character sheet provides a series of lists that establish your character's look and reputation. Choose one item from each of these lists.

Introduction

When you and each of your friends have finished making your characters, take turns introducing them. When you introduce your character, each of your friends will take turns asking a question about her, and you'll answer (so each of you will have an opportunity to ask a question about each other player's character).

When your turn comes to ask a question about another player's character, pick one from the list below or ask one of your own if you have a more pressing, personal, relevant, or provocative one to ask.

- ◆ Who broke your heart?
- ◆ Do you know where the nightmares come from?
- ◆ What do you regret?
- ◆ Whose respect do you feel compelled to earn?
- ◆ Do you consider yourself a good person?
- ◆ What did you do that you hope no one ever finds out about?
- ◆ Which secret society do you belong to?
- ◆ Why do so many people look up to you?
- ◆ Why do so many people hate you?
- ◆ What do you take pride in?

SETUP

1. Reprise a family whose saga you've already begun, or create a new one.
2. Reprise a character in this family that you've played before, or create a new one.
3. Decide on the length of the game you want to play. Each round generally takes about an hour.
 - ◆ Short: 2 rounds
 - ◆ Average: 3 rounds
 - ◆ Long: 4 rounds
 - ◆ Epic: 5 rounds
4. Separate a deck of playing cards into a **needs deck** (the four aces), a **persons deck** (the kings, queens, jacks, and jokers), and a **places deck** (the remaining 36 cards).
5. Each player takes a card from the persons deck to represent her character.
6. If you have a card for home, lay it out on the table. If not, simply leave an empty space to represent it.
7. Next, each player draws a card from the places deck. As always when pulling from the places deck, you can call the name of any named place to pull that card from the deck and then shuffle the deck. Lay your card next to home or the other drawn places card, forming a row of places.
8. Place one moment of awareness on each place laid out in the row.
9. Deal one card from the persons deck, face down, above each of the places you have out.
10. Draw a card from the needs deck. This represents your family's current need. Interpret it together to decide what this means for the family right now. Write it down on the family needs sheet. Each player takes a turn describing how this situation has affected her character specifically.
11. Each player chooses where she will begin by placing her card beneath that place. You can choose to start in the same place as another player's character or not.
12. Choose a player to go first and then proceed sunwise (to the left).



Setup Example

Jason, Giuli, and Mike set up a game. Jason takes the Jack of Hearts (The Adventurer) to represent his character. Giuli takes the Red Joker (The Magician) to represent her character. Mike takes the King of Clubs (The Priest) to represent his. They each draw a place from the places deck. First Jason draws the Abode of the Spirits, then Giuli draws the Ancient Mystery, and finally Mike draws the Garden. This creates a row of four cards, including home. They deal out one person card, face down, above each of these places, leaving the remaining person deck to the left of that new row. Below that, they put the places deck, and the needs deck below that. They place one moment of awareness on each place card in the row.

Jason puts his character at Home, as does Mike. Giuli decides to start at the Ancient Mystery that she drew.

Who Goes First?

If you don't have any other method for choosing the first player, choose the player with the youngest character. People in the Fifth World consider it a common trope in stories for young people to cause trouble that their elders then have to clean up.

If you don't like that method – or if you can't decide which player has the youngest character – the player with the highest card goes first.

1. Jack of Clubs: The Seeker
2. Jack of Hearts: The Adventurer
3. Jack of Diamonds: The Apprentice
4. Jack of Spades: The Scientist
5. Black Joker: The Fool
6. Red Joker: The Magician
7. King of Clubs: The Priest
8. King of Hearts: The Ambassador
9. King of Diamonds: The Guardian
10. King of Spades: The Teacher
11. Queen of Clubs: The Healer
12. Queen of Hearts: The Grandmother
13. Queen of Diamonds: The Huntress
14. Queen of Spades: The Storyteller

ENCOUNTERS

The game plays out in a series of **rounds**, in which you and your friends take turns setting **encounters** between your character and someone else — **the Other**. From encounter to encounter your role will shift. Sometimes you'll play your character, and sometimes you'll play the Other. Sometimes you'll act as the audience, and sometimes you'll answer **questions** and establish the truth about the world and the story. Throughout, you'll use **ritual phrases** to affect the story.

Starting an Encounter

Each time you start an encounter, follow these steps:

1. Your character's card lies below a place card. Your encounter happens at that place. Begin by using the ritual phrase, "**It happened at «place name».**" If you know the name of the place, use that. If not, the descriptor on the card (like "a natural wonder" or "the monument") will suffice.
2. If we haven't yet seen an encounter at this place in this game, answer the place's **introductory question**. Describe what we see, hear, smell, and feel here. Help us to see the Fifth World together. After we've spent a few moments placing ourselves there, decide who you will encounter here.
3. Choose **the Other**. You can encounter anyone present at the place with you. Other person cards with yours below the place card all represent

possibilities. If the place has a face-down person card above it, you can draw it to have a **random encounter**.

4. Assign roles (see below).

Random Encounter

If you'd like to have a random encounter, draw the person card currently face-down above the place. Its suit and value will suggest something of this person's character. First, answer:

Do you encounter a human person or an other-than-human person?

If you answer *human*, answer:

How does she relate to you?

This does not necessarily imply that you have a relationship. You could answer, "I've never seen her before in my life," establishing that she relates to you as a stranger.

If you answered *other-than-human*, answer:

What form does she take?

Tell us what we see when this person comes into view. Do we see a bear, a tree, a mountain, or a storm? Or does she take a form that we can't see at all — a story, an idea, or an absence, perhaps?

Assign Roles

Once you've established the identity of the Other, choose someone to play her. Players who have characters present at that place might get involved in what happens, so you'll generally want to pick someone else to play the Other if you can. If you can't, perhaps because you've all come together in the same place, the

character of the person who plays the Other might still appear, but won't play an important role in the encounter about to happen.

The player starting the encounter will play her own character. The encounter focuses on her and the Other. Everyone else might play their own characters as secondary characters if present, other

secondary characters who might appear, or the audience. The player starting the encounter should make these roles clear at the beginning.

Playing Your Character

When your turn comes to start an encounter, you'll set one up between your

Choosing the Other

One of the most important rules in the game lies hidden in that sentence above: "You can encounter anyone present at the place with you." People in the Fifth World see the world as animists. They don't think that *everything* counts as a person, but they do have different criteria for personhood, such that *anything could*. In fact, we get closer to the point by speaking of personing as a verb, something that one *does* rather than something that one *is*.

To person means to relate. Persons have relationships. They communicate, trade, give and receive gifts, and participate in ceremonies — in short, they relate to other persons.

Of course human beings person all the time, as do other-than-human animals. Plants communicate with scents and the sounds they make. They give gifts and receive them and participate in rituals. Likewise, some stones impress us with their character and personality, drawing us into relationships with them. So do weather patterns and other complex systems.

Places will speak to you if you can quiet your mind long enough to listen. They give gifts and receive them and participate in rituals. So when you choose a person present with you, you could choose the place itself.

If your temper has ever gotten the better of you, if you've ever struggled with your inner demons, if you've ever fallen under a story's spell, if you've ever felt overwhelmed by love, then you've experienced first-hand how you can have a relationship with parts of yourself. You bring them with you, so you can always find them present at the place with you. You can encounter your fear, your depression, your love, the story that drives you, your inner demons, or your own heart.

character and someone else – the Other. We'll focus on this encounter between the two of you, with you playing your own character and another player of your choice playing the Other. We know at least something about each of you, and you both have needs that drive you. Every time you encounter another person, the potential exists that she might change you, or you might change her, or both. What will happen with this one? We play to find out.

When you play your own character, you have the goal of making her seem real. Try to get into her skin, see the world as she would see it, think as she would think, and feel as she would feel. She might make mistakes, she might not know what you know, and her feelings, prejudices, ignorance, temper, hope, despair, naïveté, innocence, cruelty, or anything else might get the better of her, but she wants to succeed. If you find yourself hoping that she fails, you might have stayed behind playing the audience instead of playing your character. Good encounters come from both the primary character and the Other trying as best

they can to fulfill their needs. Take that feeling as a warning, and respond by digging deeper into your character to find your connection to her.

Playing the Other

When you play the Other, begin by drawing a card from the needs deck. This will give you a broad category for the need driving the Other. You might only have some basic facts about the person you play, but use those facts to zero in on something more specific. For example, if the Other takes the form of a bear and you draw diamonds, you might conclude that the bear wants food. Make sure you have the Other's need clear in your mind, and then introduce her as the main character would see her (or experience her, in the case of some less-corporeal persons) as she acts on that need.

Whenever you play a character other than your own, you have the goal of making her seem real. Take everything we know about her (which sometimes might not give you very much at all) and portray her as a real person. However,

Strange Needs

If it falls to you to play a bear, drawing diamonds gives you a clear cue, but what about hearts, or spades? What kind of mental needs does a bear have? These less obvious combinations will challenge you to dig deeper into an animist view of the world, but you'll find good answers even for what might seem at first like the most unlikely combinations. Visit the Fifth World website, and <https://thefifthworld.com/rpg/encounter/roles/other> in particular, for help and guidance.

you cannot make decisions for her. The skill in playing the Other (or any secondary character that doesn't belong to you) lies in portraying a character while stopping short of making any decisions for her. You can tell us about things she says and does, so long as they follow from what we already know and do not constitute a substantive decision. If you reach the point where she must make a decision one way or another, someone needs to ask a question or make an appeal.

The Other's need counts as something you know about her. You chose the specifics of it, but the cards pointed you in one direction or another. Even if the Other wants to keep her need a secret for some reason, a perceptive person might see through the charade.

If other players spend awareness to ask questions, you must answer truthfully. Not all questions will speak directly to the need you chose, but if it does, answer the question truthfully. Don't worry about creating a puzzle or making sure that your friends can't guess too easily which card you drew. Even when you try to communicate it as clearly as possible, you'll find it sometimes difficult to do so. You don't need to try to make it harder.

Encountering Other Main Characters

You can encounter other players' characters as the Other. None of the above changes, but you do have a few more restrictions. Your card and hers must both appear at the same place, per the normal rules. She must play her own character as the Other. No one else gets

to take over her character because you choose to encounter her.

When someone chooses to encounter your character, you still draw a card from the needs deck. This represents your present need. We might have just seen you in an encounter focused on solving a mystery, learning about a place, or talking to someone, but needs can shift quickly. If you draw clubs, perhaps the spiritual ramifications of recent events suddenly weighs on you. If you draw hearts, perhaps you have a sudden rush of emotion that you find difficult to contain. If you draw diamonds, perhaps you suddenly become hungry or thirsty or tired. If you draw spades, perhaps your efforts to put it all together and understand what has happened leaves you feeling lost and confused. You can try to connect the card you draw to the existing narrative, but if you find it difficult, remember that things can change quickly. Don't feel like you can't introduce a sudden shift.

Unlike playing other characters, you *can* make decisions for your own character, even as the Other.

Playing a Secondary Character

If an encounter occurs with your character present, you might play a role in it as a secondary character. She remains your character, and so you can make decisions for her, but remember that the encounter focuses on the character played by the person who started it and the Other. You only play a supporting role in this. Don't take up too much time or space. You can help, though, by spending your own awareness on other characters'

behalf. You can also ask questions if you appear in an encounter, even as a secondary character.

You might also play some other character. These characters don't play a central role in the encounter, either, so they should take up even less time and space than your own character in this role, though they may still perform an important function in the encounter. As when you play the Other, your goal lies in taking what we know about her and portraying her like a real person. **You cannot make decisions for her**, but you should portray her as we know her as best you can.

Playing the Audience

Sometimes you won't have any characters in an encounter. Nonetheless, you'll play an important part in it – as the audience.

When you play the audience, your goal lies in making the story interesting. People playing their own characters can change the story by telling us what they say and do. People playing other characters can influence the story by how they portray those characters, but ultimately those characters will not make any meaningful decisions unless we spend awareness to ask a question or we make an appeal. As the audience, you have a means of introducing new elements much more easily: by asking a leading question.

As audience, you can ask any question at any time. Here you really have an opportunity to focus on asking questions and building on the answers, and those questions can establish new elements in the encounter. If you ask, "How did you lose your footing?" the fact that the main character lost her footing becomes established, and she gets to tell us how it happened, and then what she does next.

Mana

The distinction between *portraying* and *making decisions for* a secondary character can, at times, seem slippery. Consider the Polynesian concept of *mana*, misunderstood by Victorian anthropologists as a sort of mystical force (and used in many games with that understanding), but really more concerned with the amazing ability that we have to affect the world around us. When playing secondary characters, you can tell us what they say and do so long as their words and actions remain unmanaful. Manaful words and actions – those that will really change things – can't come from your decision alone. The main characters have *mana* – in fact, that *mana* makes them the main characters of this story – but secondary characters only have as much *mana* as we can invest in them by spending awareness.

Don't simply tell us about things that happen as the audience, though. By asking a question, even a leading one, you take authorship of one part of the event but leave the other part for the other players in the encounter. This split plays a key role in keeping the story wild.

You should keep the agenda and principles in mind throughout the game, but they become especially important when you play the audience. Ask questions that further the agenda and follow the principles.

Ritual Phrases

During an encounter you will use certain ritual phrases to make things happen. They have restrictions on when and under what conditions you can use them.

"I don't see it."

Who can use it: Anyone

When you can use it: Any time. This ritual phrase differs from the others in that anyone can use it at any time, even outside of encounters or before the regular game begins during family and character creation.

What it does: The last thing that someone said didn't happen. They can try again by changing something about it or approaching it differently. Everyone at the table should feel free to use this ritual phrase liberally. Particularly early in a game this ritual phrase can help a group find a comfortable space to play together. Use it to veto elements that make the story too dark, too post-apocalyptic, too silly, or anything else that

doesn't seem like the Fifth World. You'll need to make good use of this ritual phrase to pursue the first agenda, to see the Fifth World together.



“It happened at «place name».”

Who can use it: Varies.

When you can use it: Varies.

What it does: Outside of an encounter, the player who has the next turn to start an encounter says “It happened at «place name»” to start the encounter.

During an encounter, any player can repeat “It happened at «place name».” If you do so, you must remain silent until the encounter ends. You cannot contribute anything further to it. When a second player confirms that the encounter has ended by repeating the ritual phrase a third time, the encounter ends.

Complete the ritual phrase with the name of the place where it happens. If you’ve learned the place’s true name, use that. If you haven’t learned it yet, the card descriptor (e.g., the Magician’s Hut or Solitude) will suffice.

“That sounds difficult.”

Who can use it: Anyone except the person playing the main character.

When you can use it: In response to the person playing the main character describing her character doing something difficult.

What it does: In order to do the thing she described, the person playing the main character must spend a moment of awareness. If she cannot, then she cannot do the thing she said and must change it.

As always when spending a moment of awareness, someone playing a character

present in the encounter can help by spending awareness on her behalf, which would allow her to accomplish the thing she described. Provide some description of how you provide help.

“...very difficult.”

Who can use it: Anyone except the person playing the main character and the person who just said “That sounds difficult.”

When you can use it: In response to the ritual phrase, “That sounds difficult.”

What it does: In order to do the thing the person playing the main character described, she must spend *another* moment of awareness.

Effectively this increases the cost to two moments of awareness, but the player pays each one separately, and all the rules about spending a moment of awareness (like helping) apply to each one separately.

“That sounds dangerous.”

Who can use it: Anyone except the person playing the main character.

When you can use it: In response to the person playing the main character describing her character doing something dangerous.

What it does: In order to do the thing she described, the person playing the main character risks a **scar**.

When you risk a scar, you can either spend a moment of awareness to avoid harm or take the scar. If you don’t have

any awareness left, you have no choice but to take the scar.

When you take a scar, cross off one of the slots for awareness on your character sheet. You cannot fill this slot, meaning that your maximum capacity for awareness has dropped by one. You lose any awareness that you might have had in that slot.

You can run out of awareness, but if your *capacity* for awareness drops to zero, your character loses her ability to affect the world any further – usually meaning she has died.

“...very dangerous.”

Who can use it: Anyone except the person playing the main character and the person who just said “That sounds dangerous.”

When you can use it: In response to the ritual phrase, “That sounds dangerous.”

What it does: In order to do the thing the person playing the main character described, she must make a choice. Either she can risk a second scar, *or* she can guess either *black* or *red* and then draw a card from the needs deck.

- ◆ If she guessed correctly, nothing happens – she doesn’t take a scar and doesn’t have to spend awareness.
- ◆ If she guessed incorrectly, she risks another scar (so she must either spend awareness or take a scar) and *then she must make the same choice again.*

Example

Giuli describes her character, Narluga, diving into the ocean to spear a whale. Wayne says, “That sounds dangerous,” so Giuli pays a point of awareness to avoid the scar. Mike says, “...very dangerous.” To avoid losing more awareness, Giuli decides to gamble. She guesses black, but she pulls hearts. She pays a second point of awareness to avoid the scar. Now she’s run out of awareness, and realizing that she might get pulled quickly into a terrible escalation, she decides to risk the scar to end it there. Unfortunately, she has no awareness left, so she must take the scar, reducing her maximum capacity to four awareness instead of five. “Well, yeah,” Giuli says, “I guess diving into the ocean to spear a whale could get you into some trouble, huh?”

This can lead to drawing from the needs deck while the person playing the Other has one of the needs cards. If this happens, that player should remember

Healing Scars

When you reprise a character you’ve played before in a saga game, you can heal one scar from any other character that you’ve played before. That means that when you let a character rest for a game, she’ll recover from a scar. Characters with five scars cannot heal any of them.

which card she has and shuffle it into the needs deck for this. Then, when you have resolved the ritual phrase, she can take the card back out again. Always pull from the needs deck with all four cards in it.

“I appeal to [her] [spirit/heart/body/mind].”

Who can use it: The person playing the main character.

When you can use it: During an encounter

What it does: Complete the ritual phrase with a pronoun referring to the Other and your guess as to the Other’s need: whether she has a spiritual need (clubs; “I appeal to her spirit.”), an emotional need (hearts; “I appeal to her heart.”), a physical need (diamonds; “I appeal to her body.”), or a mental need (spades; “I appeal to her mind.”). Describe how you do this. The other players should ask you if you forget.

If you guess the Other’s need correctly, you can convince her to take solid action – to do something or say something that you want her to do or say. You have satisfied her need, and she will give you what you need in return.

If you guess the right *color* but not the right *suit* exactly (e.g., you appeal to her body, but she actually had emotional needs – hearts instead of diamonds, but both red suits), you can spend a moment of awareness to succeed anyway.

If you guess incorrectly, the person playing the Other selects a **setback** that occurs. This can involve the Other making

a decision. Responding to this ritual phrase provides an exception to the rule that the person playing the Other cannot make decisions for her, if the person playing the main character guesses incorrectly and the Other must make that decision for the chosen setback to occur.

The setbacks that you can choose include:

- ◆ **Offended:** You offend someone, which could make future encounters difficult (e.g., other players should feel free to use the ritual phrase, “That sounds difficult” more frequently than usual and for things that normally wouldn’t seem difficult at all).
- ◆ **Tasked:** Someone demands you do something for her. You’ll offend her if you don’t do it.
- ◆ **Strained:** You must pay one moment of awareness, if you have any.
- ◆ **Imperiled:** The situation becomes dangerous. Another player could escalate the situation further by saying “... very dangerous.”
- ◆ **Lost:** You get lost. When the encounter ends, draw a new place randomly from the place deck and go there. You cannot use your normally-available option to call out the name of a named place when you draw from the place deck when you get lost.

Asking Questions

When the story begins, we have no idea where it will take us. We have total freedom, but only because we know nothing. As we learn what happens, that

freedom diminishes and the story takes shape. By the time we finish, we have lost all of the freedom we began with, and in exchange we have learned the story fully. We call this *hunting the wild story*. Each track or sign brings you closer to the story. We can rush through it too quickly and miss that experience of freedom and the tension of not knowing that comes with it. We defer answers to avoid that. If we don't learn anything, though, we never find the story. We ask questions and build on the answers to avoid that. The challenge lies in learning how to ask questions that will close in on the story, but not too quickly, and leave it enough space to remain wild.

While we constantly ask questions in play, the truth of those answers remains negotiable until we spend awareness to ask one of a specific set of questions. These questions carry more weight than the others. Their answers establish truths in our story and move us closer to discovering its true form.

When your character appears in an encounter, either as the main character or as a secondary character, you can spend awareness to ask any of the following questions:

- ◆ What do you wish I would do?
- ◆ How do you really feel?
- ◆ What have I overlooked?
- ◆ What do you intend to do?

Additionally, the value that your character holds in the highest regard allows you to add an additional question to this list:

- ◆ **Compassion:** What pains you?
- ◆ **Fairness:** What do you deserve?
- ◆ **Loyalty:** Where do your loyalties lie?
- ◆ **Honor:** What do they think of you?
- ◆ **Purity:** What kind of pollution taints you?

Your family's customs offer a resource to ask questions from values that you don't hold as highly yourself. Mark an unmarked custom on your family sheet to ask the question associated with its value. To unmark a marked custom, go to home and spend awareness to make an offering to the ancestor associated with the custom.

If you've learned the true name of a place, that knowledge will unlock a new question that you can add to your list while there. Learning the names of places will expand the questions you can ask, which will make it easier for you to learn things.

Answering Questions

When you ask a question, you ask it *about* a character in the story. If you ask the person playing the Other, she'll try to use the answer to hint at the Other's need, but she'll have to answer the question honestly, which might make that difficult or even impossible. Not every question will really relate to every need, after all.

When you play the Other or a secondary character other than your own and another player spends awareness to ask you one of these questions, you can make a decision for that character (which, you'll recall, you normally can't).

Example

Giuli plays Narluga. She wants to convince a traveling wizard at the festival named Mandrake to give her some peppermint. Agreeing to the deal would count as a decision, so Wayne, playing Mandrake, can't make that decision for her. Giuli spends a point of awareness to ask, "What do you wish I would do?" Wayne answers, "Become my apprentice, so I can train you as a wizard." That establishes what Mandrake wants, so when Giuli offers her promise to come to Montreal and train under her, Wayne just portrays what we already know about Mandrake by giving her the peppermint in exchange for that promise.

Ending an Encounter

After an appeal, successful or not, an encounter will usually reach a conclusion quickly, though not always. In other encounters you may not make any appeal at all. Some encounters will simply give you the opportunity to show your character doing something or having a conversation with someone. Those encounters can matter just as much as one that culminates in an exciting appeal.

The encounter ends once two people have invoked the ritual phrase, "It happened at «place name»." Once that happens, you have a few things to take care of before the next player starts the next encounter.

1. Would you like to move to a new place? You can do so now. You can move to any place currently out on the table, or draw a new place from the places deck. As usual, you can call out the name of a named place to find it in the deck and draw it, and

then reshuffle the deck, rather than pulling the top card from the deck. Place it out in the row with the other places and put your character's card below it to indicate that you've gone there.

2. If the person whose encounter just ended moved, any other players with a character in the place she just left can choose to move with her to her new location.
3. Anyone who moves her character can bring one secondary character not played by anyone at the table with her when she moves.
4. If cards remain in the person's deck, deal out one face-down above any place that no longer has one, beginning at home and moving down the row.
5. Place one moment of awareness on each place. If the place has an ancestor, add two.

At the end of each round, take a short break before starting the next one. When you reach the end of the last round, go to the endgame.

ENDGAME

When you finish the final round of encounters, we have a few ceremonies to go through to end the game.

Check Family Needs

Go through each of the needs on the family needs sheet. For each one, ask, have we satisfied this need, or does it remain?

Character Questions

Start with the player who started the first encounter. Going sunwise (to the left), each other player says something she wonders about that player's character. Then, go to the next player and do the same thing, until each player has had a chance to say something they wonder about each other player's character.

You might write these down on your character sheet and use them as questions to explore in your next game, or simply leave them unanswered.

Discovering the Name of a Place

Do you have a place on the table that played an important part in the game you just finished, or that you learned a lot about, but you don't yet know its name? If so, you have an opportunity to discover its name now.

Every place tells a story. You can hear it if you pay attention. It tells its story in the way that things happen there, the way the light falls, the way the air moves, the way animals feel there, and the way plants grow. We sometimes have difficulty separating our own concerns from the story that a place tells through us. The true name of a place condenses that story down, like carbon pressed into diamond. It gestures to the whole story with just a few syllables. To those who know the place, the name evokes its spirit, its character, its essence. For many people in the Fifth World, these names evoke such power and presence that they might simply re-

cite lists of names, and in reciting them walk the paths in their mind and feel themselves there, immersed in those stories. You don't name places. They already have names. You *discover* them.

When you try to discover a place's name, ask:

- ◆ What story does this place tell in its geology?
- ◆ What story does this place tell in its ancient past?
- ◆ What story does this place tell in the Fifth World?
- ◆ What story does this place tell to our family?

Finally, answer: *What name evokes all of these stories?* If you can answer that question, then you have discovered the place's true name. Your family has become a little more rooted in their land.

If not, don't worry. Discovering a place's true name takes a lot of subtlety and patience. Keep at it. You won't learn your land in a single game or even a single generation, but the work goes ever on.

SAGAS

A single game can provide an excellent night's entertainment, but you can also play an ongoing saga to see your family change and grow through generations. In a saga, you and your friends meet on a regular basis (weekly, biweekly, monthly – whatever suits your schedule) to reprise your characters (or add new ones) and play a series of games with the same family.

In a saga, each game reveals the story of your characters, but your characters' stories become part of the larger, inter-generational saga of your family dwelling in their land. You'll play other characters as your first one grows up, grows old, and eventually dies. At the start of each game you have the option to reprise a character you've played before or start a new one, so you can have multiple characters at the same time, too. You'll only play one character in a game, but you could switch from game to game.

Milestones

Milestones mark events in your family's story. Some of them will change the rules of your saga by unlocking new **bundles**. Others will mark your family's achievements and accomplishments.

Welcome to the Fifth World

CONDITIONS

Complete the first game in your family's saga.

UNLOCKS

The Knowledge bundle

Getting Things Done

CONDITIONS

Complete a game in which all of the players' characters help during a single encounter.

UNLOCKS

The Endeavors bundle

The Hunt Begins

REQUIRES

Welcome to the Fifth World

CONDITIONS

Complete a game in which someone has an encounter with an other-than-human

Missing Games

Roleplaying games require significant blocks of time. Even a short game can take as long as watching a movie. Hopefully you find it time well-spent with friends, but that doesn't make it any less significant an investment.

To play a Fifth World saga you don't need a group of friends who can commit to perfect attendance. In every game we focus on some members of the family (the characters of the people present), while other members of the family fade into the background. If you can't make it to game night, your character simply joins them as one of the family members that tonight's story doesn't focus on. When you return next time, you can pick right up again without a problem.

animal and accomplishes something very difficult and very dangerous.

UNLOCKS

The Hunt bundle

The Plot Thickens

CONDITIONS

Complete a game in which someone uses an appeal to get the Other to confess what she did.

UNLOCKS

The Mystery bundle

Wanderlust

CONDITIONS

At the end of the game have at least twice as many places on the table as players.

UNLOCKS

The Journey bundle

Turning the Wheel

REQUIRES

Getting Things Done, The Hunt Begins, The Plot Thickens, and Wanderlust

CONDITIONS

Members of your family must finish at least one endeavor, succeed on at least one hunt, solve at least one mystery, and return from at least one journey.

UNLOCKS

The Crisis bundle



BUNDLE

KNOWLEDGE

To people in the Fifth World knowledge about other people matters most: knowledge in the sense of “I know that person.”

When you play with the Knowledge bundle, each player has a Knowledge sheet with space for twelve people. This represents the limit on the number of people you can know. If you already know twelve people and want to get to know a thirteenth, you’ll need to choose one of the people you already know and erase them from your sheet to make room.

You can only get to know a person if you know her name.

For each of these persons, you have eight slots — two for each suit. These reflect different areas of knowledge: knowing about her spirit, knowing her emotions, knowing about her physical body, and knowing her mind. If you learn one thing for each suit you **know her**. When you encounter someone that you know, reveal a card from the needs deck. That eliminates one possibility, making it easier for you to guess her need.

If you learn a second thing about her for each suit, then you **know her well**. When you encounter someone that you know well, reveal *two* cards from the needs deck, making it even easier to guess her need. You still might get it wrong, though, since occasionally even the people you know best of all can surprise you.

When you add a Knowledge sheet to a character (either because you’ve created a new character or because you just unlocked the Knowledge bundle and haven’t played the character with the new rules yet), you can write down four things you know for each dot on your aging track.

Learning

You can write down something as knowledge when it becomes established as fact in the game. Mostly that requires asking questions. Conclusions or judgments that you draw from the answers to questions don’t count as knowledge, though. Neither does anything situational that could change in a day or two. It must tell you something about that person that will remain true for at least some time to come.

You can also use a successful appeal to get to know a person. Learn something about the domain of that person’s life that matches the suit of her need. For example, a person with spiritual needs can reveal something to you about her spirit, and a person with emotional needs can reveal something to you about her emotions.

When your character appears in an encounter and someone else learns something, you can spend awareness to learn it, too.

Teaching

If one player’s character encounters another and makes a successful appeal, she can teach one piece of knowledge for each moment of awareness she spends.

The other character can then learn those pieces of knowledge by spending a moment of awareness for each one.

Getting Help

People that you know can help you. If she doesn't belong to any player and appears in an encounter with you, describe how she helps and then mark the circle

below the first column of things you've learned about her. She'll give you a moment of awareness. If you know her well, you can mark the circle below the second column of things you know about her to gain her help a second time.

If you know another player's character you can use this benefit when you help her. That means that after

Learning Strategies

You might notice that the four basic questions you get to ask don't usually get you the answers you need to get to know someone. They give you hints about the Other's present need, which will help you make a successful appeal, but since her need can change from one encounter to the next it doesn't tell you something that will remain true for at least some time to come. They can help you succeed on an appeal, but that route means that you'll need a whole encounter to learn a single thing, so it will take four whole encounters to get to know someone (and probably more, since you probably won't always get the suit you need).

Your value's question provides a much better chance of learning something, but you only have one that you can ask freely. Don't forget that you can mark off family customs to ask other value questions. If your family has a good selection, you could ask several value questions and potentially get to know someone quickly. Your family customs only provide those extra questions as a shared resource, though, so you can't do that too often, and doing so diminishes everyone else's ability to do so.

The questions that you unlock by learning the true names of places generally work better for gaining knowledge, so if you want to gain knowledge you should start by learning the stories of places. That will help you learn names at the end of each session, which will unlock better questions for getting to know people.

Gaining knowledge snowballs. You'll need to aim carefully and find some clever ways in to gain knowledge early in your saga, but as you do so the knowledge you gain will make it easier to gain more.

spending awareness on her behalf, you'll gain awareness, meaning that you can effectively help her for free (so long as you have the awareness to spend to begin with). If you know her well, you can do this twice per game.

Changes to Setup

The knowledge bundle adds a new option to setup: when you choose cards for your characters (step #5), each player can spend a moment of awareness to take a card for a person that she knows something about. This allows her to choose which card represents that person and add her to the game from the beginning. Having already spent a moment of awareness before the first encounter, she begins play with one less moment of awareness than she would normally have.

BUNDLE

ENDEAVORS

Endeavors allow you to complete long-term or community efforts, like preparing for a festival, building a bridge or a new village, conducting research, or performing a ritual.

When you want to start an endeavor, first decide its appropriate scale (other players should remember to use "I don't see it" if the scale seems inappropriate for the intended effect).

The scale determines the amount of labor involved to complete it. Divide this among the four suits as spiritual labor, emotional labor, physical labor, and mental labor.

Getting to Know Places

Places often person, so you can get to know them. The restriction that you must know a person's name to get to know them means that you can only get to know a place after you've learned its true name. Afterwards, getting to know a place works just like getting to know anyone else.

Getting to know a place comes with an additional reward: the question that you unlocked by learning that place's name gets added to your list of questions, allowing you to spend awareness to ask it anywhere, just as you would the four base questions or your value's question.

When your character dies, she can become the ancestor connecting your family to one place that she knew well if it doesn't already have one.

Scale	Labor Involved
Small	3
Medium	5
Large	7
Massive	9
Enormous	11

Example

Wayne's character Mimus wants to prepare a new play for the upcoming festival, woven with subtle themes that will help solve many of the family's ongoing problems. Just preparing a play would probably only count as a small endeavor, but the added subtlety makes it a medium one, so it will take five labor. Wayne decides it will take at least one of each (spiritual labor to have a clear understanding of what he wants to achieve and how to do it, emotional labor to give the play the pathos it needs, physical labor for making props and costumes and setting up the stage, and mental labor to figure out plot, characters, and scene progression). He adds one more emotional labor, as he wants it to really affect his audience, so his play will require one spiritual labor, two emotional labor, one physical labor, and one mental labor.

When you start an encounter, you can describe how you fulfill one labor from an endeavor that matches the suit of the place (e.g., spiritual labor at clubs, emotional labor at hearts, physical labor at diamonds, or mental labor at spades). Other players might consider it difficult or dangerous, depending on what it involves. If you do it, mark one labor done for the endeavor. Home doesn't have a suit, and so you cannot work on your endeavors there. You might bring the

fruit of your endeavors home, but sitting around at home won't bring them any closer to completion.

BUNDLE HUNT

This bundle requires the Knowledge bundle.

People in the Fifth World hunt animals that provide them with food and the materials they need for clothing and shelter. They possess incredible skill, and for them such hunts make up a regular part of everyday life. Your character can provide for her needs, including hunting, without any particular effort or focus. The Hunt bundle allows you to go on a different sort of hunt, the hunts that you'll tell your children and grandchildren about, hunts for powerful, dangerous, or spectacular prey.

Changes to Setup

After each player has taken a card from the persons deck to represent her character, players can declare any number of hunts. For each one, choose a card from the persons deck to represent your prey. Set that card aside and place a trail marker on it. This marker represents the trail that the prey left behind. If you have more than one hunt in a game, you'll need trail markers that you can distinguish for each quarry.

If you have a hunt from a previous game that you'd like to pick up, draw the person card for the prey from the persons deck and set it aside, find the place card where you last found its trail and add it

to the row of places in play, and put the trail marker on that card.

Picking Up the Trail

When you start an encounter and a trail marker remains on your prey, you can look for the trail before choosing the Other. Draw a card from the needs deck. If you draw the suit of that place, you pick up the trail. Move the trail marker to that place.

Tracking

While at the place with the trail marker, you can encounter your prey in the form of the tracks and signs she left behind. If you succeed on an appeal, draw a card from the places deck (you cannot call the name of a place instead in this instance) and add it to the row. You move to that place, any other players' charac-

ters with you can come with you if they wish, and each of you can bring one other character not controlled by another player if you wish. Then draw a card from the needs deck. If it matches the suit of that place, you've found your prey. Add her card to that place with you and remove the trail marker from the game.

Resolution

The hunt resolves in an encounter with the prey, but only when you know your prey. If you don't know your prey yet, you might still encounter her but it will not reach a conclusive end. She escapes and the hunt goes on.

While the term "hunt" might seem to imply that the final encounter will end in death, and many do, it doesn't have to. You might hunt someone down to get them to admit to their wrongdoing,

Knowledge & Danger

Finding your prey before you've had a chance to get to know her can put you in significant danger. You don't know her, so you can't finish the hunt yet, but the physical presence of a dangerous creature provides ample reason for other players to call the situation very dangerous, even at the very beginning of the encounter before you do anything at all. You might still need to encounter her to learn more about her, but doing so could involve significant risk. When that happens, you'll want to have hunting companions who can help you, as you may find yourself spending awareness much faster than you can gather it.

Tracking provides a much safer way to get to know your prey before you come face-to-face with her, but each track and sign leads you closer to that moment, and you never know when it might happen.

to answer a question, or even to bring them home. You might hunt an animal to drive it away or give it something.

Continuing the Hunt

If the game ends with trail markers on places, you can write down the place on the hunt sheet and pick up the trail next time (see *Changes to Setup* above). You can record this information on an index card or a scrap of paper, or use our hunt sheets.

BUNDLE

MYSTERY

Throughout the game we ask questions and build on the answers, but when it comes to questions that will give us reliable answers we have a much more limited set to choose from. Mysteries allow you to spend awareness to ask any question and receive a reliable answer.

Declaring a Mystery

At any time you can declare that you want to solve a mystery. Take a mystery sheet and write a question on it. That becomes a mystery that you or any other player can try to solve.

Gathering Clues

When an encounter ends in a successful appeal, you can gather a clue. The person playing the Other provides you with a statement about the mystery that may lead to answering the question. Write it down on the mystery sheet and mark

the color of the Other's card (red or black). If you encounter your home or someone implied by your home (like your family as a group) choose either *red* or *black*, as you like.

Verifying Clues

Between encounters any player can spend a moment of awareness to verify a clue. Draw a card from the needs deck. If it matches the color of the person who gave you the clue, mark it as true. If it doesn't match, mark it as false.

Solving the Mystery

When you have verified three clues, you can encounter the mystery itself. On a successful appeal, you can spend awareness to ask the mystery's question as if it appeared on your list. Write down the answer on the mystery sheet.

BUNDLE

JOURNEY

The Fifth World focuses on your family dwelling in their land, but sometimes you do want to get away from home and see other places. Travel in the Fifth World has become slower and more of an adventure, but it certainly hasn't become unusual. Bards and traders journey the length and breadth of continents, and some bold adventurers even circle the globe. With the Journey bundle you can leave your family's territory and set off on expeditions to distant lands.

Starting a Journey

To begin a journey, you'll need a **travel deck**. The travel deck consists of 36 cards (2-10 for each of the four suits). Use a separate deck from the one used for your needs, persons, and places decks (journeys require two decks of playing cards, rather than one). The ace of hearts from this second deck becomes the **destination card**.

Set aside the destination card and shuffle the travel deck. Take the destination card and two cards from the travel deck and shuffle them together. This forms the start of your **journey deck**. Each card in the journey deck represents one day of travel on your journey. How many days do you expect your journey to take? Draw that many cards from the travel deck, face-down.

If you want to set an easy pace, for every set of four cards, draw another card from the travel deck.

If you want to set a hard pace, for every set of four cards put one back on the travel deck.

Place these cards on top of your journey deck.

Going on the Journey

Set the journey deck beside the places deck, separate from the row of places in your family territory. Leave room for a discard pile.

Everyone going on the journey places their cards in a column below the journey deck like you would under a place.

When you start an encounter while on a journey, reveal the next card from the journey deck and read its matching entry. If you draw a black card, follow its instructions and draw another card. Red cards provide encounters along the way. Play through the encounter per the normal rules.

If you set an easy pace, then each time you draw from the journey deck one member of your party regains a moment of awareness.

If you set a hard pace, then each time you draw from the journey deck one member of your party must spend a moment of awareness.

Gathering Awareness on a Journey

Life comes with greater difficulty away from home, and you won't find as many chances to gather awareness on the road. You can always choose to stop and rest. When you start an encounter you can choose to stop to rest instead of pushing on. If you do, draw from the travel deck (*not* the journey deck).

If you draw a black card, follow the instructions for that card. You then gather awareness equal to the card's value, which you can distribute amongst your party if you can come to a consensus on how to divide it. If you cannot, then no one gains awareness. You may then choose to continue the journey or take another day of rest.

If you draw a red card, you have the encounter stated for that card. If you succeed on your appeal, you gather aware-

ness equal to the card's value as you would for a black card.

A card that matches the suit and value of a place in play reminds you of home, giving you the opportunity to gather awareness from that place as if you found yourself suddenly there.

Reaching Your Destination

When you draw the destination card, you reach your destination. What happens next depends on why you undertook this journey. From here you can continue journeying, or go home (which will require another journey, usually of equal length).

How long does a journey take?

If you prefer to make broad estimates, by all means do so. If you think it will take "about a week," take seven cards.

If you prefer to get a little more precise than that, people in the Fifth World can usually cover 25 miles in a day of walking. If she has an incredible relationship with an animal that will let her ride her, such a mount can run much more quickly, but only over relatively short distances. They walk at roughly the same pace, so you won't cover any greater distance on average. Canoeing will usually come out to about the same average, too. That means you can probably cover about 100 miles every four days, so you could find the distance you want to cover, divide the miles by 100, and use four times that number for the number of days it will take. For example, in *Children of Wormwood*, Robin and her family travel from Pittsburgh to Three Myland, a distance of 230 miles, which takes ten days.

If you want to get even more precise, apply Naismith's Rule: it takes about an hour to cover three miles (five kilometers), or to go up 2,000 feet (600 meters). When you have the number of hours your journey will take, divide by eight to get the number of days.

Don't try to cover more than a month (about 750 miles, approximately the distance from New York to Chicago) in a single journey. Instead, break the journey up into stages, with intermediate destinations along the way. To cross the United States, you might journey from the ruins of New York to the ruins of Chicago in the first journey, then from Chicago to the old Pine Ridge Reservation, then to the ruins of Salt Lake City, and finally from there to San Francisco Bay, taking you across a continent in four journeys. It will take eight to go there and back again.

Travel Deck (Part One)

Card	Instructions
2 Clubs	Ask a fellow traveler what she believes about the spirits.
3 Clubs	Share a belief you have about the spirits with another traveler.
4 Clubs	Pose a moral dilemma to a fellow traveler.
5 Clubs	Ask a fellow traveler about her romantic relationships.
6 Clubs	Share how you feel with another traveler.
7 Clubs	Tell a fellow traveler about your romantic relationships.
8 Clubs	Ask a fellow traveler a philosophical question.
9 Clubs	Tell a fellow traveler about something you know.
10 Clubs	Pose a riddle or tell a joke.
2 Hearts	You encounter scouts who warn you against trespassing in their territory.
3 Hearts	You encounter a magician who says she must ritually purify you before you proceed.
4 Hearts	You encounter emissaries from a family that does not trust you.
5 Hearts	You encounter a scout who offers to lead you through his family's territory.
6 Hearts	You encounter a family that welcomes you to stay the night with them.
7 Hearts	You encounter a young man who challenges you to a friendly contest.
8 Hearts	You encounter a merchant.
9 Hearts	You encounter a traveling bard.
10 Hearts	You encounter a wanderer.

Travel Deck (Part Two)

Card	Instructions
2 Diamonds	You encounter a difficult path.
3 Diamonds	You encounter a dangerous path.
4 Diamonds	You encounter a challenging climb.
5 Diamonds	You encounter a storm.
6 Diamonds	You encounter a flood.
7 Diamonds	You encounter intense heat.
8 Diamonds	You encounter a dangerous predator.
9 Diamonds	You encounter a majestic creature.
10 Diamonds	You encounter a territorial beast.
2 Spades	Briefly describe the animal tracks you encounter.
3 Spades	Briefly describe the bird songs you hear.
4 Spades	Briefly describe the animal you glimpse.
5 Spades	Briefly describe the foliage surrounding you.
6 Spades	Briefly describe the plants you smell.
7 Spades	Briefly describe the tree that amazed you.
8 Spades	Briefly describe the lay of the land around you.
9 Spades	Briefly describe the sky above you.
10 Spades	Briefly describe the ruins you pass.

BUNDLE

CRISIS

This bundle requires the Endeavor, Hunt, Mystery, and Journey bundles.

Every generation faces a crisis that defines it. The Crisis bundle adds rules to your saga that moves your story towards a major, unifying story with each generation, then skips ahead twelve years.

Changes to Setup

When you draw a need for the family, mark which suit you draw. Even if you satisfy that need by the end of the game, that mark remains. The first suit to reach three marks determines the crisis.

Suit	Crisis
Clubs	The Curse
Hearts	The Revolution
Diamonds	The Sickness
Spades	The Monster

Each crisis presents a series of endeavors, hunts, mysteries, journeys, or other tasks which the players must accomplish to overcome it, as well as its own conditions under which it might fail, and what failure could mean.

Overwhelmed

In addition to its own failure conditions, your family can also find itself overwhelmed by concerns on all sides and unmet needs. If you have five unmet

needs of a single type (spiritual, emotional, physical, or mental), you fail the crisis. Your generation will only advance once you end a game with fewer than five unmet needs of each type.

Advancing Generations

When the crisis resolves – succeed or fail – we move forward twelve years into the future.

For each character you control, pull one or more cards from the needs deck based on your age class.

Age	Number of Cards
Child	4
Young Adult	3
Mature Adult	2
Elder	1

Choose one of the cards you drew.

Suit	Effect
Clubs	Erase four items from your knowledge sheet.
Hearts	Nothing.
Diamonds	Take a scar.
Spades	You die.

If your character survived, mark the next box in her age track, which may advance her into the next class (e.g., children become young adults, young adults become mature, and mature adults become elders). If you don't have any boxes left

in your age track, you die of old age, having lived for nearly 120 years.

You can add four items to your Knowledge sheet.

Your character's custom and how she relates to it could change over the intervening years.

If you **embody** your custom, you can

- ◆ Continue to do so
- ◆ **Aspire to** a different custom
- ◆ **Rebel against** a different custom

If you **aspire to** your custom, you can

- ◆ **Embody** it
- ◆ **Aspire to** a different custom
- ◆ **Rebel against** a different custom

If you **rebel against** your custom, you can

- ◆ Continue to do so
- ◆ **Subvert** it
- ◆ **Aspire to** it
- ◆ **Aspire to** a different custom
- ◆ **Rebel against** a different custom

If you **subvert** your custom, you can

- ◆ Continue to do so
- ◆ **Transgress against** it
- ◆ **Aspire to** it
- ◆ **Aspire to** a different custom
- ◆ **Rebel against** a different custom

CRISIS

The Curse

Your family keeps suffering from spiritual needs, and you know why: a curse lays upon you all. But who laid it on you, and why?

Power

When you reveal this crisis, the **power** of the curse equals the number of unmet needs the family has. At the end of each encounter, draw a card from the needs deck. If you draw clubs, describe an ominous sign that someone finds. The curse's power increases by one.

You can visit one of the three sacred places in your territory and perform a ceremony which will allow you to spend awareness to reduce the curse's power, one-for-one.

If the curse reaches 15 power, the family offers tribute and the crisis ends. Who they offer tribute to will depend on what you discover about who cursed you, and what tribute they offer will depend on what you discover about why they did it. Rarely will anything less than a human life do — children delivered to a sorcerer as his apprentices, or a disrespectful hunter surrendered to the wild.

When you offer tribute, all players' characters take a scar.

Discovering the Truth

First you must solve the mystery "*What curse lies upon our family?*" When you have solved that mystery, you must solve

another one: *“How can we break this curse?”*

The answer to the second mystery will point you to either the cleansing ritual or hunting the sorcerer.

The Cleansing Ritual

If you discovered that you must ritually cleanse your family, you must go to each of the three sacred places in your territory and succeed at three separate appeals at each of them:

- ◆ An appeal for understanding
- ◆ An appeal for mercy
- ◆ An appeal for forgiveness

You must also complete a large endeavor to make amends, requiring at least four spiritual labor.

Hunting the Sorcerer

If you discovered that you must hunt the sorcerer, you must first solve the mystery, *“Who cursed us?”*

When you have learned the answer, you must then prepare yourself to hunt the sorcerer by making a successful appeal to a place in the suit of clubs.

Then you can hunt down the sorcerer – whether to kill him, to force him to work some magic to break his curse, or to tell you how to do so, you might discover only when you find him.

Finally, you will need to confront either the curse itself or the dread that it has created to end its effects for good.

CRISIS

The Revolution

The repeated emotional needs of your family points to a difficult truth: one of the customs that has helped your family to live together for so many generations doesn’t work any more. It may have once helped you, but it has outlived its usefulness. The time has come to make a change, but change never comes easily.

Time For a Change

You must first solve the mystery, *“How must our customs change?”* The answer to this question should identify one of your family customs to do away with, a different custom to replace it, and what value this new custom reflects.

When you solve this mystery, any player can immediately change her custom to aspire to this new one. If necessary, change your value as well.

Opposition

Once you solve the mystery, your family gains **opposition**. It starts at zero, but increases every time you fail an appeal to a family member or the family as a whole. If it reaches five *and* surpasses the support for the revolution, the crisis fails. When this happens, erase the value that this custom reflects. Your family still follows the custom, but out of rigid orthodoxy and traditionalism, sapped of the value that originally inspired it.

Support

You must gather **support** for your change from the family, but not everyone will sign on right away. The more esteem they have in the current system, the more goading it will take to get them to join you. You will need to gain the support of one family member for each card in the persons deck, but they'll only join if you already have support from a certain number of other family members, depending on their card.

Card	Support Needed
Joker	0
Jack	2
King or Queen	4

You *must* enlist the support of any family members who embody or aspire to the old custom (even if that means enlisting support from more than fourteen people).

Joining Your Own Revolution

Since you need support from people in your family for each card in the persons deck, if you want to use the same card for your own character (and play the same character) throughout, won't you need to join your own revolution? Yes!

You might support the revolution, but giving it your full-throated, public support means something else entirely. Opening yourself to public shame and scrutiny – and most importantly, doing so without hesitation – will require you to overcome some hurdles. You can encounter the part of yourself that holds you back to recruit yourself to the revolution just as you would any other family member. Like any other family member, your position in the family will mean that it might take more or less support to do that. If you have a Joker, you can encounter yourself right away. If you have a Jack, you'll need to see the two Jokers on board first. If you have a King or a Queen, you'll need to see the two Jokers joined by two Jacks before you'll join.

You can support the revolution, but to put your name on the list you'll need to encounter and confront the things that hold you back. Change doesn't come easily, even when part of you wishes it would.

Implementation

When you get support from fourteen different members of the family, you can undertake a massive endeavor to implement those changes. This requires at least four emotional labor to deal with people's feelings about these changes.

When you complete the endeavor, you successfully resolve the crisis. Remove the old custom and replace it with the new one. Come to a consensus on which of you will put your name down as the ancestor for this new custom. Anyone who aspired to the new custom can now embody it.

CRISIS

The Sickness

Your family has faced repeated physical needs, and it has sapped their strength. Now a sickness spreads among them, and it falls to you to seek a cure.

Getting Sick

When the crisis begins, choose two members of the family who get sick. At the end of each encounter, draw a card from the needs deck. If you draw diamonds, choose another member of the family who gets sick.

Sick family members not controlled by a player cannot offer help. Those controlled by players have their maximum awareness reduced by one, just as if they'd taken a scar, but with different rules for recovery. Setting the character aside for a game won't remove this con-

dition. Instead, they'll only recover if you succeed in making a cure.

At the end of each round, draw another card from the needs deck. This time if you draw diamonds, choose a sick family member who dies because of the illness. Each time a member of the family dies, one of the players' characters must take a scar. You won't fail this crisis if you can keep the family's unmet needs under control. Instead, the question lies in how many people will die before you can solve the problem.

Addressing the Crisis

Solving this crisis involves two separate tracks which you could pursue simultaneously or one after the other: making medicine and fixing the problem that caused it in the first place.

Making Medicine

First you must solve the mystery, "*How can we cure this sickness?*" The answer to that question will lead you to one of two possibilities:

- ◆ A large endeavor requiring at least four physical labor to collect and brew medicine. Then, you must successfully appeal to the sickness to treat your family.
- ◆ A week-long journey to collect a rare medicinal plant (collecting it requires a successful appeal at the destination), followed by another week-long journey back home.

Once you have cured the sickness, anyone who has it can recover from it by

succeeding on an appeal in an encounter with it.

Fixing the Problem

Disease doesn't spread through the Fifth World regularly without reason. Sickness points to some disturbance in the web of ecological relationships that your family lives enmeshed within. The crisis hasn't passed until you've discovered the underlying problem and fixed it. Until then, people will just keep getting sick.

Fixing the problem starts with the mystery, "*What caused this sickness?*" The answer to that question will lead you to one of two possibilities:

- ◆ You discover some creature responsible for this damage. You must hunt it down and deal with it one way or another.
- ◆ The solution requires a large project including at least four physical labor.

Conclusion

You can pursue the two paths above simultaneously or one after the other. Once you have done both, the family remains shaken by the experience — even if only the fear that the same world that they rely on, that provides everything they want or need, could also kill them so easily and seemingly without warning. You've addressed the disease, but the sickness — that social dimension of the experience and what they've gone through — remains. To successfully resolve the crisis, you must successfully appeal to your family to help see them through this.

CRISIS

The Monster

It's left hints, clues, puzzles, and signs for you to find, toying with you. The truth has become obvious: something monstrous has moved into your family's territory. It remains only a matter of time before it strikes and one of your kin dies.

Missing Persons

At the end of each round, draw a card from the needs deck. If you draw spades, choose a member of your family. The person goes missing. You can begin a hunt for her, but when you encounter her draw a needs card. If you draw a black card, you find her body, clearly killed by the monster. If you draw a red card, you find her traumatized but still alive. If you haven't yet solved the mystery, "*What sort of monster stalks our territory?*" such a survivor immediately gives you a clue, already verified.

If you choose a player's character to go missing and find her still alive, she has four scars.

When a fifth person goes missing, the monster leaves your territory, satisfied with its bloody work. Your family continues to live in fear of the monster they could never defeat, and wondering if it will one day return. You fail the crisis.

Hunting the Monster

To hunt the monster, you must first solve the mystery, "*What sort of monster stalks our territory?*" The answer to this

question will tell you a great deal about the hunt to come.

When you know what kind of monster you have to deal with, you can solve the next mystery, “*How can we defeat it?*” The answer to this question will lead you to one of two possibilities:

- ◆ You must journey 100 miles (four days) to learn something or gain a special item, and then return.
- ◆ You must undertake a medium endeavor to create a special weapon.

Then you can embark on a hunt for the monster. However, the monster poses a particularly deadly threat. It will not suffice to know the monster to kill it — you’ll have to know it well.

Other Milestones & Bundles

The milestones and bundles included here shift your Fifth World saga into an intergenerational epic. It should give you a good idea of how they work. Other Fifth World players add new ones all the time. Visit <https://thefifthworld.com/rpg/saga> to find the latest milestones you can achieve and what they might unlock.

GLOSSARY

Agenda: One of the three agendas for playing the Fifth World (p. 5)

Ancestor: A revered figure from your family's history. An ancestor attached to a custom can refresh that custom when you make an offering to her at home (making that custom available again to ask the question associated with its value). An ancestor attached to a place means that the place generates two moments of awareness at the end of each encounter instead of one, and that in addition to the normal means of gathering awareness there you can also gather awareness by making an offering to that ancestor. In each case, making an offering to the ancestor requires you to spend a moment of awareness.

Appeal: Using the ritual phrase, "I appeal to [her] [spirit/heart/body/mind]" (p. 40)

Audience: When you don't have any other part in an encounter, you form part of the audience (p. 36)

Awareness: The main currency of the game, represented by tokens. Places generate awareness at the end of each encounter. Main characters can gather awareness at those places by acting in accord with its unique spirit. They spend awareness to accomplish difficult things, avoid danger, and ask questions.

Bundle: A set of related, additional rules that you can unlock in a saga by achieving a milestone.

Custom: A family has a number of customs. Each custom reflects a particular value. Each member of a family relates to a particular custom, either embodying

it, aspiring to it, rebelling against it, or subverting it.

Encounter: The basic unit of gameplay. An encounter takes place between a main character and an Other. Encountering an Other might mean talking, negotiating, bargaining, seducing, fighting, or even just passing by.

Family: The basic sovereign unit of the Fifth World. A family could mean a roaming band of 25 hunter-gatherers or a village of 100 or more gardeners. Even in the most extended groups, they think of themselves as family first and foremost. Families have their own histories and customs.

Help: When a main character in the same place as another main character spends her awareness on the other's behalf.

Main Character: A character player by one of the players at the table. The story told in any game focuses on the main characters, played by the players present.

Milestone: A goal that players can achieve in a saga. Many milestones unlock new bundles.

Needs Deck: The four aces in a deck of playing cards, representing different needs that people in the game might have (p. 9).

Other: The person that a main character faces in an encounter.

Person: Someone that you can have a relationship with, human or otherwise.

Persons Deck: The kings, queens, jacks, and jokers in a deck of playing cards, representing the main and secondary characters in a game (p. 9)

Place: A place where something happens in the story, represented by a card from the places deck. Places can sometimes count as persons (and often do).

Places Deck: The numbered cards in a deck of playing cards, representing places in the game (p. 9)

Principles: One of the nine principles for playing the Fifth World (p. 6)

Question: You can (and should) ask any question you like at any time, but if you ask one from a specific list of questions and spend a moment of awareness, the answer establishes a defined truth in the story, closing off all other possibilities and moving you closer to the conclusion (p. 40)

Random Encounter: An encounter with an Other determined by drawing a face-down persons card.

Ritual Phrase: One of several defined phrases which engage specific rules when spoken (p. 37)

Role: A player's current role in the game. Depending on how we set the encounter, you might play your own character, a secondary character, the Other, or form part of the audience (p. 32)

Round: A round consists of each player setting one encounter.

Saga: An ongoing, intergenerational story of a family dwelling in its land, made up of several interconnected game sessions, generally played by a group of friends meeting to play on a regular basis (p. 43)

Scar: The loss of one of a main character's slots for awareness, reducing her capacity for awareness permanently by one. When you take a scar, scratch out

one of the circles for awareness on your character sheet. If you have five scars, your capacity for awareness has dropped to zero, making you incapable of impacting the world – usually meaning that you've died.

Secondary Character: Any of the characters in a game not played by one of the players.

Setback: If you try to make an appeal and fail, the person playing the Other will choose a setback that you suffer from a list.

Value: A moral virtue upheld and respected by families across the Fifth World. Each custom reflects a particular value, and each character has a value that she holds in the highest regard (p. 20) Mechanically, your value adds a fifth question to the list of questions that you can spend awareness to ask. Your family's customs provides an exhaustible pool of resources, allowing you to ask the questions of values that you don't hold in the highest regard yourself, on a limited basis (p. 41)

FAMILY NAME

WATERSHED

THE FIFTH WORLD
FAMILY CUSTOMS

<div><div></div><div><div>Compassion</div><div>Fairness</div><div>Loyalty</div><div>Honor</div><div>Purity</div></div><div>Ancestor</div><div>Used</div></div>	<div><div></div><div><div>Compassion</div><div>Fairness</div><div>Loyalty</div><div>Honor</div><div>Purity</div></div><div>Ancestor</div><div>Used</div></div>
<div><div></div><div><div>Compassion</div><div>Fairness</div><div>Loyalty</div><div>Honor</div><div>Purity</div></div><div>Ancestor</div><div>Used</div></div>	<div><div></div><div><div>Compassion</div><div>Fairness</div><div>Loyalty</div><div>Honor</div><div>Purity</div></div><div>Ancestor</div><div>Used</div></div>
<div><div></div><div><div>Compassion</div><div>Fairness</div><div>Loyalty</div><div>Honor</div><div>Purity</div></div><div>Ancestor</div><div>Used</div></div>	<div><div></div><div><div>Compassion</div><div>Fairness</div><div>Loyalty</div><div>Honor</div><div>Purity</div></div><div>Ancestor</div><div>Used</div></div>
<div><div></div><div><div>Compassion</div><div>Fairness</div><div>Loyalty</div><div>Honor</div><div>Purity</div></div><div>Ancestor</div><div>Used</div></div>	<div><div></div><div><div>Compassion</div><div>Fairness</div><div>Loyalty</div><div>Honor</div><div>Purity</div></div><div>Ancestor</div><div>Used</div></div>

FAMILY NAME

WATERSHED

THE FIFTH WORLD

TERRITORY

PORTAL TO THE OTHER WORLD

2 ♣

ANCESTOR

MAGICIAN'S HUT

3 ♣

ANCESTOR

PLACE OF RESTLESS SPIRITS

4 ♣

ANCESTOR

ABODE OF THE SPIRITS

5 ♣

ANCESTOR

NATURAL WONDER

6 ♣

ANCESTOR

SHRINE

7 ♣

ANCESTOR

HEART OF THE WILD

8 ♣

ANCESTOR

CONSECRATED GROUND

9 ♣

ANCESTOR

AXIS MUNDI

10 ♣

ANCESTOR

DESOLATION

2 ♥

ANCESTOR

SOLITUDE

3 ♥

ANCESTOR

RUIN

4 ♥

ANCESTOR

WATCHTOWER

5 ♥

ANCESTOR

AN OMINOUS PLACE

6 ♥

ANCESTOR

SCOUT'S NEST

7 ♥

ANCESTOR

PLAYGROUND

8 ♥

ANCESTOR

OVERLOOK

9 ♥

ANCESTOR

TRYST

10 ♥

ANCESTOR

A PREDATOR'S TERRITORY

2 ♦

ANCESTOR

AMBUSH SITE

3 ♦

ANCESTOR

CONTESTED GROUND

4 ♦

ANCESTOR

HUNTING GROUND

5 ♦

ANCESTOR

WATERING HOLE

6 ♦

ANCESTOR

GARDEN

7 ♦

ANCESTOR

A PLACE FOR MAKING TOOLS

8 ♦

ANCESTOR

A PLACE FOR MAKING ART

9 ♦

ANCESTOR

A PLACE FOR MAKING LUXURIES

10 ♦

ANCESTOR

CAVE

2 ♠

ANCESTOR

ANCIENT MYSTERY

3 ♠

ANCESTOR

NATURAL MYSTERY

4 ♠

ANCESTOR

ARCHIVE

5 ♠

ANCESTOR

BURIAL SITE

6 ♠

ANCESTOR

MONUMENT

7 ♠

ANCESTOR

A SECRET MEETING PLACE

8 ♠

ANCESTOR

HISTORICAL SITE

9 ♠

ANCESTOR

A GALLERY

10 ♠

ANCESTOR

FAMILY NAME

YEAR

THE FIFTH WORLD

FAMILY NEEDS

SPIRITUAL NEEDS

PHYSICAL NEEDS

EMOTIONAL NEEDS

MENTAL NEEDS

MILESTONES

FAMILY NAME

YEAR

THE FIFTH WORLD
GENERATIONS



ELDERS



MATURE ADULTS



YOUNG ADULTS



CHILDREN



FAMILY



DATE _____

PLAYERS

QUESTIONS FOR NEW CHARACTERS

Who broke your heart?

Do you know where the
nightmares come from?

What do you regret?

Whose respect do you feel
compelled to earn?

Do you consider yourself
a good person?

What did you do that you hope no
one ever finds out about?

Which secret society do you
belong to?

Why do so many people
look up to you?

Why do so many people
hate you?

What do you take pride in?

At the end of each game, your
friends will each say something they
wonder about your character.
Record those that interest you here
for later reference.

ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS

If you learn other questions that you
can add to the regular list, write
them here for easy reference.

A vertical stack of 10 hexagonal question cards. Each card has a small 'A' and 'V' on the left side, and a large empty space for writing.

THE FIFTH WORLD

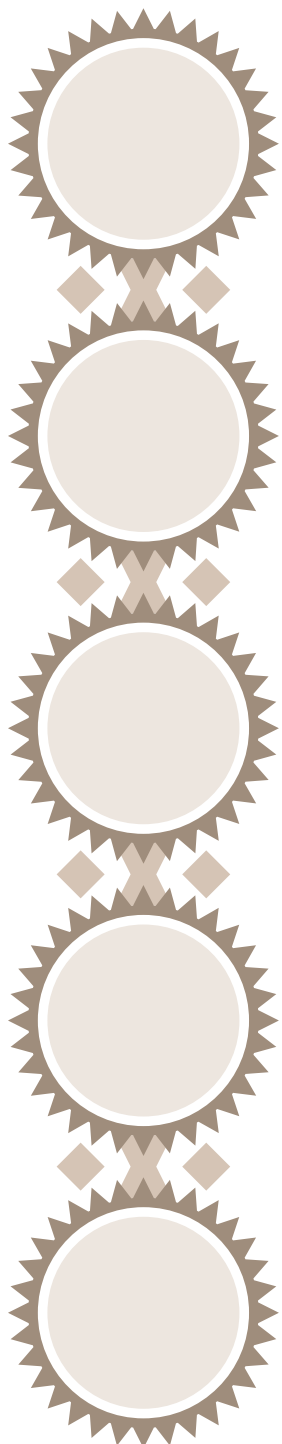
FAMILY

NAME

CARD

PLAYER

NOTES



AWARENESS

FAMILY

NAME

CARD

CUSTOM

How do you relate to your custom?

Embody

Aspire

Rebel

Subvert

Which value do you hold in the highest regard?

Compassion

Fairness

Loyalty

Honor

Purity

Choose one from each list.

Gender: Masculine, Feminine, Third, Fluid, None
Skin: Olive, Dark, Mahogany, Tawny, Ebony, Russet, Umber
Hair: Long, Shorn, Braided, Plaited, Wild, Beaded, Cropped
Eyes: Bright, Clear, Kind, Piercing, Sad, Stony, Darting
Body: Oiled, Painted, Pierced, Scarred, Tattooed, Rugged
Style: Practical, Flamboyant, Flowing, Colorful, Rich

AGE

Child

Young Adult

Mature Adult

Elder

When your character appears in an encounter, you can spend a point of awareness to ask any of these:

- What do you wish I would do?
- How do you really feel?
- What have I overlooked?
- What do you intend to do?

Add to this list the question associated with your value. Mark off your family customs to ask others.

- Compassion:** What pains you?
- Fairness:** What do you deserve?
- Loyalty:** Where do your loyalties lie?
- Honor:** What do they think of you?
- Purity:** What kind of pollution taints you?

AGENDA

See the Fifth World together.
 Reveal everyone's personhood.
 Hunt the wild story.

PRINCIPLES

Rewild the domesticated.
 Feed the story with what you know.
 Address the Fifth World.
 Reveal understandable motivations.
 Defer answers.
 Give every person life.
 Draw lines.
 Ask questions and build on the answers.
 Listen to the spirit of the place.

SETBACKS.

- Offended:** You offend someone, which might make future encounters difficult.
- Tasked:** Someone demands you do something for her. You risk offending her if you don't do it.
- Strained:** You must pay one moment of awareness, if you have any.
- Imperiled:** The situation becomes *dangerous*. Another player could say that it has become *very dangerous*.
- Lost:** You get lost. When your current encounter ends, move to a new place drawn randomly from the place deck.

RITUAL PHRASES

"I don't see it."

Always available. Cancel the last thing that a player said.

"It happened at «place name»."

Begins and ends an encounter. Begins an encounter. During an encounter, ends it if said by two players.

"That sounds difficult..."

During encounters. The last thing said will cost one moment of awareness.

"...very difficult."

After "That sounds difficult..." The last thing said will cost two moments of awareness instead of one.

"That sounds dangerous..."

During encounters. The last thing said will entail risking a scar.

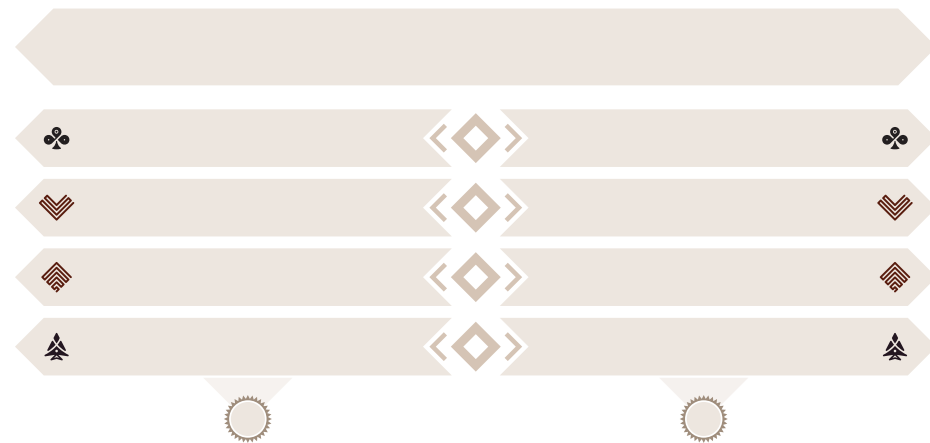
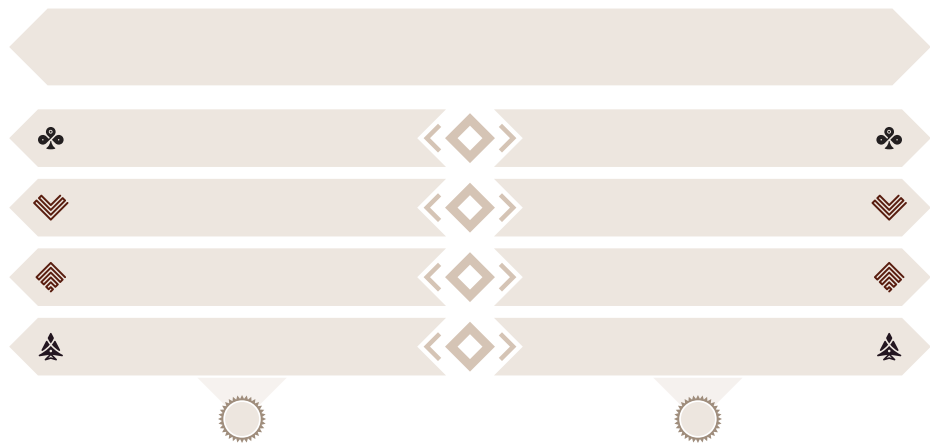
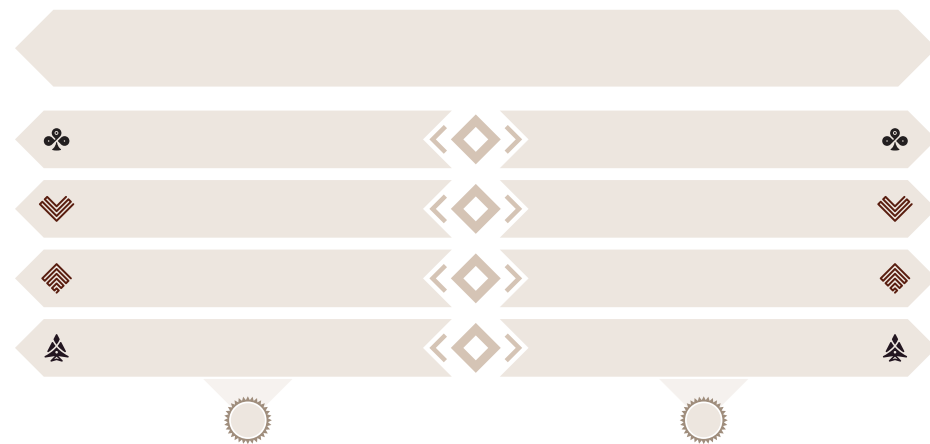
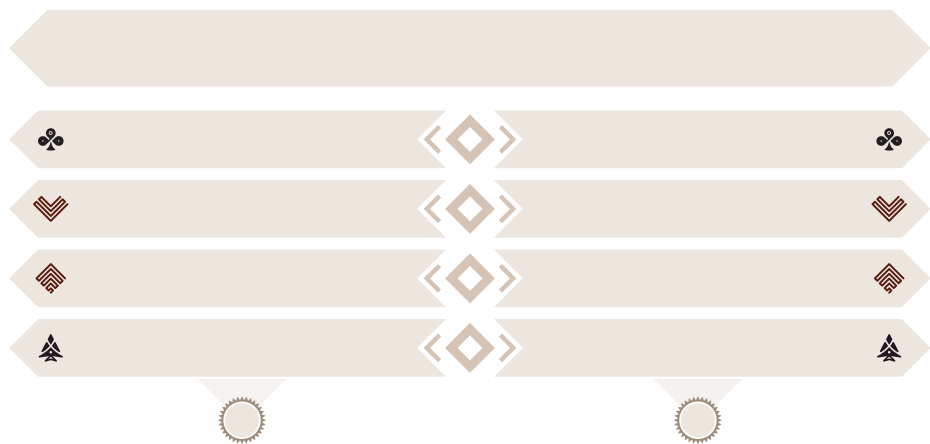
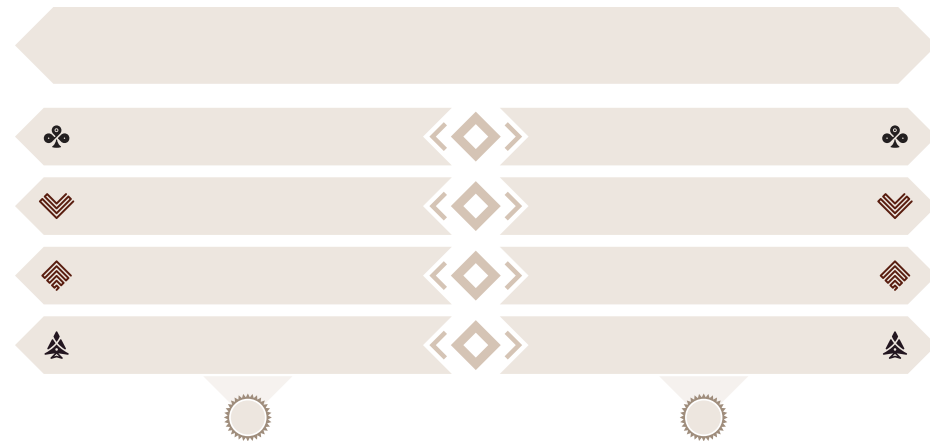
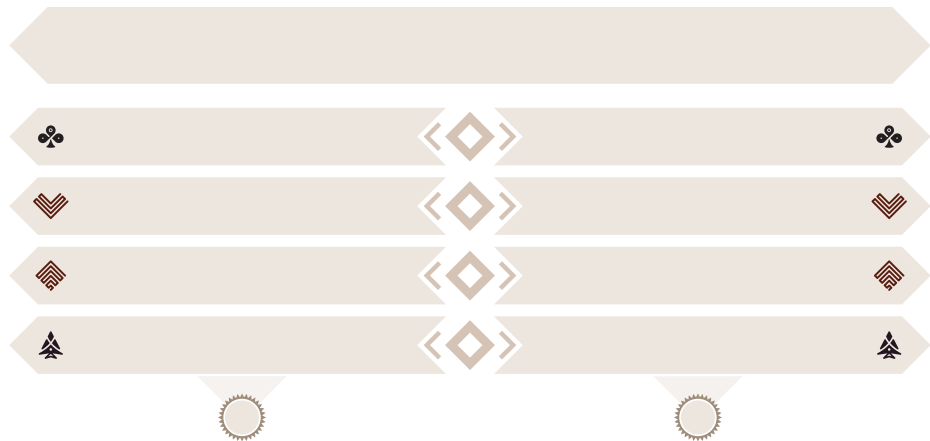
"...very dangerous."

After "That sounds dangerous..." After risking the first scar, either risk a second or draw a needs card. If you guess the color, nothing happens. If not, risk another scar and then choose again.

"I appeal to her [spirit/heart/body/mind]."

During encounters. Guess the nature of the Other's need. If you guess correctly, you tell us how the encounter ends. If you guess the right color, you can choose a setback to succeed. Otherwise, the person playing the Other chooses a setback.

	Spiritual Needs	Examples of Spiritual Needs Authenticity, beauty, freedom, harmony, hope, integrity, justice, presence, purpose
	Emotional Needs	Examples of Emotional Needs Affection, excitement, humor, intimacy, joy, love, mourning, self-expression, warmth
	Physical Needs	Examples of Physical Needs Air, food, movement, rest, safety, sex, shelter, touch, water
	Mental Needs	Examples of Mental Needs Challenge, clarity, creativity, discovery, efficacy, learning, legacy, mastery, understanding



THE FIFTH WORLD

MYSTERY

QUESTION

ANSWER

CLUE

COLOR

TRUE

FALSE



THE FIFTH WORLD

MYSTERY

QUESTION

ANSWER

CLUE

COLOR

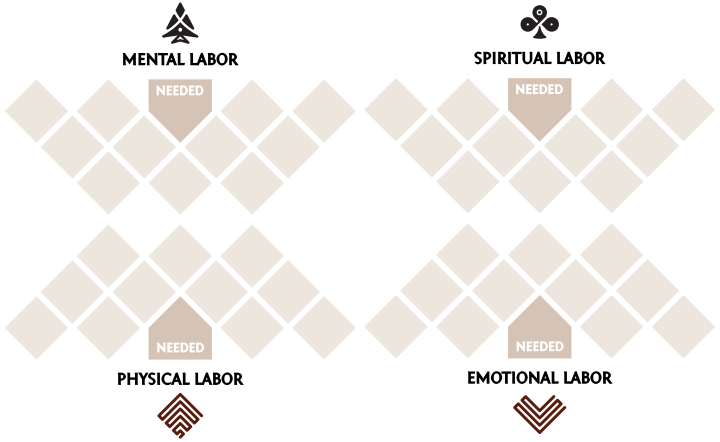
TRUE

FALSE



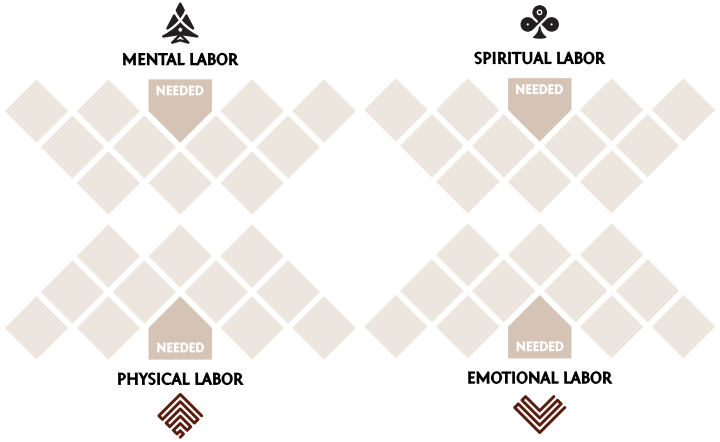
THE FIFTH WORLD

ENDEAVOR



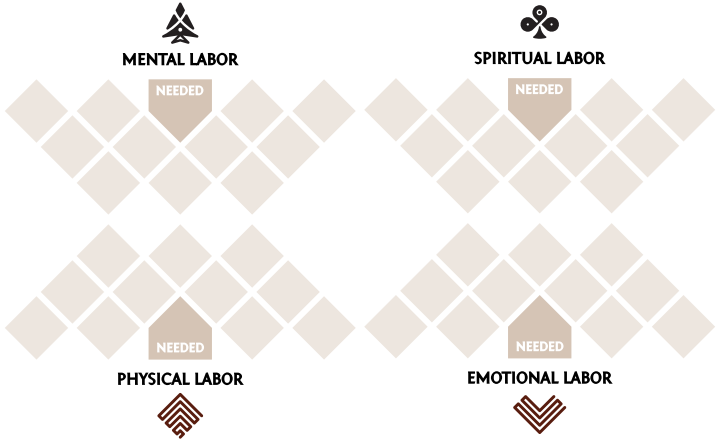
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ENDEAVOR



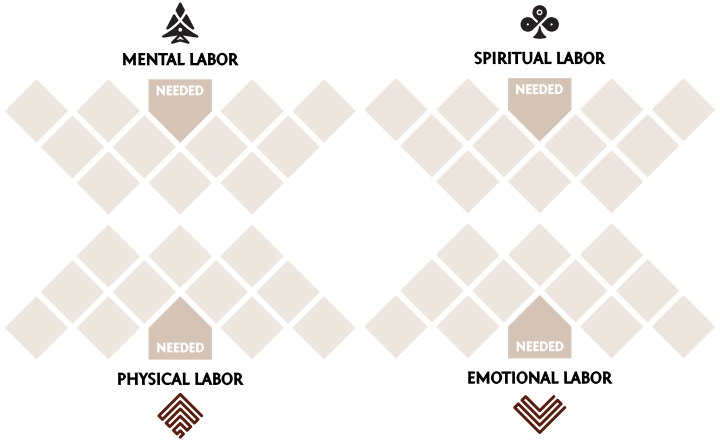
THE FIFTH WORLD

ENDEAVOR



THE FIFTH WORLD

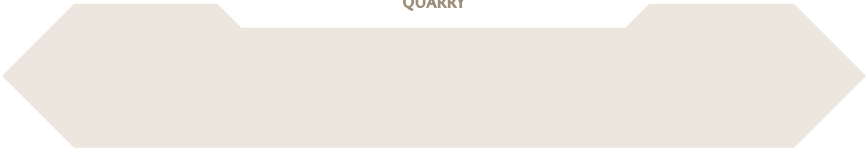
ENDEAVOR



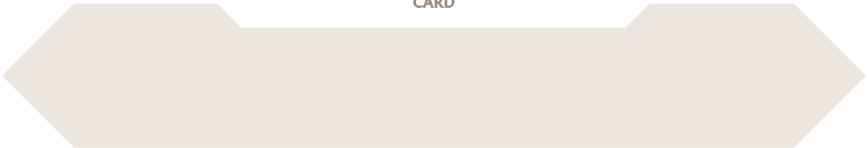
THE FIFTH WORLD

HUNT

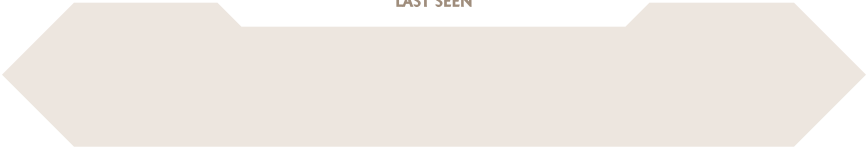
QUARRY



CARD



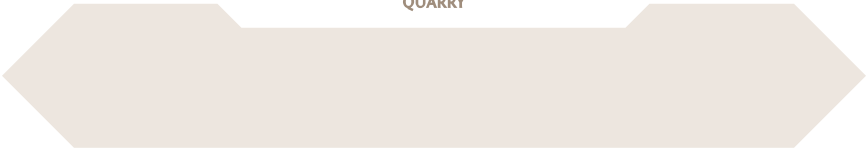
LAST SEEN



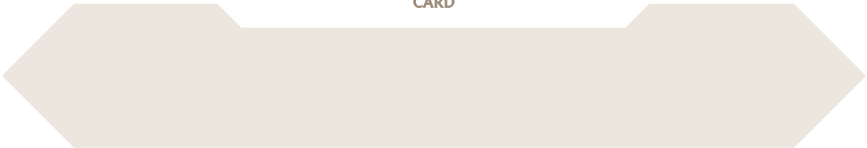
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HUNT

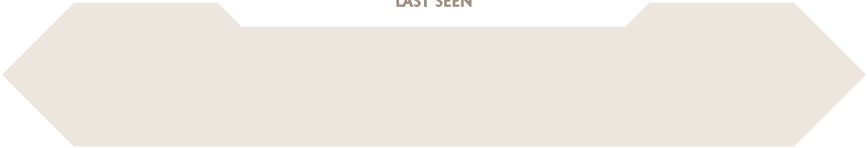
QUARRY



CARD



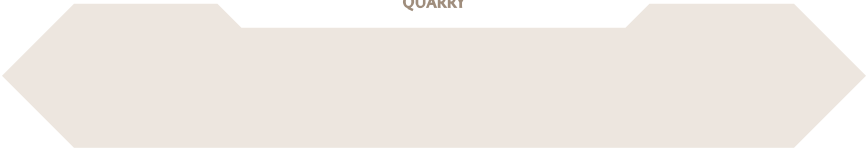
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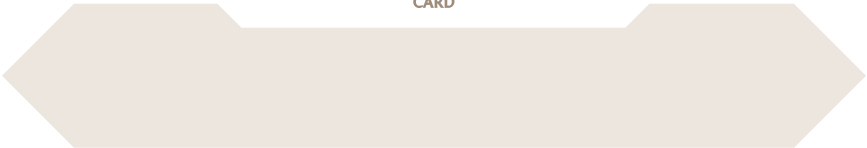
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HUNT

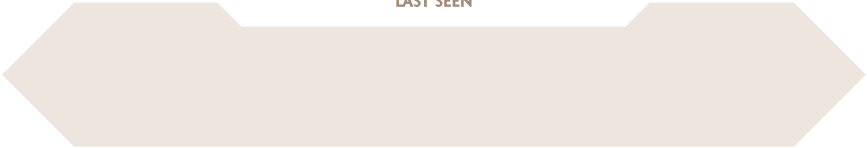
QUARRY



CARD



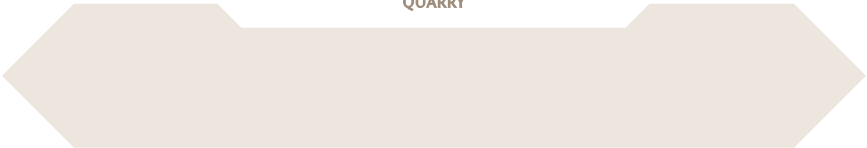
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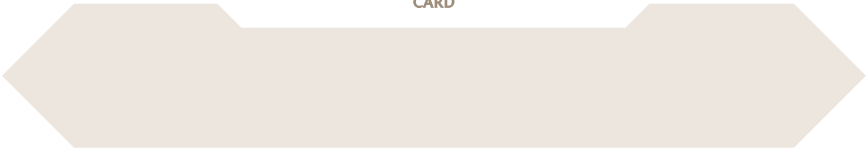
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HUNT

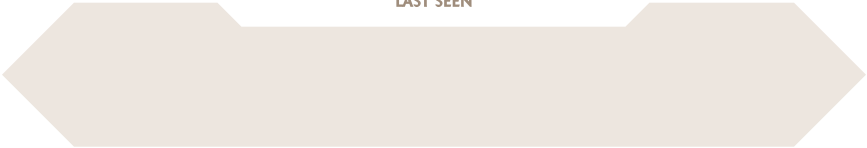
QUARRY



CARD



LAST SEEN



THE FIFTH WORLD

JOURNEY

FROM

TO

DAYS THAT OUR
JOURNEY WILL TAKE

DAYS THAT WE HAVE
TRAVELED SO FAR

PLACES THAT WE'VE SEEN

	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10

THE FIFTH WORLD

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	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
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	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10

FAMILY NAME

YEAR

THE FIFTH WORLD

CRISIS

NOTES



SPIRITUAL CRISIS

THE CURSE

ENDEAVOR: MAKE AMENDS

7 labor, including at least 4 spiritual labor.

POWER

The curse starts with power equal to the number of unmet needs your family has. After encounter, draw a card from the needs deck. If you draw clubs, someone discovers an ominous sign. Increase the curse's power by one. If the curse reaches 15 power, your family offers a tribute and you fail the crisis.

CONFRONT THE CURSE

Succeed on an appeal to the curse.

HUNT

Hunt down the sorcerer.

CLEANSING RITUAL

You must successfully appeal to each of the three sacred places in your territory for *understanding*, for *mercy*, and for *forgiveness*.

Heart of the Wild
Consecrated Ground
Axis Mundi

- ◇ Understanding
- ◇ Mercy
- ◇ Forgiveness

MYSTERY

What curse lies upon our family?

RITUAL PREPARATION

Successfully appeal to a clubs place.

MYSTERY

How can we break this curse?

MYSTERY

Who cursed us?

WHAT CURSE LIES UPON YOUR FAMILY?

HOW CAN WE BREAK THIS CURSE?

WHO CURSED US?

FAMILY NAME

YEAR

THE FIFTH WORLD

CRISIS



EMOTIONAL CRISIS

THE REVOLUTION

MYSTERY

How must our customs change?

When you answer the mystery, identify a custom that must change, and what you must change it to. From that point on, each failed appeal with a family member (or the family as a whole) increases opposition by one.

You need to convince fourteen family members — one for each card in the persons deck — to support the change before it will happen. You can encounter yourself to overcome your own hesitations and fully support the change. But everyone has a threshold — a number of other family members that must support the change before they'll join. That includes you.

CARD	THRESHOLD
Joker	0
Jack	2
King or Queen	4

If opposition ever exceeds five and the number of people who support the change, the crisis fails. Erase the value that this custom reflects. Your family still follows the custom, but out of rigid orthodoxy and traditionalism, sapped of the value it originally developed from.

SUPPORTERS

OPPOSITION

K ♣

Q ♣

J ♣

K ♥

Q ♥

J ♥

K ♦

Q ♦

J ♦

K ♠

Q ♠

J ♠

Jkb ♦

Jkr ♦

When you answer the mystery, any player can change her player's custom to the new, proposed custom and *aspire to* it. When you complete the endeavor to implement the new custom, choose one player's character to become its ancestor. Anyone who aspired to the custom may immediately change to *embody* it.

ENDEAVOR: IMPLEMENTATION

9 labor, including at least
4 emotional labor

OLD CUSTOM

NEW CUSTOM

NOTES

CRISIS



PHYSICAL CRISIS

THE SICKNESS

How can we cure this sickness?

7 labor, including at least 4 physical labor

Week-long journey to
collect a rare plant

Use the medicine to treat your family.

Once you reach the end of this track,
sick family members can recover
by encountering the sickness.

After each encounter, draw a card from the needs deck. If you draw a diamond, name a member of your family who gets sick below.

At the end of each round, draw another card from the needs deck. If you draw a diamond, a sick member of your family dies from it. Cross out her name.

What caused this sickness?

HUNT

Hunt down the creature responsible.

ENDEAVOR
7 labor, including
at least 4 physical labor

Once you reach the end of this track,
no more family members will get
sick – you just need to treat the ones
already sick.

After completing both tracks, make a successful appeal to the sickness or your family to resolve the crisis.

FAMILY NAME

YEAR

THE FIFTH WORLD

CRISIS



MENTAL CRISIS

THE MONSTER

NOTES

MISSING PERSONS

At the end of each round, draw a card from the needs deck. If you draw spades, a member of your family goes missing. When five family members go missing, the monster leaves, leaving your family terrified of the day it will return.

MYSTERY

What monster stalks our territory?

When a family member goes missing, you can start a hunt to try to find her. When you find her, draw a card from the needs deck. If you draw a black card, you find her body, clearly killed by the monster. If you draw a red card, you find her traumatized but still alive. If a player's character goes missing and you find her still alive, she has four scars.

ENDEAVOR: CREATE WEAPON

Requires 5 labor.

MYSTERY

How can we defeat the monster?

JOURNEY: RETRIEVE ITEM

Journey for four days, gain special item or knowledge, then four days back.

HUNT

Hunt down the monster.

You must know the monster well to defeat it.