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## The Mysteries of Cos

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This island is fascinating. The water of the Acheron thrums with power, and every wave that has ever fallen on the jagged stones of Cos has imbued the place with primeval magic. Ordinarily you would want nothing to do with such baleful power, but these are stressful times. Perhaps you can tap into the island's magic but first you must discover more about it. The assorted royals, merchants, and attendants wandering the island know all sorts of things - you should ask them if they know anything about the history of Cos. Once you have talked to three different people about the island, turn to page 2.

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It turns out none of the tidbits of history you could glean from the island's guests were nearly as valuable as your own nascent Soulblade power. The longer you spend on the island, the more you learn about its true nature. You need only sift the sands of its shores through your fingers to sense the death magic that courses within them, more potent than even the reckless spells of the Soulblades. The Soulblades taught you that the act of ringing a bell had the power to weaken the boundaries between life and death. Perhaps it's just a petty superstition - perhaps not. Find a bell and ring it until you summon a creature that is not human. Once you have done so, turn to page 3.

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Gods protect you. The island of Cos is not completely in the mortal realm. The souls of the dead still wander here, bound to the land by some ancient power. You have seen them yourself - the bell you rang called one to you, and to your astonishment you found you could understand it when it spoke to you. These wraiths are a reflection of the island's magic - and perhaps they hold the key to accessing that fell power. You must learn more. Speak with a ghost at length about the island, and learn their name. Once you have done so, turn to page 4.

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You're now certain that this forsaken isle has power - as do you. Already your heart beats in time with the tides of the Acheron, and your veins course with the whispers of the damned. But this magic will not be easy to draw out. You would flee from it if you could - but if worst comes to worst, and Eidola needs your help, calling on the island's mysteries could be your only option. You know now what you must do - blur the boundaries between the living and the dead, by touching the souls of those who are in between. Perform a Soulblade ritual of your choice, while three other people, including two who are sick of soul, stand within 1 ZOC of you. For the rest of game, you can find out other people's psychic health scores at will; you should ask players for their characters' psychic health scores out-of-game. Once you have done so, turn to page 5.

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Your head hurts. The whispers of generations flood into your mind, and only the meditations the Soulblades taught you as a child help you to keep your sanity. And as you begin to listen to the invisible voices in your ears, you realize that they are speaking words of wisdom, of birth and death and the path Man walks in-between. You may turn to page 6.

You now have the power to determine the date at which an individual was born, or the date on which they died. To do so, you must perform a Soulblade ritual with a Risk of 12. It requires no ingredients. The incantation "Kirolema tachem mesu iulima eya chelma" will determine an individual's birthdate, and the incantation "Dauthea kerrim emathu grimmos chalma" will allow you to determine whether the soul is among the living or among the dead. Once you have finished one of these rituals, find a GM and specify the name of an individual whose birth or death you would like to verify. If you do not know their real name, a well-known pseudonym will also work. Once you use this mechanic, it is consumed and cannot be used again.

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As the susurrus of spirit-voices continues to hiss, one rises above the others, the ragged voice of a half-mad prophet from ages past. There is more power here, it says. But first the stones must be satisfied. The others murmur in agreement, chorusing their desire for fresh mortal souls. The river of death has run too dry for too long. To placate the bloodthirsty spirits, find a dead body and consecrate it by uttering a Soulblade incantation of your choice, allowing the island to taste the sweet oblivion of the moment of their death. Once you have done so, turn to page 7.

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Everywhere around you are the echoes of the dead. You need only close your eyes to tap into the stream of eternity that ebbs and flows around you. Your own skin grows pale, and you can half-see the souls of those around you roiling beneath their flesh in a tumult of black lightning. The cold fingertips of long-forgotten ghosts press into your spine, your arms, the back of your neck, straining to drag you into the abyss. When you smile, you smile cruelly. So much power. But you may not yet be a strong enough vessel to contain it - all the souls of the island would shatter your mortal form like a flooded river breaching a dam. Find a way to increase your Psychic Health to at least 6. Once you have done so, turn to page 8.

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Your eyes flicker open once more, black as onyx. Prymnesios. What a quaint name. That sad and harrowed little man is but a fraction of who you have become. You are a messenger of the great force called Thanatos, and Prymnesios is but his mortal shell. Every word you speak, every word you hear, echoes itself into oblivion. As long as you stand on the stones of Cos, life and death are but pages in a book, and it is all too trivial to flip between them with a flick of your fingers. But the world must stay balanced, and every life demands a life. Such is the cost of power, and perhaps you will choose to pay it. Turn to page 9.

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You have the power to restore a single dead person to life, provided that person died on this island within the last day. However, another must forfeit their life in exchange. To meet this cost, you may sacrifice your own life, or sacrifice the life of another individual. For another to meet the conditions of the sacrifice, they must agree to participate in your ritual by repeating the incantation "Doros machan eman maran reyden koyome" You need not inform them that the ritual will kill them. This is a Soul Magic ritual with Risk 12. If it succeeds, your target is restored to life. Their psychic health is equal to 2. The person whose life you have chosen to forfeit immediately dies, regardless of whether you succeed or fail. You can only attempt this ritual once.

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Every time you look at your hands, your arms, every time you see your face in a mirror, you are disgusted by the frailty of your mortal flesh. Death waits for you in every dawn, waiting to wrap his skeletal fingers around your soul and suck out its seeds like a pomegranate. But this island, at the edge of the Acheron, in the doorway between the realms of death and life, is different. Here, even death may be a temporary affliction. You have heard of them, the dead that walk again, intact in soul if not in body. You must learn more. Talk to at least three people about the existence of ghosts on the island. Once you have done so, turn to page 2.

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Fools and heretics! Their eyes have not been opened. May they all rot before they leave this island! They know so little, the pathetic self-important princes and scholars and salesmen. They cannot help you in your grand design. But there are some who can - those who have been blessed with the wisdom of the parted veil. You have read the secret books of the Soulblades, and you know that the ringing of a bell will compel the spirits of the island to attend you. Find a bell and use it to call an inhuman force to you. Once you have done so, turn to page 3.

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Excellent. Perhaps, with the assistance of these specters, you can ensure that your soul survives even when your body finally fails you. Yet even these mysterious ghosts, touched by Thanatos, were once frail and feeble mortals like yourself. Only at the moment of death did they gain the clarity of the gods. Only then were their eyes opened. You must know what this revelation was like. Find out when the ghost you summoned died. Once you have done so, turn to page 4.

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The presence of ancient queens and spectral powers is a step in the right direction, but the warmth of your blood and the color in your cheeks still separates you from these regal dead. Before your vitality forsakes you, you must find a way to tauten the veil between you and your silent allies - a way to access their power from the mortal realm. The rituals of the Soulblades - those self-destructive fools, playing with Death like a childs trinket - are a way to touch the living with the fell power of Thanatos. Watch a Soulblade incantation or ritual, then repeat it as best you can far from prying eyes. Once you have done so, turn to page 5.

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As the last mystical syllable slips from your mouth, echoing in the empty halls, a cold gust of wind chills you to the bone. As you shiver, acutely aware of your own mortality, you can hear faraway whispers on the breeze. As you wander the island, you realize that the spirits of the dead are no longer silent. Their wisdom is now yours for the taking. Get the Whisperer ability from the K envelope. Once you have done so, turn to page 6.

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Not all the whispers coursing through your ears are the words of specters. Some seem to come from the core of the island itself, deep and primordial and full of power. They tell you a simple truth, one which you should have grasped long ago. To continue this quest for power in the afterlife, another must die. One soul for another. A fair trade. Find a fitting sacrifice and kill them. If you have already killed at least one person this game, you need not kill another - the spirits of the island are already satisfied. Once you have done so, turn to page 7.

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As your victims life ebbs away, you can feel your own soul strengthen. Your heartbeat quickens. You shudder in glee, glutted on the vitality you have consumed, and it takes all your effort to keep from crying out in ecstasy. Yet a great barrier still separates you from the power of death. Why is this? You have paid the price - where is your reward? "Give us just a taste, Izdubar, and your prize will be eternity." Over, and over, this mantra rings in your ears. You must risk your own soul in the darkness of insanity before you can achieve the ultimate victory. Find a way to reduce yourself to a Psychic Health of 0. Once you have done so, turn to page 8.

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You have seen the other side. The touch of Thanatos is cool and smooth as a funereal urn, fingers of pale ceramic, a voice of flax and obsidian. He took your hand and welcomed you as an equal to his realm. He has only sent you back to exact your vengeance on all the fools who doubted you. When your mortal form is at last destroyed, your life will have barely begun - your spirit will endure for eons. Even kings must die, but you will haunt this world forever, even if you do not die on the isle of Cos. Your Psychic Health increases by 2, to a maximum of 7.

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