

SWORDS AND SANDALS

A campaign setting for Risus: The Anything RPG

©2007, Guy Hoyle

The myths of ancient Greece speak of heroes, gods, and monsters, of mighty quests and tragic fates. It differs from standard fantasy in many ways, yet much of it has found its way into our books, our movies, even our RPGs.

"Swords and Sandals" is not quite a dry adaptation of Greek history and mythology. It draws inspiration from several other sources as well, including Italian sword-and-sandals movies (or "peplums"), the "Hercules" and "Xena" TV shows, and the inspired "[Mazes and Minotaurs](#)" RPG.

To use these rules you'll need a copy of Risus: the Anything RPG , (copyright 1993-2001) by S. John Ross. All references to Risus refer to [the PDF Version \(1.5\)](#) . I also assume that you have a copy of [the Risus Companion](#) ; if you don't, you're missing out on some crunchy bits of Risus goodness.

CHARACTER CREATION

Swords and Sandals follows the standard Risus method of character creation as described in Risus (p. 1), which is briefly summarized as follows:

- 1) Take 10 d6;
- 2) Divide them up into piles of 1-4 dice each;
- 3) Name each of the piles a juicy epic-sounding cliché, like "Battle-Hungry Warrior", "Wealthy Tamer of Horses" or "Beautiful Ill-Fated Maiden" (see JUICY EPIC-SOUNDING CLICHES below);
- 4) come up with a brief description of the character, his personality, what he wants out of life, etc. ;
- 5) come up with a more-or-less pronounceable Greek-sounding name, so the other players don't have to call you "Rich's character" or "the guy with the hairy back";
- 6) write it all down so you don't forget.
- 7) That's the simple way of doing things. If you want it more complicated, here are some other things you can do.

ADDING MORE STARTING DICE: Hooks and Tales

Tales: add 1 dice for coming up with a better backstory. Here's where you tell where your character comes from, who his family, friends, and enemies are, why the gods love him or hate him, what has made him famous or infamous, etc.

Hooks: add another dice for coming up with some interesting flaw or weakness that adds to the story-telling possibilities, such as "Doesn't know that he's married to his sister" or "Fated to die by a loved one's hand."

OPTIONAL OPTIONS: Other Ways To Spend Your Dice

Double-Pumped Cliches: good for that massive, heroic effort so often found in the epics and muscleman movies alike. Some clichés may be required by the GM to be bought this way. They cost twice as much as normal dice when you start out, but they improve with experience the same as any other dice.

Funky Dice: for characters like Heracles, Achilles, or Helen of Troy. In *Sword and Sandals*, most characters don't start out with Funky Dice, but earn them with experience.

Sidekicks and Shieldmates: frequently found in Greek myth. A Sidekick is a single companion; Shieldmates are a group of mostly-faceless helpers (bodyguards, spearmen, philosophers, musicians, whatever). Each cost 1 of your starting dice to get 3 dice for the Sidekick or Shieldmates' clichés.

Lucky Shots and Questing Dice: particularly for characters who are favored by the gods, or particularly good at something, or on a quest of some kind. This comes in the form of extra dice which can be added to a cliché roll. Lucky Shots can be added to any cliché roll; Questing Dice can be added to any cliché roll that fits a narrow type of activity (such as Questing For the Golden Fleece) that you specify when buying the Questing Dice. You get 3 Lucky Shots or 5 Questing Dice for every starting die you sacrifice.

THE WELL-HONED CLICHE

It's tempting to think of clichés the same way we think of character classes in other RPGs, but you can pack a lot more into a cliché than into a character class. According to [Anatomy of a Cliché](#), clichés can reveal some or all of the following information about the character. I've also provided some handy examples to illustrate what I'm talking about.

Profession: King of Mycenae, Priestess of Aphrodite, Epicurean Sage
 Race or Species: Son of a Wood-Nymph, Satyr With Pretensions of Herodom, Wise Old Centaur
 Cultural Background: Egyptian Sorcerer, Rustic Arcadian Huntress, Athenian Social Climber, Laconic Spartan Orator
 Personal History: Former Amazon Queen, Defrocked Priest of Poseidon, Ex-Philosopher
 Degree of Dedication: Diehard Monster-Slayer, Reluctant Charioteer, World-Wearied Swordslinger
 Religion or Philosophic Bent: Dedicated Stoic, Enthusiastic Priestess of Dionysus, Poseidon-Worshipping Charioteer
 Social Class or Financial Means: Cash-Poor Aristocrat, King of the Beggars, Evil Tyrant, Lost Heir to the Kingdom
 Gender: Haughty Amazon, Girl Charioteer, Thessalian Witch
 Demeanor: Happy-Go-Lucky Sidekick, Dour Cynic, Fatalistic Spearman
 Group Affiliation: Suitor of Helen, Initiate of the Eleusinian Mysteries, One of the Seven Against Thebes
 Appearance: Mad Philosopher's White-Armed Daughter, Mighty-Thewed Slayer of Men, Snaggle-Toothed Beggar, Flowing-Haired Achaean Prince, Cow-Eyed Queen of Sparta
 Ham-Handed Reference: William Shatner in a Toga, the Ancient Greek version of Cliff Clavin, Steve Reeves-type Musclemann, the "Red Tunic" Guy (the ancient Greek version of a Redshirt)
 Goals: Actor In Search Of Eternal Fame, Philosopher Looking For An Honest Man, Evil Advisor Plotting To Usurp the Throne
 Self-Image: Swordsman Who Can't Trust Himself Anymore, Sidekick Who Thinks He's A Hero, Beautiful Princess Who Thinks She's Ugly, Overenthusiastic Under-talented Would-Be Hero
 Sub-Plots and Relationships: The Daredevil Charioteer Everybody Goes To For Romantic Advice, The Treasure-Hunting Philosopher Who's In Love With The Beautiful Girl Philosopher Who's Always Stealing His Thunder
 Problems: Blind Poet, Lucky Drunk, Born Loser, Warrior-King Secretly Dying From An Old Injury, Rightful King Of Ithaca Deprived Of His Throne

JUICY EPIC-SOUNDING HEROIC CLICHES (AND OTHERS)

(Add salt and pepper to taste)

Amazon Princess	Clueless Know-It-All	Favored of (god, king)
Ancient Mariner	Clumsy Hero	Feeder of Wolves
Antlike Myrmidon	Cold-Hearted	Fleet-Footed Herald
Architect	Ravager	Follower of the Week
Barbarian Queen	Competent Man	Garrulous Old Man
Barbarian With No Name	Con Man	Gentle Giant
Beautiful Sorceress	Conqueror of (place, people)	Gentleman Thief
Beloved Companion	Cook	Girl of the Week
Berserk Warrior	Crusty Old Salt	Gloom-and-Doom
Blind King	Crusty Old Salt	Soothsayer
Blind Poet	Delighter in Slaughter	Godlike Warrior
Blind Seer	Despised Outlaw	Gold-Greedy
Blind Philosopher	Devious Manipulator	Merchant
Blood-Spattered Chirurgeon	Devoted Charioteer	Gold-Greedy Pirate
Bold Cattle-Reaver	Dim-Witted	Goldmith
Bold-Hearted Bandit	Companion	Grey-Bearded
Born Liar	Eccentric Millionaire	Soothsayer
Born Loser	Engineer	Grizzled Old Veteran
Boulder-Fisted	Enthusiastic Epicure	Hard Bargainer
Brawler	Epicurean Sage	Haughty Aristocrat
Boyishly Handsome Prince	Everyman	Haunted Hero
Braggart Soldier	Evil Tyrant	Haunted Hero
Bumbling Hero	Evil Tyrant's Daughter	Herald of (ruler, place)
Calm-Browed Mentor	Exiled King	Herder
Cartographer	Faithful Companion	Hero In Disguise
Celebrated	Faithful Dog	Heroic Do-Goooder
Playwright	Faithful Steed	Heroic Sociopath
Champion of (place, event, people)	Fall Guy	Hetaira with a Heart of Gold
Child of (god, nymph, famous person)	Farmer	High-Leaping Acrobat
Clever-Handed Crafter	Far-Sighted Archer	High-Vaulting Bull Leaper
	Far-Travelled Voyager	

Honest Thief
Horse-Riding Amazon
Hot Philosopher
Chick
Hulking Barbarian
Humbled Hero
Inscrutable Orphic
Jack Of All Trades
Jerk With A Heart
Of Gold
Ladies' Man
Leader of Battles
Leader of Men
Leatherworker
Life Of The Party
Long-haired Nature
Boy
Lovable Rogue
Lover of Battle
Lucky Drunk
Mad Philosopher
With A Plan To
Take Over The
Throne
Mad Philosopher's
Beautiful Daughter
Man Of A Thousand
Faces
Mean Drunk
Mean Jock
Messenger
Midwife
Much-Scarred
Monster-Slayer
Navigator
Nice Jock
Noble Savage
Noble Warrior

Proud Aristocratic
Pain-In-The-Butt
Obstructive
Bureaucrat
Old Campaigner
Overenthusiastic
Under-talented
Would-Be Hero
Palace
Administrator
Philosopher King
Polyglot
Polymath
Potter
Priest of (god, place,
people)
Prince of (place,
people)
Prodigy
Protector of (place,
people)
Pugnacious Pugilist
Pythagorean Mystic
Reckless Rogue
Reclusive Genius
Reluctant Monster
Renowned Actor
Repentant Traitor
Rich Bitch
Rookie
Rootless Wanderer
Sacker of Cities
Seamstress
Shallow Female Love
Interest
Shepherd of the
People
Ship Captain

Shipbuilder
Silver-Tongued Devil
Singer of Battles
Slave Dealer
Sleep-Wary Sentinel
Smith
Smooth-Tongued
Sophist
Sneering Tyrant
Spear-Famed
Stalwart
Spirit Advisor
Spoiled Princess
Stalwart Champion
Steadfast Companion
Stoic Mentor
Stoic Wise Man
Street Performer
Struggling Actor
Struggling Playwright
Surly Magician
Sweet-Throated
Singer
Swift-Stalking
Hunter
Swift-Striking
Raider
Teacher
The Contender
The Quiet One
The Swordslinger
Tragic Hero
Trickster Mentor
Waif Prophet
Warrior King
Warrior Poet
Warrior Princess
Weaver

Well-Oiled	Wing-Footed	World-Travelling
Muscleman	Warrior	Sage
Whiz Kid	Wing-Worded	World-Wearied
Wide-Faring Poet	Herald	Swordslinger
Wild Spear-Warrior	Wise Old Man	Would-Be Poet
	Woodworker	Mystagogue

HOW IS THIS DIFFERENT FROM THAT OTHER GAME?

When coming up with a player character for a "Swords and Sandals" campaign, it might seem that everybody is a fighter. In most Greek myths, this is mostly true. The typical Greek hero is a warrior-aristocrat, either without an inheritance, or wrongly deprived of his inheritance. They adventure widely, seeking to find a city to rule by marriage, by conquest, or by fortune. However, most of these heroes have other distinguishing traits, as well.

Crafty heroes definitely have their place in myth. Theseus, Oedipus, Odysseus, and even Heracles all won renown by solving some kind of puzzle or using their wits. These are a kind of fighter-rogue combination, in fantasy RPG terms. Others won fame by slaying monsters, such as Bellerophon and Perseus (and, again, Heracles). Uncommon in the myths themselves is the "wandering do-gooder" or knight-errant, though this is much more common in the sword-and-sandal movies featuring well-oiled musclemen such as Steve Reeves, Gordon Scott, and Mickey Hargitay. It should be noted that the mercenary warrior stereotype, fighting for hire, is largely absent from the Greek myths as well; any swordsman looking for employment would usually seek to become part of the household of a king or other nobleman. Other common pursuits for noblemen included raiding by sea (sometimes called "piracy"), cattle-raiding, and hunting. Holy warriors such as paladins are unknown.

Priests are not uncommon in myths, though they are not usually portrayed as adventurers. However, some heroes are closely related to the gods, and may have served as their priests (at least in game terms). Heralds, often regarded as sacred, may act as priests of Hermes in his role as Messenger

of the Gods. The role of priests has been given more leeway in this setting; see "Priestly Magic" in the Magic section, as well as "The Gods".

Magicians likewise abound in the stories (such as Circe and Medea), though not often as player-character adventurers. The role of the magician has been broadened in this campaign (see "Magic", below).

Thieves such as those found in typical fantasy RPGs are rare, since there are few large urban environments in the Greek world (though places such as Egypt and the Hittite Empire can definitely support them). Many heroes such as Theseus and Odysseus perform thief-life functions. Bandits, sea-raiders, and cattle-raiders likewise have an outlet for some of the functions of a thief. Often, sieges involve burglar-like sorties into the besieged city (or sneaking out, if one lives within the city).

Some anachronistic or fabricated character types such as philosophers, elementalists, and daedalists, have been included, partly because the genre tends to encourage such things. They have also been included as a nod to the "other" RPGs, Philosophers seem like a logical part of any Greek-influenced RPG because they are etched into our perceptions of Greece, even though they are anachronistic for a Heroic Age setting. Elementalists hark back to the fireball-throwing mages of D&D. Daedalists are an example of taking a mythical character, Daedalus, and extrapolating him into an entire group of "magicians" (as well as a nod to Clarke's Law, that "any sufficiently-advanced technology is indistinguishable from magic").

HOOKS AND TALES

There are plenty of great potential hooks and tales (duh!) in the Greek myths. Some are fairly common, while others are rather rare. Here are some ideas you can use when developing hooks and backstories.

- Most heroes tended to die on the battlefield or through accident or treachery rather than old age. Older kings tended to settle down and leave the wars to the young.
- Passions tended to run high against the highly competitive warrior-nobles, so you often hear of them killing someone in a fit of anger. Quite often this would be a father or a brother, and would lead to exile.

- Quite often, one of the gods is sufficiently peeved at a character to make his life difficult. Hera did this to several of Zeus' illegitimate offspring as well as his paramours. Poseidon raised storms and sent sea-monsters off the people who committed offenses against him. Ares tended to aid the enemies of the hero he hated, and hampered the blows he struck in combat. Aphrodite would interfere in a character's love life, perhaps getting him involved in a disastrous affair, breaking up his marriage, or any number of other calamitous affairs of the heart. Dionysus can send maenads and forest creatures after victims to drive them mad or tear them to pieces, or make the crops fail and seduce their women into his band of maenads. Most of the gods don't want the offending heroes to die, they want them to suffer. Don't tick off Apollo or Artemis, though.
- Many heroes are impulsive, acting without considering the consequences of their actions (for example, Paris' abduction of Helen, Jason's rashly vowing to retrieve the Golden Fleece, Odysseus' revealing his true name to Polyphemus). Stubbornness, lechery, and jealousy are also common.
- Heroes often travel incognito, sometimes disguised as a beggar. Since there are no inns or hostels in Achaea, they often depend upon the kindness of strangers. In spite of Zeus' command that houseguests are sacred, there's a distressing tendency for kings to feel threatened by any mystery guests in their households, and thus making an attempt to have them secretly bumped off.

MAGIC

There are several distinct "styles" of magic. These are some of the better-known types of magic; there are many others to be found in obscure corners of the world. Barbarians have their own strange magic practices, too! It is not uncommon for a hero to practice some kind of magic, especially if they have divine blood.

Daedalism: "Sandalpunk" gadgeteers, they practice arts and crafts such as architecture, blacksmithing, sculpture, painting, jewelry, astronomy, and mathematics. They are capable of producing elaborate gadgets such as combination locks, mechanical birds that sing, intricate plumbing systems, and buildings that ward against ill health and most basic curses (through study of "sacred architecture" or "sacred geometry"). The pinnacle of the

Daedalist's craft is making animated statues, solar mirrors that can set ships afire, ships that sail without wind, and the like.

Elementalism: an obscure branch of philosophy based upon the manipulation of the four elements (earth, air, fire, and water), using tools, rituals, and prayers. Some elementalists specialize in the use of a single element; others work with all four. They find it easier to work with pure substances rather than mixtures of the elements, though it is often very difficult to find the purest essences of each element (all matter is a mixture of these four elements, to some degree). Many elementalists (alchemists) devote themselves to the search for these very pure substances.

Metamorphosis: Metamorphs transform themselves or others into other shapes, such as other animals or humans. Most metamorphs rely on spells, charms, or magical herbs to change from shape to shape, but the more powerful ones need not rely on these. Some metamorphs who are the children of gods or nymphs can change to a single shape and back at will; these are scorned by other metamorphs, who do not consider them to be true practitioners of the art.

Necromancy: Many people will leave prayers and requests to the underground powers buried in graves, left in caves, or dropped in a well; this is the kind of necromancy anybody can practice, and it's only evil if the intent of the supplicant is evil. True necromancy consists of summoning up and controlling the dead, with all that implies (including dealing with the supernatural guardians of the dead). Necromancy must often be practiced at certain times (such as at night), and often at or near an entrance to the underworld (to be closer to the spirits of the dead). The most powerful necromancers can bring the dead back to life, although this tends to arouse the implacable wrath of Hades. Necromancy is very much akin to sorcery, differing mainly in focusing upon the dead and cthonic powers; they share many of the same types of spells, prayers, and rituals.

Orphism: mystic songs and poetry affecting the emotions of those who listen to the music. Orphics study the songs and poems of those who have gone before them, and gradually learn to compose their own songs. The greatest orphics can affect beasts, trees, even rocks and rivers. They do not have control over these things, but can sway them to act in friendship or in anger.

Pharmakia: Pharmakoi (sing. pharmakon) are makers of potions, medicines, and poisons (though they mostly do not admit to the latter). Naturally, they make antidotes, too. Probably the second most common form of magic (after priestly magic), few villages are without some wise woman who knows a thing or two about pharmakia. The most powerful pharmakoi are looking for the panacea, or universal cure to all wounds, diseases and poisons.

Priestly Magic: Of all the magic practiced in the Greek world, priestly "magic" is by far the most common and visible. The gods affect every aspect of Greek life (see "The Gods", below). Priests confer blessings upon worshippers; officiate at sacrifices, feasts, funerals, purifications, and athletic games; call upon the gods to fulfill their requests; interpret the mood of their patron gods; and express the displeasure of the gods when necessary. They tend to worship a single god, though they respect the other gods as well.

Prophecy: Oracles, prophets, soothsayers, augurs, and sibyls are blessed or cursed with the ability to see the future and the past through a variety of means. Many catch glimpses of other times and places through spontaneous visions; others must go through lengthy ordeals, such as dwelling in special places or inhaling the smoke of burning herbs. Clairvoyants can perceive far-off events, and while psychometrists and object readers can tell what happened in the past to a place or object. These prophecies are almost always ambiguous or vague, sometimes thwarting the intentions of those who sought them in the first place.

Sorcery: magic of trickery and compulsion. Sorcerers confuse people, make them perceive things which are not really there, and bind them to their will. Many sorcerers have the evil eye, and lay curses upon those who arouse their wrath. They use an array of magical props and tools, and often rely on chanting, magical gestures, wax "voodoo" dolls, and the inscription of spells and curses upon magically-prepared substances to work their magic. They often incorporate hair, blood, and other cast-offs from their victims into their spells to make them more effective. Sorcery also shares many tools and techniques with Necromancy (see Necromancy).

Protective Magic

There are many types of protective magic available, though the availability and reliability varies. Most people know simple gestures and prayers to turn away the most common harmful magics, and asking the appropriate god or spirit for protection is available to almost everybody. These protections do not grant immunity to these harmful magics, and they provide little protection from magical experts, but they make day-to-day life possible.

Sorcerers and necromancers can make charms, amulets, and protective talismans that will protect the bearer from specific instances of spells, or from the restless dead, but not against sorcery or necromancy in general. Most people carry around a few charms for protection from day-to-day evils.

Daedalists with an understanding of sacred architecture or sacred geometry can craft buildings and landscaping that can ward off evil influences, like an ancient Greek "feng shui", or bind the evil within an enclosure (like the original Minotaur within the Labyrinth). Most such protections are not portable, and are subject to destruction or disruption simply by destroying the edifices themselves.

The most effective protection against the songs of an orphic are, of course, stopping up your ears so that you cannot hear the song. This is ineffectual against more powerful orphics, since they can even make the deaf hear.

As discussed earlier, pharmakoi can create antidotes and preventative measures for poisons, though sometimes the cure will have side effects and interactions of its own.

The only protection against priestly magic is with more priestly magic from a sympathetic god; otherwise, you must seek to placate the god that has it in for you.

THE GODS

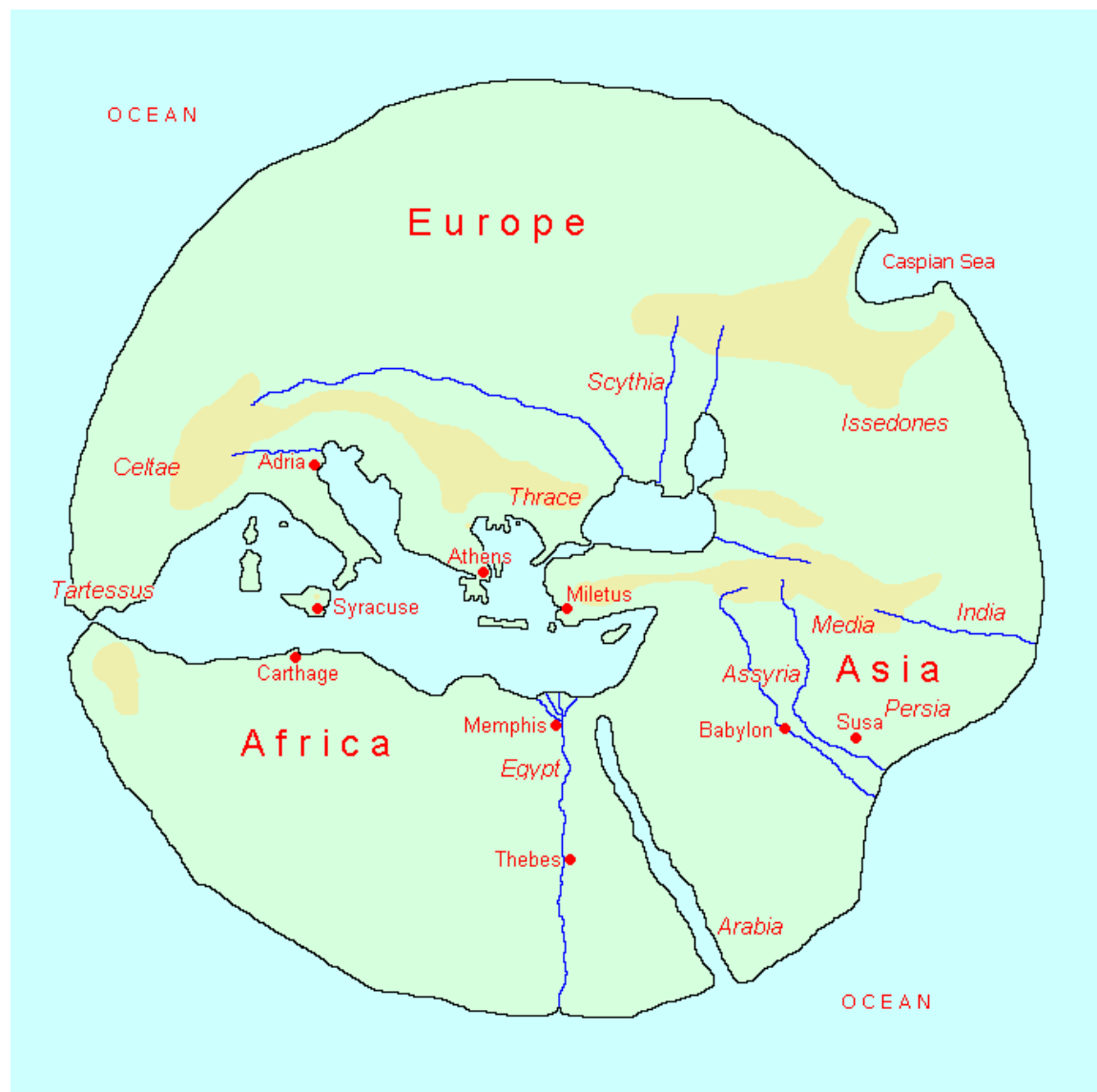
Most heroes have a divine patron or parent, and have earned the displeasure of some god or another because of the circumstances of his conception (Hera despises the issue of Zeus' infidelities, for example), something they've done (such as stealing some god's sacred cattle, or cuckolding them), or something they didn't do (omitting an important sacrifice, especially if you promised one).

Many times a character will want to contact a god to ask for help or a favor. Priests can try and contact a god during a sacrifice. The children of the gods can also appeal to their divine parents, who might answer if they happen to be looking in on their children. Anybody can appeal to the gods during times of great distress. Basically, the gods will only respond if it would be really, really interesting for them to do so, and they usually expect something in return -- and the heroes had better be forthcoming!.

Listed below are the major Gods and some areas they are usually associated with. There are many other gods, which may also be encountered during the course of the game.

- Aphrodite: all aspects of love
- Apollo: archery, healing, shepherds, music, athletics, prophecy, plagues
- Ares: uncontrolled war, fear, terror
- Artemis: hunting, forests, she-bears, the moon, childbirth
- Athena: wisdom, cunning, intelligent warfare, many crafts
- Demeter: fertility, crops, growing things
- Dionysus: wine, vegetation, pleasure, frenzy, madness
- Hephaistos: Metalcraft, beneficial fires, craftsmanship, volcanoes
- Hera: women, childbirth, queens, mothers
- Hermes: flocks, travelers, profit, gambling, eloquence, thieves, traders, conducting the dead to the underworld
- Hestia: Hearth, the home
- Poseidon: the sea, seafarers, earthquakes, horses
- Zeus : weather, sky, lightning, thunder, lightning, protecting fugitives, oracles, kings

THE WORLD



(more details to come)

RISUS: SWORD AND SANDALS

Example Characters and/or NPCs

(c) 2007, Guy Hoyle

Here are some fully-fleshed NPCs, as well as some "character seeds" for the players to customise. [Square brackets] indicate double-pumped cliches.

Testikles the Thracian

Much-tattooed berserker from Thrace with a one-sided rivalry with Herakles

Tattooed Thracian Berserker With A Grudge Against Herakles (4)
Hulking Barbarian Who Doesn't Know How To Act In Polite Company (3)
Voted "Best Pillager In Thrace" Five Years Running (2)
Insanely Mean Drunk With A Short Attention Span (2)

Hook: Imagines he was slighted by Heracles

Questing Dice: Looking for Herakles [] [] [] [] [] []

Tale: Testikles, a red-haired Thracian barbarian, was one of the foremost warriors in Thrace. To prove his prowess, he issued a challenge to Heracles, to meet him in single combat. Unfortunately, Heracles never got the message, being busy with his Twelve Labors and voyaging with the Argonauts. Testikles took this as either cowardice or contempt on Heracles' part, and vowed to seek him out and prove his own might. So far, he has met Heracles 3 times. The first time he passed out drunk just as Heracles made his appearance at a feast. The second time, he was showing off his prodigious might by engaging in a head-butting contest and knocked himself out (to Heracles' amusement). The third time Heracles was serving as a slave to Queen Omphale (dressed as a woman); Testikles didn't recognize him and put the moves on the Son of Zeus, and was knocked out by the wrathful demigod.

Megaera

Teenage Warrior Girl With A Thirst For Conquest

Spoiled Warrior Princess (4)

World-Travelling Seeker Of Ways To Kill People [2]

Sidekick: Ecstasia, Bubbly Ancient Greek "Flower Child" (3), Would-Be Bard/Actress/Priestess/Journalist, whichever takes her fancy that week (3)

Hook: Has earned an impressive number of enemies for a teenage girl, whom she encounters pretty much on a weekly basis.

Tale: Megaera is a typical spoiled teenage girl who just happens to be a very accomplished warrior princess. She has travelled the world learning ways to slaughter lots of people. For a teenage girl, she has a very impressive list of sacked cities to her credit. She's got issues, however, stemming from the brutal slaughter of her family and the tragic destruction of her home town, which she kinda feels guilty for; she was supposed to be on guard duty when the invaders snuck in, but she was making out with this totally hot dude. Still, at heart, she's still a typical prom queen, albeit a vengeance-crazed one. She's constantly being attacked by friends and relatives of the people she's slain. Her one companion is Ecstasia, who can charitably be described as "ditsy". Even Megaera really doesn't know why she tolerates Ecstasia, but she has been useful from time to time.

Skandros the Satyr

A Satyr Obsessed with Becoming A True Hero

Ex-Follower of Dionysus, Scorned by Aphrodite

Shabby-Looking Wanna-Be Hero

Satyr Struggling Against His True Nature

Questing Dice: Enduring Hardships (blessing of Dionysus) [] [] [] [] [] []

Hook: Trying to maintain dignity as a Hero while Aphrodite throws romantic entanglements his way

Tale: Skandros was a member of the retinue of the god Dionysus (known as Zagreus on the island of Crete). However, he couldn't keep his mind on frolicking and dancing; he was too interested in the clash of arms between Achaean and Minoan warriors, their chariots and horses, their tall spears and painted shields. Secretly he gathered up odd pieces of armor until he had a rag-tag suit of his own. Skandros asked Dionysus to excuse him from his duties and allow him to win honor and booty. Amused by the satyr's determination, and his odd assortment of armor, Dionysus blessed his prodigal satyr with great vitality to endure the difficulties that surely would come. However, Skandros foreswore the promiscuous ways of satyrs as "unheroic", and thereby managed to insult Aphrodite. As a result, the goddess plagues him with amorous intrigue whenever possible, seeking to ruin the Satyr's heroic facade.

Skandros is truly committed to the ideals of heroism, but he doesn't always know exactly what they are. He makes many people uncomfortable by watching them intently but discreetly, trying to see "how heroes do things". However, he is very sensitive about his efforts to appear heroic; anyone who ridicules Skandros risks his unbridled wrath.

CHARACTER SEEDS

These are some very basic characters just waiting for their Hooks and Tales to flesh them out. Feel free to change details, names, etc.

Peripetes

Dubious Philosopher with a taste for leisure

Surprisingly Competent Polymath (4)

Creatively Lazy Scrounger (3)

Enthusiastic Epicurean Philosopher (3)

Erissa of Knossos

An athletic young maid trained as a Minoan Bull Dancer, wandering the world since Theseus brought down the Minotaur

Athletic Young Ex-Bull-Dancer (4)

Rootless Wanderer With A Talent For Thievery (3)
Struggling Street Performer (2)

Erebus

Gloomy young lad singing morbid songs, making his aristocratic parents angry, and dwelling a bit too much on death.

Goth-Like Orphic (4)

Angst-Ridden Teenager Rebelling Against His Parents (4)

Teenager Secretly Dabbling A Bit Too Much In Necromancy (2)

Agonistes

Disinherited prince seeking to reclaim his birthright

Proud Aristocratic Pain-In-The-Butt trying to claim his dead father's throne (4)

Sharpshooting Archer with no time for the ladies (4)

Part-time Student of Chiron the Centaur (2)

Drimios

Son of Zeus, Priest and Prophet of the King of the Gods, and well-muscled bodybuilder type who travels around righting wrongs

Tempestuous Son of Zeus (4)

Priest of Zeus with Occasional Glimpses of Foresight (2)

Mighty-Thewed Do-Gooder [2]

Gyveros

Multi-talented son of Hephaistos

Laid-back Jack-of-all-trades (4)

Daedalist son of Hephaistos who avoids weaponry (3)

Intelligent, optimistic escape artist (3)

Osteos

Rustic Healer and battle-trained surgeon, who has travelled far and wants to tell you all about it

Crusty old-fashioned Arcadian pharmakon (4)

Blood-spattered chirurgion and priest of Apollo the Healer(3)

Far-travelled voyager with a lot of advice to give (3)