# MYRMIDON

DIVINITY. ETERNITY. MORTALITY. ANTS.

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# Story Part 1: Inclusion in Amber

Darius waited, watching. Soon it would be time. His hands restlessly caught on his sword hilt, obscured under his leather greatcoat, and his grip tightened to a level of uncomfortable rigor until he forced himself to relax. He pondered his own impatience. An uncounted number of battles lay in his past, and he had the sum total of over four thousand years experience of the wait before the action, and yet never once had such a wait given him this level of anxiety. True, he admitted to himself. Never before had he placed himself in position to confront his own makers. He shivered in spite of himself. A sneer worked itself on his perfectly chiselled features. He focussed inwards and realigned the energies of his own composition, drawing upon the immunity to temperature he had learned from Order Grylloblattodea. The shivering stopped.

Part of his mind screamed at him. The first lore! The ultimate commandment given to any Myrmidon: Never to harm or even to allow harm to any child or direct descendant of the All Mother Gaia. He quelled the instinct with iron will. No. Tonight he planned murder, the like of which two millennia had never seen. The Lores were Nothing; they were smoke and mirrors, held in place by his own blind obedience and nothing more. His heart knew the truth finally. The Gods could not compel him to do any thing. His own companion; the one being in all of the Universe whom he had trusted implicitly had revealed the truth only unwillingly, and only in the end under threat of violence. He recalled the words of Epimetheus clearly in his mind, the gift of perfect recall one he had aligned his parts for with some satisfaction.

"You do not need to change to be like the Humans, Darius. You are like them already. You have free will and always have. Only the fact that you are born of race of Ants has kept you from realizing this. Their obedience to the Hive is loyalty and instinct manifest. But you can choose if you will to not pay attention to the voices of the Hive, and to make your own path. No, please, put up your sword! I beg you, we need you far more than you have need of us. How do you think we survived the falls of Greece and Rome? It was through you and your kind. Where all else abandoned us for newer Gods, we survived on the least likely source. You. The insects. Oh! Please! No..."

Darius overlooked the gathering of humans below. Their blood was so thinned from that which had spawned them in time immemorial that he did not even feel the twinge of the lores calling him when he contemplated slaughtering the entire herd of the beasts. No. He told himself. No. Wait. Epimethius had been explicit under the threat of the blade that had cast down Uranus himself. The same blade, forged anew was in his hand even now. It had cut the manhood from the Sky, and in that act of patricidal violence, set in motion the birth of both pure love in the form of Aphrodite and pure hate in the heart of the makers

of things for their own creations. That steel strengthened his resolve. The Gods would come. They would be here, this night, here in the strange world of the now, tonight. He waited and watched.

The toga party was in full swing. The beer was flowing like a river, and the Fraternity and Sorority members were all really into the fun, making much noise through the large house. Some sounds were loud and boisterous and filled with youthful vigour. Some were soft and rapid and filled with youthful passion. It was primal, vital and empowered with the fuel and fire of mortal transience. Outside in the cold night a small group gathered, occasionally peering in through the open door.

"This will do," said the beautiful young man with the golden eyes and curly blond hair, "All the requirements are met in this rowdy gathering of humans. Shall I prepare the sacred offering? None other gives thanks in the Old Ways."

"You can be so serious sometimes. Where is the old poetry?" mocked a young woman with dark hair and eyes, who otherwise was similar in appearance to the first youth so much that they must be brother and sister. "All I am hearing is the tragic scribbelings of a teenage outcast lured toward oblivion and night like a moth to the moon."

"Leave him be, Arty. Let's crash this joint, and get the party started!" said the goat with the golden fleece that shone in the dim night light like the shimmering cascade of a delicate liquid metal waterfall. "What do you think, Clotho?" the first youth pressed on, ignoring the banter. A giant spider with twelve-inch blades for claws responded in syblant tone.

"It will suffice, Apollo. Summon the bees, and let the Ambrosia flow again as it once did in the City of the Gods on the Mountain. I grow cold, my vision blurs, and all the world seems hidden behind the fog of cataracts and age."

"As you wish," muttered Apollo from between clenched teeth. The effort of sending out the calling worked at cooling the last of the Amber Fire within him. He felt pins and needles in his fingers, and rubbed them to return the circulation. He nodded to the others, and there was a faint exhalation of relief. In one hand he raised a chalice made of gold, with a kingdom's ransom of gems embedded in the sides.

A buzzing began to intrude upon the background noise. It slowly welled in magnitude, gathering like a rising storm. Obscured by the darkness, a thousand thousands of insects came from the four corners of the Earth, even from beyond in the garden of the Hesperades. The stars flickered, then faded in a giant circle as the swarm converged inexorably towards the Frat Party and the small group of otherworldly creatures before it. Finally the sky was dark, and a whirling mass of palpable shadow began to descent like the fingers of a tornado descending from a cloud, pointing down, down, down until it brushed, touched then overwhelmed the upraised cup and the hand holding it. The wind that the swarm generated spun around the perfect apparition of the

pale skinned god like a cyclone's eye upon a marble statue, and swept all small and sundry things up and around in a mad dance of Brownian motion. In close upon the cup, the details were hidden, but the individual creatures were definitely flying in, touching down, depositing some small amount of something, then flying off back into the night. This continues for several moments, then as suddenly as it came, the finger of insectile darkness withdrew back up and into the sky. A circle of stars appeared then grew in complete reversal of the swarm's arrival. Apollo slowly lowered his hand and held the chalice delicately level. He looked upon the liquid within, and smiled to his compatriots. With a deliberate tilt of the wrist, and a muttered word of thanks, he gave a draught of the ambrosia back to the Earth, right there on the Frat house's lawn. There was creaking noise from the ground, not quite and earthquake, but not quite the stability that the firmament normally resolved itself to.

"Yee Haw! Party Time!" yelled the golden goat, kicking up its heals an dancing a sparkling jig.

"Oh for the love of Christ, Zeus, will you please take on another form. I cannot take you seriously when you look like that," muttered the blade-limbed spider in mock despair.

"Hey, I didn't ask for the curse," responded the erstwhile ruler of the heavens, "If your sister hadn't gotten so uppity I wouldn't have to make up crap like this."

"You tried to rape her while in the form of donkey," muttered Clotho with some heat. "Seduce is the word. And it would have worked too if your other sister hadn't walked in."

"We are Fate, you bloody fool. You took a bet with Hades about sleeping with us all while in the form of lower order animals, and what, you thought we wouldn't know?"

"Didn't think you would mind. Many before had been flattered. Besides, you would think five thousand years of this having to use a different form each time I slept with a woman would have been punishment enough. You can't all still be mad. Right?" The goat brayed at his own humour.

A couple of extremely drunk youths lay in a state of some disarray in the front yard, witness to the ancient Grecian Gods gate-crashing their Frat party. They also saw the next few guests arrive after them. One looked to the other after they had passed with normal disbelief numbed by inebriation. After several moments of profound clarity the likes of which drunks around the world would be the envy of, they promptly passed out.



# Introduction

### From Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia:

The Myrmidones or Myrmidons (lit. "ant-people") of Greek mythology were initially the inhabitants of the island of Aegina. When a plague killed all of the human inhabitants of the island, King Aeacus prayed to his father Zeus for a remedy. Zeus responded by transforming the ants of Aegina into a race of people, the Myrmidons. They later founded a kingdom in Phthia and took part in the Trojan War, fighting on the side of Achilles, the grandson of Aeacus.

The mythic Myrmidons were famous for their blind and remorseless loyalty to their leaders, so that in pre-industrial Europe the word "Myrmidon" carried many of the same connotations that "robot" does today.

So there was a challenge called the Game Chef. This is my contribution. If you are not sure what I am talking about, then you might want to take a look at <u>www.game-chef.com</u> for more information. This is a game for gamers. Do not expect a "what is role-playing" section, and in writing this I assume a fairly high level of understanding of role-playing concepts. Take a look at <u>www.rpg.net</u> if you need more help than I am providing here.

In this challenge I have made this three-course meal using the following ingredients:

### Theme: A Historical Period.

Beginning in the golden age of the Greek mythos, this is a game that spans five thousand years of history, following the lives of the immortal Myrmidons and their gods. They can take part in every period, as much or as little as the players desire, even surviving the end of the age of the gods, all the stages in between, even until the modern age where the Gods make bets and tell tales of all that has gone before. They can make their own mark on history and decide their own purpose... perhaps...

### **Ingredients:** Wine

Ambrosia. The food and drink of the gods. To taste of it means life eternal, or at least so long as the gods exist. It is the currency of the Olympians and their fellows, able to transcend time and impart power over time to those that partake of it.

### **Ingredients: Entomology**

The ants were made into people by the gods in answer to a prayer. Over their many millennia of life, the Myrmidons have learned to draw on their Insect nature, tapping into the life essence of all creatures of their ilk to which they feel an affinity. The powers and abilities that a Myrmidon can manifest are dependant upon what Insects they wish to draw upon and what traits they wish to emulate.

### **Ingredients:** Accuser

There is a code of lores that speak of the limits of behaviour that Myrmidons display. These are sometimes called Oaths. Any Myrmidon can Accuse another of transgressing against one of the Lores, which is one of the few ways that they can directly cause divine intervention.

**First Oath:** A Myrmidon must not harm or through inaction allow others to harm any child of Gaia. (Natural Lore).

**Second Oath:** A Myrmidon must not break an oath sworn in the name of the gods, save if it breaks the first Oath. (Divine Lore)

**Third Oath:** A Myrmidon must not disobey any order given them in their own name except where it conflicts with their previous Oaths. (Myrmidon Lore)

**Fourth Oath:** A Myrmidon may not turn away any that claim asylum save if this cause any previous Oath to be broken. A bond of honesty and service then exists between host and guest until the sun sets on the day after asylum is claimed. (Mortal Lore)

### **Ingredients: Invincible**

Myrmidons are immortal, invincible and invulnerable. They can be greatly inconvenienced by things, but as they have partaken of the Ambrosia, they cannot die, and as long as they are motivated to act, will not stop until they are sated.

### **Ingredients:** Companion

Each Myrmidon has a Patron Deity. Unbeknownst to most of the Myrmidons, this is not a Patron-Supplicant relationship at all. Were it not for the Myrmidons, the gods would have long been gone from the world. The gods have a pact with their children. They have a duty to them they binds. As a result of answering the prayer of his son, Zeus gave to the Myrmidons life, and thus they all became his children.

When the Myrmidons spread out and married, forming families of their own, their essence passed on to their children. Those that procreated became mortal, and aged and died much as other humans did. But some did not marry. Some retained the roles that they had in the armies of the Ants from which they came, and never assimilated the human ways of forming attachments. Some instead were just loners. But regardless of the reasons, some Myrmidons have never passed on their essence to others, and remain, caught in the Amber, ever in some ways as they once were, yet still feeling the passing of time, still partaking of human history and experience, and yet always apart and different.

For, while the Myrmidons have remained, the gods have faded. Replaced by other powers, now, no beings know the ways that once were. Few if any offerings are made any more. It is only through the relationship to the Myrmidons, for which an old pact still remains that the gods even have any power left anymore.

The gods must answer to the Myrmidons. Each Myrmadon has an essence of the gods as a companion, a representative of the higher self that makes them immortal, or an ancient parasite living through the remaining power that can be drawn from these strange amalgam creatures make in idle amusement in the long forgotten past.

### **Rules limitation: No Character Sheet**

All the Myrmidons began as ants. All started the same. Only over time and experience can their various essences become manifest into individuality. This is managed and represented by use of Entomology cards and Motive Force cards. Please see the section on Playing a Myrmidon to get a better understanding of how these are used, but the basic idea is that you get cards to represent different essences that the Myrmidons can draw upon to make themselves, choose reasons to be and to manifest abilities.

### **Rules limitation: Designer Created Cards**

There are three types of cards in this game: Entomology Cards that represent the essences that the Myrmidons can draw upon; Motive Force Cards that tell of the primary motivations that Myrmidons decide to base their existence on; and Pantheon cards, that show the gods that have interest in the Myrmidons both as companions and as adversaries.

### Rules limitation: Fixed characters - no generation

The Myrmidons begin from the basic insect start. How they evolve is the centre of the game, their origin is set. Setting down some cards in different orientations generates different effects. Similarly, the players will take part in the game as gods too, these being represented by the fixed Pantheon cards.

### Rules limitation: Resolution system must use colours

Each of the Entomology card sides has a colour. They form the 'suits' and there is a relationship between the colours and the dice rolls.

The colours and their meanings are as follows: White: Olympian Gods, divine power, ability to transform Yellow: Mortals, humans, art, craft, skills and learning. Blue: Chthonian Powers, Earth beings, fertility, control. Red: Insects, Instincts, movement, flight or fight powers. Green: The Titans, imprisoned powers, history and resistance. Orange: The Hive, super-organisms, the group mind, society. Purple: The Monsters, creatures of destruction and obliteration. Rules limitation: Hand gestures have mechanical in game effects.

The game is divided into three basic acts: a Prologue in which the gods play a story telling game with cards; a main History phase in which the players take on the roles of the Myrmidons at some point in history, and an Epilogue or resolution phase in which the consequence of actions is resolved. In the Prologue story game, there is the opportunity for any of the players to bid for the role of Narrator of the story, or Adversary of the others, or to assist in the construction of the tale through declaring objectives and opponents. In this Prequel game, there are numerous tactical elements that are manifest through the use of hand signals. See the section on the Prologue for more information.

Rules limitation: Dice system with 3 distinct pieces of info from a single roll.

When there is conflict in the History phase, it is resolved by rolling three dice, with the low dice indicating action success, the middle dice indicating action magnitude of effect, and the high dice indicating length of time that the action takes to complete.

So that is my take on all the challenge elements in this game. Please read on for more specific information about the game mechanics and concepts.

## Overview of Myrmidon

### Story Arc

The basic story arc is three fold. The players will take on roles of the gods for a Prologue, during which the epoch and location as well as themes and roles in the next phase are determined. In the next, History phase, they play the role of Myrmidons (or the Narrator or Antagonists of a story) at some point in the past. The last phase, the Epilogue involves resolving the outcomes of the game and character change.

### **Epic Sagas**

This game is played in flashback, and so can begin in the end, looking at any portion of the game history. To give an idea of how this structure operates, watch the movie Highlander. Chronologically, the story is almost at its end when play starts up, and over the course of the game you are building up character history and personality through relating events that happened in the character's past.

This game can be open ended, but it is easily possible to make it closed, or to close it off at any time. There are three special items that need to be noted about this.

### 1. Pressure.

If you want the game to have the sense of moving toward an end, you can manage it through descriptions but it is fairly easy to place a mechanical limitation on the game to add to this pressure. Simply reduce the amount of Wine Draughts available in the prologue for each player by one for each session that goes past.

### 2. Nascent Organism.

To give a sense of ending, quite often it is useful to fill out details of the beginning. Players may wish to play a special Origin History, during which the cards in play are limited to only Ants, and a story of the Birth on Aegina and the reason why these Myrmidons do not marry become explicit. This is identical to any other History session except as noted here.

### 3. End Game.

During the Prologue, any player can make a special closing bid to attempt to bring on the Endgame. To make this bid the player must qualify the story end that they are aiming for by putting in full view their Prime Motive, and demonstrating the Myrmidon's configuration and any other cards that allow this to happen.

Generally a threshold must be set by group consensus that the player bidding for the Endgame has a valid reason and plan for their endgame to take place. Endgame can be used in a limited fashion to kill off a Myrmidon, if that is the player's desire, and this is the only way that Myrmidons can die.

Endgame is set in the present time, and usually involves the Myrmidon directly in the same location as the modern God remnants. The gods are considered to be automatically summoned, and require no further Draught use to remain in a location, but do require it to perform any actions.

Endgame is exactly like any other bid in all other ways. It is possible for a game to continue past an Endgame (assuming that the world still exists). See the Epilogue section for more information.

# Prologue and Bidding

All the gods partook of the Wine. The Ambrosia was carefully rationed, carefully hoarded from the mortals, and shared equally among those who had made supplication of the Earth. But it was less than it once had been, and all the Olympians noted the lessening with a silent disquiet and musing. But the party was a good one, so they either forgot or filed away their concerns in order to once more live as they long ago once had, gods among mortals, enjoying the fruits of life without care.

"Shall we play the game again?" Said Artemis as she with raised eyebrow saw the Golden Goat trying to nudge its way into a threesome with two humans copulating behind the sofa. "A Story of what once was?"

Apollo sat up, his perfect chest glistening with the sweat of his own exsertions. "What stakes sister?"

She smiled. "All that we have left of the past, of course."

"We should disperse the mortals first." Apollo said, catching the direction of his sister's gaze. As answer, the blade limbed spider ceased to cloud its current form in the shroud of obscurity, and in short order those humans conscious enough to sense her had left the room screaming.

"Oh drat and blast," said the goat. "What now?"

"The game," said Clotho simply.

"Oho! I'll bet my whole portion that I have a good one," the goat said suddenly enthused, "Honour. Betrayal. Murder." Their eyes lit up in response to his.

"What place and what year?" asked Apollo.

"The year of the birth of Leonardo Da Vinci."

"Hmm," said Artemis. "A new one, I think. I am sensing the involvement of the Myrmidons... And a dark Chthonian force whose face is not clear to me."

"I wanted to speak of the trek of Hillary up the Mount tonight," muttered Clotho. "There was the hand of more than one god on Everest those days. And one of the Myrmidons was there also."

Apollo shrugged his shoulders, but Artemis pressed on. "The older tale not yet told is the better. Come, I will speak of the villains, and Zeus of the heroes. I put my portion up that you will love this tale. I hear the resonance of it in the Amber Wine... caught still in time, unchanging, eternal, absolute. As steadfast as the Myrmidons themselves."

Clotho nodded. This sounded like a good one.

Zeus started to speak, and the Ambrosia caught in the words, making them more real, more true, less a recollection of the storyteller and more a history of that which was, preserved for all eternity behind the solid resin of the Earth's blood.

### Purpose of the Prologue

The prologue is a mini-game, in which the stakes are the normal game play roles. So up for grabs is the role as Narrator, who is responsible for the setting and story elements, and the role of the Adversary who brings into play all the obstacles of the game from the Enemies, unaligned non player characters that may want something, or even natural impediments to action like ravines, crevasses, or rock slides or car accidents. Lastly there is the default role of a Protagonist, which can also be played for just as much as the others.

### Set up + Strategies in the Prologue

You need one copy of the Pantheon Cards, one copy of the Entomology Cards (with a minimum of one card of the order Hymenoptera per player), and one copy of the Motive Force cards per player.

You also need a large number of multicoloured dice of various sizes. They need to be of at least 7 different colours. The preferred colours are Red, Orange, Yellow, Green, Blue, Violet and White, but you can substitute any colours or styles so as to differentiate them.

Shuffle and deal out 2 pantheon cards face down to each player. Players get to keep their Companion card from any previous games, and if they have no face up cards available (new character or new game) deal out an extra face down Pantheon Card to each player in that situation.

Players also get an Hymenoptera Entomology card, and another three Entomology cards at random in the first game. In later sessions the Narrator gains control of the spare Entomology cards. During the Prologue the Entomology cards are not useable by any party as a stake.

Players can also make their selection of the Motive Force Cards at will.

The game advantage of playing the Narrator or the Adversary is the chance to gain a great deal more Wine Draught tokens through affecting more characters with the results of your efforts in the role. Thus in a 3 person game (the minimum) these roles are less valuable, and people will be bidding most often to play the Protagonist. In a 4 person game the rewards to risk ratio pretty much breaks even, and as the number of people increases, the benefit for being the special two roles becomes more substantial. This is deliberate, it is more work to run a game or challenge everyone playing in the game than it is to simply be the hero.

There is also a strategy to how many items you get into play during the Prologue, it usually being better to get as much as possible to support the story declared as early as possible.

### Preparing to Bid for Narrator

First and foremost, a Narrator needs to make interesting and involving descriptions of the time and place that the game is to be set in. Research a historical period. Be aware how specific Motive Forces will react/manifest in this period. Choose a primary Theme for the period: One of the Forces (motives). This will act as a guide for the players as to what elements of the story will be common. Try to pick interesting or obscure moments in history, anything will suffice as a backdrop for the events, but the more interesting or unusual the better.

### Preparing to Bid for Adversary

You should prepare several potential curses, monsters or obstacles for the remaining characters. These do not need to be any more than ideas. When you win the role of Adversary you gain the unused Pantheon Cards of the other players to represent the forces of the universe inconveniencing the plans of others. Challenges can be anything that is a barrier for the Protagonist to get something done. The Adversary is challenged to create ones that relate to the concepts on the available cards.

### Prologue Turn order

Set Up the Bidding: Players each need to bring 1 cup or bowl for holding the draughts their Companion has in reserve. The number of Draughts in the each player gets starts at default of 10. If the players are playing an unending game this default stays each story. If they are playing the Epic Confrontation version, the amount reduces by one after each tale. At the start each player gets dealt 3 face down Pantheon cards (or 2 if this is not the first game) and can select up to four Motive Force cards (hidden). Then proceed through bidding in turns till everyone has bid or indicated a no bid for this turn. The turn ends when all bids are closed.

**Step 1:** If this is the first session, conduct an open auction of Draughts for the right to choose the Speaker. If not the first session, the last Narrator has the right to choose the Speaker, but cannot choose themself. If no one bids or there is a tie, dice off for the right. Draughts spent in an Auction are Drained.

**Step 2:** Yield the floor to the Next Speaker. To Yield the floor to the next speaker, raise your cup and say something like "I have

spoken, who next?" Each player indicates they want to be nominated by raising their cup. Those who have closed bids at this time, but want the Floor must raise their Chalice with two hands. Those who cannot accept the Floor (they have had an action that round) or who want to abstain from any action this round can place their hand over their chalice. You can yield to anyone who does not have their chalice covered, but if there is more than one person with their chalice raised you must choose between them rather than picking someone who had not raised their chalice.

**Step 3:** The Speaker must make a bid. Once you have the floor you must make a bidding action of some kind. The list of available actions and gestures is listed in the next section.

**Step 4:** Bidding/ challenging and Nominating continue till all have bid or challenged once that round. If all have Bid, move to Foreshadowing (step 5). If there are players who have not placed closed bids, move to the next round (step 2)

**Step 5: Foreshadowing.** When all bids are closed, compare the Card totals of the Offers on the Table. The Offers with the Highest number of cards of their type win, ties are resolved by vote of the other players (show of hands): Bribing for votes is allowed. Any remaining ties are resolved by dice roll. Anyone with an Offer on the Table that is not taken up must buy in as a Protagonist, sacrificing their open Pantheon cards to the Adversary and buying in any Motives they want in play by Draining the number of Draughts (not Decanting them). At the end of the bidding process the Narrator takes in the opening positions of the players and outlines a prospective concept for the story to come. This forms the Narrator's key goal.

### **Bidding Actions & Gestures**

- **Open Bidding action:** An open bidding action is used to add resources to the stakes of the story. Placing an Open Bid Decants the Draughts equal to the value of the bid from the God's chalice to your Myrmidon's Amber pool for that Story.
- **Closing Bidding action:** A closing bidding action is used to commit to a role in the story, and give up the opportunity for the other roles.
- **Challenge:** An open bidding action. To place a challenge is to open up resources for other bids to use. You can challenge with Pantheon cards or Motive Force cards or both, as many as you like. If you want you can also Decant one Draught and place a face down Entomology card into play as an unclaimed resource for the game as well.
- **Buy In:** An open bidding action. To buy in is to add resources to any open challenge. You must match the resource cards of the original bid in type and number, and Decant the same number of Draughts.
- Nominate: A closing bidding action. To nominate is to indicate who you want for Narrator or Adversary. You can nominate someone who has not placed an Offer on the Table. The nominated player's bid is then strengthened by your cards held of the relevant type: Narrator is strengthened by any Motives Force and Entomology cards you have in play, and Adversary by your Pantheon cards. You can immediately place more

cards into play of the kind that you are supporting if you wish. You can Nominate twice, once for each position (unless you have first offered). The first time you nominate if you have not Offered you are indicating you are giving up your chance at Narrating or playing the Adversary. Nominating overrides a Claim made by a previous bidder.

- Offer: A closing bidding action. To place an Offer on the Table is to indicate you are willing to be the Narrator or Adversary this Story Arc. To Offer Narration you must state a Time and Place, and a Central Theme. The Central theme can come from your Motives, or can come from any Open bids. To Offer Adversity you must place a minimum of one Pantheon card from your hand, face up in front of you. You can also use any open Pantheon cards to strengthen your Offer. Once you have Offered the only actions you can perform is to Claim an Open resource, Nominate someone for the other Role or Rescind.
- **Claim:** One of the only bidding actions available to someone that has made an Offer. A Claim allows the player to claim any one open resource of the kind relevant to their chosen Offer.
- **Rescind:** An Open bidding action. In order to change your mind you must Drain one Draught to the Centre Chalice. You then rescind any Offer on the Table or Nominations you have made. You retain all resources and all losses you have undergone till then through your bidding strategy, however.

- Maybe: When you do not have the floor, you can hold hand level, pointed in the direction of someone with an Offer on the Table. You may choose to hold it steady or wobbling to indicate the same thing. Used when someone is yielding the Floor to indicate a willingness to be swayed toward or against an idea.
- **Approval:** Thumbs up intended to indicate a like for a concept and a willingness to support it if the chance arises. Used when you do not have the floor.
- **Disapproval:** Thumbs down intended to indicate a dislike for a concept. Used when you do not have the floor.

### Sample Prologue Dialogue:

Challenge: "I want to hear a story of Oblivion, of people trapped in their own desire to end existence." Open Motive Force and decant the relevant motive amount of Draughts.

April 15, 1452 AD, the city of Casablanca. The smell of fresh spice mingles with raw fish and old leather. Yelling and the sounds of people going about their business echo across the cobbled streets of the docks district. The sounds of industry and commerce are suddenly cut short by the staccatto retort of a gunpowder weapon being discharged. Many looked up from their stalls or paused in their stride, never having heard anything like it in their lives. A man dove out from a doorway into the street, a black cloud of acidic smoke in his wake. Heads turned to follow as he rolled to his feet, sprinted to the corner then skidded into a right turn. Challenge: "We should talk of the Myrmidons and how they developed." Draw a face down Entomology card and place in the Pot.

Challenge: "Can we hear tell of Clotho? It has been some time since I recall hearing of her intervention in matters of the world." Place Pantheon card open and unclaimed.

Offer to Narrate: "I know a tale of things that transpired in South Africa, During the Boer War. Shall I tell it?"

Offer of Adversity: "I can tell that Hades is in this story. His pale hands and cold stare chills the heart of any he opposes. I know what moves him to act."

Challenge: "I am interested in hearing a tale of procreation. Someone desiring continuance, a Tragedy if you can."

Nominating: "Selandra the Myrmidon was in South Africa at that time. I recall he prayed for help against the forces of death."

# History and The Game Play of the Story

On his heels a man with a blunderbuss screeched the word "Thief" into the air, and began to make chase.

Darius sprinted as fast as he could, stripping the powder and shot impregnated leather jerkin and tossing it behind him. His bare chest was unmarked, and received less attention that the bullet holes would have. Now, to loose himself in the crowd, then to examine this special steel blade that he had judged of a metal unlike any he had ever seen in his three and a half thousand years of life. But first, he needed to lose himself in the crowd.

The History phase of the game resembles a classic tabletop Role Playing Game, in that there is a Narrator and Protagonists, but there is a slight variance with the presence of the Adversary, whose responsibility it is to present all the main body of challenges that the Myrmidons face in their quest to follow their Motives while experiencing the world in the time and place of the game.

### Myrmidon Base Statistics:

Entomology cards are rated from 1 (best) to 5 (worst) in the four stat areas. The colour of the stat dice is determined by the colour of the faces of the cards pointing in the Stat direction. The number of faces on the dice determined from the chart below: Add the scores on that side together and times 2.

4 = d4	
6 = d6	
8 = d8	
10 = d10	
12 = d12	
14 + = d20	

Normal Colour Combinations & Meanings

Colour	Creature	Obtain	Alter	Control	Harm
Purple	Monster	Annihilate	Disintegrate	Incapacitate	overwhelm
Orange	Hivemind	Absorb	Incorporate	Possess	Mind Assault
Green	Titan	Take	Create	Intimidate	Smite
Red	Insect	Thieve	Chrysalis	Pheromone	Toxin
Yellow	Human	Learn	Craft	Trade	Weapon
Blue	Chthon	Consume	Spawn	Desire	Curse
White	Olympic	Requisition	Transform	Authority	Inflict

### **Statistics Definitions**

There are four base abilities. Each manifests in a different way depending upon the quality displayed in the character statistic dice. So if the Alter quadrant on the character cards displays an Orange d6, then when the character wishes to change something they do so by incorporating it into something else (themself or any relevant element).

### Obtain

Used to gain things. Includes gaining knowledge, objects and even status.

### Alter

Used to change things from one state into another.

### Control

Used to make others act as you desire.

### Harm

Used to injure or damage any other things.

### Myrmidon Action Declaration

Firstly, Protagonists declare action to be attempted. Unopposed actions automatically succeed as described by the player. Unless the action is declared resisted by another player, it is considered to have happened.

The Narrator will oppose any actions that contravene the time period or setting. The Adversary should oppose any actions where doing so will make the story more interesting. Other Protagonists can resist actions that are directed toward or involving them.

So, the Adversary (or involved Protagonist or the Narrator) declares resistance to an action. Three dice determine the effects of the action.

First they must show the Opposition dice that indicates what type of resistance there is to the action in question. Then the Protagonist puts in the active Statistic dice for the action type they are attempting. The Narrator then declares any situational modifiers and adds in the Setting dice.

Note that the Narrator must play two d10s of the theme colour of the story if they oppose an action without the support of the Antagonist.

### Myrmidon Action Success Target

Count the number of dice that are the same colour as each other. This determines the target number of the effort. This outlines the chance of success or failure.

No colour the same: Target 1

Two colours the same: Target 2

All colours the same: Target 3

### **Myrmidon Action Result**

Roll the dice. Anyone can roll them, but usually the Protagonist does, because it is traditional.

The **lowest number** indicates success of the action. If it is under or equal to the Target, the action succeeds. If it is over the target the action fails. A failed action still takes as long as indicated on the high dice, and still has a magnitude of effect from the second dice. The **highest number** is the resilience of the opposition. It indicates how long the action takes to complete by comparison to an unopposed action of the same kind. So a result of 6 would mean that the action takes six times as long to complete than if it were unopposed. This is mostly relevant for description purposes, or if there are other actions going on at the same time, so as to see who ends and action first.

The **middle number** represents the magnitude of the result.

1 Godlike success

- 2 Legendary success/ Cataclysmic failure
- 3 Super-heroic success/ Abysmal failure

4 Heroic success/ Dismal failure

5+ Mortal success/ Simple failure

In situations where there is conflict between Myrmidons, or several are acting at the same time, and timing of action matters, you can choose to roll each character's Harm dice (or in the case of Pantheon cards, their lowest available dice which is not expended) and record the number. Then the Narrator counts sequentially from one upward till someone's number comes up. In the case of ties, the two players actions are considered simultaneous. After each action is resolved, add the High Roll to the current initiative number and that becomes when the character can act next.

When a Myrmidon is resisting against another Myrmidon's action, they use an inverse of the standard action dice, based on the following transition:

### MYRMIDON

Active Ability	Passive Resistance
D20	D4
D12	D6
D10	D8
D8	D10
D6	D12
D4	D20

Use of Draughts:

The **Narrator** can Drain Draughts to resurrect something from the discard pile to their hand or back into play, or to modify any conflict one way or another in the name of drama. Narrator Draughts are the most powerful. The Narrator must Drain a Draught to take control of a challenge or opponent, and can only do so for a scene.

The **Adversary** can Drain Draughts to add multiple layers to a challenge, or to force a stand off result on a dice roll where a Challenge is losing. At any one time an Adversary may only have One Pantheon Card in play, unless they Drain a Draught to temporarily increase this limit. Adversary Draughts are second in power. It does not cost the Adversary any Draughts to assume control of any Pantheon card in play, but they cannot assume control of the Companion of a Myrmidon

Myrmidons Drain Draughts to Modify or Reinforce their Configuration. They can also Drain to Accuse and to Summon Companion. Myrmidon Draughts rank third most powerful. • Gods can give each other Draughts at will (including the Narrator and Adversary if wanted). Gods drain draughts to tweak a success level up or down. Summoned Gods can Decant a Draught to their Companion Myrmidon, and can Drain Draughts as an Adversary. God Draughts are the least powerful, unless Summoned.

# **Playing the Narrator**

It is the Narrator's job to set the scene, fill in the details, and work with the other players so as to create a shared imaginary space. When the History phase begins, the Narrator gets to see all the Motive Force cards that the players have in play for that session. The Narrator is then working with the players to try to fulfil as many of these Motives as possible. Narrator's job is then to try to weave events in the period to include the Forces that the other players manifest. The Narrator Contributes a die to all actions so as to indicate the situational modifiers for that action. Generally the colour of the dice in question should remain static and dependant upon any underlying theme for the session that the Narrator has declared in their bid (from their Motive Force cards).

The Narrator can choose how many sides to make their contributing die dependant upon the difficulty of the action. Easier actions are given low number of sides of dice, and harder ones are given higher number of sided dice. The basic difficulty classes can be defined as follows:

Dice	Difficulty
D4	Easy
D6	Average
D8	Difficult
D10	Hard
D12	Exacting
D20	Impossible

The Narrator has first option to narrate all failed action results, and the Adversary has second option.

### **Motive Force Cards**

The 28 motive force cards are indicators of what goals characters are trying to fulfil. They also are used to indicate underlying themes for stories. To bring them into play they have different costs dependent upon their underlying colour, but likewise yield increasing benefit if they become satisfied in the process of play.

Red, Yellow, Blue Motives require one Draught Decanted to bring them into play. They also generate one Wined level after play if sated.

Purple, Orange, Green Motives require two Draughts Decanted to bring them into play. They also generate one Wined level after play if sated.

White Motives require three Draughts Decanted to bring into play. They also generate one Wined level after play if sated.

Motives do not need to be completed in full in order to sate them for the purpose of reward in the game. For example, any character that desires Oblivion does not only gain experience for killing themself.

Instead, any objective that is challenged, demonstrated, spoken about or had some action done to determined a way of making it happen can be considered sated during that session, and thus worthy of benefit from the experience. Working toward sating motives is in everyone's benefit in the game, and can be seen as the primary reason for action.

# Playing the Adversary

The adversary sets aside their normal stats and sit next to the Narrator. They also get all the unused Pantheon cards from people's hands.

Characters will succeed in any action they desire all the time, unless they act against another character, or the adversary plays opposition. The Adversary must use Pantheon cards for each obstacle.

The Narrator sets scenes, and the Protagonists act on the scene as they wish. The Adversary takes over to describe obstacles, and the Narrator then adjudicates the results. Placing an obstacle requires dice to be spent from a Pantheon Card. An obstacle is a non-renewable resource but only fades once permanently overcome by some means.

As an example, the Adversary plays a Green d10 obstacle in the path of the Protagonists in the shape of a ravine that needs to be crossed to get to where they need to go. This obstacle remains for any moving on that path until it is somehow destroyed (say, building a bridge), but the d10 cannot be used for any other purpose.

If the adversary plays a Pantheon card, it can be face down if the Adversary desires. There can be multiple layers of deception or illusion clouding the nature of the Threat, each of which might be a challenge (and thus a dice) to overcome. The Narrator gets to see the face down card, and adjudicates if the challenge is being represented fairly.

After the nature of the challenge is comprehended, the card becomes face up, and the Protagonists must then

determine how they will surmount the challenge. Generally an adversary will only be able to play one card at once, but they can choose to add extra cards and thus more dice into the mix. Each layer costs the Adversary one Draught. The adversary can bring into play as many challenges at once as there are Protagonists.

### **Pantheon Cards:**

Every pantheon card in play gets 24 sides worth of dice as a non-renewable resource. When it comes into play the dice are allocated to challenges. A Companion Pantheon card can only come into play when Summoned.

So a Pantheon card might have a d4 challenge and a d20 challenge, or 3d8 challenges, or 2d6 and 1d12 or any other combination thereof. The sides can be allocated at will as the need for them arrises. The Adversary does not need to declare which pantheon card is posing which challenge, but they must record the dice bought against each card privately.

The Adversary can buy dice of different colours to the Card that plays them, but the cost increases depending on how far the colours are from each other.

**Pantheon Card (White):** Buying white dice is default, Buying any other dice is +2 faces.

Example 1: 3 white d6 (18) and one orange d4 (6)

Example 2: 2 white d4(8) one red d8(10) and one blue d4(6)

**Mortal Card (Yellow):** Buying yellow dice is default. Buying Green and Orange is +2 faces. Buying all other colours is +4 faces. Example 1: 1 yellow d12 (12), 1 blue d8 (12)

Example 2: 1 orange d4 (6), 1 purple d10 (14), 1 yellow d4 (4)

**Chthonian Card (Blue):** Buying Blue dice is default. Buying Green and Purple is +2 faces. Buying all other colours is +4 faces.

Example 1: 3 blue d4 (12), 1 white d8 (12)

Example 2: 2 blue d6 (12), 2 green d4 (12)

**Universal Card (Red):** Buying Red dice is default. Buying Purple and Orange is +2 faces. Buying all other colours is +4 faces.

Example 1: 1 red d4 (4), 2 white d6 (20)

Example 2: 1 purple d12 (14), 1 Orange d8 (10)

# **Playing a Protagonist**

### **Entomology cards**

Myrmidons draw on the power of their insect origins. They begin with the mindset of the ants that represent their innermost nature, and learn to manifest abilities of more and more orders of insects. This nature is manifest in the four base Entomology cards that Myrmidons bring into play. If a Myrmidon gains more, the remainder are held in store.

### **Card Layout and Base Statistics**

Place four cards in a diamond shape. Once placed the cards are locked in place, unless Draughts are used to manipulate the placement. See the insert page that follows for examples on how this configuration is laid out.





### Manipulating the Cards

The player can at any time twist the Entomology cards on the spot if they desire. By doing this there are changes wrought in the character's configuration for base Statistics and quality of associations as represented by their colour of dice. Characters can also gain access to understanding of new Orders of Insects as represented by Entomology cards. This usually requires some in game explanation, perhaps a mystical experience, or plot driven action determines the allocation of new cards. Such an action is in the hands of the Narrator, though it can be prompted by a Challenge bid done for that purpose.

### Locking Motives and Cards

Bringing Motives into play is the key way that characters improve. In order to qualify for a motive, a particular colour must remain manifest in the character's statistic alignments. This is demonstrated in the Inserts section. Motives lock two cards into one position, unless the same colour (free of other motives) can be constructed on the character sheet elsewhere).

### The Lores of Myrmidons

The four lores of the Myrmidon. All Myrmidons are governed by these Lores, though the degree of governance is something that is up for interpretation by all the players of the game.

**First Oath:** A Myrmidon must not harm or through inaction allow others to harm any child of Gaia. (Natural Lore)

**Second Oath:** A Myrmidon must not break an oath sworn in the name of the gods, save if it breaks the first Oath. (Divine Lore)

Third Oath: A Myrmidon must not disobey any order given them in their own name except where it conflicts with their previous Oaths. (Myrmidon Lore)

**Fourth Oath:** A Myrmidon may not turn away any that claim asylum save if this cause any previous Oath to be broken. A bond of honesty and service then exists between host and guest until the sun sets on the day after asylum is claimed. (Mortal Lore)

### **Accuse + Summoning**

Myrmidons can accuse one another of transgression against the Lores. Such accusation requires a God to judge who must not be the companion of either party. The accuser begins a ritual and makes a sacrifice of at least one Draught. The defender nominates a Pantheon Entity to judge. The entity cannot be the companion of either one of the involved parties, but if it is the companion of another Myrmidon that player will play the god for the purpose of this intervention. All others are played by the Adversary.

How this Accusation and Judgement is managed is entirely at the discretion of the involved players and the deity chosen to adjudicate. Some might demand trial by combat (eep!) or a formal trial process. Some will openly take bribes.

The Summoned God becomes actually present in the History. The only other circumstance that allows this to occur is if the Myrmidon should summon their Companion, an action that takes 2 Draughts to implement.

Summoned gods act exactly like face up Pantheon Cards, save that they may not be under the control of the Adversary.

### **End of the Flashback**

The History phase is over when there are no more obstacles to play out, or no more motives to be fulfilled, or if there is group consensus that this story is over. A History phase can end at any time in a gaming session, and the players can go through several complete cycles in one session if they want. Alternatively, a game can break and reconvene where it left off with the same people playing the same roles till that History Phase plays out. It is also possible to have multiple stories about the same point in history if so desired.

# **Epilogue and Rewards**

### Allocating Wine & Advancing Cards

At the end of the game, the Gods drink the remaining Draughts in their pool. You may want to keep a register sheet to indicate the number of draughts that each card has drunk. Add to the Wined total of the pantheon cards in question. This includes the Pantheon Cards of the Narrator and Adversary.

The Narrator then looks over the Obstacles imposed by the Adversary, and for each Obstacle that furthered the Narration they give one draught to the Adversary from the Stakes. The maximum number is equal to twice the number of players.

Protagonists display their Motives, and the Adversary looks them over. Based on wether the Motive was acted on or demonstrated in the game, the Adversary grants draughts from the Stakes to each Protagonist Player according to the value of the Motives in question. Each gains one bonus Draught if they interacted with the central theme of the History. The Protagonists then reward the Narrator with draughts for each goal they thought that the Narrator helped in putting into play (Maximum of 2 per player).

If there are any remaining draughts, they are divvied up evenly among the players. If the Draughts run out before the allocation is complete, draw the remaining rewards from the destroyed pool.

The number of Draughts that the Myrmidon accumulate can be used to enhance the Entomology cards that they have in play. Increasing one base card side by one rank costs 5 points.

### Endgame

In the shadows outside the room, Darius paused to hear the tale. His sword was in hand, at his feet the silent slain of the humans that had fled the room in the wrong direction. The time had come. He would slay the gods themselves and finally be free of this accursed existence. He moved toward the room, and was suddenly confronted by three figures.

"Darius. Brother. Sorry, no invitation."

He frowned. He did not want to spill the blood of other Myrmidons, but he couldn't let them stop him. No Choice. No Choice. This sword emasculated the greatest god that ever existed. His brethren were chaff, and he the Reaper.

"On the contrary. There is plenty of choice," said the voice in his head. "Remember the Hive. Remember your heart." The sword cluttered to the ground, as Darius

### MYRMIDON

reverted to what he once was. 4000 years of life as an immortal, and now he was nothing more than an ant.

"To squash or not to squash, that is the question..." said another voice.

"He is a child of Gaia, Xenos. Let him be. He has what he wanted now."

> "How is it is freedom to be an immortal ant?" "He is a male. Instinct will call him to mate..." "You are one evil bitch." "I am what was made of me."

# **Index of Terms:**

**Myrmidon:** The construct of the gods: granted on a prayer. Insect become human, they are the perfect worshipper. The Gods owe them a debt of life, and so they cannot die.

**Prologue Phase:** The start of the Story Arc, in which the gods gather and the type of story, setting, time and opponents are decided.

**History Phase:** This is when the main action of the Story Arc takes place. Players are one of the Protagonist Myrmidons, the Narrator or the Adversary. Finishes when all the challenges are spent or when there is consensus that the story has played out.

**Epilogue Phase:** The end of the Story Arc where rewards are allocated among the Myrmidons and the gods.

**Draught:** One portion of the Wine of the gods. One Draught of Ambrosia is represented by a single Token.

**Speaker:** In the Prologue the person who has the floor. No one else may perform any bidding or challenging unless the Speaker yields the floor to them.

**The Floor:** Owning the floor is the same thing as being the Speaker.

**Narrator:** Person that is telling the story, providing the descriptions and adjudicating actions. The Narrator is responsible for the Setting and the incidental characters.

**Adversary:** Person who providing the challenges that the Protagonists face in the story. The Adversary is responsible for the key opponent characters and works with the Narrator to create the plot.

**Protagonist:** Person who is acting in the story, responsible for the central character (s).

**The Stakes:** The Stakes are what is at risk in any game. The stakes are committed in the Bidding phase of the Prologue. All the Drained Draughts in the are placed in the Centre Chalice. The Stakes are distributed in the Epilogue game phase.

**Open Bidding action:** An open bidding action is used to add resources to the stakes of the story. Placing an Open Bid Decants the Draughts equal to the value of the bid from the God's chalice to your Myrmidon's Amber pool for that Story.

**Closing Bidding action:** An closing bidding action is used to commit to a role in the story, and give up the opportunity for the other roles.

**Challenge:** An open bidding action. To place a challenge is to open up resources for other bids to use. You can challenge with Pantheon cards or Motive Force cards.

**Buy In:** An open bidding action. To buy in is to add resources to any open challenge. You must match the resource cards of the original bid in type and number, and Decant the same number of Draughts.

**Nominate:** A closing bidding action. To nominate is to indicate who you want for Narrator or Adversary. The nominated player's bid is then strengthened by your cards held of the relevant type: Narrator is strengthened by your Motives cards, Adversary by your Pantheon cards. You can immediately place more cards into play of the kind that you are supporting if you wish. You can Nominate twice, once for each position (unless you have first offered). The first time you nominate if you have not Offered you are indicating you are giving up your chance at Narrating or playing the Adversary.

**Offer:** A closing bidding action. To place an Offer on the Table is to indicate you are willing to be the Narrator or Adversary this Story Arc. To Offer Narration you must state a Time and Place, and a Central Theme. The Central theme can come from your Motives, or can come from any Open bids. To Offer Adversity you must place a minimum of one Pantheon card from your hand, face up in front of you. You can also use any open Pantheon cards to strengthen your Offer. Once you have Offered the only actions you can perform is to Claim an Open resource, Nominate someone for the other Role or Rescind.

**Claim:** Only bidding action available to someone that has made an Offer. A Claim allows the player to claim any one open resource of the kind relevant to their chosen Offer.

**Rescind:** An Open bidding action. In order to change your mind you must Drain one Draught to the Centre Chalice. You then rescind any Offer on the Table or Nominations you have made. You retain all resources and all losses you have undergone till then through your bidding strategy, however.

**Foreshadowing:** The transition from Prologue to Story phase. When all bids are closed, compare the Card totals of the Offers on the Table. The Offers with the Highest number of cards of their type win, ties are resolved by vote of the other players (show of hands): Bribing for votes is allowed. Any remaining ties are resolved by dice roll. Anyone with an Offer on the Table that is not taken up must buy in as a Protagonist, sacrificing their open Pantheon cards to the Adversary and buying in any Motives they want in play by Draining the number of Draughts (not Decanting them).

**Ambrosia:** The Wine of the Gods. Timeless and fragrant. Measured in Draughts, it represents eternity, immortality and actions that are heroic enough to transcend time itself.

**Draining:** Moving a Draught from any pool to the Centre Chalice.

**Decanting:** Moving a Draught from a God's Chalice to a Myrmidon's pool. The action is only available in the Prologue Phase, or if the God is Summoned into the story.

**Discarding:** Moving a Card to the Discard Pile.

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**Token:** Any glass bead or poker chip can be used to represent a Token.

**Companion:** The one Pantheon card safe from the Adversaries influence. This is the Myrmidon's only definite Divine Patron and Support.

**Wine:** See Ambrosia, Draining, Decanting and Draught. The Wine of the Gods is timeless, and returns if spent wisely.

**Configuration:** The status of a Myrmidon represented by their Entomology cards in play. Configuration can be Free, Locked, Reinforced and Modified.

Accuse: A Myrmidon can Accuse any other Myrmidon of transgression against any of the Four Lores. The accusation summons a god to Adjudicate between the two. The God can be as fickle or as honest as they wish.

**Summoned:** Summoned Gods are brought bodily into the story. They can act under the control of the Narrator for one scene per Draught Drained to maintain the Summoning.

**Maybe:** When you do not have the floor, you can hold hand level, pointed in the direction of someone with an Offer on the Table. You may choose to hold it steady or wobbling to indicate the same thing. Used when someone is yielding the Floor to indicate a willingness to be swayed toward or against an idea.

**Approval:** Thumbs up intended to indicate a like for a concept and a willingness to support it if the chance arises. Used when you do not have the floor. **Disapproval:** Thumbs down intended to indicate a dislike for a concept. Used when you do not have the floor.

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