

Young Gods of Old Egypt

(A 24-Hour RPG)

This game is set in ancient Egypt. Not the Egypt that you might know, the one that really was, but *Mythical Egypt*, the one that never was, but still exists in the imagination. This is the lost age before recorded history, the golden age of pyramids and sand when the gods were young and which of them would be remembered was not yet set. You may have heard of Anubis, Horus, Bast or Set, but this is *before* their glory earned them a place in history's books. Maybe this time it will be *your* name that is remembered and theirs that is forgotten; because this is the time of the Young Gods.

The Setting

Egypt at this point has reached a height of civilization that she won't reach again for centuries. The pharaohs have built enormous pyramids and statues of themselves and their ancestors. Untold thousands of slaves labored for years to erect these monuments, but their names are forgotten; only the fruits of their labors remain.

Her armies have dominated the region for generations now; her charioteers are the best in any land. An elaborate network of trading routes and mercantile concerns allows her to dominate all of the known world and bring the best resources and treasures of other lands home to her capital, Hiku-Ptah, the city of Wonders.

But of gods, the Egyptians have none. Oh, a few superstitions, a handful of traditional rites and rituals, but no gods. Many of them even congratulate themselves on their own impiety, pointing to the more religious kingdoms that they have subjugated.

But this will not last. The time of the gods has come.

The God-taint

Not even the wisest of her scholars can say why, but the gods have come to Egypt. And in a most strange way, as well; it is the God-taint that makes mortals into the divine.

Recently, men and women of the kingdom have randomly taken ill, falling into a precipitous sickness characterized by a full day of fever dreams, fits and unbearable agony. At the conclusion of that ill day, however, the God-taint becomes fully manifest within them, and they become something other than human.

These new gods are easily recognized. Animal spirits have invaded their flesh and their heads are transformed into those of beasts. They rise from their beds with strange powers and new insights into the nature of the world. It is said that a new god is being born each day, though no one knows where or when or who will be struck down and remade.

Mighty pharaoh Mindetharsis is gravely concerned by these events. Some of the God-tainted are powerful on levels that his armies, until now unequalled in the world, cannot match. So far most of them remain loyal citizens, serving their king as they always have, but this cannot last. These young gods are coming to realize the full extent of their powers, and it is only a matter of time before one of them decides to take the Golden Throne in Hiku-Ptah for their own.

Character Creation and System Basics

Characters in Young Gods can be anyone living in Egypt who suddenly fell ill from the God-taint and awoke transformed into a divinity. While the taint seems to appear with surprising frequency among the upper classes (far more often than would be appropriate for their numbers, considering what a tiny portion of the population they are), most of the God-tainted have been commoners or even lowly slaves.

Attribute Ratings

Attributes in Young Gods are represented by a single die (at least initially; some powers add more dice later). Pick one attribute to be rated at d4, one at d6, one at d8, one at d10 and the last at d12. Here's the basic scale:

- d2: flip a coin. This is the rating of an unusually pathetic human, one who is rarely a match for even a normal person in that area. This is referred to as a level 1 rating and it is lower than God-tainted characters will normally possess.
- d4: merely human, and not a particularly impressive human at that. The rating of most normal folk. This is referred to as a level 2 rating.
- d6: a skillful human, one whose abilities are noticeably superior to most folks. This is a level 3 rating.
- d8: the best level that a mortal man can possibly achieve; only the best of the best ever reach this level of ability. A level 4 rating.
- d10: a superhuman level of ability. A level 5 rating.
- d12: a level of power that can best even most superhumans. A level 6 rating.
- d12+2: a level 7 rating.
- d12+4: a level 8 rating.
- etc.!

Note that d4 to d12 is not the full range of possibilities. Further bonuses can be added that mean that even d12 is not as high as the God-tainted can go. Also, if you have trouble remembering a rating's level, it's always equal to $\frac{1}{2}$ of the highest possible roll. So a rating of d10 is $10/2$, or 5, while a rating of d12+20 (way, way off the scale) would be $32/2$, or 16.

Task Resolution

First, figure out what ratings apply to the test. Each of these will contribute some dice to the pool (assuming that you *have* any dice in that rating). Roll all of the relevant dice and take the largest number rolled as your result. Add any bonuses to it. Note that the size of your dice is often more important than how many you roll. Even if you have a rating of 3d6, you still can't roll higher than a 6, so someone rolling a single d8 might well do better than you.

Divide this final value by the difficulty. Every full multiple of the difficulty that you roll is one success. Basically, getting one success means that you accomplished your task, two means that you accomplished it really well (a critical success), and every additional success rolled means that you did more and more astoundingly and impressively well.

In many tests, you'll be rolling against the *level* of one of your opponent's attributes or other ratings. In the case of an actively opposed test (where both sides are trying to accomplish incompatible tasks) you should both roll and then compare your successes. Whoever got the most successes wins and their final result is based upon how many successes they beat their opponent by.

Example of an Actively Opposed Test

Sulek is trying to arm-wrestle the mighty Sekhmet in an Egyptian tavern, while the merely mortal occupants try not to stare. Both sides are asked to roll their Strength dice vs the opponent's Strength level. So Sulek rolls his d10 vs a difficulty of 8 (Sekhmet's Strength level). He rolls an 8 and gets 1 success (he would have needed to roll a 16 to get two successes against such a fabulously strong opponent).

Sekhmet, on the other claw, gets to roll her extraordinary Strength of $2d12+4$ vs a difficulty of 5 (Sulek's Strength level). She rolls a 12 and a 2, so her roll is 12. Adding the +4, she gets a final result of 16. That's more than three times the difficulty, so she gets 3 successes.

Since this is an actively opposed test, the GM subtracts Sulek's one success from his opponent's three successes, leaving Sekhmet with two successes. That's still a critical success, so she easily slams Sulek's arm down, smashing the sturdy oak table in two and leaving Sulek with a sore arm and some public humiliation to get over.

Typical Difficulties

When you're trying to use an ability on someone else, the difficulty will often be the level of one of their attributes or other ratings. But when you try to perform a task which doesn't involve other people, the difficulty is usually a flat value chosen by the GM. Here are some suggestions for what each rating should mean.

- 1: So easy that it's not really worth rolling. Unless a task specifically allows the difficulty to get this low, you should assume that even with modifiers the minimum difficulty is 2. With a difficulty of one, you're basically just seeing what they roll, since the number of successes will always be equal to the number rolled.
- 2: Easy. Even the incompetent can often get a success, and normal people can readily get a critical success. When the God-tainted attempt tasks this easy, they can often get a really astounding number of successes, outdoing anything that a mere mortal could possibly accomplish. 2 is the minimum difficulty for most tasks.
- 4: Typical (for PCs, anyway). Only the most skilled of mortals can score more than a single success on a task this hard.
- 6: Hard. It takes a skilled mortal to have any chance of success at all. Even most God-tainted can't do better than a single success.
- 8: Very Hard: only the best mortals in the world even have a chance of success and they may have to try repeatedly.
- 12: Nigh Impossible: nothing mortal could ever possibly pull this task off. Even the God-tainted will find it daunting and most will be incapable of it. Only the most astoundingly powerful (level 12 and up) could get two or more successes on a difficulty 12 test.

Time and Preparation Bonuses

If your character takes extra time when performing a task, the normal benefit is that you get extra dice, generally equal in size to whatever the largest die that you were rolling was. In general, taking twice as long will grant you one extra die, while taking at least four times as long as normal will grant you two.

Special circumstances due to equipment or unusual aspects of the situation can add extra dice, but usually decrease the difficulty by 1 or 2 points instead. Bonuses that seriously change the situation can reduce it even further.

Example of Bonuses

Sulek wants to climb to the top of a stone monolith near his home. The GM tells him that the sides are very sheer, so it's a difficulty 8 task (only the best of mortal climbers could possibly pull it off and they would usually fail). Sulek has to roll his Strength and Agility vs 8. Sulek has only recently acquired his superhuman capabilities, however, and is worried about hurting himself. After all, while he's much more agile than he was as a mortal (his Strength is d10 and his Agility is d8 now), the task is still difficult even for him; he'll be rolling d10,d8 vs 8.

This still doesn't look good enough for him, Sulek decides to try and climb slowly and carefully, taking as long as necessary. He gets two extra d10s (because d10 was the largest die he was rolling). He'll roll 3d10,d8 vs 8.

If Sulek decided to get some ropes and climbing gear, however, the GM says that the difficulty will drop to 7. If he's willing to drive spikes into the monolith (leaving some signs of his ascent), it'll be 6. If he was willing to actually spend the time to construct partial scaffolding and supports, he could reduce the difficulty to 4 or even 2, depending upon how extensive they were.

He decides that adding gear would be cheating, though, and just rolls 3d10,d8. He gets 10, 7, 3 and 3 and easily makes the ascent with a 10.

Critical Failures

Sometimes you'll not just want to know whether or not someone failed, but how *badly* they failed. When this happens, take the difficulty and divide *it* by the number rolled (minimum of 2) to see how many successes the task managed to score against the character. Zero successes generally indicates a failure, but not a particularly bad one. One success indicates a bad failure, two an exceedingly bad one, et cetera.

Example:

Let's go back to Sulek and the monolith. Let's say that he was overconfident and not only spurned climbing gear, but taking any extra time, either. He rolls d10,d8 vs 8 and manages to roll a 3 and a 1 for a final result of 3. The GM wants to know exactly how badly Sulek goofed up, so he divides the difficulty of 8 by 3 and gets 2 successes for the monolith. The GM rules that Sulek takes a nasty fall and suffers two wounds.

If Sulek had managed to roll a pair of ones, the GM would have divided 8 by 2 (remember, the minimum that you divide by is 2, regardless of how badly they rolled) and poor Sulek would have taken *four* wounds, enough to kill an ordinary person outright.

The Five Attributes

There are 5 basic character ratings which all characters start with. These are known as your attributes. You'll start out by putting one of them at d4, one at d6, one at d8, one at d10 and the last at d12.

- **Strength:** your physical muscle power.
- **Agility:** your personal speed and grace.
- **Fortitude:** your constitution, endurance and personal toughness.
- **Perception:** your mental prowess and the keenness of your senses.
- **Vestige:** your skill at your mortal career, whatever it may have been before you were reborn.

Your Mortal Vestige

Your *Vestige* rating represents the ability that you have *now* in whatever career or position you had *before* becoming God-tainted. Your skills in this area are often vastly improved over what they were as a mortal. A mortal carpenter, for example, could end up acquiring superhuman skill and speed at tasks involving carpentry, perhaps having a d10, d12 or even higher Vestige as one of the God-tainted. On the other hand, many of the Young Gods reject their mortal life, considering it useless and irrelevant to their new, more exalted state of existence.

At character creation, you need to decide exactly what your mortal career was. This could be soldier, merchant, pampered nobleman, slave, slave overseer, carpenter, mason, thief, or anything else that your GM will approve. Your skill at any mundane tasks covered by your Vestige is at its normal rating.

Skills outside of your Vestige's area of expertise may *still* be covered by your Vestige rating, but your level may be reduced by one or two levels accordingly. In general, the more common and normal the task, the lower the penalty. For skills that pretty much everyone in this setting knows how to perform, at least at *some* level, you'll use your Vestige rating without any modifications. Please note that swimming and reading/writing are *unusual* skills in this setting, and very few people know how to do them.

Also, some tasks are already covered by other attributes. For example, if your Vestige was burglar and you wanted to apply it to climbing a wall, your GM might insist on having you roll Agility just like everyone else instead. In general, the GM should allow any reasonable uses of Vestige (perhaps even including it *with* that Agility roll to climb a wall) just so that it doesn't become the dumping-ground stat. On the other hand, you shouldn't allow any Vestiges that are so broad and vaguely defined that they can be applied to anything.

Vestige also has some additional effects, usually in terms of resisting attempts to measure your divine abilities. The stronger the hold of your mortal life upon you, the harder it is for other tainted characters to sense your true power.

Examples of the use of Vestige:

Sekhmet is insulted that her companions think that she's a creature of pure violence, without any cultured side. She decides to prove them wrong by borrowing a lute

and playing them one of the songs that she knew during her mortal life as a farm-wife. Since singing is the sort of thing that everyone knows how to do, she gets to roll her full Vestige despite the fact that the task isn't associated with farming or running a household. She rolls her full Vestige of d4 vs a difficulty of 2 (farming songs tend to be simple things), but unfortunately rolls a 1. Irritated because she can't remember exactly how it goes (she probably should have taken her time for the extra dice), she smashes the lute to flinders and threatens the mortal she took it from for daring to give her a substandard instrument.

Sulek, on the other hand, has a Vestige of d12 from his mortal career as a carpenter. He wants to repair his metal breastplate (which was badly damaged in an earlier encounter). The GM rules that this is outside of his career's bounds, but since it's another craft, he'll only reduce his Vestige level by one step. So Sulek rolls a d10 (actually 3d10, since he resolves to take lots of time) vs the difficulty of 4 and gets a 9 (two successes). The breastplate is completely repaired.

Generalizing the Task System

In general, when someone wants to perform a task, you first decide what attributes apply to it. For many tasks, you'll want to choose two different attributes. The big reason is to make the roll more reliable even if it's not practical to take extra time. When the task involves performing something that would be considered a normal human skill, you should probably include their Vestige in the roll. For Vestige-only tests, you'll often want to reduce the level of their Vestige rating according to how far it is out of their line of expertise; for rolls that involve Vestige and another stat, it's generally not worth the trouble.

For most tasks you'll want to use difficulty 4 and just adjust the results according to how many successes they scored. Four is a nice, reasonable value. A really skilled human can actually get two successes and God-tainted characters don't have to be super-specialized in order to get three. It's also high enough that PCs will often fail the check, which provides a bit of dramatic tension.

When interpreting the results, one success should generally mean that you succeeded, just not amazingly well. Each additional success should make the results exponentially better *unless* that would be too unbalancing. The PCs in this game are supposed to have superhuman capabilities; if someone scores 4 successes on a difficulty 4 test, the results *should* astound and amaze mere mortals and seriously impress even the divinely-touched God-tainted.

When the difficulty of a task should depend upon another person, you'll usually pick one of their attributes and use its level as the difficulty. If it's an actively opposed test, you may have both characters roll, either against their opponent's appropriate level or both against the same difficulty, then see who gets the most successes. Remember, if you make them both roll against difficulty 1, it's basically the same as just subtracting the higher roll from the lower and saying that the winner got that many successes.

Anyway, Young Gods of Old Egypt is not a detail-oriented, "crunchy" game. It should be fast and free-wheeling. If you're spending too much time analyzing the utility of each stat, you're probably missing the point.

Your Immortal Facet

Young Gods are easy to recognize. Their heads have all been replaced by those of animals. Wise men speculate about animal spirits and the inner nature of men, but no one knows exactly why one god grows the head of a crocodile and another a hawk. But it seems to be an unbreakable rule (the existence of the human Facet is not widely known).

At character creation, you have to choose which animal manifested in you. The species chosen is known as your *Facet*. Each will grant a different set of bonuses and special powers. While many of the Young Gods have chosen to associate with others who have manifested the same Facet, it doesn't really mean that they'll get along. Judging someone by their Facet is a risky thing to do, but there are some traits possessed by *most* gods who manifest a particular Facet.

When a Facet boosts an attribute by a die, this means that it changes from a single die to two (occasionally, even to 3). So if you had a rating of d10 in Strength and chose a Facet that boosted your Strength by a die, your Strength rating changes to 2d10. Facets often also improve the level of your rating, so one that improved your d10 Strength by a die and 2 levels would change your d10 Strength rating (level 5) to 2d12+2 (level 7 with an extra die).

The Many Facets of Godhood

Baboon: an agile monkey. Boosts Agility and Vestige by one die and adds one level to each. Grants the Eternal Vigilance power at d8. Most baboon-tainted are seen as stern and unfriendly, but fair.

Boar: a tusked boar with a fearsome visage. Boosts Fortitude and Vestige by one die and one level each. Grants the Disguised Facet power at d8. These God-tainted are rare and because of their innate skill at passing as other Facets, most people don't realize how many there are around. The boar-tainted tend to be charming but treacherous and one whose true form is revealed will often be shunned.

Bull/Cattle: a fearsome beast with great horns, whether male or female (male horns tend to be a little larger, but cows-headed women have horns too). Boosts Strength and Fortitude by one die and one level each. Grants the Bless Plants power at d8. The bull-tainted are considered difficult to anger, but very dangerous once their wrath is aroused. Because of their control over the fertility of plants, though, most villages would much rather placate them than actually have them leave.

Cat: a small and friendly feline. Boosts Agility by two dice and two levels. Grants the Night Vision power at d8. The cat-tainted are known for their calm and serene manner and many people believe that it is good luck to be blessed by one.

Cobra: a terrifying serpent with a hood that expands in a threatening manner when upset. Boosts Agility by a die and a level. Grants the Venom power at d8 and the Darkness power at d8. Cobras are feared, but it's believed that they never strike without giving fair warning.

Crocodile: a fearsome and stealthy underwater predator. Boosts Strength and Perception by a die and a level each. Grants the Lord of the Waters power at d8. The crocodile-tainted are widely feared and most folks can't interpret their moods at all, which makes them even more frightening.

Falcon: a small and fast raptor. Boosts Agility by a die and Perception by a die and two levels. Grants the Keen Eyes power at d8. Most falcon-tainted are seen as head-strong but good-natured.

Frog: a green skinned amphibian with large eyes. Boosts Agility and Fortitude by a die and a level each. Grants the Lord of the Waters power at d4. Grants the Rebirth power at d6. Most of the frog-tainted are quiet, unassuming folk who often shun the company of others.

Goose: a long-necked waterfowl with a small head. Boosts Fortitude and Vestige by a die and a level each. Grants the Sunder the Earth power at d8. Most goose-tainted are regarded as whimsical and easily offended. Because they have been known to angrily destroy small towns with earthquakes, most folks are terrified of offending them.

Hawk: a fierce raptor with a small, curved beak. Boosts Perception and Agility by a die and adds one level to each. Grants the Glorious Gaze power at d8. Most hawk-tainted are seen as righteous and honorable leaders.

Heron: a wading bird with a long, straight beak. Boosts Perception by a die and a level. Grants the Glorious Gaze and Rebirth powers at d8 each. The heron-tainted are regarded with a fair amount of awe, because of their ability to dispense both life and death at will.

Hippo: a large and powerful creature with great tusks and an affinity for water. Boosts Strength by two dice and two levels. Grants the Lord of the Waters power at d8. The hippo-tainted are known for their fearsome tempers.

Human: often not recognized as a Facet, it is possible for the God-tainted to retain their natural appearance and just have their natural attributes boosted. Boosts your Vestige by two dice and grants two extra levels. Grants any power of your choice at d6. The human-tainted are the rarest of the Young Gods and few people even realize that they exist, much less associate any personality traits with them.

Ibis: a wading bird with a long, curved beak. Boosts Perception by two dice and grants 2 extra levels to it. Grants the Mystical Insight power at d8. Most ibis-tainted are wise and scholarly.

Jackal: a sleek, short-furred canine. Boosts Perception and Vestige by one die and one level each. Grants the Rebirth power at d4 and the Eternal Vigilance power at d4. Most jackal-tainted are regarded as aloof and intimidating, but honorable.

Lion: a fierce and powerful feline predator. Boosts Strength by one die and two levels

and Agility by a single die. Grants the Bloodlust power at d8. Most lion-tainted are fierce and bloodthirsty warriors.

Ostrich: a long-necked, flightless bird. Boosts Strength and Agility by a die and grants one extra level to each. Grants the Sign of Order power at d8. Most ostrich-tainted are regarded as honorable and truthful to a fault but stern and very intolerant of disorder.

Ram: a tough herbivore with long, curving horns. Females with the ram-taint develop horns as well, but theirs are generally not as large or imposing. Boosts Strength and Vestige by one die and one level each. Grants the Mold Earth power at d8. The ram-tainted are generally thought of as friendly, helpful and often artistic.

Scarab: a beetle with a shining shell. Boosts Fortitude by one die and one level. Grants the Generation of Life power at d8 and the Rebirth power at d8. The scarab-tainted are regarded with superstitious awe by ordinary folks, who believe that they can create life at will.

Scorpion: a hideous arthropod, someone with the head of a scorpion always evokes fear in mortals. Furthermore, a scorpion-tainted character always grows a long, curling segmented tail with a fearsome stinger on the end. Boosts Fortitude by one die and one level. Grants the Venom and Healing Touch powers at d8. The scorpion-tainted are among the most alien-appearing of the God-tainted and even some other gods find them uncomfortable to look at. Their expressions are almost impossible to read, but the wise can judge their mood by observing the motion of their tail.

Snake: a more traditional serpent, as opposed to a cobra. Boosts Vestige by one die and one level. Grants Lord of the Waters at d8 and Venom at d8. The snake-tainted are little trusted, mostly because unlike cobras it's felt that they often strike without warning.

Turtle: a tough and armored aquatic reptile. Boosts Fortitude by two dice and two levels. Grants the Lord of the Waters power at d8. The turtle-tainted are regarded as quiet but dangerous and are widely mistrusted. They are slow to anger, but when their wrath does stir, entire towns have been washed away by terrible floods.

Vulture: a hooked-beaked scavenger bird with a bare, almost featherless head. Boosts Perception and Fortitude by one die and one level each. Grants the Scent of Blood power at d8. The vulture-tainted are seen as silent observers who prefer to wait and watch rather than intervene in events.

The Powers of the Gods

Magical powers are rated just like attributes, with a rating from d4 to d12 (or higher) and a corresponding level. While it's technically possible to have a level one power (d2), it's really rare and generally incapable of actually being used successfully.

While your Facet will always grant you at least one power, you can have more. At character creation, you get a full 6 levels of powers to divide up however you wish. You can take 6 powers at d2 each (a bad idea; get a d4 at least), 3 at d4 each, 1 at d12, 1 at d8 and one at d4, or whatever combination you want. You can even add these levels to whatever power your Facet gave you, pushing it up even higher.

Furthermore, you can choose to sacrifice one of the six levels to boost one of your powers by a die, to a maximum of 3 dice. So you could take one power at 2d10 or 3d8 and that would use up all of your free power levels.

Animal Form: you can transform yourself completely into the animal whose Facet you bear. Your attributes change to the typical one for a member of that species (usually in the d2 to d8 range), so this usually makes you weaker in combat. But you do acquire whatever abilities those animals have and you can often travel without people realizing that you are anything other than a normal animal. Roll vs difficulty 4 to transform. One success lets you remain in that form for an hour, two for a day, three or more for as long as you wish.

Bless Plants: you can boost the growth of plants magically. Roll vs 4. One success causes the plants in the area targetted to grow larger and become more healthy over the next few days. Two causes them to spring to full growth in a few minutes. Three can actually destroy a small building by causing the plants to grow right through it, tearing apart the foundations with their roots and slowly pulling it apart, a process that takes several minutes.

Bloodlust: the blood of your enemies gives you strength. Whenever you slay a mortal in such a way that their blood splatters over you, you can roll your Bloodlust rating vs level 4; each success heals you one wound. If you slay a God-tainted character, you get to roll vs level 2. When you score an *Instant Kill* this way, the difficulty is reduced by 1, to a minimum of 1. If you slay a target in melee, you can usually assume that you'll be sprayed with enough blood to use this power. When you use a missile weapon, though, it only works under special circumstances, such as striking down someone who was directly *above* you with a hurled spear. Using Bloodlust doesn't take any time; it can be invoked immediately after each time that you kill someone.

Blood-seeker: you can guide any thrown or fired weapon towards the target of your choice by whispering commands to it before you make your attack. Roll Blood-seeker vs 4. One success lets you attack anyone within range that you *could* theoretically attack, even if you can't see them or don't know exactly where they are. You have to be able to name or at least describe them to the weapon before releasing it; if you describe them poorly, it may end up attacking someone else who happens to match your description better. Two successes also lets you include your Blood-seeker dice with the attack roll.

Each additional success beyond two reduces the difficulty of hitting them by 1, down to a minimum of 2.

Command Animals: you can speak to ordinary animals (nothing smaller than sparrows) and give them commands. Roll vs 4. One success means that they consider you to be friendly and will obey simple commands that don't put them at risk (at least as far as they can see; they are just animals, though). Two successes means that they'll fight on your behalf, although they'll flee if wounded. Three or more successes means that they can be commanded to perform suicidal actions or fight to the death and they will.

If you try to use this power multiple times on the same creature, the difficulty goes up by 1 each time. If you wait at least a day, the difficulty will be reset to normal.

Disguised Facet: you can change your visible Facet to be a *different* one (your choice), disguising your true nature. If you change your Facet to human, your face normally changes back to its original form. Roll your rating vs difficulty 4. One success lets you retain your new appearance for an hour, two for a day and three or more indefinitely. This ability can also be used to change to the appearance of a *specific person* (including their voice), but the difficulty rises to 8.

Eternal Vigilance: you can keep up your guard indefinitely. Roll vs difficulty 4 when you wish to stand guard over an area. One success lets you go without sleep for a day and lets you include your Eternal Vigilance dice with any rolls to notice intruders or people attempting to surreptitiously mess with whatever you are guarding. Two successes lets you go for up to a week of guarding without food or sleep and reduces the difficulty of any of the aforementioned tests by 1. Three successes lets you stand guard indefinitely and reduces the difficulty of checks to notice such things by 2. Each additional success further reduces the difficulty by another point. The benefits only apply while you remain in the immediate vicinity being guarded; if you wander off, you lose them until you return.

Flesh of Iron: you can turn your very skin to iron for a brief period. Roll vs 4. One success protects you for a minute. Two successes protects you for an hour. Three or more protects you for a day. You can't eat or sleep like this, though, so you'll probably have to spend some time as flesh, eventually.

While you are in your iron form, your Agility level is reduced by one and your Fortitude level is increased by one. Whenever a normal weapon strikes you but fails to inflict any wounds, it breaks, shattering on your iron-hard skin. If someone strikes you barehanded and fails to wound you, you can compare your Fortitude level to theirs. If yours is at least twice theirs, they take a wound as well.

Fury: you can enter a battle rage that makes you a terrible foe to face. Roll vs 4. One success lets you include your Fury dice with all melee attack rolls. Two successes lets you furthermore ignore the increased difficulty for attacking an additional foe when you score an *Instant Kill*. Three lets you make such a terrifying flurry of blows that your melee attack rolls are applied to *every foe within reach* (you can't use the *Instant Kill* rules to attack additional foes if you use this power, because you've already attacked them all once already). If you hit at least one person, roll damage normally, then apply that damage roll

to everyone that you hit. Note that the difficulty of the damage roll may vary according to each target's Fortitude level, so the number of successes that your roll scores won't necessarily be the same for each opponent. All uses of Fury last for the duration of the fight; as soon as you have to spend at least 3 combat rounds without someone to hit, your Fury ends.

Unfortunately, the number of successes that you scored on invoking Fury adds to the difficulty of all ranged attacks that you make for the duration. It also penalizes any tasks that require calm, careful thought or slow and precise movements.

Generation of Life: you can cause servitor animals to be spontaneously created from decaying animal tissue. There must be a fair bit of material (at least a human body's worth) and it has to have been dead for at least three days. Roll your Generation of Life dice vs 4. One success will create a swarm of worms, flies or scarabs. These can't really do much except intimidate mortals, but they'll fly and/or slither around and obey your mental commands.

Two successes can create a swarm of wasps, ants or over-sized, scurrying scarabs with a nasty bite. These can be directed to attack your enemies. Since there are so many of them, they automatically hit everyone in the area that you want them too, inflicting 2d6 damage on them every round (adding additional swarms doesn't do more damage, it just expands the area affected).

Three successes can actually create a two small, humanoid creatures with featureless faces and sculpted limbs that look a bit like animated clay figures. These creatures act as mortals with d4 in each attribute. Each additional success creates another 2 creatures.

You can have as many minions at your service (a swarm counts as a single minion) as your half of your level in Generation of Life (round up). If you leave any of them alone for more than a day, the insects will disperse and the humanoid creatures will melt into shapeless clay.

Glorious Gaze: you can project golden beams of light from your eyes that cause the target to burst into flame. This is a ranged attack that you can make by rolling Agility & Perception. If you hit, the damage is based upon your Glorious Gaze rating. This power is associated with the sun; it can be used as often as you wish while you are out under the sun. Inside a building (or anywhere else with indirect sunlight), the level of your Glorious Gaze rating is reduced by one. At night or deep underground, it is reduced by two.

Whenever the power has been reduced in this manner, you can choose to still use it at full value by taking a wound. You can also invoke Glorious Gaze to try and dispel a Shroud of Darkness, but you have to take a wound for each attempt (as though you were in darkness, even if you aren't) and must match your Glorious Gaze dice vs the level of the creator's Shroud of Darkness rating.

Healing Touch: you can attempt to restore the health of others by touching them and concentrating. This is a slow process, and takes a full minute to attempt. Roll vs 4 to attempt to remove normal wounds; each success removes one wound. Normally you have to wait a full day before you can use your power on the same person again, but you can ignore this restriction by taking one wound yourself (no, these magically acquired wounds can't be healed with this power; you have to recover normally). Other problems can be

cured as well, such as Minor Illnesses (difficulty 2), Serious Illnesses (4), Lost or Crippled Limbs (8), or Lethal Plagues (12). One success sets the target on the path to recovery, but it may take a day or two to shake off the effects; two or more cures them immediately.

Keen Eyes: you can include this rating with any attempts to notice things by sight. You can also activate the power by rolling your rating vs 4. Each success increases the distance at which you can see clearly by a factor of 10. It lasts as long as you basically just keep staring at the same thing and don't do anything else.

Lord of the Waters: you can include this rating with all swimming checks and your Vestige automatically includes swimming, even if you didn't know how to swim as a mortal. You can also roll this ability vs 4 to enable yourself and anyone else that you touch to breathe water for the duration. One success lasts for an hour, two successes for a week, and three successes until you leave the water for at least a day. You can invoke it against 6 to cause rivers and lakes to flood or recede for a similar duration (three or more successes causes the flood to last for a month).

Mold Earth: the power to cause stone to shape itself like potter's clay. This can be used to reinforce or repair a wall or to open a hole. Roll vs 4. With one success, you can mold hard stone as though it were soft clay, shaping it with your hands. As soon as you release it, it becomes hard as stone once more. With two successes, you can do the same, but you just have to mime the shaping motion while standing nearby, enabling you to shape stone that you can't actually reach. With three or more successes, you can mold stone without even moving, just by looking at it. Furthermore, you can now shape it fast enough to attack people by opening holes beneath their feet or raising tall pillars and then dropping them on your target. You can even try to pin a foe by encasing them in stone.

For attacks of this sort, roll your Perception & Mold Earth dice as your attack. If you hit, use your Mold Earth rating for the damage/strength of the stone.

Mystical Insight: roll your Mystical Insight rating vs the target's Vestige Level. You can sense one of their powers per success. If you fail, you can't try again for a day. Each time that you succeed, the target is allowed to tell you the *same* powers as before, so you'll only learn about additional ones if you get more successes than previously. This ability can also be used to detect other things, such as whether or not a power has recently been used on someone, whether an animal is really a God-tainted character in disguise, whether or not a sick person is undergoing the God-taint, et cetera. The difficulty is normally level 4 or the target's Vestige (if applicable), with a single success granting basic info and two or more granting more detailed info. When you use this ability, your eyes glow brightly. Using it takes a full action in combat.

Night Vision: roll vs 3 to adjust your eyes so that you can see in darkness. One success lets you ignore penalties for poor lighting, but not complete darkness. Two or more enables you to see without any light at all, but your eyes now glow in the dark. Magical darkness can be penetrated, but the difficulty is determined by the level at which it was created. Each use lasts a full day and can be invoked automatically (no action required) the first time that you enter a dark area. Invoking it deliberately (probably because it

failed to turn on, earlier) takes a round.

Reaping: your character has, in addition to their head, manifested some sort of natural weaponry associated with their animal Facet. This could be claws, enlarged teeth, tusks or just over-sized fists (for human and baboon Facets). Roll Reaping vs 4 to invoke it. One success lets you include your Reaping dice with unarmed damage rolls (roll Strength & Reaping) for the next 3 combat rounds. Two successes lets you do so for an hour. Three or more allows you to keep your natural weapons manifested for an entire day, so long as you remain awake.

Rebirth: you can attempt to revive the recently slain. This is a difficult and draining process, and each rebirth attempt inflicts 1 wound on you. Roll vs 4. One success can revive someone who was slain within the hour by accumulating too many wounds, but not someone who suffered an *Instant Kill* result. Two successes can revive even someone who suffered an *Instant Kill*, provided that they died within no more than a day. Three successes can even revive someone who died of old age by making them young again.

If a character with the Rebirth power is slain, at dawn of the next day they may make *one* Rebirth roll vs 6. If they get at least one success, they can revive *themselves*, no matter what the current state of their body. They can even choose to reappear in a place well known to them, instead of at the location of their corpse. If they were slain with an *Instant Kill* result, then the difficulty climbs to 12. They only get one attempt; after that, too much time will have passed.

Scent of Blood: roll vs 4 to sense the presence of blood in the area. One success lets you sense the site of any recent deaths or currently ongoing battles in the vicinity. Two successes lets you sense the presence of any injured people in the area, automatically learning their location. Three successes tells you the location of every living being in your vicinity, as you can scent the blood pumping in their veins. If you have sensed someone, you can actually ignore penalties due to poor or no lighting when attacking them, because your nose guides you to them.

Shroud of Darkness: roll vs 4 to create an area of magical darkness around you. One success engulfs everything within 10 feet in darkness. Two affects everything within 100 feet. Each additional success multiplies the range affected by 10. You can see through the darkness yourself, but it counts as dim lighting (+1 difficulty to all tasks that would be hampered by poor lighting). You can sacrifice one success to eliminate that restriction, enabling you to see through it normally. The shroud lasts until dawn or until you choose to dispel it, whichever comes first.

Sign of Order: speak out sternly and roll to try to restore order to an area in chaos. The value rolled is compared to the higher of the Fortitude or Perception levels of everyone in the area. Those that you get one success against will stop whatever they were doing and will only resume destructive or disorganized behavior if attacked. Two successes will force someone to further attempt to prevent anyone else from engaging in destructive behavior. Three successes will prevent them from engaging in destructive behavior again even if attacked; they will only be able to defend themselves and retreat.

This sign can also be used to repair a damaged inanimate object, such as a wall,

shield, chariot or piece of pottery. Roll against 4 (6 for extensive damage such as reducing pottery to powder, 2 for minor damage such as cracks). Even one success restores the object to its original, undamaged form.

Sunder the Earth: enables you to cause localized earthquakes by striking the ground. Roll vs 4. One success causes the immediate vicinity to shake, increasing the difficulty of all Agility based actions by one (this doesn't affect the person who actually created the earthquake) and lasts for a few minutes. It will generally cause a lot of small stuff to fall over or be knocked off of shelves, but it won't level buildings. Two successes makes a larger quake, one that *will* destroy most wooden buildings in the area. The difficulty of Agility tests is increased by 2. Three makes a full-sized quake; it can shake an entire city and even stone buildings at the target point will eventually be shaken apart. Agility tests are worsened by 3 and there is a real danger of folks being killed outright by falling debris, depending upon what the area you hit is like.

If someone else is using this power, you can roll yours to try and dampen out their quake (subtract your successes from theirs) or to enable yourself to ignore the penalties from it (roll vs 2 in this case; each success reduces the penalty by 1).

Venom: your character has either venom-injecting fangs or a scorpion tail that they can use in combat. It's considered a melee attack, but you roll Agility & Perception to hit with it anyway. Roll your Venom rating vs their Fortitude level. One success partially paralyzes them, increasing the difficulty of all of their actions by 1 for a day. Two successes paralyzes them completely, leaving them helpless for a day, then partially paralyzed for the day after that. Three or more successes leaves them paralyzed indefinitely. You can remove the effects of your venom by touching the target and willing them to be free. The effects can also be removed by using the Healing Touch power against your Venom level... each success removes one of the successes that you scored when using Venom on them.

Voice of Command: your character can speak with a thunderous voice that lesser beings scurry to obey. Roll it vs the higher of the target's Fortitude or Perception levels. One success means that they are cowed and the difficulty of doing anything *other* than what you command will be increased by one. Two successes means that the difficulty of working against you is increased by 2 and mortals who *do* attempt to do your bidding will find that the difficulty of their tasks is reduced by 1. Any reasonable request will be obeyed. Three successes means that even other God-tainted characters can benefit from the difficulty reduction so long as they are obeying your commands and any command that the subject isn't fanatically opposed to (like killing themselves or loved ones) will be obeyed.

This power, more than any other, really terrifies Pharaoh Mindetharsis. God-tainted who have demonstrated it will never be allowed into his presence.

Combat Among the Gods

When the gods go to war, the very ground shakes and mere mortals generally run for cover.

Attack Types

What you roll to attack will depend on exactly what you're doing. Roll Strength & Agility to attack with a melee weapon, Strength & Perception to attack with a hurled weapon like a spear, or Agility & Perception to attack with a fired missile like an arrow or sling bullet. If your Vestige happens to apply to a particular kind of attack (a Vestige of archer, for example, would apply to using a bow, while soldier would apply to melee weapons like swords and spears), you can include it with the roll as well.

The basic procedure is simple: roll the appropriate dice for your attack and compare them the difficulty, which is normally equal to your opponent's Agility level. Each extra success beyond the first reduces the difficulty of damaging them by 1 (minimum 2).

If you do hit a target, roll your damage dice (usually your Strength and any additional dice contributed by the weapon itself) and compare that to their Fortitude level. Remember that their effective Fortitude level is reduced by 1 for every extra success you scored on your attack roll, down to a minimum of 2.

The number of wounds that you inflict is based upon how many successes you scored. Each additional success ends up adding one more wound than the one before it did.

- 1 success: a decent but not really impressive blow. The target takes 1 wound.
- 2 successes: a mighty blow, one that could strike a normal man dead. The target takes 3 wounds.
- 3 successes: a truly fearsome blow, the sort that could hew a man in half. The target takes 6 wounds.
- 4 successes: a mortal target is torn asunder, scattering parts of their body all over the battlefield. They take 10 wounds.
- 5 successes: a mortal target is likely to be reduced to an unrecognizable spray of gore, with the ground beneath them being shattered as well and parts flying for up to a mile. They take 15 wounds.

The number of wounds that you can *withstand* is equal to your Fortitude level. So long as your total wounds are less than that, you remain standing. When they exactly equal your Fortitude level, you fall but could still be revived with medical attention (you won't be able to *do* much until your wound level falls back below your Fortitude level, though). When they exceed your Fortitude level, you are dying (medical attention might still save you). If you take a single blow that does more damage than your Fortitude level, you are killed outright. This is known as an *Instant Kill*.

Remember that merely mortal NPCs tend to have a Fortitude level of 2 to 4, with 2 being average sorts and 4 being exceedingly tough and well-trained soldiers. So two successes on a damage check will kill a normal man on the spot and three will kill even the toughest of mortals.

Attacking Multiple Opponents Simultaneously

Whenever you strike someone down and get an *Instant Kill* (inflicting more wounds than their Fortitude level with a single blow), you can choose to continue your strike and attack another foe within reach as well. The difficulty to hit them goes up by 1, but because you tore through the first opponent so easily, you still have plenty of time left to attack them, too. If you score another *Instant Kill*, well, you can go on to yet a third opponent, although their defense will go up by 2, et cetera. Each additional target gets 1 point harder to hit, but as long as you keep rolling well enough you can continue to shred opponents until you run out of foes within reach.

Common Weapons

Here's a list of the weapons most commonly used in the setting. The damage column tells you how to calculate the damage done when you hit with it; most of them include your Strength with this roll as well.

<i>Weapon</i>	<i>Damage</i>	<i>Notes</i>
Punches & Kicks	Strength	
Knife	Strength & d4	easily concealed
Club	Strength & 2d4	
Axe	Strength & d6	can be thrown
Spear	Strength & d8	can be thrown
Sword	Strength & 2d6	expensive
Khopesh (curved sword)	Strength & d8 & d4	expensive
<i>Projectile Weapons</i>	<i>Damage</i>	<i>Notes</i>
Sling	Strength & d4 (stone) or Strength & d6 (bullet)	stones are free
Bow & arrow	Strength (max d8s) & d8	

Bows are generally built for a specific strength of use. Because of physical limitations, the bows available can't support a Strength higher than d8... if someone with d10 Strength tries to use their full power with one, it will snap in two.

Slings can fire any small, heavy object. Metal lumps (called bullets) work best, but any decently rounded rock will do in a pinch.

Shields and Armor

If you don't want to get killed in a fight, it's a good idea to use a shield or even heavy armor. Armor increases your effective Fortitude rating for purposes of figuring out how many wounds you take from a hit, although it can't increase it above a certain point. Some of the God-tainted are so tough that their skin can turn blades more easily than bronze.

- reinforced leather: +1 Fortitude, maximum of 4.
- bronze scale-mail: +2 Fortitude, maximum of 5. Expensive.
- bronze plate (must be personally fitted): +3 Fortitude, maximum of 6. Very expensive.

The hardest armor to acquire is bronze plate, because it must be personally fitted by an armorer. This generally takes at least a week.

Shields can be used to take hits instead of you. When someone hits you, figure out how many points they beat your defense level by *before* dividing. If this is less than or equal to the size rating of your shield, then the shield takes the hit instead. Once you've determined that the shield took the blow, divide their roll by your defense level to figure out how many successes they got as per normal.

After that, apply the damage to your shield as though they had attacked it deliberately. Your shield will have a Hardness rating, which tells you how hard it is to damage, and a (usually smaller) Wound rating telling you how many wounds it can take before being destroyed. Unlike a person, the number of wounds that a shield can take isn't always equal to their Fortitude rating.

If the attacker manages to score an *Instant Kill* on your shield, they not only shatter it, they get to apply the damage roll to you, too.

<i>Shield type</i>	<i>Size Rating</i>	<i>Hardness</i>	<i>Wounds</i>	<i>Notes</i>
bracer	0	2	1	
small shield	1	3	2	
large shield	2	4	2	expensive
tower shield	4	4	3	expensive

Note that a bracer has a size rating of zero, meaning that it only blocks hits that exactly match your defense level.

Wrestling Combat

Sometimes you want to try and wrestle a foe into submission rather than pummeling them with a club. To make a wrestling attack, roll your Strength & Agility vs the target's Agility level. If you get a success you have grabbed them. If you get more than one success, you can choose to declare a wrestling contest immediately, instead of waiting for your next action.

Once you've grabbed someone or been grabbed, you can declare a wrestling contest as your action. If they grabbed you, they can avoid the contest by releasing their grip; of course, there's nothing stopping you from then using your action to grab *them*.

A wrestling contest is an opposed Strength check. Each person rolls their Strength vs their opponent's Strength level and counts their successes. If multiple grapplers have ganged up on the same person, they count whoever rolled the most successes on their side as their representative, whereas their opponent must roll against the highest Strength level of all his foes.

Whoever gets the most successes wins, as per a normal actively opposed action. The winner can choose to pin the target (takes at least 2 successes but leaves them helpless), damage the target (as per regular combat damage as you choke them to death) or throw the target (breaks their grip if they have one and costs them their next action; two successes lets you throw them *at* someone as a Strength & Perception ranged attack).

Initiative

Young Gods of Old Egypt isn't really a game that needs extensive rules for initiative. In general, it should be obvious who initiated any combat. After that, just keep alternating between one side and the other until the combat ends. If you really need to determine who went first between two characters who are really determined to beat the other to something, have them both roll Agility & Perception and see who rolled highest. That person reacts first.

Healing

When characters get injured, it generally takes them a little while to recover. The God-tainted heal with frightening speed, but even mortals get better.

With every *day* of rest, a God-tainted character gets to roll Fortitude vs a difficulty of 4. Every success is one wound that heals that night. If they're active, though, instead of spending most of their time resting, the difficulty climbs to 6.

Mortals use basically the same system, but they require a *week* of rest between each healing check. Again, if they aren't getting enough rest and care, the difficulty will be 6 instead of 4.

Movement

As a general rule, characters can move 8 yards per combat round, a nice, average value. If you want to push it, though, you can elect to make an Agility roll vs 2. If you fail, then you move about 4 yards, then stumble and fall. You'll have to spend your next combat action getting back up.

If you do get at least one success, you get to multiply your base movement of 8 by the number of successes rolled. One success, of course, just means that you move normally. So the very fastest of humans, if they roll well, could increase their speed up to 4 times normal. The very fastest of the God-tainted? Well, a *starting* character could roll as high as a 16, or move at 8 times the normal rate. Running like this always entails some risk, of course, but that's why even the God-tainted generally don't bother to travel that fast.

Once you've rolled, your enhanced movement rate applies until you either stop running or decide that you need to reroll and hope for a better result. You can stop in the middle of a run, but if the stop is a sudden one, your GM may require you to make an Agility test to avoid, say, falling into the pit that you didn't notice until the last second.

If you actually want the level of detail of breaking out miniatures, then you should know that a character can only turn up to 60' at a time and that you have to move a full quarter of your movement rate before you can turn again. Yup, if you're zooming along at 64 yards per round, you could find yourself having to stop or zoom right past a tight curve.

Chariots

Wars in this time period are dominated by chariot teams. You'll generally roll your Vestige rating to pilot a chariot (dropped one or two levels if you never did it in your regular life). The warrior generally fights with spears or uses a bow to slay their enemies. They may also have a shield-man who attempts to protect them both, but their primary defense is the speed of the chariot and its ability to leave ordinary infantry in the dust.

Acquiring Equipment

Young Gods of Old Egypt is not a setting where the PCs generally have much trouble acquiring gear. To be perfectly honest, very few of the God-tainted *aren't* capable of just intimidating a shop-keeper into giving them an expensive sword in order to stay on their good side.

As a result, we use a really simple system for costs. Most things are either *Free* (so cheap that even mortals can just go get one), *Normal* (a few days of honest work will buy it), *Expensive* (normally only nobles and the wealthy will possess this) and *Very Expensive* (even many nobles will flinch at the costs involved). *Very Expensive* equipment often requires not just an initial purchase but a lot of skilled maintenance to keep it in shape, which adventuring characters may not be able to provide.

New characters can start with any reasonable *Normal* or *Free* equipment. They can also take one *Expensive* item if they choose. Items that cost more than that (or additional *Expensive* items) will have to be acquired in play (it probably won't take long unless the God-tainted PC is particularly honest).

But equipment isn't a big driver here, anyway. Merely mortal devices often can't compare to the sheer power that the God-tainted can throw around on their own. Someone with a Strength of 3d12 is already going to do more damage than any mortal swordsman wielding a fancy khopesh.

Experience and Advancement

You're already a god. What more do you want?

Well, there are ways for characters to improve their abilities. At the conclusion of each full adventure, everyone receives 4 XP (if your campaign style doesn't support distinct adventures, just give everyone 1 XP per session).

You normally can't *spend* XP until you have at least a week of downtime to relax and practice your skills, so you usually won't be able to spend it during an adventure. One exception is special training; if you spend at least three days in intense training during play, your GM may allow you to spend XP right then... provided that you're improving something that you were training in.

Improve an Attribute (4 XP): you can improve one of your 5 attributes, either by adding another die (to a max of 5 dice) or by increasing its level by 1.

Improve an existing Power (2 XP): you can improve one of your existing powers, either by adding another die (to a max of 5 dice) or by increasing its level by 1.

Acquire a new Power (4 or 5 XP): your character acquires a new power at level 2 (d4). The cost is 4 points if someone who already has that power is available (and willing) to teach you and 5 if you learned it spontaneously.

Expand your Vestige (1 XP): you can add a new broad skill to the areas covered by your Vestige. This only applies to normal human skills like fishing, swimming, speaking a foreign tongue, reading, or fighting with specific weapons. It can't be applied to powers.

Important NPCs and Locations

Pharaoh Mindetharsis: the current ruler of Egypt, Mindetharsis has ruled the land with absolute authority for the past twenty years. He hasn't been a particularly good pharaoh, but the land's unprecedented good fortunes have meant that it has thrived anyway. Mindetharsis has reaped many benefits from the enormous wealth pouring into his kingdom and now lives in an enormous and grandiose palace with a small army of personal guards and a harem of twenty of the most beautiful women in all of the known world. He has spent enough coin to bankrupt most nations on building an enormous pyramid to serve as the tomb of his beloved father. When it reached completion, Mindetharsis believed that it would be all that men would speak of for the next decade, but then the God-tainted began to appear.

Now Mindetharsis rules from an uneasy throne. Egyptians of all sorts have undergone magical transformations into godlike beings and honestly, it terrifies their ruler. Not only are many of the tainted so powerful that mere mortals cannot stand against them, they appear to be chosen at random. Mindetharsis is terrified that one of his close relatives might manifest the God-taint and try to claim the throne for their own, so his spies keep a close eye upon them all. His cousin Kahematep fell ill in a suspicious fever not long ago, and Mindetharsis' agents made sure that he died before the night was out.

While many of the God-tainted have pledged their services to his cause, it really worries Mindetharsis that he is forced to depend upon them for aid. As a result, he prizes the counsel of his mystic adviser, Soth-Kamon, more than ever.

Some of his advisers have recommended the immediate slaying of anyone who falls ill in the manner of the God-tainted, but Mindetharsis dares not comply. The only thing keeping his realm intact so far is that more full-blooded Egyptians have acquired the God-taint than slaves, and who knows what these new gods might do if they learned that their lord was massacring their new brethren?

Soth-Kamon: the most senior adviser to the pharaoh, Soth-Kamon is seen as a mystic of great knowledge. His own powers are believed (even by Soth-Kamon himself) to be the result of years of study and meditation, rather than innate, but he's actually a human-Facet whose Vestige is Mystic. He was living alone in the desert when his powers came to him, so he doesn't even remember the night of fever and believes that it was the spirits of the desert speaking to him and telling him that he was needed by the kingdom.

He is intensely loyal to the throne and has done a great deal to protect the pharaoh and the royal family from God-tainted rebels and would-be usurpers, including a pig-tainted schemer who nearly succeeded in replacing the pharaoh entirely! Since that attempt, the pig-tainted have been regarded with especial suspicion and often have to go about disguised.

The Great Pyramid: this is the sacred resting place of the late pharaoh Telantrokamen (father of pharaoh Mindetharsis). His mammoth tomb is the wonder of the age, reaching to a height higher than the spires of Hiku-Ptah and covering as much ground as a small city. It is so tall that a metal cap had to be placed upon the top to absorb lightning strikes. It is the largest structure ever made by man, and its construction was supervised by foreign engineers hired at great expense by Mindetharsis.

The first of the God-tainted appeared not long after the Great Pyramid was completed, and there are those who whisper that the Pyramid has something to do with it all, though no two rumors can agree on how or why.

Example Characters

Sulek (Vulture Facet)

Strength: d10 (5) Agility: d8 (4) Perception: 2d6 (3) Fortitude: 2d8 (4)
Vestige (carpenter): d12 (6)

Powers: Scent of Blood (d8), Mystical Insight (d6) and Mold Earth (d6).

The vulture-headed Sulek has only reluctantly come to terms with his empowerment. He tried for some time to maintain his career as a carpenter, but his superhuman prowess at it caused his fellow carpenters to protest that he was driving them out of business. Saddened by this rejection by his old friends, he became a travelling craftsman and now wanders the land dejectedly.

Sulek is a bit of a generalist. His Vulture Facet ended up improving his really poor attributes rather than making him truly exceptional (for a God-tainted character, anyway) in any particular specialty. He generally fights (when he has to) using an oaken staff that he carved himself (does Strength & 2d4 damage). He has the potential to be a great leader of men, but so far he's still looking for acceptance and isn't interested in becoming a ruler.

Sekhmet (Lion Facet)

Strength: 2d12+4 (8) Agility: 2d8 (5) Perception: 2d6 (3) Fortitude: d10 (5)
Vestige (farm-wife): d4 (2)

Powers: Bloodlust (d8) and Fury (d12).

While Sulek craves a quiet life, his companion Sekhmet craves excitement. A quiet farmer's wife in her mortal life, she awoke from her fever with the head of a lion and the strength of a hundred men. No longer content to be a quiet and demure second-class citizen, she tore down their farmhouse and tossed her husband's prize pig into the next county. Then she went forth to seek adventure and the respect that she's sure that she deserves.

Sekhmet is still glorying in her newfound power and loves to lord it over the mortals that she encounters. She *wants* them to fear her, thinks that they *should* fear her. So far she hasn't turned as murderous as some of the God-tainted, preferring to merely cow normal folks into submission. When she does get into combat though, as she did when they were attacked by some rather foolish bandits, she's a terror to behold.

A Young Gods of Old Egypt Bestiary

It's not impossible for characters to end up fighting large or exotic animals, sometimes even on purpose. Here are some suggested ratings for various beasts that you might end up encountering.

Bull

Strength 3d10, Agility d4, Perception d4, Fortitude 2d10.
Horns add another d6 damage. Very territorial.

Cobra

Strength d2, Agility d8, Perception d6, Fortitude d4.
Its venomous bite inflicts 2d12 damage and ignores armor. No initial damage; instead, the victim suffers one wound per minute until all of the damage has been done.

Crocodile

Strength 3d8, Agility d4, Perception d6, Fortitude 2d8.
Its toothy bite adds another d4 damage and allows it to simultaneously bite and grapple with one attack. It likes to seize its prey from below while they're crossing a river, then pull them under to drown.

Hippopotamus

Strength 3d12, Agility d2, Perception d4, Fortitude 2d12.
These huge animals live in herds and are extremely territorial. They probably kill more people every year than crocodiles.

Horse

Strength 2d10, Agility d4, Perception d4, Fortitude 2d8.
Recently imported to the area, the popularity of chariots has made horses into an invaluable resource. Their base movement rate is 16 instead of 8.

Lion

Strength 2d10, Agility d6, Perception d6, Fortitude 2d10.
These giant cats live in prides and are probably attacked *by* human warriors seeking glory more often than they attack people.

Scorpion

Strength negligible, Agility d6, Perception d4, Fortitude negligible.
Its sting inflicts a d4 damage; any wounds done take a full minute to kick in. These tiny creatures are more pests than anything else, but they have been known to incapacitate adult humans although it rarely leads to death. There are rumors of species that do 2d8 damage instead, though.

Wolf

Strength d6, Agility d6, Perception d8, Fortitude d4.
Travel in packs. Almost never attack humans.

Adventure Seeds for God-tainted Characters

Here are some ideas for possible adventures in Mythical Egypt. These aren't particularly detailed, but what do you expect in only 24-hours?

The Great Contest: some old friends of one of the PCs approach them with a request. There is a great competition being held in a nearby city that they wish to enter. Indeed, the main event happens to involve that PC's old career (their Vestige). They were originally going to send just a human competitor, but they've learned that at least one other town is sending a God-tainted competitor to participate.

Will the PC bury any past grievances and represent them in this great competition? Will he be able to use his superhuman skills at his old career to win the competition? Does he *have* any superhuman skill at that old career, or did he leave his Vestige at d4?

The Bandits: a border town beset by vicious bandits wants the PCs to save them. The Egyptian army never pays any attention to their area and now the bandits have begun kidnapping townsfolk and putting them to who-knows-what horrible fates! Worst of all, the bandits' terrible leader is God-tainted himself!

Will the PCs accept this mission to roust out a rogue god and his horde of vicious bandits? Will they be able to rescue the hostages from their evil captors? Will they bleed the town dry themselves, demanding everything that they take a liking to in return for their protection? Will the desperate townsfolk end up recruiting yet *another* group of God-tainted heroes to save them from their new oppressors?

The Frame-job: a pig-tainted criminal has decided to make the most law-abiding and honorable of the PCs the scapegoat for his crimes. By using his Disguised Facet power, he is committing horrible crimes in front of many witnesses while disguised as the character in question.

Will the framed PC be able to prove his innocence before the army shows up to arrest him? Can they stop the villain from simply moving on and ruining the reputation of yet another upstanding citizen? Or will they find themselves on the run from the authorities, accused of crimes that they did not commit?

The Cure: rumors have reached the PCs that a strange mystic has arrived in a border town who can *cure* the God-taint, drawing the power out of someone and turning them back into a normal person. Exactly what happens to the power that is drawn forth isn't clear, though, and some people have whispered that he's *stealing* the power of the God-tainted for his own.

Does one of the PCs wish that he *could* return to normal, or at least to his normal appearance? Perhaps one of their local allies went to investigate these strange claims and hasn't returned? Is there really a cure or is it all just a con job of some sort? And if there *is* a cure, how long will it be before Pharaoh Mindetharsis makes it mandatory for every God-tainted person in the kingdom to take it, willingly or not?

Final Commentary

Well, this was definitely an interesting project. I actually finished the entire thing in less than 24 hours (basically from 7 am to 2 am the next day, so 19 hours in total). 24 pages (my original goal) plus this afterword.

Basically, one Friday morning I woke up with an idea for a game about Egyptian proto-gods; something like a rules-light version of White Wolf's **Exalted** on a smaller scale. I would have normally scribbled down a few notes to make sure that I didn't forget the idea and then dropped it, but I had been reading about the 24-Hour RPG project and it seemed to me that **Young Gods of Old Egypt** was a great candidate for it.

Since it was only Friday, I basically resolved to not write anything down about it until Saturday morning, but I did think about it periodically during the day. I think that actually helped a lot, because by the time I started writing I already had some of the basics in mind, like what attributes would be used and the whole divide by the difficulty to get the number of successes mechanic.

So that gave me my start, and by the time that I got to subjects that I hadn't considered yet, I was on a roll. I took a *lot* of breaks during the day (including several naps; I actually slept pretty crappily the night before) and did my best to pace myself accordingly. It certainly didn't hurt that my wife was going to be busy until *very* late that night, so it's not like I was keeping us up late.

I'd like to actually try play-testing this game. The dice mechanic is a modified form of some ideas that I've been tossing around for years (the original was rolling a bunch of d6s and dividing their sum by the difficulty, but the core idea is still there). The premise is at least cute and supports a wide variety of wacky characters with animal heads. Lots and lots of animal heads.

There are a lot of places where it could be expanded, as well. A few more animal Facets (I didn't quite cover *every* possible attribute boosting combination), many additional powers, some rules for stuff like falling damage, and, of course, actually setting an upper limit on how high some of the ratings can go. I'm inclined towards 3d12+8 for attributes and 5d12+8 for powers, but it would take play-testing to see if that was really necessary.

If anybody *does* end up trying this game, please, *please* send me an email (fsonce@comcast.net) and let me know how it went, even if you started making characters and abandoned it half-way through because you didn't like the powers available. I'd love to hear about it, one way or another.

And I'm going to have to reread it myself at some point; right now I'm scribbling this afterword at 2 am and I'm not feeling too coherent myself. Here's hoping that this isn't all gibberish!

Frank "Kiz" Sronce

(started on 7/31/2004 at 7 am and finished 19 hours later)