

Riders of the Storm

A **Mythic Mortals** Adventure by Emily Care Boss

2-3 Hours

Read this scenario to the players. Read the text out loud, except for the italics which direct the GM on what to do next.

*Every so often, there will be a question in **bold** about a character. Answer it as part of learning more about the players characters for the scenario.*

Start out by characters by picking names, but not yet one of the Player Mats for each character. They will get their powers during play.

What you will need:

- Player mats
- A handful of six-sided dice (d6)
- A deck of cards for each player
 - 1 Hero, discard no cards at beginning
 - 2 Heroes, discard 10 cards at beginning
 - 3 Heroes, discard 15 cards at beginning
 - 4+ Heroes, discard 20 cards at beginning

The Pitch

It's been 20 years since the stormclouds settled over the horse plains and the last rays of the sun were seen. Some say the gods have abandoned you. Others say that new gods have taken their place.

You were born into this world. The light you grew up on was the eerie grey of cloud gloom, broken only by forks of electric-purple lightning. The massive herds of silver-grey, dun and black horses, your clans' treasure, scatter beneath the rolling thunder. You and your pack are tasked to bring this herd to your aunt's Zerkahn's holding. **(Which of you is Zerkahn's niece?)** It's what you've always done. The light and the noise and the shudder of the animal beneath make you feel alive.

Themes

- Whims of the Gods
- Family & Kin
- Pastoral herders
- Remove the Curse

This adventure is written to help you run an exciting game for you and your friends. It should be less like a rulebook and more like a box of toys. Everything is meant as inspiration and advice, use what you like, ignore what you don't.

Scene 1: The Lightning

You're riding herd duty, a privilege and a duty to bring the horses back from their summer breeding grounds. Not all make it back alive. It's been a trying time: the horses had wandered far into foothills you rarely visit, and the youngest herder of your group was hurt saving the young of Aunt Zerkahn's favorite golden mare from a rock cat. The mare crushed the cat's head as a thank you, and now bears the wounded herder proudly, wild and free as she is.

Camping in the storms takes all of your wits to keep you safe and sane. Last night was calm and you managed a fire. You were all grateful for the one who brought their bone flute. **(Which one of you carries the flute?)** The haunting melodies brought you all dreams. Strangely, several of you had similar dreams—two dark figures standing in the clouds. One with a fork of lightning in their hand. The other with storm grey hair crackling with the purple white energy of the storm, pointing down—at you!

The horses have been jumpy this morning. The clouds are darkening and roiling. A wet night ahead. Suddenly on the horizon, you see—the foothills again? That can't be. The one-eyed rider has earth-sense and you're sure has been steering you all straight. **(Which of you has earth-sense and just one eye?)**

You all grip the haft of knife tighter and check your sheaf of light spears, loose and easy to hurl at a moment's notice. All of you who carry slings check your supply of stones—luckily the river you forded had a scree of perfect sized, rounded stones fit to hand.

(Who among you wield slings?)

Thunder rolls. A silver stallion wheels on his hind legs, whinnying. Young colts nicker and cry huddling to their mares' flanks. Zerkahn's gold mare's nostrils flare and she cries out to the herd. You and your fellows gather outside the steaming, baying horses circle, protecting their young. Just in time to see five midnight-black rock cats rushing down the hillside. Something is strange in their movement. Could they—be winged?! The smell of musk and feather and blood makes your head reel, and you prepare to attack these monstrosities. Then—

Lightning strikes in your midst—chain lightning crackles and for a moment the world is lit—it is what you imagine brightest day must be like. The violet light snakes among you, and you close your eyes thanking the gods for your life and surrendering to the storm's judgement.

And then you open your eyes. The horses have scattered. You and your friends stand alone, tumbled off your mounts. Each of you has golden light sparking from you, and you feel changed, stronger. As though you have something new flowing in your veins.

Spread out the Player Mats, and have each player pick one. They will now assume those powers.

A strange new energy floods into you, and you manifest incredible power and weapons!

As you assimilate this strange new knowledge, the rock cats attack, flying and swooping, like panther crossed with a hawk. They are on four legs, and supported by massive wings.

Winged Rock Cats

(5 of them)

Base Damage: 5 | Mythos: 8 | HP: 8

- Strike with claws (Base Damage)
- Swoop down on multiple characters (3 damage, players can be knocked back)
- Terrify (at low health): Scream a deafening cry, and base damage increases to 8

Have the rock cats attack the party and the herd. They can cling to vertical surfaces of the rocks and hills. Have them attack the scattered horses which the party must protect. If the person with a flute thinks to use it, let the melody distract the cats.

After the fight is over, the party recovers the herd and assesses their injuries and losses. They have covered far more ground than they could have dreamed, fleeing the flying cats and then chasing down the terrified horses.

The rain sets in heavily, and the day's gloom pitches to night. The herder with earth-sense feels their internal

compass spin, as though their home is in every direction. They can tell what direction the group came here from, but can't tell which way to go to reach home. The group sets camp for the night. **(What songs do you sing? How do you tend to each other? To the horses?)**

The next day, the rain is done but a thick fog rises. The horses nicker happily, and seem to know the way to go. They lead the party to a new river where the fog parts. This is a river never seen before, that runs between two hills that seem to rise to the sky. A ford lies before them, offering the only safe passage across.

Scene 2: River Crossing

The river's waters run broad and slow at a ford wending around huge hunks of stone. The stones are warped and twisted, poking out at odd angles. The horses drink eagerly from the river, but shy from the ford, despite the ease of crossing there.

Above, the clouds hang heavy, settling on the crest of the peaks. On the far mount they seem to flicker, with a red light like muted flames. On the near, a purple-white flash crackles every so often.

When the riders or horses cross, the closest stone snaps into life with a horrendous clap. It becomes a twisted, snaking gaunt stone body with gnashing hands and claws but no face. Two of its fellows also turn into rending stone monsters.

Stone Gaunt

(3 of them)

Base Damage: 10 | Mythos: 5 | HP: 20

- Grab and gouge one of the riders or a horse
- Smash with their giant stone feet, making the earth tremble and knocking over those nearby
- Tear off an arm and hurl it as a weapon, others can pick them up and attach them as a new appendage.

The gaunts start off with different numbers of appendages: one with 1, one with 2, one with three. The stone gaunts attack the party directly, then start hurling body parts after a round or two. They become nightmarish starfishes of stone. (And there is room for humor too, maybe one loses all its arms and a leg...)

The gods are watching from the nearby mountains. Depending on how the fight goes for the herders, one or the other will intervene.

If they are doing well:

The fire god from the far hill crackles across the sky and strikes one of the gaunts in the heart. It topples over, then fountains out lava and grabs two other, joining together into one giant gaunt.

If they are doing poorly:

The storm god from the near hill rides a lightning bolt down that strikes the water's edge. The sand and stones by the water explode in a flash of heat, leaving black, sharp glittering glass in its place. Some are

wicked, sharp, short darts. Other shards form large gleaming mirrored shields. Everyone can grab three shards or one shield. Shards double their damage, when they hit the gaunts. Shields give them 10 defense for this fight.

Whichever god intervenes, the other comes down at the end of the battle and accuses the other of cheating.

If the fire god intervened:

God of the Storm, an aged man with a copper-colored beard and a massive axe bounds down and says, "Brother, you said to give them a fair test to see if they were worthy of breaking the curse, why now do you cheat them of their victory?"

If the storm god intervened:

God of Fire, a youth of every color of flame, robed in flowing white streaks down and says, "Brother, you said you believed they could gain the day and break the curse, why now do you cheat them of proving their worth?"

Scene 3: Storm Curse Giant

The herders see the brother spirits fight one another, grappling and wheeling through the air. They light the mountains on fire, and twist into one another, forming a new, terrifying being:

- ◆ Tall as the mountain, it takes the cap of one for a shield and wields the body of a shattered Stone Gaunt as a weapon.
- ◆ It wears flowing golden robes that crackle with shuddering many-colored flames
- ◆ It has four arms, wielding a massive copper axe and a black iron sickle in addition to the mountain top and broken stone gaunt
- ◆ It crushes what it steps on, but moves only slowly and deliberately.

As players approach the Storm Curse Giant, it cries out and attacks. The horses flee, and whinny in fear. The Giant destroys the valley around them. The humans must bring every weapon and power to bear to beat this foe.

Boss Notes: Bosses have several different phases. HP, damage, and other effects do NOT transfer between phases. It's almost like having 3 different monsters. Bosses can also go multiple times per round, noted by their multiple Mythos values.

As the players damage it, the giant changes in color from many-colored to purple black and steams like a fire with water thrown onto it.

Storm Curse Giant: First Stage

Base Damage: 10 | Mythos: 6 | HP: 25

- Stomps towards the players, changing the terrain and scaring the horses
- Snaps off more parts of the landscape as weapons. Uses mountain top and Stone Gaunts to attack
- Splashes the river as a flood onto the players, knocking them down and away

After the Giant has been vanquished in this form, it rips off its outer skin and robes and emerges glistening and black, as if made from obsidian and hematite. The Giant screams in rage and starts calling down the powers of the elements to aid it in the fight.

The players have to surmount the raging fires and skirt the lightning to attack the Giant. The horses are now being picked off one by one and captured by the Giant.

Those that are not caught, run to hide along the river and on the hills. An observant eye will see that none of the horses are being harmed. High damage attacks shatter the Giant. It may lose some of its arms.

Storm Curse Giant: Second Stage

Base Damage: 12 | Mythos: 6, 10 | HP: 15

- Calls down the storm, with wind and lightning striking at the players
- Sets the trees afire with a purple flame that leaps from treetop to treetop

- Captures horses, secreting them away on the broken mountain top.

As players put themselves in danger and try to save the horses, the Giant lights up from within with a green fire, and begins to become brittle.

Storm Curse Giant: Third Stage

After the Giant has been worn down and shattered, it seems to flow and melt, and changes color once more. It becomes as a flowing font of lava, clothed in storm clouds. It begins to attack with flames and lightning leaping from its face. It separates the herders from the group of horses it stowed behind it.

Base Damage: 14 | Mythos: 6, 9, 11 | HP: 30

- Shoots lightning bolts from its eyes that fall with a sound like a scream
- Spews purple-black flame that chokes the pass with ashes
- Spattering lava and sparks from ropelike lava arms

This is a chaotic, frenzied battlefield. The Giant is blasting the herders, working to keep them from getting close to the horses. When herders put themselves in harm's way for the horses and their friends—the Giant cries out as if in pain, and starts sprouting green growing things.

When the HP of the monster gets really low, let the herders get close to the horses and have the horses cluster to them.

The Giant makes one final attack. If it does not finish the herders, the monster becomes broken, and dissipates into smoke and steam that rush over the mountain—then breaks the storm clouds apart showing a rainbow and the Sun!

Day breaks for the first time in the herders' lives, and the horses all come out from their hiding places in the valley. The herders offer up their thanks, and each finds themselves branded with the symbol of fire or lightning, whichever they fought most bravely.

When they return home, they are greeted by their friends and families celebrating the miraculous return of the light.

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