

This is a game where two players recreate the folkloric story of Shamhat and Enkidu. It is a game of power, consent, knowledge, loyalty, and love.

The Myth

In the old story, Enkidu is a wild man who has been freeing animals from traps set by hunters, destroying cattle pens, and leading wild animals close to civilization. He must be tamed in order to protect the people living in the valley. King Gilgamesh, a warlord, hearing these things, sends Shamhat, the sacred prostitute to tame the wild man. Shamhat and Enkidu spend two weeks together in the wilderness. When Shamhat returns, she relates to Gilgamesh that the wild man Enkidu has been tamed, and then returns to him, forsaking her life at the temple and living with Enkidu as a wife.

The Game

In the game one person will play **Shamhat** - the sacred prostitute, and the other will play **Enkidu**, the wildling. The game takes place over a series of interactions where Shamhat attempts to seduce Enkidu to lie with them. In doing so, politics and power will be revealed, and both characters will have to consent and understand what will happen if they do lie together. Underneath all this lies the simple fact: Shamhat and Enkidu are attracted to each other, in a way that neither of them can fully explain.

There are three phases: Across the River, By the River, and Away from the River.

To play you will need a way to take notes and a deck of cards.

The Characters:

Shamhat:

Shamhat is beautiful, wise, and worldly. They are clever and well-respected, and have led many through the sacred rites of change and vision during their time as a sacred prostitute at the temple of Inanna.

Shamhat has been asked to lie with Enkidu, and they know that if they do, Enkidu will be tamed.

They have a divine gift (which is hidden) and a human trait (which is admired). Choose one of each:

GIFTS: Foresight, Language, Deception, or another

TRAITS: Plaited Hair, Kind Eyes, Soft Hands, or another

Shamhat dresses in a way that is meant to attract people to them. Are they *provocative*, *lewd*, *opulent*, *colorful*, or *demure*?

Enkidu

Enkidu is full of freedom, strong, and naive. They are connected to nature and the animals, and they live an existence that is without want. They do not have human desires, and see things in simple terms.

Enkidu has been warned that if they lie with a human, they will be forced to live as a human.

They have a divine gift (which is admired) and a human trait (which is hidden). Choose one of each.

GIFTS: Strength, Navigation, Speed, or another

TRAITS: Soft Voice, Delicate Face, Beautiful Laugh, or another

Enkidu lives among the creatures, and dresses without care. Are they *naked, covered in leaves, painted, wearing only bones, or using a lion skin to dress?*

The King

The King is a non-player character that is important to the game. Both Shamhat and Enkidu know about the King, and they know that the King seeks to control them both. Shamhat was ordered to tame Enkidu, and Enkidu has been ordered to live as a human. The King is powerful and strong, gifted with a mythic spear and unwavering love of his people. To defy the King is as good as defying the Gods.

Shamhat must explain what they think of the King, and how they feel about this task.

Enkidu must explain why they fear the King, and why they envy him.

Play

Each day starts out at the riverside. Shamhat and Enkidu are on opposite sides of the river, which should be indicated by a table separating the players, with the deck of cards in the center. You come to the table not knowing about each other.

Before the play starts, Enkidu must speak aloud what they see when Shamhat appears. What surprises you? What assumptions do you make? What about them attracts you? You have lived your life alone, among hares and cattle. What about a companion calls to you?

Shamhat likewise will describe what they see when Enkidu appears. What surprises you? Does Enkidu remind you of something else, of someone else? What about Enkidu repulses you? You have lived your life beloved by all, venerated as an idol. What about a companion calls to you?

Across the River

Play goes in the following order. You draw a card and must speak according to the card.

- ❖ **Spades** indicate a confession or a hidden truth
- ❖ **Clubs** indicate an insecurity or a past memory
- ❖ **Hearts** indicate an immediate desire or a long-held dream
- ❖ **Diamonds** indicate a request, demand, or question for the other player.

The player who must speak first does not have to tell the truth, but they must speak directly and openly

to the other player.

If a suit card is drawn, the following rules apply:

- ❖ **Jack:** Enkidu must show their hidden trait.
- ❖ **Queen:** Shamhat must show their hidden gift.
- ❖ **King:** A message from the King arrives. He places pressure on both Shamhat and Enkidu. Does this strengthen your desire or mute it?
- ❖ **Ace:** Another person, creature, or presence interrupts the players. The drawing player must say who it is and what they want

The second player may then respond. Afterwards the second player should draw a card and the interaction repeats. This represents a full day.

This should continue for three rounds in order to establish a familiarity. This is also where the players must establish the level of influence gods, magic, ritual, and devotion have in the game. How much of this is because of their obligations? How much of this is because of their mutual desire? How much are they willing to lie to get what they want?

At the end of the day Shamhat must choose to either call out to Enkidu, inviting them over, or to leave the river. If Shamhat leaves the riverside, the game is over, and Enkidu remains a wildling.

What does this look like? What does Shamhat do? What do they say?

Enkidu can choose to cross the river, leave the riverside, or sleep until morning. If Enkidu crosses, move on to the next section. If they leave the riverside, the game is over, and Shamhat has failed. If Enkidu rests, start the day again.

Crossing the River

Enkidu has chosen to cross the river.

Shamhat must decide whether to complete their seduction or if they are not ready to be intimate with Enkidu. If they seduce Enkidu, describe where they place their hands, their mouth, and their body. Enkidu will respond with the same.

If Shamhat is not ready to be intimate with Enkidu, they must explain why, at least to themselves, if not to Enkidu. The day ends.

Now, Enkidu draws the first card of the day, and Shamhat responds. Then Shamhat draws a card and Enkidu responds.

Shamhat must decide whether or not they wish to seduce Enkidu at the end of the day. Enkidu must decide if they will be seduced, or if they will wait another day.

At any time the players are allowed to stop the seduction. After both players describe where their hands, mouth, and body are, the players must assume that the seduction is complete. The players should fade to black, assuming that the intimacy of the moment is enough to complete the seduction. The players can go into more detail if they want, but the act (whether it is holding hands, a sex act, or falling asleep together) is consummated, and considered complete within the bounds of the game. The game moves to the next phase.

Away from the River

The morning after the intimacy has been consummated, Enkidu must make the first choice. They know that they cannot return to their old life; they know too much of humans now. They must decide to stay with Shamhat, go to the city, or run away.

If you need help, draw a card, follow the prompts as above. As always, both players should take turns to draw a card to add to the narrative.

Shamhat, you can choose to bring Enkidu to the King, as he ordered, you can run away on your own, or you could start a new life with Enkidu.

Or, Shamhat and Enkidu could decide to do something else entirely.

At the end of the story, Shamhat and Enkidu must have a single, final scene. **They must leave the river.** Together, alone, or in the morning without telling each other. The intimacy of the night before has gone, or lingers, or continues. After they have made their decisions, the players will give their final scene. They each must answer the following questions, whether together or alone:

- ❖ What will they remember from their night together?
- ❖ What has changed?
- ❖ What do they fear in their new life?
- ❖ What are they looking forward to?
- ❖ How do they feel about each other now?

Who will you save? // Who will you serve?

This game was created for the #HotHorrorJam

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