



Mythtaken

RJ Nuñez

Mythtaken

The biggest city state in the world has universally converted to atheism for tax purposes. Their gods dissolve from lack of faith, but all that spare belief is sloshing and sizzling around like bacon fat in the cosmic frying pan. Halfway across the planet, you and your cohorts have popped into manifestation but there's a little problem. Death itself (anthropomorphic personification, not a god, get it right) has your names on the docket if you can't work up enough myths, legends, deeds, and believers to sustain your brand new existence. Can you and your probationary pantheon survive past the creation myths? You'll have to rely on each other's storytelling abilities to make a myth worth remembering.

Mythtaken is a rules-light storytelling game designed to create stories in the mold of folklore and legends. It has few requirements other than a medium through which the players can communicate and share notes—you can easily play it in person, or through a messaging app. You will require the following:

- 3-6 Players
- Notecards and pencils, or some way to write things down; digital is fine
- Tokens (can be any small object, or even represented by counters or emotes digitally)

Each player is given one token, and will take their note and write the following information:

- Deity Name
- Domains/Responsibilities
- Iconic Item
- Likes/Dislikes

Once all players have done so, take the notes and assign them randomly amongst the players. Then, each player must improvise a short story about the deity whose card they now hold. They may bring in other deities, but the story must focus on the one they were given. At any point during a story, you may trade your token to the speaking player to introduce a complication, wrinkle, or opposing force. The speaker can ask for input or ideas among the players, but only by spending a token are they veto-proof. Continue around the group until you're all out of ideas, or at least everyone has taken their turn.

Safety Tools

Before you begin, make sure everyone in the group understands each others' boundaries. One way to do this would be "Red" and "Yellow" topics; Red topics should not come up or be included, while yellow topics can be mentioned but not detailed at length. This can help keep everyone comfortable and engaged or set guidelines if the players are not familiar with each other.

Improvising

First and foremost, Mythtaken is a storytelling game to facilitate fun with friends. Don't worry about a "perfect" moment—sharing ideas and puzzling out a story are core here. Additionally, you can spend your tokens to help out a friend who may have hit a dead end.

Example Story Titles

- Kyris and the Moon Eating Fish
- How Anthe Taught Rabbit to Hop
- O-kami Sarusuke Hosts the Mountain

Story Stems

- This is how (deity) created (concept).
- In the time before (blank) there was (blank)
- A story about the relationship between two deities.

Example Card

- Deity Name: The Sunset Cat
- Domain/Responsibility: Astrology
- Iconic Item: Star-string
- Likes/Dislikes: Tributes, not doing their job / Cold Weather

Short Example

This is the story of where the sun goes in winter. A long, long time ago, before the great cities were built, before humans had even decided to really knuckle down on this "civilization" thing, there was the Sunset Cat. Every day, they would bat the sun and moon around the sky, pushing them along and letting light down upon the earth. This is an important job after all, but they had one big problem: getting up early. They really would rather just stretch out, but everyone got in a huff about that, so que sera sera.

But things came to a head one winter, when the temperatures fell so low that sneezes turned to shrapnel before they left your mouth. The Cat wanted no part of this, and simply snuggled into their celestial bed figuring people would "Be able to deal with it." People were not able to deal with it! An already freezing winter sank further and further into icy cold, and the people of the earth did not know how to deal with a disappeared sun. When even waterfalls froze into sheets of icicles, something had to be done. A clever young woman took a saw out to the frozen sea, where the sun normally peeked above the horizon each day. She scraped the saw over the ice, drawing a perfect circle and popping out a block of fish. Taking care to do so as noisily as possible, she carved the fish out and sure enough, saw a vast cosmic nose sniffing from the sky. She looked up and said

(at this point, a player spends a token to be able to choose what the young woman says)

“Hey. Cat. What the hell”

And the Cat saw how bad things had gotten, how icy-cold the planet became, but mostly how unpalatable the frozen fishcicle looked. Still the lures of the warm place to burrow and the bliss of sleep were powerful—so they made a deal. In the summer months, the Cat would roll the sun out early, and leave it high in the sky while napping, so that everyone could enjoy the useful light and heat. However, comes winter, the Cat would be allowed to sleep in and retire early, keeping the sun aloft for only a few hours each day. The uneasy truce is why we call it “Equinox”, an “equal night” for the Cat.