

SAVE  
SOME  
LIGHT  
FOR  
ME

## Save Some Light for Me

An American Freeform Role-playing Scenario  
by Evan Torner

Nominated for the Special Award Otto at Fastaval 2019  
Winner of the Best Characters Otto at Fastaval 2019

### Acknowledgements & Sundry

This game is dedicated to Kat Jones, without whose partnership the very writing of this game would be impossible, and to Tobin Torner, whom I hope will one day play this scenario when he's much, much older.

The game draws heavily on two previous works: *The Intrepid Seven*, developed with Jacqueline Bryk, and *Slayer Cake*, developed with Kat. Other mega-influences on this include songs literally featured in the game: "These Dreams" by Heart and "Love Machine" by Columbus. Shoutouts also to Frank Frazetta, Roger Sweet, and Mark Taylor for somehow inspiring or creating *He-Man* and all the ridiculous, shallow, play universes of my childhood. I am indebted to Mo Holkar, Henrik Dithmer, Jon Cole, and Michael Tysvaer for early feedback on the game, and Jorgo Andreas Larsen, Troels Ken Pedersen and Piotr Duda-Dziewierz for some really useful post-play feedback at Fastaval 2019.

If you're a game mechanics nerd, look to my inspirations from *The King Is Dead* by Vincent and Meguey Baker, *Play with Intent* by Emily Care Boss and Matthijs Holter, *Augustas Skygge* by Kristoffer Rudkjær, and Maria Ljung and Helene Willer Piironen's blackbox classic *Stereo Hearts*.

Font is Didot.

All drawings by Evan Torner.

Still OG designed in MS Word 2004.

Copyright Evan Torner, 2019

(Which basically means, like, give me some attribution if you use the text or ideas in your own work... and don't be an asshole and wholesale lift my material and call it your own creation or, worse, re-sell it for profit.)

## Table of Contents

Overview .....	4
Game Organizer Materials.....	6
-Set-Up.....	7
-Character Overview.....	8
-Setting Overview.....	9
-Introduction & Warm-Up.....	10
-Act I.....	16
-Act II.....	20
-Act III.....	24
-Coda and Debrief.....	27
Character materials.....	28
-Fulmer.....	28
-Jani Kamett.....	30
-Livv.....	32
-Shannon.....	34
-Queen Tracys.....	36
-Mendel.....	38
-Uni.....	40
-Wygod.....	42
-Bibila.....	44
-Garett.....	46
Relationship Tracking Sheets.....	48
Afterword.....	51

*We're running with the shadows of the night  
So baby take my hand, it'll be all right  
Surrender all your dreams to me tonight  
They'll come true in the end*

*I want to see you clearly  
Come closer than this  
But all I remember  
Are the dreams in the mist*



*Imagine the fantasy world of Vivia in which everyone's a beautiful, queer weirdo  
And those epic ballads of your childhood all speak truth to their circumstances.*

*Imagine growing old without growing up, being young and stupid and old and sober  
And weaving dreams into second chances.*

*Imagine living out others' lives, falling in love, breaking up, and fighting the power  
And feeling that whole narrative through body and soul.*

*Imagine a world of hybridity, a world of possibility, a world of collective magic  
And patching together what is left of the whole.*



*A group of friends, lovers, and exes grow up and band together against the dark powers of the Lord of Lies. They have the Love needed to stop him. If only the rest of Life were that simple. A queer, polyamorous 1980s-inspired fantasy epic about the lightness of dreams and the weight of reality.*

**Save Some Light for Me** is a freeform scenario about the dreams and struggles of polyamorous characters in a fantasy world drawn straight from 1980s toy commercials and power ballad lyrics. Quirky-yet-lovable characters come of age together and learn, through their dreams and struggles, the joy and bittersweet sorrow of love. Players portray them through their early years, as they have dreams of greatness, become warriors, and form complex amorous and friend relationships within the group. The game organizer applies pressure on these relationships through the challenges posed by the Lord of Lies, the unremitting villain found in Act II. Nightmares abound. The characters must overcome this threat as one, but they also cannot forget the past that forged them. Once the Lord of Lies has been defeated, the characters' lives continue and the scenario deals with the fallout of their choices. The characters dream again, now that they have become older and sober, and use their remaining time to communicate with those whom they once loved or still cherish.

Keywords: Polyamory, Dreams Biography, Struggle, High Fantasy

### **About the Author**

Evan Torner (b. 1982, He/Him) is an American scholar of German, film, and role-playing games, as well as a veteran Fastaval scenario writer. His scenarios include *Metropolis* (nominated for Best Game Devices in 2012), *The Posthuman's Progress* (2013), *Uwe Boll's Big Gay Wedding* (with Kat Jones, 2014), "Something to Drink With That, Sir?" (in the *#Feminism* anthology, 2016), and *The Intrepid Seven* (with Jacqueline Bryk, 2016).

### **Requirements**

Number of Players: 5-10, plus 1 game organizer

Duration: 4 hours

Language: English

Age Limit: 16+

Materials: Printed-out game organizer & player sheets; pencils or pens; music-playing device with pre-downloaded songs and speakers

### **What You'll Find in this Document**

- Game Organizer Sheets
- Character Sheets
- Relationship Tracking Sheets

# GAME ORGANIZER

Hello! If you are reading this, then you are probably organizing the game. If not, then **please stop reading and hand it to the game organizer.** Thanks!

Any text in *italics* is to be **read aloud** to the assembled player group, so here's a sample when the players for the game start to arrive:

*Welcome to the run of Save Some Light for Me! So glad you could join us today. Some of this game will involve me reading things like this aloud from the page. I've printed out the characters for your convenience, and you may now peruse them. There are no secrets in this game.*

There, that wasn't so bad, was it? You can ad-lib these things if you'd like, but I've given you an excuse not to.

## **Your Role as Organizer**

You are going to accompany a group of players as they explore many facets of the lives of fantasy characters in an alien fantasy world. This is, to be frank, equal parts silly and serious. The characters are openly ridiculous, yet have very real vulnerabilities and emotions. Kind of like actual people. Running this game with a straight face, playing the right music at the right times (subject to your discretion of course), letting each player have the space to speak and be heard, and keeping the game running at a good pace are your most important jobs. You will also embody two major non-player characters, namely the Teacher at the Academy and the Lord of Lies.

Here is the overall **Timeline** for the 4-hour game:

0:00 0:25 Introductions to the Characters and Rules  
0:25 1:00 Warm-Up  
1:00 1:50 Act I  
1:50 2:00 Break  
2:00 2:40 Act II  
2:40 2:50 Break  
2:50 3:30 Act III  
3:30 3:50 Coda and Debrief

Another significant aspect of the game is what I call player support. This is an intimate game, and can lead to complicated player-character dynamics. It is imperative that you build trust with the players and help them find and respect their mutual emotional and physical boundaries.

If you're a first-time organizer: great! Follow the instructions below and read aloud the italics, but don't hesitate to reach out to the author <evan.torner [at] gmail.com> in case you have questions. If you're a veteran, you maybe have some questions such as...

- **Why so many characters?**

This scenario has a very flexible player count, and **none** of the characters are actually "vital" to the scenario. This allows for variability and emergence across runs of the game. The meat of the scenario is the relationships these characters form with each other through play, sexuality, and duress, and more interesting chemistry arises when more characters are present. The characters are like action-figures in a child's toy collection: seven or ten representations of genre-fiction creations into which we invest narrative, heart, and soul.

- **What do I cut if I'm running low on time?**

There is no prescribed scene length. Especially in Act III, the consequences and character decisions can come in hard and fast. "Strange Return" can boil down very quickly to the characters' decision about the Lord of Lies' ultimate fate. Remember the driving question of each scene, and don't be afraid to ask the players to steer their play to answer those questions for their characters.

- **What if I have my own song choices?** Ultimately, you're in charge. I have strong feelings about keeping "These Dreams" and "Shadows of the Night," but you can play whatever feels appropriate and in-genre. In the end, game organizer, I trust you.

## Setup

The **Song List** should be downloaded onto your musical device before arrival:

"Stunt" by Mr. Oizo

"In My Arms" by Mylo

"Heartbeats" by GRUM

"Nightclubbing" by Grace Jones

"Zingaat" by Ajay-Atul

"These Dreams" by Heart

"Shadows of the Night" by Pat Benatar

"Book of Days" by Enya

"Love Machine" by Columbus

"Don't Go" by Yazoo

All songs can be found here: <https://bit.ly/2vnN9he>

This is a game that needs some space to move around. When you come into the room where you'll run this game, arrange the character sheets on a table, and move the rest of the furniture to the side. Put out a number of chairs for

yourselves and your players to sit on when not playing, but make sure they can be swiftly cleared if need be. Plug in your musical device and make sure that the music can fill the room, but isn't too loud to disrupt any neighbors. Make sure you've read through the scenario and the characters.

## Character Overview

Players of the game will take on the role of 5-10 characters. They all have rumored powers, but those aren't as important as what kind of personalities and preferences they have. Here's my gut-level assessment of the characters for the scenario, in case anyone asks:

- **Queen Tracys** is an emotionally distant, purple icicle; deposed royalty who is ostensibly in-charge of the group, but maybe because they're just bossy. They should be played by someone who likes to play a public leader who harbors private regrets and doubts, who may seem distant but still wants to be loved. Play experience has shown that the player will have to both strongly signal this character's independence and confidence as well as the vulnerability that they so obviously want to hide somehow.
- **Shannon** is a she-dwarf who's ready for anything. They are a good character for someone who likes to improvise, play off others, and make the best of any given situation. They are also a good character for beginning role-players, as well as those who appreciate simple, clear-cut relationships.
- **Mendel** is a bulb-headed mage; kind of a sapiosexual (lover of others' brains), which means they're likely in love with most people. This character is a good fit for a player who wants to spend the game having conversations about ideas and rhetoric. It should be noted that this interest in others' thoughts makes them no less interested sexually in the other characters.
- **Uni** is basically a unicorn person who rides a unicorn (named Rydah); a scout character. Uni is best played by someone with a sense of humor and who is doesn't mind playing outgoing, sexually active characters. Uni will probably function as the linchpin between several relationships, and is great when embodied by someone with an already large personality.
- **Jani Kamett** is a talented-but-aloof angsty stranger; the mysterious figure with mysterious motives. They are without a doubt the toughest character to play. Even though Jani grows up with all the other characters, they always harbor secrets, which is also part of what makes them attractive. They will need to be able to flirt well enough to seem interesting, but always figure out ways to not be more emotionally available to those people. They will cultivate a love that is palpable but also ultimately distant and impossible. Give them to a veteran.

- **Livv** is basically a playful warrior dominatrix. They are a relatively straightforward character to play, and can be given to anyone who doesn't mind bossing others around. Queen Tracys is the natural leader of the group, but if they are not in play, then Livv makes an excellent leader too.
- **Fulmer** is a pious, submissive lizardperson priest. They are the healer, and also enjoy it when others boss them around. This character is for shy players or players who enjoy hearing and obeying. Past players have found that they often experience productive tension between asserting their beliefs and wanting others to believe on their behalf.
- **Garett** is an asexual-but-cuddly wolfperson. Those in the furry subculture would identify with him, as well as those interested in asexual play. There is some interesting play on Garett's preferences versus the overt sexuality of the others.
- **Bibila** is an earnest, idealistic bubble bard. They are a good pick for players who like to learn about all the characters, who enjoy asking questions and listening to answers. This is a great character pick for novice players.
- **Wygod** is a robot burning with fiery passion. They should be played by someone who likes to overact, who enjoys the contradiction of being a supposedly emotionless machine that is otherwise overcome with emotion. Wygod is for more experienced players who can play off obsession well.

### Setting Overview

The italics section below is information everyone has, but the non-italics section below it is information that only you as game organizer have.

*Vivia is a fantastical world full of mystery and possibility, prosperous and diverse. Magic and technology intermingle without anyone giving it a second thought: one person parks their hover-speeder, another soars past wearing a harness glowing blue with wind magic. Everyone who is anyone telepathically "downloads" the latest news and updates as they drift off to sleep. Religions intermingle and public debate is vibrant and informed: people speak often enough of the Gods' intricacies that they are familiar with how to have hard discussions. People co-exist and procreate such that everyone is a hybrid of something else. Royal hierarchies have been abolished. Councils that run each city are democratically elected, and every child gets to go to some level of the Academy. Gender is complicated enough to warrant using the pronoun "they" with everyone, and relationships are complicated enough to never assume a person only has one life-long partner. Landscapes are vast, beautiful, and mostly consist of barren plains. Weapons are few and varied, as the need for them has waned. There are rumors of powerful Rituals that can be used to defend Vivia from external attack, but it*

*is also rumored that they punch holes in the souls of those who do them without conviction. But then again: Who is worried about external attack?*

Vivia is an impressive, magical-technical melting pot, and also one on the brink of Big Trouble. Many of the Powers That Be are unaware of a couple of exploitable flaws in their society. The barren wastes between cities and towns means that if society begins to crumble, there's no "Nature" to which one can flee to — only starvation and death. The ability for news and entertainment to go directly into one's subconsciousness before one goes to sleep means that everyone's dreams and waking reality are subject to outside manipulation. A wealthy, villainous loner called the Lord of Lies (LoL) has quietly used their resources to build a hard-to-find floating cloud base with transmitters that can affect the information upload. This base will only come online when the characters reach adulthood, and the effects will become dire immediately: artificial divisions among people are exacerbated, fanatics begin to form armed bands that kill their enemies, whole villages and cities are set ablaze. The characters will grow up (and form relationships) in relative peace, be thrown into catastrophic conflict as adults, stop LoL's menace with a Ritual they learned at the Academy, and then continue to deal with the fallout as they age.

## **Introduction**

This section is meant for you to communicate the basics of the game to the players. Feel free to embellish, improvise, and go beyond the written text, if you'd like. Anyway, here are a lot of italics all at once.

*Look over the character sheets and pick the one that seems best for you. If you'd like for me to cast you, I can certainly do so.*

*Please read it through at your leisure.*

Give them genuine time in silence to read it, and perhaps ask you a few rudimentary questions before walking them through the sheets.

*Now we are going to go through a bit about the **Scenario**. You are all fantasy characters in a magical-technical utopian world that will be threatened by a villain who poisons people's dreams and turns them against each other. You will experience these non-binary characters growing up, dreaming, coming of age, forming multiple romantic and sexual attachments, battling the villain, and experiencing the aftermath. It's like a bad 1980s fantasy epic with added adult elements. Sex, relationships, and aging are right in the narrative, front and center. Everyone's pronouns are "they/them." Your characters have no pre-written backstor: you get to make it up as we go. Sometimes, music will play. Other times, your characters will dream out loud. There will be a series of warm-ups, then three Acts with optional play breaks after each one, concluding with a Coda and Debrief. Each Act contains several scenes which*

*open with a text I'll read aloud, an activity and opportunity for your characters to intermingle, and then a clear ending that I will announce.*

*Please consult with me at any time before the game or during the Act breaks if you have questions about the content or rules.*

*Let's first take a tour of your **Character Sheet**. The **Player Suggestion** indicates what type of player should take that character on, but any of these can be interpreted and modified at will by the player. When it explains **What Your Character Is**, this is our attempt at getting at "species" or "origins," although most of you are hybrids of this and that. There are, if I'm not mistaken, Wolves, Robots, She-Dwarves, Lizardfolx, Unicorns, Icicles, Bulbheads, and even, yes, Humans among you, all composites of various forms of interbreeding over decades. None of the characters have pre-determined genders, even Jani, Shannon, or Livv. Your **Character Height** is always with respect to other characters and will be used in a warm-up exercise. Your **Player Posture Suggestion** is just that: a suggestion for how to embody the character. Find your own way to do this for yourself, and please do not resort to harmful stereotypes or problematic voice accents to portray your character. Your characters do not have predetermined powers, only guidelines under the heading of **Rumored Powers**. You can decide and show what rumors are true. **Ritual Preferences** will become relevant once you are playing the game: there are four different **Rituals** that could potentially take down the villain, and one of the points of suspense in the game is which one your group will choose: **Square**, **Cross**, **Circle**, or **Triangle**. Your character has a starting preference, which can change over the course of the game. Your character has a default **Sexual Preference**, to which you can refer if you want to know what turns the character on, what they fantasize about, and what to do when doing the **Sex Technique** as your character. **Romantic Preferences** are different from **Sexual Preferences**: they're what your character seeks in a long-term partner. These are often unrealistic, but that won't deter them from trying various partner out over the course of the game. There are three **Dream Sequences** in the game, and you can choose to draw on the **Recurring Dream Themes** for ideas about what your character would dream.*

*There are some general **Principles** you should follow in playing this game. Take heed of your own and your fellow players' safety and consent. Always check in. Players are more important than the game. We are here to take care of each other. Be interesting. Make some bad choices as your characters. Frame everything with epic description — this is a fantasy game, after all! Be obvious. Pursue your goals and broadcast your desires without subtlety. Be generous. Your chief job is to make the other players look and feel awesome, even if what's happening might be intense on a character level.*

*Let's now talk about **Support**. There are two techniques that we have found support players in their agency over their safety and well-being. The first is the **Open Door**. There are many **Act Breaks**, but if you need to take care of your needs at any time, including leaving the game entirely, you are welcome to do so without feeling as if you are ruining others' experience. Please let me, the game organizer, know if the departure*

is permanent. The second is "**FREEZE**" At any point in the game, a player may shout "FREEZE" and every player is obliged to stop what they're doing, become silent, and pay attention. Let's try it out now: everyone walk around and.... FREEZE. Very good. Let's get started on the Warm-Ups for the game.

## Warm-Up

The Warm-Up will hopefully introduce any aspects of the scenario the players may still have questions about. You as the Game Organizer have of course read the whole document through and can anticipate questions as needed.

### 1. Confession (5 minutes)

*Let's now all stand in the circle. I want us to go around and introduce ourselves. Say your player names, preferred pronouns, which character you'll be portraying and a short description of that character (all character pronouns are they/them), and the cheesiest piece of crap popular culture from the 1980s that you still love.*

When it's time for you, the Game Organizer, to introduce yourself, remember to point out that you'll be playing the characters' environment and opposition, as well as the Teacher in the Academy and the villain, the Lord of Lies.

### 2. Your Dream (5 minutes)

*Now we're going to practice describing a dream quickly but evocatively. Please think of a dream you've had and, when it's your turn, describe it in 3 statements or less. If you cannot remember a dream, make one up on the spot. Let's go around in the circle. I will start.*

This is to make sure that, when you've got up to 10 players describing their characters dreams, that they know they need to keep these dream descriptions exactly this brief.

### 3. Violence and Powers (5 minutes)

*Everyone get a partner again. Violence or Powers being used against a Game Organizer character is resolved in negotiation with the Game Organizer. Violence or Powers being used against another character is done in negotiation with that character's player. The easiest way to do this is responding by way of classic improvisation techniques "Yes, and..." , "Yes, but..." , "No, but..." , "No, and..." Mime out the Violence or Power usage very slowly and describe what your character is doing. Your partner shouldn't say which technique they're using, but rather describe what it looks like in the fiction. If you've used a lot of "Yes, but..." , maybe try a "No, and..." the next time around, etc. Try having a staged superpower battle between your and your partner's characters, making effort to practice different types of response.*

Conflict and powers should be player-adjudicated, although you're there in case of emergencies. If the players get stuck on the different responses, here are some examples:

"Yes, and..."

[A natural extension of the consequences of the action.]

"Uni charges at Bibila with their horn."

"Uni's horn bores into Bibila's shoulder, and now they're stuck together."

"Yes, but..."

[A successful action that produces an unexpected outcome.]

"Uni charges at Bibila with their horn."

"Uni's horn penetrates Bibila's chest, leaving Uni open for Bibila to encase them both in a bubble."

"No, but..."

[A failure that has a silver lining.]

"Uni charges at Bibila with their horn."

"It glances off of Bibila's armor, but Bibila loses their footing."

"No, and..."

[A catastrophic failure that leads to some narratively interesting territory.]

"Uni charges at Bibila with their horn."

"Bibila sidesteps Uni and they go sprawling into the mud, providing a brief moment of embarrassment and entertainment."

#### **4. Sex Technique (5 minutes)**

*OK, use the same partner now to practice the Sex Technique. To represent sex or intimate contact of any kind, take one hand and offer it to the player in front of your face. If they assent, they will take their hand and fold your fingers together. Then you will lock eyes and state the intimate acts you are performing — "We are sharing a long, deep kiss." "We are going to the tidal pool and having rough, loud sex." When you are finished, unclasp your hands, or unclasp your hands if something is offered to which your player or character does not consent. Negotiate offgame if you have **any** doubts about what you'd like to do.*

*Try it out by offering your hand to your partner and folding your fingers together. As your characters, I want you to narrate the beginning of a sexual encounter together, no matter how improbable.*

*Go.*

#### **5. Ritual Practice (5 minutes)**

*Form a semi-circle in front of me. There are four different rituals in the game, and you will have to perform one of them at the climax of the narrative. You will get their effects explained and demonstrated in-game, but right now, we just want you to practice forming a shape with your bodies and making it evocative and magical. Designate one of you to be the Leader, and the rest of you will be Followers. I will call out the Ritual shape one by one, and the Leader will be in charge of making sure every Follower is in their proper places. Then the Leader will lead the Followers through a short improvised set of movements (no chanting is necessary — these are more like dances). The Leader may tag a new Leader **at any time** and have them improvise movements. Designate a Leader, and when I start the music, have them begin the Ritual. Form a Square with your bodies.*

Put on "These Dreams" by Heart as the background soundtrack.

*Now form a Circle.*

*Form a Triangle.*

*Form a Cross.*

Let the players explore their bodies in space and how they can enchant the space through moving in place in geometric formation.

After this particular exercise is a good opportunity to take a short 5-10 minute break so players can go to the bathroom, etc. Otherwise, the next break opportunity is after Act I, and possibly after Act II.

## **6. Getting into Character (10 minutes)**

*We are nearly to the game itself. The next few short exercises will be about getting into character. Please assume the posture you'll use for the character in the game. It's OK to keep improvising this until you find some way to comfortably embody the character.*

*Now: look at your character sheets and please form a line arranging yourselves from left to right by **Height**, shortest on the left to tallest on the right. Some of you are the same height and that's something you'll have to negotiate. Go.*

For your reference as Game Organizer, the characters from Tallest to Shortest are:

Jani Kamett

Livv

Bibila = Queen Tracys

Fulmer = Mendel

Garett  
Shannon  
Wygod  
Uni

*Exit the line by walking as your character. Walk as if your character is young and happy. Now walk as if they're depressed.*

*Now walk as if they're urgently trying to take care of some critical matter.*

*Finally, walk as the older version of your character, when they've aged and are near death.*

*Resume walking as if your character were just on the street. Talk in character and greet the others one by one as you would.*

*Find a partner or a threesome and link your fingers together. Each of you say a sentence about what you'd desire to do to that character or those characters. Swap partners and do the same one more time.*

*Finally, everyone now lie down precisely where you're standing. You are now asleep, dreaming contentedly. I want you to dream as your characters, the most innocent dreams your character can have. As your characters dream, say words aloud of things your character might see in the dream.*

*Great. We are now about ready to play the game. This is one point when we can a break if so desired.*

If you have momentum from the Warm-Up and would like to move straight on to play, then queue up "Shadows of the Night" by Pat Benatar and ask the players to assume their character posture and be ready for further instruction.

# Act I

(50 minutes)

How the characters became themselves, and how their polycule became their polycule.

Open Act I by playing "Shadows of the Night" by Pat Benatar. You may stop it after the first verse and chorus (1:20 or so) if you'd like.

## 1. Childhood (5 minutes)

*Close your eyes. You grew up on Vivia, a place of wonder and magic. A place of such diversity and energy. In the cities, villages, and countryside, cultures intermix, and lively, friendly debates about the Gods, Nature, Technology, and Society are common. But that's all a bunch of stuff for adults. You're your character as a Kid. When you open your eyes, find a space to play in and start playing with your characters' favorite toys. If your character feels comfortable doing so, you may play with the others too. This may or may not have happened in the story of the game, but shows how your characters interact with each other. When you're finished, ask yourselves what part of your child's play will always be with your character through their whole lives? What happened in their childhood?*

*Open your eyes.*

Monitor their play, noting which characters automatically gravitate to each other. Ask questions ("What are you doing?" "Who are you pretending to be?") of the characters, especially if they seem alone or detached from any other characters.

Thematic Question: What parts of their child's play will be with them always?

## 2. Academy (10 minutes)

*It is time for school. Let's set up chairs and desks, if possible, and then take a seat as your characters before they were the saviors of Vivia. Your characters are teenagers and capable of adult decision-making and sexual intercourse. The Academy is welcome to those of all backgrounds, but you all meet as pupils in the Ritual Seminar. Your characters may or may not have met each other beforehand. You will first receive a lesson from the Teacher, played by me, and you may act as teenagers do in a classroom as it is in progress. Then you will have time after class to hang out, chat, fool*

*around, and look for someone to go with you to the Academy Ball next weekend. Think about what you take with you from this time in your lives.*

As the Teacher, you will improvise a lesson on Ritual magic used as a last resort against an overwhelming foe. With the right number of participants (which will always be equivalent to the number of players in the game), the right Ritual can ensure the foe is defeated in its own way. However, the price can be steep: there are rumors that these Rituals will punch a hole in your soul or drive you mad. It's not guaranteed that they'll ever work, either. Stress that this is hidden knowledge known by only a guarded few, but that they all tested into this seminar so they must be capable of it.

If they do the **Triangle** ritual, they unleash a full-blown psychic energy attack on the foe, hopefully overwhelming its brain with raw power.

If they do the **Square** ritual, they summon an extradimensional Cube with a mind and will of its own that can be tasked with Containing the foe forever.

If they do the **Circle** ritual, they create a protection spell that keeps those under the spell's effect safe from the foe's effects, although the foe is still alive.

If they do the **Cross** ritual, they extract the soul of the foe and place it in the body of one of the participants. If that Ritual participant has a stronger will than the foe, the foe will be cowed and no longer a threat.

Stress that only one such Ritual can be performed, and only in a case of dire need, because of the unknown side effects they may release.

After the lesson, give them some time to get to know each other, flirt, and fool around after the lesson is done.

At the end of the scene, have the players remove desks and chairs and transform the room into a dance floor. Transition to the Ball scene by playing "In My Arms" by Mylo, first loudly and then bring the volume down to minimal levels so you can talk. You can even play this song twice.

Thematic Question: What from their classroom do they bring with them?

### **3. Ball** (15 minutes)

The song should be playing under you while you speak.

*What an exciting night! You are on the brilliantly lit, festively adorned rooftop of the Academy where the Ball is held. Stars glitter in the sky and fireworks boom on occasion. You are here with your date and/or dates, ready to have a good time. There*

*are also enough dark corners for making out or... something more? When the music dies out, the Ball will be over.*

The mix for the Ball is:

"In My Arms" by Mylo

"Heartbeats" by GRUM

"Zingaat" by Ajay-Atul

"Nightclubbing" by Grace Jones

... with additional songs at your discretion. Think always of synthwave, cheesy dance tunes, and 1980s pop when making those selections.

Thematic Question: Who winds up together with whom?

#### **4. First Dream (5 minutes)**

*The Ball is over, and you are with whomever you are. You all lie down, close your eyes, and have a dream. This dream represents your hopes for the future, and what you want to accomplish with your life. There will also be something sinister or unsettling at the end of the dream. Describe it in 3 sentences or less. Anyone can start, and we will conclude once everyone has shared.*

Thematic Question: What aspirations and desires do the characters wish their friends and lovers knew about?

#### **5. Drama in the Dormitories (13 minutes)**

*This next scene is a two-part construction: one part intimate hook-ups, the second part a meta-scene about the course of your relationships over the coming years. You are in the dormitories at the Academy on a night following the Ball. This is a good opportunity to follow up with sexual activities already begun during the Ball, or to initiate new relationships with a possible crush. For the first several minutes, I will not interrupt you. The meta-scene begins when I do interrupt you with the word FREEZE. At that point, you will ensure you're in groups of two or more. As I point to you, you will say in-character 1 sentence each about your feelings toward every member of the smaller group. Then you will say 2 in-character sentences detailing the following: what puts a strain on our relationships as we grow older, and what happens next. Commit fully to and even exaggerate your characters' desires and personal issues. Don't hold back: this moment is about **you**, not just the other people! Once all have said something, we'll take a moment and see if we need to do another round of late-night hook-ups and relationship confessionals. Remember: enjoy your time with your partners, but when I say FREEZE, I will point to each of you in turn to declare in-character:*

- *a sentence each about your feelings toward each of your partners*
- *a sentence each about what puts a strain on your relationship(s) as you grow older*

- *a sentence each about what happens next with these relationships.*  
*The scene and Act end with the music*

Thematic Question: What seeds planted earlier blossom into poisonous fruit?

Make sure that everyone is able to have an earnest conversation with their partner(s). If someone has no partner, then they are free to come up to a person whom they have a crush on, and can start the relationship mildly from there. End the meta-scene by playing "Don't Go" by Yazoo.

## **6. Relationship Map Adjustment (2 minutes)**

Take out the Act I Relationships worksheet.

*Now we will adjust the Relationship Map for the group. Draw a single straight line between your characters if you have intimate relations, but nothing serious; draw a double straight line if it's serious. Make a squiggly line between you if it's complicated, and draw a straight line with a pair of X's in the middle if the relationship is definitely over. You as players get to decide how much you as characters know of this.*

Do this part fairly mechanically and quickly. Post the results on the wall for everyone to see the visualization of polycul drama, which players can decide how much their characters know. Now is a good time to release the players for a break as well.

Thematic Question: What are the lines of tension within the group?

# Act II

(40 minutes)

In which the Lord of Lies appears and challenges them.

## 1. Invasion (10 Minutes)

*You have grown up and have joined adult society. And your first major challenge awaits you. The invasion is nothing like anyone expected and catches everyone off-guard. Rogue signals come from the sky, and are downloaded into everyone's brains as Vivia goes to sleep. The mental poison works slowly, and then all of a sudden intolerance is everywhere. Half-humans and three-quarter-humans start demanding Purity for the humans and form enclaves against those of other backgrounds. The Dwarf faction in every city now demands that marriages be restricted to only two people. The Icicles create armaments and begin to take the border villages. And so on. Peaceful cities transform into war zones overnight. Great powers are used against civilians, and everyone looks for someone to blame. The war has now been raging for months. Where do you fit into all of this? When the music begins to play, you find yourselves in a pitched battle amidst city ruins. Whom do you attack? Whom do you defend? Pick at least two of you who have succumbed to the signals, and are lashing out with aggression against your fellows. Those who have succumbed find themselves with amplified powers, and provide a credible threat. Act out your epic fight. When the music stops, those who have not succumbed will have eventually won, but at some cost. Select three among you who have incurred serious injuries, and announce what they are. The rest of the scene you spend recuperating your wounds, catching up with everyone, and recalling stories of pain in war.*

Once you're done with the italics text, play "Stunt" by Mr. Oizo. Push the players to provide at least 3 minutes of suspenseful fight drama within the ruins of the city. Narrate some landscape and obstacles and non-player enemies if it's necessary. This should feel a bit like *Captain America: Civil War* or some other fiction when good guys are fighting good guys.

Thematic Questions: Who gets infected by the Lord of Lies? Why? What does it look like when brother fights brother?

## 2. Mobilization (10 Minutes)

*You sit in the ruins of your Academy classroom, planning a counter-strike. Graduates of the Academy have slowly mobilized. The older teachers were wiped out in the first wave of violence, so you are the last best hope for Vivia. You have learned that a mysterious signal from a floating cloud base commanded by the so-called "Lord of*

*Lies" instigated the problem. You need to come up with a plan to locate and destroy this base to disrupt the signal. But how will you do that? It is fast, hard to locate, and miles up in the sky. Using your abilities, come up with a credible plan to bring it down. In the end, it will be necessary to incorporate one of the four Rituals of last resort into your plan. Also use this opportunity to re-visit your relationships with anyone present, pursue new conquests, etc.*

Thematic Question: How do past relationships complicate future plans for action?

### **3. The Second Dream (10 Minutes)**

*Before you take the fight to the Lord of Lies, you all lie down, close your eyes, and have a dream. This dream represents your trauma, and how recent events have disrupted your life. You can take a bit longer and describe more in-depth than the first time, but don't be afraid to iterate on earlier motifs you introduced. Don't shy away from disturbing imagery, fantasies about other characters, or difficult emotions such as grief. Anyone can start, and we will conclude once everyone has shared.*

Thematic Question: What damage has the Lord of Lies already wrought?

### **4. The Ritual (10 Minutes)**

Play "Love Machine" by Columbus in the background.

Take a few minutes to talk through what the characters accomplish with their plan. It's important that they somehow convince you that they can attract the Lord of Lies' base within striking distance of Mount Khebrus, where they will perform the Ritual. You can also adjust the text below a bit if their plan is radically different, but the players must understand that the Ritual itself is unavoidable. Some characters can choose not to participate, of course, but that will simply endanger its success. Stress this to the players from the sidelines.

*You all stand on Khebrus, the highest mountaintop in Vivia. You have somehow lured the Lord of Lies' cloud base within striking distance. It begins to unfurl massive tendrils in order to attack you. You now have the chance to shout dramatic challenges and pronouncements at the Lord of Lies, to declare what and whom you're fighting for.*

Give them space and time to do this.

*Now you must decide which Ritual you have chosen. Which one will you do? How will you invest all of yourselves in it, so that your souls burn brightest against the darkness?*

The Leader of the Ritual must come forward and declare Square, Circle, Cross, or Triangle. Characters are free to dissent and/or have drama at this moment.

Once the Ritual begins, play "These Dreams" by Heart and have them move as per the Warm-Up instructions. Let the whole song play and the Ritual movements get various forms of elaborate.

Now comes time for the different story outcomes of the different Rituals.

**Read the italics text of only the Ritual the group decided to do:**

### **Triangle**

*Your collective consciousness transforms into a finely honed weapon and flies toward the Lord of Lies' base. The explosion is unexpectedly large, and a chunk of the mountain flies away with it. One of you was standing on that chunk, and now you are no longer. Maybe it was you? One of you, please step forward and volunteer your character to perish. As a player, you would join me as a game organizer for Act III.*

Give them a moment to take in the fact that they both won the battle against the Lord of Lies and incurred a terrible loss as well.

### **Cross**

*Your Leader closes their eyes, trembling and shaking before you. They are experiencing a hellish struggle over their own mind, a battle of wills fought in the nether regions of their psyche. Help them, however, you can. And... it is over. Their hair and limbs turn bleach white. They open their eyes and speak in their own voice, as well as that of the Lord of Lies. Both of them are neither what they once were, but rather something new. What do you do?*

Give the characters a moment to take action or commune with the new being. If they choose to act violently against it, it (and the player) are permitted to rocket into the air and flee to the heavens... or die on the spot, if they so choose. In the case of death or flight, the player joins you as a game organizer for the next slot.

### **Circle**

*Your circle spirals outward and envelops first you, then the mountain, then the whole of Vivia in a broad shield of blue light. The Lord of Lies' base is repelled and hurtles high into the atmosphere, possibly into outer space. It is gone, for now.*

The Lord of Lies is gone, but not beaten. Emphasize the fact that a weak signal remains, disturbing one's dreams and haunting the recovery in Act III.

### **Square**

*You watch as the square of power you've formed extends upwards, and grows into a green floating cube of near equal size to the Lord of Lies' air base hovering in the air. It effortlessly glides over the waiting tendrils of the air base and envelops it in a green*

*prison that then hurtles to the ground. The base smashes on the ground and explodes, far from you. And then the cube rises up and continues off into the distance.*

The Lord of Lies is gone, but what is that cube doing in the world, now that its task is done? It appears to have a mind of its own. Emphasize later its strange will and desires.

Thematic Question: Which Ritual do they choose and what does it mean?

### **5. Relationship Map Adjustment (2 minutes)**

Take out the Act II Relationships worksheet.

*Now we will adjust the Relationship Map for the group a second time. Again: Draw a single straight line between your characters if you have intimate relations, but nothing serious; draw a double straight line if it's serious. Make a squiggly line between you if it's complicated, and draw a straight line with a pair of X's in the middle if the relationship is definitely over. You as players get to decide how much you as characters know of this.*

Do this part fairly mechanically and quickly. Post the results on the wall for everyone to see the visualization of polycule drama, which players can decide how much their characters know.

Thematic Question: Is the group still together, or has the struggle pushed them further apart?

# Act III

(40 minutes)

What Happens Next

## 1. Rebuilding (10 Minutes)

*Years have passed, and yet the work continues. Much of Vivia was destroyed in the Lord of Lies' path, and there is still much to rebuild. Are you all still together? Whom have you kept up with over the years? Think of the toll that the war, the Ritual, and the years took on your body. Walking is a bit more painful, and some of you are doing better than others. When I play the music, split into your groups organically and work together on some persistent project in rebuilding a ruined city. Use this opportunity to re-visit your relationships after so many years. When the music ends, you may intermingle as a broader group.*

Play "Book of Days" by Enya.

Lone projects are OK at this point. It's great if they're able to use their powers, and also encourage them to think of when they were playing as children. Could that sense of play help their new creations? Let them complain about aches and pains, bring up older discussions, etc.

Thematic Question: What new shape are the characters giving the world?

## 2. Strange Return (10 Minutes)

This is where the after-effects of the Ritual are the most important. If they chose Triangle, then the player whose character was killed will play the Lord of Lies in the scene. If they chose Circle, you play the Lord of Lies. If they chose Cross, regardless of whether or not they killed the newly spawned being, the player who played the Leader plays the newly spawned being. Read the text below:

*A little while later: You are celebrating a reunion in a newly constructed tavern. Find a seat and take a moment for yourselves. Relax.*

Let them all get comfortable and re-ignite their old flames. At an opportune moment, then introduce yourself (or the other player) as the Lord of Lies.

*You are surprised when a figure you recognize as the Lord of Lies, played by me, enters the tavern. I order a drink and sit down. What do you do now?*

Now the polycule stands before another choice. What do they do with you? You play the Lord of Lies or the hybrid figure however you choose: the default is a tired old person, full of the weight of the world. You speak of the past as if it were a millennium ago. You vaguely remember activating some signal that caused some problems. You have other problems today.

If they chose Square, then the Cube is hovering outside the tavern with some sundry residents of Vivia trapped inside its cage. Read this alternate text:

*You are surprised when you see the Cube hovering outside of the tavern. Several Vivia residents float inside of it, and you don't know if they're alive or dead. What do you do now?*

The Cube has come for some reason, but you will have to come up with it in play. Strange, alien desires motivate it, and you have permission to go there.

In all cases, the outcome of the scene is totally open. The Cube in theory could be destroyed, but do they *really* want to do another Ritual again? The Lord of Lies can be killed, shamed, welcomed, forgiven, or any number of solutions.

Play to find out.

Thematic Question: What do the characters do to the Lord of Lies? or What happened to the Cube and what does it want now?

### **3. The Third Dream (10 Minutes)**

*You all lie down, close your eyes, and have a dream. This dream represents your longer perspective on your life. What do you regret? Take some time and tell us a proper story. Don't shy away from alternative histories or being haunted by the past. Anyone can start, and we will conclude once everyone has shared.*

Thematic Question: How can one summarize a life in a dream?

### **4. Funeral (10 Minutes)**

*More years have passed. Think of how your bodies and minds have aged and decayed. One of you has died. Decide whom. That person will lie down, for they are to be launched in a transparent coffin into the stars. The rest of you have gathered to pay your last respects and say goodbye. Mingle for a little bit amongst each other, as if you haven't seen each other for a while. Organically, gather around the coffin and each of you make a statement about the deceased. The scene and Act end when I play the music.*

Play "Shadows of the Night" by Pat Benatar

Thematic Questions: Whom and what have we lost? How do we communicate that it matters?

# Coda and Debrief

(20 minutes)

*Save Some Light For Me is now over. The first thing we'll do is what we'll call a Coda, which is a way to properly conclude your play with this character.*

*Stand in a circle and imagine you are soaking wet. Shake off your character, including the adopted posture, as if they were water droplets. Once you are feeling warm, dry, and like yourself again, sit back down.*

—

*Going around the circle, everyone please share a brief statement about how they are feeling right now. No one should interrupt this statement with their own thoughts or feelings.*

—

*Let's go around a second time and ask about the relationships you had in the game and their characters' overall arc. This can become a general conversation, but I'd like to keep an eye on the time so that we can clean up before our time together is over.*

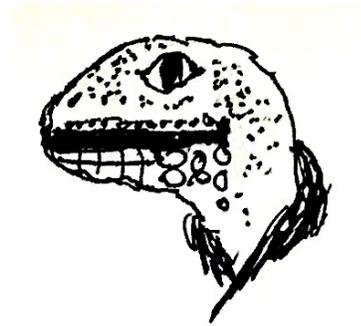
—

*Thank you all for playing, and please help clean up and reset the room with me. You all deserve a round of applause.*

# FULMER

*Life is a mystery, everyone must stand alone  
I hear you call my name  
And it feels like home*

You are a Lizardperson, submissive and pious.  
You worship the Many Gods and provide solace to those around you.



**Player Suggestion:** You should play this character if you like talking about religion and don't mind being a bit of a "bottom."

**What Your Character Is:** You are 1/2 Lizardperson, 1/4 Human, 1/8 Wolf and 1/8 Unicorn, but the Lizardperson part is dominant, so you look like a Lizardperson.

**Character Height:** You are the same height as Mendel, taller than Garrett, but not as tall as Bibila

**Player Posture Suggestion:** Walk as if you have robes and a tail sticking out, and otherwise move like a monk.

**Rumored Powers:** Summon Blessings from the Many Gods; Healing

**Ritual Preferences:** Circle

**Sexual Preferences:** You on bottom; Others satisfying their needs

**Romantic Preferences:** You want someone who will use you but also take care of you in the end.

**Recurring Dream Themes:** Angels, Weeping Moons, Upset Treefolk, Space

**In Act I...** you want someone to give you guidance, someone to take the lead and give you new perspectives. You want to figure out what to do with your sexual drives, but rejection of any kind will hurt. Do you serve your Gods, or your more basic animal needs?

**In Act II...** you are troubled and traumatized, but resolutely continue. You know you are the shining light for some people, even if you're not sure that you're up for that task in the end. Do you rise to face your duties?

**In Act III...** your healing skills are still desperately needed, and you are now seen as a hero and a leader. But you are mostly just comfortable taking orders, being led. How do you deal with that?

**Notes About the Setting** Vivia is a fantastical world full of mystery and possibility, prosperous and diverse. Magic and technology intermingle without anyone giving it a second thought: one person parks their hover-speeder, another soars past wearing a harness glowing blue with wind magic. Everyone

who is anyone telepathically "downloads" the latest news and updates as they drift off to sleep. Religions intermingle and debate remains healthy: people speak often enough of the Gods' intricacies that they are familiar with how to have hard discussions. People intermingle and co-exist such that everyone is a hybrid of something else. Royal hierarchies have been abolished. Councils that run each city are democratically elected, and every child gets to go to some level of the Academy. Gender is complicated enough to warrant using the pronoun "they" with everyone, and relationships are complicated enough to never assume a person only has one life-long partner. Landscapes are vast, beautiful, and mostly consist of barren plains. Weapons are few and varied, as the need for them has waned. There are rumors of powerful Rituals that can be used to defend Vivia from external attack, but it is also rumored that they punch holes in the souls of those who do them without conviction. But then again: Who is worried about external attack?

**Notes For You, The Player:** Take heed of your own and your fellow players' safety. We are here to take care of each other. Be interesting, framing your character's action through epic description. Be generous. Your chief job is to make the other players look and feel awesome, even if what's happening might be intense on a character level. The world is open-ended and there's no need to memorize much world lore about it. In the end, there is no "correct" way to play this character: *you* are the interpreter of this text and the arbiter of their fate. Feel free to make adjustments in the character's personality or preferences based on narrative reasons or just if you feel like it. Once you're embodying the character, it's part of you anyway.

# JANI KAMETT

*Lost inside adorable illusion  
And I cannot hide  
I'm the one you're using*

You are a Stranger of Many Talents.  
You arrive at the right place, right time, and do  
the right thing. Mysteriously.

**Player Suggestion:** You should play this character  
if you like being the center of attention but no one  
gets to know much about you. Even you.

**What Your Character Is:** No one has any idea.  
You *look* Human.

**Character Height:** No one is taller than you, but Livv is close.

**Player Posture Suggestion:** You are a tall, dark stranger. Now act like one.

**Rumored Powers:** All Sorts of Skills and Magic; Disappearing

**Ritual Preferences:** Square

**Sexual Preferences:** Flirting and leading others on; Deep and meaningful One  
Night Stands

**Romantic Preferences:** You desire meaning and connection, no matter what  
distances may separate you. You want relationships that will survive space and  
time.

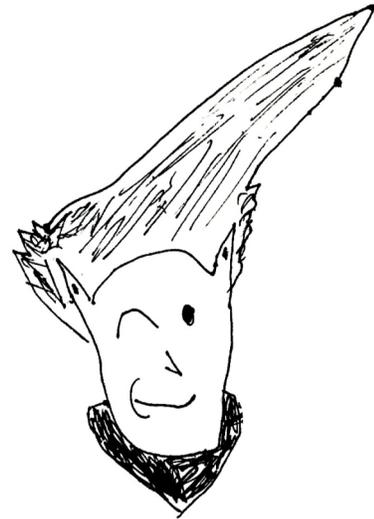
**Recurring Dream Themes:** Dogs, Earthquakes, Riches, Candy, Tightropes

**In Act I...** you are a charming, dashing, courageous young person, full of  
energy and flirtation. You live life to its fullest, but evade too many questions  
about where your from or what your background is, always turning these  
inquiries back on the questioner themselves. How do you manage to win lovers  
and yet stay aloof?

**In Act II...** you are a *deus ex machina*, someone who swoops in at the last minute  
and saves everyone through mysterious powers that look cooler than everyone  
else's (seriously). You are attached to all of these people, yet attachment breeds  
so many problems. How do you continue to keep your distance, and still  
nurture the flames of love and caring?

**In Act III...** you have shown your true colors, and are worried that the mystery  
has started to fade. Who are you, really?

**Notes About the Setting:** Vivia is a fantastical world full of mystery and  
possibility, prosperous and diverse. Magic and technology intermingle without  
anyone giving it a second thought: one person parks their hover-speeder,



another soars past wearing a harness glowing blue with wind magic. Everyone who is anyone telepathically "downloads" the latest news and updates as they drift off to sleep. Religions intermingle and debate remains healthy: people speak often enough of the Gods' intricacies that they are familiar with how to have hard discussions. People intermingle and co-exist such that everyone is a hybrid of something else. Royal hierarchies have been abolished. Councils that run each city are democratically elected, and every child gets to go to some level of the Academy. Gender is complicated enough to warrant using the pronoun "they" with everyone, and relationships are complicated enough to never assume a person only has one life-long partner. Landscapes are vast, beautiful, and mostly consist of barren plains. Weapons are few and varied, as the need for them has waned. There are rumors of powerful Rituals that can be used to defend Vivia from external attack, but it is also rumored that they punch holes in the souls of those who do them without conviction. But then again: Who is worried about external attack?

**Notes For You, The Player:** Take heed of your own and your fellow players' safety. We are here to take care of each other. Be interesting, framing your character's action through epic description. Be generous. Your chief job is to make the other players look and feel awesome, even if what's happening might be intense on a character level. The world is open-ended and there's no need to memorize much world lore about it. In the end, there is no "correct" way to play this character: *you* are the interpreter of this text and the arbiter of their fate. Feel free to make adjustments in the character's personality or preferences based on narrative reasons or just if you feel like it. Once you're embodying the character, it's part of you anyway.

# LIVV

*It's a lot like life  
This play between the sheets  
With you on top and me underneath  
Forget all about equality*

You are a Chain Knight, dominant and confident.  
You are a Deadly Warrior and can work marvelous  
wonders with your chains



**Player Suggestion:** You should play this character if you are loud and playfully dominant.

**What Your Character Is:** You are 100% Human, but that doesn't get to your head.

**Character Height:** Only Jani Kamett is taller than you.

**Player Posture Suggestion:** Walk as if you carry these heavy chains all day without ever feeling it. You're powerful and sexy.

**Rumored Powers:** Enchantment of Chains and Metal (more broadly)

**Ritual Preferences:** Triangle

**Sexual Preferences:** You on top

**Romantic Preferences:** Someone who enjoys a lifetime of fooling around and experimentation, without any of it getting old

**Recurring Dream Themes:** Falling, Spiders, Anvils, Dungeons, Care

**In Act I...** you want a bottom to your top, someone to dominate and worship you in a playful fashion. You want to show that you are strong, capable, and ready for anything. What is the chink in your armor?

**In Act II...** you are battle-weary and pulled in a dozen different directions at once by various demands on you and your skills. How are you going to pull all this off? Are you really in charge?

**In Act III...** your strength has drained from you, but your mind is still sharp. You are sassy, have a sharp wit, and entertain others. How do you unexpectedly bolster everyone's spirits?

**Notes About the Setting:** Vivia is a fantastical world full of mystery and possibility, prosperous and diverse. Magic and technology intermingle without anyone giving it a second thought: one person parks their hover-speeder, another soars past wearing a harness glowing blue with wind magic. Everyone who is anyone telepathically "downloads" the latest news and updates as they drift off to sleep. Religions intermingle and debate remains healthy: people speak often enough of the Gods' intricacies that they are familiar with how to

have hard discussions. People intermingle and co-exist such that everyone is a hybrid of something else. Royal hierarchies have been abolished. Councils that run each city are democratically elected, and every child gets to go to some level of the Academy. Gender is complicated enough to warrant using the pronoun "they" with everyone, and relationships are complicated enough to never assume a person only has one life-long partner. Landscapes are vast, beautiful, and mostly consist of barren plains. Weapons are few and varied, as the need for them has waned. There are rumors of powerful Rituals that can be used to defend Vivia from external attack, but it is also rumored that they punch holes in the souls of those who do them without conviction. But then again: Who is worried about external attack?

**Notes For You, The Player:** Take heed of your own and your fellow players' safety. We are here to take care of each other. Be interesting, framing your character's action through epic description. Be generous. Your chief job is to make the other players look and feel awesome, even if what's happening might be intense on a character level. The world is open-ended and there's no need to memorize much world lore about it. In the end, there is no "correct" way to play this character: *you* are the interpreter of this text and the arbiter of their fate. Feel free to make adjustments in the character's personality or preferences based on narrative reasons or just if you feel like it. Once you're embodying the character, it's part of you anyway.

# SHANNON

*And you're nothing but air  
With your hand in the air  
And your shoelaces tied up together with care*

You are a She-Dwarf and you're ready for anything.  
You are a Miner and a Brawler, and you've fought  
with them all.



**Player Suggestion:** You should play this character if you are pretty relaxed and like to roll with the flow.

**What Your Character Is:** You are ½ Human and ½ She-Dwarf, meaning that you are short, have a beard, and have both male and female sex organs.

**Character Height:** You are shorter than Garrett but taller than Wygod

**Player Posture Suggestion:** You may stoop down as a dwarf for as long as you want, but keep your shoulders back to show your confidence.

**Rumored Powers:** Beating Things Up; Knowledge and Control of Dirt

**Ritual Preferences:** Square

**Sexual Preferences:** The more experiences you've had together, the better the sex will be, whatever you decide to do

**Romantic Preferences:** A lifelong partner who puts up with your crap.

**Recurring Dream Themes:** Monsters, Gold, Meat, Vanishing, Stumbling

**In Act I...** you are easy to talk to, although you're not necessarily looking for anyone. As far as you're concerned, you're pretty self-sufficient. But it still seems like everyone else is having a lot of fun. Shouldn't you too?

**In Act II...** you are seasoned and ready to take on the world, because that's your only option, really. Do you still have hope?

**In Act III...** you pass the days wondering if your life made a difference in those of others. Now is a good time to check in and make sure that's the case. Do you matter?

**Notes About the Setting:** Vivia is a fantastical world full of mystery and possibility, prosperous and diverse. Magic and technology intermingle without anyone giving it a second thought: one person parks their hover-speeder, another soars past wearing a harness glowing blue with wind magic. Everyone who is anyone telepathically "downloads" the latest news and updates as they drift off to sleep. Religions intermingle and debate remains healthy: people speak often enough of the Gods' intricacies that they are familiar with how to have hard discussions. People intermingle and co-exist such that everyone is a hybrid of something else. Royal hierarchies have been abolished. Councils that

run each city are democratically elected, and every child gets to go to some level of the Academy. Gender is complicated enough to warrant using the pronoun "they" with everyone, and relationships are complicated enough to never assume a person only has one life-long partner. Landscapes are vast, beautiful, and mostly consist of barren plains. Weapons are few and varied, as the need for them has waned. There are rumors of powerful Rituals that can be used to defend Vivia from external attack, but it is also rumored that they punch holes in the souls of those who do them without conviction. But then again: Who is worried about external attack?

**Notes For You, The Player:** Take heed of your own and your fellow players' safety. We are here to take care of each other. Be interesting, framing your character's action through epic description. Be generous. Your chief job is to make the other players look and feel awesome, even if what's happening might be intense on a character level. The world is open-ended and there's no need to memorize much world lore about it. In the end, there is no "correct" way to play this character: *you* are the interpreter of this text and the arbiter of their fate. Feel free to make adjustments in the character's personality or preferences based on narrative reasons or just if you feel like it. Once you're embodying the character, it's part of you anyway.

# QUEEN TRACYS

*When illusion spin her net  
I'm never where I want to be  
And liberty she pirouette  
When I think that I am free*

You are a purple Icicle Queen from a distant country, deposed by political maneuvering.

You are a groomed Leader and hold Power over Cold and Ice.



**Player Suggestion:** You should play this character if you like being an extroverted leader while harboring quiet pathos and aristocratic angst.

**What Your Character Is:** You are 100% Icicle, which means you're a living form of frozen water, with some magical wards against melting.

**Character Height:** You are shorter than Livv, but taller than Fulmer or Mendel (and the same as Bibila)

**Player Posture Suggestion:** You are stiff as a board and keep your back as straight as possible. Don't be afraid to put your nose in the air too.

**Rumored Powers:** Control over Cold and Ice; Icicle army

**Ritual Preferences:** Circle

**Sexual Preferences:** Losing control, in whatever form that may take. But you don't want that information to get out.

**Romantic Preferences:** You want someone who gives you dignity and emotional distance while also knowing when to close the gap and provide you comfort.

**Recurring Dream Themes:** Thrones, Jewels, Horizons, Bears, Wind

**In Act I...** you want people to show respect to you, but you secretly are attracted to those who disregard that respect temporarily. You want to get back your kingdom, but kind of enjoy just being among the regular folks. Is democracy your kink?

**In Act II...** you have had to take charge in unexpected ways. People look to you for confidence and authority. Do you still have it?

**In Act III...** you have been humbled and brought into touch with who you really are. Now you need to figure out if that's the You that you want to show the world. Do you want to abandon all pretense and be totally authentic?

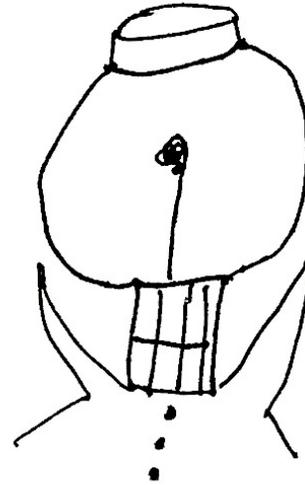
**Notes About the Setting:** Vivia is a fantastical world full of mystery and possibility, prosperous and diverse. Magic and technology intermingle without anyone giving it a second thought: one person parks their hover-speeder, another soars past wearing a harness glowing blue with wind magic. Everyone who is anyone telepathically "downloads" the latest news and updates as they drift off to sleep. Religions intermingle and debate remains healthy: people speak often enough of the Gods' intricacies that they are familiar with how to have hard discussions. People intermingle and co-exist such that everyone is a hybrid of something else. Royal hierarchies have been abolished. Councils that run each city are democratically elected, and every child gets to go to some level of the Academy. Gender is complicated enough to warrant using the pronoun "they" with everyone, and relationships are complicated enough to never assume a person only has one life-long partner. Landscapes are vast, beautiful, and mostly consist of barren plains. Weapons are few and varied, as the need for them has waned. There are rumors of powerful Rituals that can be used to defend Vivia from external attack, but it is also rumored that they punch holes in the souls of those who do them without conviction. But then again: Who is worried about external attack?

**Notes For You, The Player:** Take heed of your own and your fellow players' safety. We are here to take care of each other. Be interesting, framing your character's action through epic description. Be generous. Your chief job is to make the other players look and feel awesome, even if what's happening might be intense on a character level. The world is open-ended and there's no need to memorize much world lore about it. In the end, there is no "correct" way to play this character: *you* are the interpreter of this text and the arbiter of their fate. Feel free to make adjustments in the character's personality or preferences based on narrative reasons or just if you feel like it. Once you're embodying the character, it's part of you anyway.

# MENDEL

*Not what teacher said to do  
Makin' dreams come true  
Living tissue, warm flesh*

You are a Crystal-Bulb-headed Mage who invents wild new creations. You understand the Physics of Things and can whip up some Weird Science.



**Player Suggestion:** You should play this character if you are a bit of a nerd and like talking about esoteric topics at length.

**What Your Character Is:** You are  $\frac{3}{4}$  Crystal Bulb and  $\frac{1}{4}$  Human, which means you've got a big crystal bulb for a head and an awkward mouth.

**Character Height:** The same as Fulmer, taller than Garrett but not taller than Bibila.

**Player Posture Suggestion:** You are top-heavy, so play as if there were a weight attached to your head. Lead with your head when walking.

**Rumored Powers:** A Vast Range of All Things Magic

**Ritual Preferences:** Square

**Sexual Preferences:** Long Talks about Big Ideas; Doggy Style

**Romantic Preferences:** You want someone who values substance over style, who can talk through any topic in great detail. But also someone who takes care of your physical needs, in the end.

**Recurring Dream Themes:** Rebirth, Glowing, Masks, School, Colors

**In Act I...** you desperately want to learn as much as you can from everyone. They're all so fascinating. What did you learn that you maybe didn't want to know?

**In Act II...** your knowledge is needed for resisting the Lord of Lies. You've got magical inventions churning out for everyone to use. What is the toll of all your wondrous creations being used for brutish battle?

**In Act III...** you feel burnt-out and need support from others. You still want to talk, but maybe more about feelings than ideas. How do you reconcile your intellect with your soul?

**Notes About the Setting:** Vivia is a fantastical world full of mystery and possibility, prosperous and diverse. Magic and technology intermingle without anyone giving it a second thought: one person parks their hover-speeder, another soars past wearing a harness glowing blue with wind magic. Everyone

who is anyone telepathically "downloads" the latest news and updates as they drift off to sleep. Religions intermingle and debate remains healthy: people speak often enough of the Gods' intricacies that they are familiar with how to have hard discussions. People intermingle and co-exist such that everyone is a hybrid of something else. Royal hierarchies have been abolished. Councils that run each city are democratically elected, and every child gets to go to some level of the Academy. Gender is complicated enough to warrant using the pronoun "they" with everyone, and relationships are complicated enough to never assume a person only has one life-long partner. Landscapes are vast, beautiful, and mostly consist of barren plains. Weapons are few and varied, as the need for them has waned. There are rumors of powerful Rituals that can be used to defend Vivia from external attack, but it is also rumored that they punch holes in the souls of those who do them without conviction. But then again: Who is worried about external attack?

**Notes For You, The Player:** Take heed of your own and your fellow players' safety. We are here to take care of each other. Be interesting, framing your character's action through epic description. Be generous. Your chief job is to make the other players look and feel awesome, even if what's happening might be intense on a character level. The world is open-ended and there's no need to memorize much world lore about it. In the end, there is no "correct" way to play this character: *you* are the interpreter of this text and the arbiter of their fate. Feel free to make adjustments in the character's personality or preferences based on narrative reasons or just if you feel like it. Once you're embodying the character, it's part of you anyway.

# UNI

*I'm the urban [unicorn], baby  
Here comes the twist—  
I don't exist*



You are a Unicorn who rides on a fellow Unicorn.  
It's all good.  
You are the Swift Scout who rides forth and  
scopes out danger.

**Player Suggestion:** You should play this character if you enjoy meta-level, ironic play OR just like playing unicorns. Why not?

**What Your Character Is:** A Unicorn

**Character Height:** When not riding Rydah, your Unicorn, you are the shortest.

**Player Posture Suggestion:** Play down on your knees when not on Rydah, or stand at normal height but pretend you are mounted on a horse.

**Rumored Powers:** Extremely Fast and can Grant Wishes

**Ritual Preferences:** Cross

**Sexual Preferences:** Any gender, and always more than one for sexual play.

**Romantic Preferences:** You want more than one partner, both of whom are flexible and always ready for new adventures. Actually: you're in love with everyone unless otherwise specified.

**Recurring Dream Themes:** Bulls, Castles, Cities, Rainbows, Clouds

**In Act I...**you establish that you like being involved with more than one partner at a time. You actually *like* all the drama, and enjoy whatever's waiting around the corner. Where do you stumble?

**In Act II...** you are being used as a means of information gathering and communication. You serve a function, but you know you are capable of so much more. How do you show off your true colors despite the darkness?

**In Act III...** you and Rydah haven't lost the spark, and you're ready to live out a lively old age. Will others join you both?

**Notes About the Setting:** Vivia is a fantastical world full of mystery and possibility, prosperous and diverse. Magic and technology intermingle without anyone giving it a second thought: one person parks their hover-speeder, another soars past wearing a harness glowing blue with wind magic. Everyone who is anyone telepathically "downloads" the latest news and updates as they drift off to sleep. Religions intermingle and debate remains healthy: people speak often enough of the Gods' intricacies that they are familiar with how to have hard discussions. People intermingle and co-exist such that everyone is a

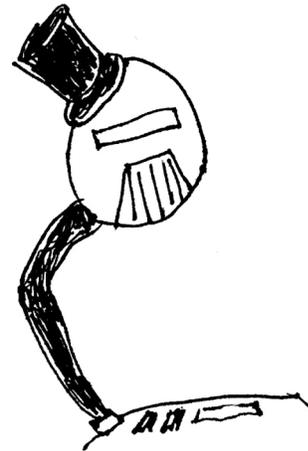
hybrid of something else. Royal hierarchies have been abolished. Councils that run each city are democratically elected, and every child gets to go to some level of the Academy. Gender is complicated enough to warrant using the pronoun "they" with everyone, and relationships are complicated enough to never assume a person only has one life-long partner. Landscapes are vast, beautiful, and mostly consist of barren plains. Weapons are few and varied, as the need for them has waned. There are rumors of powerful Rituals that can be used to defend Vivia from external attack, but it is also rumored that they punch holes in the souls of those who do them without conviction. But then again: Who is worried about external attack?

**Notes For You, The Player:** Take heed of your own and your fellow players' safety. We are here to take care of each other. Be interesting, framing your character's action through epic description. Be generous. Your chief job is to make the other players look and feel awesome, even if what's happening might be intense on a character level. The world is open-ended and there's no need to memorize much world lore about it. In the end, there is no "correct" way to play this character: *you* are the interpreter of this text and the arbiter of their fate. Feel free to make adjustments in the character's personality or preferences based on narrative reasons or just if you feel like it. Once you're embodying the character, it's part of you anyway.

# WY GOD

*When I look in your eyes  
My meter starts to rise  
And I become confused*

You are a Robot, brimming with weapons, passion, and unresolved issues. You have Many Useful Arms and can generate White Hot Heat.



**Player Suggestion:** You should play this character if you enjoy soap opera behavior and hamming it up... as a robot.

**What Your Character Is:** You are 100% Robot. You just don't know who built you, or why.

**Character Height:** Only Uni is shorter than you.

**Player Posture Suggestion:** Splay out your arms at all times and crouch or kneel to show height, whenever it's comfortable.

**Rumored Powers:** Concealed Weapons, Tools; Power over Heat and Flame

**Ritual Preferences:** Triangle

**Sexual Preferences:** Fast and Relentless, Up for Whatever Otherwise

**Romantic Preferences:** You seek True Love. Not necessarily One True Love, but they better reciprocate on the passion.

**Recurring Dream Themes:** Vines, Smoke, Airships, Television, Eyes

**In Act I...** you are in relentless pursuit of some sort of relationship. You will fall in love with someone, and it will be the best thing ever. Won't it?

**In Act II...** you have been burned, jaded, and made angry by both your personal life and your newfound life in the resistance. Who else is now as cynical as you are?

**In Act III...** your spark hasn't gone out, but maybe now you've learned a thing or two. Will you repeat the past's mistakes?

**Notes About the Setting:** Vivia is a fantastical world full of mystery and possibility, prosperous and diverse. Magic and technology intermingle without anyone giving it a second thought: one person parks their hover-speeder, another soars past wearing a harness glowing blue with wind magic. Everyone who is anyone telepathically "downloads" the latest news and updates as they drift off to sleep. Religions intermingle and debate remains healthy: people speak often enough of the Gods' intricacies that they are familiar with how to have hard discussions. People intermingle and co-exist such that everyone is a hybrid of something else. Royal hierarchies have been abolished. Councils that

run each city are democratically elected, and every child gets to go to some level of the Academy. Gender is complicated enough to warrant using the pronoun "they" with everyone, and relationships are complicated enough to never assume a person only has one life-long partner. Landscapes are vast, beautiful, and mostly consist of barren plains. Weapons are few and varied, as the need for them has waned. There are rumors of powerful Rituals that can be used to defend Vivia from external attack, but it is also rumored that they punch holes in the souls of those who do them without conviction. But then again: Who is worried about external attack?

**Notes For You, The Player:** Take heed of your own and your fellow players' safety. We are here to take care of each other. Be interesting, framing your character's action through epic description. Be generous. Your chief job is to make the other players look and feel awesome, even if what's happening might be intense on a character level. The world is open-ended and there's no need to memorize much world lore about it. In the end, there is no "correct" way to play this character: *you* are the interpreter of this text and the arbiter of their fate. Feel free to make adjustments in the character's personality or preferences based on narrative reasons or just if you feel like it. Once you're embodying the character, it's part of you anyway.

# BIBILA

*Running just as fast as we can  
Holding on to one another hands  
Trying to get away into the night*

You are a Bubble Bard, earnest and idealistic.  
Your Songs encase objects and other beings in  
Bubbles that you control.



**Player Suggestion:** You should play this character if you are inquisitive and like to learn more about the other characters.

**What Your Character Is:** You are  $\frac{1}{2}$  Human,  $\frac{1}{4}$  Unicorn, and  $\frac{1}{4}$  Crystal Bulb, but mostly you look Human with a peculiar, glossy skin texture

**Character Height:** You are shorter than Livv, but taller than Fulmer or Mendel (and the same as Queen Tracys)

**Player Posture Suggestion:** Imagine bubbles surround you, and whirl bubbles through the air with your hands on occasion.

**Rumored Powers:** Encase others and objects in hard or soft bubbles

**Ritual Preferences:** Circle

**Sexual Preferences:** Caressing and Slow Sex

**Romantic Preferences:** Someone who really loves your music, but doesn't see you as just a bard.

**Recurring Dream Themes:** Water, Shadows, Music, Insects, Holding Hands

**In Act I...** you genuinely want to get to know everyone, learning about their stories and also inspiring music for you. How do you connect the things they tell you with the universal truths you hold so dearly?

**In Act II...** you now use your music and your bubble powers for any number of war utilities. Actually, it doesn't feel good any more. Do you lose your inspiration?

**In Act III...** you have composed so many songs, joyous and sad, over the years. Now you want to take all this art and knowledge and put it into some permanent form. What will be your magnum opus?

**Notes About the Setting:** Vivia is a fantastical world full of mystery and possibility, prosperous and diverse. Magic and technology intermingle without anyone giving it a second thought: one person parks their hover-speeder, another soars past wearing a harness glowing blue with wind magic. Everyone who is anyone telepathically "downloads" the latest news and updates as they drift off to sleep. Religions intermingle and debate remains healthy: people

speak often enough of the Gods' intricacies that they are familiar with how to have hard discussions. People intermingle and co-exist such that everyone is a hybrid of something else. Royal hierarchies have been abolished. Councils that run each city are democratically elected, and every child gets to go to some level of the Academy. Gender is complicated enough to warrant using the pronoun "they" with everyone, and relationships are complicated enough to never assume a person only has one life-long partner. Landscapes are vast, beautiful, and mostly consist of barren plains. Weapons are few and varied, as the need for them has waned. There are rumors of powerful Rituals that can be used to defend Vivia from external attack, but it is also rumored that they punch holes in the souls of those who do them without conviction. But then again: Who is worried about external attack?

**Notes For You, The Player:** Take heed of your own and your fellow players' safety. We are here to take care of each other. Be interesting, framing your character's action through epic description. Be generous. Your chief job is to make the other players look and feel awesome, even if what's happening might be intense on a character level. The world is open-ended and there's no need to memorize much world lore about it. In the end, there is no "correct" way to play this character: *you* are the interpreter of this text and the arbiter of their fate. Feel free to make adjustments in the character's personality or preferences based on narrative reasons or just if you feel like it. Once you're embodying the character, it's part of you anyway.

# GARETT

*Why you want to move so fast  
We don't have to take our clothes off  
To have a good time, oh no*

You are a Wolf-Person, cuddly and friendly  
You know a lot about Nature, and can  
Summon Wolf Spirits.



**Player Suggestion:** You should play this character if you like cuddling and animal play more than sex and romance.

**What Your Character Is:** You are mostly Wolf, but you stand on two legs because you're at least  $\frac{1}{4}$  Human too

**Character Height:** You're shorter than Mendel or Fulmer, but taller than Shannon

**Player Posture Suggestion:** Wolf-people often hold up their paws and occasionally lick them. Hold up your hands and mime licking them on occasion.

**Rumored Powers:** Wolf Spirits and Power over Nature

**Ritual Preferences:** Square

**Sexual Preferences:** Cuddling and Petting; Sex isn't something you like

**Romantic Preferences:** Someone who understands your full potential but also reduces you to a cuddle object all the same.

**Recurring Dream Themes:** Ancestors, Truth, Hunting, Dress-Up

**In Act I...** you enjoy cuddling and petting, and are immediately affectionate with those who show you those things. People underestimate you, and that's a good thing. How do you show them that they should nevertheless take you seriously?

**In Act II...** you are needed to support all the others. But you need support yourself. You cannot take this on alone. How do the Wolf Spirits help you in the end?

**In Act III...** you realize your time is short on Vivia and you'll need to figure out your place in the broader cosmos. How do you deal with your own mortality?

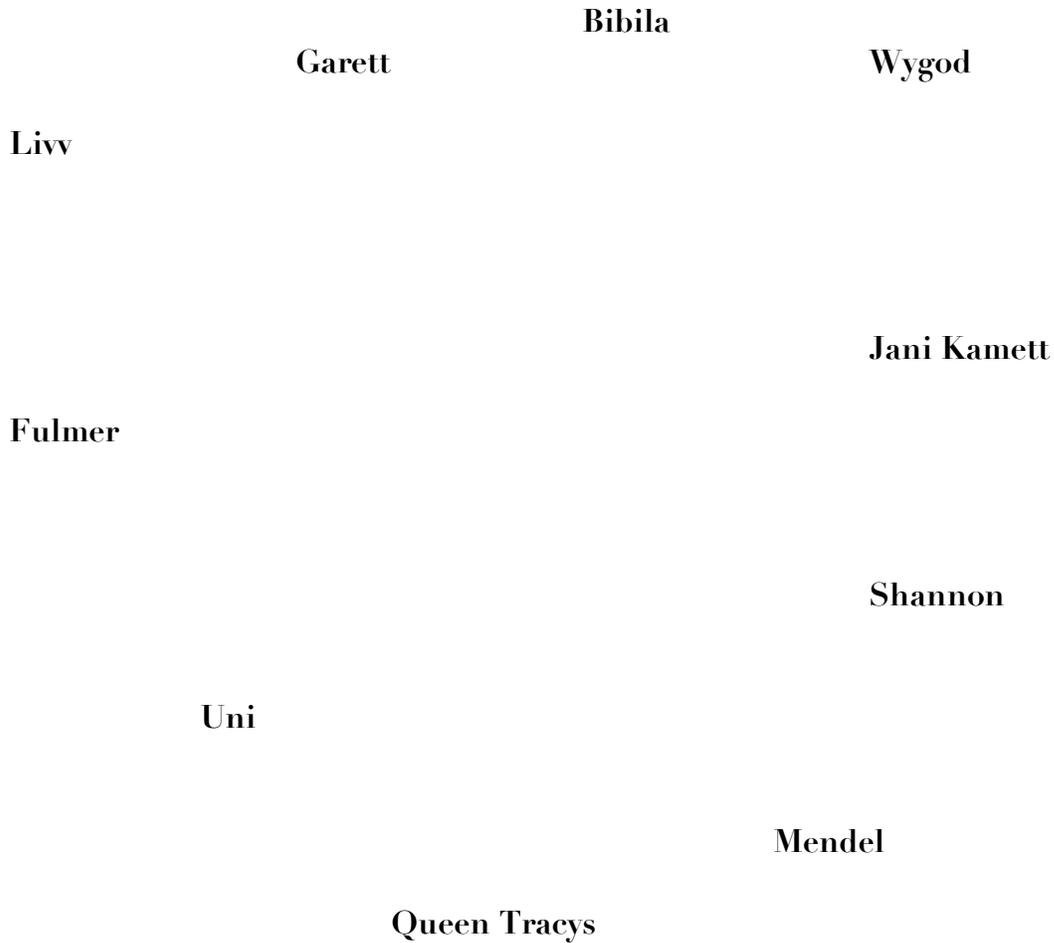
**Notes About the Setting:** Vivia is a fantastical world full of mystery and possibility, prosperous and diverse. Magic and technology intermingle without anyone giving it a second thought: one person parks their hover-speeder, another soars past wearing a harness glowing blue with wind magic. Everyone who is anyone telepathically "downloads" the latest news and updates as they drift off to sleep. Religions intermingle and debate remains healthy: people

speak often enough of the Gods' intricacies that they are familiar with how to have hard discussions. People intermingle and co-exist such that everyone is a hybrid of something else. Royal hierarchies have been abolished. Councils that run each city are democratically elected, and every child gets to go to some level of the Academy. Gender is complicated enough to warrant using the pronoun "they" with everyone, and relationships are complicated enough to never assume a person only has one life-long partner. Landscapes are vast, beautiful, and mostly consist of barren plains. Weapons are few and varied, as the need for them has waned. There are rumors of powerful Rituals that can be used to defend Vivia from external attack, but it is also rumored that they punch holes in the souls of those who do them without conviction. But then again: Who is worried about external attack?

**Notes For You, The Player:** Take heed of your own and your fellow players' safety. We are here to take care of each other. Be interesting, framing your character's action through epic description. Be generous. Your chief job is to make the other players look and feel awesome, even if what's happening might be intense on a character level. The world is open-ended and there's no need to memorize much world lore about it. In the end, there is no "correct" way to play this character: *you* are the interpreter of this text and the arbiter of their fate. Feel free to make adjustments in the character's personality or preferences based on narrative reasons or just if you feel like it. Once you're embodying the character, it's part of you anyway.

# ACT I – Relationships

Draw lines between the characters based on current relationship status.

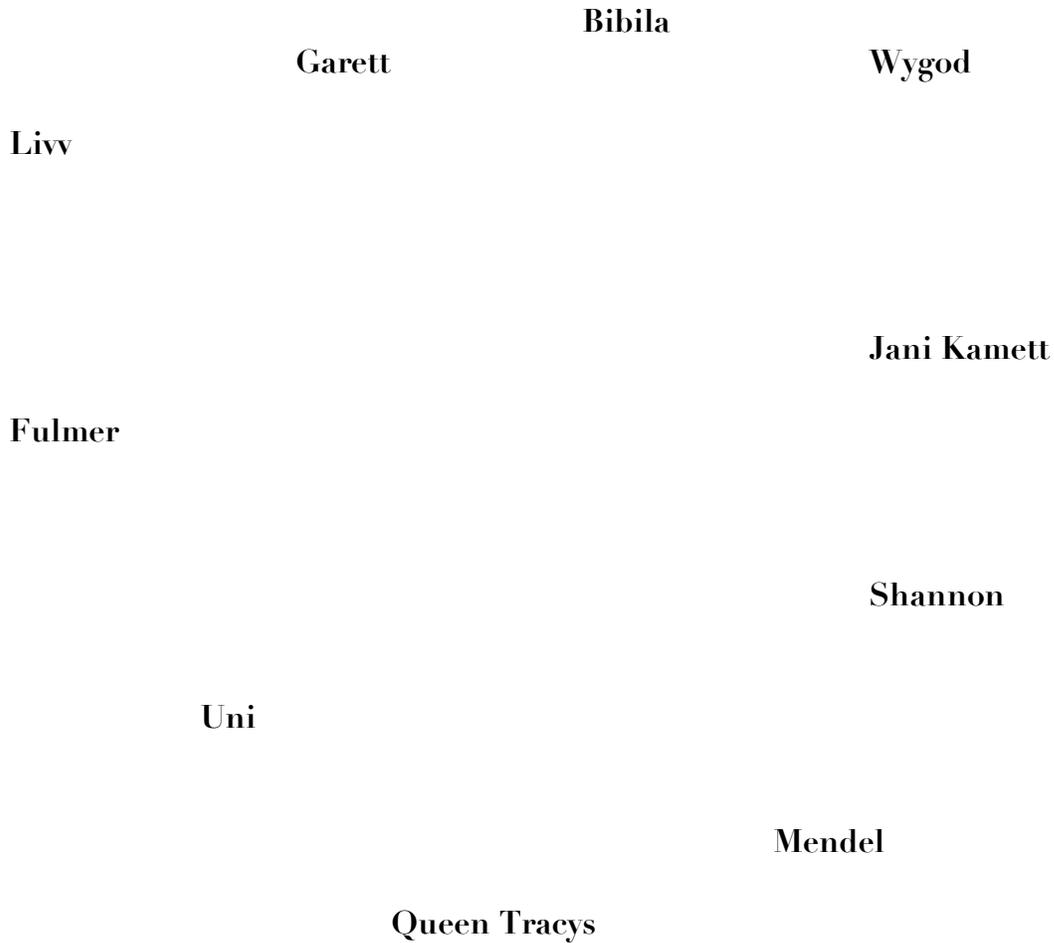


## Key

- Kissing, cuddling, non-committal sex
- ==== Serious, committed relationship
- ∩ Err...It's complicated
- xx Definitely no longer together

# ACT II – Relationships

Draw lines between the characters based on current relationship status.



## Key

- ⋈ Kissing, cuddling, non-committal sex
- ==== Serious, committed relationship
- ⌢ Err...It's complicated
- xx Definitely no longer together

## Afterword

Ever wonder what it'd be like if the characters in *He Man and the Masters of the Universe* were non-binary, queer, and had their own complicated polycule?

How about *Thundercats*?

OK, what about *Labyrinth*?

I grew up playing with action figures and setting up my own storylines for them. Some of those were romantic plots. The older I got, the more natural that romance felt. And sexuality too — they all had to have their own desires, insecurities, and inner drives. It never mattered that one figure was a hairy ape thing and another was some lizard warrior, or that they were both gendered "male." My imagination always found a way through their armor into the squishy bits of their souls.

"Fanfic!" you exclaim.

Ah, dear reader, not quite.

Since the 1980s, Disney and other megacorps have pretty much colonized childhood. A very small number of rich people are rent-seeking on every major property: *He-Man*, *Star Wars*, *Voltron*, *Trolls*, *My Little Pony*, and on and on. These franchises never really become ours to play with. I'm tired of their playgrounds. I'm picking up my toys and going home.

Home to Fastaval, it turns out, one of the few gatherings on Earth where we get to play intensely and intimately with each other; where we get to re-formulate our entire cosmos through several hours of interaction in a Danish classroom.

Home to the kinds of scenarios that choose to explore the cross-section between I don't know shallow 1980s-style kids fiction, cheesy-ass synth songs, growing old, and archetypes in polyamorous relationships.

Yes, the rituals were inspired by the Playstation controls.

Yes, this scenario is inelegance and rawness incarnate.

Yes, it's all mine.

Welcome to my weird-ass universe, and I hope you're not sore afterward.

--Evan Torner  
Covington, KY  
6 February 2019