

The Sins of Our Father I:

# The House of Gods

*The tribe of Hokwoju is in turmoil. The chieftain of the tribe, Oglala, is ready to pass to the sacred hunting grounds. His sons have scattered to the four winds and there is no clear sign of who should lead the tribe.*

*With the tremble of Mother Earth a vision came to Cries Like the Sky. The tribe is to send the strongest candidates to hunt down a worthy opponent.*

*After a celebration and a long dance for the Sun five young Hokwoju set out to prove their destiny.*

*Once the candidates have left the village Cries Like the Sky confides in Oglala – he does not trust that all of those who left will return. And he fears that what they will encounter will change them permanently.*

## **The Black Hills (Pahá Sápa)**

The Black Hills of The House of Gods are the Black Hills of South Dakota, United States. Or at least something pretty much alike.

They are a range of mountain covered with more or less with pine trees. To the Native American tribes inhabiting the are they are a sacred place left for the Old Gods that dwell there.

## **The Black River (Wakpá Sápa)**

Descending from the Black Hills with rapid falls the Black River brings fish for the tribes besides it. Occasionally shards of the hills can be found on the banks but the Natives throw these incredibly hard stones back to the river fearing the wrath of gods.

The river flows through from the Hills to east into what will later be known as Lake Oahe.

## **Hokwoju**

The Tribe of Hokwoju (Plants by the Water) is a part of the Arikara people from the Great Plains but have chosen to build a permanent village of earth lodges at the bank of the Black River.

The Hokwoju are primarily an agricultural tribe though they fish from the river and

hunt at the foothills of the Black Mountains.

A typical member of the tribe dresses in a loincloth, deer leather warmers and moccasins and decorate themselves with turkey feather.

A deer skin cape is used as protection from cold and rain and a pouch of tobacco is usually carried around the neck.

## **Myths**

The myths of the tribe are the backbone of the whole society. They tell about the dreadful Old Gods that live on the Black Hills and of the Shadow People that dwell in the dark waiting to snatch any human as their sustenance.

Myths teach that treacherous people will be poisoned by snakes and that each member of the tribe has their own position that they should struggle to keep.

Atop of all they teach that greatest honor is the honor of counting coup.

## **Counting Coup**

Counting Coup is one of the most important things to the warriors of Arikara. They are won in battle by acts of bravery. Touching the enemy, striking an opponent or escaping unharmed are a few examples of counting coup.

The risk of getting injured must be present in any action from which a coup can be counted.

After an event in which coup has been acquired the tribe gathers and recounts their acts of bravery.

The coup are recorded with notches in a coup stick (which is sometimes carried into battle) and in special cases with eagle feathers that may be weared in hair.

*In this adventure Coup is used for re-rolls and to boost skill checks. Character may gain it during the adventure but only if they have time to sit down and count the Coups they have acquired.*

## Rules summary

When taking facing a challenge gather a dice pool. Take dice equal to most relevant characteristic. If the character has any relevant skills or the Blessed condition add a die per each of them. If you have any Coup left you may add one die per Coup burnt.

GM gathers another pool (or allows the player to gather and roll it along with his own dice). This pool is equal to the difficulty of the obstacle. GM may add dice to the difficulty pool for relevant conditions the character is suffering from.

Roll both of the dice pools. Each result of four or more indicates a success. You need at least one more success than the difficulty pool.

### Challenge Levels:

3d Challenging

4d Hard

5d Severe

6d Daunting

7d Heroic

## Assisting

Each character assisting the task may add one additional die to the dice pool if they have a relevant skill or use one Coup.

## Coup

Use Coup to re-roll entire dice pool, add a die to any dice pool or to "explode" all sixes in a single check result (count the number of sixes and roll an equal amount of additional dice).

When the characters take time they may count Coup by re-telling their deeds. This requires at least two characters. Characters gain Coup from potentially dangerous situations in one-on-one basis. This also refreshes any Coup they have burnt.

## Attacking

All attacks are made in an initiative order determined by the weapon used starting from the smallest number. If similar weapons are used higher Agility goes first. If highest Agility is shared highest Coup goes first.

Make a skill check with either **Strength + Fighting** against opponent's **Agility + Fighting** or **Agility + Ranged** against opponent's **Agility + Observation**.

If the attack hits roll a number of dice equal to the damage of the weapon. Opponent loses one Vigor for each success and receives Wounded condition. When a character runs out of Vigor he dies.

### Weapon Dam.

### Initiative Notes

Axe	3	2	May be thrown with Agility + Ranged check with dam. 2
Bow	3	5	Character makes d6 arrows with a successful manufacture check
Improvised	1	4	Branches, rocks etc.
Knife	2	1	May use Agility instead of Strength when making attack check
Spear	3	2	+1 to attack check on first round, +1 to difficulty on the following turns May be thrown with Agility + Ranged check with dam. 2
Tomahawk	4	3	May be thrown with Agility + Ranged check with dam. 2
Torch	2	2	Causes one additional Vigor loss on the following round
Unarmed	1	1	Damage caused is non-lethal

# Running the Game

## Keep the Story Flowing

In this kind of a scenario failing any task should be the last option. The players will roll failed checks but in these cases you should encourage them to tell what went wrong.

Guide the outcome so that whatever the character was doing actually takes the characters forward but creates another problem or an obstacle.

You can also introduce one of the negative disadvantages as the price of success until the end of the scene.

*For example – while entering the Black Hills a character fails his discipline check he still goes on but gains the Stressed disadvantage.*

On the other hand when a character succeeds in something exceptionally well (gains four successes for example) he may gain a positive advantage until the end of the scene.

If the actions of the characters lead the adventure in a different path go with it. If the players are expecting a different outcome from their actions go with it.

This adventure is a set of linked events that

should not prove difficult to guide through without forcing the players to follow the story.

## Counting Coup

The characters are on the path to gain glory. In game terms it is represented with Coup. While keeping the story flowing you should allow the characters time to sit down and count their Coup.

They will need it.

You might want to increase the tension by hinting that the character with the highest Coup will be the next chieftain. Even though this decision should be eventually left to the characters.

## Do Not Explain

As the characters enter the Black Hills they leave behind the world they know. They are in the realm of the gods where things happen the way the gods want them to. Try to keep up an other worldly and intimidating atmosphere.

Telling them what is happening ruins the mystery of things. They will nag about it. Quite possibly a lot. But if they keep on nagging about it for a long time the most likely enjoyed the game.

## Background

Though not actually relevant GMs might want to know what is happening here. Keep in mind that players and their characters should be left in the dark as explained above.

What is explained below might or might not be true. It depends how you want to view things.

*There is a small outpost of reptilian aliens situated inside the Black Hills. A recent explosion caused a deadly fungal experiment to be released. This same explosion also shook ground in the characters' village when Cries Like the Sky gained his vision. The reptilians tried to contain the fungus but it was too contagious and infected the whole outpost.*

*While trying to reach the highest ground possible the "zombie-lizard" accessed a flying disc and tried to escape to release the spores in the high atmosphere. A single reptilian managed to thwart his plans by causing the saucer to crash.*

Yes. It I really think it is better that you keep the background to yourself.

# The Adventure

## The Hunt for the Beast

Groups wishing for more time to get into their characters could start the adventure from the celebrations of the previous night but this might lead into a number of deaths even before the actual adventure begins.

The adventure begins at the tracks of bear. The tracks lead to the forest at the slopes of Black Hills.

Even though the character might be afraid of the old gods of the mountains they should be encouraged to follow the beast. It would be a clear sign from the gods that they allowed the characters to kill a bear on their land.

**Challenges:** *Following the bear tracks (Hard 4d Awareness + Survival check); Finding the track after the bear has crossed a stream (Hard 4d Intelligence + Creativity check) Entering the sacred Black Hills (Hard 4d Willpower + Discipline check); Dodging away from a falling tree (Challenging 3d Agility + Fitness check)*

After climbing a good way up the characters find the bear. It is feeding on a carcass of a deer at the bottom of a small pass.

**Challenges:** *Finding a good way to ap-*

*proach the bear unnoticed (Challenging 3d Awareness + Creativity check); Sneaking to a strike distance to the bear (Daunting 6d Agility + Stealth check); Touching the bear for Coup (Heroic 7d Agility + Fighting check); Hitting the bear in close combat (Challenging 3d Strength + Fighting check)*

## The Fallen Star

When the bear receives a killing blow a loud blast like thunder can be heard. A lightning strikes up from the Black Hills only to be interrupted with an explosion in mid-air.

The characters witness a star falling from the sky and striking ground a few miles from their location.

**Challenges:** *Keeping calm under the ominous signs (Severe 5d Willpower + Discipline check);*

The fallen star emits a strong odour and the fire it set on the surrounding trees can be seen even in the characters' village. Finding the crater that the house struck when it hit ground is not difficult. Approaching what seems to be like a circular stone lodge might be.

**Challenges:** *Finding a safe passage from the pass to the crash site (Challenging 3d*

*Awareness + Observation check); Descending a steep cliff to the crash site safely (Hard 4d Agility + Fitness check); Taking Coup for a dangerous play on the cliff (Heroic 7d Agility + Fitness check)*

Examining the house of the Gods is most likely a religious experience to the characters. While they study the disk an emergency door blasts open allowing the characters to pass inside the house.

**Challenges:** *Resisting the nauseating presence of the gods while approaching the house (Hard 4d Stamina + Resilience check); Touching the house of gods first (all characters aiming for this take Strength/Agility/Stamina + Fitness, best result wins); Dodging away from the blast when the door explodes open (Hard 4d Awareness + Fitness check)*

## The House of Gods

Insides of the House of Gods are disturbing for the characters. Looking like the whole house was quarried from a single monolithic piece of stone.

The House consists of a few corridors, throne room and the centre room. In the centre room a pool of the gods can be found – an enormous bubble of liquid met-

al floating and pulsating in the air.

In the throne room there are two thrones and two bodies of a reptilian gods.

The first reptilian the character approach apparently died just before impact. Disturbing the dead releases a final breath of the god.

When this happens the other reptilian god stumbles up. It spots the characters it makes no effort for civilized introductions but attacks.

**Challenges:** *Not inhaling the spores from the dead alien when it erupts (Hard 4d Intelligence + Survival check); Noticing that the other reptilian god is coming to its senses (Challenging 3d Awareness + Observations check); Trying to communicate with the god (Impossible 8d Presence + Influence check); Touching the god for a coup (Severe 5d Agility + Fighting check); Hitting the reptilian alien in close combat (Hard 4d Strength + Fighting)*

## Ending the Adventure

The adventure ends when the either all of the characters are dead or the reptilian god has faced his doom in their hands.

## Epilogue

Let the players describe how their character act after the story is over. How they would perceive their actions affected the lives of their tribe.

Let them decide who in their mind is the most prominent ruler for the tribe. If there even was a survivor.

Once they have had their say in the future of their characters and tribe you will most likely crush them.

Anyone who inhaled the spores of the fungus has been infected by it. In less than a week the fungus begins to take over the character much like [Ophiocordyceps unilateralis](#) also known as the "zombie ant fungus".

These characters will lash out to anyone who takes direct contact with them. They are most likely driven away. They will then search for a high ground and curl up in the fetal position letting the fungus eat their insides.

After a few night their bloated corpse will burst releasing a cloud of fungal spores that the wind will carry to their home village.

After a week the whole tribe has been killed by neighboring tribe trying to prevent the curse of the gods from spreading.

## Wi Sapa (Black Moon)

*Neglected Shaman Initiate*

**Secret:** You have sacrificed to the angry spirits of the Shadow People. Once per session you perform a gruesome ritual that requires blood to gain Blessed condition that will last until the end of the encounter.

**Goal 1:** You want to replace Cries Like the Heaven as the shaman of your tribe. Support the strongest hunter so he will help you to reach your goal.

**Goal 2:** Those born under a new moon are feared for their link to the Shadow People. The more others fear you the more they will respect you.

**Goal 3:** Expose the secrets of others. By exposing their faults you gain superiority and control over them.

### Characteristics

*Intelligence 3 / Presence 2 / Willpower 4 / Awareness 2  
Agility 2 / Strength 1 / Stamina 1*

### Skills

*Creativity 1  
Influence 2  
Myths 1 (Nature)  
Shaman Lore 1 (Heal)  
Observation 1*

### Condition

Vigor

### Disadvantages:

Bruised -1  Wounded -1  Stressed -1

### Advantages:

Blessed +1

## Cetan Nagin (Shadowhawk)

*Arrogant Scout*

**Secret:** You have laid with another man. During a hunt two years ago you slept with your hunting partner. Afterwards you he demanded you to become his wife and a shock you pushed him off a cliff killing him.

**Goal 1:** Decide which of the other characters is suitable to be the next leader of your tribe. Do anything in your power to help him and thus decrease your own chance of becoming the tribe chieftain (as this would disallow you to become the hunt leader).

**Goal 2:** The position of hunt leader falls to those who will hear and see all. Work as an intermediary between the characters to gain their trust and respect.

**Goal 3:** You want to be the hunter with the highest count of Coups. You are aroused by the honor of your companions and this is tearing you apart.

### Characteristics

*Intelligence 1 / Presence 1 / Willpower 3 / Awareness 4  
Agility 2 / Strength 2 / Stamina 2*

### Skills

*Discipline 1  
Fighting 1  
Ranged 1  
Observation 2  
Survival 2*

### Condition

Vigor

### Disadvantages:

Bruised -1  Wounded -1  Stressed -1

### Advantages:

Blessed +1

## Chikala Chun (Little Tree)

*Daredevil Fighter*

**Secret:** You have broken the most sacred taboo and eaten human flesh. Digest the flesh of a fallen enemy to gain Blessed condition that will last until the end of the encounter. This will not go unpunished by others though if you are caught.

**Goal 1:** To become the next chieftain. Only the strongest of warriors may lead your tribe. You will do anything to gain as much power and strength as possible.

**Goal 2:** Take Coup of everything. To become the leader of the tribe you must make your mark and be sure that others will know it was you (this does not include your Secret).

**Goal 3:** Take immense chances. Only by example can a leader be good in his position. Show to your companions to what lengths you are willing to go to lead your tribe to a golden age.

### Characteristics

*Intelligence 1 / Presence 2 / Willpower 2 / Awareness 1  
Agility 3 / Strength 4 / Stamina 2*

### Skills

*Fitness 1  
Fighting (Club, Wrestling) 2  
Resilience 1  
Survival 1*

### Condition

Vigor

### Disadvantages:

Bruised -1  Wounded -1  Stressed -1

### Advantages:

Blessed +1

## Unpan Glešká (Spotted Elk)

*Deceitful Hunter*

**Secret:** You are a terrible coward. You keep re-telling the tale of your victory over a bear single-handedly. But what no-one knows is that you were shaking in terror and the bear accidentally pierced itself to your spear.

**Goal 1:** Become the next chieftain of the tribe. This should keep you off the harm's way and lead you to untold riches.

**Goal 2:** Try to avert direct conflict. You would like to deal with anything by your own rules and only when it suits you if it is possible.

**Goal 3:** Place blame on others and take credit whenever able. By turning one against another they do not notice your lack of honor.

### Characteristics

*Intelligence 2 / Presence 3 / Willpower 1 / Awareness 2  
Agility 4 / Strength 2 / Stamina 2*

### Skills

*Myths 1  
Discipline 1  
Fighting 1  
Influence 1  
Survival 1  
Stealth 2*

### Condition

Vigor

### Disadvantages:

Bruised -1  Wounded -1  Stressed -1

### Advantages:

Blessed +1

## Inyaniku (Chin as Stone)

*Reclusive Guide*

**Secret:** You have dared the sacred Black Hills and gathered secret knowledge from them. While at the hills you gain +1 to all Myths and Survival checks from your previous experiences.

**Goal 1:** To become the next chieftain. Be as curious as possible. Inquisitiveness is the best possible quality of a leader.

**Goal 2:** Remind the party to be respectful to Old Gods. Since you have already survived one almost deadly encounter with them you need to keep the others in check so not to raise their wrath again.

**Goal 3:** Earn the trust of the tribe. You have known that others might not trust you. Abhor treachery and work to improve your knowledge about others.

### Characteristics

*Intelligence 2 / Presence 1 / Willpower 2 / Awareness 3  
Agility 2 / Strength 1 / Stamina 4*

### Skills

*Fitness 1 (Climb)  
Myths 1  
Observation 1  
Ranged 1 (Tomahawk)  
Resilience 1  
Survival 1*

### Condition

Vigor

### Disadvantages:

Bruised -1  Wounded -1  Stressed -1

### Advantages:

Blessed +1

## Black Bear

### Characteristics

*Intelligence 1 / Presence 2 / Willpower 2 / Awareness 3  
Agility 2 / Strength 5 / Stamina 4*

### Condition

Defence: 3 (*Agility 2 + Fighting 1*)

Vigor

### Disadvantages:

Bruised -1  Wounded -1  
 Stressed -1  Outnumbered -1

**Advantages:**  Cornered +1

### Weapons

*Paws / Dam. 5 / Ini. 3 / A Hit causes both Wounded and Bruised conditions*

## Reptilian Alien

### Characteristics

*Intelligence 5 / Presence 3 / Willpower 4 / Awareness 2  
Agility 2 / Strength 4 / Stamina 3*

### Condition

Defence: 4 (*Agility 2 + Fighting 1 + Hard Skin 1*)

Vigor

### Disadvantages:

Bruised -1  Wounded -1  
 Stressed -1  Outnumbered -1

### Advantages:

Cornered +1

### Weapons

*Claws / Dam. 2 / Ini. 1 / May attack claws and Knife against the same target during the same round  
Black Rock Knife / Ini. 1 / Dam. 4 / May attack claws and Knife against the same target during the same round*

**Disclaimer:** *This adventure is for entertaining purpose only. Though it uses elements from real history and world it makes no effort to prove them to be correct. The names for example are taken from tribes far younger than the one the scenario is about. Do not take it seriously but enjoy the story.*

**Design & Development:** Lauri Maijala

**Play-testing:** Harri Hursti, Markus Hällber, Esa Mäkelä, N03, Sashai

**Proof-reading:** -

**Additional Thanks:** Jackdays, Ville Halonen, Johanna Kantanen, Ville Loponen, Santtu Pelkonen, Ralph Sella, Sami Villa

**Influences:** Erich von Däniken, John Harper (Lady Blackbird-scenario), Petri Hiltunen, Jay Little, H.P.Lovecraft, Frank Miller, Michael Moorcock, Predator, Giorgio A. Tsoukalos, John Wick (Curse of the Yellow Sign-scenario)

**Contact:** [lauri.maijala@gmail.com](mailto:lauri.maijala@gmail.com)