

Children of the Sun, Children of the Moon

A Role-playing Game by Nathan Paoletta and Russell Collins

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Hear me!

In millennia past, Travelers left the kingdoms of Sun and Moon to explore the land. They founded fiefs on their travels and many of them settled in these places, taking rule over the native stars. In time however, those Travelers who journeyed the furthest found a force beyond the known. An unrelenting power of destruction. A crushing monstrosity that opposed all the good that the Travelers could do. Many fell to that power and many more were tainted. They retreated to their domains but the infection of hatred and desire for destruction slowly corrupted them so that once noble rulers became despots. Valorous warriors became beasts. Loving explorers turned to heartless conquerors.

The kingdoms of Sun and Moon, witnessing the failure of the Travelers sundered their people once again. Closing their borders to the outside world.

Now however, the pleas of the native stars have grown too loud to ignore. The kings of Sun and Moon have decided to unite again and send out their Travelers to right the wrongs done so long ago. To prevent these new emissaries falling to the darkness, they have sent them forth sundered. Each Traveler carries the aspect of both Sun and Moon but the two remain separate. For a Traveler to unify aspects and become a True Traveler with the powers of old, two separate Travelers must join!

Each of you shall unite, both within and without. Journey into starlit kingdoms and confront the corrupt. Once you have vanquished the foes there, journey onward to continue the good work we set you upon.

Domains you find on your travels may stun the mind in their infinite variety. Each ruler has created their fief in the image they prefer, yet at their core they are all the same: An oppression. A land where blight dwells hidden by the trappings of glory. A land where freedom has been all but ground to dust. Travel on, through the rivers of stone, the valleys of absence. Travel on paths of shimmering gravel, past lakes of flame. Seek the kingdoms forged from the bones of stars and the crushing bleakness within. Shatter its strength so that rolling fields may bloom forth, to become a fruitful dwelling place of stars.

With this task we charge you! Go forth! Bring light to the darkness! Punishment to the wicked! Freedom to our people!

Rules

The Game

The players of this game are Travelers. In the past Travelers were "True" Travelers with bodies made of both Spheres, Moon and Sun, blended together. These True Travelers were susceptible to a terrible corruption however. To keep new Travelers free of this evil, the Kings of Sun and Moon have made it so that each Traveler has two halves. These halves are ruled over by their own Sphere and make up one body, but they can never be joined in the one Traveler. Travelers may gain the power of their predecessors, but only in a bonding between the separate minds and bodies of others like themselves. They are a strange fusion of the peoples from the Kingdoms of Sun and Moon.

They have been sent to the old fiefdoms of the now corrupt Travelers. The darkness is growing and the courts of Sun and Moon must act to save the civilians of this land; the star children. Travelers are their soldiers in this quest.

One player takes the role of the Guide. The Guide acts the personalities players do not control, describes environments, sets up scenarios and manages the resources of the Travelers opponents. The Guide need not create a detailed plan for each game. Scenarios must be flexible and should be based on the power of the Travelers. A sample game scenario is included towards the end of the rules section.

This game is best played at a table large enough to seat the players and the Guide comfortably. There must be room for character sheets to lie flat and for poker chips to be passed between players. A circular table is ideal.

Character Creation

Name

Players create a name for their character. Names evoking nobility, knights and astrological characters are encouraged.

Totem

Next a Totemic sign is chosen for the Traveler. This choice provides the breakdown of Power between the two Spheres, the Greatest Strength, and Greatest Fear of the Traveler.

Powers

Powers are divided into three aspects: The Void, Love and Hope. Void is force; the physical struggle. Love is emotion and its ability to overcome cold logic. Hope preserves against despair and the crushing corruption of the enemy.

The Totem shows the distribution of Power among the Spheres and Aspects. Power is represented by poker chips placed on the appropriated named spaces. Power will shift throughout the game between players but remember that a chip may never pass from one side of the character sheet to the other! When you receive chips from another player, add them to the stack of Power on the proper Aspect.

A Traveler's Greatest Strength represents an affinity for using a Power. In conflicts of that Power the Traveler may bid more chips than usually are allowed. This is detailed in the Conflict section.

A Traveler's Greatest Fear is another Totem, one that stands in direct opposition to the Traveler. When faced by this Totem in a Conflict, the Traveler may not act. An Achievement may overcome this limitation, detailed below.

Each player may choose a Totem from the following chart,

Totem	Strength	Fear	Sun Void	Sun Love	Sun Hope	Moon Void	Moon Love	Moon Hope
Aries	Void	Pisces	2	1	2	1	2	2
Taurus	Hope	Aquarius	1	1	3	2	2	1
Gemini	Love	Capricorn	1	2	2	2	1	2
Cancer	Void	Sagittarius	2	2	1	2	2	1
Leo	Hope	Scorpio	2	1	2	1	1	3
Virgo	Love	Libra	1	2	2	1	2	2
Pisces	Hope	Cancer	2	1	2	2	2	1
Aquarius	Love	Taurus	1	3	1	2	1	2
Capricorn	Void	Virgo	3	1	1	1	2	2
Sagittarius	Hope	Aries	2	2	1	2	1	2
Scorpio	Love	Leo	1	2	2	1	3	1
Libra	Void	Gemini	2	1	2	3	1	1

Write the starting Power values on the spaces and collect chips to represent that Power.

Achievements

Players next assign 1 Achievement for each Sphere. These Achievements are special abilities that will be "unlocked" as the character progresses through conflicts. Though the player only chooses two Achievements at start, more will be chosen and gained through later adventures.

Choose Achievements from this list and note them in the center channels of the character sheet.

Strengthen Aspect: When this Achievement is made the Travel can now spend 1 additional chip from the Aspect's Power in conflict. If this Aspect is already strengthened, this achievement stacks. It may be added again and again.

Power of Aspect: This Achievement adds one chip to the Level of Power for a single Aspect, permanently raising the base number. It too may be stacked to add further chips.

Restoration: By surrendering from a conflict, a Traveler may restore 1 Refresh to a fellow Traveler. If this Achievement is made multiple times, it increases the number of Refresh points restored.

Overcome Fear: The Achievement allows the Traveler to act against their feared Totem. At the start of the conflict the Traveler must check off one Refresh. They then fight against their foe as normal. This Achievement may only be made once.

Refreshes

Refreshes represent the stamina and willpower of a Traveler. Each Traveler starts with 12 Refreshes, divided 6 and 6 between their spheres. Refreshes will be depleted by damage in conflicts and will be spent to press attacks against a foe. When a Refresh is used, check the circle to note its depletion.

The Character Sheet

Now that the sheet has been filled out, follow the directions on the sheet to cut and fold. The center channel on which the Achievements have been written will become a partition between the two spheres and the Name and Strength flaps will stand up and face toward the opposite side of the table.

The Travelers are now ready to begin their quest!

Adventures

Scenarios

It is the Guide's job to create a scenario for the Travelers. The elements of the scenario are the setting and the conflicts that impede the Travelers' progress through it. Each scenario deals with the Travelers advancing toward the corruption that rules over a Fiefdom, their intent and direction are clear. It is up to the Guide to make that journey memorable.

Setting

The world of the star lands is an unusual place. A fantasy world, it is populated by creatures born of the night sky. The land is built from stardust and moon rocks, the seas and rivers are rainbow floes of cosmic energy. The attitudes of the setting should be familiar to any fan of Fantasy literature however. This is a world of magic, monsters, heroes and glory. View it through the lens of astronomy and the star lands will come alive.

The road to their destination may twist, but a Guide should never need to force the Travelers to the end of their adventure. Why should the dread lady of a fief not ride out to find her assailants, rather than wait in a keep? Be open to twist and turn the path the Travelers walk.

Foes

Foes create conflict with the Travelers. They are personas, environmental hazards, beasts, weapons, spells and the darkness itself. When the Travelers embark on their quest the Guide builds pools of chips as the Power resources of the Foes the Travelers will face.

For each Traveler in the adventuring group, the Guide collects 6 chips. At least one of each type must be taken per Traveler. If there are 3 players the Guide will get 18 chips. 3 must be Void, 3 must be Love and 3 must be Hope. The others may be any combination of Powers. Guides can gauge the difficulty of a quest this way. If the Travelers have less Void chips available then foes with higher Void Power will be a greater challenge. Be wary of over using one variety of Power however. It can lead to boring adventures with a one-track mind.

When creating a great challenge, the Lord of the fief himself or an emissary of the dark, the Guide should choose a totem for the enemy that opposes one of the players, acting on their fear. This will remove a Traveler from the conflict, forcing the others to struggle harder.

Foes are made by choosing chips of one Power type. This creates the foe's Strength. The kind of Power used by the foe influences the way it appears to the Travelers.

A foe of the **Void**, with red Power chips is a force of mindless violence: Brutal monsters, fierce weather, an enemy army.

Love based foes are the exact opposite of love. They are calculating minds, stripped of emotion. Cold and unfeeling they will debate and argue, wearing away at the Traveler's resolve.

The foes of **Hope** are the very strength of the darkness itself: Consuming despair, crushing belief and freedom. They may be the ghostly heralds of the dark, the killing ennui of the spoiled land or the darkness devouring all it touches.

Travelers must fight these foes on their own terms, facing fire with fire as it were. Once the Travelers vanquish all of the Power of any one aspect of their foes, they have broken their hold on the land and achieved victory over the darkness.

Conflict

Opposition

Travelers move freely through the star lands, interacting with its peoples and observing the scenery until the Guide presents a foe in opposition to the Travelers' progress. The Travelers must then choose to abandon their course, or face the foe in Conflict.

Conflicts may be physical fights, tests of endurance, philosophical arguments or trying tasks. The Guide builds a suitable foe, choosing the Power and Strength and Totem to reflect what the Travelers face and how great a threat it is. Each conflict involves only one foe and one Power though that foe may be represented by many opponents.

The Battle is Joined

To overcome a foe, Travelers must wear away at their strength, matching their chips against them. Each Traveler in the Conflict places 1 chip of any Power on either the Sun or Moon Tithe. If the Traveler is strong against the Power of the Foe he may Tithe 2 chips, again of any Power. The top chip determines the ruling Aspect, so a Hope chip with a Void chip on top of it counts as 2 Void. A Traveler may wish to Tithe Powers that will not damage the foe, they may build on those chips later if they remain unused and increase the damage to a foe.

If a Traveler has Tithed all the chips of one Power, they can only Tithe other Powers but not damage their foe until some Tithed Power is returned to them. The Traveler then narrates the blow struck at the foe.

Conflicts may consist of several rounds of traded blows if the foe is not defeated in the first exchange and the Travelers do not back down. The order of actions is not important and all Travelers who choose to remain in the conflict get one bid per round. The Tithe chips may build on each other this way . . .

Example:

The Travelers face a Love obstacle, a cold and calculating mind that halts their progress. They must use emotions and Love to defeat this obstacle. The Guide collects 4 blue chips from the pool for this obstacle and declares the ruling totem for the obstacle is Cancer.

Guide: The vizier of the court steps forward to challenge your claims of his lord's failure to rule justly. "Have you not seen the great works of this city? The walls that stretch for miles? The great forges and gardens? The strength of progress has made us a strong people. You ask us to cast that away and become weak!"

The players bid in the conflict. Player 1 is Gemini and strong in Love, so he tithes 2 chips; a Hope and a Love on top of it to his Moon Sphere. His bid is 2 Love, Moon.

"Indeed your progress is great, but it comes at the loss of the people. They suffer and strain to lift up the king and that suffering will break them. His kingdom shall collapse beneath the weight of its accomplishments!"

Player 2 is Pisces. She is fearful of Cancer and cannot act against the vizier.

Player 3 is Capricorn. She Bids 1 Love on Sun.

"Let the king himself answer our challenges!"

Player 4 is Leo. He bids 1 Void to Sun, hoping to bide his time this round.

Once all chips have been Tithed, the Guide spins a coin to determine ruling Sphere of this Exchange: Sun (heads) or Moon (tails.) That half of the Travelers' sheets is compared to the foe's Power. Chips of matching Power damage the enemy (remember the top chip determines the power of those beneath it for this exchange.) The Guide sets aside chips from the foe's strength to show the damage done.

At the end of each exchange, Travelers pass the Tithed chips of the ruling Sphere in the direction of the arrow on the Tithe space. Chips are moved from one player to another. Chips will pass from the Moon Sphere to Sun Sphere and vice versa. Never pass a chip across the division of a character sheet. Wrap around the table if necessary to pass chips along to the next player. Chips received from the Tithe are added to the stack on their appropriate Aspect. Apart from redistributing strength, passing chips unlocks additional abilities as detailed later.

Any chips Tithed to the other Sphere, the one not ruling this exchange, remain where they are. More chips may be built on top of them to create a strong attack later.

The Guide spins a coin and it lands on Heads. The Sun. Player 3's words strike true and the GM removes a chip from the Strength of the vizier. Player 4's gambit has back-fired and he does no damage to the vizier's strength. Both players pass their chips to the player at their left, who adds them to the aspect stack. Player 1 retains his stack on the Tithe.

If the enemy's power is depleted, the Travelers have won the conflict and may proceed on their quest. If an enemy is not damaged at all in a round of conflict, each Traveler must check off one refresh for the foe's success against them. If the enemy is not defeated, the Travelers can continue the conflict or retreat from this route.

Each Traveler who continues the conflict checks off a Refresh on the ruling Sphere of the last exchange. Players bid again as before the Guide spins the coin again and the conflict continues.

Round 2 of the conflict:

The Guide continues the vizier's diatribe; "You do not understand the strength of my lord's will. All that he has done shall endure, for he commands the very stars above your heads!"

Player 3 is low on Sun Sphere refreshes. Rather than continue the attack, she retreats.

Player 1 and player 4 each check off a Sun refresh and press on.

Player 1 again bids 2 chips to Moon, 1 from Void and 1 from Love. If Moon is spun, he will defeat the vizier!

"And we too have that power. But for us it is freely given, not taken by force. It is a greater power by far."

Player 4 bids 1 Love to Moon.

"My brethren speak the truth!"

The Guide spins the coin and it lands tails. The Moon. The vizier's strength has been matched, exceeded even by the Love against him.

"He twists in fury bellowing his frustration to the courtiers who stare on passively."

Once a foe is defeated the Power chips return to the Guide's pool unless a Traveler moves to vanquish the foe. That Traveler checks a Refresh from either Sphere, and the Guide's chips for that enemy are discarded from play.

Player 4 decides to vanquish this foe. He checks off one Moon refresh.

"Miserable fool! Be gone from this place! Your cruel heart is broken!"

The Guide tells of the vizier, his mind and will shattered, collapsing to his hands and knees and slinking away.

The Guide discards the 4 Love chips from his hand, rather than returning them to the pool.

Once all chips of one color are discarded from the Guide pool, the darkness is vanquished from this land and the Travelers have gained Victory.

Ascend

Capturing the Sun and Moon

If, in the course of a Conflict, a player passes over all of the chips from a Sphere, so that the adjacent player has all their chips for that Sphere, they have Captured that Sphere and unlocked a special ability. The player immediately underlines the Achievement they chose at character creation. It is now in effect for the rest of that Traveler's existence.

After dealing the killing blow to the vizier, the players pass the chips they Tithed to Moon to their right. Player 4 has just passed over all his chips, clearing his Moon Sphere. He has now Captured the Moon! He activates the special ability he chose when he created the character.

Arising as a True Traveler

If 2 adjacent players Capture their Spheres, so that one has Captured the Sun and their neighbor the Moon, they are bonded as a True Traveler. Their individual Travelers have forged a bond of enlightenment that combines them mentally, spiritually, perhaps even physically if the players wish it.

The Travelers may now combine and redistribute their Power at will at the start of any conflict. They bid 2 chips (or more if one or both has an applicable Greatest Strength) in each round of a conflict. They may also use Refreshed under either Sphere to continue an attack. Unless they both have the same Greatest Fear, they may ignore the penalty of facing their opposite Totem.

Fall

Defeat

A Traveler is defeated if all Refreshes under a Sphere are exhausted and he then chooses to continue a conflict rather than retreat. In a final act of sacrifice, the Traveler plays all of his Power under one Sphere or the other against the foe. Resolved with the coin spin, this may be a noble act to bring great victory or a tragic waste of life.

After the resolution of that round, that Traveler's chips are removed from play and the Traveler leaves the table. The players move together to fill the gap in their party. If this breaks a bond with another Traveler, the surviving Traveler recovers the chips of a starting character under that Sphere (noted on the spaces.) If the Sun and Moon have been Captured by the players that are united when the gap is filled, they may bond to create a True Traveler.

Corruption

A true Traveler may be harmed by another means. In every round that an opponent goes undefeated, it checks the value of its strength against the Refreshes of the Traveler. If the Strength of this foe equals or exceeds the current Refreshes of both Spheres of the True Traveler, that Traveler falls into the darkness. The players both remove their Travelers from play. If either of those Travelers is bonded on their other Sphere to another Traveler, that one is dragged down with them, even if Refreshes still remain that exceed the Strength of the foe. In this way an entire party of Travelers may fall like dominoes!

Example:

Player 1 with 2 refreshes and Player 2 with 2 refreshes are bonded Sun and Moon. They 4 refreshes between them.

Player 2 is also bonded to player 3 with 5 refreshes and between them they have 7.

An opponent is undefeated by the power used against him and inflicts 4 Refreshes of damage on all the Travelers. This matches the refreshes of Players 1 and 2 and defeats them. They are removed from play. Player 3 is dragged down with them as well, even though he would survive the corruption, even on his own refreshes. He is bonded to Player 2 and must share the same fate.

Quest's End

Overcoming the Corrupt

Once any Power is completely vanquished from the Guide's pool, the enemy control of the land is broken. The Travelers are victorious! All Refreshes are restored to the Travelers and their journey can continue after they receive the thanks of the populace.

Advancement

Any Traveler who is not bound to another as a True Traveler may choose 1 new Achievement to gain when they Capture the Moon or Sun during the next adventures. Only 1 ability may be chosen and it must be assigned to either Sun or Moon.

If True Travelers wish to gain new Achievements they must first separate their halves. Each redistributes their chips as their sheets show. They may now choose new abilities to gain as normal Travelers.

Rising Challenge

Once all Travelers have attained at least one power from acquiring the Sun or Moon, the Guide increases the strength of the opposition, taking 7 chips for each Traveler. When they have each attained at least 2 powers the Guide collects 8 chips and so on.

An example Adventure

In the Domain of Katschei

The Travelers following a milk white path into this land will soon find a gritty grey fog surrounding them. Strange trees of ice close in around them and soon they hear the baying of hounds.

Katschei's hounds are brutal monsters of the Void. They will strike from the mist, lashing out at the Travelers with sparking jaws. Strengthen them as is appropriate to the Void power of the Travelers.

Beyond the hounds the mist gives way and the crude dwellings of the people can be found. Their crude shacks are carved of brittle stone and bricks made from the dust. The dwellers will beg the Travelers for help and follow along behind them until the mob is confronted by the High Priest.

The priest is a creature of despair who sermonizes oblivion and prophesizes destruction. His strength is drawn from Hope and he is a suitable foe to warrant using the fear of a Traveler to reduce his opponents.

After the Priest is dealt with, the peasants can direct the Travelers to the castle of Katschei. The castle is opulently decorated. Here are the riches of the Domain collected in gaudy display. Rich courtiers, adepts of the Priest and soldiers wander the halls. Any of these can be minor foes if they choose to block the progress of the Travelers or if they are engaged by them. The Guide should carefully mete out the strength of these combatants. They are weak and easily dispatched, but some chips should be withheld for the final greater conflict, so some may yield, or even join the Travelers in a mob to confront Katschei.

Eventually the Throne of Katschei is reached. Surrounded by his captains and advisors Katschei, a beastly person, sits in vile brooding. His Vizier will step forward to challenge any with his cruel, twisted understanding of Love.

If the Vizier is overcome, Katschei himself will grab up a flaming whip and glittering glass shield and use all of his strength to send the Travelers to the Void. The Guide should devote all of the remaining Void chips to Katschei, he is a mighty force.

Once Katschei is dispatched his empire crumbles. The most devoted of his followers are dragged into the darkness along with their master and the evil works he has built fall to ruin. The people offer their praise and celebration to the Travelers and start to rebuild their homes from the warm winds and pools of light that were released with the death of Katschei.

The Travelers move on to their next adventure . . .