

THE SILT VERSES

RPG

Written by
Gabriel Robinson and Jason Cordova

Cover and interior art by
Ezra Rose

Graphic design and layout by
Ben Mansky

Edited and published by
Jason Cordova

Additional contributions by
Jacqueline Bryk, Megan Caldwell, Mike Martens,
B. Narr, James Smith, Michael Van Vleet, and
Jon Ware



Eternal gratitude and sacrifices are offered to Jon Ware and Muna Hussen for creating *The Silt Verses*, for trusting us to develop their setting into a roleplaying game, and graciously answering all of our obscure lore questions.

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Roadside shrines are decorated for the entire Gauntlet community and the TTRPG and audio drama communities for your enthusiasm and support.

The Silt Verses RPG is based on the audio drama by Jon Ware and Muna Hussen, and is adapted with their permission.

The game's mechanics are based in part on *Apocalypse World* by Vincent and Meguey Baker, *The Between* and *Public Access* by Jason Cordova, and *Ghosts of El Paso* by Daniel Qualls and Jason Cordova.

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INTRODUCTION



OVERVIEW

The Silt Verses RPG is a tabletop roleplaying game of folk horror and monstrous divinity, where strange gods haunt the landscape and civilization is fueled by ritual sacrifice. In this game, a group of conscripted agents called Custodians are sent into isolated territories to deal with these monstrous gods, terrifying angels, and other divine manifestations in order to appease them, neutralize them, or otherwise engage with the locals to find a solution to the threats they present.

The Custodians are sent on dangerous missions with little resources and the threat of dire repercussions should they break their contract. But something more sinister looms over their operations—a secret organization conspires to manipulate them for its own agenda. The Custodians must ultimately decide how to confront this organization, all the while struggling with their complicated relationship to faith and the strange gods of their past who won't let go of them so easily.

The Silt Verses RPG is based on the audio drama series by Jon Ware and Muna Hussen, and further expands on the world presented in the show. It also takes inspiration from folk horror, weird fiction, and dystopian or post-apocalyptic media (see *Media Touchstones* on page 84). You do not need to be familiar with the audio drama to enjoy the game, and no prior knowledge of the setting is necessary, but if you're curious, the *Silt Verses* audio drama reference (page 85) lists chapters and moments from the show that we especially recommend. *The Silt Verses RPG* does not seek to recreate the plot of the show, but rather encourages players to explore the setting and make it their own.

The Silt Verses RPG is Powered by the Apocalypse, meaning its mechanics are inspired, in part, by Vincent and Meguey Baker's *Apocalypse World*. It is also Carved from Brindlewood, meaning the mystery mechanics and procedures are inspired by *Brindlewood Bay*.

THE SETTING

The story of *The Silt Verses* takes place in a world much like ours, but with some extremely noticeable exceptions. Gods inhabit the world as embodiments of a particular element or concept. Some are ancient, while others are modern creations. Some haunt a particular landmark or natural object, while others are widespread. There are said to be tens of thousands of known deities worshiped throughout the Territories of the Ignathian Peninsula. Rural communities tend to worship smaller gods in ways considered horrific or bizarre by more “civilized” society. Residents of Glottage and other cities often worship in ways that are safe, commercially-licensed, or tokenistic. These many deities may be broadly categorized as falling under licensed faiths, forbidden faiths, and stray gods.

As poverty or desperation take hold, folk may find themselves worshipping more specific and terrible things, falling into patterns of ritual and behavior impossible to escape from. Sacrifice is understood as a necessary thing, for all gods must be fed, and everyone must make concessions for the greater good of society. Transformation is also a key part of many faiths. Human forms can be painfully shaped into bewildering and terrible expressions of a god’s will—inevitably becoming something that is both more and less than human and often monstrous, dangerous, or impossible to reason with—in the process. These “saints” and “angels” also haunt the landscape, and one faith’s miracle is another’s nightmare.

The Custodians will explore a landscape littered with abandoned buildings and abandoned gods. The world has been shaped and polluted by strange divinity at every level, leaving it broken-down, blasted, and wild. This is largely a gloomy place of moors, rivers, valleys, farmland, forest, and marshland, of rain and mist. Other landscapes—desert or snowy peaks or grand vistas—are outside the scope of the story we’re trying to tell here. The sea is the purest, deepest thing we see, and it’s dark and polluted and monstrous.

Modern technology exists in this world, but it is usually in disrepair, inaccessible or highly localized, and inextricably linked to a god in some form. Any scientific discoveries and technological advances are similar to ours, except they often involved the rise of an inconvenient or outright destructive god, which in turn required continued worship—and sacrifices.

Above all, the levels of technology in this world are socially and geographically unequal. While middle class neighborhoods in larger cities like Nesh may have dial-up internet, other towns have been nearly wiped out by unsustainable sacrifice. You will find abandoned vehicles and homes, empty office buildings and crumbling infrastructure almost everywhere in some form. This dissonance and inequality is felt at every level, between a central government and rural territories, between widespread commercial faiths and stray, forgotten gods.

While these concepts are key to establishing the setting of the game, there is plenty of room for interpretation at your table. For example, characters in *The Silt Verses* audio drama use pay phones, or get news from the radio. Do the Custodians have access to mobile phones in your game? If so, what off-shoot of the Saint Electric is associated with them? How might other faiths view this technology? What ritual contracts, sacrifices, or unintended complications might be a result of mobile phones existing in this world full of strange gods?

