

ROCK GODS & ROAD TRIPS



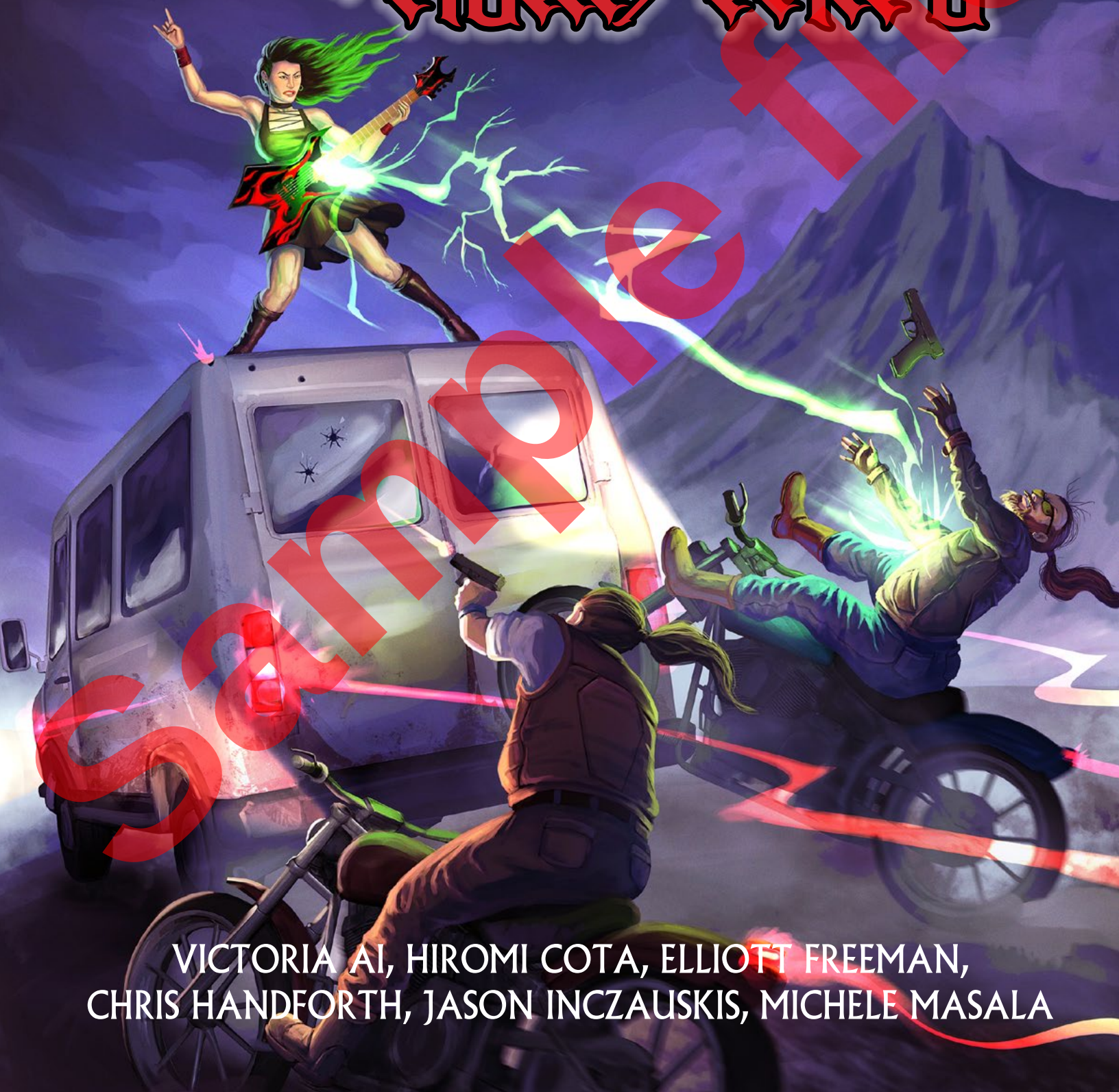
A SOURCEBOOK FOR

SCION

SECOND EDITION

ROCK GODS

& ROAD TRIPS



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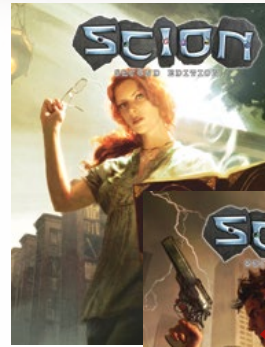
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INTRODUCTION

It is a tale that you sing. As long as you believe it, it makes you powerful.

— Persephone, *The Wicked + The Divine*

Celebrities are often said to be the legends of today, with millions of adoring fans screaming — no, worshipping — their names. In the World, though, the distinction between fame and legend is even more difficult to parse, especially when it's the Scions themselves who grab a guitar, step on the stage, and make their voices heard. What does it mean for a Scion to be both famous and mythic? And what's it like to explore the World on tour, merging the path to Apotheosis with the dream of becoming a rockstar?

Rock Gods & Road Trips answers these questions and many more. It shifts the focus from stories where the fate of the Titanomachy is at stake to fun romps where characters face the problem of the week, hit the stage, then drive to the next adventure. The core tenets of **Scion** are still present here, but played in a different tune that still allows you to pick a tone and scope for your Band's own album and rock out. One week, you fight a troll blocking a bridge, the following you stop hordes of undead fans from breaking down the gates of Yomi to show up at your concert. In the middle, you spend an evening in a diner

chatting with your Bandmates. Like a perfect roadie, this book has your back no matter the nature of your adventures.

WHAT'S IN THIS BOOK?

Rock Gods & Road Trips offers a new way to experience **Scion**, framed around rockstar thrills and challenges in parts of the World where music and myth are one.

- **Introduction:** This introduction, which gives a basic overview of the book and the rock 'n' roll lifestyle, particularly how bands get gigs and make records.
- **Chapter One: The Mythic Engine:** Explores the four-act story structure of episodic storytelling and how to apply it to **Scion**. This chapter offers Storyguides and players guidance on how to prepare and play the game as a fast and event-packed series of modular adventures. Tools such as tables of pre-generated content and adventure worksheets

MAKING MUSIC HAPPEN: THE PERFORMANCE ROLL

Which Skills and Attributes do characters use for performing? The Storypath system gives characters various options to demonstrate their talents, meaning there's no single dice pool for music, acting, dancing, writing, and the like. However, here are some suggestions:

The Culture Skill, which covers exposition to arts and language, is always a valid option for artistic expressions of all sorts; when in doubt or lacking other options, you can refer to it without fail.

Other Skills explore the pathos and nature of art in their own ways. Persuasion and Empathy work well for acting and singing. Integrity represents debaters or performers who put a lot of their passion and principles into their art. Athletics is great for dancing or physically demanding artistic work, while Technology is perfect for performers who rely on their instruments as extensions of themselves.

As for Attributes, players should likewise pick what meets their character's concept and Paths the most. Presence and Manipulation are especially fitting for art relying on words or acting, while Dexterity is perfect for dancing and complex instruments. Might, Stamina, Resolve, and Composure are instead a good match for intense performances or art that asks a lot of physical and mental energy from its creators.

Consider these guidelines and adapt them to your game. A good idea to keep in mind is to limit a given character's performance dice pool to one — at most two — combinations. As always, the Storypath system is versatile for the express purpose of enabling your character's own story at the table.

For examples of these dice pools, see the Ready-Made Characters in Chapter Three.

further help to set up scenarios quickly and easily, allowing groups to keep their personal series' season going without ever losing steam.

- **Chapter Two: Rock Gods on Tour:** Includes an entire arc of episodic scenarios set in the World, following an emergent band of rockstar Heroes hitting the road to reach a major festival where their fame — and their Legend — are at stake. Four exciting, episodic scenarios highlight the strengths of the approach discussed in Chapter One and show the World from a perspective that speaks of celebrity, music, and road trips.
- **Chapter Three: The Road Box:** Offers an entire album of new options, tools, locations, and characters to populate your road trips across the World. This includes tips on how to drive along the path from Origin to Demigod whether you travel by car, bike, bus, or magical steed; join a collection of places where myth and daily life in the World intertwine; and travel and music-themed Boons and Birthrights to grant Scions help in defeating thematic antagonists of all sorts — from sleazy Scion record representatives to mysterious cryptids.

THE ROCK 'N' ROLL LIFESTYLE

Rock Gods & Road Trips focuses on music and the performing arts — subjects that not all players are familiar with. To help players talk the talk, this introduction contains some brief overviews of the music industry.

SCALE	RANK	DESCRIPTION
0	Beginner	Largely unknown, performs at small bars and restaurants
1	Opener	Locally known among their genre's audience, opens for larger acts at music venues
2	Headliner	Well known within the genre, is usually the main draw for a show
3	Legendary	Tours globally and regularly performs at major music festivals
4	Rock God	Regularly performs sold-out shows at stadiums around the World

There are three components to the quest for stardom: performing live, making records, and promotion. Most bands do a bit of all three. Doing any of them generally calls for a Procedural scene, while climbing the ladder of success is usually a Band or long-term Deed. Achieving the highest levels

of rock stardom takes multiple Deeds, as the band needs to become known as powerhouse both live and in the studio.

LIVE PERFORMANCES

Bands just starting out have few options for performances and typically play restaurants, bars, and other gigs where few attendees pay attention to the music, aside from the ones invited by the band. Getting these gigs is usually a matter of knowing someone (using a Path's access connection) or meeting with dozens of venues' buyers before finding someone willing to give the band a shot (Procedural scene). Alternatively, bands may team up to rent a venue and put on a show as a collective (Intrigue or Procedural scene). Such gigs are often chaotic affairs, as bands clash over minor details and routinely play longer than they promised to. In general, whichever act has the best relationship with the house audio engineer calls the shots.

When bands become known to local promoters, they're able to open for larger acts. Being an opener isn't glamorous. Crowds are often reluctant to show up before you've cleared the stage and the ones there don't always pay attention to your music. However, bands that put on good shows get recognized by patrons and promoters alike. This opens up the possibility for the band to get selected to play in a local festival; these can be boons for bands trying to make a name for themselves, although bands without large fan bases tend to get crappy time slots, limiting the number of listeners. Still, they're playing on a big stage with a kick-ass sound system, and it's hard to beat that.

The next step up is playing gigs on a regular basis, which generally means getting the attention of an agent or booking agency. These people generally have a roster of bands, often within a single genre or several related genres. This allows them to put together shows with full lineups essentially on demand; a venue asks the agent or agency for bands to fill a night and the agency finds out who in their roster wants to play the gig. Half-hour sets are the norm for these gigs, at least until the agency likes you and promotes you to hour-long sets. It's also possible for a band with really good hustle (or a great manager) to work its way into these shows. Some record labels have their own agents, enabling them to support their stable of artists on tour as well as in the recording booth.

TOURING

At a certain point, the locals have heard enough of the band, and it's time to hit the road. It doesn't matter how good a band is, no one wants to hear the same set every week. The only way to fix this problem is to find more ears. At the very least, these bands need a van or truck to cart their gear around and someone to make connections with new areas. Usually this means a booking agent, but motivated band members or managers can make friends and open up venues (Procedural scene). The advantage of a booking agent is that they usually have several bands on tap, allowing them to create a steady supply of music for a string of venues. This means the bands are more likely to play venues that specialize in their kind of music, with similar bands in the lineup. In other words, agents help connect fans and bands more efficiently.

Similarly, touring managers and band managers are indispensable for handling the scheduling, paperwork, and other logistical chores, allowing the band to focus on what they do best: rock out. At least, that's what happens when the band has managers they can trust. More than a few managers out there are predators, only out there for themselves and willing to screw over their bands for a few extra bucks. Fortunately, many Scions have ways to make sure they're getting a fair slice of the pie.

Once a band becomes a headliner, they need roadies; there are simply too many details that have to go perfectly. People expect the best from the band, after all. While openers can find time to make sure their instruments are maintained and tuned, headliners have too many responsibilities. Luckily, guitar techs, bass techs, drum techs, and all the other kinds of techs specialize in making sure instruments are in pristine condition and ready to go. Similarly, lighting techs and designers can make sure that the band looks their best while rocking out on stage.

Band members often find themselves Fatebound to one or more members of their entourage, which can lead to great rewards, but also great problems. Aspiring rock stars would be wise to keep an eye out for their roadies, making sure that their support staff is taken care of. Rockers who don't look after their staff may find themselves in a world of trouble when their roadies become Imperiled or worse.

Merch

Merch can be a pain in the ass to produce, keep track of, and sell, but that doesn't make it any less vital to the success of a band. Generally, smaller bands sell their own merch or press a fan into service (Cults can help!), while larger bands have a dedicated merch person or team. As far as the actual merchandise, the goods are typically t-shirts, stickers, hats, posters, and download codes to the band's songs and music videos. Some bands may also sell CDs and vinyl records, although that tends to be niche these days, as fewer fans have the equipment to play physical media. Bands who take the time to cultivate an exotic fan base can find other merch to sell, like paintings, books, incense, and any other kind of good.

Regardless of what kind of merch a band has, their sales tend to be a major factor in whether the tour turns out well or not. This means that a stolen road box full of merch is plenty of motivation for a band to hunt down the culprit and do their best to recover it, especially for smaller, hungrier bands. Larger bands might be able to delegate such tasks to someone else, but most people usually expect Scions to take an active role when it comes to setting things right with thieves.

MAKING RECORDS

Bands seeking to share their tunes need to capture their audio and convert it to an audience-friendly format, such as MP3, FLAC, CDs, or vinyl. At the absolute beginner end, this means pointing a microphone at the band and pushing record to create a single-track recording. The result is usually poorly balanced, impossible to mix, and lacking clarity, but it's marginally better than nothing for getting a band's music out there.

One step above that is doing things on the cheap with home recording studios. These bands record each instrument and use their home computers to mix and master the music afterwards.

The result depends a great deal on the skill of the person acting as the audio engineer; the result is often worse than the band thinks they're capable of, but such recordings *can* sound professional. Better instruments and recording gear help, but the skill of the musicians and audio engineer are what really set such DIY sessions apart from the rest.

All levels past that rely on professional recording studios, with most bands renting studios by the hour or day. In addition to the studio itself, bands need an audio engineer or two to handle the mixing and mastering of the music. Famous bands may work exclusively with engineers they trust, while smaller acts are generally stuck with whoever happens to be working in the studio. The recording process itself usually lasts days, weeks, or longer, with artists performing as many takes as they can afford to get each track perfect (or as long as they can put up with pressure from their A&R).

There are two basic roads to recording at professional studios: cash and contracts. The first is easy; if a band is flush with money, they can get as many hours as they'd like in the recording booth. Scrappy bands can also get time in the recording booth, especially if they're blowing up on GodTube. Recording studios are businesses, but they're also staffed by people who love music. The better a band looks and sounds on social media, the easier a time they'll have when it comes time to booking time at the studio.

Going through a record label is a lengthier process. First off, the band needs to win over an A&R at a record label to get a record contract. Once they get a contract, they have a limited amount of time and resources to put an album together. Failure to do so means they're in violation of their contract, which generally means they owe the label a lot of money. On the plus side, the label usually handles a lot of the details of making the album, from picking the producer and engineers to hiring artists for the album art, leaving the band free to concentrate on what it does best: make music.

New Fatebinding: Contract

Wise people approach contracts with caution, as the devil's always in the details, and the devil's not always metaphorical. This Fatebinding is special in two ways: the Fatebound is a document, not a character, and it applies to multiple members of a Band. While most Contracts are recording contracts, Bands might also find themselves under the effects of a touring contract, requiring them to reach a string of venues according to a schedule.

System: At least one Scion affected by the Fatebinding must complete a Deed associated with the Contract each session, or the Contract becomes Imperiled at the start of the next session (**Scion: Hero**, p. 198). Such Perils can include irate A&Rs or record executives, malfunctioning equipment, or even stolen gear. Like all Perils, resolving these problems shouldn't take more than a scene, but failing to take action can have grave consequences, such as the Fatebinding changing to Nemesis or Traitor or even ending entirely, which cancels the Contract, jeopardizing the Band's dreams of rock stardom.

Invoke: The Contract smooths over problems as the record label handles the details. The Scion's next action has an Enhancement equal to the Fatebinding's Strength.

Compel: The Scions run afoul of a troublesome clause, and the Contract demands immediate action. Each Scion affected

by the Contract regains a point of Legend, and the Contract gains the Imperiled Condition.

Resolve: If the Band completes a Long-term or Band Deed associated with the Contract, they have created a work of art. The acclaim is immediate and empowering. During the next scene, the Momentum pool completely fills, and power of rock suffuses each Scion formerly Fatebound by the Contract, downgrading all botches to failures and granting a single reroll to all failed actions (including downgraded botches).

PROMOTION

These days, most bands have to handle their own PR, at least until they get big enough to afford a publicist. If the musicians don't get the word out about their shows, no one else is going to, and there's nothing sadder than a band playing to an empty room. The necessity of self-promotion is all the more important now that social media dominates many people's free time. If a band's not on Nymphstagram, Mumblr, GodTube, or Faebook, they're going to have problems building a following. For musicians with loyal fans (or a Cult), they might use crowdfunding services, like Praytreon, to allow fans to donate money in exchange for exclusive videos, chats, or simply the knowledge that they're helping their favorite band afford their rock 'n' roll lifestyle.

GLOSSARY

A&R: Short for "Artist and Repertoire," A&Rs are record label employees working directly with musical acts to oversee the production of new albums. A&Rs are responsible for signing acts to record contracts. They also find producers, book sessions at a recording studio, and help acts select which songs (the repertoire) should be part of an album.

Agent: Short for "booking agent," agents work with promoters to schedule acts at venues. Agents generally have a roster of acts and attempt to find all of them as many performances as the acts can stand to perform.

Amp: Short for "amplifier," amps take an audio signal from an instrument or microphone and increase the power, making the sound louder when it's sent to a speaker. Amps often have built-in speakers, which are sometimes used in place of a dedicated speaker in smaller venues, much to the chagrin of the house audio engineer.

Audio Engineer: Engineers come in two varieties: house and studio. Studio engineers record takes during recording sessions, as well as mastering and mixing takes to polish them to the point that they're ready to be put on an album. House engineers operate the mixing board at venues to ensure that live performances sound good.

Gig: Any compensated performance, whether or not an act plays music.

Jam: To play music in a group without a clear plan. The purpose of musicians jamming together is generally to have fun, although "jam bands" turn the improvisational playing into its own kind of performance.

Manager: There are two major kinds of managers: band and tour. Band managers handle or at least oversee bookings, contracts, marketing, taxes, career decisions, and anything else an act doesn't want to personally handle. Tour managers keep the band moving,

ensuring that any literal or metaphorical roadblocks are cleared and that the band gets paid for their shows.

Master: To prepare audio for commercial release. One goal of mastering audio is adjusting the audio to conform to the limitations of the release format, ensuring that the music sounds good to home listeners.

Merch: Short for "merchandise," merch refers to any goods sold by an act.

Mix: To manipulate the levels and effects of audio signals to achieve a desired sound. Good mixes need instruments to sound good individually and when combined with the rest of the band.

Monitor: An on-stage speaker directed at a musician so they can hear their own performance. Some musicians prefer in-ear monitors — specialized earbud headphones over speakers.

Pedal: A foot-activated piece of audio equipment. Most pedals apply an effect to an audio signal, such as adding distortion or changing the sound's quality.

Producer: Producers lead recording sessions during the production of a new album. For most electronic acts, the producer is also the artist. Some artists who prefer a hands-on approach to music production are also their own producer. For more conventional bands, the producer is in charge of running recording sessions and generally has the final say in whether sessions are complete or whether the band needs to perform another take.

Promoter: Short for "concert promoter," promoters handle the paperwork of putting on concerts. They work with venues and booking agents to match the availability of venues and acts. In addition to arranging gigs, they're also responsible for promoting the concert, generally through advertisements.

Recording Sessions: Often shortened to just "sessions," recording sessions are periods of time when acts, their producer, and an audio engineer work together to record takes with the intent of producing an album.

Road box: A reinforced container for transporting band equipment and keeping it safe.

Roadie: Short for "road crew," acts employ roadies to perform a variety of tasks, including moving instruments and equipment into and out of venues; tuning, setting up, and adjusting instruments; emplacing and triggering pyrotechnics; and designing and operating lighting. Roadies may also drive vehicles, handle security, sell merch, and perform countless other duties.

Take: A single recorded performance of a song or song section. Most albums require multiple takes of a song before the band plays an album-worthy take. Some album songs are composed of multiple takes composited together.

Tech: Short for "technician," tech is a catch-all term for several kinds of roadie. Lighting techs operate concert lights. Instrument techs maintain and set up instruments, amps, and other instrument-related equipment for an act. In case of a mishap on stage, instrument techs are responsible for swapping out an instrument or performing ad hoc repairs. Instrument techs generally specialize in a specific instrument (e.g. bass tech, drum tech, guitar tech, etc.)

Venue: A place where an act can perform. Venues can be as small as a hole-in-the-wall restaurant or as large as a sports arena.



CHAPTER ONE
ROAD TRIPS &
THE MYTHIC ENGINE

I don't sing for fame or fortune. I sing because it's part of who I am.

— Sister Rosetta Tharpe

The term “road trip” conjures a variety of thoughts and feelings for people, from the excitement of an adventure on the highways, to intertwined sensations of wonder and befuddlement at the road’s many mysteries, to the annoyance of being far from creature comforts. This chapter focuses on the adventures Scions can have while traveling. Not only is the road a setting unto itself, but it also brings new curiosities around each corner. In short, it’s the perfect place for an adventure.

In fact, countless TV shows and films have come to that same conclusion, using road trips as a narrative tool that takes the heroes away from safety and delivers them to adventure. Storyguides can do the very same thing with their players. In fact, groups can use this chapter to create a special kind of gaming experience they can enjoy in a single session, even if they’re missing a player or two.

ROAD TRIPS: LOW STAKES GAMES & ONE-SHOTS

For our purposes, a **road trip** is any standalone game session with limited influence on a series’ main plot. Road trips can be adventures Storyguides run when there aren’t enough players to play the main series, a one-off game during a hiatus, or even the basis for a larger, low-stakes series. Road trips pair incredibly well with the rest of the material in **Rock Gods & Road Trips** because the life of Scions on the road lends itself to the episodic gaming that is the cornerstone of road trips.

Storyguides and their players can enjoy a road trip at virtually any time. They’re most common when one or more players can’t attend a game session, but they can also be used to give the Storyguide a break by reducing the amount of work it takes to prepare the episode. A road trip could even involve handing another player the reins for a session, giving the usual Storyguide a chance to play and relax, while the temporary Storyguide flexes their story-telling chops.

This doesn’t mean that Storyguiding a road trip is easy; it still requires preparation, knowledge of the game, and the ability to make fair decisions. Additionally, it also requires a keen sense of timing to pace the session properly, since there won’t be a second session to wrap up any loose threads. Fortunately, this chapter has much of the prep work already done, allowing groups to get into the game

faster. The **Mythic Engine** is a tool that empowers groups to cooperatively construct the basic concept of an episode quickly. And since the players know some of the story ahead of time and their actions have little impact on the main plot, they’re less likely to get stuck on details, allowing scenes to flow relatively quickly.

This chapter outlines the basics of a road trip and then explores each of the scenes that make up our ideal road trip.

- **Road Trip Design:** An explanation of the terms and ideas used in the rest of the chapter
- **Four-Act Structure:** One way to structure the story of a road trip
- **The Mythic Engine:** The basics of designing and playing a road trip using the Mythic Engine
- **Act One: Setup:** Enticing players with a road trip and get their Scions ready for adventure
- **Act Two: Response:** How to show how the World reacts to Scions on a road trip
- **Act Three: Rising Action:** How to put the heroes through the wringer
- **Act Four: Finale:** Ending a road trip in a satisfying way

ROAD TRIP DESIGN

Road trips are bite-sized **Scion** episodes that can be completed in a single session. Adding a time limit to a game session can create pressure for Storyguides and players alike, as it requires moving stories along at a swift pace so that the episode feels complete by the end of the session. This pace creates its own difficulties, as it requires players and Storyguides to stay focused on advancing the plot. This chapter contains dozens of ways to aid groups in keeping things moving, while still providing an exciting adventure.

While there are many methods for keeping scenes flowing smoothly, the most important one is structure. This allows Storyguides to know what kinds of scenes should happen when and how to help their players bring those scenes to life. We call this system the Mythic Engine. Not only does it detail how to play through the eight scene types of a road trip, but it also explains how and when to fast-forward through scenes to save time. Fast-forwarding scenes is rarely done in normal gameplay, however it can be a highly effective Storyguiding technique; it allows groups to keep the critical elements of a scene, while limiting the amount of time spent dealing with relatively unimportant details.

TERMS, NEW AND FAMILIAR

Because road trips tend to play out much faster than the average Scion game, “act” and “episode” need to be redefined. Other time-related terms are included to show them in context.

Act: A series of scenes that form a coherent part of a story, such as its climax or setup. In road trips, acts serve specific roles in creating the ebb and flow of the story’s drama and action. In some cases, an act might only consist of one complex scene.

Arc: A group of episodes that takes a full storyline from beginning to end. Arcs don’t necessarily wrap everything up neatly and usually last two to five episodes.

Episode: A single game session, composed of one or more acts. This chapter details four-act episodes.

Scene: A sequence of connected actions, such as a fight or a library research trip. Scenes last as long as they need to, with some taking mere minutes. The Storyguide decides when a scene has run its course and moves the story to the next scene.

Series: An ongoing game composed of any number of episodes and arcs.

This chapter also involves terms commonly used when discussing plots and tropes, which form a useful shorthand.

Adversary: The primary antagonist of a road trip. They can be obvious from the beginning or secret until the climax.

Henchperson: Someone working for the adversary.

Lieutenant: One of the adversary’s most powerful henchpersons. They’re powerful enough that they make dealing with the adversary more difficult. Consequently, they also make the adversary’s life more difficult if the Scions can convince one to quit or betray their boss.

McGuffin: An item or person who is key to the plot, but generally not important out of context. For example, rival punk bands might not want to create a magical guitar pick, but if a pick shows up as the two face off in a battle of the bands, they might fight fiercely to get the pick or at least to keep it out of the hands of their foes.

FOUR-ACT STRUCTURE

There are countless ways to organize and structure adventures, but the Mythic Engine uses the four-act format. Why? It’s used extensively in Western media, especially film and television. So, most Scion players already have a sense for what kinds of scenes happen in stories and which order the scenes come arrive, even if they’ve never formally studied film. As a bonus, the four-act structure is incredibly similar to the three-act structure many Scion players may have studied in literature classes; the primary difference between the two is that the four-act structure splits Act Two in half, keeping each act roughly the same length, an invaluable feature for the Storyguides who want to keep stories moving fluidly. In the Mythic Engine, each act is

made up of a pair of scenes, each helping to build the story and push the Scions further into the plot.

The four acts of road trips are:

- **Setup:** Act One introduces the basics of the problem to the heroes, gives them a chance to get ready, and then sets them on a course to adventure. The first scene is the **teaser**, a single scene that gets the players excited for the rest of the episode. The second is **call to adventure**, the moment when the problem visits the heroes, forcing them to leave the comfort of their home and travel to meet a new adventure.
- **Response:** Act Two shows how the heroes react to their new circumstances and how those circumstances respond to them. The **arrival** gives the Scions a taste of the adventure, introducing important characters and conflicts, while giving them their first opportunity to influence the plot. The **mirage** is a flexible scene that allows the heroes to triumph or fail. Either way, the events of the scene are but a prelude for what is to come.
- **Rising Action:** Act Three is an escalation of action and drama, taking the heroes from the midpoint of the adventure to their lowest point. The **point of no return** signals to the Scions that they matter to the adventure; no one else is coming, so they have to save the day. The **darkest moment** is a point of failure, of things suddenly getting much worse for the heroes. It creates a dark spot in the plot, which makes the next scene shine even brighter when the Scions win.
- **Finale:** In Act Four, the heroes face their greatest obstacles, prevail, and learn what comes next. The **climax** is when the Scions confront the adversary, triumph, and set things right. It’s followed by the **resolution**, a scene that reviews everything that happened during the road trip and paints a picture of how well the heroes did and what sort of things the future might hold.

THE MYTHIC ENGINE

The Mythic Engine is a series of eight guided explorations of scene types. Although these scenes are not the only way to create road trips, they are tried and tested, approximating the exciting adventures featured in popular fiction. The Mythic Engine helps Storyguides create road trips packed with exciting twists and turns. Equally importantly, it provides hints and suggestions for keeping each scene moving smoothly, with tips for on-the-fly changes, such as having a darkest moment double as the episode’s climax.

Because road trips are intended to be completed in a single session, most Storyguides should stock their road trip with only four full scenes and fast-forward the remaining four scenes. Note that fast-forwarding a scene doesn’t

SHORTER ROAD TRIPS

Completing a full-fledged adventure in a single session can be a challenge, especially for Storyguides and players used to a more relaxed pace. Because of this, the Mythic Engine features modularity in the acts. As an important example, a mirage scene can serve as other scenes, depending on how intense it is and how well it goes for the heroes.

If things go well for the Scions but the group's low on time, the Storyguide might treat the mirage as a climax, going straight to a resolution scene, skipping three scenes. Alternatively, if it goes poorly for the heroes, the mirage can serve as their darkest moment, allowing the Storyguide to advance them directly to the climax, where they'll get their revenge on the adversary.

Additionally, every scene can be fast-forwarded if needed, keeping the essential details of the scene, and skipping past all of the rest. Between these two features, most groups should be able to enjoy stories that feel complete, even when they're short on time.

mean ignoring it; fast-forwarded scenes still cover the same important details as their regular brethren, which is critical to keeping road trips richly detailed and within time constraints. In other words, the first step in creating a road trip is to decide which scenes to play and which to fast-forward. With the exception of the climax, any of the scenes can be fast-forwarded instead of played. Thus, the Storyguide's first choice is deciding which three of the remaining seven scenes should also be played. The scenes' guides provide suggestions for when scenes should be played or fast-forwarded to help the decision process.

COLLABORATIVE OPTION

Some groups may wish to give their Storyguide a break from planning. This way, the group can get straight into the fun without making the Storyguide sit down by themselves to plot and scheme. The first six scenes have lists of options for possible ways for a scene to begin. Groups can select their favorite option or roll dice to determine what the scene's scenario is. Many lists have 10 options, making it easy to roll a 10-sided die to pick one, but some lists have 20 options, which is slightly trickier. Roll a die to determine which half of the list the option should come from. If the number is 1-5, the dice have chosen 1-10. If the number is 6-10, they've selected 11-20. Then, roll a second die to determine which of the options is the final choice. In this way, groups can create the basic idea of a scene in under a minute, allowing them to get right into roleplaying.

ACT ONE: SETUP

Act One establishes the initial problem that gets the heroes on the road to adventure. It has two scenes. The first is the **teaser**, which gets players excited to play and gives them a peek at the adventure that's about to happen. The second is the call to adventure — when the heroes learn about a problem important enough for them to leave their familiar surroundings and enter dangerous territory.

TEASER

In television, the teaser is the few minutes of a show before the opening credits roll. This is sometimes known as a “cold open,” as the opening credits are supposed to “warm” audiences up before the episode really gets going. Not all shows use a teaser, and you can omit it from your **Scion** road trip if you're pressed for time. However, teasers are very useful in quickly establishing the general feel of an episode, as well as getting people interested in what's happening or about to happen.

Teasers have three jobs; they set the stage for the rest of the session, get the action started immediately, and create player interest. It's important that your teaser can accomplish each of those objectives; a teaser that's radically different from the rest of the game makes the game feel unsatisfied. For example, if the teaser features a Scion of Herakles politically outmaneuvering the Band, players expect a chance to beat him in an Intrigue scene later on. The second two jobs usually go hand in hand; where there's action, there's usually interest — but not always. You know what your players are interested in better than we do.

PLAYING A TEASER

There are many ways for Storyguides to use teasers effectively, but since this chapter is about fast Storyguiding, we're focusing on the most versatile method: the cliffhanger. Cliffhangers are scenes that introduce a significant problem and end before the players can solve the problem. Effective cliffhangers happen a few scenes before the heroes can even begin working toward a resolution. Delaying the payoff makes things more interesting. There are three common ways of accomplishing this:

- **Using Other Characters:** The characters in the cliffhanger scene aren't the players' Scions.
- **Flashforward:** The scene details actions that will happen later in the session.
- **Flashback:** The teaser reveals an event in the characters' past coming back to haunt them.