

## **Holiday Season**

### ***Background***

It all started when Moses Claus (of Chrismukkah) and Chanukah Harry hatched a plan. All of the winter holidays live in the shadow of Christmas, but Moses Claus saw which way the wind was blowing. It would be better to try to get a part of the psychic real estate by joining forces into a several month long holiday called Holiday Season.

So, he worked with Chanukah Harry to call a meeting of all the representatives of the holidays to try to find a way they can join forces. But, only Moses Claus and Chanukah Harry know that Moses Claus is not the real representative of Christmas.

Combining holidays has certainly been done before. Holidays change and grow. Many patriotic holidays, such as President's Day are the result of the merger of holidays. This is a game of negotiations and contracts.

But then it gets worse. One by one, more Santa wannabes start entering the deliberations, and the characters must choose which one is the right Santa. Regardless of which one they choose, that is now Santa Claus, the representative of Christmas. This could radically change what we think of Christmas.

### ***Setup***

You should try to get a nice table, like one found in a hotel boardroom.

Each character gets a tent card with their name and holiday on it as well as a character sheet. There is also a file for envelopes if you wish, but they are optional. Note that while the tent cards and envelopes are in color, they will print just fine on a greyscale printer.

The harried clerk starts with the Diamond of Time. If you have a prop, say a fist sized crystal, or ball, great. Otherwise, you may use the Diamond of Time item "card" at the end of this document.

Santa 5 (Odin) should have contingency envelopes to give to the Oak King and the Holly King. Again, actual envelopes are optional, and you can just fold them over if you wish.

Chanukah Harry is leading the deliberations.

A water station might be nice. Discussion is thirsty work.

### ***Runtime***

You don't have to do much during runtime. Start the game with Santa Clauses 2-6 outside of the room and have them enter one every 3-5 minutes or so.

## **Characters**

### Potential Santas:

***Potential Santas should arrive in this order. You at least want the first four.***

Moses Claus (of Chrismukkah)  
Saint Nicholas  
Krampus  
Santa Claus  
Odin (from Yule)  
The Prophet Zarathustra (Holy day commemorating his death on the 26<sup>th</sup>)

### Holidays of Holiday Season:

***The Holiday characters should be cast in this order. You at least want the first seven.***

Chanukah (Chanukah Harry)  
Ramadan (The Prophet Mohammed)  
Kwanzaa (Maulana)  
Boxing Day (frantic shopper male/female)  
Black Friday (Harried Clerk male/female)  
New Years Eve (Father Time)  
Festivus (Head of the Household)  
Yule (Oak King and Holly King) (two chars)  
Junkanoo (Junkanoo dancer male/female)  
Bodhi Day (Buddha)  
Oh-harai-taisai (Shinto Priest)

## Holiday Season

### **What is going on?**

Chanukah Harry and Santa Claus have invited you here to discuss merging all of your lands to form Holiday Season. This would allow you all to gain a great deal of power, but you would have to share it with others, and there is the risk that you'd lose your Holiday's uniqueness via assimilation. You have been gathered for hours, socializing and chatting, but now the real negotiations are about to begin.

There are several issues that need to be hammered out. As you read your character sheet, consider how your character might feel on these issues. Unless it explicitly says you do not care, you should feel strongly about at least one.

**Tradition vs. Assimilation:** How closely do we want to merge our holidays into the new land. Keeping our traditions preserves our individual identities, but the closer we merge, the stronger our overall land will be. Without some degree of assimilation, we might as well not merge at all. And if we do not merge, some of the smaller holidays risk being forgotten altogether.

**Belief vs. Almighty Dollars:** How do we want to power our holidays? Belief can be strong, but is fickle and can leave at a moment's notice. The Almighty Dollar will provide constant power and support, but perhaps at the cost of our souls.

**Leadership of the new Holiday:** Santa Claus and Hannukah Harry presume that they will lead, but not everyone shares in that agreement. Just because they are leading this roundtable, doesn't mean they will lead the new land. You need to make sure that your holiday has adequate representation.

## ***Chanukah Harry***

### **About Chanukah**

Chanukah, the Festival of Lights, is a celebration of the victory of the Maccabees and the rededication of the Jerusalem Temple. It also commemorates the miracle of the oil that burned for 8 days

On Chanukah, you light the menorah (a candelabra) every night, and you play a game with a top called Dreidel. Gifts are traditionally given during Chanukah. The traditional food of Chanukah is potato latkes.

### **About You**

You are, more or less, the spiritual leader of the minor holiday of Chanukah. You share the role of leader with a schlub named Judah Macabee who is more interested in lighting candles and praying in the temple than giving gifts and playing dreidel games. Oy.

You represent the fun side of Chanukah, the good, practical gift like socks. And spinning a little top over and over again. And even that annoying Adam Sandler song. Hoo boy, that never gets old.

But you are tired that Chanukah is still considered a minor holiday. And now you have a chance to do something about that.

You were recently visited by Moses Claus from the newly formed holiday land of Chrismukkah. Now normally you don't care for that goyim, but he had a plan that seemed foolproof.

You had heard that many of the patriotic holidays had once joined together and now they have a powerful holiday land. Well, maybe all of the winter Holidays could join together and form Holiday Season, a powerful land comprised of all the Holidays from the end of November until January first.

But you would need Christmas's help and that wouldn't be easy. You know Santa Claus would never go for it. Christmas is too powerful and he wouldn't want to lose the prestige. But Moses

Claus had a plan. He would pretend to be Santa for the conference. They look alike after all. With your backing, the others would believe he was Santa and represented Christmas.

And once he was assumed to be the real Santa, eventually he would transition into the role. He said it has happened before in Christmas, and that the current Santa is completely unlike his predecessor, and that before that, Christmas wasn't about giving gifts at all.

You found that shocking and hard to believe. After all, Chanukah is a much older land than Christmas. But something about Moses Claus' words rang true. Maybe Christmas – and Chanukah weren't always the way they were now. Maybe holidays could change that easily.

But what about the real Santa Claus? Moses Claus just smiled and said that Santa would be taken care of. You decided not to press the issue.

So, here you are. You want a community land, where all the component holidays get equal rights. You want a homeland for each holiday. You want all the holidays to aid each other for the greater good. And you want Holiday Season to be recognized. No more "Merry Christmas" or "Happy New Year," it would be just "Happy Holidays" for all the seasons.

### **Roleplaying Hint**

Play him like Jon Lovitz. Be ultra Jewish.

### **What is going on?**

Chanukah Harry and Santa Claus have invited you here to discuss merging all of your lands to form Holiday Season. This would allow you all to gain a great deal of power, but you would have to share it with others, and there is the risk that you'd lose your Holiday's uniqueness via assimilation. You have been gathered for hours, socializing and chatting, but now the real negotiations are about to begin.

## Holiday Season

There are several issues that need to be hammered out. As you read your character sheet, consider how your character might feel on these issues. Unless it explicitly says you do not care, you should feel strongly about at least one.

**Tradition vs. Assimilation:** How closely do we want to merge our holidays into the new land. Keeping our traditions preserves our individual identities, but the closer we merge, the stronger our overall land will be. Without some degree of assimilation, we might as well not merge at all. And if we do not merge, some of the smaller holidays risk being forgotten altogether.

**Belief vs. Almighty Dollars:** How do we want to power our holidays? Belief can be strong, but is fickle and can leave at a moment's notice. The Almighty Dollar will provide constant power and support, but perhaps at the cost of our souls.

**Leadership of the new Holiday:** Santa Claus and Hannukah Harry presume that they will lead, but not everyone shares in that agreement. Just because they are leading this roundtable, doesn't mean they will lead the new land. You need to make sure that your holiday has adequate representation.

### **The Other Characters:**

**Moses Claus (Chrismukkah):** He is pretending to be Santa Claus, and you are helping with the charade. You should support his ideas.

**The Prophet Mohammed (Ramadan):** This Shlameil really gets on your nerves. It's like he has it in for you.

**Maulana (Kwanzaa):** He must be the most paranoid man you've ever met. We're not trying to keep him down; we're trying to work together to raise you all up.

**Frantic Shopper (Boxing Day):** Oy, you wish he'd/she'd calm down a little.

**Harried Clerk (Black Friday):** Likewise, this one will have a heart attack if he/she isn't careful!

**Father Time (New Years Eve):** A kindly old guy. He should be a pushover.

**Head of the Household (Festivus):** He/She is so apathetic, you'll be lucky to get his/her vote on anything.

**Oak King and Holly King (Yule):** You still don't get why Yule had to send two representatives. And why do they bicker so much?

**Junkanoo dancer (Junkanoo):** All he/she wants to do is party.

**Buddha (Bodhi Day):** This one, all he ever says is "clever" platitudes. "suffering is universal" my fanny! How could you suffer while eating a plate of delicious latkes. Well, unless the latkes were still too hot in which case you'd burn your tongue.

**Shinto Priest (Oh-harai-taisai):** Like the Buddha, this one thinks he is so wise. Well, if he'd get off his yinyang and act, something could get done around here, maybe?

# The Prophet Mohammed

## About Ramadan

Ramadan is the ninth month of the Muslim calendar. It begins with the sighting of the new moon after which all physically mature and healthy Muslims are obliged to abstain from all food, drink, gum chewing, any kind of tobacco use, and any kind of sexual contact between dawn and sunset. However, that is merely the physical component of the fast; the spiritual aspects of the fast include refraining from gossiping, lying, slander and all traits of bad character. All obscene and irreligious sights and sounds are to be avoided. Purity of thought and action is paramount.

Ramadan is the celebration of the delivery of the Quran to the Prophet Mohammed by the Archangel Gabriel.

## The Five Pillars of Islam

1. The profession of faith in Allah (Shahadah) - the declaration that there is none worthy of worship except Allah and that Muhammad is his messenger.
2. Prayer (Salat) - establishing of the five daily Prayers.
3. The paying of alms (Zakât) - which is generally 2.5% of the total savings for a rich man working in trade or industry, and 10% or 20% of the annual produce for agriculturists. This money or produce is distributed among the poor. Also, one may give 25% of found treasure such as money won in a non-gambling lottery.
4. Fasting (Sawm) - refraining from eating, drinking or satisfying sexual needs from dawn to dusk in the month of Ramadan, the ninth month in the Islamic lunar calendar.
5. The Pilgrimage to Mecca (Hajj) - this is done during the month of Zul Hijjah, and is compulsory once in a lifetime for one who has the ability to do it.

## About You

You have been asked here to make your important holiday, the holiest of the four holy months, to be

part of a larger group of holidays, and form Holiday Season. You have been asked to ignore your background and assimilate. You are unsure. You do not want to lose your identity, but if you go against the others, you risk your holiday fading into nothingness.

For one thing, it seems like Chanukah Harry is setting himself up to be leader of Holiday Season. You do not trust him. There has long been an enmity between the lands of Chanukah and Ramadan and you suspect that whatever he is planning, he wants Chanukah to have the advantage at your expense.

But the most important thing to you is that you and your holiday be respected and that your traditions not be diminished.

## Roleplaying Hint

Mohammed is a solemn figure, but you should not be afraid to be loud and angry when you need to be.

## What is going on?

Chanukah Harry and Santa Claus have invited you here to discuss merging all of your lands to form Holiday Season. This would allow you all to gain a great deal of power, but you would have to share it with others, and there is the risk that you'd lose your Holiday's uniqueness via assimilation. You have been gathered for hours, socializing and chatting, but now the real negotiations are about to begin.

There are several issues that need to be hammered out. As you read your character sheet, consider how your character might feel on these issues. Unless it explicitly says you do not care, you should feel strongly about at least one.

Tradition vs. Assimilation: How closely do we want to merge our holidays into the new land. Keeping our traditions preserves our individual identities, but the closer we merge, the stronger our overall land will be. Without some degree of

## Holiday Season

assimilation, we might as well not merge at all. And if we do not merge, some of the smaller holidays risk being forgotten altogether.

**Belief vs. Almighty Dollars:** How do we want to power our holidays? Belief can be strong, but is fickle and can leave at a moment's notice. The Almighty Dollar will provide constant power and support, but perhaps at the cost of our souls.

**Leadership of the new Holiday:** Santa Claus and Hannukah Harry presume that they will lead, but not everyone shares in that agreement. Just because they are leading this roundtable, doesn't mean they will lead the new land. You need to make sure that your holiday has adequate representation.

### **The Other Characters:**

**Santa Claus (Christmas):** He seems jolly, but is a shrewd negotiator. Since Christmas has the most to offer and the least to gain by this arrangement, he holds most of the cards.

**Chanukah Harry (Chanukah):** You have an immediate dislike for this neurotic little man. You suspect that he is trying to cheat you in some way.

**Maulana (Kwanzaa):** Like you, he believes that Chanukah and Christmas are conspired against him, but he seems to be taking it personally.

**Frantic Shopper (Boxing Day):** A very nervous man/woman. He/she seems to want everything.

**Harried Clerk (Black Friday):** You are afraid he/she will keel over at any minute.

**Father Time (New Years Eve):** He seems so nice, but you think he might be hiding something.

**Head of the Household (Festivus):** Why did he/she bother to come to this meeting if he/she is just going to sidetrack it?

**Oak King and Holly King (Yule):** All these two do is bicker. They offer nothing.

**Junkanoo dancer (Junkanoo):** All he/she wants to do is party.

**Buddha (Bodhi Day):** While you may be able to tolerate holidays that recognize a god that is like Allah, you are less sanguine with the inclusion of holidays that do not recognize any sort of god.

**Shinto Priest (Oh-harai-taisai):** Likewise. The Shinto worshippers believe in thousands of gods, but you know there is but one, and you are His prophet!

# Mulana

## About Kwanzaa

Kwanzaa is a unique African American celebration with focus on the traditional African values of family, community responsibility, commerce, and self-improvement. It is a time of reaffirming African-American people, their ancestors and culture. Kwanzaa, means “first fruits of the harvest” in the African language Kiswahili. It was founded in 1966 by Dr. Maulana Karenga (that’s you).

Kwanzaa is based on the Nguzo Saba (seven guiding principles), one for each day of the observance, and is celebrated from December 26th to January 1st.

- Umoja (**oo-MO-jah**) Unity stresses the importance of togetherness for the family and the community, which is reflected in the African saying, "I am We," or "I am because We are."
- Kujichagulia (**koo-gee-cha-goo-LEE-yah**) Self-Determination requires that we define our common interests and make decisions that are in the best interest of our family and community.
- Ujima (**oo-GEE-mah**) Collective Work and Responsibility reminds us of our obligation to the past, present and future, and that we have a role to play in the community, society, and world.
- Ujamaa (**oo-JAH-mah**) Cooperative economics emphasizes our collective economic strength and encourages us to meet common needs through mutual support.
- Nia (**NEE-yah**) Purpose encourages us to look within ourselves and to set personal goals that are beneficial to the community.
- Kuumba (**koo-OOM-bah**) Creativity makes use of our creative energies to build and maintain a strong and vibrant community.
- Imani (**ee-MAH-nee**) Faith focuses on honoring the best of our traditions, draws upon the best in ourselves, and helps us strive for a higher level of life for humankind, by affirming our self-worth and confidence in our ability to succeed and triumph in righteous struggle.

## About You

The **Man** has been keeping you and your brothers and sisters down long enough! You created your Holiday Land just a scant few years ago, based on the traditions you saw in the holiday lands of your ancestors.

Well, actually, you just made them up. Really.

But you have managed to gather enough belief that your Holiday has gained prominence and you have gained power. And it’s all about the Belief.

But now, the Man has wised up to your activities and you are here to defend your Holiday from being taken over. Oh, you’re all for cooperating, as long as there is something in it for you.

## Roleplaying Hint

Mix the Reverend Jesse Jackson with Al Sharpton, spice liberally with Marion Barry. Don’t know who these people are? Play him like Huey from the Boondocks.

## What is going on?

Chanukah Harry and Santa Claus have invited you here to discuss merging all of your lands to form Holiday Season. This would allow you all to gain a great deal of power, but you would have to share it with others, and there is the risk that you’d lose your Holiday’s uniqueness via assimilation. You have been gathered for hours, socializing and chatting, but now the real negotiations are about to begin.

There are several issues that need to be hammered out. As you read your character sheet, consider how your character might feel on these issues. Unless it explicitly says you do not care, you should feel strongly about at least one.

Tradition vs. Assimilation: How closely do we want to merge our holidays into the new land. Keeping our traditions preserves our individual



## Holiday Season

identities, but the closer we merge, the stronger our overall land will be. Without some degree of assimilation, we might as well not merge at all. And if we do not merge, some of the smaller holidays risk being forgotten altogether.

**Belief vs. Almighty Dollars:** How do we want to power our holidays? Belief can be strong, but is fickle and can leave at a moment's notice. The Almighty Dollar will provide constant power and support, but perhaps at the cost of our souls.

**Leadership of the new Holiday:** Santa Claus and Hannukah Harry presume that they will lead, but not everyone shares in that agreement. Just because they are leading this roundtable, doesn't mean they will lead the new land. You need to make sure that your holiday has adequate representation.

### The Other Characters:

**Santa Claus (Christmas):** The Man! Look at that jolly fat *white* man sitting as the king of the hill. Isn't that always the way. And the only time he takes time to notice you is to find another way to oppress you.

**Chanukah Harry (Chanukah):** Also The Man. Everyone knows that Jews have a secret cabal that controls all of the wealth in the world. He is out to get you and everything you stand for.

**The Prophet Mohammed (Ramadan):** Your Brother. While you do not follow his ways, he is your brother in oppression and you should support him.

**Frantic Shopper (Boxing Day):** You cannot stand such materialism. Calm yourself.

**Harried Clerk (Black Friday):** Another figure oppressed by the wealthy minority. Break free of your shackles!

**Father Time (New Years Eve):** Another old *white* guy. Not to be trusted.

**Head of the Household (Festivus):** Yeah, whatever.

**Oak King and Holly King (Yule):** All these two do is bicker. They offer nothing.

**Junkanoo dancer (Junkanoo):** Brother, calm down and sharpen up. He is so stoned that he doesn't even realize how the man is keeping him down. You hate drugs nearly as much as the Man. Drugs are just another tool that the Man uses to suppress opposition.

**Buddha (Bodhi Day):** You can't get a good handle on him. Is he an oppressor or the oppressed?

**Shinto Priest (Oh-harai-taisai):** Likewise.

## Frantic Shopper

### About Boxing Day

Boxing Day is a public holiday observed in many Commonwealth countries on December 26th. In many European countries it is also a holiday, called St. Stephen's Day.

Boxing Day was traditionally celebrated by giving gifts and donations to the poor and needy, but now it is all about returning unwanted presents and trying to find bargains in an after Christmas shopping frenzy.

### About You

You are the representative of Boxing Day. You are a frantic shopper. In your Holiday land you flit from store to store, trying to find the best bargains. You are crass consumerism at its worst.

And you are Boxing Day's shrewdest representative. You know how to search for the best bargains. You know to turn your nose up at lesser values. And you have the tightest wallet in all the holiday lands.

You want a holiday land that will make you feel at home, one that caters to the most consumerist ways possible. You want all sorts of decorations and gifts, the more superficial the better.

Some holidays might want to keep the spirits or their traditions, but you would like to see the new Holiday Season ruled by the Almighty Dollar.

### Roleplaying Hint

You are charged with energy, frantic with your desire for values. Be animated and energetic like you're on your 12<sup>th</sup> cup of coffee for the morning. And don't accept *anyone's* first offer. Ever. Although, if they hold out, you want it and you want it *now*!

### What is going on?

Chanukah Harry and Santa Claus have invited you here to discuss merging all of your lands to form Holiday Season. This would allow you all to gain a great deal of power, but you would have to share it with others, and there is the risk that you'd lose your Holiday's uniqueness via assimilation. You have been gathered for hours, socializing and chatting, but now the real negotiations are about to begin.

There are several issues that need to be hammered out. As you read your character sheet, consider how your character might feel on these issues. Unless it explicitly says you do not care, you should feel strongly about at least one.

Tradition vs. Assimilation: How closely do we want to merge our holidays into the new land. Keeping our traditions preserves our individual identities, but the closer we merge, the stronger our overall land will be. Without some degree of assimilation, we might as well not merge at all. And if we do not merge, some of the smaller holidays risk being forgotten altogether.

Belief vs. Almighty Dollars: How do we want to power our holidays? Belief can be strong, but is fickle and can leave at a moment's notice. The Almighty Dollar will provide constant power and support, but perhaps at the cost of our souls.

Leadership of the new Holiday: Santa Claus and Hannukah Harry presume that they will lead, but not everyone shares in that agreement. Just because they are leading this roundtable, doesn't mean they will lead the new land. You need to make sure that your holiday has adequate representation.

### The Other Characters:

**Santa Claus (Christmas):** Ho ho ho. He thinks that he can hide his power with a jolly exterior. Christmasland holds all the cards, they have the best merchandise, and the choicest goods. And you are just the person to buy them all.

## Holiday Season

**Chanukah Harry (Chanukah):** Chanukah is certainly the second richest of the lands, with a great deal of goods. But you suspect this Chanukah Harry will be a shrewd negotiator.

**The Prophet Mohammed (Ramadan):** You can't get a handle on this guy. Whose side is he on?

**Maulana (Kwanzaa):** What a jerk.

**Harried Clerk (Black Friday):** Heh, you've seen his/her kind before. You know how to deal with this type.

**Father Time (New Years Eve):** He thinks he's so wise because he's been around forever. Well, you'll show him.

**Head of the Household (Festivus):** You have no clue what this dude is all about. Does he/she want there to be a Holiday Season or not?

**Oak King and Holly King (Yule):** All these two do is bicker. They are like two middle-aged women both trying to get the same hot toy for their kids.

**Junkanoo dancer (Junkanoo):** Again, you just don't understand this one. How can someone be so relaxed? It makes no sense.

**Buddha (Bodhi Day):** Likewise. His calmness unnerves you.

**Shinto Priest (Oh-harai-taisai):** So does his. It's creepy!

## Harried Clerk

### About Black Friday

Black Friday, the day after Thanksgiving in the United States, is historically one of the busiest retail shopping days of the year.

Your holiday land is a new one, only a few decades old, younger even than Kwanzaa. But you are quickly gaining power as you serve your Corporate Masters and they reward you with Almighty Dollars.

### About You

You are the representative of Black Friday. In your Holiday land try to keep the stockroom full, and deal with the throngs of frantic shoppers who demand your attention. It's isn't a fun job but its necessary.

The most important thing about your land is that you have eschewed Belief for the Almighty Dollar. You refuse to join any holiday group that focuses on Belief. You serve your corporate masters well.

Recently, you stole the Diamond of Time from New Years Eve. It is a fine diamond and will fetch a fine price on the open market. You have it with you now.

### Roleplaying Hint

You are tired and snappy. Growl at people when you aren't getting your way. Sulk. Whine. Take sanity breaks every once in a while.

### What is going on?

Chanukah Harry and Santa Claus have invited you here to discuss merging all of your lands to form Holiday Season. This would allow you all to gain a great deal of power, but you would have to share it with others, and there is the risk that you'd lose your Holiday's uniqueness via assimilation. You have been gathered for hours, socializing and chatting, but now the real negotiations are about to begin.

There are several issues that need to be hammered out. As you read your character sheet, consider how your character might feel on these issues. Unless it explicitly says you do not care, you should feel strongly about at least one.

**Tradition vs. Assimilation:** How closely do we want to merge our holidays into the new land. Keeping our traditions preserves our individual identities, but the closer we merge, the stronger our overall land will be. Without some degree of assimilation, we might as well not merge at all. And if we do not merge, some of the smaller holidays risk being forgotten altogether.

**Belief vs. Almighty Dollars:** How do we want to power our holidays? Belief can be strong, but is fickle and can leave at a moment's notice. The Almighty Dollar will provide constant power and support, but perhaps at the cost of our souls.

**Leadership of the new Holiday:** Santa Claus and Hannukah Harry presume that they will lead, but not everyone shares in that agreement. Just because they are leading this roundtable, doesn't mean they will lead the new land. You need to make sure that your holiday has adequate representation.

### The Other Characters:

**Santa Claus (Christmas):** Oh how you loathe this man. He gives out gifts every year. What about your margin, your bottom line? He is taking bread from the mouths of your children.

**Chanukah Harry (Chanukah):** Again, another gift giver. Doesn't he realize that gifts cost money? Oh, you need a break already.

**The Prophet Mohammed (Ramadan):** At least his holiday land isn't about gifts, but it is also anti-money, so you doubt you'll be able to get along.

**Maulana (Kwanzaa):** What a jerk.

## Holiday Season

**Frantic Shopper (Boxing Day):** Heh, you've seen his/her kind before. You know how to deal with this type. Just hold back, and they'll be dying for whatever you offer.

**Father Time (New Years Eve):** He seems so calm. What is he hiding?

**Head of the Household (Festivus):** You have no clue what this dude is all about. Does he/she want there to be a Holiday Season or not?

**Oak King and Holly King (Yule):** All these two do is bicker. They are like two middle-aged women both trying to get the same hot toy for their kids.

**Junkanoo dancer (Junkanoo):** Again, you just don't understand this one.

**Buddha (Bodhi Day):** You wish you could be as calm and centered as he is. He *must* be hiding something.

**Shinto Priest (Oh-harai-taisai):** He's just plain creepy.

## Father Time

### About New Year's Eve

New Year's Eve is on December 31, the final day of the Gregorian year, and the day before New Year's Day.

New Year's Eve is a separate observance from the observance of New Year's Day. In modern Western practice, New Year's Eve is celebrated with parties and social gatherings spanning the transition of the year at midnight.

Many cultures use fireworks and other forms of noise making in part of the celebration. Some of the cities most well-known for their celebrations include Edinburgh, Sydney, Toronto, Moscow, Tokyo, Hong Kong, London, Los Angeles, Berlin, Rio de Janeiro, Paris, and New York City.

Recently, someone stole the Diamond of Time, a large diamond sphere that falls at midnight and marks the changing of the year. Without the Diamond of Time, there will be no New Year, and time will stop at the end of the year! You have come to this conference because you suspect that it was stolen by another holiday.

### About You

You are a kindly old man. You carry a scythe.

You are a bit worried about the Diamond of Time. That's far more important to you than this conference.

But you have to play your cards carefully. You can't let them know that the diamond is missing or that you suspect some of them may know more about what is going on. But you need to know what they know. And you need someone to trust.

### What is going on?

Chanukah Harry and Santa Claus have invited you here to discuss merging all of your lands to form Holiday Season. This would allow you all to gain a great deal of power, but you would have to share it

with others, and there is the risk that you'd lose your Holiday's uniqueness via assimilation. You have been gathered for hours, socializing and chatting, but now the real negotiations are about to begin.

There are several issues that need to be hammered out. As you read your character sheet, consider how your character might feel on these issues. Unless it explicitly says you do not care, you should feel strongly about at least one.

**Tradition vs. Assimilation:** How closely do we want to merge our holidays into the new land. Keeping our traditions preserves our individual identities, but the closer we merge, the stronger our overall land will be. Without some degree of assimilation, we might as well not merge at all. And if we do not merge, some of the smaller holidays risk being forgotten altogether.

**Belief vs. Almighty Dollars:** How do we want to power our holidays? Belief can be strong, but is fickle and can leave at a moment's notice. The Almighty Dollar will provide constant power and support, but perhaps at the cost of our souls.

**Leadership of the new Holiday:** Santa Claus and Hannukah Harry presume that they will lead, but not everyone shares in that agreement. Just because they are leading this roundtable, doesn't mean they will lead the new land. You need to make sure that your holiday has adequate representation.

### The Other Characters:

**Santa Claus (Christmas):** You've never met Santa, but you've spoken. He seems a bit off for some reason, but regardless, he must be trustworthy. He's Santa Claus, after all.

**Chanukah Harry (Chanukah):** What possible reason could he have for stealing the diamond? He might be completely innocent, but you have a feeling deep in your heart that he is being duped by someone as well.

**The Prophet Mohammed (Ramadan):** Given his holiday and his nature, it is doubtful he had anything to do with your problems.

**Maulana (Kwanzaa):** So full of hate. Would that hate drive a man to steal?

**Frantic Shopper (Boxing Day):** Well, this sort of consumer easily has motive: greed.

**Harried Clerk (Black Friday):** Another one who is obsessed with greed. Maybe he/she stole the diamond to sell it.

**Head of the Household (Festivus):** Is this person really that clueless and apathetic, or is it a cover?

**Oak King and Holly King (Yule):** All these two do is bicker. You can't get a good read on them.

**Junkanoo dancer (Junkanoo):** He seems so relaxed, so unlike a criminal, but look how he's dressed. You wonder if he stole the diamond for decoration.

**Buddha (Bodhi Day):** According to him, he shuns material possessions, so he probably didn't steal the diamond.

**Shinto Priest (Oh-harai-taisai):** He seems so calm, so in touch with the world around him. He just doesn't strike you as a thief.

## Head of the Household

### About Fustivus

Festivus is a nondenominational holiday featured in an episode of Seinfeld. Many people, influenced or inspired by Seinfeld, now celebrate the holiday in varying degrees of seriousness. Some do it religiously, others do it in good tidings in their respect to Seinfeld.

Festivus is celebrated each year on December 23, but many people celebrate it other times, often in early December. Its slogan is “A Festivus for the rest of us!” An aluminum pole is generally used in lieu of a Christmas tree or other holiday decoration. Those attending participate in the “Airing of Grievances” which is an opportunity for all to vent their hostilities toward each other, and after a Festivus dinner, The Feats of Strength are performed. Traditionally, Festivus is not over until the head of the household is wrestled to the floor and “pinned.”

### About You

You are the Head of the Household of Festivus. You decide what happens and when in your small community which consists of your house, your family, and a 10 foot tall aluminum pole.

You are quite happy living in your anti-Holiday holiday. Real holidays are way too much work. You want no part of that.

No, you enjoy relaxing and eating a simple meal of meatloaf and beer. You just don't care.

And that's why you are having so much fun. All the other holiday representatives are so tense, but you like letting the air out of those stuffed shirts. So, you play along, making deals and hen not holding up to them. Or making increasingly bizarre demands, just for fun.

After all, what's the worst that could happen? Your holiday stays just the way it is, and that's the way you like it.

### Roleplaying Hint

You are an apathetic trouble maker. You win the game if you can make all of the other characters laugh out loud.

### What is going on?

Chanukah Harry and Santa Claus have invited you here to discuss merging all of your lands to form Holiday Season. This would allow you all to gain a great deal of power, but you would have to share it with others, and there is the risk that you'd lose your Holiday's uniqueness via assimilation. You have been gathered for hours, socializing and chatting, but now the real negotiations are about to begin.

There are several issues that need to be hammered out. As you read your character sheet, consider how your character might feel on these issues. Unless it explicitly says you do not care, you should feel strongly about at least one.

Tradition vs. Assimilation: How closely do we want to merge our holidays into the new land. Keeping our traditions preserves our individual identities, but the closer we merge, the stronger our overall land will be. Without some degree of assimilation, we might as well not merge at all. And if we do not merge, some of the smaller holidays risk being forgotten altogether.

Belief vs. Almighty Dollars: How do we want to power our holidays? Belief can be strong, but is fickle and can leave at a moment's notice. The Almighty Dollar will provide constant power and support, but perhaps at the cost of our souls.

Leadership of the new Holiday: Santa Claus and Hannukah Harry presume that they will lead, but not everyone shares in that agreement. Just because they are leading this roundtable, doesn't mean they will lead the new land. You need to make sure that your holiday has adequate representation.

### The Other Characters:



## Holiday Season

**Santa Claus (Christmas):** He may seem jolly, but he's deadly serious about this. He's fun to prank.

**Chanukah Harry (Chanukah):** The ultimate straight man. You love playing jokes at his expense.

**The Prophet Mohammed (Ramadan):** There must be a way to get under his skin.

**Maulana (Kwanzaa):** Ahhh, perfect. You are certain with a few well placed words you can get him to explode all over Santa Claus.

**Frantic Shopper (Boxing Day):** Oooh, you bet you could give this guy a heart attack.

**Father Time (New Years Eve):** He's worried about something, but you aren't sure what.

**Harried Clerk (Black Friday):** Yeah, you love to make the vein in this dude's forehead throb like it was mamboing.

**Oak King and Holly King (Yule):** There must be a way to play these two against each other.

**Junkanoo dancer (Junkanoo):** Finally, someone as relaxed about this whole thing as you are.

**Buddha (Bodhi Day):** His veneer of outer calm betrays something. Hm.

**Shinto Priest (Oh-harai-taisai):** He doesn't seem to like Buddha, although he's too polite to say anything. You can use that.

# The Oak King

## About Yule

Yule was the winter solstice celebration of the Germanic pagans. It is one of the eight solar holidays, or sabbats. Yule is celebrated on the winter solstice: in the northern hemisphere, circa December 21.

Yule is celebrated with gatherings that often involve a meal and gift giving. The holiday is observed in a manner that commemorates the death of the Oak King identified with the wren bird (symbolizing the old year and the shortened sun) at the hands of his son and successor, the robin redbreast Holly King (the new year and the new sun that begins to grow).

## About You

The Holly King and the Oak King are part of Celtic mythology, and they represent two sides to the Greenman, or Horned God.

They battle twice a year, once at Yule and once at Midsummer (Litha) to see who would rule over the next half of the year. At Yule, the Oak King wins and at Litha, the Holly King is victorious. In other words, the Oak King rules over the lighter half of the year, and the Holly King over the darker half. The change from one to the other is a common theme for rituals at Yule, and also at Midsummer.

Another version of the Holly King and Oak King symbolism, is that they do not directly switch places twice a year, but rather both live simultaneously. The Oak King is born at Yule, and his strength grows through the spring, peaks at Beltane and then he weakens and dies at Samhain. The Holly King lives a reverse existence, and is born at Midsummer, waxes more powerful through the summer and fall, to his peak at Samhain. His influence then lessens until Beltane, when it is his turn to pass away. In this perspective, the two Kings enjoy a more intricate interplay of power and is perhaps a better illustration of their duality. At any given time, they both exist but have varying levels of influence throughout the year.

Either way, each King represents different ideas. The time of the Oak King is for growth, development, healing, and new projects. The Holly King's time is for rest, reflection, and learning.

Because the two of you co-lead your holiday, you have both come to this celebration.

## Roleplaying Hint

You hate the Holly King. Unfortunately, due to it being his time of the year, he tends to win the arguments. Regardless, no matter what he wants, you want the opposite. The others should have their hands full trying to get the two of you to work together.

You want a land full of new ideas and developments. You want to work with others to build a cooperative land where all the ideas can foster together side by side into a glorious unified whole.

## What is going on?

Chanukah Harry and Santa Claus have invited you here to discuss merging all of your lands to form Holiday Season. This would allow you all to gain a great deal of power, but you would have to share it with others, and there is the risk that you'd lose your Holiday's uniqueness via assimilation. You have been gathered for hours, socializing and chatting, but now the real negotiations are about to begin.

There are several issues that need to be hammered out. As you read your character sheet, consider how your character might feel on these issues. Unless it explicitly says you do not care, you should feel strongly about at least one.

Tradition vs. Assimilation: How closely do we want to merge our holidays into the new land. Keeping our traditions preserves our individual identities, but the closer we merge, the stronger our overall land will be. Without some degree of assimilation, we might as well not merge at all.

## Holiday Season

And if we do not merge, some of the smaller holidays risk being forgotten altogether.

**Buddha (Bodhi Day):** You rather like him. He understands that life is suffering.

Belief vs. Almighty Dollars: How do we want to power our holidays? Belief can be strong, but is fickle and can leave at a moment's notice. The Almighty Dollar will provide constant power and support, but perhaps at the cost of our souls.

**Shinto Priest (Oh-harai-taisai):** He seems to be closer to the Holly King and therefore your sworn enemy.

Leadership of the new Holiday: Santa Claus and Hannukah Harry presume that they will lead, but not everyone shares in that agreement. Just because they are leading this roundtable, doesn't mean they will lead the new land. You need to make sure that your holiday has adequate representation.

### The Other Characters:

**Santa Claus (Christmas):** You don't like him. He reminds you of the Holly King.

**Chanukah Harry (Chanukah):** You like him; he's your kinda guy.

**The Prophet Mohammed (Ramadan):** You can't understand his point of view at all.

**Maulana (Kwanzaa):** He is so full of hate. How can someone live that way? Sure, you hate the Oak King, but he seems to hate everything.

**Frantic Shopper (Boxing Day):** If he would just sit still for a few minutes, maybe you could understand what he's saying.

**Father Time (New Years Eve):** He doesn't seem to favor one of you over the other. He needs to choose.

**Harried Clerk (Black Friday):** He's not going to be useful at all.

**Head of the Household (Festivus):** If he won't care about you, why should you care about him?

**Holly King (Yule):** You cannot stand him. He is the epitome of everything you hate.

**Junkanoo dancer (Junkanoo):** Whatever.

# The Holly King

## About Yule

Yule was the winter solstice celebration of the Germanic pagans. It is one of the eight solar holidays, or sabbats. Yule is celebrated on the winter solstice: in the northern hemisphere, circa December 21.

Yule is celebrated with gatherings that often involve a meal and gift giving. The holiday is observed in a manner that commemorates the death of the Oak King identified with the wren bird (symbolizing the old year and the shortened sun) at the hands of his son and successor, the robin redbreast Holly King (the new year and the new sun that begins to grow).

## About You

The Holly King and the Oak King are part of Celtic mythology, and they represent two sides to the Greenman, or Horned God.

They battle twice a year, once at Yule and once at Midsummer (Litha) to see who would rule over the next half of the year. At Yule, the Oak King wins and at Litha, the Holly King is victorious. In other words, the Oak King rules over the lighter half of the year, and the Holly King over the darker half. The change from one to the other is a common theme for rituals at Yule, and also at Midsummer.

Another version of the Holly King and Oak King symbolism, is that they do not directly switch places twice a year, but rather both live simultaneously. The Oak King is born at Yule, and his strength grows through the spring, peaks at Beltane and then he weakens and dies at Samhain. The Holly King lives a reverse existence, and is born at Midsummer, waxes more powerful through the summer and fall, to his peak at Samhain. His influence then lessens until Beltane, when it is his turn to pass away. In this perspective, the two Kings enjoy a more intricate interplay of power and is perhaps a better illustration of their duality. At any given time, they both exist but have varying levels of influence throughout the year.

Either way, each King represents different ideas. The time of the Oak King is for growth, development, healing, and new projects. The Holly King's time is for rest, reflection, and learning.

Because the two of you co-lead your holiday, you have both come to this celebration.

## Roleplaying Hint

You hate the Oak King. Fortunately, due to it being your time of the year, you tend to win the arguments. Regardless, no matter what he wants, you want the opposite. The others should have their hands full trying to get the two of you to work together.

You want to see a land steeped in tradition. It is important that the individual holidays be allowed to keep their traditions and not assimilate into something strange and new.

## What is going on?

Chanukah Harry and Santa Claus have invited you here to discuss merging all of your lands to form Holiday Season. This would allow you all to gain a great deal of power, but you would have to share it with others, and there is the risk that you'd lose your Holiday's uniqueness via assimilation. You have been gathered for hours, socializing and chatting, but now the real negotiations are about to begin.

There are several issues that need to be hammered out. As you read your character sheet, consider how your character might feel on these issues. Unless it explicitly says you do not care, you should feel strongly about at least one.

Tradition vs. Assimilation: How closely do we want to merge our holidays into the new land. Keeping our traditions preserves our individual identities, but the closer we merge, the stronger our overall land will be. Without some degree of assimilation, we might as well not merge at all.

## Holiday Season

And if we do not merge, some of the smaller holidays risk being forgotten altogether.

**Buddha (Bodhi Day):** The Oak King seems to like him, so you dislike him.

Belief vs. Almighty Dollars: How do we want to power our holidays? Belief can be strong, but is fickle and can leave at a moment's notice. The Almighty Dollar will provide constant power and support, but perhaps at the cost of our souls.

**Shinto Priest (Oh-harai-taisai):** He is in touch with nature, and you can appreciate that.

Leadership of the new Holiday: Santa Claus and Hannukah Harry presume that they will lead, but not everyone shares in that agreement. Just because they are leading this roundtable, doesn't mean they will lead the new land. You need to make sure that your holiday has adequate representation.

### The Other Characters:

**Santa Claus (Christmas):** You like him. He seems very sympathetic.

**Chanukah Harry (Chanukah):** You don't like him. He reminds you of the Oak King.

**The Prophet Mohammed (Ramadan):** You can't understand his point of view at all.

**Maulana (Kwanzaa):** He is so full of hate. How can someone live that way? Sure, you hate the Holly King, but he seems to hate everything.

**Frantic Shopper (Boxing Day):** If he would just sit still for a few minutes, maybe you could understand what he's saying.

**Father Time (New Years Eve):** He doesn't seem to favor one of you over the other. He needs to choose.

**Harried Clerk (Black Friday):** He's not going to be useful at all.

**Head of the Household (Festivus):** If he won't care about you, why should you care about him?

**Oak King (Yule):** You cannot stand him. He is the epitome of everything you hate.

**Junkanoo dancer (Junkanoo):** Whatever.

## Junkanoo Dancer

### About Junkanoo

Junkanoo is a street parade with music, which occurs in many towns across the Bahamas every December 26 and New Year's Day. The largest Junkanoo happens in Nassau, the capital.

Junkanoo groups "rush" from 12:00 AM until shortly after dawn, to the music of cowbells, in costumes made from cardboard covered in tiny shreds of colourful crepe paper competing for cash prizes.

### About You

You are from the best group in town. You sew costumes and train all year then dance your feet off.

Junkanoo is a party, a celebration, a time to get wild and crazy. Think of it like Mardi Gras only with ganja instead of booze and 25% fewer breasts.

As long as you can keep partying, you don't really care much about anything else about Holiday Season.

### Roleplaying Hint

Yeah, mon, de Bahamas, de a lot like Jamaica, mon. Do your best Bob or Ziggy Marley impersonation and you'll be fine.

### What is going on?

Chanukah Harry and Santa Claus have invited you here to discuss merging all of your lands to form Holiday Season. This would allow you all to gain a great deal of power, but you would have to share it with others, and there is the risk that you'd lose your Holiday's uniqueness via assimilation. You have been gathered for hours, socializing and chatting, but now the real negotiations are about to begin.

There are several issues that need to be hammered out. As you read your character sheet, consider how your character might feel on these issues.

Unless it explicitly says you do not care, you should feel strongly about at least one.

**Tradition vs. Assimilation:** How closely do we want to merge our holidays into the new land. Keeping our traditions preserves our individual identities, but the closer we merge, the stronger our overall land will be. Without some degree of assimilation, we might as well not merge at all. And if we do not merge, some of the smaller holidays risk being forgotten altogether.

**Belief vs. Almighty Dollars:** How do we want to power our holidays? Belief can be strong, but is fickle and can leave at a moment's notice. The Almighty Dollar will provide constant power and support, but perhaps at the cost of our souls.

**Leadership of the new Holiday:** Santa Claus and Hannukah Harry presume that they will lead, but not everyone shares in that agreement. Just because they are leading this roundtable, doesn't mean they will lead the new land. You need to make sure that your holiday has adequate representation.

### The Other Characters:

**Santa Claus (Christmas):** This jolly old soul still needs to lighten up. He's too tense, mon.

**Chanukah Harry (Chanukah):** You've never seen anyone so uptight. How do they party in his holiday anyway?

**The Prophet Mohammed (Ramadan):** Likewise. He seems so tense, he will snap.

**Maulana (Kwanzaa):** He keeps calling you brother. You ain't his brother, mon. He is a hater, and you are a player.

**Frantic Shopper (Boxing Day):** OK, maybe there is someone more uptight than Chanukah Harry.

**Father Time (New Years Eve):** Y'know, he is up to something. He keeps looking at everyone else like he's searching for something.

## Holiday Season

**Harried Clerk (Black Friday):** This guy's got a haunted look about him.

**Head of the Household (Festivus):** At last, someone who understands that Holidays are all about relaxing.

**Holly King and Oak King (Yule):** These two bicker and fight. They need to relax.

**Buddha (Bodhi Day):** Hey, he seems calm, but not in a party way. You should see if you can cheer him up.

**Shinto Priest (Oh-harai-taisai):** He's calm too, and maybe even happy.

# Buddha

## About Bodhi Day

The prince, Siddhartha Gautama, left his home and family and all his possessions behind at the age of 29 to discover the meaning of life, particularly its hardships. After six years of rigorous discipline and asceticism under the guidance of a number of spiritual teachers, he still hadn't found what he was looking for.

While traveling with a small group of fellow seekers, he went off by himself, broke his fast, and sat down under a pipal tree and vowed not to arise until he understood. He sat through the week, day and night, and on the eighth morning came to the realization which became the founding principles of what the modern world calls Buddhism.

Bodhi Day--usually observed December 8 or the Sunday immediately preceding, is the date, according to Mahayana tradition, of Siddhartha Gautama's realization and presentation to his fellow seekers of the Four Noble Truths:

1. All beings are subject to suffering. No one escapes... suffering is universal.
2. The cause of suffering is Ignorance. And Ignorance of oneself is the greatest Ignorance.
3. Ignorance, the cause of suffering, can be overcome, and
4. The way to overcome Ignorance is the Eightfold Path.

From that point forward, he was referred to as the Buddha, the Enlightened One.

The Buddha-Dharma is the realization within one's deepest consciousness of the Oneness of all life. For the attainment of this purpose, Buddha showed us the Eightfold Path.

1. Right Views means to keep ourselves free from prejudice, superstition and delusion... and to see aright the true nature of life.

2. Right Thoughts means to turn away from the hypocrisies of this world and to direct our minds toward Truth and Positive Attitudes and Action.
3. Right Speech means to refrain from pointless and harmful talk... to speak kindly and courteously to all.
4. Right Conduct means to see that our deeds are peaceable, benevolent, compassionate and pure... and to live the Teachings daily.
5. Right Livelihood means to earn our living in such a way as to entail no evil consequences. To seek that employment to which can give our complete enthusiasm and devotion.
6. Right Effort means to direct our efforts continually to the overcoming of ignorance and craving desires.
7. Right Mindfulness means to cherish good and pure thoughts, for all that we say and do arises from our thoughts.
8. Right Meditation means to concentrate on the Oneness of all life and the Buddhahood that exists within all beings.

Bodhi day is observed simply with tea, cake, meditation and readings.

## About You

You are the Buddha. You have obtained enlightenment. You are always calm and relaxed. If you feel yourself losing this placid state, you take a step back and meditate on the four noble truths and the eightfold path until the feeling passes.

Bodhi day land is very very small. It consists of yourself, a small temple, a pipal tree and a few monks. It does not have power, as the other holidays do, but it has what is sufficient for its needs.

While you can understand the desire to have more power – more power means more celebrants and it would bring you pleasure if more people followed the eightfold path – you know that power will not stop the



## Holiday Season

suffering the other holiday characters believe they feel.

You can help lead them to enlightenment. You cannot give them enlightenment. You can show them the path, but they must walk it themselves.

And that is what you truly want. You do not care for temporal power. No, you wish those around you to be more enlightened. Guide them.

### What is going on?

Chanukah Harry and Santa Claus have invited you here to discuss merging all of your lands to form Holiday Season. This would allow you all to gain a great deal of power, but you would have to share it with others, and there is the risk that you'd lose your Holiday's uniqueness via assimilation. You have been gathered for hours, socializing and chatting, but now the real negotiations are about to begin.

There are several issues that need to be hammered out. As you read your character sheet, consider how your character might feel on these issues. Unless it explicitly says you do not care, you should feel strongly about at least one.

Tradition vs. Assimilation: How closely do we want to merge our holidays into the new land. Keeping our traditions preserves our individual identities, but the closer we merge, the stronger our overall land will be. Without some degree of assimilation, we might as well not merge at all. And if we do not merge, some of the smaller holidays risk being forgotten altogether.

Belief vs. Almighty Dollars: How do we want to power our holidays? Belief can be strong, but is fickle and can leave at a moment's notice. The Almighty Dollar will provide constant power and support, but perhaps at the cost of our souls.

Leadership of the new Holiday: Santa Claus and Hannukah Harry presume that they will lead, but not everyone shares in that agreement. Just because they are leading this roundtable, doesn't mean they will lead the new land. You need to make sure that your holiday has adequate representation.

### The Other Characters:

**Santa Claus (Christmas):** He is too wrapped in the material world. Life is more than toys and candy canes.

**Chanukah Harry (Chanukah):** He is perhaps the least enlightened man you have ever met. He has far to travel.

**The Prophet Mohammed (Ramadan):** He seems like he could accept enlightenment, but you sense an undercurrent of resentment in his words.

**Maulana (Kwanzaa):** Oh, he has hate in his heart. He believes his suffering is caused by other people. But suffering is caused by ignorance. He would be helped by learning the truth of the Eightfold path, but you feel the need to meditate after speaking to him every time.

**Frantic Shopper (Boxing Day):** If you can teach him/her some simple koans, he/she would thank you for it.

**Father Time (New Years Eve):** He has great suffering. He needs to learn.

**Harried Clerk (Black Friday):** Another whose suffering is great. Teaching him/her to meditate would be a great gift.

**Head of the Household (Festivus):** In his/her own strange way, he/she may be the most enlightened one of the others here. You would speak to him of an alliance.

**Holly King and Oak King (Yule):** They each blame each other for their suffering.

**Junkanoo Dance (Junkanoo):** He seems relaxed, but it is an artificial enlightenment.

**Shinto Priest (Oh-harai-taisai):** You believe that he is in touch with nature and the world. Yet, he seems tense when he speaks with you. You are unsure why.

# Shinto Priest

## About Oh-harai-taisai

Shinto can be seen as a form of animism and may be regarded as a variety of shamanist religion. Shinto beliefs and ways of thinking are deeply embedded in the subconscious fabric of modern Japanese society. The afterlife is not a primary concern in Shinto, and much more emphasis is placed on fitting into this world, instead of preparing for the next. Shinto has no binding set of dogma, no holiest place for worshippers, no person or kami deemed holiest, and no defined set of prayers. Instead, Shinto is a collection of rituals and methods meant to mediate the relations of living humans to kami.

In Shinto, kami are understood as the divine forces of nature. The worshippers of the Shinto religion in ancient Japan revered creations of nature which exhibited a particular beauty and power such as waterfalls, mountains, boulders, animals, trees, grasses and even rice paddies. They strongly believed the spirits or resident kami deserved respect.

Shinto believers also adhere to kami having an anthropomorphic form with the ability to act and communicate, as in a kind of avatar. They could not be seen by men. However, they were not omnipotent and omnipresent.

Oh-harai-taisai is the Shinto Grand Purification Ceremony. It is observed twice a year so that people can purify themselves of offenses they have committed during the previous half of the year. As part of the ceremonies, Japanese worshippers typically walk through a large ring of woven grass upon entering the shrines for observances.

Purity and, therefore, purification, lies at the heart of Shinto beliefs. Inside every shrine is a vessel of water which is used for ritual ablutions which involve the rinsing of the hands and the mouth before one is permitted to approach the image of the kami. Such acts, known generally as oharai, restore internal balance to the body.

The most immediately striking theme in the Shinto religion is a great love and reverence for nature. Thus, a waterfall, the moon, or just an oddly shaped rock might come to be regarded as a kami; so might charismatic persons or more abstract entities like growth and fertility. As time went by, the original nature-worshipping roots of the religion, while never lost entirely, became attenuated and the kami took on more reified and anthropomorphic forms, with a formidable corpus of myth attached to them.

Though Shinto has no absolute commandments for its adherents outside of living "a simple and harmonious life with nature and people", there are said to be "Four Affirmations" of the Shinto spirit:

- Tradition and the family: The family is seen as the main mechanism by which traditions are preserved. Their main celebrations relate to birth and marriage.
- Love of nature: Nature is sacred; to be in contact with nature is to be close to the kami. Natural objects are worshipped as containing sacred spirits.
- Physical cleanliness: Followers of Shinto take baths, wash their hands, and rinse out their mouth often.
- "Matsuri": Any festival dedicated to the Kami, of which there are many each year.

## About You

You are a simple priest of the Shinto, here to serve the Kami. Every year, you weave a large wreath of grass and then all who are in Oh-harai-taisai-land step through, kami and human alike.

You are deeply spiritual and in touch with nature. You feel somewhat uncomfortable here in this artificial space, but you are naturally calm. Even here, you can tell that the table and the chairs have their own kami that can be reached with prayer and meditation.

However, Oh-harai-taisai-land is shrinking. Valuable shines have been destroyed or taken over.

## Holiday Season

Other holidays, such as Bodhi Day, have taken over your lands.

You are here to join forces with the other lands – yes even Bodhi Day – so that your land can survive. All you ask is that Holiday Season not be commercial the way Christmas is turning out to be. Instead you want to be peaceful and naturalistic, more interested in the spirit of the holiday than the materialistic gift giving.

### What is going on?

Chanukah Harry and Santa Claus have invited you here to discuss merging all of your lands to form Holiday Season. This would allow you all to gain a great deal of power, but you would have to share it with others, and there is the risk that you'd lose your Holiday's uniqueness via assimilation. You have been gathered for hours, socializing and chatting, but now the real negotiations are about to begin.

There are several issues that need to be hammered out. As you read your character sheet, consider how your character might feel on these issues. Unless it explicitly says you do not care, you should feel strongly about at least one.

**Tradition vs. Assimilation:** How closely do we want to merge our holidays into the new land. Keeping our traditions preserves our individual identities, but the closer we merge, the stronger our overall land will be. Without some degree of assimilation, we might as well not merge at all. And if we do not merge, some of the smaller holidays risk being forgotten altogether.

**Belief vs. Almighty Dollars:** How do we want to power our holidays? Belief can be strong, but is fickle and can leave at a moment's notice. The Almighty Dollar will provide constant power and support, but perhaps at the cost of our souls.

**Leadership of the new Holiday:** Santa Claus and Hannukah Harry presume that they will lead, but not everyone shares in that agreement. Just because they are leading this roundtable, doesn't mean they will lead the new land. You need to make sure that your holiday has adequate representation.

### The Other Characters:

**Santa Claus (Christmas):** Alas, though you do not wish to dishonor his holiday, you fear that it is incompatible with your beliefs.

**Chanukah Harry (Chanukah):** His as well. He is far too materialistic and interested in rules instead of nature.

**The Prophet Mohammed (Ramadan):** He is spiritual, but does not recognize nature.

**Maulana (Kwanzaa):** You can see the truth: this man cares only for himself.

**Frantic Shopper (Boxing Day):** He/She needs to be calm and allow him/herself to regain touch with the kami.

**Father Time (New Years Eve):** He has lost something dear, you can tell.

**Harried Clerk (Black Friday):** He/She spends too much time serving others.

**Head of the Household (Festivus):** He does not seem very spiritual.

**Holly King and Oak King (Yule):** These two bicker and fight which is a shame as they are both servants of nature.

**Junkanoo Dancer (Junkanoo):** He does not seek the deeper understanding of the world around him.

**Buddha (Bodhi Day):** Alas, it is an unfortunate truth that you shall never truly appreciate the Buddha. Bodhi Day, when it was formed, eventually grew to take a good part of your land, and your land is the worse for it. While you understand that it is not the Buddha's fault, you still cannot entirely find it in your heart to forgive him.

# Santa Claus 1

## About You

You are not in fact Santa Claus. You are secretly Moses Claus from Chrismukkah. Chrismukkah is a combination of Christmas and Chanukah, and is sometimes called Chritsmaquanzica as well.

You look like Santa Claus, but you are more secular. Your holiday is so small that you do not actually have a holiday land. That is why you are here. You are trying to create one.

Because you have no holiday land, you have been spending your time in the Caves of Lost Rejection. This is where characters go when their holiday lands die or do not want them any more. It is the sorriest collection of misfits you have ever been unfortunate enough to be part of.

But not any more. You have a plan. After talking to other forgotten holiday representatives you learned something very important.

It seems that the lands are always changing, but the denizens of those lands don't seem to remember. Take Christmas for example, arguably the most powerful of the lands. Before there was Santa Claus, there was Saint Nicholas. And before there was Saint Nicholas, there was somebody called Jesus. And before that, Christmas didn't exist at all and the lands were part of a different holiday called Yule.

But if you ask the denizens of Christmas, they will have no idea what you are talking about. As far as they are concerned, Christmas is about giving gifts and decorating trees and mistletoe and it always has been. There is something about the holiday magic that makes people forget the past. Strange.

Then look at Patriotland. Patriotland used to be several different holidays that all merged together for protection. The 4<sup>th</sup> of July, President's Day, Veteran's Day, Memorial Day, Flag Day, and others. The oldest of these Lands is just over 200 years, but they think they have been there for

eternity. Some of those lands are less than fifty years old.

Now, think of Chrismukkah. Your land is the conglomeration of two holiday lands, sometimes more. What if you were able to combine all the winter holiday lands, say from the day after Thanksgiving to New Years into one?

Your Holiday Season could easily be the biggest, most powerful land out there and you would be de facto its spiritual leader.

But you knew that Santa Claus would object to such a plan. He needed to be removed from the equation.

So you went to Chanukah Harry, and the two of you hatched this plan. You would take care of Santa Claus and he would organize a gathering of all the winter holidays. You managed to kidnap Santa in a sack and he is tied up in a tree in the hinterlands.

Now you are pretending to be Santa Claus, and – as long as the others believe you are Santa Claus – you will eventually become Santa Claus. Or maybe Moses Claus would become the leader of Holiday Season, and that would be the way it has always been. Either way, as long as Holiday Season is formed, you cannot lose.

## Additional Background

Christmanukah is the most inclusive holiday ever. It combines the best parts of Christmas and Chanukah, like cookies and potato latkes. You get twenty days of presents: twelve for Christmas, eight for Chanukah.

The only other denizens of Christmanukah is a reindeer with a yarmulke and the Macabee elves, but you're hoping to expand. People decorate their houses with stockings filled with dreidels, and the menorah wreath, and the mazeltov mistletoe.

As Moses Claus, you come down the chimney and part the bowl of eggnog. You're Kringle kosher!

## Holiday Season

All of these jokes were stolen whole cloth from The Strangerhood.

### One Final Note

You desperately want Holiday Season to be formed, to the point that you don't really care about its structure or the identities of the individual holidays. All you care about is that you'll be in charge.

At some point other Santa Clauses may start arriving. The other characters will have to choose who the real Santa Claus is. You'd like it to be you.

### What is going on?

Chanukah Harry and Santa Claus have invited you here to discuss merging all of your lands to form Holiday Season. This would allow you all to gain a great deal of power, but you would have to share it with others, and there is the risk that you'd lose your Holiday's uniqueness via assimilation. You have been gathered for hours, socializing and chatting, but now the real negotiations are about to begin.

There are several issues that need to be hammered out. As you read your character sheet, consider how your character might feel on these issues. Unless it explicitly says you do not care, you should feel strongly about at least one.

**Tradition vs. Assimilation:** How closely do we want to merge our holidays into the new land. Keeping our traditions preserves our individual identities, but the closer we merge, the stronger our overall land will be. Without some degree of assimilation, we might as well not merge at all. And if we do not merge, some of the smaller holidays risk being forgotten altogether.

**Belief vs. Almighty Dollars:** How do we want to power our holidays? Belief can be strong, but is fickle and can leave at a moment's notice. The Almighty Dollar will provide constant power and support, but perhaps at the cost of our souls.

**Leadership of the new Holiday:** Santa Claus and Hannukah Harry presume that they will lead, but not everyone shares in that agreement. Just because

they are leading this roundtable, doesn't mean they will lead the new land. You need to make sure that your holiday has adequate representation.

### The Other Characters:

**Chanukah Harry (Chanukah):** He is in on the scheme and you need to work with him as he could blow it all sky high.

**The Prophet Mohammed (Ramadan):** His fiery nature may make it difficult to convince him. Perhaps you should just give in to any of his demands.

**Maulana (Kwanzaa):** He is practically insane. He'll be a hard sell.

**Frantic Shopper (Boxing Day):** You understand the siren call of rampant consumerism, but this person needs to calm down.

**Father Time (New Years Eve):** You have long suspected that lonely Father Time would be interested in joining forces with other holidays.

**Harried Clerk (Black Friday):** You think you can sell this as long as you are calm and soothing.

**Head of the Household (Festivus):** He doesn't seem interested, but maybe if you tried reverse psychology he might jump on board.

**Holly King and Oak King (Yule):** Yule still exists? You wonder if these two know that it used to be bigger than Christmas.

**Junkanoo Dancer (Junkanoo):** Another very small holiday that you don't really need. Still, the purpose of Holiday Season is to be all inclusive.

**Buddha (Bodhi Day):** Likewise, it would be a real feather in your cap to include this little known holiday.

**Shinto Priest (Oh-harai-taisai):** You barely can understand a word he is saying.

## Santa Claus 2

### About You

You are not in fact Santa Claus. You are secretly Saint Nicholas, the former leader of Christmasland, banished forever when Santa Claus took over.

You look like Santa Claus, but you are more religious. You believe that Christmas should be a time of joy and celebration, a chance to worship your Lord and your Creator. It shouldn't be a holiday about toys and gifts. That is too crass for such a divine birthday.

You have been banished to your Feast Day on December 6<sup>th</sup>. But now you have a chance to regain your glory and reshape Christmas in your image. All you have to do is be accepted as Santa Claus.

### What is going on?

Chanukah Harry and Santa Claus have invited several Holiday leaders to discuss merging all of their lands to form Holiday Season. This would allow them to gain a great deal of power, but they would have to share it with others, and there is the risk that they'd lose their Holiday's uniqueness via assimilation. They have been gathered for hours, socializing and chatting, but now the real negotiations are about to begin.

You, and several other fake Santas, have come here to meet the Christmas characters to try to convince them that you are the real Santa Claus. Whichever one of you is chosen becomes the real Santa for the rest of the game, and perhaps forever, potentially radically changing the nature of Christmas forever.

***You should arrive about five minutes after the game starts.***

There are several issues that need to be hammered out. As you read your character sheet, consider how your character might feel on these issues. Unless it explicitly says you do not care, you should feel strongly about at least one.

Tradition vs. Assimilation: How closely do we want to merge our holidays into the new land. Keeping our traditions preserves our individual identities, but the closer we merge, the stronger our overall land will be. Without some degree of assimilation, we might as well not merge at all. And if we do not merge, some of the smaller holidays risk being forgotten altogether.

Belief vs. Almighty Dollars: How do we want to power our holidays? Belief can be strong, but is fickle and can leave at a moment's notice. The Almighty Dollar will provide constant power and support, but perhaps at the cost of our souls.

Leadership of the new Holiday: Santa Claus and Hannukah Harry presume that they will lead, but not everyone shares in that agreement. Just because they are leading this roundtable, doesn't mean they will lead the new land. You need to make sure that your holiday has adequate representation.

### Additional Background

Saint Nicholas is the Patron Saint of seafarers, scholars, bankers, pawnbrokers, jurists, brewers, coopers, travelers, perfumers, unmarried girls, brides, robbers and especially children.

Saint Nicholas, like St. Wenceslaus and St. Lucy, was a saint. He was the bishop of a city named Myra in Turkey in the early part of the fourth century. His feast day is December 6th because he died on December 6 or 7 in the middle of the fourth century. Feast days celebrate the entry of the saint's soul into Heaven.

The most famous story told about St. Nicholas has to do with three young sisters who were very poor. Their parents were so poor that they did not have enough money for the daughters to get married. Every young girl needed money to pay for the wedding and to set up house for themselves.

Nicholas heard about this family and wanted to help them, but he did not want anyone to know that he was the one who was helping them. So, he climbed

up on their roof three nights in a row and threw gold coins down their chimney so that they would land in the girls' stockings, which had been hung by the fire to dry. After two of his daughters had been able to marry because of the money mysteriously appearing in their stockings, the father was determined to find out who was helping them, so he hid behind the chimney the next night. Along came Bishop Nicholas with another bag of money.

When he was discovered, he asked the father not to tell anyone else, but the father wanted everyone to know what a good and generous man the Bishop Nicholas was, so he told everyone he knew. That is how we have the story and the tradition of stocking full of gifts today.

### **The Other Characters:**

**Santa Claus 1:** You don't know who he is, but he is not the "real" Santa Claus.

**Santa Claus 4:** Ah, that's Kris Kringle. He might be considered the real Santa Claus now, but if you are voted Santa Claus then you would be the real one.

**The Oak King and the Holly King:** They seem quite familiar. You may have heard of them from somewhere.

## Santa Claus 3

### About You

You are not in fact Santa Claus. You are secretly Krampus, a Germanic satyr who used to follow Santa around and punish the naughty children. Normally, you look very much like a traditional devil with red skin, horns, and hairy cloven hooves. Oh, and you have a 12" tongue which makes you very popular with the ladies, indeed.

You were spending time in the Caves of Lost Rejections, a place where characters go when their holidays don't want them any more, when you ran into a man with a plan.

You happened to overhear Moses Claus, the leader of Christmukkah plot with Hannukah Harry to change Christmas forever.

They want to combine all the winter holidays into one with Santa Claus in the lead, except that Moses Claus would pretend to be Santa. Apparently anyone who was accepted as Santa Claus, would eventually *become* Santa Claus and be able to rule Christmas however he wished.

You had a brilliant idea, visions of punishing nasty children and getting it on with their hot MILF mommas dancing in your head. You would disguise yourself as Santa Claus and try to be accepted at the meeting as the real head of Christmas.

So, now you look and sound just like Santa Claus. And if you can get the other characters to accept you, you can *be* Santa Claus forever, and eventually show your true form, too.

By the way, your disguise is malleable and you can drop all or part of it at any time and then bring it back up at will, in case, for example, you want Krampus to appear in all his glory, or you want Santa to have a foot long tongue.

Also, since you know that Moses Claus was planning to kidnap Santa and tie him up, you should tell people that you were kidnapped and tied up to a

tree in the Hinterlands. You suspect that Moses Claus would use a sack or a disguise so that Santa wouldn't know who did it.

### What is going on?

Chanukah Harry and Santa Claus have invited several Holiday leaders to discuss merging all of their lands to form Holiday Season. This would allow them to gain a great deal of power, but they would have to share it with others, and there is the risk that they'd lose their Holiday's uniqueness via assimilation. They have been gathered for hours, socializing and chatting, but now the real negotiations are about to begin.

You, and several other fake Santas, have come here to meet the Christmas characters to try to convince them that you are the real Santa Claus. Whichever one of you is chosen becomes the real Santa for the rest of the game, and perhaps forever, potentially radically changing the nature of Christmas forever.

***You should arrive about three minutes after the previous Santa Claus (#2) does.***

There are several issues that need to be hammered out. As you read your character sheet, consider how your character might feel on these issues. Unless it explicitly says you do not care, you should feel strongly about at least one.

Tradition vs. Assimilation: How closely do we want to merge our holidays into the new land. Keeping our traditions preserves our individual identities, but the closer we merge, the stronger our overall land will be. Without some degree of assimilation, we might as well not merge at all. And if we do not merge, some of the smaller holidays risk being forgotten altogether.

Belief vs. Almighty Dollars: How do we want to power our holidays? Belief can be strong, but is fickle and can leave at a moment's notice. The Almighty Dollar will provide constant power and support, but perhaps at the cost of our souls.



## Holiday Season

Leadership of the new Holiday: Santa Claus and Hannukah Harry presume that they will lead, but not everyone shares in that agreement. Just because they are leading this roundtable, doesn't mean they will lead the new land. You need to make sure that your holiday has adequate representation.

### Additional Background

(Shamelessly stolen from rotten.com)

Krampus is one of those quirky survivals of a pagan tradition that preceded Christianity. Much like Santa himself. Santa Claus is a Christianization of a handful of traditional winter solstice figures, who morphed into St. Nicholas after the Catholics swarmed into Austria.

The tradition is primarily an Austrian thing, although it spread erratically around Europe. There are two takes on Krampus, one being a secular humanist approach and the other being a magic tradition angle.

In the secular humanist approach, Krampus and the observation of Krampus traditions are pretty much just the antithesis of Santa Claus. On Dec. 5, the eve of the feast day of St. Nick, Austrians celebrate Krampus by running across the city in grotesque masks and generally scaring children.

In other variations on the theme (and there a lot of variations considering what a relatively small geographical area we're talking about here), Krampus is one of Santa's minions, who follows along obediently passing out presents or switches depending on the moral turpitude of the child in question.

The other interpretation of Krampus is more mystical. Under this theory, people dress up in the hideous masks of Krampus in order to scare off evil spirits.

Once the Christians criminalized orgiastic excess, the Krampus-fertility nexus evolved into more of a taboo-stalker kind of scenario, in which the devilish figure, traditionally depicted with a swollen foot-long red tongue, malevolently thrusts himself on nubile women who are eternally "protesting" his

advances. But not protesting too much. After all, he had a foot-long red tongue.

A cottage industry in Austria from Victorian times through the present has been the production of Krampus postcards to commemorate the holiday season. These tend to feature Krampus and his prodigious tongue assailing various Betti Page-type pinup girls (or even pure-hearted Austrian housefraus) with his lecherous advances.

### The Other Characters:

**Santa Claus 1:** Moses Claus. You should denounce him as soon as possible to show that you are the *real* Santa Claus.

**Hannukah Harry:** The leader of Hannukah. He's a package of neuroses and might be easily intimidated into doing your bidding.

**Santa Claus 4:** Ah, that's Kris Kringle. He might be considered the real Santa Claus now, but if you are voted Santa Claus then you would be the real one.

## Santa Claus 4

### About You

You are the actual Santa Claus. You had taken a trip with Rudolph to the Island of Misfit Toys and while you were left alone, someone snuck up on you and stuffed you in your own magic sack. You couldn't escape.

You were brought through the Hinterlands and tied to a tree. You couldn't see your captor since you were in your sack.

You were eventually able to coax some friendly squirrels to untie the sack and you hotfooted it toward the closest holiday you could find to get your bearings.

And that is how you ended up here. You don't know what is going on, but something is definitely wrong here.

### What is going on?

You don't know what is going on. You don't know why there are so many imitators here. You are the real Santa Claus!

*You should arrive about five minutes after the previous Santa Claus (#3) does.*

### Additional Background

You *are* Santa Claus and shouldn't make mistakes with your history, but you are slightly disoriented from your ordeal, and it is possible you might slip up.

Santa Claus, also known as Father Christmas, Kris Kringle, or simply "Santa", is the ghost of Saint Nicholas who, in Western cultures, is described as bringing gifts on Christmas Eve, December 24. The legend may have its basis in hagiographical tales concerning the historical figure of Saint Nicholas.

The modern depiction of Santa Claus as a fat, jolly man (or gnome) wearing a red coat and trousers with white cuffs and collar, and black leather belt

and boots, became popular in the United States in the 19th century due to the significant influence of caricaturist and political cartoonist Thomas Nast.

This image has been maintained and reinforced through song, radio, television, and films. In the United Kingdom and Europe, his depiction is often identical to the American Santa, but he is commonly called Father Christmas.

One legend associated with Santa says that he lives in the far north, in a land of perpetual snow. The American version of Santa Claus lives at the North Pole, while Father Christmas is said to reside in Lapland. Other details include: that he is married and lives with Mrs. Claus; that he makes a list of children throughout the world, categorizing them according to their behavior; that he delivers presents, including toys, candy, and other presents to all of the good boys and girls in the world, and sometimes coal or sticks to the naughty children, in one night; and that he accomplishes this feat with the aid of magical elves who make the toys, and eight or nine flying reindeer who pull his sleigh.

### The Other Characters:

**Santa Claus 2:** He is actually Saint Nicholas, the former incarnation of Santa Claus. You don't know why he would be here claiming he was you.

**Santa Claus 3:** He seems familiar, but you don't know why.

**The Oak King and the Holly King:** They also seem faintly familiar, but you aren't sure why.

## Santa Claus 5

### About You

You are not in fact Santa Claus. You are secretly Odin, the highfather from Yule and the one that Santa Claus was most likely based off of.

You still live in the holiday of Yule, where you tend the Yule log. You are bitter that you have lost your position of prominence. You were once allfather, leader of your pantheon, but times changed and Saint Nicholas then Santa Claus took over.

When you heard that there was going to be a conference about Holiday Season, that the Oak King and the holly King would be attending, you knew you had to be there too.

If you could be accepted as Santa Claus, then you could lead this new Holiday Season and Yule would again gain the prominence it once had.

### What is going on?

Chanukah Harry and Santa Claus have invited several Holiday leaders to discuss merging all of their lands to form Holiday Season. This would allow them to gain a great deal of power, but they would have to share it with others, and there is the risk that they'd lose their Holiday's uniqueness via assimilation. They have been gathered for hours, socializing and chatting, but now the real negotiations are about to begin.

You, and several other fake Santas, have come here to meet the Christmas characters to try to convince them that you are the real Santa Claus. Whichever one of you is chosen becomes the real Santa for the rest of the game, and perhaps forever, potentially radically changing the nature of Christmas forever.

***You should arrive a few minutes after the previous Santa Claus (#4) does. Make sure to get there before any confessions to holiday treason are made, if possible.***

There are several issues that need to be hammered out. As you read your character sheet, consider

how your character might feel on these issues. Unless it explicitly says you do not care, you should feel strongly about at least one.

Tradition vs. Assimilation: How closely do we want to merge our holidays into the new land. Keeping our traditions preserves our individual identities, but the closer we merge, the stronger our overall land will be. Without some degree of assimilation, we might as well not merge at all. And if we do not merge, some of the smaller holidays risk being forgotten altogether.

Belief vs. Almighty Dollars: How do we want to power our holidays? Belief can be strong, but is fickle and can leave at a moment's notice. The Almighty Dollar will provide constant power and support, but perhaps at the cost of our souls.

Leadership of the new Holiday: Santa Claus and Hannukah Harry presume that they will lead, but not everyone shares in that agreement. Just because they are leading this roundtable, doesn't mean they will lead the new land. You need to make sure that your holiday has adequate representation.

### Additional Background

Yule was the winter solstice celebration of the Germanic pagans. It is one of the eight solar holidays, or sabbats. Yule is celebrated on the winter solstice: in the northern hemisphere, circa December 21.

Yule is celebrated with gatherings that often involve a meal and gift giving. The holiday is observed in a manner that commemorates the death of the Oak King identified with the wren bird (symbolizing the old year and the shortened sun) at the hands of his son and successor, the robin redbreast Holly King (the new year and the new sun that begins to grow).

Prior to the Germanic peoples' conversion to Christianity, Germanic folklore contained stories about the god Odin (Wodan), who would each year, at Yule, have a great hunting party accompanied by

his fellow gods and the fallen warriors residing in his realm.

***You have information sheets for the Oak and Holly King to give them when you arrive.***

Children would place their boots, filled with carrots, straw or sugar, near the chimney for Odin's flying horse, Sleipnir, to eat. Odin would then reward those children for their kindness by replacing Sleipnir's food with gifts or candy.

### **The Other Characters:**

**The Oak King and the Holly King:** The Holly King and the Oak King are part of Celtic mythology, and they represent two sides to the Greenman, or Horned God.

They battle twice a year, once at Yule and once at Midsummer (Litha) to see who would rule over the next half of the year. At Yule, the Oak King wins and at Litha, the Holly King is victorious. In other words, the Oak King rules over the lighter half of the year, and the Holly King over the darker half. The change from one to the other is a common theme for rituals at Yule, and also at Midsummer.

Another version of the Holly King and Oak King symbolism, is that they do not directly switch places twice a year, but rather both live simultaneously. The Oak King is born at Yule, and his strength grows through the spring, peaks at Beltane and then he weakens and dies at Samhain. The Holly King lives a reverse existence, and is born at Midsummer, waxes more powerful through the summer and fall, to his peak at Samhain. His influence then lessens until Beltane, when it is his turn to pass away. In this perspective, the two Kings enjoy a more intricate interplay of power and is perhaps a better illustration of their duality. At any given time, they both exist but have varying levels of influence throughout the year.

Either way, each King represents different ideas. The time of the Oak King is for growth, development, healing, and new projects. The Holly King's time is for rest, reflection, and learning.

The absolutely hate each other, but they should recognize you and support your bid for Santa.

***GM: Give these sheets to Santa #5 to give out when he arrives.***

## **Oak King Contingency Sheet**

Hey! You recognize that Santa!

That's Odin, the keeper of the Yule log from Yuletown. He often claimed that the concept of Santa Claus was based on him, so he must be here trying to take over the mantle again.

Should he be chosen as the real Santa Claus, it could be a huge boon for Yule. You need to support him any way you can, even if it mean working with the Holly King to do it.

## **Holly King Contingency Sheet**

Hey! You recognize that Santa!

That's Odin, the keeper of the Yule log from Yuletown. He often claimed that the concept of Santa Claus was based on him, so he must be here trying to take over the mantle again.

Should he be chosen as the real Santa Claus, it could be a huge boon for Yule. You need to support him any way you can, even if it mean working with the Oak King to do it.

## Santa Claus 6

### About You

You are not in fact Santa Claus. You are secretly The Prophet Zarathustra, who looks a whole bunch like Santa Claus.

You do not have a holiday land, per se. You wander the Hinterlands with few followers and little belief.

However, this could change in one of two ways. If you could be accepted as Santa Claus, you could merge your Holiday with Christmastown. This is a longshot.

More likely, you could try to become part of Holiday Season. There is a holiday commemorating your death on December 26<sup>th</sup>, and that falls within the purview of Holiday Season. You will have to see if they accept you.

### What is going on?

Chanukah Harry and Santa Claus have invited several Holiday leaders to discuss merging all of their lands to form Holiday Season. This would allow them to gain a great deal of power, but they would have to share it with others, and there is the risk that they'd lose their Holiday's uniqueness via assimilation. They have been gathered for hours, socializing and chatting, but now the real negotiations are about to begin.

You, and several other fake Santas, have come here to meet the Christmas characters to try to convince them that you are the real Santa Claus. Whichever one of you is chosen becomes the real Santa for the rest of the game, and perhaps forever, potentially radically changing the nature of Christmas forever.

***You should arrive a few minutes after the previous Santa Claus (#5) does.***

There are several issues that need to be hammered out. As you read your character sheet, consider how your character might feel on these issues.

Unless it explicitly says you do not care, you should feel strongly about at least one.

Tradition vs. Assimilation: How closely do we want to merge our holidays into the new land. Keeping our traditions preserves our individual identities, but the closer we merge, the stronger our overall land will be. Without some degree of assimilation, we might as well not merge at all. And if we do not merge, some of the smaller holidays risk being forgotten altogether.

Belief vs. Almighty Dollars: How do we want to power our holidays? Belief can be strong, but is fickle and can leave at a moment's notice. The Almighty Dollar will provide constant power and support, but perhaps at the cost of our souls.

Leadership of the new Holiday: Santa Claus and Hannukah Harry presume that they will lead, but not everyone shares in that agreement. Just because they are leading this roundtable, doesn't mean they will lead the new land. You need to make sure that your holiday has adequate representation.

### Additional Background

Zoroastrianism was once the state religion of Sassanid Iran, and played an important role in the Achaemenid as well as Parthian empires in Persia or more properly Iran. The religion is also known as Mazdaism by some followers and Zarathustrianism by others.

Zoroastrian areas once stretched from Anatolia as the religion of the Medes in what is now modern day Kurdistan to the Persian Gulf, and its followers once numbered in the millions. Its followers today, located in South Asia, Iran, and throughout the diaspora, number much less.

Many traits of this ancient Iranian religion of Aryan origin, which has strong similarities before its reformation to the faiths of Northern India and the Viking or Norse religion in Northern Europe, are present in modern Persians, Azerbaijanis, Armenians, Kurds, and Eurasian peoples.

## Holiday Season

The origin of the religion is ascribed to the prophet Zarathushtra, who is commonly known in the Western world as Zoroaster, the Greek version of his name.

### Principle Beliefs:

Ahura Mazda is the beginning and the end, the creator of everything which can and cannot be seen, the Eternal, the Pure and the only Truth. Zoroastrian morality is summed up in the simple phrase, "Good Thoughts, Good Words, Good Deeds" Daena is the eternal Law, whose order was revealed to humanity through the Mathra-Spenta "Holy Words". Daena has been used to mean religion, faith, law, even as a translation for the Hindu and Buddhist term Dharma: it is the correct order of the universe, which humanity naturally must follow through the Kusti "Holy Path" in order to be a Behdini "Follower of the Proper/Good Religion".

Central to Zoroastrianism is the emphasis on moral choice; of life as a battle-ground between moral and immoral forces, represented by Spenta Mainyu the 'good spirit' emanation of Ahura Mazda, and his antithesis the Satanic Angra Mainyu. This opposition may have emerged from the Indo-Iranian distinction between two forms of spiritual beings, ahuras and daevas. In Zoroastrianism, daevas are portrayed as demonic and destructive while ahuras help to uphold the moral law.

### Specific Zoroastrian concepts

Zoroastrianism teaches many of the concepts found in the major Abrahamic faiths such as Heaven, Hell, the Last Judgment, Satan, prophecy, the coming of the Messiah, angels, and evil spirits.

According to the Gathas humans are free and responsible beings. Predestination is rejected in Zoroastrian teaching. Humans bear responsibility for all situations they are in, and in the way they act to one another. Nothing in the Heavens and Earth has the power to force a being to do evil. Reward, punishment, happiness and grief all depend on how individuals live their life. Good befalls the people who do righteous deeds. Those who do evil have themselves to blame for their evil-doing.

The Prophet Zoroaster acknowledged devotion to no other god besides Ahura Mazda. The concept of Dualism plays a role when speaking of the Spenta Mainyu ("Holy Spirit") and the Angra Mainyu ("Evil Spirit"). These two have a constant battle, at the end of which the Holy Spirit will prevail by the power of Ahura Mazda.

Zoroaster is generally accepted as a historical figure, but efforts to date Zoroaster vary widely. Scholarly estimates are usually roughly near 1700 BC. Others, however, give earlier estimates, making him a candidate as the founder of the earliest religion based on revealed scripture, while still others place him in the 6th century BC, which would make him contemporary to the rise of the Achaemenids.