

In Starlight Cold

Forever have the People lived
In starlight cold;
But now we gather, and soon ascend,
And go together to world's end.



GANAKAGOK is the name of the great island of ice upon which a tribe of primitive, fur-clad hunters called the Nitu eke out a tenuous existence beneath a black sky ablaze with stars.

The Nitu live on a vast snowdrift-covered ice-pack that surrounds a gigantic central iceberg whose upper reaches have at some point in the past, far beyond living memory, been shaped into enormous towers and cascading stairs, intricate labyrinths and soaring spires. The Nitu say that

it is the work of the Forgotten Ones, vanished beings of immense power and mysterious purpose whose relics are sometimes yet found out on the ice. But the glacial plains are haunted by dangers, such as monstrous creatures called the cannibal-ghouls, and they are fearsome and terrible.

The People marvel at the legacy of the Forgotten Ones. The People honor their Ancestors, whose spirits watch over their living descendants and protect them when they can. And the People revere the Stars, whom they regard as stern judges of the moral rectitude of the Nitu and incorruptible guarantors of the harmony of the cosmic order. The first line of an oft-told origin myth of the People conveys something of this reverence. "Forever have the People lived in starlight cold," chant the shamans of the People.

But now the Stars begin to fade. And in the counsels of the wise, the visions of the far-sighted, and the mutterings of the mad comes a new refrain. Dawn is coming. Night is ending. Soon the Sun will rise.

And all wonder: What will it mean for the People?

into new waters, raising a fog into which the People are frightened to venture.

Read the three cards to determine what's going on with your character. The first card becomes your Truth-Vision; the second, your Change-Hope; the third, your Change-Fear.

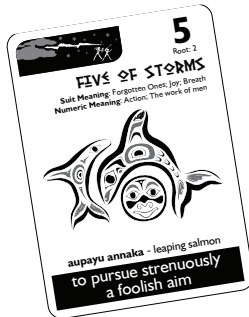
The value of your Change-Hope card determines the amount of Good Medicine your character receives. The value of your Change-Fear card determines the amount of Bad Medicine your character receives.

Truth-Vision. Read the truth-vision card to tell you why or how the character came to believe that a major change is coming to the world or the people. It is the characters' truth-visions that make them exceptional in the world of Ganakagok; it is they who, because they are convinced that the portents and signs of change must be heeded, drive the action of the game. Encourage the players to tie their truth-visions to the situation determined by the play of previous cards, and to look forward to their change-hopes and change-fears in developing the truth-vision.



*Alfie gets the **Two of Stars** (Ivory Carving: to tell or reveal) as his truth-vision. He looks closer at the card and sees that it is connected to the notion of duality and opposition, which to him seems to frame the relationship between the Stars and the Sun as an antagonistic one. Looking ahead, he notes that his change-hope card is associated with the Sun, so he decides that the Sun herself appeared to him in a dream and told him of her impending rise (and*

thus “to tell or reveal”), and how it would be opposed by a champion of the Stars, and how he must steel himself to defeat that champion so that the Dawn may finally come. This is a good reading! It pushes the character to action immediately, and it pushes other players to align their characters with or against Alfie’s.



Beth gets the **Five of Storms** (*Leaping Salmon: to pursue strenuously a foolish aim*) as her truth-vision. She sees this as meaning that her character ventured out far to the east in his kayak and saw the glimmerings of dawn before being thrown back by a storm. This reading is actually rather weak,

since it does little to drive the character’s initial actions. However, it potentially establishes the storm as a plot device that can interfere with the rising of the sun (maybe the champion of the Stars is the avatar of the storm!) or the action of the People.

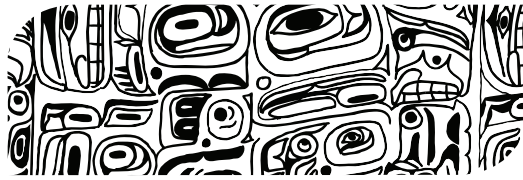
Gabriel gets the **Eight of Tears** (*Two Walruses Battle: to engage in loud or violent conflict*) as his truth-vision. He interprets it as meaning that he got into a loud and public argument with his brother about going out into the fog, the likes of which has never been seen before. What others say



is also fairly weak, although it does motivate the character to respond to the active pleas, appeals, and plans of other characters.

Ganakagok Tarot Summary

If you don't have a Ganakagok tarot deck, you can use a normal deck of playing cards to play by using this table of motifs.



Tears (Spades)

Ancient	Ace	Polar Bear: to overcome or master (medicine 16, root 4)
Man	King	Father: to lead, compel, or demand (medicine 14, root 3)
Woman	Queen	Bad Weather: to resist or oppose (medicine 14, root 3)
Child	Jack	Scout: to watch without being seen (medicine 12, root 3)
Ten	10	Stolen Treasure: to suffer ill-use or injury; to be wronged (medicine 10, root 3)
Nine	9	Darkness: to lose hope, to despair (medicine 9, root 3)
Eight	8	Two Walruses Battle: to engage in loud or violent effort (medicine 8, root 2)
Seven	7	Sea Birds in Flight: to quarrel (medicine 7, root 2)
Six	6	Journey: to travel; to experience growth or change (medicine 6, root 2)
Five	5	Chill in the Bones: to feel shame; to know weakness (medicine 5, root 2)
Four	4	Owl in Flight: to seek solitude (medicine 4, root 2)
Three	3	Sea Bird Alight: to harbor resentment (medicine 3, root 1)
Two	2	School of Fish: to court or become friends (medicine 2, root 1)

Player Preparation Summary

1. As a group and with the facilitation of the GM, draw two pairs of cards and read each to determine the *Situation of the World* and the *Situation of the Nitu*.
2. Draw three cards to read as your *truth-vision*, *change-hope*, and *change-fear*.
3. Determine your character's *name* and *identity*.
4. Allocate 10 points among Body, Face, Mind, and Soul (minimum 1, maximum 4) and divide 10 mana among at least three of the Ancestors, the Forgotten Ones, the Stars, and the Sun (minimum 1, no maximum).
5. Create three personal *Gifts* and three points worth of *Burdens* for your character.
6. Add your character to the *Nitu Map*.
7. Place another character (defined by name and identity) or add a folkway (cultural fact) to the Nitu map.
8. Add a location or other geographical/cosmological fact to the *Ganakagok Map*.
9. Go around the table and add one *Love* and one *Hate* to the *Nitu Map*.
10. Re-seat yourself in order of character age from youngest to oldest.
11. After the cards are collected and shuffled, draw three *Medicine cards* to use during play.

Turn Summary

1. **Draw Situation Card.** Narrate, roleplay, or describe active character's response.
2. **Identify Crux of the Situation.** Determine the nature of the crux (i.e., Body, Face, Mind, or Soul)
3. **Draw Consequence Card.** Briefly examine, but do not get bogged down in analysis; the winner of the player-turn gets to narrate what this means in context.
4. **Roll the Dice.** Determine number of dice to be rolled by adding relevant Mana for scene and action, spending Good Medicine (up to the value of the crucial attribute) if desired, and/or using a Medicine card if desired. After the dice are rolled but before intermediate narration is determined, the GM can draw up to N of your Bad Medicine and add them as dice set at 6.
5. **Provide Intermediate Narration.** Whoever has more dice in their favor (e.g., for the player, at or below the crucial attribute) narrates the developing situation. Ties go the GM.
6. **React.** Go around the table up to two times and invoke Gifts, Burdens, and other game-elements to shift dice. As a player, you can invoke the following things (the GM follows slightly different rules):
 - ✧ Your identity, if it is relevant to what you are doing (no more than one point).
 - ✧ Any of your Gifts, justified by their utility to your efforts (up to its strength).

- ✧ Any Love that you get, if the lover could aid your efforts (up to its strength).
- ✧ Any Love that you give, if you are acting on behalf of your beloved (up to its strength).
- ✧ Lore from the Ganakagok or Nitu Map that relates to your efforts (no more than one point).
- ✧ Your presence in the scene (no more than one point).
- ✧ Your change-hope, if you are pursuing it in your current efforts (no more than one point).

7. Provide Final Narration. This narration should be in line with the consequence card. Whoever has more non-Medicine dice in their favor narrates. In other words, if there are more Gift dice than Burden dice, the player wins. Otherwise, the GM wins narration rights. Ties go to the player.

8. Determine Consequences. The final values of the rolled dice determine the amount of Good and Bad Medicine to distribute. Additionally, other dice at or below the crucial attribute provide Gifts while other dice above the crucial attribute provide Burdens. Each Gift or Burden taken reduces the Stars in the Night Sky by one. Medicine has to be allocated; Gifts and Burdens can be waived by the active player and the GM respectively.

9. Check for Stage Change. If the Stars in the Night Sky have dropped below the threshold for Twilight, Dawn, or Morning, move to the next stage of the game. See "**Getting to the End of the Game,**" below.