

ICARUS

**A STORYTELLING GAME ABOUT
HOW GREAT CIVILIZATIONS FALL**



RULEBOOK

ICARUS

**A STORYTELLING GAME ABOUT
HOW GREAT CIVILIZATIONS FALL**



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THE GAME

Icarus is a collaborative storytelling game about the fall of a great civilization. Every game begins in a city-nation known as Icarus at the height of its power where, in celebration, the city has decided to erect a massive, ever-growing monument in the center of town to display its prestige to the world. Each of you will choose a pillar of this society to embody and receive a motive for the character you're playing. During the game, you'll be stacking dice to represent the construction of this monument, drawing cards from a story deck to create the escalating events in the city, and influencing the outcome of those events through actions driven by your characters' motives. You'll collaboratively discover what it means for a civilization to decay, as they all do with time, and when the monument finally falls, your civilization falls with it and the game comes to an end.

COMPONENTS

- 20 Icarus Dice
- 12 Pillars of Society Cards
- 5 Motive Cards
- 12 The Cracks In Our Facade Cards
- 12 The Rifts Between Us Cards
- 12 The Final Hours Cards
- 1 Bitter End Card
- 50 Sheet Aspect Pad

INTRODUCTION

If this is your first roleplaying game, welcome! Icarus is a great place to start; it has influences in traditional board games, but pushes players to really think about how their characters might act under certain circumstances. This gives it the feel of a traditional RPG, but also invites players to create the world they're playing in. It has a little bit of everything and will serve you well as a base for your roleplaying experiences to come!

For the more experienced RPG players, especially those who play games like *Dungeons & Dragons* or *Pathfinder*, Icarus might be a substantial change from what you're used to. It does not have a game master or character stats, and is a collaborative experience that puts the focus on the story you're creating together. The game takes place over a number of rounds and uses a deck of cards to spur conflicts and seed stories. You're often speaking about your character in third person, and looking at their actions on a macro-scale. It's not a traditional roleplaying experience, but it's a game that encourages you and your friends to tell sprawling, tragic, and exciting stories in a unique way.

SAFETY TOOLS

X-CARD: Sometimes during Icarus, there will be the opportunity to explore ideas that can be emotionally difficult, gruesome, or strange. Because of this, it's important to consider having an X-Card on the table at all times. This is a notecard with a large X drawn on it that can be held up or tapped by any player if something crosses a line for them. It's not designed to stifle these conversations, but rather allow players the ability to jump head first into difficult subjects with a safety net if things go too far for anyone. If any player feels uncomfortable with something that is happening and doesn't want it to be a part of the game they're playing, the X-Card is a mechanized way to do that. When the X-Card is played, discussion should pause while the player clarifies the subject or detail they want removed, and the game should quickly continue with these boundaries in place. If anyone has deeper questions about why the X-Card was used, these discussions can be saved until after the game is over.

LINES & VEILS: Players may also choose to use Lines & Veils during the game to help talk about sensitive subjects. To do this, all players should make clear any lines they don't want crossed before the game begins, and those boundaries should be adhered to by everyone at the table. This list can always be amended as the game progresses. If something comes up that is uncomfortable for someone to discuss, but they don't want it removed outright from the game, anyone can pull a veil over it by "fading to black" or saying it happens and quickly moving on. Any discussions of why should be saved for after the game.

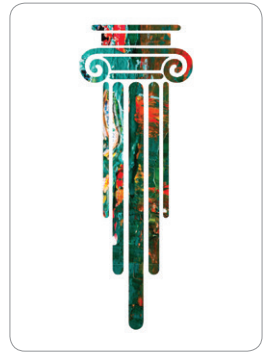


Story Deck

(Cracks in our Facade, Rifts Between Us, The Final Hours)



Motive



Pillar

SET-UP

Icarus is a GM-less game, meaning unlike some other roleplaying games, there is not one person controlling the world. Instead, players do that together. The game uses around 20 D6 dice to play. Because of the stacking mechanic, **it's very important to use rounded-edge dice**. If playing without the custom Icarus dice, we recommend two standard Chessex D6 packs of 16mm dice for the game, but anything equivalent will work just as well.

To set up the game, separate the cards into their five main parts: *Pillars of Society*, *Motives*, *The Cracks in our Facade*, *The Rifts Between Us*, *The Final Hours*, and *The Bitter End*.

There are ways to use a normal poker deck to play Icarus. See the "Oracle" section near the back on pg.32 to see how this is done.

Begin by creating the Story Deck used during the game. To do this, place the Pillars of Society and Motives aside. Take the black-backed The Bitter End card and place it face down on the table. Shuffle The Final Hours cards and put all of them face down in a pile on top of this card. Then shuffle The Rifts Between Us cards and randomly put five of them on top of The Final Hours cards. Put the rest back in the box, they won't be needed for the rest of the game. Lastly, shuffle The Cracks In Our Facade cards and randomly put five of them on top of The Rifts Between Us cards so that the decks is comprised of, top to bottom, five of The Cracks in our Facade cards, five of The Rifts

Between Us cards, twelve of The Final Hours cards, and finally the Bitter End card. The Story Deck is now ready.

Next, go around the table and decide what kind of setting or theme the players want to explore during the game. There are prompts in the “Setting Suggestions” part of this book to help get you started, but players can make up their own if desired.

Once players have collaboratively decided on a place, the city of Icarus will be set. Next, players will move on to examining the traits that make up their society’s strengths and weaknesses.

PILLARS OF SOCIETY

Shuffle the twelve Pillars of Society cards and randomly draw cards equal to the number of players, plus one. Place them all face-up in the middle of the table. Each player will choose one Pillar that they’re interested in exploring during the game and place it in front of them. The single left-over Pillar card will stay in the center of the table and serve as the inspiration for the creation of the city’s monument.

Each of the Pillar cards has a strength and weakness question. One of the Pillars chosen will serve as a weakness, while all of the others will be strengths. Decide collaboratively which is most interesting for Icarus to have as a weakness. Feel free to read the questions on the Pillar cards aloud to the table so that everybody knows what the choices are.

Once players have decided on a weakness, the player who holds that Pillar answers the Weakness question on their card aloud and creates an aspect (see Aspects) that summarizes that answer succinctly. The rest of the players will answer the Strength questions on their cards and create aspects that summarize their answers as well. There is no need to do this for the Tower’s Pillar card; there will be a different question for that card in the “Setting The Stage” section.

This process should take no more than 20 minutes; players don’t need to flush out the entire civilization here. That will be done during the game. Instead, use this as an opportunity to create great fodder for the story ahead. Lean into answers that are challenging, interesting, and have the opportunity to expand over the course of the story.

ASPECTS

An aspect is a phrase, sentence, or idea written on a notecard and placed on the table to remind players of the answer to a question the game has posed. An aspect might be something like “city has a fear of stone golems” or “We’re running out of water! The river has been dammed by someone up north.” It can also relate to a certain character like “President says dissenters should be executed” or “Jacob is the only survivor of his expedition.” If you don’t have the included aspect cards, use regular note cards, sticky notes, or even just ripped pieces of paper instead.

Aspects can be replaced by removing the old aspect and putting something else in its place, or added on to by creating a new one entirely and placing it close-by. When placing aspects during the game, figure out where on the table makes the most sense and create a sort of mind map of the city. For example, an aspect that says “The grain fields have been poisoned and people are getting sick because of it” would probably sit somewhere between the Agriculture and Health Pillars, and close by to any other aspects involving crops.

EXAMPLE OF PLAY

Hannah, Tomer, and Luis are playing a three player game of Icarus. They’ve decided on the Final Frontier as their setting because they’re all interested in science fiction and alien worlds. Hannah randomly draws 4 Pillars of Society cards to put out on the table (one more than the number of players) and reads them aloud: “Religion, Energy, Education, and Health.” Knowing she is interested in exploring cool alien technology, Hannah picks Energy as her Pillar and puts it in front of her. Luis is contemplating between Education and Health, but decides that he’s more captivated by how we have survived as a species so far away from our home planet, so he grabs Health. Left with two choices, Tomer makes the decision to go with Religion because he thinks it might be interesting to see how it has evolved since we’ve discovered life on other planets. This leaves Education in the center of the table as the reason for the city’s great monument. They’ll return to this card later.

After reading both the strength and weakness questions on his Pillar of Society card, Luis offers his weakness as a potential option. “I think this could introduce a good conflict for us to start with,” he says. “The Health

weakness is, “There is a deadly epidemic with no known cure being hidden from the public to avoid panic in city. What is it, and how is it being quietly dealt with or covered up?”

Tomer replies, “I was interested in my Pillar, Religion, being used as the weakness too, but I think I like yours better! What if it’s like an alien bacteria our bodies are vulnerable to?” Hannah adds to that by saying, “Yeah, so that only the humans in Icarus are affected by it.” Luis thinks, then says, “I like that, and I think it implants itself in the brain and feeds off of memories. They cover it up by giving them medicine that secretly incepts newly generated memories to replace the ones they lost.” He writes “Memory-feeding bacteria infecting humans. Medicine only generates fake replacement memories” on a notecard, creating the game’s first aspect. He places it in front of him, facing the rest of the players.

Hannah and Tomer read the strength questions of their Pillar cards and answer them as Aspects too. They’ll have the chance to elaborate on them when they share and want them to be quickly identifiable on the table, so they don’t write more than a sentence or two. Once they’ve completed their aspects, Hannah and Tomer also talk briefly about their answers.

CHARACTERS

Shuffle the Motive cards and deal one randomly to each player. Players will combine the motive they receive with the Pillar they’ve chosen to create a character that they control during the game. Motives should be shared openly at the table.

For example, if you chose the Pillar “Safety” and received the “Protect The Citizens” motive, you could be playing the role of a good-hearted sheriff looking out for the people of their town. Alternatively, if you chose the “Government” Pillar and received the “Protect The Leaders” motive, you may be a spy placed inside one of the anarchist groups causing trouble in the city to try and disrupt them from the inside-out. Pillars work best as a source of inspiration for the direction of the character, and not as a defining part of their job title.

As a note, if a player receives the Bring Down Icarus motive, their goal is not to ruin the other players’ fun. That player is still collaborating with them to tell the story, but that story now includes the perspective

of a rebel, spy, or defector archetype in the city.

Once everybody has come up with an idea for their character, they'll write the character's name, motive, and any basic info about them on a notecard and share with the group.

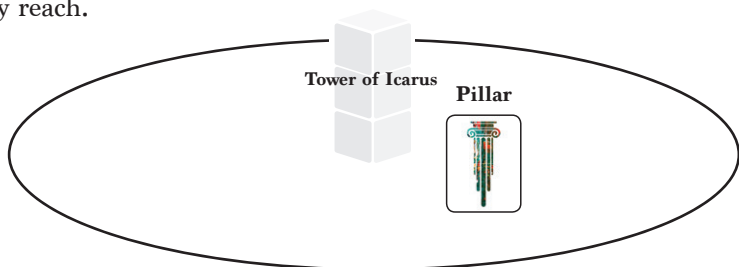
EXAMPLE OF PLAY

To start character creation, Hannah shuffles up all five motive cards and passes them out randomly, one to herself and one to each of the other players. She puts the remaining two back in the box. All three of them flip their motives face up and assess what they received. Luis drew the "Get Rich" card, which he'll pair with his "Health" Pillar to create his character. Tomer was dealt the "Protect The Citizens" card, which he'll be pairing with his "Religion" Pillar. Hannah received the "Preserve The City" motive, which she'll combine with her "Energy" Pillar. They all take a few minutes to write down character ideas on a notecard in front of them. Once they're ready, Tomer goes first. "I'm playing Rye Calix, who uses they/them pronouns. Rye has long brown hair tied back in a ponytail with a tight face accentuated by small, piercing green eyes. They are the prominent religious leader in Icarus, and oversee the de-encryption of the sacred tomes they're receiving from the AI prediction algorithm they worship. I think they use this information they receive to attempt to keep as many people safe as possible." The rest of the group introduces their characters similarly.



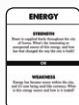
SETTING THE STAGE

Before the game begins, place all of the dice off to the side within easy reach.

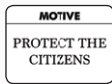


Aspect

The "Aspect" is written down and kept for reference.



Pillar



Motive

Each player should end up with a group of cards like these in front of them.

This is when players should discuss the purpose of the monument based on the Pillar they've chosen for it and the city they've created so far. It's important to talk about what it might look like when it's done being built and who is excited about its construction. Then, create an aspect collaboratively answering the very important question:

What is the monument's function?

This may be something simple like "to show off our power to the surrounding colonies" or it might be more practical like "a giant watchtower to keep the city safe." Remove the Pillar card and put the aspect in its place near the center of the table.

Next, draw two cards from the Story Deck and place them face up. Read them both aloud and answer the questions together as a group, creating or replacing aspects to reflect the answers.

After this is done, choose a first player, by volunteer or at random, whichever best suits your group. You're now ready to begin your first round.

EXAMPLE OF PLAY

Now that they've established their characters, Hannah, Tomer, and Luis look to the last Pillar of Society on their table they haven't addressed: Education. Knowing this should be the purpose of the monument being built, Luis suggests "Maybe it could be a school of some sort?" Tomer jumps in, adding: "Yeah, like a library of all of the Earth knowledge we have. Maybe they're building it as a way to remember where we came from." "So it's sort of like a Library of Alexandria?" Hannah asks, trying to make sure she understands what they want. "I think so," replies Luis, "it could be a place where we preserve the history and knowledge we have brought with us." "And what if it's shaped like a giant spacecraft, to represent how we got here?" Hannah adds. The others agree, and they replace the Pillar card with an Aspect that reads "Keeper of the Knowledge of Earth we've preserved in the shape of an upright spacecraft."

Hannah then draws a Story card for the group and reads it aloud. "A citizen attempts to plead their innocence to a serious crime, but is found guilty and sentenced. What was the crime and how are people of Icarus punished for their wrong-doings?"

Luis suggests "It could have something to do with the memories that are being implanted." "I like that," Tomer says. "What if they were taking the medicine and it gave them a false memory of someone who was coming after them?" Hannah clarifies: "And was the crime they committed maybe hurting or killing that person before they could get to them first?" "Totally," Luis says, writing down the aspect. "And the punishment is exiling them to the land below the city, outside the biosphere." They all agree and Luis finishes the Aspect by writing "Memory medicine makes citizen kill someone. Punished by being sent to land below" and placing it near the memory-eating bacteria aspect already on the table.

They answer one more story card as a group, creating another aspect together before the first round begins.

PLAYING A ROUND

Starting with the first player, move clockwise around the table taking turns.

On your turn, you can:

Enact a Change- place one die on an aspect your character would like to change or affect in some way. Describe what you are hoping to achieve by putting your focus there, and how you plan to do it.

OR

Support a Cause- place one die on an aspect that already has a die on it to support that change. Describe how your character is trying to support the effort to give it a better chance to succeed.

THEN

After a player has placed their die, they will draw the next card from the Story Deck and answer it, creating or replacing an Aspect on the table to reflect the answer.

Sometimes these changes might modify or replace an aspect that already has a character's die placed on it. If this is the case, place the die on the new aspect instead. The character must adapt to this changed situation when they resolve their die.

EXAMPLE OF PLAY

Tomer offers to be the first player and looks at the aspects on the table to figure out which one his character might want to change. "I think the person who killed someone was a member of my congregation," Tomer says. "Oh, that makes things interesting!" Hannah replies. "What are you going to do?" "Well, I don't know about this medicine yet and the AI deity we worship, who I've decided to call Saga, didn't have this death in its scripture, which makes it really suspicious. I want to send some members of my church to do some digging." Tomer puts his die on the "memory medicine makes a citizen kill someone" aspect. He then draws a story card from the deck. "There are talks of a terrible storm headed towards the city from the north. What kind of storm is it and how do people know it's coming?"

He thinks for a moment, then answers "I think it's a meteor storm. The predictive scripture we have from Saga says nearby space colonies are going to get torn to shreds by it, and then it's going to head our way. Our

atmosphere isn't thick enough to break it up, so we're going to have to do something about it." He writes as an aspect "Incoming Meteor Storm" and contemplates where to place it. It's a new conflict that doesn't necessarily relate to something that already exists, so he puts it in an open area next to him. His turn is over. Hannah grabs a die to go next.

"Well, given that there is now information out that we may get pummeled by asteroids soon, I think I'm going to try and address that. My motive is to preserve the city and my pillar is energy, so I'm going to research a way to generate armor around the city using some of the gravity energy we produce in order to try and protect us." She puts her die on the "Incoming Meteor Storm" aspect and draws a story card, answering it and creating another aspect on the table like Tomer did. The turn is then passed to Luis, who places his die on an aspect and then draws a story card to answer, and creates an aspect as well. Once this is done, they move into the Resolve Phase.

RESOLVE

At the end of the round, once all players have taken an action and answered a Story card, the first player that round adds one die to the tower to indicate the time that has passed.

When building the tower, the dice must be stacked one on top of the other in a single column. Once the die is released from the players fingertips, it may not be touched again by any player.

The resolution phase then begins. Starting with the first player, move clockwise around the table resolving the changes each character wants to make. They should play out the scene their attempt at change evokes, narrating or role-playing what their character is trying to do. When the scene reaches its climax, the player or players supporting that change with a die should describe what success would look like and roll all of the dice on the aspect to discover how it resolves.

If any of the dice roll the special pillar face (a 5 or 6 on regular 6-sided dice), the change succeeds and an aspect is created or replaced to reflect this change. If none of the dice roll the pillar face (a 5 or 6 on regular dice), an aspect is created or replaced to represent how the situation has escalated or become worse because of their actions.

Any dice that rolled a blank face result (a 1-4 on regular dice) are then added to the tower.

When all dice have been resolved, first player privileges are passed to the left and the game continues, starting another round with the new first player.

When adding or replacing an aspect, players may find that another aspect on the table no longer makes sense because of it. Don't hesitate to change or remove it for narrative cohesion.

EXAMPLE OF PLAY

Tomer is the first player this round, so he is responsible for adding a die to the tower. Because this is the very first round, he starts the tower by placing a die from the die pool next to the monument's aspect so it's within reach of everyone at the table. All other die added to the tower for the rest of the game will be stacked on top of this die.

It's then time to resolve the dice on the table. Because Tomer is the first player, he goes first. Looking back at the "memory medicine makes a citizen kill someone" aspect, he says, "I think success here is that I somehow discover it was this medication that caused it— that it's been linked to false memories before." He rolls the die and gets a 6. It's a success! "So this works! Rye discovers that the medicine is giving people false memories, and that a false memory is what made my follower think he was being hunted. I'll have to use that info to try and get him cleared to come back from the below." "Can I pitch you something?" Hannah asks. "Of course, what are you thinking?" "Since you got a six on your die, what do you think about also discovering why the medicine is being given too- that there's some sort of disease that's eating people's memories and the medicine is replacing the memories they've lost without them knowing. I think that might open up more to investigate." "That's a great idea." Tomer says as he writes the aspect and puts it on the table in the appropriate place. Because he succeeded, he replaces his die to the die pool instead of stacking it on the tower.

Moving clockwise from Tomer, Hannah is up next. She picks up her die off of the "Meteor Storm" aspect and describes what success would look like for her character here: "I really want to keep our city from getting

hit by these asteroids, so success here would be me successfully redirecting some of the city's power into a shield that could deflect the meteors as they hit." She rolls her die and gets a 3— it's a failure. She then describes how the situation escalates instead. "Hmm. Okay, so I guess that didn't work the way I wanted it to. The power redirect had unintended consequences and some of the buildings actually gained gravity again and went crashing down to the ground below. And we're still vulnerable to this meteor attack, so that's not good." "Which buildings do you think fell? So we can talk about the aftermath?" Luis asks. "I think it's most impactful if its like homes and apartments, right? Like, places where people thought they were safest." She writes down as a new aspect "Shield won't work and experimentation caused homes to crash from Icarus to the ground below," and places it near the "Meteor Storm" aspect. Then, she picks up the die she rolled and carefully stacks it onto the tower.

Luis also takes his turn, rolling his die, narrating the success or failure, and creating or modifying an aspect to reflect that outcome. After everybody has completed their turn, the person to Tomer's left, Hannah, is then deemed the First Player and another round begins.





*The future is uncertain
but the end is always near.*

Jim Morrison



WHEN THE TOWER FALLS

At some point during the game, the dice tower will fall. This triggers the final collapse of the civilization, and also ends the game. Players will answer three questions as a group before walking away from this society forever.

What caused the tower to collapse?

What happened to your character in the aftermath?

What became of the civilization after its fall?

Feel free to have an open discussion after this as you reflect on what you built and how it fell, but the game is over.

FAQ

What happens if two people want to change the same aspect, but in different ways?

Sometimes two motives will set characters against one another on the same aspect. If this happens, the changes are taken in turn order; the first player to place a die on the aspect will resolve their change (along with anyone who is aiding them in that change), then the second, and so on. Sometimes, this means that an aspect may be replaced or added on to multiple times during the resolution stage, overwriting or modifying previous work done by a character. The narrative should reflect these twists of fate appropriately.

What happens if the tower falls on accident or prematurely?

The “game designer” answer here is that the tower falling should always signal the end of the civilization, even if it’s earlier than expected, and that the narrative should follow this untimely demise. The real-world answer is, none of us will (usually) be sitting at your table to enforce this rule. Talk with your friends and do what feels right.

Can my character die before the end of the game?

Though sometimes you might be tempted to make your character’s death the escalation of a failed roll during the game, this should be avoided. There are often things worse than death, so find what that is; challenge their Motives and get them in trouble, but save them from death until Icarus falls.

What happens if I run out of dice?

The tower should fall before you do! But if you’ve somehow managed to stack the tower high enough that you don’t have enough dice left to continue, take a moment to stare in wonder at your incredible achievement. Then, go grab some more regular d6 dice and continue as normal.

SETTING SUGGESTIONS



THE FIRST CITY

Around 6,000 years ago, the first city of mankind is built. Before the invention of the wheel or the concept of writing, Icarus flourishes on the banks of the Euphrates river, standing as a testament to the sheer will and power of humanity. For the first time, a tremendous population of people are able to live in the same place together, for better or for worse.

IMAGERY

Bordered by a wide river, fields of grain, surrounded by a towering brick wall, colorful mosaics, limestone temples to the Gods, statues of the King, communal baths

RESOURCES & TECHNOLOGIES

Stone-craft, clay pottery, pictorial inscriptions on tablets, reflective gypsum plaster, masks, massive staircases, troughs and aqueducts, horses, domesticated agriculture

NAMES

Addai, Anatu, Ashur, Banda, Bathsua, Dagan, Elisav, Elishama, Enki, Gilgamesh, Ishtar, Istrak, Janai, Kepha, Kiya, Nanaya, Nohra, Pappus, Razili, Samaia, Shaphat, Tanis, Utu, Yoab



THE PLACE OF MAGIC

In a beautiful, yet treacherous land imbued with magic and threatened by the evils of both man and beast, the city of Icarus has quickly risen to prominence in the region. Filled with some of the most brilliant and dangerous dungeon delvers, wielders of the mystics, and speakers of the beyond, it has become the center of knowledge and power in the region.

IMAGERY

Pristine castles, dense forests, ancient runes, city gates, guards behind parapets, the shadow of dragons, varied humanoid species, sword fights in the street, the glow of magic in windows

RESOURCES & TECHNOLOGIES

Woodworking, blades & bows, cobblestone, distinct fabrics, scrolls, prophecies, enchanted objects, potions and alchemy, useful body parts of dangerous creatures, elemental magic

NAMES

Alora, Abernath, Crowle, Denarius, Errow, Fallur, Flynn, Grak, Howl, Illia, Inesh, Jakob, Jynoa, Kristiani, Leo, Lysander, Moras, N'koa, Noxru, Oden, Peter, Rain, Sarai, Slade, Will, Woven



THE OPULENT TIDES

The island of Icarus lies strategically between two major continents, making their civilization the midpoint for traders and travelers from these lands. Though it began as a small village for merchants to take refuge in during their voyage across the sea, the city soon grew into a place of luxury and extravagance; a central hub of trade and commerce for everyone in the region.



IMAGERY

Weathered docks above the crashing waves, crabs burrowing in sand, palm trees jutting out from thick tropic foliage, houses built on stilts, birds squawking above, early morning fog

RESOURCES & TECHNOLOGIES

Shells, seaweed, infinite sand, wind and sails, controllable tides, underwater farms, sea creatures, canal transportation, harnessing storms, volcanic activity, massive ships, gunpowder

NAMES

Aerwynn, Ariel, Asteria, Borne, Calypso, Cascade, Caspian, Coralia, Delphine, Delta, Firth, Hali, Hurley, Kai, Loire, Morgan, Nerida, Nile, Ripley, Talise, Thames, Wade, Zarya

THE WESTERN HAVEN

Positioned at the edge of a monumental canyon, Icarus is the last stop for pioneers traveling west on the railroad. Originally founded as a shanty town for those working construction on a bridge across the ravine, when the project proved too dangerous to continue, the bridge was abandoned, leaving Icarus as their final destination. Soon, with the discovery of gold in the hills to the south, the city went from a temporary shelter to a booming, prosperous society unlike any other the West has ever known.

IMAGERY

Dusty sunsets, trains billowing steam, gunfights in the streets, saloons with swinging doors, riding on horseback, a river glinting with gold, a solitary cactus, mine carts on tracks

RESOURCES & TECHNOLOGIES

Gold and other metals, revolvers, steam, wagons and horses, black oil, whiskey, tobacco, locomotive trains, morphine and other medicines, windmills, barbed wire, telegraph machines

NAMES

Annabelle, Atticus, Beatrice, Billie, Charlotte, Creed, Delia, Desmond, Emelie, Friedrich, Gwendolyn, Hazel, Isaac, Jesse, Josefina, Lucas, Mathilda, Prescott, Rosie, Tobias, Sophie, Wyatt

THE DIVINE JUNGLE

The twisting roots of the jungle intertwine with the large stone structures of Icarus, a prestigious city built among the trees. Once a simple fishing village on the edge of a local river, it has grown through time and trial into a thriving civilization where many cultures, languages, and types of thought are welcomed to converge.

IMAGERY

Vines growing over carved statues, massive stone pyramids, sunlight filtering through dense canopy, coiled snakes and brightly colored frogs, glowing pools of water, mystical smoke

RESOURCES & TECHNOLOGIES

Colossal trees, stone-craft, ancient libraries, knowledge of the stars, the Gods, nature magic, animal domestication, tree-top structures, underground reservoirs, weaponized frog poison

NAMES

Atlas, Azar, Catori, Chejo, Dakota, Halex, Hiawatha, Illiana, Julis, Kaya, Kurios, Luan, Maely, Mareya, Miko, Nyagra, Oseas, Sike, Simi, Tala, Torin, Valen, Waqar, Yadriel

*Life is pleasant.
Death is peaceful.
It's the transition
that's troublesome.*

Isaac Asimov



THE RED PROMETHEUS

As the first major city on Mars, Icarus is the cradle of a new humanity far from home. Though many have established their own camps and settlements on the surface around Icarus, never before has mankind gathered in such large numbers on a foreign planet. Despite the hostile conditions here, advancements in technology have forged a civilization away from the toxic remnants of the planet Earth once was.



IMAGERY

Endless red dunes, rocket engines burning, weathered metal, old underground sanctuaries, deep craters formed by meteor impacts, sharp auburn mountains, powerful sandstorms

RESOURCES & TECHNOLOGIES

Space travel, domes of climate control, alien minerals, rebreathers, computers and code, 3D printing, genetic enhancements, holograms, solar energy, virtual reality

NAMES

Aaden, Bronwynn, Cassian, Celestia, Cormac, Delaney, Elicora, Finn, Hudson, Jackson, Lark, Lyra, Leith, Magnus, Mercury, Octavia, Perspehone, Savion, Silas, Socrates, Violet, Vita

THE RISING SINGULARITY

As humanity and technology began to merge together, the brooding city streets of Icarus rose to fame. The first place to enact a synthetic rights law, it led the charge in recognizing AI for what it truly was- alive. With synthetics and hybrids living peacefully alongside humans, the city hit a time of explosive industrial boom, thriving on the backs of its hard-working citizens and infusing the city with a sudden and excessive amount of wealth.

IMAGERY

Neon lights reflecting off of wet streets, mechanical bees on flowers, robotic machinery constructing a building, store clerks with unblinking eyes, humans with augmented limbs

RESOURCES & TECHNOLOGIES

Beyond human-level artificial intelligence, automated transportation, bioengineering and biohacking, 4D printing, predictive behavior technology, virtual and augmented reality

NAMES

Abacus, Afternoon, Banks, Brace, Cadence, Dune, Early, Echo, Fidelity, Genesis, Isle, Juniper, Maize, Monday, Prosperity, Quarry, Reason, Shale, Thane, Truth, Vice, Welcome, Wren

THE FINAL FRONTIER

The discovery of the abundance of life outside our own Solar System was the catalyst for the next millennia of space travel from Earth. Welcomed by alien life to join a set of colonies built on the surface of a prominent trading moon, the brave first explorers established an outpost known as Icarus and learned the languages and cultures of their new lunar neighbors. They brought with them foods and other goods available nowhere else in this foreign solar system and, in part because of this, Icarus soon grew from a small trading outpost to one of the most prominent cities in the planet's orbit.

IMAGERY


Exotic alien marketplaces, massive planet in the sky, humanoids and non-humanoids conversing, ships emerging through clouds, ancient temples glowing with technology, voracious alien fauna

RESOURCES & TECHNOLOGIES

Earthborne food and goods, alien power source, FTL travel, anti-gravity tech, terraforming and weather control, cryonics, advanced medicine, artificial intelligence, plasma weapons

NAMES

Amethyst, Apollo, Bloom, Callista, Calix, Drake, Gage, Idris, Indigo, Jax, Juno, Ky, Muse, Oberon, Orion, Persephone, Quinn, Raze, Rye, Sawyer, Serenity, Thane, Ursa, Zelda, Zura



*Extinction is the rule.
Survival is the exception.*

Carl Sagan



THE ORACLE

If you don't have a deck of the Icarus cards, you can instead use a regular deck of playing cards with the Oracle provided here.

PREPARING THE DECK

- Separate all of the suits into Ace through King. Set the two Jokers aside within reach.
- Remove the Aces from every suit and place them in a pile along with one of the Jokers. These are your five Motive cards.
- Then take the rest of the Spades (Two through King) and place them in their own pile. These are your twelve Pillars of Society cards.
- The rest of the Diamonds are now your twelve The Cracks in our Facade cards. The rest of the Clubs are now your twelve The Rifts Between Us cards. The rest of the Hearts are now your twelve The Final Hours cards.
- The final Joker is The Bitter End card.

Build the deck by shuffling all 12 The Final Hours (Hearts) cards and placing them into a pile on top of the Bitter End card (Joker). Then randomly choose 6 Rifts Between Us (Clubs) cards and place them on top of this same pile. Finally, randomly choose 6 Cracks In Our Facade cards (Diamonds) and place them on top of the pile. Your story deck is now ready.

Refer to the sheet on the following pages when drawing cards for further details.

PILLARS OF SOCIETY	DETAILS
2 of Spades	<p style="text-align: center;">Architecture</p> <p><i>STRENGTH:</i> The buildings within Icarus look like no other place on the planet.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Why is this, and how does it affect the way people perceive the city?</p> <p><i>WEAKNESS:</i> The buildings within Icarus have started to deteriorate.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">What weak or unsustainable material was used to build here, and why?</p>
3 of Spades	<p style="text-align: center;">Agriculture</p> <p><i>STRENGTH:</i> The supply of food within the city is abundant.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">What do people eat the most, and why is it so prevalent here?</p> <p><i>WEAKNESS:</i> No commercial food is made or grown within the city of Icarus anymore.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Why is this, and what outside source now provides the city's food?</p>
4 of Spades	<p style="text-align: center;">Energy</p> <p><i>STRENGTH:</i> Power is supplied freely throughout the city of Icarus.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">What's the interesting or unexpected source of this energy, and how has that changed the way the city is built?</p> <p><i>WEAKNESS:</i> Energy has become scarce within the city, and it's now being used like currency.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">What is this energy source and how is it traded?</p>
5 of Spades	<p style="text-align: center;">Diplomacy</p> <p><i>STRENGTH:</i> Icarus has forged strong relationships with the surrounding civilizations.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">What is the most common export we send to them, and what do we receive in re-turn?</p> <p><i>WEAKNESS:</i> Hostile nations surround Icarus.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Which is the most dangerous and why?</p>
6 of Spades	<p style="text-align: center;">Communication</p> <p><i>STRENGTH:</i> A unique adaptation, invention, or approaching the city of Icarus has improved the way people communicate.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">What is it, and how has it changed the way citizens interact here?</p> <p><i>WEAKNESS:</i> A unique adaptation, invention, or approaching the city of Icarus has had a negative impact on how effectively people communicate.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">What is it, and how has it changed the way citizens interact here?</p>

PILLARS OF SOCIETY	DETAILS
7 of Spades	<p style="text-align: center;">Safety</p> <p><i>STRENGTH:</i> The people of Icarus feel safer within the city than anywhere else.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Why is this?</p> <p><i>WEAKNESS:</i> The people of Icarus all share a common fear.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">What is it, and where did it come from?</p>
8 of Spades	<p style="text-align: center;">Artistic Expression</p> <p><i>STRENGTH:</i> Icarus is known around the world for its unique forms of artistic expression.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">What are artists recognized for here, and what makes their work so unique?</p> <p><i>WEAKNESS:</i> Artistic expression has been suppressed or outlawed in Icarus.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Why was it banned and how do artists now hide their work in plain sight?</p>
9 of Spades	<p style="text-align: center;">Education</p> <p><i>STRENGTH:</i> The citizens of Icarus are held to the highest standards within the educational system.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">What subject or topic is seen as most important and how has this manifested itself culturally?</p> <p><i>WEAKNESS:</i> The citizens of Icarus are taught only what they need to know.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">What important knowledge is being hidden from them and why?</p>
10 of Spades	<p style="text-align: center;">Health</p> <p><i>STRENGTH:</i> There was a major medical breakthrough or discovery within Icarus that has kept the people here healthier.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">What was it and how has it affected the way society operates?</p> <p><i>WEAKNESS:</i> There is a deadly epidemic with no known cure being hidden from the public to avoid panic in city.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">What is it, and how is it being quietly dealt with or covered up?</p>
Jack of Spades	<p style="text-align: center;">Law</p> <p><i>STRENGTH:</i> Though there are lots of laws in Icarus, there is one unique law that citizens are particularly fond of.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">What is it, and why was it made?</p> <p><i>WEAKNESS:</i> Though there are lots of laws in Icarus, there is one unique law that citizens do not agree with or fear.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">What is it, and why was it made?</p>
Queen of Spades	<p style="text-align: center;">Social Structure</p> <p><i>STRENGTH:</i> Icarus holds high those who embody what they most seek.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">What group of people are most respected, and why?</p> <p><i>WEAKNESS:</i> In order to keep people in their place, Icarus has been divided into different social classes.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Who is at the top of that social class, and who is at the bottom?</p>

PILLARS OF SOCIETY	DETAILS
<p style="text-align: center;">King of Spades</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Religion</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><i>STRENGTH:</i> The supernatural plays a unifying role in the everyday lives of the people of Icarus.</p> <p>Who or what do they believe in, and what phrase, symbol, or other physical manifestation do they use to express that belief?</p> <p><i>WEAKNESS:</i> In order to keep people in line, the city of Icarus has created a religion to convince people to follow rigid strictures.</p> <p>What is the core tenet of the religion, and how does it manifest itself within the city?</p>

MOTIVES	DETAILS
A of Spades	Protect The Leaders
A of Clubs	Preserve The City
A of Hearts	Protect The Citizens
A of Diamonds	Get Rich
Joker	Bring Down Icarus



CRACKS IN OUR FACADE	DETAILS
2 of Diamonds	<p>What controversial part of the Icarus culture do other surrounding nations not agree with or share?</p>
3 of Diamonds	<p>A citizen attempts to plead their innocence to a serious crime, but is found guilty and sentenced. What was the crime and how are people of Icarus punished for their wrong-doings?</p>
4 of Diamonds	<p>A group is sent out to investigate a strange anomaly, just beyond the border of the city. What did they see, and who is going to investigate?</p>
5 of Diamonds	<p>An outside force has come to the city to negotiate a deal. Who are they, and what do they want?</p>
6 of Diamonds	<p>A resource the city once relied on as a prominent export to other nations is now running dangerously low. What is it, and why is it no longer available?</p>
7 of Diamonds	<p>An unpopular subculture within the city is holding a festival, and some members of the community have shown up to try and shut it down. What is the subculture and why is it looked down upon?</p>
8 of Diamonds	<p>There are talks of a terrible storm headed towards the city from the north. What kind of storm is it, and how do people know it's coming?</p>
9 of Diamonds	<p>A wave of crime is spreading through the city. What is it, and what group is being blamed for it?</p>
10 of Diamonds	<p>A peaceful protest flares up in a public area of Icarus. What are they angry about?</p>
Jack of Diamonds	<p>An existing weakness or problem has started to affect another aspect in the city. What major issue within the community is it creating?</p>
Queen of Diamonds	<p>All is not what it seems. Something that was once a strength is now a weakness. What is it, and why did it change so quickly?</p>
King of Diamonds	<p>A valuable resource from outside the city has suddenly become much more expensive because of the limited quantity now available. What is it, and why is it now in scarcity?</p>

THE RIFTS BETWEEN US	DETAILS
2 of Clubs	<p>The environment surrounding Icarus has become damaged or sick in some way.</p> <p>What has caused this environmental degradation, and how has a specific part of the city been adversely affected by it?</p>
3 of Clubs	<p>A subculture within the community has recently gained political prominence and has begun to actively oppress another group in the city.</p> <p>Who is this new oppressor and who is being oppressed?</p>
4 of Clubs	<p>There is a sudden surge in population.</p> <p>What caused it, and how does the city attempt to curb the increase in population?</p>
5 of Clubs	<p>The expansion of the city has started to encroach upon another nation's land, sparking a battle over territory.</p> <p>Who is the other party in this war, and what are they doing to keep our forces from moving in further?</p>
6 of Clubs	<p>A disease has been spreading rapidly through the city.</p> <p>What are the symptoms, and how is it spread?</p> <p>What measures are citizens taking to avoid getting it?</p>
7 of Clubs	<p>A residential part of the city has been quarantined.</p> <p>Where is it, what caused it, and how have they kept the quarantined citizens from leaving?</p>
8 of Clubs	<p>A curfew is decreed upon the citizens of the city.</p> <p>What happened to cause it, and how is it enforced?</p>
9 of Clubs	<p>A valuable resource used commonly within the community is now gone completely.</p> <p>What is it, what was it used for, and what are citizens doing to get their hands on the last of it?</p>
10 of Clubs	<p>An unexpected force of nature strikes the city in a single night of terror.</p> <p>What happens, and how does it inhibit one of the Pillars on the table?</p>
Jack of Clubs	<p>A prominent leader in the highest echelons of the city is accused of a terrible crime.</p> <p>What did they supposedly do, and how are they punished?</p>
Queen of Clubs	<p>A riot breaks out in response to the escalation of a problem in the city.</p> <p>Why are they protesting, and what do they damage during the riot?</p>
King of Clubs	<p>An outside force tries to invade the city.</p> <p>Who are they, what is the purpose of the invasion, and what's their plan?</p>

THE FINAL HOURS	DETAILS
2 of Hearts	<p>The culture of Icarus has changed.</p> <p>What are people doing now that they weren't before, and how is it impacting the city?</p>
3 of Hearts	<p>Another city has risen up to rival Icarus in the region, and citizens are leaving to live there instead</p> <p>Who is it and what specific resource or technology does it have, that Icarus doesn't?</p>
4 of Hearts	<p>In an attempt to save themselves from the incoming catastrophe, many of the citizens have been secretly building safety shelters.</p> <p>What interesting or unique place have they decided to build these shelters, and what major danger have they faced while doing it?</p>
5 of Hearts	<p>The physical land Icarus sits on has begun to erode or change beneath it, leaving parts of the city inaccessible to one another.</p> <p>What important area is now completely isolated, and what ramification does that have on the rest of the city?</p>
6 of Hearts	<p>Terrible pollution within the city has poisoned a basic necessity (water, air, food, etc).</p> <p>What is now in short supply, and why?</p>
7 of Hearts	<p>The city begins openly punishing citizens in public places for any criticisms leveled against its leader(s).</p> <p>What interesting way have citizens been anonymously voicing their criticisms, and what is the unique punishment if they get caught?</p>
8 of Hearts	<p>An underground group within the city starts recruiting angry citizens for a private militia.</p> <p>What is their cause, and who's their leader?</p>
9 of Hearts	<p>With many of the city's dwindling resources still going to the continuous building of the tower, a plot emerges to sabotage its construction.</p> <p>What is the plan, and what group is leading it?</p>
10 of Hearts	<p>A prominent invention, tool, or technology suddenly becomes dangerous to the citizens who use it.</p> <p>What is it and why is it a danger?</p>
Jack of Hearts	<p>In a desperate attempt to obtain the dwindling resources the people of Icarus need, a nearby civilization has been raided. They declare war in response, and send an army marching towards Icarus.</p> <p>What resource were they attempting to steal, and what makes the responding army so intimidating?</p>
Queen of Hearts	<p>A terrible natural disaster hits the city, destroying important buildings and killing citizens.</p> <p>What kind of disaster was it, and who or what is impacted the worst?</p>
King of Hearts	<p>An area of the city has become condemned and subsequently abandoned.</p> <p>What area, and why?</p>

THE BITTER END	DETAILS
Joker	<p>Icarus is a shadow of the great city it once was.</p> <p>Leave this card face up. From here forward, instead of drawing a card on your turn, further escalate an existing aspect on the table.</p>



THE TOWER OF ICARUS

EVERY TIME A NUMBER IS ROLLED, MARK IT BELOW.
ONCE ANY NUMBER HAS BEEN FULLY MARKED, THE TOWER HAS FALLEN.

1	2	3	4
1	2	3	4
1	2	3	4
1	2	3	4
1	2	3	4

ASPECT

ICARUS

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