

GENESIS OF THE TABOO

The word goes to Niveus Crimson.

Our ancestors laid the first stone of the Village to give meaning to a meaningless world. Hope for a better tomorrow and fear of repeating past mistakes mixed like lime and water, in their hearts and ours: They kept us together, kept us safe, a wall against the unknown. Time and adversity has eroded our memory of those days, but still we strive to remember. The Village Annals will bring us back there. They will show us what has changed.

The Taboo was as the heart of everything. To eat, to speak, to walk, to touch. To seize, to violate, to curse, to devour. In the beginning was the word, and the word was born of our food. Or in the beginning was touch, and touch was born of the space we shared. Were we afraid of what horrible things could feed us, so afraid as to forbid them? Or was the act of speaking terrible enough to make a word blasphemous? I wonder if what we feared was a certain place instead. Or if the root cause of our shame was the act of touching one another.

The word goes to Nigrans Crimson.

Help me remember, now. Were we afraid to eat a certain food? Cover your mouth if you remember so.

■ If more than half of the players cover their mouths, take the apple and hold it high, as you complete the following Taboo however you like:

Now I remember. We were forbidden to taste... [Example: Animal flesh]

From now on, the apple represents the forbidden food. Place it in the middle of the Village Square and let Niveus Crimson read the final words.

■ If less than half of the players covered their mouths, skip the Taboo above and go on reading.

No, we were free to partake of all the fruits of the Earth. Still I wonder, were we scared of setting foot into a certain place? Sit on the ground if you remember so.

If more than half of the players sit down, take the roll of masking tape and pick a spot within the Village Square. Then offer the tape to Niveus Crimson and have them mark the space around your feet. As they do, complete the following Taboo however you like:

Now I remember. We were forbidden to enter... [Example: The Old Gods' shrine]
 From now on, the marked space represents the forbidden ground. Step out of it and let Niveus Crimson read the final words.

If less than half of the players sat down, skip the Taboo above and go on reading.

No, all paths in the Village could be trodden. I wonder, then, whether our greatest fear was touching our neighbour. Raise your hand to the heavens if you remember so.

If more than half of the players raise their hand, beckon Niveus Crimson closer and touch a part of their body, as you complete the following Taboo however you like:

Now I remember. We were forbidden to touch... [Example: Another's face]
 From now on, it's forbidden to touch others in the way you described. Let Niveus Crimson read the final words.

If less than half of the players raised their hand, skip the Taboo above and finish reading.

No. Perhaps we disliked touch, but nothing forced us to deprive ourselves of it. What we feared above all else was the sound of a certain word.

Complete the following Taboo however you like.

Yes, now I remember. We were forbidden to utter the word... [Example: Death]

The word goes to Niveus Crimson.

This, then, was our Taboo, as ancient as the Village and as hard as its stones. An invisible thread that bound us together and rewarded respect of our ways with the promise of a bountiful future for our community.

Woe be to those who dare break the Taboo, and woe be to those who would live to witness such misfortune befall the Village. That is what we used to say.