

THE HERDER

During the Rite of the Circle, answer as if you were the Tiller and take his place. To everyone else you will be him, your twin brother, until one of you decides to reveal the truth. Should it ever happen.

Rite of initiation

You are the meek soul of the long hill, the kind hand that tends to the flocks. You and your twin brother, the Tiller, are identical in appearance and inseparable in spirit. The gods Thunder and Lightning blessed you on the day of your birth, when they struck down a tree with twin bolts. Tradition dictates neither of you shall ever embrace a weapon, because if one were to perish in battle, then the other would meet the same fate, to the great displeasure of the gods.

You have gladly accepted the humble task of tending to the beasts, because you would never wish to put your brother's life in danger. You know his mind is sharp, and he feels wasted in the fields, so he often acts ill-tempered, and draws the ire of many. But you trust your brother, and you would do anything to protect him.

On midsummer, the Tiller suggested you two honour the gods in your own way, by switching places until the end of the war, as Thunder and Lightning are wont to do in the stories. You accepted without hesitation, determined to bring good tidings in battle to the long hill, and to make your brother look better in your people's eyes. You complete each other: He will prove you can be cunning, you will prove he can be kind.

Rite of passage

▀ The Seer is the eye that reads into the signs of gods and into the hearts of men. When they understood how hard you find it to kill young beasts when they can barely stand on their hooves, they began asking for your brother's help in preparing sacrificial lambs. But on midsummer you switched places, and when they sent for the Tiller, you were the one who answered. You were to slaughter the healthiest lamb and draw its blood into a bowl, but you put down an old goat. Still, the Seer read clearly into its blood, and gleaned from it the name of the Offering: A dear friend, the Virgin's only equal in kindness. Then, the Seer added that the Tiller was to be the hand of the gods. You killed the Offering.

▀ The Crafter is the skilled hand of wonders, the source of marvel that feeds the long hill. They are the parent you never had. Your brother reaps the grains and grinds them into flour for the great oven of the Crafter's making, yet they have no fondness for each other. On midsummer's eve, you visited the Crafter while posing as the Tiller, determined to change things. You brought them many gifts and made promises you intended to keep in your brother's stead. The Crafter's only answer was to thrust the sacrificial dagger in your hands and throw you out of their house.

Rite of propitiation

In the eyes of the gods, people must prove themselves generous. To immolate the fairest among you was an act of faith. Life only has value when lived for others. The gods expect a sacrifice that shows the Circle's new-found harmony.