

## What is *Mythender*?

*Mythender* is a role-playing game that, at its core, is about two things:

- Being badass warriors who, from the very first moment of play, are taking charge and punching dragons in the face with rock-and-roll awesome. It's about telling stories of heroes who achieve impossible, mythic feats.
- Being people from another land who have epic problems back home, so they invade a beautiful, timeless land of myth and attack it to steal its power. It's about telling stories of heroes who deal with conquering and destroying another culture, or being conquered and forever changed by it.

### Is *Mythender* For You?

If you've ever been excited to read a book or see a movie about medieval or ancient heroes fighting against grand monsters, *Mythender* is for you.

If you've ever wanted to play a grand, epic hero with a real, fighting chance to be in charge of your own destiny, *Mythender* is for you.

If you're interested in kicking ass one minute and in the next dealing with what it truly means to be a hero in the eyes of everyone – man, beast and god alike – *Mythender* is for you.

If you're looking for a game about a medieval, fantasy Scandinavia, but want it to be about something other than Vikings, *Mythender* is for you.

If you want to see what a game is like where the normal, little failures like missing with your sword or failing to climb a cliff are not even possible, *Mythender* is for you.

### How is *Mythender* These Things?

#### Being Badass Warriors

Warriors in *Mythender* are second to none. Whatever your chosen weapon – giant sword, warhammer crackling with lightning, dragon-tooth daggers, or your fist wrapped in unicorn hair – you are a master of it, capable of awesome feats of prowess. Armies tremble in your presence; your only equals on the battlefield are grand beasts, monsters and gods of myth.

#### Taking Charge with Rock-and-Roll Awesome

No one playing a character in *Mythender* is subject to the whims of some old man met in a tavern. These grand champions are well beyond that, knowing full well their own, personal reasons for undertaking this task – a task they chose to do on their own, and one that only they can accomplish.

#### Achieving Impossible, Mythic Feats

Heroes in *Mythender* can hurl the largest boulders at their foes, ride the most dangerous of beasts and even at times command the very elements themselves. Fueled with raw, mythic power flowing through their veins, these men and women can achieve the unimaginable and overcome any obstacle in their paths with a flair only matched by the heroes of ancient legend.

## **A Beautiful, Timeless Land of Myth**

The world of *Mythender* is of a Scandinavia that never was, beginning as the age of Vikings comes to a close. It is a land of endless ice and snow, of monsters and sorcerers ruling over the land, of raw mythic power ripe for the taking. Grand creatures and beings of legend – not just Norse, but refugees from other, already lost mythic lands – call this world their home.

## **Epic Problems Back Home**

Those who embark on the grand quest in *Mythender* do so not because the need to do some small deed, like save a village from an evil man or gain riches so they might purchase grander splendors. They do so because of things they perceive as great injustices back home, far away from the lands of myth – to bring about the rise or fall of a great nation, or to perform some impossible feat like bringing a loved one back from the dead or building a tower to Heaven. The power these heroes wield is only matched by the weight of responsibility & burden of greatness placed upon them.

## **Conquering and Being Conquered**

The tale of *Mythender* is not a small one. To gain the power from these mythic lands, a hero must conquer the land, slay those who possess its power – monsters, sorcerers, former heroes, even the pagan gods themselves – and take the land as their own. Only then can they truly become Mythenders. But the land itself has a different agenda: to conquer those who would invade it, to corrupt them and turn them into mythic beings themselves. Will your hero conquer or be conquered?

## Overview of *Mythender*

*Mythender* is an epic fantasy game, centering on powerful-but-mortal heroes – called Mythenders – who travel to a far-off land, filled with fantastic wonders. Known by these heroes as Mythic Norden, this land is full of raw power that tempts our mortal heroes. Between this idea of powerful, heroic characters and a fantastic, mythical world is the game system, designed specifically to help you play out the stories of these heroes and the land.

### The Land of Mythic Norden

The eternal winter that is Mythic Norden is one of the last refuges for the world's creatures of myth. It is a land filled with raw power, but with that power comes an inescapable fate.

### The Land We Today Call Scandinavia

The nations that are today known as Denmark, Norway, Sweden, Finland, and even the geographically-disconnected Iceland make up a fantastic world known centuries before by great heroes as Mythic Norden.

They were, of course, not always so unified. This was a time of small kingdoms, of out-of-the-way hamlets, and of neighbor clashing against neighbor. It is not until these pagan lands are stolen away from Mythic Norden and brought into Mortal Europe – the realm the Mythenders come from, a – which these lands came together – sometimes until the wing of Christendom, sometimes to fight against it.

### A Land Truly Alive

Mythic Norden is not a land the way you and I think of the world "land." No, it lives and breathes, and we are like insects crawling around on its skin. It sees Mythenders and knows them for what they are – powerful beings who have come to take what belongs to it.

The very mythic power these heroes seek is what keeps Mythic Norden (as well as other realms like the once-grand Mythic Avalon) alive. This power bleeds off into the offspring of the land – powerful sorcerers, great beasts, and even the pagan gods themselves. These offspring feel pain when Mythic Norden is stolen from, and work to protect the land from the wills of these heroes.

### A Timeless Land

Myths are eternal, unchanging, hallmarks of belief carved in stone. Time does not move forward for myth, so time stands still in the land of myths. It does not pass in Mythic Norden, not as we understand it. Things don't change. People don't change.

Certainly men and women in Mythic Norden are born, live, and die. But the land itself is eternal stasis. Mythic Norden is alive because of this mythic power, and it is that mythic power that keeps the land locked against change.

As sojourners in a timeless land that does not change, Mythenders become agents of that very time and change. The arrival of these heroes, from a land where time flows as mortals know it, is a truly unnatural event. Time only truly moves forward in Mythic Norden – things only truly change – in their presence. But while Mythic Norden stands still, Mortal Europe moves ever-forward.

Thus, Mythic Norden connects to all times of man, starting back just after the world lost touch with eternal myth – the death of Mythic Europe, the birth of Mortal Europe – and extending up through Mythic Norden's final end. This very timelessness causes perhaps the most unbelievable effect, one that even the sages of Mythic Norden can only explain in riddles: Mythenders from across time will meet each other on the shores of Mythic Norden, and travel together to slay ancient beasts.

### **The Last Stronghold of Myth**

When Mythic Greece and Mythic Babylon were finally ended, those mythic beings able to escape were able to flee to neighboring mythic lands. These refugees of fantasy spread the tale of mortals who were able to steal their power and bind them from entering a new land they could not touch. Sadly, these stories were seen simply as proof that their neighbors were weak, and these cautionary tales were ignored.

Then one after another, Mythic Lands fell. Mythic Norden is one of the very few remaining Mythic Lands still fighting for survival. After having lost an ally in Mythic Avalon, it alone faces the onslaught of Mortal Europe.

Due to this, some of grand sorcerers, beasts, and even the occasional god are not from Mythic Norden. These immigrant myths are stranded here, desperate to survive and aid Mythic Norden in every way they can. Should you see a Chinese Dragon, a Sidhe from Mythic Avalon or even Baba Yaga, know that you are up against a fierce opponent who has nothing more to lose.

### **A Doomed Land**

Mythic Norden will die. It has already died.

If Mythenders are agents of change, it should be noted that death is a profound, impacting change. That is what each one of these heroes is to Mythic Norden: Death Incarnate.

Thanks to the efforts of Mythenders over the centuries, all of Mythic Norden will have been stolen away into Mortal Europe in the 13<sup>th</sup> Century. This is fact. This will not change. The acts of Christianizing the land and murdering its mythic defenders will end the life in Mythic Norden. Even distant pockets, where people still believe in the old ways and have never seen a Mythender, will be brought into Mortal Europe after the last of Mythic Norden's power is taken away.

Even so, Mythic Norden is fallible, just like any man is. It is fueled with an empty hope and a foolish plan – to steal Mythenders away from Mortal Europe by tempting them with power and drawing them deeper into Myth. It must do this in order to regain the power these Mythenders steal, but there is an even more desperate plan at work. If the Mortal world is a world of change, then Mythic Norden hopes to take just enough of that, and no more, to change its own fate.

This will not happen. Mythic Norden will die. It has already died. But the land can never accept this fate.

And that is why to us, people of the modern world, ideas of dragons & gods walking the earth and of lands somehow outside of time are purely ideas of fantasy.

## The World of Mortal Europe

The lands these Heroes come from are the various kingdoms and tribes that make of Europe. This is a world where the power of myth has been used up by generations past, for good and for ill.

### A War-Torn World

The world of Mortal Europe is one that is ever-ravaged by war – the curse of lands where time continues forward. Vast armies are conscripted, coffers are drained, and generations lose their lives to fight in battle after bloody battle. No land remains untouched by war for long.

While those who live in Mythic Norden may squabble, they do not have what those in Mortal Europe have: a future. This future is what those in Mortal Europe squabble over. This very thing allows those in Mortal Europe to learn, adapt, experiment over generations, to further the technology of war. As time goes on, the wars of Mortal Europe are bloodier than anything within Mythic Norden – indeed, those who are stolen away from Mythic Norden and finally taste the power in having a future often become stalwart warriors, looking to keep what's now theirs and take even more.

It is in this very culture of constant war – sometimes overt, besieging lands and marching armies; sometimes covert, plotting against one's enemy and planting seeds of destruction from within – that many heroes must contend with. Some are born into the culture, expected to be a warrior or a leader. Some are born into other lives, and war touches them at a young age. Some are fortunate enough to never know of war except in stories, but quickly learn of it by the time they travel to Mythic Norden.

### A World Devoid of Myth

Mortal Europe was not always so. It was once many Mythic Lands, before the age of the mortal man began to rise. The myths of Greece and Arabia tell us of many dangerous foes that were beaten by the strength, guile and will of mortals. In the time of *Mythender*, just as today, all that remains of these myths are their stories.

Grand kings were able to forge vast nation-states by stealing power from the mythic lands and creating something new, something where the cold, uncaring world of myth – of monsters who would eat whole villages, or sorcerers who would do anything they pleased, of fallen heroes who commanded vast power – could not touch them. Through the first acts of using their mythic power, the first Mythenders forged the mortal world.

But the mortal world grew like a weed, choking off the mythic lands around it. By the time most of Mythic Europe was turned mortal, those beasts that had survived the onslaught did so by fleeing to other mythic lands. Without these defenders, the rest of Mythic Europe fell. With that, the belief in myth began to die with it, until all we are left with today are stories that we see as fantasy and allegory.

## The Heroes of Mythender

Combine the world of endless war & strife with the hope of ultimate power in a distant land, and you have the recipe for a *Mythender* Hero.

## **Impressive Warriors, Tapping Into Myth**

*Mythender* Heroes are impressive warriors, capable of grand feats on battle only matched by heroes of legend – partly because all of our heroes of legend became that way by becoming Mythenders themselves.

A Hero fueled by Mythic Power is easily equal to that of an army of 100 soldiers. A Hero may wrestle a dragon to the ground and beat it senseless with nothing more than his fists...wrapped in unicorn mane. A Hero may block a witch's curse simply with the power of his faith in The Lord and his unflinching resolve. A group of Heroes may duel against the pagan gods, beings of thunder and lightning themselves, and walk away with the hammer of Thor and the head of Odin.

A Hero cannot die, so long as a trace of Mythic Power runs through his veins.

## **Men and Women with Grand Ambition**

There is no Hero who seeks for something small. Heroes do not travel hundreds or thousands of miles to slay horrible creatures and duel against pagan gods in a land of unrelenting snow and ice simply because they have a crush on a local lord's daughter, or because they seek vengeance against a simple crime boss. No, a Hero has a grand Ambition, something they must see happen within the world of Mortal Europe that would change it forever. When a Hero returns as a true Mythender, fueled by stolen power, kingdoms and churches will rise and fall in his wake.

That is not to say that such Ambitions are not fueled by more personal desires, like love or vengeance, but that the effects of those Ambitions are felt throughout the Mortal world.

## **Mortal Outsiders**

*Mythender* Heroes are mortal outsiders, with one foot in the Mortal world and one foot in the Mythic. While they come from lands where the myth is already lost, they are at the moment still mortal enough to take that stolen power and cross back into Mortal Europe.

The people of Mythic Norden have a name for these outsiders: Südlandern – people of the South. From some lips, this name is spoken with awe and reverence; from others, it is spoken with contempt and hatred. This is a constant reminder that these Heroes are out of place.

Being an outsider marks Heroes throughout their stay in Mythic Norden. All people instinctively recognize Heroes for who they are – incredible mortals who walk the earth, not unlike the gods they revere. Sometimes this mark is an intangible feeling, but as time goes on the mark becomes very physical and very real, as the Hero's very mortality struggles with the alien nature of Myth.

## **People from Many Times**

Mythic Norden is a strange place that mortal minds cannot understand. You may very well see Heroes, who would otherwise be separated by vast gulfs of time, journey together to slay beasts. Ancestor and descendant may fight side by side, perhaps not even knowing their bond. A Hero seeking to conquer a land may shed blood with a Hero looking to reclaim that land a century later, though in that case Mythic Norden would do its best to cloud the later Hero's mind.

## The Game System

The game system behind *Mythender* is built from the ground up to help you do two things: have knock-down, drag-out fights with beings of myth and tell stories about epic Heroes who will risk everything to do the impossible. The main ways this game works to accomplish that is to play with some ideas that some other role-playing games you've played don't.

### Normal Failure isn't Mythic

In *Mythender*, normal failure – failure where nothing happens, like missing with your sword or failing to climb a cliff – doesn't happen. All Heroes are assumed to always succeed.

Outside of the grand battles, the question isn't "Do I succeed?" but "Do I succeed *unscathed*?" Many stories of incredible Heroes, from our earliest history to today's action movies, are about what the Hero suffers through while they achieve grand things.

What does that mean in a battle? Well, your foes, also being masters of Mythic power, are also assumed to always succeed. Battle in *Mythender* is about out-pacing your foe's successes, and being more successful than your foe. Success isn't all or nothing – it has degrees. You will never miss, but that doesn't mean every blow is exactly the same.

That doesn't mean failure can't happen at all. It can, but only if a player is willing to take it on. If you want a truly mythic success, one that will be worth a much greater reward than just a regular one, you can try for that. If you do, then failure becomes an option – not just normal failure, but the catastrophic failure that will cause you harm and strife. Still, is a little risk worth walking in the footsteps of gods and legends?

### Battling is a Team Activity

The Battle System is not a combat game where people play separately, hoping to all whittle down a foe's ability to stay in the fight. Heroes in *Mythender* must work together to take down beasts of Myth, and the system reflects this. Throughout the game, you aid each other's effects in Battle, chain special effects together and bring down large game through cooperation.

A Hero who can generate massive power with each blow and the Hero who has a weapon that does grievous damage to mythic creatures can work together, building situations that allow each other to trade around dice and points, in order to bring down the kraken that threatens to drown them.

All take credit in the ending of myths. All are treated as formidable beings that threaten all of Mythic Norden. All Heroes are equal under the eyes of God, Odin, and the *Mythender* system.

### Balancing Mortality and Mythic

The true threat to a Hero isn't death, but losing yourself to Myth and becoming something that another group of Mythenders will hunt down and kill. With that, Heroes slowly slide down the path of becoming Mythic – which makes them more powerful, as they can more easily tap into Norden's power.

But there is another power, the power of being Mortal. Mythic Norden is not about change – myth is stagnant – but Mortal Europe is very much tied to change and the future. While Heroes who have lost much of their Mortality can do more grandiose things (and are closer to being lost to Myth), those who cling to their Mortality have the power to learn from their experiences and improve over time.

Losing Mortality means gaining access to more mythic power, but at the expense of missing out on character advancement opportunities. Which is the more worthwhile choice for your playing experience?

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