

Meridian Questions and Techniques

Clarifications and Questions

What if the Journeyer has a hard time coming up with a character?

Getting input and suggestions from the other players is a good start. You can always play someone very much like yourself: start with "The Journeyer is like me, except that...", and go on from there.

What if a Touch feels like they just can't use the Cadences they drew?

If a Touch ever feels like they can't use any of their three Cadences, they can place them at the bottom of the Cadence deck and draw three new ones.

What if all Touches have switched to Companions so nobody has Cadences anymore?

In that case the Guide gains a hand of three Cadences to use just like the Touches did. The Guide plays them at the Locales until three have been played, as usual. But the Guide cannot play a Companion.

What if two players disagree over what happens in a scene?

The players each have different authorities: the Guide over the descriptions and details of a Locale, as well as its Nexus, the Journeyer over their character, and the Touches over the secondary characters they introduce. Each of them should be allowed to determine what happens to their characters. If you still have a conflict that you can't easily resolve, let the Guide draw a random Cadence: if it shows a sun symbol, the Journeyer gets their way, otherwise the other player does. Move on from there, and try to be open and flexible. This is a collaborative game at its heart, and conflict goes against its spirit.

Can the Journeyer use their Progression more than once?

Yes, the Journeyer can use the Progression from their card as many times as they like, as long as there is a matching Cadence on the table each time.

Can we play Meridian with just two players?

You can. It will be a different kind of journey, however: one where the Journeyer travels alone, never to acquire a Companion. It makes for a different feel. It also puts more responsibility on the Guide: they will have to take over all of the work of providing details *and* playing secondary characters. There is one additional change I'd make: during the Finale, the Guide draws three random cards to add to the Journeyer's stack instead of just one, to make the odds work as they should.

Why do you use "they" as the pronoun for each Nexus?

There is no prescribed gender for a Nexus. You can present them as whichever gender fits your journey (along a vast non-binary range), or you can consider them fluid, ever-changing, or non-gendered.

Meridian Questions and Techniques

How is Meridian licensed?

Meridian itself is copyrighted, including the rules and all card text. However, if you want to make your own Meridian products—such as Locale or Cadence sets—we are hereby giving you license to do so and sell them without paying any royalties or fees to Berengad Games. Your products will be your property and under whatever license you choose. You do need to point to the original game and attribute it. Get in touch if you would like to use any of the graphics, and we can probably work that out too 😊

Advanced Techniques

Prelude Scenes for Each Arc

If you want to play a Prelude scene specifically tailored for a certain arc, I suggest the following:

The **Defiance** Journeyer is an outsider to Meridian, someone from our world. You can play a day in the life of this character and let us meet the two or three most influential people in their life (played by the Touches), or just have a scene where most of those people are mentioned somehow. Make sure that the core emotion driving the Journeyer to Meridian is expressed. Great fodder for this comes from family issues (they are resentful of their baby brother, scared that one of their parents might die, or mourning the loss of their long-time partner) or inescapable social environments (such as teased and shunned at school, or chased by neighborhood bullies).

A good way to transition this character to Meridian is to have a confrontation with another character over their issue, from which the Journeyer runs away and gets lost, goes somewhere they're not supposed to, or discovers a new gateway in their safe space.

The Defiance Journeyer sometimes (but not necessarily) follows a loved one into Meridian. Maybe their younger sibling is kidnapped by a Nexus or one of their minions, their puppy is chasing a shadow into a cave, or their toddler grandchild wanders off as the Journeyer is distracted. The best way to handle this is to tie it to the Journeyer's emotional state: they are distracted by grief, do something stupid out of anger, or neglect supervision of a child or pet because of their self-pity.

The **Obsession** Journeyer can be from Meridian or from the outside. Either way, they know about Meridian and have to follow all of its laws. They are single-minded in their pursuit, so their Prelude scene should establish what they're after and why they're so obsessed with it. The Touches should introduce characters that are either sympathetic and caution the Journeyer, or try to stop them as they set out on their journey (and be brushed aside or overcome by the Journeyer). Try to highlight the Journeyer's great competence in this scene by having them perform for an appreciative audience or fight off opposition. Make sure that this is an obsession so powerful that they are willing to traverse other worlds in its pursuit. It can therefore be something unattainable in our world, like locking away their heart so they stop feeling sad, being reunited with someone who passed away, or regaining their youth.

Meridian Questions and Techniques

The **Devotion** Journeyer should start in their own Locale. This can be one of Meridian's (though this excludes it from the ones you will play through) or one you make up on the spot (it doesn't have to be very detailed). The Prelude should feature signs of the threat to this Locale, as well as the Nexus tasking the Journeyer with saving it and impressing on them the importance of this mission. Signs of a threat can be the Nexus falling ill, shadows creeping in, all color leaking away, inhabitants abandoning it, sadness overcoming all, etc. Other characters of the Locale should further emphasize what the Journeyer is trying to save: there should be sympathetic creatures worth caring for. As an advanced technique, you might have another player create a Companion to accompany them right from the start (instead of starting as a Touch). The Troublemaker and the Unbound are especially suited for this role, and the Stalker can be used to represent (one or more agents of) the threat.

Choosing Locales

As the rulebook explains, the Locales are sorted into three sets: *Bumpy Rides*, *Capricious Festival*, and *Dark Reflections*. These provide a good starting point for making a journey hang together thematically, simply by sticking to a single set, but you can make more specific selections from each set. Here are some choices based on issue, mood, or emotion:

- **Joy/Childhood:** Ferocious Feast, Careening Carriages, Phoenix Aerie, Untamed Tourney
- **Adolescence:** Whispering Court, Graveyard of Playthings, Scarlet Masquerade
- **Grief/Old Age:** Mausoleum of Mirrors, Midnight Conservatory, Cathedral of Forgotten Gods, Ruins Under the Waves
- **Guilt:** Streets of Strife, Asylum of the Broken, Halls of the Harrows

You don't have to make any final choices before the game starts; you can narrow your options and then choose the order as you play, depending on the development of your journey.

You can also tailor how to reveal the Locales according to the Journeyer's arc.

The Journeyer of **Defiance** doesn't know where to find a way back home, so the order of the Locales should be unknown to them. The Guide could select and set aside one Locale that makes sense for the specific character as the final Locale. Knowing which will be the last one, the Guide can give hints and foreshadow during the journey. For example, if the last Locale is the Scarlet Masquerade, the Guide can have masked figures appear in the Prelude and throughout the journey at the edges of perception, observing the Journeyer, and other characters can hint at the fact that the Regent of Grace has doors within their manor that can lead to strange places outside of Meridian.

The Journeyer of **Obsession** usually knows where they're going, so the Guide can let them pick the last Locale ahead of time (or the Guide presents it to them). If they know how to get there, deliberately choosing all the Locales is an option, but randomly drawing them at the beginning and simply knowing what they are might be the more enjoyable way. But they might also not know where to go, just that it's somewhere in Meridian, and their obsession will lead them to it. In that case, simply choose and reveal them as you go. I suggest picking Locales with more serious progressions that really cost something.

Meridian Questions and Techniques

It's fun for the Journeyer of **Devotion** to choose whether they know the first or the last Locale (that is, they either know the starting point of their mission but not where it will take them, or they know where to go but not how to get there). You can let them choose accordingly, or the Guide can choose and present this knowledge when playing the Nexus during the Prelude.

Reincorporation and Themes

One advanced technique is to have real world characters from the Prelude be reflected in Meridian's citizens throughout the Journey. Imagine that, as in some of the source material, you are doing the equivalent of using the same actors, just in different costumes and make up. The Journeyer usually isn't aware of the similarities, but the audience is.

Reincorporating elements throughout, such as a particular kind of bird or notes from a song that featured during the Prelude, can help tie the journey together. Sometimes these elements can be substantiated as the Stalker Companion, if they feel threatening.

Finally, the Journeyer can physically change as they make their way through Meridian. Maybe they grow older or younger. Maybe they become taller and more attractive (like Bastian in *The Neverending Story*), or twisted and monstrous (like *Ink*). The Journeyer can thus express their emotional state and development, and the theme of their journey, in their physicality.

Creating Locales

Whether it's because your Journeyer of the Obsession arc was consumed during the Finale, or you just want to add your own contribution to Meridian, you can definitely create Locales of your own.

First, you need a core idea. This can start with a visual, an inspiration from other sources, or by pondering the way Meridian grows: by people becoming consumed by their obsessions and losing themselves in them. If you start with the idea of someone obsessed with something and imagine the place this would create around them, you'll have a lot to work with.

The description should be short, but include activities that are going on that a Journeyer could participate in. After all, an empty or static Locale would not be interesting to interact with.

The notes should provide sensual details: smells, sounds, colors, and so on. These provide building blocks for the Guide and the Touches when they make up more specific things at the Locale.

Characters should ideally have gender-neutral names and a title that indicates their personality or function. You can include both characters strongly implied by the Locale, as well as those that would be contradictory or incongruous so that they stand out.

The three laws deserve a lot of your attention. Each Locale should have at least one law that invites imaginative exploration (such as the one in the Midnight Conservatory stating that anything planted there grows into something) and one law specifically tempting Journeyers of the Defiance arc to break it. The third law can reinforce the mood and theme of the Locale and/or provide creative constraint.

Meridian Questions and Techniques

If you didn't start with your Nexus, make sure they embody the heart of the Locale. They are deeply involved in why the Locale is here, and without them, the Locale would lose its magic. Give them a gender-neutral name, describe their looks and attitude, and imply why they're here.

Finally, the progressions are very important. They determine how the Journeyer changes if they accept the ways of the Locale. The key progression is an experience that the Journeyer undertakes, which has a lasting impact of them. The scale progression is a trade, where the Journeyer hands something over that the Nexus desires. This doesn't have to be a physical item: it can be a memory, an attribute, an ability to feel certain things, or anything else that's a part of the Journeyer.

Creating Cadences

When creating your own Cadences, give them a uniting theme or mood and an appropriate name so that players can decide whether to include your set in their Cadence deck for a particular journey.

Keep in mind that they are evocative and vague so that they can be played at any Locale. If they were too specific, it would limit not only their use but also the joy players get from interpreting them in their own way.

Cadences come in sets of 18. Of those, ten have the sun symbol and four each the key or scale symbol. This is important for balancing the odds of the choices available to the Journeyer, both at Locales and during the Finale. It also lines up with the sheet size for most printers that'll produce poker-sized cards.