



THIS FAVORED LAND

**A WILD TALENTS SOURCEBOOK
FOR THE WAR BETWEEN THE STATES**

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INTRODUCTION



"If it were admitted that you who are dissatisfied hold the right side in the dispute, there still is no single good reason for precipitate action. Intelligence, patriotism, Christianity, and a firm reliance on Him who has never yet forsaken this favored land are still competent to adjust in the best way all our present difficulty.

"In your hands, my dissatisfied fellow-countrymen, and not in mine, is the momentous issue of civil war. The Government will not assail you. You can have no conflict without being yourselves the aggressors. You have no oath registered in heaven to destroy the Government, while I shall have the most solemn one to preserve, protect, and defend it."

Abraham Lincoln

First Inaugural Address
March 4, 1861

Northerners called it the War of the Rebellion, while Southerners referred to it as the War of Northern Aggression. It was known as the War Between the States, and the Second American Revolution. The American Civil War answered forever the question of slavery and secession in the United States at the cost of 620,000 lives.

Winston Churchill said that the Civil War was "the last war fought between gentlemen." That phrase would have shocked the wretched survivors of the prison camps of Andersonville, Georgia, or Elmira, New York. The mutual respect at Fort Sumter masked the hatred visible in the massacres at Fort Pillow and Fort Blakely. Only two years separated the patriotic fervor of 1861 from civilian riots in New York City and Richmond, Virginia. The hopes for a quick, glorious war were dashed on the killing fields of Shiloh, Antietam, Gettysburg, and Chickamauga. The war freed the slaves, but it would be another 100 years before African-Americans saw equality under the law.

From almost the moment the Civil War began, a veneer of honor, chivalry and glory was slowly stripped away to reveal a core of horror, cruelty, and barbarity. In other words, it was like any other war ever fought. It began with symbolism, ended in assassination, and was followed by the decade-long failure known as

Reconstruction. But it also brought needed change and a glimmer of hope that one day the promise of the Declaration of Independence—that all men were created equal—would come to pass.

This Favored Land is a sourcebook for the *Wild Talents* roleplaying game set during the American Civil War. Players take on the role of The Gifted, ordinary people who—by divine providence or pure chance—have been granted extraordinary powers. Though occasionally seen as saviors, they are most often scorned as sorcerers and demons, witches and charlatans. Sought by the needy, and hunted by the fearful, The Gifted are forced by the superstitions of the day to hide from public scrutiny.

No matter how hard they try to hide, The Gifted can't escape their nation's greatest crisis. Whether they are spying for the Confederacy in Washington, riding with Quantrill in Missouri, or marching with Sherman

through Georgia, The Gifted must make the difficult choice between using their powers and avoiding the dangers of discovery.

And there are more dangers in this land than minie balls and case shot. The Knights of the Golden Circle hunt Gifted blacks and vocal Unionists with equal vigor. The abolitionist Sons of Canaan seek to expand the ranks of The Gifted with freedmen and escaped slaves in advance of a slave revolt. Reverend Jacob Holden and his followers cross the land “purifying” The Gift, often-times by force. In the darkest corners of the nation lie the disembodied Ethereals, with the mysterious Society of the Raven never far away.

This Favored Land takes players from Fort Sumter to Appomattox Court House, from Boston to New Orleans, from the brink of dissolution to national rebirth. If The Gifted can survive the ordeal they, like their nation, will be changed forever.



WHAT YOU NEED TO PLAY THIS FAVORED LAND



This Favored Land is a supplement to the *Wild Talents* roleplaying game. In order to tell the story of super-powered parahumans during the American Civil War you will, of course, need the *Wild Talents* rule book.

You could quite easily ignore the superheroic aspects of *This Favored Land* and just run a straight adventure set in the Civil War without

any mention of The Gifted. This book was designed with that option in mind. In this case you will need a copy of the One Roll Engine game system. The ORE rules are found in games such as *GODLIKE: Superhero Roleplaying in a World On Fire* and *NEMESIS*. For a full understanding of the rules, however, you will need *Wild Talents*.

Introduction

COLOR AXES

This Favored Land has the following color axes, from *Wild Talents*' axes of superhero world design:

Red 1: The premise of *This Favored Land* is that The Gifted did exist 150+ years ago, but knowledge of their existence has been lost. This implies that history will proceed pretty much as it is laid out in our history books. In other words The Gifted aren't going to abolish slavery in 1860 or lead the Army of Northern Virginia into Washington in 1863. See Chapter 7 for ideas on how to run a game with a higher Red value.

Gold 4: Very few people could change their place in 19th century society. There was greater mobility in the United States than in, say, Victorian Britain, but that mobility was limited by 21st century standards and largely based on wealth and opportunity. White women had few options, and minorities fewer still. Everyone knew their station and few rose above it. Opinions about what The Gifted represent are usually based on religious dogma or superstition. While it is possible to change individual attitudes, The Gifted fear that their treatment by society would be largely negative and inflexible.

Blue 2: The only supernatural manifestations in the world are The Gifted and the Ethereals, though some believe they are two aspects of the same phenomenon. The Gifted take great pains to hide the fact that supernatural forces are at work in the world. Even the Knights of the Golden Circle hide the truth from the populace.

Black 2: Northerners and Southerners believed strongly in a religious moral foundation, and yet slavery was legal in some Northern states and all Southern states. The same Free Soil abolitionists who wanted slavery kept out of the western territories enacted "black codes" to prevent free blacks from competing with whites. The forces of both sides shed blood in the belief that they were in the right. Army chaplains preached modesty and temperance within shouting distance of alcoholism and prostitution. Most Americans knew the biblical teachings of morality, even if those teachings were forgotten in the heat of battle.

WILD TALENTS CONVENTIONS

This Favored Land uses most of the *Wild Talents* rules as is. There are, however, a few modifications. Characters in *This Favored Land* are restricted to one of two archetypes. Certain miracles are restricted, or require a specific Flaw. There are new Flaws and new Intrinsics. Some Skills are not used, and there are new period-specific Skills. Chapter 3 contains the character-specific rule changes. Civil War weaponry is covered in Chapter 4, along with rules for misfires, cover, bleeding, diseases, and amputations.

All of the dice options in the *Wild Talents* rulebook (Squishy Dice, All High, Flip Dice, etc.) and the damage modification options are compatible with *This Favored Land*. Additional damage options are found in Chapter 4.

The author allows normal (non-super powered) human characters to purchase Expert Dice in his campaigns at the same cost as Hard Dice. This is an option, but not a requirement, for *This Favored Land*.

All of the rules changes in this book can be added to a *Wild Talents* campaigns with little effort.

This Favored Land is designed for *Wild Talents Second Edition*. The Arc Dream Publishing Web site has a *This Favored Land* for 1st Edition conversion document available for free download, which contains all the character creation rules and NPC stats for playing *This Favored Land* with the first edition rules. You can find it at www.arcdream.com.