

the first book of pandemonium

DREAD

unrated edition

RAFAEL CHANDLER

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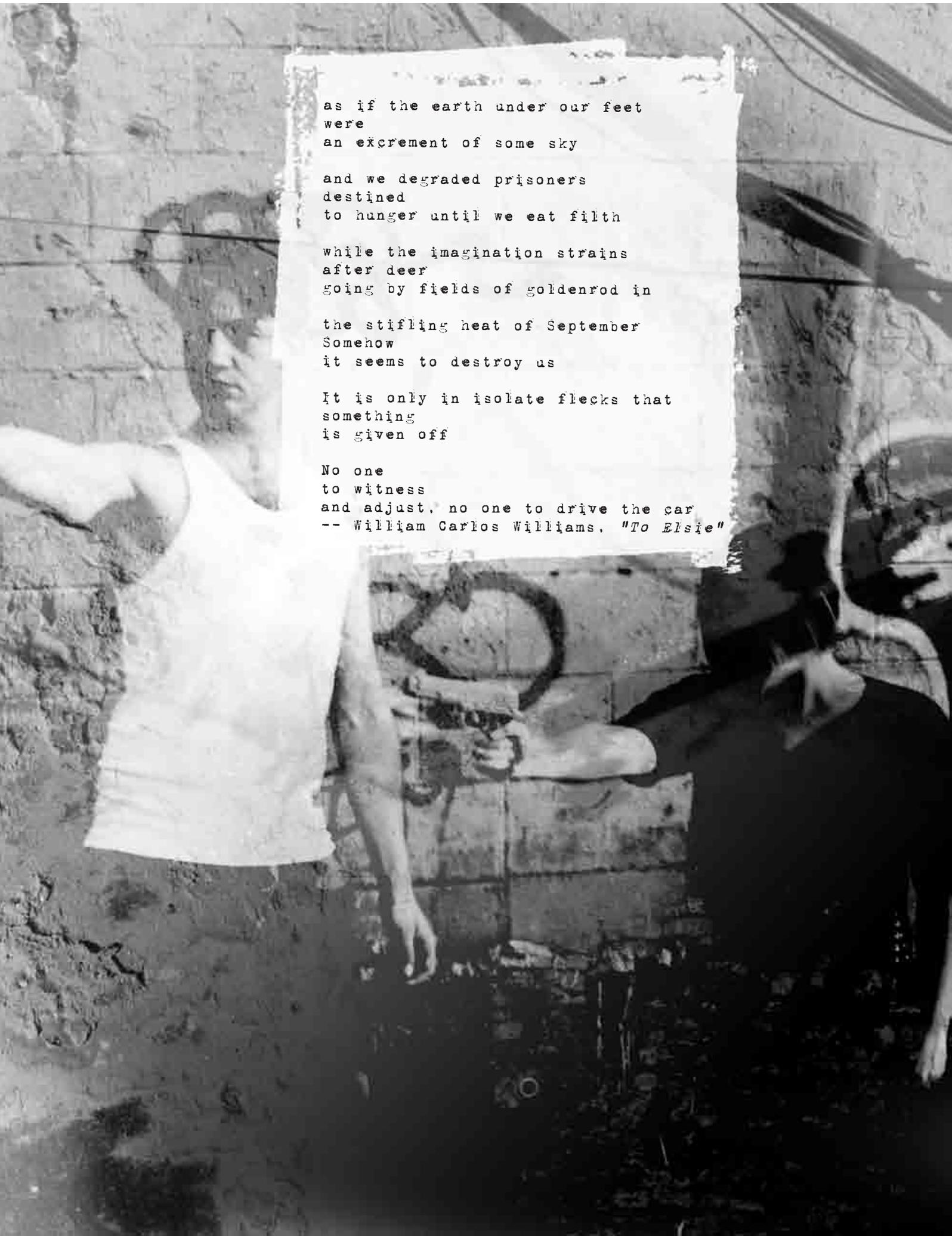
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dread (dred), adjective.

1. greatly feared, horrific
2. inspiring terror or awe



We are only undeceived
Of that which, deceiving, could no longer harm.
In the middle, not only in the middle of the way
But all the way, in a dark wood, in a bramble,
On the edge of a grimpen, where is no secure foothold,
And menaced by monsters, fancy lights,
Risking enchantment. Do not let me hear
Of the wisdom of old men, but rather of their folly,
Their fear of fear and frenzy, their fear of possession...
-- T. S. Eliot. "East Coker"



as if the earth under our feet
were
an excrement of some sky

and we degraded prisoners
destined
to hunger until we eat filth

while the imagination strains
after deer
going by fields of goldenrod in

the stifling heat of September
Somehow
it seems to destroy us

It is only in isolate flecks that
something
is given off

No one
to witness
and adjust, no one to drive the car
-- William Carlos Williams. "To Elsie"

DREAD: THE FIRST BOOK OF PANDEMONIUM

UNRATED EDITION

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DEDICATION

For Wade Harrell

because he still believes

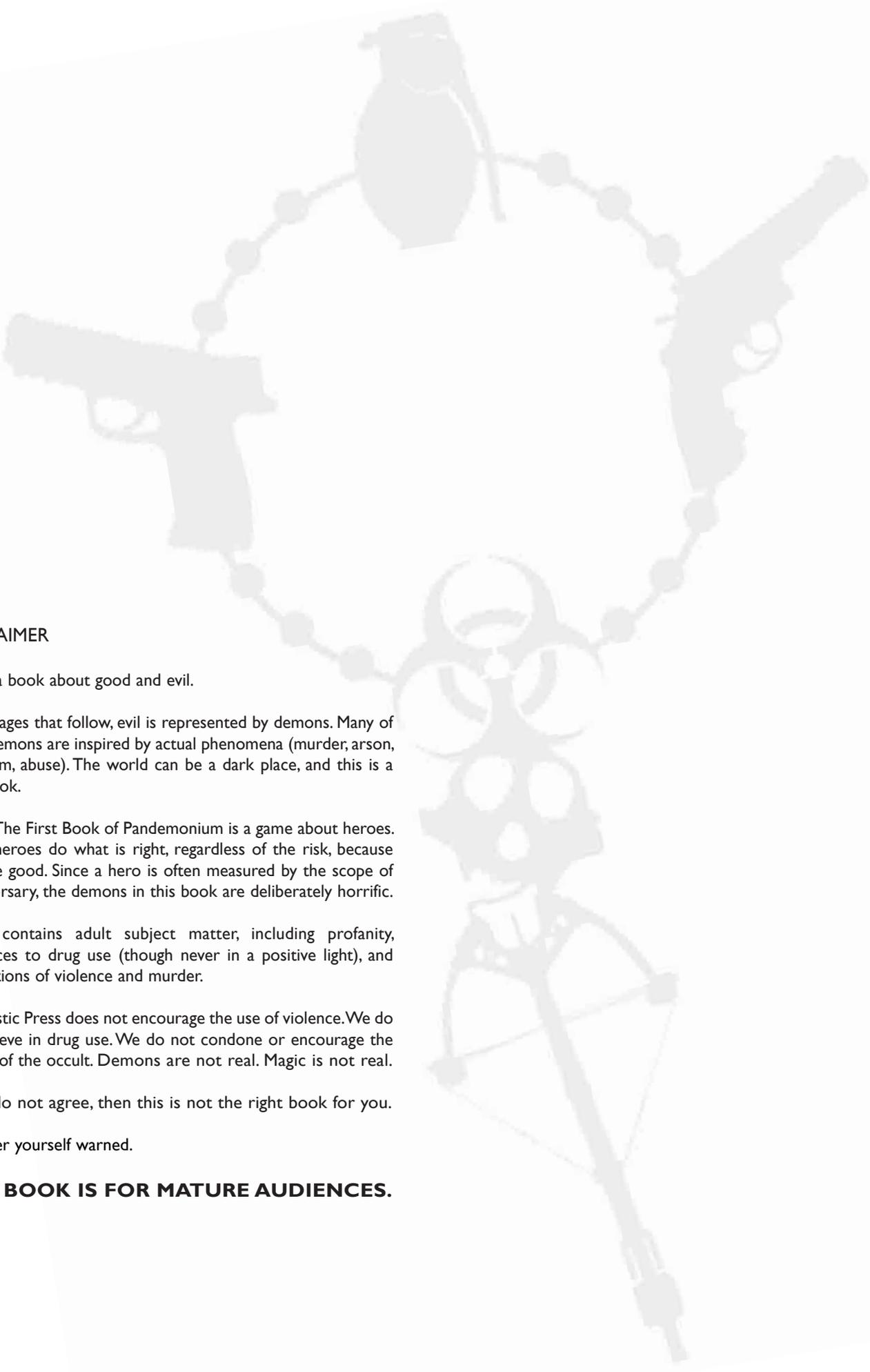
*“we saw the world with different eyes
pupils dimmed by the smoke of decay
crusted nearly shut by the stupidity of our peers
they were happy times let me tell you”*

– Alek Traunic

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DISCLAIMER

This is a book about good and evil.

In the pages that follow, evil is represented by demons. Many of these demons are inspired by actual phenomena (murder; arson, terrorism, abuse). The world can be a dark place, and this is a dark book.

Dread: The First Book of Pandemonium is a game about heroes. These heroes do what is right, regardless of the risk, because they are good. Since a hero is often measured by the scope of his adversary, the demons in this book are deliberately horrific.

Dread contains adult subject matter, including profanity, references to drug use (though never in a positive light), and descriptions of violence and murder.

Neoplastic Press does not encourage the use of violence. We do not believe in drug use. We do not condone or encourage the pursuit of the occult. Demons are not real. Magic is not real.

If you do not agree, then this is not the right book for you.

Consider yourself warned.

THIS BOOK IS FOR MATURE AUDIENCES.

PREFACE

Back in the summer of 2000, I was working at Electronic Arts Virginia. As you might expect, my co-workers were all hardcore video game enthusiasts. In my experience, you scratch a video game developer, you find a tabletop gamer. So I got a bunch of people together and we had some weekly RPG sessions. It was okay, but for the novices, the systems we tried were too complicated. Some of these guys had never done tabletop before, and it was a lot to take in at once. Worse, their characters started out as ineffectual rat-killers, and they wanted to kick ass right off the bat. Changes were made, lessons were learned.

In 2001, I moved to Raleigh and hooked up with another gaming group (the Damned Dirty Apes). We experienced similar problems, so I started tinkering with my own designs. This is something I used to do when I was first getting into tabletop gaming in the early eighties. So I started designing a horror game called Dread: The First Book of Pandemonium. It was an indie game, executed on a shoestring budget, and it was a lot of fun. The game was released in October 2002. I printed up a hundred copies, and I ran the game at Trinoc*coN and MACE. The print run sold out in about a year.

I was thinking about releasing more material for the game, but my day job wound up taking up a lot of my free time. Then I got married, and then I had a kid. You know how it goes.

I still received emails from people asking if there would be another print run of Dread. After a while, I started thinking about releasing a new edition. Maybe a free PDF? Or a cheap text-only version? In the end, however, I decided to revise the game and release a new print version. New demons, new spells, a new layout. More profanity. What the hell, I thought. How long could it possibly take? The thing's already written, I'm just adding a little polish.

A year later, I was still working on the son of a bitch.

It got out of hand quick. I found some great new artists, and a couple of amazingly talented people who call themselves Adwen Creative handled the layout, art direction, cover art, and interior art. I'm really happy with the way that the new rules work.

So, that's how we got to where we are. I really hope you enjoy the game. Drop me a line and let me know.

Best regards,
Rafael Chandler

email: spaniard@dread-rpg.com
aim: dread spaniard

Male

Room: K111R

Date: 10/1

PR interval 134 ms
 QRS duration 102 ms
 QT/QTc 324/409 ms
 P-R-T axes 49 -1 41

Incomplete right bundle branch block
 Anterior infarct, age undetermined
 Abnormal ECG

Technician: ERB

Test 104

Unconfirmed

COMMENTS:

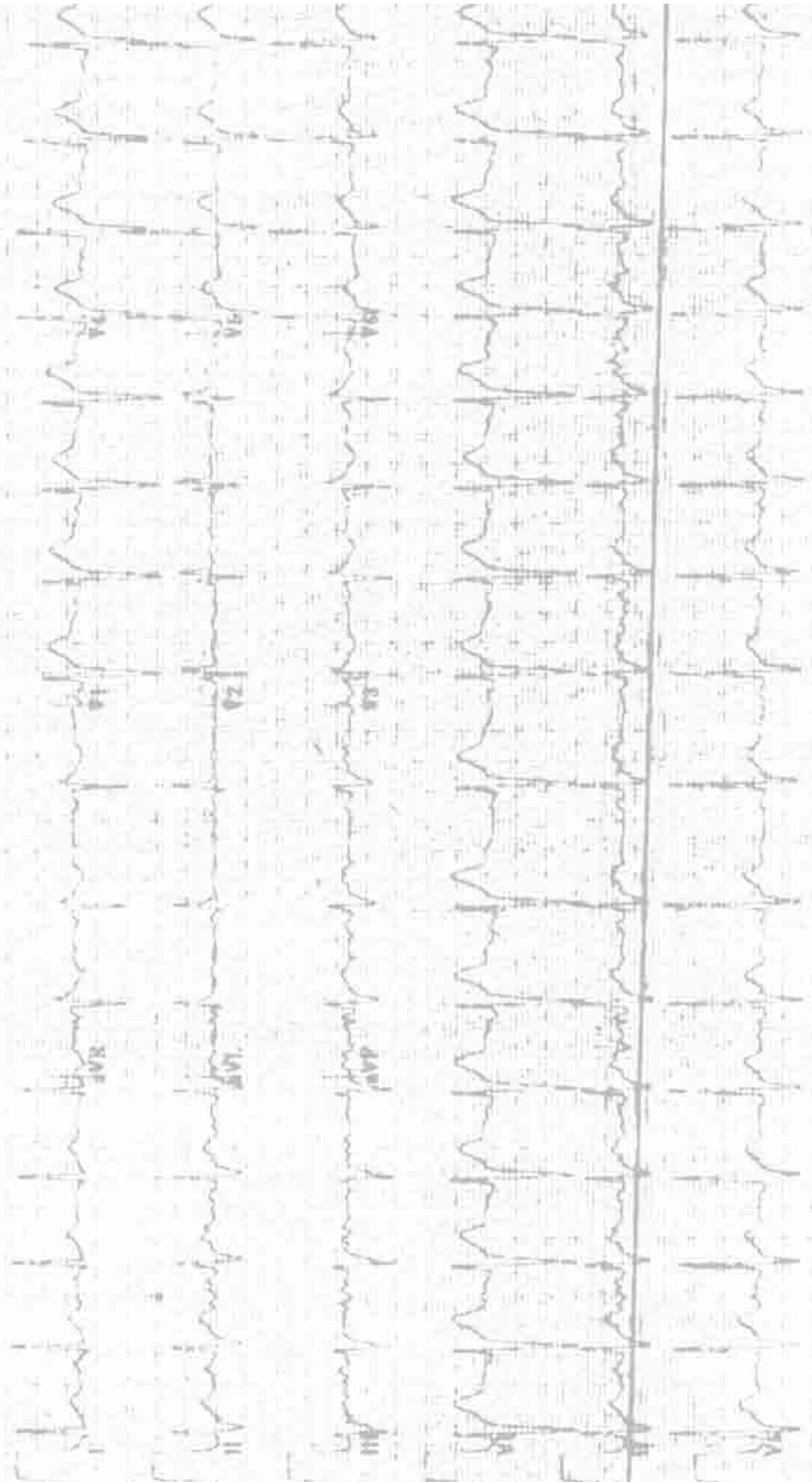


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OK. LET'S DO THIS.

Heaven was no safer.
Giants attacked the very throne of Heaven,
Filed Pelion on Ossa, mountain on mountain
Up to the very stars. Jove struck them down
With thunderbolts, and the bulk of those huge bodies
Lay on the earth, and bled, and Mother Earth,
Made pregnant by that blood, brought forth new bodies,
And gave them, to recall her older offspring,
The forms of men. And this new stock was also
Contemtuos of gods, and murder-hungry
And violent. You would know they were sons of blood.
-- Ovid. *The Metamorphoses*

Hardly are those words out
When a vast image out of Spiritus Mundi
Troubles my sight: somewhere in sands of the desert
A shape with lion body and the head of a man,
A gaze blank and pitiless as the sun,
Is moving its slow thighs, while all about it
Keel shadows of the indignant desert birds.
-- William Butler Yeats. *The Second Coming*

Chapter 1:
The Blood-Dimmed Tide



PANDEMONIUM

Chapter 1: Pandemonium

JOURNAL: TEETH

Dust everywhere.

Place is silent.

Windows boarded up, filthy bedsheets covering stained furniture, a tiny bundle of grey fur that turns out to be a dead kitten. Something wooden. A rat trap. Looks like it crushed the little kitties skull. Outside, it looks like an abandoned house in a bad part of town. Inside, you can feel it on your skin like electricity, a humming ugliness that coils into your skull like the smell of hot urine. This place stinks of hatred.

Gently, I draw the .357 and walk towards the stairs. I feel sweat trickling down my back, dampening my socks, pricking my brow. I try to ease my feet down with each step; old floorboards, don't want them to creak. After what feels like a couple of days, I cross the room and reach the bottom of the staircase. It's too dark to see if there's anything at the top.

I want to take out the walkie-talkie and ask Slashfic if he found anything outside, but I'm afraid. I don't want to make any noise. If I turn and walk out right now, I'll be okay. I'm sure of that. But I got a job to do. I can't just walk away from this. I don't want to die, though. I can't stop walking, and it's hard to breathe. My throat feels like I just swallowed a handful of chalk dust.

I try to concentrate on how I'm going to react if some gibbering skinless monstrosity swings down at me out of the shadows, screaming like a crucified castrati, perhaps laughing just before unzipping me here on the stairs. I try to keep my finger on the trigger, but my hands are sweaty, and I worry about firing the gun accidentally, maybe giving away my position, maybe blowing a hole in my foot.

I see it about ten steps up. Not the thing, although I am well aware that there is something in this house with me, something unbelievably bad. No, what I see, about ten steps up, is a small bowl. Small plastic cereal bowl, got Winnie the Pooh on it.

You climb up old stairs like this, don't do it up the middle. Wood flexes, creaks -- it's astonishingly loud in a silent house. So I put my foot against the wall, and I ease my weight up the stairs, wiping drops of sweat off my eyebrows. When I'm almost at the bowl, I crane my neck to get a better look. Something in it. Looks like it could actually be cereal. Jesus. Wouldn't that be ridiculous. But I know I'm wrong. So I shine a tiny beam of light on the cereal bowl.

Teeth. Little teeth, a kid's teeth. Maybe a dozen.

Bloody roots, ropes of dark blood curled around the shiny white enamel, cuspids, molars, canines. I feel something hot and urgent writhe in my gut, and I have to stare in the darkness for several seconds, blinking and breathing softly and slowly through my nose. It works, and I feel the nausea subside. It's a Vouzire, no doubt. That's just perfect. I can feel hysterical laughter rattling around in my lungs, and I have to bite my tongue to suppress it.

With trembling fingers, I pick up the .357. If it is a Vouzire, this gun isn't worth a god damn. A shotgun might do the trick, but honestly, I just wouldn't feel comfortable without a flamethrower. All I have is this revolver. It'll have to do. I look up the stairs, and take a slow, quiet breath.



Now I have to wonder. After all, it eats childrens' teeth. That's all a Vouzire eats. So it sets a bowl of them up here on the steps. Why? Wouldn't it want to keep them safe? You'd think so. But here they are, a handful of small white teeth. On the stairs. A delicacy, as far as the demon's concerned. Or a trap.

I reach for the walkie-talkie just before I hear the growl, behind me, heavy and loud, like someone starting a lawnmower. From the corner of my eye, I see it blur across the room towards me, a roaring mass of shining spines and serrated teeth.

Everything is so fast, but it takes me forever to turn and pull the trigger on the Smith and Wesson. It's wide, hits somewhere in the kitchen, far behind the demon. It's coming straight at me, not going to come up the stairs. Maybe it's going to jump--

The Vouzire splinters through a couch and a table before driving a fist through the wood of the staircase, smashing my ankle. I choke on a scream and slide down two steps, cracking my skull hard on the way down. I blink, once, and it's dragging me off the stairs. The hardwood flies up and smashes my mouth. Suddenly, I'm on the floor, on my back, and it's above me, reaching down with long white talons.

Slashfic kicks in the door, just behind the Vouzire, yelling obscenities as he pumps round after round into its back, silhouetted by blinding sunlight. A slug goes wild and strikes the ceiling above me. A chunk of plaster lands in my mouth and with some effort, I spit it out.

I hate my god damn job.

Everything goes black.

1.1. THE BEGINNING

This is a violent game of horror-action, set in a world of demons and black magic. It's gruesome, profane, and intended for adults. Please see the disclaimer at the front of the book.

Okay, enough bullshit, let's get into character. You'll need about twenty-four 12-sided dice, some paper, and some character sheets.

1.1.1. BLOOD MONDAY

While playing the game, you assume the role of a Disciple, a soldier on the front lines of a war against the forces of Hell. You are not an adventurer or hero or investigator. You are a Disciple. You are not part of team or party or group. You are part of a Cabal.

The Disciples in each Cabal were chosen by a Mentor. There are several Mentors, working across the globe, although the precise number is not known to you.

A few months ago, your life wasn't worth much at all. You were on the down and out, and you knew it. Then, in May, everything changed, and you stared at the television, stunned. Like billions of other people, you tried to make sense of the madness and horror, and you failed.

It got worse a few days later, and you nearly died. But you're alive, and now you know what your own blood tastes like. You have a gun. You have nothing to lose. You're ready to do what it takes to make things right again, and if you die in the line of fire, then that's what happens.

You were in a downward spiral into oblivion. For whatever reason, you had given up on life.

You were:

A wealthy, young professional with a wonderful spouse and a beautiful home. Then a slow and ugly cancer stole the one you loved while you sat by the hospital bed and stared. The world went black that day, like someone reached up and turned off the sun. You don't even remember the funeral.

An ex-con who couldn't get work, so you came home from another day of washing dishes and dealing with bullshit from a fat, sloppy bastard of a cook who'd have lasted maybe five minutes on the inside. You sat down on the couch, and you just hit that bottle until there wasn't anything left to feel. One night, you bought a revolver for forty-six dollars from a dark-eyed boy in an alley. You started staring at the gun, night after night, for hours. You didn't know why.

A mafia don's daughter: beautiful and elegant and completely unaware of your father's secret life until two men walked up to you outside the opera and tore his handsome face apart with hollow-point bullets. Kneeling beside him on the sidewalk, you knew that you would get the darkest revenge. With time, you did. Now, you're a marked woman, and the assassins know your name and your face. It's a matter of time before you're found and shot to death, to die on the sidewalk in a pool of your own blood, just like Papa.

A police detective who cracked after a particularly harrowing case. You close your eyes, and you can see her bloodied face staring up at you with blue eyes that'll never close. You tried a desk job, but couldn't get that image out of your mind. After your dismissal, you opened up a private investigation agency, hoping to exorcise your demons by specializing in missing-children cases. It almost worked, but eventually, your reputation as a volatile, unpredictable burnout resulted in fewer and fewer cases. You were out of time and out of money.

A soldier home from the war, unable to forget the horrors you'd seen. You were seeing enemies everywhere, and the front line was always a thousand yards ahead of you. You scanned it, searching for friendlies, but found none. The pills weren't helping. You were home every night, polishing your bayonet and your medal, and you were starting to worry about what you were going to do.

Whatever the case, you were down to your last. You were on a losing streak, and there was no way out of it. On the morning of May 14 -- Blood Monday -- you forgot your problems and stared at the carnage on the TV screen.

On the night of Sunday, May 13, everyone in Haywood, Oklahoma, went to sleep. By sunrise on May 14th, they were all dead or missing. The first camera crews on the scene were more aggressive than the local law enforcement had anticipated, and they rushed to the scene of the slaughter, unaware of what millions of people would later watch again and again.

There were bodies everywhere.

Haywood, a small town 130 miles southeast of Oklahoma City, was home to a few thousand people. They went to church, raised obedient children, and waved as they passed one another on quiet country roads. Their trucks kicked up small clouds of dust, and they all knew the names of the people at the cash register.

When WAOK news cameraman David Shifflett arrived at the home of Kevin and Ellen Chamberlain, his first words were, "Jesus fucking Christ." Then he vomited. However, he kept the camera steady, even when reporter Arlene Timms shrieked and stumbled backwards into him.

Sobbing hysterically, she continued to back up until she reached the WAOK news van, but Shifflett stood his ground and trained his camera lens on the indelible image that would, for many, come to symbolize the Haywood Incident. It was the bloody handprint of a child, smeared at roughly waist level on the white garage door of the Chamberlain home.

Shifflett made sure to keep the camera off of the remains of Kevin Chamberlain. He figured that it would be pointless to record something that they would never in a million years show on television.

The Chamberlain girl, Rebecca, was never found. Roughly one-third of the town's 2,000 citizens were also gone without a trace.

The bodies that were found were, in many cases, unrecognizable. Victims had been torn to pieces, slashed, crushed, and burned. James Yarborough, 24, a gas station attendant, had been crucified in his garage. Dennis Atwater, 39, a farmer, had been impaled on a pitchfork in his back yard. His right arm was missing, and appeared to have been twisted off. Mary Ann Walker, 17, was found in her bathtub, fully clothed, her lower jaw sliced off neatly, as if by some impossibly precise blade.

Inexplicably, many of the injuries appeared to be self-inflicted.

It took the world hours to fully comprehend the disaster. World leaders called the President to extend their condolences, and hundreds of thousands of dollars were sent to relief workers in the first few minutes after the broadcast. People drove hundreds of miles to help sift through the debris of smashed homes and burning vehicles, but there were no survivors. There were no clues, nor were there any notes, recordings, or fragments of evidence that could explain the atrocity.

Over the course of the day, sorrow and fear turned to anger, and America began to demand an explanation. There was talk of terrorism, of a drug that could drive ordinary people to monstrous acts of violence, of alien abduction, of satanic cults. There were many questions, and not nearly enough answers.

Then it happened again.

Two weeks after the first attack, satellite feeds from Africa showed a scene of devastation in Msawi Latu, a small village in Uganda. That nation, numbed as it was by years of mass slaughter and famine, found that it could still weep, and so it did. Yasa Olkeloke, 15, was found in the dust, her skin flayed from her slender body and folded neatly on the ground next to her. Sawa Mbetu, 28, was discovered with hundreds of tiny bite marks over his body, and a broken bottle of whiskey driven into his abdomen. His eyes, lips, and tongue had been removed.

The horror was as sharp, as real as it had been that morning. Hysteria swept the world, and few slept easy that night. A few days later, you learned the truth, and it tore the lid off your skull.



1.2. YOUR STORY

You were attacked by something not of this earth.

It was in a dark place. An attic, a lonely street, a basement, a dark field, an alley, a cemetery. It was completely unexpected. A thing, something indescribable, erupted from the darkness and struck you like a bullet from a gun. Even now, only impressions remain.

Its eyes burned like embers, its breath was hot and reeked of excrement, it dug its claws in and shredded your flesh like paper. You recoiled, screaming, digging in the dirt, trying to claw your way to safety, but it was on your back, a monstrous weight, and it slashed you to ribbons, splintered your bones, and drank your blood.

Just before the killing blow, your Mentor appeared. Weapon in hand, she broke the creature like rotting wood, crushing bones with emotionless efficiency. A boot on its shattered skull, she extended a hand to you. You took it, gingerly, and she took you up.

With her attention, your wounds healed. Over time, you were restored. She showed you how to use weapons, taught you to wield black magic, trained you to control your fear, to shoot straight, to focus on getting the job done. You are now a Disciple, a soldier in a very old war.

You know the truth, the reality behind the world we live in. You know what happened at Haywood, because the Mentor told you.

The Barrier between our world and Hell came down on Blood Monday, and the demons were ready. It was only down for a few minutes, but that was enough time.

They swept down from the sky in a gibbering horde, and they descended upon Haywood like a pestilence. Famished, after centuries of isolation, they vented their rage on the unsuspecting inhabitants of that small town, and they left no survivors.

When they were finished, they scattered. By dawn, some had reached Mexico, others, Manhattan. There were thousands of them. They hid in old barns, in lightless sewers, in the souls of pedophiles and serial killers, in the shadows of nuns and children. Now, they walk among us.

They prey on an unsuspecting humanity, and while the world struggles to make sense of the inexplicable, you prepare yourself for the impossible. The Barrier came down in Africa, the Indian Ocean, Siberia, North America, the South Pacific, Western Australia, and the Bay of Biscay. Demons swarmed through these rents in the Barrier, and made for civilization at once. However, those that couldn't immediately vent their fury on innocent victims quickly fell back into their programmed routine: infiltrate human society, possess the souls of innocent people, and cause suffering and death, all without revealing themselves directly.

The Mentor told you all of this, and instructed you to do that which no one else can do: fight the monstrosities that prey upon the people of this world.

Fight to the death, if necessary.

Now, you see her rarely, if at all. You and the other Disciples, who share your background, wage battle with the tools you are given. You struggle to do the right thing, because it is all you can do at this point.



When your Mentor visits you, the news is never good. She tells you that there is something amiss, something terribly wrong, and she tells you where. You go there, with your Cabal, and you try to fix things.

No one else can do this. You, and you alone, have the knowledge and discipline necessary. If you fail, innocents will die.

If you succeed, you might get back a little peace of mind.

A little.

1.2.1. THE BLACK LINE

The day that you became a Disciple, you crossed the Black Line. You cut off all contact with family, friends, co-workers, anyone you may have known in your previous life. You can't really relate to them anymore. Not like you used to. Your Cabal is your only family now, and the War is your only mission.

You're not even human anymore. Not really. As a Disciple, you're capable of doing things that normal people would consider impossible. You can fly, punch through brick walls, control people like a puppeteer, and cast out demons. These abilities set you apart from the rest of the world, and it is for that reason that you must remain hidden and secret.

The day you became a Disciple, your Cabal's Mentor took you over the line. She taught you how to use magic, and she taught you the ways of demonkind. But she also changed you, and made you superior to normal people in some way.

As a Disciple, your attribute scores range from 1 to 6. For most people, 2 is average.

But you possess one attribute that's far beyond what most people are capable of. Perhaps you're inhumanly strong, or perhaps you possess an indomitable will. Or, maybe you're instinctively connected to demons on some level, and can deduce things about their natures based on trace evidence that your Cabal acquires during an investigation.

You're not an ordinary person anymore.

1.2.2. STATE OF THE WORLD

You and your gaming group need to decide the state of the world. This means you'll need to discuss the prominence of the Disciples, the visibility of demons, and the involvement of the authorities.

Your Cabal may be known to the people in your town or city, or you may be faceless operators that enter and exit without being seen. Will people call you for help, or recognize you on the street, or are you unsung heroes?

Do most people believe in demons? Has there been enough evidence of their activities that the average person feels threatened by them? When told that someone is possessed, does the average person call a priest, or the insane asylum? Your group needs to discuss the public perception of demons, and decide whether the average person believes in them.

How involved are the authorities in your area? Do they interfere with the actions of your Cabal, or are they on your side? If they unofficially sanction your investigations, they may insist on rules (no automatic weapons, no gunfights in public places). If you operate outside the law, you can do what you want, but there may be consequences.

1.3. US AND THEM

You're going to be interacting with a number of different entities through each session of Dread. Some are ordinary people caught up in bad situations. Some are enemies that you're going to have to deal with in order to close out your case.

1.3.1. DISCIPLES

The important thing to remember about Disciples is that they were changed by their Mentors. Disciples aren't ordinary people anymore; they're stronger, smarter, faster, and tougher.

You and the rest of the Cabal represent humanity's last hope against the armies of Hell. You have a mission in life, and that mission is to close out as many cases as you can before you get your ticket punched.

There are other Cabals out there, but other than Disciples you may have met while working a case, you don't really know anything concrete.

1.3.2. MENTORS

Each Cabal is led by a Mentor, a shadowy figure who guides and directs the Disciples from a distance. The Mentor recruits and trains Disciples, then sets them up and leaves them to do the dirty work. Most Disciples have a personal theory about what Mentors are, and the prevailing word on the street is that Mentors are actually Angels that gave up their wings to walk among humankind. They're training Disciples to fight on the side of Heaven during the Last War.

1.3.3. CONTACTS

Your Contacts don't know exactly what it is that you do, or why, or how.

But they know enough to call you or text you when things get weird. They're unlikely to accompany you on a case, but they'll offer a helping hand if they can.

1.3.4. CIVILIANS

Most of the people that you meet are just average joes, going about the business of living. They may try to give you a hard time, or they may offer you their help. They may attack you, or they may need you to rescue them. If you use magic when they're around, you're probably going to freak them out, but this can be useful.

1.3.5. SKELLS

A skell is someone who's been possessed by a demon. Your first priority is to destroy the demon. Your second priority is to save the skell. Sometimes, you can do both.

1.3.6. CULTISTS

There are those who worship demonkind. Some do it because they are fundamentally broken or insane, and others do it because they believe that they will profit from it in some way.

Those who worship hunter demons usually have a life expectancy that can be measured in a matter of hours. As soon as the demon grows hungry, worship concludes and feeding time begins. But other demons derive great satisfaction from the adulation, and may even employ cultists as bodyguards or human shields.

Cultists don't always wear hooded robes. It's the ones wearing three-piece suits that you want to watch out for.

1.4. DEMONS

Little is known about the origin of demons. It is said that they are fallen angels, sent to earth to torment people. However, whether their existence is proof of a higher power (or a lower power) is a subject of heated debate among Disciples. Most simply see demons as the enemy forces.

There are three kinds of demon: Stalkers, Hunters, and Defilers. Each kind of demon has a specific pattern of behavior, in the same way that different animals perform specific mating rituals and migratory patterns. This can help Disciples to identify demons while on a case, and may even help to predict the demon's next move.

Unlike ordinary people, demons are frequently immune to the effects of magic. Combat spells usually work, such as spells that use fire or weaponry to inflict damage. However, spells like Confound and Diablerie will not affect a demon. The specifics are covered in the Director section, so you'll have to rely on trial and error.

Demons have access to supernatural powers. Their strength is represented by a pool of dice referred to as their Wrath, which can be used to misdirect or attack those who confront them.

1.4.1. HUNTERS

Hunter demons exist to locate and destroy human life. Some are driven by the urge to feed on their victims, while others simply kill for the sport of it. Some hunter demons are compelled to attack specific types of victims. For example, some hunter demons only attack victims of abuse; others only feed on the flesh of murderers. In combat, hunters are ferocious opponents, relying on brute force.

1.4.2. DEFILERS

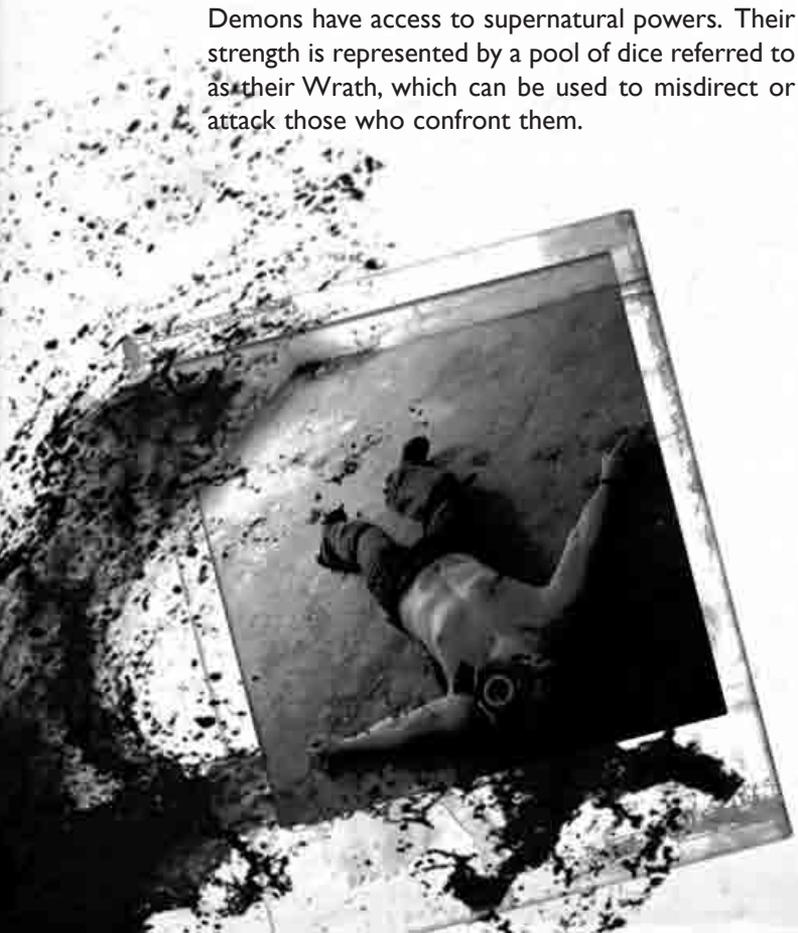
Defiler demons possess their victims, taking over their bodies and forcing them to commit acts of violence or sadism. Sometimes, the victim is aware of his or her actions; other times, when the demon takes control, the victim merely loses consciousness, and is later unable to remember what happened.

A defiler demon that has possessed a victim may deform or mark that person in some way; on the other hand, the demon may also enjoy being mistaken for an ordinary person. It's possible that the demon could walk right up to a Disciple without being recognized for what it is. Once it has possessed a victim, the demon can only be cast out if the victim is killed, or if someone performs an Exorcism (detailed in Chapter 5). Some defiler demons can possess more than one victim at a time, which can complicate matters for the Disciples.

1.4.3. STALKERS

Stalker demons feed on human misery. They don't always take an active role in the pain and suffering, however; they often prefer to help people hurt others. By placing their victims in horrible situations, or by tempting them with power or desire, stalker demons help humans to descend into sadism and brutality.

Stalkers use manipulation and guile to avoid detection. Once detected, they tend to abandon the ruse and attack directly. Though stalkers don't have the strength of hunter demons, or the magical firepower of defilers, they are nonetheless dangerous once they've been exposed.



1.5. COMMUNICATION

The most important thing to remember while playing this game is that you must communicate with the other players. If you feel like changing some of the rules, if you feel that certain options are unsatisfying, if you feel that your character is not enjoyable, if you want to express dissatisfaction with the current state of the campaign -- say so.

You can't expect a game like this to work if you don't discuss it with your fellow players every time you get together. Make time before each game to talk about how it's working out for you. You are part of a group, and if you're the unhappy wallflower in the back who doesn't complain, you're cheating yourself and the other players.

So speak your mind, as directly and politely as possible, and let your comrades know what you're thinking. It'll make your gaming experience much more enjoyable and fulfilling. However, don't wait until things go wrong to talk to your fellow players. During character creation, we'll discuss how to create a Cabal, as a group, and we'll also cover ways to create a world and environment, as a team.

1.6. CONDUCT

The Disciple has a single mission: protect people from the demons that prey upon them.

There are many different kinds of Disciple: the hard-hitting muscle, the paranormal investigator, the erudite academic, the exorcist, and the sorcerer.

However, each has been trained by the Mentor, and each possesses skills and abilities beyond those of ordinary humans.

The Cabal has been assembled to protect innocent people, not to victimize them, and gameplay should reflect that. Bear in mind that there are repercussions in this game, from creating enemies to attracting the attention of the authorities.

The waters may get muddied when the Disciples encounter people that can only be described as evil. Some of these people may be victims of demonic possession, or may be in danger of attack from a hunter demon.

It is up to the Cabal to decide how to proceed in these morally ambiguous situations. Ultimately, the group has no choice but to destroy the demons that walk the earth, as that is the sole reason for the existence of the Cabal. How that mission is executed is up to the players.

There may be situations in which the Disciples will choose to let a human perish at the hands of a demon in order to secure the objective. This is a group decision, and not one to be taken lightly.

NOTE: DISCUSSION

The recurring theme in this chapter is discussion. You need to talk about the aforementioned issues with your gaming group, including the Director, and you need to come to a consensus. In order for everyone to enjoy the game, you all need to know what each player is hoping to get out of the experience. Also, the game's a lot more fun when everyone participates in the creation of the world and setting.



A car radio bleats,
'Love, O careless Love'
I hear my ill-spirit sob in each blood cell,
as if my hand were at its throat
I myself am hell,
nobody's here--
-- Robert Lowell, Skunk Hour

I myself will laugh when disaster strikes you,
I will mock when what you dread comes,
when what you dread comes like a whirlwind,
and disaster strikes you like a devastating storm,
when distressing trouble comes on you.
-- Proverbs 1:26-27



POLICE

POLICE

FRIEND

General
Personnel
Reserve

GIRL

NO. 51
F. 42

Chapter 2:
World Of Shit

OVERVIEW

Chapter 2: World Of Shit

JOURNAL: PARTIALLY EATEN

I wake up and look down.

Slashfic cut my pants and peeled the bloody fabric up to my knee so that he could fix it up. My ankle's a thick wad of hamburger with some bits of white bone sticking out of it. He's kneeling over it, dark red smoke pouring from his mouth. He's casting a spell -- Carnation.

"The fuck were you?" I ask.

He speaks without looking up. "I was right behind you, Hush. But I thought I saw something, and I went to check it out. When I heard gunshots, I busted in. Good thing, too. That thing was getting ready to tear you a couple new anuses."

"Vouzire," I say. "It was a Vouzire."

He shrugs. Slashfic's this guy, wears a black trenchcoat, dyes his hair black, carries a katana. When I first met him, I figured him for the dark poet of grief and angst. But no, not exactly. Also, most of these goths or whatever the hell, they're a pale shade of alabaster honkey. Not Slashfic. He's part Cuban, part Korean, part something that starts with an N. Nigerian, Namibian. Something from Africa. Anyhow. He's my wingman. Or vice versa, if you ask him.

I look over. Morlock's leaning against the wall, eating a power bar. She's the tank, the muscle. Built like a pro wrestler, strong enough to lift a grown man and chuck him across the room. Which she has been known to do.

Council's scribbling notes on a steno pad.

She's a tiny little brunette with thick glasses and a plaid dress that doesn't fit quite right. She's the exorcist.

"We lost it," Slashfic says. "Busted me through a wall, then just walked out of here. Looking for more kids to eat, I bet. Morlock and Council followed it, but they lost it in the woods. It crossed the city limits, so the Durham Cabal is following up on it. Their jurisdiction, their call."

"I'm sick of taking point," I say. I look down at my foot, which is folding in on itself. The red smoke curls around it, unraveling muscle, skin, and tendons, then knitting the shattered bones back together.

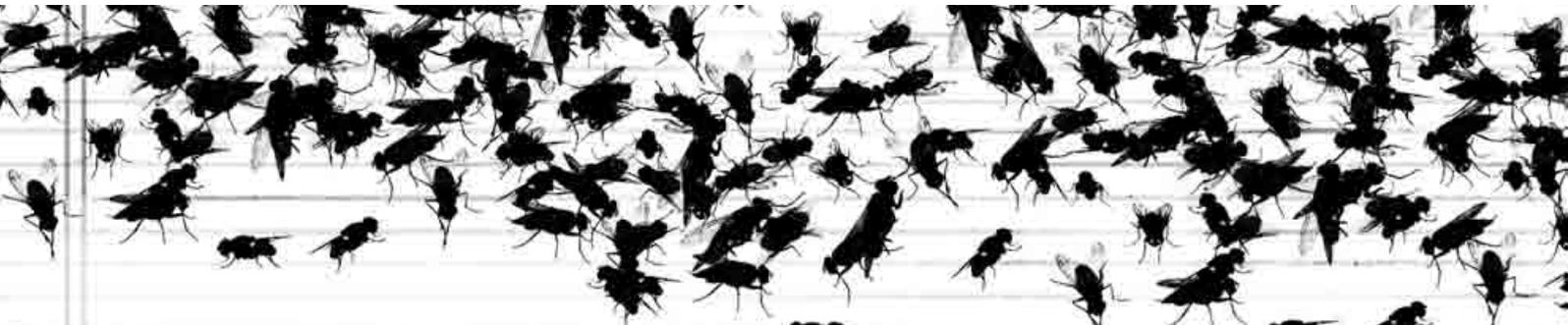
"You don't like it, screw," Slashfic says mildly. "You got the short straw, that means you're on point. I mean, I was right behind you."

"Fuck you were," I say. "That bastard nearly had me."

"Shoulda took the shotgun, like I told you," Slashfic says patiently. He sucks in a great lungful of the red smoke, and suddenly my ankle is as good as new. My sock's a blood-soaked rag, though, and I don't see my shoe anywhere. And these pants are fucked, I paid twenty dollars for them. Jesus Christ.

"You shoulda been on my six, like I told you," I say. I'm pissed off because I took the pistol thinking that it would be kind of cool. Walk in, do some recon, surprise the target, take it down, and I'm the big man with brass balls. Council's suitably impressed. She takes off the coke-bottle glasses, lets her hair down, and boom, she's a supermodel. Hey, it could happen.

But no, I got my ass handed to me and now another Cabal is going to clear the case. It was my stupid idea, but I think I'll take it out on Slashfic anyhow.



"It was your stupid fucking idea to take the pistol," he says. "So don't take it out me, you mealy-mouthed son of a bitch."

Council's phone rings. She listens, then closes it without saying anything. She walks out.

Morlock follows. "A new job?" she asks no one in particular. She sounds like a guy.

I nod. "Gotta be."

That's the thing about being a Disciple. You don't get coffee breaks. When you're on, you're on, and that's it. You work until the case is closed, and if you get another case, then you take it and you work it.

Cases come down from the boss, usually. Each Cabal has a Mentor, the one who pulled us up out of the wreckage of our shitty lives and gave us something to do.

Our Mentor is named Angelica. Haven't seen her in weeks, but she calls once in a while with a new case.

Or sometimes people come to you for help. This line of work, you meet people, and they find out what you're upto. Sure, you keep a low profile, because the last thing you want to do is to attract the attention of the media, or the cops, or the military. But people have a way of putting things together, and they call you up. And, having nothing left to lose, and nothing better to do, you check it out.

Outside, we pile into the van. Council's riding shotgun. I'm driving, I always drive. I'm not great with the black magic, like Slashfic. And I'm not strong, like Morlock. I can't perform an exorcism, like Council. But behind the wheel, I am the man.

I'm also good with locks, and I know a thing or two about getting into places where I'm not supposed to be. Other thing is, I'm good with these creatures, the demons. I know about them. Kind of messed around with the occult in my misspent youth.

We head south on 55. Streetlight shines its ugly yellow glare on Council's pretty little face. Dark, light, then dark again. She frowns. She's tapping away on her PDA.

"That call was from a woman I used to work with," she says absently.

"This woman," Slashfic says, from the back seat. "She got a name?"

"Sandra Parnell."

"She got a man?"

Council half turns around in her seat. She tries to stare him down, but he just snickers, and she gives him this little elf-girl grin and goes back to the reporting.

"Sandra heard a commotion coming from the apartment next door, and she called the police. They discovered her neighbor, Mindy Timms, dead. Partially eaten."

Now, see, that's what I'm talking about, right there. That's why I love my job. The tiny details like that. Partially eaten. Not mutilated, or cut, or maimed, but eaten. Partially. Someone (or something) looked at this dead woman's body and thought, well, damn, I guess I ought to take a bite.

You know?



2.1. MECHANICS

To resolve any conflict, roll a number of 12-sided dice equal to your skill or ability. Then, compare this score to the number you're trying to beat.

2.1.1. TARGET DIFFICULTY

If you're trying to move or manipulate an object, or to control a situation in some way, you roll against a target difficulty. Target difficulty goes from 2 (easy) to 7 (average) to 12 (extremely difficult).

For example, if you're trying to open a locked door, and your Strength is 3, you roll 3 dice. The Director indicates that the lock is rusty, so the difficulty is 5 (below average). One of your dice shows a 9. That means that you were successful, and you bashed down the door.

2.1.2. RESISTANCE

If you're taking action against another person or entity, then you're not going to roll against a Target Difficulty. You're going to roll against your opponent.

For example, if you're trying to punch a guy, and your Attack score is 4, you roll 4 dice. The guy's Defend score is 3, so the Director rolls 3 dice. Your highest number is a 10, and the other guy's highest number is a 7. That means that you hit.

In case of a tie, look at the next highest numbers. If you run out of dice to compare, roll all the dice again.

2.1.3. DAMAGE

Damage is the difference between the numbers in the event of a hit. In the aforementioned case, the guy rolled a 7 against your 10. That means that you inflict 3 points of damage against him. Of course, you will also want to add the damage from your weapon. If you're using a lead pipe (which has a damage rating of 1), that means you hit for 4 points, not 3.

2.1.4. MULTIPLES

Here's the tricky part: if you roll multiples of the same number, you add the number of multiples to the number itself. For example, if you roll three 6s, that means that you rolled a 9 (3+6). Now, if you also rolled an 11, you would want to ignore that 9.

But, in theory, you could roll some extremely high numbers this way. For example, if you roll four 12s, that means that you've rolled a 16.

2.2. BEING COOL

Whenever you describe something in a cool way, you get an extra die. It doesn't matter if you're researching data at the library, investigating a crime scene, or throwing a bar stool at someone's head in a brawl. A good description gets you that extra die.

If everyone in the group is stunned by your eloquence, or by the sheer drama of it all, or if anyone gets goosebumps, you can roll two extra dice. But don't overdo this. It only happens once in a while. You can't roll two extra dice every time.

In other words, be cool.



COOL FACTOR

NOT_COOL

COOL

I attack him.

I smile and say, "Hey, you son of a bitch. I told you, next time you see me, you better run." Then I bust him dead in the face with the lead pipe.

I punch him.

I jump over the table and punch him twice before we hit the floor.

I shoot at them.

I flick ash off my cigar, then suddenly drop it, whip out the .45, and start blasting at them.

I look at the blood.

I study the blood splatter. You know, this reminds me of this one case, back when I was working homicide in Detroit.

I climb up.

I lose my grip and slide down for a few feet, then reach out and grab at a small ledge protruding from the side of the cliff. Slowly, I pull myself to the top.

I ram their car.

I yank the wheel hard to the left and slam into their Buick, laughing maniacally the whole time.

I threaten him.

I open my jacket just a little, exposing the butt of my revolver. I say, "You talk shit now, but they're going to find you in a dumpster tomorrow morning. So you want to think about it for a second, and then tell me what I need to know? Because I'm telling you, they're going to need your dental records."

I research the demon.

I crack open volume after volume of ancient texts, searching for some passage that will shed light on the demon we're hunting. After yet another cup of black coffee, I see something that gets my attention. In an old German manuscript, I find a passage that describes something like what we faced tonight.

I cast Hemophage.

He starts shrieking as a bunch of six-inch white leeches start crawling around on his face and chest, latching onto his skin and drinking his blood.

2.3. CONTEXT

In the next chapters, we'll be discussing character creation, skill selection, and other concepts that affect your character, like Fury (points that you can use to achieve impossible stunts), Contacts (people that you know, whom you can turn to for help), and Drive (your character's motivation).

But before we do, there are a few things you need to start thinking about. Answer the following questions on the second page of your character sheet:

1. Where did you come from?
2. What did you do for a living?
3. What's your base of operations like?
4. Who do you know in town?
5. What's your Mentor like?
6. How do your teammates see you?

2.3.1. ORIGIN

Where did you come from? What happened to you to transform you from an ordinary person into someone with nothing left to lose? Where did you go wrong? What was it that changed everything for you? By answering this question, you should wind up with a single word that sums up your character's Drive, as explained in Section 3.8.

2.3.2. OCCUPATION

What did you do for a living? Was your character a soldier, a schoolteacher, a cop, a criminal, a computer geek, a student, or a psychologist? By fleshing out your character's occupational background, you'll make it easier to choose your Skills, as described in section 3.6.

2.3.3. HEADQUARTERS

What's your base of operations like? What kind of place is it? A dojo, an abandoned warehouse, a burned-out tenement? A mansion? The more time you and your fellow players spend describing your headquarters, the more fun it will be to hang out there and perform research.

2.3.4. CONTACTS

Who do you know in town? Back when you were on the police force, or the newspaper staff, or the school board, did you make any connections with significant people? Are you on a first-name basis with the mayor, or the police chief, or a bishop? By creating a preliminary list, you've simplified the process of creating your network of Contacts (described in section 3.9).

Of course, you don't want to go too far. Claiming that your character was buddies with a national leader or the head of a major religion is going too far -- just keep it reasonable.

2.3.5. MENTOR

What's your Mentor like? Spend some time talking to your fellow players about who's running your team. The Mentor isn't going to accompany you on cases, but he or she will give you leads, and will check in on you from time to time.

2.3.6. PERSONALITY

How do your teammates see you? Of course, you know how you see your character, but how do the other Disciples see him or her? Is your character a natural leader, or the silent sociopath, or the empathetic healer, or the jokerster?

NOTE: INSPIRATION FOR DREAD

This is what I was into when I was working on this game.

Fiction

- The Cold Six Thousand, by James Ellroy
- The Friends of Eddie Coyle, by George V. Higgins
- The Killer Inside Me, by Jim Thompson
- Tough Guys Don't Dance, by Norman Mailer

Television

- The Wire
- Law and Order: SVU
- The Shield

Music

- 0:12 Revolution in Just Listening, by Coalesce
- Beneath the Remains, by Sepultura
- Dismantling Devotion, by Daylight Dies
- Occupational Hazard, by Unsane
- Reign in Blood, by Slayer
- Smear Campaign, by Napalm Death
- Transcendental, by To-Mera

2.4. WORKING TOGETHER

As a team, you'll have to work together to design the world that you live in. It's obviously easy to set a campaign in your own neck of the woods, unless that's objectionable for some reason.

The big questions are things like: What sort of city/ town do you live in? Are people kind to each other? Do children mind their parents? If a woman in an alley screams for help, will someone come running, or will people turn up their TV sets and pretend that nothing's happening?

This can help establish the city more concretely in your minds. From this point, it gets a little easier. Where's your base of operations? Uptown, near the yuppie bars and strip malls? Downtown, near the strip clubs and soup kitchens? Is there a gas station near your place? Library? Church? Mosque? Synagogue? Police station? Convenience store? Diner?

Who works in these places? Are there regulars? When you walk into the convenience store, is it always the same guy, reading the paper, smiling as you walk in? Who works at the library? Is it modern, or do they still use the card catalog?



Chapter 2: World Of Shit

JOURNAL: A FEDERAL MATTER

Turns out that Mindy works -- uh, worked -- at a doctor's office. Probably nothing, but we drop Morlock and Slashfic off near the office. They'll break in, search for clues, and then trash the place, make it look like kids trying to pick up some painkillers or something.

Me and Council, we roll into the apartment complex around midnight. Cops still got tape up, floodlights. Murder investigation into the late hours, looks like. Gotta flash the badges. I yank on a paisley tie and tighten it, and Council pulls her hair back. She whips out her compact and touches up her face, then we're out the van and walking towards the cops with some purpose. Like we got some shit we gotta do, and holy crap, will you look at this, the locals have already started fucking with our crime scene.

Two blue uniforms and a brown trenchcoat are walking towards us. Trenchcoat's smoking, looks like he just stepped in dogshit. Disgusted and unhappy. One uniform's got a flashlight, the other's got his hand on the butt of his pistol.

"Federal agent," Council says, holding up her video store rental card. The one cop shines his flashlight on it, and suddenly his face goes slack. The other two just stand there, open-mouthed. They all just stare at Council.

"We're federal agents," she says. "I'm Agent Ward, this is Agent Carter. You and your people will extend us every courtesy in our investigation, and you will not impede us in any way. You are now convinced that this is the work of a serial killer, making it a federal matter. No one can persuade you otherwise."

"Yes, ma'am," the trenchcoat says. He shakes his head, as if he just woke up. "You'll probably want to see the crime scene," he says. He looks kind of confused.

They lead us into the apartment. Bad scene. Maybe Mindy put up a fight. Lots of spatter on the walls. We do some magic, take some pictures. We don't get back to headquarters until around two o'clock in the morning.

Back home, we sit down and compare notes. Looks like our skell -- the guy possessed by a demon -- is this dude named Dr. Andrew Gardner. Mindy worked in his office. Gardner's a pretty handsome dude. Probably real well-off. Cops said they found evidence, this guy was banging Mindy. Guess he wasn't the first doctor to cheat on his wife with one of his nurses.

Anyhow, Doc Gardner tore Mindy up pretty good, then started snacking. Soft tissues, mostly. Lips, nose, genitalia.

No sign of the other two, so I do some more research while Council crashes on the couch.

She gets up around five. I fix her some coffee and fry her up some bacon and eggs. Lots of salt, lots of butter. No sense eating healthy when you expect to be dead by Christmas. Fuck it, I don't even buy milk by the gallon. I go with the pint, you know?

I'm laughing at my own incredible sense of sleep-deprived humor when the other two finally show up.

"Got here soon as we could," Morlock rumbles. I look at Morlock, it always brings me down. She's a plain woman. Shoulders like a linebacker, got big blue veins in her arms. She wasn't always a big monster woman. She wasn't always called Morlock, either.

She married her high school sweetheart. He was handsome and charming, but occasionally felt the need to slap her around a bit, to make sure he had her attention. Then everything was fine again. You know the type.

One day, he busted her up pretty good. I don't know, she didn't set the table properly or something. The canned goods in the pantry weren't all turned with the labels facing forwards. Who knows. Anyhow, she had to miss a few days of class. Not a good thing when you're working on your Master's. I guess she had what you would call a moment of clarity. After some thought, she realized that the situation was only going to get worse. So she told him she was leaving him.

Naturally, he beat her so bad they had to do surgery on her face. Radical reconstruction. It's great what they can do with plastic surgery these days, but you know, it costs money. You go to the ER with a fucked-up face, they fix it. But you want to be pretty again, you gotta pay through the nose. Or what's left of it.

Anyhow, they did what they could. Then they released her. They didn't want to, but she wasn't going to press charges. She just went home. He was in what they call the honeymoon stage. If you know about domestic abuse, you know what I mean. He was just as nice as pie. Flowers, dinner, candlelight, baby, I'm so sorry, forgive me.

Morlock spiked his drink. When he started snoozing on the couch, she hit herself in the face a couple of times, then picked up this lamp and busted him so hard his neck snapped and that was good-night for mister punchy.



Yeah, I mean, cry me a fucking river, right? But they arrested her. Guess they saw through her faking her own bruises. She wasn't exactly a criminal mastermind. Anyways, the court showed leniency, but she still did some time.

Gets out of the slammer a few years later, no real job skills, no idea what she's going to do with her life. But while she was in, she kind of got religion: the weight room.

Nowadays, she goes in there, maybe twice a day. She's got a body like you see in those muscle-mags. I saw her kick a guy once, made him fly across the room. Not an exaggeration. Like he had wings, soaring through the air. I stopped hitting this other guy and just stared for a minute. Wow.

Anyhow, she's the one you turn to when it goes south. An informant panics and pulls out a gun, or a little boy smiles and then sprouts horns and starts breathing fire, or a drug dealer mistakes you for the FBI and he gets a little crazy. You name it, she's the one you want in your corner when life gets a little hostile. Doesn't smile much, though. Not hard to figure out why.

Seen her old pictures. She could have been a model, before her late husband jacked her face like that.

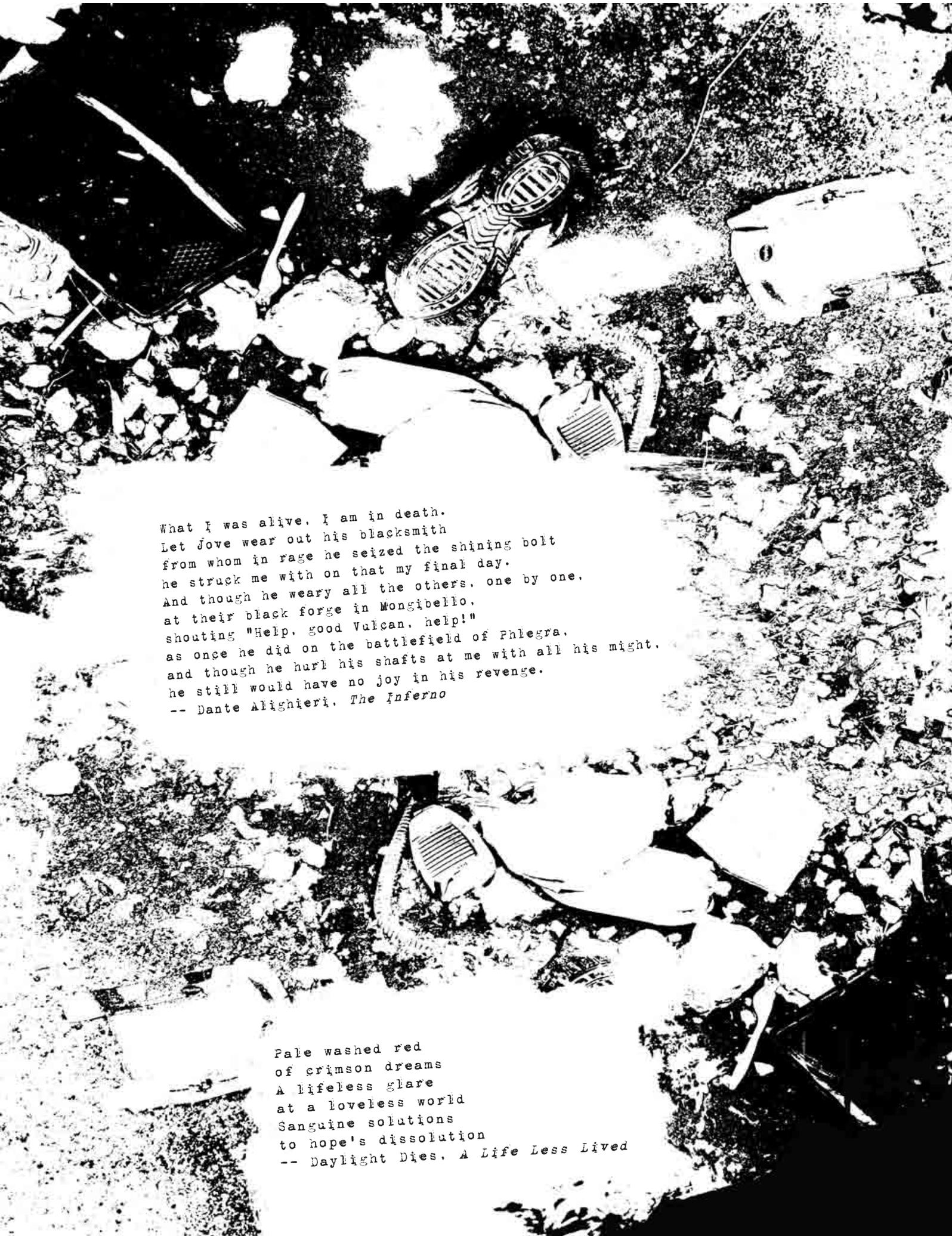
"Sun's coming up," Slashfic says. "You and me, Hush, we're on stakeout."

He snatches up some bacon off Council's plate. She just smiles at him. Dark circles under her eyes, she keeps nodding. Time for her to crash.

"Stakeout, huh?" I shake my head. I feel like hell frozen over. "Maybe you could take Morlock?"

"Maybe you could put on a bib and eat my ass," Slashfic says. "Morlock's busy. Let's go, man."

Typical.

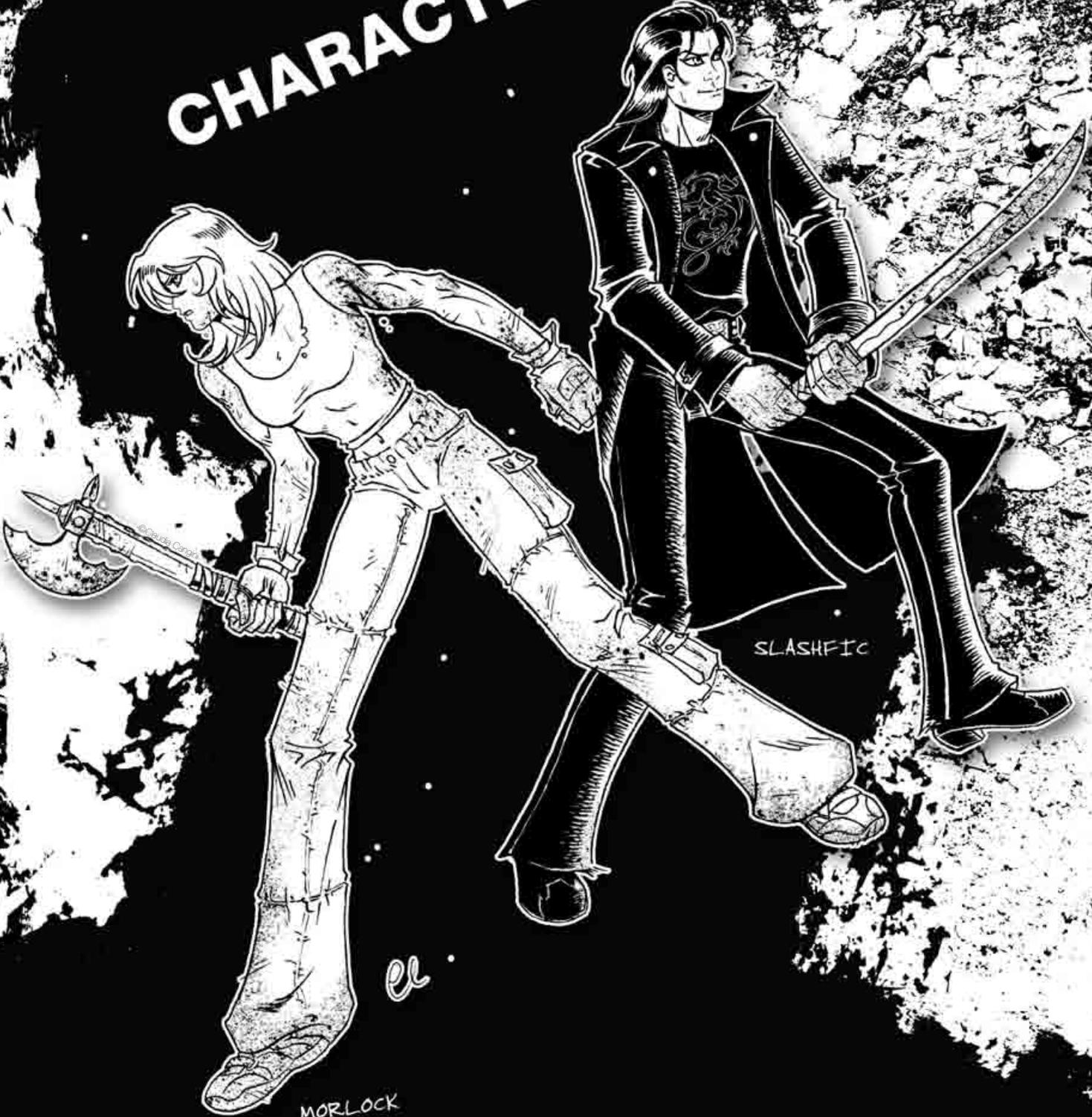


What I was alive, I am in death.
Let Jove wear out his blacksmith
from whom in rage he seized the shining bolt
he struck me with on that my final day.
And though he weary all the others, one by one,
at their black forge in Mongibello,
shouting "Help, good Vulcan, help!"
as once he did on the battlefield of Phlegra,
and though he hurl his shafts at me with all his might,
he still would have no joy in his revenge.
-- Dante Alighieri, *The Inferno*

Pale washed red
of crimson dreams
A lifeless glare
at a loveless world
Sanguine solutions
to hope's dissolution
-- Daylight Dies, *A Life Less Lived*

Chapter 3:
Life Of Discipline

CHARACTERS



SLASHFIC

el

MORLOCK

3.1. OVERVIEW

To create a Disciple, you will need to fill out a character sheet, which you can find on the last page of this book. Or you can download it from www.dread-rpg.com. This is a quick overview of the content that you'll need to enter on your sheet:

Name

Your Disciple has a name. Not the name that he or she was born with, but a handle, a code name.

Strength, Sense, and Soul (page 41)

These three attributes define your character.

Discipline (page 46)

Powers that are beyond the scope of ordinary humans. There are three Disciplines: Combat, Lore, and Exorcism.

Skills (page 47)

Each Disciple used to be something else: a journalist, a physician, a soldier.

Drive (page 53)

Drive is your character's primary motivation.

Contacts (page 53)

Your Contacts are people that you can turn to for help during the game. They also furnish you with leads or clues.

Fury (page 55)

You begin each session of Dread with 12 points of Fury, which you can use to perform stunts and impossible maneuvers.

Gear (page 57)

This includes any equipment that your character is carrying, including flashlights, identification, electronic equipment, and so on.

Weapons (page 58)

These include guns, swords, grenades, and anything else you want to use in a fight.

Magic (page 67)

This represents your character's magical power. This is equal to your Soul score.

Spells (page 70)

Each Disciple knows a few spells. The higher your Soul score, the more spells you know.

Combat (page 113)

This represents your character's fighting skill. This is equal to your Strength score, unless you have the Discipline of Combat.

Life (page 114)

This tells you how much damage your character has taken. Each Disciple begins with 12 points. If you lose a couple of points, you're bruised. If you lose more than that, you begin to suffer penalties.

Armor (page 114)

If you wear body armor, write down the armor rating in this field.



3.2. ATTRIBUTES

There are three Attributes that you must determine. These Attributes help you define what your character is (as opposed to Skills, which are things that your character knows).

Strength: Power, speed, and endurance
Sense: Intellect, education, and wit
Soul: Spiritual fortitude and will

These scores answer questions one might pose about your character. Is she smart? Is she strong? Is she confident? Is she fast? Is she tough?

To answer these questions, distribute 9 points between the first three scores. One score must be a 5 or higher. This means that the possible distributions are 1-2-6, 1-3-5, and 2-2-5. The score with the 5 or 6 determines your Discipline, which is described in Section 3.5.

3.2.2. EXAMPLES

Let's create a character named Scalpel. She used to be a medical examiner, and then she worked as a private investigator for a while. So, she's tough, but smart. We'll give her a 2 for Strength, a 5 for Sense, and a 2 for Soul. She's got average willpower (and magical skill), average strength, and a solid skill set.

The second Disciple is Texas. She used to work as a TV reporter in Dallas. She'll be the team's exorcist. So we'll give her a Strength of 1, a Sense of 2 (and we'll probably spend that on a Journalism skill), and a Soul of 6. Not much good in a fight, but the skill will help during investigations. The high Soul score means that she'll have several spells, including a few Exorcisms.

The last Disciple in this group is going to be Sarge. He's a big, tough soldier. Probably doesn't have much magical ability, more of a hands-on kind of guy. His skill is probably Military, with maybe a point of Intimidator or Mechanic for good measure. So, he'll be the combat expert, with a Strength of 6, a Sense of 2, and a Soul of 1.

3.3. USING ATTRIBUTES

Any time a character is challenged personally, he or she must perform an Attribute Check. This is done by rolling a number of 12-sided dice equal to the Attribute score.

If the highest die matches or beats the Target Difficulty, the roll is successful. If the highest die is lower than the Target Difficulty, the roll is a failure.

The Target Difficulty will range from 2 (very easy) to 7 (average) to 12 (unlikely).

If the character's body is tested in some way, such as having to kick a door down or climb a wall, the character must make a Strength Check. Combat is based on the Strength score.

If the character's mind is tested in some way, such as having to recognize a disguised suspect in a crowd, or having to decipher a message written in a code, the character must make a Sense Check. A character with a high Sense score will have more points to assign to his Skill.

If the character's spirit is tested in some way, such as having to withstand the hypnotic gaze of a demon, the character must make a Soul Check. Spell casting is resolved using the Soul score.

3.3.1. ATTRIBUTES VS. SKILLS

Skills are described in more detail in section 3.6, but in brief, skills reflect what the Disciple used to do for a living. Attributes, on the other hand, reflect the character's natural strengths and weaknesses.

There's a little overlap between skill checks and Sense checks, but the rule of thumb is: if you need to be educated to pull it off, you're talking about a skill check, not an attribute check; however, if it's something that you have to figure out, then it's a Sense check.

For instance, if you see stripes on someone's shoulder, you can't make a Sense check to figure out his rank. You need a Military skill, or some other applicable skill.

If you want to hack into a computer system, again, that's not a Sense check; it requires a background in Computers, or something similar.

However, if you're trying to catch someone in a lie, or if you're trying to solve a logic problem, then it's not a question of your character's education: it's a question of intelligence, and in that case, you make the Sense check instead.

3.3.2. OPPOSED ATTRIBUTE CHECKS

There are times when you'll engage in a non-physical conflict with another character. In these situations, make an opposed attribute check, based on the kind of interaction. If it's intellectual, it's an opposed Sense check. If it's a test of wills, then make an opposed Soul check.

For example, you may try to catch another character in a lie. In this case, make a Sense check against the other character's Soul check.

If, on the other hand, you're trying to convince someone to do something, make a Soul check against the other character's Soul check.

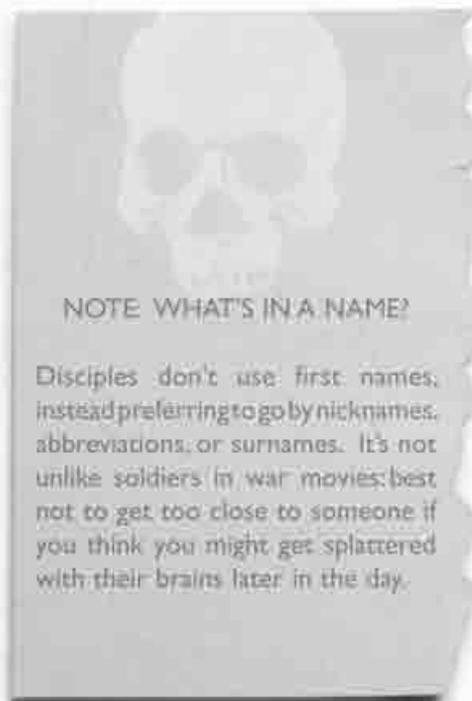
3.4. ATTRIBUTE DESCRIPTIONS

The question is, what precisely do these Attributes entail? What's the difference between a Strength score of 3 and a Strength score of 5? One's higher, sure, but other than that, what do the scores tell you about your character? For answers, consult the Attribute Scores table:

Attribute Scores

1	Below average
2-3	Average
4	Above average
5-6	Superhuman

A score of 5 or 6 indicates that the character is far superior to normal humans. This also means that your character has mastered a Discipline. See section 3.5. for more information.



Chapter 3: Life Of Discipline

JOURNAL: MALVADO

"Holy Jesus, check out the ass on that," Slashfic moans.

I ash out the window and check my watch. Christ. Nine in the morning. Usually, this is when I get to sleep.

We're camped out in the War Machine, a black '85 Dodge van with no shocks. Slashfic's up front with the binoculars, scoping out the street at the end of the alley, and I'm in back, smoking out the window and wishing I was asleep.

"Hush, man," he yells. "Look, Hush. Hot damn, this girl got an ass like an onion."

That gets my attention. Without turning around, I ask, "What does that mean?"

He was waiting for it. "Make a grown man cry," he says, and I can hear him grinning.

We've been here, parked on Pogue Street, since seven, waiting for the man. Dr. Andrew Gardner, banger (and devourer) of nurses. Yes, Lord, he loves the ladies, and they love him right back. Can't say I'm surprised. Judging from the photos the guys brought back, he's in great shape for his age, which is probably right around fifty. He's rich, drives fast, loves wine and food and all sorts of other nice crap.

He's kind of a player, too, and that seems to drive the ladies crazy. Like Mindy, the nurse he was with last night. We learned from Mindy that they went out drinking and dancing until early the next morning. Problem is, she was dead when she told us. Me and Council posed as a couple federal agents to get past the boys in blue, then we had a chat with Mindy's corpse.

She said that Dr. Gardner had bashed her skull in, then excreted this little

green slimeball through his mouth and nose. Had purple tentacles coming out of it. Dripping.

So, yeah, I hit the books all night, and came up with it: a Grusce demon. The Grusce, it curls into you, and it's kind of an any-port-in-a-storm type demon. Like, if it can get in through your mouth or ears, great. If not, then the urethra will do just fine. Or the anus. Whatever works, you know?

Man, I really just love my job sometimes.

Anyhow, the demon takes over and makes you flip out and kill people, starting with those you care about most. It went after Mindy because Dr. Gardner really did care about her. His wife was next. Morlock called us a couple minutes ago, said she found Mrs. Gardner's torso in a culvert near their house. So, the next person on the list would be Dr. Gardner's daughter. Who works downtown at Seedy's CDs.

"Alpha Tango to Blue Leader One, target acquired, engaging, over," Slashfic yells, and I flick the smoke out the window and fling open the door. We bust out and sprint down the alley. I can't see the doctor, but I got faith. Slashfic says he saw Gardner, I believe him.

I follow Slashfic as he hooks a hard right onto Hillsborough and pounds down the sidewalk, scattering the college girls like startled pigeons. Heart hammering in my chest, I race after him, lungs dusty and burning.

He's got a bead on Gardner, even if I don't. Without hesitating, he flings open the door at the record store and busts in. I follow, and yank the Smith & Wesson out of the waistband of my jeans. This could get ugly. No, scratch that. It's going to get ugly, no doubt about it.

Chapter 3: Life Of Discipline

Takes a couple seconds for my eyes to adjust, then I realize that someone's rushing up on me. I have a second to put my hands up, then I get tackled and fly back. It's the doc, and he's vomiting incandescent green foam all over me as he puts his shoulder into my abdomen, rams forward, and keeps going. The impact lifts me up off my feet, and I have this weird moment of weightlessness, like a theme-park ride just before everything goes down.

Then, I'm feeling something ice-cold all over my back, then a thousand cuts scream bloody murder as he puts me through the glass storefront and we both hit the sidewalk, him on top of me. He wastes no time, just starts pounding. I can't see anything but his paisley necktie as he just pounds the living crap out of me. No face shots, fucker goes for the throat and solar plexus. I close my eyes, detach myself from myself, and cast Malvado. When I open my eyes, there's long hard spines of white bone growing out of every part of my body.

I grab Gardner and drive a seven-inch white spike into his bicep and push. Grunting, he grabs my arm, shredding his palms as he tries to get away. No dice. I slowly get up, hit him with my left, hook him good and tight, and then shove him back into the store.

I take a quick look around. Slashfic's face is covered in blood, and he looks pissed. He whips out the sawed-off pool cue and busts Gardner in the back of the knees. The doctor goes down, but doesn't even seem to feel the injury.

Almost everybody cleared out the back when the shit went down. Gardner's daughter, Julia, is still around, though. I recognize her from the photos. She's on the phone, screaming incoherently. Probably talking to the cops.

There's bike cops all over the place, and what with all the college girls

walking around, their testosterone levels will be through the roof. The demon spins Gardner's body around and takes a swing at Slashfic.

Slash ducks, and when he looks up, I can tell by the look on his face that it's about to go down. He's getting ready to hit the demon with some Castigation. I take a step back, and the spines slowly retract back into my body.

Jesus, that really hurts. It's like getting stitches. Feels good, kinda, but it's still painful. Then I feel something cold and sharp against my throat. Crap. I risk a look down. A box cutter? Who the hell does that?

Who else? Julia Gardner, riot grrl. Slowly, I turn my head a couple degrees, to confirm my suspicions. Yes, sure enough. She's quaking in her combat boots, but I think she'll seriously kill me if I don't calm her down. Got to think of a convincing lie. She throws her arm around my chest and pulls me back.

"Get away from him!" she screams at Slashfic. "I'll cut his throat if you hurt my father!"

"Your father's possessed, we're exorcists, leather pants do not work for your body type, I'm sorry," Slashfic yells as he dodges back from a vicious blow from Gardner. The demon is bulging out of its victim -- green foam drips in thick ropes from Gardner's nose, mouth, and ears, and his eyes are glowing a sick, baleful green.

Dammit. This is getting out of control. The doctor and Slashfic throw punches at each other, but neither seems to be able to connect with the other. This is a good thing. See, if it gets hold of Slashfic, it might just rip his throat out. Or, if Slashfic touches it, he'll cast the demon out of Gardner's body. Then, Julia flips

out and gives me an impromptu tracheotomy. La-di-freaking-da.

"Fuck you, leave him alone!" she screams, her arm shaking. "What did you do to him?"

Christ, she thinks we gave him drugs or something. Okay, party's over. Slash can't hit this guy, a demon's going to kill my partner, screw it. Sure, this angst-filled bimbo will need maybe a couple stitches, but other than that, she'll be okay. Usually I don't hit girls, but it's nine o'clock in the god damn morning and I'm feeling short-tempered.

I grab the wrist, elbow her twice in the gut, spin around and backhand her. Yes, that's the kind of champion I am. My buddy's engaged a merciless demon in hand-to-hand combat, risking his life and soul, and I'm beating the day-lights out of a too-hip-for-deodorant teenager with raccoon mascara. That's just how I roll.

As she hits the ground, wailing, I dive at the old bastard. He hears me coming and spins around, so I get a full-frontal shot right on him and take him to the carpet. But the spell wore off, and I'm not covered in spikes of bone, so when we get there, the doctor takes me by the elbow and yanks really hard, and about six million flashbulbs go off and everything gets really loud as my shoulder is dislocated.

I roll over, screaming silently, and Slashfic lands on top of me, with his palm right on Gardner's face. There's a sudden rush of air, and then Gardner is absolutely silent. Greenish mucus slowly drips from his open mouth. It worked. The demon's paralyzed. Now we just have to exorcise it. And fix my arm.

Of course, neither Slashfic nor me knows how to perform an exorcism, and Council's pretty wrecked from last night.

So we'll have to carry Gardner's body back to headquarters and wait for her to come around so she can cast out the Grusce demon. No problem.

"Get the hell off me," I gasp, and Slashfic heaves himself up. He runs a hand through his hair and laughs.

"We did it," he whoops. Then he turns around. Breaking glass as someone comes in the front of the store. Through the windows.

The first bullet takes him in the shoulder, and the second one right in the chest.

Cops.

NOTE THE LAW

Police officers, federal agents, even trained soldiers are all "civilians" to a Disciple. The average civilian has attribute scores of 1 or 2, meaning that Disciples are superhuman in their abilities. Sending an ordinary person to do a Disciple's job is tantamount to murder.

For that reason, it would be immoral (and probably counterproductive) to call the police or the National Guard for reinforcements during a takedown. They're just not qualified, and you're just going to get a lot of people killed.

In fact, if the authorities do become involved in an investigation, you may want to take steps to minimize their exposure to the demons. Even if the public is aware of demons in your agreed-upon game setting, you may still want to shepherd police officers and agents, to prevent loss of innocent life. This can be a challenge, particularly if they suspect you of criminal activity.

3.5. DISCIPLINES

If a character has an Attribute score of 5 or 6, it indicates supremacy in a certain area: strength, intellect, or spirituality.

In such a case, the Disciple is also gifted with a specific skill that is tied to the high Attribute score. These Disciplines are Combat, Lore, and Exorcism.

3.5.1. COMBAT

If a character has a Strength of 5 or 6, it means that he or she has the Discipline of Combat. Through this Discipline, the character has mastered armed and unarmed combat, and is a force to be reckoned with on the battlefield.

The character adds 1 point to the Attack and Defend scores, and can split dice between multiple opponents. For example, if the character has a Strength score of 5, then he has an Attack score of 6. With an Attack score of 6, then the character can attack 6 opponents with 1 die each, or 2 opponents with 3 dice each, or any combination adding up to 6 dice.

3.5.2. LORE

If a character has a Sense score of 5 or 6, then he has access to the Discipline of Lore. This is recorded in the Discipline field on the character sheet, and then again in the Skill section of the character sheet as Occultist or Paranormal Expert or Demonbuster or whatever the hell you want. Starting out, the score is 1, but it can be raised through the expenditure of Fury. However, the maximum score for the skill is 3.

During gameplay, the Lore skill can help the Cabal to identify the demon. Each time the Disciples find a clue, or piece of physical evidence, or learn something about the movements of the demon that they're hunting, the character with the Discipline of Lore makes a mark. When three such pieces of data have been accumulated, the player can return to headquarters and consult the notes that he or she has gathered, along with any occult manuscripts that the Cabal possesses, to conduct research and see if the demon sounds familiar.

The player checks by rolling three dice (one for each piece of the puzzle), and attempting to roll his Lore skill or lower. Starting out, the Lore skill is 1, so the player rolls 3 dice and hopes for a 1. If the attempt is unsuccessful, the player rolls 2 dice. If that doesn't work, the player rolls 1 die. If the player doesn't roll any ones, that means there just enough evidence, or that the search bore no fruit. The player can roll again if and when more data is gathered. The next time the players learn something about the demon, the Disciple can make another Lore check, this time rolling 4 dice, then 3, and so on.

If the player manages to roll a 1, that means that he has established at least one fact about the demon in question, including:

1. Its name.
2. Its nature (Hunter, Defiler, or Stalker)
3. Some information about its patterns or its victims

This information is narrated by the Director, and will not include information about where to find the demon, or how to kill it. But knowing its nature and its patterns will help the Disciples to focus their energies and refine their search for it.

If the players face the same kind of demon twice, the information gathered through the use of the Lore skill will be different the next time. The specifics are, again, left to the Director's discretion.

Examples of data gathered through an investigation include (but are not limited to):

- * Accounts of its appearance or behavior
- * Physical evidence (teeth, scales, claws)
- * Recordings (audio or visual)
- * Crime scenes
- * The victims' injuries (alive or dead)

Of course, as the Disciple's Lore skill goes up, it becomes easier to identify demons in the field. If the players keep good notes, it will also be easier to cross-reference their cases.



3.5.3 . _ SORCERY

Of the three types of demons, the Defilers are possibly the most loathsome, as they have the power to possess their victims and force them to do terrible things. A character with the Discipline of Sorcery has the power to cast the Defiler out of a host body.

If a Disciple has a Soul score of 5 or 6, he or she gains the Discipline of Sorcery. This means that the player can choose the Exorcisms detailed in Section 5, as well as the other spells outlined in Section 4. Any combination is acceptable, so long as the player chooses a total number of spells equal to double his Soul score.

The player may elect not to choose any of the Exorcisms. However, without these spells, the only way to cast a demon out of a host body is to kill the host.

3.6. SKILLS

Double your Sense score. This is the total number of points that you may distribute among your skills. Choose from the list, starting on the next page, and distribute the points as you see fit. For each item, list the skill on your character sheet, followed by the job title, and then the number. For example: Crime (Bank Robber) -- 3.

Each skill has a minimum score of 1 and a maximum score of 6. This score represents the number of dice that you roll when making a skill check.

For example, Scalpel has a Sense score of 5, so we get to distribute 10 points among her skills. Since she was a medical examiner for a while, we'll go ahead and use that as a skill. Let's assign 6 points to that, since it was her primary area of expertise. Since she also worked as a private eye, we'll go with Private Investigator, and we'll put the remaining 4 points there. So, her skills look like this:

Medicine (Medical Examiner) -- 6
Crime (Private Investigator) -- 4

Note that the skill in question is either Medicine or Crime. That means that the job title is just a descriptor. For example, let's say that a character has a background in Empathy because she used to be a police negotiator. That means that she has the ability to relate to people, to calm them down or get them to see her point of view. She can talk her way out of tricky situations or defuse potential problems. But the player can't say, "The character knows how to defuse a bomb because she used to be a cop." That's not what her skill is about. She's an empath, and her skill is a result of her background.



3.6.1. USING SKILLS

When there is a situation where you think that your character's skill could come in handy, tell the Director that you want to make a skill check. The Director will tell you the target difficulty, and you'll roll the appropriate number of dice. If at least one of your dice equals or beats the difficulty, you have succeeded.

Note that the roll is against a target difficulty, not against another character's roll. For example, let's say that Scalpel comes across a murder scene. The blood is still fresh, but the body is not present. The player tells the Director that Scalpel is going to use her background as a medical examiner to check out the crime scene. The crime scene is fresh, and the blood is still wet, but there's no body, so the Director rules that figuring out what happened is going to be mildly challenging. The difficulty is 8, and the player rolls 6 dice (because Scalpel has 6 points allotted to Medicine).

She rolls 2, 3, 4, 6, 8, and 9. Since at least one of her dice matched the difficulty, she succeeds. The Director tells her that, judging from the blood spray on the walls, the victim was struck at least twice, and faint drag marks on the ground indicate that the body was moved into the next room.

Note that if the player had gone into detail, explaining how this case relates to her character's Drive, she would have garnered at least one extra die. Also, if the player had described something cool about her character's actions, then there would have been at least one extra die there as well.

3.7. SKILL DESCRIPTIONS

Each description begins with a heading that sums up the point of the skill. In the first case, the heading is Charm, because the skill allows the character to get the confidence of total strangers quickly.

The description continues with a list of possible skills, such as Con Man, Grifter, Hustler, and Actor. The player can choose any of these, or create a new one, so long as it's clearly going to reflect on the focus of the skill -- in this case, the ability to charm or persuade people. The description of the skill is followed by an explanation of its usage.

3.7.1. CHARM

Jobs: Actor, Con Artist, Con Man, Grifter, Hustler, Player, Psychologist

You've always had a knack for getting people to believe you. Whether it's because you're really charming, or attractive, or just a good actor, you've always been able to convince people that you're on the level, even if you've burned them before. When you need to borrow a car, ask a favor, or get someone to "loan" you a sizable chunk of change, things just seem to fall into place for you. You're also good at pretending to be people that you're not, which comes in handy when you're trying to get into exclusive nightclubs or invitation-only society dinners.

Gameplay: When a character is trying to persuade someone, trick them, or pass himself off as someone else, this skill can be employed. Obtaining money from a total stranger, explaining an awkward situation to the police, and impersonating an official are all good examples.

3.7.2._COMPUTER_USE

Jobs: Computer Geek, Hacker, High-Tech Cop, Programmer, Developer

You've always had a natural talent for computers. You can build them, repair them, and hack them. When it's time to retrieve data from a stolen laptop, shut off a security system, or find information online, the Cabal looks to you for the solution.

Gameplay: When a character is trying to hack a network, find hidden files on a computer, or fix a broken computer, this skill can be employed. Finding porn on someone else's machine, switching hard drives, and repairing a computer found in a dumpster are all good examples of this.

3.7.3._CRIME

Jobs: Bank Robber, Cop, Detective, Federal Agent, Private Investigator

You know a thing or two about crime. Whether you're a beat cop who's seen it all, or an ex-con who's actually done it, you know how to crack a safe, hotwire a car, or bust into someone's house without making a sound. If it's not legal, you're the one they turn to.

Gameplay: When a character is trying to break into a house, pick a lock, or sneak past a security guard, this skill can be used.

3.7.4._DRIVING

Jobs: Cab Driver, Car Thief, Courier, Drag Racer, Race Car Driver, Trucker

You've always been good with cars. You know how to shake a tail, take sharp curves, and drive fast without getting anybody killed. When it goes down, you're the getaway driver. Whether you raced cars professionally, had training, or were just born with a knack for driving fast and staying on the road, you're the team's driver in a crisis situation.

Gameplay: When a character is trying to evade pursuers, ram another car, or swerve to avoid a collision, this skill can be employed.

3.7.5._EMPATHY

Jobs: Guidance Counselor, Police Negotiator, Religious Worker (Imam, Monk, Priest, Rabbi), Social Worker

You know how to hear what people are really saying. It's always been like that for you, and you've never known why. For some reason, you can pick up on emotional vibes, read faces, and hear unspoken words. It's not like you're psychic; it's just that you can discern those non-verbal cues that seem to elude most people. When someone's lying, you can tell. When someone's hiding a great sorrow, you can feel it. And somehow, you convey this to others, so people naturally open up to you. It's not just that you're aware of what's going on; you're also receptive to it, and that makes you the person that they turn to when they need a shoulder to cry on.

Gameplay: When a character is trying to glean information from a source, or gain the confidence of a stranger, this skill can be employed. Getting a child to admit to abuse, or convincing a student to confess to a malicious prank, are good examples of this.



Example: The kid closes his eyes and shakes his head, tears streaming down his cheeks. The psychologist looks at Karen and shrugs. "He's been like that all day." He seems disgusted. Karen touches his arm. "Maybe I could talk to him alone for a minute." The psychologist arches an eyebrow crossly, but leaves the room. When he's gone, Karen takes out a tissue and wipes the boy's face.

"It's okay," she says. "You don't have to tell me anything." The Director rules that because watching his father turn into a demon was so traumatic, getting any kind of response from this child is going to be very difficult. He sets the difficulty at 10. Karen has a Social Worker skill of 3, so she rolls 3 dice. The highest is an 11, so she's successful. She talks to the boy softly and patiently, and after a while, he begins to respond. Eventually, he begins to tell her what he saw that night.

3.7.6. HUNTING

Jobs: Bounty Hunter, Hunter, Private Detective, Safari Guide

You are a hunter. For as long as you can remember, you've been good at trailing people. When someone has to be found, you've got an uncanny ability to locate them. Whether you're following someone in the city, or in the woods, you're the one that instinctively knows where to look.

Gameplay: When a character is trying to pursue a target through the jungle, follow an unsuspecting quarry through the city without being spotted, or locate someone who's skipped bail, you can use this skill.

3.7.7. INTIMIDATION

Jobs: Bouncer, Cop, Drill Instructor, Interrogator, Thug

People fear you. It's not your body, or your face; it's something that they see in your eyes. Civilized people recognize a line that can't be crossed. When people look into your eyes, they realize that you can't see that line, and you have no compunctions about doing terrible things. It may or may not be true -- but that's what they see when they look at you. Consequently, people have a hard time saying no to you.

Gameplay: When a character tries to intimidate or bully someone, this skill can be used. Interrogating a reluctant witness, convincing a bellhop to look the other way, or getting a wary receptionist to release confidential financial records are good examples of this.

3.7.8. JOURNALISM

Jobs: Blogger, Newspaper Editor, Television Reporter, War Correspondent

You know what's going on. Before your life changed, and you became a Disciple, you were plugged into the city, and knew all about who was doing what to whom. You've been away, but your skills are still sharp. You still know how to cold-call, how to act like someone's best friend, how to get information fast. You're the gatherer of data, and a repository of knowledge about the city.

Gameplay: When a character is trying to find out who's behind a building project, or who wrote a particular newspaper article, or who's running against the mayor next year, this skill can be employed.



3.7.10._MEDICINE

Jobs: Coroner, Doctor, Medical Examiner, Nurse, Orderly, Pharmacist, Physician, Surgeon

You know how the body works. Whether you pursued medicine as a career, or just took some first aid classes, you've always been good at the subject. You know about pharmaceuticals, surgery, and treatment, and you know your way around a hospital.

Gameplay: When a character tries to diagnose a medical condition, recognize the effects of a drug, or determine information from a medical chart, this skill can be used. Recognizing symptoms, evaluating tissue damage, and identifying drugs are good examples of this.

Example: Cassandra opens a few drawers. Some lingerie, some postcards, some contraceptives. A small white bottle. She opens it. Empty. The label indicates that it's Ellovate, and the prescription expired a few months ago. She seems to recall seeing the name before, but isn't sure where. The Director rules that the difficulty is 10. Cassandra has a Medicine score of 4, so she rolls 4 dice. The highest is a 10, so she's successful. She remembers that Ellovate is an anti-depressant, and a damn strong one at that. Somebody's prescription ran out, and it doesn't look like it got refilled.

3.7.9._LINGUISTICS

Jobs: International Traveler, Localization Manager, Professor of Linguistics, Translator

You're good with languages. You always had a knack for figuring out what people are saying, even if you'd never been exposed to the language before. You've learned a few languages along the way, but you can usually manage to decipher a little bit about tongues that are foreign to you.

Gameplay: When you choose this skill, select a number of languages equal to the score. If you take Linguist for 3, select three languages. In these tongues, you are fluent, and if you run across documents written in these languages, you only need to make a roll if the content is technical or complicated. If you are trying to read something written in a language you are unfamiliar with, you may attempt to decipher the general content or theme (but specifics will elude you).

3.7.11._MILITARY

Jobs: Contractor, Mercenary, Reservist, Soldier, Spec-ops team member

You've served your country. There was a time when you wore a uniform and carried a gun. Though you're no longer a member of the armed forces, you haven't forgotten your training, and you still remember the way that things worked. You are, in many ways, still a soldier, and your training has paid off time after time.

Gameplay: When a character is in a situation where knowledge of military rank, procedure, or life is necessary, this skill can be used. Recognizing a medal, field-stripping a weapon, and identifying arms and munitions are good examples.

3.7.12. PROFESSION

Jobs: Accountant, Construction Worker, Lawyer, Musician, Office Manager, Realtor, Student, Teacher, Web Designer

Your job defined you, for a while. From eight to five, you got up, and you went to work. It wasn't just any job, either; it was fairly technical, and you worked with some really talented people. Things didn't work out, but you were pretty good at it, back in the day. Now, of course, you just think about it from time to time, but back then, you lived and breathed your job.

Gameplay: Choose one profession; you can select the skill more than once, for a different profession each time. This skill encompasses the knowledge and abilities picked up while working in the cited profession. When your professional skills might be brought to bear on a situation, this skill can be used.

3.7.13. REPAIR

Jobs: Auto Mechanic, Handyman, Repairman

You're a fixer. You can fix anything, from motors to small appliances to cars to HVAC systems. You were born with a silver wrench in your hand, and the Cabal relies on you to keep things moving (or to wake the dead, if the car gets wrecked).

When a character tries to repair an old or defective machine or system, this skill can be employed. If there are missing parts or inadequate tools, the target difficulty will increase accordingly, but a high level of proficiency with this skill generally means that a Disciple knows how to fix damn near anything.

3.7.14. SCIENCE

Jobs: Lab Technician, Professor of Chemistry, Scientist

You're an educated person. Chemistry, Biology, Botany, Astronomy -- these are your meat and milk. Years of scholarship have resulted in a prodigious wealth of knowledge about the way that the world and universe work.

Gameplay: When a character tries to identify an element, plant, or heavenly body, this skill can be used. Recognizing traces of sulfur, identifying constellations in an old photograph, and recognizing a toxic mushroom are all good examples of this.

NOTE: SKILLS

During character creation, you may envision a concept for a Disciple, only to discover that one of your fellow players has created a character with a similar skill.

There are a few ways to handle this. You can just proceed with the characters, and accept that two of them will have similar skills. Or, one of you can adjust the character and choose a different skill. This may be difficult if the character's profession is closely tied to his or her backstory.

You can also choose a related skill, and tie it in to the original concept. For example, if your idea was a character with a skill in the military, you might say that he was a mechanic at an army base, and choose a skill in Repair. Or you might say that he was a combat medic, and select Medicine.

3.8. DRIVE

Examining your character thus far, you must now bridge the gap between what your character used to be, and what he is now. Write down a brief description of your character's primary motivation, the thing that keeps him going. Then boil it down to a single word.

3.8.1. USING DRIVE

During gameplay, if you can relate what you're doing to your character's Drive, you receive an extra die. You could add this die to your next roll during combat, or when using a Skill, or when making an Attribute check. This isn't something that can be done with every single fight, or with every use of your character's Skill. The use of Drive is something special, something that specifically connects your character's story to the events that are taking place in the game.

3.8.2. EXAMPLE OF DRIVE

Scalpel used to be a successful medical examiner, respected by her peers and known for her research. However, after several good years on the job, she was present at the autopsy of a child who had been tortured to death.

Over time, she became obsessed with solving the case, but the leads were sparse. There wasn't much physical evidence, and the leads didn't go anywhere. Scalpel haunted the crime scene like a ghost, searching for that elusive piece of the puzzle. She never found it, and her obsession began to impact her work. Eventually, she lost her job.

Now, she still thinks of that tiny corpse on the metal table, but her focus is on the mission. Her drive is Protection. She feels driven to protect innocent children from the horror in the darkness. In a situation where she is trying to protect a child, or rescue one, the player could cite Scalpel's Drive, and relate it to a situation at hand.

3.8.3. SAMPLE DRIVES

Your character's drive might be Action, Courage, Danger, Freedom, Honor, Justice, Love, Protection, Purity, Rage, Revenge, Salvation, Spirituality, or Valor.

3.9. CONTACTS

You've got a number of Contacts, people that you've turned to for help in the past, or who have asked you for help. A Contact is someone that you met along the way, maybe in college, or at work, or on the street. Now that you're a Disciple, that person understands that you're doing something strange these days, and is willing to help you.

Your Contacts may get in touch with you if strange supernatural things happen. In fact, they may also pass your name along to other people in desperate situations, who will then get in touch with you.

The important thing to remember is that the contacts are the property of the players, not the Director. The only person that can kill off a contact is the player. Speaking of which, if the player gets tired of a Contact, and wants to create a new one, the first Contact has to die. Talk it over with your Director to come up with a suitably gruesome demise that can be worked into the next scenario. You don't have to tell the other players, though.



3.9.1. USING CONTACTS

During gameplay, you may decide to turn to your Contacts for assistance. For example, your Cabal may want to sneak onto an army base, but you're wary of capture. If one of you had a skill in Military, or Crime, then it might be possible, but that's not the case. So, you call up one of your contacts, a lieutenant in the Army, and you ask him for help.

As long as you're not asking for an unreasonable advantage, there's no reason this can't work. If you were asking for access to guns or explosives or equipment, then the Director would be right in telling you that this is not possible. However, if all you're asking for is a little help getting through a situation, then the use of a Contact is perfectly acceptable. If asking your Contact for such a favor becomes a habit, the Director may rule that the Contact becomes unavailable temporarily, or that the Contact begins to demand favors from your team before helping you out.

These favors may put the Disciples in an awkward situation, or may even require them to break the law. If the Director rules that the contact is going to ask a favor, the player gets first crack at coming up with the specifics. If the group agrees that the request is unreasonable and dangerous, then the Director will build an upcoming scenario around it. Examples include intimidating a mob enforcer, stealing a valuable piece of software, and robbing a bank to retrieve incriminating documents from a safe deposit box.

During gameplay, when you use a Contact, the narration of the exchange is described by the player, unless the player prefers to role-play the conversation out with the Director (or another player).

3.9.2. SAMPLE CONTACTS*Sandra Coleman, TV Reporter*

Sandra is a reporter with WDRU news on Channel 4. She's covered all kinds of stories, but has lately become interested in the unexplained phenomena that appear to be occurring all over the world. Some of her key stories involve eyewitness accounts of paranormal activity, or gruesome murders that the police can't seem to solve. The Disciples have received several leads from Coleman, and in return, she only asks to know when a case has been closed so that she can report from the scene (when the Disciples have left).

Charles Whittaker, Police Officer

Officer Whittaker has been working for the Raleigh police for six years. During that time, he's only had to draw his weapon twice. The first time was during a standoff with a gunman that took hostages in a school. Whittaker did not fire shots, and the gunman surrendered without incident. The second incident was Whittaker's first encounter with the Disciples. He nearly lost his life when attacked by a demon, but the Cabal saved his life and swore him to secrecy. They consult with him from time to time, when they need help on a case.

Tosh Stewart, Coroner

Stewart has been working as the county coroner for nearly fifteen years. During that time, he's seen many dead bodies, but the most horrible deaths are always brought to his attention (and examination table) by the Disciples. Stewart furnishes time and cause of death, and also provides the Cabal with measurements and photographs of any strange bites or marks. Though he's never asked for anything in return for his work, he's recently suggested to the Disciples that they may be able to help him get out of a gambling debt.



3.10. FURY

Fury is a measure of your Disciple's power, strength, and righteous anger over the general skullfuckery of life. At the beginning of each round, each Disciple has 12 points of Fury, which can be used to perform various stunts, feats, and ass-kicking (delineated below).

Fury can also be used to further develop your character, resulting in new skills and spells.

3.10.1. REGAINING FURY

Over the course of a scenario, your character's Fury may ebb. However, you can get some of it back.

Each time you complete one of the secondary objectives in a case, you get three points of Fury. There are up to four secondary objectives in each case, so you can score up to twelve points of Fury during the course of a scenario. The maximum Fury score is 12, so kill 'em if you got 'em.

3.10.2. KICKING ASS

Fury can be used to kick ass in a variety of ways. These maneuvers are generally accompanied by vivid descriptions of impossible or ill-advised feats, such as diving head-first into the burning wreckage of an eighteen-wheeler carrying radioactive waste in order to ram a grenade into a demon's mouth.

Hardcore (1)

If a player kills one point, he can recover a point of Life immediately, ignoring the pain and moving on. This can be done as many times as the player wishes, provided that the character has enough Fury.

Kill Shot (1)

If a player kills one point, he can roll an extra die for any roll. Only one point can be spent at a time in this fashion. In other words, you can't kill five points of Fury and roll five extra dice.

Second Chance (1)

If a player kills a point, he can roll again. Anytime a player fails a roll, he can elect to roll again, effectively gaining a second chance to succeed at an action. This can only be used if the first roll was a failure, and can only be done once per round. If a roll is failed, and rolling again is also a failure, then that's the end of the player's round. Note that any extra dice must be justified as usual (a die for a Cool description must be earned again, a die for a spent Fury point requires killing an additional point of Fury, et cetera).

Cock Punch (2)

When the player kills two points, he or she can execute a dirty, sneaky, underhanded maneuver, the type of move that Disciples refer to (in their delicate way) as a 'cock punch'. For example, the character may shove an opponent into moving farm equipment, or may fling a pan of boiling water into someone's face. After describing the gory details, the player and Director roll as usual, but the player swipes the Director's highest die and adds it to his or her die pool.

Suicide Run (2)

When the player kills two points, he or she can attempt the Suicide Run, a futile gesture that's pretty much guaranteed to fail. After the player describes an action that's completely out of the question, the player rolls two dice, then adds the values together. For example, if the player is fighting a demon, and executes the Suicide Run, and rolls a 10 and a 7, that means that the player rolled a 17. Against the director's high roll of 12, that means that the player hit for 5 points of damage (plus weapon bonus). No modifiers are permitted: the player only rolls two dice, period.

Clusterfuck (2)

If a player kills two points, he or she can make a last-ditch attempt to hit someone in combat. This is particularly useful when a character with poor combat skills is up against a clearly superior opponent. The player describes a desperate plan that will most likely put the character in the hospital; then the player then rolls a single die against the opponent's roll. However, instead of choosing the opponent's highest die roll, the player looks at the opponent's lowest roll. So, if the player rolls a 4, and the opponent rolls a 1, 2, 5, 7, 7, 10, 11, and 12, then the player hits for three points of damage (4-1), plus any applicable weapon bonus.

Bullseye (2)

If a player kills two points, he can roll an automatic 12 on any attribute or skill check. This means that there is no need to roll the dice; the 12 is automatic. This doesn't apply to combat rolls or spell rolls, just to attribute checks and skill checks.

Middle Wayne (3)

This is a reference to the fact that many serial killers have the middle name Wayne. Strange, but true. After killing three points of fury, the player describes a brutal, merciless maneuver that's worthy of a sociopathic serial killer. The player gets to roll two extra dice, and the Director rolls as normal. If the Disciple gets the high roll, the damage is inflicted to the target. If the Director gets the high roll, then the damage is still taken by the Disciple's target.

So, if the Disciple rolls a 10, and the Director rolls a 4, then the demon takes 6 points of damage. If the Disciple rolls a 4, and the Director rolls the 10, then the demon still takes 6 points.

BOHICA (3)

This military acronym stands for Bend Over, Here It Comes Again. When pulling a BOHICA, the Disciple takes an action that's so foolhardy and dangerous that he loses all but 1 point of Life. Regardless of how many points he had to begin with, when he's done, he's only got 1 point left. The Disciple's target doesn't have an easy time of it: the Disciple's stunt (which must result in some kind of bodily harm to the Disciple, ranging from minor to grievous) also causes damage to the target. The player rolls as normal, but the Director only gets to roll one die. If the player is successful, and hits, the damage is doubled. Now, if the Disciple only had 1 point of Life to begin with, and is attempting to pull a BOHICA, then he loses that point of Life, drops to zero, and Retires (for more information on Retirement, see page 110).





3.11. GEAR

During the course of the game, you'll want to use various items, equipment, and weaponry. This costs money, and it's not like you have time to bag groceries or wait tables on the side when you're out demon hunting.

3.11.1. CASH

Your character has a Cash score. This represents your remaining savings, along with any money you pick up along the way. Once in a while, your Mentor will toss you a few bills to keep the electricity on, that kind of thing.

The Cash score represents the number of dice that you can roll when you want to buy something. Starting out, you have a Cash score of 1.

Different items have a value, like a Target Difficulty, that you must roll if you want to purchase that item. For example, a relatively cheap item like a pair of boots has a value of 1. So, if you want to buy a pair of boots, you roll your die and pray that the score is higher than 1.

So, okay, that one's a given. Anything with a value of 1 is there for the taking. You've always got enough cash to pick up something that cheap. As a rule of thumb, anything under fifty bucks is cheap enough that you don't have to worry too much about your finances.

However, something more substantial, like a good pistol, has a value of 7. So, if you want to buy a pistol, you have to roll a 7 or higher.

At the beginning of each session, each player can roll once to purchase any gear or equipment that the Cabal needs. After that, you're tapped out for the moment, and you can't make any other big-ticket purchases. Of course, you can still pick up anything with a value of 1, but other than that, you're strapped.

Example: The team's looking to pick up some cheap Kevlar vests, the concealed kind. The Director says that these items have a cost of 4. Since each character has a Cash score of 1, each member of the team rolls a single die at the beginning of the session. Of the three of them, one rolls a 10, one rolls a 2, and one rolls a 7. So, two of them were able to scrape together enough cash to pick up the vests. The third one gets a pat on the back and best wishes from everybody.

3.11.2. IMPROVING CASH FLOW

Immediately after character creation, each Disciple can roll three times, instead of the usual single roll. However, the same rules apply: the player must declare what he or she is rolling for, prior to making the attempt. This can only be done once, after the character is created. After that, to roll three dice, you're going to need to kill off the character and create a new one.

It's also possible to temporarily improve the cash flow of a character by other methods. For example, if the characters suddenly inherit a sizeable amount of money, then their cash flow might be bumped up to 2, or even 3, at the Director's discretion.

The duration of this change in financial fortunes is also left to the Director. It might last for the next couple of game sessions, or it might last as long as a year. Note that the maximum Cash score for a Disciple is 3.

EQUIPMENT LIST

WEAPON COST RANGE DAMAGE

Knife	1	1	1
Lead pipe	1	1	1
Hatchet	2	1	1
Nightstick	2	1	1
Arrow	2	2	1
Battle Axe	3	2	1
Broad Sword	4	1	1
Revolver	4	2	1
Katana	5	1	2
Short Bow	6	2	0
Crossbow	6	3	0
Long Bow	6	3	0
Pistol	6	2	1
Shotgun	7	2	2
Submachine Gun	9	3	3
Grenade	10	3	4
Assault Rifle	11	3	4

ARMOR COST DAMAGE

Jacket	2	3
Concealed	4	5
Tactical	6	7
SWAT	8	9
Ceramic Plate	10	11

GEAR COST

Bolt cutters	1
Boots	1
Disposable cell phone	1
Duct tape	1
Flashlight	1
Highway flare	1
Army camo	2
Binoculars	2
Fingerprint kit	2
Two-way radio	2
Digital camera	3
Police uniform	3
Camcorder	4
GPS navigator	5
Laptop	6
Three-piece suit	6
Designer dress	7
Fake ID	7
NV goggles	8
Fake badge	9
Hazmat suit	9
High-end PC	10
Car, used	11
Truck, used	12

3.11.3. EQUIPMENT

Most of the items on the preceding table are pretty straightforward. A few things to be aware of:

Armor

Armor is available. A vest will set you back maybe two hundred bucks, but it's worth it. Couple bills is a small price to pay for keeping your internal organs on the inside, where they belong.

Jackets look just like windbreakers, but are able to deflect small arms fire. Concealed armor goes under clothing; this is the bulletproof vest that is so often revealed when a TV cop takes one to the chest. Tactical and SWAT armor is worn by police officers in high-risk situations. It consists of multiple pieces of armor worn over clothing, and is quite conspicuous. So is ceramic plate, which is worn primarily by soldiers in war zones.

For a description of the way that armor works, read the combat section on page 114.

Illegal Weapons

You and your Director need to agree on how to handle this. If you're playing a more realistic game, then the use of hand grenades in public places will probably have consequences. You may, however, be playing one of those what-the-hell campaigns where it's not a big deal. Discuss, decide.

Looting the Dead

In some RPGs, it's customary to loot the bodies of the dead. Dread is no different. In fact, Disciples often loot the living. See a bad guy who's got something you want? Then take it. Why not?

3.12. ADVANCEMENT

On the character sheet at the end of the book, you'll see the Advancement section at the bottom of the page. If you're rooting around back there, you damn well better not be reading about the scenarios or demons. Just look at the character sheet and maybe photocopy it so you have some spares. Or go to www.dread-rpg.com and download a PDF version of it. Assuming that I haven't let the domain lapse and now you go there and it's a furry hentai site. Okay, anyhow.

When you've completed a mission, you put an X in one of those circles. You fill in 13 circles, you can choose a new spell or a new skill. Or you can add a point to an existing skill. If you play every Saturday night for a year, then you'll probably rack up 4 new spells, or skills, or some combination thereof. If you're only playing once a month, you may want to adjust your rate of advancement. It's a question of what your group wants to do.





'Tis now the very witching time of night,
When churchyards yawn and hell itself breathes out
Contagion to this world: now could I drink hot blood
And do such bitter business as the day
Would quake to look on.
-- William Shakespeare. *Hamlet*

I will destroy your witchcraft and you will no longer cast spells.
-- Micah 5:11-13



Chapter 4:
Bitter Business

MAGIC

Chapter 4: Bitter Business

JOURNAL: BAD CASE

"So," I say. "Does it taste like blueberries?"

She shakes her head and sips her cocoa. She drinks cocoa all year. Hundred degrees out, sweat dripping off her face, Edna Council leans against the counter and drinks scalding hot cocoa.

"You don't eat it," she says. "They put it on your face."

"Okay," I say. "So, what, you just sit there and talk to the other girls?"

We're hanging out in the kitchen. I like spending quiet time with Edna. I mean Council. You're a Disciple, you use nicknames, or last names. Don't get personal with people, don't use first names. No point, really. Anyhow, I like hanging out with her. She's close to normal. Closer than me, in some ways.

"No," she says. "You lie there, and they put it on your face, and then it kind of hardens, so you can't talk. You just lie there and listen to soothing music. After that, I got my pedicure."

"The facial, how long did you just sit there?"

"About a half hour."

"Jesus." I light a cigar. She grimaces, so I put it out. Probably the only person on earth that I would do that for, and I'm not sure why. She didn't even ask me to. "So, I ask. Then, what, you read a magazine? Watch TV?"

"No," she says. "That's the point, you don't do anything. You just relax."

Slashfic walks in. He's wearing what he refers to as his 'uniform' and what we refer to as 'surplus army boots and a trenchcoat that hasn't been washed in three years'.

"Relax where?" he asks. He opens the fridge and leans in. "Aah, shit, that feels good."

"Council got a facial," I say.

He leans over and claps me on the shoulder. "Good for you, buddy. I figured if anyone was going to get in there, it was going to be you."

I shrug off his hand. "No, you jack-ass, a facial at a spa. You know, like a mud mask."

He goes back to rooting around in the fridge. He knows damn well about the spa, me and him and Morlock all chipped in a few bills to send Council there. She pretty much saved the day.

Slash was on the ground, shot up and unconscious. I was pinned down, busted up from the fight with Dr. Gardner. Morlock was busy getting tasered in the parking lot.

We were all kind of preoccupied, and the doc was still possessed. Didn't look good for the home team.

Thing is, we're not cop-killers. Too much love for the guys in blue to put any one of them in harm's way. So it wasn't like we could just open up and take 'em down.

But Council sails in there, hits them with Stasis and Dresden and a few other spells. They're all frozen or disoriented when she casts the demon out of Dr. Gardner and destroys it.

But then she hit the ground, comatose. Pushed it too far, too fast.

I scraped her up, threw her and Slashfic into the van. Morlock managed to get free, dove in the side door, and we peeled out of there in a hurry. I drove like a maniac, and lost the cops on the beltline. They're good, they got training. But I'm better, and I got magic.

Back at the joint, Council came to, but she hasn't been the same since. She's weak as a kitten, beat down and exhausted all the time. So we sent her to a spa. Massage, pedicure, facial treatment. She's been talking about it nonstop for two days now. At first, I was pretending to be interested. Now, it's two things. First, I am kind of interested. Women are crazy. Someone cuts your fuckin toenails and you're in a good mood for an entire week, I just think that's fascinating. But the second thing is, I could listen to Council read the phone book. The broad is really growing on me.

"We got a case," Morlock rumbles. She's standing in the doorway, arms crossed. Big ole veins in her forearms, shoulders all bunched like they were carved out of marble. "Bad case," she says. Good case, you get the target before any blood hits the ground. Bad case, you get started after the target kills some people. Most cases are bad.

She gives us the whole story in the van, on the way to the scene. Word on the street is that a demon tore its way through a high-class whorehouse, uptown. Of course, the news said it was a wild animal of some kind. Witnesses described a man who had painted his skin black. Like, black black. He was wearing medieval armor of some kind. But it was stuck to his skin. And he had spikes all over, and some kind of mask. Maybe wings. Witness accounts, man. You can't believe any of it.

CAUTION

Chapter 4: Bitter Business

People see what they want to see. Of course, the past few months, as more and more incidents like this go down, people are starting to understand that something's wrong. Conspiracy theories. It's a government weapons program that got out of control and leaked in civilian populations. It's aliens, toying with us. It's the day of Judgment, and the demons are loose. That's the closest to reality, though it's still a little shy of the mark.

Morlock says this demon, it killed a half-dozen people, then grabbed one guy and took him when it left. I guess it had some dine-in, and also a little carry-out. Poor son of a bitch. Well, maybe we'll get there in time to save his life. Probably not. How it goes, right?

We pull up a block away from the apartment building. Place is locked down with cops. Yellow tape, curious onlookers, news crews.

"You guys want to go Channel Two?" I ask.

"Yeah," Slashfic says, whipping off his shirt.

"Hey, Slashfic," Council says. "I hear someone tried to trick you into wearing deodorant once, but you got wise at the last minute."

He laughs as he buttons up a blue oxford. They're always sniping at each other, like siblings.

I'm already wearing a button-up shirt, so I grab the camera equipment and Council does her hair up quick. Morlock puts on a baseball cap and picks up a tripod. Slashfic grabs the lighting and we all dive out the side door and move like we got a purpose.

Ten minutes later, we've got past the cops with a few well-placed spells and we're checking out the crime scene.

Slashfic casts Confession on a brunette. Long black hair, tall black heels. Must work here. She starts giving him a very objective and precise description of what went down.

Edna casts Astarte and gets the madam to show us her office. I cast Amanuensis and check out the laptop. Try to figure out what we got going on. Looks like she sent an email to someone about one of her girls going missing. Candi. Yeah, I'm sure that was her birth name.

Candi was last seen in the company of a guy that the madam didn't know. Gives a description: middle-age, balding, well-off. Hmm. Maybe a regular client that fell for his hooker 'girlfriend'? Wouldn't be the first. Well, no, if he was a regular, the madam would have recognized him.

I print out the info, just in case it leads to something. Then I notice an icon on the desktop. An image, labeled candi.jpg. Curious, I open it. Photo, two people getting into a limo. Grainy, black-and-white. But, it matches what's in the email. Candi's pushing thirty, and it's pushing back. Even with the poor image quality, you can see it. But, long legs, high cheekbones. A stunner, especially compared with the puffy-looking dude on her arm. He's big and jowly, got a thin little child-molester mustache like a drive-thru manager.

Morlock's taking pictures of the scene. We can check all that out later. Blood spatter, footprints, random stuff we coulda missed. The magic's going to wear off soon. Cops are going to get suspicious, the madam's going to freak out. Time to bail.

Slashfic casts Nimrod, and kneels down by a bloody footprint. I can see from the outline that it's not even vaguely human. What I can't see is the effect of the spell. Only Slashfic can see it.

For him, the demon's footprints are now glowing. He follows them down the hall to a window. He leans out, cranes his neck. Then he nods. "I got it, I got the trail," he says.

We cram into the stairwell and pound down, two at a time. "Manhole," Slashfic says. Great. I don't spend enough time in the sewers.

We stash the Channel Two gear in the van, then drive it to a parking garage. Gotta get gone before the cops get wise. On the way, I show everyone the picture of Candi and her mystery man. Slashfic taps the printout.

"You recognize her?" I turn it back around so I can study her face.

"No," he says. "Though I will say that I would, in fact, hit it."

Council groans. "Come on," she says.

"Oh, she's totally my type," he insists. "I'd bang it like a screen door in a hurricane."

"Hey," I say. "What the fuck."

"Okay, okay." He taps the guy's face. "Him, that guy. He runs Apptitude. Software company, downtown. Does pretty well. Obviously. I mean, she ain't into him for his looks, right?"

Park the van, get out. Getting late. Sun's sunk behind the skyline. Shadows getting longer. I hate sewer jobs so much. Okay, so we check out the manhole, see if we can pick up the demon's trail before it--

Headlights, screeching tires. I pull out a sawed-off pool cue, and Slashfic reaches into the van and pulls out a katana. Of course. Morlock cracks her knuckles.

Three black sedans, blocking the way out. Guys pouring out like clowns at a circus. Eight, no, nine guys. Cheap suits, revolvers. Mob? Must be. The madam's probably paying them protection money. Cops might be in on it, too. Turn a blind eye, skim a little off the top, some free trim now and then.

When the spell wore off and she realized what we'd done, she must have gotten nervous. She probably called them up, said someone was poking around the place.

Hell, they may have even seen us going in and out. These guys, they were probably in the crowd all along, just keeping an eye on things. They probably think we're mixed up in this somehow. But what exactly are we mixed up in?

"Printout," one of them says. "Hand it over." Instead of a gun, he's got a cell phone. What, if I don't cooperate, he's going to give me brain cancer? I try to think of something funny to say, but I'm not as witty as Slashfic when it comes to stuff like this.

Morlock hurls herself through the air and lands on top of the guy. He screams as she starts snapping his ribs like pencils.

Edna casts Bile and spits up this massive wad of black mucus streaked with bright red blood. It hits one guy square in the face and he starts clawing at his mouth and nose, unable to breathe. Yes sir, I'm going to marry that girl someday.

I gotta be honest. These guys are just thugs. It's unlikely that we can beat any information out of them.

But I'm going to enjoy trying.

4.1. CATHEXIS

You learned magic the hard way. Gutted, busted, burned, and kicked, you were instructed by a mirthless Mentor who wanted to impart one single piece of wisdom with regard to black magic: It is a fucking weapon. You don't just fling a fireball. You suck moisture out of the air, ignite oxygen, change the world, change the way that things should be. You are tampering. You are meddling. You are interfering with the natural order, and like any interloper, you are taking an enormous risk, and you will come to great harm if you keep taking that risk. Still, it's the only edge you have.

Normal people think they know what magic is. You mumble some magic words, boil some eye of newt and graveyard dirt, then wave your hands around, and bang, you've cast a spell. Also, there's no such thing as magic. Yeah, the rest of the world is pretty clueless.

Good thing. If they knew what you were up to, they'd kill you in your sleep.

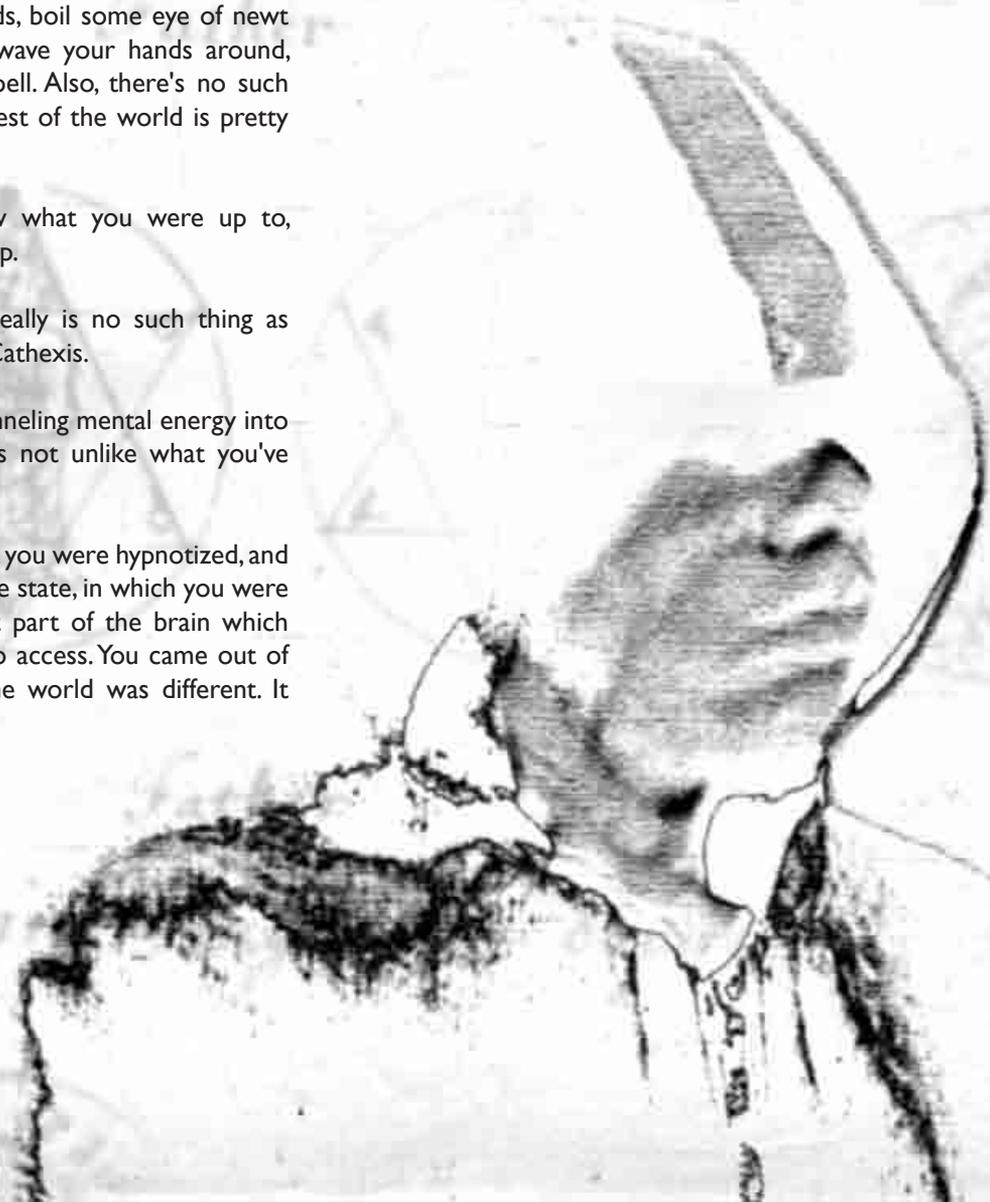
They're half-right: there really is no such thing as magic. However, there is Cathexis.

Cathexis is defined as channeling mental energy into an idea or concept. That's not unlike what you've been taught to do.

On the first day of training, you were hypnotized, and went into a deep, trancelike state, in which you were able to finally unlock that part of the brain which most people are unable to access. You came out of the hypnotic state and the world was different. It was malleable.

Through Cathexis, a deep form of concentration that most people are not able to attain, you can do the impossible: leap thirty feet straight up into the air, turn your hand into a spitting cobra, send your shadow to fight your battles for you, or transform your intestines into ravenous lampreys. You call it magic, you call it Cathexis, it's the same thing: manipulating the world in a way that is against the natural order.

In terms of gameplay, your Magic score is equal to your Soul score. Whenever instructed to make a Magic check, roll a number of dice equal to your Magic score.



4.2. USING MAGIC

A few things to think about, though:

You are not a normal person anymore.

You can spit bile, read minds, and heal the injured. If people see you doing these things, they're going to realize that something is not right with you. Their reactions will vary, but no one is going to watch you jump over a house without noting that something very odd is happening.

Attracting attention to yourself is not always a good thing; there are others out there who would kill for power, and if they feel that you are privy to secrets that will grant them this power, they'll do whatever they have to do. So exercise caution and prudence.

It's also good to bear in mind that power is seductive. With magic, you can confuse people, control them, harm them. It can be useful. But remember that you are a Disciple, and your mission in life is to protect the innocent. You must learn to control the urge to throw magic at every single situation; you must also learn to abstain from manipulating people unless absolutely necessary.

4.3. SPELLS

Each Disciple starts the game with a number of spells equal to twice his Magic score (2-12), and can cast a number of spells each day equal to his Magic score (1-6). Furthermore, a spell can be cast more than once per day. For example, a character with a Soul score of 3 will have 6 spells in his arsenal, but may choose to cast one of those spells 3 times in a single day.

If the Disciple casts more than that number, she must make a Soul check against difficulty 11. Failure means that the character takes 2 points of damage. If the roll is successful, the player takes no damage, but must make that roll each time she attempts to cast a spell until the following day.

Casting a spell is just like taking an action in combat. A character cannot cast a spell, then take an action or attack an enemy. Even if the spell's duration is listed as Immediate, it still requires concentration and focus to cast, so it counts as an action.

If a spell includes a duration, count the round in which the spell was cast, unless the caster was the last person to go. If the caster was the last person to go, do not count the round in which the spell was cast.

Spell range is the same as weapon range: a range of 1 means that the target is within arm's reach, a range of 2 means that the target is in the room, and a range of 3 indicates that the target is down the street.

4.3.2. SPELL QUICK LIST

- Amanuensis -- reproduce the last person's writing
 Anvil -- extra damage, immunity to metal
 Aphasia -- victim can't write or speak
 Ares -- become expert warrior
 Armistice -- violence is physically impossible
 Askance -- victim suspects everyone
 Astarte -- victim obeys caster
 Barricade -- wall of invisible force
 Bete Noir -- caster learns victim's secret
 Bile -- caster attacks with acid
 Bracers -- defensive armor appears on arms
 Surgeon -- add six dice to next roll
 Cacophony -- caster attacks with noise
 Caliban -- victim falls prey to illusion
 Cancer -- caster's hands become claws
 Capaneus -- caster becomes weapons expert
 Carapace -- defensive armor appears on body
 Carnation -- caster heals target's injuries
 Char -- destroys inanimate objects
 Chela -- drains target's strength
 Chelicerae -- caster attacks with mandibles
 Chiaroscuro -- caster locates target
 Cognito -- caster looks like a friend
 Confession -- victim confesses everything
 Confound -- victim develops amnesia
 Crepusculus -- caster attacks with shadow
 Culebra -- caster attacks with snake bites
 Denial -- immunity to magic
 Diablerie -- victim haunted by illusions
 Discern -- caster sees target's true nature
 Dresden -- illusions torment victims
 Duress -- demon paralyzed by caster
 Eloign -- caster teleports while attacking
 Emeute -- victims terrorized by illusions
 Energumen -- caster becomes super-strong
 Excoriate -- caster attacks with debris
 Fortress -- caster becomes expert at defense
 Frostbite -- caster attacks with cold
 Gaunt -- caster becomes intangible
 Gird -- caster attacks with swords
 Glossolalia -- caster talks with victim's voice
 Hemophage -- victim loses consciousness
 Inferno -- caster attacks with fire
 Jade -- victim is paralyzed when struck
 Leviathan -- victim sees caster as demon
 Levin -- caster drains victim's soul
 Malison -- caster's speech injures demon
 Malvado -- caster attacks with spikes
 Miserere -- confuses and weakens victims
 Moloch -- defensive armor appears
 Mute -- radius of complete silence
 Nacreous -- defensive armor appears on body
 Nephilim -- caster grows wings, can fly
 Nimrod -- caster can track target
 Nodule -- caster throws flash-bang grenade
 Noesis -- caster absorbs target's skills
 Nyctalgic -- caster can see in the dark
 Octave -- wall of force rises from the ground
 Oracle -- caster can see into near future
 Ordal -- two men enter, one man leaves
 Phantasma -- caster only seen by victim
 Refuge -- caster safe from angels and demons
 Schatten -- victim attacked by own shadow
 Sclera -- victim paralyzed by stare
 Scossa -- kicks knock victim unconscious
 Seismos -- punch creates shockwaves
 Sentinel -- invisible alarm system
 Smilodon -- caster assumes feline traits
 Sombra -- caster becomes dark smoke
 Stratus -- caster can leap great distances
 Sunder -- caster can punch through steel
 Swarm -- locusts defend caster
 Sycorax -- telekinesis, armored skin
 Tirade -- victim screams uncontrollably
 Valence -- spinning disc defends caster
 Veneno -- caster's touch is poisonous
 Viscera -- caster's innards becomes serpents
 Vore -- caster's bite drains victim's strength
 Warstorm -- caster can attack multiple foes
 Wither -- victim appears to wither and age
 Wormwood -- caster's vomit nauseates victims
 Castigation -- exorcism
 Emesis -- exorcism
 Gadarene -- exorcism
 Litany -- exorcism
 Phthisis -- exorcism
 Salvation -- exorcism
 Unction -- exorcism

4.3.3 . SPELL PACKAGES

In a hurry?

Want to get into the action quickly?

Use these spell packages to quickly assemble your Disciple's spell list. If your character's combat-focused, snag a few attack and defense spells. If you're more of an investigator, pick up some investigation spells, or maybe some stealth and manipulation. If you want your Disciple to be as repulsive as possible, go for the grotesque. It makes for a memorable game experience. Whatever you choose, study the spell descriptions carefully before actually using the spell. The quick list on the left is just an overview...

ATTACK 1: Ares, Energumen

ATTACK 2: Seismos, Sycorax

ATTACK 3: Culebra, Gird

ATTACK 4: Jade, Warstorm

ATTACK 5: Anvil, Capaneus

ATTACK 6: Eloign, Veneno

ATTACK 7: Char, Frostbite

DEFENSE 1: Armistice, Denial

DEFENSE 2: Fortress, Malvado

DEFENSE 3: Carnation, Refuge

DEFENSE 4: Sentinel, Valence

DEFENSE 5: Bracers, Capaneus

DEFENSE 6: Nacreous, Swarm

FLIGHT: Stratus, Nephilim

NONLETHAL COMBAT 1: Chela, Levin

NONLETHAL COMBAT 2: Scossa, Vore

INVESTIGATION 1: Amanuensis, Discern

INVESTIGATION 2: Nimrod, Oracle

STEALTH 1: Gaunt, Mute

STEALTH 2: Nyctalgic, Sombra

MANIPULATION 1: Astarte, Cognito

MANIPULATION 2: Confession, Leviathan

MANIPULATION 3: Aphasia, Bete Noir

MANIPULATION 4: Tirade, Wither

MANIPULATION 5: Askance, Caliban

MANIPULATION 6: Confound, Diablerie

GROTESQUE 1: Bile, Nodule

GROTESQUE 2: Viscera, Wormwood

GROTESQUE 3: Cancer, Glossolalia

GROTESQUE 4: Chelicerae, Hemophage

EXORCISM 1: Castigation, Emesis

EXORCISM 2: Gadarene, Unction

EXORCISM 3: Malison, Litany

EXORCISM 4: Phthisis, Salvation

CROWD CONTROL 1: Cacophony, Dresden

CROWD CONTROL 2: Emeute, Miserere

4.4. SPELL LIST

4.4.1. AMANUENSIS

Duration: 2 rounds (10 seconds)

Range: 1

When you cast this spell, you are able to reproduce the writing or typing of the last person to interact with a writing implement. If you pick up a pencil, you will be able to write down the last few things that were written with that pencil. If you sit at a typewriter or computer, you'll be able to reproduce whatever was last typed on it. However, you won't learn who wrote it, and the handwriting will be your own.

Gameplay: You touch the side of the computer. It's still warm. You boot it up, but there aren't any documents saved on the hard drive. You try pulling up the recently-modified docs, but they've all been deleted. Hmm. You open up a blank notepad document, and cast Amanuensis. Your fingers start moving as you watch. Interesting.

4.4.2. ANVIL

Duration: 3 rounds (15 seconds)

Range: 1

When this spell is cast, your skin becomes dark grey, and your body becomes hard and heavy, like iron. Your punches and kicks will inflict greater than normal damage; each time you hit someone, you inflict an extra point of injury, as though you were carrying a weapon. In addition, you'll be immune to attacks from metal weapons. Bullets, knives, and swords will bounce off of you without effect, though other attacks (punches, kicks, wooden weapons, fire, magic) will inflict normal damage. For the duration of the spell, you will be cool to the touch, and will register as room-temperature if viewed through infrared vision devices.

Gameplay: The cops take aim and fire. You cast Anvil and the bullets bounce off your metal skin as you turn and sprint up the stairs. By the time you reach the top floor, your shirts is hanging off your back in ragged tatters. But you're still breathing.

4.4.3. APHASIA

Duration: 30 seconds (6 rounds)

Range: 2

When you cast this spell on someone, he loses the ability to speak or write coherently. When he tries to talk, he just babbles and grunts, and he's unable to write or type words that others can understand. He's still able to comprehend what's said to him, and isn't impeded in any other way, but it's impossible to communicate with others until the spell wears off. To cast the spell, make a Magic check against the victim's Soul check.

Gameplay: The lawyer's eyes widen as you walk past him. Damn, he recognized you. You put your head down and walk faster, but it's too late. He's yelling for the cops. You turn around and hit him with Aphasia, then turn and walk away. The first cop asks the lawyer what's wrong, and he says *baga baga baga jeeeee*. You can't help but laugh, but you don't dare turn around.

4 . 4 . 4 . _ ARES

Duration: 2 rounds (10 seconds)
Range: 1

For the duration of this spell, your mental and physical energy are channeled into the art of hand-to-hand combat. Every movement you make is precise and devastating, and there are no mistakes. You punch, kick, and throw like a veteran warrior, and you block flawlessly, without having to think about it. For ten seconds, you become insanely dangerous. While the spell is in effect, you reroll any die result less than 5 when attacking or defending. If the reroll is under 5, then you count it as a 5.

Gameplay: You can't afford another hit. You're leaking blood from a dozen wounds, and your reinforcements just got punched through a wall. The cultists close in on you, their curved daggers glimmering in the moonlight. You cast Ares and drop into the Iron Horse stance. If you're going down, you're going to take a few of them to Hell with you.

4 . 4 . 5 . _ ARMISTICE

Duration: 2 rounds (10 seconds)
Range: 2

When this spell is cast, it becomes impossible for an ordinary person to harm another within ten feet of you. The attacker can pull his arm back, or aim his gun, but can't actually go through with the act of throwing a punch or pulling the trigger. This spell does not affect demons.

Gameplay: Demler is going for his revolver. The nurse has her back to him, and there's not enough time to warn her. You cast Armistice as Watkins takes aim. He tries to pull the trigger, but can't. You tell the nurse to get the hell out, and she sees Watkins. Screaming, she bolts from the room. You roll up your sleeves. Spell's going to wear off any second now. Too bad for Demler.

4 . 4 . 6 . _ ASKANCE

Duration: 1 hour
Range: 2

Casting this spell causes your victim to regard everyone suspiciously. Friends, lovers, family, co-workers, you - everyone is perceived as an enemy. For the next hour, the victim will be nervous and paranoid, sure that a threat lurks around every corner. He'll trust no one, and will not part with any kind of personal or valuable information. Every question will sound like an interrogation, and he will refuse to cooperate with anyone. To cast the spell, make a Magic check against the victim's Soul check.

Gameplay: You're pretty sure that he's lying, and that he's going to sell you out the first chance he gets. You need to find a way to keep him from blabbing to the cops, even if only for a couple minutes. So you cast Askance on him, then walk away laughing. By the time the spell wears off, and they're actually able to get some answers out of him, you'll be long gone.

4 . 4 . 7 . _ ASTARTE

Duration: 5 minutes
Range: 2

A victim of this spell becomes utterly enamored with you, and will do almost anything you ask. Though the victim will not commit harm to himself, or others, he'll gladly perform simple and reasonable tasks, regardless of other obligations. For five minutes, your victim will obey commands without question. After that, he'll return to normal, and the relationship between the two of you will revert to whatever it was before the spell was cast (bitter enemies, total strangers, et cetera). To cast the spell, make a Magic check against the victim's Soul check.

Gameplay: You need to talk to his daughter, but he's convinced that she's on drugs. That would be nice, compared to the truth, but you're not sure how to tell him that she's possessed.

If you did tell him, he'd probably try to kill you. He looks mad as hell, and he's inches from blowing up in your face. You cast *Astarte* on him and ask if you could talk to her for just a few minutes. He claps you on the shoulder and grins. No problem, buddy, he says. You have five minutes. Time to move.

4.4.8. BARRICADE

Duration: 12 rounds (1 minute)

Range: 2

This spell causes a wall of invisible force to appear. The wall, which is ten feet high and ten feet wide, will not be visible to the naked eye. If there are impediments, such as an aperture less than ten feet wide or high, the barrier will shape itself to fit as necessary (though it will never exceed ten feet in length or width). Once cast, the barricade will not change shape. The barrier acts like armor with a rating of 9. If it is not destroyed, the spell will last for 1 minute.

Gameplay: There's twenty, maybe thirty of them. Someone must have tipped them off. Time to get the hell out of town, but with a bullet in your leg, you're not getting far. You whirl around and fling a Barricade up at the far end of the alley. A second later, they all pile right into it, slamming into one another as they hit the invisible wall. That should buy you enough time to get to the van.

4.4.9. BÊTE NOIR

Duration: Immediate

Range: 2

Casting this spell permits you to learn a secret kept by the victim. Without her knowledge, you will suddenly become aware of something that she is trying to keep hidden. This can include computer passwords, locations, names, or any other kind of information that the victim would not willingly divulge. To cast the spell, make a Magic check against the victim's Soul check. The Director will tell you what secret information you've gleaned.

Gameplay: Watkins smiles mirthlessly and pushes a button on her desk. The smile vanishes and she says that security will be dragging you out of the building in about thirty seconds. You don't want to fight these guys. They're just working people, trying to put food on the table. Instead, you cast *Bête Noir* on Watkins. Instantly, you know what she'd never admit: her husband's body is at the bottom of the lake, in the trunk of a stolen car. She'll pay. But for now, you just shrug and walk out of the room.

4.4.10. BILE

Duration: 4 rounds (20 seconds)

Range: 2

When this spell is cast, you vomit up great wads of stinging acid and blood. The vomitus can blind and disorient opponents. To cast this spell, make a Magic check against the victim's Defend roll. If successful, the wad of bile and gore successfully disorients and blinds its victim, causing him to lose 2 dice on all successive actions for the next 4 rounds (20 seconds).

Gameplay: There's three of them, and one's holding a shotgun. Time to even it up a bit. You suck in a great breath, feel your eyes start to burn, and then you puke up a hot flood of crimson and black. It takes a second for the stinging to set in, but when it does, the guy with the shotgun starts to scream and claw at his face. You're not exactly surprised when the other two start running.

4.4.11. BRACERS

Duration: 3 rounds (15 seconds)

Range: 1

Mystic green fire coils around your forearms, allowing you to deflect physical attacks. For the next three rounds, you can boost your Defend score by dropping your Attack score. For every point of Attack score that you give up, you gain two dice for your Defend rolls. This is something you must decide when casting the spell.



For example, if you have an Attack score of 3 and a Defend Score of 3, then you could give up a die of Attack and have an Attack score of 2 and a Defend score of 5. Or, you could have an Attack score of 1 and a Defend score of 7. These numbers are fixed for the duration of the spell, but you can choose to distribute dice differently each time the spell is cast.

Gameplay: The demon's coming right at you. You're not much of a fighter, and the backup isn't here yet. You cast Bracers and start backpedaling as it slashes at you with its talons. Its attack bounces off the swirling green flames that crackles along your arms. You've bought yourself another few seconds. Now what?

4.4.12. BURGEON

Duration: Immediate
Range: 1

When this spell is cast, you temporarily become smarter, faster, more likable, wiser, tougher, and more dangerous. For five seconds, you're superlative in every way. The round after you cast this, add 6 dice to your next roll, regardless of whether it's a skill check, attribute check, or combat. As usual, there's a 12-die maximum. After that, you return to normal, with no side effect other than a slight headache.

Gameplay: Jesus. So many damn buttons. Computers aren't really your strong point. Hell, you've got problems setting the timer on the VCR, for fuck's sake. You clear your mind and cast Surgeon. You open your eyes and start typing. Two mouseclicks later, you're looking at the evidence that they wanted suppressed. Perfect. You hit the Print button before it wears off and you're just another idiot again.

4.4.13. CACOPHONY

Duration: 3 rounds (15 seconds)
Range: 2

When this spell is cast, a deafening clanging sound erupts from your mouth, stunning all those within

twenty feet (except your allies, who only hear you yelling). For the next 3 rounds, all those affected by the spell lose 2 dice on any rolls made. This includes skill checks, attribute checks, and combat. To cast this spell, make a Magic check against the victims' Soul checks. This will require the Director to roll once for everyone in range, or he may opt to use another method for large crowds.

Gameplay: Six -- no, seven cops, surrounding you, screaming for you to drop the gun. They don't realize that Harless isn't human; to them, he looks like any other middle-aged drone in a cheap suit. But you can see what he really is, and if you let him get away this time, there's no telling how many people he'll kill before you catch him again. You throw your head back and scream, and they hit the ground writhing. Harless bares his fangs and tears down an alley. You follow.

4.4.14. CALIBAN

Duration: 12 rounds (1 minute)
Range: 2

The victim of this spell will suddenly perceive another person (selected by you) to be hideous and repulsive, and will do anything to avoid him. No matter what the relationship between the two people might be, when the spell is cast, the victim will see the other person as disgusting and fearsome, and will refuse to talk to him or remain in his presence. If forced to remain in the other person's company, the victim will become hysterical, possibly even violent. To cast this spell, make a Magic check against the victim's Soul check.

Gameplay: She thinks she's got it all sewn up, but you might just have an ace up your sleeve. You silently cast Caliban on Henderson. Slowly, he straightens up and looks at her. You can see the loathing in his eyes, and it's obvious that she sees it, too. They both dive for the pistol at the same time, and you start tugging at the ropes in earnest. One of them's going to kill the other, and you better be out the door when it happens.





4.4.15. _CANCER

Duration: 4 rounds (20 seconds)

Range: I

This spell causes your hands to transform into massive claws, like those of a crab. For the duration of the spell, you will be unable to drive, open doors, or hold a flashlight. However, you will receive an extra die for all attacks made with the claws, which inflict damage +4. After 20 seconds, your hands return to normal.

Gameplay: The tall one brings the baseball bat down, hard, and you see stars. Holy shit. You can't tell if you're looking at the ground, or a wall. Everything's moving way too fast. You close your eyes and cast Cancer. When you open them, you're staring at two vast black lobster claws. You click them open and shut a couple of times, to get a feel for it, and you stand up. Slowly. Grinning. Time for some fucking payback.

4.4.16. _CAPANEUS

Duration: 3 rounds (15 seconds)

Range: I

When this spell is cast, you become utterly proficient with whatever weapon you happen to be holding. For the next 15 seconds, you gain two dice whenever attacking or defending with the weapon at hand. These dice are added to any existing bonuses, but only two dice will be added per round. If you're separated from your weapon, the bonus does not apply until you wield the weapon again. However, if you hold the weapon, but don't use it in the attack (for instance, you kick someone while holding a sword), the bonus still applies. If the spell is cast, but you aren't holding a weapon, the bonus doesn't kick in until a weapon is acquired (and if the three rounds elapse before you can procure a weapon, then the spell is over and too bad).

Gameplay: It's a shovel, but what the hell. You cast Capaneus and spin it in your hands like a kung fu master. The first one comes running at you with a katana, and you flick the head of the shovel into his abdomen, then sweep his legs out from under him. The second one draws a pistol. Hmm. This might be tricky.

4.4.17. CARAPACE

Duration: 12 rounds (1 minute)

Range: 1

When you cast this spell, blood begins to seep from your pores, then solidifies outside your clothing to form dark red armor. The shape that the armor takes is entirely up to the you. The crimson armor grants you an extra die when defending against physical attacks, and two extra dice when defending against magical attacks. The armor is weightless, but solid to the touch.

Gameplay: The skell turns to you, red foam dripping from his teeth. His eyes are jet black, and he's holding a pair of steak knives. Right. You cast Carapace, and wince as the blood leaks out through your skin. It coalesces into a suit of blood-red plate armor, and you draw your sword. Sir Hemophiliac battles with the demon. Yeah.

4.4.18. CARNATION

Duration: 12 rounds (1 minute)

Range: 3

When this spell is cast, a blood-colored cloud emanates from your mouth and floats towards a wounded ally. The cloud envelops the target, obscuring her, and begins to heal her injuries. Between 1 and 9 points of Life may be restored, but you sustain injury as a result. As you cast the spell, welts and bruises appear on your face and arms. The cloud is slightly larger than a person, and is opaque. It will not stray from its course, regardless of wind or obstacles. It can move in any direction, at a rate of 20 feet per round (5 seconds). It can move through fences and around physical objects, but cannot pass through solid objects. It can seep through cracks in a window, but if the window is sealed tight, and undamaged, the red mist cannot pass through.

LIFE RESTORED (TARGET)	DAMAGE SUSTAINED (CASTER)
1-3	1
4-6	2
7-9	3

Gameplay: Cat's down. She took three hits to the chest, then hit the ground. The demon tore off into the sewers, but you can't leave your partner behind. You kneel beside her and breathe a cloud of dark red mist over her mangled body. Her wounds close up, and begin to sizzle a bit. You feel it break out over your face like sudden sunburn, but it's the kind of pain you can ignore. The important thing is, Cat's eyes open and she spits up a huge wad of blood. Now where the hell did it go?

4.4.19._CHAR

Duration: Immediate.

Range: 3

The use of this spell renders inanimate objects brittle and useless. By casting this spell, you surround a small object with a glowing sphere that fades away, leaving the object blackened, fragile, and useless. Picking the object up will cause it to crumble and disintegrate into ash. The spell has a range of fifty feet, and can affect an area up to 3 feet in diameter (the maximum size of the glowing sphere). Guns, grenades, steering wheels, and communication equipment will all be destroyed by this spell, but living tissue is not affected (thus, the spell cannot directly harm a person or animal).

Gameplay: You're feeling about as heroic as a used codpiece right about now. How Borenko and his thugs got the drop on you, you're not sure. But they're protecting the demon, and that's all the justification you need for what you're about to do. You cast Char on Borenko's gun, and as it flakes away in his hand like a fistful of dust, you whip out the nunchaku. Time to fuck shit up.

4.4.20._CHELA

Duration: 3 rounds (15 seconds)

Range: 1

When this spell is cast, one of your hands becomes a massive claw, like that of a lobster. The claw is bright and silvery, and it is intangible. If it makes contact with a person, it will pass through them, but each time it does so, it drains a point of Strength. The effects are cumulative, however, and the spell lasts for three rounds, which means that a total of three points of Strength can be subtracted from an enemy in rapid succession. If the victim reaches 0, then he or she loses consciousness, and will not awaken for approximately 24 hours. Strength is regained at a rate of one point per day.

Gameplay: You don't want to hurt him, but you can't just sit there and let him shoot you, either. You cast Chela and lunge at him, burying the spectral claw in his gut. He screams as you stab him again, and his eyes roll back in his head. He slumps to the ground. Well, it's probably for the best. You don't need him interfering with what's going to happen next.

4.4.21._CHELICERAE

Duration: 2 rounds (10 seconds)

Range: 1

This spell causes a monstrous pair of four-foot mandibles, like those of a gigantic insect, to erupt from your torso. The mandibles inflict a great deal of pain, and you sustain a point of damage for casting the spell, but they inflict worse damage on your enemies. When you attack with the chitinous jaws, add 2 to your Attack score, and 2 to the damage you inflict. The jaws pretty much shred whatever clothing you might be wearing, but when the spell is over, they retract into your abdomen, leaving no scar.

Gameplay: You pull the trigger until you hear nothing but dry, impotent clicks. No more ammo, no more time -- the thing's on top of you, and you can feel its hot breath on your face as its numerous jaws gape wide. You grit your teeth and cast Chelicerae. A second later, agony tears through your bowels as the mandibles rip out of your stomach, snapping hungrily while the blood streams down your legs, into your socks.

4.4.22._CHIAROSCURO

Duration: 5 minutes

Range: 3

When you cast this spell, all the color in the world fades out, leaving behind nothing but high-contrast black-and-white. No one but the caster can see this. One person (it must be a human) in the world becomes bright red, and is visible for a distance of up to one mile. The caster can see this person through people, walls, or any other object for the duration of the spell. The caster's vision otherwise works as normal: if the person is far away, he will appear as a tiny red light on the horizon. If the person is close enough, then the caster will be able to see what the person is wearing or doing. The spell's target must be someone that the caster has met face-to-face, and the caster must know his name. When the spell wears off, the monochrome fades to reality, and the target ceases to glow red.

Gameplay: Spinning around, you scan the shopping mall. She's gone. Could be anywhere. Hell, she could have left the mall by now. But she's a ticking time bomb, with that demon inside of her. Got to perform the exorcism by sundown. You cast Chiaroscuro, and the world fades to grey. However, you see a single figure, burning crimson, out in the parking lot. It looks like she might be getting into a car. You radio Civet and give her the news. You sprint for the escalator, hoping to at least get outside before the spell wears off.

4.4.23. COGNITO

Duration: 12 rounds (1 minute)

Range: 1

When you cast this spell, you immediately become a familiar (and friendly) face to anyone who sees you. Anyone who looks at you will recognize you as a friend, family member, business associate, or old schoolmate -- whatever the case, they will respond accordingly. There's no way to know what they see, short of engaging them in conversation. There are two complications. First, if anyone sees you cast the spell, they'll see your face transform into someone else's. Second, if you cast the spell and walk into a room with two or more people, then each will see you as someone different.

Gameplay: You back out, hands raised. Giacomo's boys keep their guns trained on you until you're around the corner. You cast Cognito and step back around. "Who was that asshole tearing down the street?" you ask. Their faces light up. Okay, you think. So who am I?

4.4.24. CONFESSION

Duration: 2 rounds (10 seconds)

Range: 2

Casting this spell on your victim causes him to spill his guts immediately, answering any question you ask him, confessing to everything he's done without hesitating. When the spell wears off, he may hate you or even attack you, but for that 10 seconds, he'll tell you anything you want to know. A victim of this spell can't lie or keep quiet -- if you want to know, he has to tell you. Unlike Bête Noir, this spell isn't cast without the victim's knowledge: he knows that something has been done to him, and he'll react accordingly. He might think that you've drugged him, or that you've hypnotized him, but he'll definitely realize that you made him say things he didn't want said. To cast the spell, make a Magic check against the victim's Soul check.

Gameplay: He smiles for the cameras and raises a hand. The reporters all get quiet. The disguise is working like a charm: he looks right at you and doesn't even blink. He starts to talk, and you cast Confession on him. He frowns for just a second, and hesitates, so you ask him what he did with his daughter's bloody nightgown. Everybody turns and stares, shocked into absolute fucking silence, but he starts talking, and their heads whip around. His eyes are wide, and sweat's just pouring down his face. He can't believe what he's saying. Neither can they, but the cameras are rolling, so no one says anything. God damn, it's good to be a Disciple.



4.4.25. _CONFOUND

Duration: 4 rounds (20 seconds)

Range: 2

When you cast this spell on someone, he becomes bewildered and confused, and will be unable to remember what just happened. He'll believe any explanation, and for about 20 seconds, will be extremely impressionable. After that, he'll begin to reassert himself, and will greet any further explanations with skepticism. However, he'll still believe anything that was said during those first few seconds.

Gameplay: Right after you deck the cop, you cast confound on him. Immediately, you're on top of him, asking him if he's okay. You point to the open door and tell him the guy who hit him just ran out of the room. For kicks, you give him Borenko's description, and the cop's out the door like a bullet from a gun. You look around the evidence room. Lots of drugs, lots of guns. But you're after a dead man's notebook. It's got to be in here somewhere. Time to start searching.

4.4.26. _CREPUSCULUS

Duration: 2 rounds (10 seconds)

Range: 1

When this spell is cast, a demonic shadow rises from the ground. The crepusculus attacks anyone who threatens or attacks you, unless you direct it to be still. It's not capable of making decisions for itself, and basically has two modes: standing still, and attacking. In combat, the Crepusculus attacks with its tentacles and fangs. Its Attack score is equal to your Soul, but its other Attributes are all at 1. It inflicts a damage bonus of 1.

Gameplay: The wild dogs start barking and whining, circling you as your torch slowly burns down. This would be an extremely stupid way to die: in a cave, in the middle of nowhere, with a busted leg and no weapons, eaten by mangy strays. You cast Crepusculus, and the shadow tears itself out of the darkness and dives into the midst of the dogs. Soon enough, they're whining in pain, beaten into retreat by your dark bodyguard. Now, how to get the hell out of here?

4.4.27. _CULEBRA

Duration: 3 rounds (15 seconds)

Range: 1

When this spell is cast, your left hand transforms into the head of a snake. You gain an Attack bonus of 1, and a successful attack means that it has bitten a target, inflicting a damage bonus of 2. The victim takes an additional point of damage the following round, from the snake's poisonous venom. After 3 rounds, the snake turns back into a normal hand.

Gameplay: Diego cracks his knuckles, says he doesn't have to tell you shit. Looks like he's ready for a fight. You don't have time. You cast Culebra, and you watch his eyes widen as your fingers blur into a cobra's hood, and fangs and eyes slide out of your palm. Suddenly, your arm ends in a hissing serpent's head. Diego stares, speechless, and slowly puts his hands up in front of him, backing away.

4.4.28. _DENIAL

Duration: 3 rounds (15 seconds)

Range: 1

When this spell is cast, you become immune to all magic and supernatural effects. This spell lasts for 15 seconds, after which you'll make rolls as normal. This protection includes spells cast by other humans, as well as the magical attacks of Angels and Demons.

Gameplay: The demon turns to you and speaks in a voice like a thousand children screaming. You can't understand a word, but waves of red energy are rippling towards you, blasting furniture into splinters and crushing the floorboards as they advance. The blast flings you across the room, and you crash into a bookcase, flinging paperbacks everywhere. There's a glowing sphere in the demon's hand, and it's grinning. Fuck. You cast Denial and hope it's enough.

4.4.29. DIABLERIE

Duration: 12 rounds (1 minute)

Range: 2

When this spell is cast, demonic apparitions appear to attack anyone within thirty feet of you. The victims are convinced that the demons are real, and they will run for cover or collapse on the ground in terror. The demons are just a distraction, however; for the duration of the spell, the victims' Strength scores are reduced to 1. To cast this spell, you must make a Magic check against the Soul score of each victim. If there are too many victims to keep track of, your Director may opt to make a single roll for the entire crowd, or divide the crowd into groups (cops, civilians, et cetera).

Gameplay: There's maybe three minutes left before the bomb goes off. You're screaming at the top of your lungs, but with all the noise, no one is listening. There's more than one way to clear the room, though. You cast Diablerie on the crowd, and for a second, there's no sound. Then, they all start flipping out, running and screaming from their nonexistent tormentors. In seconds, the room's empty. Great. Now, if you were a bomb, where would you be?

4.4.30. DISCERN

Duration: Immediate

Range: 2

With this spell, you can see the secret nature of a person. You can detect drug use, suicidal urges, or the presence of a supernatural presence. If the victim is possessed by a demon, or haunted, or or being stalked by a dark entity, this spell will reveal it to you. You'll see all of this in the form of shimmering images, like still photos, in the air behind the spell's target. To cast this spell, make a Magic check against the victim's Soul check.

Gameplay: The boy hasn't seen you yet. His mother's sitting on the bench next to him, reading a paperback. No way you're going to just walk up to them and ask if their house is haunted.

Fucking out of the question. But there's one way to get a feel for the situation. You cast Discern on the boy, figuring he'd make a more attractive target for a demon. Your hunch pays off. Hovering behind him, there's a monstrous shape, a thing with long white talons and red eyes. Bingo.

4.4.31. DRESDEN

Duration: 1 round (5 seconds)

Range: 2

This spell causes the distilled horror of the Dresden firestorm to sweep through a radius of 30 feet around you. It will not affect you (or your allies), but for everyone else, it's 1945, and the streets of Dresden are burning. The victims are overcome by hallucinations: charred bodies, screaming children, smoke, and columns of raging flame surround them, and the only sound is the rumble of conflagration. Bombers roar overhead, and broken glass erupts from crushed buildings. The victims take 2 points of damage from the spell. Furthermore, they are unable to act for that round, and the following round, they will be the last to act. To cast this spell, make a Magic check against the victims' Soul checks.

4.4.32. DURESS

Duration: 1 round (5 seconds)

Range: 2

When you cast this spell on a demon, it recoils in pain, and is unable to attack for 5 seconds. During that time, it must answer any question you ask. If the demon is attacked, or if another spell is cast upon it, then the spell is broken, and the demon will be able to move (and attack) again. In this case, the demon will automatically get to attack the caster, regardless of whose turn it is. Note that the demon will try to give indirect answers, but cannot lie, and when confronted with a yes/no question, must choose yes or no. When the spell wears off, the demon will probably come after the caster with a vengeance. To cast this spell, make a Magic check against the demon's Soul check.



Gameplay: The demon unfurls itself and ripples towards you in the darkness; you feel the cold emanate from it, like November wind. Heart pounding, you cast Duress on it, and it freezes in mid-air. "Where is Jane Cotler?" you ask. A few seconds later, you hear it hiss, "In the woods south of Edgemoor Lake." Damn. She's probably dead. Still, you've got worse things to worry about. For instance, the spell's about to wear off.

4.4.33. ELOIGN

Duration: Immediate
Range: 3

When this spell is cast, you commence an attack, disappear in a flash of brilliant light, then appear behind an opponent in mid-strike. Regardless of the position of the opponent with regard to you (three stories up, underground, around a corner), if you are within 100 feet of each other, the spell is successful. If the opponent's back is to a wall, then you'll appear directly in front of the victim. If the opponent is over 100 feet away, or if there's simply no place for you to reappear, then the spell has no effect.

Gameplay: He's up there, taking aim. That sniper rifle will tear Cavanaugh's head clean off his shoulders if you don't do something. You start to swing the baseball bat, and then you cast Eloign. Suddenly you're on the rooftop with the sniper, and the bat is crashing into his skull. Booya.

4.4.34. EMEUTE

Duration: 2 rounds (10 seconds)
Range: 2

When this spell is cast, victims see apparitions of ghouls and skeletons rising from the earth. Guillotines are erected, and tearful nobles are decapitated while a bloody crowd cheers. The nobles, the bloodthirsty masses, all are in various stages of decay, and all are spattered liberally with gore. All those within 30 feet (except you and your allies) are confronted with these spectres, and are terrified and weakened by the visions. Victims' Strength scores are reduced to 1 for the next two rounds, and the victims all drop whatever they were holding at the time. To cast this spell, make a Magic check against the victims' Soul checks.

Gameplay: The hotel desk clerk sucks on a tooth and stares at you. Then he says, for the fourth time, that it's simply not possible, so sorry, sir. Sighing, you put the fifty back in your wallet. Fuck this. You shrug and smile and cast Emeute. For a second, the clerk continues to smile blandly. Then his eyes widen and his head whips back and forth wildly (presumably reacting to a screaming crowd of undead peasants, shaking their fists at some doomed Marquis). He jumps one way, then then another, then runs out into the lobby, screaming and dodging invisible assailants. During all the chaos and commotion, you lean over the counter, grab a blank keycard, jab it in the activator, punch 403, then walk away whistling. Next stop, fourth floor.

4.4.35. _ENERGUMEN

Duration: 3 rounds (15 seconds)

Range: 1

This spell energizes you, augmenting your speed and reflexes. Your movements are a blur, and your body seems to vibrate. Conversation is difficult, as you appear manic and unfocused. You won't make much sense, and it'll be hard to figure things out. However, you'll be able to beat the living shit out of people and you can jump twelve feet straight up. For the next 15 seconds, your Strength score will be 7. However, your Sense and Soul Scores will both drop to 1. All scores will return to normal after the spell wears off.

Gameplay: The girl takes off running. In seconds, the forest has swallowed her up. Normally, with your bum leg and a bullet in your shoulder, you wouldn't be up for it, but you cast Energumen on yourself, and it's like someone poured gasoline into your heart and tossed a match after it. You're moving before you even think about it, sprinting through the woods, hopping over fallen logs, barely breaking a sweat. In seconds, you've caught up to her. She spins around and throws a handful of shuriken at you. You manage to catch two and dodge the rest. Her eyes widen and she starts running again. No problem.

4.4.36. _EXCORIATE

Duration: Immediate

Range: 3

When this spell is cast, your victim is suddenly engulfed in a cloud of splinters and chunks of wood. These begin to whirl around him in an ever-accelerating vortex, shredding skin and fabric. Make a Magic check against the victim's Defend check, and if you're successful, the spell inflicts damage equal to the difference between the two. The victim must be within 50 feet of you.

Gameplay: You hit the ground hard, grimace, and get up slow. Damn. You can see Travis pounding down the alley. He's got your revolver, and there's no point trying to chase him. You cast Excoriate and start limping after him. He managed to get around the corner, but you follow the screams. Sure enough, there he is, face-down in a pile of shredded Armani.

4.4.37. _FORTRESS

Duration: 3 rounds (15 seconds)

Range: 1

While this spell is in effect, you are an impregnable fortress. You block punches, kicks, arrows, blades, bullets, and magic with ease. Your hands blaze like torches, and you weave in and out of combat, dodging and deflecting. For fifteen seconds, your Defend score is 8 against any type of attack, be it physical or magical. However, you are utterly incapable of attacking. If you attack, the spell is cancelled.

Gameplay: The cultists surround you, ceremonial daggers clenched in their trembling hands. You interrupted their ritual, and they're going to open up a forty-ounce of whoopass on you. Taking a breath, you cast Fortress and wade into battle. Your hands burst into flame as you whirl through them, ducking and parrying. You just need to hold them off until the cavalry arrives.

4.4.38. _FROSTBITE

Duration: Immediate

Range: 3

A blast of icy wind strikes your target, paralyzing him completely. The victim loses a point of Strength, falls to the ground, and loses consciousness for ten seconds. The blast of wind can move around corners, and through walls. To cast this spell, make a Magic check against the victim's Soul check.

Gameplay: Chang dives into the side of the van, and pulls the door shut behind her. They peel out of the parking lot, and they're gone. You cast Frostbite on the driver and start running. At the stoplight, you see the van, front end wrapped around an elm tree in somebody's front yard. When the spell hit, the driver must have let go of the steering wheel. Chang staggers out, face bloody, hands in the air.

4.4.39. GAUNT

Duration: 2 rounds (10 seconds)

Range: 1

When this spell is cast, the character is able to walk through solid objects, including people, vehicles, and walls. The Disciple can also climb or descend through solid matter. However, when the spell expires, if the Disciple is still moving, he will be forced back to his starting position, and his Injury score will be kicked up to 11. When the spell is cast, great quantities of blood spray from the caster's nose. His skin tightens and turns a greyish-blue, giving him a cadaverous appearance. The intangibility does not extend to clothing or other objects carried by the caster, so these will simply drop through him when the spell is cast.

Gameplay: The teller shakes his head. There's no way in, he says, not without the bank manager. You shake your head. Can't wait any longer, those people locked inside could be dead already. Damn, this job sucks. You cast Gaunt, and your clothing hits the floor, along with about a pint of bright red blood that leaves long red streaks down your chin and neck. She screams and backs away from you. You're tempted to say "Fresh brains for the master" in a thick Transylvanian accent, but fuck it, you're on a schedule here. Ten seconds to get into the vault. Naked. Damn it.

4.4.40. GIRD

Duration: 3 rounds (15 seconds)

Range: 1

When you cast this spell, great blades of stone appear in your hands. For 15 seconds, they will allow you to defend against attackers and repel sorcery. While holding the blades, your Defend score goes up by one. In addition, you get to roll an extra two dice when defending against magical attacks. The blades function as normal swords with a damage bonus of 1. However, though they are nearly weightless to you, if someone else tries to pick them up, they weigh over 100 pounds apiece.

Gameplay: The demon's face splits open, revealing a mass of gelatinous crimson tissue. As it begins to glow, you cast Gird, and two gigantic stone longswords appear in your hand. You spin them, one at a time, to get a feel for them. Hopefully, they can help take the brunt long enough for the guys to get down here and bail you out. One way to find out.

4.4.41. GLOSSOLALIA

Duration: Immediate

Range: 2

When you cast this spell, your tongue snakes out of your mouth like a tentacle, and wraps itself around the throat of the victim. Then it snaps back into your mouth, and for the next minute, your victim is unable to speak, and you can talk with his or her voice. To someone on the telephone, or over an intercom, you sound exactly like your victim.

Gameplay: She's on the phone with the priest. Perfect. She hasn't seen you yet, so you cast Glossolalia. Your tongue, suddenly long and greyish, whips around her throat and then snaps back in your mouth. She sees the gun in your hand and tries to scream, but nothing comes out. You snatch the phone from her hand and wave her over to the couch. "Father Callahan?" you say in her voice. "Sorry, I was getting bad reception, had to move to the other side of the room. What were you saying?" Perfect. With any luck, you'll figure out how he's involved in this.

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4.4.42. HEMOPHAGE

Duration: 2 minutes

Range: 2

Casting this spell creates dozens of foot-long leeches, white and eyeless, that crawl over the victim's body, draining blood and strength. The victim loses consciousness briefly (2 minutes), and wakes up with no memory of what happened. To cast this spell, make a Magic check against your victim's Soul check.

Gameplay: The cop points his pistol at you and yells something. You're not sure what. No point in paying attention, really. You cast Hemophage on him, and watch as he writhes around for a few seconds. Finally, his eyes roll up into his head and he hits the ground. You walk over, put his own cuffs on him, and walk into the house.

4.4.43. INFERNO

Duration: Immediate

Range: 1

This spell causes great walls of flame to converge on the victim, burning flesh, clothing, and possessions. The Disciple must be extremely close to the victim in order to cast the spell, and therefore takes 3 points of damage. To cast this spell, make a Magic check against the victim's Strength check. If you succeed, the damage inflicted is equal to twice the difference between your roll and the victim's roll.

Gameplay: You watch your gun tumble through the air until it splashes into the river. You turn back to Darcy, who adjusts his spectacles and gestures towards the bridge with his revolver. You let him get close, then cast Inferno on him. While he's flailing around on the ground, screaming, you look around for something to use to beat out the fire. After all, you don't want him dead. Not until he's answered a few questions.

4.4.44. JADE

Duration: 2 rounds (10 seconds)

Range: 1

One of your hands becomes a long, shimmering blade of translucent jade after this spell is cast. The blade emanates a pale green light, and is weightless. Though it is incorporeal, and inflicts no physical damage, any successful hit with the blade will temporarily paralyze a human opponent for ten seconds (2 rounds). The victim will be unable to move, speak, or cast spells, but will see and hear everything as normal. The spell lasts for two rounds, so it's possible that you can paralyze two enemies before your hand returns to normal. To strike an enemy, make a Magic check against the victim's Defend check.

Gameplay: The federal agents go for their guns. You cast Jade and ram the sword through one's throat, and the other starts shooting. You spin around and slash at him, nicking his forearm. Both agents stand there, frozen. You start running. Five-second head start. Probably not worth much.

4.4.45. LEVIATHAN

Duration: 2 minutes

Range: 2

When you cast this spell on a victim, he sees you as a monster with fangs and claws, a dark beast with black wings and burning red eyes. To everyone else, you look perfectly normal, but to your victim, you appear as a horrifying demon. To cast this spell, make a Magic check against the victim's Soul check.

Gameplay: The cultist stares at you for several seconds. "Are you with the Black Cross?" he asks. You cast Leviathan on yourself, and grin at him. As you lean in close, his eyes widen and he looks around the restaurant, horrified. No one else does anything. He blinks several times, rapidly, then puts his hands together. "Master," he says. You tell him to shut up and listen. Inside, you're laughing. This is great. He'll tell his idiot friends that you're a demon, and they'll believe every word you tell them. Priceless.

4.4.46. LEVIN

Duration: Immediate
Range: 2

This spell causes great arcs of lightning to converge on the victim, draining his Soul score. When casting the spell, make a Magic check against the victim's Soul check. If successful, the victim loses Soul points equal to the difference. If a victim's Soul score drops to zero, he or she becomes utterly catatonic. Any Soul points lost when this spell is cast will be restored within 30 seconds (6 rounds).

Gameplay: He makes a fist and brings it down on the concrete. Everything shakes, and you hit the ground. Mercy cries out as a bookshelf lands on her, and the guy gets up and strides towards her, fists glowing. You cast Levin, and bolts of blue electricity light the guy up like a Christmas tree. He drops to the ground and sits there, cross-legged and drooling. Okay. Now, is Mercy dead or what?

4.4.47. MALISON

Duration: Immediate
Range: 2

When you cast this spell, your words cause damage to demons. Any demon within 20 feet of you suddenly sports grotesque wounds and sustains Injury when you speak. To cast this spell, make a Magic check against the demon's Soul check. If successful, the damage inflicted is equal to the difference between the two scores.

Gameplay: The demon slithers towards you, mouths gaping, eyes blazing. You cast Malison and scream at the top of your lungs. The demon's heads snap back, and bloody lesions suddenly cover its abdomen and legs. It roars in pain, but doesn't advance; it's wary now. Decision time: dive out the window and drop three stories, or try to get to the shotgun before this thing tears you to shreds?

4.4.48. MALVADO

Duration: 12 rounds (1 minute)
Range: 1

This spell causes you to grow thick spikes of bone all over your body. The spell is painful, but you sustain no damage. The spikes will, however, inflict 1 point of damage to anyone who touches or strikes you. If you attack someone with your bare hands, then you inflict damage +2.

Gameplay: The first one stabs Kelly in the back. She spins around and kicks him in the gut, but two more dive on top of her. You want to help her out, but you've got your own problems: one of them grabs you in a headlock, and the other whips out a switchblade. You cast Malvado, and long spines erupt from your back, arms, shoulders, face, and legs. The guy behind you screams and steps backwards, drenched in his own blood. Without turning around, you elbow him in the throat. He goes down. The guy with the switchblade takes one look at you and starts running.

4.4.49. MISERERE

Duration: 2 rounds (10 seconds)
Range: 2

When you cast this spell, red rain falls from a height of roughly 50 feet, affecting anyone within 30 feet of you. The effect is brief (10 seconds), but during that time, the victims become weak and confused, their Strength and Sense scores dropping to 1. The rain is an illusion, and those standing in it do not actually become wet.

Gameplay: The firemen are pounding up the stairs. They'll be here any minute now. You can't expose them to this, so you cast Miserere. A second later, bloody rain's pouring down, and they're all staring at it, bewildered. The first one pitches forward, suddenly, and the guy behind him picks him up, slings him over his shoulder. They can't decide if it's a bizarre glitch in the sprinkler system or what, but you can tell that they're all suddenly feeling sick. Slowly, they start to back down the stairs. Excellent.

4.4.50. _MOLoch

Duration: 12 rounds (1 minute)

Range: 1

When this spell is cast, you become covered in a thin sheen of shimmering flame. Spreading over your body like a glowing oilslick, the liquid flame emits light, but no heat. Instead, it provides protection; while active, it absorbs the brunt of impact, subtracting 2 points from any damage you sustain. This armor lasts for 1 minutes (12 rounds), or until it absorbs 10 points of damage.

Gameplay: They open fire. You cast Moloch, and grin as their eyes widen. Then, you sprint to the other side of the rooftop. A bullet clips your bicep, but you hardly notice. The spell took most of the impact out of it. You dive off the edge of the rooftop and crash into a dumpster. Lucky for you those bottles broke your fall. Picking bits of broken glass out of your chest, you stumble down the alley.

4.4.51. _MUTE

Duration: 12 rounds (1 minute)

Range: 2

When cast, this spell causes absolute silence in a sphere around you. Wherever you go, for the next minute, there will be no sound whatsoever within 20 feet of you. However, you won't be able to hear anything either. The spell lasts for 1 minute, or until cancelled by the caster.

Gameplay: You don't want to attract any attention, but you need to get inside that morgue. You cast Mute on yourself and motion to the others to wait. You walk around the corner. Coast is clear. You sprint into the room, fumbling for the scrap of paper in your pocket. Arthur Joiner, # 233. You run your fingertips along the cold steel drawers until you find it. 233. Grab the handle, swing the door open, yank out the drawer. Should have been noisy as hell, but it's completely silent. Creepy. You unzip the black body bag, and wince at the smell. You take out your switchblade and make a single incision across his abdomen. Here goes nothing.

4.4.52. _NACREOUS

Duration: 6 rounds (30 seconds)

Range: 1

When this spell is cast, iridescent scales cover your body, and your skin becomes the color of mother-of-pearl. These scales are soft to the touch, but they absorb kinetic energy, dulling the impact of physical attacks. During combat, your Defend score goes up by 1, and if an enemy attacks you unsuccessfully, you automatically turn the force back on the attacker, inflicting a point of Injury. This spell is not effective against projectile weapons or magic.

Gameplay: The psycho smashes at you with the hammer. Arms windmilling, you lose your balance and go down. You cast Nacreous and bounce to your feet, shimmering scales covering your skin. He swings the hammer again, and you sidestep it, then drive the edge of your palm into his throat, pushing him back.

4.4.53. NEPHILIM

Duration: Immediate / 4 rounds (20 seconds)
Range: 1

When this spell is cast, a pair of vast black bat wings erupt from the Disciple's back, accompanied by a pair of ram's horns and fangs. For twenty seconds, the Disciple can fly fast enough to keep up with a car, or fast enough to catch someone falling from a great height. In addition, the Disciple can dive-bomb opponents, gaining an extra die to all Attack rolls for the duration of the spell. If the Disciple is still in the air when the spell wears off, then somebody's going sidewalk diving.

Gameplay: Lambencio points the revolver at your head. Behind him, the other cops draw their guns. Twelve stories below you, you can hear sirens, but there's no point in waiting for help to arrive. These bozos are going to start shooting any second now. Unless, of course, you jump. You turn and sprint for the edge of the rooftop, and they open fire. A bullet clips your calf, and another one tears off most of your left ear, but you ignore the pain and hurl yourself off the roof, casting Nephilim as you fall.



4.4.54. NIMROD

Duration: 10 minutes

Range: 3

After casting this spell, you will be able to track prey through any terrain, regardless of the weather or the conditions of the trail. Your target's footprints begin to glow with a pale violet light -- as do your eyes. Regardless of whether the prey was running or walking, wearing shoes or barefoot, you'll be able to pick up the trail. Though no one else will be able to see the prints, to you they'll be visible for several yards ahead, even at night. Before the spell is cast, you must be aware of at least one place where your target has been recently. Standing there, you stare at the ground until the prints appear. A successful Magic check against target difficulty 8 means that the prints are visible.

Gameplay: The witness is long-gone. But you know she was here, at her apartment. You cast Nimrod, and after a few seconds, you can see her footprints, glowing softly. Okay. You all bolt downstairs and pile into the Jeep. For a few minutes, you follow her trail, but it ends at the bus stop on Creedmoor and Glenwood. She was probably heading south, maybe downtown? You run a few red lights on your way downtown. When you get there, you drive around for a minute, hoping to pick up the trail before the spell wears off. Sure enough, you see her glowing footprints heading into the nightclub. Perfect.

4.4.55. NODULE

Duration: Immediate

Range: 2

When this spell is cast, a tumor begins to swell at the base of the Disciple's throat. This fleshy growth stops expanding when it's reached the size of a lemon. When ripped out and thrown, it functions as a flesh grenade, detonating with a loud bang and a flash of blinding light. Victims are stunned and can take no action the following round. The Disciple takes a point of damage, and drips blood all over the place.

Gameplay: They're in the next room. You're outnumbered six to one, and you're out of ammo. No problem. You cast Nodule. A second later, you've got a hideous purple growth bulging from your neck. With a grunt, you rip it off and fling it into the room. A second later, you hear the boom, and light flashes off the walls. You bust in and start swinging the 2x4 with everything you've got.

4.4.56. NOESIS

Duration: 12 rounds (1 minute)

Range: 1

When this spell is cast, the Disciple can absorb the skill of any character he or she touches. The spell lasts for 1 minute, and in that time, the Disciple can absorb as many skills as he wants, provided that he can actually touch the skin of the people in question. The acquired skills are only good for the duration of the spell, and do not include memories or personality.

Gameplay: The door's way too big to bust down, and you have no idea how to pick a lock. A cop walks past you, and you pretend to tie your shoelace. Hmm. A cop would definitely know how to get into the apartment. He's not wearing gloves. Nice. You wait until he's around the corner, then jog after him. You get his attention, then smile and ask if he knows how to get to 3rd Street. Next street over, he says. You thank him, then you thank him for doing a job that not enough people appreciate. You extend your hand. He shakes it with an embarrassed smile and walks off. Clock's ticking. You've got to get back there and jimmy the window open without setting off the alarm. You know how it's done. But that knowledge has an expiration date of one minute.

4.4.57. NYCTALGIC

Duration: 20 minutes

Range: 3

This spell allows you to see in the dark, taking none of the customary penalties for moving in darkness. Upon casting this spell, your eyes develop narrow pupils, like those of a cat. You will be able to see, and to function without penalty, in almost no light (though total darkness will mean that you are effectively blind, and you'll suffer normal penalties). If you're suddenly exposed to a drastic change of light (such as headlights suddenly turned on, blinding everyone else), your eyes respond immediately, and you'll barely notice the difference. While functioning in near-dark, you see the world in sepia-and-white, and you'll be unable to perceive color.

Gameplay: Someone hits the lights, and suddenly, you're surrounded by shadows, all of which seem to be moving. But only one of them really is. He's wearing a set of NV goggles, and since he hit the lightswitch, he's off to the left somewhere. He thinks you're blind, so you have the drop on him. You cast Nyctalgic, then slowly turn your head, just enough to mark his position. You take out the .45 and grin. This is actually going to be fun.

4.4.58. OCTAVE

Duration: Immediate

Range: 3

When you cast this spell, a massive force rises from the ground, flinging anything it touches into the air. This blast of energy is accompanied by a deafening boom. The force causes no actual damage, nor does the sound. But anything lifted into the air is going to be flipped over by an irresistible force, which can have consequences in the case of a fast-moving object or person. If the spell is cast at someone's feet, that person will be flung as high as thirty feet, with applicable damage for falling from that height. A heavier object, such as a vehicle, will effectively spin out of control and crash. Anything within a ten-foot radius of the blast's epicenter will be affected by the spell.

Gameplay: The driver's good, better than yours. You yell at Civet to step on it, but she cuts in front of a cop cruiser and ignores you. Hmm. Things are getting out of control quick. Blue light special in the rear-view, and Plachinski's jag is pulling farther away. Civet gets you close enough to cast Octave. There's a deep, fundamental boom, like a hundred peals of thunder at once, and his jag is flipped up in the air like a toy. It spins once, twice, then crashes hard. Now, you just need to figure out how to get him out of the jag and into your car with all these cops on your tail. No problem, right?



4.4.59 . ORACLE

Duration: Immediate

Range: I

When this spell is cast, you're able to view the possible outcome of events, ten to thirty minutes into the future. The vision is brief, lasting five or six seconds, and is usually nothing more than a series of images. The Director describes the images to you, but may not give you any specific details. You're able to see who is in the visions, unless faces are obscured for some reason, and the locations should also be apparent. This spell can advance the plot of an episode if your Cabal is confused by a situation or mystery. Clues can be inserted in the vision, as can startling information about other characters in the game. To successfully cast Oracle, make a Soul check against target difficulty 8. If the roll is a 12 or higher, you may control the vision somewhat: you'll be able to extend the length by a couple of seconds, and will be able to zoom in or out of the scene, or adjust the point-of-view to illuminate details not immediately available.

Gameplay: You close your eyes and go into the trance. You're in a room with a bed, and there's a medal of some kind in your hand. A military decoration. The sun is coming in through the windows, nearly horizontal rays of light. That means the room is facing west. You're looking for something else, anything that will help contextualize these images. There's a nurse in white, and she's carrying a covered tray. Her name tag says Jen Caldwell. The images fade. Okay, that may just be enough to go on.

4.4.60. ORDAL

Duration: Immediate/special

Range: 3

When this spell is cast, the caster and the victim are trapped inside a 50-foot-diameter sphere of invisible energy. The sphere forms a perfect dome overhead, 50 feet high, and it also extends underground. Nothing outside the sphere can enter, and nothing inside can exit. Any person or living creature caught inside the sphere when the spell is cast will be shunted out by an inexorable force. The sphere will remain in place until one of the two people trapped within is dead. There is no way to reverse the spell once it has been cast.

Gameplay: Destefano killed your friend. You don't have a lot of those. You cast Ordal and look around. A few squirrels get sucked out, as if by hurricane winds. But you and Destefano are both just standing there. He puts up his hand and walks away from you, quickly. Then he hits the wall. You tell him there's no way out. He's got to stay here with you until one of you is dead. Comprehending, he bends down and picks up a tree branch. It's not much of a weapon, but the feds frisked both of you, so it'll have to do. You? You won't need a weapon. You've always been a hands-on kind of guy.

4.4.61. PHANTASMO

Duration: 12 rounds (1 minute)

Range: 1

When you cast this spell on someone, you become invisible (and inaudible) to everyone else. To your victim, however, you look completely normal. You're not intangible or spectral in any way; it's just that no one can hear you or see you except your victim. After a minute, you're visible to everyone again.

Gameplay: You walk right up to Atkinson while he's stuffing his face with pasta. "Hey, fucker," you say pleasantly. He stops a waiter, walking by with a pitcher of water. "Have security escort that man out of here immediately," he says. The kid looks around, and asks what man. Atkinson gets irritated, then realizes that the mayor and the commissioner are both staring at him, puzzled. You lean forward and tell Atkinson that you own his ass, and that you're going to be the one that puts him down. With that, you walk out. You've got maybe six or seven seconds before the spell wears off. But god damn, that was great.

4.4.62. REFUGE

Duration: 9 rounds (45 seconds)

Range: 1

While this spell is in effect, a sphere of glowing energy, 15 feet in diameter, surrounds you. So long as you remain inside the sphere, you are completely immune to any magic. Furthermore, demons and angels are unable to penetrate the sphere physically. However, humans are able to come and go at will. If someone leaves the sphere, it remains active, but if anyone enters the sphere, the spell is immediately cancelled. While in the sphere, you must devote all of your energy to keeping the spell going. If you pause to attack someone, or to use another spell, the sphere collapses. Though demons cannot penetrate the sphere, they are able to hurl projectiles at you, such as bricks and bottles. So long as you remain conscious, however, the spell remains in effect.

Gameplay: You're alone in the house with a Vouzire. No way you're going to survive a head-on attack. You cast Refuge and drop to one knee behind a desk. The Vouzire hurls itself at the sphere over and over again, but can't break through. It starts flinging things at you, howling with rage, but you hunker down and try to stay calm. In less than a minute, the spell's going to wear off. If they can just get here in time, you stand a chance.

4 . 4 . 6 3 . _ S C H A T T E N

Duration: 4 rounds (20 seconds)

Range: 3

Your enemy is attacked by his own shadow when this spell is cast. You momentarily hurl your consciousness into your enemy's shadow, rip it from the earth, and attack with it. For the duration of the spell, your mind is transferred into the spectral entity, and you can use it to attack. The shadow has a Combat score equal to your Magic score, and can sustain up to 6 points of damage before dissipating. When the duration has elapsed, or if the shadow is destroyed, your consciousness returns to your body. If you're disturbed in any way, the spell is disrupted, and will end.

Gameplay: You'll never make it across four lanes in time. He's raising the gun to fire, and you're screaming, but she doesn't hear you. So you cast Schatten and suddenly you're rising up off the ground to strike. You grab his arm, and the gun goes off. She hears it, spins around, then starts running. At least she's clear. He's freaking out, he's got no idea why his own shadow is attacking him. Good. Maybe you can pitch him over the bridge.

4 . 4 . 6 4 . _ S C L E R A

Duration: 6 rounds (30 seconds)

Range: 2

When this spell is cast, your eyes turn deep red, including pupil, iris, and cornea, and you can paralyze a victim with your stare. You must be able to see the victim (but the victim doesn't need to see you), and you must be within 30 feet. To cast the spell, make a Magic check against the victim's Soul check. If successful, the victim is paralyzed for 30 seconds, and will be unable to move or speak. The victim will not necessarily fall over.

Gameplay: You turn and glare at Detective Walton. Casting Sclera, you start to walk towards him. Your eyes are blood-red, and he's suddenly frozen in his seat. You can see the fear on his frozen features, and a dark stain slowly begins to spread across the crotch of his khakis. Maybe now he'll listen to you.

4 . 4 . 6 5 . _ S C O S S A

Duration: 3 rounds (15 seconds)

Range: 1

When this spell is cast, you are able to deliver devastating kicks, capable of knocking anyone unconscious in a single blow. After casting the spell, your eyes turn jet black, and if one looks closely, pale and wispy clouds can be seen, racing along the surface of your eye. For the next three rounds, you can knock your enemies unconscious with a single kick, in addition to normal damage sustained. To attack, roll a Magic check against the target's Soul check. The victim will regain consciousness within 2-3 minutes.

The first guy swings the baseball bat, and you duck. The bat dents the filing cabinet behind you, and the second guy moves in. You cast Scossa and deliver a whip-kick to his throat. He gasps for air, then keels over. Out cold. The thug with the bat gets ready to take another swing, so you deliver a hasty roundhouse kick to his belly. It's not a good hit, you barely connect, but he crumples over and hits the ground.



4.4.66. SEISMOS

Duration: 2 rounds (10 seconds)

Range: 3

With one punch to the ground, you send shockwaves reverberating through buildings, vehicles, and your enemies. The blast shatters glass, crushes trees, and stuns your opponents for ten seconds. However, the spell only targets those victims that you specify. To cast the spell, make a Magic check against your victims' Soul checks. If successful, you have stunned your enemies for two rounds. During the first round, they are knocked to the ground and can take no action. During the second round, they are penalized by two dice for all actions, including combat, movement, and magic.

Gameplay: The car's coming right at you. No time to move. You drive a fist into the ground as you cast Seismos, and the shockwave knocks the driver out cold. He slumps against the wheel, jerking the car to the left. It smashes into a wall five feet away from you. Slowly, you get up. Close one.

4.4.67. SENTINEL

Duration: 6 hours

Range: 3

When this spell is cast, an invisible field is created around the you. The field is a sphere, 50 feet in diameter, which remains in place for six hours. During that time, if any creature or person larger than two feet high (or long), or weighing more than thirty pounds, passes through the field, an alarm sounds. Any demon that enters the space, regardless of size or shape, will trigger the alarm. However, the alarm is only audible to those within the sphere.

Gameplay: You've been wandering around in this forest for hours. No sign of civilization, no sign of the girl. Your crew's been up and running for about 36 hours, and if you don't take a break soon, you're going to start slipping. You slip, you make a mistake, the girl could die. You don't need that shit on your conscience. Better to take a couple hours and get your head straight. Swatting a mosquito, you tell the crew that it's time to get some rest, pick up the trail in the morning. Nodding, Civet casts Sentinel and you all hit the ground.

4.4.68. SMILODON

Duration: 5 rounds (30 seconds)

Range: 1

Your eyes begin to glow with a soft green light when this spell is cast, and your pupils narrow to catlike slits. Your skin pales, your teeth become long and sharp, and white claws of bone erupt from your fingertips. For the next thirty seconds, you slash enemies with your claws, and your senses are drastically improved. You can see in the dark as though it were broad daylight, and you can detect a human heartbeat up to 50 feet away. You now possess the Hunter skill with a score of 2 (if you already have this skill, then add 2 to its score for the duration of the spell). During combat, your claws inflict damage +1.

Gameplay: The lights flicker, then go out completely. Good, that means that Hazmat was able to get to the control room in time. You cast Smilodon and feel your fingertips stretching through your skin. Blood trickles down your pants legs as the claws slide out of your flesh. The world shimmers, and all the colors and smells all sharpen. You can sense where everyone is hiding. Time to shut down this operation.

4.4.69. SOMBRA

Duration: 12 rounds (1 minute)

Range: 1

Black waves of shadow converge on you when this spell is cast, and you are transformed into a cloud of dark smoke. You can't attack (or cast spells) while in this state, but you can't be harmed by a physical attacks, either. You can move in any direction at a rate of 10 feet per round, through openings as narrow as a pin's head. After 1 minute, you return to normal. Any solid objects upon your person (clothing, wallet) will be left behind when you turn into smoke. You can cancel the spell at any time, but if you are in the air when you change back, then you'll take normal falling damage. While the spell is in effect, you may revert back and forth (each transformation requires one round).

Gameplay: There's no way into that cell without the key, and the guards could walk in here at any time. You need that journal. Casting Sombra, you float, suddenly insubstantial, towards the bars. Sliding through them, you return to normal while inside the cell. You grab the journal, turn back into smoke, and pass through the bars again. On the other side, you turn back to human, and bolt up the stairs as fast as you can. Then you come back and scoop up your clothes and car keys.

4.4.70. STRATUS

Duration: 4 rounds (20 seconds)

Range: 1

Upon casting this spell, you'll be able to jump to normally impossible heights. For 20 seconds, you can jump up to 30 feet straight up, or 40 feet across. With a running jump, you can leap a distance of 60 feet (a running jump requires a good 10 feet of clear space). A jump-kick powered by this spell inflicts an additional 2 points of damage.

Gameplay: There's not a whole lot of time left. You cast Stratus, then jump straight up to the top of the neighbor's house. Once on the roof, you sprint across, then leap over to the Kinston place. You land right on the skylight over the kitchen and smash through it. You stand up, brushing busted glass off your jacket. Kinston turns to you, a bloody steak knife in his hand. "Who the hell are you?" You grin. "I'm Jet Li, motherfucker," you yell, and kick him in the chest. Oh, snap. You forgot you'd cast Stratus. He sails through the kitchen, through the living room, and through the bay window. Damn. Hopefully, you didn't kill the guy.

4.4.71. SUNDER

Duration: 2 rounds (10 seconds)

Range: 1

When you cast this spell on yourself, your hands are imbued with awesome power; you can punch right through steel, stone, brick, wood, and people. In combat, your bare hands inflict a damage bonus of +3 (or, if you're using a melee weapon, +1 to damage). When punching through solid objects, make a Strength check against the following target difficulties:

OBJECT	DIFFICULTY
Wood	3
Brick	4
Steel	6

Gameplay: You can hear her screaming, from somewhere inside the warehouse, but you can't get the door to budge. Cole's fumbling with his lockpicks, but you don't have time for this bullshit. She could be dying in there. You cast Sunder and smash through the wall.

4 . 4 . 7 2 . _ S W A R M

Duration: 4 rounds (20 seconds)

Range: 1

A glowing swarm of buzzing locusts begins to whirl around you, moving with you as you fight. The spectral locusts coil and surge around your body, blocking physical attacks and magic. For the next 20 seconds, each time you fail when defending against an attack or spell, you may make a second attempt. The second roll, however, will be half as many dice. For example, if you fail to dodge an arrow with your Defend score of 4, you can make a second attempt, but using two dice. Round halves up.

Gameplay: The demon slowly turns to look at you. Its lips pull away from its teeth, and all of the knives in the kitchen drawer suddenly tumble up into the air and turn towards you. Thinking fast, you cast Swarm, and the locusts begin to circle around you. The first knife flies towards you like a bullet from a gun, but is knocked aside by the swarm. The demon hisses. Great, now you pissed it off.

4 . 4 . 7 3 . _ S Y C O R A X

Duration: 4 rounds (20 seconds)

Range: 3

When you cast Sycorax, your skin becomes rough and brown, like tree bark. Furthermore, you can lift small objects just by thinking about it, and can wield them as weapons or drag them into your hand from as far away as 100 feet. While the spell is in effect, subtract a point from any damage you take, due to your hard, thick skin.

Gameplay: Desmond's hanging on to the bridge with one hand, and in the other, he's got the disk.

"Help me up and I'll give it to you!" he cries. Sure. You cast Sycorax and lean over so he can watch you transform. "Die, human," you hiss, and he screams and drops the disk. You hold out your hand and the disk suddenly flies up into your grasp. You walk away without looking back. He'll make it, or he won't. Not your problem anymore.

4 . 4 . 7 4 . _ T I R A D E

Duration: 3 rounds (15 seconds)

Range: 2

When you cast this spell, your victim begins to scream uncontrollably, causing everyone within 20 feet to drop whatever they're holding. Your victim keeps screaming, but is otherwise paralyzed for 15 seconds. Everyone else is free to act after the initial shock wears off. To cast this spell, make a Magic check against your victim's Soul check.

Gameplay: The judge is trying to brush off the reporters, but they're not having it. They surround him, asking questions, ramming microphones into his face. They're harassing him, but it's not enough. You need him behind bars by sundown, or you'll never catch that demon. You cast Tirade on him. The old man throws his head back and screams, the sound reverberating across the steps of City Hall, and several thousand dollars' worth of camera equipment hits the ground. A few of the cameramen are using shoulder-mounted pieces, though, so many of them collect footage of the judge screaming like a crazy person for several seconds before hurling himself at you, trying to strangle you. You smile as the cops pull him off you. No one else will ever realize that you made him do it. He'll try to explain that you're a witch. They'll lock him up, if for only one night. Should be enough.

4.4.75. VALENCE

Duration: 4 rounds (20 seconds)

Range: 1

When you cast this spell, a spinning disc of energy, eight feet in diameter, appears before you, protecting you from attacks. You can also cast it on another person, provided that you can touch him or her. The disc, which crackles with pale green electricity, drains kinetic energy from anything passing through it, and softens any blows directed at the person within. Whether you cast it on yourself or another, the spell lasts for 20 seconds, and affords the target a bonus of three dice for all Defend checks.

Gameplay: Castle goes down with a bullet in his leg. You cast Valence on him. That should keep him safe until you can finish up these bastards. You whirl around, a revolver in each fist. There's four of them. They don't stand a chance.

4.4.76. VENENO

Duration: 3 rounds (15 seconds)

Range: 1

After casting this spell, your attacks inflict lingering injuries upon opponents, slowing and weakening them. Your hands begin to trail black streams of venom that float through the air like blood in water. To attack, you must make a Magic check against your target's Soul check. If you're successful, you've successfully struck your opponent, and your enemy is now poisoned. For the next two rounds, the victim will suffer a point of damage each round, and will feel weak and feverish. The effects of the spell are cumulative, and your touch remains poisonous for three rounds, so it is possible that you might strike the same enemy three times in a row, resulting in a total drain of 6 points of damage (the first strike doing 3 points of damage over 3 rounds, the second doing 2, the third doing 1).

4.4.77. VISCERA

Duration: 3 rounds (15 seconds)

Range: 2

When this spell is cast, glistening serpents and lampreys erupt from your abdomen, tearing through your skin and clothing, and coil about your victim, biting and tearing as they constrict. However, they never completely exit your body, so your victim must be within 6 feet. To cast Viscera, make a Magic check against your target's Defend check. If you're successful, the damage done is equal to twice the difference between the scores.

Gameplay: Your wrists are numb. You've been hanging from these cuffs for half an hour, and already you wish someone would just come along and torture you already. Finally, Couralt appears, torch in hand. His smile tells you that your wish is about to be granted. He says something about meddling in the affairs of a higher power. Whatever. You wait for him to get close, then cast Viscera. A half-dozen eyeless serpents and wrist-thick tapeworms coil out of your belly and wrap themselves around his face. They bite and suck, rending skin and breaking bones. Finally, he stops kicking. Now what?



4.4.78 . _VORE

Duration: 4 rounds (20 seconds)

Range: 1

Your bite drains blood and energy when you cast this spell. By sinking your teeth into the flesh of your victim, you drain a point of his Strength, which restores 3 points of damage to you. You can repeat this as often as you like, while the spell is still in effect. At 0 Strength, the victim passes out. To successfully bite your victim, you must attack him (inflicting regular damage in the process). When the spell is cast, your teeth elongate, and your mouth widens grotesquely.

Gameplay: You're gutshot. The pain's so bad you can barely see straight. Labotski stands over you, a smoking Magnum aimed right at your kneecap. Shit, enough already. You cast Vore. As he stares at your mouth, you coil around his leg and sink your teeth into the soft meat behind his kneecap. Being a Disciple is thirsty work...

4.4.79 . _WARSTORM

Duration: Immediate

Range: 1

After casting this spell, you're capable of attacking multiple opponents in one swift flurry of attacks, but the damage done to you in return is serious. The spell allows you to blur through a room, lit by ghastly white flames, striking numerous opponents with fists and feet of blinding fire. You can attack up to six opponents in one round; for each opponent, roll a normal attack (including all applicable bonus dice). For each opponent attacked, however, you sustain two points of damage. Therefore, if surrounded by four enemies, you could cast the spell and attack all four in rapid succession, but you'd take eight points of damage.

Gameplay: There are five of them, all carrying baseball bats, closing in on you fast. They think you're a federal agent, and you don't have time to explain their mistake to them. You cast Warstorm and blitz through them like an oil fire spilling across the room. A second later, you're hawking up blood, but they're all on the ground. You shake your head and get it together. This isn't over yet.

4.4.80 . _WITHER

Duration: 2 rounds (10 seconds)

Range: 2

When you cast this spell on a target, his body suddenly withers and shrivels up. His hair turns white, his eyes become milky, his muscles shrink, and his skin sags. The effect is only an illusion, but for the next two rounds, the victim can only roll one die for any physical activity, including combat rolls or Strength checks.

Gameplay: Havermeyer goes for the gun, and you know that you'll never reach it in time. Only way out is through the long corridor behind you, and that'll make you an easy target. You cast Wither on him as he snatches the pistol up off the ground. In seconds, he's gone from muscular young drug kingpin to shuddering old man. The gun slips from his fingers and he puts a trembling hand to his wizened face. You've only got ten seconds to convince him. "Okay, Flaccido Domingo," you say. "Gimme the address or I cancel your bingo game. And break your hip."

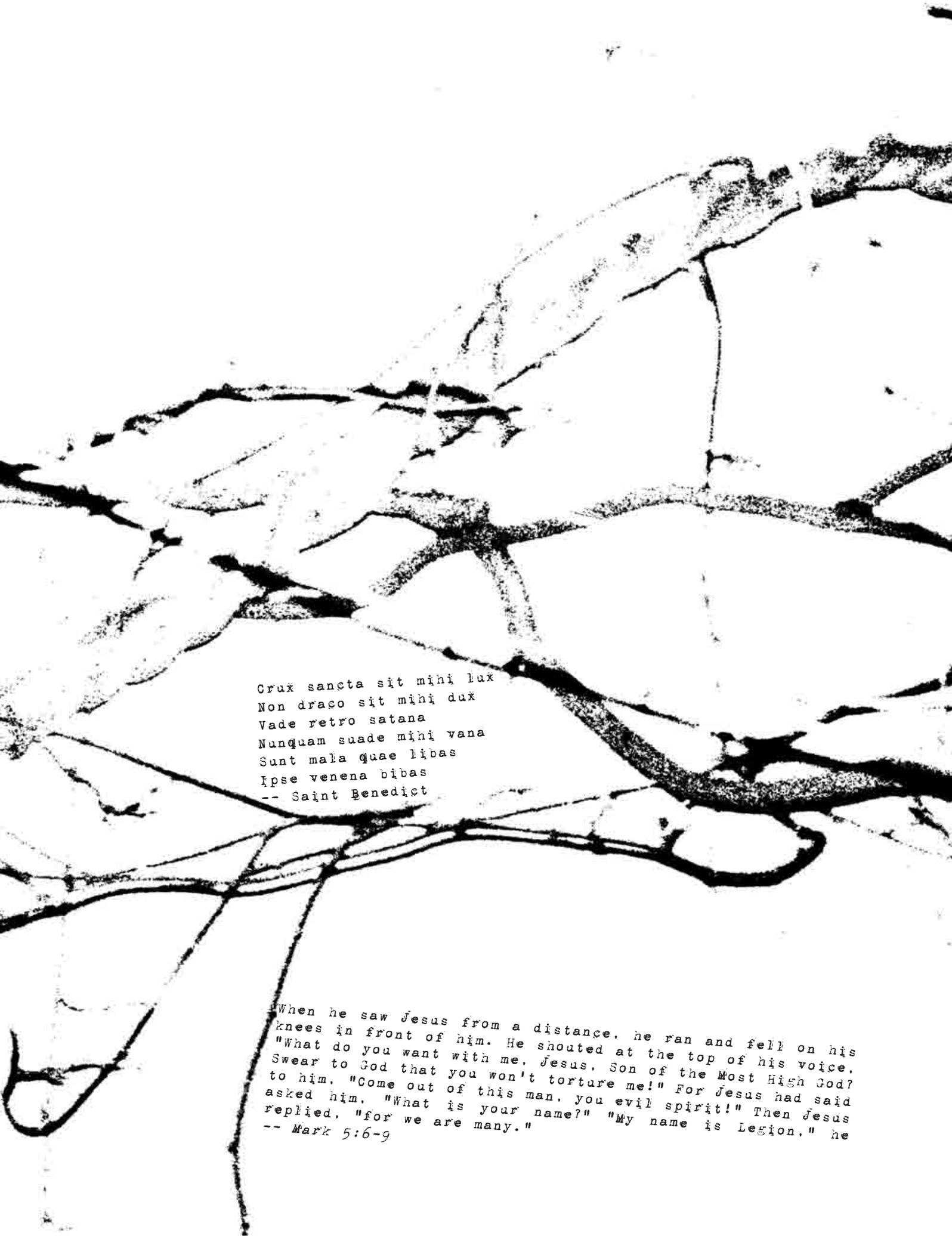
4.4.81 . _WORMWOOD

Duration: 2 rounds (10 seconds)

Range: 2

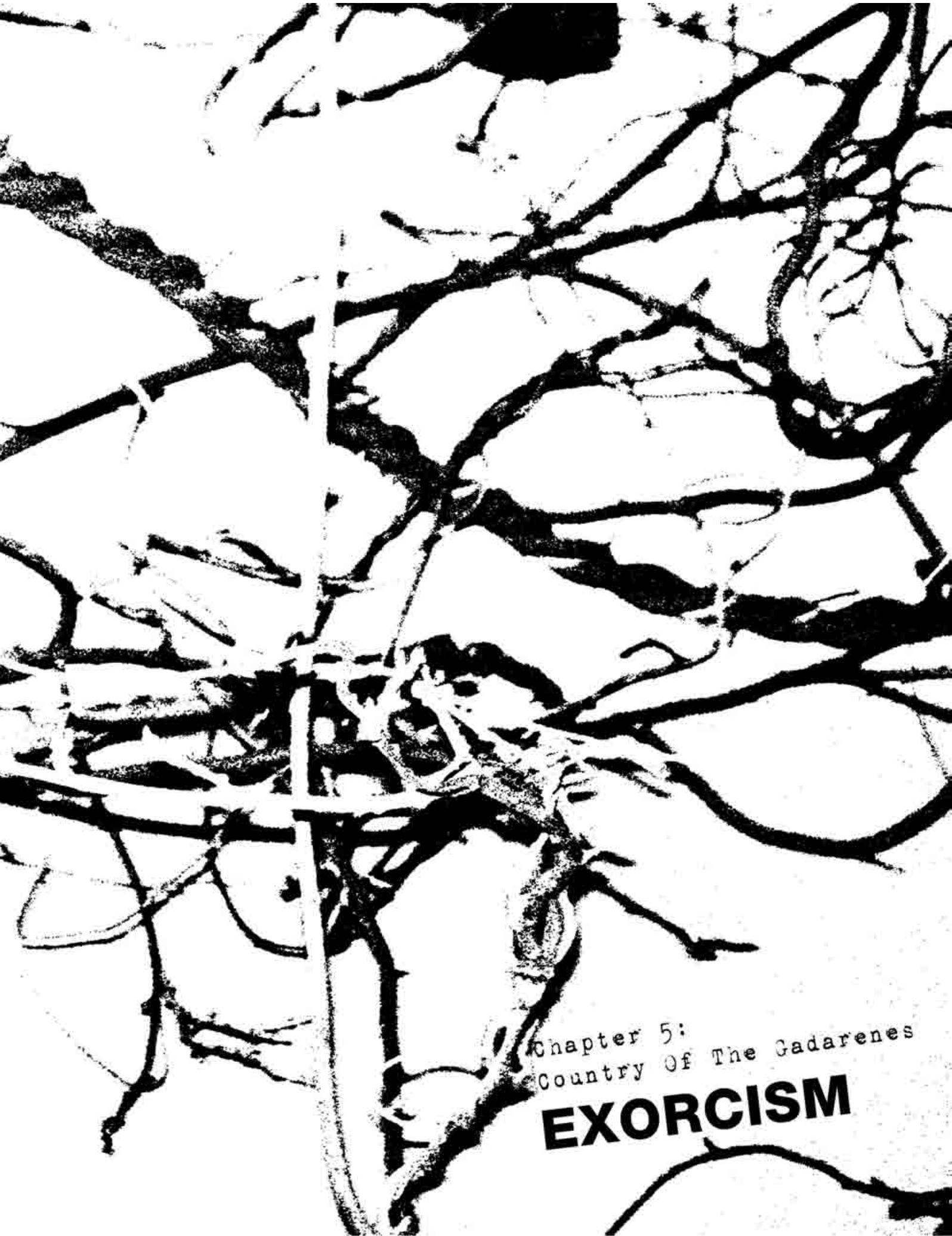
To cast this spell, make a Magic check against the Soul score of each victim. After this spell is cast, the Disciple projectile-vomits a foul-smelling spray that drenches everyone in range (except those allied with the spellcaster). For the next ten seconds, the victims are overcome with nausea and dizziness. Each time one of the victims rolls dice, subtract the highest die rolled.

Gameplay: First, you toss the revolver. No ammo, no point in carrying it any more. Second, you take a deep breath and cast Wormwood. A flood of warm putrid filth sprays out of your mouth, soaking all three of the hit men, who gasp and curse and hit the floor. Third, you wipe your mouth and reach in your pocket for a breath mint. This Disciple job is just bullshit, man. Fucking bullshit.



Crux sancta sit mihi lux
Non draco sit mihi dux
Vade retro satana
Nunquam suade mihi vana
Sunt mala quae libas
Ipse venena bibas
-- Saint Benedict

When he saw Jesus from a distance, he ran and fell on his knees in front of him. He shouted at the top of his voice, "What do you want with me, Jesus, Son of the Most High God? Swear to God that you won't torture me!" For Jesus had said to him, "Come out of this man, you evil spirit!" Then Jesus asked him, "What is your name?" "My name is Legion," he replied, "for we are many."
-- Mark 5:6-9



Chapter 5:
Country Of The Gadarenes

EXORCISM

Chapter 5: Country Of The Gadarenes

JOURNAL: FIRST JOB

My first job, I was handcuffed to a chair, and Morlock put a shotgun to my chest.

She didn't say nothing, she just kind of looked at me, then when I tried to talk, she poked me with the barrel. I took the message and I shut up. This was a few months ago, back when I was still a normal person. At the time, I didn't know her as Morlock, I just saw a big scary broad.

Angelica, our Mentor, had just dragged me out of my house and thrown me into the back of a van. The circumstances are too pitiful to go into at this point. Let's just say that I was in the process of flushing my life down the toilet when she recruited me. If recruited is the right word. But anyhow, I was happily destroying everything that I had left, which wasn't much, and I guess Angelica scraped me up off the ground just before everything went to hell.

Then someone opened the van and dragged me out. I didn't know who he was, some dude in a black coat with long black hair and a maniacal grin on his face. Kept calling me things like shitbird and fuckstick. Nowadays, I'm used to it. I mean, Slashfic uses profanity like normal people use punctuation. I guess we all do, it comes with the territory. I don't know. But anyhow, I was pretty sure that he was a sociopath, and that he was going to kill me.

Angelica, though, she was standing there, smiling, as Slashfic slapped the cuffs on me and duct-taped my ankles to the folding chair. We were in a warehouse, and there wasn't any sound but Morlock's boots pounding the concrete as she hauled gear out of duffel bags and laid it out on a folding table.

A beautiful black woman, about five-five, Angelica just radiates this sense of tranquility and peace everywhere she goes. Warmth emanates from her, you know? I mean, most people I've met, they're so fractured and bewildered that all they project is chaos and frustration. Talk to someone about life, you hear about all the things they want, and don't have. Love, success, faith. But Angelica, she just seemed so serene, so calm and so sure, that I just wanted to talk to her. To find out how she did it.

Morlock, a towering ogre-woman with bulging arms, came over and racked a shotgun, then pointed it at me, so I decided not to ask. Save it for later, I thought. If there is a later. I mean, I was pretty sure that these people were completely insane, and that I was going to die. But it didn't make sense. I mean--

Okay, the thing is, when Angelica came and got me, I was on a bender. A huge one. And I had this bizarro nightmare, but it was so vivid. I was screaming, and crying, and something was eating me. It had a face like a wolf, but leathery and hairless, and it was burying its snout in my stomach, and it hurt so bad that I was calling for my mother. And my mom came and got me. She was telling me to hush, that it was okay. Then she sang me a song, I don't remember which one. Hush, she said.

Now, of course, I know that it really happened. But at the time, I thought it was just a bad dream. I mean, there I was, bouncing along in the back of the van, then hauled out and cuffed to a chair, and there wasn't a scratch on me. So it must have been a dream, right? I didn't know anything about magic, I didn't know that Angelica was a Mentor, and I didn't know any-

thing about the Disciples, or the war, or the beautiful blonde that they were dragging into the room.

She was begging them to let her go, that she hadn't seen their faces, that she didn't know anything, and she promised that she wouldn't go to the police.

I tried to stand up, but Morlock frowned at me, and I sat right back down. She looked like she could fuck me up pretty bad, with or without the shotgun. Besides, I was cuffed to a chair, and I was still drunk.

I was also pretty convinced that I was still dreaming. That monster, devouring me, had been a really unpleasant dream, so compared to that, this wasn't so bad. Figured I'd just ride it out. Wasn't much I could do, anyhow.

The dark-haired dude, whom I would later learn to call Slashfic (for reasons that should be pretty self-explanatory, no need to delve into the man's private life), chained her arms behind her back and laid her down on the ground. Chained. I was staring, my mouth open. What the fuck, I thought, this is some kind of devil cult. They're going to kill her.

Edna Council walked into the room. She was wearing a spectacularly ugly denim dress that went from her neck to her ankles, and it was shaped kind of like a diving bell. But, you could tell, she had a nice body underneath. Cute face, but very serious. I was kind of amused by the fact that you can take a guy and cuff him to a chair and put a gun to his chest, and he will still check out and evaluates every woman he sees as a potential breeding partner.

I was still smirking to myself when she reached down and touched the blonde, who roared like a wild animal and snapped the chains, then lunged up towards Edna. But Council was too

quick, and was already halfway across the room. So the blonde whipped her head around towards me, and she grinned like a shark. I never saw so many teeth, and I was just babbling at the Morlock to please don't let her come any closer. But then I looked around and saw that Morlock was standing at the far end of the room, and there was nothing between me and the blonde.

I was screaming as she launched herself towards me, her hands distorted into black-taloned monster claws, and all I could see was those dark eyes getting bigger and bigger as she flung herself into the air and came crashing down on me. I felt her hot breath as she tried to bite my throat with that hideous mouth full of triangular teeth, and then they pulled her off of me. Slashfic was laughing, but Morlock just grunted as she flung the woman across the room.

"That skell is fast," Morlock said. She picked me up with one hand, tipping the chair back upright. Slashfic leaned over and brushed the dust off my shoulder.

"Sorry bout that, chief," he said. "But, boss lady says you needed that. We all went through the same thing, you know. You gonna be a Disciple now."

It s going to be okay, Morlock said. I stared up at this massive woman, my mouth open. I know, she said. It s frightening, and confusing. But you have to understand that it s for the best. We re going to help you. You re going to be one of us. You re not going to be an ordinary person, you re going to be a Disciple. You re going to do great things. Just trust me.

On the other side of the room, Edna placed a hand on the blonde woman's brow, and a wave of red light emanated from them. I turned my face away as they both began to scream.

5.1. CASTING OUT DEMONS

A Disciple with a Soul score of 5 or 6 has the Discipline of Sorcery, and can perform Exorcisms. There are seven, each with its advantages and risks, and each results in the casting out of defiler demons. These spells are not useful against stalkers or hunters, since these do not possess their victims.

With the exception of Litany, these spells require the caster to physically touch or strike the demon before the spell can be cast. The player must first roll to hit, then inflict damage, and then cast the spell at the same time. The player can kill a point of Fury to execute a Kill Shot, but all other Fury stunts are off-limits. The player can also employ cool descriptions, or relate the action to his character's Drive, in order to gain some extra dice.

Because many demons are physically powerful, attempting to get in close can be extremely risky. It is recommended that the exorcist work with the other members of the Cabal to wear down a demon prior to attacking.

A demon can inflict harm to the Cabal through its supernatural powers and strength, but because the Disciples have crossed the Black Line, they are immune to demonic possession, and can never be taken over by a demon.



5.1.1. CASTIGATION

Duration: 3 rounds (15 seconds)/ Until dispelled
Range: Touch

This spell will enable you to imprison a defiler demon in a cage of invisible energy. After casting this spell, you can restrain the demon, preventing it from moving or attacking. However, in order to do so, you must physically touch the demon (to do this, make a standard Attack roll during combat). If successful, you must immediately perform a Soul check against difficulty 10 to cast the spell on the demon. A successful roll means that you were successful, and the demon is paralyzed. Failure results in agony, and you sustain 2 points of damage. Each failure results in another 2 points of damage. If you don't succeed, after 3 rounds, the spell is over, and you must cast it again if you want to imprison the demon. If you succeed, the spell lasts for 2 rounds, or until you release or destroy the demon. During this time, the demon cannot move, but it can be injured. It is incapable of speech or motion, and cannot use magic.

Gameplay: Roaring, the demon pins Slashfic to the wall and rams a tentacle into his mouth; gagging, he drops the katana. God damn. You cast Castigate, then lunge at the thing. It hears you coming and whirls around, deformed faces blossoming and withering in its rippling skin. For a second, you stand there, facing one another. If it gets its claws into you, you're meat. But if you can lay a single hand on the demon, you own its ass. Simple as that.

5.1.2. EMESIS

Duration: Immediate

Range: 15 feet

When you cast this spell on a victim of demonic possession, she suddenly vomits up a huge quantity of blackish mucus that slowly takes the form (corporeal or spectral) of the demon that had possessed her. Though the victim isn't harmed by this, she is often horrified or repulsed, and may not be cooperative at first. Generally, victims of demonic possession are aware of their condition, but if your victim is an exception to this rule, she's going to think you're trying to harm her. Once you get past this problem, you've still got to deal with the fact that there's a demon rising from that dark vomitus. After one round, the demon will have completely reformed itself, and will be hell-bent on punishing you for the exorcism. To cast this spell, make a Soul check against difficulty 10 or higher.

Gameplay: She grips the knife and slowly backs towards the phone. No time for an explanation. You cast Emesis on her and step back as she pukes up a wad of black goo. She screams and wipes dark bile off her chin while you draw your sword. You tell her to get the hell out of the room as the vomitus starts to bubble. She bolts out the glass door and runs to a neighbor's house. Good.



5.1.3. GADARENE

Duration: Immediate/12 rounds (1 minute)
Range: 20 feet

This exorcism rips the demon from the body of its victim and rams it into an inanimate object. Dozens of holes appear in the victim's body, and a thick green liquid rushes out, splashing against the inanimate object in your hand. The object absorbs the liquid, and the demon. For the next minute, the demon is imprisoned in the object, and can cast no spells. The victim's wounds close almost immediately, and no permanent injury is sustained. After the minute is over, the object bursts, and the demon is released. The object in question must be no larger than three feet in any dimension. To cast this spell, make a Soul check against difficulty 10.

Gameplay: The old man grins, and his mouth bristles with three rows of serrated teeth. Fuck, it was him all along. You grab a toaster, hit him with it, and cast Gadarene. Pine-green syrup flows from his body like beer from a tap, and the toaster sucks it all up. A second later, the old man blinks and adjusts his glasses. He stares at you, confused. You'd explain, but there's no point, and no time. You run outside, yelling for the others, and fling the toaster as hard as you can. As it hits the ground, it begins to tremble, shaken by the demon within. You whip out the Beretta and hope for the best.

5.1.4. LITANY

Duration: 4 rounds (20 seconds)
Range: 10 feet

When this exorcism is cast, the Disciple's spoken words cause harm to the demon, and serve to enrage it. The player makes a Soul check against the Demon's Sense check, and if the roll is successful, then the difference is subtracted from the possessed person's Life score. When the victim's Life score equals zero, the demon tears itself from the carcass and attacks. The victim's wounds heal, and he or she is completely restored to life. This is the only exorcism that doesn't require physical contact between the caster and the skull. Once the demon is cast out of its victim, the spell is no longer effective.

Gameplay: The skull comes barrelling toward you, smashing his way through the barricade and growling like a wild animal. You backpedal and cast Litany, then start screaming as the skull sinks his teeth into your forearm. The sound hits the demon like a weapon, and it staggers back, hands over its ears.

5.1.5. PHTHISIS

Duration: Immediate
Range: 10 feet

After the Disciple casts this spell (by making physical contact with the victim of possession), the victim's skin begins to blister and rot. In seconds, it sloughs off, and the body begins to decompose rapidly. A wisp of smoke curls from the demon into the caster's mouth, and for the next round, the caster is inhabited (but neither possessed nor controlled) by the demon. During that time, any damage inflicted on the Disciple will be also inflicted on the demon, but doubled. So, if the Disciple takes 4 points of damage, the demon will take 8. After that round, the demon will be expelled from the caster's body in the form of a gout of blood from the eyes, nose, mouth, and ears which coalesces into the form of the demon.

Gameplay: You feel the demon inside you, a shrieking vortex of murder-hungry hatred inside you. It's not unlike your second marriage, you think, as the other Disciples converge on you. "Sorry, man," Hazmat says. Then he brings the baseball bat down on your skull.



5.1.6. SALVATION

Duration: Immediate

Range: 10 feet

When this spell is cast on a victim of demonic possession, his body splits open, from neck to crotch. Black smoke pours forth from this cavity, collecting in a corner of the room. There, it slowly transforms itself into the true form of the demon. Meanwhile, the victim's body heals in seconds (though his clothing is still ruined and bloody). This form of exorcism is quite painful to the victim, but it causes no harm. In order to cast this spell, make a Soul check against target difficulty 10.

Gameplay: As you cast Salvation, Walker's chin splits open. The dripping crack widens, then shoots down his throat, bisecting his adam's apple. He hits the ground, screaming, as blood stains his shirt and pants; smoke billows from the wound, slowly congealing into a seething, reptilian demon. It hisses at you as Walker curls up in the fetal position, wailing. Little sissy.

5.1.7. UNCTION

Duration: Immediate

Range: 10 feet

When this spell is cast, the player makes a Soul check against the demon's Soul check. If successful, the demon is cast out of the victim, and the difference between the two rolls is subtracted from the demon's Wrath. Light pours through the victim, erupting from eyes, mouth, and fingertips, blinding everyone in range temporarily. Wild shadows are cast against every surface, some of which are clearly moving of their own volition. The light suddenly turns into streams of blood, which are suspended in mid-air for a second before crashing to the ground, at which point all of the shadows disappear except one. This shadow materializes into the form of the demon.

Gameplay: The walls of the cathedral are crawling with deformed shadows. You reload the shotgun as you look around. One of them is going to try to disembowel you. But which one?

Every combat is therefore the bloody and destructive
measuring of the strength of forces, physical and moral;
whoever at the close has the greatest amount of both left
is the conqueror.
-- Carl von Clausewitz

If your bayonet breaks, strike with the stock. If the stock
gives way, hit him with your fists. If your fists are hurt,
bite him with your teeth.
-- Mikhail Ivanovich Dragomirov



A high-contrast, black and white photograph. On the right side, a man's face is shown in profile, looking towards the left. He has dark hair and a serious expression. His right arm is extended across the middle of the frame, showing a muscular build. The background is a dark, heavily textured wall, possibly concrete or stone, with some lighter, irregular patches. The lighting is dramatic, highlighting the contours of the man's face and arm against the dark background.

Chapter 6:
Ask Questions Later

COMBAT

JOURNAL: HARD CORPS

I trip over a root. Should have brought nightvision goggles.

"Roger that, over and out," says Slashfic. His walkie-talkie crackles. "Good news, dude."

"Yeah?"

I swat a mosquito. Should've brought repellent.

"Yeah," he says, rushing to catch up with me. "Morlock and Council are in position. We gotta take these sonsabitches down, then hunt for the target. She's running the show, might not be on-site."

"She?"

I push through a wall of bushes and vines. Should've brought a machete.

"Yeah," he says. "Council says it's a female demon."

"Really?"

I take a bullet in the chest and go down. Should've brought a vest.

We wrapped up that thing with the hookers and the software guy last week. Bad case, only got worse. But at least we got the demon. Now, we're working these extreme white supremacist wackos out in the woods. Word on the street, they're led by a demon. The great outdoors. Man, I hate the woods. New Battlestar Galactica tonight, I'm missing it. Hope Council remembered to DVR it.

Why these guys can't operate out of someone's basement, I don't know. Gotta do it out in the wilderness, snakes and brambles and muddy little streams

that are so small you don't see them until your foot goes in and you're soaked up to the ankle. And ticks, you gotta search for ticks when you get home.

After we tracked these guys here, we parked the truck in the woods and made our way up this hill. Compound's up here, they got guardposts and whatnot. Morlocks going to take out some of the guards with a crossbow, and Council's going to use magic to handle the rest. Then me and Slashfic go in guns blazing, try to clear the place out before anybody detonates the horse manure and bleach or whatever it is these unwashed sociopaths use to blow up post offices and abortion clinics. Seriously, what's with these goofy bastards? Like there aren't actual serious things going on, they gotta live in the woods and plan for the second civil war or whatever the hell?

"Jesus, fuck," Slashfic says. Lucky he's here. He casts Carnation and the red mist descends on the gaping wound in my chest. I think my lungs collapsing. He inhales suddenly, sucking in smoke tinged with my blood. He turns and spits out a bullet, then wipes his mouth.

"That was kind of cool," he says, squatting down. He wobbles a little. I sit up, suddenly able to breathe. A few droplets irritating my lungs, so I cough until I've cleared out all the blood.

"Yeah?" he says.

"Yeah," I say.

"So let's scalp that honkey motherfucker," he says, scanning the woods for the sniper.

Nothing. He casts Nyctalgic and gets a bead on the guy.

"Okay," he says. "You draw his fire and I'll sneak up behind him."

"I got a better idea," I say. "You pretend you're a white supremacist and try to infiltrate, and I'll sit here and cover you."

He nods. "Good call. The world's first Cuban-Korean-Nigerian white supremacist."

I rack my shotgun. "You want to just run at him and start shooting?"

"That usually works pretty good."

We run at the guy and start shooting, but stop when we get there and see that he's got an arrow in his neck. Morlock stands there, a wall of muscle with a crossbow cradled in her arms. She flexes her chin muscles in contempt, then walks off.

"Damn," Slashfic says. "She's good, Hush."

"Whatever." That guy was our kill.

"Kemosabe," Slashfic says. "We got company."

There's a half-dozen shapes moving through the trees towards us. Fatigues, rifles, nightvision goggles--

Hmm. That reminds me. I look down at the dead guy, and sure enough, he's got some goggles. The arrow's pinned him to the tree trunk, so I gotta pry him off to undo the strap. Slashfic helps me figure out how to turn the thing on, and then I can I put 'em on. Nice. They start shooting at us, so we crouch down.

"I'll hit 'em with a few doses of the good stuff," Slashfic says. A bullet smacks into a tree next to his head, spraying us with bark.

"Roger that," I say. "I'll take out a couple on my way in, but I gotta find the target before she detonates their suitcase nuke or whatever the hell these Nazi fucktards have been working on."

He nods and turns around. The men in the woods start screaming, shooting at invisible foes. They look around wildly, fire their guns in the sky. A few of them kill each other. I help where I can. A shotgun blast here, a knife to the throat there.

I vault over their electric fence with Stratus, and then I'm in. There's a pile of guys, maybe ten of them, all screaming orders at each other. What the hell? Suddenly, the pile erupts, and guys are flung in all directions. Morlock's standing there, soaked in blood, a wood axe in one hand and a piece of rebar in the other. She looks like a Frazetta painting. Some of the terrorist guys get up and try to tackle her again. A blur of motion, she caves in a few skulls and separates arms from torsos.

Movement, out of the corner of my eye, and I whirl around, aiming the shotgun. I lower it. It's Council, sprinting towards us. "Jeep," she gasps. I can hear the engine now. If the demon's trying to make a getaway, it's probably got something on board with it. Biological weapon, maybe, or explosives. Question is, what about the other vehicles? Is it crafty enough to sabotage--

The explosion is deafening, like someone sticking a finger in my ears and just grinding it in. I throw myself on top of Edna and shield her with my body. Something lands on me, feels like a bumper. The demon blew up something, must have been in their depot. Fuel tank, maybe a truck.

Slashfic comes running up. "Dude, everybody knows you want to nail Council, but this isn't the time."

Chapter 6: Combat

I ignore him and help her up.

She's wearing a dark blue bulletproof vest over a black t-shirt. Blue-black-grey fatigues. A walkie-talkie clipped to her belt. Little black combat boots. She looks like a little girl playing soldier.

Yesterday, she showed me this new spell. Her tongue snakes out of her mouth, whips around your neck, then snaps back in. Now she can talk with your voice. Crazy life we're living.

I keep thinking I'll wake up and my wife is still alive, I still have my job, demons are imaginary. Aw, fuck it. Who am I kidding. This is better than anything I ever dreamed of.

"Someone's gotta keep an eye on the jeep somehow," I say. "I'm going back for the truck."

"I'm with you," Council says.

"Be careful," Slashfic says. "That demon's dangerous."

I start collecting ammo from some of the dead bodies. "Tell me something I don't already know," I say.

"Okay," he says. "Something you don't already know... Well, sometimes, I wish that you had a snatch."

"Hmm," I say. "Yeah, I was definitely not aware of that."

"Vaya con dios, fuckface," he says.

Council and I start running for the truck.



6.1. DIE, MOTHERFUCKER

Combat involves three rolls: Initiative, Attack, and Defense. For each round of combat (lasting about five seconds), a character rolls Initiative once, Attack once, and Defense as many times as necessary.

Initiative: You do this at the beginning of every combat round. Everyone rolls a single die, and whoever rolled highest goes first. After that, the group can choose whether to have the player with the next-highest roll go, then the one after that. Or, the group can elect to just proceed clockwise from the highest roller.

Attack: When you punch, kick, shoot, or bash. You can do this once every round.

Defense: When you block, dodge, or evade. You do this every time someone punches, kicks, shoots, or bashes.

To attack, roll a number of dice equal to your Combat score. Your Director will roll Defense for your opponent. Consider the highest die on each side. If your roll is higher, you inflict damage equal to the difference, plus any damage bonuses for the weapon that you're using. If the opponent's roll is higher, no damage is inflicted. In the event of a tie, look to the next highest dice on each side, then the next one after that. If one of the combatants runs out of dice, the attack was unsuccessful.



6.1.1. EXAMPLE OF COMBAT

Scalpel is attacked by two cultists. She rolls initiative, and gets a 6. The cultists roll 2 and 8. One will go before her, and one will go afterwards. The first cultist swings his meat cleaver. Since he has a combat score of 2, the Director rolls two dice. Scalpel has a combat score of 3, so her player rolls three dice. The Director rolls 10-8. Scalpel gets 11-7-1. Scalpel's highest die is higher than the opponent's, so she is successfully able to defend herself against the attack.

Since it's now her turn, she attacks with her signature weapon, the scalpel. She rolls three dice, and gets a 10-6-5. The Director rolls 10-2. Since the high rolls are tied, we look to the next highest dice. A 6 for Scalpel, and a 2 for the cultist. That means that Scalpel hits, and inflicts 4 points of damage (6 minus 2). In addition, the scalpel has a damage rating of 1, so the total damage inflicted on the cultist is 5.

The second cultist attacks now, and the Director rolls 11-2. Scalpel gets 9-9-3. Because you add multiples to their number of instances, Scalpel effectively rolled an 11 (a roll of 9, on 2 dice, means 9 plus 2). Therefore, the high scores are tied. So we look at the next highest dice, and we have 2 for the cultist and 3 for Scalpel. Again, she is able to block the attack.

Initiative is re-rolled, and Scalpel goes first this time. The player decides to kill a point of Fury for an extra die, and then launches into an elaborate description of how she ducks under the cleaver, spins the cultist around, and puts him in the path of the second cultist's weapon. The description is cool, and she gets to roll an extra die as a result. Along the way, the player also describes how furious Scalpel is that these cultists have been sacrificing children to the demon that they worship. Her character's fury drives her to want to take them out of the picture permanently. Consequently, Scalpel's player will be rolling 6 dice in the ensuing attack, versus the cultist's 2.

6.2. LIFE

Each character begins a case with 12 points of Life. As the scenario progresses, the characters will take damage, which is subtracted from the Life score. When the score reaches 4, the Disciple is badly injured, and suffers a penalty of one to all die rolls (meaning that the player rolls one die less than usual). However, the player can always roll at least one die when attempting an action, regardless of penalties.

6.2.1. RECOVERY

After the Disciples close out a case, the team returns to headquarters to recover from any injuries sustained. When the next case begins, all of the Disciples are completely recovered. Life and Fury scores are returned to 12.

6.2.2. RETIREMENT

If your Disciple ever reaches 0 Life, then it's time to Retire. This means that your character is going to die. However, death is not immediate. Instead, your Disciple gets 12 Life and 24 Fury. Immediately. You get to close out your last case. Do what you have to take down your target, and then everybody has to shut the fuck up while you narrate a glorious death for your character. You can die quietly, in the snow, or you can die fighting. Go all out. Then roll up a new one.



6.3. ARMOR

Here's how armor works. You get a score that's between 1 and 12. 1 is weak, 12 is high. You get in a fight, you get hit. You take some damage.

If you want the armor to absorb some of that damage, you roll a number of dice equal to that score. If any of those dice are equal to or less than your score, then that's how much damage gets absorbed by the armor. Then, you reduce the armor's score by however much damage you took.

So you got great armor with a score of 10. You get in a fight, you take 4 points of damage. What you do is, you roll 10 dice, and you look to see how many are equal to or less than 10. They all are. So, that 4 points of damage is now coming off your armor, instead of your Life score. But, this means that your armor goes from 10 to 6. Next time you take damage, you can roll 6 dice, and see how many are equal to or less than 6.

6.4. RANGE

RANGE	DEFINITION
1	Standing close to you
2	Across the room
3	Down the street

If your target is within range, roll dice as normal. If your target is out of range by a factor of 1, you're penalized by two dice. If it's more than a factor of 1, then the attack isn't possible.

For example, if you have a sword, with a range of 1, then you can attack someone standing nearby. If your opponent is on the other side of the room, and you want to attack with the sword, your attack suffers a penalty of two dice. So, if your attack score is 5, then you only roll 3 dice.



If you want to attack someone who's down the street, and you're using a sword, then you need to spend this round running towards that person. You can attack next round.

6.5. AMMO

Can you run out of ammo while playing Dread? Hell yes. Do you have to keep track of bullets and shells and magazines? Hell no.

Each weapon is good for a specific number of firefights. After that, you're out of ammo. A revolver is only going to last you a single gunfight, but a shotgun'll get you through a couple. The cost of ammunition is equal to the cost of the weapon, so bullets for a pistol would have a cost of 4. See the table on page 58 for specific costs.

The table below indicates how many firefights a weapon is good for before you need to reload.

WEAPON	FIREFIGHTS
Revolver	1
Grenades	1
Short Bow	2
Crossbow	2
Long Bow	2
Pistol	2
Shotgun	2
SMG	3
Assault Rifle	4

6.6. VEHICULAR COMBAT

Buckle up and get ready to plow through the guardrail. It's time to figure out how to run people off the road.

6.6.1. DRIVING

When driving a vehicle, roll the vehicle's applicable attribute whenever you need to check against a situation. If you're in a truck and you need to swerve, roll one die. If you're in a car and you need to recover, roll two dice.

6.6.2. SKILLED DRIVING

If you have a driving skill (page 49), then add your skill score to the applicable modifier. So, to re-use the above examples, if you have a Race Car Driver skill with a score of 3, and you're swerving in a truck, roll 4 dice. If you're trying to recover in a car, roll 5 dice.

6.6.3. RAMMING

If you ram another vehicle, roll the appropriate number of dice versus your opponent's swerve check. If you are successful, you inflict damage to the other vehicle's body.

6.6.4. SWERVE

When another driver wants to ram you, make a swerve check. If you're successful, you were able to avoid being hit.

6.6.5. RECOVER

You make a Recover Roll (against a Target Difficulty equal to the damage you've sustained) after your vehicle has been rammed. If you fail, you're run off the road.

6.6.6. RAMMING MOTORCYCLES

If a Motorcycle sustains or inflicts 3 or more points of damage at any time, the driver must immediately make a recover check against target difficulty 12 or fly off the bike immediately. If unsuccessful, the damage sustained by the driver is equal to the difference between the roll and the target difficulty.

Example: Hazmat's on his motorcycle, and he gets rammed by a truck. The Director rolls a 10, and the player rolls a 7, so the bike takes 3 points of damage. The player now needs to make a recover check against difficulty 12. He fails, rolling 8-3-1. Hazmat is flung off the bike, and takes 4 points of damage (12 minus 8).

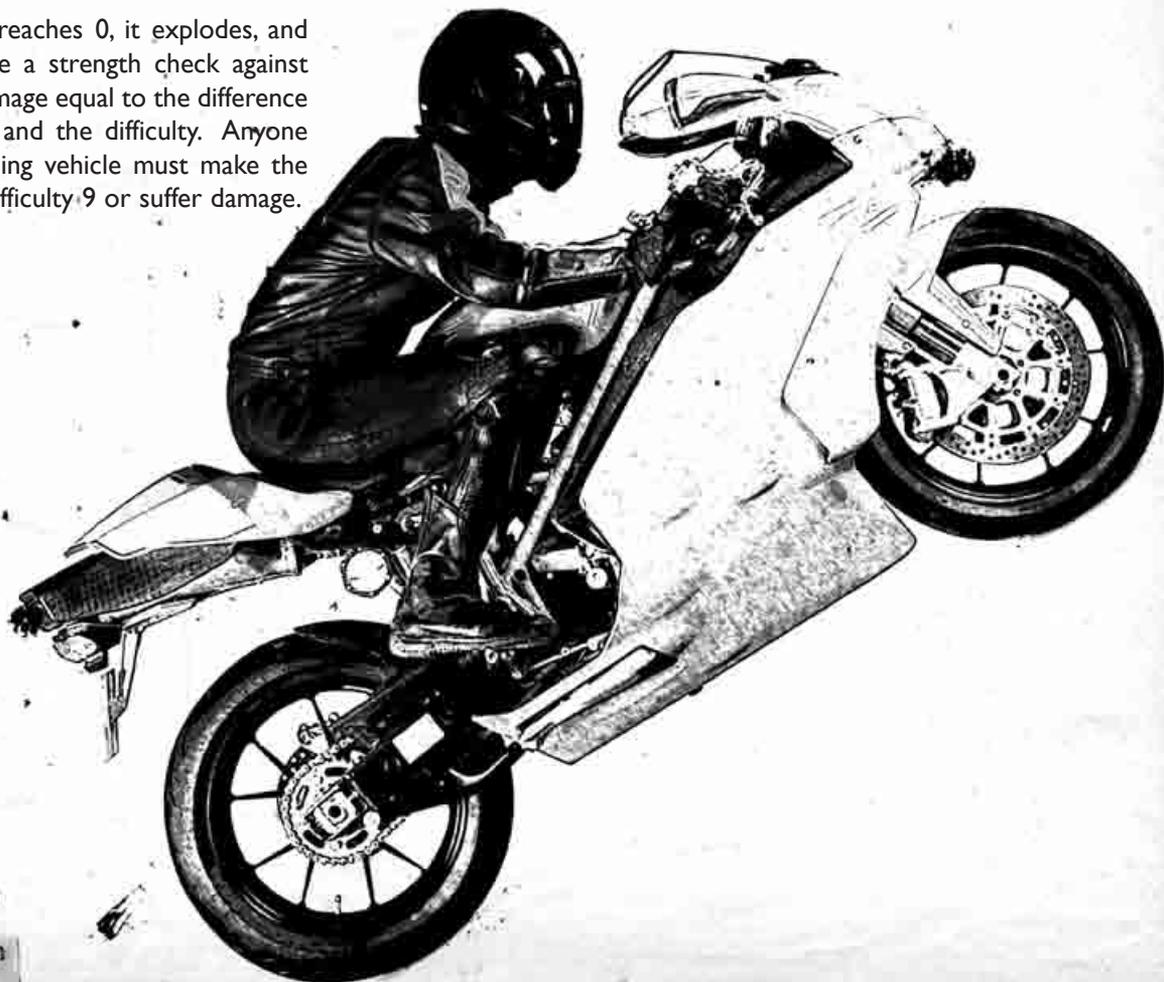
6.6.7. BODY

To destroy a vehicle, attack it, and the defender makes a swerve check to avoid being hit.

When a vehicle's body reaches 0, it explodes, and all occupants must make a strength check against difficulty 12, or suffer damage equal to the difference between their high roll and the difficulty. Anyone standing near an exploding vehicle must make the strength check against difficulty 9 or suffer damage.

6.6.8. VEHICLE STATS

Motorcycle	Car	Truck
Body 10	Body 20	Body 30
Swerve 4	Swerve 2	Swerve 1
Recover 1	Recover 2	Recover 2
Ram 1	Ram 2	Ram 3



6.6.9. OTHER VEHICLES

To create other vehicles, assign a Body score based on the guidelines on the previous page, then assign stats that add up to 6. This goes for boats, choppers, whatever.

6.7. BLOWING SHIT UP

To take out a vehicle with a single bullet, you first have to declare that you're going for just one shot. Then you have to say something appropriately over-the-top to signify that the shit-blowing-up has begun (such as "Sayonara, motherfucker," or "I'll send flowers").

To blow up the vehicle, you must roll against target difficulty 13. This will require you to roll a pair of 11s, or three 10s, or some other multiple. Obviously, this is a gamble. If successful, the vehicle is destroyed, and damage to those in or near the vehicle is calculated as described on the previous page (in the Body section).

6.8. FALLING DAMAGE

To calculate the damage sustained during a fall, make a Strength check against the following target difficulties:

HEIGHT	DIFFICULTY
Second-story window	8
Tall building	10
Skyscraper	12
Out a damn plane	14

If you succeed, you sustain no Injury. If you fail, you sustain Injury equal to the difference between your roll and the difficulty.

6.9. PENALTIES IN COMBAT

During combat, the Disciples may be impeded by their environment, or by the situation that they're in.

All players (and the Director) should discuss whether such impediments should result in any penalties to attribute checks or combat rolls. If so, consider the guidelines listed below:

If the character is fighting in darkness, or while drugged, or with one hand tied behind his back, subtract one to three dice from the roll, depending on the seriousness of the impediment.

Bear in mind that the minimum roll for any action is always one die.

Example 1

If the character is fighting at night, in the woods, with no flashlight, when the moon and stars are obscured by cloud cover, then he loses a die while rolling.

Example 2

If the fight is in a mine shaft, in near-total darkness, the penalty is two dice.

Example 3

If the character is actually blind, because of a blindfold or because his eyes got stabbed out or something, then the penalty is three dice.



The eyes are not here
There are no eyes here
In this valley of dying stars
In this hollow valley
This broken jaw of our lost kingdoms
-- T. S. Eliot, *The Hollow Men*

My work is a game, a very serious game.
-- M. C. Escher



Chapter 7:
Into the Storm

GAMEPLAY

Storm leaves city soggy

LOOK

COR

been

2713

KGS
KGS
KGS

7. GAMEPLAY

Now that we've covered character creation and conflict resolution, let's take some time to make sure that we understand how all the moving parts interact with one another.

In this section, we're going to look at an example of gameplay.

7.1. _EXAMPLE_SCENARIO

This is based on a con game I ran at MACE 2006. The players were Mark Causey, Shane Jackson, and Scott M. Perry. It was a great game, and all three of them really got into it.

7.1.1. _BREAKDOWN

So, in this scenario, the disciples are on the case of this demon. It's already killed at least one young woman, and is pursuing another. However, this second victim is involved with a Mafia don. He has, for various reasons, instructed his men to kill her. The Disciples find out that she's been taken to a construction site, where she's to be killed. They want her alive, so that they can use her as bait. Once they've killed the demon, of course, they will do what they can to ensure her safety.

The scenario begins with the Disciples studying a printout taken from one of the Mafia organization's computers.

DIRECTOR: The name on the printout is Mary Sedgwick.

PLAYER 1: If she's the next target--

PLAYER 2: It's either her or Denise. Should we split up?

PLAYER 3: Wait, Denise is the one that's in the morgue, I think. She was in her twenties, uh, let me see... young Caucasian female... Yeah, I think she's dead. She's the stiff that we--

PLAYER 2: Oh, right, in the morgue. Okay. So it's Mary that's the next one, then. Process of elimination.

PLAYER 1: Literally.

ALL: (laughter)

PLAYER 2: So, the site, you guys? Yeah? Okay. We head to the construction site. When we get close, we pull over and kill the engine, then walk the rest of the way, through the woods.

DIRECTOR: It's about 4 in the morning. You're looking at a construction site, looks like it's going to be a large shopping center off one of the major roads cutting through Apex.

PLAYER 3: Who's on the ground here? Any of the Colletti family?

DIRECTOR: Yeah, looks like you got one guy in a cheap suit, barking orders at everyone and screaming into a cell phone. A bunch of other guys are running around with dogs and flashlights, maybe a dozen guys. All armed, mostly pistols, a couple shotguns.



PLAYER 1: Let's step up and start talking.

PLAYER 2: You're not serious.

PLAYER 1: Let's do it, these guys are just thugs. They should be easy to intimidate.

PLAYER 2: Fuck it, okay.

PLAYER 3: Sure.

PLAYER 1: I walk up to the guy on the phone. "Where was she last seen?"

DIRECTOR: The guy looks at you, stunned. He pulls out a revolver. "Who the fuck are you?"

PLAYER 1: I tell him, "Your new boss, fuckface. Mister Colletti sent us. You need to tell your men to form a perimeter around the area so that we can find the girl. Now, where was she when you last saw her?"

DIRECTOR: The guy stares at you, then sighs. "She was in the trunk of the car, that Mazda. I guess they didn't search her right, and she had something, a knife, a nail file. She cut herself loose, then ran for it."

PLAYER 2: Where's the car at?

DIRECTOR: He points to the middle of the development, near a large pit where it looks like they were going to pour a concrete foundation for a building.

PLAYER 3: Ah, they were going to kill her and hide her in the concrete.

PLAYER 2: Shit, these guys probably have no clue about the demon.

PLAYER 1: Okay, I tell him, "Position your men so that we're not disturbed while we take care of this problem for Mister Colletti."

DIRECTOR: "I prolly ought to give him a call."

PLAYER 1: "When I tell you to. You fuck this up, you take a dirtnap. Think it over."

DIRECTOR: The guy opens and shuts his mouth, then shrugs.

PLAYER 2: I'm going to try to figure out where she went. I used to be a soldier, I know how it's done.

DIRECTOR: It rained, so the ground is soft, but it's at night, with limited visibility. So the target difficulty is 8.

PLAYER 2: I'm going to spend some Fury. Kill one point to roll an extra die.

DIRECTOR: Okay, roll 'em.

PLAYER 2: Okay, I got a pair of 9s.

DIRECTOR: Bullseye.

PLAYER 2: So what did she do?

DIRECTOR: She looked like she ran for the road, which is why they were searching there. What she did was, she actually ran for the road, then doubled back around the building, on the sidewalk, so there'd be no footprints. Then, while they were chasing down the road, she crawled back in the trunk. You see bits of dirt and clay in the trunk.

PLAYER 2: No shit. Then she got out, later, when they were searching the roads?

DIRECTOR: Exactly.

PLAYER 3: Not bad.

DIRECTOR: Now, she's way outside the perimeter.

PLAYER 1: Can we track her through the woods? I got hunting skills.

PLAYER 2: We got to use flashlights, I think. No nightvision goggles or anything.

PLAYER 3: Agreed.

DIRECTOR: Okay, then target difficulty 7.

PLAYER 1: Okay, I got a 10.

DIRECTOR: As you push through the brambles, you see that she weaves around a lot, she walks upstream, climbs over rocks, and does the best she can not to leave any prints.

PLAYER 2: Clearly has a strong survival instinct here.

DIRECTOR: But she's doing all this, trying to lose the pursuers, and it's slowing her down. You can see her up ahead.

PLAYER 1: Okay, I kill the flashlight.

PLAYER 2: Same.

DIRECTOR: Up ahead, you see her walking across a fallen tree trunk. She's petite, maybe five-two, and she's wearing a white dress stained with mud and dirt. She doesn't see it, but there's something floating after her, just over her shoulder.

PLAYER 3: I start running towards her.

PLAYER 2: We gotta make the demon come after us.

PLAYER 1: I got a spell that will hurt the demon, if I talk to it. That'll piss it off.

PLAYER 2: Will a shotgun work? On a demon?

PLAYER 3: Don't know. We'll find out.

PLAYER 1: I yell at Susan to get towards us as fast as she can, that she's in danger.

DIRECTOR: Behind you, you hear yells. There are three guys behind you, goombahs with shotguns.

PLAYER 3: Son of a bitch, they followed us. We do the hard work, and they get to clean up.

PLAYER 2: They're going to kill her. Shit.

PLAYER 3: You two deal with the mobsters.

DIRECTOR: Roll some dice for initiative.

[The players all roll for initiative, and combat begins. They take out the mafia goons, then fight the demon.]

PLAYER 2: Like when Jesus cast a demon out of somebody's soul or whatever, I'm casting him out of the world. "In the name of the Father, the Son, and the mothafuckin Holy Ghost, this world is not yours, and you will be leaving it soon!"

[PLAYER 2 rolls dice and casts Malison, a spell that allows the caster to injure a demon just by speaking. He rolls an extra die for the vivid description. The Director rolls dice for the demon.]

DIRECTOR: A 3 and a 5.

PLAYER 2: Three 12s.

DIRECTOR: Oh, shit.

ALL: (laughter)

DIRECTOR: So, that's 3 plus 12 equals 15, against the demon's roll, which was a 5. That means 10 points of damage.

PLAYER 2: Damn.

PLAYER 3: Well, if we ever needed it, we needed it now.

PLAYER 1: Wow.

DIRECTOR: The demon screams. As it turns around, you can finally see it...

PLAYER: I got a bad feeling about this.

[The Director describes a disgusting creature whose innards float through the air on long, slimy cables. The crew is suitably impressed. Ass-kicking ensues.]

7.1.2. ANALYSIS

Here's a quick stab at some of the elements that made this session so much fun:

Teamwork: They worked as a unit, and made decisions together. If one person had a good idea, they didn't squabble or prevaricate, they trusted each other and went with it.

Spells/Skills: They used spells and skills creatively, and they also knew to use Fury and vivid descriptions in order to get extra dice when needed.

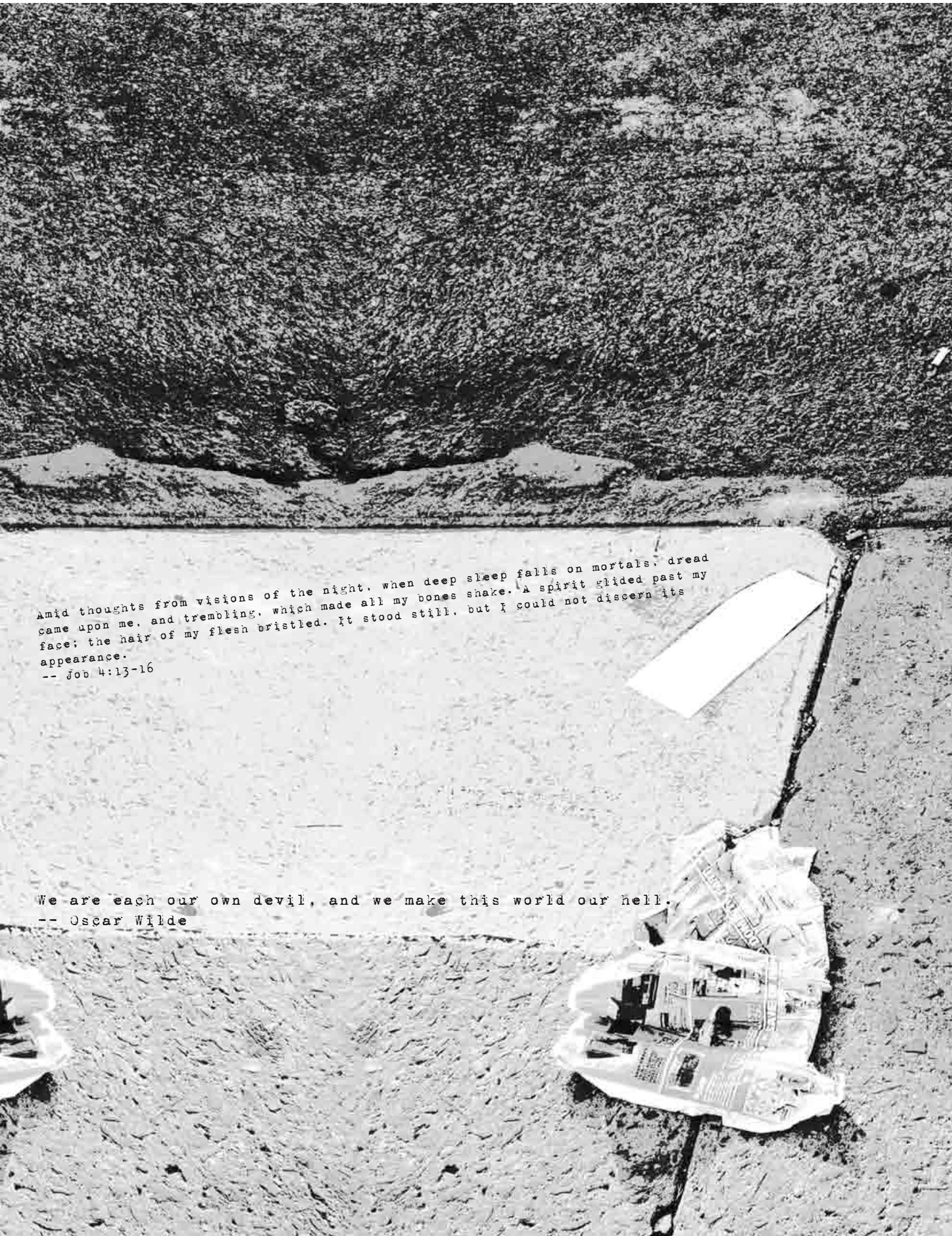
Swagger: Rather than try to sneak up on the mobsters, or run in guns blazing, they just walked up like they owned the place. Of course, this only postponed the inevitable firefight, but it allowed the Disciples to get some valuable information.

Bravery: When the demon reared its ugly head, they didn't turn tail and run. What would be the point? The whole game is about that conflict with the demon.

Humor: Dread can be a serious game, and the subject matter can be pretty dark. A joke now and then can take the edge off the situation. It's up to your gaming group how much banter you want.

Valor: Sure, the job is the demon. You take out the target, you close the case. But they were still interested in the well-being of Mary Sedgwick. They're heroes, after all.

Character: They got into character. Rather than just describe the things they were saying, they talked to each other and to the NPCs while in character. This really helps to set the mood.



Amid thoughts from visions of the night, when deep sleep falls on mortals, dread
came upon me, and trembling, which made all my bones shake. A spirit glided past my
face: the hair of my flesh bristled. It stood still, but I could not discern its
appearance.
-- Job 4:13-16

We are each our own devil, and we make this world our hell.
-- Oscar Wilde



Chapter 3:
Our Hell

QUICK START



8.1. START AT THE END

Why the hell are the quickstart rules at the end of the player section? Good question. The idea is, you've at least flipped past the rules for character creation, magic, skills, and combat. Maybe you read a few of those pages as you went.

Someone in your gaming group needs to know what the basics are prior to gameplay. Since the rules aren't all that complicated, if one person wants (preferably the Director) wants to skim through the player section and then read through this quickstart, you should be able to get a game up and running pretty quickly.

8.1.1. ONE-SHOT

This first game should be a one-shot, a disposable session that has no impact on a long-term campaign. You're just trying to get the group together and establish the basic concept of Dread. The game's pretty straightforward: it's like a cop show, in that you know you're the good guys, and the bad guys are out there, so you just need to seek and destroy. Sure, there are some grey areas that you may encounter later, but you can get into the politics of the war between Heaven and Hell later on. For now, just go in there swinging, and try to get into the action as quick as you can.

Don't waste a lot of time planning and debating during this one-shot. You can spend a half-hour discussing security systems for the bank vault, or you can just cast a spell and get in there (where you'll doubtless discover that some bank robbers got there ahead of you, inevitably resulting in a pitched battle while the cops swarm the place). The more time you spend chatting about strategy, the less time you spend getting it on. Just react viscerally to the circumstances and see where it takes you.

8.1.2. MANDATORY RETIREMENT

Skill 'em and chill 'em. You create a group of disposable heroes, quick-like, and then scrap them at the end of the session. Since they're created for the one-shot, and won't be used again, you don't have to spend a lot of time worrying about every decision. Make up your character quickly, basing him or her on yourself if need be. Don't spend a lot of time thinking up a cool name, or flipping through the spell list. Use the rules in this chapter to whip up your characters, then discard (or even Retire) them at the end of the session. If you want, you can recreate your character for the next game (your first "official" session), using what you learned during the initial one-shot.

8.2. RAPID CHARACTER CREATION

The Disciple is a soldier on the front lines of The Last War. To create your character, you'll need to determine Attributes, Skills, Spells, Weapons, Contacts, Drive, and a Name. You can photocopy the character sheet on the last pages of this book. Or download it from www.dread-rpg.com.

Character creation should be done as a group. It's easier to get all questions answered at the same time. Multiple copies of this book are helpful, but hardly necessary.

8.2.1. ARCHETYPES

There are three basic archetypes: Fighter, Investigator, and Sorcerer. All Disciples can fight, use skills, and cast spells; however, the archetypes represent expertise. So begin by deciding which element of gameplay (combat, investigation, magic) most appeals to you, and then select your archetype accordingly. You don't need to write the archetype down anywhere -- but it will determine a number of things about your character that you'll want to document (as delineated below).

8.2.2. ATTRIBUTES

Distribute 9 points between your Attributes. One of those Attributes must be a 5 or a 6. That means you'll have a distribution of 6/2/1 or 5/3/1 or 5/2/2. The high attribute should correspond with the archetype you've selected (Fighter/Strength, Investigator/Sense, Sorcerer/Soul).

8.2.3. DISCIPLINE

In the Discipline field, write down Combat, Lore, or Sorcery, depending on which archetype you went with.

8.2.4. SKILLS

Double your Sense score. This represents the number of points you can distribute between your skills. For example, if you have a Sense score of 2, you can distribute 4 points among your skills. You can put all 4 points in Empathy, or put 3 in Empathy and 1 in Journalism. Whatever.

These are the skills you can select from: Charm, Computer Use, Crime, Driving, Empathy, Hunting, Intimidation, Journalism, Linguistics, Medicine, Military, Profession, Repair, and Science.

8.2.5. SPELLS

Double your Soul score. This is the number of spells you can choose for your Disciple. Each day, your Disciple can cast a number of spells equal to his Soul score. The process of selecting spells can be extremely time-consuming, so select packages from the list in Chapter 4 (right before the spell descriptions).



Before you do, though, you may want to consider which of the following appeals to you:

- * Attack
- * Crowd control
- * Defense
- * Exorcism
- * Flight
- * Grotesquerie
- * Investigation
- * Nonlethal combat
- * Stealth

8.2.6. WEAPONS

Everybody gets a weapon from the list on page 58, provided that it has a cost of 4 or less. Just pick one weapon and go with it. Normally, the process is more complicated, but we don't have time for that now. Skip the armor. Disposable heroes, remember?

8.2.7. CONTACTS

Create two Contacts (people that you know, who can either help with investigations or give you leads). They can't resolve issues or furnish hardware. They can offer information and do favors for the player character. They should be helpful, but should nonetheless be people of limited resources. For example:

- * Police Officer (yes)
- * Police Commissioner (no)
- * DMV clerk (yes)
- * Head of Department of Transportation (no)
- * Private Jones (yes)
- * Colonel Jones (no)

Normally, you'd work out the personalities and histories of each Contact with your Director, but this time, just scribble a quick note about each Contact and worry about the rest later.

8.2.8._DRIVE

This is one word that summarizes your character's *raison d'être*. It's what keeps you going: Justice, Revenge, Love, Faith, Hatred, Compassion, Adventure, Honor, or anything else you can think of. During gameplay, you can invoke your Drive whenever applicable. Your rules expert can tell you more about that later.

8.2.9._COMBAT

Your Combat score is equal to your Strength score (unless you have a Strength of 5 or 6, in which case it's your Strength score plus 1). This is the number of dice you roll during a fight, whether attacking or defending. You can add to this through a variety of means.

8.2.10._NAME

Your character's name should be short, easy to remember and pronounce, and fairly cool. But don't waste too much time coming up with something awesome, since this is a one-shot. Last names work well, as do nicknames based on some aspect of your character's appearance, persona, or history.

8.3._PREGENS

If you don't want to take the time to create characters from scratch, you can use the pre-generated characters listed on the following pages.

8.3.1._BETTY

Discipline: Combat
 Drive: Revenge
 Strength: 5
 Sense: 1
 Soul: 3
 Combat: 6
 Skills: Driving (2)
 Spells: Char, Culebra, Frostbite, Gird, Nacreous, Swarm
 Weapons: Revolver (range 2, damage 1)
 Contacts: Jose Delgado, Police Officer; Zafirah Hassan, DMV Clerk

8.3.2._CIVET

Discipline: Investigation
 Drive: Knowledge
 Strength: 1
 Sense: 6
 Soul: 2
 Combat: 1
 Skills: Charm (5), Intimidation (4), Linguistics (3)
 Spells: Astarte, Cognito, Emeute, Miserere
 Weapons: Switchblade (range 1, damage 1)
 Contacts: Tami Sojanic, Bank Teller; Benjamin Chapman, Newspaper Reporter

8.3.3._DIRGE

Discipline: Sorcery
Drive: Power
Strength: 2
Sense: 2
Soul: 5
Combat: 2
Skills: Medicine (2), Science (2)
Spells: Aphasia, Bete Noir, Cacophony, Carnation, Castigation, Dresden, Emesis, Gadarene, Refuge, Unction
Weapons: Ball-peen hammer (range 1, damage 1)
Contacts: Ken Harriot, Mortician; Heinrich Graumann, Car thief

8.3.4._GORGON

Discipline: Sorcery
Drive: Brutality
Strength: 2
Sense: 1
Soul: 6
Combat: 2
Skills: Military (2)
Spells: Bile, Cancer, Chelicerae, Confound, Diablerie, Glossolalia, Hemophage, Nodule, Tirade, Viscera, Wither, Wormwood
Weapons: Crowbar (range 1, damage 1)
Contacts: James Raziano, Soldier; Thea Atkinson, Hacker

8.3.5._ONI

Discipline: Combat
Drive: Purification
Strength: 6
Sense: 2
Soul: 1
Combat: 7
Skills: Hunting (3), Repair (1)
Spells: Anvil, Capaneus
Weapons: Sword (range 1, damage 1)
Contacts: Leslie Nakamura, Convict; Patrick Rein, Priest

8.3.6._TROYKA

Discipline: Investigation
Drive: Redemption
Strength: 3
Sense: 5
Soul: 1
Combat: 3
Skills: Computer Use (1), Crime (4), Empathy (2), Journalism (3)
Spells: Nimrod, Oracle
Weapons: Revolver (range 2, damage 1)
Contacts: Andrea McCaul, Social Worker; Christopher Greene, Bail Bondsman



Chapter 8:

QUICKSTART

START AT
8.1. THE END



8.4. QUICKSTART PROCESS

This isn't a real game session. It's a demo, a dry run. The purpose is to get you used to the rules, and to make sure that your gaming group is firing on all cylinders. This is an opportunity to discuss your process, and to establish a framework for future gameplay.

8.4.1. TRANSPARENCY

Your gaming group may decide that the Director isn't allowed to give hints during gameplay, or that Fury awards should remain secret until the end of each session (more on that in the Director section, so if you're a player, ask the Director), or you may decide that out-of-character dialogue is strictly verboten in your gaming group. Every group has its own standards. But during Quickstart gameplay, abandon those standards. Focus on analysis while you play. Since you're trying to spend as little time as possible during character creation, make sure that you're asking and answering questions during the gameplay.

8.4.2. OOC NEGOTIATION

Ask questions about what's going on. Can I do this? Why or why not? What can I do? How does it work for his character? What skills do you have? Try to learn about the game while playing it. Of course, you want to keep the action going, so if there's a lot that you want to know, you can always write it down and discuss it during the postmortem (see below).

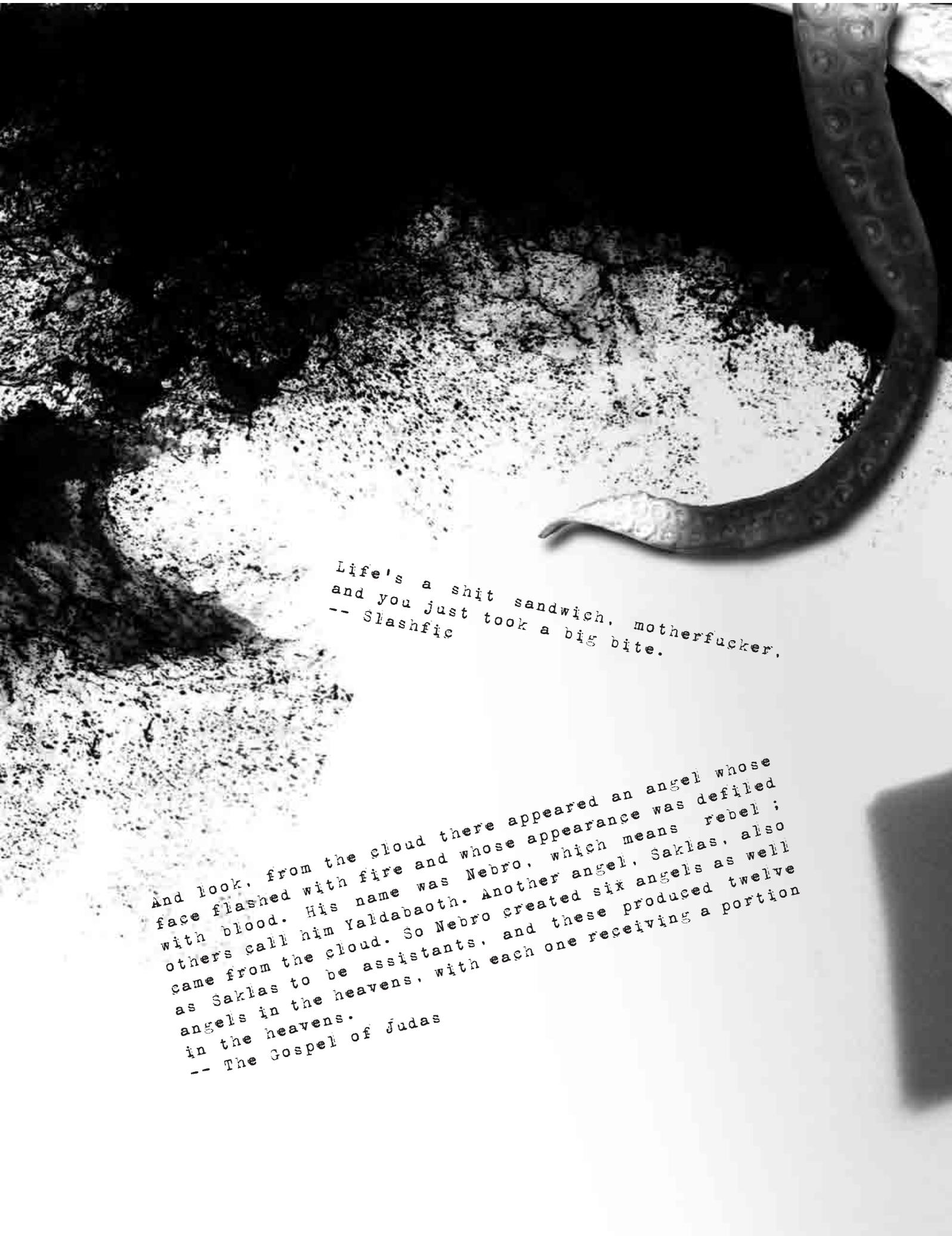
You also want to talk about the subject matter. What's your group comfortable with? What are the boundaries for religious themes, or violence, or other subject matter? How far is too far?

8.4.3. PROCESS OF ELIMINATION

Normally, you try to keep your Disciples around for the next game. For this session, though, you go all out. Take all kinds of crazy risks, pull all kinds of stunts. Disciples are ballsy and more than a little loco. There's no room for timidity in this game. With any luck, all of the player characters will go down swinging during the Quickstart session. You don't even have to close the case. It's more about getting a feel for each others' gameplay style, and for the rules.

8.4.4. POSTMORTEM

When it's all over, ask yourself what went wrong and what went right. What discussions or information would have helped to streamline the process? What parts of the game are still confusing? At this point, it'll probably be more helpful to flip through the rest of the book, reading chapters in their entirety.



Life's a shit sandwich, motherfucker,
and you just took a big bite.
-- Slashfic

And look, from the cloud there appeared an angel whose
face flashed with fire and whose appearance was defiled
with blood. His name was Nebro, which means rebel ;
others call him Yaldabaoth. Another angel, Saklas, also
came from the cloud. So Nebro created six angels as well
as Saklas to be assistants, and these produced twelve
angels in the heavens, with each one receiving a portion
in the heavens.
-- The Gospel of Judas

Chapter 9:

Defiled with Blood

APPENDIX



9.1. WTF DOES AMANUENSIS MEAN?

Amanuensis is a real word. Vouzire is not. As a general rule, the names of spells are real words, and are either archaic or obscure terms (malison, nacreous), proper nouns culled from fiction and myth (Astarte, Capaneus), or words that were appropriated from other languages (bête noir, culebra). The names of demons are created from whole cloth.

9.1.1. GUIDELINES

Accent is indicated by the presence of an apostrophe. If in doubt, agree on a pronunciation and just stick with it.

UNSUB

appears as 'burning angel'
consumed flesh of victims

- eyewitness alcoholic... should investigate
didn't kill them
they died of smoke inhalation

predator or scavenger?

only ate cooked meat - significant?

9.1.2. PRONUNCIATION

Amanuensis [uh-man-yoo-en'-sis]

Aphasia [uh-fey'-zhuh]

Ares [air'-eez]

Armistice [ahr'-muh-stis]

Askance [uh-skans']

Aspinaba [as-puh-nah'-ba]

Astarte [a-stahr'-tee]

Baskra [bosk'-ruh]

Bazulariam [boz-uh-lair'-ee-am]

Benassim [ben-uh-sim']

Bête Noir [bet nwah']

Burgeon [bur'-jun]

Cacophony [kuh-kof'-uh-nee]

Caliban [kal'-uh-ban]

Capaneus [kap'-uh-nyoos]

Carapace [kar'-uh-peys]

Cathexis [kuh-thek'-sis]

Cauriak [cawr-ee-ak']

Chela [kee'-luh]

Chelicerae [kuh-lis'-er-uh]

Chiaroscuro [kee-ahr-uh-skyoor'-oh]

Cielao [see-el'-uh-ko]

Cognito [kog-nee'-toh]

Crepusculus [kri-puhs'-kyuh-lus]

Culebra [koo-leb'-ruh]

Curhadac [coor-ad'-uhk]

Daemuil [day'-moo-il]

DaVaad [duh-vod']

Dengiorre [den-jee-or']

Deyestim [duh-yes'-tim]

Diablerie [dee-ah'-bluh-ree]

Discern [di-surn']

Eloign [i-loin']

Emesis [em'-uh-sis]

Emeute [ay-moot']

Energumen [en-ur-goo'-men]

Excoriate [ik-skawr'-ee-eyt]

Exhumilat [ex-hoom'-uh-lot]

Fliacza [flee-ox'-uh]

Foathiaq [foe-oth'-ee-ak]

Gadarene [gad'-uh-rene]

Gatterag [gat'-er-ag]

Glossolalia [glos-uh-ley'-lee-uh]

Grusce [groos'-uh]

Hemophage [he-mo-fayj']

Issoac [iss'-oh-ak]

Khorepta [coh-rep'-tuh]

Kinarsette [kin-or-set']

Laiamas [lie-ahm'-uhs]

Laradina [lar-uh-deen'-ah]

Leviathan [li-vahy'-uh-thuhn]

Levin [lev'-in]

Litany [lit'-n-ee]

Lunamic [loo-nom'-ik]

Malison [mal'-uh-suhn]

Malvado [mal-vod'-oh]

Merstett [mur-stet']

Miserere [miz-uh-rair'-ee]

Moloch [moh'-lok]

Mursallic [mur-sal'-ik]

Nacreous [ney'-kree-uhs]

Naissante [nai-son'-tay]

Nephilim [nef'-uh-lim]

Nethasq [nuh-thask']

Nodule [noj'-ool]

Noesis [noh-ee'-sis]

Nyctalgic [nik-tal'-jik]

Octave [ok'-tiv]

Ordal [or'-dull]

Paikhalix [pie-cahl'-iks]

Pelogris [pell'-uh-griss]

Phantasm [fan-taz'-moh]

Phoriag [foe'-ree-ag]

Phthisis [thahy'-sis]

QaVaad [kuh-vod']

Qolishuul [kaw-lah-shool']

Ravaqat [rah'-vuh-cat]

Remarec [reh'-mur-ek]

Scabresse [scab-ress']

Schatten [shot'-en]

Sclera [skleer'-uh]

Scossa [sco'-suh]

Seismos [sahyz'-mohs]

Shurull [shah-rule']

Smilodon [smahy'-luh-don]

Sombra [sohm'-bruh]

Stratus [strat'-uhs]

Suliegos [soo-lee-ay'-gos]

Sycorax [sik'-uh-rax]

Tavalisk [tav'-uh-lisk]

Tirade [tahy'-reyd]

Uction [uhngk'-shuhn]

Valence [vey'-luhns]

Veneno [ven-eh'-no]

Viscera [vis'-er-uh]

Vouzire [voo-zeer']

Vuiloma [voo-ee-lo'-muh]

Wreziam [rez'-ee-am]

Xarualac [zar-oo-al'-ak]

9.2. QUICKREF GLOSSARY

Ammo: Rather than keep track of individual bullets, you just keep track of how many firefights you've been in. Each weapon is only good for a specific number of firefights, after which time you need more ammo or a new weapon. See page 115 for more information.

Armor: Whether it's a bulletproof vest or ceramic plate, armor has a rating between 1 and 12. More information can be found on page 114.

Attribute: There are three Attributes: Strength, Sense, and Soul. Each has a score between 1 and 6. Normal people have attributes of 1 or 2 (occasionally as high as 3, but that's rare). Disciples have one score that's considered superhuman (a score of 5 or 6). For more information, consult Chapter 3.

Cash: Your Cash score represents the number of dice that you can roll at the beginning of a session when you're trying to buy something. Everyone starts with a Cash score of 1. For more information, see page 57.

Combat (discipline): If a character has this Discipline, it means that he or she is an expert fighter, and adds 1 point to the Combat score. For more information, see page 46.

Combat (score): The Combat score is usually equal to the Strength score, and represents the number of dice that you roll when attacking or defending. For more information, see page 41.

Contact: A contact is someone that your character knows, who can help with an investigation or even trigger one. For more information, see page 53.

Defiler (demon): A defiler demon possesses its victims and forces them to commit acts of violence. For more information, see page 25.

Discipline: This indicates superiority in a certain area: strength, intellect, or spirituality. There are three Disciplines: Combat, Lore, and Sorcery. For more information, see page 46.

Drive: One word that describes your character's primary motivation. This can be invoked during gameplay to garner an additional die. For more information, see page 53.

Fury: Each Disciple begins the game with 12 points of Fury. You can kill these points to achieve certain goals during gameplay. If you fulfill certain non-essential objectives while closing a case, you can earn additional points of Fury (though you can never have more than 12 at a time). For more information, see page 55.

Hunter (demon): A hunter demon preys on humans, killing them and/or feeding on them. For more information, see page 25.

Kicking Ass: By killing points of Fury, you can perform stunts that may help you turn the tide of battle (or may get you fragged). For more information, see page 55.

Life: Each Disciple begins the session with 12 points of Life. If the score reaches 0, the Disciple must then Retire. For more information, see page 114.

Lore (discipline): If a character has this Discipline, it means that he or she is able to identify demons based on evidence. For more information, see page 46.

Magic (score): Equal to your Soul score, the Magic score tells you how many spells you get (twice your Magic score), and how many dice you roll when using a spell (equal to your Magic score). For more information, see page 67.

Range: Range is defined as follows: 1 = Standing next to you. 2 = Across the room. 3 = Up the street. For more information, see page 114.

Retirement: When the Disciple's Life score reaches 0, it's time to Retire. Death is not immediate; the Disciple is able to close the case out with a bang.

Sense: An attribute which defines your character's intellect, education, and wit. For more information, see page 41.

Skell: Someone who's been possessed by a defiler demon. Skells can be innocent victims or scumbags who had it coming. It's hard to say which is which until the exorcism's over with. Your first priority is taking the demon down. Your second priority is saving the skell.

Skill: Reflects what your character used to do for a living. For more information, see page 47.

SMG: Submachine gun.

Sorcery (discipline): If a character has this Discipline, it means that he or she is able to perform exorcisms. For more information, see page 47.

Soul: An attribute which defines your character's spiritual fortitude and will. For more information, see page 41.

Stalker (demon): A stalker demon feeds on human misery, and helps humans to harm themselves and others. For more information, see page 25.

Strength: An attribute which defines your character's power, speed, and endurance. For more information, see page 41.





Chapter 9: Defiled with Blood

JOURNAL: LAST RIDE

I don't have a background in medicine, but I think I may have a problem.

My heart's pounding in my chest like a jackhammer, and it's actually becoming problematic. Usually, it slows down after a while, but I've been leaning against this wall for a few minutes, and it's still out of control. I put a finger on my throat and I try to squint at my watch. Hard to see in this dim light, but if I'm doing the math right, my heart rate's at about 200 beats per minute, probably higher than that, and shows no sign of dropping.

Can't seem to get enough air in my lungs. Might have something to do with the fact that my nose is broken. Crushed, more like. Can't breathe, keep hawking up blood. Trying not to swallow too much of it.

Morlock and Council are somewhere in this ghost town. They were heading to church to follow a lead on this skull. Me and Slashfic went downtown to see if we could find a police station or maybe a store sells hunting equipment, something. Needed more ammo, more gear.

Skell was waiting, had us figured out. We were still busted up from the brawl with those neo-Nazi guys at the bus station, so things got out of control quick. Slashfic dropped all kinds of black magic on this thing, but the skull was all over the place. We just couldn't get a hit. I was shooting, Slashfic was throwing lightning and fire and everything else he had, and we just couldn't bring the guy down.

Thing with a case of demonic possession is, you try to keep the skull alive, and you try to exorcise the target, the demon. But, you know, sometimes, you can't do both. Sometimes, you just say a fuckin act of contrition and you do what you have to do. That's life.

But this demon was too much for us, and we decided to go for the jugular a little too late. Slashfic tried to cast one spell too many, and his body just gave out. I did the same, but at least I stayed conscious. Last spell I cast was Malison, and I cursed that motherfucker with every swear-word I ever heard in my life. Worked, too. Drove the demon away, and gave me enough time to check on Slashfic. His pulse was there, but weak. He was in shock. The ladies were already on their way, so I radioed them and told them his location, and ordered them to get him to a hospital ASAP. I'm pretty sure that even if they floor it, Slashfic isn't going to make it. I can't let myself think about it.

Don't know what the hell I was thinking. There's no way I can do this. My left hand won't stop shaking, and I can't run fast because my knees are all rubbery. But the girls aren't any better off. Morlock took three rounds to the gut in that firefight, and even though Slashfic had cast Carnation on her, she's still got a foot in the grave. Council's wreckage, wiped out from the nonstop barrage. Fights, spells, exorcisms. You nap on the couch, then you get up and have some coffee and get back to work. There's just so many damn cases piled up, we got no time to clear them all.

We're losing this war.

This was a town full of people a couple days ago. A small town, but it wasn't empty. There were people here, walking around and buying things, talking, driving. Now it's completely deserted. Are they all dead? What kind of demon could take out an entire town, even a tiny village like this, in just two days?

I'm staggering down the street. Old-timey kind of town, lots of brick buildings with glass storefronts, some of this stuff going way back.

Chapter 9: Defiled with Blood

Hardware stores passed down from father to son, old restaurants with dark wooden booths and checkered tablecloths. A place that sells furniture, brass beds, lamps. Used and rare bookstore. Where the fuck did everybody go? It's only nine o'clock, whole town's vanished.

Except the skell. I hear him screaming as he pounds down the sidewalk in bloody bare feet. Used to be a priest. Now you'd barely know he was human. Been punching his face, it looks like a plate of raw steaks with a pair of eyes sticking out of it. We were mixing it up, and I busted him in the mouth with the butt of my pistol. He lost most of his teeth, but that didn't stop him from biting me. Wrist is all swollen where the jagged bits of enamel ground into my skin and bone.

My heart isn't slowing down. Wonder if maybe there's a pharmacy in town. What do you take? Nitroglycerine? Something like that, try to slow my heart down. Beta blockers. My dad, after his heart attack, they put him on beta blockers. I remember, he never took his medication.

Later that year, some cops found him in his truck, on the side of the road. It was a coronary. God dammit, Dad. So many fucking times I tried to tell you. Never listened. Stubborn old bastard.

I'm out of ammo, so I'm carrying this steak knife I found in someone's house. I keep hoping I'll find a cop car or a sporting goods store, but no luck so far. And I can't go exploring, because if I lose this bastard's trail, that's it. He'll move on to another town and wipe it off the map just like this one. I can't stop moving. Feels like I'm getting stabbed in the chest.

Okay, got my back to the wall. Looking left, looking right. Nothing.

I love Edna. You know what it's like when you realize you're in love? You just don't give a fuck about anything else anymore. Your job, issues with your parents, car trouble, it all just fades into the background noise. You know what really matters, and the world just sort of freezes and crystallizes. Something like that, I don't know how to say it. Everything becomes sharp and colorful, and you feel very strong.

When you know you're going to die, it's very similar. The world seems more real. Like you suddenly appreciate the way an old town feels at night. It's not like the city, not at all. It's kind of rustic, and a little sad, the way that the world has passed these little places by. You get nostalgic for something you never had, a quiet life in the country, where everyone knows your name and you don't even have to order when you go to a restaurant, because they know what you like. There's a sharp pain in the left side of my chest. It's spiking down my arm, towards the elbow. These small towns, they have a certain smell, at night. You can just imagine sitting on your porch, rocking, listening to people singing hymns.

The demon drops down off the top of a building, with a hair-raising scream that starts low and just gets higher-pitched, and it's grinning. I think. The features are distorted, puffy, raw. Still wearing the priest's costume, or vestments, or whatever. It crouches on the sidewalk and smiles at me.

Problem with the steak knife is, I gotta let the skell get in range. Not going to get a second chance, way things look. I can barely stand up, let alone fight. I got one shot at this son of a bitch, and that's going to be it, I think.

I wonder if I'm stupid enough to try to cast another spell, and I figure, yeah, I probably am. My lower back is really bothering me for some reason.

The demon opens its mouth, and then keeps opening it. I hear tendons and muscles strain, then pop and rip. Blood seeps from the corners of its mouth, then streams out in crimson rivulets as it continues to open its mouth. Torn skin.

Its head flips all the way back, and it's still screaming, tongue writhing madly, like a snake with a busted spine. Jagged yellow teeth, stained with blood, spreading farther apart, looking like the world's weirdest bear trap.

The head suddenly snaps back forward, teeth shattering against one another, and it says my name. My real name. Its eyes are wide and red, and it's whispering my name. Sutton, it says. Slowly, the priest's body lurches towards me on blistered feet, and for some reason, I'm convinced that it looks just like me. Of course, this begs the question, whose body am I in?

I shake my head. Bullshit. Manipulation, it's messing with my head. I cast Inferno and brace myself. Heart's thundering in my rib cage like a jackhammer. I feel it in my throat, my wrists.

Waves of red fire erupt from my hands, smashing into the priest's carcass, igniting the clothing, blistering the skin, searing its face black. Those eyes, they just burn away. Something ruptures in my chest, a burning wetness.

I stumble back, my eyebrows and shirt collar smoldering. I slap the embers off my face, then lunge forward with the knife. I catch him dead in the chest. I did it. I got the motherfucker, and that means that the skell is dead too. Sorry, Padre. Vaya con Dios. Hope you had a good life.

The priest's body hits the ground and rolls over. Looks dead. Of course, he looked pretty dead five seconds ago, too, when he was trying to kill me. But I can feel it. The case is closed.

I hear a car pulling up. Figures. Here comes the cavalry. Little too late, guys. But that's okay. In my chest, it's like someone's poking around with a knitting needle, this sharp lancing pain. I can't hold onto the steak knife, and it clatters on the sidewalk.

I try to dig some of the blood and gristle out of my nose, so I can breathe better. Can't seem to get any air in my lungs. One hand on the wall, I slowly slide down and sit there on the concrete.

Headlights blinding me, pinning me to the brick. Not a car after all. It's a truck. A dirty old pickup truck. It's my dad, come to take me home.

The headlights fade out. I look for a light in the darkness, but nothing. Just endless black. Hah. I fuckin knew it.

I didn't put up with any bullshit. I stood by my friends. I tried to do the best that I could. I tried to live a good life, like my father taught me. I wish he could have seen that I turned out okay, once I got my head together, but I guess that's just how it goes.

I should have told Edna how I feel. But I think she understands.

My name is Hush. I was a soldier on the front lines. I did my job. I am here, at the end of the world. I am signing off.

I'm not afraid.

A warning sign with a white background and black diagonal stripes at the top and bottom. The sign is rectangular and has a slightly distressed, weathered appearance. The text is centered and reads:

**PLAYERS
SHOULD STOP
READING
NOW**



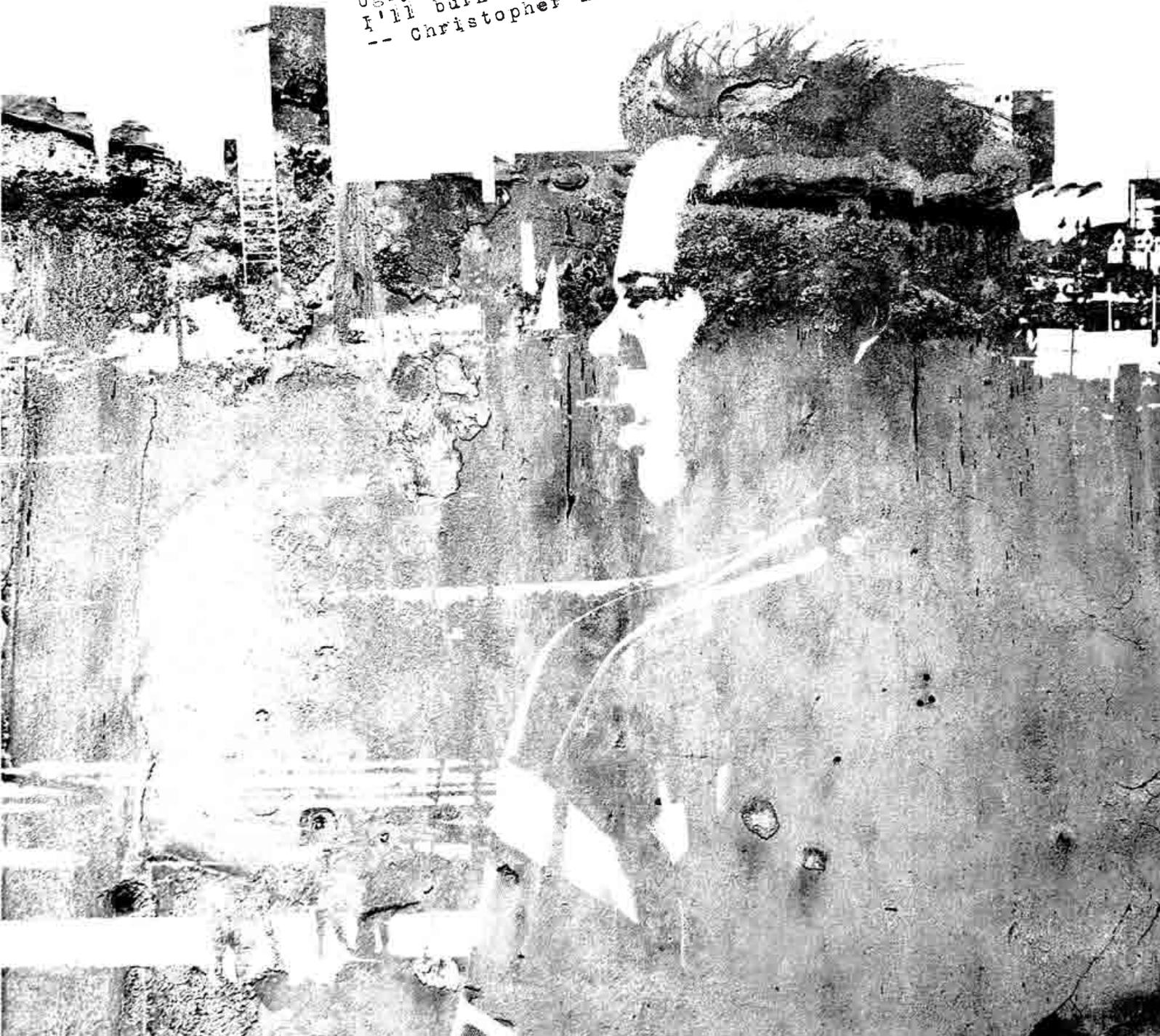
**DIRECTOR
SECTION**



After the soul had left the third power behind, it rose upward, and saw the fourth power, which had seven forms. The first form is darkness, the second desire, the third ignorance, the fourth the arousing of death, the fifth is the kingdom of the flesh, the sixth is the wisdom of the folly of the flesh, the seventh is wrathful wisdom. These are the seven participants in wrath.

-- The Gospel of Mary

O, mercy, heaven! look not so fierce on me!
Adders and serpents, let me breathe a while!
Ugly hell, gape not! come not, Lucifer!
I'll burn my books! O Mephistophilis!
-- Christopher Marlowe, Dr. Faustus



Chapter 10:
Wrathful Wisdom

DIRECTING

10.1. DIRECTION

First, it's important for you to be familiar with the content in the Player Section. Chapter 8, the Quickstart rules, will help you get your first game off the ground, but it's still vital that you have an idea of where the major information is located.

On with the show.

As the Director, it's your job to keep the action going. Yes, this is a game of back-and-forth, where the players have the ability to describe their actions in great detail. However, as the Director, it's your job to serve as the intermediary between the characters and the world.

Your task is to get the Disciples from the initial Trigger to the final confrontation, the Takedown. Typically, a standard series of events in a Dread session goes something like this:

1. Trigger
2. Investigation
3. Conflict
4. Revelation
5. Takedown

The trick is to get from the Trigger to the Takedown in a way that's fun for the players. Part of the difficulty stems from the fact that the players won't always jump through hoops that you've set up. The best way to sidestep this dilemma is to eliminate the hoops altogether.

Instead, think of the major settings in each scenario as scenes in a TV show. Imagine a cop show, in which the major characters are investigators who are trying to nail the bad guys. The team moves from location to location, and each segment of investigation brings them a little closer to the show's finale and the showdown with the serial killer or drug dealer or whatever.

In a game of Dread, the Disciples begin with a Trigger, then proceed through stages of investigation to the final showdown with the demon, resulting (presumably) in a Takedown.

Let's take a closer look at these stages.

10.1.1. THE TRIGGER

The Trigger can come from any source. For example: the Mentor, a Victim, a Contact, an Extra, or even a Disciple. The Trigger is a small and cryptic indication of demonic activity. It can be a scrawled note, a voice message, an e-mail, a clipped newspaper article, a personal visit, a blood sample, or a vision.

The Trigger never tells the whole story. If the newspaper article talks about a ritualistic murder-suicide, the Disciples should get the idea that there's more to it than that. If an Extra or a Victim tells the Disciples about a possessed relative, there should be something that's being held back -- either the story's a lie, or maybe the whole thing is a trap. The Trigger should present the tip of the iceberg.

The Trigger requires immediate action. The situation should pose a threat of some kind, either to the players or to innocent people. If the Disciples do not act, it should be clear that someone's life hangs in the balance. A sense of urgency is vital.

The Trigger should point to something or someone. A person, place, or thing should be part of the Trigger. At least one course of action (preferably several) should be obvious to the Disciples. For instance, a Trigger might come in the form of a tearful testimonial from a woman whose spouse appears possessed. This may be presented to the Disciples directly, or they might get a call from a Contact on the force, who knows one of the members of the Cabal from a past case.

Either way, the players can elect to ask further questions of the woman, visit her home and examine her husband, or try to follow the woman around and learn a little bit about her before just walking into her home. These three actions can generate further leads, combat scenarios, or new dilemmas (for example, they arrive at the home, and the husband is found dead in the kitchen, two bullet holes in his back).

The Trigger should be part of a story. There should be a series of events leading up to the Trigger, and there should be a list of possible outcomes. For instance, in the case of a woman whose spouse is possessed by an Aspinaba demon, there should be a history of abuse between them (and a police record, as a result). If the players don't intervene, a likely conclusion to the scenario could be that the possessed man killing his wife and their respective families.

If the Cabal reaches him in time, this can be averted. If they drag their heels, he may murder his wife, but not her family. Their actions should influence and determine the events that unfold around them, but there must be a logical chain of consequences before and after the events of an episode.

10.1.2. INVESTIGATION

When the Disciples arrive at the first scene, the investigation begins. This may entail the use of backgrounds to question people (such as using a Psychiatrist background to gently probe a shell-shocked witness, or using the Police Interrogator background to intimidate someone into giving up some information). The Disciples might also use their magic to gather information. A Disciple might cast Nimrod to track someone by foot, or use Oracle to gather some hints about the situation. Spells like Bete Noir and Confession can pull useful information out of uncooperative Extras.

In all of these cases, the Investigation segment requires that a Director have some information to divulge. But it's not necessary to point the players in the location of the demon (or its possessed victim) right off the bat.

During the Investigation stage, the Disciples are often impeded by Extras with hostile intentions. These Extras are, for whatever reason, opposed to the actions of the Cabal, and are prepared to respond with deadly force. Consider the following scenario:

A demon has possessed a member of a crime syndicate. Using his body, it has murdered his family, and has also attacked people affiliated with a rival organization. Essentially, it's finding every significant person in his life and murdering them. Eventually, the demon will grow tired of the game, and will abandon the body, leaving the victim to face the consequences of its actions.

The Disciples are trying to find the demon and perform an exorcism so that they can kill it. However, the mobster has friends and enemies who are trying to find him as well. If the Disciples start poking around crime scenes, or visiting the possessed man's home, these mobsters are going to get suspicious. They may assume that the Disciples are federal agents, or members of another crime family. Either way, they're going to be aggressive, and will probably dismiss anything that the Disciples say. The likely outcome of any Investigation is going to be Conflict.

10.1.3._CONFLICT

The Extras that menace the Disciples during an investigation are going to be ordinary people, for the most part. They use guns, they use fists, they use makeshift weapons like baseball bats and pool cues. But they do pose a threat, because they tend to attack in groups.

The style and frequency of Conflict will vary from session to session, but it's always good to have at least one major fight in each game of Dread. The Conflict session is a good way for the players to blow off some steam; there's nothing like a good barroom brawl or back-alley shootout to get the adrenaline flowing.

Extras who pose a threat to the Investigation can take many forms, including: criminal organizations that perceive the Disciples to be law-enforcement agents or rival criminals; hate groups like white supremacist organizations and Neo-nazi outfits; crooked cops or federal agents, who fear that the Disciples will expose them; and demon-worshipping cultists who know about the Disciples and want to stop them.

All of these groups have common ground: they're all on the wrong side of the law, and they all perceive the Disciples as a direct threat to their goals. These groups aren't going to want to negotiate, and if their initial attacks are repelled, it's conceivable that they're going to come back with better weapons, in larger numbers.

You may want to begin with an even fight, just to give the players a taste of victory early on. After all, no matter how heavily armed, a normal person against a Disciple just isn't much of a fight. The average person has Attribute scores of 1 or 2 (maybe a 3 in there somewhere), so a Disciple should be able to make short work of an ordinary schmoe without even resorting to magic or Fury.

Afterwards, as the Investigation continues, you can send larger and more dangerous groups against the Disciples, posing an ever-increasing challenge as they try to get to the demon and destroy it.

10.1.4._REVELATION

Each bout of Conflict should end with a Revelation of some kind. This is what the Investigation segment should lead to. If the Investigation produces a clue, and the Conflict scenario presents an obstacle, then the Revelation that follows should be an extension of the two that leads to the conclusion (the Takedown) or to a new round of Investigation.

For example, a Revelation might include information about the location of the skull, or clues about the relationship between a skull and the violent Extras that the players keep running into. If the demon is a hunter, then the Revelation might be physical evidence that helps the players narrow down its location.

If the demon is a stalker, the Revelation could be a clue that points to a common ground between various murders, or a piece of evidence that uncovers the location of a missing person's body.

The Revelation is a new piece of the puzzle, some information that points to the next stage of investigation.

10.1.5. TAKEDOWN

The Takedown is the final stage of the case, and consists of a battle between the Disciples and the demon. On the one hand, the Disciples should be somewhat battered. They've been fighting Extras, and they've probably taken some hits.

On the other hand, if they've been completing their secondary objectives, they should have enough Fury to propel them through some stunts during the takedown. That's going to come in handy, because demons are a lot more powerful than humans.

Typically, the Takedown comes into play after the players have experienced all previous segments of a case. In some cases, the players will go through the pattern more than once.

For example:

Trigger: The Disciples find out about a suspicious murder in a cabin

Investigation: A Nimrod spell discovers footprints in the snow, leading to a compound

Conflict: Demented cultists in the woods attack the Disciples; the Disciples kill them

Revelation: One cultist was the governor's son, and lived in an expensive house uptown

Investigation: The Disciples find a lone cultist ransacking the house, and use Confession on him

Conflict: More cultists attack, and the brawl spills out into the street

Revelation: Computer files show plans for a construction site in a wildlife preserve

Investigation: At the site, the Disciples find the cultists are worshiping the demon

Takedown: The final showdown involves Disciples, cultists, and the demon itself

In this case, the first Conflict led to a Revelation, which pointed to a new phase of Investigation. After the cycle had been repeated, the team moved to the final battleground for the Takedown.

10.1.6. SESSION DURATION

The length of the session is going to depend on the scope of the scenario. Basically, it's conflicts + investigation + takedown = duration. The more conflicts and investigations you throw in there, the longer the session is going to last. A couple quick fights and some breaking-and-entering, and you've got a short, sweet hour-long case. Multiple encounters with cultists, drug dealers, or associated bad guys, plus numerous clues scattered through various investigation sequences, and you've got the makings of a multi-session adventure.

10.2. THE CAST

Let's talk about some of the people involved in each game of Dread. In brief, Disciples are the player characters. They're the stars of the show. Contacts are the people that they know, who can furnish scenario triggers or help provide information. Extras are the ordinary people that the Disciples encounter during an investigation. Victims are the people who suffer as a result of demonic activity -- these are the people that the Cabal is trying to rescue.

10.2.1. THE DISCIPLES

The Disciples are the focus of the game. This doesn't change, ever. The characters are the heart and soul of Dread, and if the players don't relate to them, there's no point in going on. If the characters get into a crisis situation, the players need to care about the outcome, or there won't be any tension, and the game just won't be any damn fun at all.

Take time during character creation. Get involved, and be sure to explain everything carefully. Make sure you answer player questions and present them with all their options. After all, it's your team, too. Set aside an entire game session to create the Disciples, and familiarize yourself with how characters are created.

Focus on the players during gameplay. While it's important to have notes, also be sure to keep an eye on the players during a game. Are they involved? Interested? Bored? Waiting for something to happen? Trying to get a word in edgewise? Keep your finger on the pulse of the game, and make adjustments as necessary. If one of the players is incredibly bored and frustrated because his character's skills just aren't called for, and haven't been used in some time, shine a spotlight on him. Bring in a Contact, a clue, a challenge -- some opportunity to role-play, and to get involved. If things are moving along at a good clip, however, you may want to reconsider bringing in that villain. Things are interesting enough without her -- keep her in the wings, waiting for the right moment. Let the players contribute to the story, and take your cues from them whenever possible.

10.2.2. CONTACTS

Contacts belong to the players. Don't kill off a player's Contact. That's a job for the player, and for no one else. Use Contacts to move a story along, but don't overuse them. Let the players know that they're in control of their Contacts, and that they need to be willing to turn to them in a time of crisis or confusion.

Contacts make great story hooks. It's okay to use a Contact as a story hook, provided that the players are still the focus of the story. A Contact can call one of the Disciples in the middle of the night to say that she hears screams coming from the apartment upstairs. After that, let the Contact recede into the story, unless summoned by the player. Don't have the Contact barge in on the Disciples as they're examining the corpse in the apartment upstairs.

Instead, let the Disciple call the Contact to ask for a description of her neighbor. If things grind to an absolute halt, you might have the Contact call the Disciple on her cell phone, but remember to let the player take the lead after that.

Contacts add flavor. If the Disciples' Contacts are terse and hard-bitten, then that's how the game will feel. If they're light-hearted and prone to banter, they'll lighten the story and the tone. If you inject the Contacts with charm and glee, or misery and angst, make sure that it's what the players had in mind, or else things might get awkward. Talk to your players about their contacts.

10.2.3. EXTRAS

Extras can be anything. Window dressing, targets, potential Contacts, potential Victims, potential hostiles -- these characters currently belong to the Director. They are the people that the Disciples meet during the course of an adventure (excluding Contacts and Victims). They are store owners, priests, lawyers, derelicts, poets, policemen, teachers, and soldiers. They react to players' actions as you see fit, and they contribute to the mood and tone of an adventure.

Extras are just the ordinary people that the players can interact with. Some are helpful, some are enemies; some are good, and some are evil.

Extras work best when contrasted. If every Extra is sour and taciturn, it gets a little old after a while. However, if the Disciples arrive in a small town where all the Extras are glib and joyful, it changes things. Back in the city, most people were stressed and crabby. Here, everyone's really... nice. Still, wasn't that family slaughtered just the day before yesterday? Isn't it odd that no one's tense or upset?

Extras lull players into a false sense of security. Remember, ordinary humans don't really stack up against Disciples. Magic will horrify and subdue Extras, and they certainly can't take out a group of Disciples in a fair fight. Don't be afraid to send a group of Extras against the players now and again.

Gang members, neo-nazis, drug dealers, crooked cops, hitmen, and drunken mobs make for good cannon fodder. These fights allow Disciples to develop combat strategy, earn Fury, and develop a false sense of security (which you'll gleefully obliterate when the time is right).

Extras make great red herrings. Players don't know whom you've designated as Extras, Villains, or Victims. If they're good, they may not even be aware of these categories. Feel free to set up the occasional red herring.

10.2.4. VICTIMS

Victims remind the Disciples of their valor. At the end of a particularly brutal session, the players might not feel that their characters were terribly heroic. Maybe things didn't necessarily turn out the way they'd expected, the battle was a close one, the enemy got away unscathed - it might be easy for the players to lose sight of the big picture. Use the Victims to remind them that they made a difference.

Even if the last that they see of a Victim is a tearstained face and a hand waving goodbye from the back of a police cruiser, be sure to drive home the point that the Disciples saved a life and made closure possible for someone.

Victims are sympathetic characters. Remember that almost every demon inflicts pain on an innocent. For example, the Aspinaba demon possesses the body of an abusive parent or spouse. However, it then slaughters the family members of its host. Even if the Disciples think that the host should suffer, the Victims must be protected. To that end, be sure to present them as sympathetic characters: defenseless, in need of rescue.

Victims are tangled up in complex situations. Victims can't just be whisked away to safety; frequently, they are involved in scenarios that must be resolved. Something must be done to close the door for the Victim.

A child whose mother is possessed by an Aspinaba demon can't just be taken to safety. Something must be done with the mother. Whether she is killed outright, or freed from demonic possession by exorcism (then, presumably, remanded to the proper authorities for child abuse) is up to the players, but something must be done to close the door for the Victim.

10.3. SETTING

The static setting should be consistent. The city can't be a rain-drenched, dreary warzone in one session, and a sunny, pleasant metropolis the next. The mood needs to be consistent and maintained, in order to lend the setting a crucial sense of reality. If it changes every single week, it's hard to visualize or take seriously.

The static setting needs a foil. The next town over should be nothing like the Cabal's hometown. If their city is rainy and bleak, the next town over should be warm and clean. This establishes a mood for both settings more firmly.

The players need to help design the setting. Have the players consider and answer the following questions about the town or city where the characters live and work:

- * Is it a large metropolis, or a quiet little town?
- * Is there a lot of crime?
- * How do citizens treat strangers or newcomers?
- * Are people friendly?
- * What's the weather like?
- * What's the city famous for?
- * Are there any current scandals?
- * Do people go to church?
- * Do children mind their parents?
- * Do people stay out late?
- * If so, what do they do?
- * Do people answer cries for help?
- * Do they try to take care of one another?

10.3.1. HEADQUARTERS

The players must design their Base of Operations. Have the players consider and answer the following questions about their home:

- * Do they live in a house, or an apartment?
- * Separate bedrooms, or a barracks?
- * Is there a weight room?
- * A laboratory?
- * A dojo?
- * A large kitchen?
- * A library?
- * A war room with a map of the city?
- * A weapons locker?
- * A study?
- * An evidence room?

The base of operations is sacred. Unless the players deliberately invite trouble into their home, they'll never be attacked inside their base. It's a safety zone that allows them to regroup, recharge, and reconsider. If they take a beating, they can retreat and nurse their wounds in safety. When ready, they can go back out into battle, ready for more madness.

**10.4. INTERACTION**

Don't oppose the players. It's not a contest; if they make a successful roll, be satisfied. If not, remind them that by killing Fury, they can try again. Encourage them to try to tie their Drives into challenging actions, and remind them to employ dramatic descriptions to get the extra die for being Cool. Help them get the most out of their characters, and don't try to kill them off.

Negotiate boundaries and stick to them. Before gameplay, talk about out-of-character discussion, chatter, jokes, and phone use. Establish rules about all of the above, and stick to them. Make sure the players understand and agree to all of these rules. If they have to remind you of a rule, accept the reminder gracefully, and move on. If you've all accepted these rules, and abide by them, the game will be a more pleasant experience for all involved.

Establish limits for subject matter. Discuss sex, violence, profanity, and blasphemy with your group, and make sure that everyone is aware of what's appropriate (or inappropriate) for you. If necessary, establish a film rating (PG-13, R, NC-17) and stick to it. If people feel uncomfortable with the subject matter, the game won't be fun for them. It's as simple as that. So be vocal before the game starts, and once it's commenced, don't explore any grey areas. Err on the side of caution.

Be organized and efficient. Few things ruin a game faster than a Director who's misplaced his notebook, or who can't remember what happened last week. Take notes, keep them handy, and keep track of what's going on in the game. A couple of notebooks and a pack of post-it notes are all you really need.

Pay attention to everyone. If you're ignoring members of the Cabal, they're probably not having any fun. Even if the player is shy or quiet, spend some "face time". Offer suggestions, if they player isn't sure of what to do. Just don't focus on some players to such an extent that other players feel left out.

Don't expect anything specific from players. If you've got a scene in mind that requires a Disciple to crash through a certain door, rewrite that scene. Now. There's a really good chance that the Disciple's going to pick the lock, climb through a window, or shoot off the doorknob, complicating your scene.

It might even prompt you to try to "railroad" the player into crashing through the door anyhow. It's awkward and frustrating when a player feels that he must jump through hoops to resolve a situation, so don't create that sort of tension. Accept the fact that players are unpredictable, and learn to avoid scenarios that require one specific action that must be performed.

Never ever take control of a player's character. This is lame and ugly and no damn fun at all. Don't ever say, "Your character thinks that she should do this." It's not called for, ever, and makes your players unhappy. Things can look good or bad. That's legitimate and fair. You can say, "It looks like the house is empty." You can say, "It looks like you could jump across pretty easily." But leave it at that. Your job is to furnish a scene. Let the actors do the acting.

10.5. OPPOSITION

When, in the course of human events, it becomes necessary for one people to bust some caps in the name of righteousness, some d12s have to be rolled. The nature of the opposition is going to vary pretty wildly from game to game, but over time, you may want the bad guys to evolve in order to keep up with the good guys.

10.5.1. ONE-SHOTS

For a quickie one-shot, it's good enough to throw some thugs or dope dealers or crooked cops at the player, then let them take down a demon at the end of a session. Think of it as a cop show: you know that before you get to the big guy, you have to take down some low-level muscle first. Same principle.

10.5.2. MULTIPLE SESSIONS

Keep track of which demons you've already used (and maybe which tough-guy opponents, as well). You don't want to get repetitive, particularly when part of the fun is trying to figure out what the hell kind of demon the team is dealing with. For extended campaigns, you can use modified versions of existing demons.

10.5.3. EXTENDED CAMPAIGNS

You may want to introduce recurring enemies. For example, your Cabal may lock horns with a particular cult, or a government organization that keeps interfering with their plans. Over time, the Disciples' enemies may also become more dangerous, switching to heavier weapons, or developing more sophisticated combat skills.

Demons can also become recurring foes, though it's tricky. It doesn't make sense for a brutish, ravenous Hunter to crop up in multiple scenarios, but a Stalker demon could work well. However, in any instance where a demon gets away to fight another day, you want to make sure that there's still a takedown. So, this may entail multiple demons; the Stalker pulls the strings, and the Hunter acts as the muscle. The Disciples bust in, the Hunter gets dusted, the Stalker escapes, but comes back later to get vengeance.

10.6. PACING

Keeping the action going is a matter of starting big, keeping the investigation going, and picking up the slack when the session starts to slow down. By familiarizing yourself with the core components of the scenario (Trigger, Characters, Hostiles, Locations, Battlefields, and Objectives, all explained in Chapter 13), you can bust out a fast-paced, mean-spirited game of gunfights and car chases.

10.6.1. BIG OPENING

Start with something memorable. A dead body, a suicide note, some gruesome evidence, an explosion, an exchange of gunfire, a horrific act of mass destruction that's heard for miles around. Don't be coy, bust out the big guns right at the beginning. Demons are not always subtle. Nor are their human puppets.

10.6.2. COOL SCENES

Everything is an opportunity for the players to be cool, and to do cool things (interrogate people, search dead bodies for evidence, cast spells, brawl). Car chases don't just happen. Leave the keys on the counter, so to speak, and the players will get the message.

Now, some places are cooler than others. Can a library be cool? Yes, if it is on fire, or if there are naked people there. Find a way to work that into the game. Can the DMV be cool? Yes, if a demon has stored someone's lower jaw in a drawer, which the players find while poking about. Can a church folk group meeting be cool? Well, even role-playing has its limits.

10.6.3. PICKING UP SLACK

If things are slowing down, speed them up. Blow up a building, or have a dead person try to run the players down in a stolen car. Have the nearest pay phone ring. Make sure it's a skell on the other line, or someone being eaten. You don't have to explain or justify this stuff. The players will do that on their own. They'll come up with explanations and conspiracy theories that will blow your mind. Roll with it. They're the stars of the show, after all. You are the kid with a stick, poking at a hornet's nest to see if something interesting will happen.

10.7. FIRST GAME

Time for the first game. You only get one chance to make a first impression, so be sure that you know the quickstart rules, be sure to have some solid prepens on hand, keep a notebook nearby, and (try to) show a little mercy.

10.7.1. QUICKSTART

See chapter 8 for the Quickstart rules. In brief, you want to be comfortable with character creation, and you should have an idea of where to find information like descriptions of spells and skills. During this character creation process, you also want to communicate the basics of gameplay, including combat and spellcasting. Nothing too complicated, just the fundamentals of gameplay.

For your first game, you will probably want to use one of the Scenarios in Chapter 13. Feel free to use any of them, as they're all appropriate for new players.

10.7.2. _CHARACTERS

Make 'em and break 'em. You don't want the players to create 'permanent' characters for the first game, or they'll be flipping through the spell descriptions all night. Tell them they're playing a one-shot game with one-shot characters, and let them know that these characters won't be coming out of this one alive. Number one, this establishes the light-hearted and optimistic nature of Dread pretty effectively. Number two, it (hopefully) ensures that they'll go a little faster through the chargen process.

If you can use pregens, great. If the players don't like the idea, you can get them to choose archetypes prior to character creation, which will help you guide them during the chargen process. The three archetypes are Fighter, Investigator, and Exorcist. Pretty simple. Of course, there's no reason you can't have a group of three Fighters, or two Investigators and an Exorcist. But most gaming groups are paranoid about not having The One Special Guy Who Has That One Power We'll Need Later, so they'll probably divvy up and make sure that the bases are covered. "I've got the Tank, if everyone's cool." That kind of thing.

When the first game's over, it's a good idea to create new characters on the spot, if time permits. The game session will be fresh in everyone's mind, so they're going to remember what they liked and hated about the characters they were using.

You can photocopy the character sheet at the back of the book, or download it from www.dread-rpg.com.

10.7.3. _NOTEBOOK

Keep a notebook handy, and jot down your thoughts and responses during gameplay. Make a list of high and low points during the game session, and note areas that require clarification, such as specific rules questions. After gameplay, you may want to lead a short postmortem on the game, while it's still fresh in everyone's mind. What worked? What things needed to be looked up? What subject matter was a little too extreme (if any)?

10.7.4. _MERCY

During the first game, the goal is to wipe the player characters out. It's not your goal, it's everyone's goal. The players need to be in on this. It would be cool if they could all Retire at once, but that's not necessary. It's just important that however the session ends, the characters aren't going to be reused.

However, you must be merciful.

You can't make the players feel like chumps. They're like the Spartans: doomed yet kickass. Let them have their glory, and don't fight them. They can die, but you can't actually oppose them. If the first experience with this game is frustrating, they're less likely to come back for more.

Your job is to set the volleyball, and then let the player spike it.



The existence of God Almighty, the shepherd who watches over His flock and extends to us His infinite mercy, remains a profound and inscrutable mystery that perplexes the mind of rational Man, and this dilemma serves to explain the myriad faiths which have sprung up among the nations of the earth since the earliest days of our existence. There are even those, your humble servant among them, who see the world as a derelict ship without a captain, a lunatic construct without a Maker. However, while the existence of God remains a question subject to debate, there can be no doubt that Demons walk among us, and that they live to cause us harm and suffering, and to degrade their victims. Those who would take arms against the forces of Hell are either brave or foolhardy, and it is no easier to determine which of these is the case than it is to ascertain the nature of the origin of our world and cosmos. All that can be said is that the warrior who wields weapons against a Demon is destined for short life, agonizing torment, and brutal death. It is hoped that the rightness of his cause will serve as some consolation during those final moments.

-- Brother Francisco Maculata, Compendium Vilificarum

Chapter 11:

In the Beginning

HISTORY

Bedrum
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11.1. WHAT HAS BEEN

Jesus of Nazareth, the Anointed One, cast out numerous demons during his time. In Tyre and Sidon, in Gesara and Gadara, in Sepphoris and Tiberias, in Capernaum, in Jerusalem, and in Samaria, he exorcised the afflicted, and he rid the world of demons.

In the 4th century, Long Xi performed the Nuo ritual dance to cast demons from their victims. Wearing his black-and-red lion mask, he battled evil spirits throughout the Zhejiang Province.

Dvaichara Raviryana recited the Shiva Sahasranama, a scripture which lists the 1008 names of Shiva. During the early 8th century, he fought Rakshasas who had possessed the bodies of innocent people.

Rabbi Nahman Zehori cast out dybbuks, employing a mystical gematria based on the Platonic Solid known as the dodecahedron (inspired in turn by the 12 tribes of Israel and the 5 books of the Torah). Throughout the second half of the 12th century, he wandered through Europe, performing exorcisms until his disappearance in 1197.

For millennia, humans were persecuted by demons that fed on their bodies and souls. An ever-growing army of exorcists battled with these fiends, casting them from the bodies of their victims, and destroying them in combat.

Eventually, the world was cleansed of all demons, and mankind settled into a comfortable complacency. In the meantime, the forces of Hell prepared for their inevitable return.

That time has come.

11.1.1. DEMONS

There are three infernal castes: the Kharasiai, the Chraleddim, and the Ragheddim.

The Kharasiai are the highest demonic caste, and serve as the generals in Hell's army. They are twelve in number, and their names are unknown. They have never been seen on earth, and it is likely that they never will be.

The Chraleddim are the field leaders, who will fight the angels on the front lines of the Last War. Some of the Chraleddim have escaped to earth, and have recruited Disciples to help postpone (or even prevent) the Last War.

The Ragheddim are the lowest caste, and the shock troops of Hell. There are three ranks: Maculates, Chthonics, and Nycterents. The Maculates, known to the Disciples as Defilers, are demons that possess their victims and force them to commit acts of violence. The Chthonics, also known as Stalkers, are demons that haunt and torment their victims, often unseen. The Nycterents, also known as Hunters, are predators who attack and devour their prey.

The Ragheddim are the demons that Disciples hunt.

11.1.2. ANGELS

There are three divine castes: the Exousiai, the Ophanim, and the Seraphim.

The Exousiai are the highest demonic caste, and serve as the generals in Heaven's army. They are twelve in number, and their names are unknown. No human has ever looked upon one, and to do so would be death.

The Ophanim are the field leaders, who will fight the demons on the front lines of the Last War.

The Seraphim are the lowest caste, and the shock troops of Heaven. There are three ranks: Telarians, Kritarchs, and Acronicals.

The angels are ready for the Last War, and are waiting for the Ragheddim to claim an appropriate number of human souls before the angels can launch their counterattack, initiating the final conflict.

11.1.3. THE LAST WAR

The forces of Hell have been deployed. The Ragheddim (Hunters, Stalkers, and Defilers) have hit the ground, and humans have already perished by the thousands. Soon, the body count will reach 248,832.

This number is sacred to the Exousiai. There are 12 Exousiai, as there were 12 Disciples. Five is the number of the Holy Ghost; it is also the number of the Books of Moses and the Psalms of the Bible. Twelve to the fifth power is 248,832. The number, when written in a duodecimal system (one in which the base numeral is 12 instead of 10) is represented as 100,000, which is the number of Seraphim in the Heavens (minus those who have descended to Earth in order to prepare for the Last War).

It is not known how many human lives have been claimed by the Ragheddim, but the number grows every day. Soon, the angels will come to earth, and the shit is going to hit the fan. Cities will burn, the oceans will boil, the moon will drip with blood, and the sun will turn black.

Also, the demons will lose, and they will be annihilated once and for all.

Naturally, some demons have a problem with this.

Many demons feel that the outcome of the war is as preordained as Lucifer's fall. They don't think that they stand a chance against the divine armies. As far as they're concerned, the Last War is another pointless attempt to seize control of earth, and one that's doomed to fail.

The Kharasiai, the Archdemons, are convinced that they have a good chance of winning the war. And if they lose, so be it. Better dead in Hell than Heaven's slave, they say. Many of the Chraleddim are saying fuck that. They're not ready to fight a losing battle, especially if there's a way to cheat.

And there's always a way to cheat.

A small group of Chraleddim have formulated a plan to postpone the Last War by sabotaging the armies of Heaven. First, they need to buy some time. So, they need to hit the snooze-button on the kill-clock. If the Ragheddim take out 248,832 humans (or suck-pigs, as the demons say), then the War begins and all is lost. But if the demons are prevented from claiming their human souls, what then? The angels aren't going to break the Sacred Covenant and attack. Not permitted. So then the demons have a fighting chance to fuck the system and win the War.

The Chraleddim in question have surrendered their immortality, and have ascended to earth. There, they have recruited an army who can help them stave off the advance of the Heavenly host -- by killing demons.

11.1.4. MENTORS

Most Mentors are demons that have ascended to Earth, forfeiting their immortality in exchange for the ability to transfer some of their power to humans. Recruiting from the ranks of the destitute, the hopeless, the broken, and the confused, the Mentors have built an army of Disciples, most of whom think that they are doing the work of Heaven (which they are, since they're fighting demons and saving lives).

To further complicate matters, a small group of Seraphim also wish to see the war postponed, because they do not wish to see so much innocent blood spilled. They, too, have surrendered their immortality, and have descended to Earth to recruit and train Disciples. An uneasy truce exists between these fallen angels and risen demons. There's a slim chance that a group's Mentor could be an angel. It's up to the Director.

Though fallen angels and risen demons have given up a great deal of power to walk the earth, they are still strong enough to obliterate the average human without even thinking about it. They could take out a dozen Disciples without breaking a sweat, so the group should never face one in combat. The lower ranks of demons, detailed in chapter 12, are the primary opposition in this game. Later expansions will deal with other demons, as well as angels, but the Ophanim and Chraleddim are far too strong to be suitable enemies for player characters.

In gameplay, Mentors give the Cabal leads, provide advice if the players have struck a dead end, and occasionally bail them out of trouble. The Mentor allows the Director to help the players unfuck themselves when there's a bad situation. The Mentor's involvement should diminish over time, as he or she will want to move on to other Cabals as soon as this one is functional.

11.1.5. DISCIPLES

Wielding dark magic granted to them by the Mentors, the Disciples hunt demons on a one-way mission that can only end in blood and fire. They track down and destroy their enemy, unaware that they themselves are servants of Hell.

The players may never find out that their Mentor is a demon (or an angel). It's up to the Director to decide if this is an interesting direction for the campaign. However, the players should never feel that their work is invalidated. Regardless of the larger implications of the Last War, their own war against demons has saved innocent lives (and souls).

This does create some grey areas, however.

11.2. WHAT WILL BE

The Director and the players should decide if and when it's time for more elaborate story arcs. Many TV shows begin with one-off episodes that gradually build to longer story lines that play out over entire seasons. Should your group decide to pursue a similar structure with Dread, the ramifications of the Last War might play a significant part.

The players shouldn't be told about the Last War, of course. That's something that they should learn about during gameplay.

11.2.1. GREY AREAS

Complications will arise, of course. Some Disciples will balk at the notion of doing the work of Hell. Others will see the logic of postponing the Last War, given the amount of suffering that will result if they don't do their jobs. Some will resent the deception of the Mentor, while others will shrug and say what the hell.

11.2.2._LEARNING_THE_TRUTH

The Disciples may learn that their Mentor is a demon early on, or it may be something that you build up to over time. One thing to bear in mind is that the Disciples have crossed the Black Line. This means that they're something other than human, and it shows.

Disciples are unholy. They have been tainted by the forces of Hell, and it will show from time to time, though they may not recognize the signs at first. If a Disciple uses magic in a holy place, such as a church, he or she may notice unusual phenomena as a result, including statues that weep blood, boiling holy water, and crosses that blacken and smoke. These events aren't consistent, and may be interpreted by the players as evidence of demonic activity.

The typical priest or holy person will not be able to help. Most clergy wouldn't know true evil if it dropped a severed head in the collection plate, so they're not going to be able to answer the Disciples' questions with any degree of authority. Instead, clues may be dropped by demons during combat, or by angels who are trying to derail the infernal plan to stop the Last War.

Before you drop the truth on the players, you may want to throw them off the scent with a few red herrings. It's a question of how you want the revelation to play out. Typically, most Disciples believe that their Mentor is a fallen angel who has forsaken immortality to help fight the war (and, as indicated above, this may actually be the truth in some cases). One red herring might be for a Seraphim to approach the Cabal and tell them that their Mentor is actually a rogue angel who opposes the will of God, and that the demons that they're hunting are actually instruments of God, sent to purge the world of the wicked.

Alternately, a demon that the Cabal is hunting might try to convince them that the war is already lost, and explain that their Mentor is a demon himself. By dropping just enough of the truth into the mix, demons (and angels) can cause the Disciples to question what they're doing a little bit, which will make the askickery more intense when they get tired of puzzling over it and decide to just beat the daylights out of everyone.



11.2.3._EXPANSIONS

A number of expansions are planned. Future Books of Pandemonium will explore angels and demons in more detail. However, no metaplot will be employed; the story outlined in this chapter is pretty much all there is to it. You can use it, or ignore it and focus on demon-hunting. It's only there to provide a framework for long-term gameplay.

In Chapter 13, we'll address some scenario hooks that relate to this backstory.

And now, the demons.

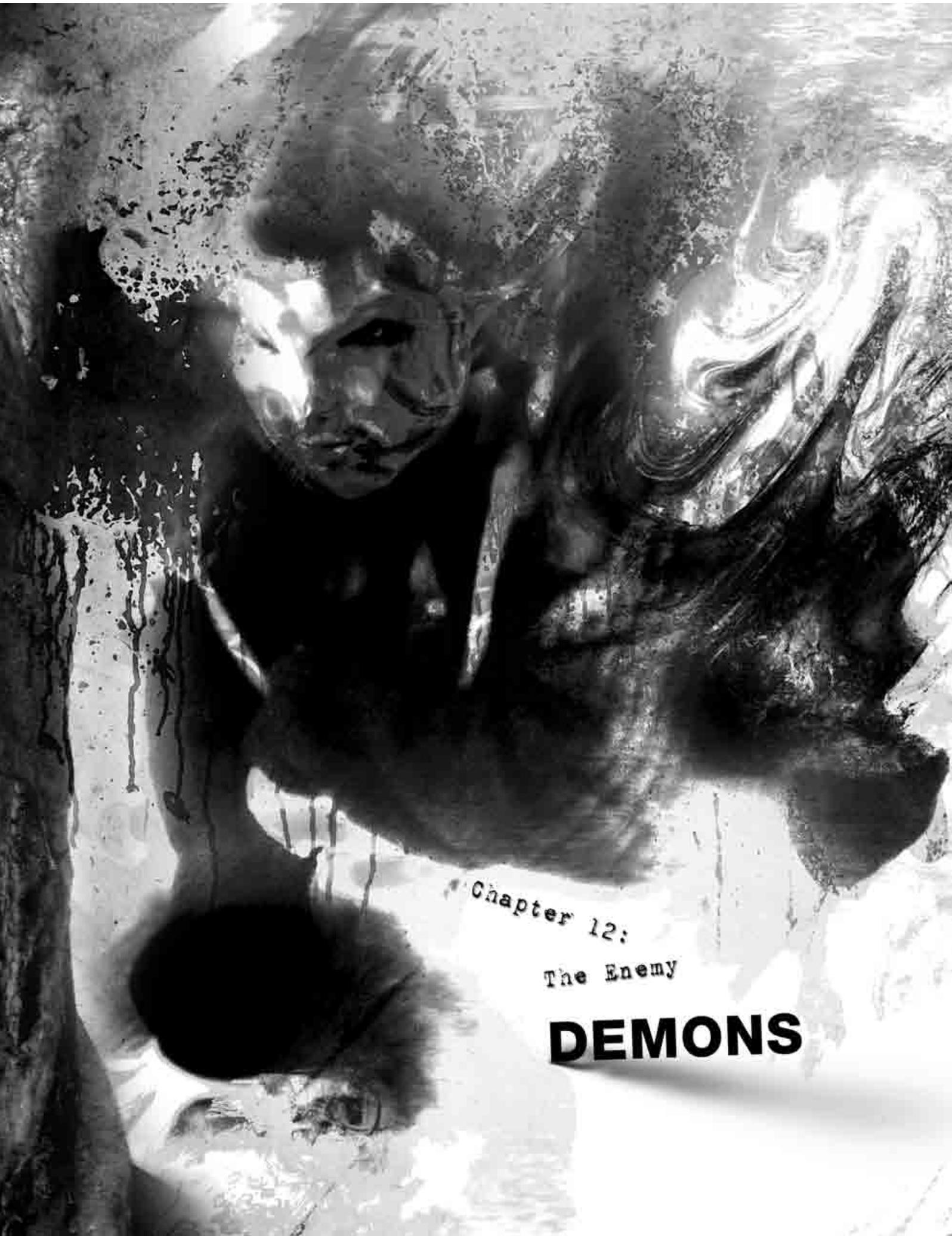
They sacrificed their sons and their daughters to demons.
They shed innocent blood, the blood of their sons and daughters,
whom they sacrificed to the idols of Canaan,
and the land was desecrated by their blood.

-- Psalm 106:37-38



Again, although to enter the soul is possible only to God Who created it,
yet devils can, with God's permission, enter our bodies; and they can then
make impressions on the inner faculties corresponding to the bodily organs.
And by those impressions the organs are affected in proportion as the inner
perceptions are affected in the way which has been shown: that the devil
can draw out some image retained in a faculty corresponding to one of the
senses; as he draws from the memory, which is in the back part of the head,
an image of a horse, and locally moves that phantasm to the middle part
of the head, where are the cells of imaginative power; and finally to the
sense of reason, which is in the front of the head. And he causes such a
sudden change and confusion, that such objects are necessarily thought to
be actual things seen with the eyes. This can be clearly exemplified by the
natural defect in frantic men and other maniacs.

-- Heinrich Kramer and Jacob Sprenger, Malleus Maleficarum



Chapter 12:

The Enemy

DEMONS

12.1. TYPES OF DEMONS

There are three types of Ragheddin: the Maculates, Nycterents, and Chthonics.

12.1.1. DEFILERS

Maculates (known to Disciples as Defilers) possess their victims and force them to commit evil acts. When tracking a Defiler, the Cabal doesn't always know who (or where) the skell is. Often, all they know is that something weird is going on. Exorcism can be used to cast the demon from the skell's body, but the demon will only be more powerful once it's released. If the skell is killed, the demon will emerge from the body unharmed, and will then have to be killed by the Disciples.

12.1.2. HUNTERS

Nycterents (known to Disciples as Hunters) are predators that maim, kill, and devour their human prey. When on the trail of a Hunter, the Disciples will find dead bodies, trace evidence, physical clues, and prints. All of these will lead to a violent showdown with their target.

12.1.3. STALKERS

Chthonics (known to Disciples as Stalkers) haunt and torment their victims. While investigating a Stalker, the Cabal will first have to determine who is being stalked, and why. Much of the time, the victim is prone to evil behavior even without the involvement of the demon, but the goal is always the same: take the target down. Once the Disciples are able to figure out what's going on, they can attract the demon's attention and engage it in battle.

12.2. PRESENTATION

There's a difference between knowing that there's a demon, and knowing where the demon is. By prolonging the takedown, and by providing the players with a detailed description of the demon, you can make the final battle of each session a memorable experience.

12.2.1. SENSATION

By describing the sounds, smells, textures, and colors, you can help the players to envision the enemy that they're fighting.

Sounds can be creepy, soft, deafening, and even misleading. Some demons speak with a human voice, while others cry like babies or sing like children. Attempting to imitate the speech of a demon may produce results that are more comical than frightening, so use your discretion -- sometimes, it's better to describe than to mimic. Familiar sounds, such as barks and roars, can be described to evoke certain moods.

Smells are often tied directly to moods and memories, and by describing foul and sweet odors, you can help the players to develop their sense of the demon in question. Some demons are associated with specific scents, but feel free to embellish these as you see fit.

Textures can be experienced by the characters during combat. Describe the skin of the demon or the skell as grainy, rough, pebbled, leathery, slick, wet, or moist to help contextualize the illustration for the player.

When describing the demon, feel free to associate its colors with unpleasant things, such as feces, vomit, blood, or mucus. Though the demon's skin (or horns, or wings) may not share the textures of these substances, by describing a fecal brown or a bloody red, you create associations in your players' minds.

12.2.2. PRESENCE

While a demon's presence may be 'felt' by the Disciples, the demon isn't always going to stick around once the Cabal has begun the investigation. It may choose to avoid confrontation at first, until the Disciples have completed part of the spiral (see Chapter 13).

At that point, you will want to bring the demon out of hiding and allow the takedown to proceed. Until that time, the demon will employ various methods of remaining undetected.

Hunters tend to hide in shadows, and mostly operate at night. Some will attack indiscriminately, but even the most bloodthirsty and deranged can recognize the threat that Disciples pose, and so a Hunter won't attack the moment that the Cabal begins to poke around the kill site. Instead, it will watch them, study their movements and interactions, and form a plan of attack. They may even discover evidence that the demon has been watching them, but attempts to locate it will fail (unless the group is close to the end of the session and it's time for the takedown).

Defilers hide inside their hosts, and it's possible that the team may even make face-to-face contact with the skell without realizing that they are talking to the demon (the average Defiler loves doing this, despite the risk). However, as a general rule, once a Cabal starts a case, the demon tries to avoid contact with them as long as possible, knowing that they want to separate it from the host that it's tormenting.

Stalkers use the Wrath to misdirect those who pursue them. By spending points of Wrath (see section 12.4.), the Stalker can look like anyone, or can even become invisible. This enables the demon to torment its prey without attracting undue attention, and it allows the demon to make a speedy retreat when things get violent.

Many demons maintain lairs, where they store the remains of their victims, or souvenirs from their kills (such as bones, wedding bands, or hair). The lair may be an abandoned church, a cave, or the basement of a condemned house. If the Cabal discovers the lair, it's unlikely that they'll find the demon there unless it's near the end of the session. Sometimes, the demon will set traps throughout its lair to punish trespassers.



12.3. BEHAVIOR PATTERNS

All demons follow patterns of behavior based on their type. They're helpless, in a sense, as they must obey these urges.

12.3.1. _DEFILER

The Defiler must take over the body of a human victim and do evil. If confronted, the demon must use its body to do harm. If the demon is exorcised, it must eventually attack the exorcist and do as much damage as possible.

12.3.2. _HUNTER

The Hunter must track down and kill humans. If discovered, it must eventually attack.

12.3.3. _STALKER

The Stalker must hide in plain sight and torment its human victim. In order to escape detection, it must misdirect people with Wrath. If anyone interferes with its work, it must eventually reveal itself and attack.

12.4. WRATH

Wrath is a resource that ranges from 10 to 30. It's the demonic equivalent of Fury, enabling the demon to perform certain stunts. During combat, all demons can kill a point of Wrath to regain a point of Life. This can be done as often as necessary.

12.4.1. _DEFILER

A Defiler can use Wrath to hurl objects and attack people with them. By killing Wrath, the demon can attack with a number of dice equal to the amount of Wrath killed (5 points equals 5 dice). This can be done in combat, in addition to an ordinary attack, and can be done while in the host or after being exorcised. If the demon is still inside the skell, there's no way to be certain (short of magic use) that the skell is responsible for the telekinetic attack. It's common for demons to pretend to be terrified as steak knives fly through the air towards a Disciple's face.

12.4.2. _HUNTER

A Hunter can kill Wrath to gain an additional attack. By killing a point of Wrath, the demon can execute a second attack during combat. The more Wrath the demon kills, the more dice it can roll on its second attack. The Hunter can only attack twice in a given round, but it can kill up to 12 points of Wrath at a time (meaning that it rolls an attack of 12 dice).

12.4.3. _STALKER

By killing a point of Wrath, the Stalker can turn itself invisible or transform itself into the likeness of an ordinary person. This lasts for a single day. Short of magic, there's no way to detect a Stalker that's used Wrath in this way. The demon can also kill a point of Wrath to take over a group of people and turn them into mindless drones. By killing a point of Wrath, the demon can temporarily possess a group of people equal to its Sense score, and can direct them to fight on its behalf. This temporary possession only lasts for a single battle, after which the victims slowly emerge from their zombie-like state, bewildered and unsure of what's going on. Disciples are immune to this possession. The Staker can also use Wrath to defend itself by killing up to 11 points at a time to add to its die rolls during combat (but only when defending).

12.5. DEMONS

The following pages list 41 different demons. Each listing contains a description of the demon's appearance, an explanation of its particular behavior pattern, and notes pertaining to the takedown, during which the Disciples will bring the demon down.



12.5.1. ASPINABA

Type: Defiler

Larva
Strength 1
Sense 2
Soul 8
Life 1
Wrath 27

Demon
Strength 5
Sense 2
Soul 8
Life 12
Wrath 27

**Appearance**

In larval form, the Aspinaba resembles a seven-inch centipede with no legs; it undulates across the floor like a snake. Its segments are dark red, and its toothless mouth is round and white. If exorcised, the demon reveals its true form: a man with pale red skin, roughly eight feet tall. It's completely hairless, and instead of a mouth, has a sucking maw like that of a lamprey. Its hands consist of three webbed talons, as do its feet. The Aspinaba's skin is shiny and wet, and gives off a faint odor of honeysuckle.

Pattern

The Aspinaba demon is extremely vulnerable until it has found a host. Hiding from daylight, the demon conceals itself until darkness has fallen, then begins to slither from home to home, searching for the negative energy that it craves. The Aspinaba feeds on the misery caused by domestic abuse. When someone strikes his spouse, or if a child is savagely beaten, the Aspinaba gains power, and grows stronger. Typically, it will enter a home where such abuse is routine, and the demon will find a place where it can safely gestate, absorbing the pain and hatred. Lurking in a basement or attic, the demon will coil about itself and wait until it has gathered enough energy to attack.

At night, it will find the perpetrator of the domestic violence, and it will crawl into his mouth. Slithering into his stomach, it begins to access all of his memories and personality. It will also send long, fibrous filaments through the lining of its host's stomach. The filaments attach themselves to the nervous system, and the Aspinaba demon takes control of the host body like a puppeteer controlling a marionette.

This process is an imperfect one, and when the demon rises from bed the next day, its control over the host body will be jerky and spastic, and the person may not make much sense to loved ones. Typically, the Aspinaba claims sickness and goes to bed early, but rises from its slumber to gorge itself on huge meals throughout the following days. During this period, the demon seems oblivious to those who have grown accustomed to abuse. It may even appear that the host is incongruously polite to the women and children that he's been battering all this time.

After it has consumed enough food, the Aspinaba will enter a final dormant stage, during which it lays several eggs in the host's stomach. After a long, deep sleep, the Aspinaba will rise from its sleep in the dead of night and stagger to the victim's bedroom. Using any heavy object, the host body will bludgeon the victim to death, and will kill anyone else in the room. After this, the host body will lurch from room to room, killing anyone else in the house. After that, the demon will begin to travel the city on foot, looking for anyone even remotely connected to the family, or to the cycle of abuse. Social workers, teachers, child protection services staff, in-laws, relatives, friends of the family, and co-workers are all potential targets. For the next 48 hours, the demon will attack and kill as many of these as possible.

When the killing spree is over, the Aspinaba will die, and the eggs will hatch. Two to four new Aspinaba larvae will emerge from the eggs, and will bite the inside of the victim's stomach until he vomits them up. Slithering away, they will pursue other victims, continuing the cycle. After they leave the body, the host will remember everything that transpired.

Takedown

There are two key places where Disciples will most likely get involved: prior to the slaughter, and just after it has begun.

If the Disciples are brought in before the slaughter begins, it could be because someone has grown concerned over the abuser's strange behavior. A case worker might fear the worst, or a friend of the family may have reason to believe that the host is somehow possessed. In any case, the Disciples would be informed that something is decidedly

wrong in the house, and that they should check it out. The Aspinaba will not wait around for the exorcists to arrive. If the person who contacted the Disciples isn't a Contact, then that Extra will probably die by the Aspinaba's hand.

After that, the Aspinaba will go into hiding, maintaining its standard feeding pattern. Its bleary-eyed, zombie-like host will still eat large meals, then sleep for hours, rising only to continue the cycle of excess. It may carry out this activity in a hotel room, or on a stained mattress in an alley. Ultimately, the demon will lay its eggs, then send the host home to kill the family. This part of the pattern cannot change; the Aspinaba is powerless to ignore its own programming. Therefore, the Disciples may be able to set a trap for the demon, if they can figure out its pattern.

If the Disciples aren't brought in until after the killing has started, establishing the pattern should be relatively easy. They might get called up by a friend on the force, or a journalist, someone who suspects that the murder was somehow linked to the supernatural. Something strange in the arrangement of the bodies, or a strange voice in the background of the 911 call. Regardless of the specifics, the Disciples are brought in because shortly after the entire family was killed, a relative in a nearby part of town was also killed.

The pattern will emerge, and the Disciples will need to figure out how to predict the demon's next target. It may be an alphabetical list, or a geographical pattern of some kind (such as a circle or spiral). Whatever the case, the Disciples will have to stop the killing, and also kill the demon's eggs before they hatch.

12.5.2. BASKRA

Type: Stalker

Strength 2

Sense 8

Soul 5

Life 18

Wrath 21

Appearance

The Baskra appears as a mutilated doctor whose gloves and smock are spattered with blood and bits of tissue. He may be wielding a scalpel or bonesaw. Strips of skin hang from his face and arms, and he may be wearing soiled bandages wrapped haphazardly around oozing sores. The sterile smell of hospital-grade antiseptic almost masks the odor of rot that clings to the Baskra.

Pattern

The Baskra preys upon the elderly, tormenting them in their dreams with visions of youth and agility, and with nightmares of death and decay. Feeding on their regrets and memories of missed opportunities, the Baskra weakens and debilitates them until they expire.

The demon stands next to its sleeping victim and places a mangled hand on her brow. Entering her mind, the demon forces two dreams on her. In the first, the victim relives the joys and accomplishments of youth. Running, dancing, kissing, she recalls all the exhilaration of a functioning body again. Nights of passion and revelry are revisited, accolades are garnered, and victories are won.

In the second dream, the victim sees her own body, as if from above, and it is young and supple. Then she sees the demon standing next to her body, and it smiles up at her; a stethoscope in its rotting claws. Her body begins to decay. Ligaments and tendons strain and snap, muscles wither beneath the skin, and hair loses all color, then falls out in clumps. Her veins darken, cheeks hollow, and eyes cave in. Slowly, her body disintegrates, splitting open to reveal a writhing mass of worms and vermin, squirming out from the desiccated torso. After three or four such nightmares, the victim's body gives out, and she suffers a fatal coronary or stroke. However, sometimes the demon cannot stand the wait, and it takes a more direct approach. On such occasions, it guts its victim with medical implements, just as the nightmare has reached its horrific climax.

The Baskra tends to avoid nursing homes and retirement communities, preferring the privacy afforded by victims who live alone. It is also something of a voyeur, and will return to a scene of a crime after one of its victims has perished.

Takedown

If it perceives that it is being hunted, the demon will begin to play tricks on its enemies. For instance, if it believes that a group of Disciples is tracking it, it will torment its elderly victims with dreams in which the Disciples are revealed as the source of the nightmares, ensuring that the victim remains fearful and uncooperative when the Disciples are around.

Furthermore, when appropriate, it will use Wrath to disguise itself as a doctor or psychiatrist, and will hide in plain sight, insisting that the Disciples must leave, as they're causing a disturbance. It takes great pleasure in proving itself superior to the Disciples, and it can't pass up such an opportunity.

12.5.3. BAZULARIAM

Type: Defiler

Strength 5

Sense 3

Soul 7

Life 15

Wrath 24

Appearance

The Bazulariam is a humanoid female with long dark hair; where its eyes should be are two small mouths lined with sharp teeth. From the waist down, the demon's shape is insectile, consisting of a bulbous black body and six bristly legs.

Pattern

The Bazulariam feasts on the agony of false prophets. It is drawn to those who feign piety or humility, but who secretly crave worship and adulation. The demon is particularly fond of religious figures who love praise and affection from their congregations. Garden-variety attention whores like actors and musicians don't really interest the demon.

The Bazulariam will seek out its prey and enter the body at night, while its victim is sleeping. Since the demon can't see, it will locate its prey based on smell. At this point, it may be seen by someone else, but the demon won't pay any attention to anyone else in the room. It will enter its host's body by turning into mist and seeping into his mouth and nostrils. Once inside, the demon remains dormant for a few days, during which time it absorbs the victim's memories and persona. When the assimilation is complete, the demon takes over, shoving its host's psyche into the back, where he can still see what it's doing to his body.

The demon then proceeds to dismantle every aspect of its victim's life as quickly and permanently as possible. It seduces his friends' wives and daughters, it beats his children, it insults his superiors, and it spends all of his money. Then it rolls up its sleeves and gets nasty. The demon will embezzle funds, burn down buildings (his office, his church, his home), and post revealing pictures of his wife on the Internet. When it's run out of ideas, the demon will kill a few friends and acquaintances, using whatever materials are on hand at the time.

At this point, the Bazulariam just watches the show, giving control back to its victim. If the authorities attempt to apprehend the host, the demon will seize control and use Wrath to kill them or escape, then return control to the host. The same thing will happen if the demon's victim tries to commit suicide.

Takedown

The Disciples will probably get involved once the bodies start hitting the floor. Once the Bazulariam starts to murder innocent victims, the Cabal may read about the killings, or may be contacted by someone involved with the host. The demon is careless, and it's possible that someone got a good look at it while it was in the process of possessing its host in the first place.

The demon wants its host to be responsible for as many atrocities as possible, so when the Disciples get involved, the Bazulariam will definitely try to kill them.



Illustration © Adam Chowles

12.5.4. BENASSIM

Type: Stalker

Strength 1

Sense 9

Soul 5

Life 20

Wrath 19

Appearance

While Stalking its prey, the Benassim is a cloud of smoke or mist. When it takes physical form, however, it appears as a writhing mass of limbs and purple flesh. Its skin ripples as new limbs and organs emerge and sink into its leathery folds. Its eyes are pure white, as are its teeth, and though the rest of it changes constantly, the demon's face is always the same: tight skin drawn over a skull, grinning with hatred. The demon reeks of sweat.

Pattern

A spectral predator, the Benassim demon stalks those whose lives are haunted by chemical dependency and substance abuse. Materializing only to drain the blood of its victims, the demon typically proves to be an elusive target. Strangely, the fiend tends to exhibit a contemplative streak, penning short verse in the blood of its victims after a kill.

Usually found in squalid settings, such as alleys or dark woods, the Benassim demon ventures out at night to torment addicts. Appearing as a numinous wraith, the demon toys with them, entertaining itself by chasing them, and then finally settles on a victim to feed on. Sometimes, instead of pursuing destitute junkies and homeless people, the Benassim selects a person of good repute and social standing, such as a doctor who relies on cocaine to get through the day, or an actor who can't quite kick the crystal meth. In these cases, the Benassim takes great pleasure in facilitating the inevitable decline of the addict in question.

Materializing at inopportune moments, the demon slowly convinces its victim that he is going mad. Manifesting itself at the peak of its victim's high, the demon appears, but only to its target, leaving others to conclude that it's merely a hallucination. Later, the demon exposes itself to the junkie, who is now sober, and whispers the awful truth to him, grinning in anticipation.

Patient and confident, the Benassim demon always waits until its victim has lost all hope, and has begun to abuse the bottle or needle in greater and greater amounts. When the victim is on the verge of overdose, or alcohol poisoning, the demon will finally appear in its physical form, and will sink its teeth into its victim's throat, drinking the sweet blood. At this point, the demon doesn't even care if anyone's watching -- now that the moment has arrived, the fiend will have its way, regardless of whether or not it's exposed.

Takedown

The Cabal may get involved after the Benassim has already killed. Since it begins to repeat its feeding pattern almost immediately, they may be able to pick up its trail fairly quickly. They may also be aided by the demon's tendency to appear several times before dealing the fatal blow.

There may be eyewitnesses to the demon's feeding, which would no doubt be part of the police investigation once the bodies are discovered. The Disciples may hear about the death of one of the more high-profile victims through a Contact, or through the media, or through a police contact. At first, it's likely that the police will see the murders as the work of a serial killer, given the repeat MO and the demon's tendency to write poetry in the blood of its victims.



Illustration © Verne Galant

12.5.5. CAURIK

Type: Stalker

Strength 3

Sense 7

Soul 4

Life 18

Wrath 21

Appearance

The Cauriak appears in the shape of a nude murder victim, covered in bleeding wounds and strange tattoos. Despite the gruesome appearance, the demon is smiling. Its eyes are blank and white, and it leaves trails in the air behind it as it moves. The Cauriak smells of vomit.

Pattern

The Cauriak demon haunts those who murder their own flesh and blood. When a father kills his daughter, or a man shoots his brother, the Cauriak visits the murderer. However, if the killer is apprehended, the demon loses all interest. It is only concerned with those who have yet to be discovered. Appearing to the murderer in the form of the deceased, the Cauriak screams threats and accusations that only the killer can hear. Deformed, mangled, and caked with graveyard dirt, the demon follows the killer around, invisible to everyone else.

Takedown

The Disciples may get involved when a Contact tells them about the manifestation. Perhaps the Contact was present at some event when the Cauriak appeared and screamed a single word before vanishing. The word may be a name, or a place, or some other clue to a long-forgotten murder. Subsequent investigation may lead some more substantial leads. The Cauriak may use the murderer's body to kill, leaving behind some trace elements that bring the case to the attention of the Cabal's Mentor. The murderer may confess his crime to someone, and swear that he is being persecuted by a demonic force of some kind. Word of this may reach the ears of the Disciples, prompting their involvement in the case.

The biggest challenge will be preventing the demon from using the murderer's body to commit even more crimes. Reaching the murderer may prove difficult, as he or she may decide to leave town to avoid apprehension (or escape the Cauriak). In any case, the murderer's location should be the focus of the investigation, once his identity has been established.

If the Cauriak realizes that it's being hunted, it will attempt to turn the tables on the Disciples by luring them to a remote location and killing them.



Type: Hunter

Strength 7

Sense 6

Soul 2

Life 24

Wrath 15

Appearance

The Cielaqo is a monstrous brute with shiny maroon skin. It has six arms, and alternates between bounding around on all six, or getting up and walking erect on its hind pair of arms. Its head is featureless except for a huge vertical gash full of teeth in the middle of where its face should be. Snaking out of this maw is a long neck tipped with a snakelike head. The Cielaqo's dark red skin is studded with tiny lumps, like the hide of an alligator.

Pattern

The Cielaqo hungers for diseased human flesh. Driven by an insatiable appetite for humans suffering from illness, the Cielaqo devours elderly cancer patients and infant victims of Fetal Alcohol Syndrome. A tenacious hunter, the Cielaqo is gifted with extraordinary powers of perception. Its senses of smell and sight, in particular, are highly developed. When on the prowl, the demon can smell diseased meat several miles away.

Merciless and swift, the demon pounces atop its victim, kills him, and devours the afflicted part of the body: the lungs of a cancer patient, the head of a stroke victim, the blood of an HIV carrier. With its six arms, it tears pieces of flesh from the corpse and crams them into its gaping maw. Insanely violent, the Cielaqo mangles the corpse after it has fed, destroys the victim's possessions, and chases down and eviscerates any witnesses who might have stumbled across the carnage.

After feeding, the Cielaqo retreats to a lair, be it in an abandoned belfry, a quiet basement, or a remote forest. There, the demon sleeps off its meal and cleans itself. The Cielaqo is notoriously fastidious when the feeding frenzy is over, and when it is not actively pursuing prey, it can spend hours grooming itself.

Takedown

The Disciples may get involved after a slaughter in a hospital of some kind, or a walk-in clinic, or a hospice. Examination of the bodies will reveal that though some of the bodies were torn apart, at least one was actually eaten. Cross-referencing bodies with maladies, as well as comparing notes with other such incidents, will reveal the Cielaqo's migratory patterns. The Disciples may be able to anticipate the location its next attack.

Alternately, the Cabal may instead get a tip after someone finds a spot that the demon had used as a place to clean itself after the carnage. Clues found there may lead them to the scene of the Cielaqo's latest attack.

If a witness somehow survives and escapes, the Cielaqo will not rest until it has found and killed him or her. This may also draw players into the scenario, as this may be someone who knows a Contact. Perhaps the survivor is placed under police protection, only to witness yet another slaughter as the demon kills the skeptical officers parked outside her home.



Illustration © Char Reed

12.5.7. CURHADAC

Type: Hunter

Strength 8

Sense 5

Soul 2

Life 25

Wrath 14

Appearance

Ten feet long, and six feet high at the shoulder, the Curhadac is built like an ape, with powerful hind legs and a muscular chest. Its head is blunt and featureless, save the eight eyes in a symmetrical pattern, like that of a spider. The eyes are flat and white, devoid of pupil or iris. It has a mouth like a shark's, opening wide enough to accommodate most of a human torso. The Curhadac's body is covered in stiff black fur, and from this fur protrude bloody talons and spines of varying lengths. Periodically, these recede into the skin and migrate elsewhere, then erupt once again, spilling the demon's blood and driving it into a frenzy. Some of these talons are long and thin, like a needle. Others are wide and serrated, like a steak knife.

Pattern

The Curhadac is an artist.

It begins by selecting a victim, typically an isolated person who won't be missed for some time. After studying the movements of its prey, the demon will attack and incapacitate the victim, then carry him to a remote location. It will then repeat this process six more times, assembling an audience of seven captives.

The Curhadac will select one of its prisoners at random and disassemble him before the others, slowly and painfully. It will then create its instruments. Using the victim's bones and hair, it will create paintbrushes. After flaying the victim, it will stretch the skin over a frame made of bones, creating a canvas. Squeezing various bodily fluids from the victim's glands and organs, it will create paint.

After assembling all of the necessary components, it will paint a portrait of one of its other victims. When finished, it will drag the portrait's subject from captivity and create new paints, brushes, and canvas. It will continue in this fashion until six portraits have been painted. The last victim is set free and given the paintings as a gift.

Takedown

The Curhadac's abductions are haphazard and random; if discovered, demon will kill and devour any witnesses, unless doing so would risk its intended target. In this way, it's possible that the Disciples will get a lead on the case, as well as a physical description of the creature. Local law enforcement may contact the Cabal because of physical evidence at the murder scene, such as the demon's deformed footprints, surveillance camera footage, or Curhadac feces full of human bones and car keys.



Illustration © Vienna gallery

Type: Stalker

Strength 2

Sense 7

Soul 6

Life 19

Wrath 20

Appearance

The DaVaad appears as a decaying warrior, bearing armor and weaponry. Sometimes, the demon wears modern-day gear, such as a tactical vest and assault rifle. Other times, the demon will be equipped with more archaic gear, like chainmail and sword. In either case, the DaVaad's flesh is rotting from its bones, and it bears horrific wounds that crawl with small insects. The demon smells of decomposing flesh and oiled leather.

Pattern

DaVaad demons haunt veterans of war who are unable to cope with the images of violence and horror that haunt their dreams.

The DaVaad demon stands over its victim at night, invisible to everyone else. It whispers of the terrible things that the veteran has seen and done, things that no one could possibly know. For the next few days, the veteran will be haunted by this spirit. Then, the demon will begin to toy with its victim's perceptions.

First, it will induce flashbacks. By prying further into the victim's psyche, it culls scenes of harrowing violence. Playing these scenes back at inopportune times, it causes the victim to question his own sanity. During a family dinner, it forces him to relive a painful interrogation, endured while a prisoner of war many years ago. While at a job interview, he'll suddenly see a good friend of his ram a bayonet through another man's abdomen, laughing hysterically.

Over time, the victim will lose his grip on what is real, and what is not. When the DaVaad feels that the victim is ready, it will begin to alter the world around him. In short bursts, and then with increasing regularity, the four walls of his home will give way to the dark green forest, or the burning sands of the desert. The hum of the ceiling fan will suddenly become the roar of a helicopter's blades, or a jeep's engine.

Finally, the victim's own loved ones will suddenly become foreign to him, taking on the appearance of the people in whose land he was a soldier. When his friends and family members suddenly bear the face of his enemy, the victim will snap, and will embark on a killing spree. After the carnage has ended, the DaVaad will move on, seeking out another victim.

Takedown

When the Disciples get involved, it will probably be while the DaVaad is busy guiding the victim through the killing spree, disguising friends, family, and total strangers as enemy soldiers.

The military may be involved in the case, and may even want to keep a lid on the situation. For example, it may be that one of the soldiers tormented by a DaVaad was exposed to a biological weapon or chemical agent designed to produce psychotic behavior in enemy soldiers.

In such a case, in order to get close enough to the victim's home or family to find any information, the Cabal may have to contend with Extras in the form of soldiers (regular or even black-bag elite operatives), federal agents (black helicopters and generic surnames), or mercenary contractors (windbreakers, sunglasses, and compact submachineguns).

When the Disciples get too close to the DaVaad, or when they locate its next target, it will take physical form and attack.

12.5.9. DAEMUIL

Type: Hunter

Strength 8

Sense 4

Soul 3

Life 27

Wrath 12

Appearance

The Daemuil appears as the rotting corpse of a woman. Its eyes have been gouged out, and foul black liquid seeps from its mouth and nostrils. The demon reeks of sewage.

Pattern

The Daemuil, in the form of a pale green light, descends upon the body of an unavenged female murder victim. The demon animates the corpse and sends it lurching after the murderer.

After taking control of the deceased, and investing it with supernatural strength and speed, the Daemuil sets off in search of the killer. Homing in on him unerringly, the demon finds him and tears him apart, literally. Usually, the demon will start with the murderer's feet. It then begins to hunt any others who might have slighted, injured, or offended the deceased.

Silent and relentless, the Daemuil sends the shambling corpse against those who aggrieved it in life. Without words, hesitation, or pity, the Daemuil rends these offenders limb from limb and walks away.

The Daemuil does not discriminate. Anyone who lied to, insulted, mocked, stole from, ignored, or rejected the deceased is fair game. The demon will walk the streets, a blood-drenched corpse in filthy rags, flinging police officers aside as it strides towards its prey with single-minded purpose. It will not be dissuaded from its mission until it has completely exhausted whatever remains of its host's memories.

When the Daemuil perceives that the mission is complete, it will open its mouth and vomit forth a pale green light, leaving behind a rotting carcass that collapses to the ground, inanimate once more.

Takedown

The Cabal may get the word about a serial killer who took out three cops after they unloaded a few dozen rounds into him. Or, they may hear that someone who's supposed to be dead was seen walking down the street in broad daylight.

If the murderer is still alive, the Disciples may wind up crossing paths with him. He may be remorseful, or he may be in denial. If pressed, he may even attack the Disciples, or have others attack them, in order to keep the murder a secret.

The question of who will be attacked next will require the Disciples to investigate the life of the deceased. During this time, the Cabal will also meet a number of people who knew the deceased, any one of which could be the next target. Given the sheer number of people who may have offended or slighted the dead person during his or her lifetime, the Disciples will need to determine the Daemuil's pattern. Is it geographical, starting with those closest to the house of the murderer? Is it chronological, beginning with childhood nemeses who are now adults? Is it starting with ex-lovers who rejected the deceased, then moving on to less significant injuries?

12.5.10._DENGIORRE

Type: Stalker

Strength 3

Sense 8

Soul 4

Life 20

Wrath 19

Appearance

When it sloughs off its disguise, the Dengiorre appears as an emaciated woman, with pale greyish skin and cloven hooves. Her features are distorted, and the skin has been cut away around the eyes, nose, and mouth. Short horns jut out from her temple, and a ridge of bone follows them all the way down the back of her skull to the base of her spine. A pair of long, rubbery tentacles emerges from her shoulder blades, each tipped with a toothless circular orifice that drips a clear anesthetic fluid. Between her legs, serrated jaws snap open and shut incessantly.

Pattern

A seemingly benevolent apparition, the Dengiorre lives to torment those who lust for wealth. Appearing as a spectre, the Dengiorre attempts to convince its victim that it is the restless spirit of a wealthy person.

Fond of trickery, the Dengiorre sets a series of traps in a remote area, and tries to persuade its victim that a treasure is hidden there. It speaks of great amounts of gold, cash, bank notes, jewelry, whatever the victim wants to hear.

Accompanying its victim to the site, the demon watches gleefully as its victim inadvertently springs the trap, and takes great satisfaction in the cries of despair and anguish. Frequently, the traps are not immediately fatal. Bear traps and snares in a distant wood, for instance, will not kill a victim outright.

However, without food and water, the victim will surely perish in time. Often, the Dengiorre will sit just out of reach and converse with the victim as he or she dies.

Invisible and silent to everyone but the victim, the Dengiorre will appear in different guises to different victims. It usually passes itself off as the ghost of a wealthy person from days long gone. To an avaricious young woman, the demon might appear as a wise old man, dapper and well-spoken. To a young thug, the fiend might appear as an elegant older woman.

Using guile and promises, the demon will win the trust and confidence of its victim. Often, if asked directly, the victim will vehemently deny any contact with the creature, convinced that anyone asking about the "ghost" is just after the money.

Takedown

The Disciples may get word of a haunted house, or of a ghost that appears to people who later go missing. Or, given that the demon tends to operate in a specific region, it may be that several bodies are found in the same remote canyon or stretch of highway. The bodies may be mistaken for the work of a serial killer by local authorities. However, the investigation will generally reveal that many of the victims died from dehydration, or exposure, not injuries.

Someone related to a victim may file a missing-persons report, or even contact the Cabal directly, hoping to find out what happened to their loved one. The case may be hours old, or years old.

If the Dengiorre has new victims to toy with, it may well convince them that the Disciples are also after the gold. This may result in complications.

12.5.11._DEYESTIM

Type: Hunter

Strength 9

Sense 5

Soul 1

Life 25

Wrath 14

**Appearance**

The Deyestim appears as a holy person, such as a priest, nun, or rabbi. However, the demon's tongue is a long, glistening ovipositor. In all other respects, the demon appears to be an ordinary human. The Deyestim reeks of thick perfume or cologne.

Pattern

The demon affiliates itself with a place of worship, such as a church, and begins to make a list of those who are no longer affiliated. Apostates, those who have changed religions, and members of the congregation who simply don't attend anymore are all added to the list. The demon cannot speak, however, and if questioned or challenged by a suspicious member of the church, it will kill without hesitation, then conceal the body.

The Deyestim then tracks down its targets, one by one, and attacks. Striking when the victim is alone, the demon beats its target senseless, then sticks the ovipositor in its victim's mouth. It lays a single egg, then leaves. At this point, the demon will no longer be found in the vicinity of the church, but will instead proceed from victim to victim, always attacking at least one person each day.

After a few hours, the egg in the victim's stomach will hatch, releasing dozens of brown recluse spiders. Some will drown in the half-digested food, but many will survive long enough to bite the lining of the victim's stomach. The victim will begin to hypersalivate and perspire before going into convulsions. Death will follow shortly thereafter.

The demon will continue until it has exhausted its list, at which point it will change its appearance and join another religious organization.

Takedown

Since all of the victims have something in common (their previous affiliation with a religious institution), the pattern will be obvious to law-enforcement agencies after a short period of time. However, the strange nature of the deaths will baffle the authorities, who may turn to the Cabal for help.

The Deyestim is a powerful combatant, and will not hesitate to engage the Disciples if they prevent it from completing its mission.

12.5.12._EXHUMILAT

Type: Hunter

Strength 7

Sense 6

Soul 2

Life 27

Wrath 12

Appearance

The Exhumilat appears as a massive toad, roughly eight feet long. Instead of a head, however, the neck just ends in a massive mouth, from which a foot-thick tongue emerges. The tongue splits into three parts; the first is the creature's face, which is that of an innocent young woman. On either side, the other two branches of the tongue are six-foot tentacles ending in stingers like that of a scorpion.

Pattern

The Exhumilat Demon does not think of itself as a predator. Rather, it regards itself as a liberator, a messiah, a benefactor. It seeks out those who have given up on life, and it offers them a moment of pure bliss, a way to find meaning and fulfillment.

The demon feels that this single (albeit fatal) pinnacle of sensation is preferable to a long and fruitless life, so it actually derives satisfaction from the happiness of others. Unfortunately, the only way that its victims can achieve this personal zenith is to tear themselves apart.

The demon passes unnoticed through our world, observing the interactions of men and women until it has selected its quarry: someone without anything to live for, someone without hope. Having chosen its prey, the creature waits for some new abasement to present itself: a humiliating experience at work, perhaps, or a lover's betrayal. When its victim feels that life cannot get any more frustrating, the demon strikes.

It guides the mind of its victim, and the body, and drives its prey to self-mutilation on an epic scale. While the demon watches, invisible, the victim begins to rend her flesh, inflicting grotesque wounds on her own body. However, the experience is painless. The victim feels enlightened and vindicated, and derives great pleasure from the wounds. Some victims feel Christlike, whereas others feel that they are stripping away a veneer of some kind. The victims never suspect the presence of the demon, and are so swayed by the Exhumilat that they never question what they're doing to themselves.

While under the demon's influence, the victims are stronger than ordinary humans. In addition, a telltale skin discoloration marks the dissolution of the softer tissues, which facilitates the mutilation to come. For several hours before a victim begins to tear herself apart, one can see the dark patches about her throat, face, and abdomen.

Ultimately, when the carnage has begun, the victim doesn't stop until a goal of some sort has been reached. Each victim finds a single part of her body that symbolizes pain; typical selections include the face, the heart, or sex organs. After the victim finds and removes the offending body part, she typically dies. The death is prolonged unnaturally by the sorcery of the Exhumilat, but while under its spell, the victim is able to inflict damage that should have been immediately fatal.



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When the blood has been spilled, and the body part extracted, the demon takes it gently from the hands of the victim, and leaves without disturbing anything else. It feels serenity, because it feels that it has somehow touched another soul, and brightened that soul, even if for only a few minutes. The Exhumilat will bask in this feeling of contentment for days, or even weeks, before seeking out another lost soul to comfort.

It keeps the body parts that its victims extract as souvenirs. It is a sentimental beast, and its subterranean lair is full of such keepsakes. The demon spends most of its time staring at the collection, reminiscing. Typically, the Exhumilat's lair is trapped in some way. When not daydreaming about the suffering that it has ameliorated, the creature devises spring-loaded spike traps, tripwire-activated hammers, and false floors that give way to bladed pits.

When stalking its prey, the demon is typically invisible. However, in combat, it shrugs off its invisibility and reveals itself.

When the demon has chosen a victim, it stays close by, and rarely leaves the person's side. It will eavesdrop on its victim's conversations, and if it recognizes Disciples or other interlopers, it will begin to lay traps for them around the victim's home. The demon's first priority is to make sure that the victim is able to complete the self-mutilation. The Exhumilat's second priority is self-defense.

Takedown

The Disciples will most likely get involved after a number of suicides have taken place. Since each will be more gruesome and impossible than the last (for instance, victims eviscerating and/or decapitating themselves, not necessarily in that order), the medical examiner or investigating officer may turn to the Cabal for help.

If anyone tries to stop the suicide from taking place, the demon will manifest and attack, killing the interloper immediately. This may also serve as a starting point for the Cabal's investigation.

12.5.13. FLIACZA

Type: Stalker

Strength 2

Sense 7

Soul 6

Life 21

Wrath 18

Appearance

The Fliacza looks like a young woman with multifaceted eyes. Her canine teeth are long, giving her a vampiric appearance. In addition, two long appendages like scorpion tails grow from her shoulder blades. The stingers hang just over her head, but can strike targets in front of her. The Fliacza smells faintly of incense.

Pattern

Drawn to political scandal, the Fliacza demon rarely shows itself. The Fliacza is attracted to politicians, executives, and others in a position of power who are trying to keep a scandal secret. Whether the problem in question is a criminal activity, an infidelity, or a family member with a substance abuse problem, the demon finds joy in the victim's panic at the thought of this problem becoming public knowledge.

Once the Fliacza has found a victim, it begins to stalk her, watching from the shadows, eavesdropping. When the victim opens a safe, the demon learns the combination. When the victim buries a clue (or a corpse), the Fliacza watches and learns. When crucial evidence is torn to shreds, the demon picks up the pieces and reassembles them.

It hoards evidence, clues, and bits of information. When it decides that the victim may well survive the scandal unscathed, the demon begins its campaign of terror. First, it targets the victim's family and friends. It stalks them, harasses them, and threatens them. They never see the demon, however. They may hear its laughter and insults as they walk to their cars in quiet parking garages at night.

It might call them, hours before dawn, then laugh or scream, and hang up. It will leave dead animals, caked with dried blood and feces, in their mailboxes, and it will vandalize their cars. It is cautious, however, and will never be apprehended by the police. For days, it will taunt and terrify them. Finally, it will select one of the victim's loved ones and kill him. The murder will look like a crime of passion: clumsy, bloody, and spontaneous. But the demon will hide one piece of evidence at the scene of the crime: a letter, a photograph, a scrap of cloth containing telltale hairs or fibers. These will all serve to implicate the Fliacza's target. However, the demon will only strike when the target is in public, seen by numerous eyewitnesses. The complications caused by the target's airtight alibi will keep the target out of prison, and will keep the police bewildered and anxious.

Over the next few days, it will repeat this pattern. If it cannot get to the victim's family or loved ones, it will pursue those who suspect something. Fellow politicians, journalists, the members of the Board of Directors -- anyone who suspects the victim of misdeeds or impropriety -- all are targets of the demon. After murdering them as brutally as possible, the demon will leave behind more clues, or will scrawl one-word messages in blood, near the corpse's hand, to make it look like a final attempt to identify the murderer.

All of this will, of course, point the finger suspicion directly at the victim, who will have absolutely no idea what is going on. The demon will not stop until the victim commits suicide, is arrested, or dies at someone else's hands. If it seems that the victim may be exonerated, despite the demon's efforts, it will kill her, but only after revealing its identity to her, and explaining what it has done.

Takedown

The Disciples may get involved when the demon starts to kill the friends and family of its target. At that point, given the target's alibi, the police may be so confused that they turn to the Cabal for assistance. One of the people being stalked by the demon may realize that the tormentor is a supernatural entity of some kind, and call the Disciples for help.

12.5.14._FOATHIAQ

Type: Hunter

Strength 8

Sense 5

Soul 2

Life 24

Wrath 15



Appearance

The Foathiac is sleek and powerful. Its body is dark, and covered with large spikes that jut from its skin at its joints (elbows, knuckles, and knees). Its face is vaguely reptilian, with a massive mouth that juts outward, bristling with teeth. Each of its hands ends in four talons; there are two fingers and two opposed thumbs, so that it can grasp and rend. The nails are long and dark. The Foathiac smells of roasted meat.

Pattern

The Foathiac lives to torment its victims. Typically, it will actually invade their home, taking an entire family hostage for a period of several hours. During this time, it will inflict unspeakable tortures on them, and when it has finished, it will dispatch them all before leaving.

A nocturnal demon, the Foathiac spends most of the day lurking in a quiet place, unseen by human eyes. When darkness falls, the creature finds a human home in a remote location, and it enters.

There is no prevarication or stealth involved; the demon kicks in a door and walks in, and immediately begins to round up the humans. It tears phones out of their hands, pummels anyone who tries to flee or fight back, and herds them all into a single room. It incapacitates them, binds them, and takes one, typically the youngest, to another room. There, the demon torments the victim, and frequently devours him when finished. After that, it extracts its next victim from the impromptu cell, and so on, until they are all dead.

The Foathiac tends to use whatever is available. For implements of torture, it relies on the tools that it finds in the homes of ordinary people: knives, saws, cheese graters. It is not terribly imaginative, and is happy just to know that innocents are suffering.

Takedown

The demon moves quickly and decisively, leaving behind considerable evidence in its wake. Skin flakes, teeth marks, and prints can be found all over the scene of the slaughter. Since the Foathiac strikes at families in remote locations, it may be some time before the carnage is discovered by authorities. Due to the decomposition, they may be inclined to believe that the people were killed by a wild animal, such as a bear, but there will be just enough suspicion that the Disciples are brought in to investigate.



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12.5.15._GATTERAG

Type: Hunter

Strength 8

Sense 4

Soul 3

Life 26

Wrath 13

Appearance

The Gatterag is a woman with mother-of-pearl skin whose body ripples with dark red flame. Her face is a skull with tiny white lights deep in the eye sockets, and her fingers are tipped with short black talons. The Gatterag smells of freshly-peeled orange rind.

Pattern

The pyrokinetic Gatterag seems happiest in the throes of an inferno. The entity is attracted to desperation and conflict, and can wait patiently for weeks just to see how the conflagration will erupt.

Typically found lurking in low-income neighborhoods, amidst refuse and garbage, or in the sewers below, the iridescent demon is drawn to people who have become so frustrated by circumstance and poverty that they turn upon one another. When a drunken husband raises his hand against his wife, or a bitter mother brutalizes her children, the Gatterag crouches nearby, absorbing the misery. When a poker game loss becomes a catalyst for violence, or a barroom brawl is taken to the next level by the use of a switchblade or pistol, the Gatterag listens closely for droplets of blood on the floor.

The demon feeds primarily on the grief and stress caused by financial woe, and by the darkly satisfying relief that violence provides. However, it must also consume flesh, and only that flesh which has been charred black. Consequently, when the release of sudden violence has been furnished, the sated Gatterag unleashes its pyrokinetic energy, causing a fire to break out.

Guiding the flame from a distance, the Gatterag does its best to trap the instigators of the violence in the fire. When there is blackened meat to be had, but before the rescue teams and firefighters can arrive, the Gatterag will descend upon the burned victims (alive or dead, it doesn't matter) and feed on their flesh. It will eat only the skin, unless the innards have been cooked as well.

If the fiend is discovered while feeding in the fire, it will be hard to spot, given its mother-of-pearl skin, which tends to reflect the flames around it. However, it can be heard, as it sings while it eats, in a voice like that of a child.

Takedown

The Gatterag's victims are often so badly burned that the bite marks go undetected, but in some cases, the amount of meat that's consumed is noted by emergency workers. A report on television about a cannibal arsonist might be the cue that involves the Cabal in the investigation. Eyewitness reports of a 'burning woman' may also be enough to bring the Disciples in.

The demon tends to stick to a specific hunting ground, making it easier to track once the Cabal has a fix on its location. When discovered, though, the Gatterag will set a number of fires to distract the Disciples so that it can pick them off one at a time.

12.5.16. GRUSCE

Type: Defiler

Strength 4

Sense 1

Soul 9

Life 12

Wrath 27

Appearance

The Grusce appears as a wad of pulsing red tissue, covered in green and white mucus. Roughly the size of a legless cat, the Grusce slithers up walls and across ceilings by means of short, barbed cilia along its underside.

Pattern

In this form, the Grusce makes its way through pipes or bodies of water, seeking only a human host. Its very presence alarms and vexes wildlife, so the creature is able to pass unmolested through shoals of fish, or under the eyes of predatory birds.

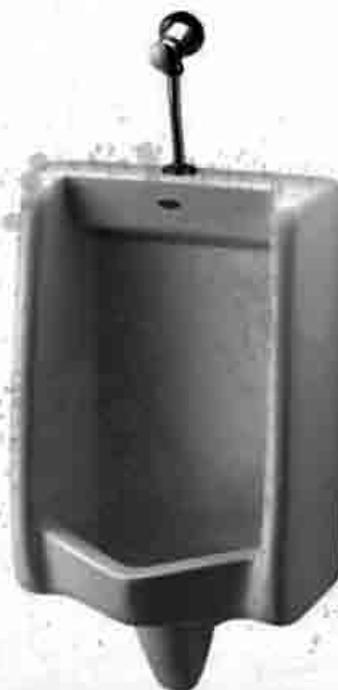
Making its way to civilization, the demon emerges from manholes, culverts, sinks, toilets, or shower heads. Alarmingly fast for its size, the bloblike creature extrudes long crimson tentacles, which it uses to attach itself to its prey. The creature is unintelligent, however, and has no compunction about where or when it strikes. Therefore, it is just as likely to strike someone in the public restroom at a crowded shopping mall, or in a quiet lake in the wilderness.

Either way, the Grusce is driven to enter its host's body, regardless of which orifice must be employed. Squirring its way within, the Grusce dissolves itself and becomes one with its host, whose mind is suddenly shoved into the back seat, leaving the demon to drive. The Grusce is not intelligent naturally, but once it has entered a victim, it has complete access to his or her memories and knowledge.

Once inside, the Grusce has a single agenda: find and destroy everyone the victim ever loved, starting with whoever's closest. When the creature has killed, the body slips into something like a coma as the Grusce coalesces and excretes itself from its host. It then proceeds to feed upon the flesh of the deceased loved one, favoring the softer tissues. After this ritual, the Grusce re-enters its host and continues with the slaughter until it is exorcised or the victim runs out of loved ones. Throughout the entire process, the host is well aware of what is transpiring, but has no control over the situation. When the victim runs out of loved ones, the demon will begin to kill indiscriminately until caught and destroyed.

Takedown

The Disciples may be alerted to the demon's presence when a Contact tells them of a strange incident in a public bathroom or beach (in which the Grusce makes contact via a victim's orifice, then stomps off awkwardly in its new body). Or, they may be brought in when the Grusce kills and devours its victims.



12.5.17. _ISSOAC

Type: Defiler

Strength 5

Sense 3

Soul 7

Life 13

Wrath 26

Appearance

The Issoac appears as a woman covered with dark red lesions and white boils ringed with pink. Her hair is falling out in clumps, and her lips are covered with sores. Her skin is peeling and blistered, and her eyes are sunken and cataractous. She wears thick makeup, bright red lipstick, and provocative clothing.

Pattern

The Issoac has a single goal: war in the streets. It gravitates towards those who participate in organized crime, with the goal of bringing them into armed conflict that claims the life of innocent civilians.

The demon will begin by possessing the leader of a crime organization. Once it has assimilated its host's memories and personality, it will initiate war in one of two ways.

First, there's the war with rival families.

In this case, the demon will claim dominance, asserting that the time for truces and agreements is over. Declaring that peace is for weaklings, it will push its men to new aggression. Claiming new territory and resources, the demon will push rival families to retaliate. It will then capture, torture, and kill their men before crossing all boundaries and violating all covenants.

The demon will betray former allies, seize their wealth and assets, blow up cars and houses, and target the women and children of its enemies. The families will either be killed outright or sold into slavery. Either way, photos will be sent to the demon's enemies so that they know exactly what happened, and who was responsible.

Although the Issoac will be moving very quickly, and executing several attacks at the same time, the other families will soon band together and declare war against the demon's organization. The Issoac never strikes so hard or so fast that the other families can't regroup and launch a counterattack; after all, it's hoping for war in the streets.

If any of its men aren't on board, the demon will kill them on its own time, then blame the enemy organization for the hit.

When the war begins, the Issoac will arm its men with the heaviest weapons possible: fully automatic rifles, grenades, rocket launchers, and anything else that it can acquire. The goal is maximum collateral damage when the shooting starts.

When the conflict begins, the demon itself will lead the charge. As soon as its host body has taken enough damage, the demon will detonate the explosive vest that it wears, incinerating the corpse and taking out as many innocent bystanders as possible.





Second, there's the war with law enforcement operatives.

In this case, the demon will attempt to push legitimate groups, such as federal or local agencies, into battle with the family, again putting innocent people in the line of fire. Chances are, the organization is being investigated by the police, or the FBI, or the ATF, or all of the above. For the most part, the investigation takes the form of surveillance, harassment, and the occasional arrest on RICO charges, but for the most part, the organization's structure has allowed it to function without serious impediment. The demon will change this, of course.

It begins by pulling operations back, consolidating power and restricting access to information. In this way, the Issoac can purge data and locate leaks. Once all snitches, wiretaps, and bugs have been dealt with, the demon announces that the organization needs to defend itself against the authorities. It claims that the group must send a message to those who persecute them. Any dissenters are framed for police collaboration and executed as swiftly as possible.

The demon secures control by 'retiring' those who have served loyally for many years, claiming that they're past their prime. In their place, the ignored and unintelligent are promoted to positions of control and authority as a reward for loyalty and bravery. They are shown respect and responsibility that they've never enjoyed before, and they are also showered with money. At this point, the organization is hemorrhaging money, but that hardly concerns the Issoac. It increases everyone's pay, and also dispenses cash bonuses for identifying informants, which results in a paranoia that the demon lashes to a fever pitch in the days before the showdown.

Once everything is in place, the demon strikes. It sends assassins after the families of the police officers or agents that are investigating the organization. The families are tortured and killed, and their remains are sent to the police along with threats of further violence. The assassins themselves may not even realize whose families they're killing, being told by the Issoac that they are the wives and children of informants.

The end result of this scenario is much like the first case: the police come after the family, guns blazing, resulting in a massive firefight that ends with severe casualties on both sides.

Takedown

The demon presents the Disciples with a real challenge. After all, as the head of an organized crime organization, the Issoac controls a small army that can be thrown at the Cabal should they try to interfere. However, there are a number of different ways that the Disciples can get involved.

A contact on the police force may contact the Cabal with stories of erratic behavior in a crime family, or the Disciples may even be approached by a member of the family who is unsure about the behavior of his leader.

Whatever the case, once the Issoac realizes that the Disciples are on the case, it may do its best to start the war between the organization and the Cabal, reasoning that the Disciples' magic should make for an interesting battle.

If the Disciples can exorcise the demon from its host, it will attack in rage.

12.5.18 . _KHOREPTA

Type: Stalker

Strength 1

Sense 9

Soul 5

Life 19

Wrath 20

Appearance

The Khorepta looks like a beautiful, athletic woman, except for the dark green tentacles that grow along her shoulder blades. Her skin smells like rain.

Pattern

The Khorepta appears to desperate men who fight out of hatred or fear. The demon sways the men, binds them to her will, and takes control of the group. Streamlining and organizing them, she takes their campaign of terror to the next level.

Whether the group in question is a team of antigovernment revolutionaries who want to turn a protest into a bloodbath, or a bunch of seperatists who want to blow up a federal building, the Khorepta steps in, takes charge, and makes sure that the plan goes off without a hitch.

The demon seizes power; then sends out members of the team for supplies and reconnaissance. Gathering as much data as possible, the demon also monitors the men, surreptitiously, gauging their mental and physical fortitude. Those whom she deems unworthy, whether because of incompetence, cowardice, or weakness, are expelled from the group and given money to maintain secrecy. Of course, they never make it to the Greyhound bus station in town, and their bodies are never found -- not that anyone looks for them.

The demon delegates roles, coordinates motion, procures the necessary equipment, and evaluates risk at every stage of the process. The risk of death does not concern her, but she is wary of discovery. If the plan is foiled, innocents will survive, and the demon cannot abide this.

Throughout the process, she reiterates, time and again, the need for secrecy, and the righteousness of the cause that they are willing to kill for. By the time the plan is ready for execution, the men are convinced that they are modern-day knights on a holy quest to save the world from itself.

The Khorepta is cunning and patient, and takes few chances.

Takedown

The Cabal may get involved when local or federal authorities become nervous about an extremist group's activities, or when the terrorists make their first move. The Disciples may even take an interest after the Khorepta's militia actually executes a terrorist attack of some kind. However, this will only be an initial strike, and not the group's doomsday weapon (sarin gas, suitcase nuke, et cetera). The Khorepta will be posing as an ordinary human, as is customary for stalker demons, but it's possible that someone may observe it in its natural form, however briefly, and report this information to the Cabal.

12.5.19. KINARSETTE

Type: Stalker

Strength 2

Sense 9

Soul 4

Life 20

Wrath 19

Appearance

The Kinarsette's body consists of a bulbous abdomen with eight long, bristly legs, like those of a tarantula. Where the head should be is the torso of a man, hairless except for short patches of black bristles along the back and shoulders. Its face is featureless, save for a round mouth crammed full of short teeth, like that of a lamprey. Its hands appear to have been hacked off, and in their place are two sharp pieces of scrap metal, rammed into the bloodied bone.

Pattern

The demon appears to unhinged recluses, lonely souls with delusions of grandeur. Seekers of wisdom, the old and infirm, the young and confused, and those who feel resentful and insecure about their place in the world.

Telling its victim whatever he needs to hear, the demon preys upon the feelings of inadequacy and anger, and offers the promise of power in a new world order. It offers the spurned and vengeful a way to wipe away the pain and frustration, promising that an Apocalypse draws near. The ancients who once ruled the world are going to return, and they will enslave all of humankind, sparing only those who have served them loyally.

The Kinarsette furnishes the victim with ancient texts that must be deciphered. The books are full of nonsensical scribbles, but the victim is so wrapped up in the fantasy that he's able to convince himself that he's discovered ancient rituals and mystical secrets. The texts tell the story of ancient gods that once ruled the earth, and whose return will cover the earth in fire and misery. Of course, they require the assistance of a human on earth.

The victim is instructed to recruit others for the cause, and in due time, a cult is formed. Their mission is to spill blood in accordance with the rituals 'described' in the ancient tomes. In their compound, the cultists capture and kill innocent victims, which are then devoured by the demon. If any of the cult members show signs of hesitation, or any indication that they're having thoughts of leaving, the Kinarsette will kill and eat them as an object lesson to the others.

Takedown

The Disciples will usually get involved once people start to go missing. Federal or local law-enforcement agencies may become aware of the cult's activities, at which point they'll make contact with the Cabal. It's also possible that someone may find a partially-eaten corpse, which could also result in a Contact getting in touch with the Disciples.

The demon will continue to encourage the cult, urging them to grow in size and ambition until the inevitable showdown with the authorities (at which point the demon moves on).

However, if anyone attempts to interfere, the demon will send the cultists after them before attacking.

Type: Defiler

Strength 5
Sense 1
Soul 9
Life 14
Wrath 25

Appearance

The Laiamas is a bald humanoid female with dark blue skin that drips with slime. Its face is horrendously distorted, and its mouth is crammed full of fangs. From its back grow thick tentacles, each at least five feet long.

Pattern

The Laiamas is drawn to conspiracies, plots, and treason. It possesses people who have access to military secrets, and uses that access to create death and destruction. There are two ways that the demon can achieve this: patriots and traitors.

When the demon takes over the body of a patriot, it selects someone who subscribes to the notion of "my country, right or wrong." Ideally, it chooses a host with connections to the military or intelligence communities, such as a high-ranking army officer or an intelligence analyst. The Laiamas plays the role of the host well enough that even friends and family won't notice anything amiss at first; the demon will go about its host's business as usual, doing nothing to tip its hand or put its host at risk.

Drawing on the host's memories, the demon will begin to construct its elaborate plan for treason. It will carefully make contact with an agent of a rival nation, and will discreetly make plans to sell military or state secrets in exchange for large sums of cash in an offshore account. However, the demon won't give up all the information at once; instead, it will parcel out the classified information in small doses, starting with low-level secrets (such as troop placements) and building up to high-end information (such as contingency plans for the nation's leaders in case of a crisis). It sells these secrets, but throws in other information for free. This other information is specifically intended to result in the loss of human life. For example, it will divulge the names and addresses of agents in the field, the locations of safehouses for defectors, and the identities of moles in the rival government's agencies.

The demon then turns its attention to its host's allies. It tracks down those who work alongside its host, and it attacks them in their homes, at night. Since it appears in the shape of its host, the demon is usually allowed inside without complaint, and is then able to strike by surprise. If the host is an officer, it targets his superiors, or other officers. If he works in the intelligence community, it goes after other analysts, codebreakers, spies, or field agents. One by one, it kills them (along with anyone else found in the home) and consumes the hearts of its victims before leaving. Using the knowledge and training of its host, it is able to avoid detection as it moves from home to home, leaving blood and bodies in its wake.

Since the host's fingerprints are all over the crime scene, the demon's cover is now blown. From this point on, the Laiamas is on the defensive, continuing its work while trying to avoid capture.



SPAIN
ALA
518
5ND
5

85	92
925	
310	1000
97	120
96	905
91	80
83	67
81	82
67	33
01	14
20	0
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09	
03	
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87	
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91	
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74	
67	

...the young boy to you. It seems to me that you will find
 ...the great world. But I hope to be
 ...the great world. But I hope to be
 ...the great world. But I hope to be

Illustration by Werner Galant

It focuses now on causing as much damage as possible to the country's infrastructure. Using the electronic data that it had prepared, the demon delivers the final blow. It may upload high-tech classified data and post it to a file-sharing network, or it may sneak onto a military base and direct an unmanned vehicle to attack nearby civilian targets. It may arrange to meet with its foreign contact in a remote location, then have a news crew arrive while it's handing the classified data over. Either way, the finale should deliver a blow to the country and its government, and result in widespread misery (especially when its host's stomach contents are revealed to contain partially-digested human hearts).

When the host is captured, the demon abandons the body and seeks out a new victim.

The Laiamas also enjoys taking over the body of those who have already turned traitor. It possesses those who sell state secrets, betray their own countries, and spy for the enemy. Once it has taken over, the demon procures an explosive device, then carefully conceals this weapon before embarking on the murder spree.

Next, the demon destroys all of the host's evidence, including any money that has been received, any hidden documents, and any devices used to indicate an information drop. Documents are shredded and tracks are covered. The demon then requests a meeting with its contact on the other side, claiming a personal emergency. It meets the enemy agent and kills him immediately, then devours his heart. It disposes of the body, but doesn't devote much time or energy to concealment; it may dump the corpse in a river, or cover it with newspapers. It repeats this process for any other conspirators.

At this point, the demon begins to dismantle its own agency's ability to interfere. It plants evidence that implicates the host's colleagues, it murders key personnel in their homes, and it uploads viruses into computer networks in an effort to stymie investigation. Again, the demon doesn't really make much of an effort to conceal the body; it knows that by the time the corpse is found, it will be too late.

To ensure that it has everyone's attention, the Laiamas will approach an innocent bystander on the street, kill him, and devour his heart in broad daylight. It then enters a building, takes hostages, and arms the bomb. When the authorities converge on the building, the demon retires to a safe distance to observe the fireworks.

Takedown

The Disciples may get brought in when bodies are found with their hearts torn out, or when someone sees the host committing murder. It's also possible that someone involved with the investigation might contact the Cabal when it's discovered that an explosive device has gone missing, particularly given the gruesome behavior of the suspected traitor.



12.5.21. LARADINA

Type: Stalker

Strength 2

Sense 7

Soul 6

Life 18

Wrath 21

Appearance

From the waist up, the Laradina is a beautiful human female, with long dark hair and large eyes. However, from the waist down, her body is that of a scaled reptile, with four massive legs, covered in spikes and short, stubby horns. From her spine grow two long tentacles, each of which ends in a mouth like a lamprey, studded with teeth.

Pattern

First, the demon will strike at a pretty young woman in an isolated place. Killing her, mutilating her body, and stealing her identity, the demon will then assume her shape. It will then approach its target, a wealthy and powerful married man. The Laradina is coy or straightforward, tender or aggressive, a delicate lover or as savage as an animal; in short, the demon gives the man whatever he's hoped for in a sexual partner. Once the affair is underway, the demon will agree to meet him in a specific place at a specific time (a certain hotel room at 4 o'clock on Wednesday afternoons, for instance).

Eventually, once the man has begun to tell lies about leaving his wife for his new love, the Laradina will contact him (usually by phone) to ask that they change their schedule. She'll say whatever she has to in order to get him to meet her at an unusual time, such as at 2 o'clock in the morning. The demon will beg, cry, and threaten to tell his wife until he agrees to meet her there, and she'll tell him that if she's running late, he needs to wait there for her. After her target has lied to his wife about an emergency business trip and rushed out, the Laradina will get started.

Methodically, the fiend will stalk every female in his life, and will disfigure them all. Wives, girlfriends, sisters, mothers, colleagues, and daughters are all tracked down by the demon, and each one is attacked and brutalized.

However, the attacks are not fatal. Instead, the demon seeks only to inflict pain, and to mangle their faces. Eyes are clawed out, noses are bitten off, and lips are slashed. The demon will stalk and maim as many of the female friends and relatives as possible. In the meantime, the creature's lover will sit in a hotel room, suspecting nothing.

When the carnage is over, the Laradina merely finds a new identity and a new lover.

Takedown

The Disciples may be brought in with the first murder, because the victim's wounds will be nothing short of horrific. With its massive talons, the Laradina will tear its victim's limbs from the body before confiscating her keys and raiding her apartment or dorm room. The Cabal may also get involved once the carnage has begun, but this is less likely, because the demon tends to strike at a very high number of targets extremely quickly.

It is also possible that the Cabal may start investigating in the aftermath of one of the Laradina's attacks, and may try to stop the Laradina's spree of murder and mutilation before it begins.

12.5.22. LUNAMIC

Type: Defiler

Strength 4

Sense 2

Soul 8

Life 12

Wrath 27

Appearance

The Lunamic is a muscular, sexless humanoid demon with pale skin. It has a massive tail like a scorpion, which curves overhead. Its face is smooth and featureless. From chest to crotch is a gaping cavity, inside which some of its organs can be glimpsed. The wound is raw, and the flesh within is clearly damaged and torn. Its hands are tipped with barbed talons. The demon smells of old books.

Pattern

The Lunamic demon draws strength from the fear of its victims, feeding on the terror that it causes them. A monstrous brute, eight feet tall, the Lunamic has a smooth, featureless face and skin like polished obsidian. From its belly, long strands of barbed viscera dangle and twitch.

However, it visits its victims in the form of a chill, a cold spot in the room. A shiver, a few goosebumps, and suddenly, the victim's consciousness has been shoved into a corner of his mind, and the demon is now in control. Taking over the victim's body, the demon uses it to entertain itself by stalking and terrifying new victims, or killing them when it grows bored.

The Lunamic demon adores places of worship: churches, synagogues, mosques -- it will find and visit any of these. Once it's found a host body, the demon locates a house of worship and enters, professing to be interested in learning more about the faith. It seems generally interested, and asks relevant, specific questions (as a rule, the demon is actually fascinated by organized religion, and comes across as educated and urbane).

During a moment of intimacy (a shared smile, a handshake), the demon will reveal itself for a second. The Lunamic is well aware of what it's doing, and derives great satisfaction in horrifying people while keeping a straight face. No matter what happens, the demon will not break character at first, and when the other person becomes startled, or worries about hallucinations, or even suspects demonic possession, the demon's host appears concerned, diplomatic, and mild-mannered. The Lunamic will not reveal itself more than once or twice per hour, and will rarely reveal itself to more than one person in the course of the day.

Sometimes, the Lunamic's victim realizes that it's not a hallucination, at which point the demon begins to visit with mounting frequency. It will visit the house of worship, wave, unveil its horrific face, then take a seat. Then, the victim will begin to see the Lunamic in other places, as well. In the street, at the mall, at the park, the victim will see the smiling face of the person he dreads most. But the Lunamic will not give in to its murderous urges immediately. It savors the fear, enjoys the taste of panic and desperation, and takes its sweet time.

After days, or even weeks, of toying with its victim, the demon will finally shed its host like a skin, stripping off skin and bone like rags, stepping out of them to reveal its true nature to its victim. Choosing the time and place carefully, the Lunamic will reveal itself to its victim one last time, in the flesh, and then it will attack. Patient and merciless, the demon will torment its victim for hours, if possible, before delivering the killing blow.

Takedown

The Cabal may hear of a demonic apparition stalking a holy person, or they may be contacted for help by one of the victims directly. The demon often torments numerous victims at the same time, so the Disciples might be contacted if one of the victims is killed.

12.5.23._MERSTETT

Type: Hunter

Invertebrate:

Strength 4

Sense 1

Soul 1

Life 12

Wrath 14

Demon:

Strength 9

Sense 4

Soul 2

Life 25

Wrath 14

Appearance

Once hatched, the Merstett is a massive reptilian creature, roughly twenty feet at the shoulder. Its body is similar to that of a rhinoceros, ending in a long tail tipped with a three-pronged pincer. Its head is featureless, save for a vast toothless maw, surrounded by six-foot barbed tentacles. Huge ragged spines, beginning at its neck, follow the curve of its spine all the way down to the tail. Its massive feet end in six-inch talons.

Pattern

The Merstett begins as an invertebrate. A mass of pale blue tissue, roughly the size of a man, it undulates along the ground, rolling its slimy bulk and leaving a trail of moisture behind. The demon stalks its human prey in lonely places, and kills them by suffocating them. Generally, it attacks people when they're by themselves, but may make an exception in the case of a pair, particularly when it hasn't been successful locating people by themselves. If it finds two people, it will attack the largest one, leaving the other to run to safety while the demon chokes the life out of its victim.

Once it has killed its prey, it hauls the body back to its lair, where it dumps the corpse on the ground and heads out in pursuit of new meat. When the Merstett has collected between 15 and 20 bodies, it will gather them all into a pile and begin to consume them. After absorbing all organic tissue (leaving behind items like clothing, belts, and car keys), the demon will harden into an egg sac and begin to gestate.

After roughly ten hours, the egg will hatch and the Merstett will emerge. A monstrous carnivore with a ferocious appetite, the demon will immediately head for the largest high-population area that it can find. Drawn to crowds, the demon will begin to attack anything that moves, flipping over cars, demolishing small buildings, and swallowing people whole. Even after its hunger has been satisfied, the demon will continue to attack until destroyed.

When it dies, the demon's body will split open and a new invertebrate will emerge. If not captured or killed, it will try to enter a manhole or body of water so that it can escape and begin the cycle again.

Takedown

While an invertebrate, the demon will kill several people in a short period of time, possibly with witnesses, resulting in numerous missing-persons investigations at the same time. The Cabal may get involved based on descriptions of the invertebrate. It's also possible that someone may stumble across the lair and find the dead bodies, or even the egg sac (just prior to hatching, of course). If the Disciples don't get involved while the Merstett is an invertebrate, they will no doubt become aware of the demon shortly after it hatches.

12.5.24. MURSALLIC

Type: Stalker

Strength 2

Sense 8

Soul 5

Life 18

Wrath 21

Appearance

The Mursallic looks like a woman with a grotesquely wide grin full of misshapen teeth. Her eyes are completely black, and though she's smiling, her eyes stream bloody tears.

Pattern

The demon poses as a wealthy older woman, a member of the cultural elite. Her furs, her perfume, and her earrings all mark her as a person of wealth and refinement. Therefore, it's strange when her victims answer the door to find her standing there, in extremely seedy and run-down neighborhoods.

The Mursallic targets poor families with serious issues, such as a sick child or desperate legal problems. The demon claims that she is the answer to their prayers, and has been sent to take care of the family's financial problems. She says that she will return in exactly one week with enough cash to take care of the family's problems once and for all.

The demon then abandons its disguise and embarks on a spree of robbery and murder. Targeting cash-only establishments (but avoiding places like banks, which feature armed guards), the demon kills indiscriminately and takes all of the available cash, ignoring any valuables. After assembling enough cash to fill a suitcase, it returns to its victims in the guise of the elegant philanthropist, and presents them with the money.

After a week has gone by, the demon returns. It claims to be in danger. A psychotic stalker is trying to kill her, or perhaps one of her children wants her dead in order to claim the inheritance money. It may even say that a maniac has assaulted her. Anything in order to gain the sympathy of the people who feel so indebted to her.

The Mursallic claims that the police mustn't get involved, and hesitantly asks for violence on its behalf. If the father agrees to 'fix the problem', the demon will point him to a complete stranger, and let the chips fall where they may. Sometimes, a confrontation leads to violence. Other times, the victim suspects that something strange is going on and calls the police.

Either way, the demon attacks, and slaughters the entire family. When finished, it dresses them up in their finest, lines them up on the floor, and covers them with money.

Then it moves on to its next victim.

Takedown

The Disciples may be involved from the beginning, due to the Mursallic's habit of biting its victims. Given that its teeth don't match anything on record, the investigating agency may bring the Cabal in to help. They may also get the case when the family's bodies are found, given the ritualistic nature of the murder and the aforementioned bite marks.

12.5.25._NAISSANTE

Type: Hunter

Strength 8

Sense 6

Soul 1

Life 27

Wrath 12

Appearance

When disguised, the Naissante appears as a small child with big sad eyes. In its true form, the Naissante has the body of a man, topped with the head of a snarling jackal, foam dripping from its lips. The demon's arms end in a single barbed spike, roughly two feet long. Its eyes are completely black.

Pattern

The Naissante has the ability to transform between two shapes: that of a small child, and that of a jackal-headed man.

While in the shape of a child, the demon comes to the home of couples who have no children of their own, and it rings the doorbell. Clad in rags, dirty, and mute, the child points to its mouth and rubs its belly. When its victims let it into the house, the demon immediately begins to search for traps that it can set. While the victims contact the authorities, reporting a lost child, the demon acts.

It pretends to be in the bathroom, then sneaks out and switches prescription medicines, poisons food in the refrigerator, and leaves marbles on stairs. In a few minutes, it has transformed the house into a deathtrap.

When the authorities come for the child, it hugs its rescuers goodbye, then gets in the car. En route, it transforms itself into its other shape and attacks, killing the occupants of the car before leaving.

Eventually, the demon returns to the home, where it reverts to the shape of a child and begins to work on the corpses. It makes toys from their bodies.

Using their skins, it makes drums. From their hollowed-out femurs, whistles. From their dried and inflated stomachs, soccer balls. From their vertebrae, rattles.

Eventually, it gets tired of playing with its toys, and moves on to another house.

Takedown

After the carnage, when the authorities find the toys made from human remains, it's only a matter of time before one of them calls the Disciples. If any eyewitnesses see the demon in its true form, they'll probably wind up talking about it, which is bound to reach the ears of the Cabal eventually.



12.5.26. NETHASQ

Type: Hunter

Strength 7

Sense 4

Soul 3

Life 26

Wrath 13

Appearance

The Nethasq appears to be a human female, but its face is hideously distorted, with massive jaws that reveal several rows of teeth, two slits for a nose, and eyes that are completely black, without pupil or cornea. Its hands end in talon-like fingernails, roughly four inches long. Where its genitals should be, the demon sports a glistening mass of foot-long tentacles that end in barbs and hooks. Its skin smells of lavender.

Pattern

The Nethasq demon haunts places where women have been defiled. In abandoned buildings where prostitutes plied their trade, or where pornographic films were shot, or where women were sexually assaulted, the demon lurks, awaiting the presence of a male.

Where the Nethasq lurks, men bleed. When a man enters a place that the demon has claimed for its own, he begins to seep blood from his mouth, anus, and urethra. Though this is not painful, it is usually fatal. The Nethasq is completely blind, but possesses an astounding sense of smell. It can smell blood for nearly a mile. Therefore, when a man enters the lair of the Nethasq demon, it knows immediately.

When it has snared a victim, the demon holds him down, squats atop him, positioning its groin just above his collarbone, and tears his lower jaw off with the frenzied lashing of its barbs. After the victim has bled to death, the demon devours the carcass quickly.

Takedown

The demon tends to focus on a specific hunting ground, and so eyewitness reports may come in of a strange woman with deformed genitalia. Disciples may also receive reports of men who bleed when approaching a certain abandoned warehouse or condemned tenement building. The Cabal may also be involved once the creature starts killing and eating its victims.

12.5.27. PAIKHALIX

Type: Defiler

Strength 6

Sense 3

Soul 7

Life 13

Wrath 26

Appearance

The Paikhalix is a humanoid male. In place of a mouth, it features mandibles, like those of an ant. From the waist down, the body consists of a long, snakelike tail. The tail is a dark green, flecked with golden scales. The demon smells like rotten eggs.

Pattern

The Paikhalix possesses those whom no one would ever suspect of murder. It takes over the bodies of the elderly, the comatose, and the catatonic, and it animates them like puppets. Given that the bodies are so withered, the demon knows that they won't amount to much in combat, so it typically uses them to set traps for the unwary.

At night, the host body shuffles out under the demon's control and begins to search for victims. The demon never strikes near its base of operations, so the coma patient will never kill anyone near the hospital, and the geriatric will never attack in the vicinity of the retirement home. Instead, they'll travel on foot to a home in a remote location, where they'll kill as quickly and efficiently as possible. For example, the demon may strike at a sleeping victim by stabbing him, or smothering him with a pillow.

Alternately, it may endanger the person by cutting the brake lines in his car or deliberately exposing the wires on an electric curling iron near the bathroom sink. It's not uncommon for a Paikhalix to set more elaborate traps, which don't necessarily result in death. For example, it may loosen the bulb in the basement, string a fishing-line tripwire across the steps, and litter the concrete at the base of the stairs with tacks and broken glass.

Most often, however, the demon aims to kill. It will continue to use its host body in this fashion until the host is caught in the act or captured, at which point the demon will abandon the body and find a new one.

Takedown

The Disciples may get brought in when someone awakens from a coma to commit murder, then keels over when captured, never to wake again. They may also be summoned when an Alzheimer's patient is found miles from home with a kitchen knife, trying to stab someone in his sleep. Either way, once the Disciples get involved, the demon will play cat-and-mouse until it is forced to expose its true self and attack.

12.5.28 . PELOGRIS

Type: Stalker

Strength 1

Sense 9

Soul 6

Life 19

Wrath 20

Appearance

The Pelogris has an insectile body, covered in a gleaming black exoskeleton. Its back four legs are nine feet long, so the demon towers above its human prey, and its front two legs are barbed, like those of a preying mantis. The creature's face is that of a human woman, but her eyes are flat and red, and two antennae protrude from her brow.

Pattern

Described in the *Compendium Vilificarum* of Brother Ignatio Maculata as a "weaver of lies," the Pelogris demon is actually drawn to the deceits of others. Concealing its cruelty beneath a veneer of piety, the demon transforms itself into the guise of a religious figure of some kind (priest, nun, rabbi, imam). It becomes involved in the deceit, insinuating itself into the conflict, augmenting its natural charisma with magic when necessary.

Typically, the Pelogris demon follows a pattern: in a small, remote town, it conceals itself in a dark place (an old barn, an abandoned silo) and waits. For days, it studies the inhabitants of the town, creeping from its hiding place at night to eavesdrop outside windows.

When the demon has found a suitable deceit, it assumes the guise of a holy man or woman, and explains itself to the townsfolk as a wandering pilgrim.

Through ostensible good will and charitable acts, the demon ingratiates itself to the community, and soon becomes vital to its spiritual well-being. The demon uses its influence to gain the attention of those engaged in the deceit, and slowly begins to aggravate the condition. For the abused daughter who conceals her shame and hatred, the demon feigns concern, and serves as her confessor, prodding her with questions until she admits her terrible secret.

Carefully sculpting her anger into a weapon, the demon then cautiously approaches the father, serving him in a similar fashion, guiding and warping his progress until his shame and guilt are hammered into a vengeful fury at the young temptress who drove him to sin.

By forcing the truth from the lips of those who are afraid to speak it, and by shaping their confusion and pain into rage, the demon forces a conflict that can only end in blood and tears. Eventually, these situations end in death, and the Pelogris demon is there to speak holy words and bow its head, but the waves of grief, agony, and sorrow have energized the creature, which then moves on to another town. It survives on these complex tragedies, craving the emotional web created when a person harms someone that once felt love instead of fear; the sensation is amplified when the tormentor still has feelings for the victim.



Illustration © Adam Chowles



There are countless scenarios: an embezzling banker and his paranoid partner, the cheating wife and suspicious husband, the duplicitous bank robbers hiding out in a remote county, the murderer and his intimidated witness. In each of these, the demon lurks behind a collar or habit, dispensing platitudes and sympathy, relishing every moment.

Sometimes, the demon will weave a massive web of hatred and deceit that takes weeks or even months to manifest, resulting in a frenzy of bloodshed in which nearly everyone in the town is driven to murder, arson, or suicide. In these cases, it's possible for the Pelogris to turn a thriving community into a ghost town overnight.

Takedown

The Cabal may get brought into the investigation when the demon drives two people towards a murder-suicide, or if numerous small communities report a strange religious figure who always seems to bring misery and death.

It could also be that the demon has completely obliterated a small town by turning everyone against his neighbor, resulting in investigation by the Disciples (at which point the demon has moved on to another town).

If confronted, the Pelogris sloughs off its guise, revealing itself as a monstrous creature. In combat, it tends to focus on weaker opponents, picking them off as viciously as possible, with the intent of demoralizing its other adversaries.



Illustration © Adam Chowles

12.5.29 . PHORIAG

Type: Hunter

Strength 7

Sense 4

Soul 3

Life 24

Wrath 15

Appearance

The Phoriag appears as a muscular, sexless humanoid with a face that's blank, except for a round, toothless orifice in the middle. It has a massive tail, like a scorpion, which is tipped by a foot-long spine. Its limbs are long and bony, and it has two elbows in each arm and two knees in each leg, giving it a spider-like appearance. The demon's fingers and toes are long and tipped with dark talons.

Pattern

The Phoriag begins by choosing a target, usually a young woman in her teens. Watching from afar, the demon waits until she's alone with an older man, an authority figure of some kind. At that point, it attacks. The Phoriag knows only one spell, which it casts on the girl. She slumps to the ground, unconscious, and the demon creates a gateway between our world and Li'Crast, a wasteland once inhabited by demons.

The Phoriag will then grab its victim and shove him through the gate. On the other side, the terrified victim will see that he's arrived in a horrific landscape of crucified angels, decaying corpses in mass graves, and vast craters that blast eye-watering smoke and ash into the sky.

When the girl awakens, her memories will be dark and ugly, and she'll be unsure of what to do, or whom to turn to. According to her memories, she was attacked by the person, whom she trusted, and after she fended off the unwelcome advances, the man left angrily.

When questioned by police, she will be able to furnish specific details, and will not change her story during questioning -- the memories are vivid and real to her, and she will believe her own story completely. However, after it happens again, and again, and the attackers have vanished without a trace, she will be regarded as a suspect. In the meantime, the Phoriag will have seeded its hunting-ground with live prey.

As the circle of suspicion closes in around the demon's target, it will begin to leave traces of evidence at the scenes of the attacks. Each time the Phoriag takes a victim to Li'Crast, it will leave behind a shoe, or a wallet, or some other clue, hidden in a closet, or under furniture.

In time, the evidence will be found, and the girl will be arrested. The bodies will never be discovered, though, for the Phoriag has sealed them in another place, where they've spent days surviving in a dark world of sand and stone.

Finally, it will enter Li'Crast, where it will hunt and eviscerate its victims, one by one.

Takedown

The Disciples will most likely be brought in to help with the investigation when the men go missing and suspicion is cast on the young woman. The demon tends to watch from a distance, so it will no doubt be aware of the Cabal before they know about the Phoriag. However, it will not attack unless they make some kind of meaningful contact with the young woman, at which point the demon will drag everyone -- Disciples, woman, and any bystanders -- into Li'Crast, where it will attempt to kill all of them.

Killing the demon results in a gateway opening from Li'Crast back into our world, through which all of the demon's surviving victims will be able to return home.

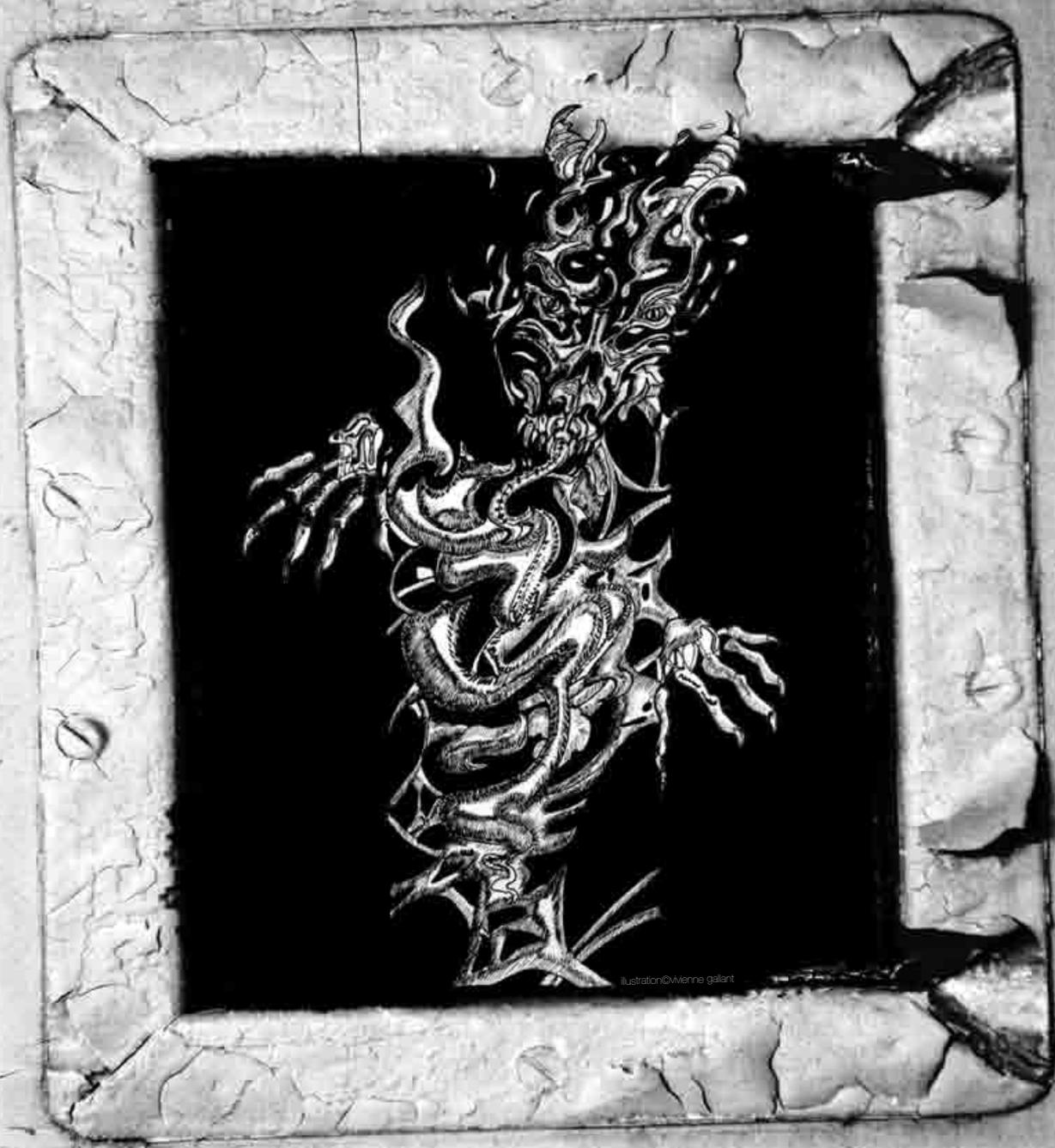


Illustration © Wierne galant

12.5.30 - QAVAAD

Type: Defiler

Strength 5

Sense 2

Soul 8

Life 14

Wrath 25

Appearance

A gruesome monstrosity, the QaVaad appears to be partially complete. Its fleshless skull is topped with curling horns, like those of a ram, and its eyes float in their sockets. Its skeleton hangs in empty space, bumping against dangling organs and nerves. The demon's glistening large intestine trails away from the rest of it like a tail, leaving a smear wherever it passes.

Pattern

The QaVaad takes over the body of a veteran who has seen combat. It preys on those who have suffered in some way on the battlefield, whether it's because they saw their comrades die, or because they were exposed to chemicals, or because they now suffer from post-traumatic stress disorder. The demon takes over the host and immediately declares war on the world. Once it has possessed its victim, his eyes begin to glow a deep green, and his canine teeth elongate.

It sets up position in the early hours of the morning, choosing a part of the city with solid defenses and a good view. For example, it may choose the window of a condemned building, or a rooftop. It booby-traps access to its position with razor wire and improvised explosives, and always plans for several escape routes when the authorities arrive.

Once there are numerous targets to choose from, the QaVaad opens fire on anyone it sees. It continues to attack until it either runs out of targets, or comes under fire from the police. In either case, it will hit the ground running and escape capture.

After that, it will locate a second position and repeat the pattern.

Eventually, the demon will begin to tire of the pattern (assuming that its host has not been killed), and it will move on to phase two. The second phase of the pattern involves tracking down and killing the host's superior officers. This can also include murdering any politicians who approved the operations that the host was a part of. This involves extremely high-level government officials, since many years may have passed in the interim.

Takedown

If the shooter is recognized by law-enforcement, or if his likeness is shown on television, someone may get in touch with the Disciples, shocked by his deformed appearance. The demon prefers to re-enact battles from its host's memories, so it will choose positions that are geographically analogous to places that he has actually been. This may help Disciples figure out where the demon will strike next. The QaVaad will continue until its host is killed, at which point it will find another victim. If Disciples become involved, the demon will reveal its true self and attack.



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12.5.31. QOLISHUUL

Type: Defiler

Strength 4

Sense 1

Soul 9

Injury 15

Wrath 24

Appearance

The Qolishuul appears as a mass of writhing tentacles with a long, snakelike tail that ends in a barbed hook. The tentacles are a pale pink, and rubbery to the touch; their tips exude droplets of moisture that smell faintly of cloves. Typically, the Qolishuul is found inside the body of a host, and when it attacks, it protrudes from the host's body through the abdomen, and walks around on its host's hands and feet like a quadruped.

Pattern

The demon seeks out and possesses a teacher. Once it has control of its host, it begins to track down the teacher's star pupils. Straight-A students, award-winning debaters, and top-ranked athletes are all prey for the Qolishuul. Gaining access to the student in the shape of the teacher, the demon kills the student, hides the body, and then feeds on the part of the student that was most closely linked with his success. It eats the brain of an academic, the biceps and quadriceps of a quarterback, the feet of a dancer, and the face of a thespian.

In the course of a few hours, the demon tracks down and kills the teachers' most favored students, either at home, or on the way home from school. Eventually, the teacher is caught, tried, and convicted. The demon enjoys this part of the process, and tends to put on quite a show during the trial. It will recount the gory details with great relish, describing the butchery (and subsequent feeding) with gusto.

When the Qolishuul becomes bored with the trial and conviction, it will pass from the teacher's body into someone else's. The jump is a quick one, but requires physical contact of some kind. The demon will then proceed to jump from body to body over the next few days until it finds another teacher.

Then, the demon repeats the cycle with a new batch of promising young students.

Takedown

The demon moves from person to person, and tends to reuse certain words, sayings, and phrases, regardless of which body it happens to be in. This may help the Disciples to track the demon down once they get involved in the case. Other than the teachers, those who are possessed by the Qolishuul have no memory of it afterwards, and tend to appear very distracted while possessed.



Type: Stalker

Strength 1
Sense 8
Soul 6
Injury 18
Wrath 21

Appearance

The Ravaqat appears as a humanoid with bronze skin. Its faceplate is skull-like, and its tail is tipped with a four-pronged barb.

Pattern

The Ravaqat disguises itself as a criminal. After infiltrating an urban gang (usually by performing a shocking act of violence), the demon seizes control. It forms an organized coalition, brokering truces between gangs and solidifying power. Slowly, it convinces the various groups to abandon their racial or territorial disputes, uniting them into an army.

It patterns the structure after military rank, enforces brutal discipline, and trains its militia in the use of heavy weaponry and squad-based tactics. Over time, it forms an army capable of holding its own against a SWAT team or National Guard unit.

At that point, the Ravaqat strikes.

It begins by ordering its troops to capture and torture various community leaders who have exerted a positive influence on young people. Then it declares war on the police and takes control of the streets. Snipers take positions on rooftops, grenadiers prepare explosive devices, improvised bombs are set in parked cars, and gunners take positions behind sandbag emplacements. By this time, the demon has gained a colossal hold on the minds of the young men in its service, and they are ready to die for the cause (though they're never quite certain what the cause actually is).

The war, though bloody, is usually fairly short-lived. The authorities are able to bring in more and more experienced troops, armed with more and more sophisticated weapons. In time, the battle is over and the Ravaqat's army is destroyed. At this point, the demon sets off in search of a new militia.

Takedown

Strangely, the first sign that something wrong is a sharp decrease in violent crime rates. This may be a red flag to attentive police officers, signaling that something big is about to go down. When the gangs start capturing and killing community leaders, something about the behavior of the gang members may alert eyewitnesses that something supernatural is going on. The Disciples may also be brought in after the gun battle, because of the strange testimony of the surviving gang members.

12.5.33. REMAREC

Type: Stalker

Strength 2

Sense 8

Soul 5

Life 20

Wrath 19

Appearance

The Remarec looks like a man scuttling around on all fours, except that he has two arms instead of legs. Each of his four arms ends in a bloody stump. Where his head should be is another stump, from which protrudes a long pink tongue, like that of an anteater.

Pattern

The Remarec haunts the graves of those who died young. Drawn to the misery of the grieving parents, the demon manifests itself in the graveyard, or follows the parents back home and reveals itself to them there.

The demon's favored tactic is to visit at night, speaking with a child's voice, begging the parent for forgiveness. It never offers specifics, but only asks to be forgiven for being such a bad child. Then it reveals its horrifically misshapen form, and delights in their screams of horror and anguish.



Often, the demon will haunt the same bereaved parents for months before giving up and killing them. When the Remarec demon decides to kill the parents, it does the best it can to make the deaths look like a murder-suicide. If it can't, then it will destroy every heirloom or valuable that it can find, before it finally corners and mangles the parents.

Takedown

The demon haunts the same graveyard time after time in a consistent pattern, so the Disciples may get brought in when authorities notice the similarities between various murder-suicides.

Type: Stalker

Strength 3

Sense 7

Soul 4

Life 18

Wrath 21

Appearance

The Scabresse appears as a classical demon, including ram's horns, red skin, fangs, a forked tongue, black bat wings, a barbed tail, and cloven hooves. Naturally, the demon smells of sulfur.

Pattern

The Scabresse preys on the young homeless. Destitute runaways, teenage prostitutes, and aimless high school dropouts are its meat and milk. From the shadows, this demon stalks its hapless prey, most of whom never even suspect its presence. Upon selecting a target, the Scabresse patiently begins to hunt its quarry. The demon feeds on the misery, sickness, and desolation of its victims, and it will seek to exacerbate these by any means possible. To this end, the Scabresse will destroy anyone who tries to make life easier for its victim. Helpful friends, concerned teachers, motivated policemen, and caring social workers will be removed from contact with the demon's intended prey.

However, the Scabresse is not content to merely kill those who interfere with its sport. It is driven to utterly humiliate and defile them, as punishment for their interloping. Thus, it will strive to discredit them, and to ruin their lives. By planting drugs or illegal pornography in their homes or vehicles, and then summoning the authorities, the demon causes them to fall from grace in the eyes of its victims. It also provides a convincing explanation for the suicide that invariably follows.

After the positive influence is removed from its young victims, the Scabresse visits the teacher or guidance counselor in prison, and carefully makes the murder look like a guilty suicide. It is careful, and strikes at night, so the demon is rarely caught at this stage.

This disturbing revelation about a positive older figure only serves to aggravate the young runaway's feelings of isolation and betrayal, which are a delicacy for the Scabresse. One by one, the victim's allies and loved ones are discredited and removed from the picture, until the prey is completely alone. At this point, the Scabresse emerges from the shadows and reveals itself to its victim. It typically taunts its prey, promising a horrific death in a matter of days. It then returns to the shadows and vanishes from sight. For days, it hounds its prey, deriving malicious glee from the panic and desperation. If the victim finds refuge in a home or religious sanctuary, the demon leaves syringes or weapons in easily discovered hiding places, and waits for its victim to be expelled by the fearful or exasperated Samaritans. If this does not work, the Scabresse destroys its victim's protectors outright.

Takedown

A contact, such as a teacher or social worker, may contact the Disciples after a colleague is murdered. Or, they may get involved when an eyewitness sees the demon in its true form. The Cabal may also be contacted once the demon reveals itself to one of its victims.



Illustration © char rood

AGER

12.5.35. SHURULL

Type: Stalker

Strength 1

Sense 9

Soul 6

Life 19

Wrath 20

Appearance

The Shurull looks like an angel from classic myth. Its body is that of a well-built man or woman with blue eyes and long hair, and its wings are long and white.

Pattern

A sadistic tormentor, the Shurull demon places control of its victim's life in the hands of the victim's worst enemy, bringing a bloody closure to their conflict, and destroying one life while corrupting another.

When a gangster turns on his partner, or an abusive husband crosses the line with his wife, or a chronically absent father misses his young son's moment of glory yet again, the Shurull is there to offer a kind of satisfaction. Abducting the guilty party, and binding him hand and foot, the Shurull then presents itself to the aggrieved individual in the guise of an angelic creature. Wings, halo, and golden light are wrapped around the demon as it explains that it has come to punish the wicked. Its mesmerized victim is then offered a choice: liberate the tormentor or inflict pain.

If the injured person (the neglected child, the betrayed partner, the battered wife) finds it possible to offer forgiveness, the Shurull kills both persons in disgust and starts all over again. However, if the injured person seeks revenge, the Shurull displays a maniacal patience, and a wicked understanding of human anatomy.

Over a great span of time, it will torture its incapacitated victim (the double-crossing criminal, the violent spouse), bringing him back from the brink time and again. The Shurull will begin to solicit feedback and suggestions from the other person, asking for advice on technique and method. Before long, the demon will be able to retreat to the sidelines, content to watch as one flays the other alive.

Needless to say, the Shurull is happiest when one kills the other in an excess of zeal. At this juncture, the demon will divest itself of the angelic disguise, and will reveal its true face. A spiny red fiend, the Shurull will then wish the duped murderer good luck, and will maim the person in some way before leaving -- a gouged eye, an amputated hand or foot. The wound will prove too agonizing to tend alone, and will generally drive its victim to seek medical attention. Carefully, the Shurull will follow, and will place some keepsake from the deceased's person on the pillow of the convalescing victim in the hospital. Soon enough, the authorities will discover the mangled remains (in the woods, in a basement, in the desert), and will descend upon the hospital to take the murderer into custody. Then the demon begins anew.

Takedown

Once the slaughter has ended, the murderer's testimony may alert the Cabal to the presence of the demon, as well as its pattern of behavior. At that point, the Disciples may realize that if two enemies go missing at the same time, it could be an indicator that the demon has made its move. Tracking the demon through magic or physical evidence will bring them into contact with the Shurull.

Violent and cruel, the Shurull will often focus on a single person if attacked by a group, and will seek to wound that person as brutally as possible.



12.5.36. SULIEGOS

Type: Defiler

Strength 2

Sense 7

Soul 5

Injury 21

Wrath 18

Appearance

In its natural state, it is approximately seven feet tall, and appears as a wide humanoid with burning yellow eyes. Closer inspection will reveal that the creature's body is actually nothing more than a charred black skeleton buried under a writhing layer of dark blue insects. Four dark horns curl from its smoking skull, and its finger-bones are tipped with long white talons. The insects (beetles, dragonflies, and wasps) will scatter if the demon is struck, but will immediately return to swarm about it.

Pattern

The Suliegos targets successful people who love attention. Once the demon has entered the host's body, it begins to remove his ability to succeed. It creates adversity and tests the victim's resolve. However, this all happens without the host's knowledge. Unlike other demons that take over a body and begin to manipulate it, the Suliegos is a passive observer at first. It only takes control of the host when he is sleeping, at which point the demon sets its trap.

It locates the aspect of its host that is most directly responsible for his success, and it destroys that element. If the host is an athlete, the demon sabotages his car, resulting in an accident that irreparably damages his legs. If the victim is a musician, the demon takes control when the host is chopping vegetables, then slices the fingers off and fumbles them into the whirring garbage disposal before returning control to the horrified victim. If the host is a model, the demon finds a way to mangle his face. If the host is a singer, the demon arranges to injure the victim's throat, damaging the vocal chords.

At this point, the demon retires to the background to observe while its victim grapples with his loss. After progressing through various stages of grief, it's possible that the victim may try to go on with life, finding joy in other ways (learning to run with prosthetic limbs, for example, or obtaining reconstructive surgery to repair damage to his face).

This will not work for the Suliegos.



At the first sign of hope, the demon will reassert control and begin to destroy the victim's life for good. It begins by cutting ties with family and friends, essentially removing the victim's support system. Then, the demon begins to sabotage the victim's entire world. It dabbles with hard drugs, drives drunk, and engages in every destructive impulse that occurs to it. After flaunting the law, getting arrested, getting bailed out, and skipping the sentencing, the demon gambles away its host's savings and prepares for the big finish.

The Suliegos ends the downward spiral with a violent, shocking suicide that invariably claims the lives of a few innocent bystanders. For example, it may detonate a bomb in a public place, dying in the resulting explosion, or it may suddenly engage the police in a gun battle. It may arm an explosive device, throw it down into a crowd from the top of a building, then jump off just in time to land in the explosion. It may carjack a vehicle, then stage a spectacular car crash. It may run through the streets with a loaded gun, firing at random, then dive head-first into an empty swimming pool.

Whatever the case, when the corpse of the host is found, there will be a few blue insects buzzing around it.

In the second pattern, the Suliegos targets failures, those who have amounted to nothing despite the opportunities that were presented to them. It favors those who blame others for the state of their lives. The beaten, the downtrodden, the addicted -- these are the demon's prey.

Once the demon has entered a host, it begins to locate each of the people that the host blames for his failures. One by one, the Suliegos locates and kills them. In some cases, the transgression is real, such as in the case of a man whose business partner swindled him out of a fortune, leaving him bankrupt. In other cases, the crime is imagined, such as a host who mistakenly believes that a judge sentenced him unfairly. The demon doesn't care; it just finds and kills its victims, slowly and painfully.

After it grows weary of this game, it ends with the same violent finale described above. Again, blue insects are found near the dead body of the host afterwards.

Takedown

The disciples may get involved with the investigation once the demon has already claimed a few lives. Entomologists, puzzled with the unusual appearance and behavior of the insects found on the corpse, may get in touch with the Cabal, or concerned family members suspecting demonic possession may contact the Disciples. The Cabal may also get wind of a rash of unexplained suicides through their contacts with local or federal law-enforcement.





Illustration © Wienne Gallant

12.5.37. - TAVALISK

Type: Stalker

Strength 2

Sense 7

Soul 5

Life 21

Wrath 18

Appearance

The Tavalisk appears as a skeletal animal of some kind, such as a wolf or panther. Its fur is ghostly white, and its eyes glow bright red. The demon's talons are long and black, as are its teeth. It has short black horns in a line from its brow to its tail, along its crooked spine.

Pattern

The Tavalisk feeds on people who harm animals, such as hunters, psychotics, and those who test products on animal subjects. It tracks its prey, then attempts to lure its prey by imitating the sound of a wounded animal. When the person investigates, the Tavalisk attacks and pins down its victim, then consumes his organs before delivering the killing bite.

The demon also sees itself as the protector of those who defend animals, such as conservationists, vegetarians, veterinarians, and zoologists. If the demon learns that one of its 'protectors' has been threatened, harassed, or insulted, it will track down and murder the assailant, once again eating its victim alive.

The Tavalisk's lair is full of gnawed human bones, and is usually full of animals. They scatter at the approach of humans, but it is noteworthy that even animals normally at odds with each other in the wild (such as wolves and rabbits) exist harmoniously while in the lair of the demon.

Takedown

The consistency of the attacks, along with the unusual bite marks, may serve to bring the Disciples into the investigation. The Cabal may also get brought in when an eyewitness reports the demon's attack, or when a group of people who all share a similar background (a group of hunters, a laboratory full of product-testers) is killed.



Illustration © Claudia Carr

12.5.38 . VOUZIRE

Type: Hunter

Strength 10

Sense 6

Soul 1

Life 30

Wrath 9

Appearance

The Vouzire is a murderous brute, and the most dangerous of all demons. Nine feet tall, it is a hulking monstrosity with four arms. The top two arms end with long clusters of spikes and thorns. The bottom two arms end in snapping pincers like that of a crab. The creature's head is a snapping mandible like that of a centipede, and it appears to be eyeless. Its entire body is covered in an exoskeleton, like an ant or a lobster. Large blades stick out from its shoulders and all along its arms, making it a lethal combatant.

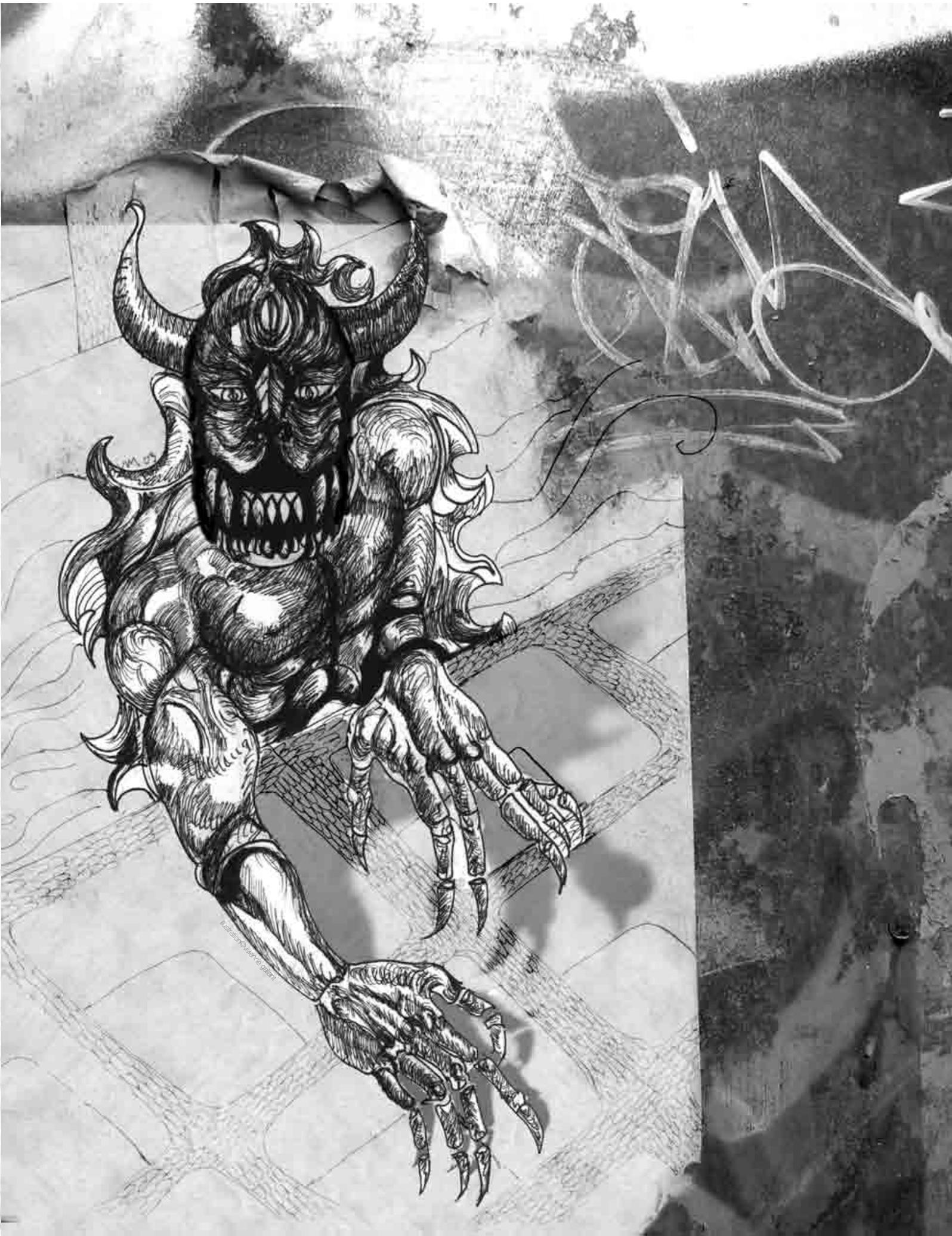
Pattern

A gigantic demon that feeds on the teeth of abused children, the Vouzire is insanely fast, strong beyond belief, and incredibly violent. Its first reaction is to kill, each and every time. Without hesitation, the creature will slash and stab anything and everything that it runs across, taking pleasure only in killing. After the slaughter, the demon will extract the teeth of any dead children, placing them in a small receptacle. Gingerly, it will chew the teeth like candies, one at a time. The Vouzire haunts abandoned homes, dark woods, and lonely barns. There, it spends much of its time asleep, leaving its sanctuary only to pursue fresh food. If engaged in combat, the Vouzire is nightmarishly fast and can deal shocking amounts of damage.

Takedown

The Cabal may be brought in once the demon has struck. Or, they may be contacted when someone sees the demon returning to its hideout. It's also possible that the demon may be responsible for a major bloodbath, such as killing an entire family or a group of police officers, prompting authorities to get in touch with the Disciples.





Type: Defiler
 Strength 6
 Sense 2
 Soul 7
 Life 14
 Wrath 25

Appearance

The Vuiloma appears as a man with long curled horns, a mouth crammed full of sharp teeth, long black nails, and chalk-white skin. The demon is surrounded by dark blue flames, which burn cold.

Pattern

The Vuiloma exists to destroy small, tight-knit communities. It favors those in remote locations, where outside communication is difficult. The demon feeds on fear, paranoia, and despair, and it uses these to turn people against one another.

It begins by possessing a single person, someone who is thought of as the community's center, a leader of some kind. In the dead of night, while everyone is sleeping, the demon sabotages phone lines, cell phone towers, computers, and radios. From house to house it creeps, ensuring that communication will not be possible with the outside world. It then sabotages every vehicle it finds, making certain that its victims will be unable to escape.

The demon then uses its Wrath to create illusions that torment the people of the community. Over the next few hours, the demon torments and horrifies them with terrifying visions plucked from their own minds. It brings their worst fears, their most horrific nightmares, and their most painful experiences to life.

Victims of abuse will relive their torment; a woman who fears dogs will be pursued through the streets by a pack of rabid pit bulls; a man who was tortured while a POW will believe that he is back in the prison camp; a boy who dreams of vampires will see them lurking everywhere. The visions, though fundamentally harmless, are extremely vivid, and will instill terror and panic in those who endure them.

From the host, the demon will conjure a single, nightmarish representation of evil, be it a demon, or a monster, or the Devil, and it will create an entity in that image. By spending Wrath (between 10 and 20 points), the Vuiloma can create another demon. The new demon, the Vuiloac, splits the points of Wrath between its Life and Strength scores. Its Soul and Sense scores are 1, and its Wrath is 0.

The Vuiloac will wander through the town, butchering everyone it sees, inciting panic and fear.

Inevitably, some of the townsfolk will attempt to mount a defense, but will be cut down by the demon. Worse, the Vuiloma, still in the body of one of their own, will try to convince people that someone in the town was actually responsible for bringing this evil upon them. If it can, it will incite people to riot, possibly even leading them in a lynching or two before dawn.

Takedown

Once the demon has destroyed the town, and many of its inhabitants, it directs its host to commit suicide, then walks out. The Disciples may be brought in at this point, since much of the evidence will point to demonic activity. The Cabal will then need to figure out where the demon will strike next, and to get there in time to prevent another tragedy.



Type: Defiler
 Strength 5
 Sense 1
 Soul 9
 Life 12
 Wrath 27

Appearance

The Wreziam has a silvery body that tapers down to a narrow spike where its legs ought to be. Its hands end in shining hooked blades, and it flies on a pair of translucent metal wings shaped like those of a bee or wasp.

Pattern

The Wreziam takes over the body of a man who is generally agreed-upon to be a 'good man.' It seizes control of him while he sleeps, and kills a young woman while in his body. After leaving a few notes in ancient Greek or Latin in the woman's blood, the demon brings the body home and leaves it in the host's bed, then lies down beside it and goes back to sleep.

When the victim wakes up, covered in blood, next to a dead woman, the demon merely observes, curious to see what the man will do. Will he call the authorities and tell them that there's been a murder? Will he dispose of the bloodied bedsheets and bury the body? When he finds the blood-encrusted steak knife in his kitchen, will he clean it or throw it away? When he finds the bloody trash bags in the trunk of his car, will he suffer a nervous breakdown?.

At this point, the demon will only take control of the host for one of two reasons: to kill again, or to keep the host alive. The host may want to commit suicide, which the demon can't accept. It would rather expose itself to the victim than lose him to suicide.

If the demon becomes bored with the host's behavior, it will commit another murder and leave the body in bed with the host.

Sometimes, the host decides that he's a serial killer, and that he might as well enjoy it. In such cases, the demon will hang back and watch the show, only interfering if it fears that the host is neglecting a certain detail (such as wiping handprints off a doorknob).

Takedown

The Wreziam loves patterns in its victims, and will direct its host's body to kill a specific kind of victim, based on height, weight, and hair, or location, or profession. Somehow, a pattern will emerge, which will probably begin to tie the victims together for the investigators (who may then call the Disciples when the bloody notes are found).



Type: Stalker

Strength 1

Sense 9

Soul 5

Life 18

Wrath 21

Appearance

The Xarualac appears as a man with long stringy hair and a mouth that takes up his entire face. In place of legs, the demon has a second pair of arms; all four hands feature long fingers tipped with talons. The demon's bowels are ripped open, and its bowels drag on the ground. Some of its dripping intestines are attached to bloated stomachs that float in the air, carrying the demon along. The demon smells faintly of rose petals.

Pattern

Drawn to celebrities, the Xarualac haunts those who are surrounded by adulation and public success. The Xarualac feeds on their hidden doubts and insecurities, and at the same time, stokes the fires of arrogance and self-indulgence that burn within them. When it grows weary, it attacks, leaving behind mangled bodies and broken dreams.

The Xarualac presents itself in the guise of an admirer or devotee. To a musician, it appears as a groupie or music critic; to an actor, it is a journalist or director; to an athlete, it approaches in the form of an admiring fan, or as a recruiter from a successful team.

The demon caters to its victim's need for adulation and praise, and provides encouragement and support. With time, the demon moves from the fringe of the celebrity's life, into the middle. Over time, it persuades its victim that life would not be possible without the demon. It becomes a decision-maker, helping the celebrity choose contracts, engagements, and venues. It screens those who wish to come into contact with the victim, including friends and family. It will alienate its victim's loved ones as quickly as

possible, knowing that they will intervene if not cut off immediately.

It sets itself up as the center of its victim's life, and sees to it that a steady supply of decadence and distraction are available. Drugs, alcohol, casual sex, and illegal entertainment are all made readily available to its victim, and the Xarualac never hesitates to point out that it's all been earned, it's all justified, all that hard work has finally paid off, and this is the good life, buddy.

The end result is predictable enough: the celebrity is found in a pool of blood or vomit, or is ruined by a scandal (drug use, vehicular manslaughter, sex with a minor). This, in itself, is satisfying enough to the Xarualac, but sometimes, it cannot stand the wait.

In this case, the Xarualac first contacts the friends and family of the victim, one at a time, claiming a serious emergency. If the person volunteers to contact the authorities, the Xarualac will decline, pointing out that the situation is not life-threatening, but if the authorities are involved, the celebrity might well end up in prison. The demon demands that the person come quickly, to help out and "clean up the mess," and then hangs up. It knows full well what will happen, and it lays out a series of metal cutting tools in preparation.

After it has dispatched a number of its victim's loved ones, the demon wraps up a few organs and weapons, then pays a visit to its victim. The demon leaves the bloodied weapons near its horrified victim, then leaves. The authorities arrive soon enough, alerted by an anonymous phone call, and if the victim doesn't commit suicide, he is typically convicted and incarcerated. If not, the Xarualac is patient. It will try again.

Takedown

The Disciples may be contacted by one of the celebrity's friends, someone who's convinced that there's supernatural foul play at work. Alternately, the Cabal may be summoned once the demon has struck, leaving bodies in its wake.

<u>NAME</u>	<u>SECTION</u>	<u>TYPE</u>	<u>STRENGTH</u>	<u>SENSE</u>	<u>SOUL</u>	<u>LIFE</u>	<u>WRATH</u>
Aspinaba	12.5.1.	defiler	5	2	8	12	27
Baskra	12.5.2.	stalker	2	8	5	18	21
Bazulariam	12.5.3.	defiler	5	3	7	15	24
Benassim	12.5.4.	stalker	1	9	5	20	19
Cauriak	12.5.5.	stalker	3	7	4	18	21
Cielago	12.5.6.	hunter	7	6	2	24	15
Curhadac	12.5.7.	hunter	8	5	2	24	15
DaVaad	12.5.8.	stalker	8	4	3	27	12
Daemuil	12.5.9.	hunter	2	7	6	19	20
Denglokke	12.5.10.	stalker	3	8	4	20	19
Deyestim	12.5.11.	hunter	9	5	1	25	14
Exhumilat	12.5.12.	hunter	7	6	2	27	12
Fliacza	12.5.13.	stalker	2	7	6	21	18
Foathiaq	12.5.14.	hunter	8	5	2	24	15
Gatterag	12.5.15.	hunter	8	5	2	26	13
Grusoe	12.5.16.	defiler	4	1	9	12	27
Issoac	12.5.17.	defiler	6	3	7	13	26
Khorepta	12.5.18.	stalker	1	9	5	19	20
Kinarsette	12.5.19.	stalker	2	9	4	20	19
Laiamas	12.5.20.	defiler	5	1	9	14	25
Laradina	12.5.21.	stalker	2	7	6	18	21
Luhamic	12.5.22.	defiler	4	2	8	12	27
Merstett	12.5.23.	hunter	9	4	2	25	14
Mursallie	12.5.24.	stalker	2	8	5	18	21
Naissante	12.5.25.	hunter	8	6	1	27	12
Nethasq	12.5.26.	hunter	7	4	3	26	13
Paikhalix	12.5.27.	defiler	6	3	7	13	26
Pelognis	12.5.28.	stalker	1	9	6	19	20
Phoriag	12.5.29.	hunter	7	4	3	24	15
QaVaad	12.5.30.	defiler	5	2	8	14	25
Qolishuul	12.5.31.	defiler	4	1	9	15	24
Ravaqat	12.5.32.	stalker	1	8	6	18	21
Remarec	12.5.33.	stalker	2	8	5	20	19
Scabresse	12.5.34.	stalker	3	7	4	18	21
Shuruli	12.5.35.	stalker	1	9	6	19	20
Sulliegos	12.5.36.	defiler	5	3	7	15	24
Tavalisk	12.5.37.	stalker	2	7	5	21	18
Vouzire	12.5.38.	hunter	9	6	1	27	12
Vuiloma	12.5.39.	defiler	6	2	7	14	25
Wrezlam	12.5.40.	defiler	5	1	9	12	27
Xarualac	12.5.41.	stalker	1	9	5	18	21

12.7. CASTING SPELLS ON DEMONS

Some spells have limited effect on demons, while others have no effect at all. Results vary from Director to Director, but this list is a good starting point.

Anvil:

Works as written. In addition, any metallic demon limbs, such as those of a Wreziam, are affected.

Confession:

Works as written, but the demon is still able to fight.

Denial:

Works as described, but inflicts no physical damage.

Dresden:

Only inflicts damage. The demon is immune to the illusion and its side-effects.

Frostbite:

Only inflicts damage. The demon is immune to the paralysis.

Leviathan:

Works as written. The demon may actually believe that it is talking to one of its own.

Scossa:

Only inflicts damage as a normal kick. No side-effects.

Seismos:

Only inflicts a 2-die penalty, which lasts for 1 round.

Vore:

Drains 1 point of Wrath and bestows 1 point of Life on the caster. No other effects.

12.7.1. NO_EFFECT

The following spells have no effect whatsoever on demons:

Armistice

Askance

Astarte

Cacophony

Caliban

Chiaroscuro

Cognito

Confound

Diablerie

Emeute

Glossolalia

Hemophage

Jade

Levin

Miserere

Noesis

Phantasmo

Sclera

Tirade

Wither

Wormwood

What though the field be lost?
All is not lost -- the unconquerable will,
And study of revenge, immortal hate,
And courage never to submit or yield:
And what is else not to be overcome?
-- John Milton, Paradise Lost

Then the kings of the earth, the princes, the generals, the rich,
the mighty, and every slave and every free man hid in caves and
among the rocks of the mountains. They called to the mountains
and the rocks, "Fall on us and hide us from the face of him who
sits on the throne and from the wrath of the Lamb! For the great
day of their wrath has come, and who can stand?"
-- Revelation 6:15-17



Chapter 13:

Day Of Wrath

SCENARIOS

13.1. OVERVIEW OF SCENARIOS

Creating scenarios for Dread requires the ability to roll with punches and go with the flow. You can't predict what the players are going to do, and you can't force them to do what you want. You need to be able to take cues from them, and you need to be able to give them cues. For example, if the scenario in question involves a crooked cop who's being stalked by a demon, the players might decide to involve a Contact of theirs on the force. This can complicate matters for you, since you visualized a climactic shootout, not an Internal Affairs investigation.

You need to get comfortable with the idea that it's a group effort, and plotting an $X+Y=Z$ scenario isn't going to work in a game like Dread.

The best way to handle it is to create a cast, a summary of goals, a description of locations, and series of threats -- then let the players step into the scenario and decide where they want to go and what they want to do.

Encourage your players as they start out. Seriously. When the player issues a cool description, feel free to say that it is cool. If the description of a Cockpunch is funny, then laugh. If they have crazy ideas, congratulate them and roll with it.

In this chapter, we'll go over the components of a Dread scenario, and we'll look at some lists that will help you create your own adventures. Then we'll delve into a few example scenarios to get you started.

13.2. CONSTRUCTING SCENARIOS

Each scenario consists of a number of elements that you should determine before the game session begins. It's great if you have these elements committed to memory, but it's okay if you just have them written in a notebook or stored on a laptop. The important thing is that you can bring up this data during the game, so that you can continue the flow of response and description.

13.2. DEMON

Every scenario involves at least one demon. The demon is the focus of the session, and its destruction pretty much signals the end of the scenario. The nature of the demon determines a great deal about the kind of scenario that your players will be facing. For example, the presence of a QaVaad means that there will be a crazed veteran shooting at random civilians, whereas a Merstett generally accompanies massive property damage.

13.2.1. OBJECTIVES

This is a list of three or four secondary objectives found in the scenario. The first priority is always the takedown of the demon, but secondary objectives usually pertain to the ordinary people and their problems. Secondary objectives include directives like:

- * Shut down mob operation
- * Rescue police officer
- * Prevent murder-suicide
- * Return stolen jewelry
- * Prevent car bombing
- * Rescue Senator from assassins

Each time the players complete an objective, each Disciple in the Cabal gets 3 points of Fury (as always, the maximum Fury score is 12 unless a character is facing Retirement).

These objectives are secondary because they're not critical to completing the primary objective (taking down the demon). As such, it's possible to resolve a case without completing any of the secondary objectives. The players will have to decide how to approach this.

When a session is complete, you may want to discuss the objectives with your players, to let them know which ones they didn't complete. On the other hand, they may not want to know. Either way, they'll know about the completed secondary objectives right away, because you'll tell them when they get 3 points of Fury during gameplay.

13.2.2._TRIGGER

The trigger is the element that kicks off the scenario, usually in the form of a tip from the Mentor or from a Contact. Triggers from a Contact could include:

- * A phone call from a coroner who is having trouble identifying the bite marks on a corpse
- * Email from a federal agent whose investigation just got really weird
- * A mysterious envelope left on the doorstep, containing photos that show a demon erupting from the belly of a pregnant woman

13.2.3._SITUATION

The situation can consist of a few lines or several paragraphs. It outlines the events leading up to the players' involvement in the scenario, and establishes the various locations, threats, and major characters.

13.2.4._EVIDENCE

During the course of an investigation, the Disciples will find evidence alerting them to the nature of the demon that they're hunting. This can take a number of forms, including recordings (audio files, video surveillance, photographs), eyewitness testimony, physical evidence (slime, teeth, claws, scales, hair, feces), and wounds (on the bodies of the living and the dead).

Prior to gameplay, you want to determine what pieces of the puzzle will be available, and scatter them throughout the various locations and battlefields.

13.2.5._LOCATIONS

Locations are places that the Disciples will investigate. They'll find bodies, clues, evidence, and information. But they won't find trouble. The only characters that the Cabal interacts with will be neutral or friendly. Hostility on the part of the Cabal can change this, of course.

13.2.6. BATTLEFIELDS

Battlefields are just like locations, but they feature more concrete evidence (fewer recordings and more feces). In addition, the characters encountered in battlefields tend to be predominantly hostile. In general, poking around a battlefield results in a fight. There's no way for the players to know whether a mansion is a location or a battlefield until the bullets start flying.

13.2.7. CHARACTERS

The players will interact with a number of characters, some of whom are being victimized by a demon, and some of whom are merely victims of circumstance, coping with some other tragedy or trauma. These characters tend to comprise the majority of the secondary objectives.

13.2.8. HOSTILES

Hostiles are low-level threats that can add up to a major problem for the Disciples over time. Though the team can make short work of a few hostiles (gang members, drug lords, thugs, assassins, crooked cops), when they start attacking en masse, or when they keep showing up in different places, they can wear the player characters down.

Hostiles are the cannon fodder of Dread. They exist to get the crap beat out of them by the Disciples. They are also demon food. More often than not, the takedown starts in the middle of a fight with some hostiles, in which the demon manifests and promptly eviscerates a hostile to make its presence known. This can result in some pretty interesting firefights.

Hostiles are ordinary people, meaning that their stats range from 1 to 3, and their Life score is around 5 or 6. Sample stats for hostiles are sprinkled throughout the scenarios at the end of this chapter.

13.2.9. RESOLUTION

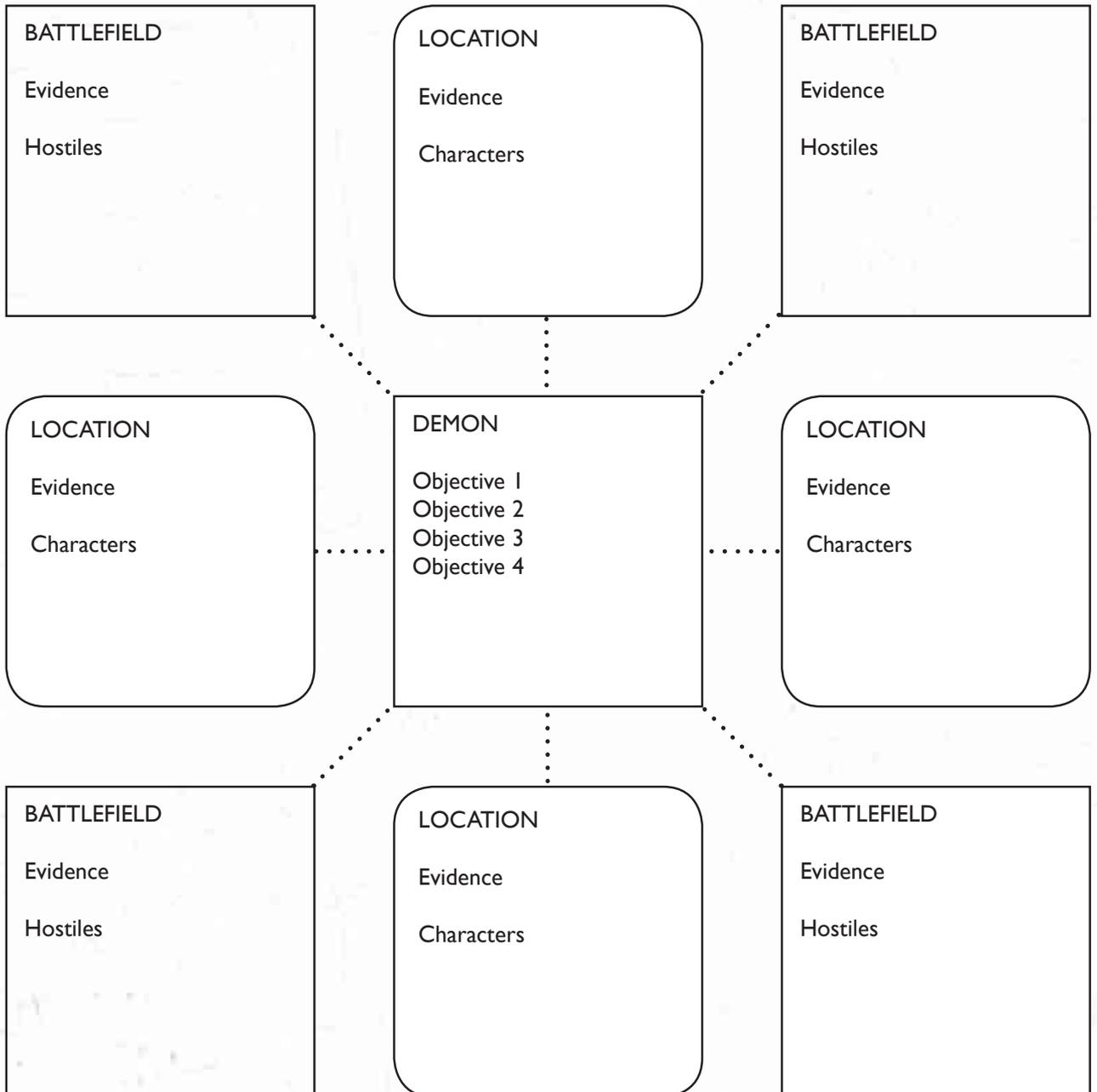
Each scenario has a single primary resolution: the destruction of the demon. But there are numerous ways that the scenario can play out, and the resolution section outlines some of the more likely possibilities.



13.3. THE DEATH SPIRAL

The death spiral is a depiction of the most significant elements of the scenario, and can help a director keep an eye on the locations, battlefields, objectives, evidence, and hostiles.

The Death Spiral



13.4. HOOKS

These are a few example hooks that can be parlayed into full-blown scenarios.

13.4.1. _JESUS_SAVES

A faith-healing televangelist is possessed by a Bazulariam demon. Once the bodies start to hit the floor, the police begin to investigate. The problem is, the televangelist's accountant has been laundering money for the Triad through the Ministry. This may bring unwanted attention to the Triad if the televangelist is investigated. Once the Disciples get involved, they may find themselves at war with the Triad.

13.4.2. _PAYDAY

An Aspinaba enters the body of an abusive husband and father who happens to be a compulsive gambler. He owes a great deal of money to a bookie with Syndicate connections, and when the bookie sends collectors after him, the skell beats two of them to death with his bare hands. The Syndicate gets involved, and they figure the Cabal must be friends of the skell, so...

13.4.3. _LA_COSA_MORTA

The city's chief of police murdered his wife in a drunken stupor, but managed to hide the body with the help of a mafia don. They left enough evidence to pin the crime on someone else, though the case was never officially closed. The chief is now a martyr and a hero, but a Cauriak demon has taken an interest in him. His ensuing erratic behavior is starting to make the mafia don a little nervous.

13.4.4. _WACKO_COMPOUND

After being taken over by an Exhumilat, several victims tear themselves apart. A group of cultists worship the demon, which occasionally takes one of them as a victim. The cult has a compound in the wilderness, and they're armed to the teeth. Local law-enforcement operatives, unaware of the danger, have surrounded the compound, and are ready for a siege. But they're not ready for a demon, and it's up to the Cabal to make sure that the cops aren't slaughtered themselves.

13.4.5. _THE_FAMILY_JEWELS

A group of jewel thieves rips off a millionaire and hits the road. Enraged, he hires a group of ex-military bounty hunters to recover his jewels (and torture the thieves to death). The thieves are found by a Dengiorre, which lures them into the woods with the promise of untold wealth. The Disciples are already aware of the demon's activity, having just been contacted about a mass grave found in the wilderness. What the Cabal doesn't know about is that there are some armed-and-dangerous jewel thieves and a few armed-and-dangerous bounty hunters, all with itchy trigger fingers.

13.4.6. _TURF_WAR

An Issoac demon starts a conflict between the Stidda and the Yakuza. It takes over the Capo, murders the wife of the Oyabun, and prepares for a showdown in the streets. As far as the demon is concerned, the Disciples are just collateral damage.

13.4.7. _GOOD_DOGGIE

A Tavalisk stalks and kills a group of hunters in the woods. Nearby, a covert government facility in the mountains is developing a devastating new bio-weapon. The weapon, intended for dispersal in civilian populations, is being tested on animal subjects. The Tavalisk turns its attention to the facility, with predictably awful results.

13.4.8. _BESIEGED

A Ravaqat demon organizes a group of street gangs into an army, and takes aim at a vigilante group called the Neighborhood Guardians. The gangs prepare for a violent showdown at an anti-drug rally being held at a nearby school.

13.4.9. _THE_MIDNIGHT_SPECIAL

Bank robbers, on the run from the crooked cops that they double-crossed, take refuge at the city docks. The warehouse at the center of the loading area, which used to be a part of the city's red-light district, was once the location of a brothel, and is currently haunted by a Nethasq. The cops track them down, and a vicious game of cat-and-mouse is played out between the bank robbers, the police, and the demon.



13.5. SCENARIO GENERATOR

To whip up a scenario really quickly, roll a couple of 12-sided dice. The first die will tell you which list to look at, and the second die will tell you which item on the list to write down.

Jot down a couple of hostiles and three to six locations, then add a demon to the mix, and you've got the skeleton of a Dread scenario.

13.5.1. HOSTILES

1-4: **List A**

5-8: **List B**

9-12: **List C**

List A

1. Arsonists
2. Assassins
3. Bank robbers
4. Burglars
5. Cannibals
6. Car thieves
7. Cartel
8. Con artists
9. Convicts
10. Corrupt politicians
11. Counterfeiters
12. Cultists

List B

1. Dirty cops
2. Dirty feds
3. Drug dealers
4. Extortionists
5. Extremists
6. Forgers
7. Gang
8. Graverobbers
9. Gunrunners
10. Hackers
11. Jewelry thieves
12. Kidnappers

List C

1. Mob
2. Neo-nazis
3. Pirates
4. Racketeers
5. Separatists
6. Serial killers
7. Slavers
8. Smugglers
9. Spies
10. Terrorists
11. War criminals
12. White-collar criminals

13.5.2. LOCATIONS

1-3: **List A**

4-6: **List B**

7-9: **List C**

10-12: **List D**

List A

1. Alley
2. Amusement park
3. Apartment complex
4. Army base
5. Art gallery
6. Auto shop
7. Bank
8. Bar
9. Basement
10. Beach
11. Campus
12. Cargo bay

List B

1. Castle
2. Church
3. City streets
4. Construction site
5. Desert
6. Dump
7. Factory
8. Farm
9. Government building
10. Highway
11. Houseboat
12. IT department

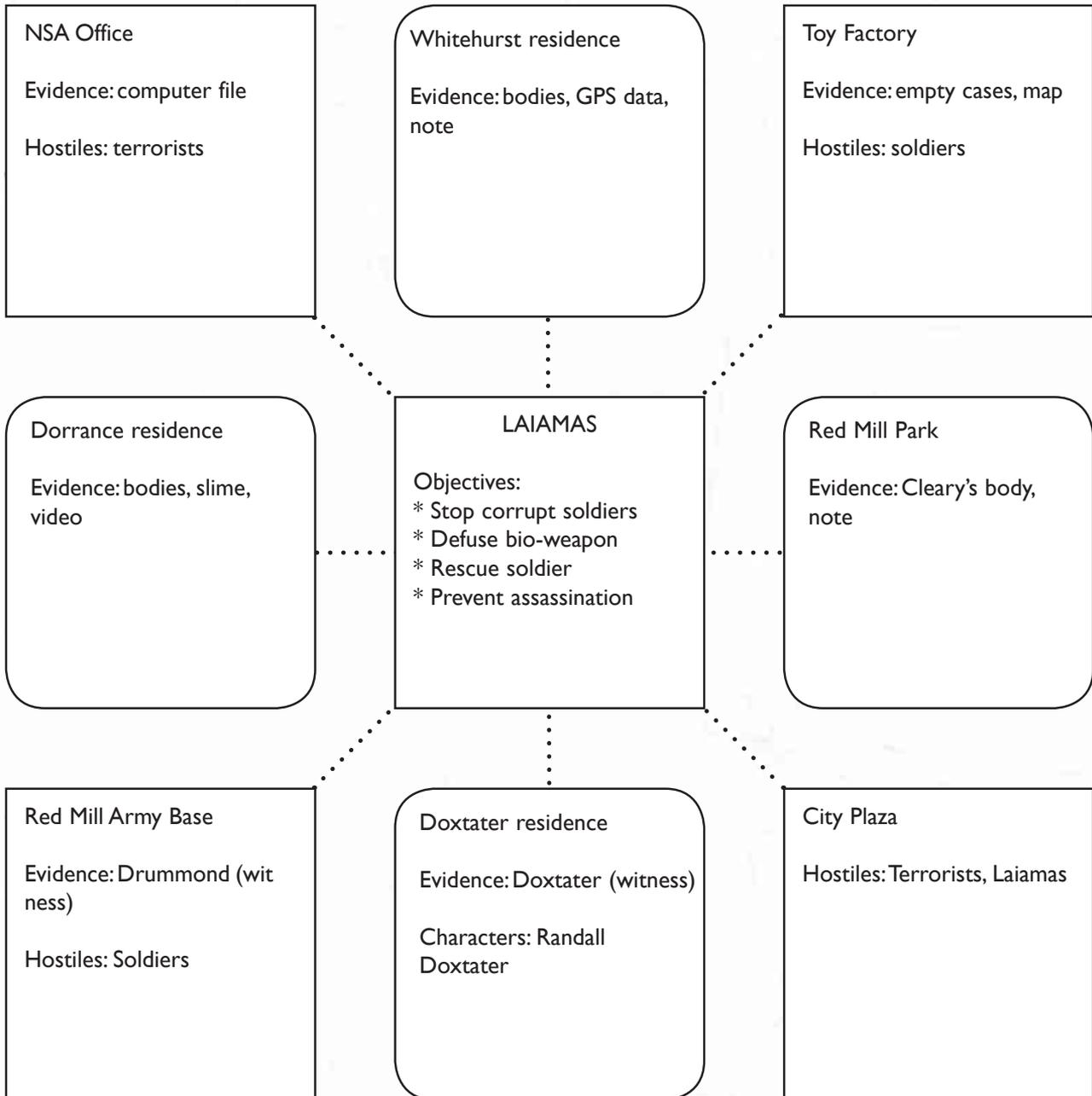
List C

1. Loading dock
2. Mansion
3. Marina
4. Mausoleum
5. Museum
6. Office building
7. Oil rig
8. Overpass
9. Park
10. Parking garage
11. Rest area
12. Rooftop

List D

1. School
2. Sewers
3. Ship
4. Shopping mall
5. Stadium
6. Steel mill
7. Suburbs
8. Subway
9. Swamp
10. Theater
11. Woods
12. Zoo

National Insecurity



13.6. NATIONAL INSECURITY

A scenario for Dread:
The First Book of Pandemonium

13.6.1. OBJECTIVES

1. Stop corrupt soldiers
2. Defuse bio-weapon
3. Rescue soldier
4. Stop assassination

13.6.2. TRIGGER

There are a number of ways that the Cabal can get involved in this case. For example, a journalist or police officer might get in touch with the Disciples regarding a series of gruesome and inexplicable murders. A witness might call them to describe a horrific sight: a woman with blue skin and tentacles, devouring a man in a remote park. Or the Cabal may hear about the NSA murders on a police scanner while eavesdropping for cases.

13.6.3. SYNOPSIS

The Laiamas demon has taken over the body of Owen Michaels, a counter-terrorism analyst with the National Security Agency (NSA). Michaels has spent the past two years working on Project Justification, a government initiative to infiltrate a domestic terror group called The Millennial Ark.

Michaels, jaded and bitter after a long and costly divorce, was able to make contact with the group, and he has managed to keep them one step ahead of the NSA. The Millennial Ark has asked him to procure an explosive device, which they plan to detonate in a civilian population. Michaels hesitated at first, but in the end, his greed won out.

The the Laiamas took control of his body.

The demon entered Michaels and immediately began to rearrange the situation. Using his knowledge, resources, and access, the demon created a bomb far more powerful than what the Millennial Ark had asked for. It then began to wipe the slate clean.

It nuked hard drives, burned and shredded paper documents, and destroyed all of the cash in Michaels' possession (knowing that the money, probably stolen, might be traced back to him if spent). In its haste, the demon overlooked a few documents, which are still sitting in Michaels' desk in his home.

Convinced that its work was done, the Laiamas arranged to meet with Michaels' contact in the woods north of Red Mill Park. The terrorist, thinking that the bomb would be delivered, arrived at the predetermined spot, where the demon tore him open and ate his heart. It covered the man's body with branches and headed home to take a shower.

Since then, the demon has been working around the clock to set its plan in motion, and will be striking in a matter of hours. As soon as it has finished killing a number of Michaels' colleagues within the NSA, the demon will arm the bomb, leave it in a public place, and exit Michaels' body, giving him just enough time to either panic and try to alert the authorities (a futile gesture, since they won't be able to disarm the bomb in time) or make his escape (in which case he'll spend the rest of his life a hunted man).

However, there are other parties involved.

Randall Doxtater, a retired schoolteacher, carves musical instruments from koa wood on the roof of his house. He likes to sit on the roof, smoke his pipe, and watch the sun go down while he carves.

Yesterday, an army jeep pulled up at the derelict factory near his home, and a pair of rough-looking men unloaded some cases. Doxtater found this odd, but he didn't know if it was any of his business, so he just kept carving while he watched. He had no way of knowing that those men were mercenaries hired by Michaels to steal explosives from a nearby Army base.

At the same Army base, a small group of soldiers has discovered that the Army's accounting system is woefully inadequate, and that surplus material is neither tracked nor returned. Taking advantage of the situation, the soldiers began to sell automatic weapons to local hunters. The business has been good, and no one on the base has noticed. The hunters are happy with their assault rifles, the soldiers are happy with the extra money, and they have no clue that the hunters are actually terrorists.

The Millennial Ark's founder, Warren Parrish, believes in the sanctity of marriage. The idea of The Millennial Ark came to him in a vision, in which he saw the animals proceeding two by two towards Noah's Ark. He realized that sometimes, a flood is required to wash away the impurities. If the flood is water, the world will be cleansed; if the great wave is blood, then so much the better, since our sins were all redeemed through the blood of Christ. Parrish is ready to kill men, women, and children to convince the world that homosexuality is Satan's work, and he now possesses the means.

He has recruited a small army of like-minded men, and dubbed them The Millennial Ark. He says that they, like the Ark of Noah, carry the future of humanity within them.

13.6.4.CHARACTERS

Presidential candidate Andrew Gorman is on the campaign trail, and will be speaking in a matter of hours to a packed crowd in the city's historic central plaza. Gorman supports civil unions for homosexuals. Roughly 2000 meters away, one of the Millennium Ark's snipers is waiting with a .50 long-range sniper rifle. When Gorman begins his speech, the shooter will fire. A few seconds later, Parrish plans to detonate the explosive, taking out as much of the audience as possible.

The demon, of course, has no intention of helping the Millennium Ark in their quest. The demon would much rather detonate the bomb in a completely arbitrary location, making it harder for people to process the senselessness of the destruction.

Tonight, the demon will begin to track down its host's colleagues in the NSA at their homes. One by one, it will break in and slaughter them. Then, it will arm the bomb and walk away from Michaels, leaving him to his fate.

Owen Michaels (skell), NSA Analyst

Michaels is a thin man with greying hair and a cheap windbreaker. His dirty white sneakers are laced improperly, and his nose is always red. His voice is reedy, and he appears hostile and driven. The world owes him an existence, and he's been thwarted all his life. It's time for him to get what he deserves. The demon, on the other hand, is calm, cold, measured, and patient. Occasionally, distracted by blood or impulse, the Laiamas gets distracted and loses focus. Mistakes are made.

Senator Andrew Gorman, Candidate

Gorman is strong-willed, heroic, decisive, compassionate, and a natural leader. For nearly a year, he's been cheating on his wife with a member of his campaign staff. He is a staunch supporter of equal rights, and he backs both affirmative action and civil unions (in fact, he intends to push for gay marriage). He doesn't go down without a fight.

Warren Parrish, Founder, Millennial Ark

Short, balding, with a thick moustache and beard, Parrish tends to waddle when he walks. Ravidly anti-gay, he believes that America is run by movie stars and sodomites, and sees himself as a holy soldier on the front lines of the Third World War. He is ready to kill (or die) for his beliefs.

Randall Doxtater, Retired teacher

Doxtater is a black man in his fifties. He's of medium height and build, with deep dark eyes that he hides behind mirrored sunglasses. He tends to take a long breath before speaking, even if it's only a single word. His voice is deep and strong, the sound of authority. Sometimes, he addresses younger people as if they were his students. Doxtater is not foolish, but he's no coward, and he'll help if he can. The characters can find him on the rooftop, carving.

Private Mike Haga, Soldier

Haga is puffy-faced, heavy-set, and slow, with small eyes placed close together and an unusually large forehead. He's also the informal leader of the group of business-minded soldiers stationed at Red Mill. When he realized that there was money to be made in the illegal weapons business, he organized the group and started turning a modest profit almost immediately. He knows that he faces stiff penalties if caught, so he'll shoot first and make up a story later if he thinks he's in trouble.

Private Sid Drummond, Soldier

Drummond is a freckled doughboy with a soft chin and large brown eyes. He burns easily in the sun. Haga is the alpha dog, and Drummond knows it, but Haga lets him in on the schemes, and that's enough. However, if pressed, he'll crack much quicker than Haga ever would, and he'll surrender with the mildest provocation.

Darren Eberhardt, Security Guard

Eberhardt is a square-jawed good-old boy with an athletic build and clear blue eyes. Thick-necked, with scabs and scars all over his hands and fingers from insisting on handling home repairs that probably merited the involvement of a professional, he handles himself well under pressure. Though by no means an academic, he's smart enough, and he won't crumble in the face of the supernatural. He may take some convincing, but he doesn't have to be an enemy to the Disciples. The Cabal will probably find Eberhardt at the NSA lab.

Susan Lafayette, NSA Analyst

Susan is a petite blonde in her thirties. When not at work, she spends her time at home in her sweatpants, reading or studying for her doctorate. She's deeply religious, and believes that her work actually makes the world a better place.

Roger Hayes, Head of Security

Hayes is the head of the private security team attached to Senator Gorman. He's principled, resolute, and doesn't believe anything until he has seen it with his own eyes. The Disciples may have a hard time getting Hayes to cooperate with them, and he will not hesitate to use lethal force if he believes that someone poses a threat to the Senator. He actually despises Gorman for his views, and for his infidelity, but he will defend him to the death regardless.

13.6.5. LOCATIONS

Whitehurst residence

The house of Charles Whitehurst, NSA Analyst, is a complete wreck. There's blood on the walls, floor, and ceiling, and the entire Whitehurst family has been murdered by the demon. Their bodies are piled together in the kitchen, and all of their chests have been ripped open (and their hearts are gone, eaten by the demon). A bloody plate and utensils at the dinner table would appear to indicate that the demon sat down to eat after killing them. Pale blue slime is found on the floor, and on the bodies. Among Whitehurst's notes in his desk, the Disciples can find GPS coordinates leading to Red Mill park, and a piece of paper with a number on it. The number can be identified as the serial number to a rifle that was reported missing from Red Mill Army Base.

Red Mill Park

At Red Mill Park, just a few miles south of the Army base, the Disciples will find the corpse of Andrew Cleary. He was a grocery store cashier, and was also a member of the Millennial Ark. His head was torn from his shoulders, and is nowhere to be seen. In addition, his heart has been ripped out, and the cavity is crawling with insects. On his person, the Cabal will find an address (which will turn out to be the NSA operations office). The note will also reference a terminal number, and a login and password.

Dorrance residence

This is the home of Arthur Dorrance, NSA Analyst. Dorrance is dead, as are his wife and children. As before, all of the bodies have been dismembered, and their hearts eaten. There are more traces of pale blue slime, but this time, it appears to have bits of matter clinging to it. Testing will reveal that the slime contains granules of chrysotile asbestos (which is currently being abated from an abandoned toy factory downtown) and koa shavings (which are sold by a rare woods dealer to a retired music teacher who lives near the factory). If the Cabal investigate the Dorrance residence further, they will find a nannycam inside a stuffed bear. The recorded footage will show only a few glimpses of Michaels walking in, but for a second, the image will be distorted. If the frame is frozen, the Disciples will see a vague image of the demon and its massive tentacles.

Doxtater residence

Randall Doxtater sits on his rooftop and watches the city traffic while he carves his instruments and occasionally plays them. He has noticed a lot of activity in the nearby toy factory lately, but has attributed it to a renovation project. After the abatement went on hold due to problems with funding, however, the activity continued. Now, he is becoming more suspicious. A jeep pulled up the other day, and two men delivered a package. Doxtater never saw them leave. The jeep is still sitting there. He's also seen some movement through a broken window on the second floor.

13.6.6. BATTLEFIELDS**NSA Operations Office**

This is the workplace of Owen Michaels, Darren Eberhardt, Susan Lafayette, Arthur Dorrance (deceased), and Charles Whitehurst (deceased). It's a small regional office, consisting of a lobby, a cluster of offices, a server room, a security office, and a large conference room. Eberhardt is typically in the security office, keeping an eye on the monitors. Susan Lafayette will be working late, trying to figure out if there's a mole in the NSA, supplying information to the Millennial Ark. In Michaels' office, the Disciples will find a reference to an explosive device on his computer. This will require some manipulation (such as the use of a skill, or the use of a spell like *Amanuensis*). The same file will also reference Senator Gorman. While the Cabal is at the office, a group of Millennial Ark terrorists will attack.

Red Mill Army Base

This is the army base where Privates Drummond and Haga have been stealing firearms and explosives. When the Disciples arrive, various other soldiers are all trying to destroy the evidence of their theft. If discovered, they will open fire. One of them, Drummond, knows about the Millennial Ark plans (or, at least, knows that they have obtained a bomb through Michaels and that they're going to use it in the next few hours). If there's shooting, he'll try to escape. If he can't escape, he'll surrender and try to negotiate his freedom by giving up information. After the firefight, other soldiers (not involved in the scam) will converge on the scene, believing the Cabal to be terrorists.

Lucky Panda Toy Factory

The derelict factory shut down nearly five years ago, and is now undergoing an asbestos abatement. However, due to budget problems, the abatement has been put on hold indefinitely. The Laiamas has taken over the factory as its base of operations because it's remote and uninhabited. If the Disciples search the factory, they'll find numerous mangled toys, including headless dolls, burned baby toys, and talking stuffed animals that carry on sinister conversations with the Disciples. The demon is nowhere to be found; more traces of bluish slime confirm that this is its lair, however. The Cabal can find empty cases that once contained components for an explosive device, as well as a map of the area with highlighter circles over Red Mill Army Base, the NSA operations office, and the city plaza. While they're at the factory, the Cabal will be attacked by various soldiers from Red Mill who are afraid that the Disciples are going to expose them.

City Plaza

A large crowd has gathered for the campaign speech by Senator Gorman, which will kick off the Unity Pride March through the downtown area. Hayes and the rest of the security team are everywhere, ready for anything. Once the Disciples arrive, the sniper will open fire on them to prevent them from interfering. Parrish will lead a ground attack against them, and the demon will materialize and try to kill everyone. If the Disciples are able to get the drop on the sniper, or Parrish, they may still have to deal with Gorman's security team.

13.6.7. HOSTILES

Parrish and the Millennial Ark terrorists will be immediately hostile to the Disciples, as will Haga, Drummond, and the soldiers involved in the gun scam. Eberhardt, Lafayette, Hayes, Gorman's security team, and any other soldiers at Red Mill will be neutral to the Cabal unless provoked. If the Disciples

trespass, threaten, or attack any of them, they will respond in kind. The Disciples will have a hard time convincing any of these men of the existence of demons without some real proof. And they may not even want to, given the risks involved with bringing ordinary people into the War.

Warren Parrish

Strength 2, Sense 2, Soul 1, Life 6
Crime 2, Hunting 2, rifle

Millennial Ark Terrorist

Strength 2, Sense 1, Soul 1, Life 5
Crime 1, Hunting 1, shotgun, knife

Millennial Ark Sniper

Strength 3, Sense 1, Soul 1, Life 5
Crime 1, Hunting 1, rifle, knife

Private Mike Haga

Strength 2, Sense 1, Soul 1, Life 6
Military 2, rifle, grenade, knife

Private Sid Drummond

Strength 1, Sense 1, Soul 1, Life 5
Military 2, pistol, knife

Soldier

Strength 2, Sense 1, Soul 1, Life 5
Military 2, rifle, knife

Darren Eberhardt

Strength 2, Sense 1, Soul 1, Life 6
Military 1, Crime 1, pistol

Susan Lafayette

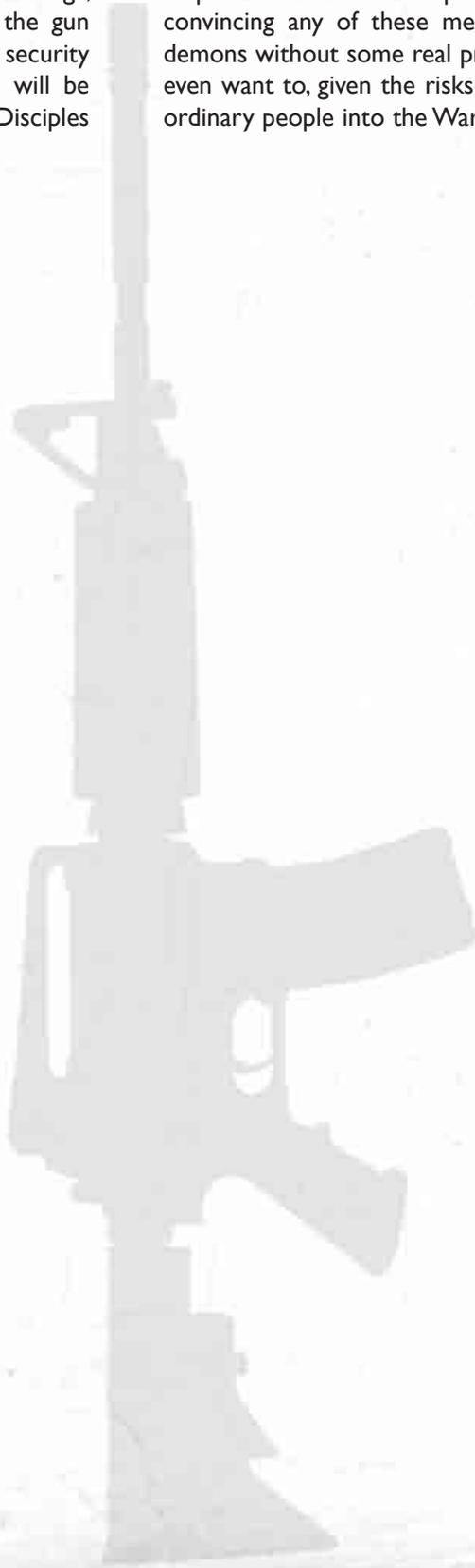
Strength 2, Sense 2, Soul 1, Life 6
Military 4, pistol

Roger Hayes

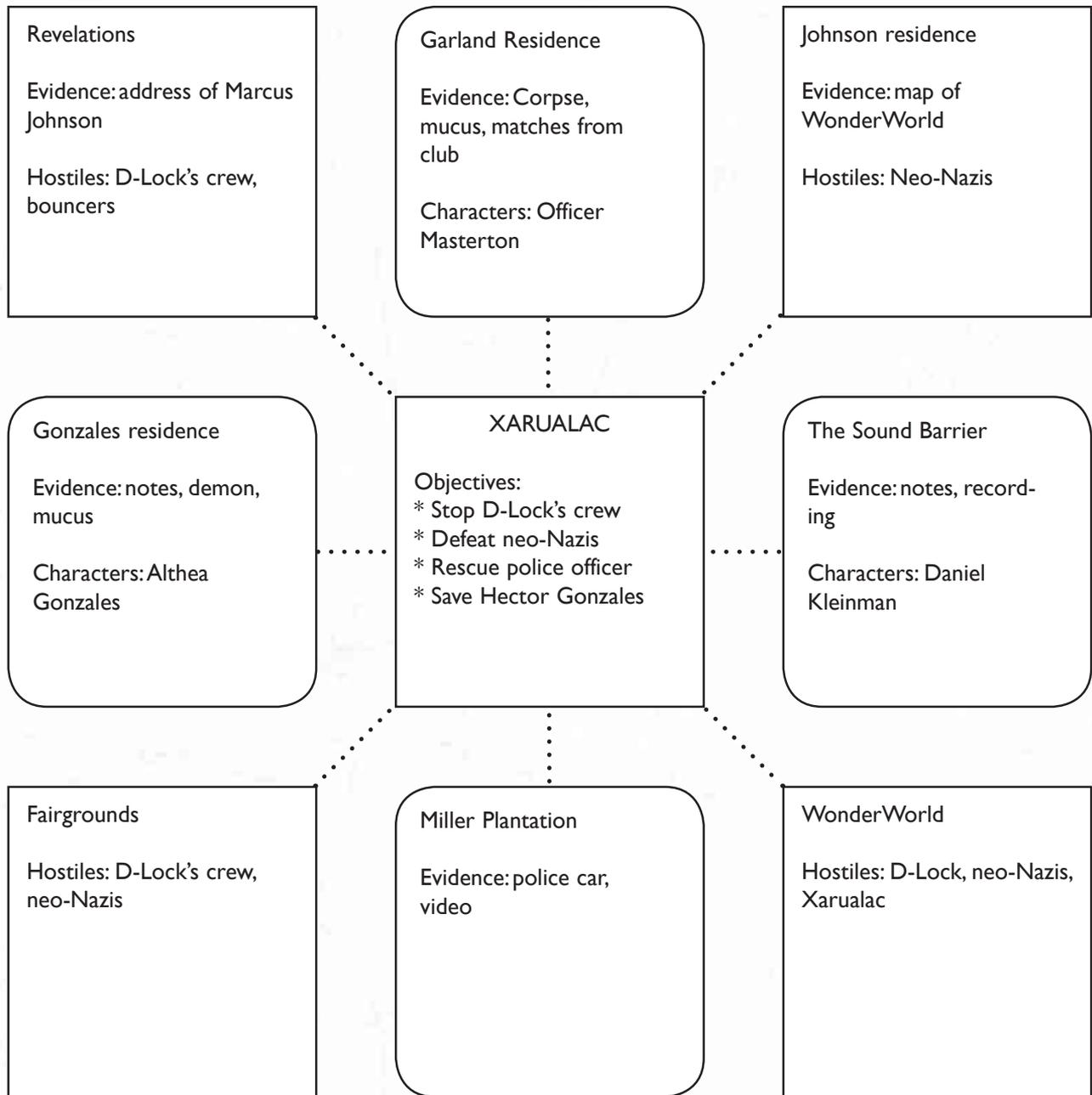
Strength 2, Sense 1, Soul 1, Life 6
Military 1, Intimidation 1, pistol, revolver

Gorman's Security Detail

Strength 2, Sense 1, Soul 1, Life 5
Military 1, Intimidation 1, pistol



Some Cyclopean Abominations Up In This Bitch



13.7. SOME CYCLOPEAN ABOMINATIONS UP IN THIS BITCH

A scenario for Dread: The First Book of Pandemonium

13.7.1. OBJECTIVES

1. Stop D-Lock's crew
2. Defeat neo-Nazis
3. Rescue Officer Ramirez
4. Save Althea Gonzales

13.7.2. TRIGGER

The Disciples can get involved from a number of angles. The police might bring them in to help out with the investigation of the slaughter at the Garland residence, or in response to strange sightings at the Johnson residence. A contact may get in touch with the Cabal because of concerns about the erratic behavior of Hector Gonzales. Or someone may tell the Disciples about a strange recording at The Sound Barrier.

13.7.3. SITUATION

Hector Gonzales calls himself Ominuss. He's a rapper.

He recorded two moderately successful albums (Section Number 415 and Victimless Crimes), then switched genres to horrorcore. His backing band, consisting mainly of heavy metal musicians, performs guitar-heavy live music over which he raps about death, demons, and the supernatural.

His third album, Chroniconomicon, featured such hit singles as "In Tha Gambrel-Roofed Projects" and "Eldritch Vatos". It catapulted Ominuss to the top of the charts on the basis of its crossover appeal, and spawned several music videos. Ominuss recently finished a successful tour with rap-metal band inSects, and is currently in the studio, working on his fourth album. He is also being stalked by a demon.

The Xarualac, attracted to Ominuss' fame and notoriety, has infiltrated the rapper's life by posing as a record producer named John Everett. Ordinarily, Gonzales is suspicious of suits, but the demon is quite persuasive, and it has cemented its bond with him. Through manipulation, the demon has convinced Gonzales to cut all ties with his family and friends, and to rely exclusively on Everett.

When the scenario begins, the Xarualac will have just decided to begin killing Gonzales' loved ones.

Another rapper, named D-Lock (real name Derek Lockamy), has been plotting against Ominuss for some time. An existing beef, which started as an argument backstage at the Grammys, has escalated recently, and D-Lock and his crew are going to try to kill Ominuss tonight in a drive-by shooting. If they can't find him, a few of D-Lock's men are waiting at Revelations, a nightclub downtown that Ominuss frequents.

Shawn Lepow, a twenty-year old neo-Nazi, just lost his job pumping gas. His employer told him that he was being fired for missing work two days in a row (and showing up late on the third day). However, Lepow is convinced that his employers are replacing him with a minority as part of some kind of affirmative-action plan. This infuriates him, and he's going to take that rage out on someone. He and his friends are driving around, looking for someone to beat senseless. What the others don't know is that Lepow has his father's revolver, and that he's looking to kill someone tonight.

While cruising around downtown, Lepow and his friends see a young black man getting into a red Lamborghini. This man is Marcus Johnson, owner of Majestic Records. Johnson is disappointed, because he tried to talk to Ominuss in the recording studio, only to be dismissed like an underling. He's genuinely concerned about his friend, and is so preoccupied that he doesn't notice the car full of skinheads following him home. In Miller Plantation, a high-income neighborhood, Lepow and his crew watch Johnson pull into his gated driveway. They pull over and wait.

While drinking beer in Lepow's battered Honda, the group is approached by Officer Alonzo Ramirez, a four-year veteran of the city police. Ordinarily, Ramirez would be riding with his partner, but due to budget cuts, the force has been ordered to send one-man units to low-crime areas until further notice.

When confronted, the group grabs Ramirez, overpowers him, and stuffs him into the trunk. They then drive off triumphantly, having forgotten all about Johnson.

The Xarualac has just killed Ominuss' agent, Rachel Garland. It is now outside of Johnson's home, and it's about to enter and kill him.

Ominuss is drunk and high, and he has no idea what's going on. He has been thinking for some time about WonderWorld, an amusement park that shut down last summer after a tragic accident. He has decided to visit the amusement park and walk around, and he's bringing his notebook with him, because he's got some amazing rhymes just underneath the surface, waiting to get out, and he's going to unleash them tonight.

Gonzales is utterly oblivious to the violence that's about to erupt around him.

13.7.4.CHARACTERS

Ominuss (aka Hector Gonzales), rapper

A medium-sized Latino with close-cropped hair, usually seen wearing a hoodie and sunglasses, regardless of the time of day. Gonzales is confused, unhappy, and lonely. He's been convinced by the demon that everyone's after his money, even his own family, and he feels that he can't turn his back on anyone. Gonzales is quite intelligent, and reads a great deal. He used to drink heavily, and has recently started again. He's currently hard at work on his new album, "Some Cyclopean Abominations Up In This Bitch."

John Everett (demon), record producer

The Xarualac has disguised itself as a record producer with an unlimited budget, and is Gonzales' new best friend. By playing up to his (admittedly sizable) ego, the demon has entrenched itself as his only ally in a world of rivals and backstabbers. The demon is in the process of murdering Marcus Johnson when the scenario begins, and will then move on to the home of Althea Gonzales. If the Disciples begin to interfere with its plans, the demon will watch them and study their behavior before attacking.

Sarah Masterton, police officer

Officer Masterton was the first person to reach the Garland residence, and she was able to keep the crime scene clean of any contamination. She's shocked and horrified by what she's seen, but she's no fool. If the Disciples try to access the crime scene, she's going to try to prevent them unless steps are taken to persuade her.

D-Lock (aka Derek Lockamy), rapper

Tall and muscular, D-Lock wears an all-white athletic ensemble, including jersey, sneakers, and baseball cap. He's also carrying a submachine gun. He's resentful of Gonzales' success, and believes that this is the one moment in his life where he can actually change his destiny with a single bullet. Temperamental and impatient, D-Lock tends to shoot first and ask questions later. He looks forward to prison, convinced that he'll be a legend after he kills Ominuss.

Shawn Lepow, neo-Nazi thug

Lepow has large ears and a wispy fuzz-mustache. His eyes are dark and suspicious. Frustrated and unhappy with his day job, Lepow is now terrified at the prospect of unemployment. He's ashamed of his country, sick of political correctness, and convinced that the Haywood Massacre on Blood Monday was the work of terrorists who came in to the country through Mexico. Vicious and hateful, Lepow will attack anything that moves at this point.

Daniel Kleinman, security guard

Kleinman thinks that rap stands for Retards Attempting Poetry. However, he has a great deal of respect for Marcus Johnson, and he enjoys his job as a security guard at Sound Barrier (Johnson's recording studio). He will not hesitate to fire if he thinks that someone is trying to break in. Loyal to his job, Kleinman is a good man in a bad situation.

Althea Gonzales, model

Althea is a beautiful woman in her early thirties. She got her start working as a catalog model, but is now only works sporadically. Her husband's success means that she can spend more time with their children, which she enjoys. She is extremely anxious about Gonzales, because of his recent heavy drinking, and because she fears Everett's influence on him. She doesn't know about the heroin yet, but if she finds out, she'll fly into a rage. She is convinced that all the money in the world won't help you if it costs you your soul, and she'd rather leave Gonzales than watch him spiral into oblivion.

Alonzo Ramirez, police officer

Ramirez is a good cop. He's only been on the force for a few years, but he has the respect of his superior officers. This new single-officer policy is something that Ramirez opposes, but he believes in doing his duty without complaint, so he hasn't said anything yet. Right now, he's trapped in the trunk of a car, and he thinks that he's going to be murdered soon. He's trying to keep a level head so that he can attack when the trunk is opened. A deeply religious Catholic, Ramirez will have no problem accepting the idea that demons are real if presented with sufficient proof.

Peace Pipe (aka William James), club owner

Peace Pipe has been running Revelations for a few years, ever since it was a brick building with boarded-up windows behind the EZ-Mart gas station on Route 55. He's an old hippie with dreadlocks and a long scar on his chin, and he tends to favor medallions and tank tops (the better to accentuate his greying chest hair). He acknowledges that some of his patrons tend to get out of hand, which is why he employs bouncers, but he really just wants everyone to get along and have a good time.

13.7.5. LOCATIONS**Garland residence**

Rachel Garland was Gonzales' agent, and spoke with him just a few hours before she was murdered by the Xarualac. Her home has been trashed. Furniture is broken, blood has been sprayed along the walls, and greyish-green mucus trails are found along the walls, ceiling, and floor (where the demon's intestines have dragged as it floated through the air). In Garland's notes, the Cabal will find a reference to Revelations, along with a book of matches from the nightclub on her person. Garland is in the kitchen sink, the bathtub, and the freezer. Officer Masterton is just outside the residence.

The Sound Barrier

This is the recording studio where Ominuss is working on his new album. Kleinman is working the night shift, and won't let anyone in without good reason. The studio is a linear series of rooms: lobby, meeting room, lounge, mixing room, and booth. In the meeting room, the Disciples will find a notebook that mentions Johnson's concerns about Gonzales (he thinks that Everett is up to no good, and is very disturbed to learn that Gonzales doesn't even know how to get in touch with Everett -- no phone, no email, no address, nothing). They'll also find a recording from earlier that evening, in which Gonzales can be heard talking with someone whose voice is so horribly distorted that the words are unintelligible. On the tape, however, Gonzales can clearly be heard mentioning Garland's name. He's concerned about her, because she hasn't been returning his calls.

Miller Plantation

This is an expensive neighborhood, where driveways are gated, and where homes are often concealed behind walls of vegetation (which also obscure video cameras that sweep the area). Near the Johnson residence, a police car is parked on the side of the road. It's Officer Ramirez's car, and if the Disciples investigate it, they'll see that there are skid marks in front of the car, from where Lepow peeled out of the neighborhood in a hurry (after abducting Officer Ramirez). Inside the police car, the Cabal will find the officer's computer, which indicates the last car that was looked up (Lepow's). It shows his last known address, make and model, and license plate. Video footage taken by the in-car video camera shows the skinheads beating Ramirez down and shoving him in the trunk.

Gonzales residence

Althea Gonzales is home, up all night with worry about her husband. She's convinced that something is wrong, but he's had numerous run-ins with the police, and she's not ready to call them yet. The security camera outside the home picked up footage of Everett just seconds ago. His form flickered and became that of the demon, for just a second, before he vanished into the shadows. In Gonzalez's home recording studio, they'll find notes indicating that he's supposed to meet Garland at Revelations this evening. The presence of the Cabal has scared off the Xarualac (for the moment), and if they search for him, they'll find nothing but some of that greenish mucus in the bushes.

Revelations

A smoky, dirty nightclub, Revelations smells of sweat, desperation, and marijuana smoke. Aside from the people drinking, dancing, and making out, there are a bunch of D-Lock's crew standing around, looking menacing. A few of them have managed to get pistols past the bouncers, and the rest are carrying knives. The proprietor of the club, Peace Pipe, just wants people to have fun, leave a good tip, and then get the hell out. He'll intervene if violence breaks out, unless it means putting himself in the line of fire. The bouncers will probably not want to let the male Disciples in, but the female Disciples have a pretty good chance. If D-Lock's crew get the idea that the Cabal knows anything about Gonzales, they'll attack. One of them has the Marcus Johnson's address in his pocket. Outside the nightclub, a bunch of skinheads are waiting for D-Lock's crew to come out. If they see the Disciples, they may attack.

Johnson residence

This is the home of Marcus Johnson, owner of Majestic Records. He's been dead for less than ten minutes. There's mucus (from the Xarualac) all over the walls and floor, and Johnson's corpse is nailed to the wall upside-down, his hands and feet cut off and stacked in the fireplace. There are no police yet. In his office, there are notes in his handwriting indicating his concern about Gonzales' behavior, and a map of the city with WonderWorld circled in red. A group of skinheads is coming by to pick up the cop car, and they attack the Disciples on sight.

Fairgrounds

The Fairgrounds, located near the highway, are the only part of the Enchanted Realms park that are still in use. However, at this late hour, they're closed. The grounds consist of large open spaces where vendors pitch tents and booths on the weekends, and a central exhibition area that's used occasionally for special events. The skinheads have arrived in large numbers, and are currently embroiled in a battle with the remainder of D-Lock's crew. When the Cabal arrives at the Fairgrounds, both groups will open fire on them.

WonderWorld

Ominuss is now in WonderWorld, a theme park that shut down last summer when one of the rides malfunctioned and a car flew off the rails, killing six children and wounding a dozen more. He's wandering around, thinking, and is dimly aware that there's a gun battle going on nearby, but he's so bewildered by the combination of alcohol, heroin, and the demon's influence that he no longer knows what's going on. D-Lock just saw Gonzales, and is getting ready to kill him. The last remaining skinheads (two or three) are hauling Officer Ramirez out of his car, and they're getting ready to shoot him in the head, execution-style. The Xarualac is about to attack and kill Gonzales, along with anyone else it sees. When the Disciples arrive on the scene, the final battle will begin.

13.7.7. HOSTILES

Officer Ramirez will be grateful to the Disciples for saving him, but he may turn on them if he believes them to be evil or dangerous to innocent people. The same goes for Officer Masterton. The rest are hostile to the Cabal from the start.

Officer Alonzo Ramirez

Strength 2, Sense 1, Soul 1, Life 6
Crime 2, pistol, riot club

Sarah Masterton

Strength 2, Sense 1, Soul 1, Life 5
Crime 2, pistol, riot club

D-Lock (a.k.a. Derek Lockamy)

Strength 2, Sense 1, Soul 1, Life 5
Crime 2, pistol, revolver

Shawn Lepow

Strength 3, Sense 1, Soul 1, Life 5
Crime 2, shotgun, knife

Daniel Kleinman

Strength 2, Sense 1, Soul 1, Life 6
Crime 2, pistol

Skinheads

Strength 2, Sense 1, Soul 1, Life 5
Crime 2, revolver

D-Lock's crew

Strength 2, Sense 1, Soul 1, Life 5
Crime 2, revolver

EXCERPTS FROM THE FORTHCOMING OMINOUS ALBUM
SOME CYCLOPEAN ABOMINATIONS UP IN THIS BITCH

I explode from the sea with a fury spectacular
That you cannot explain with the common vernacular
You can't escape this rage tentacular
As I seduce your women like a Viagra Dracula
I break you with rhyme as I play you like Tetris
You cannot conceive of this fiend geometric
A force like no other, beyond comprehension
A satanic hispanic from another dimension
Causing a panic with each threat that I mention
But it's not in my nature to front or to threaten
I'm here to spread my tenebrous venom
The Goat and her Thousand Young are my brethren

from "Straight Outta Innsmouth"

I'll smash the works of homo sapiens
And the churches will be caving in
Burn the armies and the navies and
When it's over, I'm enslaving them
No angels will be saving them
Their prayers will be failing them
Their women will be wailing when
My minions are impaling them
Yo, fuck it, time to deconstruct it
Dholes in dark holes do as they're instructed
The Ancients have no patience
Now set course for total global devastation
The patron saint of grief and catastrophe
I feed on terror and unholy agony
I'll reconfigure your lowly anatomy
And I'll watch your spirit slowly atrophy

*from "Crepuscular Mothafuckin Shadows
Out Of Unfathomable Aeons"*

The dripping blood our only drink.
The bloody flesh our only food:
In spite of which we like to think
That we are sound, substantial flesh and blood
Again, in spite of that, we call this Friday good.
-- T. S. Eliot, "East Coker"

All that is necessary for evil to succeed is that good men do nothing.
-- Edmund Burke



Everything Ends

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Rafael Chandler

Creation, Writing, Design

Chandler is a video game writer and designer with seven years of industry experience. He's written storylines, dialogue, cinematic scripts, and/or game documentation for Zipper Interactive, Electronic Arts, Ubisoft, SouthPeak Games, NHN, IC Company, and XLOC. Chandler has contributed to over 30 games, including Ghost Recon: Advanced Warfighter, Rainbow Six: Lockdown, Ghost Recon 2, Monster Madness: Battle for Suburbia, and various unannounced next-generation projects. He is the author of *The Game Writing Handbook*, and also writes *Screen/Play*, a column at Gamasutra.com. In addition, he's been a speaker at the Game Writers Conference and the Russian Game Developers Conference. Through his publishing imprint, Neoplastic Press, Chandler is releasing the Unrated Edition of *Dread: The First Book of Pandemonium* in mid-2007. For more information, please check out www.rafaelchandler.com. You can also email him at spaniard@dread-rpg.com.



Adwen Creative

Art direction, layout, photography, interior art
Adwen Creative, Inc. is a design company that offers a wide range of services in both digital and print mediums; from branding make-overs to web design to video production to advertising. Founded in 2006 by multimedia artist, Wade Harrell and graphic designer Neda Pek-Harrell, this creative team with 20 years of combined experience is just getting started. Some examples of their work include the layout of the *Dread* rulebook and *Dread* website. For more information, please contact them at www.adwencreative.com or info@adwencreative.com.

Barb Bel

Interior Art

Originally from Albany, NY, Barbara Bel has found her calling in the art industry. Her art involves a variety of different media including drawing, painting, photography, costume design, tattoo design, graphic design, poetry, short fiction, and illustration. In addition to also dabbling in music, she would like to try her hand at jewelry making, sculpture, metal work, and glass blowing. Still experimenting with her own design and technique, this is just the beginning of her artistic endeavors. Things that inspire her to create are: Nature, drumming, dancing, her snake Hajime (R.I.P.), KI, chocolate, video games, anime, miniature versions of big things, Kate Moss, cute things, desolate places, and setting things on fire. Barbara has many artistic influences. Her favorite ones include: David Mack, Chad Michael Ward, Brom, Salvador Dali, H.R. Giger, Olivia DeBardinis, Hajime Sorayama, and Jill Thompson. Email Barbara at darque-eyes-studios@email.com.

Adam Chowles

Interior Art

Adam Chowles was born and raised in the seaside town of Torquay, England. He had an interest in drawing and fantasy art right from an early age, and it's something that's stayed with him and been a driving force in his life. So it's fantastic to now have a career that allows him to indulge in both. He graduated from Plymouth University in Graphic Design in 2001 and since then he's been slowly building a freelance illustration career with an aim of making it a full-time job. Chowles has also recently been involved in Raging Psycho Comics' Night Warrior online comic project as an Art Director and it's already enjoying success, with a print issue released and a PSP UMD release scheduled for release next year. He has high hopes for Dread: The First Book of Pandemonium, and with any luck, it will see the beginning of his career as a freelance fantasy artist. For more information, please contact him at adam@adamchowles.co.uk, or visit his web site at www.adamchowles.co.uk.

Claudia Cangini

Interior Art

Claudia got her start working as a manga letterer. In the years that followed, she worked in manga localization, graphic design for web and print, editing, illustration, and comic book writing and illustration. These days, she can usually be found behind her keyboard or graphic tablet, doing freelance work in Forli, Italy. If you don't see her there, she's probably slacking off, RPGing, reading, or watching DVDs. For more information, please visit www.claudiacangini.com and claudiacangini.deviantart.com, or feel free to email her at me@claudiacangini.com

Vivienne Gallant

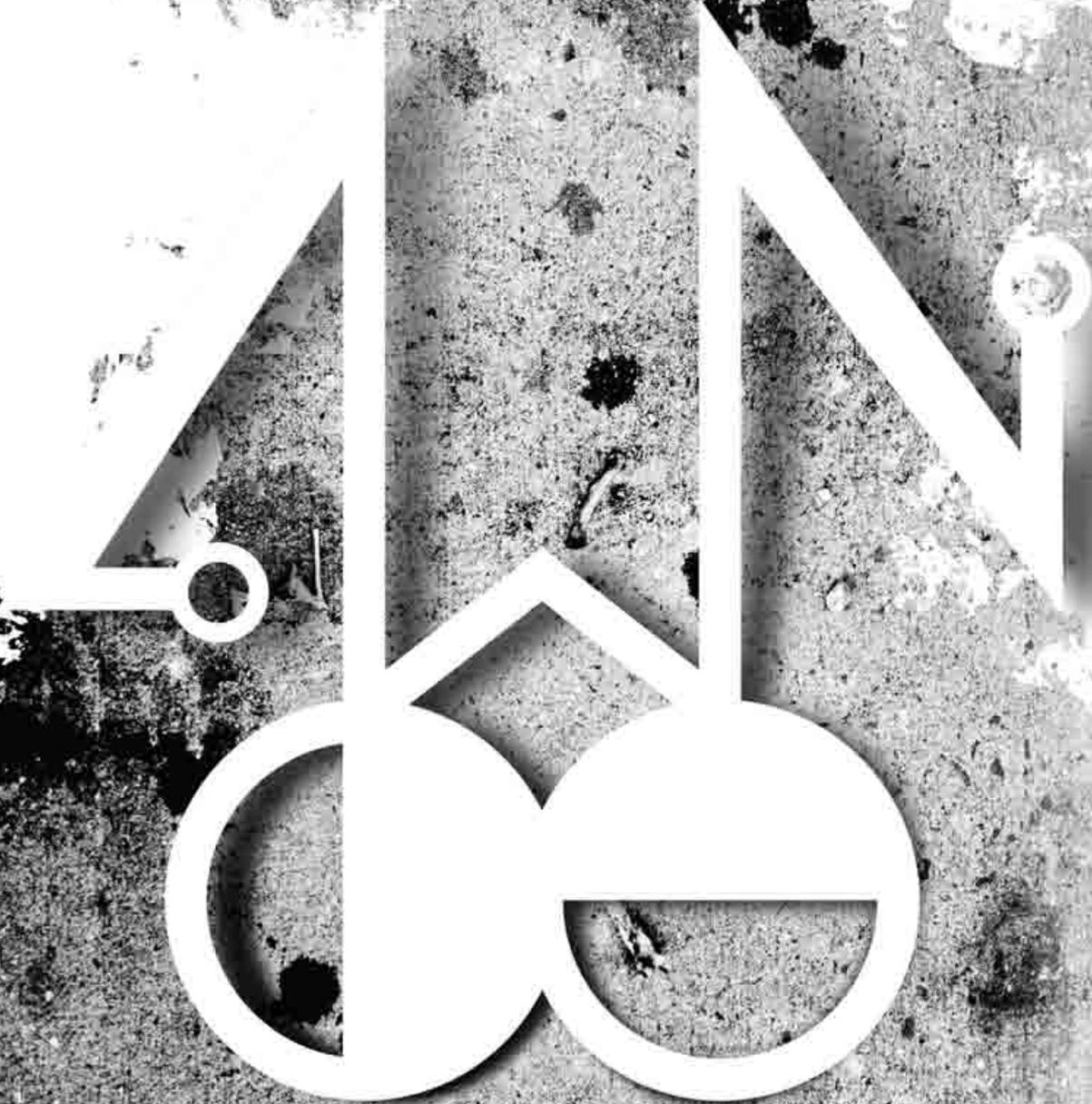
Interior Art

Vivienne M. Gallant was born in North Carolina to open-minded parents who let their child explore different things in the world, no matter if that world included fantasy and horror. Her tale begins in the 1970s at the Forest Drive-In, in Raleigh, North Carolina. "The Brides of Dracula", was playing on the screen. People were screaming from their cars, and jumping in their seats. Her little mind got hooked on what could scare so many grown people. Soon, she found out through her own nightmares what frightened adults. To conquer her fears, she began drawing what scared her most, and remained a recluse in school. The rest is history. She has been illustrating her nightmares since the age of eight. Through the years, she has acquired a BA in art, theatrical scenic design training, and freelance illustration experience. She's currently looking for new territory to spread her talents of making fantasy come to reality through her illustrations. For more information, feel free to contact Vivienne at vmgallant@bellsouth.net.

Char Reed

Interior Art

Charlene, better known to friends and family as Char, was born in 1984 in Austin, TX. She grew up with a passion for art and was always encouraged to develop the talent from early on. She currently resides in North Carolina and enjoys creating artwork in many mediums, including pencil work, watercolors, colored pencils, acrylic and digitally. For more information, contact her at char.reed@gmail.com, or visit her web site at www.charrartist.com.



adwen creative inc.

WE HAVE HAD A GREAT TIME WORKING ON THIS BOOK AND HOPE THAT YOU ENJOY PLAYING THE GAME AS MUCH AS WE DID COMING UP WITH A VISUAL EXPERIENCE ON PAR WITH RAFAEL'S IMAGINATION. WE WOULD LIKE TO THANK OUR MODELS ADEM KUPI AND DAVID KIRKPATRICK WHOSE CONTRIBUTIONS WERE CRITICAL TO THE SUCCESS OF THE PROJECT.

IF YOU LIKE WHAT YOU SEE PLEASE COME VISIT US AT
WWW.ADWENCREATIVE.COM

WADE&NEDA

Adwen Creative went above and beyond the call of duty during the development of *Dread: The First Book of Pandemonium*. The book's layout and art direction surpass my wildest expectations, and they have also created a first-rate web site for Neoplastic Press. They are flexible, efficient, responsive, and organized, and I am amazed by their raw talent and work ethic. I can't recommend them strongly enough.
Rafael Chandler
President, Neoplastic Press
www.dread-rpg.com

Adwen Creative designed a corporate identity for Media Sunshine, which included a logo, letterhead, cards, PR materials, and an awesome website. They created a wide variety of logos, and went through several iterations with me until we found the perfect one. I am most impressed with the website and PR materials they created. By thinking outside the box, they came up with a concept that reflected my company's core values and services in a unique and memorable way. I look forward to working with them for my future creative design needs.

Heather Chandler
Executive Producer, Media Sunshine
www.mediasunshine.com

MALICE

THE SECOND BOOK OF PANDEMONIUM



RAFAEL
CHANDLER

2005

MALICE

THE SECOND BOOK OF PANDEMONIUM

COMING THIS WINTER

The demon slithers towards us, screaming with the voice of a child as it opens and shuts its claws. Morlock jumps off the roof of the school and lands on top of it. She tries to get it in a headlock, but it wrenches loose, whips a tentacle around her throat, and flings her at the chain-link fence. Roaring, Morlock smashes through it and lands in the sand-pit under a swing-set. Me and Slashfic look at each other. Council's out for the count, and Slashfic's face is a mask of blood, black in the moonlight. He got shoved face-first through a car window earlier. Damn, I think. This bastard is taking us apart. I run towards the demon, and the last thing I see is that grinning face blurring towards me.

Later, I'm in the car. Morlock is driving. I'm in the passenger seat, which is soaked with my blood. On the radio, the President vows to protect Murrlica from tourism. Everything hurts. I pull the aspirin out of the glove box. Empty. I roll down the window and lean out so I can see myself in the rear-view mirror. My lower jaw is missing.

This sourcebook for Dread features:

- * Information about the Armies of Heaven, including the Kritarchs and Telarians
- * New vehicles, including tanks, choppers, and home-made anti-demon war machines
- * New enemies, including the Crucifers, Sectaries, and Eremites
- * Federal agencies like Section Zero, DPI, and Omega Division
- * Expanded information about cults, such as Heaven's Children and The Black Cross
- * Over a dozen new scenarios, including Suture Self, Posed-Mortem, and Strip Club

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Finally, we always endeavor to keep a knowledgeable (though opinionated) staff on hand, so feel free to ask if you don't see what you're looking for.

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DREAD: THE FIRST BOOK OF PANDEMONIUM

NAME	
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DRIVE	
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DISCIPLINE	
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BIOGRAPHY

STRENGTH	
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COMBAT	
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FURY	
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SENSE	
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MAGIC	
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LIFE	
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SOUL	
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ARMOR	
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CASH	
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SKILLS

WEAPONS

SPELLS

CONTACTS

GEAR

NOTES

ADVANCEMENT	<input type="checkbox"/>												
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