

Burner

The Pleasant Glades Strip Mall consists of four stores: Anchor Hardware, King Pawn Store, Gatehouse Storage, and Red Talk Phones. It is located near the highway on the outskirts of the city and does just enough business to justify its existence.

The player characters all work at stores in Pleasant Glades. They are normal civilians that work in retail. They have no knowledge of the mythos, special backgrounds, or unusual talents. Otherwise they would not be working there.

For whatever reason, Pleasant Glades has become the one stop shopping outlet for Cell E, part of the illegal Delta Green conspiracy. They have used Pleasant Glades to set up a green box (the self-storage units are adjacent to the mall) and have bought quite a few supplies there from shovels and quicklime to prepaid burner cell phones, which brings us to tonight, after all the stores have closed.

Earlier today, Agent Ethan paid an employee of Red Talk Phones to activate dozens of cheap burner phones that he would pick up later tonight. This is under the table cash and the Red Talk employee needed it but activating and entering in phone numbers of burner phones is more time consuming than he realized. As the scenario starts, all of the PCs are in the back office of Red Talk Phones, opening, activating, and charging the phones. They also have to enter in the other phone numbers in the new phones. Every PC was bribed by the Red Talk employee to help (who is presumably a PC as well).

Things did not work out as well for Cell E. Emily pulls into the parking lot in a stolen minivan, with Ethan's corpse in the back. Edward was taken by 'It' at the commune. She needs a phone and Ethan told her about the burners before he bled out. Emily was winged by a cultist, so she's bleeding as well but her wound can be concealed under her jacket.

The scenario starts as the PCs hear Emily arrive. She bangs on the glass door of the store. Her goal is to get a burner and call cell A to tell them that the Avatar is loosed but it is not fully phased into this reality. She captured the cult leader and stuck him in the green box at Gatehouse Storage. She needs backup to recite the banishment ritual tattooed on the leader's back. She will pass out from blood loss in a few minutes, when the Avatar roars. She will do whatever she can to get a phone from the PCs.

911

The PCs may or may notice Emily's wound or the holstered pistol under her jacket. If they do, they will probably want to call 911. If they do, the Program will be alerted and mobilize to capture Emily and deal with the Avatar. It will take them some time to show up though and they may decide to shoot all civilian witnesses.

The Avatar and its Roar

Regardless of what the PCs do, the Avatar will appear within a few minutes in the front parking lot and roar. It appears as a large winged humanoid but it constantly shifts and mutates, a fractal of flesh and crystal. It costs 1/1d8 SAN to view.

The roar is unlike anything the PCs have ever heard nor can they fully process it. It costs 1/1d4 SAN. The Avatar cannot be perceived by normal humans as it is out of phase with reality. However, it can spend 6 MP to roar and cause all nearby humans to also phase out of normal reality. This means the PCs can now perceive and interact with the Avatar. It also means they can be killed by it. It takes the Avatar at least one hour to recover the MP to roar again.

More importantly, the PCs can no longer be perceived by normal humans with normal human senses. They can talk on the phone and be seen by video cameras but humans can't see or hear them directly. They also cannot affect any tangible object as long as a normal human perceives it. Glass becomes indestructible and flashlights stop working. They are essentially corporeal ghosts. Note that the avatar is bound by this rule as well, so it can't bust down any doors as long as there's at least one normal human nearby.

If there are no nearby observers, the Avatar and the PCs can interact with objects normally. The Avatar can batter down doors but the PCs can grab tools

Emily's Wallet

After Emily passes out, the PCs will probably want to save her or at least check her for clues. She has a Glock pistol with X number of bullets left (1 for each PC, a total coincidence). She also has a FBI badge, a scrap of paper with a phone number and the letter A, and a wallet. The wallet contains:

A hotel keycard

The Starry Wisdom Commune New Age Healing Center business card

A key for unit 52 in Gatehouse Storage

An ATF ID for Emily Williamson

Prank Call 911

If 911 was called, then the Avatar will watch passively as the paramedics and police show up and look around. They may or may not find Ethan's body hidden in the minivan. They will not notice the PCs at all, which costs 0/1d4 SAN when the PCs realize the truth. Sooner or later, they will leave.

The Avatar's Plans

It wants to devour its prey, namely Emily and the PCs. It stalks around the mall, waiting for its prey to emerge. It knows that all of the affected are gradually phasing out of reality into the Avatar's reality. If the PCs do nothing, they will disappear entirely. If the Avatar spots a victim, it will chase them.

The Border

The strip mall (including the storage units) is surrounded by a dimensional barrier. If any of the PCs try to flee, they will see a shimmering wall similar to an aurora borealis. If they cross, they will be transported to the Avatar's native dimension.

Calling A Cell

If a PC calls the number on the scrap of paper, they will talk to a member of A Cell. A Cell is desperate and may tell them about the tattooed cultist in unit 52 of Gatehouse Storage. It may ask them to wake Emily up first, assuming the PCs stopped her bleeding. Anchor Hardware and King Pawn have first aid kits available.

A Cell will warn the PCs not to trust the government as they will be shot for seeing too much.

The Program's Response

The Program was alerted earlier when E Cell burned a commune down to the ground and murdered some cultists. If anyone calls 911, they will show up sooner or later. First, they will call a random PC and try to get as much information as possible. They promise whatever help the PC asks for but the Program does not understand the nature of the Avatar. They will try to isolate the area, intercepting local first responders, takeout food delivery drivers, and anyone else the PCs try to call in.

The Program's go-to plan is to send a team of spec ops commandos to sweep the area and secure all evidence and witnesses. They will not be able to perceive the PCs, Emily, or the cult leader until the Avatar roars again. At that point, the commandos phase out and the Program will launch a drone strike to cleanse the area within 5 minutes of the roar. Everyone will die.

Getting to the Cult Leader

Sneaking from Red Talk Phones to Gatehouse Storage will be difficult while the Avatar is waiting for them. The PCs may hop from store to store, since they should have the keys. The other stores may have useful items to distract or fight the Avatar. Unit 52 is locked and requires Emily's key or bolt cutters. The cult leader is alive but unconscious. He may wake up but knows no dangerous spells he can recite while tied up.

The tattoo can be recited by anyone – it triggers a spell that forces a SAN test on the caster. If successful, the Avatar loses 1d6 POW and alerts the Avatar to the caster's location. If failed, the caster loses 1d6 SAN. Multiple characters can recite the spell. Either way, the caster loses 1 POW per casting. If taken to 0 POW, the Avatar is banished.

Resolution

If the PCs can banish the Avatar, everyone will return to reality. Getting to the storage unit without being killed by the Avatar will require teamwork and luck.

If the PCs do not succeed in banishing the Avatar, they will gradually phase out of reality. The Avatar will continue to stalk the earth. The cult leader may or may not escape.

The Avatar

STR 30 DEX 20 CON 20 INT 6 (actually hyper-intelligent but so alien it cannot easily understand earth)
POW 20
HP 25
Armor: 5 points and regenerates 1 point per round. If brought to 0 hit points, it will reform with full health 2d6 rounds later.
Combat: 2 attacks of Fractal Rend 45% 1d6 + db Skills: Alertness 75% Stealth 35%

The Cult Leader

STR 8 DEX 11 CON 8 INT 15 POW 18 CHA 17
HP 8
SAN 0
Spells: Summon the Avatar, Banish the Avatar
Skills: Alertness 35%, Be a manipulative Cult Leader 75%, Deception 75%, Dodge 35%, Knife 50%, Unarmed 30%