


SEORA

THE FIRST BOOK OF PANDEMONIUM
TENTH ANNIVERSARY EDITION



RAFAEL CHANDLER

A black and white photograph showing a person in a dark, industrial setting, possibly a slaughterhouse. The person is wearing a dark jacket and a hat, and is looking towards the camera. The background is filled with a grid of dark, vertical lines, likely metal bars or a wall. The lighting is dramatic, with strong highlights and deep shadows. In the foreground, there is a large, dark, textured object, possibly a piece of machinery or a large animal carcass, which is partially obscured by the person's shadow.

You alone understand the state of wooden shutters and weed-cracked driveway, bits of mulch scattered over a sidewalk, sagging gutters choked with russet pine needles and oak leaves. You know these traces, you can read them and determine the essence of a family at a glance. It is worst when they hear your own leaden steps and the voices trail off into the nervous silence of those who know exactly what they deserve, but who would rather scurry blindly under the furniture, crawling over the linoleum, gasping in the sudden lack of air in a house gone pregnant with emptiness. They are quiet, then, as your boots thud on the wooden porch and the door creaks open, slow but achingly loud, as though the door itself resists your approach and screams a futile warning. When you rack the shotgun, the screaming begins again. The Abbattoir awaits.



IN LOVING MEMORY OF
THE DARK RIDERS OF MEREGOTH

ILIOS THE TAURIAN

THALAN ZUR, DROW TEMPLAR

PIMEDUS THE SORCERER

LADY BETH

ROXALOT BRONZBALZAVICH

**YOU
SHOULD
KNOW
THIS:**

S C O R N

I S A

G A M E

A B O U T

M E A T





DEDICATION

*This one is for
Alexandre "Kobayashi" Jeannette
Andy "DiamondSutra" Kitkowski
Anthony "Ars Mysteriorum" Holtberg
celebrityomnipath
Conrad "LordEntropy" Murkitt
Daniel "Blockhead" Blakelock
Oliver "Ahrimanius" Summers
Pawel "Chimera" Cybula
Scott "Prime Minister" Dorward.*

WARNING: THIS IS JUST A GAME!

Please be aware that this is just a role-playing game. *Scorn* is set in a world of demons and angels, but these are imaginary! We here at Neoplastic Press do not condone the practice of monotheism. On the subject of the occult, we're pretty ambivalent. I mean, if you think it'll help you score, then sure, put on the pentacle medallion and the robes or whatever.

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FIRST EDITION, 2002

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SECOND EDITION, 2007

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10TH ANNIVERSARY, 2012

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Zombie Holocaust Font by Chad Savage

A Letter of Marque

Avast, ye dogs of cutlass, flint, and hook:
I care not how ye found this bloody book,
But if ye be a scurvy pirate true,
Then pass it on as it was passed to you.

Hey! If you dig my role-playing games, please share them! That includes Scorn, Spite, Sects Cells, A Grail Epoch, ViewScream, everything! Email them to friends, upload them to file-sharing sites, torrent the fuck out of them.

In fact, with the Open Sores license, you could actually remix Scorn and/or Spite and sell it anywhere you please.

All I ask is that you consider purchasing my novel, *Hexcommunicated*. It's as subtle as napalm and as delicate as a kitchen-sink garbage disposal. It's about Fearwolves, Soulturgeists, Skelekinetics, unborn terrorists, Lovecraftian WMDs, and sentient zombies. It's violent and action-packed, and if you like my game fiction, you'll dig my novel.

It's also gotten some decent reviews. Support an indie author by purchasing my fiction, and I'll keep hammering out the brutal (and free!) RPGs.

You can learn more about my novel, and all my upcoming games, at rafaelchandler.com.

Or hit me up at:
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Preface

When it comes to film, I am a gorehound; movies like *À l'intérieur*, *Martyrs*, and *[REC]* really scratch the itch for me. I love the horror fiction of Clive Barker and the crime fiction of James Ellroy. My favorite albums include *Occasus* (by the Amenta), *By The Blessing of Satan* (by Behexen), and *Those Once Loyal* (by Bolt Thrower).

If, like me, you enjoy subject matter that makes some people squirm, then you may enjoy this game. If you enjoy games in which you are able to inject some of your bile, then Scorn might well get the job done for you. If you want to find out what happens when you investigate the lurid, the pathetic, the monstrous, the inhumane, and the repugnant -- and then resolve the situation, not with words or kindness, but with atrocity -- then you may well find what you are looking for within these pages.

So here we are -- Scorn: The First Book of Pandemonium, Tenth Anniversary Edition, a game about demons and the sorry bastards who hunt them. Hope you enjoy it.

Mano cornuta,
Rafael

Quick and dirty version

This is a free PDF. Feel free to distribute it however you see fit!

The landscape-formatted printer-friendly \$6.66 version will feature a table of contents, and index, no art, bookmarks, the whole thing.

This, on the other hand, is the print PDF, and looks exactly like the book will. It's kind of a mess, really, but that's the point. (Though I should note that the print version will have a table of contents and an index and all that rot).

Anyhow, if you dig it, you can buy the book, which will be sold at cost (no profits to me). Enjoy!

Satanas Aeternam Metallum,
Rafael

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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 kittie's 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 castrato, 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 children's 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.



1.2. In the Beginning

This is a violent game of splatterpunk action in a world gone straight to hell. It's about demons and exorcism and flamethrowers and Jesus and abortion.

If you have ever read *Guideposts* magazine, and enjoyed it, just get the fuck out now.

Scorn is fast-paced and gruesome and vulgar, and requires players to do some lifting -- you can't just sit there and say "I roll to hit," over and over again, you lazy fuck. You're going to have to describe a few things, or do a bit of narration.

SCORN IS A GAME ABOUT DISCIPLES

Disciples are soldiers on the front line of the Last War. Demons, hidden from human eyes for centuries, now walk among us once more.

Your character is a Disciple, a supernatural warrior tasked with finding and destroying demons -- and those whom they have tainted.



(All kidding aside, it's actually possible to run a G-rated game of Scorn, devoid of blasphemy, gore, and/or profanity. For more about this "safe" playstyle, please see page XX.)



The Disciples in each Cabal are chosen by a Vicar. There are several Vicars, possibly hundreds or thousands of them, but you have no idea.

Vicars are powerful warlocks who train Disciples, teach them to use magic, and assign them investigations.

Nobody knows what the fuck a Vicar actually is. A person with a gun, sure. But maybe something else? An angel?

1.1.1. BLOOD MONDAY

On the night of May 13, everyone in Farmville, Virginia, went to sleep. By the time the sun came up, 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 the scene of the slaughter, unaware of what millions of people would later watch again and again.

There were bodies everywhere.

Farmville, a small town in central Virginia, was home to a eight 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 behind the cash register.

When WROK 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 WROK news van, but Shifflett stood his ground and trained his camera lens on the indelible image that would, for many, come to symbolize the Farmville Incident. It was the bloody handprint of a child, smeared at roughly waist level on the white garage door of the Chamberlain home.

Shifflett zoomed in on the remains of Kevin Chamberlain. He later sold the footage for sixteen thousand dollars. A few weeks later, he ingested drain cleaner.

The Chamberlain girl, Rebecca, was never found. Roughly one-third of the town's 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.

**PROBLY TOURISTS,
THEY HATE MURRIKA**

Over the course of the day, sorrow and fear turned to anger, and Americans 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. The next day.

Chicago, a city of three million.

Jenny Soames, 15, was found in the dust, her skin flayed from her slender body and folded neatly on the ground next to her. Steve Tanaka, 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.

A few days later, they hit a small town in Spain. Then Melbourne. Hysteria swept the world.

Soon after, you learned the truth, and it tore the lid off your skull.

just to recap:

- somebody killed several million people by pulling their organs out through various orifices
- definitely not terrorists (well, probably not)

- authorities unable to help (big surprise!)
- nations on brink of war
- religious hysteria, freakouts
- a good time to invest in companies that manufacture ammunition

1.2. YOU FUCKING FREAK

1.2. Your Story

The Vicar showed you to use weapons, taught you to wield black magic, tained 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's going on, because the Vicar 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 Farmville 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.

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.

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

Fight to the death, if necessary.

~~Now they walk among us~~



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 Vicar visits you, the news is never good. She tells you that there is something amiss, 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.

INSPIRATION

Not sure where to begin? Looking for some inspiration? Watch these music videos.

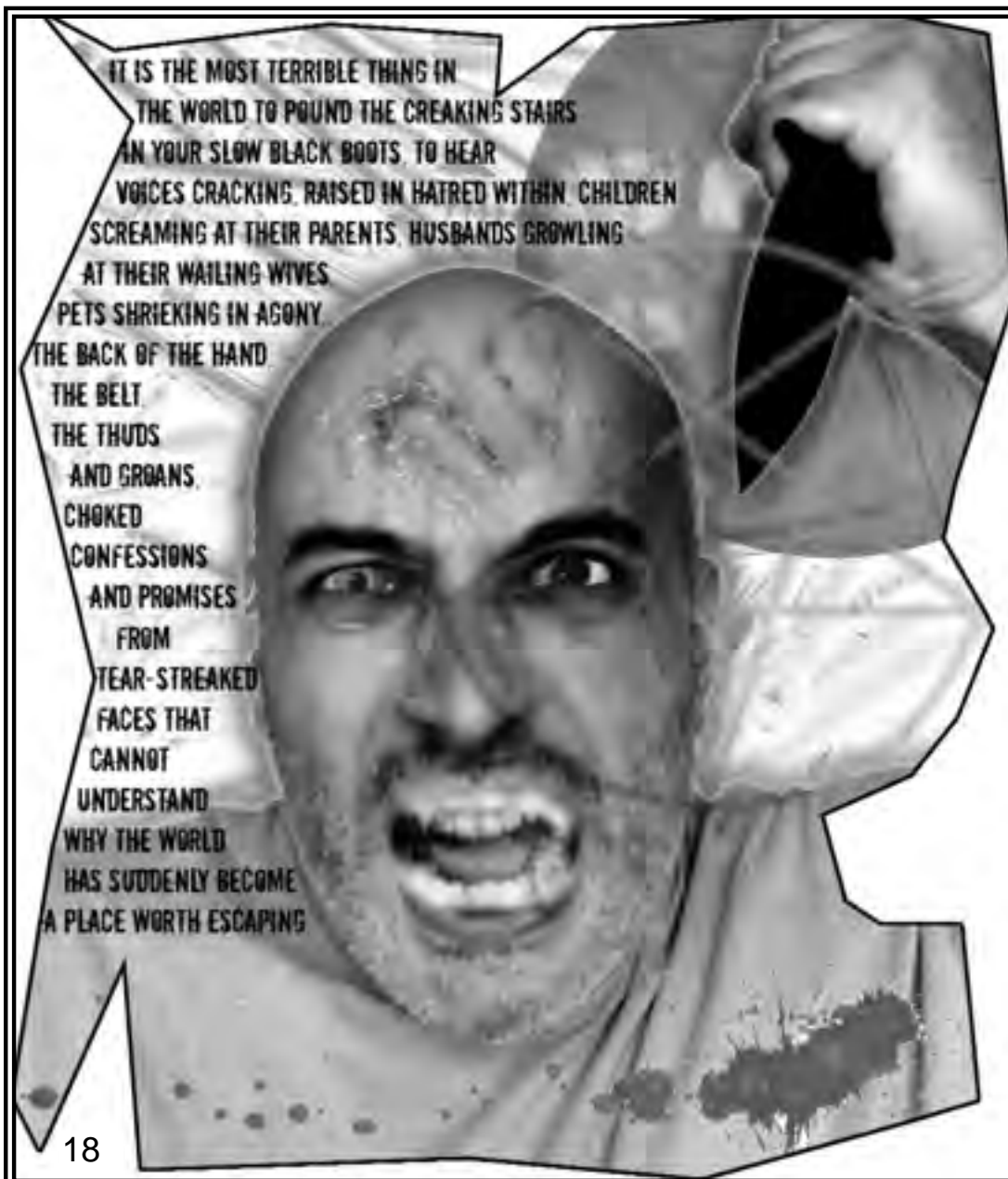
Alas, Lord is Upon Me, by Behemoth

Homage for Satan, by Deicide

Bleed, by Meshuggah

Come to Daddy, by Aphex Twin

Fertile Green, by High on Fire



THE TONE ARGUMENT

During character creation, talk to the other players about the tone of this game. Would you prefer an R rating, or an NC-17?

Will your campaign be grim, unpleasant, morbid, or relentlessly violent?

Discuss and decide.

1.2.1. THE BLACK LINE

The day that you became a Disciple, you crossed the Black Line. You severed all ties with relatives and co-workers. 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 Vicar 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.

You possess attributes 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.

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.

Before character creation begins, make sure that these five questions are answered:

1. Will people call you for help, and recognize you on the street, or are you unsung heroes?
2. Do most people believe in demons? Has there been enough evidence of their activities that the average person feels threatened by them?
3. 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.
4. 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.

SEPSIS

A demon is a deviation from the natural order, and it heralds some awful consequence. As a result, the mere presence of a demon causes weird things to happen, even long after the demon has gone.

This phenomenon is known as Sepsis.

During your investigation, you will come face to face with Sepsis. Be ready for anything.

1.3. US & 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 Vicars. 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 die.

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. VICARS

Each Cabal is led by a Vicar, a shadowy figure who recruits and trains Disciples, then sets them up and leaves them to do the dirty work. Most Disciples have a personal theory about what Vicars are, and the prevailing word on the street is that they're 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.

this game will give you brain damage



1.3.3. NPCs

You crossed the Black Line. You're not an ordinary person anymore. You cut off all ties to family, friends, people who know your heart. They're dead to you now.

But you're not alone. There are people out there, and you're going to interact with them, and you're going to save them (or maybe kill them).

[[WHEN YOU THINK ABOUT IT, IT'S NOT UNLIKE THE PROCESS USED TO TRANSFORM PEOPLE INTO WAR CRIMINALS. YOU LOSE YOUR NAME, YOUR SUPPORT STRUCTURE, YOUR AUTONOMY, AND ANY CHANCE YOU EVER HAD AT A NORMAL, HAPPY FUTURE. THIS IS HOW DEATH SQUADS ARE CREATED! FUCK! THANKS, NEIL!]]

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.

CIVILIANS

These are people that you met after you became a Disciple. They're losers, trash, failures. They 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.

Each time you start a new adventure, you create a new Civilian. This person represents your chance at a little Redemption. Rescue the Civilian, get some of your soul back. Simple as that.

Fail, and a part of your heart rots away.

Skills

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

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.

The Hard Cold Loner Walks a Tough and Lonely Road

This is the worst character for a game like Scorn.

It's easy when your character has no heart. You don't have to engage, interact, confront, or do any kind of work. Your character is bulletproof and emotionless, a badass who doesn't let the pain inside.

Doesn't work! Breaks the game! Tedious and boring!

It's like watching a movie about a character who doesn't actually want anything. No goals, no risks, no stakes, no chance of success or failure, just empty actions and boring scenes.

To drag the ugliness forward, you need to set the hook first. Make sure your character WANTS something, needs someone to do something specific (get away, get to safety, survive, atone, turn over a new leaf, pay with his blood, suffer for her sins, face judgment, die in agony, burn a bible on an altar strewn with intestines, whatever).

When your character has a Civilian, and needs something from that character, and has a relationship with other NPCs, and feels doubt or trust, then the game is headed in the right direction, and pain will surely follow.

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 four kinds of demon: Stalkers, Hunters, Defilers, and Infectors. 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 Sway 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.

1.4.4. Infectors

Infectors are extremely powerful demons that torment humans with strange and horrific diseases. Drawn to places of filth and squalor, Infectors spread plagues that can wipe out entire cities in a matter of days.

Infectors can assume human form at will, and are smart enough to pass for human without difficulty. Should a Cabal begin to interfere with the work of an Infector, it will immediately focus on bringing them down.

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 Vicar, 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 is a lot more fun when every one participates in the creation of the world and setting.

JOURNAL: MEATBLEACH

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.

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.

"That's him." Slash lurches into the street. I flick the smoke out the window and fling open the door. We bust out and sprint down the alley.

I follow Slashfic as he hooks a hard right onto Hillsborough and pounds down the sidewalk, scattering the college girls like startled pigeons.

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.

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.

He rams 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. No face shots, he goes for the throat and solar plexus. I close my eyes and cast Meatbleach. When I open my eyes, there's long hard spines of white bone growing out of every part of my chalk-white body.

I grab Gardner and drive a seven-inch spike into his bicep. 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.

The demon pops up, spins Gardner's body around and takes a swing at Slashfic. Sepsis effects: faces on the wall scream at me. This place is contaminated.

I tackle the demon 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 hard; my shoulder is dislocated.

Breaking glass as someone comes in the front of the store. Through the windows.

The first bullet takes Gardner in the shoulder, and the second one hits me right in the chest.

Cops.

Like old men, toothless, jaws slack with folds of skin,
who point withered fingers at the sky, interpreting the way
that clouds curl in upon themselves and stretch across
the sky like corpses, and then tell you that it will rain tomorrow;
like the frail grandmothers with their endless cups of tea
and the prophecy of the muddy leaves crowded in the wet porcelain,
you have a sense of things that will be
although they are not yet.

You can tell people from their buildings, pick apart
the righteous and the wicked, divine the nature
of copulation beneath a roof from its slope
and the pollen-dusted shingles.
From the caudition of a bent window screen,
the condition of the children; from the color of the paint,
you discern the color of the bruises on a wife's thighs.

CHAPTER 2 - MECHANICS

THIS GAME'S RULES WILL NOT FIX THE MOTHERFUCKERS AT YOUR TABLE

If you game with people that want to break rules, run from conflict, turtle up and hide inside a shell, or make life difficult for other players, this game's text isn't going to cure the problem. DTM.F.A.

THIS IS NOT A GAME FOR EVERYONE

Scorn is for experienced DMs (Directors of Mayhem, whatever) who are comfortable with improvisation and player narration. It is a game designed for players who are comfortable contributing to world building, narrating events, and sacrificing their characters when needed.

This is a game about selfish people doing ugly things: abuse, domination, and torment. The concept is structured around blasphemy and profanity.

These elements are touted as 'features.'

FOCUS ON COLLABORATIVE ANIMOSITY

This isn't just an adversarial game where the DM and players are enemies. It's not merely a cooperative game where the DM and players give each other tokens representing nice things. This is a game about blood and pain, and it requires DMs and players to work together to create tension and conflict.

Collaborative animosity produces the necessary violence.

Work together to create and destroy. Instructions follow.

2.1. Overview

You'll need some 12-sided dice to play this game. The most a player can roll is 18.

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

DMs don't roll dice -- they just provide target difficulty numbers for you, based on the situation that you're in.

2.1.1. Target Difficulty

Whether you're trying to move a heavy object, punch someone's lights out, or crash a dumptruck into a demon, roll a number of d12s against the target difficulty that your DM provides. Meet it or beat it, and your attempt is a success.

Target difficulty goes from 2 (easy) to 7 (average) to 12 (extremely difficult). If the task is impossible, the target difficulty can range as high as 15.

Example 1: You're trying to open a locked door, and your Violence score is 3, you roll 3 dice. The DM says that the lock is rusty, so the difficulty is 5 (below average). You roll a 9, 5, and 4. You say, "I rolled a 9." That means that you were successful, and you bashed down the door.

Example 2: You're trying to intimidate someone into giving you some information. Your Traction score is 4, so you roll 4 dice. The DM tells you that this guy won't scare easy, so the difficulty is 8. You roll 10, 8, 7, and 3. You say, "I rolled a 10." The DM says that the guy's intimidated.

2.1.2. Damage

Damage is the difference between the numbers in the event of a hit. If you're trying to shoot someone, and the DM says the difficulty is a 7, and you rolled a 10, then you inflict 3 points of damage.

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.

More on all of this in Chapter 5: Conflict (page 124).

2.1.3. Multiples

This is the fun 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.

$$6, 6, 6 = 3 + 6 = 9$$

Now, if you also rolled an 11, you would want to ignore those 6s.

$$11, 6, 6, 6 = 11$$

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 (because $4+12=16$).

2.1.4. Narration

If you succeed at something, the player on your right narrates what happened.

If you fail, the player on your left narrates what happened.

2.1.5. Cabal Points

Anytime another player describes something in a vivid, exciting, or memorable manner, or does something truly great that serves to further the cause of the Cabal, you may assign Cabal points.

This should be done after the player describes what she's doing, but before the dice have been rolled.

Each time you give the player a Cabal point, she can reroll 1s. If, after she rerolls all her 1s, she still has a 1 on the table, then that's just how it is. She can't reroll anymore after that.

If you give a player 2 Cabal points, she can reroll 1s and 2s. If you give a player 6 Cabal points, she can reroll 1s, 2s, 3s, all the way up to 6s. Meaning if she rolls 12, 9, 5, 4, 2, she can reroll the 5, 4, and 2.

You have 6 points, and they have to last you the whole case, so only use them when appropriate. Multiple players can contribute cumulative Cabal points to a single roll, with a maximum of 6 points.

Alternately, you can use Cabal points as extra dice: 2 points equals 2 dice. If three players give a fourth player one point each, that's 3 extra dice.

The 6-point max still applies, and players can never roll more than 18 dice at one time.

2.2. THE DICE POOL

The number of dice that you roll -- your dice pool -- is equal to your relevant Attribute, plus your relevant skill, plus any applicable spell you happen to be casting.

Pick the skill that's applicable, based on what you're doing. If you don't have a relevant skill for this particular action, skip that part.

You can roll a maximum of 18 dice at any time.

Example: You're going to hypnotize someone. The Attribute in question is Traction (more on that later). Your Traction score is 4.

Your Charm skill is 3. So you add that to your dice pool. Now we're up to 7.

You're casting a spell, and the spell description says that you add 2 dice to the pool.

Attribute (Traction): 4
Skill (Charm): 3
Magic: 2

Total: $4+3+2=9$

The DM says that this is going to be very difficult, because the person in question is trying to strangle you with a dead hooker's pantyhose. Target difficulty is 10.

You roll your 9 dice and come up with 8, 8, 7, 6, 5, 5, 5, 4, 3.

Two eights equals 10 ($2+8=10$). So you successfully mesmerize your attacker.

2.3. Descriptions

Anytime you're rolling dice, and your description is vivid, gruesome, detailed, and/or surprising, you get an extra die. This is in addition to any Cabal points that other players give you.

Don't ask for the extra die. Don't look at the DM with those little puppy dog eyes. Just take the die and add it to your pool, because you went to the trouble of defining the game world, as opposed to merely saying, "I shoot it."

By putting effort into your descriptions of any action, you're creating movement, sound, scent, taste, texture, and color. This contributes to the intensity of the game.

Once per game session, you can tell another player that a description was particularly vivid, and that means the player gets to roll two extra dice, not one. This is something only players can do, not the DM.

ADDING IT UP

start your dice pool with a number of dice equal to one of your attributes:
Violence
Traction
Instinct

[For more info about attributes, check out section 3.2.]

Then add the number from one of your skills (like Crime, Medicine, or Repair).

For more on skills, check out section 3.6.

Finally, if there are any dice to add because of a spell you're casting (see section 4.3), add that as well. And don't forget to add a die for vivid descriptions, as detailed above.



The Black Line

The day you were made a Disciple, you crossed the Black Line and became something other than a human being. You're enchanted, but not in a magical and fun way. You're sick. There's a miasma about you, the odor of rotting meat on a sweaty day when the garbage crew is late for the pickup. Animals growl and hiss when you near. When you enter the Sepsis, it always gets worse, and when you get mixed up in a case, it always goes from the balance atop a blade's edge straight into flesh dragged, writhing, through broken glass and razor wire.

2.3. CONTEXT

In the next chapter, we'll be discussing character creation. But before we do, there are a few things you need to start thinking about. Answer the following questions on the back of your character sheet. You'll want to do this with the other players and with your DM.

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 Vicar 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? To answer this question completely, you'll need to pick a character class (see chapter 3).

ONCE, YOU WERE HAPPY.
YOU HAD A GOOD LIFE.
THAT LIFE IS OVER NOW.
YOU ARE A REMNANT.
YOU ARE IN THE DISCARD PILE.
YOU WILL BE CRUSHED BY OPPROBRIUM.
YOUR BONES WILL BE GNAWED IN THE DESERT.
NO ONE WILL REMEMBER YOUR NAME.

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? An abandoned warehouse, a burned-out tenement, a mansion?

2.3.4. CIVILIANS

Who do you know in this city? Could be someone high up the food chain, like a police chief, or a powerful politician. Or it could be a heroin addict who lives in a culvert.

By creating a preliminary list, you've simplified the process of creating your network of Civilians (described in section 3.9).

Yeah, it really sucks when you have one of those games where you have no idea what all these sociopathic transients are doing together. You try to make it work, but it doesn't always congeal.

The trick is, you sit down and you hammer out the reason why you're all together, because trying to insert square pegs into round holes has its charms, but it's nothing compared to taking a tight-knit group of people and ripping them apart (literally, if that's what it takes). Talk to the other players and get this squared away.

2.3.5. VICAR

What's your Vicar like? The gaming group is responsible for creating this character. Who runs your team? Male or female? What's this person look like? How does this person talk/ behave? The DM, who'll be playing this role, will also have some input.

The Vicar 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 the natural leader, or the silent sociopath, or the soft-spoken healer?

Without telling the other players, answer the question, "Who is your character, *really*?"

It'll come up later.

2.4. WORKING TOGETHER

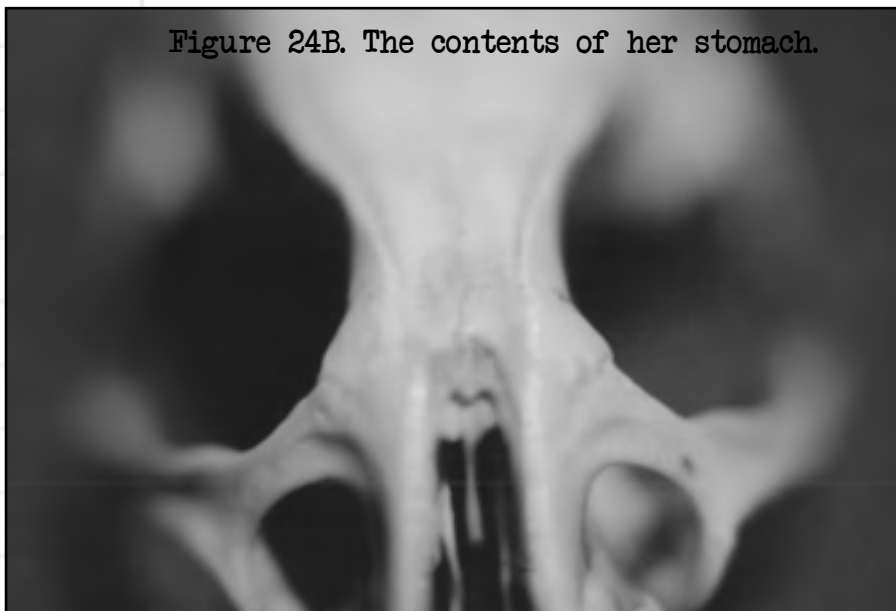
As a team, you'll have to work together to design the world that you live in. It's obviously easy to set a campaign in your own neck of the woods, unless that's objectionable for some reason.

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?

Figure 24B. The contents of her stomach.



The idea is, you don't just open your beak like a baby bird and wait for the DM to regurgitate a setting. You roll up your god damn sleeves and you make it happen.

JOURNAL: BILE

"We got a case," Morlock rumbles. 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 grey. Medieval armor, metal wings.

Witness accounts. You can't believe any of it. 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 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. That gives Council an idea.

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.

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 Eye Void and gets the madam to show us her office. I check out the laptop, try to figure out what we got going on. Looks like the madam sent an email to someone about one of her girls going missing. Helen Ramirez.

Helen 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. But 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: Helen.jpg. Photo: two people getting into a limo. Grainy, black-and-white. Even with the poor image quality, you can see it: long legs, high cheekbones. A stunner with a 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.

Council casts *Fleshlust*. She follows the demon's trail, visible only to her. She leans out the window "I got it, I got the trail," she says.

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 Helen 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. "But 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. 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."

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.

These guys are just thugs. It's unlikely that we can beat any information out of them. But I'm going to enjoy trying.

CHAPTER 3 - CHARACTERS

3.1. In this Chapter

To create a Disciple, you will need to fill out a character sheet, which you can find on the last page of this book.

This is a quick overview of the content that we'll cover in Chapter 3.

Name (page 36)

Your Disciple has a name. Not the name that he or she was born with, but a handle, a code name. Nobody wants to know your real name. If there's a chance they're going to get splattered with your brains later in the day, your fellow Disciples would rather just use your one-word nickname and forget you as soon as the dirt hits your coffin.

Attributes (page 35)

These three scores -- Violence, Traction, and Instinct -- define your character. Attributes range from 1 (weak) to 6 (supernatural). Average for a human is 2 or 3.

Classes (page 38)

Disciples come in 5 flavors: Murderist, Priest, Nail-Martyr, War Ghoul, and Hammerwitch.

Discipline (page 46)

These further define your character. Choose from 3 Disciplines: Brutality, Investigation, and Demonology.

Skills (page 48)

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

Drive (page 52)

Drive is your character's primary motivation in this particular job. You create a new one each time.

Civilians (page 52)

Civilians are at the core of each session of Scorn. These people don't know who you used to be -- they just know you as an investigator of the supernatural. They may try to kill you, or they may need your help; they may help you with your investigation, or they may well be at the heart of it.

Decay (page 55)

You begin each session of Scorn with 6 points of Decay. You can use Decay to change your circumstances for the better. When you reach 12 points, you turn into a demon and your fellow Disciples put a gun in your mouth.

Blood (page 125)

This tells you how many pints of blood you've got left. You start at 12. When you hit 0, you die. The lower your Blood score, the weaker you get.

Cabal (page 27)

You get six Cabal points in each gaming session. You can use these to reward other players for doing things that further the cause of your Cabal.

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).

Violence: Harm people, break things.

Traction: Make people listen to you and obey.

Instinct: Figure out what the fuck is going on.

Distribute 9 points between these three scores. Each score should be between 1 and 6. A score of 2 or 3 is average. 1 is very low, and 6 is superhuman -- you can rip a bank vault off the hinges or talk a cop into giving you that heroin out of the evidence locker and then spotting you twenty bucks to get you through the weekend.

3.2.1. Examples

Let's create a character named Sterile. She used to be a medical examiner, and then she worked as a private investigator for a while. She's got people skills: she knows when people are lying to her, and she can intimidate people into doing what she wants them to.

We'll give her a 2 for Violence, a 4 for Traction, and a 3 for Instinct.

The second Disciple is Hacksaw. She used to work as a collector for a loan shark in Dallas. She'll be the team's bone breaker. So we'll give her a Violence score of 6, an Instinct of 2, and a point of Traction. Not the kind of person who can talk her way past the bouncer, but she could definitely curb-stomp him if necessary.

3.2.1. Using Attributes

Any time your character does something interesting, something where there's a risk of failure and it actually matters, you roll the dice.

Example 1: There's a locked door. The DM knows there's nothing on the other side. You say you're going to kick it down. The DM describes this, and then describes the room.

Example 2: There's a locked door. The DM knows that there's a guy eating someone's hands on the other side. You say you're going to kick it down. The DM tells you the target difficulty.

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.

VIOLENCE

There is no soft action in this game. All action is violent. Don't roll Violence to see if someone is afraid of you. Roll Violence if you're going to hurt someone or break something.

- kick door off hinges
- ram your car into stroller
- stab, bludgeon, strangle person
- smash computer into bits
- burn house down
- splash acid on priceless painting
- thrust crowbar into demon

TRACTION

If you have any traction with this guy, he might give up some intel.

Traction is pull, influence, the ability to sway or intimidate or persuade.

- Scare person into backing down
- Coerce someone into helping
- Threaten, cajole, charm
- Convince someone that you're actually a cop or a fed or a nurse

INSTINCT

A combination of gut feeling, street smarts, and education. This is how you figure things out, notice details, and put pieces together.

- Access files on computer
- Drive the forklift
- Pick the lock on a safe
- Set up surveillance
- Perform appendectomy
- Translate eldritch tome

3.3. NAMES

Your character's name should be one word, easy to remember, and tied to that character's identity in some way -- a surname, a nickname based on appearance or backstory, a reference to something that happened in the past, whatever.

Some players are happy to make up their own handles. Others prefer to pick from lists, or to use those lists as inspiration. Here's a list, if you're interested:

Skag	Spleen
Vile	Laugier
Cleaver	Hacksaw
Bustillo	Marshall
Toxin	Entropy
Sledge	Vegas
Casket	Cat
Salvo	Hush
Hazmat	Chrome
Betty	Slashfic
Mustang	Zombie
Maury	Gens
Civet	Venge
Fluke	Morlock
Dirge	Balaguero
Oni	Jazz
Plaza	Aria
Troyka	Dahan
Gorgon	Larva
Pall	Rocher
Wetwork	Nakata

3.3.1. USING NAMES

SOME PLAYERS PREFER TO CALL EACH OTHER BY NAME DURING PLAY: "DAVE, MY GUY'S GOING TO ASK YOUR GUY FOR HELP."

OTHER PLAYERS PREFER TO SPEAK IN THE FIRST PERSON: "GORGON, HELP ME UNFUCK THIS SITUATION BEFORE IT GETS ANY WORSE."

THE NAMES YOU CHOOSE WILL CONTRIBUTE TO THE FLAVOR OF YOUR CAMPAIGN. IF YOU GO ALL-SUR-NAMES, YOU MAY FIND YOURSELF ACTING LIKE OPS. GO WITH GRIM OR HORROR-ESQUE HANDLES (WETWORK, RAZORWIRE, AND (OR)NER), AND YOU MAY NOTICE A TENDENCY TOWARDS EVEN MORE BLOODSHED IN YOUR HOICES.

COMICAL NAMES TEND TO PRODUCE FLUFFY, CUTE, AND MEANINGLESS GAMEPLAY EXPERIENCES.



3.4. Vicars

In addition to a name, your Vicar needs the following:

1. A physical description
2. A voice/speech-pattern
3. A personality
4. A means of presenting information

This information is going to help your DM role-play the Vicar. You, as a group of players, can split these four tasks up, or you can address them, one at a time, as a group. The DM may or may not choose to be involved (some DMs like to wing it).

Here are three example Vicars:

INTERACTING WITH VICARS

You won't do it all that much.

Typically, the Vicar presents you with your mission: investigate a series of ritual murders, check out rumors of strange sightings in a burned-out church, talk to some homeless guy who says he saw a werewolf eating human hearts behind a strip club.

After that, the Vicar won't be around much. He or she will be training new Disciples (your replacements) or delivering marching orders to other Cabals.

Colonel Pierce

Pierce is a muscular black man in his late fifties. Despite the gray hair, he is strong and lean, and gives the impression that he can handle himself in combat. He's stern, focused, and disciplined. His military uniform is creased and spotless, and the regulation sidearm at his hip is well-oiled and ready for combat. Pierce speaks in clipped, precise tones, and he never appears to be surprised by anything. When he presents news to the Cabal, he does so in the form of a military briefing: documents folded carefully into long envelopes or folders, enlarged monochrome photographs with targets circled in red ink, slideshows, and annotated maps spread out across tables.

Ms. Thorne

A serious-looking businesswoman in her late thirties, Thorne usually wears a navy blue power suit and carries a stack of meticulously-labeled folders. Her blonde hair is pulled back in a bun, held in place with a needle-sharp pencil, and her hard and unblinking eyes stare out at the world from behind horn-rimmed glasses. Thorne does not smile. Thorne does not empathize. Thorne does not tolerate interruption. When she brings information or missions to the Cabal, she does so in the form of a slideshow presentation, complete with bullet points and transitions. She's terse, formal, and mirthless.

Augustus N. Thirwell

A ruddy-faced man in his forties, Thirwell wears a rumpled trenchcoat, a wrinkled shirt, slacks with frayed cuffs, and a necktie that he's always using to wipe up spills or clean his thick glasses. His face is fleshy and splotchy, and a network of veins around his nose reflect what appears to be a life-long love affair with the bottle. In fact, he's never far from an alcoholic beverage, whether it's a hip flask or a bottle in a brown paper bag. Thirwell is soft-spoken, hesitant, and unrelentingly bleak in his outlook. His fatalism is matched by the news that he brings in the form of newspaper clippings and police reports, which he usually hands to a member of the Cabal before shuffling back out of headquarters.

3.5. Classes

There are 5 classes: Hammerwitch, Murderist, Nail-Martyr, Priest, and War Ghoul.

Pick one. Details on the next few pages.

The **Hammerwitch** is an abomination, an echo of the witch trials of centuries past.

A **Murderist** is born from an unholy union between a defiler demon and a skull.

A **Priest** is a soul-seller who didn't quite get her money's worth.

The **War Ghoul** survived a demon attack and lived to tell about it.

The **Nail-Martyr** spent too much time in the Sepsis, and carries it with him.

Each of the five character classes includes an origin description, along with a stunt that's unique to your character class.

When you use your character's stunts, you accrue points of Decay, which will eventually kill your Disciple. The only way to compensate for this is to rescue the innocent. (Stunts are explained in detail on page 56).

Later, you'll pick out a discipline for your character -- this basically means that you're going to focus on combat, demonology, or investigation. Your choice of disciplines will give you access to powers, which you can use whenever you want (without worrying about Decay).

For now, read over the descriptions of the five character classes, and pick one. Then write down the character's stunt on your character sheet.

WHEN YOU BEGIN THE GAME
DON'T TELL THE OTHER PLAYERS
ABOUT YOUR CHARACTER
YOU CAN REVEAL YOUR CODE NAME
-- BUT NEVER EVER YOUR FIRST NAME --
AND YOU CAN DESCRIBE
WHAT YOUR CHARACTER LOOKS LIKE
BUT THAT IS ALL
THEY WILL LEARN THE REST OVER TIME
THROUGH YOUR WORDS AND DEEDS

Look at that origin description -- the story of your Disciple's life -- and fill in the blanks. Take that open-ended description and plug in some details. Answer the questions. Keep it terse and specific: don't get long-winded, don't be vague. Don't dwell on minutiae. Write a short, punchy origin story that centers on a couple of key details -- who she killed, what you smoked, where the graves are, who pulled the trigger, what the judge said, how the cult found out about you, where you stashed the glowing mason jar with the screaming wad of tissue inside.

Details.

THIS IS
WHAT
A CABAL
LOOKS
LIKE



Hammer Witch

"By the eyes of Set, such pain, such liberation, peeling the duplicity away like so much plastic, like a cheap suit, like popping out the undertaker's sutures, one by one. You think I'm insane, but there's nothing like it."

It was always secondary, an ancillary concern compared to your all-encompassing desire for the truth, the glistening meat beneath the veil of reality. School, work, sex, all minor considerations, all subsumed by your lust to divine the nature of our universe. You got your wish.

Beth, a fresh-faced Zealot, got in over her head while working a case, and in a fight with a couple of angels, she unleashed Epinoia (see *Spite: The Second Book of Pandemonium*, page 124). Epinoia is a powerful spell designed for use against monstrous angels that lay waste to entire civilizations. Against a pair of low-level angels, the spell was pure overkill.

It summoned the spirit of the city (Salem, Massachusetts) and deployed it against the angels in the form of a glowing sphere that obliterated both angels, then -- still hungry for targets -- the spell turned on Beth and devoured her in a surge of crimson light. Devoid of fresh quarry, the spell turned in on itself, imploding and then surging forth in all directions.

You were in Salem that day. The details are hazy. The situation involved a copy of the *Malleus Maleficarum*, a quart of Kentucky Senator bourbon, and a handful of coca leaf. You looked up. Something surged towards you a tsunami of grinning energy. You got hit.

The shimmering core of the spell, charged with the history of Salem, slammed into you like a wrecking ball. You felt the agonies of those accused of witchcraft in centuries past -- your shoulders wrenched by the rack, your ribs crushed by stones, your soles blistering as the flames licked your feet, your throat constricted by the bristled noose. When you regained consciousness, you were different. You had broken through, transcended this grim world of pavement and urine and spreadsheets.

But it was not without cost: your body is deformed in some way: you're not whole, or you're surrounded by lampreys that whisper pillow talk in Italian, or tattoos slide over your skin, showing scenes from the life of the person you're talking to. Explain, define: how are you monstrous?

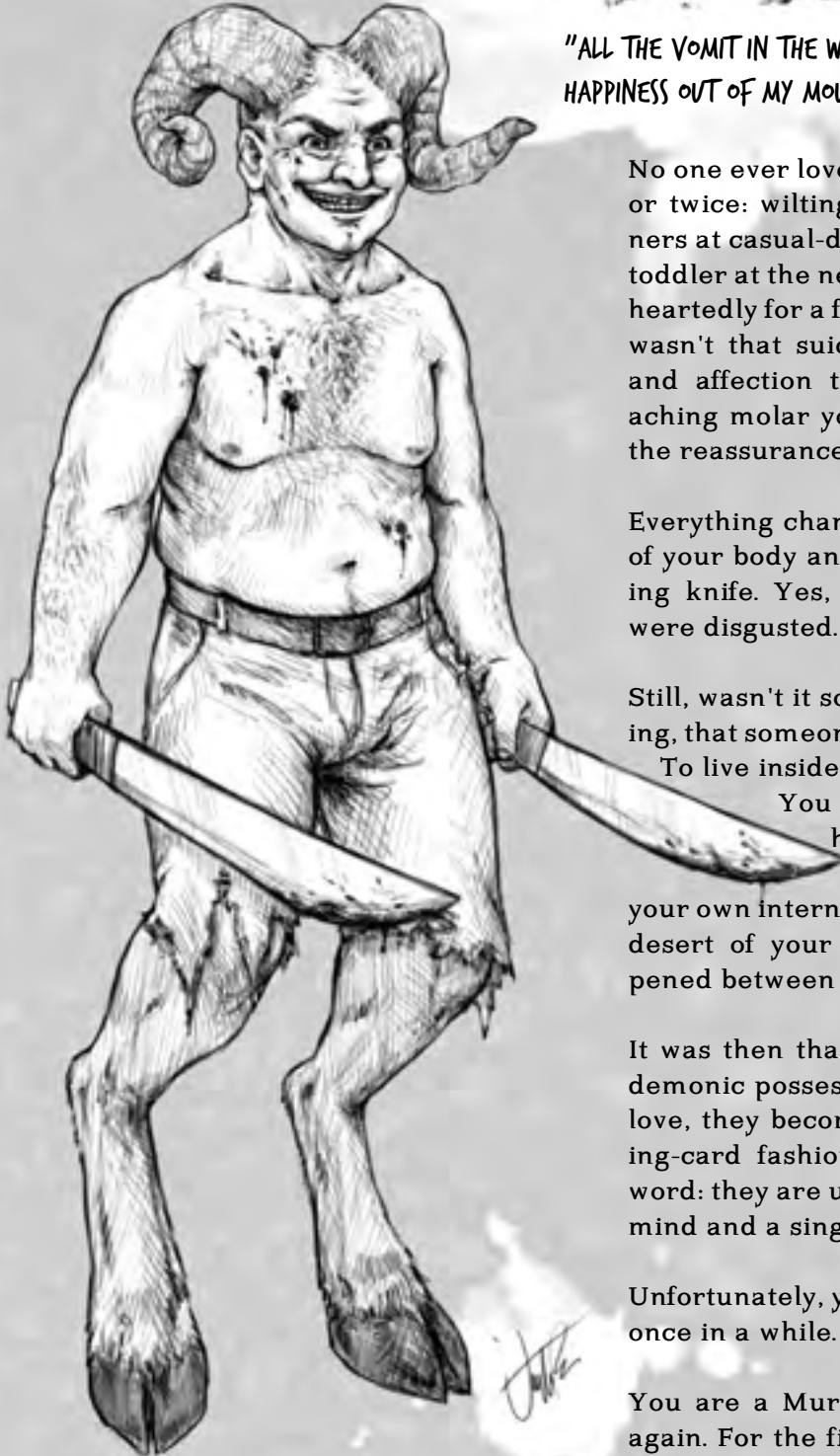
You are a Hammerwitch, an entity like no other, a purveyor of weird joys and unbidden truths, and you alone see the world as it is.

STUNT: Suture Self

The player can restore any other player's Decay score to 6, but those points are then given to the Hammerwitch. For example, if the other player's Decay is at 9, the Hammerwitch can lower the score to 6, but then must sustain 3 points of Decay. The standard penalties for Decay apply. In addition, by doing so, the player can add one spell to her character sheet. She can even choose a spell outside her discipline. This one-time-only spell is held in reserve until used, and it doesn't count towards her 6-spells-per case limit.

Murderist

"ALL THE VOMIT IN THE WORLD AND I STILL CAN'T GET THE TASTE OF HAPPINESS OUT OF MY MOUTH. THEN AGAIN, I'M NOT FINISHED YET."



No one ever loved you. Not really. It was close, once or twice: wilting flowers in a vase, mediocre dinners at casual-dining restaurants with a screaming toddler at the next table, a bedframe creaking half-heartedly for a few minutes. But it wasn't passion. It wasn't that suicidal rush of mingled lust, terror, and affection that you'd always craved, like an aching molar you probe with your tongue just for the reassurance.

Everything changed when the demon took control of your body and made you cut people with a paring knife. Yes, you were horrified, and yes, you were disgusted.

Still, wasn't it something, to be so special, so alluring, that someone actually wanted to be inside you?

To live inside you, as though you were a home?

You heard the demon's thoughts, and it heard yours. Its need for flesh, pain, and degradation mingled with your own internal void, the sprawling sun-bleached desert of your neglected heart. Something happened between the two of you. You fell in love.

It was then that you learned the strange truth of demonic possession: if a demon and its host fall in love, they become one. Not in some syrupy greeting-card fashion, but in the truest sense of the word: they are united in a single body, with a single mind and a single soul.

Unfortunately, you have to do something bad every once in a while. What is it?

You are a Murderist. You were alone, but never again. For the first time in your life, you are complete, an entity free of doubt or hesitation, a sharp-toothed lover of mayhem, quick to laugh, quick to disembowel. You are loved.

STUNT - BLOODBATH

After taking 2 points of Decay, player describes a brutal, merciless maneuver. The player gets to roll two extra dice. If the player's roll beats the target difficulty, damage is inflicted to the target. If the player roll is under the target difficulty, then the damage is still taken by the Disciple's target. So, if the Disciple rolls a 10, and the target difficulty is 4, then the demon takes 6 points of damage. If the Disciple rolls a 4, and the difficulty is 10, then the demon still takes 6 points.

Nail-Martyr

"I picture myself, ripping at my burning shirt, the buttons melting into my skin, bones shaken by a fast humming that fills the sky as a dark shadow falls over me and I look up to see the riveted white belly of a passenger aircraft passing just overhead, nose pointed at the ground, wings burning like an angel who asked too many questions. It makes me happy."



It was an ordinary life. Bills, television, dishes in the sink. But you were in the wrong place at the wrong time, caught in the crossfire.

A Disciple cast an exorcism spell at a demon, but missed. You, across the street, too stunned to move, watched that rippling black energy as it coiled towards you. And in the moment just before it hit, you saw huge beads of yellow sweat seep from the brick wall to your left, tiny eyes blinking on each droplet.

Though you didn't realize it at the time, you were in the Sepsis (page 19), the supernatural bleed-through that ensues when demons walk among us. The strange confluence of events produced a change in your body, transforming you into a Disciple fueled by pain.

But that's not all. Strange things happen when you're injured: what, exactly? What happens to your body, or the air around you, or the sky, when you are made to bleed?

You are a Nail-Martyr, a masochistic killer who delights in exposing the beauty within: liver, kidneys, marrow. If you can't see someone else's, you're comfortable exploring the inner workings of your own body. First into the line of fire, you take great joy in decorating yourself with the ammunition of the enemy.

STUNT: SWEET AGONY

Anytime you take 3 or more points of damage in a single roll of the dice, you get an extra Cabal point. However, you still have the 6-point limit, so you can only use this stunt when you have 5 or less Cabal points.

"Thus the duplicity of flesh is stripped away until no element remains but the rawest truth, nude muscle of purest animosity, still life with glistening sexless Gemini. So give me that ammunition, whore. Or I burn this city down."

PRIEST

43



As it turns out, selling your soul wasn't such a hot idea. You wanted power, wealth, sex, and/or fame. What you got was a head full of ticks and a need to destroy.

Still, that destruction isn't some manifestation of anger, or a compulsion towards entropy or anarchy. Quite the opposite, in fact.

You're a Priest, a soulless warrior with a sharp and crystalline understanding of the world. You understand why termites build, why tumor cells metastasize, why knives nestle snugly in kitchen drawers. There's a comfort in assembly and structure, and your job is to ensure that everything goes as planned.

What was the name of the archdemon you negotiated with? When it showed you the true nature of Heaven, what did you see? What did you realize? What are you trying to build?

STUNT - SENTIENT CANCER

WHEN YOU'RE NOT SURE WHAT TO DO NEXT, AND YOUR CABAL HAS REACHED A DEAD END, CONSIDER VISITING THE ONCOLOGY WARD AND COMMUNICATING WITH SENTIENT CANCER. YOU HAVE THE ABILITY TO SPEAK DIRECTLY TO MALIGNANT CELLS, WHICH WILL THEN RESPOND TO YOU IN A CRYPTIC AND ORACULAR MANNER. THE DM WILL PROVIDE YOU WITH THE INFORMATION YOU NEED.

NO ONE ELSE CAN HEAR THE VOICE OF CANCER.

YOU CAN ONLY USE THIS STUNT ONCE PER CASE, UNLESS YOU CURE THE CANCER PATIENT AND TAKE THE SLITHERING TUMORS WITH YOU, (WHICH WILL CAUSE YOUR DECAY TO INCREASE BY 3. IF YOU TAKE THIS APPROACH, YOU CAN ASK THE CANCEROUS CELLS A SECOND QUESTION LATER ON, AT WHICH POINT THEY WILL DISINTEGRATE IN YOUR PALM. (NO ADDITIONAL DECAY FOR THAT.)

WAR GHOUL



“I HAVE BOUNDING OVERWATCH. HOSTILES, MOBILE, TWO UP, INTENDING NORTHEAST. YOU ARE CLEARED FOR INTERDICTION.”

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 Vicar 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. Now you are a War Ghoul.

Stunt: Tango Down

By performing an incredibly violent and dangerous maneuver, which causes you great injury, you are able to greatly improve your chances of success in some endeavor. Lose 5 points of Blood and halve the target difficulty (round down). Perform as often as you like.



3.6. Disciplines

Each Disciple must choose a discipline: Brutality, Demonology, or Investigation. This choice reflects your area of expertise: breaking bones, wielding magic, or digging up answers.

In addition to the powers you receive from your class, you'll also have access to special powers as a result of your Discipline. You can use this power anytime you like.

Furthermore, you'll get access to spells not available to other characters. Select 6 spells from the Magic section in chapter 4. Choose spells from your section -- if you've selected the discipline of Brutality, you can only select spells from that section (not Demonology).

3.6.1. Brutality

A Disciple who's chosen the discipline of Brutality is the first into battle and the last to leave the fray. She has mastered armed and unarmed combat, and is a force to be reckoned with on the battlefield.

Multiple Targets

During combat with ordinary humans, the Brutalist can attack up to 6 targets at a time, by adding 1 to the target difficulty (each) for attacking the most powerful of them. The damage is applied to each of them, in its entirety.

Example 1: There are four assassins, and you want to attack all four at once, then look at the target difficulty for attacking the most powerful of them, add 3 to that, and roll. If you're successful, the damage is applied to all 4 of them.

Example 2: There are a half-dozen cops shooting at you. The DM says that one of them is the most experienced: target difficulty for this one is 8. You decide to attack all six of them, so add 5 to the first guy's target difficulty, and you get 13. Then you roll to hit. You roll three 12s, which equals 15. This means that you inflict 2 points of damage -- so all six enemies take 2 points of damage apiece.

3.6.2. Demonology

Though all Disciples can wield magic, Demonologists have access to spells that inflict serious injury on demons. They can also wield strange and horrific magics that deform and distort their bodies, temporarily transforming them into demonic entities.

Eldritch Tome

The Demonologist has access to an eldritch tome, an accursed enchiridion with a blood-soaked history; previous owners of this spellbook were sadists of the highest order, or serial killers who made trophies of their victims' sweetbreads, or demon worshipers who got the wrong end of the bargain. (Note: this book will need a name, and at some point, the player will have to reveal the backstory.) By using this book, the player can make a unique roll when casting a spell on a demon -- instead of rolling the standard number of dice, the player rolls two dice, then adds the values together. No modifiers are permitted: the player only rolls two dice, period.

For example, if the player is fighting a demon, and chooses to cast Hemophage, instead of rolling the usual number of dice, she rolls 2 of them. She rolls a 10 and a 7, which means that the player rolled a 17. The DM said the target difficulty was 12, which means that the player hit for 5 points of damage.

3.6.2. Investigation

Some are rumpled gumshoes, some are high-tech covert operatives, and some are suit-and-tie chameleons who pose as federal agents or police detectives. The Investigator hacks the computers, questions the eyewitnesses, hotwires the car, and establishes cause of death at the crime scene.

Analysis

This is the most powerful weapon in the Investigator's arsenal.

The Investigator is carefully attuned to the behavior of her supernatural prey (including angels, demons, and otherworldly entities, but not halfbreeds). As a consequence, she can discover things about the creature that's being hunted, and these facts can help the team during the take-down.

Each time the Investigator finds a piece of evidence, she gets to make an Analysis check. This entails rolling a single die; a roll of **9 or higher** means that the Investigator has learned something about the demon in question. By taking a point of Decay, she can roll two dice instead of one -- but that's the maximum number of dice that can be rolled on an Analysis check; you can't take a bunch of Decay to roll a handful of dice for the Analysis check. You can't use any powers to roll extra dice, either.

If the roll is not successful, the player can't try again until the character has found another bit of evidence. This evidence must be demonic in nature -- a crime scene doesn't count as evidence unless a demon was present.

The next time you find evidence, the difficulty drops to 8 or higher. The third time, it's 7 or higher (and there it stays until the case is over).

Evidence can include (but is not limited to) the following: physical evidence (teeth, scales, claws, tentacles), recordings (audio or video), crime scenes, victims' injuries (alive or deceased).

If successful, the DM will narrate a single fact about the demon in question (its name, its patterns, its victims, et cetera). After that, the player describes some key piece of information that his character has learned, and as a result of this information, there will be combat bonuses when the Cabal finally comes up against the entity in question.

For example, while hunting a demon, which the Investigator has determined to be a Curhadac, the player might narrate the following: "When this one starts to mutter in Aramaic, which it sometimes does during combat, we can swarm it real fast, catch it off-guard." This is a random bit of information that only applies to the specific demon in question, and not all demons (or even all Curhadac demons). Meaning, this trick won't be useful against the next Curhadac they encounter.

The information narrated by the player can't be some ridiculously perfect vulnerability, either ("If we pour holy water on it, the demon will die!"). It has to be a weird factoid that the group can use to their advantage, but not something that gives them an obvious upper hand.

If the Investigator performs three successful Analysis checks, then later on in the adventure, when the Cabal engages the demon in combat, they will all receive an extra die while attacking the demon (for the duration of the takedown). This die applies to combat and spells, but not stunts.

In addition, for each Analysis check that the Investigator performs successfully, she will receive an extra die (referred to as the Analysis pool). This pool of dice can **only** be used by the Investigator, and can't be shared with other Investigators. It can only be used in combat (attacking or defending, not stunts or magic), and it can only be used against the demon in question.

A total of 12 dice can be stored in the Analysis pool in this fashion -- but again, they can only be used against the demon, and it's a one-time opportunity.

The player can use all 12 at once, or divide them up. But once they're used, they're gone (and, of course, they cease to exist when the demon has been killed).

For example, the Cabal is hunting a demon, but they don't know what kind. They find a mangled corpse and a puddle of some noxious green fluid. The Investigator makes two Analysis checks (one for the corpse, one for the fluid). She rolls a 10 on the first one. Just be safe, she takes a point of Decay so that she can roll two dice on the next one. She rolls an 11 and a 4. This means that the Investigator has gathered two bits of data. If she successfully picks up one more clue, everyone on the team will get an extra die when they attack the demon, later on. And now she has 2 dice in her Analysis pool.

The DM provides two facts: number one, they're facing a Curhadac demon, and number two, it is an artist that uses the human as both medium and canvas.

After that, the player narrates two facts ("Its carapace protects the soft meat of its neck, but this particular demon's carapace has a gap in it, which we can use to our advantage when we attack" -- "This Curhadac has poor eyesight, so try to flank it during the takedown"). These facts don't have any mechanical bonus yet -- but when the player makes one more successful Analysis check, the team will get an extra die when attacking the Curhadac.

3.7. Skills

Choose from the list, starting on the next page, and distribute 5 points as you see fit. You can choose 5 skills at 1 point each, or 1 skill for 5 points.

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.

List each skill on your character sheet, followed by the job title, and then the number. For example, *Crime (Bank Robber): 3* or *Journalism (Reporter): 2*.

For example, let's pick skills for Scalpel. Since she was a medical examiner for a while, we'll go ahead and use that as a skill. Let's assign 4 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 2 points there. So, her skills look like this:

Medicine (Medical Examiner): 4

Crime (Private Investigator): 2

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.

3.7.1. Using Skills

When there is a situation where you think that your character's skill could come in handy, the DM will tell you your target difficulty. Start by determining which attribute you want to bring in -- Violence, Instinct, or Traction. Respectively, are you trying to exert physical force, figure something out, or get someone to do something for you?

Add up your dice pool: the number of dice you get for your attribute, plus the number of dice you get from the skill you're going to be using. There might be other factors involved, but those two numbers, added together, are the core of your skill check.

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 DM that Scalpel is going to use her background as a medical examiner to check out the crime scene. Theoretically, in this case, she could opt to use Crime as well, but her Medicine score is higher.

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.

The player has an Instinct score of 5 -- and we're going to use Instinct, because this a question of figuring something out, not persuading a person or physically forcing something. We add the 4 dice for Medicine, and get a dice pool of 9 dice. We roll, and the highest die is an 11.

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.

3.7.2. Skill Descriptions

Each description begins with a heading that sums up the skill. For example, Charm. The description continues with a list of possible jobs, 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.

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 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.

Computer Use

Jobs: Hacker, Programmer, Software 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.

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 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.

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.

Empathy

Jobs: Guidance Counselor, Police Negotiator, 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.

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.

Hunting

Jobs: Skiptracer, Hunter, Private Detective

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 -- 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.

Intimidation

Jobs: Bouncer, Cop, Drill Instructor, Criminal

People fear you. It's not your body, or your face; it's something that they see in your eyes. When people look into your eyes, they realize that 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 look at financial records are good examples of this.

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.

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).

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.

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.

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.

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.

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.

3.8. DRIVE

Write down a brief description of a key moment in your character's future; this is an event that won't transpire until later in the game.

Your Drive should be open-ended enough that your DM can work it into the game somehow, but specific enough that you'll know exactly when it's supposed to happen.

This Drive, this compulsion, this sense of being propelled towards some glorious moment, shouldn't be your focus during play - be on the lookout for ways to bring this scene to life, but don't get too hung up on the idea. It'll happen when it happens.

When you're able to invoke your Drive, and you play out that crucial scene, proceed as normal, except that you can, for one action, reroll up to half of your dice if you don't like the results. You can only reroll them once -- if the results come up bad, tough luck.

Examples:

"I aim the shotgun and fire as the vehicle speeds directly towards me."

"The demon congeals into physical form; it tears its own torso open, revealing a scene from my past."

"She sees what I look like and she screams, her fingernails dragging parallel crimson stripes down her face."

"The holy water boils over and scalds my hands, but I fill the whiskey bottle and screw the cap back on."

3.9. CIVILIANS

Humans come in two flavors: NPCs and civilians.

NPCs aren't your problem. You don't go out of your way to hurt them, but you're not going to cry a river if they turn out to be collateral damage. Life is life. Everyone's guilty of something.

Civilians, on the other hand, are the characters in your story who are somehow connected to you, and whom you can rescue. They're in danger; for whatever reason, they're in the demon's shadow, and if you don't do something, they'll meet an ugly end.

Each time you run a new scenario, you create a new civilian that's connected to your character. The DM will provide a general description ("An alcoholic cab driver who recently found a brown paper bag stuffed full of counterfeit twenties") and you'll fill in the necessary information: name, age, gender, and appearance.

Then you'll add two key details: the connection to you, and the thing your character likes most about this person.

The latter might well be taken from your own life: come up with a detail, some trait or tic or characteristic or habit that endears you to a friend or relative or co-worker. Assign that to your civilian.

Then establish a connection between your character and this person.

When you crossed the Black Line, you cut off all contact with the people in your life, but since then, you've made new contacts. This is one of them, someone who only knows you as an investigator of some kind. This person might be under the mistaken impression that your character is a cop, or a federal agent, or a spy. It's not necessary to tell the truth; in fact, you might want to hold off on revealing your true nature until it's absolutely necessary.

Your civilian (each player gets one) understands that you're doing something strange, but whatever it is, it's for a good cause. Your civilian trusts you, at least initially.

The civilian may get in touch with you if strange (i.e., supernatural) things happen in town. In fact, the civilian may pass your contact info to other people, who call you for help.


3.9.1. Stats

Your civilian has typical human stats, which are covered in the DM section.

You need to assign points to two stats: Life and Connection. Split 7 points between these two scores (5 Life and 2 Connection, for instance, or 1 Life and 6 Connection). Life indicates how much damage the civilian can take before dying.

Connection is how many points of Decay you can get rid of if you rescue your civilian and get him/her out of harm's way. But if your civilian dies, then that's how many points of Decay you have to take.

To rescue a civilian, you have to kill the demon. Succeed, and your Decay score goes down. Fail, and your Decay score goes up.



**They are all dead, mouths asape, eyes shiny,
a shoal of corpses with skin like wet soap, drool
frothing at the corners of their fishlike mouths.**

3.10. DECAY

Decay is a measure of how far your character has fallen. In either direction.

A score of 6 means that your Disciple wields horrific magic, but has managed to hold on to enough humanity to remain grounded and sane. In other words, you're a typical Disciple. While the Decay score stays between 4 and 8, this remains the case; when the decay score goes below 4, or above 8, there are problems.

DEFORMITY

A score of 9 or 10 means that your character has become demonic: describe the changes in your appearance. Then add 2 points of Blood, as your Disciple becomes more powerful. Hiding your identity is no longer possible, because you no longer look like a human. Most people will flee from you, or attack you on sight. Only those who know you (the civilians on your group's character sheets) will speak with you, and even then, they're fearful.

MUTATION

A score of 11 means that your appearance has deteriorated. More tentacles, more flesh rotting off the bone. At this point, all target difficulties are reduced by 3, unless they involve interacting with ordinary humans -- such interaction is no longer possible. Even your civilians will flee from you or open fire. But for any other interactions, your target difficulty is lowered by 3, making it easier to kill, break, or find.

TRANSFORMATION

A Decay score of 12 means that your character has been consumed by the darkness, and is now a demon who must be hunted and killed by the Cabal.



"But that's a human being."

"No, that's a cop."

WEAKNESS

At a Decay score of 2 or 3, your character loses one spell -- instead of casting 6 per case, now you can only cast 5. If you're already down to 5 or fewer spells, you lose a point of Blood. Even if you later go back up to 3 points of Decay, you're still down one spell. This remains the case until your next investigation. It's also cumulative -- if your Decay score goes back up, then goes down to 2 again, you lose another spell (and you lose another point of Blood).

THE HUNGER

A score of 1 means that your character has lost the connection to the magical energy that's required in order to cast spells. You're effectively turning into a normal human. While your Decay score is 1, you must consume human flesh in order to cast a spell or perform a stunt.

Normally, performing a stunt would increase your Decay, but when you reach Decay 1, that's no longer the case. Each time you want to use magic or a stunt, you must eat the flesh of a new human.

HUMANITY

When your Decay score reaches 0, it means that your character is no longer a Disciple, but has become human once again, and can no longer cast spells or battle against demons. The character is excommunicated from the Cabal and becomes an NPC (or, later, perhaps a civilian).

Note: you won't take penalties as your Decay score moves back to the middle. For example, if your score drops to 2, and then you take a point, going up to 3, you don't lose an additional spell.

Same goes for bonuses. If you enter Deformity, and you get 2 points blood because your Decay is at 9, you won't get 2 more when your Decay hits 10. Your Decay will have to move towards the middle (to 8 or lower) and then climb back up again for you to be affected.

3.10.11. INCREASING DECAY

Your Decay goes up when you kill an innocent person or see a demon's true form. There are other ways -- complete list is in the DM section (page 152), and is not for players to see.

3.10.11. DECREASING DECAY

You lose 1 point of Decay for each human enemy you kill, 2 points for killing a demonic Manifestation (DM section, page 174), 1 point of Decay for each innocent person you help, and varying points for completing the scenario's Objectives (the DM will tell you when this happens). When you rescue your Civilian from danger, your Decay is lowered by the civilian's Connection score (see page 53).

At the center of the city, there is a structure called the Abbatoir.

A thousand-foot skyscraper of obsidian and opaque windows, the Abbatoir is invisible to everyone except Disciples. At the base of this four-kilometer structure, there are chutes lubricated with the blood of the dead. These funnels lead up: bodies dropped within do not fall -- they tumble up into the Abbatoir. Long minutes later, the corpse (also invisible to normal humans) can be seen rising from an opening atop the Abbatoir.

Each time the Disciples drop a dead body into the Abbatoir, all of their Decay scores drop by 1. This can be done again and again.

NEVER DROP
A LIVING PERSON
INTO THE ABBATOIR
NEVER NEVER NEVER

3.11. STUNTS

You can perform actions that would be impossible for an ordinary human. These supernatural stunts are made possible by adding points of Decay.

Stunts are generally accompanied by vivid descriptions of dangerous and ill-advised feats, such as dodging sniper fire as you sprint into a cornfield, grabbing a screaming demon by its tentacles, and ramming it headlong into the spinning blades of a combine harvester.

Each stunt is accompanied by a Decay cost (per use), a description (which must be furnished by the player before the dice are rolled), and an explanation of the mechanics.

Stunts can't be combined. However, it is possible to execute two stunts in a single round, provided that the first one is the Tourniquet maneuver.

In addition to these 4, there are also 5 stunts that are unique to the various character classes, detailed on pages 40-44.

Retcon

Decay: 1

If a player takes a point of Decay, 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 (for example, a die for a vivid description must be earned again).

Tourniquet

Decay: 1

If a player takes one point, he can recover two points of Blood immediately, ignoring the pain and moving on. This can be done as many times as the player wishes, provided that the character can take the Decay.

Headshot

Decay: 1

By using this power, the player can roll an extra die and inflict double damage, when attacking an ordinary human. This power has no effect against halfbreeds, demons, or angels.

Inverted Cross

Decay: 3

The player can use this after a bad roll. By spending three points of Decay, the player can flip the dice pool structure upside-down, counting anything under the target difficulty as a success instead of a failure. For example, if the player was trying to roll a 10 or higher, but rolled a 6, that would actually be a success. And, in the event of a fight, that 6 would mean 4 points of damage (because you're still calculating the difference between the high roll and the target difficulty). The player loses a point of Blood when using this stunt.

3.12. GEAR

You get what you can scavenge. In the wake of the attacks, nations around the world have cracked down on firearms. It's hard to get good ammo these days.

Armor's hard to come by, but it's not impossible. Same goes for heavy weapons. These are defined in chapter 6.

3.13. LEVELING UP

Every third case, you get a new spell. You can pick it from any discipline.



Hours later, she emerged from bed tired and cold. She went straight to the bathroom, drawn by some urge that she didn't know how to ignore. She turned on the light and stared at herself in the mirror. Her face was dark in spots that resembled bruises. Yet, she had no recollection of being struck.

It was something to ponder on another day. Something was amiss, just beneath her skin. The way her jaw rang, like some bell struck gently, was strange, somehow alien, and yet vaguely familiar. She imagined her mouth full of loose teeth, the roots turned to rotted strands of stringy flesh, gums bleeding. Absently, she probed an incisor with her tongue, and stiffened as the tooth gave way, accompanied by the coppery tang of blood. She spat a crimson wad into the sink, mystified, and opened her lips.

In her reflection, she saw blood oozing from her gums, trickling over teeth which pointed in various directions, skewed at odd angles. Curious, she reached up and took hold of one tooth, slippery with blood and saliva. Clutching the sink with one hand, she carefully wiggled the tooth. There was no pain, only a numb warmth mixed with spurts of guilty pleasure. She tore the tooth from its socket. Leaning over so that the now steady stream of blood would trickle into the sink, she lay the tooth on the ceramic toothbrush-holder under the mirror. Trembling with anticipation, Christi yanked out the cuspid adjacent, and then the next tooth and the next. For moments, the only sounds were her rapid breathing, occasional gasps, and the soft wet wrench of sundered roots, followed by the tiny clink of enamel on porcelain.

When it was done, Christi stared at the glistening strawberry ruin of her mouth, bleeding worse than before, but pure and soft and scarlet, devoid of intruding white bone. The purple spots had intensified and were now spreading with alarming speed. At their origins, about her cheekbones and mouth, the skin was softening, like that of a plum ripened past maturity. Yet, under the skin, did there not lurk more intransigent bone? Christi began to grasp the significance of what she was doing. Gently, she tucked two fingers under her tongue and pushed the heel of her other hand under her upper jaw. Eyes squeezed shut, braced for agony, she shoved. There was no pain.

Instead, she felt an almost unbearable frisson that ran along the inside her mouth and down the length of her esophagus. Gasping, jaw askew, she again grabbed the sink, this time with both hands, nearly unable to stand. Waves of pleasure washed up her thighs and ran warm, strong fingers under her rib cage and across her belly, bringing muffled cries from the red wreck of her mouth. Shuddering, she ripped the clumsy jaw off and dropped it into the sink. Too good, too sweet, too bright; tears of ecstasy blossomed in her eyes and she unknowingly ground her hips against the cold white ceramic of the sink. Awed by the sudden exposure of flesh's mystery, Christi stared at the wound. Her tongue, thick and purple, dangled from it; irritated, she ripped it out and dropped it into the sink.





Bliss. This cleansing was bliss. For several minutes, Christi just admired her handiwork. Warmed by afterglow, she neatened the hole by tearing off wet strings of flesh surrounding her cheeks and throat. Her bra ricocheted off the beige tile on the wall and hung from the hot water knob; her shirt landed in the bathtub. Satisfied, she ran her palms up and down her ribs, preparing herself.

All inhibitions abandoned, she dug into the meat just above her larynx and pulled. The sensation was akin to that of removing a splinter from her flesh, minus the pain.

She continued to yank gobbets from her throat, peeling back skin to expose ropes of maroon muscle, yellowish fatty tissue, and bluish veins. Her nipples hardened as she felt the slow wet warmth of blood spreading down her breast to her belly, her thighs. Had she been capable of sound, she might have moaned, but she could not; she lurched and trembled, and her eyelids fluttered. Finally, she reached the last impediment: her sternum. As if acting on their own volition, her fingers peeled the flesh from the hard breastplate with a veteran surgeon's skill. The spasms of delight that exploded in her nerve endings weakened her knees and hastened her fingers. Intent on savoring each surge, she forced herself to pause and catch her breath.

Her hands opened another door, sliding under the sternum, the left hooking between the clavicles, and the right cupping her xiphoid process from beneath. With a grunt, she yanked the plate of hard bone from her chest and dropped it into the sink. This dark red fruit, this fluttering delicacy, was her salvation. There, pulsing amidst the carnage, was her sweet heart, her true love, and she stared at its reflection in the mirror with wondering eyes. This was the absolute bliss of self-love, self-discovery, and it was her happiness that guided her fingers now.

Tears of joy streaming down her face, she eased herself from her cavity and lifted herself up to the light.

MAGNIFIC

CHAPTER FOUR



4.1. Magic

After you crossed the Black Line and became a Disciple, you learned how to use magic. It wasn't what you expected at all.

When you cast a spell, you are tampering with the natural order of things. There is risk, and there are often consequences. Sometimes, these consequences are extremely painful, or permanent. But that's the price you pay for interfering with the natural order. 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.

On your first day as a Vicar, the Vicar placed you into a deep, trancelike state. You don't remember what happened while you were in that state, but when you regained consciousness, the world felt different. Your Vicar explained that he had helped you to unlock that part of the brain which most people are unable to access. When you came out of the hypnotic state, the world was different, because it was malleable. You had crossed the Line.

Now you can do the impossible: hurl a car across the street, punch through concrete, or rip off your skin to reveal a demon within. These techniques, taught by your Vicar, are your primary weapons in your war against the demons.

CAUTION

Remember that you're not an ordinary person anymore. You can spit acid, resurrect the dead, and summon nightmarish creatures to do your bidding. If you use this magic in public, most people are going to panic; some will flee, some will call the authorities, and some will attack you. As always, you're a Disciple, and your mission in life is to protect the innocent (except when it is necessary to consume their flesh).

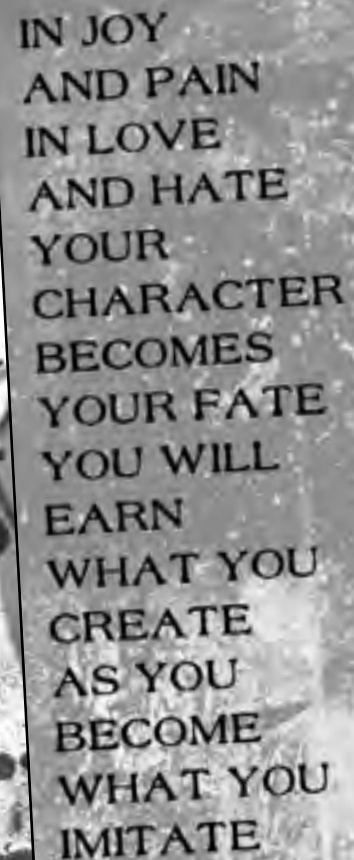
Also bear in mind that attracting attention to yourself is not always a good thing; there are others out there who would kill for power, and if they feel that you are privy to secrets that will grant them this power, they'll do whatever they have to do. So exercise caution and prudence.

Each Disciple starts the game with 6 spells, and can cast 6 spells per case.

An individual spell can be cast more than once per case. For example, a player may choose to cast one of his spells 6 times in a single case.

After that sixth spell is cast, you can keep casting spells, but each additional spell will cost you.

In order to cast the seventh spell, you'll have to take a point of Decay. The eighth spell will cost you two points, and the ninth will cost you an additional three points. So if you cast 9 spells in the course of an investigation, you're going to incur 6 points of Decay (1+2+3).



IN JOY
AND PAIN
IN LOVE
AND HATE
YOUR
CHARACTER
BECOMES
YOUR FATE
YOU WILL
EARN
WHAT YOU
CREATE
AS YOU
BECOME
WHAT YOU
IMITATE

4.2. REPLENISHING SPELLS

You don't keep track of time -- life is just a series of cases that you have to resolve.

A case can take a few hours, or a few days. Either way, your Disciple is running ragged until it's all over. Then, he or she gets some rest, and your Blood goes back up to 12 and your Decay returns to 6. Like ammo, it's just an easier way to keep track of things (such as spells).

Spell range is the same as weapon range:

A range of 1 means that the target is within arm's reach.

Range 2 means that the target is within throwing distance.

A range of 3 indicates that the target is within line-of-sight (unassisted by binoculars).

4.3. TARGETS

Each spell has a specific target, and is ineffectual against anyone not listed. Some spells can affect more than one target. Here are the possible targets:

1. Self: This spell only affects the caster.
2. Humans: This spell only affects ordinary people.
3. Halfbreeds: Affects Disciples, and other halfbreeds.
4. Demons: Only affects demons and agents of Hell.
5. Angels: Affects angels and other agents of Heaven.
6. Skills: Humans that have been possessed.
7. All: Humans, half-breeds, angels, and demons.

4.4. VISUAL EFFECTS

Many spells include descriptions of the special effects that accompany casting. Feel free to embellish or add to these during gameplay. For example, your Disciple's use of Abnegation might sometimes result in a blast of freezing cold, or a spray of acid. A vivid description of such an effect could result in an extra die (or two) for you, so feel free to take some liberties with the spell descriptions -- but only with regard to the effects, not the mechanics themselves.

4.5. CASTING TIME

If the spell has an effect (roll Violence+1 or roll Traction+2, followed by a consequence), then the spell is your action for that particular round.

If, on the other hand, the spell will augment another action -- for example, by casting the spell, you increase the damage done on your next attack -- then casting the spell doesn't count as an action.

4.6. ROLLING

Anytime you cast a spell that requires a roll, use your Attributes -- Violence, Traction, or Instinct.

The spell will tell you to roll Violence, unless there's a bonus, in which case the description will say something like "roll Violence+3," which means roll a number of dice equal to your Violence score, plus 3, plus any benefits that you can think of (not including skills, but definitely including dice from Cabal points or vivid descriptions.)

4.7. EXORCISM

There are 7 exorcisms -- spells that can drive a demon from a possessed person (known as a skell).

A demon can also be driven out by killing the victim (however, the demon sustains no damage during this process).

The spells are: Castigation, Gadarene, Litany, Phthisis, Salvation, Spray and Pray, and Unction.

Because many demons are physically powerful, attempting to get in close can be extremely risky. It is recommended that the Demonologist 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.



S P E L L L I S T

BRUTALITY

Agonistes
Anvil
Barricade
Behemoth
Bile
Bone Temple
Bracers
Brazen Bull
Carnation
Death Panel
From the Pit
Gauntlet
Gunfetti
Heretic Sphere
Judas Blade
Killchain
Lesion
Malison
Meatbleach
Nightmare Coil
Octave
Plague Vector
Powdercorpse
Rabid Maw
Razorwomb
Refuge
Shockfist
Swarm
Truce
Vore

DEMONOLOGY

Acid Reflux
Cacophony
Cancer
Castigation
Gadarene
Glossolalia
Hemophage
Incision
Litany
Mandible
Nephilim
Nodule
Obscintacle
Phthisis
Ragged Wings
Salvation
Sexpletive
Shard Wight
Slugmuscle
Spray and Pray
Sunder
Tatterflesh
Tide Writhing
Tirade
Two Knives
Unbaptized
Unction
Viscera
Vivisection
Wormwood

INVESTIGATION

Aphasia
Bete Noir
Confession
Cuspidor
Diablerie
Eye Void
Fleshlust
Gaunt
Gristle Pig
Heart Furnace
Jackal Grin
Leviathan
Lightless
Mute
Nullified
Oracle
Pariah
Phantasm
Photobomb
Querty
Scalpel of Truth
Scrivener
Seed of Lore
Skullcat
Sombra
Soul Window
Spoiled Milk
Sway
Trimester
Wither



BRUTALITY

AGONISTES

Duration: 2 attacks

Range: self

Targets: self

This spell renders you utterly proficient with whatever weapon you happen to be holding. For the next 2 times you roll the dice, you'll get 3 extra dice when making a Violence check with the weapon you're holding. If you're separated from your weapon, or if you decide to perform some other kind of attack, the bonus is over and the spell is broken.

For example, let's say you cast Agonistes while holding a pistol. The next two times you roll Violence while using the pistol, you get an extra 3 dice in your pool. However, if you fire one shot, and then you switch to a different weapon, the spell is over. Even if you switch back to the pistol, those extra dice are gone.

It doesn't matter how long it is between shots. If you take one shot, and get your extra 3 dice, and then the fight is over, you still get to use those other 3 dice the next time you use your pistol -- unless your next fight involves a different weapon, as stated above. It's up to the player to track those extra dice.

ANVIL

Duration: 2 defenses

Range: self

Targets: self

Your skin becomes dark grey, and your body is transformed into iron. Your eyes glow red, like ingots, and your footsteps clang hard.

Because of your metallic skin, punches and kicks will inflict greater than normal damage; each time you hit someone, you inflict an extra point of damage. Armed attacks (swords, guns) receive no such bonus.

You are now immune to metal weapons: bullets and knives will bounce off your skin without inflicting any damage, though other attacks (punches, kicks, wooden weapons, fire, magic) will inflict normal damage.

For example, you cast Anvil and attack someone. The target difficulty is 8, and you roll a 10. That's two points of damage, but you add one because of the spell, bringing the total to 3.

Someone attacks you with a fireplace poker, but it bounces off harmlessly. A subsequent attack with a wooden letter opener inflicts standard damage.

BARRICADE

Duration: 1 minute/special

Range: self

Targets: self

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.

It's not completely impenetrable, but it will slow down bullets, knives, magic, and anything else; in other words, it will act like armor.

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 6 (see page 125). If it is not destroyed, the spell will last for 1 minute.

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.

BEHEMOTH

Duration: 4 rounds (20 seconds)

Range: 2

Targets: any

When you cast Behemoth, your skin becomes rough and grey, like the hide of some pachyderm. Also, something horrible happens to the memories of any innocent bystanders (what, exactly, happens to their memories?).

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 50 feet (range 2). 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.



BILE

BILE

Duration: 1 attacks

Range: 2

Targets: human, demon, angel, halfbreed

When this spell is cast, you vomit up great wads of stinging acid and blood. The vomitus can blind and disorient opponents. Roll Violence+3 against your victim. If successful, the wad of bile and gore successfully disorients and blinds its victim, lowering the target difficulty of attacks against him by 3 (if human or halfbreed) or 2 (if a demon or angel) for the next attack. Inflict 1 point of damage.

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.

BONE TEMPLE

Duration: 1 defense

Range: self

Targets: self

When this spell is cast, you become immune to all magic and supernatural effects. This spell lasts for 1 attack against you, after which you'll make rolls as normal. This protection includes spells cast by other half-breeds, as well as the magical attacks of angels and demons.

As you cast the spell, a structure of bone appears around you. Describe its appearance.

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 Bone Temple and hope it's enough.

BRACERS

Duration: 2 defenses

Range: self

Targets: self

Mystic green fire blazes along your skin and coils around your forearms, allowing you to deflect attacks. For the next 2 defenses, you take half damage (rounded down) from any physical attacks, such as fists, knives, or bullets.

In addition, you can opt to add 3 extra dice when defending, but you'll have to raise your Decay by 1. Again, this will protect you for the next 2 defenses, for a single point of Decay.

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?

BRAZEN BULL

Duration: immediate

Range: 3

Targets: human

A vast bull of iron, covered in shimmering flames, erupts from the ground and charges your target. From inside this large demonic beast, someone screams for help, pounding on the inside of the bull and begging to be released. The inner workings of the brazen bull are curved in such a manner that as the voice exits the beast's mouth, the screams of agony are transformed into bellows. The entity (a person?) trapped inside the bull is never seen, but you may explain who it is, if you wish.

When the bull collides with your target, the victim loses Life (roll Violence+3 against the target difficulty for damage), falls to the ground, and loses 1 point of Violence on his next action.

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

CARNATION

Duration: immediate

Range: 2

Targets: human, halfbreed

When this spell is cast, a blood-colored cloud emanates from your mouth and floats towards a wounded ally (human or halfbreed). The cloud envelops the target, and begins to heal any injuries.

Between 2 and 8 points of damage may be restored, but you'll sustain injury as a result. For each point of Blood you lose, the target will regain 4 points.

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.

The spell 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.

DEATH PANEL

Duration: immediate

Range: 2

Targets: human

This spell causes screaming ghouls, flesh rotting from the bone, to appear and swarm all over your target. To cast the spell, roll Violence+1 against the target difficulty. If successful, the damage inflicted is equal to the difference, plus 3.

The undead ravage their target, then liquefy and seep into the earth. One of them looks familiar. Why?

Gameplay: You watch your gun tumble through the air until it splashes into the river. You turn back to Lewis, who adjusts his spectacles and gestures towards the bridge with his revolver. You let him get close, then cast Death Panel on him. While he's flailing around on the ground, screaming, covered in flesh-eating zombies, you light a cigar and check your watch. Almost lunchtime.

FROM THE PIT

Duration: 1 defense

Range: self

Targets: self

While this spell is in effect, you are an impregnable fortress. You are also transformed into a horrific fiend. You block punches, kicks, arrows, blades, bullets, and magic with ease. Tentacles coil from your back, a serpent's tongue darts from your mouth, a third eye blinks upon your brow, and/or slime oozes from your orifices. Describe your repugnant appearance, and focus on the scent.

When defending against the next attack (be it physical or magical), roll Violence+9.

However, you are utterly incapable of attacking. If you attack, the spell is cancelled.

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.

GAUNTLET

Duration: 2 defenses

Range: self

Targets: self

When you cast this spell, blood begins to seep from under your fingernails, then solidifies outside your clothing to form dark red gauntlets of glowing metal. Describe them.

These afford you an extra 4 dice when rolling against your next 2 magical attacks, and for the next physical attack you fail to defend against, you take one less point of damage when you're struck.

The armor is weightless, and though the bloodshed is uncomfortable (even painful), the process causes you no damage.

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 pair of blood-red cesti, and you draw your sword.



GUNFETTI

Duration: 2 attacks

Range: self

Targets: self

The caster's forearms and hands become two massive firearms with a range of 3. Describe them!

The character can make two special attacks (one per round, as usual, unless the player wants to take a point of Decay, in which case he can make both attacks in one round).

The left hand fires a single armor-piercing round, which gives the caster a damage bonus of 4 on his next attack with this weapon. The right hand fires a barrage of flechettes. With this weapon, the player rolls Violence+2.

In exchange for 1 points of Decay, the Disciple can attack with both weapons in a single round. However, the player won't be able to swap these actions for something else -- for example, he can't perform two stunts, or cast two spells, instead. He either fires both weapons, or takes a regular action. Until the spell wears off, or is canceled, the player is unable to use his hands, as they're large firearms.

HERETIC SPHERE

Duration: 1 attack

Range: 2

Targets: any

The use of this spell creates a sphere of crackling energy around you, which you can fling towards your enemy. Roll Violence+2 to hit.

If you succeed, the sphere hits your foe, then fades away, leaving all inanimate objects blackened, fragile, and useless. Picking these objects up will cause them to crumble and disintegrate into ash.

The spell has a range of 2, and can affect an area up to 6 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, though it will denude a person).

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 Heretic Sphere. Borenko's gun flakes away in his hand like a fistful of dust, and his pants crumble to the sidewalk. You whip out the machete.



JUDAS BLADE

Duration: 2 attacks

Range: 1

Targets: human

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 2 attacks, so it's possible that you can paralyze two enemies before your hand returns to normal. To strike an enemy, roll Violence (remember, there's no damage inflicted).

The federal agents go for their guns. You cast Judas Blade 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.

KILLCHAIN

Duration: 2 defenses

Range: self

Targets: self

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 the next two attacks, or two defenses, or one of each, seconds, you become insanely dangerous. While the spell is in effect, you reroll any die result less than 5. If the reroll is under 5, then you count it as a 5.

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 Killchain. If you're going down, you're going to take a few of them to Hell with you.

LESION

Duration: special

Range: special

Targets: special

A glistening creature appears; covered in oozing sores, it obeys the caster until it is destroyed. It can neither communicate nor investigate.

The entity can attack and defend itself independently, but will prioritize the Disciple's life above its own. It will not leave her side, and will place itself between the caster and any attacker. Furthermore, damage from any successful attack against the Disciple will be taken from the Lesion first. If it is destroyed while protecting her, then overflow damage will then be taken from the Disciple. The entity has the following stats:

Lesion

Violence 3

Instinct 1

Traction 1

Blood 6

Three of them. Skinless dogs with mouths like lampreys. Demons. Three of them, bounding towards you. Thick snuffling noises coming from their orifices. Your revolver just isn't going to do the job. You cast Lesion. It wriggles into view, tentacles dripping with saliva. Hope it's enough.

MALISON

Duration: 1 attack

Range: 3

Targets: demons

When you cast this spell, your words cause damage to demons. Any demon within range 3 of you will sustain grotesque wounds when you speak.

To cast this spell, roll Traction+3 against the target difficulty. If successful, the damage inflicted is equal to the difference between the two scores, plus one.

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?

MEATBLEACH

Duration: 2 attacks/defenses

Range: self

Targets: any

This spell causes you to grow thick spikes of bone all over your body, as your skin adopts the texture, color, and smell of curdled milk. The spell is painful, but you sustain no damage.

The spikes will, however, inflict 1 point of damage who touches or strikes you. If you successfully attack someone with your bare hands, then you inflict damage +2.

The spell lasts for 2 defenses, or 2 attacks, or one of each.

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.

NIGHTMARE COIL

Duration: 1 attack

Range: 2

Targets: angels, demons, halfbreeds

What was the worst thing that ever happened to you?

It's happening again, but this time it's going to help. It manifests itself as a shifting wad of ectoplasm that takes the form of a personal trauma, one that you rarely discuss. This entity, trailing wisps of liquid smoke, remains near you for six hours.

If, during that time, any angels, demons, or halfbreeds come near you -- even if hidden by treachery or magic, even if they're friendly -- your ectoplasmic sentinel will issue a hideous scream and coil itself around the target for a few seconds.

For your first attack or action (of any kind) against the target, you'll get a +2 on any roll. After that, the sentinel will vanish. If you take no action, the spell will end automatically, and the ectoplasm will dissipate.

OCTAVE

Duration: immediate

Range: 2

Targets: any

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 itself causes no actual damage, nor does the sound. But anything lifted into the air is going to be flipped over by a fast-moving irresistible force, which can have consequences in the case of a fast-moving object or person.

If the spell is cast the ground under someone, that person will be flung a couple stories into the air, 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 five-foot radius (range 1) of the epicenter will be affected by the spell. The epicenter can be up to range 2 away from the caster (throwing range).

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.

PLAGUE VECTOR

Duration: 1 attack

Range: 1

Targets: self

When this spell is cast, your left hand transforms into the head of a rotting, diseased snake.

Roll Violence+2 to attack with your malformed limb. A successful attack means that the serpent has bitten a target, inflicting damage+2.

The victim takes an additional point of damage the following round, as sores and cysts erupt around the bite wound.

Harrison 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 Plague Vector, and you watch his eyes widen as your fingers blur into a scab-covered snake's head; fangs and eyes slide out of your palm. Harrison stares, speechless, and slowly puts his hands up in front of him, backing away.

POWDERCORPSE

Duration: special

Range: 2

Targets: self

If there's a corpse within range 3, it rises up. You now command it. It shares your attributes, skills, spells, and Decay, but this body's Blood score is only 4.

For the duration of the spell, your body is comatose. If you were standing, you'll fall over. If your body sustains any injury, you return to it and the spell ends.

Any damage sustained by the corpse doesn't affect your actual body.

You'll never make it across four lanes in time. The cop's raising the gun to fire, and you're screaming, but she doesn't hear you. The dead homeless dude, head half blown off, is sprawled across the pavement. You cast Powdercorpse and suddenly you're a dead hobo with one eye, rising up off the concrete to strike. You grab the cop's arm, and the gun goes off. She hears it, spins around, then starts running. At least she's clear. He's freaking out. Good. Maybe you can pitch him over the bridge.

RABID MAW

Duration: immediate

Range: 3

Targets: self

When this spell is cast, a large maw appears in a solid surface (the floor, a wall, a window, a door). The mouth (describe it!) is just large enough to fit through. If you dive in, a second maw will appear within range 3 (line of sight).

You can commence an attack, teleport through the twin mouths, then reappear behind an opponent in mid-strike. Regardless of the position of the opponent with regard to you (three stories up, across a field), you appear directly behind the target. Roll Violence+2 to hit.

If the opponent's back is to a wall, then you'll appear directly in front of him (so you roll Violence+1).

If there's simply no place for you to reappear, then the spell has no effect.

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 Rabid Maw. Suddenly you're on the rooftop with the sniper, and the bat is crashing into his skull.

RAZORWOMB

Duration: 1 defense

Range: 1

Targets: self/ally

When you cast this spell, a spinning sphere of razor-sharp blades, eight feet in diameter, appears around you, protecting you from attacks.

You can also cast it on another person, provided that you can touch him or her. The blades, which crackle with pale blue electricity, drain kinetic energy from anything passing through, softening any blows directed at the person within. The blades are intangible, meaning that they're also present underneath the target's feet -- so if a demon were to tunnel beneath and try to attack from below, the spell would still be effective.

If someone tries to punch or kick through the blades, they automatically sustain 1 point of damage, whether the attack is successful or not.

Whether you cast it on yourself or another, the spell lasts for 1 attack against you (or your ally). It allows you to reroll your lowest two dice when defending -- but you can only reroll them once.

Castle goes down with a bullet in his leg. You cast Razorwomb 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.

REFUGE

Duration: 10 seconds (2 rounds)

Range: self

Targets: self

While this spell is in effect, a sphere of glowing energy surrounds you. So long as you remain inside the sphere, you are completely immune to any magic.

Demons, angels, and halfbreeds are unable to penetrate the sphere physically. However, humans are able to come and go at will.

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.

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.

SEISMIC

Duration: immediate

Range: 3

Targets: self

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 opponent.

Target one victim and roll Violence+3.

If successful, you have stunned your enemy for two rounds. During the first round, he's knocked to the ground and can take no action. During the second round, he's penalized for any action taken, including combat, movement, and magic (the target difficulty is lowered by 3).

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.

SWARM

Duration: 2 actions

Range: self

Targets: self

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.

The next 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 roll 8 dice, but fail to dodge an arrow, you can make a second attempt, but using 4 dice. Round halves up.

You can do this twice. Then the insects disappear.

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.



TRUCE

Duration: 10 seconds (2 rounds)

Range: 2

Targets: humans

When this spell is cast, it becomes impossible for an ordinary person to harm anyone within range 2 (throwing distance) 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 only affects humans, not half-breeds or demons.

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.

VORE

Duration: 1 attack

Range: 1

Targets: humans, halfbreeds

When the spell is cast, your teeth elongate, and your mouth widens grotesquely. Also, something disgusting happens to you. Describe it.

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 Violence Score, which restores 2 points of Blood to you.

You must roll Violence+1 to attack.

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.

DEMONOLOGY

ACID REFLUX

Duration: 1 attack

Range: 2

Targets: humans, halfbreeds

When this spell is cast, the Disciple can vomit up a huge quantity of acid.

If she lands a hit, rolling Violence (no bonus), she can choose to boost her own Blood score. The difference between her roll and the target difficulty will determine how much damage is healed. (Rolling a 10 against difficulty 5 means that the player recovers 5 points of Blood.)

However, each time she vomits, there's a 1 in 12 chance that the spell will backfire. In this case, the vomit has no effect, and the Disciple is temporarily transformed into a hideous tentacled monstrosity that bears no resemblance to a human.

Her stats remain unchanged, and she can still use magic, but driving a car is pretty much out of the question. So is going out in public without inciting a riot. This effect lasts for 10 minutes.

Gameplay: The halfbreeds have the drop on you. Packing submachine guns. Got to even the odds a bit. You cast Perdition and start puking up some scorching black mucus.

CACOPHONY

Duration: 1 action

Range: 2

Targets: any

When this spell is cast, a deafening clanging sound erupts from your mouth, stunning all those within range 2 (except for your allies, who only hear you yelling).

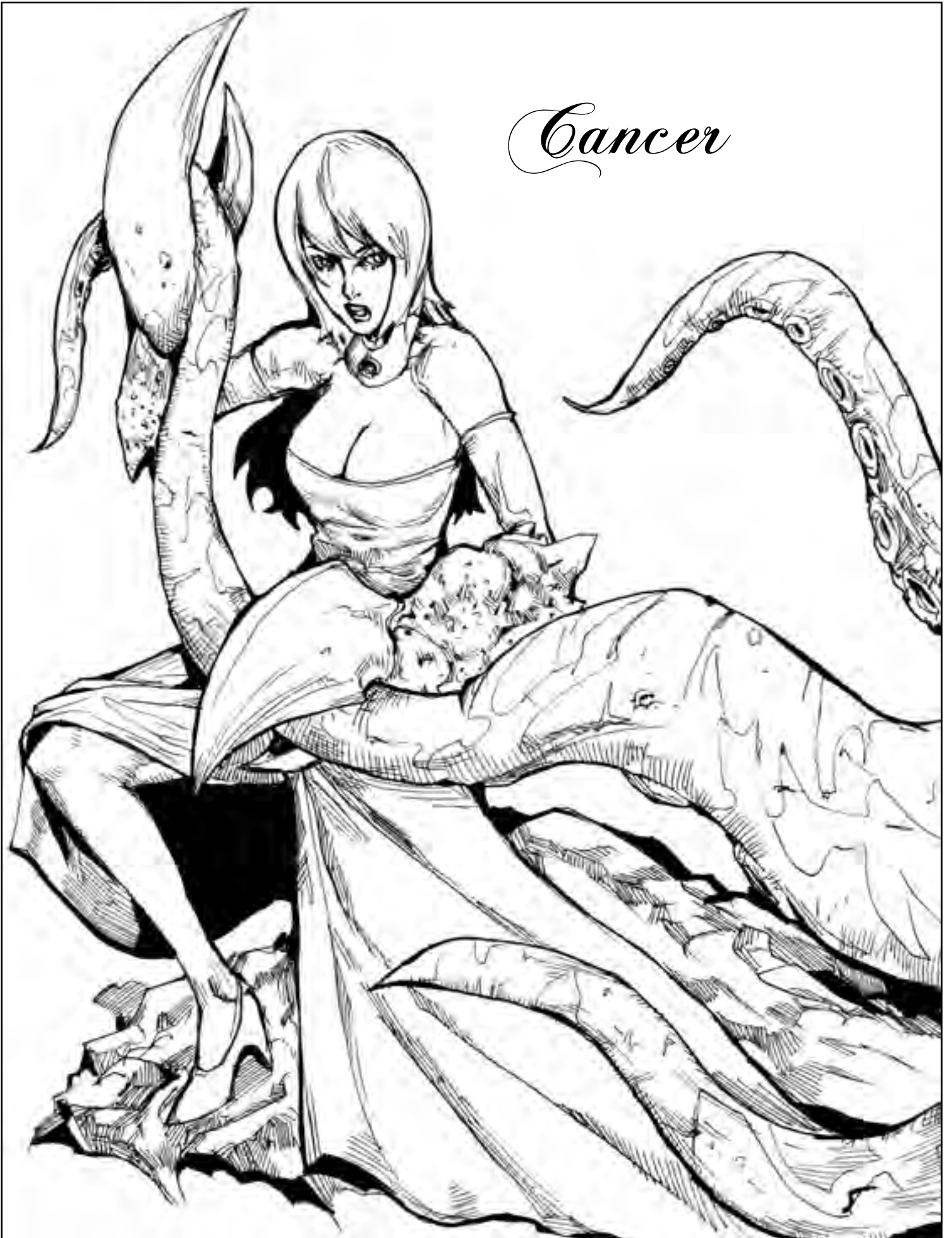
The next attack or action taken against the victims of this spell will have a bonus of 1.

For the next attack or action taken by these victims, the target difficulty will go down by 2.

To cast this spell, roll Violence+1 against each victim. The DM 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.

Cancer



CANCER

Duration: 2 attacks

Range: 1

Targets: any

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 2 successful attacks, 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.

CASTIGATION

Duration: 1 action

Range: 1

Targets: demons

This spell will enable you to imprison a demon in a cage of invisible energy.

After casting this spell, you can restrain a demon, preventing it from moving or attacking. However, in order to do so, you must physically touch the demon (to do this, roll Traction+4).

A successful roll means that you were successful, and the demon is paralyzed.

Failure results in agony, and you lose 4 points of Blood.

If you succeed, the spell lasts for one attack. During this time, the demon cannot move, but it can be injured. It is incapable of speech or motion, and cannot use magic.

Roaring, the demon pins Slashfic to the wall and rams a tentacle into his mouth; gagging, he drops the sword. God damn. You cast Castigation, 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 can take it down.

GADARENE

Duration: 10 seconds (2 rounds)

Range: 2

Targets: skulls

To cast this exorcism, roll Traction+2.

Gadarene rips the demon from the body of its victim and rams it into a small object. Dozens of serrated 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 both the liquid and the demon.

For the next minute, the demon is imprisoned in the object, and can cast take no physical action. However, it can still use Wrath to perform magics.

The victim's wounds close almost immediately, and no permanent injury is sustained.

After one minute, the object bursts, and the demon is released.

The old man grins, and his mouth bristles with three rows of shark 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.

GLOSSOLALIA

Duration: 1 attack

Range: 1

Targets: humans, halfbreeds

When you cast this spell (roll Traction+1), 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.

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.

HEMOPHAGE

Duration: 1 attack/1 minute

Range: 2

Targets: humans

Casting this spell creates dozens of footlong leeches, white and eyeless, that crawl over the victim's body, draining blood and strength.

The victim loses consciousness briefly (1 round), and wakes up with no memory of what happened.

To cast this spell, roll Traction+1.

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.

INCISION

Duration: 1 action

Range: 2

Targets: humans

This spell causes nightmarish visions of illegal or antiquated surgical procedures to sweep through the area around you (range 2).

Allies are unaffected by this spell. Against your opponents, roll Traction+1 (each enemy gets an individual target difficulty, unless there are so many that the DM breaks them up into groups).

Victims are overcome by hallucinations: mutilated bodies, rusting instruments, screaming patients, grinning doctors. Describe the visions.

Victims take 2 points of damage from the spell, and the next time they defend against an attack, lower the target difficulty by 1.

LITANY

Duration: immediate

Range: 2

Targets: skulls

When this exorcism is cast, the Disciple's spoken words cause harm to the demon, and serve to enrage it.

The player rolls Traction+1 against the demon, 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 demon takes no damage from the spell.)

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 skell. Once the demon is cast out of its victim, the spell is no longer effective.

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

MANDIBLE

Duration: 1 attack

Range: 1

Targets: any

This spell causes a monstrous pair of four-foot mandibles, like that of a gigantic insect, to erupt from your torso. The mandibles inflict a great deal of pain, and you lose a point of Blood for casting the spell, but they inflict worse damage on the your enemies.

When you attack with the chitinous jaws, roll Violence+2, and add a damage bonus of 4. 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.

Those humans who are injured by the mandibles sprout mandibles of their own, from their mouths -- making speech impossible. This lasts for an hour.

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 it's 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.

NEPHILIM

Duration: 20 seconds (4 rounds)

Range: 1

Targets: self

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 Violence 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.

Lambenicio 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.

NODULE

Duration: 1 action

Range: 2

Targets: humans, halfbreeds

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.

Roll Violence+2 against the target difficulty.

Victims are stunned and can take no action the following round (but they sustain no damage). The Disciple loses a point of Blood.

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.

OBSCENTITY

Duration: 1 attack

Range: 2

Targets: humans

When this spell is cast, the Disciple suddenly takes the form of a horrific monster. His voice and appearance instill terror in crowds, and cause large groups of people to either flee or obey him (if he presents demands).

The caster must roll Traction+1; if successful, the crowd is his to command. Though terrified, they won't do anything blatantly illegal or immoral (such as killing someone in their midst or attacking officers of the law).

However, they can be coerced into doing things that appear to be in their own self-interest (fleeing a dangerous situation, evacuating town, handing over all weapons).

Angry mob with pitchforks. You cast Obscentity. They recoil in horror, genuflect, drop their farm implements and scatter. Good enough.

PHTHISIS

Duration: 1 round

Range: 1

Targets: skulls

The caster makes contact with a possessed victim by rolling Traction+2 against the target difficulty.

If successful, the exorcism begins: 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 possessed by the demon.

During that time, any injury inflicted on the Disciple will be inflicted on the demon, but doubled. So, if the Disciple takes 4 points of damage, the demon will take 8.

After 1 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.

You feel the demon inside you, a shrieking vortex of murder-hungry hatred. 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.

RESURRECTION

Duration: special

Range: special

Targets: special

This spell resurrects dead heroes. Through Resurrection, the Cabal can bring fallen Disciples (or other halfbreeds) back to life. This spell requires the caster to eat the still-beating heart of an archdemon. Each member of the Cabal must sacrifice one spell permanently (it's erased from the character sheet).

The Cabal must then travel to the white sands of Gehenna and stand before the Iron Gates. Once there, they must perform the Malismic Rites. No one has ever survived this process.

You can't believe it. Kestrel's dead. He tore the demon to pieces with his bare hands, and he told you about his dead wife, and then he was gone. But you're not ready to bury another friend. You and the other Disciples make a pact: you're going to bring him back. It's stupid, and it's crazy, but there's a way to do it: Resurrection. The only thing is, you're not sure where to find an archdemon's heart. And as a general rule, they're not organ donors. But fuck it, there's work to be done.

SALVATION

Duration: 1 action

Range: 1

Targets: skills

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, roll Traction+1. Failure means the caster loses a point of Blood.

As you cast Salvation, Guerrero'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 Guerrero curls up in the fetal position, wailing. Fucking sissy.

SEXPLETIVE

Duration: 1 attack

Range: 2

Targets: any

This spell causes the caster to spew a stream of invective and obscenity at the victim.

To cast the spell, roll Violence+1. Then recite the stream of profanity that streams from the caster's mouth as the spell's waves of force hit the target.

A human hit by the spell will lose Violence equal to the difference between the caster's roll and the target difficulty.

A halfbreed hit by the spell will lose Blood equal to the difference between the two scores.

A demon (or angel) will lose Wrath equal to the difference between the two scores.

If a victim's Violence score drops to zero, he or she becomes utterly catatonic -- and immediately takes 2 points of damage.

Any Violence points lost by a human will be restored 1 round later, when the victim regains consciousness.

The halfbreed makes a fist and brings it down on the concrete. Everything shakes, and you hit the ground. Hellen cries out as a bookshelf lands on her, and the guy gets up and strides towards her, fists glowing. You cast Sexpletive and spit profanity at the halfbreed. He recoils, stunned.

SHARD WIGHT

Duration: 1 action/special

Range: special

Targets: special

When this spell is cast, a demonic shadow rises from the ground. Describe it.

The Shard Wight 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 Shard Wight attacks with its tentacles and fangs. Its Violence score is equal to your Traction, but its other Attributes are all at 1. It inflicts a damage bonus of 1.

It has 3 points of Blood, and when it is killed, it vanishes.

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?



SEXPLETIVE

SLUGMUSCLE

Duration: 3 rounds

Range: 1

Targets: humans

When this spell is cast, your musculature bulges and strains, and a sheen of greyish slime coats your flesh. Your sledgehammer fists can knock normal humans unconscious with 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, any successful punch will immediately render any human opponent unconscious (for 2 rounds), in addition to normal damages sustained during the attack.

To cast this spell, roll a normal attack against the victim's target difficulty, but reroll any 1s or 2s. This spell doesn't work with weapons -- only fists.

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 right cross 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 jab to his belly. It's not a good hit, you barely connect, but he crumples over and hits the ground.

SPRAY AND PRAY

Duration: 1 action

Range: 2

Targets: skulls

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. Until it becomes corporeal, it is incapable of attacking, but it is also immune to any violence or sorcery.

To cast this spell, roll Traction+1 against the demon.

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.



t grows in you, dead weight, some trace element of
yself that I would sooner purge, a photograph th
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tatterflesh

SUNDER

Duration: 2 attacks

Range: 1

Targets: any

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, roll Violence+1 against the following target difficulties: Wood 4, stone 7, steel 10.

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.

TATTERFLESH

Duration: 2 defenses

Range: 1

Targets: self

When this spell is cast, your flesh is shredded to rags which hang from your skeleton. This rotting carcass is more durable than your own flesh, and as a result, you subtract 2 points from any damage sustained during the next 2 attacks.

If you consume human flesh right before casting the spell (taking an additional point of decay in the process), you can double the effects of the spell (subtract 4 points of damage instead of 2).

They open fire. You cast Tatterflesh, and grin as their eyes widen. Then, you sprint to the other side of the rooftop. A bullet clips your humerus, 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 rib cage, you stumble down the alley.

TIDE WRITHING

Duration: 1 attack

Range: 2

Targets: humans, halfbreeds

To cast this spell, roll Traction.

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. All are in various stages of decay. The tide of hemoglobin starts in the gutters and gradually rises, drowning all in blood.

All those within range 2 (except you and your allies) are confronted with these spectres, and are terrified and weakened by the visions.

Victims' Violence scores are reduced to 1 for the next round, and the victims all drop whatever they were holding at the time.

The hotel desk clerk sucks on a tooth and stares at you. Then he says no fucking way. Sighing, you put the fifty back in your wallet. Fuck this. You shrug and smile and cast Tide Writhing. For a second, the clerk continues to smile blandly. Then his eyes widen (presumably reacting to a screaming crowd of undead peasants, shaking their fists at some doomed Marquis). He runs out into the lobby, screaming and dodging invisible assailants. You lean over the counter, grab a blank keycard, jab it in the activator, punch 403, then walk away. Next stop, fourth floor.

TIRADE

Duration: 1 action/special

Range: 2

Targets: humans

When you cast this spell, your victim begins to scream uncontrollably, causing all humans within 20 feet to drop whatever they're holding (though they can immediately pick things up after the initial shock wears off).

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, roll Traction+1.

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.

TWO KNIVES

Duration: 1 attack

Range: 2

Targets: humans, halfbreeds

When this spell is cast, the Disciple and her human target are transported to a dark corner of Qo'Crast, a hellish nether-realm.

In Qo'Crast, the sky is a vast sheet of pink flesh whose suppurating orifices drip fluids down upon vast fields of severed heads that scream eternally. In the distance, vast and terrible windmills made of dried skin turn slowly, serving some unknowable function. Along roads paved with the skulls of aborted infants, swarms of bloody teeth bounce in unison, seeking fresh meat.

There are two knives (range 1, damage+1) on the ground.

Magic is not possible in Qo'Crast.

Here, the Disciple and her target must fight to the death. The spell does not end until one of them is dead.

The rest of the team is still dealing with the Curhadac demon. Vargas makes a break for it. Can't let him kill again. You cast Two Knives, and suddenly both you and Vargas are standing on a wind-blasted promontory of black stone, looking down upon an orchard of screaming cherubs nailed to inverted crosses. Time for some fun.

UNBAPTIZED

Duration: 1 action/2 rounds

Range: 2

Targets: humans

When you cast this spell, the spirits of dead unbaptized infants rise from the flames of Gehenna and hover over your victims.

The effect is brief (10 seconds), but during that time, the victims become weak and confused, their Violence and Instinct scores dropping to 1.

The infants speak. What do they say?

The firemen are pounding up the stairs. They'll be here any minute now. You can't expose them to this, so you cast Unbaptized. A second later, a glowing baby appears, and then another. The firemen stop and stare. The first one pitches forward, suddenly, and the guy behind him picks him up, slings him over his shoulder. You can tell that they're all suddenly feeling sick. Slowly, they back down the stairs.



VISERA

UNCTION

Duration: 1 attack

Range: 1

Targets: skulls

When this exorcism is cast, the player rolls Violence against the target difficulty. 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.

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?

VISCERA

Duration: 1 action

Range: 2

Targets: any

When this spell is cast, your intestines turn into glistening serpents and lampreys and tentacled creatures, which erupt from your abdomen. Though still anchored to your bowels, these entities lunge to strike victims standing near you (range 1), biting and tearing and constricting.

Roll Violence+5 and lose 1 point of Blood.

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?

ERRO N° PUBLICO



ELIGRO DE MUERTI



I wish mice with knives would visit me at night
And slice my eyes twice, to wipe the sight from my life;
I'd be delighted to be blind, I think that would be nice,
I think that I might like a life without light.

I wish I could take flight and flee this garish paradise;
I'd leave the light behind, and in memory I would hide,
I'd be delighted in the night, I think that would be fine,
I think that I might like a life without light.

I wish that I could rest and hide from all this happiness;
I'd suck poison from your breast or erect a tower of excrement.
My friends are all grotesque; they vex me with their tenderness,
I think I would prefer less restless guests.

I wish I could break bread with the silent dead
While I bled in bed, blessed and dressed in red;
I'd kiss their bloody heads, I think that would be best,
I think I would prefer less restless guests.

VIVISECTION

Duration: 1 attack

Range: 2

Targets: humans, halfbreeds

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.

Roll Traction+3, and if you're successful, the spell inflicts damage equal to the difference between the two. Fail, and the spell backfires, ripping your own flesh (for 2 points of Blood).

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.

WORMWOOD

Duration: 1 action

Range: 2

Targets: any

After this spell is cast, the Disciple's eyes exude a foul-smelling spray that drenches everyone in range (except those allied with the spellcaster).

For the next few seconds, the victims are somewhat incapacitated with nausea and dizziness. The next time one of the victims is attacked, reroll the lowest die rolled. This applies to everyone who was affected by the spell -- for one attack against each target (regardless of who's doing the attacking), you reroll the lowest die one time.

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 eyesockets, soaking all three of the hit men, who gasp and curse and hit the floor. Third, you try to wipe your face clean with a moist towellette. This Disciple job is just bullshit, man. Fucking bullshit.

INVESTIGATION

APHASIA

Duration: 1 minute

Range: 2

Targets: human

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, roll Traction+2.

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 jeeee. You can't help but laugh, but you don't dare turn around.

BETE NOIR

Duration: immediate

Range: 2

Targets: human

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, roll Instinct+2.

The DM will tell you what secret information you've gleaned.

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.

CONFESSION

Duration: 10 seconds (2 rounds)

Range: 2

Targets: human

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, roll Traction+1.

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.

CUSPIDOR

Duration: 3 rounds

Range: 2

Targets: humans

When this spell is cast, the Disciple will be able to detect the presence of any humans who have recently entered the Sepsis. For three rounds, the Disciple's eyes will glow with a pale green light.

Any person who has been exposed to the Sepsis will begin to foam at the mouth, spitting uncontrollably and laughing.

Roll Instinct+3.

The person in question will probably not know that they have been within the Sepsis, and will be horrified by the brownish foam emanating from his or her mouth (despite being unable to stop laughing).

DIABLERIE

Duration: 5 minutes

Range: 2

Targets: human

When this spell is cast, demonic apparitions that screech horribly and appear to attack anyone within thirty feet of you. The victim is convinced that the demons are real, and runs for cover (or attacks, depending on the person).

The demons are just a distraction, however; for the duration of the spell, the victim's Instinct Score is reduced to 1.

To cast this spell, roll Traction+3.

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).

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?

EYE VOID

Duration: 5 minutes

Range: 2

Targets: human

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, roll Traction+4.

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.

FLESHLUST

Duration: 5 minutes

Range: 3

Targets: any

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.

Roll Instinct+2 and the prints are visible.

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.

GAUNT

Duration: 4 rounds (20 seconds)

Range: self

Targets: self

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 Blood score will drop by 4.

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.

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. Dammit.

GRISTLE PIG

Duration: 5 minutes

Range: 1

Targets: human

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, roll Traction+2. You must be close enough to touch your victim.

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.

HEART FURNACE

Duration: immediate

Range: self

Targets: self

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 Instinct or Traction roll

As usual, there's an 18-die maximum. After that, you return to normal, with no side effect other than a slight headache.

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 Burgeon. 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.



Gristle Pig

JACKAL GRIN

Duration: 1 minute

Range: self

Targets: self/humans

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 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.

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?

LEVIATHAN

Duration: 1 minute

Range: self

Targets: self

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, roll Traction+4.

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.

LIGHTLESS

Duration: 5 minutes

Range: self

Targets: self

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.

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.

MUTE

Duration: 1 minute

Range: 2

Targets: self

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.

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.

NULLIFIED

Duration: 3 rounds

Range: 1

Targets: human (deceased)

The caster can analyze a corpse, determining cause and time of death. When the spell is cast, the Disciple will be able to open the victim up using her fingertip as a scalpel, peeling back the epidermis to gain access to internal tissues. During the examination, the corpse floats up in the air, and the various organs are separated from the body; they hover in place while the Disciple studies them. She can feel the nature of the victim's injuries (blunt force trauma, strangulation, fire, drowning, sharp force trauma, gunshot wound, supernatural weapon, angel tentacles, and so on).

She will be able to determine the exact time of the target's death, as well as the relative height of the killer (taller/shorter than the victim). In addition, she'll know whether the victim expected the attack or was caught by surprise. When the spell is over, the victim and all of his internal organs will collapse to the floor in a bloody heap. This spell can count as evidence.

(Note to DM-- a random table for this spell can be found in the Appendix at the end of the book.)

ORACLE

Duration: immediate

Range: self

Targets: self

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 cast Oracle, roll Instinct+2. 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.

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.

PARIAH

Duration: 1 hour

Range: 2

Targets: humans

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, roll Traction.

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.

PHANTASMO

Duration: 1 minute

Range: 1

Targets: self/humans

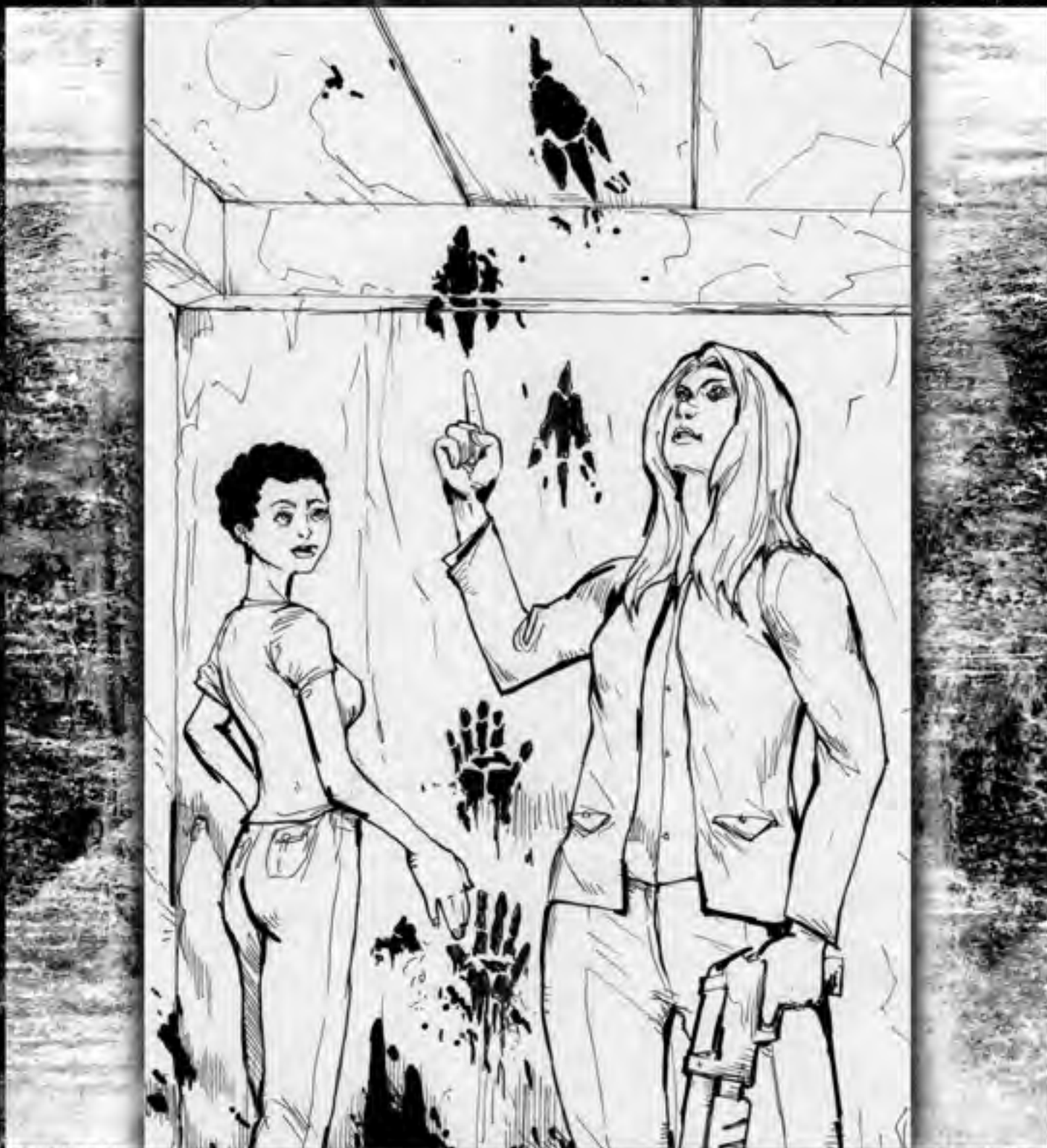
When you cast this spell on someone, you become invisible (and inaudible) to everyone else. To your victim, however, you look completely normal.

You're not intangible or spectral in any way; it's just that no humans can hear you or see you except your victim (halfbreeds and demons are unaffected).

After a minute, you're visible to everyone again.

To cast the spell, roll Traction and make physical contact with your victim.

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.



P H O T O B O M B

PHOTOBOMB

Duration: 3

Range: 1

Targets: self

When this spell is cast, the Disciple is able to detect the presence of angels or demons. Strange photographs will appear in corners of the room, yellowed images of recent events, shedding light on supernatural activity.

In the pictures, afflicted persons will appear deformed or grotesque. No one else will be able to see what the caster sees.

The demon or angel will immediately know that it has been detected, and will respond accordingly.

QUERTY

Duration: immediate

Range: 1

Targets: self

When this spell is cast (Instinct+1), the Disciple can instantly tell if the data that the team is looking for can be found in a computer (or filing cabinet, or folder).

The Disciple doesn't know what that information is, and if access to that information is restricted (computer password, security guard in front of filing cabinet), the spell will not make it any easier to get to.

But once access is granted -- when the computer is be turned on and used, when the files are opened and read -- the Disciple will be able to go right to the relevant information.

SCALPEL OF TRUTH

Duration: 1 round (5 seconds)

Range: 1

Targets: demons

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, roll Traction.

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 Scalpel of Truth 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 Edgemon Lake." Damn. She's probably dead. Still, you've got worse things to worry about. For instance, the spell's about to wear off.

SCRIVENER

Duration: 1 minute

Range: self

Targets: self

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.

Roll Instinct+1.

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.

SEED LORE

Duration: 1 minute

Range: 1

Targets: humans

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. There's a max of 9 for each skill.

The acquired skills are only good for the duration of the spell, and do not include memories or personality.

No roll is necessary; the spell is automatic.

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.

SKULLCAT

Duration: 30 seconds (6 rounds)

Range: self

Targets: self

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.

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.

SOMBRA

Duration: 1 minute

Range: self/special

Targets: self

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.

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.

SOUL WINDOW

Duration: immediate

Range: self

Targets: humans

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 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, roll Traction+2. There's a table of results (for the DM) in the back of this book.

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.

SPOILED MILK

Duration: 10 seconds/2 rounds

Range: 2

Targets: humans

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 range 2.

To cast the spell, roll Traction.

If successful, the victim is paralyzed for 10 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.

SWAY

Duration: 20 seconds

Range: 1

Targets: humans

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.

Roll Traction+1.

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.

TRIMESTER

Duration: 1

Range: 2

Targets: humans, halfbreeds

This spell allows the Disciple to see the target's true nature. She can detect drug use, alcoholism, homicidal thoughts, or the presence of supernatural entities like demons or angels.

All of this will be revealed in the form of shimmering images, visible only to the caster, which hover behind the spell's target.

The caster's eyes will burn with a greenish fire while the spell is in effect, and nothing the Disciple does will cover up the sickly light.

Roll Instinct+1.

(Note to Director -- a random table for this spell can be found in the Appendix at the end of the book.)

WITHER

Duration: 10 seconds (2 rounds)

Range: 1

Targets: humans

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, any physical attack against the victim gets an additional 4 dice.

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. Time to cancel his bingo game and bust his hip.

(trimester)



5: CONFLICT

P. 124

5.1. Breaking it down

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

Initiative: Each player rolls a single die, and adds the value of whichever attribute they'll be using in this round. If you're going to be putting the hurt on someone, roll a d12 and add your Violence score. If you're planning on talking your way out of trouble (or talking your way into it), then roll d12 and add your Traction score. If you're trying to hack the computer while your teammates shoot at the terrorists, then roll d12 and add your Instinct score.

Whoever rolled highest goes first. Then, the player chooses who will go next, and then after that player acts, he/she chooses the next player, and so on, until all players have gone. Then it's the DM's turn.

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.

5.1.1. Player Character dice pools

Take the player character's attribute, add the dice from one applicable skill (the player must explain), and add any other dice from Cabal points (page 27) or vivid descriptions or stunts).

If you're trying to force a door open, and there's a high-tech lock, you can bring in Computer Use, or Crime. If you're in a fight, and you want to stab someone, you can bring in Crime (I used to stab people for a living), Medicine (you know where to stab), Military (stab instructor), Hunting (bit of stabbing), and so on.

NPCs don't get dice pools: the DM assigns them target difficulties by adding attributes (if you're trying to intimidate someone, Traction; if you're trying to hit someone, Violence; if you want to catch someone in a lie, Instinct) to relevant skills. Then add the point value of any weapons, if it's a physical battle.

5.1.2. Example of Combat

Scalpel is attacked by two cultists. She rolls initiative, and gets a 6. The other players roll 2 and 8. One will go before her, and one will go afterwards.

When it's her turn, Scalpel pops a switchblade. The DM says the target difficulty is average: the cultist's Violence score is 3, and he has the Crime skill at 3, and he has a 2-point dagger, so that's a total of 8.

Scalpel has a Violence score of 3, so she rolls 3 dice against target difficulty 8.

She gets a 10-6-5. That means that Scalpel hits, and inflicts 2 points of damage (10 minus 8). In addition, the switchblade has a damage rating of 1, so the total damage inflicted on the cultist is 3. He's dead.

Now it's the DM's turn.

The second cultist swings his meat cleaver. Since he has a Violence score of 2, a background in Military (2), and a crowbar (2), the DM says the target difficulty is 6 (2+2+2).

Scalpel defends against this. She rolls Violence (which is 3), and gets 4, 3, 1. Terrible roll. She takes a 2 points of damage, plus another for the crowbar (a two-point weapon does 1 point of damage -- more on this later).

Initiative is re-rolled, and Scalpel goes first this time. The player launches into an elaborate description of how she ducks under the crowbar, spins the cultist around, and stabs him in the back. The description is cool, and she gets to roll an extra die as a result.

ORDER OF NARRATION

This is how you find out who is supposed to be narrating combat, and when.

1. Initiative is rolled
2. Player describes an attempt ("This is what I'm going to do")
3. Dice are rolled against the target difficulty, and they tell you whether it was successful
4. Another player then describes the outcome of the attempt -- if it's a success, it's the player on your right; if it's a failure, the narration comes from the player on your left

This applies to pretty much everything.

You can't say that you've run the car off the road when you haven't even rolled dice yet. So you say that you jerk the wheel hard, and that your van caroms across the highway towards the car.

If you roll the dice and it's a success, then the player on your right narrates the impact. If you roll and it's a failure, the player on your left explains how you just missed them.

5.2. Blood

Each character begins a case with 12 points of Blood. As the scenario progresses, the characters will take damage, which is subtracted from the Blood score.

1-4 points of damage: Minor injury. Flesh wound. Bullet went through the skin, didn't hit any bone. Knife didn't puncture any internal organs. Abrasions, bruising, sprains, but nothing that a splash of whiskey won't put right.

5-8 points of damage: Serious injury. Broken bones. Internal bleeding. Third-degree burns. The Disciple is probably going to leave a trail of blood. Limping, groaning, and cursing through gritted teeth.

9-12 points of damage: Horrific injury. Cracked skull. Shattered bones. Severely damaged organs. Limbs are torn/wrenched off. Eyes are put out.

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.

5.2.1. 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. Blood scores are returned to 12.

Magic (like Carnation) can also restore Blood.

5.2.2. Retirement

If your Disciple ever reaches 0 points Blood, then it's time to Retire. This means that your character is going to die.

However, death is not immediate. Instead, your Disciple's Blood score goes up to 24, and you no longer lose points of Decay -- with exception to the use of Stunts (those will still cost you Decay points).

You get to close out your last case. Do what you have to 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.

5.3. Armor

Every piece of armor, from a bulletproof vest to a full-body suit of high-tech ceramic plate armor, has a rating.

If you are injured while wearing armor, subtract the damage from your armor. The remaining damage is taken by your Disciple. Your armor rating then goes down by 1.

For example, you're wearing a bulletproof vest with an armor rating of 3. You take 5 points of damage. The vest absorbs 3 points, so you only take 2. Now your vest only has 2 points of armor.

A vest has 2-3 points of armor rating, a heavy suit of military armor has 3-4 points.

5.4. Penalties

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 penalties to combat rolls, attribute checks, or skill rolls. If so, employ the guidelines below (but please note that though these penalties are cumulative, the maximum penalty for these penalties should be three dice -- after which you can add other appropriate penalties, such as for magical effects or severe injury):

Darkness: If the character is in near-total darkness, such as a cave, then the penalty is one die.

Swimming: If the character is trying to take action while swimming, the penalty is one die.

Underwater: The penalty is two dice when trying to take any action while completely underwater.

Blindness: If the character is blindfolded, or if his eyes are damaged, the penalty is two dice.

Incapacitation: The penalty is two dice if the Disciple is chained, or caged, or otherwise restrained.

5.5. Range

There are three ranges:

1: Short range (arm's reach, melee combat, fist-fight).

2: Medium range (close-quarters firearms combat, thrown weapons or objects, just across the room).

3: Long range (down the street, sniper fire, thrown grenades).

If your target is within range, roll dice as normal. If your target is out of range by a factor of 1, subtract one die. If your target is out of range by a factor of 2, subtract 3 dice.

For example, if Skag is attacking with a sword (which has a range of 1), and her target is right in front of her, she rolls 7 dice -- because her combat score is 7.

But if she's attacking someone on the other side of the room, she'll have to leap across the room to reach him. She now has to roll 6 dice, because the enemy is out of range.

If she wants to attack someone far away, she's going to have to find some way to rapidly traverse a great distance in order to land a blow with her sword. So now she'll roll 4 dice when attacking.

5.6. Weapon Statistics

Each weapon has three stats: Range, Damage, and Ammo.

Damage is added to a successful violence roll when that weapon is used. For example, if you roll a 10 against difficulty 7, you do 3 points of damage; but if you have a switchblade (which is damage+1), then you inflict 4 points of damage.

To determine a weapons's stats, divide its score (furnished by your DM) between Range and Damage. For example, the DM may say that you've picked up a 3-point axe.

You could say that it's got a range of 2 (a weapon well-balanced for throwing) and a damage of 1, or you could say it's got a range of 1 (good for melee combat) and a damage of 2 (heavy, with a keen edge).

Either way, write it down on your character sheet.

If you find a 6-point rifle, there are a few ways to interpret the score:

Range 3, damage 3. Long-range sniper rifle.

Range 2, damage 4. Powerful assault rifle.

Range 1, damage 5. Damaged sights, poor accuracy, armor-piercing rounds.

5.6.1. Ammunition

- * For melee weapons like crowbars: infinite
- * For handguns: good for a single firefight
- * For rifles and other heavy weapons: good for 2 firefights

5.7. Vehicular Combat

When driving a vehicle, roll the vehicle's applicable attribute whenever you need to check against a situation (for vehicle attributes, see the list below). If you're in a truck and you need to swerve, roll 1 die. If you're in a car and you need to recover, roll 2 dice.

If you have the driving skill, then add your skill score to the applicable modifier. So, to re-use the above examples, if you have the driving skill with a score of 3, and you're swerving in a truck, roll 4 dice (3+1). If you're trying to recover in a car, roll 5 dice (3+2).

If your character is driving, and you want to shoot, that's fine, but you can't drive and ram at the same time -- you have to choose one attack per round (unless you're able to make multiple attacks because of a spell or a Power).

5.7.1. Ramming

If you ram another vehicle, roll the appropriate number of dice versus the target difficulty. If you are successful, you inflict damage to the other vehicle's body.

To ram a person (or run him over), roll the appropriate number of dice against the TD. Damage is equal to the difference, plus the vehicle's ram score.

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.

VEHICLE STATS

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

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

5.7.2. Swerving

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

5.7.3. Recovering

You make a Recover roll after your vehicle has been rammed, or if the vehicle has sustained any kind of damage. If you fail, you're run off the road. The target difficulty is equal to the damage sustained.

For example, Casket shoots at an opponent's car. He is successful, and his shotgun inflicts 6 points of damage to the car. The driver must now make a Recover roll against difficulty 6, or be run off the road (car damaged, no longer drivable).

5.8. Falling Damage

To determine if Injury is sustained during a fall, make a Violence check against the following target difficulties:

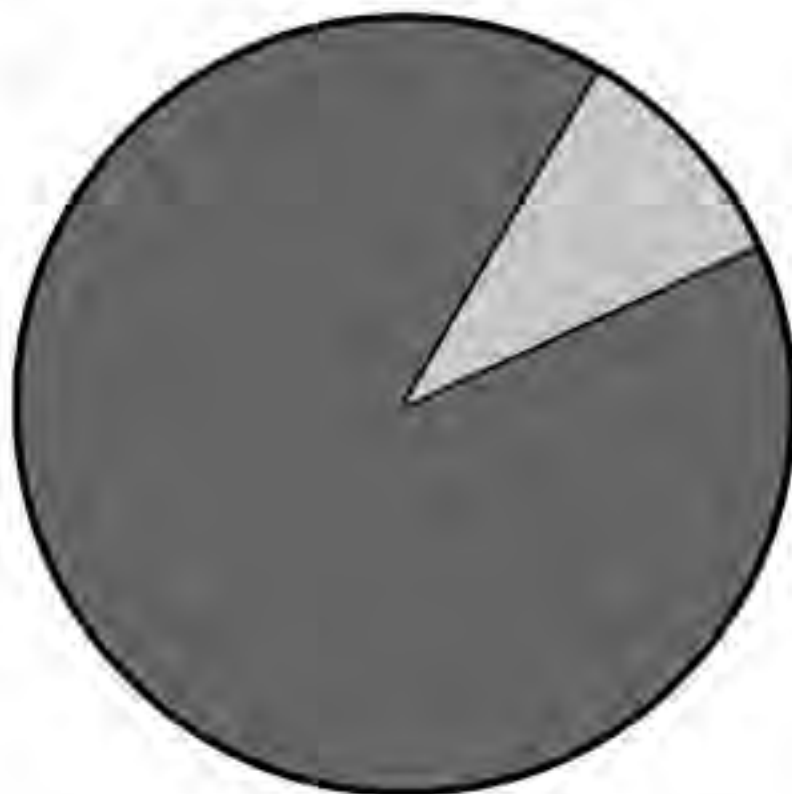
- 8: Second story window
- 10: Tall building
- 13: Top floor of skyscraper
- 15: Wing of plane

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

5.9. Group Attacks

If your Disciple is attacking a large group of humans, rolling the dice over and over again can be kind of time-consuming. You can cluster hostiles into groups of 3 or 4 (at the DM's discretion), and subtract damage from the mob's combined Blood score.

time spent talking



the dm



players

CHAPTER 6

PLAYING THE GAME

6.1. Choose a Class

You've picked out a class for your character. Now it's time to pick out your player class. Pick one, or create your own:

Detective

You're the disciplined and logical player, the most reasonable member of the group. And you have your doubts about this game. You know there's something that's been withheld from you, some piece of information that you don't have yet. Can you figure out what it is? Can you push the narrative forward, hoping to pick up new clues about the common thread that ties all of these supernatural elements together? Formulate your conspiracy theory and pursue it with dogged determination.

FX Coordinator

If it explodes, you want a piece of it. Your job is to describe the vast emerald prism that hovers over the city, the high-speed gunfight in the market district, the gleaming obelisk of your Abbatoir, the glimmering magics wielded by the demon, the howling grotesquerie of the Sepsis. You're the one who paints a picture with words and contributes to the strange reality of Scorn. You have an unlimited budget and a cast of thousands, so go insane.

Gorehound

You're the one responsible for getting the entrails out. When a fellow player fails a die roll, and someone has to narrate, and that someone is you, go for the bowels or the genitals. Everyone in the world of Scorn is a pressurized blood sack waiting to be punctured, resulting in absolute hemoglobin bukkake. You know what you have to do. Your contribution to this session is high fructose gore syrup, so let's paint the town red.

Power Source

You're the facilitator, the one who loves to set things up for other players, creating opportunities for them to show off. You encourage other players to describe events or make speeches or narrate interludes, and you get off on these elements yourself. You love seat-of-the-pants storytelling, and you don't just get into character -- you've got ideas about the NPCs and civilians, and you give the DM a lot of good material to work with. You're enthusiastic about all of it, you give out Cabal dice like crazy, you make crazy decisions during play that result in memorable conflicts, and you do it all with panache. You are walking, talking rocket fuel.

6.2. Attempt the Impossible

It's possible, but you may not be able to pull it off.

That's the rule. Unless you're being silly ("I want to jump to the moon"), in which case, this game might not be for you.

If you're trying to do something, the DM doesn't tell you yes or no -- the DM tells you what you have to roll in order to pull it off. Unless, of course, it's so trivial that there's no point in rolling.

For example, if you're looking for a gun in a police station, you're probably going to find one pretty easy. So the DM tells you yes, you find a pistol, and let's move on. No sense quibbling over details like these when there are throats to slit.

If you're looking for a gun in a cop's house, you're liable to find one, but there are no guarantees. You'll have to make an Instinct check -- maybe because the weapon is hidden, maybe because the cop has a family and the gun's locked up. So the DM tells you to roll Instinct against difficulty 7.

If you're looking for a gun in the house of an anti-gun activist, the odds are slim indeed. However, you might find out that our activist is actually a fraud of some kind. Or maybe he found a gun, and is keeping it in his house because he's going to turn it over to the cops -- but it's hidden somewhere in the house. Anyhow, this is a moot point, because you haven't rolled yet. The DM tells you the odds are slim, and so the target difficulty is 12.

If you're looking for a gun in a day care center, good fucking luck with that. Well, hopefully. Hell, who knows, anyhow, the DM says it's damn near impossible in this particular situation because of X, Y, and Z, so the difficulty is 14. To pull this off, you need to roll a pair of 12s, or maybe a bunch of 10s. Definitely won't be easy. Still, it's not impossible. That's the important part.

There's no planning stage. Instead of planning, take action.

6.3. Rehearse Your Delivery

Don't practice specifics, practice principles.

Your situation will change from game to game. The events you narrate will always be different, but your style's only going to get sharper and more defined over time.

Push your style forward by phrasing your sentences more directly. Never begin a sentence with "There is," because this is a dead phrase.

"There is a room. There is a gun in the room. There's a man across the street."

These aren't scenes from a story, they're snapshots, static images that convey nothing. Avoid them. In the world of Scorn, everything moves.

Begin every sentence, every scene, every idea, with a noun and a verb. What is in the room? A man? Fine, let's use that. Tell us that sweat drips down the man's face. Why? Immediately, we wonder why you told us that. Is it because the man is hot? Because he's afraid? Is he sick?

"Paint peels from the walls."

"Bullet holes in the glass stare at us."

None of this is really happening, per se -- the paint isn't actively peeling itself off the walls while we watch -- but the idea projects decay, a derelict structure, neglect, and so on. And there's a bit of paranoia in that second one: we're being watched.

Practice your nouns and verbs, and bring them into your game narration. Keep it terse and grim.

6.4. Use Movie Terms

If you're unsure how to start describing scenes or narrating outcomes, fall back on movie terms to help provide a structure: Zoom in, zoom out, fade in, fade out, cut to, pan. These are a solid means of communicating visuals (and intent) to other players, and are an excellent shorthand that everyone's already more or less familiar with. Use them to establish the scene in your mind, and to share that scene with other players.

6.5. Propel the Investigation

You want to push the game forward, not hold it back. When your character's in danger, it's easy to duck, retreat, look for an easy way out. But that's not how things happen in this game. That approach doesn't push the story forward. Think of your favorite TV shows, movies, and novels. Did the characters make safe choices? Did they seek cover at every available opportunity? Did they avoid conflict?

Powerful narrative results when principled (not good, not heroic) characters make choices based on their beliefs or goals.

Those choices are often surprising, because they are not obvious -- so **don't** make the obvious choice, because everyone else has already thought about it, and saying it out loud will just bore the people around the table. Decisions, though surprising, should be consistent with what we know about them. So be true to the character you've defined.

Finally, good characters make choices that complicate matters. Don't worry about creating havoc. Just in case it wasn't perfectly clear from the layout and illustrations: this is a chaotic game. Fuck it up.

6.6. Give it a Minute

Resist the temptation to interrupt; this is an indulgence that can derail the flow of a story. You may find yourself nodding with ever-increasing speed, saying, "Yeah, okay," when another player (or even the DM) is narrating. You get excited, you think you've got a great idea to contribute.

But for all you know, that player was about to spring something on you -- something unexpected. Or perhaps she was building up to a crescendo.

Give it a minute. Don't be afraid of speeches, or lengthy descriptions, or extended narrations. Part of the DM's job is making sure that all players get the spotlight, so go with the flow and enjoy the speeches and descriptions. Instead of trying to anticipate what you'll do when it's your turn, force yourself to open up, listen in, and climb into the other players' skulls. There's not telling what you'll find in there.

6.7. Avoid the Obvious

This was just mentioned, but it bears repeating.

When narrating, don't state the obvious. Don't rely on the comfortable. If it feels predictable, trash it.

Make the effort, and try to find something in you that hasn't been said, can't be predicted. Draw from your life, your longings, your strained relationships with relatives, co-workers you despised -- dig into the bedrock and pull up something that's personal, something not culled from a movie or book that the other players are familiar with.

This is a game about impossible things. Don't feel like you have to work within reasonable parameters. If there's a scene where a player fails a die roll, and it's your turn to narrate, fuck with the DM! Tell the group that during the gunfight, as the player fires at the demon and misses, there's a man on a bridge with a pair of binoculars. He watches as the gun goes off, then checks his watch, nods, and walks away. There, done, that's your narration. Wasn't obvious or predictable, it had fuck-all to do with the fight, but damned if it wasn't a curious thing, and now everyone wants more.

Create something interesting.

6.8. Expose your Flank

Don't retract: push forward. Don't try to protect your character: expose him to danger. Don't shy away from an argument with an NPC: pursue it.

Conflict, be it emotional or physical, is part of all narrative, and this game is no different. Go for the jugular, but don't sissy up and spend all your time trying to protect your character from harm; expose her to danger by taking risks, deliberately creating situations that could end badly, or ignoring danger in the pursuit of an important goal.

This is what memorable character do.



6.9. Phone Etiquette

Motherfucker,
turn it **o**ff.



PROTIP

Seek out dramatic players,
but avoid dramatic people.

6.10. Online Gaming

These are good rules for playing Scorn online via G+ Hangouts, Skype, or other video software.

1. Turn the camera on: the other players need to see video footage, not a static image.
2. No hemming-and-hawing when it's time to throw down. The pace must be maintained, particularly considering that we're all staring at computer screens! We've got to preserve that momentum and immersion to the best of our abilities.
3. You want to hear the people you're playing with, so consider banning all barking dogs or loud children.
4. In order to avoid the thunderous clatter of your keyboard, or feedback coming from your speakers, use a headset microphone. Don't breathe heavily.
5. Practice microphone discipline. If your phone starts ringing, hit the mute button until it stops.
6. Use the chat window for out-of-character questions and comments, not jokes.
7. If you're new to online RPG gaming, aim for 2 hours, at least at first. You can play those epic 5- and 6-hour sessions once you've got the hang of it.
8. Be on time. Be on time. Be on time. And double-check the date and time.

7. Appendix

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 of play

This is (loosely) based on a con game I ran. The players were Mark Causey ("Pastor"), Scott Perry ("Rowe") and Shane Jackson ("Mac"). It was a great game, lots of fun. The session was recorded, then edited, and occasionally embellished to produce this example of gameplay.

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.

This example scenario begins with the Disciples studying a printout taken from one of the Mafia organization's computers.

Prior to that, they found out about the demon through their Vicar, studied a few crime scenes, investigated the demon by visiting the morgue and examining its victims, and hacked into a DMV computer. Through disguise, trickery, and magic, they managed to close in on the demon, but didn't really get into too many altercations.

DIRECTOR: The name on the printout is Mary Sedgwick.

ROWE: If she's the next target--

PRIEST: It's either her or Denise. Should we split up?

MAC: 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--

PASTOR: Oh, right, in the morgue. Okay. So it's Mary that's the next one, then. Process of elimination.

ROWE: Literally.

ALL: (laughter)

PASTOR : 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.

MAC: 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.

ROWE: Let's step up and start talking.

PASTOR : You're not serious.

ROWE: Let's do it, these guys are just thugs. They should be easy to intimidate.

PASTOR : Fuck it, okay.

MAC: Sure.

ROWE: 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?"

ROWE: 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."

PASTOR : 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.

MAC: Ah, they were going to kill her and hide her in the concrete.

PASTOR : Shit, these guys probably have no clue about the demon.

ROWE: 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."

ROWE: "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.

PASTOR : 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.

PASTOR : Okay, I got a pair of 9s.

DIRECTOR: Bullseye.

PASTOR : 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.

PASTOR : No shit. Then she got out, later, when they were searching the roads?

DIRECTOR: Exactly.

MAC: Not bad.

DIRECTOR: Now, she's way outside the perimeter.

ROWE: Can we track her through the woods? I got hunting skills.

PASTOR : We got to use flashlights, I think. No nightvision goggles or anything.

MAC: Agreed.

DIRECTOR: Okay, then target difficulty 7.

ROWE: 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.

PASTOR : 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.

ROWE: Okay, I kill the flashlight.

PASTOR : 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.

MAC: I start running towards her.

PASTOR : We gotta make the demon come after us.

ROWE: I got a spell that will hurt the demon, if I talk to it. That'll piss it off.

PASTOR : Will a shotgun work? On a demon?

MAC: Don't know. We'll find out.

ROWE: 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.

MAC: Son of a bitch, they followed us. We do the hard work, and they get to clean up.

PASTOR : They're going to kill her. Shit.

MAC: 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 assassins, then fight the demon.]

PASTOR: 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!"

[PASTOR 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 DM says the target difficulty is 9.]

PASTOR : Three 12s.

DIRECTOR: Oh, shit.

ALL: (laughter)

DIRECTOR: So, that's 3 plus 12 equals 15, against the demon's roll, which was a 9. And I get a plus one with this spells That means 7 points of damage.

PASTOR : Damn.

MAC: Well, if we ever needed it, we needed it now.

ROWE: Wow.

DIRECTOR: The demon screams. As it turns around, you can finally see it...

ROWE: 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.]

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 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.

Honor: 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.

Description: When appropriate (such as when attacking or casting a spell or using a skill), the players described what they were doing. This keeps the game interesting, and also garners you that extra die.

7.2. Slang

This is a list of slang terms used by Disciple while on the job.

Angel food cake: (noun) A corpse, particularly one that has been mangled by demons.

Belt-fed: Used an intensifier, as in, "That guy is a belt-fed son of a bitch," i.e., a real son of a bitch.

Blackliner: (noun) A Disciple.

Boss: (noun) The group's Vicar.

Brace: (verb) To interrogate or question someone, usually in a hostile fashion.

Bush: The Sepsis. "This is some serious bush. Like a porno from the seventies."

Canned goods: (noun) Fake evidence, typically planted by Disciples to incriminate an enemy.

Carnivore: (noun) A demon that has consumed human flesh.

Case: (noun) An instance of supernatural activity that the Cabal must investigate.

Chalkout: (noun) A dead body.

Clear: (verb) To resolve a case by killing a demon.

Containment: (noun) The Cabal's policy of keeping the Last War a secret.

Decedent: (noun) A dead person.

Decapitate: (verb) To remove (through violence or other means) the leader of an organization.

Detox: (verb) To perform an exorcism.

DNA: (noun) Physical evidence left behind by a demon.

Drop: (verb) To abandon one skill in favor of another. Some demons do this as part of their patterns.

Element: (noun) One component of a larger fighting force.

Extract: (verb) To leave or evacuate a place or situation.

Fallujah: A dangerous situation. Means "a screwed-up place crawling with bad guys".

Flak: (noun) Gunfire or the use of magic.

Frag: (verb) To kill, particularly a civilian.

Hinky: (adjective) Something questionable or suspect.

HMFIC: Head Motherfucker In Charge. In other words, the Vicar.

Hotel Alpha: Haul ass (get out of there).

Jonestown: (noun) The compound or headquarters of a cult.

Jurisdiction: (noun) The area of operations for a Cabal.

Lead poisoning: (noun) Death by gunfire.

Like: (verb) To harbor a suspicion towards someone.

Maggot: (noun) A human that works alongside demons.

Merrin: (noun) A priest (or other clergyman) that tries to interfere with the Cabal's work.

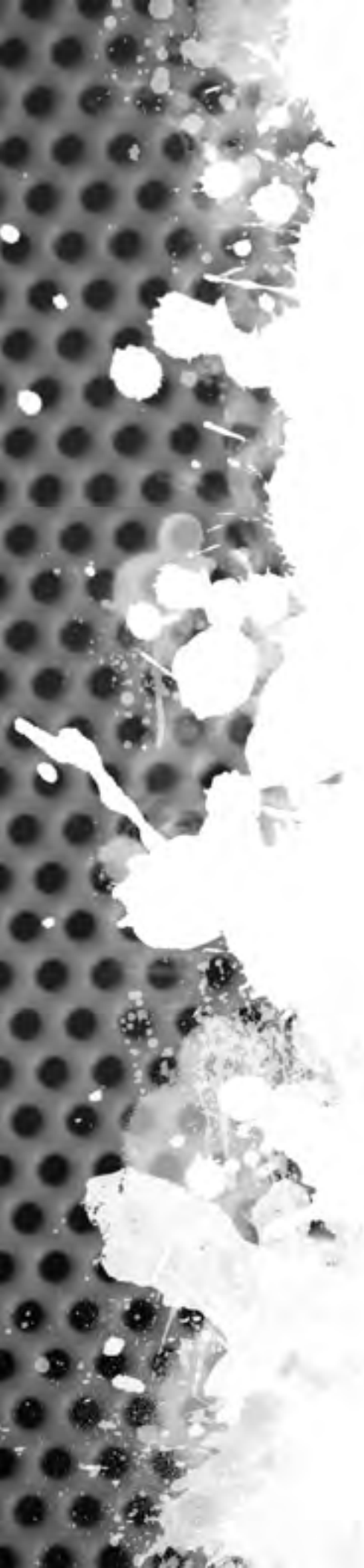
Millicent: (noun) A police officer or detective.

Neutralize: (verb) To kill or destroy.

OpFor: (noun) Opposing force; a group of enemies.

Oxygen thief: Useless person.

Pig: Authority figure wearing a uniform.



Pineapple: (noun) A hand grenade.

Pull the pin: (verb) To Retire.

Redliner: (noun) No one is sure exactly what it means, but it's definitely something bad.

Secretor: (noun) A demon that leaves physical evidence behind.

Short-timer: (noun) A reckless Disciple.

Skell: (noun) A human that has been possessed by a demon.

Stateside: The real world, outside the Sepsis.

Suit: (noun) A federal agent.

Tango: (noun) Target; an enemy.

Ten-ring: (noun) An achievement, success, or effective maneuver. Refers to the circular center of a target at a shooting range (which is worth ten points).

Throwdown: (noun) A concealed weapon.

Tinfoil: (noun) A conspiracy theorist; usually a term of derision.

Tourist: (noun) An ordinary person who investigates the supernatural.

Unsub: (noun) Unidentified subject; a killer (human or otherwise) whose identity remains unclear.

Vampire: A Disciple who works mostly at night.

Veteran: (noun) A Disciple with more than three months in the field.

Visual: (noun) To have a visual on something means that one can see the object or person in question.

Whiteline: (noun) A Zealot, or someone whose powers are Divine in nature (see *Spite: The Second Book of Pandemonium*).

Witness: (noun) A civilian who becomes aware of the existence of demons

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. 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.

Morlock and Council are somewhere in this ghost town. They were heading to church to follow a lead on this skell. Me and Slashfic went downtown.

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 skell 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 skell 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.

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.

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 skull. 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.

I can't hear him screaming anymore. I immediately lunge for the wall and flatten myself against it. 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 skull 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.

Been a while since someone used my real name.

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 skull 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.

And I'm watching you, the ghostlike orphicetus, long thin streamer of
water, coiling, retracting, dragging the hook back in, pulling you
in, watching it cut the water like a blade, silver, brilliant, never
ever out for long. You don't spit up poison like that. And if you do,
I'm here because that's how things are. That's the barb. The hook. Keep
your beer from the cooler, and I'm dragging. Back to me. Back for
the beer. Feel you out there, fighting the hook. Never a good idea. It's
a struggle, you set it. I learned that years ago, the hard way. Every good lesson, I learn
the hard way. You fight it, fight me, tug and yank, force the muscles in my throat
open, and there are sharp pinpricks of sweat on my brow. You didn't ask for this,
ask you. This is not a question of consent. This is an exercise in godhood. This is
a man ever gets to God. This is my religion. True religion. Not obeisance and supplication.
brow dusty with ash, hairshirt abrading tender flesh. This is communion with the
order. This is how we learn to die: observation. I am watching you flash like a knife
in the water, watching as you flash like a knife, mirrored in the churning glass, brilliant
and gorgeous and we both know exactly what is going on. I am watching your reflection
and cannot look at you anymore; your scales catch starlight and fling it at me until I
cannot even see my beer. I reach down and fumble for it, knock it over. Can't
see when it was empty anyhow. You're weakening as I wind it, coil it back in,
retract the weapon. You're slowing, and I'm winding it in, dragging you to shore.
I crash madly, splashing me with dark water as I bring you to the sand. You're
on the shore as I look down at you, your anaclastic shimmer, your gaps, your
a study in jewelry: flat obsidian eyes, scales glinting like nacreous diamonds, pearls,
drops of ruby from your ruined mouth. This is unfair. This is God. This is what
I cannot believe I did this. I am sick, now, the hook back in my mouth, the empty
beer at my heels, a gaping mouth, demanding more, tugging at the hook which scrapes
my gums, bloody spittle, frothing sputum and bile, the accumulated venom of a quarter
century. This is the best I've ever had it. This is exactly what I've always adored. This is satisfaction.
This is truth. This is beauty. This is God. This is the world, and this is the only thing
that I truly understand or believe in. The rest, I fake, because it seems to amuse or gratify
others. So let them feel amusement or gratification. I have you, and everything that you
have taught me. You say nothing. You gasp, curl, and shudder, and a shadow passes over
you. Confused, I look up. A cloud obscures the moon. This is too much. I leave you with
a fever and stagger inside. The next day, I rise to greet you. You are tired. You are hazy.
I put my hand to you and you are cold. I see my eyes reflected in your own. You say nothing.
I raise the blade and your eyes follow mine, never looking down. You do not move.
I drag the blade to your face, just under your eye. I drag it down, slowly, and then you are gone.
Obscured. Steam. I wipe it from the mirror and look at you again. You are tired. Your eyes
are flat and dark, and there is a tiny ruby droplet near your mouth. Shaving nick. I wipe it
away, and I continue. I scrape the stubble from your jaw and occasionally wipe my hand
on the cold mirror. I am watching the razor blade flash like mercury below my eyes, refracting
blinding me. Forever wind it up, coil it in my fists. I wipe blood from my lip and watch
your reflection because I cannot look at you anymore.

DIRECTOR

SECTION

PLAYERS

STOP

READING

DIRECTION

The Disciple's rib cage is crushed by the impact, and there's no doubt in anyone's mind: he's going to Retire now. With one last heroic effort, he hurls himself at the demon and holds it at bay while the other two Disciples evacuate the nuclear processing plant. They look back, and see their comrade strangling the demon even as the massive containment shield slides down, obscuring him from view. Inside the shield, the Disciple finally kills the demon. The room begins to blaze with white light as radioactive gases flood the room. The Disciple leans against a wall, blood spurting from his throat. He lights a cigar, puffs on it, and says something pessimistic. Then he slumps to the ground.

The Cabal infiltrate the military installation through guile, magic, and brute force. The team's hacker accesses the government network while the other two keep an eye out for trouble. The hacker frowns. It doesn't make sense. The government is creating an army of supernatural warriors, using demon DNA?

The door flies off the hinges as four soldiers charge the Disciples. The first soldier's jaw stretches unnaturally, and his teeth split the gums wide open as they elongate and sharpen. The second soldier holds out her hands, which meld into a single tendril of greenish flesh.

You make all this happen.

As the DM, 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 DM, it's your job to serve as the intermediary between the characters and the world.

In this chapter, we'll cover the structure of gameplay, the quickstart process, themes, extended campaigns, scene-setting, and world-building.

8.1. Overview

First, it's important for you to be familiar with the content in the Player Section; you need to have an idea of where the major information is located.

As the DM, 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 Scorn 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 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.

In a game of Scorn, the Disciples begin with a Trigger, then proceed through stages of investigation to the final showdown with the demon, resulting (presumably) in a Takedown.

8.1.1. The Trigger

The Trigger can come from any source, including civilians or the Vicar.

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. More often than not, the Trigger will be provided to the Cabal by the Vicar, particularly during the first few missions. He may call them with some information, or he may summon them to a meeting, or he may send them an email.

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 a contact tells the Disciples about a relative who's acting strangely, there's bound to be a complication of some kind -- a case of demonic possession, for instance. 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. It should be clear that someone's life hangs in the balance. A sense of urgency is vital.

TRIGGERS

Here are three places where you can choose to Trigger an investigation:

1. Before: The demon hasn't done anything yet. The Vicar gives the Cabal a clue, or they get word of a strange sighting that the police are dismissing as nonsense, or they otherwise find reason to investigate. But nothing's happened yet, so while they're over here, the demon is over there, and it does something, so they check it out, which brings them to the next location, and with each one, they get closer, until the showdown.

2. During: The demon strikes, and it makes the news. At the scene of a horrendous bloodbath, neighbors tell the cops that some child saw a hideous six-legged monster climbing up the side of a building. Authorities, though skeptical of the report, are on the lookout for an animal which may have escaped from a private zoo. Whatever the case, the Disciples get involved after the bodies have hit the floor.

3. After: The whole thing went down. The demon went on a killing spree, and the bodies are all piled up. Think of a terror cell or a serial killer that has just struck again. The investigators (cops or federal agents) kick open the door to the apartment. Inside, they find maps, notes, random scribbles, photographs tacked to walls. The same principle applies here. The demon has already picked out its next target, and there are cryptic clues that point to this somehow. This approach is a little like #1, except that this time, the Cabal gets to see the demon's handiwork (which should usually include one or two pieces of evidence) before the investigation begins. The clues won't lead the Cabal to the demon directly, but they'll put the team on its trail.

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, or 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 a Xaanuath, it could be that the wife was unfaithful, and the husband never forgave her. If the Disciples don't act in time, the wife will probably be mutilated, and might be killed.

If the Cabal reaches him in time, this can be averted. But if they drag their heels while investigating, they might get to him after he kills his wife, but before he's had a chance to kill anyone else. The Cabal's 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.

8.1.2. Investigation

When the Disciples arrive at the first scene, the investigation begins. This may entail the use of skill to question people (such as using the Charm skill to get information from a police officer). The Disciples might also use their magic to gather information; spells like Confessor and Catechism can be extremely useful during the Investigation phase.

In all of these cases, the Investigation segment requires that a DM 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. In fact, this can be an extremely bad idea, as it will rob the scenario of its mystery (after all, the players are going to be wondering what kind of enemy they're up against), and it will also probably result in a much shorter scenario than you anticipated. It's good to provide some insulation; the demon may be working with a lesser entity, such as a Rephah; or it may be using humans to do its dirty work, such as a cult or other faction. As the scenario progresses, the Disciples will close the gap, building tension.

During the Investigation stage, the Disciples are often impeded by NPCs with hostile intentions. These NPCs are, for whatever reason, opposed to the actions of the Cabal, and are prepared to respond with deadly force. Consider the following scenario:

An 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.

MULTIPLE DEMONS

As the Cabal becomes more powerful, it's possible that they'll go up against multiple demons. How do you handle the evidence?

For scenarios with two or more demons, be sure to indicate which physical evidence is found at what location. Be sure that each piece of evidence is tied to a specific demon, and keep track of it. Make sure that there are separate records kept for the demons in question so that you don't confuse the players.

8.1.3. Conflict

The NPCs 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 Scorn.

nPCs 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; cops who resent being interrupted while pepper-spraying college girls; federal agents investigating dissidents; and demon-worshipping cultists who know about the Disciples and want to stop them.

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.

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 2 or 3, so a Disciple should be able to make short work of an ordinary antagonist without even resorting to magic.

But when the reinforcements arrive, equipped with heavy weapons, or when the Investigation brings the Cabal into conflict with a well-funded faction, such as a government agency, then the threat will become real; body armor, assault rifles, and tanks will even the odds considerably.

Furthermore, as the characters get more powerful, they're likely to encounter well-trained enemies. Instead of mob enforcers with knives and pistols, they'll go up against assassins with sniper rifles and grenades and Violence scores of 4 or 5.

8.1.4. 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 a new round of Investigation (or to the Takedown).

For example, a Revelation might include information about the location of the skull, or clues about the relationship between a skull and the violent NPCs that the players keep running into. If the demon is a Judge, then the Revelation might be physical evidence that helps the players narrow down its location (since Judges tend to be territorial).

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.

8.1.5. 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 NPCs, and they've probably taken some hits.

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 are contacted when police find a drug lord nailed to an inverted cross in a whorehouse.

Investigation: Using magic, a Disciple learns that the victim was killed by a twelve-foot entity with fangs and claws.

Conflict: The crooked cops turn their backs as the drug lord's henchmen attack the Disciples, thinking that they're FBI agents.

Revelation: One of the captured henchmen reveals that the drug lord's death is the latest in a series. A rival organization's boss was murdered last week.

Investigation: The Disciples hit the other boss' mansion for clues.

Revelation: The Disciples find claw marks and other evidence in the room where the boss was killed. There are clues suggesting that the mob boss was killed by someone that he knew and trusted. Possibly a woman.

[Continue the Investigation/Revelation loop. When the Disciples hit locations, they find evidence. When they visit Battlefields, they encounter armed resistance, then find more information. Finally--]

Takedown: The final showdown involves Disciples, the last remaining drug lord and his private army, 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.

8.1.6. 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.

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.

Generally, a single session will probably last between two and six hours. If it lasts longer, consider an intermission during which the Disciples recover Blood before going back into the fray.

8.2. The Cast

Disciples are the stars of the show. Civilians are the people that they know, who furnish scenario triggers or help provide information. NPCs are the ordinary people that the Disciples encounter during an investigation. Some of them are enemies, and some of them are in need of protection.

8.2.1. The Disciples

The Disciples are the focus of the game. This doesn't change, ever. The characters are the heart and soul of Scorn, 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 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.

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 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 civilian, a clue, a challenge -- some opportunity to role-play, and to get involved. Let the players contribute to the story, and take your cues from them whenever possible.

8.2.2. Contacts

Civilians belong to the players. As the Director, you can't kill off a player's civilian. That's a job for the dice.

Use civilians to move a story along, but don't overuse them. Let the players know that they're in control of their civilians, and that they need to be willing to turn to them in a time of crisis or confusion.

Civilians make great story hooks. It's okay to use a civilian that way, provided that the players are still the focus of the story. A civilian 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 civilian recede into the story, unless summoned by the player. Don't have the civilian barge in on the Disciples as they're examining the corpse in the apartment upstairs. That's the player's call.

8.2.3. NPCs

NPCs are just the ordinary people that the players can interact with. Some are helpful, some are enemies; some are good, and some are evil.

NPCs can be anything. Window dressing, targets, victims, potential hostiles -- these characters currently belong to the Director. They are the people that the Disciples meet during the course of a scenario. They are store owners, priests, lawyers, policemen, teachers, and soldiers. They react to players' actions as you see fit, and they contribute to the mood and tone of an adventure.

Low-level NPCs can make good cannon fodder. Gang members, neo-Nazis, drug dealers, cops, hitmen, and drunken mobs are all good practice for Cabals. These fights allow Disciples to develop combat strategy, which comes in handy during the Takedown.

These NPCs are not necessarily going to pose a direct threat to the Cabal. One or two thugs with pistols are easy prey, even for Disciples that aren't Fighters. However, NPCs can pose indirect threats. For instance, a man with a gun can kill an innocent person -- the Disciples will need to move quickly to prevent a tragedy.

He can push a button, sounding an alarm, making it harder to infiltrate a military base. He can yell for help, summoning reinforcements. He can detonate a bomb, killing hundreds of victims a mile away. In this way, ordinary NPC humans can still create tension (threat) and a sense of accomplishment (resolution) for the group.

Make sure that some of them are sympathetic characters. Remember that almost every demon inflicts pain on an innocent. These NPCs are tangled up in complex situations.

Frequently, they are involved in scenarios that must be resolved. A child whose mother is possessed by a demon can't just be taken to safety. Something must be done with the mother. Whether she is killed in combat, or freed from demonic possession by exorcism is up to the players, but something must be done to fix the problem.

8.3. Interaction

You're there to help the players get the most out of their characters. 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.

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.

A Disciple's Decay score goes up when the following happens:

- * A human sees you cast a spell that deforms you or distorts reality (1)
- * You see a demon's true form (1)
- * You kill an innocent person (2)
- * Your civilian dies (varies)
- * You allow an innocent to die (1)
- * You eat human flesh (1)
- * You enter the Sepsis (1)
- * You learn the truth about your Vicar (2)

See page 55 for guidelines about lowering the Decay score.

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 (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.

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.

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 is 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.

LOCATION, LOCATION, LOCATION

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?

After that, the players need to 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 home base needs to be described completely, in serious detail. The players need to be able to visualize it, so that they know what can and can't be done at home.

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.

8.4. Opponents

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.

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.

Over time, you want to 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 kind of demon the team is dealing with. For extended campaigns, you might want to use modified versions of existing demons, just to keep the players off-balance.

For extended campaigns, you'll 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.

8.5. Pacing

Keeping the action going is all about starting big, moving the action, and picking up the slack when the session starts to slow down. What's more fun, a three-hour session of wall-to-wall skull-busting and car chases, or six hours of bickering, planning, and negotiation? Keep it moving, and you could get a short, mean game with lots of gore on the walls. That's what players remember, years down the line.

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.

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.

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 skull on the other line, or someone being eaten. You don't have to explain or justify it. 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.

8.6. First Game

Time for the first game. You only get one chance to make a first impression, so be sure that you know the rules inside and out, have some solid prepens on hand, and have all scenario information printed out and ready to go.

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.

PROTIP

Use one of the canned scenarios in the back of this book. Let your players tweak the civilians, or come up with their own and work them into the story.

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 Scorn pretty effectively (“You’re all dead meat!”). Number two, it (hopefully) ensures that they'll move a little faster through the chargen process.

ANTHROPOMORPHIZING DEMONS

Demons don't have jobs. They don't watch TV. They don't wonder aloud if they should order dessert. They don't read celebrity gossip magazines.

Sure, they might *pretend* to do these things, when they're trying to pass for human beings. But really, they're just mimicking our behavior, and they're really just trying to get close to their prey.

It's not unlike *Macrochelys temminckii*, the Alligator Snapping Turtle. The turtle lies still, with its mouth open, and it wiggles its tongue, which looks like a little bit of food. When a fish swims up to investigate, the turtle's jaws snap shut, and the prey is consumed. The turtle doesn't think about how clever it is, and it really doesn't have any opinions about the fish that it consumes. Demons function in the same way.

They don't enjoy what they do, they do it because they are engineered to do it. They're smarter than animals, but they're not human beings. They should feel alien, they should make people uncomfortable (even when posing as humans, they should feel... wrong, somehow).

Think of the demon as the snapping turtle, and humans as the unwary fish. The demons don't feel bad about the agony that they inflict. It's just the natural order of things.

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.

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)?

During the first game, the goal is to wipe the player characters out. It's not just 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.

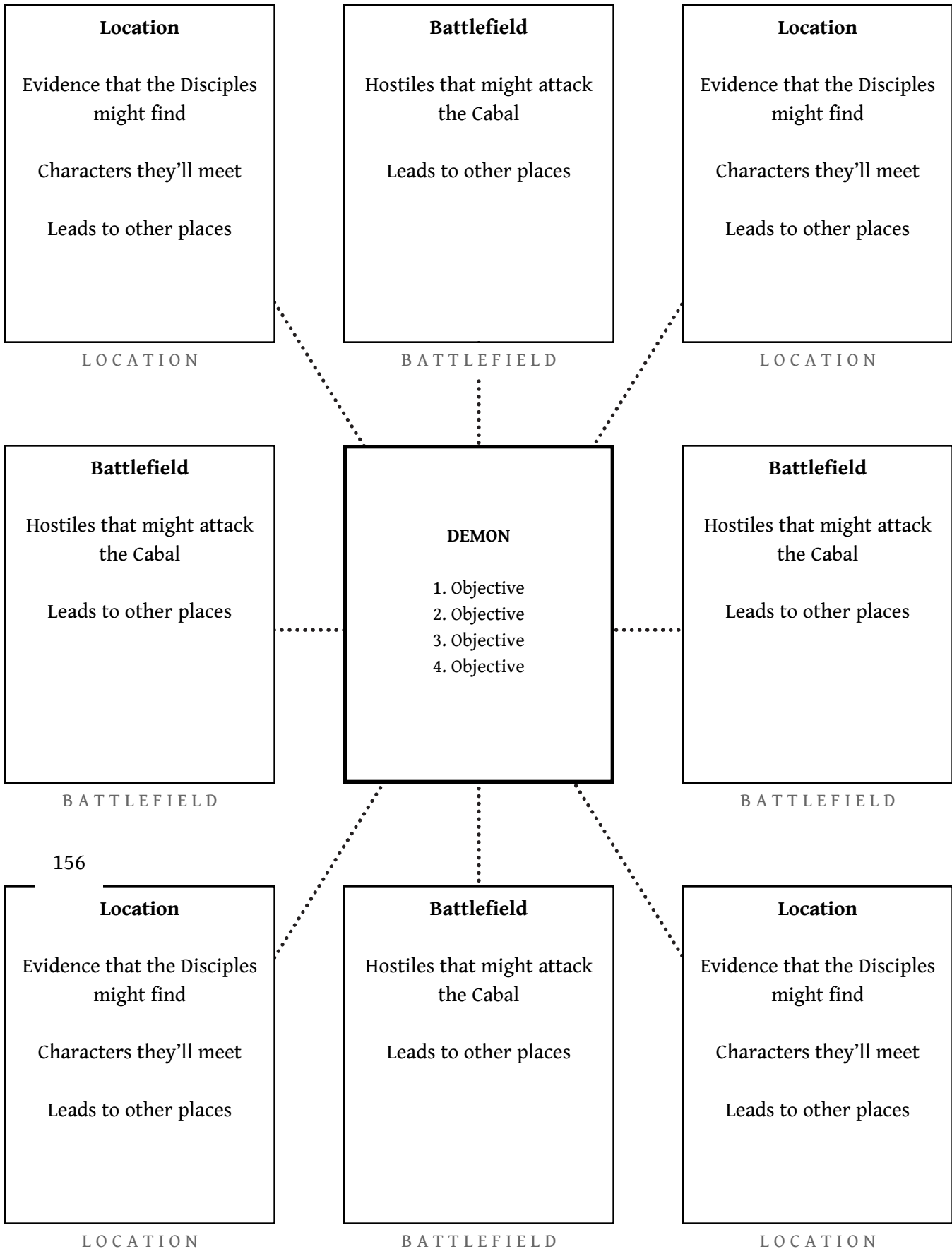
However, you must be merciful. You can't make the players feel like chumps. They're like the Spartans: doomed yet kickass. Let them have their glory, and don't fight them. They can die, but you can't actually oppose them. If the first experience with this game is frustrating, they're less likely to come back for more.

8.7. Scenarios

Creating scenarios for Scorn 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 get comfortable with is the idea that it's a group effort, and plotting a linear scenario isn't going to work in a game like this.

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. This collection of elements is plotted on a diagram called the Death Spiral, which you'll see when you turn the page.

DEATH SPIRAL



8.7.1. The Death Spiral

The death spiral is a depiction of the most significant elements of the scenario, and can help a DM keep an eye on the locations, battlefields, objectives, evidence, and hostiles. It includes all of the aforementioned elements, and serves as nothing more than a convenient way to document these story elements.

You don't need four locations and four battlefields. Feel free to mix it up. The important thing is that each place leads to at least one other location or battlefield (preferably, each place should point to two other places, so that the players never reach that dreaded dead end).

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 also okay if you just have them written in a notebook or on your computer. 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.

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.

8.7.2. Objectives

There are three or four secondary objectives found in each scenario. The first priority is always the take-down 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 loses a point of Decay.

You can vary the number of objectives, naturally.

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. It's up to the players.

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 lose some of the Decay they've accrued.

8.7.3. Trigger

The trigger is the element that kicks off the scenario, usually in the form of a tip from the Vicar or from a Contact. You'll want to document which kind of Trigger is featured in your scenario.

Triggers 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;
- * Or a mysterious envelope left on the doorstep, containing photos that show a demon erupting from the belly of a pregnant woman.

8.7.4. 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. It lists everything that happened just prior to the Cabal's involvement, and it outlines the things that will happen next, unless the Disciples resolve the case.

8.7.5. 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 (mostly locations).

8.7.6. 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.

8.7.7. Battlefields

Battlefields are just like locations, but they feature less evidence. 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.

8.7.8. 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. Here, you'll list all of the main characters in the scenario.

8.7.9. Hostiles

Hostiles are characters found in specific battlefields, and they'll attack the Disciples on sight. For example, the Zilant enforcers are found at this warehouse, and the dirty federal agents will be hanging out near their safehouse downtown, and so forth. These hostiles are tied to specific places, where they 'wait' for the Disciples to show up so they can fight.

Hostiles are the cannon fodder of Spite. They exist to get the daylights 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 (of course, remember that everyone hates the Cabal, so if you've got a demon battling a group of mob hitmen, they should all eventually turn to the Disciples and open fire).

8.7.8. 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.



SETTING THE SCENE #1

(To Player 1): What gender is the corpse?

(Player 1): Female.

(To Player 2): Okay, what about the particulars? Height, weight, and so on.

(Player 2): Um, Caucasian female, mid-thirties, medium build.

(To Player 3): What kind of injuries are we looking at?

(Player 3): Shattered skull, busted wide open. Don't know if that's what killed her, though.

SETTING THE SCENE #2

(To Player 1): The engine is still running, but it's in park, and there's no one in the driver's seat. The back doors of the van are wide open. What's inside?

(Player 1): I can see wooden crates. Six or seven crates in the back of the van.

(To Player 2): Something's dripping down the side of one of the crates. What is it?

(Player 2): Um... at first I thought it was blood, but it's too thick. Some kind of bodily fluid, dark blue.

(To Player 3): What's written on the crates?

(Player 3): The address is a PO Box, but on the sides, I can see FRAGILE and LIVE SPECIMEN written in red ink in all-caps.

8.8. Campaigns

More than just a sequence of scenarios, the campaign drives the Disciples deeper into a complex situation that they understand only over time. It culminates in a major revelation, and it requires some significant action on their part.

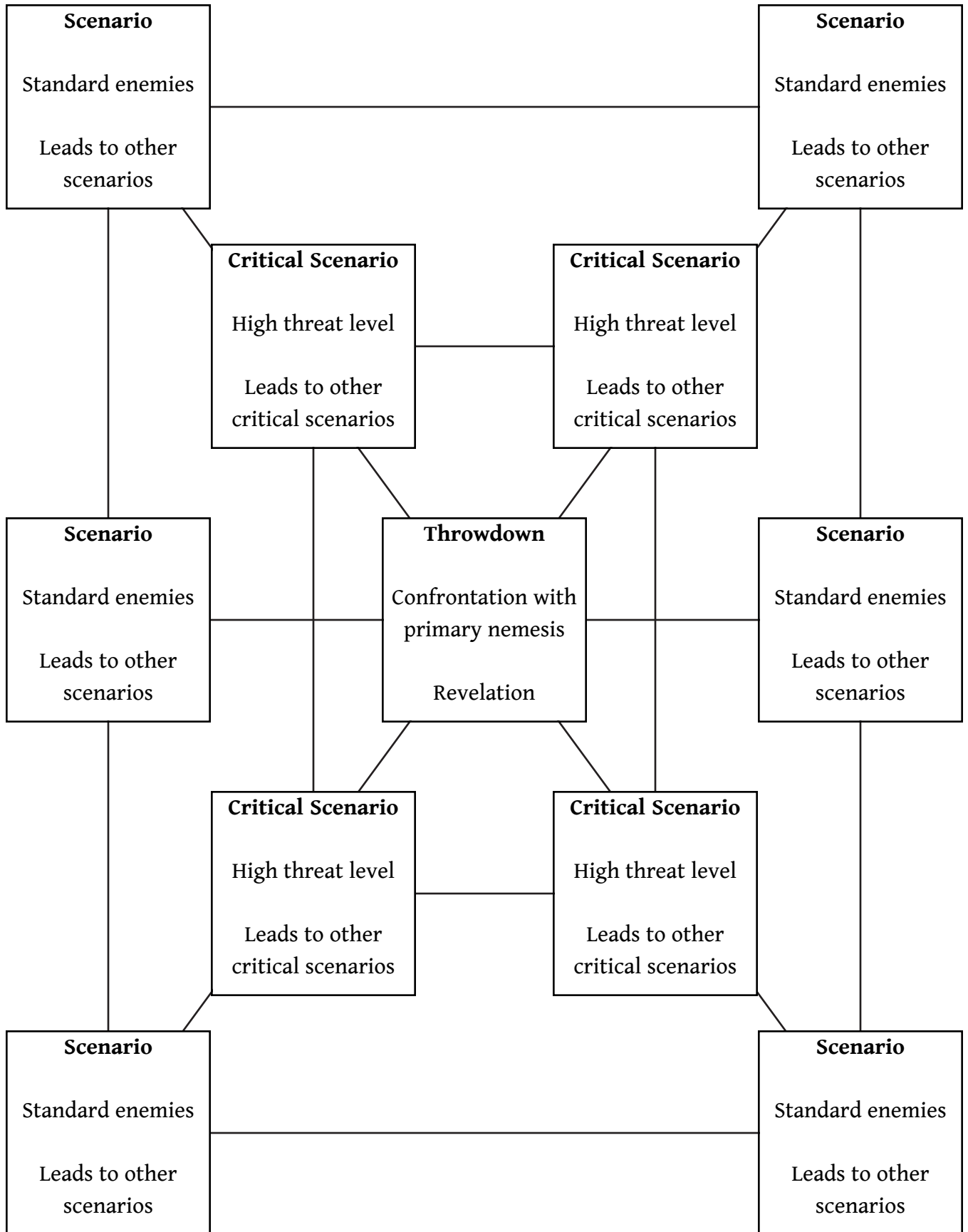
A campaign begins as an ordinary scenario, but the information presented during the adventure will eventually lead the Disciples closer to the final act. Think of the campaign as a large version of the Death Spiral, but instead of locations, you've got scenarios. Those on the edge, farthest from the finale, are just the tip of the iceberg. These are ordinary sessions in which the Disciples get the Trigger, they investigate, and they destroy a demon.

In the next layer, as the Disciples work their way towards the center, they start to learn more about the conspiracy or puzzle at the heart of the campaign. Then, after they've worked their way through these, the campaign's finale transpires. Here, all information is revealed.

As noted, it's not unlike the Death Spiral. In the Death Spiral, the Cabal moves from place to place, gathering information about the demon they're hunting. Rather than just get all the data at once, they learn a little bit here and there. They find some physical evidence, they learn that it has tentacles, they find some teeth marks, they figure out its name, and so on.

In the same manner, the Disciples learn a little bit more about the situation with each additional scenario, which brings them closer and closer to the crux of the conflict.

CAMPAIGN SPIRAL



8.8.1. Goals

Your goal for a campaign shouldn't be a specific resolution ("The Disciples learn this information and then they do this and that..."). Instead, you should be aiming towards an opportunity for action, which must be resolved in some way ("The Disciples learn this information, and then must decide what to do; some of their options include..."). If you always bear this in mind, then you'll be better equipped to respond to the decisions that they make (which will be different from the decisions that you would have made), and you'll also create situations that could be resolved in a number of different ways.

When you create open-ended situations like these, you cause some degree of tension. After all, if there's one way to fix a problem, and it's obvious, then there's no tension; but if there's a problem that might be resolved in a number of different ways, then there's no way to be sure that you're pursuing the best plan of action.

This kind of stress is healthy; when the gaming group has a choice to make, it requires some discussion and debate, which gets them more immersed and involved in the game world. After the choice has been made, and the situation gets resolved, there's a sense of accomplishment that transcends what would be felt had they just jumped through some prepared hoops without any kind of choice or risk.

8.8.2. Scene Setting

Scene setting can be a powerful tool that adds unexpected twists to a situation, and it is a good way to keep the players immersed in the game world.

When using this technique, you start to describe a situation or setting, but then begin to ask specific and pointed questions of the players.

For example, the Disciples may tell you that they want to check out the condemned building. Inside, they decide to sweep the area for clues or information. You tell them that they're standing in an empty office with worn grey carpeting.

The acoustic ceiling tiles overhead are missing, and they can see the HVAC wiring and pipes overhead. Everything is quiet and covered in dust. And in the corner of the room, there's a mangled corpse. Then, you start to ask questions:

- * What's on the ground?
- * How did he die?
- * Where are his eyes?
- * What's running towards you?
- * What's written on the wall?
- * Where is the gun?
- * What's in the sink?
- * Who is in the photograph?
- * Why is the smell so nauseating?

This definitely requires you to be comfortable with seat-of-the-pants directing, and it means that your gaming group has to be ready to answer questions like that without hesitation (too much prevarication will kill the momentum and ruin the moment).

As you can see in these two examples, you can widen or narrow the focus of your questions. Open-ended questions are a bit of a challenge, as you're essentially providing a blank space that must be filled with content. While a veteran DM has no problem coming up with something that fits in that space, a player may not be accustomed to that level of improvisation.

More narrowly-focused questions can make it easier for players to get into the spirit of scene setting. By telling them what they're looking at, then asking for one or two key details ("A name is written on the wall in blood -- What's the name?"), you get them involved in the process, and you make it easy for them to participate.

The more narrowly-focused the questions, the easier it is for the DM to incorporate content into a scenario. More open-ended questions ("What's inside the coffin?") can be a challenge, because there's absolutely no way to know what the players are going to say ("Jimmy Hoffa's corpse! No, wait, it's a six-foot cybernetic tapeworm with a penis!").

So good luck with that.

8.8.3. World Building

World building is a mini-game that can be played at any time in a campaign. Before starting a scenario, explain the rules to your players and use the mini-game to create a world that the players have some stake in, as co-authors.

Here are the rules:

Each player gets 5 points. You can spend points (or earn points back) by assigning people to the world, and also by assigning them attributes. Each player (including the Director) can contribute one item (from the list below) per turn.

- * Create person (name) - Costs 1 point
- * Add normal backstory to person (hometown, personal life) - Costs 1 point
- * Add special backstory to person (fame, notoriety) - Costs 2 points
- * Add powerful backstory to person (wealth, elected office, authority) - Costs 2 points
- * Establish allegiance between two characters (marriage, friendship, business) - Costs 1 point
- * Establish dislike between two characters (rivalry, animosity) - Earns 1 point
- * Establish murderous intentions between two characters (revenge, hate) - Earns 2 points
- * Establish character as Cabal's nemesis (criminal, authority) - Earns 2 points

This process doesn't need to continue until all points are used up. Once the group has spent a few rounds on this process, you're bound to have a pretty interesting group of characters that you can now flesh out and incorporate into the game. Rather than dropping completely new NPCs into the mix, you'll now be adding characters that the players know a little bit about.

Check out the example on the right. Though they haven't established much about Stephanie Brogan, they do know that she's a principled district attorney who's not afraid to destroy a corrupt politician if he's crossed the line; and they know that she's been targeted by an underworld assassin.

EXAMPLE OF WORLD-BUILDING

Player1: I'll start. I'm creating a character named Chris Anderson. That costs me 1 point, so I'm down to 4.

Player 2: Okay, I'll create a character named Stephanie Brogan. Also costs me 1, so I'm at 4 now.

Player 3: Hmm. I'll give Chris a backstory. He was running for office, but a scandal forced him to withdraw. He's now a hard-drinking man. Bitter and alone. That's a special backstory, which costs me 2, so I'm down to 3.

Director: Let's say there's another character named Seneca. A woman. I got 4 points.

Player 1: Nice. Seneca is an assassin in the criminal underworld. Definitely a special backstory. I'm down to 2 points.

Player 2: Stephanie is... a district attorney. That also gives her some power, as an elected official. So that's 2 points, leaving me with 2 points.

Player 3: Time to make these people hate each other. Stephanie is making Seneca's life difficult, so Seneca wants her dead. That earns me 2 points. I was at 3, but now I'm back up to 5.

Director. Sounds good to me. I'll say that Seneca is also the Cabal's nemesis. Not sure why yet, but she wants you guys dead. That's 2 points for me, so I'm now up to 6.

Player 1: Let's say that Stephanie Brogan is the one who cost Chris Anderson his career. So he's going to be loyal to Seneca, which costs 1 point. I'm down to 1.

This mini-game is something that you don't want to drop on novice players, as they've got enough to get accustomed to. But if you've been playing some one-shots, and you want to start gearing up for an extended campaign, this can be a good way to signal a shift in gears.

Chapter 9: Setting

9.1. What has been

Jesus of Nazareth, also known as Christos, the Unholy One, spread a pestilence of demons across the land. In Tyre and Sidon, in Gesara and Gadara, in Sepphoris and Tiberias, in Capernaum, in Jerusalem, and in Samaria, he afflicted the innocent, and he tormented the defenseless.

An ever-growing army of exorcists battled with these fiends, casting them from the bodies of their victims, and destroying them in combat.

Led by Judas Iscariot, a powerful sorcerer, these first Disciples were able to trap Christos, and banish him to the blasted sands of Gehenna. There, Christos waits, dreaming.

The Disciples continued to fight their battle. 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.

The Call of Christos



9.1.1. Demons

There are three infernal castes: the Kharasiai, the Chraleddim, and the Ouloromm.

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 Ouloromm are the lowest caste, and the shock troops of Hell. There are four ranks: Maculates, Chthonics, Epidemes, 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. Epidemes, known as Infectors, spread pestilence and disease.

The Ouloromm are the demons that Disciples hunt.

9.1.2. Angels

There are three divine castes: the Exousiai, the Ophanim, and the Seraphim.

The Exousiai are the highest angelic 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 Ouloromm to claim an appropriate number of human souls before the angels can launch their counterattack, initiating the final conflict.

9.1.3. The Last War

The forces of Hell have been deployed. The Ouloromm (Hunters, Infectors, Stalkers, and Defilers) have hit the ground, and humans have already perished by the millions.

It is not known how many human lives have been claimed by the Ouloromm, but the number grows every day. Soon, they'll harvest enough souls, and 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.

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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 Ouloromm take out the required number of humans, and gather enough souls to prompt the angels to come to Earth, 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.

9.1.4. Vicars

Most Vicars 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 Vicars 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).

Nota bene: If you really need stats for Vicars, consider using one of the Erelim from Spite.

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 Vicar 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.

In gameplay, Vicars give the Cabal leads, provide advice if the players have struck a dead end, and occasionally bail them out of trouble. The Vicar allows the Director to help the players unfuck themselves when there's a bad situation. The Vicar'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.

9.1.5. Disciples

Wielding dark magic granted to them by the Vicars, 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 Vicar 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.



9.2. 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.

9.2.1. 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 Vicar, while others will shrug and say what the hell.

9.2.2. Learning the Truth

The Disciples may learn that their Vicar 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 Vicar 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 demon to approach the Cabal and tell them that their Vicar 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 Vicar 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 asskickery more intense when they get tired of puzzling over it and decide to just beat the daylights out of everyone.

As for the true nature of God, it is not unlike the ichneumon wasp, but on a cosmic scale.

9.2. The Abbatoir

This is where Disciples dump their corpse-meat (see page 53). It is a direct conduit to God, and is a part of His design for humanity. That's why no one can see it except Disciples and demons.

Some demons live inside the Abbatoir. They are watching.

CHAPTER 10

The truth, then: demons love us. They love humans. They need us. They acknowledge the debt, in the same way that some people kneel beside an animal they have killed while hunting, and murmur words of gratitude; or clasp their hands over a holiday meal and express their thanks to some deity before cutting the meat from the bone and crushing it between their teeth, washing the warm bolus down with wines and sugary soft drinks and gravies. Demons feed upon us, and their regard for us is not without a sincere affection. Nonetheless, our agony is their purview. It is not enough to end a life; for the end of life signals the end of pain.

DEMONS

The demon seeks to prolong the agony, like an interrogator who tries to keep the witch or terrorist alive long enough to serve a purpose; in the case of the demon, this purpose is nourishment, for it is the extremity of physical and emotional pain which sustains them. This world, replete with torment and degradation, is a ceaseless banquet for entities that gorge upon neglect and abuse like sweetmeats. Even as they pause over our sweating, broken bodies, our shattered teeth, our torn hair and garments, they feel a profound connection, like a man stuffing dripping pork into his mouth while thinking of the bristled snout he tickled only days before.

12.1. Types of Demons

There are four types of Ouloromm: the Maculates, Nycterents, Infectors, 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.

12.1.2. Hunters

Nycterents (which Disciples call 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.

10.1.3. 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.

10.1.4. Infectors

Epidemes, which Disciples call Infectors, leave behind bloated corpses, irradiated homes, and ghost towns where entire communities have been wiped out. The mere presence of an Infector will cause outbreaks of plagues with high mortality rates: cholera, Dengue fever, and malaria will afflict victims in regions where these diseases have never been reported before.

10.2. 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.

10.2.1. 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, 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.

10.2.2. 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.

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, 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.

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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.

COMBAT

Fighting a demon is not unlike combat with a human.

Start with the demon's highest attribute. That's the baseline for target difficulty. If it's Violence, we're talking about a physical attack.

If it uses Traction, then it's manipulating the victim, showing him visions of the past, hinting at his future (eternal damnation, murder at the hands of his teammates).

If the demon's high score is Instinct, it's going to use elements of the surroundings to inflict damage: power cords detach and land in a puddle of water near the Disciple, saw blades fly through the air, cars start themselves and try to run the Disciple over.

If the demon uses Wrath, you can add to the target difficulty.

Most demons will come out swinging, blazing through Wrath to try and kill members of the Cabal.

Some demons (Stalkers and Infectors, mostly) are armored. Same rules apply: subtract the armor's value from any damage inflicted, then lower the armor rating by 1 until it's gone.

10.3. Sepsis

An demon is a deviation from the natural order, and it heralds some awful consequence. As a result, the mere presence of a demon causes weird things to happen, even long after the entity has gone:

- * The ground where an demon has walked is now covered in slithering maggots;
- * Animals are torn apart from within by hives of insects growing in their bowels;
- * Strange people with cadaverous grins wink and wave from inside mirrors;
- * Knives fling themselves from kitchen drawers and hurl themselves at people;
- * Fluids slide up walls and across ceilings in defiance of gravity, then rain up into the sky;
- * Laughter is heard in empty rooms, and then it turns into screams of utter agony;
- * Solid objects, such as tables and chairs, are suddenly rendered rubbery and malleable;
- * A reporter on TV blows her brains out, and the screen explodes as blood sprays into the room;
- * Healthy and friendly animals suddenly attack their masters (or themselves);
- * People suddenly vomit up living things, which rapidly crawl away;
- * Statues step down from their pedestals and devour children;
- * Paintings speak, telling of horrible calamities yet to come, then commit suicide;
- * Ovens grow teeth, and they bite off the hands of cooks, then broil the skin black;
- * A tentacle snakes out of the toilet and starts attacking anyone in range;
- * Loud screaming is heard from every speaker in the area, including radios, phones, and TVs;
- * Words written in blood appear on walls, giving false information to the Cabal;
- * Trees reach down and carve their initials into the flesh of teenagers.

Over time, these incidents become more commonplace. They also escalate. Sometimes, these manifestations take physical form and attack the Disciples.

Deformed people in the mirror will step through and attack; shadows will become tangible; statues will bludgeon Disciples with their stony fists; deformed animals will bite and claw. These manifestations aren't as powerful as demons, but the very fact that these can attack should challenge the expectations of the player, making them nervous.

Manifestations

Violence: 5-8

Instinct: 1-3

Traction: 1-3

Life: 7-10

Wrath: 0-12

Armor: 4-8

These phenomena can also make for excellent Triggers, drawing Disciples into the investigation.

10.1.2. Wrath

Wrath enables the demon to perform certain stunts. During combat, all demons can kill a point of Wrath to regain a point of Life, OR to add to the target difficulty when attacking or defending. This can be done as often as necessary. They can also do other maneuvers, as detailed below.

10.3. Behavior Patterns

All demons follow patterns of behavior based on their type. They're helpless, in a sense, as they must obey these urges.

10.3.1. 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.

10.3.2. Hunter

The Hunter must track down and kill humans. If discovered, it must eventually attack.

10.3.3. 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.

10.3.4. Infector

The Infector contaminates people with strange and horrific new diseases. It turns some of its victims into zombies (with the same stats as the Manifestations on the previous page), who turn other humans into zombies as well. If anyone attempts to cure the pestilence, the Infector will set a series of devastating traps before attacking.

10.4. Wrath

Wrath is a resource that ranges from 10 to 30. It enables 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.

10.4.1. Defiler

A Defiler can use Wrath to hurl objects and attack people with them. By killing Wrath, the demon can attack with a target difficulty equal to triple the amount of Wrath killed (2 points equals 6 difficulty). 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 skull, there's no way to be certain (short of magic use) that the skull 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.

10.4.2. 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. This second attack doesn't use the Violence score -- it's on a point-for-point basis, 1 point of Wrath equaling 2 points of target difficulty (so the

demon attacks, then kills 5 points of Wrath for a second attack at 10 T.D.). The maximum for any such attack is 7 points of Wrath (target difficulty 14).

10.4.3. 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 Instinct 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 Stalker can also use Wrath to defend itself (or attack Disciples) by killing points to add to its target difficulty during combat (one point of Wrath is 2 points of TD).

10.4.4. Infector

By killing a point of Wrath, an Infector can unleash a repugnant projectile attack. Leeching a point of life from each infected person within line-of-sight, the demon can spit writhing maggots in caustic sputum (casu marzu, basically) at its target. The target difficulty is equal to the amount of life that it has stolen from its human victims.

10.5. Demons

The following pages list the demons of Scorn. Each listing contains a description of the demon's appearance, an explanation of its particular behavior pattern, and notes pertaining to the take-down, during which the Disciples will bring the demon down.

See page 173 for a description of how demons use Traction, Violence, and Instinct during combat.



Akaestic

Type: Stalker

Violence 1
Instinct 9
Traction 6
Life 19
Armor 3
Wrath 20

The Akaestic demon haunts lonely places and lonely people. It casts its thoughts far away, until it has found a victim lonely and desperate enough to feed it. Then, it slowly drives him mad, planting thoughts of murder in his mind.

An amorphous blob of tissue, covered in screaming mouths, the demon has several large tentacles growing from its central mass. It typically hides in a sewer or forest, but rarely bothers to conceal itself. If it is discovered, it will kill and devour its victim.

From its remote hiding place, the Akaestic will cast out its mind, sifting through nearby towns and cities, hoping to find a lonely person, someone with neither friends nor family. Its victim will ideally match the following description: a quiet drifter with no steady job or personal life, who lacks any sort of focus or ambition.

Upon finding a potential victim, the Akaestic will begin to sing to him, in a voice like that of a small child. Only the victim will be able to hear this music. After a time, the visions will take their toll. Unable to hold down a job or make regular appointments at the soup kitchen or unemployment office, the victim will be told, time and again, that only one person understands.

The Keradhon will finally appear to the victim, in the form of a numinous person with feathered wings, and it will identify itself as a guardian angel. Then it will command its victim to find and punish the wicked. At first, the victim may resist, but the Keradhon is patient, and will wear him down. It knows his weakness, and it will persist until he does as it commands.

The Keradhon will also speak to the victim, from miles away, whispering in his ear. It will tell the victim that he is special, that he is loved, that he is important. It will insist that those who belittle or ignore him, those who think that they're better, will all perish in due time.

Then, the visions begin. The victim will begin to see short acts of violence, perpetrated on beautiful, successful, or wealthy people, typically members of the opposite sex. With time, the visions will get longer and longer, and more grotesque. First, the victim will see a shooting. Then, a stabbing. Then, hours of torture and ritual impalement.

After the first murder, the victim will be directed to obtain transportation by any means necessary, and will then be guided to the place where the starving Akaestic waits, coiling its tentacles in anticipation. Devouring the food that its victim has brought, the Akaestic will thank its victim and send him back out into the world to procure more food. If discovered, the demon will attack with its rubbery tentacles.

Aspinaba

Type: Defiler

Larva

Violence 1

Instinct 2

Traction 8

Life 1

Wrath 27

Demon

Violence 5

Instinct 2

Traction 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.



AVOMIAD

Type: Stalker

Violence 1
Instinct 9
Traction 5
Life 19
Armor 4
Wrath 20

The Avomiad befriends weak, bullied people, and patiently drives them to murder and suicide. Appearing to its victim as a small, talking animal (such as a kitten or squirrel), the Avomiad offers reassurance, promises vengeance, and vows to bestow great powers. Ordinarily, even someone mistreated on a daily basis might well begin to question his sanity when confronted with a talking animal; however, the Avomiad slowly and gently begins to assert control of its victim from the first word.

Initially, the demon merely chats with its victim. It sizes up the victim's potential, and tries to determine his state of mind. Could he be persuaded to kill? Is he so full of hate and frustration that he could commit murder? Could he be driven to suicide?

If the demon concludes that its victim is suitable, it will begin to plant dark ideas in his mind. Even after the demon has bewitched its target, the victim may be confused or frightened. Therefore, the demon only visits when the victim is alone.

It claims to be an angel, and says that it has come to free the victim from his suffering. It promises respect and accolades, admiration and leadership. It then plants visions of brutality, scenes of revenge taken for all the petty slights and misdeeds of the victim's tormentors. In those visions, the victim stands, covered in blood, in a room full of corpses, smiling.

Over time, the Avomiad begins to push its victim to the edge. For weeks, it visits the victim, at a certain time of day (a lunch break, or late at night), and it chats with him. It asks him to divulge everything -- all the humiliations and abuse of the day, all the insults and frustration.

Unfortunately, this does not have a cathartic effect on the victim. Instead, it only serves to last him into a blind fury, and the victim begins to daydream about violent revenge. After days, or even weeks, the victim obtains a weapon. Generally, the Avomiad prefers cutting or stabbing weapons, so the victim typically procures a knife or axe.

On the morning of the onslaught, the victim wakes up with red eyes. The irises are blood-red, though the cornea and pupil are still white and black, respectively. In addition, over the course of the next few minutes, the victim's body will be altered by the Avomiad's magic. Horns will sprout from his brow, or his nails will become long black talons.

Exhilarated, the victim will take his weapon to the place of torment, and will immediately begin the slaughter. Without thinking, he will slash and stab, covering himself in blood and gore. Silently, invisibly, the Avomiad watches, enjoying the carnage. When finished, the victim will commit suicide as quickly and efficiently as possible.

However, if the victim is in any way impeded or accosted, at any time, the demon will attack. If Disciples question the victim, try to restrain him, or take away his weapon, the Avomiad will do its best to slay them all. Swift and reptilian, the demon has long nails and teeth, which it uses in combat.



GOOD
NEWS.
IT'S
CANCER.
YOU'RE
GOING
TO
FU~~CKING~~
DIE.

BASKRA

Type: Stalker

Violence 2

Instinct 8

Traction 5

Life 18

Armor 4

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 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 his 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.

Type: Defiler

Violence 5

Instinct 3

Traction 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.

Bazulariam



Benassim



Type - Stalker

Violence 1

Instinct 9

Traction 5

Life 20

Armor 3

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 himself 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.



Cauriaq

Type: Stalker

Violence 3
Instinct 7
Traction 4
Life 18
Armor 2
Wrath 21

Appearance

The Cauriaq 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 Cauriaq smells of vomit.

Pattern

The Cauriaq demon haunts those who murder their own flesh and blood. When a father kills his daughter, or a man shoots his brother, the Cauriaq 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 Cauriaq 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 Cauriaq 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 Cauriaq may use the murderer's body to kill, leaving behind some trace elements that bring the case to the attention of the Cabal's Vicar. 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 Cauriaq). In any case, the murderer's location should be the focus of the investigation, once his identity has been established.

If the Cauriaq 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.



Cherub

Cherub

Rank: Infector

Violence 11

Instinct 5

Traction 2

Life 20

Armor 4

Wrath 20

Appearance

The Cherub is a towering mass of pale green tissue, shot through with veins of yellow and bright emerald. It drips with thick banana-yellow mucus. Vaguely humanoid, the ten-foot-tall entity has a skull-like head and two misshapen arms. Its lower body is a column of flesh that slides rapidly across the floor, leaving a trail of fluids.

Pattern

The Cherub targets low-income neighborhoods and places where people struggle in squalor and deprivation. Specifically, it is attracted to those who seek to resolve such problems through community service or volunteer work.

Once the demon has established its target, it secretes toxins from its skin, which are then smeared over random surfaces and left for the unwary. The Cherub may leave a box full of canned goods near a homeless shelter, or it may assume human form and

make a donation (in the form of a written check, infected with some horrible disease) at a food bank.

At rallies, marches, and peaceful protests, the demon will shoulder its way through the crowd, infecting everyone it touches. At soup kitchens, it will ladle out contaminated food to the hungry.

Eventually, the epidemic will take hold, and the sickness will begin to claim lives. The victims of the Cherub develop coin-sized white boils, ringed with pink, across their bodies, which eventually burst, spraying yellowish mucus in all directions. As the victim's condition worsens, internal organs slowly liquefy and blood seeps from the pores. The Cherub haunts the victim during these final stages, invisible to everyone else.

Sometimes, the demon selects a victim (or a dozen victims) and alters the chemistry of the infection somewhat. The infection is no longer directly fatal. Instead, after the boils have appeared, the victim is driven completely insane with rage, and is compelled to rampage through the area, attacking everyone he sees until he is killed.

Infected victims receive 6 points of Life and 3 points of Violence.



curhadac

Type - Hunter

Violence 8

Instinct 5

Traction 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 theeight 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 accomodate 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 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.

DAEMUIL

Type - Hunter

Violence 8

Instinct 4

Traction 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 dirt-caked 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?





DAVAAD

Type - Stalker

Violence 2

Instinct 7

Traction 6

Life 19

Armor 5

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.

DENGIORRE



Type - Stalker

Violence 3

Instinct 8

Traction 4

Life 20

Armor 4

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, a pair of serrated jaws snaps 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.



Deustuam

Type : Hunter

Violence 9

Instinct 5

Traction 1

Life 25

Wrath 14

Appearance

The Deustuam 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 Deustuam 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 Deustuam 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 Deustuam is a powerful combatant, and will not hesitate to engage the Disciples if they prevent it from completing its mission.



Duogorak

Type: Hunter

Violence 9
Instinct 5
Traction 1
Life 21
Wrath 14

Parasite

Violence 3
Instinct 1
Traction 1
Life 10
Wrath 6

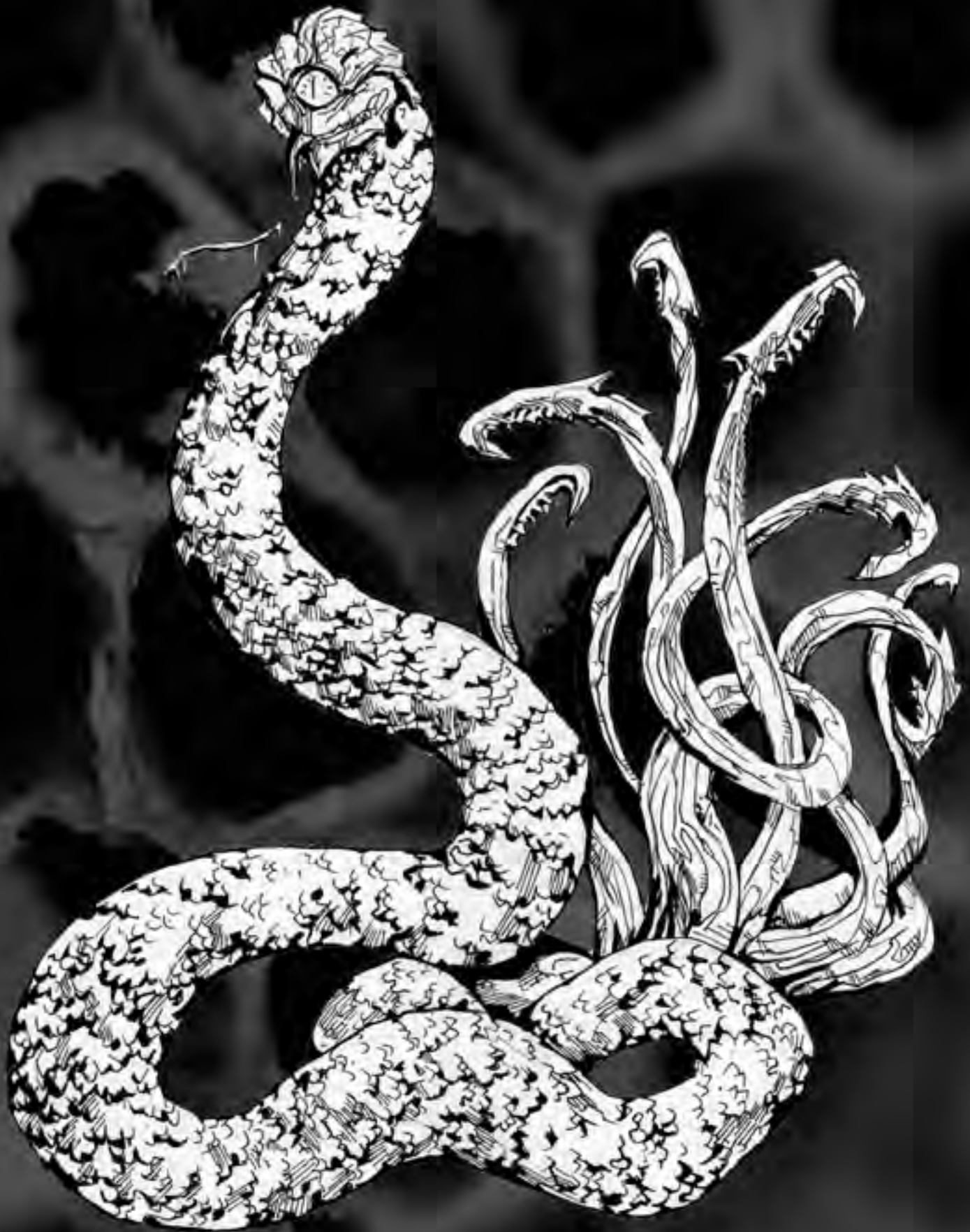
The Druthua demon lurks below the city, feeding on its dregs. The homeless person, the alcoholic, the addict -- all these fall prey to the creature. It wraps its victim in its writhing tentacles and slowly crushes the life from the struggling body.

Then, it absorbs the victim's memories, and begins to summon those whom the victim knew. Other people who knew the deceased will see him standing on a corner, beckoning.

If they follow, they will eventually reach the lair of the demon. Deep in the sewers, or in some other remote place, the demon will lurk, waiting to snare another unwary trespasser in its coils.

The Druthua feeds on those who will not be missed. However, if threatened, it will kill anyone, regardless of social status.

If attacked, the creature will first unleash parasites made from the corpses of its other victims. Hairless creatures with stumpy white limbs, they will swarm over the aggressors while the demon attacks.



Epexiant

Type: Defiler

Violence 5
Instinct 3
Traction 7
Life 15
Wrath 24

The Epexiant is a five-foot-long serpent with glistening emerald skin. The demon's single eye is blood-red, as are the serrated hooks at the end of the demon's seven tentacles.

It preys upon those who are so racked by grief that they are unable to move on with their lives. For days, the demon will hunt for a suitable victim, someone who has lost a loved one and is crippled by the sorrow. Typically, the victim mourns a spouse or child who passed away some time ago. The demon prefers to torment those who can't let go of the sadness and get on with the business of living.

When a victim has been selected, the demon will visit at night. After sneaking in, the demon will vomit up a small quantity of greenish ichor into the victim's mouth. Inside the victim, the ichor will begin to spread, overtaking healthy tissue like a cancer. The victim's body will begin to change; eyes and skin will be tinted green; hair will fall out in clumps, revealing a bright emerald scalp; and fingernails and teeth will loosen and slide out.

By midnight, the victim will be nearly unrecognizable. Awakenning with an unslakable thirst for blood, she will leave her home at once. Wandering aimlessly, she will attack anyone she encounters, without hesitation. Once she has killed, the skell will drink as much of the victim's blood as possible.

Inside her, the demon will grow. A monstrous worm the size of a man's forearm, the Epexiant swells in her abdomen. At dawn, the victim will find a quiet place to sleep and hide. For twelve or thirteen hours, she will hibernate, gorged with blood. In the meantime, the demon will continue to grow.

At dusk, she will split open to reveal a new Epexiant demon, which will begin to repeat the cycle.

Type - Hunter

Violence 7

Instinct 6

Traction 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 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.

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.

Exhumilat



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.



Fliacza

Type - Stalker

Violence 2

Instinct 7

Traction 6

Life 21

Armor 2

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 its target's friends and family. 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.



FOATHIAC

Type: Hunter

Violence 8

Instinct 5

Traction 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 it 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.



GATTERAG

Type: Hunter

Violence 8

Instinct 4

Traction 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.

GHUJALAT





Ghujalat

Type - Hunter

Violence 8

Instinct 6

Traction 1

Life 27

Wrath 12

Appearance

When disguised, the Ghujalat appears as a small child with big sad eyes. In its true form, the Ghujalat 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 Ghujalat has the ability to transform between two shapes: that of a small child, and that of a monstrous wererecreature that bears an uncanny resemblance to the child's stuffed animal.

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 death-trap.

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.

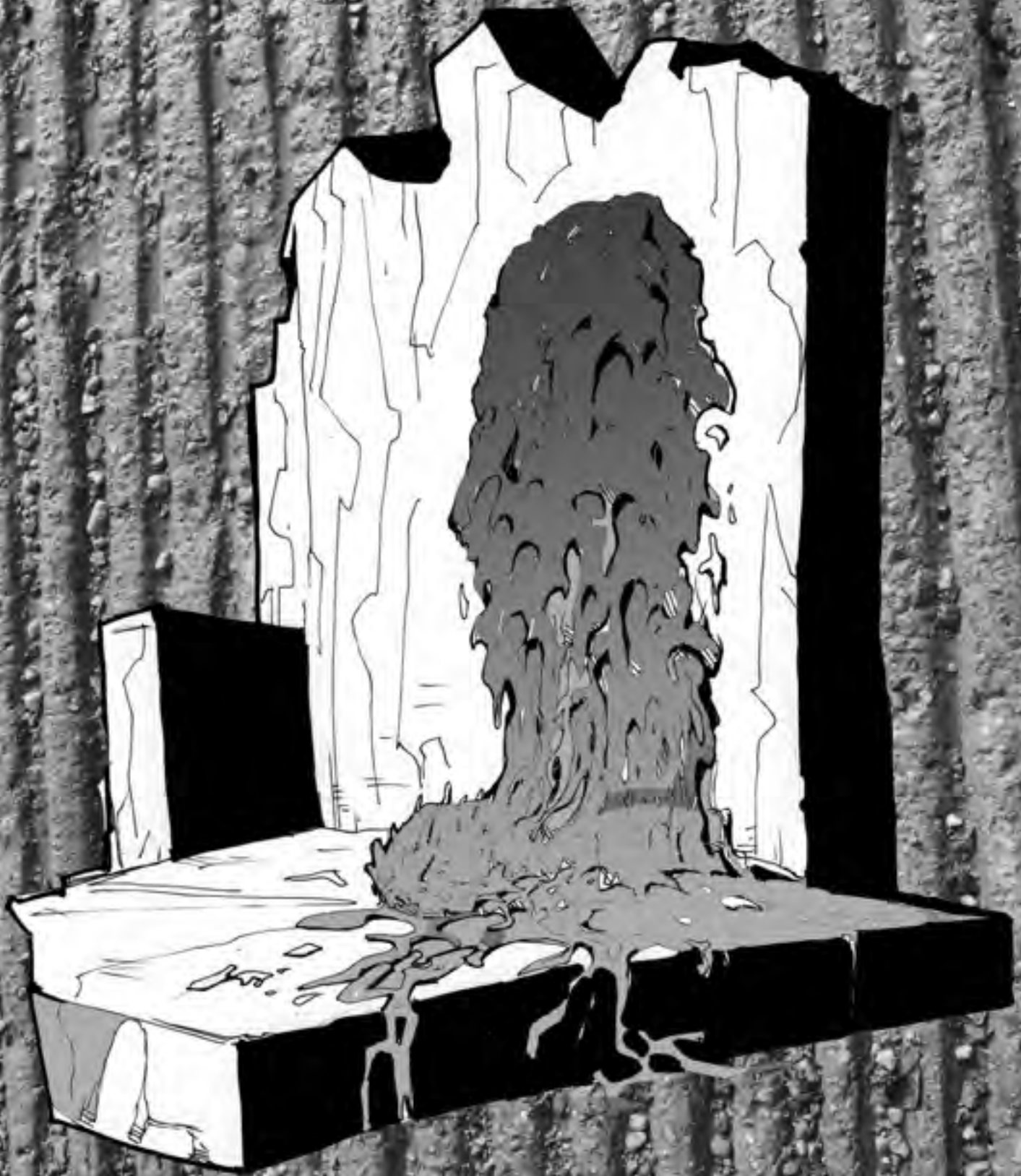
Eventually, the demon returns to the home, where it reverts to the shape of a child and begins to work on the corpses. It makes toys from their bodies.

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.



g r u s c e

Type - Defiler

Violence 4
Instinct 1
Traction 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. Alarming fast for its size, the blob-like 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.

Squirming 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.



Heuzam

Type: Stalker

Numeac

Violence 2
Instinct 8
Traction 5
Life 15
Armor 3
Wrath 25

Violence 4
Instinct 1
Traction 1
Life 12
Wrath 12

Native to the blasted plains of Li'Crast, the Heuzam is a massive demon that coils through the dusty rocks of that hellish realm. The demon's body is covered with glittering purple and crimson tentacles, which make it visible from a great distance as it undulates rapidly towards its prey.

The demon feeds on any kind of flesh, but it prefers to consume those who are dying or injured. Near battlefields and hospitals, the demon slithers in search of fresh meat.

Slow-witted and easily confused, the demon will also attack when startled or discovered, and it is quite powerful. The Heuzam tends to crush its victims in its powerful coils.

The demon also bites with its jagged teeth, and can sting with the barb at the end of its tail. By killing two points of Wrath, after a successful tail attack, the demon can lay an egg in the skin of its host. Within seconds, the egg hatches, and the larva within grows to full-size: the Numeac, a six-inch insectile parasite with a dense and near-impenetrable exoskeleton. It can perform this maneuver over and over again.

If cornered or outnumbered, the Heuzam will flee, preferring the taste of meat that doesn't fight back.

If two or more demons are gathered together, however, or if the Heuzam has allies of some kind, it will go into a battle frenzy and fight to the death.

However, though it typically prefers the meat of those who are near death, it is also fond of that which was only recently born, and regards newborns as a delicacy.



i s s o a c

Type - Defiler

Violence 5

Instinct 3

Traction 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 informations and locate information 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 swiftly executed.

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 Issaac. 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 show-down.

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 Issaac 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 Issaac 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 Issaac 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.

KHOREPTA



I PLEDGE ALL LEGIONS TO THE FLAG
OF THE UNITED STATES OF AMURRIKA,
AND TO THE REPUBLIC
ON WHICH IT STANDS,
ONE NATION UNDER SIEGE,
IMMISCIBLE,
WITH LIBERTINE INJUSTICE FOR ALL.

Type - Stalker

Violence 1
Instinct 9
Traction 5
Life 19
Armor 5
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 separatists 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.

Kinarsette



The fruit was rotten anyhow.

I dropped my face in the garbage along with whatever passed for restraint, and since then, I've been free to carve my name with scalpels, paring knives, and fangs: unfettered, gleaming, skinless, raw, and pure.

Type - Stalker

Violence 2

Instinct 9

Traction 4

Life 20

Armor 3

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, encouraging 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.



Laiamas

Type - Defiler

Violence 5

Instinct 1

Traction 9

Life 14

Wrath 25

Appearance

The Laiamas is a bald humanoid female with dark blue skin that drips with slime. Her face is horrendously distorted, and her mouth is crammed full of fangs. From her pevils grow the faces of the children she has eaten.

Pattern

The Laiamas is drawn to conspiracies, plots, and treason. It possesses people in 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, code-breakers, 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.

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 retreats 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.



Laradina

Type: Stalker

Violence 2

Instinct 7

Traction 6

Life 18

Armor 4

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

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.

Lunatic



Type - Defiler

Violence 4

Instinct 2

Traction 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.

MERSTETT



Type - Hunter

Invertebrate:

Violence 4

Instinct 1

Traction 1

Life 12

Wrath 14

Demon:

Violence 9

Instinct 4

Traction 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.



Mursallic

Type - Stalker

Violence 2

Instinct 8

Traction 5

Life 18

Armor 4

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 cultured 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.

If confronted, the Mursallic will change its shape to a colossal fetus inside a glowing pink egg of phosphorescent crystal. It will ask them to be its parents.

Narhuac

Type: Infector

Violence 9

Instinct 3

Traction 6

Life 23

Armor 5

Wrath 19

Appearance

The Narhuac demon appears as a hyena-like humanoid with matted brown and beige fur. The demon exudes a thick musk which induces nausea in ordinary humans.

Pattern

The Narhuac is drawn to military installations. Attracted to violence and abuse, the demon seeks out captives or hostages who are being tortured or interrogated.

It begins by infecting these prisoners with a debilitating illness that wracks the victims' bodies with horrific seizures. Victims shudder, convulse, twitch, scream uncontrollably, and produce greenish foam at the mouth. If the seizures themselves do not prove fatal, the strain that they place on the heart and

nervous system will eventually result in the death of the victim.

The disease will eventually spread to other people, including doctors, nurses, other captives, and military personnel. Within a matter of hours, the entire base will be infected (or at risk of infection). It's not uncommon for the area to come under hasty quarantine at this time, which is exactly what the demon has been hoping for.

Disguising itself as an ordinary person, the Narhuac will select a few of the larger victims for a different strain. This infection will mutate the target, transforming him into a hideous mockery of humanity.

The victim's skin will crust and redden, becoming pink and scaly like the exposed dermis of the Narhuac; then a hard exoskeleton of chitin will grow over most of the body; the hair will fall from his head; his eyes will seep dark blood; his fingernails will harden into claws; his teeth will meld and elongate into two spikes of bone; and his body will exude a horrific tell-tale odor. Large claws will grow from his hands, and a barbed tail will complete the victim's transformation into a Xhavuax demon. Immensely strong, and capable of frightening swift attacks and jumps of up to fifty feet upwards from a standing start, the demon will whoop and screech while crawling head-down along a wall towards the Disciples.

Typically, once the Narhuac realizes it's been compromised, it will deploy several of these demons.



Narhuac



Navaad

Type: Hunter

Violence 8

Instinct 6

Traction 1

Life 27

Wrath 12

The Navaad Demon is a doppelganger, albeit an incompetent one. Disguising itself as a human, the creature walks in lonely places at night, seeking the blood of self-destructive people.

The demon is drawn to those who abuse themselves, mutilate their own bodies, or continually place themselves in situations where they are sure to come to harm. However, as its appearance looks like a hazy approximation of a real person, it only appears at night, and always approaches from a distance.

When it is close to its intended target, and its sham is discovered, the beast unravels and displays its true form: a deformed humanoid entity with rotting greyish skin and vaguely reptilian features.

The Navaad is murderously strong and fast, and takes great delight in tormenting its prey before killing.

In lieu of an attack, the Navaad can cast a spell by killing a point of Wrath, which results in a seething swarm of insects which emanate from the demon's blurry hands. Flying unerringly towards the victims' mouths, the insects vanish upon contact with the target, only to be followed by a torrent of blood from the victim's teeth and gums. The demon can target as many as three people with this spell; to cast it, the Director must make a Traction check against the victims' Defend checks.

Nethasq



Type - Hunter

Violence 7

Instinct 4

Traction 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.



Paikhalix

Type - Defiler

Violence 6
Instinct 3
Traction 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.

Pelogris



PELOGRIS

Type - Stalker
 Violence 1
 Instinct 9
 Traction 6
 Life 19
 Armor 4
 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.

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.



PHORIAG

Type - Hunter

Violence 7

Instinct 4

Traction 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.

Qavaad

Type - Defiler

Violence 5

Instinct 2

Traction 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 it 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.





q o l i s h u u l

Type - Defiler

Violence 4

Instinct 1

Traction 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, it tracks down student after student, typically at home, or on the way home from school, and it commits murder after murder. Eventually, of course, the teacher is caught, at which point it leaps into another body -- usually that of a police officer.

What happens to its former host after that is of no consequence to the demon, but typically, the teacher is tried, arrested, and convicted. The demon uses its new body to find another teacher, which it then questions as part of the investigation. At this time it makes the jump again, taking over the teacher, leaving the somewhat amnesiac police officer very confused.

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 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.



Ravaqat

Type - Stalker

Violence 1

Instinct 8

Traction 6

Injury 18

Armor 5

Wrath 21

Appearance

The Ravaqat appears as an armored humanoid with bronze skin. Its faceplate is skull-like.

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.



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Remarec

Type - Stalker

Violence 2

Instinct 8

Traction 5

Life 20

Armor 2

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 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.



Scabresse

Type - Stalker

Violence 3

Instinct 7

Traction 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 for weeks, the field 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.



Shurull



Shurull - Stalker
Violence 1
Instinct 9
Traction 6
Life 19
Armor 3
Wrath 20

Appearance

The Shurull is a colossal monstrosity, easily twice the size of a human, with four thick legs and a pair of ragged claws. Its sweet-smelling ruby skin is covered in emerald spines which secrete the odor of cocoa, and within its six shiny eyes, those who look closely can see the happiest moments of their lives replayed again and again (with the demon just barely visible in the background of these scenes, smiling).

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 descent 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.

Suliegos

Type - Defiler

Violence 2

Instinct 7

Traction 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.



Tavalisk

Type - Stalker

Violence **2**

Instinct **7**

Traction **5**

Life **21**

Armor **3**

Wrath **18**

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.



Varkata

Varkata

Rank: Infector
Violence 10
Instinct 4
Traction 4
Life 20
Armor 4
Wrath 16

Qovian

Rank: Infector
Violence 5
Instinct 2
Traction 2
Life 10
Armor 2
Wrath 8

The disease also drives the victim into a frenzy during which he is compelled to eat as much as possible. Anything remotely resembling food will be torn apart and crammed into the victim's maw.

After that, the Infected will enter a deep trance-like state from which no one will be able to awaken them. Eventually, the victim's body will split open, revealing a leathery green egg the size of a basketball.

Appearance

The Varkata appears as a large sphere of greenish-blue tissue, from which dangle ten tentacles of different lengths. An enormous mouth protrudes from the four-foot-wide central sphere, and each of the tentacles ends in a mouth that's at least a foot-long, each of which jabbars in a different extinct language. The demon sweats a milky pink substance that reeks of fresh fruit.

Pattern

The Varkata is drawn to hospitals, asylums, and clinics. Though repulsed by cleanliness, the demon is compelled to visit these places (and then defile them).

It begins by afflicting victims with a strange ailment that deforms and distorts the skin, rendering it greenish and leathery, like the hide of an alligator. The victim's teeth and nails fall out, replaced by large, serrated teeth and blackish talons. The skin develops ridges and pebble-like lumps in strange patterns, and all the hair on the victim's body falls out in bloody clumps.

When the egg hatches, a dozen eel-like creatures will slither out in search of food. After gorging on hospital food or human flesh, the creatures will begin to grow, eventually reaching five feet tall in size. These demons, known as Qovians, serve the Varkata, helping it to lock down the hospital with booby traps, setting ambushes for Disciples, and locating fresh meat for the Varkata. Qovians are spindly, long-limbed entities with bird-like beaks surrounded by a ring of eight eyes. Their fingers are thin and nimble, and their four legs end in foot-long spikes of purple bone.

Once it has assembled a small team of Qovians, the Infector will seize control of the hospital, barricading itself inside. It will then engage in all manner of horrific behavior, such as forcing patients to battle each other to the death using scalpels or bone saws. It will force captured medical personnel to choose between consuming human flesh or being vivisected. And it will send the Qovians out to patrol the facility's corridors for interlopers, secretly hoping that a Cabal will appear to provide a worthy challenge.

Vouzire

Type: Hunter

Violence 13

Instinct 6

Traction 2

Life 30

Armor 5

Wrath 9

Appearance

The Vouzire is a murderous brute, and one of the most dangerous 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.





VURZOLAG

Type: Defiler
Violence 6
Instinct 2
Traction 7
Life 14
Wrath 25

Appearance

The Vurzolag 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 Vurzolag exists to destroy small, tight-knit communities. It favors those in remote locations, where remote 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 Vurzolag can create another demon. The new demon, the Vuiloma, splits the points of Wrath between its Life and Violence scores. Its Traction and Instinct scores are 1, and its Wrath is 0.

The Vuiloma 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 Vurzolag, 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.

Wreziam



Type - Defiler

Violence 5

Instinct 1

Traction 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 the the woman's blood, the demon brngs 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 bed-sheets 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 hand-prints 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).

XARUALAC



Type - Stalker

Violence 1

Traction 9

Traction 5

Life 18

Armor 3

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.



Xhavuax

Xhavuax

Rank: Infector

Violence 5

Instinct 2

Traction 3

Life 12

Armor 3

Wrath 9

Appearance

The flesh of the Xhavuax is covered by an exoskeleton that ranges in color from bright pink to dark red. Its powerful arms are tipped with shiny violet claws, from which depend two thin pink tentacles (which the demon uses to execute more complex tasks). The demon's face is covered in the same chitinous shell, but its baleful yellow eyes are visible. Its mouth is bracketed by two white spikes of bone, each roughly a foot long. The demon stands on four legs, and a tail-like appendage, tipped with a stinger of pale blue chitin, grows from the middle of its back.

Pattern

Created by the Narhuac demon, Xhavuax demons live to serve their master. They tend to operate in small groups, patrolling an area or hunting for prey. Using their powerful claws, they brachiate across ceilings, leaping from wall to wall over great distances.

When a group of Xhavuaxes locates human prey, they will usually pin down the victim and peel the skin off, using their tentacles to get the small bits.

Mindless and without any real objective, they nonetheless pose a challenge for the Cabal because of their numbers.

During combat, Xhavuaxes whoop and scream as they fling themselves at the Disciples. They tend to prefer aerial attacks.

CHAPTER 11

SCENARIOS

There are a few full-length scenarios in this book, along with a handful of short scenarios and some hooks. The short scenarios will require fleshing out by the Director, and the hooks are just there to get you started. However, the full-length scenarios, which might require more than one session to complete, should cover all of the angles, and should be playable right out of the box, except for the civilians.

Your players should either tweak the civilians in these scenarios, or create their own and then you can work them into the story.

There are a few things to keep in mind:

Each full-length scenario features two demons. This, coupled with up to four Battlefield encounters, can really wear your players down. You may want to adjust the lethality by adding items like body armor and heavy weapons into the mix, so that the players have a fighting chance. Or not! It depends on the number of combat-oriented Disciples in the group, and the size of the group itself. The number of hostiles is generally up to the Director as well, for the same reason.

Also, for those scenarios with two demons, you'll find that each of the Locations features various pieces of physical evidence. Note that each piece of evidence is attached to one of the demons in the scenario. Your group may want to consider separating the evidence pools when it comes time for the Disciples to make Lore checks. It's something to discuss before running any of these scenarios.

Farm

1. Prints in mud (Laradina)
2. Pyramid of skulls (Laradina)

L O C A T I O N

Auto shop

Possessed civilians

B A T T L E F I E L D

Scrap yard

L O C A T I O N

Trailer Park

Con artists

B A T T L E F I E L D

Laradina

Wreziam

Rescue Stacy Wellman
Rescue Amber Watkins
Rescue Arthur Hudson
Rescue possession victims

St. Gregory's Church

Congregation

B A T T L E F I E L D

Wellman residence

1. N.W.C. pamphlet (Laradina)
2. Wellman's note (Laradina)

L O C A T I O N

New World compound

Cultists

B A T T L E F I E L D

New World Church

1. Joyner's diary (Laradina)

L O C A T I O N

SCENARIO 1: DEVIL MADE ME DO IT

HOOK

There's something nasty about the New World Church, though you can't quite put your finger on it. Could be something to do with the fact that people connected to the congregation keep turning up dead. That, and the fact that every time you walk into the place, the holy water starts boiling. Word on the street is that something huge is going down, and you're the only ones who can keep it from happening. Typical.

SITUATION

Doug Joyner, a professor of English Literature at State University, lost his job two years ago. After a few fruitless months of job-hunting, he started drinking heavily. His wife left him shortly before Christmas, and he plunged into a profound depression.

On New Year's Eve, he decided to commit suicide. However, while writing his suicide note, he glanced across his collection of rare hardcover first editions, and saw the title of *The Wrought Crutch*, a novel written in the 1930s. In his drunkenness, he mistook the title as *The Wrought Church*, and inspiration struck.

For the next few months, he spent his days scribbling in notebooks like a madman, and his nights typing up his manuscript. When he was finished, he had the Sacred Word. This book, which he christened "a Bible for the third Millennium", was printed up by a vanity press in the thousands. Joyner stored the books in his garage and began his ministry.

He targeted sad women. He targeted lonely men with receding hairlines. He targeted single mothers and the homeless and the people that he met in the unemployment line. Joyner's charisma and natural good looks served him

well; he converted a dozen people in the first month. The congregation of the New World Church met in his living room until he gathered so many followers that they wouldn't fit in his house anymore. With the money that he collected from believers, Joyner was able to rent space, and eventually build a church.

Joyner was discovered by a Pelagris demon in search of amusement. The New World Church was a sham, and the demon knew it; Joyner was just looking for a quick buck. This delighted the creature, which presented itself to Joyner in its true form. The man took one look at her, screamed, defecated, and passed out. When he woke up, the demon was still there. After several hours, he had calmed himself enough that he could listen to what it had to say.

The demon promised him great power, but demanded human sacrifice in its name. It provided him with the finances that he required, and directed him to build the church in the wilderness -- far from the prying eyes of the authorities. Joyner assented, and the church was built in Ardmore, a small town east of the mountains. The church's entire congregation moved into the town in small stages, to keep suspicion to a minimum.

There were two churches; one was a large, ugly modular structure in the fashion of many revival churches. The other was an underground compound in an abandoned fallout shelter, which the congregation kept secret from everyone else.

The cult grew in size. They kidnapped people and brainwashed them into joining. They love-bombed their friends and neighbors. They gathered around people in need and helped them without asking for anything in return, and many people were swept up by emotion and defected from St. Gregory's.

Father Esteban Cardoso, the priest at St. Gregory's, was appalled. His flock had deserted him in large numbers, and he seemed powerless to do anything about it. But that wasn't enough, apparently. A Wreziam, working in tandem with the Laradina, took over Cardoso and used his body to wreak havoc.

A week ago, Cardoso regained consciousness in the house of Maria Genaro, 29. Maria, a member of St. Gregory's Church, waited tables at the Daylight Diner, and lived alone. Cardoso was naked, and soaked with her blood. He was looking at her feet, which were nailed to the wall. Her hands were nailed to the wall as well, in a crucifixion pose, but the rest of her was nowhere to be found. Just hands and feet.

In a panic, Cardoso washed and scrubbed himself in her bathroom. He took her hands and feet and stuffed them into a plastic bag.

In the garage, he found her car, and was stunned to see her body (minus hands and feet) in the back seat, wrapped in plastic. A few hours before dawn, the priest dressed himself in her overcoat and drove the corpse to his home. He dismembered her, burned her body to ash, and burned the overcoat as well. He then returned to the house and scrubbed it thoroughly. For the next two days, he waited in spiritual agony for the arrival of the police. When they didn't come, he began to relax.

Two nights ago, he woke up in the house of Anita Sherman, another member of his church. Her face had been torn from her skull, leaving behind a mass of red muscle tissue. Her teeth and ears were gone. Cardoso searched the house, but didn't find them.

He disposed of the body and scrubbed the house, then got home just before dawn. He has

managed to calm himself down, but he is convinced that he murdered those women in his sleep. There's a part of him that is comfortable with the idea. The Wreziam knows this.

A group of con artists, led by a grifter named Peter Cook, pulled off a heist in Chicago. They ripped off the Chicago Syndicate for a small fortune in emeralds, a hundred thousand in small unmarked bills, and a set of printing plates for hundred-dollar bills. Though the plates are out of date, and would never make it through a bank's inspection system, the bills will definitely work on ordinary people without access to those resources.

The con artists know that they need a mark. They've opened up an account, and have found a target for their scheme. Stacy Wellman, an aging realtor, is facing serious financial difficulties. Cook has passed himself off as an investor, and has managed to take her 'investments' and redouble them. Of course, he's cashing her checks and then paying her with counterfeit bills. Stacy has been targeted by the group because they know that she doesn't believe in banks, so she isn't going to deposit the bills. It's a short-term con, but it's going to allow them to lay low until they can scrape up enough cash to set up an operation in a remote part of the country.

They have no idea that Wellman has been selected as the New World Church's next sacrificial offering. And they have no idea that the Chicago Syndicate put someone on their trail. Nathan Russell, a Syndicate clean-up man for decades, has tracked the con men to Ardmore. One of them went out for supplies, but never came back. Cook and the others are starting to wonder what happened to him. They're not worried yet, but they should be -- Russell and his men caught him and tortured him for information. Russell and the Syndicate operators are on their way to the trailer park where Cook and his team are hiding out.

This morning, Joyner sent members of his cult to the home of a local man who refused to join the church. He was dragged from his home and stuffed into a van. When they removed the blindfold, he saw the Laradina reaching for him.

An hour later, Father Cardoso walked down to the auto shop, whose employees were all on lunch break -- except for Janet Stillman. Cardoso beat her to death with a tire iron, then left. This was not done under the influence of the Wreziam that has possessed him. The priest merely thought that it would be a good idea.

The Syndicate crew is moving towards Cook's location. Father Cardoso's demon has decided to use this newfound enthusiasm to kill a few more beautiful women today. The Laradina is getting hungry, so several cultists have kidnapped Stacy Wellman.

Things are about to get hectic in the town of Ardmore.

OBJECTIVES

Rescue Stacy Wellman

At the New World Church, the cultists are preparing to perform a ritual sacrifice on Stacy Wellman. The demon is absent, having business elsewhere. If the Disciples can rescue Wellman and defeat the members of the cult, they'll lose 1 point of Decay.

Rescue Amber Watkins

At St. Gregory's Church, Amber is being stalked by Father Cardoso. She has no idea that he is possessed, and she doesn't even suspect that he plans to do her harm. He called her earlier today and asked her to come by the church in the evening. She's alone and unarmed, and if the Disciples don't save her, she'll die at Cardoso's hand. If they save her, they'll cross off 1 point of Decay.

Rescue Arthur Hudson

At the Upwardly Mobile Residential Park, Arthur Hudson is getting ready to angrily confront the con artists who ripped him off earlier in the week. Blinded by anger, and overconfident because of the gun in his hand, he has no idea how much danger he's in. If the Disciples can stop the con men before they kill Hudson, the Cabal will each lose 1 point of Decay.

Rescue victims of possession

At the Fender Mender Auto Shop, the Laradina has possessed nine people and sent them to find and kill the Cabal. If they Disciples can defeat these innocent victims without killing them, the Disciples will each lose 1 point of Decay.

TRIGGERS

The Disciples might hear strange rumors about a series of murders in a small town, or get word about Cardoso's killings from a contact (such as a journalist or law-enforcement operative). The Cabal might hear rumors about a cult that hunts for sacrificial victims in a remote community, or they might hear about strange sightings: giant insects, the Mothman, aliens. Of course, these are actually sightings of the Wreziam.

CHARACTERS

Doug Joyner

Joyner is in his thirties. Tall and charming, he has a winning smile that masks his raging insecurities. He's eloquent and polished, and talks a good game. He draws on a broad education and an impressive vocabulary to impress the people of Ardmore.

His mind has been fractured by seeing the true form of the Laradina: from the waist up, a human female; from the waist down, a four-legged reptilian body, ranging in color from sickly pale green to bright red, with two foul-smelling tentacles ending in toothed maws.

Though he's managed to control himself thus far, Joyner is screaming inside. It will only take one or two more bizarre events to throw Joyner completely over the brink; if he sees a Disciple in action, he will doubtless snap, and will order his congregation to march into battle in the name of God.

He refers to himself as Deacon Joyner, and treats the cult like an actual church. However, he founded the New World Church because he craves wealth and power. The cult members constitute his private army, and they're fanatically loyal to him.

Joyner dominates conversations (or tries to) and usually asks questions in a rapid-fire technique that disorients ordinary people. He answers questions with more questions, and rarely furnishes actual information.

Worse, he's always on his way to attend to some 'church business', so he has an excuse if he appears tense or distracted. No matter what someone wants to talk about, Joyner is getting ready to collect money for hungry children, or to visit an ailing parishoner in the hospital.

The Laradina has strayed from its usual path somewhat. The demon uses its power to prove to the people of Ardmore that Deacon Ardmore is the prophet that he claims to be; while Joyner calls on God, the demon turns itself invisible and moves objects around, or raises people up into the air. It has disguised itself as Maureen Normant, the church secretary.

The demon is no fool; when the Cabal arrives, it will stay well clear of them while it tries to have them killed indirectly (by possessing groups of cultists). Should the group back the demon into a corner, it will reveal itself and attack.

Peter Cook

Cook is in his late twenties. Balding, stubbled, and greasy, he always appears frustrated and unkempt. His clothing is ratty, his breath reeks, and he always seems to be blinking back tears.

Fast and manic, Cook sees himself as a wiseguy comedian, and spits out a steady stream of inane pattern. Though he always tries to present himself as the leader of the group of con men, he actually needs constant reassurance, and can't make a decision until he's sure that everyone agrees with it.

If things get violent, Cook panics and seeks shelter. He would actually sell out his own mother if the need arose.

He knows that there are bound to be Syndicate collectors after him, but he's convinced that he's safe if he and his crew keep a low profile in Ardmore. As far as he's concerned, he's surrounded by country bumpkins, ripe for the picking.

Nathan Russell

Tall, beefy, and sweaty, Russell favors cheap suits and worn fedoras. His face is broad, and full of character, and there are dark burst veins around his nose and cheeks.

Quiet, humble, and modest, Russell believes in hard work and discipline. He's careful, precise, and patient, and believes in a day's work for a day's pay. Russell doesn't complain; he just does his job.

He has no idea how many people he's killed.

Slow and calm, he never gets flustered. He's never impressed (or if he is, he never shows it), and he never runs. He has caused a great deal of death in his lifetime, and he's been ready to die for some time now.

Russell has a deep, raspy voice. Serious and humorless, he can come across as simple and uneducated. However, he is an intelligent man, and an excellent judge of character. He won't attack unless he has to.

His men are fiercely loyal to him, and will follow his lead in any situation.

Arthur Hudson

Hudson is a Caucasian male in his fifties. He's pale, thin, and almost completely bald. He has long, thin nostrils and copious amounts of grey nasal hair. His ears are also quite hairy. Hudson favors pastel-colored shirts with black suspenders.

Though usually a mild-mannered individual, Hudson is irate because he knows that he has been taken advantage of. He was approached at a bar by Cook, who was posing as an investor who had heard about a sure thing.

Over drinks, Cook conspiratorially told Hudson about a property in the area that he was going to acquire from a recently-widowed woman. The property was large, and the cost was negligible. Hudson wanted in, but Cook was reluctant.

Eventually, Hudson 'persuaded' him, so Cook proposed the following: Hudson would write a check for ten thousand, effectively purchasing a share of this property.

In return, Cook would go to the bank where Hudson worked, and deposit ten thousand in cash in a safety-deposit box. Hudson would hold on to the key.

If the deal went through, Hudson would return the cash; but if things didn't work out, Hudson could keep the ten thousand, and he wouldn't be out a penny. This agreed with the slightly-tipsy Hudson, and the arrangements were made.

A week later, a suspicious Hudson double-checked the bills with his head of security (without telling her where he'd gotten the money). She demonstrated that they were counterfeit, and Hudson flew into a rage.

He's furious, and he's carrying a pistol. He wants nothing more than to have the money returned to him, but if he can't get it, he may well try to kill Cook.

Father Esteban Cardoso

Father Esteban Cardoso believes in demons, and will try to ward them off with the cross. If this has no effect, he will attack with any weapon in range, praying loudly the entire time. He's tall and full of energy and life, and he'll thank the Disciples profusely for the work that they do.

Cardoso is also sexually repressed, and full of frustrated lust. He harbors a secret hatred of beautiful women, and dreams of killing them. He channels this fury into everything he does.

He has no idea that he's possessed by a Wreziam demon, and has instead decided that he has been chosen by God to rid the world of the temptation presented by lustful women.

His voice is a strong and powerful baritone. He speaks with a very faint Spanish accent.

Amber Watkins

Amber Watkins is a 33-year Caucasian female. She's unusually tall (just over six feet), with long blonde hair. She's wearing a navy blue power suit, and carries a black leather purse.

Amber is timid and easily manipulated. Weak-willed and hesitant, she depends on others for advice and direction. Her husband, a motivational speaker who travels a lot of the time, is never around; one of Amber's co-workers made a pass at her, and she went along with it. She wasn't sure why, and she still isn't sure why she did it, but she now feels a tremendous sense of guilt. She's hoping that Father Cardoso can tell her what she's supposed to do.

She's meeting with the priest to make a confession and get some kind of forgiveness. Ideally, she'd like to be given some kind of religious ritual of absolution (she's kind of hazy on the details), and then she wants to get back to work.

FARM

The farm feels sad, lost, empty, and dusty. A few hours ago, the Laradina came here, looking for trouble. It found a man and killed him for the hell of it.

Sty

There's a dead pig in the sty with a bulging belly. Inside, the Disciples will find a great deal of corn meal and most of a human hand. The hand, savagely mangled, bears a wedding band inscribed with a date (9.3.75). This is the wedding date of Jim Durant, the farmer who owns this property. There are also drag marks in the mud, indicating a large four-legged creature with a massive tail (the Laradina).

Barn

Inside, the Disciples will find rusting farm equipment, sacks of animal feed, and a small pyramid of ten skulls. Some are cattle skulls, some are pig skulls, and one is the skull of Nadine Scheller, a 19-year-old hitchhiker who disappeared two weeks ago. Nadine was killed and eaten by the Laradina, which kept her skull as a souvenir. After it killed Durant and his livestock, the demon arranged the skulls in a small pyramid against the wall of the barn, with Nadine's head on top.

Evidence

1. *Prints in mud (Laradina)*
2. *Pyramid of skulls (Laradina)*

SCRAP YARD

Dirty and derelict, the scrap yard squats on the edge of town. A few hours ago, an old man sat in the office, sipping coffee and reading a newspaper. He was visited by Dave Noell, a member of Cook's team. Noell was getting nervous, and knew that it would be a matter of time before the Syndicate sent someone after them.

He was hoping to buy a cheap vehicle off of the old man. During their negotiations, Russell's crew arrived. They beat the old man to death and shot his dogs. They dragged Noell, kicking and screaming, into the scrap yard. They tied him to the hood of a rusting Datsun B210. They cut off his nose and one of his ears. Then, once they felt that they had his attention, they started asking questions. Since there's no demonic activity at this location, there's no evidence.

Office

The office is a trailer at the edge of the scrap yard, near the entrance. As the Disciples pass through the gate, they'll see a dead body in front of the trailer. It's the corpse of the nameless old man who owned the property. Inside, they will find a small table covered with post-it notes, numerous pin-up girls taped to the walls, and a large puddle of blood near the door.

Yard

Outside, it's quiet. There are no birds singing, and it's very still. There's a Datsun B210 at the far end of the scrap yard, past the rusting hulks of pickup trucks and farm machinery. The car is covered in the blood of Dave Noell. Near the car, the Disciples will find two ears, a nose, and an empty coffee mug full of bloody fingernails and toenails.

Compactor

In the compactor, the Disciples will find the mangled body of Dave Noell. In his pocket, they'll find a convenience store receipt. The convenience store in question is located across the street from the trailer park where the con artists are hiding out.

WELLMAN RESIDENCE

This is the residence of Stacy Wellman. She was kidnapped by the members of the New World Church a few hours ago. During the

abduction, the cultists were driven into a frenzy by the intensity of their emotion. Wellman was beaten senseless with her own fireplace poker, and the cultists destroyed her home. Now, the place is deserted and silent, save for the crickets outside.

Kitchen

There's raw chicken on a blue cutting board near the sink, and a few flies crawling on the knife next to it. The chicken is slimy and greyish-pink. There's some blood on the refrigerator. A successful crime or medicine skill against difficulty 11 will reveal that the victim was struck a glancing blow to the torso with a fireplace poker, and the sharp tip cut both fabric and skin, spraying blood against the fridge.

Spare room

Here, Wellman stored boxes of old documents and knickknacks. In their zeal, the cultists tore these open. The room is scattered with bits of paper and cardboard. Among these scraps, the Disciples will find a pamphlet from the New World Church; entitled *Magna Mater*, this publication describes the Laradina (though not in detail) and professes great adoration for her.

Backyard

If one of the Disciples can make a Sense check against difficulty 11, the group will discover that one of the stones in Wellman's garden is fake. Made of plastic, the stone can be split in two to reveal a letter hidden inside. Written in Wellman's handwriting, it warns that someone is going to try to kill Wellman, and begs the reader to rescue her. She also describes a hideous ritual of worship, and gives a description of the Laradina in her human form. There's an address at the bottom that leads to the New World Church.

Evidence

1. *N.W.C. pamphlet (Laradina)*
2. *Wellman's note (Laradina)*

NEW WORLD CHURCH

It looks like an ordinary church in a decent part of town. It's recent, and seems to have been built efficiently, if not with an eye towards beauty. The steeple is plain and windowless, the exterior is fairly cheap vinyl, and the interior is decorated with fake flowers and thrift-store reproductions of paintings with religious motifs. There are pamphlets, fliers, and photocopied booklets in every room, extolling the virtues of New World Faith.

The church teaches that enemies of God walk among us, poisoning our minds. We all have God within us at conception, but the choice to obey or disobey was made by our souls in the womb. The chosen must expel those who chose wrong, and cast them from communities.

If the Disciples sneak in after hours, and are caught, the police will arrive fairly quickly. On the other hand, if the Disciples walk in and try to meet with Joyner, they'll find him in the meeting rooms.

Worship area

As the Disciples enter the church, they see cheap lamps, flimsy plastic tables, and stacks of poorly-printed literature on every surface. In the worship area, dim light shines through crudely-executed stained glass depictions of biblical figures; the wooden pews are dusty, and the hymnals are worn and dog-eared. There are two statues, one on the left, depicting Christ, and one on the right, depicting Mary. As the Cabal enters the worship area, both statues begin to bleed from the eyes.

Testing will reveal that this is ordinary human blood, but no examination (up to and including smashing the statues to see if there's anything inside) will explain what has happened here. Note that this phenomenon does not constitute evidence of demonic activity (though the players won't be certain of its true nature unless they've learned of their own origins).

Meeting rooms

In the back of the church building, there are numerous meeting rooms. These are decorated with amateurish paintings of biblical scenes. Doug Joyner, the church deacon, and his assistant, Bernice Timms, are going over church finances in one of these rooms. As the Disciples enter, one of the paintings (a depiction of Samson killing the lion) bursts into flames. Joyner and Timms are horrified. Joyner rants at the Cabal, and will have to be pacified before he will even talk to them.

Offices

Past the meeting rooms, the Disciples will find a trio of offices. One contains financial records and paperwork. Examination of these documents will produce no leads. However, the second office contains similar documents, including one that notes the address of the church headquarters: 111 Main Street (which, curiously, is the same address as the town's post office). The third office is Joyner's. There are dozens of old books on shelves behind his desk, dealing with subjects like theology, philosophy, and American history. He also has copies of the sacred texts of every major religion. If the Disciples investigate the office, they might find his safe. A successful skill check against difficulty 11 will reveal the location of a safe, hidden behind one of the bookcases (requiring the Cabal to remove all of the books on one shelf, then pry the wooden panel away from the wall). In the safe, the Disciples will find a loaded revolver and a notebook. The notebook is Joyner's diary, and contains his life story, references to his first encounter with the Laradina, and a description of the demon.

Evidence

1. *Joyner's diary (Laradina)*

AUTO SHOP

The place has been torn apart. Father Cardoso was here earlier. He found Janet Stillman, an employee who was finishing up some paperwork. He picked up a tire iron and killed her with it, then left. The Laradina got wind of this, and found it amusing, but she also knows that if anyone finds the evidence, it could complicate her plans, so she's possessed a group of civilians and sent them in to clean the area up.

Ordinary people, armed with farm tools, the possessed victims are catatonic and bewildered-looking. They will kill the Cabal if they can, but if they're defeated, the possession will wear off. They'll have no memory of the incident.

Lobby

As the Disciples pass through the glass door, they'll see spilled coffee and scattered magazines and newspapers. This is where Cardoso initially attacked Stillman, a receptionist at the auto shop.

Bathroom

The toilet seat is cracked and bloody. A successful skill check will reveal that someone was rammed head-first into the commode. There's a rosary behind the toilet. During the struggle, Stillman tore it from the priest's throat.

Shop

The shop area smells of grease, oil, and banana-scented air freshener. Here, the Disciples will find the corpse of Janet Stillman. Her eyes have been bashed from her skull, and the Cabal will find them on the hood of a car, arranged neatly beside her car keys and the pen that she used to try to stab Cardoso.

TRAILER PARK

The Upwardly Mobile Residential Park is run-down, filthy, and reeks of cheap alcohol and urine. Empty bottles, burger wrappers, and crack vials litter the patchy yellow-green grass that grows sporadically between the trailers. Cook and his group of con artists are operating out of trailer 42.

Trailer office

The office is dirty and reeks of cigarette smoke. Everything is brown, whether or not it started as a different color. The desk is cluttered with magazines, coffee mugs, and ashtrays. If the Disciples search the office, they'll find that the most recent rental is unit 42.

Yard

The yard in front of unit 42 is mostly a patch of mud littered with empty beer bottles and wadded-up plastic bags. There are two mud-spattered plastic chairs, one tottering on three legs, in front of the door. Two of the trailer's windows are broken, and have been covered up with black plastic trash bags taped over the holes.

Trailer

Inside, the con artists are celebrating their success with an impromptu coke party. Wired on high-grade cocaine, they're all feeling extremely intense, and they're armed to the teeth.

The trailer is littered with receipts and fake IDs, along with laptops and business cards bearing the logo of their fake company. Some of the paperwork indicates that Stacy Wellman is their latest victim.

ST. GREGORY'S CHURCH

Possessed by the Wreziam demon, Father Cardoso has killed several blondes, each of which has been wrapped in plastic and placed in a storage shed behind the church.

Parking lot

In the parking lot, several members of the St. Gregory's congregation are looking for a scapegoat. They're angry and scared about the New World Church, and they'll see any outsiders (such as the Disciples) as a threat. It's likely that they'll attack the Disciples on sight, unless the Disciples are disguised as ordinary (non-weapon-carrying) citizens.

Shed

Here, the Disciples will find the bodies of Cardoso's victims. Wrapped in plastic and tied with twine, the victims were carefully mutilated and then sewn back up with rosaries and crumpled Bible pages stuffed inside. The shed reeks of putrefaction. Cardoso has tried to mask the scent with large plastic tubs full of cat litter and baking soda. Though they've absorbed some of the odor, it's not nearly enough.

Priest's office

Here, the Disciples will find Amber Watkins and possibly Father Cardoso as well (though he may also be elsewhere in the church, with Amber waiting in his office). The office is well-furnished, and features numerous religious texts bound in leather. Investigation of the area will turn up metallic scales from the Wreziam.

NEW WORLD COMPOUND

This is the secret headquarters of the New World Church. It's a nuclear fallout shelter from the fifties, retrofitted to serve as a compound for the cult.

Stairwell

As the Disciples descend, they'll encounter cultists coming up the stairs, armed with shotguns.

Antechamber

This area is surprisingly elegant, with thick maroon carpeting and dark walls decorated with paintings depicting Joyner surrounded by angels.

Worship area

Here, there is a massive stone altar. Stacy Wellman is strapped to the altar, and is about to be sacrificed. There's a large razor-tipped pendulum swinging overhead, and it descends a little with each swing. Should the Disciples interfere, the demon will manifest and attack, as will the cultists.

SCENARIO 2: FIRST DEGREE MARTYR

HOOK

The first victim was found, mutilated beyond recognition, inside a bathroom. The door was locked from the inside. The second victim was torn to pieces, and the damage was so severe that the body was initially thought to belong to two victims. The coroner's report indicated that cause of death was suicide.

As if that weren't bad enough, two members of Raleigh City Council have turned up dead in the past week. The papers won't say what was done to the bodies, but your sources tell you that it was pretty horrific. All you know is that both victims were found in a similar position: nailed to the side of a church, at least forty feet off the ground.

No one has a clue how it was done. Except you, of course. This is the work of demons, and you're the only ones who can put a stop to it. It's going to be another one of those days.

SITUATION

There are two demons working in tandem: a Bazulariam that has taken over the body of Mayor Tyler Graham, and an Exhumilat that has targeted the children of the Reverend Charles Langdale.

Two days ago, the Exhumilat drove one of Langdale's children to suicide; another followed yesterday. The authorities are baffled by the hideous suicides, and don't know what to do next. The Exhumilat plans to kill both of Langdale's surviving children, starting with Kelly. After that, it will start over somewhere else.

In the meantime, the Mayor, under siege from the City Council, has come under scrutiny for allegations of turning a blind eye to police corruption. The Bazulariam has responded by crucifying two members of City Council by nailing them to the side of a church. Next, it plans to kill the Mayor's wife and children.

OBJECTIVES

Rescue Bowers from the collectors

Should the Disciples encounter the collectors in the subway station, they'll lose 1 point of Decay by neutralizing them (by whatever means necessary).

Save Curtiss from the Bazulariam

If the Disciples can rescue Curtiss at Graham's estate, they'll lose a point of Decay.

Prevent Kelly's suicide

They need to make sure that Kelly doesn't kill herself (either by throwing herself into the path of a subway train, or while being manipulated by the Exhumilat).

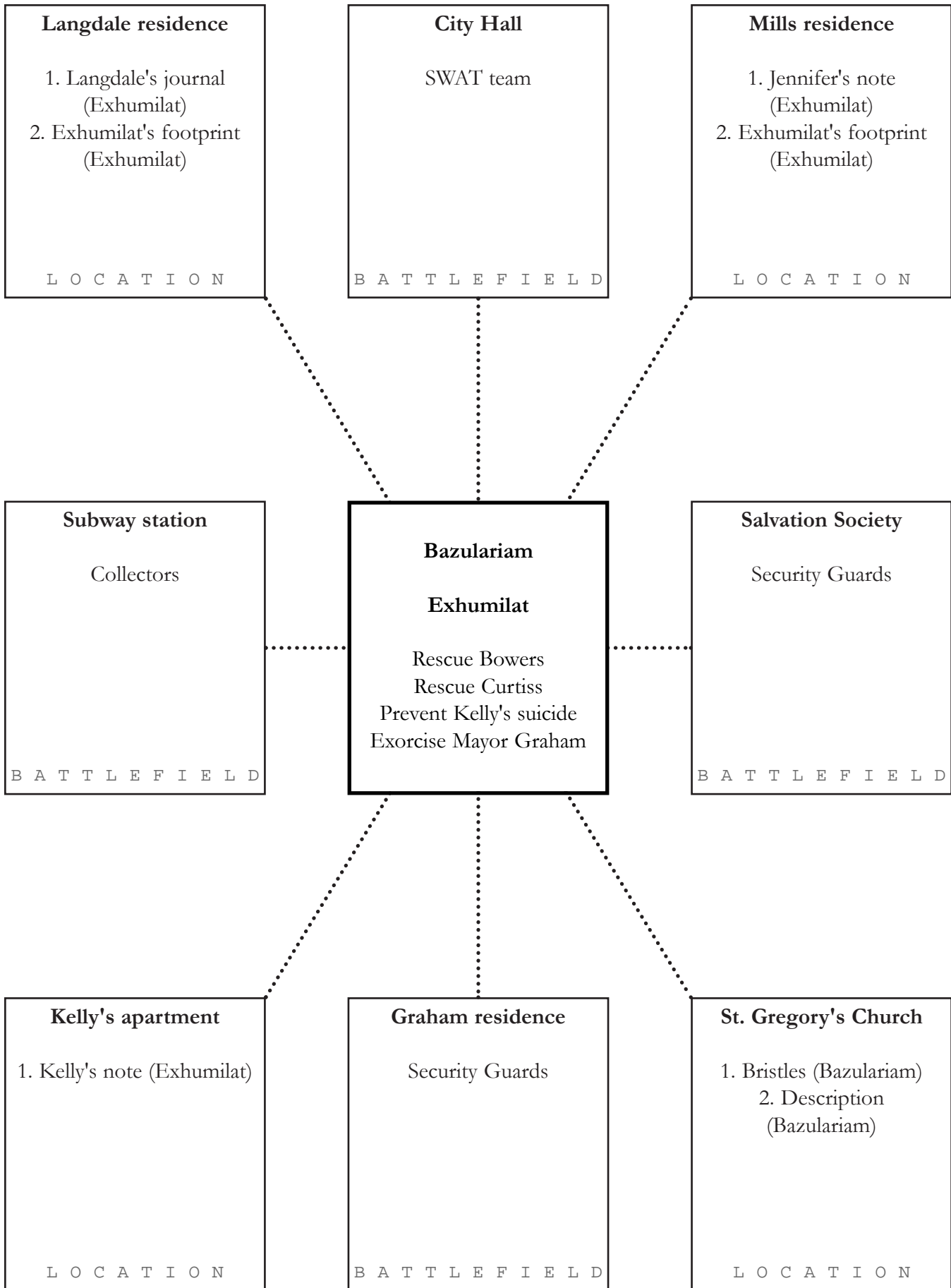
Cast demon out of Tyler Graham

If the Disciples can exorcise the Bazulariam from the Mayor's body before killing it, they'll lose a point of Decay.

TRIGGERS

The Disciples may become involved because of strange newspaper reports, or they may hear about these cases on the news. Alternately, a contact with the police, the media, or the Mayor's office may get in touch with them.

FIRST DEGREE MARTYR



CHARACTERS

Kelly Langdale

Kelly is the daughter of the Reverend Charles Langdale. She's in her thirties, and she's addicted to crystal meth. Though her face is pretty, her looks are fading fast. She has bad breath, pale skin, and poor hygiene. She appears anxious and twitchy, with stringy hair and bleary eyes. She's wearing second-hand clothing and trinkets, and she reeks of sweat and cigarette smoke. Kelly looks hungry.

Her voice is reedy and plaintive, and she seems paranoid and clingy. Stubborn, greedy, and self-absorbed, she's very difficult to deal with.

From time to time, she realizes just how bad her life has gotten, and she's overcome with despair. She doesn't believe in much except her brother. She's horrified by the recent events, but doesn't know what to do about them.

Kelly will panic and scream at the first sign of the supernatural. Despite her terror, she'll also use the chaos to try to swipe anything that looks valuable, figuring she can sell it later. She's utterly focused on herself, and thinks first of protection and acquisition. She's not much use in a fight, and will be all but catatonic if she sees the Disciples using magic. The first chance she gets after that, she'll try to escape. If it looks profitable, she'll try to betray the Disciples.

She has no idea that she's been targeted by the Exhumilat.

James Curtiss

Curtiss is the Mayor's senior advisor. His job is to oversee the Mayor's schedule, manage the operations of various municipal organizations, and to advise the Mayor on community issues.

He's in his late forties, with greying temples and a scar across his right forearm and wrist. When he's irritated, his eyes narrow and his jaws clench. He speaks deliberately and precisely, and sometimes seems quite condescending.

Serious, meticulous, and formal, Curtiss is easily engaged in discourse and debate. He's focused on facts and figures, and doesn't believe in an afterlife. A fierce rationalist, he clings to principles like Occam's razor. He doesn't believe in profanity, and considers it the sign of a limited vocabulary.

If the situation becomes violent, he will take cover and attempt to escape crisis. Curtiss is unlikely to enter combat, and will try to contact the authorities instead. He'll probably assume that the Disciples are criminals.

Nathan Bowers

Bowers is Langdale's bastard son. He was conceived in a drunken night of passion almost thirty years ago, and his mother never lets him forget that he is an accident of birth.

Bowers is a hard-faced young man with a do-rag and gang colors. Old before his time, his face is lined and his eyes are sunken. His jacket is worn and his clothing is threadbare and cheap. His facial expressions range between hostile and hateful.

A white male in his late twenties, Bowers is a hard-faced young man with a do-rag and gang colors. Old before his time, his face is lined and his eyes are sunken. His jacket is worn and his clothing is threadbare and cheap. His facial expressions range between hostile and hateful.

After burning through his monthly allowance from the Reverend Charles Langdale, Bowers usually tries to make some extra cash by stealing, gambling, and borrowing. His drug habit has become extremely expensive, and he's tried his hand at drug dealing in order to stay afloat. However, he wound up snorting most of the package, and hasn't had much luck selling the rest. As a result, a group of collectors has been sent to beat some sense into him (or kill him, if it doesn't look like he's getting the message).

Volatile and macho, Bowers is abusive to women and domineering in the face of weakness. However, he cringes in the face of danger. He'll provoke a fight, then flee. A fast talker when he has to be, he'll try to negotiate his way out of trouble if the need arises. Bowers panics if things get violent.

Charles Langdale

The Reverend Charles Langdale, host of the wildly popular television program Salvation Society, has had four legitimate children (Willard, Timothy, Jennifer, and Kelly) and one bastard (Nathan). His oldest son, Willard, died in a car accident nine years ago. Two days ago, his daughter Jennifer committed suicide. The day after that, Timothy did the same. Langdale is beside himself with grief, and is trying to reach out to Kelly and Nathan. Neither one wants anything to do with him, and he's resorted to hiring a private investigator to help him figure out what's going on. He has no idea that his family has been targeted by an Exhumilat demon. In fact, Langdale is an atheist, and doesn't even believe that demons exist.

Tyler Graham

As the city's Mayor, Graham is responsible for millions of dollars and thousands of lives. The power went to his head years ago, and his raging ego is like a beacon to the Bazulariam that has possessed him.

A tall, handsome man in his fifties, Graham projects confidence and charisma. He has one wife, three mistresses, and a few female colleagues that he sleeps with from time to time. Keeping track of it all has never been a problem for the Mayor, given his near-photographic memory.

He is the unwilling host of a brutal Bazulariam demon that intends to use his body to commit several murders.

LANGDALE RESIDENCE

Here, driven by the Exhumilat's guidance, Timothy Langdale committed suicide in a spectacular fashion. He turned on his video camera, sat down in front of it, and tore himself limb from limb. The video was broadcast on the web, where it was found and distributed in a matter of moments by his horrified friends and acquaintances. By sundown, the video was all over the place.

Bedroom

Here, the Disciples will find Langdale's journal, in which he describes the sense of elation that he feels at the prospect of his coming liberation. He knows that he's going to ascend to a higher plane of existence when he's finished. Langdale writes that reason has always impeded his quest for a stronger faith, and so he must find the source of that reason and purge it from his body.

Kitchen

This is where the authorities found Langdale's body. The room is covered in blood, which has dried to a sticky orange-black on the linoleum. There is a large reptilian footprint in the blood, in the carpeting of the kitchen. That part of the room has been blocked off by yellow tape, indicating that the police see this print as evidence.

Evidence

1. *Langdale's journal (Exhumilat)*
2. *Exhumilat's footprint (Exhumilat)*

MILLS RESIDENCE

This is the home of Jennifer Langdale Mills, daughter of the Reverend Charles Langdale. Yesterday, Jennifer locked herself inside the bathroom and tore herself to shreds. While the Exhumilat watched, she ripped her skin off and dismembered herself.

Office

On Jennifer's computer, the Disciples will find a text file where Jennifer writes about her recent miscarriage. She still grieves for the loss of her unborn child, and curses the womb that failed her so miserably.

Bathroom

The bathroom looks like a slaughterhouse. Though Jennifer's body has been gathered and processed, the blood (which reaches as high as the top of the shower curtains) remains. The distribution suggests that the victim was writhing in uncontrollable agony towards the end (however, if the Disciples learn anything about the Exhumilat, they will realize that she was not in pain, but in ecstasy). Again, the Disciples will find a single footprint, like a signature, in the pooled blood on the bathroom floor.

Evidence

1. *Jennifer's note (Exhumilat)*
2. *Exhumilat's footprint (Exhumilat)*

KELLY'S APARTMENT

Kelly knows that something is wrong, but she can't put her finger on it. However, she is convinced that the dark patches on her skin are an indicator of some kind of disease, and she's on her way to the doctor's office to see if anyone can tell her what's going on. She's left a note for her brother explaining all of this.

In the meantime, her half-brother, Nathan, is crashing on her couch to avoid the collectors that are after him. If pressured by the Disciples, he'll take them to the subway station where Kelly is waiting (but only if they promise to protect him).

Evidence

1. *Kelly's note (Exhumilat)*

ST. GREGORY'S CHURCH

This is where Jeremy Tolliver and Susan Nedlemeier were found, nailed to the wall in crucifixion poses. The Bazulariam hauled them up the side of the church and left them there, forty feet off the ground.

Grounds

If the Disciples investigate the area, they'll find small clusters of black bristles, which resemble two-inch needles, embedded in the brick building where the Bazulariam climbed up.

Parking lot

If the Disciples search the parking lot, they'll find Tolliver's SUV and Nedlemeier's car. Searching these vehicles will produce a single lead: a document in Tolliver's briefcase, showing that both he and Nedlemeier were fighting the Mayor about an investigation into corruption in the police department.

Inside

If the Cabal investigates inside the church, they'll find a near-catatonic old woman praying. Should they question her (requiring a charm or intimidation skill check against a fairly high difficulty), they'll learn that she saw something: "a devil".

The woman, who suffers from senility, will give a decent description of the Bazulariam demon, and claim that it dragged two sinners up the wall so that they would have higher to fall when their souls went down to hell. She will also tell the Disciples all kinds of horribly inane and perverse things, so it's going to be difficult for them to figure out what's real, and what's just a product of her deranged mind.

Evidence

1. *Bristles (Bazulariam)*
2. *Description (Bazulariam)*

CITY HALL

Surrounded by police officers and SWAT team members, Mayor Graham is preparing to hold a press conference outside of City Hall. This is the only public appearance that he has scheduled for the next 48 hours. He plans to address the horrific murders of the two City Council members in front of the media.

However, when the Disciples show up, the demon inside him will identify the Cabal as killers, and will order the police to apprehend the suspects. In order to make sure that everyone is paying attention, the demon will use its telekinetic abilities to snatch a gun from the holster of a police officer and put it near the hand of one of the Disciples, ensuring that violence breaks out.

During the commotion, the Bazulariam will allow security to hustle it into a bulletproof SUV and leave the area. They'll head back to Graham's home, a well-guarded mansion.

Curtiss, who has noticed a profound change in his boss, will attempt to make contact with the Disciples after the battle, assuming that the Disciples are victorious. He'll volunteer to be their inside man, should they try to move in on Graham's residence.

SUBWAY STATION

Kelly has come to the conclusion that she's going to commit suicide like her siblings, and she'd rather die than suffer like that.

She's standing on a subway platform, and she's getting ready to throw herself in front of a moving subway car. When the Disciples arrive, she's going to be walking towards the edge of the platform. To make matters worse, the collectors that have been watching Bowers have followed him from Kelly's apartment to the subway station. They've been hoping to see Bowers going to his stash (they were convinced that he has one), but at this point, they're going to settle for killing him. Whether or not he's with the Disciples, the collectors are going to attack the Disciples, reasoning that they're involved with him somehow.

SALVATION SOCIETY HQ

Langdale runs the Salvation Society from a massive office building downtown. The lower levels are dedicated to the maintenance of the Salvation Society organization, while higher levels maintain the various web sites and online communities. Langdale's office is on the top floor.

If the Disciples approach the Reverend Langdale, his security detail will attack, believing that the Disciples mean to do him harm.

Should the Disciples approach Langdale, and make contact with the Exhumilat, it is probably that the Bazulariam will appear and attack.

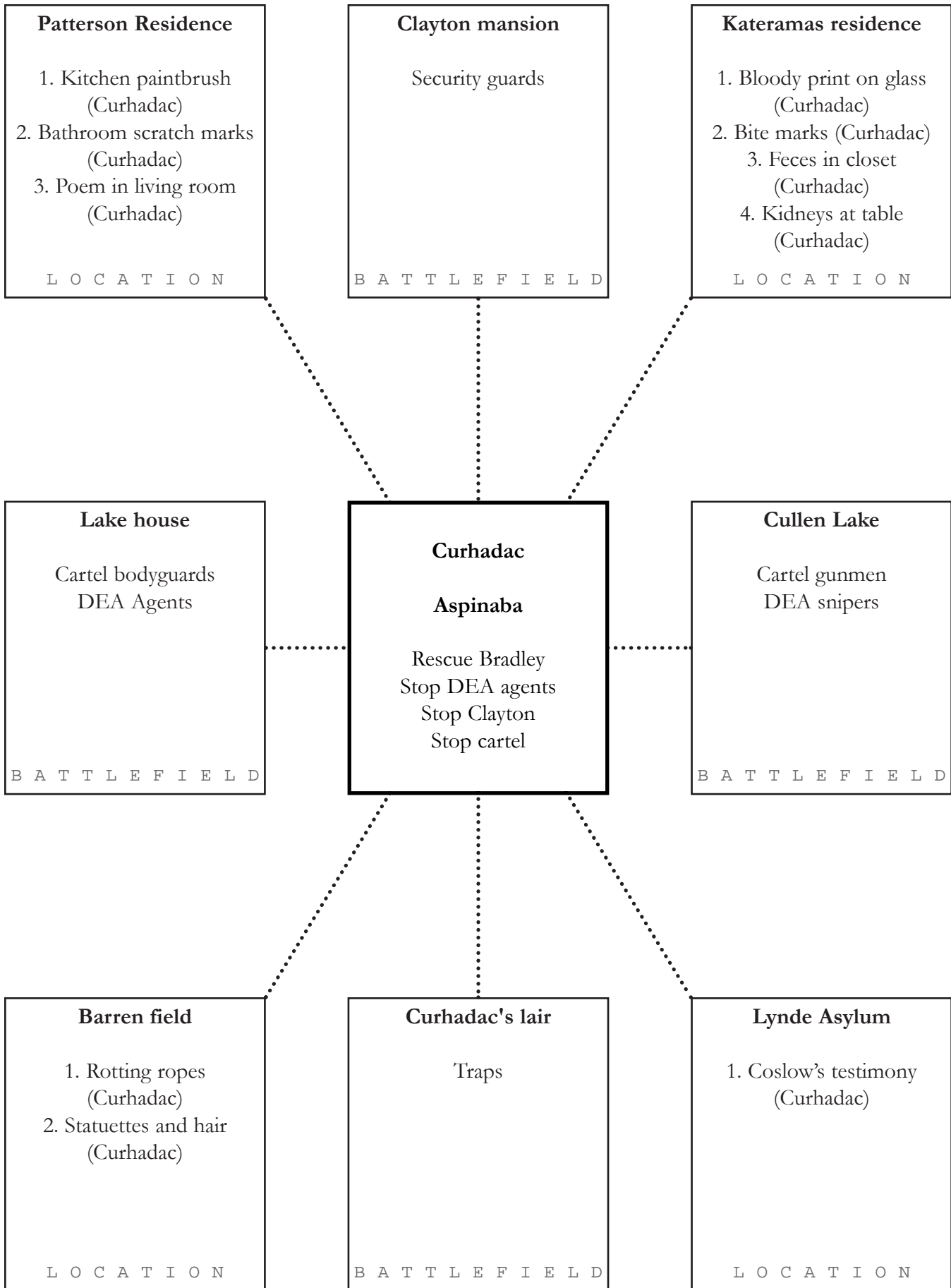
GRAHAM RESIDENCE

If the Disciples haven't already locked horns with the Bazulariam, the Mayor will hole up here, waiting for the Disciples to come and find him. The estate is well-defended, and features a state-of-the-art surveillance system. There are also guard dogs and armed guards.

Should the Disciples approach Graham's residence, and make contact with the Bazulariam, it is likely that the Exhumilat will also manifest itself and attack them.

If the Disciples agree with Curtiss' plan, it's likely that the vengeful Bazulariam will attempt to kill him for helping the Cabal.

ART IMITATES DEATH



SCENARIO 3: ART IMITATES DEATH

HOOK

The most disturbing piece of evidence you've ever seen is a painting. Originally, it was a lawyer. When the cops found him, he was stretched across the canvas. Not pretty. The second victim was a sculpture. You have no idea what the third one will be. A flower arrangement, maybe. Who cares? You don't know much about art, but you know what you don't like. And you definitely don't like demons. Time to assemble the Cabal and get to work.

SITUATION

David Coslow was convicted of serial murder and sent to an asylum. Warren Clayton is an amoral millionaire who collects paintings made from human bodily fluids. Dr. Randall Webb likes to torture his catatonic patients. Hector Morales is a drug lord who collects human fingers.

And they're the innocent bystanders.

A few months ago a Curhadac demon abducted seven people. They were all dragged to its lair - a remote shack (described in the Location: Barren Field section) -- and six of them were torn to pieces. The Curhadac created paintings from their bodies, then gave these to the seventh victim, David Coslow. The demon freed Coslow, then walked away.

Coslow wandered through the woods until he reached a farmhouse. He told his story, then collapsed. The stunned family called the police, who searched the area until they found the cave, the paintings, and the corpses.

At the trial, Coslow explained what he had seen. He tried to describe the demon that had held them captive, torn them apart, and painted desert landscapes with their bodily fluids. He broke down during cross-examination, and fell into a catatonic state. He has not recovered. Currently, David Coslow is a patient at Sophia Lynde State Hospital for the Insane.

Dr. Randall Webb, the hospital's director, enjoys a nice bout of electroconvulsive therapy in the evening. It helps him to unwind. He usually selects one of his catatonic (or otherwise unresponsive patients), and straps him or her in for a few rounds with "the lightning rod." Webb doesn't know if this has any positive effect on the patient, and he doesn't care. He just likes to watch their faces when they convulse.

An Aspinaba demon has taken residence in the hospital. Currently, it inhabits the body of Brenda Collins, a 67-year-old woman who has not spoken a word in forty years. Brenda killed and ate her newborn daughter in 1967.

The Aspinaba, attracted by the memories of child abuse, has decided to take over Brenda's body, in order to track down and kill her remaining children (who are now adults).

Last night, the demon carefully placed a handful of marbles in a stairwell and loosened the lightbulb. A janitor slipped, tumbled down the stone stairs, and snapped his neck at the bottom. He lived through much of the night.

Tonight, the demon will strike again. Emboldened by success, it will stalk the halls of Lynde Asylum, and it will kill anyone that it encounters.

Rather than rely on subtle methods like traps, it will employ a more direct approach, crushing its victims skulls and snapping their spines. However, it will only reveal its true form to the Disciples, and even then, only if they attack it.

The six paintings were collected by the police, bagged, and presented as evidence at Coslow's trial. Then they vanished. Millionaire Warren Clayton was able to acquire all six of the paintings, via illegal means. An art collector with unusual tastes, Clayton simply could not live without those paintings once he'd heard about them.

By bribing his way through most of the police station, he was able to arrange to have five of the paintings delivered to his house. He kept them in a room in the house's lowest level. The sixth painting was seized by the FBI, who wanted to perform additional tests.

Before they could do so, Clayton hired a group of men to stage a robbery of the FBI evidence room. The men, members of Hector Morale's crew, were able to seize the painting and deliver it to Coslow.

While there, they also swiped large quantities of cocaine and heroin that were slated for use as evidence in ongoing trials.

Six weeks ago, one of the pieces was stolen. The thief, Ramon Salazar, was one of the men who stole the painting from the FBI evidence locker. He reasoned that the paintings must be worth a great deal in order to warrant that kind of risk.

Salazar took the painting to his apartment downtown, where he planned to fence it to a contact of his, who knew a thing or two about stolen artwork. Unfortunately, Salazar got into an altercation at a nightclub later that evening. A man who suspected Salazar of engaging in sexual intercourse with his sister stabbed him in the genitals.

Salazar bled out on the way to the hospital. Toxicology indicated high levels of cocaine in his system, so the police investigated his apartment. Though they didn't find much evidence, they did locate the painting. When they realized that this was one of the paintings attached to the Coslow case from the previous year, the police contacted the FBI.

The painting is now once again in the possession of the FBI. This time, they've taken steps to ensure that it remains in their custody.

Last night, Andrew Patterson was kidnapped from his home by the same demon. In the process of restraining Patterson, it tore his wife, Marie, limb from limb. A few hours later, shortly before dawn, it struck again at the home of Molly Kateramas. Her family (husband, two children) were dismembered and partially eaten.

The Curhadac has esconced Andrew and Molly in its lair, which is a small cave on a lake, not far from the Clayton estate. Clayton has no idea that a demon dwells so near his property. If he knew, he would be fascinated. He loves the Curhadac's paintings more than anything else in his life.

Right now, Clayton is working closely with Morales and a few rogue DEA agents. Morales brings in the cocaine and heroin, and the boats land at Clayton's marina. The DEA keep Clayton and the Cartel free of suspicion, in exchange for a small percentage of the profits. In addition, Morales gives up information about rivals and low-level dealers. This keeps the DEA agents' numbers up.

Early this morning, Jerome Bradley found out about this operation. Bradley, a security guard in Clayton's employ, went to his boss to report what he'd discovered. He assumed that Clayton had no knowledge of this activity. By the time he realized his mistake, it was too late; the DEA agents and Morales took him into a boathouse and began to interrogate him.

After a few hours, the DEA agents figured out that he hadn't told anyone anything, and they recommended killing him. Morales volunteered to dispose of the body. He's been torturing Bradley ever since. He has six of Bradley's fingers, and intends to cut off the other four at some point later this evening.

The Curhadac must collect five more victims before it can begin its latest masterpiece. It will strike again tonight, unless destroyed.

CLAYTON

Reclusive millionaire, multiple homes
Has mansion near a lake
Drugs brought in through speedboats
Doesn't need money, independently wealthy
Loves the thrill of making money with drugs
Not particularly violent, just amoral
Fascinated by art, loves the blood paintings
Doesn't know they were done by Curhadac

MORALES

Brutal, ambitious drug lord
Despises weak, effeminate Clayton
Needs man's DEA connections
Working with DEA is necessary evil
Sadistic, enjoys watching people die
Studying project management
Wants to become legitimate one day
Doesn't know about problems at home

COSLOW

'Blood Artist' was gas station cashier
Abducted from home last year
Watched as demon killed victims
Saw paintings made from bodies
Was given paintings as a gift
Driven completely insane by experience
Catatonic patient at Lynde Asylum
Will commit suicide after encounter

OBJECTIVES

Rescue Bradley

Bradley is in the boathouse at Clayton's marina. The DEA operatives who beat him bloody have come to the conclusion that he knows nothing. But Morales continues to torture him for the fun of it. The Disciples need to rescue Bradley.

Stop DEA agents

DEA agents and cartel gunmen are trying to escape on the lake. They're in a speedboat, pulling away from the boathouse. There's another speedboat nearby. The Disciples must capture or kill all four DEA agents.

Stop Clayton

If the players apprehend or kill Clayton, they will learn that DNA testing on the paintings in his 'blue room' helps to identify the victims who were killed by the demon (though authorities will blame a serial killer). This will give closure to the families of the victims.

Stop cartel

Morales' men are all over the boathouse. Fanatically loyal (and wired out of their skulls on high-quality cocaine), they will fight the Disciples to the Death. Killing all of them means the Disciples lose a point of Decay.

TRIGGERS

There are a few ways that a contact might get the Cabal involved with this case. A journalist might be working on a story about the Artist (which is what the papers called Coslow during his trial), or about the recent murders.

A crime-related contact (someone involved in law enforcement, or a private detective) might ask the Disciples for help with the investigation of the Patterson or Kateramas murders. However, the latter would be an off-the-record investigation, since the police haven't yet had cause to enter the Kateramas home.

A contact in the medical field might have heard about the medical examiner's work on the dead bodies in the Patterson and/or Kateramas cases.

The characters might also hear about the grisly killings on the news, or read about them in the paper. The Vicar might direct the Cabal to check out the Lynde Asylum for information about Coslow.

Police Deny Connection to Blood Artist Killings

Though David Coslow, known as the Blood Artist, remains incarcerated at The Sophia Lynde State Hospital for the Insane, sources in the police department indicate that last night's murder of Andrew Patterson and his two children bear a startling resemblance to the murders that resulted in Coslow's conviction.

Three Dead, One Missing in Unsolved Murder Case

Investigators say that someone broke into the Windsor Lake home of Andrew and Marie Patterson late last night. The assailants killed Andrew, 39, an associate manager for Modern Media, and the two children, whose names have not been released. Marie was abducted, and sources within the police department indicate that there were signs of a struggle. No further information was available at the time of this writing.

CHARACTERS

Dr. Randall Webb

Dr. Randall Webb is in his fifties. He has a kind face and pale blue eyes. He's meticulous, poised, crisp, and freshly-scrubbed. He bites his nails to the quick. His hair is greying, but his build is wiry and muscular. He looks like the kind of guy who plays a little golf on the weekend. Maybe some squash, a round or two of tennis.

Pleasant, affable, and mild-mannered, Webb is good company. He's easygoing, quick to laugh, and really seems to care about his patients. He believes that he's making good progress with Coslow. He quickly downplays Coslow's demon story, though.

“Well, let me ask you this. how do you define mental health? Here at Lynde Asylum, we make incremental progress. It's a question of degree, measured over time, calculated on a daily basis. Over there -- that redhead? She used to boil and eat cats. She says they're insects, not mammals, so it's okay, it's not inhumane or wrong.

“Personally, I'm almost inclined to agree with her. Think about it! A man breaks into your home. You have a dog. Your dog will growl, bark, attack, protect you, and it doesn't matter if it's a pit bull or a Pekinese, it will fight for you. A cat just stares at the intruder with the blank, soulless eyes of a preying mantis. It doesn't care if you live or die. It might hiss, but it won't protect your or your family.

“So is that red-haired girl crazy? Professionally, I'd have to say yes. But as a dog person, I think she might just be on to something. Hahaha. Okay, just kidding. The point is, she's getting better. We're making progress.”

Webb will be happy to help if he believes that the Disciples are sincere. However, he's no fool, and will assume nothing. If the Cabal wants to talk to Coslow, Webb will have to be coerced, bullied, or charmed with magic.

He has a calm and pleasant demeanor as long as things are going well. He will panic and fly into an absolute rage at Coslow's death. He might even attack one of the Disciples.

In his spare time, Webb tortures catatonic and incoherent patients with electroconvulsive therapy equipment.

Warren Clayton

Clayton is a lean, athletic man in his fifties. With his olive skin and slight accent, his exact ethnicity and nation of origin are hard to place. He has long, shiny hair, a narrow face, dark eyes, and pinched features. He tends to squint, which makes him appear skeptical and suspicious, even if he's verbally agreeing with someone.

Condescending, smug, and abrupt, Clayton exudes wealth, control, and power. He talks in nautical terms: captain, ship, rudder, and steer. He always talks to people like they're the help.

Warren Clayton inherited most of his money, and due to his extravagant lifestyle, he's beginning to run out. He uses his wealth to crush small business owners, acquires them, and lays off their employees. Then he has his personnel department recruit these unemployed workers for jobs that don't pay quite as well, and which aren't really in their area of expertise. He is delighted to hear of their unhappiness, even though the high turnover rate actually winds up costing his businesses money.

Clayton also likes to send married employees on long-term off-site assignments with colleagues of the opposite sex. It amuses him to no end to learn of infidelities, office romances gone sour, and accusations of inappropriate behavior.

He's calm under fire, in control, and will not hesitate to shoot. In a crisis, he gives orders, takes hostages, and defends himself with any weapon he can get his hands on. He will not panic, but will act as though he's in charge. His pride will be his undoing, as he will assume that the Disciples are stupid, weak, or easily bribed.

Jerome Bradley

Jerome Bradley is a security guard for Warren Clayton. He's a tired-looking Caucasian male in his forties. He's tired and hangdog-looking, with a cheap windbreaker and a lined face. He's been beaten and tortured, and he looks bloody and exhausted. His missing fingers and cowering demeanor make him look rumped and defeated.

Bradley is fairly pessimistic and snarky. This recent turn of events just confirms what he's always known about life. Wily, sarcastic, and prone to grumpiness, Bradley's cantankerous demeanor is actually fairly engaging, particularly when he seems more annoyed than distraught over his torture and abuse. For him, every minor inconvenience is the end of the world, and the mutilation of his hands is an annoyance.

Bradley doesn't subscribe to the notion of an afterlife. He lives day to day, and hopes for the best. A former police officer, he is prone to telling stories about his days on the force.

Too badly injured to help, Bradley will nonetheless try to contribute something to the effort. If he believes that the Disciples have good intentions, he'll tell them where he's hidden a nearby firearm (whether it's a revolver or an automatic rifle is the Director's discretion).

If rescued, he'll try to call for help unless dissuaded. Though he'll be grateful to the Disciples for rescuing him, if they don't offer some kind of explanation for their presence and behavior, he might conclude that they're members of a rival cartel.

“Ain't this a bitch? How the fuck do I give the finger to some jagoff talking on his cell phone while he's driving? I need a prosthetic middle finger. Hey, you got any cigarettes? Man, I could use a smoke. Doctor says I should quit, or at least try smoking cigarettes with filters. Fuck that action, compadre. Smoking with a filter is like suckin on a tittie through a negligee. No thanks, take it off, you know?”

David Coslow

David Coslow is thin, gaunt, haunted, and hollow-eyed. His teeth are long, and his hair is lank and greasy. He's nervous and reeks of sweat. Exhausted and worn down, Coslow plays with his hair and bites his nails.

He has a reedy voice, thin and whispery. During conversation, he's erratic, nervous, and prone to tics and stuttering. If intimidated, he appears confused and he blinks a lot.

During his conversation with the Disciples, he will gradually become more relaxed. He'll appear very calm as he relates his story to them. Once they reach the subject of the demon, he will seem incongruously happy.

If asked, he'll explain that for the first time, he feels like someone believes him. He'll answer any question to the best of his ability. Savvy players will be able to accumulate a great deal of information about the demon's appearance and behavior at this point.

After talking to the Disciples, Coslow will pull a handful of nails from his pocket and pop them into his mouth. Smiling, he'll bite down, forcing the nails through his chin and throat. No matter what, he'll be dead by the time anyone gets to him. No one will ever know where the nails came from.

Should the Disciples somehow manage to keep him from killing himself with the nails, he'll find another way at some point. Worst-case scenario, he'll keel over from a heart attack or stroke. The man is dead, end of story.

Hector Morales

Hector Morales is a tanned and muscular Hispanic male in his late thirties. Lean, well-dressed, and polished, Morales is nonetheless an utterly inhuman psychotic who collects the fingers of his victims.

Dark-eyed, tanned, stylish, and confident, Morales wears brightly-colored Hawaiian shirts. He is elegant, with good posture and alpha-male poise. His voice is a rich tenor, slightly accented.

Morales will freak out at the sight of the demon, but will eventually reassert himself and open fire. If attacked by the Disciples, he will retaliate, but the use of magic may drive him into a state of panic, at which point he will retreat.

The Vaqueta Cartel, based out of Cordino, Colombia, is responsible for countless crimes throughout Central and South America. Led by Ernesto Rodriguez, 67, the cartels has killed cops and judges, murdered witnesses, and enslaved entire villages. They are one of the largest exporters of drugs into North America and Europe. Recently, Rodriguez was taken over by an Issoc demon. The demon has already destroyed much of Cordino, and is now on its way to seek out and recruit Morales for the second stage of its war on authority. Should Morales survive this scenario, he may crop up later, in league with the possessed Rodriguez.

PATTERSON RESIDENCE

This is the home of Andrew and Marie Patterson. Andrew, 39, is an associate manager for a telemarketing company. Marie, 42, was a substitute teacher. Andrew was abducted by the Curhadac during dinner last night. Marie was partially eaten, and mangled beyond recognition. The house is a complete disaster.

The body of Marie Patterson has been moved to the office of the Medical Examiner, and much of the evidence has been bagged and removed. The forensic analysts are currently en route to the police station. They're scheduled to return shortly, to complete the task of documenting and bagging all physical evidence. The police have sealed the area off with yellow crime scene tape, and there are two officers sitting in a squad car in the driveway.

The Disciples might figure out what happened here through a series of skill checks (difficulty ranges between 9 and 12). In brief, the Curhadac attacked Marie first, while Andrew was upstairs. It struck while she was coming out of the bathroom, chased her through the living room, and cornered her in the kitchen, where it devoured most of her torso. During her struggles, several wine bottles were knocked over in the process.

By the time Andrew got down the stairs, she was dead. The demon knocked Andrew unconscious, then ransacked the house for a paintbrush, which it used to paint a small portrait of Andrew on Marie's leg (which was collected by police, though droplets around the kitchen floor indicate what transpired here).

Upstairs

In the bedroom, a successful Crime check against difficulty 11 will reveal a revolver hidden in the closet (range 2, damage 2, ammo 1).

There's blood on the linoleum, and it's still a little slippery. It looks like someone was dragged in through the living room. There's broken glass on the floor from a half-dozen wine bottles. A paintbrush soaked in Marie's blood is lying on the kitchen counter, and there's burned food in a pot on the stove. The kitchen reeks of burned food, the coppery stink of blood, and potpourri; after the violence, the Curhadac heated potpourri and water in a pan in order to mask the smell somewhat.

Bathroom

This is where the demon first struck at Marie Patterson. After smashing her face into the mirror, it pursued her into the kitchen, where she was killed. There are scratches on the door frame, caused by the demon's spikes. The Disciples can figure out what happened, and also learn something about the demon's size and shape (due to the scratches on the frame), by making a successful skill check at difficulty 11.

Living room

The Pattersons' dog is nailed to the wall with a fireplace poker. The demon has scribbled something on the wall in the dog's blood. A successful Linguistics check (difficulty 10) will reveal that this is a short poem written in Lemnian; it's a paean to dogs, celebrating their loyalty and courage. The carpet in this room is covered in dried blood from the dog and from Marie; footsteps through this area will crunch quietly in the silent house. The room reeks of dog urine; it voided its bladder in terror before being killed.

Garage

The Pattersons' SUV is still parked in the garage (body 28, swerve 1, recover 2, ram 3).

Evidence

1. *Kitchen paintbrush (Curhadac)*
2. *Bathroom scratch marks (Curhadac)*
3. *Poem in living room (Curhadac)*

KATERAMAS RESIDENCE

The Curhadac struck again, abducting Molly Kateramas from her home in the hours before sunrise. After smashing through their back door, the beast thudded upstairs, where it devoured most of George Kateramas in a single gulp before knocking Molly senseless against the post of her brass bed. It then attacked and killed their children, William and Regina.

After the frenzy of its initial attack, the demon carried the three corpses downstairs and broiled their kidneys, which it ate at their dining room table. The Disciples might determine what transpired here through a series of skill checks (difficulty ranges between 9 and 12).

When the Disciples arrive, the area is still undisturbed. Because the Kateramas house is surrounded by a sizable yard and a high fence, no one heard or saw anything, and the police haven't yet been called. However, after a day or two, a classmate or co-worker might come by the house to see what's going on.

Outside, the mood is somber and dark. The sky is dark and overcast, and it's been drizzling for a few hours now. In the distance, sirens can be heard. These eventually fade out without getting any closer.

Kitchen

The glass door that leads to the backyard has been smashed in. Pieces of broken glass are littered all over the kitchen floor. Droplets of thick green blood (from where the Curhadac's spines pierce its skin) are scattered through this area. The mangled bodies of George, William, and Regina are stacked under the kitchen table.

A successful skill check (medicine) against difficulty 10 will reveal that their kidneys were torn out through their backs prior to being mauled. The kitchen smells mouth-wateringly good.

In the oven, the Disciples will find two uneaten kidneys (George's). They've been seasoned with cayenne pepper and grated lemon peel.

Dining room

There's a plate at the table. This is where the demon stood and finished its meal. When finished, it drank a glass of water, which is still on the table, next to its neatly-folded napkin.

Bedroom

There's blood on the sheets, and the room is in a state of complete disarray. The sheets and linens are torn, and the carpet is still damp with blood. In the closet, there's a pile of feces. After it defecated, the demon tried to cover its droppings with Molly's shoes.

Garage

Parked in the garage, the Disciples will find a minivan (body 31, swerve 1, recover 2, ram 3).

Evidence

1. *Bloody print on glass (Curhadac)*
2. *Bite marks on bodies (Curhadac)*
3. *Feces in closet (Curhadac)*
4. *Kidneys at table (Curhadac)*

BARREN FIELD

This small property was annexed by the city during a period of expansion. Though it was never formally developed, a group of squatters constructed a makeshift shack from an aluminum shed and several pieces of tarpaper. They abandoned it a few years back in favor of more comfortable accommodations in the downtown area.

The Curhadac brought its victims to this shack last year. It tied their arms and feet with rope, and broke their legs to ensure that they would not flee. One by one, it selected its bound and struggling victims and tore them apart, using their bodies to create soothing landscape paintings, which it then presented to David Coslow, whom the demon set free.

Later, the police combed the area for evidence, but they didn't know about the coffee can in the gully. Before it set Coslow free, it led him to a gully, and it showed him a few trinkets, which it was placing in a coffee can. It smiled at him. Coslow soiled himself in the extremity of his terror.

The demon placed the paintings, wrapped in fabric, in Coslow's arms, and then it let him go. He never told anyone about the coffee can. It was something that he wanted to tell the police about, because he believed that it would somehow exonerate him, but he was afraid that the demon would be angry with him, so he never said anything.

Field

The area around the shack is covered in hard clay. No dirt, and no grass. Erosion has taken its toll, and the rains have washed small gullies into the earth. These are relatively shallow, but deepen as they approach the west.

Gullies

In one of the deepest gullies, roughly a quarter-mile west of the shack, there's a sealed coffee can hidden under a pile of rags and pieces of a broken vacuum cleaner. Inside the can, the Disciples will find a statuette of a nude human female, carved from bone; a lock of dark hair tied with a red ribbon; and a piece of scrimshaw depicting ships at sea and stars in the sky. All three objects came from the body of Jessica Laverdier, who was one of the Curhadac's victims.

Shack

Derelict and dusty, this structure reeks of rot and urine. Light comes through cracks in the walls, and illuminates the dust-motes hanging in the air. There are a few rotting lengths of rope on the ground.

Evidence

1. *Rotting ropes (Curhadac)*
2. *Statuettes and hair (Curhadac)*

LYNDE ASYLUM

The Sophia Lynde State Hospital for the Insane is sophisticated, clean, and state-of-the-art. It features wide hallways, quiet common areas, and small conference rooms. These are all bright white, and the whole building smells of industrial-strength disinfectant.

Lobby

If the Disciples arrive here under pretense, or if they just walk in, they will be asked to wait for the psychiatrist in charge of Coslow's case, one Dr. Randall Webb.

If they did any research before coming here, they'll learn that Lynde only houses criminally insane prisoners. Richard Noelle, for example, killed 12 pregnant women. Arthur Hong strangled dozens of hitchhikers and dumped their bodies along the highway.

The lobby is furnished with comfortable chairs and numerous magazines. While waiting, the Cabal may observe that the facility is run like a prison; there are metal bars, surveillance cameras, and armed security guards. Leashed attack dogs patrol the grounds. A tired-looking brunette in her fifties (Jessica Sarnes) is being pushed through the lobby in a wheelchair; the attendant with her leaves her 'parked' near a magazine rack while he signs in at the admin's desk.

The Disciples can see that the brunette is hollow-eyed and slack-jawed; she's completely catatonic. Though they won't know it unless they use magic (such as Discern), this woman is possessed by a Aspinaba demon.

If they decide to do some snooping while waiting, it won't be too hard (difficulty 9) to learn that Warren Clayton has been here several times. It looks as though he's been using the alias "Arthur Mowkan". A Sense check against difficulty 10 will reveal that this is an anagram of 'human artwork'. Arthur has visited Coslow several times over the last few months, but the last time he visited, he signed out as Warren Clayton by mistake. Investigation will reveal that the employee who signed him in was fired for accepting bribes.

Webb's office

Sparsely decorated, this office smells of old books and aftershave. There are three-dimensional models of the human brain on shelves, next to plaques and awards and dozens of textbooks. Webb is here, waiting for the Disciples. He greets them warmly and asks how he can help them.

At this point, the use of magic or skills will get them a tour of the facility, ending at Coslow's cell. Anything else will get security into the room in a matter of seconds.

Coslow's cell

He sits, shirtless and crosslegged, on the floor. Quiet and serene in his padded cell, Coslow sits and stares into space. The wall that divides the players from Coslow is three-inch plexiglass with small ventilation holes at the top of the cell. There's no door here -- in order to reach the door, the Cabal must approach the cell from another room. Breaking through the plexiglass will require a strength check against difficulty 11.

ECT treatment room

If the Disciples cast Bete Noir or Confession on Webb, they'll learn that he likes to torture his patients with electroconvulsive therapy (see his character description for more info). Should they proceed to the ECT treatment room, they won't find any evidence of wrongdoing, but they will find Brenda Collins, the woman who's possessed by the Aspinaba demon. She's receiving electroshock treatment, but investigation will reveal that this is part of regular procedure. The room smells of bleach and urine. The members of the hospital staff may panic if confronted by the Disciples.

Evidence

1. *Coslow's testimony (Curhadac)*

CLAYTON MANSION

The local residence of Warren Clayton is an opulent and gated mansion that borders Cullen Lake. This isn't Clayton's actual residence -- it's just where he stays when he's in the area. He flies in from time to time. Though he doesn't have a private airstrip in this area yet, he's thinking about having one built.

Outside, the mansion is well-defended by Clayton's private security detail. There are high fences, guard dogs, and video surveillance. Inside, the mansion is decorated in a garish gold-and-maroon color scheme. The foyer is vast, with high staircases, and many of the rooms in this house have clearly never been used.

Breaking into the mansion will require the use of magic, or skill checks against difficulty 12.

Bedroom

Of the mansion's six bedrooms, this is the largest. It's also the only one in use. The bed is adorned with solid gold bedposts. The toilet handle is made of gold. The toothbrush is made of ivory. And gold. In the largest of his three closets, hidden behind a large stack of illegal pornography, the Disciples will find a cardboard box full of cash in small, unmarked bills. If the Disciples take this money, then at the beginning of their next mission, the Cash score for every member of the team will be at 3. This one-time bonus will not be transferable, and after that, their cash score will go back down to normal. If their cash score is already at 3 or higher, it will be improved by 1 point for the next mission).

Security room

The security room, which is locked (difficulty 10) and guarded (twice as many security personnel as there are Disciples), is located in the far southwest corner of the house, far from the residential area. This room is quite large, and is equipped with dozens of monitors, sensors, and several weapons (2 assault rifles, 6 shotguns, and 6 pistols). By observing the monitors, the Disciples may be able to watch Clayton, or a member of his staff, enter and exit the Blue Room (thereby learning the location of the room, and the combination to the number pad: 100202).

Garage

In the garage, which is the size of a small department store, the Disciples will find several high-end sports cars (body 18, swerve 3, recover 2, ram 1).

Blue room

The Blue Room is located on the lowest level of the house, which is underground. To reach the room, the Cabal must descend down a flight of stairs lined with paintings by famous modern

artists. When they reach the bottom, they'll find a number pad. Above it, there's a security camera. If the Disciples haven't already reached the security room, their presence in this area will result in an attack from Clayton's security team. If they've already entered the security room, they can enter the code -- 051407 -- or enter the door another way. Bashing the door down requires a strength check against difficulty 11.

Inside, the Blue Room is lit by pale lights in the corners. The room is actually painted black, but the bulbs emit a pale blue glow. There are five of the Curhadac's paintings on the wall, and six black leather sofas in the center of the room, each of which faces one of the paintings. The sixth sofa faces an empty spot on the wall; the painting that Salazar stole used to hang here. The paintings are well-executed landscapes and still lifes.

LAKE HOUSE

This is where Morales' speedboats bring drugs in. Clayton's security team and the DEA agents bring the drugs into the lakehouse, where they're then loaded into vehicles and transported throughout the city.

Right now, Bradley is in the storage shed, being tortured by Morales' thugs. The DEA agents are in the lake house, talking to Morales. A group of Clayton's security guards is heading towards the docks to make sure there's nothing left in the speedboats.

Docks

There are three speedboats here (body 25, swerve 4, recover 1, ram 1). The keys are in the possession of Morales' men, who are currently torturing Bradley in the storage shed. Hotwiring the boats will require a skill check against difficulty 11.

The water around the docks is murky, but if the Disciples poke around long enough, they may find the dead body of Andrew Peele. He was one of Clayton's employees, but after he discovered the drug operation, he was dismissed. Then, Morales cut off all of his fingers, tied cinderblocks to his feet, and dumped him into the lake. He left enough slack in the rope to guarantee that Peele could keep part of his face above water if he paddled long enough. Peele lasted for several minutes.

House

Inside the lake house, Morales is in the process of giving up a low-level dealer who works for a rival. The DEA agents will arrest the dealer, who will give them information about his boss (Morales' rival). It's a win-win situation, as far as everyone's concerned, and they'll decide to celebrate with a drink.

Storage shed

Occasionally, Morales' men will store a few kilos of cocaine here if there's too much to fit comfortably in the lake house. There's still some residue here, but other than these traces, the shelves are bare. Bradley is tied to a chair, and Morales' thugs are beating him senseless. There's no real reason to do so, but Morales knows that his men need to blow off a little steam now and again, and this is a good way for them to unwind. The men have keys to the speedboats outside.

CULLEN LAKE

Once combat begins, some of the cartel gunmen and at least two DEA operatives will scramble from the nearby area (where they've been patrolling the wooded areas around the estate) and make for the docks. They'll hotwire the boats, if necessary, and try to get out as quickly as possible. Of the three boats, the cartel gunmen will take one, the DEA ops will take the other, and the third will be left sitting there. As noted before, hotwiring it will require a skill check against difficulty 11.

Should the Disciples give chase in the third boat, or use other methods to attack, the hostiles will head west across the lake. It will take them thirty seconds to reach the other side, where they've hidden a couple of SUVs for just such a contingency (body 30, swerve 2, recover 1, ram 3). If the Aspinaba hasn't struck yet, this might be a good place for the body of Jessica Sarnes out of the water and try to drag a few Disciples in with her.

If the hostiles are still in once piece when they reach the far side of the lake, they'll hit a sand bar, effectively ending the chase. Once they get out of the boats and start running towards the SUVs (probably exchanging gunfire with the Cabal as they do so), you might want to introduce another party into the mix.

For example, this might be the time for the Curhadac to strike. Or, you might have a DEA sniper or two (or three!), back at the docks, firing at the Disciples. Since the shooter(s) will be at range 3, and firing an automatic rifle, this could be extremely bad for the Cabal.

If the hostiles survive all of this chaos, they'll jump into the SUVs and head north, crashing their car(s), or parking and getting out, near the caves.

CURHADAC'S LAIR

Along the western end of the lake is a series of rock caves that head down a good sixty or seventy feet. The cave walls are dark brown, moist, and cool to the touch. While the cartel ops and DEA agents know of these caves, none of them knows about the demon or its prey. The hostiles might enter these caves, hoping to find a defensible position against the Disciples (who have probably used magic by now, terrifying their enemies).

If the enemies are all defeated, the Disciples will find more of the demon's droppings in the area. It found the SUVs a few hours ago, and defecated on one of them to mark its territory (and show its displeasure). Should the Disciples use Nimrod (or the Tracking skill) to follow the Curhadac, its trail will lead them to the caves.

The moment someone enters the cave system, the screams of the Curhadac's victims can be heard. Anticipating some kind of interference, the demon has booby-trapped portions of its lair. Spikes, needles, drop-away floors, and swinging blades can inflict serious damage on the Disciples. If a trap is triggered, the Disciple must roll a defend check against difficulty 11 or take damage +2. An attempt to look for traps will require a sense check against difficulty 12 (difficulty 9 for investigators).

If the Disciples are still pursuing the gunmen, at least one of the hostiles should die a gruesome death early on, due to triggering a trap.

Molly Kateramas and Andrew Patterson are shackled to the wall, nearly hysterical with terror. They're both dehydrated and exhausted, but otherwise in decent shape. Should the Disciples clear the area of all hostiles and rescue the victims, they'll answer any of the Cabal's questions about the demon (though they won't have much to tell, other than eyewitness accounts).

SCENARIO HOOKS

RED MEAT

The city is in a state of panic over a series of horrific suicide attempts, some successful and others less so. A few weeks ago, Tony Degrosso, an athlete in training for the Olympics, hurled himself in front of a moving train, and lost both of his legs in the ensuing accident. Miraculously, he survived. After doctors saved his life, he somehow managed to get his wheelchair to the roof of the hospital and flung himself off, plunging ten stories to his death. How he was able to get past security remains a mystery.

Local legend Amber Waters, folk guitarist and indie rock star, walked into a hardware store, picked up an axe, and chopped off her right hand without hesitation. As horrified sales clerks tried to offer medical attention, she held them at bay with wild swings of the axe; in between, she hacked her severed hand into pieces, ensuring that it would never be re-attached. Then she lost consciousness. A few weeks later, she walked up to a gas station, sprayed gasoline all over herself, a few cars, and several pumps. Then she produced a cigarette lighter from her pocket. The explosion killed eight people and wounded several others.

This is the work of a Suliegos demon, and it's just getting started. The one thing that all of the victims have in common is membership at Resistance, a health and fitness center. The one thing that all of the death scenes have in common is the presence of blue insects; at both the hospital and the gas station, bright blue wasps, beetles, and flies were found buzzing around.

The latest victim of the demon is Cliff Miller, the blues singer-guitarist. He's trying to score heroin downtown, just across the street from where a drug deal is going sour. The seller, Andrew Wheeler, is higher than a kite on cocaine, but the buyer, Luis Morello, is convinced that Wheeler's acting funny because he's a narc. The situation is about to turn violent, and just as things get crazy, Miller's going to suddenly get the urge to rip out his own vocal cords...

BLOOD MONEY

After Matt O'Neill lost his job, his house, and then his car, he moved his family into a small apartment downtown. He's had trouble finding work, and the recession is making it hard for his family to make ends meet. They do the best they can, but it's not good enough.

Then someone rings the doorbell. Her name, she says is Christine Marie Cranston, heir to the Cranston fortune. She's come to help, having heard of the O'Neill family's plight through a distant relative who used to work in the same office as Matt. She's happy to help them financially, no strings attached.

Overjoyed, the O'Neills try to stay optimistic as days go by, but finally she returns, one week later, with a briefcase full of cash. She says that for tax purposes, she has to do it this way. They're too stunned and grateful to disagree, so she leaves the money with them and wishes them all the best.

A few days later, though, she returns. She asks Matt for help. Her only child, a bitter and twisted young man, has been making strange comments about his inheritance. Worse, he broke into her home last night, and threatened to kill her if she didn't hand over the money in a matter of days. The police are investigating, but she says that they don't take her seriously.

She begs O'Neill to help. Reluctantly, he does so, but the address that she gives him leads O'Neill to the warehouse where a violent drug gang does business. Worse, the demon got the briefcase full of money by stalking and killing several members of the gang. O'Neill fled, but the gang is after him.

Other members of the gang have bribed crooked police officers into helping, and the cops are looking for the stolen money. A hit just came up, because O'Neill's wife just spent some of the money at the grocery store. At this point, the drug gang, the dirty cops, and the demon are all converging on the apartment, but the O'Neills are gone, having fled to a trailer park on the other side of town until O'Neill can figure out what to do.

Somewhere along the line, someone saw the demon killing one of the drug dealers, and the Cabal was brought into the equation. The question is, can they get to the demon in time?

FOOL'S GOLD

A group of soldiers, scheduled for deployment to Iran, have decided to go AWOL. As they escape the base, however, they are spotted, and a confrontation ensues with a guard. One of the soldiers panics and kills the guard, and the soldiers flee for their lives.

They're now making their way through the woods on foot, hoping to locate a vehicle that they can use to get out of the country. In the meantime, a group of murderous bank robbers has encountered a Dengiorre. Posing as the restless spirit of a wealthy woman long dead, it has persuaded the criminals that there's a massive stash of gold bullion buried in the woods.

However, the conversation was interrupted by a group of college students on a hiking excursion. The bank robbers captured the students, and have decided to put them to work digging for the buried treasure (after which they'll be killed and buried in the woods).

One of the students, however, was separated from the rest of the group, and she witnessed the whole thing. Terrified by the criminals, and even more so by the 'ghost', she called the only person she could trust: the Cabal.

Paranoid and hopped-up on drugs, the bank robbers will shoot anything that moves. They're convinced that there's someone trailing them (which is true -- the college student who contacted the Disciples is trying to follow them through the woods so that she can tell someone where her friends are), and they're convinced that the authorities have tracked them down after their latest heist.

The AWOL soldiers are in a state of panic, convinced that they'll be caught, tried, and executed for desertion and murder. If they encounter the Disciples, it's likely that they'll assume they're dealing with US Marshals or bounty hunters, and they'll respond with lethal force.

Since they're equipped with body armor, assault rifles, and hand grenades, they pose a serious threat to the Cabal.

The Disciples need to locate the Dengiorre and send it back to Hell. But if they are conscientious, they'll also want to save the college students from certain death.

Woods

Here, the Dengiorre has set numerous traps for the bank robbers, but many of them look like natural phenomena, so as not to arouse suspicion. For example, the demon has placed several antlers at the bottom of a gulch, which has been covered with a thin layer of twigs and leaves.

Should one of the bank robbers (or hostages, or soldiers, or Disciples) tumble into pit, it's likely that he'll be injured very badly. Other examples include a rusting bear trap and a wire snare that could well sever someone's foot.

If the Disciples are trailing the bank robbers, they may have to make numerous skill and attribute checks to avoid taking damage. They may also encounter the corpse of one of the bank robbers (or even someone who's too injured to be carried along).

Cave

This is the promised location of the nonexistent gold. Here, the demon has set several traps, so elaborate (and so recently constructed) that even the drug-addled hostage takers will recognize that they've been duped.

However, the entrance to the cave will seal itself behind them, and none of them has thought to bring climbing gear, so they have no choice but to continue, using their hostages to trigger traps as they go.

There's a large opening at the top of the hill, several feet wide, but the bank robbers have no way to reach it. The Disciples will be able to use this to enter the cave, at which point they'll have to deal with the bank robbers, the hostage crisis, and the Dengiorre, which resents the intrusion of the Cabal.

River

Here, the soldiers have paused for rest and water. They've set up a defensive perimeter, and are scanning the area for trouble with their nightvision goggles. They know that they're not alone, but they haven't encountered the bank robbers yet. Any contact with the Disciples will probably result in combat.

EXCELSIS DEO

Natalie Owens has been married for seven years. Her husband, David, has been cheating on her for three. A few months ago, Natalie found out, and she asked for a divorce. Instead of apologizing, David became physically abusive and threatened to kill her. Since then, she's been living in terror, and she's become aware of a dark side of David that she never suspected. In addition to being unfaithful and abusive, David is also addicted to various narcotics, gambles compulsively, and owes a great deal of money to various loan sharks.

Two nights ago, Natalie was visited in her bed (where she was sleeping alone, with no idea where David was) by what appeared to be an angel. A beautiful woman with vast white wings, glowing with a soft light, told Natalie that everything was going to be okay. The angel (actually a Shurull demon) told Natalie that she would have to be strong, like Judith. Natalie, a devout Christian, was familiar with the Biblical story of the woman who murdered Holofernes by seducing him, getting him drunk, and decapitating him. She told the angel that she understood, and that she would do God's will.

The angel vanished in a flash of light, and Natalie started making plans. The following day, she blurted a few of these to her sister, and told her about the visitation from the angel. Disturbed, her sister called the police.

When David returned home that afternoon, Natalie poured him a drink and served him his dinner. His drink and food were laced with crushed sleeping pills, and he was incapacitated almost immediately. Natalie drove him to the woods, where he regained consciousness and found himself strapped to a fallen tree trunk. He was able to get a decent idea of his location, based on the sounds of the freeway and the city skyline in the distance. David sent a text message to Lydia, but as he sent it, the phone beeped, and Natalie (just coming back from the car with a duffel bag full of woodworking tools) heard it. She destroyed the phone with a hammer. Currently, she is torturing David under the direction of the 'angel'.

David is in a great deal of debt, and his life is in danger if he can't pay up. So he and his girlfriend, Lydia Manzof, have devised an extremely dangerous scheme. Lydia comes from an extremely wealthy family, but doesn't have access to the money. Her parents have allotted her a strictly-controlled stipend, because she spends the money on drugs and parties, and frequently goes on benders that end with her waking up in prison.

Chafing under their control, Lydia has convinced David to stage a kidnapping, and they can then split the ransom. He agreed, and yesterday, he 'abducted' her. The two of them trashed her apartment and left a cryptic ransom note. However, on their way out, they were accosted by Lucas Horne, one of David's loan sharks. Horne and his men were about to break David's legs when Lydia told them about the plan. Lucas immediately agreed to hold off on physical violence in exchange for a large cut of the ransom money. To ensure David's cooperation, Lucas and his men took Lydia with them.

Since David is in the woods, being tortured by Natalie, he hasn't been answering his phone. Lucas is convinced that David's gone the police. He and his men are searching for David, and they plan to kill him when they find him.

A group of FBI agents was contacted by local authorities when the ransom note was found. Based on eyewitness testimony, the agents are on the trail of David and Lucas.

Owens residence

If the Disciples search the home, they'll find several kilos of cocaine in a shoebox in the closet. In the bathroom, they'll find an empty bottle of sleeping pills, and a spoon in the sink is coated with residue from crushed pills. At the kitchen table, the half-eaten meal and toppled chair will no doubt fill in the missing pieces of the puzzle for the Cabal. Searching David's computer will turn up the address to Lucas' nightclub.

Lucas' nightclub

Currently closed; dark and empty. In the back room, Lydia is tied to a chair, and her mouth is taped shut. Several of Lucas' men are guarding her. Her phone rang when David texted her, but she wasn't able to answer it. Lucas and several of his men are out looking for David. One of them knows a thing or two about computers, and is trying to access the GPS in the Owens' SUV, which will lead them to the forest. If the Disciples check Lydia's phone, they'll see David's location.

Lydia's apartment

Here, the Disciples will find more of Lucas' men, ransacking the place for clues to David's location. Lucas will call one of his men with the information about David's current position (based on the GPS in the SUV).

Forest

Lucas and his men will arrive at David and Natalie's location a few minutes after the Disciples do. It's likely that the Shurull will reveal itself and attack the Disciples, figuring them to be the most immediate threat.

BEST SERVED COLD

A few weeks ago, a group of computer hackers has been hired by a mercenary group to carry out cyber-attacks against a government agency. After the mission is completed, the mercs take the hackers out to celebrate. In a seedy brothel, a drug-fueled argument breaks out between one of the mercs and one of the hackers. The merc pulls a knife and stabs the man dead. The mercs do their best to keep the situation quiet, paying the hackers a large quantity of hush money, and they then drive the corpse out into the wilderness and bury it in the woods.

However, the body was possessed by a Daemuil demon, which is now on a mission of revenge. The hackers and mercenaries have both been hired by a group of eco-terrorists to perform a similar operation, and they're all working from a series of warehouses and cheap one-room apartments downtown. The demon is on the hunt, and the Disciples must find it and stop it before the ensuing violence claims the lives of innocent bystanders.

COLLATERAL DAMAGE

A group of violent neo-Nazis looking for trouble has had several conflicts with a local drug gang. During a firefight, two police officers are critically injured in the crossfire. The police have since targeted both groups, and will stop at nothing to bring them down. The neo-Nazis have been organized into an army by the Issoac, and they're currently training in a compound in the woods. The demon's goal is to push the skinheads into a war with the drug gang. The neo-Nazis capture, torture, and kill several of the gang's leaders.

A few innocent families are caught in the crossfire, so the Disciples get involved. Word on the street is that there's a female skinhead in charge of the neo-Nazis, and that she's sadistic, insane, and seems to be bulletproof...

FATHER, FORGIVE ME

Father Daniel Potrafka has been using St. Andrews' Church to launder money for the Syndicate. The police are currently investigating the church, and there have been allegations of embezzlement and misappropriated funds. The Syndicate has made it clear to Father Daniel that if any of this gets back to them, he is a dead man. This situation is complicated by the presence of a Lunamic demon, which reveals itself to Father Daniel.

During a meeting with a pair of Syndicate enforcers, the demon manifests itself and then kills both of them, then informs the terrified priest that he must never mention a word of this to anyone.

Now, Father Daniel is on the run, believing that he is being punished for his sins. The police are after him, as he's their number-one suspect in the murder of the two enforcers. The Syndicate believes that Father Daniel is in police or FBI custody, and there's a massive contract out on him.

Meanwhile, the demon is posing as a helpful member of the St. Andrews congregation, and is driving the priest as far away from the city as possible. It's only a matter of time before the bodies start to pile up.

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.

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...

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.

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.

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.

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.

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 Cauriaq demon has taken an interest in him. His ensuing erratic behavior is starting to make the mafia don a little nervous.

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.

RANDOMIZED DEMON GENERATOR

“The (name1)(name2)(name3) demon. This (description) (breed) (pattern) (victims). Its body is (appearance1) (appearance2), and it has (appearance3).”

name1 (2d12)

Ha
Foca
Ka
Gauri
Qa
Vassa
Da
Phoso
Xo
A
Orgro
Cha
Ga
Ou
Shukro
Ke
Akri
De
Xe
Che
U
Ge
Gasku

name2 (1d12)

ne
ve
le
ze
mi
vi
li
zi
mo
ro
lo
zo

name3 (1d12)

ndiac
sette
miaq
ruom
gris
iloma
nziam
thac
qest
thon
viliac
noth

description (1d12)

This skin-harvesting
This brutal
This music-loving
This malevolent
This shimmering
This foul
This fastidious
This impure
This Bible-quoting
This sweet-smelling
This terrifying
This hypersexual

breed (1d12)

Stalker (Violence 2, Instinct 7, Traction 6, Life 18, Wrath 21)
Stalker (Violence 2, Instinct 8, Traction 5, Life 18, Wrath 21)
Stalker (Violence 1, Instinct 9, Traction 6, Life 19, Wrath 20)
Defiler (Violence 6, Instinct 3, Traction 7, Life 13, Wrath 26)
Defiler (Violence 5, Instinct 2, Traction 8, Life 14, Wrath 25)
Defiler (Violence 4, Instinct 1, Traction 9, Life 15, Wrath 24)
Hunter (Violence 9, Instinct 6, Traction 2, Life 29, Wrath 10)
Hunter (Violence 7, Instinct 6, Traction 2, Life 24, Wrath 15)
Hunter (Violence 8, Instinct 5, Traction 2, Life 25, Wrath 14)
Infector
Infector
Infector

pattern (1d12)

feeds upon
 torments
 guides and instructs
 haunts
 kills the loved ones of
 attacks
 collects the genitals of
 harvests
 creates art from the hair of
 eviscerates
 wears the skin of
 licks clean

VICTIMS (2d12)

those who have committed murder.
 the terminally ill.
 religious leaders.
 victims of abuse.
 the elderly.
 false prophets.
 addicts.
 criminals.
 virgins.
 random victims.
 the suicidal.
 the unfaithful.
 the devout.
 the socially shunned.
 the grief-stricken.
 transients.
 the mentally unbalanced.
 those deeply in love.
 the charitable.
 alcoholics.
 the wealthy.
 prostitutes.
 those plagued by the secrets they keep.

appearance1 (1d12)

lean and
 somewhat
 bulbous and
 grotesquely
 scaly and
 almost
 covered in sores and
 mostly
 decayed and
 vaguely
 massive and
 vast and

appearance2 (1d12)

reptilian
 amorphous
 insectile
 squamous
 arachnid
 humanoid
 octopoid
 lupine
 serpentine
 transparent
 luminescent
 skeletal

appearance3 (1d12)

two large wings.
 access to government databases.
 a dozen ropelike tentacles that undulate slowly.
 large crab-like claws.
 the voice of a child.
 a scorpion-like tail.
 several gaping mouths.
 necrotic buboes that violently burst upon physical contact.
 long, serrated mandibles.
 jagged teeth jutting from a wide, flat mouth.
 wet skin that trails long strands of acidic, viscous fluid.
 the face of a beautiful woman.

DM APPENDIX: HOSTILES

Civilian

Violence 1
Instinct 1
Traction 1
Life 4
Skills: Random 2

Academic

Violence 1
Instinct 2
Traction 1
Life 4
Skills: Random 4

Clergy

Violence 1
Instinct 1
Traction 2
Life 4
Skills: Random 2

Athlete

Violence 2
Instinct 1
Traction 1
Life 4
Skills: Random 2

Politician

Violence 1
Instinct 2
Traction 1
Life 4
Skills: Profession (Politics) 4

Police officer

Violence 2
Instinct 1
Traction 1
Life 5
Skills: Crime 2

Detective

Violence 2
Instinct 2
Traction 1
Life 5
Skills: Crime 4

Task Force Officer

Violence 4
Instinct 1
Traction 1
Life 6
Armor 5
Skills: Crime (Task Force) 2

Police sniper

Violence 4
Instinct 1
Traction 1
Life 6
Armor 7
Skills: Crime (Police sniper) 2

SWAT operative

Violence 4
Instinct 2
Traction 1
Life 7
Armor 9
Skills: Crime (SWAT) 4

Spy

Violence 2
Instinct 2
Traction 1
Life 5
Armor 3
Skills: Profession (Spy) 4

Desk agent

Violence 1
Instinct 3
Traction 1
Life 5
Skills: Computers (Hacking) 6

Field agent

Violence 2
Instinct 2
Traction 1
Life 6
Armor 5
Skills: Crime (Federal agent) 2

Soldier

Violence 3
Instinct 1
Traction 1
Life 6
Armor 7
Skills: Military (Soldier) 2

Special Forces operator

Violence 4
Instinct 2
Traction 1
Life 7
Armor 11
Skills: Military (Special Forces) 4

Security guard

Violence 2
Instinct 1
Traction 1
Life 6
Skills: Crime (Security guard) 2

Private Investigator

Violence 2
Instinct 1
Traction 1
Life 5
Skills: Crime (P.I) 2

Bodyguard

Violence 3
Instinct 1
Traction 1
Life 5
Armor 3
Skills: Crime (Bodyguard) 2

Assassin

Violence 4
Instinct 2
Traction 1
Life 6
Armor 5
Skills: Crime (Assassin) 2

Mercenary

Violence 4
Instinct 2
Traction 1
Life 7
Armor 11
Skills: Military (Mercenary) 4

Junkie

Violence 1
Instinct 1
Traction 1
Life 4
Skills: Crime (Junkie) 2

Gang member

Violence 2
Instinct 1
Traction 1
Life 5
Skills: Crime (Gang member) 2

Hacker

Violence 1
Instinct 3
Traction 1
Life 3
Skills: Computers (Hacker) 6

Drug lord

Violence 1
Instinct 2
Traction 1
Life 4
Skills: Crime (Drug lord) 4

Gunrunner

Violence 2
Instinct 1
Traction 1
Life 4
Armor 9
Skills: Crime (Gunrunning) 2

Yakuza gunman

Violence 4
Instinct 1
Traction 1
Life 6
Armor 5
Skills: Crime (Yakuza) 2

Ninja (omg)

Violence 4
Instinct 2
Traction 1
Life 6
Skills: Crime (Ninja) 2

Terrorist

Violence 2
Instinct 1
Traction 1
Life 5
Armor 3
Skills: Crime (Terrorism) 2

Serial killer

Violence 2
Instinct 2
Traction 1
Life 5
Skills: Random 4

Mad Scientist

Violence 1
Instinct 3
Traction 1
Life 4
Skills: Science (-specify-) 6

Scenario Generation

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 some hostiles and locations, then add a demon. Voila -- scenario!

15.1.1. Hostiles

- 1-3: List A
- 4-6: List B
- 7-9: List C
- 10-12: List D

List A

1. Arsonists
2. Assassins
3. Bank robbers
4. Blackmailers
5. Burglars
6. Cannibals
7. Car thieves
8. Cartel
9. Con artists
10. Convicts
11. Corrupt politicians
12. Counterfeiters

List B

1. Cultists
2. Dirty cops
3. Dirty feds
4. Drug dealers
5. Drug traffickers
6. Embezzlers
7. Extortionists
8. Extremists
9. Forgers
10. Gang

11. Graverobbers
12. Grifters

List C

1. Gunrunners
2. Hackers
3. Jewelry thieves
4. Jury fixers
5. Kidnappers
6. Mob
7. Murderers
8. Neo-Nazis
9. Pickpockets
10. Pirates
11. Racketeers
12. Robbers

List D

1. Saboteurs
2. Separatists
3. Serial killers
4. Slavers
5. Smugglers
6. Spies
7. Terrorists
8. Thieves
9. Traitors
10. Vandals
11. War criminals
12. White-collar criminals

15.1.2. 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

Spell Results

Nullified

1. Blunt Force Trauma
2. Chemical Trauma
3. Drowning
4. Electrocutation
5. Fire
6. Poison
7. Punctures
8. Sharp Force Trauma
9. Shooting
10. Smothering
11. Strangulation
12. Traffic Fatality

Soul Window

1. Alcoholism
2. Being stalked
3. Cocaine
4. Cultist
5. Egg in stomach
6. Half-breed
7. Meth addiction
8. Multiple personalities
9. Murderous rage
10. Painkillers
11. Possession
12. Suicidal

Bete Noir

1. Affair
2. Blackmail
3. Computer password
4. Dying of terminal illness
5. Evidence
6. Hidden weapon
7. Murder
8. Recently consumed human flesh
9. Saw an angel
10. Secret location
11. Stash of stolen money
12. Wearing panties

Random Tables

Types of Evidence

1. Bite marks
2. Blood
3. Bones
4. Fingerprint
5. Inscription
6. Odor
7. Organs
8. Saliva
9. Semen
10. Sweat
11. Weapon
12. Wounds

Triggers

1. Frantic phone call from contact
2. Email from contact
3. Police report
4. Screams, sirens
5. Article in magazine or newspaper
6. CB radio chatter
7. Strange sighting
8. Missing persons report
9. Dead body found
10. Orders from Monitor
11. Ominous note
12. Severed head mounted on spike in front of local orphanage with scorpion stuffed into mouth

What's in the Bag?

1. Severed head
2. Kilo of uncut heroin
3. Grenades
4. Spitting cobra
5. Instructions
6. Vials of blood
7. The specimen
8. Suicide note
9. Angel teeth
10. Detonator
11. Ransom note
12. Fetus, vengeful

**- OFFICE OF THE COUNTY CORONER -
MEDICAL EXAMINER'S REPORT**

DECEDENT: _____

DRIVE: _____

CLASS: _____

DISCIPLINE: _____

VIOLENCE
 TRACTION
 INSTINCT

DECAY
 BLOOD
 CABAL

SKILLS

SPELLS

WEAPONS (RNG/DMG/AMMO)

STUNTS

CIVILIAN _____

GEAR _____

