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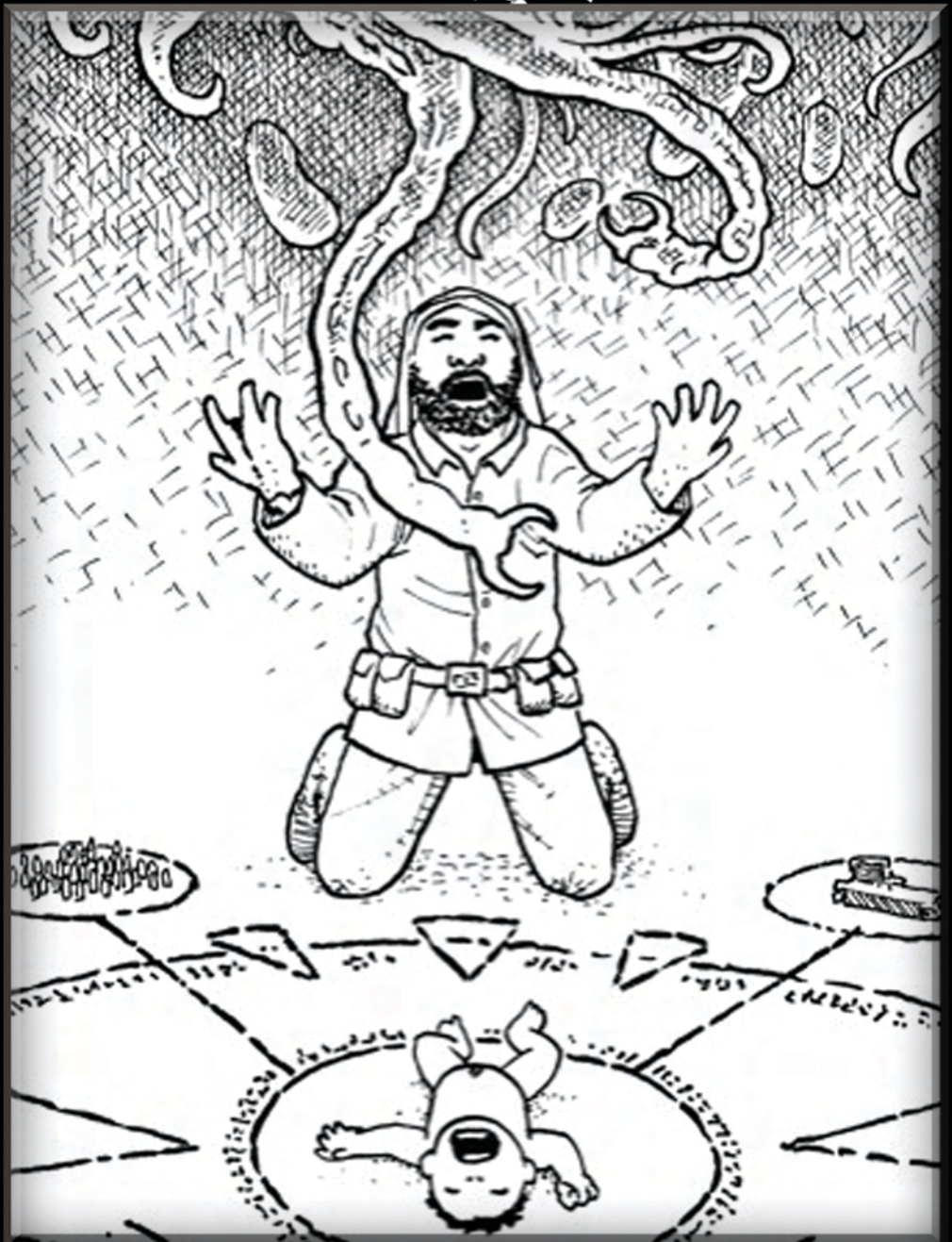
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# THE BIG BOOK OF CULTS



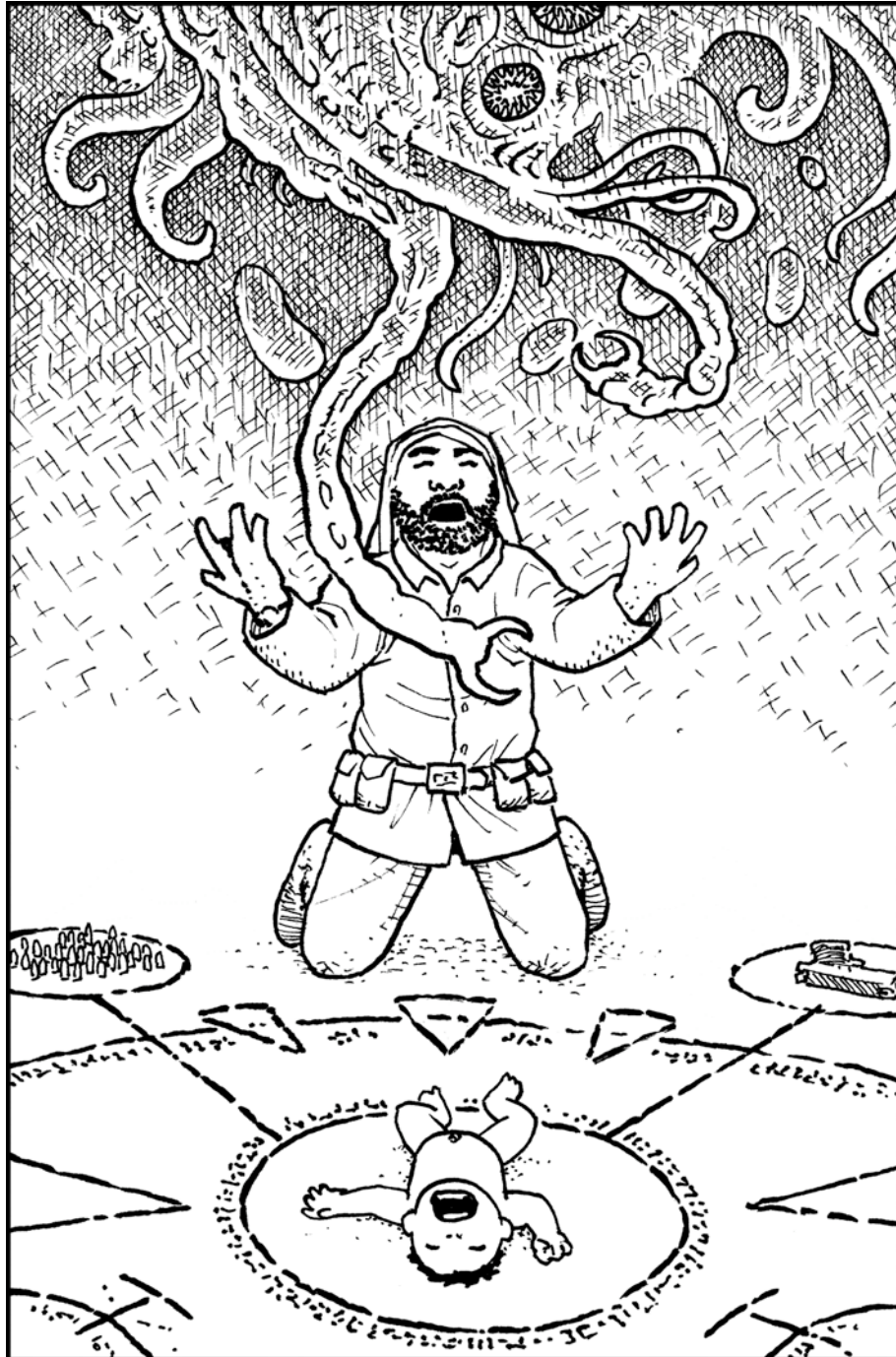
## Evil Cults for Call of Cthulhu





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# THE BIG BOOK OF CULTS



Modern-Day Cults for *Call of Cthulhu*

Ben Counter

# THE BIG BOOK OF CULTS

Modern-day cults for *Call of Cthulhu*

By Ben Counter

Illustrations:

**Jason Fletcher:** The Hunting Falls Clinic

**David Hughes:** The Church of a Thousand Tomorrows  
and The Sufferers' Guild.

**David Lee Ingersoll:** Cover illustration, The Triumvirate,  
and The Golden Chalice

**Tim Joyner:** The Hammer

This book could not have been produced without Adam Crossingham and everyone at the Black Seal, the Shadow Warriors Roleplaying Club (especially Gerald, Pam, Mark, Peter, Tim and Andy), and Dustin and everybody at Chaosium.

Particular thanks are given to Jason, Dave, David and Tim for their outstanding illustrations.

Nothing in this book is real. Be grateful.

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## INTRODUCTION

This book contains a collection of modern-day organisations for use in your Call of Cthulhu games. And that's about all the advice I can give. After all, it's your game. You'll probably come up with uses for these guys that I would never have thought of. And it's your players' game, too, and they'll come up with ways to interact with the organisations which no-one expected. Players are like that.

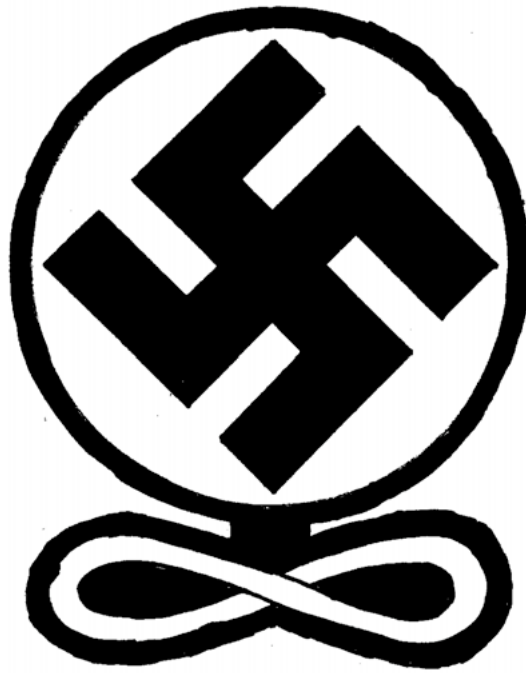
I have tried to ensure that all the organisations described in this book pose different challenges. The Church of a Thousand Tomorrows can nuke you from orbit if they want, while the Sufferers' Guild could probably be brought down with a few well-placed phone calls. More importantly, all the characters described have a reason for the things they do. No-one would ever worship an evil god just for the hell of it - that's just crazy. So some of the characters described here want revenge, some of them are just looking for a good time, and many of them are genuinely doing what they believe is right.

Call of Cthulhu is about taking responsibility for your actions. All the men and women in this book have made a decision, often one that will damn them. One day they will have to face up to the consequences of what they have done, and it might just be the investigators of your group who will make that happen.

And investigators make choices, too. They have to accept the consequences of the cults they break up, the spells they cast, the people they kill. The way they deal with the organisations in this book is something they will have to live with – do they join them, or do they load up with shotguns and kill them all? Do they try to understand what motivates the sorcerers and murderers? Do they take out the bad guy, or try to save his soul? Your investigators have the choice. They also have to suffer the consequences, for good or ill. And dealing with the Cthulhu Mythos in any respect always, always corrupts. Sooner or later, your investigators are going to start looking like the same kind of irredeemable madmen they used to hunt down – and that's the aspect of the Mythos that will be the most difficult of all to fight.

Once the players accept that, their investigators aren't just collections of statistics any more. They're characters. Shepherding them to that point is the most challenging part of running a roleplaying game, and I hope this book has made it a little bit easier.

Ben Counter



### THE CHURCH OF A THOUSAND TOMORROWS

The Church of a Thousand Tomorrows is a quasi-religious neo-nazi cult, based in the UK, dedicated to eradicating the ‘lower races’ and taking over the world. Drawing members from extreme right-wing organisations and organised football hooligans, their goals seem impossibly lofty. Unfortunately for everyone else, their leader is intelligent, driven, and utterly insane, and he might have found a way to make his dreams of racial domination come true.

#### Alaric Yarrow-Strasse

From a wealthy family and sporting a public school education, Yarrow-Strasse is the heart and mind of the Church. His family was half-German and his grandfather flew in the Luftwaffe during the Second World War – Alaric heard the old man’s stories and realised he hadn’t been an enemy of freedom and justice but simply another man fighting for his country. Alaric understood then that no-one does something just because it is evil – they do it because they believe in it, just like his grandfather believed in dropping bombs on London.

Alaric studied what the Nazis themselves were trying to achieve. Yarrow-Strasse was sly and amoral even as a boy and he saw nothing wrong in the activities of a group of people who wanted to create a new world order of prosperity and strength. In fact, the more he read about them, the more he came to see them as unfairly vilified. Their only crime was failure – had they won the Second World War, they would have been heroes for having the courage to fight for what they believed in. In this way, from a young age, Alaric Yarrow-Strasse became a true neo-nazi. He knew enough not to



reveal his allegiance, but secretly he was determined to pursue a goal of racial victory.

In his early twenties he founded an organisation, the Twilight Council, to coordinate the activities of various far-right groups, from actual extremist political parties to bands of fascist-leaning football hooligans.

All that hatred in one place got Alaric noticed. Quite what guise Nyarlathotep used to appear to Yarrow-Strasse is known only to Yarrow-Strasse and the god itself. But appear he did, and over the course of three days Yarrow-Strasse remained locked in the cellar of the ancestral home, debating with the god as it demanded he prove his dedication to his cause.

Whatever Yarrow-Strasse said to Nyarlathotep, it worked. When he emerged from the meeting he knew the spell-ritual named ‘Behold the Darkness of the Unguided World’. It promised to send the caster, with the help of many willing sympathisers, into the future to witness the chaos that would result from a world where the Nazi ideals were never realised.

Yarrow-Strasse gathered a cabal of the Twilight Council’s most dedicated servants and enacted the ritual. And it worked. Yarrow-Strasse witnessed the End Times themselves, and when he returned to the present day he was filled with a new ice-cold dedication to racial victory. In that moment, the Church of a Thousand Tomorrows was born – dedicated to creating a hard core of neo-nazi troopers that could use time travel to win the ultimate victory.

### **The Plan**

Yarrow-Strasse intends to rewrite history to create a racially pure utopia that would make Himmler weep with joy. The spell imparted to him by Nyarlathotep has allowed him to make several trips into the future. He has taken his most trusted sympathisers along for the ride, creating a paramilitary unit – dubbed the SS-Futurkommando – equipped with weaponry created for wars hundreds of years hence. Alaric and some of the SS-Futurkommando leaders also possess occult and magical knowledge stolen from the scholars of the future. Only Alaric himself has seen the End Times themselves but he is convinced that they result from Mankind’s inability to purify itself of the ‘lower races’, and he does a good job of convincing the other members of the Church. Alaric’s goal is of such importance to him that he considers it akin to a religion, hence the name of his inner circle.

Nyarlathotep’s spell, of course, only allows travel to the future, and Alaric needs to start messing around with the past. However, The Church’s footsoldiers have recently come across a new drug on the streets that might be the answer. Called Liao, it is imported from somewhere in central or south-east Asia, and when used in its raw form transports the consciousness of the user back in time. Alaric hopes that combining this drug with the ritual of the spell will allow controllable time travel into



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both the past and the future, and once he has that, he will travel right back to the beginning of time where he intends to rewrite the whole of history according to his will. The result, believes Alaric, will be a world of strength and purity, a perfect realisation of the eternal Reich.

Unfortunately, Liao is imported into the UK by particularly violent gangs of Tcho-Tcho. A drug war looms with the Tcho-Tcho, and Alaric is willing to sacrifice the Church's unwitting footsoldiers to acquire more of the drug.

The spell Nyarlathotep imparted to Alaric is known to other occultists as the powerful 'Look To The Future', which sends the caster into the future. Alaric can also take allies along with him, and has taught the spell in turn to the most trusted inner circle members. Whether Alaric will succeed in modifying the spell with the use of Liao is another matter, but if it suits Nyarlathotep for him to succeed then there's nothing to stop it from working.

### **The Church**

The majority of the Church is made up of members recruited from far right groups like political extremists and racist football hooligans, most of whom still think they are working for a political end under the aegis of the Twilight Council. Their purpose is to generally act as go-betweens, footsoldiers and enforcers, both in acquiring the Liao drug and in performing tasks demanded by Alaric. They know nothing of the time-travelling ambitions of their leader, but they do know Yarrow-Strasse is intent on heralding a new age of racial purity and they all aspire to ascending to the next level – Alaric's inner circle, where they will learn of the Church and its true purpose.

There are perhaps one thousand individuals on whom Alaric can call for errands and grunt work. They are almost all ignorant of the plans of the Church. The majority of them are poorly educated, male, and angry, but there are numerous exceptions. They comprise several neo-nazi, far-right or white supremacist organisations, which can be created or elaborated upon (or appropriated from real-life groups) as the Keeper wishes.

The Twilight Council to which each such group contributes is a political umbrella group, and its constitution covers the areas on which these groups broadly agree – a cessation of all immigration, forced repatriation of asylum seekers, educational emphasis on nationalism and British culture as opposed to multiculturalism, and an official recognition of the superiority of the white race. This constitution (available in pamphlet form from the Twilight Council offices – actually a P.O. box) was written by Yarrow-Strasse to appeal as broadly as possible to his target audience. The leaders of each group have personally met Alaric, and the majority of them honestly believe that he intends to weld them into a genuine political entity. Alaric's inner circle prepares regular communications to tell the Twilight Council members what they want to hear, namely that the Council is slowly but surely acquiring political credentials. Soon it will be a recognised political party in its own right large and organised enough to take an active part in government.



Of course, Alaric fully intends to destroy this strand of the spacetime continuum before that happens. He has no intention of letting anyone but the most able of the Council members know what he is planning. If investigators start meddling in the plans of the Church, Alaric will pit them against one of the more violent Twilight Council groups. Alaric is forging links with similar far-right and racist groups in continental Europe and North America, so even investigators outside the UK could well find violent skinheads opposing them at every turn. The Twilight Council also has a couple of legal professionals on standby to fend off more subtle attempts to investigate or damage the Council. Alaric has no compunction at all against using the members of the Council as weapons, scapegoats or crumple zones for the Church of a Thousand Tomorrows. Their main task is locating and monitoring the Tcho-Tcho gangs bringing Liao into Europe and the UK – once they are in position Alaric will launch them on a bloody all-out war against the Tcho-Tcho, and no-one can predict who will win.

### **The Inner Circle**

The ‘inner circle’ of the Church of a Thousand Tomorrows numbers less than a hundred individuals, again mostly young and male, but better educated and generally more intelligent than the Twilight Council’s general membership. These are the men trusted with Alaric to understand the scope of his plan (if not all the details). He brings them together for irregular meetings, normally at his family’s large Hampshire estate, where he delivers sermons on his vision of a racially pure reality, issues commands to the rest of the Church and receives progress reports.

Many members of the Inner Circle pose as founders of the Twilight Council, the future Members of Parliament who will turn the half-baked polemic of the various extremist groups and turn them into reality. In truth they are Alaric’s instruments for manipulating the Twilight Council groups into doing his bidding. These men (and they are all men) are drawn from the inner circle’s older members, and are respectable and competent. Investigators who get through the first few layers of the Twilight Council will home in on these men, and it is from them that they will receive the first hints of the Church’s plan. Alaric has not inducted the majority of them into the Church’s full plan – they mostly believe that Alaric is capable of time travel and is probably intending to go back to the 1930s and 40s to change the outcome of the Second World War. A few of them, mostly those who have gone into the future with Alaric, know the truth. Each of these inner circle members is responsible for liaising with one or more extremist groups, ensuring that they perform the tasks Alaric requires of them and do not put the Church’s plans at risk.

The rest of the inner circle mostly consists of the SS-Futurkommando.

### **SS-Futurkommando**

Alaric’s personal corps of soldiers, these men are drawn from those who have seen the future and proven their loyalty and toughness. They are all dedicated right-wing extremists and white supremacists. They are armed with weaponry from the future

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and when on duty with Alaric wear full SS uniforms. The SS-Futurkommando serve as bodyguards for Alaric, and henchmen for completing tasks that cannot be trusted to the enthusiastic amateurs of the Twilight Council – including all missions into the future (and, it is planned, into the past once Alaric has learned how to go there).

There are more than fifty SS-Futurkommando. Most of them are military veterans and the rest are violent criminals. All have been subjected to both visions of the future and Alaric's own persuasiveness, and all have survived an initiation which has them take a place on a squad performing a particularly dangerous and sanity-blasting mission into the future. Many of the missions they undertake involve acquiring future technology and armaments, so each Futurkommando is armed with a unique combination of weapons, armour and technology. Alaric is loathe to use these soldiers in the present day but sometimes – such as when he absolutely, positively has to eliminate investigators who are getting dangerously close – he will deploy them to assassinate or kidnap targets.

SS-Futurkommando also guard the Church's key sites. The most important of these is a space station brought back from the future and christened 'Dammerung'. There are always between eight and twelve SS-Futurkommando on board the Dammerung, sometimes more when Alaric himself is on board. The Futurkommando also guard Lakadaemon, the near-future bunker installation used by the Church as a prison, and Yarrow Fell, the ancestral home of Alaric's family.

### **Dammerung**

The space station known as 'Dammerung' by the Church was recovered from the 24<sup>th</sup> century on the most successful SS-Futurkommando raid yet. The era in which it was built saw ruthless frontier wars over the right to near-orbit space, fought in the upper atmosphere by sophisticated craft built by most of the thousand plus militarised nations on an unrecognisable Earth. The Dammerung had just been completed and was sitting in ground dock waiting to be launched when Alaric led a Futurkommando raid to capture it. Alaric and the Futurkommando troops with him enacted a ritual that enchanted the whole space station and attuned it to an SS officer's dagger carried by Alaric so the station would come with him when returned back to the present time.

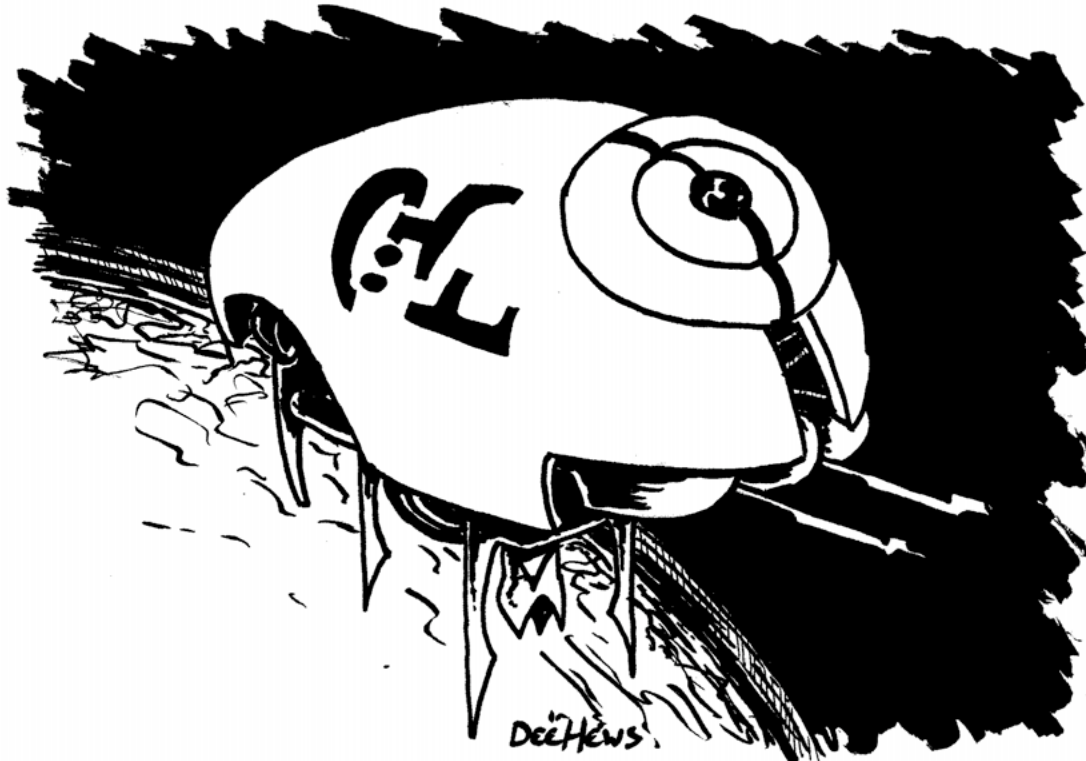
Dammerung is orbiting Earth in the present day. It is stealth-capable and difficult to spot even by the modern military – furthermore it can teleport targets to and from the surface and is very well-armed indeed. Alaric has never used Dammerung as an





offensive weapon but he is willing to do so in extremis. Dammerung serves as a secure headquarters for the Church of a Thousand Tomorrows and Alaric is often on board, with several Futurkommando and other inner circle members. No members of the Twilight Council organisations know of its existence (many of the inner circle are still in the dark about it).

The main purpose of Dammerung, however, is to enable the final phase of Alaric's plan. Once he has adapted Nyarlathotep's spell to allow travel into the past, he will take Dammerung back to the time of the Big Bang where he believes an intelligence exists that will determine the course of spacetime. He will bargain with that entity, just as he bargained with Nyarlathotep (he believes it might actually be Nyarlathotep), and have spacetime rewritten to create the racial utopia he desires. The ritual will be held on the command deck of the station, with the viewing dome fully open so the observers can witness the full glory of whatever it is that lurks at the beginning of time.



The interior of Dammerung represents a cold-blooded aesthetic. Walls are continuous with curves instead of hard corners, faced with a substance like matt blue-grey stone and inlaid with friezes of symbols, possibly abstract, possibly full of meaning. Most of the lighting on the command decks is floor-mounted, lending the whole place an unearthly, slightly underwater feel. The docking deck and everything beneath it is finished in strange black iron, slightly more cramped and organic like the entrails of a giant metallic creature. There are no elevators or moving walkways – the decks are connected by short ladders. Gravity is maintained at a fraction less than Earth standard, giving the station a definite sense of up and down. The Church has made some more frequently used parts of the Dammerung more 'homely' by putting up swastika or iron cross flags and propaganda posters (some replicas of Third Reich

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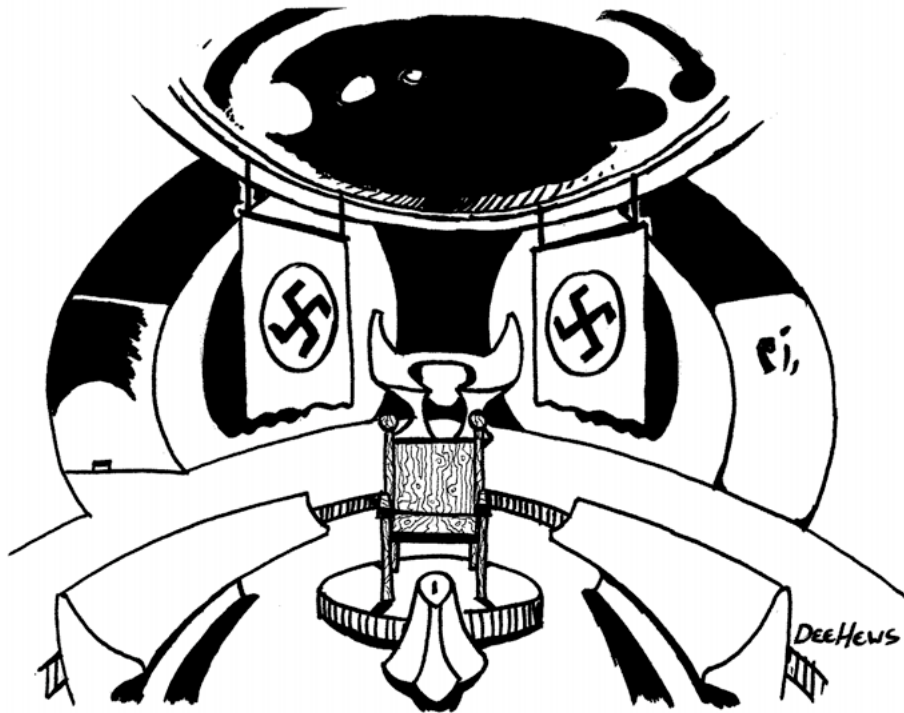
propaganda, others new posters and leaflets produced by the Twilight Council). Alaric, however, does not allow graffiti on his space station.

The Church does not know how to work all of Dammerung's systems. They can get it to move, enter stealth mode, fire its main weapons array, maintain temperature and life support, and other basic functions. They have yet to work out how to activate internal security and external defensive weapons, along with some of the more complex equipment in the kitchens and sick bay. Thanks to the enchantment cast over the whole station, it can only be operated when Alaric's enchanted SS dagger is inserted into one of the command consoles.

### Command Deck

The topmost deck houses the 'bridge' of the station, a large circular deck topped with a hemispherical viewing dome which can be set to appear opaque or transparent. Several semicircular consoles stand around the command deck, most of them housing controls the Church hasn't deciphered yet. A raised circular section in the centre is apparently the place of authority and it is here that Alaric tends to take his place. The console here controls the main weapons array and life support, and is also the place where Alaric activates the Dammerung by stabbing his dagger into the console housing.

The Command Deck was originally fairly devoid of decoration apart from the ubiquitous inlaid abstract designs. The Church has hung large swastika flags and posted facsimiles of Nazi propaganda posters everywhere. Alaric's place of honour is on a large hardwood chair, practically a throne. When on this deck he is normally flanked by two SS-Futurkommando troopers.



The Command Deck will be the location for the final phase of Alaric's plan. It is here that the liao-enhanced version of the spell will be cast, sending the whole Dammerung back to before the Big Bang. With the viewing dome set to clear Alaric will be able to look out on space as it appeared at the beginning of time, and bargain with whatever he finds there to create his utopia. The Command Deck is perhaps the most likely scene for a final confrontation with Alaric - after the spell is cast it will be a place of cosmic madness as characters look through the dome to see time streaking backwards at a million years per second.

### Library

The ship's library is a large low-ceilinged room in which stand several rows of perfectly regular rectangular black glass blocks. Each one has a different small symbol engraved into one corner. The Church believes these blocks are made of a data storage medium, but have no idea how to access the information within.

The Church is right about this room's purpose and anyone who knows the means of accessing the blocks (this is done by placing a hand on the surface and visualising a string of symbols that serves as a code) can find out all manner of technical data about the station, along with a sketchy history of Earth up until the 24<sup>th</sup> century. The contents of this history and the San loss involved is at the Keeper's discretion.

For the time being the Church uses this deck to store weapons and other miscellaneous equipment, heaped up in irregular piles between the glassy blocks.

### Observations/Communications

This room is dominated by what are presumably very powerful computers, taking the form of thousands of short rods that move rapidly up and down in large tanks of clear, viscous liquid. These computers analyse information from the Dammerung's sensors but they operate on principles unknown to present-day science and the Church has no hope of accessing them directly.

The room is dark and lit mainly by the large luminous viewscreens connected to the Dammerung's sensors. The Church, though the higher sensor functions are beyond them, can configure these screens to observe in all directions, including straight down. The Church can use the Dammerung's sensors to 'zoom in' to parts of the Earth's surface, close enough to read a headline on a discarded newspaper. This makes the Obs room very useful for tracking enemies and (although they haven't tried it yet) targeting the station's main weapon.

Also here is the communications console, which connects all areas of the station. The comms console is a waist-high construction of opalescent glass from which thousands of filaments lead into the back wall of the room. This Church found a stock of walkman-sized glass devices on the Dammerung which can be given to someone on the surface so they can communicate with the station - this, combined with the sensor screens, allows for some very fine coordination between Alaric and men on the ground.



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The Obs/Comms room is almost always staffed with two or more men, normally inner circle members and sometimes Futurkommando troops. Alaric often takes a personal interest in watching Twilight Council members going about the tasks he sets them.

### Sick Bay

The sick bay contains six raised slabs, presumably to serve as beds, floating immovable above the floor by some means the Church hasn't figured out. Large devices are mounted on the ceiling above each bed – it appears that dextrous metallic arms tipped with various painful-looking blades and needles can fold out from these devices but the Church does not know how to switch them on and is rather wary of what they might do.

A cabinet on the far wall contains some slightly less complex-looking handheld implements. Some extrude wirelike mobile filaments that knit skin back together, others dispense artificial blood, and there is one that appears to grow substitute organs in a large clear glass cylinder of bluish liquid. Thanks to some luck and a bit of trial and error these can be used by the Church to give treatment equivalent to a fully-staffed hospital emergency department. The sick bay could presumably treat injuries and illnesses beyond modern medicine if anyone could work out how to use it properly.

The sick bay is not staffed permanently but Alaric tries to make sure there are at least a couple of men on board at all times who now how to use the less complex devices.

### Kitchens & Mess

The Mess is where the Church members eat, and where Alaric gathers them to address them. The tables and chairs are fairly normal – everything is fixed to the floor and the lighting is fixed to the tables themselves, casting strange shadows everywhere when the tables are occupied.

The adjoining kitchens are dominated by shiny metal cabinets containing bafflingly complex equipment. The Church has managed to work one such cabinet to heat food, but apart from that the kitchens are useless to them. Several catering packs of convenience food are piled up in the kitchens and more has to be teleported up regularly, although presumably the kitchens could produce and prepare plenty of food when operated properly.

### Docking & Storage

The docking deck is mostly taken up with a large empty hangar in which shuttle or other smaller craft could be stored. Two huge docking ports on either side of the hangar would allow these craft to fly in, or as a place for larger craft to dock. The rest of the deck is used for storage, comprising several large but featureless rooms.



The Church has set up a PA system here, intending for the docking deck to be used for larger gatherings of Church members.

### Teleporter Array

The teleporter array is a spherical chamber with several doors leading off from it, each connecting to a ring-shaped corridor surrounding the sphere. The inside of the sphere is very cold and the curved, stonelike inner surface is covered in intricate, apparently abstract designs of silver.

The controls for the teleporter array are in the Comms/Obs room, since the Dammerung's sensors are used to lock onto targets to teleport up, or locations to teleport them down to. This means that a group of investigators trying to flee the Dammerung will probably have to leave someone behind to operate the controls. The teleporter controls are simple enough and have been labelled with masking tape, so that anyone with a minute or so of study can use them. The Dammerung's teleporter evidently contains several auto-targeting and failsafe devices, which means that the Church has so far been unsuccessful in teleporting someone into the middle of a wall, beneath the ground, or into the sun. It has no trouble teleporting people into the vacuum of space, though. It is possible that the Dammerung's sensors are sensitive enough to teleport Futurkommando troops into hard-to-reach places like airliners, nuclear power stations, the Houses of Parliament, and so on, but it hasn't been tried yet.

Teleported targets on the ground are transported to the teleporter array with their clothes and anything they were holding. When people are teleported onto the ground from the Dammerung, everything inside the spherical chamber is sent to the surface. The doors around the spherical chamber must be closed for the teleportation to work, so no-one has yet been caught half-in and half-out of the area to be teleported.

Teleportation is not something for which the human body is designed. A character loses 0/1 Sanity points every time they are teleported. The sensation of being teleported is one of extreme cold followed by deafness and blindness that lasts for about ten seconds. Teleportation leaves a faint smell of chlorine.

The teleporter is the only way of getting on or off the Dammerung without a spacecraft specially designed to be compatible with the portals on the docking deck.

### Barracks

The Dammerung's crew quarters now serve as the barracks for the Church members on board. There are about thirty beds over three decks, each bed being a coffin-sized compartment set into one wall, like the shelf of a morgue. The insides of these compartments are luminescent and operating a switch at what is presumably the head end causes a series of faint patterns of light and colour to swim over the surfaces, creating an unusually effective soporific affect which helps the occupier fall asleep very quickly (this effect can be resisted, however, so stuffing someone into a compartment and flicking the switch won't make them fall asleep). Most of the

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compartments have sleeping bags and pillows in them, and many contain a stash of pornography.

The rest of the barracks are taken up with fairly conventional tables, chairs and lockers (the lockers can be secured with flat grey keycards, each about the size of a credit card – Futurkommando troopers permanently barracked here tend to write their names on their keys which are otherwise all identical). This barracks contain the detritus left by the men who stay there – posters, books, magazines, unwashed clothes (the Dammerung does not appear to have any laundry facilities), and plenty of far-right or racist literature and posters.

Bathroom facilities adjoin the barracks. The several shower cubicles do not use water but instead remove dirt by the use of some form of high-frequency sound waves. The toilets are intuitive enough to use, although they appear to employ similarly water-free principles to dispose of waste.

One unusual feature that the Church discovered by accident is that the shower cubicles constantly screen occupants for drugs. If narcotics are discovered in an occupant's system the cubicle is sealed and an alert icon flashes on the command deck – the cubicle can then only be opened from the outside. Church members who have drugs in their system cannot therefore shower until the drugs have passed through them. The system presumably screens for all forms of narcotics along with an unknown number of medicines and other substances. The Church do not yet know how to turn the screening off.

### Brig

The collection of secure cells, each of which can be opened with a black keycard, was presumably intended for securing prisoners. Alaric currently uses one of these cells as his office, valuing its security and privacy and not minding the lack of windows. He, of course, possesses one of the keycards which can open the doors from both sides.

In the cell he uses is a large desk and chair he had teleported up from the surface. On the desk can be found a laptop computer (which normally runs off its battery, being periodically recharged using a small petrol generator in another cell since the Dammerung does not have power points) containing a great deal of information on the Church of a Thousand Tomorrows and the Twilight Council, several draft speeches extolling the virtues of all-white civilisation, and several text files devoted to near-impenetrable musings on the nature of space, time, and the Divine (the term Alaric uses to refer to Nyarlathotep, although he knows the god's 'real' name). Here he also keeps a futuristic 'vaperifle' weapon, a spare SS officer's uniform and, in the draw of the desk, an original Iron Cross with Oak Leaf Cluster that he bought over the Internet. He believes that he deserves it for all that he has done, and will do, for the Final Reich to come.

The other cells are featureless, lacking – slightly mysteriously – even beds or toilets. They are not used to hold prisoners (the Church's captives are taken to Lakadaemon)



but they obviously could be used to do so. Without a black keycard they are effectively inescapable except perhaps by magical means – the blue-black alloy of the walls is smooth as glass but far tougher than any metal.

### Reactor Core

The Dammerung's power source is a large transparent cylinder which glows a constant acidic yellow-white. The cylinder is suspended by unknown means in the centre of a similarly shaped cavity in the centre of the station, ringed by walkways which spiral up to the top of the cylinder. The reactor requires fuel to be regularly poured into the top of the cylinder, which the Church has discovered can be pretty much anything although distilled water seems to be the best. The reaction in the core is presumably some kind of fusion, although it emits no heat (only light). If the core runs dry the station powers down but for a while (at least a week, probably longer) life support and orbital stability are maintained and the teleporter still works.

The reactor is extremely efficient, requiring only a couple of large drums of distilled water per week. It is also very stable, so breaching or otherwise tampering with it will result in nothing more serious than a flooded core.

### Weapons Array

The Dammerung's primary armament consists of several large spike-like vanes or projectors that jut down from its underside. These, once power is routed from the reactor, generate a massive energy discharge. When pointed at the surface of the Earth, this creates an immense column of white fire that shoots into the ground like lightning, annihilating whatever is standing on the surface beneath it. This leaves a crater about a hundred and fifty metres across, surrounded by a zone of another hundred metres where living things are killed or horribly burned.

So far the Church have not used this weapon, knowing that firing it will reveal the Dammerung's position in orbit (although they tested the weapon when they first stole the Dammerung from the future and know what it can do). It is controlled from the consoles around Alaric's seat on the command deck and can be targeted very accurately using the equipment in the Obs/Comms room. Once the Church uses the weapon again it will realise that the controls can also adjust the diameter of the column, from its current blockbusting dimensions to a pencil-thin stream perfect for killing individual targets.

The weapons array is surrounded by a warren of service ducts and crawlspaces, allowing access to all manner of massive strangely-shaped equipment that no current-day engineer could make sense of.

### Taking Down the Dammerung

Destroying the Dammerung is difficult but entirely possible, and investigating the Church of a Thousand Tomorrows might well bring up the question of how to do it. The Dammerung has formidable shielding and short-range defensive weapons but apart from the stealth field which is always active, the Church do not know how to

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activate these defences. Therefore, inflicting massive physical damage (crashing a space shuttle into it, hitting it with a nuclear missile, and so on) would work. Similarly, getting control of the Dammerung and flying it at speed into the ground or a mountain would destroy it (the station's gravity, however, protects the occupants from sudden acceleration or deceleration so crashing into the sea would not harm the station or its crew. In fact they could easily submerge it and fly it around underwater, although they do not know this yet). Other possibilities include teleporting a large amount of explosives into the teleporter array or flying the Dammerung into the sun.

It would be very difficult to sabotage the systems of the Dammerung, especially since no-one in the current era of history can understand how it works. The reactor core in particular is stable and blowing it up or otherwise breaching it will result only in a flooded core room and a powered-down space station. Life support is similarly robust and drilling or blowing a hole in the outer hull, difficult enough in itself, will at most render one deck uninhabitable. Automated fire defences make arson unlikely to succeed. The Dammerung possesses self-repair capabilities so damage inflicted, unless catastrophic, will be repaired within a few days with or without crew intervention.

Mythos solutions (like summoning Azathoth on board the station) will probably work if the scale is great enough.

### **Lakadaemon**

Lakadaemon (named after the lands of ancient Sparta, much admired by Alaric) is the Church's prison camp. Located somewhere in what was once England about two and a half thousand years after the present day, it consist of an underground bunker of uncertain purpose surrounded by horrendous urban desolation.

The apparent condition of the world at this time is most likely the result of war or possibly a massive natural disaster, but this is far from certain. Lakadaemon is in the middle of what was once a very large multi-level city that existed in the southern part of England. What little remains of the architecture is strange and organic, as if the massive concrete structures were grown rather than built. The remains are collapsed and charred- whatever happened to the city it involved immense physical force and lots of fire.

There are normally six Futurkommando soldiers here, who are rotated into Lakadaemon for two weeks to guard the prisoners. No-one likes serving at Lakadaemon when their turn comes, but Alaric makes it clear they have no choice. These Futurkommando return back to the present day when the spell Alaric uses to send them into the future expires – each of the prisoners has been branded with a mark of enchantment that prevents them from returning at the same time.





But the Futurkommandos are not the real reason the prisoners cannot get out. The real reason is the ruined city itself. Those who have made a run for it have returned, wide-eyed and fearful, barely coherent as they claim there is something living in the city near Lakadaemon, waiting for prey. These runaways are isolated in one of Lakadaemon's interrogation cells where their bodies bloat and blacken, assailed by a dozen diseases and cancers at once. The Futurkommandos have not ventured out to see what is inflicting this fate on them. Whatever it might be, it is so terrible that prisoners would rather stay in Lakadaemon than face it, and Lakadaemon itself is no picnic.

The Lakadaemon bunker was probably a military installation of some kind, although no-one's ruled out the possibility of it just being an unusually ugly underground train station or the basement of a large building. A single entrance in a clearing amidst the rubble leads into a dank concrete structure. The main part of the structure consists of three concentric rings of small rooms, many of which the Church has fitted with padlocks to form prison cells. There are thirty rooms in total. A larger room leading off from this complex is where the Futurkommandos complainingly prepare meals for the prisoners, normally a stringy stew containing a bit of everything from the supplies that are sent forward with each guard rotation. The Futurkommandos occupy a set of three rooms slightly larger than the cells – these rooms probably served as a command or communications post since there are blackened holes in the walls where equipment was once housed. Interrogations are carried out in the final room, which is narrow, low and long. A single chair, a bucket, and a battered tin bath occupy this room, each of which have their purpose in the violent and brutal interrogation sessions. Futurkommandos often pass the time by tormenting prisoners in here, regardless of whether the prisoners in question are expected to have any useful information.



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Conditions at Lakadaemon are very poor. The bunker has no running water or toilet facilities – the guards make do with bottled water brought forward with them and the clearing outside the bunker respectively. Lighting is by hand-held torch only, and the bunker is normally freezing cold.

The prisoners held at Lakadaemon are few but important. Some of them are mundane prisoners, like undercover policemen captured while investigating the Twilight Council or Tcho-Tchos being interrogated to find out more about the source of the Liao (the Church has yet to fully realise there is something terribly, terribly wrong with the Tcho-Tcho). A couple, however, are individuals brought from other time periods. Alaric is interested both in critical junctures of future history and, especially, in occult or magical knowledge concerning Nyarlathotep and entities like him. One of the prisoners, for instance, is a sorcerer from a far future where mankind battles some unnameable darkness with soul-corrupting magic. This sorcerer, Aethillian, is gradually giving up his magical secrets under torture and is the source of much of Alaric's mystical knowledge (it was he who taught Alaric the enchantment spell that let him take the Dammerung through time). These more esoteric prisoners are often quite able to escape the Lakadaemon facility, but those who have find that there are even worse things lurking in the ruined city that the sadistic Futurkommandos.

Life for prisoners at Lakadaemon is filthy, brutal and short, and few are kept for any length of time before the Futurkommandos haul them out to the edge of the clearing and shoot them. The realisation that they imprisoned in an utterly desolate time causes prisoners D3/D6 San loss straight away, in addition to 0/D4 loss per week due to the unbearably intense sense of isolation. Most prisoners are driven insane by the sadism of the Futurkommandos, and those who 'escape' usually snap when they witness whatever it is that infests the city around them. Imprisonment at Lakadaemon is a death sentence whether the Futurkommando execute you or not.

### **Yarrow Fell**

Yarrow Fell is Alaric's large country home in Hampshire, and it served as the headquarters of the Church before the Dammerung was captured. The large U-shaped house is divided into the main house and the east and west wings – it was in the east wing, with its large dining hall, that Yarrow-Strasse presided over meetings of the Church. The dining hall still bears the trappings of its role as cult cathedral, with a lectern, swastika-draped altar, and ceremonial copies of *Mein Kampf* and the transcribed spell dictated to Alaric by Nyarlathotep. This transcription, on a large sheet of artificially aged parchment, could be used to learn the spell 'Look To The Future', requiring 2 weeks to study and 0/D4 San loss (the transcription contains only the spell and grants no increases in the Cthulhu Mythos skill).

The dining hall was also the place where Alaric enacted the spell 'Behold the Darkness of the Unguided World' to send him and then his followers into the future. Though Alaric makes many Church decisions on board the Dammerung, he still



needs a place on the surface to cast the spell and Yarrow Fell still serves that purpose. A large scorched circle on the dining hall floor marks where the spell has been cast multiple times. Alaric also meets prospective inner circle members at Yarrow Fell, feeling its grand surroundings lend the Church gravitas and respectability, as well as being less likely to drive new members crazy than a trip to the Dammerung.

Yarrow Fell is not the Church's headquarters any more but there are still likely to be SS-Futurkommando guards and an inner circle member or two here, co-ordinating Twilight Council

operations. The rest of the house is generally mothballed – it is handsome and lavish but ill-maintained, with damp and mildew spoiling the opulence. The grounds, once neatly kept, are starting to look overgrown and sinister.

Yarrow Fell is technically owned by Alaric's parents, Mary and Archibald. Nobody has seen Mary or Archibald Yarrow-Strasse for several years – no-one in the Church particularly cares where they are as long as they have use of Yarrow Fell. Alaric's parents are probably dead, but Alaric has never mentioned anything about what happened to them.

### **Important Individuals**

#### **Alaric Yarrow-Strasse, Time-Travelling Neo-Nazi In Space**

Alaric is a young-looking man with a narrow, intense face and intelligent, expressive eyes. Were it not for his shaven head and SS officer's uniform he would look like a quiet, withdrawn student or young academic. He is not particularly well-built, especially compared to the SS-Futurkommando troops who protect him, but he is a lot tougher than he looks. Alaric speaks with a toned-down RP accent and is very rarely ruffled by anything – he is determined rather than manic, steely-eyed rather than frothingly crazy.

He is, however, completely insane and has absolutely no compunction about causing suffering, destruction and death in pursuit of his goal. His hatred of non-whites, gays, and other 'undesirables' is generally unspoken and finds its outlet in the intensity of his quest to erase them from the spacetime continuum.

**STR 11**

**CON 12**

**SIZ 12**

**INT 17**

**POW 21**

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**DEX 13      APP 9      EDU 19      SAN 0      HP 12**  
**Damage Bonus: +0**

**Weapons:**    Vaperifle 50%, (2D10 +scald)  
                  Enchanted SS Dagger 45%, (1D8,1 point permanent Con drain)  
                  Grapple 30%, (Special +2D8 Skinner damage)

**Spells:** Contact Nyarlathotep, Behold the Darkness of the Unguided World (Look to the Future), Enchant Sacrificial Knife

**Skills:** Astronomy 20%, Computer Use 30%, Credit Rating 60%, Cthulhu Mythos 9%, Dodge 33%, Drive Automobile 25%, History 55%, Occult 15%, Other Language (German) 75%, Persuade 90%, Pilot Space Station 25%, Psychology 30%.

Hunter Brand, Our Man In America

Brand is one of the Church's inner circle members, specifically the man Alaric has charged with bringing American neo-nazi and far-right militia groups into the Twilight Council. Brand was the leader of a small but determined militia group which moved from place to place across the American Midwest, and which was implicated in the deaths of three members of a black family who were allegedly ambushed on the freeway, beaten to death and hung from a road sign.

Brand and his men were never convicted but it brought them to the attention of the US Federal authorities, which in turn led the Twilight Council and the Church to hear of them. Alaric contacted Brand and found that Brand was a tough, uncompromising man who considered himself fighting the last stand against racial surrender. Alaric integrated him into the Twilight Council and eventually brought him into the inner circle.



Brand is a big man who once dressed like a paramilitary biker. He has now shaved and wears a suit instead of fatigue pants and webbing, but he is still very intimidating. His tall and barrel-chested physique gives the impression that he could break you like a twig – an impression that is, incidentally, correct. Brand makes contacts with various militant racist groups in America, posing as an agent of a potential financial backer and observing their levels of dedication and competence. He acts as a liaison with the Twilight Council for those groups he deems useful. Alaric intends to use the American groups to hunt down any Liao coming into America, as well as making the US a safe haven for Church members who are exposed in the UK.



Hunter Brandt knows the Church has supernatural methods but he does not know the full scope of Alaric's plan. He believes that Alaric intends to travel back in time and prevent America's entry into WW2, an eventuality Brand believes will lead to the Nazis winning the war and coming to dominate Europe.

**STR** 17      **CON** 16      **SIZ** 17      **INT** 11      **POW** 10  
**DEX** 13      **APP** 8      **EDU** 13      **SAN** 30      **HP** 16  
**Damage Bonus:** +1D4

**Weapons:**

Colt Python Revolver 55% (1D10+2)  
Fist/Punch 70% (1D3+DB)  
Grapple 50% (special)  
Headbutt 60% (1D4+DB)  
Hunting Knife 60% (1D6+2+DB)

**Skills:** Conceal 25%, Dodge 35%, Drive Automobile 45%, Fast Talk 25%, First Aid 45%, Intimidate Punks 69%, Martial Arts 15%, Persuade 25%, Spot Hidden 46%, Throw 35%

Eagle One, Killing Machine



Eagle One was once a loyal Futurkommando. Lost on an expedition into the future, he was captured by a malevolent species that encroaches on earth's territory several thousand years hence. Alaric recaptured him by travelling to a point twenty years later, by which time Eagle One had been cruelly tormented and experimented upon. Alaric brought him back to the present and found that Eagle One was now a horribly malformed, mutated killing machine, a prototype attack creature forcibly evolved for war.

Eagle One's only recognisable human emotion is an obsessive loyalty towards Alaric. He is still humanoid, but his malformed limbs have knees and elbows that point the wrong way and allow him to scamper up walls and along ceilings with ease. His tongue is a long, prehensile weapon which he can use to ensnare or strangle opponents – the rest of his face is a nightmare, with two vertical slits for a nose and large multi-lobed reptilian eyes. He wears a specially altered Futurkommando uniform and can usually be found on the Dammerung where he functions as a fast

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response solution to intruders. Alaric could use Eagle One as an assassination tool once he has proved his capacity to kill.

Eagle One cannot speak, but he can understand spoken English and German well enough to follow orders.

**STR 22**      **CON 19**      **SIZ 17**      **INT 6**      **POW 13**  
**DEX 16**      **APP 5**      **EDU 12**      **SAN 0**      **HP 18**  
**Damage Bonus:**+2D6

**Weapons:** Talon 70%, (D4+DB)  
Fang-filled Maw 50%, (D6+DB)  
Tongue Grapple 35% (special)

**Skills:** Climb 90%, Dodge 55%, Gibber Inhumanly 80%, Hide 35%, Jump 30%, Listen 60%, Sneak 50%.

SAN loss to see Eagle One is 0/D6.

### Gavin Lowestoft, Inside Man



Three years ago Gavin Lowestoft murdered an Asian student by beating him unconscious and setting him on fire. He was arrested, convicted, and sentenced to life imprisonment. That's where he is now, languishing in a cell, surviving by muscling in as the leader of a group of racist prisoners which is getting smaller and smaller. Sooner or later, a black or Asian prisoner is going to stab him in the gut and leave him to bleed to death.

Gavin Lowestoft was also a member of the inner circle of the Church of a Thousand Tomorrows.

Acting as the Twilight Council liaison for several small far-right groups, he came to know a great deal about the Church and its goals. Alaric severed all ties when Lowestoft got himself arrested and Lowestoft would be happy to sell out the Church if it would secure his freedom.

Lowestoft is a very valuable source of information about the Church. He does not know quite what Alaric intends to do and he has not learned of the existence of Dammerung, but he knows time travel, magic spells and strange gods are involved. However, investigators wanting his help must make a very difficult moral choice.



Lowestoft will only give up what he knows if investigators can give him his freedom. He is still an unapologetic racist bastard and proud of it, but helping him go free might be the only way to get a lead on the Church.

Lowestoft is in middle age with a shaven head and a scarred, battered face. He has lost weight in prison and can't crack heads quite as well as he used to but he is still an unpleasant and dangerous man.

**STR** 10      **CON** 11      **SIZ** 10      **INT** 9      **POW** 8

**DEX** 11      **APP** 9      **EDU** 12      **SAN** 31      **HP** 10

**Damage Bonus:** +0

**Weapons:**      Fist/Punch 70% (D3+DB)  
                      Head Butt 60% (1D4 +DB)  
                      Shiv 60% (D6 +DB)

**Skills:** Bargain 20%, Conceal 45%, Cthulhu Mythos 5%, Dodge 30%, Fast Talk 25%, Hide 40%, Locksmith 20%, Sneak 40%, Spot Hidden 30%

Aethillian Vel Kraeion, Imprisoned Future Warlock



In nine hundred years from the present day, Mankind embraces forbidden magic in the hope of staving off the encroaching darkness. Whether this works or not isn't certain but Aethillian Vel Kraeion is one of the sorcerers trying to do it. He was captured in a particularly violent SS-Futurkommando raid and is currently imprisoned at the Lakadaemon temporal prison, gradually having his magical knowledge tortured out of him by Alaric. Vel Kraeion speaks the broken but passable English he was forced to learn by Alaric.

He is taller and thinner than a present-day human with mid-brown skin that was originally smooth and perfect. His clothes were once very complex robes of cream and dark red, but they are now

tattered rags. He is covered in new scars, from surgical cuts to cigarette and electrical burns. Vel Kraeion is a capable sorcerer but he lacks the ingredients, space and freedom to cast most of his spell-rituals. In any case, if he escaped from Lakadaemon



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he would have to survive in the monster-haunted ruins and he doesn't rate his chances of making it for long.

Vel Kraeion is from a time very different to the present day. He has not succumbed to insanity as most prisoners have, and he spends most of his time meditating to gain control of his body enough to reduce the pain. He does not harbour emotions like despair or anger in the way that present-day humans do. He will break eventually, but it will take a long time. Furthermore, while Vel Kraeion could be a valuable ally to investigators who free him, he will not be so out of gratitude or altruism. He comes from a dark and fatalistic time and will not see any intrinsic value in helping investigators take down the Church. He is a true neutral, interested mainly in returning to his own time, and will as readily abandon friendly investigators as help them.

**STR** 9            **CON** 9            **SIZ** 8            **INT** 18            **POW** 16

**DEX** 13            **APP** 10            **EDU** 22            **SAN** 40            **HP** 8

**Damage Bonus:** +0

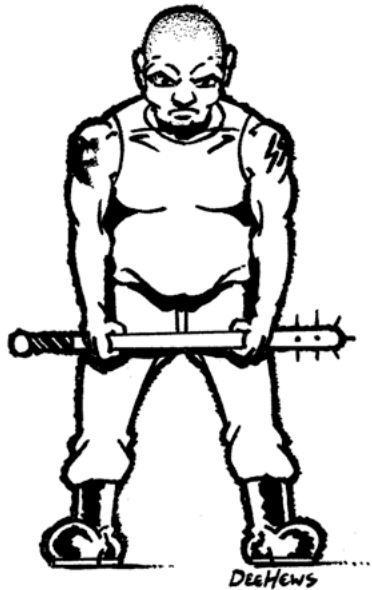
**Weapons:** All weapons at base chances.

**Spells:** Augur, Banishment of Yde Etad, Circle of Nausea, Eye of Light and Darkness, Healing, Mental Suggestion, Unmask Demon. *Note that Vel Kraeion cannot cast his versions of these spells while he is confined – his versions all require time, space and preparation.*

**Skills:** Art (Sculpture) 60%, Astronomy 30%, Conceal 30%, Cthulhu Mythos 20%, Esoteric Philosophies Yet Unwritten 80%, History (2500-2900 AD only) 40%, Hide 25%, Meditate 60%, Occult 30%, Psychology 40%.

Twilight Council Meatheads





While more varied than the Futurkommando troopers, the skinhead thugs that might be deployed by the various Twilight Council organisations are normally young and male (and, of course, all white). Very few are female. They normally stick to hand-to-hand weapons rather than firearms, especially in the UK. They are generally violent, dumb and disposable. Large numbers of grunts like these a can be deployed indirectly by the Church's Inner Circle, but very few of them have any idea that something supernatural is going on.

**STR 14      CON 15      SIZ 15      INT 10      POW 10**  
**DEX 13      APP 11      EDU 10      SAN 50      HP 15**

**Damage Bonus: +1D4**

**Attacks:**      Fist/Punch 60% (1D3+DB)  
                     Knife or Club 50% (D6+DB)  
                     Head Butt 45% (D4+DB)

**Skills:** Conceal 30%, Hide 25%, Hurl Racist Abuse 80%, Sneak 40%, Spot Hidden 30%, Throw 35%.

Futurkommando Grunts

The average Futurkommando grunt is a white male in his twenties with a shaven head, surly demeanour and SS uniform. They are normally armed with Vaperifles (See 'Future Weaponry' below) but when they are on a mission on the surface they often use whatever weapons they are comfortable with. All Futurkommando troopers have experience of violence either through military service or criminality. They typically function in rotation as guards on Yarrow Fell or Lakadaemon, as troopers attending Alaric on the Dammerung, or troubleshooters and assassins in the field.

**STR 16      CON 15      SIZ 16      INT 11      POW 12**  
**DEX 13      APP 10      EDU 11      SAN 40      HP 16**

**Damage Bonus: +1D4**

**Attacks:**      Vaperifle 60% (2D20 +scald)

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Fist/Punch 75% (1D3 +DB)  
Combat Knife 55% (D6+DB)

**Skills:** Computer Use 20%, Electrical Repair 25%, Follow Orders 77%, Hide 30%, History (Future Only) 15%, Other Language (German) 20%, Sneak 40%, Spot Hidden 40%, Throw 55%.

### Future Weaponry

SS-Futurkommando troops are armed with weapons they have captured from the future. They have come across many different types of weapons but very few have been intuitive enough for them to use without vaporising themselves.

### Vaperifle

The weapon christened the 'vaperifle' is a rifle-like weapon made of hard ergonomically sculpted black plastic-like material. The stock of the gun moulds itself automatically to fit the dimensions of the firer. It has three stubby cylinders mounted on the business end which rotate rapidly when the gun is readied to fire. These cylinders fire bolts of light which cause organic matter to vaporise, leaving cylindrical cores dissolved from flesh surrounded by horrendous scald wounds. These weapons are favoured on the Dammerung since they do not affect the inorganic substance of the station itself.

<b>Base Chance</b>	<b>Damage</b>	<b>Base Range</b>	<b>Attacks/ Round</b>	<b>Magazine Size</b>	<b>HPs</b>
20%	2D10	100	3 or burst	150	25

In addition to the statistics above, a vaperifle causes intense and debilitating pain to a target. A target who suffers damage from a vaperifle must roll Conx3 or less or be rendered in agony for D3 rounds, unable to move or do anything else until they recover. Vaperifles do not affect inorganic targets.

### Mad Gas

The Church has captured a crate of smooth spherical grenades which are armed by twisting the two halves of the sphere. These grenades burst to create a cloud of hallucinogenic gas. When used against a group of armed enemies the gas will often cause them to kill one another, and will in any case leave them disoriented and unable to fight back for some time after exposure. The Church believes the 'mad gas' was designed as an anti-riot weapon but they happily use it in more extreme situations.

<b>Base Chance</b>	<b>Damage</b>	<b>Base Range</b>	<b>Attacks/ Round</b>	<b>Magazine Size</b>	<b>HPs</b>
Throw	Insanity/ 10yds	Thrown	N/A	One Use	15

A target affected by mad gas must roll POWx3 or under or be affected by a short temporary insanity as if they had lost 5 or more sanity points in quick succession (an Idea roll does not apply). Homicidal mania, fleeing in a screaming panic or bizarre



hallucinations commonly ensue. Suffering the effects of a mad gas attack normally costs D6 Sanity points – perhaps more if the target ended up murdering a friend or innocent bystander while in the grip of the mania. Gas masks, NBC suits and so on protect targets from the gas.

### Skinner

A ‘skinner’ is a suit of very fine, almost transparent filaments which is worn like an undershirt. When the wearer grabs an enemy, or is grabbed by someone else, the filaments uncoil and attack the enemy. They worm into the enemy’s skin and pull it apart, leaving shallow but massive wounds that bleed copiously and are agonisingly painful. A skinner is not really an offensive weapon but a defensive one, a last line against attackers who get past conventional weaponry. Its capabilities cannot be ‘turned off’, at least by the Church – wearers must avoid close physical contact with people they don’t want to kill. The Church only has three skimmers and needless to say Alaric wears one at almost all times.

The game effects of a skimmer come into effect if the wearer is grappled, or grapples another character. The wearer’s opponent will suffer 2D8 damage in addition to any other effects of the grapple. The skimmer will also activate if the wearer enters close physical contact of other kinds, such as giving someone a hug.

### Plot Seeds

- An influx of Liao imported from the plateau of Leng leads to investigators monitoring Tcho-Tcho drug gangs. They end up in the middle of a war between the Church and the Tcho-Tcho as Yarrow-Strasse tries to secure a constant supply of the raw drug.
- There’s something very strange in orbit, apparently large yet barely visible. When the observatory that noticed it is destroyed by a column of flame from the sky, someone has to find out what the hell it is.
- Organised hooligans supporting a local football team employ Mythos-related symbols and chants while they’re out rampaging. Investigating them leads to the lower echelons of the Twilight Council. The trail upwards reveals madness, murder, and horrors from out of time.



THE GOLDEN CHALICE

Worshippers of the deepest debaucheries, the devotees of the Golden Chalice are drawn from the ranks of the internationally famous. What begins as a means of becoming anonymous turns into a way to indulge themselves without fear of exposure, and from then on is a one-way trip into corruptive, orgiastic cult worship that can only end in madness. But until that final self-destruction, life is good, pleasure is everything, and there are more than enough wannabees willing to kill to keep the secret.

### **Birth of the Golden Chalice**

The Golden Chalice is a very young cult, as such things go. Its origins lie in the 1980s, in the coke-fuelled world of movie producer Denton Bridger. Bridger made far too much money for his own good off the back of thick-ear action movies and the occasional romantic comedy, and he was utterly unable to cope with his success. His descent into complete reliance on cocaine, drink and sex is by no means unique but even the most jaded of commentators raised an eyebrow at Bridger. He scheduled periods of lucidity long enough to sign deals on the next action blockbuster, then retreated back to his Los Angeles villa where he would fill whole weeks, then months, with an oblivion of drugs, hired party girls, and fawning hangers-on.

Nothing lasted forever. Bridger could only last a few years of such astonishing excess. Eventually he was spending money faster than he could make it, especially when the blockbusters dried up and he could no longer muster the discipline to seek new avenues of wealth. Bridger's health, however, was failing faster than his finances. His heart started to go, then his liver. Simple old age caught up with him, because Denton Bridger had abused himself so much that he was a man in his late forties living in the body of a senior citizen.



As the hangers-on dissolved faster than the cash, one of Bridger's few remaining friends was Chet Clavin. Clavin was the star of the *Overdrive* movies, a series of four action cop movies that epitomised Bridger's style of no-nonsense flicks with plenty of guns, car chases and partial nudity. Clavin was one of the few people who had ever tried to keep Bridger on the rails and Bridger repaid him with the truth.

Bridger hadn't just been trying to drown in decadence or block out the real world with drink, drugs and sex. He was trying to reach a higher level of understanding, to



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commune with something higher than him, something inside him that he wanted to unlock with drugs and sensual experience. Bridger had thrown himself into his coke-fuelled lifestyle with religious enthusiasm because it really was a religion for him. This entity inside him that he worshipped was something powerful and knowledgeable, and everything Bridger did was intended to let him commune with it. On the occasions he had succeeded, he had been rewarded with the most intense ecstasy – it was to this euphoric state, not the drugs or the drink, that Bridger had been addicted.

In those few moments of communion with the greater intelligence inside him, Denton Bridger had learned secrets of the universe that were beyond normal human understanding. He knew he was going to die, and so he told those in turn to Clavin, his protégé and only friend.

Clavin, for his part, thought it was all bullshit, and that Bridger had lost his marbles in the last couple of years of his life. By the time Bridger died in 1988 he had dictated to Clavin several pages of impenetrably dense notes describing some kind of ritual or religious observance. Clavin ignored them as he tried to set up a post-action star life, finally setting up a security consultancy in 1992 to provide security advice and services to LA's nervous elite. The company itself was run by some fairly competent employees, with Clavin using his contacts and residual fame to act as the company frontman. With no more movies on the horizon the company gave Clavin something to do (he didn't really need the money), but Clavin quickly gave in to boredom. One day he dug out Bridger's rantings and decided, out of grim curiosity, to actually read them in depth. And by the time he got to the end, he realised that maybe they might actually work.

### **Overdrive Consulting**

Clavin's company, Overdrive Consulting, had found its killer app. The notes dictated by Bridger comprised a collection of spells, some of which amazed Clavin discovered would actually work. The most powerful and reliable spell allowed the caster to change his own appearance, or the appearance of someone else. Clavin tried out the spell once, and though the ritual itself felt dark and unnatural the spell worked. Clavin realised how he could apply such magic to the celebrities who made up his client base. LA's celebrities could walk the streets anonymously, unrecognised. They could go wherever they wanted – plastic surgery and abortion clinics, drinking dens, drug deals – without the risk of bad publicity. The paparazzi could go spin – Overdrive Consulting could make a client look like an everyday Joe, for a fee.

Clavin began suggesting to his contacts that Overdrive Consulting could give its clients more than just security solutions. The wealthy and famous could be shown a whole new way to live their lives. The first few people Clavin tried the spell out with were acquaintances from his action movie days, mostly faded stars like himself. But celebrity is a small world and by the mid-nineties, discreet word of mouth had made Overdrive Consulting the hub of an elite within the elite.



And over the months, and then years, the entity that had spoken to Denton Bridger took a hold. It spoke to Clavin at the heart of the rituals he performed for his clients, told him of the other worlds the magic hinted at, suggested knowledge of grand cosmic truths and the keys to untold power. It was within them all, waiting to be awoken, and it knew everything.

Meanwhile, Overdrive Consulting had given a new freedom to its clients. Clavin's magic could change their appearances for a few hours or a couple of days, depending on how much they paid. For most this was the opportunity to get some downtime from the pressures of fame. But for some, it was free reign to do whatever they wanted without the fear of responsibility. No-one can ever know how many thrill-seeking crimes – from vandalism to rape – were committed by Overdrive clients veiled by Clavin's magic. To them, this was an addiction in its own right, inflicting outrage and suffering on the same people who fawned over their pictures in magazines.

From the twin nuclei of Clavin's magical revelations and the thrill-seeking clients who gave Overdrive Consulting so much business, the cult of the Golden Chalice was formed.

### **The Thirster**

The entity that Denton Bridger detected within himself was not a higher form of his own consciousness. It was not, as might seem far more likely, an illusion created by years of debauchery. It was something else entirely.

The creature that took up residence inside Denton Bridger has no name of its own, but some of those it infests come to know it as the Thirster. Quite how it came to roost inside Denton Bridger in the first place isn't certain but may have something to do with a lengthy location shoot for *Overdrive 2* in the Tunisian desert. The creature is an otherworldly parasite that lives of extremes of emotion, and its favourite flavour is torment. Its uses its host to feed it, causing them to commit heinous acts or murder, torture and mutilation. It became trapped in Bridger thanks to the large amount of mind-altering substances he consumed, which warped his mental architecture and kept the Thirster from jumping out of him mind until it was freed by Bridger's death. Though the Thirster is a monstrous predator driven by the need to consume it is not stupid. It seeks out hosts with charisma and status, welding a support network around them to facilitate and conceal its crimes. Its latest creation is the Golden Chalice.

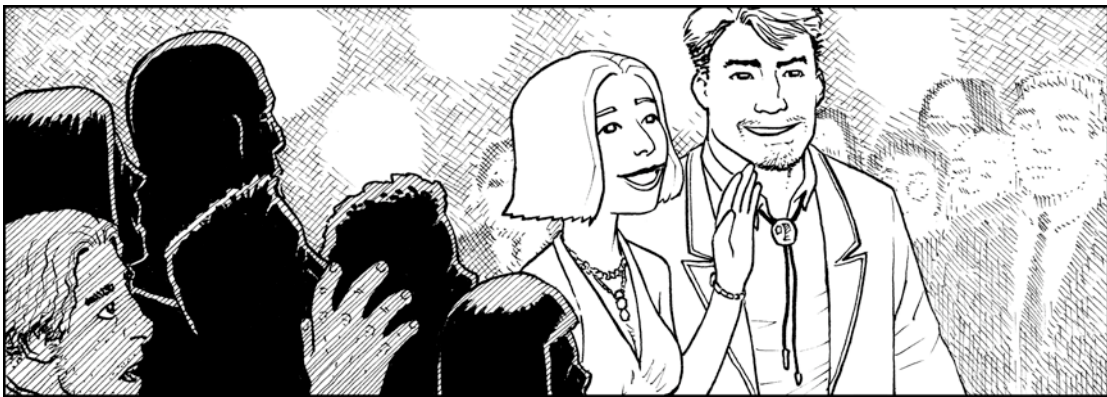
The Thirster is a creature of the Mythos and over the years has sucked secrets out of its hosts' minds including several powerful spells. These are the spells it imparted to Denton Bridger, and which were then passed on to Chet Clavin, in order to create the fertile feeding ground for suffering the Golden Chalice provides. These spells include the one which Overdrive Consulting clients now use to disguise themselves and absolve themselves of responsibility for their actions. This magic is the foundation of the Golden Chalice but the Thirster has learned an important lesson and does not manipulate Chet Clavin directly as it did Denton Bridger.

The Thirster learned its lesson during the last few days of Bridger’s life. Bridger’s body and mind were an utter wreck. So damaged was he that the Thirster was barely able to escape his body at all. The Thirster narrowly avoided dying along with Bridger and is not prepared to take that risk again. Instead, it spends a very limited amount of time in the minds of any one Golden Chalice devotee, using their increasingly frequent meetings to flit between them. An additional benefit is that it can speak to each of them, offering a brief glimpse of the cosmic realities it understands. Each and every member of the Golden Chalice is a potential host, who might find themselves with missing time and blood on their hands – the purpose of the Golden Chalice, as far as the Thirster is concerned, is to make these hosts accept what they do and remain available for when the Thirster wants them next.

In some ways the Thirster’s motives are comfortingly terrestrial. It does what it does to survive – it just has a particularly horrible way of doing it. But the Golden Chalice is not the Thirster, or vice versa – the Thirster created the Golden Chalice but the cult could continue quite happily without the Thirster being involved. The Chalice is the real villain of the piece, being composed of men and women who are ultimately only human. The Chalice would continue without the Thirster, since they are all utterly addicted to the unholy freedom of the Chalice gives its members.

**The Golden Chalice Today**

The Golden Chalice is a now a fully-fledged cult devoted not to any otherworldly god or malevolent Great Old One, but to the pursuit of excess and sensual experience. Each devotee of the Golden Chalice effectively worships him or herself. The cult is a relatively loose one organised into informal layers, united mainly by the image-altering spell administered by Chet Clavin.



The outermost layer is formed from the elite clients of Overdrive Consulting who have used Clavin’s spell to acquire some much-wanted freedom. They have used the magic for largely practical reasons – meeting with a secret lover, buying drugs, avoiding the paparazzi or just walking the streets for a while without fear of being recognised. These men and women know little of the psuedo-religious heart of the Golden Chalice, but the fact that they have benefited from obvious magic means they understand the rules of reality are mutable.

Celebrity makes for a small world and such ‘outer layer’ members will often mingle with other Overdrive clients closer to the centre of the Golden Chalice. They might be asked to attend one of the Chalice’s informal meetings. These get-togethers, each held in a different lavish Californian mansion or hired nightclub, form the majority of cult activity. Golden Chalice members attend under the effect of the spell so their identities are hidden from one another, and surrounded by equally anonymous fellow revellers they partake in sensual pleasures without fear of responsibility. Such cult revels vary from simple benders fuelled by drugs and booze to events where attendees commit acts of torture and even murder without fear of being caught, or even of having to look at the culprit in the mirror. This layer, which makes up the bulk of the Golden Chalice, takes many forms and the events are not organised by any cult hierarchy, instead happening as and when particular members want to indulge themselves. The first religious overtures occur at this level, where newer members will first hear of the group’s higher goals in unlocking their true potential through the most intense of sensual stimuli. The ‘Golden Chalice’ might be mentioned as a vague term for members who understand the cult’s goals and embrace them.

Some members drop out at this stage, their sense of basic morality reminding them that even if they wear a different face, they are still responsible for their actions. Some, however, embrace it fully, and want to go further. The next ‘layer’ is formed around the thrill-seekers from the earlier days, when some Overdrive clients went out to commit crimes just because they could. Now they form a much tighter-knit group – the ‘higher circle’ - who, as well as attending Golden Chalice functions, have their own code which is divulged only to members they invite into their ranks.

The goal of these members is to take self-worship beyond the plush penthouses and villas. They believe that sensual indulgence means nothing if it only affects their own tiny, rarefied world, and only takes on any significance if they can act above the rules of the world at large. The members of this higher circle indulge themselves not amongst other anonymous devotees but under the noses of the ‘normal’ population – the men and women the Golden Chalice refers to as the ‘audience’. To do this they set one another challenges, support one another, and mediate the rules of the ‘game’. The crimes they commit vary from simply beating up complete strangers to elaborate plans that utterly destroy the lives of hapless audience members selected at random. Members are honour-bound to accept the challenges of other members, no matter how dangerous or foul the crime involved might be – but they are also entitled to help from any other members of the circle. They never meet without the benefit of the image-altering spell and rarely even know one another’s identities, communicating by anonymous mobile phones or dead drops. Many of Los Angeles’ most horrible crimes are the work of the higher circle of the Golden Chalice, who do what they do to prove that they are worthy of their own worship.

Chet Clavin himself is a member of the largest circle, the Golden Chalice members who get together to debauch themselves. He knows that some of his thrill-seeking clients use his magic to raise hell outside the Chalice, but he does not know how

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elaborate the higher circle is or how horrible their activities. And even the members of the higher circle rarely have an inkling of the very pinnacle of the cult.

### **The First Team**

The small cell that sits at the top of the Golden Chalice cult calls itself the ‘First Team’. They are a cabal of around a dozen competitive sociopaths created from a band of higher circle members who started treating their outrages in a competitive manner. The First Team maintains a leaderboard of kills, and each Team member takes immense pride in seeing his or her assumed name at the top. There is only one rule among the members of the First Team – other Team members are off-limits. Otherwise anyone, including other Golden Chalice members, are fair game. Particularly horrible or public ‘kills’ are worth double points. The First Team have absolutely no sense of their own responsibility, instead believing that they become different people when they mask themselves with Clavin’s spell. The place at the top of the leaderboard is hard-won and constantly disputed, and the holder can claim to have rightfully earned the status of his or her own god.

Membership of the First Team is fluid but the actual number is quite stable – some members drop off the leaderboard, while others are promoted according to the First Team’s strict criteria from the higher circle. The First Team is sworn not to reveal its existence to the rest of the Golden Chalice – they consider themselves an elite within an elite, demonstrably superior to both the ‘audience’ and to the rest of the cult, the ultimate expression of human potential. The First Team is the favourite haunt of the Thirster, which can latch onto a random First Team member in the certainty that the infliction of fear and torment will not be far away.





Many First Team members have retreated from the ‘normal’ debaucheries of the Golden Chalice, devoting their self-worship entirely into creating ever greater atrocities. Serial and multiple murders, gun rampages, and the kidnapping of victims from across the country or even abroad could all be laid at the feet of the First Team, if anyone could ever trace the crimes back to them. Perhaps, as the First Teams’



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excesses become more extravagant and horrible, one of them will make a fatal mistake that will put some dogged investigators on their trail.

### **The Vermin**

The total membership of the Golden Chalice isn't more than a couple of hundred individuals, and only about forty of those make up the higher circle. But they are not alone. They have the Vermin.

The Vermin are the various lackeys and hangers-on that every Golden Chalice member has access to. The Vermin are out-of-work actors or screenwriters, or sometimes besotted fans, who can be relied on to do whatever a celebrity tells them. The Golden Chalice makes frequent use of the Vermin to organise their revels and run other cult errands. The Vermin, however, do not know anything about the Golden Chalice – as members of the 'audience' they deal only with the celebrity they cling to. They never know that their idol has two faces, one real and one magical, dealing exclusively with one or the other. They certainly don't know they are referred to as 'vermin'. Though the Vermin are considered subhuman by most Golden Chalice members, the cult could not exist without them.

Vermin attached to higher circle members are used as accomplices in crimes. They are amongst the most hapless of vermin, the desperate and broken, who will willingly engage in baffling, often dangerous pursuits that a celebrity demands of them for no apparent reason. Few such Vermin ever see the true faces of the celebrities they serve, dealing only with the too-perfect, magically disguised versions. Many Vermin have ended up dead, and more in prison, unknowingly helping some higher circle members commit one of their many outrages.

The First Team have Vermin, too, and are mostly adept at manipulating and abusing them. A member is permitted to use Vermin, including their own, as kills for the leaderboard. First Team members are good at acquiring new Vermin since theirs so often end up crazy, imprisoned or dead.

Most Chalice members recognise that Vermin are the weak link in the cult. Vermin know nothing of the cult's pseudo-religious goals, and are each loyal only to one individual member. The cult is scrupulous about keeping Vermin in the dark about anything magical, but nobody is perfect and leaks do happen. Higher circle and First Team members are in a position to eliminate Vermin who find out too much and even members of the general cult would often have little compunction about killing troublesome hangers-on, but sooner or later word will get out and the cult will have to winnow out the followers who know too much.

### **The Place To Be**

The Golden Chalice is based in Los Angeles but it is effectively international. Anywhere its members go, it can flourish. LA and New York are the most likely places for a cult revel, but they can also occur anywhere in the world where there is somewhere discreet and lavish enough to hold them. The cult itself is not a property-



owning organisation, but some locations are more or less permanent fixtures of the cult.

Overdrive Consulting is a rather unassuming building in Los Angeles, handsome without standing out among the corporate headquarters that surround it. An elegant glass-fronted atrium is home to a pretty receptionist whose job is to filter out anyone who doesn't belong there. There isn't even a sign outside the building – Overdrive Consulting is advertised mostly by word of mouth, ensuring that anyone who knows about it is probably from the correct circles. Overdrive Consulting is quite an effective security consulting company, who can give you all the advice you need to keep you safe from LA's less attractive occupants. They are particularly good at suggesting lifestyle changes that will result in greater safety and privacy.

On the top floor, Chet Clavin keeps his own offices. Most of his working time he acts as the frontman for Overdrive, welcoming new clients, flashing them a beaming action-hero smile and assuring them they've come to the right place. For clients he trusts to keep a secret, it is here that (without the knowledge of Overdrive's other employees) he suggests a more esoteric solution, and casts the image-altering spell on which Overdrive's real success is based. The chambers are configured to increase the spell's effectiveness, from the exotic incense that always burns here to the complex patterns inlaid on the floor. Clavin believes that only he knows how to cast the spell, but many members of the higher circle and First Team can do it, too – few other members of the Golden Chalice know this, however, so Clavin very frequently casts the spell here or in clients' homes.

The First Team meets in the private back room of the Salamander Rooms, a small and extremely exclusive nightspot where failing to appear in *Variety* for a month will see you kicked out by the bouncers. The back room is reserved exclusively for the assumed identities of the First Team – although they do not appear to be celebrities when under Clavin's spell, they have put down enough money and pulled enough strings to ensure that they, and only they, can always get in. The back room is small and plain, containing a large table with enough seats for all the First Team members and a private doorway into the Salamander Rooms' kitchens – the First Team always insist on their own menu being cooked to their own specifications, even having the meat delivered specially. The First Team's leaderboard dominates one wall, divulging only the members' assumed codenames and a series of tally marks denoting their current kills.

### **The Bold And The Beautiful**

The members of the Golden Chalice are rich and mostly famous. Many of the individuals mentioned in this chapter might look like portraits of existing celebrities, and in some cases they are. This poses something of a problem for a Keeper who wants to pit their investigators against the Golden Chalice. On the one hand, using made-up characters who are supposedly internationally famous breaks the suspension of disbelief since players won't have heard of them, like a movie that uses a generic president when everyone knows what the real one looks like. On the other hand,

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facing off against real-life actors and pop stars could feel ridiculous for the players (and necessitates some rather bizarre preparation by the Keeper – statting up Cameron Diaz probably isn't as much fun as it sounds). One solution is to have investigators only encounter really famous Golden Chalice members while they are disguised by Clavin's magic, and only hint at who they might really be. Members encountered 'in the flesh' could be invented characters who, while rich and influential, wouldn't be so much in the public eye, such as movie producers or record company executives. Of course, the first followers of the Golden Chalice the investigators are likely to encounter are the Vermin, who by definition are never famous.

### **Lifting the Curtain**

The Golden Chalice is almost entirely ignorant of the Mythos, and the Mythos cares no more about them than it does the rest of mankind. The only connections to the Mythos are the Thirster (which exists independently of the cult) and the spell Clavin uses to change the faces of his clientele.

That does not mean the Golden Chalice is not a religious cult. The men and women who make up its membership worship not a tentacled monster or an abstract Outer God, but themselves. Each cult revel is an act of mass selfishness, devoted to wringing as much pleasure and sensation as possible from whoever and whatever is present. The higher circle take self-worship to such an extent that they make blood sacrifices to themselves, and the First Team see themselves as a sort of competing pantheon, outdoing one another to see who will sit, like Zeus, at the very top.

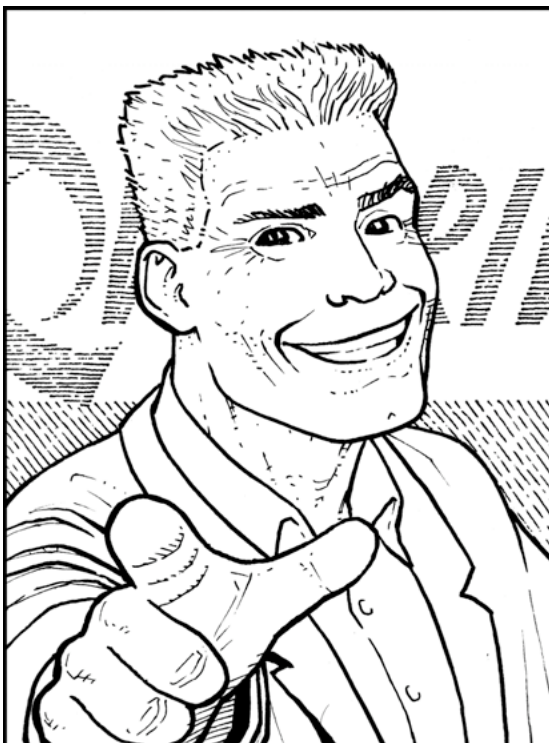
Just because the Golden Chalice does not use religious vocabulary or dress everyone up in robes, that doesn't mean they are not every bit as fanatical as the Louisiana swamp-dwellers who danced around their statue of Cthulhu. The Chalice will kill to

protect themselves and sacrifice everything short of their own lives in the pursuit of their ideals. They have money, influence, and disposable lackeys by the literal busload, all of which can become ammunition in a war to keep the Chalice overflowing. If anything theirs is a modern religion, a symptom of the increasing psychopathy of Mankind that is surely a mark of the coming End Times.

### **Important Individuals**

Chet Clavin, '80s action icon and ignorant pleasure-cult mandarin

Chet Clavin is the closest thing the Golden Chalice has to a leader. The



moviegoing public of the '80s rarely saw Clavin without an assault rifle and manfully ripped shirt, filling some greasy foreign bad guy with hot lead. Now well into his 50s, Clavin is still a big, muscly guy with rugged good looks. If anything he has become a more attractive man with age, his brawny body now matched by a craggy, worldly face. Clavin's teeth, however, are still perfect and abnormally white, an obvious artificial note that accentuates his bottle tan and the carefully cultivated faux-casualness of his suits. When presiding over a cult revel he wears a face that looks a lot like his younger, falsely-handsome self.

Clavin has become ever more narcissistic and arrogant as the Golden Chalice grew. It was he who named the Golden Chalice (for no real reason other than that he liked the sound of it) and thinks he is the only person alive with an understanding of mystical reality – in truth, of course, he knows barely a fraction of the true horrible cosmic reality and there are other members of the Chalice who know far, far more. Clavin fancies himself the heart of an enlightened pleasure-cult and does not know the excesses of the higher circle or the First Team. If Clavin were to be removed the Golden Chalice would carry on – higher circle members would take over the spellcasting duties and the First Team would continue to merrily wreak terrible suffering amongst the 'audience'. Clavin started something he does not fully understand, and something he definitely couldn't stop even if he wanted to.

**New Spell: False Face**

The spell taught to Clavin by the Thirster creates a new face for the target. The ritual for the spell lasts about ten minutes in a specially prepared ritual room, or half an hour elsewhere. The spell costs 3 magic points. Both the caster and the target lose 1 Sanity point when the spell is completed. The target now has a new face for 12 hours (which may grant them a new temporary APP rating), at which point it will fade away and their normal face will appear again. The spell can only be used to create an imaginary face, never the likeness of an existing person, and so it cannot be used to disguise someone as a specific individual. The spell can be cast on multiple targets at once, but costs the caster an extra 1 magic point and 1 Sanity for each extra target in the ritual.

**STR 14      CON 11      SIZ 15      INT 9      POW 11**  
**DEX 10      APP 16      EDU 12      SAN 20      HP 12**  
**Damage Bonus: +1D4**

**Weapons:**    Fist/Punch 60% (D3+DB)  
                  .38 Revolver 33% (1D10)  
                  Grapple 35% (special)

**Spells:** False Face (see above)

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**Skills:** Act Tough 70%, Credit Rating 80%, Drive Auto 50%, Fast Talk 38%, Jump 40%, Occult 14%, Persuade 25%.

The Thirster, alien parasite from another dimension

The Thirster is a cosmic parasite that lives off pain and torment. While its possession



of Denton Bridger led ultimately to the creation of the Golden Chalice, the Thirster is not an intrinsic part of the cult. It can survive outside a human host but finds it much easier to feed when it can get a host to do all the work, and so the Thirster hangs around the cult, jumping into the more debauched members. Its favourite hosts are, of course, the First Team, and it is clever enough to have clocked which Chalice members are on the leaderboard. First Team members require little prompting to commit acts of atrocious malice, so the Thirster normally just rides along with them and waits. Being a cosmic intruder from another reality, the Thirster's motivations beyond simple predation are utterly beyond human understanding. It is completely alien in every respect – it doesn't even 'exist' in our reality in all but a

metaphysical sense. The members of the Golden Chalice do not have enough understanding of the Mythos and the truth of reality, and so do not suspect that the Thirster exists. The Thirster does little that would make them think otherwise. If the Golden Chalice is destroyed the Thirster will go on, finding other hosts to feed as it has done in the past – the Chalice, however, provides the most fertile feeding ground the Thirster has ever known and it will defend the Chalice if anyone looks like destroying or exposing it.

The Thirster does not have normal characteristics as it does not interact with the physical world. It is invisible except when revealed through magical means (such as the Powder of Ibn Gazi). It has an INT of 18 and a POW of 22, and is only vulnerable to attacks that drain POW. The Thirster can 'ride' an unsuspecting victim at the cost of 1 POW per 12 hours, and gains 1 point of POW from every act of extreme suffering its host commits or witnesses. This can bring its POW above its starting level, but this surplus POW is lost at a rate of 1 point ever 12 hours until back to its normal maximum of 22.



The Thirster's principal method of attack against a creature that is aware of it and unwilling to be ridden is possession. It can possess a victim by overcoming that victim's POW on the resistance table, and can then control the victim for a number of rounds equal to its remaining POW. When this time is up, the Thirster must emerge from its victim and cannot possess another one for D4 hours.

Mindy Tangasian, brutalised Vermin assassin

Mindy Tangasian came to Los Angeles from Wisconsin in the late '90s hoping to become a star. Less than a week later she was hanging around Hollywood Boulevard, waiting for someone to give her money, and by then she didn't care what she had to do to get it. But there were so many others there, criminals and hookers, dealers and leg-breakers - in the grim underworld of Los Angeles, Mindy just didn't have what it took to survive. Mindy had turned tricks and run a few handfuls of drugs but she couldn't scrape together enough money to rent a room, let alone start herself on the path to something bigger. She was a failure. A nobody. She was vermin.



Someone found her on her corner of Hollywood – a woman with a face Mindy didn't recognise. The woman assured Mindy she was in the movie industry and took Mindy to a mansion huge and lavish enough to suggest she was telling the truth. Mindy was offered a deal. Mindy would do whatever the woman wanted, and in return the woman would get Mindy into the movies. Mindy would do anything, absolutely anything, for that chance. When the woman chained her up for days on end, Mindy didn't scream to be released. When she was drugged and woke up with new surgical scars, she didn't try to escape. She would do anything. Anything, just for that one chance to be somebody one day. Eventually, that came to include killing.

Mindy Tangasian is the pet Vermin for a prominent actress who is also an enthusiastic Chalice member. Mindy was mentally unstable before she was ever taken to the mansion, her sense of right and wrong eroded by an all-consuming terror of being a nobody. Now her sense of self has been completely erased and she is a cold-blooded killer for the Chalice. Mindy is passably attractive in spite of the emaciation caused by her owner's neglect and can get close to any red-blooded male with a



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couple of drinks in him. Whenever the Golden Chalice needs such a man killed, Mindy's owner is given the task of making it happen and Mindy is her most reliable tool. Chet Clavin does not know that Vermin assassins like Mindy exist, but Mindy is just one of several Vermin used to kidnap, kill and worse by the more violent Chalice members.

In truth there is no Mindy Tangasian any more. Mindy is completely devoid of any sense of morality or empathy, and struggles to maintain the pretence of humanity needed to get close to her victims. Mindy knows absolutely that it will take just one more kill to become a star – the truth, of course, is that she will die Vermin without ever knowing the Golden Chalice exists.

**STR 7      CON 8      SIZ 8      INT 13      POW 10**  
**DEX 14      APP 14      EDU 13      SAN 0      HP 7**  
**Damage Bonus: +0**

**Weapons:**

Butterfly Knife 70% (D4+DB)  
Garrotte 65% (Strangulation)

**Skills:** Appear Harmless 80%, Conceal 50%, Disguise 55%, Dodge 40%, Fast Talk 35%, Hide 60%, Listen 33%, Locksmith 20%, Pharmacy 20%, Psychology 37%, Sneak 66%.

Maury – sitcom samurai

'Maury' is the cult name used by a prominent sitcom actor that investigators have certainly seen grinning from their TV set more times that they realise. Maury considers the person on the TV to be an entirely separate individual from the 'true' self he becomes away from the cameras – a follower of the ancient samurai code, a katana-wielding warrior embracing the purity of combat and the ethos of a bygone age. Maury always had a private interest in ancient Japan and the mythology of the samurai, but the Golden Chalice has given him the chance to really indulge himself.





Maury wears the features of a noble Japanese warrior when he attends gatherings of the Golden Chalice's higher circle. His new face lets him indulge in the art of sword combat without worrying about petty concerns like being arrested for murder. Maury's staged single combats, where kidnapped victims or disposable vermin are forced to face him in a swordfight, are regular and much anticipated events amongst the more active higher circle members. Maury is proud of the scars he has been dealt by lucky blows, and prouder by far of the kills he has made with his fabulously expensive katana (none of your reproduction crap here – Maury's sword is the genuine antique article with a blade sharp enough to shave with).

Maury believes that he will reach his own enlightenment not by the excesses of pleasure the rest of the Chalice pursue, but through the self-knowledge only pure combat can begin. His cod-samurai philosophy is taking over his whole personality and soon he will give up his career as a comedy actor to take on the mantle of holy warrior, stalking Los Angeles with an imaginary face. Maury's strange sense of honour means he will offer to fight troublesome investigators in single combat, then bring the worst excesses of the higher circle down on their heads should they refuse. Maury's swordsmanship is indeed impressive, so investigators who agree to fight Maury will almost certainly die like so many victims before them.

**STR 15      CON 12      SIZ 10      INT 11      POW 9**  
**DEX 17      APP 16      EDU 14      SAN 0      HP 11**  
**Damage Bonus: +D3**

**Weapons:**

Katana 87% (D8+1+DB)  
Grapple 44% (Special)  
Fist/Punch 70% (D3+DB)

**Spells:** False Face

**Skills:** Art (Calligraphy) 22%, Credit Rating 80%, Dodge 67%, History 37%, Jump 40%, Martial Arts 55%, Other Language (Japanese) 61%.

**Plot Seeds**

- The investigators are approached by an acquaintance whose son or daughter has been arrested for murder in Los Angeles. The kid is clearly guilty but there was no motive behind the killing. Investigating the murder leads the investigators to a cell of vermin used by the Golden Chalice for dirty work – the victim of the murder was a reporter with photographs of a Golden Chalice orgy and evidence of which masked celebrities were involved. Can the investigators complete the reporter's quest for the truth as more vermin are sent after them?

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- Two First Team members up the ante on their competition, competing to see who can kill the most famous people instead of just meaningless audience members. A third First Teamer sees this as heresy, since the whole purpose of the First Team is to emphasise the superiority of the rich and famous over 'ordinary' people – he brings in the investigators to discover the true identities of the two heretics and stop them before the next star-studded awards ceremony is turned into a bloodbath.

- The higher circle pool their resources to make a movie which, unknown to anyone outside the higher circle, contains subliminal messages that turn one in every hundred viewers into a violent psychopath.

- Chet Clavin is diagnosed with terminal cancer and delves into every book of occult nonsense he can find looking for a spell to cure himself. He finds some real spells but his poor understanding of magic results in catastrophically skewed results and a private north California hospital suddenly brimming with otherworldly horrors. Saving Clavin and reversing the gate he has opened into another world is one thing – it's quite another to survive when the Chalice try to clean the whole thing up.



THE HAMMER

The Hammer is almost entirely the work of one man – Karlaster Vyne, a wealthy New York banker with some very specific beliefs about history, society and the evolution of the human species. Vyne forms the very top ‘layer’ of the Hammer, an organisation he founded to perpetrate acts of terrorism against what he believes is a new and predatory offshoot of human evolution. Vyne may well be crazy – more importantly, he may also be right. The terrorist cells who unknowingly serve him could really be fighting the last stand of homo sapiens against enslavement.

Karlaster Vyne

Vyne was the seventh son of a black Missouri family. Vyne’s family was poor but his father never gave up hope of his children living better lives. He believed that hard work and dedication could win a man anything – after all, this was America, where anyone could be rich if they played the game well enough. Vyne never forgot his father’s words and went to school shoeless intent on becoming somebody one day. Vyne was clever, clever enough to win a scholarship and go to college, to understand how the economy worked and the seams within it that could be mined for profit. Karlaster Vyne went into banking, always with the intent of eventually becoming a one-man going concern, supporting himself without being beholden to anyone else. By his late thirties, he had succeeded. But there was more, much more, to Karlaster Vyne than a man following the American dream.

Vyne developed his beliefs as a result of his own success. He was a rich in a way that could not be accounted for solely by the effort he put in. There were millions of hard-working people out there who were still poor, like his parents had been. Vyne searched for the answer to why people could succeed in life, and came to develop an elaborate belief system that set him off on a quite different path.

Vyne believes it all started with the Industrial Revolution, in the latter part of the nineteenth century. In the course of a few decades, it became the case that success and quality of life were no longer dependent on physical capability or intelligence (the factors that define the evolutionary path of a species), or on mere chance. The new industrialisation meant that one person could command immense wealth and power through manipulating those around him. This was not a function of intellect, but of some other factor that had not previously been important enough to become an evolutionary trump card. Some called it charisma, but Vyne knew it was something far more important than that.

The next stage in human evolution, Vyne surmised, was a creature that, while physiologically human, possessed the ability to influence and manipulate unevolved humans. With human life no longer a matter of survival of the fittest, this social evolution could flourish and the emerging race of neo-humans attained inevitable positions of power and influence.

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Karlaster Vyne is under no illusions about what will happen next. For most of natural history evolution has been a war where the winners survive and the losers become extinct. But evolution has changed. The neo-humans will keep the unevolved humans like humans keep cattle, and Vyne has come to the conclusion that enslavement of the human race by the neo-humans is just a matter of time.

But Karlaster Vyne loves humankind. And as the only one who can see the enslavement coming, he has a duty to his fellow man to lead the resistance movement. Using his wealth and contacts, Karlaster Vyne created the Hammer, an organisation entirely ignorant of him and mostly ignorant of what they fight for. The men and women of the Hammer fight for freedom, gain, hatred and fanatical devotion, never knowing that they are part of one man's war against a stage of human evolution that very few can see coming.

### Neo-Humanity

According to Vyne's theory, a neo-human can take any number of forms as long as it attains domination over the humans around it. This can be crude and literal domination – the head of an organised crime network could be a neo-human, especially if he has welded his organisation together through sheer force of personality. Sometimes a neo-human will be much more subtle, controlling a company or political movement. Others do not create a support structure at all, instead using society itself to elevate them to a position of power – trendsetters, prominent social commentators, religious leaders or celebrities famous just for being famous are examples of potential neo-humans.

Whether enslaving people through politics, finance, society or any other means, neo-humans share a common goal. They crave power. Normal humans crave the same thing, of course, but for neo-humans it is a biological imperative. Their evolution has instilled in them a literal need for control over unevolved humans. Each neo-human goes about attaining control differently, but ultimately they are all the same.

Karlaster Vyne has identified a particular type of neo-human which, he believes, confirms beyond any doubt that they are a separate evolutionary strain. These neo-humans form close-knit and often bizarre religious groups around themselves and use their powers to make their followers see things – magic spells, creatures from beyond, even manifestations of actual gods. These cultist leaders are the pinnacle of neo-human evolution, demonstrating awesome manipulative powers that can only be ascribed to psychic abilities. Vyne believes cult leaders to be the latest form of neo-human, and his biggest concern is turning the Hammer towards the elimination of these most dangerous targets.

### First Layer

The Hammer has three 'layers', separated by the level of knowledge its members have of what they are fighting for. Karlaster Vyne himself is the sole inhabitant of the first layer. From his handsome office halfway up a skyscraper in New York, Vyne plans the activities of the Hammer in considerable detail. Vyne occasionally contacts



the members of the second layer directly, never letting on his true identity or role, but mostly he can trust them to fight the war themselves. Vyne's rare contacts are made to steer the Hammer in a particular direction, placing ideas in the heads of the second layer that are eventually realised as Vyne's intended results. Vyne very, very rarely fails to have the Hammer do what he wants, even if his plans take years to bear fruit.

Vyne's plan, at its very heart, is simple. He wants the Hammer to identify and kill every single neo-human. It is the second layer who identify targets, while the third layer perform the actual executions. The Hammer also engages in auxiliary acts of terrorism and violence, so the neo-human deaths look like part of much larger vendettas against society. Vyne has to keep the Hammer secret in case the neo-humans realise its existence and pool their efforts to destroy it.

### Second Layer

The second layer believes that its members control the Hammer. The very varied membership is typically intelligent and well-connected. These men and women were unknowingly selected by Vyne to join the Hammer, either by contacting existing members and subtly suggesting the new members be approached, or by more rarely contacting the new member directly and instructing them in how to join the Hammer.

The second layer consists of a couple of hundred individuals from all walks of life – academics, politicians, homemakers, cops, gangsters, financiers, activists, cab drivers, anyone who Vyne thinks will be useful. These second layer members know of the Hammer and the coming race of neo-humans that will enslave mankind in a matter of decades. Most members live in New York where the Hammer is unofficially based but they rarely meet in any great numbers, communicating instead by coded emails or dead drops. Sometimes three or four will meet to discuss some more complex plan but the Hammer knows how dangerous it is to get too many of them together in one place at any one time.

There are two criteria for joining the second layer of the Hammer. Firstly, an individual must believe in the theory of a new, socially manipulative stage in human evolution. The second layer discreetly posits the theory through various media to find people who agree with it. The second criterion is that the individual must be useful to the war effort, either gathering intelligence on neo-human targets or manipulating the ignorant third-layer terrorist groups.

The second layer of the Hammer is a deliberately difficult group to pin down. One member might be a cop who knows the contact details of an Islamic terrorist cell. Another could be a reporter for the celebrity section of a magazine, carefully sifting through interviews to find which of the beautiful people have attained their celebrity through neo-human levels of manipulation. Those two old guys playing chess in the park could be members of the Hammer, too, wily old warriors who know just what buttons to press to get a certain group of anti-globalisation extremists to firebomb a particular office. The second layer are clever, determined and resourceful, able to call

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on almost any specialisation from within the membership, and capable of bringing the violent fanatics of the third layer down on pretty much anyone they target.

The main gap in the second layer's knowledge is Vyne's existence. Many of the second layer have actually met him, but never suspected that he was the man ultimately controlling them (in many cases they had no idea he was a member of the Hammer at all). The second layer are too proud in their manipulation of the third layer to think that someone might be manipulating them.

### Third Layer

If Vyne is the commander and the second layer are the intelligence staff, the third layer are the front-line soldiers of the Hammer. The third layer consists of several terrorist or violent extremist organisations, groups willing to use lethal violence in the furtherance of their goals. Third layer organisations include, but are not limited to, far right extremists, religious fanatics of all faiths, violent criminal gangs, anti-globalisation (or anti-abortion, or anti-anything) extremists, militant animal rights activists, murderously corrupt police, and even isolated serial killers. An ideal third layer group is fanatically violent, close-knit, relatively isolated from the rest of society and apt to react with murderous intensity to a particular stimulus.

The third layer is completely ignorant of the existence of the Hammer, and of the part any third layer group plays in the Hammer's war (including their own). No-one in the third layer has even heard of the neo-human theory (a criterion for the second layer using them at all).

The third layer perform the assassinations of targets identified by the second layer. The second layer has them do this by feeding them information, either anonymously or by posing as sympathisers to a particular group's cause. Some targets are obvious – anti-globalisation militants could be used to target a neo-human businessman, for instance. Others are more subtle, and the second layer must come up with ingenious ways of having a third layer group kill them without making them a specific targets. Groups who intend to cause mass destruction, like religiously motivated terrorist cells, are most useful for this – the second layer could turn them towards destroying a particular Federal building at a specific time. The terrorists probably don't care that a potentially neo-human socialite is inside the building that the same time, but for the second layer her death is the whole point of the exercise.

Many third layer operations, of course, cause great loss of human life, quite apart from any neo-humans killed. The second layer wish this was not the case but they know they are fighting a war where sacrifices have to be made. The alternative to these relatively few innocent deaths is the enslavement of the whole human race, and so the second layer reluctantly accept the 'collateral damage' caused by the excesses of the third layer.

Some members of the second layer are tasked with camouflaging the Hammer's manipulation of the third layer. If the third layer only eliminated a particular type of



target, a clever observer could work out what the Hammer was doing and try to stop them. Even worse, the neo-humans could identify who is attacking them and band together to destroy the Hammer. To this end, certain second layer members are connected to third layer groups whose purpose is to cause violence and destruction that has nothing to do with the war against the neo-humans. In this way, neo-human deaths are disguised as incidental parts of greater campaigns of violence. Not all members of the second layer know that this is an objective of the Hammer, and the members who organise it are the hardest-bitten soldiers in the Hammer.

### The Contingency

Karlaster Vyne keeps himself secret from the Hammer's second layer for a very simple reason. If the second layer ever found out about Vyne, they would come to a conclusion that is completely inevitable – Karlaster Vyne himself is a neo-human.

Vyne became aware of this fact very soon in the development of his theory. Vyne's banking fortune was amassed not through pure intellect but through the ability to second-guess and manipulate people, a sure indicator that he possesses post-evolutionary powers of social engineering. The Hammer itself is even more concrete proof – Vyne has not identified a single neo-human who has created such a powerful organ as the Hammer through nothing more than subtle manipulation of unsuspecting humans. The Hammer could only be created by a neo-human. But Vyne loves the human race, even if he isn't technically human himself, and he will go to any lengths to stave off neo-human domination. The only way to save mankind is to kill every single neo-human, and that includes Karlaster Vyne.

Vyne accepts that the Hammer will one day have to kill him. He has made this a certainty with a contingency plan. Once the Hammer has developed to the point where the second layer can operate without input from Vyne, Vyne has arranged for him and his office to come to the attention of a second layer member responsible for identifying neo-humans. Vyne will be just another target for the second layer to eliminate, and being a single individual on his own without lackeys or bodyguards to protect him he will make far too tempting a target for the second layer to pass up. Vyne doesn't know which third layer group will be used to eliminate him – as an extremely rich black man he imagines anti-globalisation pipe-bombers or white supremacist gunmen are the most likely assassins, but he is curious to see who the second layer will use.

Vyne doesn't mind his impending death. How many other men have left a legacy that will save mankind? How many have died not ignorant and terrified, but understanding the meaning of their sacrifice? Vyne's death will benefit mankind, and so he is more than willing to accept it. But until then, he will fight his war with the ferocity and subtlety that only a neo-human can muster.



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### The Hammer and the Mythos

Karlaster Vyne knows about the Mythos. He understands some of the mythology behind its gods and monsters, and about the purported existence of sanity-blasting magic. He also thinks it's a complete fabrication.

Vyne believes the Mythos was created by particularly advanced neo-humans who use it to cow their human followers into following them as devoted cultists.

Manifestations of Mythos gods or creatures are actually hallucinations created by neo-human powers of suggestion, or even outright psychic mind control. Because of this, Mythos cults are high on the second layer's hit list. Indeed, investigators hunting Mythos cult leaders will find ready allies in third layer groups, and may even form a third layer group themselves. The owner of the psychic detective agency who gives them cases, the professor of ancient history who gives them their research assignments, the government agent who sends them out to face down supernatural threats to America – any one of these people could actually be a member of the second layer, using valiant investigators to hunt down neo-humans dressed up as cult leaders. Investigators are dedicated, resourceful and often rather violent, and so they are perfect for the Hammer's purposes. Many successful cult-busting campaigns could be fought through before a band of investigators start to suspect the existence of the Hammer.

The question posed, of course, is whether Karlaster Vyne is right. Vyne himself might well be crazy but that doesn't mean he's wrong about neo-humans. It also doesn't mean he's wrong about the origin of the Mythos. Investigators whose minds have been half-broken by understanding of the Mythos could be driven all the way to madness when they find out that there are no Outer Gods or Dimensional Shamblers after all, just the machinations of humanity's next stage. Those that survive the revelation have to decide whether they're with the Hammer, or against it. And that's not forgetting that investigators might even be tagged as neo-humans themselves.

Like everything else, the question of whether Vyne is correct is up to the Keeper. If Vyne is wrong then he's just one more madman to be taken down. But if he's right, everything changes – and, in a sense, you're not playing *Call of Cthulhu* any more.



Important Individuals

Karlaster Vyne, Either He's Crazy Or We're All Going To Die



Karlastyer Vyne looks pretty damn good for his fifty plus years. A tall, black, statesmanlike man, he works out three times a week and watches what he eats. His suits are impeccable but never flashy. He exudes authority and intelligence, and speaks with such quiet confidence that a few words from him can change the course of your life. Those who meet him rarely know who he really is, but they never forget him.

Vyne is very, very rich, to the extent that he can make tens of millions of dollars liquid at a few minutes' notice. He spends relatively little time tending to the fortune he extricated from his banking concerns several years ago, instead devoting most of his working time to planning the subtle manipulations he uses to direct the Hammer. He can almost always be found on the twelfth floor of the Corinthian Building, a New York skyscraper. Vyne owns the whole floor and his office takes up one corner, both corner walls taken up with windows looking out on a stunning view of New York.

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Vyne's finely appointed, tasteful office forms the better part of his world – he owns an apartment a couple of blocks away that he uses for little more than sleeping in.

Vyne's personality is characterised by complete conviction in his beliefs. He knows absolutely that neo-humans exist and are poised to take over the world, enslaving homo sapiens without anyone noticing at first. He is also absolutely certain in the knowledge that he himself is a neo-human, and that the future of mankind requires him to die. Similarly, he knows that the Hammer will succeed, because he created it and he is never wrong. Such purity of purpose represents either complete selflessness in the face of an awesome threat, or arrogance to the point of insanity.

Karlaster Vyne does not consider himself to be human, and there is a possibility that he is right. Therefore statistics are not given for him – it is up to the Keeper to decide whether he really is the next stage of human evolution, or just another cult leader.

**Sal Moskowitz, Second Layer Conspiracy Theorist**



Sal Moskowitz came over to America from Austria as part of the huge exodus in the shadow of the Holocaust, arriving with his mother when he was in his twenties. The elderly Sal is now part of New York's Jewish community – he loves chess, Central Park when the leaves turn red, and long, aimless conversations with other old guys who've seen it all. Sal Moskowitz also serves the second layer, sowing the seeds of appalling violence.

To Sal, the neo-human theory makes perfect sense. How else could one explain the increasingly savage genocides of the twentieth century? Those neo-human bastards have been trying to exterminate everyone since the October Revolution and it's both an honour and a duty to oppose them. Sal's particular role within the Hammer is inventing conspiracy theories. As a worldly and intelligent man, Sal is adept at weaving disparate strands of urban myth and shady politics into vivid and internally consistent theories. He then hands these conspiracy theories on to the rest of the Hammer to distribute through new-fangled channels like the Internet. Sal is good enough at what he does to tailor particular theories to particular neo-human targets, especially politicians or targets in big business. Half the crazies who write books about CIA mind control and aliens masquerading as ex-presidents actually get their ideas, ultimately, from Sal Moskowitz. Sal sits back and watches his made-up theories become accepted fact, and then develop into excuses for anti-government whackos to blow up Federal buildings. He is one of the most hands-off members of the second layer, killing through many layers of interpretation and delegation. He doesn't know when or where a particular theory will lead to the death of a target, but they almost always die eventually.

A chain-smoking elderly Jewish man who is all but blind without his thick glasses, Sal can often be found in Central Park where other members of the Hammer come to listen to his latest creations. Sal is grumpy and cynical, his eyes only lighting up when the conversation turns to chess or the weather. He knows full well how many people must have been killed, or lost their minds to paranoia, because of his theories. It's not that he doesn't care – it's just that letting those neo-humans win would be far too great a weight on his conscience.

**STR** 7      **CON** 8      **SIZ** 9      **INT** 16      **POW** 15

**DEX** 9      **APP** 10      **EDU** 18      **SAN** 55      **HP** 8

**Damage Bonus:** +0

**Weapons:** All weapons at base chances.

**Skills:** Anthropology 20%, Bargain 23%, Beat You At Chess 60%, Fast Talk 30%, History 52%, Invent Conspiracies 79%, Law 17%, Library Use 44%, Occult 22%, Other Language (English) 85%\*, Other Language (Hebrew) 40%, Persuade 24%, Psychology 55%.

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\*Sal's mother tongue is German.

**Alison Shaele, Lover of Life**



Alison Shaele knows that very, very few people truly believe in anything. Their opinions change according to whatever is convenient or fashionable and hardly anyone every really stands up for anything. Alison is different. She believes in a principle that is self-evident to her – the sanctity of life. In all existence, only human life is sacred. And by the same logic, the ending of human life is an unholy act that must be prevented at all costs.

Alison believes that those who destroy human lives have desecrated their own lives and that killing such people is not a sin. She is therefore willing to kill these people – specifically those who perform, condone or permit abortion - to prevent further acts of sacrilege. A long-time pro-life campaigner now in her forties, Alison Shaele has gone beyond the campaigning and demonstrations of her younger days and is now



engaged in a total war against the forces that make abortion possible. Little more than a one-woman band, no longer regularly affiliated with any other pro-life groups, she receives snippets of intelligence from anonymous informants within medicine and government directing her to the people who finance and support abortion. Other pro-life extremists shoot abortion doctors or bomb clinics - Alison strikes at the heart of the evil, the men and women who secretly allow the doctors to do their unholy work.

Alison looks every one of her forty-four years, with blonde hair cut practically short and a figure that borders on the emaciated. She normally works alone, using letter and car bombs to attack her targets. In truth, of course, Alison Shaele is a tool of the Hammer. She believes the informants who feed her information have sought her out because of her long standing pro-life activities, but in reality they are all incarnations of a second layer member who trusts her to attack any target no matter how tenuously the link to abortion may seem.

**STR** 11      **CON** 9      **SIZ** 9      **INT** 13      **POW** 10  
**DEX** 12      **APP** 9      **EDU** 14      **SAN** 22      **HP** 9  
**Damage Bonus:** +0

**Weapons:** .30-06 Bolt Action Rifle 66% (2D6+4)  
.38 Revolver 40% (1D10)

**Skills:** Chemistry 22%, Conceal 51%, Craft (bomb making) 55%, Craft (gunsmithing) 61%, Disguise 25%, Drive Auto 55%, Electrical Repair 14%, Electronics 33%, First Aid 41%, Hide 38%, Law 14%, Locksmith 9%, Mechanical Repair 31%, Pharmacy 8%, Throw 66%.

#### Plot Hooks

- A member of the Hammer's second layer, while organising third layer groups to destroy a religious cult, comes to believe that it is the Mythos and not the Hammer's neo-human conspiracy that threatens humanity. The member flees to the investigators, pleading with them to bring down the Hammer before more innocents die. Vyne himself must intervene before the investigators tear apart everything he has built.

- A prominent political candidate has narrowly survived three separate terrorist incidents and doesn't believe in coincidences. The investigators are the only people he trusts to find out who is trying to kill him, and how they are able to bring such disparate extremist groups down on his head. The candidate, however, is at the top of the Hammer's target list and they will stop at nothing to see him dead.

- An obscure department within US military intelligence identifies a subtle pattern of terrorism-related deaths, and extrapolate the existence of the Hammer. A group of

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investigators becomes a pawn in a battle of wits between military intelligence and the Hammer –eventually the investigators will have to decide which side they are on.

### **THE HUNTING FALLS CLINIC**

The Hunting Falls Clinic is located in a picturesque part of upstate New York, on the shores of the small Lake Tharn. It is small, exclusive, and very, very expensive – but the treatment it provides is of such high quality that Doctor Aloysius Olrenshaw claims he can cure anything.

And he’s right. But the price is always more than just money. Olrenshaw’s methods utilise technology from another world supplied by a being he mistakenly believes to be benevolent, and who desires blasphemous knowledge in repayment for its assistance. It is working with Olrenshaw to contact others of its species elsewhere in the solar system, and when that happens, Earth itself may be the site of an alien civil war.

#### **Dr Olrenshaw**

Herbie Olrenshaw was a con man working in New York, seeking out easily-baffled old ladies and selling them fake insurance, home security systems, pension plans, and anything else he could make sound plausible. He was slick and believable but ultimately it wasn’t much of a living. Then one of his unsuspecting marks, an old woman dying of cancer, showed him something extraordinary – a metallic device with a strange crystalline shape she said her own father had found while on a fishing trip upstate. It somehow cured her father’s heart condition, but the old lady couldn’t work out how to use it to cure herself.

Once the old woman was dead Olrenshaw ransacked her house, recovered the device, and found that her father once frequented a small cabin on the shore of Lake Tharn. Thinking he could start selling quack cure-all treatments to more gullible marks, he headed up there to see if he could find any more likely-looking miracle cures.

That’s where he encountered the Being from L’gh’rx.

#### **The Being from L’gh’rx**

L’gh’rx, known to Earthly astronomers as Uranus, has for untold millennia been inhabited by a metallic, cuboid race with a primitive civilisation beneath the frozen seas. The mindsets of these creatures can only be guessed at, for they cling to primitivism and simplicity as if deliberately stunting their potential. Their ‘religion’ centres around Lrogg, a deliberately abstract deity to whom the beings of L’gh’rx direct their devotions. The oldest inhabitants of L’gh’rx know that there are forces out there beyond reality that want to be worshipped, and which might take notice if their





civilisation progressed to its full potential. They therefore stay stunted and hidden on their frozen world, terrified of piercing the veil, with their facsimile god standing in to keep their population from turning to other, dangerous gods.

But like any civilisation, L'gh'rx has its malcontents. Limited contact with other races in the solar system – especially the fanatical and loathsome Shan – hinted at greater knowledge and potential. Some L'gh'rxian heretics embrace their species' potential and desire technology, understanding and power, those same things prohibited by the rest of their civilisation. The heretics of L'gh'rx even dared to leave the protective, frozen womb of the planet itself on crude spacecraft copied from Shan principles – and it was one of these heretics that crash-landed several thousand years ago in what would later become New York state.

Olnrenshaw found the corroded remains of the creature's spaceship and recovered some more of its technology from inside. Then, on a second trip, he found the Being itself, still alive in a cave on the lake's shore. The Being could communicate with him and assured him that it was benevolent and wanted only to help mankind with its healing technology. In return, it sought only knowledge. It didn't tell Olnrenshaw at the time that the knowledge it sought was of the Great Old Ones, Outer Gods, and other forces the Shans had worshipped.

Olnrenshaw had the perfect scam. The alien technology could indeed cure anything – and Olnrenshaw knew how much people would pay to fend off death itself. But now he wasn't in it for the money. He was in awe of the Being and of his place in the coming order of inter-species co-operation. But he couldn't help the Being on his own, and so the Clinic was born.

### Lrogg

The status of Lrogg, the god of L'gh'rx, as a deity is uncertain. It has been referred to in some sources as an avatar of Nyarlathotep, and in others as being relatively undemanding as far as Mythos gods go. The concept of Lrogg as a substitute for more dangerous gods is perhaps the simplest, but by all means Keepers should feel free to use more sinister interpretations of the god of L'gh'rx. If Lrogg is a dangerous Mythos force, after all, then the anti-religious stance of the orthodox L'gh'rxians acquires a welcome note of irony.

### The Clinic

Hunting Falls Clinic is a small, ultra-exclusive private healthcare facility advertised only by word of mouth. The wealthy and ill come here to be cured of whatever it is that is killing them – what actually happens is that Herbie Olnrenshaw (now revelling in the fake title of Dr. Aloysius Olnrenshaw) uses L'Gh'rxian technology to hold back their symptoms but leave them susceptible to relapses. To stay alive they have to make their resources available to Olnrenshaw so he can pursue the Being's agenda. In this way the Clinic forms the hub of an unwilling conspiracy, formed of men and women facing lingering deaths if they do not help hunt down the esoteric and occult knowledge the Being craves.

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The Clinic includes the clinic building itself with reception, examination rooms, and the sinister surgical suite in the cellar. The crashed spaceship lies a short walk away, the Being's cave is on the nearby lake shore, and Olrenshaw's own home overlooks the lake.

### The Clinic Building

The clinic is an innocuous-looking building nestling amidst picturesque woodland. A large inviting porch leading into the reception area, where Marjorie the receptionist waits to welcome patients for their appointments (no-one ever comes to Hunting Falls without an appointment). Past this area are Dr Olrenshaw's day office (his 'real' office is in the basement downstairs), a storage area, three examination rooms, a small kitchen with a kettle and microwave, and a bathroom. Nothing on this floor seems out of the ordinary – only a medical professional could cast doubt on this being a working medical practice. The reception area is well-appointed with plenty of comfortable chairs and several new magazines for waiting patients (not that patients are ever kept waiting).

### The Basement

The basement floor of the clinic is something else entirely. A flight of stairs down leads to a short corridor connecting four large rooms with bare concrete walls and floors.

The Tank Room contains a large metal tank full of viscous, strangely stringy fluid, shimmering with a rainbow of colours. A stepladder allows someone to climb up over the side of the tank and immerse themselves in the fluid. Observing the fluid shows it to be slightly mobile, reaching up against the sides of the tank.

A large locked cabinet against the back wall contains a strange piece of machinery, consisting of three large silvery-grey cylinders mounted on a frame that folds out so the cylinders stand fanned out like the petals of a flower. When an activation stud is pressed the cylinders rotate and more of the fluid is extruded from the base of the contraption. Hanging alongside the device is a loop of what looks like fiberoptic cable. When this is thrown into the tank while a patient is immersed in the fluid, the fibres wrap around the patient and force themselves into every orifice. This invasive and painful experience costs 0/D6 Sanity, but also sears away tumours, knits torn internal tissue back together, unclogs arteries, and generally cures internal injuries or disorders. The process lasts about fifteen minutes during which the patient feels sharp internal burning pains and is unable to breathe, although the fluid and fibres provide oxygen to the brain so they do not drown.

The Web Room is full of a strange substance that stretches between the walls, floors and ceiling, like a thick alien web. The strands of this web are translucent, rough and slightly sticky. The web is extruded from a complex metal device roughly the size and shape of a baseball bat that Olrenshaw keeps locked in his basement office. Olrenshaw uses the web to heal external injuries or cover up scars caused by



operations in the Crawler Room. Patients are brought into this room while drugged or restrained, and wrapped up in the web so they are suspended by it in the middle of the room. The web constricts automatically until the patient can only just breathe. The web then dissolves the skin around their injuries or scars before breaking down and flowing into the wound. The web substance then adapts the characteristics of the skin around it, effectively forming a seamless skin graft. The resulting skin cannot be distinguished from the patient's original skin, although areas healed by the web no longer have any nerve endings and so do not have a sense of touch. This whole process, in particular the initial dissolution of the skin, is painful and distressing, costing a total of 0/D6 Sanity if the patient is awake for most of it.

Treatment in the Web Room takes about 48 hours. When this time has elapsed, the web around the patient crumbles and they are left on the floor, still restrained, until Olrenshaw comes to get them.

The Crawler Room is named after the large semi-autonomous surgery device that inhabits it. The Crawler is an eight-foot high, roughly insectoid device apparently composed entirely of blades and needle-tipped manipulators. It normally crouches in one corner of the room, which is empty apart from the dark stains all over the wall, floor and ceiling. When a patient is presented to it, the Crawler automatically animates and begins to operate. It seizes the patient and immediately begins to cut them apart, neatly and efficiently, often completely dismembering them before putting them back together again. The Crawler is inhumanly strong and durable, and those patients who try to fight it off suffer horrendous injuries which are duly healed when the Crawler pins them down. A conscious patient operated on without anaesthetic in this way suffers D3/D10 San loss as the Crawler slices them apart with monstrous efficiency. The Crawler reassembles its patients so they fit together better than before, and in this way the Crawler heals the physical injuries of its patients (including the ones it inflicts itself).

Dr Olrenshaw uses the Crawler on patients who have severe traumatic injuries. The Crawler rarely fails to put such patients back together again but leaves obvious and horrible scars that Olrenshaw repairs using the Web Room. The Crawler could also be used as a very, very effective torture device and, if Olrenshaw ever works out how to modify its behaviour, as an exceptional assassin.

The final room is Olrenshaw's office. He has made this windowless concrete room as close as possible to the handsome office of the wealthy doctor he pretends to be, with pictures on the walls, a massive mahogany desk, bookshelves, and leather upholstered chairs for visitors to sit in. It is here that he begins the consultations for the patients he intends to treat with the alien technology. The cabinets and desk drawers contain many medical implements – earthly and alien – with which he conducts initial examinations as well as drugging or restraining patients who are about to undergo particularly distressing treatments.

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Olnrenshaw is still a con man and has the capacity to track many different scams in his head without leaving a paper trail – this means there is no convenient laptop computer or filing cabinet in his office with details of all his patients. The best source of information by far is Olnrenshaw himself.

### L’Gh’rxian Spaceship

The spacecraft used by the being from L’Gh’rx to travel to Earth is based off the same principles as the temple-ships of the Shan, utilising non-Euclidean geometry to manipulate spacetime around it and so travel great distances very quickly. It is, however, far less sophisticated and efficient than the spacecraft of the Shan, explaining why it crash-landed on Earth. The Being originally intended to fly to Mercury and then visit each of the Solar System’s planets in turn, eventually returning to L’Gh’rx at the head of an army of followers singing the praises of its heretical religion. Its ship, however, was too inefficient to make the original journey and crashed into Earth instead, forcing the Being to rethink its plans.

The ship is a roughly wedge-shaped construction, about sixty metres long, that appears to be made of dull matt grey metal. This material, however, has some give in it, a bit like hard rubber. The ship is actually made of an organic substance which bears some resemblance at a chemical level to living flesh – the various items Olnrenshaw uses for treating patients were originally made to repair this substance (but the ship was too badly damaged for even this technology to make it spaceworthy again). Its shape could once be altered by nerve-like filaments that sent impulses through the body of the ship, but the controls of the ship are damaged and the ship is now inert.

The ship is well hidden by the dense woodland on the lake shore. The impact half-buried it in the ground and the trees have long since grown back over the impact site so that although very large, the ship is difficult to spot (including from the air) unless you’re right on top of it. There is one way into the ship through a hatch on the upper surface, but this must be forced open with considerable effort. Inside the ship is damp and smells of mould. Its surfaces are rotten and spongy, and some parts recoil from the touch. Everything in the ship has been removed by Olnrenshaw, leaving only a cramped cavity like the inside of a cancerous organ.

### The Cave of the Being

A large natural cave on the edge of Lake Tharn forms the home of the Being. The cave entrance itself is difficult to get to, requiring a long cold wade (or a boat) to reach it from the lake and a short but difficult rock climb from above. Olnrenshaw keeps a small rowboat hidden in foliage on a more accessible stretch of the shore so he can reach the cave easily and converse with the Being.

The cave is cold and dank, not that the Being seems to mind. The Being is immensely patient and evidently does not feel boredom, so it has not resorted to decoration as such. Its unusual form of comprehending the written word, however, has led to it papering the walls with pages from the occult tomes brought to it by Olnrenshaw’s



network. Every inch of the walls and ceiling of the cave are covered in pages from books, many of them cut out of rare and valuable tomes. These pages are pinned to the walls by diamond-hard shards flaked off the Being's metallic form, and anyone who managed to collect them all could put them together into several Mythos-related texts. The Being pins them up in this way because it cannot read as such – instead, it surrounds itself with pages and absorbs their knowledge with its whole body, like a plant absorbing sunlight. This is how the Being spends most of its time, slowly revolving in the centre of the room, drinking blasphemous knowledge from the walls.

Two piles of books – one of tomes the Being has not yet started on, the other a sad heap of gutted spines – lie on the floor. At any time there are a few intact books (maybe D4+2) with some Mythos or occult relevance, of which most are monetarily valuable. These will usually be relatively minor Mythos texts – the Being cannibalises and 'reads' more important documents at once. The Being has yet to absorb the knowledge from the most monstrous of Mythos tomes (including the Necronomicon) since Olrenshaw's network has yet to find such books. It is important to note that since the Being's method of 'reading' does not rely on comprehending any particular human language, the tomes in its cave are in many different languages.

#### Olrenshaw's House

Olrenshaw has the home he dreamed of as a small-time New York conman. He could never have scammed enough money to afford it before, but now the money he demands for his treatments have enabled him to finally build the home he thinks the world owes him.

Olrenshaw is aware that he does not have very good taste so he frequently brings in interior designers to ensure everything is cutting-edge. The house itself is achingly hip, all strange angles and timber with plenty of glass. Olrenshaw updates his home frequently so the interior often changes, but chrome, polished granite and marble usually abound. Olrenshaw does not scrimp on entertainment so a full home cinema setup and lightning-fast personal computer are always present.

Olrenshaw keeps his home tidy. Should he invite anyone there he will insist on them being as fastidious as him – now he has a home that accurately reflects his perception of his own importance, he doesn't want anyone messing it up. The house has plenty to steal but little in the way of actual evidence for investigators. There may occasionally be a neatly-wrapped Mythos tome, freshly delivered by one of Olrenshaw's network, on the dining room table or breakfast bar – other than that Olrenshaw is too accomplished a conman to leave incriminating paperwork lying around.

#### Olrenshaw's Network

Dr. Olrenshaw can call upon a large and influential group of people. These are not cultists or followers, or even people in Olrenshaw's employ. Instead, they are Olrenshaw's terminally ill patients who owe him their lives, and Olrenshaw intends to make them all pay their due.

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Dr Olrenshaw can cure just about any illness and most injuries, no matter how severe. He charges an appropriately outlandish amount for this – Olrenshaw carries out a simple background check on prospective patients and anyone obviously too poor to pay will not be given an appointment. How the patients react to the alien technology beneath the Clinic varies – what does not vary is that following treatment their symptoms are alleviated and their impending deaths are postponed.

After a few months, however, their symptoms return. They inevitably contact Dr Olrenshaw again, who tells them that further treatments are required. He is not willing to accept simple money for this service, however. From now on he will be paid in favours, which he can ‘cash in’ at any time. This is an obligation from which the patient will never be free as long as they want to keep on living.

Olrenshaw therefore has a network of current patients, who do whatever he asks in return for repeated treatments to keep them alive. Some of his patients refuse to accept his deal – these stubborn men and women all die quickly, often with symptoms that appear unusually rapid and aggressive in their onset. Others try to blackmail Olrenshaw, threatening to tell whatever authority will listen about Olrenshaw’s activities unless they receive continued treatment for free. These upstarts are usually dealt with by more pragmatic patients who have no compunction about bumping off another rich sick person (or, more commonly, having them killed by someone who needs the money). While Olrenshaw’s network is formed by mostly unwilling conspirators, once they are facing inevitable suffering and death they often swallow their pride and agree to whatever Olrenshaw asks.

The members of the network are scattered all over the US and many are from abroad. Few of them know of any other members, although most suspect there are more. Their only contact is with Olrenshaw, who very rarely contacts them directly except to demand a favour and administer treatments. Individual members of the network are therefore of limited use in tracking down other members, except for direct contact with Olrenshaw and the Clinic for treatment.

The most common ‘favours’ Olrenshaw extorts from the network involve acquiring occult knowledge. This is at the instigation of the Being, who wants enough Mythos and magical knowledge to contact L’gh’rx and spread its heretical views amongst the creatures of its homeworld. The wealth and prominence of the network members assist in this no end. Some members are good only for their money, and are instructed by Olrenshaw to buy occult volumes at auction or offer fantastic amounts for books in private collections. Others have more subtle uses, such as those with connections to museums or academia, or who own assets that can transport rare and often stolen material to Hunting Falls. Other members might be involved in organised crime or government, both being useful to help other network members or hinder anyone who gets in the network’s way – such as investigators trying to get a handle on what looks from the outside like a shadowy conclave of rich occultists.



Only Olrenshaw knows who all the various network members are and what they are up to. He does not have this information written down anywhere – he is still an accomplished conman and knows that the only safe place to write down the details of all his scams is in his head. Olrenshaw is not supernaturally resilient or otherwise superhuman, and is susceptible to torture and interrogation like anyone else (although he is probably more resistant than most due to his admiration for the Being and his dream of becoming the bridge between man and alien). Such interrogation is probably the only way investigators will be able to understand the scale and nature of Olrenshaw’s operation.

**Important People**

**Dr Aloysius Olrenshaw**



Intelligent and persuasive, Olrenshaw is an accomplished con man now in thrall to the Being from L’Gh’rx. Olrenshaw is quite tall and goes to considerable efforts to look handsome and rich. His slicked-back dark hair and well cared-for skin mean he would look at home on daytime TV doling out medical advice to besotted housewives – he takes care to look old enough to be a wealthy professional but young enough to be attractive.

‘Dr’ Olrenshaw’s medical credentials are completely false but he has a practiced air of competence. Good judges of character will see that Dr Olrenshaw radiates insincerity. Everyone else will see a good-looking and successful man.

**STR 10      CON 11      SIZ 11      INT 16      POW 12**

**DEX 14      APP 15      EDU 13      SAN 0      HP 11**

**Damage Bonus: +0**

**Weapons:**    Hypodermic Syringe 55% (1+whatever is in the syringe)

**Skills:** Bargain 50%, Computer Use 20%, Credit Rating 70%, Cthulhu Mythos 5%, Fast Talk 93%, Hide 25%, Law 20%, Locksmith 30%, Medicine 10%, Occult 15%, Perform Scam 55%, Pharmacy 5%, Psychology 60%, Sneak 35%.

**Marjorie**



Marjorie is the receptionist for the clinic. She is a small, slightly rodentine lady, around 30, with a sweet smile, thick glasses and rather frizzy blonde hair tied into a disobedient plait.

Marjorie is also the result of Olrenshaw's early experimentation with the medical technology supplied by the Being. When threatened, her body splits lengthways to reveal a gaping maw crammed with spiny tentacles. At all other times she is accommodating and pleasant as long as she is not forced to converse on subjects she has not been programmed with.



**STR** 20      **CON** 25      **SIZ** 14  
**INT** 10      **POW** 10  
**DEX** 18      **APP** 10      **EDU** 3  
**SAN** -      **HP** 19  
**Damage Bonus:** +1D6

**Weapons:** Spiked Tentacle 65%  
(D8+DB)  
Crushing Maw 35%  
(2D8+DB)

**Skills:** Appear Normal 40%, Climb 60%,  
Jump 70%, Track 70%.

SAN loss to see Marjorie in her monstrous form is 1/D8.

### The Being

A malevolent alien heretic, the Being resembles a cloud of moving metallic cubes, each slightly larger than a human fist, that form shapes and patterns according to its mood. It normally forms a roughly columnal shape about twelve feet high and three feet across. It can detach groups of cubes to pick up or manipulate objects, and individual cubes can change into spheres, pyramids, and other simple geometric shapes. If forced to defend itself, it can attack with individual knife-like



shapes or swirl its whole form around an attacker, crushing and stabbing with all its cubes at once. Even if forced into combat the Being is a very tough creature to kill since every cube must be destroyed.

Cornering it in the cave and then destroying the cave is the best bet, but this will be hard to achieve without sacrificing whoever is assigned to blow it up. Interestingly, though the Being knows scores of spells gleaned from Mythos texts, it can only cast a few of them since it cannot voice the chants or perform the gestures required for most rituals performed by humans.

The Being communicates telepathically, each communication being preceded by a moment of strange noises transmitted directly into the recipient's head as the Being seeks out their native language. This communication is therefore always in the hearer's native tongue. Contact with the Being in this way costs 0/D3 San (in addition to San loss for encountering the Being in the first place).

The Being's goal is to acquire knowledge concerning obscene gods and forbidden magic, and then contact L'gh'rx (Uranus) to kindle greater heresy amongst its people. Should it succeed in both of these, the other Beings from L'gh'rx might be forced to break their taboo on space travel and come to Earth to silence the blasphemer.

**STR** 12      **CON** 25      **SIZ** 25      **INT** 20      **POW** 20

**DEX** 8      **APP** 1      **EDU** 8      **SAN** -      **HP** 50

**Damage Bonus:** +1D6

**Weapons:**    Crush 30% (Damage 2D10+DB)  
                  Slash 70% (Damage D6+DB)

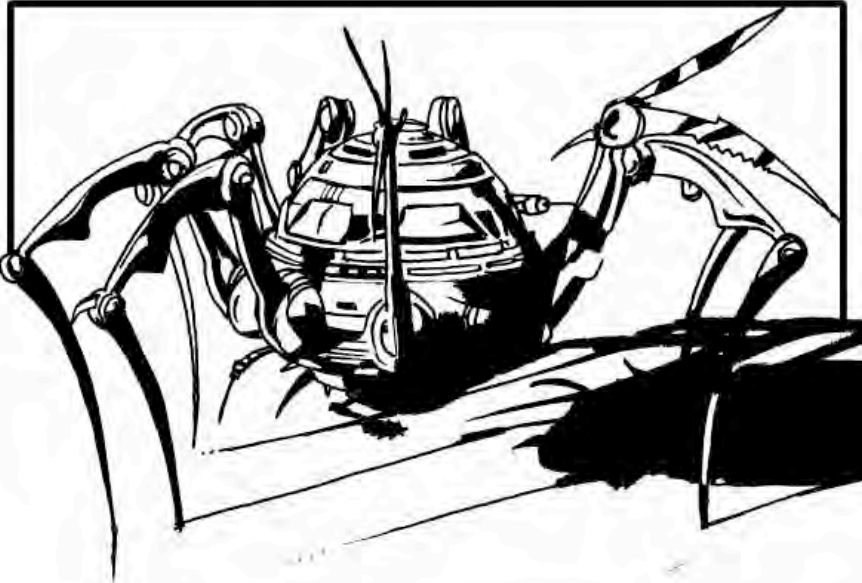
**Spells:** Dream Vision, Contact Shan. The Being knows many more spells but cannot cast them, and could impart many spells to a willing human via telepathy.

**Skills:** Astronomy 80%, Cthulhu Mythos 50%, Occult 60%, Persuade 40%, Telepathic Communication 95%.

SAN loss to see the Being from L'gh'rx is 0/D6.

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## The Crawler



A piece of highly advanced alien technology copied from Shan principles, the Crawler is an ultra-efficient medical device that could double as a torture and/or killing machine. Composed entirely of bladed appendages it scuttles spiderlike along walls and ceilings with frightening speed. Its tactic is always to pin its patients/victims down (often transfixing them to the wall or floor) before heaving itself on top of them and dissecting them with dozens of blades. It is implacable and unreasoning, operating entirely according to basic pre-programmed patterns which cannot be changed (except perhaps by the Being). Any living human which finds itself in a room with the Crawler will be attacked, dissected, and reassembled.

**STR** 19      **CON** 20      **SIZ** 22      **INT** -      **POW** -  
**DEX** 20      **APP** -      **EDU** -      **SAN** 0      **HP** 21  
**Damage Bonus:** +2D6

**Weapons:**    Blade 75% (D6+DB+immobilisation)

**Skills:** Climb 95%, Dissect 100%, First Aid 100%, Heal Lethal Injury 95%, Reassemble 100%.

SAN loss for seeing the Crawler is 0/D6. This does not include SAN loss for being dissected.

## Ambrosio Spinella

An ageing New York Mafia don dying of stomach cancer, Spinella owes his life to the Clinic. In repayment, his men are at Olrenshaw's disposal. They are hunting down





occult books in both America and the ‘old country’, and their activities could attract the attention of authorities, rival families, and nosy investigators.

Spinella was once a tough son of a bitch who was smart enough to come up with the plan and burly enough to carry it out himself. He’s still physically imposing but a lot of that brawn has wasted away and the rest has turned to fat. He always keeps up appearances but he can’t quite hide his thrice-broken nose and small, violent eyes. Spinella hates being beholden to anybody and would have broken every bone in Olrenshaw’s body by now if he didn’t rely on Olrenshaw’s technology to survive. Spinella is a dangerous foe who will protect Olrenshaw and his network down to the last disposable goon, but who might strike a deal with investigators who can help him take

down Olrenshaw and keep the healing technology for himself.

**STR** 10      **CON** 14      **SIZ** 16      **INT** 14      **POW** 11  
**DEX** 9      **APP** 8      **EDU** 14      **SAN** 51      **HP** 15  
**Damage Bonus:** +0

**Weapons:**

.38 Revolver 63% (D10)  
 ‘Little Sophia’ 55% (straight razor, D6+DB)  
 Head Butt 69% (D4+DB)

**Skills:** Accounting (Creative) 29%, Bargain 55%, Conceal 30%, Credit Rating 55%, Drive Auto 30%, Fast Talk 55%, Law 45%, Locksmith 30%, Other Language (Italian – Sicilian Dialect) 69%, Persuade 15%, Psychology 25%, Run Rackets 55%

Michael & Portia Collingwood



Michael and Portia were until a short while ago a well-off and slightly smug couple living in a handsome Boston townhouse with their six year old daughter Olivia. Michael's thinning hair, glasses and businesslike demeanour were perfectly at home amongst his lawyer colleagues while Portia had settled into the role of blonde, fashionable trophy wife with ease. But now they are a little more hollow-eyed and ragged. Neither gets enough sleep and Michael is working the shortest hours he can get away with to be with his ailing daughter. They are getting slowly more and more desperate – it started when Olivia was diagnosed with a terminal illness, but it got much, much worse when her illness became something else entirely.



Michael and Portia's daughter Olivia was dying of leukaemia when they brought her to the Clinic. Olivia is still alive but the treatment administered by Olrenshaw went wrong somehow, causing little Olivia to develop more and more sanity-draining deformities. Michael went to the clinic to remonstrate with Olrenshaw but was chased away by a hideous tentacled thing that was patrolling the grounds. The couple are now looking for someone willing to check out Olrenshaw and the Clinic, bring back some answers, and find out what is happening to their daughter.

#### Michael

**STR** 9      **CON** 11      **SIZ** 10      **INT** 15      **POW** 12

**DEX** 10      **APP** 13      **EDU** 17      **SAN** 57      **HP** 10

**Damage Bonus:** +0

**Weapons:** .22 handgun 26% (1D6, normally kept in a lock box at home)

**Skills:** Accounting 49%, Computer Use 41%, Credit Rating 69%, Drive Auto 23%, Law 81%, Library Use 43%, Other Language (Latin) 22%, Psychology 22%.

#### Portia

**STR** 10      **CON** 12      **SIZ** 9      **INT** 12      **POW** 9

**DEX** 13      **APP** 16      **EDU** 12      **SAN** 42      **HP** 10

**Damage Bonus:** +0

**Weapons:** All weapons at base chances.

**Skills:** Art (Singing) 33%, Conceal 26%, Dodge 34%, Drive Auto 25%, Fast Talk 19%, Persuade 29%, Psychology 31%, Sneak 26%.

**Plot Hooks**

- The wealthy individual sponsoring the investigators, or a particularly wealthy investigator, is diagnosed with a terminal illness. They hear tell of an exclusive clinic which can cure any illness, for a very high price. An appointment with Dr Olrenshaw is duly booked...

- Someone is buying up occult knowledge at a prodigious rate. A particularly dangerous book is snapped up at auction and the investigators have to make sure it is not going into the wrong hands. The shadowy occult network hinted at by the first few investigations is just the beginning of a journey that ends with a showdown against the blasphemous alien menace.

- An observatory notices a major impact or explosion on the planet Uranus. A few weeks later a meteor smacks into New York State, reducing a community to ash. The L'gh'rxians have discovered the heresies of the Being at Lake Tharn and are trying to destroy it by flinging chunks of their planet's core at Earth. The first shot missed, but there are more on the way unless someone can work out what is going on and destroy the Clinic and the Being with enough certainty to satisfy the watching L'gh'rxian elders.

- An ageing and wealthy industrialist explodes at a society function, killing several prominent businessmen with flying shards of bone. The industrialist was recently treated at an exclusive clinic near New York, and amongst the dead is someone who was on the verge of exposing the clinic and its sinister dealings. Can the investigators find the connection before more of the Clinic's patients are turned into living weapons to keep Olrenshaw's secrets safe?

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## **THE SUFFERERS' GUILD**

The Mythos is many things. It is a collection of gods and monsters. A state of mind. A theory of the truths behind the cosmos. A result of the hysteria that occurs when the human psyche is exposed to the true magnitude of the universe. But there is one factor that unites every encounter with the Mythos, no matter how severe it might be or what form it might take. That factor is suffering.

Every single human who has encountered the Mythos had suffered from the exposure. Even the most powerful sorcerers who seem to have succeeded in bargaining with Mythos powers are, ultimately, damned, and will suffer more than anyone when their time comes. Most are victims not of the Mythos itself – the gods and even monsters of the Mythos would rather just ignore mankind entirely than waste precious time and energy tormenting them – but of other humans, of people who have learned fell magic, made pacts to bring horrible creatures onto Earth, or simply gone violently mad.

Some of the victims of these people die, or course, or are driven irreparably insane. Most try to forget what they have seen and live normal lives, hoping they will never have to go through anything like that again. But some want revenge. And a very few come to hear of the Sufferers' Guild, a group that will help them get their revenge – for a terrible price that, nonetheless, some are prepared to pay.

### **Born From Betrayal**

The Sufferers' Guild has two founders. The first is a woman named Juliet McGowes, once a member of a cult which preached personal enlightenment and spiritual completeness from its small fortified compound in Texas. The Congregation of the New Understanding was considered a largely insignificant and mostly harmless cult – while its members changed from normal men and women to devoted followers of a cod new-age philosophy and cut all ties with family and friends, the cult did not seem to be fleecing its members financially or indulging in suspicious activities. Its members seemed to be well-cared for, including the children. The families of members complained that their loved ones were being brainwashed but ultimately the Congregation was protected by a constitutional right to religious freedom and since it did not seem to be forcing anyone to do anything the authorities mostly left it alone.

Juliet McGowes was a minor initiate of the cult, having given up her job as a schoolteacher to live a communal life of contemplation and philosophy at the Congregation's compound. She was there when the High Realiser of the Congregation, the highly charismatic Victor Szrbac, used the collected willpower of the Congregation to bring forth the entity he called the 'First Understander'. This was the being who, through comprehension of the cosmos, made the physical and spiritual worlds come into being. The being was known by many other names to many other occultists, but it was perhaps properly known as Yog-Sothoth, the Key and the Gate, the All In One, a monstrosly powerful Outer God who was angered at being forced to partially manifest at the Congregation's compound and proceeded to lay waste to





it. There were two survivors of the carnage which saw the compound reduced to a faintly radioactive crater – Szrback, who used magic to flee the scene, and Juliet McGowes, who was spared death by sheer good fortune. She realised that Szrback was an accomplished sorcerer who had used the members of the Congregation solely to fuel the summoning, hoping to bargain with Yog-Sothoth for yet more magical power. And though the Congregation was gone and everything she had believed for the last few years was a complete lie, she also had a new purpose in life. She wanted revenge.

The second founder is an ex-cop, Martin Fortman. During Fortman's days as a detective in the Chicago police department he was driven half-crazy pursuing a killer motivated by the occult, who murdered randomly-selected victims to harvest body parts which were later used in spells. Fortman was the only one who believed that the seemingly unconnected killings were the work of one individual, and it was him alone who traced the deaths to Verity Caspian, the owner of a small second-hand bookstore. Fortman couldn't get an arrest warrant for Caspian and it was being prevented from bringing her to justice that finally made him snap. The occult murders had driven him to the edge and Fortman finally went over it, nearly killing his precinct captain and being sent to a psychiatric care facility. With his job gone and his mind barely healed, Fortman decided that he didn't have a great deal to live with any more – so he decided to screw the law and kill Verity Caspian.

Fortman and McGowes met in the same treatment centre in Illinois, where McGowes had returned to be with her family and Fortman was surviving on a disability pension. They were both in counselling for their traumatic experiences, but were unable to tell the doctors or their fellow patients of the occult experiences that had driven them over the edge. They found that they could tell one another, and the two realised that not only had they found someone else who would understand, but they could actually help one another fulfil their need for payback against the dark forces of the world. They made a pact – they would get their revenge by swapping victims. McGowes would kill Verity Caspian, the multiple murderer in Chicago. Fortman would kill Victor Szrback, cult sorcerer and devotee of Yog-Sothoth. They would be unconnected to the crime, and their victims wouldn't suspect their would-be killers. It was the best chance they had. McGowes and Fortman sealed their pact and went their separate ways to hunt down the monster from one another's past.

McGowes was successful. She broke into Verity Caspian's shop and burned it to the ground – Caspian was trapped in the apartment above and burned to death in the inferno. As McGowes watched the building burn she was sure she could see dark, batlike shapes flitting off through the smoke and flames as the shelves of rare books burned.

Fortman, however, was less successful. He tracked Victor Szrback from Texas all the way across the US, and each time he thought he had cornered him he would find just the remnants of another cult or evidence of summonings and rituals that hinted at immense power. Through the books and remains Szrback left behind, Fortman came

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to understand a little about the gods and monsters that lived beyond human comprehension, and which could be summoned or called upon by powerful sorcerers and their magic. Believing that the best way to fight fire was with fire, Fortman studied some of the texts and interrogated some of the survivors of Szrback's cults, eventually learning a little magic of his own. But try as he might he couldn't drive Szrback into a corner and eventually the sorcerer's trail went cold. Fortman guessed that Szrback had gone abroad, probably to Europe, and contacted McGowes to tell her that he had failed.

McGowes knew what a dangerous opponent Szrback was and what a difficult man he would be to kill. If Fortman could not kill him, perhaps there was someone else out there who could. Someone who wanted another person dead. In fact, there were a lot of victims, and a lot of Mythos-inspired bastards who deserved to die. Why not give the victims a chance for revenge, just like McGowes and Fortman had given themselves?

So was the Sufferers' Guild born.

### **Vengeance Incorporated**

If you are a veteran of the occult and have an inkling of the true power of magic, there is a chance you have heard of the Sufferers' Guild. To the small subsection of society who have heard of them, they are a body of mythical assassins, ready to strike mercilessly against anyone who dabbles a little too far into forbidden secrets. There is only one thing more dangerous than risking their anger, and that is deliberately seeking them out. Because the Sufferers' Guild can rid you of someone who wronged you... but at the price of your soul.

The truth about the Sufferers' Guild is actually quite close to the whisperings between occult adepts. The Guild is a self-sustaining organisation linked by obligation and revenge. Its members have very little to do with one another and would never recognise another member if they saw one in the street – they all act as individuals, their only contact with the Sufferers' Guild being a brief initial meeting with an existing members (who they never see again) and a single telephone call when they least expect it, telling them who to kill.

The first obstacle to joining the Guild is, of course, discovering that it exists. The Guild only makes itself known to those who have suffered some terrible loss or betrayal at the hands of a supernaturally capable opponent such as a sorcerer or a summoner of monsters. Most victims of magic-equipped ne'er-do-wells never know they have been the victim of magic, and many go mad, but some live to tell the tale. Cult survivors, the relatives of sacrificial victims, innocent bystanders caught in some infernal crossfire – when searching for the identity of their enemy and a way to get payback, there is a chance they will hear of the assassins of the Sufferers' Guild. Many – probably the majority – never pursue the Guild. But those that do might hear tales of how a supposedly invincible sorcerer was killed one day by a complete stranger, supposedly in the employ for the Guild. If their case is genuine then they



might even happen across someone who claims they found the Guild and called upon them. Or maybe a member of the Guild will notice someone trying to conduct research into the organisation, and will directly approach the would-be avenger.

However a victim might get in touch with the Guild, the Guild sends someone to meet with them and proposes a deal. The deal is always the same, and is based on the pact struck by Fortman and McGowes. Name the Mythos-inspired enemy who betrayed or hurt you, and the Guild will send someone to kill them – someone just like you, who has a reason to want revenge against a completely different target. The other half of the bargain is that one day you will receive a call from the Guild, telling you who you must kill in return.

You can take the bargain, or leave it. If you take it then perhaps your enemy will be killed tomorrow, or next year, or in ten years, or some time in future after you are gone. But, if it is within the Guild's power, they will be killed. And you can be absolutely certain that there will be a phone call in the middle of the night giving you the name, address and description of a person you have never met, and you will be expected to kill that person. There are no exceptions or variations. Whether you are a cop, criminal, soccermom, businessman, hobo, occultist or college kid, you will kill when the time comes. That is the deal. Take it or leave it.

### **The Unavenged**

Those who have accepted the Guild's bargain are only human. Some of their targets are not. It is possible that a Guild member cannot perform the assassination the Guild requires of them – the enemy is too powerful for them to destroy, or they simply escape the Guild assassin and cannot be found. It is relatively rare that a Guild member fails to fulfil their obligation, since the Guild expects its members to succeed or die in the attempt. But it is nevertheless true that a target might prove beyond a particular member.

When this happens, the obligation does not go away. It just changes into to something else. The Guild member becomes one of the Unavenged, a small body of men and women who perform tasks for the Guild other than killing. For instance, the stranger who offers you the original deal is one of the Unavenged. Similarly, the person who calls you up when you least expect it is an Unavenged. Martin Fortman became the first of the Unavenged when he failed to kill Victor Szrbach. Fortman normally works towards another of the Unavenged's duties – protecting the Guild itself. Some occultists would dearly love to unlock the secrets of the mysterious Guild, and it is Fortman's job to co-ordinate the Unavenged in seeing off these threats. Anyone investigating the Sufferers' Guild will have to brave the honour-bound ferocity of the Unavenged if they are to get close to the truth.

It is sometimes the case that while serving as an Unavenged, a failed assassin might acquire new occult and magical knowledge that makes them able to take on their

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original target again, or perhaps their target surfaces again after disappearing. If this happens, the Guild will call on them once more and if they kill their target they are free of the obligations of the Unavenged. If this does not happen – and it very rarely does – then the only way out is death.

The Sufferers' Guild makes it very clear what it wants from those who take its bargain. No member is ever in any doubt of what they will eventually have to do. But nevertheless, sometimes people lose their nerve. Some cannot stomach the idea of killing someone. Others decide they cannot possibly take on their target without suffering a fate worse than death. A few decide that no-one has a right to demand they kill another human being, regardless of what they owe the Guild. These people break the deal the Guild offers them, and for such people there is only one fate. They are immediately added to the Hit List.

### **The Hit List**

At the heart of the Sufferers' Guild is the Hit List. This is a database of all the targets the Sufferers' Guild has been asked to kill, along with the names of those who have accepted the deal and later broken it. When a target is killed it is removed from the list. Anyone on the list is fair game, and any one could be next – none can be taken off while they are still alive.

Since every new member brings in a new target, but not every member succeeds in killing the target they are later given, the Hit List is gradually growing longer. A few names have been the subject of repeated assassination attempts. But there remains a chance that a future member will possess the necessary skills to kill them, and so these long-standing names stay on the list. The very first name on the list was, of course, Victor Szrbac – and he is still there, waiting for someone with the know-how to kill him. The longer-standing part of the list is a 'who's who' of nefarious sorcerers and bargainers with foul gods, and none who know of the list are in any doubt that they will continue to plague the victims of the world for a long time to come. It is possible that one day the Guild will organise a mission of the Unavenged to hunt down and kill one or more of these veteran targets, thus killing a target outside the normal mechanism of the Guild, but this could put the whole Guild's operation at risk so it has not been tried yet.

The hit list would be an immensely valuable document to anyone with occult aspirations. It gives the names and known details of dozens of sorcerers, cult leaders, and assorted monstrous worshippers of darkness. It is a window, albeit vague and incomplete, into the world of madmen and occultists that festers just beneath the surface of civilisation. The list, of course, does not include a fraction of the people who are doing dark, forbidden things in the hidden corners of the world, but a ruthless occultist could still use it to forge unprecedented contacts within the magically-aware population of the world. It could be the key to creating an occult brotherhood of truly terrible power. There is almost literally nothing the Unavenged won't do to stop that from happening.



### **Investigating the Sufferers' Guild**

The Guild could be as much an ally as an enemy. The most obvious way for investigators to come into contact with the Guild would probably be for them to investigate a murder committed by a Guild member. Instead of the victim being innocent, the investigators could discover that they are actually a degenerate Mythos-worshipping monster, and that the killer seemingly had nothing to do with them.

Another possibility is, of course, for an investigator to call upon the Sufferers' Guild to kill an enemy he or the other investigators have made. This would be a good way out if they have failed to get rid of the enemy in the past, but there is no guarantee the Guild will have a member able to kill the enemy. More importantly, the investigators have now tied themselves into a debt that will sooner or later see them given a target they themselves have to kill. They might not like what they have to do – the Sufferers' Guild is sometimes called upon to kill someone that an outsider would see as a good and kind person. But the Guild does not accept excuses and the investigators must either murder their target, or be added to the Guild's Hit List. And they will be under no illusions that they can only get off that list by dying.

This last eventuality hints at a further use for the Sufferers' Guild. During their careers, investigators often acquire magical and Mythos-related knowledge, and sometimes use that knowledge to fight or kill other people. Investigators usually don't kill unless they think they are doing the right thing, but of course knowledge of the Mythos always, always brings corruption. Investigators who use magic or other Mythos knowledge to inflict suffering on someone could well create a victim who has a legitimate reason to want them dead. That cult leader might have had a family, or that innocent bystander might be horribly traumatised by what he witnessed the investigators doing. In this way the Sufferers Guild could be called upon to kill one or more of the investigators. The Guild is a way of forcing investigators to take responsibility for their actions, compelling them to understand that they have driven someone to want them dead and caused the Guild to be convinced that they are bad guys tainted by the supernatural. The investigators will not just have to fend off strangers who suddenly try to kill them – they must also face the reality of what they have done to deserve it.

### **Important Individuals**

Juliet McGowes, Spirit of the Sufferers' Guild



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Juliet was a sensitive, kind woman before the Congregation of New Understanding found her and turned her into a brainwashed zombie. After the carnage in Texas in which she witnessed the manifestation of Yog-Sothoth, Juliet isn't quite that sweet, understanding person any more. She is still deeply compassionate, softly-spoken and approachable, but now she feels the pain of victims of the Mythos all over the world who have no recourse for justice and no-one to speak for them. Beneath the surface Juliet has absolute hatred for those who seek out the occult for personal gain. She is not violent or aggressive, and most people who know her

would never believe she has the capacity to kill. But underneath her everyday persona, deep down where she can control it, Juliet McGowes is motivated by hate.

McGowes' role in the Sufferers' Guild is to maintain the hit list and match up new members with targets. She is the heart and soul of the Guild, and if she was gone then it is uncertain whether the Guild could continue to exist. In her early forties and still an attractive woman, Juliet lives with her family in the suburbs of Chicago and looks more like a soccer mom than an avenger battling the darkness. If anyone was to hurt her, the whole Guild would mobilise to extract vengeance.

**STR** 8      **CON** 9      **SIZ** 9      **INT** 15      **POW** 17

**DEX** 10      **APP** 15      **EDU** 14      **SAN** 61      **HP** 9

**Damage Bonus:** +0

**Weapons:** .22 Automatic Pistol 32% (1D6)

**Skills:** Art (painting) 17%, Computer Use 21%, Conceal 30%, Credit Rating 39%, Cthulhu Mythos 11%, Drive Auto 23%, History 51%, Law 27%, Occult 12%, Persuade 39%, Psychology 45%.

Martin Fortman, First of the Unavenged





When Fortman was a cop, he was built like football player and could body-check the biggest drug-addled fugitive into submission. But he's not a cop any more and the muscle has turned to fat. Approaching his fifties, Fortman is still a physically formidable man, but his receding hairline and spreading stomach suggest he's on borrowed time as far as the ass-kicking goes. He is short-tempered and bitter, and alienates people with his low opinion of the human race in general.

Fortman is driven on by his failure to kill Victor Szrback. He made a pledge to Juliet McGowes, the person who he respects more than any other. But he couldn't keep that pledge, and he won't rest until he has atoned. Fortman is in charge of the Unavenged, and schools them well in the inflexibility and capacity for sacrifice that the role requires. Fortman himself will go further than perhaps any of the Unavenged are willing to go, and this includes the use of some minor magic he has learned while trailing Szrback. Somewhere beneath the moral exhaustion and self-loathing Martin Fortman is deeply, eternally in love with Juliet McGowes and will kill, die, and come back from the dead to protect her.

**STR** 15    **CON** 16    **SIZ** 15    **INT** 11    **POW** 11  
**DEX** 10    **APP** 9    **EDU** 13    **SAN** 41    **HP** 15  
**Damage Bonus:** +1D4

**Weapons:**    Fist/Punch 71% (D3+DB)  
                   .38 Revolver 63% (D10)  
                   Grapple 39% (special)  
                   Nightstick 66% (D6+DB)

**Spells:** Eibon's Wheel of Mist, Evil Eye, Red Sign of Shudde M'Ell.

**Skills:** Apply Handcuffs 77%, Bargain 22%, Computer Use 11%, Conceal 29%, Cthulhu Mythos 7%, Drive Auto 63%, First Aid 45%, Law 39%, Locksmith 22%, Psychology 33%, Take No Crap 88%, Throw 39%.



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### Brian Adolpho, Waiting for the Call

Brian was a software engineer who lived off takeaway pizza and watched DVDs in the evenings. He played computer games, watched basketball and hung out with friends from college on the weekends. He still does all those things, but now he does them knowing that one day he won't be a software engineer any more, he'll be a murderer.

Brian's sister, Clara, was a student at a small east coast university studying archaeology. She brought something back from one of their digs to study at home and Brian saw it once – a small statue of a squat winged creature with tentacles where its face should have been. Brian doesn't know what it was or where it came from but he is absolutely certain that it was the statue that drove Clara insane.



Brian visits Clara occasionally but she doesn't recognise him, and she spends hours on end curled up in the corner of her room saying things in a language no-one else understands. Clara was smart, pretty and cool. Brian wanted revenge for what happened to her. The Guild found him through a combination of internet rants he posted and clumsy attempts to hunt down occult texts at Clara's old university. He told the Unavenged who came to visit him that he wanted Clara's old archaeology professor dead. They explained the Guild's deal, and Brian took it.

Brian is just another late twenties computer geek. He had a nervous laugh and an aversion to crowds before he ever heard of the Guild, and only his buddies who know him well think there is something subtly different about him now. Brian is acutely aware that he has never really been tested, and is determined not to wuss out when he gets that call telling him who he has to kill. Clara deserved better than what she got, and if this is what he's got to do to make it right, then he'll do it, no matter what.

**STR 9          CON 8          SIZ 12          INT 16          POW 11**  
**DEX 9          APP 11          EDU 19          SAN 55          HP 10**  
**Damage Bonus: +0**

**Weapons:** All weapons at base chances.

**Skills:** Accounting 12%, Computer Use 83%, Electronics 57%, Fast Talk 33%, Library Use 49%, Spot Hidden 45%

Victor Szrback, Cultist of Yog-Sothoth and First on the List

Dark-eyed, handsome and almost supernaturally charismatic, Victor Szrback has opted out of the human race. He has found something better than morality, camaraderie, riches, idealism or any of the other things that motivate everyone else. He has found the Key and the Gate, the All In One, the being who dwells beyond space and time and will teach him how to expand his consciousness and leave the useless cage of his body behind. This is what Szrback wants – to be superior in every way to anyone who has ever lived, through the revelation of Yog-Sothoth.

Szrback's past is such a complicated mess of magic, occultism, secrets and lies that even he can't piece it together any more. He drifts from



place to place, always seeming confident and charming, and starts a religious movement that soon gathers dozens of followers thanks to his immense charisma. He uses the worshippers he has gathered to harvest magical power and contact Yog-Sothoth one again. Each time he gets closer to becoming one with the god, each time understands more about what he has to do to become a god himself. He has started and betrayed so many fringe religious groups that they have begun to run together in his memory, one procession of hapless, doomed people with minds too small to call human. Szrback has absolutely no remaining concept of other peoples' humanity, and considers the human race as fuel for his aspirations. He knows many spells and is more than willing to kill anyone, including bystanders, to defend himself.

Szrback is slim and handsome, and though getting quite old his looks improve with age. His appearance and name suggest central European or Balkan ancestry, but he can't remember where he came from or whether his name is really his. His past doesn't matter, because Yog-Sothoth is coterminous with all space and time and one day Victor will be, too.

**STR** 11      **CON** 14      **SIZ** 10      **INT** 16      **POW** 21

**DEX** 13      **APP** 15      **EDU** 15      **SAN** -      **HP** 12

**Damage Bonus:** +0

**Attacks:**      Sacrificial Knife 71% (D6+DB)

**Spells:** Contact Yog-Sothoth, Call Yog-Sothoth, Flesh Ward, Implant Fear, Gray Binding, Pipes of Madness, Levitate, Summon/Bind Servitor of the Outer Gods, Wither Limb.

**Skills:** Anthropology 21%, Art (oratory) 55%, Conceal 33%, Credit Rating 55%, Cthulhu Mythos 45%, Disguise 57%, Fast Talk 73%, History 60%, Law 30%, Occult 66%, Other Language (Latin) 51%, Other Language (Ancient Greek 41%, Other Language (R'lyeh) 11%, Persuade 84%, Psychology 66%, Sneak 29%, Spot Hidden 56%.

### **Plot Hooks**

- Brian Adolpho succeeds in fulfilling his oath to the Sufferers' Guild. He is captured and arrested for murder, but Mythos-related paraphernalia at the victim's house and Adolpho's apparent lack of motive bring the investigators onto the case. Can Adolpho evade their attempts to find out the truth from him, or will the Unavenged have to silence Adolpho before the investigators discover the existence of the Sufferers' Guild?

- After a long and costly campaign, a band of investigators finally close in on the big villain of the piece (perhaps Victor Szrback). At the last moment an assassin from the Sufferers' Guild swoops in and kills the villain, leaving the investigators perplexed at



this new player in the Mythos game. Will they treat the Guild as enemies or new allies, and will the Guild see them as enough of a threat to put them on the hit list?

- Martin Fortman tracks Victor Szrback to the headquarters of a cult in the investigators' home city. Fortman mobilises the Unavenged along with all the Guild members who have yet to fulfil their oath, and sics them on Szrback's cult in an all-out tit-for-tat terrorist war aimed at smoking out Szrback and killing him. The investigator's first priority is to survive the underground war as the bodies pile up, and then discover who the two opposing sides are and whether they are going to side with either.

THE TRIUMVIRATE

The Triumvirate is a group of three Yithians, aliens whose host bodies live in the distant past but who can transport their minds forward in time to inhabit the bodies of humans. The Triumvirate’s task is to ensure that the Earth becomes habitable for another host species of the Yithians – an insectoid race that requires high levels of radiation to survive. The Triumvirate is therefore actively attempting to hasten nuclear war and the resulting irradiation of the Earth, a goal the completion of which now seems inevitable.

**THE GREAT RACE OF YITH**

*Yithians might appear, by the standards of Mythos-aware races, to be relatively benign. While they can be callous in swapping minds with humans to explore the present-day world, and occasionally murderous in hiding their presence, they normally do not appear to wish humanity any particular harm. They can be actively helpful on the rare occasions when humans make a meaningful stand against the Mythos or hostile alien species. As far as the Mythos goes, humans who encounter them could come to the conclusion that the Yithians are among the good guys.*



Those who know better understand that there are no good guys, or bad guys. The Yithians certainly fit neither description. The goal of the Yithian species as a whole is simple survival. The Yithians inhabit the bodies of other species and the ‘Yithian’ most frequently encountered by humans is the rubbery, conical creature which represents a long-term, stable form of Yithian civilisation. This form is native to Earth from four hundred million to fifty million years before the present day. The Yithians can transport their consciousnesses into the future and they do this with the intention of ensuring that their safety in the far future comes to pass. They will manipulate events and people as much as they have to.

The Yithians often intervene in the affairs of mankind because their long-term future depends on Earth. While this might be comforting in the short-term,

this meddling is really to ensure that Earth eventually becomes habitable by another of the Yithians’ host species, an insect-like species that supplants humans on Earth. These creatures require a high level of radiation to survive, and so as far as the

Yithians are concerned the purpose of humans on Earth is to create these levels of radiation.

Yithians have taken an interest in ensuring that homo sapiens survives relatively intact until they have reached the level of technology where they can successfully irradiate the whole Earth. That point was reached during the Cold War, but something went wrong. The global thermonuclear war which the Yithians were certain would occur did not come to pass. Many Yithians believe this is just another phase of history and that humanity will soon return to a nuclear standoff, but some Yithians do not wish to leave such an important development to chance. They are becoming impatient. They want nuclear war now, before mankind is wiped out by marauding aliens or a manifestation of a Mythos power, leaving the Earth destroyed, infected, or otherwise useless.

The Triumvirate are three such Yithians. They have cast their minds forward to the beginning of the twenty-first century, a time when nuclear weapons are plentiful and many states are unstable and easily manipulated. There will never be a better time, in the past or the future, to trigger a nuclear war. The Triumvirate's goal is to ensure this war begins, and they do not believe in leaving anything to chance.

### THE POWER OF THREE

The three Yithians who make up the Triumvirate are out on their own. They have tired of debating how to make the Yithian future come to pass, and so they have taken matters into their own hands. Since they often have to deal with humans who lack the ability to pronounce their Yithian names, the three have named themselves after the members of the Second Triumvirate who came to power in Rome in 43BC after the death of Caesar - Antony, Lepidus, and Octavian. These three are united in their desire to irradiate the Earth by sparking off a nuclear war between the various human nations, but in their methods and outlook they are markedly different.

The Triumvirate do not live in the same place, as they are well aware of the fragility of their human bodies and wish to minimise their chances of all being exposed and killed at once. Antony lives in a fortified Vermont ranch in the middle of nowhere, Octavian is a long-term patient at a private Parisian hospital, and Lepidus might be anywhere on Earth depending on his whim. Icon International, the mercenary company ultimately owned by Antony, has its headquarters in Johannesburg, South Africa. Moreover the Triumvirate's mercenary concerns are spread all over the world, especially hotspots like Russia, the northern part of Latin America, and most of Africa.

Octavian is the brains of the Triumvirate, keeping abreast of global politics and planning the best ways to start nuclear hostilities. Antony is the soldier, using the extensive connections of his ex-CIA host body to acquire mercenary assets and occasionally taking a personal hand in directing them. Lepidus, meanwhile, is the wild card, a wanderer whose role is to delve into the world's strange and hostile

places in case he turns up something that Octavian's journals and newspapers never hear about. Together they believe they have all the bases covered and that no opportunity for nuclear warmongering will pass them by. The bad news for humankind is that they're probably right.

### OCTAVIAN

Octavian inhabits the body of Elaine Falconier, a French woman with a rare and extreme allergic condition. Since childhood she has lived at the St Augustine hospital in Paris, a small and well-regarded hospital that kept Elaine in complete isolation in a sealed and climate-controlled ward, well away from the thousands of chemicals that caused violent allergic reactions in the young woman. Elaine lived in the hospital for more than thirty years before Octavian, searching for potential host bodies prior to the Triumvirate's first active operations, found her in 1989.

Elaine was a good-humoured and generous woman in spite of her enforced isolation, well loved by the members of her extended family who visited her several times every week. The personality of Octavian could not have been more different. Octavian disliked humankind immensely, seeing them as crude, stupid, repulsive animals arrogant enough to believe they could understand the universe with their laughably primitive 'science'. He avoided human contact at all costs, regarding humans as a mild arachnophobe might regard spiders, and was seeking a body which would facilitate deliberate isolation from other humans. Elaine's situation suited him perfectly – other humans were not permitted to come into physical contact with Elaine, and through her Octavian could have control over which humans he had to deal with. He began by cutting off all contact with Elaine's family, to the great distress of her parents, siblings, nephews and nieces.

Octavian made little attempt to mirror the personality of the middle-aged Elaine. He immediately set about ensuring he was informed of all matters of global politics. 'Elaine' ordered a bewildering array of international newspapers and journals, most of them in languages Elaine Falconier had never learned to read. To the staff of the St Augustine hospital, 'Elaine' had become unfriendly, short-tempered and unreasonable, suddenly resenting any intrusions into her sealed ward where previously she had been good friends with the doctors and nurses who looked after her. Most doctors who continued to examine her now believe that she is suffering from a depressive mental illness caused by her enforced isolation and are always offering her ways to leave her ward and visit friends and family outside the hospital. Octavian, however, allows them to neither examine her mental state nor to get her into the environmental suits that would allow 'Elaine' to leave St Augustine's.

The Triumvirate's activities are project-oriented, and Octavian's role is to come up with new projects. At any one time the Triumvirate might have half a dozen projects active, with several more existing only in Octavian's many notebooks, each project carefully written up from concept to execution details in a handwriting that is definitely not Elaine Falconier's. Octavian keeps tabs on the most promising areas of



the globe, collating thick files of newspaper and magazine cuttings and carefully annotating his piles of journals and books, always on the lookout for new potential hotspots where tensions can boil over into war or nuclear terrorism. Octavian believes that following the 9/11 attacks the world has never boasted such a great array of religious and national tensions, any one of which be prompted into a nuclear flashpoint by the Triumvirate's careful planning and mercenary assets.

Octavian is cold-blooded and determined even when it comes to the lives of other Yithians – he has absolutely no concept of the value of human life, considering humans utterly worthless, rather dull and quite disconcerting to be around. Ultimately Octavian would be willing to die if it meant he could be certain that the Earth would be irradiated. This is not courage or selflessness – Octavian is simply utterly certain that the Yithian future will come to pass, and that any events necessary for this to happen are pre-ordained. If they include his own death, then he will die, and nothing anyone can do will change that. An absolute believer in determinism, Octavian does not believe he or any other creature has free will, and that the existence of the Triumvirate itself is an inevitable product of history. He therefore never considers anything in terms of morality – he is not a good guy and he is not bad, he is just doing what, from a time-travelling point of view, has already happened.

St Augustine's hospital itself is a small building in the suburbs of Paris. Once a rather forbidding nineteenth-century sanitarium it has been considerably renovated and rebuilt. The reception building and staff buildings are modern while the wards themselves are original red brick, high-ceilinged and airy. 'Elaine Falconier' is one of about a dozen long-term residents, of whom two others are extreme allergy sufferers. Elaine's ward consists of a bedroom, a living space, and a bathroom, all multiply sealed from the outside and supplied with carefully purified air and water. Everything is plain and white since Octavian had Elaine's pictures and photographs removed and there are now several piles of newspapers, magazines, cuttings files, journals and notebooks. Octavian greatly resents these being periodically cleared out by hospital staff and jealously guards the more important material – he will react with violent anger to anyone who so much as touches his notebooks. The living space contains a television so Octavian can watch various 24-hour news channels and a large desk where he spends most days reading and working – Elaine was given a laptop computer with internet access so she could remain in constant contact with her family and friends but Octavian does not trust his work to computers and so rarely uses it. There is a telephone in the room which Octavian often uses to speak with the other two Triumvirate members, always taking great care to ensure he is not bugged or overheard.

Octavian is essentially immobile. If he was ever to leave the ward, let alone the hospital, Elaine's body would suffer a violent allergic reaction that would render it disabled in a matter of hours through agonising weeping sores and respiratory distress. Octavian does not believe this makes him vulnerable, however. The apparent innocence of Elaine Falconier, who has no demonstrable connections with mercenaries or international terrorism of any kind, is a better defence than always

being on the move. Should the Triumvirate be compromised it is Octavian who will mostly likely survive, and he is capable of restarting the group's activities given a couple more sympathetic Yithians. Octavian considers himself the leader of the Triumvirate and this is perhaps his principal weakness. He finds it difficult to imagine either Lepidus or Antony could disagree with him, much less turn on him. Antony and Lepidus, however, think they know better than Octavian, and see him as simply doing the preliminary work while they make things happen.

### ANTONY

Lewis Verloni's life before Antony found him is heavily classified. An analyst and then a case handler for the Central Intelligence Agency, he specialised in Latin America where his facility with languages and flair for mollifying suspicious allies set him in good stead. He worked extensively with Colombians on both sides of the conflict between rebels and the government. Although he rarely left the safety of Langley he was responsible for gathering a great deal of valuable intelligence on the conflict, the country's various drugs barons and foreign terrorists who came to the country to be trained and equipped. Verloni helped hunt down a group of right-wing extremists who attended training camps deep in the Colombian jungle, orchestrating a covert airstrike against their camp which wiped out any chance of them beginning their planned bombing attacks against US government buildings.

Antony needed someone with connections. He homed in on the CIA early on and decided Verloni was a good choice - senior but not too senior, competent, connected, and known to many useful people on various sides as a friendly voice on the phone. Antony inhabited Verloni's body early in 1991 and immediately set about getting Verloni fired from his job. After kicking out Verloni's wife from his Virginia home he faked extreme drunkenness and assaulted his immediate superior. When this earned only a severe reprimand he repeated the ruse until Verloni was fired, a month after Antony had taken over his body.

Antony laid low for a few months, then began using Verloni's connections to compile a list of mercenaries. Some groups were professional corporate killers, others were just terrorist groups willing to take on targets only tangentially linked with their goals when some extra cash was involved. Some of these groups included individuals with whom Verloni had had a working relationship, while others were just names given to him by his informants. They all had their uses, and he soon started marrying up names on the list with the projects coming down from Octavian.

Antony knew that he was the most obvious target for anyone who might try to bring down the Triumvirate. He took great care to minimise his contact with the mercenaries he employed, but ultimately he knew that anyone looking high enough up the chain would eventually find Lewis Verloni, ex-CIA and now probably suspected super-terrorist. Antony therefore moved to rural Vermont, bought a parcel of land and built a formidably fortified house. Antony now lives in this miniature fortress miles away from anywhere. The physical and electronic defences are of the





highest order. Training facilities surround the house, where Antony sometimes observes prospective mercenaries to see if they are up to the tasks he sets them. Men from Icon International, the Triumvirate's own mercenary company, guard his home, rotated out of guard duty frequently before they suspect that there is something very, very wrong with 'Mr. Johnson'.

Antony's role is to acquire mercenaries and set them off following the plans Octavian formulates. Antony understands how essential this is to the Triumvirate's goal but he yearns for a greater challenge. His motivation is not determination to secure a Yithian future, but to be the best at what he does. He is not content just to send disposable men off on insane missions, and wants to take a more personal hand in the Triumvirate's military matters. Physical combat is an unfamiliar concept to most Yithians and Antony is fascinated by it. He struggles to understand the principles of physical combat, studying military history and literature to broaden his knowledge. The inside of Antony's fortress home, which is hardly visited by anyone other than Antony himself, is a veritable museum of militaria. All manner of weapons and armour are on display, from antique swords to assault firearms from all over the world, mostly supplied by 'Verloni's' mercenary contacts.

Antony sometimes asks more trustworthy and professional mercenaries to train him, and though he has honed Verloni's body to a state of great fitness he still has difficulty understanding the mechanics of battlefield psychology so essential to warfare. He wants to plan, direct and take direct part in the missions essential to the Triumvirate, but he knows he is not yet ready for war. The truth is his ignorance of human psychology would actually be a benefit, not a drawback – he does not flinch at gunfire or shy away from physical pain, and when pressed would make a merciless and highly deadly opponent. The biggest favour an enemy of the Triumvirate could do Antony would be to physically attack him. Once he experiences mortal combat he will consider himself ready, and will ride into battle along with his mercenaries.

### LEPIDUS

*Octavian is the brains of the outfit, and Antony is the muscle. Lepidus is the imagination. The Triumvirate understand that human politics are bewilderingly complex and fluid, to the extent that the most careful planning can unravel as soon as it comes into contact with these dynamic, self-destructive creatures. To help them cope with the random factors that come into play whenever humans are involved, they have Lepidus. Lepidus has no fixed role, or even fixed body, and is there to arrange things when Octavian and Antony cannot cope.*

*Lepidus is an unusual choice to be trusted with anything as important as the Yithian future. He has little respect for the sort of slow-burning plans the Yithians execute so well, preferring to think on the spot and create a solution from whatever is at hand. Even he sees how important the irradiation of Earth is, however, and shares the concern of other Yithians that the Cold War did not result in the expected nuclear war, so he has thrown his lot in with the Triumvirate. Lepidus' bizarre mode of thinking borders on mental illness by Yithian standards so normally other Yithians*

would not consider working with him. The Triumvirate, however, need his short-term thinking to cope with the ever-changing condition of the human race. Both Antony and Octavian can stomach Lepidus, but they do not like doing it.

Lepidus, as befits his mercurial role, rarely stays in the same host body for long. While Yithian mind transfers are normally long-term, to allow the Yithian to discover more about the human world, Lepidus makes the most of the Triumvirate's connections in the distant past to change human host very frequently. Lepidus almost always travels in the body of a child. Anyone who understands the Yithian method of mind transfer could follow the trail of missing children who later turn up with traumatic memories of a distant, alien past, but Lepidus knows this isn't very likely and is far less of a risk than staying in any one body for too long. Lepidus is better than most Yithians at acting in a relatively human manner, but he cannot hide his natural curiosity and evasiveness. Lepidus understand humans quite well but does not place any particular value on them, and is certainly not above disposing of a host body once its mind has been transferred back to prevent anyone following him.

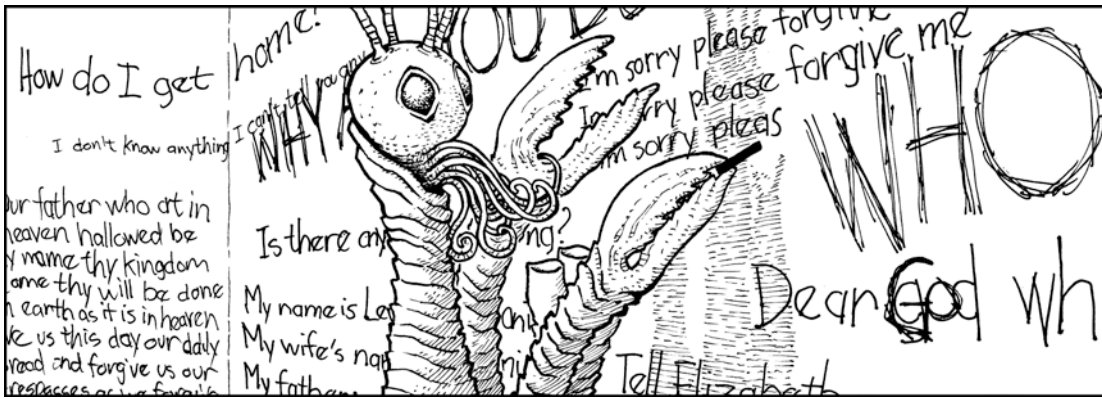
Lepidus might be hunting down a particular mercenary for Octavian one day and staking out a political leader the next. He could be found hiring a professional killer to eliminate a determined investigator, crossing a border in darkness to locate a nuclear facility, or attending school in an unstable country to get a better feel for its politics and society. As the Triumvirate's troubleshooter Lepidus is the most likely first contact for anyone caught up in the Yithians' projects. He is also the primary obstacle for any investigators trying to uncover the Triumvirate and learn the identities of its three controlling aliens. Lepidus will be a creative and implacable opponent in this situation, rarely confronting his opponents directly but acting behind the scenes to bring anything he can down on investigators' heads. This includes everything from local criminals to national and international intelligence agencies.

Antony and Octavian know that Lepidus does not think in the way they understand. But they do not realise quite how un-Yithian Lepidus' thinking really is. Lepidus is quite capable of developing and executing his own projects without the knowledge of the rest of the Triumvirate. If they knew what he was doing, they would quickly have Lepidus' Yithian body executed and use every mercenary at their disposal to hunt down his mind. But Lepidus is confident that, typical Yithians that they are, they will never realise what he is doing to bring about his own brand of nuclear war.

### **THE PAST**

Antony, Octavian and Lepidus are assisted by a small group of Yithians in the distant past. These Yithians' main task is to care for the bodies of the Triumvirate. The conical alien bodies originally used by the members of the Triumvirate are now inhabited by the minds of Elaine Falconier, Lewis Verloni, and whatever terrified child Lepidus has swapped minds with at the moment. The bodies are kept secure, each living in a single floor of the immense cyclopean tower where the Triumvirate is based. The humans who inhabit these bodies have free run of a floor each, never contacting the other inmates and rarely interacting with other Yithians.





*The bodies are kept healthy but the Triumvirate has little regard for the humans' mental health, and all of them suffer greatly from unexplained incarceration in alien bodies on an unknown world. Lewis Verloni is probably irredeemably insane having completely lost his sense of self, and spends all his time ranting at people who aren't there. Elaine Falconier is holding on, but not by much. Her waking moments are haunted by the faces of her friends and family, and while she always accepted her medical condition as bad luck she does not understand why she has been singled out for this horrible existence as an alien prisoner. The children who flit in and out of Lepidus' body endure short, terrifying bafflement, normally for a maximum of a week before they are returned – Lepidus does not let all of them live after they return to their own bodies but those who survive are severely traumatised by their unexplainable memories.*

*The Yithians who support the Triumvirate are willing for their bodies to be used to swap minds with important humans so the humans can be interrogated in the past. It is also possible that one could use a prominent human's body to perform some act vital to one of the Triumvirate's projects (such as taking over a military general's body to gain access to nuclear launch controls). The Triumvirate, however, is loathe to use either of these methods because of the greatly increased chance of being uncovered and jeopardising any future projects. Neither method has yet been used, but there are always Yithians ready to make it happen.*

### ICON INTERNATIONAL

The company Icon International was founded in 1994 by two of Antony's contacts from Verloni's CIA days – Matthais Fortune, a South African businessman who had provided cover for some CIA operations in Africa, and Osip Karpov, an ex-officer in the Russian military who worked as a mercenary 'contract employee' for the CIA in Russia and Central Asia. Icon's headquarters is an office in Johannesburg, South Africa, where Fortune maintains the warren of paperwork that makes it very difficult indeed to find out who is employed by Icon and what manner of work the company actually does.

Icon is officially a political consulting company, but if anyone was to penetrate the misinformation compiled by Fortune they would find out that Icon does not seem to

have any actual clients. It uses only freelance ‘consultants’, and pays them with money extorted from contacts of Antony’s such as Latin American crime barons or terrorist cells who are threatened with exposure or outright attack by mercenaries.

The purpose of Icon is to facilitate the acquisition of mercenaries for the Triumvirate’s projects. Fortune does not know the Triumvirate exists, and thinks the company is probably being controlled by the CIA. Whoever it is that runs the show, they have enough information about Fortune’s shady past as a manufacturer and trader of weapons throughout Africa that they could have him thrown in jail forever if he doesn’t carry on cooking Icon’s books. Karpov, meanwhile, is an operational expert who has conducted deniable military operations for both the Russian government and the CIA – while he knows that Antony (who he has met) is a very strange person he does what he does because he enjoys it and the money is good. Osip often leads mercenary teams recruited through Icon, and has spent stints at Antony’s fortified estate training mercenaries alongside Antony himself.

The Triumvirate consider Icon to be a completely disposable part of their operation. Karpov has built up formidable contacts to rival Lewis Verloni’s and he is a very useful go-between for the Triumvirate to give orders to their mercenaries, but ultimately the Triumvirate could live without Icon if they had to. Should investigators close in on Icon’s operations, the Triumvirate will send Lepidus to kill Matthias Fortune and burn down the Icon offices, then set some of their mercs on Karpov. The Triumvirate’s many projects would be postponed by such an eventuality, but not halted entirely.

### PROJECTS

The projects designed by Octavian are the heart of what the Triumvirate is about. They are all intended to start nuclear confrontation somewhere in the world, ideally a confrontation that will escalate until global irradiation is made inevitable. Each project has a code name taken from a battle from ancient history, and each one is being actively pursued by mercenaries unwittingly taking their orders from the Triumvirate. There are many more projects being pursued, but the following are the ones that are past the planning stage and are currently in operation.

The nations identified by Octavian as possessing nuclear weapons are the USA, Russia, China, the United Kingdom, France, Israel, Pakistan, and India. Octavian is working on the assumption that nuclear weapons are also possessed by North Korea and the Ukraine.

### Actium

The Actium project is intended to inflame tensions between India and Pakistan to the extent that full-scale war is declared, followed by a nuclear strike. The Triumvirate hope that this will cause the whole of Asia to be drawn into a nuclear conflict, destabilising the most populous countries in the world and beginning a full-scale nuclear war.



The conflict between India and Pakistan over the disputed Kashmir region has, however, so far refused to boil over into outright war. Octavian has therefore decided that simple acts of violence are not sophisticated enough to tip the balance. He has tasked Antony with recruiting people who can acquire books of occult knowledge, especially those pertaining to the Cthulhu Mythos (of which the Yithians are tangentially aware). Antony is currently trying to acquire the services of robbers and burglars working for organised crime syndicates. Once these people bring spells (especially spells which can summon otherworldly creatures, the bigger and more horrendous the better) to the Triumvirate, magically-equipped mercenaries can be sent to the Kashmir region and use magic to commit a supernatural atrocity, perhaps summoning monstrous creatures or simply inflicting a huge sorcerous disaster on as many people as possible. A supernatural attack, reasons Octavian, will have a far more profound effect than mere violence, and is far more likely to bring accusations and recriminations severe enough to spark a nuclear exchange. The Actium project also allows for secondary magic-assisted strikes to be made to increase the pressure on both countries to retaliate.

The exact nature of the supernatural attack will depend on what spells Antony can acquire. The Triumvirate does not intend anything so drastic as summoning an Outer God since they want the Earth itself to survive, although calling forth a Great Old One would probably have the desired effect without overly endangering the fabric of the planet.

#### Issus

Officially, the Ukraine does not possess any nuclear weapons. However, prior to the fall of the Soviet Union there were hundreds of nuclear weapons stationed on Ukrainian soil. These were supposed to be handed over to Russia upon the break-up of the USSR, but it has recently been suggested that an 'administrative error' could have led to many weapons being left in place. There is therefore a good possibility that the Ukraine has accidentally acquired a considerable nuclear arsenal.

The acquisition of a nuclear weapon has always been a priority for the Triumvirate, since nothing is as likely to start a nuclear war than a nuclear detonation that can be disguised as a deliberate strike by another country. The Issus project is intended to comb Ukrainian soil to find nuclear weapons that might have been overlooked. Issus is one of the longest-running Triumvirate projects and the one that requires the most frequent operations. Antony mostly leaves Karpov to run Issus operations. To date the Triumvirate have not found any spare nukes, but they are becoming more and more certain that they are there to be found.

If the Triumvirate were to acquire their own weapon, another project would be created to make the best use of it. This would probably involve detonating the weapon in the USA or Western Europe, along with a parallel operation to create suspicious activity in a nation hostile to the target (the current favourite is North Korea). Octavian considers a nuclear conflict to almost certainly result from such an operation.

### Gaugamela

The Triumvirate knows that most of the wars taking place in the current era of history are small-scale brushfire conflicts, and that a major world-spanning multi-national war is thought by most human authorities to be supremely unlikely. Such a massive global conflict, however, is the event most likely to result in the kind of massed nuclear exchange the Triumvirate needs. World War Three is the goal of the Gaugamela project. This is the longest-term and in some ways least promising Triumvirate project, but one that if it works can hardly fail to thoroughly irradiate the Earth.

The Triumvirate needs two superpowers to clash for Gaugamela to succeed. It has identified America as the only current superpower. The opposition is to be the European Union. The member states of the EU are not yet bound tightly enough together to form a single opposing force to the US, but the Triumvirate believes the potential is there to weld a formidable superpower out of the various European nations.

Gaugamela therefore has two stages. The first is to force the European Union to become a single federal superstate. There is only one force strong enough to cause such a dramatic change, and that force is fear. The first stage of Gaugamela involves convincing European intelligence agencies that the United States is in possession of extremely dangerous occult weaponry and is capable and willing to use such weapons to take over the world. The Triumvirate will do this by having mercenaries commit supernaturally significant acts – summonings, ritual murders, and so on – that happen to create a short-term benefit for US interests. Prominent enemies of America could be murdered by Mythos-inspired means, for instance.

Once the authorities in the European Union become convinced that such supernatural threats exist and that they are being actively employed by the US, the Triumvirate believes the ‘federalisation’ of the EU will speed up and Europe will soon act like a single very powerful nation, pooling its resources for self-defence against a corrupted United States. Once this stage has been reached, the second stage of Gaugamela will take place. This will be the creation of a ‘trigger event’, a simulated supernatural attack that convinces the EU that the US is in very real danger of destroying the world through some ill-advised Mythos meddling. The EU will be forced to launch a massive strike to prevent that from happening, the US will retaliate, and the human race will be extinguished in the short but final Third World War.

Octavian believes that the Gaugamela project requires too major a change to world politics before it can become feasible and does not consider it among the Triumvirate’s active projects. Antony, however, believes it will work, and that humans can be tipped into another global conflict as long as the right pressures are brought to bear at the right times. Octavian knows Antony is conducting Gaugamela but does not know that Antony is already well into the first stage. Bafflingly horrible acts are already occurring, both in the US and abroad, which suggest someone in the



US is using supernatural means to further American interests. The project is very expensive in terms of the mercenaries who are killed or driven insane during Gaugamela missions, but Antony is confident he can maintain enough contacts to keep the cannon fodder coming.

### Cannae

Cannae is unique in that it is not a project pursued by the Triumvirate at all, but a sole endeavour by Lepidus. Lepidus has more contact with humans than either of the other two Triumvirate members and he does not believe the humans are willing to destroy themselves in a nuclear war, regardless of human pessimism or Yithian assumptions about a lesser species. Lepidus has instigated Cannae not to set humans against one another, but to confront them with an enemy so horrendous that they will sacrifice the Earth to destroy it.

400 million years ago the Yithians, inhabiting the cone-shaped beings that colonised Earth's ancient prehistory, began their war of subjugation against the vicious, carnivorous race of Flying Polyps. The Polyps were defeated and imprisoned, but escaped fifty million years ago. Their escape was the event that caused the flight of the Yithians into the far future, and which ultimately requires the Triumvirate to prepare the Earth for the species which the Yithians will inhabit in the future. The escaped Polyps eventually disappeared from the Earth, perhaps seeking new feeding grounds or a more stable world where they would not be warred upon by enemy species.



Lepidus, however, is aware that not all the Polyps on Earth escaped fifty million years ago. Whatever cataclysm shattered their prisons, it left one or two prison-cities intact. Lepidus has information that one such city lies deep beneath the Atlantic Ocean, between the Bromley Plateau off the coast of Brazil and the Mid-Atlantic Ridge. The prison appears to be nothing more sinister than a large and elaborate rock formation, but inside it is a maddening city-sized labyrinth of strangely-proportioned tunnels and rooms. This cyclopean basalt construction has withstood the elements for 400 million years but Lepidus intends to change all that. He believes that when the Polyps in this prison are released, their voraciousness and obvious alien vileness will prompt a massive and violent reaction from all the human nations, resulting in mankind throwing everything they have at the Polyps including nuclear weapons. When the



Polyps retaliate and make war on mankind, both species will probably be destroyed, with humanity nuking the remaining Polyps out of existence and then perishing in the subsequent nuclear winter.

The principal goal of the Cannae project is therefore to open up the Atlantic prison and let the Polyps out. To accomplish this Lepidus needs deep-sea submersibles and plenty of heavy undersea construction gear and explosives. Lepidus is slowly amassing the manpower and equipment he needs – his current cover story is that a major oil field could be located beneath the ‘rock formation’. Once he has the investment and permits in place, he can start the undersea drilling operation that will release the Polyps and plunge mankind into its final cataclysmic war.

The war against the Flying Polyps is a horrendous memory for the Yithian race. The idea of deliberately freeing the few Polyps who remain is such a horrendous concept to any right-thinking Yithian that the Triumvirate (or indeed any other Yithian) would execute Lepidus without hesitation if they found out about project Cannae. Lepidus is well aware of this and fully intends not to get caught.

#### IMPORTANT INDIVIDUALS

##### Octavian, Architect of the Apocalypse



Octavian’s body is that of Elaine Falconier, a middle-aged French woman. Falconier is quite a handsome woman with long blonde hair and noble features. With Octavian controlling her body, she no longer has the welcoming smile her friends and family knew. Octavian is very cold and officious, accepting no interruptions. He has a dislike of physical contact that borders on the phobic and greatly dislikes anyone entering his sealed-off hospital ward. He has absolutely no understanding of human mannerisms or feelings. He doesn’t care.

Octavian’s dominant personality trait is a certainty of his own superiority. While he wouldn’t put it in so many words, he believes he is more intelligent and dedicated than the other Triumvirate members, and that he alone understands what has to be done to secure a Yithian future. In a way the Triumvirate exists because Octavian believes this, since it means he is willing to ignore the wisdom of other Yithians who, if they knew of what the Triumvirate were up to, would surely try to convince Octavian of the error of his ways. Octavian might be naïve with regards to humans, and susceptible to manipulation by cunning creatures like Lepidus, but his



genuine dedication and absolute confidence in his impressive intellect make him a formidable opponent for anyone who might try to stop him.

Elaine Falconier suffered from a rare and potentially fatal total allergy syndrome. Should Octavian ever leave the sealed hospital ward, Elaine Falconier's body will break into an extremely severe rash and her throat will contract. The body will suffer severe pain and breathing difficulties, and will die within a few hours. Even if placed in a sterile environment again Octavian will be unconscious for a matter of days and severe exposure to the impurities in 'normal' air will cause permanent damage.

**STR 7      CON 6      SIZ 8      INT 23      POW 13**  
**DEX 9      APP 14      EDU 9      SAN -      HP 7**  
**Damage Bonus: -1D4**

**Weapons:** All weapons at base chances.

**Skills:** Anthropology 14%, Computer Use 22%, Cthulhu Mythos 16%, History 66%, Other Language (English) 88%, Other Language (French) 91%, Other Language (Italian) 33%, Other Language (Russian) 42%, Other Language (Afrikaans) 19%, Other Language (Japanese) 9%, World Politics 83%.



Antony, Alien Soldier Boy

Lewis Verloni was quite a well-toned and passably handsome man when Antony swapped his mind with him, always clean-shaven and with habitually short blonde hair. Under Antony his body has become well-toned and tanned, to the extent that 'Verloni' is in exceptional shape for a man twenty years younger. Antony has continued Verloni's habit of wearing suits, except for when he wears fatigues and webbing for training exercises.

Antony cannot replicate genuine human interaction, much less the veneer of trustworthiness that Verloni employed so successfully when with the CIA, but he can deal competently enough with the mercenaries he employs. Antony is a competent soldier and can defend himself very well. Inside his fortified Vermont home he is very difficult to get at indeed.

**STR 13      CON 12      SIZ 13      INT 19      POW 11**  
**DEX 14      APP 13      EDU 11      SAN -      HP 12**  
**Damage Bonus: +1D4**

**Weapons:** M16A2 Assault Rifle 59% (2D8)  
.38 Automatic Pistol 39% (D10)  
K-Bar Fighting Knife 35% (D4+2+DB)

**Skills:** Computer Use 22%, Conceal 31%, Cthulhu Mythos 12%, Dodge 39%, Drive Auto 60%, Hide 40%, Listen 44%, Military Science 88%, Other Language (English) 82%, Other Language (Spanish) 71%, Other Language (Portuguese) 39%, Other Language (Russian) 29%, Pilot Helicopter 33%, Spot Hidden 55%, Throw 50%.



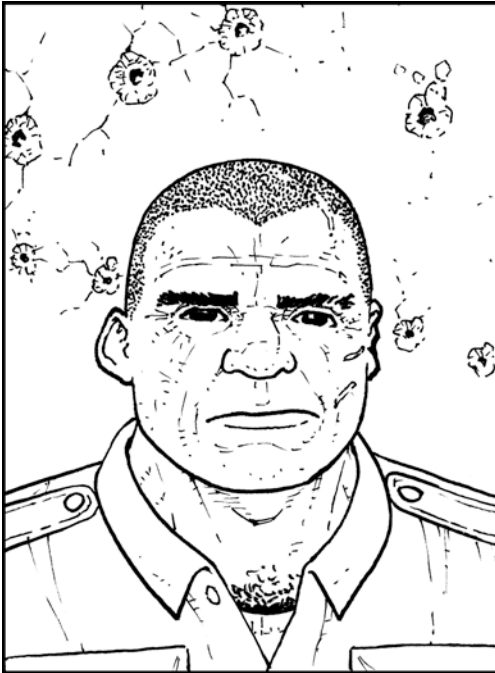
Lepidus, Yithian Heretic

Lepidus swaps bodies very frequently, but almost always inhabits the body of a child. Of all the members of the Triumvirate Lepidus is the most able to act like a normal human. Close scrutiny will often reveal Lepidus to be something other than normal, but in everyday interaction few people have reason to suspect that Lepidus isn't just another child. Lepidus knows that humans find children very easy to ignore and maximises this by being quite and polite, so that people will forget he is there. Those who spend some time with Lepidus often think he is some kind of child prodigy.

Lepidus is rarely rude or aggressive. He has learned that brute threats are very effective against humans in the short-term but ultimately they react better to people they are comfortable around. He has, however, absolutely no concept of the value of human life or well-being, and is perfectly prepared to kill, maim or torture to get what he wants. This lack of empathy extends to other Yithians, and it is here that Lepidus' real danger lies. If his plans for the

Cannae project are discovered, Lepidus is willing to have the other two members of the Triumvirate killed, and hope that his own activities are enough to release the Polyps from their prison.

Lepidus changes host bodies very frequently and will rarely be met in the same one twice, so statistics for him are not given. He has INT 22 and POW 15, and speaks any languages his host can along with fluent English, Russian and Afrikaans.



Osip Karpov, Bad-Ass Russian Merc

Osip Karpov is a veteran of the Russian military (just which branch he doesn't say), and he looks it. Karpov isn't a big man but he seems it, bleeding competent brutality from every pore. He keeps his thick black hair closely shaved. Beneath his dark stubble his skin is battered and leathery, and he makes no attempt to hide the ugly scar from the loss of his left ear (presumably from shrapnel, but again he doesn't say). Karpov forces himself into a suit when he has to but he only ever looks at home in faded military fatigues.

Karpov is very curt and professional when planning and executing military missions and there is very little that one person can do to

another that he hasn't seen somewhere. Karpov's work has taken him from Siberia to Sub-Saharan Africa and South America. Icon International keeps him busy, gets him paid and makes him a respected man, but he has no particular loyalty to it and he has no respect at all for his partner in Icon, Matthias Fortune. He has no idea the Triumvirate exists and does not suspect that Antony, with whom he deals often, is anything other than a moneymen – he suspects that Antony is CIA but he doesn't really care.

Karpov's major mental weakness is his absolute refusal to accept an insult. If someone bad-mouths him and he finds out about it, the only acceptable outcomes are for the culprit to suffer greatly (normally losing a body part) or to grovel in front of Karpov and beg for an apology.

**STR 14      CON 16      SIZ 13      INT 11      POW 13**

**DEX 14      APP 8      EDU 11      SAN 29      HP 14**

**Damage Bonus: +1D4**

**Weapons:**    AK-47 Assault Rifle 79% (2D6+1)

Skorpion Submachine Gun 60% (D8)  
7.65mm Automatic Pistol 63% (D8)  
Bayonet 67% (1D6+1+DB)  
Fist/Punch 86% (D3+DB)  
Head Butt 70% (D4+DB)

**Skills:** Bargain 55%, Computer Use 12%, Dodge 55%, Drive Auto 39%, First Aid 59%, Hide 49%, Mechanical Repair 30%, Navigate 28%, Operate Heavy Machine 27%, Other Language (English) 55%, Spot Hidden 45%, Throw 67%, Track 35%.

### PLOT HOOKS

- Octavian starts kidnapping prominent political theorists and sociologists. He uses Icon International mercenaries to imprison and interrogate his own personal think tank, in the hope that their expertise will illuminate more ways for the human race to nuke itself into oblivion. The investigators are drawn into searching for the missing boffins and finding out the culprit behind the brain drain.

- Elaine Falconier's relatives (perhaps a branch of her family living outside France) know there is something very, very wrong about their loved one. They ask the investigators to look into the hospital and the staff who are treating her, thinking that perhaps she is being mistreated or influenced somehow. Neither the investigators nor Elaine's relatives are prepared for what the investigators discover to be lurking inside Elaine's body.

- Before he was taken over by Antony, Lewis Verloni was part of a top-secret project by the CIA. The US Government will stop at nothing to find Verloni and get him back – including using a deniable group of investigators to do the legwork in tracking 'Verloni' down. Once the investigators find him, US intelligence moves in to snatch 'Verloni' and kick-start a war between the Triumvirate and the CIA to get Antony back and prevent the US government from discovering the Triumvirate's existence.

- The investigators learn from previous contact with the Yithians that the Triumvirate exists and what its intentions are, but no details that might help them find the members. When project Issus is successful and Triumvirate-sponsored mercenaries start detonating nuclear bombs, the investigators are the only ones who know who the culprits must be. It's up to the investigators to find the Triumvirate, prevent World War III, and save the world.

- Lepidus takes over the body of the child of someone close to the investigators. What starts as the case of a missing child escalates into a battle against the Triumvirate, where perhaps the best chance of getting the child back is pitting Lepidus against Octavian and Antony.



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**Look up up in the sky they are there and watching and they want to destroy us all.... They have seen the End Times and they want to change them but they are bad so bad The Church Of A Thousand Tomorrows time-travelling Nazis in space and they might just get away with it up there in the sky...**

If you're very very good or very very bad maybe **The Hammer** knows where you are and wants to kill you because they think you're not human and you'll enslave all us Neanderthals. All the gods and monsters aren't real! And you all thought they were! It's the enslavers that are real the neo-humans to come living amongst us and someone's out to get them! Or maybe these guys are just crazy but that would be silly.

Welcome to the **Hunting Falls Clinic**. The doctor is in.  
Sane.

Boom shake shake shake the planet and all my friends will be radioactive if they win. Put your mittens on for the nuclear winter someone wants to make Earth nice and homely for the future but that means we all have to go. They say **The Triumvirate** have learned to stop worrying and love the Bomb but then they are aliens so it doesn't\_really\_count.

There is no such thing as **The Sufferers' Guild**.

**There's no business like showwwwbusiness like nooooo business I knowwww because they are all watching you from the other side of the screen they have no souls they are not like you and me, drinking from The Golden Chalice because they think they are so much better but all the time they're just so much worse.**

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**GATSBY AND THE GREAT RACE (CHA0324):** *You know Julian Gatsby. He recently inherited the family home following the sad demise of his father. Julian is a free-spirited young man, in his mid-20s, and a new fan of the horse races. You arrive for a fabulous garden party and are shown to your room. Other guests arrive shortly after. In a few hours you will gather in the garden for an enjoyable afternoon of food, drink, stimulating conversation, and the radio broadcast of the Great Race. This scenario has the capacity for up to 32 people to be involved, playing in several overlapping games.*

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