

DEMONGROUND

Reflections of a Darker Future

SUMMER 2000
VOL 9

WALKING
DEAD
ISSUE!

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Between Sin & Salvation

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Between Sin & Salvation

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DEMONGROUND Issue 9

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NEVER GIVE UP, NEVER SURRENDER!

It has happened to the best of products: cars, snack foods, and yes, even role playing games. Sometime in the life of the product, the company decides, "This is no longer a profit generating item," and the wheels of the production line grind to a halt. No more Range Rover. No more Reggie bar. And no more... well, fill this blank with your favorite role playing game. Kult, Chill, Dark Conspiracy, and now Dark*Matter. Gone, dead, kaput. There is the expected grieving, the cries of justice from the masses, and eventually the acceptance that a favorite hobby will quickly be replaced by a new one.

But times have changed. We are no longer subject entirely to the dictates of the gaming industry. In fact, with the miracle of the internet, games considered long-dead have taken on a new life. Dark Conspiracy is one of those games. Canceled with the closing of Games Designers Workshop, its true fans languished in obscurity. The 'net gave those fans an outlet with which to reach out and find others like them, and

eventually a whole network of websites, mail forums and chatrooms sprung up, all in support of a "dead game." Of course, the story does not end there. Revived after years of being out of print, DC is now in its second edition, with no sign of slowing down.

So, what are you doing to keep your game alive? Are you going to sit by and let your passion slide? Or are you going to do your best to keep your favorite role playing game in the hearts and minds of its players, by organizing local games, writing and sharing adventures with your fellow fans, or setting up a fan-site on the world wide web? All of these things work, we know they do; this publication is proof positive of that fact. Don't worry about your writing style, we can't all be professional authors; the key is in your enthusiasm, it will shine thru any work you do to forward the cause of your game.

I have one last note. Most of you have played numerous different games, some of which have most likely gone out of print. You may ask, out of all the games

that I have played and enjoyed, which should I put my efforts towards? Well, the answer may lie in a combination of your personal knowledge of the games, its entertainment value, and its "capacity for growth." I think, though, that writing articles and stories to expand upon the known boundaries of games, pushing the envelope of what people think can and can't be done within the context of an RPG is the most important. This sort of outside-the-box approach to game design can be the best and the most satisfying, because it throws players (and game masters) into situations they never dreamed of, and can breath new life into tired cliché game settings ("You are sitting in a tavern...")

I think Piet Hein said it best:

Problems: "Problems worthy of attack prove their worth by hitting back."

OK, I've said my piece, now get out there and *save that game!*

Chris Carpenter - Associate Editor

Origins International Game Expo & Fair

July 13th - 16th, 2000 - Columbus, OH

Each year at Origins, *The Academy of Adventure Gaming Arts and Design* presents the **Origins Awards** - which are quite simply, the gaming industry equivalent of the Oscars.

Several games and supplements that fall under the scope of our magazine have been nominated for awards this year. For the first time this year, the Academy is allowing the public portion of the vote to be tabulated online as well as via the traditional mail-in ballot. Be sure to check out the ballot, and vote for your favorites!



Ballots will be accepted thru June 28, 2000

The online ballot can be found at:
<http://www.gama.org/academy/vote/vote.phtml?election=Origins00>
Download the traditional print-out/mail-in ballot at:
http://www.gama.org/academy/pdf_ballots/general_ballot_2000.pdf

To our loyal fans: Although DEMONGROUND is eligible for the award for "Best Amateur Gaming Magazine", we did not receive a nomination in this category, and do not appear on the ballot. **However, you can still vote for us!** The ballot allows a write-in vote for each category. To vote for DEMONGROUND in the write-in section for **Category 6.1 - Best Amateur Gaming Magazine**, you would need to write: **Title: DEMONGROUND**
Publisher: DEMONGROUND (<http://www.demonground.org/>)



Dr. Nakami's Quarterly Report to the Institute

The Hoffmann Agenda Revealed!

by Wolfgang Baur

For those of you without authorized access to this document, shame on you. For those Institute agents who have not read the copy of this document that you were all previously provided with, shame on you as well.

For those new members of the Institute and other unfortunate souls, the tradition of the Director's Quarterly Report (DQR) dates to the very first days of the Institute, when the city officials and certain other partners of the fledging Institute needed to be kept apprised of its activities. It has always been a somewhat rambling, personal report rather than a purely corporate document. The report lists goals, highlights trouble spots, and remembers the fallen comrades of the recent past. Under no circumstances should it be released to the public, except for the courtesy copies distributed to the persons and groups listed in Appendix F. These include a few well-placed government officials and highly-trusted donors to the Institute's cause.

Supplemental documentation and appendices of each quarter's report may be obtained by filing request form A53, with your supervisor's signature. Because of its wide-ranging nature and the time required for compilation and dissemination, each report is neither completely up-to-date nor 100% accurate. Enterprising agents can verify relevant report information through diligent fieldwork and their contacts. Corrections should be sent to my office using the TPS cover sheet.

In addition, the DQR has always been a source of hints and innuendo that don't always add up to those not nearly as relentlessly informed as the Good Doctor himself. To help readers seeking to understand his allusions to prior operations and policies, I've taken the liberty of adding my own remarks as footnotes.

Wolfgang Baur

Red Section Cadre of 1998

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Director's Quarterly Report
to the
Hoffmann Institute

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CCCXXXII

Prepared in Cooperation and Consultation
with the
Intelligence and Analysis Divisions

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Gentlemen:

Since my last report, our work has succeeded on two main fronts within the United States: in containing the Houston virus from spreading beyond Texas and the southwest, and in confronting the Strangers of Point Pleasant, West Virginia. Elsewhere, we have suffered a serious reverse in Russia and have made an important new contact in Tibet. These events are all evaluated in greater detail elsewhere; this report, as always, seeks merely to keep you apprised of rapidly moving events, and to keep you acquainted with the Institute's options in the case of reversals.

Yours most sincerely,

絲寬 仲弥 博士

Dr. Itohiro Nakami

New Strategic Goals

As many of you know, our efforts to form a stronger working relationship in Eastern Europe have failed rather spectacularly. It is likely that we were betrayed either by the go-between in Opus Dei or by those we negotiated with in good faith among the Gregorians. Attempts to minimize our losses are ongoing.

As a result of this collapse, we have made further efforts among the Tibetans. This effort has been partially successful, despite Chinese national security efforts to hinder our progress. I recommend to the Institute's board that we devote further resources to this effort, and if the Key is indeed where we think it is, I suggest that we follow up our initial contacts with a team of White Section preceptors and equerries (1).

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Ongoing Fieldwork

Temple Cascadia. The forces available here are now at full strength, fully trained, and fully equipped with biological containment and nanite suppression gear. Our contingency planners have worked out responses for the most likely scenarios if the situation in Texas or Magnetogorsk should get out of control. To protect against the “worst-case” alternative, I’ve arranged for fast track approval from the Board. Any such move will require close coordination with USGov and a scorched-earth policy, including a tacnuc option if things get out of control. A “terrorist” media cover is still under fabrication (2).

Jerusalem. The archaeological work nears completion, but more funds will need to be approved to secure cooperation from the Copts. Progress is slow (3).

Belize. The Institute has recently opened a branch office here; so far, it has returned few new results with respect to the Lost City (4). Photo-reconnaissance may help. Volunteers are needed for the winter survey of new territory.

Baghdad. The appearance of two “Cities of Jinn” (in central Saudia Arabia and in Kurdish-held Iraq) is interesting in that shows signs of kinori strength but investigating may lead to political problems. We have no field agents in either country, and neither the House of Saud nor the Iraqi state seem willing to ask for help. Either Iraqi special forces research is far more advanced than first suspected, or the kinori are testing a new tool against human targets, or the local governments have reached an accommodation with the kinori. All possibilities bear investigating. We need a team of agents with more than a passing knowledge of Arabic, Assyrian neo-Aramaic, and/or Kurdish.

Mr. Zamfirescu and his staff have made some interesting discoveries regarding historical precedents for some of the phenomena observed in Persia under the Shah. Advise contact through the Nestorians. See Appendix A (5).

Aleutians. Despite sending two teams, we have not recovered a body from the White Church of Pure Light. The reports to date indicate a superior level of technology, either elohim or luciferan, and a great interest in rallying a human congregation, or at least a set of human servitors. Our primary competitor in this arena is the Hidden Order of St. Gregory, which views the White Church as a heretical splinter group of the Russian Orthodox congregations of Dutch Harbor and Attu (the leader of the White Church is a Russian monarchist and a defrocked priest). The FBI continues to be involved in investigating the group for firearms, fraud, and child abuse violations (6).

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New Discoveries & Promising Avenues of Research

Occult Partnership. An agent claiming to speak on behalf of the Comte St. Germaine has approached our station director in Jakarta, offering a temporary exchange of information with regard to the actions of the elohim cults in Alaska and the newly-sighted ghuls of Iraq. While we will exercise due diligence in pursuing this opportunity, be aware that it is likely a fraud. Our independent efforts in Alaska and Kuwait should continue regardless of the outcome (7).

Nanite Sterilizer. Cooperation with the CXS has proven instrumental in perfecting a basic nanite counter-measure. The treatment uses low-level radiation to destroy nanites present in a wound or in an area, much as an anti-bacterial can reduce the chances of an infected wound. This new treatment offers no clear-cut immunity to infection, but improves resistance when exposed (8).

Leads in Prometheus Case. The renegade scientist, Dr. Regor Prometheus, is believed to be responsible for the disappearance of a family in Omaha and another in San Jose, California. We are cooperating with local law enforcement and with the doctor's recent employers at CXS in bringing this fugitive to justice. Current theories hold that Prometheus is kidnapping aliens—or rather, of abducting anyone he thinks might be an alien. Field Directors are requested to remind their staff of his appearance and MO.

Significant Losses

Killed In Action:

- > Maria Grassl, lost when her car crashed and burned under suspicious circumstances en route to Chiapas, Mexico. She is survived by her husband Mark and her daughter Faith. Donations in her name may be made to the Institute's Advanced Medical Association.
- > Thomas Clarsen, of wounds suffered in Montreal while apprehending a member of Les Treize Corbeaux. He is survived by his mother, Angela, his brother Charles, and a sister, Jennifer Murphy (an Institute member in the New York City regional offices) (9).

Missing In Action.

- > John Moore, while investigating a case in West Virginia. Blood samples recovered from Mammoth Cave National Park match 99.98%, and the search continues (10).
- > Richard Helzermann, senior computer scientist at the Institute facility in Chicago. Believed kidnapped by hostile forces to obtain OSIRS data; investigation ongoing (11).
- > Mahmud Alahyari. Failed to report for duty in Jiddah on the Red

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- Sea; Freemasons and/or kinori suspected.
- > Tatyana Valenkova. Our St. Petersburg Special Agent in Charge has failed us. In fact, the agent responsible for arranging the conference with the Gregorians has gone missing, along with a set of papers including talking points, a short list of Russian and Ukrainian contacts, the Eastern section budget, and a “good faith” analysis of the benefits of cooperation between our two organizations. This is a serious security breach, and all possible efforts are being made to reverse the problem (12)
 - > Virginia Clements. Junior member of Archives; vanished while shelving tomes recovered from Mission 811A (see Appendix B for the relevant Case Report). Believed lost to paranormal phenomena.
 - > Gowri Poonawala, lost in snowstorm in Tibet. Presumed dead.
 - > Roger Perkins, Agent First Class and Professor Veña Sanchezvandez, Intelligence Division. Lost in the Florida panhandle during escort duty when an Institute plane went down. Radio contact lost 3/14; partial wreckage recovered 3/17. Presumed dead (13).

Material Losses.

- > Three blood samples from the Mississippi delta mission of '96 (see Quarterly Report #CCCIX) were lost with the car carrying Maria Grassl. See “KIA”. They cannot be replaced without another break of improbably good fortune, or a serious reconnaissance in force in Houston. Board to consider options (14).
- > A first edition of *On the Revolutions of the Heavenly Spheres* (Copernicus, 1543) has been stolen from our New York Rare Book Depository—the investigation has been hampered by a remarkable lack of evidence and missing records. Another copy was stolen from National Vernadsky Library, Kiev; thefts from the Pulkovo Observatory Library, St. Petersburg, Russia, and from an Augustinian monastic collection in Brno, Czech Republic were detected and returned when they were put up at auction. An arson at Pulkovo is thought to have been an attempt to simplify the theft (destroying records of the holdings) (15).
- > One Institute Lear jet. Replacement cost: \$6 million.

New Procedures and Budgetary Concerns.

- > All administrative groups should now begin using cover sheets for their TPS reports.
- > Arms and munitions costs are up sharply this last quarter. We are not a private army. Please keep hot incidents to a minimum, and allow local law enforcement agencies to make all low-level arrests possible.
- > Genome analysis reports are to use the new form provided in Appendix E.

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Project Annotations by Wolfgang Baur, Department Chief, Special Division

1. The recent contacts between the Institute and a secretive group of Tibetan Buddhist monks (aka Ascended Masters, or Red Hats) is actually not a new contact at all, but the renewal of ties that Nakami first made as a much younger man, before the Communist takeover in Tibet in the early 1950s. Since then, the Chinese secret service has made communication with the lamas very difficult. Recent ties seem to rely on advanced telecommunications gear (including a narrow-beam burst satellite uplink) smuggled in by a team of Institute tech ops (one of whom died en route when the team was caught in bad weather). In exchange, the monks are training Institute paranormalists. *Note: A group could well be assigned to take spare parts to Tibet, to answer a distress call from the remote monastery, or even to take part in this training (ideally, a Buddhist or mindwalker agent should be included in party—forward any nominations you may wish to make).*
2. The White Section troops are being prepped for a major attack; the agents might be invited along. It won't be pretty—most of these operations leave absolutely no survivors. Casualties are high among the Institute staff as well—the sandmen have a number of tricks that they use in defense, ranging from gas attacks to radiation zones to EMP pulse generators (sandmen are largely immune to all of these).
3. The Jerusalem project is an excavation of the Templar headquarters, which lie directly under and around the Wailing Wall and Al-Aksa mosque. It requires massive bribery and secrecy to keep secret, but Nakami expects it to pay off in the long term. *Note: The investigators might well be asked to escort or smuggle a relic from Jerusalem to the Archival offices of the Institute in Barcelona, especially if any of them are devoutly Catholic, Jewish, or Moslem. The Copts referred to in the report at Coptic Christians, an offshoot of the faith that dates back to the earliest days of Christianity. Their opponents might be members of the Final Church who have gotten wind of a major find in the Holy Land.*
4. The lost city in Belize is a long-term pet project of Dr. Nakami's to find and restore a Grey station ship which he believes was abandoned in situ in Central America, deliberately concealed from view by the simple means of being buried under an enormous stone pyramid. The Doctor has never provided any evidence for his belief of his, and most of the board takes a tolerant view of his obsession with this topic, but the costs are high, both in terms of cash and in terms of investigators spending time in the Central American jungle. *Note: "Visiting Belize" is NOT a perk or Cancun vacation by any stretch of the imagination—most offices send a "volunteer" to take a tour of duty in Belize only as a form of punishment. Malaria, snakebite, heat exhaustion, and even attacks by drug lords are the typical result of such a trip. The most recent expedition could include your agents, if they are in trouble with their Field Director or if they just need to get out of town for a while.*
5. The mess in Iraq has only been reported by unofficial channels; Iraqi Republican Guards have been called in with flamethrowers, gas, and tanks to destroy a number of old ruins and small villages. From USMil sources, some of these attacks have also involved digging apparatus. Those attacks ended quite recently. The local population of both Arabians and Iraqis has been discussing a series of goat mutilations as the work of *jinn*, or devils of the desert. An Institute field agent sent to Jiddah, Saudia Arabia, failed to report. *Note: More agents could well be sent as a follow-up; a Combat Spec is definitely required, as both the Saudis and the Iraqis are heavily armed and extremely nervous about the threat. While any mistake here could easily be written off as a "border war" between the two sides—if the agents are not careful, it might actually be a border war, with them in the middle!*
6. The body the Doctor refers to is believed to be a mummified or at least intact Luciferan or elohim body. Finding it would be a major discovery for the Institute, as no such body has ever been examined in any detail. Naturally, the luciferans or elohim themselves might object to such a desecration of a body—and would probably arrive in time to snatch it away from any investigating team. Note that the Aleutian islands cover thousands of miles of cold, foggy, North Pacific territory—and any millennial cult that summoned up or found such a body would probably object to uninvited visitors.

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7. The offer from the Comte seems sleazy, unlikely, and even ridiculous in its overblown language. The go-betweens that the Comte uses are amateurish New Agers and fraudulent occultists. But the offer is perfectly genuine. Naturally, the Comte demands a show of good faith before any cooperation is possible. The heroes may be asked to follow up this seemingly bogus offer, learn it is genuine, and then must prove the Institute's sincerity by eliminating or humiliating on the Comte St. Germaine's ancient rivals in order to gain access to some of his store of information. The Comte operates through intermediaries until such time as he learns to trust the heroes.
8. The nanite sterilizer resembles a simple handheld incandescent worklight; it combines a wave of low-level radiation (unable to penetrate the human skin for more than a millimeter) with a strong, fluctuating electromagnetic field that disorients and even cripples nanites. Anyone treated with it gains a +2 step bonus to a resistance check against nanite infection. Only someone with access to the engineering section of the Analytical division will be able to obtain one of these anytime soon, though the Institute is building enough to distribute to all its offices worldwide.
9. Died of sorcerous wounds that would not heal. Heroes may be called in to act on the information obtained by this capture, and possibly to study the body.
10. See *The Killing Jar* Case Report.
11. Helzermann was actually abducted by the Chicago molemen after he stumbled onto one of their meeting-places (he was pursuing a dumpster-diver a little more aggressively than might be prudent). The heroes could well be asked to investigate.
12. The collapse of discussions with the Order of St. Gregory seems to be a result of rather too much trust on the Institute's part, and a failure by the Intelligence Division to discover the existence of a double agent within the Institute. According to this traitor's defenders, the double agent may have been influenced by nationalism, religion, and possibly even by supernatural means to betray Institute secrets to the Order. *Note: In fact, Tatyana's "betrayal" is actually part of a carefully-orchestrated attempt to feed false information about the Institute's intentions to the Hidden Order, a so-called "poisoned well." A group of agents might soon be required to extract her from a Serbian stronghold of the Hidden Order (before her planting of false documents is revealed).*
13. See "The Kindness of Strangers," *Dragon Annual* #4.
14. The Mississippian blood samples are somehow related to the Southern Death Cult and voodoo activities in New Orleans, and the Zapatistas in southern Mexico (who practice the blood magic of the SDC, in a form related to Aztec rituals). The relationship is murky, but the blood samples are said to show anomalous genetic sequences (taken from voodoo practitioners while they were "possessed"). These genetic sequences may shed valuable light on how FX runs in families. The heroes may be asked to get replacement blood samples from the guerillas, without arousing suspicions from the Mexican government and without getting shot. Naturally, a SDC member among the guerillas (the man responsible for Maria Grassl's death) absolutely refuses to allow any such action.
15. The Copernican book discusses the fact that the earth circles the sun rather than vice versa, and it also contains (in rather cryptic codes) an Enochian spell of the GM's choice from *FX: Guide to the Paranormal*. Since the Institute copy has been stolen (perhaps an inside job, perhaps a bibliophile from New York city who discovered the Hoffmann collection and got a little greedy), the heroes might well be sent on a book hunt. The theft might be related to the disappearance of the Institute Archivist (likely kidnapped or the victim of extortion—or perhaps the perpetrator of the theft).

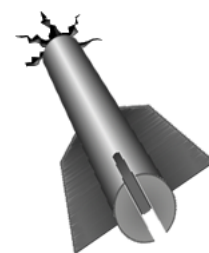
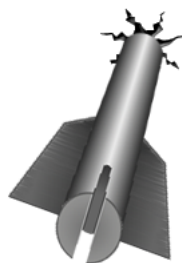
* * *

Wolfgang Baur was a member of the same collegiate secret society that bred that infamous conspirator, DEMONGROUND editor Mike Marchi. No, really, he was. We're not making this up.

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WEAPONS DEVELOPMENT:

GETTING
THE
POINT
ACROSS

by A. Shane Murphy

Reduced-Detection
Melee Weapons

The weapons presented here are intended to remain hidden from standard metal detectors.

Ceramic Katana

A new weapon developed by Sun Technologies in their fight against the Dark Ones. This weapon uses state-of-the-art ceramic materials to create a formidable sword. It was the company's CEO who decided her "troops" needed a weapon that was lightweight, strong and deadly. This sword was the result and in the hands of a trained individual is extremely deadly. The ceramic blade never loses its edge, weighs only 0.5kg, is nonconductive (more useful than you might think), and invisible to metal detectors.

Plastic spike

This harmless looking plastic brush

holds a nasty surprise. The bristled head can be removed revealing a hardened plastic spike. As dangerous as any 5" stabbing weapon, it does have a few obvious drawbacks. Made of plastic it not very strong, and with the blade lacking an edge, is limited to thrusting and stabbing attacks. By the same token however plastic is almost impossible to detect with most modern sensors.

Plastic knives

These knives were made for concealment and quick stabbing attacks. Constructed of vulcanized plastic, they are hard enough to do considerable damage, yet are too brittle for any extended combat.

Concealed pen knife

This is a normal looking ink pen. Under the removable cap is a 4" steel blade, built more for stabbing than cutting it receives a -2 difficulty modifier to notice.

Sun Industries
HVP Crossbow Line

Sun Technologies is a weapons manufacturer poised on the cutting edge. Using modern materials and techniques they have recreated the ancient crossbow. Fully redesigned these are a new breed of "pump" reloading weapon, making them as dangerous as any hand gun while insuring complete silence.

Sun XX

This is a small repeating "pump" style crossbow.

Ammo: Bolts - Target: \$1 each; Razor Tip: \$2 each; Carbon Razor \$3 each (*this price includes the shaft which can be aluminum, fiberglass, or wood*)

Wt: 3.0kg

Mag: 6 round clip

Price: \$250 (C/C)

6-bolt magazines are \$30 each

Sun XLE

A larger version of the XX, can also use a large clip.

Ammo: Bolts - Target: \$1 each; Razor Tip: \$2 each; Carbon Razor \$3 each (*this price includes the shaft which can be aluminum, fiberglass, or wood*)

Wt: 3.5kg

Mag: 6/10 round clip

Price: \$350 (C/C)

10-bolt magazines are \$50 each

Weapon	Rng	Hit Mod	Damage	Weight	Price	Avail
Ceramic Katana	L	-	1d6+STR	2.0kg	\$3000	(S/S)
Plastic Spike	S	+1	1d6-1	0.1kg	\$25	(C/S)
Plastic Knife	S	+2	1d6	0.2kg	\$75	(S/S)
Pen Knife	S	-	1d6-1	0.1kg	\$45	(S/S)

Weapon	Bolt Type	ROF	Dam	Pen	Blk	Mag	--- Recoil ---		
							SS	Brst	Rng
Sun XX	Target Bolt	PA	2	Nil	4	6	1	-	20*
	Razor Tip	PA	3	Nil	4	6	1	-	20*
	Carbon Razor	PA	3	1-Nil	4	6	1	-	20*
Sun XLE	Target Bolt	PA	2	Nil	4	6/10	1	-	30*
	Razor Tip	PA	3	Nil	4	6/10	1	-	30*
	Carbon Razor	PA	3	1-Nil	4	6/10	1	-	30*

*Can be fitted with a scope, add +15 meters to range

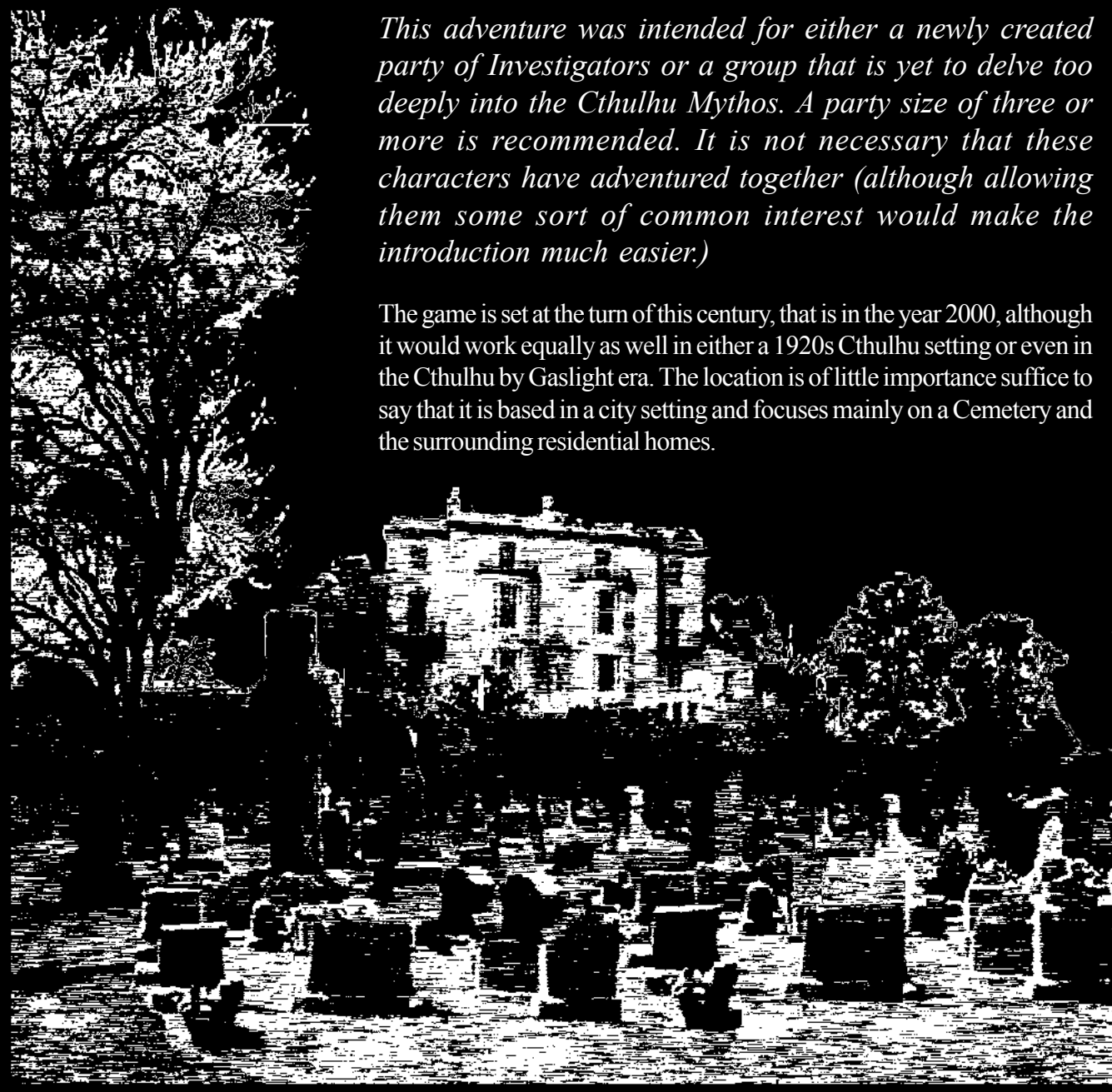


DANCING TO THE WRONG TUNE

**A Modern-Day Call of Cthulhu Adventure
by Marcus D. Bone**

This adventure was intended for either a newly created party of Investigators or a group that is yet to delve too deeply into the Cthulhu Mythos. A party size of three or more is recommended. It is not necessary that these characters have adventured together (although allowing them some sort of common interest would make the introduction much easier.)

The game is set at the turn of this century, that is in the year 2000, although it would work equally as well in either a 1920s Cthulhu setting or even in the Cthulhu by Gaslight era. The location is of little importance suffice to say that it is based in a city setting and focuses mainly on a Cemetery and the surrounding residential homes.





As stated above it is considerably simpler for the Keeper if the characters are part of some sort of mutual appreciation society, be it a book club, wine tasting group or even a roleplaying club. Including a character with some sort of musical ability (**Art**), however small, would also be an advantage to the investigators. It is important that the adventure commences at night, when common people have the time to meet, and this will form a backdrop for the forthcoming events.

The Stranger in the Night

The adventure opens as it gets late in the evening and the investigator's meeting is drawing to a close, with each player looking forward to little more than a good night's sleep before the rigours of a new day. The group has slowly dwindled over the evening as others have already headed home, so now only the players remain for one more chat before moving on.

Just as it seems there is nothing more to do than to say their good-byes one of the characters will hear someone at the door, followed by a loud thump as something heavy collapses against it.

When someone investigates, they discover a man slumped against the door. Looking as if he has been mugged and beaten, he is bleeding profusely from a number of cuts to his head and face. He is an older man, graying, with a face that is wrinkled and pale, he could be anywhere between 50 or 70 years in age.

As soon as one of the players attempt to move him, even if it is just into a more comfortable position they will feel, rather than see, that his injuries are worse than they initially appear. His midsection has been stabbed repeatedly and his clothing is drenched in blood. If the characters don't attempt to help, it will still become apparent that the man is in a life and death struggle, as blood begins to puddle around him.

Any investigator attempting to help the man, who is now falling in and out of consciousness, will be quickly covered in blood. In one moment of clarity however the injured man grabs the

closest character pulling them closer with an iron like grip. His mouth full of blood he coughs once, spraying the character with blood and mucus, before gurgling in their ear... *"You must play the notes... you must ... before..."* He coughs again as a stream of blood and spittle rolls down his face onto his blood-drenched shirt. *"before... it's too late."* He looks the character in the eyes. *"Promise me ... Promise me you'll play for them... all of you."* He stares at the characters wide eyed and will only proceed when all the players agree. Coughing once more he loosens his grip slightly and with one hand pulls from his overcoat a hastily bound set of papers, which he thrusts into the nearest character's hands. He smiles weakly and then slumps once more into unconsciousness... a state from which he never awakens.

Whether or not the characters at this point have rung the police, they will duly arrive about now and take charge of the situation. They will, of course, have some very serious questions to ask the characters and will not take accept any appreciate any attempts at vaguaries. If the investigators inquire as to how the patrol car arrived, the officer will curtly explain how a *more caring* citizen had witnessed the poor man entering the current location.

By the time the ambulance arrives, the poor man is dead from 'blood loss sustained from stab wounds to his chest and abdomen'. There is little the paramedics can do except cover the body with a plastic sheet and wait until the arriving homicide detectives allow them to remove the corpse. Also a small crowd of bystanders is starting to gather, attracted by the lights and sounds at this late hour, and this will force one of the officers to move the characters inside as they continue questioning.

The 'interrogation' of the players is fairly straightforward. Eventually, one of the homicide detectives will join the questioning. After that, it will quickly become apparent that the players know nothing of this 'mugging', and they will be allowed to leave.

The Papers

Hopefully the character who was handed the papers will have kept them, seeing as they are the only link they have to fulfilling the victims last wishes.

The papers themselves are bundled together with a loose piece of string and are now covered in blood. Most of the papers seem to be random sheets of music rather than any set text, and will take at least an hour to put them into order. The inventory of papers is as follows:

- The dead man's business card is the first thing any of them will notice. It lists his address, but no phone number. *See handout 1*
- Most of the rest of the material is just sheets and sheets of piano music. Most characters will recognize some of the titles, **Holsts** "The Planets", **Wagners** "Ride of the Valkyries" and **Tchaikovskys** "1812 Overture", among others. There are a handful however, that not even a skilled musician will recognise. Although unauthored, each of these has an eerie title such as "The Dark Man Cometh", "Lurker on the Edge" and "The Unwitnessed".
- The last piece of paper is actually an article from a newspaper dating back to 1960. *See handout 2*

Investigating Further

The next day dawns the local early edition paper holds an article that holds much interest for the characters, but not in the way they were expecting. *See Handout 3.*

How the characters react to this is really up to them, but this should prompt them to do some further investigation into Grey and the history of the Cemetery District.

The Cemetery District

The Local Library has plenty of material on the Cemetery District as it was one of the original suburbs of the newly formed city. A four-hour search through books, journals and old papers tells much of the area, which is renowned for its ghostly sightings and multitudes of old housing. The most shocking of the



stories comes from the late 1950's when five murders and as many disappearances took place over a period of twenty-four months leading into early 1960. The police of the time were unable to discover the identity of murderer and the victims were more often than not ripped to shreds and barely identifiable.

The case was closed in 1965, four full years after the last disappearance, the police citing a lack of evidence and more pressing cases at hand. No one at the time could shed any light on the murders although for years the Cemetery district was a quiet, almost abandoned suburb as many locals moved out in fear for their safety.

Jonathon M. Grey

Surprisingly there is a considerable amount of information about Jonathon especially in the early 1950's. Even a cursory glance into his background will reveal that he was once hailed as the next big thing in classical music in the decade after the war. A more intense search, taking six hours, will uncover more about the poor victim's life.

In 1952 Grey appeared to be the rising star of classical music matching, with some skill, the new 'rock and roll' movement that was sweeping the United States. He was praised by many and had few critics. "*The new Gershwin,*" wrote one reviewer, "*whose music endears him to his audience, enthralling them with willowy fingers that bring life to the piano like no other.*"

Grey gained fame and popularity and by the late 50's was a rich and contented man destined to be as famous as Mozart or Strauss. Late in 1959 he publicly declared that he was going to return to his home (the city the characters live in), and compose his next masterpiece.

And that was the last thing anyone ever heard of Grey. If reporters came knocking at his home in the Cemetery District he refused to see them, and no amount of cajoling would draw him out. In the end the musical world moved on focusing on new British groups like 'The Beatles' and the 'Rolling Stones', forgetting that Grey had ever existed.

Number One Cemetery Rd

Maybe even more surprising than the depth of information on Grey are the details of the house at 1 Cemetery Rd. Four hours of research at the Hall of Records provides a great deal of information about the ancient house.

It seems that a local tribe of natives gave the original owner, Barnard Grey, the deed to the land the house stands on 'until the last of their people died' some three hundred years ago, as reward for saving one of the chiefs daughters from some sort of 'beast'. In turn this man built a homestead that was passed on from generation to generation until Jonathon Grey took possession from his uncle in 1960.

The most disturbing thing about the home however is that it is located smack in the middle of the cemetery itself. The City council was unable to remove it when the surrounding land was designated a cemetery. The Grey family fought to uphold the rights granted them under the original native deed. When it eventually came down to a court case in the early 1800's, the judge could find no cause for the family to be removed, as the bloodline of the natives still remained. Descendants of the original tribe still live today (far removed from the city).

The Sheet Music

This is a little harder to find anything about, although the common works are easily referenced and offer nothing to the investigators, the unauthored works will take ten hours of hard research relying on correspondence with known experts. It turns out, as the characters might have guessed, that the work is reminiscent of the early works of Jonathon Grey, although they have now taken a darker, more sorrowful tone. These works have also never been published and as far as the correspondent knows have never been heard in any public forum. One correspondent expresses particular interest in seeing the entire musical score.

The House in the Cemetery

Eventually the characters are going to want to visit the house where Grey

lived. It is truly in the middle of the cemetery with a long driveway leading to it, and enclosed with a sturdy wrought iron fence. It is situated in the oldest part of the graveyard with some of the headstones dating back to the late 1700's. The house itself is a large two-story affair, which seems to have been expanded many times, as each generation of Greys added on what they required.

If the players think about asking the people who live in the neighborhood surrounding the cemetery, they will hear a number of curious things about the old Grey home. Probably the most disturbing are the reports of the wild parties that seem to take place there two or three nights in succession every month. If questioned further the neighbor will state that truthfully the parties are loud affairs of shouting and an eerie piano playing. Although probably the strangest thing is that nobody can recall ever seeing the revelers, either arriving or leaving.

If asked why they have never done anything about these 'parties', they will admit shamefully that they and others have only heard these while deep in the cemetery late at night.

The only other information anyone in the area has about the house comes from a little old lady whose property is one of the closest to the Grey House. She will state quite openly that there has always been music in the Grey House as far back as she can remember, and even in her grandmothers time the old folk told of the 'dances' that took place without so much as an invitation to any of the neighbors!

If the players decide to explore the cemetery they discover nothing of interest except that many of the headstones in the area have fallen and are crumbling. Considering their age, this is of little surprise.

The house itself has two outbuildings. The first is a tool shed, with all the modern essentials for garden maintenance: ride on mower, weed killers and the like. The other is a garage, which is home to 1955 Rolls Royce. The car is covered by a tarpaulin and hasn't been registered for the last thirty years.



Exploring the House

Surprisingly the front door is unlocked, and the first impression the investigators get is that someone has ransacked the house. Although the furniture has been left standing, many papers, books and contents of drawers have been strewn around the various rooms.

With its many rooms and old décor, the house inside and out hasn't been renovated in at least 70 years. It is like walking onto a 1930's melodrama set. Every room is large and obviously built to accommodate more than one occupant. As such, many of the rooms upstairs have not been disturbed for some time and most have a visible layers of dust covering them.

The Front Room

The Front Room looks the most lived-in of any in the house. It has a fireplace and a number of comfortable looking chairs. It also has a large writing desk and a large wall filled with books.

Most notably the mess in this room is greater than any other, papers and books are everywhere, many of them torn and damaged, whoever was here was searching for something specific.

Because of the mess, the room will take a while to explore, but after a good hour the characters will come up with two items of interest. The first, located in the writing desk, is a small leather bound journal, which dates back to the 1950's, although it is incomplete it covers a short period of Grey's life. The second is a Letter that is found squeezed behind the seat of one of the leather chairs, it seems to be some sort of instructions to the finder, as well as a last will and testament.

The Journal

The Journal was obviously written in happier times for Jonathon, and covers the last 2 years before he moved back to his family home in the Cemetery District of the city. The journal takes only an hour to read.

- The main topic in the early part of the notebook is his music and his wishes and goals to develop it. He also tells

of his joy at bringing happiness to his fans.

- Early in 1958 he learns of his uncle's death and seems to be very downhearted at the news. He also mentions the 'promises' he made before his own parent's deaths, but neglects to explain them in detail.
- Upon moving into the Grey House he makes mention to "his Uncle joining the others" and how he alone had to keep up the house.
- Finally he makes mention of some tasks that were left by his Uncle, but again, never explains what those tasks were.

The Letter

The Letter is much more help to the investigators, but even that doesn't explain exactly what is going on. Although there is no date on it the players will get the impression that it is not more than a few days old. Although in that short lifespan, it has apparently seen some abuse. **See Handout 4.**

The Music Hall

One of the largest rooms in the house, this hosts nothing more than a Grand piano, an ornate Grandfather Clock and a number of box seats around the walls. One thing will strike the players is the smell of fresh dirt and decay that permeates the room, even though by sight alone this looks the cleanest room in the entire house. Closer examination reveals that the floor is covered with small scrapes as if a dozen or more cats have been running around on the highly polished floor. The horrible smell is worse by the curtains and the windows of the room, especially the large north facing one, as do the scrapes on the floor, one could assume that what ever it was entered through the window.

The Grand Piano is the key to the characters finding out what Grey meant for them to do. On it is more music sheets all of which have scores that are unfamiliar to the party. If any of the characters start to play any of the music they will hear below the house a rumbling sound, like that of a large dog or cat being

disturbed from their slumber. If the characters continue to play the music the growling whine will increase, as if more 'voices' join the first until the noise they produce is deafening which will cause 0/1 Sanity for every minute it continues. This disturbing noise will cease immediately the music is stopped.

The Kitchen

The Kitchen is much like any other in a large house, well equipped and lighted, with plenty of counter-space to prepare and cook food. Unlike the rest of the house the kitchen is in relative good order, clean, tidy, and well stocked.

There are three doors from the kitchen, one leading back into the house, one outside and a third that leads down a dark set of stairs into what is obviously the cellar.

If any of the characters examine the large walk in freezer in the Kitchen they will be astonished to find that is stocked full of animal carcasses, all of which hang from hooks.

The Cellar

The horrible smell of dirt and decay also hangs heavily in the air, and gets worse as the characters descend the stairs to the cellar.

The Cellar is dark and poorly lit by a single bulb hanging from the ceiling, and this light reveals that this room has been used for nothing more than storage. Scattered around the floor are the remains of old furniture and heirlooms, all in very poor condition. It doesn't take a scholar to realise that this room hasn't been touched in a very long time.

Before the characters get a chance to examine the Cellar more thoroughly they will hear footsteps above them. Someone has obviously entered the house; then as they listen, they hear the ominous metallic 'click' of a pistol being cocked.

The Intruders

Three armed men have entered the house, each armed and in a foul temper. They are agents of the Mi-Go, creatures that reside on Pluto and whose machinations conflict heavily with the



welfare of mankind. They are also responsible for both the fatal beating of Jonathon Grey, and the ransacked condition of the house. Lead by Jack Kramer (see sidebar below), they have returned to the house to resume their search. They are under strict orders from their alien employers to return with “the Item” they require or face a fate worse than death. *Note: The irony of this situation is that Kramer does not actually know what “the Item” is. He has merely been told he would know it when he saw it.*

The presence of the players in the house is a complication for Kramer and his cohorts. They will naturally assume that the characters possess “the Item” they are looking for.

At first the intruders will try to convince the characters to part with “the Item” voluntarily.

Next, Kramer will threaten that if they don’t hand it over, they will be in “big trouble”. Any questions the players ask to get Kramer to clarify what he is after

will not be successful. Kramer or one of the others will insinuate that the characters know *exactly* what they are after and they had better hand it over before things get ugly.

Eventually one side or the other is going to become frustrated to the point of attacking the other group. This should lead to a quick brawl, as the thugs attempt to overwhelm the players so they can get what they came for. It should be easy enough for the characters to stop the thugs from doing any real harm and as soon as the three intruders realise the players aren’t pushovers they will retreat. As they go, Kramer will yell, “*You don’t know who you’re dealing with. Your days are numbered!*”

After this encounter the characters may feel a little conflicted. The Letter they have requires that they remain in the house until midnight, but with people threatening their lives this may not seem like a wise course of action.

Note: If the characters offer the bundle of papers to Kramer, he will just

toss them aside (he already saw the bundle when attacking Grey the other night). The Letter might be a different matter, but Kramer is too single-minded to recognize it as a clue to his goal.

If the Characters Leave

If the character decide to abandon their task, and leave the house, then the rest of the day and night will pass without incident. However, the morning paper reports a very disturbing incident that causes the reader and the rest of the party to lose 2/1D10 Sanity.

The paper details the disappearance of two teenagers from the Cemetery District, the night before. A local attests that he heard what could only be described as ‘a pack of wild dogs’ around the time the two kids were last seen, but no one has come forth to verify any of his claims.

If the characters still refuse to do anything about the promise they made Grey then the adventure is effectively over, and the Keeper should severely punish the players characters for not trying to keep their city and community free of the Mythos terror.

As Midnight Approaches

If the characters follow the instructions left by Grey, they should have no trouble preparing for the ‘ceremony’ that is going to take place. The cryptic reference to the carcasses in the Letter should make more sense once they find the meat locker (up until that point, they may actually consider digging up some bodies from the cemetery!). One carcass from the freezer must be removed, dragged into the music room, and the internal doors in the house must be opened. Finally one of the characters is needed to play the piano in the Music Hall throughout the ceremony. The choice of pianist is up to the players, but it is suggested that a character with at least some musical (**Art**) skill be chosen. If this character spends a few hours going over the music he or she must play (or if there is no character with **Art** skill) they will receive a 50% bonus to their skill during the ceremony.

Jack Kramer (and his associates)

Kramer is a Thug and little more. Although quite bright, he is gullible and this has led him to be involved with some very shady employers. Always out for a quick buck he has nothing against using violence to achieve his goals, but tends to keep the application of such force in check, using only as much as necessary.

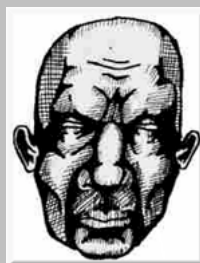
Kramer’s associates lack that level of control, but will only go as far as Kramer will allow them. They listen to his orders carefully knowing full well what their current employers are capable of doing if they fail in their appointed tasks.

They are all armed with .38 Revolvers on their current assignment, which is finding “the Item” their employers desire. They in fact don’t even know what they are looking for, but have been told that they will recognise it when they see it. As a result they are responsible for attacking Jonathon Grey, and in turn his death, even though this got them no closer to completing their job.

Damage Bonus +1D4

Weapons: .38 Revolvers 40%, damage 1D10
Club 40%, damage 1D6 + db

	Str	Con	Siz	Dex	Pow	HP
Kramer	14	12	12	11	15	17
Thug 1	13	11	15	11	11	13
Thug 2	12	11	12	10	11	14



The Ceremony Begins

During the ceremony, the investigators will be called upon to make many Sanity rolls, this may lead to some characters becoming temporary insane, however it is important that someone is playing the piano at all times, for the ceremony to continue. *Note: It is easy enough for a nearby investigator to take over the playing if their companion is starting to show signs of mental fatigue.*

The ceremony can start anytime after midnight, with the designated pianist striking the first notes of 'Lurker on the Edge'. (on a successful **Art** roll). The first few bars of the song pass with strained notes, as the pianist attempts to get into the odd rhythm of the music. Still more minutes pass before the characters start to hear the first results of the melody.

At first all is quiet... too quiet. The music produced by the piano is eerie and all pervading. Just listening to it sends shivers down the listener's spine. The haunting melody seems to tell a tale of misery and remorse. It is a disenchanting

tune that claws at the character's souls.

Any investigators succeeding a **Listen** roll begins to hear noises from below the house, like the howls of hounds, it grows louder until even those that failed the Listen roll can make it out. As the sound grows, one can begin to make out the cries of individuals amongst cacophony of sound. All too soon the howling reaches an ear-piercing volume, drowning out even the horrid music from the piano. All present lose 0/1 Sanity.

Just when it seems that they can take no more the whole house begins to shake, rattling on its foundations. Then there is a loud crash below as if someone or something has entered the Cellar. The noises can be heard clearly now, the howling and grunting is interspersed with cries of creatures not of this earth. The Grey house continues to shake as the things below move about, it seems obvious that they are drawn towards the music. All must lose 1/1D3 Sanity.

The rushing of hooves and claws sound out the advance of these creatures as they make their way up the Cellar

steps. The noise gets louder as they enter the Kitchen and then the Hall. All around them the creatures can be heard drowning out the continuing chords of the *Lurker on the Edge*. Suddenly one of the creatures bursts through the doorway into the Music Room. It is a rubbery, loathsome humanoid, half clothed in a torn pair of ancient pants. Its claws and canine features seem to wiggle in some sort of expectation, looking up at the investigators it comes to a sliding stop on the polished floors. The smell of dirt and decay again assails the investigators at the creature stares at them.

Such a creature is horrible to behold but the realisation that it actually understands that it is confronted by a new and maybe threatening situation is almost too much for even the most hardy character. Sanity losses of 1/1D6 affect all.

Behind this first creature others now arrive, crowding the doorway like deformed school students. They sniff the air at the strangers yipping and barking to each other in some form of rudimentary communication. Slowly, the sounds of

The Ghouls of Cemetery Road (Greys Ghouls)

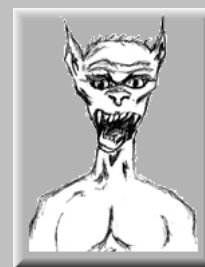
Seen as evil ugly creatures that prowl on humanity edges, waiting for the right time to strike, Greys Ghouls seem to be slightly different than most. Jonathon, bound by oath treated this commune almost like kin, so much so that one wonders whether the rumours of man becoming ghoulish might have some grounding.

The History of Greys Ghouls is a long and clouded one, stretching back to the houses original owner Bernard Grey and attacks on the local native tribe. Once a month these creatures have risen from their burrows (the land that is now the cemetery) and stalked the innocent passers-by for food. That was until one of the Greys ancestors discovered the love of music the ghouls displayed, and then in turn for their own safety as well as that of the community, began to hold dances with the aim of feeding the creatures with livestock instead of human flesh. That was until Grey arrived in the 60's and by chance discovered his talent for opening gateways to other worlds. Here he had discovered a way to insure the ghouls forever remained away from the townsfolk.

Each month he would open the gateway to these 'other worlds' to allow the ghouls to hunt the inhabitants of those plains. Not that this didn't have an effect on Jonathon's already fragile mind, knowing one day that with his passing someone would have to open the gateway

one more time and allow the ghouls leave earth once and for all.

Greys Ghouls are a fearful sight to behold, and although they will not attempt to attack the investigator playing the piano they do realise that something is amiss, and menace the other PC's. They number in the dozens and their gibbering and mewing will surely try the characters nerves. Although too many to destroy below is the common statistics of a Greys Ghoul if the need arises.



Sanity Loss 0 / 1D6

Damage Bonus +1D4

Weapons: Claws 30%, damage 1D6 + db
Bite 30%, damage 1D6 + automatic worry

Armour: Firearms and Projectiles half of rolled damage; round up any fraction.

	<u>Str</u>	<u>Con</u>	<u>Siz</u>	<u>Dex</u>	<u>Pow</u>	<u>HP</u>
Typical Grey Ghoul	16	12	13	13	13	15

Also see the entry under Ghoul in the main CoC Rule Book.



the music straining from the piano overcomes their original fears and they cautiously enter the Music Room. Attracted to the carcass, the first creatures in the room immediately attack it with vengeance.

As quickly as that is devoured the ghouls, in ones and twos, begin to scout out the familiar surroundings and within minutes they seem ready to dismiss the characters. Now that the investigators have also recovered their wits they are astonished to realise that some 20 or 30 of these creature now occupy the room. Thankfully they seem preoccupied by the music and have no mind anything else. Then the music stops...

The Dark Man

As the music sheets comes to an end the pianist scrambles to find the next tune "*The Dark Man Cometh*". In the sudden silence, the ghouls become more aware of their surroundings, instantly turning their attentions on the characters - as if re-evaluating the player's potential as a threat.

As the ghouls begin to close in on the pianist and his fellows it might be necessary to impress on the players the danger of the situation they are in. Having a small scuffle break out between one or more of the characters and the creatures will bring tension to the scene as the Musician tries to start the new song. An **Art** roll at -25% (due to the pressure) is required to start "*The Dark Man Cometh*". As soon as he or she succeeds in this, the ghouls immediately halt their attacks and return to their former 'preoccupied' state.

Unlike the eerie tune of the previous piece *The Dark Man Cometh* is a much lighter composition, bringing a levity to the evening that seems frighteningly inappropriate. This strange joy even seems to spread to the Ghouls. In front of one of the characters one of these strange beasts starts to convulse, it's limbs moving in strange directions, as it shuffles slightly to the left then right. It takes the character a few moments to realise what is going on... the ghoul is dancing!

As if a sign, this strange dancing action starts to spread among the gathered creatures, giving the scene a horribly comic look. In response the music begins to change tempo, getting faster and faster as the creatures continue to dance around the room. Eventually it becomes obvious to the investigators that ghouls seem to be congregating near the large north-facing window.

At first the characters are at a loss to explain why this is so, however moments later a crack of light appears, not as one might expect from outside, but rather from a spot half way up the windowpane. As the music gets faster and faster the light begins to grow, now encompassing more and more of the window.

Interrupted

As the ghouls continue their dance of madness around the stunned characters, the gateway created by "*The Darkman Cometh*" song seems to pulse with a life of its own, seemingly inviting the characters and the creatures to enter its bright domain. The noises of excitement that comes from the ghouls increase until it reaches a crescendo.

Then as if mesmerized by something outside the room the ghouls suddenly stop their inane stomping and as one cock their head to the roof. Even though the piano continues to play, it becomes obvious that someone or something approaches.

For a few dread seconds there is nothing but the strained notes of the song being played. Then out in the hallway, the front door is splintered in its frame.

What the players do in the short time before the intruders reach the Music Hall is of little relevance, as even if they abandon their comrade at the piano, they will still encounter the creatures that have come to call.

These creatures are the Mi-Go, otherwise known as *The Fungi from Yuggoth*. They are the benefactors of Jack Kramer and his thugs and have come personally to finish the task he was so unable. The appearance of such alien creatures is quite a shock to the characters, whose mental states have

already been strained by the night's events. The appearance of the Mi-Go tops off the immensely strange events that have surrounded Jonathon Grey's death. All take 1/1D6 Sanity loss.

At this point (or during the events that follow) the character playing the piano may wish to stop. If he or she does so, the Gate will vanish from the window frame with an audible 'pop'.

As for the ghouls, the appearance of the Mi-Go sparks them into a frenzy that even the music cannot control. They immediately attack the Mi-Go with a fury that terrifies the characters. Sanity Loss of 0/1 for all.

As one, the ghouls leap to attack the newly arrived Mi-Go, who are prepared for such an event, and attempt to hold the creatures back with the metallic wands they carry. These sticks are very effective weapons which emit beams of bright light that cause anything they touch to instantaneously burst into flame! It is one thing when the beams strike a ghoul, and yet another thing altogether when they strike the walls of the Music Hall. Within moments, a handful of small fires are igniting all around the room!

As the battle continues, the characters must escape or they too will become casualties in this unworldly battle. It is important to impress on the players that the old house is quickly and irreversibly going up in flames and the fire will become a threat to their health in a matter of moments.

Escaping the inferno is not too difficult and a successful **Luck Roll** will ensure that they can make it outside the building before the fire is life-threatening. Those unlucky few that fail this roll take 1d3 damage from burns and cuts as they desperately make their way outside.

Once all the characters have managed to make their way outside the fire quickly claims the ancient wooden structure. In a matter of minutes the Grey House will become an inferno that destroys all around it. Only the two outbuildings escape unscathed.

While the characters watch the fire, the more observant among them notice that they are being watched by three men



in a late model Ford sedan - the same men that threatened the characters in the house earlier. If approached, they quickly make their getaway.

Conclusion

Within quarter of an hour the local fire department arrives, but the Grey House already beyond saving and the fireman can do little but ensure that the fire does not spread. Strangely there is little sign of the combatants that fought inside, either they too have been consumed by the flames, or by some miracle escaped unseen.

If the characters remain around long enough they will be detained by the attending officers. Oddly, the police seem uninterested in assigning blame for the fire to the players, or even finding out why they were at the Grey House at such a late hour. They are simply warned to keep their noses clean and 'get lost!'

Epilogue

The characters have stopped two

enemies of humanity on this long night and although their nerve has been tested on more than one occasion, they remain bloodied but unbowed. As a result the characters each receive a Sanity Reward of 1D10+2 Sanity and the knowledge that their hometown is a little safer at night.

However this adventure may just be the first of many, with the characters having a number of leads available to continue their investigations into the Cthulhu Mythos.

- Did any of the characters save the music sheets from the fire? If so what results might the 'music' have now the ghouls are no more? Can the Gateway be opened once again? And who else knows about the music and its effects?
- What of Kramer and his thugs? Will they leave the characters alone now that their patrons are no more? Are their benefactors in fact 'no more'? Are more Mi-Go roaming the Earth at this very moment planning the destruction of humans that slaughtered their kin?
- The Ghouls are all dead, destroyed by the fire that consumed the number One

Cemetery Road... or did they? If more Ghouls roam the underground of the city is anyone safe? And who is to say that they are the only creatures to stalk the sewers? What if a more dangerous threat lurks below?

Designers Notes

This adventure was actually created some five years ago as an introductory adventure for a number of players new to the Cthulhu Mythos. Original created as a 1920's game it intentional left open a number of avenues for future investigation allowing the players to dictate the direction of a short campaign. I hope that although updated to a modern setting it still holds the possibilities and intrigues it originally did. I know that played is the spirit was intended will allow ample opportunities for an interesting and exciting campaign.

*I couldn't conclude this with out adding my inspiration for the adventure. First and foremost I can contribute most, if not, all the ideas contained in the above to the Lovecraft stories **The Music of Erich Zann**, **Pickman's Model** and **The Lurking Fear**, as I'm sure you'll recognise if you read or have read these stories. However I also must say that the original premise of this adventure rests firmly on the introductory scenario presented in the 5th Edition Rulebook, **The Edge of Darkness**, to which I'm eternally grateful.*

The Mi-Go (The Fungi from Yuggoth)

The Mi-Go are the employers of Kramer and is Thugs, as well as the Masterminds behind the attack on Jonathon. This technologically advanced race is the bane of mankind and their fierce determination to keep humans a subservient race has meant that many of our greatest discoveries have been crushed or destroyed before there potential has been truly realised.

This is true again in the case of Jonathon Grey, composer extraordinaire, whose ability to create music so powerful that it summoned gateways to other worlds. Unfortunately his attempt at controlling the actions of the ghouls put him in direct competition with the Mi-Go. Unknown to him the Fungi of Yuggoth have laid in wait for Greys monthly cycle to begin again, so that they can find and recover the item they believe he uses to open the gates. Of course what they do not know is that Grey used no item at all to allow the ghouls to travel between worlds, but rather just his amazing musical talent.

The 6 Mi-Go in this adventure are all armed with Fire Lances weapons designed to ignite anything they touch, and only if the characters are extremely fortunate will they avoid the wrath of these weapons. More messengers than fighters they still pose a grave threat to the investigators fore filling their promise.



Sanity Loss 0 / 1D6

Damage Bonus +0

Weapons: Nippers 30%, damage 1D6 + grapple
Fire Lances 50%, damage 1D10 (1st and 2nd degree burns)

	<u>Str</u>	<u>Con</u>	<u>Siz</u>	<u>Dex</u>	<u>Pow</u>	<u>HP</u>
Mi-Go 1	10	14	14	20	13	14
Mi-Go 2	10	14	13	17	10	12
Mi-Go 3	11	13	8	14	12	12
Mi-Go 4	9	11	10	15	14	9
Mi-Go 5	10	10	11	17	9	13
Mi-Go 6	8	14	14	18	10	12

Also see the entry under Mi-Go in the main CoC Rule Book.



DANCING TO THE WRONG TUNE

Player Handouts

Jonathon M. Grey
Composer & Conductor

1 Cemetery Road
(City)

Player Handout 1

ANOTHER CEMETERY MURDER!

The City is again victim of serial killer lurking Cemetery District

Last night Police Officers discovered a third, as yet unnamed body, near the Cemetery. This new victim joins a growing list of names that have perished in or near our most sacred resting-place.

The Police are baffled to the perpetrator of these crimes but Chief O'Brien has stated publicly that no stone will be left unturned until this murderer is found and dealt with.

Player Handout 2

COUPLE VANISH FROM CEMETERY

Two Youths disappear from parked car in Cemetery District

Early this morning Officers from the Cemetery district were out searching for two, as yet, unnamed youths in and around the City Cemetery.

Although the Police are saying little at this moment, information has come to light that the disappearances are most definitely linked with foul play and are being treated with all seriousness by law enforcement agents.

Player Handout 3



To Whom It may Concern,

If you are reading this, then it is certain that I am dead. I feel this must be the case as I have been followed now for weeks. I do not know what these people want, but I believe they are willing to kill for it.

If (as I fear) I am dead, then I must beseech you to continue the task that I have been charged with - as my Uncle carried that burden before me, and his father (my grandfather) before him, so too must you, now perform this terrible task. The very souls of the people of this city hang in the balance!

I know this must all come as a shock to you. I am certain that I do not know you personally (I have contact with so few people these days). My only hope is that I can impress upon you how vital it is that the instructions I write be followed to the letter — or dire consequences will result. First you will need my Music — not the mundane pieces that passed for my music, but the compositions wrenched from the depths of my own tortured soul.

The ceremony I will describe must commence upon the stroke of midnight... no sooner... no later. There are things involved that know only of that fleeting moment of time that falls between the death of one day, and the birth of the next.

Just prior to the commencement of the ceremony, a fitting tribute must be brought to the Music Room in my home (there are plenty of these carcasses on hand). All interior doors of the house should be opened, and all outside door barred! At the appointed time, the chords of 'The Lurker at the Edge' must be played. Do not fear those that come. They will not harm those who play for them, those cursed melodies. Once all are present, the score of 'The Dark Man' must follow, until the light and the door arrive. They will do what they must. I beg of you, do not interfere with them!

Once they have gone, you must stop playing immediately, no matter the place it may be. Quickly then, leave the house and bar the door so no others may stumble upon it. Better still, destroy the cursed structure. Whichever course you choose, make certain that those hated melodies are never sung again - by instrument or man, as I wish no other to experience the horrors that I have witnessed.

I thank you now, as I fear I will never have another chance. I am sorry to bring you into this, but if not you then whom?

Yours,

Jonathon Grey



Nets of Mephistopheles

by A. Shane Murphy

Spider Crabs

Strength:	4	Initiative:	3
Constitution:	8	Move:	2 / 8 / 15 / 30
Agility:	5	Skill / Damage:	4 / 1d6, 1p1
Intelligence:	1	Hits:	20 / 40*
Education:	1	# Appear:	3d6
Charisma:	1		
Empathy:	0		

* AV 1, due to hard shell.

their poisonous bite, their only mode of attack is a small pair of very strong pincers just under their mandibles. They also spin large webs that are strong enough to catch some animals and even humans unlucky enough to wander into one. Their web requires an Average vs. Strength roll to break free.

Notes

The Dark Lord known to humans as Mephistopholes introduced these horrors in just the last few months. Even though they are a prolific species, food supply and the lack of real intelligence has helped to keep their numbers small. Ω

The Mythology

These creatures are relatively new and have no known historical counterpart.

The Reality

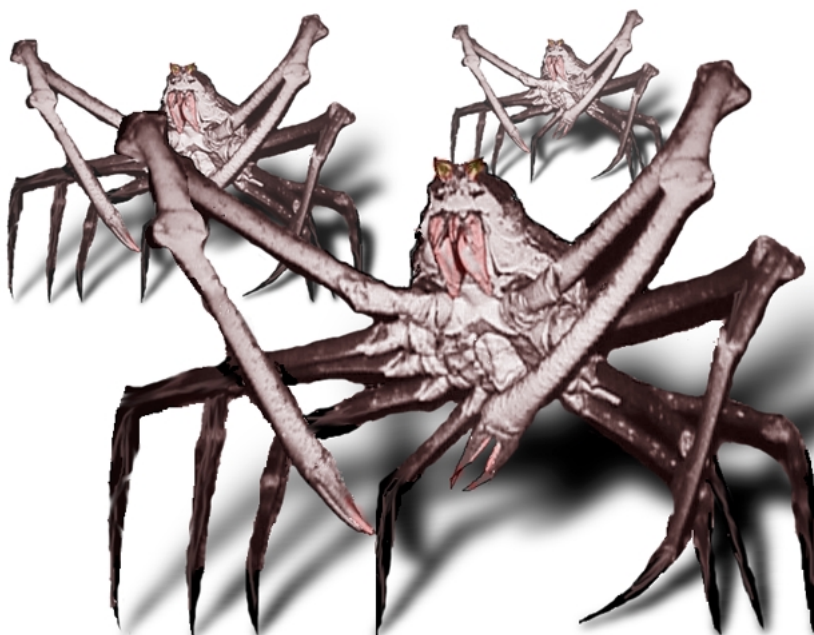
These alien arachnids only recently started appearing around dens of Insectoid ETs.

Combat Abilities

Spider Crabs will attack en masse from hiding, without regard for their own losses. Once engaged, they will never retreat from combat. One-on-one they are a nuisance, but in great numbers they can be very dangerous. Use extreme caution when entering a nest of them! Beside

Physical Appearance

They look similar to a large spider, with the shell of a crab - complete with a small pair of strong pincers, and a hard exoskeleton covering their entire body. Their body, including legs, is about 1 meter in diameter. The dark coloration of their shell helps them hide from their prey until it is too late (*in game terms this makes them one level more difficult to observe when in the shadows*). The hardness of the shell gives the Spider Crab an Armor Value of 1 in all hit locations.



The UNINVITED

A New Dark Race
by Lee Williams

This race is one of the more mysterious of the Darkling peoples. Much about them is still unknown, even by the other Dark races. Uncertain of their true name, since their arrival on Earth and activities in Britain and Europe they have become known as the 'Uninvited'.

Why are they here? It seems that they seek mainly to further accelerate the destruction that pollution and ecological ruin has already brought to the world. Our best guess is that they require the Earth as a colony for the rest of their species, and are changing the ecosphere to suit their own preferences. It is calculated that this change will eventually render the planet uninhabitable to human beings. The atmosphere will be filled with carbon dioxide, causing the temperature to rise sharply and make it impossible for Earthly life to function properly. If let continue, the ice caps will completely melt, acid rain will rise to an un-precedented level, and vastly increased amounts of background radiation will be released to make the Earth habit-able for them in their original form.

At the current time, they are believed to be using a form of empathic control to inhabit the cloned bodies of humans with their own minds and thoughts. In certain ways, they could be considered similar to Changelings, but in this case a copy of the human concerned is reconstructed after their death and then used as a vessel for the mind of the controlling being. The complete memories and attitudes of the original human are transferred into the controlling entities' brain, to help them blend almost seamlessly into the life path of the now deceased original.

The Uninvited are known to have certain empathic powers. Although the exact nature and strength of these are not certain, they appear to use the Psionic discipline of Empathy. They are

known to be capable of Telepathy, at least among themselves, as well as having the ability to Project Emotion on humans.

They do however have an Empathic weakness that may well be exploited in order to defeat their machinations. If one of their human forms is killed the empathic link causes all the Uninvited to feel extreme pain, and as a result renders them incapacitated for a few moments. and this may give minion

hunters an edge.

The telltale symptoms are that an Uninvited reconstruction will faint and fall to the floor, whilst bleeding profusely from the nose and ear cavities. The eyes become pure white, with no discernible iris or pupil. Also, they will give an extremely high-pitched scream, barely audible to the human ear. These effects will incapacitate the beings for approximately sixty seconds,

after which they return to normal but with very low reserves of strength.

The mindset of the Uninvited is somewhat odd. They all work together to achieve their ultimate goal, and therefore it is conceivable that they share a communal mind. However, humans prize their individuality and it may be that the group that is active on Earth might be seen as unusual by the rest of their species, in that they are capable of functioning as individuals. Among themselves, they think of the human personalities held within their minds as 'drivers' and let the stored memories take over when necessary. They always retain complete control and never let the stored personality run free.

As they do not have names in the human sense, they use the prefix 'the' to define themselves added to the name of the replaced human. Thus, a replacement might think of himself as 'the John Smith' and the original human John Smith (or at least his memories) would be thought of as 'the driver'.



Eyal Faingersh (C) 1999



REFEREES INFORMATION

In human form, the Uninvited possess somewhat enhanced physical statistics. However, in order to sustain their mental capacities they will use what appear to be normal ventolin inhalers as used by asthma sufferers. These inhalers are filled with a chemical mix thought to be similar to the atmosphere of their native proto-dimension. A good way to incapacitate them is to blast them with a jet of pure oxygen from a cylinder. This has the same effect as a pepper spray on a human, and in high enough concentration it can even kill them.

In fact, one of their number was unwittingly killed by a paramedic crew after a car crash, when they put him onto oxygen to keep him alive until they reached the hospital. When this body was subjected to a post-mortem, the pathologist was astonished to discover that all of the internal organs in the main body cavity were all shrivelled and burnt to cinders. The reason for this is unclear but it may be a way of concealing any slight internal physical differences.

Remember, they are already among us...

The Uninvited

Strength	8	Education	10
Move	as human	Constitution	8
Charisma	as original human	Skill/Damage	8 / 1D6
Agility	6	Empathy	12
Hits	30 / 60	Intelligence	10
Initiative	6	# Appear	varies

Special:

Telepathy	8	Project Thought	6
Project Emotion	6	Willpower Drain	4

Other powers from the Psionic school of Empathy may be available.

Note:

Figures given here are for a standard Uninvited clone body. It is possible that there are other types of clone bodies available for special purposes.

This article was inspired by the 1997 British TV mini-series The Uninvited.

Ω

ART GALLERY

This feature is dedicated to the many pieces of art we receive that are truly remarkable works, that we didn't want to wait for a related story to come along to use.

This time around, we are featuring "Easy Prey" by Andrew Simmons. Just looking at this piece, one is given to wonder which subject is the predator, and which is the prey - which we're pretty sure was the intent all along.

Andrew has submitted a number of pencil sketches (both color and not), and expressed an interest in doing some more pictures for us by request. You can expect to see a lot more of his work in future issues.



GENERIC

HORROR ADVENTURE GENERATOR

by Dale Robert Thurber

The following tables are meant to aid in generating ideas for adventures. Keep rolling on the various tables until you find a combination that appeals to you, or inspires you with an idea for an adventure of your own.

ADVENTURE GENERATOR (D12)

Adventure Type

- 1 - Artifact Chase
- 2 - Bug Hunt
- 3 - New Contact
- 4 - Data Recovery
- 5 - Paranormal Investigation
- 6 - Extraction
- 7 - Infiltration
- 8 - Murder Investigation
- 9 - Payoff
- 10 - Quarantine
- 11 - Search & Destroy
- 12 - Surveillance

TYPE OF SCENES (D20)

- 1 - 5 Challenge - basic scene type (minimum 1)
- 6 - 8 Combat - basic scene type (minimum 1)
- 9 - 13 Encounter - basic scene type (minimum 1)
- 14 - Recap
- 15 - Briefing
- 16 - Cut-Scene
- 17 - Forgotten Scene
- 18 - Flashback
- 19 - Summation
- 20 - Cliffhanger

** Scenes shouldn't be that random - some scenes simply must be included, based on your adventure - refer to pages 241-243 of the Dark*Matter sourcebook.*

ADVENTURE TOPICS (d4 & d100)

Adventure Topics have been divided into two tables. To select a topic, roll both a **d4** and **d100**. The d4 result determines which table. The d100 selects the topic from that table. On d100 results of 76+, reroll.

Adventure Topic Table #1 (d4 result: 1 or 2)

- | | | |
|-----------------------------------|---|--|
| 1 - Abduction | 27 - Code breaking | 51 - Golem |
| 2 - Advanced Aircraft | 28 - Computer hackers | 52 - Government takeover |
| 3 - Alchemy | 29 - Concentration camps | 53 - Haunting |
| 4 - Alien artifact | 30 - Corporate adept | 54 - The Horten Brothers |
| 5 - Alien captured | 31 - Cover up | 55 - Human sacrifice |
| 6 - Alien colonization plan | 32 - Crop circles | 56 - Immortality treatment |
| 7 - Alien escapes | 33 - Cryogenics | 57 - Institute attacked |
| 8 - Andean mummies | 34 - Crystal skulls | 58 - Interdimensional doorway |
| 9 - Arcane tome found | 35 - Dinosaurs | 59 - Jersey Devil |
| 10 - Archaeological find | 36 - Desert survival | 60 - JFK |
| 11 - Arctic survival | 37 - Drugs | 61 - Kidnapping |
| 12 - Assassins | 38 - Earthquakes, unnatural | 62 - Lazar, Bob |
| 13 - Astrology | 39 - Easter Island | 63 - Loch Ness |
| 14 - Atlantis | 40 - El Chupacabra | 64 - Lost tribe found |
| 15 - Automatic writing | 41 - Electronic voice phenomena | 65 - Lunar cycle madness |
| 16 - Bermuda Triangle | 42 - Epidemic | 66 - Mass insanity |
| 17 - Biowarfare | 43 - Face on Mars | 67 - Martial artist |
| 18 - Black helicopters | 44 - False memory syndrome | 68 - Message from the future / past |
| 19 - Blackmail | 45 - Fatima | 69 - Meteors / meteorites |
| 20 - Blessed Virgin Mary sighting | 46 - Files stolen | 70 - Military experiment |
| 21 - Bombing | 47 - Flight 401 | 71 - Mindwalking criminal - mind control |
| 22 - Cattle mutilation | 48 - Fountain of Youth | 72 - Miracle medicine |
| 23 - Channeling con man | 49 - Frogs (falling from sky / mutations) | 73 - Missing corpse |
| 24 - Chemical warfare | 50 - Genetics (gene-splicing / mutations) | 74 - Missing persons |
| 25 - Christian cult | | 75 - Morrison, Jim |
| 26 - Circus freaks | | |



Adventure Topic Table #2 (d4 result:3 or 4)

- | | | |
|--|--|--|
| 1 - Mothmen | 27 - Psychic network | 52 - Spring-heeled Jack |
| 2 - Moon secrets | 28 - Public miracle | 53 - Stigmata |
| 3 - Mountain expedition | 29 - Pyramids | 54 - Stock market mindwalking |
| 4 - Mysterious fog | 30 - Quarantine | 55 - Stonehenge |
| 5 - Mysterious suicide | 31 - Radiation burns | 56 - Super weapon |
| 6 - Mystery objects falling from the sky | 32 - Rainforest survival | 57 - Swamp survival |
| 7 - Nanotechnology | 33 - Recruiting new H. Institute staff | 58 - Teleportation |
| 8 - Nerve gas | 34 - Religious artifacts | 59 - Templars return |
| 9 - New school of magic | 35 - Retarded mindwalker | 60 - Tesla |
| 10 - New mutant | 36 - Revelations | 61 - Time traveler |
| 11 - New species | 37 - Reverse gravity zones | 62 - Trephination |
| 12 - New technology | 38 - Runes | 63 - Twenty-three |
| 13 - Numerology | 39 - Ruins | 64 - Undersea diving |
| 14 - Obelisks | 40 - Satellites | 65 - Unexpected weather (natural?) |
| 15 - Obtain secret files | 41 - Satanic cult | 66 - UFO crash |
| 16 - Occult society | 42 - Scandal frame up | 67 - UFO sighting |
| 17 - Ooparts (out-of-place artifacts) | 43 - Secret lab | 68 - Vampires |
| 18 - Oswald doubles | 44 - Serial killer | 69 - Villains, unusual (see chart below) |
| 19 - Pagan cult | 45 - Shapechangers | 70 - Virtual reality |
| 20 - Petrified man | 46 - Sinking building | 71 - Virus |
| 21 - Pollution | 47 - Slave labor camps | 72 - Visions |
| 22 - Possession | 48 - Solar flare | 73 - Warren Commission |
| 23 - Prediction program | 49 - Spaceship enters our solar system | 74 - Werewolf mutation |
| 24 - Project Mongoose | 50 - Spirit photography | 75 - Wiccans / witchcraft |
| 25 - Project Phoenix | 51 - Spontaneous human combustion | |
| 26 - Prophecies | | |

VILLAIN / FOE / ENEMY ARCHETYPES (d6 & d20)

No adventure is complete without a memorable Villain. The Villain / Foe / Enemy Archetypes have been divided into two tables. To select a villain, roll both a **d6** and **d20**. The d6 result determines which table the d20 result is compared to.

Villain Table #1 (d6 result: 1 - 3)

- 1 - Alien
- 2 - Anarchist
- 3 - Bomb expert
- 4 - Brute
- 5 - "Bug"
- 6 - Bureaucrat from within HI
- 7 - Channeler
- 8 - Con artist
- 9 - Crazy animal
- 10 - Diabolist
- 11 - Demon / devil
- 12 - FX-powered person
- 13 - Gadgeteer
- 14 - Gang member
- 15 - Ghost tied to a certain locale
- 16 - Hacker
- 17 - Hemomancer
- 18 - Hermeticist
- 19 - Invisible man
- 20 - Insane plotter

Villain Table #2 (d6 result: 4 - 6)

- 1 - Martial artist
- 2 - Mad scientist
- 3 - Mind controller
- 4 - Militiaman
- 5 - Mob Boss
- 6 - Mutant, Animal
- 7 - Mutant, Human
- 8 - Possessed person
- 9 - Pyrokinetic
- 10 - Religious fanatic / cultist
- 11 - Seducer / Temptress
- 12 - Serial killer
- 13 - Soldier
- 14 - Street Punk / Thug
- 15 - Terrorist
- 16 - Thief
- 17 - Vampire
- 18 - Voodoo practitioner
- 19 - Werewolf
- 20 - Witch

All Flesh Must Be Eaten



Living Dead Girl

by Christopher Haynes

HISTORY PART ONE

INTRODUCTION

“Who is this irresistible creature who has an insatiable love for the dead?”

“Living Dead Girl” is a world setting for Eden Studios’ ALL FLESH MUST BE EATEN, a survival horror roleplaying game that allows you to play in a world infested by the walking dead. This particular deadworld was inspired by Rob Zombie’s song “Living Dead Girl,” and is based on a number of sources, including Chaos! Comics’ EVIL ERNIE, the three RETURN OF THE LIVING DEAD films, and the AFMBE deadworld “Mein Zombie.”

The “Living Dead Girl” deadworld is set in the cosmology of two other Eden Studios roleplaying games, ARMAGEDDON and WITCHCRAFT, and Zombie Masters are encouraged to purchase and explore these games (which use the same Unisystem as AFMBE) for more detailed information. Chroniclers of ARMAGEDDON and WITCHCRAFT are certainly invited to make use of this material for their own campaigns as well. Likewise, several different Story Ideas have been provided for Game Masters, each with suggestions of how they might be adapted to other RPGs.

If you have any questions or comments, please give me a piece of your mind. The Living Dead Girl tells me that pieces from the frontal and occipital lobes are particularly tender, and make for an excellent roast, or can even be diced for a quick snack...

Christopher Haynes
christopherhaynes@home.com

“When once the restraining talisman of the Christian cross is broken in Germany, then the fury of the ancient warriors, the berserk rage of which the Nordic poets sang, will surge up again. The old stone gods will rise from long-forgotten ruins and rub the dust of a thousand years from their eyes; and Thor with his giant hammer will leap up and smash the Gothic cathedrals. And when that crash comes, it will be like nothing heard before in history.”

- Heinrich Heine

The gods of mythology and the angels and demons of religious belief have a common origin, an origin that dates back to the time of Creation. Gods and angels are the descendants of Sephyr, the Tools of the Creator, elemental beings that shaped our reality. The Sephyr



evolved into two distinct orders of beings: the Seraphim and the Titans. The Seraphim were the beings of spirit, the emissaries and servants of the Creator. The Titans were embodiments of different aspects of reality, such as War, Death and Justice, and they were the first to come to Earth to set themselves up as deities.

The rise of monotheism was not mere happenstance; even as human missionaries gained converts throughout Europe, the pagan pantheons were being besieged and overwhelmed by the Heavenly Hosts. The Titans were forced to stay out of the affairs of man, and most of them became the Old Gods, remembered only in folk tales and ancient myths. Centuries later, some Titans returned to the world, but in utter secrecy.

Margo Schreck was born in Munich, Germany in 1928. Her mother Emma died during childbirth, but her father, Dr. Herman Schreck, raised his daughter as best as he could. Dr. Schreck was not only a brilliant biologist, but also a war veteran, and his experiences as a medic during World War I still haunted him. Fascinated with overcoming the inevitability of death, Schreck's research brought him into repeated contact with other prominent German scientists of the 1930s.

In 1933, Dr. Schreck joined Munich's National Socialist party and, over the following years, became a young colleague of other Nazi doctors, such as Karl Clauberg, Sigmund Rascher, and Horst Schumann. Both Schreck and Rascher had a special hatred of the Roman Catholic Church (as did most of the Nazi party), but Herman became increasingly drawn to the growing "New Heathen" (Neuheiden) movement and the traditional Nordic Faith that had been followed by the Vikings and, before them, the diverse Germanic of Europe and Asia.

The Norse Gods were worshipped by large numbers of people until as late as 900 AD, when a combination of Christian missionaries (and Christian persecution) and the Seraphim's attack on Asgard ended their existence as an active pantheon. In late 19th and early 20th Century, however, there had been many

flourishing esoteric orders in Germany and Austria that sought to establish a reborn Germanic identity and to reconnect the people with their repressed archetypes. One of the most significant of these Orders was founded in Germany in 1912 - the German Order, and from this sprang the Thule Society.

Both societies - which eventually became almost interchangeable in ideas and even membership - were originally composed of the German officer class and professions, who were convinced of a massive international Jewish conspiracy backed up by occult practices. To counter this they established their own Nordic occult-based Freemasonry, complete with elaborate rituals and robes, Viking helmets and swords. More importantly, the Thule Society - which took its name from the fabled land of Ultima Thule, a sort of paradise on Earth - began to recruit new members from the lower classes and disseminated anti-Semitic material in its various newspapers. One of these, a Munich newspaper named the *Völkischer Beobachter*, eventually became the official journal of the German Workers' Party in 1919. A year later the party became the National Socialist German Workers' Party (NSDAP) under the leadership of Adolf Hitler.

The Thule Society was active in efforts to overthrow the Bavarian Communist Government and journalist, poet, and occult student Dietrich Eckart, who was a major intellectual influence on Hitler in the early years, aided their propaganda effort. The swastika flag adopted by the NSDAP was the brainchild of another Thulist, Dr. Friedrich Krohn. Krohn suggested a swastika on a white disc with a red background - red for blood and the social ideal, white for nationalism and purity of race, and the swastika for 'the struggle for victory of Aryan man'. Hitler was delighted but for one detail - the traditional 'right-handed' swastika was to be reversed, forming an evocation of evil, spiritual devolution and Black Magic.

With the victory of the NSDAP, the occult tradition was carried on in the Third Reich mainly by the SS

(Schutzstaffel), whose Reichsführer, Heinrich Himmler, was also an avid student of the occult. Josef Goebbels pretended to an interest in the occult and in astrology in order to please the Führer, and Rudolf Hess may have dabbled in occult matters, but Himmler was the one true 'sorcerer's apprentice' in Hitler's inner circle. Reinhard Heydrich, head of the Security and Intelligence Service (Sicherheitsdienst - SD) reported to Himmler in 1939 that he had discovered the case of a witch called Margareth Himbler, burnt in Germany in 1629. The similarity of names encouraged Himmler's interest in German witchcraft, and eventually, in 1935, an SS occult research department, the top-secret *Geheimnisvolle Korps* (Occult Corps) was established as a branch of Himmler's *Ahnenerbe* (Ancestral Heritage Bureau).

The center of the Occult Corps became Castle Wewelsburg in Westphalia, which was bought as a ruin in 1934 and rebuilt over the next 11 years at a cost of 13 million marks. The central banqueting hall contained a vast round table with throne-like seats to accommodate Himmler and 12 of his favorite officers, making his "Order of the Black Knights" a Dark Covenant of 13. Beneath this hall was a *Walhalla*, or 'Hall of the Dead', where plinths stood around a stone table and the covenant could practice their witchcraft in secret.

Himmler was so obsessed with witchcraft that the Occult Corps eventually looted more than 140,000 books on the subject from libraries across Nazi-occupied Europe. He believed that the persecution of witches in the 17th century represented a kind of Holocaust of the German race carried out by the Roman Catholic Church. "The witch-hunting cost the German people hundreds of thousands of mothers and women, cruelly tortured and executed," Himmler said. He deployed the Occult Corps to discover traces of an old Germanic magic that survived the witch-hunts. Among their discoveries was the Black Magic of evil seers and mediums: necromancy.

"Conquer death and we shall conquer

the world,” Hitler instructed the Occult Corps in 1936, and Dr. Herman Schreck was among the first scientists recruited to do just that. Just as Valhalla’s dead warriors would fight again when the Twilight of the Gods came, Germany would use magic and science to create an army of immortal soldiers who could never be stopped. Project “Götterdämmerung” had begun.

HISTORY PART TWO

“Herman Göring would later say Adolf Hitler was never the same after the suicide of his beloved niece... Curiously, shortly after her death, Hitler looked with disdain on a piece of ham being served during breakfast and refused to eat it, saying it was like eating a corpse. From that moment on, he refused to eat meat.”

- The Rise of Adolf Hitler: Success and a Suicide

From 1938 to 1942, while Dr. Schreck and his staff experimented with gasses, chemicals, and serums while combing through the Himmler’s stolen texts, his daughter was an active member of the League of Young Girls (Jungmädelsbund - JM). The JM was a constituent organization of the Hitler Youth (Hitler Jugend - HJ), which placed particular emphasis on pre-military training. In 1942, Margo turned 14 and joined the League of German Girls (Bund Deutscher Mädel -BDM) and was outfitted with the navy skirt and white blouse that marked her as one of the future mothers of the Greater German Reich. She attended weekly meetings where she did handicrafts, sang songs, and listened to lectures on National Socialist ideology with a particular emphasis on racial theory (Rassenkunde). Like all girls in the BDM, Margo joined the boys from the HJ in training for duties in the anti-aircraft batteries and particularly in working on the land.

BDM girls stood waiting on the platforms of railway stations ready to ply troops in transit with drink and food. They also worked as secretaries and

receptionists for the railway stations and the armed forces. The girls assisted the Red Cross and served in military hospitals, where they provided first aid during air raids, often at considerable risk to their lives. They acted as nursemaids, supervised kindergartens, worked in KLV (Kinderlandverschickung) camps for evacuated children, and helped in old peoples’ homes. They helped to look after war widows, refugees and the homeless by bringing them food and coal, repairing their homes, tending their gardens, and helping them replace their papers and ration cards. They formed choirs to entertain the sick and wounded, and produced plays for their amusement.

During her years in the BDM Margo often visited her father in Project Götterdämmerung’s secret laboratory in Munich. It was there in 1944 that she first met the project’s liaison to the Occult Corps: a handsome SS (Schutzstaffel) officer named Walter Fuhrmann. He was a superior physical specimen, proud of bearing, sound in morals and ideals, and had the mental toughness to execute the most distasteful assignments. Walter initially served in the SD and gained a great deal of experience in counter-intelligence before joining the Occult Corps and, in time, the secret Order of Black Knights.

Walter had met many BDM girls at social events arranged to bring SS men together with young women of several Nazi organizations. These get-acquainted sessions were casual and quite proper, and for most of the men of the SS, the meetings frequently led pre- or extra-marital relationships. Walter had been given every encouragement and opportunity to sire children in great numbers, for Himmler had decided that it was the patriotic duty of every SS man to sire at least four children; he usually denied promotion to childless officers such as SS-Obersturmbannführer Fuhrmann.

The SS had other uses for the BDM as well. To mobilize all remaining strength for the war effort, the SS began recruiting older BDM girls for the new SS Female Assistance Corps (SS-Helferinnenkorps

- SSK). Normally when a BDM girl reached 17 she joined an organization called Glaube und Schönheit (“Faith and Beauty”), in which she would receive advanced training in domestic science and preparation for marriage. In 1944, however, it was far more important for the girls from this BDM auxiliary to free SS men for front-line duty by working as telephone operators, telegraph clerks, radio operators, and female assistants for special purposes.

Efforts were made to recruit the daughters of SS families, and Margo was not only related to SS Brigadeführer Julius Schreck, but her father also worked for the SS occult research department. Eight weeks after being inducted into the SS academy (Reichsschule-SS) on the northern outskirts of Munich, Margo was sworn in as a member of the SSK and attached to the Occult Corps as Walter Fuhrmann’s assistant.

Himmler wished to protect the girls of the SSK from chauvinist abuse, and had placed special emphasis on professional relationships with male members of the SS. His men were expected to deal with the girls in a “clean, decent, and knightly-comradely fashion.” Within a year, however, Walter and Margo had fallen in love. Although Margo had been thoroughly indoctrinated in her duty to bear children for the Reich, in or out of wedlock, Walter felt the need to solemnize their relationship. Of course the Reichsführer-SS was hostile to the “hypocrisy” of monogamy, but he continued to tolerate conventional marriage. SSK assistants who wished to get married had to get permission from Himmler and the Race and Settlement Main Office, but before Margo received their approval, disaster struck.

In 1945, Project Götterdämmerung’s laboratory was hit during the Allied bombing raids on Munich and Nuremberg, which hitherto had remained virtually untouched. Margo became trapped in the rubble, and some of the project’s gas canisters ruptured, poisoning her before she could escape. By the time Walter reached Margo’s body, she was already dead.



Dr. Schreck and several of his staff survived, but he was driven mad with grief. Although the secret to immortality still eluded them, Project Götterdämmerung had tried using magical formulas to develop a serum that could violate the magical Life and Death Cycle. If such a serum was injected into the bodies of men, it would allow the dead to continue inhabiting their own flesh long after they should have surrendered it. The Nazis could then conceivably create an army of undead berserkers, “draugar,” who could never be stopped.

Unfortunately, Project Götterdämmerung had little success with necromancy up until now, and the newest formula was still untested. Now Dr. Schreck was determined to make it work. He would use the new serum to raise his daughter’s dead body. As the pigmentation seemingly leached out of her body and she began to stir, Herman cried out that his white-skinned daughter had conquered death, for she was now Hel, the mythological Queen of the Dead made flesh. Indeed, Dr. Herman Schreck was the first to discover that Margo was gone, and in her place was a living dead girl named Hela... and flesh was what she hungered for.

HISTORY PART THREE

“Nothing in Germany is more alive than our dead.”

Baldur von Schirach, Reich Leader for Youth Education in the NSDAP

Hela was more than just Hel’s avatar, however; she was, in a sense, her daughter. In Norse mythology, Hel was the ruler of Helheim (“house of Hel”), the Realm of the Dead in Niflheim (“house of mists”), and was the most feared and hated of the Nordic Titans. She was the youngest child of the evil god Loki and the giantess Angrboda, and the Norse gods had abducted Hel and her brothers from Angrboda’s hall and cast them into the underworld - a place of icy fogs and mists, darkness and cold. There Hel built her a great keep with towering walls and gates, Eljudnir (“home of the dead”), and

distributed those who were sent to her: the wicked and those who died of sickness or old age. She welcomed them into her hall (Damp-With-Sleet) and shared her provisions with them; her plate was Hunger and her knife was Famine. The dead might even dream of her embraces or share her Sick-Bed.

Also in Niflheim was Nidhogg (“tearer of corpses”), a monstrous serpent which gnawed at the roots of the World Tree Yggdrasil. The Dread Biter lurked in Nastrond, where it ate corpses to sustain itself until the final conflict, a Götterdämmerung that would forever change the world. Eventually, both the Seraphim and the Titans had realized that Nidhogg was actually an aspect of Leviathan - an entity from beyond Reality that was seeking to enter our world and ultimately destroy it. Like the angels and the other Old Gods, Hel also had visions of the war with Leviathan that was to come. When Dr. Schreck reanimated his daughter’s body, Hel slipped out of her prison (it would not be the first time - during the Black Plague, which ravaged Norway and other parts of Scandinavia to an even greater degree than the rest of Western Europe, Hel was said to travel the countryside).

Hel then created an avatar by imprinting a portion of her own soul on Margo Schreck’s, modifying it to some degree. These modifications affected Hela’s appearance, personality and inherent powers, although Margo’s original soul and her rearing and environment also had an impact. The result was a strange mixture of human and divine. As Hel’s avatar, Hela was the spiritual offspring of Hel, a human being whose soul was modified into a closer resemblance to the Essence matrix of the Old Goddess. The result was a woman who shared many traits with her spiritual “parent,” from powers to personality, but who was an independent creature with her own free will and destiny.

Margo retained some of her old intellect, and even though she was now a zombie, she still had a kind of animal cunning and could even talk, although it was not a pretty sound. Nobody knows

what she said to her father, but by the time Walter and the surviving scientists learned what Dr. Schreck had done, it was too late to save him. Hela had murdered Herman and anyone else who had encountered her since she rose from the dead, and while there wasn’t necessarily much left of their bodies after she had eaten, her victims also rose to become her undead slaves. Walter and his men were now facing an entire pack of zombies under Hela’s psychic control; monsters fueled by rage and fresh meat, and with each casualty their numbers were growing. To make matters worse, their queen recovered from any damage that was done to her. No matter how many zombies the Nazis destroyed, Hela herself seemed unstoppable, and soon Munich’s bombed-out ruins were overrun with the walking dead.



Munich’s top Nazi party official, Paul Giesler, was Gauleiter (district leader) of Bavaria and the holder of an honor badge in gold for his earlier service as a Storm Troop leader. Giesler hoped that the problem could be contained and eliminated before it spread any further - particularly to neighboring Dachau, which provided new material to Project Götterdämmerung for Dr. Schreck’s studies. Located 12 miles north of Munich, Dachau was one of Germany’s worst and most notorious camps, and had been the scene of medical experiments



carried out on hundreds of inmates by Dr. Schreck's old friend and colleague, SS-Untersturmführer Dr. Rascher. Neither Giesler nor anyone else in Munich wanted to see another harrowing of hell in that place. A local organization of German insurgents led by United States Army captain Ruppert Gerngross, however, misunderstood Giesler's intentions and prevented the authorities from destroying the bridges leading out of the city so that the Americans would have little trouble getting into town when the 7th Army came.

As an ever-growing army of the undead feasted on the people of Munich, Walter wondered if the collapse of Germany and the rise of the walking dead tallied exactly with what could be expected of the Black Order's pact with evil powers. Did the essence of such magic lie in sacrifice: an orgy of blood and destruction? Hela's judgment was clouded with rage, and she somehow amplified the hate and bloodlust inside each and every zombie. The creatures seemed bent on destruction for its own sake, not only killing humans, but destroying buildings or anything else that got in their path. Telepathically connected by Hela's psychic powers, even the most stupid zombies showed an amazing ability to work together, especially when it came to hunting down the living.

Finally, the surviving scientists created an experimental weapon: a Mauser that fired a projectile that injected liquid nitrogen into the target. If Hela's brain could be targeted, the gel might render her "unconscious" for several minutes, which might be just enough time for the humans to transfer her to another facility for study. Also, without their queen to keep the lines of communication open, the undead would be leaderless and much more manageable - especially those zombies whose brains had already been damaged or rotted away. Walter decided that he would be the one to fire the rifle, and a single shot aimed at Hela's forehead put her down. With no time to spare, the young officer helped the scientists place her body in a specially

prepared drum that would keep Hela in suspended animation.

In the meantime, the remaining German troops tried desperately to isolate the infected residents and the dead. Giesler refused to allow anyone to leave the city under any circumstances, forcing Walter and his fellow survivors to remain behind as Hela's drum (along with the remaining records of the project's experiments) was placed on a military truck headed for a nearby Occult Corps research facility in Nuremberg.

What they didn't know at the time was that the Americans had already reached Nuremberg, and were now only days away from Dachau and Munich. The truck never reached the facility; an attack by the 7th Army on the German convoy killed the soldiers before the Americans could learn just what it was they were transporting. It wasn't until the Army liberated Dachau and encountered a small, cheering crowd in Munich that the Americans discovered the horrifying truth: the ruins were filled with the walking dead. In several neighborhoods, the German troops were still busy fighting for their lives against the monsters, and the men of the Army's 45th Division had a long, vicious room-to-room fight with hungry zombies in Munich's SS-Reichsschule. The Americans soon learned what the Germans had already discovered - their guns were almost useless against the undead.

The 7th Army fought for as long as they could, before ultimately calling in tactical air forces that dropped enough bombs on Munich to destroy the last remaining zombies. The War Department brought Hela's drum back to the United States, where it was eventually handed over to the Army's Chemical, Biological, and Radiological Warfare support unit. The drum was shuffled around for years and finally placed in a storage dump near New York City. The site was forgotten until 1991, when a group of neo-Nazi youths secretly gained access to the dump and found what they were looking for. The skinheads took Hela's drum and delivered it to Walter Fuhrmann.

HISTORY PART FOUR

"Join hands with the heroes in America, Britain, Iceland, Denmark and other White countries who have raised the holy Swastika banner and defended it with their blood. It has risen from the ashes of Berlin, and never shall it be hauled down again."

*- George Lincoln Rockwell,
founder of the American Nazi Party*

Walter had made a narrow escape from Munich in 1945, when the city's hungry zombies had ambushed the unsuspecting 7th Army. He'd hoped to reach the research facility in Nuremberg, but he soon discovered that the Americans now occupied almost all of Bayern. There was nothing he could do to rescue Margo and it was no longer safe to remain in Germany; the Third Reich was on the verge of collapse. Even Hitler knew that all hope had gone, although he waited in his bunker until April 30, 1945 before committing suicide with Eva Braun, whom he had just married. The date was significant: it was the day that ends in Walpurgis Night - the high feast of the powers of darkness.

As much as Walter loved Germany and the Reich, this was no longer a place for him now. Every day the Allies were arresting more of his old comrades; zealous members of the Red Army had shot many of them on sight. Husbands and fathers, sons and brothers were being made to watch while whole squads of Russian soldiers violated their women. German militiamen were doused in gasoline and set aflame. Babies with their heads bashed in littered the floors of ravaged homes. Soviet troops were urged on by propaganda leaflets proclaiming "The hour of revenge has struck!"

Walter knew that even if the Soviets didn't kill him, the Americans would certainly make him reveal secrets about the Fatherland he was not prepared to divulge. Escape was the only option. He had to find some type of escape out of Germany; out of Europe. He had heard rumors of a way out that could be used to his advantage - if they were true.



Travelling to Fusen, a small town outside of Munich, Walter took refuge in Neuschwanstein, the lovely picturesque castle that dominated the region. Inside the Nazis had hidden mountains of artistic treasures, and the Allies had not dared to bomb the area. Compared to the rest of Germany, Castle Neuschwanstein was a virtual paradise of tranquility.

Walter soon learned of an organization code-named "ODESSA" which was equipped with three separate tentacles reaching around the globe. Tentacle One was assembled by Wehrmacht officer Reinhard Gehlen from the vast Nazi intelligence service - in its new guise it would be known as the "Gehlen Organization" or, simply, "the Org." Tentacle Two, the work of SS-Standartenführer Otto Skorzeny, was a system of "ratlines" used to desert the sinking Reich and relocate prominent Nazis in South and Central America, Mexico, the Middle East, and Indonesia. Tentacle Three, also the work of Skorzeny (in collaboration with his father-in-law Hjalmar Schacht, president of Hitler's Reichsbank), handled foreign transport of Third Reich assets. Once abroad, Tentacle Three established dozens of front companies. Through ODESSA, Vessler explained, escape was possible.

After making the necessary arrangements, Walter found himself in Syria for a time before reaching the Brazilian city of Sao Paulo. Despite the fact that Brazil sent troops to fight alongside the Allies in Europe, its government had also allowed other Nazis fleeing Germany to settle in the country. In Sao Paulo, eight of them had already filled a bank vault with millions of dollars worth of cash, gold bars and jewelry stolen from victims of the Holocaust and plundered from occupied Europe. The hoard was deposited in the name of Albert Blume, a German who came to Brazil before the Second World War and acted as a banker for other Nazis who fled to South America later.

Just as ODESSA had helped Walter and his colleagues escape to Brazil, so did the U.S. military round up Nazi

scientists and bring them to the United States. The War Department had originally intended merely to debrief them and send them back to Germany, but when it realized the extent of the scientists' knowledge and expertise, the Americans decided it would be a waste to send the scientists back home. The War Department decided to keep the Nazi scientists in America and make them U.S. citizens. By September 1946, "Project Paperclip" was bringing even the most ardent Nazi scientists to the United States to work on America's behalf during the Cold War, and the operation for eleven more years until, in 1957, the West German government protested that the U.S. had stripped it of its "scientific skills."

In the meantime, while his fellow expatriates found jobs as "security advisers" in Latin America, Walter learned a great deal from Blume. Drawing upon ODESSA's hidden assets while working for a number of banking and financial industries in Brazil, Walter amassed a sizable fortune of his own before moving to Milwaukee, Wisconsin in 1958. Shortly thereafter he became an official supporter of George Lincoln Rockwell's newly created "American Nazi Party" as well as other neo-Nazi organizations, and used his money and influence to gain control of them - but these were not his only goals. Walter secretly began recruiting Nazi scientists who, despite their newfound positions in the American scientific community, were still loyal to Germany. Walter knew they could be of great use to him personally, for he was still obsessed with finding Margo Schreck.

Walter continued to recruit more scientists over the years until finally, in 1991, his neo-Nazi agents discovered an old Army file that had been lost in 1947. Inside was an inventory of several supply dumps in the New York area, including the one that Hela's drum had been stored in. Now 78 years old, Walter would be reunited with his fiancée at last. A gathering of forensic specialists, neurologists, biologists, chemists, and toxicologists followed Walter to

Manhattan, where they could begin work behind the façade of a small research center. Between them, these twelve scientists had devoted more than three decades trying to unlock the secrets of Project Götterdämmerung's achievements. Now they could finally put that research to use.

HISTORY PART FIVE

"And now on foreign soil National Socialism has gained its first conscious martyr - a man who did nothing save to enter the lists for Germany which is not only his sacred right but his duty in this world: a man who did nothing save remember his homeland and pledge himself to her in loyalty. He, too, was murdered, just like so many others... We understand the challenge to battle and we take up the gage! My dear comrade! You have not fallen in vain!"

- Adolf Hitler

The scientists released Margo from her drum and began a protracted series of tests. They reproduced Dr. Schreck's formulas, and discovered that even the serum he'd injected into his daughter had no effect upon their cadavers. When combined with the gasses that had saturated Margo's corpse in 1945, however, the resulting compound did animate lifeless tissue. Walter's staff was ultimately able to synthesize a poisonous gas that was identical to the combination of nerve agents that had raised Margo from the dead, but yet the corpses reanimated by the gas were no more powerful than the zombies that Hela herself had created in Munich. It seemed that the Queen of the Dead's origin would remain a mystery.

Walter ordered the research contingent to keep Margo as comfortable as possible, but they also took many precautions to ensure that she couldn't harm them. Hela craved human flesh; from the moment the scientists freed her, it was all she could think of. Walter still hoped that, if she were kept in a controlled environment and remained well fed, perhaps his beloved Margo could be



reasoned with and could even return with him to Europe someday. Accordingly, his scientists made great progress in their attempts to re-educate and to rehabilitate her.

During this time, Hela discovered that she had the power to project her soul to the domain of the dead. Because she did not transport herself physically, Margo appeared to be sleeping when she used this power, and indeed, at first it seemed like a dream to her as well - but it was real. There she saw Nidhogg gnawing perpetually at the deepest root of Yggdrasil. There she met the monstrous hound Garm, with four eyes and a chest drenched with blood, which lived in the Gnipa-cave and guarded the entrance to Helheim. In Eljudnir, she met Hel's manservant Ganglati, the Shambling Man, and her maidservant Ganglot, the Lurching Woman. Finally, she met Hel herself, and learned whom she was beholden to.

The link between Hela and Hel was already very strong; even in Munich Hel used her avatar as a source of information by seeing through her eyes or sensing everything going on around her. Likewise, Hel had even "spoken" to Earth's new Queen of the Dead, be it to offer advice or to give orders. But even in Munich, when Hela was purely a creature of instinct, Hel had found it was not so easy to take over her mind. Rather than try to force Hela to do her bidding, Hel would ask for her obedience.

During her waking hours, she and Walter would often spend much time together, but unfortunately, Margo could not resist her addiction to flesh. After just a few hours without eating, the ravenous hunger would finally overcome her and Hela's instincts would take over. When that happened, Hela saw no difference between old friends and fresh meat. The flesh had to be living and breathing as it was being consumed, which meant that Walter's neo-Nazis were responsible for feeding Hela by finding at least two or three victims each day. At first, the scientists had attempted to feed Hela by immobilizing a human and allowing her to eat a particular limb or organs from the

victim, so that a single person could be kept alive from one meal to the next. Unfortunately, the scientists quickly discovered that Hela's bodily fluids were just as poisonous and effective as the gas they had synthesized: she needed only to bite a living being and the chain reaction would begin. Over time, Walter's men would abduct more than 10,000 people from New York City and the surrounding region.

Because the neo-Nazis were discreet, they were able to continue their work for nine years without any real trouble from the local authorities. Although a number of infected corpses were either studied or stored in suspended animation just as Hela had been, most of the victims were incinerated onsite in special crematoriums before they could become a threat, and their ashes were carefully disposed of. By 2000, however, agents in the FBI's Manhattan field office had drawn their own conclusions from the local investigations into missing persons. When the connection was made to Walter Fuhrmann's research center, the FBI learned more than enough about him and his connections to the neo-Nazi movement to suspect that he was involved in some kind of modern-day continuation of the Holocaust.

The FBI immediately raided Walter's research center. Special agents surrounded the facility and fought a number of heavily armed guards and skinheads before finally closing in on the research contingent. Some scientists tried to fight back while others attempted to escape, and in the confusion the center's zombies were accidentally released - including Hela. For the people trapped inside the building with them, it was as if all Hell had broken loose. Despite his advanced age, Walter fought his way past panic-stricken agents and hungry zombies (whose rapidly growing numbers now included dead neo-Nazis, scientists, and FBI agents) before finding Hela, who was already feasting on living flesh. Incredibly, instead of attacking Walter, she agreed to come with him. Together they nearly escaped from the center, but an FBI agent confronted them

both and shot Walter in the head. The old man was dead; his brains had literally been blown out.

Hela killed the terrified FBI agent before returning to Walter Fuhrmann's dead body. Margo Schreck loved Walter, but Hela loved the tender taste of his brains even more. Hela then took the clothes from a dying skinhead while her angry, starving zombies overwhelmed the remaining FBI agents and attacked the reinforcements. For the first time in fifty-five years, the Queen of the Dead was free, and her thoughts were clouded with rage. She wanted revenge, and reawakened intelligence combined with the powers of a goddess meant that she would have it!

STORY IDEA

NIGHT OF THE LIVING DEAD GIRL

"This is what we thank these dead for: in one of the worst periods of German history, they set the example."

- Adolf Hitler

This Story is unique in that it allows Cast Members to take part in the living dead girl's history before the present day. Specifically, during the events of 1945, when flesh-eating zombies walked in Munich. Such an adventure could either begin with the creation of Hela and her subsequent rampage through the city's ruins, or shortly after the Queen of the Dead was placed in suspended animation and transported to Nuremberg, in which case she would play no direct part in the adventure and her zombies would not have the "Teamwork" capability.

Using the archetypes and character creation rules from the AFMBE deadworld "Mein Zombie," Cast Members can play either Allied or German soldiers. If the adventure begins with Hela's creation, German soldiers loyal to Walter Fuhrmann and Gauleiter Paul Giesler would be responsible for protecting the project scientists while simultaneously trying to destroy her zombies. The creation of the experimental Mauser (see AFMBE p166 for details) and Hela's eventual capture would



depend on their success. Failure to stop Hela in time could even lead to the creation of a small army of disfigured zombies in Dachau!

Other Germans, and any Allied soldiers in Munich at that time, could possibly be insurgents like Ruppert Gerngross. Such player characters would be at more of a disadvantage than Walter's men, because they would not initially know what the zombies were or where they had come from. Also, they could be in just as much danger whenever they encountered German soldiers. Could soldiers of both sides work together? Or are the differences too great?

If the adventure begins after Hela was captured, then Cast Members could take on the role of Allied soldiers in the 7th Army who had already liberated Dachau and just arrived in Munich. They too would be threatened not only by zombies, but by the last remaining German soldiers as well. Again, could soldiers of both sides work together? Because the Allied soldiers in this adventure would not be responsible for guarding anyone, and an Avatar would not be among the antagonists, this adventure would be a much more traditional "seek and destroy" zombie scenario than the previous one. Characters from the Army's 45th Division might find the room-to-room fight with hungry zombies in Munich's SS academy especially challenging.

STORY IDEA CLEAN AND FLOSS

"He who lives the life of a criminal wants to avoid being seen as one. His dark behavior forces him to wear the mask of the ordinary man, the mask of the harmless."

*- Julius Streicher,
publisher of Der Stürmer*

In this Story, Margo Schreck hid in Manhattan after escaping during the raid on Walter's research center. She soon discovered that New York City was indeed the city that never sleeps, packed with more places to go, more things to do, and more people to feed on than

anywhere else in the United States of America.

Her experiences in Munich had taught Margo that if she alerted mankind to her presence, and made her true nature known to them, the humans would band together once more to hunt Hela and her zombies to extinction. This time, the Queen of the Dead would feed as necessary but keep a low profile, so that she could remain above the law, above society, and above everyone else's judgment but her own. She would answer to nothing but her own insatiable hunger.

Presently, Hela is careful to not use her powers where humans could see them, and she disguises her prey's disappearance or cause of death so as not to arouse the suspicions of the authorities (a process she calls "cleaning and flossing"). Using her powers over the undead, Hela ensures that the zombies she creates are either destroyed or learn her ways.

Zombie Masters might consider allowing Cast Members to play FBI agents who are still searching for this much more subtle version of Hela in the New York City area. Alternatively, BUREAU 13: STALKING THE NIGHT FANTASTIC game masters allow their players to take on the role of Bureau 13 agents, while NIGHTLIFE City Planners can just as easily substitute Target Alpha for the FBI. CONSPIRACY X Game Masters might adapt the Living Dead Girl's history to their own campaign setting and use both The Watch (during the events of the "Night of the Living Dead Girl" Story Idea in 1945) and Aegis (for any modern day adventures) in place of other government agencies.

NIGHTLIFE City Planners as well as WORLD OF DARKNESS Storytellers may also consider using this version of the Queen of the Dead in their own campaigns as well, although players with undead characters might not appreciate it. For example, Hela could use her powers to rise through the ranks of one of NIGHTLIFE's anti-human factions (such as The Complex), or to seize control of The Sabbat in VAMPIRE: THE MASQUERADE. In any event, her

motives would be similar to those in "The Final Solution" Story Idea: the creation of a new Fourth Reich with herself as its Führer. For game masters of super-hero RPGs, this version of the Queen of the Dead might even make an interesting super-villainess.

STORY IDEA THE FINAL SOLUTION

"Only when the dying society still has enough life-energy to produce a spiritual giant, a godlike throwback to the ancient heroism of its people who is able to shock and drive the civilization out of its natural historical night of sleep and death, in spite of the suicidal opposition of the dying peoples who long only for 'peace' and the slumber of death, can a society once again rise for a while."

*-George Lincoln Rockwell,
founder of the American Nazi Party*

In this Story, by the time the Department of Defense realized what had happened, the living throughout the northeastern United States and Canada were already fighting a battle just to survive. Hela's zombies took everyone by surprise and gained a great deal of ground before the authorities gathered the wherewithal to respond.

New York and the neighboring states and provinces were the first to fall into chaos, partly because the undead were pulling down phone and power lines, as well as destroying power plants and electrical substations, leaving communities without power or phones. The panic among the populace only made matters worse. Many went outright mad at the sight of their dead friends and relatives eating the flesh of the living, and arson, looting and even outright robbery became commonplace. Flaming cities have become deathtraps for millions, caught on congested roads by the zombies, and there seems to be no way of stopping this endless tide of the walking dead. It simply grows larger and larger with every passing hour.

For Hela, this is only the beginning



of her Final Solution: every man, woman, and child on earth must die. The driving force behind the undead, the Avatar of an evil goddess would also be the heart and soul of a new Fourth Reich: a kingdom of zombies, with a living dead girl as its queen and Führer.

Hela's path of destruction has so far earned her an army of zombies 95 million strong and mastery of the United States east of the Mississippi River. That area is dominated by zombies, although there are a few pockets of humans in this region, notably in Chicago and Detroit. Hela's mission accelerated greatly after her subjugation of Washington DC, but the new president has set up a command post under Davenport, Iowa, and started several military and scientific operations against her.

As these operations continued to fail, the Fourth Reich pushed toward Middle America. The United States government hastily constructed a fortified wall on the west bank of the Mississippi River and put the remaining U.S. under martial law. Under pressure from foreign nations, the U.S. has officially ceased operations against Hela, hoping to placate her. As things stand now, the country is a nation divided, but it's only a matter of time before the Queen of the Dead resumes her westward expansion.

Zombie Masters may allow Cast Members to play normal humans desperately trying to survive, or possibly survivors dedicated to destroying Hela and stopping the slaughter. Alternatively, ZMs may allow Cast Members to play intelligent zombies or humans who have joined Hela's undead army. Hela's influence has become so widespread that she even has allies among the living. With the Fourth Reich seeming almost inevitable, some among the living (particularly neo-Nazis) are beginning to think about their lives after death. Many living humans have become the new Führer's supporters and informants in exchange for preferential treatment after their demise!

NIGHTLIFE City Planners who wish to make use of the KINRISE supplement could use this Story Idea as a background

for their own post-holocaust campaign. In this case, a European or Asian nation may have decided that the spread of zombies had to stop, and ordered a full nuclear strike against North America for the sake of mankind. The resulting "Spasm War" would change the face of the planet, but just as in KINRISE the undead would survive the nuclear winter. ZMs may adapt the AFMBE deadworld "After the Bomb" to such a campaign setting as well.

STORY IDEA KINGDOM COME

"A horror will spread across the world, driving into the hearts of all those who did not want to hear or see at a time when the misery could still have been halted!"

Julius Streicher, publisher of Der Stürmer

This Story Idea's premise is almost identical to "Living Dead Girl: The Final Solution," but it takes a much more drastic turn. In "Kingdom Come," Hela's zombies not only spread throughout the northeastern United States and Canada, but throughout the entire world as well. While New York and the neighboring states and provinces were falling into chaos, intelligent and problem-solving zombies boarded flights at John F. Kennedy International Airport and climbed aboard ships headed for the Atlantic Ocean. Soon the dead were rising around the world, and the slaughter had begun in earnest.

At least one European or Asian nation must have decided that the spread of zombies from North America had to stop, and ordered a full nuclear strike against the United States and Canada for the sake of mankind. The resulting "Spasm War" changed the face of the planet, as the attack on North America started a chain reaction. The United States struck back. Fallout and stray hits brought other nations into the war, while some panic-stricken nations fired their missiles at everyone. Before anyone knew it, World

War III had started and finished.

The electromagnetic pulse (EMP) from the first blasts had wiped out most electronic devices; United States citizens who were already tuned into the Emergency Broadcast System for information about the zombies never knew what hit them. All major metropolitan centers became raging bonfires; their inhabitants became torches of flesh. Yet elsewhere it was getting very cold. The sun was gone; the crippling cold of nuclear winter had begun.

The mass exodus of survivors from the burning cities caused quite a few problems. The military was already trying to quarantine the zombies and any infected victims, but the civilians wanted nothing more than to escape the burning wreckage. The ensuing battle was ugly. The military was better armed, but not nearly as desperate as the mobs of refugees, or as dangerous as the radioactive zombies that had survived and still hungered for human flesh!

Hela may or may not have survived the war herself, and the would-be Führer's presence (or the lack of it) would make a significant difference in the world to come. Zombie Masters are free to decide for themselves whether she did or not, but in any event they might consider adapting the AFMBE deadworld "After the Bomb" and its own Story Ideas to this setting. NIGHTLIFE City Planners who wish to make use of the KINRISE supplement could use "Kingdom Come" a background for their own post-holocaust campaign.

STORY IDEA TWILIGHT OF THE GODS

"A priest recently asked me: 'But what about eternity...?' I replied: 'A day in National Socialist Germany is better for me than all of your Heaven.'"

Dr. Robert Ley, Reich Organization Leader and head of the German Labor Front (DAF)

In this Story, the Time of Reckoning is at hand. Götterdämmerung has begun.



Magic and the supernatural have become a factor in the lives of every living person. Beings of tremendous power walk the Earth again — the Old Gods of mythology side by side with Angels and Demons and even stranger creatures. These beings have returned to the world to fight an enemy that threatens their very existence, and that of our entire universe. Leviathan has risen in the East, and has already seized over half of the planet.

Led by the Dark Apostle, the Believers of Leviathan want nothing less than the total submission of humankind. Only when every living human being worships Leviathan will this being manifest itself on our reality. Traitors, both human and supernatural, lend their resources to the monstrous armies of the Dark Apostle, tilting the balance to his favor. If the Believers triumph, the world as we know it will cease to exist, transformed into a reflection of the twisted mind of Leviathan, the Outsider who was cast out by the Creator at the beginning of time.

The call of Leviathan is seductive, offering power and the fulfillment of one's darkest desires. And, slowly but surely, the number of converts is growing.

This is the setting of the ARMA-GEDDON roleplaying game, but with an important difference. While the other Norse gods have been especially active in their war against Dark Apostle's Church of Revelations, Hel knows that if she destroys every living man, woman, and child on Earth, Leviathan can never succeed. Her Avatar, Hela, is responsible for carrying out this Final Solution. As in "The Final Solution" Story Idea, Hela envisions a new Fourth Reich of the undead, with herself as its queen and Führer. Her zombies oppose the war machine of the Army of Revelation and clash in battlefields around the world. In the Otherworlds, the war rages as well; even the Nine Worlds of the Norse gods are not exempt from invasion by the followers of Leviathan.

Obviously, Hela's aspects would ensure that The Church of Revelations' order of undead beings, the Undying Knights of Sheol, would be much less effective in the "Twilight of the Gods" setting than they are in a traditional

ARMAGEDDON campaign. To make matters worse for the Knights, Hela would view their chief agent, the reanimated corpse of premier Nazi troubleshooter SS-Standartenführer Otto Skorzeny, as a traitor to the Reich and would go out of her way to destroy him personally. Adepts of the Fifth Circle might also wish to reconsider using their powers to raise hordes of the recently dead.

Zombie Masters have several options in "Twilight of the Gods." They may either Cast Members to play humans desperately trying to survive in a Great War where souls are the ultimate prize, or as in AFMBE's "Rebirth into Death" deadworld, they may allow Cast Members to play neo-Nazis and intelligent zombies who have joined Hela's undead army. ARMAGEDDON Chroniclers have even more options available to them, and may also allow player character True Immortals, Inheritors, Nephilim, Kerubim, Seraphim, and even other Avatars to help determine the fate of mankind.

STORY IDEA TAINTED MEAT

"Our holy hate will bring us victory and save all of mankind."

*- Ernst Heimer,
Julius Streicher's second-in-command*

This Story Idea's premise and adventure hooks are almost identical to those in "Twilight of the Gods," but with one major difference. In this Story, Hel created her Avatar to seek out and destroy anyone who bears the Mark of Leviathan. In Munich, Hela's hunger was insatiable because it can only be satisfied by the flesh of True Believers, and not by that of normal human beings. Her zombies crave this Tainted meat as well, and will do anything to get it!

In the "Tainted Meat" setting, Walter Fuhrmann was a Gifted man who learned a great deal from the Order of the Black Knights, and cultivated his occult powers throughout his life. He learned the truth about Nidhogg long before the future Dark Apostle, Johann Goering,

was born, and he discovered why Hela had been created. Walter imagined that if he could only find his beloved Margo, perhaps she could be reasoned with and made to understand just what it was that she really hungered for.

Accordingly, when Margo was finally brought to Walter's research center, his scientists made great progress in their attempts to re-educate and to rehabilitate her. But the Adversary would not allow that to happen, and it ensured that the center was raided and that the men inside of it were killed. Hela, however, had already learned more than enough about Leviathan... and the Queen of the Dead had escaped.

The rules for both Hela and her zombies in a "Tainted Meat" campaign are also slightly different. They still possess the "Life Sense" ability, but in this deadworld it only senses True Believers and any other beings bearing the Mark of Leviathan. Likewise, their hunger is only satisfied by the Tainted flesh of creatures that bear the Mark. Neither Hela nor her zombies prey on normal human beings unless such food is not available (such as in Munich in 1945), in which case the desperate and starving zombies will take any meaty bit of living flesh they can sink their teeth into.

Of the various "Living Dead Girl" Story Ideas, "Tainted Meat" presents the most sympathetic version of Hela and her zombies. As with "Twilight of the Gods," Cast Members to play humans desperately trying to survive in a Great War where souls are the ultimate prize, or Zombie Masters may allow Cast Members to play neo-Nazis and intelligent zombies who have joined Hela's undead army. Again, ARMAGEDDON Chroniclers have even more options available to them, and may also allow player character True Immortals, Inheritors, Nephilim, Kerubim, Seraphim, and even other Avatars to help determine the fate of mankind.

* * *



HELA - The Living Dead Girl

Statistics:

Strength:	11
Dexterity:	5
Constitution:	8
Intelligence:	4
Perception:	8
Willpower:	6
Dead Points:	n/a
Speed:	26
Endurance Points:	n/a
Essence Pool:	82

Known Qualities/Drawbacks:

Adversary (humanity) 5
 Attractive 4 (+4 to any task or test that involves making an impression on other people.)
 Beholden (Hel, Norse Goddess of Death, see Armageddon pp198-199) 5
 Covetous (human flesh; Difficult Willpower Test must also be made every hour with cumulative penalties) 3
 Cruel 2
 Contacts (Neo-Nazis) 4
 Delusion (Prejudice: rabid white supremacist) 3
 Fast Reaction Time (+1 on Willpower Tests to resist fear.)
 Hard to Kill 5 (+5 bonus to Survival Tests.)
 Nerves of Steel 3 (+4 bonus to Fear Tests.)
 Obsession (Genocide.)
 Situational Awareness (+2 to any Perception-based rolls to sense trouble or danger.)
 Zealot (National Socialism.)

Skills:

Acrobatics 2	Guns (all) 1	Occult Knowledge (Germanic) 1
Beautician 2	Hand Weapon (Axe) 2	Riding (Horse) 2
Brawling 5	Hand Weapon (Club) 1	Running (Dash) 1
Climbing 2	Hand Weapon (Knife) 2	Seduction 1
Dancing (Folk) 2	Humanities (German) 2	Singing 1
Dodge 2	Intimidation 3	Stealth 4
Driving (Motorcycle) 3	Language (English) 2	Swimming 2
Driving (Truck) 2	Language (German) 5	Thrown (Knife) 1
First Aid 2	Myth & Legend (Norse) 4	Thrown (Javelin) 2
	Notice 2	

Attack:

According to weapon type or see below

Weak Spot:

None

Getting Around:

The Quick Dead (base Dexterity 3, base speed 18)
 Burrowing (No more than a couple of feet per minute.)
 Leaping (Can leap up to 6' in height and forward up to 12'.)
 The Lunge (+2 Initiative in close combat.)
 Aquatic (Underwater Speed: 3.)
 Climbing (Climbing Speed: 3' per turn.)

Strength:

Monstrous Strength (base 7)
 Damage Resistant (All weapons except fire and chemicals do half damage.)
 Iron Grip (Strength for gripping equal to 14.)
 Claws (D6(3) x Strength in armor-piercing, slashing damage.)
 Teeth (-3 to hit in close combat, damage equals 6 per turn.)
 The Hug of Death (-2 to hit in close combat, Strength once hugging equal to 14, damage equals D4(2) x 10 per turn.)

Senses:

Like Nothing You've Ever Seen
 Life Sense (Range: 80 yards.)
 Scent Tracking (Perception 16 for purposes of smelling.)

Sustenance:

Who Needs Food? (But see also Covetous.)
 All Flesh Must Be Eaten

Intelligence:

Language
 Long-Term Memory
 Problem Solving (Note that 15+ Dead Points inflicted to the head will immediately reduce the Hela's intelligence to "Dumb as Dead Wood" until the damage is regenerated. It takes 15 Dead Points to grow a new brain, or 20 Dead Points to grow a whole new head.)
 Teamwork (Range: see the aspect "Death Speech" below. Note that this feature is a does not work if Hela is currently inanimate or "Dumb as Dead Wood.")

Spreading the Love:

One Bite and You're Hooked (Mixing bodily fluids or blood with Margo Schreck affects both the living and the dead. An infected but otherwise unharmed victim usually dies within several hours and goes straight from living to undead. Infected corpses rise up as zombies in 3-30 minutes.)



HELA - The Living Dead Girl (continued...)

KNOWN ASPECTS

Immortality

Hela heals 1 Dead Point per Willpower level every 5 seconds (one combat turn). If a limb is severed and not reattached, a replacement will grow out. Even beheading is not final! Unless her body is completely destroyed, such as being burnt to ashes or dissolved in acid, she will regenerate any damage and eventually return to unlife. Being at ground zero for a large explosion (something that inflicted 300+ points of damage) would also do the trick. It takes the same number of Dead Points to grow a new limb as it does to destroy one and 100 or more to regenerate her entire body — see “Flesh Notes” (AFMBE p147) for specific values.

Death Sight

This is nearly identical to the aspect described in Armageddon, p191. Hela is uniquely attuned to the approach of death. She can sense terminal disease and imminent death among those around her (as per the “Death Sight” power in WitchCraft p240). Through those same senses, she can also see ghosts and other errant spirits wandering the Earth.

Death Speech (Strength 16; Art 5)

Hela can communicate telepathically with any undead, even if they do not possess the “Language” ability. This aspect works like the power “Mindtalk” (WitchCraft p228) except that it cannot be used with living creatures. The range of this connection is 36 miles per Willpower level of Hela and, if the target does not resist, the undead being spoken to. Hela automatically establishes contact with any zombies descended from her; this forms the basis of their Teamwork ability, and their connection may be considered a Gestalt (see WitchCraft p226).

She can also use this aspect to read both the minds of undead creatures and those of corpses whether the body is currently undead or not. An inanimate brain that has suffered 15 points of damage or more, however, cannot normally be read. As before, the range of this aspect is 36 miles per Hela’s Willpower level. If the target is undead and Hela has already gained lordship over it, then the individual’s Willpower level is added to the range. See the full description of the “Mindsight” power (WitchCraft p227) for more details.

Finally, Hela can use Death Speech to send a deafening psychic “scream” that can inflict (D4(2) x Death Speech Strength) points of damage on the undead, as per the “Mindkill” power in WitchCraft p234. Surviving victims lose all actions for 1 Turn, and will be at a penalty of -4 on all Tasks and Tests for 1 additional Turn per Success Level of the attack. The range of the scream is limited to 2 yards per Strength level unless Hela has already gained Lordship over the victim(s), in which case the range is the same as normal Death Speech. If Hela screams at zombies that are descended from her, they are automatically destroyed and cannot be reanimated.

Domain of the Dead

This aspect works differently than the one listed in Armageddon p191. By concentrating for one turn, Hela can project her soul, as per the “Soul Projection” power (WitchCraft p221), to Helheim in the Realm of the Dead known as Niflheim. Because she does not transport herself physically, Hela spends no Essence points and there seems to be no time limit. Hela appears to be sleeping when she uses this aspect.

Death Lordship (Strength 16; Art 5)

This ability combines Hela’s “Domain of the Dead” aspect with “Death Speech,” and in practice resembles two magical powers: “Mindrule” (WitchCraft p228) and “Death Lordship” (p239). Hela can only use this aspect against other undead, including the Restless Dead and Vampyres. She automatically rules any zombies that have descended from her; they have no defense. Other undead may attempt to resist her commands.

To first use Death Lordship against an individual undead creature, Hela must be within 2 yards per Strength level. Victims can then be made to follow her instructions via Death Speech at its normal range, and if necessary Hela can even replace the victim’s mind with her own, taking total control. See the description of these two powers for more details.

LIVING DEAD GIRL ZOMBIES

Statistics:

Strength: 1 to 2	Willpower: 2
Dexterity: 1 to 2	Dead Points: n/a
Constitution: 2	Speed: 2 to 4
Intelligence: -2 to level held during life	Endurance Points: n/a
Perception: 1 to 2	Essence Pool: 6+

Skills:

Brawling 2+
Possibly more skills depending on Intelligence (see below)

Attack:

Bite damage D4 x 2 (4) slashing or according to weapon type

Weak Spot:

None

Getting Around:

Varies (Ranges from "Slow and Steady" to "Life-Like" depending on the body's physical condition.)

Strength:

Varies (Ranges from "Ninety-Pound Weakling" to "Dead Joe Average" depending on the body's physical condition.)

Senses:

Varies (Ranges from "Like the Dead" to "Like the Living" depending on the physical condition of the sense organs.)
Life Sense (Range: 20 to 40 yards.)

Sustenance:

Who Needs Food?
All Flesh Must Be Eaten

Intelligence:

Varies (Ranges from "Dumb as Dead Wood" to "Problem Solving" depending on the brain's physical condition, and can also include "Language" - note that 15+ Dead Points inflicted to the zombie's head will immediately reduce its intelligence to "Dumb as Dead Wood.")

Teamwork (Hela's zombies can communicate telepathically with her and each other. This connection is limited to within 36 miles per Willpower level of Hela and the individual zombies. Zombies descended from Hela automatically establish contact with their queen when they are within range; this forms the basis of their Teamwork ability, and the connection may be considered a Gestalt (see WitchCraft p226). Note that this feature does not work if Hela is currently inanimate or unable to keep the line of communication open with her zombies.)

Spreading the Love:

One Bite and You're Hooked (Mixing bodily fluids or blood with a zombie affects both the living and the dead. An infected but otherwise unharmed victim usually dies within several hours and goes straight from living to undead. Infected corpses rise up as zombies in 3-30 minutes.)

Special:

Varies (Possibilities include "Diseased Corpse" and "Noxious Odor.")
Regeneration (Living Dead Girl zombies regain 1 Dead Point per minute.)

Power: Varies (ranges from 25 to 62+)



THE *republic of britain*

Containment Zones

by Lee Williams

“Unless we are able to develop a coherent philosophy of social order, and apply it, the streets of many of our cities will be policed by quasi-military formations within five years. Two forms of policing will therefore emerge. One for those enclaves where the combination of relative poverty, social breakdown and alienation have become pronounced; the other, more benign, where the successful people live. The former will operate without the consent of the residents and take on repressive characteristics. The detection of crime in such areas will plummet through lack of public co-operation. These occupied zones will be the breeding grounds of crime and will be potentially riotous.”

- John Alderson, former Chief Constable of Devon & Cornwall Police, quoted in *The Observer* newspaper, 1986

What is a conzone?

Originating in the thankfully brief period of SPP rule in Britain, the economic containment zones (or conzones) were set up to allow the repressive government to keep the socially deprived people tucked away. Later, they were to be used as camps for the accommodation of those who opposed the SPP. Out of sight, out of mind, as the saying has it. Now the SPP are gone, and yet the new Republic's government keeps the conzones alive, albeit under a different title and for allegedly different reasons. This change, as the media call it, a 'Social Compromise'.

Now known as Special Category Estates, these areas are filled with those people claiming welfare benefits who are unable to find accommodation elsewhere. Indeed, it is part of the conditions placed on many welfare claimants that they are required to reside in the Estates, until they can find long-term employment. This happens infrequently at best, as living in a conzone or SCE carries a stigma which itself makes it harder for the occupants to find work. Many of these people would in fact be slightly better off if they became ballotmen, selling their voting rights to corporations in exchange for basic food and housing under the terms of the Voting Proxy and Private Welfare Act. However, many Britons still find this to be unpalatable and so seek welfare assistance from the vastly over-stretched new government. In certain ways these areas are very much like corporate housing compounds but are instead run jointly by the Home Office and the newly formed Department for Special Category Administration.

Although the original conzones were formed temporarily and in haste by the SPP, it looks as though they are here to stay, albeit in a modified form. What long-term effects this may have on the Republic are as yet unclear, but it is certain that future governments will have to address the poverty and social deprivation that exists in these areas. Otherwise, like the unloved SPP, they may arouse the wrath of the populace at large, tipping the country into fresh unrest. Then again the government must be careful not to over react, as they did in the town of Exeter when a suspected political coup was quashed with the help of the Army. Fully a quarter of the buildings in the

Exeter conzone were damaged or destroyed, with 7 civilian fatalities sustained during the indiscriminate firing. In the end these 'revolutionaries' turned out to be a group of 13 former low level SPP officials, who combined could muster only 6 assault rifles and 3 submachine guns. Planning originally to rob a local bank and use the funds to flee abroad, all but two were killed in a running battle with the soldiers. As a result the Conzies around the country have become noticeably more distrustful of the government. Indeed, this may be why the current government is a little nervous when discussing the SCE issue in public.

Life in the zones

The basic day to day rules for living in a Conzone/SCE are relatively simple. If you want to leave the area, for example to go and exchange your food vouchers, you pass through the 'forts' that stand at the official entry/exit points. Your ID card is scanned and logged into the police computer. Upon your return, you are checked off the list. The act of leaving a conzone, legally or otherwise, is known as going into 'the world'. Access to the zone is denied between 10pm and 6am, when a full curfew is in effect and armed police patrol the perimeter of the zone in an attempt to keep the area secure. If an occupant is late in returning, they will be questioned before being allowed back in, but anyone trying to get out after 10pm is arrested on sight. Those absconding from the Conzones are usually tracked down within hours by Britain's own bounty hunters, Breakers, and are brought straight back to the local authorities.

Are you living in a zone? Then you can expect to be called conzie or dreggie when you go out into 'the world'. These epithets, originally insults, have quickly become badges of pride among some conzone youth gangs. Many of these youth gangs in the larger conzones even look strange to outsiders. Having never known anything else, they form into groups who go all out to look completely different to all of the other groups, while also trying to alarm the other residents of the zone. Whether a ganger or not, so far as the rest of the population is concerned as a conzie you speak differently, you smell different, your ID card is a different colour and you are subject to different

laws. Whatever your age, even if you make it in the world you will never quite shake off the label of 'conzie'.

As might be expected, petty crime is rife in certain zones. However, serious offences such as murder are not at all common, mainly because everyone gets to know everyone else. Anything that would upset the somewhat quirky local moral code is generally dealt with internally. The police often find those who have defied local conventions tied to the gateposts of the entry/exit stations when they come off night patrol at dawn, with cards around their necks explaining the alleged offences. Most often the offenders are unharmed, but have been carried away from their homes in the night by mobs and subjected to a terror campaign before being left for the police. If there is no basis for the allegations, then they are usually moved quickly to other zones. Often however, they admit their offences and are tried in Court for them. Although the official line is that the Regional Police Commissioners are strictly against the inhabitants taking the law into their own hands, the local patrol officers are secretly grateful for the assistance.

The zones are also very good places for Breakers to ply their trade. Most Breakers have at least one contact in each of the major zones, and some are also adept at blending in with the locals should it become necessary. Indeed, several are from

these areas and take a certain pride in the fact that they were instrumental in starting the street fighting that led to the downfall of the SPP a few years back. As mentioned earlier, one of the most common duties of a Breaker is the apprehension and return of runners, usually teenaged conzies who illegally leave the zones to look for excitement or who just like causing bother to the authorities.

The Social Compromise

Simply put, the Social Compromise is a leash on one's freedoms; as a bank or other financial institution would place certain restrictions on those who borrow money from it, so does the government in placing certain social restrictions on those who seek aid from them. This of course means the restrictions on movement and so on. Although the more democratic parties oppose this, they are as yet unable to come up with a better solution. Therefore, the politicians argue endlessly about the future of the conzones, whilst the conzies themselves don't even tend to vote at all and don't usually care. From where they are, it doesn't matter in the slightest who is in charge, as they won't change anything anyway.

Ω



New Empathic Cells

by Lee Williams

Vision Things

Goals	Information Brokers, Trainers
Methods	Shadows
Empathic Philosophy	Mystics
Organisation	Anarchic group
Assets Rating	Few
Size	18 members
Level of Activity	Medium
Relations with other Cells	Cautious, but they try to maintain good relations with any others they encounter
Headquarters	Manchester
Relations with ETs	None as yet

Description: The Vision Things were originally a local fan club for a British Goth band. At one of their annual conventions, a Ravager decided to join the fun. Since then, the survivors have formed into a relatively secret cell, gathering information on weird happenings as best they can and utilising their somewhat limited knowledge of Empathy to train newcomers in what they see as the mystical arts. Although their Gothic roots and ideas sometimes cause merriment and even outright disbelief in others, they have been able to keep the Manchester area reasonably clear of Darkling activity. Not to be underestimated in the struggle against the Darkness

The Runners

Goals	Gain power for the Dark races
Methods	Any
Empathic Philosophy	Mystic
Organisation	Dictatorial unit
Assets Rating	Adequate
Size	8 members
Level of Activity	High
Relations with ETs	View ETs as tools to use for their own purposes
Relations with other Cells	Good to begin with, later they intend to lure other cells into elaborate traps
Headquarters	London

Description: The Runners are a group that is run by Igers, in thrall to a Dark Lord who intends to have the British Isles as his own domain. They will use any method to reach their goals, but will continue the appearance of a genuine cell until the last possible moment. They will hunt down any who succeed in opposing their plans, sometimes waiting for years before striking.

Ω



DARK DEVICES

New Toys for the Forces of Darkness

Three new Darkling devices for Dark Conspiracy
by A. Shane Murphy

Empathic Screamers

This relatively new darkling device is best described as “a combination of an organic computer and an esperlink”. The main component in the device is the brain tissue of neuropaths. These samples are cut into thin slices and arranged in a manner similar to an organic computer. The pain receptors in each slice is then bombarded with constant stimuli which results in the tissue “screaming” in empathetic agony. This has the effect of making all rolls using human empathy, darkling empathy, animal empathy, telepathy and all cascade skills two levels more difficult, if they are attempted within the screamers area of effect. If this puts the difficulty past impossible, then that roll will automatically fail!

The size of the “Screamer” determines its area of effect. While the average portable Screamer can effectively block out a diameter of up to one kilometer, non-portable Screamers are much more powerful.

Wt. 4 kg

Price: N/A (-/-)

Dimensional Viners

Appearing like other viners, these organisms have been bred with a new mutation: making any use of Dimension Walk (and all cascades) 2 levels more difficult to use inside their confines. How this is accomplished is unknown. Speculation has it that one of the Dark Lords aimed to be able to house its minions in an area free from Minion Hunter incursions. To be affected by the D-viner one must be inside its boundaries, merely being near one has no effect. It is an all or nothing process, and the roll is only limited if the Hunter is enclosed on all sides. Dark Elves have adopted the name D-Viners for these mutant constructs.

Wt: variable

Price: N/A (-/-)

Inferno Blades

These knives appear as black, non-reflective 8” commando knives. Though at first glance these seem completely normal, they are, in fact, far from it. The Obsidian people make these blades in Gehenna for other dark minions who serve the same master.

When the weapon is drawn, the metal blade begins to generate vast amounts of heat. Why it does so is open to speculation, however it appears to be an inherent property of the metal itself and not the Proto-Dimension where it was forged. Measurements of the blade itself indicate that the metal reaches temperatures as high as 600 degrees Fahrenheit. The handle and sheath of the knife are immune to this effect, remaining cool to the touch, even when the blade is drawn. Thus, it is safe to carry and use, so long as one doesn’t touch the blade.

Wt: 1.0 kg (including sheath)

Price: N/A (-/-)

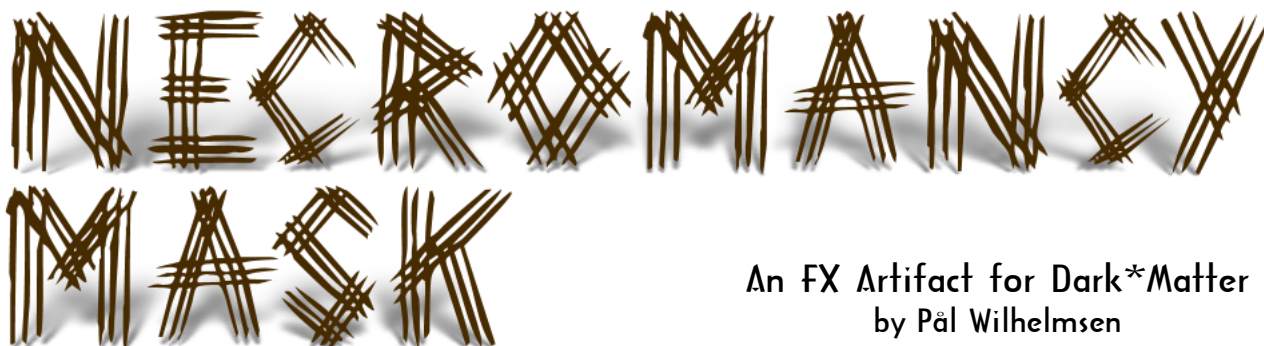
	<i>Rng</i>	<i>Hit Mod</i>	<i>Damage</i>	<i>Weight</i>
Inferno Blade	S	+2	3d6	0.5kg

Ω

“What is the one piece of equipment that is absolutely essential to a Minion Hunter? I’d say without hesitation - a good pair of running shoes.

“Because sooner or later, the shit is going to come down hard, and it’s not going to be a matter of whether you can outrun the monster, but whether you can outrun the other potential happy-meals-on-legs fleeing with you.”

- Zena Marley (Early 21st -century mercenary-philosopher)



An FX Artifact for Dark*^{Matter} by Pål Wilhelmsen

Description

Necromancy Masks appear as exquisitely carved or crafted masks, sometimes painted, but unadorned by jewels, rare metals, or other valuable materials. Masks are representative of their origin, and will be made of materials common to the region. Such materials include a variety of woods, bamboo, bone, stone, hide, or shell.

History and Origin

The exact origin and number of the Necromancy Masks is not known to the Hoffman Institute, except that they seem to appear independent of culture, history or ethnicity. There are two known masks, The Oseberg Mask and The Lagos Mask.

Captain Neal Westward of the British army brought the Lagos Mask to London from Lagos, Nigeria in 1862. The mask had been taken from slavers in a lesson of Imperial justice. It was later donated to the British Museum after a few years at the Westward estate in Surrey, England. Since 1948, British Museum officials have refused to let anyone outside of the museum staff study it. Rumors say that it may no longer be in the possession of the museum, due to theft or by design.

The Oseberg Mask was buried with the Oseberg Queen and her longship in 838 not far from Tonsberg, Norway. The ship had been plundered sometime during the Middle Ages of all valuables, but the thieves had missed, or not dared to take, a few occult items. The mask re-entered history again when the Oseberg ship was discovered and unearthed in 1904. Most of the findings from the Oseberg ship were made public and even displayed at the Vikingskiphuset museum in Oslo, Norway. The mask's magic abilities became apparent in 1928, six months after the mask had been moved to a storehouse near a cemetery. When Hoffman Institute agents visited Oslo in 1928 to investigate a series of killings with occult aspects, evidence pointed toward the mask, and so it was moved to a safer location. The Oseberg mask has been missing since World War II, possibly in the possession of the Nazis or Odessa.

There have probably been even more masks. For instance, the Roman sorcerer Cornelius Agricola hinted in his journals, "...the death mask of Judas Iscariot has powers over the restless dead."

Necromancy Mask

Form:	Clothing (wooden mask)
Purpose:	Enhance FX (Necromancy) Powers
Powers:	FX battery (Good), Heighten FX energy (Ordinary)
Drawbacks:	Hostile Consciousness (Slight), Zombie Curse (Moderate, Special)

The mask stores 4 FX energy points, and renews itself at a rate of one every 6 hours. If worn continuously by its master it renews itself at a rate of 1 point per hour. The stored FX points must be used for Necromancy spells. The mask also provides a -1 bonus on all necromancy spells while worn. There is a 1 in 6 chance that the mask will be recalcitrant when the wearer tries to use it. If so, the mask has an intelligence of 8, and must be convinced to function using an Interaction: charm skill check. These abilities are fully detailed in Dragon Magazine 268.

A mask cannot be used unless the wearer is skilled in Necromancy, and is its master. To become a mask's master, the wearer must spend 1 FX point to make a complex Necromancy: animate dead skill check (5 successes.) Any failure will require the user to start over from scratch (and spend another FX point,) but will also animate a Zombie (pg. 85 Beyond Science: A Guide to FX) within 1000 meters of the mask. On a critical failure, the Zombie will be possessed by a Zombie Demon (see below.) These Zombies will try to find the hero, kill him or her, and take the mask. The mask will refuse to control the Zombies, even if the hero has become the mask's master in the interval.

Any undead created by the mask's master become subjects of the mask. A mask's master does not have to wear the mask to command it's undead, but the mask must be worn to utilize its other powers. If the mask, for any reason, gets a new master, all undead created by the former master are put under the control of the new one.

A mask with no master animates one corpse within 100 meters every full moon (nothing happens if there is no corpse within range.) The Zombie will seek out the mask by all means available and try to use it. Any Zombie that dons the mask will automatically become a Zombie Demon, and automatically becomes the mask's master.



Zombie Demon

STR 13 INT 13
DEX 12 WIL 14
CON 12 PER 3
Durability: 16 / 16 / 4
Action check: 14 + / 7 / 3
Move: sprint: 22, run: 14, walk: 4
Reaction score: 3 / good
FX energy points: 10

Attacks

Energy drain 19/9/4 d6+2s / d8+3s / d4+2f EN/O
Claws 20/10/5 d4+3s / d4+2w / 1-2 m LI/O
Any available hand weapon

Defenses

- 2 resistance modifier vs. mental attacks
- 3 resistance modifier vs. melee attacks

Skills

Unarmed (13)- brawl (20); Stealth (12) - Hide (15), Sneak (13); Stamina (12) - endurance (14), resist pain (18); Tactics (13) - Infantry (15);
The Zombie Demon may also have skills the corpse had in life, particularly weapon skills.

FX skills

Necromancy (13) - animate dead (16), energy drain (19), fortitude (16)

The Zombie Demon seems to be a physical manifestation of the mask's spirit of independence. It will stop at nothing to retrieve and wear the mask, destroying anyone associated with

the mask, including witnesses and anyone in the general vicinity of the mask. Its ability to interact with its surroundings is limited by the degree of the decomposition of the body. Some are able to speak, while others are limited to growls or often silence. After the mask is secured, the Zombie Demon will simply flee, beginning on a master plan of the GM's design, including raising an army of the undead, or seeking other Necromancy artifacts. The Zombie demon will over time learn more skills related to modern day society and possibly new FX powers if given time to perform rituals and research. Ω



WORLD WIDE WEB-WATCH

Which Role Playing Game is best?

It is the age-old question. Ask a thousand people, and you'll get a couple hundred different answers - but they'll have a thousand different reasons for their decision.

Well, lucky for us, there is a ready-made forum in which to hold the discussion: FreeVote.com – which, according to their web site “is a free service for anyone to use. It allows webmasters to create virtual “voting booths” where web surfers can come and vote for things.” It's easy to set up, and it's easy to use. Simply set up a booth, provide a link to it from a web page, and watch the tallies start rolling in.

Now, someone has opened up the question that burns in every gamer's heart, and has allowed us a chance to see the results of pure popular vote.

http://freevote.com/booth/best_rpg

In the interest of keeping the playing field as level as possible, and avoid ballot-stuffing, the booth has been configured to allow only 'registered users' to vote. Each user can cast one single vote per week. You can vote for a new game each week (to suit your ever-changing interests), or you can reaffirm your commitment to a particular game.

Either way, the die has been cast. The race is on. Get out there and vote!

May the Best Game Win!

All Flesh Must Be Eaten



by Rob Beck II

Rob brings us a narrative of his AFMBE playtest session

A cool breeze blew across Washington Street that brisk April afternoon. Green-gray storm clouds, which had been threatening all day, lingered overhead. The trees along the edges of Washington Memorial Cemetery, which were just coming into bloom, swayed gently and brushed their leaves against one another. Along this section of Washington Street, nature's serenity was quashed by the cacophony of horns, engines, and overworked mufflers. The largest commercial district on the East Side of the city surrounded the once-isolated cemetery; a swell of strip malls, mega-stores, cineplexes and lube shops. Traffic was especially bad today, especially around the Meijer superstore. A long line of cars had begun to back up in its immense parking lot to match the lines beginning on the main thoroughfare.

Billy Ray Hutch cursed his luck. He had just come into town to get some new tires for his F350. He didn't even have to go that far into town. Lighter traffic was

only a few blocks away, and a few miles beyond that, his trailer. He needed to get some bug lights too, he thought to himself, but not today. Looking at the cars streaming in and out of Meijer, he figured he'd just try for them at the Kroger in Greenfield. "Uh-oh", he said out loud to no one in particular. "Here cumz the damn Nashun' o' Islum folks again." While traffic was this slow, it seemed as if some people who had been standing by the cemetery's entrance were starting to make their way amongst the cars. Billy Ray naturally thought the donation crews were out in force today.

Mike Perkins couldn't believe it. He was late opening his store and all because some hilljacks from Greenfield wanted to come into the city today. He couldn't be delayed longer or his regulars might get tired of waiting and leave. It didn't seem appropriate to some of them, apparently, to linger too long outside of an adult bookstore. "Damn, five minutes late getting their jerkin' material and they're all up in ya!" Now even worse, it seemed

someone up ahead just hit some fool trying to cross the street. "I knew it! Gonna be late! Damn't!" The accident escalated as cars slammed into each other, jumped lanes, and skidded into embankments. Soon both directions of traffic were completely clogged.

Blake Anderson was walking to Arby's to grab some lunch before return to his work in the sporting goods section of Meijer. "What the hell's going on?" he said to Cathy, a co-worker he'd been trying to get lucky with. "Looks like a big pileup on Washington. Damn, don't these people know how to friggin' drive?" "Oh my God", said Cathy, "I think I saw someone get hit. Oh Jesus, that was gross." She cringed and recoiled into Blake's shoulder. Blake let out a little smile and put his arm around her "Yeah that's awful. Poor guy." He gently patted her on the back. "I'm so in," he thought. Now there were screams from the woman who had been driving the car that hit the poor bastard. "Must be pretty bloody." Cathy looked up at Blake as he said this. He



internally sighed, knowing what she was going to ask. "Shouldn't we do something?" He looked at her. "Ok, you go call for an ambulance. I'll go up there and see what I can do." She flashed him a smile that let him know he'd scored some huge points. "*What the hell,*" he figured, as he enjoyed watching her bounce away. "Maybe there's something I can do." He headed up to where a crowd was beginning to form near the accident. "Why are so many people screaming?" he wondered. "Could the guy look that bad?"

"That'll be \$13.25, sir." Arno Friedman beamed the smile to the guy counting change in front of him. "Jesus Christ, sure costs a lot o put a little gas in the tank and grab a soda!" Arno slurped his Yoohoo. "Yessir, certain is, but we do appreciate your business!" The man, like most other customers who came through Arno's Bigfoot gas station, was fairly nondescript. Most were just entering or leaving town, and needed a little gas. Arno basically ignored him as he took his money and made change. The saccharine smile stayed plastered on his face throughout the whole transaction. "Thank you and come again." Arno slurped his chocolate soda again as he watched the man leave, absent-mindedly noting his height as he exited. He started his spot check of the floor and grabbed a fresh Yoohoo on his way past the refrigerator. He shook the bottle as he cleaned his employee of the month picture. Just as he was finishing up, he heard the crash of metal on metal. He went to the door to look, but only saw stopped traffic. He missed the screams, though, as he headed to check stock in the rear of the store. He also missed the figures lumbering out of the cemetery and into traffic.

Billy Ray, by this point, had seen the accident, and exited his truck to see if he could help. He had grabbed the first aid kit from his truck and stumbled forward through the stopped cars. He bumped into a short, leather-covered black man getting out of his new Trans Am. "Man, watch where the hell you're goin'!" the little man blurted out. "Hey mister" Billy

Ray looked a little annoyed "case you didn't notice, there's some hurt people up there!" Noticing now that the man he bumped into resembled Lenny from "Of Mice and Men"; he toned down his hostility a notch. "Sorry man, just didn't see ya. I was wonderin' what in hell's name was going on up there." They both looked over at the crowd assembled in the middle of the accident. Several people seemed to be leaning into cars. Some were huddled around figures on the ground. Mike and Billy Ray also noticed how dirty and filthy these people seemed to be. The smell began to assault their noses at this point; a kind of sickly sweet mixed with a coppery smell.

At that point, one of the people who had been leaning into a car window stood up and looked at them. He certainly appeared to be an accident victim, one, at least, who had died maybe a week ago. Gray flesh sagged on his face. His sunken eyes were yellow and pussy, and his mouth was full of gore. The woman he had been leaning over didn't look too good anymore either. She was still belted in to her seat, but a large section of her neck, along with her ear was missing. That same ear slid, chewed and bloody, out of the gray man's mouth as he let out a throaty moan and reached his hands out towards Billy Ray and Mike.

"Shit! Cannibals!" yelled Mike. Billy Ray yelled "Cultists!"; stepped up, and used the medical kit as a club on the "man's" head. It fell back a bit, but rebounded to standing. Several more figures like that one started rising from similar scenes of gore all over the area. People still in their cars and within sight of this mass raising hit the gas and tried to make a break for it. This only worsened their situation and those around them. Mike's car was among the casualties, taking a nasty side impact. "C'mon!" Billy Ray shouted to Mike as he tried to make it back to his truck.

Blake had run up to the scene only to find mass confusion. After seeing a woman and her children scream wildly in their car, while two "men" beat on the windows, he decided something had gone horribly wrong. He reached the one

banging on the passenger door and was almost overcome by the sickly sweet stench coming from him. The "man's" eyes were clouded over, but he still seemed to notice Blake. Blake nimbly dodged his lunge and spun almost completely around to kick him in the head. Blake heard the neck snap, and watched the body slump towards the ground. He then body checked the other attacker and sent him flying several yards. "Hey lady!" he yelled at the woman in the car. "Open the damn doors, grab your kids and follow me!" After a couple of good bangs against the glass, he got her attention. She unlocked the doors and he grabbed two of the kids, still screaming, from inside the car. She dragged the third out and began to follow Blake. The child let out an ear-piercing wail as the first "man" that Blake had kicked reached up and grabbed the poor boy's leg and took a fair bite out of it. Blake stopped, dropped the two kids he was holding, and started stomping on the thing's (it had ceased to be human to him) head repeatedly until the skull cracked and gray matter oozed out. The woman had, by this time, grabbed her three children and was running for the imagined safety of the Meijer. The one boy's screams had obviously roused her from her shock.

Now sensing the others near him, Blake realized how precarious his situation was. Four fresh "things" were slowly shuffling towards him. Three looked long dead, like they had just come out of some morgue, but the fourth wore a nice new suit and still had fresh blood all over his white dress shirt. "Shit, the people they kill are getting up! No good" he thought, as he weighed his options. He roughly shoved past two of them and made his way to... wherever he didn't see one of them. Not too far away now, there appeared to be two still living men. One was obviously a redneck and the other was a black man in what Blake could only describe as "really pimpin' clothes" They were making their way towards a thinner part of the traffic jam near its ever expanding edge, specifically towards a big Ford pickup. "Well, safety in numbers", he thought, and he bolted

through the stopped cars and the screaming.

“Hey!” Blake yelled to get their attention. “Hey hell you sumbitch, I ain’t stoppin’ for nothin’.” The redneck was obviously bright too, Blake thought. By this point, the two had made it to the pickup and were jumping in. Blake was now practically on the hick and leaping into the bed of the truck, he yelled “Mind if I bum a ride?!” “Owww! Shit!” Blake yelled as he landed on the big tires in the bed of the truck. “Mind the tires.” Billy Ray smiled as he started the truck. Mike was already in the passenger side and had produced a pistol from his jacket. He could see more of the cannibals shuffling towards them and methodically any people or cars full of people in their way. “Damn, need gas, like now.” Billy Ray sighed as he watched his fuel light come on. He had thought he had enough gas to make it home, but hadn’t counted on the traffic or the dead people. Mike, somewhat agitated by this statement, “Well fuckin’ get gas then damn’t! Don’t just roll it around in your inbred head!” Billy Ray slammed it in reverse and shoved the car behind him out of the way. He then shifted into drive and plowed through the cars between him and the gas station. “They were abandoned anyway” he smiled as he glanced over to the almost stunned Mike. Up over the median and over to the Bigfoot, Billy Ray left the engine running and jumped out to fill the tank. “Damn city! Gotta prepay!” he yelled. “Well, what the hell are you waiting for, an invitation?” Blake yelled. “Fuck it! I’ll pay!” Mike jumped out of the car and ran for the store, reholstering his pistol.

Arno had been watching with some amusement as the pickup tore through traffic and over into his gas station. The crashing noise had brought him out from storage to see what was the matter. He moved behind the counter and placed a hand on the .357 magnum he had strapped beneath the counter. The other hand remained firmly affixed on his Yoohoo. As the leather-clad black man ran into his store, he slurped. “Can I help you?” he beamed. “We need fucking gas!

Fill it up on 5!” Mike shouted. “Will that be cash or charge, sir?” Arno didn’t skip a beat. “What? Ah hell, charge it. Damn world’s comin’ to an end anyway. Won’t have to pay the damn bill nohow.” Mike fished through his wallet and handed him a credit card. Arno swiped the card and turned on the pump. “Thank you sir and have a nice day.” Arno slurped. “What’s going on out there?” he asked, half-interested. “Oh, nothin’ much, just the dead risin’ from their graves and such”, Mike muttered sarcastically. Arno’s icy shell cracked. “What?!” he asked more seriously. As if to answer that, a Honda came ripping through the path made by Billy Ray’s truck. Two figures hung out



the passenger windows. It crossed into the gas station’s lot, crushed two gas pumps, and then plowed through the front of the store. Billy Ray and Blake dove for cover outside, and Mike and Arno dove behind the counter on the inside.

As he ducked, Arno yelled “The cash register only has \$50 or less and the cashier does not have keys to the safe!” The car’s momentum had been primarily absorbed by the concrete posts in front of the store, and had come to a rest in front of the register. The woman in the driver’s seat had a face full of airbag, a

bag that was rapidly staining crimson. Arno slowly lifted himself off the floor. Upon seeing her, his first thought was to move over to her and check to see if she was still alive. His sense of smell was overwhelmed with the odor of gasoline and ozone from torn electrical wires. As he moved toward her, another figure rose from the passenger’s side of the car. From the looks of him, he thought initially he had been a passenger that had fared much worse than the driver had. The putrescent smell, Y-incision on the chest and low moan told him that maybe this passenger was already beyond help. “Oh shit, it’s the inevitable zombie apocalypse!” Arno screeched as he reached behind the counter for his pistol. He’d seen the Romero films. He knew how to put one of these things down. All they needed was one shot to the head, and it was all over. He took aim and squeezed one off right between its eyes, or at least where its eyes would have been if it hadn’t stumbled over some rubble. His shot landed harmlessly in the thing’s chest as it lunged toward the counter. Arno backed up and bumped into the side of the counter. His second shot went wild and missed the creature entirely. Sweat was visibly beading on Arno’s head as he took careful aim. The thing was close enough to grab him and its one remaining eye fixed on and let out a low, gurgling moan. Arno could smell its fetid breath and feel the strength of its vice-like grip grab at his shirt. It opened its mouth as it slowly descended on him. Fear and desperation accomplished what hundreds of hours of zombie movies couldn’t. His hand, acting almost independently of the rest of his body placed the pistol in the thing’s mouth and squeezed the trigger. A loud clap and goeey gray-red mist spread out from the back of its head. The creature fell to the floor in a heap.

“Did you get it? Yeah, yeah you did.” Mike said as he cleared the debris. “Damn thing nearly got me.” Arno audibly sighed. “Always thought I was a good shot.” “Everyone ok in there?” Billy Ray and Blake had come to check the situation. “What? Was one of the damn



things in the car?” Blake asked, looking at the headless body.

As if in answer to that, the woman with the face full of airbag whimpered. Mike and Billy Ray rushed to her side. She had been bitten, right in the shoulder. There was a lot of blood and the wound looked like it was turning septic. “We gotta get her to a hospital.” Billy Ray said. “Well, whatever, let’s just get the hell outta here.” Mike seemed very impatient. “Don’t know how much gas has pumped by now, or if it’s still pumpin’.” Billy Ray said. He carefully opened the car door, unfastened the woman and began to work the airbag down. The air was pierced by half a dozen low moans coming from the street. The four men looked up to see the creatures heading in their general direction. “Damn’t redneck, get to pumpin’!” Blake yelled. “I’ll get the girl.” Billy Ray ran for his truck, followed closely by Arno and Mike. As he lifted her from the wreck, Blake heard another low moan coming from back near the 2-liter display. A second thing had apparently been hanging on to the car. The creature rose up and immediately fixed on Blake. “Holy shit!” he shouted, and with the woman in his arms, he ran for the truck. Arno and Mike were unloading rounds into the approaching creatures, but not having the best luck with hitting them in the head. More of the things could be seen in the distance. Some were in the fast food restaurants that lined the streets. Some had made it to the giant cineplex. Abandoned cars littered the road and grass. Many had partially devoured bodies in them that were beginning to stir. Those that had lived were the ones who abandoned their cars and fled. “We’re damn near out of ammo here!” Mike yelled. “Hell with it, let’s get. We got enough gas to clear this hellhole!” Bill Ray shouted back. Blake had made it to the truck. “One’s on my ass! Let’s bail!” Arno helped him load the woman in the back, and Mike jumped in the front passenger’s seat. Blake had heard the ammo comment. “Hey, there’s a lot more ammo and tons of guns at the Meijer.” Mike dashed his hopes. *Pop* “Well

Meijer is on the other side of the traffic jam and I can see about fifteen dead fucks heading for its front doors. I think its safe to say it’s closed for business.” Blake protested “Damn’t it wouldn’t be so hard to get past them. This truck can mow ‘em down!” Billy Ray ripped out the gas nozzle and left it lying on the ground, still pumping. He jumped in, started the engine, and roared out of the area.

Behind them, they could see the creature coming out of the gas station to join those from the street. They all stretched out their arms longingly. Arno fired a couple of shots at the spraying gas, hoping to spark some fumes. Whether it was that, or the small electrical fires starting in the store, something ignited the gas covering the ground. The explosion immolated every one of the creatures. “Guess I gotta find a new job.” Arno mused.

Driving through the rear access road to the mall, Billy Ray was focused on getting out of the city. That is, until Arno shouted, “Wait! Pop’s Guns is right there! We need more guns!” Without looking away from the road, Billy Ray added, “They overcharge on ammo.” “Who gives a shit!” yelled the still mildly hysterical Blake. “If you don’t want to go back to Meijer, we damn well can stop here!” Billy Ray relented and jumped the median on 10th Street, screeching into the strip mall parking lot. The braking slammed everyone hard against the truck. “Damn’t! Why the Hell did we have to leave my car!” Blake was picking himself off the bed of the truck. Brushing him and the woman off, Arno replied “Would you rather go back to the zombie-infested Meijer to retrieve it?” “Why not?” Blake was persistent. “We blew away some of those bastards with just a couple of guns. We can probably get enough guns here to clear out the rest!” “Forget it, man. Lucky we got outta there alive. Now let’s get in there, buy some damn guns, and fuck off!” Mike leapt out of the truck and headed for the store.

Arno and Blake put the woman in the front seat and locked the doors, then once sure she was relatively safe, they

followed Mike and Billy Ray in. A chilled calm floated down amongst them. Only Billy Ray dared to fracture the silence of the moment. “Well, I got plenty o’ guns at home. I’ll just browse a bit and maybe buy some ammo.” Before going in, Mike gave him a “What planet are you from again?” look. Billy Ray smiled a toothy grin in reply.

“Good afternoon. Can I help you?” The middle-aged man wearing glasses and flannel stood behind the counter. He occasionally let his eyes drift to Mike as if checking up on him. If Mike notice, he didn’t let on. “Yeah, we need guns. Lots and lots of guns.” Blake saw no reason not to get to the point. Arno was a bit more level headed. “Umm...yeah, we’re looking for something with good stopping power.” Blake began pointing at weapons. “We need the two Remington 870’s there, those two .30-06 Remingtons, and we’ll need scopes for those. We’ll also need...” He paused and looked back at the others. “Do we want revolvers or semi-auto?” “As auto as we can get ‘em” was Arno and Billy Ray’s replies. “We’re going for high capacity here”, added Arno. “Ok then.” Blake looked over the pistol case. “Gimme those two H&K USP’s...those are .45’s right? And those two Glock .45’s.” Blake looked like a kid in a candy store. “I’ll need to see a permit for whoever’s buying” as “Pop” grabbed the paperwork for sale. “Otherwise, you’ll have to wait on the handguns. By the way, who *is* paying for all this?” Everyone looked at Mike. Mike sighed and flipped out a VISA as well as his concealed carry permit. “Better check and make sure they ain’t stolen.” An old man at the other end of the store also clad in flannel and a farm cap eyed Mike suspiciously. Mike looked sideways at him and said, “I thought I recognized you. Don’t you buy ‘Hot Ebony Buns’ at my store?” The man quickly put his head down and exited. Brushing him off, Mike added “We’ll need plenty of ammo for those as well.”

As Pop and his son started putting together the order and paperwork, a scream echoed from outside, followed by several gunshots. The man who had just

left the store was being advanced upon by something that probably wasn't alive that morning. A festering corpse, riddled with bullet holes, lunged forward and latched onto his neck. It pulled a sizeable piece of muscle loose and then took another chunk out of his cheek. His scream turned to gurgles, as what was left of his throat filled with blood. In seconds, he was a bloody heap on the ground. Pop and his son appeared stunned. Arno, however, had seen too many movies not to be ready for this. And this time, he didn't miss. As the creature approached the door, Arno leveled his pistol at the thing's head and squeezed off a round. It dropped solidly against the door. The woman in their truck was half-heartedly screaming and crying. Arno and Blake went out to calm her down, pushing the door open and knocking the corpse aside.

Pop finally snapped out of it. "What the hell was that thing?!" Billy Ray said very matter-of-factly, "Near's we can figure, they're former residents of the cemetery over yonder. Just can't figure how it got up here from Washington Street so fast. That's like a mile or sumthin'." Mike reminded him "Well, you not being from around here hilljack, you might not realize that the cemetery extends all the way to 10th Street." He pointed to the road bordering the strip

mall. "Looks like all the dead fucks didn't just head for Washington. Some came this way, and if that's the case, they're already in the neighborhoods out here." "You mean" said the still recovering Pop "that there's more of those damn things out there?!" Arno had come back in to help carry weapons and joined the conversation. "I'd guess hundreds, maybe over a thousand by now. And that's just here. Doesn't include all the mortuaries, hospitals, the morgue and any more zombies these create. Then there are other towns and cities. Imagine what the coastal cities are gonna be dealing with." "So" Mike raised his eyebrows and motioned towards the door. "If you don't mind there 'Pop', we'd like to get the hell outta here with our hardware. Maybe you should think about doing the same." Pop nodded slowly, as if his head was moving through molasses. "Yeah, I think you're right. Look, don't worry about the paperwork. Just clear out and take your stuff. John!" He looked over at his son. "We'd better get packing. Good luck boys." They all nodded, grabbed their new toys and headed out the door.

The redneck that had recently died was beginning to try and stand. A quick pistol shot to the head ended his troubles and the group loaded themselves back into the truck. Blake had the woman settled down finally. They moved into

the back seat, small as it was. Arno stayed in the flatbed with one of the rifles. Blake looked over at the woman's shoulder. She was semi-conscious and was developing a fever. "We need to get her to a hospital soon." Mike said, "Community's not far west of us. We can drop her off there then get the hell out of town." Looking through the rear glass at her, Arno was sure she was finished. He'd seen enough movies to know that nothing good ever happened when a person was bitten. He didn't share it, though, feeling that his newfound friends might disagree.

The hospital was confused, but not overwhelmed. Victims had come in, but only in small numbers. Mike suggested to an orderly who took the woman from them that they might want to get some armed people watching the doors just in case. The orderly just looked at him funny when. "These hospitals are gonna be meat factories." Arno couldn't hide his disgust. Mike shook his head. "Just too stupid to listen. Hell with 'em. We're getting outta here." As they were leaving the emergency room entrance, Arno happened to look up at the TV. One of the local reporters, who possessed a seemingly solid piece of hair and a practiced grin sat reading the latest report while people in the background ran about frantically. His steady, monotone voice resounded in stark contrast to the chaos around him. *"Reports have been coming in for the past hour of attacks by what authorities are labeling as 'an army of assassins'. Attacks similar to what have been reported here are trickling in from all across the country. Just a few moments ago, we were told that one of our network affiliate crews on assignment in Beijing were attacked by similar individuals, so this appears to be developing into a global phenomenon."* He paused and put a hand to his ear. *"I'm just receiving word that St. Vincent's hospital on the northwest side has been attacked by these killers. Casualties are said to be high, but luckily it appears that we have more people injured than actually killed."* His monotone voice never wavered.





"Authorities have advised that you are to lock your doors and not allow entrance to any strange person. Even if you think you know them, authorities warn they might be under some kind of cult influence. Should they appear odd or in a state of confusion, do not let them into your home. Police are trying to set up emergency stations where people in attacked areas or unable to make it to their homes can go. If you feel threatened or in danger, you can flee to these sites and receive protection. The Governor is considering calling out the National Guard to patrol the streets and rescue stations and to relieve some of the pressure on the police. He will announce his decision within the hour. We will keep you informed on these strange happenings as new information becomes available."

Blake had been staring blankly at the screen, but finally spoke up. "I bet that news anchor is an undercover zombie. Only someone who'd returned from the grave could be that wooden." Arno almost allowed himself to laugh. With that, the four headed back for the truck. Arno took one last look at the emergency room, noting all the bite victims. "More chum for the feast" he mused to himself. Once back in the bed of the pickup, he felt like he was escaping from Hell.

It was about an hour drive to Billy Ray's doublewide trailer, with another hour added in for stops at Mike, Arno, and Blake's east-side apartments. They had managed to escape the city before exit due to traffic congestion became impossible. The yard was littered with broken appliances and busted automobiles. Blake thought as he got out of the pickup "Under stereotype in the dictionary, there's a little picture of this redneck. He smiled at Billy Ray. Everyone jumped out and looked around. His "home" was surrounded on three sides by farm fields. The seed had just been planted, though, so there was a clear line of sight for about a mile. The back of the trailer bordered a small patch of woods. They would have to keep an eye on that, Mike thought.

Billy Ray and Blake spent the next



hour trying to put together some gear they would need from his trailer's vast array of garbage. Arno and Mike amused themselves noting all the NASCAR paraphernalia lying about. Mike finally got bored with that and turned the TV on. The same reporter, a bit more haggard than when they had first seen him, was talking about the same thing. The biggest difference was a list of schools and hospitals was scrolling across the bottom of the screen.

"The situation has been steadily deteriorating over the last few hours. These persons have attacked several neighborhoods. The casualty totals we have seen coming in appear to be quite high. As you who have been watching are aware, the Governor has released the National Guard to take over law enforcement duties in all metropolitan areas in the state. They should be hitting the streets anytime now. Please, if you can, try and make it to a rescue station. Do not try and stay in your homes. You can not be assured of safety if you stay in your homes."

Click Arno turned off the TV. "Yes, better to get us in cattle pens first so it's easier to be slaughtered. Why don't they just have us charge the zombies in human waves?" Mike shook his head. "You're a bit of a doomsayer aren't you?" "What tipped you off?" Arno walked back to help Billy Ray and Blake. Mike took one of the newly scoped rifles out into the encroaching darkness and began to scan the horizon. He lifted the sight to his eye. Three shuffling figures could be seen lumbering in his direction from across an open field, maybe three hundred yards away. The odd figures had limp postures and blank expressions, visible even in the low light of the early evening. Mike chambered a round, took careful aim, and fired. The northern-most one dropped. The survivors let out a moan he could hear all the way from where he was standing. He reacquired and fired twice more. Both went down in heaps.

Billy Ray, Blake, and Arno came running out with their weapons at the ready. Mike turned to look at them. "S'Ok, just a few off in the distance. I got 'em."



Arno looked at the others. "They know we're here. We'd better get your stuff and go. We'll just have to stop at a store and get the rest." "Now wait." Billy Ray held up his hand. "I know I can find that radio and lantern if you just give me a few more minutes." Blake was ignoring both of them. "What the hell do you mean 'They knew'?! How can they know shit, man. They're dead. They know they're fucking dead and I bet that's pretty much it." Arno looked at him somberly. "I'm pretty sure they can smell us or something. It's some predatory instinct thing, or something. They just know where the food is." Blake pointed his shotgun north. "Well, the Burger King's that way. Let's get the hell outta here." Billy Ray resigned himself to the fact that they would not help him look for anymore of his lost camping gear.

They gathered what gear and food they could and head north. The pickup was again low on gas. Billy Ray unveiled a large custom Chevy van he had behind his trailer. The van had plenty of captain's chairs, wall to wall carpet, and porthole side windows. Even the perturbed Blake muttered "pimpin'". They passed through the normally quiet town of Greenfield. U.S. 40 was clogged with cars trying to get out of the metropolitan area. Some fancy sidewalk driving and a few side roads later, the group managed to make it to a strip mall with a grocery store.

"First we hit the Kroger's, then Radio Shack." Mike seemed to be the only one with any real plan. The Kroger's was surprisingly quiet. Three cashiers even stood lazily behind their registers, each with a distinct look of boredom on their face. "Evenin' y'all." Billy Ray crowed as he grabbed a shopping cart. Mike whispered to Blake as he grabbed a cart, "Bet they're more taken aback by the fact that a ne-gro is in their store more than the whole Hell on Earth thing." Blake stifled a laugh and moved to follow him down the produce aisle. Arno looked over the three disinterested workers. "How's the chum tonight?" he said in a quick, peppy voice. They looked at each other with a confused gaze. "All my questions are answered." Arno grabbed

a third shopping cart. They spent the next thirty minutes grabbing anything they thought would be useful. Flashlights, canned food, bottled water, and other items that might serve them well were taken. They shouted back and forth across the aisles to remind each other of this or that. "Don't forget batteries!" shouted Arno. Mike quickly followed this. "Don't forget the Jurgens lotion. You don't know how long we're gonna be stuck out in the country!" Blake snorted.

As time passed, they became aware that the store was beginning to fill up with people. Billy Ray realized it was time to go and shepherded the others forward. They were a bit rough making their way to a register. A lady in front of them was fishing through her purse. "If I could just find that forty cents off coupon..." Arno looked on in disbelief. He then shouted "Lady, fuck the coupon! It's the zombie apocalypse. You can spare the damn change I think!" "Well I..." she was cut off by Billy Ray, who gently lifted her out of line and to the bagging area. Mike managed to get out "We'll just pay for hers too" to the bewildered cashier. They were rung out in record time. Arno paid with his ATM card. The general consensus was that since Mike had bought the guns and ammo, it was the least the rest of them could do. As they exited, they were greeted with a quickly filling parking lot. They had to flash guns to keep people away from the groceries. It was in this tense moment, that things took a turn for the worse.

Screams were heard from the edge of the grocery store's parking lot. In the confusion, some of the creatures had stumbled up to the mass of cars and people. The agitation of the crowd turned into a frenzied panic as people tried to escape. Billy Ray was the first to respond. He raised his USP and took aim. Arno followed. People ducked and split all around them, trying to avoid the weapons. The dead were felled within minutes. The parking lot emptied almost as quickly save for the wounded that lay here and there. Those who had been bitten were scattered on the fringe and

those who had been trampled were scattered through the rest of the parking lot. Screams and moans could be heard above the fleeing engines. "Almost deserve to be eaten. They ain't even helpin' the wounded." Mike was finishing loading groceries in the car. "What can you expect from zombie chum?" Arno added. "Man, you really are a broken record!" Blake was helping throw groceries in the van. Billy Ray holstered his sidearm. "Maybe we should help..." "It'd only slow us down, and there's too many injured. How many of those will be zombified before we can get to them? And how many zombies will we allow to catch up to us if we do?" Billy Ray hated to admit it, but the convenience store clerk had a point. "C'mon." Mike had finished loading groceries. "Let's grab some goodies from the Radio Shack and get the fuck outta here." Everyone nodded in silent agreement.

A good hit from a sledgehammer opened the door at the Radio Shack. They collected walkie-talkies, a radio, plenty of batteries, and a couple of laptop computers. Billy Ray kept watch as they looted the store. He noticed that quite a crowd was gathering at the McDonalds down the street. That crowd, almost as one, walked up to the windows and started beating on them. The terrified patrons screamed and tried to flee past the horde. Only a few made it. "Zombies are at the McDonalds." Billy Ray shouted in a lazy drawl. "Well, there's no accounting for taste." Blake replied. "Let's go!" The four of them got back in the van and headed north, hoping to find some safety in some form.

As they drove north along State Road 9, the last vestiges of Greenfield vanished behind them. Ahead were nothing but the stars and endless fields of tiny plants. They had escaped, for now. "By the way" Blake said looking around at the other three in the van. "My name's Blake. What the hell are your names anyway?" The van roared off into the darkness. A silent figure that had been walking south turned north to follow the van. A low, throaty moan escaped its lips...

Ω



CALL TO DARKNESS

Part Two by Mike Marchi

“Wil was a Neuropath. He had latent mental abilities that were awakened by the gunshot trauma. Sara explained that he had tremendous potential, but lacked the training to be able to control his abilities. In those early days, he was pretty much the psychic equivalent of a siren. He advertised his presence wherever he went.” Her eyes lost focus again as the memories returned. “Eventually he attracted the wrong kind of attention...”

Siren Song

Enise Westfield winced as the telltale precursor of pain tickled at her left temple. Thinking about Wil always gave her a headache. The tingle of discomfort reminded her again why she chose not to think about him much these days. But the straightjacket that prevented her from even rubbing her own throbbing skull, reminded her of how little choice she had in the matter. Ever since she had become a resident of Ward D, it seems that people had done everything in their power to constantly remind her of why she was there.

Now the latest in a series of shrinks was seated before her, asking the hard questions. Searching for a justification for the act...

The jolt of pain shot all the way through her head this time, like a red-hot knitting needle sliding instantly through her skull, in the left temple and out the right.

* * *

Doctor Nicholas Mercer watched the madwoman curled up and sitting in the corner floor of her cell, waiting for her to continue her tale. She seemed to stop and try to push past a painful memory. *There's more here than meets the eye*, he thought. *What is going on inside that head of yours, Enise. Tell me, and maybe I can help.* That last thought struck him as odd. He had only been listening to her for a very short time, but already felt an odd connection with this haunted woman. The clinical scientist in his own head clucked in disapproval. *This is most definitely not the time to start feeling an attachment to a patient. Especially not this one!* But still, the unscientific side of his brain took a moment to consider the possibility.

She was very tall, athletic, and had deep auburn hair, cropped short - most likely by the hospital staff. Her once-attractive face was now drawn and pale, her cheekbones exposed beneath darkly ringed, sunken eyes. Yet despite the frame around them, the eyes themselves were her most striking feature. Even the light of madness behind them could not disguise the beauty of those deep green eyes. As she sat before him, rocking back and forth, He couldn't decide how to handle the situation.

The woman before him was a surgeon of some renown. She

had been found after-hours in the operating theatre of County General hospital, unattended by any other hospital staff. A janitor had walked unannounced into the surgery, to find Doctor Enise Westfield, dressed in full surgical scrubs. The bright stainless steel scalpel held aloft by a blood-stained, latex-clad right hand dripped with gore. On the table before her was a man - 'was', being the operative word. He may have begun that day as a man, but he ended it as the single most damning piece of evidence against his own long-time friend and associate, Doctor Enise Westfield. In his mind's eye, Nick remembered the crime scene photos of the victim. The photos left little to the imagination. Each slice in the victim's flesh, each cross-section of tissue that had been deftly trimmed out of his body and tossed in the scrap bucket of OR-3 was catalogued ad-nauseam.

He had been asked to evaluate her mental state, to see if she was fit to stand trial for the murder of Wil Ohmsford. The more she spoke, the less certain he was that she was sane. But he felt a strong compulsion to hear her out. To follow her tale (or was it her delusion) through to the end.

“Please continue, Enise. You mentioned a word I'm not familiar with, 'neuropath'?”

The woman raised her eyes to look at him, without moving her chin, which was clenched down against her chest. Her short quick breaths indicated that she was in a lot of pain. Perhaps more than he had originally thought.

“It's not my fucking word,” she snapped suddenly. “I didn't make it up. Sara did.”

Nick had been doing this enough to know that this first session had reached an end. He would get nothing more out of her, as long as she was experiencing this pain. “All right, doctor. I think this will do for now.”

Her breathing eased up just a bit. She lowered her eyes again and resumed the rocking motion.

Nick stood up and began scribbling something in his notebook. “I'll be back later, Enise. We'll talk again when you've gotten some rest.”

* * *

“Right this way, Doctor.” Emma opened an office door with 'Visitor' embossed on the frosted glass window. “Make yourself at home, and I'll transfer Mr. Garafallo's call when it comes.”

“Thanks, Emma,” Nick smiled at the administrative assistant for the Psych Ward D, and stepped through the door into the guest office. The room was ten feet square, with a desk, credenza, bookcase, and two chairs - one for the lucky 'visitor' who got to use the office, and the other for his or her own guest. A single small window, no more than two feet square, was inlaid with a wire mesh and sat high up the painted cinder-block wall. The dim shadow of bars could be seen on the



outside of the window. A single, dim light fixture sat flush with the twelve-foot ceiling, casting a sick yellow glow in the room, too low to even read comfortably by. Fortunately, there was a lamp on the desk, the wrought iron base painted to match the utilitarian gray walls. The lamp cast a circle of illumination on the desktop, revealing a chunky black rotary telephone, and the keyboard for the computer workstation on the corner of the desk.

Nick sat down in the desk chair, noting the annoying squeal that the casters made as it rolled along the worn wood floor. He stared at the phone for a few minutes, wondering when Emma would pass the District Attorney's call through. The office was disturbingly quiet, the only background sounds coming from the hiss of the steam radiator, and the buzz of the incandescent bulb in the desk lamp. Even the computer terminal was silent - turned off. *Don't have a login for this system, anyway*, he noted with chagrin. His inventory of the office supplies in the center desk drawer didn't take nearly as long as he'd hoped, there being all of two black stick-pens, a red Swingline stapler, and a single pale yellow pad of post-it notes. He was just getting ready to see what books were on the shelves, when the shrill bell of the black telephone shattered the silence.

He waited for the second ring before picking up the receiver, using the time to regain his composure after being startled by the sudden sound. "Hello?"

"Nick! Glad I could catch you. How is it going?"

"It's going fine. How are you?"

"Just peachy. But I'm not inquiring about your health. What about Westfield? I need to know if she's sane or not."

"It's hard to say, Rob..."

"Oh for Chrissakes, Nick. What the hell have you been doing out there all afternoon?"

"Evaluating your suspect."

There was a long pause from the other end of the phone, followed by a sign. "Of course, Nick. I'm sorry."

As he listened, there was a soft knock on the office door, followed by Emma slipping into the room, sliding a thick manila file folder onto the edge of his desk, and exiting just as quietly. Nick flipped open the file folder on Enise Westfield and began paging through the material as the District Attorney continued. "How much more time do you need? This wouldn't be such a big deal if the hospital had kept a lid on it. But the Mayor seems to be trying to use this case for some political leverage. I don't pretend to understand his reasons. But he's got to know which way to spin this. Was she a brilliant surgeon who

cracked under the stress of an overloaded hospital, or is she a cold-hearted killer who eviscerated her best friend, and was stopped before she could cause any real public harm?"

Nick's brow furrowed as he noted several omissions in the file. "I'd say I'm going to need the whole weekend at a minimum, Robert. I'd like to do some bloodwork, and check out her scans. Rule out chemical imbalance."

"Haven't they done that stuff yet?"

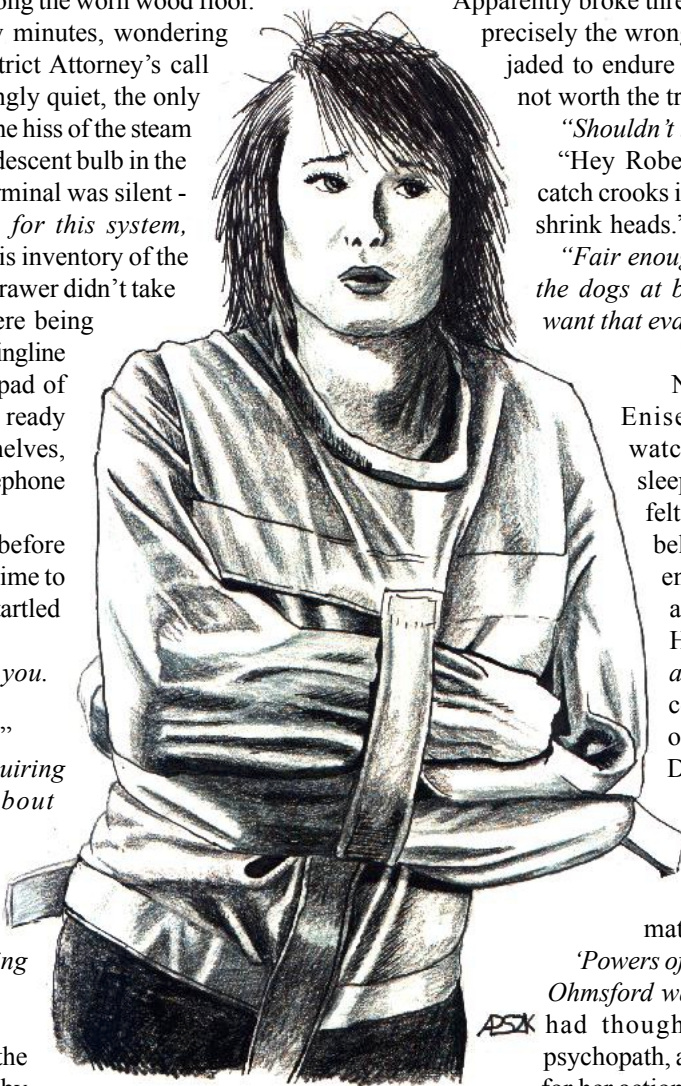
"Her chart says that she wouldn't let them draw the labs. Apparently broke three needles off by thrashing at precisely the wrong time. The staff here is too jaded to endure that kind of resistance. It's not worth the trouble to them."

"Shouldn't they just have sedated her?"

"Hey Robert, I won't tell you how to catch crooks if you won't question how we shrink heads."

"Fair enough, buddy. I think I can hold the dogs at bay for the weekend. But I want that evaluation first thing Monday."

* * *



Nick stood at the door to Enise's cell for a long time, watching her fitful attempts at sleep. The auto-injector pouch felt bulky and out of place on his belt. In the injector, a dosage of enough sedative to bring down a rhino. *It's just a precaution.* He reminded himself. *It's also a betrayal of trust.* He countered. Any hope he had of unravelling the enigma of Doctor Enise Westfield lay in establishing a rapport based on trust. She was nearly there, finally sharing a few snippets of information in conspiratorial tones.

'Powers of the mind', she had said. 'Wil Ohmsford was a neuropath.' At first he had thought that she meant to say psychopath, and was offering it as defense for her actions.

But after convincing Emma to give him access to the computer terminal in 'his' office, he had spent a couple hours researching the terms she had used. Neuropathy, as in telepathy or empathy. The powers of the mind, indeed. He had avoided these subjects throughout his clinical career. They were the stuff of supermarket tabloids, and flew in the face of logic.

His reverie was broken by the arrival of Rachel, along with two very large orderlies. The men were dressed in the traditional white scrubs of their profession, and between the two of them, looked like they worked out by tossing sides of beef back and forth across. *These guys are huge! And they're just another*



precaution. Another betrayal. I hope we don't need them.

Enise was sitting upright and staring intently at him even before he had closed the door. "Good evening, Enise. I trust you're feeling a little better."

The woman's head twitched to one side and she winced in pain. Nick had to wince himself at the sound of the tendon in her neck snapping along with the motion. She just stared at him, saying nothing.

"Enise, I was wondering if I could have your permission to run some tests..."

As soon as he said 'tests', her eyes widened in obvious fear. She shook her head in the negative.

"Please. I believe it is necessary – to help you."

"No."

"You are a doctor. You know many things can influence human behavior. Something's not right. We both know that."

"NO!"

"Please, Enise. I really..."

He never got a chance to finish the sentence. With a fluid motion, Enise lept off the bed and plowed into him, throwing him back against the side wall of the cell – no easy task considering she still wore the straightjacket. The reaction from the hall was immediate. Rachel and the orderlies were in the room, and all over her in a heartbeat.

The three staff members hit Enise hard, bearing her to the ground. Enise strained against the straightjacket. Teeth clenched, beads of perspiration standing out on her red, straining face. She was obviously trying to pull her arms free of the constricting material. Nick stood transfixed against the wall of the cell, watching the others struggle to hold her down. The chords on her neck stood out, her face constricted in pain and anger. Nick heard a series of loud popping sounds fire off in quick succession. *My god, those were the seams on the jacket*, he thought. Rachel and the larger orderly finally managed to hold the squirming madwoman down, while the second fought to secure the straps to her legs. Enise yowled like a wounded cat, all semblance of the intelligent, coherent physician stripped unceremoniously away.

The orderly lost his grip on her right ankle, and paid the price, taking a kick to the solar-plexus that sent him flying across the room. *She's stronger than she looks*. Nick had seen patients in highly agitated states often exhibit superhuman abilities, but this was something more. Enise tried to use the now-free leg to try to dislodge Rachel. The short black woman swore an oath, "Smitty, get your ass back up here, and secure that leg!!!" Nick could only watch in fascination as the fallen orderly, Smitty dragged himself up onto all fours, and then into a shaky, semi-upright position. With amazing agility, he reached out and snagged the edge of her foot, drawing it in close to his body and trapping it between his body and his beefy arm.

Finally restrained, Enise let out a bloodcurdling shriek.

The sound broke Nick out of his stunned paralysis. He knew he only had a moment before Rachel, Smitty and the other orderly were knocked free of their tenous perch. The auto-injector found purchase against her left thigh, and forced

a stream of warm sedative into her bloodstream.

"Oh god, no. Don doo tthissss..." and then she went limp.

* * *

Nick sat in his borrowed desk-chair for a long time, staring at the lab reports on Enise Westfield. He couldn't quite wrap his brain around the results. Considering the effort it had taken to get the samples, they had drawn twice the normal amount of blood and tissue, knowing that if a test went wrong, getting another sample would prove very difficult. When the first set of tests had come back, Nick had immediately demanded they be repeated. The numbers were identical in both instances.

In the hour that followed, Doctor Nicholas Mercer picked up the receiver on the phone twice, both times with the intention of calling Robert Garafallo. Both times he had reseated the handset before getting past the first number on the rotary dial.

Finally, he did pick up the phone, but it wasn't the District Attorney he called. "Hello, Janice? It's Nick. Hi."

Nick pulled one of the pens and the post-it pad out of the desk drawer and started drawing sharp little angular patterns on the paper. "Yeah. It's been a long time. Listen, I need a favor, Jan."

He began subconsciously bouncing his left knee with a nervous twitch. He didn't even realize he had started doing it until he rapped his kneecap against the leg of the desk.

"Do you still have full-time access to the genetics lab?"

He paused again and resumed the rhythmic drumming.

"No, it's not like that, Jan. I need something checked out, and it has to be someone I trust. Whatever else may have happened — I still..." he trailed off.

"Really? Thanks Jan. I owe you one."

* * *

"Leave us alone, Rachel." Nick spoke in a level voice, but his heart was pounding in his chest. He fought to keep himself calm, and hoped to God, the security woman wouldn't see the sweat on his forehead, or catch the smell of fear that radiated off him in waves. In his hand, he clutched a sweat-stained and crumpled copy of the fax from Janice.

"Nobody is supposed to be alone with her, Doctor. Not after what happened last time."

"Rachel, look at the patient for a moment. She is wearing a straightjacket *and* strapped to her bed. I don't think I'm in any danger." *I wish I really believed that.*

Nick looked directly at Rachel, praying that the expression on his face was one of calm. Rachel bought the façade, and left him alone with Doctor Enise Westfield.

When the door latched shut, and he turned to face his restrained patient, she was already looking back at him. "Did you find what you were looking for?" she asked.

Nick swallowed hard and took a step closer. "I..." He had to fight off a sudden urge to stop there, and forced himself to lean closer. He stopped with his face only a foot away from hers. Then, very quietly, he spoke so that only she could hear.

"What are you?"

To be continued...

Ω

Overheard at the Game Master Lounge:

Last night I threw a rather nasty creature at the group. It had nearly killed two party members and was using a third as a human shield. So they were standing there, pumping bullets into the thing, completely ignoring the danger to their own guy! In a last ditch effort to escape, the creature propelled itself backwards out the fifth floor window...

While still holding their friend?

Nope. It used him to push off, which more or less sent him flailing toward the guys with the guns.

So it wasn't dead?

Not at the time it leapt out the window. It's not the fall that kills you, you know. It's the landing.

Ah. So the landing killed it?

Well, the players looked out the window, and saw it lying in a crumpled heap on the sidewalk. They wanted to be sure, so the marksman took careful aim and put a slug through its skull.

Probably prudent.

Probably. Then they thought it over, switched to full automatic fire, and emptied a full clip into the body.

Well, *that* ought to have done it.

You'd think so. But they still had their doubts, so they tossed a grenade out the window. It landed in the unmoving creature's lap, exploded and vaporized the thing's midsection.

What a waste of firepower! Did they get on with the game then?

Well, no. They still weren't sure. So they grabbed a glass case full of Army Ants and tossed that out the window onto the body below. The ants swarmed out, and stripped the body to bone in less than 20 seconds.

Wow. Were they convinced yet?

They still weren't quite ready to buy it. So they split into two teams and went down there. Approaching it carefully from two different directions.

So, of course, when they got there, the creature was gone, right?

Of course it *wasn't* gone! They killed it seven times over! Hell, the pavement was starting to take structural damage!

Considering how paranoid they were, they probably tried using a flamethrower next.

No, actually, I think they were finally getting the picture. With guns trained on the skeleton, they approached from four different directions to poke at the bones with the butt of a rifle. They couldn't decide which one of them should try that, so they agreed to all poke it simultaneously.

Did you inform them that the creature was truly dead?

Never had a chance. They were attacked by the Army Ants. The swarm killed the entire group in less than a minute. There was no one left to tell. Now, if they *had* used that flamethrower...





The Loose Ends

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Playtest Session title block based off art by Earl Geier which appeared in the Dark Conspiracy 1st Edition rule book.

Next Issue

You may have already noticed that this issue is our largest to date. That, combined with our driving desire to 'raise the bar' with each subsequent release is forcing us to shift to a Quarterly release schedule. So Volume 10 will be our **Fall 2000** issue, and will be available around the end of September.

We are also instituting a writing contest. See the back cover, and check out our web site for more details! Ω

DEMONGROUND: Reflections of a Darker Future

The Magazine of Modern Conspiracy/Horror

proudly announces

THE DEMONGROUND THEME-WRITING CONTEST

Beginning with Issue 10, we at DEMONGROUND will be bringing you a new quarterly feature. We thought it would be interesting to see how each of the different game systems would address specific themes in the conspiracy/horror genre. For instance, in this issue, we presented several different articles dealing primarily with Zombies.

As with this issue, each quarterly installment will not just contain contest-themed material. Only a specific portion of the magazine will be devoted to presenting the BEST articles on the theme. The rest of the magazine will continue to be devoted to a variety of conspiracy/horror material of any theme.

The themed articles presented in the magazine will be considered the 'finalists' in the contest.

The rest is up to you, the DEMONGROUND reader. Shortly after the release of Issue 10, we will present a ballot on the DEMONGROUND web site. Only registered subscribers of Demonground will be allowed to vote for contest winners, and each registered subscriber will be able to cast one vote. At the end of the tabulation period, the winner will be declared, and will receive a PRIZE!

Keep a close watch on the DEMONGROUND web site for more details and specifics of this contest.

We know you're all anxious to get started, so here is our first theme topic:

DEMONGROUND Issue 10 Theme

ALIENS

If it involves creatures from beyond the stars, it's fair game for Issue 10

Please indicate at the start of each contest entry that it is intended for the Theme Contest. Remember, it may not be possible for all contest entries to appear in the magazine. Finalists will be chosen by DG staff members. Final choice of the winner will be carried out by popular vote from among registered Demonground subscribers ONLY. See the DEMONGROUND Web Page for further details and full presentation of the terms and conditions of the contest, as well as specifications of the Prize.



www.demonground.org