

ROCK GOD DEATH-FUGUE

COMPATIBLE WITH

**DCC
RPG**



**PARENTAL
ADVISORY
EXPLICIT CONTENT**

ROCK GOD DEATH-FUGUE

by Steve Bean

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THE PLAYTESTERS OF PERDITION TOUR:

GÖTTERDÄMMERUNG

George "Loren Verboten" Feldman (Drums)
Daniel "FDS" Halpern-DeVries (Keyboards)
Edward "Steve" Mighetto (Guitar)
Mario "Elric Finn" Mejo (Flute)
Jeff "Boris Jäger" Hays (Bass)
Eric "Tod" Rollins (Vocals)

STÄUF INFEKSHÜN

Keith "Whip Klinger" LaBaw (Vocals)
Laura "Lars Schuller" Tank (Drums)
Milos "Mick Civil" Babic (Bass)
JP "Merlin" Charpentier (Guitar)

ÜNFETTERED SCIENCE

John "Garkan" Gard (Drums)
David "Untirfir" Zelasco (Vocals)
Mike "Thump" Markey (Lead Guitar)
Jayson "Kombüstion" Utz (Theremin)
Reid "Sturm von Krieg" Steele (Bass)
Casey "Fabian Clemence IV" Sherman (Vocals)

BLOODBATH AND BEYOND

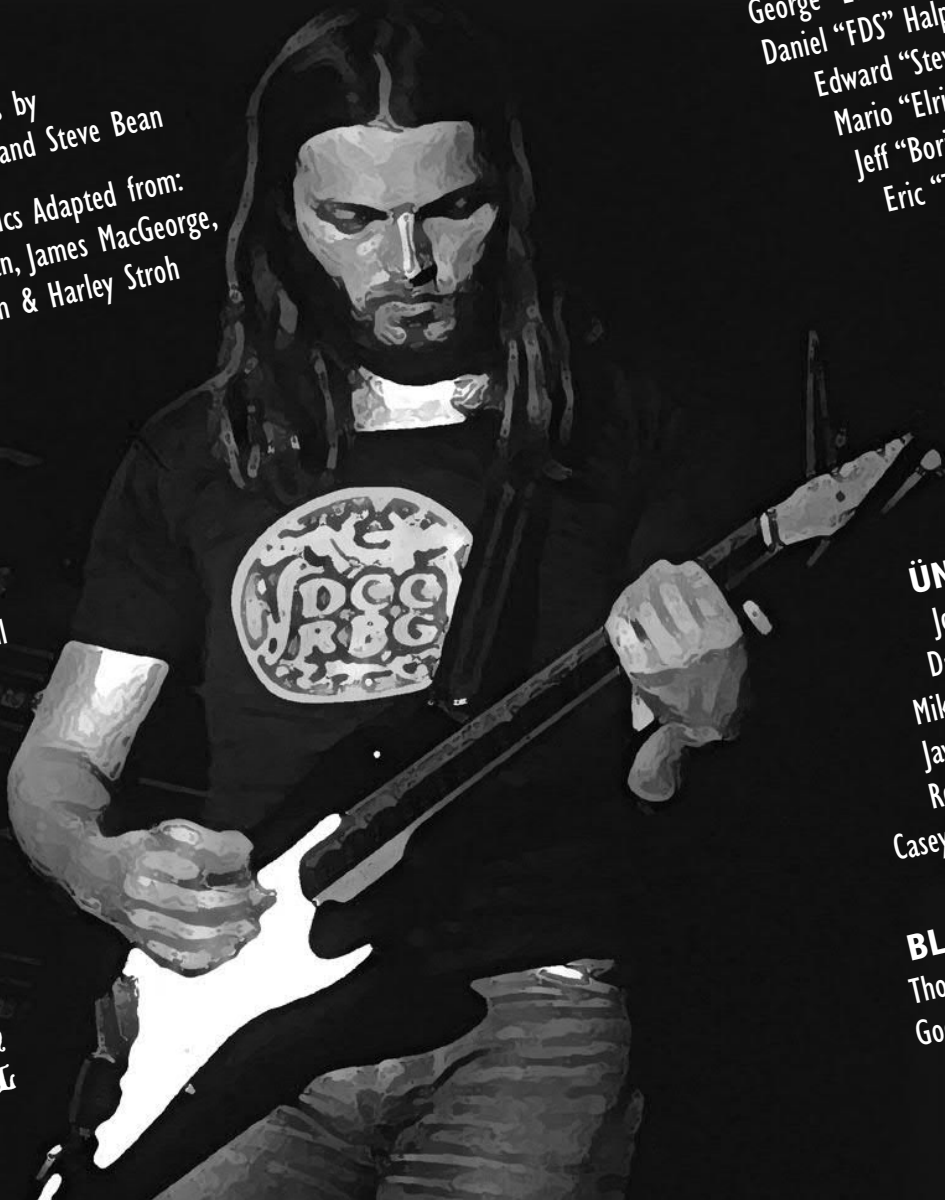
Thom "Gorgar" Hall (Gong & Triangle)
Godd Todd "Godd Todd" Evans (Vocals)
Mark "Spider" Malone (Drums)
Peter "Helmut" Ciccolo (Bass)
Jim "Mercurio" Dovey (Guitar)

Lyrics by
Julian Bernick and Steve Bean
w/ Add'l Lyrics Adapted from:
Joseph Goodman, James MacGeorge,
Terry Olson & Harley Stroh

Art Direction:
Steve Bean

Layout:
Cindy
MacConnell

With
eternal
appreciation
for James
MacGeorge's
**BLACK
SUN
DEATH
CRAWL**



Writhe Through Shadow

Atramentous

ROCK GOD DEATH-FUGUE

ff w/distortion P.M.--- P.M.--

E5 C5 D5 E5 G5 E5

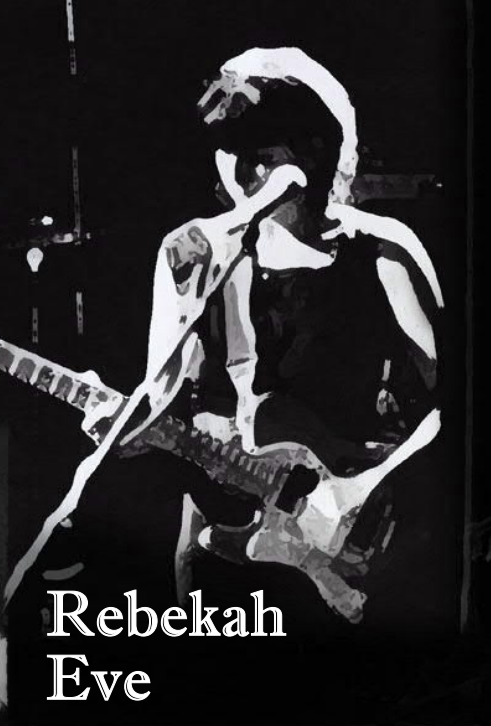
The image shows a musical score for a guitar piece. It features a treble clef and a key signature of one sharp (F#). The score consists of two lines of music. The first line starts with a chord of E5 and contains a series of eighth notes. The second line contains a sequence of chords: C5, D5, E5, G5, and E5. The notation includes dynamic markings like 'ff' and 'w/distortion', and phrasing slurs with accents.



James
Kota



Elijah
Hillary



Rebekah
Eve



Bale
Mann



Lloyd
Frasier

CIRCA 2005



ATRAMENTOUS

CIRCA 2012



Site of what would prove to be the band's final show: a small-venue club date.

FAME HAS BEEN ACHIEVED BUT THE GOAL STILL REMAINS:
IMMORTALITY

BANDMATES, GO NO FURTHER—
HERE THERE BE MONSTERS...

BLACK SIDE OF THE SUN

A Strange and Foreboding Portal

The burning purge, which scours the earth
The hardened glamour, be-stilling life
The baleful storm, it heeds no plea
The raging wind, eats from within

Chorus

Four banes are placed
Upon this gate
Fire, Ice, Storm and Hate
Fire, Ice, Storm and Hate

PLAYING
THIS
ALBUM

ROCK GOD DEATH-FUGUE...

...is a one-shot "adventure" that explores themes of artistry, envy, excess, hubris and the cost of "immortality-through-popular-media."
ROCK GOD DEATH-FUGUE (RGD-F) owes much of its inspiration to James MacGeorge's BLACK SUN DEATH CRAWL. RGD-F is also a follow up to NULL SINGULARITY, a BSOC-inspired one-shot that presented players with an exploration-through-role-playing of the lengths to which they would go to survive when "survival at any cost" could cost them their very humanity. But where BLACK SUN DEATH CRAWL is truly Nihilistic feeling and NULL SINGULARITY feels like claustrophobic panic and agoraphobic fear, ROCK GOD DEATH-FUGUE is pure tragicomedy.

Burn Out or Fade Away

RGD-F PCs are "Rock Gods" weaving musical "magic" and indulging in all the debaucheries and dangerous habits of the rock 'n' roll lifestyle. This lifestyle, along with hubris and other deep flaws, guarantee they will come to a bad end. The players' goal is to get to choose that end from among 3 types: 1) a "Blaze of Glory," 2) "Wry Self-Parody" or 3) "Gracelandian" Disgrace. At the end of the game, players improv-narrate how history will remember their Rock God. Whether players get to choose what type of end they narrate depends on whether their PC captures "The Limelight" and has also demonstrated artistry by having a high Inspiration Ability Score.

A Pantheon of Rock Gods

Before character creation, players decide what kind of band they are: hard rock, prog rock, death metal, etc. A good way to decide this is to have the players agree on 3-4 bands that complete the sentence "We sound like..."

Then, players decide what role each of their PCs plays in the band: vocals, lead guitar, etc. As Rock Gods their class is "wizard" but their band role dictates 2 Ability Scores that modify their "spell casting," which manifest through their music and celebrity aura.

Adventure Format

This booklet contains 13 short encounters that alternate between concerts performed by the PCs and events that take place on the road between shows. Both types of encounters are likely to cost PCs Inspiration, an Ability Score that replaces Luck. Inspiration will be critical when PCs face off against each other in PvP "musical" "spell duels" called "Contending for The Limelight." Success at Contending for The Limelight marks a Rock God for glory.

Encounters, NPCs & Judge Improv

ROCK GOD DEATH-FUGUE is minimalist by design. Encounters are written bare-bones style w/ a set-up & some stats or rules. They leave out much of the narrative detail about locations and NPC descriptions. This requires Judges to fill in the details either through pre-session prep or improvisation.

Inspiration

Rock Gods seek the truth and purity of art. In ROCK GOD DEATH-FUGUE, a PC's capacity to quest after, and produce, real art is represented by an Ability Score called "Inspiration," or Insp. Inspiration replaces Luck. It can be burned just like Luck AND it can be used for spellburn.

"The 27"

Seeking art in its pure form—or for that matter, creating it—will drive a mortal to the brink of insanity (if not over it). So, every Rock God has one of "The 27:" a dark flaw in his or her psyche. Players determine their PC's flaw by rolling a d30 on the table provided. A PC's "27" should heavily influence his/her choices & actions; The end a player narrates for her or his PC can also be an expression of this flaw.

Too Close to the (Oft-Black) Sun: The Seductive, Soul-Decaying Power of a Rock God

Rock Gods are "wizards," but in our world, magic manifests in only very few ways—true art and the power to influence others being 2 of them. Rock Gods cast "spells" through the artistic impact of music and the perversely compelling aura of fame—both exceedingly powerful and dangerous forces. Wielding the two together can provide an almost limitless ability to bend the modern world to one's whim. At the same time, the pure truth of art can electrocute the soul and the fundamental falseness of celebrity can poison it. This can destroy one's moral compass and one's artistic and personal integrity. Losing one's integrity causes catastrophic collateral damage to both dignity and decency—two things that make us human. Paradoxically, this damage to self can also serve as a source of inspiration, fueling the very art that had only been recently sacrificed to it. So Rock Gods' use of "magic" risks "corruption"—taking the form of compromised art and vacuous fame—but also a paradoxical potential for these corruptions to generate new inspiration. This is represented in RGD-F through a version of DCC Corruption called "Crisis of Self." The game mechanics of Crisis of Self are written into the two Rock God spell descriptions.



The Appended Sea

At water's edge
She waits for me
To return from distant sea

But my bones are soaked
With ocean's brine
Soul beat by endless wave

Her heart remains forever mine
While my heart belongs
To salted rime

Chorus

The pain of longing
You will sing
Forever

Forever desiring what the sea has taken
That no ship can ever bring

CONTENDING FOR THE LIMELIGHT!

"Limelight" encounters take place at each of the concerts the PCs' band plays on this tour/adventure. During each concert, one or more pairs of PCs find themselves locked together in a rare artistic moment. Both PCs in a pairing are invoking the "Dark Muse" & both have the potential to achieve transcendence through their performance—but ego, envy, competition for the crowd's favor mean that only ONE will prevail.

"Limelight" encounters work through a simplified version of the DCC Spell Duel mechanic. The Judge sets up The Limelight narratively, describing the scene for pairs of performers' "musical duel(s)." Both players in a dueling pair role-play what their PCs' performances look like. The PC with the higher Inspiration Ability Score decides the order in which players will role-play their performances.

The players w/o PCs involved in The Limelight each award a "Crowd Bonus" of +0-+4 to one of the players contending for The Limelight based on which role-play they think was more compelling. These are written anonymously on slips of paper. The Judge tallies the votes and awards the bonus to the player with either 1) the higher average award or, 2) with more awards given to him/her. The bonus should be approximately the net difference between the two players' average awards.

Steps for Contending for The Limelight

1. Choose "duelists" & narrate setting.
2. Determine role-playing order.
3. Players role-play performances.
4. Non-dueling players award bonuses; Judge collates these & awards one Crowd Bonus.
5. Duelists secretly assign spellburn to positions 1-5 in the appropriate row.
6. Duelists roll 5d20 & record low to high in the appropriate row.
7. Duelists compare modified rolls, burning Insp as desired.
8. Adjust positions of tokens on the Duel Tracker after each comparison. Anytime the position difference is 5+ spaces the PC w/ the higher token wins.
9. Repeat steps 4-8 as needed to resolve duel.

EXAMPLE: Alt rockers Pall (Synthesizer) and Beau (Guitar) Contend for The Limelight. Beau's player describes a steel-framed "hamster ball" enclosing Beau, and Beau crowd

THE LIMELIGHT CONTINUED

surfing the audience while playing. Pall's player describes a synthesizer with sharpened spikes that cause Pall's hands to bleed as Pall solos. One player awards Pall a +2 bonus while the remaining 2 players award Beau +3 and +1, respectively. So the Judge Awards Pall a +2 Crowd Bonus to spell check rolls at the start of the duel.

The Limelight is a spell duel with some big simplifications:

- * Rock Gods know 2 spells. These spells counter themselves & each other.
- * The winner of the contest for The Limelight is the 1st PC to end a round with a 5+ difference on the Duel Tracker (Tracked using tokens on the double-neck guitar Tracking Sheet provided.)
- * Players will roll five spell checks simultaneously and arrange them, lowest to highest, in the positions marked 1-5 the Player Worksheet.
- * Players can spellburn for any or all of the five Rolls. This burn is done secretly in writing before any rolls are made. The spellburn assigned to a roll is recorded in the row provided on the Player Worksheet.
- * The Crowd Bonus is added to its recipient's spell checks (recorded in the row provided on the Player Worksheet) but the bonus decreases by a cumulative -1 for each spell check comparison the Crowd Bonus winner loses to the other player.
- * Spell check rolls are compared on the Tracking Sheet starting with position one and progressing across to position five. The higher modified spell check roll wins & advances that PC's tracker by +1. For every increment of 6 (round down) that the winner's spell check roll exceeds the loser's, the winner advances his/her token by an additional +1.
- * Inspiration (Luck) can be burned to boost any of the checks after the rolls have been made. This can result in a back-and-forth "Insp burn sub-duel" between the 2 PCs over any single die roll/round of the musical spell duel.
- * If a modified spell check roll indicates that a spell is lost for the day, it is assumed that the PC switches to the other spell between rounds. If a PC loses her/his second spell during a duel then that PC must spellburn to continue the duel, applying the burn retroactively to rounds already rolled.

THE LIMELIGHT CONTINUED

- * Rolls that result in Unintended Consequences (Misfires) and Crises of Self (Corruption) are resolved AFTER the entire duel is finished and each of these results rolled is applied once ONLY for the entire duel, regardless of how many times the result was rolled.
- * No Spell Duel Check Comparisons (Table 4-5) or Counterspell Power checks (Table 4-6) are made. Similarly, there is no Phlogiston Disturbance on tie rolls.

At the end of Contending for The Limelight, any PCs who dueled with each other (presumably in pairs) dice off against their opponent(s) in a contested Pers check. If any PC who won a duel has the higher roll than her/his opponent(s), s/he steals two points of Insp from the PC with the lowest Pers check roll.

A PC's win/loss record for Limelight contests and his/her ending Insp score determine how history remembers her/his Rock God. (See the section "Burn Out, Fade Away or...Worse?", below.)

PC Match-Ups for Contending for The Limelight

Judges should aim to give all PCs the same # of opportunities to Contend for The Limelight. They should also expect to choose Limelight match-ups on the fly in response to the emerging narrative, leveraging any PC rivalries that develop during sessions. Game mechanics may also play a role in which PCs a Judge chooses to pit against each other to Contend for The Limelight. For example a PC may exhaust his or her spells during an encounter before a show. The Judge might choose to avoid putting that PC in contention for The Limelight since a PC with no ability to counterspell is likely to make for an anti-climactic Limelight encounter. (Though Judges should remember that a Wizard can Spellburn to recall a spell that's lost for the day.)

CHARACTER DEATH

This is Not Our Fate. So Let Us Not Talk Falsely Now, the Hour's Getting Late:

A hallmark of DCC is how it reclaimed PC death—absent from more "modern" rule sets. RGD-F also embraces an "ethos of demise," but in its own way. It is predetermined that all of the PCs in RGD-F are going to die, or otherwise come to a (at least partially) bad end—that's a significant part of the fun. With a bad end being a foregone conclusion, players are free to take full advantage of the opportunity to explore the dark themes of human existence presented by the adventure. So—though it may be difficult for DCC Judges to embrace—this gives them license to spare a PC from death so s/he can experience all the encounters, and fully explore his/her fictional self. Don't worry—RGD-F is full of things worse than death, and, as stated, all the PCs are going to come to some sort of bad end. (See the adventure's epilogue, entitled: Burn Out, Fade Away or... Worse?)

So, if a PC is going to be killed and you want to spare him/her, do it. Narrate an alternative result, all the while making it understood, subtly, that an unnamed, dark, "higher power" is intervening. Make that PC's "27" flaw somehow work to spare him/her. Then, when you get to "Burn Out, Fade Away or... Worse?", where they try and claim the fate they want for their PCs, have that dark, higher power "call in the marker". Declare outright which category of fate befalls the spared PC or narrate their fate yourself.

If a PC does die, you can opt to have the manager of the PCs' band bring in a replacement to ensure a full line-up and a commercially successful tour. You can give the player of the character who died the pleasure of naming this NPC, presenting some improvised personal history for the NPC, role-playing the manager introducing the NPC to the band and otherwise using his or her best role-playing skills to help this NPC add color to the band.

THE TOUR

...cause it feels of death
... on the floor, my ass still on the bed
... on rug into my clothes, I zombie out the door
I don't know what I got, but all I want is more.
Did you finish that? Do you need another one?
Did you finish that? Do you need another one?

Boy they sold it... Boy they sold it to us slow...
I got money now...
I can sit and watch it glow...

I like the morning, I like the call of crows
Before the sunrise, and
Too damn cold for snow
And when the sun comes up
It shines in black and white
And I feel lovely, feel like a suicide
Did you finish that?
Did...

I get suspicious when people wonder why
I'm the one black bird in that big gray open sky
I got a place to stand, I got some room to fly
I got some guts to eat, I got a power line
Did you finish that? Do you need another one?
Did you finish that? Do you need another one?

Boy they sold it... and they sold it to us slow...
I got more loneliness... than anyone I know...
Boy they tricked us...
Turned the heat up on us slow...
I got more loneliness... than anyone I know...

I like the morning, I like the
It makes...

Prelude: In Antwerp—One of Those Fans

"Your tour gets off to a turbulent start when, b/c of mechanical trouble, the flight to your Amsterdam kick-off show is diverted to Antwerp. Your manager determines you can get to your show in Eindhoven fastest by bus and goes to charter one. Restless from travel you leave the lounge to roam the terminal. Word spreads quickly and by the time your manager returns, a crowd has gathered. Loathe to alienate your growing fan base, your publicist insists on an impromptu signing."

"You're enjoying the attention until one fan makes it through the line. He's quiet and polite but there's something unnerving about him. In turn, he looks each member of your band in the eye, holding the contact just a little too long. He says: "You're going to go down in history." The album he puts in front of you to sign isn't yours. It's Write Through Shadow by Atramentous. Called "The Cursed Album," it happens to be one you're all listening to right now, an influence you're all sharing

RE: your next studio album. He asks you to
'Please make it out to Max.
Max Dieter Kauptman.'"



Free Days

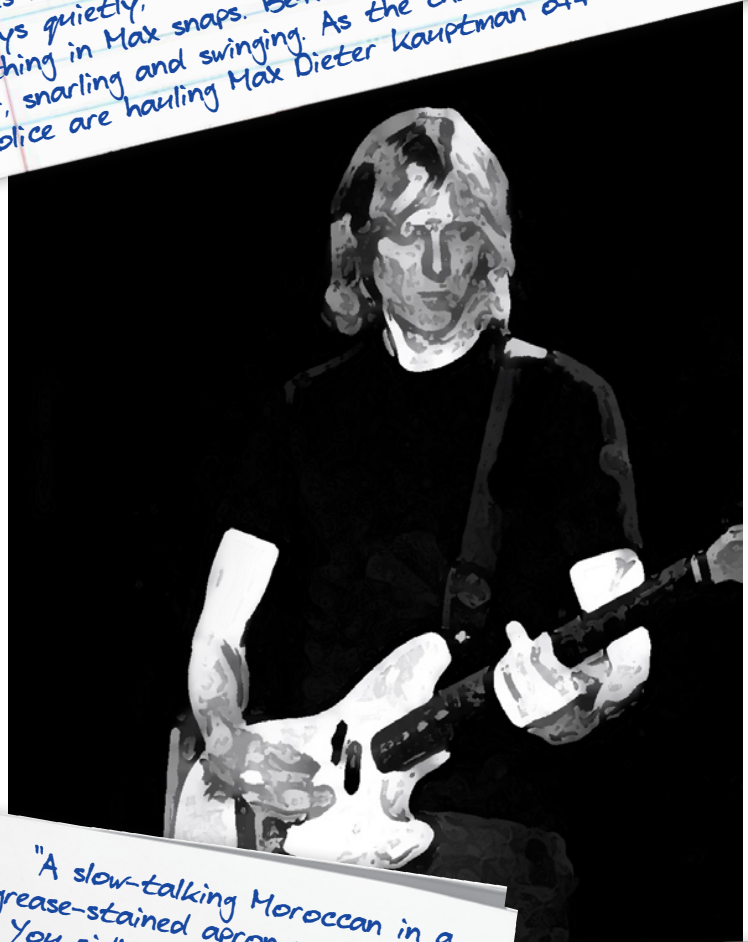
The closet contains a man
With small pipes emerging
From his wrists, thighs and neck
His exsanguinated body
Slumps in its chained restraints
He takes a dying breath,
He raises his head to look at you

Bleed for the box, he says, or else...
Or else It will escape

Bleed for the box
Or else It will escape

The cabinet contains a
With distinguished
From its hallowed
Our life's blood
As con

"Your publicist steps in and tells Max you can't sign it, offering him a publicity photo. Max looks at the publicist with hate in his eyes. 'No,' he says quietly, 'this.' The fan behind him complains and something in Max snaps. Before you can react he turns on the complainer, snarling and swinging. As the charter bus pulls up, the Belgian police are hauling Max Dieter Kaupman off in a van."



II. A Score Gone Wrong

"The scene at the signing has some of you 'wiggling.' While the roadies load the bus, (PC w/ an addiction)—you look at your phone. Your connection has come through. You can score some (drug of choice) off a kitchen worker. S/he's waiting for you at the loading dock behind her/his restaurant. You slip your security & go meet your connection."

"A slow-talking Moroccan in a grease-stained apron nods at you. You sidle over and s/he quotes you a price. You're in a strange land and don't know the scene—is it customary to haggle? You don't care about the \$\$\$, "you just want the stuff."

"Then a big, dark, late-model sedan eases into the lot. 4 swarthy dudes in expensive clothes slide out."

"One speaks in clipped words, Turkish, maybe. Then he points a gun at the Moroccan."

Toughs (4): Init +2,
Atk knife +2 melee
(1d4) or pistol +2 missile
(1d6); AC 11, HD 2d6; MV
30'; Act 1d20; SV Fort
+3, Ref +2, Will +1.

III. The Limelight: Eindhoven

The 4 parts of
Limelight encounters:

1. Set the stage: describe, or have a player describe, the venue, the crowd and the opening band.
2. Opening number: describe, or have a player describe, what it looks like when the band comes on stage & what their opening number looks and sounds like. Encourage players to invent names for their songs

3. Climax: describe, or have a player describe the show's climax, when PCs duel for The Limelight. Help set up narrative tension, then run the duel(s).
4. After the duel(s), describe, or have a player describe, the end of the concert.

IV. The Crowd in Eindhoven

"The fans go crazy for the duel-like performances of (Names of PCs who Contended for The Limelight). But as the last notes fade away, you can tell: it's too much. The crowd is too caught up in it all: the drugs and hormones and beer and sweat and the music have overwhelmed their senses. The crowd had been swaying, but now it's surging. Clamping down on panic you realize that in a few short moments, one of two things is going to happen. This huge crowd is going to either rush the stage and drown you in a tidal wave of bodies, or will turn into a stampede that will trample someone to death."

Swarm of Fans (1): Init -1; Atk trample, +2 melee (1d6); AC 12; HD 12d4; MV 30; Act 1d16; SP: trample all targets w/in a 20'x20' space; on a hit, targets must make a DC 15 Ref save or MV is halved; SV Fort +4; Ref -2; Will +3

Pink (bye)

Saw those walls come down, glea
Heard the final roar, saw the thro
Clicked the final link, saw the amethyst clouds blow
The man on TV said, at this time, there's no one left to try

bye

On a desert, on a mountain, in the jungle full of ash
the ending of the oceans, see the steam lift off waves a-crash
dumb as pebbles, can't read the news, and there's no one left to try
Can't drive a thousand cars, can't ask a million questions why

bye

The consolation comes so long as two remain
Do you want to get in-back off-get in front of this runaway train?
Heard the president laugh, but when I turned around, I found
Is that an argument, my love, yes? Or a cur

bye

Remind Players What's at Stake:

1. More Limelight duels won than lost & 10+ Insp: Blaze of Glory
2. More duels won than lost & ≤ nine Insp: Wry Self-Parody
3. As many or more duels lost vs. won: "Gracelandian" Disgrace

V. Overdose @ an After-Hours Party (Optional Encounter)

"The insanity at the show has left you, your fans and the whole town of Eindhoven in a state. You don't know about the town, but you need to get bent. At the after party, there's everything imaginable to do just that."

"Each of you is 'feeling no pain' in your own way when you grok an abrupt, sharp tension ripple through the entire party. A groupie pushes her way through the party-goers but before a word even leaves her mouth, you know what's wrong—someone has ODeD."

A fan has overdosed on heroin or some other drug and is in a life-threatening situation. The PCs have 2 rounds before the NPC fan has to begin making a Fort save each round. The save is DC 10 in the first round, w/ the DC going up by +1 each subsequent round.



Liz had Zee

Lust slithers forth forbidden
To caress with writhing glee
Then lust crawls back
To fawning dark
With black heart
You gave it free

Complications: This is NOT a combat encounter, but there are lots of things to throw at the PCs here: the band's publicist being more concerned about bad press than the fan, a hotel employee or off-duty cop getting in the PCs' way, party-goers reacting to the situation by taking more drugs & ODeD, etc.

The PCs are each probably under the influence of various drugs: penalize spell-, skill- & ability checks to match the amount and type of drugs each PC has taken.

VI. Impromptu Gig In Cologne

"Your band's tour manager is a huge Nico fan. So when she realizes you're going to pass through Cologne, Nico's birthplace, she convinces you to stop and do an unscheduled small club date. She makes some calls—it's not hard to find a brauhaus eager to cash in on your rising fame—and the gig is set."

The brauhaus is an artist's dream, all old wood and deep shadows, with recipes dating back centuries—as Judge, play this up, maybe even encourage competition, using narrative role-playing or game mechanics (eg a contested Pers ability check) to decide which 2 PCs will have Contend for The Limelight here.

She Creeps

About this girl I know, I'd say she's got a perfect heart
She'll be your everything, except she don't know where to stop and start
Her mind's a dark device, she fastens on something like me
She'll give you anything, but you better know that it ain't free

Because... she creeps

You gotta shut her out, get away from clinging death
She'll have you organized, she'll have you scheduling your breath
She'll have you rhyming obviously, suck the sap right from your pen
And when you're mollified and lost your head, she'll do it all again

Because... she creeps

Is this misogyny? Is it just helpful advice?
Is this really real my boy? As real as white on lice
You know the rules my boy, you know her - you know what she's trying to do
And if you still fuck up, you know then that the blame's on you

Shadow Walking

A wayward child
At a dim-lit spire
Toy gun in hand
Blade of straw a-teeth

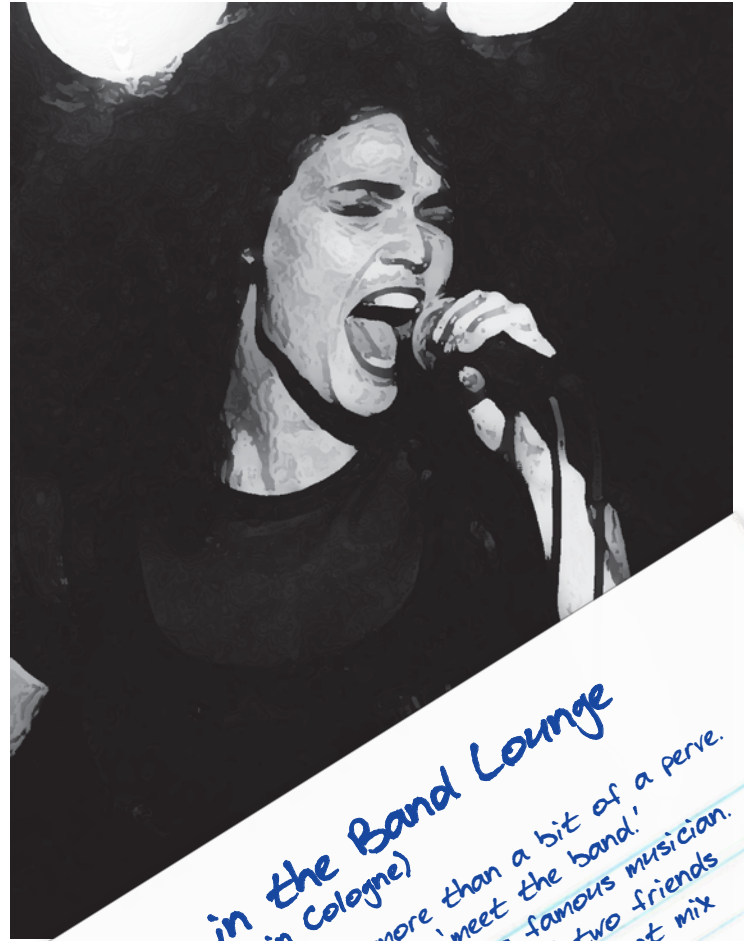
She sees the Old Moon
With the New Moon embraced
Flying above a row
Of aspen trees

The grass was silvered
And was gleaming
The night was pleading weakly
With the sun

Chorus

She played the shadow game
We all knew as kids
Pass a tree, a standing stone
Have your shade be something
On the other side

He knew that
A mountain
The one climber



VII. Mein Freund/Meine Freundin in the Band Lounge
(Optional Encounter—Before or After the Show in Cologne)

"The brautaus owner is a 'swinger' (his/her words) and more than a bit of a perve. S/he's brought a bunch of friends who are very eager to 'meet the band.' There's a hook-up for everyone and more than one if you're a famous musician. But the owner's perverse pleasures extend to head games: he's invited two friends who simultaneously love AND hate each other. Their dynamic is a violent mix of contempt, sexual compulsion and possessive jealousy. Once they both realize that the other one is there, & that s/he is f****g a Rock God, all Hell breaks loose."

Choose 2 PCs to be "hooked up" w/ a "friend." B/c of their "crazy love," each friend NPC is immune to Aura of the Dark Muse cast by any Rock God except the one s/he is hooked up with. Spell checks for The Dark Muse Provides are made at a -4 by PCs "with" a friend.

Time's Up

Time's up for the planet and the people and the feedlots and the
and the lack of f*****g fuel

Time's up for the American way of life and acting like a fat f*****g fool

Time is up for hiding our face in the sand while the bombs and the bullets

Time's up for this drunken, decadent mess, and the clock hand is coming

And the clock hand is coming around again

Chorus

Time's up for the animal bones and oil

Time's up for the letting the new world or

Time's up for the video games and booze

Time's up for the time that goes nowhere

Time's up for the time that goes nowhere

Time's up for the time that goes nowhere... e...

Time's up for the spies and the spooks and the

Time's up for the torturers and liars and lapdogs

Time's up for the everyone cuz time is short and

Time's up cuz I been to Hell and back and they're

And the clock hand is coming round again...

And they're waiting for us with open arms...

Time's up for distraction and conspiracy

Time's up for sloth and hypocrisy

Time's up for the fake tits and fake hair

Time's up for the time that goes nowhere

Time's up for the time that goes nowhere

Time's up for the time that goes nowhere...



VIII. Two Tattoos @ Buchenwald

"On the way to Leipzig, you stop for lunch near the town of Jena and learn about the museum & memorial at the site of the Buchenwald Concentration Camp. You feel compelled to go pay your respects.

Visiting the cells, the Corpse Cellar and the Crematorium leaves you emotionally raw, so you're lost in painful reflection when you reach the memorial. So lost, you fail to notice the old woman in the wheelchair until she's shrieking at you:

"I know you Hauptscharführer Sommer. I know you! It was clever of you to disguise yourself as a gypsy but your pride got the better of you—you HAD to wear your death's-head badge!!!"

She has pinned (name of PC)'s foot w/ her chair & she's stabbing wildly at the skull tattooed on his/her collarbone. As her family runs to her she begins flailing and you can see faded #s tattooed on her wrist."

She's a survivor of this camp. The PC's tattoo reminded her of an SS insignia and it triggered a flashback. She's frail, out of her mind (+6 to Will saves) and hurting herself—if she isn't stopped in 3d3 rounds, she's going to suffer a stroke and die. The more serious the situation becomes, the more likely it is that one of her distraught family members will also "go ballistic" on the band.



Nine: The Limelight (in Frankfurt)

Remind Players What's at Stake:

1. *More Limelight duels won than lost and 10+ Insp: Blaze of Glory*
2. *More duels won than lost and \leq nine Insp: Wry Self-Parody*
3. *As many or more duels lost as won: "Gracelandian" Disgrace*

X. The Tour Bus Crashes Near Dresden

Time's up for the spies and the spooks and
Time's up for the torturers and liars and land
Time's up for the everyone cuz time is short
Time's up cuz I been to Hell and back a

And the clock hand is coming round again...

And they're waiting for us with open arms

Chorus

Time's up for distraction and conspiracy
Time's up for sloth and hypocrisy
Time's up for the fake tits and fake hair
Time's up for the time that goes nowhere...
Time's up for the time that goes nowhere...
Time's up for the time that goes nowhere

Time's up for the metaphysical jig and blaming
Time's up for God and the book and the sacred h
keeping us down since men could speak
Time's up for the press and the TV and the
Time's up for the empire because the waves are

Because the clock hand's coming round again

Because

Because

The PCs have another round to react. Then the bus careens out of control. PCs can try to regain control of the bus (DC 13 Agl check) but the fire in the driver's compartment forces a PC to make a DC 15 Fort save each round or be burned for 1d6 dmg

"The bus rolls out of Jena with you still stunned by your strange run-in with the old woman. You quickly reach for the virtue or vice that helps you check out or get yourself straight—whatever helps you cope with the shock. You're settling into the cushion of your seat when the intercom bleats and the driver, in heavily accented English, explains: There's a bridge out up ahead. We're detouring through Chemnitz. The delay won't affect your schedule."

Give the players the opportunity to let their PCs indulge in a few vices, debrief the incident at Buchenwald and let their "27" flaws show.

"A shout of 'Oh Scheiße!' rings out from the driver. Your eyes dart to the windshield just in time to see two things: a sign that says 'Dresden 5km' and the snapping of the tie-downs securing an acetylene tank on the truck ahead of you."

The PCs have one round to react. The Judge should remind them of their "27" flaws and any mind-altered or inebriated state they're in when they react and should impose bonuses or penalties to rolls as appropriate.

Unless the PCs do something radical: "The acetylene tank bounces off the pavement, ruptures and smashes into the front of the bus. The windshield shatters and you see the driver engulfed in flames."

Add 't'l DC 13 Agl and Int checks can be attempted to avoid collisions w/ cars and stop the bus, respectively. Three cumulative rounds out of control and the bus crashes. (1d12 dmg to passengers; DC 15 Ref save = 1/2 dmg)

XI. Going on in Leipzig

"Backstage before the show you can't imagine going on. The past few days have been insane & this is just the tour's 1st leg!"

"Walking on-stage is surreal. Maybe reports about the band's past few days have affected the crowd—whatever the reason, instead of the usual roar accompanying your entrée, the audience is dead silent."

"From the opening chord, the first note sung, the 1st snare snap, you all know. This will be a show they'll remember for decades. And each of you is Hell-bent on being the one remembered above all others. At the back of your mind, a nagging half-formed thought whispers: 'This will definitely be the thing you'll be remembered for if it's the last thing you ever do.'"

Two-Thousand, One-Hundred and Thirteen

The Moon-Called-Eth
Slowly circles Ore
Covered with rolling grasslands
And caressed by a slow, warm breeze

Chorus
Where do questions go
When they remain too long
Unanswered
The answer? They go to Eth

It is not so much a paradise
As a meditation

On the Invisible Plains
At both the start and finish
Of the Endless Fields

XII. Last Chance for The Limelight

At the band's show in Leipzig, the difficulties on the tour drive all the band mates to Contend for The Limelight. It's as if a doom hangs over them, making each member of the band desperate for a chance at artistic immortality. The Judge should involve as many PCs in this contest for The Limelight as possible, ideally ALL of them.

XIII. The Return of Max Dieter Kauptman

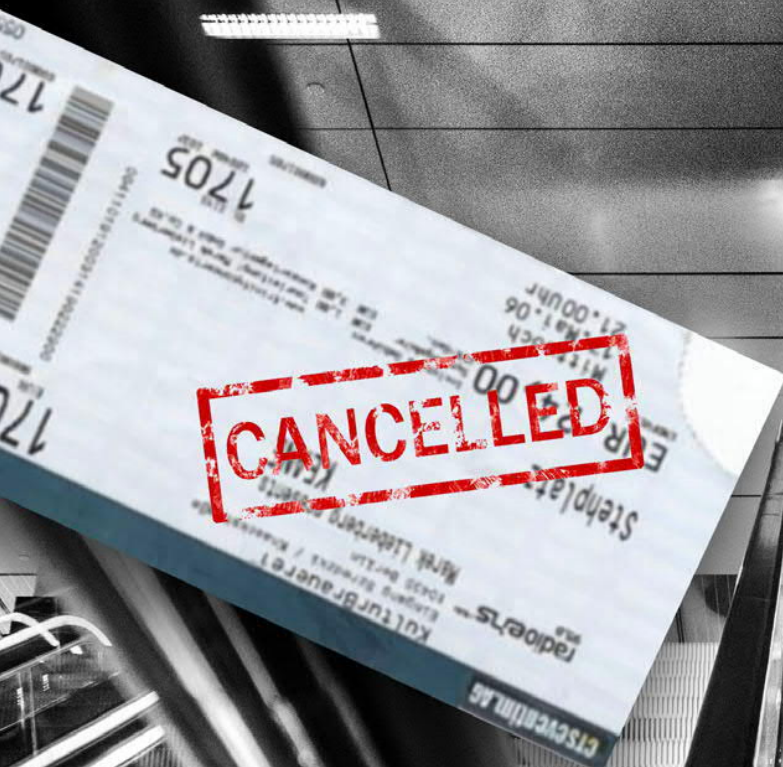
“In transit, exhausted and a bit in shock, you feel your ride ease to a stop. Before you can even see your destination, you can hear the crowd that’s gathered at news of your arrival. You have no stomach for it. But the rear doors open and your publicist’s face pokes through—

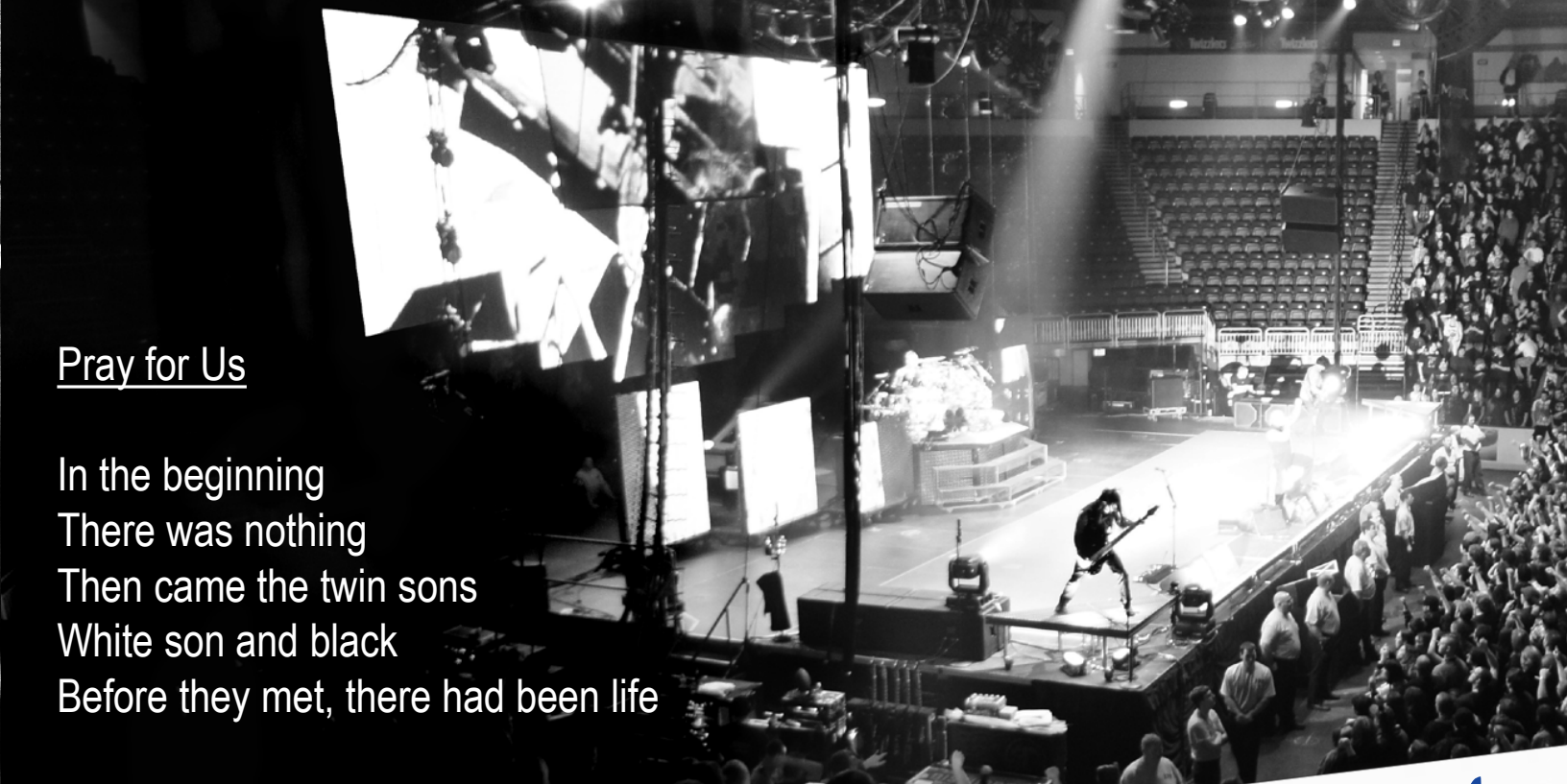
‘I want to see you grateful for your fans. Out with you, now!’ ”

*“Things are too bright after the dimness of the vehicle’s interior. You go to put on your sunglasses then stop yourself—you can’t display the appropriate public face from behind a pair of dark shades. Without them, the flashbulbs are blinding. Through spots in your eyes you see the crowd, the police barricades and the one fan who slipped through them. He’s carrying several old, vinyl records—the cover of the topmost album is mostly concealed by one of your band’s glossy, 9x12, stock promotional photos, but you can just make out what record it is: Atramentous’ *Writhe Through Shadow*. Strangely, the fan has his hand thrust into the bottom-most album jacket, making an awkward carry out of the whole stack.”*

“As your eyes clear you realize you recognize the fan. From Antwerp. What was his name? Matt? No, Max. Max Dieter Kauptman. You’ve placed him now, but he’s slipped the notice of both police and security. He pulls his hand from the album jacket—you can see it now: He has a pistol. He points it at (Name of PC who has been cumulatively the most successful in the Contending for The Limelight) and it ‘pops.’ Twice.”

“Your band mate falls to the ground, blood spurting from between fingers clamped to the hole in her/his neck. The ground rises up to meet her/him.”





Pray for Us

In the beginning
There was nothing
Then came the twin sons
White son and black
Before they met, there had been life

But the black son rent the white
And brought suffering eternal
The doors between one and the other
Slammed forever shut

Chorus

Once we had names
Before, we were people
Now we are the cursed
Please, please... pray for us

RIP

**BURN OUT, FADE AWAY,
OR...WORSE?**

Whether or not a Rock God survives the tour, s/he has a Dark Destiny; for artists there are many more fates worse than death: irrelevance, being forgotten, or even popularity, if it turns the artist into a cliché. (eg a record company sells the rights to an artist's song for a sappy commercial selling an awful product...)

The 3 Dark Destinies—how history might remember a Rock God:
More Limelight duels won than lost and 10+ Insp: Blaze of Glory
More Limelight duels won than lost and ≤ nine Insp: Wry Self-Parody
As many or more duels lost as won: "Gracelandian" Disgrace

At the end of the adventure, each player determines his/her PC's Final Destiny & narrates how history remembers that PC using the Destiny as a narrative guide and factoring in her/his "27" flaw, if possible.

You hold in your hands the last recordings
of the legendary band Atramentous

All five members died in a plane crash
during their 2012 world tour: Icarian Black (Elijah Hillary),
James Kota, Lloyd Frasier, Bale "The Mystery" Mann (whose body was
never recovered) and the beautiful—and controversial—Rebekah Eve

Some believe these recordings to be cursed; what is certain is:
This album is an unintended eulogy in E-minor

It is an artistic masterpiece

It is: *Writhe Through Shadow*

1ST WORLD TOUR

WRITE — NEXT ALBUM
W/ THESE HACKS!?

LISTEN TO — ATRAMENTOUS ALBUM
WRITHE THROUGH SHADOW

GOT TO FIND: SUPPLIERS *VOICES?*

IMMORTALITY... ?

TRANSCENDENCE AT ALL COSTS
— MUSE — MUSINGS — MUSIC

GUITAR TABS FOR DA JUDGE (LICKS LEARNED IN PLAYTESTING)

of Play Sessions

I think RGD-F runs best in two sessions of about 3 hours (not including breaks). Most of my tests were done in one 4-hour session, but groups only experienced about ½ the encounters and ½ the number of Limelight duels I'd've liked to have seen PCs participate in.

Running this Adventure in Public

RGD-F brings out the “Metalocalypse” or “This is Spinal Tap” in players, only it's the X- and MA-rated versions. So if you're going to play it in public, make sure you're in a place where you won't cause (yourself) problems if your players get carried away. In one convention playtest, a 10 year old girl walked into the room in the middle of a sex scene and we had to quickly switch to speaking in euphemisms.

of Players & Challenge Level

The encounters in RGD-F are designed for a classic four-piece rock band line-up: vocalist, guitarist, bassist and drums... In many of the playtests I had 6 PCs. It ran pretty well, but some of the encounters—eg the Overdose, Mein Freund and Buchenwald—were a little too easy. Judges w/ 5–6 PCs should scale up the challenge level. I don't recommend more than 6 PCs.

Important NPCs: Manager & Publicist

In playtests, I found two NPCs to be very important to influencing the narrative: the band's manager and its publicist. These NPCs need a few particular characteristics: 1) They need to have influence over the band, and 2) They should be resistant to the band's *Aura* spell. Make up stats in-flight. As personalities they should be *compelling*.

Reminding Players What's at Stake when Contending for The Limelight

A couple of playtest groups gave me the feedback that they would have benefitted from being reminded of what was at stake during the Limelight duels so they could make more conscious decisions about burning Insp. So in this final version, I've put reminders on several of the Limelight encounter pages and printed the guidelines in a blank space on one of the spell handouts.

Odd # of Players & The Limelight

An odd number of players can leave one player with nothing to do during Limelight duels. If you move the duels along this isn't too much of a problem; it helps to give that player the opportunity to narrate the set-up for the duels as outlined in the 4-part approach to running Limelight duels.

Rules for Limelight “Assists”

A couple of playtesters wanted RGD-F to be cooperative instead of PvP. An interesting idea, but not really the flavor I'm going for. However, allowing the “odd PC out” in a Limelight duel to try to assist a comrade could be a good way to involve all PCs in a duel, even w/ an odd number of players. Have the assisting PC make a Spell Check against a DC and give the PC s/he is assisting a +1 to duel Spell Checks for a successful check and an additional, cumulative +1 for every 3–4 points that the check roll exceeds the target DC.

ROCK GOD

Band Name:

Character Name:

Flaw:

Armor

Class:

HP (Roll d4 + Sta Mod, 3x):

Ability Scores [Roll 3d6; Insp Roll 4d4+2]

Str Mod + +1 Melee =

Agl Mod + +1 Ref = Missile = Init = Spd = 30'

Sta Mod + +1 Fort =

Pers Mod + +2 Will =

Int Mod

Insp Mod

Action Die: d20

Crit Die: d8, Table 1

3rd Level

Role in Band:

Vocals (Str & Pers)

Guitar (Agl & Pers)

Bass Guitar (Str & Int)

Drums (Agl & Sta)

Other (Pers & Int)

Spell Check:

Role Mod +

Role Mod +

Level + 3 =

Total:

Spells Known:

Aura of the Dark Muse

The Dark Muse Provides

Personal Items:

“The 27”— Every Rock God has one of “the 27”— a “dark flaw.” Players should have their PC’s “27” manifest frequently across the encounters, heavily influencing his/her choices and actions; it is up to player whether his/her PC’s Dark Destiny is a direct expression of this flaw. A PC’s flaw is determined with a roll of a d30:

1. Addictive Personality: Alcohol
2. Addictive Personality: Mixing drugs
3. Addictive Personality: Hard drugs
4. Addictive Personality: Gambling
5. Addictive Personality: Sex—
Always with the wrong person
6. Poor Judgment:
Always hooks up with crazy lovers
7. Poor Judgment:
Violent when under the influence
8. Poor Judgment:
Always pisses off the wrong dude
9. Poor Judgment: Likes fast—and/or—dangerous things when under the influence
10. Poor Judgment: Makes bad financial decisions
11. Poor Judgment:
Blindly rebels against any and all authority
12. Obsession: Guns
13. Obsession: Depravity
(eg child pornography, coprophilia, et. al.)
14. Obsession: It’s a *secret...*
15. Obsession: Stealing other people’s lovers
16. Obsession: Vanity
17. Mental Health Issue: Manic Depression
18. Mental Health Issue: Necrophilia
19. Mental Health Issue: Pyromaniac
20. Mental Health Issue:
Compulsive Masturbator
21. Mental Health Issue:
Tourette’s Syndrome
22. Mental Health Issue:
Phobia — Social Situations
23. Mental Health Issue:
Phobia — Germs
24. Mental Health Issue: PTSD
Manifests as Cutting
25. Mental Health Issue: PTSD
Manifests as Panic Attacks
26. Mental Health Issue: Narcolepsy
- 27 —30. Player chooses or invents flaw

AURA OF THE DARK MUSE

Level: 2

Range: W/n earshot

Duration: 1 turn or more

Casting Time: 1 Round

Save: Will

<p>General</p>	<p>The caster uses musical artistry, poetics or rhetoric to charm anyone who can see & hear the caster. The caster can target a portion of his or her audience. The size of the audience targeted by the spell determines an additional modifier that applies to the Spell Check: 10K – 5,000=-4; <5K – 500=-3, <500 – 50=-1; <50 – 20=-2; <20 – 2=-1; 1=±0. Targets get a Will save against the caster’s spell check. Targets who make successful saves against this spell receive a cumulative +2 to their Will save against subsequent castings of this spell by any caster during the same encounter. While affected by the spell, the target is marked by a sign of the caster’s control (eg they acquire a tattoo of the band’s logo, they purchase and wear apparel merch, play the band’s music on portable stereos, etc.) Targets receive a new save to break the charm according to Int, as follows: Int 3 – 5=1 month; Int 6 – 7=1 week; Int 8 – 10=3 days; Int 11 – 12=1 day; Int 13 – 15=3 hours; Int 16 – 17=1 hour; Int 18+=1 turn. If a target’s new save roll exceeds the charmer’s modified spell check roll by 3+ the charm is broken; if the save is made by less than 3 more than the modified spell check roll, the charm remains in effect but the effects drop one category on the spell results table and the target receives a new save at the next, shorter interval, ie as if the target were one Int category smarter.</p>
<p>Manifestation</p>	<p>Roll 1d3: (1) the caster’s voice or musical instrument takes on a rich, other-worldly tone; (2) the caster is perceived by the target as having a subtle halo-like aura; (3) the space around the caster vibrates with a visceral tension, making those experiencing it feel like the world is more real, more “now,” more intense or more in focus.</p>
<p>Crisis of Self (Corruption)</p>	<p>The PC loses one point of Inspiration. At the next <i>inopportune</i> moment (determined by the Judge or chosen by the player during role-playing), the PC’s “27”—his/her dark flaw—manifests <i>acutely</i>, with the PC experiencing the role-playing consequences of the flaw manifesting at that time and place. During the manifestation the PC both courts <i>and</i> risks Inspiration while confronting his or her “demons.” The PC makes a DC 14 Will save. On a successful save the PC adds one point to his/her Inspiration score. For every 3 points by which the roll exceeds the DC of the save, (rounded down) the PC adds +1 point to his/her Insp score. If the PC fails the save, s/he loses a point of Inspiration.</p>
<p>Unintended Consequence (Misfire)</p>	<p>Roll 1d4: (1) caster becomes obsessed with one or more targeted individuals; (2) 2d3 randomly determined nearby creatures become deeply co-dependent; (3) caster develops a significant level of self-loathing (4) target is not charmed but instead repulsed and angered by caster.</p>
<p>1 – 3</p>	<p>Lost, failure, and worse. Roll 1d6 modified by Inspiration: (<0 – 1) Crisis of Self + Unintended Consequence; (2 – 3) Crisis of Self; (4+) Unintended Consequence</p>
<p>4 – 10</p>	<p>Spell is lost for the day.</p>
<p>11 – 13</p>	<p>Failure, but the spell is not lost.</p>
<p>14 – 23</p>	<p>The target must make a Will save or fall under the caster’s complete control, as if it were his/her close friend However, the target will not perform actions which a friend would not perform. The target is able to operate at fully-normal functionality while charmed.</p>
<p>24 – 30</p>	<p>The target must make a Will save or fall under the caster’s complete control, as if it were his/her devoted follower However, the target will not perform actions that are suicidal or that a devoted follower would not perform.</p>
<p>31 +</p>	<p>The target must make a Will save or fall under the caster’s complete control, as if it were his/her fanatical follower. The target will perform any action that the caster desires, including actions that are suicidal or might bring harm to the target. The target’s fanaticism drives it to operate at above-normal functionality while charmed, granting it bonuses to rolls or advancing it up the Dice Chain as the Judge deems appropriate (eg action dice, ability checks, skill checks, damage rolls, Deed Dice, etc.)</p>

THE DARK MUSE PROVIDES

Level: 2

Range: Variable

Duration: Permanent

Casting Time: 1 action

Save: None

General	This spell enables the caster to call into existence an item, object or substance that s/he desires. A successful casting gives the wizard an intuitive understanding of how close by the item, object or substance is, but does not provide an exact location or specific direction. But a sufficiently powerful casting can summon that item, object or substance immediately “to hand.” The item, object or substance can only be summoned into existence if such a thing exists on the caster’s own plane of origin and in past or present historical epochs of that plane of existence—nothing can be summoned from the future. On a successful casting, the wizard may choose to invoke any effect equal to or less than his/her spell check, allowing him/her to produce a weaker but potentially more useful result.
Manifestation	N/A
Crisis of Self (Corruption)	The PC loses one point of Inspiration. At the next <i>inopportune</i> moment (determined by the Judge or chosen by the player during role-playing), the PC’s “27”—his/her dark flaw—manifests <i>acutely</i> , with the PC experiencing the role-playing consequences of the flaw manifesting at that time and place. During the manifestation the PC both courts <i>and</i> risks Inspiration while confronting his or her “demons.” The PC makes a DC 14 Will save. On a successful save the PC adds one point to his/her Inspiration score. For every 3 points by which the roll exceeds the DC of the save, (rounded down) the PC adds +1 point to his/her Insp score. If the PC fails the save, s/he loses a point of Inspiration.
Unintended Consequence (Misfire)	Roll 1d4: (1) the caster loses a significant item in his/her possession; (2) at an inopportune time, the caster is accused of thievery and the item in question <i>is</i> , inexplicably, somewhere in his/her possession; (3) the caster harms him/herself in some manner during the attempt to obtain the item, object or substance s/he desires; (4) the caster mistakes something else for the desired item, only realizing the mistake <i>after</i> attempting to use the item for its intended purpose.
1 – 2	Lost, failure, and worse. Roll 1d6 modified by Inspiration: (<0 – 1) Crisis of Self + Unintended Consequence; (2 – 3) Crisis of Self; (4+) Unintended Consequence.
3 – 7	Spell is lost for the day.
8 – 9	Failure, but the spell is not lost.
10 – 11	The caster summons a commonly found, inexpensive item, object or substance. The item, object or substance is somewhere in the same space as the caster (eg in the same room, in the same vehicle, etc.), or in the possession of someone in that space who holds the caster in positive regard.
12 – 13	The caster has a commonly found, inexpensive item, object or substance on his/her own person.
14 – 15	The caster summons an uncommon and/or expensive item, object or substance. The Judge decides if the item, object or substance is somewhere in her/his vicinity, ie within the same building if it is modestly-sized (eg a house), on the same floor of a large building or within a defined outdoor area (eg in the park, in the empty lot, etc.) or if it is in the same space as the caster (eg in the same room, in the same vehicle, etc.) and in the possession of someone who is positively inclined toward him/her.
16 – 19	The caster summons an uncommon and/or expensive item, object or substance. The Judge decides if the item, object or substance is somewhere in the same space as the caster (eg in the same room, in the same vehicle, etc.), or if it is in the possession of someone in that space who holds the caster in positive regard.
20 – 21	The caster has an uncommon and/or expensive item, object or substance on his/her own person.

THE DARK MUSE PROVIDES—CONTINUED

22 — 25	The caster summons a rare and difficult to obtain item, object or substance. The Judge decides if the item, object or substance is somewhere in her vicinity, ie within the same building if it is modestly-sized (eg a house), on the same floor of a large building or within a defined outdoor area (eg in the park, in the empty lot, etc.) or if it is in the same space as the caster (eg in the same room, in the same vehicle, etc.) and in the possession of someone who is positively inclined toward him/her.
26 — 29	The caster summons a rare and difficult to obtain item, object or substance. The Judge decides if the item, object or substance is somewhere in the same space as the caster (eg in the same room, in the same vehicle, etc.), or if it is in the possession of someone in that space who holds the caster in positive regard.
30 — 31	The caster has an rare and difficult to obtain item, object or substance on his/her own person.
32 — 33	The caster summons a unique item, object or substance. The Judge decides if the item, object or substance is somewhere in her vicinity, ie within the same building if it is modestly-sized (eg a house), on the same floor of a large building or within a defined outdoor area (eg in the park, in the empty lot, etc.) or if it is in the same space as the caster (eg in the same room, in the same vehicle, etc.) and in the possession of someone who is positively inclined toward him/her. If the item, object or substance is owned by an entity, that entity will make every effort to recover it.
34+	The caster summons a unique item, object or substance. The Judge decides if the item, object or substance is somewhere in the same space as the caster (eg in the same room, in the same vehicle, etc.), or if it is in the possession of someone in that space who holds the caster in positive regard. If the item, object or substance is owned by an entity, that entity will make every effort to recover it.

The 3 Dark Destinies—How History Might Remember Your Rock God:
More Limelight duels won than lost and 10+ Insp: **Blaze of Glory**
More Limelight duels won than lost and ≤ 9 Insp: **Wry Self-Parody**
As many or more duels lost as won: **“Gracelandian” Disgrace**

CONTENDING FOR THE LIMELIGHT PLAYER WORKSHEET

						1	2	3	4	5
CROWD BONUS?										
SPELL MODIFIER <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>										
SPELLBURN										
+ D20 ROLL										
= NET SPELL <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>										

Steps for Contending for The Limelight

1. Choose “duelists” and narrate setting.
2. Determine role-playing order.
3. Players role-play performances.
4. Non-dueling players award bonuses; Judge collates these & awards one Crowd Bonus.
5. Duelists secretly assign spellburn, as desired, to positions 1–5 in the appropriate row.
6. Duelists roll 5d20 & record rolls from lowest to highest in the guitar pick row.
7. Duelists compare modified rolls, burning Insp as desired.
8. Adjust positions of tokens on the Duel Tracker after each comparison. Anytime the position difference is 5+ spaces the PC w/ the higher token wins.
9. Repeat steps 4–8 as needed to resolve duel.

CONTENDING FOR THE LIMELIGHT: DUEL TRACKER

ADJUST POSITIONS OF TOKENS ON THE
TRACKER AFTER EACH COMPARISON.
WHEN THE POSITION DIFFERENCE IS 5*
SPACES THE AC W/ THE TOKEN
HIGHER ON THE TRACKER WINS

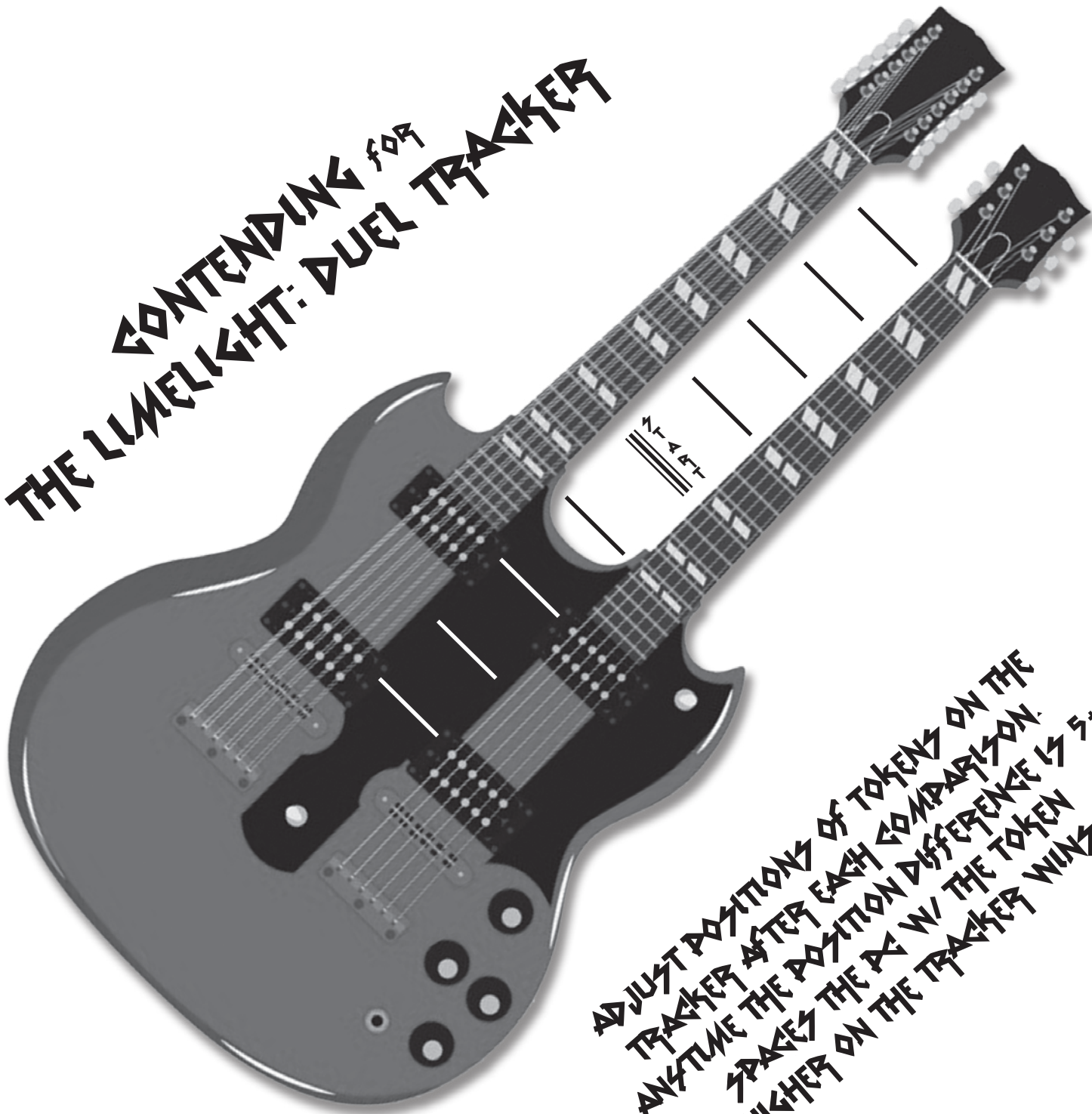


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DICE & DRUGS AND ROCK 'N' ROLL!

ROCK GOD DEATH-FUGUE is a one-shot adventure that uses the DCC RPG rules to turn players into a heavy metal band on the German leg of its 1st world tour. The PCs are “Rock Gods,” weaving musical “magic” and indulging in all the debaucheries and dangerous habits of the rock ‘n’ roll lifestyle. To make matters worse, the PCs *all* show up listening to *Writhe Through Shadow*—the so-called “Cursed Album.” It’s *certain* they’re headed for a bad end, the only question is whether they go out in a blaze of glory or as sad self-parodies like Axl, Elvis or the Ozzy of *The Osbournes* era.

The adventure alternates between encounters on the road that threaten to derail the tour—or worse—and the band’s shows. In concert, egos, insecurities & aspirations to true artistry take over, creating PvP musical duels. The outcome of these duels determine how history remembers each Rock God!

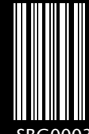
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