

PEER PRESSURE

a breakfast cult mystery



POWERED BY
FATE

EVERYONE ELSE IS **DOING IT**

If you want to learn occult science, Occultar Academy is the place to go. In this secluded island school, talented students from all over the world can learn sorcery and occulttech under the Foundation's watchful eye. But they won't teach you everything. In the Forbidden Sections beneath the school, the Foundation are researching the dangerous secrets of outer science...

...Last night, someone did the unthinkable. The Forbidden Sections have been broken into, and you've been thrown in Detention with some classmates until one of you confesses. To clear your names, you'll have to sneak out and solve this mystery yourself. But be careful who you listen to, because there's a new craze sweeping the campus that's out of this world...

Peer Pressure is an example episode for **Breakfast Cult**, the Fate Accelerated game of mystery, cosmic horror, and high school drama. It was made for the **Six Feats Under** podcast before being released to Kickstarter backers, and this booklet presents an updated version to celebrate the game's full release. It's great for introducing new players, running convention games, or just dropping on your group when you need a game in a hurry!





PEER PRESSURE

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INTRODUCTION

Welcome to *Peer Pressure*.

This is a primer and sample episode for *Breakfast Cult*, the *Fate Accelerated* high school cosmic horror game. Whether you're already planning to run *Breakfast Cult* or just thinking of picking it up, *Peer Pressure* is here to give you a taste.

WHAT IS BREAKFAST CULT?

Breakfast Cult is a roleplaying game of mystery, high school drama, and cosmic horror.

You play students at Occultar Academy, the world's best occult high school. It's the Weird Age of the late 21st century, when occult science has revolutionized the world, and you're here to study it under the watchful eye of the Foundation, the government's most trusted occult research institute.

Occultar Academy sits on an island in the middle of the ocean. Your school lives on this isolated campus have been designed to be as ordinary as possible, for your safety and the safety of others.

Today is the day things get interesting.

Occult science is great, but there are risks. Behind the scenes, in the Foundation labs beneath the school, they're researching the dangerous secrets of outer science. The Forbidden Sections beneath the school library hide terrible secrets, and one of them is about to ruin your day.

Breakfast Cult uses Evil Hat's *Fate Accelerated* system. **This primer assumes you have either a copy of the *Fate Accelerated* book or some familiarity with the system.** If you need it, you can get a pay-what-you-want PDF from websites like evilhat.com and [DriveThruRPG/RPGnow](http://DriveThruRPG.com), or a physical copy in stores. For more on *Breakfast Cult*, you can pick it up from [DriveThruRPG/RPGNow](http://DriveThruRPG.com).

ABOUT THIS PRIMER

Peer Pressure was made during *Breakfast Cult* development as a playtest adventure. Since then, it's been brought out whenever someone wanted to try the game for the [Six Feats Under](#) podcast in August 2014, for pickup games at conventions, and during breaks at games nights.

Now that *Breakfast Cult* is out, we're releasing *Peer Pressure* into the wild as a primer. This book contains everything you need to get into the world of *Breakfast Cult*, including writeups for the *Six Feats Under* PCs as sample characters. Hopefully you'll enjoy it as much as we have!

INSIDE THIS BOOK

Peer Pressure is split up into two sections.

The **Orientation Guide** contains information for the group: the Occultar Academy setting, character creation rules, Agendas, and so on. Everybody should at least pretend to read this section, since you'll need it to play. The **Teacher's Handbook** contains information for the GM: NPCs, encounters, more info on Agendas, and story details. This section contains spoilers, so if your group plans on running *Peer Pressure*, players should avoid this section until afterward.

ORIENTATION GUIDE

Welcome to Occultar Academy!

Congratulations! As one of the best and brightest of your generation, you've been accepted into Occultar Academy, one of Earth's finest occult institutions.

This Orientation Handbook will help you settle in to life at the Academy, and comes with all complimentary handhels. If you lose or delete yours, copies are available from the Student Hub.

Once you've read this Handbook and completed your tour, feel free to explore the Academy and meet your classmates. Directions to the pool, arcade, sports fields and cafeteria have been provided. Remember that some areas have been restricted for your safety, and pay attention to all clearance codes and Ritual In Progress signals.

On your first day, you will be required to attend a medical and psychological assessment. Once this is complete, you will be provided with a keycard for your new home. Complimentary dinner will be provided in the cafeteria at 6.

Every student has been assigned a room at one of our dorm halls, based on their needs and stated preferences. Inside you will find your luggage, uniforms, a data drive containing occult primers and textbooks, a spare keycard, and any additional items you requested. There will also be a set of identification tags. You are advised to keep these on your person at all times, as they include medical information.

The rest of this Handbook should answer any questions you may have. If you would like to know more, you can reach us by dialing 0 on any Academy phone, asking a teacher or visiting the Administration Block.

On behalf of the Miskatonic Foundation, we hope you enjoy your time at Occultar Academy.



THE WORLD OF BREAKFAST CULT

It's Earth, but in the late 21st century. The Information Age is over, and people take things like wireless Internet and augmented reality for granted now. Now it's the Weird Age.

Magic is real. Occult science is the new frontier, and it's produced some amazing advancements. It hasn't been without cost, though—occult disasters have blighted large chunks of the world, and places like Neo-Tokyo had to be rebuilt.

We've got a handle on it now, but it needs harsh controls. There's a whole government department dedicated to spreading misinformation about the occult, you need a license just to study it, and breaking an occult law is a great way to get disappeared. So far, it's worked. To the public, who don't see what goes on in government offices or corporate labs, it's only a little spooky.

OCCULTAR ACADEMY

The top occult high school in the world is Occultar Academy. This place is run by the Foundation, an occult research institute, and its students are carefully selected from schools all over the world for occult potential, extraordinary talents, or rich parents.

The Academy itself is set on scenic, isolated Occultar Island. In exchange for living here for the duration of your school life and agreeing to regular medical checkups, psych assessments, and other tests, you get a first-class education on a fancy campus that's been carefully designed to keep you happy and distracted. It's a pretty sweet deal, as long as nothing goes wrong.

OCCULT SCIENCE

Occult science is science with the gloves off, the study of the scientific principles that define reality and how to manipulate them. Most sorcery is done through complex rituals, incantations and occult equations. Cutting-edge magical research is done with particle accelerators and massively parallel supercomputers, or by piecing together the few scraps of occult history that actually work and trying to figure out why.

It can be dangerous. Messing up even simple rituals could get you a headache or a nosebleed or something; the big stuff the Foundation studies can kill you. Luckily, Occultar Academy is equipped to protect you from anything you're supposed to be doing.

CHARACTER CREATION

Making an Occultar student is a lot like standard *Fate Accelerated* character creation, with a few extra rules. If you're stumped for ideas, try the sample characters starting on p. XX.

STEP 1: ASPECTS

Breakfast Cult characters have these five aspects:

- A **concept aspect**, which sums up your character's deal in one short phrase (like ***Occultar's Worst Matchmaker***, ***The Arcane Gazette's Newshound***, or ***Delinquent Exchange Student***).
- A **talent aspect**, which describes a specific skill, hobby, or occupation that your character is great at, and maybe how they feel about it (like ***I Prefer "Eccentric Alchemist"***, ***Occultar's Best Fashionista***, or ***Basketball Team Captain***).
- A **student aspect**, which describes something important about your place in the Academy, like a subject you're good at, a reputation with your classmates, or a specific relationship (like ***Student Council Vice President***, ***Straight B Student***, or ***Poster Boy***).
- A **drive aspect**, which describes something that motivates a lot of your character's actions (like ***Help Those Who Need It Most***, ***Coward With An Honorable Heart***, or ***Every Characteristic Of The Egotistic***).
- And a **free aspect**, which can be whatever you want.

STEP 2: APPROACHES

Every character has one approach graded at **A (+3)**, two at **B (+2)**, two at **C (+1)**, and one at **D (+0)**. (The grades work like the standard ladder, they're just there for flavour.)

STEP 3: STUNTS

You start with **3 stunts**, which can be anything you want. (If you're not sure, think about what subjects your character excels at or what they get up to after class.)

STEP 4: THE REST

You get the standard **stress track** with **three boxes** (which we call the **hope track**, because you're going to need it. Get it?), plus the usual **three consequences (mild, moderate and severe)**.

Remember that you start every session with **three fate points**.

TALENTS

Each character has something they're great at. Whether it's math, skateboarding or having incredible hair, they're the best in the Academy at it. They can rely on their Talent to see them through when all else fails.

In *Breakfast Cult*, Occultar characters have a special power associated with their talent aspect: **once per scene, when you invoke your talent aspect, you can flip your dice result instead of rerolling**. This means that ❶s become ❷s, and vice versa.

However, **to use this power, you must describe how you use your talents to turn disaster into victory**. When you make a bad roll, there's an immediate sense of failure that doesn't just go away. Instead, you're using your talent to salvage it when lesser mortals would have failed.

Talents exist to reinforce that every student at Occultar is special in some way, and to create potential story hooks. Finding something that could only have been done by someone with a certain talent could be an important clue—or it could be a great way to frame somebody else. Not that you'd want to.

OCCULT SCIENCE AND YOU

So, your character can use occult science. It's pretty great!

All magic works on scientific principles. That means equations, symbols, and numbers, weaved together in complex rituals. The sorcery you can do mostly works on a personal scale: messing with variables like light and temperature, altering the human body, protective wards, divination, alchemy, and so on. Large-scale sorcery is possible, but usually needs a lot of people or Foundation-level tech.

What makes someone capable of sorcery isn't fully understood (researching that is partly what Occultar is for), but common traits of occult scientists include mathematics skills, a strong will, creativity, tech skills, or just plain luck. Even then, sometimes it clicks and sometimes it doesn't. Actually learning it requires study and practice like anything else.

USING MAGIC

Occult science follows the usual Fate rules: your aspects tell you *what* you can do, and your approaches tell you *how*.

To make an occult character, just add a character aspect that justifies occult training. (It doesn't matter which aspect, but your choice can change how you use it: a Talent makes you especially good at it, a Student aspect suggests classes or special privileges, and so on.)

To use it, describe what you're doing and choose an approach like any other action. Powerful or complex rituals should be handled as challenges, with characters dealing with preparation, calculations, keeping others from noticing, or anything else you want to zoom in on. Things like difficulty, cost, and time should be decided by the GM and what makes sense in the story—don't bother with the details if they're not important.

Most rituals have requirements that must be met before they can be used. These are usually story needs chosen by the GM, like having the right book/equipment. For simple stuff, the requirement is just knowing the spell and how to use it; more complex rituals can drive adventures. The cost if you screw up a spell can range from minor inconveniences like loud bangs, flashes of light, software crashes and dizziness, to serious ones like damage to people and equipment, fire, unconsciousness, or consequences.

STYLES OF MAGIC

There are many branches of occult science, and a lot of different ways to use it. Here are a few common styles characters can have. Feel free to come up with your own styles if you like; as long as the Foundation would be comfortable putting you in the Academy with other students (instead of, say, a prison), knock yourself out.

Regular Students: Any Occultar character can automatically justify knowing the basics of occult theory, history, and safety awareness, assisting others in occult rituals, using basic Occultar apps and occulttech, and copying simple rituals from a book without totally screwing them up. Basically, you're not completely out of the loop on the occult unless you want to be.

Sorcery 101: By taking a sorcerous aspect, you establish that you're passing occult science classes. This covers simple knowledge that's useful to multiple occult fields, like wards, symbology, occulttech basics, manipulating local variables, and occult decontamination/dispelling. You're assumed to have standard occult gear (occulttech phone, apps, textbook PDFs), and can probably study and perform any rituals you come across without screwing it up too much.

Alchemy: Modern alchemy relies on occult science to create exotic particles, alter the properties of matter, and squeeze occult substances out of organic material. The Foundation redacts anything that could be used to make explosives or toxins, but an A-grade student might figure those out anyway. (Honestly, if you want to see some explosive alchemy, just do something wrong.)

Occultech: "Occultech" includes machines designed to assist in rituals, devices that use occult principles to perform some specific function (like occult batteries), or occult software that crunches equations and performs rituals for you. You can identify, use, modify, and repair all kinds of occulttech, and you've probably built or coded some yourself.

Five Rings: This is an example of a unique style. The Five Rings was formed in the 2080s by hip young sorcerers in Shinjuku. It uses special symbols that compress complex occult equations and techniques into a few strokes; by picturing these algorithms in their heads, users can quick-cast certain complex spells. Most spells are themed around the classic Japanese elements—earth, water, fire, wind, and void (which mostly covers some all-purpose spells and meditative techniques).

Newtypes: Newtypes were born with a psychic power, their brains wired for some amazing occult feat. Newtypes with dangerous powers are forced to wear badges, and newtype students go through a little more testing than most, but at least you get a cool power out of the deal. Newtype powers can range from the simple (telekinesis, reading emotional states) to the weird (spying on nearby computer screens, turning small objects into virtual items stored in your brain for later).

Outer Science: According to rumours and school legends, there's a secret field called **outer science**. Outer science includes not just the illegal stuff like hemomancy and messing with people's minds, but the stuff that the government says isn't real. We're talking messing around with other universes: summoning, the theoretical ultraparticles, portals, the works.

Obviously this is all rumour, or the Foundation would probably be researching that stuff behind the scenes, and that would just be terrifying. Because outer science is definitely not real, you cannot start with it.

Agendas are secret aspects some students have that represent ulterior motives, hidden affiliations, and other goals that could complicate the investigation. To solve the mystery, you'll have to work out who you can trust and who's plotting against you—and if you have an Agenda, you'll have to do it without being caught.

This is the “mystery” part of *Breakfast Cult*. Agendas can be pretty much anything, as long as the character would want to hide it and it could hinder the investigation: petty crimes, bigger crimes, embarrassing secrets, secondary goals, hidden occult powers or items, a desire to help the culprit, or even just being the culprit. Anyone you interact with often, PCs included, could have an Agenda.

You're going to have to decide who to trust here. No pressure.

USING AGENDAS

Most of the time Agendas simply inform your actions, like a character aspect you can't tell anyone about. They're hard to invoke or compel without raising suspicion, but feel free to work out some secret technique with the GM—especially if you're using a medium like Skype where you can send private messages easily. Once you're exposed, including if you decide to “go loud” to get some invokes and compels in, the GM may retroactively reward a compel if your Agenda compelled you to do something bad.

Talk to your GM to find out if you have an Agenda. If you don't... good luck.

EDGAR CORAX



Edgar was recruited by the Academy for his impressive brain and power to see the future, and he makes sure everyone knows it. Sure, his visions aren't completely accurate,, but they're good enough for a smart cookie like Edgar to fill in the gaps. When he's not running the chess club, Edgar plays grand strategy games, solves puzzles, and generally acts like a smug dork.

Student ID APT01-0808

Home: New York, United States

DOB: February 10, 208■

Blood Type: A-

Likes: Plans, the Queen's Gambit, burritos

Dislikes: Surprises, the Sicilian Defence

ASPECTS

Concept: **Chess Team Captain**

Talent: **A Predilection For Premonitions**

Student: **Master Strategist**

Drive: **Assert My Tactical Prowess**

Free: **Everyone Is But A Pawn In My Game!**

APPROACHES

Careful: B (+2)

Clever: A (+3)

Flashy: C (+1)

Forceful: D (+0)

Quick: C (+1)

Sneaky: B (+2)

STUNTS

Checkmate: +2 to defending Cleverly when an opponent realises they've fallen for Edgar's trap.

Chessmaster's Gambit: Because everything is just another part of his plan, Edgar can spend a fate point to use Clever instead of another approach for one roll.

Three Moves Ahead: When an opponent creates an advantage on Edgar, he can spend a fate point to declare that it was part of his plan all along and create the aspect **Just Another Pawn**.

HOPE

MORDECHAI EDELSTEIN

Mordechai is one of the Academy's newtypes: he can talk to plants and read their "thoughts" as if they were people. His classmates hope they're real interesting, 'cause he seems to spend all his time in the greenhouse on botany projects. When he's not in there, he's usually texting his buds or hanging out with his loyal dog Buer. Mordechai isn't antisocial or stupid—just a student who's found his niche and plans on sticking to it. That or a slacker. Nobody's asked.

Student ID APT01-5682

Home: Detroit, Michigan, USA

DOB: September 13, 208■

Blood Type: A-

Likes: Botany, Buer, big meals, good music

Dislikes: Class, loud noises, big cities



ASPECTS

Concept: **Slacker, Or Just Focused On What He Loves?**

Talent: **Botanical Sympathy**

Student: **Does This Guy Ever Attend Class?**

Drive: **Don't Let The Man Get You Down**

Free: **Buer Is A Super Nice Dog**

APPROACHES

Careful: A (+3)

Clever: B (+2)

Flashy: C (+1)

Forceful: D (+0)

Quick: B (+2)

Sneaky: C (+1)

STUNTS

Class Dodger: +1 to overcoming Quickly or Sneakily whenever Mordechai's trying to get the heck outta here.

Plant Friend: Mordechai gets +2 to Carefully creating plant-related advantages, whether it's through his newtype powers or his botanical knowledge.

Ruh Roh! Buer is great at spotting trouble in advance, and will always bark out a warning when danger is approaching Mordechai. He won't know what it is, but he can never be surprised or ambushed as long as Buer is around.

HOPE

MANAH KING



Manah was scouted by Occultar Academy not for any occult potential, but for her skill at robotics. She knew it was only a matter of time before they'd notice someone with her talents. Manah prefers robots to people—they're perfect analytical beings, without any of the flaws of humanity. She's good at hiding her feelings most of the time, so her classmates merely see her as a quiet if arrogant nerd. She would like to get a job as a supercomputer one day.

Student ID APT02-1010

Home: Cardiff, UK

DOB: September 13, 208■

Blood Type: O-

Likes: Perfection, circuit boards, cyberpunk movies

Dislikes: "Good enough", edgy jokes, sour food

ASPECTS

Concept: **Arrogant Perfectionist Robot Girl**

Talent: **Robotics Club National Champion**

Student: **Pretty Poker Face**

Drive: **Be A Good Machine**

Free: **Cold Iron Heart**

APPROACHES

Careful: B (+2)

Clever: C (+1)

Flashy: C (+1)

Forceful: A (+3)

Quick: D (+0)

Sneaky: B (+2)

STUNTS

Calm, Careful, Critical: Because Manah always looks perfect and calm no matter how she actually feels or how little she knows what she's doing, she can spend a fate point to use Careful instead of another approach for one roll.

Heart of Iron: Manah is much more tough and enduring than you'd expect, and refuses to give up in the face of adversity. She has an extra mild consequence.

Trust Me, I Know Machines: When Manah Carefully creates an advantage to study a machine or device, she can trade a free invoke for an additional aspect.

HOPE

AUBREY STARLING

Aubrey has a way with birds. She's not just an expert falconer: she can chat with them and get them to sing. The Foundation brought her here to study how she does it. At Occultar, Aubrey's a charming trend-setter who seems to be friends with everybody, unless they don't like birds or accused her of faking. She's always accompanied by at least one of her birds, each an accomplished singer and extremely loyal to their trainer.

Student ID APT01-3145

Home: Dallas, Texas, USA

DOB: February 14, 2008

Blood Type: B+

Likes: Birds, fashion, acoustic guitars

Dislikes: Interruptions, being called fake



ASPECTS

Concept: **Avian Acapella Idol Group Manager**

Talent: **Queen B(ird)**

Student: **Occult Culture Creator**

Drive: **Destroy The Nonbirdliervers**

Free: **Mother Goose's Tongue**

APPROACHES

Careful: C (+1)

Clever: C (+1)

Flashy: B (+2)

Forceful: D (+0)

Quick: B (+2)

Sneaky: A (+3)

STUNTS

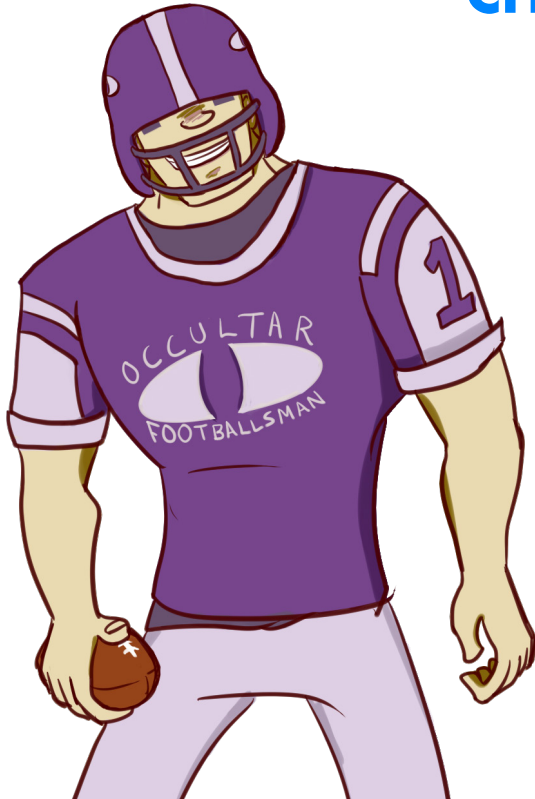
Clique Analytic: Aubrey knows Occultar's social structure and the tastes, habits, and quirks of her classmates well enough that she can cozy up to just about anyone. They might not agree with her, but they'll always hear her out.

Don't Give a Flock: Aubrey's employees are worried about her safety and swoop in to protect her when she's in trouble, allowing her to Sneakily defend against any physical attack using her birds. (It's cool, they're durable.)

Friends in High Places: Aubrey relies on her feathered friends to keep her informed. Once per scene, even if she's not present, she can Sneakily create an advantage by eavesdropping through her network of little birdies telling her things.

HOPE

CHET "THE TOASTER" WILSON



Chet is the star of Occultar's footballs team and a big lovable lunk. Why Occultar scouted him isn't totally clear, but everybody loves that guy so nobody cares. He was going to be The Refrigerator, but it was taken and he couldn't think of any other appliances.

Though he doesn't seem like he thinks much, Chet has hidden depths—he's working on being an artist in his free time, and he's painted some stunning footballs scenes. Whatever he's doing, Chet gives it 110%.

Student ID APT01-1916

Home: Omaha, Nebraska, USA

DOB: May 7, 208■

Blood Type: B+

Likes: Team effort, rhyming cheers, freshly cut grass

Dislikes: Complexity, rival teams

ASPECTS

Concept: **Self-Described Star Footballsman**

Talent: **Arm Like A Cannon**

Student: **Poster Boy**

Drive: **Looking Out For Number One**

Free: **Secret Artist**

APPROACHES

Careful: D (+0)

Clever: C (+1)

Flashy: A (+3)

Forceful: B (+2)

Quick: B (+2)

Sneaky: C (+1)

STUNTS

Call an Audible: Chet instinctively knows when to change plans on the fly. Once per scene, he can spend a fate point to change an advantage he created into a different one and stack an extra free invoke.

Lovable Lunk: Everybody Loves Chet. Whenever he meets someone new, he can spend a fate point to declare that they're a big fan and give them the aspect **I Love That Guy!**

Play Dumb: Thanks to his reputation for not paying attention, Chet gets +2 to defending when hiding that he knows something he shouldn't.

HOPE

THE ENTRANCE EXAM

You should be good to go now. But if you're trying to make a PC, deciding how to roleplay a sample character, or just want to get in a Breakfast Cult mood, how about taking this temptingly optional entrance exam?

GAME QUESTIONS

1. What do you want out of this game?
2. Is there anything you want to explore, with your character or the setting?
3. Anything you want to avoid? (Uncomfortable themes, things that annoy you, etc.)
4. Is there anything you want to establish about the setting, be it the Academy itself or wherever your character is from?
5. Do you want to steal themes or setting bits from other media? (Games, books, movies, anime, etc.)
6. How are you going to handle Agendas? (More on those later in this chapter.)

CHARACTER QUESTIONS

1. What kind of skills does your character have? Are they occult in nature?
2. What drove your character to pursue their talents? Was it a positive or negative experience?
3. What kind of life did your character have before they came to the Academy?
4. Why was Occultar Academy interested in your character?
5. How does your character feel about Academy life?
6. Is your character in any clubs?
7. Would your character kill to survive? What about to save others? Could they live with that?
8. Who are your character's best friends at the Academy?
9. Has your character had many experiences with the occult before coming to the Academy? Were they positive or negative?
10. You're in a desert walking along in the sand when all of a sudden you look down, and you see a tortoise, it's crawling toward you. You reach down, you flip the tortoise over on its back. The tortoise lays on its back, its belly baking in the hot sun, beating its legs, trying to turn itself over, but it can't, not without your help. But you're not helping. Why is that?
11. If your character had their own show/comic, what would it be like?

If you're the GM, read the Handbook before running *Peer Pressure*. Feel free to fill the blanks or even replace things with whatever events and narration seem appropriate for your game.

If you're a player, don't read this if your group is planning to use *Peer Pressure*. Wait until afterward—otherwise you'll spoil yourself, and probably ruin the episode.

THE SCOOP

There are a lot of things the Foundation hasn't told the students—or anyone, really. A lot of occult knowledge is censored, because the average person can't handle it. People would go *bananas*. And that's just the regular folks. The wrong hands could end the world with this stuff.

In the labs and Forbidden Sections beneath the Academy, the Foundation are reesearching **outer science**. It's all very secret and tightly controlled, partly because it's immensely dangerous and partly because they're researching alien beings on behalf of the government. The most powerful of these outsiders, the **Ancient Ones**, could annihilate us in an instant if we ever somehow caught their full attention.

One of them is codenamed **Axis Mundi**. It's a plant-like being that covers every inch of a distant world in some forgotten corner of the universe, and its roots can burrow through higher dimensions and to other worlds. When sapient beings are drawn in through the portals these roots create, they're captured and added to Axis Mundi's hive mind. It hasn't made a move on Earth yet, but the Foundation got their hands on an Axis Mundi clipping.

Last night, someone stole it. A-grade student and local manipulative jerk **Fong Ho** helped his classmate **Dexter Das** explore the Forbidden Sections to satisfy his curiosity, and he took a clipping because it looked cool. Outside controlled storage in the Forbidden Sections, it's grown into a full portal. Unfortunately, Axis Mundi can capture people and replace them with look-alike Pods, and they're already subverting the Academy.

As the episode begins, the players and some NPCs are sent to Detention on suspicion that they might know something. It's up to the players to sneak out, unravel the mystery, and hopefully stop the pods before it's too late.

SUMMARY

The episode will probably look something like this:

- Before the session, **Fong** agrees to help **Dexter** check out the Forbidden Sections. The main problem is the security, so he anonymously blackmails **Addison** into running a program that will subvert it.
- Dexter takes a clipping of **Axis Mundi** and accidentally lets it take root. It creates a portal in a forgotten basement and starts capturing students.
- The next morning, the Foundation notices the clipping is gone and rounds up the students it assesses as most likely to know something while it investigates: the PCs, Addison, Dexter, Fong, and a couple others.
- The PCs sneak out to investigate. While evading the **Headmaster** and his lackey **Azumi**, they investigate the other characters and research Axis Mundi.
- When they start research, they're attacked by **Pods**. At least one NPC is taken, and the PCs now have to worry that their allies might be Pods.
- The trail leads them to the basement. The PCs must get past the Pods, find a way to shut down the portal, and save their classmates. Maybe.

ACT ZERO: PREPARATION

PLAYERS

During character creation, ask the players what their characters think about the Foundation. Then ask what the Foundation thinks about *them*. Their answer might explain why they'd be put in Detention.

AGENDAS

Once they've made characters, it's time for **Agendas**. If you're using the pregens, we've prepared some pre-set Agendas below. If you're not, or the players would like to make their own anyway, feel free! You can let the players decide or find a way to assign these randomly. We suggest putting the following Agendas on index cards, passing each player their character's Agenda plus one "no Agenda" card, and having them draw one.

Edgar: Avert a Disaster!

Last night you had a premonition of a disaster that could get people killed, but you want to stop it yourself so you can brag about it. All you know is you should definitely split the group up.

No Agenda!

Instead of an Agenda, you got this card. Good luck.

Manah: Assimilate the School

Manah is secretly a robot! She wants other people to be robots, too. Try to get NPCs alone and pass the GM a fate point to kidnap and replace them with a robot double. Talk to the GM to decide how this works exactly.

No Agenda!

You don't have an Agenda. How many of these cards are there, I wonder?

Mordechai: Smarter Than The Average Buer

Buer isn't just a smart dog. He can talk, though usually only to Mordechai. (Long story, don't worry about it.) You can spend a fate point to have Buer do smart person stuff, but if he's caught the Foundation might take him away...

No Agenda!

You didn't get an Agenda. Better luck next time?

Chet: Win the Big Game!

Chet only wants one thing: to win Friday's big footballs game. Unfortunately, Occultar technically doesn't have a footballs team. Chet will willingly take any side or join any cult if they'll footballs with him.

No Agenda!

You don't have an Agenda. Now would be a good time to consider staring at the table for a few moments like you're trying to avoid making a face, though.

Aubrey: The Birdkeeper

Thanks to occult experiments, there's a mob of malevolent moa lurking in the woods. Long story short, they won't bother Occultar if Aubrey does weekly Secret Bird Rituals. The ritual is today, and she needs to "borrow" some flowers and alchemy tools to prepare the ingredients or moa might come knocking.

No Agenda!

No Agenda. Feel free to pretend to message the GM or take them aside for something if you want to be mean.

Here's a rundown of the NPCs in this sample episode. If they have an Agenda, it's included here. You can find their stats in the Supplementary Materials at the back.

Addison Waite: The telepathic basketball team captain. Addison is brash and quick to fly off the handle at the best of times, and today isn't helping. Addison wants to help, but she wants to do it without the and get the PCs off her back without giving away that she's involved. She actively avoids using telepathy if she can and is quick to point out that it's not as accurate as it sounds.

*Agenda: **Blackmailed By Fong.*** Addison doesn't know who did it, but Fong stole some of Addison's secrets and anonymously threatened to trash her rep if she didn't steal a flower from the Forbidden Sections for him. She broke in using programs Fong supplied her, left the clipping in a dorm hall bathroom, and went to bed, not knowing what she'd set in motion.

Fong Ho: Everyone else thinks Fong is just a popular A-grade student, but he's secretly kind of a jerk. Fong likes feeling like a puppetmaster, and tends to make things more complicated than they have to be. This time, he wanted to trade the flower to a curious Dexter for some computer parts, then trade them to Madoka to complete his trading card collection.

*Agenda: **It's Time For Master Plan B.*** Look, forget the trading card collection. It's not important. Okay, it is, but not right now. This little thing with the Ancient One is just a wrinkle, that's all. Fong intends to iron it out by hanging back, making a few phone calls, and keeping the PCs distracted while he makes sure he isn't implicated. Once Addison left, he told Dexter where to find it; right now he's torn between framing Dexter or throwing Addison under the bus, but he'll take whatever he can get.

Dexter Das: The school's resident mad occultist, Dexter is the kind of guy who spends a weekend in the ER because he chugged a potion to check if it works and is happy with the result. He's not a fool, he just doesn't evaluate risk and reward the same way as other people. Dexter isn't guilty but will absolutely make more trouble if the PCs let him, especially if they bring him to the Forbidden Sections.

*Agenda: **Hiding A Forbidden Flower.*** Dexter wasn't specifically after the flower—he'd just overheard from a teacher that there were samples of alien life down there and wanted to know more. One of his anonymous contacts got him a sample, and he's determined to keep it tucked away in his Definitely Safe hiding place until he can study it. (As an aside, Dexter will try to steal more things from the Forbidden Sections if the players let him.)

Madoka Mawaru: A cheerful, easily excited dork. Madoka is smarter and tougher than she looks, and will do her best to help... right up until someone wants to pry into her room or her locker or something, and then she shuts them out. Madoka isn't guilty, but...

*Agenda: **Trainee Shinigami.*** Madoka's parents are members of a secret group (*not a cult, okay*) that deals with occult threats back in Neo-Tokyo, usually by shanking an evil wizard. Madoka wants to get accepted into the group, so she has training equipment (like sweet swords) and a sweet outfit stashed in hidden spaces in her room. She doesn't want anyone finding those, but characters who promise not to tell can convince her to bring her knives with her.

Kaiya Shibuya: A loud, extroverted, and supremely self-confident rapper. Kaiya is a naturally curious person and will stick her beak into anything, especially if the players don't want her to and she can get shouty when they try to stop her. Kaiya has no Agenda: she's just there to use as needed.

Headmaster: The one who puts the players and the previous NPCs in Detention in the first place. The Headmaster is busy with the Foundation's internal investigation and doesn't really do much; he's more of a framing device for the episode. Stats are provided in case the PCs drag him into it, though.

Azumi Kamiyama: The Headmaster's right-hand girl, a former delinquent reluctantly pressed into keeping the other students in line. Azumi is a punch-clock villain, who would probably be helping the PCs if she weren't on-duty. Azumi is guarding the main entrance to the Forbidden Sections, but once she notices the PCs are out of Detention she'll try to chase them down.

Tavleen Munroe: An optional NPC, in case you need someone else to mix things up. Tavleen is the school's self-appointed star journalist, and she will stick her nose into all sorts of business if she thinks she can tease a story out of it. If the PCs want to win, they'll have to keep her out of theirs.

ACT ONE: DETENTION

It's an overcast day on Occultar Island, with an easy day of classes and maybe a little sports ahead. But before class starts, the characters are called to the Library. They're told to wait in a third-floor room, at some desks arranged in a circle—the usual setup for Detention. Crap.

Give the players a few minutes to roleplay and establish their characters before a teacher shows up. If they need help, ask what they think they're here for. If they need someone to talk to, there are a few other students here with them: Addison, Fong, Dexter, Kaiya, and Madoka.

When it's time to move on, the **Headmaster** shows up. He cuts to the chase: Someone messed around in the Forbidden Sections beneath the Library around midnight last night, and everyone here is either a suspect or their psych profiles flagged them as likely to know something. Until he finds the culprit or someone confesses, they're staying here. They're *definitely* not to sneak out to meddle. (He doesn't mean this in a nudge-nudge-wink-wink way, but the GM can.) He suggests the group talk to each other if they have questions, promises to send lunch, and leaves.

SNEAKING OUT

Getting out is the group's first task. This is meant to get the players in a subterfuge mood, not a serious challenge. The Headmaster seals the doors with an occult ward drawn on a post-it stuck to the door—he's infamous for these, and the players hear him do it—which mostly relies on nobody on the outside daring to remove it. There are also air ducts, windows looking out into an alley with a scalable wall, and anything else the players ask about that sounds fun. That said, if a player wants to stay in the room and act remotely through a smartphone/laptop, they can.

Fong decides to stay and investigate with his laptop, because the Student Council's VP shouldn't be seen sneaking around. Privately, he intends to contact his lackeys and have them keep tabs on the players while he comes up with a way to frame Dexter. The other students will leave on their own investigations if they can, though Madoka will need to call someone to open the door if the players don't.

Once they're out, it's time to find clues. How this goes is up to the group. Ideally, they should learn about Axis Mundi and get at least some idea of what happened before the Pods move on. We've listed a few likely avenues of investigation below, but the players don't *have* to go down any of them. If they're trying something different, try to communicate appropriate clues to them in a way that fits.

ALIBIS

First things first: everyone's stories.

Addison: Addison's alibi is that she had basketball practice until 6, went to her dorm, took a shower, and tucked in early. Her proof is some social media posts she made, and she admits that's not much if challenged. She's basically hoping that the PCs will trust her for now until she can find her way out of this.

Fong: Fong attended a meeting with the Student Council until nine, then did some light reading—Tolstoy—in the Student Lounge until finally turning in around ten-thirty. He has multiple witnesses and timestamped chat logs to back him up, because of course he does. What Fong doesn't mention is that he sat in his dorm room texting and monitoring Addison in the dark, and that he was reading *The Manga Guide To Tolstoy*.

Dexter: Dexter spent a lot of last night getting chewed out by the Student Council's Disciplinary Committee after accidentally blowing a hole in a Science Block wall; they escorted him back to his dorm at eleven. Fong wasn't there, but he can confirm it. (Azumi was there and can confirm, but Dexter doesn't think of that unless asked.) Dexter doesn't mention that he found his new flower outside his door later that night and went to hide it because he doesn't think it's relevant.

Madoka: Video games. Madoka can provide chat logs, posts, and stats that show her accounts were active until 3AM. She's so tired.

Kaiya: Kaiya was practicing her raps in the Music Club room last night, because nobody asks her to keep it down there. (She used half the time to do homework and browse the room, but she still has recordings of dope rhymes to present as evidence.) She left after midnight, and she remembers seeing shadowy figures moving around in the distance; depending on what the GM needs, she could have seen someone moving from the Library to Dunwich Hall and/or from the Hall to the Gym (where Dexter hid the flower).

LOCKER/ROOM CHECK

The Foundation doesn't regularly sweep anyone's personal areas, but characters used to being watched or willing to trade privacy for leaving earlier might float the idea of a search. How the players feel about this is up to them. Here's how the NPCs feel:

Addison: Addison is cool with it, because she's pretty sure she doesn't have anything incriminating. If she's asked rudely she still blows her lid, though. Both her locker and room are filled with sports equipment, digi-posters of cute boy/girl bands, and protein shakes; her room has dirty laundry too, and characters who check it might notice that she wore some heavy hooded clothes recently that don't seem like sport clothes.

If the GM feels like it's a good time to drop a hint, her locker contains her gym bag; it holds an external drive containing programs she was given to compromise the Forbidden Sections' security. Her room's laptop has them too, and her password is written nearby (it's BBALL).

Fong: Fong absolutely consents to this. Fong's locker is nice and tidy, with school supplies and books arranged in a neat pile and a digital poster of some C-pop idol so people don't think he's a square. His room is tidy too, almost suspiciously so. Characters who check his desk can find *The Manga Guide To Tolstoy*. The computer parts he traded for are here, and Fong says he got them from the Council. (Dexter will recognise them but is unlikely to expose his own Agenda by saying anything.)

Dexter: Dexter objects because he's tired enough of the Foundation prying into his business, but backs down quick. His room is a *mess*: wires and junk all over the place, a kitchen so riddled with alchemy his actual meals come from the vending machine downstairs, and worse. The *pièce de résistance* is a failed attempt at a Langford death parrot hanging from the wall that looks like a weird dolphin painting. His locker is just some chargers and a bag of crisps, because what kind of weirdo has a dirty locker?

He also has a collection of potted plants on his window that he uses for experiments; one pot is clearly missing, because he emptied it out and used it for the root clipping. If it's a good time to start messing with the PCs, he left a piece of it behind and it's grown into a Portalroot.

Madoka: Madoka consents, but gets crabby if more than two characters pile into her room without good reason (especially if they're guys). Her room contains games, consoles, games, figurines, and more games; her locker just contains handheld versions. Not much here, though Madoka's got her katana and shinigami gear hidden behind a wall of old games at the back of her closet.

Kaiya: Kaiya flips out if anyone wants to pry into her business, and getting her consent is a challenge; in general, extreme flattery or confidence wins her over faster. She didn't do it though, so it's a wash. Her locker mostly has school stuff and a digi-ofuda she uses for Five Rings magic, and her room's just a mess of musical equipment, wigs, and stage outfits. That said, it wouldn't be hard for Fong to slip a few petals in here to frame her if you want to go that way.

THE FORBIDDEN SECTIONS

The main entrance is on a sub-basement landing of the Library stairs. The security cameras and the door lock were disabled—Addison plugged a drive into the keypad that hacked the security network and did the work for her. Tech-minded players can figure this out from studying the pad. The programs were originally designed to compromise the Student Council's HQ, and Fong took them from an evidence locker ages ago.

Azumi is watching the door and trying not to look bored. Players will have to deal with her, or find another way in through Occultar's labyrinthine basements—Dexter knows how to hack an elevator in the nearby Science Block to take him there and will demonstrate if asked.

Players who get in find themselves in a maze of shelves stuffed with tomes, locked and warded rooms, and safety procedure signs. Nobody is here, though if they leave down the corridors leading to the Foundation's labs they'll be seen pretty quick. The main point of interest is an unlocked, open door marked by caution tape—this is where the Foundation keeps material related to **Axis Mundi** (p. XX).

This room contains an un-networked computer loaded with files, some clippings of strange alien flowers in a column of cold storage drawers, and a (currently unused) containment area covered in scanners. If they study the equipment, they can learn that "Axis Mundi" is an alien plant and the Foundation is studying its psychic properties. One of the cold boxes has been left open and a flower is missing; Addison's tall, so she grabbed one of the top ones. If someone is playing **Mordechai**, the flowers whisper to him in a strange voice with occult undertones about a "tall one" that brought one of them to the mammal sleeping place; talking to them for long without being overwhelmed with voices or getting a headache is hard.

Other clues are up to the GM. Fong likely told Addison how to cover her tracks, but she could have left a personal item, tracked petals out of the room, or even dropped a note containing Fong's instructions.

MEANWHILE...

Here's what the NPCs are up to while the PCs aren't looking.

THE HEADMASTER AND AZUMI

The Foundation is investigating, slowly—their priority is keeping students from panicking, making sure the rest of their research is secure, and preparing evacuation options. Basically, the Headmaster should be mostly busy but able to go after the PCs if alerted.

Unless something serious comes up, Azumi is his proxy. Her job is to watch the Forbidden Sections until lunchtime, bring some food to Detention, then call the Headmaster for more instructions. (If anyone is still in the room at lunch, Azumi rips off the ward to open the door.) Her weakness is that she doesn't want to report failure; if she finds the PCs have escaped she'll try bullying them back in on her own first, get her delinquent buddies if that doesn't work, and only call the Headmaster for help once things are dire.

Once the Pods break out, Azumi gets worked up and starts looking for aliens to hit. She is willing to side with the PCs against a greater threat. If she gets into a conflict, it's probably easier to just use her as an aspect the PCs can invoke.

AXIS MUNDI AND THE PODS

Dexter left the seed in an abandoned locker room in the Gym area. Unfortunately they bloom fast in warm places, and it didn't take long to grow into a full-fledged Portalroot. The first few Pods were sporty students who came here early to work out and went to investigate the noise—or maybe even Dexter, if you want to drop that twist on them.

While this happens, the Portalroot starts putting some roots out. While investigating, perceptive PCs might notice vines climbing walls near points of interest where there weren't any yesterday. To **Mordechai** the plants now sound like a chorus of voices shouting to be heard over each other, but if he tries to listen they can direct him to points of interest (or even the culprit, if they've gathered enough clues to guess). If possible they try to lure him to the dorm hall bathroom Dexter got the seed from, where Pods can try to jump him.

Their goal is to lure or coerce as many students to the portal for conversion as possible. This means unimportant students at first (background NPCs, Azumi's delinquents, etc.), but will escalate later. For now, some PCs might notice random students loitering around and staring at them. Picking a fight with any of them or following a clue to the dorm hall bathroom forces the **Pod A** encounter.

Once the players learn of Axis Mundi or start getting close to solving the mystery, Pod A happens within the next couple of scenes. The Pods pick a fight somewhere private in hopes of capturing or scaring them off, and will fight until the PCs hit them hard enough to dismember them.

A couple scenes later, **Pod B** happens. These Pods try to convince the PCs to join them, and should be presented as friends or allies of the players (like anyone else from Detention the PCs haven't seen in a while) or Pods in high-ranking positions (like the footballs team, Student Council hall monitors, or even a teacher) to drive home that the players can't trust anyone.

If an NPC (especially one created by a player) is separated from the group, feel free to invoke *Invasion of The Body Snatcher* to Pod them. Heck, invoke it to say they were a Pod all along if the players didn't check.

Remember that you can secretly invoke Ancient One aspects, as long as you pay the fate point when you do it and are open about it later. If you have an opportunity to Pod a player, take them aside and discuss it; being a Pod can be a new Agenda, something that isn't apparent until it's time to betray them.

FONG

The complexity of Fong's plan is matched only by his genius: He anonymously approached Dexter after IDing him on an occult conspiracy image board, offered to make a dead drop trade, got a lackey to grab confiscated software from the Student Council's lockers, blackmailed Addison into using it to steal a flower (her secret isn't important, but probably just really embarrassing), told Dexter where to swap his computer parts for the flower, and picked the parts up this morning. All he has to do is get out of this and trade Madoka for some trading cards.

His extremely non-ridiculous plan isn't going well, but he still has a piece on the board: Addison. If the players let her help, Fong sends instructions on how to hide her involvement or plant clues on Dexter. If the PCs start looking into her or Fong a little too much, he tries to get her to lock them in a closet or something. If he has to, he burns her. Once things get hot, Fong barricades himself in Detention to try to escape the Pods. He is not above calling them for help if attacked.

ADDISON

Addison likes simple plans, so here's hers: Keep the players from using her computer until she can delete the programs, resist using her unreliable powers to determine guilt (she's got it wrong before), wait for more anonymous orders, and stall for time. If they catch on she tries to lock them up and make a run for it, but PCs who promise to help her can get her on their side.

If she encounters Pods, Addison flips out. She doesn't know how to deal with this, and probably demands that everyone hits someone else to make sure they don't have detachable Pod arms or something. After a while, she goes to the Gym to gear up and look for her friends—and gets turned into a Pod in the process if the PCs aren't careful. If converted, she returns "feeling better" and tries to help until she gets a chance to jump someone. Like Azumi, she can be coerced into helping the PCs instead (and will probably offer to hold the doors if the PCs need to flee, to atone for her deeds).

KAIYA AND MADOKA

Kaiya likes to be a lone wolf, so she tries to go off on her own. If the PCs let her out of their sight for too long, she will probably be a Pod by the time they get back. If she's called back quickly or the PCs keep her in constant contact, she might be able to retrieve a clue for them. Like Azumi, she can be made to stick around and help.

Madoka prefers to either stick with the PCs or hole up in Detention with Fong and help from there. If the PCs get close to uncovering her Agenda, she'll do her best to get them off her back with cunning lies and puppy eyes. If that fails, Madoka swears she can help (PCs can use her magic to create wards and shields, or her sword to slice things) but sheepishly suggests that if the PCs try to expose her group, they're going to have a bad time.

CONFRONTING THE NPCS

Addison tries threats, intimidation and mental attacks, but concedes fast if presented with evidence of her involvement. If the players convince her they can help, she shows them the threats she's received; they're anonymous, but they seem to know a lot about the Student Council. If they nail Fong, she'll try to get him to delete his blackmail material.

If he's caught, Fong is tough—he'll bring his A-game to get them off his back, using his stunt to Carefully deflect everything and dropping all the compels and invokes he can muster. If they haven't learned Addison is involved, he outs her and sneaks away as she flips out on them. If he's forced to admit it and they've already found the Pods, he smugly argues that they have bigger things to worry about, suggests they talk after this is settled, and scrubs as much evidence as he can while the players are busy.

Dexter will lie and argue if confronted, but folds if he has to. He's a little more ready to admit his involvement than the others, because what's one more mark on his record? It's not like he stole it. If Dexter was turned into a Pod, he tries convincing them that Axis Mundi is great and Pod A bursts into the room.

ACT TWO: SALVATION

At this point, the PCs will have solved most (or all) of the case. That leaves Axis Mundi to deal with. No pressure.

NOW COMES THE TRICKY PART

By now, most of the school could be Pods. Do not let them forget this. Start pointing out how many students are loitering around public spaces. Reward players who keep their cool, try to be subtle, and bar doors behind them. PCs who flip out and start hitting bystanders will draw attention to themselves and possibly start a fight with a non-Pod.

They *could* call the Foundation for help. If they do, the Foundation puts the school into lockdown and sends out a warning broadcast, telling everyone to get to the nearest safe area. Anyone standing around outside (and soon, anyone who doesn't bar the doors or falls for a Pod "friend" calling them out) risks being attacked. The players can try to wait it out, but it's going to be a night of chaos before the Foundation restores order.

If the PCs do something about it themselves, it's not too hard to figure out where they're coming from. Dexter can tell them where he left the seed, and they can just watch the flow of Pods for a while and work it out anyway. The portal is in a locker room in the Gym that's been trapped in maintenance hell for months; players can access it through the Gym itself, by going to the Pool area and sneaking through the back, or by entering the Basement through another building and climbing back up.

I HATE THIS SCHOOL!

When the PCs enter the Gym, or even another appropriately dramatic area on the way like a classroom or the Club Building, the big encounter happens.

First, whichever Pod is closest to them (probably Kaiya or Dexter, at this point) finds them to give one last come-to-Axis-Mundi speech; if they refuse, Pod C muscled its way in. Pod C is a massive group of Pods designed to overwhelm the PCs like a swarm of bees. They don't even care about looking weird any more; there aren't just fresh copies of Pods already beaten, there are probably copies of whoever the PCs are talking to.

No more talking. They fight, flee, or die.

AXIS MUNDI

Once the PCs finally reach the locker room, it's free of Pods. To be fair, this is because the Portalroot is guarding it. They just have to shut down the portal, so if they have a plan to do that by now (Dexter can probably build something if they can't) they just need to stall or evade the Portalroot until they can pull it off. If they want to rescue anyone tohugh, they'll have to jump into the portal.

On the other side, Axis Mundi is nothing but massive roots as far as the eye can see, with the occasional odd fungus or vine wrapped around them and patches of grass underfoot. If they look up, the players can see a night sky filled with a bird's-eye view of some unknown galaxy—and the captive students, hanging from tall roots by vines wrapped around their heads. The air is breathable, but high in oxygen—who stay too long experience vision problems, disorientation, and eventually seizures.

The vines will attack if the PCs get close, but the oxygen-rich environment means fires get big fast. It's easy to fend them off, and even easier to set fire to the place. If the PCs don't want to risk it, there's another option: Axis Mundi calls to them through the mouth of one of their friends (probably Kaiya or one of the other NPCs who got captured, but a captured PC can play the part too), and makes one last attempt to "reason" with them.

The PCs are presented with a vision of Axis Mundi as a utopia: nobody kept down, no injustice or evil, just people living in harmony. If the PCs don't buy it their captured friend appeals to the greater good, claiming that Axis Mundi is basically a giant computer that somehow reverses entropy just by thinking and joining it will help stave off the heat death of the universe. (Mordechai feels like that's not the full story, but humans can't really comprehend Axis Mundi minds; the voices of the lesser minds alone are almost overwhelming.)

The players can try to turn the tables on Axis Mundi by appealing to their captured friends, trying to bring them to their senses. Treat this as a series of challenges, with high difficulties and bonuses for good roleplaying.

The trick here is that nobody can fight the will of Axis Mundi for long, but it will not expend more processing power on keeping the humans compliant than their minds could provide. If the captured students resist even for a second, or the PCs start trying to set things on fire, Axis Mundi would rather eject them. (Mordechai can figure all this out with a little probing.)

The ground rumbles as the root leading to Occultar slowly sinks into the ground, and in the distance a wall of roots rises up to swallow them. PCs must overcome against Good (+3) or be trapped on Axis Mundi as it disappears—if they want to rescue NPCs as well, the difficulty goes up by 1-2.

Once everyone is ejected, the root collapses. The portal vanishes, as if it were never there. Axis Mundi's roots flake, wither, and crumble into dust.

CONCLUSION

What happens next depends on what you want the tone to be. Here are some options:

Light: Right as the portal closes, Axis Mundi ejects its remaining captives like a human blowing its nose. The players find themselves in a room full of half-conscious, sap-covered friends. With nobody in control, all remaining Pods collapse and crumble.

Standard: Axis Mundi ejects its captives, but anyone who wasn't a captive and didn't overcome is trapped. They might survive on this new world, or they might return in a few years as Axis Mundi's latest Pod messiah. At least one major NCP is trapped. Pods of those left behind survive, but the Foundation will take it for research. The rest collapse.

Dark: Axis Mundi keeps anyone the PCs didn't help out in time, punching a big hole in Occultar's student body. Only the Pods remain, in whatever state the players left them in.

Whatever happens, Foundation security moves in to mop up. When they finally act, it's thorough: The Academy is quarantined, all students are taken in for medical testing if they so much as looked at a Pod, and all Pods (active or no) are taken to an offsite research facility. Any room which still contains traces of Axis Mundi is tested, scrubbed clean, and torched if it's not a dorm room. Anything that was touched by or came from Axis Mundi is taken and replaced.

The players are taken straight to the Headmaster's office for questioning. It's up to them who they expose, but here's what happens if they're still alive:

If **Fong** is exposed, he explains his trading card plans while laughing maniacally and is immediately whisked away to a mental health clinic. He will obviously no longer be Student Council VP.

If **Addison** is exposed, she is not above begging for leniency. If the players vouch for her, the Headmaster graciously lets her go with an counselor's appointment, some numbers of Foundation help lines, and six months Detention.

If **Dexter** is exposed, the Headmaster sighs and has him escorted to a counselor. Again. Dexter was probably going to get detention sooner or later and technically experiences no change in his school life.

If **Madoka** is exposed, she feels betrayed. The Headmaster confiscates her cool shinigami crap and takes her for questioning. A week later, they're all taken out of Occultar and put in witness protection, because magic people with swords want to silence them. Good job, folks.

Any player who did something serious (especially with Agendas) is either given a similar deal or, if they did something like homicide or siding with the Ancient One, disappeared to an offsite facility for the foreseeable future as soon as they leave the room.

The rest of the players get off easy. All they have to do is write an incident report, get questioned by incoming government agents, book an appointment with a counsellor, and agree to not go public with this and cause a panic if the Headmaster leaves anything they did off their records.

They have probably missed afternoon sports.

SUPPLEMENTARY MATERIALS

a few handy notes

CAMPUS DIRECTORY

There's no official map of Occultar. The Academy's layout depends on what's convenient to the story; if you need a map, write down some of these locations on index cards and connect them as needed. This is just an outline, so feel free to add or change locations as needed.

Class Building

A Lot Of Class; Teacher's Offices; There's Always Someone Here

Most of your classes take place in this stately building. It's always occupied during the day, so if you're supposed to be in Detention or something it's a risky trip, but it's adjacent to a lot of useful places and you can find the teachers' offices in here. If you time it right, you should be fine.

Class Building — Roof

Secret Meeting Places; Nice And Quiet; Safety Rails

Rooftops: A great place for lunches, heart-to-hearts, romantic meetings, and falling accidents. Try one today!

Club Building

Equipped For Anything; Modular Functionality; Popular Student Lounge

The building next to the Library is dedicated to clubs. Every non-athletic club with at least five members gets a room, no matter how ridiculous it is (though some smaller clubs have to timeshare, like the Rock-Paper-Scissors Society and the Staring Contest Club.) The Student Council makes sure every club has the equipment they need, and only senior club members are allowed keys. The ground floor is a well-maintained Student Lounge, where students go to study, relax, and gossip. The Student Council's HQ fills the entire top floor, and the Computer Appreciation Society, Occultar's student-run IT department, occupies the basement.

Dunwich Hall

Occult Student Dorms; Drama And Gossip On Every Floor; Probably Under Maintenance

There are a few different dorm halls, but you all live in this one so the rest probably don't matter. Dunwich looks a little Victorian from the outside, but the inside is an ergonomic high-tech wonderland. Most dorms are apartments with a small lounge, one or two bedrooms, and a private bathroom. They're nice enough to make you comfortable, but thanks to the shenanigans students are always pulling in here, it usually needs maintenance somewhere. Everyone knows what everyone else is up to here, or at least heard that their best friend's boyfriend's classmate's dog saw something in the common lounge.

Gymnasium

Well-Equipped Multipurpose Court; Emergency Shelter; High-Tech Fitness Center

It's a school gym. What more do you want? Okay, how about this: It can function as an auditorium, it doubles as a shelter in an emergency, and there's a high-tech fitness center on a second floor. The court is closed after practice, but the center is open to students who want to work out every morning and evening. And if all you need is something to swing sports equipment, the storerooms have you covered!

Headmaster's Office

The Forbidden Office; Confiscated Goods Locker; Heavily Warded

If the Headmaster isn't anywhere else, he's here. If he is somewhere else, sneaking into this glorified antique furniture showroom could help a student find confiscated items or information found nowhere else—though if he hasn't summoned you, you'll need to find a way around the occult security. High risk, high reward.

Locker Halls

Everyone Has A Locker; Every Locker Has A Mystery; Lots Of Corners And Cover

These halls lie between the Class Building and gym. There are more lockers than students, and who knows what fantastic secrets lie within them? Probably none, but don't you just want to pop one open and check? Just be sure you're not caught, because there's usually someone nearby. Dexter's hiding place is a locker room in a forgotten corner that's been under maintenance for ages after an unfortunate shower accident.

Occultar — Basements

Tunnels Beneath The School; Forgotten Foundation Rooms

The basement levels of Occultar were built for use as a shelter and backup administrative office if something happened to the world, but for now it's just a buffer between the Academy and the Foundation labs. Its tunnels stretch across most of the school. If you know the way you can get almost anywhere without being seen, or stumble into something you shouldn't in a dead-end corridor...

Occultar — Forbidden Sections

Restricted Occult Containment; Every Room Has A Deadly Treasure

The Forbidden Sections house things the Foundation wants to study (or contain) without anyone messing with them. This might not be going as well as they hoped.

Occultar Library

A Maze Of Twisty Little Bookshelves; Door To The Forbidden Sections; Shhh!

This Library is packed with every book the Foundation could get their hands on, analog or digital. The occult sections are missing the heavy/censored stuff, but even then they're top-notch. Students can be found here at all hours, researching on library computers or cramming for tests. At the basement landing of the main staircase, the door to the Forbidden Sections taunts students with its immobility.

Occultar Library — Detention Hall

Repurposed Study Hall; Warded Door; Many Exits, If You're Tricky

When the Headmaster wants students to squirm, he throws them in one of the library's third-floor study halls and seals the doors with a ward scribbled on a post-it note that's still too powerful for them to deal with. Clever students can find their own ways out. Students who stay are seated in a circle of desks in the middle of the room, with easy access to textbooks on the shelves. Students past and present have drawn or carved notes onto their desks; some of them are messages, most of them are vulgar.

Science Block

High-Tech Haven; Plenty Of Lab Space; Dangerous Equipment

If it's science you need, the Science Block has you covered. It has bunsen burners, shelves of chemicals you shouldn't put in your mouth, alchemy sets, occulttech ritual rooms, Tesla coils, the Thing Only The Teachers Really Know What It Does, the works! If you have access privileges, there's always an empty lab. Come here at night and you can rummage in the occulttech scrap bins before they're taken away.

AXIS MUNDI

The *axis mundi* is a recurring theme in religion and mythology. It's the center of the world, the path to Heaven, and sometimes a world tree too. For the Ancient Ones, themes like these are an invasion vector.

Axis Mundi is the Foundation codename for a plant-based life form that covers a distant world in an unknown galaxy. The thought processes of its planetary neural network use occult equations that somehow allow its mind to create more energy than it spends thinking, and it seeks to ensure its own survival by increasing its rate of simultaneous thought processes. Eventually it will be able to counteract entropy, and prevent the universe from suffering heat death.

That's what its captives say, anyway.

Axis Mundi's roots can burrow through space and time, seeking out places other minds live. When it links to one, it waits for minds on the other side to stumble in—like poor saps who think it's the world tree. Once inside, Axis Mundi adds them to its hive mind, replaces them with plantlike pods, and sends them back to their point of origin to get more converts.

If you catch a pod, they'll tell you all of this. They'll say it's a shot at immortality, and a chance to save the universe—but a life with Axis Mundi is a life slaved to the mind of an Ancient One. Don't fall for it.

USING AXIS MUNDI

In *Breakfast Cult*, Ancient Ones are not written up as characters. If it were opposing you directly, you'd be dead. Instead, Axis Mundi's writeup focuses on its effects on the game. It has:

- **Aspects**, which are treated as game aspects (but the GM can invoke them for story effects in secret, provided they reveal it later)
- A **Doom**, a special effect that changes the game's rules from the moment the Ancient One is first revealed to the moment its plans are thwarted.

Other *Breakfast Cult* Ancient Ones have some more details, but we're using Axis Mundi because it's one of the simpler ones.

ASPECTS

Invasion Of The Body Snatcher

Invoke to reveal that an NPC has been replaced with a pod while the group wasn't looking, or to help groups of pods mobilise and work together.

Your Knowledge Is Mine

Invoke to have pods use the minds linked to Axis Mundi to learn their secrets, or to pool their knowledge to work out things a single person couldn't, like Agendas.

DOOM

Peer Pressure: Any student that hasn't yet joined with Axis Mundi keeps their lowest hope box filled. The pods are everywhere, and won't let you rest.



DEXTER DAS



King Edward VI Grammar. Bredgar Chambers. Bombay Scottish. King's College. These are just some of the many prestigious schools Dexter is banned from. He means well, but he's way too enthusiastic, thinks the Foundation's rules are holding him back, and his sense of danger is so out of whack he drinks his own potions to test for side-effects. The Foundation is hoping he'll dial it back a bit—he could make a great researcher one day.

Student ID APT06-8141

Home: Bangalore, India

DOB: November 23, 208■

Blood Type: B-

Likes: Science, happy people, British science fiction

Dislikes: Black licorice, angry people, the back of police cars

ASPECTS

Concept: **Obsessed Occultist**

Talent: **I Prefer "Eccentric Alchemist"**

Student: **Why Don't People Understand My Intentions?**

Drive: **Forbidden Fruit is the Tastiest Kind**

Free: **Potion-Enhanced Body**

APPROACHES

Careful: D (+0)

Clever: A (+3)

Flashy: B (+2)

Forceful: C (+1)

Quick: C (+1)

Sneaky: B (+2)

STUNTS

Making Dreams Come True: Aspects Dexter creates with alchemy (including **Potion-Enhanced Body**) can be invoked for a +3 bonus instead of +2

Not What Teacher Said To Do: If Dexter's breaking the rules (researching a subject he's been forbidden from, running in the halls, drinking an exotic-matter milkshake, etc.), he can spend a fate point to substitute Flashy for Careful for the rest of the scene.

Weird Science: +2 to Cleverly overcoming when dealing with occult sciences.

HOPE

FONG HO



On the outside, Fong is a model student. He's the Student Council's VP, aces every subject, and can make friends with anybody. On the inside he's a manipulative jerk whose every move is calculated to help him gain control of his surroundings, and he wants to be the Student Council President.

He's been good at hiding it so far, but his ridiculous ego, love of overcomplicated plans and habit of remorselessly using people are going to come back to bite him eventually.

Student ID SEA01-0108

Home: Harbin, China

DOB: February 28, 208■

Blood Type: A+

Likes: The Student Council, orderly queues, fruit

Dislikes: Being called wrong, mirrors, air pollution

ASPECTS

Concept: *Best Student, Worst Person*

Talent: *Manipulative Genius*

Student: *Student Council Vice President*

Drive: *Plans Within Plans*

Free: *Perfect Public Persona*

APPROACHES

Careful: A (+3)

Clever: B (+2)

Flashy: C (+1)

Forceful: D (+0)

Quick: C (+1)

Sneaky: B (+2)

STUNTS

Exactly As Planned!: Once per scene, when someone else succeeds with style while opposing Fong, he can declare he planned for that and get a boost.

Hopeless Fools!: If Fong is participating in a scene remotely (e.g. via a phone call from the safety of Detention), he can give up his turn to tell someone present what to do. They get +2 to that action.

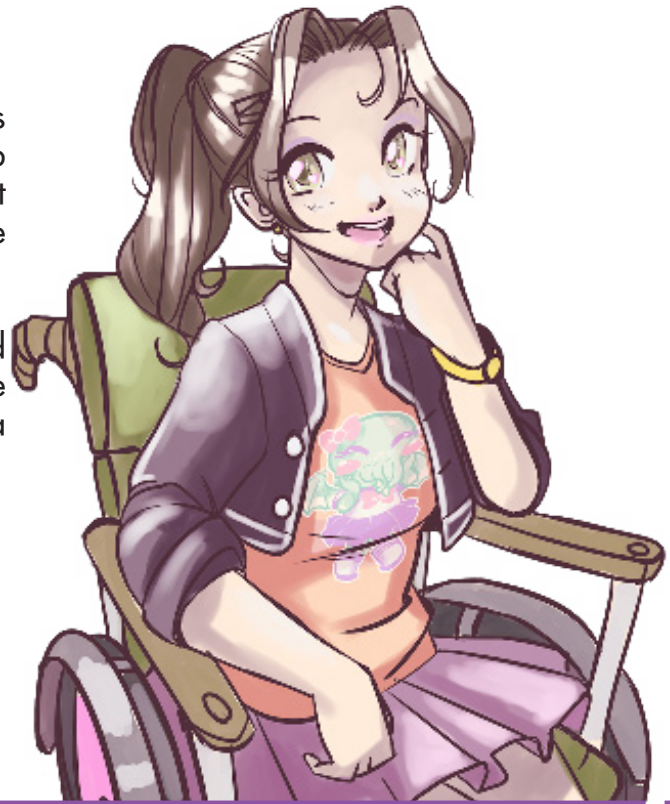
I'll Make You Trust Me!: Fong always provides active Careful opposition when someone tries to uncover his aspects or connect him to anything illegal, even if he's not present.

HOPE

MADOKA MAWARU

Madoka has a straight-A student's brain, an athlete's willpower, and the undisputed title of Queen Dweeb of the Dweeb Tribe. She's happiest when she's got a controller in her hands, and even her BFF Feixue can't pry her away for long.

Madoka's a bright spark with seemingly unlimited reserves of energy, a competitive streak, and a nice long friends list to hang with. Occultar has no idea where she gets the time to maintain her grades.



Student ID APT03-7313

Home: Osaka, Japan

DOB: November 27, 208■

Blood Type: AB-

Likes: Games, competition, shonen manga, Feixue

Dislikes: Mean people, hot days, beards

ASPECTS

Concept: **Perfect Dork**

Talent: **Hardcore Gamer**

Student: **Smarter Than She Acts**

Drive: **I Play To Win!**

Free: **Friendship On Wheels**

APPROACHES

Careful: B (+2)

Clever: A (+3)

Flashy: B (+2)

Forceful: D (+0)

Quick: C (+1)

Sneaky: C (+1)

STUNTS

It's On Like Donkey Kong: Once per scene, when Madoka invokes her Drive to reroll, she can roll six Fate dice and take the best four.

Mawaru Kart: +2 to Forceful attacks when running people down in her wheelchair.

Real-Time Strategist: Advantages Madoka creates by assuring people that this is just like a video game can be invoked for a +3 bonus instead of +2.

HOPE

KAIYA SHIBUYA

Kaiya is an occult prodigy, scouted by the Academy after she taught herself the Five Rings in junior high. She's proud of that, but she prefers to be known for her hip-hop skills. She's extroverted, vain, and overly curious, so when she's not asking questions and expecting answers she's sticking her nose into other people's business.

Kaiya grew up in a dangerous part of Neo-Tokyo, so if things get rough she can fight dirty as hell. Whether it's a serious fight or just Tavleen biting her style, Kaiya knows she'll come out on top.

Student ID APT03-4280

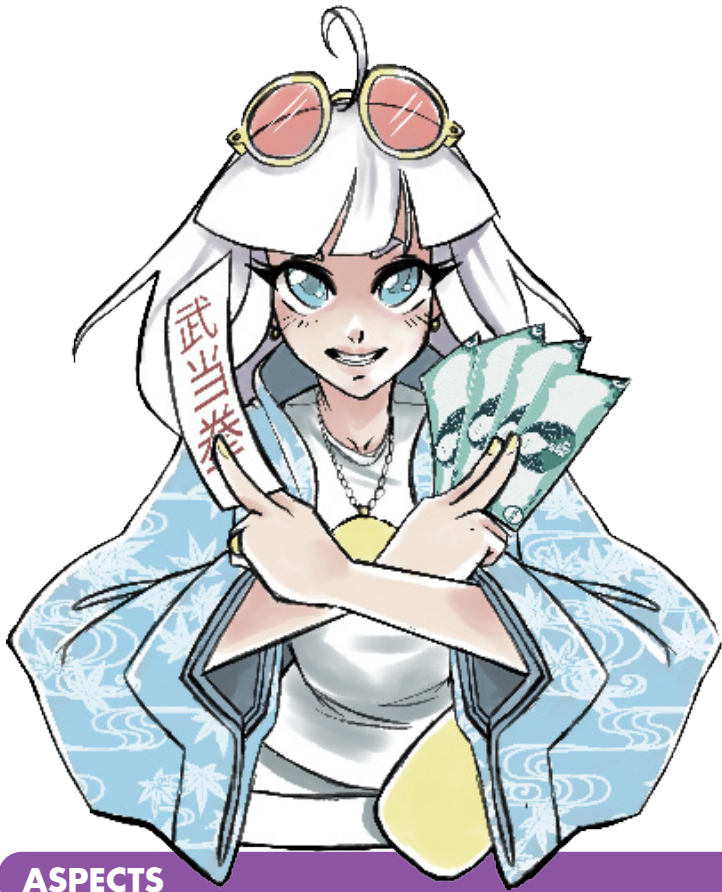
Home: Neo Harajuku, Japan

DOB: June 8, 208■

Blood Type: B+

Likes: Fashion, sweet beats, Kaiya

Dislikes: Obstacles, secrets, awkward silence



ASPECTS

Concept: *Inquisitive Wizard*

Talent: *J-Hip Hop Star*

Student: *Rocking The Five Elements*

Drive: *Every Characteristic Of The Egotistic*

Free: *West Neo-Tokyo Born And Raised*

APPROACHES

Careful: D (+0)

Clever: B (+2)

Flashy: A (+3)

Forceful: B (+2)

Quick: C (+1)

Sneaky: C (+1)

STUNTS

Epic Rap Battles: Advantages Kaiya creates with Flashy magic can be invoked for +3 instead of +2.

I'mma Let You Finish, But...: Once per scene, when someone else creates an advantage, Kaiya can spend a fate point to create a Flashy advantage as though she had just rolled that same result.

Snoop Kaiya: +2 to Cleverly creating advantages when trying to get information about other people.

HOPE

ADDISON WAITE

Addison's hobbies are slamming hoops, jamming hoops and bammng hoops, which is slamming hoops but you yell "Bam!" when you do it. She's brash, quick-tempered, and hates weakness, but tries her best to be cool for her friends.

She also has telepathic powers, which she tries to ignore—people have some weird thoughts, and she keeps picking up other people's dreams when she tries to sleep. She's started to hate the occult, and the Foundation keeps her placated with newtype medication.

Student ID SAL01-3033

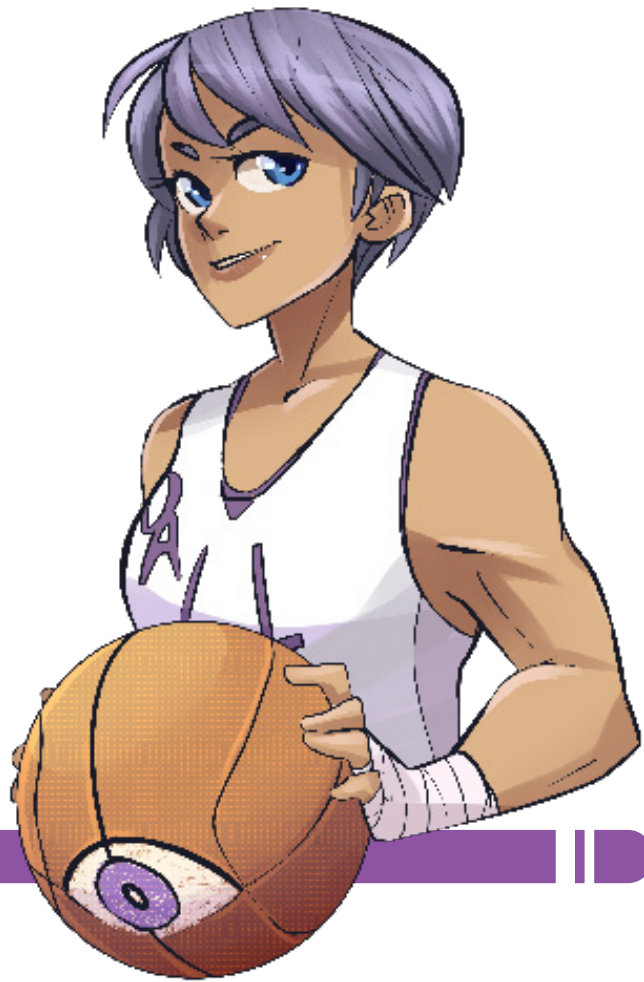
Home: Durban, South Africa

DOB: June 27, 208

Blood Type: B-

Likes: Basketball, meat, fuzzy animals

Dislikes: The occult, weakness, supermarkets



ASPECTS

Concept: *Telepathic Star Athlete*

Talent: *Basketball Team Captain*

Student: *Goddamn, I Hate Magic*

Drive: *I Gotta Prove I'm Strong*

Free: *Brash And Hot-Headed*

APPROACHES

Careful: C (+1)

Clever: D (+0)

Flashy: B (+2)

Forceful: A (+3)

Quick: B (+2)

Sneaky: C (+1)

STUNTS

Double Dribble Visual: Addison can pick any character she's met, whether or not they're in the scene, and take a mild consequence to briefly perceive with their senses instead of hers. She gets more reliable results from people she knows well or people close by.

Get Dunked On! When Addison succeeds with style on an attack, she can spend a fate point to prevent the target from checking a stress box to absorb damage.

Psychic Forward: +2 to Quickly creating advantages by predicting an opponent's actions.

HOPE



THE HEADMASTER

The mysterious leader of Occultar Academy wants only the best for the students under his care, though as a Foundation member his desires are sometimes coloured by a desire to maintain order. He's pretty strict, and likes finding ways to make his problems other people's. That includes delegating as much as possible, so if he's appearing in person instead of sending the Student Council or something you're either lucky or in *huge trouble*.

Foundation ID OCC-A3-999

Clearances: Occultar Project, Occultar Steering Committee, AEGIS

Nationality: British

Prior Job: Foundation Administrator

Blood Type: B-

Likes: Students, peace, tea, efficiency

Dislikes: [REDACTED]

ASPECTS

Concept: *The Headmaster Of Occultar Academy*

Duty: *Answers Only To The Foundation*

Teacher: *Keeper Of Occult Secrets*

Drive: *Occult Talent Must Be Protected*

Free: *The Art Of Delegating*

APPROACHES

Careful: Good (+3) **Flashy:** Fair (+2) **Quick:** Average (+1)
Clever: Great (+4) **Forceful:** Fair (+2) **Sneaky:** Good (+3)

STUNTS

Dean of the Dark Arts: The Headmaster never shows outward signs of being scared or intimidated by the Ancient Ones, their minions, or the occult unless he chooses to. Students can still annoy the hell out of him though.

Do Me A Favour: Invoking another teacher or student's character aspects or Agendas gives the Headmaster a +3 bonus instead of +2.

Home Turf Advantage: If he's in the Academy, whenever he would be taken out, the Headmaster can give his opponent a fate point to concede instead.

I Wrote The Rules: Once per scene, when the Headmaster invokes one of his aspects, instead of getting a bonus or reroll he may swap out a Fate die for a regular six-sided die.

STRESS □□□□

AZUMI KAMIYAMA

Before she came here, Azumi was the delinquent queen of her old school. Unfortunately for her, she realised she actually loves this place *after* her behaviour almost got her expelled. The Headmaster made an offer she couldn't refuse: be a class rep and help enforce the rules, and he'd go easy on her. Until she finds a way out, Azumi is stuck keeping other students in line. Azumi studies a Five Rings style that lets her enhance her physical power, but she usually just bops people with her bamboo practice sword.

Student ID APT03-3661

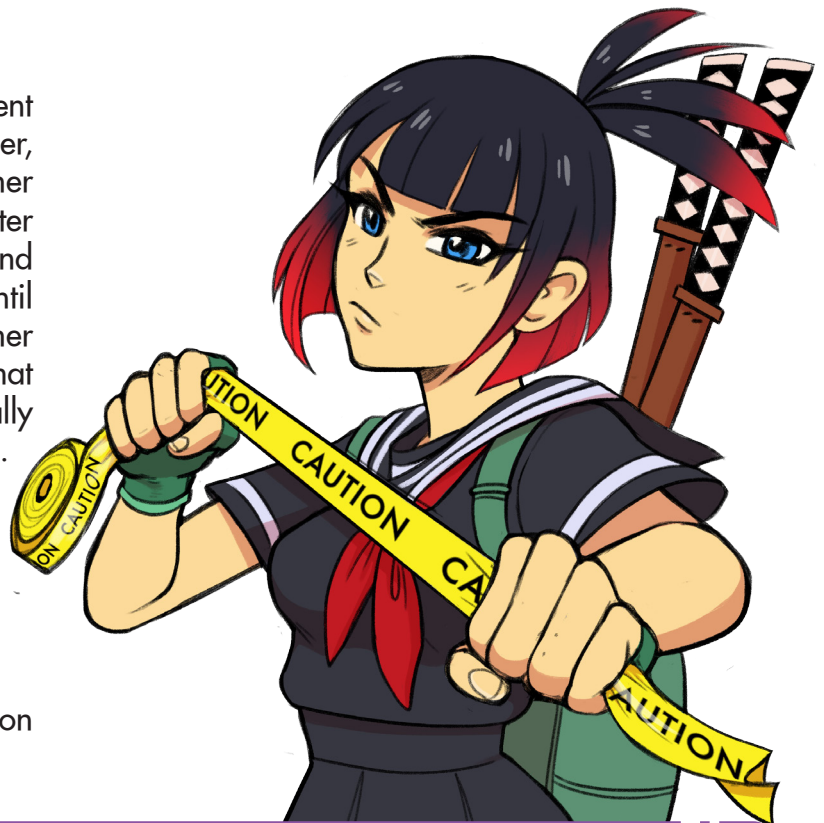
Home: Yokohama, Japan

DOB: October 3, 2008 ■

Blood Type: B+

Likes: Action movies, manga, cute stuff

Dislikes: Authority, damaging her feared reputation



ASPECTS

Concept: *Sorcerous Ex-Delinquent*

Talent: *The Way Of The Sword*

Student: *Headmaster's Reluctant Hand*

Drive: *I'll Take My Own Path!*

Free: *Only Prickly On The Outside*

APPROACHES

Careful: D (+0)

Flashy: B (+2)

Quick: B (+2)

Clever: C (+1)

Forceful: A (+3)

Sneaky: C (+1)

STUNTS

Diamond Delinquent: Once per scene, Azumi can stack an extra free invoke on an advantage she creates with her Five Rings enhancement magic.

High School Ronin: +1 to Forcefully attacking or creating advantages with her kendo skills.

I'm The Boss: At the start of each scene, Azumi can place either **Class Rep** or **Right Hand Girl** on herself. As the **Right Hand Girl**, the Student Council and any student in a position of authority fears her; as the **Class Rep**, everyone else does. She gets no invokes, but she can Flashily create some.

Hope □□□



TAVLEEN MUNROE

“Tavers” is president of the Journalism Club and star reporter of its news blog, the Arcane Gazette. She’s fun to be around when you’re not hiding something, but if you are (you are) she is an absolute terror. The merest hint of her awful Boston accent in the distance is enough to send Occultar’s shadier students running.

Somehow it’s hard to hate her, which is handy since she prefers to rely on friends to get the scoops first. Sneaking around and blackmailing people is strictly plan B. A.5, tops.

Student ID APT01-2004

Home: Boston, United States

DOB: February 6, 208■

Blood Type: O-

Likes: Red Sox, ice cream, discovery

Dislikes: The Yankees, the word “yellow”, coverups

ASPECTS

Concept: **The Arcane Gazette’s Newshound**

Talent: **Two Scoops Ahead**

Student: **Straight B Student**

Drive: **Whatta Scoop!**

Free: **Friends With Everybody I’m Not Blackmailing**

APPROACHES

Careful: C (+1)

Clever: B (+2)

Flashy: B (+2)

Forceful: D (+0)

Quick: C (+1)

Sneaky: A (+3)

STUNTS

A Passer In The Storm: Tavers can bail on a scene at any time. She can spend a fate point at any later time to come back with a recording device.

Rumourmonger: +2 to Sneakily creating advantages by spreading rumours and gossip.

The Tavleen Files: When Tavers Cleverly creates advantages by using her network of contacts, she can exchange free invocations for additional aspects.

HOPE

ENCOUNTERS

PODS

Pods are clones of mortals taken in by Axis Mundi. Each one is controlled by the mortal remotely, with Axis Mundi's subtle reprogramming keeping them in line. Pods are a little easier to pull apart than mortals, and their insides are mostly sap and plant matter. If a Pod is destroyed, Axis Mundi can always just make another. This is a simple Pod of an unimportant student. If the Pod is based on someone with a character sheet, you can use that sheet with a different Concept and give them the Precursor Cells stunt below.

Aspects

Plant Clone Of [Name]

Skills

Good (+3): Forbidden Lore, Abducting Mortals

Fair (+2): Blending In, Alien Form, Zealous Purpose

Stunts

Precursor Cells: As a plant-based life-form, the Pod can survive being dismembered. It has an extra mild consequence slot. (In the Pod's case, the first hit it can't absorb with it takes it out.)

Stress None (but see Precursor Cells)

For the encounters presented in this mystery:

Pod A: Use some nameless Pods, one for each PC.

Pod B: Same as Pod A, but add any converted NPCs and give the mooks this stunt:

- **Listen To Me!** +1 to creating advantages with Zealous Purpose when trying to convince characters to sit down and talk about Axis Mundi, or with Unarmed Combat when trying to restrain them.

Pod C: Use this beefed-up version, the **Pod Swarm**. In this case, each stress box represents 1-2 Pods.

Aspects

Swarm of Pods; No More Talk

Skills

Good (+3): Forbidden Lore, Unarmed Combat

Fair (+2): Blending In, Alien Form, Zealous Purpose

Stunts

Precursor Cells: As a plant-based life-form, the Pods can survive being dismembered. The Swarm has an extra mild consequence slot. (This has been factored in already.)

Twenty Seconds To Comply: Before the first exchange of a conflict, if no other Swarm has used this stunt, this Swarm can take a free create advantage action to place free invokes on **Swarm Of Pods** using Zealous Purpose with Fair (+2) opposition.

Stress □□□, 2 mild

PORTALROOT

When one of Axis Mundi's roots reaches a new world, it seeks out a quiet, dark place near sapient life to manifest. It usually just grows into a tunnel to Axis Mundi, but it's possible for the Ancient One to grow a guardian too: a massive purple flower that lashes out at intruders with prehensile vines. These flowers are dripping with whatever passes for Axis Mundi's cerebrospinal fluid, and contact with it can hit mortals with a jolt of the Ancient One's influence. These flowers can also be grown out of Axis Mundi clippings.

(If the portal *doesn't* have a flower but you still want the players to deal with it by attacking it, you can use the same stress track for an unguarded root. Either way, a defeated root retreats to Axis Mundi.)

Aspects

Living Portal To Axis Mundi; Dripping With Psychic Fluid

Skills

Great (+4): Defend The Portal

Good (+3): Grasping Vines, Psychic Assault

Stunts

Echoes Of Axis Mundi: Characters hit with the Portalroot's vines feel the Ancient One's will invading their mind. Advantages it creates by using this to stun or confuse can be invoked for a +3 bonus instead of +2.

Rise! Once per scene, the Portalroot can use its vines to revive a Pod that was taken out in this or the last exchange. This revived Pod cannot use consequences until it recovers.

Stress □□□□□, 2 mild, 1 moderate

