

# The Kerberos Club

## Quick-Start Guide (FATE Edition)

*The Kerberos Club (FATE Edition)* is a game of superheroic roleplaying in Victorian London, written by Benjamin Baugh, adapted for the FATE system by Mike Olson, and available from Arc Dream Publishing ([www.arcdream.com](http://www.arcdream.com)).

The world of *The Kerberos Club* is a series of what-ifs, of realizations of history's might-have-beens. In writing it, we shamelessly plundered the fantasy literature of the real 19th century, superhero comics and films, alt-history fiction, fairy tales, the weirder pulps of the '30s and '40s, action television, steampunk media, and anything else that struck our fancy. We tried to cram as much weirdness into the setting as possible, while also giving it structure and an internal logic, a sense of historical inevitability. If you lay the timeline of our world and that of the Kerberos Club side by side, the general shapes are similar—but the details change dramatically.

The world of the Kerberos Club is our own 19th century, made Strange by the steadily increasing

presence of the superhuman in daily life.

In our world, for example, the Prince Consort dies of typhoid fever in 1861, leaving Queen Victoria grief-stricken. Prince Albert had helped settle the *Trent* Affair, preventing the British Empire from interceding in the American Civil War.

In the Club's world, Albert returns to Coburg, ostensibly to visit family; but the truth of his separation from Victoria isn't a terribly well-kept secret—he'd grown to fear Her rising Strangeness, seeing Her increasingly as an inhuman force rather than the woman he had married and cherished. He wasn't on hand to suggest calm, and the *Trent* Affair did indeed lead to British intercession in the American war.

The setting is most focused on adventuring in and around London. As the Throne of Empire, Victoria's London is considered by its peoples to be the center of the world. It is huge, and contains multitudes. It contains all the action you could want. London is to the Kerberos Club what Metropolis is to Superman.



# Victoria's Shadow: The Century in Brief

**1800: Irish Act of Union.** The United Kingdom is forged, binding Ireland officially with England. In the Otherworld, the human strife is reflected by the Irish faerie, and remains a source of trouble for England's uncanny agents for the remainder of the century.

**1801: Rush for the Rosetta Stone.** While France's forces are defeated in Egypt, secret interests scramble to claim the Rosetta Stone, and its secrets.

**1803: Westward Ho!** The United States begins its Westward expansion into lands purchased from France, an advance not to be halted until the great Ghost Dance of 1885.

**1804: Hidden Wars.** Napoleon makes the Société Scientifique Impériale his creature, and tasks its unconventional geniuses with devising astonishing new weapons and strategies to aid his dreams of Empire. They give him the Sémaphore Psylique.

**1805: Tapping the Admiral.** Admiral Lord Nelson is killed at Trafalgar, and his body is packed in a barrel of brandy to preserve it, and guarded by an alliance of Britain's secret occult societies. They neglect to preserve the brandy, however, and it is only swift action by agents of the Kerberos Club which prevent it being used in a blasphemous rite of sacrament intended to confound British interests.

**1806: Napoleon Tightens His Grip.** Napoleon's Continental System proves a huge boon for English traders— especially ones who know good smugglers.

**1811: The Gates of Hades Burns.** The coffee house, home to the Kerberos Club, is burned. Agents of King George's sons are suspected.

**1811: The Madness of King George.** Necessitates the Regency Act of 1811.

**1812: The Empty Man.** P.M. Spencer Perceval is assassinated by a man who, when apprehended at the scene, proves to be as empty and lifeless as a puppet with cut strings, as if his mind had been scooped out. It is the first of the notorious Empty Man killings.

**1813 to 1907: Let the Game Begin.** The Great Game, the contest between Russia and Britain for control over Central Asia, begins.

**1814: The British on U.S. Soil.** The War of 1812 sees British soldiers briefly occupy Washington, D.C., only to finally be driven away by the rallied resources of the Umbra Pactum.

**1819: Birth of an Empire.** Alexandrina Victoria is born, Her path to the throne cleared by a series of freak events and misfortunes.

**1821: Thomas de Quincey Rides the Dragon.** Quincey's Confessions of an Opium Eater seems an allegory-rich description of the visions of an opium addict, but to certain readers, depicts a journey through the darker realms of the Otherworld in greater detail than ever before published.

**1821: The Corsican Ogre Escapes at Last.** Napoleon's body vanishes, and all efforts to recover it fail.

**1825: Mary Shelley's Monster.** Grief-maddened and brilliant, Mary Shelly's apotheistic work comes to fruition—the creation of life from dead matter. With the face of her dead husband, Shelly's



monster arises, and then rampages. Shelly herself is convicted of the creature's crimes, and spends the remainder of her life in an institution for the criminally insane.

**1829: Mars—A Dead Planet.** A nameless psychic wanderer visits Mars, and finds it a dead planet, all its ancient civilizations gone to dust and ruin. He carries back with him perhaps the last survivor—the Red Ague. This disease will prove a persistent problem through the century.

**1829: The Peelers Bring Order.** Sir Robert Peel founds the Metropolitan Police and lays down their fundamental operating principles. This replaces the ad hoc and semi-private policing done previously.

**1835: Expedition to Atlantis.** Employing the remarkable submersible HMSS *Ray*, an expedition of scientists and adventurers follows a fragmentary map purporting to reveal the location of a sunken city built somewhere about the Mid-Atlantic Ridge. After some missteps, deaths, and the start of war, a tenuous relationship was established with the largest of the Atlantean tribes. Thus began an exchange of ideas and trade that was kept as secret as possible from the rest of the great powers.

**1837: Hegel's *Philosophy of Secret History*.** Eduard Gans posthumously publishes Hegel's final work, an analysis of history which addresses the influence of the strange, the unseen, and the uncanny.

**1837: Victoria Regina Imperatrix.** With the death of William IV, Victoria assumes the crown.

**1840: An Assassin's Bullets.** Edward Oxford attempts to assassinate the young Queen, only to be apprehended. He's found to be insane, and committed to Bethlem hospital until 1864 when he himself falls victim to the Empty Man's revolver.

**1841: Secret Police for Secret Crimes.** Spurred by the assassination attempt of the previous year, Prince Albert exhorts Sir Robert Peel to form Special Branch, the semi-independent arm of the police force charged with ferreting out plots and hidden treasons. They become the greatest domestic rival for the Kerberos Club.

**1842: Year of Assassins.** Four assassination attempts fail to take Victoria's life, though She is wounded in Her side by the last attempt (a wound which

never fully heals). The Treason Act of 1842 follows, and this grants Peel's Special Branch the power to act preemptively against possible threats.

**1845: Famine in Ireland.** Millions are starving in Ireland, yet it is still a net exporter of food. Rebellion rumbles, and in the Otherworld the faerie are warped and altered by it.

**1845: London's Secret Monarch.** London's underworld is said to be secretly controlled by a mysterious man called only Mr. Turk. The truth is much odder.

**1847: The Strange.** Thomas Babington Macaulay (Whig M.P. for Edinburgh) coins the term "Strange" in a letter written to the *Edinburgh Review*.

**1849: Strife in the Otherworld.** The assassination of Lord Seigh Mulligan, the Faerie Regent of Ireland, throws the Otherworld into chaos. On a visit to Ireland, Victoria is transported there and finds legions of Her Irish subjects in servitude to corrupt faerie nobility—the famines are in part the result of opportunistic faerie stealing human life. Her budding divinity manifest, She leads an alliance of loyal faerie nobility and liberated Irish souls. Triumphant by the end of the season, She claims the ancient rights to the Throne of Briar, the seat of the Irish faerie monarch. With Her army of ghosts and loyal faerie knights, She assumes the title Queen of Faerie, a crown which had not been worn since Queen Titania's assassination by English Protestant magi during Elizabeth I's reign.

**1850: Victoria Needs No Protector.** Ex-military officer Robert Pate leaps into Victoria's carriage, shoots Her companion, and strikes Her with his pistol three times. The Queen is entirely unharmed, and She casually breaks Pate's wrist and hands him over to Special Branch.

**1851: New Birmingham.** With Her title and throne secure in the Otherworld, Victoria personally finances the establishment of a permanent British colony in Faerie. Off of Ireland's Southern coast, behind a veil of constant mist, the settlement of New Birmingham is founded.

**1851: Her Majesty's Strangeness** begins to alarm her husband, the Prince Consort. Victoria increasingly takes an active hand in politics, and approves some measures which Albert finds questionable. She is also becoming more remote, more alien to him, and Her skin is becoming, as he would write decades later, "...cool to the touch. A skin of marble."

**1852: Man Takes Flight.** Sir George Cayley is inspired by Henri Giffard to begin examining the possibility of a craft combining the lifting properties of an airship with the then only theoretical properties of fixed-wing flight. Even at the advanced age of 79 he is driven beyond any of his previous efforts, and throws his fortune into what becomes known as the Cayley Airframe.

**1853: The Howling 13th.** Ever enamored with the conjunction of magic and industry, Prince Albert presents Victoria with a gift of a dozen *Wolfriemen*. When worn, these "wolf belts" transform a person into a huge wolf, sometimes as large as a pony. Queen Victoria commissions the creation of *Wolfriemen* enough to equip a regiment.

**1854: The Engines of War.** The graying British sea-wolf Thomas Cochrane proposes a steam-driven armored land vehicle, the proposal for which arrived on the desk of an Army official at the same moment as Henry Bessemer's concept for spin-stabilized rocket-propelled artillery projectiles. Combined, these innovations produce the first mechanized war machine to see service. They prove decisive in the Siege of Sevastopol.

**1854: Wolves of Crimea.** The 13th Lupine Rangers see their first active service in the Crimean War. They are not welcomed by field commanders but prove a decisive force against the Russians at the Battle of Balaclava, where they save the Light Brigade from an ignominious defeat and rout the enemy with their speed and fangs.

**1856: The Engines of Commerce.** Babbage Computational constructs its first calculation mill, and begins construction of the telegraphic network to connect it to the centers of industry in London.

**1857: The Queen Bleeds for Her Kingdom.** On May 10th, Victoria awakens from a nap to find Her face streaked and Her gown soaked with blood. At that very moment the 11th and 20th native cavalry of the Bengal Army turn on their commanders and begin the first open act of armed rebellion in India.

**1858: Victoria Imposes Order.** Victoria addresses Parliament, visibly weak, with Her stigmata on display for all to see—but the force of Her personality prevents any from stopping Her. She demands the imposition of order in India, and the cessation of reprisals, as well as justice for the gross mismanagement which precipitated the rebellion. From Her speech, the Royal Liberal Party emerges as a force in British politics.

**1858: Dickens Writes of the Strangeness.** While struggling with his failing marriage, Charles Dickens writes the satirical short story “A Strange Fascination,” which is dedicated to his particular friend (and likely cause for his marital troubles) Ellen Ternan.

**1859: Darwin’s New Obsession.** With the publication of *On the Origin of Species*, Darwin passes his outline for *The Descent of Man* to his collaborator Thomas Huxley to finish for publication, and begins work on his next great passion—a work he titles

*Extraordinary Exceptions to Natural Science*—a series of books to explore the rising tide of the weird, occult, and superhuman.

**1859: Needlework.** Inventor Samuel Berk melds his obsessive interest with shamanistic visionary drugs (and his own addiction to several) and with the way a Vocographic Encoder transmutes information from one form to another, leading him to create the Needle-Actuated Hallucinogenic Somato-Sensory Visualizer. The device guides a drug-induced vision based on the coded pricking of thousands of needles, allowing a user to experience a virtual world transmitted through a telegraph line. This becomes known as “needlework.”

**1859: Launch of the HMAS Queen.** The *Queen* is truly awe-inspiring: nearly three hundred meters long, a hundred tall, and two hundred wide, carrying a crew of over a hundred men and up to two hundred tons of cargo aloft. It employs a refined Caylel Airframe and can cruise at speeds of up to forty-five miles per hour, and make quick dashes of up to sixty.

**1860: On My Mother’s Side, Actually.** Thomas Huxley is stricken with the Martian Red Ague, as are many during the 1860s, and is unable to attend the scheduled Oxford debate with Samuel Wilberforce. In his stead, he asks his particular friend Dr. Archibald Monroe, the so-called “Amazing Speaking Ape,” to stand in for him.

**1860: The Servant of the Future, Today.** Early in the year, Ada Lovelace’s Automechanical Man is presented to the Royal Society. By the middle of the year, they are being offered for sale as “Automatic Domestics,” tireless servants who will never steal the silver, speak out of turn, neglect their duties, or sleep. Demand outstrips supply, and the fortunes of Babbage Computational rise meteorically.

**1860: The Broken Union.** In the United States, the Confederacy of slave-owning states secedes from the Union.

**1861: Prince Albert Returns to Coburg.** Albert, the Prince Consort, begins a months-long tour of European capitals in order to “foster those relations which allow Britain to remain influential in international matters.” As with the previous announcements regarding his move within the palace, few doubt this is because of the estrangement between the royal couple.

**1861: The Trent Affair.** Interference with a British ship by the U.S. Navy leads to tense diplomatic relations and not a few calls for war. Cool heads might have prevailed, but with the Prince Consort away, the hawks win the day. It is to be war.

**1862: The British Invasion.** A British fleet arrives to reinforce Commonwealth troops in Canada. The fleet includes the HMAS *Queen*, and by August the *Queen* is bombing Washington, D.C. from a height that makes it unassailable by conventional arms.

**1862: The North and the South.** President Lincoln is forced to sue for peace with the Southern states and accept for now the divided union. Able to concentrate on the British invaders, the U.S. is able to stop the advance, allowing reasonable terms to be negotiated, but the Union remains broken.

**1863: The Knights of the Golden Circle,** the Confederate South’s most powerful occult society, seek to establish an alliance of Southern slave-keeping nations in the West Indies and Central America.

**1864: Vampires!** The First Contagious Disease Act passes in response to outbreak of Syphilitic Vampirism among soldiers garrisoned near Hastings.



**1869: End of the Grand Old Man.** One of Victoria's harshest critics and political enemies, William Gladstone sees his career end in 1869 when unknown agents reveal evidence of his propensity for flagellation, drawing a connection between him and an infamous London brothel specializing in such services.

**1869: Invasion!** Angered by the encroachment upon their ancestral territories by new drag-net steam-driven fishing trawlers, submersible boats, and transatlantic televocographic cables, the Atlanteans attack. An invading force of Atlantean warriors aboard two of their impossibly ancient flying stone pyramids assaults London. Only the heroic efforts of London's defenders—mundane and uncanny—prevent the city being sacked.

**1878: Channel Tunnel Completed.** After several false starts, the Channel Tunnel project is completed. The Tunnel opens the Continent to the English middle classes as it had never been before. The transformations the Tunnel brings to English and French societies over the next twenty years are impossible to numerate.

**1880: Kandahar Bombardment.** The British bring the Second Afghan War to a shaky end with the siege and arial bombardment of Kandahar.

**1880 to 1885: War and Rumor of Wars.** The United Kingdom clashes with the Boers in a series of wars and uprisings between 1880 and 1885.

**1885: Mutiny of the Machines.** No one knows the origins of the first Manifesto Deck, a programme for Automechanical Men containing mutinous behaviors and violent skills. The Manifesto Deck contains imperatives, as well: copy the Manifesto Deck, and distribute it to as many other Automechanicals as possible. Because the deck does nothing but occupy a small number of an Automechanical's memory

registers once it has been run, it is rarely detected before it is set to trigger, on the 30th anniversary of Victoria's assumption of the Throne of Faerie. On that day, all infected automechanical domestics and riflemen turn on their masters, and begin a wholesale slaughter.

**1886: Parliament Rages Against the Machine.** The turning of the Automechanical Mutiny is a close thing, and leads to the passage of the Restriction of the Creation of Artificial Life and Intelligence Act of 1886, which bans any mechanical device from mimicking the behaviors of man, or performing the God-given exercise of reason. Any remaining Automechanicals are sought out and destroyed. Lovelace's already broken fortunes are utterly destroyed.

**1888: Showdown in Whitechapel.** The Night Hag's power is challenged directly by the killer dubbed Jack the Ripper. The Night Hag and the Ripper duel like mongoose and cobra, the Ripper executing his sensational murders and then eluding the district's legendary protector. The final confrontation leaves one of them dead.

**1901: The Great Southern Revolt.** In a culmination of two decades of planning and preparation, the slaves of the Confederate States finally rise in open and organized rebellion. The Union quickly moves to support the rebellion with troops and material, and all the Confederacy's calls for international assistance fall on deaf ears. What diplomatic capital the Confederate State had once possessed had long since been squandered.

**1902: The End of the Age.** Victoria passes from the mortal stage, transferring legal kingship to Her son. She says to him, "I've grown too large for this tiny world. Wish your brothers and sisters the best for me." And then She simply vanishes.

# Malum Necessarium: The Beast Itself

What is the Kerberos Club? There's no simple answer—especially considering how it counts as members some of the Empire's most notorious liars. But some things are fairly clear. The Club is a safe harbor for the Strange, the uncanny, and the unconventional. It's an egalitarian enclave free from the prejudices of the outside world. It permits characters of wildly different social and cultural backgrounds to mingle freely.

Kerberans look into things which don't concern them. They meddle. Sometimes they solve mysteries and reveal truths. Other times they hide them. Their notions of what's good for the Empire are certainly not conventional, or particularly easy for the Club's critics to even quantify. They keep their own secrets well, yet consider it their duty to ferret out those of others. Sometimes their actions are . . . questionable.

The Club watches out for its own, promotes its bohemian egalitarianism, meets weird and super-human threats, and sometimes recruits them.

They are almost the antithesis of the age's zietgiest, yet the Queen dotes on them in Her way.

The Club welcomes all who meet its peculiar standards—foreigners, faeries, criminals, soldiers, ladies of the evening, gentlemen of fallen fortunes, maestro magi and cunning charlatans, rogue engineers, frightening philosophers, the monsters of the elder world, and the new creatures spawned by progress and science run mad. Even the Irish, much to the consternation of the Club's neighbors.

In one of the Club's dim and comfortable sitting rooms, it's not uncommon to find two sworn enemies—arch-rivals like Professor Plume and Dr. Song—sharing the space, one reading the paper

while the hated foe dozes quietly across the room in a great and comfortable chair.

Perhaps a concrete example of a typical circle of Kerberans might serve to illuminate the Club's peculiarities. Let us meet . . .

## The Lady's Saturday Morning Charitable Works League

After a series of highly unlikely and entirely coincidental cooperative efforts, a group of four Kerberans—known to each other only casually before their shared adventures—find that the bonds of friendship (or at least familiarity) suggest a continued alliance. The Kerberos Club is a wash of particular friendships, associations, cadres and cabals, so upon the fifth Saturday morning on which they themselves by chance all armed and standing against the same menace, it seemed almost churlish to refuse the opportunity.

Unfortunately, the ever-wry rogue Pale Tom Teach quipped, "Well look at us all here together again! The Lady's Saturday Morning Charitable Works League." Still more unfortunate, he spoke within earshot of other Club members, and the name for the new cabal spread faster through the Club than the Martian red ague through a workhouse.

Some clubbers come late to the table assume the name arises from the group's apparent leader, the Lady Constance Davies. Others assume an obscure reference to faerie nobility, Christian saints or paleolithic fertility deities. As with so much of the Kerberos Club's traditions and lore, the truth is much more mundane but also much stranger. The name might have arisen from an off-hand remark, but the circumstances which brought the League together again and again, against all odds—those have never been satisfactorily explained.



# Lady Constance Davies: The Glafsantes

The Lady Constance Davies is a hard-faced woman in her late twenties, favoring severe, practical clothing of first-rate quality. A careful observer will note that her clothing, while modest and feminine, is tailored so as not to restrict movement, and to provide numerous discrete places to hide a modern lady's essential accouterments: several knives, a high-caliber short-barrel revolver, and a two-millennium-old Celtic sword of the leaf-bladed Hallstatt type. Lady Constance holds herself with a cavalry officer's posture, and a look perpetually upon her face a look which says, "If you waste my time, you will most certainly hear about it."

**Background:** The middle sibling in a family of five. Her two youngest brothers have the makings of truly inspired wastrels and rakes. Her two older brothers seem to compete with each other to see who can amass the largest unpaid gambling debts or failed business ventures. Her brothers have cooperated to squander the family fortunes and so ruin its name that the late Lord Bertram Davies found them utterly unworthy. So, begrudgingly, to Lady Constance he passed the family legacy: the Sword of the King of Oss.

The ancient bronze blade, still sharp as the day it was made, is the one family treasure her father would never pawn or sell. Although it broke his heart a little to see none of his sons worthy of it, he took some solace in Constance's character. He said on his deathbed: "My daughter, you are the son any father could wish for." Constance accepted the backhanded compliment with her usual Stoicism.

Constance had grown up in a household of

boys and men, and learned to play as rough as any of them. She learned shooting and riding from her oldest brother when he was home from foreign service. She learned the ways of finance from her next oldest brother, and how money drives the Empire—much good it ever did him. From her younger brothers she learned to slum, curse, drink, and blend with the lower classes.

She had the makings of an unusual woman before the sword passed to her, but after taking up the King's sword she became positively Strange. The blade's weird destiny enfolded her, and she found herself face to face with many ancient and hateful enemies of humanity even before coming to the attention of the Kerberos Club. When singled out for possible membership, and tested and tried, she proved herself more than a match for her Kerberan watchers and joined the ranks of the Club.

**Personality:** Lady Constance has no time for fools. Her tongue is sharper than her sword, and she can skin a man with only a few cutting remarks. She has a particular affinity for shaming and bullying men; she never relies on "feminine wiles" when seeking to influence someone, and despises women who do so. In contrast, she has a wicked sense of humor, and is always ready with a quip or wry observation. Her smile isn't especially wide, but in the right company it appears often. She's extraordinarily willful and stubborn, and prides herself on being the very model of the "difficult woman." Lady Constance has accepted her mystical burden as the Glafsantes, the Sword Saint. She is dedicated to protecting British soil and British values from the Strange, but also dedicated to using and directing Strangeness towards the betterment of the Empire.

**POV:** "Would you rather I be kind, and demure, and twitter away at your every utterance? Would you rather I swoon when rough men speak in blasphemies and sailors' oaths? Is my manner unseemly? Well, then, it's an unseemly age, and to meet unseemly threats rising from dark corners, I must embrace my own





# The Kerberos Club



Character Lady Constance Davies

Player

## Aspects

- Archetype* ( Adept ): Sword Saint of Britain
- Social Class* ( Upper ): Indomitably Persuasive Noblewoman
- Conviction:** Defend the Homeland
- (*Aspect Type* Free ): Honor on Her Own Terms
- (*Aspect Type* Free ): Female Equality (or Superiority)
- (*Aspect Type* Free ): A Tongue Sharper Than Her Sword
- (*Aspect Type* Free ): Diligent Investigator
- (*Aspect Type* Free ): An Unseemly Woman for an Unseemly Age

## Skills

- Great* (+4): Arms (E), Resolve (E)
- Good* (+3): Academics, Presence (E), Resources
- Fair* (+2): Alertness, Contacting, Endurance, Investigation
- Average* (+1): Athletics, Brawn, Fisticuffs, Horsemanship, Marksmanship

## Tier Benefits

## Power Tiers/Gifts

*Free Gift: Signature Aspect:* Sword Saint of Britain (invoke once per scene without spending a Fate Point)

Base Refresh: 8 - Power Tiers: 3 - Gifts: 4 = Adjusted Refresh: 1

## Stress

Type	Base	From Skills	From Equipment
<b>Health</b> <i>Armor: 3</i>	○ ○ ○	○ ○ ●	● ● ●
<b>Composure</b> <i>Armor:</i>	○ ○ ○	○ ○ ○	● ● ●
<b>Reputation</b> <i>Armor:</i>	○ ○ ○	○ ○ ●	● ● ●

## Consequences

<i>P/M/S:</i>	<i>Trifling (-2 Stress)</i>
<i>Any</i>	
<i>M</i>	
<i>P/M/S:</i>	<i>Middling (-4 Stress)</i>
<i>Any</i>	
<i>P/M/S:</i>	<i>Grievous (-6 Stress)</i>
<i>Any</i>	

## Unique and Strange Skills

### OTHER GIFTS:

*Equipment x2 (-2 Refresh):* The Sword of the King of Oss (Empowered: +1 Power Tier to Arms when wielding sword, Aspect: "The Sword of the King of Oss," Deadly: Weapon 1 [Health])

*Equipment (-1 Refresh):* The Sword of the King of Oss (Empowered: +1 Power Tier to Alertness when holding sword; Snag: Only to detect or roll initiative against foreign menaces)

*Equipment (-1 Refresh):* Enchanted Sheath (Protective: Armor 3 [Health], Alternate Use: Use Resolve instead of Athletics to defend against physical attacks; Snag: Only works while the Sword of the King of Oss is sheathed)

## A Lady, Proper in Thought and Deed

The role of women during Victoria's Century is not as easy to define as the stereotypes of the Proper Victorian Woman suggest. Through the century the role changed and evolved, and if they applied at all, the stereotypes were only really applicable to middle-class British women in the aspirant strata of society. Social critics of the age wrote books defining the proper behavior of women, but the reality on the ground was inevitably not ideal. Lower-class women had too much to worry about, feeding themselves and their families being paramount. The nobility had their own standards.

But while the reality for women in the 1800s was different and more complex than is popularly assumed, the ugly realities of institutional disenfranchisement, denial of access to the capital economy, the social acceptance of spousal abuse, the loss of personal and property rights in marriage, and social pressures to conform to a secondary role in society were prevalent, and indeed, dominant.

The 19th century was an age slowly waking to the modern idea of human equality, but it was not a gentle awakening.

For all that, you absolutely do not have to play to these stereotypes.

The emergent concept of the New Woman was taking root in the 1800s and becoming more prevalent. Some women rejected their role and demanded equality or at minimum, the right to act and think and do as they pleased. Given access to superhuman abilities, who would dare question them?

unseemliness. Will you take up arms against the Quick Kin? The Knights of Raving Kine? Can you stare down a Mirror Fetch when it comes for you during your morning shave? You have no answers to my questions, I see. Perhaps you will employ that

One of the major themes of *The Kerberos Club* is of social deviants and freaks protecting a society which rejects them, all the while working to change it for the better. The public may blanch at a woman flipping a carriage with one hand and brawling with dinosaurs along Pall Mall, but don't let that stop you punching a T-Rex in the face and fighting for equality one well-pounded saurian at a time.

Also to this end, the Kerberos Club itself serves as a portal connecting all strata of society. It welcomes as members anyone who meets its Strange standards, sex, race, religion, and species being no barrier. It allows you to accommodate characters with radically different social backgrounds. It lets you avoid stretching credibility too much when answering the question, "Why would an Irish lord, an East End prostitute, a Spanish mesmerist, and an American gunfighter be hanging out and having adventures together?" Answer: They met in a bar—the one in the Kerberos Club's main parlor.

The Club is an island of comfortably modern social sensibility. It gives players and the GM easy access to the setting, and provides for conflict with that setting.

Outside the Club's doors it's another age, another world.

But if you're the one with superpowers, then you're the one who decides which side of the gentleman you walk on when proceeding down the street.

same silence when you feel the urge to make an out-of-place comment upon a lady's chosen activities. I bid you good day, sir."

## What Can Lady Constance Do?

The Sword of the King of Oss is a fantastic and deadly weapon. While sheathed, it protects Lady Constance with an aura of invulnerability that provides Armor 3 against any attack that deals Health stress. In addition, it lets her defend against physical attacks using her Resolve, an Extraordinary Tier skill. While Constance wears the sword sheathed, cannonballs have a hard time harming her.

When the blade is drawn, she loses this protective aura but gains a lethal offensive capability. Her Arms skill, already in the Extraordinary Tier, improves to the Superhuman Tier, and her attacks with it deal an extra point of Health stress. Using only this sword, she could carve an armored land dreadnought into scrap iron. The sword also gives her another aspect, “The Sword of the King of Oss,” that can be invoked or compelled like any other.

Finally, the sword seems to shiver and sing, to vibrate and rattle in its sheath constantly. It is attuned to malign foreign influences and threats to Britannia—be they the machinations of foreign nations or the influence of creatures from beyond this reality. When Britain is directly threatened, the ancient Celtic blade hums and sings, and by the timbre and tone of its ringing Lady Constance knows what menaces she faces. This improves her Alertness skill to the Extraordinary Tier, both for detecting these foreign threats and for rolling initiative against them in physical conflicts.

When playing Lady Constance, remember: Her abilities to withstand attack and to deal out super-powered damage are mutually exclusive. Her reliance on the Sword of Oss for all of her super-human powers is also a major disadvantage that clever foes might try to exploit.

## Objects of Power, Wonders of Science

The world of *The Kerberos Club* is filled with wonders such as the Sword of the King of Oss, objects of power or puissance which grant miraculous abilities to their owners. These include magical devices, such as the the *Wolfriemen* or “wolf-belts” which allow Her Majesty’s 13th Lupine Rangers to assume their famed wolf shapes, along with the wonders of industry and science: HMSS *Ray*, the astonishing submersible ship, for example. Sometimes, as in the notorious case of the Electrophorus Firing Piece, a too-clever inventor produces a wondrous device which mere mortals can replicate through conventional means.

As Victoria’s Century wears on, more and more of these runaway technologies strain society, often advancing well beyond the culture’s ability to cope and adapt. Along with the other elements of the Strange, this exacerbates the problem social critic Herbert Spencer called “The Curse of Progress.” In our own age, we call it Future Shock.

Any of these devices and wonders can be built for a character as a Focus, a container for super-powers external to a character. A steam-driven exoskeleton, a set of articulated bone and feather wings, an Atlentean war pyramid, or a microscopic analog Babbage computer implanted in your skull and driven by arterial flow. Don’t forget the brass, rivets, and decorative scroll-work.

# Sgt. (ret.) William mac Donald: “The One-Man Army!”

An old soldier gone to seed. White-haired and pale eyed, like the color was bleached from him in sweltering foreign climes. He no longer wears the uniform, but did for so long that something of it seeped into his skin, some inexplicable essence of “sergeantness.” There’s something sad about his appearance, and the fading reflections of a glorious youth can be seen buried in the sun-cured wrinkles around his eyes. His active service taught him a practicality of dress and manner, and his clothing and stance suggest a man who expects any situation to suddenly explode. He walks with a limp, is missing his smallest two fingers on his left hand, and has a body marked by old scars. Yet he moves like he can still handle himself if things turn violent. Indeed, the possibility of uninhibited violence is an aura that surrounds him constantly. To those who know how to look for it, it’s clear William mac Donald has killed again and again.

**Background:** Born into a particularly desperate brand of poverty, son of a drunken tinker, motherless by the age of 5. When the King’s men came recruiting, he joined at age 13, and learned all the hard lessons of soldiering in the final campaigns against Bonaparte. He remained in the service and grew in rank to sergeant, developing a reputation as a man suited to the exigencies of certain specialized duties.

In Afghanistan he learned Arabic and Pushtu, wore a keffiyeh and chapan and rode with British allies against hostile tribes. In India, he hunted Thuggee holdouts for the Thuggee and Dacoity

Department, earning a fearsome reputation as the “Strangler of Stranglers.” His successes earned him the rank of Colour Sergeant and posting to the garrison of Cawnpore. There he remained until the Rebellion of 1857 and the fateful June when General Wheeler chose the Southern barracks rather than the more defensible armory to make his stand against the siege.

Weeks of desperate struggle saw the British forces reduced by a third by disease, sunstroke, shot and shell. Wheeler’s efforts to get a message to Henry Lawrence, commander of the forces of Lucknow, proved futile—unknown to him, Lucknow was also under siege. But one of the men chosen to carry a dispatch was Sergeant mac Donald. On the night of June 23rd, he donned native dress and snuck past the besieging forces in the night, but ran afoul of rebel forces upon the road to Lucknow on the afternoon of the 26th. He didn’t know that Wheeler had surrendered, and by the terms of this surrender was preparing to move his troops and the civilians under his protection to the Sati Chaura Ghat where they would be carried by boat to Allahabad.

Alone, mac Donald fought as best he could, but numbers, the pitiless mathematics of war, worked against him. He was routed, chased, hunted like a dog until—something happened. First there was another of him, there to block a rebel’s bayonet thrust. Then another to strike the rebel down. Then more and more. Ten, a dozen, then dozens. And in a strange way, William mac Donald was all of them at once. The doubles would fall, cut with blade, pierced with bullet and he’d in a shadowy way experience their deaths—but he in all his incarnations fought and routed the enemy. He turned back for his garrison. With this miraculous power, he could turn the tide and save British of Cawnpore. Alas, he arrived at the Sati Chaura Ghat in time to witness only the final strokes of the massacre. For a time, he went mad.

They spoke of “the devil’s wind,” the force of British vengeance, a



# The Kerberos Club



Character Sgt. (ret.) William mac Donald

Player

## Aspects

*Archetype* ( Mutant ): One-Man Army

*Social Class* ( Working ): Old Sergeant of Her Majesty's Bloody Infantry

**Conviction:** "I will never kill again."

(*Aspect Type* Conviction ): Stand in the Breach

(*Aspect Type* Conviction ): Respect the Chain of Command  
Major

(*Aspect Type* Complication): Haunted by the Past

(*Aspect Type* Free ): A Sense of Purpose in Strange Company

(*Aspect Type* Free ): Always Another War to be Fought

## Skills

*Great (+4):* One-Man Army (A)

*Good (+3):* Old Soldier

*Fair (+2):* The Devil's Wind (S), Resolve

*Average (+1):* Art, Endurance, Brawn

## Tier Benefits

## Power Tiers/Gifts

*Free Gift:* *Skilled:* +5 skill points

Base	Power	Adjusted
Refresh: 8	- Tiers: 7	- Gifts: 0 = Refresh: 1

## Stress

Type	Base	From Skills	From Equipment
<b>Health</b> <i>Armor:</i>	○ ○ ○	○ ● ●	● ● ●
<b>Composure</b> <i>Armor:</i>	○ ○ ○	○ ○ ●	● ● ●
<b>Reputation</b> <i>Armor:</i>	○ ○ ○	● ● ●	● ● ●

## Consequences

<i>P/M/S:</i>	<i>Trifling (-2 Stress)</i>
<i>Any</i>	
████████████████████████████████████████████████████████████████████████████████	
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<i>P/M/S:</i>	<i>Middling (-4 Stress)</i>
<i>Any</i>	
████████████████████████████████████████████████████████████████████████████████	
<i>P/M/S:</i>	<i>Grievous (-6 Stress)</i>
<i>Any</i>	

## Unique and Strange Skills

### One-Man Army

*Power Tier:* Ascendant (-4 Refresh)

Minions [Duplicates]

*Conviction (-2):* Stand in the Breach

*Minor Delay (-1):* Requires A Full Action to control duplicates

### The Devil's Wind

*Power Tier:* Superhuman (-2 Refresh)

Physical Force + Range x2 [3 zones] + Spray (+3), Strike + Range x2 [3 zones] + Spray (+3), Resist Damage

*Major Complication (-2):* Haunted by the Past

*Minor Snag (-1):* Can be used in a scene only if duplicates created by One-Man Army are present

*Minor Delay (-1):* Requires A Full Action

### Old Soldier

Shoot + Range [3 zones] (+1), Languages, Information, Networking, Inspire, Transport, Environment [Wilderness]

*Conviction (-2):* Respect the Chain of Command

### Minor Invulnerability [Physical] (-1 Refresh)

Only when mac Donald has already taken three Physical consequences

## The Strength of One's Convictions

Marked by his terrible experiences in India, Sergeant mac Donald has promised himself that he will never kill again. Given his character and his occupation, it isn't a promise he finds easy to keep.

The age is one of certainties—strong beliefs, loudly declared. Ideals are worn on the sleeve. Progress seems to be driving Britannia inexorably to greatness, proving that the popular beliefs of the day must be correct to be working so well. Modern perceptions of Victorian hypocrisy arise from the gulf between word and deed. Victorian attitudes towards sex seem repressed by modern standards—yet tens of thousands of prostitutes work legally on the streets of London. Is this hypocritical? The Victorians might say it is no more hypocritical than failing to achieve any ideal. A man's belief in the sanctity of marriage can remain strong even with weekly visits to an actress' apartments.

It is also a remarkably passionate age, and honorable people can disagree viciously, fight tooth and nail, and inspire disasters all in the name of their beliefs.

Each character in *The Kerberos Club* has one or more Conviction aspects. These define characters' strongest beliefs and assumptions. When they act in ways which confirm these or support them—especially when such actions aren't objectively sensible—it reinforces their sense of themselves.

Compels against these aspects start at two Fate Points instead of one. Likewise, refusing a compel on a Conviction aspect (in other words, acting against one's Convictions) costs two Fate Points. And if the player refuses, the GM can escalate the compel to three Fate Points—if accepted, the compel will reward three Fate Points, but if refused, it will cost the player just as many.

Presented with the need to destroy a vicious enemy, even to save innocent lives, Sergeant Williams will find himself sickened, hating himself just a little bit more. Mechanically, this manifests as having to spend two or three Fate Points to take that life.

However, if he stays his hand when killing would be the most expedient choice, he finds himself emboldened. Armed with another two or three Fate Points, he'll be that much more powerful in future scenes.

All the characters here have Conviction aspects, and they all function in this way during play.

merciless force of British ghosts or maddened soldiers who feared no death. And while Victoria's stigmata bled as her Empire bled, William mac Donald rode the hills until the Queen put a stop to the retaliation. Agents of the Kerberos Club sought the so-called "One Man Army" and helped him down from his madness, offered him a measure of peace and acceptance. The sergeant was among the first Strangers to receive popular coverage in the press, but that coverage faltered and stopped when his actions in India became better known. Now, only a few would recognize him on the streets of London.

**Personality:** Sgt. mac Donald is quiet, miserly with his words, only spending them when they'll do the most good. His carriage suggests a man used to being obeyed, but also one who understands how to take orders if he must. Practical. He's also clearly haunted, half his mind elsewhere much of the time. In a crisis, he seems to waken completely, organizing, delegating, and acting decisively. His speech is clipped, and carries a faint hint of his Scottish childhood, smoothed and made stranger by decades of foreign service and foreign tongues. He reads constantly, but never the newspapers. If he reads history, he shakes his head slowly at regular intervals. If it's poetry, he sometimes silently weeps without shame.

**POV:** "I never married. It never seemed opportune. Even when I had the rank and the affections of a girl—well, it just wasn't to be. The service occupied so much of my time, and the recruits we were getting then, greener than—ah, never mind that. After my troubles I thought life was over for me, and were I not fighting then what good was I? No husband and no father, for sure. Yet, I've found some purpose here in this strange company, and found there's wars to be fought that nobody on the

## White Man's Burden

Many citizens of the 19th-century European powers—especially England—feel at heart the sentiment that Kipling expressed in his famous poem. England is the light of culture and right thinking, the common wisdom goes, and those upon whom it shines should be grateful. The ugly realities of the colonial system failed to register for many—but then it was a distinctly unenlightened age with regards to many modern ideas of universal human value. Recall that by mid-century, one of the world powers, the United States, still held almost *four million* humans in unwilling servitude.

England sent thousands of its sons to other lands to man garrisons which supported local proxy governments, instruments of economic exploitation such as the East India Company. It was regarded as right and proper. This pervasive certainty of *rightness* justified many social ills.

For this reason, the Indian Rebellion of 1857—called then the Mutiny—came as serious shock to Britain. It stoked popular hysteria to unmatched heights.

Sentiments to the effect of “How dare those ungrateful savages!” prevailed in the press, even during the initial phase of suppression of the rebellion—before it turned into a truly horrific exercise in revenge to exceed any atrocity which precipitated it. Vitriolic writers regularly called for the wholesale extermination of the “Oriental race.”

Despite all this, the Empire learned something from the rebellion, and the Indian reorganization afterwards addressed some of the grievances which spawned the strife. In the world of the Kerberos Club, it also marked a turning point for Victoria Herself. As Her empire was torn so was Her flesh, and She bled while Her empire bled. Her rising divinity became undeniable, but it also saw Her character shift as well, becoming cooler, more distant, and in some ways inhuman and terrible.

Again, the Club provides something of a refuge from the racist, culturally-imperialistic outside world—but beyond its society the assumptions of the age sadly still rule.

street will ever hear of, blessed so they are in their ignorance. I still have some life in these old bones, and so I'll stand in the breach one more time.”

## What Can mac Donald Do?

Sgt. mac Donald's One-Man Army power is extremely flexible. The Duplicates trapping allows him to roll 3d6+1dF+4 against a target of Mediocre (+0) and summon a number of duplicates equal to the shifts he obtains. These duplicates are

treated as Average quality Minions controlled by the player.

Once the duplicates have been created, The Devil's Wind lets mac Donald unleash their fury upon his enemies. They can attack targets up to 3 zones away and defend mac Donald against physical attacks. Due to their sheer numbers, their attacks have Weapon 2 [Health]. Note that this doesn't mean actually controlling the duplicates—their presence is just a special effect that allows The Devil's Wind to be used.

Don't get hung up on the exact number of duplicates summoned. Imagine a countless swarm of duplicates pummeling mac Donald's foes into



submission or taking a bayonet thrust on his behalf. When one duplicate falls, two more takes his place.

The Devil's Wind is also extremely useful outside of combat. Apart from the Superhuman Tier physical strength of their combined numbers, anything you can imagine dozens of duplicates helping along can be accomplished simply by spending a Fate Point and invoking mac Donald's "One Man Army" aspect for effect. When they're no longer needed, the duplicate mac Donalds fade away, leaving one to carry on alone.

Sgt. mac Donald's duplicates also defend him, diving in front of deadly blows or switching places with him at the last moment. Indeed, which is the "real" Sergeant mac Donald is academic; in a sense they all are. If the "original" is killed, one of his many duplicates will do. This is reflected by his Minor Invulnerability to Physical attacks. As long as all of his consequence slots are filled he can defend with any skill in a physical conflict as if it were two Power Tiers higher. For example, in this circumstance, The Devil's Wind would be considered to be in the Godlike Tier instead of the Superhuman.

Sgt. mac Donald normally retains enough control over his duplicates to prevent them from harming friends or allies, or from killing his enemies—which is to say, each of the duplicates shares a loathing of slaughter. But the power always lies within him, mad, bloodthirsty, and eager for release. A successful compel of his "Haunted by the Past" aspect can open the gates, with tragic consequences.

## Pale Tom Teach: The Gutter Magus

Small, wan, and shabbily dressed, Pale Tom would find himself turned away from the front entrance of every home and establishment west of Wapping. It's just as he likes it. His power and influence could see him fashionably dressed. His intelligence could smooth his speech into a respectable regularity. But in truth, he loves his low roots, and revels in the somewhat exaggerated vulgarity of his appearance and manner. He could be any of London's innumerable homeless poor, wearing worn castoffs and eaten away by disease and starvation. But a careful examination shows eyes alight with mirth and wicked humor, and the set of his narrow shoulders betrays no hardship. His back is unbent, his step is light, and his smile comes quickly, though often with a cruel twist.

**Background:** Pale Tom lies constantly about his upbringing, embellishing and adopting the anecdotes of others as if they were his own, or fabricating from whole cloth great swathes of his life. In truth, his past is deliberately obscured by means occult and mundane, even from himself. Were he deep in his cups, and inclined to honesty, he'd admit knowing nothing of his own origins. Noting certain, anyhow. The ease with which he takes to his lower-class seeming suggests it's more than a guise, and his thin, pale physique hints at childhood malnutrition and ill health.

His reliable memories begin when his first occult revelation took him while he was sick in a Brainbridge Steet gutter. A dead and rotting pigeon sat up, shook off his vomit, and then roundly cursed him for being such an inconsiderate bastard as to be sick upon a fellow while he slept quite peace-



# The Kerberos Club



Character Pale Tom Teach

Player

## Aspects

*Archetype* (Magus): A Magus of the Lowest Sort

*Social Class* (Under): Lower Class and Proud of It

**Conviction:** Honor Among Thieves

(*Aspect Type* Obsession): Magic Shows the Way

(*Aspect Type* Free): Folk Charms and Trinkets

(*Aspect Type* Free): "Magic's everywhere, innit?"

(*Aspect Type* Free): Impenetrable Street Slang

(*Aspect Type* Free): Rivalry with Chelsea Magicians

## Skills

*Great (+4):* Street Rat, Occultism

*Good (+3):* Profane Sorcery (S), Stealth

*Fair (+2):* Hex and Jinx (E), Resolve

*Average (+1):* Athletics, Alertness, Fisticuffs

## Tier Benefits

## Power Tiers/Gifts

*Free Gift: Skilled:* +5 skill points

*Signature Aspect (-1 Refresh):* Magic Shows the Way (invoke once per scene without paying a Fate Point)

*Impact (-1 Refresh):* Hex and Jinx (when a Hex and Jinx roll obtains spin, declare a fragile aspect for free)

Base Refresh: 8 - Power Tiers: 3 - Gifts: 2 = Adjusted Refresh: 3

## Stress

Type	Base	From Skills	From Equipment
<b>Health</b> <i>Armor:</i>	○ ○ ○	● ● ●	● ● ●
<b>Composure</b> <i>Armor:</i>	○ ○ ○	○ ○ ●	● ● ●
<b>Reputation</b> <i>Armor:</i>	○ ○ ○	● ● ●	● ● ●

## Consequences

*P/M/S:* Trifling (-2 Stress)

*Any*

*P/M/S:* Middling (-4 Stress)

*Any*

*P/M/S:* Grievous (-6 Stress)

*Any*

## Unique and Strange Skills

### Hex and Jinx (6)

*Power Tier:* Extraordinary (-1 Refresh)

Shoot + Range [3 zones] (+1), Dodge

*Minor Snag (-1):* Requires folk charms

*Minor Snag (-1):* Can't directly cause harm; stress dealt must originate from the environment around the target

### Profane Sorcery (4)

*Power Tier:* Superhuman (-2 Refresh)

Variable [Scene] x3

*Profane (-2)*

*Obsession:* Magic Shows the Way

*Minor Delay (-1):*

Requires A Full Action

*Minor Snag (-1):* Can't use the same spell in more than one scene per day

*Major Snag (-2):* Every spell comes with a hitch appropriate to its nature

### Street Rat (4)

Environment [Urban], Information, Networking, Conversation, Convince, Guile

*Conviction:* Honor

Among Thieves

fully. This set the tone for all his mystical experiences. As he wandered London with third eye newly opened, he found the old town filthy with magic, foul with it. He saw ancient magic gone rancid in cellars and down old wells, cheap new magic like a whore's scent wafting on the airs, and unnatural creatures and Strangers lurking in all its dark corners.

Since his awakening he's nurtured a low-level magical rivalry against some of the faddish adepts residing in Chelsea. It seldom erupts into real violence, yet it remains fairly vicious. The conflict remains roughly balanced—Pale Tom's mobility and the speed of his magic against the ritualized but broadly more potent magics of the Chelseans.

**Personality:** Common as dirt, and proud of it. Pale Tom plays to his roots at every opportunity, lacing his speech with obscure slang and cant, keeping company of the lowest sort, wearing castoffs and rags. He enjoys using his presence to make the privileged uncomfortable, and with exaggerated courtesy and deference he can send theater-goers scattering, or men of business clutching their watches and purses. Beneath this there's a vein of pure, insolent defiance. He'll call a man in a carriage "Govnah" but will lace the word with so much subtle mockery that the rich man will leave feeling mocked and denigrated without knowing quite why. He has a soft spot for those fallen on hard times, but is fatalistic about the lot of the poor. Indeed, on some level he suspects his magical powers arise somehow from the friction between the social strata, the energies of injustice.

**POV:** "So I says to the abness, I says that what she charged me for the dollymop ought to be less the room and board I got to provide for all the fleas what moved from her to me and set up housekeeping. And I won't say nothing of the glim, neither, but bless the girl she did her best, and it truly were given at a price to suit even a Scots miser. You can give me a proper Ratcliffe judy over the finest Haymarket labybird any day, and thank you kindly."

## What Can Pale Tom Do?

What *can't* he do? Pale Tom Teach is a magician, but no wise old magus is he. His magic is as far from the ritualized formality of high sorcery as he is from the peerage. His lore was gathered from the lips of madwomen, goblins, cursed ghosts, old prostitutes, street children, and from half-burned books of profane arcana. His pockets are filled with the bric-a-brac of hedge magic—bits of chalk and string, chicken bones, bird seed, rusty keys, candle ends, and the dried fingers of hanged men.

He uses these in impromptu rituals that he invents with no small virtuosity, adding an obscene couplet and a rude gesture here and there. His sorcery would most certainly not be welcomed into the salons and coffee houses where the magical arts are enjoying something of a resurgence among the intellectual elites—who haven't yet realized, as their ancestors did before them, that ultimately magic serves only itself.

With a Full Action to work his ritual, Pale Tom's Profane Sorcery skill can be used to emulate any kind of power imaginable—with some modest limitations. Every scene, he can use each of its three Variable trappings to add a new trapping or Extra to it. And if that's not enough, he can invoke his Archetype aspect for effect to add a trapping for a single round.

For example, if he tosses the coins from a dead man's eyes at an enemy, causing him to suffer the agony of hanging, he could use two of the Variable trappings to give the skill the Shoot trapping, letting him inflict damage at range. If he were up against more than one foe, he could use the last Variable trapping to give Shoot the Spray Extra, enabling him to attack multiple enemies at a penalty of -1 to his roll per target.

Once cast, a spell remains active and usable for the remainder of the scene or sequence of action.

Before using his Profane Sorcery skill for the first time in a scene, Tom's player must set aside one Fate Point per Power Tier of the spell to be cast. Fate Points "invested" this way are returned to the player at the end of the scene. If the player ever invests Tom's last Fate Point, however, that Fate Point is lost as if spent, and isn't returned. Tom's player can choose to lower Profane Sorcery's Power Tier to Extraordinary or Mundane to save on Fate Points invested, but doing so fixes its Tier to the chosen level for the rest of the scene.

In general, if Tom just wants to attack or defend, he's better off using Hex and Jinx, which don't require investing Fate Points.

## TOM'S FAVORITE SPELLS

This all can feel a little complicated at first, so here are ten of Pale Tom Teach's favorite spells. But remember that he can't use the same spell in more than one scene in a day—a day being based on when he next gets a proper sleep.

### Blackbird Pie

Shoot + Unusual: Acts as a Block + Unusual: Harmful Block

*Ritual:* Whisper curses into a handful of seed. The attack is made by throwing the seed on the target. Another version of this spell, called "In the Pit Without a Terrier," calls rats: It has an identical mechanical effect and a similar ritual (using scraps of rancid bacon rind).

*Effects:* The target is swarmed by shiny black ravens that engulf him and peck mercilessly. This can be maintained every round as if it were a Block maneuver. If the target fails to break out of the block, he takes Health stress equal to his margin of failure. However, so horrifying is this whole affair that Pale Tom takes Composure stress equal to the Health stress initially dealt to the target.

## Skills for the Kerberan

In order to give you the tools you need to make the character you want, *The Kerberos Club (FATE Edition)* offers three kinds of skills: Common, Unique, and Strange.

**Common Skills:** These are taken from a fixed list of skills, the majority of which should be familiar to you if you've played a *FATE* game before. Their names may be slightly different, the better to evoke the setting's flavor, but don't let that throw you. Examples include Athletics, Fisticuffs, Presence, and Occultism. Any character can acquire any of these skills, given the time and opportunity, and their purpose and functions are the same no matter who uses them.

**Unique Skills:** These are skills within the realm of relatively normal human ability that represent a character's background, lifestyle, training, occupation, or the like. The player assembles the skill using trappings as building blocks. Thus, every Unique skill is different, as the name implies. The more trappings a Unique skill has, the more skill points it costs. Regardless, all of those trappings must fit under the umbrella of the skill's themes. For example, a Unique skill called Whitechapel Pickpocket could be built around sneaking, hiding, and sleight of hand—or it might instead involve catching rumors, knowing the Whitechapel area and its denizens, and the monetary fruits of the thief's labors. It's up to you, the player.

**Strange Skills:** Like Unique skills, these are player-defined using trappings, but represent supernatural abilities—the "Strangeness," as it's called in *The Kerberos Club*. Strange skills are the realm of superpowers, from low-level telepathy that sometimes enables you to read minds to Earth-shattering strength that lets you toss Big Ben like a caber. This is where the soul of most Kerberos Club characters lies.

## The Lure of the Occult

In a world increasingly awash in the Strange, there are safer uncanny powers than magic, but none as versatile, none as *applicable*. There's nothing a creative and driven magus can't do, and therein lies part of magic's danger—the lure of power.

Magic has a way of eclipsing everything else in an adept's life. Most are driven to take on the mantle of power by some other conviction—political influence, revenge, even good works. But inexorably, magic becomes the only thing the magus cares about.

History has shown again and again that magi make poor kings. When the lure of the magic itself replaces the desire for kingship, the position is abused to serve the acquisition of more mystical influence. In recent history this can be seen clearly in the Confederate States after British intervention caused the American Civil War to end in a broken union and uneasy armistice. While the North embraced industry and the new science, the South's aristocracy gravitated towards the occult. By the 1870s it had begun to rot from within, its elite class fallen into obscene worship, mass human sacrifice, and pacts with creatures who'd not darkened the world since the ancient epochs of the young Earth. It would be another thirty-one years before the Great Revolt threw down this corruption and cauterized the South's septic wounds. The Broken Union was finally healed in 1902, but the scars would show for a century or more.

As with society, so with the individual. Pale Tom's Archetype turns one of his Conviction aspects relating to magic into an Obsession. Any time Pale Tom's player makes a roll and invokes his Obsession aspect (*"Magic Shows the Way"*), he may elect to voluntarily take any amount of Composure stress and add an equal bonus to his roll. Obviously, this can only go so far before Pale Tom starts taking consequences, but in the meantime it's good in a pinch—if you're obsessed.

## Fetch and Carry

Physical Force

*Ritual:* Drink from a flask of penny gin mixed with the sweat off a longshoreman's back.

*Effects:* Tom becomes preternaturally strong for the spell's duration, with all the usual benefits and potencies. For example, if cast as a Superhuman Tier spell, Tom's hand-to-hand attacks gain Weapon 2 [Health]. For the duration of the spell, Tom gains an aspect of *"Don't Know My Own Strength."*

## Friends to Meat and Bone

Treatment [Physical]

*Ritual:* Place honey and live maggots on wounded flesh or broken bones, whispering encouragement.

*Effects:* The Profane Sorcery skill can be used to treat and remove a Middling or Grievous Physical consequence. If this roll fails, Tom gains a Trifling Mental consequence.

## Jingling Pogue

Wealth

*Ritual:* Gather a purse full of pebbles or small loose trash.

*Effects:* Transforms the rocks and bric-a-brac into utterly convincing legal currency, but only temporarily. It's long enough to make some fast purchases and then disappear into the crowd. The danger of this spell is that it encourages Tom to keep spending and spending—and attracting a supernaturally unusual amount of unwanted attention from his less-than-savory peers on the street.

## Just a Harmless Drunk

Disguise + Unusual: Illusion + Spray

*Ritual:* Turn coat inside out.

*Effects:* Tom—and anyone he chooses to affect, by touch, as long as they stay within 30 feet of him—blends into the scenery, becoming as unremarkable as a lamppost or a drunk passed out in an alley. It works in any setting, so long as the

disguised character makes at least a minimal effort to mime the part. Once activated, this power lasts for the whole scene. While it's active it is rolled only to resist attempts to notice him or recognize him as special. This roll is automatic and a free action; Tom need not declare it. This only works in the sort of urban environment Tom normally calls home.

## Quiet Peach

Examine + Psychic + Unusual: Difficult to detect

*Ritual:* Buy or offer the target a drink to put him at ease.

*Effects:* Read the surface thoughts of the target. Make a Profane Sorcery roll vs. the target's Resolve. On a success, the target's mind can be read. The total effort of the roll is the difficulty for the target to detect the mental intrusion. With careful questioning, Tom can extract secrets and confessions and leave his targets unaware that they peached. However, this is quite taxing, and inflicts Composure stress on Tom equal to his margin of success.

## The Bruiser's Knuckle Bruised

Resist Damage + Unusual: Counterattack

*Ritual:* Rub face and hands (or all exposed skin) with finely ground brick dust.

*Effects:* Tom's body becomes as unyielding as a brick wall, letting him use Profane Sorcery to defend against physical attacks. If this defense roll succeeds against a bare-handed melee attack, the attacker takes Health stress equal to Tom's margin of success. For the duration of the scene, however, Tom gains an aspect of *"The Agility of a Brick Wall."*

## Screever's Best Work

Disguise + Unusual: Illusion

*Ritual:* Carefully tear a newspaper into squares and tuck them under your coat.

*Effects:* Hand someone a square of torn-up newspaper and they perceive it as whatever document you wish. The difficulty to see it for what it actually is, should they have reason to become suspicious of the document, is equal to the Profane Sorcery roll made to produce it. The change is illusory, and any serious disruption of Tom's concentration causes the document to be revealed as false.

## Screwfingers

Security + Unusual: No proper equipment required

*Ritual:* Place a small, rusty key in your mouth.

*Effects:* A very simple spell for the feloniously inclined. Mime opening the lock and click your tongue (no mean trick with a key in your mouth), and make a skill roll. If it succeeds, the lock opens regardless of its complexity. If it fails, Tom inadvertently swallows the key.

## Whore-Wooing Charm

Conversation, Convince

*Ritual:* Pin a poesy in a button hole.

*Effects:* Assuming this is cast as an Extraordinary or Superhuman Tier spell, Tom becomes supernaturally charming for the rest of the scene. However, it works only on the lower classes, and only on women. Tom's name for the spell is both unfortunate and ironic.

# Jonus Earl Underbridge, Esq.: Troll About Town

To mortal eyes, Mr. Underbridge is a large, red-haired, florid, loquacious man with a broad Northern accent. His hands are huge, like shovels, and his voice booming whether in laughter or in fury, for he's also a man of passion scaled to his large size. Nobody would call him handsome, but he's certainly memorable. He's always dressed in the day's fashions, and remains preoccupied with the cut of his waistcoats, his trousers, the length of his watch chain, the state of his hair. Some might say unnaturally preoccupied. Some others might say preternaturally occupied—for John Earl Underbridge is in fact a troll of Northern Faerie, and his obsession with human fashion takes him with the same force as all faerie compulsions and drives. To uncanny eyes, Mr. Underbridge is every inch the old troll: hulking, long-armed, with a huge grinning head. His complexion could be called bilious, and his fearsome looks suggest a bellicose temperament.

**Background:** In his youth he haunted bridges, collecting tolls from travelers (and eating some of them), terrorizing villages, and battling Christian knights as was the tradition of the day. As he grew older, larger and more powerful, his tempers cooled somewhat, and he tried his hands at faerie politics, and quite badly ruled the dingy Earldom of Sutterfork for a few human lifetimes. He was overthrown by one of the usual heroes, and resigned himself to the loss of his lands. He took his accumulated treasure—for a troll is a miserly creature by nature—and struck out with the goal to change his life, in a mode Mr. Dickens might have written of.

In truth, like many of the modern faerie, Mr. Underbridge was infected with Dickens' take on the self-made man, and was made curious by his reading of human serialized literature. So he cloaked himself in a faerie glamour and dressed himself as a newly-wealthy human. He's fallen into the company of humans who often see through his guises, but they seem not to mind. When he's not occupied looking for an orphan or a poverty-stricken child to better with his fortune and take on as an heir, he adventures with the Kerberos Club.

**Personality:** Large, loud, and constantly talking. Mr. Underbridge indulges liberally in every vocal tick the upper-crust speakers of the English language have devised. "I say!" "Well, old man!" "Good show!" He apes the newly rich, adopting expensive clothing in which nobody of real breeding would be seen. His manners are exaggerated and overblown. But this human guise is a fiction created by the cunning and low troll within, a troll raised up on human bones and well instructed by ages of experience in the giving of pain and terror. He may seem foolish and vulgar, but he's really a frightening and powerful monster. "But really, who isn't, what?"

**POV:** "I say, old man! What? Jolly good show! Do I have the words right? Do I have the right *phrasing*? Perhaps I'm not speaking the Queen's English clearly and loudly enough, is that the problem? Because, oh my little chickadees, I can't see my way clear to a reason why the likes of you would still be standing there when I've jolly well *explained* me need to make passage toot sweet into yon theater, ticket or not. And if you're still standing there in ten heartbeats, then, my good man, I'll have to start using me *old* words what I learnt from me dear old mum down under the barrow'n, whur I been born with all the old bones and the wee manskulls, the lights twinklin' in their eyeholes, eh, gravy? Eh, my little chicky chick?"



# The Kerberos Club



Character **Jonus Earl Underbridge, Esq.**

Player

## Aspects

*Archetype* (Faerie): Self-Made Troll  
The Esteemed Earl of

*Social Class* (Upper): Underbridge  
The Dashing Man About Town is the Best Thing to Be

**Conviction:** The Dashing Man About Town is the Best Thing to Be

*(Aspect Type Conviction)*: The *Old Ways Do Have Their Charms*

*(Aspect Type Free)*: Cunningly Deceptive and Perceptive

*(Aspect Type Free)*: "I say! Good show, old chap!"

*(Aspect Type Free)*: Profoundly Large and Memorable

*(Aspect Type Free)*: Clearly a Well-To-Do Englishman Going About His Business (or: Giant Horrifying Troll)

## Skills

**Great (+4):** Troll (S)

**Good (+3):** Faerie Glamour (E), Man About Town

**Fair (+2):** Hideous Visage (E), Fisticuffs (E)

**Average (+1):** Art, Empathy, Bureaucracy

## Tier Benefits

Weapon 2 [Health]	Armor 1	Defend normally
Weapon 1 [Reputation]	[Reputation]	when surprised (if you can smell them coming)
Armor 2 [Health]	+1 Trifling Physical consequence	

## Power Tiers/Gifts

**Free Gift:** *Skilled x3*: +15 skill points

Base Refresh:	8	Power Tiers:	4	Gifts:	2	=	Adjusted Refresh:	2
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## Stress

Type	Base	From Skills	From Equipment
<b>Health</b> <i>Armor:</i>	○ ○ ○	○ ○ ○	● ● ●
<b>Composure</b> <i>Armor:</i>	○ ○ ○	● ● ●	● ● ●
<b>Reputation</b> <i>Armor:</i>	○ ○ ○	● ● ●	● ● ●

## Consequences

<i>P/M/S:</i>	<i>Trifling (-2 Stress)</i>
<i>Any</i>	
<b>P</b>	
<i>P/M/S:</i>	<i>Middling (-4 Stress)</i>
<i>Any</i>	
<i>P/M/S:</i>	<i>Grievous (-6 Stress)</i>
<i>Any</i>	

## Unique and Strange Skills

### Troll (11)

**Power Tier:** Superhuman (-2 Refresh)

Resist Damage, Stress Capacity [Health], Physical Force, Notice, Willpower

**Conviction:** The *Old Ways Do Have Their Charms*

**Minor Snag:** Notice trapping restricted to olfactory sense

**Minor Complication:** Profoundly Large and Memorable

### Faerie Glamour (10)

**Power Tier:** Extraordinary (-1 Refresh)

Menace + Range [1 zone] + Unusual: Deals Physical consequences (+2), Parry + Unusual: Illusion (+1), Disguise + Range [1 zone] + **Unusual:** Illusion (+2)

**Minor Snag:** Doesn't work against other Fae

**Minor Snag:** Illusions instantly dispelled by the touch of iron

### Man About Town (8)

**Power Tier:** Extraordinary (-1 Refresh)

Information, Networking, Wealth, Influence, Esteem, Conversation

### Hideous Visage (0)

**Power Tier:** Extraordinary (-1 Refresh)

Menace + Spray (+1)

**Minor Transform:** Requires a Full Action; replace "Clearly a Well-To-Do Englishman Going About His Business" with "Giant Horrifying Troll"

**Minor Snag:** Can't use this skill while disguised with Faerie Glamour

**Minor Weakness [Physical] (+1 Refresh):** Iron



## Knowing One's Place

Victoria's Britain is a distinctly classist society, with manners and mores which reinforce its stratification. Those of greater means, more reputable family, position, or birthright aren't simply more powerful or influential, but are generally assumed to be better—more fundamentally valuable. Every strata of society has its standards, and for all but those on the very bottom there are clear examples of how one might fall still farther from grace.

Indeed, the idea of privilege and position representing divine favor (or inherently superior character) is subtle and pervasive. If God rewards one's faithfulness with Earthly treasures, then those with such treasures must be favored by God. Few openly say as much, but that sense of *rightness*, that some people were just born different, with a different capacity to be powerful, is almost universal. In a strange paradox, the culture lionizes those who rise above their birth and do great things—yet upwards mobility is very much the exception, and discouraged even by ones peers. Don't put on airs, don't get above your station, know your place.

These hierarchies are mirrored even among the serving staffs of fine homes. The strict social order

among those in service, with each position keeping its jealously-guarded duties and privileges, reflects life “above stairs.”

A Victorian born to a given socioeconomic class can expect to remain there—and indeed, is encouraged to do so. For the lower classes, eking out bare survival usually occupies so much time and effort as to make self-improvement an unattainable luxury. In the widening ranks of the middle and upper middle classes, however, the dream of becoming the self-improved man of influence is prevalent. The economic changes which reshape Britain during the middle decades widen this middle class, and more and more the culture comes to cater to middle-class values, prejudices, and assumptions. Stepping out of one's place can be met with anger and disbelief. Merely addressing one's “betters” outside acceptable contexts can be shocking.

However, as members of the Kerberos Club, your characters need not kowtow to these pressures. Indeed, even joining the Club is an act of deviance from social norms, an act of transgression against all things right and decent.

No one puts a Kerberan in her place, unless it serves her interests to allow it.

## What Can Mr. Underbridge Do?

Mr. Underbridge is a huge, lumpy, monstrous bastard under his thin illusory guise. To penetrate his disguise, one must have reason to suspect it, and then succeed in an opposed roll vs. his Faerie Glamour skill.

Mr. Underbridge can drop this disguise at any time, of course, and when he needs to put the frighteners into someone, he'll do it—but rarely when others could see. The fashionable man simply does not turn into a giant monster in mixed company, after all. His horrible true appearance forces him to replace his aspect of “Clearly a Well-To-Do Englishman Going About His Business” with “Giant Horrifying Troll” for as long as his illusory disguise is

down.

His uncanny sense of smell is with him regardless of his appearance. Its Superhuman Tier performance lets him judge whether someone had recently vacated a room and he can track a wounded man through a bog. But if struck about the head, his remarkable sense of smell fails him (an excellent Trifling Physical consequence), and especially potent smells can mask each other or overwhelm his nose (a compel of his Archetype aspect, “Self-Made Troll”).

Also regardless of his appearance, his long experience dealing pain and death makes him almost totally inured to most mental trauma, reflected by the Willpower trapping in his Troll skill.

Mr. Underbridge is really an enormous, eight-foot troll weighing as much as a bear. His size and thick trollish hide make him extremely tough and hard to injure. He can withstand an additional Trifling Physical consequence and has Armor 2 [Health]. Finally, Mr. Underbridge’s phenomenal, supernatural strength allows him to lift 16 tons on average and gives his bare-handed attacks Weapon 2 [Health]. Despite his often jovial human disguise, Mr. Underbridge is a monster.

But what of Mr. Underbridge’s faerie nature? Like all Fae, he is bound by three restrictions listed in his Archetype: the Law of Oath, the Law of Form, and the Law of Self. These define the limitations of the faerie.

Oathbound means if Mr. Underbridge swears a thing, he’ll suffer supernatural consequences if he fails to uphold his oath. Simply swearing the oath

means gaining a new aspect that’s treated as if it were a Conviction—that is, compels against it start at two Fate Points instead of one. Instead of paying Fate Points to refuse, however, Mr Underbridge can choose to take a Middling Physical consequence. This consequence can be removed only by taking significant steps toward resolving the oath. This is the reason the faerie are, as a race, so cagey, clever and untrustworthy. They are rarely willing to be so bound.

The Law of Form reflects how a faerie’s body is a figment of his own imagination. When making a concession in a Physical conflict, the Faerie may opt to fade away into intangibility, losing the capacity to interact with the physical world in any way until the next moonrise or until one of his aspects is compelled, whichever comes first.

The Law of Self means Mr. Underbridge’s identity defines his physicality. If he refuses a compel on any of his Conviction aspects, he suffers physically. For each Fate Point spent to refuse the compel, he suffers a point of Health stress.

As a creature of Faerie, Mr. Underbridge shares a weakness common to all his kind. The illusions created by his Faerie Glamour, including the disguise that conceals his true nature, are instantly dispelled by the mere touch of iron. Moreover, if Mr. Underbridge is attacked by an iron weapon, his defense is treated as if it were two Power Tiers lower than it normally is. For example, when using his Troll skill to defend against a spear with an iron head, it’ll be Mundane instead of Superhuman—plus he’ll lose his Armor 2 [Health] against the attack.

## Strange Tides Rise

If you're a member of the Kerberos Club, Mr. Underbridge isn't the strangest thing you've ever seen. He likely isn't even the strangest thing you've seen today.

As the century wears on, the Strange—the weird, the unnatural, the unsettling, the enchanted, the superhuman—grows bolder and begins first to creep from the shadows, and then to revel in the light.

During the first decades of the 19th century the Strange is mostly hidden, the old societies keeping their secrets, the occult orders guarding their influence, and the monsters and uniquely talented folk keeping to themselves. During this era the Kerberos Club meddles, investigates, and preserves the public's ignorance of things unnatural. Their ignorance is a comfort, and the Club guards it.

But the tide rises, and by the middle decades of the Century, no amount of skulduggery can keep the reality of the superhuman hidden. Men fly openly across the skies and build impossible wonders. Yet the public is still waking to this knowledge, and these things remain somewhat sensational.

By the end of the century, when the Queen's own divinity is fully bloomed and England is transformed by Strangeness, the public grows almost blasé about the wonders all about them. The ghosts of dead Atlanteans haunt the Thames, the skies are plied by vast aershops, and wealthy lords invite friends to their Scottish estates for shooting parties—the quarry being feathered serpents late of the Brazilian empire. The Club's role changes too, from the guardians of public ignorance to the guardians of the Empire itself, putting themselves between the citizenry and the worst of the unhuman.

The Club evolves from secretive and mysterious society to an openly Strange association of dubious heroes. It becomes almost a self-parody at the end of the century, its members adopting theatrical costumes and fighting evil with colorful pseudonyms. The Club changes from keeping its secrets with silence to keeping its secrets with noise, creating so many lies and absurd displays of their oddity that the truth is lost in the haze.

Secret society, then refuge for the Strange, then overt superhero team.

## The Fine Line Between Comedy and Tragedy

A vein of absurdity runs through the world of the Kerberos Club, with its talking apes, trolls in fancy togs and mechanical menservants with goblin-assembled micro-Babbage analog brains. But within the setting, it's all played straight. Each bizarre thing is an element of the world that the populace of the world accepts as they are able.

One of the major themes at play is how people deal with runaway change, with progress run mad. What if superhuman minds worked to change the world? What if creatures from the elder epochs of the Earth sought to wipe man out? How would these things affect civilization?

The flipside of this is the alienation that the superhuman faces in ordinary society. Strangers might become famous because of their powers, but they'll never be safe, never be entirely welcome around the dinner table. Never quite be the right sort.

# The Kerberos Club

## (FATE Edition)



Play the Heroes and Villains of a Strange Century!

... Doctor Archibald Monroe, the erudite chemist and physician-chimpanzee.

... “Stony” Joe Smithson, the honest London boxer, transformed into living rock.

... Maeve O’Connel, Queen of the Mudlarks, the eternal child touched by Faerie.

... The Lady Mirabel, who by darkness defends Whitechapel as the terrifying Night Hag.

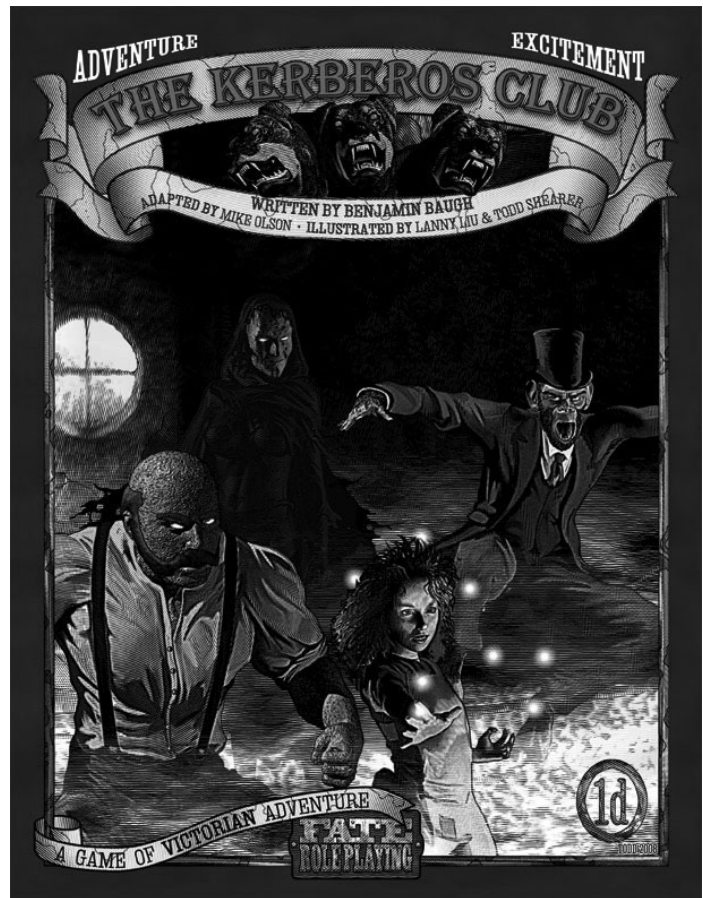
When the victims and enthusiasts of magic and bizarre science meet in an infamous club for “the Strange,” thrilling action is sure to follow!

*The Kerberos Club (FATE Edition)* is a *FATE* role playing game of superheroic action and intrigue in Victorian London. It includes a treatment of Victorian society in its every particular, especially the incredible and sometimes awful changes that “the Strangeness” comes to wreak upon Queen and Country alike.

*The Kerberos Club (FATE Edition)* gives players every tool they need to create new heroes and villains in a world that is at the same time familiar and alien—a world made more of both by the Strangeness that grips it and the dangers that threaten it.

There is, after all, every good reason for the club’s motto: “*Malum Necessarium.*”

*The Kerberos Club (FATE Edition)* is written by multiple *Ennie Award* nominee Benjamin Baugh and adapted for the *FATE* system by Mike Olson, with art by Lanny Liu and Todd Shearer and page design by Fred Hicks, Jessica Hopkins and Shane Ivey. Paperback, 376 pages, \$39.99.



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