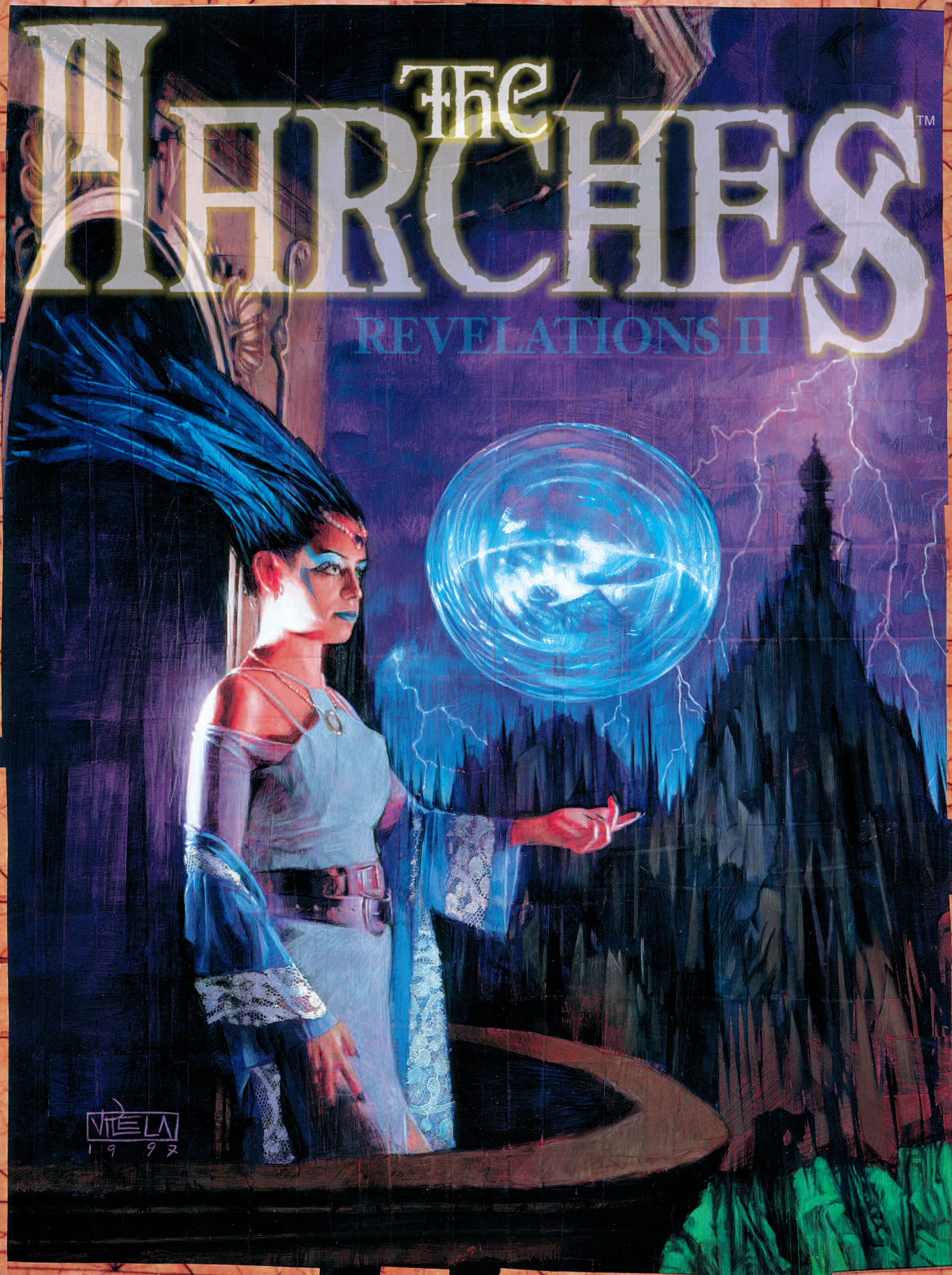


IN NOMINE™

III THE WERCEES™

REVELATIONS II



NTELA
1992

STEVE JACKSON GAMES

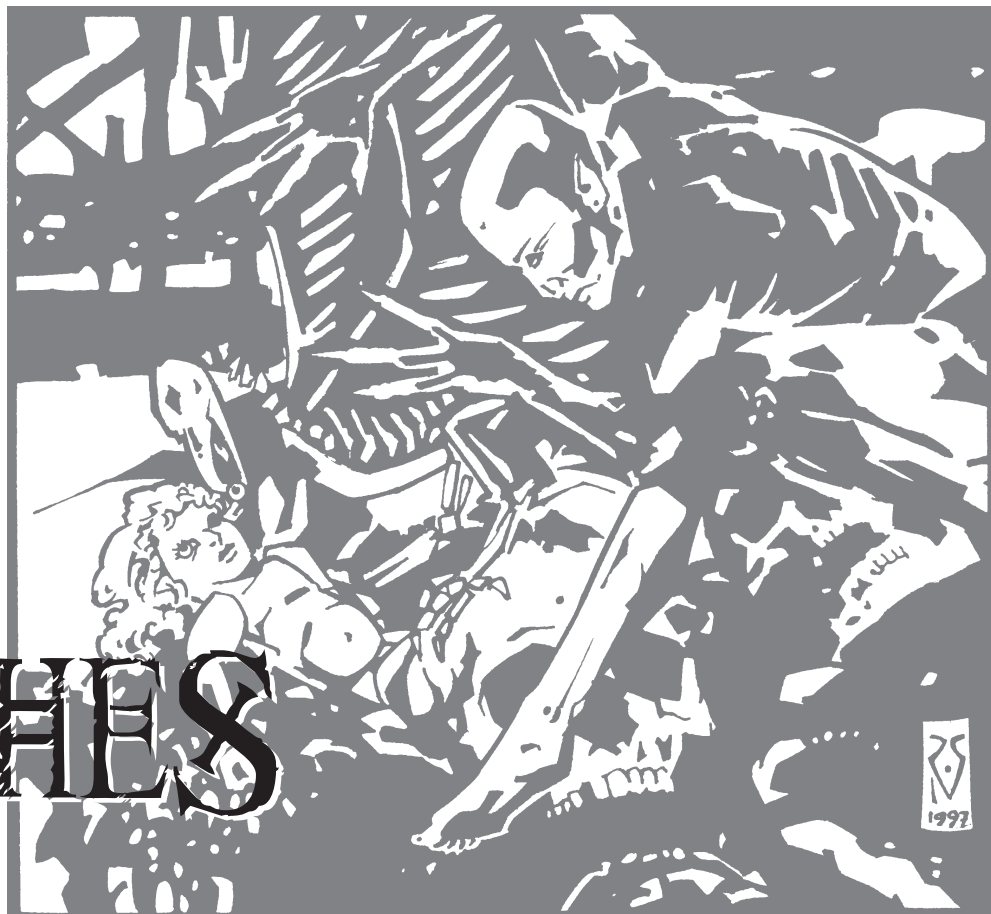
IN NOMINE REVELATIONS II, THE WERCEES

STEVE JACKSON GAMES

IN NOMINE

The MARCHES

Revelations II



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RECKONING

Ponder now by thyself, how great fruit of wickedness the grain of evil seed hath brought forth. And when the ears shall be cut down, which are without number; how great a floor shall they fill? Then I answered and said, How, and when shall these things come to pass? wherefore are our years few and evil? And he answered me, saying, Do not thou hasten above the most Highest: for thy haste is in vain to be above him, for thou hast much exceeded. Did not the souls also of the righteous ask question of these things in their chambers, saying, How long shall I hope on this fashion? When cometh the fruit of the floor of our reward? And unto these things Uriel the archangel gave them answer, and said, Even when the number of seeds is filled in you: for he hath weighed the world in the balance.

— Second Book of Esdras 4:31–36

Where is Uriel the angel, who came unto me at the first? For he hath caused me to fall into many trances, and mine end is turned into corruption, and my prayer to rebuke.

— Second Book of Esdras 10:28

And for many years Uriel the Archangel of Purity had visited the sons of Man and had borne them tidings of the Lord. And also did he seek out corruption and destroy that which was abominable in the eyes of the Lord.

But it came to pass that Uriel visited a great holocaust among all those creatures not of man and not born in the Genesis, but who came after.

And he slew the unicorn, and the dragon, and the giants who were descended from the Grigori, and he slew the mer-creatures, and even the great beasts who dwelled in the deep. He slew the eagle-headed gryphon, and he slew the gorgon and the hydra and the chimera, for he said that they were all terrible beasts, harmful to the sons of Man.

And with his terrible swift sword he slew also the faeries who lived in the forests and the streams, in the mountains and the lakes, and even in the deserts, and he sent his angels out among mankind to hunt and kill the last faeries, who dwelled among men.

And many Archangels were wroth with him, and there were angels who opposed the angels who served Uriel, and there was great fury in Heaven, and great disturbance in the Symphony, until at last the Seraphim Council summoned Uriel and all other Archangels to their Council Spires.



Dominic presided over the Seraphim Council, but he said nothing, so Uriel stood before the Council and said, “Who speaketh against me?”

And Archangel Jordi said “I do,” with a great roar, for his voice was the voice of a thousand lions, and the scream of a thousand eagles and the hissing of a thousand serpents, and he said, “Thou hast slain the unicorn and the dragon and the gryphon, and they were all creatures precious to me, and thou hast slain them to the last!”

And Uriel said, “Thou hast forgotten that God gave Man dominion over the animals, even the wisest of the animals. He made the dragons, verily, they and their ilk, and He made them mortal that they might die when their time was over. They consorted with Evil, and were slain to the last, and thou shouldst rejoice in that cleansing.”

So proud Uriel stood before his peers and said, “Who else speaketh against me?”

And Blandine said, “I do,” and her voice was quiet, but it made the other Archangels tremble, for never before had the Archangel of Dreams been so angry. Even Archangel David, who was as stone and could be moved by no force, stepped aside for Blandine. And Michael, who bethought himself that Uriel had gone too far, but would not say so, would not meet her eyes. And even Dominic was silent as Blandine spoke.

“You invaded my Marches, and slew all the creatures of myth,” she said to Uriel. “In Your name, your Malakim stormed the dreaming and killed my creations. You have

left vast stretches of my Marches empty, as from a great holocaust. You have violated my Word as Beleth has never done. Would that you be cast down to Hell, for you have done an evil thing.”

And great was Blandine’s condemnation, and the Seraphim and Archangels stirred, for none had ever heard one Archangel damn another so.

But Uriel stood proud and held his sword aloft and said, “With this sword I will destroy all things that are not of God, and if thou permittest creations of Man, and Ethereal spirits, and dreams that become real, to live and thrive in thy Marches, I will slay them.”

And Blandine trembled and wept, and the other Archangels were much disturbed, for they thought Uriel was mad.

But Dominic would not pronounce judgment upon him. The Seraphim said, “Let there be a vote.”

And Yves, whom all others looked to, was heavy-hearted, for he knew the vote might cause a rift in Heaven that would never heal. He looked to his left, where Gabriel stood, and Gabriel’s eyes were fire. Gabriel had not been to Heaven since the last such gathering had driven her out, and whether Gabriel felt sympathy or disdain for Uriel, even Yves did not know.

And Yves looked to his right, where Uriel’s most loyal follower stood, Laurence, the Angel of Swords. And Laurence commanded Uriel’s legions of Malakim, and if Uriel were censured, Yves saw that Laurence might even be moved to lead his host against the Council.

But before the first angel of the Council could cast his vote, a Presence filled the Spires, and all the Seraphim and Archangels, even Uriel, turned their eyes away.

And a voice said, “Uriel, come with Me.”

And Uriel was gone, for he had been called to a higher Heaven known to but a few.

“Yes, yes, I know about this,” Baal said, closing the enormous book. “The Great Tyrant intervened directly, as He did when Michael was charged with heresy a thousand years earlier.”

Baal spoke bitterly, even after all this time. In truth, he would have been disappointed if Archangel Michael had been stripped of his power, for Michael was one of the few enemies Baal respected, and he looked forward to slaying the Archangel of War himself, on the day of Armageddon. But he also found it ironic that after

Lucifer’s revolt, God dealt with subsequent rebellious angels with a much lighter touch, exonerating or recalling them, rather than banishing them. It offended Baal’s sense of justice that he and his kind must dwell in Hell while others were allowed to remain in Heaven for crimes no less than his.

Kronos, Prince of Fate, smiled. “Michael was Heaven’s finest warrior, and Uriel was their brightest, the first of the Malakim and the one who made them pure. God needed Michael and Uriel.”

The Prince of the War narrowed his eyes. The implication stung. This was why he did not like Kronos, though he often needed the Prince of Fate’s insight. “But this doesn’t answer my question: does Uriel’s Word still protect the Malakim?”

Kronos leaned on his cane. “You know that most of Uriel’s Servitors realigned themselves with Laurence, when he was given command of Heaven’s armies. A few of them joined Michael or Dominic instead . . . but a small number could not countenance the exile of their master, and became Outcasts.”

Baal nodded. “The Tsayadim. Uriel’s hunters. They think they’re still serving the Archangel of Purity. Now they nip at Beleth’s flanks in the Marches, hunting rogue spirits and forgotten gods.”

Kronos chuckled dryly, without humor. “For over twelve hundred years they’ve continued their lonely crusade, with no support from their Superior, no protection

from anyone. Celestials on both sides have abandoned their purpose under far less duress. Yet the Angels of Purity still hunt all that is dissonant in the Symphony.”

Baal waved his hand impatiently. “What is your point? They’re as stubborn and fanatical as their master.”

Kronos shook his head. “Yes. But sheer stubbornness doesn’t protect angels from Falling . . . often the reverse. Yet in the twelve centuries since

Uriel withdrew from our sight, the Tsayadim have continued to serve his Word, even in self-imposed exile. If the Word of Purity had truly been abandoned, at least *one* of them should have Fallen by now. But *no* Angel of Purity ever has.” Kronos gnashed his teeth in frustration, as if he regarded this as a personal failing, and left Baal to brood over their common dilemma.



SUPERIORS



6

SUPERIORS

1967
DIPZ

BLANDINE

ARCHANGEL OF DREAMS

HISTORY

Millennia ago, when the universe was still in its infancy, Blandine and Beleth loved one another. Among the first angels made by God, they were young and full of wonder and innocence – and one of the earliest triumphs of God.

God loved his creations, but Blandine and Beleth were the first of his creations to love one another. The Host followed suit, exploring their feelings for one another, for God and for the humans below on the young Earth. It was a good time to be alive.

Then Lucifer led the rebellion that led to the Fall, taking a third of the angels of heaven and convincing them that he was right and God was wrong . . . that angels were too fine a thing, too *glorious* a thing, to be mere instruments of a greater symphony, servile to God while the humans were permitted to find their own path in their brief lives. Lucifer was beautiful, charismatic and used his own logic like sweet bait on those he wanted on his side. It deeply satisfied his sense of irony to sever Beleth and Blandine, the two angels who had in many ways come to symbolize the beauty of selfless devotion among the creations of God. And furthermore, it served the ends of his long-term goal . . . the taking of the Symphony for himself.

Beleth was, in those days, the angel of Fear, working in tandem with Blandine's word of Dream . . . They complemented each other, using mankind's own aspirations and apprehensions to mold great minds of great men, helping the humans advance. It seemed that their work – their very existence – was a single thing with two facets.

At first, Blandine didn't even suspect Lucifer; no one did. When Lucifer and his followers would gather in the Groves, Blandine observed from a distance. Nothing at first seemed wrong, and Lucifer seemed to be nothing other than a kind of fact-advocate among angels. Since he was the Lightbringer, and favored by God, no harm could come from a little examination of the truth . . .

Beleth received an invitation, to come and listen, to see what Truths she could find in what he was saying in the Groves. Lucifer asked her himself, and he was every bit the dashing radical, the passionate philosopher. Beleth accepted.



Blandine had always been both more aggressive and optimistic than Beleth, as suited her Word. Beleth was much more fragile, less secure . . . her mastery of the concept of Fear was anything but an abstract one. She knew fear, herself. The two complemented each other, giving to one another what the other lacked. Blandine lacked any sense of the possibility of failure. Beleth needed reminding of the possibility of success. Lucifer knew this, and used it.

The Lightbringer pried deep into Beleth's insecurities . . . "Your own fear," Lucifer explained, "stems from wielding your Word incorrectly." Beleth became convinced that her approach to her Word was too soft, too giving . . . too influenced by Blandine. Blandine, explained Lucifer, *envied* her, which is why ultimately the humans that both of them touched *overcame* their fears, and achieved their dreams. Over a short period of time, Lucifer inspired hatred in Beleth, hatred for humans, and resentment of Blandine.

Blandine tried, desperately, to convince Beleth that Lucifer was manipulating her, but every word she spoke could be interpreted as jealousy, and it was. By the time Blandine approached other angels about the problem, the Rebellion was beginning, and Beleth stole away into the crowds of dissenting angels, out of reach, at the side of Lucifer.

Heavenly time has a lot more to do with the *nature* of events than with linear measures of their duration. A hundred years can see the rise of a great nation of humans, and pass like a lazy afternoon in Heaven. By the same token, the indivisible instant between the life and death of an ordinary man can be a century of mourning to the entire Host. Time is strange, to an angel.

The Fall was millennia ago, but Blandine feels the pain and frustration of her loss as if it had happened this morning. Now, Beleth's dark tower of Nightmare remains visible across the Marches, a constant reminder of Lucifer's theft – and the servants of Beleth and Blandine fight a quiet, bitter war.



PERSONALITY AND OUTLOOK

Those who work with Blandine rarely deal with her directly; she keeps to herself, engrossed in the unfathomable complexities of the dreams and hopes of all humanity. Most first impressions of Blandine peg her as well-versed in her own powers (she is), humble (she is) and busy in order to keep herself from thinking too much about her own feelings.

Despite her lingering pain over Beleth (which she stoically keeps inside), Blandine is somewhat optimistic when it comes to humanity. Studying the valley of human dreamscapes like a vast game of chess, she takes her part of the War very seriously.

Her moods are often contradictory, running the gamut from bright Pollyanna to grim self-absorption. She is determined that every human she can touch will experience their dreams to the fullest, finding their potential and true happiness in a kind of fairy-tale ideal, but her own smiles are rare and slight. Blandine believes very

seriously that human dreams are the key to everything, that the hearts of mankind carry the solution to all dilemmas and the strength to see them to an end.

How Blandine will behave toward anyone else depends on how close she is to them. To her Servitors, she is kind but brief, delivering more commands than compliments (though when she rewards exceptional service, the rewards are great). To her few friends (which are rumored to include a small number of humans), she is warmer, letting both her optimism and great weariness become more visible.

PRIORITIES

Blandine's efforts are among the most vital in the War. Every one of six billion human souls enters the Marches each night, bringing with them their secrets, their troubles, their concerns and their hopes. The vast valley between Blandine's and Beleth's towers is an ocean of glittering fragments of humanity.

Personal issues aside, Blandine is among the most ancient of Archangels, a powerful primal force. She's out to end the War, wipe out the Diabolicals and return the

A SAMPLE TETHER: THE SOJACK HOUSE

In 1955, Dr. Mitchell Sojack, a clinical psychiatrist, and his wife, Rosemary, a Freudian analyst, opened the Sojack Home for the Mentally Disabled near Santa Fe, New Mexico. The small (20-bed) private institute specialized in long-term care for victims of mental disorders that were a result of trauma, most particularly "catatonics" and others barely able to feed or clothe themselves.

Rosemary Sojack had been an Army nurse in World War II, and tended to the patients' physical needs, with the help of assistants (often students). A handful of the earliest admissions into the Sojack House were infantrymen whom Rosemary had treated in the war – extreme victims of "shell shock" and combat trauma. The Sojacks' private studies of these patients were ground-breaking work in the modern study of post-traumatic stress, and the Sojacks themselves were both spiritual, faithful physicians who truly cared for their charges.

In 1967, Hell came to the Sojack House, with Heaven close on its heels. A California artist, Devin Cross, was admitted to the institute by his wealthy parental patrons. Devin had been a classic "tortured soul," painting large surrealist landscapes filled with recurring themes of misery and despair. One morning, he was found staring at a half-empty canvas, his eyes glazed over and his veins sizzling with narcotics. The Sojacks accepted the case, and put him in his new room. What Mitch and Rosemary didn't know was that Devin Cross was the plaything of a pair of Beleth's more mischievous earthly Servitors, who helped him along into the realm of Nightmare each night. Now, they had him there *all the time*, serving the sentence of the damned without the formality of death.

When Yrian, Guardian of the Dreams of Artists, got wind of what had been done to Devin Cross, she

sought to undo the evil . . . and a battle between Yrian and the two servants of Beleth began, with both sides calling in reinforcements at need. The battle over the soul of a single artist became a matter of pride between the two sides, and it escalated quickly.

The conflict was not long-lived, and it was not without casualties. In a moment of extreme spite, a minor demonic servant of Beleth decided to make the battle an open one, and ran amok, killing Rosemary and one assistant messily, and sending a helpless Mitchell into the same kind of trauma-induced coma that he'd been studying for nearly a decade. Heaven was quick to answer, and Yrian knew that her fellow Cherubs would be insufficient to make a permanent impression . . . Blandine's Malakim are few in number, but they exist for times like that. Hell got out quick, and left the house in peace.

The Sojack House had been quietly becoming more and more a place of peaceful dream under the care of its founders, and when the Host went to bat for it, its role as a Tether to Blandine's tower was fairly assured. It took only a few years of careful work to bring that potential to fruition. The House's seneschal is James, a Mercurian, who adopted the Role of young Dr. Franklin Sojack, the son that the Sojacks never had, in order to keep the Sojack house from closing down. Mitchell died in 1992 at the age of 75, having spent 25 years dreaming peacefully, guarded in the Marches at all times. The other patients, likewise, were free to dream unmolested by the forces of darkness – and the Sojack House became a focal point of constant dreams.

Except for the dreamers, everyone at the Sojack House today is an angel, and the house is one of Blandine's principal Tethers in the American Southwest.



Symphony to where it once was: humans pursuing their dreams, and angels guiding them when necessary, and leaving them alone when possible. To this end, she organizes one of the largest angelic networks of the Host (and one of the least visible), along with a variety of human servants and Soldiers as well. She is also a vigilant guardian of the border between the Marches and Heaven, standing watch with the Guardians against incursion by the spiteful remnants of human myth, living out their exile in the wake of Uriel's final crusade.

Blandine's Word

The Word of Dreams has two principal facets. The first is its most literal – the trip each sleeper takes into his private dreamscape when he sleeps. The second is a little more metaphorical – usually. Those dreams that the dreamers carry with them while waking are also under Blandine's care – all of their hopes, aspirations, goals – noble and ignoble alike. Blandine is not judgmental; the dreams of the selfish side of humanity deserve protecting as much, she believes, as their selfless and noble dreams. Provided, of course, that those dreams are truly *theirs*, and not the work of diabolical manipulators. The power to manipulate human dreams is great, and Blandine does not use it casually, or brook casual uses by her servants. If the War is to be won, Blandine firmly believes it must be won by letting the humans exercise the will that God has given them.

This attitude gets a mixed response in the Seraphim Council. Most of the Archangels agree that humans must ultimately make their own path; *all* of them agree that demonic manipulation must be wiped out. But some disagree strongly about the dreams of the selfish, seeing the Host as a body meant to punish humans, as well as shepherd them. But, disagreements or no, most of the Archangels are content to leave Blandine to her work. She's very, very good at it.

Conflict With Beleth

The servants of Beleth and Blandine are worked to exhaustion, every night, in subtle warfare among the dreamscapes. Both are working to influence humanity through dream – and the conflict has traditionally been strategic and indirect. Recently, however, Beleth has been playing a stronger game, engaging Blandine's angels directly. Blandine believes that Beleth is trying to force her into taking a more militaristic tack – to join the War on Earth as much as in the Marches. Blandine has opted not to take the bait, and is suffering some heavy losses for it. Rather, she is redoubling her efforts in the dreamscapes, working to fight Beleth indirectly.

It's a tricky struggle, the outcome always in doubt. If either Beleth or Blandine should gain a significant advantage, it could tip the balance of the entire War.

Currently, the mistresses of the Marches hold one another in check.

Little Dreams

Blandine is a patron to dreamers of all kinds, and she interprets her Word to include every manner of human artistry and creativity: dreams given form. Few humans have their own personal dream-guard, but those dreamers who make their dreams open to others are given special priority. Almost every poet, painter, musician, actor and writer has one of Blandine's angels looking over his shoulder.

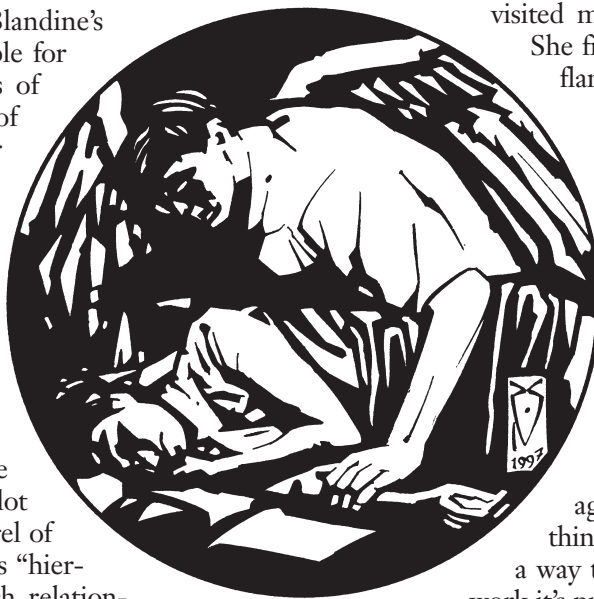
Another type of dreamer especially favored by Blandine is the ambitious madman – any human who dreams of building an empire, making a new nation or toppling an old one is likely, too, to be favored with an angelic guardian.

This isn't just Blandine letting her personal tastes interfere with her use of power. Such people are often capable of making vital changes on Earth, frequently through inspiration alone. A charismatic satirist can bring about a revolution, and millions of lives can be saved or lost by keeping close watch on such matters. Demons often stalk those capable of such changes, and the angels vigilantly keep watch.

Organization

Blandine's angels work individually, and more than a third of her Servitors are Cherubs like herself. Some are assigned to tend both the lives and dreams of an individual dreamer. Some of Blandine's Word-bound angels are responsible for an entire *type* of dream (Dreams of Peace, Dreams of Love, Dreams of Contentment), or type of *dreamer* (the Dreams of Concerned Parents, the Dreams of Soldiers, the Dreams of the Dying). Many patrol the Marches nightly, moving from dreamscape to dreamscape, never resting as they guard the rest of the mortals.

While it is accepted etiquette that an angel assigned to the dreams of a single Air Force pilot defers to the judgment of the Angel of the Dreams of Soldiers, Blandine's "hierarchy" begins and ends with such relationships. Blandine's angels each answer to their calling, and to Blandine personally. Very rarely does the Marches become a battlefield in the traditional sense. Rather, it is a theater of billions of individual nightly battles, fought between single dreamers and the forces of Heaven and Hell, rather than entire armies of the Host and the Diabolicals.



POLITICS

Blandine is one of the least political angels in the Seraphim Council, keeping her methods, her moods and her plans to herself.

While she will (very occasionally) take action or speak out against the more flying-fire-and-machine-guns factions of Heaven (twice, recently, she's lost patience with Michael), she normally keeps a quiet vigil over the Marches, knowing full well her importance to the War.

David: She isn't friendly to me, and she isn't important to me. Helping humans master their fears, helping them sleep well . . . That's very pretty work. I don't wish to belittle her achievements, so I have little else to say.

Dominic: Innocence and Guilt bubble up in the surface of the dreamscapes; I make regular visits to the Marches. Blandine serves her station with skill and dedicated concern. Her judgment is sharp and her methods are effective.

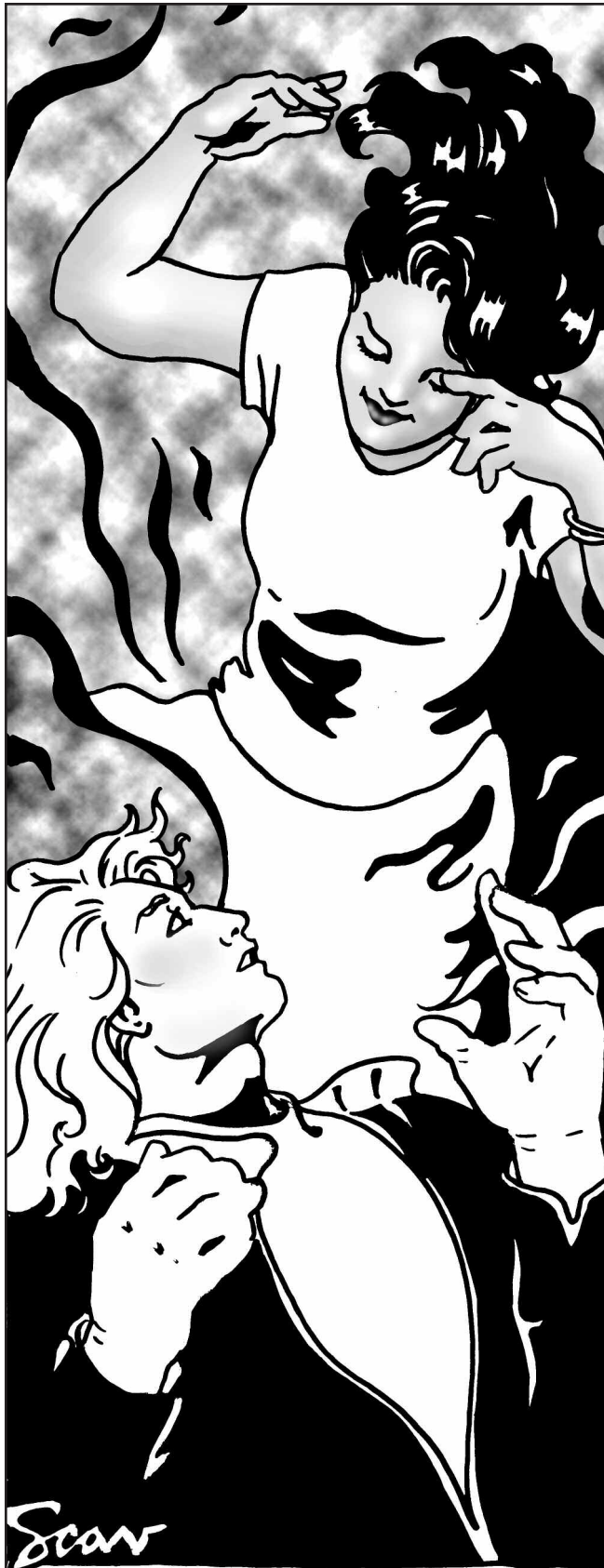
Eli: Hey, she's great. No, really. She stays *out* of the bickering. She dedicates herself to helping humanity bridge the gap between what they want to be and who they *are*. And who they want to be with. That's an important dream, the best. Her Word embodies a point that a lot of the angels miss . . . It's *okay* to be motivated by what feels good. It's a damned shame about Beleth.

Gabriel: I liked her, I think. I think she has visited me, recently, in another guise. She fires sparks, and fans embers to flame. Yes, I'm sure I liked her . . .

Janus: Her word is so unreal . . . I love it, the power it has. In the Marches, the humans are free to fly from truth to truth and slip through walls and over mountains in the blink of an eye. She does a good job.

Jean: She gives a little too much, a little too quickly, to those who send her their entreaties . . . And she encourages a kind of false optimism, I think. She is valuable to us, but in a way that is so far afield of my own work it's probably best that she keeps her distance from us the way she does.

Jordi: Animals dream, too . . . And Blandine doesn't ignore them; she tends to them as vigilantly as to the humans. I've seen her bring peace to beasts in pain, even if it had nothing to do with the War in a way that the Council recognizes.



Laurence: She is the general on the broadest beach-head of the human soul. I let her do what she does best; she always, *always* comes through for us. Sometimes *we* fail *her*; and I regret those times deeply.

Marc: Well, people are going to dream about money whether Blandine is overseeing the Marches or not. She keeps Beleth in check, and that's about all.

Michael: Is it really a good *idea* to quell the fears of mankind in a world of false imagery? How does *that* prepare them? I often wonder if Nightmares aren't better for our cause; I'd like to see Blandine take the initiative to control the *entire* realm of Dream. Contentment isn't an attribute of a good soldier.

Novalis: She's a friend, a good one. She's one of the few that really gets it – that violence isn't the way to win hearts, and that it's *hearts* we're trying to win. We don't see each other as often as we used to, but whenever I get a chance to visit her, she always makes me feel welcome.

Yves: When the trouble with Beleth came, Blandine, dear friend though she is, was angry with me for not warning her. But I had, in so many ways. In every way that I *could*. That was a brief flash, though; she was still quite young, and she has since accepted the complexities of her destiny with elegance. She is one of our brightest, and I miss the days when we could talk more often.

NEW SERVITOR ATTUNEMENTS

The following attunements may be reserved as rewards for exceptional service to Blandine. They may also be available at character creation, at the option of the Game Master.

Dream Joining

This attunement is used to *merge* the dreamscapes of two separate dreamers, so that they “meet” one another in their dreams. It requires 2 Essence. Both dreamscapes must be active and occupied, and in the same part of the Marches (within what passes for “line of sight” in the Ethereal realm).

Once two dreamers are joined, the dreams also join, and support one another. If one of the dreamers fails a skill roll with a check digit of 6, the dream will not automatically slide into the realm of Nightmare unless the *other* dreamer does so, too. And if the first dreamer makes *any* successful skill roll before that happens, the “nightmare slip” is nullified entirely, and both dreamers once again have “clean slates” until another failed skill roll occurs with a 6 check digit. However, it is equally difficult to slip out of Beleth's grasp once in it . . . if a merged dreamscape passes into the darker side of the Marches, it takes two successes, and two check digits of 6, for an automatic journey back.



A merged dreamscape contains elements of the psyche of both dreamers, and the dreamers are both “along for the ride” together. If either dreamer wakes up, the merge is gently broken, and the two dreamscapes drift apart again.

This attunement has many uses. Two enemies, meeting in their dreams, will come to know one another’s hopes and fears more closely than possible in the corporeal realm; they can wake up with hostilities disarmed (the dream itself should be roleplayed, if either dreamer is a PC). Two lovers, joined in a dream, can experience intimacy on a spiritual level normally unattainable in mortal life (sometimes, when love is very strong between two humans, their dreamscapes will find one another, and merge naturally for a time).

Dreambook

This attunement allows the angel to create a *dreambook*, a corporeal recording of a dreamer’s experiences in the Marches. A blank book must be in hand, and the angel must be in physical contact with the dreamer while he sleeps. A complete record of the dream will appear on the pages of the book, seemingly written in the dreamer’s hand. The exact style it is written in (straightforward prose, high-flown poetry, etc.) depends on both the nature of the dreamer and the nature of the dream. A few dreambooks have become classic works of literature . . .

In recent years, this attunement has been used successfully to create “dreambooks” in other media, as well – videocassette, 8mm film, CD-ROM and so on (the name of the attunement is traditional). However, audio or visual dreambooks can only be seen and heard for what they are by celestials, Soldiers and others able to perceive the

Symphony to some extent. Normal humans (including the dreamer, if he is one) will simply see a video of the dreamer lying in bed asleep, or hear a tape of soft snoring.

Lucidity

This attunement allows the angel to grant *lucidity* to a dreamer, for a cost of 3 Essence, for the duration of a single dream. A lucid dreamer has total control over the events of his own dream – he determines what elements come and go, and doesn’t roll dice against skills while in his dreamscape. Rather, his successes and failures in his dreamscape are determined by his own self-image. Lucidity given to the wrong dreamer can vault him instantly into Beleth’s hands; this power should be used with caution! Lucidity granted to the *right* dreamer can provide an almost absolute protection against suffering nightmare.

The angel need not be in the dreamer’s dreamscape to use this attunement; contact with the dreamer’s vessel is sufficient. If the angel *is* within the dreamscape, the Lucid dreamer can eject the angel at will, if his presence is noticed and the dreamer (for whatever reason) doesn’t want the angel present.

HIGHER DISTINCTIONS

Beyond Master of the Realms of Night, Blandine grants higher distinction to those who have distinguished themselves in her service, furthering the Word of Dream in all of its incarnations, particularly those who have helped many humans achieve their dreams and overcome their fears.



Blandine's Sentinels (the only "rank" Blandine confers beyond Master) are each responsible for intensive work against Beleth's servants, and are each Word-bound angels of great personal power, dedicated to both their Word and the greater Word of Dream. Some receive autonomous control of stretches of Blandine's Marches, wandering like holy shepherds among the dreamscapes.

Player characters will have to work long and hard to attain such distinction, and it carries with it a significant reduction in Earthly activity, in most cases.

The full title of angels bearing these distinctions is derived from their Word. The Angel of Dreams of Peace, one of Blandine's most favored Guardians, is titled the Guardian of Dreams of Peace – a powerful force protecting the aspirations of mankind.

Blandine's higher Distinctions carry with them no special powers, such as those of the lower Distinctions. Rather, they are typically awarded along with several unique Rites . . . and a new level of responsibility.

SAMPLE SERVITOR

ODRIC

Cherub Servitor of Dreams

Corporeal Forces – 2 Strength 3 Agility 5
Ethereal Forces – 3 Intelligence 6 Precision 6
Celestial Forces – 4 Will 5 Perception 11

Vessel: Human/1 (Charisma +1)

Role: Writer/2, Status 3

Skills: Computer Operation/2, Driving/1, Knowledge (Writing/2)

Songs: Dream (Corporeal/2, Ethereal/2, Celestial/2), Harmony (Ethereal/1), Healing (Ethereal/1), Light (Ethereal/1).

Attunements: Cherub of Dreams, Mercurian of Dreams, Dream Walking

Odric is the relatively inexperienced child of two powerful Guardians in Blandine's service – Yrian, Guardian of the Dreams of Artists, and Oresto, Guardian of Dreams of Love.

He is a very young angel, having been born less than 30 years ago, but his Role is that of an older man: Joshua Manning-Rice, an uncelebrated author of children's stories living in Tallahassee, Florida.

Even the most well-meaning and literally *holy* of parents can be a source of stress when they are as significant as Odric's, and he has found his early years difficult, striving for personal identity in the shadow of two very respected angels.

His decision to serve Blandine came from a sincere personal love of her Word, as well as respect for his two parents, but a conscious decision to avoid directly serving the Words of his parents went with it. So far, his work has not placed him under their supervising eye, but that situation may not last forever. After all, an artistically gifted child can dream of love . . .

Odric works closely with Lissah, the Angel of the Dreams of Children. Lissah is one of the children of Beleth and Blandine, born before the Fall, and the last surviving child of that union still among the Host (she has two brothers, both of whom serve Beleth). Lissah has a particular sympathy for Odric's unusual social position in Heaven.

As Manning-Rice, Odric reaches out to children through beautiful and simple fantasies and morality tales, full of triumphs against evil. Odric watches over the dreams of the children of a nearby human family at night, learning through them the intricacies of Lissah's Word.

Odric is suitable either as an NPC encounter, or as a player-character angel for beginning play.

MENUNIM

MESSENGERS OF HOPE

The man on the bus was deep in thought. It's no use. Dad will never understand who I really am. There's just no point in talking to him about it. Next to him, a fellow passenger sat and read the paper, apparently taking no notice of the sad, silent man to his left.

I never thought I would lose Dad this way – to just have him leave my life. But I know better than to talk sense to him. It's no use. The man sighed. The passenger next to him turned a page of his newspaper. The rustling sound it made suddenly made the man think of birds . . . of a day when he – then just a boy – and his father unexpectedly saw a sleek falcon land on a nearby rock. It was a pleasant memory.

Maybe, the man thought, maybe he loves me enough to listen just one more time.

Still waters run deep. The Menunim are the most subtle and silent of all the Host, and yet their faith, optimism and open-mindedness are renowned. They avoid speaking to humans when they can, since they wish to avoid even the slightest dissonance in the Symphony. The Menunim trust humans to do the right thing – they just think that sometimes mortals need a little push to get them going.

RESONANCE

Menunim are charged with instilling hope in mortals who need it. They do not seek to do so through clumsy methods such as conversation or camaraderie. Instead, the Menunim drift silently from person to person, favoring crowds and public transport, instinctively seeking out those who are in despair and mentally giving them the hope they need. They do this without speaking a word.

Menunim generally believe that humans possess free will, and that a human must chart his own course toward his Destiny. But they also believe that the universe is basically good, and that humans are naturally inclined toward their Destiny rather than their Fate. In turn, they believe that is they who are the expression of that natural, universal inclination: the innate goodness of the universe manifests itself as Menunim, embodiments of a principle, and it is their inborn responsibility to give humans the hope they need to move upward and onward.

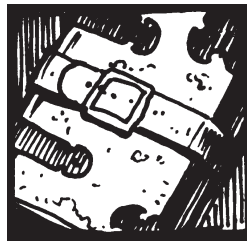




Needless to say, Menunim are rather distant beings. Since they see themselves as goodness given concrete consciousness, they tend to look at things in a concrete, rational way . . . they are the quintessence of hope, and so they approach their role mechanistically. Each human who receives the gift of hope is a human one step closer to Destiny; each Destiny achieved brings the War one step closer to victory.

Menunim are fond of keeping notebooks in which they record the lives they've touched; when they encounter other Menunim, they read to each other from these books and compare notes. Some might say they're keeping score.

The hope instilled by the Menunim is rarely earth-shaking. The ills they seek to redress are generally the stresses of daily life. On rare occasions, a Menunite will find a human on the very threshold of Destiny, and will do all in his power to get the human to take that step. But by and large they are the shoe elves of Heaven, silently encouraging people to mend their woes themselves and become happier people as a result.



DISSONANCE

It is dissonant for a Menunite to directly manipulate a human toward a given conclusion. They gladly make small, positive adjustments in a human's attitude and outlook toward a situation, but they do not engage in mind control or even conversational encouragement.

Engaging a human in conversation to move them toward some goal is forbidden; the Menunim see even the small happinesses granted by the Mercurians to be abrogations of a human's free will.

One might ask a Menunite for advice, but it is never given. Since Menunim see themselves as the expression of a natural principle, they only use their consciousness to aid them in locating people who need their hope reinforced. They see themselves as involved in the simple channeling of the universe's goodness – anything more than that is dissonant, as it reveals a Menunite who places

more value in his personal consciousness than in the universal will.

NEW CHOIRS AND BANDS

The Marches introduces to the *In Nomine* Symphony a new angelic Choir, the Menunim (p. 15), and a new demonic Band, the Pachadim (p. 36).

These are minor Choirs and Bands, like others to be introduced in future supplements. They possess neither the numbers nor the sweeping, universal natures of the major Choirs and Bands.

Almost without exception, minor Choirs and

Bands will be dedicated to the service of a single Archangel or Demon Prince. Many minor Choirs and Bands will have a nature, or aspect, that is "tuned" to the Word of the Superior they serve.

However, members of such Choirs or Bands will sometimes be found serving a Superior other than their normal one, since some of those Superiors will loan out their Servitors.



It is also dissonant for a Menunite to try to aid the same human twice in one day. If the first attempt fails, the Menunite waits until the following day if he tries again at all – the failure of the attempt meant that the universe simply didn't want it to happen, and going against the (perceived) flow of the universe is dissonant for a Menunite.

Note that Menunim have no problem communicating with Soldiers and other humans who are aware of the War and of the genuine existence of celestial beings. They only avoid conversing with normal humans. Even so, Soldiers who ask a Menunite for advice about their personal lives are likely to get the cold shoulder and an admonition to walk your own path. Jiminy Cricket they're not.

MANNER AND APPEARANCE

Menunim tend to be grave and silent except around other allied celestials; in their company, Menunim relax and take on a wistful, wry look.

Among humans they dress conservatively – favoring gray – and avoid making an impression of any sort through clothing, speech, movement or expression. They do not want to be noticed by anyone.

In his celestial form, a Menunite is a vaporous cloud. They can coalesce a face within the cloud if they feel the need to, but this is rare.

GAME MECHANICS

Menunim are naturally drawn toward people who could use a little hope . . . but almost everyone does. In particular, however, Menunim are drawn toward people who are consciously thinking about a given situation and who are unhappy and uncertain about their role within that situation.

To find such a person, a Menunite need only spend two minutes among a group of humans and make a simple d666 check against his Perception. Success indicates that the Menunite has located the human in the greatest personal distress and understands his problem. If this check digit is 5 or 6, the Menunite can even hear the human's conscious thoughts as they relate to the distress. With a target chosen, the Menunim makes a second d666 check, this time against his Will. The result is in the boxed text of check-digit results. If the Perception check die was a 5 or 6, the Menunite gains a +1 bonus to his target number for the Will check.

CHOIR ATTUNEMENT

The Menunim are a Choir dedicated to service to Blandine. She will loan her Menunim to other Superiors

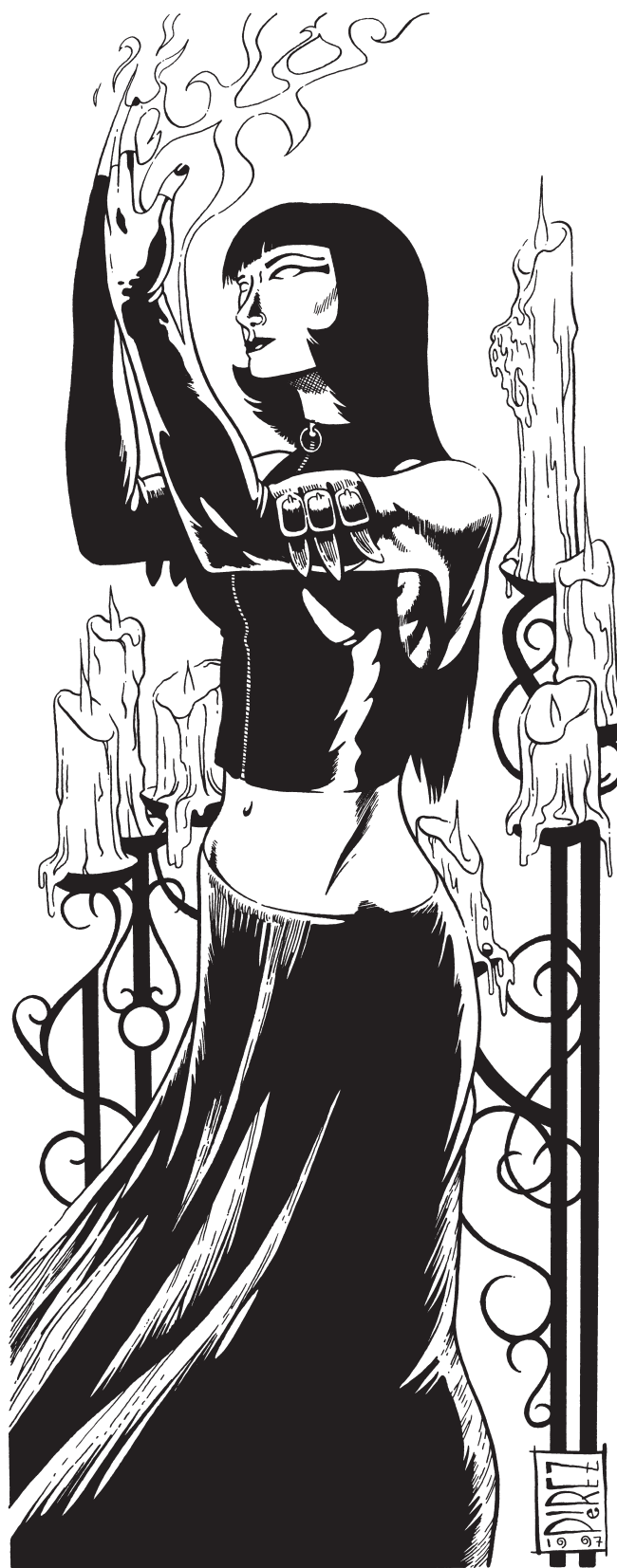
MENUNIM CHECK DIGIT RESULTS

- 1...The target is mildly encouraged. He will not change his course of action or try again at something he has failed at, but he will be more at ease with himself about his inaction or failure.
- 2...The target feels substantially better about his role in the situation that is causing him stress. He is still unlikely to do anything about it, but he will give the matter considerable further thought with an open mind.
- 3...The target resolves to do something about the situation he is in, but must first spend considerable time contemplating the proper course of action. This contemplation might not bear fruit, but the attempt will at least be comforting. If a course of action does become apparent, he will act on it.
- 4...The target decides on a course of action to resolve the situation in a positive way and sets out at once to make it happen. It may not be the wisest choice, but it's a start.
- 5...The target has a good idea of what he should do and is willing to rise to the challenge. Any personal-interaction die rolls made to start this course of action (such as the Emote skill or the Will attribute) are made at a +1 bonus to the target number.
- 6...The target experiences a moment of clarity in which the wisest, most positive course of action is obvious to him. Any personal-interaction die rolls made to start this course of action (such as the Emote skill or the Will attribute) are made at a +2 bonus to the target number.

on request; of course, some of the Archangels are more likely to ask for her help than others. Almost every heavenly project can use a little hope from time to time . . . But no Menunite has ever permanently left Blandine's charge.

Blandine provides all her Menunim a special attunement, as follows:

Blandine's Menunim carry out their task in the land of dreams just as they do in the waking world. Such Menunim usually have Dream Walking, and can use their power to sense despair among the world's dreamers. Menunim gain a +2 result to their check digit on Will for successful attempts at instilling hope when using the power on a dreamer within the Marches.



GABRIEL

ARCHANGEL OF FIRE

A primordial dancer on the edge of the War, listening to the rhythm of the Symphony and moving to its ineffable beat, Gabriel represents the illumination of the Holy Flame. In the early days, this cast her in the role of messenger and inspirer. But in later days, she has turned toward the aspect of her nature that makes her the punisher of the cruel – the wrath of the Holy Flame.

Gabriel is a very old angel, although she appears ever-youthful. She was approached by Lucifer during the rebellion, but despite his best efforts at persuasion, she rejected him.

She originally gifted humanity with Fire as a means to keep them from the darkness and to promote warmth and inspiration – some feel Gabriel was the original Prometheus, although she denies being associated with the myth. It wasn't as if she really got permission, per se, to do this – but it's much easier to get forgiveness than permission.

She served as the messenger of inspiration for Christianity and later, for Islam – reciting the Qu'ran word for word as Yves gave it to her. This won her nothing but trouble – she hasn't stopped paying for her willingness to serve as intermediary and messenger.

Dominic attempted to have Gabriel cast from Heaven because of her role in Yves' experimental religion, and the proud Gabriel has been in self-imposed exile ever since, which has only made her even more unstable. The power of Heaven no longer balances the highs and lows of her raging flame.

She now walks beneath the sun on Earth, taking fire from it and using its light to illuminate the cruel. She dwells in the most desolate places, wandering for years in the driest deserts, bathing in volcanoes, climbing the highest heights to absorb pure sunlight. It is the solar light that offers her solace in the absence of the light of Heaven.

She has watched Jean turn the night from the darkness of preindustrial times to the brightly lit spires of the modern cities. She has made sure that humanity never forgets the power of fire, even though they now warm themselves with electrically heated air and the explosions that drive them in their luxurious automobiles are tiny and unseen.

When Lucifer gave Belial the Word of Fire, it caused Gabriel much pain – not damage per se, but a kind of dissonance. It was the sound of fingernails scraping across the delicate melody lines of the Symphony. She knew what had transpired immediately, knew Belial as one of her former servants, one of the ignorant mass who had thrown in with the Morningstar Prince.

As Belial has gone forth to promote his Word, this noise has continued. No other celestial must face exactly what Gabriel faces, because she must listen to this foul anti-harmonious melody playing just over her own line. (Michael and Baal also share a Word, of course, but they also have a grudging respect for one another; Belial is Gabriel's most bitter enemy.) She does not have the purifying filter of Heaven to keep out the discordance. It would be enough to drive a stable celestial insane, but in Gabriel's case it just adds napalm to the fire.

PERSONALITY AND OUTLOOK

Mysterious, inscrutable and fleet, Gabriel is an unknown variable in the War. Laurence cannot plan for her involvement in anything. No one may reasonably summon her, or involve her in their plots. She is an untamable force of divine nature.

Even her Servitors, though they love her dearly, have no idea what goes on inside her head. Even though they participate in the Holy Flame, they have no way to understand how the events of the past and the existence of Belial have twisted and changed Gabriel.

In the midst of guttering, sparking, fiery madness, she has moments of utter clarity. During this time she reveals her brilliance, the inimitable spark of inspiration that embodies her Word. She speaks quietly and with great love to her Servitors, moving among their host, touching them and instantly knowing all that they face.

These messages frequently show uncanny insight, as if God had spoken them, and are given in some of the most unlikely destinations – some celestial, some ethereal, some corporeal. It is in these times of clarity that she will remove dissonance from favored Servitors, something

she has no apparent interest in when the madness is upon her. This time of clarity rarely lasts more than a day; then Gabriel departs her celestial company and seeks solitude, as her deep-rooted madness becomes violent and destructive shortly after these times. Two Cherubim of Yves are always attuned to her, wherever she is, watching her (from a safe distance, which at times can be very far away) and marking her passage. They are assigned the duty of making certain that her episodes of uncontrollable fury do not endanger anyone or disrupt the Symphony. They are Aluriel and Mordekial, sometimes called "Gabriel's Firemen" (see p. 27).

PRIORITIES

Gabriel's Servitors serve her office much more than she does these days. Her madness prevents her from actively pursuing the cause of punishing the cruel, but her Servitors participate in and utilize her amazing, world-shaping energy to fulfill her office well.

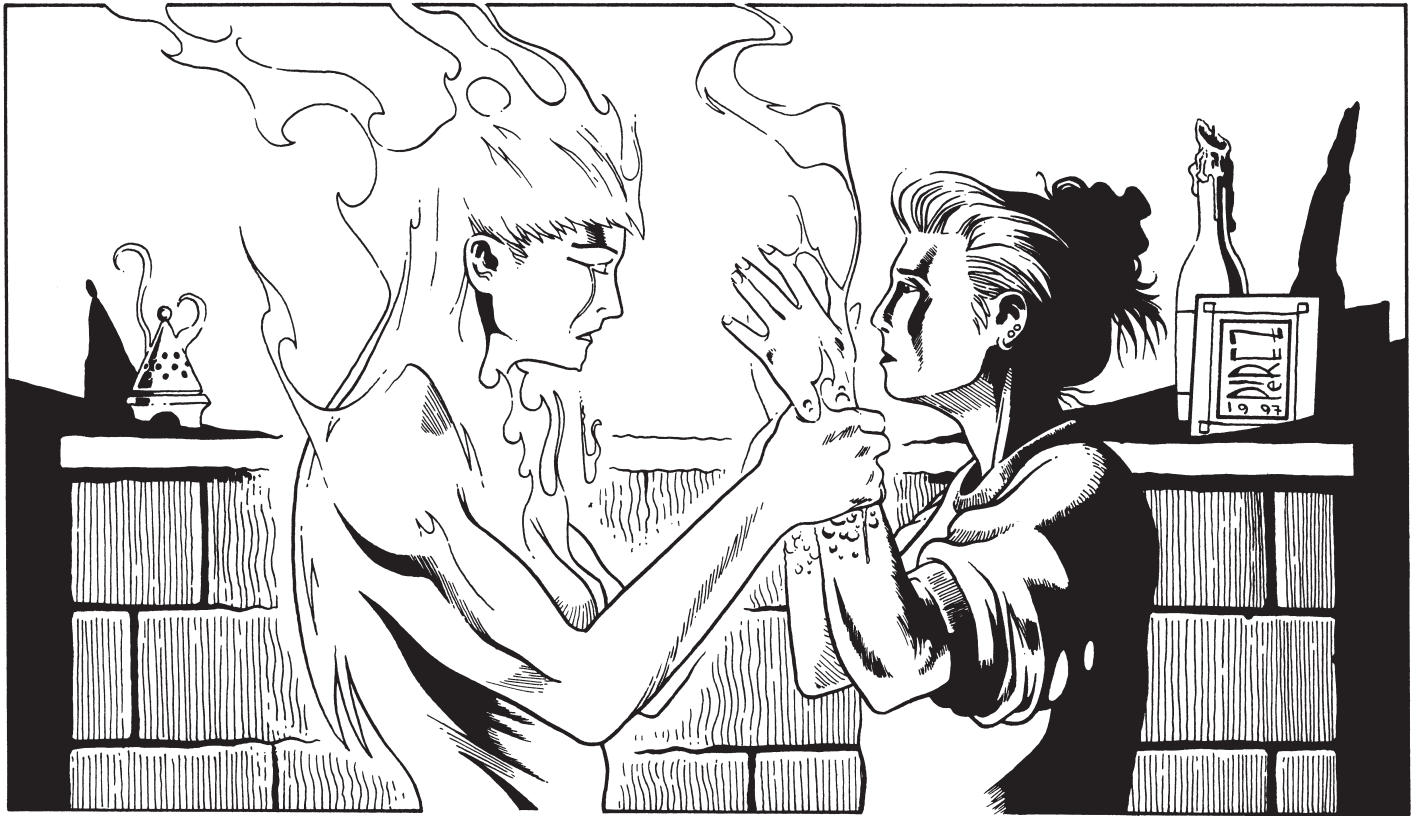
The thing that mostly dominates Gabriel's waking consciousness is a need to destroy that which causes her pain. And yet, giving in to that part of herself means upholding the destructive aspects of the Word of Fire,

thus playing into Belial's hands. She is therefore constantly on the run from herself – that being the only celestial who can truly threaten her (except perhaps for Michael).

The only celestial she will pause for is Yves. There is some inexplicable relationship between them – she seems to perceive Yves in an almost paternal light.

For his part, Yves can freeze her with a word, and is the only one who can actually cause her clarity to return – albeit briefly. If he says something is important, that proves sufficient to penetrate the whirl of madness within Gabriel and give her pause.





GABRIEL'S WORD

The Fire that Gabriel promotes is the divine spark, the holy ignition, the fiery bolt from Heaven, the wrath of God, the Holy Flame. At one time she embodied all of Fire, from its destructive aspects to its more creative ones, but Lucifer has made certain that Belial promotes destruction and the more negative aspects of Fire, and now she is in a way inhibited and limited to only the righteous Fire of God's wrath. Curiously enough, Eli aids her frequently without her knowing, as the inspiration of the Divine Flame and the fire of Creation that he supports are very closely related.

Nearly all celestials, particularly the Word-Bound, tend to think of themselves as agents of that Word. Gabriel's sense of identity has slipped. She has a hard time figuring out where her personality ends and her Word begins – and lately has given up even trying. The primal things that she does might seem mindlessly destructive – but so does an erupting volcano, until you come to know the inner wisdom behind its explosion and flow.

Above all else, Gabriel represents that ineffable spark of light and life that refuses to be snuffed out – in this, she is both horrific and beatific, as she represents the greatest wrath and the greatest mercy all at once.

DISSONANCE

Gabriel feels the dissonance of those who work for her as if it were her own. This ubiquity of pain makes her simultaneously merciful and stern. On one hand she feels the pain of her Servitors; on the other she cannot help but channel some of the divine wrath within her toward those who are dissonant.

Furthermore, she is aware of the dissonant Word of Fire that Belial propagates, and so her tolerance for dissonance is very thin. Fortunately for her Servitors, this means she is more likely to remove dissonance from them. Unfortunately, this also means she is merciless toward the extremely dissonant, especially if they became dissonant through their own inaction. Gabriel abhors laziness.

ORGANIZATION

Gabriel's Servitors are run by Soldekai, a Malakite who has no fear of his mistress. Sol's unique distinction as Chamberlain of the Legions of Flame is the only higher distinction Gabriel has ever named. The distinction enables him to keep track of the punishment of the cruel on Earth, and to know where Gabriel is at all times. He has an Ofanite servant with an impressive choice of



transportation who keeps him moving from place to place.

Gabriel has abdicated much of the political nature of her position and now lets Sol take care of the day-to-day running of her organization. She has more important things to do. Still, she is the celestial who comes when her people call, not Sol. Sol is one reason why Gabriel's Earth operations are fairly successful – he actually works with Michael and Laurence from time to time to coordinate things, and is the chief user of Gabriel's Tethers to Heaven. Still, he must answer for what he does when Gabriel has her moments of clarity, and it's certain that with the surety of the sun she will know all that has tran-

spired, especially all that he has accomplished or failed to achieve.

It is whispered that Sol secretly hopes that Gabriel's Word will fall to his care should she Fall, but there is no evidence that it is something he would ever even begin to contemplate. Still, everyone in Heaven remarks on how well he treats his Servitors, and everyone is mindful of his puissance in defending Gabriel.

A DAY IN THE LIFE OF . . .

Gabriel's Servitors are busy people. First of all, the cruel are everywhere, waiting for their attention. Their

CALLED ON THE CARPET

A brief transcript of an encounter between Gabriel and one of her Servitors:

Gabriel opens the window of Lara's apartment, stepping in quietly. She wears a peculiar vessel of living flame. The warmth and lambent light of the skin of her fiery Numinous Corpus (although the fires are clearly banked) gets Lara's attention, as she is resting after a long day's work on the suicide hotline.

Lara looks up in surprise.

GABRIEL: You should not have left the window open. (In English)

LARA: Yes, Bright One. I am sorry. (Lara speaks celestially, singing her words)

GABRIEL: You help others who wish to endanger themselves?

LARA: Help them not to hurt themselves.

Gabriel nods. She steps over to the mantelpiece at her hearth, looking down into the dark ashes.

GABRIEL: Do you think the hearth should contain, or host?

Lara is clearly puzzled.

LARA: It should . . . I don't know, Bright One.

Gabriel nods slowly. Her hand print becomes visible on the wood of the mantel, the burnt smell of wood wafting softly into the room, as she gently opens the ceramic incense holder there.

GABRIEL: You like the smell of burning?

LARA: Y-yes, I suppose, I'm not sure . . .

Gabriel turns toward Lara; her voice is soft, calm.

GABRIEL: Have you ever smelled flesh burn?

LARA: (fear in her voice) N-no . . .

Gabriel nods again. Her eyes begin to show a certain light.

GABRIEL: It is not a good smell. And yet – there's something satisfying about it.

Lara just nods, trying to appear very small, her thoughts flying.

GABRIEL: Are you afraid of me?

LARA: N-no . . . (she pauses, then manages to gasp) should I be?

Gabriel smiles softly. She takes an incense stick, lights it with her fingertip, and blows out the little fire on the tip of it, watching the incense smoke waft up, curling in circles.

GABRIEL: You see the circles?

Lara nods, stepping closer, trying to humor her Superior.

GABRIEL: (Celestial) Circles are everywhere, you see. Rings. Circles. We cannot stop, or start, for there is no beginning. There is no ending to the burning.

Lara nods softly. Gabriel turns, and grabs Lara's hand. The heat is intense.

GABRIEL: (Celestial) Don't you understand? Can't you see? There can be no ending without a beginning.

Lara nods, wincing, her skin smoking. Gabriel bows her head; a sob escapes her lips. A single fiery tear drops from her eye, starting a small fire on the carpet that quickly burns out. It makes a mark much like the ember-burn from the fireplace last winter. Slowly, she releases Lara's wrist, which is already turning pink from the burn.

LARA: (Celestial) You're not feeling well, are you?

Gabriel looks back up at Lara, her face quiet now, her tears boiling off of her skin.

GABRIEL: (Celestial) I am as well as I can be.



Superior also adds an edgy passion to everything they do, as her own madness seems to “rub off” on her Servitors in a minor way.

Generally, a Servitor of Gabriel will have a “current project” – one of the cruel who has yet to taste the Fire, that they spend most of their time on. However, Sol will infrequently show up with a “special mission,” and the cruel-of-the-moment will either go unpunished for a short time (Sol making the dissonance worth the Servitor’s while) or plans will be stepped up to finish them off so that Sol’s needs can be made a priority.

One thing is certain: if the Boss, Gabriel, shows up, there’s going to be Hell to pay. Even in the midst of her madness, she recognizes her Servitors on sight and will expect absolute loyalty from them immediately. She will often draw them into whatever current delusion she might be experiencing; sometimes it’s a very real threat or danger, sometimes it’s just shadows of the firelight. Luckily, Aluriel and Mordekial are usually very close behind the Boss, and have been known

to help a hapless Servitor out of a particularly sticky situation – after observing her for some time they have picked up enough clues about her behavior to “handle” her (or to call in reinforcements – in the utmost emergency, even Yves himself – when necessary). Still, even they can’t dissuade Gabriel all the time. If Gabriel wants something, you can be certain she will get it. It is not at all wise to tempt Gabriel’s cataclysmic temper.

AN ANALYSIS OF GABRIEL’S PSYCHOSIS

Gabriel is insane – that’s plain to see. What she suffers from most is a lack of true identity and the discordant harboring of centuries of anger, rage and barely withheld destruction. In the midst of her insanity, she is also affected by the transcendent Divine perspective, frequently receiving inspiration direct from the Godhead. As a result, she is remarkably intuitive, prescient and sagacious, in a mysterious fashion that Yves mirrors but does not share.

She inhibits the destructive part of her nature, which causes even more dissonance within her. Unable to prevent spillover from her rage, she has taken to isolating herself from all but a few. Still, as a result of her burning need to punish the cruel, she must forsake isolation from time to time and this is usually when her longtime cycle of destruction – guilt,



brooding, anxiety – perpetuates itself. At her very heart she is still the divine messenger – but words have failed her, and actions are all that she has left to convey what she must communicate.

TETHERS

At one time when she performed the service of divine messenger she was herself a divine Tether, mobile and sentient in service to the Name, able to return to Heaven

easily wherever she went. After she went into exile from Heaven, however, Gabriel discovered that she had inadvertently made several Tethers by her very presence – among these are the Dome of the Rock in Jerusalem (which has since fallen to Belial and Malphas) and a certain field near Bethlehem (which has since been lost and not yet relocated). Because she does not travel to Heaven much, Gabriel is connected with only a few Tethers that are still in her purview. One of these Tethers is Mount Pele in the highly volcanic island chain of Hawaii, which

A SAMPLE TETHER: ST. IGNATIUS' ORPHANAGE

Manhattan, New York City

Located in the heart of the Chelsea district in Manhattan, the old Orphanage is one of those buildings that has faded into the urban landscape, forgotten by developers and zoning officials. In fact, it is likely to remain that way for some time.

Once it was a blossoming children's mission, giving care to the city's homeless children for years before losing its charter. The orphanage was forced to close, to cede to the then-new foster-care system, and since then it has been an empty hulk, boarded up and deserted.

Until five years ago, no one, not even the squatters who would normally love such a haven, passed beneath the gargoyle-encrusted archway and no one climbed the brownstone facade to break through the non-boarded windows. Five years ago, Galuriel came to the orphanage. A Cherub of Fire, she sensed that something was definitely wrong about the place. Working with a few angels of Gabriel, she began to right the many injustices in the closing and in the former administration of the orphanage. Taking on the role of Sally Gayle, investigative reporter, she got the necessary court documents, reports from the news morgue and the testimony of a number of street informants to properly prosecute and pursue justice. The crowning evidence came from several people who had lived in the orphanage, who came forward after years of silence to speak about their time there.

It was discovered that the orphanage had long been a place of abject cruelty, child abuse and molestation. Names of several key administrators were bandied about, while a few volunteer workers were kept in the clear by orphans who testified that the gentle volunteers were the only reason they were alive today. A grand jury issued indictments for the

top three administrators of the place, even though they were now much older.

Human justice wasn't enough for Galuriel, however. The administrators hired top lawyers who were able to destroy the prosecution's very old case, and they walked. And soon, very soon, one by one (in a series of deaths that some of the newspapers thought might be gang- or Mafia-related) the administrators met their deaths. One fell from a subway platform and incinerated on the third rail before being decapitated by an oncoming train. Another was burned in an apartment fire while trying to escape via the elevator – miraculously, nobody else in the building was hurt. The third was in a terrible accident in the Holland Tunnel, when a gasoline tanker truck overturned after a tire blowout, and he and his car were consumed instantly.

After that, there was talk of reopening the orphanage. Sally Gayle was able to put together a loosely knit alliance of local businesses, city officials and the Department of Youth and Family Services, to put together a foster daycare center in the old hulk. Now Sally uses the daycare as a means of tracking down child-abuse cases in the city and, if they do not bring themselves to change, bring them to justice.

The only truly holy part of the building is an old makeshift chapel on the topmost floor, which is blocked off from the rest of the building and can only be gotten to via a hidden stairway. This is the spot someone using the Tether would arrive at; the other end stretches up to the Eternal City, one of the very few of Gabriel's Tethers that does. Gabriel herself has visited this Tether before, and pronounced its work just and right, departing quickly thereafter to attend a four-alarm fire in the Bronx.

Then again, someplace in New York is always burning.

connects directly to her great and potent volcano on the edge of the Marches in Heaven.

Sightings of her bathing in the molten lava and her tendency to clear the area around a volcano just before it erupts are legendary – and are believed to be the pagan goddess Pele, who has not been encountered by celestials since Uriel’s crusade for purity in the Middle Ages (but who, some angels say, still dwells in the volcano itself, watching Gabriel whenever she visits from ancient hiding places). Just about every active volcano has the potential to be a Tether for Gabriel – she only needs to awaken its potential by diving into its heart and giving up the proper amount of Essence.

The other Tethers associated with her are hers in name only, as they are senesched by angels in her organization on Earth and ultimately administered through Sol, her Chamberlain. These Tethers are chiefly concerned with the punishment of the cruel, and exist in places where justice has been done to them. One such place is the old, now-abandoned St. Ignatius Orphanage in New York City (see sidebar, p. 23).

POLITICS

By not being active in Heavenly politics, Gabriel has become a dangerous variable that all the political players must constantly evaluate and factor into their plans. Only Yves seems to know her well enough to understand where she truly fits in the political scheme of things – the rest spend countless hours trying to predict what she’ll do, and for all their effort still have no idea. Her sigil of authority might show up at any time (Sol carries it and places it at the discretion of those she wishes to have it), representing her vote, which can fall in any direction.

Below are some of the opinions, both closely held and openly pronounced, that the other Superiors of Heaven harbor about her:

Blandine: She has a great Dream, but I fear it has consumed her . . . I’ve tried reaching out to her, but don’t know if I ever penetrated her madness to the hope I know lies within. She can be destructive, dangerous, insane. Still – every child fears the dark, and she does bring Light . . .



David: She is whom we will all someday become. Pure, primal, unfettered, just as fire should be – she is the unstoppable force to my own immovable object – and yet we are more alike than different. I hear her roar echo deep in the earth – how long can her rage be denied?

Dominic: Apostate, a whisperer of secrets and heresy, absolutely insane. Doubtless the Fire she represents will soon be snuffed out by the cold of Hell. Then we shall renew the Holy Flame – and the ancient fires of questioning will burn again.

Eli: She’s intense, you got to hand it to her – she puts up with a lot of crap. And she really needs to lighten up – she’s *way* too quick to torch those who could be put right with a little effort. But I’ll tell you something – I would be nowhere without her. How many stories were born around a campfire?

Janus: Pure, golden, untamable. We have a lot in common, except she's let her Infernal counterpart get under her skin and drive her over the edge, and I'll *never* let that happen to me. The way she is now, I just don't understand her. That's okay. I've learned not to fan the flame.

Jean: She has no idea what she does, and cares not for the results. She has long since left the burden of ethics and sanity behind – now she consumes without thinking. Her fire burns out of control. It has ever fallen to me to clean up the messes she makes – I have had to learn to temper that which she cannot properly rule. If only she could be channeled, controlled, made biddable – what a force she would be to harness. I shall have to set my genius to work on such a task.

Jordi: We fear her, with good reason. She is the flash-fire that kills all, whether she means it or not. Still, that fire-light draws us all. How can we deny that which both repels and calls us?

Laurence: She barely recognizes my existence. If not for Soldekai, her angels might be as wild as Eli's.

Marc: A curious problem – she is ultimately in equilibrium, swinging between extremes. Her Word represents a process, by which things are transformed – there is fuel, and a spark, and a balance of energy released versus fuel consumed. She understands cycles.

Michael: I fear her unpredictability, but I would not take action against her. She carries the original spark of the Divine. If the situation deteriorates, I would not hesitate to do what must be done . . . though it would be a tragic day for us all.

Novalis: "Ah my friends, and oh my loves – it makes a lovely light." Seriously, if Dominic could put aside his

unthinking hatred, if Laurence would welcome her back with open arms, we'd see how transcendent Love fixes everything. Hers is a discordant soul banished, misunderstood. And yet her madness swaths her in the kind of barrier that not even my most gifted Servitors can hope to penetrate. Still – have you ever seen a forest after a fire? A few years pass, and it is renewed. There is wisdom in that.

Yves: I have long since put the past behind me – I have seen how others have taken words and twisted them. It is not my Destiny that I am concerned about, but all of Creation's. In the end, Gabriel will remain – this I have seen, as I have seen her aurora burn over the horizon of potentiality. She is the fire that speaks to patriarchs and saints, she is the holy inspiration that moves humanity to wisdom. Wherever she goes, there is God.



NEW SERVITOR ATTUNEMENTS

Eyes of Fire

By staring into a flame, the angel has the ability to view the closest object of his Choir attunement (Malakim see the object of their current mission), wherever that person may be. No sound is conveyed, but the angel knows the general direction of his prey.

Whispers of Inspiration

With this attunement, the angel may communicate thoughts directly into the waiting mind of a listening, contemplative being. This communication carries no specific psychic power of suggestion – it is not a measure of control. But the content of the communication can be anything verbally expressible. Information transmitted this way is more likely to be remembered later. Servitors of Gabriel who work together frequently use this attunement to communicate between themselves without being overheard.



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GABRIEL



Where There's Smoke . . .

This attunement allows an angel to sense when a person within line of sight is a pyromaniac. Elohim with this attunement are instantly able to recognize Servitors of Belial.

The True Shape of Flame

Using this attunement, an angel is able to manipulate flame into discrete forms and shapes. These shapes can be anything – some beautiful art has been cast in ephemeral flame. The fire can be made to appear to write in a specific way, or to form letters, leaving a communication or making an impression. This attunement is chiefly used to shape fire to scare the Hell out of the

cruel, but occasionally it is used in a defensive manner. It is useful, sometimes, to be able to swath one's body in a circle of flame that moves at your command.

The Last Spark

An angel may use this attunement to gift a hopeless, dejected human who no longer believes in mercy, who has lost faith, or who has turned from God, with the divine spark. This has the effect of giving the human a number of Essence equal to his highest Force, as well as a swell of personal energy and new perspective.

This angelic inspiration only lasts for an hour, after which it is up to the formerly dejected human to survive on his own.

SAMPLE SERVITORS OF GABRIEL

CARAMIKOS

Ofanite Servitor of Fire

Corporeal Forces – 4 Strength 10 Agility 6
Ethereal Forces – 3 Intelligence 6 Precision 6
Celestial Forces – 2 Will 5 Perception 3

Vessel: Human/3

Role: Fireman/3, Status 3

Skills: Dodge/3, Knowledge (Arson/3), Driving (Car/3), Knowledge (Firefighting/3), Large Weapon (Fire Axe/2), Ranged Weapon (Pistol/3), Tracking /2

Songs: Shields (Corporeal/3)

Attunements: Ofanite of Fire

Caramikos' vessel is a big, burly Greek-looking fireman, who graduated from the front-lines of firefighting to go forth into the world, looking for arsonists and bringing them to justice. As a result, he finds himself in many direct conflicts with demon Servitors of Belial, either directly or through his special Role. He utilizes his special attunement to pursue his mission.

His role as a fireman does not keep him from occasionally locking an arsonist within a building and allowing the criminal to set the fire that brings about his own doom.

Caramikos is a properly balanced starting character.

JAHAZ

Mercurian Servitor of Fire

Corporeal Forces – 2 Strength 3 Agility 5
Ethereal Forces – 4 Intelligence 7 Precision 9
Celestial Forces – 3 Will 6 Perception 6

Vessel: Human/2

Skills: Detect Lies/2, Dodge/3, Driving/1, Emote/2, Singing/1

Songs: Dreams (Corporeal/2, Ethereal/1, Celestial/2), Entropy (Ethereal 2, Celestial 1), Shields (Corporeal/3)

Attunements: Dance of the Atoms

Jahaz knows the Marches as well as almost any of Gabriel's Servitors. After all, he and his Mercurian brethren in service to the Archangel of Fire attempt to stay the hands of those who inflict cruelty on themselves. By Jahaz's reckoning, where better to start than deep within the desires and fears of these troubled souls – in short, within their dreams?

Given his perspective on his mission, Jahaz often carries it out by manifesting within the dreamscapes of his targets. There he applies his excellent communications skills to address the source of the human's anguish. He reasons where called for, simply sings at other times. At worst, his soothing voice within his target's head usually serves as a temporary balm. At best, it can tip the scales

of self-worth and prompt permanent changes in someone's outlook on himself.

Jahaz is fond of reinforcing his dreamscape messages by using his Servitor attunement to make his target's sleeping quarters reflect his message's theme when they awaken. More than one of his targets has awakened in a literal cold sweat.

Certainly, Jahaz's methodology attempts far more permanent changes than the single day of preventing self-cruelty with which Gabriel charges her Mercurians. So far, no one has called him on the carpet for over-reaching his mission . . . but he somewhat anxiously awaits his next detailed interview with his Archangel.

Jahaz is a properly balanced starting character.

ALURIEL AND MORDEKIAL

Cherubim Masters of Divine Knowledge

These two angels are virtually identical in their appearance and characteristics.

Corporeal Forces – 6 Strength 12 Agility 12
Ethereal Forces – 4 Intelligence 6 Precision 10
Celestial Forces – 5 Will 10 Perception 10

Vessel: Human/3

Songs: Healing (Corporeal/5, Ethereal/5, Celestial/4), Motion (Corporeal/4, Celestial/5), Tongues (Corporeal/5, Ethereal/5, Celestial/5)

Attunements: Cherub of Fire, Ofanite of Fire, Malakite of Destiny, Eyes of Fire, The True Shape of Flame

These Servitors of Yves are on loan to Gabriel only at Yves' insistence. Most of the time she ignores them, while grudgingly admitting to herself that Yves' wisdom in placing them with her is greater than her own. They are charged with minimizing the effects of Gabriel's rages and the fires that she will inevitably start, earning them the nickname "Firemen" among Gabriel's Servitors.

They are nearly always attuned to Gabriel, and are constantly watching her from afar. They try to keep a low profile – in the early days of their servitude, a few demons learned their Word and purpose, and now most demons know that when they see the Firemen, Gabriel must not be far behind. Belial would love to subvert and turn these two into Djinn.

No one knows if these bruisers were created as one angel and then split into two, or if they were just "born" that way. Yves isn't telling. They are, however, perfectly aligned to their purpose – keeping tabs on Gabriel and making sure the worst of her damage is healed or repaired. Ultimately they report back to Yves, and can even summon him (+3 to invocation) in an emergency that only he can deal with.

BELETH

DEMON PRINCESS OF NIGHTMARES

Her tower, dark and twisted, cast its shadow over the glittering dreamscapes before the first words of what we call “history” were penned. Her influence was bringing terror to mankind before mankind even knew what to call itself. Beleth, once a creature of fierce lights and promise, reigns as a creature of equally fierce darkness.

In the aftermath of the Fall, the struggle for domination of the Marches was one of the earliest real battles of the War. It was also the shortest, as the angels and demons discovered the truth: the Marches can't be dominated by *anyone* . . . The realm of dream and half-reality is, if anything, the one part of the Symphony where the War has little meaning, except in the dreams of mankind.

As the then-Archangel of Fear, Beleth had learned the ins and outs of the field of dreamscapes along with her lover and partner, Blandine. When Lucifer granted her the title of Demon Princess of Nightmares, she was charged to counter Blandine's every move, work to destroy her if possible and keep vigil over the Marches on behalf of Hell.

Many of the Demon Princes snickered quietly to themselves. Always eager to underestimate Beleth, they chalked up her position in the Marches to a virtual exile, a meaningless job for one of Lucifer's minor playthings. But as the early dramas of mankind began to roll out over the surface of the Earth, the vital importance of their dreams became obvious.

Beleth herself smiled pleasantly at any slander slung her way. While still learning her way around infernal politics, she was no longer blind to Lucifer's real motives for seducing her into the Fall . . . but she was far from bitter. She was grateful. It had been painful, being an angel who didn't really love humanity . . . being a Demon Princess gave her full license to *hate* mankind, and to play their fears not to develop their strengths, but to target their weaknesses. Beleth started having *fun* before the metaphorical mortar in her tower was dry.

For many centuries, it was simply a matter of crossing Blandine, frustrating her at every turn. Years of anger built into more years of absolute hatred, and every new method Beleth developed was delivered with burning



hatred for her former partner. The conflict for the Marches took on its own life, distant, almost, from the War on Earth – and both combatants took to it with vigor. Nothing changed for a long time.

During the period mankind would later call the Dark Ages, a couple of centuries after the fall of Rome, there were major upheavals. Uriel, the Archangel of Purity, declared a war on the beasts of fable and the “pagan gods” – powerful spirits worshiped by human idolaters, who gave them Essence and placed them on thrones in the Marches (see pp. 76-78). Some of these powerful spirits and creatures had even worked as allies with Blandine, but now they were hunted, and hordes of Uriel’s fanatical followers surged into the Marches, and the remote corners of the Earth, hunting them down.

Blandine wept at the passing of the unicorns. Beleth, on the other hand, sheltered the last few . . . ushering them into the Far Marches, along with the surviving gods of every pagan faith in man’s history . . . the crippled Wotan stood next to Mictalantehtli and shivered in fear. Beleth smiled and began to make deals.

Beleth’s Domain took on a new dimension, as she added the forces of the spirit world, and many of their unique methods of shaping the Symphony, to the arsenal employed by her Servitors. Some of the old gods despise demons in general and Beleth in particular, but Uriel made his impression before being called to a higher place. The old gods are no longer free to move beyond the shadowy reaches of the Far Marches, and they must stand behind Beleth for protection.

As the 20th century draws to a close, Beleth’s millennia of strategy are beginning to pay off. Careful maneuvers on every flank of Heaven’s defenses are winning her ground, inch by inch, and things are beginning to look bleak for Blandine.

PERSONALITY AND OUTLOOK

Beleth is nasty. She delights in human terror in the same way that Andrealphus delights in the moment of sexual release . . . Her laughter rings across the valley of dreams perpetually, fueled by the torment she brings to mankind, millions of nightmares at a time. She likes scaring angels, and *demons*, just as much. And she’s good at it. And when she can’t scare you, she’ll crush your vessel and smear you against a rock. Scared now? Good.

She is motivated by hatred. She hates humanity. She hates the rest of Hell’s court. She hates *herself*, and has since the dawn of time. Beleth has not loved a single thing since she loved

Blandine, and that, too, has been reshaped and hammered into a steel-hard edge of hatred. Her pursuit of her Word leaves humanity shaking and insecure, awakening their native urge to self-preservation and making them easy prey for the selfish temptations of Hell. But the long-term goal of the War isn’t as important to Beleth as the short-term thrill of seeing humanity beaten down one fragile hope at a time.

Beleth treats her talented underlings with respect. She really *does* admire a skilled demon at work, and secretly feels her position threatened constantly. Every one of her more powerful Servitors seems so much more confident, so much more *pure* in their purpose than Beleth . . . Beleth often feels like a fraud. But these insecurities are kept tightly locked inside, in a pattern that repeats itself pathetically to the very dregs of her ranks. Beleth, like those who serve her, is defined by arrogance underpinned by self-loathing. She’s not very much fun to talk to. Any time player-character demons encounter her (after a successful invocation or otherwise), the GM should keep in mind her love of fear in *every* being she encounters, and her general loathing of everything in the Symphony, herself included.

PRIORITIES

Beleth’s role in the War is vast. As the Princess in charge of seeing to it that every human lives in fear, and that every fear is actualized, she has a lot to keep her busy. But Beleth is more than just her Word. Her servants are



the sworn enemies of Blandine, and she oversees the constant conflicts – both on Earth and in the Marches – between the two factions of dreams.

Beleth uses more open force than Blandine, and has been attempting to draw her angelic opposite into a more visceral war for most of this century, with mixed results.

Beleth is also Hell's principal agent in the Marches . . . and in particular, the rescuer and occasional ally to the Old Gods that survived Uriel's purge in the eighth century.

Her alliance with the ancient pagan spirits is an uneasy one, but she jockeys well, using *their* fears of vanishing forgotten into the mists of antiquity.

A SAMPLE TETHER: CULLEY'S GAP

In the late 1960s, the youthful counterculture started exploring altered states of consciousness with the help of a lot of popular drugs . . . and slowly, the trend flowed out of the cities and into the rural areas. The West Virginia panhandle didn't get hit until the second half of the decade, but when it did, the local kids were moving beyond weed into more intense chemicals – and when LSD finally came to town, the local youth would pack up in pickups and head out to their favorite spots in the woods. Just west of Keyser was one such spot: Culley's Gap.

Hell was behind the spread of the drugs, and there were plenty of demons roaming the Earth to keep watch over things and speed things along. Culley's Gap was to become a triumph for a handful of Beleth's servants . . . the original inventors of the "bad trip" put together a party of waking nightmare to end them all.

It was 1969, late in the summer, when it all came together. Galoth, the Demon of Waking Nightmares (in his guise as Bobby Cunningham – a popular kid among the high school students and post-school losers alike), drew hippies, rebels and "chemonauts" from as far away as central Maryland and corners of Pennsylvania for a giant party. Depending on who you were, and who you asked, it was about peace, it was about music, it was about bacchanalian sex and drugs, it was about plans to overthrow the government, it was about *whatever you wanted it to be*. Galoth built a network of servants and unwitting dupes and spread whatever word needed to be spread to get the people there. He built it, and they came.

There have been few triumphs so total in the name of the Mistress of Nightmares. Over 200 people, crowded around a river gap on both sides, swaying in the pines and tossing beer bottles into the water . . . and as the evening fell, and the hits were tasted and the wine was drunk and the noses got candied . . . all the chemistry hit exactly *wrong* on every single user there. (Galoth helped.) The dark

side of the dreamlands was suddenly visited by 200 wide-awake dreamers, living out their worst fears at the hands of Beleth and her Servitors. It was a banner night for Nightmares, and the Symphony split wide, the wound still unhealed. A straight path from Culley's Gap to the foot of Beleth's tower was opened, and it's still strong.

In the wake of the memorable party of 1969 (which included two suicides and one accidental drowning, to make things complete), the reputation of Culley's Gap was secure, and "Bobby Cunningham" stayed on to make it grow. To go up to the Deadly Gap and hit a cap was a popular *dare* for any young man who wanted to prove his courage to his girlfriend; the place was almost a *guarantee* for a nightmare trip, and only the tough would do that on purpose, right?

Bobby was, and is, a charismatic fellow, a demon who truly despises mankind. He's still a regular visitor, and one of his own demonic offspring (Danni Baker to the locals, Dezoraël to the denizens of Hell) is its Seneschal. If you encounter demons in the West Virginia woods at night, things are bound to be scary, anyway. But at Culley's Gap, human terror is a speciality.

The gap has several special properties. First, the effects of any drug on a human or animal vessel is *doubled* in Culley's Gap: a quarter-gram of heroin might as well be a half; a single hit of acid counts as a double. But the effects are always *extremely bad*, taking wide-awake drug-users straight to the foot of Beleth's tower, to waking nightmares of the sort only possible with a combination of playful chemicals and the direct influence of Hell. Any demon tempting a human into taking such a chemical joyride to terror gains 1 Essence per victim. "Bobby Cunningham" and his friends keep a lot of addicts on their personal string . . . they rarely kill them, preferring to keep them hooked. But, of course, if one or two die, there will always be more available at the local public schools . . .

Word

The Word of Nightmares, like Blandine's Word of Dreams, encompasses not only the literal travels of a human soul into the Marches, but also the fears, apprehensions and private terrors that keep people from reaching their full potential. When *really* stimulated, those fears can drive anyone into utter self-destruction. Beleth likes that.

It's Beleth's job not only to haunt the dreams of man, but to inspire waking terror, and to make sure that fear rules the actions of everyone she and her servants can reach. Unlike Blandine, who tries to restrict her influence on human dreams to those dreams the humans carry within themselves, Beleth actively encourages the stimulation and creation of *new* nightmares. The goal, ultimately, is to break the human spirit entirely.

Sometimes, the creation of "living nightmares" – scenarios of improbable but utterly horrifying events – becomes a special art-form undertaken by some of Beleth's more creative demons. Some of the more hideous traffic accidents, building fires and medical disasters of this century were carefully staged "live dreamscapes," sometimes lovingly crafted just to torment a single human. That dozens (or hundreds!) of others were scared witless (and inspired to visit Beleth in the Marches that night, and for many nights to follow) was just a bonus.

Conflict With Blandine

Locked in a constant war in the Marches, the servants of Beleth and Blandine expend a good deal of their resources just outmaneuvering one another. The Marches shifts and flows with the forms of angels and demons, rushing among the glittering dreamscapes, trying to make a difference.

Lately, though, Beleth has been taking the war for dreams into the corporeal . . . by moving her resources from the Marches to Earth, she's inspiring nightmares the old-fashioned way – by making sure humans have a *really* bad day. Many of her demons have also been assigned (even Word-bound) to the destruction of the "vital dreamers" – artists and visionaries – that Blandine has decided to protect. There are hundreds of key human beings that have both a demon trying to shatter their confidence and bring their nightmares to fruition, and an angel trying to bolster them and see them to the realization of their dreams. A handful of such humans have *multiple* combatants on each side . . . one-man celestial war zones.

Right now, Beleth seems to be on the winning side, but the Demon Princess constantly fears tricks up Blandine's sleeve. New currents in the Marches seem to indicate a



rising power from Heaven. If either side gains a real edge, the entire War will certainly be affected.

The Old Gods

Beleth makes liberal use of the powerful spirits still worshipped by tiny pockets of humankind. A large part of her nightmare army is actually composed of the more insignificant spirits. From the Old Gods themselves, Beleth has drawn a wide variety of attunements and special Songs, most of which she has thus far kept jealously to herself. Soon, she plans to release a lot of this secret power to her favored Servitors.

The spirits, for the most part, have few chips to put on the bargaining table. They're stuck, they're weakened, they're outcast and they know it.

A few are wandering into the *really* remote stretches of the Marches, far away from Beleth, Blandine, the other spirits, *anything* that anyone can remember . . . looking for a new way to rebuild, or a new way to be remembered. But every day that they wander, they increase their risk of being forgotten entirely. Many that choose this path fade to their doom, reverting to insignificant little wisps of whimsy.

ORGANIZATION

Most of Beleth's demons are either lone agents of Hell or members of small "nightmare squads" of three or four demons each. Close to a quarter of them are Habbalah, making nightmares in the name of God . . . Many more are members of her personal Band, the Pachadim (see p. 36). The rest of Beleth's forces are an even mix of the other demonic bands.

Like her general "more visceral" approach of recent years, this is a tactic designed to force Blandine into defensive positions of decision. By mixing up the way the War is fought, Beleth hopes to stay on the offensive. It's a philosophy that has won many souls for Hell so far.

One area where Beleth's approach matches Blandine's closely is the pattern of assigned Words. Most of Beleth's Word-bound demons are assigned to a broad category of terror: The Demon of the Falling Nightmare is one of the oldest (and most ironic) offices . . . The Demon of Shameful Dreams is powerful, as is the Demon of Dreams of Betrayal. This infernal hierarchy extends downward from broad spheres into more and more specific ones, so that the Demon of Nightmares About Rabid Dogs is expected to answer to the Demon of Nightmares About Animal Attacks, but it is the senior demon's own lookout to see that he does.



POLITICS

With her Principality right on the border of Hell, Beleth literally lives in a world of her own, a kind of hyper-metaphor for demonic individuality. She plays politics only when she *feels* like it, and that suits the courts of the Pit just fine. Her relationship with the Light-bringer himself is a shadowy secret . . . and there are no eyes in Hell that dare pry on any kind of regular basis. Lucifer seems to use Beleth in many of his personal strategies, but Beleth herself is a silent partner when it comes to these special endeavors of Hell's master.

Beleth tends to spread her resources over broader areas than Blandine. While many of her Demons are assigned to individual dreamers (more often than not to counter angelic influence), most are assigned to entire households, neighborhoods, organizations and so on. Groups of people that have a real chance to help others (local chapters of the Salvation Army or Red Cross, for instance) are typically assigned powerful squads.

Andrealphus: She's a cold shower with a knife in it. Not the right kind of thrill for most, but there's a delicious few that really get into terror. For their sake, I find her work indispensable. I just don't use it all that much personally.

Asmodeus: She is of little interest to me, and much less important than she believes. Lucifer uses her, which means she isn't entirely useless, certainly not as useless as



many others I could name . . . There have been an increasing number of Renegades from her ranks, lately, however. This bears watching.

Baal: Simple, confused toy of Lucifer. Before the rebellion, when so many of us were hot for action, Beleth was the little angel at Lucifer's feet, treating him like God himself. It was good sport, watching her being used . . . but I have no time for diversion, and I think she's a waste. My boys can work around her.

Belial: I don't like *her* at all but I admire what she can do. Her work is like a gas-flame . . . there's no way to fight it that doesn't make it worse. I can respect that.

Haagenti: I once dreamed I got so hungry I started *gnawing on my own leg*. Then I woke up and *TRIED* it. Ha! Some nightmare! I taste goooood!

Kobal: Well, she's a little spy, you know . . . and I think she wastes the Marches. The potential there is so . . . ahhh, but nobody would even *get* it. I tried once, to work with her. Never again; she said that I was being *kind* to humanity. And when I was there, in her realm . . . she was *poking around*. No, no fun. None at all.

Kronos: Useful. *Useful*. The dreams of humans are where they find strength . . . and where we can steal it from them. Beleth wields her power like a gentle razor, slicing deep into the hopes of man. She has wrought so much destruction. Many Princes are so petty they envy her, but they don't admit it.

Lilith: Living out there on the edge of the Marches, she makes her own way. She scares *me*, but I guess that's the point, isn't it? I've had plans, lately, for her . . . there are things she wants that I can get her. And she'll owe *big*. All's fair . . .

Malphas: Beautiful, subtle Princess. What weeks of real trauma, real betrayal, real *malice* are required to produce . . . she can insert into a man's mind with a single dream. So many go to their rest seeking solace, seeking truth. They trust in their dreams. Beleth brings mankind to self-betrayal, self-hatred and self-fear. There is no bond that nightmares cannot break, and I adore her technique. Her servants are easy to pit against one another as well . . .

Nybbas: Nightmares . . . if we could give mankind a way to *watch* them, now *that* would be worth putting our resources into. Think of that! Tuning into the 24-hour Nightmare Network, standing witness in the privacy of your own living room to the personal, *intimate* terror of your neighbors . . . Oh, yes! *Must* ask Vapula to get to work on that. But as they stand, Nightmares don't sell ads, don't sell tickets and don't *push the product*. Passé.

Saminga: She won't be necessary when the victory is finally won, when mankind are all dead and rotting and obedient to *me*. The dead stare blankly at her terrors, and continue to obey me. Superfluous little whelp.

Valefor: She once asked me if I could steal dreams. I told her that, one way or another, I did that every day. But I don't think that was the answer she wanted. She just stared for a while. Creeped *me* out. I don't know what the hell she was talking about.

Vapula: There are some great inventors on Earth that can't do a thing until they've taken a trip to Beleth's little playground. They wake up in a cold sweat and the next thing you know they're rubbing a new chemical on a rabbit's backside to see if it stings. So I guess she serves her purpose.

attunement. Any demon visiting the nightmare as it occurs can spend 1 Essence to make an element of the unpleasant event into a Nightmare Trigger. Whenever the dreamer again experiences anything containing the Trigger, he will relive the same nightmare when he next sleeps.

Example: A bank teller accidentally issues an extra \$400 to a customer, and gets chewed out by her boss, then fired. While her boss was screaming at her, the teller focused on his eyeglasses: large red-framed monstrosities. Those spectacles are a recurring theme in the nightmare she has that night . . .

If a demon were to enter her dream and see that element, he could lock it as a Trigger. From then on, any sight of ugly red eyeglasses would distress the former bank teller to the point that she would automatically begin that night's sleep in Beleth's side of the Marches.

The Trigger lasts until the dreamer successfully moves a Trigger-inspired nightmare into Blandine's realm.



NEW SERVITOR ATTUNEMENTS

Dream Joining

This attunement, used to bond two dreams (or nightmares) into a single active dreamscape, is available to the Servitors of Beleth as well as Blandine. In demonic hands, it serves a similar purpose – to intensify the nature of the dream and “anchor” it on one side of the Marches. It follows the rules described on p. 12.

Note, however, that this attunement requires more judicious use on the part of Beleth's demons than by Blandine's angels. While bonded nightmares can firmly force two dreamers to stay in Beleth's realm, the intimate *personal* bonding between the dreamers still occurs, and surviving a mutual nightmare can bring people *together* and help them *overcome* fears. Beleth adores the clever use of this attunement, but mercilessly punishes slip-ups that aid humanity rather than harm it.

Nightmare Trigger

Anytime a human dreamer experiences something unpleasant while awake, and travels to Beleth's realm at night because of it, that dreamer is vulnerable to this

Dream Drain

To use this attunement, the demon must be in a human dreamscape when it is in Beleth's realm. This attunement allows the demon to take a special role in the nightmare, appearing as a particularly dangerous threat. The form triggers the dreamer's own innate access to his own Essence, and *empties* it into the demon, as a defensive gesture!

The demon gets every speck of Essence the dreamer has to give.

The drawback is that it *works* as a defensive gesture. The demon is immediately ejected from the nightmare, and the dreamer gets to make a d666 roll against Will. If the roll succeeds, the dreamer's dreamscape drifts into Blandine's half of the Vale of Dreams, and any demonic attempts to meddle with that dream for the rest of the night are reduced by an amount equal to the check digit.

HIGHER DISTINCTIONS

Beyond Baron of Screams, Beleth grants higher distinction to those demons who've made a real difference in the level of humanity's daily (or nightly) terror, and who have served Beleth's Word with real vigor. Beleth's Dukes (the only Distinction Beleth grants beyond Baron) are each Word-bound demons of considerable



power and subtle skill, demons who are equally adept in the dreamscape of a sleeping human as they are in the day-to-day world of humans fighting to overcome their fears.

The full title of demons bearing these distinctions is derived from their Word. The Demon of Nightmares of Failure – a highly placed Duke – is properly addressed as the Duke of Nightmares of Failure, a demon whose influence includes the smaller spheres ruled by (as two examples among several) the Demon of Nightmares of Romantic Rejection and the Demon of Nightmares of Poverty.

Beleth's higher Distinction carries with it no special powers, such as those of the lower Distinctions. Rather, it is typically awarded along with several unique Rites, regular access to Beleth's ear and increased responsibility.

SAMPLE SERVITOR OF BELETH

JACKIE

Balseraph Servitor of Nightmares

Corporeal Forces – 3 Strength 4 Agility 8
Ethereal Forces – 2 Intelligence 5 Precision 3
Celestial Forces – 4 Will 12 Perception 4

Vessels: Cat/2 (Charisma +2), Human/2

Skills: Acrobatics/2, Climbing/1, Emote/3, Escape/1, Fighting/1

Songs: Dreams (Corporeal/2, Ethereal/3, Celestial/1), Form (Ethereal/2)

Attunements: Balseraph of Nightmares, Dream Walking

Discord: Aura/6

A fluffy white kitty-cat, alone and hungry, right outside your door. *Take me in and feed me*, it seems to say. *I'm cold and lonely and if you feed me I'll love you forever . . .* Every move it makes speaks of quiet, innocent pathos and a warm affection waiting for a deserving owner. Of course, you don't know it's a Balseraph, and every gesture, without a single word uttered, is a black and evil lie.

Jackie has a human vessel, for when she really needs one, but prefers to bring terror to humans in her cat form. She operates in large urban areas, playing up the pitiful-stray routine and earning the sympathy of a victim, then slowly turning their lives into Hell on Earth. The baby shouldn't have been chasing the kitty under the ironing board . . . oops!

She's been at this for nearly a century, and hasn't grown tired of it yet. By day, she wreaks terror through simple tricks and maneuvers. By night, she enters the dreams of her "owners," and makes certain that they stay firmly in Beleth's realm. Jackie hasn't been assigned to anything really serious yet, but that's bound to change soon, as the Princess of Nightmares has recently noticed what a talented Balseraph is slinking around on little cat feet . . .

Jackie is a balanced starting-level demon, ready for play.



PACHADIM

THE FRIGHTENERS

*Shane, what is it? What's wrong? Is it me?
It's nothing, really, honey. It's nothing.
You still love me, don't you? Don't you, Shane?
Sure I do, babe. Sure I do. It's just . . .
Just what? What is it, Shane? Just tell me and I'll make
it right!
I just think that maybe I'd love you more if you lost some
weight.*

Humans are full of locked doors, behind which are the raging monsters of their fears. They try to keep these doors locked, lest they destroy themselves. But the Pachadim have the keys.

RESONANCE

Like the Impudites, Pachadim take a very hands-on approach. They like to enmesh themselves in a web of human relationships, continually tweaking the fears of everyone they know. Pachadim can sense what a human fears, and then does what he can to make these fears worse. By and large, the fears Pachadim prey on aren't things like being afraid of the dark; they're personal-security fears, like worrying if your husband is cheating on you or that you're overweight or that your mother never loved you or that you're of no use to anyone and you'd be better off dead. Pachadim are master manipulators, and words are their most potent weapons. For that matter, humans are good tools, too: a simple suggestion in one mortal ear can trigger a raging argument a few hours later.

Some Pachadim are renowned among their Band for having spent years – almost a full human lifetime, in fact – playing the same role: marrying, raising a family, pursuing a career and so on. They have the unparalleled joy of seeing all of the lives around them turn sour and futile as the years go by, and finally they get to see their own bitter, dysfunctional children go out into the world and do the same to others. Pachadim like to say that the only real difference between a human and a Pachadite is that a Pachadite intentionally inflicts heartache and misery on those around him; humans do it by instinct.

It is the goal of each Pachadite to push all humans to live in fear, all the time. In fact, the original Pachadim



were fallen Menunim (see p. 36), who believed that only humans strong enough to overcome their fears deserved to reach their Destiny. Some Pachadim are envious of the Habbalah's divine delusion – they secretly like to think that they, too, are really doing God's work by weeding out the weak, but they know better than to admit it.

DISSONANCE

Pachadim can generate dissonance in two ways. First and foremost, Pachadim cannot have a relationship with a human that is not predatory. A Pachadite can never consider a human to be a true friend or ally, not even human servants of the diabolic with whom a Pachadite is ordered to work. A Pachadite must always be exploiting the fears of humans around him, which makes them extremely unpleasant for human sorcerers and other such folk to be around. So tell me, was becoming a bootlicking jackal of Prince Malphas really worth your immortal soul?

Second, Pachadim genuinely respect humans who can overcome their fears; moreover, they know that weak humans are just a better investment of their time, since such humans can be counted on for a lifetime of sharing their burden of misery with those around them. If a Pachadite attempts to prey on a human's fears and fails three times in a row (whether in the same hour, week, month or whatever), he cannot ever try preying on that human again without acquiring dissonance.

MANNER AND APPEARANCE

Pachadim are almost indistinguishable from humans in their manner – at least, indistinguishable from human jerks. They don't necessarily operate from behind a facade of friendliness (as Impudites do); many humans

who know a Pachadite in his human role may well consider him to be an obnoxious jerk. The trick is that Pachadim find humans who will tolerate an obnoxious jerk in exchange for a little affection, camaraderie or the promise of a promotion. The more openly manipulative, caustic and destructive a Pachadite can be and still accomplish his goals, the happier he is.

In appearance, Pachadim in human guise are generally attractive, well-dressed people, because Pachadim have found that humans will take a lot of punishment from someone who looks good. Pachadim like to think of themselves as incarnations of primal human nature, and they may be right. In celestial form, Pachadim look like grotesquely fat, diseased, pustule-ridden humans, which is another reason they like to spend most of their time in corporeal form.

GAME MECHANICS

To learn a human's fear, a Pachadite needs to spend a couple minutes around him – ideally, in conversation. Then the Pachadite makes a simple d666 Perception check. The check digit indicates how powerful the fear is for the human – in game terms, the check digit is the Will attribute for the fear's effect on that human.

Once a Pachadite has learned a human's fear (or fears – Pachadim can keep prying fears out of a human, if they want to) he may attempt to prey on that fear. Such an attempt is usually made by talking to the human and finding a way to make the

human conscious of his fear with a simple, seemingly innocent comment. When the attempt is made, the human must make a d666 roll, adding his Will as a modifier. The target number is equal to the fear's Will, as determined above.





BAND ATTUNEMENT

The Pachadim are a Band dedicated to service to Beleth. (For an explanation of minor Choirs and Bands, and how they relate to Superiors and the major Choirs from *In Nomine*, see *Minor Choirs and Bands* on p. 16.)

Beleth will loan her Pachadim to other Superiors on request – of course, some of the Demon Princes are more likely to ask for her help than others. There is almost no infernal scheme that cannot take advantage of a Pachadite's ability to use fear to demoralize and divide humans (Among the other Princes, Malphas finds them particularly helpful). But no Pachadite has ever permanently left the Princess of Nightmares' charge.

Beleth provides all her Pachadim a special attunement, as follows:

Beleth's Pachadim carry out their task in the land of dreams just as they do in the waking world – perhaps even more effectively, given the nature of the ethereal realm. Such Pachadim usually have Dream Walking, and can use their power to sense vulnerability among the world's dreamers.

Pachadim gain a +2 result to their check digit for successful attempts at causing fear when using the power on a dreamer within the Marches.

If the roll fails, the human is plagued by his fear for a number of weeks equal to the Will of the fear. In his personal interactions, the victim unconsciously assumes that everyone he meets is in some way trying to prey on his fear, and acts accordingly. In addition, all Will checks he makes for the first 24 hours are at a -1 penalty.

The Will of the fear indicates how strongly it affects the human. Fears with a Will of 1 or 2 are not crippling. A human ridden by such a fear will simply be a bit on edge, a bit insecure. Fears with a Will of 3 or 4 are potent, and will probably result in at least one explosive argument. Fears with a Will of 5 or 6 are shattering, and the human will suffer from clinical depression for at least 24 hours and perhaps for the entire period.

When a Pachadite has succeeded in preying on a human's fear, he cannot use that fear on the human again until the fear's current effects have ended; the human will have barred the door to that fear and wrapped himself tightly around it, to the point that it can't be used against him until his guard is down once more.



BELIAL

DEMON PRINCE OF FIRE

The crazed arsonist of the War, Belial is the not-too-subtle Demon Prince of Fire. When quietly inciting rebellion in Heaven, Lucifer knew that he would need the destructive power of Fire on his side, so after his attempts to sway Gabriel failed, he recruited one of her minions, a small, relatively weak Ofanite named Belial. Belial lusted for Fire – not because it could warm the cold, or bring light to darkness, but because it consumed everything it touched. He appreciated the perfection of how it transformed, how it reduced things of beauty to things of ugly darkness.

Belial wasn't very hard to recruit – his solitary nature and his habit of exploring Earth without permission from his Superior was enough to help Lucifer gain the angel's confidence, then later his support and loyalty.

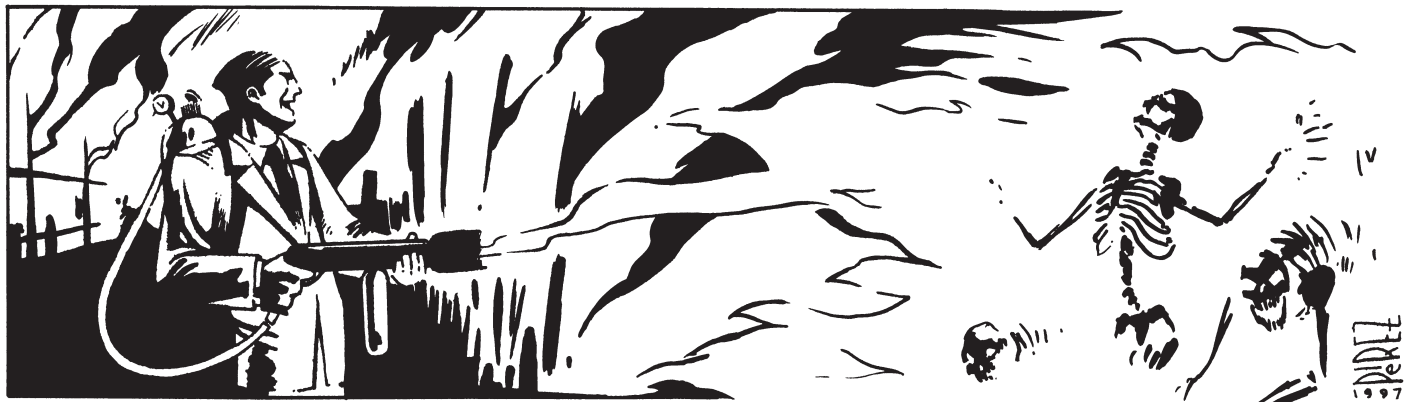
Belial's obsession with flame drove his every action from the moment he threw in with the rebellion. Lucifer had promised him the Word of Fire, which Belial believed he'd take directly from Gabriel after Lucifer made things right in Heaven.

Well, good thing Belial came along when Lucifer was thrown out. One of the first Words Lucifer assigned was Fire, and Belial was ordered to immediately set fire to Hell, at first for the purposes of light and later to punish the damned. Needless to say, Hell has been a pretty hot place ever since (except where it's freezing) and Belial has a lot to do with that.

Belial's pyromania (and pyrophagia and pyrophilia) has driven him to wander Earth, looking for new things to set on fire or new kinds of combustion. In early history, before things got too complicated by technology, he would go about promoting his Word by making certain lots of stuff got burned. He was there when Rome burned, the Library of Alexandria, London . . . he really misses thatch roofs.

Belial's Servitors were expert at encouraging large-scale destruction – they were sad to see the Roman army go, as frequently they would take apart cities and towns brick by brick and burn fields of much-needed grain as part of a rural lighting program. Belial himself was too preoccupied with fire, touching it, breathing it in, seeing it work, to really get organized enough to engender the





destruction – for a long time he was perfectly willing to just watch humans play with his favorite toy.

It wasn't long, however, until he started to get jealous of some of the things Vapula was doing. First he caught Vapula's people in China involved in the creation of fireworks – which was fine with him at first because it was just a new way to see things burn. But then the concept of guns came about, and Belial was sure that Vapula was trying to take over his Word.

After spending some time with Vapula, however, Belial was fascinated with all the incredibly diverse ways combustion could take place. Vapula promised he would do nothing to take away from the destructive aspect of Fire, and since his Word has continued to grow as a result of Vapula's efforts, the two Demon Princes' association continues unhindered.

Belial learned to appreciate the myriad kinds of Fire – he came to love anything that deals destruction and is composed of energy: electricity, radiation, plasma – if it is hot and hurts, he is up for it.

Belial has never been much of a planner, much less a schemer. His basic philosophy for supporting his Word is to have his Servitors show up at a scene of mass destruction as soon as possible after it happens, and see what else they can stir up. Belial doesn't personally plan and execute that many fires, but he's frequently behind some of the best – like Mrs.

O'Leary's cow kicking over a lantern in Chicago. He's also expert at taking fires that happen by accident and making them worse; he was around to confuse the San Francisco firemen after their great earthquakes (both big ones) and to help the fires burn faster and higher.

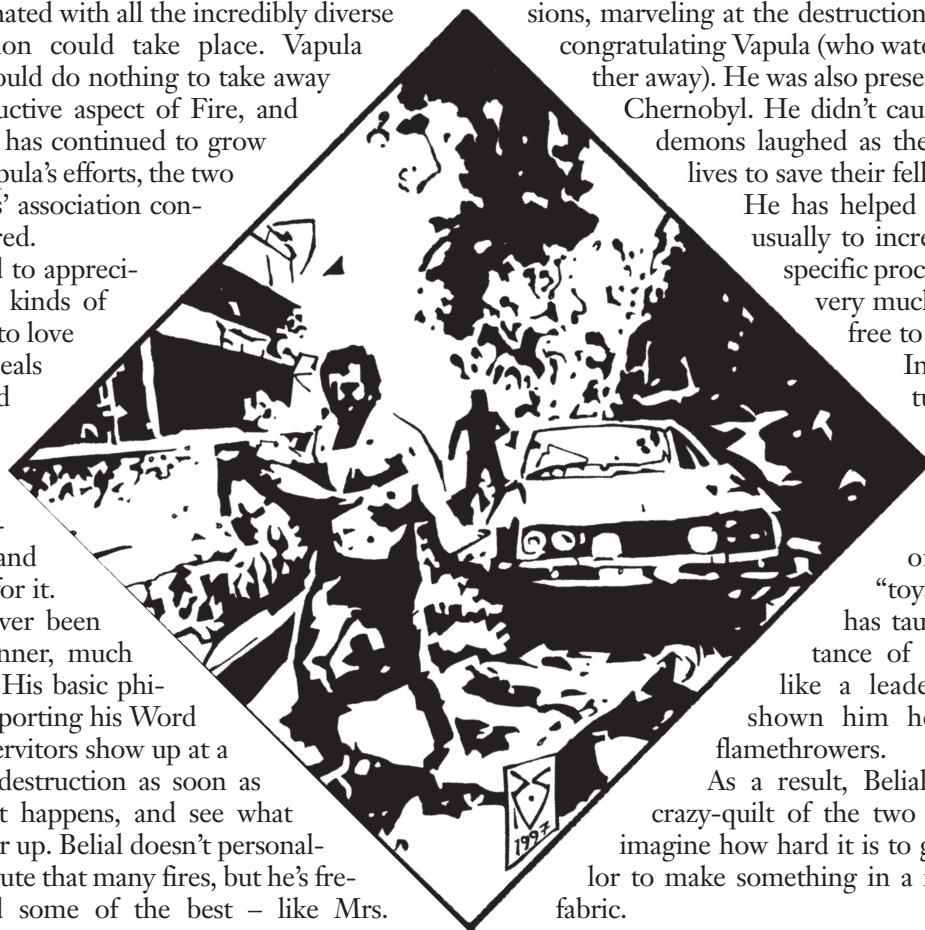
And lastly, Belial can also follow his own intuition to the next big conflagration and arrive there before it happens – that's how he came to be at the burning of Atlanta, for instance.

He managed to be present at both atomic bomb explosions, marveling at the destruction caused by both and congratulating Vapula (who watched from much further away). He was also present for the accident at Chernobyl. He didn't cause it, but he and his demons laughed as the firemen gave their lives to save their fellow Russians.

He has helped Vapula many times, usually to increase the cruelty of a specific process or procedure. He very much likes to see fire set free to do its work.

In the last few centuries he has taken to closely listening to any advice from Baal and has received a number of fine, destructive "toys" from Vapula. Baal has taught him the importance of acting and dressing like a leader, and Vapula has shown him how much he likes flamethrowers.

As a result, Belial is something of a crazy-quilt of the two influences. You can imagine how hard it is to get a Savile Row tailor to make something in a nice flame-retardant fabric.



PERSONALITY AND OUTLOOK

Belial is the ultimate loose cannon on the deck. He hates to take the blame for anything and so gets involved in very few overall operations. Still, Hell is best served this way – Belial’s freelance activities on Earth frequently net him great gains for his Word. Belial is somewhat lazy despite his energetic Word, always looking for the most effect from the least effort.

His identification with fire is incredibly focused – he relates everything back to it. Nothing is important if it is not bright, hot, burning or fire-like in some way – unless it causes destruction. Belial doesn’t have grand dreams of some future where the world is engulfed in flames (although he certainly wouldn’t mind); he doesn’t plan that far ahead. He’s just content to deal with the destruction that’s occurring right now, today, rather than worry about what might happen in the future.

He was disappointed with the end of the Cold War, because it denied him the opportunity to experience another nuclear blast, though he was certainly on hand in Vietnam, in Cuba and various times in the Middle East when the use of nuclear weapons seemed possible. He’s even tried to get Baal to help him arm some terrorists with a nuclear weapon, but the Demon Prince of the War doesn’t have a lot of time for Belial’s obsessions, and most terrorists actually work indirectly for Malphas or Beleth, Superiors with whom he does not have much contact.

PRIORITIES

Destruction is Belial’s priority. He simply wishes to make the chaos within himself part of reality. He isn’t picky how it is accomplished, except that he would like it to be very fiery. He’s had Servitors ride along into space with shuttle flights to see if they can’t find a proper asteroid to turn into a flaming, burning meteor – that would be fun! Barring that, there’s always the chance for a latter-day nuclear apocalypse, especially with all those nukes running around loose from the former Soviet Union.

With the Big One more unlikely than ever lately, Belial goes for whatever he can get. From a four-alarm house fire to an M-80 exploding in a child’s hand, he’s up for it. The fires he helps along don’t ever match the burning inside him, but they give him a few moments of relief. He’s always thinking about his next big conflagration, in much the same way an addict thinks about his next fix.

Because of the Discord his people are famous for, he has taken a lot of grief from other Superiors, especially Asmodeus. He doesn’t like it any more than the rest of them, but there’s not a lot he can do about it. Still, whenever he remembers to think about it, he tries to warn his people about being burned by their own fires – that being the chief cause of so much Dissonance among his Servitors. He has asked for and received a squad of really nasty Djinn Renegade hunters from Baal to stalk and put an end to any of his Servitors who appear to be about



A SAMPLE TETHER: THE ATOMIC DOME

The Atomic Dome, the memorial constructed by Hiroshima survivors at ground zero of the first wartime use of atomic weapons, was intended to be both a memorial to the victims and a sober reminder of the horrors of war. Today, it serves a third purpose, as a Tether of Belial.

The Dome, which connects directly to the fiery volcano of Sheol, is now little-used by Belial himself, but is a favorite transfer point for many of his Servitors. It offers a particularly nostalgic view of the city once reduced to a smoking ruin. Hiroshima's fires were a long time dying, and the collateral damage was also considerable. A demon who wishes to be called "Satsuke" is the Seneschal of the Dome; he serves under the Demon of Nuclear Devastation, a frantic and increasingly paranoid Calabim Baron who is trying desperately to keep his Word alive, but not doing too well at it.

Belial isn't much of a nostalgia buff – he was there when the thing went off originally, took in all the lovely devastation, and then left for Nagasaki to be sure and catch that one. But the destruction itself was so complete that it became connected to Sheol with-

out any effort on Belial's part, and he was not about to pass up a free Tether.

Fires near the Dome tend to burn more brightly and more intensely due to the Tether's presence, but usually the only way to prove it's a Tether is to be standing there when a demon uses it.

Satsuke has been known to travel on business in the country, leaving the Tether guarded only by a raucous band of young Japanese demons who couldn't care less. The doomsday cults that are now springing up in Japan are part of a cooperative effort Satsuke is working with some Servitors of Malphas. Belial hasn't even noticed, because nothing the cult has done has resulted in a real explosion yet, but Saminga was impressed by the amount of death a little nerve toxin can cause. Although surely Vapula is mixed up in this, too, it's hard to put a finger on which Superior has the most influence in Satsuke's organization – and Satsuke, cunning politico that he is, has made certain that this remains the case. Vapula must have some kind of Tether nearby (perhaps on the site of Japan's first atomic pile, not far away from Hiroshima) – but where it is, nobody knows.

to go Renegade, or worse, be Redeemed. The one thing that truly galls him is for Gabriel to salvage one of his own.

Of course, Belial has failures of his own, which his enemies at the Infernal Court never fail to bring up. The most recent was the debacle of the annual "Burning Man" celebration, which Belial founded as a celebration of fire and explosion. While he sat entranced by the flames, servants of Novalis turned the whole thing into a New Age spiritual exploration, safe for the whole family. He still catches hell about that.

The supposed battle over the Word of Fire is over as far as he's concerned. He's never much cared for the symbolic or non-destructive aspects of Fire – Gabriel can have them for all he cares.

Gabriel's earthly operation (run by that foul Soldekai) is what bothers him the most – they are goody-two-shoes who are constantly trying to find his most delicious torturers, pyromaniacs and arsonists and "bring them to justice" – whatever *that* means. What it usually means is that they're no fun to play with anymore, after they've gone to jail or through treatment or been thrown off railroad bridges. This really ticks Belial off. In his single-minded madness of flame, nothing should ever get between him

and his need, his burning desire. Furthermore, those who prevent or stop fires – firemen, fire safety inspectors, bomb squads, bomb-sniffing dogs – all earn his special ire.

He has a place in Hell for the souls of known damned firemen, and he treats them to endless replays of their own failures throughout their careers. Frequently he uses them as chandeliers in his Fire Parties, held each summer on Earth and occasionally in Hell. He never lets any fireman stop burning, though he provides them with tubs full of gasoline should they ever wish to take a dip.

One very important priority to Belial is that he always has a very strong vessel – a real bruiser. He hates to lose a vessel to fire but occasionally does so when his attunement fails.

Nearly all of his vessels are scarred and branded by fire, so it's fairly easy to pick Belial out of a celestial line-up: he's the one who's smoking – all over his body.

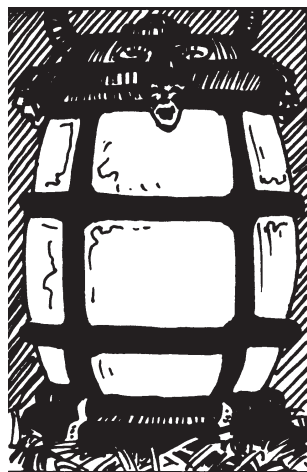
BELIAL'S WORD

Destruction, burning, ruination: this is Belial's Word of Fire. It doesn't inspire, it isn't merry, it isn't even cheerful. Belial prefers his flames colored with the chem-

icals found in human blood, but any other color will do. In a way, all Calabim are serving his Word when they use their Band resonance – random and wanton destruction of any variety serves him just as much as burning, licking flames.

DISSONANCE

Fire is an inherently treacherous tool – one mistake, one careless moment, and it turns on you. Belial's Word doesn't allow anyone to make such mistakes. The idea is that you *destroy* – you aren't *destroyed*. Part of the celestial reason for this is Belial's own metaphysical selfishness – but part, surely, must come from Gabriel herself, as she has tainted the demonic Word of Fire through her own connection to it (for which she has paid dearly – see p. 19).



Belial promotes his Word by both directly causing destruction and by encouraging others to foment destruction wherever possible. Whether it's kicking over a lantern or causing a spark in an oxygen recirculator, a child playing with matches or a government testing nuclear weapons, Belial revels in fire and destruction of all kinds. He does find it safer, however, to have someone else perform the deed, freeing him from most of the dissonance liability should he get caught in the blast.

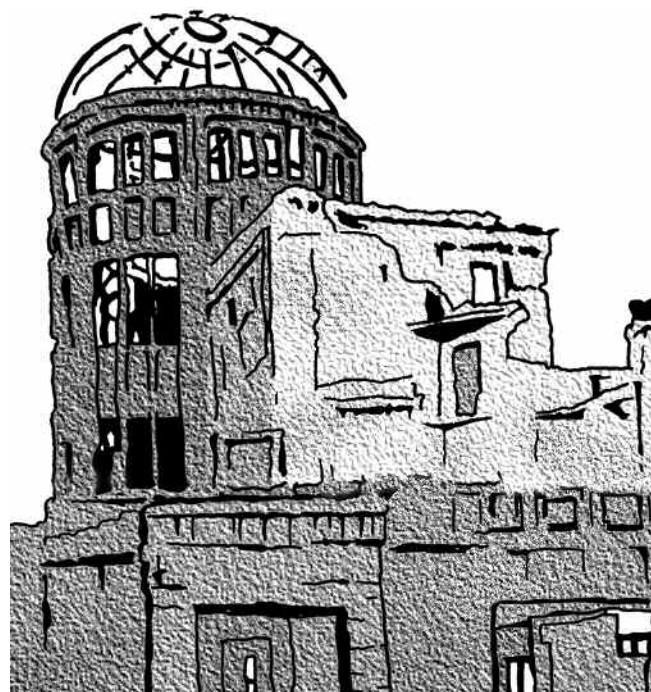
ORGANIZATION

Belial doesn't actually organize his people. His single-minded driving need to attend the very next incendiary event on Earth doesn't leave him much time for such things. His own region in Hell is slipshod and scattered – Sheol is a mess, but it's a burning mess, and that's all Belial cares about. He doesn't keep track of his Servitors (although like most Superiors he can tell his Servitors at a glance, he rarely even bothers to learn their names – there is a lot of “Hey, you!” and “Underling!” in his commands) and any planning or coordination he does is purely off the cuff and on the fly. He is, however, the burning hope of every Calabite, and they all like him almost instantly, although they don't always show it outwardly.

Despite his tremendous lack of organization, Belial still manages to keep in touch with his more powerful demons because they tend to show up in the same places

– though the last time Belial saw all his Word-bound Servitors in the same place was just over 50 years ago in Dresden, Germany.

Because of Baal's influence, however, he has taken to maintaining a Golden Fortress of Flame (somebody had to tell Belial that gold melted rather easily, so he put up an iron fortress and had it painted gold). Perched on the edge of Sheol overlooking the Lake of Fire – it's the stylish thing to do, after all. Belial eschews the palace unless he has to meet with another Superior. He much prefers to walk out to the end of his adamantine dock on the Lake, and swan-dive in, sleeping in its fiery midst – when he chooses to sleep at all, which is not often.

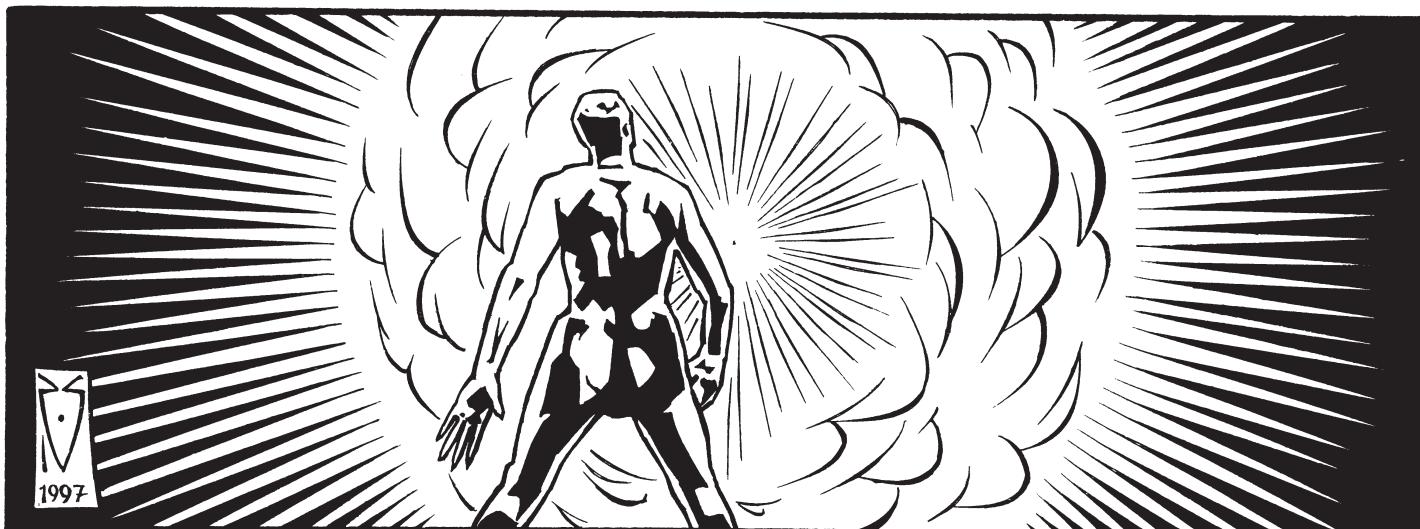


TETHERS

Sites of mass destruction are his favorites, and there are plenty to choose from. One of his favorite Tethers is located at the three marble columns in Golden Gate Park in San Francisco that honor the casualties of the Great Earthquake. The cities of Hiroshima and Nagasaki also contain Tethers to his unholy Fortress in Sheol (see *The Atomic Dome*, p. 42).

POLITICS

Belial doesn't seem to be the most thoughtful of Superiors. Indeed, he just isn't that bright, despite his fiery Word. Still, he has a certain insane genius, an idiot-



savant mastery of all forms of combustion and all flavors of destruction. In order to properly understand Belial, one must come to understand the single-mindedness with which he pursues his craft. He rivals Andrealphus in his ability to focus on his Word.



He just doesn't think things through. He'd rather be in the middle of a fire than outside, watching it. Many Demon Princes have underestimated Belial's awareness, and have paid for their lack of vision. The single-mindedness which drives Belial can occasionally be shifted to something other than destruction.

This has only happened a few times, but the results were formidable. Belial has totally wiped out several powers in Hell – erased them from existence – when they crossed him. This talent for absolutely selfish vengeance is what keeps Belial respected among the Infernal courts.

Andrealphus: Just because I understand the idea of an all-consuming need doesn't mean I agree with Belial and his ways. And while I often burn with lust, too often his fires burn what would otherwise be lovely flesh.

Asmodeus: If he cannot control his destructive nature, I hope Lucifer will restrain him before he does too much damage. Too many delicate operations have been ruined by this loose cannon.

Baal: He has a gift, and is a valuable ally. I believe I could control him if necessary. Already he dresses like me, accepts my advice. He will follow me at the right time. Until then, his obsession aids the War.

Beleth: I hate him, to be honest, but why should I spend my time worrying about the likes of him? He travels in his own circles; I sit here in the midnight fortress. He is as far away from me as can be and still be Fallen. My creatures loathe the fire, they loathe the light in any color. And one day I will reign in a nightmare Earth where the only fire is that of my own dreams.

Haagenti: Fire's hungry like me, right? It consumes almost as fast as I do. And fire's good for cooking – when there's time to really enjoy your meal. So I guess he's okay.

Kobal: This guy has a burning desire to really cook my goose. I can't understand what inspires him to flame me, but at the same time I'm sympathetic to his combustible personality. I myself have at times indulged in in-sin-diary tactics. Just because I don't necessarily hold a torch for Gabriel doesn't mean I'm not sensitive to the boiling point of Belial's nature – and he *does* have balls. Fire balls of course – what were you thinking?

Kronos: Fire is surest, it strikes, it is the killer that reduces everything from its high state to a state of ashen despair. How appropriate that it be used to thwart humanity. How wonderful that it can turn a leader into a homeless beggar. At times the weaving of a man's fate is best served hot.

Lilith: Okay, he is one scary guy. But let's face it – he's no rocket scientist. It doesn't take a lot to get something from him. I enjoy making him a deal here and there, although he's reneged once or twice and I had to rake him across the coals. He won't soon cross me again – not if he knows what's good for him.

Malphas: Unsubtle whelp. His only good use is that his unpredictability lends a certain chaotic undertone to the War, one that is easily exploited by those who can see clearly in the Dark. Although I've made good use of the tools he's developed – torches, Molotov cocktails, even a truckload of fertilizer – I dare not involve him directly in my affairs, for his chaotic nature would surely harm more than help. I have seen in his eyes, however, a certain appreciation for my arts . . .

Nybbas: BOOM! Hell says "YES." Tremendous market share when he's on his game, something of a wet

firecracker when he's not. I mean, you can only stare at a guy staring at a fire for so long, right? But when he's cookin', he's cookin'. I keep trying to keep up with this guy, the newsies are seriously hot for him – they love what he does. He basically is a wandering Action Copter News Event, wherever he goes. He'd better play ball with us in the future, though – we don't want to have to pull out those Elle MacPherson fire-prevention spots – heh heh, that should put a dent in his Word if he gets out of hand. Just like everybody, he's a resource to be managed, a star to be worked.

Saminga: Fire is the death eater, consumer of fallen corpses – poison to me! All he sends me are charred remains, useless to my needs. He does not understand that there are other, less destructive ways to kill. If he wasn't clearly insane, I would believe that he actively opposed me.

Valefor: This guy is as quiet as a monster truck with a hair-trigger car alarm. His Word consumes all that is valuable. I don't really see how he and I can ever see eye-to-eye, if nothing else because I just don't understand why you'd want to destroy something valuable. Doesn't he get it?

Vapula: Ahh yes, one of my most attentive audiences – as long as I am creating incendiary devices for him. His devotion is something of an inspiration – listening to his mad ravings about flame has frequently given me the vision to create yet another weapon of an order of magnitude more power. There are large craters in my principality from the testing . . . I look forward to his next visit with much anticipation.



NEW SERVITOR ATTUNEMENTS

Eyes of Blight

With this attunement, the demon can see the entropy inherent in everything around him – see how things are falling apart, how those weaknesses might be exploited. Using a Perception roll, he can add the check digit to any attempts to destroy a target first studied using this attunement. This attunement also allows a demon to know, at a glance, where not to step and what not to touch in a dangerous situation; a booby-trap trigger (or even an accident waiting to happen) looks like a light flare in the Eyes of Blight.



A Kiss for Fuses

With this attunement, anything flammable can be made into a fuse. The demon kisses the item (enough to get just a little saliva on it) and spends 1 Essence, visualizing the exact time in minutes he wishes the fuse to be “set for.” That’s it. The fuse goes off in an incendiary spark as planned, as modified by a die roll:

Die Roll	Time Change
1	+10 minutes
2	+5 minutes
3	Exact time
4	-5 minutes
5	-10 minutes
6	No matter what time originally envisioned, it goes off in 5 minutes.

The spark itself does no damage, but it will ignite any flammables or explosives nearby.

Call of the Dancing Flame

A demon uses this attunement to transfix a human and keep them from taking action to stop a fire. This is not an uncommon happening even among firefighters – to be so entranced by the flame and the deadly beauty of it that you fail to take any action at all. In order to use this attunement, the demon must have some nearby source of flame to work with – the bigger the flame the better (the GM may award modifiers for large fires).

Make an opposed roll between the Demon’s Celestial Forces and the Will of the target. The check digit $\times 2$ indicates the number of minutes a viewer will be held in thrall by the flames. Fire damage taken during this time doesn’t shorten the time – it just feels warm and good, like sunlight. This attunement can bring out pyromania in its targets – a roll of 666 will definitely make the target a confirmed pyro.

Blackdraft

This attunement takes a raging inferno and totally shuts it down – for a short while. The fire – its light, its heat, its chemical qualities – suddenly stops. This can affect as small a space as a room or as big as a subway platform, depending on what the demon desires. For a short time, it’s absolutely safe to do anything in the area affected by the zone. Then, when the demon wills or when the attunement runs out, the fire is suddenly “back,” just as destructive as before. This usually has devastating effects.

The attunement costs 3 Essence to use and lasts as long as a Celestial Forces roll’s check digit $\times 2$, or until the demon releases it. The only way to tell that something is amiss is that, before the blackdraft is released, the



shadows in the area are particularly thick and heavy – this is because the fire itself has been changed for a short time into cool, non-smoking shadow energy. Note that this attunement also allows demons to escape their own fires.

Domino Effect

By using the inherent destructiveness of the Word of Fire, demons with this attunement may cause a chain reaction of ever-increasing destruction starting with one simple, violent action. This action can be as innocent as dropping a quarter off the side of a bridge or as violent as throwing someone through a plate-glass window. The action itself must succeed through normal skill rolls.

Then the GM rolls a d6, plus the number of Essence the demon wishes to spend. If the result is 10 or higher, then another, slightly more violent action occurs – up to the GM's discretion. By carefully selecting his environment, a demon can sow the seeds of a lot of disaster through a single event: for example, using this attunement in the middle of a busy highway might well have serious repercussions. Usually demons of Belial feel compelled to stand agape and watch the chaos their simple action breeds. There is certainly no stopping this effect once it gets started.

SAMPLE SERVITORS OF BELIAL

BALISHAZAR

Balseraph Servitor of Fire

Corporeal Forces – 4 Strength 8 Agility 8
Ethereal Forces – 3 Intelligence 8 Precision 4
Celestial Forces – 2 Will 6 Perception 2

Vessel: Human/3

Role: Fireman/3, Status 3

Skills: Driving (Car/2), Driving (Fire Truck/2), Knowledge (Arson/3), Knowledge (Fire-fighting/3), Large Weapon (Fire Axe/2)

Attunements: Balseraph of Fire, Blackdraft

Bill Shester (Balishazar) is the best fireman in the Sixth District of New York City – it's amazing how many fires have been put out by his uncanny sense of where the fire is going to go and what it's going to do. True, they get very destructive before they're conquered – but at least it gets put out, right? Strange how Bill always has no problem getting to where he needs to go in a burning building – and how the places where he's been sometimes flash out and back-draft . . . Still, no one suspects that this seemingly heroic, intelligent man is actually the worst





arsonist in the city's history. His ability to lie convincingly has helped him keep his cover. Little does he know that Caramikos, an angel of Gabriel, has started to pick out a pattern in his burning, and might soon be paying him a visit.

Balishazar is a balanced starting character.

SERGEI ROSKOVICH

Calabite Servitor of Fire

Corporeal Forces – 4 Strength 9 Agility 7
Ethereal Forces – 3 Intelligence 5 Precision 7
Celestial Forces – 2 Will 6 Perception 2

Vessel: Human/2 (Charisma -1)

Role: WWII veteran on pension/2, Status 1

Skills: Dodge/6, Fighting/2, Knowledge (Great War history/1), Move Silently/1, Ranged Weapon (Rifle/3), Tactics/1, Throwing/3

Songs: Dreams (Corporeal/4), Entropy (Ethereal/4)

Attunements: Firewalker, Shedite of Belial

Discord: Paranoia/3

Sergei Roskovich has seen better days. And nights.

As a demon newly arrived on Earth in the early days of Hitler's invasion of Russia, Sergei took on the Role of a sergeant in the Soviet army. There he began his mission – to see it all burn – with glee. Molotov cocktails flew from his squad's hands with wild abandon. German infantrymen and armor – and the occasional slow-footed Russian peasant – went up in thick, greasy columns of smoke.

Then, the war ended, and Sergei expected a promotion to bigger and better things as a result of his efforts. Instead, Belial appeared and chewed him out royally, for it seems that Sergei's Prince was far more concerned with the *quantity* of Sergei's work than the *quality*. Gasoline flames are nice, but by '43 those Germans had learned their lessons and refused to sit still. Sergei's output had not been what Belial had intended.

As punishment, Sergei was left in his role, with instructions to finish his assignment. Given his Discord, Sergei takes this to mean he needs to destroy *every single German survivor of World War II*. He fears Belial will lose patience soon and make him the "toast" of Hell . . .

At first, he tried to accomplish this by infiltrating the Soviet nuclear command. But even the Soviets – perhaps especially the Soviets – would not let someone of a Calabite nature near their nukes.

So Sergei resolved to hunt down his prey man by man. This proved hard work. At first he met success in the chaotic years immediately following the conflict. But eventually, word got around among the German veterans that someone with a taste for Molotovs was stalking them. In a couple of nasty scrapes, the battle-hardened humans nearly bagged a demon without knowing Sergei's nature.

As a result, Sergei changed tactics. Now, he softens up his targets in their area of greatest weakness – their dreams. There, all the guilt and fear bred by the war years serve as fuel for Sergei's intentions. He terrorizes his prey by night, flushes them into vulnerable circumstances and finishes his work.

As the years roll by, time has taken Sergei's side. WWII veterans are becoming more and more rare. While this makes his hunting harder, Sergei anxiously awaits the day the last one dies – preferably at his hand but any circumstances will do. Then, he'll take his finally completed mission – and his rather rare experience working in the Marches – to Belial and petition for a promotion and a new chance to destroy.

Sergei is a balanced starting character.



OTHER SUPERIORS IN THE MARCHES

Blandine and Beleth rule the Marches, but other Superiors have reason to visit, or send Servitors there, when their Words lead into the ethereal realm. The former lovers can no more claim the ethereal as their exclusive domains than another Superior could claim the corporeal or celestial. The other Superiors' interest in the Marches varies, however:

David: The ever-shifting dream world disagrees with Stone more than Blandine herself does. He and his Servitors avoid it, and feel uneasy there at best.

Dominic: He and his Servitors often cull information from human dreams, but rarely interfere in them.

Eli: His few supervised Servitors might spend much time in the Marches, furthering creation at its crucible, the individual dreamscape. Rumor has it that Eli even seeks out and consults the Old Gods – after all, are they not the ultimate in human imagination?

Gabriel: Though dreamscapes make fertile judgment and hunting grounds for her Servitors, few take advantage. The style doesn't often seem right.

Janus: Janus and his Servitors are as at home in the Marches as anywhere, perhaps more so. The ethereal realm's nature suits them.

Jean: Servitors of Lightning find the Marches discomfiting. Rarely do they perceive a need to enter.

Jordi: His Servitors usually find their most effective course within the corporeal realm. Sometimes they try to join the dreamscapes of an animal and a human who can aid their Word.

Laurence: Given the history, Laurence and his Servitors hold a variety of perspectives on the Marches. The Guardians (p. 92) know it well, with mixed emotions. Others see work undone there . . . Uriel's work.

Marc: While a few Servitors of Trade see their Word as utterly corporeal, most recognize the passion that fuels merchants – and where it comes from.

Michael: Likely, his angels would need to conduct their ethereal missions on Beleth's side. They're not often seen on Blandine's . . . whatever that means.

Novalis: Servitors of the Archangel of Flowers do much of their good among the dreamscapes. Other than Blandine's own, they are the angels most commonly encountered in Blandine's Domain.

Yves: The Marches often hold the key to this Archangel and his Servitors' agendas. Yves, also, is rumored to send trusted Servitors to consult with the Old Gods – who often carry a heavy Destiny.

Andrealphus: Terror rarely inspires Lust, so most of these demons do their deeds elsewhere. The more intelligent realize nightmarish fear about one topic can lead to lust for another . . .

Asmodeus: Demons seldom sleep. The Game takes place elsewhere, for the most part.

Baal: The Marches hold many tools for Baal and his Servitors, often providing an opening for a flank attack where a frontal assault would not work.

Belial: Though nightmares and terror suit their agenda, Belial and his minions rarely command the subtlety to do effective work in the Marches.

Haagenti: As with Belial, human dreamscapes serve Servitors of Gluttony in good stead, but only when they possess the tact to utilize them.

Kobal: Servitors of Dark Humor gleefully take their missions to the Marches, though ever mindful that the Vale's demonic mistress rarely sees eye to eye with them.

Kronos: Only Kronos – and perhaps *his* Superior – know how much of Fate's work takes place in the ethereal realm. Every domain of the Marches holds some edge for this Archangel and his Servitors.

Lilith: Lilith and her children find the Marches a double-edged sword, for where else offers so much freedom and imprisonment all at once? They visit often – but with care.

Malphas: Servitors of Factions can get more work done in a single night in the Marches than in weeks on Earth, and often do. They see dreamscapes as one of their most useful tools.

Nybbas: Though Nybbas himself dismisses the importance of dreamscapes, many of his Servitors recognize the cultural weight of the Marches. Some may even sneak into the Far Marches, where ancient cultural icons await use as Media fuel.

Saminga: The dead don't suffer nightmares. Saminga and his hordes don't concern themselves with anything that isn't dead.

Valefor: The more inventive of Valefor's Servitors find the Marches a better marketplace than any on Earth. And its nature suits them so.

Vapula: Dreamscapes often prove the launching pad for hellish inventions, and Servitors of Technology don't ignore this fact. But they must beware the Vale, too. Their inventions can create *too* much nightmarish backlash and end up banned in a swell of public opinion.



50

SORCERERS



SORCERERS

Jenny stood alone on the roof of the school, watching the sun set. They had really roughed her up again, those pretty, petite, cutesy cheerleader girls who kept calling her “dyke” and “flat-sie.” They had destroyed the notebooks in which she had scribbled poetry, drafts of suicide notes and love letters never sent, but not before reading them all aloud at a pajama party that she heard through the receiver of a phone one Saturday night. They rubbed her face with dog feces. They snipped her bra straps with scissors while she was in gym. They stole all her pads when she first got her period. Those little bitches had made sure that she was anathema, outcast.

Now, they would pay. She had found one of her grandmother’s old Latin texts, and it told her how to handle the problem. She kissed her dear old cat, Scoot, goodbye, crying for a moment as she held the old text in her hand, then softly muttering syllables she had learned in Latin class. She had been paying attention. She knew what must be done. The blood from the poor old cat splattered like dark red tears on the ash-covered tar-paper roof. She sat and thought about what she had done, and what she truly wished would happen. The candle she had barely managed to keep lit suddenly flared into a yellow-green flame, and then she knew, somehow, that all would be well.

That Monday, the announcement came on the loudspeaker: a drunken driver had plunged headlong into the cheerleaders’ van on the way to the championship game. Not one of the six girls in the van survived. That afternoon, Jenny changed in peace, next to the six lockers draped in black. She missed Scoot. But there were other cats.

INTRODUCTION:

THE SUMMONER’S TALE

There are those who are certain that their Destiny lies in power . . . whether it’s the power to manipulate others, or just the power that comes from knowing more, more, always more. They seek mastery, and many prefer mastery of others to mastery of self.

Some seek knowledge for what they can accomplish with it, for good or evil. Others seek power, pure and simple, and see knowledge as simply another tool. Many, dealt poor hands by life, seek to pull out a trump card, to turn the tables on their tormenters.

They yearn for occult knowledge, and some find it. Sorcery works. With the right words, the right frame of mind, they discover how to spin their own Essence into a kind of net, a siren-song in the Symphony, a magnet attracting spirits and celestials.

These are called sorcerers. They have the knowledge. They have the power. It really, really works. They can talk to spirits, call demons, Do Things.

And most of them are damned.



HISTORY: VOICES IN THE DARK

Ever since Eve spoke with the snake, humanity has felt the draw of power. It was the lust for power – to know, to understand her world – that tempted Eve to eat of the fruit of the Tree of Knowledge of Good and Evil. This same urge has driven the lives of sorcerers ever since. Some say Cain was the first sorcerer. There are records of sorcerers as far back as the time of the Pharaohs. Solomon himself was a great sorcerer . . . one of the few who found great power and avoided damnation.

During medieval times, sorcerers walked the halls of power; many wielded influence in the Church. They



summoned bad weather for their noble masters' foes, sent curses to the unborn, seduced women who walked alone at night, and left behind many destroyed lives when they were finally murdered, executed at the stake or consumed by the very spirits they tried to control.

During the Renaissance they hid behind men of learning and in monasteries, finally emerging to enter the universities that were springing up in Paris and Milan.

In the time of revolutions, when the monarchies began to tatter and the Church lost ground in the face of reason, they laughed in the midst of the chaos.

In early Victorian times they were fashionable heroes of the press. They sold their liquors and elixirs in medicine shows. They cured warts and made young men's objects of desire fall hopelessly in love with them (for as long as the payments kept coming in).

During the Industrial Revolution they took jobs with the big companies, disguising themselves with charts and graphs, and using their sorcerous power to foster corruption in the pursuit of their own goals. They fed off the Essence of children sent to work, sacrificing the young ones to the demons they called up and bargained with on the factory floor late at night.

During the World Wars they switched sides as easily as the pendulum in a clock, one minute using their demonic allies to cause havoc behind Allied lines and the next calling up a thick fog so that Hitler couldn't cross the English Channel.

Between the Wars they went into hiding, finding ancient scrolls and knowledge in the aftermath of imperialism's collapse. They celebrated when they saw the fruits of the Fat Man, thinking that, finally, humanity had achieved a level of power equal to the celestial.

In modern times they have hidden in plain sight, disguising their cults and belief systems in half-baked theories espoused to little public effect – or caching them-

selves in the dusty sub-basements of Ivy League universities, to while away the hours learning ancient languages and summoning particularly interesting spirits for tea and sympathy.

Few sorcerers are long-lived (except for the Dozen; see p. 53), but their knowledge and the promise of power is still very appealing. Throughout history, sorcerers have begat other sorcerers simply by being who they are. The idea of sorcery has a magnetic appeal to the very people who have some natural proficiency for it. And usually, a dead sorcerer's books, ideas, notes and equipment somehow find their way into the hands of another person just ripe to become a sorcerer.

Some sorcerers are solitary, but most seek out the company of their kind, yearning for reasons they don't fully understand to share their knowledge with a select few. Then they feud and fight and start yet more hidden groups. The list of such cabals and includes such famous names as The Black Order, The White Order, The Order of the Purple Robes, Temple Abyss, Temple of the Dark, Dark Temple, The Fire of Absalom, The Hooded





Circle, the Circle of the Snake, Serpent's Sons (an all-male group), the Sons of Lucifer, Satan's Fatal Twelve, The Brotherhood of 13, The Fellowship of Set, The Esteemed Overlords of Sleep, the Union of Darkness, the Chaos Union, the Army of the Five Rings and the Cabal of the Fiery Rings.

Most experienced sorcerers understand the risks. But they know that some of their kind have learned enough to avoid the risks, gain enough power to guard themselves and prolong their lifespans unnaturally in the bargain.

The greatest of these are called the Dozen by outsiders, although the rumors say there are probably 13. What the group calls itself is not known.

Of course the Dozen may not exist. Some sorcerers, and most demons, believe that they're just a lie to lure more sorcerers down the path to destruction. Others claim the lack of evidence of the existence of the Dozen is proof of their power. The debate rages on.

CHANTS OF EVIL: MODERN SUMMONING TECHNIQUES

There is a curious alchemy at work in the creation of a sorcerer. First and foremost, he must possess 6 Forces, and his Will must be strong – no weaker than 6. To be successful, he should have a decent Perception and Intelligence as well, although sorcerers who had neither have succeeded in the past. The fundamental characteristic that sorcerers rely upon is their Will – this is the root of their power, the primary tool they use to pierce the Cacophony (their twisted perception of the Symphony) and plumb the depths of Hell and the secrets of the Marches. Knowledge allows them to utilize their Essence in ways that are more flexible and variable than simply yanking spirits out of the otherworld.

THE ELEMENTS OF SORCERY

Basic, primitive sorcery is an intuitive, inherently selfish act of raw, ecstatic energy. The first sorcerers probably had no idea that their tremendous hunger for power would actually bear fruit in the form of their darkest nightmares. Everything outside of the Will, willing spirits to appear and be commanded, is a result of knowledge learned over years of sorcerous experimentation and ritual codification. It's relatively easy to call things up, not so easy to get them to be useful to you, speak their language or keep them from killing you once they're here – and definitely not so easy to send them home again. Finally, one's Essence (or the Essence of others, given freely or not) is valuable in providing the energy to perform all this manipulation.

A sorcerer's Will is remarkable in that it has this inherent selfishness . . . possibly derived from memories as an infant when the entire world was you and you were the entire world. Even a "good" sorcerer has a strong core of Self.

For this reason, most sorcerers don't even believe in the War, the existence of God, or that demons and angels, *as such*, exist. As far as a sorcerer is concerned, celestials and ethereal spirits might be creatures who are playthings for their enjoyment, or nightmares to be feared, but not part of some kind of moralistic psychosocial war fought behind the scenes. Most sorcerers are surprised upon their deaths to discover how wrong they really were. There are exceptions – some sorcerers know they are calling up things they shouldn't, and some rationalize that even an evil spirit can be used for good purposes. A few know exactly what they're doing, and are too insane or hateful to care.

The knowledge required to be a relatively successful sorcerer (i.e., the kind that isn't instantly eaten by what they call)

want to follow the path of sorcery. The amount of time required to decipher coded books in ancient, mostly forgotten languages and translate them into something that is useful today means “no social life.” Plus, having to explain the fresh bloodstains on your bedspread usually doesn’t win points with your girlfriend – nor does having to share her with your demon.

For this reason, sorcerers tend to be solitary, bookish sorts unless they somehow intuit all their sorcerous knowledge without having to read it – or have a sorcerous tutor. Even then, hanging out with a sorcerer doesn’t win anyone “cool” points – they frequently smell bad, have poor manners and have a habit of taking the last beer from the fridge. Selfishness again . . .

Finally, the fact that most sorcerous activities require Essence means that either you’re always tired and out of luck – or your friends, compatriots, family, flock or co-workers are. Or you’ve left a string of black cats sacrificed across the city, or you’re starting to drive past child-care facilities to stare at the little bundles of energy playing there.

In other words, you’re becoming a sociopath.

These requirements – Will, knowledge, Essence – are absolutely necessary to successful sorcery.

There’s one more requirement – an appropriate Initiation. It may be self-initiation – for instance, read from a sorcerous book – or a full-blown dark ritual with 13 cowed, black-robed sorcerers chanting your name in Assyrian.

This Initiation serves as the process by which the sorcerer acquires the necessary attunement (see p. 57) for sorcery to work for him.



HIT THE BOOKS

Most of the knowledge-based skills required by sorcery can be summed up into three skills: Summon, Focus and Command. Of the three, Command is the hardest to come by, Summon the second hardest and Focus the easiest. All of the collective studies that a sorcerer undertakes feed one of these three knowledge skills.

Focus is simply the skill with which the Sorcerer controls the use of his Essence. Without the skill, all he can do is spend his own Essence to power Songs (provided he knows any). As he learns the Focus skill, he learns to form his essence into shapes (drawing for a first time a

sorcerous Circle, for example); then to take Essence from other sources (first from inanimate, non-sentient sources and then later from animals and people), and finally reaching the level where he understands the creation of talismans, the brewing of elixirs and how to make certain Essence-forms permanent. A sorcerer needn't learn Focus first, but then he has no protection from anything he summons and tends to use too much Essence (i.e., all of his current collected supply) whenever he Summons.

Knowledge of the Summon skill is best described as a cracked-rear-view of the Symphony. Many sorcerers call the Symphony "the Cacophony" – in their limited perception they can only hear the clashing of the powers. They only perceive the contrapuntal notes that seem to clash and collide, creating noise, not music. Summon is knowledge of the Cacophony and how to pierce it with your Will to bring spirits out of it. Sometimes those spirits come out of Hell, and sometimes they come from the Marches. At the beginning of his study, the sorcerer can only hope to summon an ethereal spirit (see p. 73) or a demonling (see p. 71), a minor demonic celestial spirit. As they progress in their knowledge of Summoning, they begin to learn how to get exactly what they want.

First they learn how to summon a specific kind of spirit, then a specific category (like a Band), and then the specific spirit itself. At first, they only know how to call the spirit . . . who must arrive on its own power in its own time. When they advance to the highest familiarity with this knowledge, they are able to use their own Essence to create a tunnel through the Cacophony by which the spirit may travel directly to the sorcerer.

Command is the most dangerous of the three sorcerous skills. When first learning Command, you are able to use your Will to make suggestions, to get other humans to do things for you. With more study and practice, you begin to discover how to address celestials and ethereal spirits so that they treat you with respect. Later, as you master Command at the higher levels, you learn how to demand and expect servitude from ethereal spirits and how to instill fear in demons (little ones, anyway). Some believe the Dozen have

learned how to truly command demons, and although many believe they have mastered this art, it is surprisingly tricky over the long term. Demons have a notorious habit of making you believe you've won, and then turning on you when you least expect it – though most sorcerers don't learn this until it is much, much too late . . .

Named spirits are particularly vulnerable to sorcerers. These are demons and ethereal spirits who have distinguished themselves enough to be called by a name. There are hundreds of thousands of nameless minor demon spirits – snots, grubs, squicks, frotings and others – who have no name and await the day someone (usually another demon – but what the Hell) calls them by name to come serve. Most demons, however, are quite crafty and do not allow their true names to be known. The names of the Demon Princes are known, of course, but this does not mean that *they* are any more summonable – and woe be unto those who try.

A few Demon Princes, particularly Malphas, Kobal, Kronos and Asmodeus – have a few Servitors who wait around to answer any Calls their Masters receive – "So, exactly *why* are you calling my Dark Lord? He'd like to know." Haagenti has been known to show up and eat sorcerers who dare to call him . . .

Demon player characters are considered named, but they may decide that their true Name is something besides the name they use. It is all but impossible for a demon with a Word not to be named – if nothing else, the Word is his name – although summoning a Word-bound demon is something that requires a knowledge of Summon at a very high level.

WHY ANGELS CAN'T BE SUMMONED

A sorcerer's Will is strong, but it can't pierce the heavenly sphere of the Divine. No amount of Essence can bring an angel out of Heaven, no amount of knowledge will teach a sorcerer how to call an angel out of the Celestial. Some master Summoners have managed to Call a named angel who was already within the corporeal realm, but the Call wasn't very compelling – it was more of a page, a celestial beeper if you will.





Some angels will show up just to explain (verbally or non-verbally) that they don't approve of the sorcerer's actions.

Even if you *do* manage to summon an angel, you are risking the wrath of that angel's Superior just by trying it. Dominic especially takes a dim view of any angel being summoned – even if the angel's compliance is voluntary. Angels are also adept at foiling the constructs of Essence created by Focus, and they laugh at any Command.

Some sorcerers, who know that the War is real, theorize that their skills were built around manipulation of the basic elements making up a demon's nature, to best exploit all the metaphysical flaws inherent in the Fallen celestials. Of course those techniques will never work on angels.

Other sorcerers believe that they simply don't compre-

hend enough yet, and that one day they'll make a quantum leap in knowledge that will allow them to treat angels just as they do their demonic counterparts – once again, the legendary Dozen are said to be able to Summon and Command angels.

The wisest sorcerers (a small percentage, almost by definition, but a group that tends to be long-lived) know the *real* truth:

Angels are best left alone.



SORCEROUS MECHANICS

CHARACTER GENERATION

Sorcerers must have at least 6 Forces.

Sorcerers must have a Will of at least 6.

Sorcerers must buy the Sorcery attunement. (It is assumed that an Initiation took place sometime prior to the beginning of play, unless the player or Game Master thinks it would make for a good opening adventure.)

SORCERY ATTUNEMENT

This attunement allows the user to practice sorcery, to attempt to manipulate Essence and various ethereal and celestial spirits using the Summon, Focus and Command skills. The Sorcery attunement lets them spend Essence in concert with their ritual practices through their Sorcery skills.

Like all other attunements, Sorcery costs 10 character points. Sorcerer characters may purchase Discord to gain additional character points (at these prices, they may have to).

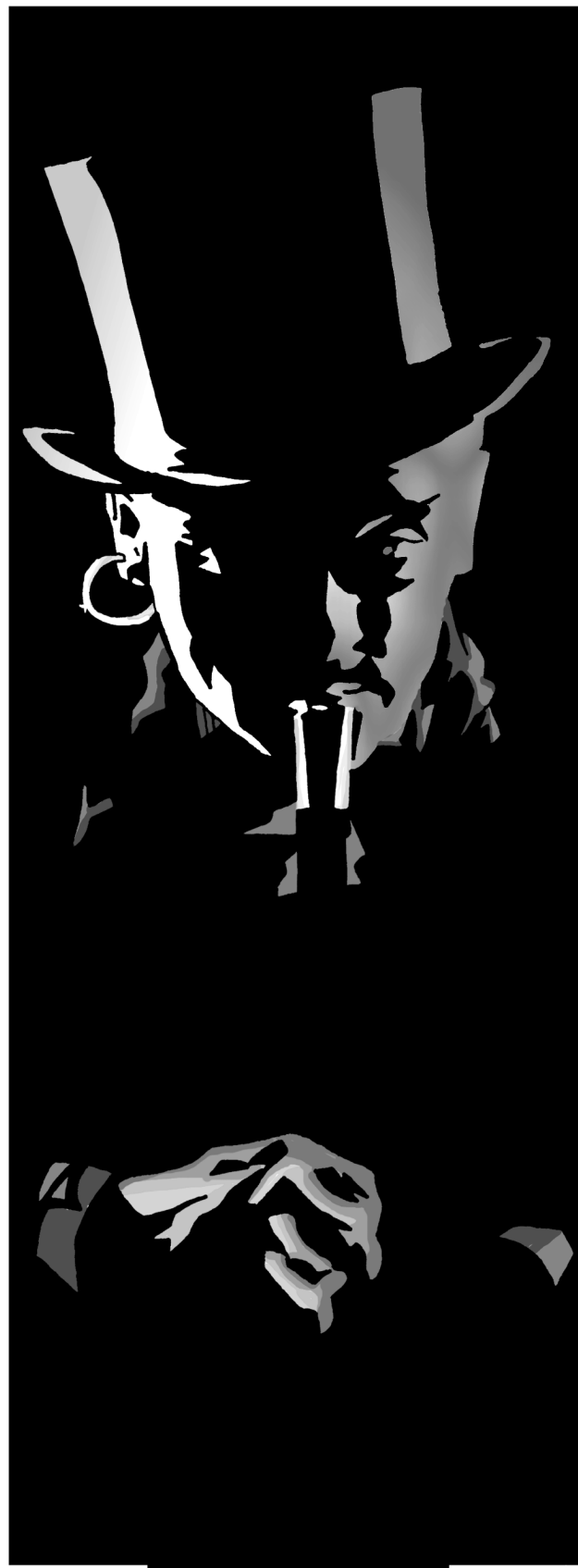
SORCEROUS SKILLS AND SKILL EFFECT LIMITS

Sorcerous skills progress in levels, each with a greater affect. This allows a gradual progression of sorcerous powers. It's a lot harder to learn a level of sorcerous skill than any "mundane" skills, like Driving or Ranged Weapon. Each level in a sorcerous skill is meant to be obtained through much travail and difficulty. The Game Master should make the acquisition of these levels an adventure of their own, not just a simple matter of cashing in character points. And it takes a lot of points, too – the Summon and Focus skills cost 2 points per level, and the Command skill costs 3 points per level.

These skills have no default – while those without the Sorcery attunement can learn these skills in hopes of gaining the attunement later or as an intellectual exercise (or perhaps in order to teach somebody else), there is no way anyone who does not have the Sorcery attunement can actually use any of them.

SUMMON SKILL

In addition to the basic knowledge needed to perform a summoning, the sorcerer also needs the proper setting. For particularly long summonings, they also need a comfortable place to rest. The requirements for summoning vary by the tradition in which the summoner is based – Gnostic sorcerers will use Greek chants and incense





while a Native American sorcerer might offer pipe smoke to the four directions. The skill itself is generic; players should tailor the details to conform to their character's personality and background.

Also, knowledge of any skill at a particular level assumes knowledge at all previous levels. But just because a sorcerer has the power to do things with their Summon skill, doesn't mean that he must, or that he has before. They simply know how. So, a native shaman who has Summon/5 might only use his skill to call forth gentle rain spirits from the Marches, and never have summoned anything else.

The base characteristic for the Summon skill is Will.

Summon/1 (Summon a random ethereal spirit from the Marches)

This allows you to reach into the Ethereal realm and pull out a minor ethereal spirit at random. You have no control over how powerful the spirit will be, but it must have a corporeal vessel (pp. 110-111). The spirit's Forces are equal to the check digit of the roll. See the Ethereal Spirit Generation Chart (p. 73) for more details.

The ethereal spirit arrives 10×1d6 minutes later.

The ethereal spirit will serve the sorcerer only if it makes a favorable Reaction roll upon arriving (see *Reaction Rolls* in *In Nomine*, p. 44), if it is defeated in a

Will-war (see *Will-War*, p. 64), or if bribed with Essence (GM's discretion; the bigger the offer, the better).

Intervention:

If 111 is rolled, a Reliever appears.

If 666 is rolled, a strange, infernal servant of an ancient Dark God arrives, with 2d6 Forces.

Time Required: 30 minutes.

Essence Cost: equal to the check digit of the roll.

Summon/2 (Summon demonling)

This only lets you summon a minor demonling (see *Demonlings*, p. 71), including Gremlins, Imps and Familiars. The roll's check digit determines the demonling's Forces, and the GM determines exactly what the sorcerer has conjured up.

The demonling arrives 10×1d6 minutes later (or 1d6 minutes later if at an Infernal Tether).

The demonling will serve the sorcerer only if it makes a favorable Reaction roll upon arriving (see *Reaction Rolls* in *In Nomine*, p. 44), or if it is defeated in a Will-war (see *Will-War*, p. 64).

Intervention:

If 111 is rolled, no demonling appears and a celestial chord is heard for miles around.

If 666 is rolled, a higher-powered infernal spirit arrives: an Imp or a Gremlin. It will not be hostile.

Time Required: 15 minutes.

Essence Cost: equal to the check digit of the roll.

Summon/3 (Summon a demon of a specific band from Hell)

This skill does not assume that the sorcerer knows all the Bands of demons that exist. For those bands that he is aware of, the sorcerer may summon a demon of that kind from Hell. The GM may wish to use a pre-generated demon, or he may turn to the character write-ups in the back of *In Nomine* for ideas, or he may wish to generate a demon on the spot.

The demon arrives 20×1d6 minutes later (or 1d6 minutes later if at an Infernal Tether).

Demons who live in Hell are hard-cases who are used to eternal struggle. They're not really impressed by humans. The sorcerer will have to try to bargain for the demon's service, and the demon will already be pretty upset. Usually the demon will attempt to dominate the sorcerer with a Will-war, possess him, have a little fun on Earth and then leave. Sometimes a demon will choose to maintain the Master/Slave relationship and use the sorcerer as his pawn (see *Will-War*, p. 64, for more details.) Note that a sorcerer cannot initiate a Will-war with a demon without the demon's permission.

Intervention:

If 111 is rolled, no demon appears and a nearby angel receives information on the exact location of the summoning.

If 666 is rolled, a higher-powered demon, a Knight with 10 Forces, arrives.

Time Required: 1d6 hours.

Essence Cost: equal to the check digit of the roll × 2.

Summon/4 (Summon a named demon from elsewhere in the corporeal realm)

Now the sorcerer is playing with fire. If he knows the name of a demon, he may attempt to summon that demon from anywhere in the corporeal plane. The demon must then make all haste to drop what it is doing and travel to the location of the sorcerer – unless he starts making Will + Celestial Forces rolls to refuse – and even then, this costs him 1 Essence a day to resist. The demon may also make Will rolls to resist dropping what he is doing and leaving immediately upon being summoned. This usually angers the demon to no end – unless the sorcerer has worked with the demon before, or the demon happens to be bored out of his skull.

The demon arrives as soon as it can get there – there’s no set time. Frequently demons so summoned will “go celestial” in bursts, moving at top speed until they reach the location of the sorcerer.

Demons who do not live in Hell are used to the constant give-and-take, the deal-making that must take place on the corporeal plane. They’re not really impressed by humans – but they’re used to dealing with them. The demon may be willing to make a deal – if it’s not too angry at being summoned. The GM may roll a reaction roll at -3 to see if the demon is well-disposed to the sorcerer or not. The demon may try a Will-war on the summoner, but usually both sorcerer and demon like to keep out of such struggles, preferring instead to have a polite

discourse. Of course, if the demon is angry enough, there’s the chance that it will simply attempt to slay the sorcerer and leave.

Intervention:

If 111 is rolled, no demon appears and a nearby angel receives information on the exact location of the summoning, a mental image of the person who tried it and the name of the demon summoned.

If 666 is rolled, the named demon appears instantly, drawn through the Symphony.

Time Required: 1d6+2 hours.

Essence Cost: equal to 3 plus twice the check digit of the roll.



Summon/5 (Summon a named ethereal spirit from the Marches)

Now the sorcerer is able to call forth a specific, named ethereal spirit from the Marches. This must be one that has a corporeal vessel (pp. 110-111), or the spell has no effect. The reaction of the spirit is determined by the GM, but can be modified by Reaction rolls. The sorcerer may wish to engage the spirit in a Will-war.

Note that old pagan gods can not usually be summoned to the corporeal plane, unless they wish to come for their own reasons. When you summon Loki or Pan, you’re really just requesting his attention. If your request



is interesting or flattering, he might risk celestial wrath and drop in, to see what you want. A god's sincere worshiper, of course, has a better chance of summoning him or his minions.

Intervention:

If 111 is rolled, the sorcerer has caught the attention of one of Blandine or Beleth's Servitors instead and they show up to punish the offender.

If 666 is rolled, the sorcerer not only summons the named ethereal spirit, but opens up a pathway through the Symphony so that the spirit arrives instantly.

Time Required: 2d6 hours.

Essence Cost: 1 point per Force of the summoned ethereal spirit + 3.

Summon/6 (Summon named demons from Hell)

This is quite dangerous. First of all, a demon summoned by name from Hell will frequently let his Superior know what is going on before he leaves – and Superiors don't take kindly at all to their servants being called out from under them. Second of all, the demon usually arrives fresh and full of Essence and spoiling for a fight.

Once the named demon arrives, it is under no compulsion to stay or serve in any way – in fact, most leave shortly after trashing the surrounding area and killing whoever summoned them.

The only way that a sorcerer can really get by with summoning a named demon is if he works it out with

that demon in advance. Some master/servant relationships work that way – especially when the sorcerer is the servant.

Making use of this skill usually means that you are broadcasting to Hell that you are a sorcerer, and if they didn't know about you before, they certainly know about you now. The next step that Asmodeus usually takes at hearing of a sorcerer with this power is to send demons to destroy that sorcerer, even if this means going up against Kronos' servitor Hatiphaz (p. 69).

Frequently sorcerers who obtain this knowledge hide that fact and move further on in their studies.

Intervention:

If 111 is rolled, the nearest angel or Soldier of God instantly receives specific information about the sorcerer's identity, who he was trying to summon and where he is currently located.

If 666 is rolled, the demon is stolen from Hell quickly and quietly, fast enough so that even his Superior doesn't know he's gone.

Time Required: 1d6x4 hours of continuous summoning.

Essence Cost: 1 per Force of the summoned demon, minus the amount of the check digit.

FOCUS SKILL

The Focus Skill allows the user to manipulate Essence into useful shapes and forces, drain it from others and store it. Knowledge of this skill at any particular level assumes knowledge of all lower-level skills. The base characteristic for the Focus skill is Precision.

Focus/1 (Protective ward)

This is one of the most basic sorcerous skills, and one of the most useful. While it won't protect you from an angry demon forever, it can give you some breathing room.

This skill creates a warded area through which no celestial or ethereal entity can traverse, even if they're inhabiting a corporeal vessel.

The ward is an energy field that can be worn down by repeated attacks. A spirit may attack the ward with a d666 roll using Will + Ethereal Forces. Damage to the ward is determined by the check digit of the roll + the spirit's Precision.

The sorcerer who created the ward can detect about how many hits the ward has left with a d666 roll against Focus + Perception.



The area of effect and duration of a ward is determined by the check digit of the roll:

- 1: 10-foot radius, 10 minutes, 10 hits
- 2: 20-foot radius, 30 minutes, 20 hits
- 3: 30-foot radius, 1 hour, 30 hits
- 4: 50-foot radius, 4 hours, 50 hits
- 5: 100-foot radius, 8 hours, 75 hits
- 6: 150-foot radius, 24 hours, 100 hits

Intervention:

If 111 is rolled, the ward has an innate flaw that will reveal itself whenever it is tested.

If 666 is rolled, the ward has 25 extra hits and lasts for as long as the sorcerer is willing to concentrate.

Time Required: 15 minutes.

Essence Cost: equal to the check digit of the roll.

Focus/2 (Sacrifice for Essence)

This allows sorcerers to sacrifice things with Essence in them (not necessarily only living things; some items with Celestial Forces – like talismans – have Essence) and take the Essence for themselves. Up to the check digit × 2 points may be gained in this fashion. Unless the sorcerer has a Reliquary ready or a spirit jar (see Focus/3, below) the excess Essence bleeds off into the Symphony immediately.

Note that this skill doesn't create Essence; it just funnels whatever Essence was in the sacrifice.

Intervention:

If 111 is rolled, all Essence is lost into the Symphony, as if all of the points were spent (with the attendant Celestial noise this causes).

If 666 is rolled, the sorcerer gains an extra 5 Essence from the sacrifice.

Time Required: 30 minutes preparation.

Essence Cost: 1.

Focus/3 (Store Essence)

This allows a sorcerer to prepare and store his personal Essence in a temporary holding device called a spirit jar. An object is prepared using the skill and then, using a ritual, the sorcerer stores his Essence in the jar. The spirit jar is usually made of some kind of small closable container (bottle, jar, box, cloth bag, paper sack, plastic bag, etc.), and must be hidden from all light until the Essence is ready to enter it. When exposed to light, the spirit jar becomes ready to receive the Essence – if it is not filled with Essence within 1 hour, then all of the Essence spent to create it is lost and the jar is ruined (and the particular object used cannot be used again).

The amount of Essence that the jar can hold, and how long the effect will last, depends on the check digit of the roll.



- 1: 5 Essence, 4 hours
- 2: 10 Essence, 8 hours
- 3: 15 Essence, 12 hours
- 4: 20 Essence, 24 hours
- 5: 30 Essence, 3 days
- 6: 45 Essence, 7 days

The Essence can be drained from a spirit jar in whatever amounts the user desires, including all of it at once. When the duration the jar is good for is up, any remaining Essence is lost to the Symphony. Once drained, either deliberately or when time runs out, the jar loses its ability to hold Essence, though the physical object used to make the jar can be reused.

Intervention:

If 111 is rolled, all Essence is lost into the Symphony, as if all of the points were spent (with the attendant Celestial noise this causes).

If 666 is rolled, the sorcerer has accidentally created an infernal Reliquary. Re-roll the check digit to see how much Essence the Reliquary holds.

Time Required: 4 hours preparation.

Essence Cost: 1d6+3

Focus/4 (Create spirit anchor)

A spirit anchor restrains a spirit temporarily. Sorcerers use spirit anchors so that they can have a cadre of spirits available to them without having to constantly keep track of them. Summoning takes an awful amount of work and risk, and it's good to have a few minor spirits around to pull out if needed.

Each spirit anchor created can only hold a spirit with a certain amount of Forces, and only for a certain amount of time before checking again, as determined by the check digit:

- 1: 2 Forces, 3 months
- 2: 3 Forces, 1 month
- 3: 5 Forces, 2 weeks
- 4: 7 Forces, 1 week
- 5: 8 Forces, 3 days
- 6: 9 Forces, 1 day

Demons cannot be held in such a fashion – anything possessing a corporeal vessel is simply unaffected. Spirits may resist being anchored by making a Will + Celestial Forces roll. The check digit must beat the check digit of their prison, and the spirit must spend 2 Essence in the attempt.

At the end of the time period, the sorcerer must make another skill check for each anchor to see if he can retain the anchor, although he needn't spend any further Essence. The spirit may spend another 2 Essence, however, but an unlucky spirit may find itself eventually trapped with no way out.

A spirit trapped in an anchor can do nothing. The sorcerer may talk to the spirit (perhaps to strike a bargain for its release), but that is entirely at the sorcerer's discretion.

Some sorcerers prepare a number of these prisons and keep them handy when they are summoning, to capture interesting but potentially harmful spirits.

The anchor can be anything non-living that the sorcerer owns, from a shoe to an office building (though most sorcerers opt for something that is convenient and portable).

If the anchor is ever destroyed, the spirit becomes immediately freed.

Intervention:

If 111 is rolled, the anchor appears ready but is really not – when the sorcerer uses it, the spirit is seemingly trapped but easily breaks through 1d6 rounds later.

If 666 is rolled, the sorcerer has managed to chain the spirit – it is trapped until he releases it.

Time Required: 2 hours under moonlight.

Essence Cost: 2 × the Celestial Forces of the spirit being trapped.

Focus/5 (Siphon Essence)

This allows sorcerers to take Essence from the living in much the same way that an Impudite does, except a sorcerer need only touch someone and invoke his Focus skill to do it.

Essence siphoned is equal to the check digit. The victim may wish to resist with a Will + Celestial Forces roll – if so, that roll opposes the Siphon roll.

Intervention:

If 111 is rolled, the victim is somehow alerted to what the sorcerer is doing.

If 666 is rolled, the sorcerer can choose to cause damage in exchange for more Essence – the Siphon roll is then treated as a celestial attack, and the sorcerer gains extra Essence equal to the number of soul hits he does.

Time Required: 1 minute.

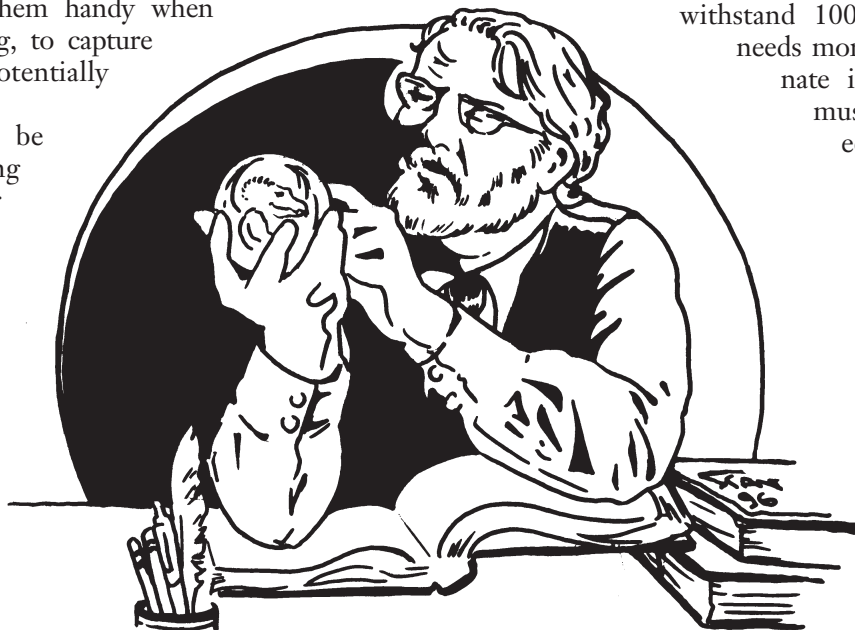
Essence Cost: 2.

Focus/6 (Create permanent circle)

Using this skill, the sorcerer creates a permanent circle of protection that acts like a protective ward (see p. 60), only much stronger.

It may have up to a 50-foot radius and can withstand 100 spirit-hits until it needs more Essence to rejuvenate itself – the sorcerer must spend Essence equal to half its creation cost, rounded up. It can be rejuvenated to full strength with a word, or lowered at will.

The check digit will determine how many times the ward can be rejuvenated before it fades out forever.



Intervention:

If 111 is rolled, there is an inherent flaw in the ward that will cause it to shatter at some point in the future. The GM should decide when this should happen, making sure that it is the most damaging possible moment.

If 666 is rolled, the sorcerer is on his way to creating an Infernal Tether. It will not "fade out." All Summonings conducted within the ward receive a +2 bonus.

Time Required: 24 hours, during which time the sorcerer cannot eat or drink, and must relieve himself in a container kept within the ward.

Essence Cost: 3 × the check digit.



COMMAND SKILL

Note that this skill does not include the power to command actual demons, named or unnamed.

The base characteristic for the Command skill is Precision.

Command/1 (Suggest)

A sorcerer can use his Will to make suggestions to all of those around him. While these suggestions must be plausible, they don't have to make a whole lot of sense. The sorcerer rolls his Will + Command versus the target's Will + Celestial Forces. The GM may wish to award the sorcerer a bonus of up to +3 if the suggestion is particularly well-worded or if the target would naturally do what is asked anyway.

Intervention:

If 111 is rolled, the victim is somehow alerted to what the sorcerer is doing and no further attempts will work on that subject.

If 666 is rolled, no rolls are necessary for this victim in the future. Any reasonable suggestions made to the victim are followed automatically, unless a celestial intervenes.

Time Required: 1 minute.

Essence Cost: 1 × the check digit.

Command/2 (Command minor ethereal spirits)

This gives you a bonus in a Will-war with a minor ethereal spirit (a spirit possessing fewer than 9 Forces). Roll Will + Command prior to the Will-war and you receive a bonus to your Will-war roll equal to the check digit.

Intervention:

If 111 is rolled, the bonus you're given is actually a penalty.

If 666 is rolled, the sorcerer can choose to spend Essence on the attack in addition to on the defense.

Time Required: 15 minutes.

Essence Cost: the check digit.

Command/3 (Command demonlings)

This gives a bonus in the Will-war with a demonling. Roll Will + Command prior to the Will-war and you receive a bonus to your Will-war roll equal to the check digit.

Intervention:

If 111 is rolled, the bonus you're given is actually a penalty.

If 666 is rolled, the sorcerer can choose to spend Essence on the attack as well as on defense.

Time Required: 15 minutes.

Essence Cost: the check digit.

Command/4 (Awe demonlings)

By uttering words in ancient tongues and claiming power and knowledge, a sorcerer may attempt to influence the reaction of a summoned demonling.

The sorcerer rolls his Will + Command. The check digit is the bonus the demonling has on his reaction roll.

Intervention:

If 111 is rolled, the demonling laughs and will never again take the sorcerer seriously.

If 666 is rolled, the demonling willingly serves the sorcerer for as long as the sorcerer will allow it.

Time Required: 10 minutes.

Essence Cost: 1 Essence per Force of the demonling.



Command/5: (Command major ethereal spirits)

This gives you a bonus in the Will-war with a major ethereal spirit (a spirit of 9 Forces or more). Roll Will + Command prior to or during the Will-war (in lieu of an attack or defense) and you receive a bonus to your Will-war roll equal to the check digit.

Intervention:

If 111 is rolled, the bonus you're given is actually a penalty.

If 666 is rolled, the sorcerer can choose to spend Essence on the attack as well as on defense.

Time Required: 1 round.

Essence Cost: the check digit + 3

Command/6 (Awe demons)

By dressing appropriately, knowing the right demonic names to drop, and otherwise acting as if you know what you're talking about, you may seek to impress a demon.

The sorcerer rolls his Will + Command. The check digit is the bonus that the demon has on his reaction roll.

Intervention:

If 111 is rolled, the demon laughs and will never again take the sorcerer seriously, and all future Command rolls will be at -1 for demons.

If 666 is rolled, the demon actually thinks the sorcerer is impressive, for a mortal, and will tend to offer aid (and not eat the sorcerer).

Time Required: 30 minutes.

Essence Cost: 1 Essence per Force of the demon.

DOMINANCE OR SUBMISSION: TECHNIQUES AND USES OF SORCERY

THE WAR OF WILLS

Sorcerers play a deadly game where they put their bodies, minds and souls on the line in exchange for a grab at power. Much of the upper hand comes from having a strong will, and asserting that will over spirits to force them to do the sorcerer's bidding.

This struggle is called the War of Wills, or Will-war. It is truly a war, an ongoing conflict, with many separate battles. The battles take place intermittently over the course of the relationship between spirit and sorcerer.

A Will-war is not always required to deal with demons, though many sorcerers enter into it in order to make certain their commands will be carried out.

Who Can Play

The War of Wills is only available to those ethereal spirits and demons who have Celestial Forces and at least 1 point of Will.

Initiating a Will-war is not done lightly; the stakes are high. Many times, demons and sorcerers alike prefer to bargain (see p. 66). A sorcerer can go up against a spirit or demonling at his discretion, but he cannot initiate a Will-war with a demon without that demon's permission. A demon can initiate a Will-war whenever it wants, but can only take on a sorcerer that has attempted to Summon a demon, either by name or at random. (Otherwise, demons would simply go into Will-war with any mortal that crossed their path.) Demons rarely need to initiate a Will-war, however, as most sorcerers brave enough to Summon a demon will blunder ahead with a challenge of their own.

WILL-WAR MECHANICS

The Will-war is run like a celestial combat, but it is non-lethal. The demon comes equipped with the natural Will and power to conduct this kind of soul-duelling; sorcerers must use their Command skill and their own Will.

Damage is done to one's Will hits, a kind of soul-hit that is a lot like stun damage in corporeal combat. Once again, this celestial combat is not permanently damaging – the participants don't lose Forces. When one entity's Will hits are reduced to zero, the conflict is over. Then the winner becomes the master, the loser the servant.

Participants may elect to spend Essence to influence die rolls in defense only, as per the rules in *In Nomine*, p. 46.

Will hits heal at a rate of (Celestial Forces) per week.

Servitude

The winner of the Will-war is the master; the loser becomes the servant.

Servitude does not mean that the servant will slay himself for the master. But it does mean that he will use his Resources, Essence, Songs, attunements, political sway and any other assets that the master finds necessary.

The servant's Will is temporarily broken – but his Intelligence is still with him, and can be utilized in perverting the intent of the master's commands. The servant cannot bring himself to harm his master in any way, though sometimes a particularly intelligent servant will influence the master into doing things of his own free will which ultimately lead to his downfall or even death.

While verbal abuse and humiliating and degrading commands are typical from extremely powerful masters (or extremely stupid ones), a master may not directly harm his servant in any way. This includes all sorts of sneaky stuff like commanding a third party to harm the servant, placing the servant in an obviously deadly situation (“Here, boy. Go try to hold back that lava flow.”) or anything else the GM decides is dirty pool. Servants can be used for dirty work, sure, but it has to be work they have a decent chance of surviving. Breaking this rule automatically severs the master-servant relationship.

A master need not keep his servant at his side constantly. He can sense what direction his servant is in and about how far away he is with a successful Perception roll.



Breaking the Bonds

If the servant is an ethereal spirit or the sorcerer, then that servant must obey the master until one of three things happens:



who has that Song. Once in the Marches, all skills having to do with ethereal spirits gain a bonus of +1.

Because of the prevalence of spirits that the sorcerer actually has a hope of controlling, many sorcerers choose to stay in the Marches. While in the Marches, sorcerers are covered in a fiery light that is as bright as their Will is strong. This is the symbolic fire of sorcery that they carry with them at all times, and a way for

✘ The servant is released by the master. This can happen at any time the master wishes it, or it could be the result of a bargain (see below)

✘ The master dies. If the master is a demon, death of his corporeal vessel will suffice.

✘ The servant breaks free. Once the servant's Will hits are totally regenerated, the servant can call for another Will-war, and the master is obligated to accept (even if he's a demon). If the servant wins, the roles are not reversed – he is merely freed. Many servants prefer to bargain for their freedom, though; if a servant loses three Will-wars to the same master (including the original one), no more challenges may be made.

If the two ever meet again, the former master gets a +2 on all Will-war rolls against an entity who has at any previous time been his servant.

others to identify that they are either a demon or a sorcerer.

Many sorcerers are afraid to sleep because their dreamscapes are almost always in Beleth's side of the Marches. Demons like to come and taunt them there, and many sorcerers have died in their sleep as a result.

BARGAINING

The demons and sorcerers that deal with each other on a regular basis usually do so by bargaining. Instigating a Will-war is risky business – nobody wants to lose one, and even if you win, you can't get the servant to do anything really dangerous.

But, even if you can't force a demon to do what you want, you can often make a deal. And having a demon taking orders is an attractive thing to a sorcerer, even if he did have to ask nicely rather than command. Besides, it's exciting . . . the thrill of bargaining with a demon is not unlike pushing your life savings out on the blackjack table and taking one more card.

What can a sorcerer get out of such a bargain? A

DREAMING THE DARK – SORCERERS AND THE MARCHES

Sorcerers can only “physically” reach the Marches through the Song of Dreams or by riding with a spirit



demon can use his own Essence to transfer power – in the form of an attunement or Song – to a sorcerer. Also, demons know a lot of things – especially arcane lore. They are powerful in and of themselves. They have powerful friends.

What can a demon get out of a bargain? Demons need for things to happen in the human sphere. Unless a sorcerer spends some Essence, he's basically soundless to the Symphony. A sorcerer, with his knowledge of ethereal spirits and other arcane lore, is a better bet than a plain Soldier of Hell.

Most demons figure that sorcerers are basically contract workers for Hell, Inc. – might as well give them the business.

A typical bargain is a one-for-one exchange of human deed for demonic power, usually with the human going first. But even if the demon fulfills his end of the bargain first, the sorcerer will almost always honor any bargain he makes. In addition to swearing to do just that in his Initiation, no sorcerer could possibly study enough to learn how to summon a demon to have not also learned what happens to welchers.

Whatever the two entities agree on is the bargain, but the GM should remember several important rules:

✘ Demons have no pity. Except for Impudites, most do not like humans, even the tiniest bit. And they especially hate humans who have the gall to think themselves good enough to deal with them. They may respect a rare few, but they hate *them*, too, perhaps even more than the rest.

✘ Demons don't play fair. They will not out-and-out welch on a bargain, but expect them to fulfill their end of anything but the simplest agreement in a way you didn't expect. You can also be sure that anything they ask you to do will be much more difficult and dangerous than they led you to believe.

✘ Eventually, no matter what, anybody who runs errands for demons will be damned. There's not much of a way to get around that one, unless you can find a way to join the mysterious Dozen and not die.

Power is not really easily measurable, and it's hard to



tell whether you got a fair deal. How can you measure the value of cutting the brake lines on a school bus full of children about to take a drive in the mountains against the procurement of the Song of Healing?

Sorcerers just have to study up on demonology, know what is capable of being offered, and drive the best bargain they can. And watch your back.

As Asmodeus is fond of saying, "Caveat emptor."

But the rewards can be great, for those with the stomach for the bargain. Below are a few potential goals that have tempted sorcerers:

ADVANCED SORCERY

Demons can grant occult knowledge far beyond the ken of mortal sorcerers – indeed, this is the sole use that many sorcerers have for demons. Below are some summaries of skills that demons can grant sorcerers.

Each skill requires the Sorcery attunement to use (see p. 57), and cannot be used at all by default. In addition, each skill's base characteristic is the highest level of the appropriate sorcery skill the sorcerer has; for example, if a sorcerer's highest level of the Focus skill was Focus/3, then his base characteristic for using the Alchemy skill would be 3.

Each of these Advanced Sorcery skills costs 3 character points per level.

Yes, all these skills can be learned without recourse to demonic training . . . but the "good" human sorcerers who can and will teach them, or the ethereal spirits who are not worse than demons, are few and far between. And of course the demons will deny that advanced sorcerous skills can come from any sources but the infernal.

Alchemy (Focus)

By using Essence, a sorcerer may infuse potions, elixirs, powders and salves with powers similar to any Songs or attunements he possesses. The GM may, at his



discretion, make the sorcerer come up with rare or costly ingredients for the concoction.

The potion (or whatever) is a one-use item that must be entirely used up by the sorcerer (drunk, rubbed on the skin, swallowed, whatever) to provide the desired effect. When it is consumed, the Song or attunement that was stored in the mixture can be used by the sorcerer one time with no Essence cost. The skill roll is made when the concoction is created; the check digit of the skill indicates the level of the Song, or adds +1 to the effectiveness of the attunement (if applicable) on a check digit of 6.

Intervention:

If 111 is rolled, the potion is a failure, but the Essence spent to create it is still lost.

If 666 is rolled, the sorcerer spends no Essence creating the item.

Time Required: Varies, but should be at least a full day.

Essence Cost: 1d6+3.

Exorcism (Command)

The sorcerer can force demons or spirits to relinquish possession of human vessels or inanimate objects, thus breaking any soul anchors or bindings that might exist.

Treat this as a Will-war between the sorcerer and the spirit (see p. 64). The sorcerer rolls against his Exorcism skill + Will. If the sorcerer succeeds, the demon or spirit must leave that vessel or object, and may not try to enter again for a year. If the sorcerer fails, the demon remains where it is, and the sorcerer may not try again for at least one month.

If the sorcerer fails three times, the demon may automatically make him his servant as if the sorcerer had lost a Will-war!

Intervention:

If 111 is rolled, the demon may not attempt to reenter the vessel ever, and the sorcerer pays no Essence cost.

If 666 is rolled, the demon possesses the sorcerer, as per the Song of Possession, *In Nomine*, p. 83.

Time Required: 1 hour.

Essence Cost: the check digit.

Banishment (Summon)

The sorcerer can force a demon to go back to Hell or an ethereal spirit to leave for the Marches. Roll against Banishment + Will versus the target's Will + Celestial Forces; the check digit of a successful roll determines how quickly the demon is banished, in rounds.

If the attempt fails, the demon or spirit will initiate a Will-war against the sorcerer (see p. 64) with a +2 bonus to his roll. (GMs should use discretion here; if the spirit has little chance of winning a Will-war, it will find another way to attack.)

Intervention:

If 111 is rolled, the demon is banished instantly and may not return to the corporeal realm for a year and a day.

If 666 is rolled, the demon possesses the sorcerer, as per the Song of Possession, *In Nomine*, p. 83.

Time Required: 10 minutes.

Essence Cost: the check digit - 2.

STORIES OF THE DARK

Here are some story ideas you can use to get a sorcerer-based campaign off the ground:

The Sorcerer's Apprentice

This is a rags-to-riches-to-chains story, from the beginning where a normal human stumbles across a sorcerer to the end when the new sorcerer finds himself burning down churches so he can get that Ferrari he always dreamed of. It's best in a one-on-one gaming environment.

I Hold the Line

You are a sorcerer who knows a terrible secret, either about a group of ethereal spirits who are planning an attack on the corporeal realm, or a bunch of demons who are getting ready to rumble.

You must put yourself between them and the rest of humanity, using your knowledge of the occult to save the day. This story line can be played with other *In Nomine* character types from Soldiers to celestials.

The Road to Hell

This is a story about good intentions. You start as a sorcerer who studied only for "academic purposes." You begin to find that you have a taste for hunting down demons and demon worshipers, only to realize that the power you've acquired from your demonological studies has made you something of a demon-worshiper, too. What do you do? Do you recant all your knowledge, all your skill, or do you go on, trying to use your powers for "good"? This story can be about a cabal of sorcerers, each struggling with their own little corner of corruption and obsession.

The Parliament of Dreams

You and your cabal of sorcerers are summoned into the Marches for a meeting with a mysterious, shadowy court of hooded entities who request your help in operations on Earth. In exchange they offer great knowledge and power for reward. Who are they? What do they want?

Whom do they serve? Are they pagan gods who are trying to establish a foothold in the corporeal realm, or are they demons in disguise? The only real question is: can you pass up the chance of a lifetime?

The Call of the Dark

You are an archeologist studying ancient religions all over the world. You have no idea you've become a sorcerer through reading thousands of incantations and chants. Now, spirits are showing up for you when you call – are you going mad, or can you now finally get that grant you've been longing for?



Damn-sizing

This corporate sorcery campaign tells the story of a group of sorcerers who have been practicing their art since the days they bound spirits of death, pain and fire into Nazi bombs. An action thriller with boardroom chanting sessions and factory machines coming to life, this campaign is about the real demons running the corporeal world.

FROM THE DEMONS' VIEWPOINT . . .

Demons, as you might expect, have a different perspective on the Black Art. While a very few sorcerers wield real power and have earned demonic respect, the vast majority are seen as just Soldiers of Hell with a few extra tricks . . . errand boys and cannon fodder.

The whole concept of Sorcery goes back to Kronos, who long ago started a project that would help send the most ambitious, power-hungry humans down a dark, twisted road toward their Fate. He persuaded Lucifer to give one of his favorite Balsephs, named Hatiphas, the Word of Sorcery. Hatiphas went forth to fool and damn those mortals who sought occult power.

As Baroness of Sorcery, she has the power to grant the Sorcery attunement (see p. 57) to whomever she wishes, and her Servitors have this attunement, too. It's hard to say whether the Sorcery attunement is an add-on to the human soul or just a process which awakens parts of it – that's for the philosophers to quibble over, and Hatiphas is much too busy to give it much thought.

Hatiphas makes sure that while the "forbidden knowledge" has a reputation of being hard to find, and is seen



as a myth by “educated” skeptics, it always finds its way into the hands of those it can corrupt. She does her best to help it along, encouraging cabals, making sure that her pet sorcerers feel compelled to share their secrets.

Hatiphas (woe unto any who call her “Hattie”) is a Balseph who took lessons from Lilith about the finer points of bargaining. This makes her the most silver-tongued of devils. For the most part, Hatiphas runs a “female” organization in Hell. But some of her best sorcerous recruiter Impudites prefer the Role of scholarly males. Many of her Servitors are Lilim, with their gift for bargaining.

Hatiphas, of course, treats all of her carefully constructed lies as the Truth. She loves to manifest on Earth as the archetypal Evil Sorceress . . . tall, seductive, all black leather and silver jewelry and husky laughter. Hatiphas loves her job.

Many in Hell appreciate her work. Lilith is a particular ally (some whisper more than a mere ally, and in fact the Princess of Freedom currently owes the Balseph a little favor or two). Vapula and Saminga are both jealous of Hatiphas, but for different reasons. Vapula sees her as a threat to mortal’s growing dependence on technology.

Saminga desperately wishes he had followers like hers – potent sorcerers, all of whom owe her favors.

But nobody’s perfect, at least not in the Infernal realms, and not everything about Hatiphas’ Sorcery “scam” has gone according to plan. Sorcerers who have managed to contain their ambition (the minority, admittedly), have actually enjoyed long careers and accomplished some good; the Native American shaman who calls upon rain spirits to save his people from drought is a good example.

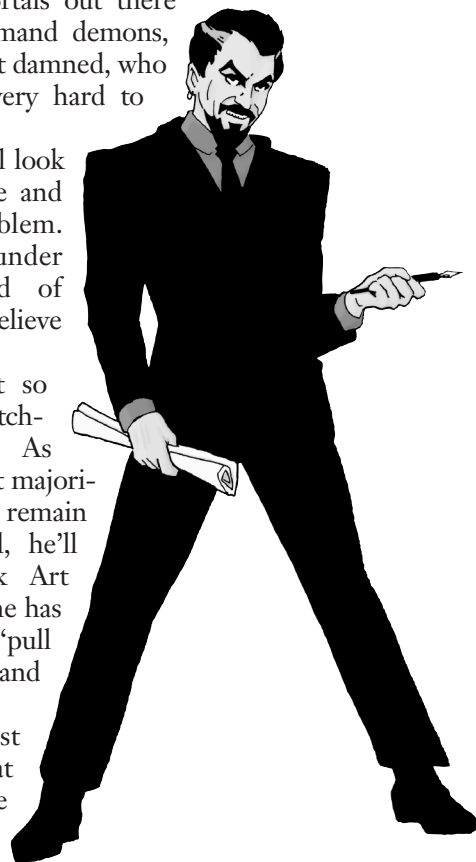
And then there are those rare mortals, such as the historical Merlin and Solomon, who gain *great* power and use it for good. Such long runs of luck and mastery leave all of Hell nervous. It only gets worse when the most dedicated sorcerers, through luck or incredible Will or both, actually gain power over Hell’s minions . . . even if they have evil in mind. Hell, after all, is not about “promoting evil for its own sake.” It’s about power. And handing too much power to mortals is a bad, bad idea.

And what about the Dozen? Real, or myth? Good, or evil? The conventional wisdom among demons is that they’re a joke – there are several standard names that demons will “let drop” as belonging to members of the Dozen, just to keep the story consistent. But some demons, when no minions of Hatiphas are around, will admit . . . sorcery has fallen into some frightening hands. There are mortals out there who can command demons, who are not yet damned, who have proven very hard to kill.

Hatiphas will look you in the eye and say “No problem. I’ve got it under control.” And of course you’ll believe her.

Kronos isn’t so sure. He’s watching carefully. As long as the vast majority of sorcerers remain dupes of Hell, he’ll let the Black Art thrive. If not, he has said he will “pull the plug” once and for all.

Can he just erase sorcery at his whim? He says he can.



DEMONLINGS

Most of the demonlings a sorcerer will deal with will be Gremlins, Imps and Familiars (see *In Nomine*, p. 192). Since creatures this weak are not named, they can only be Summoned at random (see *Summon/2*, p. 58).

The GM has full control over just what appears when a demonling is summoned. Gremlins and Imps are the most common; Familiars less so. In addition, Hell is also populated with all sorts of other minor creatures that could be Summoned to the corporeal realm and forced to serve a sorcerer, though the ability to Summon them does not imply in the least the ability to force them to serve . . .

DEMONLING GENERATION

The number of Forces the demonling that was Summoned has depends on the check digit of the Summoning roll. The GM can allocate the Forces as he wishes, though every demonling must have at least 1 Celestial Force. Demonlings tend to pour as much into Will as possible, too.

Some demonlings appear on the corporeal plane in a vessel, but many of the weaker ones can't afford one and will appear in celestial form only.

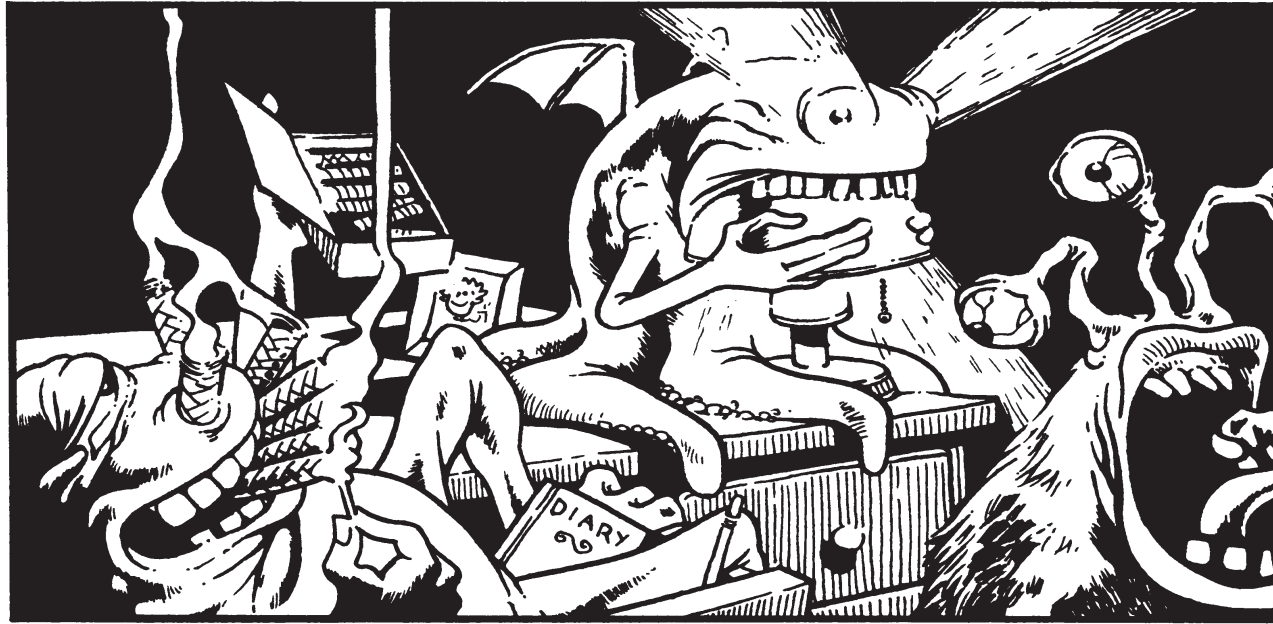
Demonling Types

A precise taxonomy of demonlings has yet to be attempted – perhaps Kronos will assign the task to a former biologist as punishment. Demons refer to them in slang terms – snots, grubs, squicks, frotlings and others. The demonlings themselves often fight among themselves about whether they're a frotling or a snot, but nobody else really cares.

Appearance & Personality

The Game Master can create his own demonlings from scratch, or he can roll one up on the following tables. The game effects, if any, of any of these features are up to the GM.





Eyes

- 1: Googly (they waggle)
- 2: On stalks
- 3: Independent
- 4: Different colors
- 5: Glowing
- 6: Pupil-less

Fur/Skin

- 1: Dry, scaly
- 2: Flaky
- 3: Oozing sores
- 4: Flagellae
- 5: Armored
- 6: Fiery

Smell

- 1: Rotting meat
- 2: Sulfur
- 3: Smog
- 4: Rotting flowers
- 5: Acidic
- 6: Intense perfume

Arms

- 1: One arm
- 2: Two arms
- 3: Two arms, one tentacle
- 4: Two arms, two tentacles
- 5: Four arms
- 6: Four arms, two tentacles

Legs

- 1: One leg
- 2: Two legs
- 3: Three legs
- 4: Four legs
- 5: Four legs, one useless tail
- 6: Six legs

Primary Motivation

- 1: Strange obsession
- 2: Cause pain
- 3: Break or eat things
- 4: Steal things
- 5: Scare people or animals
- 6: Confuse people

GMs may wish to award demonlings Essence if motivations are met.

Primary Fear

- 1: Angels
- 2: Demons
- 3: Pain
- 4: Television
- 5: Animals
- 6: Sorcerers

GMs may wish to modify reactions involving a primary fear.

Standard Operating Procedure

- 1: *Investigation*, to extremes: constant questions, rooting around in your stuff, sorting through (and rearranging) files.
- 2: *Bargaining*: making promises, currying favor, negotiating, weaseling out of deals.
- 3: *Taunting*: abusive and annoying. "Your mother was a Cherub, your father smelt of holy water!"
- 4: *Destructive*: breaking dishes, scratching furniture, magnetizing floppy disks, dropping Ming vases from high places.
- 5: *Hostile*: glaring silence, nonchalance, apathy, attitude.
- 6: *Show-off*: using Songs, juggling, joking, glad-handing.

Resources

Demonlings do not have servants. Any demonling who has an artifact probably stole it – and any demon who catches one with an artifact will probably snuff out the little snot and take it – so most of them eschew artifacts. This means they have either Songs, skills or Discord.



ETHEREAL SPIRIT SUMMONING

Four kinds of ethereal spirits are summonable by sorcerers.

Primal spirits are natural ethereal spirits: elemental forces, dreams of the sleeping Earth, leftover bits of creation. They can be quite powerful within their own sphere of influence (their Affinity). They are described on p. 105.

Myth spirits are the creatures of legend. Uriel's Crusade killed many, and the survivors are mostly in hiding. The GM may detail them as he likes; some have surprising abilities. See *Creatures of Myth*, p. 109.

Pagan spirits are the Old Gods and their Servitors. Note that it would be most unlikely for a sorcerer to summon an actual pagan deity like Loki or Athena . . . but their servants are summonable. See p. 91.

Dream spirits were created by an individual dreamer, but escaped from their Dreamscape. They are frequently hunted down by Beleth and Blandine's Servitors and returned to their "homes," but some hide in out-of-the-way corners of the Marches. See p. 108.

No ethereal spirit can be summoned to the corporeal plane unless it possesses a vessel (see pp. 110-111).

RANDOM SUMMONING

If the sorcerer has no idea what he's going to get, the Game Master should invent something that fits the story. If inspiration is needed, roll one die and use this table. Roll 1d6+2 for Forces.

1-2: Primal Spirit (roll for Affinity, or assign one that fits the sorcerer's needs if he rolled well.)

3: Dream Spirit (roll for type)

4: Myth Spirit (the GM may invent anything interesting, or roll again if he does not feel inspired)

5-6: Pagan Spirit (roll below for pantheon or domain)

Primal Spirit Affinities

Roll 3d6:

- 3-4: Snow (p. 105)
- 5: Plants (p. 107)
- 6: Animals (p. 107)
- 7: Lightning (p. 105)
- 8: Fire (p. 105)
- 9: Rain (p. 105)
- 10: Wind (p. 106)
- 11: Water (p. 106)

- 12: Storms (p. 105)
- 13: Stone (p. 106)
- 14: Moon (p. 107)
- 15: Sun (p. 107)
- 16: Gold (p. 106)
- 17-18: Jewels (p. 106)

Dream Spirit Types

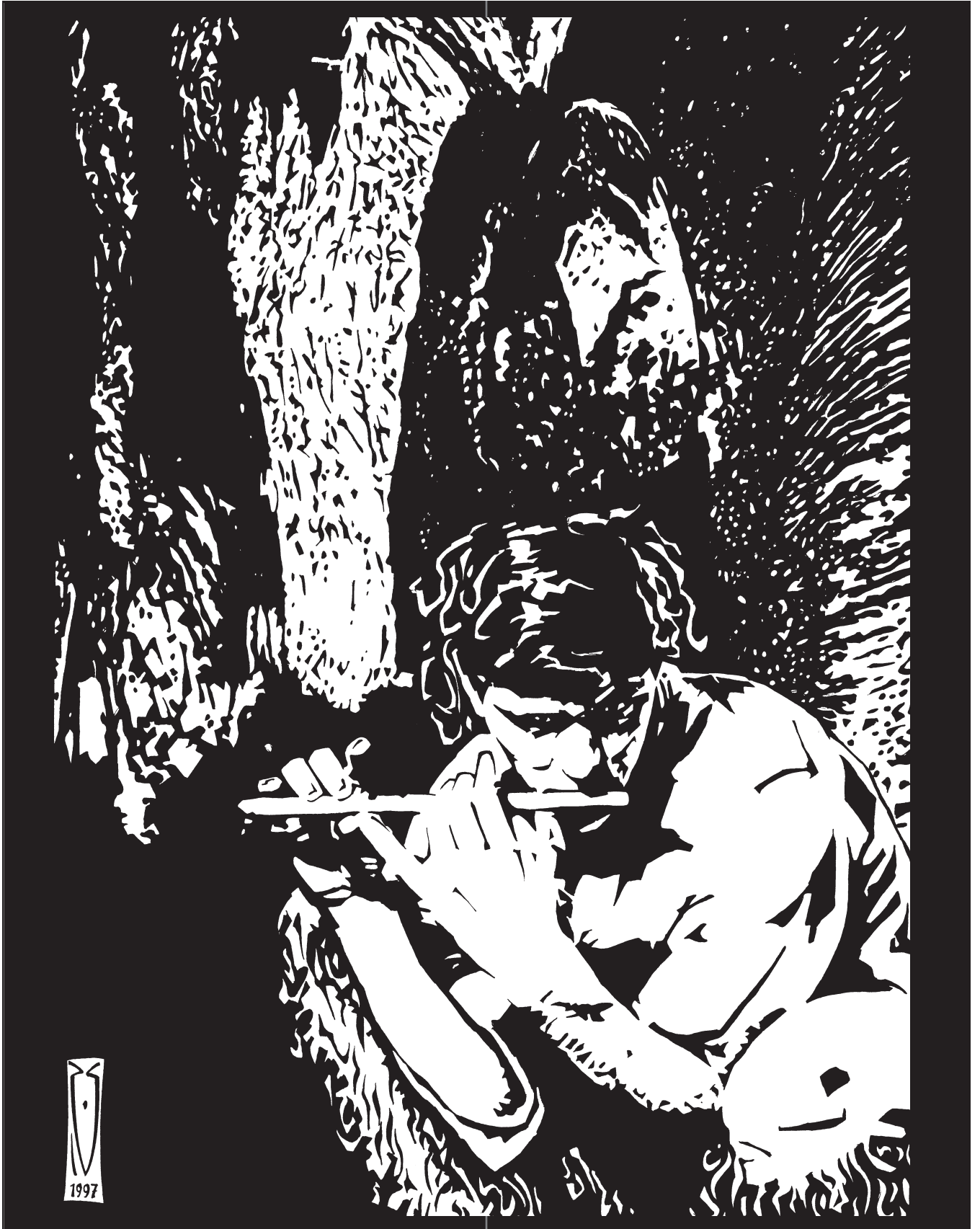
Roll 2d6:

- 2-3: Animate Background Fragment (p. 108)
- 4-5: Animate Foreground Figment (p. 108)
- 6-8: Central Character (p. 108)
- 9-11: Nightmare Element (p. 109)
- 12: Spiritual Metaphor (p. 109)

Pagan Spirit Pantheon

Roll 2d6:

- 2-3: Dreamtime (p. 103)
- 4: Mictlan (p. 100)
- 5: Faerie (p. 98)
- 6: Aesir (p. 96)
- 7: Olympus (p. 99)
- 8: Heliopolitans (p. 103)
- 9: Loas (p. 104)
- 10: August Prosperity Collective (p. 104)
- 11-12: Happy Hunting Grounds (p. 102)



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THE ETHEREAL REALM



THE ETHEREAL REALM

"A myth is a public dream, and a dream is a private myth."
— Joseph Campbell

The ethereal realm, also called the Marches, stretches across the vast distance between the corporeal and celestial realms. It is made up of the haunting echoes of the Symphony that reverberate between the other two realms, a reflection of the dreams and imaginings of humanity. For the most part, the Marches are a vast, unformed sea of chaos, filled with mists and dream stuff. The endless nothingness of the Marches is broken up by different dreamscapes or domains. Time and space often seem distorted in the Marches and are highly subjective.

The Marches are the home of the ethereal spirits. Some of these creatures are older than mankind; others were created by the dreams of man. They have the potential to be a potent third force in the War, though their powers are now in eclipse.

HISTORY

Before the appearance of mankind, the Marches were truly inchoate, made up only of animal dreams . . . powerful, primal, but unfocused. Perhaps the oldest of the primal spirits, the ones from before Man, were created from the rage of tigers, the lust of whales, the dreams of dinosaurs who longed for safe green fields where they could raise their babies.

Once Man appeared on the scene, the Marches filled with millions of complex dreamscapes. Blandine and Beleth, the Archangels of Dream and Fear, were given dominion over the Marches and raised their twin towers. Then came the Fall, and the division was now between Dream and Nightmare.

But before the Fall, other players had already stepped onto the stage of the Marches.

THE OLD GODS APPEAR

The mortals of old looked on the world with wonder and fear. Not understanding the mysteries of God's creation, unable to hear the music of the Symphony, they sought to find meaning in the natural events that happened around them. Those feelings manifested in the Marches as living beings . . . ethereal spirits who embodied human emotions and the things that stirred them in mortal hearts and minds. The spirits fed and grew strong



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THE ETHEREAL REALM



on the Essence that human imagination offered, and many mortals came to worship them as gods, a role they quickly accepted. The spirits taught humans Songs and gave them Soul Links (see *Ethereal Resources*, p. 126), and created rituals of worship that allowed humans to generate more Essence for the spirits, increasing their power and allowing them to bestow gifts on their loyal followers.

The spirits appeared in many different forms and pantheons – reflecting the cultures that spawned them – and filled many different roles in the complex cosmologies that were created. They were gods of war, agriculture, fertility, craftsmanship and every other field of human endeavor. Every human culture on Earth had at least some people who believed in the spirits and communicated with them. These people became shamans and priests of the pagan gods and worked to spread their worship. The Marches filled with beings of power, and the Essence from human worship flowed freely. Many spirits were able to create corporeal vessels to cross over into the corporeal world and work their will there.

Some spirits became patrons, protectors and teachers of their human followers, who told myths and legends about their exploits. These spirits were kind and caring toward mortals; others found humans entertaining . . . as

chess pieces, toys or carousing companions. Some were interested only in the Essence that humans could offer them and extracted it however they could. These spirits discovered that strong emotions tended to evoke the flow of Essence in humans, and that terror could goad a mortal into releasing stored Essence in a burst that could be tapped by the spirit. Thus grew the tales of dark hunter and trickster gods. Other spirits objected to the “strip mining” tactics of their fellows and worked to protect humans. Conflicts between these two camps are recorded in myth as the battles of the gods for the spirits of humanity, pale echoes of the true War for the Symphony that was happening behind the scenes.

The appearances of the ethereals in the corporeal world strengthened belief in the spirits, increasing their power. Human cultures worshiped and feared the beings that they had themselves created, ignoring the deeper truth of the existence of the true Creator. If God was bothered by this ignorance on the part of His creations, He showed no sign of it. Worship of the pagan gods continued unabated and unopposed by anyone except God’s mortal worshippers.

THE PURIFICATION CRUSADE

But one celestial refused to endure what he saw as a blasphemous turning away from God to worship idols of human making. Uriel, the Archangel of Purity, was deeply offended by the worship of the pagan spirits. Worse still was the suggestion by some of these upstart spirits that the Most High was Himself nothing more than a creation of the human imagination, that God had elevated Himself above His position as a simple tribal divinity of the Hebrews and was rewriting the Symphony to suit His own plans and exclude the other gods from it. Why, the very *idea* was blasphemous! Uriel saw the Symphony as a manifestation of his own Word, a place where complete purity of thought, word and deed should prevail. The betrayal of God by his creations, who turned their backs on Him to worship at pagan altars, was a blight on all that was right and true.

In his wrath, Uriel called for a great Crusade against the spirits, especially the pagan gods, the beings known as the Courts of Faerie and the mythical beasts that captured mortal imaginations. Uriel’s angels of Purity took up the call with sword and song, and a great war began between the forces of Heaven and the spirits of the Marches. Uriel’s Servitors hunted and killed the creatures of fantasy and fought the pagan spirits who opposed them.

Although they were supported by the faith and Essence of their human worshippers, the pagan spirits could not resist the onslaught of the Heavenly Hosts.

They were too divided to work together, wrapped up in the interests and needs of their human worshipers and opposed to the other factions and pantheons. The spirits were driven back into the depths of the Marches. Those who stood and fought in the corporeal realm were slain by Uriel's angels. Thus perished the dragons and most of the Lords of Faerie. They loved the Earth too much to leave it, and they died mortal deaths.

But Uriel was not satisfied. The hunters followed the spirits even into the depths of Blandine's realm, bringing the Crusade into the dreams of humanity.

In the Marches, the pagans stood their ground as best they could. They concealed themselves in the dreams and nightmares of mortals. They fortified their ethereal strongholds against the impending onslaught of Uriel's crusaders.

As natives of the ethereal realm, the spirits expected to be able to mount an effective guerilla campaign against the angels who hunted them, and most pantheons prepared for what would be their final fight.

Beleth had watched the persecution of the ethereals with great interest. The Princess of Nightmares offered a deal: sanctuary in her realm to those powers who wished it. They wouldn't even have to serve Beleth . . . though, of course, those who chose to do so would receive preference, Essence, more help in defense.

Many accepted. The dark Princess gained many valuable allies in the Marches while thumbing her nose at Uriel and his Crusade. The pact was struck and the pagan gods sought the protection of the realm of nightmare. Their images were demonized in the dreams and imaginations of much of humanity, making the pagan gods creatures of deception and evil in many human cultures.

URIEL'S JUDGMENT

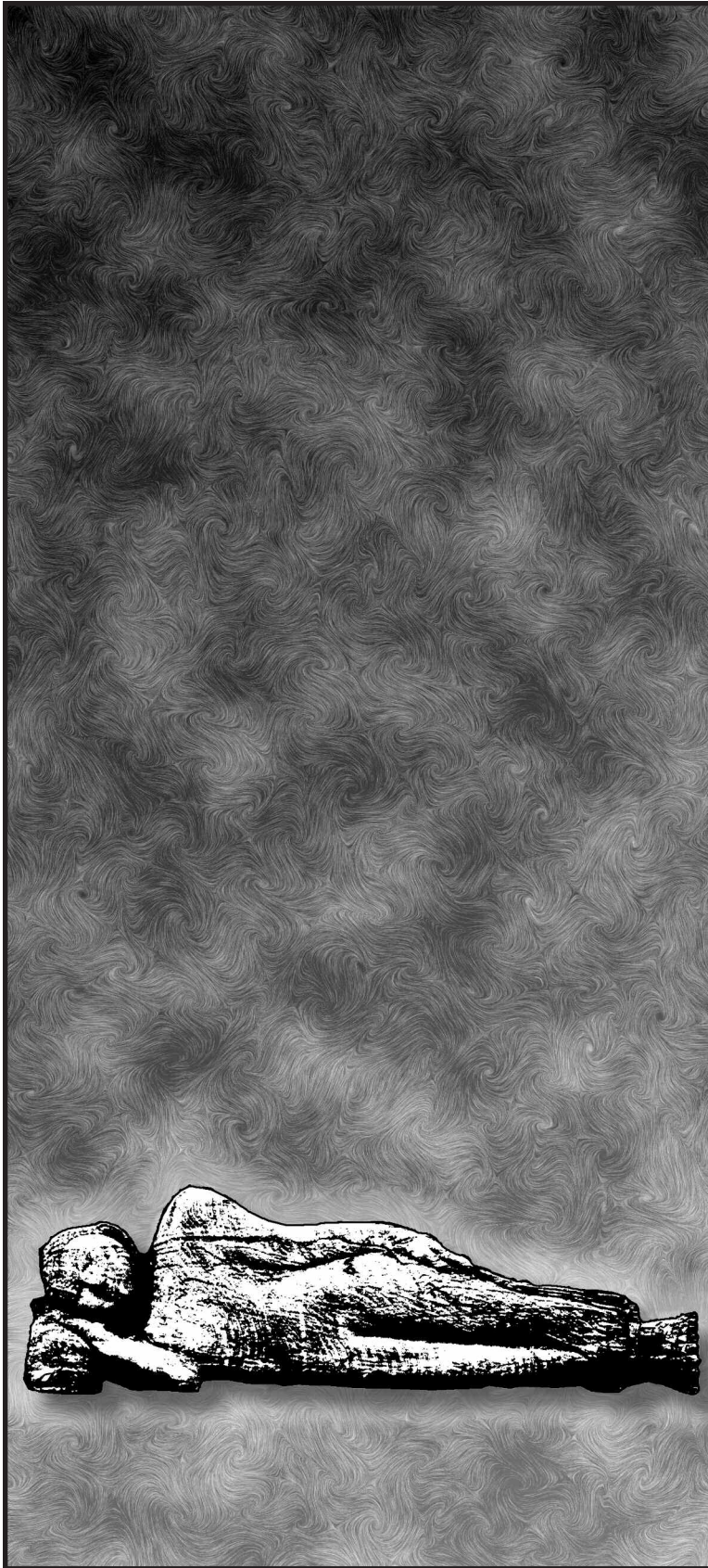
As Beleth expected, Uriel did not let her interference slow his Crusade. If anything, the involvement of a Princess of Hell only fired the Archangel's zeal. Uriel called for an assault on the pagan spirits and their demon allies on Beleth's side of the Marches . . . and perhaps even an invasion of Hell itself. Blandine objected, saying that it would tear the Marches apart and plunge untold human dreamers into the realm of nightmare, pushing them that much closer to the grasp of Beleth and Hell. She refused to support Uriel's plan. But the Archangel of Purity would not be swayed and made ready to continue



even without Blandine's permission. Finally, Blandine petitioned the Seraphim Council to put an end to the slaughter and madness in her realm. Uriel and his followers were called before the Council and ordered to end their crusade while the Council deliberated.

The question was not an easy one. Uriel's crusade had driven the ethereal spirits from Earth, crippling the pagan religions and ending most ethereal involvement in the corporeal realm. But it had also wreaked havoc in the Symphony – millions of creatures of myth and legend, which were also God's creations, were killed. And the warring in the Marches had also disrupted many of the dreamscapes of mortals, tipping the balance of some of them toward Hell.

Throughout the trial, Uriel remained steadfast in defense of his actions. He spoke eloquently in support of his Crusade. He had acted, he said, in the name of God and in the fulfillment of his Word for the betterment of Heaven's cause in the War. The Archangel's followers steadfastly supported him, including Laurence, the Angel of the Sword, who was one of Uriel's most trusted and honored Servitors. The Council was at a loss for how to judge Uriel.



Then the Archangel of Purity ascended at God's command and has not been heard from since. Uriel's Crusade was ended and the remaining spirits were left to their own devices. Some remained allied with Beleth; others wandered back to the shattered ruins of their realms in the Far Marches to try to rebuild and survive as best they could.

The Council also had to decide what to do about Uriel's Servitors. They had slaughtered many of God's creations and shattered many mortal dreams, pushing some dreamers headlong into Beleth's realm of nightmare. On the other hand, they were only following Uriel's orders, and doing so with great zeal and devotion, qualities to be commended in an angel.

The Council knew God's will when He chose Laurence, a Servitor of Purity, to be Archangel of the Sword and Commander of God's Armies in the War. Most of Uriel's former Servitors became Laurence's, while a few others were assigned to other Superiors. A small handful continued under Laurence's command to continue the task they had been chosen for by Uriel: protecting the purity of the Earth from the spirits still abroad in the Marches. These are the Guardians of the Marches (p. 92).

THE MARCHES TODAY

The Marches, chaotic and indistinct as they are, are still divided into several different areas. The best known area, "central" only by definition, is known as the Vale of Dreams. This region consists of Blandine and Beleth's Domains, each centered around its mistress' castle. Here the vast majority of sleeping mortals experience their nightly dreams and nightmares.

Surrounding the celestial-controlled domains, stretching perhaps to infinity, are the Far Marches, the dark and hidden corners of the dream realm, haunted by pagan spirits and beings of myth, full of secret domains. Celestials who enter the Far Marches do so at their peril; there are things out there, powerful things, that neither dream-Superior controls or even knows about. And neither Beleth nor Blandine likes being reminded of that.

Between the Vale and the Far Marches lies the uncertain expanse of mists called the Border Marches, watched over by celestials both infernal and divine for any attempts to trespass into the Vale of Dreams.



IN THE MARCHES

Existence in the ethereal realm is a matter of thought. The ethereal is made up of the stuff of imagination, so the power of the mind and Ethereal or Celestial Forces can influence it. Most spirits have a preferred appearance (which may be humanoid, animal or elemental in form) and can be recognized when they assume it. But many spirits can change their appearance at will. Beings in the Marches can use Will or the Dreaming skill to alter their appearance and disguise it (p. 85). The Celestial Song of Form can also be used to alter the singer's appearance in the Marches, if desired.

Characters in the Marches have all of their normal abilities and Resources. They even carry dream-images of their normal equipment and any Artifacts they possess with them into the Marches. They can also use Will, Dreaming skill or the Celestial Song of Dreams to create other items or even settings within a dreamscape.

ENTERING AND LEAVING THE MARCHES

Humans enter the Marches every time they fall asleep and dream. This requires no effort on the part of the dreamer; it simply happens. A human who specifically *wants* to fall asleep in order to enter the Marches must make a successful Will roll to do so. Lucid dreamers (see p. 84) can use their Dreaming skill in place of the Will

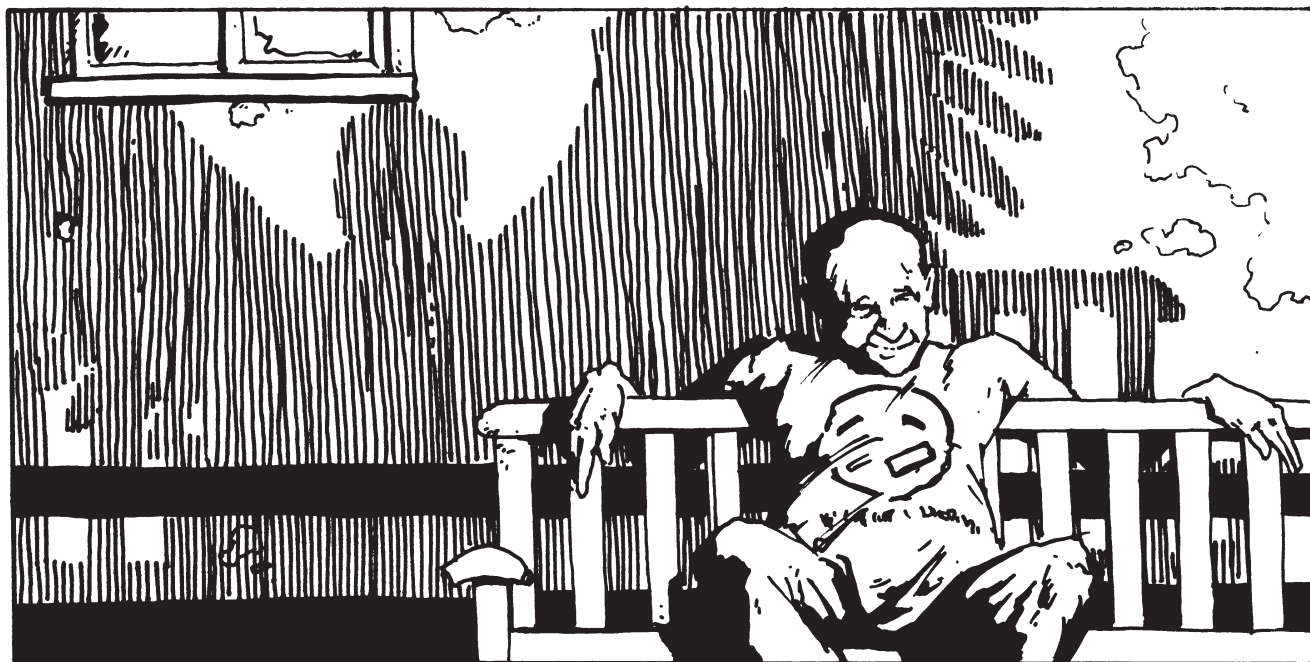
roll. It takes a human 30 minutes to reach a dreaming state, divided by the check digit of the Will roll.

The mortal dreamer always appears in the Near Marches in his personal dreamscape, which can drift from one side of the Vale of Dreams to the other. A 111 on a Will roll to enter the Marches results in the dreamer appearing at the base of Blandine's tower, while a 666 on the roll puts the hapless dreamer in the shadow of Beleth's tower. The dreamer will likely experience a particularly potent dream or nightmare when this happens. Or the dreamer might draw the attention of the Superior or one of her servants. Such rare mortals often have the potential to become Soldiers or lucid dreamers. Humans who know the Corporeal Song of Dreams can use it to enter the Marches through another sleeping human's dreamscape if they fall asleep in close proximity to the subject.

Dreaming humans can also make a Will roll to wake up from a dream or nightmare. If the roll is successful, the human awakens immediately and any visitors to his dreamscape are immediately forced awake; non-dreaming visitors (that is, meddling spirits and celestials) are forcibly ejected. Lucid dreamers can use their Dreaming skill for this roll.

Celestials

Celestials do not normally need to sleep, but they can do so with a successful Will roll. If the Will roll fails, the celestial must wait at least half an hour before trying again. Another Will roll is required to wake up. If it fails,





the celestial must wait another half hour before trying again. Angels and demons do not have dreamscapes of their own. They walk through the domain of either Beleth or Blandine in the Vale of Dreams, surrounded by the teeming domains of humans' personal dreamscapes.

Angels or demons who enter the tower of Blandine or Beleth in celestial form can also exit from them into the Vale of Dreams. When an angel or demon does so, his celestial form vanishes, reappearing when he returns to the tower.

If a celestial enters the Marches through the dreams of a human dreamer, he appears in that human's dreamscape. The celestial's corporeal vessel (if he was corporeal at the time) remains asleep until his return. If anything happens to disturb the vessel, he may awaken immediately to deal with it (no roll required).

Celestials can also enter the Marches through an Ethereal Tether on the Earth. This requires the celestial to assume his celestial form and make a Will roll. If the roll is successful, the celestial appears in the Far Marches in whatever domain the Tether connects to. His corporeal vessel vanishes completely from the corporeal realm while he is in the Marches. The ethereal spirits of the Far Marches are not fond of unexpected celestial visitors, and may react with hostility toward any angelic or demonic gate-crashers.

Returning to the corporeal plane requires another successful Will roll, and takes the celestial back to the Tether he left from, but the return must take place in the domain connected to that Tether. Celestials can also return through another, different Ethereal Tether if they can find one, or they can leave the domain they are in and travel to another, or even back to the Vale of Dreams.

Ethereals

Ethereal spirits cannot enter the celestial realm. They can enter the corporeal realm easily, by making a Will roll and spending 1 Essence, but they must have a cor-

poreal vessel to do so (see pp. 110-111). Leaving the corporeal realm to return to the celestial also requires a Will roll and 1 Essence.

The Heavenly Host has forbidden ethereals from coming to Earth. But spirits visit Earth all the time . . . on their own business, or that of their rulers. Sorcerers or pagan worshipers can also call ethereal spirits to appear on Earth, provided those spirits possess vessels.

To the chagrin of Laurence and Blandine, there is no way to "prevent" ethereals from entering the corporeal realm; there is no border to guard. Thus, the only way to enforce the prohibition is to punish offenders ruthlessly. Any angel is permitted and encouraged to destroy ethereals encountered in corporeal form, or to report them to servants of Laurence or Blandine. Demons, for their part, will not countenance competition from ethereals "poaching" on their earthly territories . . . unless some sort of deal is offered.

DISTURBING THE SYMPHONY

It is possible to disturb the Symphony in the Marches. Expenditures of Essence and destructive acts toward human dreamers can be detected by other celestials. Generally speaking, disturbances in the Far Marches are too "distant" to be detected from Blandine or Beleth's domains, and vice versa.

Physical distance is not really a factor in the Marches, but separation between domains is. For each domain "border" between the source of the disturbance and the listener, there is a -5 modifier to the Perception roll to sense the disturbance. So if a demon in the dreamscape of a human on Beleth's side of the Vale disturbs the Symphony, an angel on Blandine's side of the Vale will be at -5 for the "border" of the human's dreamscape, and -5 for the border between Beleth and Blandine's realms, for a total of -10. If the angel were in the Border Marches the penalty would be -15 and in the Far Marches -20. Therefore, only very significant disturbances of the

Symphony are detectable in the Marches unless the listener is in the same or a neighboring domain.

Disturbances in the Marches generally cannot be detected from the corporeal realm. The only exception is the death of a human. If a celestial kills a dreaming human in the Marches (in celestial combat), the disturbance caused by the death is detectable in *both* the ethereal and the corporeal realms. The distance in the corporeal realm is figured from the distance between the detecting celestial and the human dreamer's corporeal body. This is one reason that Beleth and Blandine's servants take great care not to kill dreamers when they can use other means to accomplish their goals.

Celestials entering or leaving the Marches do not cause disturbance like they do in the corporeal realm. Damage inflicted against a human or ethereal spirit in ethereal combat does cause disturbance equal to the Ethereal Forces lost. Damaging "inanimate" objects in dreamscapes and domains does not cause disturbance. Celestials altering dreamscapes using their Will cause only a point of disturbance, usually undetectable except to others in the same domain.

Ethereal spirits operating in the corporeal realm create disturbances in the Symphony just as celestials do. The ethereals are no more "natural" in the corporeal realm

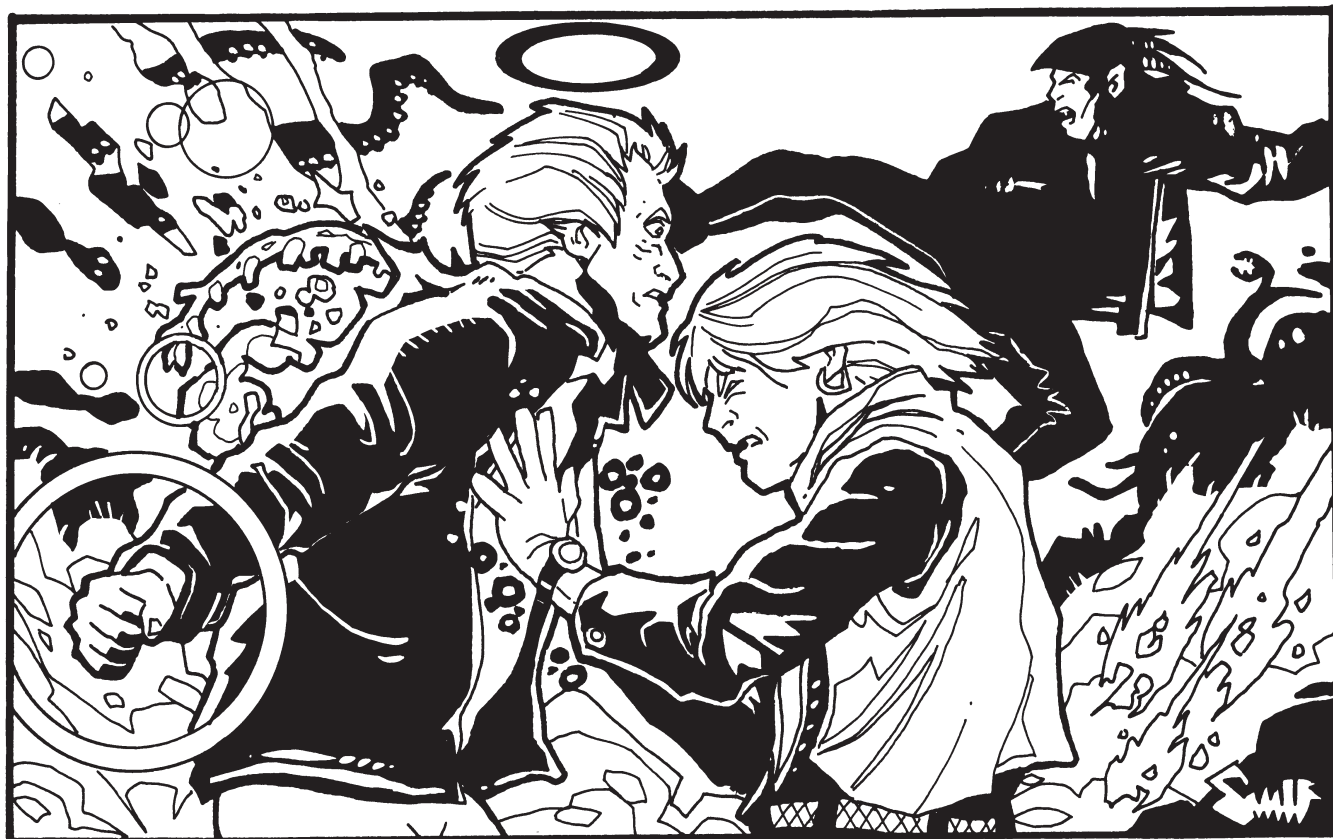
than celestials are. Ethereals in the Marches do not cause disturbances in the Symphony unless they interfere with the dreams of a human or otherwise harm or affect a human, in which case they cause disturbance normally. Note that there is no difference in "feel" between a disturbance in the Symphony caused by a celestial, an ethereal or a human spending Essence.

ETHEREAL COMBAT

Combat in the ethereal realm is also a matter of the mind. Corporeal combat is not possible in the Marches, although celestial combat is still an option for spirits and celestials. Ethereal combat is the most common option, but not all characters are necessarily capable of it.

Anyone who knows any of the Songs of Dreams or has the Dreamwalk attunement is capable of ethereal combat, as is anyone who knows the Ethereal Song of Entropy, a powerful weapon in ethereal combat. Ethereal spirits are all automatically capable of combat in their native environment. Humans with the Dreaming skill are also capable of ethereal combat in the Marches.

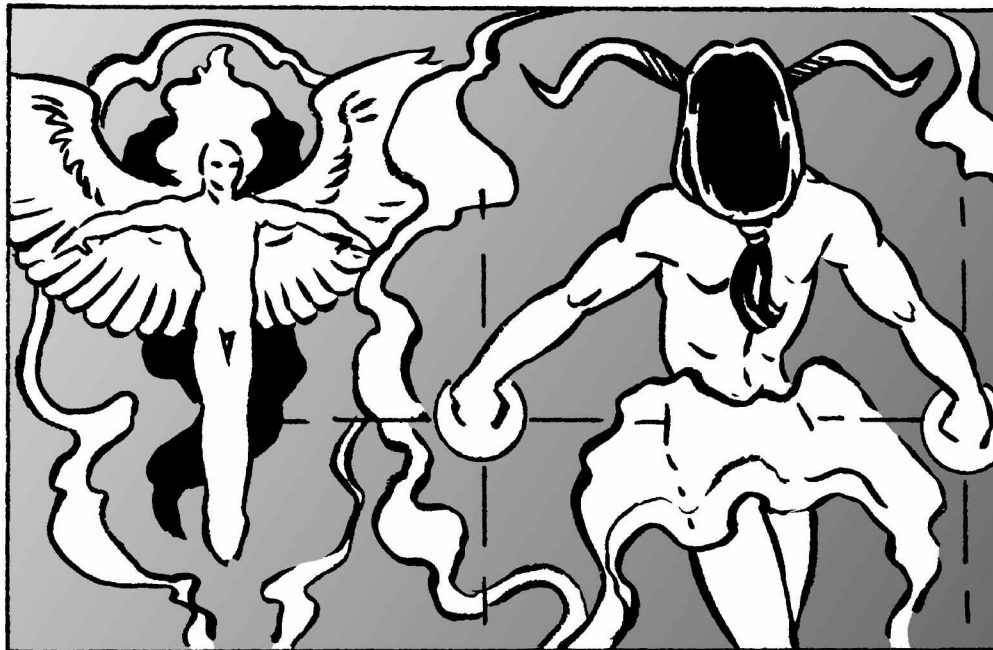
Other characters cannot make ethereal attacks, but can still use other Songs or attunements, such as the Songs of Shields or Song of Thunder, either to defend themselves



or to attack. If you don't have any such abilities (like a human dreamer) you can still attempt to Dodge ethereal attacks using your Perception, but you can't attack. Creatures without Ethereal Forces cannot participate in ethereal combat, but neither can they be targeted by ethereal attacks.

Unless the attacker is using a specific Song or other ability to attack, an ethereal attack is rolled as a normal attack against (Intelligence + Ethereal Forces). An ethereal weapon attack uses the weapon skill instead. The defender may attempt a Dodge roll, using Perception instead of Agility.

Damage in ethereal combat is measured in *Mind hits*, which are equal to (Ethereal Forces × Intelligence). If your Mind hits fall to zero or less, you fall unconscious and are ejected from the ethereal realm, and you gain one level of Ethereal Discord (see *In Nomine*, p. 87). Celestials ejected from the Marches go back to either the corporeal or celestial realm where they were before entering the Marches. Ethereal spirits reduced to zero Mind hits are forced back to their own domain in the Marches. If they are already in their own domain, they fall unconscious and lose 1 Ethereal Force.



Mind hits heal at the same rate as body hits. They can also be restored by the Ethereal Song of Healing.

The nature of ethereal combat means that most fights in the Marches are not lethal. After all, it's all just a dream. Multiple ethereal "deaths" will eventually result in the victim being driven mad by the amount of

Ethereal Discord that he acquires. Beleth and her demons prefer things this way, since the Princess of Nightmares believes that death is far too quick and easy a release for her human victims.

Note also that the rules of combat may vary widely from dreamscape to dreamscape. The default is "like the corporeal world." But each dreamscape can have its own rules.

Celestial Combat in the Marches

When combatants turn serious in the Marches, they engage in celestial combat, which has the potential to erase a victim's entire being from the Symphony.

Humans in the Marches are not protected by their corporeal vessels, nor are celestials, so anyone with Celestial Forces is vulnerable to celestial attacks in this realm. Mundane humans are incapable of instigating celestial combat in the Marches, but celestials, ethereals and humans with the conscious ability to control their Essence usage (such as Soldiers and sorcerers) can initiate celestial combat if they wish.

Celestials who are destroyed in celestial combat in the

Marches often awaken as Remnants, with only dim and fragmented memories. Humans whose souls are destroyed die in their sleep or lapse into a coma from which they never awaken. Ethereals who are reduced to zero or fewer soul hits disincorporate and are destroyed.

Celestial combat in the Marches is serious business and no one invokes it casually. Both Blandine and Beleth prefer their Servitors to keep conflicts on the ethereal level. This disturbs the Symphony and depletes the ranks of their Servitors far less than the struggle of celestial combat.

Most ethereal spirits also prefer to avoid combat – of any sort – when possible. They try to confine themselves to ethereal combat when forced to fight at all. They remember all too well the havoc wrought by Uriel's angels. Few want to risk the same end.

But some dream of revenge . . .



DOMAINS AND DREAMSCAPES

The Marches are generally vast and featureless, an endless plane of potential filled with misty dream-stuff. Within this vastness are domains, pockets of the dream-stuff that makes up the ethereal realm shaped by the power of thought and imagination. Each domain has a mind (or minds) that support and sustain it, preventing the domain from dissolving back into the formlessness of the ethereal.

Most domains in the Marches are the dreamscapes of mortals. Dreamscapes are little, individual domains created by the minds of humans. They are fully active when the human is asleep and the unconscious is unfettered by the conscious mind, channeling thought and imagination into the ethereal. The human exists within his dreamscape, and it can take on any form called for by the mortal's dreams or nightmares.

Each dreamscape is its own little pocket universe. In almost all cases, human dreamscapes are entirely separate

and individual, but there exist means for relocating from one person's dreamscape to another or even for combining dreamscapes.

Human dreamscapes float through the Marches, drifting gently on the currents of emotion generated by dreamers. The vast majority of these dreamscapes exist within the Vale of Dreams between Blandine and Beleth's towers, passing from one Superior's domain to the other and back again depending on the human dreamer's own thoughts and actions and on the actions of any who might interfere with his dreams.

If a dreamer is required to make a skill roll in his dream, he may shift the location of his dreamscape from one side of the Vale to the other. If a dreamer on Blandine's side of the Vale fails a skill roll in a dream with a check digit of 6, his dreamworld is immediately transported to Beleth's side, along with any other visitors that might be inside it. The dream has become a nightmare. If a dreamer on Beleth's side of the Vale succeeds in a skill roll with a check digit of 6, his dreamworld immediately shifts to Blandine's side and the nightmare becomes a peaceful dream.

Ethereal spirits are able to enter the dreamscape of a human dreamer with a successful Perception roll. The check digit of the roll times the spirit's Ethereal Forces determines how many minutes it can remain in the



human's dream. Celestials with the Dream Walk attunement or the Corporeal Song of Dreams can also enter mortal dreamscapes to work their will for good or for ill. Even some humans have the ability to walk freely in the realm of dreams.

LUCID DREAMERS

Some rare mortals can become "lucid dreamers," able to control the contents and events of their own dreamscapes, and even to enter the dreamscapes of others. Lucid dreaming requires the Dreaming skill, which is based on Perception and has a default of -5. Celestials can neither learn nor use the Dreaming skill because they have no personal dreamworlds of their own. Only humans can learn how to control their own dreams, giving them some amount of freedom in the Marches.

The Dreaming skill can be used in place of a Will roll to fall asleep or wake up when desired. It can also be used to create an effect like the Ethereal Song of Dreams, with no Essence cost. This effect only functions within the lucid dreamer's own dreamworld, allowing him to alter skill rolls and events in his own dreams. The dreamer has the "home field" advantage there and can use his control over his own dreams to affect even celestial intruders in his dreamworld.

Visitors to the lucid dreamer's dreamworld can resist the first use of the Dreaming skill against them with a Will roll; a successful resistance roll means that the

Dreaming skill has no effect against the intruder for a number of minutes equal to the check digit.

Lucid dreamers can also use their Dreaming skill to move their dream-self anywhere in the Marches they wish to go. They can travel freely between Blandine's and Beleth's Domains in the Vale of Dreams. They can even leave the Vale and wander in the Far Marches, if they so desire. All that is required is a successful Dreaming roll. A failed roll means that the dreamer does not move, except in the case of a failed roll on Blandine's side of the Vale, in which case a check digit of 6 sends the dreamer to Beleth's side of the Marches and renders him incapable of leaving for 1 hour.

A lucid dreamer wandering through the Marches cannot enter the dreamscape of another human without the use of a Song or attunement, but can enter the domains of ethereal spirits in the Far Marches with the permission of the spirits who control the domain.



DREAM-SHAPING

The ethereal realm is made up of the stuff of dreams. It is a place of thought and imagination, where the power of someone's mind can influence the world around them. People in a dreamscape or domain can use the power of their Wills and the Songs of Dreams (along with some attunements and distinctions) to influence and shape events in the dream-
scape. An individual human dreamscape is far easier to influence than the domains of powerful and willful beings like the pagan gods or the celestial Superiors, who take a dim view of intruders.

A dreamer can alter the events or contents of a dreamworld with a successful Will roll.

The check digit of the roll determines how dramatic a change the character can make to the dream (see *Dream-Shaping Results*, p. 85).

If the alterations of one character are opposed by another, the Will roll becomes a Contest of Will to see which side's efforts are successful. The Dreaming skill can be used in place of a Will roll in the user's own dreamscape; the dreamworlds of lucid dreamers are difficult to alter without their permission.

Songs of Dreams in Dream-Shaping

The Corporeal Song of Dreams simply allows the person using the Song to step into someone else's dreamscape.

The Ethereal Song of Dreams allows the performer to affect another dreamer's skill rolls within the domain. Victims can resist the first use of the Song against them with a Will roll; success ejects the intruder from the dreamscape or domain, requiring them to reenter if they wish to try and influence the subject again. This Song can also be used against intruders in a dreamworld or domain. In this case, successful resistance means that the Song cannot affect the intruder for a number of minutes equal to the check digit of the resistance roll.

The Celestial Song of Dreams allows the performer to more easily shape the stuff of the ethereal realm to his Will. The check digit of a successfully performed Song is added to the performer's next Will or Dreaming roll to shape the outcome or events of the dreamscape with which he is interfering.



DREAM-SHAPING RESULTS

- 1....Make a minor change to the environment: light to dark, hot to cold, cloudy to sunny, etc.
- 2....Alter a single object of about 15 lbs. weight or a meter in size. The object can be transformed from anything to anything: a branch into a gun, a staff into a snake, or a rock into a pile of dust.
- 3....Alter the appearance of your dream-self into any roughly humanoid form you desire.
- 4....Transform larger items and dream-images of living beings (but not actual dreamers, spirits or other spirits within a dream). You can turn a dream-elephant into a mouse or a tree into a car.
- 5....Cause subjective time in the dreamworld to alter, moving up to twice as fast or half as fast as before. This affects everyone in the dreamworld, making the dream happen faster or slower than normal. You can also radically alter the environment of the current dream: making it snow in a dream of a summer's day, for example.
- 6....End the current dream and begin a completely new one of your own design. You may have to make other Dream-Shaping rolls to keep the dream going where you want it to. You can force a dreamer to move from Blandine's realm to Beleth's or vice versa, switching between dream and nightmare.

A higher check digit can also accomplish any of the lower results, if that is all that is desired. A dream alteration generally lasts for the rest of the dream unless someone else uses Dream-Shaping to change things again.

Using the Songs of Dreams requires the use of Essence, of course, and so creates a minor disturbance in the Symphony. Usually this is muffled by the borders between domains in the Marches, enough so that most interference in a human dreamscape will not be detected.

Most dream-shapers prefer to use pure Will to try and alter a dreamscape first, since it causes less of a disturbance, and *then* resort to Songs. Dream Soldiers are particularly careful about using Songs, since their normal Will causes no disturbance in the Symphony but expending Essence can draw the attention of celestials and ethereal spirits much more powerful than they are.

THE VALE OF DREAMS

The Vale of Dreams is what most celestials mean when they talk about “the Marches” in general. The Vale is divided between Blandine, the Archangel of Dreams (p. 7), and Beleth, the Demon Princess of Nightmares (p. 28). Most mortals go here when they sleep and dream, between the towers of Beleth and Blandine . . . a misty valley between Earth and Heaven, between Heaven and Hell. It is here that the forces of the War fight over the dreams of humanity.

BLANDINE’S DOMAIN

The domain of the Archangel of Dreams is focused on her tower, a Heavenly Tether. The upper part of the tower allows an angel to ascend to Heaven, while the lower part exits into the Vale of Dreams. The tower acts as a headquarters for Blandine’s angels operating in the Vale and other areas of the Marches, as well as a place for angels to find Blandine. The inside of the tower appears to be much larger than the outside, and there are doors, corridors and rooms to which only the most trusted servants of Blandine have access. Some of these secret passages are open only to Blandine herself, although it is rumored that Beleth still knows about many of them from her time as Blandine’s lover and companion.

One of the rooms in the middle level of the tower is a vast library of dreams that

have been collected by Blandine and her Servitors. It includes books, stories, films and other creative works that were never made in the corporeal world . . . only dreamed of by the artists. The angels of dreams collect them and keep them for inspiration and posterity. The library naturally has connections to Yves’ vast library in Heaven, and the Archangel of Destiny is occasionally spotted browsing through the stacks.

From the top of the tower, one can look across the vastness of the Vale of Dreams and see Beleth’s dark tower rising on the opposite side. Below is the misty vale where the dreamworlds of humanity exist.

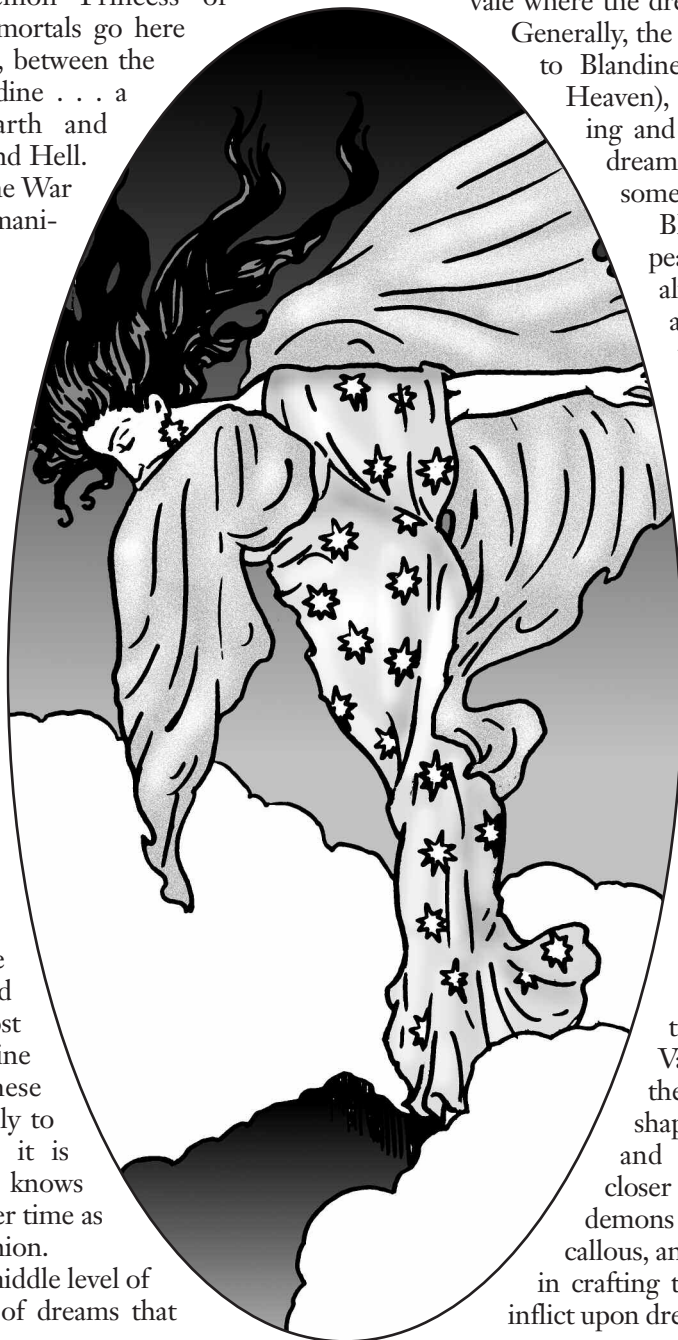
Generally, the closer a mortal dreamscape is to Blandine’s tower (and therefore, to Heaven), the more pleasant, comforting and restful are the dreams. The dreams are also more vivid and, sometimes, inspirational.

Blandine’s domain is a calm, peaceful and restful place. It is always busy, because there are always mortals sleeping somewhere in the corporeal world.

Blandine and her Servitors are tireless in their work of aiding mortal dreamers to combat their fears and find their path to their Destiny. Other angels sometimes will grudgingly acknowledge that Blandine may do more in furthering the cause of Heaven on a daily (or, more accurately, nightly) basis than any of the more zealous, passionate or flashy Superiors.

BELETH’S DOMAIN

As with Blandine, Beleth’s Domain is focused on her tower and extends into the Vale of Dreams. On her side, the nightmares of mortals are shaped to bring them to despair and selfishness, bringing them closer to their Fate. Beleth and her demons are exceptionally cruel and callous, and take great pride and delight in crafting the most fearsome images to inflict upon dreamers. Beleth’s domain is like



a giant nightmare factory, filled with every terrible or frightening image imaginable.

In addition to her demonic Servitors, Beleth encourages many ethereal spirits that feed on human Essence through fear to dwell in her dark domain, using them as additional "troops" for her legions of nightmares. Beleth cares little for the Essence that these ethereals take for themselves so long as they inflict terror in the process. Visitors to Beleth's Domain can find bogeymen, goblins, night hags, dark and forgotten gods and other creatures of nightmare. Most of these ethereals hate and fear the forces of Heaven because of the Purification Crusade that drove them into the depths of the Marches. They also fear Beleth's power. Although few of the ethereals are truly loyal to the Princess of Nightmares, they continue to serve her out of fear and need of her patronage.

Beleth's dark tower is a dark mirror-image of Blandine's. It is an Infernal Tether that connects to the vast city of Hades. Demons who enter the tower from the Marches can use it to descend to Hell, and those who enter the tower from Hell can exit it into Beleth's side of the Marches. The interior of the tower is a dark maze of twisted passages and rooms, many more than would seem to fit inside the structure. Servitors who have cause to enter their mistress' home for some reason are advised not to wander. The uppermost level of the tower is Beleth's, and she does not like to be disturbed without a very good reason.

The middle levels of the tower contain a large amphitheater, a cylindrical chamber with a ceiling that vanishes into darkness and row upon vertical row of seating ringing the outer edge. Dreamers can be brought here to be tormented by Beleth herself or one of the Princess' higher-ranked Servitors. Such spectacles may be provided as training sessions, or just for the fun of it.

The tower also contains a vast library of all of the fears and nightmares of humanity, lovingly collected by Beleth and her Servitors. Portions of the library even date back to Beleth's time as Archangel of Fear. The collection connects with Kronos' Archives in Hell, and no doubt with Yves' divine library as well . . . though a demon likely will not be able to utilize those!

BETWEEN THE TOWERS

The area of the Marches that stretches between Blandine and Beleth's twin towers is known as the Vale of Dreams or simply, the Vale. It is the region of the Marches that runs "between" the celestial realms of Heaven and Hell before opening up into the vastness of the Far Marches. This makes little sense in any physical manner, but the celestial and ethereal realms do not follow corporeal rules, and the perceptions of a corporeal visitor reflect his own nature rather than the true nature of what he sees.

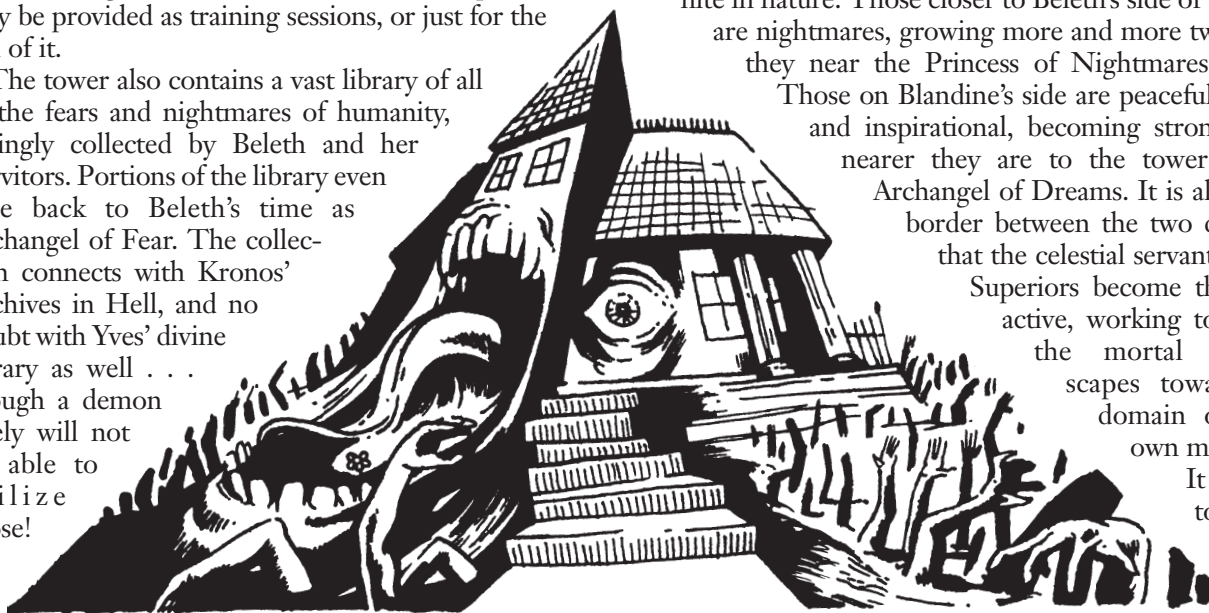
Blandine and Beleth's domains encompass all of the dreamworlds that exist between them. A dreamer in the Vale is either in Blandine's Domain or Beleth's. There is no middle-ground, although the exact placement of the border is often vague.

The Vale contains the dreamscapes of sleeping mortals. To outsiders like the celestials, they appear in an infinite variety of forms, often in some kind of reflective or crystalline form: a mirror, crystal, pool of water or floating iridescent bubble of some kind suspended in the mists of the Vale. Anyone near the dreamscape can look into it and see images of the dream going on within. Many of the dreamscapes belong to mortals who are awake. These dreamscapes are like shadowy versions of the dreamworlds of sleeping humans. They are "off limits" to anyone, due to the influence of the mortal's conscious mind. Occasionally the dreamscape of an awake human will show flickers of thoughts and daydreams. It is believed that Beleth and Blandine can access the dreams of conscious humans, but no other celestial or spirit has such power.

The individual dreamscapes within the Vale are infinite in nature. Those closer to Beleth's side of the Vale are nightmares, growing more and more twisted as they near the Princess of Nightmares' tower.

Those on Blandine's side are peaceful, restful and inspirational, becoming stronger the nearer they are to the tower of the Archangel of Dreams. It is along the border between the two domains that the celestial servants of the Superiors become the most active, working to nudge the mortal dreamscapes toward the domain of their own mistress.

It is hard to locate



BEYOND THE VALE

The ethereal realm is wide, if not infinite. Blandine and Beleth have, perhaps, defined its center by the placement of their towers, but their Vale is nothing but a small island, a relatively peaceful and formal battleground, in the realm that is the Marches of Dream.

THE BORDER MARCHES

Immediately beyond the domains of Blandine and Beleth lies the Border Marches. Blandine's sector of the border is watched over by an order of angels known as the Guardians (p. 92) to keep the spirits from the Far Marches from making their way into the Vale and disturbing the dreams of humans. The Guardians patrol the Border Marches and keep watch over Blandine's side of them.

On Beleth's side of the Vale, the Border Marches are far more open and accessible. The Demon Princess of Nightmares often makes deals with the spirits lurking and living in the Far Marches, and she often allows them to enter her side of the Vale. Several of these spirits strengthen the legions of fear under Beleth's command while the more powerful ones have even more direct dealings with the Demon Princess.

Some ethereals, like the infamous Loki, seem to come and go as they please.

On Beleth's side, the Guardians (see p. 92) watch the Border Marches as best possible, and report a n y t h i n g

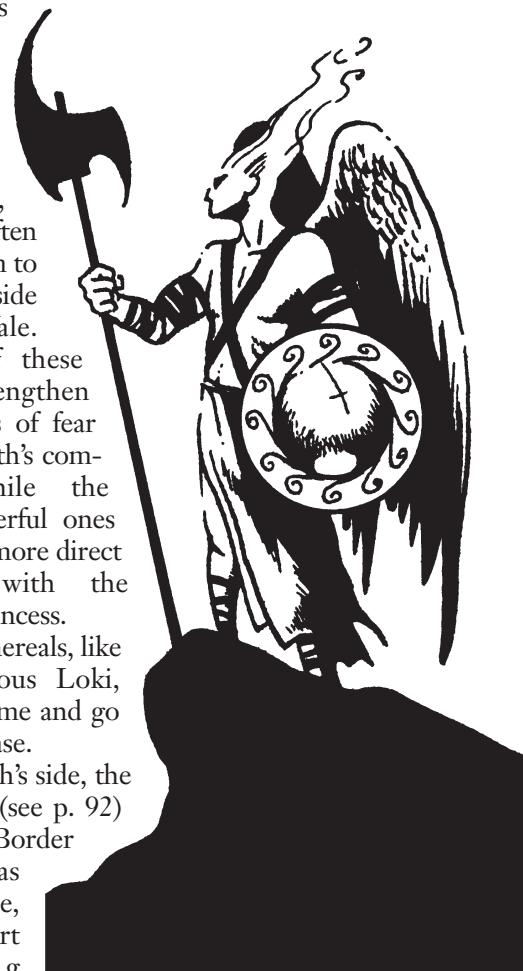


individual dreamscapes in the Vale. The difficulty of the search is based on the abilities of the celestial and how they enter the Marches. Making contact with a human on the corporeal plane through touch, attunements or the use of Songs such as Charm allows a celestial to enter the Marches through the dreamscape of the human while they are asleep. They can then work to influence the mortal dreamer, or exit the dreamscape into the Vale and make their way elsewhere in the Marches.

Celestials who enter the Marches on their own appear at the base of the tower they are aligned with. To find a specific dreamscape in the Vale requires the celestial to search for it. Attunements and Songs that will locate a subject in the corporeal realm will also locate his dreamscape. If the celestial's corporeal vessel is sleeping near a sleeping human (up to twice the celestial's Celestial Forces in yards), then he may make a Perception roll to locate that human's dreamscape in the Marches. Otherwise, locating an individual human dreamscape among the billions in the Marches is impossible without Intervention.

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THE ETHEREAL REALM



suspicious to Blandine and Laurence. They often try to prevent dangerous spirits from entering the Near Marches even on Beleth's side, but are normally forbidden to take any action that might lead to an all-out conflict in the Marches.

Celestials traveling into the Far Marches should have the permission of their Superior – as well as Blandine or Beleth – to do so. Those who do not will often find themselves challenged by the Guardians, or by the Servitors of one of the Superiors who controls the Marches.

And, nightly, some human dreamers slip through the Border Marches and wander out into the depths on their own. Most of these humans are preyed upon by the spirits that dwell out in the Far Marches, waking up from a strange dream or nightmare minus some Essence for the experience. Some end up Servitors or Soldiers of the ethereals of the Far Marches.

THE FAR MARCHES

Away from the Vale of Dreams and the domains of Blandine and Beleth lie the Far Marches, made up of the depths of the human unconscious; dreams, nightmares, archetypes and myths. In the Far Marches are the scattered domains of powerful ethereal spirits who have gathered sufficient Essence and still have enough Will to shape them out of the dream stuff of the Marches. These include the legendary homes of many of the pagan gods banished to the depths of the Marches by Uriel 1,500 years ago, along with other legendary locales out of human myth and fantasy.

For the most part, the Far Marches are of little interest to either side of the War. Few mortal dreamers ever venture out this far into the Marches, and the pagan gods are mostly left alone by the celestials.

From time to time, celestials will have a reason to venture into the Far Marches, such as to protect an important human dreamer who has wandered (or been taken) there, or to request aid from one of the pagan pantheons, or to prevent the pagans from cooperating with the other side.

The Far Marches are only accessible from Earth in an Ethereal Tether devoted to one of the domains (see pp. 96-104) of the ethereal spirits. The dreamer manifests in the domain of the spirits who control the Tether.

The only other means to reach the Far Marches is to appear in Blandine or Beleth's domain and travel to the Far Marches from there. The time the journey takes depends on the destination and the traveler's dedication to getting there quickly, but never longer than can be accomplished in a single night's dream in the corporeal realm.





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DENIZENS OF THE MARCHES



DENIZENS OF THE MARCHES

Beleth and Blandine rule in their towers, and mortal dreamers and celestials move through the Marches, but the natives of the ethereal realm are the spirits. Most have now been pushed to the Far Marches, well beyond Blandine and Beleth's twin realms. These are the true denizens of the Marches, created from the collective force of humanity's dreams and nightmares. They are living dreams, creatures of hope, fear and imagination.

These spirits can communicate with mortals on Earth, and even create vessels in which to physically enter the corporeal realm. They do not have celestial forms, and cannot enter the celestial realm without the aid of a Superior, or a special attunement granted by a Superior.

Ethereal spirits can learn and use Songs, especially Ethereal Songs (see p. 126 for their unique Song of Spirit Speech). Most lesser spirits will have a limited list of Songs they can learn. Songs of Attraction, Dreams, Form, Light, Possession and Tongues are common.

Some were once worshiped as gods, and a few of them still are.

THE PAGAN GODS

The surviving pagan gods live in the depths of the Far Marches, as far away from the watchful eyes of the celestials – and, unfortunately, their worshipers on Earth – as they can be. Tattered remnants of their formerly glorious ethereal realms still exist in the Far Marches, slowly disintegrating from lack of Essence to support them, like grand mansions falling apart from neglect.

Some of the gods still have worshipers on Earth, and these remain the strongest of the spirits. The rest are slowly fading away from lack of worship and attention (and the Essence that comes with it). Even the most powerful gods are only shadows of what they were in the days before Uriel's Crusade.

Abilities

The pagan gods, like all beings, are made up of collections of Forces in stable configurations. Once they were very powerful, gaining Forces and Essence from the worship that humans gave to them. Since the Crusade, the pagan gods have fallen upon hard times and have been greatly diminished in power. Most of them are on par with reasonably powerful celestials, having between 9 and 18 Forces. Most gods whose Forces drop below 9 seem to quietly fade away and disappear. It is believed



that some of these “faded gods” actually escaped to Earth to mingle with humanity.

Pagan spirits must have at least one Force of each type, just like celestials. They can also learn and use Songs (see p. 126 for the exclusive Song of Spirit Speech). Spirits tend to know Ethereal Songs more than any other kind.

THE GUARDIANS OF THE MARCHES

The Guardians are an elite cadre of Malakim of the Sword. They serve as “border guards” between the Marches and the corporeal realm. They also keep the surviving pagan spirits away from the dream worlds of mortals in the Marches. Like many border guards, some of the Guardians have gained a great deal of sympathy for the pagan spirits over the centuries. They would never shirk their duty or their oaths, but they have realized that the pagans might have some place in God’s Plan. After all, many of these spirits spring from human imagination, and humans are creations of God . . . and some of these spirits are older than mankind – where did they come from, if not from God?

Many of the Guardians see that some of the spirits are very different from demons, and doubt that their oath not to suffer an evil to live applies to these “third parties” of the War.

Most of the Guardians were Servitors of Uriel and battle-comrades of Laurence during the Purification Crusade. Most wholeheartedly support Laurence’s appointment as Archangel of the Sword and Commander of God’s Army, but some also feel that Uriel should have been allowed to complete his crusade. The continued existence of the pagan gods bothers them . . . it is a troublesome loose end, an imperfection that needs to be corrected. Of course, questioning the judgment of God in such a manner is something that the Guardians do not speak of openly or casually unless they want to have an extended meeting with Dominic or his Inquisitors. Laurence himself strongly discourages such dissent in the ranks.

Rumor has it that the commander of the Guardians,

Tahariel, a Friend of the Lord’s Troops, hopes to gain the Word of Purity for himself and take up Uriel’s work of cleansing the Marches. That won’t happen if Laurence has anything to say about it. Tahariel maintains a “hard line” approach to guarding the borders of the Marches and takes a dim view of any angel who has dealings with the ethereals other than over the point of a sword.

To allow the Guardians to fulfill their duties, Blandine has granted them all the Dream Walking attunement, allowing them to enter the dreamscapes of mortal dreamers and ferret out rogue spirits wherever they may go. Blandine can revoke this attunement at will, and has told Laurence and Tahariel that she’ll do so if the Guardians become so overzealous that they threaten the Word of Dreams.

The Guardians do most of their work in the Marches, but can and will venture into the corporeal world in pursuit of “invading” spirits. In the Marches, they guard the border firmly but not ruthlessly; intruding ethereals will be ejected but not slain out of hand unless they show dangerous fight (or, of course, demonic sympathies). On Earth, though, they usually try their best to kill intruders, just because no lesser stricture seems available! (Though it’s amazing how often some little spirits, especially beneficent Australian and Amerind totems, seem to slip away from apparently murderous Malakim, and how those Malakim never actually get around to taking oaths to destroy the spirits.)

Tahariel has petitioned for more angels, the better to follow up on rumors of pagan activity on Earth, but Laurence has bigger problems to worry about.

The pagan gods also often have their own unique attunements, and can sometimes grant these to followers.

The pagans have Rites for gaining Essence, some of which are passed on to their mortal worshipers. Their major source of Essence is their worshipers. A pagan spirit cultivates worshipers carefully, teaching them Rites to allow them to gather Essence and occasionally feed it to their patron. Each Rite generates 1 Essence for the “god.” From time to time ethereals require rituals and sacrifices from their worshipers in which the worshipers give up all of their Essence to the spirit in a height of ecstatic emotion like passion, anger or despair.

Many of the pagan spirits are very old and are believed to hold other secrets of the Symphony and how to influence it – secrets that can sometimes be had for a price.

Involvement in the War

The pagan gods are only peripherally involved in the War. Most of them hope to stay out of the celestials’ way while trying to scrape together enough worshipers and Essence to survive. Generally speaking, the pagans have a great deal more in common with the demons than with the angels, since both of them have been trounced by the forces of Heaven. Few ethereal spirits are stupid enough to trust the denizens of Hell, but many of them follow the philosophy that the enemy of an enemy is a good potential ally.

For this reason, the pagan gods are most often encountered on Beleth’s side of the Marches, when they make their way out of the Far Marches at all.

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DENIZENS OF THE MARCHES



Some pagan gods have allied themselves with other demons from time to time, but it is usually a temporary affair. Saminga, for example, used secrets of mummification that he learned from the Egyptian gods to rise to his position as Demon Prince of Death. Although Saminga has long since moved on to other concerns, the Egyptian pantheon has not forgotten his “debt” to them.

The Guardians (see p. 92) and Blandine’s Servitors remain vigilant against incursions of pagan spirits. They guard the dreams of mortals on Blandine’s side of the Marches against spirits seeking to manipulate those dreams or to pump mortals for Essence. Unfortunately, this means that the only path by which pagan spirits can enter mortal dreams is on Beleth’s side of the Marches. That means that the spirits must be able to inspire enough fear and despair in dreamers to be tolerated by Beleth.

This has led to prosperity for many of the darker and more nightmarish spirits, who use their old methods of gathering Essence through terror, while the more kindly and gentle spirits struggle to gather worshipers to sustain themselves now that they are cut off from the dreams of humanity.

Negotiations

The pagan gods have only a few things to offer celestials: knowledge, services, Rites and Essence. Celestials dealing with ethereals need to exercise great caution; the inhabitants of the Marches are often dangerous, bitter and deceptive beings, especially toward angels.

The ethereals understand their home realm in a way no celestial can. They know things that even Blandine and Beleth don’t know about the Far Marches, and can be useful guides or sources of information. They also have considerable insight into the dreams and feelings of

ETHEREAL REMNANTS

Celestial rumors hint that some of the pagan gods destroyed in the Purification Crusade left Remnants on Earth. Angels and demons occasionally report encountering apparent Remnants with strange powers that seem neither divine nor infernal . . . although with Remnants and their shattered memories, it’s always hard to tell.

humanity, more so than most celestials, who have little direct knowledge of what it is to be human. Most ethereals are creations of the human spirit, and know it well.

PAGAN WORSHIPERS AND SOLDIERS

The pagan gods still have mortal worshipers who provide them with some small influence in the corporeal realm, in addition to their offerings of Essence. If a celestial is dealing with the mortal pagan community, sometimes granting a favor to the pagan god(s) they worship can help smooth the way. The ethereals jealously guard their worshipers from the manipulation of the celestials, but they are also fearful of invoking another crusade if they protest too much. Mortal pagans can also sometimes become allies in the War, on either side.

Most mortal pagans are like other mundanes except for their spiritual beliefs. Many just dabble in their belief in the old gods and are not significant sources of Essence for their patrons. Only a devoted core of worshipers actually participates in rituals and Rites to generate Essence that supports their patrons. Even these pagans



DREAM SOLDIERS

Some skilled lucid dreamers (see p. 84) come to the attention of Blandine, Beleth or the ethereal spirits that dwell in the Marches, and enter their service as Dream Soldiers. These dreamers can gain additional Forces and use their abilities to further the cause of their patron in the Marches. A Dream Soldier has 6 Forces, at least 2 of which must be Ethereal. They can control the expenditure of their Essence at will. The soldier must know the Dreaming skill at level 1 or better and may learn any Ethereal Song or any of the Songs of Dreams. Most Dream Soldiers also gain attunements like Dream Walking from their Superior, or are Soul Linked (see p. 126).

Dream Soldiers have the same advantages in the War as other Soldiers; they do not disturb the Symphony with their actions and so can operate more freely in many ways. Most are no match for a celestial or powerful ethereal, but their Dreaming skill and Songs often make them formidable opponents in their own dream worlds. Both Blandine and Beleth have Dream Soldiers working for them and their Servitors. The pagan gods of the Far Marches also have some Soldiers, most of whom are also priests of their pagan religion (p. 95).

are generally unaware of the purpose of their religious rituals, and would object to the celestial characterization of their gods as spiritual parasites.

Pagans become involved in their religion for the same reasons people join other religions: agreement with its

tenets and philosophy, a need for fellowship and community, psychological needs, etc. Some pagans also choose their religion as a conscious rebellion against Judeo-Christian beliefs, as a philosophical statement or, much more rarely, as a conscious desire not to support either side of the War. This might be because the pagan is a pacifist who cannot support either side of any war, or because the pagan does not think either side of the War is worth supporting. Both types are few and far between.

Some devoted pagans receive boons and gifts from their gods, which affirms the power of the god in the worshiper's heart and mind. The boons granted to worshipers helps draw in other followers and keep the existing faithful coming back, even though they may end up drained of Essence from time to time.

The truly faithful pagan priests and priestesses can even become Soldiers of the ethereals. These Soldiers begin with 6 Forces and know how to control their Essence use like other Soldiers (see *In Nomine*, p. 46). They may learn and use Ethereal Songs as well as any of the three Songs of Dreams. They are usually the spiritual leaders of their pagan communities, although some pagan Soldiers operate on their own or in small groups.

Not all pagan Soldiers are fighters. In fact, most pagans try to stay out of the War and operate quietly on the sidelines, not drawing notice from either side. A few pagans ally themselves with the forces of Heaven or Hell temporarily for a particular occasion, and then go their own way. A small core of fanatic pagans have taken up the view that they are the only mortals aware of the *real* story: that both God and Lucifer are overblown spirits and that Earth and humanity need to be protected from both sides of the War. If such heretics become more than



mere annoyances to the celestials, they are usually quickly crushed by both sides.

PAGAN WORSHIP RITES

The pagan gods have their own Rites for generating Essence, and can teach them to celestials. The use of such Rites is, needless to say, frowned upon by Superiors. The same is true of taking any Essence offered by an ethereal, since such Essence has usually been generated through pagan rites.

However, the pagan gods have another type of Rite – “worship rites.” These do not *generate* Essence . . . they *channel* Essence from worshipers to the object of worship. Unless otherwise specified, each Rite transfers 1 point of Essence from the worshiper to the ethereal spirit and can only be performed once per day. Not all Rites work for all gods, of course. One hour spent sunbathing could be a Rite for Apollo, but does nothing for Loki.

Individual Rites

- ✘ Three hours reading stories of the god.
- ✘ One hour meditating.
- ✘ Ritual drug use (such as peyote in Amerind Rites).
- ✘ Going walkabout (Aboriginal), 2 Essence per full day.

Group Rites

✘ Dancing around a bonfire, 1 Essence per participant; at midnight on a solstice or equinox, 2 Essence per participant; on such a night at a mystical site (Stonehenge, etc.), 3 Essence per participant.

✘ A group activity that relates to the god (followers of Bacchus getting drunk, or followers of Apollo sunbathing, or followers of Loki playing an elaborate trick on someone), 1 Essence per participant.

Sacrifices

✘ Monetary donation: 1 Essence for each 5% of monthly income.

✘ Sacred herbs, gathered in a prescribed manner and burned: 3 Essence.

✘ Blood sacrifice: all the Essence the victim had.

Again, the GM must use his discretion in determining which Rites to assign to which gods.

Many of these Rites are harmless to mortals and provide just enough Essence to keep a pagan god going, and so are likely to be ignored by most celestial forces. But if things start to get out of hand – say, a blood cult starts sacrificing farm animals to some Aztec god – the response from both Asmodeus and Dominic against the cultists (*and* the god) will be swift and severe.



MAJOR PANTHEONS

No one knows exactly how many of the major pagan spirits survived Uriel's Crusade. The ethereals are understandably wary; they conceal their strengths. Some pantheons are more active in the Marches and the corporeal realm and, therefore, more carefully watched by the Guardians and the other celestials. The rest of the Old Gods quietly go about their business in the depths of the Far Marches, hoping not to be noticed.

Here are some of the most important groups of pagan gods still active in the Marches and elsewhere.



ASGARD AND VALHALLA

Asgard is the domain of the Norse gods, the Aesir, and the remaining spirits of their mortal worshipers. Ethereal Tethers connecting Asgard to Earth always place the traveler on the rainbow bridge of Bifrost, which connects Asgard to the corporeal realm. The bridge is guarded by Heimdall, the watchman of the Aesir. Heimdall is a formidable opponent for anyone seeking to pass him without leave, as some of Uriel's angels discovered. He also carries a horn whose sound can be heard through all of Asgard, which he uses to alert his fellow spirits of any danger.

The Domain of Asgard includes the various homes and halls of the Aesir themselves and the faded realm of Niffelheim. Asgard is sustained by the power of Odin and the worshipers of the Norse gods, and many of the spirits of their worshipers dwell there. The icy realm Niffelheim has become home to all of the various mon-

sters, giants, dark elves and other creatures of Norse myth under the guidance of Loki's daughter Hela, who supports her fading realm with aid from the forces of Hell.

The Aesir

The Norse gods are survivors, and they have become one of the most important pantheons since the exile of the ethereals. Odin is a wily old bird. He knew that Ragnarok would come one day; he just didn't know that it would come in the form of angels wielding flaming swords. The All-Father's preparations for the Twilight of the Gods allowed many of the Aesir to survive the purge and escape into the Marches.

Odin and his blood-brother Loki are the major figures of the Norse pantheon. Odin still gathers Essence and Forces from the *Einberiar*; souls of dead worshipers gathered by the Valkyries and brought to his hall of Valhalla. There are far fewer of these spirit warriors than there were. Once the halls thronged with them, but most were destroyed by Uriel's angels. Those who remain still serve Odin loyally, although they are no match for celestial opponents. Odin is also served by ethereal spirits in the form of two ravens and two wolves. The ravens, Hugin and Munin (Thought and Memory), are the All-Father's spies in the Marches and in the corporeal realm, bringing back news and useful gossip. The wolves, Freke and Gere, are Odin's constant companions and guardians. Odin also has his eight-legged steed, Sleipner, to transport him.

Thor was the only important Aes lost in the Crusade. Always loving a fight, always slow to retreat, he was last seen, by the fleeing Hugin, holding off six Malakim.

Loki Wolf's-Father is one of the most active ethereals in the Marches. Odin freed Loki from his imprisonment deep beneath the Earth when the Crusade began. As so many times before, Loki's cleverness helped to save the Asgardians from their troubles. The trickster god now travels throughout the Marches in a variety of forms, dipping into the dreams of mortals and shaping them to his will. Although the Guardians and other celestials are aware of Loki's activities, so wily has he been that even the ever-vigilant Seraphim of Blandine have been unable to prevent the Trickster from going about his business in the realm of dreams. Beleth sometimes deals with Loki to craft a particular nightmare or invade the dreams of a well-guarded mortal, but the Princess of Nightmares distrusts the Norse trickster and deals with him as little as possible.

Celestials have been disturbed by rumors that Odin believes that the Purification Crusade was *not* Ragnarok. Old One-Eye is said to be making preparations for the real thing, and possibly even hastening things along a bit

to topple the old order and recreate the Symphony, or at least the corporeal world. Those who believe this point to the fact that Loki's wolf son Fenris remains bound in the deepest depths of the Far Marches and is fated to break his bonds on the Twilight of the Gods. Most believe that such a thing is impossible, but others wait and watch the Aesir carefully.

VALKYRIE

Corporeal Forces – 2 Strength 4 Agility 4
Ethereal Forces – 3 Intelligence 5 Precision 7
Celestial Forces – 2 Will 4 Perception 4

Vessel: None

Skills: Dodge/3, Fighting/3, Large Weapon/4, Tactics/2, Throwing/3, Tracking/4

Songs: Attraction (Celestial/5), Dreams (Ethereal/2), Thunder/2

The Valkyries, the choosers of the slain, still bring the spirits of fallen Norse warriors to the halls of Valhalla, but those vast halls are a great deal gloomier than they were at the height of the Aesir's power. Valkyries always appear as tall, fair, athletic women, but they don't wear horned helmets or brass brassieres. They are likeliest to wear the tunic, chain mail and helm of a male Norse warrior, but might manifest in more modern clothing.



The Valkyries use their Song of Attraction to attune themselves to certain mortals at Odin's direction, allowing them to know when the human they are attuned to is in danger and may die. Then the Valkyrie appears to collect the human's spirit and carry them into Valhalla.

Odin once cared only that his worshipers lived and died bravely. Now those worshipers are much fewer, and he prefers that they live, as long as they keep their honor. Therefore, his Valkyries will sometimes help a worthy pagan fighting unfair odds . . . especially against the hosts of Hell. A demon invading a Tether of the Aesir, or even the daily life of a virtuous follower of Odin, might find that his mortal victims weren't unguarded!

PLACES THAT NEVER WERE

Some domains in the Far Marches may be based on mythical lands or places that once were real but now only exist in the Marches. Many of these places have or had Tethers in the corporeal realm that allowed dreamers to travel to and from them. Examples include Atlantis, Shangri-la, Brigadoon and El Dorado. Visitors to these lost places may find them inhabited by ethereal spirits and human dream-shades, or abandoned and slowly collapsing back into the formless mists of the Marches for lack of Essence to sustain them.

The modern fascination with unexplained mysteries, strange places and forgotten myths seems to be providing enough Essence to keep many such places in a state of balance and prevent them from dissolving back into nothingness. Some angels suspect that the creatures of the Far Marches have bargained with Nybbas to plead their case in the media and renew human interest in them.

Game Masters can use the infinite possibilities of the Marches to create adventures in any setting that the human mind can imagine, from cyberpunk to historical to twisted nightmare. The Marches are a place where imagination is everything, after all!

EINHERIAR

Corporeal Forces – 2 Strength 5 Agility 3
Ethereal Forces – 2 Intelligence 3 Precision 5
Celestial Forces – 1 Will 2 Perception 2

Vessel: None

Skills: Dodge/3, Fighting/4, Large Weapon/4, Tactics/3, Throwing/3, Tracking/3

Songs: None

The Einheriar are the spirits of slain warriors brought to Valhalla by the Valkyries. They are capable fighters, but no match for a celestial or the more powerful ethereal spirits. Some of the more experienced Einheriar are pagan Soldiers, with additional Forces and have learned some Ethereal Songs. Einheriar taken from modern Aesir worshipers will have modern skills and knowledge.

Human spirits who remain in Asgard serve as Dream Soldiers of the Aesir and help to provide some of the Essence needed to maintain Asgard. They are fearless and tireless warriors who fight at Odin's command, and help to protect Asgard from the possibility that Uriel's former Servitors – or others among the Heavenly Hosts – will decide to finish the job that the Purification Crusade started.

FAERIE

The domain of Faerie is known by many names: Avalon, Tir na nOg, Hy Brasill, Lyonesse, the Fair Lands of the West. It is home to many of the lesser spirits of the Far Marches: the Good Folk, the Tuatha De Danaan and other Anglo-Celtic nature spirits and gods who were driven from Earth long ago to their realms “under the hill” (in other words, into the Marches).

Once the fair folk were well known to the humans of the British Isles and parts of Europe. Many walked the Earth in corporeal vessels, and many brought humans they fancied into their ethereal domain. The “bight fae” of the Seelie Court fought many battles against their Unseelie counterparts over the capturing of Essence from humanity. The Seelie fae preferred to use pleasure, song, dance and wonderment to capture the human imagination, while the Unseelie favored fear, pain and death to extract what they needed from humanity. Both sides were forced to flee the corporeal realm when Uriel’s angels began their “purification” of Earth.

Humans in the places where the Good Folk once operated still hold some belief in them, which provides a small amount of Essence to sustain Faerie. There has even been an increased interest in ancient Celtic beliefs and practices in recent years, aided by their human worshipers and some diabolical assistance.

The Fair Folk have many Ethereal Tethers still on Earth, including faerie rings, hollow hills and different hidden places in the woods and ancient Celtic ruins that humans still believe to be haunts of the fae. Mortals who sleep and dream in these Tethers find themselves in the domain of Faerie, where a night can seem like a year (or vice versa) and mortal dreamers are invited to join in the revels of the inhabitants, awakening to find that much time has passed and they have lost their Essence to their faerie hosts. The Little People carefully balance their

“abductions” of dreamers so as not to draw too much attention from either Heaven or Hell. Most celestials figure that a human foolish enough to sleep in a faerie Tether deserves the lesson he will get. Some Tethers are controlled by the Unseelie, and humans sleeping in them will face the terrors of the Wild Hunt or whatever other “sport” the Unseelie choose to inspire the proper state of terror in their victim.

One reason that Faerie prospers by comparison to the other domains is that the rulers of Faerie made a pact with Beleth and Lucifer during the Purification Crusade:

they would tithes some of their spirits to Hell every seven years to serve the Princess of Nightmares in tormenting mortals (something that they do quite well). This gave Beleth the service of many of the fearsome creatures of human myth; bogeymen, goblins, boggles and such. In return, Faerie enjoys protection and aid from Hell. The forces of Heaven do not look kindly upon this arrangement, and most of the Fair Folk avoid Heavenly Tethers and icons like the plague (the reason they are said to avoid churches and be repelled by religious icons).

There are several factions in Heaven who wish to see the alliance ended with the destruction of Faerie, but so far no one in the Heavenly Host has been willing to take up the sword to lead

another Crusade, even against this single domain.

The Seelie Court is ruled by a king and queen, chosen from among the most powerful of the Faerie nobility. Typically, they rule for a few hundred years and then abdicate, but coups and murders are not unknown. The names of the current rulers, and the location of their court, are unknown; it is assumed that they fear Heavenly retribution for their cooperation with Beleth, and keep to the farthest Far Marches. The Unseelie Court counts more truly powerful beings among its number, but almost never has a clear leader either in war or in peace, and rarely stays organized for any endeavor on a larger scale than the Wild Hunt.





FAY

Corporeal Forces – 1 Strength 1 Agility 3
Ethereal Forces – 3 Intelligence 4 Precision 8
Celestial Forces – 1 Will 2 Perception 2

Vessel: None

Skills: Dodge/2, Fast-Talk/2, Lying/2

Songs: Attraction (Ethereal/1), Charm (Ethereal/2, Celestial/2), Dreams (Celestial/1), Form (Ethereal/2, Celestial/2), Light (Corporeal/1, Ethereal/1), Wings/2

These abilities are typical of many of the small bogies, sprites and similar creatures of the Faerie domain. Most of them are fairly harmless, but they are tricksters and practical jokers who delight in using their Songs and skills to deceive mortals and lead them astray through the Marches when presented with the opportunity.

FAERIE NOBLE

Corporeal Forces – 2 Strength 3 Agility 5
Ethereal Forces – 3 Intelligence 5 Precision 7
Celestial Forces – 2 Will 5 Perception 3

Vessel: None

Skills: Dodge/3, Fast-Talk/2, Large Weapon/3, Lying/4, Seduction/3

Songs: Attraction (Ethereal/2), Dreams (Celestial/3), Entropy (Ethereal/2), Form (Ethereal/2, Celestial/2), Light (Ethereal/2)

These are the rulers of the realm. They are not at all like their smaller cousins. Faerie nobles are tall and fair humanoids, dressed in fine clothing and usually armed with a sword or similar weapon. They are highly emotional and fond of using mortals to indulge their whims. Like their lesser cousins, they are masterful liars and illusionists, shaping dreams and words to suit their purposes. Some more powerful lords of the Good Folk (including the king and queen of the realm) have Forces and power to rival that of a Word-bound celestial.

OLYMPUS

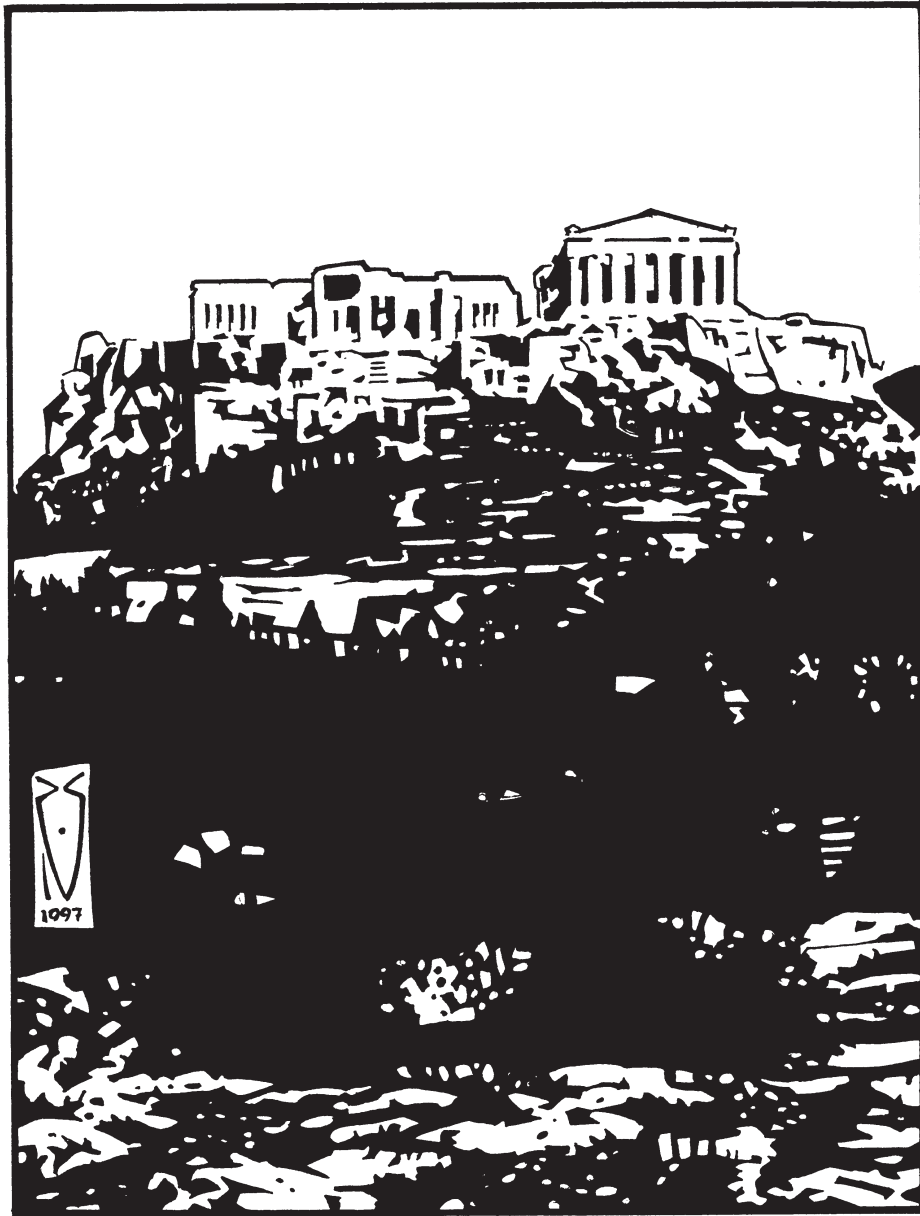
The legendary Mount Olympus, home of the Greek gods, stands in the depths of the Marches. The top of the true Mount Olympus in the corporeal world, along with some Greek temples and ruins, are Tethers to this domain, where the surviving Greek gods dwell along with many of the heroes and creatures from Greek myth. Here can be found the gorgons, Pegasus, the Cyclops and other such creatures. The marble halls of Olympus are largely quiet and empty, with many of the Greek gods faded or lost in the battle with Uriel's angels.

Deep below Olympus lie the caverns of Erebus, the remains of the Greek underworld. There the remaining spirits of mortals who followed the Olympians dwell, ruled over by sad-eyed Queen Persephone, her husband Hades long since lost in conflict with the denizens of Hell. Ironically, his name is attached to Hell's greatest city. Erebus is a lonely place of dream-shades, with black poplar trees growing along the shore of the River Styx. Erebus is now mostly inhabited by the tormented souls of the greatest Greek criminals. Sisyphus, Tantalus, Ixos and others still suffer their punishments.

The Olympians

Most of the remnants of Olympus are the "second-generation" gods, ruled by Athena, who led her fellow gods and goddesses into the Far Marches to avoid destruction at the hands of Uriel's forces. Hot-blooded Ares fell to Uriel's angels, and Zeus and many of the elder Olympians faded quickly without the worship and sacrifices that sustained them.

The remaining Greek gods are as petty as ever. Hera has become a shrewish and bitter widow without Zeus and his many affairs to occupy her time. Aphrodite pines for the loss of her lover Ares and tries to amuse herself with invading the occasional mortal dream. The



Guardians believe that she might have some dealings with Lilith from time to time, and it is quite possible that the Greek goddess of love might owe the Princess of Freedom a favor or two. Hermes has vanished without a trace, some say to Earth, others to the unknown depths of the Marches or even to Heaven or Hell.

Apollo lives in isolation in a cave on the slopes of Olympus' dream-spire, where he occasionally speaks prophecies and offers advice to Athena. The golden and fiery spirit of his youth seems to have fled from he who was once called "the shining one." Apollo's sister Artemis has become even more wild and untamed in her anger. She hunts with her hounds and her spirit followers in the depths of the Far Marches, occasionally making a hapless

mortal dreamer her prey for the night. Hephaestus still goes about his work in his smithy; and rumor has it he gets occasional visits from both Jean and Vapula to discuss the finer points of technology and invention. Poseidon is the only "elder" god remaining, tied up in the business of the sea and his few mortal worshipers.

A few of the remaining Olympians have thrown in their lot with Beleth and the Princes of Hell. Dionysus – the spirit of madness, revelry and wine – has been known to aid Haagenti, the demon Prince of Gluttony. Pan, the goat-footed satyr spirit of legend, has also allied himself with the forces of Hell on occasion, particularly Andrealphus, in the name of having a good time. Athena does not approve of dealings with the Fallen Ones, but she can do little to restrain her wayward cousins.

MICTLAN

The Aztec land of the dead, the remains of Mictlan are nominally ruled by Mictalantechtli, the Aztec Lord of the Underworld, but they are largely under the influence of Beleth.

The Aztecs

The Aztec spirits were some of the most heavily persecuted of the pagan gods. Uriel's crusaders considered the blood-soaked idols of the Aztecs to be some of the worst perversions of human worship by the ethereals and so struck against the Aztec spirits without mercy.

The gods of the Aztecs were forced to abandon their followers and retreat deep into the Marches, where they suffered greatly from lack of worship. The sacrifices and rituals of the Aztec nation had made them some of the most powerful ethereals, but being forced into the Marches while Europeans devastated their followers put an end to the rituals that fed and sustained them. This destroyed many Aztec spirits and weakened the rest.

Beleth was quick to offer the Aztecs shelter in her

DREAM-SHADES

After death, a human spirit normally ascends to one of the celestial realms, depending on the nature of that person's life. But some human spirits remain in the Marches rather than moving on to Heaven or Hell. They become dream-shades. Some are mortals who die in their sleep while in the ethereal realm; others are dreamers who know enough about the Marches to manage to "anchor" themselves there when their corporeal body dies. Many simply cling too tightly to their own dreams or nightmares to move on, making a personal Heaven or Hell out of their dreamscape after death. Other souls choose to leave their dreamworld behind and wander the Marches after death, working to create dreams or nightmares for others. These humans usually are (or become) Dream Soldiers. Some mortal pagans also come to the Marches after death to serve the spirits they worship.

A dream-shade cannot return to Earth without a corporeal vessel. And unless a celestial Superior or pagan god takes an interest in one, he never will – unlike true ethereal spirits, they cannot create their own vessels. They regain Essence like spirits, though – one point at every midnight.

All such souls are strongly "pulled" toward the celestial and their final reward. Any dream-shade can choose to let go of his grasp on the ethereal and be drawn to Heaven or Hell at any time, simply vanishing from the Marches. The longer the spirit dwells in the ethereal realm the stronger this pull becomes. It gains even more force for those human spirits who return to the corporeal world and are killed again. Each time a dream-shade suffers the destruction of a corporeal vessel, they must make a Will roll, minus the total number of vessels they have lost, to avoid moving on to their final, celestial reward.



realm, because the denizens of Hell were well acquainted – and impressed – with their work on Earth. The survivors of the once-proud Aztec pantheon were forced to huddle in the faded realm of Mictlan, home of the dead, and became the lackeys of the Princes of Hell in exchange for Essence to sustain them and the right to set up a sacrificial cult or two from time to time.

Now Tezcatlipoca, Huitzilopochtli and Mictlantechtli haunt the nightmares of mortals at the command of the Princess of Nightmares. They do her beckoning in exchange for what morsels of hellish support they can



obtain – for while other pagan religions have enjoyed modest revivals in recent years, the increasing urbanization of Mexico and Central America threatens to fade the Aztec spirits into oblivion.

The one ray of hope in the desolation of the Aztecs is the mysterious absence of Quetzalcoatl, who disappeared into the Far Marches long before the coming of the Crusade, with the promise that he would one day return. The mortal Aztecs took the arrival of Cortez on their shores to be the return of the feathered serpent god, but in truth, Quetzalcoatl has yet to make his return from whatever distant dream world that he departed to.



THE HAPPY HUNTING GROUNDS

Home of many Native American spirits, this domain is sustained by the belief and rituals of the Indian culture. It has slowly faded – like the Native Americans themselves – though it has enjoyed some modest renewed attention of late.

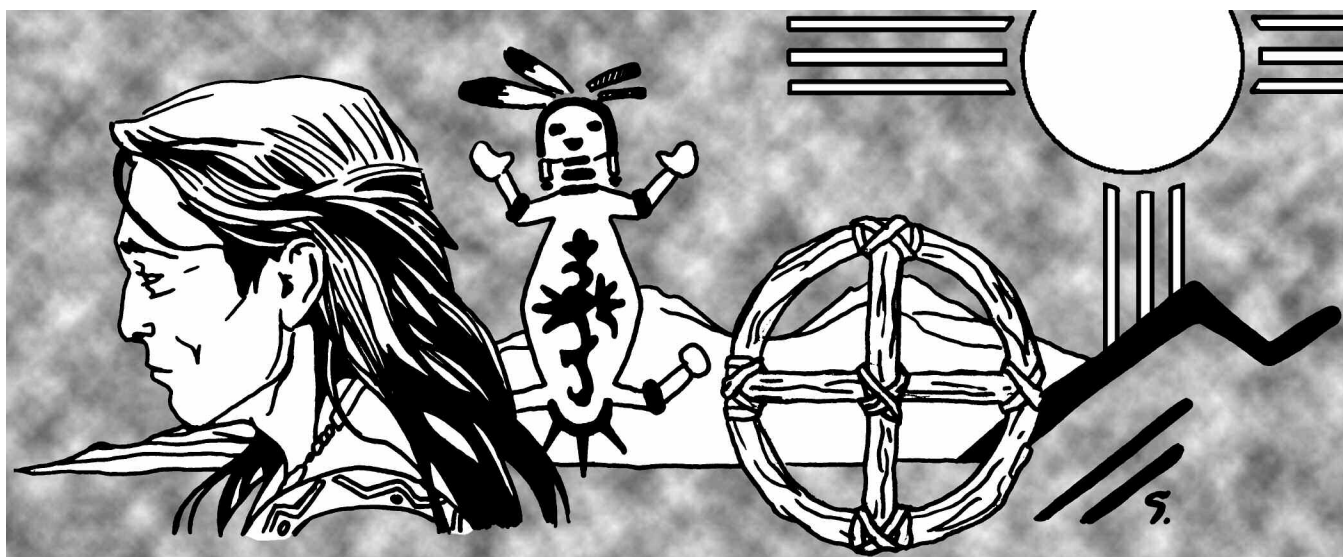
Many Native American spirits – kachinas, manitous and such – were driven into the Marches by Uriel's angels, forcing them to abandon the people they protected, resulting in the slow obliteration of the Amerindian culture.

Strongly connected with the native culture and the corporeal realm, these spirits have not fared well in their long exile in the Marches. Many sneak back to the corporeal world, especially in animal vessels (see pp. 110-111) . . . some to aid their people, others just to get back to a more fertile Essence-hunting ground.

Many Amerind spirits, particularly those of a warrior bent, hold codes of honor as strict as any Malakite's – though far, far different than those normally found among the Heavenly Host. Other Indian spirits are tricksters, bringers of insight or animal totems.

Jordi sympathizes with the Indian spirits; they were some of the only "people" that he really liked on Earth. Rumors suggest that some of the Amerind spirits have even been called to Jordi's heavenly savannah to speak with the Archangel of Animals. What words passed between Jordi and the spirits, no one knows.

Most of the Native spirits prefer not to have dealings with Heaven or Hell, "burned" as they were by the events of the Crusade and having little philosophical common ground with the participants in the War. Some of the less pleasant spirits are happy to "hire out" to Beleth in exchange for some Essence.



THE DREAMTIME

Deep in the Far Marches lies a dreamworld the size of the continent of Australia. It has the size and features of Australia, but it's the Australia of more than 10,000 years ago, long before anyone lived there except the Aboriginal tribes. This is the Dreamtime, the first world of Aborigine lore. The Aborigines believe the ethereal realm to be the origin of all things. They say the corporeal and celestial worlds grew out of the timeless and eternal dream of the ethereal, and the corporeal world is the shadow of the ethereal, rather than the other way around. The Dreamtime is inhabited by intelligent animals and other creatures of Australian myth.

Because the Aborigines believed in *Baiame*, the High God, their totem spirits were spared a great deal of Uriel's fury. The Archangel of Purity had much bigger fish to fry. The tribes knew and acknowledged the mastery of the Creator, and that was enough to buy the lives of their lesser spirits. Uriel's angels were content to drive the Australian spirits from the corporeal realm.

Ironically, though this pantheon underwent little celestial persecution, its corporeal roots are dying. The slow destruction of the Aboriginal culture is destroying the Dreamtime as well. As fewer and fewer of the tribes continue the Rites that have been maintained unbroken for thousands of years, the Dreamtime is beginning to fade, along with the spirits that inhabit it.

This has driven some of the Dreamtime spirits to attempt to "recruit" more shamans to help support their

domain. To do so, they must either risk a visit to Earth, or enter the dreams of humans and initiate them in their traditions, teaching them to become their Dream Soldiers.

Unfortunately, the dreams of humans on Blandine's side of the Marches are well-protected, while Beleth expects any spirit who wants to work her side of the Vale to inflict terror on human dreamers. This is hardly conducive to recruiting new worshipers. It remains to be seen if the spirits and their Soldiers will be able to reverse the decline of the Dreamtime.



THE HELIOPOLITANS

The Egyptian gods have seen far better times. Many were destroyed by Uriel's crusaders before the remainder fled to the Far Marches. Isis and Set remain the most powerful. Osiris, Horus and many others are gone; the rest, like Anubis and Bast, are slowly fading away for apathy and lack of worship. Rumor has it that Isis works in secret to gather sufficient Essence and Forces to bring Osiris back from death as she did once before, restoring hope and leadership to the pantheon. Isis has vast arcane knowledge of Songs and the Symphony that she trades for what she needs to continue her work.



The evil Set has allied himself with Hell many times before and hopes to find himself a permanent place in the hierarchy of the infernal realm, but no Demon Prince is foolish enough to trust the Egyptian spirit of darkness. Anubis, the guardian and guide of the dead, worked with Set to give the secrets of mummification to Saminga and aid the Prince's rise to power. The gods of Heliopolis now hope for something in return from the Prince of Death, but he has shown little gratitude.

THE AUGUST PROSPERITY COLLECTIVE

The Shinto *kami* (spirits) driven out of Japan have established a pact with Nybbas to “buy out” new cultural icons and regain their power on Earth through the mass media. Many Japanese forms of entertainment such as *manga* and *anime* contain mythological images of ancient Japanese heroes, gods and spirits. These images help to feed Essence to those spirits in their ethereal realm.

They also find their way into dreams . . . Blandine's angels have been on guard lately against the increasing number of “Japanimation” dream-worlds, in which the

kami and their demon allies can speak to unknowing mortal supporters. Advances in virtual-reality technology, and its need for more content, will make this task grow.

THE LOAS

Many of the African spirits, the *loas* or *orishas*, have decided, “If you can't beat 'em, join 'em.” They have masqueraded as saints and other heavenly agents to their worshipers, leading to the creation of syncretistic religions such as Voudoun and Santeria. Truly skilled voodooists are humans with 6 Forces, capable of using Songs and Essence like other pagan Soldiers (pp. 93-95).

Many of these Soldiers are willing servants of Heaven as well, which creates a unique situation for the Heavenly Host. Angels can have practitioners of Voudoun handle tasks for them that are important to the War, and Kyriotates always find them to be willing subjects. On the other hand, they have been unable to sway the voodooists from their pagan roots or keep them from performing Rites that aid their loa. The loas are also more active on Earth than any other ethereals, using an ability similar to the Kyriotates' to possess mortal worshipers as vessels for brief periods.

An uneasy truce exists between the celestials and the loas. The ethereals don't have any problems with the celestials influencing their followers so long as the Voudoun worshipers continue to support the ethereals as well. Some Archangels are distrustful of this “alliance.” Dominic, for one, would like to stop all traffic with the ethereals.

The forces of Hell have done their best to sow dissent and distrust in this unique alliance. Nybbas in particular has been careful to portray Voudoun in the media as “evil” magic, to keep practitioners secretive and make any voodooista Soldiers less effective.



PRIMAL SPIRITS

Primal spirits are spirits of nature; their kind has been in the Marches since the first times. They are elemental forces, dreams of the sleeping Earth, leftover bits from the days of creation. These spirits can be quite powerful within their own specialized sphere of influence (called their Affinity). Most primal spirits have simple personalities, but some are complex . . . cunning or treacherous, or obeying unknown motivations.

Primal spirits must have at least one Corporeal Force, one Ethereal Force and one Celestial Force. Each spirit has an Affinity (or two at most) that defines its powers and usefulness. Some common Affinities include:

Fire (Agility)

Power suggestions: start small fires, fire immunity, instill warmth, glow, forge, hypnotism.

Essence Cost: 1 per check digit, +3 if attacking.

Spirit description: fire spirits tend to be very brusque, piercing, fleet of foot. They are very beautiful and lithe. Some have called them Salamanders.

Motivation: burn, consume, illuminate.

Standard operating procedure: frenetic movement, leaping, searching.

Fears: water, lack of air.



Lightning (Precision)

Power suggestions: move quickly, flash, electrify, power surge.

Essence Cost: 1 per check digit.

Spirit description: lightning spirits tend to have wild, sparking hair. They move quickly, but very precisely. They're androgynous. They sometimes appear as animals (horses, birds).

Motivation: speed, awakening, travel.

Standard operating procedure: from place to place in zero time. Never stop moving.

Fears: conductive metals, ceramics, water.

Rain (Perception)

Power suggestions: obscurement, quenching fires, making crops grow, provoking emotional response.



Essence Cost: 2 points.

Spirit description: flowing, graceful, quiet, tiny, moving softly, delicate, shy, soft voice.

Motivation: enveloping, covering, cleansing, feeding, growing.

Standard operating procedure: flow, penetration through density.

Fears: heat, the sun.

Storms (Agility)

Power suggestions: Lightning affinity, Rain affinity, Wind affinity, purification, smite.

Essence Cost: 1 per check digit, +3 if attacking.

Spirit description: blustering, boisterous, passionate, direct.

Motivation: awakening, cleansing, wearing away, fighting.

Standard operating procedure: roar in, sneak out.

Fears: sun, stone.

Snow (Perception)

Power suggestions: cold, obscurement, ability to walk in/through the snow.

Essence Cost: 2 points.

Spirit description: quiet, soft, moving slowly, inexorable, looming, large.

Motivation: enveloping, hiding, covering. Snow spirits love to hide people and freeze them.

Standard operating procedure: cover everything, be annoying and hard to move.

Fears: fire, sun.

Wind (Will)

Power suggestions: erosion, flight, strength of wind, fleetness, hear rumors in the wind.

Essence Cost: 1 per check digit, +3 if flying.

Spirit description: rushing, moving, chaotic, untamable, twisting, curling, undefinable, defiant.

Motivation: going where no spirit has gone before. Never pausing.

Standard operating procedure: over, under, around or through.

Fears: stone.

Stone (Strength)

Power suggestions: armor, protection, absorption, permanence, beauty, strength, metals, forging.

Essence Cost: 2 points, +1 point per point of armor bestowed, if applicable.

Spirit description: strong, slow, brooding, wise, silent.

Motivation: stability, permanence, protection, predictability.

Standard operating procedure: stable, practical, methodical planning.

Fears: wind, water.

Jewels (Perception)

Power suggestions: prosperity, scrying, gemstone affinity, strength, beauty.

Essence Cost: 2 points.

Spirit description: crystalline, small, haughty, critical, appraising.

Motivation: containing secrets, containing power, being a seed of prosperity.

Standard operating procedure: hides, longs to be treated.

Fears: stone.

Gold (Precision)

Power suggestions: greed, value, trade, Sun affinity.

Essence Cost: 2 points.

Spirit description: glowing, warm, elegant, quiet, ostentatious.

Motivation: adding value, adding beauty.

Standard operating procedure: being flexible while maintaining the highest standards.

Fears: stone, wind.

Water (Will)

Power suggestions: quenching thirst, erosion, memory, purification, tears, rivers, ocean, lakes.

Essence Cost: 2 points.

Spirit description: flowing, changing, mutable, strong, deep.

Motivation: to fill up all that is empty.

Standard operating procedure: to respond to every aspect of a situation, to flow into it.

Fears: fire, the sun.



Animals (Precision)

Power suggestions: controlling a kind of animal, animal healing, animal protection, animal possession.

Essence Cost: 1 point per check digit, +3 if attacking.

Spirit description: quick, quiet, instinctive, using all senses, tracking.

Motivation: survival, eating, reproducing.

Standard operating procedure: trust no one. Stay alert. Keep your claws handy.

Fears: humanity.

Plants (Will)

Power suggestions: trees, grasses, herbs (healing), protection, growth, new life, rebirth.

Essence Cost: 2 points, +1 point per hit healed if applicable.

Spirit description: flexible, diverse, perpetual, strong, beautiful.

Motivation: survival, reproducing, flexibility in the face of damage or danger.

Standard operating procedure: grow. Get your roots to water. Reach for the sun. Grow.

Fears: fire.

Moon (Perception)

Power suggestions: reflection, falsehood, light, revelation, mutability, motherhood.

Essence Cost: 2 points.

Spirit description: quicksilver, mutable, changing, feminine, softly spoken, round, caring.

Motivation: revelation, uncovering secrets, confronting the darkness.

Standard operating procedure: change without ever changing. Reflect that which is shown you. Reveal what is hidden without revealing too much.

Fears: Celestials and all those who harbor truth without speaking it.

Sun (Will)

Power suggestions: illumination, life-giving, growth, stability, Gold affinity, seasons, the calendar, fatherhood.

Essence Cost: 2 points.

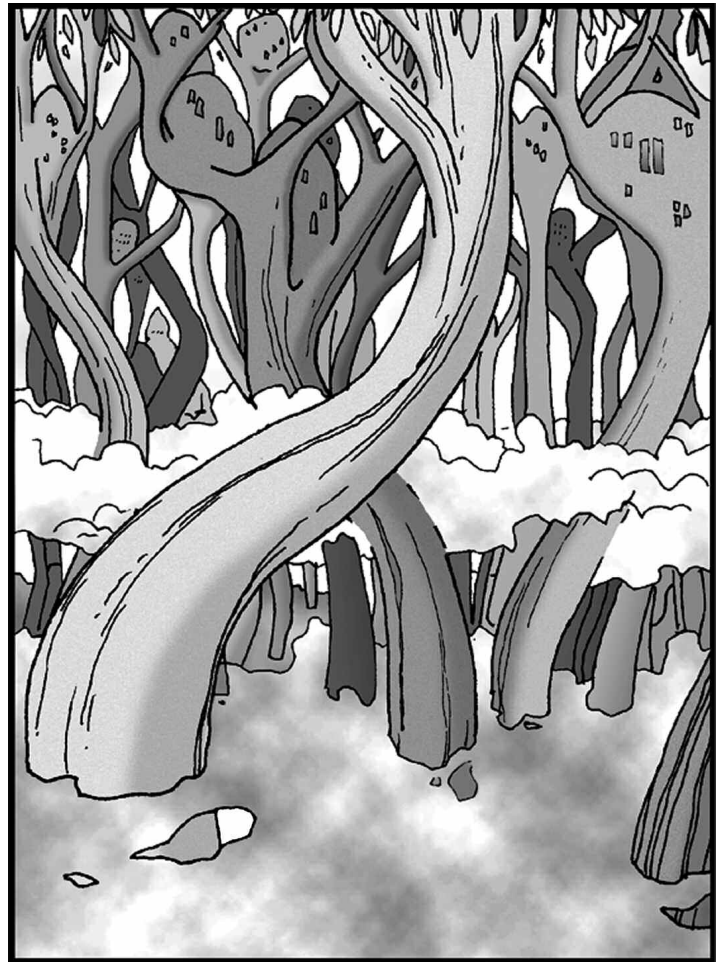
Spirit description: steady, vivacious, warm, friendly, outgoing, obnoxious, lean, grating.

Motivation: illuminating others, shedding light everywhere. Chase away all shadows.

Standard operating procedure: do your duty daily – keep a steady course. Don't let anyone get in your way.

Fears: Celestials, especially those who wish to snuff out the light.

Primal spirits may have multiple Affinities if the combination makes “natural” sense. For example, a spirit



might easily have Jewels and Gold . . . but Storms and Fire would require some explanation. Each level of an Affinity costs 2 character points.

Affinity Mechanics

Affinities are a broad area of power interpretable by a GM. The GM decides if the spirit in question can attempt a specific action based on its Affinity, and rolls d666 against the Affinity level plus the base characteristic. Essence cost is initially paid by the spirit, but spirits who are summoned by sorcerers may also draw upon the summoner's Essence (with his permission) to complete necessary orders.

Example: Lilah, a sorceress, has managed to summon a primal spirit with 5 Forces and the Affinities Moon and Wind. She asks it to lift her up to the third story of an office building and help her gain access through the window. The GM decides that this is within the spirit's ability, and rolls the spirit's Will + Affinity level on d666. The roll succeeds, and the check digit is 3, so Lilah's spirit must pay 1 essence +3 since Lilah will be flying. The GM decides that the spirit's Moon affinity can allow

her to pop the window latch (falsehood, mutability). Another d666 and the expenditure of 2 more essence by the spirit allows this to occur – one from the spirit itself, and one “borrowed” from Lilah. However, the spirit finds itself unable to remain quiet (its Moon affinity is acting up) as Lilah is sneaking into the back office, and “accidentally” knocks over a paperweight, thus alerting guards downstairs to her presence.

DREAM SPIRITS

Dream spirits escaped from a particularly vivid dreamscape and have managed to steal enough Essence here and there to stay alive. They are frequently hunted down by Beleth and Blandine’s Servitors and returned to their “homes,” but some have managed to hide in the more out-of-the-way corners of the Marches. Very rarely, they create vessels and enter the corporeal world as creatures from nightmare.

A dream spirit usually has only 1-3 Forces, and must have at least 1 Ethereal Force. Frequently they carry Discord with them . . . they are out of their element and it has caused them to suffer. Many of them are insane (or at least deeply disturbed) as a result of leaving their home dream, which is the only context in which they make any sense at all.

Their power is highly subjective. GMs may wish to grant them Songs – usually at not too high a level. Most of them have the equivalent of Focus/1 in that they like to consume Essence from others. Dream spirits are leeches that try to siphon off Essence from everything around them. They are frequently more of a nuisance than a help – especially the insane ones!

The best thing about a dream spirit is that it can very easily traverse dreamscapes. Frequently, sorcerers utilize them to dreamshape as well – sending them to enter the dreamscapes of others and shape their dreams as the sorcerer wishes.

Dream spirits usually know the Song of Dreaming from the very start, and many have the Dreaming skill naturally.

Creating Dream Spirits

The Game Master can invent any dream spirit he likes for the purposes of play. These tables can be used for a quick random creation.

Roll 2d6:

2-3: Animate Background Fragment

Not the main focus of the dream, but one of those elements that can occasionally be spotted in the background (like a tennis ball that speaks, or a telephone that rings incessantly, or a pair of walking pink polka-dotted slacks).

Madness: obsessive/compulsive, depression.

Motivation: to be noticed, to be liked, to take a larger role in things.

Fear: being lost forever.

Standard operating procedure: keep trying things until you’re noticed.

4-5: Animate Foreground Figment

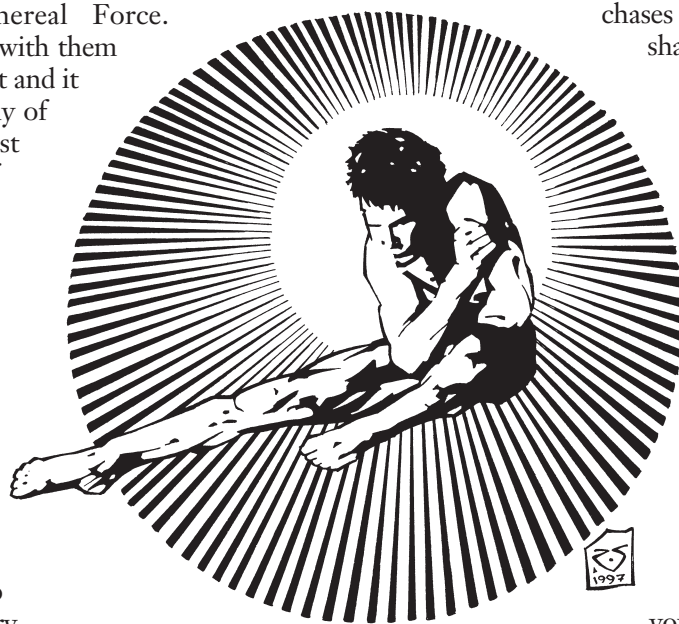
One of the “bit players” in a dream (like a bellhop that opens a door for you, or a frog that chases you around with a can of shaving cream, or the third-grade teacher who walks in and gives a tip on your relationship).

Madness: paranoia and/or obsessive-compulsive.

Motivation: play your part well, and They might not notice you escaped. Blend in, fade out. Don’t stand out in the crowd.

Fear: being sent back to the “home” dreamscape from which you escaped.

Standard operating procedure: don’t offend anyone, stay alert, smile, trust no one.



6-8: Central Character

The focus of a dream (Elvis, someone’s father, a co-worker).

Madness: megalomania.

Motivation: to be worshipped, nay, to be adored. To take charge. To be accepted as “just as good as the real thing.”

Fear: being denounced as “only a dream”; being sent back to the dreamscape.

Standard operating procedure: refuse to believe that you are anything other than what you say you are. Never admit to coming from a dream. Explain to anyone who suggests otherwise that they’re sadly mistaken.

9-11: *Nightmare Element*

A dangerous dream-spirit from a nightmare.

Madness: manic-depressive, schizophrenia and/or criminal psychotic.

Motivation: the only way you can feel better is to scare and hurt other people. That helps a lot. Shouldn’t others be happy to suffer so you can feel better?

Fear: the pain of continued existence and being destroyed.

Standard operating procedure:

cause pain and fear wherever possible, twice on Sundays.

12: *Spiritual Metaphor*

An enigmatic spirit of mystery from a dream.

Madness: God complex.

Motivation: reveal mystery, touch souls, aid transcendence.

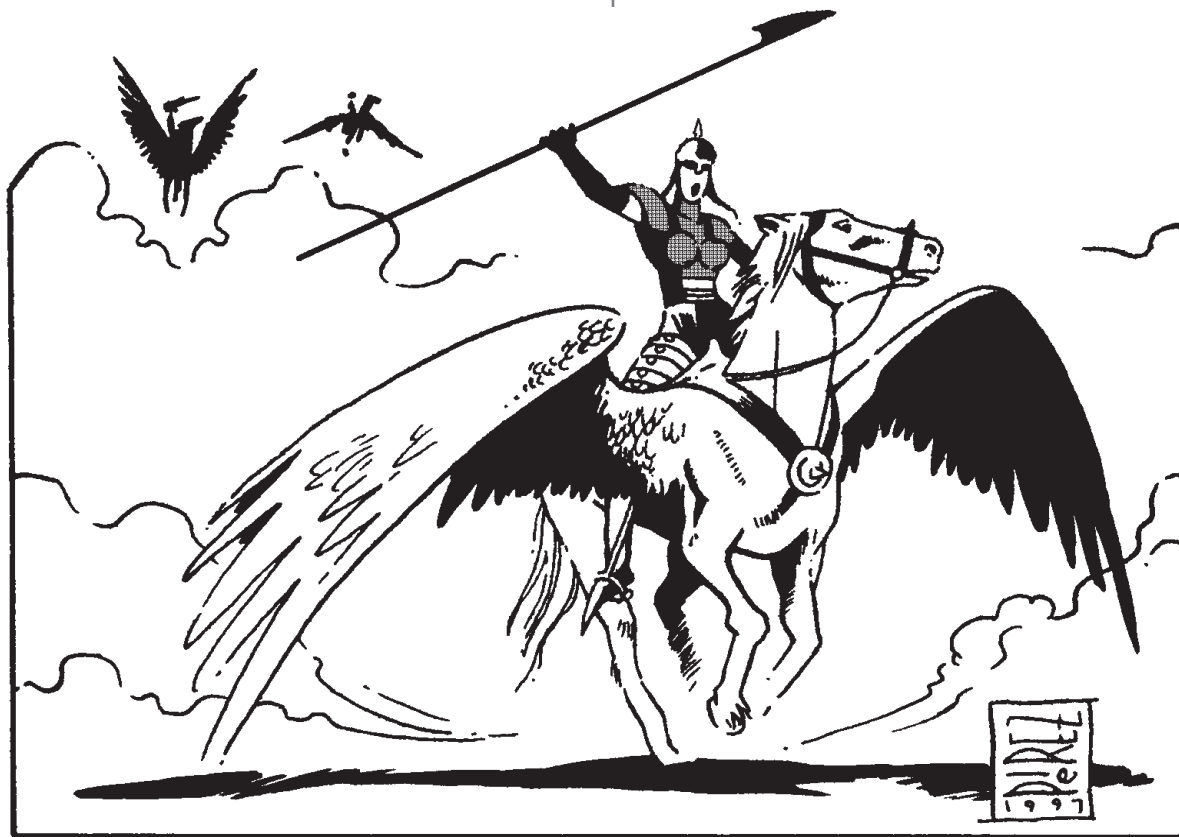
Fear: closed minds and cold hearts.

Standard operating procedure: speak in riddles, smile beatifically, remain calm, move with a purpose.

CREATURES OF MYTH

Hiding in the corners of the Far Marches are the surviving creatures of myth and legend from all over the world and every human culture. There are unicorn, chimeras, manticores, sphinxes, rakshasa and even stranger beings living in the depths of the Marches. The Guardians keep them away from the Vale, but they sometimes risk a visit to Earth . . . or are sent by an ethereal master or summoned by a sorcerer. The creatures of myth are also occasionally used by Beleth as “extras” for a particular nightmare, in exchange for whatever Essence they might suck from the terror of the sleeping mortal.

Most surviving myth-spirits have fewer than 9 Forces, since they have not used human Essence or worship to increase their power. Greater ones are rumored to survive, but they seem to be most reclusive, if they exist. There are even rumors of dragons . . . but then, there have always been rumors of dragons.



ETHEREAL SPIRITS IN THE CORPOREAL REALM

Spirits usually interact with mortals in their dreams, rather than appearing in the corporeal realm. But some spirits communicate with waking mortals, and even visit Earth in corporeal vessels.



COMMUNICATION

Spirits can use the Celestial Song of Tongues, or any version of the Song of Spirit Speech (p. 126), to communicate with waking mortals without leaving the ethereal realm. They must, of course, have met the mortal already, but a meeting in dreams is sufficient. A spirit who is *Linked* (see p. 126) to a mortal may use the mortal's own Essence to power these Songs!

PHYSICAL MANIFESTATION

It is the "official" position of the Heavenly Host, as well as the spirits of the Marches, that none of the ethereal folks survive on Earth. Uriel's Crusade was officially

a success, and the Host forbids any spirits, whether sprite or pagan god, from creating vessels to appear on Earth.

But it happens. Some spirits visit Earth in pursuit of their own agendas, or those of their ruler. Most just want to have a good time. The corporeal realm is so much fun!

To appear in the corporeal realm, a spirit must have a vessel. These are identical to celestial vessels, outwardly resembling normal human or animal bodies, but much tougher. Regardless of size, they have the spirit's Forces.

Tales of ethereal spirits "manifesting" on Earth without a vessel, as a hazy outline, pillar of fire and so on, are puzzling to the Host. They may represent special vessels . . . or creative use of the Songs of Tongues or Spirit Speech . . . or realistic dreams in which the mortal *thought* he was awake. But, at least as far as the celestials go, no ethereal has the ability to create celestial forms or manifest on Earth without a vessel.

The Essence Cache

Unlike celestials, ethereal spirits have the power to create their own vessels. They greatly resent that the Host now forbids them to do so.

Any spirit may place Essence in a cache – a sort of "Essence bank." The cache can hold up to *100 times its owner's Forces* in Essence. But Essence placed in the cache can only be used to create vessels. It can never be used for any other purpose; it

cannot be given away, nor stolen (as far as is known). So spirits who wish to visit Earth hoard whatever Essence they can, one or two points at a time, till they have enough to create a vessel.

Creating a Vessel

Ethereal spirits creating their own vessels do not pay character points for it, but do spend Essence on it. Vessels cost 15 Essence for each level they have as a resource, per Force the vessel typically contains. A spirit may not create a vessel "greater" than its own total of Forces – a 3-Force spirit could not manifest (on its own) as a human. Some common spirit vessels are:



Travel Between Realms

A spirit with a vessel may manifest in the corporeal realm by spending 1 Essence and making a Will roll. It may appear anyplace he has ever been, or with any human to which it is Linked (p. 126). It may also appear any place clear-

1 Force (15 Essence per level): Tiny things, from insect swarms up to rat, mouse or small bird.

2 Forces (30 Essence per level): Small creatures: a cat, a small dog, a raven.

3 Forces (45 Essence per level): Medium-sized creatures: an ordinary dog, a wolf or coyote, an eagle. "Manikins" – big-headed humanoid shapes perhaps 3 feet tall – fall in this category. So does a very small child.

4 Forces (60 Essence per level): Larger beasts: big dog, deer or bear. Or a half-grown child.

5 Forces (75 Essence per level): Human-sized and larger; a man or woman, lion, dolphin or bison.

Gigantic forms are possible, but rare in modern times. Thor, were he still around, might enjoy manifesting as a "thunder lizard" brontosaur, but even if he could spare the Essence, it would attract too much attention.

Thus, a spirit manifesting as a bird would pay 15 points for a level-1 vessel . . . up to 75 points for a level-5 vessel. Human vessels *start* at 75 points and go up.

The spirit may choose to absorb some Discord in order to lower the cost of a new vessel. Each level of Corporeal or Ethereal Discord reduces the Essence cost of a new vessel by 3, per level of the vessel as a resource. Each level of Celestial Discord will reduce the Essence cost of a new vessel by 5, per level of the vessel as a resource. So a level 1 human vessel with 3 levels of Need, a Celestial Discord, would cost not 75 Essence, but 60. A level 2 human vessel with 3 levels of Need would cost not 150 Essence, but 120. No matter how much Discord is taken, a vessel never costs less than 1 Essence.

ly seen while visiting a mortal dreamscape; an Intelligence roll may be required to avoid errors.

To return to the ethereal realm, the spirit must spend 1 Essence and make a successful Will roll. The vessel vanishes and the spirit appears at any "place" it knows within the Marches. As with celestials, any damage the vessel had taken is retained and reappears when the vessel does; it heals only while the vessel is in use.

Destruction of the Vessel

When a spirit's corporeal vessel is destroyed, it returns to the ethereal realm, at whatever place it considers "home" or otherwise safe. A spirit's period of Trauma (see *In Nomine*, p. 67) is measured in weeks rather than days, and the Will roll to recover from Trauma is made at a -2. Furthermore, every failed Will roll *costs the spirit 1 Force!* Thus, many spirits fade away to nothing when they lose their Vessels. This makes corporeal "death" very dangerous for ethereals, which is why so many spirits met the true death during the Purification, and why they are so cautious about returning to Earth.





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BLOOD AND CIRCUSES



BLOOD AND CIRCUSES

"I am convinced that the only people worthy of consideration in this world are the unusual ones. For the common folk are like the leaves of a tree, and live and die unnoticed."

— L. Frank Baum, *The Marvelous Land of Oz*

The forces of Heaven and Hell take many forms within the corporeal realm. The Lord works in mysterious ways; so, too, does his counterpart. As above, so below: among the host of corporeal servants of the celestial there exist twin brothers, the Dawsons, who have been roaming the back roads of small-town America since the 1950s. Mirrors of those they pay allegiance to, the Dawsons are old enemies and work toward opposing goals. They leapfrog each other across the land, each seeking to undo what the other has done and each seeking to do that which the other will seek to redress. They are mirror opposites, divine and diabolic, and their companions are the outcasts of society, chosen or fated: the carnies.

This chapter presents two opposing forces within the world of mortals, ripe for inclusion in your campaign. It is not a ready-to-run adventure; you will need to read through it and customize it for your group. General suggestions on how to use the two major sections appear on p. 119 and p. 123; a specific scenario plot you can use to bring the Dawson brothers into your campaign appears at the end of this section, beginning on p. 124.

The material herein is presented as an adventure *resource* rather than an adventure per se, because it should be useful at multiple points in your campaign. Its subplots can recur throughout your storyline. There is enough information here that you *can* run a single adventure with this material, but try to keep the important characters alive at the end: they have been designed to be useful on an ongoing basis.

THE DAWSONS

The town was Springfield, the sort of town that could be in most any state, but which was probably in the Midwest: Ohio, Illinois, one of those. Springfield was one of those towns, small, nondescript – but clean, safe and wholesome, too.

In 1925, to Alfred and Mary Dawson, there was born a monstrosity: Siamese twins, Arthur and Harold, joined only by a fleshy bond at the chest but with otherwise normal physiologies. A willful local doctor whose name is sadly lost to history undertook the separation of the pair.



The doctor encountered one irregularity in the procedure, which he did not mention to the parents and which he took to his grave: in removing the connective tissue, he discovered a golden cord, perhaps an eighth of an inch thick, which bound the twins together, tied to their rib cages. The doctor severed the cord and removed it from both boys, and hypothesized (with bland naiveté) that the mother had perhaps ingested the cord by accident and that it had migrated somehow into the uterus where it was responsible for the conjoining of the twins. That the cord might have been of some miraculous intent never seemed to cross his mind; scant wonder his name is lost to time.

Growing up in Springfield, identical twin brothers Arthur and Harold Dawson were the same in every respect but temperament. Harold was kindly and soft-spoken, while Arthur was cruel and cunning. Arthur was



circumspect enough to hide the depth of his cunning from most who knew him, while Harold was humble enough to disguise the hidden regions of his great heart. Most considered the boys to be typical small-town kids.

Time passed, and much occurred that need not concern us. In 1952, then, let us say only that the boys – inseparable so far despite their differences – launched a career as managers of a carnival. The old Grayson Fabulon had come to Springfield on its last legs and promptly defaulted on its rental payment to a local landowner, throwing the entire enterprise into insolvency and court proceedings under the scrutiny of a zealous county clerk. The Dawson twins bid a healthy portion of their pooled life savings and bought the Fabulon, promptly retitling it the Dawson Brothers' Superlative Entertainments. They spent the rest of their savings to touch up the carnival's aesthetic appeal, which was sorely in need of paint and repair. Once the refurbishing was complete, the Dawsons set out on the road to glory.

Within three years, the Dawson Brothers Superlative Entertainments was doing quite well. Much of this success was due to the sideshow of freaks, gimps and illusionists, a sideshow that has since passed into legend among carnies for being one of the best. At one time or another during the 1950s, nearly every sideshow performer of prominence did a hitch with the Dawsons. The brothers ran a good show, paid their performers well and

drew substantial crowds throughout the American Midwest.

All of this came to an end, however, in 1962. Arthur and Harold went their separate ways. They split their carnival between them, although not on equitable lines. Arthur clearly got the better part of the deal, from a financial standpoint at least. Arthur took the carnival proper and the illusionists (he could already foresee the decline of the less-savory acts) and Harold took over the 10-in-1 freak show.

As the years passed, Arthur's business acumen was demonstrated time and again. Today, Arthur Dawson (proprietor of Dawson's Spectacular Entertainment) is a successful carnival operator whose million-dollar show tours 16 states and winters at an exclusive retreat in Florida. His carnival is spit-and-polish clean, in every way the model of a modern family traveling attraction. Thirtysomethings who grew up making annual visits to Dawson's write glowing reviews in local newspapers, and more than a few book authors have made a point to credit Dawson's with igniting their youthful imagination with the flame of excitement and adventure. Dawson's Spectacular Entertainment has merged with the vast hegemony of contemporary American pop culture.

In counterpoint, Harold Dawson's Oddities of Nature has suffered a steady decline. The freak show of old is all but dead today, as the forces of political correctness and modern medicine conspire to not only remove the label "freak," but to find socially acceptable ways for such individuals to earn a living besides the fairly easy and enjoyable life of an itinerant performer. Harold Dawson has hung on tenaciously, intent on providing an honest and lucrative livelihood for any freak who comes in search of one. In the last few years his show has seen something of an upswing in major metropolitan areas, where the post-modern appreciation of freaks has grown in recent years.

The Dawson brothers have each been touched by celestial forces. Arthur Dawson has become a servant of Valefor, Prince of Theft; a carny's life is a rootless one of deception and chicanery, of rooking the rubes (gullible carnival-goers) for the money in their pockets or the stars in their eyes. Harold Dawson is a follower of Eli, Archangel of Creation. He can find the good in most anyone (save his brother) and wanders from town to town in search of wrongs that need righting.

Together with their loyal carny followers, the Dawsons work to further their masters' aims on Earth. Both of their attractions carry secrets, locked within the gaudy posters and enshrined within the concession stands. Arthur holds the secrets of broken dreams and lost loves; Harold, the secrets of the soaring potential within us all. Diametric opposites, the Dawson brothers slip from town to town, and both Hell *and* Heaven follow them.



ARTHUR DAWSON'S SUPERLATIVE ENTERTAINMENTS

Arthur Dawson runs a tight ship, no question about it. He charges fair prices and gives a good show. But Arthur Dawson serves Valefor, Prince of Theft, and the price of admission is not the only price his visitors pay. Arthur and his carnies steal from their guests. The rookie carnies are taught the basics of pickpocketing, minor scams and so forth. Those with more talent, the barkers, run the attractions in the Corridor of Skill: games of chance and other diversions where the rubes must be both flattered and suckered so that they give up their money willingly. The most promising join the Tent of Illusions – knife-throwers, sword-swallowers, magicians, etc.

That last group, known as the illusionists, are the ones whom Arthur Dawson indoctrinates into the worship of Valefor. Arthur and the illusionists engage in the usual complement of sorcerous rites and the occasional blood sacrifice, and in return they are granted certain powers that allow them to steal things of real value: hope, love, dreams. It is these sweet treats that Arthur and his illu-

sionists truly lust for, and that their master Valefor holds in high regard.

Due to his adoration of Valefor, Arthur Dawson never lets his carnival sit in any one place for more than three days. Typically, the carnival arrives before dawn on a Friday morning so that set-up can be completed by Friday afternoon; tear-down begins at midnight on Sunday night and the carnival is gone before sunrise for a mid-week engagement in a smaller town before returning to a larger city for the next big weekend. Most carnivals remain in place for two weeks or longer, but Dawson cuts his visits short. Typically, he's turned this into a marketing point: "We're in such demand that a weekend is all we can spare," is his usual response to the question of why his visits are so short. He churns up the publicity before arriving so that the carnival will see near-constant business all through the visit.

THE MIDWAY

The major features of the carnival, for most visitors, are the rides on the midway. Arthur Dawson offers a good selection: the Rocket (a roller-coaster), the Spinner (a tilt-a-whirl), the Circle of Life (a Ferris wheel), the Smash 'n' Bash (bumper cars) and many more. The rides are all in tip-top shape, and are paid for with tickets bought at sales booths throughout the carnival.

For Arthur Dawson and his carnies, the rides are bait: they draw the crowds from whom they feed. As the

guests walk among the timbers of the Rocket, the carnies circle unnoticed like hungry wolves. They pick and choose their targets carefully. Who will lose a wallet, or a watch? Who will be urged toward the Corridor of Skill with free tickets to get them started?

And who, who of all, will receive a pass to the Tent of Illusions where their very souls will be drained? It is amid the rides – the wonderful, head-spinning rides – that the weak are drawn off from the pack and preyed upon mercilessly.

Typical Rookie Carny, Human

Corporeal Forces – 3 Strength 5 Agility 7
Ethereal Forces – 1 Intelligence 1 Precision 3
Celestial Forces – 1 Will 1 Perception 3

Skills: Acrobatics/2, Climbing/1, Dodge/1, Fast Talk/1, Fighting/3, Lockpicking/3, Lying/3, Move Silently/4, Running/2

The rookie carnies perform any number of necessary odd jobs around the carnival, but their most important work is robbing the rubes. They loiter about the midway, picking their targets and pilfering their valuables. These carnies are nothing more than ordinary thieves, with no knowledge of the Symphony. When needed, they serve as the brute force of the carnival, protecting Arthur Dawson and the other carnies from interlopers.

THE CORRIDOR OF SKILL

This area contains the usual games of chance and skill one finds at any carnival: test your strength, guess your weight, knock over the milk bottles, throw the darts and so on. The odds, of course, are stacked against the rubes who come to play. That's why they're rubes, after all.

But the games are dear to Arthur Dawson's heart, for this is where the rubes willingly part with their money. No rookie carnies work here picking pockets, pulling penny-ante scams and making sucker bets with drunks; here, the carnies are more experienced barkers. A barker works each booth, trying to talk the rubes into coming over for a game. They use a mixture of flattery and insults, trying to quickly get a handle on each person who walks by and lure them in. A good barker can persuade a rube to part with \$10 or \$20 in order to win a 59-cent teddy bear key-ring for his sweetheart, and enjoys watching the rube sweat as he or she racks up failure after failure with just enough successes to keep the money coming. Aw, you were so close that time! But you're gettin' better, yes indeed! Try again, pal . . . A rube and his money are soon parted, and the skill it takes to make that parting occur is the hallmark of the barkers.



Typical Barker, Human

Corporeal Forces – 1 Strength 2 Agility 2
Ethereal Forces – 2 Intelligence 4 Precision 4
Celestial Forces – 2 Will 5 Perception 3

Skills: Dodge/2, Electrician/3, Fast Talk/4, Fighting/2, Lying/4, Throwing/5

The barkers work the games of chance and skill. They are smooth talkers, adept at picking out the vulnerabilities in anyone they meet; they instinctively know what to say to get someone to do something they wouldn't normally consider. The range of this ability is limited to getting people to play their games, but within that area they are quite effective.

The barkers know nothing of Celestials or the Symphony, but they do know enough about Arthur Dawson's organization to realize that the better they are, the higher the rewards – and that there's more to life than being a barker.

THE TENT OF ILLUSIONS

The Tent of Illusions is the dark heart of Arthur Dawson's Superlative Entertainments. While many rubes come and go through the tent unharmed, admiring the sword-swallowers, fire-eaters and the many stage-magic acts, a special few are singled out by the carnies on the midway. They are often those most in need of being taken down a peg or two . . . bullies, narcissists, boasters and so forth. But some are innocents, full of the bright fancy of hopes and dreams they are certain to fulfill – till the illusionists get to them, that is.

The Tent of Illusions is one of Valefor's Tethers (see *In Nomine*, p. 59) on Earth. Unlike most Tethers, it is not static; it moves with the carnival, and when the tent is folded up and the contents boxed away it does not truly exist. Once the carnival has come to a stop and the tent is set up and the illusionists assemble their stalls, the Tether becomes active. It is then that the Tether feeds.

It is the innocents that are the sweetest of the sweet for the illusionists. It is the theft of the innocents' most fervent desires that causes the most grief, and therefore is the most highly prized act an illusionist can perform. Those who lose their dreams to these human fiends rarely regain them, and are doomed to a fate without hope or optimism. While the carnival is open, Arthur Dawson spends most of his time in the Tent of Illusions, hand-picking those who through pride or aspiration will receive the illusionists' terrible gifts.

Typical Illusionist, Sorcerer

Corporeal Forces – 3 Strength 4 Agility 8
Ethereal Forces – 1 Intelligence 2 Precision 2
Celestial Forces – 2 Will 3 Perception 5

Skills: Emote/3, Escape/2, Fast Talk/3, Focus/3, Knowledge (Magic Tricks/3), Savoir Faire/1, Seduction/2, Summon/2

Songs: Entropy (Corporeal/3), Form (Corporeal/2)

Attunements: Sorcery

The illusionists are at the top of Arthur Dawson's coterie of carnies. They are full-blown sorcerers devoted to the furtherance of Valefor's goals on Earth. Ruthless and thirsting for the theft of human joy, the illusionists are masters of both stage magic and the real magic practiced by sorcerers. They use the Songs of Entropy and Form to take from people that which they are proudest of: Entropy ages the boastful young and Form skews the pretty faces of the vain. (Victims requiring more subtle magics are the province of Sosostri, the Seneschal of the Tent of Illusions.) The illusionists are under the direct control of Arthur Dawson, and are loyal to the end. They revere Valefor by name, and have full knowledge of the Symphony and their role within it.

UNIQUE TETHER POWER: THE BARGAIN OF DESPAIR

The Bargain of Despair is a Tether power associated with the Tent of Illusions, granted by Prince Valefor. It could potentially crop up as a power possessed by an Artifact of Valefor or something else, but such uses are up to the GM.

The user of the Bargain of Despair (typically the Seneschal of the Tether) can make a bargain with a human target: one of the human's fears will be erased, in exchange for converting one of the human's desires — one that is likely to push the human in the direction of his Destiny — into a fear. Although that is the gist of the bargain, it is couched in misleading terms: the user of the Bargain emphasizes what the human will receive (the erasure of a fear), and does not have to state what the human is losing (a desire converted to a fear) unless directly asked, and even then the user may equivocate: "What are you giving in exchange? Oh, nothing much." Repeated grilling will force the user to explain the bargain in full, but typically the user selects a human careless enough to make this possibility unlikely. NPCs must make a d666 check against their Will; failure indicates that they agree to the Bargain. Players whose characters are offered the Bargain may make their own decision.

The desire and the fear must be of roughly equivalent status in the human's psyche. For example, erasing a victim's fear of bald eagles in exchange for converting his desire to breathe to a fear would be inappropriate. Usually, the desire that is converted is for something pervasive: love, companionship, affection, honesty and so forth.

The Seneschal of the Tent of Illusions, where this Tether power is based, is traditionally a Pachadite. The Seneschal uses his Pachadim power of fear-identification and fear-instilling to cripple a human with a given fear; once this is done and the human is weak with the fear, the Seneschal sidles up and offers to erase the fear currently plaguing the human. Most humans agree before they even know what is going on.

The erasure and desire-fear swap last for a number of years equal to the user's Will.

The Bargain of Despair may be used to cancel the effects of the Bargain of Hope (p. 121) when used on a human enjoying its effects.

The Seneschal of the Tent of Illusions is a Pachadim (see p. 36) named Sosostris, Knight of Kleptos (*In Nomine*, p. 181). She moves silently through the milling throng in the Tent, taking the subtle cues of the illusionists as guidelines for which humans she will suckle from. Besides being a powerful Word-bound Seneschal demon, she has something else going for her – the Tether within the Tent of Illusions has a unique ability she alone can invoke, the Bargain of Despair (p. 117).



SOSOSTRIS

Pachadite of Nightmares
Seneschal of the Tent of Illusions,
in service to Valefor

Corporeal Forces – 4 Strength 8 Agility 8
Ethereal Forces – 4 Intelligence 10 Precision 6
Celestial Forces – 4 Will 7 Perception 9

Vessel: Human/2, Status 3 (Entertainer)

Skills: Acrobatics/2, Detect Lies/3, Emote/3, Fast Talk/3, Knowledge (Human Weakness/3)

Songs: Attraction (Ethereal/3), Entropy (Corporeal/3), Form (Celestial/3), Motion (Ethereal/3)

Attunement: Pachadim of Nightmares, Passage, Swipe

Distinctions: Knight of Kleptos

Special Abilities: As a Pachadim on loan to Valefor, Sosostris can use her fear-identifying power (but without triggering that fear) to make a human think that he can

simply avoid an unpleasant situation and everything will be all right. Her victims don't file income taxes, stand up their dates when things aren't going well and are generally pathologically unreliable.

ARTHUR DAWSON

At 70 years old and counting, Arthur Dawson is perhaps the meanest old cuss to ever walk the earth. He'd

cross the street just to cast a shadow on a lilac. He's brutally intelligent with an animalistic cunning, though he keeps up a *very* effective ruse as a kindly old codger who's been around the block and emerged with a smile on his face. No one save his followers and his brother know him for the architect of cruelty that he is.

As he's fond of observing to newspaper reporters, Arthur Dawson just *loves* small-town America. That's where all the good people are, he often says, and he's sincere – that's where all the good people are whom Arthur Dawson wants to destroy, one by one. Over the course of the last five

decades, he's destroyed them all: pretty homecoming queens, brawny quarterbacks, good-hearted bankers, kindly preachers, devoted mothers, stalwart fathers, canny police chiefs, valiant firefighters and on and on down the corridors of the American dream. His victims are the pillars of the communities he visits, and it is their dreams that he defiles. He despises everyone and everything, absolutely, and takes his only pleasure in demolishing that which others respect.

ARTHUR DAWSON

Thief of Hope

Corporeal Forces – 2 Strength 3 Agility 5
Ethereal Forces – 2 Intelligence 4 Precision 4
Celestial Forces – 2 Will 3 Perception 5

Skills: Detect Lies/3, Dodge/3, Emote/5, Fast Talk/5, Knowledge (Business Management/3), Lockpicking/3, Lying/5, Move Silently/2

Songs: Charm (Corporeal/4), Entropy (Corporeal/4), Form (Corporeal/3), Shields (Corporeal/1), Thunder/1



USING ARTHUR DAWSON'S SPECTACULAR ENTERTAINMENTS

In play, the carnival can turn up wherever you need it, but it's most appropriate in small towns in the American Midwest. It's best if the carnival is not initially encountered directly, but instead through the effects it has on those who visit it.

For groups allied with Heaven, the carnival is perhaps most effective when used against an NPC, preferably one the player characters are already familiar with, but perhaps one whose victimization by the carnival would be the springboard for an adventure. The victim should have suffered a strange loss of faith in whatever was important to him: a priest may have abandoned his church, a civic leader may have retired from public life, a journalist may have given up on the big story she was working on. This would launch the player characters into an investigation of how the victim lost touch with his destiny. This would in turn put them on the trail of the carnival, finding other instances of the loss of hope along the way. Any angelic characters working in the service of Yves should be particularly incensed by what the carnival is up to.

For groups allied with Hell, it is again the harming of an NPC that is the most likely entrance for the carnival into your campaign. In this case, keep in mind that Arthur Dawson and his illusionists are as likely to prey on the vain, the boastful and other egotists as they are on the hopers and dreamers. A mortal ally of the player charac-

ters known for his bullyish manners may have become weak as a kitten; for Dawson, humbling a sinner is doubly pleasant for the feelings of personal betrayal and bitterness it produces in those already on the path to damnation.

Demons or their servants may also seek out Arthur Dawson's help to bring down a powerful character on the side of the angels, or just want to draw on his vast reservoir of experience and knowledge about the plans of the divine over the last several decades. Anyone in the service of Kronos, Prince of Fate, should regard Arthur Dawson with loathing at the very least; Kronos and Valefor are enemies, and Kronos considers the actions of Arthur Dawson's group to be a particular infringement on his jurisdiction. Kronos pays lip service to how Dawson serves Hell well and how the mortal is more or less doing Kronos' work in the corporeal realm, but he'd still rather see Dawson out of the picture or, at the least, working directly for him instead of Valefor.

HAROLD DAWSON'S ODDITIES OF NATURE

A decrepit and shabby holdover from better days, Harold Dawson's Oddities of Nature staggers from town to town, offering the public a rare first-hand look at those who are not as others: freaks, ranging from flipper babies to bearded ladies. Run by kindly Harold Dawson, the Oddities of Nature follow good weather and rarely book in advance. They show up, hope for



the best, and leave before the local social workers descend on them with subpoenas.

Harold runs a good outfit and his freaks are happy, but that doesn't mean the world understands them. Once, "enlightened" individuals wanted to take freaks out of freak shows to study them; today, similar individuals want to move freaks into the mainstream and encourage them to find menial labor suited to their constrained capabilities. Harold offers them a decent livelihood that requires little training or work and gives them a community of co-workers who understand them and are friendly to them, as well as social opportunities to meet other freaks and form romantic relationships. Those who have been persuaded to leave and enter the mainstream almost always return; those who remain on the freak circuit do not live idealized lives, but they get by, with the usual allotment of joys and sorrows. His show typically has about ten freaks active at any one time.

Each freak has his or her own trailer, which is hauled

around by pickup trucks driven by carnies. During show hours, the freaks all stay within secluded booths under a big tent. The design of the booths is such that no more than two freaks can be seen at a time. A crew of 15 carnies travels with the freak show, serving as muscle and protection for the precious freaks.

Typical Rookie Carny, Human

Corporeal Forces – 3 Strength 6 Agility 6

Ethereal Forces – 1 Intelligence 1 Precision 3

Celestial Forces – 1 Will 1 Perception 3

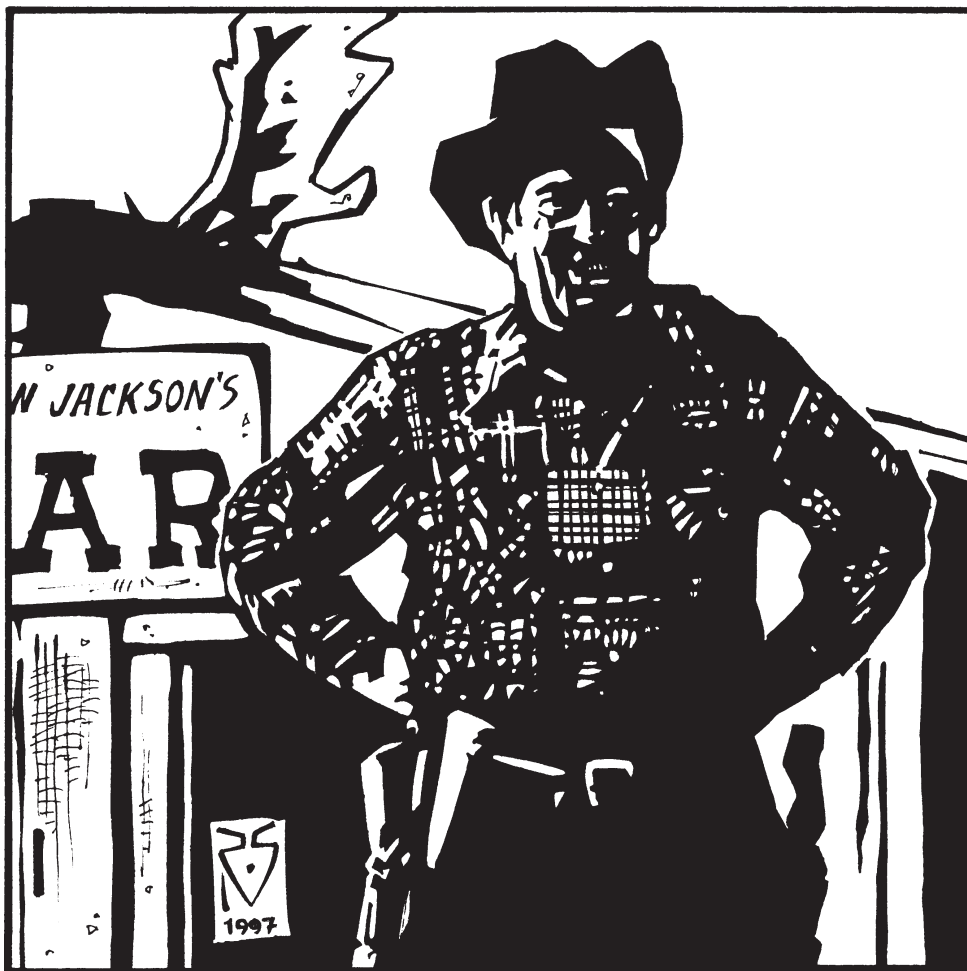
Skills: Acrobatics/4, Climbing/4, Detect Lies/3, Dodge/2, Fighting/3, Running/3, Survival/1

The rookie carnies perform any number of necessary odd jobs around the freak show, but their most important work is in transporting the whole outfit, setting up the freak show, and taking care of the freaks. They have no knowledge of the Symphony. They tend to be kindly folks who are running away from something in their

lives; often, they are humans under the effects of the Bargain of Hope (see sidebar, above), tagging along until they've completed the Bargain. These carnies tend to return every few years to do another hitch with the show, paying back Harold Dawson and Eloisa (the Seneschal) with their hard work and loyal, loving service.

In recent years, Harold Dawson's public-relations stock has risen thanks to a post-modern appreciation of circuses in general and freak shows in particular. Harold Dawson has been getting bookings in major cities and has even entered negotiations for a documentary to be broadcast on a major pay-cable network.

Despite the resurgent interest in freaks, Harold Dawson remains focused on his obsession: improving the lives of those around him. Though few outsiders appreciate this, Harold has



UNIQUE TETHER POWER: THE BARGAIN OF HOPE

The Bargain of Hope is a Tether power possessed by the Oddities of Nature attraction, granted by the archangel Eli. It could potentially crop up as a power possessed by an artifact of Eli or even something else entirely (with Eli you never know), but such uses are up to the GM.

The user of the Bargain of Hope (typically the Seneschal of the Tether) can make a bargain with a human target: the human's greatest desire – usually one that relates directly toward achieving his Destiny – will be unlocked and brought fully into consciousness, enabling the human to work to achieve the desire directly instead of stumbling about in the dark, unclear on his purpose in life. However, the human must pursue the desire once it is known; if he gives up, the desire will sink back down into his unconscious.

In play, the Bargainer must make a d666 check against his Will. Success indicates that the desire is manifested and gains a Will of its own (much as the fear brought out of a human victim by a Pachadite gains a Will of its own). Initially, the desire has a Will of 1. Each week, the person must make another d666 check against his Will. Each weekly success raises the desire's Will by 1 point. Once the desire achieves a Will of 6, it is fully realized and the

Bargainer may pursue it through every available avenue for the rest of his life. Failure in any weekly attempt means the desire's Will drops by 1; if it drops to 0, the desire is lost and forgotten once more.

Depending on the person's actions during the week, the GM may choose to grant bonuses or penalties to the roll. A week spent exploring the desire, be it to save battered children or to find true love, could grant as much as +3 to the d666 check for that week. A week spent ignoring the desire could carry a similar penalty.

The Seneschal of the Oddities of Nature where this Tether power is based is currently a Menunite. The Seneschal uses her Menunim power of hope-identification and hope-inspiration to help the Bargainer achieve fulfillment of his desire. Since the Oddities of Nature tend to hang around a given locale for a couple of weeks, it gives the Seneschal additional time to help the person out. Some folks have been known to follow the Oddities of Nature, working as carnies, so as to stay with the Seneschal and work to improve themselves.

The Bargain of Hope may be used to cancel the effects of the Bargain of Despair (p. 117) when used on a human suffering from its effects.

formed a viable community, an extended family, that moves from point to point on the map and does good works. High on Harold's agenda is undoing the evil done by his brother.

THE FREAKS

Arthur Dawson typically has ten freaks working for him at any one time. A set of ten sample freaks follows. Combat stats are not provided; these people are not fighters. Each freak does have a particular area of influence in which his or her conversational skills are celestially augmented. Each freak can converse with someone on a particular topic in such a way as to help that person out; this power works like a verbal version of that of the Menunim. Through association with Harold Dawson and the divine spark he carries, they have become supernaturally effective counselors.

Larry Rosenberg, the Tattooed Man

Larry's body is covered from head to toe in tattoos, which is pretty natural for a tattooed man . . . What

makes him unusual is that the tattoos tell a strange allegorical story, called The Child Slave Rebellion, in which strange cherubic slaves overthrow their unseen but sadistic masters. Larry's area of specialty is parent-child relations.

Melinda Pryce, the Bearded Lady

Melinda is a normal 33-year-old woman with the obvious distinguishing feature of a lush, full beard. Lovely and kind, Melinda has a marvelous singing voice that she uses as part of her performance. Melinda's area of specialty is self-confidence.

Arbo, the Dog-Faced Boy

Arbo's features are normal, but his face is covered with fine brown hair. The net effect isn't necessarily all that dog-like, but it is quite peculiar to behold. Arbo is a quiet lad of 19 years, but he tends to get boisterous when drunk and often spends his evenings drunkenly singing Christian folk songs. Arbo's area of specialty is faith in God.

Anna, the Pinhead

Anna is fairly simple-minded, childish in her approach to life and kind as can be. Microcephalic, Anna's head is bald and looks strangely small for her size. In her act she dances and cavorts to a scratchy old turntable playing children's music. Anna's area of specialty is the capacity for joy.

Sally and Sarah, the Siamese Twins

Joined at the hip, Sally and Sarah share a common leg (giving them a total of three) and are quite adept at tandem acrobatic feats. In private life – such as it is – they are amicable and gossippy, and both are terrible flirts. Sally and Sarah's area of specialty is affairs of the heart.

Ivor, the Sword-Swallower

Ivor is not a freak *per se* but rather a performer of great skill who tours with Harold Dawson's troupe for about three months out of the year. The rest of the time, Ivor runs a comic book store in Kansas City. Ivor's area of specialty is the pursuit of dreams.

Darryl Yoakum, the Ohio Giant

Darryl stands 7' 11" tall, though he claims that several days of bed rest result in a three-inch relaxation of his spine. He likes to say that he's the black sheep of his family. Darryl's area of specialty is pride in one's appearance.

Gina Dowden, the Four-Legged Wonder

Gina has an inborn twin, whose stunted legs protrude from her abdomen. Her twin's legs rarely do more than twitch, but the effect is quite startling. Gina insists that she can hear her twin speaking to her, and she often carries on audible but one-sided conversations with her twin. Gina's area of specialty is sibling relations.

Angelo Cartwright, the Living Skeleton

At a height of 5' 6" and a weight of just 78 pounds, Angelo lives up to his billing. He follows a very strict diet to keep his weight at its present level, although his over-active metabolism is a great aid to maintaining his status. Angelo's area of specialty is personal discipline and ambition.

THE SENESCHAL

Harold Dawson's Oddities of Nature is a Tether for Eli, Archangel of Creation. As a human servant, Harold suits Eli perfectly: quirky, outside the mainstream and devoted to good works. Harold does not burden his freaks with knowledge of the Symphony in specific terms, but he does express in deed and word a



general reverence for life that is in accordance with the Symphony and with the aims of his Superior.

Besides Harold, there is another member of the freak show who knows all about the Symphony: the Tether's Seneschal, Eloisa, a Menunite of Blandine on loan to Eli. She works for the freak show in her human role as a carny, and even Harold tends to forget that she's an angel in disguise. Eloisa tries to undo the evil of Arthur Dawson, and at the same time tries to help Harold keep things together. She is aided in her efforts by the power of the Tether: an ability called the Bargain of Hope, described in the boxed text on p. 121.

Eloisa has been with Harold Dawson's crew for almost 20 years. She had spent several years seeking out Eli in his walks upon the Earth, intrigued by what she'd heard about him and curious to meet him. When she finally found him, he was wandering aimlessly through Harold Dawson's freak show; she asked him what she could do to serve him, and he made some passing reference to how this place could use some straightening up. Eloisa at first wasn't entirely certain that Eli even knew who and what she was, but several days later she received word down the Menunim hierarchy that she was on loan to Eli until further notice. She has faithfully worked with Harold Dawson ever since.

ELOISA

*Menunite of Dreams
Seneschal of the Bargain of Hope,
in service to Eli*

Corporeal Forces – 4 Strength 7 Agility 9
Ethereal Forces – 4 Intelligence 9 Precision 7
Celestial Forces – 4 Will 8 Perception 8

Vessel: Human/4, Status 1 (Carny)

Skills: Dodge/2, Engineering/3, Fighting/3, Singing/2, Tracking/4

Songs: Form (Celestial/3), Harmony (Corporeal/3), Light (Celestial/3), Shields (Corporeal/3)

Attunements: Menunim of Dreams, Abracadabra, Transubstantiation

Special Abilities: As a Menunite in the service of Eli, Eloisa is naturally inclined toward affairs of the heart. Her purview as Seneschal of the Oddities of Nature, however, forces her to deal with a wider range of matters. She also makes use of the Tether's special ability, the Bargain of Hope.

HAROLD DAWSON

Harold Dawson genuinely loves people, especially what he calls *special* people: folks who are marginalized in some way, cut off from society because of their skin, their bodies or their minds. Harold is a perpetual outsider, and he loves his fellow outsiders as much as he loves himself.

As he's fond of telling newspaper reporters, "Heck, we're all freaks inside." Harold believes that everyone is a little wonky in one way or another, and there's no reason to hate or fear anyone because of it.

He loves his freaks, and he loves the good folks who come out to see the show, no matter what their intentions or attitudes may be; even the rudest visitors at least had the curiosity and the independence to come and see the freaks.

HAROLD DAWSON

Prophet of Hope

Corporeal Forces – 2 Strength 3 Agility 5
Ethereal Forces – 2 Intelligence 4 Precision 4
Celestial Forces – 2 Will 3 Perception 5

Skills: Artistry (Painting/5), Detect Lies/3, Dodge/3, Fast Talk/5, Knowledge (Business Management/3), Medicine/3, Move Silently/2, Tracking/5

Songs: Charm (Corporeal/4), Entropy (Corporeal/4), Form (Corporeal/3), Shields (Corporeal/1), Thunder/1



USING HAROLD DAWSON'S ODDITIES OF NATURE

In play, the freak show can turn up wherever you need it, but it's most appropriate to use it in small towns in the American Midwest.

For groups allied with Heaven, a threat to the freak show is a good draw. Celestials might feel Essence use occurring there and investigate, learning about its secrets in the process. Creating a threat to the show should not be difficult; some "enlightened" civil servant could be trying to close the show down and pack the freaks off for rehabilitation, spurred on by a demonic ally who wants to destroy the Tether.

For groups allied with Hell, an excellent plot hook is to have a mortal servant drop everything and join the show as a carnny, following an encounter with the Seneschal in which the Bargain of Hope was struck. An investigation would follow, eventually uncovering the truth: the

NPC's attempt to actualize his desire must be discouraged, or else the help of the Seneschal of Arthur Dawson's Superlative Entertainments must be enlisted to undo the Bargain of Hope.

ADVENTURE SEEDS

If the GM wants to hit the ground running and the devil take the hindmost, here's an adventure involving both the Dawson brothers and their shows.

Eloisa, the Menunite Seneschal of Harold Dawson's Oddities of Nature, is currently a servant of Eli – and she's in trouble. It is dissonant for Menunim to directly influence a human's path toward his Destiny; Menunim are supposed to use subtle mental influence rather than conversation, persuasion and other direct methods. But when Eloisa uses the Bargain of Hope, those people often drop what they're doing and join the freak show as a carny until the Bargain is completed. They hang around Eloisa, seeking her guidance and asking her advice. If Eloisa were a normal Menunite, she would never let this happen – but she is a devoted servant of Eli and the Seneschal of the Oddities of Nature, and her duties are in conflict with her choir.

As a result, Eloisa has steadily acquired Dissonance. She does what she can to dispel it, but what it boils down to is that Eli has put her between a rock and a hard place, and she is suffering as a result.

Dominic is eager to persecute Eli. If he can't do it directly then he can at least strike at Eli's servants. Most of them are in the service of other Superiors and as such do not serve Dominic's needs. But poor Eloisa is perfect: a direct servant of Eli, doing what he has told her to do, and acquiring Dissonance as a result.

Dominic's plan is simple. Eloisa has generated enough Dissonance (or even Discord) that she is edging too close to becoming an Outcast. He has to do something, for her sake if nothing else! This means an investigation, and a halting of her Bargain-related work until the investigation is completed. The investigation will not end with Eloisa; Dominic hopes to show that by putting a Menunite into a task where she cannot help but acquire Dissonance, Eli is simply not fit to serve as an archangel. Even if this case is not decisive, it will tell against Eli in the future.





Dominic is not out to persecute Eloisa; he simply wants to investigate her and use the opportunity to criticize Eli. In the process, however, he will attempt to get Eloisa assigned to another archangel and to leave Harold Dawson's Oddities of Nature (Dominic finds Harold Dawson and his freak show distasteful, and is suspicious of Harold's relationship with his twin brother).

The investigation will jeopardize the work of the freak show, and endanger the progress of the human carnies who are working through their Bargain of Hope. Lacking the protection of the Seneschal – for Eloisa will surrender her duties during the investigation – the freak show will be vulnerable and Arthur Dawson may take the opportunity to strike against his brother. In addition, Arthur's crew may attempt to steal Eloisa's Heart; by necessity (Eli is too disorganized to store his angel's hearts), Eloisa keeps her Heart with her in the freak show.

For groups allied with Hell, the mission will be to disrupt the freak show by any means. Mortals could be manipulated into breaking up the freak show out of social concern; the individual freaks could be preyed upon in various ways to convince them to leave the show; Harold Dawson could be disposed of through some legal means that would disband the operation. The party will have the help of Arthur Dawson, which can include victims of the Bargain of Despair as well as Sosostriis, Seneschal of the Tent of Illusions. Arthur's circus will almost certainly change course and set up shop in the same town that Harold's freak show is visiting.

Groups allied with Heaven may be assigned to investigate Eloisa's dissonant situation at Dominic's request, or to aid Eloisa against the investigators sent by Dominic. This effort will include an exploration of the Dawson's history and the role of the two brothers' groups, and will almost certainly include an attempt to locate Eli to testify on Eloisa's behalf – or, if the group is working for Dominic, to locate Eli so that he may face charges of abusing a servant. In addition, the group will have to fend off the assaults – legal, celestial and corporeal – of Arthur Dawson's crew and their allies.

Either way, the climax is likely to involve the dramatic appearance of Eli. Opportunities to bring Eli into a campaign are rare, so make the most of it. He may be so chaotic that Dominic succeeds in putting Eloisa under another archangel's charge, weakening the freak show for a final attack. Or he may be so persuasive that she is allowed to stay, and her dissonance removed.

Ideally, however, the Dawson brothers should continue their leapfrogging path across America's heart, probing its fears and its desires with equal passion.



ETHEREAL RESOURCES

Song of Spirit Speech

Ethereal spirits and their servants often communicate through the Song of Spirit Speech. Only mortals and ethereals may use it; Celestials can not learn or be affected by it. (Ethereal spirits, on the other hand, may learn many of the Songs used by Celestials; see p. 110 for a list of the ones most commonly known.)

Most human who know the Song are agents or worshippers of pagan spirits; some are sorcerers.

The user of this Song must have met his target at least once, though he need not reveal his own identity when he sends a message. He must visualize the soul to whom he wishes to speak, and perform the Song. The target may be anywhere in the corporeal or ethereal realms.

- *Corporeal* – The Corporeal Song of Spirit Speech works on targets in the corporeal realm, only. It will send a verbal message – in the user’s voice, audible to anyone within hearing range of the target – no longer than a number of words equal to the Essence spent times the user’s Corporeal Forces. If the target is sleeping, roll versus the sender’s Will to see if the target awakens instantly and hears the message.

- *Ethereal* – This version of the Song creates a minor illusion, affecting only one sense. For example, a beckoning figure could be seen, text on a page could be altered to read differently or a soft voice could be heard. The effect lasts for a number of minutes equal to the user’s Ethereal Forces.

- *Celestial* – The user will manifest briefly in front of his target, for a number of rounds equal to the user’s Celestial Forces. He will not be seen by anyone else. If this Song is used to summon an ethereal spirit to Earth, the spirit may manifest there if it has an available vessel, ending the Song’s effect. This Song may be maintained indefinitely by spending additional Essence; the target may contribute the Essence if he wishes.

Essence Requirement: 1.

Degree of Disturbance: when used wholly within the Marches, none; when either user or target is in the corporeal realm, it creates a disturbance in the Symphony equal to the check digit.

NEW DISCORD

Soul Link

It’s possible for a human soul to become linked to that of an ethereal or celestial “patron.” For the human, this can be good or bad. For angels and demons, it’s unnatural, a Celestial Discord that isn’t easy to get rid of. Usually, only when the human’s Forces are disbanded, or he ascends to the reaches of Heaven beyond those inhabited by the angels of *In Nomine*, will the link disappear.

Soul Link functions as a permanent version of the Djinn resonance (see *In Nomine*, p. 142), with the same restrictions. The holder may attempt to track the human to which he is linked anywhere in the Symphony.

Regardless of how his linked mentor appears, the human will always recognize him, and may ask for a favor when the two meet or talk. The patron must make a Will roll, minus twice the level of this Discord, or feel compelled to fulfill the request. Future pleas for assistance will fall on deaf ears until the prior request is fulfilled, unless it supersedes the earlier request in some way. Elohim receive dissonance when they give in to a request, unless a good reason is given (GM’s discretion).

There is a small advantage to being Soul Linked – the human, of his own free will, may offer up his Essence, whether or not he has the ability to consciously control it, to his patron. This may only be done once per day, and transfers no more Essence than the level of the Discord.

Soul Links for Ethereals

Though Soul Link is a discord for Celestials, it’s a positive trait for ethereal spirits . . . another tie to the attractive, forbidden corporeal realm, and a source of Essence. Likewise, a Soul Link can be a benefit to a human, if used properly. Ethereal spirits must pay 3 points per level for this ability and explain how it was obtained.

Very powerful ethereals, like the old gods, have the ability to create Links at will, for themselves or for other spirits. They are cautious in doing so because every link adds more boons they’ll be asked to grant. But any shaman might be linked to a patron spirit, and a Norse high priest might have a direct line to Odin himself.

Soul Links for Mortals

A soul link can be a benefit to a human, if the patron is not hostile or predatory. A link to a well-disposed patron should be a Resource costing 3 points per level, and require a good explanation. Links to hostile ethereals or Celestials should probably not be taken at character creation; leave them as a possible adventure consequence.

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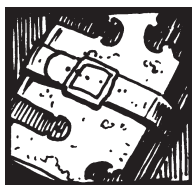


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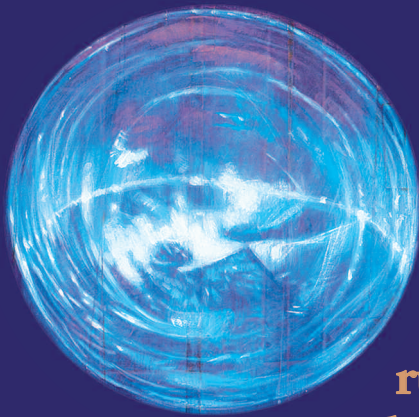


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