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“Fallen! Fallen is Babylon the Great!  
She has become a home for demons  
and a haunt for every evil spirit,  
a haunt for every unclean and detestable bird.”



An adventure for the World of Darkness  
using the Storytelling Adventure System

Written by Matthew McFarland  
Developed by Eddy Webb  
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STORYTELLING ADVENTURE SYSTEM

SCENES 8	MENTAL PHYSICAL SOCIAL	●●●● ●●●● ●●●●	XP LEVEL 0-34
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— Revelation 18:2



# FALLEN IS BABYLON

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A demon is nothing but sin given will and power, and a man who makes a deal with a demon is inviting that sin into him. It does more than consume him – it defines him. It wears him. It rots away at the core of his being. Demons can do it to places, too – whole cities, given the chance. They can alter the supernatural landscape, and despite the prevailing rumor that demons can be bound by rules and symbols, the intelligent occultist must always remember that it was the demons themselves who revealed most of these rules in the first place.

Here, then, is the result of sin, hubris and impatience, and here is a chance to banish a demon back to Hell and right a great wrong – or to seize power. Which will the characters choose?

## Introduction

**Fallen is Babylon** is a story for the World of Darkness inspired by and using systems and material from **World of Darkness: Inferno**. While having this book would be very helpful in running **Fallen is Babylon**, it isn't strictly necessary, as the relevant systems are reprinted herein.

This story works best when the characters are members of a supernatural race with a defined social structure – vampires, werewolves, mages and changelings are all superb choices for **Fallen is Babylon**. Prometheans, Sin-Eaters and mortal characters (with or without using the structures in **Hunter: The Vigil**) can easily be the protagonists of this story; it simply requires a bit more setup from the Storyteller. A brief discussion on how to spin this story for the different game lines can be found below.

### ABOUT THE STORYTELLING ADVENTURE SYSTEM

If this is your first Storytelling Adventure System (SAS) product, you've chosen a fine place to start. To keep this story kit lean and focused, though, we haven't included a lot of the core premises and Storyteller suggestions that are at the heart of the SAS. Whether you're a new Storyteller or an old hand, be sure to read the *free SAS Guide*, found at the SAS website:

[www.white-wolf.com/sas](http://www.white-wolf.com/sas)

Here are some of the features available in **Fallen is Babylon**:

- **Interactive links.** Clicking on anything in blue will take you directly to the section referenced, or to an appropriate character sheet or prop. It may also take you to an external website that could be useful.
- **Scenes.** Clicking on a scene name in the scene flowchart or the page number in the scene card will take you to the full write-up of the scene.
- **Bookmarks.** This PDF is fully bookmarked, so you can jump to major sections at any time when the file is open.

The characters are alone in this city, unable to locate any of “their kind.” They might form any number of theories as to why this is the case, but the truth of the matter is that an ancient pact with a powerful demon makes the city inhospitable. Now, though, the desperation of a man bound into a pact with a lesser demon might undo this older bargain – and set the greater demon free. This might ultimately benefit the characters and their people, but can they truly manipulate the forces of Hell?

In **Fallen is Babylon**, the characters arrive in the city in response to rumors, assignment or curiosity over the fact that none of their people seem to dwell there. While there, they learn of a lecture being given by a noted occultist and demonologist which is drawing protest from religious groups. The occultist, Dr. Eric Rasoletti, collapses during the lecture and is taken to the hospital, and the characters soon learn that something sinister is happening. Investigating Rasoletti's condition, they learn that his malady is of his own making. In trying to cure it, he might release something even worse.

The story proper begins on a Tuesday night, when Dr. Rasoletti gives his talk. The characters might go because the subject interests them (the Satanic Panic of the 1980s), or because of Rasoletti's claims to compare and contrast the purported “Satanism” of that mania with actual demon worship. They might also wind up in the area because of the protesters. Because Rasoletti is claiming to be discussing real-life demon worship, religious groups are picketing the event. News crews, of course, are on hand to document this. The protesters aren't actually allowed into the university auditorium where the lecture is taking place, so many of them are massed in the shadow of the church across the street.

During the lecture, Rasoletti begins speaking in the language of demons (the Dragon's Tongue) and then collapses. Paramedics determine that he appears to be asleep, and can find nothing physically wrong with him except that he can't be woken. A note in his pocket leads characters to his apartment, where they witness the machinations of two demons – one a demon of Sloth to whom Rasoletti is indebted (called Hush), and one a much more powerful demon of Pride (called Ai'tahe) who is trapped beneath the aforementioned church.

The characters, at this point, might choose to investigate the church, or might choose to do some research into the demons. Walking into the church prepared is certainly better than the alternative, but in either case the characters meet the priest of the church, who is well aware of what lurks there. He tries to warn them off, but if they persist, they wind up entering into negotiations with the demon. The results of those negotiations might change the spiritual and magical landscape of the city forever, or might simply reverse the curse under which it currently labors.

Fallen is Babylon

Introduction

## Themes: Sloth, Pride and Temperance

**Fallen is Babylon** has three main themes. The first is *sloth*. Eric Rasoletti made a deal with a demon because he didn't want to work for the accolades he felt he deserved. He wanted to skip over the "hard part" and live what he saw as the cushy life of a successful academic. The characters have the temptation at any point to walk away from Rasoletti and the trouble that he's causing, because any usual society that the characters would have simply isn't present here. No Prince will tell them what to do, no seasonal King hands down orders, no Hierarch recruits them to look into the matter. If they want to know the truth, they have expend the effort to look for it.

And this leads nicely into the second theme – *pride*. It takes a certain amount of pride to bargain with a demon, because the would-be Faust has to believe that he can succeed in getting the better of a demon where everyone else has failed. Clearly, though, enough of this sort of pride exists that demons continue to whisper their temptations and worm their way into the hearts of susceptible people. Are the characters such people, ready to seize power in exchange for sacrifice? Or do they know when to leave well enough alone?

The final theme of this story is *temperance*. Looking at the situation rationally and evenly, the truth is that the demonic presence below the church is having a detrimental effect on the city (especially from the characters' perspective, since none of their kind can remain here). The characters don't have to sell their souls and become possessed in order to fix this; all they have to do is learn what the demon wants (escape). An attitude of sheer, unwavering refusal to deal with the demon is no better than entering into negotiations with an intent to beat the demon at its own game – unrealistic and more than a little self-important. (Note that if the Storyteller is running this story as a **Vampire: The Requiem** game, the stakes change a little. The characters have the chance to keep this city free of Kindred, and that might actually appeal to them.)

## Mood: Rebuilding Ruins

The characters are walking into ruins. Rasoletti's life is a dismal failure. The distant attempt to render the Demon of Pride powerless failed; all the Church managed to do was imprison it, but its influence has corrupted the area. And the characters should find remnants of their culture in the city, evidence that at one point it housed a thriving population of their people.

Can the characters rebuild? Possibly, but not during this story. The best they can do during **Fallen is Babylon** is resolve the past, and establish some hope for the future.

## A Chapter in Your Chronicle

One of the best ways to use **Fallen is Babylon** is as a beginning point for your chronicle. This story assumes that the characters are entering a new city, either on their own or at the behest of a superior. No members of the characters' supernatural "race" dwell in the city, meaning that they are bereft of the usual comforts and backup they would normally enjoy. But by the same token, the city has no political drama, no bad blood and no entrenched power structure. Once the characters finish this story, banishing Ai'tah and lifting the curse that keeps their kind from the city, they might open it, inviting other members of their social groups (if any) to join them. They might claim the city for themselves (though enforcing that claim will be difficult – unless they get the demon to help them, of course). Because the end of **Fallen is Babylon** is potentially a new beginning for the city's supernatural landscape, this story can make an excellent segue-way into whatever kind of chronicle you wish to present.

If this story occurs in the midst of your chronicle, you can simply downplay the "new beginning" aspects of the story. Maybe the curse survives the demon's passage, or maybe the characters simply don't bother negotiating with Ai'tah at all. You can also allow the characters to exorcise the demon, but have them return to whatever their base of operations was before beginning this story. The city remains open (and perhaps a temptation), but now the supernatural beings that were heretofore barred from it can move in and explore. No matter where it falls in your chronicle, **Fallen is Babylon** allows you to present a city that hasn't seen any of the characters' sorts in a long time, and therefore has a wealth of supernatural "buildup" for characters to discover. This is discussed in more detailed below.

## A Story By Itself

If, on the other hand, you intend to run **Fallen is Babylon** as a self-contained story, we recommend that you focus on the interplay between the demons and on Rasoletti's plight, rather than the strange absence of supernatural beings. The curse isn't as immediate a concern as two invisible, warring embodiments of sin in the city, especially if the characters don't have a strong connection to their respective supernatural societies. Beyond that, however, the story works as presented as a one-shot.

# Fallen is Babylon Across the World of Darkness

This story is designed to be used for any kind of characters that the Storyteller wishes to include. The assumptions that **Fallen is Babylon** makes are:

- The story takes place in a large American city, with a population of between 250,000 and half a million. Examples include: Cleveland, Ohio; Albuquerque, New Mexico; Kansas City, Missouri; Tampa, Florida and Portland, Oregon.
- No members of the character's "race" of supernatural beings currently reside there. That is, if the Storyteller plans to run **Fallen is Babylon** as a **Mage: The Awakening** story, no mages live in the city, no Consilium exists and mages outside the city have probably heard rumors that "no one over in Cleveland ever Awakens."
- The city did *at one time* have a population of such beings, but they vanished or left the city in the earliest part of the 20th century, and were all gone by 1910.
- The curse doesn't actually prevent members of a given supernatural race from entering the city; it merely prevents new ones from being created, and presents as a subtle driving force that urges them out if they do visit. If this doesn't work for you, you might consider having the race be represented, but only by a very small number of members. For instance, instead of a full freehold, maybe the city only boasts a single motley of changelings.
- The city has a large, urban university and a nearby Episcopal church.
- Other cities in the area *do* have supernatural populations, and the characters probably hail from one of these cities. The characters may or may not be sent to the story's city to investigate the lack of their kind.

Below are some brief notes about running **Fallen is Babylon** using one of the existing World of Darkness games.

## Vampire: The Requiem

In a **Vampire** game, the city does not accept new Embraces. Anyone Embraced in the city dies rather than rising as a vampire. The last Prince of the city perished in 1908 (when the church was erected and the demon imprisoned), and no new Kindred have taken up residence since. The curse manifests as a growing sense of unease and inability to control the Beast; all rolls to resist frenzy suffer a cumulative -1 penalty for every full month that a vampire remains in the city.

Note, by the way, that running **Fallen is Babylon** as a **Vampire** story changes the themes in a subtle but important way. Breaking the curse would allow vampires to kill and Embrace citizens once again, and would end this

city's status as a place devoid of the ravenous undead. A coterie that breaks the curse might well be morally responsible for the actions of any vampire that comes to take up residence here — a heavy burden indeed.

## Werewolf: The Forsaken

In a **Werewolf** game, no First Changes occur within city limits. Packs of werewolves pass through the city occasionally, but loci yield minimal Essence (any attempt gain Essence from a locus receives a -5 modifier), and spirits ignore werewolves as though they have better things to do. The spirit wilds don't look demonic or contaminated, just somewhat bland. As such, Uratha don't stay around very long.

No werewolf packs have claimed territory in the city since 1908, but the markings and signs that they made at the time might be found in the scene "History Lessons." Likewise, it might be possible, at the Storyteller's discretion, to find an old and powerful spirit that remembers the last resident pack — maybe it was even the pack's totem, and could shed some light on how the demon was imprisoned in the church.

Lunes can explain the truth of the matter, as far as they know it. They refer to the curse as "the Pall," and state that Luna cannot see the city and therefore cannot choose those within it to become werewolves. They do not know *why* this has happened, and neither do most other spirits.


## Mage: The Awakening

Sleepers do not Awaken within the city, if you are using **Fallen is Babylon** as a **Mage** story. Mages gradually lose their heightened perceptions over time in the city. For every full month that an Awakened character spends here, apply a -1 modifier to any Mage Sight or Unseen Sense roll. Given enough time, visiting mages decide that the city simply has nothing to offer them and move on.

The Consilium that once existed here, however, left behind notes, records and perhaps even Artifacts. When the characters go looking for data about their people's past (again, see "History Lessons"), you might consider having the characters discover a treasure trove of information dating back to the turn of the 20th century, all magically protected against decay. The most recent data should refer to the demonic imprisonment (probably in oblique terms, since the mages of the time didn't know what was happening) and to the gradual "magical death" of the city (actually the simple inability to perceive magic).

## Promethean: The Created

The Created lack a social framework, and so finding that a city contains no Prometheans probably isn't much of a shock. Instead, to make this story work as a **Promethean** game, the demon's presence interferes with the



Pilgrimage itself. When a character is about to achieve a minor milestone or otherwise game Vitriol, she feels it welling up inside her... and then slipping away as though something was siphoning it off. Prometheans cannot gain Vitriol in this city as long as Ai'tahe is imprisoned. If the characters manage to send Ai'tahe back to Hell, any Vitriol they would have gained comes flooding back in a near-orgasmic rush of knowledge and fulfillment.

## Changeling: The Lost


The Others do abduct people from this city – even Ai'tahe isn't powerful enough to prevent that. But escapees from Arcadia don't find their way here. Memories that should lead people to this city simply lead them around in a circle in the Hedge, usually resulting in their being captured once more, unless they can find new memories to guide them.

This in itself wouldn't stop changelings from coming to the city and forming a freehold, but the secondary effect of the curse is that the Hedge is almost impossible to navigate. The roll to find a gateway out of the Hedge (usually Intelligence + Investigation + Wyrd) is simply the changeling's Wyrd, meaning that weaker changelings have almost no chance of discovering an exit – unless they leave the city. An old Hollow situated in the Hedge near the center of the city and completely overgrown with briars tells the sad story of a motley that tried to flee the area only to be hounded by hobgoblins and monsters, starved, frozen... and chased right back to where they started. If the characters dig deep enough into this Hollow, they might discover the bones of these unfortunate changelings.

## The World of Darkness & Hunter: The Vigil

The player characters might be non-supernatural mortals, investigating the occult or drawn into the events of this story by coincidence or forces outside their comprehension. Such characters might be created using just the **World of Darkness Rulebook** (possibly in conjunction with such sourcebooks as **Second Sight** or **Asylum**) or **Hunter: The Vigil**. This section applies to both sorts of characters, with the note that mortal characters don't necessarily have to be driven to find and destroy (or at least curtail) the supernatural in order to participate in **Fallen is Babylon**. The characters might all be professors or other academics at the university, and respond to Eric Rasoletti's call for help that way. Or Ai'tahe might entice all of them to become involved somehow – maybe they all attend services at Trinity Cathedral.

Hunters do sometimes belong to established groups, but they are still human, and therefore the curse doesn't affect them directly. It's more likely that hunters might look into why another type of supernatural being is excluded – maybe a captured vampire tells them a rumor about a city where the undead fear to tread. In this instance, the cell might look to replicate the effect when they find out that they only reason the city is without a



particular supernatural influence is because a powerful demon makes it so. Should they still banish the demon, even though the result might be worse in the long run? Do they think that they could set up operations here and prevent the supernatural from taking root?

One group of hunters requires a special consideration, however: The Lucifuge. Since these hunters are supposedly the descendants of Satan, they have a better chance of detecting (and falling prey to) demonic influence. Lucifuge characters all suffer nightmares from the very first night they spend in the city, nightmares in which they are being dragged downwards, screaming, by flaming chains. If the characters contact their superiors about these dreams, they are told that although other visiting members have reported this effect, the organization has no record of ever investigating the city (and they just volunteered).

## Geist: The Sin-Eaters

People die in the city, but they do not merge with geists. Under the curse, while geists can briefly escape the Underworld, they can't join with human hosts because they slip back into the Great Below too quickly. The Underworld has a strange gravity to it in this city, drawing all dead things down toward it, and this prevents people from making the Bargain.

It also prevents Sin-Eaters from coming back to life in the city. This isn't something that you should make the players discover the hard way, of course; their geists should warn them, or else they should see information on the Twilight Network. As motivation, the Network also mentions that anyone who finds the truth as to why this happens and stops it will be handsomely rewarded.

If characters enter the Underworld in the city, they might find someone who was present when the demon was imprisoned – a century-old Sin-Eater or geist, for instance – and can give them at least some information about what's going on. Ghosts, likewise, might be able to help the characters.

## Crossover

If you were running this story as a **Vampire: The Requiem** game, what's to say that the characters might not run across a pack of werewolves? If you are savvy with multiple game lines and wish to stipulate that the curse affects one "race" but not the others, **Fallen is Babylon** could make a fine crossover story. Maybe a lone mage meets up with a coterie of curious vampires and they go searching for the truth behind the lack of Awakened in the city. Maybe a motley of changelings decides it needs a guide to the city, but since their kind seem to be absent, they befriend (or bribe) a local Sin-Eater instead. The only major obstacle to running this kind of crossover story is that it requires multiple books and some rules-juggling, but if your troupe can handle that, the themes of **Fallen is Babylon** stand on their own



regardless of what kinds of character sheets the protagonists use.

## Supernatural Tolerance

Some of the systems in this story refer to “Supernatural Tolerance.” This is the trait that measures the strength of a character’s otherworldly knowledge, energy or potency, and though it goes by different titles in the various games (and means different things), the trait is often added to contested resistance rolls. A character’s Supernatural Tolerance trait is Blood Potency, Primal Urge, Gnosis, Azoth, Wyrd or Psyche.

## Backstory and Set-up

Before we get into the story proper, some backstory and introduction to the characters is probably helpful. The Storyteller should pay close attention to the events preceding **Fallen is Babylon**, both because it will help him work this story into an existing chronicle (if necessary) and because the players will likely think of avenues of approach not covered by the following scenes. If the Storyteller knows what came before and what the principal characters’ motivations are, he will be much better able to roll with the punches.

## Backstory

The foundation for **Fallen is Babylon** was laid in 1908, when Trinity Cathedral was built in what would become the downtown area of the city. Trinity Cathedral, formally Holy Trinity Episcopalian Cathedral, included an uncommon feature for churches of the

time. The outside walls had small tunnels, leading from the roof down to the ground. These tunnels, visible even today from the outside of the church, are rectangular, sixteen inches by nine inches. Officially, they were carved as a gutter system for the church, but the head mason, the architect and the first rector of the church knew the truth. The “gutters,” and in fact the entire building, were the prison of a powerful demon.

## The Summons

The church has records of who summoned the demon known as Ai’tahe and why, but those archives haven’t seen the light of day in close to a century (the characters might discover them in “A Blessing from Father Stepp,” however). Ai’tahe is a demon of Pride, and more specifically the Pride of Those Who Challenge God. The demon reveled in the hubris and power of supernatural beings, and Ai’tahe answered a summons from the same kinds of supernatural beings as the troupe’s characters. This is why it is important for the characters to have some kind of remnant of their culture to find in the city; those were the last of their people to dwell here before the demon laid its curse.

The group that summoned up the demon did so in an attempt to fulfill some comparatively pedestrian goal. One coterie of vampires might have wished to destroy another. A pack of werewolves might have attempted to make Ai’tahe its totem. A cabal of mages wanted to create new Hallows across the city, and so on. But the summons wasn’t executed properly, and Ai’tahe was set free. Fortunately, as a Dominion, it had limited power in the earthly realm, and realizing this limitation, it set about trying to bargain with those that summoned it.

At this point, someone stepped in and convinced the demon to “possess” the church. The demon did so, enjoying the notion of corrupting the building from the foundation up, but it had been tricked — the grates over the gutters formed a seal that trapped it within the walls. And there it has remained since 1908, waiting for someone to enter into negotiations once again and free it, or at least give it the power to go back to Hell.

So who brokered that first deal? The Storyteller needs to make that decision based on the needs of the chronicle. Representatives of the Episcopal Church might have done it, which opens the way for a story involving the Church as handing down knowledge of such matters for decades (good for **Hunter: The Vigil** or **Vampire: The Requiem** in particular). A mysterious stranger might have accepted a bribe from the church in order to trap the demon; **Mage: The Awakening** or **Changeling: The Dreaming** lend themselves to this sort of interpretation. Werewolves don’t usually truck with demons, but demons are subject to many of the same metaphysical laws as spirits, so it’s possible that a pack performed a powerful and forbidden rite to seal Ai’tahe away. Or maybe the beings that summoned the demon real-

ized their mistake and tried to put things right — this kind of self-reliance and responsibility goes well with **Promethean: The Created** and **Geist: The Sin-Eaters**. If you are running **Fallen is Babylon** as a **World of Darkness** story with mortal protagonists, then any of these options might work, or you might simply frame the story in an evocative way with no heed for what game system might be used to emulate it.

As part of the negotiations, though, Ai'tahe laid a curse upon the supernatural beings of the city. The particulars of this curse, as discussed, depend on the supernatural beings that summoned it, but the curse has remained in place ever since.

## Set-up

Jumping forward to the present day, a young would-be academic named Eric Rasoletti calls up a demon of Sloth called Hush. It makes a pact with him, but makes the deal too quickly — it doesn't command Rasoletti to give it a secret name and thus make it available for summons by other demonologists. It anchors itself to Rasoletti's apartment (though through the terms of their pact, it can affect him at a distance) and waits there, hoping to find a way to influence Rasoletti to give it what wants. As a demon of inertia, though, its efforts on that front are almost nil.

Rasoletti himself isn't happy with the arrangement, and schemes to find a way out. He eventually hits on the more-powerful demon at the church, and reasons that if he can call up *that* demon from its slumber, one can destroy the other and Rasoletti will be left free of any demonic taint. Hush, naturally, isn't keen to see this happen, but it also can't kill Rasoletti without losing its own link to the mortal world. And so a strange game of cat and mouse began — Rasoletti would try to get to the church, but Hush would intensify its hold on him, putting him to sleep or making him simply not care. Finally, Rasoletti decided to do something drastic.

Knowing that his annual talk on the Satanic Panic draws a crowd of strange individuals, Rasoletti added a new twist this year — a discussion about real demon-summoning. He plans to speak in Dragon's Tongue, the language of demons, and hope that one of the people in the crowd can recognize it. He knows that Hush won't let him say much, but he has taken precautions. Anyone who puts forth the effort that he cannot will find out the truth. Rasoletti is taking a large gamble, of course — the person that learns the truth might want to kill him as a demonolater. But he truly feels that his only choice is to rot here, and he doesn't want to do that anymore.

## Involving the Characters

Aside from curiosity to investigate once Rasoletti collapses, the characters need a good reason to be at the lecture hall and in the city in the first place. Some suggestions include:

- One or more of the characters might attend classes at the university and come to the lecture for class credit, or just out of curiosity.
- The characters might be present in some professional capacity. Police and EMTs are on hand in case the protests turn ugly, or the characters might be reporters for local news, campus papers or underground media.
- Rasoletti might know the characters by reputation, if they are well known among occult circles, and have invited them. If he knows that they have a direct connection to the supernatural, he makes eye contact with one of them just before collapsing.
- If the players are creating characters specifically for **Fallen is Babylon**, you might consider requiring one of them to take the Dragon's Tongue Merit (p. 8). In fact, *all* of the characters might have it, and this might be what unites them at the lecture — they are the only ones who understand what Rasoletti says before falling over.
- The characters might be investigating why the city doesn't contain any of their particular "race." The lecture might be revealed as a place to start by a Contact, by research (especially if demons come up in the research, which is appropriate) or by a power that allows glimpses of the future.
- The characters might simply be in the area of the lecture hall (across the street from Trinity Cathedral) and be drawn in by the protests. Vampires might wish to hunt amongst the angry, sign-bearing folks; changelings could revel in the strong emotions present. Other types of characters might just be curious.

At least one of the characters needs to be in the lecture hall for Rasoletti's speech, so that she can hear him speak in Dragon's Tongue and witness his collapse. Depending on the nature of your players' characters, you'll need to decide if one is enough.

## New Elements


A brief discussion on the nature of demons in the **World of Darkness** is necessary to fully make use of **Fallen is Babylon**. Some of the material below is reprinted from **World of Darkness: Inferno**.

## What Are Demons?

Demons are otherworldly beings that resemble spirits or ghosts in many ways. In fact, it is possible for spirits (the same sort found in the **Shadow** and that werewolves and some mages often interact with) or ghosts (as described in the **World of Darkness Rulebook**) to become demons. The transition between "spirit/ghost" and "demon" is a blurry one — it's possible for a conceptual spirit to focus on a Vice-like concept or for a ghost to be evil, and yet neither might actually be a demon.

So where does the break occur? It's not so easily defined. Once a spirit





or ghost becomes a demon, though, there's no going back. The demon is a creature of Vice, and it focuses on promoting that Vice to the exclusion of all other activities, so as to increase its own Infernal Rank.

Demons fall into three classes: Whisperers, Diaboli and Dominions.

**Whisperers** are the weakest demons in terms of influencing this world. Even if one of them is a prince in the Infernal hierarchy, it can extend only the weakest tendril of its essence into the world. Perhaps Whisperers don't come from Hell at all but dwell in some blackened part of the soul. A Whisperer's weakness also makes it a subtle creature. There are no shimmering pentagrams or goutts of Hellfire to find – only a feeling, some soft words and ill coincidences.

Every Whisperer is connected to a particular victim. Most targets are normal humans, but a supernatural template provides no special protection. A vampire or changeling is just as susceptible as an ordinary person.

Neither of the demons that play major roles in **Fallen is Babylon** are Whisperers.

**Diaboli** were once "normal" spirits or ghosts, until a demon (a Whisperer, usually) corrupted them, devoured them and twisted their nature into Hell's service, or so most demonologists believe. They are not much more powerful than the standard versions of such beings. Demonic ghosts (called Larvals) or spirits (called Immundi) have the same Numina and Influences as their non-Hell-born cousins. They are also bound by the same restrictions and weaknesses that other such beings are. That is, Larvals must still stay close to their anchors, and Immundi still have bans. Hush is a Diabolus of the Immundus type.

Diaboli can be summoned in the same ways as other ghosts and spirits; in fact, Rasoletti summoned Hush not through his demonic ritual but through sheer laziness.

While occultists may debate as to whether Whisperers and Diaboli are "true demons," no doubt exists as to the **Dominions**. They are straightforward manifestations of the Infernal – or as straightforward as you can expect from an order of master deceivers. They are the horned things that appear in pentagrams, the razor-toothed frog-things that act as black magicians' familiars and the Dukes, Presidents and Ministers of hundreds of occult concordances.

A Dominion's greatest strength is its greatest weakness. It has earned a secret name and a place in demonology's lore. All Dominions can be summoned and bound by skilled occultists. This is no comfort, however, because few people summon demons for a truly good cause, and even fewer are wise and trained well enough in the dark arts to control what they call. Dominions may rage against a clever summoner, but for the most part an occultist's efforts are opportunity. Even demons hate Hell; the realms above are where



real power lies. Hell is already corrupt; Dominions can't thrive there any more than a mortal could if he was forced to eat his own waste to survive.

Every Dominion is known to the worlds beyond Hell. Someone has written a Testament to its existence or a set of rituals for summoning it. Someone has heard its secret name in his head and wept, knowing he gave it a foothold in the world. Ai'tahe is an extremely powerful Dominion.

## Systems

All demons have the following powers:

**Aura of Corruption:** Demons leave their mark on everything they touch. It's impossible to predict the general effects of a demon's attentions, but in many cases they remain long after it's either left or been banished. The exact effect depends upon the circumstances behind the demon's presence and its favored sins. In game terms, this puts the effects of corruption at the Storyteller's discretion. Hush's Aura of Corruption is described in "The Desecrated Apartment" and "Freeing Rasoletti." Ai'tahe's Aura of Corruption doesn't figure into the mechanics of the story directly; it is prevented from bringing its full power to bear.

**The Dragon's Tongue:** Demons understand all languages, including ancient, dead tongues and languages that are used in supernatural societies. Additionally, demons "speak" their own language. It sounds like tortured glossolalia and cannot be translated or decoded. Strangely enough, it can be taught.

**Soul of Sin:** Within their own Vices, demons understand sin to a degree no other being can fathom. When a target shares one of its Vices (see "Traits," below), the demon immediately knows about every occasion upon which she's indulged it, even when she has forgotten some or all of them. For instance, if Hush interacts with a character whose Vice is Sloth, the demon immediately knows about all instances in the past when the character has indulged that Vice.

**Lord of Lies:** No supernatural power can detect a demon's lies, half-truths or other deceptions, even when the power does not depend upon reading the demon's "mind." For example, powers that search for falsehood according to the threads of destiny (such as Awakened Fate spells) are useless. Anyone using such a power sees whatever the demon wants him to see. Some rituals and powers can command a demon to speak the truth, but their users have no way of knowing whether these are effective. The demon might resist the use of such a power and, playing the part of a cowed, defeated spirit, spout a torrent of lies in a grudging, pained voice.

**Keeper of Secrets:** No supernatural power can penetrate a demon's thoughts. (Perhaps this is for the best.) There are rites and powers capable of commanding a demon to reveal information, but without them, characters are limited to their natural guile and the demon's discretion. Powers

can sense the presence of demons, but can never peer inside their thoughts and motives.

### Traits

As spirits, Diaboli and Dominions have the Attributes listed for ghosts on p. 208 of the **World of Darkness Rulebook**, with the following adjustments:

- Demons do not have a Virtue or Vice, but a Malapraxis. A Malapraxis includes a Vice and a Key, but demons cannot regain Willpower by satisfying it. Instead, they regain Willpower when someone *else* indulges it. The Malapraxis' Key is an additional condition that mandates how the Vice is expressed. It can be a social situation, a type of object – almost anything a sinner could use or experience when he acts upon the Vice. Hush's Malapraxis is Sloth through Inertia, laziness expressed by not changing in response to the outside world.

- Demons do not have a Morality score because they are utterly immoral.
- Demons possess an Infernal Rank that governs their total power and supernatural influence upon the world.

Otherwise, demons use the simplified Power/Finesse/Resistance spread and any derived Traits, including Corpus and Essence, using the same rules. Reducing a demon's Corpus to 0 sends it back to Hell. It cannot return unless it is summoned, or worms its way into the world once more through a worldly being's sins.

### New Merit: Dragon's Tongue (• or ••)

**Effect:** Demons have their own tongue, known colloquially as the Dragon's Tongue. What are the origins of this strange language? Why is it for some a series of hisses and clicks, while for others it is a mad susurrations of guttural noises? Frankly, few know; some suggest it is a remnant language cobbled together from the pre-Babel language of angels, of God, and of Adam and Eve. Others say it's more a conceptual meta-language, a tongue that is as much meaning as it is sound. All demons know it, and those characters who purchase this Merit at one dot find that their minds do understand it and they can shape the words. Those who purchase this at two dots find that they can communicate fluently with all demons: they gain +1 to Social rolls with demons.

Dragon's Tongue can be acquired at any point in a character's life. Some characters have it from birth, while others gain this dubious blessing later, perhaps as the result of a curse or a failed summoning ritual. Dragon's Tongue can be purchased as part of a demonic pact, though the demon granting it generally works in a clause that prohibits the character from using the knowledge to control or take advantage of that particular demon.

Any character, including characters with supernatural templates, can purchase this Merit.



# The Cast

## Dr. Eric Rasoletti. Indebted Professor

**Quotes:** *“Have your papers on my desk by the 13th. Or the 16th, if you want to take the weekend. Or by the end of term, at least.”*

*“Can’t make the conference, I’m afraid. Schedule conflict.”*

*“Tenure? Oh, it’s all right. Not as great as you’d think.”*

**Virtue:** Charity. Rasoletti is a giving man, though the reason he can afford to be giving is that he can’t actually change his fortunes, even by giving away everything he owns. He makes gifts of money and possessions in the same way someone about to commit suicide would.

**Vice:** Sloth. Rasoletti was just lazy at one point, not wanting to do the work of politicking, writing and re-writing papers, and defending his dissertation. Now, the influence of Hush has made him barely able to wake up long enough to teach his classes.

**Background:** Dr. Eric Rasoletti was born in 1974, in the same city he now lives in. During the 1980s, he watched the Satanic Panic with great interest, wondering how on Earth people were fooled into believing in a nationwide cult of baby-killing Devil-worshippers. He became something of an expert on the subject by the time he graduated from high school, reading the papers published in psychological journals and the many books on the topic. He even arranged to interview one of the purported survivors of a “rape camp” for a course he took as a freshman, majoring in Sociology.

Rasoletti wasn’t an exceptional student, but he mastered the world of academic bureaucracy almost immediately. He learned which courses would be easy As, which ones he could sleep through and which professors were susceptible to excuses or requests for extra credit (for which he used papers he’d written years earlier). He graduated with a Bachelors of Arts degree, and immediately enrolled in graduate school. He kept gaming the system right up until he was on the verge of receiving his Ph.D., when he realized that he would have to stand in front of a panel of professors and explain his dissertation – which he had no interest in actually writing.



Over the years, though, Rasoletti had done some work in spite of himself. One of the things he’d learned was that demonology as a field of study was quite real, and people existed who really did believe in demons. He researched demon summoning, reasoning that even if it turned out to be a hoax, he’d have good material for his dissertation. Somewhere in his soul, though, he knew that demons *did* exist. The night before his dissertation was due, Eric Rasoletti made contact with a demon.

He bargained with the demon successfully. He wanted to be wise and incisive of mind, and this was granted (boosting his Intelligence and Academics traits to 5). He wanted tenure and a permanent job at the university as a professor, and this was granted (meaning he gained the Status Merit). Finally, he wanted to speak and read all the languages of world, and this, too, came to pass.

Of course, demons never do anything out of the goodness of their hearts. This demon demanded four sacrifices from Rasoletti. First, the demon demanded Rasoletti’s resting form – it could force Rasoletti to fall into a deep and immediate sleep at any time. Second, it wanted Rasoletti to dedicate 10 minutes out of every hour to it. Rasoletti simply zones out occasionally, and cannot take part in conversation or do anything requiring more than the most basic cognitive functions (Rasoletti did have the presence of mind to insist that the demon not use either of the sacrifices when it might endanger him). Third, Rasoletti agreed never to quit his job or even leave the city. Finally, he had to agree to commit a murder in the demon’s name.

Rasoletti balked at the last sacrifice, but ultimately agreed to kill someone who had a chance to save himself. He bought a bottle of wine and mixed in a strong but foul-tasting poison, and left it on the corner near the church. A homeless man picked it up and drank it, noticing the unpleasant flavor but choking it down anyway. He was dead in minutes, and the demon sealed the pact with Rasoletti.

**Description:** Eric Rasoletti is in his early 40s. He has thinning red hair and wears a short beard, and sports wire-rimmed glasses a few years out of fashion. He wears jeans and sport coats to class, takes notes for himself with a miniature tape recorder, and has a laconic and easy manner. It seems that he has achieved a kind of Zen, managing to remain unconcerned about any unpleasantness in his life. In truth, he just doesn’t usually have the energy to care much.

**Storytelling Hints:** Dr. Rasoletti is thoroughly miserable and completely degraded. He despises himself for what he did – not so much the murder, because he feels the man he killed didn’t have much to live for anyway, but for having cheated to get where he is. He also hates himself for cheating and still losing so spectacularly. He’s had to turn down opportunities to lecture all over the world because he can’t leave his city, thanks to his agreement

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The Cast



# Father Ewan Stepp, Guardian Priest

**Quotes:** "Soup kitchen's open, guys. Two blocks up. God bless."

"I'd be happy to speak with your daughter, ma'am. No, not here – too formal. Maybe we could all sit down together at the café down the street?"

"Tell me more about what you saw. I promise, I won't laugh."

**Virtue:** Faith. Father Stepp fervently believes that God is the greatest good, and that those who do His work have nothing to fear from the shadows. He believes that because the alternative is madness and doubt, and he has seen too many of his fellow priests take that road.

**Vice:** Wrath. Father Stepp is aware that monsters exist, and it fills him with an anger that he knows is not righteous. He hates that the unclean creatures of Hell are permitted to kill and infect at will, and he hates even more than he is impotent to do anything significant about it.

**Background:** Father Ewan Stepp joined the Army right out of high school, seeking to follow in his father's footsteps and defend his country. He found, however, that he wasn't doing much "defending" of anything other than the rest of his unit – acceptable, but hardly what he'd joined to do. Consulting with the Army chaplain, he confessed how he was feeling – that he was a thug, a paid killer and little more, and the chaplain told him that God needed men with his spirit. Stepp agreed, and after fulfilling his tour of duty, he entered the priesthood.

Ewan Stepp is the rector of Holy Trinity now, but he didn't get the position because he gives a great sermon or for his political acumen. Truth be told, his brusque, no-nonsense approach doesn't make him friends easily. He got the job because this particular church has its secrets, and the diocese needed a man they could trust not to break. When he was given the position, Stepp immediately asked his superiors why. When they revealed the demon imprisoned in the church's walls, he breathed a sigh of relief. God *did* need men like him, after all.

Since then, Stepp has delivered sermons (usually written for him by more eloquent men, though he's improving his abilities in that regard) and helped to straighten out members of his congregation with addictions, pregnancies, abusive households and other troubling issues. He also keeps a sharp eye out for supernatu-



Name: Father Ewan Stepp

Virtue: Faith

Faction:

Concept: Guardian Priest

Vice: Wrath

Group Name:

Intelligence ●●○○○	Strength ●●○○○	Presence ●●○○○
Wits ●●○○○	Dexterity ●●○○○	Manipulation ●●○○○
Resolve ●●○○○	Stamina ●●○○○	Composure ●●○○○

### Skills

Academics (Religion) ●●○○○
Computer ●○○○○
Crafts ●●○○○
Investigation ●●○○○
Occult (Demons) ●●○○○
Politics (Church) ●○○○○
Athletics ●●○○○
Brawl ●●○○○
Firearms ●●○○○
Stealth ●○○○○
Weaponry ●○○○○
Empathy ●●○○○
Expression (Sermons) ●○○○○
Intimidation ●●○○○
Streetwise ●○○○○
Subterfuge ●●○○○
_____ ●○○○○
_____ ●○○○○
_____ ●○○○○
_____ ●○○○○

### Merits

Iron Stamina ●●○○○
Status (Church) ●●○○○
Unseen Sense ●●○○○
_____ ●○○○○
_____ ●○○○○
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### Health

●●●●●●●●○○○
□□□□□□□□□□

### Willpower

●●●●●●●○○○
□□□□□□□□



### Flaws

Morality _____ 8
Size _____ 5
Speed _____ 10
Defense _____ 2
Initiative Mod _____ 5
Armor _____ None

### Notes

Father Stepp's Unseen Sense is specialized toward whatever kinds of characters the players portray.

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ral activity. He knows that demons have followers, and that they might someday come to free the creature from the walls of the church. On that day, Father Stepp is prepared to give up his life to keep that from happening.

**Description:** Now in his early 40s, Father Stepp is tall, muscular and imposing. He wears his graying hair cropped close, and keeps his glasses in his breast pocket, only wearing them to read or watch television. His voice is deep and gentle, but he talks quickly and makes his points succinctly. Father Stepp doesn't drink or smoke, but he is fond of good coffee, and the scent of espresso often precedes him.

**Storytelling Hints:** Stepp believes in the supernatural whole-heartedly, though he doesn't have much practical experience with it. He reads church documents that describe encounters with vampires, werewolves and other monsters and wonders what those people *really* saw – demons? Madmen? Or did they accurately and faithfully record their experiences? In either case, Father Stepp watches everything that happens around his church with jaded and discerning eye. He is under no circumstances willing to let the demon be freed, but he might be open to the possibility that a supernatural being might have a non-demonic origin. Even if he decides a given supernatural creature is evil or Satanic, he knows that the servants of Lucifer often war amongst themselves, and might be inclined to help one against the other.

**Notes:** Father Stepp's Unseen Sense should be specialized toward whatever kinds of characters the players portray. In a **Changeling** game, for instance, he should have Unseen Sense (Fae).

## Hush, Demon of Sloth

**Quotes:** “Why not sleep on it?”

“No need to do anything right now.”

“Don't worry. I'm not going anywhere.”

**Malapraxix:** Like all demons, Hush does not have a Virtue or Vice, but a Malapraxix. Malapraxes are tuned to a Vice and a Key. In Hush's case, the Vice is Sloth and the Key is Inertia. Hush is a demon of getting stuck, of becoming so mired in a routine, comfortable situation that one never moves forward.

**Background:** Hush was once a spirit of silence (and it retains its disdain for sound even now). It passed up opportunities to consume other such spirits for their power, as it reasoned that expending the effort would ultimately be too much work. A spirit of silence, after all, is nothing but the absence of noise, and absence is a passive notion. How could it be silence if it went around chasing other spirits? That would make it a spirit of *quiet*, and that just wasn't acceptable.

Over time, Hush stagnated and solidified. It accepted the power of Hell into it, becoming an Immundus rather than just a spirit. It remained in one place until that tiny pocket of silence cracked open and noise and light spilled in. Eric Rasoletti had called it up, using notes meant to summon a more powerful demon of Sloth (which had, characteristically, fobbed the duty off on a lesser creature). Hush used its powers to grant Rasoletti what it wanted, but in its hurry to see Rasoletti's pact to completion, it neglected to ask him to grant it a secret name. Now it is stuck, just as Rasoletti is stuck, languishing as an Immundus when it could be a Dominion.

**Description:** Hush rarely appears, but when it does, it resembles a two-foot brown and black slug. The markings on its back resemble Eric Rasoletti's face, if the light hits them right. Hush leaves a trail of slime wherever it goes, and it emits a cloying, sweet odor. Hush does not speak – it is, in fact, incapable of making a sound. It communicates telepathically when necessary.

**Storytelling Hints:** Hush is a demon of inertia, and as such prefers to avoid movement, change and any sort of effort. This unfortunately makes advancement in Infernal Rank difficult, and since



Hush didn't bother to have Rasoletti give it a secret name when he summoned it, Hush has been stuck at its present level of power for years (much like Rasoletti himself). In another spirit, this might be cause for frustration, but Hush doesn't get worked up about it. In fact, the only thing that elicits any sort of anger from the demon is betrayal from its thrall.



### DARK NUMINA

As a demon, Hush exhibits some powers different from the ones found listed for ghosts in the **World of Darkness Rulebook**. Some of them have already been described in the section on demons, above. The rest are detailed here.

- **Aura of Corruption:** Hush can sap energy from anyone in its immediate area, or in the area of Rasoletti. The systems for this power are given in "The Desecrated Apartment" and "Freeing Rasoletti."

- **Babel:** The demon can make it impossible for its target to speak coherently. Spend one Essence and roll Power + Finesse + Infernal Rank (8 dice) - the target's Resolve. Every success prevents the victim from speaking intelligibly for a minute. Try as she might, she simply spouts random syllables. She may communicate only in the Dragon's Tongue, as this is not affected by the Numen.

- **Create Pact:** This Numen allows Hush to make bargains with living (or unliving) beings, trading services and increased traits for sacrifices. Hush has already made a pact with Rasoletti and is too lazy to do so again, so no system for this Numen is required.



Name: Hush

Virtue: N/A

Concept: Demon of Sloth

Vice: Sloth - Inertia

Power	●●●●●	Finesse	●●●●●	Resistance	●●●●●
-------	-------	---------	-------	------------	-------

Skills	Numina	Dice Pool	Corpus
<input type="checkbox"/> _____ 00000	Aura of Corruption	_____	●●●●●●●●●●●●●●
<input type="checkbox"/> _____ 00000	Babel	_____	□□□□□□□□□□□□
<input type="checkbox"/> _____ 00000	Create Pact	_____	○○○○○○○○○○○○○○
<input type="checkbox"/> _____ 00000	Dragon's Tongue	_____	□□□□□□□□□□□□
<input type="checkbox"/> _____ 00000	Keeper of Secrets	_____	
<input type="checkbox"/> _____ 00000	Lord of Lies	_____	<b>Willpower</b>
<input type="checkbox"/> _____ 00000	Soul of Sin	_____	●●●●●●●●●●●●
<input type="checkbox"/> _____ 00000	_____	_____	□□□□□□□□□□
<input type="checkbox"/> _____ 00000	_____	_____	○○○○○○○○○○○○
<input type="checkbox"/> _____ 00000	_____	_____	□□□□□□□□□□
<input type="checkbox"/> _____ 00000	_____	_____	
<input type="checkbox"/> _____ 00000	_____	_____	<b>Essence</b>
<input type="checkbox"/> _____ 00000	_____	_____	□□□□□□□□□□
<input type="checkbox"/> _____ 00000	_____	_____	□□□□□□□□□□
<input type="checkbox"/> _____ 00000	<b>Influence</b>	_____	
<input type="checkbox"/> _____ 00000	_____	00000	Morality _____
<input type="checkbox"/> _____ 00000	_____	00000	Aspect _____
<input type="checkbox"/> _____ 00000	_____	00000	Rank _____ 3
<input type="checkbox"/> _____ 00000	_____	00000	Size _____ 2
<input type="checkbox"/> _____ 00000	_____	00000	Speed 2 (species factor -3)
<input type="checkbox"/> _____ 00000	_____	00000	Defense _____ 3
<input type="checkbox"/> _____ 00000	_____	00000	Initiative Mod _____ 5

### Notes

Max Essence: 20

# Ai'tahe, Archdemon of Pride

# Scene Flowchart

**Quotes:** "Have you come to free me?"

"Say the word, and share in my power."

"I will never forget your name or your face, infidel!"

**Malapraxis:** The Pride of Those Who Challenge God. Ai'tahe is a demon of supernatural power, and draws its strength from any being who has abilities beyond the understanding of humanity and feels even a shred of pride over it.

**Background:** Ai'tahe is an archdemon, and its past is shrouded in a thousand legends. Was it truly Ai'tahe that raised a dying Wallachian prince as one of the undead? Did this demon really direct a group of crazed, drunken women to rend asunder a heartbroken singer who had just lost the love of his life in the Underworld? Was this the creature that stood by and watched while an ancient pack of wolves slew their progenitor, Father Wolf? Ai'tahe would claim all of these and more are true... but then, it is a demon of Pride.

Archdemons are almost impossible to summon, simply because the rituals to do so are so complicated. Somehow, someone managed to summon Ai'tahe in 1908. Ai'tahe only responds to entreaties from supernatural beings, and in this instance it appeared – but was almost immediately trapped. Someone had discovered the demon's seal and locked it into place.

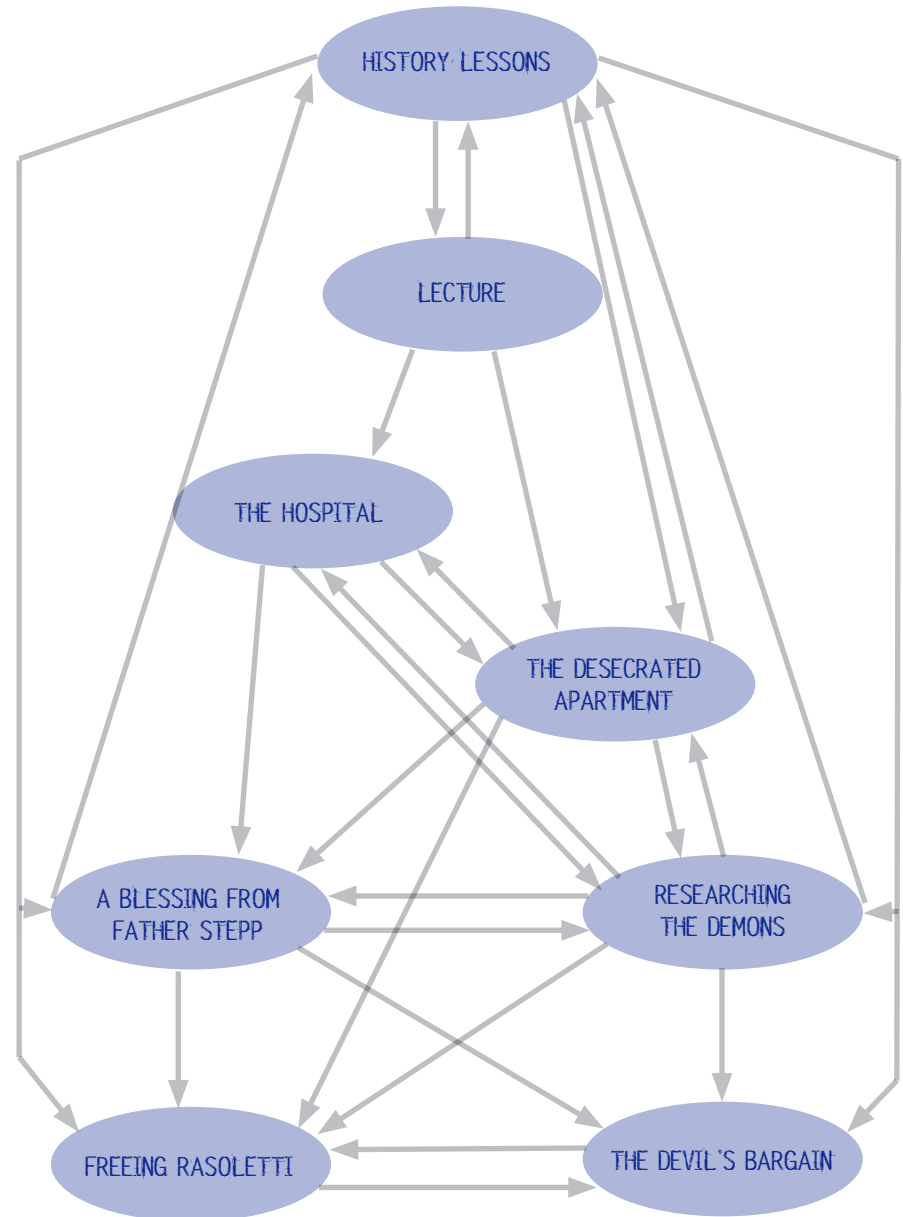
**Description:** Ai'tahe never appears in visible form, but its presence is unmistakable. For supernatural beings, Ai'tahe burrows into the seat of their magic. The otherworldly nature of such beings becomes obvious when Ai'tahe is near – a changeling's Mask falls, a mage's Nimbus becomes unclenched. "Don't hide what you are," Ai'tahe urges. "Don't cringe before the mortals!"

Characters interacting with Ai'tahe see the shadow of the cross move, stretch and grow limbs – far too many limbs for a human being. The dust in the area gives it a face, when it needs one. The scent of blood, brimstone and sweat from the hunt fill the air. To bargain with Ai'tahe is to be in the presence of pure, powerful evil. Even contained, Ai'tahe should feel like a threat.

**Storytelling Hints:** Ai'tahe seethes with rage, but as much as it would like to destroy the city and everyone who calls it home, it has had enough time to realize that even Hell is preferable to being entombed in a church. It wants to go free, but failing that, it wants to go home.

Ai'tahe is not capable of showing humility, however. It is a demon of Pride, and even trapped in a gutter it acts the part. It makes demands, but it promises godlike power in return. It claims to know the truth about whatever mysteries interest the characters. It will promise anything in exchange for its freedom, and it is capable of delivering (see "The Devil's Bargain" for more on bargaining with Ai'tahe).

As an archdemon, Ai'tahe does not possess game traits. It is too powerful to be represented by numbers. The systems necessary for dealing with Ai'tahe are presented in "The Devil's Bargain."



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# The Lecture

Mental •• Physical •• Social ••

## Overview

In this scene, the characters attend the lecture at the city's university and witness Rasoletti attempt to betray his demonic master before collapsing. The characters might be able to check his body (and his pockets) before the EMTs take him away, ending the scene.

## Description

### Outside

Protesters choke the street corners, carrying signs with various Bible verses (Deuteronomy 32:17, Psalms 106:37, Job 10:11), admonitions to reject sin and embrace Christ, and a huge banner reading "WHAT IS OUR CHILDREN LEARNING IN COLLEGE" The city police are on hand to make sure things don't get out of control, but just at present it looks like all the crowd wants to do is yell. Across the street from the university's Main Classroom building sits Trinity Cathedral. Not as large as the university's building, it still seems to dwarf anything else on the block. Spires and gargoyles loom over the protesters. A dour priest stands at the huge, oaken doors to the building. His expression makes it impossible to tell if he approves of the protests.

### Inside the lecture hall

The auditorium is huge, and the stage is bare but for one podium. No screen is in evidence, implying that tonight's speaker isn't going to bother with any sort of multimedia. Listening to the chatter around the room, you hear various points of view:

"This guy's a quack. If he's such an expert, why isn't he out doing the lecture circuit? Why hasn't he written a book?"

"It's not a hoax! My sister's little cousin was one of the kids abused up in Massachusetts."

"Real occult practices? Please. This is just another attempt by the Christian Reich to make us look like psychos."

"Just to warn you, this guy is boring as hell. I took his class last year."

### Dragon's Tongue

You can't pick out syllables, words or even individual sounds, but whatever language he is speaking, it sends chills up your back. His voice hooks into your flesh like briars, and pulls. It makes your back teeth ache and your ears ring. Yet even if you tried, you couldn't begin to reproduce it. And for that, you are thankful.

## Storyteller Goals

You have two main goals in this scene. The first is simply to establish the

area. The characters will be returning to this general locale again, when they confront or question Father Stepp and when they negotiate with Ai'tahe ("A Blessing from Father Stepp" and "The Devil's Bargain," respectively). It's important to give a description of the street corner that includes the entrance to the lecture hall and Trinity Cathedral. We recommend that the Storyteller decide on a few other businesses or landmarks in the area to help flesh out the descriptions (this depends on the geographical region in which the story is set).

The second goal is to get the characters involved with Rasoletti, and thus hooked into **Fallen is Babylon** as a whole. The characters need to realize by the end of the scene that Rasoletti collapsed because of supernatural interference. Hopefully, the characters examine Rasoletti so that they can find the note and key in his pocket. If they don't, they have the option of following him to the hospital and interacting with him there or doing some research into who he is.

This scene begins outside among the protesters. Establish the scene by allowing the characters to speak with or push past a few people with signs, and make a point of mentioning Father Stepp (but not by name) standing on the church steps, watching the protest. If the characters speak to him, he tells them that he's not necessarily opposed to people studying the occult and he's not a believer in the Satanic Panic, but he is annoyed at how cavalierly demons and the occult are treated in modern media. Remember that Father Stepp's Unseen Sense Merit might detect the characters, at which point he makes mental notes of their faces and names.

After about 20 minutes, the doors open and security guards and police start admitting people into the lecture hall. Getting in requires a ticket, purchased in advance or at a table just inside the door. Security guards flank the table and will physically restrain anyone who tries to get by without a ticket, but the tickets aren't expensive. It's also possible to sneak by (see below).

Once the characters are in the lecture hall, Rasoletti takes the stage. For as interesting a topic as this might have been, Rasoletti manages to make it boring. Due chiefly to Hush's influence, he is an extremely dull public speaker. However, the facts he presents are shocking enough by themselves to keep people awake for the first half of his presentation, which is a discussion of the Satanic Ritual Abuse hoax of the 1980s.

He gives everyone a break before the second half of the presentation, and a good percentage of the people attending leave. This frees up seats just about everywhere in the auditorium, which allows characters to sit up front, near Rasoletti, if they weren't already. Subtly encourage the players to have their characters do so — maybe they see a Contact or Ally sitting up front, or maybe they see something strange about Rasoletti through magical means.

As the second half of the lecture begins, Rasoletti says that demon worshippers are actually fairly rare. Real demonologists, he says, are people who have learned to summon demons and make demands of them. He then proceeds to read what he describes as "part of a demon-summoning ritual," whereupon he recites a few words in Dragon's Tongue. He barely gets a sentence out, however, before he collapses, falling off the stage and landing at the feet of any characters that happen to be sitting in the front row.

At this point the characters have perhaps 30 seconds before EMTs arrive (since several were already in the area). If any of the characters *are* EMTs or police officers they should be the first to respond, but any characters in the front row might take the opportunity to search Rasoletti's body. They might do this out of greed, curiosity or genuine concern, but in any event, they might find his apartment key and a handwritten note (see the prop on p. 35).

This scene ends when Rasoletti is taken out of the lecture hall on a gurney. The characters might or might not be with him.

## Character Goals

Witness the lecture and learn that Rasoletti is somehow tainted by the supernatural.

### Sneaking Into the Lecture

**Dice Pool:** Dexterity + Stealth vs. Wits + Composure (5 dice for security guard)

**Action:** Instant and contested

**Hindrances:** Character looks out of place on a college campus – too old, too young, etc. (-1); character is dressed in an extreme manner – obvious piercings, dyed hair, full nun's habit, etc. (-2); more than one character trying at once (-1 per extra character, cumulative)

**Help:** Other characters create a distraction (use Teamwork rules, p. 134 of the **World of Darkness Rulebook**); character looks like a college student (+1)

#### Roll Results

**Dramatic Failure:** The character is immediately ejected; for whatever reason, the guards see him as a security risk. If this isn't realistic (character is especially harmless-looking), he is at least asked to pay the entrance fee.

**Failure:** Character is called back to the table and asked to pay the entrance fee. Belligerent characters are sent to the end of the line, but if the character can make the case that he "just forgot" to buy a ticket, they'll take his money right away and let him in.

**Success:** The character sneaks in and enters the auditorium undetected.

**Exceptional Success:** The character sneaks in and notes Rasoletti by the side door to the auditorium. He is holding a piece of paper. He stares at it and sighs, then folds it up, kisses it, and puts it into his left hip pocket. He doesn't notice the character.

### Deciphering Dragon's Tongue

**Dice Pool:** Intelligence + Occult

**Action:** Instant

If the character has the Dragon's Tongue Merit, this roll isn't necessary. The character understands what Rasoletti said: "Help me rid this city of its curses."

**Hindrances:** Obscurity (-3; all characters suffer this modifier); characters next to the character are talking during the lecture (-1)

**Help:** Demonology Specialty in Occult (+1)

#### Roll Results

**Dramatic Failure:** The Dragon's Tongue has a profound effect on the character's sanity. Have the player roll the character's Resolve + Composure. If this roll fails, the character develops the vocalization derangement (p. 98 of the **World of Darkness Rulebook**) for the remainder of the night.

**Failure:** The character does not understand what Rasoletti says, and has no idea what language it was.

**Success:** The character does not understand what Rasoletti said, but knows that it was in no earthly language. She will recognize the phrase if she hears it again.

**Exceptional Success:** The character knows that the language was Dragon's Tongue (if the character has a Specialty in Demonology) or some other-worldly language based on evil (if not). She remembers the phrase, and believes it to be a plea for help or a warning.

### Searching Rasoletti's Body

**Dice Pool:** Dexterity + Larceny

**Action:** Extended; five successes required, and each roll requires 10 seconds of searching. The player can make three rolls before the EMTs arrive.

**Hindrances:** No allied characters nearby (-2 as the character must be wary of being seen); character can only use one hand (-3)

**Help:** Extra characters involved (can either offset the penalty above or use Teamwork); character saw Rasoletti put note in his pocket (+4)

#### Roll Results

**Dramatic Failure:** The character is caught searching the body and has to contend with police inquiry. He can probably come up with a good excuse ("I was looking for a wallet, for an emergency contact number"), but the Storyteller might require a Manipulation + Persuasion roll, especially if the character was caught sneaking in earlier.

**Failure:** No successes are added to the total. If the player fails to accumulate five successes before the EMTs arrive, he doesn't find the information.

**Success:** The player adds successes to the total. If the player reaches five successes in three rolls, the character finds the note and the key to Rasoletti's apartment in his left hip pocket.

**Exceptional Success:** No effect other than quickly finding the note and key.

### Consequences

At the end of this scene, the characters are probably watching Rasoletti being wheeled away on a gurney. Hopefully, they also have his note and his apartment key. If they follow him to the hospital in hopes of reviving him (perhaps magically), go to "The Hospital." If they decide to check out his apartment, proceed to "The Desecrated Apartment."

# The Hospital

Mental • • • Physical • Social • •

## Overview

This scene happens whenever the characters go to the hospital to visit, examine or interrogate Rasoletti. Once he is taken to the hospital, he remains there for the rest of the story, or until the characters convince him to get out.

## Description

### Immediately following the lecture

The emergency room is a scene of chaos. Patients search fruitlessly for someone to assuage fears about their loved ones. Nurses, doctors and orderlies glide around them, ignoring them, going about their own business. A stretcher disappears behind a set of swinging doors with Rasoletti lying on it, still apparently unconscious.

### After the first few hours

Rasoletti has been given a room on the cardiac intensive care floor. Signs on the walls admonish you to turn off cell phones, and nurses look at you strangely. None of them ask you whom you're here to see, however. You hear a steady stream of beeps, labored breaths, and from one room, a recitation from the Bible: "I will grant peace in the land, and you will lie down and no one will make you afraid. I will remove savage beasts from the land, and the sword will not pass through your country."

When Rasoletti collapses at the lecture, the EMTs bring him to the hospital where he is immediately put into intensive care. Once it is determined that he is in no immediate danger, they move him to neurological intensive care. The medical staff runs a sleep study and an MRI, but only discovers that he drops directly from a wakeful state to delta sleep (the deepest stage of sleep), and never enters REM sleep, meaning he does not dream.

Getting to Rasoletti can be as simple as walking purposefully to his room (see below), or as complicated as convincing a nurse that the character is a friend or family member. Intensive care wards are generally stricter about visitors than other areas of a hospital, but if you don't want to bother with the characters possibly being turned away, just assume that no one stops them.

When the characters do speak with Rasoletti, remember that he tries to avoid giving information away directly. Below is a list of information that Rasoletti attempts to impart to the characters, and a quote for how he might do it.

• Rasoletti wants the characters to go to his apartment, where they can read his notes (he doesn't mention that Hush has Desecrated the apartment, however; see "The Desecrated Apartment"). "I got a good deal on my apartment. It's over on Lakeside Drive. Have you see it? I could give you the address."

• Rasoletti would prefer that the characters believe that Hush chose him, rather than the other way around, but he does want them to know that he is demon-plagued. "Ever feel like there's something attached to you, weighing you down, keeping you where you are?"

• One important bit of information that Rasoletti wants the characters to understand is that he can't leave the city without violating the terms of his pact. He isn't sure what will happen if he does leave (he suspects Hush might stop his heart). "I wasn't born here, but I'm pretty sure I'm going to die here. This city's like a tar pit, y'know? Sucks you down. It feels impossible to leave. Every time I try, something stops me. You know, a work obligation, or a promise I made, or something."

• He doesn't try to push them toward Trinity Cathedral unless they intimate knowing about Ai'take, in which case Rasoletti tries to encourage them to negotiate with the more powerful demon to destroy Hush. "The enemy of my enemy is my friend, right? You've just got to know which enemy to back."

If Rasoletti gets too specific, Hush puts him to sleep. More specifically, Hush shuts his servant down if any of the following occur:

- Rasoletti or the characters mention Ai'take by name
- Anyone speaks Dragon's Tongue
- The characters make any mention of performing an exorcism (which won't work, as Rasoletti is not possessed)
- Any reference is made to destroying Hush (mentioned by name, or anything that indicates the demon that Rasoletti summoned)

## Storyteller Goals

This is one of several scenes in which the characters gain some insight into what is happening and why. They can speak with Rasoletti and learn a bit of his history, though he isn't entirely forthcoming with them (not because he doesn't want to be, but he knows that Hush can put him to sleep again should he say too much).

You can also use this scene to steer characters toward other avenues of research that might not have occurred to the players. For instance, if the troupe's characters are werewolves, and you've decided that the cultural artifacts for "History Lessons" are a series of weathered carvings on some stones deep in a nearby forest, Rasoletti might tell the characters to "go take a walk in the woods — start with the blue trail, but don't bother sticking to it." He can get more specific, but he should pass out just as he imparts a crucial bit of information.

## Character Goals

Learning about Rasoletti and his pact. Get some direction about what to investigate next, or form a plan for negotiating with Ai'tahe or breaking the pact with Hush, all depending on when in the story the characters play through this scene.

### MENTAL COMMUNICATION

Many supernatural beings have some way to communicate without speaking. The Mind Arcanum or the *Auspex* Discipline can initiate telepathic contact, a changeling might wish to enter Rasoletti's dreams, and so on. With direct mind-to-mind contact, a character may be able to gain information more quickly and completely than through simple conversation. Of course, Rasoletti can't hide anything from Hush, and so this method doesn't bypass the demon.

Using supernatural powers, though, should confer some results for the character. After all, the character has to use the power in an intensive care ward, under the watchful eyes of hospital staff—that's enough of a challenge to merit a payoff. Maybe the character only gets a few turns of conversation before Hush shuts Rasoletti's mind down, but that can be enough to see distinct images: his apartment, the church, or anywhere you'd like the players to go.

If you want to add an extra challenge to this tactic, perhaps the character runs the risk of getting trapped in Rasoletti's mind when Hush lowers the proverbial boom. The character might need to terminate the power before Hush puts Rasoletti to sleep — a contested roll of the character's Wits + Resolve against Hush's Power + Finesse would be one way to resolve this.

### Actions

#### Coaxing Information out of Rasoletti

**Dice Pool:** Manipulation + Persuasion – Rasoletti's Composure (2 dice)

**Action:** Instant

You can choose to resolve this action solely through role-play, but if you wish to use dice to speed things up, feel free.

**Hindrances:** Character's questions have a noticeably Christian slant (-1)

**Help:** Character is obviously erudite and educated (+1)

#### Roll Results

**Dramatic Failure:** The character says something that Hush interprets as threatening to it, and the demon immediately puts Rasoletti to sleep.

**Failure:** Rasoletti isn't sure how much to trust these people, and doesn't let anything slip. If the character keeps him talking for another 10 minutes, the player can make another roll.

**Success:** Rasoletti reveals some of the information listed above, but delivered cryptically.

**Exceptional Success:** Rasoletti and the character understand each other perfectly. Rasoletti answers the question in a way that the character fully comprehends, so give the player an accurate answer (as far as Rasoletti knows) to whatever question was asked.

### Consequences

If Hush puts Rasoletti to sleep, he remains so for eight hours. As such, this scene might be over in moments, or it could take far longer if the characters are willing to wait around for him to wake up (this could result in a character fulfilling the Virtue of Fortitude). Once the characters have the information they seek, the story could progress to any of the other scenes except "The Lecture," depending on what the players decide to do next.



# The Desecrated Apartment

Mental • • • Physical • Social •

## Overview

The characters visit Rasoletti's apartment and learn most, if not quite all, of the truth behind his pact with Hush and his interest in Trinity Cathedral.

## Description

### Outside

*The apartment building is definitely for the affluent. You've already passed a police car cruising the area, and the cars in the parking lot are high-end, running the gamut from luxury SUVs to prim little hybrids. A middle-aged couple walks out of the building and nods to you in greeting, but their attitude is obvious: "You don't live here."*

### Inside

*The apartment's interior is drab. It's not messy, exactly; it's just boring. There are no decorations to speak of, no attempt to make the place look lived-in. A trash bag stuffed with pizza boxes and the remnants of microwave dinners sits by the door, waiting to be dragged downstairs to the dumpster. The bookshelves are full, mostly with books of local history, true crime and pop-culture occultism. If Rasoletti has tomes of true demonic power, he must keep them elsewhere.*

## Storyteller Goals

This scene has two goals: To give the characters some solid information on the nature of the foes they face, and to scare the shit out of them.

When Hush appeared and agreed to the pact with Rasoletti, it bound itself to his apartment. The apartment was already Desecrated (an area can become Desecrated when an evil act is perpetrated there, and summoning a demon certainly qualifies). Unfortunately for Hush, without a secret name it cannot leave the apartment. It wields power over Rasoletti per the terms of their pact, but beyond that its scope is quite limited.

Unfortunately, Rasoletti was busy attempting to contact Ai'tahe as well, and since he's so lazy, he didn't leave his apartment to do it. Ai'tahe is therefore capable of wielding some influence here, too (this would not normally be possible for a bound demon, but Ai'tahe is beyond the scope of most such entities).

The characters can search the apartment. They find information as described below ("Searching the Apartment"). At some point during the search, Hush makes its presence known. It spreads its influence of apathy and inertia across the apartment ("Resisting Hush"). As they characters attempt to pull themselves out of these doldrums, they hear a voice in their heads.

*"Yes... rise up. Resist. You are mightier than this. You are strong, beyond mortal ken. You shall not be defeated by a slug. Force it to appear. Destroy it. Do this in my name."*

The voice they hear in their heads is Ai'tahe, and it should disturb them. Ai'tahe's voice reminds them of the moment that they became supernatural creatures, which for many such beings is unpleasant. A vampire remembers the moment she lost the last of her life's blood. A werewolf recalls the savagery and carnage of the First Change. Mages think back to the Awakening, lost in the Supernal Realms and surrounded by mystery. Changelings relive the frantic run through the Hedge, fleeing the Keeper. Sin-Eaters die again and remember the Bargain, when an ancient ghost-creature melded with them. Hunters and other mortals relive the moment that proved to them that the supernatural exists, and feel that horror and sense of helplessness all over again (which is, admittedly, quite a different sensation than other characters face). Prometheans, since they are "born" to their supernatural state, don't remember any one instance. Instead, their minds are filled with fire, lightning and pure energy — a vision of the Divine Fire.

If the characters wish to initiate a dialog with this voice, or if they focus on it, trying to follow it back, use the "Communicating with Ai'tahe" action.

## Destroying Hush

Ai'tahe admonishes the characters to destroy Hush. Is it possible?

It is, but it's not easy. The characters can force Hush to flee the apartment by lowering the Desecration of the place. How they go about doing this depends on their capabilities, and you will need to make some judgment calls about what the characters are able to do with their supernatural powers in this scenario. Some suggestions:

- Altering the apartment beyond recognition forces Hush out. The characters might accomplish this by repainting, moving all the furniture out or just setting the place on fire (this last can result in degeneration rolls, of course).
- Any supernatural power that can alter the mystical resonance of an area can reduce the Desecration level and force Hush out.
- An exorcism (p. 214 of the **World of Darkness Rulebook**) can cleanse the apartment. The exorcist's target number of successes is five. Note that only a mortal with Morality 8 or more can perform exorcisms. Father Stepp might be convinced to do it.

• Hush is capable of Materializing, but won't do so if it feels threatened. If the characters have powers that allow them to injure spirits in Twilight, they can simply inflict enough damage to Hush to reduce its Corpus to zero. This banishes Hush (see below), but leaves the apartment Desecrated.

No matter the method, Hush resists with all of its power. It is capable of using its Aura of Corruption to make anyone in the apartment sluggish and lazy, as described below. As such, sustaining the energy to banish it, through whatever method, will be difficult.

Once Hush is banished, it disappears from the apartment and reappears on Rasoletti's body, spread over his back and legs like a layer of brown slime. It can retreat inside his body, if necessary, and retains its ability to make him sleep. Actually destroying (or banishing) the demon requires breaking the pact ("Freeing Rasoletti").

## Character Goals

Learning about Rasoletti and his demonic pact. Banishing Hush.

## Actions

### Searching the Apartment

**Dice Pool:** Wits + Investigation

**Action:** Extended (10 successes; every roll requires 10 minutes of work)

This roll is a good candidate for a Teamwork action (p. 134 of the **World of Darkness Rulebook**).

**Hindrances:** Noisy neighbors (-1); power failure (-3); no one activates the computer (-5)

**Help:** Players state they are looking in specific places (+1); systematic plan of action (+2); character searching has at least one dot in Computer and mentions checking the computer files (+3)

### Roll Results

**Dramatic Failure:** A character knocks over a bookcase, which crashes to the floor. The downstairs neighbors immediately call the police, who might well arrest the characters for trespassing unless they can come up with a good cover story.

**Failure:** No successes are added to the total.

**Success:** The player adds successes to the total. Unlike most extended action, the characters gain information as they search.

Success Total	Information Gained
2	A book on local history with a picture of Trinity Cathedral bookmarked
4	A journal containing extensive notes on Satanic Panic cases. About halfway through, it switches to complaints about the tenure system and specific professors. The last page simply reads, "I did it. He died because he was too lazy and stupid to stop drinking. Now I get my reward."
6	A scan of sketch of the seal used to keep Ai'tahe imprisoned saved as a computer file.
8	Map of the city, with the site of the scene "History Lessons," Trinity Cathedral, and the apartment circle in red. The city limits (Rasoletti's prison) are marked in thick, black grease pencil, and the word FUCK! is written near the site of "History Lessons" — it is outside the area in which Rasoletti can travel.
10	A rubbing of a Latin phrase. If the characters can translate it (Stepp can; it's a rubbing from the back wall of the church), it reads "Let the vigilant never lose sight of this place, for in the House of God, the Proudful One lies entombed."

**Exceptional Success:** No result other than acquiring information more quickly.

## Resisting Hush

**Dice Pool:** Resolve + Composure + Supernatural Tolerance vs. Power + Finesse + Infernal Rank

**Action:** Instant and contested

This power is Hush's expression of its Aura of Corruption. Hush can use this power as often as it wishes, but doesn't make the effort unless a serious threat to its well-being arises.

**Hindrances:** Character has the Vice of Sloth (-2); character with the Vice of Sloth has regained Willpower from that Vice during the same day (-5); character is sitting down (-1)

**Help:** Character is standing up (+1); character's Virtue is Fortitude (+1); character is walking or otherwise active (+2)

## Roll Results

**Dramatic Failure:** The character falls into a sleep like Rasoletti's, and cannot wake up unless physically removed from the apartment.

**Failure:** The player rolls fewer successes for the character than the Storyteller does for Hush. The character sits down and cannot muster the energy to move. For the character to shake off the effects, the player must spend a Willpower point and roll Resolve + Composure until she accumulates more successes than the Storyteller did for Hush. One roll can be made per turn.

**Success:** The player rolls as many or more successes for the character as the Storyteller does for Hush. The character feels a strong desire to sit down and rest, but is under no compulsion to act on it. If the character *does* sit down and rest, she cannot get up until the player succeeds on another Resolve + Composure roll (but no Willpower expenditure is necessary).

**Exceptional Success:** The player rolls as many or more successes than the Storyteller, and rolls an exceptional success. The character feels no compulsion to sit or rest, but is aware that something tried to influence her behavior.

## Communicating with Ai'tahe

**Dice Pool:** Composure + Occult

**Action:** Instant

**Hindrances:** Character has Morality 8 or more (-1); the character is mortal (-5)

**Help:** Presence of another demon (+1); character has used a supernatural power in the last 12 hours (+2); character has Morality 5 or less (+2)

## Roll Results

**Dramatic Failure:** Ai'tahe takes offense at the character's clumsy attempt to communicate with it, and decides to teach him a lesson. The character immediately suffers three points of lethal damage. Ashes and shadows pour from his mouth and eyes, and his skin feels as though he had suffered severe frostbite.

**Failure:** The character is beneath Ai'tahe's notice, and he receives no response.

**Success:** The character gets the archdemon's attention. Ai'tahe engages in conversation with the character for one turn per success on the roll. Don't tell the player that time is short; simply respond to the character as Ai'tahe – haughty, prideful and menacing. Shadows in the room come alive as it speaks, and the character's mystical nature comes to the fore as described on p. 14.

During the conversation, Ai'tahe will reveal that Rasoletti made a pact with a minor demon, and was trying to make contact with Ai'tahe for purposes unknown (it hasn't occurred to Ai'tahe that Rasoletti wants out of

his pact, because it doesn't understand the notion of giving up supernatural power). It knows about the site of "History Lessons," and will reveal it if the character asks why no other members of his "race" are present in the city. Any other information that Ai'tahe reveals is at your discretion, but remember that the demon wants to be freed and it is quite happy to lie about its imprisonment. If it feels that telling the character that the grates on the church that imprison it are actually symbols focusing its power in preparation for a Church-led demonic summoning will compel the character to destroy those grates, that's what it says. Remember that it is impossible to tell if demons are lying.

**Exceptional Success:** Ai'tahe is impressed with the character's tenacity. It enters into conversation as above, but with the entire group. The apartment falls away into blackness, and the characters feel movement around them. They cannot see, however. They feel no sense of falling or position of any kind – the sensory deprivation is almost complete, aside from a vague feeling that they are not alone. Any of the characters can ask Ai'tahe questions, regardless of who rolled the dice, but the conversation still only lasts one turn per success.

## Consequences

After this scene, the characters probably have a better sense of what they are up against. From here, they might go to "History Lessons" to learn about their own history, to "A Blessing from Father Stepp" to speak with Father Stepp, or "Researching the Demons" to research demons further.



# Researching the Demons

Mental •—••• Physical •—••• Social •—•••

## Overview

This scene occurs whenever the characters decide to research the demons of the city or demons in general, *without* going to the hospital to talk to Rasoletti, the church or the site out of town.

## Description

- The man across the table from you fingers the money in the envelope. “OK. You haven’t bought information, sonny,” he says. “You’ve bought time. You’ve bought 10 minutes of my time. I can tell you anything you want to know, but you’ve got to ask the right questions or I can’t help you. Go.”
- It’s a carnival, a tent revival, a festival! None of the boring, antiseptic religion that you’d find in the suburbs. The people here are alive, and they dance, and they drink and they speak in tongues. But some of them are naked. Some of them are bleeding. And that altar isn’t covered in a red cloth, it’s just covered in red.
- This is the part of the library where no one ever goes. It isn’t spooky, exactly; it’s just dead. The books on the shelf don’t have titles, just faded bits of gilding where titles used to be. Every now and then a librarian or a page peeks down the stacks at you, but they aren’t sure what to ask. They’ve never been down here, either.

## Storyteller Goals

The “research” in this scene can take place in any number of ways. As the descriptions indicate, the characters might do it the old-fashioned way, hitting the books in libraries, rare bookstores, private collections and the like. They might find demon-worshippers and try to play along long enough to gain some insight, or they might contact someone who knows someone who knows someone else and arrange a meeting. The point is that the characters need to learn a little about how demons operate.

The information that the characters can discover in this scene depends very much on the questions they ask. That isn’t meant to be a dodge; it’s part and parcel to dealing with demons. Demons lie, but they prefer to lie by omission if they can, which means not answering unasked questions. The characters shouldn’t learn knowledge that they don’t seek, so structure the information they gain accordingly.

Two basic types of information might result from their investigations: Information about these particular demons, and information about demons in general. Six points of information for each type follow. They are presented as bits of information that the characters could learn or hear directly, followed by some brief explanation for the Storyteller.

## Specific Information

- *Hush is not a true demon.* **Explanation:** Hush is an Immundus, and does not have a secret name. This means that it doesn’t have the power or mobility that a Dominion such as Ai’tahe has. Whether that makes Hush any less of a “true” demon is up for debate, but from a certain perspective it’s true.
- *Hush is bound to the location in which it was summoned.* **Explanation:** This is true; Hush is bound to Rasoletti’s apartment. It’s not because Hush was summoned there, exactly, but because the Sloth-demon was too lazy to anchor itself anywhere else.
- *If Hush’s pact with Rasoletti is broken, Hush will be banished to Hell.* **Explanation:** Provided that the demon is also exorcised from the apartment, this is true.
- *Ai’tahe has been intimately involved with the supernatural through recorded history.* **Explanation:** Almost all reference to Ai’tahe mention it in the context of other supernatural beings, be they vampires, werewolves, witches, ghosts or fairies.
- *Ai’tahe is powerful.* **Explanation:** This seems simplistic, but it’s actually an important point for the players to understand. Ai’tahe is so powerful that it doesn’t have game traits. The characters cannot free the demon and survive a straight-up fight.
- *The Episcopal Church knows about Ai’tahe and has imprisoned it.* **Explanation:** This piece of data should help lead the characters to Father Stepp.

## General Information

- *Demons specialize. Each demon represents a particular sin.* **Explanation:** Knowing how to beat Hush and Ai’tahe requires knowing that they must act in accordance with their given Malapraxes.
- *Demons thrive on evil acts.* **Explanation:** Characters with low Morality might be disquieted to know that selfish and malicious actions have an effect on the spiritual makeup of the world.
- *Demons do not necessarily cooperate.* **Explanation:** The characters should learn that it is possible to play one demon off another.
- *Demons require a secret name in order to be summoned – normally.* **Explanation:** Hush was something of a special case; the ritual didn’t summon it so much as Rasoletti’s display of Sloth did. Usually, though, demons require their own particular ritual to be successfully summoned, and Hush doesn’t have one.
- *Demons have their own language, called the Dragon’s Tongue.* **Explanation:** A character might be able to learn this language, spending two or six experience points for the one- or two-dot version of the Merit, respectively. This allows the character to better deal with Ai’tahe, but it might have consequences down the line, at the Storyteller’s discretion.
- *Ghosts and spirits can become demons, and some distinction exists between such a demon and a simply evil ghost or spirit.* **Explanation:** As mentioned previously, for a spirit or ghost to become a demon it has to become devoted to sin and Vice.

Fallen is Babylon

Researching the Demons



## Character Goals

Research, forbidden knowledge, planning next move.

## Actions

### Making Contact with an Occult Informant

**Dice Pool:** Manipulation + Streetwise

**Action:** Extended (8 successes; each roll represents a day of work)

Finding an informant is much like working the black market (see p. 86 of the **World of Darkness Rulebook**), except that the character is looking for something more exotic than drugs or stolen goods. In a city with demonic activity, though, people who know more than they should are present, hiding the shadows looking to sell what they know.

**Hindrances:** Character has no Occult Skill dots (-3); characters aren't prepared to pay much (-4)

**Help:** Characters have access to at least Resources 3 (+3); one character has an Occult Specialty in Demons (+1)

#### Roll Results

**Dramatic Failure:** The characters come to the attention of a group that they would rather avoid. Maybe it's a cell of Christian hunters on the prowl for demon-worshippers, or just some cops looking for evidence of ritual crime.

**Failure:** The player accumulates no successes toward the total.

**Success:** The player makes progress toward the goal. When she reaches eight successes, the characters find someone who is willing to talk with them about demons. His rates will be exorbitant, of course, and he makes no guarantees of their safety, but his information is accurate.

**Exceptional Success:** The player makes considerable progress toward the goal. If the player achieves the target with an exceptional success, the characters discover an occultist who is willing to share his considerable store of information for nothing. He doesn't charge for his time, and seems happy to help (this might worry the characters, of course – why is he being so generous?).

### Sneaking Into a Demonic Ritual

**Dice Pool:** Presence + Persuasion

**Action:** Instant (but see below)

If the characters discover a cult meeting or ritual of demon worshippers, they might wish to blend in and try to learn a few things. This requires looking like they belong. Having each player make this roll every 10 minutes of game time, or whenever the character does something suspicious.

**Hindrances:** Character has no Occult Skill rating (-3); character has Morality 8 or more (-2)

**Help:** Character has Morality 5 or less (+2); character once belonged to a cult (+2)

#### Roll Results

**Dramatic Failure:** The cultists immediately recognize the character as a spy. Depending on the nature of the cult, this could result in the members attacking the characters, or just ejecting her and breaking up the meeting. Any further attempts to get information about demons (other than by pure research) suffer a -3 modifier, though, as word of the spyspreads.

**Failure:** The cultists become suspicious of the character and interrogate her further. If she can't answer their questions (Wits + Occult vs. seven dice for the cultists' Intelligence + Occult), treat this as a dramatic failure. Otherwise, the character is allowed to stay, but apply a -2 modifier to any further rolls to blend in.

**Success:** The cultists treat the character as one of their own, for the time being.

**Exceptional Success:** The cultists see the character as an especially fervent member. No further rolls are necessary to blend in.

### Finding Rare Books

**Dice Pool:** Intelligence + Academics

**Action:** Extended (3 successes, every roll requires one day of work)

This action isn't so much about research (which is covered on p. 55 of the **World of Darkness Rulebook**), but about finding the specialized books and resources needed to research demons.

**Hindrances:** Character has no Occult Skill rating (-3)

**Help:** Character speaks multiple languages (+1/language); character has an Occult Specialty in Demons (+1); character has Contacts in Academia or Rare Books (+1), character enlists Rasoletti's help (+2)

#### Roll Results

**Dramatic Failure:** The character finds information that reveals that he's been on the wrong track up to now. All previously acquired successes are erased.

**Failure:** No successes are accumulated toward the total.

**Success:** The player accumulates successes toward the total. When she reaches three successes, the character finds a good book on the occult and demonology. This lends a +2 to any research the character wishes to perform (otherwise, the system on p. 55 of the **World of Darkness Rulebook** applies).

**Exceptional Success:** The character achieves the goal with an exceptional success, and finds a source of information written by an actual demonologist. The information is concise and accurate. The +2 bonus stands, and in addition research rolls require only 15 minutes, not 30 as indicated in the **World of Darkness Rulebook**.

### Consequences

This scene should give the character a better idea of what they are up against in both general terms (demons) and specific ones (Ait'abe and Hush). From here, they might choose to investigate the church ("A Blessing from Father Stepp") or Rasoletti ("The Hospital" or "The Desecrated Apartment"), depending on what they have already done.

Fallen is Babylon

Researching the Demons

# History Lessons

Mental ••• Physical ••• Social •••

## Overview

This scene takes place when the characters look into the past of the supernatural race that the Storyteller has decided was affected by Ai'tahe's bargain.

## Description

### Vampires

*The elder stirs. Your blood stains his lips, and his right eye flutters open. His left eye has been gored from the socket, and you realize that his right hand is still smeared with blood from plucking it out – why would he maim himself so? What did he see?*

### Werewolves

*The rock carvings tell a story. They're weathered, faded, but uncompromising, and the weight of history presses down on you as you study them. A century ago, the last of your kind carved these figures, howled his sorrow to the moon, and fled.*

### Mages

*The box before you contains memories. The sigils carved in the top make that clear. But they also indicate that opening the box is "Pandora's Mistake." The box is heavy out of proportion to its size, and it seems to shift in your hands as though something was alive inside.*

### Prometheans

*"What would you know?" it says. It's a sublimatus, you're certain, but it's been pinned to a huge oak tree with spikes of a metal that you've never seen before. It stares at you hungrily, awakened by your Azoth, its three tongues playing over each other like a nest of snakes.*

### Changelings

*The leaves turn yellow, orange and brown, and fall from the tree in a matter of seconds. Revealed in the bark is the last testament of the Autumn Court, the final words of the freehold of this city.*

### Hunters/Mortals

*The computer hums to life. It's old, probably dating to the 1980s, but the data it contains is older. You still aren't sure who wrote all this down, but now at least you'll be able to learn what happened here. If the diskette isn't corrupted by long years in a disused office, that is.*

### Sin-Eaters

*The Underworld makes for a superb hiding place. The Avernian Gate yawns open,*

*and you can see writing on the wall. Chalk, maybe, or just scratched there with a chunk of glass. As you start to read, you hear footsteps, slow, ponderous thuds, and then speeding up to a predator's run. You were afraid there might be a guardian here.*

## Storyteller Goals

This scene is meant to tie the characters' supernatural race more firmly into the story by explaining the history behind the appearance of Ai'tahe and the curse it placed on the area. The characters, after learning this information, should realize that only by banishing the demon (or getting it to rescind the curse, at least) can their people ever inhabit the area safely again.

Of course, that doesn't mean that the characters will do so. It's reasonable to assume that werewolves (being territorial by nature) or mages (being curious) will work to end the curse. But what about Prometheans? They might feel that this city is better off not having to contend with Wastelands or Disquiet. Vampires, too, might decide that a city without the undead is a city without nightly predation.

**Fallen is Babylon** doesn't require that the characters feel one way or another about the curse and its long-term effects. If you as Storyteller are planning on expanding the story or using it as an arc in your chronicle, you might wish to spin things so that it seems like a good idea to end the curse.

This story doesn't have enough space to detail a full scene of discovery for each of the supernatural "races." Instead, this scene simply explains what kind of information should be available in the "time capsule."

## Personalized

You should definitely construct the scene with your troupe's characters in mind. A pack of werewolves with a martial focus should probably fight for the information, perhaps besting an old knowledge-spirit before they learn the truth. A motley of Winter Court changelings probably has most of its work just finding the information, since their predecessors probably hid it extremely well.

## Cultural

After obtaining the information, the characters should know some details about how things used to work. They should know the basic structure of the Consilium (**Mage**), who was Prince (**Vampire**) or how a freehold's oaths were set up (**Changeling**). They should learn a few names, as well – perhaps of movers and shakers within the city, but definitely of the archivist(s). Seeing this glimpse of the past allows the characters to compare and contrast how their societies work now with how they worked a century ago. Has enough changed? Too much? What lessons can they take from their forebears?

## Summoning Ai'tahe

The characters should learn why and how their forebears called up Ai'tahe. The demon's Mythology is included. This is a physical description of the archdemon, as well as an explanation of why it was summoned.

Fallen is Babylon

History Lessons



Because these details will necessarily vary based on what game the Storyteller is running, the full Mythology isn't included here. Below is a brief, in-character description of Ai'tahe that can be modified as necessary.

IT HAS MANY NAMES, BUT THE GREATEST POWER COMES FROM THE STORIES IN WHICH IT IS NOT NAMED. THE STEED THAT CARRIED BELLEROPHON. THE SERPENT IN THE GARDEN OF EDEN. THE HAND THAT GUIDED HOD'S BOW. IN EVERY STORY, THE ONE IT GUIDES COMES TO WOE, BUT THROUGH HIS (OR HER) OWN FOOLISHNESS. EVE EATS THE APPLE, BUT THROUGH THIS GAINS KNOWLEDGE AND FREEDOM. BELLEROPHON SLAYS THE CHIMERA AND BECOMES A HERO, BUT ATTEMPTS TO CLIMB TOO HIGH AND IS STRUCK DOWN. HOD FIRES HIS ARROW AND KILLS HIS BROTHER, BUT NEVER STOPS TO CONSIDER THAT HE CANNOT SEE HIS TARGET

WE, THEN, CALL UP THIS GUIDE OF OUR OWN FREE WILL, AND WE ACCEPT ITS HELP AND ITS GUIDANCE. WE SHALL KEEP EVER WATCHFUL FOR THE TEMPTATION, THE FALL, THE TRAGIC FLAW THAT DOOMED THESE OTHER FOOLS. IT IS THIS TEMPERANCE THAT SHALL SAVE US FROM RUIN.

Following this is a brief lament, making clear that the Church interfered and bound the demon, and that the resulting curse left the members of this supernatural race unable to stay. Depending on how dramatic you want to be about it, all of the members in the city might have turned to black dust in the space of a night, or they might have noticed the effects gradually and left. In any event, the information should point the characters in the direction of the Church.

### A SUGGESTION — FLASHBACK CHAPTER

If you're running this story as part of a larger chronicle, it might be interesting to have the players create characters who were present in the city in 1908, when Ai'tahe was summoned and the curse initially laid. They might even portray the characters that summoned the demon, or they might be a pocket of resistance (i.e., common sense) in the area, but either way, this kind of chapter gives the players some firsthand knowledge that their modern characters can then learn about in this scene.

This will, of course, require doing a little light research into the status of the area near the turn of the 20th century, but you don't need to go too in-depth with it, since the flashback should only last a chapter.

## Character Goals

Research, learning about the past.

## Actions

What kinds of actions are required to get to the information depends entirely on what form they take. Some possibilities include:

- **Vampire:** Awaken a torpid elder vampire from that time; digging up a coffin full of written archives (and reading them without them disintegrating)
- **Werewolf:** Talking with a spirit holding the knowledge; rock carvings with First Tongue glyphs
- **Mage:** Artifact holding memories; Mysterium Athaeneum with Atlantean guardians
- **Promethean:** Written ramble from a Promethean of that time; *sublimatus* trapped in a place where Azothic radiance hasn't reached in decades
- **Changeling:** Hollow containing the records locked with a magical riddle; characters must swear an oath of service to a powerful hobgoblin to obtain information
- **Hunter:** Records assembled and saved onto now-obsolete computer file by Union members in the 1980s; records are actually in Milan in the hands of the Lucifuge and characters must convince the conspiracy that they need to see them
- **Geist:** Carved on the wall in the Underworld, but guarded by a powerful geist; the ghost of the mortal wife of one of the Bound who summoned Ai'tahe is still around, and remembers everything

## Consequences

The characters should come away from this scene with some solid knowledge about what their people (or the chosen group of supernatural characters, if you are running this story as a **World of Darkness** or **Hunter: The Vigil** story) did and why, as well as some thoughts about what, if anything, they need to do to resolve it. Depending on how they have approached their investigation so far, they might go from here to collect more data ("Researching the Demons") or to Father Stepp to find out the Church's involvement ("A Blessing from Father Stepp").

# A Blessing from Father Stepp

Mental •• Physical ••• Social •••

## Overview

In this scene, the characters investigate Trinity Cathedral, converse with Father Stepp and learn about the Church's role in imprisoning and guarding Ai'tahe.

## Description

### Outside

*The church's massive oak doors don't seem welcoming. You know they aren't locked – the sign on the door proclaims that the church is always open. And yet, these doors seem to turn you away. They don't so much prohibit entry as disapprove that you are even on church ground.*

### Father Stepp

*Father Stepp sits across the table and opens a book nearly three feet long. "No one's opened this book in a long time," he says. He stares at you, steady blue eyes boring into yours. "You'd better be right about this."*

## Storyteller Goals

This scene ideally takes place after the characters have learned the history of Rasoletti, Hush, the summoning of Ai'tahe and the fate of the supernatural beings of the city's past. Father Stepp can fill in the rest of the details, provided that the characters treat him well. From here, the characters can enter directly into negotiations with Ai'tahe, or they can return at a later date when they feel they are prepared.

This scene should serve to fill in the gaps in the characters' knowledge. By now they know that Ai'tahe is powerful and responsible for the curse on the city. Here, they learn why and how he was trapped, and what Father Stepp and people like him have done for 100 years to keep the demon from harming anyone.

The characters can come to church at any time, day or night. The doors are unlocked, and the pews might be full of worshippers (if the characters come during a service) or utterly empty (if they arrive in the middle of the night). The church doesn't feel welcoming, but it doesn't necessarily feel forbidding,

either. It feels *tense*, as though everything in the building is wound too tight. The characters should meet Father Stepp shortly after entering. He makes a point of introducing himself and asking if they need anything. Remember that with his Unseen Sense Merit, he can feel that the characters are "off" somehow. He might also remember them from "The Lecture," and if they behaved themselves then, it might be worth a bonus on Social rolls now.

Father Stepp is aware of the supernatural, and learning that the characters *are* paranormal beings doesn't faze him much. He won't discuss the church's occult history (or the supernatural in general) with the characters until he knows they actually have something genuine and useful to contribute to the conversation. They don't necessarily have to reveal themselves as supernatural beings in order for him to reach that conclusion, though; if a character mentions Ai'tahe by name or lets on that she knows that a demon is imprisoned her, Father Stepp becomes much more willing to converse. He remains guarded until he's sure of the character's intentions, however.

The Storyteller should steer the characters toward the archives of the church. These are kept in a back storeroom behind a set of complicated locks, and the door is wired to a silent alarm that summons police support inside two minutes (and sends a text message to Father Stepp's phone to boot). It's not impossible to beat the security, but the best way to view the archives is to get the priest on the characters' side.

This scene, therefore, can be a game of conversation cat-and-mouse between the characters and Father Stepp, a scene of supernatural manipulation (a vampire might use Dominate to force Stepp's will, for instance) or a scene of stealth and skullduggery. In any event, once the characters do access the archives, they learn how the Church came to be involved with the beings that summoned Ai'tahe. As discussed under Set-Up (p. 5), these details are up to the Storyteller.

The other important part of this scene is a manifestation from Ai'tahe. Much as in the apartment in "The Desecrated Apartment," Ai'tahe appears in a shifting mass of shadows and a change in the pressure of the air. Its voice is deep and resonant, but somehow hollow-sounding, as though the demon were speaking from the bottom of a deep pit. It cannot communicate with anyone in the church without speaking Dragon's Tongue (one of the terms of its imprisonment), but if one of the characters understands Dragon's Tongue or specifically asks it to speak another language, then a dialog can take place. This might result in the action moving direction into "The Devil's Bargain," or the characters might just exchange words with the demons and leave. Father Stepp, for his part, admonishes the characters not to respond if he is present when Ai'tahe speaks. Ai'tahe has, after all, spoken to him many, many times, and has he never responded except to say "Get thee behind me."

## Character Goals

Putting the last pieces of the puzzle together, meeting Father Stepp and seeing an example of virtue triumphing over temptation.

## Actions

### Opening the Lock

**Dice Pool:** Dexterity + Larceny

**Action:** Extended (20 successes; each roll requires one minute)

Breaking into the archives actually requires three separate actions. Two mechanical locks require five successes each to pick, and the electronic lock requires 10 successes to disarm. The characters realize this with a successful Wits + Larceny roll (-3 for darkness). If this roll fails, the character starts with the mechanical locks, and misses the electronic one unless the player specifically states the character is checking for such a mechanism.

**Hindrances:** Darkened hallway (-3); stopping and starting to dodge church personnel (-3)

**Help:** Visit to the church earlier to “case” (+2)

#### Roll Results

**Dramatic Failure:** The alarm is activated. Police arrive within two minutes, and Father Stepp arrives even faster.

**Failure:** The player accumulates no successes toward the total.

**Success:** The player adds successes to the total. The character can disable a mechanical lock with five successes or the electronic lock with 10, and can handle them in any order (provided he knows about them).

**Exceptional Success:** No effect except for faster success.

### Convincing Father Stepp to Talk

**Dice Pool:** Manipulation + Persuasion vs. Wits + Subterfuge

**Action:** Instant

Father Stepp is susceptible to supernatural coercion, of course, though he resists it as much as he is able.

**Hindrances:** Character offers a monetary bribe (-3); character reveals himself to be supernatural in a way that makes him look evil or demonic (-2); character plays coy and doesn't speak in specifics (-1); more than one character trying to converse with Stepp at once (-1)

**Help:** Character reveals that he knows about Ai'tah (+3); character reveals himself to be supernatural in a way that looks benign or even angelic (+2); character wears a cross or other Christian symbol (+1); character is forthright and direct (+1)

## Roll Results

**Dramatic Failure:** Father Stepp orders the characters out of the church and calls the diocese's bishop. This probably doesn't have any immediate effect, but if you want to introduce the notion of hunters coming after the characters later, this would be a superb reason.

**Failure:** The player rolls fewer successes than the Storyteller. Father Stepp is unconvinced about the character's motives. The player can try again after another five minutes of conversation, provided the character reveals something new and of interest.

**Success:** The player rolls as many or more successes than the Storyteller. Father Stepp is willing to talk to the characters about the church's history, and will show one character the archives.

**Exceptional Success:** The player rolls more successes than the Storyteller and rolls an exceptional success. Father Stepp is convinced of the characters' motives, and allows all of them to see the archives.

## Consequences

At this point, the characters should have a relatively clear picture of what is going on in the city. They might choose to attempt to free Rasoletti from his pact (“Freeing Rasoletti”), expel Ai'tah or break the curse (“The Devil's Bargain”), or just leave the whole mess behind and leave town.



# Freeing Rasoletti

Mental • • • Physical • • Social • •

## Overview

The characters attempt to break Rasoletti's pact with Hush, perhaps to help him, perhaps simply to banish or destroy the demon.

## Description

*The city limits loom in the distance. In the backseat, Rasoletti's head lolls to one side, and his breathing slows. You step on the gas, but you feel fatigue start to claim you as well. Your mind goes on autopilot – shouldn't you be headed back into town? Where were you going, anyway?*

## Storyteller Goals

This scene begins whenever the characters decide to take on Hush. They might start by ousting him from the apartment (which is discussed in "The Desecrated Apartment"), or by getting Rasoletti to explain the particulars of the pact to them. He can tell them that he is forbidden to leave the city



or quit his job, and that he must dedicate 10 minutes out of every hour to the demon. The characters, therefore, can also attempt to break the pact by violating these clauses.

- **Keeping Rasoletti Awake:** The characters can sit with Rasoletti for a full hour, making sure that Hush doesn't get the ten minutes its due. The system for this is below, but having some magical backing for it would make it easier. A vampire could Dominate Rasoletti to "stay awake," while a mage might use a Mind spell to make his mind incapable of resting. Any supernatural being might simply scare him badly enough that his mind doesn't slip into the lazy zone that allows Hush to take over.

- **Getting Rasoletti Out of Town:** This is nominally as simple as putting Rasoletti in a car and getting him out of the city. Unfortunately, Hush expresses its power by attacking the driver, forcing the kind of "driver autopilot" that happens when someone slips into a familiar route while behind the wheel. The character ends up right back where she started. If a character has the ability to teleport Rasoletti out or open a gateway to another plane of existence (the Hedge, the Shadow, the Underworld), this option is much easier.

- **Getting Rasoletti Fired:** The characters need to convince the university to fire a tenured professor. This is a monumentally difficult task, as tenured professors are almost impossible to dislodge. It generally takes criminal charges, drug use while on university grounds or an affair with a student to accomplish this, and even then the process takes months. The characters might be able to manufacture something extreme enough to hasten the process (framing Rasoletti for murder, for instance), but he won't agree to that – he wants to be free, not go from one prison to another.

Whatever the method, Hush attempts to kill Rasoletti if it realizes that the characters are going to steal its servant away. It shuts down Rasoletti's autonomic nervous system, effectively suffocating him. The characters can save him through supernatural means (Life magic, a healing power or something that shuts down the demon's influence) or through medical means (see below).

If the characters break the pact without dealing with the apartment, Hush simply retreats to the Desecrated ground. The characters need to deal with the demon there, but that is a much easier prospect when Hush doesn't have the option of retreating to Rasoletti's brain. The characters can force the demon out, whereupon it goes to Hell, slipping away into a corner as though sliding downhill. It doesn't even expend the energy to scream or complain.

## Character Goals

Freeing a man from a demon, cleansing the city of demonic influence.

# Actions

## Keeping Rasoletti Awake

**Dice Pool:** Presence + (a Social Skill)

**Action:** Instant

Which Skill the player rolls depends on the character's approach. Yelling and smacking Rasoletti around would use Intimidation, while keeping his attention through conversation would involve Persuasion. The player needs to succeed on six such rolls (one for every 10 minutes) in order to break the curse. The characters can trade off, or can use Teamwork (p. 134 of the **World of Darkness Rulebook**).

**Hindrances:** Quiet, dull or familiar environment (-2); Hush has already been expelled from the apartment (-5); every character that previously failed the roll (-1)

**Help:** Hush is still in apartment (+1); loud or interesting environment (+1)

### Roll Results

**Dramatic Failure:** Rasoletti zones out, and the attempt fails.

**Failure:** The character fails to keep Rasoletti's interest, but another character can immediately jump in and make the attempt.

**Success:** The character holds Rasoletti's interest for 10 minutes.

**Exceptional Success:** The character holds Rasoletti's interest for 20 minutes (thus reducing the number of successful rolls that need to be made).

## Resisting Hush's Influence

**Dice Pool:** Resolve + Composure + Supernatural Tolerance vs. Power + Finesse + Infernal Rank

**Action:** Instant and contested

This power is Hush's expression of its Aura of Corruption.

**Hindrances:** Character has the Vice of Sloth (-2); character with the Vice of Sloth has regained Willpower from that Vice during the same day (-5); character is driving his own car (-1)

**Help:** Character is driving an unfamiliar car (+1); character's Virtue is Fortitude (+1); other characters keep the driver's attention engaged (+2)

### Roll Results

**Dramatic Failure:** The driver goes on "autopilot," and winds up back at the apartment. None of the other characters in the car notice.

**Failure:** The player rolls fewer successes for the character than the Storyteller does for Hush. The character starts to drive back toward the apartment, but other characters can stop her (Presence + Persuasion to get her attention).

**Success:** The player rolls as many or more successes for the character as the Storyteller does for Hush. The character feels fatigue and has to pay attention a little more to get where she is going, but is under no compulsion to drive anywhere other than out of town.

**Exceptional Success:** The player rolls as many or more successes than the Storyteller, and rolls an exceptional success. The character feels no compulsion to change direction, but is aware that something tried to influence her behavior.

## Keeping Rasoletti Alive

**Dice Pool:** Wits + Medicine

**Action:** Instant

Once it becomes obviously to Hush that the characters are going to try to break the pact, it attempts to kill Rasoletti by shutting off his autonomic functions (heart and lungs). At this point, the attack is a parting shot = Hush knows it is beaten, but in true demonic fashion, it tries to take its servant out with it.

**Hindrances:** In a car or otherwise cramped space (-2); each previously failed roll (-1, cumulative)

**Help:** Characters have access to oxygen (+1); characters have access to adrenaline shot (+1)

### Roll Results

**Dramatic Failure:** Rasoletti suffocates to death, but dies free of Hush's influence.

**Failure:** Rasoletti starts to suffocate. The characters can continue making this roll once every 30 seconds. They have three minutes (six rolls) before he dies.

**Success:** Rasoletti's lungs continue to work until Hush loses its influence over him.

**Exceptional Success:** Rasoletti never even loses consciousness completely. The characters all regain all spent Willpower as though they had fulfilled their Virtues.

## Consequences

Once Rasoletti is free, he tells the characters he is getting out of town. He does, however, offer them use of his apartment and any assistance he can ever offer them as a researcher. He is quite willing to help them deal with Ai'tah before he leaves, but he will not take part in any pact with the archdemon.

Fallen is Babylon

Freeing Rasoletti



# The Devil's Bargain

Mental ••• Physical •• Social ••••

## Overview

In this scene, the characters deal with Ai'tahe. They might send it back to Hell and free the city from the curse, or they might become Indebted servants of the demon and greet the next dawn (or dusk) as forces for Sin in the World of Darkness.

## Description

*The lights in the church flicker. The candles burn bright red for a moment, and the shadows pounce inward. You feel them strike you like a strong wind, and then everything is calm – but it is here. Ai'tahe is listening. And you know that it is the stronger bargainer.*

## Banishing the demon

*A hole opens in the air. What's inside that hole... you can't quite see. You can see images, things that resemble animals but clearly aren't, and you can hear cries of horrible, unimaginable pain. The shadows in the room flow into this hole like dust into a vacuum, and you know that Ai'tahe is gone – and that it preferred the torments of Hell to being trapped in this place of Virtue.*

## Becoming Indebted

*You agree, and you feel the demon reach into you. It changes your body, making the alterations you agreed upon, but you feel it reaching beyond your physical form. It touches the tapestry of all reality, pulling threads, changing colors, to accomplish the goals you wanted, to bring your wealth, servants, fame – whatever you desire. And you swell with pride. This is, truly, what it is to challenge God.*

## Storyteller Goals

In this scene, the characters come face-to-face with true evil and either triumph over it, become it or retreat from it. This scene should tie together all of the events of **Fallen is Babylon**. That means that the major Storyteller characters (Hush, Ai'tahe, Rasoletti and Father Stepp) should either play a role or be mentioned somewhere. The characters should see the pride of Ai'tahe, a demon so powerful it won't even acknowledge the existence of "mere mortals," and they should know that this pride isn't just posturing. Ai'tahe really is powerful enough to rewrite portions of reality – and they can, if they wish, partake in that power.



This scene takes place at the church, and in order for it to happen, something must be done about Father Stepp. The characters might be able to convince him to allow them to have a conversation with the demon, especially if they offer assurance that they intend to banish it. Stepp is not interested in having more supernatural beings in the city, though, so lifting the curse isn't on his list of priorities. If the characters frame it in terms of a demonic effect, though, he grudgingly admits that it should be lifted.

If the characters don't want to take the time to convince Stepp of their intentions, they can simply use their powers to subdue him. Ai'tahe draws power from such an act, though.

## Negotiations

In order to enter into negotiations with Ai'tahe, the characters need to grant it a certain degree of freedom. That means removing one of the grates on the roof; this grants Ai'tahe enough leeway to influence the world, but only with permission.

Ai'tahe is a shrewd bargainer. It knows that one word from the characters can set it free to wreak havoc upon the world. It tries to underplay this, but as a demon of Pride, it has difficulty underplaying

Fallen is Babylon

The Devil's Bargain



anything. It boasts about its might, especially if the characters can get it talking, and it *never* admits to being imprisoned or being weak in any way.

Ideally, the negotiations should be played out as a conversation, with you taking the role of Ai'tahe (and, if necessary, Father Stepp) and the players speaking for their characters. Try to limit the amount of out-of-character chatter between the players, and respond to (or at least take note of) everything that the characters say. Ai'tahe is perceptive, and it plays upon fears, lusts and sins of the characters.

Ai'tahe wants one thing above all: Freedom. It wants to be entirely unfettered, at which point it can slip between the worlds at its leisure. It might Desecrate the church, turning its prison into a place of demonic power (and it would most certainly call up a weaker demon to possess Father Stepp). If the characters simply let Ai'tahe off its chain, it grants them a free dot of their supernatural power trait (Gnosis, Blood Potency, etc.) in gratitude.

If it can't get true freedom, Ai'tahe is willing to go back to Hell. In Hell, it can be summoned again, and being close to a place of prayer, piety and humility drives it mad. It doesn't want to admit that it will accept going to Hell, but if it gets the sense that this is the best deal it's going to get, it's willing to lift the curse in order to do so. It cannot grant traits or other rewards from Hell, though (and it tells the characters as much with mock sorrow).

Finally, Ai'tahe is willing to Indebt the characters but remain trapped, if no other offers are on the table. It can grant any trait that the characters wish, but requires sacrifices of varying severities in order to power such gifts. Sacrifices include: murders committed in its name (it is especially fond of murders that further supernatural causes, such as a vampire draining a victim to death or a werewolf eating a human); rituals involving mortal cultists duped by the supernatural, or activities in which supernatural beings use their arcane gifts. Since these might be activities that the characters would be performing anyway, it might seem like a good deal.

One potential way for the characters to sweeten whatever deal they make with Ai'tahe is to let the demon get revenge on Father Stepp. Ai'tahe hates the priest with a burning passion – he is a mortal man, and yet consistently defies temptation and sin. If the characters are willing to murder the priest (or let Ai'tahe do it), the demon is much more willing to leave the city in peace.

Of course, Ai'tahe tries to spin things in its favor as much as possible. It asks to name one favor from the characters per month, and agrees to all sorts of strictures on the favor. What it wants is to be able to force them to remove the grates.

**World of Darkness: Inferno** has a detailed system for creating pacts with demons. If you have access to that book, feel free to apply the usual balance between Sacrifices and Benefits. Ai'tahe, as an archdemon, is powerful enough to grant anything the characters might wish for, but it cannot perform Services while bound (nor would it, even if it were free).

## Character Goals

Banish Ai'tahe. Gain demonic power. Break the curse.

## Actions

The characters might need to subdue Father Stepp in order to open negotiations, which might require combat or use of supernatural powers. If they use supernatural powers to do so, any rolls the players make to notice deception or trickery on the part of Ai'tahe suffer a -3 modifier, as the area becomes more in tune with the demon's brand of sin.

Since Ai'tahe doesn't have game traits, the negotiations can't be represented with a contested action. Instead, the Storyteller should let the pact or agreement come together organically. If that isn't palatable to your players, use the following system.

## Bargaining with Ai'tahe

**Dice Pool:** Wits + Subterfuge

**Action:** Extended (see below; one roll per 20 minutes of negotiations)

The players should lay out their goals before rolling any dice, and the Storyteller should set a target number of successes based on how close to the demon's goals they are. A pact in which Ai'tahe agrees to go home and lift the curse might require 15 successes. If the characters allow him to kill Father Stepp first, this total might drop to five.

The characters can and probably should use Teamwork for this action. Indeed, any player whose character contributes so much as a single phrase to the negotiations *must* take part in the teamwork roll.

**Hindrances:** Character has no dots in Occult (-3); character used a supernatural power on Father Stepp (-3); character succumbed to Hush's powers earlier (-1); character's Vice is Pride (-2); character has regained Willpower from the Vice of Pride in the last day (-1); each hour of negotiations after the first (-1, cumulative)

**Help:** Character possesses the Meditative Mind Merit (+1); Father Stepp is present (Storyteller should roll for his participation in the negotiations); character never fell victim to Hush's powers (+1); character's Virtue is Charity (+1)

## Roll Results

**Dramatic Failure:** Ai'tahe "wins" the negotiation. The characters might get what they want, but they have agreed to something terrible. Maybe Ai'tahe is free for one night out of the year (it might not seem like much, but remember how powerful the archdemon is), or maybe the characters agreed to commit one murder in its name periodically.

Fallen is Babylon

The Devil's Bargain

**Failure:** The players accumulate no successes toward the total.

**Success:** The players accumulate successes toward the total. Once they reach the goal, the negotiations have finished and they accomplish what they set out to.

**Exceptional Success:** The players accumulate considerable successes. If the players complete the negotiations with an exceptional success, Ai'tah slips up somewhere, and the characters get what they want without a significant cost to their souls.

## Consequences

After this scene, the characters might have saved the city from a demon's influences, or they might walk out of that church with blood on their hands and a demon in their hearts. In any event, the events of **Fallen is Babylon** are over.

# Aftermath

At the end of the story, the characters might take any number of actions. They might decide to try to rebuild their people's presence in the city, maybe working with Father Stepp to make sure that the supernatural doesn't victimize the mortal population. They might report back to any superiors out of town, asking for assistance, or telling them that this city is now a new Consilium/freehold/domain/territory under their protection. They might be Indebted to a powerful demon, which might limit their utility as player-controlled characters, depending on what they've agreed to and the sensibilities of the troupe.

In any case, it's quite possible that a whole new area has been opened up in your chronicle. How much you and your troupe choose to explore is, of course, up to you.

## Experience

Experience points are handed out after each chapter according to the suggestions in the **World of Darkness Rulebook**, pp. 216-217. After the story is over, there are a few additional points that can be awarded:

- Give everyone in the group +1 experience for banishing Hush
- Give everyone in the group +1 experience for banishing Ai'tah
- If the characters made a friend, or at least a contact, out of Father Stepp, give them +1 experience
- If the characters figured out what happened to their people back in 1908 (or to the relevant race, depending on what game you are running), give them +1 experience



# SCENE: The Lecture

15

MENTAL .. PHYSICAL .. SOCIAL ..

## HINDRANCES

**Sneaking into the Lecture:** Character looks out of place on a college campus — too old, too young, etc. (-1); character is dressed in an extreme manner — obvious piercings, dyed hair, full nun's habit, etc. -2; more than one character trying at once (-1 per extra character, cumulative)

**Deciphering Dragon's Tongue:** Obscurity (-3; all characters suffer this modifier); characters next to the character are talking during the lecture (-1)

**Searching Rasoletti's Body:** No allied characters nearby (-2 as the character must be wary of being seen); character can only use one hand (-3)

## HELP

**Sneaking into the Lecture:** Other characters create a distraction (use Teamwork rules, p. 134 of the World of Darkness Rulebook); character looks like a college student (+1)

**Deciphering Dragon's Tongue:** Demonology Specialty in Occult (+1)

**Searching Rasoletti's Body:** Extra characters involved (can either offset the penalty above or use Teamwork); character saw Rasoletti put note in his pocket (+4)

## OTHER

STs

Hook the players, introduce the story

PCs

Witness the lecture and learn that Rasoletti is in some way tainted by the supernatural.

# SCENE: The Deseccated Apartment

19

MENTAL ... PHYSICAL . SOCIAL .

## HINDRANCES

**Searching the Apartment:** Noisy neighbors (-1); power failure (-3); no one activates the computer (-5)

**Resisting Hush:** Character has the Vice of Sloth (-2); character with the Vice of Sloth has regained Willpower from that Vice during the same day (-5); character is sitting down (-1)

**Communicating with Ai'tahe:** Character has Morality 8 or more (-1); the character is mortal (-5)

## HELP

**Searching the Apartment:** Players state they are looking in specific places (+1); systematic plan of action (+2); character searching has at least one dot in Computer and mentions checking the computer files (+3)

**Resisting Hush:** Character is standing up (+1); character's Virtue is Fortitude (+1); character is walking or otherwise active (+2)

**Communicating with Ai'tahe:** Presence of another demon (+1); character has used a supernatural power in the last 12 hours (+2); character has Morality 5 or less (+2)

## OTHER

STs

To give the characters some solid information on the nature of the foes they face, and to scare the Hell out of them.

PCs

Learning about Rasoletti and his demonic pact. Banishing Hush.

# SCENE: The Hospital

17

MENTAL ... PHYSICAL . SOCIAL ..

## HINDRANCES

**Coaxing Information out of Rasoletti:** Character's questions have a noticeably Christian slant (-1)

## HELP

**Coaxing Information out of Rasoletti:** Character is obviously erudite and educated (+1)

## OTHER

STs

Reveal Rasoletti's history and pact.

PCs

Learning about Rasoletti and his pact, getting some direction about what to investigate next, or forming a plan for negotiating with Ai'tahe/breaking the pact with Hush, all depending on when in the story the characters play through this scene.

# SCENE: Researching the Demons

22

MENTAL .-... PHYSICAL .-... SOCIAL .-...-

## HINDRANCES

**Making Contact with an Occult Informant:** Character has no Occult Skill dots (-3); characters aren't prepared to pay much (-4)

**Sneaking Into a Demonic Ritual:** Character has no Occult Skill rating (-3); character has Morality 8 or more (-2)

**Finding Rare Books:** Character has no Occult Skill rating (-3)

## HELP

**Making Contact with an Occult Informant:** Characters have access to at least Resources 3 (+3); one character has an Occult Specialty in Demons (+1)

**Sneaking Into a Demonic Ritual:** Character has Morality 5 or less (+2); character once belonged to a cult (+2)

**Finding Rare Books:** Character speaks multiple languages (+1/language); character has an Occult Specialty in Demons (+1); characters has Contacts in Academia or Rare Books (+1), character enlists Rasoletti's help (+2)

## OTHER

STs

Present information on demons in general and Hush and Ai'tahe in particular.

PCs

Research, forbidden knowledge, planning next move.

# SCENE: History Lessons

24

MENTAL . . . . . PHYSICAL . . . . . SOCIAL . . . . .

## HINDRANCES

## HELP

## OTHER

Nothing specific

Nothing specific

**STs** Tie the characters' supernatural race more firmly into the story by explaining the history behind the appearance of Ai'tahe and the curse it placed on the area.

**PCs** Research, learning about the past.

# SCENE: Freeing Rasoletti

28

MENTAL . . . . . PHYSICAL . . . . . SOCIAL . . . . .

## HINDRANCES

## HELP

## OTHER

Keeping Rasoletti Awake: Quiet, dull or familiar environment (-2); Hush has already been expelled from the apartment (-5); every character that previously failed the roll (-1)

Keeping Rasoletti Awake: Hush is still in apartment (+1); loud or interesting environment (+1)

Resisting Hush's Influence: Character has the Vice of Sloth (-2); character with the Vice of Sloth has regained Willpower from that Vice during the same day (-5); character is driving his own car (-1)

Resisting Hush's Influence: Character is driving an unfamiliar car (+1); character's Virtue is Fortitude (+1); other characters keep the driver's attention engaged (+2)

Keeping Rasoletti Alive: In a car or otherwise cramped space (-2); each previously failed roll (-1, cumulative)

Keeping Rasoletti Alive: Characters have access to oxygen (+1); characters have access to adrenaline shot (+1)

**STs** Letting the characters best one demon and hopefully gain an ally in dealing with the other one.

**PCs** Freeing a man from a demon, cleansing the city of demonic influence.

# SCENE: A Blessing from Father Stepp

26

MENTAL . . . . . PHYSICAL . . . . . SOCIAL . . . . .

## HINDRANCES

## HELP

## OTHER

Opening the Lock: Darkened hallway (-3); stopping and starting to dodge church personnel (-3)

Opening the Lock: Visit to the church earlier to "case" (+2)

Convincing Father Stepp to Talk: Character offers a monetary bribe (-3); character reveals himself to be supernatural in a way that makes him look evil or demonic (-2); character plays coy and doesn't speak in specifics (-1); more than one character trying to converse with Stepp at once (-1)

Convincing Father Stepp to Talk: Character reveals that he knows about Ai'tahe (+3); character reveals himself to be supernatural in a way that looks benign or even angelic (+2); character wears a cross or other Christian symbol (+1); character is forthright and direct (+1)

**STs** Fill in the gaps in the characters' knowledge.

**PCs** Putting the last pieces of the puzzle together, meeting Father Stepp and seeing an example of virtue triumphing over temptation.

# SCENE: The Devil's Bargain

30

MENTAL . . . . . PHYSICAL . . . . . SOCIAL . . . . .

## HINDRANCES

## HELP

## OTHER

Bargaining with Ai'tahe: Character has no dots in Occult (-3); character used a supernatural power on Father Stepp (-3); character succumbed to Hush's powers earlier (-1); character's Vice is Pride (-2); character has regained Willpower from the Vice of Pride in the last day (-1); each hour of negotiations after the first (-1, cumulative)

Bargaining with Ai'tahe: Character possesses the Meditative Mind Merit (+1); Father Stepp is present (Storyteller should roll for his participation in the negotiations); character never fell victim to Hush's powers (+1); character's Virtue is Charity (+1)

**STs** Tie story together, defeat evil

**PCs** Banish Ai'tahe. Gain demonic power. Break the curse.

It has many names, but the greatest power comes from the stories in which it is not named. The steed that carried Bellerophon. The Serpent in the Garden of Eden. The hand that guided Hod's bow. In every story, the one it guides comes to woe, but through his (or her) own foolishness. Eve eats the apple, but through this gains knowledge and freedom. Bellerophon slays the chimera and becomes a hero, but attempts to climb too high and is struck down. Hod fires his arrow and kills his brother, but never stops to consider that he cannot see his target

We, then, call up this guide of our own free will, and we accept its help and its guidance. We shall keep ever watchful for the temptation, the fall, the tragic flaw that doomed these other fools. It is this temperance that shall save us from ruin.

My name is Eric  
Rasoletti.

I live at 4401  
Lakeview Dr Apt.  
213

I am trapped  
there

If you understood  
me tonight,  
please help



Name: **Hush**

Virtue: **N/A**

Concept: **Demon of Sloth**

Vice: **Sloth - Inertia**

Power ●●●●○	Finesse ●●○○○	Resistance ●●●●○
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Skills	Numina <small>Dice Pool</small>	Corpus
<input type="checkbox"/> _____ 00000	Aura of Corruption _____	●●●●●●●○○○○○
<input type="checkbox"/> _____ 00000	Babel _____	□□□□□□□□□□□□
<input type="checkbox"/> _____ 00000	Create Pact _____	○○○○○○○○○○○○○○
<input type="checkbox"/> _____ 00000	Dragon's Tongue _____	□□□□□□□□□□□□
<input type="checkbox"/> _____ 00000	Keeper of Secrets _____	
<input type="checkbox"/> _____ 00000	Lord of Lies _____	Willpower
<input type="checkbox"/> _____ 00000	Soul of Sin _____	●●●●●●●○○○○○
<input type="checkbox"/> _____ 00000	_____	□□□□□□□□□□□□
<input type="checkbox"/> _____ 00000	_____	○○○○○○○○○○○○
<input type="checkbox"/> _____ 00000	_____	□□□□□□□□□□□□
<input type="checkbox"/> _____ 00000	_____	Essence
<input type="checkbox"/> _____ 00000	_____	□□□□□□□□□□□□
<input type="checkbox"/> _____ 00000	_____	□□□□□□□□□□□□
<input type="checkbox"/> _____ 00000	Influence	
<input type="checkbox"/> _____ 00000	_____ 00000	Morality _____
<input type="checkbox"/> _____ 00000	_____ 00000	Aspect _____
<input type="checkbox"/> _____ 00000	_____ 00000	Rank _____ 3
<input type="checkbox"/> _____ 00000	_____ 00000	Size _____ 2
<input type="checkbox"/> _____ 00000	_____ 00000	Speed <u>2</u> (species factor -3)
<input type="checkbox"/> _____ 00000	_____ 00000	Defense _____ 3
<input type="checkbox"/> _____ 00000	_____ 00000	Initiative Mod _____ 5



Notes

Max Essence: 20