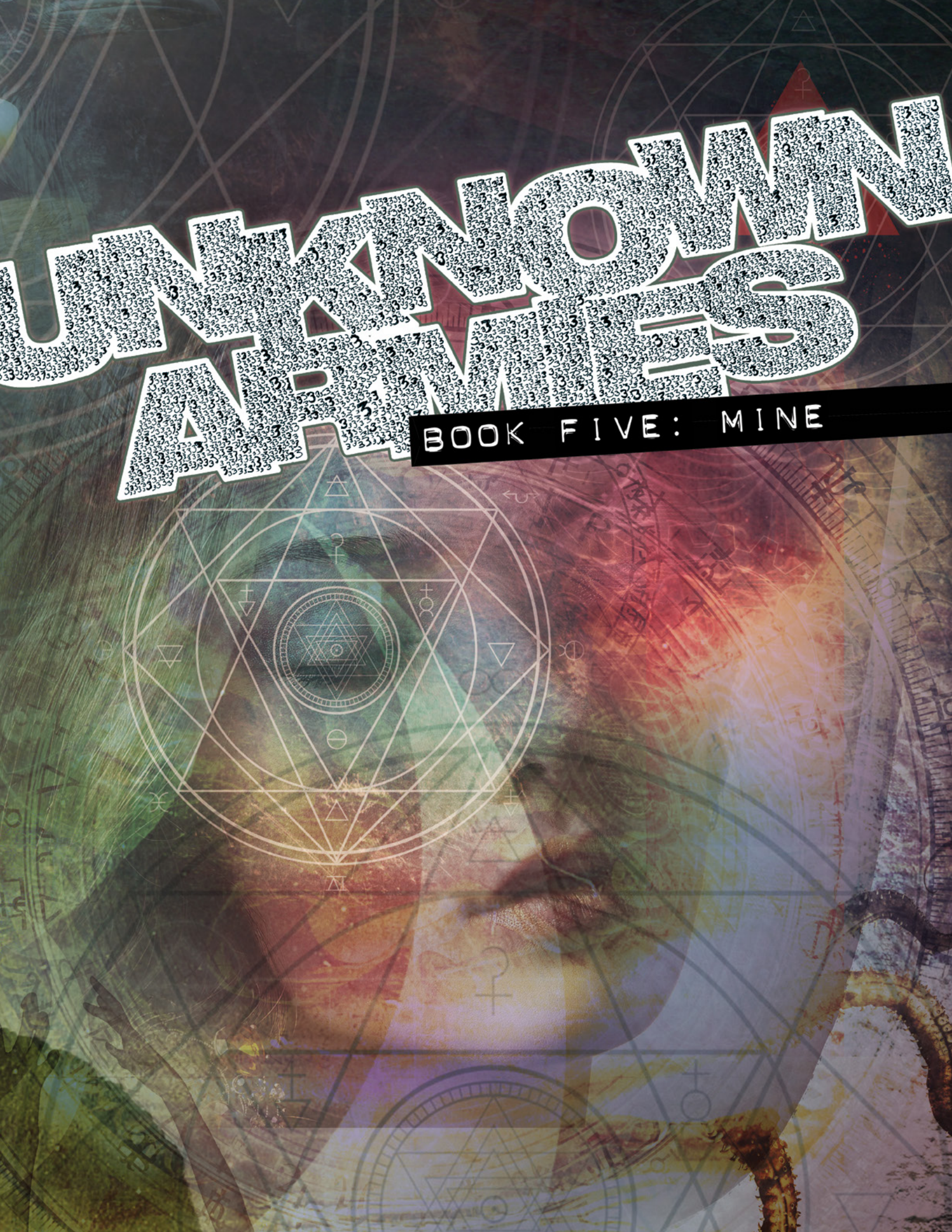


UNKNOWN AFFAIRS

BOOK FIVE: MINE



WARRIORS APPRENTICESTM

BOOK FIVE: MINE

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To our legions of alpha, beta, and gamma playtesters and to our generous backers — this game exists because of you! You did this!

We are the music makers,
And we are the dreamers of dreams,
Wandering by lone sea-breakers,
And sitting by desolate streams; —
World-losers and world-forsakers,
On whom the pale moon gleams:
Yet we are the movers and shakers
Of the world for ever, it seems.
Ode, Arthur O'Shaughnessy

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1: INTRODUCTION

WHAT IS THIS?

Book Five: Mine is a compilation of additional material for *Unknown Armies*, designed by a cabal of writers and prompted by backers of the wildly successful *Unknown Armies* Kickstarter in 2016. Herein you'll discover new and, in many cases, revised rules and background for a dizzying array of miscellanea, salvaged from past editions and conjured into existence by dedicated fans of the work of Greg Stolze and John Scott Tynes.

The book is assembled into four chapters, in addition to this introduction. They are as follows:

Adepts: Eight magickal schools, including some old favorites; a huge chunk of information about rituals; and a handful of artifacts.

Avatars: Nine archetypes, updating several classics that were not included in *Book One: Play*.

Places: Details on otherspaces, as well as a new category of archetype, the paragon place.

Faces: Antagonists and potential allies, including the Cult of the Cruel Ones.

Just as with *Book Four: Expose*, the contents of this book are yours to accept, reject, twist, or turn as you desire. Nothing is canon unless it suits your own personal paradigm of *Unknown Armies*. But if you are ever looking to go beyond the core books and sample from that buffet of the unknown that is the occult underground and its many labyrinthine passages above and below, you may find what you most desire here.



INGRATE

i am strung together with a variety of athletic tapes like some kind of crap-sack cyborg

1: INTRO



Four is a powerful number. The four elements are rocks, paper, scissors, and blood.

2: ADEPTS



3: AVATARS



4: PLACES



5: FACES





2: ADEPTS

There are as many new traditions in the 21st century as there are new hip-hop artists or new indie directors. Every minute another adept steps forward with an obsession and a set of taboos and a hunger for working her will. In addition to those that were included in *Book One: Play*, *Book Three: Reveal*, and *Book Four: Expose*, this chapter calls back to some of the popular schools of the 20th century and casts

CRYPTOMANCY AKA COGNOSCENTI, WEASELS, LIARS

Knowledge is power. Even children know that much. But what people rarely admit is that power is easily diluted.

Being one of twenty people who know the café that serves the best pie in the city, that's one thing. Everyone in a fifty-mile radius knowing the location, that's something else. Likewise, holding a disastrously embarrassing secret about the mayor is bankable leverage. Once it's on the front page, it's just one more piece of tedious gossip.

From there, the calculus is simple. The power in knowledge is strongest when it is kept concentrated. Facts become more precious as fewer people know them. So the sanctity of the factual is not to be squandered on the profane.

In our brave new online world, knowledge is ripped apart, and scattered to the four winds like grain. Global businesses are devoted to the idea of increasing access to factual knowledge, of opening the world's secrets to every person on Earth. There, it is trampled, ground into dust, truly worthless.

The wise understand the reckless folly of this impulse. The truth must be treated with the utmost respect and devotion. It is not something to be spread carelessly. Real devotion to knowledge means never sully it, never allowing it to be communicated and weakened and rendered impotent. Instead, it must be lovingly hidden, venerated, allowed to flourish in the darkness away from the light of casual inquiry. There, its density provides the power to rewrite reality itself.

At the heart of this dedication to knowledge lies a paradox that every cryptomancer must learn how to deal with. It is not possible to gather facts to protect without seeking them out and learning them — an act of precisely the sort of communication that diminishes the information. The cherishing of data, of gathering power from it, is rooted in its utmost disrespect. But then, what is more human than to do wrong in the pursuit of righteousness?

Given their secretive nature, cryptomancers are creatures of rumor and disinformation. Even that is far too well-known, so far as the school's members are concerned. However, if they absolutely must be considered at all, they prefer to be thought of as “cognoscenti.” Those who know of their existence tend to be less generous, and nicknames include “weasels,” and, simply, “liars.”

WHISK

yeah, get the lead out on that you lazy fuckers. it's super late.

them anew from the forge of magickal inspiration.

Fair warning: several of these schools may, at first blush, seem better served as the instrument of antagonists or rival adepts. Their secrets are at times profane and at other times preposterous. Of course, that never stopped a player before, did it?

STATS

Generate a Minor Charge: Learn a piece of private information that could cause tangible harm to someone if the knowledge were to be made publicly accessible.

The rise of the internet has been an incredible boon for Cryptomancy as a discipline. Uncovering secrets used to be painstaking work involving stakeouts, stalking, burglary, research, and, if all else failed, putting in the weeks of work to gain a mark's trust. Nowadays it's not much harder than logging onto the darknet via Tor and downloading today's leaked list of usernames with passwords, then checking social media to identify some of those users. If that's too tech-savvy, try getting friendly with a magazine or website's gossip columnist — or becoming one yourself. Alternatively, there's always private detective work, or just getting into any negatively regarded subculture and making friends.

We're drowning in information. Much of it is potentially damaging to the people involved due our overly judgmental world, as a lot of risqué selfie-snappers have discovered. It's only the sheer volume of it all that acts as any sort of protection. Note that “damaging” here means that if the information was made available to the wrong person, the victim it concerns would suffer ongoing unpleasant social, financial, mental, physical, or emotional consequences.

A cryptomancer with a steady source of compromising information can harvest up to a maximum of ten minor charges a day. If they're a half-way skilled internet user, that only takes a couple of hours. Easily accessible public knowledge is no use for charging off, of course. The person it pertains to has to still consider it a secret.

Generate a Significant Charge: Harm someone by releasing information about them.

Holding secrets is a route to influence, but real power is gained using those secrets. By actualizing the potential stored in the fact, its energy is maximized, its secrecy burned up in a blaze that leaves the cryptomancer stronger and more dangerous.

To gain a significant charge from a secret, the cognoscente exposes it (in writing) to the person or people whom the subject really didn't want the information getting to. When the secret concerns a normal person, that usually means sharing it with a spouse, parent, child, priest, colleague, boss, etc. If it refers to a public figure, then it needs to go to a newspaper, news program, Facebook fan group, and so on. If the cryptomancer is part of a gang robbing a bank, warning the police about the robbery would count. So, in fact, would outing a friendly adept to a rival.

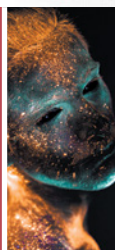
1: INTRO



2: ADEPTS



3: AVATARS



4: PLACES

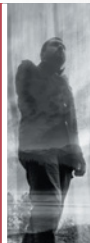


5: FACES





1: INTRO



2: ADEPTS



3: AVATARS



4: PLACES



5: FACES



For the charge to be generated, the secret has to be believed, and it has to harm the person it is about. Publication in a newspaper or large website usually lends enough credibility, but for more personal matters, proof may need to be provided. It may take a few hours to target sufficiently harmful recipients for any given already-known secret, and gather the proof required. Even so, a diligent adept can reliably manage a couple of charges a day without much effort. Most also keep a number of secrets ready to fire, for emergencies.

Sometimes, the harm done by exposing a secret is profound. Gaining a significant charge always has the potential to require a stress check if things go badly.

Cryptomancers are rarely popular.

Generate a Major Charge: Discover and publicize a secret that shakes the nation, one which unpleasant people would cheerfully kill to protect.

Finding and releasing a fact that brought down the current government would be enough for a major charge. So would publicizing information that showed the pope was actually a woman, or somehow proving beyond debate that the moon landings were faked.

Taboo: Telling someone a truth that they did not know.

This is a long way from having to lie all the time. Being forced to lie in all interactions would be totally crippling. Any obligate liar would be unable to manage even the smallest social tasks. Imagine such a person faced with a shop assistant. "Can I help you?" "No." "You're pointing at cheese. Do you want cheese?" "No." "Are you looking to get shot, fool?" "...Yes."

The taboo of this school is subtler, although still tough. The cryptomancer can reveal any fact which those hearing

it either know or reasonably suspect to be true. The weasel walking around with a name-tag declaring "Hi, my name is Robin!" can freely answer to their name in public. If the guy at the deli counter asks if the adept wants something, it is fine to say yes. It is safe to note that the sun is shining, or, when late to an appointment, to honestly say that the traffic was bad. However, if the information isn't at least already a plausible possibility in the minds of all hearers, the adept has got problems. If that late arrival was due to something out of the ordinary — an escaped elephant, say — then revealing that truth would cost the adept all charges. So would mentioning Google to a technophobe, or giving the name of the street they lived on to anyone who didn't already have a good idea of it.

It is very easy to accidentally break this taboo. Go into a restaurant alone and tell the server you want a table for six, and that's got a good chance of voiding your charges. Consequently, the great majority of liars make habits of avoiding children, never directly answering any questions, and when there's no choice, falling back on a meticulously detailed fictional life. Good GMs listen very carefully to everything a cryptomantic PC says, and have absolute say over when taboo is violated. Who knows where unexpected ears may be found?

Only spoken or otherwise auditory information violates this taboo. If it's transmitted visually — writing, signing, painting, email — then it's fine.

Random Magick Domain: Facts, deception, and illusion. Weasels can make the truth unassailable, convince you that your grandmother was from Atlantis, have a rattlesnake look like a fire hose, or winkle accurate information out of a long-lost Sumerian tablet. Since Cryptomancy does not have a blast, its random magick cannot cause direct physical harm.

CRYPTOMANCY MINOR FORMULA SPELLS

THE FORGOTTEN

Cost: 3 minor charges.

Effect: Using this spell, the secret-keeper edits the target out of the world for a short period of time. This requires physical contact, and lasts for as many minutes as the tens place of the successful casting roll. The target immediately vanishes from reality. For the duration of the spell, it is precisely as if they never existed in the first place. The only person who remembers the target's existence is the adept who cast the spell.

At the end of the spell, the target returns, unaware of any interruption. Experiencing or witnessing such a reappearance might trigger an Unnatural (5) check at the GM's discretion. If the target was in a vehicle when the spell was cast, they reappear in the appropriate spot in that vehicle, as if they'd not been interrupted. Should their prior location be occupied or unsafe, they reappear in the nearest safe spot.

GLIB TONGUE

Cost: 3 minor charges.

Effect: By using this spell, the cognoscente can tap into the reservoirs of truth that they carry to make themselves seem more honest. The spell lasts for a number of minutes equal to the casting roll. Whilst it lasts, their Lie ability — or any identity being used as a direct replacement of the Lie ability — gains a +20% bonus, and all rolls to lie successfully are made without difficulty or penalty.

GOOD INSTINCTS

Cost: 3 minor charges.

Effect: The counterpart to Glib Tongue, this spell helps the windbag to know when they are being told the truth. Like its cousin, the spell's effect lasts for a number of minutes equal to the casting roll. During this time, the caster's Notice ability — or other identity being used as a replacement for it — gains +20% for the purposes of knowing when someone is lying, and all such rolls are made without difficulty or penalty.

SEARCH YOUR FEELINGS

Cost: 2 minor charges.

Effect: After casting this spell on a target by touching them, the liar has five minutes to reveal one truth to the target. If they already suspected (or feared) this information to be accurate, they know with certainty that it is in fact true. There's obviously no guarantee that they act on this new conviction. We lie to ourselves all the time. However, the target no longer harbors any actual doubt.

If the target had no prior idea about the fact, then they do not automatically believe it. However, they don't believe the caster to be insincere in the matter, and at least suspect the accuracy of the revelation. If the caster fails to make their revelation within five minutes, the spell is wasted.

Spoken truths still break taboo under this spell, and the truths involved cannot generate a significant charge. Even so, it's sometimes worth it.

SEEING IS BELIEVING

Cost: 3 minor charges.

Effect: Touching an object with their hand, the liar casts this spell and loudly describes with their hand, the liar casts this spell and loudly describes an alternate appearance for the object. Provided that the spell casts successfully, the object appears to all others to be precisely as described. Someone who arrives on the scene after the caster's announcement is still subject to the spell's effects.

There are some restrictions on this, however. The described item must be roughly the same size as the actual object. The illusion is purely visual, so smell and touch are not affected. Finally, it is not possible to change the way a living creature appears. The spell lasts two minutes after the caster has removed their hand from the object (or the object from their hand, if you prefer).

It's best not to hang around after passing that \$1 off as a \$50.

JUDGE OF CHARACTER

Cost: 2 minor charges.

Effect: After spending at least sixty seconds in conversation with the target, the caster is able to use this spell to gain insight into the person they're talking to. If target and caster are part of a group conversation, the target must have addressed at least one sentence to the caster. The spell informs the weasel of the target's obsession or, if they have none, their highest ability. This information is presented as a brief vision of relevant imagery. The knowledge gained cannot help provide a charge, even if it reveals a damaging secret.

WITCHSIGHT

Cost: 3 minor charges.

Effect: This spell allows the cryptomancer to perceive the unseen. Specifically, for a number of minutes equal to the casting roll, the adept becomes able to see non-physical spiritual entities and other residual energies in the immediate area. Assuming there are any to be seen, of course.

The ability to hear these spirits for the duration costs an extra charge, which must be spent in advance, at the time of casting. It doesn't guarantee that they can actually speak.

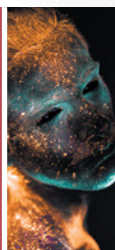
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2: ADEPTS



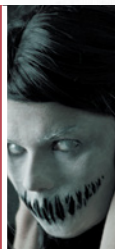
3: AVATARS



4: PLACES



5: FACES



CRYPTOMANCY SIGNIFICANT FORMULA SPELLS

THE LOST

Cost: 4 significant charges.

Effect: This is a longer-lasting version of The Forgotten. A target within visual range is completely edited out of reality for a few hours, as many as the number on the tens die of the casting roll. They vanish, forgotten by all, as if they never were. Get rid of the driver of a car, for instance, and the passengers recall getting into this insane position themselves. Only the caster remembers the missing person.

When the spell ends, the target returns to reality, no time having passed for them. If they were moving, they return to where they would have been if not interrupted, otherwise they go back where they were. A plane passenger reappears in their seat, not in the open air. If the return location is occupied or now unsafe, the target reappears at the nearest safe spot.

Realizing hours have been lost may provoke a stress roll, and looking at the right spot to see someone pop back into reality is an Unnatural (5) check.

CUTTING THE CORD

Cost: 4 significant charges.

Effect: It's a well-known fact, amongst the general public, that there is no such thing as magick. Using this spell, the cognoscente is able to channel the pressure of the belief in this lie into a focused backlash. For a number of hours equal to the tens die of the casting roll, this spell prevents a touched target from successfully accessing any paranormal ability or identity. Specifically, this includes adept magick, avatar channels, random magick, gutter magick, and supernatural identities. All such rolls simply fail. It only affects real, live humans though.

SOWING SEEDS

Cost: 2 significant charges

Effect: To cast this spell, the cognoscente gazes at the target, whispers a lie, and on a successful roll, spends the charges. Whatever was whispered immediately occurs to the target as something they've just realized. It doesn't matter whether they could hear the caster or not.

There's no onus to act on this realization, but the lie is planted. Plausibility is the main deciding factor in whether the target even believes it or not, along with their own personal gullibility. The target feels as if they just remembered or deduced the lie, depending on which seems more likely. Something like "Godzilla is about to eat my car!" only makes the target wonder why their imagination is acting out. Few security guards challenge "I just heard something suspicious in that dark corner," though.

This spell does not trigger the weasel's taboo, as the whisper is not a truth, even if the target of the spell takes it as being one in their own mind.

FOOL'S GOLD

Cost: 3 significant charges.

Effect: This powerful spell edits reality so that a (non-living) object that the cryptomancer is touching with their hand actually becomes something different. Anything up to the size of an SUV is fair game. The change in size, shape, and

function can be quite profound, but the general category of the bulk of its substance — mineral, metal, liquid, organic matter, etc. — has to stay the same. A potato into an oven-ready turkey, or a metal door into a pistol? No problem. Trying to transform snakeskin into a mobile phone wouldn't work, however.

The spell lasts three minutes after the caster has dropped or released the object. For a long, happy life, do not consume objects changed by this spell.

THE BABEL EFFECT

Cost: 2 significant charges.

Effect: In casting this spell, the weasel specifies one language spoken by humans. This language can be centuries dead, so long as people once used it. For the duration of the spell, which lasts a number of hours equal to the sum of the digits of the casting roll, the caster can perfectly understand that language.

This understanding covers both spoken and written text, and the language only has to be clearly identified, not named. "Whatever this damned scroll is written in!" is fine. Codes and ciphers are not automatically broken however, and the fluency only flows one way. The caster cannot speak or write the language, only understand it.

Linguistic comprehension is far enough removed from the hunt of information gathering that using this spell does not invalidate a piece of information from being useful for charging. The chances of a dead language containing a fact harmful to someone living are remote at best, though.

OUT OF THE SHADOWS

Cost: 2 significant charges.

Effect: Like its minor counterpart Judge of Character, this spell can only be cast on a target that the liar has been talking to for at least one minute. If the conversation involves others as well, the target must have addressed at least once sentence to the caster. When the spell hits, the caster gets a brief vision illustrating a fact that is directly related to the target's darkest secret. That secret — or any other directly linked to the vision — cannot subsequently provide the liar with any charges.

TAP THE SOURCE

Cost: 2 significant charges.

Effect: By focusing inward on the collected truths and lies held, the weasel can create a temporary breach in the veil. A demon is pulled through at random, arriving in front of the caster.

That's what Tap the Source can do. What it can't do is make the demon visible or audible, prevent it from wandering off, stop it going back through the veil, make it pay you any attention, hurt it, compel it to honesty, or get rid of it again.

Despite these lethally dangerous shortcomings, some cognoscenti still make use of this spell.

MAJOR CHARGE EFFECTS

Permanently remove one person from reality, so that they never existed. Change a fact about oneself, for example becoming young, or beautiful, or Russian. Permanently change an object into something completely different, such as turning a toad into a sword that kills demons.

1: INTRO



2: ADEPTS



3: AVATARS



4: PLACES



5: FACES





DETRITOMANCY AKA GARBLOGISTS, MAGPIES, PACK RATS

Modern culture relies on constant consumption, and that means constant obsolescence. Each new thing you cram into your crowded life pushes something older away — and eventually out onto the discard pile. It's as true of experiences and people as it is of possessions. Even if you try to preserve something, time wears away at it, decreasing its usefulness, eroding associated memories and affections, until it is just clutter. From there, it's a short step to the garbage heap. Your own existence is no better. As time passes, you get more and more decrepit, more and more obsolete, until you're thrown away, left behind to rot along with all your cares and concerns, while the world grinds on.

All that is, is trash.

Truly understanding that brings a power of its own. Every piece of trash was once coveted, whether for itself, or as part of something greater. Candy wrappers, cigarette butts, used condoms, whatever — it once exerted influence over someone. These shards of energy can be gathered, harvested, their accumulated neglect and decay can be used. Garbage calls to garbage.

The paradox that every detritomancer must come to terms with is that to be a source of power, trash must be gathered, retained, preserved. Only by devoting care and attention to rubbish, by treating the worthless with the greatest respect, can it become a resource. When all is trash, trash is all.

Every detritomancer maintains a midden in their home — their collection of accrued trash. Most of the time, it does not take long before the midden occupies almost all the available space. Homeless garbologists must make do with what they can carry, in bags or shopping carts. A midden must always be protected from the weather as well as the pack rat can manage.

STATS

Generate a Minor Charge: Gather garbage in a public place. For every full two hours that the pack rat spends in public collecting trash — from the sidewalk, in a park, along a river-bank, etc. — they get one minor charge. They can't be too picky, though. Once the garbage is close enough to be collectable without taking a step, they have to gather it. Choosing one item from a bin or other receptacle is sufficient, but taking more is permissible. If they don't manage to gather at least ten pieces of garbage in the two-hour time period, no charge is generated.

Garbage specifically means something that was discarded because it was not worth keeping, or something that was accidentally abandoned and not found again. Gifts, purchases, thefts, items put down but not genuinely abandoned, things deliberately hidden, these are not trash.

Openly gathering trash in public requires a Self (2) check. Detritomancers adapt to this quickly, of course. Almost all detritomancers own several trash grabbers and pick sticks.

Generate a Significant Charge: There are two ways to generate a significant charge.

One is highly unpredictable, and relies on randomly finding a piece of trash that is still valuable or that someone strongly regrets losing or throwing away. Specifically, this means an object of sentimental or practical value to someone, like a diary or treasured photograph, or an item objectively worth more than \$100. For every minor charge generated, roll a ten-sided die. On a 1, a significant charge is generated instead. The GM decides what the significant trash item is.

The other method is reliable, but risky. The detritomancer has to spend a full hour illegally searching through trash that is actively guarded from public access. This might mean

1: INTRO



2: ADEPTS



3: AVATARS



4: PLACES



5: FACES



breaking into the janitorial storage area of a large company, or riffling through the dustbins on some celebrity's estate. One item of garbage claimed in that time is enough to generate the charge, and it doesn't make any difference whether the former owner regrets discarding it or not. Any one site is good for a single charge per week.

Generate a Major Charge: Find something of major historical significance or vast financial value while attempting to generate a minor or significant charge. An example of the former might be the first draft of *My Name is Dirk A.* or a female *E. woodii* seed. The latter must be any single item worth more than half a million dollars, such as a long-forgotten Rembrandt thrown out in a stack of horrible Victorian knock-offs, or an obscenely large bearer bond.

Taboo: When all is trash, trash is all, and garbologists have two taboos.

Firstly, they may not voluntarily own any single item worth \$100 or more for over twenty-four hours in total. Stealing counts as taking ownership, as does borrowing something for more than three days. Failing to observe this taboo voids all charges until the item is thrown away (or, if borrowed, returned). Renting or hiring something that is valued at greater than \$100 is permitted, so long as the rent is at the lower end of the going rate, and is paid as agreed.

There are two exceptions. Money, being abstract, does not trigger this taboo (although a bank account holding more than \$100 does). More importantly, items that were recovered during charge generation are always safe. Even if it is valuable trash, it is still trash.

Note that involuntary ownership of a valuable item or resource for more than twenty-four hours does not trigger taboo — so long as the garbologist starts genuinely trying to rid themselves of the item as soon as they are aware of it. The taboo lies in accepting existing value as desirable, not in weaponized red tape.

The other taboo relates to the midden, and the respect it requires. Deliberately damaging or getting rid of any piece of garbage owned breaks taboo. This includes destroying, abandoning, selling, lending, leasing out, or giving away a piece of the midden. Other people's actions have similar effect — damaging or diminishing a magpie's midden dissipates their charges, unless the person responsible is an interloper.

The midden must contain both garbage collected as part of charge generation and garbage generated by living. Yes, even used matches. Spending money is safe, as is being compelled to get rid of something. Loose hairs, fingernail trimmings and so on, being generated by the body, do not count as trash. So that guy with the fifty Mason jars full of his own pee has something else going on.

Random Magick Domain: Detritomancy is about engaging with the forgotten, the discarded, the neglected, and the unwanted, and wringing utility from them. Consequently, pack rats have influence over knowledge and awareness, decrepitude, and unconscious action. They might not be able to get you to the other side of the country in a hurry, but they can really mess with your enemy's life.

DETRITOMANCY MINOR FORMULA SPELLS

LAZINESS

Cost: 2 minor charges.

Effect: Evoking and projecting a feeling of neglect and futility, the detritomancer saps the motivation from a visible target. Why bother really trying, when there is nothing lasting to achieve? The next time the target attempts a roll, whatever ability it is that they try to use suffers a -10% penalty. The malaise they feel just won't permit them give it their all.

Repeated uses of Laziness stack sequentially, adding the same shift to several rolls. Note that since Laziness works by affecting motivation, it has no effect on targets that do not actually have psychological states. You can't inflict Laziness on a landmine.

The effect dissipates at dawn.

TOO MUCH JUNK FOOD

Cost: 1 minor charge.

Effect: The Detritomancy minor blast spell makes the target's body fall apart in ways that are associated with misuse — sprains, dislocations, cracked bones, minor ruptures, and so on.

Being in top physical condition makes the target less susceptible, because there is less ongoing deterioration to work with. Calculate the damage done as usual for a touch-ranged minor blast, but against someone with a Fitness ability at 50% or higher, the caster takes a -20% to their adept identity. Non-organic targets are damaged by this attack, provided that they'd degrade over a century or so, but intangible ones are immune.

SIMPLE CARELESSNESS

Cost: 1 minor charge.

Effect: It's so easy to lose track. We've all put something important down somewhere for a moment and then neglected to pick it back up, or dropped an object from a pocket or purse without even realizing that it fell. We notice far too late, once we have no idea where it could have gotten to.

Used at visual range, this spell makes the target drop one object at some point in the next ten minutes without noticing. Worn and held items are not affected, but things in pockets, handbags, backpacks, and so on are all fair game. The item that drops is chosen at random. If the target has nothing to lose, the charge is wasted.

For a cost of an extra minor charge, the garbologist can choose to physically body-check the target and, in doing so, make them drop one object they're holding. This doesn't work if the object held is actually being used at the time — the target won't drop the sword they're trying to skewer someone with — or if the object is a magickal focus, such as a fulminaturge's totem weapon.

Using this spell on a pack rat does not make them break taboo, nor can an object lost through this spell count as garbage for generating a charge.

1: INTRO



2: ADEPTS



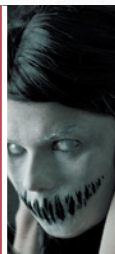
3: AVATARS



4: PLACES



5: FACES



PAST DUE FOR MAINTENANCE

Cost: 1 minor charge.

Effect: It all turns to garbage in the end. It's inevitable. With this spell, the pack rat simply reminds ordinary matter of the fate that awaits it, encouraging it towards decay and breakdown. The effects are not immediate, but they are relentless.

The target object cannot be larger than fist-sized, and it either must be visible, or a discrete part of something visible. Such a component can only be targeted if the garbologist knows where it is in the larger object, and what it looks like. So, if they've never seen a gasket, they can't blight one inside a car engine. Knowledge ability rolls may be required, at the GM's discretion.

Once the spell casts, the target degrades at a rate equivalent to one year of regular use for every full day that passes. Paint peels, steel rusts, wood rots, and so on. This decay continues until the target either completely wears away into dust, receives a thorough renovation, or is magically cleansed.

Artifacts, magickal foci, and items that are stored in conditions designed to preserve them (in a museum, for example) are not affected by this spell.

FORGETFULNESS

Cost: 3 minor charges.

Effect: In time, all that we achieve is lost. If we're lucky, we won't live to see our own utter obscurity, but to be forgotten and discarded is simply the fate that we all share.

With this spell, the detritomancer reaches into that inevitability and pulls a cover of disregard down over an upcoming event in the target's life. It requires physical contact, and the pack rat has to know the time and place of the event they're targeting, but if the spell casts successfully, the victim completely forgets about one arranged meeting, appointment, or similar engagement.

If reminded by a third party, including a smartphone alarm, the victim remembers the event. Otherwise, the effect lasts until dawn. If the meeting is a matter of life and death, the target can attempt to roll their Secrecy ability to resist the compulsion to forget.

UNPLANNED OUTAGE

Cost: 2 minor charges.

Effect: Marshalling the energies of neglect and disinterest, the pack rat pushes against the immediate area that they are in. Something immediately happens to cause a small, unnoticed breach in security in this area. This could be a computer left logged on, a door not quite shutting, or a guard just resting their eyes for a moment. The breach lasts for a number of minutes equal to the ones place die of the Detritomancy roll.

The garbologist does not know what form the breach took, nor how long it lasts, but they do feel the effect expire. There's no guarantee a second casting manifests in the same way, though. Note that an "area" could encompass a room, the nearest wall of a building, a courtyard, a stretch of street, or similar. If there are no security systems to disable, the charges are lost.

THIS TOO SHALL PASS

Cost: 2 minor charges.

Effect: When one understands that nothing tangible is meaningful, then every challenge becomes simply a problem of managing one's reactions. In focusing on this truth, the magpie steels themselves psychologically to address any crisis in terms of their personal response to it.

Mechanically, this takes the effect of automatically having the next stress check roll against the Self meter rather than whatever meter it would otherwise have challenged. This spell only works on the caster. It does not stack, and it lasts until dawn.

DETRITOMANCY SIGNIFICANT FORMULA SPELLS

WHAT'S THE POINT?

Cost: 1 significant charge.

Effect: Building on the apathy of the Laziness spell, this clouds the deepest drives and motivations of a target in visual range. Nothing makes any difference in the long run, so why bother trying to dig into your greatest reserves? When the spell is successfully cast, the pack rat chooses either the target's obsession identity or one of their passions. For the next three hours, the target cannot use that obsession or passion to flip-flop any dice rolls.

SLIPPING THROUGH THE CRACKS

Cost: 2 significant charges.

Effect: The things we notice represent a tiny fraction of everything going on around us. The homeless know this only too well. Almost nobody pays attention to the disadvantaged, given a choice. This spell wraps the detritomancer in a cloak of neglect and decrepitude, marking them as beneath notice, outside of context.

So long as they take no startling action — loud speech, sudden rapid movement, being aggressive — the garbologist remains unseen and unheard for a number of minutes equal to the casting roll. A person who is specifically watching out vigilantly for intruders, such as a guard on alert, rolls their Notice ability at a -20% penalty. If they succeed, they perceive the caster normally. People watching the caster's location remotely, whether through magick or technology, are not affected by this spell.

YOUR BODY, YOUR TEMPLE

Cost: 1 significant charge.

Effect: The Detritomancy significant blast, this spell works in a similar way to Too Much Junk Food. The damage it inflicts on a target in visual range manifests as wear and tear. Non-fatal injuries might become shattered bones, failed non-critical organs, burst blood vessels, and so on. A fatal attack could appear as a sudden stroke, an aneurysm, a massive heart attack, etc.

As with the minor blast, being in good physical condition provides resistance to the damage. Against someone with a Fitness ability at 50% or higher, the caster takes a -20% to their adept identity. This blast affects non-organic material like doors or walls in the form of rust, degradation, rot, and similar degeneration, but it does not harm intangible enemies or anything that can resist the passage of centuries unchanged.

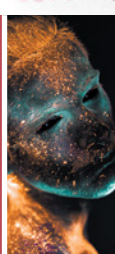
1: INTRO



2: ADEPTS



3: AVATARS



4: PLACES



5: FACES



ALLEY CAT AUGURY

Cost: 1 significant charge.

Effect: When breaks occur, they typically follow the lines of existing faults. That's as true of earthquakes as it is of minds. By examining the patterns that form in the point of breaking, the garbologist can gain insight into the faults behind reality itself. This spell allows the caster to obtain information on any topic associated with Detritomancy's broader random magick domain — things forgotten or lost, weaknesses and dislikes, the neglected or decrepit.

In addition to a significant charge, the use of this spell requires the killing and disembowelment of a stray or verminous animal. This may well require a stress check, particularly for gentle onlookers. The GM's decision is final, but this process usually yields hints and obscurities. Things found with the aid of this spell do not work to help the caster charge up.

It is whispered that disemboweling a "stray" human for this spell permits the discovery of highly specific, accurate information on any topic whatsoever, but no garbologist admits to knowing whether this rumor is true or not.

I DON'T NEED THIS

Cost: 1 significant charge.

Effect: The urge to hold on to the past is a trap, an excuse that the weak use to shield against the awareness of their irrelevance. "This was important," they say, "so I matter." But past experiences can anchor pain and cement weaknesses in place. When the past has outlived its usefulness, it too becomes trash.

With this spell, the magpie can help a willing target discard the memories that anchor any one of their hardened or failed notches. First, it is necessary for the target to describe the event to the detritomancer in detail. The caster helps the target obtain a vague understanding of futility of everything, the traumatic memory included, and to embody the memory within a physical possession. This possession needs to either have significant personal meaning to the target, or to be worth at least \$100. The caster then spends the charge, the target throws the object away, and the notch is removed. Until the following dawn, the target cannot flip-flop any rolls.

This process can only be used to help any given target once a week, and the discarded object cannot be used to gain the caster a charge. It is also not possible to cast this spell on yourself.

DUMPSTER DIVER

Cost: 1 significant charge.

Effect: With this spell, the garbologist reaches out mentally to a target in visual range and gifts them an unconscious understanding of the true meaninglessness of material things. The conscious mind barely notices this, and at most, the target might feel a bit gloomy. However, the idea of using money or any other form of barter becomes seriously abhorrent.

Specifically, while this spell is in effect, attempting to perform any economic transaction triggers a Self (8) check. The idea of trading seems futile, stupidly shortsighted to the point of being demeaning. Adepts and avatars whose magickal identities are focused directly on currency, finance, or trade may resist this effect by rolling a success on the relevant mystic identity.

The spell lasts until dawn.

FUTILITY

Cost: 2 significant charges.

Effect: To understand that all is trash and everything that you do is forgotten and discarded can be quite demotivating to the unenlightened. By opening a target within view's mind to this truth, this spell makes it difficult to do, well, anything much.

In game terms, the victim of this spell becomes unable to do anything requiring a dice roll, social interaction, or concentration. Resisting this wave of ennui requires a Self (8) check for each complex action the victim wants to take. The effects last for a number of hours equal to the number on the ones place die of the casting roll.

Most people affected by this just stop whatever they were doing and wander off in a preoccupied funk. Being attacked or endangered immediately ends the spell, as does seeing one of your five relationships in immediate danger.

This spell does not affect detritomancers or targets without meaningful complex psychology. Alligators do not suffer existential angst.

MAJOR CHARGE EFFECTS

Have an entire city block immediately crumble into rubble. Obliterate all the trash from an entire county. Gain the life-long power to be unnoticed by customs officials and border guards. Permanently change people's perceptions of one product line so that everyone knows it's rubbish.

1: INTRO



2: ADEPTS



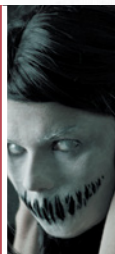
3: AVATARS



4: PLACES



5: FACES





ENTROPOMANCY AKA BODYBAGS, CHAOS MAGES, EXPLODING DICE

People like to feel safe, to think they're in control of their lives. They drive to some boring job, work for someone who forgets them months after they leave for another job, drive home, raise kids, go to bed. Rinse, repeat, maybe with some lawn work or video games in the mix. In every moment, they think, "I'm the master of my destiny."

You don't sell yourself that lie. There is no destiny. There is no master. Your eyes are open: everyone is at the whim of chaos itself (Eris or Discordia, if you're into personification).

Some people think they get the idea, and play the game in little ways. They road trip to Vegas for fun, and "lose what they can afford." They pick fights with people who might not fight back. They risk other people's money on playing with hedge funds. All of them are trying to make out with chaos while wearing a dental dam.

Not you. You wholly devote your life to that (or her). Risk is in your blood, your soul. All of life is a roulette wheel, and you put everything on oo.

Wagering is worship, and what you're wagering is yourself, in little or not-so-little ways. That takes different forms: shoplifting from a corner store just for kicks, picking a fight with someone who looks like they won't take your shit, taking your mom's savings to Atlantic City without her knowing. Unlike those fools who don't really get it, you're not here to win. You're here to play.

Win or lose, chaos nods your way, and you get a rush of mystical euphoria. When you win, well, the win doesn't matter — that's not the point. When you lose, it hurts, but that hurt makes the rush taste just a little sweeter. It's all about the surrender of a vulnerable moment.

Endure that, and that rush turns into true power. That power is a loaded die, a black marker, an ace up your sleeve, a favor from the universe all in one. You play the True Game, and you can stack the deck in your favor here and there. If

that doesn't sound fair — hell, it's not supposed to be fair. Chance isn't fair, and as its disciple you get to use that power make all those people who feel safe truly experience risk by stacking the deck against them.

Will it blow up in your face? Assuredly so. That's all part of the Game. But you gotta let it ride.

STATS

Generate a Minor Charge: Risk something you feel if you lose: money you need, injury that hurts for a while (1d10 wounds), humiliation you can't shrug off. It's always your choice, always something you initiate, and always something immediate. Risks you don't expect (like an ambush) don't pay off.

There's a caveat: chaos knows the risks, even if you don't. If you think the risk is great enough, but it's not — someone stacked the deck in your favor — you won't feel a thing. (In game terms, the risk needs to be at least 10% likely.) That also means if magick is used by anyone to alter the outcome in your favor, no charge for you.

Generate a Significant Charge: Risk bigger stakes — still a deliberate choice with immediate consequences. This time, it's pointless, outright stupid even to mundane gamblers and adrenaline junkies. Serious injury or death need to be on the table (like 5d10 wounds), but the trick is it can't be for something you want to do for *any other reason* than to feel that rush. If you need to fight that armed thug to find out where your brother's being held, chaos yawns. But play the entropomancer classic game of Russian roulette, and party on.

Some very well-off or well-connected entropomancers can risk wagers that are fates as bad as death. Those would count too, though such moments are few and far between.

1: INTRO



2: ADEPTS



3: AVATARS



4: PLACES



5: FACES



Generate a Major Charge: Want ultimate power? Put at least ten people in mortal danger from your pointless gamble, like rolling the dice to see if your bomb blows up a diner. Think of it as borrowing chips from a bunch of friends to match a bet while holding a pair of deuces. Trick is, those people must be aware of the danger, and you must be able to see and feel their absolute awareness of the moment — everyone in that diner should know what's going on, even if they don't understand the mystical meaning behind it. Unsuspecting people aren't enough to satisfy Mother Chaos. Or if you risk the life of someone you love who cares about you in return (along with your own), that's more than enough to count as ten random people.

Taboo: Knowingly putting someone else at risk to protect yourself. Eris mildly disapproves of her devotees playing it safe by walking away from a bad bet, but she doesn't strip power away unless you try to play the game from a position of safety. Gunman in the next room? You don't ask someone else to go in first. Dropping \$10,000 you borrowed from a friend on a blackjack hand drains you just as well if you know they might forgive the debt instead of destroy your social credibility or break your fingers (or both).

Random Magick Domain: Entropomancy is all about coincidence. Craving a cigarette? Someone accidentally left behind a half-full pack right where you're about to sit. Looking for your dipsomancer buddy? He's in the first bar you try. Need into a locked building? The side door happens to be slightly ajar.

ENTROPOMANCY MINOR FORMULA SPELLS

TASTE OF CHAOS

Cost: 1 minor charge.

Effect: Things just suddenly seem to go bad for the target of this spell. They suffer a -10% penalty to their next action. You can stack the deck, and increase the penalty by -10% per extra charge spent, to a maximum of your spell roll as a percentage. You can't use this effect on the same person more than once a day.

THE EVIL EYE

Cost: 1 minor charge.

Effect: This is the Entropomancy minor blast. The victim's skin suddenly manifests small injuries in the shape of words, symbols, or pictures, depending on what's deep in your mind when you blast away. If the victim dies, they burst or fall apart, leaving a horrifying mess — causing stress checks, but they don't become grenades that damage anything around them.

You can wager with the cosmos to get more damage out of the blast. If you want to gamble, roll a die before the damage is resolved. If it's even, add that number to the damage. If it's odd, the blast does nothing and you lose the charge. Keep going until you lose, are satisfied, or have won five rolls.

PEEK AT THE TOP CARD

Cost: 1 minor charge.

Effect: You get a hunch about your next roll of any type, or the next roll someone else makes in an action that directly involves you (helping or hurting).

PIERCE THE VEIL

Cost: 2 minor charges.

Effect: This summons up a demon, who speaks to you telepathically. Fun fact: this spell doesn't grant any power over the entity you've called forth, nor any way to get rid of it if things get out of hand. If you want actual control, use the significant entropomancer spell Cage for the Dead (and a little luck).

FORTUNE'S FOOL

Cost: 2 minor charges.

Effect: This spell lets you re-roll a failure you just made — even a matched failure or a fumble. Coincidence intervenes, though for good or ill depends on how you roll the second time. If you do this in a high-pressure moment (like combat), casting this spell is considered part of the same action or moment before resolving the initial roll. This only works on your failures, not someone else's.

Two restrictions: you can't cast this spell twice for the same roll, and you can't cast it on another Fortune's Fool. All the charges in the world won't give you infinite luck.

It's your action, and you point your pistol at someone just as eager to take you out permanently. You pull the trigger and roll a failure. Before anything gets resolved, as part of the same action, you can attempt Fortune's Fool. If you succeed at the spell, you get to roll that attack again before anything else happens. Whatever the results of that roll, that's what you're stuck with.

You're trying to get away from an angry entropomancer with a gun, and your friend is covering you. You witness them get shot in the gut, so the GM calls for a Violence (3) check. You fail that, but being an entropomancer yourself, you cast Fortune's Fool to get yourself a chance to keep your shit together so you get away without making a stupid panicked decision in where you run. Hopefully you do.

BULLETPROOF CHUTZPAH

Cost: 2 minor charges.

Effect: For a number of rounds equal to the ones places on your roll, you have a mystical shield made of unbelievable luck, potentially shielding you from physical harm (fists, knives, gunshots, trucks, anything other than magick). Any such attacks during this time have a 50% chance of completely failing to harm you. Roll a die before damage is rolled. If even, the damage is 0; if odd, the damage isn't affected.

You can cast this only on yourself. While it's active, you can't gain any charges, even those you might gain that have nothing to do with physical harm.

1: INTRO



2: ADEPTS



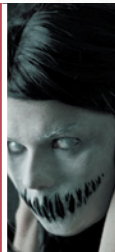
3: AVATARS



4: PLACES



5: FACES



DOUBLE OR NOTHING

Cost: 3 minor charges.

Effect: The world around you bends to your swagger and confidence. Add a boost to your next roll equal to this spell's roll rounded down to the ten's digit (19% means +10%, 41% means +40%). You can cast this on someone else in your line of sight for an additional 2 minor charges.

Yes, if you roll something with 0 for the ten's digit (01% to 09%), you don't get a boost. Or, technically, you get a boost of +0%, however you want to look at it. Either way, that's where the "or Nothing" comes in.

ENTROPOMANCY SIGNIFICANT FORMULA SPELLS

KILLING STARE

Cost: 1 significant charge.

Effect: This is the Entropomancy significant blast spell. It has the same horrifying look and feel as the minor blast, with a lot of oomph to it. Unlike the Evil Eye though, you can't gamble to add damage to this heavy hitter.

I FEEL LUCKY

Cost: 1 significant charge.

Effect: While you're at a search engine, think hard about someone or something. Type the first thing that comes into your mind, and click the search button. The first search result tells you where you need to go, the phone number of someone you need to reach, or another big step in what you seek.

CAGE FOR THE DEAD

Cost: 2 significant charges.

Effect: This spell allows you to play the gridiron game of *controlling a summoned demon*. Good luck with that, and keep in mind demons are contrary little bastards who do their best to screw you over on general principles — even when they don't have anything to gain by their treachery.

The one thing entropomancers can't force a demon to do is go back to the astral plane. Once a new player walks into your metaphysical poker night, Eris isn't inclined to let you kick them out. (But you can push the demon into a host and hope they can vanquish the demon — if you're a desperate jerk willing to break taboo by getting someone else to face what scares you.)

LUCK OF THE DAMNED

Cost: 1 significant charge.

Effect: Reduce all damage just inflicted on you from one source to 0. For this to work, you need to state the coincidence that explains the failure, tweaking the reality of what just transpired. "The gun jammed," works. "The shooter just realized you look like his mother and reconsidered his life choices," doesn't, unfortunately.

The GM determines if your coincidence works — though if your idea is too much of a stretch, they should work with you to come up with one that does or pretend the spell didn't happen. If nobody can come with a good idea, pretend the spell wasn't attempted and the charge wasn't spent.

And no, you can't use this to undo damage earned by a charge-building action (or the immediate reaction from someone who took offense at your charge-building action).

I WIN

Cost: 2 significant charges.

Effect: Turn a moment of failure into an utter triumph. For the action you just rolled, that roll is a success regardless of what you needed. Rolled a 78% when you needed a 55% or lower? Congrats, your 78% wins you the moment. The normal rules for what you do with that roll, such as calculating damage, apply to that result just as if you would have won with it anyway. You can cast this as part of a reaction that you just rolled; it doesn't count as its own action to do so.

This spell never works on fumbles. When you roll 00, Mother Chaos wants you to feel it.

It's your action, and you point your hand cannon at someone just as eager to take you out permanently. (Yes, again. You're not exactly the making-friends type, apparently.) You pull the trigger and roll a failure at 88%. Cast I Win like a champ, and the damage from that 88% gunshot blows away the competition... literally.

Still in that horrible situation where your friend is trying to protect you from that entropomancer with an even bigger gun this time. You roll a whopping 99% on that Helplessness (8) check as you watch your friend suddenly have a lot less of a skull. Succeed at I Win, and you're solid enough to run, or hell, decide to avenge your friend right then and there.

What I always tell people when they ask me if I feel lucky is: do you feel aligned to the whims of the universe? Because I do.

1: INTRO



2: ADEPTS



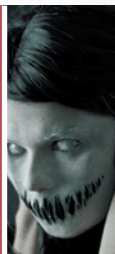
3: AVATARS



4: PLACES



5: FACES



See "Controlling Demons" on page 110 of Book Two: Run.

EDIT THE WORLD

Cost: 2 significant charges.

Effect: Will a recent moment you experienced to have been slightly different. Forget to put your shotgun in your trunk? You didn't. Wished you could have said goodbye to your girlfriend before you stormed off to your death? Turns out you did. Don't want to bleed out in a ditch after being shot up by those goons? Thankfully the harm wasn't that bad.

There are a bunch of caveats to this spell. First, this lets you only change an event that could or would have happened in the last seven hours. You can stretch this by an hour for each additional significant charge you pour into the spell, but you can't go more than eleven hours back.

Second, the scale is small and personal. You can't win the lotto, even at the small scale. You can't make someone not-dead. (At least, not with significant charges.)

Third, causality ensures that whatever happens between then and now isn't overly fucked with. That shotgun you most definitely put in your trunk this morning? You wouldn't have thought to take it out of the trunk until now, even if it would have made sense for you to have done so. (Time-paradox tenses get annoying, we know.) The GM makes the call on if the change is legitimate, and changes that have unavoidable cascading effects on what would have happened in between then and now are too significant and unavoidable.

Entropomancers have different ways to explain this spell, from time being a spongy sort of fabric that can be twisted around to sliding into an alternate history where what you needed to have happened did (or didn't).

You can use this spell to effectively undo damage done to you, except that earned from a charging ritual. The attacks against you happened, but you recover wounds equal to your roll. Edit the World differs from Luck of the Damned in that it can erase any number of attacks that happened to you, not simply nullify the most recent one. The harm done to you was as painful and horrifying as before you cast the spell, just not as bad as it seemed.

COLD READ

Cost: 2 significant charges.

Effect: Look someone in the eyes when you cast this spell. You get a significant inform sense based on knowing what they're likely to do, or if they're bluffing. You can use this sense as a reaction in a conflict, if it's better than your normal options for avoiding attacks or manipulation.

If the target ever has a dramatic personality shift, this sense becomes useless. While it is active, you can't earn charges from the target, either with rituals or otherwise.

ON A ROLL

Cost: 3 significant charges.

Effect: You're inexplicably lucky for twenty-four hours. When you need to roll, you do so with a +10% boost. There's a stinger, though: if you break taboo during that time, the spell instantly ceases.

MAJOR CHARGE EFFECTS

With major Entropomancy changes, you get the biggest payday of them all: to dramatically change your history. Be the only one to have the winning numbers to today's Powerball. Avoid the ambush that killed your friends last week. Make it so your dad hadn't had that affair that drove your mom away. The catch: you can never undo an event you did to gain charges. By extension, if the event you'd want to change would have you be such a different person that you wouldn't be an entropomancer at all now, that's off limits. Dame Fortune has her hooks in you forever; nothing's gonna change that.

You also can't change a moment of ascension, no matter how tied to your personal history that moment is. "Fixed point in time," as the popular show says.

1: INTRO



2: ADEPTS



3: AVATARS



4: PLACES



5: FACES





EPIDEROMANCY AKA FLESHWORKERS, SKINNERS, TRAUMA CASES

You know the truth is in your veins. Let it out.

No one sees your true self until you wear the bleeding mask of pain. Open it up.

Your body is your temple. Plunder it.

It started with cutting. You got dumped or got fat or got jacked, and in the middle of the night you went into the kitchen and got the knife, or to the bathroom for a razor blade. You started small. Little cuts on the inside of your thighs. Slices on your upper arm. Cuts on your chest. Cutting put you in control. You knew you had one true thing: the reality of your body, your dominion over your own flesh. It wasn't suicide. It was the opposite. There isn't a word for what it was.

That smug fuck at the hospital cheerfully said it was a coping mechanism. He wanted to explain it away, put you in a support group, introduce you to some other cutters. He didn't get it. Neither did they.

Some people grow out of cutting. You grew into it. You did it when you didn't have to. Sometimes the blood ran and then you spoke in a voice that wasn't your own. A voice of power. You learned to use that voice. You found you could cut your skin without blades. You could open up on command, the will made flesh, the blood running free.

Then you realized you could do it to someone else.

You're beyond cutting now. You're even beyond yourself. You speak in the voice of power all the time and you no longer remember what your old voice was like. You are strong now. Not vulnerable. Not weak. Not dumped or fat or jacked. You are everyone who you never imagined you could be.

The central paradox of Epideromancy is that it creates from destruction, builds identity from self-mutilation. The path to mastery of the self is only, in the end, the path to ruination. Epideromancers are variously known as

“fleshworkers,” “skimmers,” and “trauma cases.” The pinnacle of Epideromancy would be a skinner bleeding himself to death.

STATS

Generate a Minor Charge: The fleshworker gives themselves a small injury that causes 3 wounds.

There's no need to roll for this, but for charging, the adept needs to have access to something that can cause controllable damage, like a box cutter or a hammer. Without access to a tool they can control safely, they must make do with generating a significant charge instead.

In a pinch, an epideromancer can generate a minor charge every five seconds. Accepting wound care — mundane or magical — from another person breaks taboo, and epideromantic magick can never heal the wounds taken in charge generation. So, it takes about a week of rest to fully recover from generating 2 minor charges. It's not possible to perform surgery on yourself, but an adept with an identity skilled in first aid and access to supplies can give themselves golden hour treatment.

Giving someone else permission to cause the damage does not generate a charge, it breaks taboo. Skinners cannot charge up off combat.

Generate a Significant Charge: The skinner deals themselves a considerable number of wounds.

Anything that would be considered a melee attack counts as a source of charges, and so does using the environment to damage yourself willy-nilly. A knife in the thigh, a lump hammer to the forehead, running head-down at a wall, it all deals 2d10 wounds — rolled secretly by the GM, of course. If the dice are matched, that's another 3 wounds.

It's always possible to damage yourself significantly

1: INTRO



2: ADEPTS



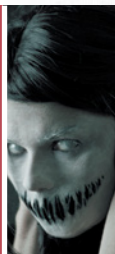
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somehow, wherever you are, unless it's a carefully monitored suicide watch. Generating a significant charge takes a few seconds. Bystanders probably try to stop such blatant self-destruction however, if there are any.

It takes up to the better part of a month of rest to recover from generating a significant charge. Even with perfect first aid, the skinner would still need two weeks of taking it easy to be back to full.

Generate a Major Charge: The epideromancer permanently cripples themselves.

Although skimmers are one of the very few schools to have trivially easy access to a major charge, it is not a step that any take lightly. The amount of damage required to the self is profound — remove both eyes, become permanently deaf, cut out the tongue, hack off a limb, sever the spinal cord above the waist, or take complete second degree burns (or equivalent) to the face. Facial destruction can leave the adept's vision intact so long as things like nose, lips, ears, and eyebrows are destroyed.

Anything less is unlikely to do the trick. Castration is not an acute enough disability to generate a major charge. The damage has to be obvious to anyone interacting with the adept, not just lovers.

In addition to the ongoing handicap, this process also deals 1–100 wounds, rolled secretly by the GM. Given that normal humans have a wound threshold of 50, there is a significant chance of dying. Ad-hoc self-surgery is ludicrously dangerous.

Neither the wounds nor the handicap involved can ever be healed, naturally or magically. The power drawn from the maiming leaves the body unable to accept any recovery. Regular prosthetics or adaptive devices to help cope are fine, however.

Taboo: Allowing anyone else to modify your body.

If a trauma case permits any other person to alter them physically, all their charges are lost. This covers everything from going to see a doctor or dentist right down to getting a manicure or haircut. Involuntary actions do not break taboo, though. It's safe to be wounded in combat — "safe" — or to be surprised by a friend sneakily chopping off a lock of hair. Fleshworkers who are the recipients of life-saving emergency surgery or treatment won't break their taboo so long as they strenuously resist the attempt.

Random Magick Domain: Fleshworkers can alter bodies, and do nothing else. It is, in many ways, the most pragmatic and down-to-earth style. There's no ephemeral philosophy here — just effects on flesh and blood and bone. This school's magick works on animals as well as people and, with time and significant charge treatments, can heal disease.

EPIDEROMANCY MINOR FORMULA SPELLS

WARPING

Cost: 1 minor charge.

Effect: The Epideromancy minor blast warps the victim's body. The adept can slap a target and rip half the skin off their head, or punch them in stomach and make their thumbs shatter.

The caster must be touching the target to blast them. In combat, this means either rolling a successful punch or kick attack first, or just attempting to lay a finger on the target. Trying to just touch someone gets +20% to Struggle or an identity replacing it, but attacking adds the hand-to-hand damage. Either way, the blast does damage equal to the sum of the dice of the successful casting roll.

The benefit to this is that the caster chooses where the damage goes — a specific joint or bone, a blood vessel, an eye, the skin of the lips, whatever. It's not possible to turn non-fatal damage into a lethal wound, so targeting the heart is likely to give the victim a nasty twinge rather than a coronary. Cosmetic damage reflects the severity of the damage. Inflicting 2 wounds isn't going to tear someone's jaw off, but 20 might well do just that.

REGENERATION

Cost: 1–2 minor charges.

Effect: The skinner lays hands on a wound and casts this spell, healing some of the damage. It works on the adept themselves, as well as on other people and animals. The source of the damage doesn't matter. Magickal or mundane, this can help. The wounds recovered are equal to the number on the ones die of the casting roll.

This spell only works once per injury, and can never heal damage taken in gaining Epideromancy charges. Add a minor charge to the cost if the injury has already received successful medical attention.

THE FLESH IS MY SERVANT

Cost: 1 minor charge.

Effect: By manipulating muscle and blood flow, the skinner can temporarily enhance their physical abilities. The spell lasts until the next time they go to sleep. Until then, one chosen ability — Fitness, Dodge, Pursuit, or Struggle — gets +10%.

This spell does not stack to provide anything other than +10%, but it can be used by particularly cautious trauma cases to repeatedly cover as many abilities it can affect. It does not heal wounds however, and cannot affect rolls made before the spell was cast.

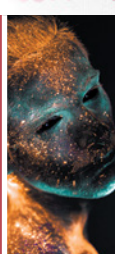
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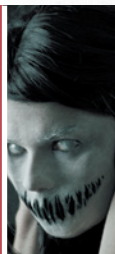
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THE MIRROR LIES

Cost: 1 minor charge.

Effect: With the help of this spell, the fleshworker can change their appearance until the next time they fall asleep. The alterations it makes are physical rather than illusory, but they are quite minor in scope. This can include changing color of skin, hair, or eyes by several shades, changing height by an inch or two, altering distribution of body weight or the appearance of muscularity, tweaking facial features, and so on. It also allows them to look convincingly like a gender-flipped twin of themselves.

The Mirror Lies isn't good enough to allow the adept to mimic someone else convincingly, unless they already happen to closely resemble the person. A passing likeness is possible if the caster isn't too dissimilar. Multiple castings of this spell cannot build on each other, as the effect is rooted in the caster's actual physical likeness, but several changes can be incorporated into one casting.

RELENTLESS WILL

Cost: 1 minor charge.

Effect: Relentless Will removes the need for one night's sleep. Having cast it, the fleshworker feels well-rested and refreshed for the next sixteen hours, and OK for the following eight. There is no sleep debt to catch up on afterwards. At the GM's discretion, the fleshworker can take stress checks to Self when using this spell every day for extended periods of time.

GREATER WARPING

Cost: 3 minor charges.

Effect: Imagine your legs slamming shut, the skin between them dissolving away, the flesh melding, the knees and ankles fusing together, the whole flowing and distorting until there is one horrible pillar of flesh where your legs used to be... With the power of Greater Warping, the epidermancer can distort a body, edit it, twist it in ways the victim never imagined.

The spell requires bodily contact with the victim, and each application affects an area the size of the caster's hand. It twists and fuses bone, cause skin to flow together or roll away, blight flesh, or seal orifices, all in seconds. The alteration does not need to be where the caster is touching the victim. A skinner who is also a qualified plastic surgeon would be well-placed to perform cosmetic improvements with this spell. This spell can even erase or smudge fingerprints.

All changes made this way are permanent, and require surgery to undo. A victim whose mouth and nostrils have been sealed over runs out of breath after one round for every five points of their wound threshold. They fall unconscious two rounds after that, and are dead after an additional four rounds.

Being the target of — or witnessing — this spell may require an Unnatural (5) check at the GM's discretion.

EPIDEROMANCY SIGNIFICANT FORMULA SPELLS

BODY LIKE A STILL POND

Cost: 1 significant charge.

Effect: A powerful defensive spell, this allows the fleshworker's body to flow and re-form in response to damage. A knife cut is as damaging as dragging a stick through water. Bullets pass through the flesh with barely a ripple. Just seeing this effect is an Unnatural (3) check.

In mechanical terms, if the fleshworker is attacked physically, they only take wounds equal to the number on the tens die of the successful attack roll. Take a point-blank shotgun to the face on a roll of 68? That's 6 wounds.

The spell starts once cast, and lasts until three rounds have ended, the casting round included. So if the caster's initiative was bad, they might get just two rounds of use out of it, instead of the maximum of three. On the plus side though, it doesn't require any concentration to maintain for its duration.

FACE SHIFT

Cost: 1 significant charge.

Effect: This spell allows the skinner to permanently change one aspect of their appearance. The adept can choose to gain or lose up to three inches in height, change the shape of their mouth or nose, alter the color of their eyes or skin or hair, and so on. Fingerprints and retinas are a snap. They could also use this to gain up to thirty pounds if they have access to that much edible biomass, or lose the same if there's somewhere to dump the spare gunk.

Repeated castings of this spell build on each other. If the caster has an identity based on physical beauty, it can be permanently increased by 3% each time this spell is cast, up to a maximum of 85%. It won't help build a strength- or speed-based identity though, as those fall under the spell Preternatural Prowess.

This spell cannot obscure damage taken to generate a major Epideromancy charge. Nothing magical can hide that. Novice fleshworkers are also told horrible stories about foolish adepts who moved themselves outside of the usual range of human possibility with this spell and attracted *entirely* the wrong sort of attention.

BODY LIKE IRON

Cost: 1 significant charge.

Effect: By increasing the resilience of their body and preparing some pre-emptive defenses, the fleshworker increases their own resilience to injury. Specifically, each time this spell is cast, the adept permanently adds 3 to their wound threshold, up to a maximum of 250. Since actual wounds are known only to the GM, it's best to keep track of this spell's use.

This process does not heal damage, and it doesn't work on others. If the caster had 20 wounds before with a wound threshold of 50, they still have 20 wounds but their wound threshold would now be 53.

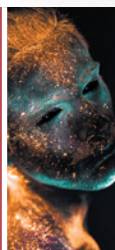
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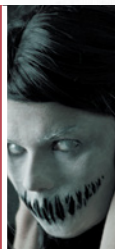
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PRETERNATURAL PROWESS

Cost: 1 significant charge.

Effect: Each time this spell is cast, the skinner permanently increases either their Fitness, Dodge, Pursuit, or Struggle ability by 3%. It can never increase an ability over 85%. Abilities still shift with hardened notches, so make sure to record affected abilities as their base score and bonus from this spell.

BODY MELTING

Cost: 1 significant charge.

Effect: The Epideromancy significant blast, Body Melting works exactly in the same way as its minor sibling Warping. All the same details apply. It's just that the damage, being equal to the successful casting roll, is much, much nastier.

Use your imagination, you sick puppy.

CHAMELEON

Cost: 1 significant charge.

Effect: After a ten-minute period of slow transformation, the fleshworker has become an exact duplicate of another person. The effect lasts for twenty-four hours, or if the caster has a part of the target's body — a hair, nail clipping or DNA sample will do — for exactly seven full days. The adept doesn't gain any of the target's memories, mannerisms, or skills, and doesn't suddenly sound like the target, but the likeness is perfect, even down to retinal scans, fingerprints, and DNA tests.

In the absence of a body sample, the caster must have had physical contact with the target at least once in the past. Brushing past them in a hallway is perfectly acceptable, but seeing them across a room is not. The fleshworker can terminate this spell at any time before its expiry, if they want to.

WITHERING

Cost: 1 significant charge.

Effect: By touching a target and expending a charge, the fleshworker can permanently decrease the victim's abilities or identities. Like The Flesh is My Servant and Preternatural Prowess, this works on physical abilities: Fitness, Dodge, Pursuit, and Struggle. The damage the target takes to the ability is equal to the sum of the dice of the casting roll. Only experience can undo the damage.

BODY HORROR

Cost: 1 significant charge.

Effect: There are few things more terrifying to encounter than a fleshworker with a nasty imagination. Using this spell, the caster attracts the attention of a victim within thirty feet and then briefly warps and deforms themselves in utterly horrible ways — making their eyeballs dance over their face, opening their mouth to reveal row after row of razor-sharp teeth, moving in ways that are impossible for any living thing. Whatever the caster can dream up.

The target is forced to make an Unnatural check equal in rank to the sum of the casting dice, to a maximum of 10. If the caster rolled 25, it's an Unnatural (7) check. If they rolled 39, it's an Unnatural (10) check.

MAJOR CHARGE EFFECTS

Completely and permanently redesign someone else's body. Be twenty years old for the next century. Freely switch biological sex and appearance at will. Permanently turn an animal into a human (or vice versa). Restore someone else's lost youth.



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KATHAROMANCY AKA NEAT FREAKS, SANITIZERS, HOWARDS

It's not about being clean. It's about being in control. Fine, maybe the two are mixed so vigorously that no one can tell the difference anymore.

When you're dirty and contaminated, you've lost control. You can infect other people and places without your say. A battle wages inside you between white blood cells and infections, yet you're more war correspondent than general. Ah, but show that filth who's boss and you're back in charge. That's what being obsessed with cleanliness leads to: protection, executive power, and serenity.

By making yourself and your environment hygienic, you are controlling it. Washing and sterilizing protects you from unseen dangers. Peace of mind comes from cleanliness. To weaken your enemies, you contaminate them. All warfare is germ warfare.

Katharomancy is not OCD with some soap. Sure, washing your hands every thirty minutes is a repetitive act, but a katharomancer won't feel a compulsion to count the number of tiles in the ceiling. They usually don't have any compulsions. Instead, they're more like sensible germaphobes with no more issues (and no fewer) than your average adept.

The modern world is both supportive and maddening to katharomancers. (They're nicknamed "neat freaks," "sanitizers," or "Howards," depending on how rude you want to be to them.) Hand sanitizers and cleaning products abound, but so do pollution and allergens. Many of their homes are practically clean rooms with ULPA filters, positive air pressure, and enough cleaning products to sanitize Rhode Island. Katharomancers see chemicals as their friends. In fact, anything organic or natural is immediately suspect.

The central paradox of Katharomancy is based on control. Neat freaks stay clean and pure to remain in charge of themselves. But to do that, they must surrender power to their obsessions and, to some degree, the contaminants they fear.

STATS

Generate a Minor Charge: Thoroughly clean yourself or a room you are in. This is much more than taking a shower, pony. You must make things sanitary, hygienic, and pure. This process must take at least one hour. Longer is fine, but if you only need twenty minutes to clean yourself that well, you obviously missed something.

For yourself, that means bathing every square inch (except eyes), shampooing, exfoliating, trimming hair, cutting nails, brushing, flossing, tongue scraping, removing ear wax, and more.

For a room, that means steam cleaning (or sweeping and mopping), washing windows (no streaks!), carefully removing all trash and disinfecting anything that you might touch — light switches, doorknobs, remote controls, etc.

Any cleaning done for or by a spell cannot be used to generate charges. You must tell the GM which is which before breaking out the disinfectants.

Generate a Significant Charge: Cleanliness is a way to stay in control. You gain a significant charge by cleaning up something that hits you with a stress check to interact with. The check must force a die roll, so hardened notches block this from happening (but see The Purge significant spell). Howards who fail this stress check end up going into a literal cleaning frenzy, taking 1d10 wounds as they rub their hands and knees raw scrubbing and disinfecting.

You can also generate a significant charge by turning any home into a clean room. We're talking positive air pressure, disinfected everything, and using UV lights to find any invisible stains to remove. And for Pete's sake, no carpets.

Essentially, taking action to thoroughly purge an environment or location of all contaminants, pollutants, filth, and microbes in a manner which consumes personal resources or puts you at some risk of becoming a pariah among your community or social circles does it.

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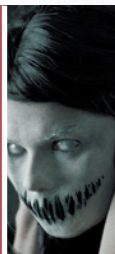
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The more proactive methods of generating a significant charge need to remain in place for at least twenty-four hours for them to generate a charge, and you can't gain more than a single charge from a given location or environment per month. Give it time to get dirty again.

Generate a Major Charge: Katharomancers can generate a major charge by adding something significant to the war on contamination. Inventing a new and better formula for an antibacterial cleaner would work, as would passing a law mandating HEPA filters in all homes and businesses.

Taboo: A katharomancer cannot willingly get dirty. This includes wearing only clean clothes, not holding plants or animals, wearing gloves, and so on. However, this only applies to willful acts that obviously contaminate you. Getting knocked into a mud puddle does nothing. You can go into dirty locations (a park, a nightclub, the mall) because getting yourself up for failure is not the same thing as failing. Just bring along some wipes.

Also, you can never, never ever handle cash or coins. Those are just disgusting.

Random Magick Domain: Staying obsessively clean is the irrational response to losing power. (Was that pork chop cooked to temperature? Will it give me trichinosis? How do I know what to do???) That's why katharomancers have power over fear and helplessness. What you don't know can kill you. At the least, it can make you freak out and panic.

KATHAROMANCY MINOR FORMULA SPELLS

NOT TODAY, DIRT

Cost: 1 minor charge.

Effect: Getting covered in mud, dust, or something like that is... well, it gives you tremors. That fear can be tapped by spending a charge. You then gain a 20% bonus to a Health or Dodge roll that ultimately keeps your hygienic and clean.

- For Health, that can mean resisting poison or jumping over a dirty puddle. You cannot use it to run away from anything or heal, even from an infection. (You're already dirty.)
- For Dodge, that can mean avoiding being attacked (if the attacker is dirty or uses a clearly dirty weapon) or avoiding a snowball. (Snow is just water wrapped around dirt, that's why.) You cannot use it in an ambush or to dodge a fist unless the hand is bloody or clearly covered in grease.

WASHING AWAY FAILURE

Cost: 1 minor charge.

Effect: Getting yourself clean is calming and empowering. After you wash up, you can do great things. Once per day, you can thoroughly wash your hands and spend a charge. On your next roll, for anything, you can flip-flop the results. If you washed up expecting a Lie roll and you suddenly find yourself making an Isolation stress check, you can only flip-flop the stress check.

However, you can flip-flop the next roll after that one if you immediately wash your hands again (within thirty seconds). You can only do this once.

DUAL-PURPOSE CLEANER

Cost: 1–2 minor charges.

Effect: Hygiene is good for us and bad for germs. Now, it's good for you and bad for people. To use this spell, you first need a spray bottle full of a common household cleaner. Furniture polish, glass cleaner, all-purpose cleaner: if it comes in a squirt bottle or aerosol spray, it counts. If you spend one charge while briefly shaking the bottle, the next spray is like short-acting tear gas. Roll to hit a person with the spray (anywhere on the body is fine). That sucker feels crippling pain and takes a –30% penalty to all rolls for three minutes. If you missed, then you should aim better next time.

If you spend 2 charges and one turn cleaning the cleaning bottle, you can heal someone hurt by sickness, disease, or contamination. Just spray the target (maybe not in the eyes) and make a roll with your adept identity. With a success, the target heals wounds equal to the ones die on your roll. Failure means you only heal 1 wound.

GERMSPOTTING

Cost: 2 minor charges.

Effect: People can't normally see germs. That's how tricky they are. With this spell, people can — and it's a fun but grotesque way to manipulate others. Pick one object you can see in the same room or general area as you. As soon as you spend the charges, all microorganisms on the surface suddenly manifest as weird, arthropodic things right out of an H.R. Giger painting and everyone present can see them. That ham sandwich in your hand? There are things crawling all over it. Your shirt? Covered with many-limbed, clicking things that move. They don't look like germs in electron microscopes but like the monsters they really are — only for a second, though. Then they go back to hiding.

Anyone in contact with the object must make an Unnatural (3) stress check. Failure means frenzy or panic but not paralysis. You can't stay still when you see those... things... all over the place.

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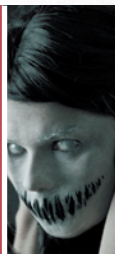
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DR. CLEANGOOD

Cost: 2 or 4 minor charges.

Effect: When you have a cold or illness, you need to make a successful Health roll to start feeling better and avoid the -10% or -20% penalty on rolls. Not anymore. Dip a finger in any cleaning fluid and draw a circle on the forehead of the sick person, then wipe it away. Any common sickness is cured: flu, tetanus, gonorrhea, or anything that can be treated with a little penicillin or bedrest. If you spend 4 charges, any serious illness gets better for one week. Penalties, wounds, or contagion risk are suspended for seven days, but the cancer is not cured.

BATHVOYANCE

Cost: 3 minor charges.

Effect: Cleanliness is important to you. But is it important to the people in your life? It had better be, because you're like a hygienically obsessed Santa Claus. Touch a person anywhere except on the skin or hair, then spend the charges. You quickly get a vision of where that person last washed, showered, or otherwise cleaned something, from doing the dishes to wiping blood off his hands. This vision lasts about ten seconds.

Normally, the vision is centered on the person like a video game. You won't necessarily know where the cleaning took place. With a successful Notice roll, you can look around the place to get a better idea of exactly where they were. Just try not to use this with your waitress. Sometimes, ignorance is bliss.

FEAR WHAT I FEAR

Cost: 4 minor charges.

If people realized just how unsanitary and filthy things are out there, they'd understand why you want to wear latex gloves and a surgical mask everywhere you go. Isn't it time you gave them an education? Target one person you can see (even on live video) and whisper what you want them to believe is unhygienic: that restaurant is serving botulism, their boyfriend has crabs, this room is full of airborne anthrax, and so on. Your target then panics or frenzies as if they just lost a stress check. There's no actual roll, so the target doesn't get a failed notch. They just freak out over how disgusting and unclean it is. They calm down once the triggering thing is gone or they leave the area.

KATHAROMANCY SIGNIFICANT FORMULA SPELLS

TEFLON ADEPT

Cost: 1 significant charge.

Effect: With this spell, you serve mystical notice to all germs, bacteria, dirt, slime, toxins, and airborne particulates that you are not to be fucked with. And boy, do they get the message.

You spend the significant charge and swallow a tiny drop of cleaner or sanitizer: hand sanitizer, bleach, Pledge, or anything like that. (Just a symbolic amount, not anything that would poison you.) For the next five minutes, you cannot become dirty or sick no matter what happens. You could go swimming in a septic tank and emerge not just healthy but spotless and with a refreshing pine scent. Anything you have on you is defended as well. You won't

even get irradiated if you juggle uranium fuel rods.

Please note that bullets, bombs, and fists do not make you dirty. They kill you. Tear gas won't bother you, but the nice police officer with a Taser can still take you out.

THE PURGE

Cost: 1 significant charge.

Effect: Every once in a while, it pays to just undergo a radical cleanse to rid yourself of lingering blockages. For katharomancers, hardened notches interfere with their ability to generate charges because they inure them to gross, filthy things. Therefore, this spell helps them eliminate those notches and ready themselves to be confronted all over again with the sickness of the world around them.

By spending 1 significant charge and at least four hours' worth of drinking high-fiber concoctions loaded with cayenne pepper and citric acid, the katharomancer may eliminate one hardened notch from a shock meter of their choice. The blockage usually leaves the katharomancer's body in the form of diarrhea, vomiting, or considerable amounts of sweat.

TIDYING UP THE FUTURE

Cost: 1 significant charge.

Effect: To make this spell work, you must spend thirty minutes cleaning something that's dirty or messy. If you have a hunch roll already saved, you gain +10% whenever you use the hunch roll. If you do not have a hunch roll, you can use this spell to make one and squirrel it away. Then you can use this spell again to get a +10% bonus to that one, assuming you have the significant charge to spare.

You can use this spell multiple times, but you can never raise that bonus higher than 50%. When you finally use your hunch roll and its bonus, you must clean yourself immediately afterward in some way. If you cannot, you face a Helplessness stress check with the rank equal to one higher than your current number of hardened notches, to a maximum of 7 (eventually, even this kind of thing doesn't throw you).

Andy used Tidying Up the Future five times to get a hunch roll and build up a +40% bonus. On his way to meet his cabal, a dark sedan starts trailing him. Andy uses his hunch to succeed on his Pursuit roll and slip away from the tail. Suddenly, Andy realizes he used up all his hand sanitizer earlier. He has three hardened notches for Helplessness, so he must either find some baby wipes fast or face a Helplessness (4) stress check.

STERILIZATION UPGRADE AVAILABLE

Cost: 1 significant charge.

Effect: Things that are clean are inherently good. A rusty knife is dull and can slip, but a clean knife is sharp and true. And when it comes to keeping things clean, it's hard to beat you.

First, you put on a pair of clean gloves. Any kind works. Then you spend the charge and run your hands over a non-organic object. It could be mechanical, digital, simple, complex, or anything in between, but you must either rub the whole thing or spend two minutes caressing it.

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This has two magickal effects:

- The object's surface is clean and sanitary. It won't remove toxins or radiation, but any dirt or microorganisms are gone.
- Within three hours, anyone who uses this object gains a one-time +40% bonus to a roll. Once rolled, the bonus is gone, and the object is now dusty like it had been left in a barn all summer.

DOES THIS LOOK INFECTED TO YOU?

Cost: 2 significant charges.

No one can see germs and bacteria. Is that doorknob clean? If you disinfect it and wipe it down, how do you know those contaminants are really gone? That's right — you don't. A perfectly clean thing and one that gives you a deadly disease look exactly alike. This spell pushes that fear into others.

Pick one person and then one object. Say to the person, "Is that [object] really clean? I don't know," and spend your charges. If your target is holding that thing, they must succeed on a Helplessness (7) stress check or drop it and wash compulsively for three minutes and gain a failed notch. If they aren't holding the object, they must make a Violence (7) check to touch it within the next thirty-three minutes.

HEALING POWER OF HAIRLESSNESS

Cost: 2 significant charges.

Effect: The logic is simple. Germs and dirt cause people to be unhealthy. Being free from germs and dirt causes people to be healthy. Therefore, becoming clean can heal people — if you're clean to start with.

To begin with, you must be completely hygienic. Yes, that means a good scrub in the bathtub. But it also means gargling with antiseptic mouthwash, using an enema, and shaving off all body hair. Yes, all of it. Once done, you diffuse 2 significant charges throughout your body. You're primed and ready — make a roll using your adept identity within twenty-four hours of the cleanse, and recover a number of wounds equal to the roll on a success. It's just like *surgery*, only better.

- A rolled fumble or matched failure turns into a regular failure.
- A rolled failure becomes a success.
- A rolled success becomes a matched success.

Matched successes and crits are unaffected. If no healing roll is made, the charges are lost and the only thing that happens is you feel kinda groovy for that day. You can use this spell on other people if they're willing to get all squeaky clean and hairless. If you get dirty while primed, any rolled failure remains a failure. Keep it clean.

SANITARY CIRCLE

Cost: 3 significant charges.

Effect: Hand sanitizer is your shield. Since it protects from unseen viruses and germs, it can protect in other ways as well. To use this spell, you must first have some hand sanitizer. Nothing else suffices. Squirt a circle on the ground up to six feet in diameter. (Or oval, or strange wiggly line that roughly forms a circle. This is magick, not a kindergarten entrance exam.) Once the circle is connected, 3 significant charges are sucked right out of you.

Any minor spells or first level channels (for avatar percentiles 1%–50%) have no effect on anyone or anything within the circle. Minor unnatural entities such as diametrics or whisperers cannot cross the line. Significant spells, second level channels (51%–70%), and significant entities can only be blocked with a successful Fitness roll for each one. Anything more powerful than these lights the circle of hand sanitizer on fire as they easily reach you.

The sanitary circle lasts for up to ten minutes, but each spell, channel, or entity that is blocked reduces that time by one minute. (If three spells come at you in the first minute, you're down to seven minutes at the most.) It also has no effect on the physical world. If you think magickal sanitizer can stop bullets, you're gonna bleed.

DISINFECTING EXORCISM

Cost: 4 significant charges.

Effect: Life can be messy to control. Even if you manage to keep your body and clothes free from muck and fluids, your soul can get grimy by all of the things you faced. Thankfully, you know how to clean the inside of a person as well.

To prepare for this spell, don a gas mask and protective coverall including gloves and boots. Get a hazmat material bag ready. Have someone lie down on a bed made with freshly washed white linens. As you touch their chest (through the gloves, mind you), spend 4 significant charges. Then slowly draw your hands upwards.

Any unnatural entity inside that person comes out stuck to your gloves. If no entity is there, you draw out one failed notch and one hardened notch from whichever meter has the most total notches. (The GM breaks any ties.) Entity or not, what you draw out looks like puke-green taffy and smells like ass. It's easy to get all of it in the hazmat bag. Once there, you can follow proper hazmat disposal rules to get rid of the entity or notches for good. Playing around with the unnatural substance is not recommended.

MAJOR CHARGE EFFECTS

Eradicate a specific disease in one part of the world. Completely clean up a polluted lake. Sterilize everything around you for three square miles (as a one-time effect). Trace pollution or contamination straight to its source no matter where it is.

Swimmers and cyclists often shave as much body hair as possible in order to reduce wind resistance.

Why do you do it?

1: INTRO



2: ADEPTS



3: AVATARS



4: PLACES



5: FACES



See "Hospital Stays" on page 75 of Book One: Play.



PLUTOMACY

AKA MISERS, BANKERS, GREENSPANS

Money is power. Greed is good. Blah, blah, blah. You know what? Money is just a means to an end. It's not about earning a big salary; it's about having a fat bank account. Because with that, you can acquire almost anything.

Imagine you started a new job next week that pays \$3,000.00 every two weeks. Do you have any power before you get that first paycheck? Nope. Cash that check, and you have power. Spend that money on fancy clothes and fine dining, and you've lost it. For Plutomancy, the key to gaining magickal power comes not from earning or spending. It comes from having. Money is the most important thing to have because it's the most versatile. Bank accounts and credit cards are Schrödinger's boxes for finance; it's something, you just don't know what until it's used. Everything has a price, and people are no exception. With enough money, you could even buy your way into heaven. That's why money has magick to plutomancers; it's potentially everything.

Plutomancers did not weather the Great Recession very well. So many misers lost their fortunes one way or another. As the money dried up, so did the spells. Most plutomancers found themselves having lived a miserly life for decades to gain power — then watching as the power vanished like their retirement plans. Penniless and chargeless, many gave up on the occult underground and tried living like normal people for a chance. These days, the remaining plutomancers tend to be rich fat cats or bitter Occupy Wall Street folk. No, they do not get along at all.

The central paradox for Plutomancy is that you must get rich but live poorly. Having gets you power, but getting loses it. Many plutomancers live in trailers and shop for clothes at discount clothes barns even though they have bank accounts that allow them to buy lakeside mansions and Armani suits.

People often call plutomancers "misers," "bankers," and "Greenspans." Some even mean those terms positively.

STATS

Generate a Minor Charge: Acquire between \$1,000.00-\$9,999.99 from a single transaction. If your biweekly paycheck is \$7,580.23, you generate a minor charge every two weeks.

Generate a Significant Charge: Acquire between \$10,000.00 and \$9,999,999.99 from a single transaction. If you sell your car for \$90,000.00, you generate a significant charge. If you sell a vintage guitar for \$6,500.00 and earn \$7,580.23 from a paycheck, you don't get any significant charges because those are two transactions.

Generate a Major Charge: Acquire \$10,000,000 or more from a single transaction.

Taboo: Plutomancers lose all their banked charges if they spend \$2,000.00 or more on a single transaction. Financial products (mutual funds, bonds, currency trading) are exempted, since you are just changing the way your money looks. Watch out for those broker fees, though.

Random Magick Domain: The reason plutomancers are obsessed with money is that it provides leverage. You can acquire almost anything with a big enough wallet. Plutomancers have power over getting and giving things. They're also about real stuff, not illusions. Dreams are worthless; cold, hard cash is king.

1: INTRO



2: ADEPTS



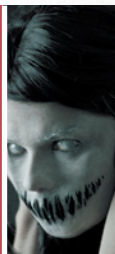
3: AVATARS



4: PLACES



5: FACES



PLUTOMANCY MINOR FORMULA SPELLS

BANK ERROR IN YOUR FAVOR

Cost: 1 minor charge.

Effect: Through a serendipitous glitch in the system, you or a target of your choosing can gain up to \$1,000.00 in cash or credit. You don't get to pick; it depends on how the glitch occurs. To get cash, you need to make a transaction with cash. The ATM spits out ten Franklins, or the change given to you by the cashier adds up to a thousand bucks even if you expected seventy-five cents back. If you use a debit card or gift card, your account balance goes up by a grand. If you use a credit card, your balance is reduced by that much. There are no written or digital recordings to show anything happened, and nobody working the transaction notices anything odd about it at the time (and faces a Self (2) check later if they're confronted with it).

ACCOUNT SUMMARY

Cost: 1 minor charge.

Effect: To make sure they keep transactions accurate and secure, financial institutions collect personal information from their customers. Now, you can use that to make things a little less secure. You need to physically hold a person's checkbook, credit card, or debit card for at least thirty seconds. You then know their full name, home address, work address, phone numbers, and email address. You do not get a Social Security number, nor do you get any account numbers. This isn't identity theft.

PURCHASE HISTORY

Cost: 2–3 minor charges.

Effect: Thanks to modern accounting and marketing, everything you buy with a card is tracked, stored, and used to figure you out. With this spell, you can tell who bought something without all that paperwork and downloading of statements. Run your hand across any object and spend the charges. You then get a clear image of whomever it belongs to. You won't know a name or anything like that, but you would be able to recognize her if you saw her at the mall.

By spending a third charge, you can see who owned the object before the current owner. If it's a company (i.e., she bought the gun you're caressing at a store), you get a vision of the front of that store. With a successful Notice roll, you can even get the address.

TAX-DEDUCTIBLE CHARITY CASE

Cost: 2 minor charges.

Effect: Money makes the world go 'round. Sure, that's a trite phrase. Doesn't mean it's not true. Before making a roll, you can donate money to improve your chances. For each \$100.00 you give away, you gain 1% to your next roll. You cannot spend more than \$1,999.99 without breaking a taboo, but donating that much exactly gives you +20%. If you do not make a roll within thirty-three minutes of making that donation official, then you've wasted your charges and money. Also, the roll must only benefit yourself. You're donating to help yourself, not the poor.

Giving money away means giving it to a person or a charitable or nonprofit organization (regular businesses do not count) without gaining any benefit. Giving \$500.00 to

a friend who promises to do you right later is trading favors, not giving. Yep, that means this spell is not tax-deductible.

I KNOW YOUR PRICE

Cost: 3 minor charges.

Effect: Everyone has values, mores, and things they just won't do — until they see a fat wad of cash. First, settle on a single person. You don't have to know them or even be near them, but you need a name. Then state a clear, observable action. (Not a thought or point of view but something people could literally see happen.) Then spend your charges. You instantly know what that person would need to get to follow through with that action.

This is not about convincing or coercion. Lots of folks would lie in court if you threatened their families. This is what knowledge, service, or cash would be so tempting that a person would do that action to get it. If you asked, "What would make Martina divorce Luis?" the answer could be, "\$10,000.00" or, "Proof that Luis really was cheating with that skank."

This is also what would work, not what the person thinks would work. Martina might get seriously offended at the offer of ten grand to dump Luis, but if the offer is genuine, she takes it. If this makes a person go against their passions or moral code, they must make a Self (4) stress check.

DEBT COLLECTING AND TRADING

Cost: 3–4 minor charges.

Effect: This spell lets you trade favors with a person — and enforce it magically. Find someone who needs something: knowledge, cash, help, anything. Make a deal that, if you provide that thing, the person owes you something about the same value in return. If they agree, 3 minor charges pop. If you faithfully adhere to your end of the deal, that person accepts the benefit. For up to one year afterward, you can force the target to do something of roughly equal value to pay off that debt. The only payment off-limits is anything impossible, though sex and violence can only be used if your end of the deal involved the same. If either party does not follow through, they face an Isolation (7) stress check.

Amy needs a fake ID fast. Emily the plutomancer says she can get one in two days. In return, Amy owes Emily a favor. Amy agrees, and Emily spends 3 minor charges to enforce the deal. Emily then pays a forger \$500.00 for a passport saying Amy is now Francesca Gloria De Jesus. A month later, she tracks down Amy at a bar and asks to crash at Amy's place. She may not be happy about having a houseguest, but Amy is compelled to let Emily couch-surf for what the GM says is roughly \$500.00 worth of rent and utilities.

Plutomancers can trade these debts (and their compulsive mojo) between themselves. It costs a minor charge to transfer a debt, paid by the person giving the debt away. The plutomancer receiving the debt must pay the favor's rough value in cash or EFT. In the above example, Emily could trade Amy's debt to another plutomancer for \$500.00. The prohibition on earning charges from magically generated currency applies here.

1: INTRO



2: ADEPTS



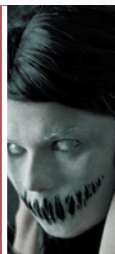
3: AVATARS



4: PLACES



5: FACES



PLUTOMANCY SIGNIFICANT FORMULA SPELLS

DEAD PRESIDENTS SPEAK

Cost: 1 significant charge.

Effect: Cash is some of the dirtiest stuff you touch daily. That ten-dollar bill you handed to the cashier at McDonald's has probably been in numerous hands before you ever got it. And don't ask where those singles have been.

With this spell, you get a single coin or bill of any denomination to literally tell you where it has been. The historical person on the currency talks to you and lists all of the locations it has been in the past twenty-four hours. (Only you can see their lips move or hear their words.) Addresses are not known, just names of locations. If the currency was given to a person, that person is named instead. ("I cannot tell a lie. I've been at the bank on State Street, Four Seasons Dry Cleaners, and with a homeless guy called Freddie Four-Fingers.")

HOSTILE PAYMENT

Cost: 1 significant charge.

Modern finance is not a world for the weak and polite. To get ahead these days, you need to be willing to step on more than a few toes — and a few backs. That means getting dirty and mean from time to time. This spell lets you do that.

You toss a few dollars at a person in a dismissive way, then spend your charge. Your victim then tries to hurt himself. How? Depends on what's nearby. Usually, the victim makes an unarmed attack on himself as he slams a door on his hand or punches a cement wall. But if there is anything dangerous nearby, the victim goes for that in a painful and possibly fatal way. Cast this in a restaurant, and your vic stabs himself with a knife. On a street, he throws himself at a passing car. Atop a building, he may jump. If there is a non-fatal way to hurt himself, he always does that. If not, death is possible. If the target has a loaded gun on their person, he uses it.

The victim can fight against this spell. If he makes a successful Unnatural (5) stress check, then he doesn't hurt himself. Instead, he's stunned for a minute or so while he tries to process that urge for self-harm.

RETAIL THERAPY

Cost: 2 significant charges.

Effect: Love comes and goes. Friends let you down. But a new couch is always going to be there for you. (Until you throw it out and buy another, of course.) Plutomancers know the true value of acquisition, and they can use it to heal their souls. If you spend a minimum of \$666.00 with a few hours of shopping (on one thing or a bunch of things), you can spend 2 significant charges to remove one failed notch on your Helplessness or Self meter. However, retail therapy is shallow. You can never remove the last failed notch on either meter.

REAL VS. MAGICK MONEY

Any money gained by a Plutomancy formula spell is the real deal. It's legal tender accepted anywhere. However, money gained from magick never counts for gaining charges. You can't magick up a cool grand to get a significant charge. You can't even use money people pay you for using spells or rituals. The universe isn't that easy to trick, banker.

You also need to keep track of your cash. Find a place on your character sheet (or use checkbook software) to monitor how much you take in and spend, as some plutomancer spells require funds to work.

DEVALUATION

Cost: 2 significant charges.

Financial worth is subjective and can change based on the state of an object. That's why a car loses value the moment you drive it off the lot. Your power over acquisition can help you turn something pristine and high-worth to something old, decayed, and near-worthless. It's like forced entropy. Metal rusts, wires corrode, fiddly bits break off, and so on. It doesn't age so much as it deteriorates.

This spell breaks objects. The object must be inorganic. (Plastic counts as inorganic here. Wood? Not so much.) If the object is solid, it must weigh fifty pounds or less. You couldn't affect the Venus de Milo, but you could affect those small reproductions for sale in the gift shop. If it's a mechanical or electric thing, it can be roughly the size of a van. The effect takes about thirty seconds to work, so if you cast this on a gun during combat, it can still be used for one to two turns.

A plutomancer cannot use this spell on anything he owns.

THE ALMIGHTY DOLLAR

Cost: 2 significant charges.

Effect: Normally, coercion uses manipulation and emotional blackmail. A plutomancer can add forced bribery to that list. When you attempt to coerce someone, you can give them money to gain 10%–40% on the roll. But how much money depends on the target's socioeconomic class.

- If the target belongs to the lower class (works at McDonald's), it's \$75.00 per 10% change. To get all 40%, you need to spend \$300.00.
- If the target belongs to the middle class (middle management), it's \$150.00 per 10% change. To get all 40%, you need to spend \$600.00.
- If the target belongs to the upper class (franchises several McDonald's), it's \$225.00 per 10% change. To get all 40%, you need to spend \$900.00.

The target cannot refuse the bribe no matter how offended they get. You must actually give the money, so cash or EFT works but credit cards are useless without a reader. If you fail the roll, you can get the money back with a successful Connect roll.

1: INTRO



2: ADEPTS



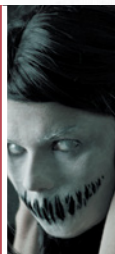
3: AVATARS



4: PLACES



5: FACES



FINANCE CHARGES

Cost: 3 significant charges.

Effect: Poverty sucks. Just ask someone who needs to sell furniture for insulin. This spell is a curse that all but ensures someone descends into poverty and enjoys the lovely benefits of being bankrupt. Name a poor sucker (or a sucker that will soon be poor) and spend your charges. The next day, she loses one cent. Stupid, right? But each day moving forward, the amount lost gets doubled. The following day she loses two cents. Then four cents, eight cents, and so on. Still unimpressed? By the end of day thirty, she's lost \$10,737,418.23. In a month.

How does the money disappear? It just does. Cash goes missing and bank accounts drop with no discernable reason. There are no mistakes, computer glitches, or thefts to argue over. Complain to the teller all you want, but he won't be able to help you. This spell only affects cash, accounts (bank, IRA, 401(k), etc.), and financial products like stocks, mutual funds, that sort of thing. It used to only work on private individuals, but hey. Corporations are people now.

The curse runs out once the target is out of money or thirty days have passed. A person hit with this spell is immune to it for the next three years. They might not know that, of course.

WAGE SLAVE

Cost: 5 significant charges.

Very few people manage to find that dream job where they absolutely love going to work. Instead, most toil away in a job that ranges from "meh" to "I could set the building on fire." We work because we need the money to live and buy stuff. Since people normally do things they don't like for money, plutomancers can twist that to make people do things the plutomancer likes for money.

Spend 5 significant charges and give the proper payment to a person, and you can force her to do something you want. The payment varies on class as with The Almighty Dollar but in an opposite way. Upper class people cost \$400.00; middle class cost \$1,200.00; and lower class cost \$2,400.00. (Yes, that's a taboo breaker. It's your choice, miser.) The target is compelled to take the money (cash or EFT) just like they're compelled to do that thing.

This spell is powerful, but there are two important limits:

- The act you are forcing a person to do cannot be sexual or deadly. People do crappy jobs for a paycheck, but few take a job as an escort or assassin. Some level of violence can be forced depending on that person's hardened Violence notches. If your target is a naïve professor who shies away from *Game of Thrones* because of the violence, you might get a bad slap out of her. If the target has been a boxer for ten years, get ready to see blood. (Again, nothing leading to death.)
- The person must want to do it on some level. You're not going to get a Catholic priest to renounce God and Christ without that priest having a crisis of faith somewhere deep inside him. A security guard only gives you the keys if he kinda hates the place anyway.

As soon as the act is complete, your target is pissed. Any relationship you have with them drops by -33%. If they did something more-or-less opposed to their inner values, they face a Self (1-5) stress check depending on how bad it was.

MAJOR CHARGE EFFECTS

Produce legal documents showing you own an object worth \$1,000,000.00 or less. Cause a stock market to be extremely bullish or bearish for a day. Force a company to declare bankruptcy.

1: INTRO



2: ADEPTS



3: AVATARS



4: PLACES



5: FACES





PORNOMANCY

AKA AFFINITES, EXTRAS, NYMPHOS

When it comes to power, it's hard to beat sex. It literally creates life. Some folks would move heaven and Earth to get a piece. It inspires love and hate, aggression and tenderness, and so much more.

And then there's porn.

Really, porn is not about sex. It's a performance done for money. It's not prostitution because no one involved is doing it out of desire. It's not intimacy, because any pleasure shown on video is either faked or used to sell the scene. Yet millions of people pour so much time and energy into enjoying pornography. It literally helped create the internet as we know it today. With all that energy, it was only a matter of time before magick came from it.

In the 1990s, videotape was the medium of choice for porn. The industry exploded, but there was one specific video that gave birth to this school of magic. The movie never was finished, so it has no name. It features a woman in mid-performance who transcended into the Invisible Clergy — the Naked Goddess. And that transcendence was caught on videotape. Pornomancers found that, by performing the acts done by the Naked Goddess in human form, they gained magickal power. Watching the videotape was like the Second Coming.

But the digital age has changed that somewhat. Porn is ubiquitous online. It's easy to find, it's often free, and anyone with a camera and someone willing to fuck can make it. When the Naked Goddess returned and Her image was caught on digital video, watching it did nothing. Recreating it did nothing. It was just another porn clip.

The original videotape remains an immense source of power and the wellspring of Pornomancy. For lack of a better term, people who watched the original became

infected with magick and could do Pornomancy. When they had unprotected sex, their partners got it too. (Perhaps unironically, a condom prevented the transmission of this power.) People who never saw the VHS tape could still cast formula spells.

In other words, Pornomancy has changed. You can still generate charges by rote mimicry of Her sexual acts, but you can also create power by embracing the central paradox and starring in your own porn. This ain't Naked Goddessomancy, after all. It's Pornomancy.

The central paradox that powers this school is that a creative, emotionally charged act born from desire is converted into a rote, cold act born from indifference. People in love have sex to feel pleasure, bond with their partner, and have children. Porn stars have sex to get paid. They take one of the most emotional acts people can do and turn it into yet another day at the office.

STATS

Pornomancers now have two ways to generate each type of charge. You can choose either, and can even bounce between the two. They work for any pornomancer.

Generate a Minor Charge: Recreate a scene originally done by the Naked Goddess in Her porn career. It must be close but doesn't need to be exact.

Film one sex scene up to thirty-three minutes long that ends with an orgasm (real or fake). Doing it live with an audience of at least thirteen people also counts.

Generate a Significant Charge: Recreate an entire scene from the Naked Goddess' work with very similar sets, actors,

1: INTRO



2: ADEPTS



3: AVATARS



4: PLACES



5: FACES



and sexual acts.

Film and upload a sex scene to an adult site. (This can be your own.) You receive your charge once it has been viewed by 333 people you have never met before.

Generate a Major Charge: Recreate a Naked Goddess scene using the original cast (or their descendants). The reenactment must be exact.

Get nominated for and win an AVN Award for your performance in porn.

Taboo: Sex is a tool to get what you want, that's it. If you ever have sex for emotion or pleasure, you lose all your charges. You can have quid-pro-quo sex (sleep with someone to gain a favor), and you can still enjoy the act if it sells the performance. But you can never have a loving sexual relationship without losing all your power.

Random Magick Domain: Porn isn't "real" sex (for a certain value of "real," anyway), so Pornomancy is bad at creating real things. Instead, it's great for ethereal stuff like persuasion, coincidence, and illusion. It's high-end stagecraft of the most intimate of activities.

PORNOMANCY MINOR FORMULA SPELLS

FANNING THE FLAMES

Cost: 1 minor charge.

Effect: Porn is all about turning people on. (Well, for the people watching, anyway.) You tap into this to fan the flames of desire in someone you can see or talk to. You start by being openly and obviously flirty. After that, spend your charge to gain a +20% bonus to one roll involving conversation with that person. Connect and Lie are the two obvious choices, but this spell can improve rolls for relationships, coercion, identities, even therapy. It just can't tip the scales for physical activity.

However, the target must be capable of sexual attraction to you. If you're a woman, that means straight men, gay women, and anyone bisexual or pan. This spell cannot affect children or people who cannot feel sexual desire. A woman who tries this on a gay man loses the charge and gets nothing but a polite laugh.

WHAT'S YOUR DESIRE?

Cost: 1 minor charge.

Being the center of so much sexual passion (yet remaining dispassionate about the whole thing) can give you a preternatural ability to know what people are passionate about. Pick one person and touch them. You instantly know one of the target's passions. Pick fear, rage, or noble, and the GM tells you what that is. You can cast this spell multiple times to learn two or three passions as long as you have the charges to cast this sucker that many times.

The person being probed like this knows something happens. They never know what happened exactly (unless they're a pornomancer too), but they suddenly feel like someone is watching them. Enjoy explaining that away.

DON'T HATE ME BECAUSE I'M HOT

Cost: 1-4 minor charges.

Effect: You know how to use sexuality and desire to get what you want. That's what you do in porn, anyway. This spell lets you build up that energy and use it as a wall between you and someone who wants to hurt you. Select one person as your target. If they attack you in the next hour, physically or verbally, they must make an Isolation stress check with the rank equal to the number of charges spent. If you used 3 charges, it's an Isolation (3) stress check.

If the target succeeds (or has enough hardened notches in Isolation), then their attack happens anyway. If the target fails, they do not gain a failed notch. Instead, they cannot attack you for that hour. Whatever made them pissed off enough to get all aggressive doesn't seem to matter anymore, because you're a sweet thang that doesn't deserve to be treated so rudely.

BROWSER HISTORY

Cost: 2 minor charges.

Sex can be a confusing thing for many people. Subcultures say certain desires or fetishes are bad and need to be repressed. But in the world of online smut, there's something for everyone — and it's just a few clicks away. Gay sex might be a sin for your church, but maybe you should see what's the big deal if two guys started...

If you can touch a person's phone, tablet, or computer, you can cast this spell to learn two things:

- The online address and type of porn they last viewed on any device.
- If they have any sexual fetishes that would embarrass them.

This last one is very subjective, however. Some people have totally owned their *My Little Pony* fetish, so you wouldn't learn about that. If your target is a teacher, then you can easily learn his predilection for schoolgirl bondage. You can't dredge up any repressed fetishes, because if they don't know it, they won't watch it online. If you use this knowledge in a coercion roll, you gain +1 to the rank of the stress check.

AURAL SEX

Cost: 2 minor charges.

Being a successful adult performer sometimes requires the right words in a scene. Sure, those naked bodies are all great and stuff, but some dirty talk can really crank up the power. You spend the charges and whisper something to someone that only they can hear. (If anyone else hears it, nothing happens and the charges aren't spent.) That something turns out to be so sexy, filthy, and arousing that the person is overwhelmed by images of that happening. The next roll made by that poor, turned-on soul in the next three minutes is an automatic failure. Once a roll is made, the spell is over.

1: INTRO



2: ADEPTS



3: AVATARS



4: PLACES



5: FACES



FLASH BANG

Cost: 3–4 minor charges.

Effect: Sexiness and desire are based on so much more than just how you look. It's more of an internal thing. That said, a nice ass is hard to resist. When you cast this spell, you must flash a little skin at up to three people. It could be showing a little leg or something worthy of Mardi Gras beads, but it must be a body part normally covered. (A wink won't suffice no matter how beautiful you are.) Those who see the flash are stunned by a jolt of desire. This happens regardless of sexual orientation, which may confuse some more than others.

If this happens in combat, the poor saps are stunned for one turn. Outside of combat, they remain stunned for about fifteen seconds. During this time, they can dodge attacks but that's about it. You can steal their wallet, pull down their pants, or just run away. They just stand there. You can extend the stun for another fifteen seconds if you spend another minor charge and flash a new body part.

I DO NOT KNOW YOU

Cost: 4 minor charges.

Effect: Everybody watches porn, but not everybody admits it. Conservatives can call you a pervert, and liberals can call you a misogynist. That's why people keep such things quiet. What happens when they meet a real live porn star? It depends on how they feel about themselves.

- If a person has three or less hardened notches on their Self meter, they act like they cannot see you. Fine, if you try stealing from the jewelry case, the retail clerk stops you. This isn't invisibility, it's embarrassment. You can slip past people if it's not a big deal. (Getting past the nightclub bouncer is cake. Getting past the Secret Service is not gonna happen.) If confronted, they deny ever seeing you. Anywhere. Definitely not on Pornhub.
- If they have four or more hardened notches on that Self meter, then they are excited to see you! ("Dude! It's that chick from *Unwinding Amy 3!*") They bend over backward to help you. Nothing illegal or crazy, mind you. But if you need a ride or a drink, they got you covered.

All of this costs 4 minor charges and works in one location only for about an hour. Yes, that means you can have really annoying guys falling over themselves to see what you're doing at the grocery store this late at night.

PORNOMANCY SIGNIFICANT FORMULA SPELLS

HOW DID SHE BEND LIKE THAT?

Cost: 1 significant charge.

Sex work is hard work. Sex on camera doubly so, because the positions that look great on video aren't the same ones that are actually comfortable to do. You need to have the right level of fitness and endurance to be successful as an adult performer. This spell translates that into a permanent improvement. You gain 5% to either Fitness or Struggle each time this is cast. You have to pick which ability goes up beforehand. The highest you can build either with this spell is 60%.

You should not use this spell more than once per week. If you do, you need to make a Violence stress check with the rank equal to the tens digit of your new ability score. If you have Fitness 55%, you'd need to face a Violence (6) check if you try adding another 5% to it. If you fail, you lose 5% as well as the usual bucket of fun that comes with failing a Violence stress check.

SYNCHRONICITY

Cost: 2 significant charges.

Effect: Pornomancy was born by being in the right place at the right moment — when that adult performer elevated to become the Naked Goddess. The echoes of that synchronicity can still be felt by pornomancers. And if there's one thing they're good at, it's using what can be felt to their benefit. You spend the charge and — well, it depends. You could gain a 20% bonus to your next roll because you just happen to be at the right time and right place. Or the GM puts you where you should be given whatever you're trying to do. Now, being there is not the same thing as being able to handle being there.

You're looking for a lost dog and cast Synchronicity. The GM decides it makes more sense to turn a corner and find Fido sitting there waiting for you. Alternatively, the GM could give you +20% to your Notice roll to find evidence of where Fido ran off to. None of that necessarily means Fido won't bite your ass.

ACTING IN PORN

Cost: 1 significant charge.

Porn stars are notorious for being bad actors. You can use this spell to make someone act so bad, everything they say sounds stupid or deceitful. The target must be someone you can see. Once the charges are spent, that poor person automatically fails the next Connect, Status, or Lie roll when they try convincing or explaining to someone. Worse, whoever was listening believes that person was lying or at least hiding the truth. ("Where was I? Um, I was ... yeah, the library. Studying for the LSAT like I said and definitely not banging the babysitter. What? I said I *didn't* bang her!")

1: INTRO



2: ADEPTS



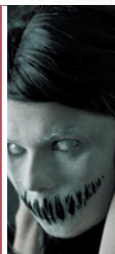
3: AVATARS



4: PLACES



5: FACES



PLEASURE-PAIN LINE

Cost: 1 significant charge.

Effect: The line between pain and pleasure can get blurry. You can make it disappear altogether. Target one person that's just about to do something pleasurable, from eating a nice piece of pie to having a threesome. As soon as they start to enjoy themselves, it becomes painful. The target makes an unarmed attack against themselves. A success or failure means they take 3 wounds. A crit means they pass out from the pain as well. A fumble means they take no damage but really do not want to do that thing right now, thank you very much. Matched rolls do nothing special.

DEEP THROAT

Cost: 2 significant charges.

Not to be too crude about it, but porn stars have an ability to — um, fit things in their bodies that other people could not. This can be a natural talent, but most porn stars must train their body to relax and take things that shouldn't be there. You can do the same with this spell, albeit in non-traditional ways. (Non-traditional for adult videos, anyway.) Take an object no bigger than your fist and place it against your naked skin. That object disappears under your skin and fits inside you comfortably. It can remain there for up to twenty-four hours, and you can take it out at any time. It doesn't get damaged, although it comes out a bit soggy.

This object shows up on x-rays, and can be removed by somebody else with surgical (or violent) methods, if they know about it. Once the twenty-four hours is up, the object is ejected from your body without causing harm to you or the object.

DEAD INSIDE

Cost: 2–3 significant charges.

Performing in adult content requires more than just a body. You need to disconnect on some level and remember this is just a performance; your emotions do not matter. That gives you power over your own. By casting this spell, you can cancel one stress check you face as if you had enough hardened notches. If you spend another significant charge (for a total of 3), you can help someone else do that instead of you. It doesn't matter what meter is being triggered. You choke back those emotions and calmly get through the experience. The memories might not be nice, but they aren't nightmares either.

THIRSTY GARDENER

Cost: 3 significant charges.

Effect: A classic trope in porn is the sexy gardener who wanders inside the house for a drink of water. Of course, the housewife is standing around the kitchen in lingerie. No one knows how that gardener got inside, and the housewife is certainly unconcerned. Fun ensues. While you can't force people to have sex with you with this spell, you can get into just about any building. Doors are unlocked, alarms disabled, and guards somewhere else when you want to get inside someplace.

If anyone runs into you while you're there, they must make an Unnatural (4) stress check. If they succeed, they know perfectly well that you have no business being there and act accordingly. (Hello, not-so-sexy handcuffs!) But if they fail, they gain a hardened notch. Instead of reacting negatively like normal, they become your bestest buddy in the whole world. They follow you around, flirt casually without meaning anything, open doors for you, and so on. There's only two things they won't do: sleep with you or hurt anybody. This effect lasts for either one hour or when you've collected six groupies. As soon as a sixth person fails that Unnatural check, it all goes down hard.

You need to get into a small-town police station and free a friend who got pinched. You drive around back and cast this spell. When you try the back door, it turns out someone propped it open for their smoke break and they forgot to shut it properly. Your friend who got arrested? Yeah, someone forgot to lock that one cell. A detective sees you and fails his stress check. He asks you how you're doing and asks if you need coffee, police protection, or a backrub.

MAJOR CHARGE EFFECTS

Break into mainstream acting successfully. Look, sound, and feel like a legendary porn star at their prime. Calm or inflame the passions of thousands in one space, like a concert or mall. Change a person's sexual characteristics.

1: INTRO



2: ADEPTS



3: AVATARS



4: PLACES



5: FACES





URBANOMANCY

AKA RATS, SLUM JUNKIES, HAWKSMOORS, WARD HEELERS

Each city has a beating heart, and you heart beats in synchrony with it. You feel every organ in the city as though it were one of your own: each new development project, crime spree, election, migration of tech workers, block party, traffic accident, pest infestation, public transit crisis. The beauty of its complex symphony is unmatched.

Your devotion to your city is equally unmatched. You don't just see the city for what it is, but what it could be. You are its shepherd and spouse, the Metatron to its God. You are its witness, seeing and chronicling what the common denizens ignore.

Ultimately, the city is made of its people, so you feel its people in your bones and blood. You taste the fear people have of Mission Park. You watch as recessions consume job after job and know it for the ravenous beast it is. You know which dealers sell clean heroin and which sell tainted junk. You can see the cascading effects of one person jaywalking while looking at their phone become a traffic accident twenty-five minutes later, because the person who nearly hit them now has too much adrenaline in their veins and won't notice the van they wouldn't have even encountered if they hadn't stopped in the first place.

You know this because you study your city like the scholar-priests of old. You worship the city — the city that is and the city that could be.

But ultimately, your city is uncaring. It's filled with people, yes, but it doesn't need any one individual to thrive. Maybe other people need a community leader to champion for them, but remove that person, and the city itself endures. Deep down, every urbanomancer knows that even they're replaceable, removable, irrelevant in the scope of things — yet each one is so tied to their city that they're at the same time the city's bedrock, confidante, the only one who truly understands it.

You may be a magus-advocate of your city, and it loves you for that, but in the end it doesn't need you at all. You're a brief fling. In that painful intersection lies your magick.

STATS

Each urbanomancer is attuned to one city, and once attuned that can never change. This means a genuine city: a municipality with at least 100,000 people in it. For sprawls and twin cities, the attunement ends at the city's border, and doesn't go an inch beyond. (That means you have to pick a side, Minneapolis/Saint Paul urbanomancers.)

For adjacent suburbs whose residents broadly see themselves culturally tied to your city (and only your city), you can work magick there at -10% but can't generate charges from it.

Generate a Minor Charge: Revere your city for four hours. Walk around, observing and committing to paper or memory patterns and subtleties others miss, like cracks in the road or the frequency of cars with parking tickets block by block. People-watch in a transit center, watching the expressions on faces coming and going. Consume crime blogs in the hunt for patterns more mystical than mundane.

Generate a Significant Charge: Change the flow of the city for even a moment in a way that's impossible to ignore. You can make your mark through obstruction, such as blocking a major intersection to where map programs reroute traffic or organizing a concert or protest that fills a major park. You can work within the system of the city itself to make your mark, such as by changing how a neighborhood is policed or a subway is funded.

Getting a part of the city named after you is every ambitious urbanomancer's dream. Having a street, park, or building named after you — not just with your name, but in your honor — generates charges over time, from once a year to once every day depending on the importance of the site to the city's zeitgeist.

1: INTRO



2: ADEPTS



3: AVATARS



4: PLACES



5: FACES



Generate a Major Charge: Permanently mark the city, either physically or in the psychic landscape of its citizens and the city's relationship to the world. Building a freeway or subway, setting a city-wide fire, or sparking a historical moment that is never forgotten bestows a major charge.

If the city is named in your honor, you get a major charge in the moment of the renaming ceremony, then once every year you refrain from breaking taboo or leaving your city. (Though once you achieve this feat, adepts afraid of your power will gun for you. Only one urbanomancer has achieved this, and only for one year.)

Taboo: There are two roads of Urbanomancy: those who worship their city as lovers from within, and those who worship their city as observers separate from it. Most rats are the former — “traditional” or “political” urbanomancers — and for all that they revere the city, they show almost mystic disdain for what lies beneath it. If a political urbanomancer touches the actual earth of the city, whether a front yard, park, patch of undeveloped land, or bit of gravel on the side of the road, their charges are drained out of them not unlike lightning hitting a grounding rod. A good thick-soled pair of shoes can protect the rat, but it only takes one stumble to send their charges away.

The others, the “outsider” or “vagrant” urbanomancers, are witnesses to their city while being invisible specters within it. They don't have the prohibition that traditionalists do, but they can never take benefit from the protection of their city. In their view, the city doesn't get any protection from the elements, so they must act likewise. Taking shelter is taboo — walking into a fast-food joint to get a burger won't break taboo, but they must take it outside as soon as they can. If it's raining, they don't get to stay indoors. And they certainly can never sleep in shelter meant to be slept in. The very fundamentals of urban living are disallowed. (Incidentally, the rise of this variant is why no urbanomancers have access to the Ragged Warriors spell that traditionalists could once cast.)

Regardless of type, all urbanomancers are tied to their beloved city. Leaving the city doesn't inherently drain one of charges, but they can't gain more charges or cast any adept spells while away; only their city responds to their will. If an urbanomancer is gone for a week or longer, the ache and loss inside of them starts to take a toll. (One slum junkie described it like jonesing for a smoke while missing your new lover then having your ATM cards stolen from you all in one.) The GM might apply -10% or -20% penalties to various actions that involve cities (dealing with people, driving, finding someone in a crowd), or even require Helplessness or Isolation checks if they're unable to or prevent themselves from returning “home.”

Random Magick Domain: Urbanomancy is about your city's underlying hive mind, its zeitgeist — not about any individual cog in the machine, but the larger forces like crowds, organizations, infrastructure, etc. Commune with the city to gain information within it. Alter how the machine that is the city works, to smooth or interfere with someone's actions and agenda.

URBANOMANCY MINOR FORMULA SPELLS

The listed costs are generally for both branches of Urbanomancy, though in some cases outsiders have a different effect or cost reflecting their different relationship with the city.

FIVE-STAR RIDE

Cost: 1 minor charge.

Effect: State a desired destination within the city. A ride share car or cab is coincidentally nearby, picking you up to take you to the destination. The ride is free for you, the traffic is smooth no matter the time of day, and the driver treats you like you want to be treated (chatty, quiet, playing music you want). You can take one or two other people, as many as can fit in a typical car.

An older version of the spell exists called “Day Pass,” which allows you to use any public transportation system in the same way. Ticket checkers and transit officers let you on without notice, your connections are perfectly timed for you (even if early or late for others), and you find a seat. Like with the new, luxurious version of the spell, you can take one or two people with you, though there's no guarantee of seats for them.

POSTING IN THE REAL WORLD

Cost: 1 or 3 minor charges.

Effect: Leave a message concealed in any part on the city, which is received only by a person or group you choose at the outset (e.g., “Camille from Third Street Café” or “other adepts”). You must be in the area and looking at where you want to leave the message when casting the spell.

The message can't be more than 140 characters long, but can take a variety of forms people would typically ignore: seemingly unintelligible graffiti, chalk marks or minor cracks in the pavement, a busker's music, coffee shop chatter, pigeon droppings, the scurrying sound of rats suddenly resolving itself into words. This message lasts for a week.

For 2 more minor charges, the message moves to find those you designate, then stays there. If there's more than one place for the message to go, it goes to the largest group or the one nearest to you; you have no control over that degree of precision.

There's a hitch: other urbanomancers can tell where a Posting is, and can spend a minor charge to read it themselves if they weren't already designated.

Receiving such a message is an Unnatural (3) check for those unaccustomed to it. It's an Unnatural (1) check for those who are.

Your childhood friend's kid ran away to the “big city,” and you want to make sure he doesn't fall in with bad people. You cast Posting in the Real World to have the message seek him out, and he sees a note carved in seemingly random knife marks on the pier he's sitting at, telling him where to find a hot meal. Of course, it's on him to decide to go there (and hopefully not freak out from the spell).

1: INTRO



2: ADEPTS



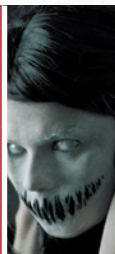
3: AVATARS



4: PLACES



5: FACES



STREETWISE

Cost: 1–2 minor charges.

Effect: Divine any fact about the city itself or the groups within it. Know where every entrance and exit to a building is (even those not intended), how many people would today vote Hazel Nguyen for mayor or yes on Proposition 67, or which gang has control over the local meth trade or Washington Park. No further specifics are available with this spell — you can't tell who Jose Hernandez would vote for or where his mistress lives, but if you knew he was a member of, say, the Islington Freemasons, you could find out where and when they meet, then work from information you get there.

Since the advent of outsider Urbanomancy, this spell became divided. Politicals can learn about things relevant to the middle and upper classes though this spell. Outsiders can learn about the lower classes and common criminal elements. Using this spell to learn something privileged to the other side costs one more charge. Facts common to both are fair game to all.

FACE IN THE CROWD

Cost: 2 minor charges.

Effect: You disappear into an existing crowd. Your features don't change — you just become incredibly hard to spot, another part of the great teeming mass of the city. All attempts to follow or detect you are at a –50% penalty while you're the crowd.

VERMIN'S EYES

Cost: 2 minor charges.

Effect: When casting this spell, hold a small animal common to your city's urban landscape: rat, squirrel, pigeon, crow, etc. You now see through its eyes and exert control over its actions, if the actions remain natural for that animal. Rats scurry and might bite, but don't carry someone's keys away. Pigeons hover around and can ruin a suit, but don't dive bomb. (Many urbanomancers like to use crows for their versatility, though crows are far less easy to handle in the first place.)

This effect lasts until you cancel it, but you can't switch back and forth between your vision and the animal's; as soon as you change back, the spell is over.

An outsider who does this at least five times a week with the same animal forms a bond with that animal. Using this spell on that animal costs a single charge, though the affinity breaks if the urbanomancer uses the spell on another animal.

BREAK YOUR MOTHER'S BACK

Cost: 3 minor charges.

Effect: This is the Urbanomancy minor blast. The city itself lashes out against the target, either through uncaring coincidence or random street violence. Loose masonry falling from a few stories up, a stray dog's bite, a poorly thrown baseball to the head, an angry drunk stumbling into them out of a bar.

Onlookers (and maybe the target themselves) won't have any sense of the unnaturalness, so no Unnatural check. In some cases, like with the coincidental loose masonry, the GM might call for a Helplessness check instead of Violence — the literally painful realization that the city can take anyone out at any time is frightening in different way that being in a fight.

On the downside, the blast waits to strike until a coincidence is plausible. If the target is chasing you through a mall, the blast fires off immediately. Fighting someone in their house? That blast probably doesn't go off right away. But once he leaves to walk to the corner store, the city remembers that it owes a debt of suffering.

URBANOMANCY SIGNIFICANT FORMULA SPELLS

ALONE IN THE CROWD

Cost: 1 significant charge.

Effect: For a week, the target of this spell becomes a pariah to the city. Nobody attacks or openly mocks them, but everyone subtly avoids them. If they're in a crowd, people keep a distance of at least a foot. Conversations are kept as short and sharp as possible, so there's no comfort in even the occasional chatty barista or checker.

Rules-wise, this imposes –20% on Status rolls and to Connect rolls with strangers. The GM might call for Isolation or Helplessness checks.

Close friends and family aren't affected by this spell, but they also don't really notice the treatment the city is giving. The target isn't subject to this if they go to another city before the time is up, though if they return before then the city still treats them coldly.

You can end this effect early if you wish.

MY TURF

Cost: 1 significant charge.

Effect: Establish your magical dominance over a specific area. The area can be up to one square mile and must have clearly defined boundaries that the city recognizes, like Grant Square or the Ferry Building. When you cast the spell, specify one type of event to sense: criminal activity, a member of the New Inquisition entering, someone playing a geocaching game, etc. You automatically sense that event as well as any magic cast within the area. You can spend minor charges to add more events to sense, one per charge. When you sense the event, you know which type of event, but nothing more specific.

This spell lasts a week before needing to be renewed, and you can only have one My Turf active at a time. When recasting the spell, you aren't bound to the same events — change, increase, or decrease as you like.

The sort of site you can claim depends on if you're an outsider or a traditionalist. Places associated with the

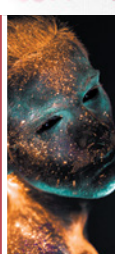
1: INTRO



2: ADEPTS



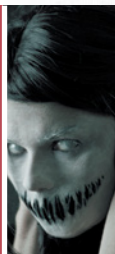
3: AVATARS



4: PLACES



5: FACES



lower classes are available only to outsiders, and the higher classes only to traditionalists. Utterly communal places where everyone mixes together, like subway terminals, are open to both branches.

WRONG TURN

Cost: 2 significant charges.

Effect: Next time the target travels around the city, this spell ensures they end up in a public place you choose when casting the spell. "Public" is very broad, including the street outside of your house or in the middle of a sketchy part of town. Coincidence works with crowds and traffic to force this.

The target can avoid the effect with some sort of travel spell cast by them or another. Trying to resist otherwise angers the city, and the effects become more obvious and possibly more dangerous — such as being hit by a car and taken by ambulance that happens to break down near the pier you wanted them to wind up at. (One rat learned the hard way that Wrong Turn isn't ideal for causing a romantic moment for a marriage proposal.)

THE MADNESS OF CROWDS

Cost: 3 significant charges.

Effect: This starts a *riot* in a crowd you're near. There must be pre-existing tension over some issue — possibly created by Urbanomancy — for the riot to explode. When casting the spell, you can give some general shape to the riot provided it gets the tension, such as what the riot is against or which direction it starts to move. However, you must be present at ground zero to cast this spell, and the riot starts immediately.

NAPOLEON OF NOTTING HILL

Cost: 3 significant charges.

Effect: An individual you choose (which can include you) rises to a position of respect and power within their neighborhood. The spell works slowly, over a period of three months. You can't choose anything specific about this, as the nature of the individual dictates the position they gain, be it a community spokesperson, gang leader, borough representative, head of the Neighborhood Watch, etc.

Once achieved, it's up to the target to maintain that position on their own actions and merits. Or the spell could be cast again to maintain the position that might be otherwise pissed away.

TRAFFIC ACCIDENT

Cost: 3 significant charges.

Effect: This is the Urbanomancy significant blast. It works like Break Your Mother's Back, at the significant scale. Depending on the locale, being inside of a house might not be enough to protect the target in that moment: stray gunshots happen.

MAJOR CHARGE EFFECTS

Change the political or cultural favor of someone to elevate their status, whether that's to make someone mayor or police chief, or to make someone the person mayors and police chiefs court the blessing of. Tap into the interconnection of cities to make a broad change in your country, such as lowering or raising crime rates. Manifest or disappear a building in your city and have no one notice the change. Magickally link two cities together to create sister cities, wherein Urbanomancy and other occult mojo treats them as the same city.

See "Riots: When Society Fails a Stress Check" in Book Two: Run on page 98.

1: INTRO



2: ADEPTS



3: AVATARS



4: PLACES



5: FACES



THE BIG BOOK OF RITUALS

Yeah. Good luck with that.

Congratulations! Against all odds, you've found a thing that is forbidden, brutal and is probably the most dangerous way to go about getting what you need, but hey. You need it, right? Really, really need it, right? You wouldn't be reading these words otherwise. Maybe you're reading this from a link in your email to a third-party file sharing site that requires a Tor browser to view. Maybe you found it on a file on a USB shaped like a rubber ducky with demon horns. Maybe you found it carefully copied by hand in a marble-bound copybook left in the gardening section of a public library or maybe I handed you a PoD vanity press published copy while you were drinking a frappe in a Buckstars Coffee and walked away without a word. It comes in many forms, this guide, and each instance of it is incomplete. You don't have the same ritual list that I gave to that powerful politician who just won the nomination for president. This is by design. The advice I give remains pretty much the same, though, so you can probably count on that.

Who am I? Well. I'm an embodied demon of course. Most of these rituals have nothing to do with demons, and I don't personally benefit from you casting them. Really. My reasons for collecting them and telling you about them? Don't sweat it kid. My plans come to fruition after you're a hundred years dead and they have very little to do with humans. Promise. For now, just take it on faith that I love human need, love it, and love to see it satisfied after you funny little monkeys have put yourself through hell to do it. Suffering with a payoff, avarice, greed, desperation, and then living with getting exactly what you asked for? That's better than a blowjob from twins while eating donuts. And I really love donuts. So please. Do the thing. You need something badly enough; you wouldn't be reading this if not. Take the risks. Reap the rewards. I'm watching.

Here's the six or seven things you need to know.

THE NEW RULES OF RITUAL WORK

THE RULE OF NEED

Rituals exist because people really need them to. This is not in a "I passionately need my personal fucked-up worldview to be true to the point that I make magick to force it on the truth." This is "I just really need the prom queen to die when she's being crowned, messily, in front of everyone." Rituals are born of singular needs rather than whole wrecked belief systems. This explains why some rituals can be cast without the caster even believing in magick. *Need* is a million times more important than *belief*.

THE RULE OF NEW

These rituals aren't ancient. They aren't grounded in centuries-old traditions. And if a ritual that's centuries old works it's because someone needed it to so badly they made a new ritual. So far as I can tell, nothing pre-WWII still works. And I'm suspect about even that. Lost Nazi rituals you hear about from time to time? Yeah, probably modern hate, not antique evil.

THE RULE OF DISCOVERY

Rituals are drawn to the people who need them the most. Or think they do. Yes, even ponies.

THE RULE OF SECRECY

Rituals have a shelf life directly related to the number of people who know about them. This may be one of the reasons ancient rituals don't work anymore. But probably it's more than just that. The more people that know about an exact ritual, the sooner it just stops working as-is. Rituals can change to fit a need if the need is strong enough but a ritual is a lot of moving parts and there's no way just the input changes without effecting the output.

THE RULE OF DECAY

There aren't really any good rituals for creating charges anymore. If there ever were any to begin with. But that doesn't mean you gotta be a charger to get the juices flowing. Not anymore.

THE RULE OF RULES

Rituals are when magic breaks or bends a rule to satisfy a human need. Usually a pretty selfish need. Even the rules within in a ritual bend and break by its very nature. This also applies to these rules about rituals. So, watch your ass.

The Other Rule. One or many of these rules may be untrue. Your mileage may vary.

— Gary the Demon's Big "Book" of Rituals

1: INTRO



2: ADEPTS



3: AVATARS



4: PLACES



5: FACES





WHAT THIS SECTION IS

The information here is largely GM-facing, as this is a guide to using rituals in your game in addition to being just a list of new weird and creepy rituals. A lot has changed since March of '03, a lot of the old truths in setting have shifted or changed. This section offers some ways to address the new world disorder.

It includes:

- Using rituals as objectives.
- A few groups of rituals exploring some of the new rules for rituals.
- A baked-in hook for a series of ritual-focused objectives.
- Game rituals and why anyone would do something so stupid.
- Who is Gary?

Each grouping of rituals also includes an in-character snippet to anchor them in the world, ideas for the GM for where the characters might find them, how the characters can find out more if they're digging deeper, and how the GM can use them in a story.

While the information here is for the GM, feel free to yank out the in-character snippets and present them as-is to jump-start your stories. Is it possible that Gary the Demon's Big "Book" of Rituals is itself a form of meta ritual? Scribble out some passages for your players on a coffee-stained legal pad and find out together.

If you dare.

Remember, too, that all demons are liars. Much of what Gary says is likely bald-faced ass-clutching nonsense. GMs should feel free to invert one or more rituals provided here as best suits their antagonist phase needs.

RITUALS AS AN OBJECTIVE

Book One: Play provides rules for how and when to roll the dice when a PC wants to cast a ritual they've found or know as a part of their features. That's cool, you can leave that alone. You can choose if you want to include these rituals in the list of rituals a character knows as a feature.

As for finding "new" ones or casting especially scary ones, why not use an objective instead? Or a series of objectives if you want to ultimately let a bunch of ponies cast a significant ritual. First, dropping "Successfully cast How to Cut Off Your Own Head 10%" in your check looks cool. Second, you have easy baked-in milestones to increase the percentage chance of success like "Find out if anyone has done this successfully," and "Find the blood of an aged virgin whore" — or whatever the ritual requires. You and the players can extrapolate more ways to insure the ritual works beyond what's written here in the text. Technically, you only need a set of pencils and the right words to cast "Charlie Charlie" but if you also had red salt, an image of Charlie, and the firsthand account of some pitfalls not mentioned in the write-up, the chances of success are much higher. That is, the objective's percentage score is higher because they worked through the steps.

Finally, you can let them substitute their Casts Rituals identity with their objective's percentage. That way, PCs who pursue the ritual and moods of the story are more likely to be successful (assuming their identity percentiles aren't already high). You can mess with this by messing with their timeline. They're at a 33% chance of success on Tuesday when they discover today is the best day to do the ritual for the next twenty years. That is, they can take their chances by rolling today at 33%, or suffer an unnamed penalty or consequence by doing it on a less fortunate day. That's a nice hard choice right there.

1: INTRO



2: ADEPTS



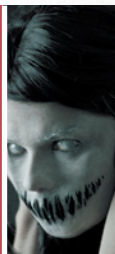
3: AVATARS



4: PLACES



5: FACES



If they succeed, give them what the ritual says it gives them. If you've made promises, uphold them. However — remember that rituals bend and break rules. Don't screw them when their hard work pays off, but do reveal results of their actions they neglected to consider. So, they cast a ritual that makes them rich; that's great, but a sudden influx of wealth doesn't come from nowhere. Whose money did you take, buddy? Many rituals can and should have inherent consequences. You can hear demons now because of the ritual, sure, but now you can *always* hear demons. *All the time*. So that sucks. Make sure these sorts of things are spelled out explicitly before the characters get into it. The best torments are the ones a ritual seeker signs up for.

If they fail, well. They knew what they were getting into. They did the legwork. They knew how bad it could get. Open the gates of hell.

But always, always, let them know there's probably a way to shut that door again. Like, say, another ritual as objective?

PROFESSIONAL RUMORS

You know when you had that shit warehouse job and everyone told you to never come in the side door on Tuesdays, but there was never an explanation why? But eventually Todd went through the door on a Tuesday because he was late, and he died of cancer three months later? Well. That's probably because of a ritual. Truckers have a lot of these. TV executives have even more. There are no known functional professional rumor-based rituals among butchers and charcutiers but no one knows why.

You can't trace these rituals back to a source because they don't have sources. They're just something people "in the industry" know. The rule of secrecy is especially harsh to these rituals, which is why these things tend to exist briefly while being pretty potent for as long as they've got. They're hard to research because no one wants to talk to outsiders about them mostly out of embarrassment. Your best bet is people who don't believe in them, but have or know someone who tried them anyway.

— Gary the Demon's Big "Book" of Rituals

Where to find them: The bar where insiders drink. The journal of an infamous whistleblower who died mysteriously. Among a watchdog group that obsesses over crooked fat cats. At a location that's famous among the in-crowd. At a prestigious school where people enter the profession. At a convention for said profession.

How to learn more: Be a member of the profession, or trick others into believing you are. Be a victim to one.

How to use them: Knowing the ritual lends credibility to someone important to an objective. The objective requires that a PC find a fast track through an insular business. A PC is already in the industry and heard a rumor that's too good to pass up.

THE CURSED STORY

You know the story about that story or poem or whatever that if you read it, you're cursed? Totally real. Plenty of big name pro writers know how, but don't necessarily believe it would work.

Cost: 1 minor charge.

Ritual Action: Write a story about something terrible you've personally done. You can and should fictionalize it to make it sound more like a curse or something that can and does happen to the reader, but it's gotta be close enough that if someone you love reads it, they'd know it was about you. If you've never done anything terrible, you must do that first. Write the whole thing in human blood. Doesn't matter whose. Send it to seven people including someone you love. Don't worry, they're going to spread it.

Effect: If you manage all that, you lose a relationship. One person knows what you did and wants nothing to do with you. However, a group of people are now circulating your cursed story. Pick a group that you targeted, identities are good examples. Any time a person with that identity or in that group comes up in game, there is a chance they are currently being effected by unnatural phenomena. The chance is equal to what the ritualist rolled to cast the ritual.

THE DEVIL'S DISSERTATION

You ever hear of the Codex Gigas? Never mind, forget I said anything. Grad students and professors probably know this ritual. Similar rituals happen in high-stakes offices from time to time as well.

Cost: 1 minor charge.

Ritual Action: Be screwed by a deadline. An essay that requires a month of research due tomorrow, and you just started? That kind of thing. Hit bottom and be convinced you would give up anything to get this magickally done on time. Even your soul. Start the work. If you genuinely meant it, you're going to hit your deadline.

Effect: You did it! Enjoy a 10% increase on an identity that could be improved by your impossible success. The work is sublime. If you're a charger, lose the ability to hold charges for a year. If you're not, you are never able to generate charges.

1: INTRO



2: ADEPTS



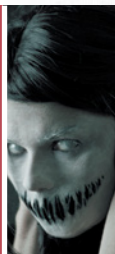
3: AVATARS



4: PLACES



5: FACES



CHANNEL ZERO

If you've ever worked in TV you've heard of a secret channel, a channel full of answers that you can only watch three times in your life.

Cost: 1 minor charge.

Ritual Action: Find a Zenith brand TV with a functioning antenna. The tube and set don't have to work, but the antenna needs to be intact. You need a remote from any TV and a TV Guide from the year you were born or its first year of publication if you were born before that. Hire someone to sit in another room and not interfere, no matter what they hear. It can be a stranger or a friend, but money must change hands. If the ritual fails, or they use or destroy the TV, your soul is forfeit and you become a demon that haunts the airwaves. Use the remote to turn on the TV and start flipping through the TV Guide. If you've followed the steps, the TV turns on. The TV talks to you and tells you six things you'd rather not know about yourself. These things may or may not be true but you believe them. Next, ask your questions. They must be yes/no questions, and you can only ask a total of three in a lifetime. After that, conducting the ritual again just flat-out kills you.

Effect: If you succeed at the ritual you need to endure the fun facts the channel shares with you. You're hit with a Self (5) stress check (or higher, depending on how the GM feels). If the ritual is conducted during a full moon, you automatically fail this roll. After, ask your questions. The answers are as truthful as they can be, but no one knows whose perspective they follow when an answer requires an opinion (such as, "Do you like Crystal Pepsi?").

MIXING UP MUMMY BROWN

Artists covet this stuff. It makes a mean bit of leverage if you can't use it yourself.

Cost: 1 minor charge.

Ritual Action: You're going to need a mummy, obviously. For these purposes, any preserved and desiccated corpse will do. It's gotta be human. You must grind the entire thing, bones *and* teeth, into powder. That's harder than it sounds. True mummy brown also requires a portion of sand or soil from the corpse's land of birth. Mix 'til color saturation is achieved.

Effect: Paintings, sketches, or even text colored — in part or in whole — with mummy brown evokes real feelings of despair in the viewer. A profound and unexplainable sorrow that speaks of nothingness, death and the void to which the soul marches without means to escape. If the viewer is not a creative person, they find it difficult to do anything for a few days, much like the effects of depression. A creative type, skilled or unskilled, is compelled to spend the next twenty-four hours creating even at the cost of their own health. They push themselves past the breaking point of exhaustion to keep working.

COPY PASTES

The internet is nothing if not a place where inaccurate information flows freely from desperate people to other desperate people in torrents. I love it. Humans honestly believe if you know the right website or whatever, you can literally get anything on the internet. Dirk A.-branded coffee mug for your mom's birthday? Check. A pay-what-you-want snuff film? Check. A ritual to make her see you for who you really are? Well. Kinda check. (Hint: you're a narcissist and she should run.)

Message boards, unlisted YouTube channels, image sites that are mostly gifs of anime characters having sex, and even most major social media platforms all have a few secret spots dedicated to the exchange of rituals. Most of them don't know that's what they're doing. They're just exchanging spooky stories or arguing over which version is the "real" version for fun. This versioning of the rituals is how they dodge or prove the Rule of Secrecy. You don't know if you've got the version that works without trying it. That said, thanks to the Rule of Discovery, if you need it bad enough, oh, you get it all right.

Most of these rituals have some sort of internal logic problem. That's pretty standard.

— Gary the Demon's Big "Book" of Rituals

Where to find them: The memorial page of a dead man that's updating and deleting posts every midnight. A sub-board of a message board about "real life" horror stories. A link on the wiki that supposedly lists most sites on the deep web. Pinned to a literal message board in the back of a community center no one uses anymore.

How to learn more: Chat rooms. The comment section of a YouTuber who reads scary stories on her channel. An invite-only group on a popular social media page. The corrections section of Wikipedia.

How to use them: When you're bored with life. When you need something strange to happen. To examine the depravity of the human condition. When you need money fast and have forgotten how normal people go about that kind of thing.

1: INTRO



2: ADEPTS



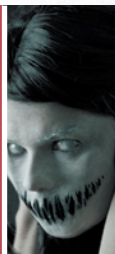
3: AVATARS



4: PLACES



5: FACES



THE FUBAR RITUAL

You went to a certain place at a certain time and did a certain thing and the thing you were sure was going to happen happened. Now your walls are bleeding, your dead ex-boyfriend keeps messaging you on social media, and all your pictures show you as a corpse. What can you do?

Cost: 1 minor charge.

Ritual Action: This ritual involves getting all the people caught up in an unnatural phenomenon to go with you to a place where it all got started. That might be where an adept blew himself up or where you and your cohorts botched a ritual. There, you need to symbolically perform the action that caused the phenomenon backward in a circle of salt. The phenomenon most certainly pushes against your ritual, lurking outside the circle trying to trick someone to break the circle.

Effect: If you succeed at the ritual without anyone being pulled or lured across the circle of salt, you have rebuked any residual occurrences of unnatural entities that might be stalking you. If some part of a curse or a botched ritual or bad magic was causing a continuing event, it's over now. Or maybe it just goes somewhere else far away from you. Hard to say.

DO YOU WANT TO SEE GHOSTS?

There's probably no good difference between ghosts and demons, and demons lie, but that's not going to stop you trying to see them, is it? Fine, you need to see "ghosts," here's how.

Cost: 1 minor charge.

Ritual Action: Go to a cemetery on the night of the new moon. You can't bring any artificial light or light source. So, no smartphones. You and your friends should go pretty much in the dark. Find a grave that shares a name with one of you or was a blood relation. You need enough hot ash to rub into your eyes. The more you injure yourself with it, the longer the ability lasts. If you want to see ghosts forever, whisper to them while you put your eyes out with the hot ash.

Variant: That's stupid. You need a video camera to witness the ritual. You must record everything. When you're done and half blind, it's the camera that sees the ghosts.

Effect: For several weeks, equal to the amount of self-inflicted wounds you've taken, you (or the camera) can see ghosts. This manifests in a light glow around the possessed or objects that have been manipulated by the dead. Recovering wounds reduces the weeks you can use this, so be prepared to hurt for a while.

HOW TO CUT OFF YOUR OWN HEAD

Who knows why anyone does anything, really? But especially this one.

Cost: 1 minor charge.

Ritual Action: Really, what you're doing is making a snuff film. You need some friends you trust that can follow directions, a video camera, a very big knife. You also need relative isolation in a location of a previous beheading, but it doesn't have to be famous or anything. Knife's gotta make its first contact with your neck at exactly noon (local time) and your head needs to be clean off within ten minutes. That's harder

than it sounds. If your friends screw up the timing or don't get your head clean off, well. Not a great day for you, is it? If they get it clean off in time and then kinda stick it back in place, the ritual is mostly complete. After that, you must upload the video to the internet and somehow manage to trick three people into watching it within forty-eight hours.

Variant: Noon is stupid, it makes no sense. You must do the deed at the exact time the last person beheaded on the spot went down. It absorbs your death by causing a hiccup in reality.

Effect: If everything goes as planned you get bragging rights, have a snuff film of yourself and you've traumatized a bunch of people! Plus, you pick up the Sort of Immortal identity at 25%. This is only sort of immortal. You still grow old, you can still get the big C, but falling off a building might not be so bad. Remember also that until this identity is increased past 50%, the Provides Wound Threshold feature doesn't do a lot.

I'm Sort of Immortal, of course I can survive that fall, drink that bleach, endure those burns.

Features: Provides Wound Threshold, Substitutes for Dodge, Substitutes for Fitness.

THE UBER TO HELL

Sometimes, you just gotta get there on time and it doesn't matter how.

Cost: 1 minor charge.

Ritual Action: There's this phone number, it goes to a cell phone. You can just look it up online by searching for "worst Uber trip ever" and whatever number they list is the right one. If you call and tell the dispatcher, "I'll go through hell to get there," she tells you she understands. Ten minutes later you get a text that your ride has arrived. If you're a man you get a menacing white guy who spends the whole time bragging about how awesome his life is. If you eschew gender binaries you get a small pregnant Mexican woman who says nothing but looks sadly at you in the rear view. If you are a woman, the driver's seat is empty but the car drives, leaving you alone with your thoughts. The trip feels like it takes days, out the window you quickly see a hellscape full of tortured souls, inflicting suffering in themselves and each other. There is no escape, you must witness what people do to themselves. But when it's over, you're anywhere in the world you need to be at exactly the right time.

The car always has exactly as many vacant seats as you need, if you're going through hell with some friends. They see what you see.

Variant: It doesn't go through hell. It goes to the other place. You don't remember any of it, but spend the rest of your life longing to go back. This ritual is never acquired at the same place as the standard one.

Effect: You get exactly where you wanted to go as if no time passed at all. You've spent days, in your mind, riding through hell, however. You're going to have some nightmares — at least an Unnatural (7) stress check. To determine how bad the trip was, a GM should look up the rates for a hired car in the character's area at the time they call. That rate figures into how long you think you're in hell. Watch out for surge pricing!

1: INTRO



2: ADEPTS



3: AVATARS



4: PLACES



5: FACES



IT MEETS THE NEED

You know the story of the guy who loses his wife to a car accident and even though he's never done any kind of magick in his life, he just happens to find out about an ancient Aztec burial ground in the area where he can do a ritual to bring her back? Yeah. Well, those stories come from truth. It may not have always been true, but now it is. I have this theory that you crazy kids have shifted reality to favor coincidence and happenstance over randomness by a near universal obsession with it. At least with rituals, in this case, this sort of ritual follows a tragedy. Terrible "hope" that only comes during the darkest night of the soul. Evidence suggests these types of rituals warp reality in tiny itty bitty bits to be in the right place at just the right time. Is there a sentience behind them? Are these rituals handed out to you by the Invisible Clergy to test and inspire? Or is it me? I guess you never really know.

— Gary the Demon's Big "Book" of Rituals

Where to find them: It's less that you find them and more that they find you. If you're at the bottom and all seems lost, when there seems like no solution to your problem, these rituals just sort of work their way into your life. You wake up going, "Oh, crap, I read about something like this a few months ago, where's that grimoire?!" even if you'd read no such thing a month ago. And bam, there it is!

How to learn more: Anyone could have more information, and often in tracking down ingredients or hanging around the locations looking at your options, the right party is there to give you a grim warning. Almost always, you won't be able to trust them.

How to use them: There are fates worse than death. In theory, these rituals help you avoid them. Use a ritual, at your own peril, when all is lost.

THE HOOK-UP

You've been alone too long, and the lack of human contact, real, physical intimate human contact is killing you. It doesn't have to be meaningful, but it should at least feel meaningful before you go crazy and hurt yourself or someone else.

Cost: 1 minor charge.

Ritual Action: Prepare a concoction of oils and a tiny portion of your own certain specific body fluids. Try to dress up a little, make pretend you've got some self-respect left, OK? Now. Go to a dive bar. A place where everyone is desperate for something. Talk to the people there, attractive, unattractive, doesn't matter. Someone of the appropriate gender presentation shows interest. As soon as you are invited to, have sex with them somewhere in the building. If you don't use protection, one or both of you may be impregnated by a demon. After the exchange, say goodbye. Continue this process at new bars of nicer and nicer quality until you black out. In the morning, you wake up at home with things looking up.

Effect: At the end of ritual you have the picture and phone number of a stranger in your cell phone or a Polaroid with a number scribbled on it stuck in your pocket. You now have a 10% relationship with this stranger without even knowing their name or remembering the details of your interaction. That 10% stays exactly as it is, never decaying, so long as you never reach out. You can build the relationship with time if you go and meet the stranger and go about things in the traditional way. It's bound to get awkward, but neither of you ever get the hookup out of your minds for as long as you live. The relationship never goes below 5% no matter what you do to each other.

Note: The hookups are not magickally coercive. No one is magickally forced to engage.

THE TV IN THE ALLEY

You know they say the TV in that alley behind the butcher shop works sometimes? I wonder if it's got cable.

Cost: 1 minor charge.

Ritual Action: Plenty of people pass by broken TV sets in alleys and along roadsides, outside abandoned homes or left but not picked up near trashcans in parts of town where trash doesn't get collected. You pass by one from time to time without ever thinking about it, but they're there for a reason.

If you're suffering from a particularly bad phobia, one that's making life almost impossible, find one of these abandoned TVs. It might take some searching and a lot of raised eyebrows from locals, but if you can find a mostly intact trashed TV, you're halfway there. Next, you must sit down in front of it, like a kid, and turn it from channel to channel until you get a signal. Don't worry if there's no power or the buttons are busted. Just go through the motions. You know when you've gotten to the right channel because you're hit square in the face by images coming off the screen. Granted, no one else can see the images and you're sitting there screaming — it's not a cute look. Meanwhile, the TV fills your brain with horrific, impossible images and you can't look away until the broadcast is over. The TV catches fire and never works for this ritual again. Expect some nightmares for a few weeks. But... your phobia is gone!

Effect: Well. OK. The phobia isn't exactly gone. At the end of the ritual, the GM (with your input) picks a new phobia for you, switching one completely for another. Ideally, it shifts from whatever the phobia is to something more directly dangerous so that the phobia seems gone or at least more "sane." (Clowns to serial killers, for example. Rabbits to dogs. That sort of thing. Something more socially acceptable.)

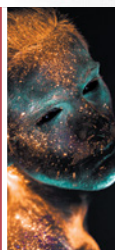
1: INTRO



2: ADEPTS



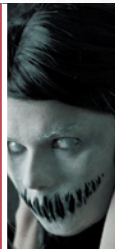
3: AVATARS



4: PLACES



5: FACES



FINDING THE BOOK OF NAMES

He's been terrorizing you and your buddies for months and you just can't get closer to him! If only you knew who he was. If only you had a name...

Cost: 1 minor charge.

Ritual Action: Go to any book shop or library you have access to. Walk directly to the counter and ask the person behind the counter for the Book of Names. If they laugh and direct you to a section of baby names, leave and burn your shoes. Best to do that in the parking lot. Keep trying different shops and libraries until the person behind the counter sighs and tells you, "This isn't really what you want," before walking away from the counter without helping you. At that point, find a section of books that hasn't been well-dusted. Toss them to the ground. Behind them, you find the Book of Names. What you do with it is up to you.

Effect: This is a huge artifact that has a list of the names of everything, everything that ever has been and ever will be. Delving into it is pointless as it has no references. Instead, you simply open the book, let the pages fall open on their own. The book always opens to a page, and the first name your eyes fall on is the name you need. (Not necessarily the name of your enemy, but the name you need to go further.) Your cabal enjoys a +5% bonus to your objective. Now, to figure out how the name is relevant...

WHAT TO DO WHEN SOMEONE IS BURIED ALIVE

No time to explain. They don't have long.

Cost: 1 minor charge.

Ritual Action: If someone you love has been buried alive, there's a limited amount of air, no way to find them, and one lone sociopath who isn't telling you anything, it's time to take matters into your own hands.

It takes a group of people and a cell phone with a good charge. First, you must bury one of your group with the working cell phone. It doesn't have to be deep, but it does have to provide a real risk of suffocation. The caster, in this case, the willingly buried person, must have a picture or symbol of the lost victim. Concentrate on that. Instead of what limited air the victim has left to live, they now have as much as the ritualist has left, buying everyone some time. The phone needs to be live, as the caster begins to spout locations, ideas, zeroing in on the victim. Listeners above ground have as long as the caster has air to find the victim. If they fail, both the victim and the ritualist die.

There are variations of this ritual thought to find kidnapped children in peril or someone trapped in a burning building, for example.

Effect: As noted, the victim now has the caster's timeline left to breathe. Moreover, the psychological damage potentially done by being buried alive is shared between the caster and the victim. They develop or increase a relationship with the victim at or by 5% if they both survive. In the meantime, every minute the ritualist is under, they can share one clue to the victim's whereabouts shrouded in symbolism; others can roll to decipher the clues.

ODDITIES AND ENTITIES

It's not that local oddities and entity-connected rituals break the rules. They don't. They just seem to go together logically. As a creature who was once a slave to one of these rituals myself, I find it interesting how they interact with the Rule of New. Give enough rumors or stories about a certain place, or enough attention to an urban legend, and a new ritual follows. A person can't necessarily sit down and write a ritual to summon their favorite horror movie monster into being. But people can.

The need they satisfy may be hard to pin down. It's nowhere near as direct as previous types of rituals. I have a theory that the need is a public and shared one for the odd and impossible. People want normal, but need bizarre. These rituals are born from that paradox.

— Gary the Demon's Big "Book" of Rituals

Where to find them: Follow the local rumors. Buy a local a drink or six. Listen to that homeless man holding a sign outside the Board of Education. Read a flyer handed out at the local clinic, closely.

How to learn more: Talk to a high school history teacher. Read between the lines in the local gay paper. Join one of those Preservation Societies. Dig into Yelp and look for patterns.

How to use them: Find places of power, build up prestige among a local cult. Manipulate the mythology of a new monster for your own advantage. To sate curiosity.

THE GALLERY

Not everyone can get into the gallery. Certainly, there's no foot traffic and they don't open their doors for just anyone. You've got to know just the right way to get in. And not being allowed in is often enough to convince an obsessive type that they need to do just that.

Cost: 1 minor charge.

Ritual Action: First, you and some friends must get physically removed from another gallery or museum. Afterward, you're charged with the right attitude, so you go to the gallery entrance. Once there, you talk amongst your friends about the perils of postmodernism, how film isn't real art, or how the only real art is art that injures the viewer in some way. You don't have to be knowledgeable on the topic, but you do have to sound like you are. If you can get your debate to near blows, or at least seem as if you are near blows, a woman in a nice suit and trilby steps out of an elevator and invites you in for being "true art lovers."

Effect: Invitation to the gallery is rare, and the experience is different for each person. However, a group going in shares the same general sense of artistic frustration and lost potential. The paintings and sculptures inside leave the viewer feeling the authentic frustration of the poet who never reached an audience, or the sculptor who died before their masterwork was completed. This feeling is powerful. For artists and non-artists alike, though, the intensity of the experience is bound to give a character some new insight. They can add +5% to any creative, artistic, or emotion-centered identity at the cost of a failed notch in Helplessness, Isolation, or Self.

1: INTRO



2: ADEPTS



3: AVATARS



4: PLACES



5: FACES





HITCHHIKERS

If it works, it works, but if you're wrong...

Cost: 1 minor charge.

Ritual Action: This ritual helps you to identify "hitchhikers," and safely harvest them. You need a rig, though you don't have to be towing cargo. You can have companions with you in the cab, but need to leave room in the passenger seat. In fact, it's better to have a few buddies trailing you to make sure you have privacy for the ritual. You must scribe certain blasphemous words under the hood of the rig and across your dash. You need a vanilla-scented air freshener. As you drive, you must chant the blasphemy. At that point, a hitchhiker shows up. Sometimes they're older men: drifters, degenerates, sex workers, runaways. As varied as real human hitchhikers are. Pick them up. If they get up into the cab and compliment the writing on the dash, you know you've found one. At that point, drive them three miles, and then, pull over and gut them with a knife. They fight and scream like a normal person, beg, all that. However, inside you find they're not human. Inside, they're nothing but twigs and ash. Even their skin seems to be paper as soon as they stop moving. In the empty gut, you find a small object. A rubber duck, baseball bat, anything. Keep that. It will be important to you in the future. Never do this more than once a year.

Effect: Assuming the character did the ritual correctly and didn't kill an innocent person, they have found a minor artifact of the GM's choice. If the character attempts this ritual more than once in a year, they find they've picked up a normal human hitchhiker and not an oddity, and now they're a cold-blooded murderer.

TO CALL THE HUNTER

Have you ever hated someone so much that you'd do anything to get them out of your life? (Just shy of killing them with your own bare hands, of course.) Are you willing to literally put your life down on the line to make sure they're gone? OK then. You want to call the Hunter.

Cost: 1 minor charge.

Ritual Action: You need to swipe something personal from your target, something that they're likely to carry with them

daily. That's important. Then, you need to conduct the first half of the rite. You lock every door and window in your house (or a house) but one. This is the entrance where the Hunter comes in.

Wrap the small personal item in at least seven strands of your own hair then spit on it. Shout "I am filled with hate! Hate that consumes me! I call on the Hunter to feast on my hate and bring terror and misery to the object of my hate. I ask that the Hunter scare/terrify/hobble/mortally wound/kill my enemy." At that point, the Hunter enters the doorway you created for it.

I won't spoil anything by telling you what it looks like, it's better you see yourself, but there's no way to prepare for it. It picks up the object and offers it to you. If you take the token, the deed is done. Your fate is sealed. The Hunter vanishes, but don't worry, this won't be the last time. You must return the object to your target without them knowing you had it. As soon as they start carrying it again, the ritual is complete. Rumors persist of people who have cast this ritual on themselves or a willing participant as a great "thrill ride." In this case, the degree of suffering they experience is equal rather than one degree harsher for the victim than the caster.

Effect: As soon as the victim of the ritual wears or carries the cursed object on them, the ritual completes and the Hunter chases them down. Depending on the wording of the demand, they do, in fact, suffer a fate ranging from startlement to brutal murder. The Hunter requires a price for its work, however. Two for the price of one, after a fashion. Whatever degree of torment the caster wishes on their enemy, they experience themselves. The ritualist is hunted, through the streets, with no help or comfort to protect them. The Hunter is an expert in terror and hounding a victim, never getting in closer than it wants to until it's ready. For every degree of torment after the scare, the hunt lasts one day. The hunt is always enough to scare the ritualist, and though requesting death of the victim doesn't kill the ritualist, only mortally wounds them (they're one wound shy of maxing out their wound threshold), they know well how terrible that death was. If the victim survives, they associate the terror with the ritualist and fear them, but are never able to prove the connection.

1: INTRO



2: ADEPTS



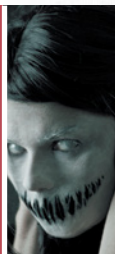
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RITUAL GAMES

Have you ever played Charlie Charlie, or Bloody Mary, or London Bridge? Then you've already done a ritual game, if an incomplete one. The steps are similar in any ritual game, really.

First, you create or go to a perilous environment: In Bloody Mary, this is a bathroom in the dark, which is kind of dangerous if you think about it. In London Bridge, you walk under the representation of a bridge you know is going to fall eventually.

Second, you challenge an entity or force of nature: When you play Charlie Charlie or Bloody Mary it's against someone specific, in London Bridge you symbolically challenge gravity.

Third, you prove your worth: Time your passing under the bridge correctly. Say Bloody Mary the right number of times without chickening out. Hold the pencil steady.

Fourth, (though this and the third step can change places or happen at about the same time) expose yourself or give something up: For Charlie Charlie to really work, you must ask him just questions and risk embarrassment in front of your friends. With Bloody Mary, you give up the ability to ever enter a dark bathroom again without feeling nervous. London Bridge is about a group sacrifice, really, and the kid who is caught is "out" and thus symbolically dead.

Finally, you get something: An answer to a scandalous question or simply bragging rights. But you play the game to prove something about yourself or get access to a secret you weren't supposed to have. "See, I told you I wasn't scared!" is a powerful phrase for a child to be able to say.

They're just kids' games though, right?

Try again.

Like any ritual, a ritual game is based on need. A kid only needs confidence, hope, and all that other stuff that magick is only temporarily good at providing. That need is rarely very strong. The games that the kids play are watered-down versions of rituals probably well past their shelf life. Whatever bloody pagan ritual London Bridge descended from has been lost over the centuries, and Charlie Charlie is about one million viral videos past its prime. There's still a charged way to play "Bloody Mary," but I'm not going to tell you how.

— Gary the Demon's Big "Book" of Rituals

WHAT THEY ARE

When a character hits a wall, comes up to the end of the line or runs out of other options, a game promises exactly what they need. Games are handmade promises of precisely the cure for what ails you. Games don't offer the solution to a character's problem, they offer a new path to follow. And at their end, if you survive, either the character no longer gives a crap about what you thought you needed before, or they know exactly what to do next. A successful game changes the character.

They're also stupidly dangerous. To play the game a character should know the rules, so they've got a damn fine sense of exactly how stupid and dangerous the game is. Anyone short of the truly desperate or deeply obsessed would laugh and walk away without a second thought. Of

course, characters in *Unknown Armies* must be one or both.

A game ritual responds to a need and travels by rumor more often than moldering tome. Here's some examples of the need, the vector of transmission, and the promised results:

Roddy Macmillan, adrenaline junkie, has pushed himself to a point where he just can't feel anything anymore. Nothing gets him going, he's done too much in his short life. Suddenly, he notices all the neighborhood teens talking about the Bridge Drop game. Some sort of spooky magickal bungee jump off a local bridge, only no bungee. He dismisses it until he hears several people describe it as "enough of a rush to reset your whole system or kill you with the last greatest thrill of your life." Could he go back to a time when a fast car was a rush? Doing the ritual is the only way to be sure.

Minerva is no charger. Just a wannabe obsessed enough with the concept of magick that she's been experimenting with rituals. There are diminishing returns on minor rituals, and she needs to try something bigger. High on mescaline and ketamine, her friend suggests she try Seven Doors, a game he'd heard about once. If the game doesn't kill her, she finds a being at the seventh door who can grant her one wish. He then prescribes the rules of the game. It sounds like he's reciting something even though he's probably just making it up.

Ritual games follow the needs, and they're a tool for GMs to hook the players back to a stymied plot line by tempting them with exactly what they need to move the plot forward. But it's not a gimme, as the path through the game should be extraordinarily difficult and the potential cost high.

HOW TO BUILD ONE

Ritual games follow a series of steps, and share traits though they must fit the situation. Therefore, this section is a toolkit to tailor a game to the characters based on where they might be stuck on an objective. Don't overuse this process and rely on it to solve every character problem. These rituals might show up once in a lifetime.

Oh, and one side thing to consider: all characters must play the game. Fate's a real asshat like that sometimes.

Here's how you build one:

What do the characters need? When you're faced with a well-screwed pooch of an objective, or a GMC that's just bested the characters too well or even a character who has rendered themselves all but unplayable by a series of bad luck rolls and desperate choices, it might be time to offer the characters a game. Backtrack a little if you must. What options had they previously dismissed as impossible and forgotten all about? "Well, sure we might be able to get a demon to possess him but we couldn't possibly trick it into re-growing his leg and leaving peacefully after." It's OK to offer them an impossible solution because they're going to pay for it. In a lot of ways, *Unknown Armies* isn't about not getting what you want, it's about getting exactly what

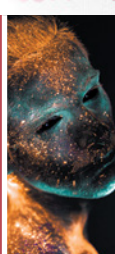
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2: ADEPTS



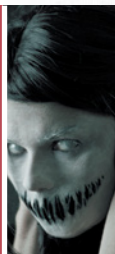
3: AVATARS



4: PLACES



5: FACES



you wanted and then wondering what the hell you were thinking. This applies here too. Offer them a miracle, the exact thing they think they need, put it right out there in front of them.

How do they find out about it? So, a ritual game exists somewhere in the world that can give the characters exactly what they think they need or more. How do they find out about it? Drop a rumor first. Look at the characters' relationships, anyone have a guru who could have heard of a lost practice? Anyone got buddies in a gang that knows some of those Santa Muerte worshippers? You can also just go direct. All the kids in the neighborhood go outside and start reciting a chant that instructs the characters what to do? An email with a link to a site that you can only access at midnight? Don't sweat where the rumors came from, you can fill it in on the back end or leave it as just one of those things that happens. Maybe these games are remnants from a world where these things were common or maybe they're just hiccups in the new world order. It shouldn't matter if the characters need it bad enough.

Where do they have to go? All ritual games involve going to a dangerous place or creating a place where the characters are in danger. Maybe that's as complicated as creating a ritually prepared no man's land where a demon can enter without escaping or as simple as the characters talking their way into an interview with a known serial killer. Danger doesn't have to be physical. If the game requires the character break into the mayor's office, cool. Just make sure they must play the game while people are in the building without getting kicked out.

If the characters are researching the game, somehow, digging in to where they heard about it, and they're worried this step is impossible, give them a second option. It should also feel impossible.

Finding, securing, or getting into just the right place should take a few rolls. This is a situation where all characters must take part. Make sure each character is forced to put their neck on the line and share in the danger.

Who or what do they challenge? These games are competitive or at least have some kind of judgement on the quality of play. Is it the laws of nature, like challenging the human ability to survive exposure in the winter? Or something more literal like The Observer of the Third House of Hissan? The characters don't necessarily have to know what they're challenging, but the GM does. It helps them decide how the characters prove themselves.

How do they prove themselves? Building off the last idea, you want a series of challenges that each character faces when playing the game. While it can be physical, the real damage done here should be on a psychic level. Punch the characters in their fears and obsessions. Hit them where they're hardened to show their buddies just how screwed up they've become.

The GM's goal here is to hit each character with a break that is not simply a part of the story or unfortunate side effects of living a screwed-up life in a screwed-up world. Rather, the game is yanking back a specific scab in a specific spot and pouring bleach on it.

If characters fail to prove themselves, something that's entirely possible considering people willing to play such a game are probably pretty beat up to begin with, don't head right for failure. Of course, you can start with, "Do you think this is an awesome and horrible place for your character to die in memorable and grotesque fashion?" If the answer is less than an enthusiastic yes, move on. Potential failure should be reflected in a harder choice, a bigger swing between you get what you want *but at a price*.

What do they have to give up? There is balance in the game ritual. And in some ways, this step is the final proof of who someone is. What must a character have to give up, to have their need sated? This doesn't have to be even at first blush, but it must even out in the end. Do they just smell like grave dirt for the rest of their life? No sweat! At least until the relationship scores start draining and the character must find friends who are accepting of a constant reminder of mortality.

You can make the sacrifice here vague it a point. But it's important that characters at least understand the scope of what they're agreeing to give up. This is a seriously screwed up, selfish version of "The Gift of the Magi."

The following are suggestions for sacrifices and how a GM might back the weirdness with mechanics. These can and should be tweaked to fit individual situations.

- Your eyes. (Heavy modifiers to sight-based rolls or relationships with shallow people.)
- Using a phone without hearing *them* whisper. (Stress checks any time you use a phone and the GM's regular contrivances to get you to try.)
- Your mothers' love. (Destroy that relationship score, can't be raised, stress check when it comes up.)
- Good Fridays, not the holiday. (Lose the ability to flip flop rolls on a Friday, GM keeps track of the days of the week so be careful.)
- Ability to sleep. (Oh, the hardened notches you develop...)

What do they get? As rituals are meant to bend the rules of reality in *Unknown Armies*, so can game rituals give the GM some space to bend the rules of the game. As a group, GMs need to be comfortable with the outcomes of playing the game. Can a character undo the damage of a Room of Renunciation? Or is it low-key, like dropping all their hardened notches? Change a school of magick? Maybe. Is it weirder than that? Can a ritual game give you the ability to tempt a godwalker by talking to them or a glimpse of what an angel looks like? That's up to the table and the story you want to tell. It's a pretty good bet that at the very least, a ritual game can create a charge even a pony could use. But is it worth it?

WHO IS GARY?

That's up to you. He and his "book" are mostly a rumor and no one has a full copy. He could be a damaged occultist deluding himself into thinking he's a demon to validate what he believes to be true, or he's exactly what he says he is. The only thing that matters is that he's probably right about rituals. Probably.

1: INTRO



2: ADEPTS



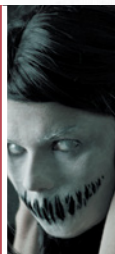
3: AVATARS



4: PLACES



5: FACES



ARTIFACTS

LISTENING SHEARS

Power: Significant.

Description: A hedge trimmer at least two decades old, worn but in decent condition. They're sharp — they never need sharpening — even if they look ravaged by rust and time, with the edges of the blades stained green from so much use.

Effect: Listening Shears hear the simple but alien thoughts of plants, and convey them to the wielder.

Initially, all the wielder hears is a sharp scream of pain when the blades cut into a tree or bush. The scream is faint but can't be ignored, and doesn't seem to come from any discernible direction or distance. For most people, the first time they use the artifact, there's no sense that the scream has anything to do with their action — it's a coincidence, maybe a mystery to investigate or something to shrug off. After the third or four time, most people link their action of trimming to the scream. Realizing that is an Unnatural (4) check.

For those who continue to use the Shears after that, instead of tossing them away or putting them in some disused corner of their shed, the Shears convey more. It takes two or three dozen times using them before the wielder hears other thoughts: ones that don't have words, but sensations like "thirsty" or "infested" or "rotting" or "thriving" or "fruit will drop soon." To hear these thoughts, they must cut at the plant. The first time this happens, that's another Unnatural (4) check.

Some speculate that if you use the Shears long enough, you can gain even more insight or even communicate with plants. If that's true, only someone with an appropriate obsession could possibly achieve that.

TIM'S BIRTHDAY PRESENT

Power: Significant.

Description: Two hats, a gray skullcap that easily clings to the head and a green party cone hat with "Happy Birthday!" printed on it, complete with a cheap chinstrap.

Effect: The two hats act as a one-way transmitter of sensations and emotions. Whatever the person wearing the gray hat feels physically or emotionally is instead felt by the one wearing the green hat. Everything from being cut or shot, feeling deep regret or orgasmic joy, and even how the cool breeze feels is felt only by the one wearing the green hat.

The hats are activated by two people wearing them looking each other in the eyes. Those who don't want the effect to happen can attempt to resist it with appropriate identity — magical identities count, or Fitness as a default. Succeeding means the hats work for *neither* person that day. Otherwise, the one wearing the transmitter immediately stops feeling anything, and the receiver feels their own sensations along with the transmitter's. For the next twenty-four hours, as long as the hats are no more than thirty-three miles apart, the receiver continues to swallow the sensations of the transmitter. (If the hats move out of range, the effect continues again once the hats are close enough.)

The GM should look for Isolation check opportunities for the transmitter and Self check opportunities for the receiver. The transfer is permanent: the transmitter may not even strongly remember the events during that time with no emotional sensation attached to them, and the receiver may well have PTSD from the experience.

When it comes to physical damage, the sensation is felt, but the damage itself isn't transferred. If you're wearing the transmitter, you won't feel your arm being on fire, but it still burns (and continues to traumatize the receiver). Dying while wearing the transmitter may induce enough shock to kill the receiver.

These hats were originally created by an adept for a paraplegic friend, so he could once again know the joy of running on a sunny day and the pleasure of intense sex. They've been stolen and misused since then, as a torture device, and as a way to commit remorseless murder.

WAINWRIGHT'S SECOND BANNER

Power: Significant.

Description: A simple blue flag with gold star on it, nineteen feet by ten feet. The placement of the star and the number of points it has shifts from time to time, when no one is looking.

Effect: The Banner causes those with allegiance to something — a country, a company, a spouse, a cause — to temporarily transfer this allegiance to the flag's bearer. This activates when someone looks at the flag and recites a pledge to it, one that needn't be felt, just recited. If someone is bearing the flag or standing under it, in that moment the pledger's strongest sense of devotion shifts to the bearer. The devoted husband feels little for his marriage and everything for the bearer. The obsessive CEO doesn't care much about her company anymore, pouring her focus into ambitions for the bearer. The bearer needn't be aware of this effect for it to work.

Resisting the effect is possible, though unconscious for anyone who doesn't have an adept or avatar identity. Adepts and avatars know they're being magically manipulated, however may not care in the moment if they fail to resist. At most, twelve people can be affected at a time; after that, the flag's pull is spent until the effects wear off.

In game terms, the affected character's favorite, guru, or mentor relationship to one subject, person, or target switches, percentiles included, to the flag's bearer. Alternately, if the character previously had some sort of obsession identity that was directly connected to a country or cause, it switches to the flag bearer instead, and becomes their new obsession.

The effect lasts until sundown or when the flag is taken down, whichever happens first. The shift back isn't noticeable, though if the pledger reflects upon that day and their odd behavior and action, that may call for Self checks. Anyone who gets a matched success on resisting instead feels anger toward the bearer, a sense of attempted violation.

Adepts can spend 2 significant charges to attempt to influence onlookers without them having to recite a pledge.

1: INTRO



2: ADEPTS



3: AVATARS



4: PLACES



5: FACES





3: AVATARS

To be precise, this is a chapter full of archetypes, not avatars, but if you're a player who wants their character to walk in the footsteps of the Invisible Clergy then you're really talking about becoming an avatar. That's what this chapter shows you.

Much like the adepts chapter, this one includes some

THE DEMAGOGUE

ATTRIBUTES

There are no easy answers... except when you need them. The Demagogue is there to provide them, to spoon feed them to you — populist wisdom that almost makes sense if you squint at it a little. Everyone has a primal locus inside — the mammalian stem, the limbic core, whatever. We have knee-jerk reactions deeply coded inside of us, and many of those are ugly. Others are merely simplistic and binary. Fight or flight is still a powerful shot of DNA running through all our supposedly modern sensibilities.

The Demagogue plays on this core. They know that all the ills in the world can be solved through their ascendancy (not necessarily magical) to power. Someone is to blame, and the Demagogue knows who. Gamergate was led by Demagogues; some anti-fracking groups are too. Occupy Wall Street probably could have used a Demagogue, but they didn't have one to hand. Demagogues rise to power when folks feel like the tide is against them, the system is rigged, and all their ills are definitely someone else's fault. The Demagogue has the solution, one even had the *final* solution. Demagogues are generally dangerous, at least when they point their silver, forked tongue toward selfish interests. But there are some who mean well. Some of them even mean well *and* do it. After all, simply because an idea appeals to frustrated masses doesn't automatically make it bad. Some of the founding fathers were Demagogues, and they built something based on good intentions. That other fellow, with the final solution? He was crazy as a sack full of assholes, but he believed.

One of the key talents the Demagogue possesses is that of simplifying the complex. He takes a myriad of causalities and boils them down to a single message. In the 140-character world we live in, this is a surefire way of clear communication. The Demagogue, like the Salesman, knows that, deep down, you want to latch onto to something, and he's here to sell it to you. He's not looking for a piece of the action though, he *IS* the action. Back when the ancient Greeks coined the term "demagogue," it simply meant the leader of common people. As time rolled on, however, term became more precisely defined.

NODULE

i was trying to schedule an appointment with the sexbot9000

archetypes from previous editions that have been brought up-to-date with the new edition and the new era. You might consider this a warm, welcoming walk into nostalgia. Or you might wish you'd never read about them, because now you're changing your entire life to suit them.

"A demagogue, in the strict signification of the word, is a 'leader of the rabble.'"

— James Fenimore Cooper, *The American Democrat*

In 1838, Cooper codified the characteristics of a Demagogue, laying out the tenets for the archetype. When something gains memetic traction in the collective unconscious, it can redefine (even create) archetypes. That's not to say that earlier Demagogues didn't possess the traits below, only that categories backing labels tend to work well in modernity.

Cooper cited four major aspects of the Demagogue:

- They fashion themselves as a man or woman of the common people, as opposed to the elites.
- Their politics depends on a visceral connection with the people which greatly exceeds ordinary political popularity.
- They manipulate this connection, and the raging popularity it affords, for their own benefit and ambition.
- They threaten or outright break established rules of conduct, institutions, and even the law.

It is likewise important to note that the Demagogue need not cleave to his ideology, only that he apparently believes in it. Some Demagogues are the most fervent believer in their cause, while others are but a conduit by which a belief gains popularity.

TABOOS

The Demagogue does not have to be a true believer. He may change his mind — but he is never wrong. Ever. He doesn't apologize. He doesn't admit mistakes. Someone else is to blame. The media manipulated his message. Biased critics demonized what he meant to say. The internet is a cesspool of vitriol, a tiger waiting to leap on anyone who posts a counter opinion.

As a Demagogue, you cannot be wrong. Not publicly. You can't admit it. If you back down the GM has every right to punish you. No true Demagogue backs down. Anytime you change your mind, it's simply a re-branding, a further clarification of your idea. In fact, you're not changing your mind or your opinion, you're just expanding the view you previously espoused. This is good for everyone. Only you can bring the change that's needed.

1: INTRO



2: ADEPTS



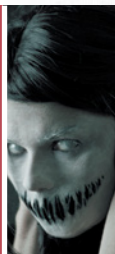
3: AVATARS



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SYMBOLS

The flag of one's country is the most potent symbol of most Demagogues. The good old red, white, and blue is a primary example and nearly all would-be avatars of the Demagogue at least wear it as a pin on their lapel.

Religious symbols, the iconography of hate, the peace sign made with tobacco-stained fingers; these can be used by different Demagogues. A symbol is a simplification of a broader, more complex idea. The sign/signifier relationship is not unlike the relationship of the Demagogue with the issues he seeks to solve.

Pulpits, soapboxes, and gilded thrones are likewise symbols of this archetype.

SUSPECTED AVATARS IN HISTORY

Senator Joe McCarthy was almost certainly an avatar of the Demagogue, as are certain billionaires-turned-politicians. Adolf Hitler was one of the worst Demagogues of all time, but let's not forget Winston Churchill, who stood up to him, was also probably an avatar (and if not the godwalker, he was certainly making a play for it). Going further back in history, Cleon of Athens and Alcibiades were likely among the first so-recognized Demagogues. The coin is double-sided, it just seems to come up ugly more often than not.

MASKS

Taliesin (Welsh), St. Paul (Christian), Loki (Norse), Clermeil (Vodou). In popular culture, the Boy Who Cried Wolf qualifies as does President Frank Underwood, and Cobra Commander. *The Man That Corrupted Hadleyburg* and *The Music Man* are specific, intentional evocations of the Demagogue as well.

CHANNELS

1%–50%: At this level, the Demagogue both recognizes the inherent leanings of a given individual and may then alter them. This alteration isn't massive. He can't turn a priest into an atheist, but he could move someone from center left to center right, politically. The Demagogue never creates beliefs, he simply manipulates and amplifies them. He can influence the ideas of others but cannot create them from whole cloth and force someone to find a true faith.

The Demagogue must have the target's attention for at least thirty minutes, during which they feel out the other and push their beliefs in a direction of the Demagogue's choosing. This may be resolved with Connect or a relevant identity, or the Demagogue identity if it's higher. The effects last for a number of minutes equal to the roll. It's the GM's decision, but truly changing someone's mind is pretty supernatural — check out any internet comments section for proof of this. Bottom line — don't let someone who isn't a Demagogue avatar get away with as much as the Demagogue.

The other side of this channel is the ability to quickly suss out a person's belief system. Not only does a successful check against the Demagogue's percentage give him a pretty thorough idea of the target's central tenants, their core beliefs, it also lays bare their innermost passions. He doesn't know their history, or the intricacies of their personality, but those things which are going to push a person's buttons. He might not like them when they're angry but he could definitely make them so, if he wanted. This does not automatically translate into moving their position, but it does give the clues needed to do so. Further, the Demagogue is hard to fool when it comes to beliefs. If someone is full of it, a successful roll lets him know. "Sure, he pretends to be woke, but he's just in it for the girls."

51%–70%: This is a step above the previous ability. On a successful roll, the Demagogue gets not only a sense of what the person believes but what they want to believe. Deep down, many people have stirrings of belief, repressed feelings, and these are things the Demagogue spelunks in his probe of personal faith. Not everyone has a hidden urge to believe, but most people do. The cynic may secretly hope he's wrong about the world while the altruist may secretly suspect mankind is worthless and doomed. Not all such desired beliefs are so polarized. There are levels or nuance and subtlety at work in all beliefs, but the Demagogue does better pushing those that are large and in charge.

This effect lasts for a number of hours equal to the die roll, rather than minutes.

1: INTRO



2: ADEPTS



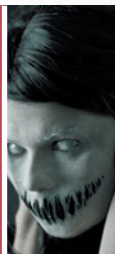
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71%–90%: Remember when we said the Demagogue can't create belief? We lied. They do, but it's only at this extremely powerful level. By and large, a Demagogue doesn't create belief, except when he does. Think of this as a supernatural, not-guff magickal form of memetic engineering. This is a direct hack of the collective unconscious whereby the Demagogue spends a day focusing intently on a given idea. Perhaps he wants the world to believe that the Roman Empire never ended, that everything we see post 410 AD is an illusion. The Demagogue wraps himself in foci related to Philip K. Dick and Gnosticism, spends an entire day meditating on it, and boom — people start to believe the next day. Not everyone, mind you, not most. The idea isn't necessarily going mainstream, but it has a shot. The DNA has been directly injected into the collective mind. Using his other skills, the Demagogue could conceivably make it jump from an outlier idea to a popular belief. Why do you think such a high portion of Americans *really* believe in UFOs?

THE DISCIPLE

ATTRIBUTES

Part of what makes us human is getting a great idea and wanting to teach it to others. These people become teachers, cult leaders, mystic gurus, and infomercial spokespeople. But without students, that teacher is just a random idiot spouting philosophy into the air. In some ways, the student is more important than the teacher. That's what gives the Disciple so much power.

The Disciple is a student. Not in the sense of being forced to attend school for years, but as someone who willingly and completely devotes herself to learning something. Before anyone can call themselves a Disciple, they must find a master and a teaching. The two can come in any order, but both must be there. If someone has a master but no teaching, then that's idolization. (See music.) If someone has a teaching but no master, then that's a creed. (See politics.) If they have both, they can begin channeling the Disciple.

The teaching covers just about everything. It's broad and encompasses most, if not all the things in life. It can be dripping with New Age-like mysticism, Judeo-Christian ideas, or rational scientific logic. But it is true. All of it, all of the time. The Disciple believes the teaching down to the marrow of their bones.

Revering the master is not same thing as doing anything the master said. Disciples are faithful and enthusiastic students, not groupies or cultists. They do not follow dumb zealots whose teaching boils down to "give me sex and money." Disciples follow smart zealots who drank their own Flavor Aid.

The problem with the Disciple is that she never truly learns. She remains forever the student, willing to follow a mentor but never rising to that status herself. Even if she one day goes forth to teach her master's words to others, she's only parroting the teaching. If she ever starts to get her own ideas and extrapolate or add to the teaching, she falls from the path of the Disciple. Wasn't the master talking about the truth? Can the Disciple somehow make it more truthy? If she could, that would mean the master wasn't correct about everything. They obviously were. Therefore, it just makes sense that she can't improve the teaching.

91%+: The Demagogue says it, someone believes it. Just one person though, at least at a time. Whatever it is they are told becomes reality to them. How long this belief lasts is based on the Demagogue's roll and the idea's reasonability to the subject. Telling Bill Nye you were abducted by UFOs allows him to refuse with a Self check. Telling a believer in chemtrails the CIA is behind *Pokémon Go* is very doable.

The Demagogue rolls his avatar identity. The tens die is the time in seconds, minutes, hours, or days the subject firmly believes what he told them. This can be a simple suggestion — "You don't want to arrest me. Your wife is cheating on you at home, right now. Go and catch her in the act," to something far more complex: "Yes, I did build a time machine out of a DeLorean, and we are now in the Cretaceous Era of Hill Valley. Watch out for that *T. rex* behind you." He's powerful. His words create reality. It may be for one person at a time, but he's a Demagogue. He knows exactly how much one person can achieve.

MASTER AND TEACHING

Avatars of the Disciple must pick one person as their master and one set of knowledge as their teaching. The master must be a person who taught something important. They must also be dead or at least missing. Otherwise, the Disciple would still be at their feet soaking up all that mystic goodness. It's rare, but a set of masters could work if they generally all taught the same idea. There's at least one rabidly American avatar of the Disciple who believes the Founding Fathers are her masters.

The teaching must center on a philosophy of life. It must be about how the universe works, how people are, or something equally weighty.

Yes, avatars of the Disciple drank the Flavor Aid too. Just not in a "I'm going to kill everyone I know so we can join the Zuptons from planet Nequila" sort of way. It's the Christian who finds apologetics for financial and sexual scandals in their church. It's the atheist who firmly believes logic answers everything — except for Gödel.

TABOOS

The Disciple must always revere their master and teaching. The Master doesn't have to be perfect, but she cannot say her master was a scumbag con artist. Likewise, she can't claim the teaching is stupid. Lastly, the Disciple cannot change or add to the teaching.

SYMBOLS

The book is the strongest symbol, but the quill, pencil, and chalkboard all remain important. Others include the monk's robe and the martial artist's gi.

1: INTRO



2: ADEPTS



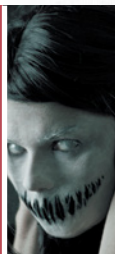
3: AVATARS



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SUSPECTED AVATARS IN HISTORY

Mary Magdalene, Upali, Pindola Bharadvaja, John Esslemont, Wilhelm Reich, Ip Man, Joseph Stalin, St. Peter (until he denounced his master three times), Joseph Goebbels, and Patty Hearst.

MASKS

Eliza Doolittle (English), Hermione Granger (English), Luke Skywalker (American).

CHANNELS

1%-50%: The master and the teaching give the Disciple a worldview that helps make sense of the weird crap that happens in the occult underground. When facing an Unnatural stress check, make an avatar identity roll. If successful, the Disciple acts like her Unnatural meter had as many hardened notches as the tens place of the roll. Whatever triggered the Unnatural stress check is explained away by the wisdom she received at the feet of her master. Failed identity rolls have no effect. Once the stress check is complete, her Unnatural meter returns to normal.

The Disciple (with an avatar identity at 40%) is enjoying a meal of pasta Bolognese without realizing it's part of a Red Sauce minor ritual. Near the end of the meal, someone asks a yes-or-no question, forcing the Disciple to answer, "Yes." This is an Unnatural (2) stress check. She rolls against her avatar identity and gets a 34%. Her Unnatural shock meter has three hardened notches for that one stress check. She easily shrugs off the weirdness and quotes the master on how positive answers are really negative (or something equally pretentious). If she failed her avatar identity roll, she would face that Unnatural (2) stress check as normal.

51%-70%: The Disciple knows that her master and teaching is the one true way. Fellow students are always welcome. Those that ignore or reject the teaching can suck it. When she directly helps a fellow student of her teaching, or at least someone who has been positive about it, any roll using an upbeat ability gains +10%. When the Disciple directly hurts someone who hates her teaching, or has openly called it bullshit, any roll using a downbeat ability gains +10%. People who have no thought one way or another cannot be affected by this power at all. Ignorance is the true bliss.

"Directly" means this roll will immediately help or hurt someone and that its target is the subject of the roll. Lying to a cop to get an enemy in trouble does not count because the Disciple is not rolling against the enemy of her teaching. If the Disciple and her enemy are trying to argue over who the cop should arrest, then this power can work.

DISCIPLES, GURUS, AND MENTORS

Characters in *Unknown Armies* can have relationships labeled guru and mentor. Do these conflict with the avatar's chosen master? Do they all have to be the same person?

No to both questions. The Disciple's master be the same person as her guru, since that's more about the big-picture stuff than anything else, but that's not required. Mentors are about smaller stakes and therefore aren't a good idea for a master. But a Disciple can definitely have a master, a guru, and a mentor as three separate persons. Obsession with being the Disciple isn't the only thing in their life. Gurus and mentors can't be diametrically opposed to the Disciple's teaching, but they do not have to be students of the master either.

1: INTRO



2: ADEPTS



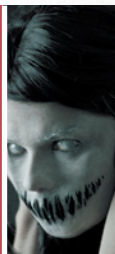
3: AVATARS



4: PLACES



5: FACES



71%–90%: The master did not give the Disciple a teaching narrow in scope. No, it encompasses everything in the universe, from tiny grains of sand to entire galaxies. That's why the teaching helps her understand almost everything. In other words, the insight given to the Disciple by her master counts as mystical cross-training. With a successful Knowledge roll, she can know any non-personal knowledge about... well, just about anything that's known. Need directions to the nearest Chinese restaurant serving dim sum? Wondering if the guards protecting a billionaire's safe are armed? You can know almost anything with a successful Knowledge roll.

However, there are limits. (There always are.) First, personal data cannot be known — can't get a home address, security code, DNA type, or anything like that. Second, it must be known to have been known. No one has published a successful Grand Unified Theory, so you can't claim GUT was solved somewhere and thereby know it. Lastly, the Disciple cannot use this to "know" an ability that takes training like kung fu or cooking. You can know what goes in a baked Alaska, but being able to make it is not included.

THE HEALER

ATTRIBUTES

The bright shining light of the magick demimonde, the Healer's very touch can cure diseases, their words can end wars, and their soothing aura can bring peace to even the most troubled minds. The Healer fixes the cracks that humanity creates within itself. They mend the bones and calm the spirit. They patch rifts between rivals and rebuild the bonds of humanity that tie us all together.

And while that all might seem like hippie talk, detailing the Healer's broader perspective is essential to understanding their motivation and mindset. Because the Healer does not focus solely on physical healing, even though that's incredibly important: the body is the container of the mind and spirit. Instead, the Healer's domain reaches further in and farther within humanity than its fragile and mortal covering.

From mental ailments to spiritual uncertainty to societal rifts, the Healer's purpose is to undo damage — damage which can take numerous forms and have repercussions that may not be fully realized for generations.

For the Healer, there is a way the world is supposed to be. Things are born. They grow, they age, they die. There's a natural curve to life, and the Healer gets that. Humans build bonds with each other. Societies rise and come together. While single individuals may get credited for technological advances such as penicillin, manned flight, and the internet, all of those named people are standing on the shoulders of giants. It is together that humanity advances.

The Healer sees the web of life and makes sure the necessary strands remain intact. Selfish motivation is destructive — damaging — and the Healer knows that must be stopped. Those are the rules. And the Healer plays by the rules.

Until, that is, the Healer's personal interest is threatened. Then all those rules fly out the window.

Remember that the Healer is born from an obsession with How Things Should Be — a potentially dangerous worldview that is just as likely to spawn another Pol Pot as another Gandhi. "This is what's right" speaks to the core of the Healer. If there is evident damage, the Healer fixes it.

91%+: The Disciple's master knows all and guides her. Once per week, she can summon her master with a successful avatar identity roll. They appear in properly dramatic fashion (flash of light, riding a cloud, and so on), but it's not a physical thing. Nothing can damage the master except magick. People who are not students of the master or have no idea she can summon this sucker face an Unnatural (5) test when they see this mess for the first time.

Once summoned, the Disciple may ask up to three yes-or-no questions. Her master knows the answers no matter what and says either "Yes" or "No" to each. However, the master never elaborates or says anything other than those two responses. If you ask where to find the original VHS tape of the Naked Goddess, the master frowns and disappears. There goes the other questions for the week, buddy.

If there is no evident damage, the Healer finds some.

And while all Healers have a shared intent, they don't all have the best bedside manner. Some Healers are soft-spoken and kind but some are loud and aggressive. Some prefer the scalpel; others grab the bonesaw. The Healer undoes whatever damage they see in whichever manner they see fit.

TABOOS

The Healer cannot leave an injured person untreated, even if helping them involves personal risk, even if they hate them, even if they're an enemy. Until the Healer has six or more hardened notches in Isolation, they consider any human being to be a person for the purposes of this. For every notch past five, they can designate one category of people as expendable for your taboo, but doing so — deciding "gays don't deserve my medical attention" to pick an unfortunately current example — is a Self (6) check. Or you could just opt to treat everyone like a person instead of chopping off pieces of your own humanity by making arbitrary category choices.

SYMBOLS

The two most prominent symbols of the Healer are the Rod of Asclepius and the red cross but numerous other symbols exist as well, such as the Eye of Horus, onyx gemstones, and the spiritual healing symbols used in reiki energy manipulation.

SUSPECTED AVATARS IN HISTORY

Demosthenes, Marie Curie, Jonas Salk, Florence Nightingale, Franklin Delano Roosevelt, and Auguste Comte.

MASKS

The Healer appears in myths and religions throughout the world: Ixtlilton (Aztec), Brigid and Dian Cécht (Celtic), Zhang Guolao (Chinese), Hathor (Egyptian), Asclepius (Greek), Dhatri (Hindu), Haoma (Persian), and on and on.

1: INTRO



2: ADEPTS



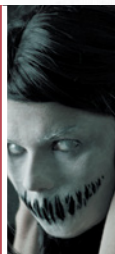
3: AVATARS



4: PLACES



5: FACES





You can't throw a stone at most ancient cultures without hitting a half-dozen medicinally inclined godheads. Some avatars claim the miracles of Jesus Christ as a religious depiction of the Healer but with everyone vying for ownership of the big JC it's best not even to get involved in that particular philosophical tug of war.

CHANNELS

1%–50%: Physical healing. With a successful avatar identity roll, the Healer can repair any minor physical damage by placing their hands over it. This covers everything from patching a rip in a jacket to fixing a broken bone to closing torn flesh. They can mend anything but they must be able to get their hands on it. Skin to skin (or whatever) contact. This means reaching into a person's chest cavity to close the hole in their heart or digging fingers into someone's leg to heal their snapped femur. This effect removes wounds equal to the sum of the dice. It can only be used once on a particular instance of damage, and the avatar can only roll it once per hour.

At this stage, as miraculous as this might seem, the repair still leaves a scar. And they can't bring anybody back from the dead.

As a side effect, the Healer can use their avatar identity to get into places normally reserved only for doctors, nurses, or any practitioner of medicine. You just have an aura about you.

51%–70%: Mental healing. The Healer can ease the mental and emotional pain of shock and trauma. They need only speak to capture the attention of someone suffering a mental affliction. Through a series of pointed questions, they can compel true and honest answers that provide insight into their tangled webs. As the chemicals in the target's brain adjust to the Healer's suggestions, and conceptual associations unfurl, they gain clarity and serenity to a level few ever know.

People are very calmed by the Healer's presence and they can use their avatar identity to get people to confide in them — from offering up stock tips to confessing to murder.

With a success on their avatar roll, they can remove the target's deepest failed notch on a single shock meter. They can also kick someone out of their freeze, fight, or flight state, if they're experiencing it. Individuals can't benefit from this more than once a week, but the Healer can roll it on as many people as she likes.

71%–90%: Social healing. A successful avatar roll allows the Healer to win the hearts and minds of 2d10+50 people. They can end blood feuds with a single word. They can break pack mentality and disperse heated crowds. As the Healer walks through a full-scale riot in the street, both sides put down their arms and come together — or at least, the Healer can reduce a riot roll by their avatar rating if they're trying to stop one.

The Healer's avatar identity draws attention to them in tense situations. Reporters come to them first for an assessment of the scene. Cops see them as an ally. People look to them for leadership through crisis.

Even here, as awe-inspiring as this is, they can't bring back the dead.

91%+: Resurrection. But only humans and only those who have been dead for less than twenty-four hours. At some point, whatever soul the person had is shriveled like a raisin and/or gone to wherever it was destined to go. If the Healer places their bare palm on the patient's flesh, and makes a successful avatar roll, they can reach through the membrane separating life and death and pull the person back to the land of the living.

This only works on any given person once. Try it a second time, and the veil doesn't part right and the Healer is liable to just pop a demon into the world. Anyone brought back with this ability comes back loaded with shock: they have five failed notches in the Unnatural and Violence (those can be taken care of later). Each use of this ability sucks away 1d10 percentiles from the Healer's avatar identity. It's almost like violating the barrier between life and death is a serious issue...

1: INTRO



2: ADEPTS



3: AVATARS



4: PLACES



5: FACES





THE MARTYR

ATTRIBUTES

Everyone loves something more than themselves. If not, they might be a narcissist, a sociopath, or a presidential candidate. For most people, it's a person they love more — their child, their parent, their sibling. For some, it's their dog or cat or mini pig. It doesn't matter who the person or animal is, only that it's more important than life itself. That's part of what makes us human, or something we like to believe is in the secret sauce of being "decent and well adjusted."

Not everyone has something more important to them than themselves when it comes down to it. The ones that interest us, that reflect the Invisible Clergy, are true believers in a cause. They love nothing more than their cause. Anyone and everyone might be sacrificed before the altar of the cause's greater goal — even their own person.

The cause is the all for the Martyr. Family, friends, and other obligations pale and fall away as the cause grows in his eyes like a blossoming mushroom cloud of purpose. There is nothing for the Martyr like this raw hit. Having purpose leads to meaning, and becoming a symbol of the cause leads to a kind of immortality.

The self is nothing, an abstraction used in service to something greater. This is never a person, at least not a tangible one, but an idea, something inchoate and beyond the merely corporeal. It could be social justice, God, white supremacy, or climate change, but it isn't a single person. The cause is a movement of which the Martyr must always be a part. This is essential. To friends and family, the Martyr gradually seems to lose those aspects of self which defined him as a person, instead swapping out parts of psyche for full devotion to the central beliefs he advocates.

Think of the Martyr as that cute person at the party you're interested in. You strike up a conversation, pleasantries are introduced and then — boom — you are beset by

their singular cause. "You have to eat organic. It's the only way." "Only a fool votes libtard." "Natural birth, water birth, reduces the trauma of modernity."

You've met this person. We've all met this person. No matter what subject you try to introduce, they manage to turn it toward their own purpose. Everything, no matter how small, relates directly to the cause. "You didn't like *Fury Road*? You're part of the patriarchy!" These people are on the road to, maybe, becoming a Martyr but they almost never know it. Self-awareness doesn't keep them from becoming more aligned with the Martyr, but remember that the Invisible Clergy doesn't care about his feelings or his personal devotion to the cause. They only care about what he does to act on it.

The Martyr can integrate his path and purpose. He may use the occult underground and his advancing abilities to serve the cause. It is only when the power becomes more promising than promotion of purpose that the path falters and the Martyr becomes just another vibrant believer and armchair crusader rather than an avatar.

TABOOS

The principal taboo of the Martyr lies in their hierarchy of importance. The cause is always at the top. It's the one percent of the one percent. The Martyr's life is devoted to acting in defense of the cause. Anyone in his life is either equally devoted or understands the Martyr's choice. Anyone who does not eventually finds themselves left behind.

To clarify, the Martyr's cause must be framed as a relationship — any one of them, except the protégé. A Martyr breaks taboo if his relationship score drops, any other relationship is rated higher, or any time they fail to support the cause because of danger, a failed stress check, or being spooked.

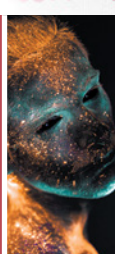
1: INTRO



2: ADEPTS



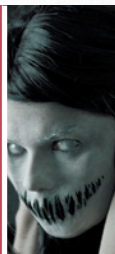
3: AVATARS



4: PLACES



5: FACES



SYMBOLS

Bumper stickers like “Nuke the Gay Baby Whales for Jesus!”, slogans on internet sigs, avatars online — anything representing the cause is a symbol of the Martyr. Some traditional sacrifices, too, are symbols — goats and lambs and hares. Arrest records, handcuffs, and other items associated with imprisonment for one’s beliefs are likewise symbols.

SUSPECTED AVATARS IN HISTORY

Jesus is both mask and avatar of the Martyr. He’s the first that comes to mind in much of the west, but Sikhs, Muslims, and even atheists have their own Martyrs as well. Nelson Mandela was a Martyr for freedom. Ho Chi Minh for communism, maybe. Socrates was a Martyr for truth, drinking hemlock rather than betraying his philosophy. Gandhi and Rosa Luxemburg both were avatars of the Martyr. In recent years, many suicide bombers were also Martyrs. So, too, are white nationalist terrorists. Belief in the cause, not the cause’s goal or methods, are all the matter to the cosmos.

MASKS

Jesus, Isaac, and other Biblical figures are masks of the Martyr. At the end of the show, Jack on *Lost* becomes a Martyr. Certain “magical girls” in fiction, and even super villains in comics, can likewise be Martyrs.

CHANNELS

1%-50%: A man can only go so far, belief in something greater takes him the rest of the way. When serving his cause, the Martyr evidences inhuman endurance both mentally and physically. The Martyr’s avatar identity can substitute for an ability check if it fits the following criteria: one, it must directly relate to the cause. It cannot be tangential. It isn’t possible to add avatar percentiles to a roll while watching a *Star Trek* marathon because bringing about a post-scarcity utopia is the goal. Two, something must be on the line. Something real. The Martyr must have skin in the game. He risks all for something greater than himself. If he alone benefits, and not the cause, his avatar identity cannot be substituted. The GM and player need to decide on a case-by-case basis.

51%-70%: A Martyr never quits and, sometimes, the cosmos smiles on that. Anytime the Martyr makes a roll in direct service to his greater cause, he may flip-flop the roll. This represents the sheer will, forged by the cause, bending the reality of the world.

71%-90%: Inspire another. Anyone who follows the Martyr in service of his cause, however briefly, may benefit from the Martyr’s unwavering sense of purpose. The Martyr may give a person a +20% boost to one roll *after* they roll it, if it’s in pursuit of the Martyr’s belief. He gets one boost per day per person. Alternately, the person can flip-flop their roll or re-roll it entirely.

Further, the Martyr can literally take the wounds of another. The Martyr may do this if the person is within sight. Upon a successful avatar roll, the wounds are immediately transferred from the subject to the Martyr. We should note this may kill the Martyr but, hey, that’s what they’re known for.

91%+: Speaking of dying for the cause, every Martyr has some stock in the immortality of their ideas and purpose beyond their mere lifetime. When a Martyr dies in service of their cause, their death becomes legend, it is captured in the collective unconscious of the world. Photos may exist, iPhone footage, or live tweeting of the death. It might just be rumor, but it’s a narrative that moves people.

Moreover, the Martyr’s cause gets a boost. If it was little known, it becomes widespread. If it was already a global cause, it finds new adherents inspired by the Martyr’s death. Finally, the Martyr’s death may add 10% of their avatar identity upon dying to the overall group’s goal. Again, the Martyr must have died in service to the cause, but a little skimming off the top goes to his compatriots.

1: INTRO



2: ADEPTS



3: AVATARS



4: PLACES



5: FACES





THE MASTERLESS MAN

ATTRIBUTES

We've all believed in something. Maybe it was a higher power, Santa Claus, or the inevitable return of *Firefly* (it's not happening), but few of us believed in something, or someone, so much that their loss radically altered our lives. Few of us ever had a master, and so few of us can truly understand the Masterless Man.

A master is traditionally a person, someone to whom the subordinate gives fealty — the classic being the samurai, who becomes a ronin when their master dies. Many occultists believe the archetype first manifested in this form, though others suggest it dates back much further. In more modern contexts, the Masterless Man is best known as the gunslinger of the American West. The United States itself is in some way founded on the idea of the Masterless Man, for the country shook off the mighty British Empire and King America, then, is a Masterless Man and there are few archetypes as quintessentially American. It may have begun with samurai, but it winds up being Bruce Willis trapped at the top of Nakatomi Plaza.

Whether he believed in a king, a daimyo, or a way of life, the Masterless Man was in some way forsaken by that lost master and now roams the world (or his corner of it) as a loner, a dealer of justice, a force of chaos fighting chaos. He is always male, though that may be changing (some say journalist Laurie Penny is making a play to be the Masterless Woman). Combat is in their blood, though it isn't merely with traditional weapons. While the sword and original Colt .45 are the traditional arms for the Masterless Man, the internet also gave birth to would-be avatars of this archetype. However, those without the traditional lethal weapons are still at a disadvantage. The archetype might shift, but it hasn't done so yet. For now, the pen is not mightier

than the sword when it comes to aspirant avatars of the Masterless Man.

TABOOS

He gives fealty to no person or idea. Once, he did so, but either they disappeared, turned their back on him, or betrayed his seemingly intractable faith. The true Masterless Man never believes again. He genuflects before no leader or ideal. To do so invites an erosion of avatarhood and a shift back into the old ways he's abandoned.

Further, he must never settle down. The open road, hotel rooms, airport concourses — these are the home of the moment. He is a wanderer. There is nothing for him in the quiet, contemplative life. To lay roots is to believe in something. No Masterless Man ever does this again. If he can't fit it into a GOOD (Get Out Of Dodge) bag, it's not something he can own permanently. Staying anywhere for more than a week, too, erodes his commitment to the transitory life. He enters a town and saves it from the local toughs, (or pointlessly terrorizes the residents, depending on circumstance and perspective) but he does not put down roots there.

The Masterless Man is enjoined against dependent relationships with others. If an avatar of the Masterless Man's *total percentiles* in his favorite, guru, and mentor relationships ever exceed 100%, his avatar identity is reduced by the amount that exceeds 100% until those relationships are spoiled back down below a total of 100%.

SYMBOLS

Traditionally, the unshaven, unkempt look of the drifter is a symbol of the Masterless Man. His uniform has been abandoned and in its place are the pieces of office that now serve him — sword, revolver, motorcycle, horse. A long,

1: INTRO



2: ADEPTS



3: AVATARS



4: PLACES



5: FACES



black trench coat once symbolized the Masterless Man, but Columbine put an end to that. Dark hats, particularly cowboy hats, are still in vogue semiotically, though.

Cigarettes, more so than ever, help mark the Masterless Man. While he isn't a rebel as such, he follows his own code, and that doesn't jive with the Surgeon General's Warning. He wears no badge of office, no star, but may keep a few mementos from his previous life only to remind him of the path he no longer follows. By tradition, the restless wave symbolizes the Masterless Man for the word *ronin* means "wave man" in Japanese. One of the potential godwalkers for this archetype is said to be a surfer, in fact. More than one Masterless Man carries around a copy of *On the Road* or *Tapping the Source*.

SUSPECTED AVATARS IN HISTORY

Miyamoto Musashi is perhaps the archetypal example of a Masterless Man. Wild Bill Hickok is the quintessential gunfighter example and, perhaps, so is John Wesley Hardin. Some argue Randy Weaver was approaching godwalker status and was taken out by FLEX ECHO, but there's no proof of this.

MASKS

Sir Balan (Arthurian), Ivanhoe (English), St. Christopher and the Wandering Jew (Christian), Prometheus (Greek), Sisyphus, as interpreted by Camus (Greek), John McClain, John J. Rambo, Billy the Kid (American), Ogun (Vodou), Yojimbo (Japanese), Johnny Utah (American), Spike Spiegel (Japanese), Casca the Eternal Mercenary (Roman), and (though hotly debated) street samurai Molly Millions (*Neuromancer*).

CHANNELS

1%-50%: The Masterless Man relies on himself. He is alone, and the world and the road and the internet are all very punishing. Traditionally, this has been directly related to physical harm. For the most part, it still is. Once per month, the Masterless Man may make an avatar roll. Is successful, his wound threshold increases by an amount equal to the total of the dice rolled. This remains until lost and can exceed his normal maximum. He is a badass, when the rubber hits the road.

Trauma isn't just physical, and a free pen takes as much abuse as a free blade but in a different way. Once per week, he may choose to re-roll any stress check or flip-flop it. This represents his ability to weather the slings and arrows of the outrageous internet, the unwashed masses, society and the like. He cuts his own path through the world, and people try to beat him down for it. That could be a gunshot. It could be a mean-ass tweet.

Note: the GM and player should establish at the start of the game what kind of Masterless Man the player takes on. By and large, the Masterless Man is still a rough and tumble fighter, a sellsword with a code of honor. However, the archetype morphs, and with mutability comes a slow but steady change. If the player chooses the traditional path, they get the physical benefits. If they player chooses another, they get those less tangible. At the end of the day, ideas may be more powerful than guns, but a gunshot will kill the most ruggedly independent writer.

51%-70%: Once per round, the Masterless Man can re-roll any attack which failed under his avatar percentage. He's very good at fighting, be it in a firefight or a flamewar. Many, many legends of the Masterless Man leave him standing alone, bodies all around him. If he fails the second roll, he fails. He can only re-roll once once per round no matter what. If he tries to cut off both his opponent's arms in a theatrical kung fu-style attack of flair and blood, and misses both, he only gets to re-roll once. The other limb, sadly, remains firmly attached to the opponent.

Likewise, he can re-roll any sort of "attack" which isn't considered physical once per day. These may be attacks with words, ideas, or the like. Again, the player must select if they walk the traditional path of the Masterless Man with a weapon or something more metaphorical.

71%-90%: The Masterless Man can fight on even when fatally injured. He dies on the operating room table, he flatlines. Sorry. Anytime he takes damage which exceeds his wound threshold, he may make an avatar roll to remain on his feet, to keep fighting. He acts without penalty if he keeps making rolls. When he fails a roll, he dies. Moreover, he dies either way when combat is over. Them's the breaks. Going down in a blaze of glory is very much the domain of the Masterless Man.

For a non-combat skewing Masterless Man, this ability resurrects him spiritually, mentally, emotionally, and the like. Whenever his notches push him in the direction of becoming burned out, he can prevent the final notch with a successful roll. He only gets to do this once per roll. After that, he goes buggy, the cosmos isn't there to help him.

91%+: No checks needed here, loners. Anytime someone attacks the Masterless Man and damages him with a percent under his Masterless Man identity, he takes either the actual damage or the sum of the dice, whichever is lower. It's very hard to hurt him but not impossible.

For those on the newer path, he may automatically flip-flop a roll against him which one could construe as an attack (the GM must set the ground rules for this) if said roll is under his avatar level. This can apply to any "attack" which would cause a stress check.

1: INTRO



2: ADEPTS



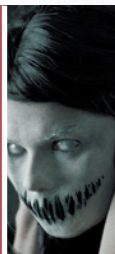
3: AVATARS



4: PLACES



5: FACES





THE MVP

ATTRIBUTES

You may think people worship gods, but more often than not, people worship people.

Back when cuneiform was some newfangled thing, people would worship priests and royalty. When monotheism was the latest fad, people worshipped saints and prophets. During the Enlightenment, folks started worshipping philosophers and thinkers. For better or worse, the modern age has gotten rid of religion and reason. Now, we worship athletes.

Sure, movie stars and politicians are big. But when it comes to moving the hearts and minds of millions (for love or hate), it's hard to beat a successful athlete. Instead of cathedrals, we build stadiums. The Super Bowl is the most-watched TV event each year. The World Cup can inspire people to scream for joy, cry like a child, spend like a millionaire, and kill like a jilted lover.

Within that morass of emotion, competition, and energy lies the Most Valuable Player. The MVP is more than merely good at their sport. They absolutely excel at it, and they do so consistently for their team or country. Their presence is vital. Without them, the team and maybe even the sport itself withers. When Tiger Woods is winning golf tournaments, attendance skyrockets and golf is hugely popular. When Tiger doesn't show, attendance drops and TV networks switch over to some movie that was cheap to buy the rights for.

MVPs have reached the pinnacle of their sport through a combination of innate talent, hard work, and training. When they win a medal or championship, people who love the MVP think he deserved it. After all, shouldn't God-given ability and determination be rewarded? That's why someone who is the right person at the right spot doesn't count. Dwight Clark's dramatic winning touchdown is so important, it's simply referred to as "The Catch." However, Clark is not an avatar of the MVP. (Notice how you didn't know his name?)

These champions are also lessons in paradoxes. MVPs are not the leaders of their team, but they provide leadership to it. They do not crave the limelight, but they get it much more than other teammates. Millions of people may worship the ground they walk on, but an equal number can hate them with an intensity usually reserved for child molesters. For the most part though, the MVP just plays and wins for the team.

Speaking of which, the MVP needs a side to play for. Usually, this is a team. It can also be a country, like athletes who compete in the Olympics. Yet you can still have an MVP in non-team sports like boxing or golf because the sport itself counts as a team. Someone like Billie Jean King can cozy up to the MVP for two reasons: tennis and feminism. Both are competitions and have big fan bases to support and revile Ms. King.

MVPs are beloved and revered by their teams and the people who root for them. However, that lasts only as long as the athlete brings home victory and pride. When a footballer wins, he's hailed as a hero. When he brings failure and shame? He winds up like Andrés Escobar. (The MVP can be a fickle archetype.) For each person who will spend \$1,000 just for an autographed jersey, however, there is another one who is filled with such hate and jealousy that he has actually considered cutting the hamstrings of that MVP.

It used to be that MVPs had to be respectful and classy. That certainly helps, but these days, the more important thing is winning. In fact, MVPs can be horrible role models. They can drink, smoke, screw, and more. Not everything can be overlooked, of course. An arrogant high school quarterback who leads his team to victory channels the MVP even if he got the homecoming queen pregnant. But he gets nothing if he starts belittling opponents and bragging about himself.

Which brings us to an interesting point of conflict for the MVP: egotism. There's a difference between accurately

1: INTRO



2: ADEPTS



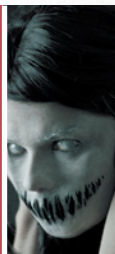
3: AVATARS



4: PLACES



5: FACES



pointing out how your skill is higher than others and being a jackass about it. Muhammad Ali got away with being a blowhard because he had the winning record to back it up — and he was funny about it. He spent most of his time talking about how great he was, not how untalented or unworthy his opponents were. The MVP must focus on the talent that creates winning records and brings pride to his supporters.

The MVP isn't just a modern phenomenon. Ancient warriors who inspired their armies and Roman gladiators who became famous were probably channeling the MVP as well. Wherever there is competition and a team (or at least a side to represent and win for), there is a Most Valuable Player. And it's certainly possible to become an avatar of the MVP without being a professional athlete. Amateur athletes count, but so do members of sales teams, election committees, and more. Anytime there is a team competing against other teams, the MVP can be there. That used car salesman who manages to sell the most cars whenever the boss sets up a competition? Possibly getting a boost from the MVP.

TABOOS

The MVP must be observed earning success through talent and training. He can never get caught cheating. The key word is "caught." If accused of a doping scandal, the MVP is fine. When evidence appears proving the doping happened, say goodbye to it all. Also, the MVP cannot have a losing record. The occasional loss is expected, but if the MVP keeps losing again and again, the archetype moves on to someone else.

SYMBOLS

The jersey is the biggest symbol of the MVP, as that's what most fans wear to honor their team and heroes. Uniforms in general are powerful, as are trophies, medals, and sporting equipment.

SUSPECTED AVATARS IN HISTORY

Marcus Calpurnius Flamma, Michael Jordan, Jesse Owens, Michelle Kwan, Joe Namath, Tiger Woods, Muhammad Ali, Babe Ruth, Nadia Comăneci, Pelé, and Stephen Curry. Non-athletes include Steve Jobs and Karl Rove.

MASKS

Lancelot (Arthurian), Lugh (Irish), Meleager (Greek), Hercules (Greek), Euthymus (Greek), and Sterling Archer (American).

CHANNELS

1%–50%: Success is its own reward. Every time the MVP succeeds at a roll, his next roll is at +10%. This is not cumulative, so don't expect four good rolls to give +40%. Each success only brings an additional +10% to the next one. Matched successes, crits, and failures are unaffected.

51%–70%: MVPs do not let failure stop them. Instead, it inspires them to try harder and achieve more. If he fails on a roll, his next roll gets a +10% bonus. If he gets a matched failure, he gains +20%. If he fumbles, he gets +30%. Again, this is not cumulative. However, he must be actively working with his cabal (or whatever counts as his team).

The MVP is walking home alone after a party and gets jumped by an old enemy. Since the MVP is all alone, this power has no effect at all. If the MVP was walking home with his cabal or a group of friends, then it would kick in on each failed roll.

71%–90%: MVPs come through in the clutch. When his team is down and the tension is building, he finds a way to beat the competition and turn defeat into a win for his team. Whenever the avatar is competing against something and success would help the cabal get close to their chosen objective, he may roll his avatar identity instead of whatever ability the GM had chosen. This can be done once per day. Helping the cabal reach the objective isn't always the same thing as adding to the percentage.

A cabal with the objective "Defeat the shadowy agency controlling our hometown" is trying to break into a reporter's home. This reporter is sitting on evidence of who belongs to that agency. The MVP could use this power to break into the house (a competition against the lock) or to sneak past the reporter while she's in the kitchen (a competition against her) because successes in either ultimately help the cabal reach that objective. The MVP could not use this to find the data on the reporter's laptop because there is no competition. Nothing is trying to stop the MVP from succeeding in that case.

91%+: MVPs are messiahs for their fans — and Satan personified for fans of rival teams. Once per week, the MVP can remove one failed notch from Helplessness, Isolation, or Self for someone who believes he is great. (Since the MVP is using his status as a hero to inspire, it doesn't affect Violence or Unnatural meters.) The recipient must be an honest, true fan, although not necessarily a rabid one.

Things are different when the MVP meets someone who hates him. Instead of bringing out the best in someone, he brings out the worst. He can force a Helplessness (8), Isolation (8), or Self (8) check. Again, the target must truly dislike the MVP. Someone indifferent or ignorant of the MVP cannot be affected by either. The MVP cannot do both each week; just one or the other.

1: INTRO



2: ADEPTS



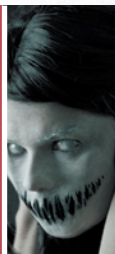
3: AVATARS



4: PLACES



5: FACES





THE PILGRIM

ATTRIBUTES

While there exist negative archetypes such as the Fool and the Masterless Man, there is an opposite defined by singular purpose — the Pilgrim. The Pilgrim seeks an ultimate goal, one of great importance to herself but also, most likely, the world. Her pursuit is not the inner journey, for what she seeks is in some way tangible. The Buddhist seeking Nirvana is not a Pilgrim but an adventurer seeking Shangri-La (or Shambhala) is. Belief is the central tenet for the Pilgrim, and she never wavers from this course. Like a lodestone, or the gravity well of a black hole if one is less charitable, the belief inexorably pulls the Pilgrim toward it. Ultimately, it may consume her.

This is not anathema to the Pilgrim, for she devotes her life, and would often give it, to achieve her goal. The boy mythologized as the originator of the Children's Crusade is as much a Pilgrim as the UFOlogist whose academic career lies in ruin — both devoted their lives to a singular belief. The Pilgrim always has a North Star, and its presence in her sky makes her unrelenting in the pursuit of her quest. Whether she seeks the Holy Grail of legend from astride a horse, or the lost city of Atlantis in a modern submersible, the Pilgrim travels far in her quest.

Embodying a quest is more important than achieving it. This must be distinctly understood. The Pilgrim's role is the journey. Though they have a clear destination, upon reaching it, they are a Pilgrim no longer. They must either ascend or be cast back into the soup of mortals and straights. Not unlike the Guide, the map is very much the territory, though the destination never alters. But a Pilgrim who grasps the Grail, opens the Ark of the Covenant, or finds Atlantis off the Bimini coast has fulfilled her purpose. It is time to move up or move on.

Seeking who really killed JFK is a path of the Pilgrim as is finding proof of Jesus' divinity. The goal cannot be easily

achievable, but it ought to be within the realm of extreme possibility. Powerful avatars, maybe only Pilgrim godwalkers, ever alter reality such that their goal becomes real. For example, Lee Harvey Oswald might have really killed JFK, but the conspiracy theorist Pilgrim could cause the universe to change as if that were not the case all along. History can be rewritten and the world can forget the truth. At least so goes the legend.

TABOOS

The Pilgrim is on a quest, and that quest supersedes everything else in her life. She cannot go a session without devoting time to that goal. To do so invites the GM to knock down her percentiles and make her nothing more than an armchair nut.

Her goal must remain consistent. There is no going back. A Pilgrim does not simply decide that the Grail is a medieval creation and move on. She ceases to walk the Pilgrim's path if she abandons or alters her goal.

This is an archetype with a relatively narrow set of definitions. There is one goal. It is the only goal. At the end of the day, nothing but the goal matters. No, the Statosphere does *not* care if she falls in love, has a child, or finds a more interesting lost civilization. Stick to the goal. Don't be a slacker.

SYMBOLS

The object of the quest often has its own symbols — a holy cross, the Grail, a POW/MIA flag — it doesn't matter what so long as it embodies the goal. Likewise, the hobo's bindle, the long-brimmed hat of certain American pilgrims, the open road, and the walking stick all represent the Pilgrim. In modernity, the classic flying saucer, truther internet-speak, and certain popular (sometimes unfortunate) Twitter hashtags also represent the path the Pilgrim walks.

1: INTRO



2: ADEPTS



3: AVATARS



4: PLACES



5: FACES



SUSPECTED AVATARS IN HISTORY

Percy Fawcett, in his search for the Lost City of Z, almost certainly became a Pilgrim. Giorgio A. Tsoukalos (if one believes his sincerity), Meriwether Lewis, and ironically, Friedrich Nietzsche may also have been Pilgrims. Amelia Earhart might have approached godwalker status, and some say her disappearance was the result of ascension. David Icke may also be an avatar of the Pilgrim as well as Joseph Smith.

MASKS

Odin sought to escape Ragnarok and is thus a mask of the Pilgrim (Norse). Sir Galahad (Arthurian) quested for, and won, the Holy Grail. Jason and the Argonauts (Greek), Xuanzang the monk (Chinese), and St. Bernard of Clairvaux (French) are also Pilgrim manifestations. In popular culture, such figures as Frodo and Percy Jackson are incarnations of the Pilgrim as is Beatrix Kiddo and, arguably, the Punisher.

CHANNELS

1%–50%: The cosmos recognizes the Pilgrim's single-minded pursuit of her quest and, at times, bends itself in such a way that helps her. Think of the cosmos as a field of corn, tightly packed. A farmer might plow trails through that corn hell or he might make crop circles. It's easier to walk through a plowed path than push through the corn, right? The paths are the cosmos opening avenues of less resistance. Her quest reveals them when she succeeds. Sadly, the paths are narrow and, at this level, the ability to alter anything cosmically is likewise circumscribed. Only one ability gets the benefits outlined below.

The Pilgrim chooses one goal which relates to the central quest and then selects a single ability. If she rolls under her avatar identity, all rolls for the ability selected can be flip-flopped. This continues until she either abandons her goal (bad avatar!) or completes it. This can only be applied to one ability at a time and the goal cannot be changed unless abandoned or completed. The goal need not be the quest but must be at least a step toward it.

51%–70%: The path laid before the Pilgrim is always arduous and usually long. Sometimes, though, she gets a cheat code and skips ahead along the road. Consider it a cut in the movie of life. Her fervent belief in the obtainability of her goal sometimes causes space-time to bend around her. She travels much further than in a day than physics should allow.

The Pilgrim rolls her avatar identity. If she succeeds, a day's travel, for her and her alone, is approximately the length of the continental United States or Australia. She does not teleport as such, but begins her journey in one place and winds up some improbable distance away about twenty-four hours later. Like the distance itself, the time is not precisely twenty-four hours. The cosmos is not constrained by human constructs.

The journey might begin by car, headed along the fading, grass-reclaimed asphalt of Route 66. The Pilgrim finds herself on a pier in California at the end, with only vague memories of roadside attractions in her rearview. The Pilgrim might board a cruise ship headed out of England and wind up on a crabbing boat in Maine as it docks near dusk. Again, the world warps around her. People don't think it's odd that she's on their crab boat; they just accept it or

ignore it. The Pilgrim can make this trip once every twenty-four hours. Sure, she could fly, but think of all the airfare savings! Not to mention she won't be tracked by the Powers That Be via computer and passport.

71%–90%: The fire burning within and the dedication in the Pilgrim's mind may be temporarily passed on to others. With a successful avatar roll, they see that hers *is* the one, true quest. In that brief period of time (long enough for a simple command or suggestion), the subject obeys the Pilgrim's will — to a point.

No matter how ensorcelled they are with the vital nature of her quest, they don't violate their core persona. It isn't possible to get a person who's a happy-go-lucky sort to put a revolver to their head and Jackson Pollock the wall with their brains. Similarly, social conventions hold. It isn't possible to have someone stand up in the center of an airport, strip, and claim their liver is an IED. It just doesn't work that way. The Pilgrim can bend their will, not reforge it. Like the dreamlike passage in the last channel, the subject remembers only hazily that any of this took place.

Resistance on the part of the subject triggers a Self check for them with a difficulty equal to the tens place of the Pilgrim's avatar rating. To activate the potential subject, the Pilgrim must lock eyes with them. Someone who cannot see the Pilgrim cannot be influenced by this ability.

91%+: Now, the Pilgrim can travel a great distance in mere minutes, and to anywhere she's seen or heard described in some detail. Take a few steps along the Vegas Strip and wind up in Macao. Use any portal — a window, a door, a beaded curtain — as a gateway to anywhere that meets the above parameters. Her hand turns the cut-glass doorknob of an estate in New York only for the door to open into the Forbidden City in Beijing.

When she appears, no one notices. She's in the blind spot of potential observers and security cameras... but only until she moves into view. She has to explain herself then. You don't miracle your ass to the secret set of *Star Wars XX* and just look like another cast member.

The Pilgrim can memorize a photo or a description of a place she's never seen — Google Street View may really have been designed by a Pilgrim! Make your avatar roll and there she is. She may also bring people with her, up to the number of the tens digit in her avatar score. This isn't a quantum transport business, after all.

There's a reverse to this, too. The Pilgrim can take anyone she can see, whether it be in the wild, digitally, or by photo and trap them in a loop of doors. With a successful roll, any door or other type of portal they open leads where the Pilgrim chooses. For example, she could have an enemy open the door to their car, get in and find themselves in the interrogation room of police station. They open that door (if they can) and find they're right back in the same room. It works with closets, bathrooms, and Porta-Pottys. The sky is the limit. (Yes, they could wind up in an airplane bathroom at 35,000 feet.)

This is a magickal attack, though, so the unfortunate target may have a chance to resist. As always, it's always easier to put a whammy on a mundane than it is a charger. This effect can't be used on any given enemy more than a number of times equal to the ones place of the Pilgrim's avatar roll.

1: INTRO



2: ADEPTS



3: AVATARS



4: PLACES



5: FACES





THE SALESMAN

ATTRIBUTES

That slick smile you see a mile away but still can't resist. The low, conspiratorial tone that lets you know you're special, and that's why you're getting "the good deal." The charisma riding out on the photons of your 3:00 AM, insomnia-fueled infomercial binge in 1999. All these things herald the Salesman. Once, they called this avatar the Merchant, but more recently they call him the Salesman. He knows what you think you want before you do, because he placed the idea there in the first place.

That's the common view of the Salesman, but it isn't necessarily gospel. For a Salesman, the only thing that's "gospel" is closing the deal. That's not to say the deal can't be in the interest of both parties. The Popeil Pocket Fisherman did what it said, after all. So did the Louisiana Purchase. Point is, the Salesman always gets his cut, he always takes his piece of the pie. For some, this makes him a necessary evil, a middleman selling arms to the hotspots of the world or the small-time dealer slinging coke to the Alphas and Phis during pledge week. Someone brokered a deal that let Doctors Without Borders get into Syria, though. That was the Salesman too.

For the Salesman, the world is nothing but the movement of commodities. Reduced to its basic, binary code, the universe is buy or sell, supply and demand. Anything else is just window dressing. Economists try to spot the trends shaping the global economy or reflect and categorize those which came before, but few are avatars of the Salesman unless they parlay their "expertise" into pure profit. Selling ideas can sometimes be the quickest way to rise as an avatar of the Salesman.

In the past — hell even as recent as the early aughts — the Salesman was bound by the transfer of physical goods, but the increasingly wired world made the trade of ideas just as lucrative. That's not to say spreading ideas makes

one a contestant for a Salesman avatar, but skimming a profit from the transaction does. Moreover, the salesman isn't the source of the idea, he just buys and sells it. A cult leader might collect a mint (and some dubious number of "wives") by farming out their own form of transrational neo-eschatology, but they're no Salesman. They're a believer. Salesmen don't believe in the things they sell; they believe in the flow of commerce. That's not to say the product being moved need be shoddy (a knock-off Chinese iPhone or dodgy interpretation of early nihilistic Nietzsche and/or Whitehead), just that, for the Salesman, it's the transaction that really counts.

TABOOS

No Salesman may become a "groupie" of the thing they sell. Someone on the net pimping out geo-locations for Pokemón might be a Salesman, but they start to lose percentage points if they're on Team Mystic (or Valor or whatever). The Salesman facilitates transaction. He does not make the sausage. Sure, he knows *how* the sausage is made (at least enough to sound like he does, anyway), but he doesn't make it. He's no craftsman. A memetic engineer can craft memes, but cannot be the Salesman of memes. The political campaign manager, however, can co-opt those memes for the candidate — but not for themselves. They can profit, but they never become the candidate. The candidate is the product.

Second, the Salesman doesn't get taken... ever. If he finds himself on the bad end of a deal, he's losing ground as a Salesman avatar. He *does not get sold*. He sells others. Anytime he winds up holding the bag while some Harold Hill marches off with the band to 76 trombones, he loses 1%–5% from his avatar: Salesman identity.

Finally, the Salesman can't possess a commodity of something that he won't sell. Buying something and then refusing

1: INTRO



2: ADEPTS



3: AVATARS



4: PLACES



5: FACES



to sell it when there's a good deal offered for it is verboten. He can have friends, family, even mementoes, but the Salesman is a Salesman, not a collector. Warehouse space is pricey, gotta move the product!

SYMBOLS

The letters APR, red stickers, markdowns, "For Sale" signs on cars, 3D concept art of final products, the Kickstarter logo, and the phrases "Low Financing!" and "Always Be Closing" — all these are symbols of the Salesman. Avatars have been known to get tattoos on their wrists of QVC and HSN. The Salesman keeps the dollar or the ten or the hundo from his first sale.

From olden times, and by way of tradition, the Salesman's sampler bag or case, rental cars, battered beige trench coats, and *Death of Salesman*-style glasses all qualify as symbols. Some Salesman still travel, of course, but rarely door-to-door. Still, there's a rumor holding that the current godwalker of the Salesman was a door-to-door rep for Amway.

SUSPECTED AVATARS IN HISTORY

The robber barons of the 19th century were, according to a few occult-leaning economists, avatars of the Salesman with J.P. Morgan emerging as victor. Thomas Edison, too, might be considered a Salesman though others say he was an avatar of the Hacker. Ron Popeil was almost certainly an avatar, as was Mike Murphy (McCain's 2008 senior strategist). Certain bloggers, and even the founders of great blogging empires, are also avatars. Nick Denton of Gawker may have been an avatar, though it's said he was taken down by Peter Thiel in a race to become the next godwalker.

MASKS

Quark is a consummate Salesman, as is the Boy Who Cried Wolf (though he failed in the end). Saul Goodman is a mask too. Pop culture is full of them. In mythology, Oxun-Mare (Candomblé), Mephistopheles (German), the Pied Piper of Hamelin (German), and Aison (Vodou) are all masks of the Salesman.

CHANNELS

1%-50%: Beauty is in the eye of the beholder. So is value. One man's junk is another man's treasure, and the Salesman is very good at making junk look like treasure. It's all in how you present something. It's not just how the Salesman presents the product — whatever that may be — but also how he presents something he wants to buy to the seller. "Sure, it's a Lamborghini, but people want to buy American, right?" A successful avatar identity roll results in a good deal, either way. From the TAG Heuer he gets for the price of a Movado to convincing that person with the rare baseball card that "collectible" just means they made it to sell a ton of, the Salesman is very persuasive.

If the Salesman gets a roll resulting in a matched success or crit, he really pulls a fast one. The Jaeger-LeCoultre goes for the price of a Casio *and* the seller gives the Salesman the shirt off his back. "That Ming vase, hey, you can get something better at Pottery Barn!" The seller or swapper doesn't *have* to obey, but they must make a Self (3) or Unnatural (3) check to resist.

51%-70%: Trading intangibles, like souls, is within the realm of the Salesman's power. He can buy someone's as-yet-to-be-firstborn. He can arrange a trade of years from someone's life for money. He is really something, the ultimate seller. Too many failed notches? The Salesman can broker a deal.

The Salesman can also sell identity percentiles for wound threshold, but both parties have to agree. He isn't the flim-flam man here. These contracts are only valid for those in the know. Coercion doesn't work. The previous channel doesn't work. The Salesman must be the conduit. To do so, make an avatar roll. Another caveat, this should be described in-game, not just mechanically. Trading wound threshold for money might result in a rich fellow asking the Salesman to ask another person to cut themselves for money while the rich man watches. Pervy? Yes, but also effective!

71%-90%: The Salesman has reached the point where his deals need not only be between people. Now, he can make deals with demons, trading them intangible aspects of his life, or someone else's if he's managed to acquire those. The demon cannot harm the Salesman, nor him it. The pact is irrevocable once the two parties agree. As with the previous channel, demons are unable to be coerced. This isn't to say the Salesman couldn't somehow leverage the creature otherwise. At the GM's discretion, other unnatural entities may also be engaged in such deals. A failed roll indicates the demon now marks the Salesman as a "person of interest." This could be very bad, merely annoying, or add up to nothing. Again, the GM's discretion determines the result. The point is, dealing with demons always carries some risk.

91%+: The Salesman takes nothing without a transaction. That includes attacks. If someone wants to attack him, magickally or otherwise, they must pay for it. The attacker must pay in money. Real money. That's right, they must either give official, current legal tender or throw it at the Salesman. Someone wants to kick the Salesman? They toss a quarter one round and can strike the next. They want to get a punch in next? That's another quarter, bud.

People instinctively understand how this transaction works; it's a key element of the purity of the Salesman's role in the cosmos that there's no ambiguity to transactions of this nature.

1: INTRO



2: ADEPTS



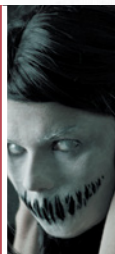
3: AVATARS



4: PLACES



5: FACES





THE TWO-FACED MAN

ATTRIBUTES

This is the archetype of selfish betrayal. It pulls in all manner of seedy characters who are quite happy to lie, backstab, and abandon people — but not while acting the part. First, she whispers what you wanted to hear all along. She smiles, helps, and supports. But it's all an act. When the hour arrives, she takes what she wants and laughs as you weep.

This is also the archetype of noble sacrifice. It pulls in all manner of upstanding heroes who are happy to protect, champion, and serve people — but not while undercover. First, they do deeds they never thought capable of. They hurt, steal, and kill. But it's all an act. When the hour arrives, they take their revenge and laugh as you're arrested.

It's fitting that both are true for the Two-Faced Man.

An avatar of the Two-Faced Man is the quintessential undercover operative. She's not just a spy, though. She won't slip into a corporate HQ and steal some patents. Instead, she gets hired by that corporation and works there for weeks, months, or even years. A Two-Faced Man avatar immerses herself so deeply in the enemy group that she can lose track of who she is. But in the end, it's all worth it. She gets what she wanted all along.

An avatar of the Two-Faced Man must pick two groups. One is designated her home group, while the other is her enemy group. For this purpose, "group" can mean an organization, an ideology, or anything that brings people together under a label. However, these groups must be in conflict, at least potentially. The NAACP and the National Urban League cannot both be picked unless those two have developed an intense rivalry. Also, the avatar must create two separate identities, a home one and an enemy one, complete with names and looks. (The Two-Faced Man only has one obsession and set of passions.)

Once decided, the avatar can change her group designations. Doing so lowers her current avatar rating by 20% and

THE TWO-FACED WOMAN?

It might have been true that only men could become avatars of the Two-Faced Man in days past but not anymore. It's just as easy for anyone. (More accurately, it's just as hard.) However, the name has stuck. Much like "dude" or "guys," the "man" in Two-Faced Man refers to any gender.

brings any relationships she might have in the old group to 5%. She can never return to a group she left either, so don't be too hasty to skip town.

Having an avatar of the Two-Faced Man in your cabal is both a blessing and a curse. If she defines the cabal as her home group, she can really come in handy. However, she can use her powers even if she defined your cabal as the enemy group. Which is it? Is she friend or foe? You don't know.

TABOOS

Avatars of the Two-Faced Man can never be caught helping or supporting their home group by someone in the enemy group (or the other way around). In other words, she cannot be caught being a duplicitous bastard. Being caught by someone outside of those two groups might be tricky to handle, but it's not a taboo-breaker.

SYMBOLS

Janus masks, broken mirrors, wigs, hidden microphones or cameras.

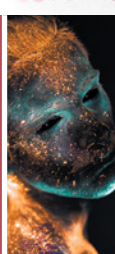
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2: ADEPTS



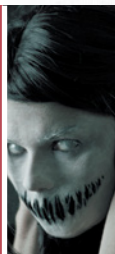
3: AVATARS



4: PLACES



5: FACES



SUSPECTED AVATARS IN HISTORY

Benedict Arnold, Dominick Polifrone, Mata Hari, Oskar Schindler, Sabu, Eddie Chapman, Katrina Leung, Joaquin "Jack" Garcia, James Hogue, and Paul Rusesabagina.

MASKS

Ruadan (Celtic), James Bond (English), Caprica Six (American), Donnie Brasco (American), Sinon (Japanese), Johnny Utah (American), Mr. Orange (American).

CHANNELS

1%–50%: The Two-Faced Man's nature is to infiltrate and join people that hardly know her. To be able to do that, she needs to know what people want to hear. Angry opposition or even polite criticism doesn't work half as well as coily saying what they wanted her to all along.

When someone talks to the Two-Faced Man specifically, she makes an avatar identity roll. If successful, she can see a single sentence in her mind of what that person wants to hear her say right there, right then. Speaking that sentence to them grants her a bonus of +10% to +30% to any roll with Connect, Status, or Lie, depending on which the GM thinks is most sensible.

The phrase in her mind never has secrets, passwords, or the location of the buried body. Instead, she gets a sentence born from the crucible of exigent circumstances and a person's passions. If Zeke the biker gang treasurer starts talking to her, the sentence in her mind could be, "You're clearly a genius at math, and you should be running this gang." It could also be, "I'm going to let you kill me because I'm really a two-faced son of a bitch," or even "Let's run away to Amsterdam and get married." She never has to say the sentence, but if she doesn't immediately, she's lost the potential bonus.

If she wants to push her luck, she can use this with a group of people. She still needs to make a successful avatar identity roll first, but then her mind zeroes in on a statement that appeals to the crowd as a whole. If she fails, she must make a Self check with the rank equal to the ones place of the failed roll.

And don't even try to add five subordinate clauses and commas to that one sentence.

51%–70%: It's impossible for the Two-Faced Man to know everything about her groups (or just keep all the facts straight). That can cause a bit of a pickle when asked to name the passcode or who Jelly-G used to date before Kyle. Thankfully, that's much less of an issue now.

When speaking to someone in her home group or enemy group, the Two-Faced Man can make them believe she knows stuff she doesn't. She makes an avatar identity roll and says the words, "The dogs bark at midnight." If successful, the people who heard her believe she answered the question correctly. She still has no clue what she should have said. She just made them hear the answer they already knew.

In addition, she doesn't have to make Self or Isolation stress checks when doing something to keep undercover once she can access this channel. A narcotics officer who is also an avatar of the Two-Faced Man can sell drugs and beat snitches all the livelong day.

71%–90%: It happens to all Two-Faced Men eventually. She's doing something she shouldn't, exactly where she shouldn't, and she gets caught. A cop who's undercover in a gang could get caught at the precinct house with two eight balls — or be found at Ducky's house using her phone to record a deal. When this happens, she has two choices. (Technically she has a third option, but getting arrested or stabbed in the face isn't usually considered a "choice.")

- The Two-Faced Man gets angry at them for not trusting her. No, not angry. She blows a fuse big time. She throws stuff around, breaks a few things, and must be held back or she beats whoever is calling her out. When she does this, her mojo wipes their minds clear of the specifics. Her cover isn't blown, but she lost cred with that group. It's also a brute-force method to get out of trouble, so everyone involved must make a Violence (3) stress check.
- Alternatively, she makes an avatar identity roll. With success, everybody in the immediate area is convinced she is utterly and completely loyal. Whatever she was doing doesn't matter. Those eight balls are obviously from the evidence locker, and you were clearly on your way there right now, sorry to have held you up. And filming with your phone? Ha! We know you're on Tinder, stupid. Don't try to hide it!

91%+: Once per week, the Two-Faced Man can pick one recorded statement of hers and change it how she sees fit. Then all evidence in existence is changed to reflect the new statement. Be it handwriting, voice recording, video, newspaper, microfiche, or anything else, if it's what she said, she can change it.

All instances change. If she's quoted by the Chicago Tribune as saying, "Taxpayers are a bunch of rubes, and I got all the monies now, bitch," she could change it to, "Our government needs to get wasteful spending under control." That change appears in every single newspaper ever printed, as well as all online editions, reporters' notes, recordings, and any video. (Yes, even her mouth changes as if she said the new words.)

The data being changed must have been recorded by someone else. Also, this channel cannot change legal documents or contracts. She could change what you said in court transcripts, but she cannot get out of that Boca Raton time-share contract. She can also change her name as recorded only to one of her two groups' identities.

The Two-Faced Man is spending a lovely afternoon with some New Inquisition buddies (her enemy group). Suddenly, a D Clearance flunky with high aspirations accuses her of being a mole for... well, somebody else, that's for sure. He starts playing a video he surreptitiously recorded of the avatar chatting with her cabal (her home group). She knows she talked about infiltrating TNI in that clip, and she makes a successful avatar identity roll. That video now clearly shows her telling the cabal to either join TNI or die.

1: INTRO



2: ADEPTS



3: AVATARS



4: PLACES



5: FACES





4: PLACES

Every *Unknown Armies* story is set in a cold, unfeeling, morally questionable world of driven individuals making desperate plans. Or at least most are. This world has a multitude of stages, however, and the fact that *Unknown Armies* makes a big deal of creating locations in character creation is a signal to every player that there's no point telling a story without a deeply thematic and emblematic set.

PARAGON PLACES

Go to the place where the thing you wish to know is native; your best teacher is there. Where the thing you wish to know is so dominant that you must breathe its very atmosphere, there teaching is most thorough, and learning is most easy. You acquire a language most readily in the country where it is spoken; you study mineralogy best among miners; and so with everything else.

— Johann Wolfgang von Goethe

Places take on a character, based on the way they're used over time. *Here* is the most contemplative fishing hole, *there* is the library full of all the most perfect books for you, and *that* is the most sordid and dangerous crack house where you can get bent in exactly the ways you desire.

You walk in, and the very air is different. There's a vibe, a pulse. This place you're in is for something, and does something, and encourages something. Sometimes that something is good, and sometimes that something is bad. You've just walked into a paragon place.

PARAGON PLACES VS. OTHERSPACES VS. THE HOUSE OF RENUNCIATION

Paragons are not fictional places made real — those are otherspaces. Take a real *location*, and make it *realer*: that's a paragon place.

Paragon places are stable ground, wired into the bones of the cosmos. Archimedes said, "Give me but one firm spot on which to stand, and I will move the earth." Paragons are those firm spots where the world can be moved easier.

A few whacked-out occultists say that the collection of archetypal locations exists as a house of many mansions in the Statosphere, a House of Affirmation (opposed to the House of Renunciation) where the Invisible Clergy dwell; and life here on

ASPIRE

i'd heard of people smoking it, shooting up, even taking it through lollipops, but makeup as a vector?

This chapter approaches locations in a new way, introducing the concept of the paragon place. It also opens a few new otherspaces for GMs to consider setting the players up against during the antagonist phase. Players, if you see something here you like, you can always work it into an objective, too.

Earth is just a reflection of their avatars and paragons. It's possible. The House of Renunciation serves a purpose in the cosmos, as the sewer pipe for Invisible Clergy members who get booted.

So... if there are Rooms that serve as *output* valves, couldn't there also be *intake* ones?

WHAT ARE PARAGON PLACES?

If Earth is the center of the universe and the top dog, and otherspace bubbles are its fleas, paragon places are *parts of the dog* — bones, ears, paws, cute snuffling nose, teeth, etc.

These archetypal locations are not only part of the physical topography of the universe, but the spiritual geography of it as well. As human will and action happen repeatedly in similar ways in the same place over time, they reshape the place into "a good place for those things." As other human wills and actions bumble along the spiritual landscape, they find these existing mystical campsites waiting ready for them, stocked with a ring of stones for a campfire, stacked and dry wood logs to burn, a lean-to shelter or cabin, and maybe even a latrine pit or outhouse. Indeed, humans wishing to express actions along the line of certain desires can even be *drawn* to these already proper and meet places, to engage in whatever shenanigans are appropriate.

Like all archetypes, paragon places are the conscious embodiments of a specific aspect of human experience, representing the important parts of life, particularly those human activities done over and over in a place. They are potent: enhancing human will in pursuit of those fit and meet activities, and resisting will opposed to their natures. They bend coincidence within their borders, and provide as best as they can what the human spirit needs at that moment to do that thing in that place.

As living people can follow the path of an archetype as an avatar, so a "living" place (read: "being used" or "lived-in") can be shaped by human will and used to fit an archetypal concept of a place as a paragon. Paragon derives from the Italian word *paragone* ("touchstone") and originally from the Greek *parakonon* meaning "to sharpen" (*para-*, "alongside of," plus *akonē*, "whetstone").

1: INTRO



2: ADEPTS



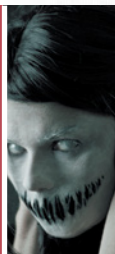
3: AVATARS



4: PLACES



5: FACES



Spiritual topography is a worthwhile obsession if you ask me.

Please ask me.

Review "Location, Location, Location" on page 117 of Book Two: Run.

Please.

A touchstone is used to judge the purity of gold or silver; a whetstone is used to sharpen an edge. Paragon places are places that judge and sharpen a set, complex, or pattern of human will and action. Be it axis mundi or omphalos, it is the heart or navel of a worldview. Mircea Eliade has said, "Every microcosm, every inhabited region, has what may be called a 'Centre,' that is to say, a place that is sacred above all," and that dude has eaten his fair share of *Amanita muscaria*, so he's likely onto something.

As a place is used, it gains practice in being used that way, and becomes a better place to Do That Thing. These places are the trees and the dirt and roots and the leaf-mold of the *Forest of the Mind* through which human souls and lives wend. And we can feel that when we're there, deep inside. Conscious and unconscious repeated use of a place gives it a vibe, a flavor, which builds up over repetition. The more frequently and regularly the place is utilized, the more power it contains... and the more things it encourages and discourages visitors to do.

DEALING WITH PARAGON PLACES

Paragons are an important basis of our reality, simply because people consciously do the same things in them, over and over, and that leaves a strong mark not just on the face of Earth, but also on our collective unconscious. They work on emotional and aesthetic logic (rather than the dream logic of otherspaces), mostly affecting human thought and action, but also to the extent of bending the physics of space and time. They are "suitable places" to do certain "work" — but that "work" can be good, bad, indifferent, or horrific. For example, a Library is a good place to do research on who did you wrong; a Public Office is a good place to find out where they're living now; a Bar is a good place to slip them a Mickey Finn; a Slaughterhouse is a good place to kill them; and a Crawlspace is a good place to hide the body.

- Paragon places exist, and they are uncommon but not rare. They are built according to fundamental human rules and habits, tend to be wired into a sort of order — a "just feels like that kind of place."
- While paragon places exist all over the world, in various cultures and referred to by various names, they are at their uttermost base the same "kind of place" for all humans — an African Home is as welcoming as one in Siberia, and a Castle is the same in Tokyo or New York City.
- The caretakers, residents, and visitors of a paragon place are bound by all suitable human laws, morals, or ethics, though they often act according to their own interests.
- With a few exceptions, free entry and exit to a paragon is assured to all. (The Prison or the Maze may be more difficult to get out of...

but there is usually a set of actions to undertake to do so.) These places are available to all humans... but note that some entities aren't human any more, or never were.

- Paragon places are permanent... until changed through disuse or active opposition to the type of place they are. Kill enough people in the Hospital on purpose, and it stops being a place of healing and becomes one of torment and death.

Members of the occult underground often seek out (or try to create!) paragon places, be it for charging purposes, for a safe house to hunker down in, to leverage their objectives, or to enhance their personal power. It's typical: any attempt to set up a Treehouse for your local merry band of malcontents is a way of attempting to take over or build a paragon place for oneself and one's compadres. They are part of the landscape of the human soul, after all.

Paragon places form either unintentionally or intentionally. Go to the same set of rocks near the stream under the cliff to knap flint into arrowheads every day, week, season, year, century, millennium — and that becomes the Flint-Knapping Place (a forerunner to the Workshop). It's irrelevant if that becoming "just so happened" or if Thorg decided once that that's where the knapping happens, *dammit*, and made everyone go there forever. It's just that now, long after Thorg and his tribe are gone, it's still a good place to knap flint... or manufacture guns.

MATRYOSHKA PARAGONS

What about paragon places existing inside of other paragon places, nested like those creepy Russian dolls?

Totes legit, guys. A home probably isn't a Home without at least a Kitchen and a Bedroom, right? And a whole bunch of Castles have Armories, Libraries, Chapels, Kitchens, and so forth.

A good rule of thumb for a paragon place is that it has to be clearly delineated from stuff around it. Separate buildings work best (for most, but some paragons imply a necessity to be part of a larger whole), and any distinct walls or doors work, but even a switch from carpet to linoleum (for those with efficiency apartments) or an archway of trees, a sharp ridgeline, or dividing streams make sense. And each of them can have different caretakers, associates, and affiliates.

Think about it: the Home paragon clearly includes a host of other paragons within it. (As does the City. As does the Universe. Hmmm...)

Whacked-out occultists can, have, and will make all kinds of creepy Venn diagrams of this stuff in frog's blood ink using scientific calculators, alchemical symbols, and crow-feather quills, then photocopy it and debate it at smoky cabal meetings. Naturally.

See "The Forest of the Mind" on page 93 of Book One: Play.

1: INTRO



2: ADEPTS



3: AVATARS



One inside the other inside the other inside the other inside the first one.

4: PLACES



5: FACES



MATRYOSHKA CARETAKERS

When a resonant avatar enters the appropriate paragon, they get into the driver's seat: the True King in his Castle. But what if there's no clearly separated "driver's seat"? What about someone who is a paragon's caretaker, but also following a caretaker-like archetype? Examples include the Librarian (or Scholar) in a Library, the Groundskeeper in a Stadium, and the Butler in a Mansion. Don't things kind of go down the rabbit hole then?

Absolutely... if you want them to. This is where some cray-cray can boil over, and you end up with your Jack Torrance, Grail Knight, Norman Bates, Alfred Pennyworth stuff. Or not, if you don't.

Here's a quick break-down on options for paragon caretakers plus caretaker-type avatars:

- **Nope!** You've either got the paragon caretaker identity or the caretaker avatar identity. You can buttle anywhere, Alfred, but James is stuck with that one mansion.
- **Sorta?** Your paragon caretaker identity gets leveled-up into a real avatar path — you've moved beyond being the janitor of the grade school, Willie — you have become a Groundskeeper!
- **Go for it!** Go ahead, double-dip. It's not just fun, it's now your *career*. You're tying yourself, your actions, and your core identity to one place, essentially forever. You do gain all sorts of spiffy superpowers in return for not really being able to leave that place, sure — but you're also getting extra-weird in your habits, obsessive in your thoughts, and repetitive in your actions in the bargain. Additionally: you probably live longer than the average bear and slowly go mad... and when an affiliate of your paragon shows up, you *will* go slavishly Renfield/Igor for him. No take-backsies. And if a second affiliate shows up, you become *her* utterly devoted servant *at the same time*, which is a great way to go stark raving mad in moments. Cheers!

HOW PARAGON PLACES WORK

Paragon places naturally occur as the result of human action, intentional or unintentional. They are human places where humans do human things. Be in that place, and do what should be done there, and some of its power can be borrowed.

A place's paragon identity increases by 1% every twenty significant "uses" of that place by humans along its intended purpose, successful or not. When we say "significant" we mean "important enough to make a roll." A matched success along the remit of the paragon place instantly boosts the paragon 5%. However, the paragon identity decreases 1% per every significant use (success or failure) against its nature, and loses 1d10+5% for matched successes along that anti-line. Matched failures, whether in line or against the paragon's

remit, causes *significant unnatural phenomena* to happen immediately. Resonant avatars increase the paragon identity 1% per success and decrease it by 1% per failure, on any purpose-related task within its boundaries.

A paragon place's identity can be leveraged by characters to achieve *objectives* that are suitable to be performed or triggered in that sort of place; the positive shift is equal to the tens place of the paragon identity.

Anyone in a paragon place has access to subtle mystic abilities that are somewhat equivalent to avatar channels called paragon adjuncts. They are intimately tied to the location's purpose, and get increasingly powerful as the paragon's alignment with its archetypal location grows. If the place has the adjunct, and the person knows they're in a paragon place and are doing something in line with the remit of the place, the adjunct can be accessed by anyone with a Secrecy roll (instead, adepts and avatars can use their respective identities, and caretakers can use their relevant caretaker identity) once per day. Repairing a car is kosher for the Garage, but not so much for the Zoo. Caretakers of the paragon and associated avatars can use each adjunct once per day per person currently in the paragon. Resonant avatars of the paragon can use them at will.

Like the theme music of avatars, paragon places get set dressing as they become more attuned to their archetypal location: mystic static, synchronicities, and side effects surrounding and permeating the place. The stronger the paragon represents the archetypal location, the more apropos the details become.

A paragon of the Home usually smells like cookies, while a Kitchen may smell of bread, the Library of old books, and the Garage of engine grease. There's always hooting and screeches in a Zoo, and "Piano Man" is always playing when you walk into a Bar. There's always more *stuff* squirreled away in a Junkyard... or an Abattoir. And so forth. Set dressing isn't usually directly helpful or harmful, but it is a big honking clue from the universe that you've stepped into a place of power and order... whatever that particular power or order is.

When a paragon place becomes the acme of the archetypal location it represents, heaven touches earth and the Statosphere can be made manifest. In the same way the avatar paths have godwalkers, paragon places can become an omphalos. There is only ever one omphalos at a time per archetypal location. They all get their own special, specific adjunct that does something cool, and they have one other capability that makes the occult underground drool: they are built into the cosmos in such a way that acts there *cannot be ignored*. They are truly the "firm spot to stand on" that gutter magick Archimedes types want to try to move the world from. As with lesser paragons, an omphalos's identity can be leveraged for objectives suitable to be performed or triggered in that

See
"Significant
Phenomena"
on page 83 of
Book One:
Play.

See
"Objectives"
on page 13 of
Book Two:
Run.

1: INTRO



2: ADEPTS



3: AVATARS



4: PLACES



5: FACES



Whispering,
"No! No!"

sort of place along the lines of its nature, except that the positive shift is equal to a +20% for local objectives, +10% for weighty objectives, and +5% for global objectives. Oh, they're also great places to try to stage an ascension.

Of course, they are hotly contested. Omphalos status isn't usually "competed" for, because luckily, paragon places rarely come close enough to this level (given the up and down nature of aligned activities that increases or decreases their identity, which can be performed by any human inside the place). Still, an omphalos is the sort of strategic target that unknown armies go to battle for every night.

STEAM-ENGINE APOCALYPSES

If human thought is a growth, like all other growths, its logic is without foundation of its own, and is only the adjusting constructiveness of all other growing things. A tree cannot find out, as it were, how to blossom, until comes blossom-time. A social growth cannot find out the use of steam-engines, until comes steam-engine-time.

— Charles Fort, *Lo!*

If paragon places are spiritual geography, steam-engine apocalypses are spiritual weather. These are times of import, the sort that get heavily larded in prophecies about the end being nigh, the stars coming right, the Moon in the Seventh House, Jupiter aligning with Mars, blah blah blah.

Along with the Chuckles Fort quote, keep in mind that the word "apocalypse" can be defined as "a prophetic revelation or unveiling that has sharp points that stab you right through your soft and dangly bits, and then pours battery acid into them." That's pretty much a direct translation from the Ancient Greek. Seriously. Would I lie?

Anyway, steam-engine apocalypses are times of power, which a GM can use for free-floating shifts to a particular objective, ideas for what sorts of random events will mess up her players' day, access to some steam-engine apocalypse adjuncts (like for paragons), general ways that the wind is blowing various NPCs' plans along, or to give a certain oracular flavor to unnatural phenomena.

Feel free to extrapolate rules-stuff from paragon places to fit your steam-engine apocalypsing.

- The Corners of the Day (dawn, noon, sunset, midnight)
- The Baptism
- The Rite of Passage
- The Knighting/Ordination
- The Marriage
- The Final Countdown
- The Funeral/Wake
- The Witching Hour

PARAGON ADJUNCTS

Paragon adjuncts break down this way:

1%–50%, Think: Thoughts about doing the work natural to the paragon place, or thoughts engendered in doing that work, are more creative and insightful. Plans are more detailed, mysteries unraveled, new solutions discovered. The paragon provides fertile soil for new thought to grow. Gain a *hunch* related to a specific problem or task that is bedeviling you.

51%–70%, Heal or Help: Things feel nicer, safer, more comfortable when you're in the paragon place. Once per day, someone can flip-flop a roll to treat or repair something if it's appropriate to the location. Appropriate features that can be added just about anywhere include Medical and Therapeutic, if you're doing what you should be doing in that place. A hobbyist often feels better and less stressed after working in her taxidermy Workshop, and grandmothers across space and time are wise to the ways of baking in their Kitchens. (Additional features, if they make sense, could be added instead.)

71%–90%, Work: Pick one: the typical work done in the paragon place (and any work product produced by someone there) is either better, faster, or cheaper. (Associated avatars get to pick two; resonant avatars get all three.) Car repair in the Garage; research in the Laboratory; mutilation in the Torture Chamber; gossip and character assassination at the Salon — it's all a higher quality thing, when you do it in the Right Place. Although a lot of this tends to rely on GM fiat and handwaving, players should remind the GM about these effects when said handwaving is carried out in play.

91+%, Weird: This is where the plausibly deniable, minor miracle effects start coming in, related to the nature and the work done in a paragon place. The weird adjunct skews the Unnatural, mostly effecting magickal, astral, and other freaky crap. Cookies get baked that make astral parasites drop off you when eaten; secret impossible dossiers are discovered in file cabinets; cancers go into spontaneous remission; the heartbreak of psoriasis finds love again; that sort of dealio. A generic fallback effect is something on the level of a minor unnatural effect once per week, a significant one once per month, and a major one once per decade.

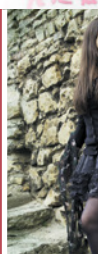
99%, Omphalos: A potent no-shit magickal ability, uniquely chosen for that place by a resonant avatar the very first time they visit that paragon after it become the Place to Be. Once selected, it cannot be changed... unless the omphalos is un-omphalosed and then re-omphalosed. Tricky!

See "Hunch Rolls" on page 15 of Book One: Play.

1: INTRO



2: ADEPTS



3: AVATARS



4: PLACES



5: FACES



Screaming, "Yes! Yes!!"

PARAGON CARETAKERS

Those who serve a paragon place are its caretakers. Caretakers, uh, take care of the joint.

A paragon's caretaker is responsible for their place. They may not like the responsibility, but there it is, duty nibbling at your bottom. They can travel the wider world as they will, following their own interests or in the interests of the paragon, but on a regular basis they are always be drawn back to it to make sure everything's shipshape. Returning to the scene of the crime may be a literal compulsion for a caretaker. They make sure it's all in order, whatever that order should be for the place: be that rugs neatly swept, silver polished, and wine cellar well-stocked; or properly draped with sheets of cobwebs, storm shutters rusted right, and floorboards sprung at just the proper angle to creak (artful splashes of blood to dry just-so are optional). They make sure all is tidy, ready to be used by anyone for its basic (cosmic) purpose... but especially associated and resonant avatars.

A paragon can have up to three caretakers at any one time, and prefers at least one. If there's no current caretaker, the paragon tries to entice someone to sign on with appropriate "presents" (physical, mental, emotional, or magical cookies — maybe their knee doesn't hurt any more, their writing gets easier, they don't feel as bad for bashing in their husband's head with a baseball bat, or now they can see auras... little stuff).

To become a caretaker of a paragon place, you take it as an identity. That allows you to use each paragon adjunct once per day per person currently in the place, and grants two other special abilities:

- Gatekeeper. The caretaker can use their identity to block, repel, or eject all unnatural entities from the paragon. A successful roll just kicks them out and/or won't let them into the paragon for a number of minutes equal to their Caretaker identity. This ability also works somewhat on humans in the joint (adepts, avatars, whatever) who are trying to perform actions opposed to the purpose of the paragon, but this is limited to a one-shot -10% to any roll the person uses to try and perform an "opposed" task per hour (or a one-shot attempt to physically eject the person per day).
- Recognition. The caretaker can tell if a person or an avatar is of a type associated or affiliated with their paragon, and — if they are — gets hints towards which particular avatar path the target person follows. This happens automatically inside the confines of the paragon place, but can be attempted with a roll against their Caretaker identity outside of it.

PARAGON ASSOCIATES AND AFFILIATES

Because of their strong connection to the Statosphere, various species of avatar link right into the vibe of related paragon place. Associated avatars "go along with" the nature of the paragon place; they fit there well. Resonant avatars line up exceedingly well, strongly connected to the reason and purpose of the paragon: they're "part of it" in some regard, and they can essentially "drive" it, control it, and dominate it.

An associated avatar of a paragon place can detect the closest paragon place its archetype is associated with to within twenty miles, if there is one (basically, direction and distance), but only if they're specifically looking for a paragon place like that. Useful! They can also use each of its adjuncts once per day per person currently in the paragon, just as a caretaker does. Additionally, an affiliate gets to pick two qualities between better, faster, or cheaper when using the 51%–70% adjunct of the paragon to do purpose-related work.

Resonant avatars can also detect the closest paragon place they connect to with a successful identity roll, but they don't even have to be looking for a specific one; they get a sense of all the close "good places" for them to be — run to, hole up in, etc. A resonant avatar of a paragon can use any of its adjuncts at will when inside of it, and gets all three qualities of better, faster, and cheaper when using the 51%–70% adjunct of the paragon to do purpose-related work. Lastly, the first time an affiliate visits a new omphalos, it gets to pick a special power for it... so long as that place remains the ultimate paragon of its archetypal location.

ARCHETYPAL LOCATIONS

The entries that follow contain a wide range of archetypal locations that could have potential paragon places represented on the landscape of a campaign.

The archetypal location's basic nature is described by its attributes. This is sort of place it is, and the sorts of activities it encourages.

Taboos are the things that the place is *not* about. Do this stuff here, and it becomes less of the place it's trying to be.

Associated avatars "go along with" the nature of the paragon place. It's where they *hang out*.

Resonant avatars align strongly with the intent, nature, history, and purpose of the paragon place. It's where they *run the joint*.

Symbols are elements associated with that sort of place. Paragons shed and groove with these images; they provide the set dressing.

Adjuncts are the little mystical lagniappe that paragons provide to anyone willing to Do the Right Thing in the Right Place. Simple!

PARAGON PLACES

Here follow a few example paragon places that can be used, modified, or ignored in your *Unknown Armies* games as you will.

THE BATTLEFIELD

Where armies, usually known (but sometimes unknown), clash in contests for resources or renown. Sword and gun, bat and ball, budget spreadsheet and PowerPoint presentation — these are the weapons that warriors throughout time have brought to bear. A field of honor and dishonor, where the spoils are for the victors, and agony dealt out to the defeated.

Alternate Inflections: Arena, Racetrack, Sports Field, Stadium.

Attributes: Conflict, argument, resolution, the display of prowess, attack, clear victories and losses.

Taboo: Peacemaking (without prior conflict... though if characterized as "another front" in a war, peace

1: INTRO



2: ADEPTS



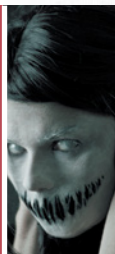
3: AVATARS



4: PLACES



5: FACES



negotiations can ironically be a battlefield; on a related note, see also Pat Benatar).

Associated Avatars: The Captain, the Masterless Man, the True King, the Rebel, the Peacemaker, the MVP, the Star.

Resonant Avatars: The Warrior.

Symbols: Blood, sweat, tears, the weapons of choice for the field, extreme weather, yelling, songs, chants, cheers, the clash of man against man, thuds, booms.

Weird Adjunct (91+%): A Battlefield provides +10% to all Struggle rolls or direct conflict-related rolls in a relevant identity.

Battlefield Omphalos — Microtex Field: Located in East Dorset, Vermont, and home to the East Dorset Boomerangs, Microtex Field is the finest Class A Short Season league baseball field on Earth. Incredible feats of athleticism, nail-biting double-headers, and remarkable displays of true good sportsmanship abound. Bring the kids, buy some dogs, and drink a couple beers as you watch the Boomerangs come back again for another win!

The omphalos adjunct of Microtex Field is that it is a Self (10) stress check for an umpire to deliberately favor one side or the other, and the umpire gets a +30% bonus to any identity or ability used for perception or to determine fairness.

THE CASTLE

Strong walls, heavy gates, pennants waving in the breeze. A secure defensible point, where one can rest and regroup before launching a new assault on life. Some are even self-contained worlds, cradling a small civilization, shielding it from outside assault. When a True King rules from his Castle, fear is either nonexistent, or omnipresent.

Alternate Inflections: Stronghold, Palace, Tower, Mansion.

Attributes: Protection, healing, re-arming and repairing, defense.

Taboo: Openness, freedom that edges on chaos, thoughtlessness.

Associated Avatars: The Necessary Servant, the Executioner, the Chronicler, the Confessor, the Healer, the Two-Faced Man.

Resonant Avatars: The True King.

Symbols: Towers, pennants and flags, shields, towers and gates, barbicans and sally ports and battlements and flying buttresses and all the rest of that scenery in the *Lord of the Rings* movies and AD&D *Dungeon Master's Guide* appendices.

Weird Adjunct (91+%): A Castle gives +10% to defenses to anyone inside against magickal attacks from anyone outside of it.

Castle Omphalos: There is currently no Castle omphalos, but a likely candidate to soon get the nod is the so-called "Oshkosh Camelot" in Wisconsin, where the True King of Madison and the True King of the Cheeseheads are once again angling towards magickal war. A ripe fruit for the picking indeed.

THE HOME

Home is where the heart is. It's where they *have* to take you in. It's where you hang your hat, after all. Home, sweet home. Be it a bungalow with a picket fence in the 'burbs, a de-luxe apartment in the sky-y-y, a surprisingly roomy two-level (that can fit three adults, six kids, a dog, and a maid while lacking any bathrooms), a mansion in Beverly Hills complete with a cement pond, or a grass hut on a tropical island, home is what you make of it. If it's your Home, it's your center, your base... and sometimes, the enemy can sneak into your base.

Alternate Inflections: Old Folks' Home, Funeral Home (bleeds into the Cemetery), Home for Wayward Girls (bleeds into the Orphanage).

Attributes: Rest, food, healing, connection, interaction — and the opposites of all these.

Taboo: You have to belong to be Home; that's the only requirement.

Associated Avatars: The Fool, the Trickster, the Unsung Champion, the Rebel, the Outsider, the Martyr, the Necessary Servant, the Peacemaker.

Resonant Avatars: The Mother (also, one would assume, the Father and the Child).

Symbols: Comfy furniture, decent and filling food, warm beds, good company, a close but not confining atmosphere... or the opposites of these, in a way that is deeply pathetic and truly hurtful.

Weird Adjunct (91+%): Depending upon the nature of the Home (a happy or unhappy one), hardened notches or failed notches can be removed from your shock meters, once per extended stay. (An extended stay is at least a week, and requires an extended absence of twice that to "reset.")

Home Omphalos — 333 Maple Lane: The Chhabra-Wilson Home is a beat-up but clean Craftsman home in a quiet neighborhood, right in the middle of a lazy street. The yard needs trimming, but not too bad, and there are kids' toys all over it in disarray. Arjun works at the courthouse as a prothonotary and is the assistant scoutmaster for Troop 523, taking Delmar and Vihaan camping with their little friends. Ashley Jo is a stay-at-home mom with tats, a penchant for welding scrap metal into sculpture (a hobby that has recently turned lucrative!), and a distended abdomen filled with eight months' worth of growing Pauline Rupinder.

The omphalos adjunct of 333 Maple Lane is that seemingly disparate and disconnected things that should not fit together can be connected into a harmonious whole in a way that seems natural, wholesome, and even artful.

THE MARKETPLACE

Things you won't believe; all your pleasures up for sale. The finest wines, the choicest silks, the rarest jewels. Baskets of luscious fruit, belts of oiled ammo, rugs handwoven by Buddhist nuns, a box of old Richie Rich comics, rare coins and stamps, shrunken heads. A '69 Dodge Charger, only needs a new tranny. The lures of the ropers, the free samples of pastry, the call of the barkers, the jingle and jangle of metal specie changing hands. The dust, the smells, the press of humanity all wanting to fulfill their wildest needs, pure and prurient. Heaven and hell on offer, the best in town, at rock-bottom rates.

1: INTRO



2: ADEPTS



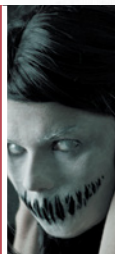
3: AVATARS



4: PLACES



5: FACES



Alternate Inflections: Flea Market, Little Curio Shop/Bazaar of the Bizarre, Mall.

Attributes: Commerce, exchange, bargains, trade, barter, goods and services for payment, cheating, double-dealing, sales patter.

Taboo: True altruistic charity, outright theft, providing anything without payment, profit, or interest.

Associated Avatars: The Pilgrim, the Demagogue, the Messenger, the Firebrand, the Trickster, the Guide, the Hacker, the Opportunist, the Outsider, the Solid Citizen.

Resonant Avatars: The Salesman.

Symbols: Coins, paper money, scales, reed baskets, dust, wallah calls, cymbals, the scent of fried delicacies.

Weird Adjunct (91+%): For every day that a seller haunts the market with something to sell (uninterrupted during the times when the shop, exchange, or market is open), there is a 1% chance a buyer appears for it, no matter what it is. Double that time if the item to be sold is not tangible; additionally, triple it if the item could be seen as a “curse.” (Seems long and boring, but after 600 days of not missing the Ljubljana Flea Market, bucko, someone *will* show up to buy your prostate cancer off of you.)

Marketplace Omphalos — Maiduguri Fish Market: Any seafood sold or purchased at the Maiduguri Fish Market in Nigeria does not spoil or rot for thirty-three days and eight hours.

THE WILDERNESS

Full of life, but little of it human. Few marks of civilization’s passing. Untamed. Unspoiled. Dangerous. Natural. Isolated. Peaceful. Violent. Rugged. *Wild*.

Alternate Inflections: Forest, Jungle, Desert, Tundra, Open Sea, Mountain.

Attributes: Survival, self-sufficiency, moving along or in opposition to natural cycles and rhythms, growth, ripeness, spiritual cleansing, physical dirt, chaos, liberty, freedom.

Taboo: Order, neatness, artificial proportion, rules, laws, dictates, security, safety, physical cleanliness.

Associated Avatars: The Explorer, the Guide, the Hunter, the Outsider, the Survivor.

Resonant Avatars: The Savage.

Symbols: Weather, green plants, or stark barrenness, wide vistas, animal noises, the wind (sight, sound, touch, scent, taste), blood, red in fang and claw.

Weird Adjunct (91+%): Free-floating demons not currently inhabiting a body can be discerned and easily spoken with in the Wilderness; they’re more or less all over the (paragon) place. They can’t buy plane tickets, after all, and must drift “by foot” wherever they want to go, if they can’t find someone to ride. After 400 miles of trackless plain and no Jones Boys to get revenge on or ice cream in sight for them to obsessively eat (or whatever their particular deal is), they get less shy and awful talky, trying to snooker some schmo into letting them climb inside. Don’t fall for it.

Wilderness Omphalos — Smoking Lake Nature Reserve: If a caretaker, associate, or affiliate stares into the lake during a clear full moon evening, they see a true vision of the past or the future reflected in its waters.

POTENTIAL PARAGON PLACES

Here’s a list of potential paragon places in addition to those on the previous pages. Note that alternate inflections of a place or other facets of their basic expression (shown in parentheses) can evolve quite different end results... (Much as for human avatars — when does the Warrior split off from the Solider, for example?)

Compare the differences in the words “Castle” and “Palace” — the former implies strong defenses, while the other hints toward opulence and luxury. What’s the difference between a Dump and a Junkyard? A Bar or a Tavern? A Burial Ground versus a Cemetery versus a Graveyard?

- Abattoir (Slaughterhouse)
- Armory
- Back Alley (Empty Street, Charming Boulevard)
- Bad Place (Site of Tragedy)
- Bedroom
- Burial Ground (Graveyard, Elephant’s Graveyard, Cemetery)
- Circus
- Closet
- Court
- Docks
- Dump (Junkyard)
- Farm (Hunting Preserve)
- Garage
- Garden (Park, Glade, Meadow)
- Gym
- Haunted House
- Hospital
- Hotel (Grand Hotel, Motel)
- Kitchen (Bakery)
- Labyrinth
- Library (University, Laboratory, File Room, Newspaper Morgue)
- Monastery
- Monument (Natural Wonder, Roadside Attraction, Inspiration Point)
- Museum
- Old Neighborhood
- Prison
- Rest Stop (Truck Stop)
- Restaurant (Café, Diner, Fancy Eats, Soda Shop)
- Secret Hideout (Secret Rendezvous, Treehouse, Hidden Lair)
- Temple (Church, Cathedral, Mosque, Synagogue)
- Theater (Amphitheater, Concert Hall, Drive-In, Music Hall)
- Valley (Hollow, Swimmin’ Hole)
- Workshop (Factory)
- Zoo

1: INTRO



2: ADEPTS



3: AVATARS



4: PLACES



5: FACES





THE SOMETIMES BAR

“He sits at the filthy bar and silently witnesses the change of watch from his will to his independently operating motor skills.”

— John O’Brien, *Leaving Las Vegas*

Everyone has a favorite bar, at least if they’re a drinker. There’s the corner bar, the dive bar, the theme bar, the kitsch bar, the after-hours bar, the bar for functional alcoholics, the bar for not-so-functional alcoholics. There are college bars and townie bars, seedy bars and actual-for-real dangerous bars. There are chain bars, bars in movies and bars on TV. England has its pubs. America has bars. They are related but not the same.

The Sometimes Bar is a paragon place. We’ve fleshed it out a lot more than the examples in the previous section to give you a sense of where these things can go. The Bar is coded deeply in the DNA of the American dream, sometimes on the darker side. You celebrate at a bar, but you also go there to forget. The best of times and worst of times are lauded and drown in bars. America is not America without bars. It just isn’t. You may be a teetotaler, but American isn’t.

During Prohibition, when everyone was legally obligated to be a teetotaler, there were more bars than ever. Organized crime came to power because of bars. People need a place to commiserate about their lives, to mourn their losses, to make a fool of themselves, and to fight against the day. “Sometimes you want to go where everybody knows your name.”

At the Sometimes Bar, they do. Even though you’ve never been there, you feel at home. Even though you know none of these people, many of them know about you. The

atmosphere is warm, welcoming, with that scent of beer and smoke and sadness. In the Sometimes Bar, you can still smoke indoors.

The Sometimes Bar got its name because sometimes it’s where you left it, and sometimes it isn’t. The Sometimes Bar changes location. There is no set time or place where it goes next. The caretaker, Sam, says it winds up where it needs to be. Wherever it does wind up, it fits in seamlessly, at least on the façade. No one remembers the bar not being there, but that isn’t the same as necessarily remembering it being there. For many, it’s a rediscovery of a place they remember from when they were younger, or a place their dad talked about, or a bar that had pictures of KIAs from World War II gone sepia on the walls. The Sometimes Bar is nondescript on the outside, a chameleon that can fit into nearly any neighborhood.

Over the centuries — yes, the bar is that old — it’s had many looks and more patrons. Plotters of the American Revolution met here. Doc Holliday and Wyatt Earp drank here. Nixon used to come here in a dark limo toward the end of his fall. The bar hosts demons, but not the horrible kind — just dead people, and not always. This is the bar where Fitzgerald drank, where Hemingway drank, and where Al Capone made his first moves in Chicago. It’s been a way station in Jamestown, what they call a “public house,” and a gathering for the literati in New York. Mostly, though, it’s not been home of hearth to the famous, but to the everyday people that are the pumping heart of America.

You’ve been here. Everyone who has ever entered more than a few bars has been here. It’s one you don’t remember. It’s that night you got really drunk and blacked out near the end... but you were there. We were all there.

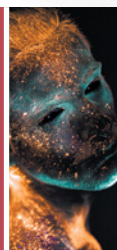
1: INTRO



2: ADEPTS



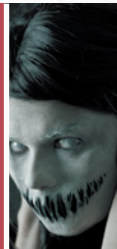
3: AVATARS



4: PLACES



5: FACES



SET DRESSING

All paragon places have set dressing, kinks in the fiber optics of the universe. The Sometimes Bar is no exception except that all of its strange effects are attached to specific locations and objects within the bar. Below are two examples.

The jukebox is a mid-1940s Wurlitzer in less than mint condition. The cards listening song titles are yellowed with age. Anyone who has a problem, something that's been eating at them, something which has hung over them like a dark cloud, can look through the playlists and, if they look long enough, they find a song *just for them*. The song has the answer, or at least a hint, to their problem. It's right there in the lyrics. The song is always by someone well known, but it's never been heard by anyone else before. The whole bar hears the song, but they hear the famous song by the same artist. Only the person who plugs in a dime (that's what it *always* costs) hears the true song.

A cigarette machine stands at the foyer to the Sometimes Bar (such as it is). It sells all the brands you've ever heard of and those you never have. Some aren't made anymore, some are from otherspaces, some from alternate Earths. There isn't anything different about them when you smoke them but, if you don't smoke the last one in the pack, you get +5 to your wound threshold. It remains if you keep that cigarette on your person. If it's smoked, lost, stolen, or waterlogged, it's not good anymore. This benefit is known to a handful of Sometimes Bar patrons, at least two of whom think the effect is multiplicatory. (It's not. You can never get a bonus above +5, but don't tell that to the guy who has eighty-nine last cigarettes sewn into the lining of his Buzz Rickson jacket.)

SAMANTHA "SAM" MANKILLER — CARETAKER

Sam isn't the first person to run the Sometimes Bar, and she likely won't be the last. She's in her late twenties or early thirties but has a far more aged air about her. She's also very pretty, but you wouldn't think of hitting on her. It's a Self (4) stress check to try.

Samantha is Cherokee, and her last name is also a rank in the tribes of old. Has she killed anyone? No one can say for sure, but there was a Samantha Mankiller on the FBI's wanted list back in 2008. She tells a few kindred souls, yeah, she was once on the run from things too. What exactly she doesn't say. On New Year's Eve 2009, Sam came into the Sometimes Bar. She took over being caretaker that night, though some things she's said in the past make it sound like it wasn't by choice. Whatever did happen resulted in two things. One, Samantha Mankiller ceased to exist in any database, any written record, and even in the minds of those who knew her. The cosmos effectively erased her.

And two? Sam is an alcoholic but, in the Sometimes Bar, she suffers no ill effects. She drinks all day and night, keeping on the edge of oblivion but still maintaining some kind of sobriety. The Sometimes Bar lets you drown your sorrows but not the whole of your past. Whatever Sam did before still leans on her, hard.

It goes without saying that every dipsomancer worth his proof wants to find the Sometimes Bar. No one is sure what happens when the alcoholic occultist finds the platonic form of the bar, but surely something momentous does. Sam might be a dipsomancer herself. You gonna ask her?

Alternate Inflections: Brewpub, Cocktail Lounge, Tap Room.

Attributes: Drinking, woes, celebrations, cheating lovers, one-night stands, self-destruction, camaraderie, memory (loss of and nostalgia for), fighting, neon.

Taboo: Teetotalers, harshing someone's buzz, pulling a gun, not tipping.

Associated Avatars: The Masterless Man, the Demagogue, the Messenger, the Firebrand, the Trickster, the Guide, the Outsider.

Resonant Avatars: The Rebel.

Symbols: Dollar bills, bottle caps, shot glasses, certain unpleasant smells, smoke, matchbooks, cocktail napkins, pretzels, tears.

Weird Adjunct (91+%): For every hour a drinker spends at the Sometimes Bar pondering the deep mysteries of the universe — or merely why Bonnie left her for the circus — there is a cumulative 2% chance that either the true song plays and reveals a very gnomic answer, or an avatar of the Guide (or Demagogue if the GM feels nasty) appears to "help" the boozier out of her troubles.

1: INTRO



2: ADEPTS



3: AVATARS



4: PLACES



5: FACES



THE DRIVE-IN

It started with a simple premise: create a movie theater where people sit in their cars instead of theater seats and order obscene amounts of popcorn and snacks while connecting with their families or people they want super fun sexytimes with.

OK, maybe it's not so simple. But it's a premise that took off and helped shaped America. That's why these places are still so powerful despite almost disappearing off the map. That, and magick tends to love a paradox — or at least a big contradiction.

ATTRIBUTES

Drive-ins have two contradictory natures: family-friendly and immoral sex. When drive-in theaters flourished in the '50s and '60s in America, they were places to bring the family, including babies. Beyond seeing a Disney film, they used to have playgrounds, petting zoos, boat rides, even church services on Sundays. By pricing per car, theaters encouraged parents to bring the whole family down to watch movies. It was a safe place for families and kids.

Sitting right next to the family-friendly atmosphere was sexual perversion. Drive-ins were derogatively called "passion pits" because teens would go there to ignore the film and grope each other in a dark car. As attendance started to wane in the '70s, theaters started showing porn and exploitation films, amping up the dirty. One car might have mom, dad, and the kids. Next to it, another will have two teens with their pants around their ankles.

While there's been a small resurgence in drive-in theaters (many suspect viaturges and pornomancers are behind it), they are still rare. Find one that's still showing flicks at night, and you've found a magickal hotspot.

Taboo: Watching a movie on a phone, tablet, computer, or DVD player. Bringing in food or drink instead of buying snacks from the concession stands. Walking in. (It's a drive-in, pal!)

Associated Avatars: The Fool, the Naked Goddess, the Rebel.

Resonant Avatars: The Star, the Salesman, the Mother, the Sexual Rebis.

Symbols: The car (and the old-fashioned car radio with knobs instead of buttons), an empty movie screen, popcorn, and those speakers you put on your car window.

DARKNESS IS WHEN THE MAGIC HAPPENS

To use any adjunct from a drive-in, it must be at night and a movie must be playing on the big screen. Just like nightclubs, drive-ins during the day are lacking magick — and a little sad.

ADJUNCTS

1%-50%: Drive-ins are movie theaters where you watch from the comfort of your car. As such, you can gain a hunch for problems related to entertainment or travel. You could use that hunch later on to remember who starred as the physician in *The Cannonball Run*, fix a Saab variable compression engine, or something actually helpful.

51%-70%: If your identity does not include the *Therapeutic feature*, it does for the purposes of one roll for helping the neurotic while at the drive-in. If you already have that feature, you can flip-flop your roll to soothe those emotional scars. This impromptu therapy session must take place in a car at the Drive-In.

71%-90%: Drive-ins are places where people go to have fun, be it a nice night with the kids enjoying the latest movie with a talking pet or seeing just how many bases you can cover with your main squeeze. All of that involves relationships of some kind, which is why paragon drive-ins are spots where folks working on relationships get a helping hand.

- **Better:** Gain +20% to rolls involving Connect, Lie, Status, or Secrecy while on the paragon's official grounds. Across the street doesn't do jack for you.
- **Faster:** Get a leg up on a new relationship. If you name someone as a relationship, it begins at 20% instead of the usual 5%. But if you complete a group objective while at the drive-in to create a new relationship, it starts at the full value of the successful objective. If your objective was at 73% when you rolled it successfully, the relationship begins at 73%.
- **Cheaper:** To improve a relationship you already have, you don't need to do something a friend couldn't accomplish on their own or that costs you dearly. In other words, you gain the benefit of selfless giving (+5% to relationship) without paying for it. This only applies once for any relationship you bring to the Drive-In.

See "Therapy" on page 76 of Book One: Play.

There's a scene in the movie Twister where the tornado comes in and just trashes a drive-in and you know, that's symbolic as hell.

1: INTRO



2: ADEPTS



3: AVATARS



4: PLACES



5: FACES



91%: When watching a horror movie, many fans yell at the screen. As if the characters could hear them! Well, since drive-ins are all about relationships, now you can have one with a movie character. (Socially. Get your mind out of the gutter, pony.)

With this adjunct, you can have a conversation with a character in the movie showing on screen. The character doesn't walk off the screen like *The Purple Rose of Cairo*. Instead, you yell out a question, and that character answers as if he can see you. You can get an answer to any one question related to that character's fictional role but with real-life answers. Talk to a serial killer on screen, and you could learn about a real serial killer, that killer's real victims, and so on. It doesn't have to make sense for that character to know it; you only need a connection to the character.

You're sitting in your car at the drive-in watching *Goodfellas*. When Tommy DeVito (played by Joe Pesci) comes on screen, you yell out, "Hey, Tommy! Where's a mafia hangout in New York City?" Joe Pesci stops asking Ray Liotta if he's a funny guy to look right at you and says, "What? Why you gotta be bustin' my balls?" After some arguing and probably a death threat, Tommy tells you to visit Frankie's Vineria on Mulberry Street.

You won't be able to get knowledge that doesn't exist. Ask Doc how the flux capacitor really works, and nothing happens. A cop on the screen could tell you where to find your friend that got arrested. A drug dealer could tell you the latest street name for molly and where to score some. Just don't ask cartoons anything. The answers are unhelpful and oddly sexual.

99%: People tend to show up at the drive-in with people they know, even if it's just a first date. When this place reaches the apex of its magickal power, a resonant avatar can summon the spirit of a dead human they had a relationship with. To do this, you must play that person's favorite movie on the big screen. They stay if the movie plays. While here, they can't make any rolls for interacting with the physical world. They're ghosts, after all.



1: INTRO



2: ADEPTS



3: AVATARS



4: PLACES



5: FACES



OTHERSPACES

THE BINGE

Those who compulsively use their TV to distract themselves until they pass out from sheer exhaustion night and night again are drawn to the Binge. This otherspace is an embodiment of a deep need to escape from everything about one's life, especially from one's own thoughts. This isn't a space for those who do a little binge-watching or play a video game into the wee hours for genuine fun; it's a space tailor-made for those who are engaging in something they don't necessarily find particularly interesting just to keep themselves from facing their own lives.

The Binge is strange even by otherspace standards: it's one of the few seemingly "digital" ones. It's not genuinely a digital construct, but a state-of-mind otherspace whose entry point is conceptually linked to entertainment. Some who know of this space theorize that the Binge is the Statosphere's way of granting the gift of freedom from self-actualization.

THE UNCONSCIOUS RITUAL OF INVITATION

The Binge chooses who is invited in, and entering is so simple as to be unnoticed. The space extends an invitation at a very weary moment for the would-be binger. One of the characters on-screen simply asks the viewer if they'd like to come in. If they truly desire escape, their mind leaps in, moving from watching the screen to being in the media. The transition isn't as jarring as one might think, since the viewer is making the shift in such a tired state as to mistake the moment for being a dream. The body is left behind, catatonic or comatose while the consciousness is elsewhere.

The Binge never invites or allows videomancers inside. Never.

THE ENTERTAINMENT LANDSCAPE

Being within this space feels much like that of watching a film or playing a video game, while existing right in the action. The colors are intensified or just plain off — too bright, unbearable dark, a little too red or blue or green at times. The sound is dramatic, and it's not unusual to have some soundtrack play faintly in the background. The otherspace mimics what the medium does to engross and distract with sensory bombardment.

The Binge holds scenes from slasher films, old sitcoms, violent video games, calm but monotonous games, most other things one could imagine. When a person enters the Binge, they bring with them scenes and sensations from the media they were watching or playing when the invitation occurred, whatever they were holding onto to escape through. Each such moment adds to the collection of experiences the Binge can inflict upon visitors, too. These moments merge and fluctuate like a sort of weather — sometimes sudden and turbulent, sometimes so smooth as to be unnoticed.

CHARACTERS

For the most part, those inside the Binge won't encounter another actual person. If two bingers encounter one another, it would take an act of self-awareness to realize the other person is an interloper — which could cause the

one noticing to suddenly be acutely aware of their circumstances. So, the space actively shifts the mind-states of those inside around to not be thinking of the same sort of scene.

People interact with the Characters: entities given enough semblance of being to play their role, with no self-awareness beyond that. When a Character recurs often enough to enough different bingers, it becomes self-aware. Knowing their role, self-aware Characters serve to reinforce the Binge's overall agenda of keeping bingers distracted — contently or otherwise.

Should a binger become self-aware, one of these Characters enters the moment and steers it to a narrative that's relaxing or that's so overwhelming as to cause the binger to focus on the scene and forget about the truth. Tyler the Slasher stalks bingers (who can feel the pain of being cut). Carrie and Branson draw the binger into intense sexual fantasies. The Orange Tabby tries to trick bingers into thinking they're still sitting on a couch watching television. If pressed, if the binger refuses to suspend their disbelief, then these Characters genuinely engage in the debate, asking what's so worthwhile out there that's worth leaving for?

Twice, a self-aware Character has tried to leave the Binge by possessing a binger's body. So far, that hasn't succeeded.

LEAVING THE BINGE

To leave the Binge is significantly more difficult, because it requires the binger to be aware that they're not simply living out a dream *and* to want to face themselves in the real world. Those who momentarily become aware of the situation forget it soon after should they wish to continue their escape, though not before a Character attempts to draw them back into the fiction.

The binger who genuinely rejects the space are rejected in kind — bitterly so. If their body is still habitable, the consciousness returns. From that moment on, however, if they try to watch a show or play a game to pass the time, they feel scorned, though by no one in particular. The Binge never invites them back in.

To those without bodies still alive, the consciousness simply dissipates. Unfortunately for the binger, there's no way to tell if their body is still alive or even how much time has passed since they entered.

WHAT PEOPLE KNOW

Though there's no known ritual for entering the Binge uninvited and fully aware, that doesn't stop Tina Squall, an adept in Champaign, Illinois, from seeking one out. She lost her father last year to the Binge, and has made her mission to open the otherspace to free anyone else trapped inside. After telling a videomancer about the Binge in hopes of a way in, rumors about the otherspace have spread around in the entertainment-obsessed corners of the occult underground.

1: INTRO



2: ADEPTS



3: AVATARS



4: PLACES



5: FACES



SPITSTONE

The village of Spitstone is an unusual otherspace which occupies most of a small, somewhat unruly headland. To get there, the would-be visitor needs to hold a copy of a specific guidebook to England in their left hand, recite a phrase that is thought to be in a debased form of Latin, and pass a Self (5) check to resist a wave of self-revulsion. Then the next time that person walks one circuit clockwise round an oak tree, touching the bark of the oak with their right hand throughout, they find themselves at the start of a small, leafy lane that leads into the village.

THE VILLAGE LANDSCAPE

Spitstone is an old-fashioned fishing village, one long past the days of its glory. Its cottages are decidedly shabby, with faded paint peeling from stone walls and wooden window frames. Few inhabitants make any effort to maintain an attractive front yard. A lack of actual trash is about the best you can hope for. Wandering through the place, one feels a sense of lingering ennui from the people and the buildings alike. The small, rotting dock does still hold a handful of fishing vessels, but the catches they bring in are decidedly strange.

The local inhabitants — the human ones, anyway — give every impression of believing themselves to be part of Hookland, a county on the southern coast of England, one which has never existed. The peninsula is lined with rocky shores on three sides, and is bounded to the north by a wild stretch of forest that gets increasingly tangled the deeper you go. If anyone has found its far side, they haven't left any word of what lies beyond.

There are a number of caves set within the cliffs of the peninsula. Getting to them would require some hazardous climbing, or the use of a boat. These caves have been rumored to hold everything from doors entering onto places of power through to the Holy Grail of King Arthur. More likely though, only crabs and seaweed are there to be found. There are no known records of explorations down into any of the caves.

The heart of the village is its meager collection of commercial enterprises — Stella's Bakery, the Spitstone General Store, the Fathom Brides pub, and the Lost and Found. With no road through the forest, there is no obvious way for any of these shops to stay stocked, but they do. The shelves of the general store are filled with the sorts of staple provisions one might have found in any small English shop in the 1940s, from bags of flour and tins of ham through to small packing crates filled with loose-leaf tea. The residents sometimes claim that the goods come to them via the sufferance of the King-Under-The-Sea. If there is some sort of regular supply boat to the headland however, no returning wanderer has mentioned seeing it.

THE WEDDING

At uncertain intervals, the residents of Spitstone gather by the dock and celebrate an event they call "The Wedding of the Fathom Brides." Two unmarried girls are paraded through the village in elaborate wedding costumes, to much festivity and acclaim, and loaded onto a pair of specially prepared fishing boats. These are covered with banners and flags and other decorations, and laden down with bags and cases of uncertain dowry. The ships then put out to sea and, once past sight of land... well, only the locals know for sure,

and they're reticent on the matter. Some hours later, the boats return with empty holds, and wet, shivering, strangely exultant girls.

VISITOR ADVICE

Visitors to Spitstone are never made to feel either particularly welcome or unwelcome. The locals treat them as a fact of life, much like the weather. There's not much to covet in the village, but if you want a cream-filled "fish bun" (in the shape of a mackerel) from the bakery, or a pint of Lazarus ale in the pub, they happily take any nationality's currency off you in exchange. To leave the village and return to the real world, enter either of the pub's toilets. The visitor finds themselves back by the tree from which they left, three minutes, days, or months after their departure.

There is one consistent warning regarding Spitstone, in all the accounts of it that exist: attempt no violence towards any of the inhabitants. Potential consequences are left to the traveler's imagination.

THE LOST AND FOUND

On occasion, travelers have reported being asked for assistance with tasks requiring various degrees of resourcefulness and chutzpah. Rewards typically come in the form of Spanish doubloons dated 1728 AD, or so the reports claim. Nice as treasure is though, the primary reason for making the effort to visit Spitstone is the Lost and Found.

This is a small, dim shop, with no stock on display and nobody behind the long, dusty counter. Ring the little bell that sits on the counter though, and the proprietor comes out from the back room. A tall, muscular creature, he could probably pass for a normal person at a distance. His arms and legs, however, are too long. They are jointed in ways that human limbs are not. His face is almost perfectly round, with large, saucer-like eyes and a grin that is as excessively wide as it is predatory. There is a distinctly vulpine cast to his features.

Despite his appearance, the proprietor is pleasant and well-mannered. If you have an object that needs to be kept safe and secure, you may leave it with him. In return, he gives you a chit. Until the chit is redeemed, the object is absolutely, one hundred percent secure, caught out of time and space, inaccessible to any — even, it is suggested, the Invisible Clergy themselves. To reclaim an object, give its chit back to the proprietor. It is returned to you exactly as it was left. A mug of coffee could spend a century in the Lost and Found and come out still hot.

The price of a transaction at the Lost and Found, either depositing or redeeming, is one memory, chosen by the proprietor. He does not inform the client of the memory required, either before or after taking payment. Paying this price may take 5% off a relationship or identity, remove a hardened or failed notch, or obliterate some personal detail whose absence is only uncovered later.

There are rumors that some of the items in storage at the Lost and Found are significantly undesirable — cursed, hazardous, even actively alive and angry. In one particularly wild account, a stoned adept from the '60s claimed to have deposited several ravenous tigers with the proprietor, then hidden the chits inside obscure books at different reference libraries. Unlikely as this sounds, it is definitely wise to have a good idea of what your chit is for before redeeming it.

1: INTRO



2: ADEPTS



3: AVATARS



4: PLACES



5: FACES





5: FACES

If the player characters were the only people in the *Unknown Armies* campaign, the story would be ridiculously insular. So, of course, there are GMCs and antagonists and hapless organizations and mysterious factions that make the world seem alive and populated.

SLEEPER MEETING

This is a basic skeleton for a typical meeting of the mysterious and feared bloody neighborhood watch of the occult underground, the *Sleepers*. It's suitable as the basis of a couple scenes in an evening's adventure, a whole session of its own, or a keystone structure for an entire campaign. Change your zoom level to suit: swoop in to focus on something interesting, pull back to see a bigger situation in context.

Rock a buh-bye, baby.

BEFORE THE MEETING

So, how do you know that a Sleeper meeting is imminent? A couple ways:

- It's been about a month since the last one in your area.
- You called the Hotline, and Krystal told you a meeting is due (and where and when).
- You notice a crap-ton of visiting Sleepers suddenly showing up in your burg, sniffing around, looking paranoid, and splattering creepy shit all over the place.
- Somebody's recently sent up a Sleeper invocation.
- You've sent up a recent invocation.
- The sleeping tiger is stirring because of events, just because.

Mostly, you have anywhere from twelve hours to two days to take the time to put on make-up and dress up right before hitting the local Crazy Magick Boy Scouts Troop Meeting... but sometimes, things get *fun*, and the meeting's happening across town (in ten minutes), or just ended (two hours ago), or you're being chased by an axe-wielding nutcase *right into the middle of that meeting* in the back room of the Kit-Kat Klub.

LARIAT

the best thing about being a writer is getting away with it

This chapter touches on a few of these, expanding on ideas brought up in the first three volumes or dredged up from older editions. There's a wealth of antagonist information here, but also quite a lot of inspiration for the tired and worn-out game master.

FINDING THE MEETING

So, you're pretty sure a Sleeper meeting is gonna go down. How do you find out where and when?

- If you were at the last Sleeper meeting in the area, check your calendar. You guys set that stuff up at the end of each meeting.
- Ask another local Sleeper if they know. (It's called *networking!*)
- Do a freaky magickal divination of some sort. Gutter magick, random magick, formula magick, whatever. Gut a pigeon, scatter some baseball cards, dress up like Elvis and masturbate while hanging upside down in gravity boots... C'mon, this is basic stuff, people.
- If you're a *vrai*-Sleeper, call the Hotline and get the 411 from Krystal.

Or, if you're very, very (un)lucky, *Krystal calls you*. Guess what? You know your Sleeper gal-pal, the one who dresses like a coked-out biker-nun? Well, Sister Mary Cyclegang just got nicked with a Glock and a dead alligator in the Walmart over on Don Knotts Boulevard, and now she can't set up this month's shindig, So, you're up, Sleepy: you get to host the Morgantown meeting this month.

A festival of fuckery awaits! Enjoy! (*Quietly.*)

HOSTING THE MEETING

If you got the call from Krystal (or you called a meeting yourself, all pro-active and stuff, because the feces are about to hit the HVAC), you're the meeting's host.

That means a couple things:

- **You set up the meeting place.** You need a private place, big enough to hold about nine to fifteen people for a monthly meeting or twenty to forty people for a seasonal gathering. The place needs to have the ability to heat some water for that many people — that means a coffee urn and heat or power for it. Hotel conference rooms, the back rooms of bars, secluded crypts in graveyards (with a propane stove and a tin pot), or even private residences are cool.
- **You need a copy of *My Name is Dirk A.*** For the opening reading ("The Claws of the Tiger"), the instructions for the I

See "Sleepers" on page 77 of Book Two: Run.

1: INTRO



2: ADEPTS



3: AVATARS



4: PLACES



5: FACES



We snagged this content from a redacted memo crumpled up and left in a trash can by a disgruntled Sleeper.

Have Become Phobetor ritual, and the Four Rules of the Sleepers.

- You may (or may not) get the box.
- You need to tell other Sleepers you know when and where the meeting is. This includes new Sleepers you meet on the street, *faux* and *vrai*. It's not a bad idea to call and update Krystal, too. That's paying back a favor.

GETTING A SLEEPERS BOX

A Sleepers box is found someplace random and usually convenient: held as mail for room 333 at the nearby Dewdrop Inn, at the post office as general delivery for a "Dr. Allen Friday," inside a trash dumpster that was just emptied earlier that day, hidden in the linen closet of your apartment under a bunch of old sheets.

The box for your region can be just about anything — a kid's *Adam-12* lunchbox from the '70s, a leather and brass steamer trunk, an old Adidas shoebox held together with duct tape, it doesn't matter. It looks a little weird, of course — how could it not? — but not too weird. Notable — but not completely out of place.

A Sleepers box always has a couple things: a hat, a bag of marbles (all black except for one white one), a pen, and a notebook to record the date, time, and place of the meeting, who hosted (by codename), who chaired (ditto), who was brewmaster (ditto-ditto; see below) who attended (if they chose to sign), and the topics or situations discussed, in bullet-point format.

Sometimes, there's other stuff in there: money (loose change or wads), drugs, Happy Meal toys, scribbled notes, vials of mystical fluids or powders, a picture postcard of a lynching picnic (addressed to someone famous?), minor enchanted items, a menu from a restaurant that doesn't seem to ever have existed, bones, feathers, fishing lures, one of your report cards from fourth grade, a mummified baby's fist around a purple dildo, a book of Forever stamps, paper clips, a live red newt in a teensy terrarium... the usual weirdness of the occult underground.

In any case, that junk might come in handy at the meeting. Unless it doesn't.

You've got about an 85% chance that the box you get is the same one from last month, but those buggers do travel region to region. When a different box shows up, regular local attendees note it. It's kinda cool to check out what's in the new box, and to see if you can puzzle out where it came from by studying the notebook.

If you call the meeting, you may or may not have to *make* a new box. Which is also fun.

SETTING UP

It's easy: about an hour before the meeting start time, get to the meeting place, fill up the coffee pot, open your copy of Dirk's diary to the reading, put the marbles in the hat, fill out the relevant info (so far) in the notebook, pick your chair, and wait. Smoke 'em if you got 'em.

Fauxes and *vrais* start wandering in any minute. The only surprise is if there are no surprises. "Boring and typical" is not a standard situation in the underground, am I right?

SLEEPER MEETING NEUTRAL GROUND WEIRDNESS

As noted in *Book Two: Run*, a Sleeper meeting is considered neutral ground by the magick subculture. Basically, if you can get within thirty-three feet and three inches of the doorway to the place, usually no one directly messes with you coming, during, or going.

However, some other oddities are wrapped up in this ersatz sanctuary vibe — unnatural critters avoid the meeting place for a span of time encompassing an hour before and after the meeting, as well as while it's going on. Ghosts and demons don't come into a meeting room, unless they're inside a material object (locket, photo, animal, person) or they are specifically invited by name. Ongoing negative magickal effects, like curses and so forth, are "muted" — they don't go away, they're just less intense for a time. Astral parasites go to "sleep" (heh) and stop chewing on your spirit for a sec, so someone who knows what they're doing could take them off of you a little easier... if the price is right. Mystically, think "water-resistant" not "waterproof" and you'll be fine.

There's also the beneficial psychological effect of a bunch of isolated, poorly socialized, and culturally marginalized freakjobs sitting together talking calmly, expressing their deepest hopes and fears, sharing their greatest failures and triumphs, trying to help each other and stop the public from going Frankenstein mob with the pitchforks and the torches for the greater good. You don't necessarily have to murder your greatest foe immediately, even if they're sitting right next to you... Catch up with them later and stick a knife in their eye. But for now, it's cool.

Human interaction and connection. It's good stuff.

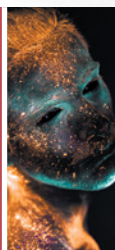
1: INTRO



2: ADEPTS



3: AVATARS



4: PLACES



5: FACES



SLEEPER MEETING RANDOMNESS

d10	Who? (Person)	What? (Past or Purpose)	How? (Attitude)
1	Named GMC	<i>Whisper War</i> veteran	Happy, joyous, free
2	Local charger	Saved somebody	Honest
3	Local checker	Fixing the world, peacefully	Open-minded
4	Local pony	Fixing the world, forcefully	Contrite
5	Visiting charger	Still bleeding from the wakened tiger	Dedicated
6	Visiting checker	Deal-seeker	Restless
7	Visiting pony	Deal-broker	Irritable
8	Clued-in "mundane"	Deal-breaker	Discontented
9	Complete newbie	Lost somebody	Guilty
0	Agent of the House of Renunciation	Woke the tiger; it was bad	Regretful

ATTENDING SLEEPERS

The average monthly meeting gets three *vrais*, with four to seven *fauxes* filling out the other chairs. You might already know some of them by name or rep, they might be new, they might be old and just haven't been around much, or they might be visiting from someplace else. Only about a quarter of attendees, other than yourself, are interesting.

That's a bunch of GMCs to come up with for a GM. No worries; got you covered. Above is a quick and dirty chart to help round-out a meeting fast — just roll 3d10 and come up with a suitable underground codename. Examples:

9/4/6: A complete newbie, who wishes to stab all monsters with a sword (why not), who is restless and jumpy. Let's call her the Daughter of D'Artagnan.

1/8/8: A named GMC, who breaks deals like a mofo, who is discontented and bitter with his lot in life... Hey, why is Dirk Allen at the Ottumwa meeting tonight? (I don't want to alarm you, guys, but signs point to things getting batshit insane if Daddy Dirk drops in on a random Sleeper meeting in Iowa.)

7/6/5: A visiting pony seeking a deal who comes off as a really dedicated sort, both to his own goals and the objectives of the Sleepers. Let's say he's Russian... "My name Heavy Metal Misha, and you have the magick cocaine that turns people into bear, *da?* I want. Five kilo. Omsk very bad with noisy *gertsog*... think you call them 'duke.' *Spasibo.*"

THE MEETING

Stage is dressed, actors in place, scene is set... on with the show. Lights, camera, action!

Let's get... encounter groupy!

SELECT THE CHAIR

The host passes the hat full of marbles around the room. Whoever picks the white one is the meeting's chair.

The chair puts the marbles away, introduces herself, welcomes the Sleepers to the meeting, and reads "*The Claws of the Tiger*".

Then they sign the notebook, pass that around to be signed (or not), and pick someone to be the brewmaster. Over the course of the meeting, the brewmaster spends a couple charges while adding the ritual ingredients to the water in the coffee urn, all the while doing the ritual tapping to prep a whole lotta water for the closing ritual. (Individual Sleepers in attendance still have to scribe the rune, bleed into their cup, speak the words, and spend all relevant, normal charges to magically perform I Have Become Phobator. There's no cost-saving here in mojo, just time and liquid volume.)

The next order of business is to start discussion. If the chair knows what the situation is that's currently going on, they describe it, then open the floor. If they don't know, they ask someone if they know of a situation. If there's no situation actually going on that could wake the tiger (uncommon, given the chaotic churn of the underground), they pick a topic for a little conversational group therapy.

DISCUSSION

Discussion usually starts with the chair, then goes counterclockwise around the room, because widdershins is more magickal or something. Sometimes, people complain and insist for dubious reasons that discussion should be deasil (clockwise) because they want to be defiantly rebellious and show off their magickal cred and/or vocabulary.

Remember: it's traditional to not use real names — members give an underground *nom de guerre* or a nickname.

See "*The Whisper War*" on page 80 of Book Two: Run.

1: INTRO



2: ADEPTS



3: AVATARS



4: PLACES



5: FACES



Obviously do not try any of this at home with the lights on.

MORE SLEEPER MEETING RANDOMNESS, BRUH

d10	Who? (Noisy Idiot)	What? (Noisy Action)	Why? (Crazy Goal)
1	Named GMC	Saving one person's life, health, or sanity	Payback for Whisper War events
2	Local charger	Saving a lot of peoples' lives, health, or sanity	Pride/"I'll show them!"
3	Local checker	Messing with a public official/celebrity	Greed/"I gots to get paid, son."
4	Local pony	Messing with a religious or charitable organization	Lust/"I did it all for youuu!"
5	Visiting charger	Messing with a civic or legal organization	Envy/"That belongs to me!"
6	Visiting checker	Messing with a business or political organization	Gluttony/ "Become a god."
7	Visiting pony	Small-scale terrorism, mundane flavor	Wrath/"Wreak my revenge!"
8	Clued-in "mundane"	Small-scale terrorism via magick	Sloth/"Bored now; nothing on TV."
9	Complete newbie	Large-scale terrorism, mundane flavor	"You must suffer as I have suffered/ Everyone needs to know what I know!"
0	Agent of the House of Renunciation	Large-scale terrorism via magick	Kick-off Judgment Day

THE SITUATION (IF ANY)

Something that happened, is happening, or will soon happen to bring public knowledge of magick to the masses, most usually in a messy fashion. People will get hurt. Lots of people. Very badly.

Describe it, discuss it, then decide what to do — individually, collectively, or both — about it, if anything.

Nothing on deck that your merry band of misfits is neck-deep in already? Your inspiration engine need a jumpstart? Check out the table above, bruh. Examples:

9/4/6: A complete newbie, with a hard-on against Mormons, who thinks he'll glean all the collected power of the Tabernacle Choir by screwing with one of their fundraising concerts.

1/8/8: A named GMC is doing something semi-local involving magick that causes riots, because there's nothing good on television tonight... So, Selena Ramirez (remember her?) is going to go into a newly discovered, long-sealed TNI safe house while live-streaming it on Facebook. That'll be neat!

7/6/5: A visiting pony wishes to mess with a business, let's say the local franchise of a certain southern colonel's fast-food chain, because the assistant manager won't join her little cabal of chicken haruspices. I mean, she's the district manager, that guy should get with her program. It's one of her restaurants, after all... or *should* be.

THE TOPIC (IF NO SITUATION)

If there's no upcoming tiger-soothing on the horizon, Sleepers like to chew over their past screw-ups with each other, and maybe get a little advice how to stop the nightmares, how to get lime Jell-O stains out of white carpeting, how to turn a bag of spiders back into their girlfriend's face, or how to maybe just not to do that kind of crap accidentally/on purpose again.

Meeting topics are usually one of the Four Rules of the Sleepers:

- Keep Quiet.
- Live Long.
- You Did It.
- You Fix It.

Participating Sleepers share a little snippet of their past history based on the chosen rule. While some folks can yammer on for fifteen minutes at a stretch (and do!), it really comes down to a basic, three sentence paragraph: *What Happened?*, *What Changed Your Perspective?*, and *What's Your Current Status?*

Keep Quiet: "My name is Red Wendy. I told my mom I was a witch, and showed her something weird. She freaked, and threw me out. Now I live in a van down by the river."

Live Long: "Men call me Unforgiven. I used my dead son's heart in an alchemical experiment to create the Philosopher's Stone. It didn't work. Now his angry ghost haunts my dreams."

You Did It: "My name is Dirty Sam. I left that guy gutted on the kitchen table, and wrote "You Did It" in his blood. As was proper. Still, I'm curiously bothered by it."

You Fix It: "I don't murder people anymore; my name's Chuckles the Sad British Clown. It's taken a decade, but I've finally apologized to every surviving descendent of my victims. Note also it's important for me to say that while killing in self-defense isn't an apology, it also isn't murder. Not technically."

1: INTRO

2: ADEPTS

3: AVATARS

4: PLACES

5: FACES

“WHAT’S IN THE BOX?”

d10	Little Stuff	Medium	Big
1	\$3.33	¥100	Gift card (\$1,000)
2	Rubber ball/bungee cord	Fancy calculator	Car keys (truck’s outside; quarter-tank of gas)
3	Winning scratch-off ticket	Baby doll/teddy bear	<i>Wooden nickel</i>
4	Envelope with significant address on it	<i>centurion</i>	Clean (burner) smartphone
5	Pack of chewing gum	Tracksuit in your size	Plane tickets (somewhere convenient)
6	Paper clips/string	Pint of cheap vodka	Second-generation copy of the Naked Goddess VHS tape
7	Matchbox car	Pocket multitool	A .38 revolver, no serial number
8	Roll of quarters (\$10)	€50	<i>Queller’s wand</i>
9	Band-Aids	<i>Lucky Flick</i>	<i>Vial of Grappa di Veronica</i>
0	Half-pack of cigarettes (your aunt’s brand)	Sturdy work boots	Item that is disturbingly personal to you

PASS THE HAT & RAIDING THE BOX

During the discussion, the chair passes the hat again, and attendees put in whatever they want to it. The idea is any donations either help out the local Sleeper community, or permit attendees to get rid of something they don’t want to carry anymore, figuratively or literally.

Once the hat goes around the room, the host gets to pick some stuff from the collection – often money to pay for the meeting place’s rental, but whatever. Then the stuff in the hat is dumped into the box, and any Sleeper in attendance, if sufficiently moved by a burning desire or need to do so, can get up and root around in the box for goodies. (More than a handful of *fauxes* get beer and pizza money this way, and unless their personal financial situation is dire, they get spanked by *vrais* for it, eventually.)

Leftover stuff is... er, *left over* in the box, for the next meeting.

Need some creepy for the hat? See above!

MEETING ETIQUETTE

Sleepers have a few traditions centered on manners and courtesy at their meetings. Whether directly informed by text in *My Name is Dirk A.*, or just a collection of best practices that have grown up over time, breaking one of these rules of meeting etiquette makes long-time *vrai*-Sleepers snotty.

In addition to the neutral ground tradition, here are some other rules to follow or else suffer social appropriation and physical laceration:

Diary Thumpers: Some meetings like to quote *My Name is Dirk A.* extensively; some meetings avoid doing so except for the reading, the ritual, and the rules. Every Sleeper has a strong opinion on how much quoting of Dirk’s diary should

happen, and they would love to share it with you at high volume.

Lovey/Hatey Eyes: Near sociopaths and psychopaths who can’t play well with the other normal kindergarten kids tend to stare at people. Don’t be that guy. Prolonged eye contact has a long and storied body of mystical superstition around it, as well as functional physio-psychological effects. Plus, it’s rude. “Stop it with the Lovey/Hatey Eyes, Steve! Blink, for crying out loud!”

Notebooks/Recorders: Other than the basic one that comes in the box, outside recording of a Sleeper meeting is bad form. Write about it in your diary later if you want, nobody can stop you, but don’t use your cell phone to film people yapping about serious business, OK?

“Scanning Auras”: Listen, we know you’re going to be trying to get the skinny on all the other scenesters in the room. Just don’t be obvious, for Buddha’s sake. Sheesh. Do you wolf whistle like a construction worker every time something tasty wanders by? Keep your crystal balls in your boxers, Kreskin.

Tangential Bullshit: Most Sleepers feel very strongly about talking about anything during a meeting that is not directly related to the situation or the topic. Very focused about that... even sometimes to the point of missing fairly obvious indirectly related issues or information. “I don’t care that Copper Crone over there stole your girlfriend last year and had sex with your car. We’re talking about a mass outbreak of possessed gerbils, Steve! Save your tangential bullshit with her and her posse of puppeteered possums for after the meeting.”

See “See a Penny...” on page 89 of Book One: Play.

See “centurion” on page 21 of Book Three: Reveal.

See “Queller’s Wand” on page 77 of Book Three: Reveal.

See “Lucky Flick” on page 87 of Book One: Play.

See “Grappa di Veronica” on page 45 of Book Three: Reveal.

1: INTRO



2: ADEPTS



3: AVATARS



4: PLACES



5: FACES



Like that scene in *Dune*. You know the one.



SET THE NEXT MEETING

At the end of discussion, the chair asks for ideas on an appropriate date and time (possibly even place) for the next meeting. Simple majority vote decides yea or nay on each aspect of planning. If deadlocked, chair announces that the next meeting's biz is all left up to fate.

RITUAL CLOSING

After that, the brewmaster provides everyone a mystically primed piping hot cup of water for making into a stimulating beverage. The chair leads everyone in doing the rune-drawing, word-speaking, bloodletting, and charge-spending bits of the I Have Become Phobetor ritual. Everybody drink!

Successful rolls mean some folks' Sleeper identities improve. Some folks' identities won't. Have fun describing that whole deal.

"MAILING THE BOX"

When all the formal festivities are completed, the host shoves all the leftover crap (that fits!) in the box, closes it, locks it or seals it however. Next, they kiss their fingers and touch it, like saying goodbye. Then, they just walk away, shutting off the lights, closing the door, and leaving the box at the meeting place.

Don't worry: in an hour, it's gone. One way or another, it's speeding to the next meeting. A cleaning lady moves it, or some whacked-out mystic gets a message from beyond to grab it and take it somewhere, or the building is picked up by a tornado and spread across four counties, or it absolutely vanishes (*poof!*) when observers blink and look away for a second.

It — or one much like it — is waiting for the next Sleeper meeting. Count on it.

CLOSING TIME

Those poets of our age, Semisonic, may have said it best: "You don't have to go home, but you can't stay here."

After the meeting's over, in about an hour, the neutral ground effect fades. People go about their business of sexting cuties for Netflix and chill, roller skating, visiting grandma in the home, heisting AB neg from the local blood bank, sacrificing goats to the undergods, and the like. You know, your usual occult undergrounding.

But some *vrais* need a little more. A little extra. Lagniappe. They need to hit the meeting *after* the meeting.

THE MEETING AFTER THE MEETING

Even in the workaday world, after an encounter group experience, many folks like to go eat pie and debrief. Maybe a little visiting and fellowshipping, you know? At least with the people like you, who take this as seriously as you do, who you've shared touchy secrets with and bonded with, who you don't currently want to kill, and/or who don't want to kill you at the moment.

You guys decide to go to the meeting after the meeting. That's where hardcore *vrai* business is on the agenda. Only *vrais* — real chargers, movers, and shakers — get invited to have coffee with the Three Who Whisper at Denny's, a cocktail at the corner dive with Big Jane Catastrophe, or play miniature golf with Dermott Arkane at the Putt-Putt Palace.

All hardcore *vrai* business equals mostly gossip, complaining, and conspiracy to commit various crimes. Which local Sleepers have gone off the reservation, and gotten noisy with their magick? Which should be made an example of? Are we badass enough to make them into an example? What kind of cool stuff do they have? Have you heard the recent scuttlebutt and rumors about various players and cabals, both local, global, and cosmic? Have you received any signs and portents? Were they directly ascertained or overheard? I liked what you shared at the meeting about your break-up and accidental erasure of your boyfriend from reality; let's continue this with deep *real talk* about our pasts, fears, guilt, and shame. How do you un-erase someone from reality, anyway? Any ideas? Have you heard the tales of the Sleepers' rich and secret history? Have any Whisper War stories? Do you know about the Committee and the Hotline? Just what the hell is up with that Krystal character?

Sometimes, actions spring from words shared at the meetings after the meetings. Creepy actions. Violent actions. World-shaking actions.

Sleeper actions.

Pleasant dreams!

1: INTRO



2: ADEPTS



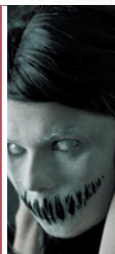
3: AVATARS



4: PLACES



5: FACES



LIGHTHOUSE

Occultists and unnatural entities leave in their wake broken bodies, broken minds, broken homes. Having nowhere to turn where they'd be believed, those victims usually succumb to despair or psychosis. Cameron Coleman and her network of "occult survivors" called Lighthouse work tirelessly to help those in danger of losing themselves walk the path back to a functional life.

Sometimes they even succeed, though they're all broken themselves.

HISTORY

Three years ago, Cameron Coleman was in the wrong place at the wrong time. While waiting in line at her local drug store in Albuquerque, New Mexico, she along with the other four people in the store were unnaturally assaulted. Her memory of that night is all snapshots of red and pain: a tall man walked in, the guy behind her shouted, the tall man spat something she didn't understand, then the screaming, then the pain and screaming and pain. Tiny blades juttied out of her skin on her arms, and leapt away like butterflies. She didn't remember falling on the ground, but when EMTs arrived, she was barely alive in a pool of her own blood.

Of course, the tiny blades were gone. The wounds weren't, and they left nasty scars. The guy behind her wasn't so lucky — he was shredded through and through.

For Cameron, the nightmares played the moment back night after night. Terror gave into obsession, and she began researching whatever she could about that freak moment. She lost her job, her husband and daughter, her home to this "insanity" no one else could understand. Living alone in a filthy, cheap studio, Cameron grew to accept that she was just killing herself one inch at a time, until she found a shred of truth.

That truth came in the form of Tyrone LaCroix. Tyrone and Cameron met through one of the many occult conspiracy message boards on the internet. He witnessed a similar experience in his hometown of Gary, Indiana eight months after Cameron's attack. He described the tall man shouting at someone else in an alley, then the other person fell to the ground screaming. After the tall man grabbed something from the body and ran off, Tyrone rushed to help, which is when a cop arrived to check out the screaming as well. By then, the man on the ground was dead and in pieces.

Tyrone might have been able to drink himself into rationalization if the cop hadn't arrested him. He was forced to play the moment over in his head in lockup, see pictures of the scene the police put in front of him, and describe to his lawyer what happened that night (who naturally didn't believe him). His name finally made it into the papers as the prime suspect for this sensationalized murder. The prosecution eventually dropped the case — LaCroix's lawyer never got the story as to why the case was dropped, and told LaCroix to be thankful — but his reputation was damaged beyond repair.

That's when he started doing his own research, and found a woman in Albuquerque describing much the same thing. They started writing each other, first about the experiences, then about their life stories beyond that. The shared connection turned into something beyond friendship; after a year of writing and occasional romantic visits, he moved to Albuquerque to build a new life with her.

The two worked together to find more evidence of the person they dubbed Razorman, and found more people with stories of horrifying assaults. They turned their attention away from hunting Razorman to listening to victims. Tyrone and Cameron got inspired to take classes in crisis counseling, to help people instead of hunting monsters.

Through chance, they came across a well-to-do businessman from DC named Harold Prince, whose son was also brutally murdered by Razorman. Prince saw potential in the two would-be counselors, and offered to bankroll them if they were serious. Thus Lighthouse was born: a support group that would "help people find their way back from the dark."

ORGANIZATION

On paper, Lighthouse is a non-profit support service run out of Albuquerque, whose mission is to help trauma victims find long-term help. Coleman, LaCroix, and Prince make up Lighthouse's board of directors. At any given time, there are twenty to twenty-five members of Lighthouse across the United States — all volunteers, all survivors of or witnesses to occult-based trauma. The core duo are written up as GMCs.

CAMERON COLEMAN

Personality: Equal parts passionate and ragged.

Cameron puts a little effort in appearing composed, but she knows it's an act, one that's tiring to keep up.

Obsession: Justice. Cameron seeks to expose everyone who commits horrid crimes.

Wound Threshold: 50.

Rage Stimulus: People who get away with hurting others. She tells you "the system is rigged," and her blood boils whenever she reads about someone victimizing another and walking away free.

Fear Stimulus: She's petrified at the thought of being unable to fight back — physically, socially, and otherwise.

Noble Stimulus: People who don't know how to rebuild their lives, but want to. She's been there — and still is there — and can't help but empathize.

Conspiracy "Realist" 70%*: Coerces Self, Evaluates the Unnatural, Substitutes for Knowledge (*obsession identity).

Closed Off 50%: Protects Helplessness, Protects Isolation, Substitutes for Secrecy.

CAMERON COLEMAN

Notches	Violence	Unnatural	Helplessness	Isolation	Self
Hardened	1	0	4	4	2
Failed	1	2	1	2	0

1: INTRO



2: ADEPTS



3: AVATARS



4: PLACES



5: FACES



TYRONE LACROIX

Notches	Violence	Unnatural	Helplessness	Isolation	Self
Hardened	4	1	3	2	0
Failed	2	1	2	0	0

TYRONE LACROIX

Personality: Tyrone is the sort of quiet man who reads a room before talking, calculating what to say. He wants to help people, and though his way of doing so is suited for emails and instant messages more than in person, he does what he can to make the world a little less crappy. That helps him sleep better at night.

Obsession: Healing others. Tyrone's whole world is a series of injustices against himself and his community. He can't stand to see people hurt and angry, and yearns to help people stand back up again.

Wound Threshold: 60.

Rage Stimulus: Impatient people. He's aware of the irony of being impatient about impatient people, and some of that rage focuses inward.

Fear Stimulus: Getting beat down in an unfair fight. He's been in his share of schoolyard tussles, but he's never completely gotten over being beat by three guys when he was seventeen. The thought of living in that hell over and over in prison tormented him during his arrest.

Noble Stimulus: He has quite a soft spot for hard-luck women.

Amateur Counselor 60%*: Evaluates Helplessness, Substitutes for Connect, Therapeutic (* obsession identity).

Grew Up Fighting 60%: Protects the Unnatural, Provides Wound Threshold, Substitutes for Fitness.

OTHER NOTABLE MEMBERS OF LIGHTHOUSE

When Genevieve Fisher was junior at UCLA majoring in computer science, she suddenly went missing for four months. Someone dropped her off at a hospital after a heroin overdose. She claimed that the entire time, she was seeing through her eyes but never in control of herself; whatever was inside of her chased one addiction after another. Her narcotics support group took this as metaphor; Lighthouse believed her literal story. Genevieve contributes to the operation with software that helps search through stories on the internet for keywords to find ones that might be credible enough for Lighthouse.

Jason Williams (formerly Caroline Williams) was always a genuine believer in the unnatural. He hasn't had a violent interaction with the unnatural yet, but has dabbled in occult rites. In his obsessiveness to learn all he can, he came across numerous fringe groups like Lighthouse. Jason is a member of many of these, which is openly known by the Lighthouse inner circle. He serves as a litmus test: if Lighthouse finds information that Jason thinks is remotely credible, it's worth investigating. Unlike the rest of Lighthouse, Jason has no permanent address — he travels around the country in his beat-up car, keeping in touch with everyone with coffee shop Wi-Fi.

Recently, Dominic O'Conner sought out Cameron, and explained that he was one of the EMTs who found her that fateful night. Being trained in compartmentalizing trauma, he fared better than most who experience such moments, as seeing burn victims and watching kids bleed out in his arms is just as nightmarish. But he never forgot Cameron's name, and when he ran across a mention of her and her group, he reached out to help. He mostly talks with victims, to help them process their trauma — something he's more adept at than the frequently distracted Cameron and over-worked Tyrone.

Angelika Sanchez joined Lighthouse after LaCroix flew out to Cheyenne, Wyoming to help her cope with losing her arm to some sort of "shadow-thing" while walking home one night. He stayed with her for a week to help her go from being suicidal — sleeping pills and a bottle of wine on her nightstand for when she finally decides to do it — to getting into a local therapy program. Being "post-suicidal" as she calls it, she specializes in listening to others who are in the space she was once in. But in the last two months, she's not volunteered to take any contact work, and has asked to focus on helping to validate the information that comes in from Genevieve. She told LaCroix over chat that she needs a break from emotional labor.

Since everyone is a volunteer and only Coleman and LaCroix work full-time for the organization, Lighthouse doesn't ask a great deal from the staff. Coleman and LaCroix review the information about potential supernatural assaults Genevieve's system delivers to them, then farm out investigation to a volunteer who has the bandwidth to do something. If there's cause to reach out to the possible victims, the core duo asks a counselor they feel suited for the task to make contact.

Consequently, the success rate for this loosely organized group is low, but it's not zero. They help around five people a year, though over the last year that number has tripled.

The group uses Slack for most of their non-critical correspondence, and once a month the core staff meets via video conferencing to talk. This is largely to keep a physically disconnected group from feeling alienated, so they take turns talking about their lives outside of Lighthouse before getting to business. Prince flies everyone interested out to his estate in Maryland once a year in the spring to thank them for their time and give everyone a chance to bond and be heard.

1: INTRO



2: ADEPTS



3: AVATARS



4: PLACES



5: FACES



ISSUES

As a self-selecting group of people trying to help people recover from trauma while trying to recover themselves, Lighthouse is one false move from imploding.

Cameron can't stop looking for Razorman. Tyrone fights constantly to keep Cameron from losing herself in the pursuit. The more he learns about the unnatural, the more he wants to steer clear of people like Razorman. Cameron wants to find some way to "bring him to justice to get closure," at least that's what she tells herself and her partner. (She has never told Tyrone of the dreams she has of doing to Razorman what he's done to others, and how powerful she feels in those dreams.)

What no one else in Lighthouse knows is that Razorman is Harold's son, Nathan. Lighthouse is how Harold tries to buy peace with himself for not being able to stop his own son from going down that dark path. Nathan was always a troubled child, and Harold's work kept him from putting much effort into his son's wellbeing. That's why he supports Tyrone in trying to keep Cameron from investigating further.

Genevieve relapses, mainly with Vicodin and alcohol. Every few months, Genevieve reaches out and Tyrone flies to Los Angeles to help her get clean, which leaves Cameron both a little jealous and with time to pursue Razorman.

THE CULT OF THE CRUEL ONES

<xbaby> Shut. Up listen. This isn't just some creepypasta. This isn't Slenderman. Go to the darknet, for one. Use Tor.

<xbaby> Are you listening to me, man.

<xbaby> I died and came back and I'm telling you there are things out there.

<chiba420> You didn't die. You were just really bored, dickhole.

<xbaby> I saw your mother. She killed herself.

<chiba420> WTF, man? I never told you that!

— Fragment of an IRC chat caught by the NSA and spread around the office.

Everybody dies. I hate to spoil the ending, but there you are. You shuffle off your mortal coil and go out into the great beyond, pierce the veil, visit the undiscovered country — whatever. Humans have mythologized this process for as long as archaeologists can tell. Hell, Neanderthal graves were found filled with flowers. Even they had a concept of the afterlife.

In the vast stretches of intervening millennia between the Neanderthals' own trip to the undiscovered country and our flash modernity we have, as a species, tried to figure out what lies beyond death. Really, we're just hoping anything lies beyond death — except for those people who claim to have met the Cruel Ones. They really wish death was simply everything you've ever done and been being shut off like a

Jason is weakly channeling the Explorer, through sharing his exploration of the unnatural to Lighthouse and others. LaCroix expresses his discomfort on occasion at having someone who could "go psycho" if he embraces what he learns, since he hasn't experienced horror first-hand as the rest of Lighthouse has. But Cameron is calm about the situation so long as Jason doesn't cause damage in his pursuit; after all, Jason might point her to Razorman. Jason for his part says he's only in for the knowledge, not the power. (This is true, as Jason has come to understand the avatar he's channeling abhors making its own mark to be discovered by another.)

The real Angelika Sanchez was killed two months ago while meeting with a victim in said victim's home by a New Inquisition operator on the job to erase another operator's past. That's when TNI found out about Lighthouse from her laptop, and after seeing a wealth of information about suspicious events coming in, they decided to pose as her. She just missed her second video meeting. LaCroix wants to fly out to see if anything's wrong, but that would put even more strain on his relationship — more so since he's genuinely infatuated with Angelika and definitely finds her changes in behavior suspicious.

Razorman is currently in Eugene, Oregon.

light. They wish life and death were binary. They wish there wasn't a gray area. Anyway, that's what they say on the internet, so you should probably believe it.

WHAT'S IN A CULT?

We usually think of Jim Jones' tribe drinking the Flavor Aid and slouching toward the kingdom of heaven that looked suspiciously like a very bad decision in Guyana.

Aum Shinrikyo comes to mind, dumping sarin gas in the subways of Tokyo because they wanted to bring about the end of the world — it's a long story, use Google.

Heaven's Gate might stir in the back of your head like a celebrity's name long forgotten, people wearing bad clothes and white sneakers waiting for the great UFO godhead behind the comet Hale-Bopp to take them to the great reward.

Cults always have a leader, a wild-eyed force whose personal magnetism and raw madness draw troubled followers like a strange attractor. Personality dominates, and the beliefs themselves need not make sense for belief and charisma to smooth over the logical bumps. As one cult leader said — even god's mind can make taut the curvature of space-time. That lady shot herself the next day. So it goes.

The Cult of Cruel Ones probably, maybe, started with a leader not unlike the above. There's occasionally a Wikipedia article (occasional because it's not always there when you look) describing one John Wigan who died after taking a fistful of ecstasy and lids of GHB at a San Francisco rave back in 1994.

Wigan died, and was legit brain dead for over an hour. Yet, thirteen days later, he woke up. He had parted the veil on a chemical comet, a *Gravity's Rainbow* of neo-new age rave culture and seen some really scary stuff. He had to tell the world.

1: INTRO



2: ADEPTS



3: AVATARS



4: PLACES



5: FACES



His circle of friends listened to what he had to say in the rambling weeks after he'd died, but Wigan didn't have a coherent idea. All he knew was that a being, or maybe beings, visited him in the non-space between life and death. His soul was a delicacy to them, Wigan said, but he was special. Our Wigan was human. A real live specimen of God's own creation.

Wigan figured out he needed to get all this information in his head down on paper, and make sense of it. He was convinced this being, whose unpronounceable name translated as "Cruel One," downloaded 180 whole gigabytes of information into his mind. Yeah, 180GB. It was 1994, OK? It seemed like a lot.

That 180 gigs poured out like diarrhea on dysentery (something Wigan's father used to say) over the course of about a month shut away in his flat in Mission (again, 1994, slackers could afford to live in San Francisco). He emerged into the saline light off the bay with just over two million words printed out by an old dot matrix. He went through 1,200 ink cartridges.

No one but Wigan ever read the full text, but what he told people, and what he did let them read, drew followers. It was weird, not merely because all of it was bugfuck crazy, but also because Wigan didn't have any overt charisma. He didn't have that presence. His "crazy eyes" looked more Rodney Dangerfield than Rasputin. And yet people flocked to him. Not thousands but definitely one hundred, almost, pretty close. No less than fifty-five for sure.

For the next six years they hung around the peak of the San Francisco rave scene pushing smart drugs, neo-eschatology, and NDEs — near-death experiences.

See, Wigan knew two things for certain. One, the Cruel Ones were out there and two, "out there" was really hell. John Wigan, at age twenty-four, had found the portal to hell. It was easy, all you had to do was die.

A sane person might ask — well, why would Wigan, or anyone else, want to revisit hell? Wigan's answer was simple: because the only people that get trapped in hell are people. He wasn't people. His followers weren't either. They weren't human, but Nephilim.

Wigan's cosmography, such as it was, mashed up various Judeo-Christian ideas with more verve than a Puff Daddy remix. According to Wigan, the Cruel One who visited him — kidnapped him, really — was one of the Myriad 200. Called Watchers in some Hebrew texts, these "angels" were sent by god to observe the newly created human race. This new race was God's favorite and the angels, well, they were old news. Watching these monkeys wasn't really on the list of things the Watchers wanted to do but, as they did, they began to realize God failed. Angels were already perfect. These humans were not. They died, for one. On the other hand, they might be useful — at least one Watcher called Samael, or Sataniel, or the Morning Star thought they might be.

God, it said, betrayed the perfection of his own creation by making physical beings in the world. He sought to usurp the Watchers, and all angels, from their rightful position and replace them with these bald monkeys. Samael started a revolt, and he enlisted the help of the monkeys in doing so. He showed them how to make fire, and taught them how things worked. He told them how to give things names and, in so doing, make them different. Then, he showed

that different things were often bad and the bald monkeys should kill them. Soon enough, Paradise turned into a gore fest — especially after another Watcher, Azazel, taught the humans how to forge metal into swords. Briefly put, the shit hit the cosmic fan.

The Myriad 200 Watchers took on the host of heaven. They made a good showing, but they lost. The other angels killed them, every last one. They flayed and crucified them under Earth's sun. Those that didn't die quickly in combat, died slowly and in agony. They'd lost, doomed to inhabit a nacreous mist between worlds for as long as man held dominion on Earth.

Samael, though, this wasn't his first rodeo. He'd set up a little something for defeat. His Watchers sired offspring with the female monkeys. God's perfect beings were corruptible forever.

Wigan, now, back in the '90s, related this to his followers. The Cruel Ones were stuck in what he called "El Shaddai's Tesseract" and only those with Nephilim blood could free them. Those without the blood were just lunch, their souls torn apart by the Cruel Ones for all eternity. Nephilim had no souls. That's why they could help the Cruel Ones. In return, they'd receive dominion over Earth when the Cruel Ones killed God. That was the Cult of the Cruel Ones' ultimate mission — to knock off God.

Only speculation exists as to what Wigan and his people did between the formation of the cult and New Year's Eve, 2000. That night, they all died. They raved till dawn, welcomed the new millennium, and took a final concoction of chemicals that sent them to speak with the Cruel Ones. Only this time, they didn't come back. The police found sixty-six bodies inside a warehouse where the rave was held the night before. There were survivors — or so legends say. Try finding the police report about this incident, or an article, or anything concrete. Go ahead, Google it. The Cruel Ones will wait.

THE AUGHTS

Bulletin board systems (BBS) were the method for the initial dissemination of the Cult of the Cruel Ones, and no one paid much attention. Like many things, it was a story relegated to the digital dust of the budding internet's corners. Crystalinks and Geocities were the first to (no pun intended) resurrect Wigan and his cosmology.

People typed out parts of what were, allegedly, Wigan's exegesis, and it made for good reading. It was spooky, creepy, and more than a little crazy. It would have stayed that way if it weren't for users claiming to have been there, with Wigan, saying they died and came back. Some of them insisted they were among the sixty-six bodies found on the first morning of the year 2000.

One screen name, which gained a reputation on forums and MySpace, is RandyRandii. They posted lengthy accounts of contact with the Cruel Ones by induced death. Flame wars started, claiming they were hoaxing everyone or part of some viral marketing stunt.

But there were others. Ones with names like Gadreel, Penemue, and Belial. It didn't take commenters long to find out these were names of the supposed Hebraic Watchers outlined in the Book of Enoch. They had pictures, too, early uploaded footage of what they claimed lay beyond the veil. Shadows pulled from the corners of a room make the figure

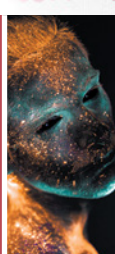
1: INTRO



2: ADEPTS



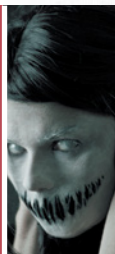
3: AVATARS



4: PLACES



5: FACES



of a man. A sleeping infant speaks in tongues, all the while eyes closed and breathing calmly. There were ways to bring a Cruel One into this world, briefly, if one was willing to die.

In 2007, a YouTube video briefly stormed the newly released iPhone, showing what appeared to be a mother, back to the camera, standing in the corner of the kitchen. She reaches up toward the cabinet to get an ingredient — for she is wearing a cooking apron — and then pauses. Turning to the camera she says, “Sataniel returns,” in a matter-of-fact voice before turning literally inside out. Her organs and sinew, bones and brain coat the kitchen in her wake. An official story by *The New York Times* claimed the entire event was part of an alternate reality game (ARG) designed to promote a new video game for the Xbox 360. The game never came out.

2010

After that, the Cruel Ones retreated into the peripheral of the digital now until, on Halloween Eve 2010, three sisters killed the youngest among them. They said they did it to talk to the “Cruel Ones.” They said it wasn’t the first time they’d talked to them. They said they found the method to go inside death, and then bring the dead back, on the internet. Only the first half of the cocktail worked.

The news hit big for about a week, until another, sicker story — this one involving a celebrity cannibal — displaced it. It wouldn’t be until 2015 when the two stories were linked, but no matter. The sisters eventually went to trial, were found innocent by reason of insanity, and spent the remainder of their formative years in one sanitarium or another. Books were written about them. You may have seen the movie, though it went direct to Blockbuster. (Blockbuster used to be a thing.)

From 2010 to 2015 social media exploded, and viral agents like “The Cruel Ones” spread in vectors that made biological weapons designers jealous. For a while, the Cruel Ones were everywhere. You couldn’t go online without seeing a friend post a meme about them, or mention something they heard, or claim to have killed themselves and talked to Sataniel. Like any viral phenomenon, it burned itself out in the absence of further fuel — or so it seemed.

2013–2016

Certain IRCs (internet relay chats) connected a group of young millennials who never knew a world before the internet. They were curious, eager, and had grown up on a steady diet of horror by such masters as Craven, del Toro, and some of the kings of torture porn like Eli Roth. This was just the sort of creepypasta they could get into and, what was more, a user appeared on the darknets claiming to be John Wigan — first going by the moniker of a 16th century Trinitarian Protestant named Johann Wigan.

This person, whom no can verify is Wigan, claimed that only some of his followers died in 2000, and the ones who did simply didn’t have Nephilim DNA. The Cruel Ones ate them but, and here was the kicker, he found a way to bring Cruel Ones back into the world — in the bodies of the bald monkeys, in the mortal coils of men and women. He hadn’t perfected it but, under the Cruel Ones’ direction, Wigan had begun to “dissect and vivisect” the soul. There were reports posted via Tor networks and things in deeper, unnamed webs. There was a video of a young woman in a hospital

gown curled in the corner of a concrete room. The view was from a CCTV camera. Fear and horror don’t describe the woman’s face as she begins to thrash wildly, beat her hands against the fire door of her cell and scream. All the while, a calm and even male voice clinically records what appears to be a living autopsy of her soul. Phrases like, “Moral core removed. Weight two grams,” were copy-pasted all over. The woman begins a strange kind of dance in the center of the room, appears to be pulled by invisible strings then, and upon briefly regaining her will, drops to the floor, comes up in a crouch, and beats her head against the concrete wall until her brains splatter the room. The calm voice notes, “Subject deceased before experiment’s conclusion.” As the video fades, people claim they see humanoid figures pulling back into the shadows, holding things like scalpels made of ink.

The reality is, bodies have been found. They seem to have been subjects of surgeries, but surgeries one coroner notes, “As if performed from the inside.” Subreddits monitor the ongoing “cover-up” of such victims, while 4chan slanders each victim but reposts all the juicy details. Little actual evidence is needed to set any of these channels off. When a particular story is hot, it breaks the surface of the lower dungeons of internet iniquity and reaches Twitter and Facebook.

In 2015, the release and subsequent immediate disappearance of the now-seventeen- and eighteen-year-old sisters who killed their sibling managed to break through the scum on the deep web’s pond.

The sisters were released into their parent’s custody. Their mom and dad were found dead. Shotgun blasts took off most their heads two days after the girls were released. They have not been found. The girls, that is, not the heads.

They have, however, been active on the darknet, deep web, and even various disposable Twitter burner accounts which have very few followers. The sisters claim their parents were humans, they are Nephilim and have joined with John Wigan to not only part the veil, but “tear a bloody hole in it through which all 200 Cruel Ones may return.”

They keep logs of their “experiments,” and hapless BitTorrent users looking for Episode 7 or a celebrity sex tape have gotten files filled with things that drove them to alcohol, drugs, and therapy.

An increasing number of Near-Death Experiencers, called “Needers” online, embraced the techniques laid out in these fragmentary docs and, like those before them, claim to have pierced the veil and seen the Cruel Ones.

2016

Creepypasta: Creepypastas are horror-related legends or images that have been copy-and-pasted around the internet.

Wikipedia, September, 2016.

In this year alone, several crimes have been attributed to the Cruel Ones. In January, an EMT in Anchorage, Alaska recounted the story of a woman who came to town for a PR conference and had a deadly aneurysm. Somehow, she came back from death. Upon her return to the “lower forty-eight” she contacted the EMT, seeming to know many personal and private details, and wooed him to come visit

1: INTRO



2: ADEPTS



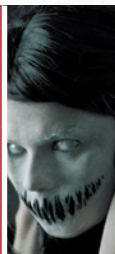
3: AVATARS



4: PLACES



5: FACES



her. He barely escaped with his life. His kidney, however, did not make it with him.

In July, a twenty-two-year-old shot and killed five people at Chicago Comic Con while cosplaying as what he told attendees was “a Cruel One.” He shot himself in the head before providing any further explanation.

Two med students in Boston were accused of the death of a third in September. Their defense claims the students were “exploring what lies beyond the veil” and that “the victim was wholly willing and even signed a release.” The case has yet to go to trial.

Three high school students made what they called a “pilgrimage” to the grounds of Columbine High School where they claim to have summoned the ghosts of Dylan Klebold and Eric Harris who, terrified and crying, claimed the Cruel Ones were coming before disappearing. One of the students said the ghosts screamed when they disappeared and “looked like they were all stretched out like this documentary I saw about what would happen to a dude falling into a black hole, man.”

THE FUTURE

The FBI and NSA have, quietly, begin to investigate what or who these “Cruel Ones” are. Both organizations have not ruled out the idea that ISIS, or an ISIS-like entity uses it as a recruiting tool. Privately, the NSA believes the Russians have discovered a way to weaponize memes. At the Las Vegas hacker convention, DEF CON, two panels explored the possibility that the United States had in fact weaponized these memes and now aimed to cover it up.

On darknets, VPNs, and in the chat windows file-sharing programs, the legend grows. Wigan is out there. So are the sisters. They post under fleeting screen names, but their

DETECTIVE ERNESTO “NESTO” CASAVETES

Nesto is a cop, a homicide detective, and he’s a good one. He wasn’t top of the academy, nor is he smartest man on the force, or the best shot at the range. He has no sixth sense for knowing who did it, just the resources of a real cop. There isn’t anything remarkable about Nesto on the surface, so how did he clear the most cases in all of San Francisco three years straight?

Nesto is tenacious. He does not quit. He’s kept dogging cases as cold as Pluto’s ass. Where other cops gave up, Nesto kept grinding away — at the case, at the evidence, at the suspects. Anyone put in the box with him has a high chance of confessing, maybe to the crime, maybe to a predilection for Klingon opera during sex. He gets at you because he takes his time. He lets you talk. He lets you sweat. He knows how to work you. He hasn’t once had to threaten violence let alone use it in the box.

Given all this, you’d think Nesto would be the best, most popular detective on the San Francisco PD. He isn’t. At least not anymore. You see, Nesto caught a couple of cases that changed the way he thought and the way people thought about him. The first was a missing kid, twelve-year-old girl, the same age as his daughter. The girl’s room was full of unicorns and pictures of boy bands — just like his daughter’s. Nine months he hunted down every lead, every clue, ever junkie skel who said maybe he knew something. Nine months and he had nothing to show for it. Finally, his

growing cult says you can tell the difference between them “really” speaking and hoaxers. The Cruel Ones is a distributed program. While Wigan and the sisters are venerated, they are not the center. There is no center. This is the first full-on cult in cyberspace. It is devoid of any single location. There is no GPS for these territories.

They share information, means of dying and coming back. If you happen in on one of their conversations, before you’re booted, you might hear them talk about how they don’t come back the same. How they feel connected beyond the internet, like a hive mind. How they have notions of doing things to people with blades and knives. How you really “have to torture someone to death to get a glimpse of their soul.”

If you believe the chatter on the net, they are out there dying and coming back. They continue experiments to “vissect and dissect the soul.” Parents on Facebook speak to each other about how their kids got involved in “this internet thing” and aren’t the same anymore. Some of these parents meet in church basements and YMCAs. They have support groups like addicts do.

A new group has taken Wigan’s banner and waves it across the net with all the ferocity and intensity of the worst comments section. Gen Xers, millennials, and those whose generation have not yet been named are caught up in something that seems very new, very “of the now.” But, if you believe Wigan, if you believe other commenters in the weirder alcoves of the matrix, none of this is new. None of this is a trend. This is a secret older than man, as old as the Earth itself. The Cruel Ones are coming. You can talk to them. All you have to do is die.

lieutenant pulled the case. It went into the cold files. Nesto was fine. It ate at him for five years like a stomach parasite, but he was fine. At the end of year five, his wife left him. Shortly thereafter, his daughter started dressing goth and stopped talking to him. Nesto was still fine. He was fine on the job, too, when he pulled his service weapon on a jaywalker, and he was fine in the bars after — ping ponging his way down the seedier side of Mission in search of cheap company and hard drinks. When he rolled his car, the alcohol blotted out the memory. That was fine, too. Nesto was fine. Fit as a fiddle.

Still, they pulled him from active duty and put him on paid leave. Three months with the mandated shrink, and Nesto was truly fine. It said so in the shrink’s report. He was fit for duty. He must be OK, right?

Six weeks back and he caught a case of a dead hooker — she was the same age as his daughter, too. Had a unicorn tattooed on her butt. Her body was in a single room occupancy motel, opened neatly down the center like someone had unzipped her and pulled out the good bits inside. He didn’t solve that case, not right away. Two more hookers showed up exactly the same way. In a drunken phone call, he tried to tell his ex-wife about it, and she listened politely before saying goodbye. By the fourth victim, Nesto had dug deep into the strata of the streets and cottoned on to something called the occult underground. There were freaks and

1: INTRO



2: ADEPTS



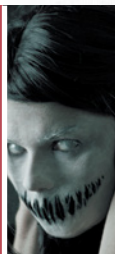
3: AVATARS



4: PLACES



5: FACES





DETECTIVE ERNESTO "NESTO" CASAVETES

Notches	Violence	Unnatural	Helplessness	Isolation	Self
Hardened	6	4	5	7	1
Failed	2	1	3	2	2

cultists and worse out there using for real, honest-to-god magick. Nesto knew because he witnessed some.

It took him a couple of months to figure out the killer was a thanotomancer who was, in daylight hours, a bartender at a trendy club. Seven days he watched him. He watched him while he worked, while he had sex, while he slept. He *knew* the man and, in knowing him, knew how to deal with him. No way was the court system up to this.

So, Ernesto shot him. Seven bullets because he thought that number was important (it wasn't). Before he shot him, though, he gagged him with ether so he wouldn't wake, then burned the charger's fetish bag in the shower. The fire alarm woke the man up. That's when Nesto plugged him, fired four shots into the wall with a stolen revolver, and put that in the perp's hands. It was ruled a good shooting.

After that, though, there seemed to be a sense of the unnatural about Nesto, like he'd picked up a scent and couldn't scrub it out. He started getting kicked all the spooky cases, and the department began calling him "Mulder." Nesto didn't mind. He'd found his purpose. There weren't just sick, deviant criminals out there. There were sick, deviant criminals using magick. All that stood between innocent people and Armageddon was Nesto. He was the wall.

POSSESSIONS

His badge and service Glock 23 are his tools of the trade. He carries a few magickal wards, most of which do no good. He has a picture of his daughter kept in a safe at home (he thinks possession of it by someone else could make her a target for a magickal attack). Nesto also has a unicorn tattooed on his butt and a closetful of unicorns, one for each birthday or Christmas unshared, each present unspent.

STATS

Personality: Nesto is tenacious in all things. He doesn't quit a case anymore than he quits a bottle of Johnny Walker. He holds out to the end, means well, and may be one of the few people with a good heart.

Obsession: Cop. Eradicating the occult underground from San Francisco. To Nesto, they're *all* bad apples.

Wound Threshold: 60.

Rage Stimulus: Hurting girls. Anyone hitting a girl, violating her, or using her earns Nesto's wrath. He feels like a failure as a father and brings that pathos to the street.

Fear Stimulus: Threats to someone close. Nesto had a partner who was killed. He never got over that and, now that his wife and daughter are on the fringes of his life, he feels like he is inches away from losing them. He has an ex-con named Skinny Jinny he sees on the sly. That's one way to get to him.

Noble Stimulus: Doing the right thing. At the end of the day, Nesto is a cop and wants to see the right thing done. That isn't always by the book and less so when dealing with the occult underground, but he still has a working moral compass.

Cop 70%*: Provides Firearm Attacks, Substitutes for Pursuit, and Substitutes for Struggle (* obsession identity).

Tenacious 60%: Provides Wound Threshold, Substitutes for Coercion, Substitutes for Notice.

Gutter Magick 35%: Nesto can use gutter magick and cast basic rituals but makes a Self check for every three rituals he attempts.

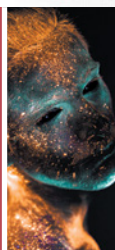
1: INTRO



2: ADEPTS



3: AVATARS



4: PLACES



5: FACES



"MAD DOC" ARSON

Notches	Violence	Unnatural	Helplessness	Isolation	Self
Hardened	8	7	2	2	2
Failed	4	3	0	1	2

"MAD DOC" ARSON

"Mad Doc" Arson started as a true believer back in the early '80s when he joined the political movement of a fringe candidate in California. Arson rose to become the fledgling demagogue's campaign manager and took him high — but not high enough to be elected. Arson was disappointed, but decided to redouble his efforts for his candidate in the next election cycle. He was right in the middle of doing that when he headed west to Palm Springs for a "think." When he came back, Arson shot his candidate five times in the chest with a revolver. You might have heard about it on TV. The gunman was never caught.

What happened in Palm Springs, or on the way to Palm Springs? Doc isn't talking, but word in the occult underground says it involved everything from Dirk Allen and the Freak to the Room of Renunciation. Whatever it was, Doc Arson didn't emerge from the desert as the same man. He went from a man whose ideological convictions were backed with both passion and restraint, to a violently unhinged obsessive. Coming out of that desert, Doc realized you must burn things down before you can rebuild them. Hence his nickname.

Back then, this is way back in the 1980s and 1990s, kids, Doc gained a measure of renown and became what the occult underground then called a "duke." The term is out of fashion, and hearing Doc sling it around dates him. The point is, he was serious people. He wasn't a godwalker, but the occult underground knew his name and knew to keep out of his way unless necessary. You see, Doc wanted to change the world all his life — that's why he got into politics — but he now understood that the way to change the world was by ripping down the "memetic thought structures" and "limiting delusions of self" which cause people to act the way they do. The software didn't need new code, it needed to be burned with a virus and rewritten from scratch. Doc made it his mission to do so. Violently.

Doc observes people, ones he considers as fundamental to the overarching structure of the group mind which perpetuates sameness. These folks aren't necessarily powerful or even in the occult underground. Anyone could be fair game, as the way Doc makes his calculations is beyond anyone's ken. Doc finds the ones he thinks need turning, kidnaps them, and subjects them to traumatic, reprehensible stuff. Precisely what this entails isn't known, as his "subjects" seem to lose their memory of the specifics. They all come out passionate though — half are dead set on revenge against Doc Arson, while the other half thinks Doc has shown them the light.

Doc wanders alone, though, not keeping any in the latter camp in tow. The only place he's been seen more than twice in the last five years is San Francisco, mostly in the Mission District. He doesn't have a permanent residence but maintains the role of itinerant preacher, changing minds one at a time. Incidentally, both those who want to kill him and those who want to say thanks seem to turn out as chargers in their own right. So, whatever he's doing, he's turning people on to the occult underground.

Doc views himself as an agent of chaos, but not mere entropic chaos. He wants to end the current order at any cost. He's contrarian except when held to this central tenet — no self exists, no morality exists, and thus we are all truly free. He says it without a smile.

STATS

Personality: Doc is, in his terms, "the first fully functional sociopathic messiah." He is a full-on nutjob, but one with purpose. Sometimes, he's heard muttering *Hamlet* under his breath, "Though this be madness, yet there is method in 't."

Obsession: Violent Messiah Complex. Converting others. Turning them on to his way of seeing things. Masochistic application of nihilistic philosophy refuting the self. It is not yet entirely clear, even to Doc, what his end goal is.

Wound Threshold: 50.

Rage Stimulus: The status quo. Anyone spouting canned lines from sound bites, anyone preaching the gospel according to popular opinion. And God help you if you're a sports fan...

Fear Stimulus: Being one of the crowd. Doc once was one of the crowd. Some say he was on a tenure track to a professorship at Berkeley in Classics. There are still memories of that man in his brain, and that guy scares the hell out him.

Noble Stimulus: Freeing others from the tyranny of groupthink. He doesn't let people suffer under the truncheon of society (literal or figurative) if he can help it. That said, he tries not to expose himself so much as to ruin his overall plan. He's a psycho, but he's a psycho who helps other misfits.

Motumancy 70%*: Doc Arson is, big shocker, a devotee of the school of Motumancy (*obsession identity).

Violent Messiah Complex 65%: Coerces Violence, Protects Isolation, Protects Self.

Cop Killer 50%: Provides Firearm Attacks, Provides Initiative, Substitutes for Struggle. (Except for Provides Firearm Attacks, this identity only applies when dealing with "authority" figures such as police, FBI, or Mossad.)

POSSESSIONS

Doc has an array of firearms, but he trades them in for "clean" ones regularly. He also carries explosives when he can find them — they aren't that easy to come by. In his "doctor's bag" (no, he really calls it that) are an array of sharp instruments, bamboo slivers, homemade eye-proppers like in *A Clockwork Orange*, and an iPhone filled with disturbing, profane images and every album and cover in the entire Nickelback oeuvre.

Doc also likes books, the paper kind. He recycles these as he goes through them — often making notes inside them then putting them in library sales to spread his own memes. Thomas Ligotti, Nietzsche, Chuck Palahniuk. Alfred North Whitehead, and works by Peter Sjöstedt-H. are often found in his car or room.

1: INTRO



2: ADEPTS



3: AVATARS



4: PLACES



5: FACES





MOONGLOW

Moonglow, or Moon, is old enough to have seen his hippie ideal come into vogue, go out of vogue, then return anew. Of course, for twenty-seven of those years he zoned out. He has no memory of this period, zero history. It's a blank, a lacuna in the narrative that is Moonglow. In 1969, he was telling fortunes at rock concerts, in the back rooms of love-in (ya know, in the rooms beyond the beads), and at the legendary Woodstock. He remembers Woodstock, as much as anyone who was there can. After that, he woke up and it was 1996. He woke up on a bus with a lot of grunge fans so he didn't really notice the difference for a while.

That bus ride was Moonglow's reintroduction to the world. That bus ride was also eighteen years ago. For a time, Moonglow drifted, trying to make sense of what happened to him, or at least trying to get by. He'd always been a fortune teller, plugged into the Age of Aquarius, astrology, transmitting the tarot, reading sheep's intestines, and seeing the future in those predictive games kids played with origami fold-ups. That, mind you, developed in the '80s, and Moonglow thought it was just a new way to tap into the karmic wheel.

In his wanderings, he caught the eye of Alex Abel, the founder of the New Inquisition — a billionaire with heart, Moonglow called him for some while. But the more he worked for Abel, in a crackerjack squad of chargers called the Weather Channelers, the more he could hear the voices of his past accusing him of the most heinous crime the '60s had ever dreamed up: selling out. It was good times, but still... there he was, working for a billionaire and seeking out occult mysteries for The Man, because when you get right down to it, all billionaires are The Man. Alex became increasingly unstable over the next years and Moonglow bugged out. "Hey, man," he said in his resignation letter, scrawled

on the back of McDonald's kid's placemat with Happy Meal crayons, "it's been real." Moonglow was on his own again. That, he soon realized, is exactly where he needed to be, and anyway his *I Ching* reading told him he had to leave the cabal behind, right? After spending so many years investigating the occult, that nagging feeling that there was a mystery right in front of him grew impossible to ignore — he was missing twenty-six years of his life. Hey, the man took a lot of acid. He took the *brown acid*.

That was about ten years back. Moonglow is still on a quest for self-knowledge, man. You'd best get out of the way if you want to keep things groovy.

STATS

Personality: A pretty easygoing individual, Moonglow generally wouldn't harm a fly, but will put a hex on you if you're in the way of his quest for personal identity. Back in the day, he had rejected personal identity in favor of universal oneness, but all his readings — the yarrow stalks, the tarot, the tea leaves — point to some cosmic event which quite literally removed *him* from the view of the Statosphere for twenty-six years. For Moonglow, this search for his true personality isn't about himself but about figuring out what happened to the cosmos while he was gone. It's, like, his duty, man.

Unlike most hippies, as a result, he has a harder edge than it looks (being a doughy sixty-five with snow-white hair and beard). You see, karma is very, very real to Moonglow, but so is pre-karma. It flows both ways, that's why it's a *wheel*, ya straight. So, anything that afflicts your life in childhood is the universe's revenge for the asshole you became. If you were beaten as a child, you weren't a victim, you were being judged for

1: INTRO



2: ADEPTS



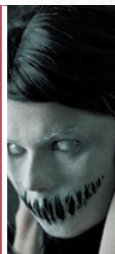
3: AVATARS



4: PLACES



5: FACES



beating your own kids as an adult.

Such murky morality allows Moonglow to ignore a lot of suffering. Somewhere along the line, in one life or another, you had it coming.

Obsession: Let's Rap. Moonglow wants to find out what happened during the missing period in his life. He's certain it's about more than just him.

Wound Threshold: 50.

Rage Stimulus: Moonglow used to go off on anyone who complained when they had it good. He doesn't anymore, though they still piss him off. Today, it's people who go on about their own "history." He just cannot take it. He's missing twenty-six years! He doesn't want to hear about your wedding, see the photos of your kids, here about your senior year debauchery. Anyone who goes on about themselves for too long earns his ire.

Fear Stimulus: Violence (specifically being the victim of it) scares Moonglow silly. He's begun to suspect he was abused in some way during his multi-decade blackout.

Noble Stimulus: Pacifism. Though he has a hard edge, he doesn't fight. Ever. He's still a hippie at heart, though one whose heart is a big black well needing filling. He's never hit anyone in anger and still wonders why he woke up, twenty-six years later than intended, on a bus with that lead pipe in his hands...

Fortune Teller 75%: Vague Information, use gutter magick, casts rituals.

Let's Rap 60%: Substitutes for Connect, Substitutes for Lie, Substitutes for Status. People just think he's wise and trustworthy from the get-go.

Harmless Hippie 50%*: Coerces Helplessness, Coerces Self, Substitutes for Connect. People tend to either like Moonglow or give him a pass. He looks like a burnout, after all (* obsession identity).

POSSESSIONS

As a hippie, Moonglow eschews material things for the most part. However, he has a small collection of objects he believes are vital clues to his missing years. These objects are totemic to him. Chief among them is a series of images he discovered in San Francisco six years ago. Each is an '80s-era Polaroid showing Moonglow peacing out over a bong (which he still has) in a share house. The people in the pictures are never in focus or have their back to the camera. He identified the street where one photo was likely taken, but the house which stood there was gone and, very oddly, no one in the neighborhood could remember who had lived there, like, ever. It's a convenience store now.

These items were on him when he woke in 1996:

- \$827 of which he has 336 of the original bills. Sometimes, he tried to "sniff" out the others.
- His wallet with ID. His real name seems the same.
- Thirty-six cents of which one quarter remains. It's dated 1998. He's sure it's the same one he had in 1996.
- A dashiki, sunglasses, four hits of blotter acid (one remains but is no doubt useless), a tie-dyed headband.
- He also had a wax-sealed jar with type O negative blood in it. (Not his own, he's confirmed this), a lead pipe with flecks of what he found out are blood, three tarot decks, a wooden mask with what looks like the face of a Lovecraftian crab (that guy: total straight but in touch with cosmos. It's all a wheel...), and his bong.
- The most important item, apart from the pictures, is the jawbone of a dog. He is certain it is from one of the original Lassies. But why?

MOONGLOW

Notches	Violence	Unnatural	Helplessness	Isolation	Self
Hardened	0	9	4	2	4
Failed	1	4	2	1	3

1: INTRO



2: ADEPTS



3: AVATARS



4: PLACES



5: FACES

