



Magi, Madmen, and Monsters

for *GURPS Cabal*

by Bevan Thomas

The Cabal is an ancient and mighty organization dealt with in the aptly named *GURPS Cabal*. It is a coalition of sorcerers, fringe mystics, and supernatural creatures dedicated to mutual support, the acquisition of power, and the exploration and mastery of the spiritual planes. The leaders of this august and monstrous society are the Grand Masters, beings of almost unspeakable cunning, power, and ruthlessness. *GURPS Cabal* deals with 13 of them, ranging from the calm and erudite John Dee to the vile and bloodthirsty Erzsebet Bathori and the darkly enigmatic Garravin. This article introduces nine more individuals who have managed to claw and fight their way up the hierarchy to become lords of the night. Though created for the Cabal, they can easily be incorporated into other horror settings as patrons or adversaries.

These Grand Masters were created with variety in mind. Figures from history rub shoulders with entirely new creations, relatively moral scholars feature alongside depraved monsters. The GM is expected to pick and choose which ones are right for his campaign, and of course even the ones he selects should be modified to serve the best purpose in his setting that they can. It is his Cabal, after all.

Adave

Adave ("Adam" + "Eve") is a peculiar Grand Master. It is the gestalt product of a pair of alchemists: William Trent and his sister Josephine. The twin siblings were minor nobility who lived in 17th-century England and devoted almost all of their time to hunting for the secrets of immortality.

They eventually devised a strange ritual that would result in a physical enactment of the alchemical marriage. If properly performed on a brother and his twin sister, it would transform the two into a single immortal being. Though the two were disturbed by the ramifications of such a ritual, they were too excited by the promise of immortality to pass it up. Therefore they brew the two elixirs, and when the time came, they linked their hands, clinked glasses as they toasted to the hope of immortality, and drank in unison.

And then what once was two suddenly became one.

Adave was born: Adam Kadamon incarnate, the holy hermaphrodite, the perfect union of the masculine and feminine. As soon as the transformation was complete, Adave destroyed all of its notes so that no one would be able to use the information to figure out how to separate the being into its original two forms. After this was done, it packed up its things and left to begin its new life.

It was soon located, contacted, and recruited by the Cabal. Many within the organization would do anything to find out exactly what ritual created Adave. However, the hermaphrodite's unique gestalt brain is virtually immune to any attempts to read, control, or otherwise manipulate it. Furthermore, its complete mastery over all conscious and unconscious bodily functions means that Adave can choose to temporarily "turn off" pain receptors in different parts of its body, making it immune to torture. It claims to have forgotten exactly what the ritual was, and the Cabal has no way of verifying that (something that frustrates Cabalists to no end).

Adave's existence as a transfigured being, its promise that if it ever remembers the ritual "the Cabal will be the first to know," and the insight its alleviated consciousness can give on a wide variety of situations allowed the being to rise within the Cabal's ranks and attain the position of Grand Master. Now it spends most of its time in research and quiet contemplation. Adave is a tranquil being, all the aspects of its body and mind having become perfectly balanced through the consumption of the elixir. It always responds to threats in a quiet and calm manner, which often makes it pivotal in crisis situations.

Coaxoch

Coaxoch ("Serpent Flower") was an Aztec priestess who lived hundreds of years ago. She worshipped Tlazolteotl, "The Eater of Filth," goddess of sex and birth, and through her connected with Naber, aethyr of Akton. Believing Naber to be the "true Tlazolteotl," the priestess devoted herself to the aethyr's dogma of debauchery and self-mutilation of the soul.

However, the other priests declared Coaxoch's rituals to be an abomination, and they sealed her up in a cave as punishment. The priestess clawed at the rocks to no avail, and then pleaded with "Tlazolteotl" to save her. Naber appeared to Coaxoch in the form of the goddess and copulated with the woman in the darkness. Then for centuries, Coaxoch hung between life and death. Her body became mummified, preserved yet desiccated, and outside the Aztec Empire fell and the modern world grew up where the ziggurats and temples once stood.

Then, in 1920, a group of archaeologists uncovered the cave. As the sunlight hit Coaxoch's body, the priestess awoke into her undead existence and the mummy slowly rose from the ground. The archaeologists were destroyed in an orgy of blood and agony, and then Coaxoch walked down the mountain and into the new world.

It was not long before the Cabal snapped her up, recognizing that such a powerful and unstable sorceress should not be allowed to operate on her own. She soon found her niche exploring the darker areas of the occult, and has taken to Erzsébet Bathory, finding a kindred spirit in the Blood Countess. When not exploring the Four Realms with Naber as her guide, Coaxoch indulges her love of parties in which she seeks to outdo Marie Laveau for extravagance, Cagliostro for decadence, and Erzsébet for monstrosity. Though the priestess' true appearance is that of a leathery corpse, she usually employs her magic to change her body into a more pleasant form. However, it is rumored that certain people, such as the Countess, enjoy the mummy's true appearance, finding it . . . intense.

Crow

Perhaps the youngest Grand Master, Crow was born on November 7, 1981, in Vancouver, British Columbia, Canada. His name was Brandon MacKay, and for the first part of his life, he was a normal boy with a passing interest in literature and nature. All that changed in the

nineteenth year when he decided to go camping on his own deep in the lush rainforests of BC.

It was on his third night that MacKay was found by the great eikone of hunger, a manifestation of Atrax's shadow, [Baxbakwalanuxsiwae](#). This Northern spirit possessed MacKay, driving him mad and causing him to run screaming through the wilderness, hungry for blood. A month later, MacKay regained control. He was lying naked by a stream, his body covered in blood. He was not sure what exactly had happened to him during his insanity, but what he did know was that now he had become touched by the Cannibal and filled with its power. MacKay realized that he came from a long line of Kwakiutl shamans (or pepaxalai) on his mother's side, that the Cannibal had responded to his blood, and that he had been initiated into the way of the Hamatsa.

The new sorcerer named himself "Crow," and began to gather to himself all the occult forces of the Pacific Northwest Coast. As this is one of the parts of the world with little Cabal presence (not considered important enough by most Cabalists), it was relatively easy. Soon he had created treaties with the Sasquatch families, forced the obedience of the most prominent water monsters, made pacts with the various eikones, eidolons, and ultraterrestrials that frequent the area, and gained control over the province's ley-lines and places of power.

Then, three short years after his first encounter with the Cannibal, Crow announced himself to the powers that be. He showed up at a Cabal chapter-house and convinced a group of Grand Masters to meet with him behind closed doors. Few people know what was said, but what is known is that when Crow stepped out again, he had been declared one of them.

Crow has become the wild card amongst the politicking of the Cabal's Inner Circle. He is a maverick, a new recruit who's goals are either unknown or unestablished. This means that most of the other Grand Masters are trying to sway Crow to their side, taking advantage of what they perceive to be raw power directed by a naive and inexperienced mind. His eikone, the Cannibal, makes a lot of Cabalists uneasy, and some believe it might even be a demon in disguise. Many are nervously waiting to see what the pepaxalai's exact agenda is.

His "nest" is at the center of a winding labyrinth located underneath the city of Victoria. The length of the labyrinth is cared with runes from a multitude of different occult languages, and it adjoins Binah, Baxbakwalanuxsiwae's own realm, and some say the Abyss. It is strongly connected to Atrax, though here the decan has particularly dark overtones (hunger, gluttony, and the will to devour). Crow is often found meditating here, link to the paranormal energy of the Northwest Coast like a spider at the center of his mystic web.

Marlowe

Christopher "Kit" Marlowe was born on February 26, 1564 and said to die on May 30, 1593. The following centuries did not improve his temper. He was the most popular playwright of his day, one of his most famous pieces being the occult-heavy *Doctor Faustus*, and was secretly one of the most trusted Cabalists in the service of John Dee.

In order to increase his effectiveness as one of Dee's agents (and to deal with the various elements of Marlowe's "controversial" personal life which had been revealed), Marlowe faked his own [death](#), and left an inert homunculus in his place. Then he wandered around Europe, using his talents for subterfuge and art in the Cabal's service while indulging in his love of wine, men, and tobacco.

It was in 1610 when he encountered Erzsébet Bathory while investigating reports of vampirism in

Hungary. The Blood Countess fell in love with the middle-aged rake, an attraction that Marlowe in no way returned. In an attempt to gain his fealty, Erzsabet turned Marlowe into a vampire and trapped him in her castle. However, he used his magic to escape and convince the King of Hungary to order he imprisoned.

Ever since, Marlowe has continued to do the Cabal's dirty work, and eventually became a Grand Master. For one of such a rank, he is incredibly "hands on," preferring to do the job himself if at all possible. He dislikes his vampiric state, though admits that it has certain advantages.

He is a consummate liar, rogue, and con-man. Only the following things are certain about him: he is loyal to John Dee, he hates Erzsabet Bathori, and he dislikes drinking female blood. Marlowe claims to have no ulterior motives, and is simply doing his best to "serve the Cabal's needs."

He's probably lying.

Myrddin

In 1941, during the Battle of Britain, a German bomber suffered a mechanical anomaly and accidentally dropped a bomb on a grove of trees near the town of Selkirk on the Scottish border. The bomb awoke the entity who had been slumbering under the grove for more than a thousand years. After the planes were gone, he walked out of his cave and came to the nearest Cabal chapter house to announce himself. Grand Master Myrddin, more commonly known as Merlin, had returned.

Few Grand Masters have as many contradictory legends around them. There was an Emrys Myrddin who was a member of the Cabal in the 6th century, and served as an advisor to the brother kings Ambrosius Aurelianus and Uther Pendragon, and to Uther's son Arthur. However, there was another Cabalist mage known as Myrddin Wyllt who lived a hundred years later in Wales, and wrote a series of prophesies while living as a hermit in the forest. At different times, the "modern" Myrddin has claimed to be either of these or both or none, and no one can figure out the truth of the matter.

Whatever his past, Myrddin is one of the Cabal's mightiest mages and famous for his ability to take on any form. He is strongly attuned to the decans Bianakith and Charchnoumis, and his favorite forms include an old man with a gray beard, a beautiful boy with golden hair, a large raven, a dark youth dressed entirely in black, and a huge, black mastiff. He is also a prophet, known for spouting cryptic predictions at odd moments.

Myrddin is obsessed with acquiring the "Four Artifacts of Britain," four magical items that correspond to the four suits of the Tarot deck. They are the Holy Grail (the cup), the Spear of Longinus (the wand), the sword Excalibur (the sword), and the Round Table (the disk). Myrddin's search for these artifacts, as well as his frequent visits to the realm of Camelot in Briah, might suggest that he is Emrys, but some people feel all this is misdirection, serving as a smokescreen for Myrddin's true goals. Besides, it's such a cliché for Cabalists, especially British ones, to quest for the Grail and the Spear that many feel doesn't add much to the "Emrys Myrddin" argument anyway.

Myrddin is a British nationalist, especially with regards to occultism. He is obsessed with "returning the flower of English sorcery," and makes no secret of his distaste for "foreign magic." He is on excellent terms with Adave, John Dee, and strangely enough, Garravin, as well

as tolerating Erasmus Rooke, but has a talent for rubbing other Grand Masters the wrong way. There is especially bad blood between Myrddin and Dr. Fang, and neither Cabalist makes any secret of the scorn he feels for the other's methods.

Back in King Arthur's day, Emrys Myrddin had numerous contacts with Faerie. In fact, the trials and tribulations of the kingdom had been shaped by a shadow war between fae-attuned Cabalists, cumulating in Morgan the Fay's pact with the Unseelie Court and eventually overthrow of Arthur. This has caused many people to speculate on the exact reasons behind Myrddin's close friendship with Garravin. Some believe that Myrddin was friends with Garravin's father, or that the old fairy was Myrddin's father too, making Garravin and him half-brothers (after all, many people have claimed that Myrddin's father was a fairy or the Devil). Others have suggested that the two might actually be lovers. As both Myrddin and Garravin are infamous for their short tempers and imaginative punishments, most people only speculate well out of earshot.

Poe

He is the creator of modern detective fiction and the master of the gothic short story, his life read like one of his own horror yarns, and his [death](#) was wrought with confusion and mystery. And yet, his waking life paled in comparison to the life Edgar Allan Poe lived when he slept, for he was a member of the ancient sect of dream-warriors known as the [Benandanti](#).

Born on January 19, 1809, with his birth caul still on his face, Poe was blessed with psionic powers, particularly the "Sight" (detecting and communicating with spirits) and the ability to Dream Travel (p. CB99). With these powers came the responsibility of doing battle in the Dreamworlds against the Malandanti, dark witches in the service of demons who wish to gain control over the dreams of humanity. By night Edgar Allan Poe fought them, and by day he wrote stories of madness and terror as a form of catharsis. He hoped that by expressing in fiction the insanity he constantly faced, he would be able to purge it from his mind, and remain sane himself.

For a while it worked, but Poe earned many enemies. Chief among them was Loruhamah, prince of the howling night, chief among the demons who feed on nightmares. Eventually Loruhamah's agents managed to enter the waking world and target Poe while he was at his most vulnerable. It was on October 7, 1849 that the author and dream warrior was found dead. Though the medical verdict was alcohol poisoning, he was in fact struck down by demons. While they killed his body, they did not kill his soul, for just before death Poe's dream self was able to flee to Nod, and from there into Atziluth.

It was 40 years later when Poe was next seen. An Italian Cabalist dreamed that Poe warned him of an upcoming invasion of nightmare demons. Fortunately, the Cabalist believed him, and contacted his superiors, and the threat was averted.

And so Poe became part of the Cabal, and so pivotal has he become that the dream warrior is now a Grand Master. He also still remains in contact with the Benandanti, and makes no secret of his disgust of much the Cabal's activities. Poe only associates with the Cabal because he feels that only the resources of this vast organization are able to hold back Loruhamah and his minions, it is the lesser of two evils.

Poe has no real existence outside Nod and the Dreamworlds. He is one of the few people able to navigate the various Dreamworlds successfully, and can jump from dreamer to dreamer with surprising ease. He is generally in Nod when not communicating with his associates. For

communication, he prefers to speak to them while they dream, though the Cabal has devised special crystals that Poe can "possess" and speak out of if necessary.

Rasputin

Few Grand Masters are viewed with more fear and awe than Grigori Yefimovich Rasputin, known as the "Mad Monk" and the "Holy Devil." He was born in a small Siberian village on January 10th, 1869, and had a relatively uneventful existence for the first 30 years of his life. However, while on a pilgrimage to Jerusalem, he gained various supernatural powers, particularly in the realms of prophecy and healing. Most occultists believe that these powers were psionic in nature, but to Rasputin they were always gifts from God.

It was in 1903 that he returned to his homeland, becoming a famous healer. In 1905, Rasputin was brought to the court of the Tsar in order to heal his son's hemophilia, and though Rasputin did not completely cure Tsarevich Alexei, he was able to sooth the boy's suffering. He became part of the court, and eventually was appointed the person advisor to Alexei's mother, Tsarina Alexandra.

In 1916, a group of nobles became disgusted with Rasputin's prominence at court and sought to assassinate him. They invited the mystic for dinner, and fed him cakes and wine laced with cyanide. Unaffected by the poison, Rasputin was than shot many times by the conspirators. Rasputin's healing powers allowed him to withstand much of the attack, and he fled, intending to go to the Tsarina. In desperation, the assassins clubbed Rasputin into unconsciousness, cut a hole in the ice of the Neva River, and stuffed him into the freezing waters.

Three days later, the body was recovered and buried. However, that was not the end of Grigori Yefimovich Rasputin. While his body languished in the hole, Rasputin's ka was thrust into the realms of the spirit, and Rasputin's body toppled to the ground. Like a shooting star, his ka fell towards the Abyss, and Rasputin claims that there he confronted Choronzon, Breaker of Thought and Form. It is said that the Mad Monk defeated the powerful demon guardian and entered Daath, the hidden 11th sephirah, the "worm that gnaws." It is said that the Mad Monk learned the secrets of Daath and used them to enter Atziluth and stand naked before the Godhead. It is said that Rasputin then returned to his body as an enlightened and mighty soul. Many people say these things, primarily Rasputin and his followers, but other Cabalists are less sure. Some believe that the man fell into the Abyss, where his soul was devoured, and it was a demon that returned and dressed itself in Rasputin's skin.

Rasputin, if it was Rasputin, awoke exactly three weeks, three days, and three hours after his "death," his body having completely repaired itself. Then he clawed his way to the surface and walked off.

After his betrayal and "murder," the Holy Devil decided to devote all his time to the Cabal. He soon became a Grand Master, and attracted to him a large body of supporters. When not slaking his legendary lusts on female disciples, Rasputin devotes virtually all of his time to exploring the Spirit Realms, particularly the Abyss and the hypothetical sephirah Daath. If Daath does not exist, as many Cabalists believe, then Rasputin is simply continually sending his ka into the realm of demons, an image that horrifies many fellow occultists. In fact, a group is being formed, a cabal within the Cabal, that believes Rasputin needs to be destroyed before he drags all of the order into the Abyss with him, and they are currently trying to figure out how to destroy Rasputin before it is too late.

Rasputin claims to have taken Shaliah, Lady of Material Happiness and aethyr of Phthenoth, as a lover, and it is at least true that Rasputin seems able to regenerate from virtually any wound. Some people claim that the Mad Monk was once completely burnt and his ashes scattered, but that the ashes eventually drifted together and reformed into his body. This may be an exaggeration, but certainly he has been shot, burnt, poisoned, and cursed numerous times, but has always recovered. Many people once witnessed him being decapitated, but then his body calmly reached down to his fallen head, placed it back on his neck, and he was then good as new. As most Cabalists are obsessed with immortality, many are desperate to know how Rasputin has achieved this, and this is one of the reasons why he has so many initiates pledging loyalty to him. However, so far Rasputin has told no one his secrets.

Though Rasputin is a fairly solitary individual (when not making appearances to his supporters), he has developed connections with Grand Masters from his area of the world. He has at least a working relationship with the demigod Koschei the Deathless, and is known to have occasionally been "intimate" with Oleupata Horsekiller. Thanks to his regeneration, the Mad Monk is one of the few people who can cope with the Scythian priestess' rages.

Sophia

It is well known by occultists that the great alchemist and theologian Albertus Magnus once created a homunculus that so disturbed his pupil, Thomas Aquinas, that the young man eventually smashed the creature to pieces. What is less well known is that in 1255, Albertus constructed a new homunculus, a female that he named Sophia.

When Sophia heard what had happened to her "brother," she was filled with fear and fled the alchemist's house. She wandered over Europe, hunting for a place where she could feel safe, where she would be treated not as an abomination or an object but as a real being. She was eventually found by the Cabalistic lodge known as the Brethren of the Lambent Flame, and was inducted into the group.

Now, after hundreds of years, Sophia has become a force to be reckoned with within the Cabal. Unlike many other Grand Masters, her goals are entirely material. She has no interest in occult study or exploration of the Realms. All she wants is to create a world safe for nonhumans.

Sophia is by far the most vocal nonhuman activist within the Cabal. And by her definition, someone is only a nonhuman if he or she was never part of humanity. Sophia couldn't care less about undead like Elzsbet Bathori, and even shapeshifters like Athene du Sarrazin are a little too human for her taste. Instead she associates with such creatures as the Serpent-Lord Kaas'sth'raa, the fae noble Garravin, and other even stranger beings.

She often demands that various creatures be reclassified as "people" and champions for members of numerous species to be accepted into the Cabal. Her current pet goal is the appointment of a troll Grand Master, which she feels is necessary for the "protection and recognition of a wise and noble species which has suffered much from human bigotry and hate." Certain Cabalists feel that Sophia intends to eventually perform a coup against the Cabal, purging it of all its human members. Sophia dismisses such claims as "attempts at fearmongering by the speciest status quo."

Dr. Taylor

Susan Taylor is perhaps the greatest purely scientific mind the Cabal has to offer. Openly disdainful of what she perceives as the randomness and unreliability of magic, she is determined to prove that science and mathematics have the power to analyze, measure, and define the metaphysical as well as they do the physical.

Her studies and inventions have helped the Cabal immensely, and it is a testament to her genius that she has managed to rise so high in an organization while simultaneously deriding the philosophy on which the organization was formed.

A year ago, she was a Philosopher happily going about her work, but then disaster struck. Dr. Taylor had developed a device that she felt would allow her to look deep into Briah, and possibly even gaze upon Atziluth itself. Unfortunately, she must have made an error in her calculations somewhere, for when the machine was turned on, it ripped a hole in reality and from that gash flew a qliphothic swarm. Two of Taylor's assistants were torn to pieces before the monsters were driven back and the hole was closed. Before the swarm was banished, one of the monsters stung Taylor's left hand and injected something into her skin.

Susan Taylor was unconscious for three weeks, entrapped by visions of destruction and chaos, of the Vale of Hinnom, of a possible Apocalypse, and of what she thinks might be the "first draft" of Creation. When she awoke, Taylor discovered that the wound left by the qliphoth had developed a gray-green growth. After some intense study, she realized that it was qliphothic matter, that a piece of "God's garbage pit" was growing on her body.

Taylor is both fascinated and repulsed by the situation. After various attempts to banish the qliphothic material failed, Taylor convinced her superiors that this may be a blessing in disguise. This growth and the accompanied visions permit a unique analysis of qliphothic matter and the First Creation, information that could prove invaluable to the Cabal. Having appealed to the organization's lust for knowledge, Taylor was allowed to embark on her study of the growth. However, she was warned that if she ever appeared a threat, she would be treated without mercy.

Over the last year, Dr. Taylor's studies have added much to the study of the qliphoth, and her visions have helped counteract attempted invasions from the Vale of Hinnom. Susan Taylor has become so pivotal to the Cabal that she now holds the position of Grand Master, and continues with her studies to use science to map the Realms and plumb the depths of the Abyss.

The growth has now spread over Susan Taylor's entire left arm, covering it in a gray-green chitinous shell, and is starting to spread over her body. When Taylor isn't paying attention, the arm sometimes does things of its own accord, such as the fingers clenching and unclenching or moving in a way that certain Cabalists feel is some indecipherable alien sign-language. She generally hides the arm with a long sleeve and glove, and it has greatly disturbed many Cabalists. There are those that fear she has become a sleeper agent for the qliphoth, and needs to be destroyed before she destroys the Cabal and perhaps even the world.

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