



The Rats' Revenge: Part II

An Adventure for *In Nomine*

by Jo Ramsay

The Story so Far

In the [first part of this *In Nomine* scenario](#), PCs were asked to investigate a locked room murder on Earth, with strange rodent connections. Other NPCs with an interest are a mortal Fortean investigator, a faerie noble and his hobgoblin servants, and a demon of nightmares. A Renegade Shedite and the two demons hunting her are also in the area.

In this final part, the murder is explained. The children's home where characters may track down a missing message is described, and the resulting trek into the Marches is detailed.

Additional Encounters on Earth

These are additional optional encounters with the various NPCs for GMs to use.

Bang Bang! Someone's dead!

There is a loud disturbance from the secure wing of the mental hospital. This is caused by Jasper's hair-trigger finger; the Game demon has shot and killed a mortal who he suspected of hosting the Shedite. Unfortunately he was wrong, and it is left to Sedek to cover up the disturbance to "prove his loyalty to Hell." Jasper calmly maintains that he was perfectly correct and stalks off to investigate other suspects. While the other demons don't care about the body count, Sedek would prefer to keep his role intact.

Reed Falls in Love

If PCs encounter Reed, he may fall hopelessly in love with one of them. This is not dependent on the vessel's age, beauty, or placid nature; faerie love is a whimsical thing. The victim of this crush will be subjected to a horrific series of romantic assaults! They will receive anonymous bunches of red roses, chocolates, heartfelt poems, serenades, and offers to take a ride on the back of the yellow Ducati. If he is encouraged, the faerie noble can make himself very helpful to a PC group, even after realizing that they are angels. If spurned, he will pursue vengeance without remorse.

The Real Story

CABLE FAERIES

(aka Faerie Rats, or Cable Rats)

Corporeal Forces - 1	Strength 1	Agility 3
Ethereal Forces - 2	Intelligence 2	Precision 6

Celestial Forces - 1 Will 2 Perception 2

Vessel: Rat/1 (cream-colored fur with reddish muzzle and paws)

Skills: Rat/1 Detect Lies/1, Dodge/3, Engineering/1, Escape/3, Locate Food/4, Knowledge/5 (Cables)

Songs: Dreams (Ethereal/1, Celestial/2), Motion (Celestial/2), Wings/1

Special Abilities: With effort (and the expenditure of 1 Essence), a cable rat can turn a cable into a temporary talisman, allowing it to be taken into the Marches. This is how they take their finds home.

Angels and demons who know about these creatures dismiss them as ethereal vermin. These faerie creatures who take the form of rats are suspected to be a debased modern form of Brownie. They sneak into the corporeal world and carefully retrieve cables, wires, and electrical components. The first sign of a house being infested with cable rats is that electrical leads disappear during the night.

They revenge themselves on mortals who provoke them, but if people treat them well, by offering food, cables, or suitably ethereal music (such as Britney Spears), the rats respond in kind. They may leave gifts of interesting cables or work through the night to mend broken possessions, just as their Brownie forbears would have done. Unfortunately, the rats are faeries and not engineers, and although mended items will be spotlessly clean in the morning, they are just as likely to be broken as they were before.

Faerie nobles use cable rats as messengers, and celestials have also been able to befriend these small spirits, training them to run simple errands or collect cables.

But where do the rats take all the cables that they gather from Earth? They have a nest in the Far Marches, occupied by the King Rat, a terrifying gestalt creature (see below). For decades, the King Rat has been sending its smaller component rats out to collect cables, in order to work on various master projects. Unfortunately, the current project was inspired by dreamscapes of people who were terrified of nuclear war. It's a bomb. The celestial bomb will devastate the Celestial Forces of large numbers of beings . . . if it is ever activated.

Rebellion in the Teind

The rulers of Faerie (see *The Marches*, p. 98) are among the proudest, cruelest, most beautiful, and most hideous of ethereals. They are envied and hated by their ethereal kin, because where other ethereals were slaughtered during Uriel's great crusade, these creatures made a bargain with the devil himself (or at least with Beleth) in return for support and succor. Made up traditionally of two warring courts, the Seelie and the Unseelie make up the two sides of the faerie realm -- rulers of both courts signed the infernal pact, and both courts have prospered. And the price of this treaty? Faerie sends a tithe of subject spirits to Hell each seven years. These slave faeries are subject to the whims and desires of the Princess of Nightmares, and are allowed to live in an area of Her Dark Marches known as the Teind (see *You Are Here*, p. 119).

If there is a leader of the Teind spirits, it is Arawn, an Unseelie noble who was delivered to Beleth in chains as part of the first tithe. And he has plans. From his own cable rat messengers he learned of the King Rat's project. Having reflected on the possibilities, he sent a messenger to Baal.

Arawn's plans to provoke a war in Hell, and has offered Baal a guide to the celestial bomb, in return for the release of the Teind. In order to reach the rats' nest, Baal's troops will have to march through Beleth's Dark Marches, and the Lady of Screams will see such an intrusion as a *casus belli*. Especially if one of her loyal faerie slaves were to intercept a letter from Baal to an unnamed ethereal that gave advance warnings of his plans . . .

Don't Shoot the Messenger

Unfortunately, the messenger rat went missing. It was expected to return from a Tether on Earth, where a private message from Baal was being sent to Arawn, confirming plans to march out into the ethereal realms and capture the bomb. But the rat has not yet returned. Arawn was sufficiently concerned to despatch Reed and the hobgoblins to find the missing rat urgently.

What Happened in Paradise Towers

- **A week ago:** A tame cable rat is given a message on Earth by a demonic Servitor of Baal, and sent to Arawn, who intends to pass the note to Beleth, pretending that he "intercepted" it. On her way back to Paradise Towers (to travel back to the Marches), the rat is injured by a dog and barely escapes with her life. She crawls through the floorboards into the Jacksons' apartment, trailing blood, and hides in a wardrobe. A day later, Lucy finds the rat, and puts her into a spare hamster cage with some warm bedding and fresh food. Forgetting her important mission, the rat curls up and enjoys the attention.
- **Four days ago:** Eddie Jackson comes home drunk, beats up his wife and elder daughter, and threatens to kill the toddler. It is not the first time. Lucy hides in her room, crying, and wishes aloud that her father would just die. The rat listens -- later that night, she chitters a message to the King Rat via Celestial Song of Tongues, calling on the other cable faeries to protect and repay her mortal friend.
- **Three days ago:**
 - *Morning:* Social services pay the Jacksons a visit at 7am, taking the girls away. Lucy hides her rat in her pocket. The girls are later placed temporarily in a childrens' home, pending foster parents being found.
 - *Midnight:* The rats take their revenge. Hundreds of them pour silently into the apartment from the Far Marches, and they attack both of the adults simultaneously, tying their wrists and ankles together tightly with Cat 5 Ethernet cable while they work.
 - Eddie Jackson is pinned down by a carpet of writhing furry bodies and eaten alive. A pillow muffles his screams. Next to him, the cable rats also pin down his wife, but not a hair of her body is harmed. Instead, the blood and entrails of her dead lover splatter across her face and soak into the blankets and sheets of the bed. Used to the screams, neighbors do not give the alert until the next day.
 - The disturbance to the Symphony caused by the murder of a mortal by supernatural entities is heard by a passing Ofanite who relays the news over a CB radio.

The Children's Home

Interesting facts: In order to find the Jackson girls, PCs must get the details of the childrens' home from social services. Typically, this sort of information is not given out lightly, but having authorization from the police will help.

Purpose: PCs will have to come here to find the missing rat. If they don't follow the trail, then eventually NPCs will retrieve the message, setting off events described in "If the Letter Was Found by NPCs."

Description: The Greer Home for Children is housed in a square gray building that was designed in the 1960s. It's a miserable looking place. The kids are a rough lot, and the older children are regularly in trouble with the police for muggings and shoplifting. Staff range from well-meaning and ineffectual to lazy and irresponsible, but are not actively malicious.

Neither Lucy or Amy have left their (shared) room since they arrived, other than to eat or visit the bathroom. If PCs talk to them, the girls are quiet and withdrawn. No-one has yet told them about

their father's death and mother's incarceration, and although Lucy is glad to be away from her father, she is homesick. Her little sister doesn't understand what is going on.

If PCs can draw her out, Lucy will eventually swear them to secrecy and tell them about her rat and how she came to find it. The rat itself is dozing happily in her pocket. If PCs try to take the rat away, the girl will burst into tears and wail that her new pet is her best and only friend.

Other encounters: While at the childrens' home, PCs have a chance of running into Reed, who has finally seduced a council worker into checking the files for the childrens' location and/or Sedek and the Game demons, who have learned about the rat from the tortured hobgoblin and Ivy's ramblings.

A Diplomatic Note

Having found the missing rat in the children's home, any PC who handles the creature can make a Perception roll to detect the relic collar that it is wearing -- no thicker than a human hair. If this hair is taken from Earth into either the Marches or the celestial realms, it will transform into its true form; a thin scroll, bent into the shape of a torc. The scroll is written in Helltongue, and is illegible to angels who do not know the demonic language. The Corporeal Song of Tongues can only translate Earthly languages (of which this is not one), but any redeemed demon will be able to decipher the contents.

The letter reads:

Having received your last missive, We are pleased to accept your conditions for providing scouts to show Our troops the location of the rats' nest in the Far Marches. In return for such aid as results in Our obtaining the alleged device to inform and enable Our Unholy War, We do hereby agree that the Teind shall be disbanded and all ethereal spirits therein released from indenture to the Princess of Nightmares, if they so desire.

We do not expect to be disappointed, either in these ethereal scouts, or in that the game is worth the candle.

Under Our Hand and Seal.

B
(*it is sealed with Baal's sigil*)

Part II: Of Rats and Men

Introduction: On a Gathering Storm

Having found the strange letter and reported it to Heaven, PCs are rewarded by their Superiors. Generous Superiors might also throw in a minor relic or reliquary, an extra vessel, or a new Servant. Dissonance will be queried, and forgiven. After enjoying a well-deserved couple of days off, PCs are invited to attend a briefing in Blandine's Tower. It is obvious from the solemn atmosphere in the meeting room that the other attendees are high-ranking angels, so it is no surprise when Laurence, Michael, and Blandine enter. The Archangel of Dreams folds her arms and watches serenely as Laurence briefs the assembled angels.

Following receipt of the letter, spies have been sent into Beleth's domain to confirm that demonic armies are heading out into the Far Marches. The spies also confirmed that both Baal and Beleth

had troops in the field. Laurence reminds the audience that the Princes of Nightmares and The War are known to be antagonistic to each other, and that a war between them could only benefit Heaven. He also reads out the letter (translated into the angelic tongue), and explains how Baal's secret negotiation to free the Teind might incur Beleth's wrath. Clearly, it is the responsibility of those loyal to Heaven to investigate this rats' nest, find out what Baal was offered by the unknown ethereal, and make sure that the demons can't get it. Fortunately there are Servitors of Heaven who have recently encountered these ethereal rats on Earth and know something of their habits.

All eyes turn to the PCs.

Laurence calls them to the front of the room and formally charges them with a Quest. For the honor of Heaven, they are to secretly travel through the Marches, find the rats' nest, and remove or disable the device mentioned in the letter. Refusal is not an option.

Of course, PCs may have decided to go and investigate the rats' nest without any prompting at all .
..

If the Letter was Found by NPCs

If either the demons or Arawn's messengers retrieved the letter from the missing cable rat before PCs got there, then both PCs and Superiors have less information to work with. PCs are called to another meeting, either in a local Tether (if there is a Tether to Michael or Laurence in the area) or in a run-down hotel room. They are met there by three other celestials, who quickly prove to be the Archangel Michael, one of his Mercurian aide-de-camps, and one of Blandine's senior Malakite honor-guard.

The reason for this meeting is that angelic spies in the Marches have observed movement of demonic troops across Beleth's domain and into the Far Marches. It seems that both Baal and Beleth have troops in motion, and given that they are known to detest each other, it is unlikely that they are simply on a training exercise. A captured ethereal from Beleth's Marches mentioned the "rats' nest" as the cause of these movements. As the PCs are the local experts on these creatures and their habits, they are requested to trek into the Marches, find what they can about the troop movements, and discover why the demons are interested in the cable rats' lair. Needless to say, secrecy is of the utmost importance. Michael comments dryly that there will be plenty of opportunity for heroism later. The Malakite also briefs the PCs on cable faeries, repeating most of the information given above. However, Heaven has no guides who have ever visited the rats' nest in person. For this, PCs are on their own. Characters who are less than totally enthusiastic about the opportunity to sneak behind enemy lines, through hordes of demonic infantry, and into an unknown domain in the Far Marches will be chastized by the Archangel, who claims that he only wishes he could go himself. This is of course absolutely true.

The Road Less Travelled

Travelling through the Marches poses some problems for PCs. While Blandine will assign a Cherub to guide them into the Far Marches on request, no angel knows where the rats' nest is located. The easiest way to find it is either to tag a cable rat and follow it home, or to head toward where the spies reported the armies, and hope to capture either a demon or ethereal who knows the way.

It is simple for a celestial to create a disguise in the Ethereal Realms; usually they will appear as the image of their most recent vessel, but they can change this appearance with a successful Will roll.

The trek is arduous, and involving all types of exotic terrain, with associated problems (whispering deserts, a road paved with teeth, rafting down a river of tears). As PCs head away from the Vale of

Dreams and out into the Far Marches, the geography gets stranger, and the Earthly laws of Physics are regularly bent or broken. The sky is as likely to be red as it is to be blue, a straight line may not be the shortest route between two points, and concentrating hard on where you want to go (with a successful Will roll) is a more accurate form of navigation than any compass.

Combat in the Marches

In the Ethereal realm, characters can choose whether to engage in ethereal or celestial combat (corporeal combat is not an option). Ethereal combat may involve Songs that are specifically stated as causing mind hits, Songs of Dreams, or the Dreamwalking attunement. Many Corporeal Songs do not function in the Marches, and it is down to the GMs discretion to decide which Songs should work there. It is also possible to simply assault an opponent directly, using force of Will to maintain a weapon that will function in the ethereal realm -- this defaults to an ethereal attack. Combat of this type in the Marches is calculated similarly to corporeal combat, substituting Intelligence for Strength and Precision for Agility. Damage is taken as mind hits instead of body hits. Damage is calculated as if combat was unarmed, but the use of "ethereal weapons" allows an attacker to use a weapon skill to attack, rather than Fighting.

Celestials, ethereals, and humans who can control their Essence expenditure can also choose to engage in celestial combat in the Marches. Due to the dangers of losing Forces, celestial combat is relatively unusual in the ethereal realm.

Optional Encounters

These are optional encounters. There are extra ideas for locations in the Marches and ethereal NPCs in *You Are Here*, and the *Liber Servitorum*.

The Black Knight

As PCs stumble down a mountain trail, they see a narrow chasm between two cliff-faces ahead of them. The ledge on the PCs' side of the precipice is buffeted by high winds, enough to make flying a tricky proposition at best. A sturdy wooden post is fixed to the ground by the cliff's edge, with a brass bugle attached to it.

As soon as one of the PCs blows a note on the bugle, the ground begins to shake and the sound of horses' hooves can be heard. As if out of nowhere, a knight in matt-black armor rides out from the far side of the chasm. A translucent bridge appears under his horse as he approaches; it curves in a delicate arc and has no supports. When the knight reaches the middle of the bridge, he calls out to the PCs and tells them that he has vowed that only those pure in heart and strong in faith shall pass.

The knight is a Malakite of Uriel, one of the infamous Tsayadim who deliberately left Heaven after their Master was recalled, becoming Outcasts rather than swear allegiance to any other Word than Purity. He interrogates PCs at length about any recent deeds (or misdeeds), accusing each one of whichever impurities he can detect with his resonance. His accusations become wilder and wilder, and it is clear that the black knight has no intention of letting anybody cross the chasm. If pressed on this point, he will invite the PCs to select a champion to fight him, swearing that if he is defeated in ethereal combat then the party may pass.

After the knight's defeat, the bridge shimmers and then disappears as if it had never existed. The knight's shield now displays Uriel's sigil in silver on a red background. If defeated in single combat, he attempts to answer any questions the PCs wish to ask him -- except for how to traverse the bridge. He then mounts up and rides off.

In order to cross the chasm, PCs must have faith. If a character gathers his courage and steps out into the void, the bridge miraculously appears under his feet, supporting him until he reaches the

other side. If characters fail to defeat the knight then he rides back onto the bridge; they will have to retrace their steps and find another way around.

THE BLACK KNIGHT

Outcast Malakite of Uriel

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

Skills: Detect Lies/1, Dodge/4, Fighting/2, Knowledge/5 (Butchering Ethereals), Large Weapon (Lance/3, Sword/5), Riding/3

Songs: Entropy (Ethereal/4, Celestial/2), Light (Celestial/2), Tongue/5

Discord: Aura/2

Servant: His horse is a 4-Force ethereal. The Black Knight has convinced himself that it was sent to serve him, and has weaned it off human flesh . . . mostly. This tolerance of an ethereal has earned him the Discord.

Pool of Futility

A pool of dark, muddied water ringed with empty beer cans and urban waste. Many footprints lead towards it. PCs who peer into the pool must make a Will roll. If the roll is successful, the pool will show them an accurate view of whichever location they currently have in mind, in any realm. If the Will roll is failed, then the pool will show them a nightmare vision of the places or people they most love suffering terrible tragedies. Often these dark images will strongly suggest that the PC abandon his current quest and go back to help. A mortal friend might be shown in an intensive care hospital bed, whispering the character's name, or a favorite apartment might be shown being burgled and set on fire by hated enemies.

Behind Enemy Lines

As PCs approach the rats' nest, they find signs of the demonic armies who are encamped to either side. Terrain becomes swampy, broken up by thickets of tentacled trees that ooze blood when scratched. Periodically, dense gray mists emanate from the swamp, hiding everything from view. Wide trails of footprints are trampled through the ground, and flocks of ethereal carrion birds occupy every available perching space. Wings of demonic scouts soar across the patchwork skies overhead and there are also wide patrols on the ground to be avoided.

The demons each alter their appearances in the Marches to become as intimidating as possible, and it is difficult to identify an individual's Band or allegiance by sight. There are currently no battles in progress, the armies are standing by and waiting for further instructions. Beleth's troops have tattered banners flying, and nightmare-handlers standing guard with manticores and cthulhoid horrors leashed on silver chains. Baal's troops are smartly uniformed, more disciplined, and have brought some tanks along to the party.

Anyone with tactical skill who attempts to survey the two forces will spot that Beleth's ragtag army has a clear advantage, in numbers as well as terrain. Knowing Baal's reputation as a general, this implies that his troops are intended to act merely as a diversion.

If PCs are stealthy, the first contact will occur when they hear screams and laughter in the distance. Investigation shows that a group of Beleth's demons have trapped a gangly Impudite who went going AWOL from Baal's ranks. In the absence of any other orders, they have decided to torture her by crucifying her upside down. It relieves the boredom. Spying on the conversation shows that

the armies are currently waiting for orders, and that there are rumors that both Princes will be showing up in person to direct their forces. If the Impudite is rescued, she is more than willing to strike a deal with her saviors in return for a clean getaway. She has heard the rumors that Baal's strike force are disposable cannon fodder, here to present a diversion while the real strike team sneak into the nest and grab the bomb. She believes this to be true, which is why she is trying to go quietly AWOL.

By pretending to be either demons or ethereals, PCs will be able to sneak through either of the battle-lines -- they will have a marginally easier time with Beleth's troops, who are less disciplined but more casually sadistic. As well as the usual gossip that Baal wears womens' underwear, Beleth sings country music in the bath, and that the other side are afraid of the dark, PCs may overhear rumors about the rats' nest and what lies within it. These include the existence of a king rat, a terrifying Godzilla creature who is as powerful as a Superior. The mists provide an ideal cover for brave angels to sneak past the soldiers to the cable rats' nest.

The Rat's Nest

The rats' nest bears a strong resemblance to a giant ball of wool, as large as a tower block, made of woven metallic wires. It can be easily seen from any vantage point (such as a tree) that rises above the camps.

On reaching the nest, PCs will be able to clamber inside through any of the many holes leading inwards. The interior is a maze of tunnels and crawlways, and the whole edifice feels like an artifact to anyone who makes a successful Perception roll. Any different types of cables are woven into the walls, and a wide variety of technical devices, both old and new, have been retrieved by the rats and built into the nest. The nest is lit by an eclectic array of lighting equipment, and after a few minutes, PCs begin to notice the cable rats themselves. The creatures are nervous, and are hiding in the walls, where only their pink eyes are visible.

The King Rat lives in the very center of the nest, in a huge hollowed out chamber. The bomb is in another secret room, which any cable rat can locate. Also in the nest are five of Baal's SMS (Special Marches Squad) elite commandos -- their mission: to locate and capture the device, using as much force as is necessary without drawing Beleth's attention. The demons spent several hours trying to find the center of the nest, and have now regrouped with a subtle new plan. They will just hack their way through, destroying all cable rats they can find, because destroying ethereals in the Marches makes no disturbance.

The King Rat is a large creature of fiendish intellect, who enjoys chess, witty conversation, building impossible devices of ultimate doom, and protecting its rat subjects. It is a faerie noble, and if approached with the proper amount of respect, it will barter for the bomb; as far as the King is concerned, the device stopped being interesting after it was completed.

If the PCs do not encounter the demons before they begin their hack and slay approach, they will find that the tunnels in the nest twist around suddenly, so as to all lead into the nest's center. There the King Rat waits to defend its home from all intruders; the demons have already stumbled into the King's lair and are attempting to assault it.

If any Superiors are summoned, there will be trouble. Both Baal and Beleth are taking a personal interest in the affair, and both of them will respond to any enemy Superiors by turning up in person. An animated three-way argument is likely to ensue, during which sensible PCs could escape with the fleeing cable rats.

NPC Stats in the Rats' Nest

COMMANDO SMS DEMON

Servitor of Baal

Corporeal Forces - 1 Strength 2 Agility 2
Ethereal Forces - 4 Intelligence 8 Precision 8
Celestial Forces - 5 Will 10 Perception 10

Skills: Dodge/3, Large Weapon/1 (Sword), Move Silently/2, Ranged Weapon/3 (SMG), Small Weapon/4 (Knife), Survival/4 (Marches), Tracking/3, (the leader also has Tactics/4)

Songs: Dreams (All/4), Healing (Ethereal/2)

Discord (for Calabim): Murderous/3

Attunement: Appropriate Band Attunement of The War. The leader also has the Art of War.

Artifact: Unholy sub-machine gun or flaming combat knife

KING RAT

Ethereal Faerie Lord

Corporeal Forces - 0 Strength 1 Agility 1
Ethereal Forces - 6 Intelligence 12 Precision 12
Celestial Forces - 6 Will 12 Perception 12

Skills: Dodge/6, Engineering/5, Fighting/6, Savoir Faire/2, Tactics/4

Songs: Charm (All/3), Entropy (Ethereal/3), Harmony (Ethereal/4, Celestial/4), Motion (Ethereal/2, Celestial/6)

The King Rat can also attack with its tail as if it had Numinous Corpus (Tail/5), and summon hundreds of smaller cable rats to help defend the nest.

How I Learned to Love the Bomb

The bomb is a gleaming metal sheath, studded with flashing lights and clever control systems. It is also a living relic (see *Liber Reliquarum*, p. 104) with enough intelligence to carry out conversations, and it is a coward -- the bomb understands that it will cease to exist if it explodes, so it has no intention of doing so. PCs (or NPCs) are welcome to try to persuade it otherwise . . .

It is not the only relic in the rats' secret room; there are also any number of abandoned master projects that the rats have attempted in the past. While some may still work, the majority are now rusted and forgotten.

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