

HELLHOUND



DARK PASSIONS





GHULHU TACH

DARK PASSIONS

CREDITS

CTHULHU TECH AND FRAMEWORK CREATED BY
MATTHEW GRAU

WRITTEN BY
MATTHEW GRAU, FRASER MCKAY

INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY DEVELOPER
MATTHEW GRAU

EDITING
MATTHEW GRAU, JIM WONG

ART DIRECTION & LOGO DESIGN
MIKE VAILLANCOURT

ORIGINAL COVER & BOOK GRAPHIC DESIGN
MARIA CABARDO

COVER & BOOK GRAPHIC DESIGN
MARIA CABARDO

COVER ART
TREVOR CLAXTON

INTERIOR ILLUSTRATION
TREVOR CLAXTON (13, 15, 17, 46, 51), MARCO NELOR
(4, 20, 25, 42), BRUNO WERNECK (10, 19, 23, 28)

WILDFIRE BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT
TOM NORMAN

WILDFIRE OPERATIONS MANAGEMENT:
FRASER MCKAY

THANKS TO

The GenCon 2007 Mongoose Publishing crew and Jessica Gretz.

SPECIAL THANKS

- *WildFire, for pulling it all together.*
- *Flaming Cobra & Mongoose Publishing, for finally giving this a home.*
- *Alexander Fennell, for making us a part of it for real.*
- *Jim Wong, for generously evangelizing.*
- *Robert Glass, for being our champion.*
- *Blake Fabian, for creating an amazing demo movie.*
- *Jason Walker, for the help.*

www.cthulhutech.com
Forums, Information, & Downloads

WildFire LLC
11700 Marine View Drive
Edmonds, WA 98026
www.wildfirellc.com

Black Sky
www.blackskystudios.com

First Printing. ©2008, WildFire LLC, used under exclusive license from Matthew Grau dba Black Sky Studios. All Rights Reserved. *CthulhuTech* and *Framework* are trademarks of Matthew Grau dba Black Sky Studios. All Rights Reserved. All characters, names, places, and text herein are copyrighted by Black Sky Studios, used by WildFire LLC under license. References to the works of H. P. Lovecraft are from and remain in the public domain. Catalyst Game Labs and the Catalyst Game Labs logo are trademarks of InMediaRes Productions, LLC. Printed in Thailand.



DISCLAIMER

CthulhuTech is a game. It is a work of fiction intended as entertainment. Everything contained within is a product of imagination. None of it is real.

This book uses the supernatural for settings, characters, and themes. All mystical and supernatural elements are fiction and intended for entertainment purposes only.

FOR MATURE AUDIENCES ONLY

This book is intended for mature readers. It contains dark and disturbing content and images. Reader discretion is advised.



TABLE OF CONTENTS

3

| | | |
|----|------------------------|--|
| 04 | FICTION | <i>Too Far Gone</i> |
| 06 | CHAPTER ONE | <i>Welcome</i> |
| 07 | CHAPTER TWO | <i>Wayward Sons (Cults)</i> |
| 10 | FICTION | <i>Mother Knows Best</i> |
| 12 | CHAPTER THREE | <i>Those Who Stray (Cult Listings)</i> |
| 12 | | <i>Blood Brigade</i> |
| 14 | | <i>Church of All</i> |
| 16 | | <i>The Circle</i> |
| 18 | | <i>Congregation of the Earth Mother</i> |
| 20 | | <i>Dionysus Club</i> |
| 22 | | <i>The Empty</i> |
| 24 | | <i>Scions of Forever</i> |
| 26 | | <i>Sleepers</i> |
| 28 | FICTION | <i>Splitting Hairs</i> |
| 30 | CHAPTER FOUR | <i>Guiding Dark Passions (Storyguiding)</i> |
| 35 | CHAPTER FIVE | <i>The Wrong Neighbors (Supporting Cast)</i> |
| 42 | FICTION | <i>Scene of the Crime</i> |
| 44 | CHAPTER FOURTEEN..... | <i>Sins & Threats (Stories)</i> |
| 56 | CHAPTER EIGHTEEN | <i>Index</i> |

TOO FAR GONE




Tuesday, April 10th, 2 am. A spacious studio loft in the downtown district of the Los Angeles arcology, filled with federal agents, corpses, and the lingering smell of gunpowder and burnt hair. Agent Jack Crenshaw stepped over the threshold and into the mess. Blonde, rough-looking, but dressed to code, he flashed his Federal Security Bureau ID. Crenshaw took a look around, shook his head, and lit a cigarette.

"Disgusting habit. How can that still be legal?" An Hispanic woman passing gracefully out of her prime snapped off bloodied rubber gloves

and stood up from the half a body she'd been inspecting.

"Because they aren't addictive and they don't cause cancer anymore. Why the hell are you complaining, Maria? You smell dead bodies all day."

She snorted and went back to her business. All around Crenshaw was a similar scene. A bunch of spent shell-casings, rubble from a couple explosions, and lots of dead bodies. It even looked like one or two of the cadavers was half-eaten. A couple members of the strike team had



fallen as well, their corpses being treated with a delicacy the others weren't.

"Just once, I'd like one of these raids to not end up being a bloodbath," said Crenshaw, to nobody in particular.

An almost too-skinny black-skinned woman stepped over the sea of evidence. Agent Jezany. "Might be too much to ask, Jack." She slipped on some bodily fluid that was congealing, but caught herself with typical Nazzadi grace. "You see these things happen on the monitors, but it never compares to the reality."

"No, it doesn't." Crenshaw offered her an arm to support herself while she checked to make sure whatever she'd stepped in didn't make its way onto her suit. "What do we have for survivors?"

Her personal fashion standards still intact, Jezany motioned for Crenshaw to follow. "Seven. Usual mix of cult crazies. I've been sitting on them until you got here. They're secured in the kitchen."

"Tally-ho."

The kitchen was probably the only place that wasn't a total wreck, but that wasn't saying much. Bullets had still blown through the walls, and chips of tile and wallboard dusted the room. Under the watchful eye of heavily armed federal agents sat a motley group of worn people, ranging from teens to middle-age,

all meticulously tied up and gagged. Crenshaw stepped in and carefully and deliberately assessed every one of them, trying to meet each of their eyes in turn. Deciding on a girl of maybe fifteen, he crouched down and gently removed her gag.

"Hey sweetheart. These are some seriously bad people you've fallen in with. You want to tell me what's been going on here?"

Next to her, a guy who looked like a cross between a tennis instructor and a tech indus-

try geek suddenly bared his teeth and growled, gnashing against his bit and straining like a rabid dog. The nearby guard didn't miss a beat and a couple hundred thousand volts quickly calmed the prisoner back down.

Crenshaw stamped out his cigarette in the debris. "Not again. Haven't we wiped these guys out yet?"

"I was hoping. It's been a long time since we saw them," replied Jezany.

"Pack them up and ship them out. It's going to take better persuasion that we're capable of here to get anything out them."

The girl's eyes filled with hate. "When the Goat of the Woods comes again, you will know unending torment! There will be no place in her world for you!"

"Why is it always 'my god's going to kick your ass for this?' Tell it to get in line." And with that, Crenshaw left her ranting to the guards. A couple short zaps later and she was quiet.

With the efficiency only the New Earth Government can offer, the prisoners were whisked away. Crenshaw and Jezany made their way out the front door and back into some semblance of normalcy. The Nazzadi hit the elevator call button. "The Congregation's back."

"Looks that way. They're like the gift that keeps on giving."

"Do you know what that girl was talking about? I don't think I've heard of a 'Goat of the Woods.'" The elevator doors opened with a ding and they stepped in, sending it down to the ground floor.

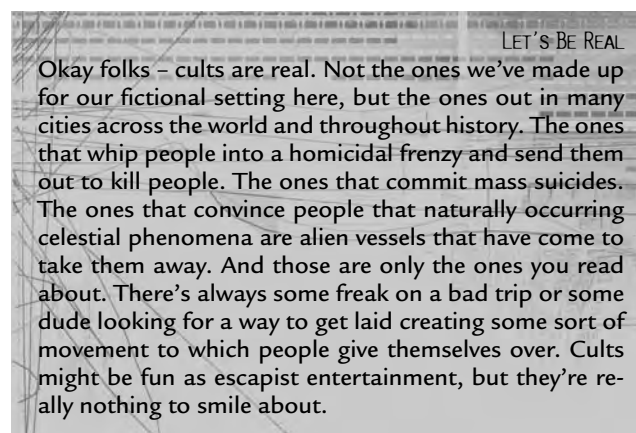
Crenshaw didn't watch the descending numbers the way almost everyone does. "Who knows. Doesn't even have to be some nasty that's in a dusty book. These loonies always have some kind of new and exciting version of their dark god. She probably just made it up."

Out on the street, the agents finished taking the fight out of a couple cultists that had gone dangerously bestial. Slobbering and whining, they were unceremoniously stuffed into the back of an unmarked van.

Crenshaw lit another cigarette and took a long moment to exhale. "What the hell is wrong with people?"

CHAPTER ONE... WELCOME

Inside these pages you will be introduced to another part of the *CthulhuTech* setting – minor cults. Unlike the major players of the Aeon War, these smaller cults may not appear to be enemies of the New Earth Government at first glance. Some of them are not. But some of them represent an insidious evil that might not draw attention until it is too late. Regardless, they are each an influence in their own right.



The minor cults that play an important part in the *CthulhuTech* setting are presented in this book. We will be exploring:

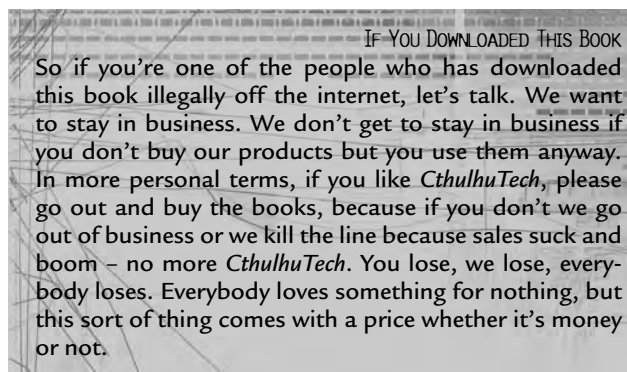
- *The Blood Brigade* – a nihilistic para-military organization founded by insane mortal followers of the Disciples of the Rapine Storm. They perpetrate hate-crimes and terrorist actions within the NEG.
- *The Church of All* – a new-age cult known by many names. They combine drugs and magic to bond people to the Source of All Things and ultimately to the Esoteric Order of Dagon.
- *The Circle* – servants of Nyarlathotep who've rejected the Chrysalis Corporation. They act as the elite special forces for the Children of Chaos.
- *The Congregation of the Earth Mother* – an ancient fertility cult nearly destroyed by the Federal Security Bureau, worshipping the darkest things in nature.
- *The Dionysus Club* – a secret society that caters to the jaded tastes of the rich and elite. It slowly draws them further down a spiral of degradation and insan-

ity under the careful eye of the Disciples of Death's Shadow.

- *The Empty* – an “organization” of the homeless, unwanted, and insane. They perpetuate homespun evil that eats away at a community's feelings of safety and security.
- *The Scions of Forever* – an ancient organization of mystics gifted with the ability to see through time. The Scions manipulate the world for reasons known only to them.
- *The Sleepers* – an organization dedicated to personal psychic development on the surface. Underneath, they recruit gifted lucid dreamers into a group that explores dreams and guards them against the interference of unscrupulous magicians.

In addition to this short welcome, you will explore the nature of minor cults in the next section. Detailed explanations of each of these eight minor cults follow. Finally, we've provided you with a couple of ready-to-play stories that can help you incorporate a few of these minor cults into your game.

Bundled with *Dark Passions* is a *CthulhuTech* reference. This handy tool is meant for players and Storyguides alike and compiles important setting and game rules into one handy place. However, it is no substitute for the setting and game rules laid out in the *Core Book* – the reference is simply meant to help you clarify things with which you are already familiar on the fly. Each entry also includes a page number from the *Core Book*, so that you can easily find more detail if you require it.



CHAPTER TWO...WAYWARD SONS

The Cults that make the news aren't the only ones affecting the universe. While the Rapine Storm purges Asia, while the Esoteric Order searches for lost places, while the Children of Chaos fester inside the New Earth Government like a cancer, their "lesser" fellows play no small part. The distinction between major and minor cult is predominately one of size and scope. The Rapine Storm is a monstrous horde rolling across the world, while the Blood Brigade is a small group of lunatics perpetuating hate-crimes on the home front. The Death Shadows spread throughout society like some sort of malignant disease, while the Dionysus Club is one small independent arm dedicated to one single purpose. The Scions of Forever wield enormous power though they are a small select group of sorcerers and para-psychics. The Congregation of the Earth Mother once was a large and influential cult, but the efforts of the New Earth Government have reduced it to a shadow of its former self.

RECRUITMENT CULTS

Several of the significant minor cults are what the Federal Security Bureau classifies as recruitment cults. These cults are the friendlier faces of the major players, selling some diabolical watered-down version of their ideology. Attracting potentially sympathetic elements of society, the recruitment cults' early levels of initiation seem harmless. New members find themselves hooked within a matter of months through a combination of psychological manipulation and a level of brainwashing. Eventually their sanity is stripped away through deeper levels of initiation until they are confronted with the truth – they are ready to join the ranks of a much greater organization. Though the Federal Security Bureau does its best to investigate every organization that might have ties to the Cults, there are many and the recruitment cults have become very clever.

The recruitment cults we will be exploring here include the Blood Brigade (loosely), the Church of All, and the Dionysus Club.

CULT RECRUITMENT


Each cult attracts initiates differently. Some seem like legitimate new-age faiths repressed by a paranoid government. Some seem like private clubs or secret societies that will advance the personal interests of an initiate. Some simply provide purpose to those who've utterly lost their way.

Generally speaking, the types of people that get involved with cults are people who are disillusioned in some way. They might feel that their life lacks meaning or purpose, that mainstream culture simply does not offer them what they need, or that they are not getting the rewards they feel they deserve. They are essentially lost and looking for someone else to provide them with an answer – or even a quick fix or handout. This kind of person is not terribly hard to find in the modern day when many question the meaning of it all in the face of possible extinction, especially among the generations that have known nothing but the oppression of the Arcanotech and Aeon Wars.

Most cults start small. They feed initiates some diluted version of their true purpose, promising greater power and knowledge with further levels of initiation. Each level of initiation typically requires new rites and tests. Exclusivity and elusive promises combine with progressive brainwashing techniques to create fanatics. All along the way old ties to the world, friends, and family are discarded in favor of the company of the cult. By the time an initiate discovers the true purpose of the cult, he's usually too far gone to protest.

CULT WATCH

So who protects the citizens of the New Earth Government against the cultist threat? The primary agency charged with rooting out cult influence within mortal society is the Federal Security Bureau. In addition to tending to criminal matters of federal importance, including organized crime, drugs, and contraband, the FSB maintains a Sectarian Crimes Division which employs a great num-



ber of undercover and field agents. They investigate new-age groups, radical self-help groups, secret societies, and back alley churches to determine if any might be classified as cults and pose a threat to the New Earth Government. In addition to the authority to shut such operations down completely, the FSB maintains a Deprogramming Unit designed to help brainwashed cultists come back to the world and once again live a normal life.

The Office of Internal Security also tangentially deals with cult matters. Policing crimes of a mystical nature, the OIS sometimes runs awry of cults operating within the arcane underground. Most times they deal with these threats in their own way. This often results in a shattered cult cell, dead bodies, and a host of people that simply disappear in the judicial system – the OIS lacks the “soft” touch of the Federal Security Bureau.

The Ministry of Information tracks all purchases and correlates data into statistically probable categories. While most serious cults purchase their sensitive materials on the black market, dangerous idiots and the misguided work through above-board sources. The Ministry computer systems flag the areas in which purchases indicate a high probability of cult activity and forward them to the Federal Security Bureau. Few significant crackdowns come from these probabilities, but they certainly help keep the moron population down.

Additionally, the New Earth Government maintains several public informant hotlines. Citizens are encouraged to report suspicious activities in their neighborhoods and substantial rewards are offered to those who actually assist in the exposure of a cult or cultist activity. Since this tactic most often resulted in the nosy old lady on the block blowing a false alarm on some innocent bachelor in early days, callers are expected to have very good reason for informing. Casual accusers face stiff fines and penalties these days and those who call too often are suspected of trying to eliminate the competition.

KEEPING OUT OF TROUBLE

Any cult is always on the lookout for the man. Neither the Federal Security Bureau nor the Office of Internal Security is forgiving. The FSB is constantly on the watch for anything even remotely resembling cult activity and the citizenry will call them in if they aren't careful. It's a tenuous situation at best.

Most cults operate in a conspiratorial cell structure. Top cult leaders don't share real names or real contact information. Initiates can only inform on each other. There is little way to connect one cell to another. You can never stop them – you can only cripple them for a time. Cults like the Empty are basically impossible to track. Most others have the ability to disappear overnight, drawing back until the time is right to resurface. And nearly all of them will sacrifice an arm or a leg to save the whole without hesitation. They are sneaky, slippery, and hard to kill.

THE INFLUENCE OF THE INDEPENDENTS

While the recruitment cults have their missions cut out for them, the independent cults influence the world in different ways. Shocking events in any urban neighborhood are what the Empty have to offer, while the Sleepers walk among the dreams of those same people. No one truly knows what sort of influence the Scions of Forever wield, but their mastery of the currents of time can only mean that they could wield enormous power if they so chose. The Congregation of the Earth Mother wields almost no influence, instead working desperately to cling to any power they still have. However, rumors claim that the cult is regrouping and has made allies that will soon assure its ascension to a power of the modern age. Meanwhile, the Circle holds the power to reach nearly anyone.

SUPPORT FROM THE SHADOWS

What most of the minor cults do not know is that they have a secret supporter – the Disciples of Death's Shadow. Whatever the cult is up to, it is in some way aligned with the Death Shadows' goal – preparing the world to serve the Old Ones by stripping away people's humanity.

The Death Shadows' influence spreads far and wide and they are capable of many things. However, they are cautious and normally only give aid in secret, the benefactors behind the scenes.

The Church of All and the Congregation of the Earth Mother sometimes suddenly get access to those black market goods for which they sought or get tipped off that law enforcement is too close. Many cells of both these cults owe their continuing existence to the help of the Shadows.

Of course the Blood Brigade and the Dionysus Clubs get special attention. The Dionysus Clubs are administered by the Death Shadows, so they are a no-brainer. The Blood Brigade is another arm of the Dead God's machine, so the Shadows quietly help them get access to things like weapons and explosives.

The Death Shadows even support the Empty when and how they can. Usually this manifests as keeping law enforcement off the Empty's back as long as possible, so that he can continue his loathsome activities.

The Circle needs little help and the Death Shadows typically avoid the elite of Nyarlathotep.

The minor cults that could be considered neutral or "good," such as the Scions of Forever and the Sleepers, are on their own. Should the Death Shadows ever find a way to stymie their work or cripple them, they most assuredly would.

WHERE ARE CULTS FOUND?

At your work. Down the street. In your neighborhood. While the Children of Chaos and the Disciples of Death's Shadow spin a web of power throughout the New Earth Government, the minor cults are at your doorstep. People may come across the major cults and never know it, but they always remember even the slightest brush with those of a "less significant" nature.

The New Earth Government has trouble with the Blood Brigade everywhere. It doesn't seem to matter where the centers of power are located, these lunatics seem to spread like the plague. They appear to be the cockroaches of society - no matter how hard the government works, the Brigade never seems to be gone for good. The Church of All, no matter what name it assumes, is predominately found in coastal or near-coastal cities. They command many initiates throughout the western and southern coasts of Africa, the northeastern coasts of South America, but they wield their greatest power in the northeastern coasts of North America. The Circle exists dispersed in small numbers throughout every arcology in the world. They maintain a tight network however, and can respond quickly to nearly any situation. Though nearly destroyed, the Congregation of the Earth Mother hides in small pockets across the world. There are reasonable

numbers in remote areas like the primordial forests of the Pacific Northwest, the remaining rainforests of South America, and the jungles of Africa. Nearly every major arcology in North America, Europe, Asia, and Australia boasts a Dionysus Club, but the cult has made few inroads into South America or Africa. Through their prestigious membership, they hold influence in major industries and matters of state wherever they are found. One could hardly say that the Empty hold influence over any one place, but they come on like a disease to poison communities at random. They are without a doubt one of the strangest threats in the Strange Aeon. It would be safe to say that the Scions of Forever hold the keys to ultimate power, but that they choose to use it in the most unusual ways. If they wanted, the Scions could exert enormous influence over the most influential people in the New Earth Government. Finally, unlike most other cults, the Sleepers only hold sway over the world of dreams. Through those dreams, they can conceivably reach any person alive and speak to them in their sleep.

AT YOUR DOORSTEP

Your average citizen of the New Earth Government honestly knows little about nor is forced to deal with cults on a daily basis. For most, the Rapine Storm and the Esoteric Order of Dagon are threats watched on the news. The Disciples of Death's Shadow are a myth and the Children of Chaos a secret known only to those who dig too deep. Most never knowingly come into contact with the Church of All, the Congregation of the Earth Mother, or the Sleepers. Only the extremely unfortunate come into contact with the Circle, and only those who might have somehow crossed the Children of Chaos need fear them. Those that are rich, famous, and decadent might find their way into the Dionysus Clubs, but even then they rarely penetrate into the depths of what the cult truly represents.

But there are those that touch the average person personally. Citizens of the NEG are on the watch for terrorist organizations like the Blood Brigade, who keeps perpetuating urban violence. The Empty do horrible things that shake up neighborhoods and communities. And every once in a while, a person has a strange experience courtesy of the Scions of Forever, though they would never recognize nor understand the cult's touch.

MOTHER KNOWS BEST

At first, it was frightening, the way the unknown is always frightening. I had taken drugs before, but just the usual party prescriptions. I remember the first time I took LSD. I tried to play it off like it wasn't a big deal, but I was terrified until it kicked in and then it was fun. But this really was a big deal. This was the first time I'd done drugs for spiritual reasons. I must be on the fast track, because I'm soul-tripping my first time out.

The drugs came in one big horse pill and looked a little like the Bliss I'd had that was cut with mescaline. That was a trip I wasn't ever going to forget, just like I figured this one would be. I hadn't done any drugs since I'd become a spiritual seeker because I'd always done them for the wrong reasons, so like I said, it was frightening. I took the pills and Sister Roxanne took me into the contemplation room. I'd heard stories, so I had an idea what to expect. It was dark and quiet and warm, with fuzzy pillows I just sank into. She stripped me naked, laid me down, and stroked my hair to make sure I was relaxed. I'm glad I was nervous, because otherwise something inappropriate might have happened.

The trip came up on me like a warm, gentle wave. It was like I just drifted out of one state of consciousness to the next. I'd felt the profound empathy that comes with something like Bliss before, but the Harmony was so far beyond that. It was like my body was vibrating in tune with everything in the world. I could finally feel the connection I'd come to suspect was there. I was everything and everything was me. It wasn't long before the Somnicon followed and my entire being was infused with visions of the world I'd never dreamed were possible. My spirit was finally entirely open and I could see things for what they truly were.

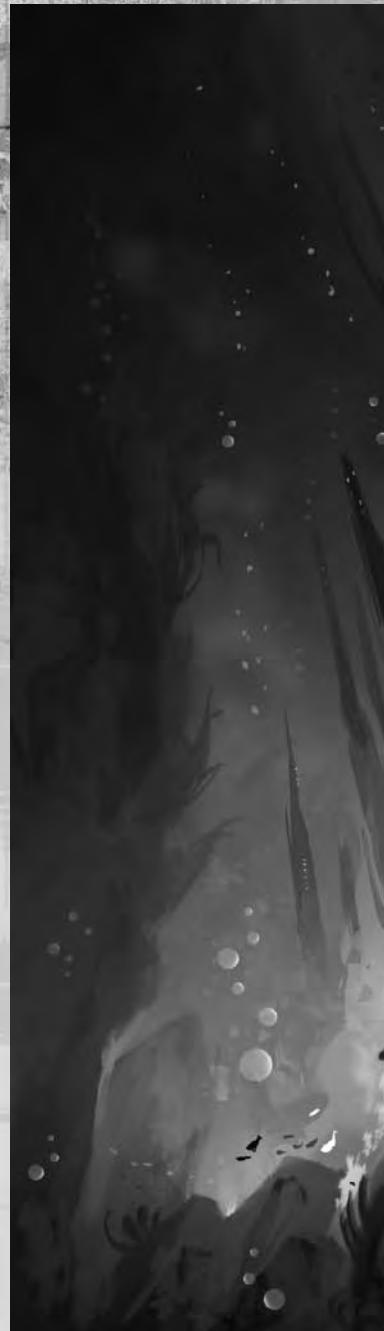
My consciousness felt like it had separated itself from my body - I've been told that it did - and that I was floating through nature from the open skies on down to the insects in the Earth. I could now truly understand how small and insignificant we are in the grand scheme, how arrogant we are for thinking we're something more. Hours seemed like minutes and eventually I settled back into my body, sweaty and breathless with exhilaration. As if I'd ever had any doubt, the Church was right.

It took me a whole day to fully recover. Two days for four hours. It was the most exhausting comedown I'd ever had. But it wasn't unpleasant, like that freeze-dried feeling you get af-

ter a Bliss bender. I just needed to rest and when I was done I went back ready for more. Sister Roxanne laughed. After all, just tripping out wasn't going to lead to enlightenment. I needed guided reflection and time to meditate on what I'd experienced before I could send my spirit back out into the world again.

So I worked with the Church and I meditated and I grew. My mind opened up to the things I'd experienced and I began to feel more at one with the world each and every day. And so my trips continued. Once a week Sister Roxanne would take me into the contemplation room and I would drift off into a mystical world of oneness. Each trip took me closer and closer to the source. At first, I couldn't tell why I was drawn to the oceans, but their timeless beauty and wonder reached in and grabbed my soul. It wasn't long before my entire experience was spend beneath the waves, exploring dark, magical places where man has never been.

I will never forget the day I first saw them. They were like angels. I had finally broken through the arrogance of man and discovered there was something more. There was a whole world underneath the oceans that we were not a part of and knew nothing about. And this world was a peaceful heaven. Amazing cities built out of volcanic rock and coral, inhabited by creatures older than the first mammals, an aquatic predecessor of man possessed of an ancient wisdom. Imagine my joy when I was told that they were still there. More than still there. Among us - the holiest of us - and the Church was bringing me to them. And they had chosen to gift mankind with their seed and the offspring of these holy unions where the true spiritual leaders for which I had been questing.





My life forever changed the day I discovered that I had been chosen for personal guidance by Mother Xenia, a wise woman and offspring of one of these unions. I was ecstatic. It was, as I'd come to learn, a profound honor. Late at night I was brought to her chamber. There she stood, cloaked and bathed in moonlight. I waited in silence for a moment before she turned to approach, her hood still covering her divine face. "You have come far. You are ready," she said.

"Thank you, Mother," I said. "But ready for what?"

"In order to reach the next step of enlightenment, you must be with me." She slipped back her hood, revealing something I had never seen before. Beauty. Smooth, gray flesh, gills to let her breathe in the holy depths, and deep, deep black eyes. She was divinity laid out before me. Mother Xenia reached out with a webbed hand and stroked my chest. "Relax. This is not only enlightening. It is also pleasurable."

The experience was nothing short of ecstasy.

CHAPTER THREE... THOSE WHO STRAY

BLOOD BRIGADE

Blind desperation sparks bloody violence. Terror snarls with teeth of hate. Slaughter becomes an act of holy worship. And a young girl's prayers are answered by whispers of suicide.

"O Father, we cannot alone cleanse the sin of our people. But our bodies are the living chalice of Your Precious Blood. The purer we are, the better we will ascend in your grace upon the day of our holy sacrifice."

The terror of the Blood Brigade is well known throughout the New Earth Government. A suicide bomber decimates a government office. A Nazzadi family is mauled on a side street. A city official barely avoids a car bomb explosion. The Blood Brigade is an insidious multi-headed beast that continues to spread violence and terror.

The Blood Brigade teaches that God visited all the horrors of the Aeon War upon man in judgment of his sin. Man, in his arrogance, has yet to truly learn from the decades of pain he has endured. Even today he calls forth and embraces as a brother those who once sought his death. The cult believes that the demonic image of the Nazzadi reveals their unholy roots. The Nazzadi are the true embodiment of evil and the New Earth Government is the "Great Betrayer" for sheltering them. Despite the government's propagandist lies, initiates of the Blood Brigade know the truth – that humanity cannot be saved unless mankind reclaims his righteousness in the eyes of God. The NEG must be laid low and faithful humans must rise to destroy their old enemy.

Most people today have suffered some sort of tragedy or sense of hopelessness. A soldier haunted by nightmares of blood, a mother whose child was reduced to a lifeless mess by a Migou rocket, a High School quarterback who saw his girlfriend rent into strings of dripping flesh by something hideous, or a middle-aged businessman who faces an empty future. Despite the government's best efforts to help, some people spiral into depression and disillusionment. This is the ground that the Blood Brigade recruits from and it's happening all over the world.

"God has sent us his final warning", teaches the Father. "For God will no longer be burdened by the sin of man. Cast all eyes, my children, to the place that was once the den of evil. See how, like Sodom and Gomorra, was Las Vegas swept aside by God's righteous hand."

It starts quietly enough. Leaflets promising support and comfort passed out in public places. Organized disaster relief efforts that offer victims a message of hope. Safe urban shelters opened to the dispossessed. Soon, the message of hope is mixed with messages of man's divine destiny as witnessed by "he who has forsaken all names but the Father." Those drawn to the message become volunteers in the service of the Ministry of Divine Truth – a subtly bigoted non-profit organization dedicated to humanitarian pursuits. But there are those who truly heed the suggestive call of distrust, bigotry, and hate. These people openly discriminate against the Nazzadi in their self-righteousness. Some go so far as to inflict violence against them. Those who show particular devotion to the Father's word are invited to the higher calling – to save those wretched members of humanity who have fallen under the corruption of the enemy that hides in the open. This is the calling of the Blood Brigade.

The Blood Brigade originated with David Muldine, a former television evangelist and multi-millionaire from New Zealand. He was there when the Rapine Storm first launched their hellish rampage through Southeast Asia. He saw first-hand the wake of inhuman horror left behind its path. His tortured mind wrestled to comprehend the violent carnage with hot, piercing clarity. He recoiled in terror at the large insect things that dined on human meat. He vomited his revulsion at the self-mutilated humans who gorged on the flesh of their own kind. He witnessed a world where humanity evaporated before the alien hunger of the grotesque. And his mind began to seep away into welcomed nothingness.

Then it happened. It came to him as he hid among the crumbled ruins of a burned building. Something nightmarish and primal crept its way around him, near him, behind him. Finally, it hissed an almost imperceptible word. A holy name. It drifted like a plague across the stinking air and somehow buried itself in the last bastion of reason that was David's mind. He lost consciousness and began to dream as if guided by something new. The whispers of his dream spoke the same message to him every night.

The scenes of death no longer horrified David Muldine. He was fascinated by the purity of the moment. He began to understand for God now spoke to him in his dreams. It was a cleansing that God demanded. The world must be purged of the unclean, the

Nazzadi, godless humans, and the Migou. Countless days passed as David made his way to the coast of Thailand, there to catch a boat to safety among thousands of other refugees. Each dreadful sight he saw seemed to make sense now, because his dreams showed the truth of it. David eventually found himself in the safety of Buenos Aires, there to begin the work of God's new calling – the building of a church and its secret brigade of God's holy avengers.

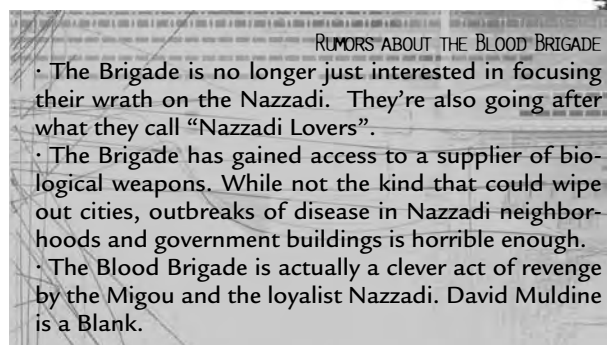
The Blood Brigade is the most dangerous kind of enemy. They are fanatically religious zealots who would happily sacrifice their own lives in keeping with the Father's word. In fact, the sole purpose of many Brigade cells is to do just that, in such a spectacular fashion that martyrdom would be assured – death is life to them. The last image that most envision before their final sacrifice is the picture of the Father smiling lovingly upon them. Of course, most of the Brigade have no idea that the smiling old man they see is not the true face of the Father.

13



Today, the Blood Brigade operates through independent terrorist cells, making them dangerous and difficult to track. Each cell, consisting of three or four operatives, reports to a leader under the authority of a superior cell. Names are kept secret beyond the brotherhood of the cell. Thus, the Blood Brigade cannot be compromised if a particular cell is broken. Each member is inducted into a cell only if he proves himself through a righteous test in keeping with the Father's teaching. This often involves a violent crime. The final phase of initiation is carried out through a blood ritual that culminates in the chanting of the holy name – the Dead God's name. It is said that once an initiate completes the Ritual of Brotherhood, God eternally marks his soul so that he can never again be released from God's will. Only then can His dream be truly shared.

No, David Muldine could never show his face in public. Most cannot yet understand that the violent scarring, peeling, and piercing of his flesh were acts commanded by God. But the day will soon come when all will understand his holy name.



CHURCH OF ALL

The Church of All sits quietly and unobtrusively within the cities of the New Earth Government. If one tried to look for it, he wouldn't find it. The government doesn't even think it's there and no one on the inside is blowing the whistle. On the other hand, if you hung out in new-age bookstores or attended psychic development workshops as a hobby, you might be invited to a lecture or a meditation group. They'll shut you out if they know you have dishonest intentions – they always know. But if you like what you experience, you'll be invited to join the Church of All.

The Church says it's a congregation of people dedicated to one key belief: that all life in the universe is connected and all life is part of something greater. Life is the All – they preach evolution. Initiates practice crystal harmonics, meditation, herbalism, holistic health, and psychic and magical development, all to expand consciousness and grow outside the bounds of conventional reality. That's what they are on the surface. They claim they're underground because the government persecutes anyone who tries to go beyond consensual reality. They claim New Earth Government paranoia suppresses them. And for most initiates, these practices are all they know.

It isn't until an initiate has been a growing part of the Church for some time that he is introduced to Harmony. The effects of Harmony are profound. It is an enchanted drug that attunes a person to the harmonic frequencies of the planet. Users feel at one with the world and everything in it. The Church claims that it is what god must feel. Once introduced, an initiate ritually ingests Harmony. Then the cult adds hallucinogens and starts manipulating the Harmony trip. The eternal majesty of the oceans becomes a focal point – the source of all life. Then he is introduced to the Third Circle.

The Third Circle are initiates who have seen what man was meant to be. The creatures they see are a more evolved and harmonious form of life. These amphibious beings come from under the sea. The Deep Ones finally rear their heads. The rising initiate's Harmony trips take on a whole new character. They can literally hear the call of the deep now and begin to have visions of Deep One cities. These fantasy cities appear far more elegant and grandiose than they are in real life. The Deep Ones appear to be graceful, al-

most angelic amphibians, bridging the gap between life on the land and life at the source. When the idea of alien life in the ocean becomes normal, a rising initiate is elevated to the Third Circle and introduced to the Second.

The Second Circle are Esoteric Order of Dagon Cultists chosen to work as recruiters. They tell the Third Order initiate about how they've participated in rituals with the Deep Ones, or bred with them, or both. The initiate is introduced to all manner of new and powerful rituals and is told the tales of the Cultists' experience in graphic detail, omitting the needlessly frightening particulars. Harmony trips take on an even stranger tone. The user has visions of rising cities and sleeping gods and a glorious world remade in their image. By the time a Third Circle initiate has reached this point it doesn't take long to get used to it. Then it's time for the final step.

The First Circle is composed of Hybrids in various states of transformation. They are the High Priests of the Church of All – the children of a higher race. The Priests tell the Second Circle initiates the old legends and fill them in on the secret world they've never known. They learn the true history of the world. The initiate comes to believe that the Deep Ones are truly higher beings. If they worship a sleeping deity, then he must be great indeed – and he must be reawakened so that others can behold his glory. Harmony trips become visions of R'lyeh and of the divinity that slumbers there. They begin to hear the voice of the living god in their dreams. No longer does the initiate worship nature. No longer does he worship the ocean. He now worships Cthulhu and is accepted into the Esoteric Order of Dagon.

From early initiation through acceptance into the Esoteric Order takes a while. Your average person isn't going to think that a cult run by fishmen with rape camps who are out to destroy the world is such a good idea. Theirs is a harder pill to swallow than say the Children of Chaos who offer incredible personal power. Dagonites are expected to be servants, humbled that they cannot evolve to the level of their masters and supplicant to their betters. So the Church of All's process is slow, but the results are impressive. Initiates who go all the way are thoroughly brainwashed to enjoy what they do and are fanatically loyal to their god.

The Church hides in most major New Earth Government cities. Recruiters canvas new-age and occult stores and events looking for those who might be sympathetic. They offer special consciousness expanding lectures and workshops for a nominal fee. Some initiates drop out before they learn the deeply hidden secrets, but they keep their involvement quiet. No one leaves the Church disgruntled – they are just sometimes called away. Even if that wasn't true, the cult keeps detailed blackmail files on all their initiates just in case. They also mystically screen all newcomers to keep out police or government officials, most especially the Federal Security Bureau.

Fortunately for them, the FSB has heard of them but knows very little and believes that the Church of All does not pose a serious threat. They believe the cult to be a seriously out there group of crystal-worshipping anti-establishment hippies and the most dangerous thing they do is fail to register if they are magically or psychically active. Such offenders are handed over the Office of Internal Security for prosecution and the rest slapped on the wrist. The government has simply never uncovered the truth. Though the Church of All is a consistent threat to the NEG, they stay low and they keep their noses clean. More importantly, they deal with things quickly. Those who threaten their secrecy are first blackmailed. If that does not work, these unfortunate souls face Hybrid hit squads. The Esoteric Order of Dagon cannot afford to lose the one thing that allows the ranks of their mortal initiates to grow.

RUMORS ABOUT THE CHURCH OF ALL

- The Church is working on new ways to accelerate the initiation process. It will involve regularly subjecting initiates to manipulative dream magic.
- Small batches of Harmony occasionally slip out onto the street. When they do, they most often go to very wealthy and discerning customers. Many dealers die trying to get a supply of the drug.
- The Children of Chaos have managed to infiltrate the Esoteric Order through the Church. The Chrysalis Corporation likes to keep tabs on everybody and the EOD doesn't typically like to keep in touch.



THE CIRCLE

The Circle. The name brings fear to those who know it. A group of the most dangerous dark sorcerers and para-psychics in the world, the Circle serves none other than the patron of magicians – Nyarlathotep. They believe their power and devotion have earned them a special place in their master's plans. Despite the efforts of the Children of Chaos, the Circle has never fallen in with the Chrysalis Corporation and their independence is something of a sore spot for the corporate cult. None of the Circle are even Dhohandoids.

They have been likened to the Children of Chaos' elite special forces. They get to who they want to get to and they do what they want to do. It is difficult to stop Circle spies and even more difficult to escape a Circle assassin. But they only do the will of their god and it is said that they are personally advised by one of his avatars. The Blind Lady, it is said, teaches them that their power is merely an extension of themselves and that they are merely an extension of the great power that owns them.

The Circle has existed since the Children of Chaos infected the Chrysalis Corporation. The Cult's dependency on the Rite of Transfiguration and eventual corporatization disgusted the Circle's founders. They simply declared themselves separate and had the power to back it up. They continued to serve the same master, but in their own distinct way.

Not surprisingly, they meddle heavily in the arcane underground. The Circle boasts some of the big power players in the illegal magic trade. They run a dishonest game, taking advantage of who they can and sowing chaos in the mystical world. Purchasing something from the Circle is a risky proposition. While they certainly have the most powerful and rarest goods, there is an equal chance that they will screw any buyer or send him and others to their destruction as give him what he wants. Members of the Circle are difficult to contact through the underground – they most commonly work through min-

ions. They destroy the character of anyone who gets too close to them and execute those who persist.

But the black market is just a sideline for them. They really specialize in taking out their master's most powerful enemies. They assassinate rival corporate executives. They brainwash politicians. They even hunt Taggers. The average mortal doesn't show up on their radar. You have to be someone important to get their attention. Some whisper that even the highest positions of state aren't safe from the Circle, but that seems unlikely.

Chasing the Circle is difficult at best. Each of them has been methodically erased from the system – technically, they don't exist anymore. They swim through any number of identities at a time. Add in a boatload of money and a lot of magical power and the government has barely been able to touch them. What few initiates they might find are "dead" within hours.

It is difficult to join the Circle. No one can ask, but instead must be invited – only the powerful and skilled are. But the invitation isn't enough. Initiates must prove their fanatical loyalty to both their fellows and their god. Rites include a certain level of brainwashing, pain, and ultimately the blood sacrifice of a loved one. Most of the cultists have murdered their spouses, mothers, or children to secure their place within. All bear scars and brands that mark them as one of the Circle.

Ultimately, the Circle has its own agenda. They certainly help destroy the enemies of the Chrysalis Corporation, but they have another purpose. They have been tasked by their god to gather the mystical power of the world into their hands. This is no mean feat, but the Circle does their best. They steal rare tomes from institutions and the rich. They delete legitimate rituals and manuscripts from the electronic record and disseminate corrupted versions. They draw the attention of the Office of Internal Security to sacrificial groups. But most importantly, they actively seek to subvert or destroy those agencies opposed to their activities. They make sure no one looks too carefully into the inner workings of the Chrysalis Corporation. They help cover up Dhohandoid activity in major arcologies. They send the OIS and the Federal Security Bureau on wild goose chases. They lure those same agencies into death traps. There are

LOOSE ENDS

Farouk Hassan from the Hot Merchandise story in the CthulhuTech Core Book is a member of the Circle. All that business about independent operation was just another level of cover. If you use him in your game, you now have a new cult to play with.

those that say the Circle's spies already hold power inside the government and are slowly destroying the competition from within.

They play a cat and mouse game with the Office of Internal Security, who knows they're there but can't catch them. The cult frequently taunts the federal agency. The job of policing crimes of a mystical nature is already dangerous enough, but it is the threat of the Circle that keeps agents looking over their shoulder. The Circle has cost more agents than any other single source since the Office's inception and they seem to take perverse glee in continuing the trend. The OIS, almost to a person, believes it has a personal bone to pick with the cult. For some agents, the Circle has become their white whale. It seems more than likely that either the cult has discovered a mystical way to predict the agency's plans or that they have been infiltrated at high levels, because the Circle makes the Office look like fools. The OIS maintains a close eye on their employees, searching for a possible and ever elusive leak.

Murmurs in the underground say that the Circle is about to pull a master move to turn the Office of Internal Security against the Eldritch Society. The

government has never known about Tagers, simply regarding them as an unclassified extra-dimensional enemy best killed before study. But if the Circle can reveal a threat from within the New Earth Government and link Chrysalis Corporation illegal activity to them, the OIS will take off after them in a heartbeat. They also say that the Circle is close to solving an arcane riddle of immense proportions. There are some who suspect that it has something to do with the foundation of the Chrysalis Corporation – the Rite of Transfiguration. The Rite has never been able to be controlled, but some believe the Circle has found something beyond even that. If that were the case, the servants of Nyarlathotep would command incredible power. But most who hear these rumors dismiss them as folly, mostly because the alternative would be unthinkable.

RUMORS ABOUT THE CIRCLE

- They have infiltrated into the high ranks of the Office of Internal Security. Their spies corrupt the informational structure of the agency.
- To even get the attention of the Circle a person must murder someone close to them.
- The Circle is experimenting with new variations and applications of the Rite of Transfiguration.





CONGREGATION OF THE EARTH MOTHER

The Congregation of the Earth Mother has existed in many incarnations throughout the millennia. Once they wielded great power, spread throughout the tribes of man. Today they are but a shadow of their former selves, scattered and divided thanks to the cult hunters within the Federal Security Bureau.

Throughout all its forms, the Congregation has been a fertility cult of one form or another. They are a neo-pagan cult today, worshipping nature as sanctified. They go beyond the tree-huggers of a bygone era and have roots deep within Wiccan traditions. Initiates preach personal empowerment through respect for nature and the natural order and are active environmentalists. Herbalism for both health and recreation is common as is practice of “light magics” – rituals meant to help another. Congregation sorcerers do not register because they believe it is blasphemous to require regulation of something that could be the natural birthright of nearly every person on the planet. Their gatherings are healing and cleansing rituals, rituals to give thanks for the bounty of harvest, and orgies to celebrate the mystery of life. On the surface, it isn’t too hard for the Congregation to attract environmentalists who don’t mind the idea of wanton sex.

Then again, things grow darker as initiation continues. Natural hallucinogens and narcotics become commonplace. Ritualistic sex becomes more a part of regular worship, as do bastard offspring that are raised in cult-maintained communal homes. Attitudes regarding nature deepen and become more emotional, to the point where an initiate might come to regard a tree much like a lover. Initiates are encouraged to get in touch with their “spirit animal” and let these creatures possess them. While they retain the ability to function in society, underneath they become more and more bestial. They run on instinct without conscience, sating their natural urges as they come. Many hold survival of the fittest as the highest law and become violent, culling what they believe to be the weaker elements of the species. Some acquire ritualistic tattoos that bring them closer to an animal nature, some file their teeth to become natural predators, and some go even further. The further the Congregation goes, the more they throw caution to the wind as they operate on a more intuitive level. It’s no surprise why the FSB wanted to wipe them

out, nor is it shocking that the Congregation wasn’t capable of mounting a coordinated defense.

The god hidden behind the veils, the deity that powers and drives them they call the Black Mother. She is known by other names, including the Dark Goat of the Woods. To those who truly study occult lore, they know she is none other than the Old One called Shub-Niggurath. The Congregation believes that the Black Mother is the perfect goddess of nature. Initiates believe that mortals need to learn to live in true harmony with the natural order and believe that animals are closer to nature than we and therefore a purer form of life. Once returned to this planet, the Black Mother will be able to help all things – aliens, mortals, monsters, animals, and plants – live in perfect natural harmony. Initiates truly and deeply believe that she is benevolent or at least as benevolent as nature gets – they understand that nature has a dark side, which they view as necessary and welcome. After all, the Black Mother is the embodiment of the ways things should be.

Though nearly destroyed, the Congregation of the Earth Mother hides in small pockets across the world. They are most populous in remote areas like the primordial forests of the Pacific Northwest of North America, the returning rainforests of South America, and the dark jungles of Africa. Rumors whisper that they are reorganizing and planning something to herald their re-emergence into the world. These rumors are not entirely untrue. They owe their newfound purpose to the Chrysalis Corporation who has graciously stepped in to help them. The Children of Chaos have presented themselves as allies in the Congregation’s great quest, believing that the gods should once again walk among the world. It should be obvious that their children have lost their way without deific guidance. The Corporation is a machine of the gods that executes their will to bring them back from exile at the hands of their enemies – something the Congregation is prepared to believe. After all, the Dhohanoids wear the forms of their gods and are much closer to nature than mortals because of it.

The Chrysalis Corporation is lying to them. They could really care less about a crippled fertility cult. However, they are allies that can be used to help bring Shub-Niggurath across into this dimension

and help hasten the end of mortal civilization. To that end, they are the main reason the Congregation is still going and they provide the “pagans” with resources and safe havens across the world.

The Congregation is getting bold. They are actively recruiting to increase their numbers. Surprisingly, they are finding easy targets within the arcologies of the New Earth Government as more and more people feel disconnected from nature. The Congregation’s naturalist/Wiccan front also draws in the alternatively spiritual and those who regard themselves as witches. The cult’s numbers are increasing and, with the guidance of the Children of Chaos, are staying off the Federal Security Bureau’s radar.

The cults of Shub-Niggurath go back through the entirety of Human history. Higher levels of initiation within the Congregation draw heavily from Babylonian, Sumerian, Egyptian, and Greek fertility cults. Today, nearly everything about her “church” is rooted in modern paganism and Wicca. There is no doubt that the true masters of the Black Mother’s congregation knew and worshipped her as Shub-Niggurath, but somehow this knowledge was lost in their decimation. The Congregation of the Earth Mother is a religion that has lost its true initiates and now stumbles naively along on what they thought was the truth. Since most of the monstrous children of the Dark Goat are gone and the goddess herself is unlikely to correct them, it all seems to be working out nicely for the Old Ones.

RUMORS ABOUT THE CONGREGATION OF THE EARTH MOTHER

- Something big is going down in the Pacific Northwest. The Congregation has solidified power and exist in greater numbers there than anywhere else in the world.
- The most initiated know full well about the true nature of the Black Mother. It just suits them to play games with the Chrysalis Corporation for now. They believe the arrogant cult of Nyarlathotep will get its due when Shub-Niggurath returns.
- The monstrous children of the Dark Goat are not gone. Powerful sorcerers within the Congregation found ways to conceal them or give them mortal forms.
- They have magic that allows them to “channel” their spirit animal and bestow on “mediums” supernatural abilities.



DIONYSUS CLUB

Hidden deep within the halls of wealth and privilege is a secret society rooted in the ecstasies of old. Catering to the jaded pleasures of the rich and famous, the Dionysus Club takes its name from the Greek god of wine. Ancient worshippers participated in orgiastic and ecstatic rituals, sometimes losing themselves to sensation and their own base desires. The Dionysus Club of the modern day is no different, but part of a much darker purpose.

On the surface, the cult appears to be nothing more than a place for rich people to secretly gather and conspire to increase their wealth and status while indulging themselves in excess. Only those invited by an existing member may join. The Club preaches that experience is the purpose of life and only through indulgence can one truly live. The terms of initiation are simple. Everything that happens related to the Dionysus Club is a secret – the kind that they must take with them to their grave. Initiates must always be loyal to each other, upon pain of death. For those things, initiates gain access to an enormous power base and more sex, drugs, and forbidden pleasures than anyone should really have. And true enough, new initiates have exactly this experience.

But those prices are the letter of the pact, not the spirit. Once an initiate has become accustomed to

the cult's power and vice, his loyalty is tested. The test varies from person to person, but the initiate is always asked to do something that strays into the realm of moral objection. He might be asked to do a favor that risks or harms people he likes and cares about or he might be asked to put himself at a disadvantage to help another Dionysian. On the other hand, he might simply be asked to bend or abuse the rules in his sphere of influence. Unfortunately, the penalty for disloyalty is death – an excellent motivator when the initiate hears what he has to do. If an initiate is found to be loyal, he advances in status within the Dionysus Club and is given his reward. This reward is always something that pushes a current vice a little further along. If he likes “barely legal” girls, his reward is only fifteen years old. If he likes snorting coke, his reward is to smoke it. Of course, initiates do not have the option to refuse their rewards either. With each test comes greater risk or humiliation in the name of the cult, along with greater and more debauched rewards.

At some point, the secret masters that run the Club discover an initiate's secret and sickest hidden fantasies and desires. Some have rape fantasies. Some are closet necrophiliacs or pedophiles. Some have sadistic fantasies of torture and humiliation, while some have a secret passion for slaughter. Each time



an initiate's loyalty is tested, he is drawn closer and closer to his deepest, most disturbing desires. When he finally goes beyond the pale, he occupies the highest circle of the Dionysus Club. He is a sadist, a rapist, a murderer, or worse, and completely morally bankrupt. Only his loathsome urges remain, coupled with blind ambition and absolute dedication to the cult.

That final initiation also reveals the greater purpose of the Dionysus Club – to recruit the rich and powerful into the spider-webbing network of the Death Shadows. Initiates often become part of the Disciples of Death's Shadow and move towards corruption on a greater scale. Some however stay behind and help increase the influence and membership of the Dionysus Clubs. The Shadows regard the Clubs as an important and necessary part of their operation and happily provide support whenever it's needed.

But the cult isn't all business. When the time comes, the Club goes all out with outrageous decorations, outrageous themes, and outrageous vice. These regular parties host a great many "standard" debaucheries, with plenty of drugs and sex. The more jaded Dionysians regard these as trips back to their roots, while the less initiated revel in the decadence of it all. Some parties have been known to go on and on – the longest lasted thirty-seven days. There are always new chemicals or experiences to be had and these parties hook the unsure quickly.

Anyplace the Dionysus Club operates, they hold significant influence in the circles of the elite. However, their influence can only spread as far as their current membership will allow. It all depends upon position and initiation – the cult can get more out of an initiate who's well on his way than one who's fresh. These days, the Club is prevalent among business executives, politicians, and media icons. There's a chance that the CEO of the company you just invested in destroyed her husband's career to advance a "brother." Your local police chief may actively be promoting the increasingly violent drug trade. The singer you idolize may have raped a young boy last night. The CEO is responsible for your money, the police chief is responsible for your safety, and the singer influences the minds of your

children. The evils they perpetuate may be small in the grand scheme, but that makes them no less destructive to the people that suffer them.

At any given time, there is at least one Dionysus Club in every major arcology throughout the New Earth Government. Each Club has a core membership of a few hundred in various states of initiation. The greatest and most renowned Clubs are those in Los Angeles, Hong Kong, Johannesburg, Rio de Janeiro, and surprisingly Chicago – the seat of political power.

The Club sets up shop in unlikely places. Forgotten back alley basements, abandoned warehouses, old government bomb shelters – wherever they can quickly grab and won't gather unwanted attention. Even though the Clubs are lavishly decorated, an interesting counterpoint to the urban decay around them, they contain little that can be used as evidence. This makes it easy for Dionysians to abandon a Club when necessary, leaving the authorities with nothing. Each of these locations is also mystically protected, to prevent prying eyes.

It is difficult to crack the Dionysus Club. The physical locations the Club occupies at any given time can change on a moment's notice. Their policies of secrecy and loyalty keep them safe from each other. The government learned of their existence completely by accident and what few successful busts there have been happened by pure luck. A bunch of rich and influential people all covering each other's backs makes the Dionysus Club an elusive foe.

RUMORS ABOUT THE DIONYSUS CLUB

- There are internet circles of regular people who are trying to find the Clubs. They believe that if they find the Club's location and learn the secret signs that they will be accepted, even if they aren't rich, famous, or powerful. They really just want to get inside because they've heard about the vice and want that kind of life for themselves.
- The Dionysus Club doesn't actually exist. It's a bone the Death Shadows throw at the Federal Security Bureau to keep them distracted.
- The last President was a member and had been for years before he was elected. What happened behind closed doors is more than what most people could handle.

THE EMPTY

The headlines show they are there. The law-abiding wife who suddenly poisons her entire family. The shut-in who decides to stalk and kill a stranger just to see if he can. The honors students who rape the neighborhood girls. The cult of disillusioned youths who decide that summoning demons is the shortest route to personal fulfillment. The corporate executive who shoots everyone on the rush hour train before killing himself. The grandfather that molests every member of his family he can get his hands on. The step-mother who boils her daughter in the tub and doesn't call emergency services.

They are the knowing look in the homeless' eyes. They are the shell-shocked stare of those who've lost their souls to the Aeon War. They are what exists when all is lost. They are the Empty.

For some, absolute despair leads to perfect clarity – or at least a shattering of mind and spirit that masquerades as such. The climate of the Aeon War is one that some people simply cannot endure. They are lost in ways that no mortal institution can help. Some plod along in their gray and meaningless lives, checked out to the world, running on autopilot. Some wind up in institutions with no real hope of ever going back to their lives. Some choose the soft option and take their own lives. But some find themselves looking for something – anything – else to give their lives meaning, because hope is gone forever. It is these to which shades of darkness call, leading them to become part of something that has no face and no name.

In that black and cold place, something in these people calls out beyond the world and something answers. A sliver of unknowable darkness enters the rifts in their souls and they find that for which they've been looking. Perfect acceptance. Perfect love. Purpose. Meaning. But only a nightmarish perversion of these things, the kind only someone who had become truly empty inside would accept and cherish. Then the madness begins in earnest.

The thing now inside them drives them to unspeakable acts, the kind of things that happen suddenly in families and communities that leave them feeling shocked, horrified, and victimized. The kind of things that reveal the carefully crafted illusion of safety to be the charade it is. One quiet inhuman act sends ripples into the world around it that leave lasting

scars. It is the kind of personal horror that makes one question if there is a god and why he'd let something like this happen.

However, in the Strange Aeon benevolent gods are in short supply. Whatever force is behind the creation of the Empty is a being that does not want humanity to survive. Those few fringe occult scholars who know the Empty exist have differing theories. Perhaps it is the work of the N'athm and their powers of madness, creeping into society to sow darkness. Perhaps darkness is all that's left when the higher soul gives up. Some within the Eldritch Society believe that the clearing created by such absolute surrender to despair calls to the Forgotten One Myrovh, that she is creating new pawns in some unfathomable game. But most believe that it is Gurathnaka, the Shadow of Night, who brings these nightmares into being. Whether the Old One sleeps or not, these scholars say that it ushers pieces of its alien consciousness into the damaged soul and it is these shards of nightmare that forever warp the people known only as the Empty.

In addition to those who lose themselves in the face of the Strange Aeon, there are those who are taken through their unfortunate circumstance. The homeless are among the most prevalent. Though there are many factors that contribute to homelessness – some societal, some circumstantial, and some psychological – many homeless people give in to the hopelessness surrounding their lives. It is through these cracks that the nightmare seeps. However, Empty homeless don't often perpetrate the heinous acts others do. At the bottom rung of society, they band together and create a sort of hive mind that watches and waits. They are the eyes and ears of the thing influencing the Empty, perfectly and innocuously coordinated. Schizophrenics are also curiously susceptible. Their biologically skewed reality opens them up to the thing that drives the Empty. Unlike the homeless, schizophrenics end up the same as other Empty – lost and drawn to commit horrifying acts.

The fate of someone who is Empty is usually grim. Most are either apprehended by the authorities, shot resisting arrest or threatening law officers, or they take their own lives. When interrogated, most can provide no adequate explanation as to why they did what they did. They most often flatly confess to their crimes in detail, as if retelling their normal daily

activities. If they did not confess, a lie detector test would not help because they show no emotional distress at all. The Federal Security Bureau sometimes coordinates with the Office of Internal Security to remove convicted Empty to testing facilities, but most rot away in jail cells with no chance of parole. Many die in prison, killed by other inmates. But whatever their ultimate fate, one common thread binds them – none feel remorse for their crimes.

The Empty attract N'athm like worms to a corpse. There is something in that final step into desolation that calls to them. However, the creatures do nothing to “assist” in an Empty’s descent – they simply sit and watch. When finally the horror is exposed to the community around them, the N'athm then step in and use their powers to make things that much worse. But strangely, they leave before real damage is done. It’s as if they want to let things be, like artists letting the work speak for itself.

As N'athm are predominately solitary beings, if someone were discover this fact he could use the unusual group of the creatures as a warning that something terrible was soon to happen. Some have stumbled onto this fact by accident, but it is only discussed in the most fringe of circles. Though organizations such as the Federal Security Bureau are aware of the underground rumors surrounding the Empty, they do not have evidence to believe them. Even so, how would they fight such an enemy? No one can tell who might become one of them. No one can predict where they will strike or what horror they will bring. The best anyone can hope to do is react – and hope that the New Earth Government can change things enough to bring real hope back to the people of the world.

RUMORS ABOUT THE EMPTY

- It’s really all just the N’athm. That business about Gurathnaka is a bunch of rumors seeded into paranoid minds to make the threat seem that much greater and impossible to overcome.
- It’s funny what happens when the government experiments on an unsuspecting populace, isn’t it?
- The Federal Security Bureau is getting better at investigating those who are flagged in their regular psychological evaluations, but they do not have the manpower necessary to check all of them out. It’s a scary world out there and lots of people are flagged as questionable all the time.
- The New Earth Government covers up just as many incidents as it lets go to press. It’s worse than people think.





SCIIONS OF FOREVER

An enigmatic assembly of gifted sorcerers and those para-psychics who perceive time, the Scions of Forever revere the Endless One Yog-Sothoth. All secrets are revealed to his eyes. It is said that in him all that has passed and all that will come to pass has been written, and the Scions wish to know it all.

The Scions of Forever are keepers of secret magics long-lost. The rituals they command are among the most powerful in this world and all are meant to part the veil and peer through time. There are those that claim the Scions themselves can manipulate the temporal flow and that many of them are beyond death. Rumors say that the oldest among them are millennia old, if not older, and some believe the oldest to have transcended linear time. In any case, their magic keeps them concealed for no one can find them.

There are few who would believe such a group exists. Only the most initiated of occult scholars have even heard tales of the Scions. Even then, those that search for the cult are regarded much the same as those who seek Bigfoot or the Loch Ness Monster – the topic is entertaining conversation, but folly to a serious researcher. But exist they do and what little evidence presents itself is more than enough to keep seekers dedicated to their quest. The cult is almost impossible to find. Few alive would have any idea how to attract the attention of the Scions of Forever, much less how to seek them out.

To walk as a Scion is to walk as no other mortal. The Scions' regular contact with things beyond this world and their expansive understanding of all time change them evermore. They are, by conventional standards, no longer sane. Scions do not keep the company of regular mortals and they eschew the society of the New Earth Government. They simply cannot relate to normal people anymore. Those that have been contacted by the cult describe them as distant and otherworldly – a condition only exacerbated in those who've seen centuries pass. Furthermore, no one knows how many Scions there are, just as no one knows whether or not they have some kind of leader. Nobody even knows how long they've been around, but undoubtedly if one were asked the answer would be "always."

Though few, the Scions wield enormous temporal power. Their knowledge of the future has provided them with fabulous riches. They have always known

which nations to back, which researchers to fund, and in which companies to invest. To the individual the Scions are the most privately and quietly wealthy citizens of the world, though few choose to display it. Likewise, their familiarity with the past gives them enormous political power. They know the right things to say to influence or ingratiate, but more importantly they know all the dirty little secrets of the world. When they cannot manipulate, they blackmail. However, these things matter little to them.

Fundamentally, the Scions of Forever would be considered neutral in the Aeon War. They know what the future holds, so they see no need to try and change it. The future is what the future is. But still, for reasons understood fully only by them the Scions step in and enigmatically guide individuals. Their appearance mysterious and their advice cryptic, they often include information of personal benefit to the receiver. This lends credence to the Scions' message and few refuse. However, such people are at the mercy of the Scions. They are incapable of summoning or contacting the cult and can only choose whether or not to obey. Unfortunately, no one knows if the guidance the Scions bring will result in benefit or tragedy – except those that bring it. The Scions refer to this as "smoothing the path" so that the future may more easily arrive. They claim that the future will come one way or another and they are just helping it arrive in the most painless way possible. The question is, painless for whom?

There are those among the other cults who would bring the Scions under their heels. Some few within the Esoteric Order of Dagon believe the Scions of Forever know where R'lyeh lies – after all, all the past is open to them. But the Deep Ones don't want to believe that someone has more powerful magics than them and their pride typically wins out. Within the Children of Chaos, the Circle actively seeks them. Rumor has it they wish to strike some sort of bargain with the soothsayers, but most regard this as an unlikely gambit at best. Fortunately for all, the Scions do not interfere with the affairs of the Migou, who would simply seek to assimilate the mortals or use them for their own designs. The aliens are not accustomed to anyone's counsel except their own.

It is impossible to outwit or endanger a Scion of Forever. Since they can see the future, they always seem to be one step ahead of everyone. They always know

when someone is lying. They always know when someone means them harm. Woe betide those who try to cross the Scions – their futures won't be smooth. Betrayers soon find it isn't worth living through that kind of hell.

Traveling the dangerous roads they do, one might suspect that the Scions would attract the murder-

instead of the salad, and that there's twenty terranotes somebody dropped under his desk. Another might be told to change his job, leave his spouse, and take on a new mistress. Others might be given information to advance at their careers or to acquire large sums of money, at some sort of emotional cost. What purpose do these actions serve? They often seem trivial or at the very least not of

25



ous attentions of the Hounds, but they do not. It seems they have found a way to strike a deal with the creatures. Perhaps it is because the Scions believe they are servants of fate, not greedy sorcerers trying to manipulate time for their own personal gain. But that might be attributing too many mortal traits to a being beyond understanding. It is more likely that the Hounds have some gain in allowing the Scions to use their powers. Perhaps the Scions found something that the Hounds want.

Recently, many claim to have been visited by the Scions across the Pacific Northwest of North America – Seattle and Vancouver specifically. Something's happening near those places that's attracting their attention. China as well. Their approaches can seem utterly surreal. One person might be advised to take a different train to work, order the soup

worldly importance. And why so many people in such well-defined areas? What is that thing that's drawing them there? What they desire is anyone's guess, but those who know believe that it can't be good – it seems sort of like firefighting.

RUMORS ABOUT THE SCIONS OF FOREVER

- The Scions of Forever are a ghost story. Really. They're like the Men in Black of the arcane world.
- The Ashcroft Foundation has infrequent but regular visits from the Scions of Forever.
- The Scions have taken an interest in the White Human-Nazzadi mixed children. Mothers are often given strange information to "help" raise their children.



SLEEPERS

Some people are inexplicably drawn to their dreams. Perhaps their dreams are vivid, almost real. Perhaps what they see in their dreams often comes true. Perhaps these people just see their dreams as a boundless land of fantasy just waiting to be explored. Oftentimes these people find themselves in new-age or occult bookstores searching for ways to learn more about their dreams. They buy and read volumes of books and when given the chance join workshops that help them interpret their dreams and, more importantly, consciously control them.

Lucid dreaming is a topic of some controversy. Some believe that people can learn to consciously program their dreams. Some believe that people can learn to stay mentally conscious in their dreams, controlling them as their physical bodies rest. Others believe that all dreams are connected through what Jung called the Universal Subconscious and that lucid dreamers can drift from dream to dream spiritually connected to all other people. Scientists generally don't know what to think for even in the modern day dreams are a great mystery.

Finding legitimate workshops on lucid dreaming isn't terribly difficult. Anyplace that does significant traffic in books on alternative spirituality should have fliers for them. But every now and again, one of these workshops is taught by someone who truly knows what they're talking about – someone who has a deeply intimate knowledge of dreams. It's in these workshops that one has the chance to meet one of the Sleepers.

The Sleepers are most alive when they slumber. Masters of lucid dreaming, they have also mastered the magic of dreams. They are one of the few cults that could be said to be "benevolent," using their dream arts to protect the sleeping world against those who would violate and manipulate them in their sleep. There are many who would use the power of dream magic unscrupulously and the Sleepers take it upon themselves to be the first and only line of defense in the mortal world.

They recruit from among the most talented lucid dreamers they find in their workshops. Only interested in those with a similar mindset – an altruistic or protective one – the Sleepers quickly dismiss those who are selfish, greedy, or secretly malevolent. Those who are chosen find themselves visited by the cult in their dreams. They are asked if they wish to expand

their knowledge of dreams and their power within them, in exchange for service to the greater whole. Few who are approached fail to accept – after all, the Sleepers have secretly watched them in their sleep to make sure they would be a good fit. Initiates are quickly taught arcane skills and learn the secrets of dream magic – those that don't already enter dreams para-psychically.

It is said that the cult is steeped in the tradition of the mystery cult of the Greek god Hypnos – the god of sleep – though its roots go far deeper than that. The highest initiates among the Sleepers believe that they have existed for millennia longer than that, since the first days that early man was able to master arcane power. Stories tell of a shadowy guide, a wise man who appeared only in dreams. This guide held the key to dreams and gave it to the first of the Sleepers, entrusting them to keep it safe for all mankind. Many believe that he was once a mortal sorcerer who had ascended beyond the World of Elements, perhaps one of the first, who felt enough kinship with his less evolved fellows to help them in what he knew was eventually to come. Others believe him to be an avatar of Nyarlathotep, imparting eldritch power in yet another of his unknown labyrinthine plans. However, some believe that this man was an avatar of the Forgotten One Morfean, crossing time and space to give mankind a weapon against his enemies. Since the disappearance of the Dreamlands, the Sleepers keep no counsel but their own.

Once the Sleepers not only traveled dreams, they went beyond the dreams of mortals. This dimension beyond dreams was sometimes called the Dreamlands, home to many ancient wonders. But those days are gone. It seems that Gurathnaka, the creeping dread, Old One, the devourer of dreams succeeded in his eons old desire. The Dreamlands are cut off from the world of men, some say forever consumed. Today, the cult's numbers are a quarter of what they once were, the rest dead in their sleep or forever raving in asylums, the victims of horrifying depredation.

Since the Sleepers rarely gather in the physical world, they are at little risk of being busted by the government. Most of their daytime activities are perfectly legal. Teaching effective seminars on lucid dreaming is hardly against New Earth Government law. The most illegal thing the majority of the cult is involved in is the illegal practice of magic – few Sleeper dream sorcerers choose to register. Those federal agents who

get too close find themselves being steered in other directions by their suddenly “precognitive” dreams or frightened away by chronic nightmares.

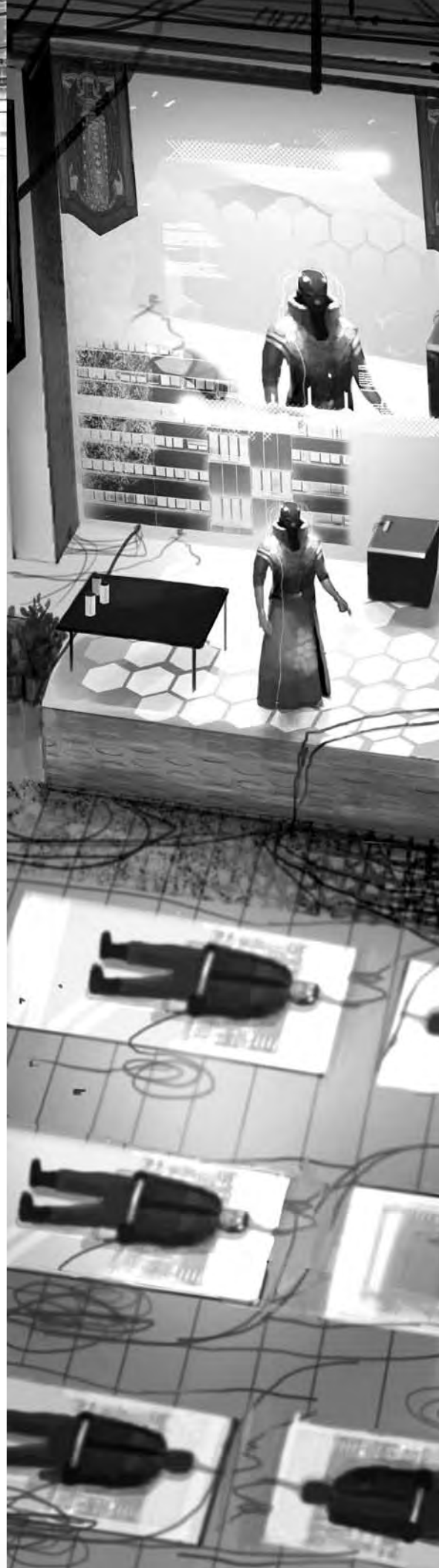
The cult operates the world over. After all, physical distance means little beyond the wall of sleep. Sleepers in Johannesburg can join with those in Chicago to aid those in Berlin. Coded electronic transmissions combined with meetings in dreams coordinate the efforts of the cult. In addition to protecting the citizens of the New Earth Government against night terrors, the Sleepers do what they can to afflict ne’er-do-wells within society and cultists and sorcerers without. Any mortal enemy of the NEG that the cult can find soon suffers a barrage of horrifying dreams and subconscious manipulation. This is not always successful, but if this power is applied at critical junctures it may be enough to distract these malevolent powers for the waking authorities to gain an advantage.

However, there is a dark side of the cult. There are some Sleepers who find themselves growing beyond what they believe to be strictly mortal codes of conduct. Secretly, they begin to manipulate those they seek to save without failing to perform their solemn duties. The activities of these renegades do not typically alert the rest of the cult, though they give these flexibly moral sorcerers no small degree of temporal power. They see it as a small sacrifice on the part of the whole, a reward for services rendered. If they were to be discovered, there would be a schism within the Sleepers, a civil war of sorts as the questionably ethical defended themselves against the morally upright.

If the rumors that Gurathnaka sleeps are true, then the Sleepers are indeed the masters of dreams in the World of Elements. Their greatest threat then comes from practitioners of the arcane – but in the Strange Aeon, few can afford to be complacent. If the god were to awaken, the cult would be first he would devour and soon after the mortal world would no longer even be safe when they dreamed.

RUMORS ABOUT THE SLEEPERS

- There is no such thing as a benevolent cult. Whatever they’ve spun into the dreams of those who claim to have “discovered” them is a great Sleeper PR campaign.
- The Sleepers and the Federal Security Bureau have a secret agreement. The agency leaves the cult alone to do its business, protecting New Earth Government citizens where the government cannot.
- At least part of Gurathanaka is awake and simply watching with amusement.



SPLITTING HAIRS

Enrique didn't know what to do when the notes started showing up. Every night he'd lock the door, go to bed, and the next morning there one would be - a strange note on his dresser. The notes themselves weren't anything special. Good old-fashioned hand-written letters on a small blank sheet of white paper. At first he thought someone was playing a joke on him. He confronted everyone he could think of about it until he got a note that said, 'YOU WON'T FIND ME.' Then he called the police. They came and looked at his condo and the notes and told him there were no

signs of breaking and entering and since nothing was stolen and no one was hurt there wasn't anything they could do. So he tried to stay up all night to catch whoever was leaving them. He went to the bathroom around 5 am and sure enough, there was a new note. Next he set up his digital video recorder. Another note, nothing on the tape.

By this point, Enrique was sufficiently freaked out and decided to finally try the one thing he hadn't - doing what the note said. It wasn't re-



ally a big deal, but it was spooky the way the instruction was delivered. All it said for the last week was, 'TAKE THE 6:20 AM TRAIN.' Enrique took the 6:50 am train to work every morning. But why would someone want him to catch the same train a half hour earlier? But he did.

That day, the train broke down. It got stuck in one of the tunnels with some sort of electrical problem that took them over an hour to fix. If Enrique had taken his usual train, he'd have gotten to work on time. Instead, he spent over an hour getting to know the people sitting next to him, which included a beautiful Nazzadi girl named Riky. They hit it off and exchanged info. However, none of this explained the note or who had mysteriously sent it.

The notes stopped for the time being. Enrique went on with his life. He went out with Riky and it wasn't long before they were in a committed relationship. Months passed. He moved in with Riky. They found themselves a lovely condo a level up from where they were, but it was a bit more than they could afford. They figured being house-poor wasn't the worse thing that could happen to them, so they were okay with it. They'd been in the new place less than a week when Enrique got another note. This one said, 'EAT LUNCH IN THE TOLEDO CONFERENCE ROOM.' He knew better than to ignore it, but he didn't show Riky. It was just too weird.

That very day Enrique packed himself a delightful lunch and headed to the Toledo Conference Room when it was time – and walked in on the Vice-President of the company having sex with the Director of Personnel Resources. They had forgotten to lock the door and were both married to other people, not to mention how much trouble they'd get in for this kind of office romance. It didn't take

long for Enrique to get a nice promotion and a juicy pay raise. Suddenly that condo wasn't so expensive.

More months went by. No notes. Enrique and Riky got married. They had a nice spring wedding and even had a reception in a room with a window to the outside. It was expensive, but worth it. They had a wonderful honeymoon in the tropics, but they brought home a present. Somewhere along the line, their birth control had failed. Riky was pregnant. It was a shock, but they couldn't have been happier.

While the fact that they were different races wasn't that much of a problem, although Riky's father hadn't been as happy as he could have, the challenges began now that a baby was entering the picture. Riky wanted the child to have a Nazzadi name and know his heritage. Enrique didn't see why he should educate their child into a culture that was fabricated, much less name him in a fake language. Things got tense, the way they had never been tense before. Enrique thought Riky was clinging to a ridiculous past and she thought he was a bigot.

And it got worse. The child was White – one of the rare and unusual xenomixed children. Riky believed them to be blessed. Enrique couldn't believe that his wife had birthed a freak. They went into counseling and things slowly got better. Enrique let her give the child a Nazzadi name, but insisted the child be raised as a normal part of the world. Riky let it go because he was softening and their relationship was getting back to what it used to be.

Then, after more than year, another note appeared like magic on the couple's dresser. This one Riky found first and naturally she asked her husband about it. Enrique tried to play it off, but eventually told her the whole story. She didn't know if she believed it, but Enrique did and that's all that mattered to her. The note said, 'TAKE WEST STREET HOME.' West Street was an alternate route back from Enrique's train home at night. As he'd learned to do, he was going to do it.

Unfortunately, that night something got loose on West Street and murdered Enrique and four other people before police could kill it. It was a nearly impossible time for Riky. Fortunately, Enrique had an excellent life insurance policy through his company, so she and the baby were going to be okay. The morning after the funeral, Riky found one last note on her dresser. It said, 'RAISE YOUR CHILD AMONG YOUR PEOPLE.'



CHAPTER FOUR...GUIDING DARK PASSIONS

Now that you've read this book, you're undoubtedly working on ways to use minor cults in your game. Let's examine two ways – creating a story focusing on the minor cults and working minor cults into your already existing story.

TELLING MINOR CULT STORIES

Telling a story that revolves around minor cults can be rewarding and exciting. Instead of going for the epic feel of a more traditionally oriented *CthulhuTech* story, minor cult stories are personal in their horror.

An interesting way to start a minor cult story is to create a group of everyday people as the Dramatic Characters. Instead of arcanotechnicians, occult scholars, soldiers, or Tagers, create Characters that are schoolteachers, waiters, technical support, or minor city functionaries. They are people who are not geared towards a life of action and are ill-prepared for the dangers that face them. The Characters' goals are personal – preserve their own lives and well-being as well as those of their friends and families.

A second option is to create a traditional group of Dramatic Characters and set them as the focus of minor cult predation. Perhaps a group of Tagers has run afoul of the Circle and now the elite sorcerers hunt them. Perhaps a group of New Earth Government mecha pilots have fallen prey to the overtures of the Church of All while on leave. Perhaps a group of Nazzadi is the target of Blood Brigade hate crimes. However it manifests, the Characters are firmly embroiled in street-level cult activity.

Another option is to create a cult-busting story. Perhaps the Characters are all FSB agents, sent undercover to infiltrate and bring down a cell of a cult. Perhaps they are police officers, finding themselves in over their heads and eventually becoming part of a larger operation. Perhaps they are OIS agents who run afoul of minor cults as part of their normal duty. Undercover games provide a different kind of horror, as Characters are forced to discover just how far they're willing to go to maintain their cover.

Perhaps the most disturbing option is to create a story in which the Characters are cultists. You might start them out as initiates and tell the story of their ascension through the ranks. They might be spirit-channeling members of the Congregation of the

Earth Mother, or recruiters for the Church of All, or the elite of society in the Dionysus Club. Two cults are unsuitable for play – the Scions of Forever are too weird and mysterious and the Empty are more of a spiritual disease than an organization. An option for the side of good would be the Sleepers.

ADDING MINOR CULTS TO YOUR STORY

Minor cults can show up in a variety of ways in your game. If you're already playing an established game, it's unlikely that a minor cult is going to become the primary antagonist. They offer interesting subplots or they are the minor lackeys of an already larger organization that your Characters are facing. Use them when you want to break up the larger plot with something more personal.

New Earth Government or Engel Project

If you're playing a game focused around some major facet of the Aeon War, your Characters normally face cults in the form of the Disciples of the Rapine Storm or the Esoteric Order of Dagon. The minor cults can help bring the story home for the Characters. Perhaps a Character's friend or loved one gets sucked into one of them. Perhaps they are forced to face the ugliness in their own neighborhoods. Or perhaps they run afoul of an enemy that is not so easy to fight, such as the Circle. It offers the opportunity for Characters who normally solve problems with the end of an assault rifle or plasma cannon entry into a darker and more mystical world.

Eldritch Society

Characters in an Eldritch Society game already live in the same world as the minor cults. It isn't much of a stretch to bring them into the story. The Circle is an enemy to be immediately utilized. Members of the Eldritch Society are literally likely to run into any and all of the minor cults in their Shadow War, hiding behind the scenes and running in the dark and forbidden parts of the New Earth Government. Use minor cults to help break up hunting the Chrysalis Corporation – Tagers are unlikely to ignore the cults' terrible influence.

Other

It really doesn't matter what type of game you're playing, the minor cults are at your doorstep. You hardly need a reason to bring one into your game, because they have the ability to pop up anywhere.

Playing a game with street cops? Use the Empty or have them run afoul of the Dionysus Club. Playing a game with researchers? One of the occult scholars starts going to events that are secretly run by the Church of All. Any criminal style game will likely run across something in their normal course of business, just like the Eldritch Society. The minor cults present an opportunity for your Characters to step out of their normal lives into something personal and horrifying.

TOOLS OF THE TRADE

Unsurprisingly, the minor cults have their own bags of tricks. Some of them use their own drugs to brainwash and indoctrinate. Some have their own brand of magic, inherited from the dark object of their worship. Though they may not wield the vast power of the Children of Chaos, the Disciples of the Unnamable, or the Esoteric Order of Dagon, the minor cults are frightening powers in their own right.

BRAINWASHING

The term brainwashing means using coercive psychological systems to change a person's beliefs, ideas, attitudes, and behaviors. Essentially, it forces a person to come around to the brainwasher's way of thinking and acting. Many of the cults presented in this book utilize some kinds of brainwashing techniques in their recruitment and indoctrination process.

There are several different brainwashing techniques:

- Social isolation, which means that the cult limits or prohibits contact with anyone who doesn't share the group's attitudes, including family and close friends. Dependence on the group is encouraged, especially financial.
- Total agreement, which means that there are rules for what can and cannot be talked about and non-supporting information and opinions are prohibited. A special language within the cult is also usually adopted.
- Breaking down identity, which means that the person is forced to view his identity and past in negative ways to destabilize his basic view of himself and reality.
- Personal dependency, which means that the cult

creates a sense of powerlessness by putting the person in situations that undermine his confidence placing the cult in a position to support and care for him.

- Negative reinforcement and conditioning, which means that the person is socially and emotionally manipulated in negative ways whenever he breaks from the cult's prescribed ways, including humiliation, social rejection, guilt, anxiety, and sometimes psychological threats. He is likewise rewarded when he "behaves."
- Auditory hypnotic states, which means that some cults will use repetitive music and ways of rhythmic speaking at a rate of 45 to 72 beats per minute – close to the beat of a human heart – in order to induce a hypnotic and suggestible state.

These techniques are in addition to the various magical rituals and drugs that many of the cults use.

CULT MAGIC

There are two new magical rituals of note that are important to the minor cults presented here: the Circle's Craft the Labyrinthian Identity and the Congregation of the Earth Mother's Call the Soul's Beast.

Craft the Labyrinthian Identity Third Order

aka: Ghost in the Machine

Type: Enchantment

Legality: Illegal

Learning Time: 6 Months

Insanity Test: Hard/2 Insanity Points

Occult Rating Required: Master

Intellect Required: 9

Tenacity Required: 9

Prep Time: 1 Week

Casting Time: 2 Days

Difficulty: Hard

Extended Tests Required: 8

Ruach Cost: 30

Components & Requirements: a consecrated arcane space, a cloudy night, piercing needles, the recipient's blood, various incense, various large harmonic crystals. The eventual recipient must have created a document that details up to ten false identities.

Also, ritual participants must have fasted for two days prior to the ritual, must be freshly bathed without perfume or deodorant, and must perform the ritual naked.

Effects: A carefully and jealously guarded secret of the Circle passed down from the Blind Lady, Craft the Labyrinthian Identity allows a sorcerer to create a network of smoke-screen identities in which to exist. Before the ritual is performed, the recipient creates a document that presents up to ten false identities, with details of who they are, what they've done, and what they have. His true identity is then erased from all records, physical or electronic. Birth records, tax and medical records, passports, credit cards, and more are created in accordance with the details of the recipient's desired false identities. He effectively ceases to exist as himself and now exists as up to ten different people. These identities are in no way linked and he becomes virtually impossible to truly trace. This does not create wealth or ownership, but it does create credit ratings and credit limits. Physical objects registered to his true identity, such as condos or cars, transfer as if sold to a third party broker and eventually purchased by one of his new fake identities.

Though this is an enchantment spell, no particular object is enchanted by the ritual. Instead, records all over the world and in cyberspace shift to reflect the enchantment.

Black Market Price: n/a. The Circle keeps copies of this ritual out of circulation.

Casting Fee: n/a. The Circle will not perform the ritual for someone outside their ranks.

Component Cost: 1050 Tn

Call the Soul's Beast Third Order

aka: Spirit Animal Possession

Type: Transmogrification

Legality: Illegal

Learning Time: 6 Months

Insanity Test: Hard/2 Insanity Points

Occult Rating Required: Master

Intellect Required: 6

Tenacity Required: 9

Prep Time: 1 Week

Casting Time: 3 Days

Difficulty: Hard

SPIRIT ANIMAL POSSESSION

The exact details of spirit animal possession varies from animal to animal. You will have to create specific attributes for specific creatures. Here are a couple of examples from which to draw:

Equine (Horse Family) Possession

Attribute Bonuses: +2 Strength, +1 Tenacity

Quality Bonuses: Acute Hearing, Acute Smell & Taste, Acute Vision, Peripheral Vision, Wary

Skill Bonuses: +1 level of expertise for Athletics, Observation, and Survival

Special Abilities: Broadband Hearing (as sensor system), Double Jump Distance, Double Land Speed, Kick (+1)

Great Cat Possession

Attribute Bonuses: +2 Agility, +1 Perception

Quality Bonuses: Acute Hearing, Acute Smell & Taste, Fast, Wary

Skill Bonuses: +1 level of expertise for Athletics, Observation, and Survival

Special Abilities: Double Climbing Speed, Double Jump Distance, Double Land Speed, Claws (+1), Nightvision (as Nazzadi ability)

Lupine (Wolf Family) Possession

Attribute Bonuses: +2 Perception, +1 Tenacity

Quality Bonuses: Acute Hearing, Acute Smell & Taste, Wary

Skill Bonuses: +1 level of expertise for Athletics, Observation, and Survival

Special Abilities: Broadband Hearing (as sensor system), Double Jump Distance, Double Land Speed, Bite (+1), Nightvision (as Nazzadi ability)

Serpent Possession

Attribute Bonuses: +2 Agility, +1 Strength

Quality Bonuses: Acute Smell & Taste, Ambidextrous, Double-Jointed, Fast

Skill Bonuses: +1 level of expertise for Athletics, Observation, and Survival

Special Abilities: Double Climbing Speed, Double Land Speed, Fangs (+1), Thermal Vision (as sensor system)

Extended Tests Required: 8

Ruach Cost: 30

Components & Requirements: at least a 100 square foot reasonably undisturbed working space, a bell or windchimes, candles, piercing needles, blood from the recipient, various herbs, various incense, various large harmonic crystals. Also, ritual participants must have meditated and been at one with their own spirit animals and animal instincts for at least two of the days preceding the ritual.

Effects: Unknown to those outside the Congregation of the Earth Mother, this ritual mystically bestows the characteristics of an adherent's spirit animal upon the recipient. It is considered a great honor within the Congregation to undergo this rite and those who

do give themselves over to the power inside them. A recipient gains mystical abilities but becomes more animalistic in his behavior, in tune with his specific spirit animal. For example, an adherent who's spirit animal is a great cat becomes more agile and graceful, a natural climber, and sees in the dark, while becoming cruel, cunning, sneaky, and proud. Another might be one who's animal is a serpent becomes flexible and double jointed, sibilant, and cold-blooded. The effects of this ritual endure for six lunar months (about 174 days).

Black Market Price: n/a. This ritual is jealously guarded by the Congregation of the Earth Mother.

Casting Fee: n/a. Members of the Congregation will not perform this ritual for the uninitiated.

Component Cost: 1050 Tn

DREAM MAGIC

This type of magic is key for the Church of All and the Sleepers. Dream magic will be explored in detail in the upcoming *Vade Mecum: the CthulhuTech Companion*. For the time being, just assume that dream magicians can get inside someone's dream and manipulate them. A brief sample of several dreaming rituals can be found on p. 41.

DRUGS

To some, drugs is a dirty word conjuring images of junkies strung out in dirty alleys. To others, drugs are something to help them wind down or cut loose after a long week. But the kinds of drugs the minor cults deal in are neither of those. They are the kinds of substances that alter minds in ways that leave them open to the dark believers' advances.

Aphrodisiacs

People have searched for drugs to enhance sexual experience for ages. Some believe in the mythical Spanish Fly, while others turn to naturopathic options like oysters or damiana. There are those that claim Ecstasy is an aphrodisiac, but in truth only for some. Some of the minor cults use true aphrodisiacs to make the sexual demands of initiation easier for the petitioner.

The Congregation of the Earth Mother cultivates an organic aphrodisiac known only as Gold – named so after the primary color of the sacral chakra. Like Ecaryline, the drug is created from a secret recipe of rare plants and herbs, with some unusual animal products mixed in. The effects of Gold are pro-

found. The sexual drive of a user is awakened and heightened to a point known only in the peaks of puberty and beyond. The urge to engage in sexual intercourse becomes overwhelming. Beyond that, the stamina of a user is increased, orgasms for females become easier to come by, and both males and females become multi-orgasmic. The end result is usually an orgy of multiple sex partners that lasts for hours, often blurring normal sexual preferences and fetishes.

Gold can last for up to four hours. Some users continue their trip by ingesting more drugs, but after six hours a user's body will give in to exhaustion without the aid of stimulants or a drug like Ecaryline. Gold is usually ingested as a powder or a pill. The drug itself is non-addictive, but some users become sex-addicted with repeated use.

Since the idea of having sexual intercourse with a fishman can be unnerving, even for an advanced initiate of the Church of All, the cult has created a designer drug called DFA. It acts as a sedative, while enhancing blood flow and providing a euphoric sensation. It won't make someone have sex with someone they don't want to, but it will make someone far less nervous or inhibited and make the experience more pleasurable.

The effects of DFA last for about an hour. There is very little need to extend a DFA trip, so repeated doses are not common. The drug is lightly addictive, but again, some users become psychologically hooked. DFA is usually ingested as a pill.

Hallucinogens

Both the Church of All and the Congregation of the Earth Mother ply their petitioners with chemicals that deeply alter their perceptions.

The Church of All has created a hallucinogen called Somnicon. It supposedly opens one up to the dreams of the world, floating through the oneness of creation. A Somnicon trip is intense – a dissociative DMT-like vision quest. However, the most amazing and sinister property of the drug is that the trip can be manipulated by most forms of dream magic, giving Church sorcerers the ability to guide a user's hallucinations. Combined with the effects of the enchanted drug Harmony, a user undergoes what can only be described as a profoundly humbling and life-changing experience.

Taking Somnicon and Harmony together is called “soul-tripping.”

The effects of Somnicon last for four hours, but the trip can be prolonged by “bumping” – taking more. It is considered to be a “natural” drug, as the chemicals it creates occur naturally, but never in this combination or in this quantity. In truth it bears more resemblance to a designer drug. Somnicon is most often ingested as a powder or a pill. The drugs is non-addictive, but like all drugs of its sort some users develop a psychological addiction.

Ecaryline is the natural hallucinogen of choice of the Congregation of the Earth Mother. It is a secret combination of several specially grown plants and herbs that yields something akin to a smooth combination of mescaline and opium. Users undergo a dreamy, euphoric trip with visual hallucinations that ebbs and flows in waves. Most often, the effects of Ecaryline are combined with the cult’s aphrodisiac, Gold, making ritual sex a surreal and animalistic experience – this kind of trip is known vulgarly as a “wet dream.”

The effects of Ecaryline last for up to twelve hours. A trip can be extended, but a user’s body usually has had enough by the time the trip is through – only stimulants will allow him to take more and keep going. The drug is usually ingested as a powder or a pill. Ecaryline is non-addictive, though a small number of users may develop psychological addiction.

Harmony

An enchanted drug, Harmony is heavy duty. It actually attunes users’ vibrational frequencies to those of the planet. They truly feel the connection between everyone and everything. A Harmony trip is a life-changing experience, period. However, the Church of All doesn’t stop there. Combined with Somnicon, the Church puts initiates in a profoundly connected vision-quest, manipulated by dream magics to bring them into a worship of the ocean, the Deep Ones, and ultimately the sleeping Cthulhu himself. Soul-tripping, when properly guided, creates fanatics.

Harmony lasts for four hours and the mortal form cannot withstand more than a single trip at a time. Multiple ingestions lead to death. The drug can be ingested a maximum of once a week without harm – any sooner can result in nerve damage and even

death. Harmony is often ingested as a liquid or a powder. The drug can be mixed with Ecaryline for a different experience. However, those who mix Harmony and Gold usually die – after a couple of hours of the most intense and spiritual sex of their lives.

Unfortunately, Harmony is highly addictive on both physical and psychological levels, but most users are capable of using the drug at the appropriate intervals to avoid harm. Less cautious addicts don’t live long.

On the Streets

Sometimes, the jealously guarded tools to the minor cults find their way out into the world. Perhaps a renegade initiate steals them for his own personal use or gain. Perhaps a corrupt federal agent leaks some back out onto the streets after a bust. Here are a few of those things.

The cults do a pretty good job of keeping their drugs out of the street trade, but of any of their tools drugs are the most commonly found. DFA is the one most often encountered – in fact, sometimes individual cells of the Church of All will sell some to make money. Ecaryline is rare on the streets, but when it finds its way there it commands a juicy, though not outrageous, price. Gold is exactly that on the streets. Wealthy people pay king’s ransoms for the drug when they can get it. Even though it could bankroll the cult, the Congregation believes it sacrilegious to give the drug to outsiders. Harmony is even more expensive when found, but the Church rarely lets any out of its sight. It is difficult to make and key to the Church’s initiation process. Lastly, Somnicon is the rarest of all. Dream magicians everywhere would kill to get their hands on such a thing. It is rumored that the Sleepers are close to unraveling the drug’s secrets – which could make them a powerful force for good.

Neither of the two special rituals presented here have found their way into the world. They are too closely and jealously guarded secrets.

CHAPTER FIVE... THE WRONG NEIGHBORS

Most people understand the distinction between good guys and bad guys when the characteristics that define them are identified with one camp or the other. After all, who within New Earth Government society could possibly claim that their government is made up of a bunch of black hat-wearing bad guys bent on victimizing the poor and helpless Migou? It's easy to see who should be supported and who should be opposed in this age. The horror of the Rapine Storm and its catastrophic rage against humanity is another example of a line drawn between two polar opposite opponents. But what happens when that line is blurred? What happens, for instance, when a person who might be your brother is discovered to belong to a dangerous cult? Can your brother now be labeled as a bad guy? And what if it turns out that your brother only joined the cult with the best of intentions or for the most noble of reasons only to be deluded by the group's corrupting influence? Is he still considered a bad guy or simply a good guy trying to cope with a bad situation?

This chapter introduces you to several Supporting Cast characters that represent a cross section of cults operation within NEG society. Most of the cults are dangerous in one-way or the other, but many of the cultists involved are just normal people trying to find their way. Whereas some of

these people might indeed be beyond redemption, others cannot be so clearly judged. It is here that the opportunity arises to create a story with a *film noir* elements that blurs the line between good and bad. These characters offer a chance to tell a new tale with a different flavor and feel. Feel free to use them as is or change them as desired to suit your campaign needs.

BLOOD BRIGADE TERRORIST: JOHN BAGOT

Even though he lost his entire family during the First Arcanotech War, John Bagot cannot recall ever having any kind of ill-feeling toward the Nazzadi when he was young. But he does remember growing up with the recurring feelings of being listless and alone. An ex-girlfriend tried to help once. With her encouragement, John began to attend community activist meetings sponsored by the Ministry of Divine Truth. A growing feeling of belonging began to embrace John as he continued to attend these meetings. Now the word of the Father has come into focus and the atrocities of his youth float in his memory with stark clarity and deadly understanding. The blood-gorged dreams sent by God make the killing so easy. Yes, John Bagot feels truly blessed.

SUPPORTING CAST LISTINGS

35

As you browse through the list of Supporting Cast characters you will see a list of qualifications that look like this:

| | |
|--------------------------|--|
| Profession and Name | Describes who the character is and what he does for a living. |
| Experience Level | Describes whether the character is Experienced Veteran, or Elite |
| Race | Indicates whether the character is Human or Nazzadi. |
| Gender | Self-explanatory. |
| Job | Lists the character's "day job" if different from his profession. |
| Defining Characteristics | The character's Virtue and Flaw, which help outline the character's personality. |
| Allegiance | Indicates where the character's loyalty would typically lie. |
| Attributes | These are the character's attributes based on their race as shown. You can change the race based on the rules presented in the <i>Cthulhutech Core Book</i> . |
| Secondary Attributes | The character's Actions, Movement, Orgone, Reflex, and Vitality and are shown here. |
| Qualities | Lists those special aspects of the character that give him an edge and those that hinder him. Point values for variable point qualities are listed in parenthesis. |
| Spells: | If the character is a sorcerer, his repertoire is listed here. |
| General Skills | Lists the general and professional skills that each character is familiar with and his level of expertise. |
| Combat Skills | Lists the character's combat proficiency. |
| Gear | What the character might carry if encountered in the setting. |

John Bagot

Experience Level: Experienced

Race: Human

Gender: Male

Job: Fleet Vehicle Driver

Defining Characteristics: Self-Confident, Self-Righteous

Allegiance: New Earth Government

Attributes: Agility 8, Intelligence 5, Perception 6, Presence 5, Strength 6, Tenacity 8,

Secondary Attributes: Actions 2, Movement 13 mph (32/8 ypt), Orgone 11, Reflex 6, Vitality 12

Qualities: Acute Sight, Ally (Blood Brigade Cell), Driven, Duty (Blood Brigade), Fanatical, Prejudice (against all Nazzadi), Wary

General Skills: Computer: Novice, Demolitions: Expert (Specialized: Time Bombs), Language (English): Expert, Literacy: Novice, Observation: Adept, Persuade: Novice, Pilot (Ground Vehicles/Personal A-Pod Vehicles): Novice, Regional Knowledge: Novice (Focused: Black Market), Security: Adept, Stealth: Adept, Surveillance: Novice, Trivia (Professional Sports Teams): Student

Combat Skills: Dodge: Adept, Fighting: Adept, Marksman: Expert

Gear: Book – “In the Father’s Way,” Fumigator, L7A2 Fragmentation Grenades (2ea), MP-6A1 Machine Pistol, Ordinary Clothing, PCPU, Satchel Charge

CHURCH OF ALL 1ST CIRCLE HYBRID PRIESTESS: KORA-TADI

Kora-Tadi knows that the purpose of her race was once to bring war to this world. However, she’s spent most of her life trying to find a different path. “Integrate with humans,” she was told, so she did and discovered a spiritual purpose. The Church of All took her in and gave her a reason and a way to understand the value of life. She gave up her old name, like all initiates who reach the 2nd Circle. She is now called Kora-Tadi, which means “tide pool” in Nazzadi. As a member of the 1st Circle, she travels from city to city, using her gift of magic to unlock the secret desires and untold truths of any new Church initiate. Unfortunately, she suffers from physical pain every now and then ever since her body begun to change under the blessing of the Deep Ones.

Kora-Tadi

Experience Level: Experienced

Race: Nazzadi/Hybrid

Gender: Female

Job: Full-Time Cult Priestess

Defining Characteristics: Confident, Domineering

Allegiance: Esoteric Order of Dagon

Attributes: Agility 5, Intelligence 8, Perception 5, Presence 6, Strength 5, Tenacity 8,

Secondary Attributes: Actions 1, Movement 9 mph (22/5 ypt), Orgone 13, Reflex 6, Vitality 11

Qualities: Acute Sight, Ally (Church of All), Authority (Church of All/1), Big Ego/1, Chronic Pain, Delusion (firmly believes that awakening the sleeping god will bring paradise on Earth), Duty (Church of All), Fanatical (loyal to the goals and methods of the church)

Spells: Conjoin the Adrift Psyche, Consecrate Arcane Space, Contact Those Who Dwell Beyond, Eldritch Faculties, Know Passion’s Flame, Summon Fetch, Ward of Cool Spirit

General Skills: Artist: Student, Bureaucracy: Novice, Computer: Novice, Culture (Deep One): Novice, Language (English): Adept, Language (Nazzadi): Expert, Language (R’lyeha): Adept, Literacy (Adept), Misdirect: Adept, Occult: Expert, Observation: Novice, Regional Knowledge: Adept, Survival: Student

Combat Skills: Dodge: Novice, Marksman: Novice

Gear: Aquatic Fetch, Ceremonial Garb, Ordinary Clothing, PCPU, Small Pendant adorned with the symbol of the Esoteric Order of Dagon, UT-7 Hornet,

CHURCH OF ALL 2ND CIRCLE RECRUITER: WILLOW DREAM

Willow is a real beauty and she knows it; she always uses her assets to her best advantage. Born as Aika Yamaguchi in Okinawa, her family moved to North America years ago. She later became involved with a psychic meditation group while attending university, leading to her first introduction to the Church of All. Willow is flamboyant and charismatic and her zest for celebrating the magic of life is infectious. She certainly believes in the message of the church. It’s just hard to believe that under all the new age fluff is a shrewd person whose efforts are always focused on personal gain. She has returned to college life to further her own ambitions and the interests of the Church as aggressively as possible.

Willow Dream

Experience Level: Experienced

Race: Human

Gender: Female

Job: Student (recruits for Church of All at local colleges)

Defining Characteristics: Effervescent, Dishonest

Allegiance: Esoteric Order of Dagon

Attributes: Agility 6, Intelligence 6, Perception 6, Presence 10, Strength 4, Tenacity 5

Secondary Attributes: Actions 1, Movement 9 mph (22/5 ypt), Orgone 10, Reflex 6, Vitality 9

Qualities: Alluring/2, Ally (Church of All), Compulsive Behavior (constantly fusses with her hair), Coward, Delusion (believes that she will be granted a higher place by God for each person initiated into the church), Duty (Church of All), Obsessive, Sexy Voice/1, Shrewd

General Skills: Artist: Novice (Focused: Jewel Crafting), Earth Science: Adept (Focused: Oceanography), Education: Student, Language (English): Expert, Language (Japanese): Adept, Language (Nazzadi): Novice, Larceny: Adept (Specialized: Information Gathering), Literacy: Novice, Misdirect: Expert, Occult: Novice, Observation: Adept, Persuade: Expert (Specialized: Ideology), Regional Knowledge: Novice, Seduction: Novice

Combat Skills: Dodge: Novice

Gear: Gaudy Jewelry, Natural Fiber Clothing, PCPU, Portable Pipe with Maruijuana and Opium, Student Pass

CIRCLE ASSASSIN: MARLIS WERDEN

Marlis is a middle-aged woman who sports the look of her Germanic ancestry proudly. She approaches everything with formality and her stone temperament can sometimes be quite intimidating. Nevertheless she can certainly conduct herself in social situations with grace. Something about the way she carries herself makes most people reluctant to ask about the scar on her face. Marlis is a powerful sorceress and one of the most efficient killers to serve The Circle. She is highly dedicated and only utilized on the most critical of missions. She kills without remorse and she coldly views her victims as nothing more than business objectives. Don't ever make her your enemy.

Marlis Werden

Experience Level: Elite

Race: Human

Gender: Female

Job: Undercover Espionage and Assassination

Defining Characteristics: Sober, Cruel

Allegiance: The Circle

Attributes: Agility 5, Intelligence 11, Perception 7, Presence 6, Strength 4, Tenacity 9

Secondary Attributes: Actions 1, Movement 7 mph (17/4 ypt), Orgone 20, Reflex 7, Vitality 11

Qualities: Ally (The Circle/2), Big Ego/1, Contact

(Children of Chaos/2), Dark Secret (assassin with history of killings/3), Duty (The Circle/2), Fanatical (the integrity and reputation of the Circle/3)

Spells: Beckon Shade Corpus, Call Forth Bakhi, Consecrate Arcane Space, Constitute Powder of Ibn Ghazi, Craft the Labyrinthian Identity, Craft Weeping Orb, Craft Yog-Sothoth's Guard, Degeneration, Eldritch Faculties, Imbue Glamour Lock, Influence the Naked Spirit, Ward of Seclusion

General Skills: Artist: Novice, Bureaucracy: Adept, Computer: Student, Language (English): Expert, Language (Enochian): Adept, Language (Nazzadi): Expert, Language (Pnakotic): Novice, Language (R'lyehian): Expert, Language (Tsath-yo): Student, Literacy: Adept, Misdirect: Adept, Occult: Master, Observation: Adept, Persuade: Adept, Regional Knowledge: Novice, Savoir-Faire: Adept, Stealth: Novice, Surveillance: Adept, Trivia (Poisons): Student

Combat Skills: Dodge: Expert, Marksman: Adept

Gear: Concealable Holster, Digital Video Recorder, Fine Clothing, High-Power Business Suit, Level P Weapons Permit, Magical Tomes, PCPU, UT-9 Stinger, Wireless Communications Earpiece

CONGREGATION OF THE EARTH MOTHER MEDIUM: KALLEGRA

Kallegra is old school Nazzadi. He firmly identifies with the martial background of his heritage and he has found something for which to fight. He knows with certainty that the Black Mother will reward him for his loyalty. After all, hasn't he already received the call of his spirit animal - the black panther? Let the witches of the Congregation tend to the souls of their followers. Kallegra is here to protect them and so he does, even if it were at cost of his own life. By day he works in his gun shop, but he spends time in the fields or forests whenever he gets a chance - running like the wind and roaring his challenge to the world.

Kallegra

Experience Level: Experienced

Race: Nazzadi

Gender: Male

Job: Maintenance Technician and Gunsmith

Defining Characteristics: Curious, Impulsive

Allegiance: Congregation of the Earth Mother

Attributes: Agility 10, Intelligence 4, Perception 8, Presence 5, Strength 6, Tenacity 6

Secondary Attributes: Actions 3, Movement 27 mph (67/15 ypt), Orgone 10, Reflex 8, Vitality 11

Qualities: Acute Hearing, Acute Smell, Acute Taste, Ally (Congregation of the Earth Mother), Compulsive Behavior (fidgets and can't sit still), Delusion (sees the rejection of civilized law and the embracement of the Dark Mother as progress that will exalt him/2), Fanatical (defend the Congregation to the death/3), Fast, Fearless, Impetuous, Internal Compass, Wary

Spirit Animal Abilities: Double Climbing Speed, Double Jump Distance, Double Land Speed, Claws (+1)

General Skills: Armorer: Adept, Athletics: Expert, Computer: Student, Intimidate: Adept, Language (English): Expert, Language (Nazzadi): Expert, Literacy: Novice, Observation: Expert, Pilot (Ground Vehicles): Student, Regional Knowledge: Adept, Stealth: Expert, Survival: Expert, Technician: Adept, Trivia (Goddess worship rituals and customs): Student

Combat Skills: Dodge: Adept, Fighting: Adept, Marksman: Adept

Gear: AR-25 Assault Rifle, Ordinary Clothing, PCPU, Swiss Army Knife, Various Hand Tools, Weapon Cleaning Kit

CONGREGATION OF THE EARTH MOTHER WITCH: LUCINDA LOPEZ

Lucinda has had sexual relations with more men and women among her flock than she can count. She is not in short supply of company. Yet she aches from a deeply buried yearning that has never been truly fulfilled. Could she really be lonely? She tries to deny it because of the blessings granted to her by the Earth Mother and for them she is grateful. But Lucinda has never found that special someone. She's most often been admired from afar for her elegance and beauty and decent guys seem to shy to approach her. It was her mother's interest in Wicca that brought Lucinda into the fold of the Congregation, but it was her need to feel wanted and loved that drove her to excel in her devotion and magical study. She's surrounded by more friends than she could hope for, yet somewhere deep down is the voice of that little girl who longs for real love.

Lucinda Lopez

Experience Level: Experienced

Race: Human

Gender: Female

Job: Veterinarian

Defining Characteristics: Faithful, Lonely

Allegiance: Congregation of the Earth Mother

Attributes: Agility 4, Intelligence 9, Perception 5, Presence 8, Strength 4, Tenacity 8

Secondary Attributes: Actions 1, Movement 7 mph (17/4 ypt), Orgone 14, Reflex 7, Vitality 11

Qualities: Alluring/3, Ally (Congregation of the Earth Mother/2), Authority (CoEM Witch), Code (protect the downtrodden and needy, never accept reward for service), Delusion (belief that her dedication to the Dark Mother will fill that empty void inside), Duty (Congregation of the Earth Mother/1), Rival, Sexy Voice/2

Spells: Call the Soul's Beast, Consecrate Arcane Space, Curse of the Outsider, Eldritch Faculties, Manipulate Passion, Mend Flesh, Summon Familiar, Ward of Corporal Protection, Ward of Solitude, Wisdom of Yog-Sothoth

General Skills: Artist: Novice, Computer: Student, Education: Master, Language (English): Expert, Language (Enochian): Novice, Language (Pnakotic): Student, Language (R'lyehian): Student, Language (Spanish): Adept, Literacy: Adept, Medicine: Adept, Observation: Adept, Occult: Master, Performance (Dance): Adept, Regional Knowledge: Novice, Seduction: Adept, Survival: Novice, Trivia (Goddess worship rituals and traditions): Student

Combat Skills: Dodge: Novice

Gear: Ceremonial Robes, Expensive Hand-Made Necklace, Medkit, Ordinary Clothing, PCPU, Raven Familiar

DIONYSUS CLUB POWER BROKER: CLIFFORD HAMMOND

Everybody has a breaking point, price, or dirty little secret to discover and exploit. That's the game that Clifford Hammond loves to play. To paraphrase Sir Francis Bacon, "knowledge is power," and Clifford believes that to the extreme. Why fight when you can command? Why argue when you can simply find and push the right button to make someone bend to your will? Feed the desire and watch the depravity grow like a weed in a flower garden. Clifford revels in the knowledge that he is very good at doing just that, making him a perfect fit for the Dionysus Club. Sorcery? Arcanotechnology? None of these compare to the true power that Clifford Hammond commands from his archive of people's dark secrets and naughty desires.

Clifford Hammond

Experience Level: Experienced

Race: Human

Gender: Male

Job: Independently Wealthy Business Owner

Defining Characteristics: Courteous, Selfish

Allegiance: Dionysus Club

Attributes: Agility 5, Intelligence 7, Perception 7, Presence 8, Strength 4, Tenacity 5

Secondary Attributes: Actions 1, Movement 7 mph (17/4 ypt), Orgone 11, Reflex 6, Vitality 9

Qualities: Ally (Dionysus Club/2), Big Ego/1, Coward, Dark Secret (records all the dirty little secrets of society's more respected and powerful people/3), Elite, Greed, Shrewd, Wealth/3

General Skills: Bureacracy: Adept, Business: Expert, Computer: Novice, Education: Expert, Language (English): Expert, Larceny: Adept, Literacy: Adept, Misdirect: Adept, Observation: Novice, Persuade: Adept, Regional Knowledge: Adept, Savoir-Faire: Expert, Trivia (Classic Music): Adept

Combat Skills: Dodge: Adept, Marksman: Adept

Gear: Concealable Holster, CS-40 Defender, PCPU, Level P Weapon Permit, Very Expensive and Cool Clothing, Very Expensive Ring, Wireless Communication Earpiece

EMPTY PSYCHOPATH: LOYKA

Nobody knows where Loyka came from before landing a job as a handyman at a local orphanage. He is reticent to let others know about his knowledge of satellite communications systems and uncanny fighting abilities, of whose origins he has no clue. Like everyone else he has no idea of his past, but he's nice enough. So much so that the orphanage manager offered him a trial position as grounds keeper. While the management seems to like him, the kids certainly don't - not with the hungry way he looks at them from time to time. Sometimes he wonders why he dreams about what it would be like to cut one of those sweet little angels open. Voices. Whispers. Need. There is something so tantalizing about his dreams.

Loyka

Experience Level: Experienced

Race: Nazzadi

Gender: Male

Job: Orphanage Handyman

Defining Characteristics: Polite, Cruel

Allegiance: New Earth Government

Attributes: Agility 8, Intelligence 4, Perception 6, Presence 4, Strength 8, Tenacity 7

Secondary Attributes: Actions 2, Movement 17 mph (42/10 ypt), Orgone 10, Reflex 6, Vitality 12

Qualities: Amnesia, Damaged, Dark Secret (serial

killer), Fast, Fearless, Latent Para-Psychic, Manic

General Skills: Artist: Student, Athletic: Novice,

Communications: Adept, Computer: Student,

Language (English): Adept, Language (Nazzadi):

Expert, Literacy: Novice, Observation: Adept, Pilot

(Ground and Personal A-Pod vehicles): Novice, Re-

gional Knowledge: Adept, Stealth: Expert, Survival:

Adept

Combat Skills: Armed Fighting: Expert, Dodge: Ad-

ept, Fighting: Adept, Marksman: Adept

Gear: Combat Knife - Composite, Ordinary

Clothing, Small Box with a Child's Severed Finger,

Swiss Army Knife with Laser Pointer

PRIVATE INVESTIGATOR:

JACK HAMMER

Jack was once a well-respected OIS agent, until his wife died six years ago in an accident leaving his life in ruin and a whiskey bottle as his only comfort. Jack has since picked himself up and rebuilt hjs life and reputation as a tough, no-nonsense PI. He still can't help but take a drop every now and then and he likes to savor a good cigar. He is cool, relaxed, and intelligent. He particularly enjoys smacking down anyone who likes to make fun of his name.

Jack Hammer

Experience Level: Veteran

Race: Human

Gender: Male

Defining Characteristics: Cool, Pessimist

Allegiance: New Earth Government

Attributes: Agility 6, Intelligence 8, Perception 9,

Presence 8, Strength 7, Tenacity 7,

Secondary Attributes: Actions 2, Movement 11 mph

(27/6 ypt), Orgone 12, Reflex 7, Vitality 12

Qualities: Acute Hearing, Acute Sight, Alluring/1,

Ally (OIS Friend/2), Contact (Local Police/2), De-

pressive, Habit (Minor Addiction to Alcohol/1),

Watched by the OIS/1

General Skills: Communications: Novice, Computer:

Student, Criminal: Adept, Education: Adept, In-

timidate: Adept, Language (English): Expert, Lan-

guage (Nazzadi): Adept, Literacy: Novice, Hobby

(Pool): Student, Law Enforcement: Master, Mis-

direct: Adept, Observation: Expert, Persuade: Ad-

ept, Regional Knowledge: Adept, Research: Adept,

Stealth: Adept, Streetwise: Expert, Surveillance:

Adept

Combat Skills: Dodge: Adept, Fighting: Adept,

Marksman: Expert

Gear: Concealable Holster, CS-32 Peacemaker,

Long Overcoat, Night Vision Goggles, PCPU, Weapons Permit (PA), Wireless Communication Earpiece

SCIONS OF FOREVER IMMORTAL

SORCERESS: NEFERURE EL-BAHRI

Neferure is a beautifully exotic Egyptian woman who carries herself with uncommon grace. She appears to be just shy of thirty years old, though the truth of her age is something she guards very carefully. She is extremely wealthy and very well connected among the elite of society - so much the better to watch those who influence the tides of history. Neferure trades in rare and ancient antiques as a way to keep herself occupied and to reminisce about the old days, for she was born a very long time ago, during the 18th Dynasty of Ancient Egypt, to her mother, the Pharaoh Hatshepsut. As a High Priestess of Amun, it was Neferure's duty to perform arcane rituals at the Temple of Karnak, which she did dutifully until something went horribly wrong. Some kind of corruption entered her and changed her forever. To this date nothing has ever been found in the Tomb of Neferure, daughter of Hatshepsut. As potentially one of the oldest Scions in existence, she shores her mind against the madness of unending years with her knowledge of the future. She knows when she is destined to die and she looks forward to that day.

Neferure el-Bahri

Experience Level: Elite

Race: Human

Gender: Female

Job: Exotic Antiques Trader

Defining Characteristics: Courteous, Isolated

Allegiance: Scions of Forever

Attributes: Agility 5, Intelligence 11, Perception 6, Presence 9, Strength 4, Tenacity 10

Secondary Attributes: Actions 1, Movement 7 mph (17/4 ypt), Orgone 30, Reflex 7, Vitality 12

Qualities: Ally (Scions of Forever/2), Alluring/2, Dark Secret (Tainted Immortality/3), Elite, Outsider Tainted (Does not age, cries tears of blood), Wealth

Spells: Neferure is old and powerful enough to know just about any spell that isn't a closely guarded secret by other sects or cults. She possesses a secret knowledge of spells beyond the understanding of most mortal sorcerers.

General Skills: Appraisal: Expert, Bureaucracy: Adept, Computer: Student, Culture (Middle Eastern): Expert, History: Master, Hobby (Swimming): Stu-

dent, Language (Ancient Egyptian, Coptic): Expert, Language (Egyptian Arabic): Expert, Language (English): Expert, Language (Enochian): Adept, Language (Nazzadi): Novice, Language (Pnakotic): Adept, Language (R'lyehian): Expert, Language (Tsath-yo): Adept, Literacy: Adept, Misdirect: Adept, Occult: Master, Observation: Adept, Persuade: Expert, Regional Knowledge: Adept, Savoir-Faire: Expert

Combat Skills: Dodge: Expert, Marksman: Expert

Gear: Extravagant Clothing, Level P Weapons Permit, Magical Tomes, PCPU, UT-7 Hornet

SLEEPER DREAM MAGICIAN: AVILY

Avily has always possessed a remarkable gift for recalling memories in minute detail. She learned as a teenager to capture these memories in art, relying greatly on the images of her dreams. Some dreams began to feel almost real as if somehow she knew that she could control them. Then one day a stranger, an old Australian man named Myles Barnaby, came to see her. He claimed that he could teach her all she wanted to know about dreams and in her curiosity she accepted. Avily learned much over the years and eventually found herself faced with the reality of the Sleepers. She now operates an upscale art gallery by day, though at night she polices the world of dreams from her sanctuary on the second floor. Much of her art is inspired by the dreams of sleepers thousands of miles away.

Avily

Experience Level: Veteran

Race: Nazzadi

Gender: Female

Job: Illustrator and Art Gallery owner

Defining Characteristics: Wise, Detached

Allegiance: New Earth Government

Attributes: Agility 4, Intelligence 10, Perception 6, Presence 7, Strength 4, Tenacity 9

Secondary Attributes: Actions 1, Movement 7 mph (17/4 ypt), Orgone 28, Reflex 6, Vitality 11

Qualities: Ally (Sleepers/2), Duty (Sleepers/1), Eidetic Memory, Outsider Tainted, Skinny, Slow Healing

Spells: Call the Night's Terrors, Command the Slumbering Shell, Influence the Naked Spirit, Insight of the Sleeper, Master Imagination's Realm, Ward Against Sorcery, Ward Against the Unbidden, Ward of Solitude, Wisdom of Yog-Sothoth

General Skills: Appraisal: Adept, Artist (Illustrator): Expert, Business: Adept, Computer: Student, Culture

(International Art Community): Novice, Education: Adept, Language (English): Adept, Language (Enochian): Adept, Language (R'lyehian): Adept, Language (Nazadi): Expert, Literacy: Adept, Observation: Expert, Occult: Master, Regional Knowledge: Adept, Trivia (Greek Mythology): Student
Combat Skills: Dodge: Adept, Marksman: Novice
Gear: Formal Business Outfit, Illustrator's Tools, Ordinary Clothing, PCPU, Wireless Communications Earpiece

SLEEPER WORKSHOP LEADER: NAFUNA JONES

Lucid dreaming has fascinated Nafuna since she was a small child. Recurring nightmares have haunted her since the days she lived in Nigeria. They always included the frantic flight from a charging lion so large and hideous that it barely resembled anything real. Her grandmother later taught her how to control her dreams and face her demons through a meditative process. Nafuna learned to turn and face the object of her fear. She has since grown to become an accomplished athlete, while continuing her research in the field of lucid dreaming. She now helps others to conquer their fears and control their dreams through workshops and personal instruction. It is here that her real purpose has blossomed. She works in service of the most powerful lucid dreamers in the world and perhaps together they will help the promise of dreams wash away the nightmares of the waking world.

Nafuna Jones

Experience Level: Experienced

Race: Human

Gender: Female

Job: Athletic Trainer and Volunteer Workshop Leader

Defining Characteristics: Compassionate, Obstinate

Allegiance: New Earth Government

Attributes: Agility 8, Intelligence 5, Perception 6, Presence 8, Strength 6, Tenacity 6

Secondary Attributes: Actions 2, Movement 13 mph (32/8 ypt), Orgone 10, Reflex 6, Vitality 11

Qualities: Alluring/1, Ally (Sleepers/2), Duty (Sleepers/1), Minor Empathy, Obsessive

General Skills: Athletics: Adept, Communications: Student, Computer: Adept, Culture (West Africa): Adept, Education: Adept, Hobby (Soccer): Student, Language (English): Expert, Language

(Mande – West African): Expert, Language (Nazadi): Expert, Literacy: Adept, Observation: Adept, Persuade: Adept, Regional Knowledge: Novice, Trivia (Lucid Dreaming): Novice

Combat Skills: Dodge: Adept

Gear: African Jewelry, Athletic Outfit, Book “Awake in Your Dream,” Ordinary Clothing, PCPU

NEW SPELLS

Some of the spells presented in this chapter were not included in the *Cthulhutech* Core Book. These spells are covered in full detail in *Vade Mecum: the CthulhuTech Companion*. In the meantime you can find a basic description of each spell here.

Call the Night's Terrors (First Order, Dreaming): Inflicts recurring nightmares on victim and forces a -1 Test Penalty, or -2 if they fail a Challenging Tenacity Feat Test on each day thereafter.

Command the Slumbering Shell (First Order, Dreaming): Plants a simple suggestion into a sleeper's mind that can be carried out through sleepwalking.

Conjoin the Adrift Psyche (Second Order, Dreaming): Allows the sorcerer to psychically enter another person's dream and affect the environment of the dream only through personal interaction.

Craft Weeping Orb (Third Order, Enchantment): A lethal version of a Woeful Orb that operates within 100 yards and flies at speeds up to 45mph. They attack with an Adept Armed Fighting or Marksman Skill, and defend with an Adept Dodge Skill with Attributes of 10. Attacks against them suffer a -4 test penalty.

Imbue Glamour Lock (First Order, Enchantment): Creates a minor illusion that affects the look of the recipient.

Influence the Naked Spirit (Second Order, Dreaming): Creates recurring dreams to manipulate the psyche of others for conditioning and brainwashing purposes.

Insight of the Sleeper (First Order, Dreaming): Recipient gains insight into his own life through the replay of imprinted memories in the form of a dream.

Know Passion's Flame (First Order, Scrying): Allows the sorcerer to see the surface thoughts and deepest desires of another.

Master Imagination's Realm (Third Order, Dreaming): Grants complete mastery over world of a sleeper's dream with the potential for amazing results.

Ward of Cool Spirit (First Order, Protection): Creates a space that feels calm and makes sudden or violent eruptions less likely. Fear tests are at +4 and Social Skill Tests are reduced by one degree.

SCENE OF THE CRIME



I remember feeling the familiar ache of recoil in my arm. I'd just pumped an entire clip of lethal business from the muzzle of my weapon. Not at a paper target mind you, but at real flesh and bone. I'd seen the threat and reacted like a machine without thought - move, draw, aim, fire! Years of training wrapped itself neatly into a single moment of deadly precision. It took a second for my mind to catch up on the

scream-filled and blood-soaked details of the moment.

I know that some people deserve to die. You see enough of their brutal handiwork when you carry a badge. Rape victims banged like disposable punching bags, old people beaten to death 'cause they're a convenient way to vent rage, children hocked as black market sex-dolls for that cer-



tain "special" clientele. This time it was a flesh-carving SOB who thought that sewing people together with piano wire before flaying them was a pretty neat idea.

I recall standing in a small living room as my heart raced with adrenaline. A Nazzadi family was bound on the floor like Christmas hams. Blood flowed freely from their flesh where needles had pulled the piano wire into a haphazard kind of stitch. The children cried helplessly through their gags. The mother's screams echoed her horror and pain. The father stared at me wide-eyed and shocked. And the guy who tried to play Suzie Homemaker with their skin lay crumpled on the floor like a pile of useless meat.

I lowered my weapon and considered the body of the man I'd shot. So this was Vincent Thomas Roaker. I'd tracked this jerk for over six months. My first introduction to his hobby was in Oakland where Mr. Roaker had taken an interest in a certain eighteen year-old babysitter. He'd followed her on her way to work one day to make sure she wouldn't have to worry

about going home again. I was called in to investigate the murder. The body of a two year-old boy had been sewn to the torso of the babysitter with piano wire - most of their skin had been carved away and their heads were removed. It pissed me off. It's bad enough that the bugs try to wipe us out every day, but this guy Roaker was worse than any of those effing aliens! He

was the kind of monster who preyed upon his own kind for no reason.

I secured the area before holstering my weapon. Kneeling down before Roaker's corpse I spotted the pistol he tried to pull on me. My god, he had a large folding saw in his other hand. The kind an innocent person would use on camping trips. I tore it free from his dead man's grasp.

How strange it was to kneel over him. I had won. I was the killer of killers. But I was different from Roaker. You know why? Because, unlike this monster I could feel pain. It was a deep burning pain that seared me with memories of my father before he died in the First Arcanotech War. And it was a pain that screamed at me when I thought of my wife leaving me for some young Nazzadi lover. Pain that hollowed my gut every time I thought of losing my promotion to a dark-skinned alien with stupid looking tattoos on his face! Yeah, that's what set me apart from this dead son of a bitch. I knew pain and I knew anger, because unlike him I was still human. And the more I thought about it the more I felt that burning anger creep into every muscle of my body.

I glanced once again at Roaker as I stood and walked behind the Nazzadi woman bound on the ground before me. That empty soulless killer unwittingly gave me the means to follow the Father's calling. I was a man of deep faith and I knew my purpose. I knew how to fix crime scenes. I knew that nobody could possibly believe any other truth what I told. They would know that I simply showed up too late to stop the murders and shot to death the suspect in the process. Yes, God had indeed granted me an opportunity.

I grabbed the Nazzadi woman's hair and violently yanked her head back. Almost without thought, my hand drew the saw blade across her smooth black throat. I tried to ignore the screams and wet gurgling sounds as I rasped the steel teeth of the blade over her flesh. I remember my anger drifting away in that moment replaced by a sense of true spiritual peace. And I no longer heard the screams.

It felt good.

CHAPTER SIX...SINS & THREATS

Presented here are two ready to run minor cult stories for your *CthulhuTech* game, along with a handful of story seeds. The ready to run stories should require little effort on your part to prepare, but the story seeds only give you an idea of where to go – the details are up to you.

EMPTY THREATS

This is a story in which one of the Characters is stalked and kidnapped by a pair of sadistic serial killers who are in fact Empty. It is meant for games in which the Characters live in or around an arcology and who are not Taggers – arcane shapeshifters would have no problem squishing a couple of teenage crazies. Since the setup for this story is subtle, it's best if you weave in the first Act while you're finishing another story.

Warning: *This story is disturbing. It is not for the faint of heart. Your discretion is advised.*

ACT I: SOMEONE'S WATCHING

Goals: To introduce the story and hook the characters. They hear reports of missing persons; one of the Characters starts to have unusual encounters with homeless people and finally is abducted.

Setting: Regular locations in and around your Character's city of residence.

Cast: *Five reported missing persons.*

Homeless Empty.

Our unknown abductors.

The News

Despite the Ministry of Information's efforts to keep the daily news "realistic, but hopeful," the missing persons statistics are depressing. People seem to go missing all the time, even in arcologies. Sometimes people disappear of their own volition, but more often than not some sort of foul play is involved.

This story starts with a series of news warnings in whatever arcology your game is set. Several people have gone missing over the last month, none of which appear to have any relation. The police show pictures, provide brief descriptions, and disclose where they were last seen. The missing persons are:

- Mai Wing, a young Chinese-American mother and homemaker.
- Kidina, Nazzadi, a middle-aged utility truck operator.
- Tony Washington, a local African-American DJ.
- Helmut Brauer, a manufacturing executive retiree.
- Efurany, a young Nazzadi child of eight.

It's up to you to place where these people live and where they were abducted from based on your setting. None of the people appear to have anything in common and, though they won't admit to it publicly, the police have no leads. Authorities ask that people not only keep on the watch for these missing persons, but to stay vigilant in their neighborhoods. A hotline number is provided.

And that's it. Things quietly begin.

Unwanted Attention

Now you have to pick one of your Characters to undergo an unfortunate and traumatizing event. It's best if you choose a player who you know can handle having their Character kidnapped and victimized – preferably someone who trusts you and doesn't have personal issues around control. If you choose a female player, be sure she's someone you have a bond of trust with so that you don't incite real world anxieties. The Character in question should be someone who has a normal enough social life and would be found out in the world. This Character will now be referred to as our Victim.

At first, he begins to run into homeless people more often than he normally would. There are certainly homeless people inside every arcology, but they usually lay low so they don't get put into shelters or put outside by the authorities. They start by just showing up in his life – sitting in the same car on the train, sitting on the same block as the Victim's favorite coffee shop, etc. It isn't long before they show up in those places and others and start interacting with the Victim. They zero in to beg for change or food, they accost the character with a vacant wet-brained rant, they grab him and mumble incoherently, etc. Finally, it seems as if they are now watching the Victim in a coordinated fashion. The homeless of his community seem to know where he works, where he lives, and where he most often goes. It's just creepy.

Abduction

Just when our Victim has gotten really paranoid, things stop. He can't find a homeless person if he tries – well, maybe one or two in back alleys, but they keep to themselves. Everything just goes back to normal. Give him a little time to settle down and convince him that things are back to normal. Lull him into a false sense of security. And then abduct him however you can. Only you know your Victim's habits well enough to create a convincing way to kidnap him. Maybe he's drugged in his sleep. Maybe he's shot with a stun gun and dragged into an alley. Maybe his food ends up drugged and he disappears from the restaurant bathroom. Regardless, he ends up unconscious, bound, gagged, and stuffed in a car trunk.

ACT II: THE LION'S DEN

Goals: To put the Victim into a sick serial killer hell; to put the rest of the Characters on the investigative path.

Setting: Regular locations in and around your Character's city of residence. An abandoned industrial building outside the arcology.

Cast: *Travis and Tina Tasolczak* – identical twin teenage Empty serial killers.

A few unfortunate victims.

A mysterious caller.

Unfortunate Surroundings

The Victim eventually comes to from his abducted haze to discover he's been locked in a metal cage. Razor wire's been wrapped around the bars. There's no amenities – no toilet – and there's not even enough room to lay down. More than likely, he cuts himself on the razor wire just waking up. Once awake, the Victim will wish he hadn't bothered.

Anything that might have been useful has been taken away from the Victim. He doesn't even have shoelaces or a belt left. The lock on the cage is a digital four-digit combination lock. There are ten-thousand possible combinations and the lock shuts down for twenty minutes if you enter the wrong

combination three times. The bars are welded steel covered in razor-wire. There's nothing in reach. It will take some serious ingenuity and luck to escape from such a prison.

Around him, the room is an old industrial room with big ugly machines designed to do who-knows-what. There are two other similar cages in the room. It's dingy, nasty, smelly, badly lit, and gross. Though the perpetrators of these crimes torture their victims, there are no instruments of torture in this room. There's only some buckets to serve slop and water in and hoses to clean out excrement.

Each of the missing persons in the recent police report has been abducted by the sick freaks who created this place, and the victims' fates are thus:

- Mai Wing, mother and homemaker, and Kidina, Nazzadi truck operator, have already been tortured, killed, and disposed of – or possibly eaten.
- Tony Washington, local DJ, occasionally cries out from a cage across the room. His tongue has been cut out (and force fed to him), so he cannot communicate. His tongue is not the only thing he's lost. His genitals, a foot, an arm, his remaining hand – all have been surgically removed and force fed back to him. He is, thankfully, no longer home and won't be much longer for this world.
- Helmut Brauer, executive retiree, is now a macabre and disturbing work of art. His body cut into pieces and mutilated, he hangs in an almost unrecognizable sculpture of rearranged parts.
- Efurany, the eight year-old Nazzadi girl lies curled up in a nearby cage. She has been regularly beaten and sexually abused. Furthermore, the twins have forced her to watch as they tortured and murdered other victims. She's on the border-line of going Empty herself.

Let the victim get his bearings and get a look at what's happened to the others here. Let the horror and dread build. Let him grasp that the horrible things that have been done to the others here is a fate he now shares.

Enter the abductors, a pair of sociopathic, psychopathic Empty teenage twins named Travis and Tina Tsolczak. Identical, Travis and Tina look like opposite gender mirror images of each other – blonde-haired, blue-eyed pretty Caucasian teens dressed in

hip urban fashions. They walk through their prison wearing evil smiles and approach the victim. He can say what he wants, but they won't answer. They just give him a once over to make sure he's okay and then walk over to Efurany's cage. The little girl whimpers and pushes herself up against the back of the cage to get away from them, cutting herself on the razor wire in the process. The twins zap her with a stun gun and drag her out of the cage and ultimately out of the room.

This sort of horrifying setting and situation calls for a variety of Insanity Tests as this experience goes on. Don't be afraid to make your Victim roll for as many as you can come up with – this is not the sort of thing he'll come back from free and clear.

What the victim doesn't know is that he's in an abandoned industrial complex that the twins have claimed as their own, in an unpopulated part of the city outside the arcology.

Trying to Find What Isn't There

Finding the twins through convention means is pretty much impossible. This business is very premeditated. The twins have spent years studying criminology and forensics (and medicine, not coincidentally) for years. The police are totally stumped. Plus, they are Empty and whatever dark force guides them helps make them smart about what they're up to – how else could a couple of teenagers get out of an arcology with a body? The victims they've chosen have been chosen entirely at random. The only common thread they have is that they all live in the same city. The twins might as well be ghosts.

Don't discourage the Characters from looking, however, Hopefully they have the kind of contacts that will help them out, or they're just a bunch of citizens hoping to find their lost friend and going on instinct. However, they have to get out into the world so they can find their lucky break that will save their friend.

A Lucky Break

The lucky break doesn't come from investigation. Ask any detective – most of the time a search for a missing person is like looking for a needle in a haystack. But the Characters do get a lucky break, for unknown reasons and with unknown motives from the mysterious Scions of Forever. Unfortunately, the Characters have no idea who the Scions are nor will they know much from this interaction.



Just when things are looking hopeless, choose one of your Characters to get a very important phone call – unknown name, unknown number. If he chooses not to answer it, he'll keep getting calls at random times until he does. The voice on the other end addresses him by name and tells him that what he seeks is protected by the unwanted. The Character is told to go to a neighborhood outside the arcology and then the voice hangs up. Choose a run-down, mostly abandoned industrial area of whatever city you've set your game in for this tip – this is where the twins' lair will be. If they try, the call cannot be traced nor can the caller be identified. In fact, there isn't even a digital record of the call in the communications company's database.

Odds are that the Characters will be out of leads and even this sort of weird tip will be worth their time to explore.

ACT III: TEENAGE PSYCHOTICS

Goals: To torture the Victim and make him fear for his fate; to rescue the Victim from the twins.

Setting: An abandoned industrial neighborhood outside the arcology of your Character's city of residence. The twins' lair.

Cast: *Travis and Tina Tasolczak* – identical twin teenage Empty serial killers.

Homeless Empty.

A few unfortunate victims.

The police (maybe).

A mysterious caller.

Very Bad Things

It's going to take time for the Characters to find the Victim. During the time the Victim is at the twins' mercy, the following things will happen:

- Efurany is removed from her cage and returned to her cage numerous times. Sometimes she comes back further bloodied and tortured, sometimes not. She will not communicate.
- At some point they will take Tony from his cage. He will shriek horribly when they do, before they stun him into silence. He is taken away. Soon there-

after, they will come and get Efurany. Then, the screams begin. Tony howls and shrieks so loudly that the Victim can hear him from some other part of this place. When the horror is finally over, Tony is returned to his cell, but without one of his legs. Efurany is returned a couple hours later.

• After being starved, the Victim is taken out of his cell and fed by the twins. It should be obvious that what he's being fed is Tony's leg. The twins aren't much for conversation, so if he refuses to eat it, they will force him to eat it. Then they will proceed to torture the Victim. Electricity is a great place to start as well as good old-fashioned beating. If you want to give the Character scars, move on to piercing, cutting, and burning. These first sessions are painful and terrifying, but they won't leave permanent damage – yet.


Feel free to add to this sickening experience if the Characters take too long getting the pieces together and mounting their rescue. Continue to have the Victim make Insanity Tests as appropriate.

Rescue

Once the rest of the Characters have an idea where to look, it's a pretty good guess that they're going to go looking. Getting to where they need to go is going to require a car or similar transportation. Unless it's the middle of the day, cabs aren't going to take them there.

Once they get to the neighborhood, all they have to do is keep an eye out for the homeless. There's a lot of them and they all seem to look up and watch the Characters carefully. They don't particularly hang around near the twins' industrial building, but the fact that they're all over in about a four block radius around it should be a clue. The rescuing Characters may see a car leaving the building's block or they may hear screams. All you need to do is give them some kind of clue that someone besides the homeless is around and they should be able to find the right place.

The industrial building isn't locked and looks thoroughly abandoned upon casual inspection. However, all someone has to do is walk a little deeper inside and one of the back utility doors has a padlock on it, similar to the ones on the cages described earlier. However, these Characters have access to tools, even if only bricks, and can probably get access.



Inside, they find the torture room. Dried blood covers a chair and what looks like an operating table, both with restraints. A nearby table contains pretty much any tool a torturer could want. And then there's the portable grill and the small fridge containing remnants of body parts. It's time for these Characters to start making Insanity Tests.

Another locked door leads off this room into the room with the cages. They'll find Efurany and Tony and the interesting art on the wall and someone will probably lose their lunch. Time for more Insanity Tests. Their friend is in his cage and all they have to do is clip the lock and get the hell out. If they try to rescue her, Efurany won't let anybody touch her – they'll have to stun her to get her out of her cage or she'll thrash around until she cuts herself so badly on the razor wire that she'll die of blood loss. If Tony could talk, he'd beg for someone to kill him. Maybe he's just better left for the police.

On the other hand, you may have a particularly ingenious Victim who has figured out a way to escape. Just have the Characters show up at the last minute and help him escape. In the state he should be in, he'll appreciate someone carrying him out of there.

Killers

The twins should come back to find the Characters rescuing their friend. If it seems like the twins can gain an advantage and take the Characters, they'll be sneaky and do some damage. But Travis and Tina are sickos, not combatants. Most likely they'll just take off running and try to get away. If the Characters can stop them from getting in their car, they'll have to chase the twins on foot through the abandoned industrial neighborhood. If not, time for a car chase. Hopefully, someone will have the presence of mind to call the cops.

Whether or not the twins are captured is up to you. After everything, your Characters may instead just try to kill them. If cornered, the twins may try to take their own lives. It's up to you and your group as to how this chase winds up.

Epilogue

If the twins survive and are taken into police custody, they will matter-of-factly confess. The Victim will be able to watch from behind one-way glass for some

kind of closure. Travis and Tina will be tried and convicted of several counts of First Degree Murder and sentenced to the death penalty. They'll also be front page news and the Characters are going to get their day in the spotlight.

If the twins don't survive, then the Characters just need to go back to their lives. Either way, the emotional damage is heavy.

When all is said and done, the Character who received the mysterious phone call receives another. This time, the voice asks to speak to the victim. It tells him that while the body will heal, the spirit remains wounded until examined – look inside. It's up to you what is appropriate for the Victim, but perhaps something like the Latent Para-Psychic or Wary Assets for free might be a good light in the darkness, or Erupted Para-Psychic if he's already latent (or both if he's suffered especially). These prizes can only be claimed when he's done the work as the voice asked and spent time in deep meditation and reflection searching through his pain.

SINS OF THE DAUGHTER

This story is intended for a street-level game. The players are hired by John Stanwood, a well-known Senate Councilman to investigate and resolve a blackmail plot against his family. The political atmosphere of his new legislation would make a personal scandal disastrous. He therefore seeks to have his problem resolved unofficially, quietly, and as far under the carpet as his substantial personal fortune can guarantee. Here are a few suggested ways to introduce your players to this story:

- *Tager story* – A member of the Eldritch Society with political connections is contacted by Stanwood's assistant. The Eldritch Society member then notifies the player group of the job opportunity.

- *Law enforcement story* – A superior approaches the players to seek help with a touchy problem. He is well acquainted with the Stanwood family and asks the players to take a little unofficial time-off to investigate this apparently simple case.

- *Arcane underground or private investigator story* – A personal agent of John Stanwood is referred to one of the players though he doesn't immediately reveal the name of his employer. He is looking to hire someone to handle a "sensitive" personal matter.

· *Any story* – John Stanwood is the target of a low-level Blood Brigade assassination attempt on his motorcade. Several security guards go down. The players happen to be there and foil the plot. Councilman Stanwood sees this situation as an opportunity to hire potential talent to solve his blackmail problem.

Regardless of which hook you use, the characters should soon find themselves riding in a stylish limousine to a meeting with Councilman Stanwood at his private estate.

PART 1: BLACKMAIL

Goals: Introduce the players to the story under the premise of a blackmail investigation.

Setting: The Stanwood Estate, somewhere in or near your story's arcology, a large stone manor in the style of an old English country estate.

Cast: *Samir Balan* – A sixty-one year-old grey-bearded butler who looks sturdy despite his age. Wears a white suit and a turban. Quiet, formal, never smiles.

Senate Councilman John Stanwood – A fifty year-old man, six foot, good physical shape, grey hair, piercing gaze, wears his power like a fine Italian suit, palpable air of authority.

Karla Stanwood – A twenty-one year-old daughter of John Stanwood, reckless, head-strong, self-indulgent, spoiled, flirtatious, and a very beautiful blonde.

Marlis Werden – A thirty-nine year-old woman of Germanic descent, Stanwood's personal assistant. She has blond hair tied back in a conservative manner, wears business power suits, can be friendly but not beyond the realm of business, and sports a scar on her face.

The Situation

A wrought iron security gate opens to allow the limousine access to the estate grounds. The vehicle rolls up to a large arched entranceway. Samir Balan greets the players as they exit the vehicle and shows them inside the Stanwood home. Marlis

Werden soon approaches wielding a smile and a very formal air of superiority. She greets the players and leads them to the library.

The players are offered drinks and asked to make themselves comfortable. Marlis then explains that her employer, Senate Councilman Stanwood, is a very influential leader in Chicago. She outlines that he is a prominent voice for a new Corporate Deregulation Bill that will propel technology research and advancement to new levels. Removing the reigns from private business is meant to give the New Earth Government war production the boost it needs to finally take the fight back to the Migou. Marlis also explains that due to the sensitive nature of Senate Councilman Stanwood's position, any private contract for services rendered must be carried out with the utmost discretion.

Samir Balan soon reappears and announces that the Senate Councilman is ready to see the players. Marlis offers her assistance should the players find that they need it. She then says her goodbyes and takes her leave. The players are led through the estate to an elegant glass conservatory filled with various species of rare plants. The center of the conservatory is adorned with furniture in the fashion of a comfortable living room and a grey haired man beckons the players to join him there. This is John Stanwood.

Stanwood greets the players easily enough but with an air of authority. He asks them to sit and offers any refreshment they may like. He gets down to business as soon as everyone settles. "Thank you all for coming. I've asked you here on a matter of personal business. If any of you have family you might understand when I say that there is nothing more important in a father's life than the well-being of his daughter. My daughter, Karla, is more precious to me than anything in the world. But, ever since her mother died, she seems to have drifted away and involved herself with questionable people. I cannot write off her excesses as a young woman's folly, because circumstances have grown far beyond that."

Stanwood begins to explain the he's being blackmailed. He's received several samples of video clips of his daughter engaged in explicit and drug-enhanced sexual acts. The stark vulgarity in some of

her activities would certainly ignite a scandal if made public. Stanwood avoids details, but it is clear from his expression that he is both hurt and angry over the whole affair.

“At first they wanted cash to keep these videos secret. The sum was low enough and easy to manage. Then it got worse. They sought to influence my Senate vote. And oh God, what I’ve had to witness my daughter do! I was horrified and angry. My daughter of course denies everything even when faced with one of the videos. She claims she couldn’t remember ever doing any of those things.”

Just then the players notice a beautiful young woman make her way out into the garden. Her long blonde hair cascades gently over the back of her red satin robe. Her hands move to the tie of the robe and gracefully pull the garment off her shoulders to reveal a golden tanned and striking nude figure. She seems relaxed and gently settles herself upon a lounge chair to warm her body under the shower of sunlight. There seems to be no regard in her manner toward anyone who might see her. Stanwood notices an attention shift in the players. With a look of irritation he signals Samir who in turn presses a remote control to darken the glass pane that frames Karla’s golden figure. Stanwood continues.

“I apologize for the distraction. As I was saying, my daughter is in trouble and I need your help to find out who is behind these blackmail messages and put a stop to it. You will be well compensated.”

The players should ask Stanwood questions about where her daughter goes and who she spends time with. If not, he will simply reveal that she’s been involved with someone named Brent at school. The Storyguide can select any local University with the appropriate level of prestige that would suit a Councilman’s daughter. “You might want to start there,” remarks Stanwood. “Be careful and good luck.”

PART 2: INVESTIGATION

Goals: Trace the activities of Karla Stanwood that lead to the Spell Trader magic shop.

Setting: University Campus and the Spell Trader magic shop.

Cast: *Brent Collins* – Handsome, athletic, well mannered, over the moon with Kara, seems nervous and constantly looking over his shoulder.

Myron Kovalevsky – Forty-two, Ukrainian born. Reserved, portly, balding, seems like he’s hiding something. Speaks with an Eastern European accent.

Nandy – Mid-twenties Nazzadi, long black hair, very pretty, curious, talks a lot. Lingerie shop worker.

Karla Stanwood

The Situation

The players begin their search for answers. Any attempt to interview Karla directly will reveal very little. She comes off as flighty and air-headed. Any direct questions about her activities will likely invoke flirtatious behavior or claims that she just doesn’t remember.

The investigation should lead to Karla’s University where the players learn that she is a well-known party girl. However, she’s also maintained an excellent academic record and in fact has excelled in occult studies and sorcery. The players soon discover that Karla’s latest boyfriend is Brent Collins, the son of a wealthy business family. It seems that Karla met Brent a year ago in a sorcery survey class called “Practical Applications of Sorcery.” Brent encouraged her to continue her studies and introduced her to an off-campus club that dabbled in certain recreational aspects of sorcery. Rumor has it that this club met regularly in the basement of a magic shop known as Spell Traders.

Spell Traders is the kind of magic shop that caters more toward trinket buyers and tourists than serious sorcerers. But a discerning eye will certainly find genuine magic merchandise among the shelves of junk. The establishment is located near the downtown shopping district. The owner is a very conservative man named Myron Kovalevsky. He claims to know nothing of Karla Stanwood and his demeanor shifts slightly to the defensive if her name is mentioned. Attempting to force an issue during normal business hours will result in nothing and may in fact solicit a call to the police.

As the players leave Kovalevsky’s store they notice a beautiful young Nazzadi woman watching through

a lingerie shop window from across the city walkway. She backs quickly away from the window with a startled expression once she realizes that she's been spotted. This should hook the players to investigate. If not, she'll eventually signal the players to come over. She introduces herself as Nandy.

Nandy is easy to talk to and the players soon discover that she is a bit of a busy body. She's watched the goings on at the Spell Trader for some time and describes how a small group of people often shows up after hours. She hadn't thought much about it until late one night when a young blonde woman was carried out unconscious by a couple of men. Nandy can reasonably confirm that the woman she saw that night was Karla based on her description. She lives in an apartment above the lingerie shop and has a good view of the Spell Trader's front entrance. She is eager to help and will volunteer her place if the players want to stake out the location.

True as Nandy's word several excited people show up at the Spell Trader later that night. One of them is Karla Stanwood.

PART 3: CRIMES OF PASSION

Goals: Stop Brent Collins' shooting spree and at the same time deal with the mess without inciting a public media scandal.

Setting: The Spell Trader magic shop

Cast: *Brent Collins*

Myron Kovalevsky

Marlis Werden

The players soon notice a very agitated Brent Collins approaching. He hugs his overcoat tightly and uses a code key to enter the front door of the magic shop. This should cue the players to follow. A locked front door delays them for a moment. Soon, a woman's faint scream is heard from inside along with muffled gunfire. With all pretenses gone, the players must break into the building in response to the emergency.

51



The shop is dark, but a light leads to a back stairwell. Screams continue to emanate from that direction. The stairs lead down to a basement area that appears to host magic rituals – candles, braziers, and an inscribed pentagram on the ground. Another doorway opens from this room to a back room. The bullet punctured remains of a young man lies sprawled on the floor just beyond.

As the players approach the room they find Brent nervously grasping a pistol trained at the doorway. Five other young men and women in various stages of undress cower against an opposite wall. Myron Kovalevsky lies on the floor bleeding from two gunshots wounds to his stomach. Karla Stanwood is tied naked to a bed with lighting, sound, and video equipment set up around her. Brent looks stunned and helpless as the gun wavers in his hand.

The players must deal with Brent – a frightened and guilt-ridden college student trying to save his girlfriend from the life he'd introduced her to by mistake. Brent will explain that Karla reveled in her wild-girl image just to spite her father. She took to sorcery because her dad would not approve. When Kovalevsky introduced her to his personal porn studio she hungrily jumped in. All her hidden desires were catered to. She received special invitations to weekend long sex parties and went out of her way to experience everything that a good Senate Councilman's daughter would never do. Brent saw her life spinning out of control and though he feared Kovalevsky's connections he decided to do something about it. Unfortunately that "something" included bringing a gun to an argument.

Sputtering coughs alert the players that Kovalevsky is still alive for now. He clutches an envelope in his hand. The letters "D-Club/CH" can clearly be seen on the outside. If anyone presses the meaning of the inscription Kovalevsky will simply whisper the name "Hammond" and will pass soon after.

The players now find themselves in an awkward position. A call to the police would embroil the Stanwood family in a huge media scandal. Likewise, walking away is not an option. Someone should get the idea to call Marlis Werden for help. If not, Marlis will call one of the players under the pretense that Karla has

gone missing. She will advise that the players sit tight until help arrives. She soon shows up with a handful of black-suited and armed security people. After a quick run-down she advises the players to get Karla and Brent out of there. She'll clean up the situation but won't reveal how.

Karla is in shock and will need to be cared for as the players take her home. What they do with Brent is up to them.

PART 4: POLITICS IS MURDER

Goals: Discover the Dionysus Club connection and stop the assassination plot.

Setting: The Hammond Estate and the Stanwood Estate

Cast: *Clifford Hammond* – Mid-thirties, Scandinavian-looking, fit, long blonde hair, visibly terrified.

Marlis Werden

A call comes in from a stranger the following day. His name is Clifford Hammond and he sounds mortally terrified. "Please, I need to see you right now! I know who you work for and I don't have time to waste! She's out of control! I'm only involved because I was asked to indoctrinate the Stanwood girl. I didn't think it would ever come to this! Please hurry!"

Hammond quickly gives his address then hangs up leaving an air of suspicion behind. His Estate is a modern home of the most stylish architecture some ten miles outside the local arcology. A security guard greets the players at the front gate. Hammond, audibly impatient, will grant them access via the guard's intercom.

Hammond meets the players in his study wearing a long silk robe. He greets them nervously and with evident fear in his eyes. He explains how "she" came to him with a request to work on the Stanwood girl. The reward for the deal was substantial and he was sure that any political leverage with the Senate Councilman would be invaluable. But things were now out of control. To highlight his point, Hammond presses a button on a remote control to display a hologram

image of this morning's news broadcast. The headline story is a large explosion and fire that engulfed a local magic shop known as the Spell Trader. The cause is still under investigation.

"Marlis is an extremely dangerous woman and I know the kind of people she works for! We had Karla Stanwood so turned around emotionally that she began to really hate her father. I believe that Marlis added an extra push to transform hate into murder – playing with her dreams I think. Councilman Stanwood is a very respected political leader. I'm sure that his untimely and tragic death would almost guarantee the posthumous passing of his Corporate Deregulation Bill. At least I think that this is what Marlis is up to. But, that doesn't matter now! Please, you must protect..." Just then a small metal sphere sporting blade protrusions crashes violently through the window and flies murderously into the back of Hammond's skull. He dies instantly.

Although the players don't know this, Marlis Werden is a powerful sorceress and a member of the Circle. Her contract with the Chrysalis Corporation was to make sure that Stanwood's bill would pass. She was perfectly aware of local Dionysus Club actives, at least their surface actives, and decided to make use of their resources for her own ends. Her plan was to eliminate Stanwood on the eve of the Senate legislation vote and in so doing perhaps gain a new Circle recruit in Karla Stanwood. However, Brent's untimely interruption at the magic shop threw her timetable into disarray causing her to accelerate her plans. Stanwood is scheduled to die tonight.

The players must race to the Stanwood Estate to stop Karla from killing her father. Security guards under Marlis' command cover the grounds to keep out intruders. Dhohanoids will be included if Taggers are among the players. The Storyguide can also add summoned creatures such as Guants or Byakhee – Marlis would certainly enslave something not of this world to her service. The Storyguide should balance the opponent strength against the overall ability of the Characters. The players must fight past the guards to enter the estate grounds. Marlis confronts anyone who makes it past her

guards and tries to stop them. If she cannot, she will observe the better part of valor and escape, leaving the players to deal with Karla. That is if she survives.

A gunshot is heard from upstairs. As the players burst into the master bedroom they find Karla standing with a pistol aimed at her father. He sits bolt upright in his bed staring wide eyed at her. A bullet hole now decorates the wall behind his head. "I can't do it!!" she screams in hysterical panic and turns the pistol on herself. Winning Initiative will allow one of the players to dash in and bat the pistol away before she can pull the trigger. Otherwise, Karla will experience a violent and tragic end to her pain.

EPILOGUE

If Karla Stanwood survives she will be admitted to a mental hospital for treatment. John Stanwood immediately removes his Corporate Deregulation Bill from the table. The Senate Councilman's spin masters quickly transform the magic shop explosion, the murder of Clifford Hammond, and the skirmish at the Stanwood Estate into Blood Brigade terrorist plot. And if Marlis Werden survives, the players will have earned themselves a new, deadly, and resourceful enemy.

John Stanwood graciously rewards the players for their work and sincerely thanks them for saving his life and that of his daughter. He offers to make himself available to any of the Characters should they need someone of his position in the future. The Characters can now take a level three Ally asset for John Stanwood.

HOOKS

Here are a few story plots to give you ideas for further games involving minor cults.

A TIME TO CELEBRATE,

A TIME TO DIE

A story hook involving the Blood Brigade

Dante Cook was a quiet man. Nobody knew much about him except that he kept to himself most of the time and that he was polite and deeply religious. Who would ever guess that this truck driver who lived peacefully by himself had any kind of military background? In fact, his background wouldn't be in question at all if it hadn't been for the fact that Mr. Cook was found murdered in his apartment three days ago. The killing was clean and professional, execution style. Local authorities believe that he had established black market connections and in fact may have been in debt for a substantial amount of money.

The players, whether by relation, association, or profession, are called to investigate Cook's murder. Several unusual clues were discovered at the scene of his death, including a design for an elegant yet simple detonation device, ingredients to make a fair amount of chemical explosive, and a pay stub for an industrial chemical plant (that produces chlorine) showing that he had recently been hired as a fleet driver. Next to the pay stub was a printout of a news story about a local fair to celebrate the annual Earth Brotherhood Festival. At the bottom of the page, scrawled in handwriting, were the words, "In the name of the Father."

Why was Dante Cook murdered? Was he part of a terrorist plot to release deadly chlorine gas into a crowd of festival-goers? If so, did he have accomplices? The players must race against time to discover the truth and prevent the execution of an unthinkable plot.

IMPULSIVE

A story hook for an Eldritch Society game

Recently, a Whisper known to the pack was killed and her mauled body was found by the police. The area she was found in was supposed to contain underground activity, but was supposed to be safe from the Chrysalis Corporation. What else could quietly

take a Tager down in a back alley in such a gruesome fashion? There were no other bodies found at the crime scene and there was no sign of gunfire. Law enforcement is conducting a standard thorough homicide investigation and the Whisper's pack, as known associates, is part of that investigation. They have to lay low, but they're pissed, so they ask the Characters' pack to take a look for them.

The truth is that there is a Congregation of the Earth Mother safehouse near where the Whisper was killed. The sensitive among the cultists sensed a threat and went to investigate. When she shifted, spirit animal imbued of the cultists instinctively attacked. Overall, not a smart move on their part, but such creatures are not known for thinking first. Several imbued cultists died in the assault, but the Whisper was taken down under the weight of their numbers, their pack tactics, and their suicidal commitment.

If the pack can react fast enough, they may be able to sniff out the Congregation as they move their safehouse. The cultists know it's not safe there anymore and are moving with as much haste as they can, without attracting too much attention to themselves. While the pack may be able to, if carefully played, get leads on Congregation activity elsewhere in the arcology, the situation will most likely devolve into an ugly bloodbath – after all, animals will defend their territory.

IN THE WOODS,

NO ONE CAN HEAR YOU SCREAMING

A story hook involving the Congregation of the Earth Mother

A friend, partner, or fellow agent goes missing after several weeks in the wilderness. His last message said something about a sister in trouble. His last known location was a small remote town in the Pacific Northwest. The players arrive to discover a run-down and almost abandoned settlement. Most people are suspicious and unwilling to talk, instead resorting to rude comments or silent disregard. Only the local hotel manager, a woman in her late forties, is willing to help. She acknowledges seeing the missing man says he traveled north some time ago. It is late, so she invites the players to stay the night before continuing their journey.

Whether they are forced or drugged, the players are taken in the middle of the night deep into the forest, prisoners of a primal and dangerous looking mob. They are stripped, bound, and placed in the center of a large pentagram drawn on the grounds of a forest clearing. Torch smoke spirals in the air as dark robed figures slowly form a circle around the pentagram. A middle-aged woman steps out among the crowd – the hotel manager and she is naked except for an antler-crowned head dress. She speaks, “Oh blessed mother, accept this worthy sacrifice as a symbol of our unwavering devotion. As it was with the old ways, we will hunt for the blood that you demand.”

A robed figure approaches the players to cut their bonds with a large knife. They are commanded to run into the dark wood beyond the clearing as the crowd of worshipers discards their robes to reveal their true feral selves. The hunt is on.

PREMONITIONS

A story hook involving the Sleepers

Someone in your story is haunted by recurring nightmares, with gradually building detail and intensity. Each night this dreamer finds himself walking through the corridors of a burning home as deep rage pounds at his senses. He comes to a bedroom to find a Nazzadi woman frantically tearing at a window latch. The dreamer approaches this woman from behind and somewhere in his mind realizes he is holding something – a chair-leg club burning at the end like a torch. The woman turns suddenly as she senses his presence. She screams in shrill horror as the blazing club comes crashing down on her skull like a hammer crushing a grapefruit. The rage lessens with each swing as the dreamer's true emotion sheers away from the blood frenzy of the moment, protected in a veil of calm. Another presence is felt and reassuring thoughts somehow bring the dreamer back from losing himself in murder. He understands that who he is and who he dreams to be are two different people. An old woman appears, shrouded in white light and beckons the dreamer to gaze toward a large mirror hanging on the wall. His reflection is the image of a young man, perhaps sixteen. His face is pierced and scarred, his eyes are hollow and mad. A cold chill seeps into the dreamer's bones as inhuman whispers fill the room. They claw at the dreamer's veil of calm until screams begin to gurgles in his

throat. Each night the dreamer awakens with sweat covering his shaking body.

These dreams are clearly a warning and the dreamer must somehow stop the events of this dream from happening in reality. Can he discover who the Nazzadi woman really is? Can he uncover the identity of this murderer before it's too late? Will his dream companion give him the strength to face horrors so unholy that their power might actually be rooted in the nightmares of the Unnamable? The dreamer must gather his full strength and that of his allies to uncover the truth.

WHEN AT FIRST YOU DON'T SUCCEED...

A story hook for a law enforcement game

There has been a recent rash of college, club, and bar date rapes. The victims are pretty girls between the ages of 18 and 24, though a couple younger girls with fake ID's have also fallen prey. Each of the girls reports drinking alcoholic beverages and soon after spinning out of control. It is suspected right off the bat that they have been drugged. Their memories are fuzzy and though they remember being forced to engage in sexual intercourse while they were helpless, they cannot provide details about their attackers. Furthermore, the rapists have been smart enough to wear condoms to avoid leaving DNA evidence.

Investigations of parties and bars has finally turned up an unidentified residue in a couple of drinking glasses. The forensics lab has analyzed the substance and compared it against the Federal Security Bureau's law enforcement database. It is classified as the unidentified compound U-213A and it is a rare drug that finds its way onto the street from time to time and is commonly used as a very effective date rape drug, particularly when mixed with alcohol.

Successful investigation will bring them to a Second Circle Church of All cultist who is distributing the drug DFA to street dealers in order to drum up some cash for the cult. Characters may be led to a small lab in a disreputable part of town that contains Church trappings and more than likely will find themselves accosted by Hybrids in the shadows. While it will be difficult to catch the Church, it is more than likely that they will be able to bust the lab and stop the flow of DFA onto the streets – for now.



INDEX

| | | | |
|----------------------------------|--------------|-----------------------------------|--------------|
| Adding Minor Cults | 29 | Esoteric Order of Dagon | 7, 14-15, 24 |
| Aphrodisiacs | 33 | Federal Security Bureau (FSB) | 7, 15, 18 |
| Black Mother, the | 14 | First Circle | 14 |
| Blind Lady, the | 16 | Gold | 33, 34 |
| Blood Brigade | 6, 12-13 | Gurathnaka | 22, 26 |
| Blood Brigade Terrorist | 35-36 | Hallucinogens | 33 |
| Brainwashing | 31 | Harmony | 14, 34 |
| Call the Night's Terrors | 41 | Hooks | 54-55 |
| Call the Soul's Beast | 32 | Hounds | 24 |
| Cell Structure | 8 | Hybrids | 14 |
| Children of Chaos | 7, 18 | Hypnos | 26 |
| Chrysalis Corporation | 16, 18 | Imbue Glamour Lock | 41 |
| Church of All | 6, 14-15 | Independent Minor Cults | 8 |
| Church of All Priestess | 36 | Influence the Naked Spirit | 41 |
| Church of All Recruiter | 36-37 | Insight of the Sleeper | 41 |
| Circle Assassin | 37 | Know Passion's Flame | 41 |
| Circle, the | 6, 16-17, 24 | Lucid Dreaming | 26 |
| Command the Slumbering Shell | 41 | Master Imagination's Realm | 41 |
| Congregation Medium | 37-38 | Ministry of Divine Truth | 12 |
| Congregation of the Earth Mother | 6, 18-19 | Ministry of Information | 8 |
| Congregation Witch | 38 | Minor Cults | 6 |
| Conjoin the Adrift Psyche | 41 | Morfean | 26 |
| Core Book | 6 | Myrovh | 22 |
| Craft the Labyrinthian Identity | 31 | N'athm | 22, 23 |
| Craft Weeping Orb | 41 | Nyarlathept | 14 |
| Cthulhu | 14 | Office of Internal Security (OIS) | 8, 17 |
| Cult Locations | 9 | Private Investigator | 39-40 |
| Cult Magic | 31-33 | Recruitment Cults | 7 |
| Cult Recruitment | 7 | Scion Immortal Sorceress | 40 |
| Cult Tools | 31 | Scions of Forever | 6, 24-25 |
| Cult Watch | 7 | Second Circle | 14 |
| Dark Goat | 18 | Sectarian Crimes Division | 7 |
| Dead God, the | 13 | Shub-Niggurath | 14 |
| Deep Ones | 14 | Sins of the Daughter | 48-53 |
| Deprogramming Unit | 8 | Sleeper Dream Magician | 40-41 |
| DFA | 33, 34 | Sleeper Workshop Leader | 41 |
| Dionysus Club | 6, 20-21 | Sleepers | 6, 26-27 |
| Dionysus Club Power Broker | 38-39 | Somnicon | 33-34 |
| Disciples of Death's Shadow | 7, 8-9, 21 | Spells | 31, 41 |
| Disciples of the Rapine Storm | 7 | Spirit Animal Possession | 18, 32 |
| Dream Magic | 33 | Telling Minor Cult Stories | 30 |
| Dreamlands | 26 | Third Circle | 14 |
| Drugs | 33 | Universal Subconscious | 26 |
| Ecaryline | 34 | Ward of Cool Spirit | 41 |
| Empty Psychopath | 39 | Wicca | 18 |
| Empty Threats | 44-48 | Yog-Sothoth | 24 |
| Empty, the | 6, 22-23 | | |




A COLLECTION OF USEFUL THINGS

This short reference section is designed to help you find important Character material in the *CthulhuTech Core Book*. It contains:

- the Character Design summary.
- Character Development rules.
- a list of Skills and Qualities with corresponding page numbers.
- the Basic Combat Summary.
- the Fear Effects table and a list of Mental Disorders with corresponding page numbers.
- the Character Sheet.
- the Mecha Sheet.
- the Supporting Cast Sheet.

You may photocopy the Character, Mecha, and Supporting Cast Sheets for your personal use. To acquire a free .pdf of this material, check out www.cthulhutech.com (use code 2011ta2089).

- *Nazzadi* – the biogenetic creations of the Migou, originally sent to destroy Humanity.



POSSSESSIONS

Gear (Carried)

| |
|--|
| |
| |
| |
| |
| |
| |
| |
| |
| |
| |

Gear (Owned)

| |
|--|
| |
| |
| |
| |
| |
| |
| |
| |
| |
| |

SPELLS

First Order

| Type | Effect | Cost |
|------|--------|------|
| | | |
| | | |
| | | |
| | | |
| | | |
| | | |
| | | |
| | | |

Second Order

| Type | Effect | Cost |
|------|--------|------|
| | | |
| | | |
| | | |
| | | |
| | | |
| | | |
| | | |
| | | |

Third Order

| Type | Effect | Cost |
|------|--------|------|
| | | |
| | | |
| | | |
| | | |
| | | |
| | | |
| | | |
| | | |

TAGER

Manifestation

Regeneration

Fear Factor

Shifted Attributes

| Agility | Level | Feat |
|---------|-------|------|
| | | |
| | | |
| | | |
| | | |
| | | |
| | | |
| | | |
| | | |
| | | |
| | | |
| | | |

Perception

Strength

Tenacity

Actions

Movement

Reflex

Vitality

ARMOR

Type

| | Protection |
|--|------------|
| | |
| | |
| | |
| | |
| | |
| | |
| | |
| | |

WEAPONS

| Type | Damage | Shots/Rounds | Range |
|------|--------|--------------|-------|
| | | | |
| | | | |
| | | | |
| | | | |
| | | | |
| | | | |
| | | | |
| | | | |
| | | | |
| | | | |
| | | | |

WOUNDS

| Level | Vitality | Current | Effect | Tager Vitality | Tager Current |
|----------|----------|---------|--|----------------|---------------|
| Flesh | | | None | | |
| Light | | | -1 Test Penalty | | |
| Moderate | | | -3 Test Penalty/Half Move Max. 2 Actions/Armor Half | | |
| Severe | | | -6 Test Penalty/Crawl Max. 1 Action/Armor Gone | | |
| Dead | | | Unconscious & Dying | | |

Choose a Name:

- Pick a Character name.
- Record your name.
- Record your Storyguide's name.

Concept is explained on p. 58.

STEP TWO: ATTRIBUTES

Distribute 35 points among the six Attributes, from 1 to 10:

- *Agility* is a measure of physical dexterity and grace.
- *Intellect* is a measure of education and intelligence.
- *Perception* is a measure of awareness and sense acuity.
- *Presence* is a measure of charm, beauty, and force of personality.
- *Strength* is a measure of physical might.
- *Tenacity* is a measure of endurance and willpower.

Attributes are explained on p. 60.

STEP THREE: SKILLS & SPECIALIZATIONS, QUALITIES

Purchase skills using 20 points; 1 point is available for two Focused level Specializations. Each skill costs the desired level of expertise's die rating:

- Student (1 Die)
- Novice (2 Dice)
- Adept (3 Dice)
- Expert (4 Dice)
- Master (5 Dice)

All Characters receive the following skills for free:

- Languages (English or Nazzadi): Expert (or both at Novice for younger Nazzadi)
- Literacy: Novice
- Regional Knowledge: Novice

You may also purchase Assets, which cost skill points, and acquire up to ten points worth of Drawbacks, which give you skill points to spend.

Skills & Specializations and Qualities are explained on p. 61. Skills are listed on p. 80. Qualities are listed on p. 93.

STEP FOUR: SECONDARY ATTRIBUTES

Calculate Secondary Attributes:

- Actions – average of Agility & Perception. Consult table on p. 64.
- Movement – average of Agility & Strength. Consult table on p. 64.
- Orgone – 5 + average of Intellect & Tenacity.
- Reflex – average of Agility, Intellect, & Perception.
- Vitality – 5+ average of Strength & Tenacity.
- Drama Points – 10

Secondary Attributes are explained on p. 64.

STEP FIVE: OUTFITTING THE CHARACTER

Characters are middle class and entitled to the creature comforts associated with that level of status. Any special gear is determined by Profession, starting on p. 71.

STEP SIX: CHEATS

Spend 6 Cheats. Adjust any Secondary Attributes that might be affected.

Cheats are further explained on p. 65.

*Check for requirements and Insanity Tests.

STEP SEVEN: MAKING IT REAL

Add detail and background, including physical description, personality, motivation, family, and friends.

Making It Real is further explained on p. 65.

CHARACTER ENHANCEMENT

| | |
|---|----|
| Increase an Attribute 1 point | 3 |
| Get 2 more points for Skills | 1 |
| Increase Orgone by 2 | 1 |
| Increase Vitality by 1 | 1 |
| Start with a legal First Order Protection or Scrying Spell | 1* |
| Start with an illegal First Order Protection or Scrying Spell | 2* |
| Start with a legal First Order Enchantment or Transmogrification Spell | 2* |
| Start with an illegal First Order Enchantment, Summoning, or Transmogrification Spell | 4* |

CHEATS

CHEAT COST

| |
|----|
| 3 |
| 1 |
| 1 |
| 1 |
| 1* |
| 2* |
| 2* |
| 4* |

CHARACTER DEVELOPMENT

As stories progress, Dramatic Characters gain points in what is called Experience. These rewards represent the Character's learning and evolution and can be used to improve a variety of a Character's aspects. Experience is usually handed out at the end of every play session and you may spend it immediately or save it up. Experience can be spent at any time to develop your Character – even during an episode.

To Improve An Attribute

Normally, improving attributes is difficult. If you wish to do so, talk with your Storyguide about the things your Character needs to do to improve that Attribute and then have him do them during play. Once a reasonable amount of time has passed, as determined by your Storyguide, spend the Experience and increase the Attribute by one. Attributes can be increased to a maximum of 11 normally, but can be increased up to 20 if the Character is influenced by things of an otherworldly nature.

You'll notice that improving Attributes at low levels is more expensive. That's because one to three on the Attribute scale describe varying levels of handicap and it is often difficult to overcome natural disadvantages.

- To increase an Attribute of 4 or higher by one point costs a number of Experience equal to the Attribute's current rating x 5.
- To increase an Attribute of 3 or lower costs a number of Experience equal to the Attribute's current rating x 10.

To Learn A New Skill

If you want your Character to learn a new skill he must first seek instruction. An instructor is classified as any Character with at least an Adept level of expertise in the skill being taught and with a Presence of at least 7. He must then make a Challenging (Hard for Professional Skills) Extended Test for the skill and is required to roll five successful Tests to succeed. Of course, this will take time and your Storyguide will let you know how long it takes in game time to gain this rudimentary understanding of the skill.

Once your Character has completed his training, spend 5 Experience to learn the new skill at a Student level of expertise.

To Develop A Skill One Level of Expertise

If you want to improve one of your Character's skills, it must be one that he has been practicing – either through regular use, study, or training. A skill may only be increased one level of expertise every other episode at the most.

- To develop from Student to Novice costs 10 Experience.
- To develop from Novice to Adept costs 20 Experience.
- To develop from Adept to Expert costs 20 Experience.
- To develop from Expert to Master costs 30 Experience.

To Become Specialized

If you want your Character to become specialized it must be in an area within a skill that he has been practicing – either through regular use, study, or training. A Specialization may only be acquired or improved if the overall skill to which it is attached is not improved that episode, and then only once every other episode.

- To become Focused in an area costs 15 Experience.
- To become a Specialist in an area from being Focused costs 20 Experience.

IMPROVING FEATS

Even though the starting level for Feat skills is linked to an Attribute, it is not limited by that Attribute over time. You can spend Experience to improve Feat skills just like any other, but they require varied concentration on the associated Attribute through a variety of skills and applications. In short, you have to concentrate on your raw ability as if you were training to improve the associated Attribute.

To Increase Orgone

Orgone is one of those unpredictable things and thus requires nothing other than Experience in order to improve. You can improve it at any time, for any reason, up to a maximum of double your Character's starting amount.

- To increase Orgone by one point costs a number of Experience equal to your Character's current Orgone rating.

To Obtain New Spells

Learning new spells is intense and each one takes a certain amount of time to study. Once your Character meets the Intellect, Tenacity, Occult, and study requirements, you can spend the Experience to learn the spell. Many spells also required Insanity Tests when they are learned, so keep an eye out.

- To learn a new First Order Protection or Scrying spell costs 10 Experience.
- To learn a new Second Order Protection or Scrying spell costs 20 Experience.
- To learn a new Third Order Protection or Scrying spell costs 30 Experience.
- To learn a new First Order Enchantment, Summoning, or Transmogrification spell costs 15 Experience.
- To learn a new Second Order Enchantment, Summoning, or Transmogrification spell costs 30 Experience.
- To learn a new Third Order Enchantment, Summoning, or Transmogrification spell costs 50 Experience.

See p. 183 for specific information on spells.

Removing Drawbacks & Acquiring New Assets

Qualities are, in most cases, intangibles and story devices. Some of them cannot be acquired after you've started playing your Character and some Drawbacks might be impossible to overcome. Your Storyguide will let you know which Assets or Drawbacks can be acquired or removed during play, but your common sense should predict his answer. If your Storyguide rules that an Asset can be acquired or a Drawback removed, he will provide you with a set of conditional or behavioral requirements. Once complete, spend the appropriate Experience and it is done.

- Removing a Drawback or acquiring a new Asset worth one point costs 5 Experience.
- Removing a Drawback or acquiring a new Asset worth two points costs 15 Experience.
- Removing a Drawback or acquiring a new Asset worth three points costs 35 Experience.
- Removing a Drawback or acquiring a new Asset worth four points costs 55 Experience.

Personality Development

Just like real people, Dramatic Characters change over time and not just in the aforementioned ways. Who people are, what they value, how they view things – these things shift in at least small ways. The personalities of Dramatic Characters can and should transform over time.

Aside from the more subtle ways in which you portray your Character, you can change his Defining Characteristics. Your Character always has one Virtue and one Flaw and you can't just get rid of either at any time. Change of personality on this core a level should be a serious focus in a Dramatic Character's life or the result of a serious, traumatic, or otherwise life-changing event. When working to change personality, the shift will be an effort at first but your Storyguide will tell you when it has occurred for good.

SPENDING ODD EXPERIENCE

If you ever end up with an odd number of Experience from purchasing Orgone increases, you can spend them to purchase temporary Drama Points. Record these temporary points separately, because when you use them they are gone – they do not regenerate like normal Drama Points. You get two temporary Drama Points for every point of Experience you choose to spend but you can still only bank up to twenty total, including your regular pool.

COMPLETE SKILL LIST

General Skills

| | Page |
|-------------------------------------|------|
| Appraisal (Perception)* | 80 |
| Arcanotechnician (Intellect)* | 80 |
| Arcanotech Engineering (Intellect)* | 80 |
| Armorer (Intellect)* | 81 |
| Artist (Perception) | 81 |
| Athletics (Special) | 81 |
| Bureaucracy (Intellect) | 81 |
| Business (Intellect) | 82 |
| Communications (Intellect)* | 82 |
| Computers (Intellect)* | 82 |
| Criminal (Agility) | 82 |
| Culture (Intellect) | 82 |
| Demolitions (Intellect) | 83 |
| Education (Intellect) | 83 |
| Engineering (Intellect)* | 83 |
| Feat (Variable) | 83 |
| History (Intellect) | 83 |
| Hobby (Special) | 84 |
| Intimidate (Presence) | 84 |
| Languages (Intellect)* | 84 |
| Larceny (Intellect)* | 84 |
| Law Enforcement (Intellect) | 84 |
| Literacy (Intellect) | 85 |
| Medicine (Intellect)* | 85 |
| Misdirect (Presence) | 86 |
| Munitions (Intellect)* | 86 |
| Observation (Perception) | 86 |
| Occult (Intellect)* | 86 |
| Performance (Presence) | 87 |
| Persuade (Presence) | 87 |
| Pilot (Agility) | 87 |
| Regional Knowledge (Intellect) | 87 |
| Research (Perception) | 88 |
| Savoir-Faire (Intellect) | 88 |
| Science: Earth (Intellect)* | 88 |
| Science: Life (Intellect)* | 88 |
| Science: Physical (Intellect)* | 88 |
| Security (Intellect)* | 89 |
| Seduction (Presence) | 89 |
| Streetwise (Intellect) | 89 |
| Stealth (Agility) | 89 |
| Surveillance (Intellect) | 89 |
| Survival (Tenacity) | 90 |
| Technician (Intellect)* | 90 |
| Trivia (Intellect) | 90 |

COMBAT SKILLS

| | |
|-------------------------------|----|
| Armed Fighting (Agility) | 90 |
| Dodge (Agility) | 91 |
| Fighting (Agility) | 91 |
| Marksman (Perception) | 91 |
| Support Weapons (Perception)* | 92 |
| Thrown Weapons (Agility) | 92 |

* = Professional Skill

QUALITIES LIST

Assets

| | Page |
|-----------------------------|------|
| *Acute Senses (2) | 93 |
| *Alluring (1) | 93 |
| *Ally (1-3) | 94 |
| Ambidextrous (3) | 94 |
| Authority (1-4) | 94 |
| Commendation (1-3) | 94 |
| Common Sense (2) | 94 |
| *Contact (1-3) | 94 |
| Driven (2) | 95 |
| Double Jointed (1) | 95 |
| Efficient Immune System (1) | 95 |
| Efficient Metabolism (1) | 95 |
| Eidetic Memory (3) | 95 |
| *Egghead (2) | 95 |
| Elite (4) | 95 |
| Famous Incident (1-3) | 95 |
| Fast (2) | 95 |
| Fearless (2) | 95 |
| High Pain Threshold (3) | 96 |
| Innovative (2) | 96 |
| Internal Clock (1) | 96 |
| Internal Compass (1) | 96 |
| Latent Para-Psychic (4) | 96 |
| *Luck (3) | 96 |
| Minor Empathy (2) | 96 |
| *Muse (1) | 96 |
| *Natural Athlete (2) | 96 |
| Nightvision (3) | 96 |
| Peripheral Vision (3) | 97 |
| Quick Healer (3) | 97 |
| *Sexy Voice (1) | 97 |
| Shrewd (2) | 97 |
| Tager (4) | 97 |
| Tager: Exceptional (2) | 97 |
| Wary (2) | 98 |
| Wealth (1-4) | 98 |

Page

Drawbacks

| | Page |
|-------------------------------|------|
| Amnesia (4) | 98 |
| *Big Ego (1) | 98 |
| Chronic Pain (2) | 98 |
| Code (1-3) | 98 |
| Compulsive Behavior (1-3) | 99 |
| Coward (2) | 99 |
| Damaged (2) | 99 |
| *Dark Secret (1-3) | 99 |
| Debt (1-4) | 99 |
| Delusions (2) | 99 |
| Depressive (2) | 99 |
| Disgraced (4) | 99 |
| *Duty (1-3) | 100 |
| Engel Synthesis Interface (1) | 100 |
| *Fanatical (1-3) | 100 |
| Fat (2 or 3) | 100 |
| *Foe (1-3) | 100 |
| *Grating Voice (1) | 101 |
| Greed (3) | 101 |
| *Habit (1-4) | 101 |
| *Hunted (1-4) | 101 |
| *Ineptitude (2) | 101 |
| Impetuous (2) | 101 |
| Jealous (2) | 101 |
| Lazy (3) | 102 |
| Low Pain Threshold (3) | 102 |
| Manic (2) | 102 |
| Mean (2) | 102 |
| Mute (3) | 102 |
| Mystically Void (4) | 102 |
| *Oath (1-3) | 102 |
| Obsessive (2) | 103 |
| Outsider Tainted (4) | 103 |
| *Phobia (1-4) | 103 |
| *Prejudice (2) | 103 |
| *Repellent (1) | 103 |
| *Rival (2) | 103 |
| *Sensory Impaired (2) | 103 |
| Short Fuse (2) | 104 |
| Skinny (2) | 104 |
| Slow (2) | 104 |
| Slow Healing (3) | 104 |
| Tired (2) | 104 |
| Truly Honest (2) | 104 |
| *Vengeful (1-3) | 104 |
| Watched (1-3) | 104 |

BASIC COMBAT SUMMARY

1. Determine Initiative

Each participant rolls one die and adds it to his Reflex. The highest total gets to act first and then each participant acts in descending order of Initiatives.

2. Declare Number of Actions

Each Character who is capable of multiple Actions declares how many he would like to take this turn. Choosing to take two Actions incurs a Test Penalty of -2 to all Actions and choosing to take three Actions incurs a Test Penalty to -4 to all Actions.

3. Make Combat Contests

The attacking Character rolls the appropriate combat skill for the type of attack he's making, while the target makes a defense roll using the highest of his appropriate defense skills for the type of attack coming at him. Characters can defend an unlimited number of times unless an attack is a surprise. Range also affects projectile and thrown weapon attacks.

4. Roll Damage

The amount of damage a Character's attack does depends on his success (the amount he beat the defense roll by), the type of weapon, and his Strength if he's in close combat or using a thrown weapon. Take any of the three factors that are appropriate, roll that total number of dice, and add them all up to determine the total damage. Remember that you always roll at least one die of damage for a successful attack.

| ATTACK | DEFENSE | DEFENSE SKILLS |
|----------------|------------------------------------|----------------|
| Fighting | Armed Fighting, Dodge, or Fighting | |
| Armed Fighting | Armed Fighting or Dodge* | |
| All Others | Dodge | |

*Fighting may be used as a defense against Armed Fighting if the defender has natural weapons.

| RANGE | RANGE MODIFIERS DIFFICULTY MODIFIER |
|---------------|--|
| Short Range | +2 |
| Mid Range | 0 |
| Long Range | -2 |
| Extreme Range | -6 |

| RESULT GREATER BY | SUCCESS DAMAGE DAMAGE |
|-------------------|--------------------------|
| 1-5 | 1 die |
| 6-10 | 2 dice |
| 11-15 | 3 dice |
| 16-20 | 4 dice |

| STRENGTH | STRENGTH MODIFIERS MODIFICATION |
|----------|------------------------------------|
| 1-3 | -1 die |
| 4-7 | None |
| 8-9 | +1 die |
| 10-11 | +2 dice |
| 12-13 | +3 dice |
| 14-15 | +4 dice |

5. Check Wounds

Apply the amount of damage determined in Step Four to the target's Wound Scheme. Each Wound Level is equal in points to the Character's Vitality. Armor reduces the amount of damage taken before it is applied to the Wound Scheme - the rating is equal to a number of dice that are rolled and the result is subtracted from the total damage.

6. Additional Actions

Without recalculating Initiative, repeat the steps for any Characters who are taking second actions and then again for any third actions. Remember to apply multiple action penalties.

FEAR EFFECTS

2d10 result

2 – Physical Effect – The raw power of your fear manifests in some sort of permanent physical way. Perhaps your hair turns white, you gain an eye twitch, you shake sometimes for no reason, or you gain a speech impediment. This condition can be cured with therapy, with the exception of physical manifestations like white hair (see p. 139). You lose a turn as you process the fear.

3 – Lose Bodily Control – The sight startles and stuns you and you are unable to take action for one turn. You also temporarily lose control of your body functions with the ensuing discomfort and embarrassment.

4 – Forget – You'll forget most if not all of the experience – it's going to be a blank spot in your memory. While you continue to function for now, the scene will be gone from your mind as soon as it's over. However, nothing can be truly repressed so you may end up plagued with nightmares for a while. You suffer a –1 Test Penalty to all Actions for rest of the scene.

5-6 – Faint – The sight frightens or disturbs you so deeply that you simply can't take it. You faint dead away for at least one minute, or five minutes if no one attempts to revive you.

7-8 – Cower – You cower in fear and attempt pathetically to get away. You can't run – you'll trip all over yourself if you try – but you can crawl and whimper just fine. In fact, it's more than likely that you'll find yourself crying or sobbing. You suffer a –2 Test Penalty to all Actions for the rest of the scene and you must succeed at a Hard Tenacity Test to take any direct action against the object of fear.

9-10 – Scream – The sight startles and scares you and you cry out in terror. You lose your next Action.

11-12 – Stunned – The sight stuns you beyond the capacity for rational thought and you are unable to take action for one turn.

13-14 – Twitch – The sight shocks you out of your skin, causing you to temporarily retreat inside yourself. You can take no Actions as you twitch and drool for the next 1 to 5 minutes (half a die). You may or may not have memory of the experience afterwards.

15-16 – Terror – You are utterly and completely terrified beyond belief and run away screaming. You will do anything it takes to get away from the thing that scared you – once you are finally away from it and feel a little safer you suffer the effects of Cower above for the next 1 to 5 minutes (half a die). More than likely you sob or scream the entire time.

17-18 – Morbid Fascination – The sight frightens you but your terror becomes fascination. You find yourself drawn to whatever scared you and you want to obsessively study and learn more about it for the next 1 to 5 days (half a die).

19 – Temporary Disorder – The experience is so scarring that you develop some kind of permanent behavioral disorder of your Storyguide's determination. Appropriate disorders might include eating, sleeping, attention, or temper disorders – technically they're anxiety disorders, mood disorders, minor physical disorders, or a rage disorder. Otherwise, as Twitch, above.

20 – Phobia – You are so deeply affected by your terror that you are now permanently afraid of whatever scared you – you gain a permanent phobia anxiety disorder. Otherwise, as Terror, above.

A QUICK LIST OF MENTAL DISORDERS

Anxiety Disorders

p. 137

- General Anxiety Disorder
- Obsessive or Compulsive Disorder
- Panic Disorder
- Phobias
- Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder

Somatoform Disorders

p. 137

- Conversion Disorder
- Hypochondriasis
- Minor Physical Disorders

Dissociative Disorders

p. 137

- Multiple Personality Disorder
- Psychogenic Amnesia
- Psychogenic Fugue

Mood Disorders

p. 137

- Major Depression
- Dysthymia
- Manic-Depression
- Cyclothymia

Schizophrenia

p. 137 & 139

- Catatonic Schizophrenia
- Disorganized Schizophrenia
- Paranoid Schizophrenia
- Undifferentiated Schizophrenia

Personality Disorders

p. 139

- Antisocial Disorder (Sociopathy)
- Avoidant Disorder
- Borderline Disorder
- Dependent Disorder
- Histrionic Disorder
- Megalomania
- Narcissitic Disorder
- Obsessive-Compulsive Disorder (OCD)
- Paranoid Disorder
- Rage Disorder
- Schizotypal Disorder
- Schizoid Disorder



| | | | |
|------------|--|------------|--|
| Name | | Callsign | |
| Player | | Allegiance | |
| Storyguide | | Profession | |
| Story | | Race | |
| Virtue | | Flaw | |

| Attribute | Rating | Feat Level |
|------------|--------|------------|
| Agility | | |
| Intellect | | |
| Perception | | |
| Presence | | |
| Strength | | |
| Tenacity | | |

| | |
|--------------|--|
| Actions | |
| Movement | |
| Reflex | |
| Orgone | |
| Vitality | |
| Drama Points | |

| | |
|---------|--|
| Total | |
| Unspent | |

[illegible]

| | |
|----------------|--|
| Gender | |
| Age | |
| Height | |
| Weight | |
| Hair | |
| Eyes | |
| Coloring | |
| Dist. Features | |
| Birthday | |
| Place of Birth | |

| |
|-----------|
| Assets |
| |
| |
| Drawbacks |
| |
| |

| | |
|--|--|
| | |
| | |
| | |

| | |
|-----------|--|
| Points | |
| Disorders | |





POSSESSIONS

Gear (Carried)

| |
|--|
| |
| |
| |
| |
| |
| |
| |
| |

Gear (Owned)

| |
|--|
| |
| |
| |
| |
| |
| |
| |
| |

SPELLS

First Order

Type

Effect

Cost

| | | | |
|--|--|--|--|
| | | | |
| | | | |
| | | | |
| | | | |
| | | | |

Second Order

Type

Effect

Cost

| | | | |
|--|--|--|--|
| | | | |
| | | | |
| | | | |
| | | | |
| | | | |

Third Order

Type

Effect

Cost

| | | | |
|--|--|--|--|
| | | | |
| | | | |
| | | | |
| | | | |
| | | | |

ARMOR

Type

Protection

| | |
|--|--|
| | |
| | |

TAGER

Manifestation

Regeneration

Fear Factor

Shifted Attributes

Level

Feat

Agility

Perception

Strength

Tenacity

Actions

Movement

Reflex

Vitality

WEAPONS

Type

Damage

Shots/Rounds

Range

| | | | |
|--|--|--|--|
| | | | |
| | | | |
| | | | |
| | | | |
| | | | |
| | | | |
| | | | |
| | | | |

WOUNDS

Level

Vitality

Current

Effect

Tager Vitality

Tager Current

Flesh

Light

Moderate

Serious

Death's Door

None

-1 Test Penalty

-3 Test Penalty/Half Move Max. 2 Actions/Armor Half

-6 Test Penalty/Crawl Max. 1 Action/Armor Gone

Unconscious & Dying

G/HULHU MECH SHEET

| CONCEPT | |
|----------------|--|
| Mecha Name | |
| Mecha Type | |
| Size Class | |
| Pilot Callsign | |

| STRUCTURE | |
|--------------|--|
| Integrity | |
| Armor | |
| DCS | |
| Regeneration | |

| CHARACTERISTICS | | | | |
|--------------------|--------------|-----------------|------------|---------|
| Type | Mecha Rating | Pilot's Ability | Modifies | Overall |
| Control Response | | | Agility | |
| Sensors | | | Perception | |
| Multi-Task Systems | | | Actions | |
| Warning Systems | | | Reflex | |
| | Rating | Dam. Bonus | Equals | |
| Frame | | | Strength | |

| SUPPORT SYSTEMS | | |
|-----------------|---------|---------|
| Type | Effects | SF Code |
| | | |
| | | |
| | | |
| | | |
| | | |
| | | |

| SENSOR SYSTEMS | | | |
|----------------|-------|------|---------|
| Type | Range | Mode | SF Code |
| | | | |
| | | | |
| | | | |
| | | | |
| | | | |
| | | | |
| | | | |
| | | | |

| MOVEMENT SYSTEMS | | |
|-------------------|---------|---------|
| Type | Effects | SF Code |
| Ground Speed | | |
| Air/Water Speed | | |
| Acceleration Code | | |
| Jumping Distance | | |
| | | |
| | | |
| | | |
| | | |
| | | |

| WEAPON SYSTEMS | | | | | | | |
|----------------|------|-------|--------|-------|--------|---------|---------|
| Type | Size | Range | Damage | Shots | Rounds | Special | SF Code |
| | | | | | | | |
| | | | | | | | |
| | | | | | | | |
| | | | | | | | |
| | | | | | | | |
| | | | | | | | |
| | | | | | | | |

| DAMAGE | | | |
|----------|-----------|---------|--|
| Level | Integrity | Current | Effect |
| Cosmetic | | | None |
| Light | | | -1 Test Penalty |
| Moderate | | | -3 Test Penalty, Half Move, Max. 2 Actions Armor Half, DCS/Regeneration Half Rate |
| Serious | | | -6 Test Penalty, Only Crawl. Max. 1 Action No A-Pod/Jump, Pilot Takes Half Armor Gone, DCS Quarter/Regen Half Rate |
| Critical | | | Falling Apart, Barely Walk No A-Pod/Jump, Pilot Takes Full No DCS/Regen Quarter Rate |



SUPPORTING CAST SHEET

SUPPORTING CHARACTER

| | | | |
|--------------------------|----------|--------------|------------|
| Name/Callsign | | Race | |
| Defining Characteristics | | Gender | |
| Allegiance | | | |
| Attributes | Agility | Intelligence | Perception |
| | Presence | Strength | Tenacity |
| Secondary Attributes | Actions | Movement | Orgone |
| | Reflex | Vitality | |
| Qualities | | | |
| General Skills | | | |
| Combat Skills | | | |
| Gear | | | |
| Spells | | | |

SUPPORTING CHARACTER

| | | | |
|--------------------------|----------|--------------|------------|
| Name/Callsign | | Race | |
| Defining Characteristics | | Gender | |
| Allegiance | | | |
| Attributes | Agility | Intelligence | Perception |
| | Presence | Strength | Tenacity |
| Secondary Attributes | Actions | Movement | Orgone |
| | Reflex | Vitality | |
| Qualities | | | |
| General Skills | | | |
| Combat Skills | | | |
| Gear | | | |
| Spells | | | |

SUPPORTING CHARACTER

| | | | |
|--------------------------|----------|--------------|------------|
| Name/Callsign | | Race | |
| Defining Characteristics | | Gender | |
| Allegiance | | | |
| Attributes | Agility | Intelligence | Perception |
| | Presence | Strength | Tenacity |
| Secondary Attributes | Actions | Movement | Orgone |
| | Reflex | Vitality | |
| Qualities | | | |
| General Skills | | | |
| Combat Skills | | | |
| Gear | | | |
| Spells | | | |

UNDER MEUM: THE CYBUTECH COMMISSION

The Last War Continues

Foes without. Foes within. It seems that safety is just an illusion in 2085. Congregations of dead religions work their evil on the world. Armies of monsters and alien creatures bring death and horror. Hidden cults chew away at the innards of the New Earth Government, secretly destroying us from within.

This is the Aeon War, and it's bigger than just one book.

Explore society as one of the forbidden Human-Nazzadi xenomixed love children. Be a stranger in your own land as an otherworldly White. Fight the hidden enemies within society as an agent of the Federal Security Bureau. Abuse shocking power policing arcane crimes as an agent of the Office of Internal Security. Bring the power of the cosmos to bear with just the power of your own mind - or lose yourself to it.

154 pages. March 2008.

THE DAMNATION VIEW

It's a Question of Perspective

Time waits for no one. The Disciples of the Rapine Storm throw themselves with renewed fervor against the beleaguered troops holding the lines of the far east. The New Earth Government desperately searches for a plan to drive the alien insects from their last bastion of safety. Deep within dark places something ancient and primal stirs, ready to gift the world with its unspeakable presence once again. And somewhere, the children of the fish god find lost things that were better left lost.

This is how the end begins. Welcome to 2086.

Discover new breakthroughs that might give humanity a much needed edge - but at what cost? Suffer a plague of street crime, eroding the places where people once felt safe. Watch in shock at the lengths the Nazzadi are willing to go to police their own kind. And quietly, something new is born within the darkest pits of the Chrysalis Corporation. Explore a year in the Strange Aeon or lose yourself in the lies and pretend it isn't happening.

128 pages. July 2008.

MORTAL REMAINS

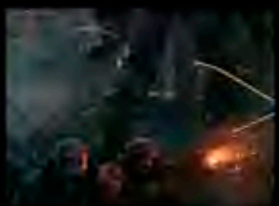
The Enemy Of My Enemy Is Still My Enemy

The New Earth Government. A place of progress and hope. A world carefully crafted by the powers that be to give lives to those it protects. The last hope of humanity in a time when it seems as if our light will be extinguished forever. The Migou. Beings who have always viewed the Earth as their backyard, to be used and abused as they will. Creatures caught unawares by what we have become and intent on destroying us because of it.

Enemies bound to the mortal coil, perhaps soon to be consumed by it - and each other.

Live in the world of the NEG, exploring society from the streets on up. Walk within the worlds of politics, religion, and pop culture. Discover what the growing identity of the Nazzadi is all about. Explore the dark end of the street where vice and crime dwell. Or discover the world of the alien insects from Pluto and even explore it as one of them. Peel back the veil and see the Migou for what they truly are - and maybe even admire them for it.

128 pages. November 2008.



WILD FIRE



At Your Doorstep

The Aeon War rages outside. The Migou encroach on the heart of civilization from Alaska. The Rapine Storm throws itself against failing lines in China. Dark things awaken in the forgotten corners of the world. All the while, sinister cults erode the New Earth Government from within.

Fight fanatical suicide bombers dedicated to the fall of civilization – and the destruction of our “alien” brethren. Face your own inner fortitude in the face of overwhelming temptations of forbidden physical pleasures. Sleep fitfully in the fear that something out there is intent to ravage your dreams.

All in your neighborhood. Down the street. Even next door.

Nowhere else will you find a setting like *CthulhuTech*.

Inside this book you will find:

- a detailed discussion of cults within society, their influence, and how they are dealt with by the New Earth Government.
- four pieces of unusual fiction to help portray the ugliness of cult influence.
- eight unique and insidious minor cults, including the Congregation of the Earth Mother, a nearly destroyed fertility cult with much darker origins, the Empty, a lost “group” of the homeless and hopelessly deranged, and the mysterious Scions of Forever, who seem to know the streams of time and just how to manipulate it.
- guidelines and ideas for creating cult games or for integrating them into your already existing *CthulhuTech* game.
- story starters and hooks, to bring minor cults into your game now.
- a game reference, to help you find Framework rules you need when you need them and give you sheets to easily copy for your own use.

This book is meant to be used with the *CthulhuTech* storytelling game and requires the *Core Book*.

FOR MATURE AUDIENCES ONLY

This book is intended for mature readers. It contains dark and disturbing content and images. Reader discretion is advised.

Catalyst Game Labs
23200

www.catalystgamelabs.com
www.cthulhutech.com
Printed in Thailand

FRAMEWORK