



# IN NOMINE SUPERIORS: ASMODEUS

*In Nomine* was written by Derek Percy  
based on an original game by CROC

By S. DiGiovanni, Jordan Grooms,  
AnnaLinden Weller, Steve Kenson,  
and Derek Percy  
Additional material by Elizabeth McCoy  
and William J. Keith  
Edited by Elizabeth McCoy  
Sigil by Jordan Grooms

Playtesters: Chris Anthony, Genevieve Cogman,  
Nathan Henderson, William J. Keith, Fade Manley,  
Christopher Pipinou, Sirea, Grady W. Smitley III,  
Leticia Sparkman, James Walker, and everyone else who  
didn't present valid Hadean passports. Please follow the  
nice Impudites and answer their questions.

AN e23 ADVENTURE  
FOR IN NOMINE® FROM  
STEVE JACKSON GAMES  
FOR 3 TO 6 PLAYERS



*GURPS*, Warehouse 23, and the all-seeing pyramid are registered trademarks of Steve Jackson Games Incorporated. *Pyramid*, *In Nomine*, *Superiors: Asmodeus*, and the names of all products published by Steve Jackson Games Incorporated are registered trademarks or trademarks of Steve Jackson Games Incorporated, or used under license. Some art copyright © www.clipart.com. All rights reserved. *Superiors: Asmodeus* is copyright © 2007 by Steve Jackson Games Incorporated.

The scanning, uploading, and distribution of this material via the Internet or via any other means without the permission of the publisher is illegal, and punishable by law. Please purchase only authorized electronic editions, and do not participate in or encourage the electronic piracy of copyrighted materials. Your support of the author's rights is appreciated.

**STEVE JACKSON GAMES**  
**e23.sjgames.com**



# Contents

## ASMODEUS DJINN PRINCE

OF THE GAME	3
Dissonance	3
<i>Do As You're Told</i>	3
Band Attunements	3
Servitor Attunements	4
Distinctions	5
Higher Distinctions	5
<i>Oh, the Humanity</i>	5
<i>Sidestepping</i>	6
Relations	7
Rites	7
<i>Secret Songs</i>	7
<i>Asmodeus' Secret Rite</i>	7
Additional Rites	8
Chance of Invocation: 1	8
Invocation Modifiers	8
<b>GURPS Point Breakdowns</b>	
for Asmodeus	8
ASMODEUS IN DETAIL	9
Names, Appearance,	
and Manner	9
The Word of the Game	9
History	10
<i>Game Theory</i>	10
Personality and Outlook	11
Politics	12
<i>The Towers</i>	13

Variations on a Theme	14
<i>War Crimes</i>	15
<i>Endgames</i>	15
<i>Ulamalitzli: Aztec Games</i>	15
HADES: THE GRAY CITY	16
Houses of Cards:	
Places in Hades	16
Denizens of Hades	18
<i>Word-Bound Servitors</i>	18
Asmodeus' Tethers	19
<i>The Game Writ Small</i>	19
PLAYERS AND PAWNS	20
Asmodeans, Asmodicans, Canes	
Asmodei, Gamesters	20
Suits of the Game	20
<i>The Name of the Game</i>	20
Bands	21
<i>Learning to Play: Chess,</i>	
<i>Go, Mao</i>	21
<i>Bishop, Knight, Rook, Pawn</i>	22
<i>Winning Free</i>	23
<i>Benedict Chess:</i>	
<i>Changing Superiors</i>	23
Playing the Game:	
Inside InfSec	24
<i>The Emerald Countess</i>	
<i>of Intrigue</i>	24
Tools of the Trade	25
<i>Games Gone By</i>	25

<i>Rules for Rules' Sake</i>	26
Humanity in Action	27
Jobs	29
<i>Stealing Information:</i>	
<i>Theft and the Game</i>	29
Playing Together	30
<i>Caseworkers</i>	30
<i>Corner Police Stations</i>	30
<i>Sample Servitors</i>	31
Across the Board:	
Judgment and the Game	34
Games within Games	35
<i>The Trouble with Judges</i>	35
Dealing with the Game,	
Inside and Out	36
<i>Bureaucratic</i>	
<i>Departmentalization</i>	36
<i>Anatomy of a Hunt</i>	37
<i>Crimes Against Hell</i>	38
GAMING WITH THE GAME:	
ADVENTURE SEEDS	39
An Otherwise Unconvincing	
Narrative	39
The First Rule of LARP Club	39
<i>The Sapir-Whorf Hypothesis</i>	39
Go Fish	40
Strategies	40
Talking Is Prohibited	40
<i>Real Life Games</i>	41

## GURPS IN NOMINE

This expanded Superior write-up includes material both for the traditional *In Nomine* rules and *GURPS In Nomine*. Converted characters have been only slightly "normalized" – they are straight conversions, using the rules in Chapter 9 of *GURPS In Nomine*. The only exception is in levels of Discord; in a normal conversion, an adapted Frequency of Submission table (pp. CI10-11) would be used. For simplicity, Discord has been taken "straight," with the default *GURPS Basic Set* or *GURPS Compendium I* mechanics. Human characters have also been rounded or approximated in some cases.

Note that Songs have had the -5 applied for use outside the celestial realm. If these characters go to Hell or Heaven, they will have +5 to all Songs.

The default Tech Level for *GURPS In Nomine* is TL7.

### Extra Hit Points and Reduced Hit Points

Many converted *GURPS* characters have Extra Hit Points for physical, mental, and celestial combat. The physical advantage is written as Extra Hit Points for the vessel in question. Extra Hit Points (Mind) are bought with the -50% Limitation, "Only for mental combat," and Extra Hit Points (Soul) are bought with the -20% Limitation, "Only for celestial combat." Reduced Hit Points for Mind hits and Soul hits have the same Limitations. See pages 27 and 28 in *GURPS In Nomine* for more information.

### Power Investiture and Essence Control

The *GURPS In Nomine* advantages Power Investiture (p. IN27), and Essence Control (p. IN31) are both included in the Basic Celestial Template (pp. IN9-10). Non-player celestials are assumed to have the default 9 levels of Essence Control, and have allocated their initial Power Investiture levels to Power Investiture (Corporeal) 3, Power Investiture (Ethereal) 3, and Power Investiture (Celestial) 3. Any totals listed in the descriptions include these levels plus any additional purchased.

### Page References – GURPS and Original In Nomine

Rules and statistics in this article are specifically for the *GURPS Basic Set*, (Third Edition, revised), and *In Nomine*, third printing (available from e23). Any page reference that begins with a B refers to the *GURPS Basic Set* – e.g., p. B102 means p. 102 of the *GURPS Basic Set*, Third Edition, revised. Page references that begin with CI indicate *GURPS Compendium I*, M is for *GURPS Magic*, and IN refers to *GURPS In Nomine*. For a full list of *GURPS* abbreviations, see p. CI181 or the updated web list at [www.sjgames.com/gurps/abbrevs.html](http://www.sjgames.com/gurps/abbrevs.html).



# ASMODEUS DJINN PRINCE OF THE GAME

*The world is a game, whose rules must be followed.*

Asmodeus and his Servitors are Lucifer's secret police, responsible for hunting down Renegades and other traitors to the infernal armies, and for keeping order in Hell.

The Prince of the Game is one of the most powerful of Hell's royalty. He is widely feared and roundly hated by his peers. His agents always have at least one cover identity and often move through infernal society unseen, only unmasking themselves to levy an accusation and make the subsequent arrest.

Gamesters are charged with slaying or seizing any Renegades they encounter. To Asmodeus and his servants, a demon is Renegade and within their jurisdiction if he acts

## DO AS YOU'RE TOLD

Asmodeus' dissonance conditions provide him with an extremely effective way of preventing sedition in the ranks of the Game: all he has to do is forbid his Servitors from attempting to redeem, breaking their Hearts, or running. As this aspect of Asmodeus' dissonance conditions makes it more difficult to play Renegade Asmodeans, GMs may consider it an optional Rule of the Game.

(The GM should assume that celestials lose Word-imposed dissonance conditions if their Hearts are broken (p. IN12). Not using this rule makes it effectively *impossible* to escape from the Game without excessive amounts of Discord, given the existence of the Song of Celestial Tongues.)

against the expressed or implied wishes of his Prince, if he possesses dissonance or "angelic" Discord, or if his actions call his loyalty to Hell into question – in short, if he breaks the rules.

Above all, Lucifer uses Asmodeus to weed out demons who might defect to the angels or threaten Lucifer's own plans. The Game is the counterweight to the unrest Malphas stirs up, a force of totalitarian order imposed on an ever-volatile Hell. While any Prince may call upon the Servitors of Asmodeus, most prefer to deal with problems themselves rather than risk close scrutiny.

Asmodeus usually appears as a tall man with burning eyes – the Inquisition incarnate.

## DISSONANCE

Servitors of Asmodeus generate dissonance by disobeying any of his direct orders or by helping a Renegade to escape judgment.

## BAND ATTUNEMENTS

Asmodeus' Band Attunements are for his Servitors only. Gamesters are attuned to the members of their respective Bands, and can identify them with a successful Perception roll; they will also know how much dissonance the target has, if any. This is a passive attunement: the GM may roll privately as needed. A Servitor with more than one Band Attunement rolls only once and knows which Band he has detected. If the roll fails, the Gamester will be unaware of the subject's nature for the check digit in hours – at which point the GM may make another roll.

All Servitors of the Game also get 12 extra character points, which must be spent on a Role or skills for that Role (*In Nomine*, p. 43, or p. IN32); this is a one-time bonus, not associated with Band Attunements. (Shedim may spend this on Servants, to use as hosts, or Roles *as* their Servants; see p. 22 for more Shedite-host-Role tricks.) While Asmodeus may grant *Roles* to others' Servitors, it is certain the Game knows everything about such gifts.

## Balseraphs

Balseraphs of the Game assume Roles such as lawyers, stockbrokers, meteorologists, and politicians, which permit them to creatively redefine opinion – though always within the Rules.

## Djinn

Asmodeus' Djinn serve the Game by taking jobs as security guards, accountants, police officers, and members of the military: positions from which they can watch over, possess, and control lesser pieces on the board.





## Calabim

Calabim in service to the Game tend to get Roles as construction workers, oil tanker captains, organized crime members, and other places where their destructive nature can open new lines of play.

## Habbalah

The Habbalah who work for Asmodeus occupy Roles where they can punish those who break the Rules, such as therapists, school counselors, corrections officers, and judges.

## Lilim

Lilim who Bind to the Game become traps for the unsuspecting and unprepared, pinning their adversaries between the snare of their resonance and their Roles. They range from private investigators, policemen, and lawyers to prostitutes, students, and aides to people in power.

## Shedim (partially restricted)

Asmodeus' Shedim need not wear out their welcome by perverting their hosts – their Lord has other duties for them, preferring their capacity to spy over their ability to corrupt. They may stay in a borrowed body for a number of days equal to the check digit of the successful possession roll and don't generate dissonance if they fail to corrupt their host.

*(Members of other Bands may use this attunement to identify Shedim and their dissonance.)*

## Impudites

Gamester Impudites become doctors, solicitors, creditors, telemarketers, and other Roles that provide opportunities to leech away all of their target's support, leaving them vulnerable to more direct plays.

# SERVITOR ATTUNEMENTS

## Argument of Casuistry

A Servitor using this attunement can use convoluted logic to convince someone else of the rightness or wrongness of a particular premise, based on actual evidence. This evidence can be flimsy, circumstantial, or self-manufactured. The Gamester could try to convince the witness of a crime that the blood he saw was a movie prop by "discovering" a burst capsule at the scene, but could not convince someone that his spouse was cheating on him without some kind of evidence in support.

This ability requires a Will roll to activate and lasts for the check digit in minutes. Subjects negate the effects with a

Perception roll; a simple success is enough to notice the flaws and inconsistencies in the demon's argument. If the manufactured evidence is *very* good, the GM may allow the subject to still favor the explanation! However, if proof of the false nature of the demon's "evidence" is shown to the victim, his mind will be unclouded – and he *will* remember who lied to him.

The demon cannot attempt to use Argument of Casuistry again *at all* for a number of hours equal to the check digit of the target's successful Perception roll.

## Dissonance Binding

For 3 Essence, this attunement permits its owner to bind a celestial in his own dissonance, creating invisible chains that restrict the victim's movement. The subject's Agility is reduced by his dissonance plus the Celestial Forces of the binder for the binder's total Forces in hours; penalize the appropriate attribute in other realms, whether the victim was affected in the corporeal first or not. The bound celestial may not spend or regenerate Essence. (It does not work against a target who is not dissonant at all.)

## Humanity

This attunement lets a demon pass as a human under any circumstance, to anyone shy of Asmodeus or Lucifer himself.

It costs 1 Essence to activate and remains in effect for 24 hours (no more, no less). During this time, the demon will not make disturbance when damaging objects or people. He becomes a mundane human in almost every regard: his vessel requires food and maintenance, and he can't perform Songs, or assume his celestial form on Earth. Invoking Humanity while *in* celestial form would mimic a ghost! In Hell, he would seem to be a damned soul; in the Marches, a dreamshade. He may use attunements, both passive ones and those requiring Essence to fuel them (including Humanity itself), as well as his basic resonance, and he may spend Essence to enhance die rolls. Spending Essence for any reason will cause disturbance. He may not exchange Essence with someone else, nor regenerate Essence naturally (even at noon or via Rite).

## Insert Coin to Continue

For 1 Essence, the Gamester may massage the Rules of the Symphony in order to give himself another chance if he has *failed*. After the Gamester's player has rolled the d666 and failed, he may invoke this attunement and re-roll the dice. Essence spent to improve the failed roll is still gone, though Essence may still be spent on the new roll as is normal. (The Essence used to activate the attunement does not improve the new roll.) Interventions of either kind may not be re-rolled, and if the new roll also fails, the attunement may not be invoked again on the second failure. This ability may be used as many times per day as the Gamester has Celestial Forces.



## OH, THE HUMANITY

*"So, will I be affected like a mundane human would be if?"*

*"Yes."*

*—A conversation between senior and junior partners.*

By default, any attempt to distinguish the Gamester from a 5-Force human *fails*. He requires food, water, shelter, and sleep, and generates a dreamscape normally (though he may dream . . . odd things). Essence reserves, as seen by Vapulan Impudite glasses, are within human norms and appear to regenerate at noon. A 7-Force Shedite could possess a 18-Force Duke of the Game, and notice nothing odd – until evicted, should the attunement lapse. If the Servitor tells a Seraph he's really a demon, the Seraph will believe he's lying or deluded.

For some GMs, this is far more potent than desirable! However, weakening it is quite possible. See *Humanity in Action*, p. 27, for more details.

## Rule of Law

This attunement can only be used by a being who has invoked Asmodeus' Humanity attunement. Rule of Law forces celestials in the corporeal realm to play by corporeal rules, whether they want to or not. The targeted celestial has all the restrictions of Humanity (whichever the GM is using; see p. 27), adapted to suit his current form. This requires 3 Essence, cannot normally be resisted, and the victim must be inhabiting a corporeal vessel or host which is within touching range. (This applies to *any* vessel or host: a Kyriotate of Lightning possessing a piece of technology might require maintenance, but not the same maintenance as a human form.) The effects last for a number of hours equal to the user's Celestial Forces, *or* until the user's own Humanity ends, whichever comes *first*!

Rule of Law is a useful means of avoiding disturbance from celestials the demon might be hunting while simultaneously limiting the target's means of escape or self-defense. This attunement is especially useful when dealing with celestials whose human Roles have a lower Status than the demon's: when all else is even, the Gamester's influence in society may be the deciding factor. Some Gamesters, posing as Hellsworn or human servants of demons, have used Rule of Law to discomfit angels trying to kill them. Asmodeus

frowns on thus revealing the nature and powers of his pieces, unless the angel is killed or captured before it understands what exactly happened.

## Sense for Betrayal

While all of Asmodeus' Servitors can sense dissonance in their Bandmates, this attunement allows them to perceive it in *any* celestial, including angels. It functions similarly to the Band Attunements, requiring a successful Perception roll to activate and lasting for the check digit in hours. It will not identify a celestial's Choir or Band, or even its divine or infernal nature, but the general efficacy of this attunement makes it quite popular among Gamesters, particularly since they can use it to estimate how close an angel is to Falling as well as how close a demon might be to running Renegade.

## DISTINCTIONS

### Knight of Judgment

The Knight has the power to impress the humans he meets. They will respect his opinions and will not dispute his judgments. He receives Charisma +3 (respectable authority) for free, which functions in any form and stacks with normal Charisma.

### Captain of Integrity

Asmodeus' Captains can instantly detect anyone whose spoken words differ from their secret feelings, recognizing lies and hypocrisies as soon as they are heard. (This functions like Detect Lies, not like the Seraph resonance.)

### Baron of Justice


The demon may identify those whose opinions are just, fair, and accurate. His Celestial Forces indicate how much detail the demon gets about their judgment.

## HIGHER DISTINCTIONS

Distinctions above Baron are granted by Asmodeus for faithful and loyal service over *very* long periods of time. A servant of the Game must have a spotless record for Asmodeus to even consider offering a promotion to such an exalted position. Higher Distinctions also come with a commensurate increase in duties. The closer a demon of the Game gets to the top of the ladder, the more of Asmodeus' attention he draws, for good or ill.

Asmodeus' Marquises, Counts, and Dukes are always Word-bound to some lesser but important aspect of the Word of the Game. Each one plays a particular role in Asmodeus' plans, and they tend to spend more time carrying out the schemes of their master in Hell than on Earth.





Rank isn't everything, however. While the system of Distinctions is deeply important in the Game, it doesn't always reveal true power. Asmodeus often has reasons of his own for leaving an expert Gamester without any official mark of his approval. A few Gamesters are so infamous that they wield approximately the same influence as a demon with a

Distinction, yet have no official rank at all. Furthermore, even an official Distinction may not truly be a *reward*: high-ranked Asmodeans may get caught up in the internal politics of the Game, which conveniently prevents the excessively ambitious from meddling with the *Prince's* plans.

## SIDESTEPPING

The "glass ceiling" of Word-binding in the Game's Distinctions is not as much of a limitation as it could be: Asmodeus has deemed two "side-Distinctions" to not require an accompanying Word. These act as half-step increases in rank, and are available to demons below Marquis rank. No one has been known to hold both side-Distinctions at once.

### *Bishop*

While chess terminology is often used to denote status amongst Asmodeans, the ecclesiastical definition of a bishop – an official who holds jurisdiction over a particular region called a "bishopric" – is an equally likely source for the title of this side-Distinction. Bishops of the Game hold status akin to Seneschals in the Game-defined bishoprics they oversee: usually junior Bishops hold segments of territory within a senior Bishop's jurisdiction. Bishoprics are mostly found in Hades, though there are Baron Bishops who oversee all Gamester outposts for various regions of Earth, and it is rumored that Asmodeus has assigned Bishops to an ethereal Domain or two.

As long as the Bishop is within the boundaries of his bishopric, he may use any of Asmodeus' attunements and Distinctions (that he possesses!) without spending Essence and rolling only to determine check digit – on Servitors, Soldiers, or other subordinates of the Game. For example, the Captain Bishop of Honshu may use Humanity freely anywhere on that island, but must still pay Essence to use Rule of Law on angels or other non-Asmodicans – though Game-contracted Free Lilim are fair game.

Asmodeus has Bishops supervising even Principalities: these are officially considered direct subordinates of the Demons of Mao, Chess, and Go (p. 21), as it is the Bishops' responsibility to oversee the assignments and activities of Gamesters within their bishoprics. These demons do not advertise their presence, and as long as they ostensibly restrict their attentions to Gamesters, most Princes tolerate them. Others may not have even noticed them.

(Many Bishops never achieve a rank beyond Baron; after all, holding a Word is required to rise higher.

Asmodeus rarely considers it necessary to grant the powers of a Bishop to one of his Word-bound. It happens sometimes, or a Bishop gains a Word and is then promoted, but it's not the default rule.)

### *Dealer*

Mammon, now Prince of Greed, was originally a Balseraph of the Game, and Asmodeus' first Dealer. When he assisted Asmodeus in winning the Right of Contract from Lucifer (*Superiors 4: Rogues to Riches*, p. 52), the Prince of the Game decided that Mammon should be the first to Play with this new rule. Since then, Mammon's side-Distinction has evolved far beyond its origins.

A Dealer of the Game bears a signet ring or other appropriate item with Asmodeus' personal sigil at all times; this seal cannot be used by anyone save a Dealer or Asmodeus himself. Dealers cannot hold any Discord or dissonance if they wish to activate a seal. (There are no Calabite Dealers.)

Upon activation, the seal will inscribe the Game's sigil upon *any* reasonably flat surface (including flesh), and the sigil "reads" as an artifact created directly by the Prince. It can cause items that bear its mark to become minor relics, sufficient to carry a contract from Earth to Hell. Marked upon a living being, the sigil will remain upon the soul until erased by a Superior . . .

A Dealer has the right to treat in Asmodeus' name with humans for purposes of Contract, or with demons – up to and including Princes – for anything else the Game requires. Most Dealers are given specific realms of authority, such as soul-distribution in the Yards, where at least three Captain Dealers are always on staff.

A Dealer outranks a Bishop of equivalent full Distinction everywhere save the Bishop's own territory, without specific orders from Asmodeus or a higher-ranked Gamester to the contrary. A significant percentage of Asmodeus' long-term Dealers are Fallen Traders and Mercurians; his most senior living Dealer is Sharezer, Impudite Baron of the Game, who was one of the first to Fall from Marc's service.





## Marquis

Asmodeus' Marquises are often given control of a specific project or objective in the Game, such as toppling a government, tracking down a particularly important traitor, manipulating city politics to aid formation of Hell-Tethers, or corrupting a specific individual to Hell's cause. A rare few have indefinite assignments, such as assigning demons for training and missions (p. 19). Marquises have free rein within the confines of their assignment: they may co-opt the services of nearly any Gamester in order to execute their plans. A successful Marquis will follow a line of play to conclusion relentlessly. An unsuccessful one will soon be outmaneuvered and replaced.

## Count

Counts of the Game are placed in charge of one of the organizations that control Hades, such as the Infernal Police, or one of the key buildings in Hades and its staff, such as the Halls of Loyalty or the Arenas. They are given almost complete authority over their particular organization, and are deeply embroiled in the highest levels of the Game's designs.

## Duke

The Game's Dukes are governors of large areas within Asmodeus' territory. Each Duchy is composed of many bishoprics, and a Duke of the Game holds a position much like a feudal lord: he is the immediate authority for all the Bishops in his Duchy and all the Gamesters those Bishops command. This gives Dukes enormous amounts of power – more than any other Gamester save Asmodeus himself. However, a Duke of the Game must deal with other Dukes, his Bishops, and his Lord Prince.

Higher Distinctions include the powers of lesser ones and Dukes oversee bishoprics – but Bishop is a *side*-Distinction that Dukes are rarely granted. A Duke who finds this a crippling disadvantage will not long retain the position.



## SECRET SONGS

The files of the Game are extensive, and contain several Songs that only Asmodeus and Servitors of his choosing have access to. These include the Song of Banishing (*Liber Canticorum*, p. 61), the Song of Binding (*Liber Canticorum*, p. 64), and the Song of Retribution (*Liber Canticorum*, p. 76). It is rumored that Asmodeus also occasionally distributes the Songs of Concealment (*Liber Canticorum*, p. 31) and Correspondence (*Liber Canticorum*, p. 65). A variant on Numinous Corpus: Arms (*Liber Canticorum*, p. 72), that produces appendages capable of dealing with large amounts of paperwork, is also a favorite.



## ASMODEUS' SECRET RITE

- Identify and exploit a loophole in one of the Game's Rites, attunements, Distinctions, or dissonance conditions. (I.e., persuade the GM to allow a usable loophole in game mechanics or Asmodeus' orders to remain as it is.) The loophole must be used as well as identified, though the GM should give Essence for this Rite if he or another player can make use of it but the player can't. (2 Essence, regardless of whether or not the loophole is beneficial, neutral, or harmful to the character. 3 Essence if the loophole is in Asmodeus' orders, and was *not* intentional on the GM's part.)

This is actually a basic Rite of the Game; it's just that few Gamesters know it exists. After all, to regenerate Essence through this Rite, a Gamester has to be able to identify a flaw in the rules of the Game, and bring the flaw to someone's attention one way or another, without actually allowing the flaw to be eliminated. Among those who have heard of it, it is rumored that activating the 2 Essence form of this Rite is a requirement for Knighthood, and activating the 3 Essence form is a requirement to go past a Barony.

## RELATIONS

A demon of the Game will never ignore treason out of "friendship." Asmodeus is allied with Kronos, but Kronos' demons are cut no slack. In fact, some Gamesters might let treason in a *hostile* force fester a bit longer "just to see who we can smoke out." Any extra damage in the enemy ranks is just the fortunes of war.

**Allied:** Kronos (*None consider themselves Allied to Asmodeus*)

**Associated:** Baal (*Baal, Beleth, and Kronos are Associated with Asmodeus*)

**Neutral:** Beleth, Malphas (*All the others are Neutral to Asmodeus, except . . .*)

**Hostile:** All the others, except . . . (*Saminga is Hostile to Asmodeus*)

**Enemy:** Valefor (*Haagenti, Kobal, and Valefor are Enemies of Asmodeus*)

## RITEs

- At sunset, Asmodeus' Servitors regenerate 2 Essence, not just 1.
- Eliminate a Renegade demon. (3 Essence)



## ADDITIONAL RITES

- Cause delay, frustration, and confusion via legal paperwork.
- Officiate at a chess tournament, deal a poker game, or otherwise control the gameplay of humans.
- Play and win three games in a row against a skilled opponent or opponents. (Occasionally, Asmodeus gives out a variant of this worth 2 Essence, but limited to a specific game or type of game.)

## CHANCE OF INVOCATION: 1

Regardless of invocations, Asmodeus personally checks in on each of his Servitors roughly once a month to assess

their progress. Any dissonance they've gained will be immediately noticed and require an explanation.

## INVOCATION MODIFIERS

- +1 A deck of cards, chessboard, or other means for playing a game
- +2 A captured Renegade
- +3 Use exhaustive evidence to bog down a trial
- +4 Evidence of treason against any state, celestial or corporeal
- +5 Presence of a chess Grandmaster or player of similar caliber
- +6 Take control of a government – any government, in any manner



## GURPS POINT BREAKDOWNS FOR ASMODEUS

Here are the *GURPS In Nomine* point breakdowns for Asmodeus (including the ones on pp. 110-111 of *GURPS In Nomine*). For mechanical details, consult the main text.

**All:** Symphonic Knowledge: Band recognition/dissonance (No media use, -66%). 10 points. This must be bought separately, at full cost, for each Band. It *must* be taken for the demon's own Band; this adds 10 points, in addition to the costs below. (The points toward Roles are part of the Servitor cost, not Band Attunements.)

**Shedim:** Adds Limited duration (-5%) to Body-hopping [-4]; their Dissonance Condition drops in value from -8 (daily corruption and host death) to -1 point (only host death) [7]. Total: 3 points.

**Argument of Casuistry:** Symphonic Influence: Belief (Requires Evidence, -20%). 24 points.

**Dissonance Binding:** New power, including No Roll Required. 25 points.

**Humanity:** New power. 30 points.

**Insert Coin to Continue:** Luck (Costs Essence, -10%; One Re-roll, -5%, Uses in-game time restrictions, +0%). 13 points.

**Rule of Law:** Applies the Enhancements and Limitations of Affects Others Involuntarily, +60%; No Roll Required, +66%; and Costs Essence, -20%, to Humanity. 32 points.

**Sense for Betrayal:** Symphonic Knowledge: Dissonance (No Media Use, -66%; Extended Duration (degree of success in hours), +90%). 38 points.

**Knight of Judgment:** Charisma +5 (Only affects humans, -10%) [23]. Celestial Rank +1 [5]. Total: 28 points.

**Captain of Integrity:** Symphonic Knowledge: Liars/Hypocrites (No Roll Required, +66%; No media use, -66%; Restricted scope, -33%) [20]. Celestial Rank +1 [5]. Total: 25 points.

**Baron of Justice:** Judgment ability (No Roll Required, +66%; No media use, -66%; Restricted scope, -50%) [15]. Celestial Rank +1 [5]. 20 points.

**Bishop:** Applies No Roll Required to *all* his attunements and Distinctions (+66%), as well as Reduced Essence (+40%), but only within his bishopric (-10%) and only upon "pieces" of the Game (-20%). This may be calculated individually for a given Bishop PC, or assume a cost of 114 points, plus 5 for Celestial Rank (within his bishopric), for a total of 119 points.

**Dealer:** A combination of a relic with minor game effects (such as the ability, akin to the Celestial Song of Artifacts (p. IN159), to make an item a level 0 artifact) and vast political power, restrained only by the good sense of the Dealer and fear of the Prince's wrath, as well as a level of celestial Rank when relatively off-duty. 50 points.

**Marquises, Counts, and Dukes** each add an additional +1 Celestial Rank at 5 points per level. (So a Marquis has paid 5 points more than a Baron, a Count has paid 10 more, and a Duke has paid 15 more.)

**Other:** Part of the *Servitor Cost* (p. IN80) includes 20 points for purchasing a Role; Shedim should use these points for servants (Allies or Unwilling Allies) to use as hosts.





# ASMODEUS in detail

## NAMES, APPEARANCE, AND MANNER

When appearing openly, the Prince of the Game finds it useful to cultivate a fearsome presence: his only consistency in vessel styles is that they are intimidating. The chilling effect of his infamous burning eyes is a byword in Hell, and foolhardy beings have made bets about the number of times he has raised his inflectionless voice. Most demons – even Princes – find it wise not to provoke such a display.

And display it would be. Asmodeus does nothing that does not benefit him, down to his appearance. To appear imposing reminds demons that *he* writes their rules, and showing certain characteristics, like the burning eyes, contributes to the misimpression that Asmodeus always appears in such a way. The Prince of the Game has found that an even, bland tone of voice heightens useful anxieties, and makes occasional deviations from that monotone even more striking. Furthermore, to instill more energy into his voice or actions than absolutely necessary is to care about the subject, which Asmodeus consciously refuses to do. This in no way stops him from redefining situations so that any irritation he may wish to express becomes a useful move: even when acting out of displeasure, Asmodeus will not fail to turn anything to his advantage.

When not appearing openly, Asmodeus can resemble anyone at all, from an innocent bystander to a therapist, bartender, or even a friend of his target. (The vulnerability of the target having a friend in the first place will be noted, particularly if the subject is one of his own Servitors.) When masquerading, Asmodeus frequently does not announce himself even to his servant. A few of his Servitors have even been unaware that they were reporting to him, thinking the Prince had passed them over for inspection. Asmodeus deals with that naïveté as he sees fit.

The Prince of the Game has used many pseudonyms and even Roles over the years. However, the vast majority of these are not known to be *his* pseudonym or Role. Asmodeus sees little point in acquiring influence under names known to be his: it is less work to simply use his own name in the first place.

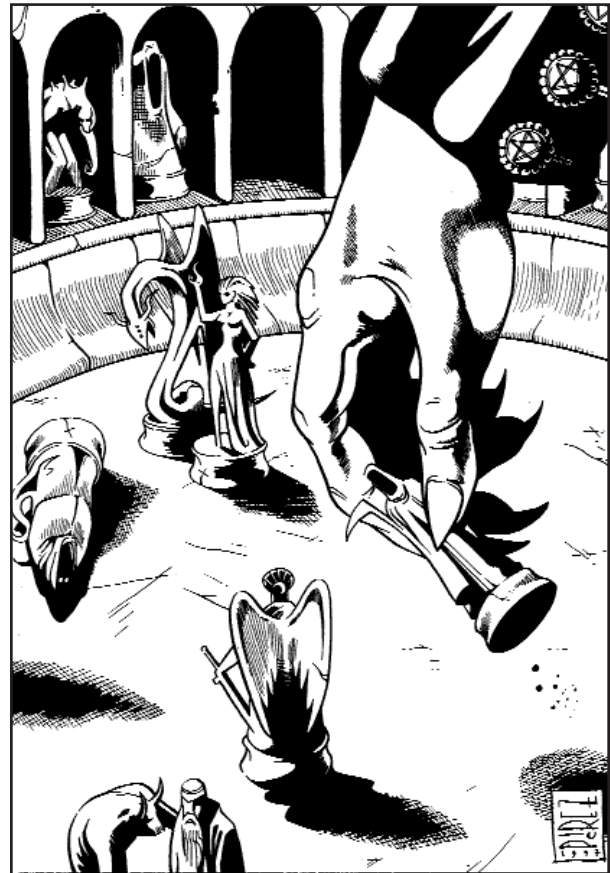
## THE WORD OF THE GAME


A common misperception of Asmodeus' Word is that the Game is a metaphor: insert "piece" for person, "move" for action, and so forth: an elaborate, complex, and useless system for re-labeling the Symphony. However, a metaphor is an artificial analogy drawn between unrelated concepts.

Asmodeus and his Servitors believe that the Symphony *is* the Game: not the filter through which the Symphony can be understood but what it actually *is*. They believe that the universe was designed with certain rules and its denizens were endowed with particular capabilities and flaws. Both celestials and mortals are controlled by these attributes and restricted by the very nature of the world they live in. Thus, they are easily manipulated by anyone who understands their strengths and weaknesses. The Game's arrogance leads him and his Servitors to believe, then, that this is the entirety of the Symphony.

All of this is unfair, and Asmodeus knows it. There is nothing fair or just in the nature of the world; therefore justice and fairness do not matter. What matters is what works. The Game is about knowing the rules well enough that they can be manipulated and brought to bear on one's opponents – and everyone is an opponent – instead of oneself, so that there can be no possible doubt of the victor.

And Asmodeus believes that with victory safely in hand, there is no reason that the rules of the next game should not be rewritten as he prefers.





The Game is undoubtedly a force of order. The rules are to be followed, and when not followed, to be used. This applies both to the rules that comprise the natural world and to those Asmodeus constructs himself. The Prince of the Game draws no distinction between the two. If a demon is to bend them, he had better not get caught at it – or at least have very good reasons for his audacity.

*First rule of the Game: Don't break the rules. Second rule of the Game: Finding a loophole isn't breaking the rules. Third rule of the Game: If you get caught, it wasn't a loophole after all.*

– Aclahaye,  
*Habbalite of the Game*

In addition to providing order to Hell, Asmodeus oversees all forms of the Game played by humans. Whenever a mortal plays mind-games with another person, or twists the truth for personal gain or pleasure, they are Playing the Game of Asmodeus. Hypocrites, oath-breakers, and those who exploit the letter of the law rather than following its spirit all further the cause of Asmodeus' Word. Additionally, the Prince supports human competition in more "traditional" games: sporting contests, board games, and gambling all see attention from Gamesters working to support the Word.

## HISTORY

Before the Fall, the Cherub Asmodeus was one of the most devoted angels in service to Dominic, the Angel of Judgment. He served the Word of Judgment with diligence and passion, but his loyalty to his superior was even greater. Asmodeus was Dominic's trusted companion and friend: the two angels worked together with the Metatron to codify the Word of God into the first laws, a task that Asmodeus in particular found utterly fascinating. Given their closeness, it was unsurprising that Dominic sent Asmodeus to speak with the Archangel of Light when Dominic thought Lucifer had begun to misjudge issues.

Asmodeus spoke with Lucifer for a long time, trying to discover the reasons the Archangel had for his activities. The Archangel of Light was apparently forthright with the Cherub, appealing to his sense of justice and equity. Asmodeus came to believe that it was unfair that God not listen to Lucifer's grievances, and that the lack of acknowledgment should be redressed. Lucifer further convinced Asmodeus that Dominic would better judge the Lightbringer's underlying rightness when he saw the Movement in action, rather than becoming distracted by what

only seemed to be flaws. Wishing to best persuade his friend, Asmodeus returned to Dominic and told him strict truth: "Lucifer is aware of the choices he has made, and his reasoning will be explained soon." Dominic could not hear Truth through Lucifer's haze of ineffability, but trusted Asmodeus' judgment. Having satisfied his superior, Asmodeus returned to helping Lucifer plan what would become the Rebellion.

The failure of the rebellion was, in Asmodeus' mind, a triple betrayal: Dominic's, for not following them, God's, for not listening to them, and even Lucifer's, for lying to them. As his nature twisted into a Djinn's, Asmodeus realized that those betrayals signified a larger truth: justice itself was a lie, and did not exist anywhere in the Symphony. He had no reason to care about it any longer: God toyed with them as pieces in a cosmic game.

In the chaos in the new Hell, Lucifer granted the Word of the Game to the former Cherub who had loved God's laws, and gave him the authority to enforce order on the seething mass of demons. Asmodeus took to the task with a vengeance: instead of penance he levied punishment, and in place of justice he raised up the Rules.

## GAME THEORY

Asmodeus' most recent attempt to expand his Word is the advent of "game theory," an area of mathematics that describes decision-making among people with competing interests. Whether or not the original theorists were intentionally serving Hell, the Prince of the Game claimed their ideas as part of his Word, and has promoted them as such.

Though it has rapidly expanded in scope, covering fields from biology to ethics, game theory originally sought to describe and predict economics. Asmodeus turned this into an overt challenge to Trade, verging on a declaration of war. As such, the Archangel of Trade has taken an intensive interest in the study as part of his retaliatory measures.

This conflict between the Game and Trade is largely one of ideals: what is the impact of game theory on the minds of humanity? Does it encourage selfishness and self-interest, or is it innocuous, promoting cooperation and concern for others? Trade and his allies have largely blunted the thrust of game theory as an Asmodean weapon, but Asmodeus has not abandoned the concept's potential for Hadean purposes. Gamesters often use the terminology of game theory in casual conversation, though its impact is still in contention on Earth.



The Game has not always been the finely tuned mechanism that now exists in Hell. When Lucifer gave Asmodeus the Word, the concept of interpreting the universe as a Game to be Played did not exist: several precursors were present, including games of chance in which one played for one's life, but the idea as a whole was unrefined. Even now, the invention of new games or changes in old ones shift the metaphors, labels, and stereotypes of Gamesters: the current vogue of chess and card-game structure is only a few thousand years old. In the first years of the Game in Hell, Lucifer gave Asmodeus the job of keeping order in the infernal realm. The new Prince built on what he was familiar with – which was Judgment. The beginnings of the Game were more directly an opposition to Dominic in Heaven. It required Asmodeus' single-minded obsession to create the idea of the Game as a thing to be Played, and he is unspeakably proud of what he has accomplished.

The way the Game is played has never quite been the way that Judgment is administered. Where Dominic is known for his public trials, the Game prefers to handle things more subtly. Makatiel, Prince of Disease, was the first Prince openly executed by the Game, but that was in collusion with Judgment. Asmodeus either has (or would like celestials to *think* he has) arranged for the removal of other Princes, from Beelzebub, first Prince of Corruption, to Mariel, Princess of Oblivion. Those who suggest that the Game takes credit where credit is not due are likely to be accused of treason themselves.

The activities Asmodeus does not admit to performing are also enlightening. Older Gamesters believe that the Game has enacted a quiet, intensive investigation into Factions. They point to the open hostility the Game showed to Factions early in Hell's history as evidence, and Malphas' attempts to factionalize Hell instead of just Heaven and Earth as reason. These Servitors remember the abrupt change from hostility to the current tolerance bordering on approval, and believe that Asmodeus was satisfied with his inquiries. The Prince of the Game neither confirms nor denies this, just as he neither confirms nor denies other rumors about him.

## PERSONALITY AND OUTLOOK

*"It is better to be feared than loved, if you cannot be both."*

– Niccolo Machiavelli, The Prince

### *Priorities and Views on the War*

It is commonly assumed that Asmodeus' first priority is to prevent demons from going Renegade. That assumption is incorrect: the Prince of the Game's first and only priority is to

*win*, though he pursues that goal by breaking it down into several lesser objectives.

First is the prevention of demonic pieces benefiting the other side, either directly or indirectly. Asmodeus believes that Hell cannot Play effectively if its pieces break the rules, and so he must devote a substantial amount of time preventing such violations. Lucifer charges the Prince with maintaining order and loyalty among demons: inherently selfish, chaotic and traitorous creatures. Asmodeus takes a certain pride in the fact that he does his job so well under such difficult conditions, while holding the necessity of the task itself in Djinnish contempt. If demons would simply follow the rules appropriately, the Game would be free to focus its energies on offensive strategies. Still, Asmodeus does what he can to advance his own agendas while enforcing the rules as required.

The Game also regulates the actions of his fellow Princes. Although Lucifer sometimes chooses to intervene personally in the workings of Hell, he relies on his appointee, Asmodeus, to keep the daily operations of the infernal realm running smoothly. Asmodeus accomplishes this by mitigating the influence Hell's factions have on each other. He usually supports the more militant, proactive elements, though he has also been known to undermine them, through discreet support of "softer" Princes, should the militant factions threaten his own plans.

Since playing blind is a state best left to one's opponents – and Asmodeus classifies everyone as his opponent in some way – he has a remarkable network of spies. His own Servitors usually go disguised in order to mislead his opponents – by Roles in the corporeal realm, and more inventive methods in the ethereal and celestial realms. When his servants uncover some disloyal or dangerous element, Asmodeus does not always order them to take immediate action, but may instead bid them to wait and observe. This allows the Prince to acquire a better understanding of the variables of the situation, as well as potentially uncovering accomplices or allies of the traitors. Nor is he above setting up systems of informants who do not know the ultimate destination of their reports, or filtering bad information to others' spies.

Asmodeus also allocates resources to more straightforward pursuits, such as offensive maneuvers against Heaven and expanding the Word of the Game. The first he prefers to do by influencing the appropriate factor to take a desired action, usually by just giving the Prince of the War – whom Asmodeus considers a highly useful piece indeed – enough information to act on. However, Asmodeus does not rule out more subtle influences, or even personal appearances. Like all Superiors, Asmodeus must dedicate a portion of his own resources to expanding his Word. While the Prince holds that his Game is Played by everyone everywhere, if often ineptly, he finds it easiest to demonstrate this to others in the fields of politics and law.

As for the end of the War . . . Asmodeus is prepared to design a set of rules to play by after Hell's victory.







## Views on God

Asmodeus acknowledges that God created the most rudimentary Game: the Symphony before the Fall. However, Asmodeus believes himself to have redefined and refined this Game after the Fall, making it something indubitably his. Asmodeus believes that God, too, must Play by the Rules, which is why He has not intervened directly in the Game between Heaven and Hell.

## Views on Lucifer

Lucifer does not correspond to any standard piece or card in any game, though like every piece in the great Game, he is also a player - and Player.

Even the complex game of chess does not hold a classification for Lucifer. He cannot be the queen piece of Hell, as Asmodeus knows the available moves of a queen, but does not know the full extent of Lucifer's abilities. Asmodeus does not consider Lucifer to be Hell's ultimate king piece, either; the War would not be *over* if Lucifer were somehow destroyed, though Hell would be crippled. (The designation of "king," without whom the game is lost, has gone to Fate even before Kronos' advent.) Asmodeus continues to resent his position as Lucifer's underling, and takes a certain satisfaction in refusing Lucifer the position as the most important piece in Hell.

## Views on Humanity

Asmodeus does not hold the same personal antagonism and contempt for humanity that most other Princes do: he does not care enough about them to do so. He has noted their capacity to act upon the Symphony without disturbance and their influence on celestial Words, which has led him to create the Humanity attunement to duplicate the effects and disguise the nature of one piece with the seeming of another. The Prince has come to the conclusion that as a whole, humanity is most valuable as ignorant pieces and tokens for Heaven and Hell to feud over. Still, he notes individual humans' skill in Playing as accurately as any other being's, and does not spurn Hellsworn or sorcerers from his service.

## POLITICS

As the Prince responsible for keeping order in Hell, Asmodeus actively involves himself in the political conflicts that constantly absorb the demonic royalty. As a Djinn, Asmodeus shows nothing but apathy or occasionally irritation in response to any attempt to engage him on a personal level, from Malphas' overtures of friendship to Kobal's witticisms.

## Princely Opinions

Despite the fact that they are ostensibly on the same side of the War, most Princes spend almost as much time obstructing Asmodeus as they do opposing Heaven. In return, the

Prince of the Game analyzes their weaknesses and strengths as he would any enemy's.

**Andrealphus:** He acts the cold fish, with his only pleasure being paper-pushing. It's as if he thinks that the rest of us don't understand the *desire* he has for control. But I understand that perfectly. Oh yes. (*He wastes time in his own physical pleasures rather than usefully furthering the cause of Hell; he may serve his own Word, but that is of small concern to me. A distressing number of Renegades come from his ranks, and he takes little interest in pursuing them. I would be interested in evidence of personal recusancy on his part.*)

**Baal:** He understands the importance of maintaining order in the ranks, and does so with considerable artistry. We must be unified where the Hosts of Heaven are scattered and discordant. (*Baal is a useful leader. He deals harshly with deserters, so I rarely have to become involved. He does his job well and leaves me to my plays.*)

**Beleth:** The Game ensures that even the least demonlings in Shal-Mari know that terror has a face and form, and might turn its crimson eye to them at any time. Prince or newly birthed, all have a shadow to fear in the darkness. Asmodeus *understands*, though our paths cross but rarely. (*Her agents are typically cooperative, but more importantly, she is Lucifer's piece, and interfering with his Plays is not a thing to be done lightly. I rarely see the need to do so, and particularly not with her.*)

**Belial:** Bah! He's a wet blanket with no fire. Everything's so cautious and so planned - there's no room to breathe in Hell. Why Lucifer allows him so much control is beyond me. (*If he cannot restrain his destructive nature, it will be appropriate to remove him before he does too much damage. Too many delicate plays have been ruined by this loose cannon.*)

**Haagenti:** Rules, rules, rules! All this talk about rules gives me indigestion! Can't he ever leave well enough alone? I can't be truly *hungry* if I'm thinking about the rules - and I don't like his attitude toward me and Kobal. He'd better be careful. Or else. (*Excessive and unintelligent. Not really faults in themselves, but he listens to Kobal. To be watched like all that Prince's other tools.*)

**Kobal:** It's almost too easy. He's so full of himself, so puffed up with his own importance that I just have to poke a few holes to deflate him. But then he spoils the game anyway, because he just doesn't get it. (*He seems to think that he can play by his own set of rules in the Game. I doubt he quite realizes just how wrong he is about that. When the time comes, I will be there to remind him of the rules in Hell. [pause] I owe him a special favor, as well.*)

**Kronos:** He is more aware of his role in the grand scheme of things than most. He knows being a leader often means being a follower as well, if only of the unwritten rules. (*He is the key to our entire strategy and the board upon which I will construct the next phase of the Game. Even now, he directly manipulates the Symphony itself and turns it to our favor. His style of play is . . . appreciable.*)

**Lilith:** To him, I owe nothing. He is a slave at heart, knowing nothing of real freedom. I'm amazed he found the spirit to rebel against Heaven in the first place. (*She is flighty,*

too devoted to herself and not enough to Hell. If she did not provide useful services and demons for the cause, she would be just another Renegade. As it is, **I** must police her “free” children carefully, since she cares not what they do.)

**Malphas:** Everyone thinks I should have a problem with him, but it’s just the opposite. My work would be much less interesting without all of his rules to play the game by. And while everyone is looking over their shoulder for Asmodeus, they never see me. *(A useful piece for stirring up treason, bringing it to notice. However, should he create more disloyalty than he uncovers, he will become expendable.)*

**Nybbas:** Hey, games are *fabulous*, babe! Bread and Circuses sell to the masses like nobody’s business, but you have to make sure the Game is a spectacle for people to watch! Cheerleaders, lighted scoreboards, jump cuts to the extreme! Nobody wants to watch a guy play solitaire behind a screen of smoke. Strictly C-SPAN. *(Frivolous and immature, but he does promote Hell on Earth. He has had too much easy success, and grows too complacent. I don’t disparage his power, though, just his judgment; his support of Vapula makes them both too strong. I plan to change that.)*

**Saminga:** He used to laugh at me, like they all did. Now he’s laughing out the other side of his face. He can have his stupid games. I have all I need. *(An almost mindless piece, incapable of anything but the most infantile plays. Rarely significantly useful.)*

**Valefor:** He’s too caught up with his rules and regulations. He doesn’t realize that he risks losing it all by trying to hang onto every little thing. Demons need to be free to create – that’s what we rebelled for! Still, we have to be careful of



## THE TOWERS

Asmodeus has no respect for the Word of Dreams. Dreams reveal details of the self to anyone who discovers them, and in the Game’s eyes, this weakness makes the Archangel Blandine one of the more flawed pieces on the board.

Even so, his dislike for Dreams appears to be of a more personal origin than simply one born out of his Word. Some of the excess is doubtless that of a Djinn for a Cherub, but it does not appear to this degree in his assessments of the other Cherub Archangels.

It is possible that Asmodeus Djinnishly resents the steadfast love Blandine still holds for Beleth. It is even possible he is Djinnishly *jealous*, holding his own secret and twisted obsession for the Archangel, exacerbated by Blandine’s utter disregard for the Game. (Or, some unwise demons suggest, Asmodeus is jealous of the obsession *Beleth* continues to have for her former partner.)

Alternately, Asmodeus could very well be planning – or already implementing – a major move in the ethereal involving the Marches themselves, their Superiors, and his professed opinions of them both.

him. Getting nailed by the Game is not fun. *(He appears out of nowhere one day, the power in him obvious. Yet there is no record of him, either as an angel from before the Fall or as a demonling created here. Of course, the records aren’t perfect, curse Kobal. And how convenient that he brings Lucifer a gift from Yves’ own Library – a place none of the rest of us could penetrate . . . What is his game? Just **who** is his master?)*

**Vapula:** He would have humanity cling to the ways of the past when they should really be looking forward to the future. Why am I forever plagued by bureaucratic idiocy? How am I supposed to work like this? *(His anarchistic tendencies are dangerous, but for all his undeniable intelligence, Vapula is easily manipulated.)*

## Archangel Opinions

While no Archangel can be appreciative of such a powerful Demon Prince as Asmodeus, opinions of him range from visceral detestation to bitter acknowledgment of his control over the elements of Hell which would prefer a hot War to the current cold one.

**Blandine:** He is nothing to me; there are no rules that can restrict the human spirit. *(Dreams are nothing but foolish, distracting delusions. If I catch any demons wasting time in dreaming, there will be Hell to pay.)*



**David:** Asmodeus spins Gordian knots of intrigue, well beyond my ability to unravel. I do not bother unraveling them. My hands can tear the strongest knot. *(David's blind loyalty and ostensible refusal to Play makes him little more than Heaven's pawn: the supplier of brute force to carry out even their most ill-advised military schemes. The pattern is clear, if unremarked upon in Heaven.)*

**Dominic:** Once, he was my confidant, always at my side. Now he is everything I hate, arbitrary and corrupt. The only remnants left of the Cherub are his dedication to rules. It . . . can be sufficient. *(Once my mentor, now my opposite number. I can use him, and have. He tries to use me, and thinks he has. It is a most . . . satisfying . . . play.)*

**Eli:** I don't think Asmodeus understands quite how creative he gets sometimes. All those shadow-plays, lies, traps, counters, moves – man. It's not that I like him, but hey, he has his cool moments. *(He is . . . excessively creative in his interpretation of the Rules. This recent strategy of his bears watching, given that unpredictability, though it is convenient to collect his discarded cards while he claims to leave the table. If he bluffs too long, all his infinite creations shall become mine – whether he Falls or not.)*

**Gabriel:** Burn the boards, shatter the pieces, tear away the self-written rules that blind you, Asmodeus, and see the truth. God does not play games with His children. You are ashes and cold iron, charred and bitter. *(A dangerous wildcard who upsets the settled order of Heaven, and an unpredictable piece. It is a pity that Dominic cannot control her better. Her servants have an annoying habit of detecting those who are . . . efficient . . . in my service.)*

**Janus:** “Why – you're nothing but a pack of cards!” And one who really should learn a few new tricks – houses get old, so blow ‘em down. His rules are stifling – just go right through them. *(The first and most effective wildcard in Heaven's deck. The only advantage he provides us is he sometimes plays against Heaven as well.)*

**Jean:** His intelligence is undeniable. His focus is characteristic of his Band. If he would permit himself to remember more of Heaven, there is a point at which he would be even more effective. I shall not inform him of this; there is currently no reason to draw his attention as an opponent if I can avoid it. *(A skillful player, though limited in his chief objectives. He has been known to make moves in unforeseen areas, however, and bears watching.)*

**Jordi:** Chasing leaves in play teaches the young to hunt: the Game is nothing more. He continues to claw the trees in my territory, and I will not permit it. *(He controls certain basic resources that Heaven does not realize its dependence on, and his isolation renders them vulnerable. I neither forget nor neglect that kind of advantage.)*

**Laurence:** By killing their own kind, his demons do some of our work for us. But he is crafty and his spies are everywhere, forcing us to be ever-vigilant. *(An impudent Virtue, blinded by idealism. He's a child pushing pieces around on a board he doesn't understand. He served Heaven better as a pawn to attack our pieces directly. I wish him a long career as General of the Host.)*

**Marc:** The only “give” in his “give and take” is a setup for more taking. He's almost as greedy as Mammon, if subtler. *(Marc's chief weakness is his emphasis on fair trade. I find it satisfying to take advantage of it wherever possible, and force him to sacrifice his pieces instead. He is able to bring influences to bear that can cripple a complex play, and it is necessary to ensure that he does not get the opportunity or information required to do so.)*

**Michael:** There is something worse than Dominic, and it's Asmodeus. Give me just *one* more piece of reliable information of their collaboration, and I look forward to sharing it with the Seraphim Council. *(He is undisciplined, arrogant, and proud. It is unreasonable and unjust that God should have pardoned him for his sins. I am pleased to share news of Outcasts from War's ranks with Dominic.)*

## WAR CRIMES

Asmodeus' use of Judgment's diction when speaking of the Archangel of War represents the Game's analysis of Michael using the perspective of a Judge, and obliquely serves to illustrate his own view as well. Michael was found guilty; what reason was there to show mercy to him, when his pride is so dangerous to himself and others? To Asmodeus, that incident reveals God's true role as a Player of the Game, using Judgment to accomplish Plays and then disregarding its strictures when useful.

Asmodeus finds Michael himself to be one of God's more effective pieces, if not the subtlest. Michael's games with Truth and deception are a sign of skill, though his pride and dissonance conditions are flaws that Asmodeus exploits as often as possible.

**Novalis:** Asmodeus . . . knows very well when to use peaceful methods, and to use them first. But I don't admire him for what he does. It is cold calculation, because he wants to be sure there is always some *worse* threat he can use. *(She counterbalances the influence of Heaven's military in favor of protecting its living resources: while her nonviolent influences can be subtle, it is an obvious flaw that she must be driven to violence.)*

**Yves:** He's relentless in hunting down Renegades, those for whom the Symphony still has hope. Destroying the repentant cannot drown out his desire for forgiveness. *(Ah, yes, Yves. There's a curious being. So unlike the rest of Heaven's host. Destiny is the victory condition of Heaven; it is fitting that he should have different characteristics than pieces that may be sacrificed.)*







## ENDGAMES

Asmodeus believes that the conflict between Destiny and Fate is the true basis of the War. Michael and Baal strongly influence that conflict, but they are not the true king pieces. The War would not be decided should one die, and the Game divides his support between Baal and Kronos accordingly. Asmodeus believes that once the War has been won and the third phase of the Game begins, either Fate or Destiny will serve as the board upon which the new Rules are constructed.

Given its degradation and corrosion of even the Symphony, however, Fate's capacity to be a default condition of Play could be questionable. If so, the alliance between the Game and Fate may well be a feint, keeping the truest enemy of the Game closest of all.

## Other Opinions

**Humanity:** They are most valuable as pieces, influencing Words in controlled ignorance. There are few of them who Play with an appreciable amount of skill.

**Soldiers and Sorcerers:** While they do not have the power, Forces, or experience of a celestial, neither do they have the weaknesses. They are true pawns, and those that Play acceptably may become my pieces.

**Ethereals:** Those not aligned with Hell are in a vulnerable position, particularly upon the corporeal. Removing them from it serves not only to remove an opponent, but to reinforce control over those belonging to Hell. At this point, their weak position on the board is more important than their individual characteristics.

## VARIATIONS ON A THEME

Asmodeus can be portrayed in a number of ways, depending on the role the GM wants him to play and the type of campaign in which he appears. He may even present himself as any or all of the following, depending on his plans and whom he speaks with! Of course, the safest bet with Asmodeus is to assume that *all* of the variants contain at least a grain of truth.

### *Asmodeus the Player*

In a lighter, more humorous campaign, Asmodeus is truly obsessed with games-with-a-lowercase-"g." His speech is filled with analogies and references to various games, and he never appears without a deck of cards or portable game board

## ULAMALITZLI: AZTEC GAMES

The Prince of the Game is occasionally willing to grant certain corporeal privileges and advantages to ethereals who make themselves useful to him, especially those who are willing to act as spies and report goings-on in the Marches. Two of Asmodeus' best spies are the Hero Twins of the Aztec Pantheon, Han-Hunahpu and Xbalanque. After the Purity Crusade, most of the Aztec gods became lackeys of Nightmares, far reduced from their original power. The Hero Twins seem to be no exception.

However, during the height of the Crusade, the Game took note of one of the legends surrounding the two ethereals: the myth in which Han-Hunahpu and Xbalanque outwitted and destroyed the Lords of Xilbalba, Aztec gods of the underworld, by means of playing the Aztec ball game, *ulama*, with enormous skill and trickery. Asmodeus found the implications of this legend interesting enough to challenge the beleaguered ethereals to a game of *ulama* himself. The stakes were that if the Hero Twins won, Asmodeus would ensure that they would be remembered on Earth, not beholden to Beleth like the rest of their pantheon. If he won . . . he would have no such obligation. Han-Hunahpu and Xbalanque accepted.

The Prince of the Game is not a Lord of Xilbalba. Skilled though the Hero Twins were at *ulama*, they could not defeat Asmodeus. Still, their performance was noteworthy enough that Asmodeus decided to prevent their enslavement to Beleth anyway, and kept them as his own spies in the Marches. The Djinn has even gone to the trouble of preserving *ulama* in modern Mexican culture, remarkably uncorrupted from its historical form, keeping the Hero Twins in the minds of its players.

close to hand. He *insists* on being called Game Master or "DM." He and his Servitors will go out of their way to accept a challenge to a match – their eagerness approaches addiction. Winning such a contest might even earn a clever demon a reduction in his sentence. For added amusement, the GM may encourage Asmodean PCs to refer to things as "leveling up," "taking on a disad," "putting points into my paperwork skills," or any other slangy gaming term. If a *GURPS In Nomine* character takes this as a Quirk, he might even gain character points from it – while deliberately telling people that he's roleplaying his character.



Of course, Asmodeus as Player does not necessarily have to be comic relief: a Demon Prince who takes a cold pleasure in playing “lesser” games like *Munchkin* or *Illuminati* might be terrifying indeed – especially since he’d enforce every last rule.

## Asmodeus the Policeman

This Prince of the Game is focused on order to the absence of anything else. He runs a totalitarian police state in Hell; his Servitors are visible on every street corner, watching for the slightest deviation in loyalty. Asmodeus has rejected subtlety in favor of an iron fist: there is no whimsy in this Game. Nothing but absolute obedience to the Rules is acceptable. The portions of his Word devoted to playing games – and even Playing Games – have been de-emphasized. This Asmodeus spends much of his time directly opposing Dominic: the infernal cliché that Judgment is Heaven’s Game applies more truly in reverse.

## Asmodeus the Pawn

An interestingly limited Prince of the Game is one imprisoned by his own Word. This Asmodeus is crippled by a Word-based *inability* to disobey Lucifer (possibly imposed when the First Balseraph noticed resentment in his minion). Above all else, he is Lucifer’s pawn: whatever free will he might have is deeply buried in a Byzantine mesh of rules. His very nature, as defined by his Word, decrees everyone powerless to make any choices of their own accord. All are merely pawns – even the Prince of the Game.

This Game is, correspondingly, much more hidebound than the intrigue-filled self-contradictory maze that it normally is. Individual Gamesters will be drowning in paperwork and permits, preventing them from doing anything but their jobs.

Asmodeus may not be aware of the situation he is in – however, if he *is* conscious of how Lucifer’s gift has limited him, he may be seeking an appropriate answer for that betrayal.

# HADES: THE GRAY CITY

*Per me si va ne la citta dolente,  
per me si va ne l'eterno dolore,  
per me si va tra la perduta gente . . .  
Lasciate ogne speranza, voi ch'intrate.  
(Through me the way into the suffering city,  
Through me the way to the eternal pain,  
Through me the way that runs among the lost . . .  
Abandon all hope, ye who enter here.)*

– Dante Alighieri, trans. Allen Mandelbaum, “Divina Commedia, Inferno, III, 1-9”

Asmodeus’ Principality rings the rest of Hell, its massive urban sprawl insulating the infernal realm from all outside influence. Hades is an enormous, labyrinthine metropolis: all of the great cities of Hell in human legend – Pandemonium, Dis, and the others – are based upon the Gray City where the Game reigns supreme. The city itself is an obscene combination of architectural styles, at times reminiscent of the oppressiveness of Soviet masonry, elsewhere congested with hundreds of dim, twisted alleyways, all overlaid with the bustling, frantic energy and focus of downtown New York City. Skyscrapers loom in iron girders and dark glass, stark against the smog clouding the ever-overcast sky. Beneath the ground are howling subways, and the streets above are choked with demons and the damned.



## HOUSES OF CARDS: PLACES IN HADES

Despite the oppressive modernity of the city, most Hadean landmarks are anachronistically constructed, from the pseudo-Roman Plaza of Ashes to the Renaissance décor of Asmodeus’ Palace. The rest of the city is crowded with hulking buildings made of concrete slabs and lit by sodium lamps that provide an inescapable miasma reminiscent of the darkest noir films.



## The Gates of Hell

The Gates of Hell are a pair of gigantic bronze doors standing open at the edge of Hades. The pillars they hang from were once mile-high ebony towers, but they were knocked askew millennia ago and no one has bothered to put them right. Engraved above the Gates is an inscription, barely visible through the smog. At times it seems to read “Abandon All Hope, Ye Who Enter Here;” at others, “Arbeit Macht Frei.” Demons – mostly Habbalah – armed with whips drive masses of the newly damned through the Gates.

Daniel and Hutriel, the Angels of Final Justice (*Heaven and Hell*, pp. 15-16), stand at either side of the gateway, examining each approaching soul for virtue. It is rumored that the two angels have occasionally released a soul to Heaven, but such rumors are forcefully discouraged. (Especially when true.) Most demons view the Angels of Final Justice as simply part of the landscape: unmoving, unchanging, and permanent. They are feared, but with the fear of those who live on the slopes of a volcano. Final Justice are dangerous, to be sure, but mostly they are simply present.

## The Soul Yards

The Soul Yards are the first destination of the newly damned after they pass through the Gates. A filthy sprawl of broken cobbles and brick, the Yards swarm with confused and miserable damned, shepherded by Habbalah with whips, prods, switches, and smiles. (Other demons serve as herders as well, but Habbalah predominate.) Looming over them all are high stone walls and several squat towers, from which the overseers tally the souls and issue orders for their inspection, classification, and branding (literal or metaphoric) as the property of one or another of the Demon Princes.

Inside the towers, the atmosphere resembles both a cattle auction and the Tokyo Stock Exchange. Agents of each Prince bargain for the souls that are their due – and sometimes the souls that aren’t. Once their quotas have been met, the agents collect their new charges and the holding pens are refilled with new damned. More information about the politics of acquiring souls can be found in *Heaven and Hell*, p. 94.

The Soul Yards comprise several Knight-level bishoprics (p. 6): Triel, Djinn Baron of the Game, is the current overarching Soul Yards Bishop (*Heaven and Hell*, p. 96). Murmur, Calabite Duke of the Game (*Infernal Player’s Guide*, p. 37), counts the Yards within his duchy as well as the Hadean ghettos housing Asmodeus’ damned; he considers himself overseer of *all* souls in the Game, but this is frequently contested by his fellows.

## Asmodeus’ Palace

Asmodeus’ Palace is a palace in name only. It is more accurately the repository for the Game’s files, central control for Asmodeus’ spy network, and home to some of his most

poisonous Servitors. The amount of secret information stored in the vaults of the Palace is second only to Kronos’ Archive, and unlike the Archive, it is meticulously ordered. The human souls who maintain the records have their Ethereal Forces stripped and adjusted to the bare minimum required for alphabetization, preventing even the possibility of betrayal. Most demons and their Princes would give much for a reliable source within the Palace, but the Infernal Police make sure that only the most loyal Gamesters are ever allowed within its walls. The security around the Halls of Records has only strengthened in merciless lack of humor since Kobal’s Pranksters managed to infiltrate and . . . reorganize . . . files (*Superiors 2: Pleasures of the Flesh*, p. 72).

Occasionally, the Palace has fulfilled a use more traditionally suited to its name. Asmodeus at times sees fit to play host to one or another of the lords of Hell, and during such periods the upper halls of the Palace are opened: richly decorated in red and gray, they’re an opulent setting as grandiose as that of any other Prince. Asmodeus’ reasons for this, permitting the most curious to be so tantalizingly close to his files, are unknown. The best money would be on games of cat-and-mouse.

## The Plaza of Ashes

The Plaza of Ashes, the site of the Game’s public executions, is also one of the few places in Hades that is undeniably beautiful. The plaza is a huge, open fan-shape, reminiscent of the Piazza del Campo, visible from the balconies of Asmodeus’ Palace and large enough to hold a hundred thousand. It is paved with a magnificent mosaic, in the style of ancient Rome, depicting a chess match in progress. (The rank and file Servitors frequently murmur rumors that the positions of the tiled chess pieces change.) Statuary and monuments ring the Plaza, and the effect of emerging through them into the clear area is one of understated awe: the sudden lack of looming buildings coupled with the artistic design produces a sense of overwhelming relief. The eye is then drawn to the formal executions constantly held atop the set of stairs at the northernmost edge, leading up to the shining marble facade of the Halls of Loyalty.

## The Halls of Loyalty

The Halls of Loyalty are located next to Asmodeus’ Palace, and a network of underground tunnels connects the two. The Halls rise from the Hadean streets in a facade of gleaming marble, the most pristine building in all of the Gray City. The ever-present smog is scrubbed away by thousands of damned souls. The Halls are the headquarters of the Infernal Police and the place where the treasonous are brought for interrogation and punishment. It is perhaps the most shunned building in Hell. Demons taken within are seldom seen again – InfPol always has a use for suspects, regardless of their ultimate innocence or guilt, and the miles of underground cells are never full.





## The Arenas

Beneath Hades lie the Arenas: gladiatorial pits devoted to trial by combat, contests of strength, and the entertainment of the Gray City's populace. In previous centuries, Asmodeus used the Arenas directly in the enforcement of his Rules, but with the rise of Shal-Mari's larger and gaudier arenas, the Hadean version has fallen out of the public eye of Hell. The Prince of the Game finds it politic to allow the lords of Shal-Mari to offer the entertainment of blood sport, while keeping his own Arenas for the Game's private purposes.

## Gambling Halls

The Game is not entirely a sleek, threatening, and purposefully organized society. There *are* high-class establishments (such as The Fair Chance; *You Are Here*, p. 98), but within the back alleys of Hades are many cheap casinos, full of damned and desperate addicts sitting in front of rigged slot machines and dealers who don't even bother to hide their cheating.

The sanest of these gamblers play for Essence, or the jackpot of a ticket to another Principality. Others play simply for enough Essence to keep playing. Most of those on a "winning streak" haven't moved from their slot machines or tables in hundreds of years. These halls don't feel the need to pamper their clients, as corporeal casinos might; many even demand an entrance fee. They know they're the only affordable game in town.

## DENIZENS OF HADES

Hades is inhabited by more than just demons in service to Asmodeus. All sorts make their homes there, as spies, ambassadors, workers in the Soul Yards, or simply to avoid enemies from their own organization – allowing Servitors of other Superiors to reside in his city makes it easier for Asmodeus to keep an eye on them. While it is relatively easy for a demon to gain access to Hades through a series of checkpoints, emerging from it again requires passports even for Gamesters. Any demon dwelling in the Gray City has tacitly ceded supremacy to the Game: there is no other way to survive in the streets than to Play. It is only to be expected that the paranoia levels are as high as those of Cold War Berlin.

Asmodeus' damned souls are taxed for their Essence by the Prince's bureaucracy. Most are frightened enough to pay regularly. Those who refuse often attempt to escape into one of the many gangs on the streets of Hades, but since the gang leaders pay protection to InfPol, Asmodeus gets the Essence nonetheless. Muggings and shakedowns are common, especially for the new or friendless. However, souls who in life played the Game themselves can find employment and even limited power and respect in Hades; the soul of Cardinal Richelieu has been seen in the presence of Asmodeus himself. (And though the human philosopher Wittgenstein is not

## WORD-BOUND SERVITORS

Demons of the Game are bound both to Words which refer specifically to aspects of lesser games (to protect them from too much Heavenly influence), and to Words which support the general mentality of the Greater Game. Among the former group are the Demons of Chess, Mao, and Go (p. 21), as well as the Demons of Unusually Good Poker Hands, Hexagonal Grid Maps, Low Odds (founder of Aces and Eights, p. 35), and the Full-Court Press, whose Word originated in the game of basketball and has since expanded rapidly. In the latter group are Ben-Japheth, Habbalite Demon of Student Discipline (*Infernal Player's Guide*, p. 43), Caveatal, Impudite Demon of Loopholes (*Heaven and Hell*, pp. 26-27); Staciell, Lilim Demon of Intrigue (p. 24); the Demons of Lawyers, Neurolinguistic Programming, Filing, Boardroom Meetings, and Lying in Wait, as well as the Demon of Passports, who gained her Word during the heights of Cold War tension.

recorded as being in Hell, his works are favored by many erudite Gamesters.) Corrupt police, lawyers, and psychologists often wind up being caseworkers (p. 30).





## THE GAME WRIT SMALL

*This is a game of seven-card Hadean-standard Mao, Loyalist variant. The object of the game is to get rid of all your cards. Play proceeds to the dealer's left. There is no talking. You may refer to the dealer as "Lord Asmodeus" . . .*

More so than Go, poker, or even chess, many Gamesters consider the game of Mao to be a viable analogy to the Greater Game. Playing it well is both a source of pride and a mark of innate skill, making Mao exceptionally popular in Hades, as well as wherever Gamesters gather on the corporeal.

Mao is played with one or more decks of standard playing cards, and proceeds much like *Uno* or Crazy Eights: suit on suit and number on number. However, Mao also operates by an arcane, complex, and actively confusing set of additional rules (which must never be written down) known by the dealer and only learned by the players during the course of the game – except when they aren't. There are many, *many* variants of Mao, both on Earth and in Hell. Mistakes are rewarded by penalty cards, as distributed at the discretion of the dealer, who is (usually) the only participant permitted to speak. Catching him in a mistake of his own, however, is possible, and the ability to do so is the mark of a truly superior player.

The parallels to the Greater Game are obvious.

No one is more aware of these parallels than Jahathanna, Habbalite Marquis of the Game, the Demon of Mao. Along with the Demons of Chess and Go, Jahathanna controls training and assignments of the Game's Servitors (p. 44), and has since before her Word had a name in English. She makes certain that all of them become exquisitely and painfully aware of the rules, the consequences of breaking them, and the skills required to maneuver around them. Demons who fail to meet her exacting (if often absurd) standards often end up in the worst of the jobs that Hades can offer.

## ASMODEUS' TETHERS

Tethers of the Game form wherever humans twist, bend, or fight over the rules that govern them – and the places where those rules are enforced. They tend to be courthouses, sites of political intrigue, government buildings, and casinos. Game Tethers can also be found in schoolrooms, post offices, bars, and theaters, as well as more unusual locales as long as someone has Played sufficiently well there. Asmodeus prefers to keep his most unusual Tether locations under wraps, often using them to spy upon other Princes. Some of Asmodeus' most famous Tethers are the Agora in Athens, the KGB building in Moscow, and the site of the Council of Trent (below). For others, see the *Liber Castellorum*, pp. 91-92.

### *The Council of Trent*

The Council of Trent was convened by the Catholic Church in 1545 A.D. to authoritatively determine the doctrines of the Church in response to the Protestant heresy. The council lasted for eighteen years, changed location twice, and was the site of some of the most febrile, fervent, and factionalized arguments about theological laws in the history of Catholicism. Merely setting up the Council took nearly forty years of political infighting between the European monarchs and the agents of the Pope. When the Council finally began, its process of operation was equally rule-bound and Byzantine: a commission of consultants drew up a list of topics, which were then discussed in two separate preliminary sessions (one for theological concerns and one for legal concerns). Only then were they presented for general debate. Violent arguments concerning trivialities such as the order of topics to be discussed and what the official title of the Council should be occupied the delegates for months. Later, after political strife and infectious disease drove the Council from Trent to Bologna and back again, some decisions were reached as to the proper doctrines, but they failed to reunite the Church against the Protestants.

The Tether to the Game associated with the Council of Trent formed at the site of its inauguration: the nave of the city's cathedral. It was quickly stabilized by Asmodeus when a team of Gamesters observing the Council reported it – much to the consternation of Laurence, who had hoped to claim it for his own in the name of the Catholic Church. The Tether strengthened over the course of the Council, and Asmodeus kept it well defended. After the official close of the Council, Asmodeus appointed a Habbalite of the Game, Tephra, to be Seneschal. Several attempts to claim the Tether for Heaven, variously organized by Laurence and Dominic, were made in the next century, but did not succeed. Tephra still holds the position to this day, but the strength of the Tether she protects has diminished as the history of the Catholic Church recedes from prominence in everyday human affairs.





# PLAYERS AND PAWNS

## ASMODEANS, ASMODICANS, CANES ASMODEI, GAMESTERS

*It's all about the Game (and how you play it)*

*All about control (and if you can take it)*

*All about the debt (and if you can pay it)*

*It's all about pain (and who's gonna make it)*

– Motorhead, “The Game”

A demon of the Game is the image of the corrupt policeman, lawyer, or judge. Half of the Hadean economy revolves around bribes, although Gamesters frequently renege on their promises when it suits their purposes. Sentences are arbitrary, often irrelevant to the crime, and usually designed to entertain or benefit everyone but the criminal. Gamesters are Hell’s Judgment, ubiquitous and universally disliked among other Words, but they are also so entrenched in Hell’s order of things that no one can oust or ignore them.

A demon of the Game is everything Machiavelli imagined – and worse. They thrive on intrigues and information, on triple-meanings and complex codes where everything is significant unless it’s a diversion. One of Asmodeus’ first Servitors was the main developer of Helltongue, with all its complexities of grammar and syntax; another originated Hadean-standard Mao (p. 21). It is no surprise that the Demon of Intrigue (p. 24) runs Asmodeus’ spies.

A demon of the Game is, above all else, *flexible*. They work alone as often as in partnerships or teams. While they are not quite “jacks of all trades, masters of none,” they want to be able to handle as many situations as possible with ease – or possess enough power to ensure they will never be faced with trouble outside their particular specialty.

The Game fosters the impression that its Servitors are more or less interchangeable. This makes it easier to infiltrate places like Shal-Mari, on the grounds that no one expects a Gamester in good standing to behave like an Andrealphan, Comedian, or Free Lilim. Within the Game itself, however, this assumption is proven wrong: there are *many* ways to play the Game, and nearly all of them are represented within Hades’ walls.

## SUITS OF THE GAME

Most Gamesters find it easier to categorize their fellows by play-style rather than Band, as they believe play-style is a more accurate and reliable way of predicting their Wordmates. The currently preferred classification system is

## THE NAME OF THE GAME

Asmodeus has developed a wide range of titles over the millennia, including a few that are almost casual. A disfavored Gamester or a Servitor of another Word is expected to address Asmodeus as “Most Dread Prince of the Game” or an even more ornate title, while those who have been shown favor are not only permitted but *expected* to use the relatively informal “Grandmaster,” or other traditional mode of address for a master of a game. “Lord Player” or “my Lord Prince” is customary for those Servitors neither especially favored nor out-of-favor.

Undercover Servitors encountering Asmodeus are expected to address him in a manner suitable to their cover, without sacrificing respect. Asmodeus rarely bothers to make this easy on his Servitors if it would inconvenience him: they are expected to think quickly.

Common names for Asmodeus’ Servitors include Asmodeans, Gamesters, Players, or Gray Men; Spooks, Cops, and Dogs are also popular with less polite demons. Chess-piece titles are acceptable only within the ranks of the Game (p. 22); demons of other Words often use “Pawns” as an insult. The Suit-terminology (p. 20) is also acceptable within the Game, but rarely used accurately by other demons. Most traditionally, they are the *Canes Asmodei*: the Hounds of Asmodeus. (A term that twists the Dominican order’s “*Domini canes*” – hounds of God – and thus “Asmodican” is an appropriate variant.) While the Black Suits (p. 21) are most likely to call themselves Hounds, and some finicky Gamesters prefer the more civilized *Servitores Asmodei*, “*cave canem*” is a catchphrase in Hell: “the Game’s afoot.”

the Suits, named for the suits of a standard deck of cards. Gamesters are sorted based on their preferred methodology, their usual duties, and their perceptions of the Game.







## LEARNING TO PLAY: CHESS, GO, MAO

Once a demonling (commonly known as “checkers” amongst more powerful Gamesters) fledges, it is often snapped up by an experienced Servitor to be properly indoctrinated into the Rules of the Game. The junior Gamester becomes the senior’s lackey and personal Pawn; in return, the senior is theoretically responsible for ensuring that the new fledge ends up a competent player. Senior partners are often held accountable for their Pawn’s mistakes, both during and *after* the partnership. Gamesters may be training multiple subordinates at any one time, and might even specialize in doing so.

The Demons of Chess, Go, and Mao, all Marquises of the Game, are officially responsible for assigning *Canes Asmodei* to Game-teams, including training partnerships; this is rarely done with much deliberation, especially for lesser pieces. The three Marquises (a Djinn, an Impudite, and a Habbalite, respectively) hold Words very close to the philosophical heart of the Game, though none of their personal Words is very expandable *outside* of it. A further check is the constant rivalry between the three: they spend as much time thwarting one another as they do improving their own positions.

Sidestepping the political machinations of the three Marquises and simply *acquiring* a new-fledged demon as a Pawn is certainly possible for an ambitious or desperate Gamester, though they run the risk of being found in treasonous violation of the Rules. A safer and more prestigious method of claiming pieces of one’s own is to cause the Fall of an angel – a new-Fallen is almost always the responsibility of the piece that captured it. Naturally, attempting to subvert angels carries risks of its own.

### *Playing Black*

Black Suits are dedicated to the Rules and the hunt for Rules-breakers more than any other aspect of the Game.

**Spades** are Asmodeus’ hunters, assassins, and cleanup crew. One of the most feared is the Renegade-hunter Nergal, a Djinn (*Infernal Player’s Guide*, p. 31). They practice violence with style and forethought, and typically consider every other play-style vastly inferior to their own.

**Clubs** are torturers, interrogators, and security officers, favoring an uglier aspect of the Game. To some Gamesters, being accused of being a Club is almost as dire an insult as being accused of treason or poor playing; others wear the name with pride. The Halls of Loyalty and the Arenas are full of self-proclaimed Clubs.

### *Playing Red*

Red Suits consider the Rules secondary to Playing with them. They freely make use of loopholes or even break rules, if they believe they can get away with it.

**Diamonds** are the majority: as sharp and cold as their namesake, these demons are the manipulators and spies of the Game. The Countess of Intrigue is a well-known Diamond, and most of her Suit-mates pay homage to her Word on a regular basis.

**Hearts**, by contrast, freely enjoy their Play. They are gamblers, socialites, and, of course, heartbreakers. They love the adrenaline rush of seeing how far they can bend the rules without quite breaking them, and live for improvisation and risktaking.

### *Playing with Wildcards*

Some Gamesters really *are* jacks-of-all-trades, adapting their play-style to suit the moment, with no particular preference other than mutability. Others embody their Band-stereotype so much that it wastes time calling them anything else. Yet others simply fail to fit any definition other than “miscellaneous.” Many Wildcards, for various reasons, find that a familiarity with the Suit-system is useful – either for pretending to be in an official Suit, or for identifying members thereof – and that their place “outside the classifications” makes it easier for them to learn the system and manipulate it. Others eschew the system entirely, deeming it far less useful than their other tools.

## BANDS

While there are variations – and there are always variations, exceptions, and loopholes within the Game – Asmodeus does have specific uses for his Hounds, whether by Suit or Band.

### *Balseraphs*

Asmodeus’ Balseraphs favor Playing in law and politics, and other realms where they can manipulate the definitions of the Rules to suit their ends. (The Game’s chief prosecutor is the Liar Mastema (*Infernal Player’s Guide*, p. 23).) They love playing with words: the more literary-minded frequently compete in round-robins, Japanese *renga* verses, and other cooperative writings that let them subvert each others’ intentions, or even put their own into codes.





## Djinn

Stalkers of the Game are the most common hunters – especially since they can keep track of their partners as well as their target. The average Gamester Djinn has at least one personal obsession, channeled to serve the Game’s ends. They may obsess over their work (eliminating dissonant demons, preventing Renegades), an object they are fixated on (a favorite game, their hunting tools), or even their partners, opponents, or Prince. A Djinn without an obsession makes a poor Gamester: they just don’t *care* enough to play.

### BISHOP, KNIGHT, ROOK, PAWN

Among themselves, Gamesters use an elaborate ranking system that owes much to the game of chess. Most Servitors wear the symbol of a pawn marked with one to three eyes, overlaid on the sigil of the Game: the greater the number of eyes, the more favored the Servitor is. Higher-ranked Asmodeans wear other chess pieces, such as the Bishops (p. 6). Servitors who are currently out of favor are “fallen pieces”: their sigils lie on their sides.

No Gamester wears the image of a king. Asmodeus himself has only been seen with an undecorated Game-sigil. Vocally speculating about the Prince’s unwillingness to mark himself as a piece rather than a player is unwise where the Game might be listening.

The sigil system, like nearly all publicly visible rules of the Game, is jettisoned when a Gamester finds it convenient or useful to do so. Impersonating a higher-ranked Servitor through use of the sigils is possible, but carries a severe penalty. Likewise, the out of favor wear their shame openly – when they fear being caught doing otherwise.

## Calabim

While the Game has its share of mindless Destroyers, many merely feign a lack of intelligence in order to have the opportunity for destroying greater things. They are great players of *Jenga* and other games that involve careful, deliberate destruction – though the pieces seldom survive removal.

Calabim of the Game find frequent use as enforcers and executioners, regardless of their intelligence. Assuming that’s all they’re interested in is a mistake; many also find satisfaction in subtler destructions, specializing in breaking minds or spirits. Such Destroyers can be remarkably compatible with Habbalah and other Clubs (p. 21).

## Habbalah

Habbalah of the Game are no less deluded than their fellow “Choir”-members. They tend to believe, along with their Prince, that the Symphony was designed as a Game, and they use this belief to justify the selfishness of their so-called devotion to God. A great many are religious adherents of one kind or another – the commonest faith being the worship of God’s greatest creation, the Game itself. Regardless of their particular spiritual convictions, the Game’s Habbalah value skilled play as the clearest sign of worthiness and strength. Those who misplay are weaklings and deserve nothing but contempt – and the barbed end of a whip.

Asmodean Habbalah are uniquely suited to interrogation work, and often found in the Halls of Loyalty or on roving investigatory teams. On Earth, their insistence that others follow the Rules, or be condemned for weakness and unsuitability, makes them excellent agents for supporting the Word within humanity.

## Lilim

Though it is by no means unheard of, not all Lilim of the Game are collected through potential treason trials and geased arrangements. Nor are they entirely “made to order” with inclinations to Bind themselves at birth. The prospect of a free Role and a job with many opportunities to collect hooks appeals to some younger Free Lilim, and some of the older ones have gathered enough experience in infernal politics that they believe they can play the Game to their own ends. Asmodeus holds at least one Geas upon each of his Lilim, which does not count for points at character creation. He is one of the Princes most likely to purchase some or most of a new-Bound’s remaining birth-Geases from Lilith.

Lilim of the Game can make good spies, especially since many of them began Free. They also tend to be fond of desk jobs like secretary and bookkeeper, which often allow them to do little favors for their co-workers and superiors.

## Shedim

Asmodeus’ Shedim are almost all spies. Their ability to lurk in the back of an unsuspecting mortal’s mind without needing to change his behavior makes them very good “passive bugs,” and many of them have skills and Songs that enable them to pretend to be Shedim of other Words as necessary.

A Perception-based resonance, such as a Lilim’s or most angels’, will give information on a Shedite, rather than its host. Many Gamester Shedim maintain Servants as regular hosts, and frequent extended periods of possession *may* generate a Role for the Shedite as that Servant! While achieving a Role/6 would be extremely difficult, low-level Roles are possible, and may provide some defense against certain resonances – like that of the Mercurians. Of course, a Shedite with the Role of John Doe rarely wants to be resonated while possessing Jane Smith.

## WINNING FREE

Asmodeus' distaste for Lilith's wildcard Daughters is notorious. He dislikes them specifically because they are *wildcards*: their obedience can be bought and sold at whim, they can have any number of unpredictable capabilities or limitations, they have no Hearts and thus no means to trace them should they leave Hell, and their Mother's Word makes it impossible for them to submit to captivity without a fight.

However, Asmodeus considers Tempters a useful resource, and has demonstrated a willingness to let them win positions of power in the Game. While the contracts and rewards he offers Free Lilim are remarkably unpredictable, they are usually tailored to the Lilim in question.

Despite Asmodeus' interest in acquiring Lilim for his service, the average Free is still terrified of Hell's police. Asmodeus prefers to save his efforts for acquiring older Frees, with the experience and resources to compensate him for his efforts rapidly. Gamesters believe that the Free Lilim's give-and-take process of winning true Freedom is a form of playing the Game; convincing them to bind themselves appropriately is a matter of getting them to admit they *Play* – and rewriting their conditions for victory.

The other option, which is somewhat easier, is Humanity, which Asmodeus sometimes grants to Shedim assigned to spy on angels. While it does ensure that angelic resonances get "human" results, it also complicates matters for the Shedite: the human mind *is* still lurking in the background and capable of taking over if it succeeds at a contest of Will rolls. Furthermore, the demon is nearly trapped in its host for the duration of the attunement. Thus, few Shedim use this tactic unless absolutely necessary. For more details, see *Humanity In Action* (p. 27).

## Impudites

Asmodean Takers tend to be charmingly social web-weavers and networkers. They play vast games of chess with humanity as their favorite pawns – but pawns nonetheless. They do not see humans as capable of becoming anything more, and have no problem using them up and discarding them, as long as the humans don't die in the process.

Asmodeus sends Takers after specific targets almost as often as he sends Djinn: a given Impudite may be assigned to a piece in order to charm and subvert it, or to worm his way into its confidences and leech away financial, emotional, physical, and even moral strength in preparation for its removal.

## BENEDICT CHESS: CHANGING SUPERIORS

When other demons deal with the Game as InfSec (Infernal Security), sacrifice is the most common tactic – of a Geas, of a Servant, of an enemy, of an ally. The Game is known to encourage such plays with mitigated sentences, when it serves the Game and does not endanger the Gamester.

Asmodeus executes or "disappears" enough demons to encourage proper fear of the Game, but disapproves of a wanton waste of pieces. Certainly, some are flawed enough that the cost of making them useable is too high, but this is not true for many demons the Game seizes. Even a Free Lilim with no debts owed to her can be used to bind potential traitors to the Game's purposes, and even a mindless demon of Fire can be used for muscle. The Halls of Loyalty (p. 17) contain torturers capable of brainwashing captured Servitors, though the loyalty of such altered pieces will always be dubious.

Therefore, a percentage of Asmodeus' Servitors are formerly from other Words. Most of these transfers are the conscripts, who have entered the Game's service to avoid being executed for treason or sent to the Halls of Loyalty. A few were given to the Game by their Princes for some political consideration from Asmodeus – or in an attempt to get a spy in Hades. Some have voluntarily sought out service with the Game – usually to avoid their Superiors' wrath after failing some assignment.

Asmodeus himself rarely bestows one of his own pieces on another Prince unless he considers that piece entirely worthless, or the play particularly worthwhile (see the adventure seeds, p. 39, for one gambit). Asmodeus never lets his Servitors transfer entirely and keep their Band Attunements or Distinctions, but has been known to leave Servitor Attunements intact. Demons who retain any Game abilities are expected to react appropriately should they discover a dissonant demon. Typically, though, a Gamester only leaves Asmodeus' service by ascension to Princehood, redemption, or death – and Asmodeans hold that even the former two do not remove a piece from the Game.



## The Fallen

Asmodeus takes a definite interest in Fallen angels, and is willing to go to considerable lengths to acquire them. A Gamester who was involved in an angel's Fall may "mentor" that angel in his new career (p. 21). Gamesters make a point of investigating all Fallen, no matter where they now serve, despite any objection from the new demon's superiors. The Prince of the Game sees ex-angels primarily as a source of information, but he is surprisingly lenient in allowing his own Fallen to gain status within the Game, if they are competent. The exceptions to this rule are "yo-yo" demons – those who have redeemed and then Fallen again. Such traitors are subject to strictest interrogation and menial positions, if they are allowed to live at all.

## Humans

The Game sees no reason not to use humans from all walks of life as pawns, from the expected corrupt lawyers to disillusioned artists and manual laborers. A common trait among them is the profound belief that the world is unfair, and a subsequent willingness to use any method to get ahead, regardless of its morality. (Those who are *competent* either have, or acquire, an interest in the legalities of those methods.)

Asmodeus tends to use his human pieces subtly, since the Humanity attunement is required to fully duplicate some of their attributes. Soldiers of Hell and even sorcerers are often found Role-building, spying, and in other discreet positions, as well as aiding demonic Gamesters.



## PLAYING THE GAME: INSIDE INFSEC

The Game is Hell's internal security force, and its stated function is to prevent and punish treason. Most Gamesters spend their entire existence hunting down the treasonous through one means or another. A common modern term for Gamesters is "InfSec" – Infernal Security. Another, much older, is "those bloody bastards," but seldom to their faces.

## THE EMERALD COUNTESS OF INTRIGUE

Staciel, the Demon of Intrigue (*Heaven and Hell*, p. 95), is the head of the Infernal Police, commonly called InfPol (p. 36), and the Game's spymistress. Her control of InfPol ensures most denizens of Hell fear her attention, and if that's not enough, she can find some snippet of information that, whispered in the right ear, will cause the effect she desires.

Asmodeus does not trust anyone, and Staciel is a skilled, dangerous piece fully capable of having agendas of her own. However, the Prince finds her useful: he has kept her a Countess, excusing her from time-consuming inter-Ducal politics, and some of her insights have found their way into the plans of the Game. Despite this, there are demons who believe that Staciel is in fact working for some other Prince (perhaps Malphas or Alaemon, Prince of Secrets), or selling information for personal gain. Wiser demons believe that if Staciel is a double agent, her Lord knows and permits it.

Publicly available records contain no mention of a "Staciel," either in or out of the Game, earlier than 1555 AD, when she appears already Word-bound. This is hardly surprising, considering that Lilith never gives her Daughters names that end in *-iel* ("of God"). Whoever Staciel was before she became the Demon of Intrigue, she's not telling, and Lilith's fee for that data . . . Better not to ask. The choice of "Staciel," from the Greek root *stas*, meaning "political strife," is linguistically atrocious, mixing Greek and Hebrew, but otherwise apt: a name that could be translated "the political strife of God" describes Intrigue's activities quite well, and the Emerald Countess has precisely the sense of humor that would be amused at implicating God in her work in Hell.

Whatever her true name is, Staciel's origins, and her ultimate motivations, remain unknown. Is she a proxy piece standing in for Lilith in a high-stakes contest between Freedom and the Game? Did she find that the best sponsor for the Word she desired was the Prince of the Game? Or did Asmodeus requisition a Lilim from Lilith – designed to his specifications?

Staciel herself is silent on the matter – after all, the speculation can only feed her Word.



## Treason

There are reams of rules that define treason: they contradict each other on multiple points. Gamesters have been known to use several contradictory rules in the same situation as necessary. However, a functional description of treason is “anything that impedes the Game that the Game can punish.” While Asmodeans’ ideas of what constitutes “impeding the Game” can vary, their Prince expects them to curtail both dissonance among demons, “good” Discords such as Merciful or Selfless (*Infernal Player’s Guide*, p. 105), and giving aid to Heaven. (Failure to give *enough* aid to Hell also counts as “giving aid to Heaven.”)

Though no Gamester will ever admit it, the Game cannot always enforce its policies. The best Servitors know how tenuous their authority can be. A lone Gamester who pushes a group of demons too far may find himself in Trauma for his pains: wiser ones will make sure the odds favor *them* before exerting their authority.

## Methodology and Common Techniques

There are two types of visits by the Game: those it wants you to know about and those it doesn’t. The first kind is always a display of power. Most often, it is an attempt to coerce perks from the visited demon, an effort to get him to implicate another, or an arrest. Sometimes, it is merely a reminder of the Game’s presence, or the Game-team exercising their authority for their own satisfaction.

The second type of visit is likely seeking signs of treason, knowledge that can be extracted, or, often, just reinforcing the Gamester’s “role” as the Servitor of another Superior. Their main aim will be to remain unobserved. Gamesters on assignment have no basic script to follow: they can and do improvise.

## Rewards and Punishments

Gamesters who Play well can be rewarded with assignments that fit their particular skills, teammates who don’t stab them in the back, and artifacts tailored to their jobs. Asmodeus himself has been known to assign subordinates high-profile assignments, or something as innocuous as better housing in Hades, as well as more prosaic Songs, attunements, and Distinctions. However, talented players are equally likely to be shunted into grunt work by nervous higher-ups who fear for their jobs. Striking a balance between “too good to be wasted” and “not good enough to threaten” is a difficult prospect.

Minor mistakes often result in Discord, removal of privileges, inconvenient reassignments, and placement in positions where they may be sacrificed for a better player’s cause. Gamesters who seriously misplay (deliberately or through ineptness) – by accumulating dissonance (especially unto Discord), aiding Renegades, or betraying the Game to other

## GAMES GONE BY

In the past, transportation on Earth was slower and had more dangers associated. In the past, there were fewer humans to conceal a Renegade amongst. In the past . . . it was easier to keep demons from running to a Tether by simple *logistics*. (Shedim of the Game were greatly prized as spies on other demons, since it only took a wandering servant or Soldier to carry one around in the night, and an entire village could be spied upon, slowly, by the Fleshless.)

If a demon fled by road, he could be noticed by others, and caught by a team with one demon in a horse vessel, untiring and night-sighted. If he ran into the wilderness . . . Jordi’s angels were likely to find him eventually. Only those demons who wanted to get to a Tether that was *very* close had good chances of avoiding the Game while they did it. Also, with fewer humans, and fewer means of entering big cities, the Game *could* claim that they (and thus Hell) had “control” of a given location.

With modern transportation what it is, fast and virtually anonymous, the Game’s ability to thwart Renegades is much more difficult. It is hardly public knowledge, and any given Asmodean may not be aware of it, but more Renegades are getting away, and for longer, than ever before. Partnerships with Judgment were never common, but they’re happening more often.

And when the Game says they have the city of Los Angeles under total surveillance? It may well be only habit that ensures anyone believes that.

Superiors – are quickly and painfully punished. The Halls of Loyalty are open for all demons, including those serving the Word that operates them. Asmodeus has also been known to Force-strip his Servitors, and then use the shells that remain as gladiators in the Arenas.

## TOOLS OF THE TRADE

An Asmodean should be able to requisition nearly anything from Hades’ stores – as long as he remembers to fill out all the required paperwork completely, of course. In triplicate. Hadean artifacts often manifest as game pieces or more mundane objects: a pen, a pair of sunglasses, or something else unremarkable. Fiery Swords (*Liber Reliquiarum*, p. 60) are considered useful only if one is pretending to be a servant of Gabriel, but no intelligent Gamester goes on the streets without at least a few aces up his sleeve.



## RULES FOR RULES' SAKE

Paperwork, to Gamesters, is as easily performed as moving a pawn. Angels, humans, and even most other demons have trouble with the excessive amounts of documentation required by the Game, but Asmodeus' own Servitors find it second nature to navigate. A Gamester who cannot clear a desk covered with paperwork in under an hour will find his lack of skill mocked, punished, and worst of all, *remembered*.

This is not to de-emphasize the difficulties caused by Asmodeus' vision of bureaucratic regulations: the Prince of the Game finds red tape a valid aspect of his Word, and increases the amount of it wherever possible. Overly difficult legalese is a reminder to the victim thereof that he is playing by another's rules in a game that does not care about him in the slightest. It is simply that Servitors of the Game are so accustomed to these rules that they hardly notice them anymore.

## GameCode

Gamesters on-duty (and an off-duty Gamester is an aberration – or lying) keep track of the progression of moves in the Game via a number of methods limited only by their ingenuity and code-making skill. However, a common code is in use throughout Hades: its adoption by InfPol, whose agents are trained in its use, has standardized it. GameCode is treated as a Language skill; it is considered treason for non-Gamesters to learn it.

## Uniforms

The standard celestial Game-uniform is a gray suit with the sigil of the Game in crimson on the breast pocket. Asmodeans without humanoid celestial forms favor gray leather harnesses with pockets to store useful tools in. However, anything from Judgment-style cloaks to formal gowns to casual vests to dramatic capes can be considered a “uniform” so long as it is in the Game colors (gray or red), or marked with Game insignia.

Uniforms also traditionally include secret pockets or sheathes for storing weapons or notebooks; while one can requisition relatively standard clothing, most Gamesters will try to add a few extra hiding places.

Game-uniforms are rarely artifacts, although certain accessories may be. Fallen pieces (p. 22) are often issued collars which act as Discord Bracelets (*Liber Reliquarum*, pp. 56-57), Will Shackles, or other useful leashes.

## Nooses

The most commonly seen implement of the Game, these celestial artifacts appear as small gold-wire lassos. Usually at least one noose is issued per corporeal team of Gamesters. They must be gotten around part of the target celestial's body in order to function – Asmodeans favor the neck, permitting the noose to double as a garrote – which requires a Small Weapons (Noose) roll, and may be avoided via a Contest with the target's Dodge. Once the target is noosed, the holder can drag him into celestial form, and even to Hell! This is a two-stage process: the holder must spend Essence *for both himself and his victim* to assume celestial form, then ascend through a Tether or to his Heart; the holder rolls for each, and his success (or failure) applies to both himself and his captive. The victim may roll Will, penalized by twice the level of the artifact, to resist the “pull” of the noose in each stage.

The Bound Discord both *forces* the victim to make a Will roll to resist the pull into celestial form, and adds its Discord level to the target number! (A Gamester with the Bound Discord is unlikely to be issued a noose; if he cannot achieve celestial form himself, let alone drag anyone to Hell, why bother?)

Most nooses are enchanted to degrade quickly upon exposure to the Light of Heaven, and no Archangels have made it a priority to duplicate them.

**Cost:** 4 points per level. The *Fragility* feature behaves as per Will Shackles (*Liber Reliquarum*, p. 82) when adjusting the price.

**Activation:** Special (see text).

## Notebooks

Notebooks not more than “relic/0” artifacts – just enough enchantment to have a celestial and a corporeal form, and to be traceable but not easily so (*Liber Reliquarum*, p. 12) – are standard issue and cost no character points to purchase. The celestial form is usually (but not always) more distinctive than the corporeal: the standard image of a Gamester's “little black book” has an intimidating, black, leather-bound cover embossed with the demon's sigil (p. 22), while a corporeal notebook can appear as anything from a clipboard to a three-ring binder full of paper. If a Gamester chooses to invest points in his notebook, popular effects are a variant Song of Corporeal Tongues (to make the text illegible to all save the Gamester), a talismanic bonus to Savoir-Faire or Fast-Talk, the ability to Summon it at will, a Visibility modifier, or a more durable notebook (*Liber Reliquarum*, pp. 22-23).


**Cost:** 0 points, before any Feature costs.

## Will Shackles

Many Gamesters make a point of obtaining their own pair of Shackles as quickly as possible. Those Gamesters who tend to lose or break their Shackles are often issued a cheaper variant: a pair of unlinked bracelets, one set with some kind of gem, one capable of locking. The second bracelet behaves







as per normal Shackles, forcing the victim to obey the wearer of the first bracelet – but anyone can wear the first. (A very unlucky Servitor might fear his target acquiring the control bracelet.)

**Cost:** As per *Liber Reliquarum*, pp. 82-83. The bracelet variants cost 4 points per level before other modifiers.

## Chess With Death

Despite the name, this enchantment may be wrapped into many different objects, from gameboards to dice to decks of cards. Naturally, any Word-bound Servitor of Asmodeus can be expected to have at *least* one “Chess With Death” set of an appropriate form, frequently adding the Summonable Feature. Another common Feature is the ability to remember and lay out the “state” of an interrupted game.

When the owner of a Chess With Death set secures the agreement (grudging or otherwise) of an opponent, and spends 1 Essence, the enchantment activates. The first part ensures that the players will continue the game, no matter what; it requires a Will roll, minus twice the level of the relic, to *stop*. This roll may be modified by threats from the Gamester, or external emergencies such as earthquakes or burning buildings.

The second part is the more dangerous one; the life of the players becomes linked to the game. If playing chess, each piece lost will take a proportional hit of damage from its player. If playing dice, each loss subtracts an appropriate hit. (If playing corporeally, Body hits; if playing in the Marches, Mind hits; if in Hell – or presumably, Heaven – Soul hits.)

Despite the name, Chess With Death will not *destroy* the loser by default, though games on the celestial plane can strip all but the last Celestial Force. There *are* game sets which will deal physical or spiritual death, but most “merely” knock the loser unconscious for hours equal to the Chess With Death’s level. Considering that these game sets are typically owned by Asmodeans who are very good indeed with them, and that the loser is left insensible and helpless before the winner, this is not much consolation.

(While some GMs and players might enjoy a tense game of poker in real life, with characters’ fates on the line, the mechanics can easily abstract to a Contest (*In Nomine*, p. 39, or p. B87) of the Gamester’s Knowledge skill for that game, and the opponent’s skill – or default. The check digits may also indicate how *long* a game takes to have a victor, and how many hits each player suffered before the game ended.)

**Cost:** 3 points per level, +1 per game-state remembered.

**Activation:** Special (see text)

## HUMANITY IN ACTION

How well the Humanity attunement (p. 5) works depends what the GM decides Asmodeus’ understanding of the Symphony’s rules is. Guidelines for both default Humanity and ways to weaken it are below.

## Default Humanity

The power of the attunement suggests that Lucifer himself might have been involved in its creation, allowing demons of the Game to lie to the Symphony itself about what they are.

Any Gamester will have at *least* “Role/0” paperwork, even if he is out of favor, his job is “short-term special missions only,” or he visits the corporeal realm once in a century. Invoking Humanity grants the seeming of that Role for all attunements, Songs, and resonances. (Humanized Shedim get the “Role” of their hosts.) He appears to be a (selfish) 5-Force mortal. So long as he never “breaks character” in his Role, his nature will not be betrayed.


However, there are considerations that a good Gamester should be aware of, lest he have his bluff called.

The Servitor has the seeming of a 5-Force human, *without* the potential for any other Forces! If he allows an attempt to attach a sixth Force to him, his Forces will unravel, just as they would for an equivalent human (*Corporeal Player’s Guide*, p. 28). Effective characteristics and Forces remain the same, but while target numbers are unchanged, the *result* should be no more than a mortal could achieve! (Otherwise, the character could not “pass” effectively.) This typically means interpreting or modifying the check digit to yield human results.

Unconsciousness is based on what a very tough human would be knocked out by – (Corporeal Forces + Toughness) x Strength – while death is based on what would kill the celestial within. Stakes through the heart or beheading are useful in case of doubt. Another physical concern is ideally solved by vessels which *lack* the ability to bear or sire children; “accidents” are treated as if caused by the Celestial Song of Fruition (*Liber Canticorum*, p. 70). Diseases will fade quickly after the attunement lapses, as their own biological momentum falters against the unnatural metabolism of vessels.

If the demon dies while “human,” he is in a position like that of Hellsworn, who are drawn to Hell by the weight of their infernal Force. *Canes Asmodei* posing as ghosts or dreamshades are under the same restrictions as those souls; e.g., Gamester ghosts require an anchor in the corporeal realm to avoid Hell (*Corporeal Player’s Guide*, pp. 81-83). They will regain any lost Forces after the attunement lapses, much as a ghost proceeding to the afterlife would (*Liber Umbrarum*, p. 18).

Humanity, as an attunement, may be renewed at any point before it expires, resetting the 24-hour duration – but Essence may not be transferred to the Servitor, so eventually a non-Impudite will run out. Many Gamesters time the activation so that it ends just before dusk Essence would arrive. This allows Essence-frugal Asmodeans to continue the masquerade indefinitely, since they receive 2 Essence at sunset, and may thus adjust their reactivations to allow them to get their dusk-Essence every other night.



Shedim under Humanity's influence are able to use their resonance, but *cannot* take celestial form; they may only transfer between hosts by "oozing" (*Infernal Player's Guide*, p. 57). The dreamscape of such a conjoined host and demon is likely to be very odd – but within the realm of human imagination.

Finally, Kronos and Yves are wildcards, as always.

## Weakening Humanity

This attunement is an expression of *Asmodeus*' knowledge of the Symphony and the rules that its pieces go by. However, just as the Game's conceptualization of the Symphony is not flawless, neither is Humanity.

Humanity only approximates the Symphonic signature of a mortal on the corporeal plane: the "default state." Humanity does not extend to imitating the changed states of human beings: damned, dreamshades, or ghosts.

The soul is unchanged, and thus anything that directly examines the soul (or the Truth) will unmask the Servitor. Superiors easily notice, if they bother to look. A Kyriotate will require the *demon's* number of Forces to possess the body. (*Asmodeus* may well remove Forces from his Servitors to make the numbers consistent.) Impudites of Technology can spot the amount of Essence that the demon *truly* holds. Seraphim, Destiny Servitors, and Shedim are all to be strictly avoided.

## House Rules

Naturally, a GM may adjust assumptions as needed. *Asmodeus* may be able to grant higher-Force versions of Humanity (the resulting rulings about Songs, receiving non-Game attunements, Sorcery, or "becoming a Soldier" is for the GM to decide).

Perhaps someone using Humanity can be revealed only by his thoughts and words: a Seraph hears truth, a dreamscape reveals images of Hell, a Shedite sees demonic memories. Perhaps the demon becomes deaf to the Symphony for the duration. Perhaps Superiors see through the disguise, but any lesser being's abilities will be fooled. Or, to make it more powerful, perhaps a "human" Hound is treated like a *Hellsworn*, able to use Corporeal Songs by default and regaining Essence at noon . . . So long as the GM is not playing Humanity Mao with the actual players, modifications are definitely within the rules.

## Getting Tricky

Humanity has interesting possibilities, which good Gamesters should be aware of so that they may exploit the ability to the fullest. (These techniques can be used with both the default and weakened forms of the attunement.)

Humanized *Asmodeans* can acquire access to places that a detectable demon would not be able to – such as angelic Tethers – without alerting Malakim or Mercurians

via resonance or attunement. Furthermore, harming or killing a "human" Gamester will cause dissonance for, respectively, Mercurians or Impudites, which will not lapse when the attunement does. (For that matter, Mercurians and Impudites will become dissonant if they harm or kill *themselves* while under Rule of Law!)

One use of Humanity involves a Gamester who has invoked Humanity being possessed by a Shedite, either knowingly or not. Though the risk of the Fleshless overhearing the "human's" thoughts is often considered prohibitive, Gamesters have been known to trick Shedim of other Words into using them as hosts while under Humanity, giving the Hounds a chance to overhear conversations that the Shedite may not want the Game to know about. While the same gambit can be used on *Asmodean* Fleshless, Gamesters also use this method cooperatively. The Shedite and its partner, appearing to be a single being, can enter into dangerous situations with an ally ready to hand. When necessary, the Shedite moves into a new host, and the other demon is free to reveal himself. (Or to pretend to be an innocent dupe of a demonic possession . . .) Should the Shedite also activate Humanity, the attunement works as if it has possessed a normal human.

Gamesters who are concerned with their own dissonance or Discord can also use Humanity to foil not just angels of Judgment or Lilim of Fate, but also their own Wordmates. (Unfortunately, they do become vulnerable to the powers of a Knight of Judgment (p. 5).)

Rule of Law also serves to hide Balseraphs – and other Infernals – from perceptive Malakim. Even if the demon in question is not a Gamester himself in need of protection, some assignments require live capture of the target, and *Canes Asmodei* have been known to use Rule of Law to ensure their victim survives long enough to be returned to Hell.

## Ashleigh Rodriguez

Ashleigh Rodriguez is a Hispanic woman with a rather pronounced nose, apparently in her mid-thirties, of average weight and slightly below average height. She works as a financial analyst in the New York Stock Exchange, a known Trade Tether (*Liber Castellorum*, pp. 84-85). Her coworkers find her pleasant to be around, if a bit dry, and possessed of a cheerful sort of cynicism and *schadenfreude*. She is yet to come under direct angelic scrutiny, as her largest apparent vice is a weakness for reality television.

The GM should note that *Asmodeus* himself has been known to make use of the Humanity attunement.



## JOBS

*"Everybody's playing the game / but nobody's rules are the same . . . "*

– Florence, "Nobody's Side," *Chess*.

### *Celestial Jobs*

Many Gamesters are occupied in the celestial plane, since the vast majority of demons to investigate are in Hell. Throughout Hell, Asmodeans find work as border guards, squads of police, and both covert and "legitimate" investigative teams. The bureaucratic system and quietly combative hierarchies which rule the Gray City ensure that there is always work for a Gamester in Hades itself, either processing the vast amounts of information generated by the spy networks or extracting that information in the Halls of Loyalty. Minor demonlings and new fledges may also be jailors and flunkies for their elders.

The Soul Yards (p. 17) are also full of young demons who have not yet demonstrated true ability to Play. Most of these are Habbalite Clubs, and may not even be Heart-bound to the Game, but all Bands and Suits are represented. They are also frequently recruited by more experienced demons, as expendable muscle.

### *Ethereal Jobs*

Asmodeans commonly refer to an assignment to the Marches as a game of "fairy chess," both as basic wordplay and to describe the wider variety of pieces in it. Their main work on the ethereal plane is to investigate Servitors of Beleth, pursue fleeing Renegades, and spy on every notable piece present. Game-teams assigned here may find themselves infiltrating suspicious Domains, taking custody of ethereals who have become more useful as captured pawns, or providing a police escort for Servitors of Nightmares – sometimes even on request.

### *Corporeal Jobs*

The traditional task of *Canes Asmodei* on Earth is to hunt down Renegades, but this is by no means *all* they do. Renegade Hellsworn (also known as Gray Soldiers; *Corporeal Player's Guide*, p. 67), rogue ethereals, and too-powerful sorcerers are other targets. Servitors also support the Word with Roles that range from religious officials to blackjack dealers in Las Vegas; they support the War against Heaven with Roles in most major human governmental agencies, law offices, armies, and police forces. As a side effect of this, if a demon needs Earthly paperwork speeded or impeded, there's likely an agent of the Game who can be persuaded to help . . . if the demon in question is willing to let InfSec know exactly where he is and what he's doing.

The Game employs a surprising number of demonlings on the corporeal realm, to manufacture Roles for Asmodicans – or as "gifts" to Servitors of other Words.

## STEALING INFORMATION: THEFT AND THE GAME

Asmodeus, unlike his Heavenly counterpart, does not announce his investigations. Instead, they may be discovered by monitoring the hostility of his relations to the rest of Hell. Despite Kobal's frequent attempts to antagonize him, the Game has not yet treated Lucifer's Jester to the same sort of scrutiny that he has the Prince of Theft. Kobal is merely an annoyance: Valefor is an unknown.

Even with other potential targets available, Gamesters are expected to monitor the activities of Valeforians and make sure that they know what the Thieves have been doing, what their Prince has ordered them to do, and whether the two correspond as they should. The slightest hint of disobedience – to Valefor, to the Rules, and especially to Hell – is met with sharp retaliation. Gamesters assigned to observe Thieves are given a long leash: they need no hard evidence but "suspicious behavior" to bring a Theft Servitor in, no questions asked.

Thieves brought in by Gamesters have every possible piece of information about their Prince wrung from them; hardly unusual, though the emphasis on Valefor himself is suggestive of Asmodeus' true goal. The Game does not passively let pieces as significant as Princes keep secrets from it. Should Asmodeus find a reason to remove Valefor from the board, a forthright arrest would be the most innocuous, and the least likely, outcome.

### *Unusual Jobs*

The most uncommon job is cooperation with Judgment. Other tasks that are classed as "unusual" are variations of the typical in atypical places, such as posing as Servitors of other Words for infiltration and spying purposes, causing diversionary riots, and manning casino tables in Shal-Mari. As with any Prince, there may be instructions to do entirely inexplicable things. Protect a given human, ethereal, demon, or even angel for a set period of time. Go to a shop and purchase an item, then sell it elsewhere. Infiltrate and *aid* a divine Tether. The demons will likely never be told why.





## CASEWORKERS

*Hi! How's it going? I'm Zach, your caseworker! If there's anything I can help you with, just let me know. PS: Don't blame the mailman. He didn't want to tell us your address.*

*— Postcard found outside a vacant apartment*

One of the departments of the HIA (p. 36) is “Target Information Correlation.” Information on targets passes from the Windows (Personnel Department) to the TIC, and they then collect information that might pertain to these beings. This compilation is analyzed by TIC, and an assigned “caseworker” makes suggestions for exploiting any perceived weaknesses in the target. While most of the attention is given to Renegades who have escaped more than one capture team, important mortals may be targeted for influence, and troublesome angels frequently have files with TIC.

Since caseworkers are corporeally weak and ill-trained in combat, they rarely leave Hell. Most have flunkies – from demonlings to true field agents – to do their information-gathering for them; the least powerful must bribe and bargain for reports related to their subjects. Caseworkers abuse their power when they can, demanding irrelevant information or betraying Gamesters to rival Hadean groups. They can sabotage a field team’s capture attempt by giving false information or spooking the target into a competing Hound’s grasp. On the other hand, a cooperative caseworker can be a boon to pursuit teams, giving them relevant information and tactics advice, or even contacting the “client” personally as a distraction for the hunters closing in. A bored caseworker may target *angels* for “care packages,” urging them to switch sides for a life of fun and Games.

## In Service to the Game

*“It pays to be multicultural in today’s modern society.”*

*— Zeth, Balseraph of the Media*

Not all of the spies who work for the Game are actual *Servitors* of the Game. Some are “unofficial Servitors” who have betrayed their own Prince to the Game. Most of these are double agents, blackmailed, or both. Gamesters who know the true attributes of these deceptive pieces treat them with understandable suspicion, but that doesn’t mean they won’t make use of them.

Loyalties are hard to ascertain in Hell, and Asmodeus finds no reason to treat those spies who allege a “need” to Play any differently than the normal traitors. He seldom removes them from their current Superiors, since acquiring

their Hearts is unlikely to sway their loyalties in either direction if they have already betrayed their original Lord. They will Play anyway, as everyone does.

## CORNER POLICE STATIONS

Some Gamesters are assigned to a location openly, their contact information spread far and wide, solely so that other Words’ Servitors can find them and report treason or request aid. Reporting treachery is done whenever demons think that they can rid themselves of an enemy. Begging for aid is done only in dire need, and the price may be very high.

In Hell, passport checkpoints and uniformed Gamesters serve this purpose, as well as their other duties.

## PLAYING TOGETHER

*... who trusts who? Maybe I'll trust you,  
But can you trust me? Wait and see!*

*— “The Riddle,” The Scarlet Pimpernel*

Like their divine counterparts, Gamesters can be found singly, in pairs, and in groups. However, where Judgment has triads in order to ensure that a judgment is fair, Gamesters are grouped together for their own safety. While they will backstab and betray each other as a matter of course, most *Canes Asmodei* also know that they have no true allies outside their Word.

Typical teams are between two and five *Canes Asmodei*. The fewer the members, the more likely they’ll be assigned to work together long-term, or even indefinitely. The largest groups are likely to be assigned a one-time mission before being broken down into their component teams again. Of course, each type of group offers opportunities for Play – either against each other, such as attempting to frame or covertly murder a hated teammate, or through use of bribery and blackmail to keep a good co-worker from being reassigned to some other area.

## Solitaire-Players

Most solo Gamesters are spies. Roles make it simpler for a corporeal spy to masquerade as human, while Gamesters in the Marches or Hell feign serving another Word. Other lone Asmodeans are openly Game in order to accomplish a specific goal. Of the latter type, some have hidden advantages to let them get away with that sort of bravado, and some operatives who believe themselves to be alone may have a hidden watcher.



## Partners

While a full “team” of Gamesters may have only two demons assigned to it, Asmodeus has various reasons for placing a pair to work with each other. Often, one will be in a clear position of authority over the other, monitoring the other’s inexperience, incompetence, or suspected treason. Other times, the power will be more evenly distributed, as Asmodeus simply wants complementary skill-sets. This can lead to feuds between the partners, but as long as they are effective together, the Prince seldom sees a point to easing the tensions.

## Roving Teams

Similar to Judgment’s roving triads (*Superiors 1: War and Honor*, p. 60), these teams of Gamesters do *not* disguise what they are in the slightest. To minimize disturbance, their Roles are often private investigators, Mafia thugs, or government authorities, and their job is to go to known demons’ locations and put the fear of the Game into them. Roving teams are called to a location to do what the Game needs to have openly accomplished without compromising any spies who may have found the trouble in the first place. They are commonly resented by other Gamesters for taking credit for all of the work, and many learn to leave town *quickly* for fear of retaliation by those they’ve interrogated – or their own Wordmates.



## Retrieval Squads

Retrieval squads are sent after the traitorous in order to kill them or bring them to the Halls of Loyalty. They are notoriously inventive in their methodology and single-minded in their pursuit. While it is not unheard of, a roving team being used as a retrieval squad is unusual, since they can be easily recognized and therefore put at a disadvantage. Retrieval squads made up of specialists are considerably more discreet, and often sent after particularly difficult Renegades. The most common retrieval squad is simply a collection of whatever Gamesters are in the area, who rarely bother to call themselves a “squad” at all.

# SAMPLE SERVITORS

## WARRANE

### *Calabite Knight of the Game* *Bishop of the Northern Soul Yards*

**Corporeal Forces - 3** Strength 6 Agility 6  
**Ethereal Forces - 4** Intelligence 7 Precision 9  
**Celestial Forces - 5** Will 12 Perception 8  
**Vessel:** Vessel/2 (human male), Charisma +2 (friendly)  
**Role:** “Warren Ramirez,” Attorney/4, Status/4  
**Skills:** Artistry/1 (Woodcarving), Computer Operations/1, Dodge/1, Driving/1, Fast-Talk/1, Fighting/1, Emote/1, Escape/1, Knowledge (Area: Hell/4, the Game/3, Law/4, Psychology/3), Languages (English/3\*, Latin/1, Spanish/2), Lying/1, Move Silently/1, Savoir-Faire/1, Seduction/1, Small Weapons/2 (Noose), Ranged Weapons/2 (Guns)

**Songs:** Charm (Ethereal/3, Celestial/3)  
**Attunements:** Calabite of the Game, Argument of Casuistry, Knight of Judgment, Bishop of the Game (Northern Soul Yards Bishopric)  
**Discord:** Angry/4  
**Artifacts:** Will Shackles/3 (*Liber Reliquarum*, pp. 81-82)  
**Special Rites:** Warrane is aware of the secret Rite of the Game, and has used both the 2 Essence and 3 Essence forms.  
 \* This is his “free” language.

*Continued on next page . . .*

# SAMPLE SERVITORS

## (CONTINUED)

### *Warrane, Calabite Knight of the Game, Bishop of the Northern Soul Yards 1,021.5 points*

**ST** 14 [0]; **DX** 14 [0]; **IQ** 16 [20]; **HT** 18 [45].

Speed 8; Move 8.

Dodge 9.

**Advantages:** Alertness +2 [10]; Artifact (Will Shackles) [45]; Band (Calabite) [28]; Band Attunement (Calabite of the Game) [10]; Basic Celestial Template [480]; Charisma +1 [5]; Combat Reflexes [15]; Comfortable Wealth [10]; Distinction (Bishop) [119]; Distinction (Knight of Judgment) [28]; Essence Control 12 [3]; Extra Hit Points (Mind) +3 [8]; Extra Hit Points (Soul) +9 [36]; Manual Dexterity +2 [6]; Power Investiture (Ethereal) 4 [10]; Power Investiture (Celestial) 5 [20]; Role 4 (Warren Ramirez, Attorney) [0\*]; Servitor Attunement (Argument of Casuistry) [24]; Servitor of the Game [21]; Strong Will +10 [40]; Vessel (Attractive, Extra Hit Points +2) [45].

**Disadvantages:** Bad Temper [-10]; Discord (Bad Temper) [-20].

**Quirks:** Behaves more like an Impudite than a Calabite; Does woodcarving as a hobby; Holds grudges for as long as necessary to get revenge; Prefers Lilim minions; Presents the Game as *fun* to potential recruits. [-5]

**Skills:** Acting-15 [1]; Area Knowledge (Hell)-18 [4]; Brawling-13 [1/2]; Computer Operation/TL7-15 [1/2]; Driving (Car)-12 [1/2]; Escape-11 [1/2]; Fast-Talk-14 [1/2]; Guns (Pistol)/TL7-15 [1/2]; Lasso-13 [1]; Law-16 [4]; Professional Skill (Gamester)-16 [2]; Psychology-15 [2]; Savoir-Faire-15 [1/2]; Sex Appeal-12 [1/2]; Stealth-12 [1/2]; Woodworking-12 [1/2].

**Languages:** English (native)-16 [0]; Helltongue (native)-16 [0]; Latin-14 [1/2]; Spanish-15 [1].

**Songs:** Charm (Ethereal)-14 [4]; Charm (Celestial)-15 [4].

\* *Warrane's Role is paid for out of the Servitor of the Game advantage, which grants 20 points toward a Role.*

Warrane is, to all appearances, a minor piece in the Game. As one of several Soul Yards Bishops – and not even a Captain at that – he seems relegated to obscurity, too busy with negotiating carefully unfair distributions

of souls among the various Princes to do anything that would let him rise in rank. He's rather talented at seducing Lilim into the Game, though: newly-contracted Frees assigned to the Soul Yards usually pass into his bishopric, and he's good enough at portraying the more appealing side of the Game that few of those *want* to leave.

Which is exactly the appearance he wants to project.

Warrane was born a gremlin in Hades some centuries before. Despite being a gremlin, he appeared to be an *imp* – a deformed imp, but an imp nonetheless. Like most demonlings, he was abused by fledges, and he received at least as much abuse from other demonlings. After a while, Warrane became Angry.

He fledged Calabite, but as “deformed” a Calabite as he was a gremlin, with large dark wings, small horns, and only a faint red tinge to his skin. From a distance in particularly bad lighting – or in vessel – Warrane could pass for an Impudite; being a Gamester, he began to take advantage of that. He ostensibly won his Knighthood through spywork, posing as a Taker of various other Words and filtering information back to the Game. Asmodeus granted him his bishopric shortly after that, and Warrane jumped at the opportunity to continue networking. And to use his new status to get revenge on those who'd mocked him, of course. Strong will or no, Warrane *is* an Angry Calabite.

He is found occasionally on Earth, where celestial appearance rarely matters. He usually leaves a particularly skilled (or easily sacrificed) Lilim to handle affairs while he is away from his bishopric, geased against betraying him. Currently, his favorite Role is that of an attorney – and it amuses him to work *pro bono* cases as often as paying ones. He has occasionally come into conflict with servants of Judgment this way, but so far none have managed to successfully kill his vessel or his Role's reputation. Of course, Warrane has incentive to avoid that: Trauma can be deadly for a demon's career.

*Continued on next page . . .*



# SAMPLE SERVITORS

## (CONTINUED)

As a Knight and Bishop of the Game, Warrane is an appropriate direct superior for starting characters, or Game-contact for characters from other Words, through his background as spy and negotiator. Starting characters may also find themselves caught up in one of his plots:

either as his own pawns, or simply in his path as he targets someone else. Unlucky characters may find themselves pitted against him; Triel (p. 17) has thus-far not seen the older "Impudite-wannabe" Bishop as a threat, but this *could* change . . .

## ELEALEH

### *Habbalite of the Game*

**Corporeal Forces - 2** Strength 2 Agility 6  
**Ethereal Forces - 3** Intelligence 8 Precision 4  
**Celestial Forces - 4** Will 9 Perception 7  
**Vessel:** Vessel/2 (dark-haired Caucasian male),

Charisma +1

**Role:** "Elijah Rayne," Preacher/5, Status/4

**Skills:** Driving/2, Emote/5, Fast-Talk/4, Knowledge (the Game/1, Scripture/4), Lying/2, Savior-Faire/2

**Songs:** Opening (Ethereal/4), Sensation (Corporeal/5)

**Attunements:** Habbalite of the Game

### Elealeh, Habbalite of the Game 583.5 points

**ST** 6 [-70]; **DX** 13 [-10]; **IQ** 18 [45]; **HT** 14 [0].

Speed 6.75; Move 6.

Dodge 6.

**Advantages:** Band (Habbalite) [25]; Band Attunement (Habbalite of the Game) [10]; Basic Celestial Template [480]; Extra Hit Points (Soul) +3 [12]; Power Investiture (Celestial) 4 [10]; Reputation +4 (Large Group: American Evangelical Christians, all the time) [10]; Role 5 (Elijah Rayne, Preacher) [5\*]; Servitor of the Game [21]; Strong Will +2 [8]; Vessel (Voice) [30].

**Disadvantages:** Power Investiture (Corporeal) 2 [-10]; Reduced Alertness -2 [-10]; Reduced Hit Points -1 (vessel) [-5]; Reduced Hit Points (Mind) -1 [-2]; Reduced Manual Dexterity -4 [-12].

**Quirks:** Believes that God loves rules [-1].

**Skills:** Acting-18 [1]; Bard-22 [6]; Driving (Car) -13 [1]; Fast-Talk-19 [4]; Literature (Biblical) -17/23 [4]; Professional Skill (Gamester)-16 [1/2]; Savoir-Faire-20 [1].

**Languages:** English (native)-18 [0]; Helltongue (native)-18 [0].

**Songs:** Opening (Ethereal)-16 [8]; Sensation (Corporeal)-16 [12].

\* Elealeh's Role is partly paid for by his Servitor advantage.

*Elealeh is a balanced starting In Nomine character, suitable for player use or as an NPC.*

*As written, Elealeh is not a balanced starting GURPS character; he has 41.5 more points to spend. Therefore, raise his ST to 8 [20], his Driving to 14 [1], Professional Skill (Gamester) to 17 [1/2], and purchase an Unwilling Ally Group (p. CI20) of a small group (two to five of his best, most fanatical followers) of 100-point NPCs who are available quite often (on a roll of 12 or less) [20]. (While they believe they do favors for him willingly, they are under the influence of a demon, who can get away with working against their best interests and patch it up later with his Songs and resonance.)*

The Reverend Elijah Rayne is the pastor and preacher for a small Pentecostal church in the southern United States. Charismatic and a skilled speaker, his fire-and-brimstone sermons draw crowds of believers, whom he exhorts toward godliness with threats of the power and majesty of Hell's temptation. His church is known for the episodes of divine ecstasy that afflict the parishioners. The Reverend Rayne's preaching instructs that God has rules, stringent rules, for mankind, and it is only by strict obedience that man might achieve any mercy for his fallen and abject state of sin.

*Continued on next page . . .*



## ELEALEH (CONTINUED)

Elijah Rayne is the latest in a series of similar Roles held by Elealeh, Habbalite of the Game. He specializes in the religious aspects of the Game on Earth – or as he would prefer to say, in Playing God’s Game with the cesspit that is the mortal masses. The fact that he serves a demonic master makes no difference to Elealeh; the weak angels in Heaven do not understand God’s true purpose, and disobey His strictures of order, repentance, and obedience. Elealeh, believing himself a free agent of the Lord, must serve the one who is closest to executing God’s true desires – obedience to the Rules of the Game.

In his Role as the Reverend Rayne, Elealeh inspires terror and desperation in those whom he considers weaklings

undeserving of God’s love (which is pretty much everyone, as usual). His skill at speaking is intensified by selective use of his resonance and Songs; he performs Ethereal Opening (*Liber Canticorum*, p. 43) to make his congregation suggestible, and Corporeal Sensation (*Liber Canticorum*, p. 51) to give them a taste of the hellfire that awaits them. As his task is not the traditional Gamester’s job of enforcer and policeman, but rather expansion of his Prince’s Word, Elealeh has great hopes for his current Role. The Reverend Rayne is beginning to attract attention from outside his small community, and the Habbalite believes that he may soon be in a more advantageous position on the board.

## ACROSS THE BOARD: JUDGMENT AND THE GAME

In Hell, Asmodeus’ occasional cooperation with Judgment is considered one of the Game’s largest hypocrisies, since any other demons associating with angels are subject to rigorous interrogation. The Prince of the Game sees no reason to deny this double standard, or the fact that such collaborations occur. Many Gamesters even claim it’s *common*, to deter Renegades from sheltering with angels – but unauthorized attempts to ally with Dominicans usually end in violence; only a truly foolish or desperate triad would agree. This includes prior members of Game-cooperation triads (*Superiors 1: War & Honor*, p. 61).

Playing with Judgment involves deceptions and attempts to take advantage of the other on both parts: some Gamesters consider this practice an appropriately corruptive influence regardless of whether it leads to a Judge’s Fall, while others think of it as honing an opponent’s skill. Occasionally, it leads

to outright battles when a dangerous Renegade turns out to sincerely desire redemption, or a valuable Outcast Falls!

*“They can be anyone, anywhere.  
From the drunk on the corner, to  
that pigeon over there – even a  
weak-minded Seraph you’re trying  
to pry things out of. Bastards are  
spies, just like us. In fact . . . are you  
sure who you’re talking to right  
now?”*

*– An ostensible Habbalite  
of the Game, on  
Kyriotates of Judgment*

The Prince of the Game believes himself to be at an advantage in these intrigue-filled coalitions. Having been a Judge, he can still deduce what a Judge will consider dissonant behavior and use that knowledge to outplay the angels, since he and his minions are not bound to those standards. Dominic in turn makes a point of only permitting his canniest and most loyal Servitors to participate in such collaborations (*Superiors 1: War and Honor*, p. 61), some of whom have been inventive and perceptive enough to thoroughly best the Gamesters they were theoretically working with.

Judgment and the Game are each other’s ally of last resort. Neither accepts the other’s word blindly under any circumstance, and there are always layers of hidden objectives and misleading statements to each grudging agreement.







## THE TROUBLE WITH JUDGES

*Be careful. He can hear a trilogy if you say "um."  
– Unknown Club, assigned to a Judgment team.*

There are unique challenges to working with Judgment, and dealing with the resonance of angels. Normally, the only experience a demon will have with angelic resonances are those of the Balseraphs of Fate, and prior associates of a Fallen. There aren't so many Balseraphs of Fate that Asmodeus can borrow them to train all of his Servitors in the tricky ways of angels (and Kronos isn't on *such* exquisitely good terms with Asmodeus to make that likely), and by now, most Gamesters are Hellborn.

Contradicting the boasts and swagger – and occasional overconfident attempts to make their own partnerships – only certain *Canes Asmodei* are selected and trained to work with angels. The Prince picks his Servitors according to his own methods: a promising Hellborn who has never left Hades has a chance, and so

does a canny Diamond or exuberant Heart who's got some angels convinced that they've found a redemption candidate if only they're careful. (Using the Fallen on Judgment-Game operations has its own hazards, such as the Dominicans attempting to arrest their "partners.")

The course is not as exhaustive as it could be. Sometimes, for whatever reason, it's skipped. But a properly trained Hound is presumed to know certain details regarding angels in general and those of Judgment in particular. Primarily, they focus on the *extreme* perceptiveness of these Seraphim, Cherubim who can attune *and* be violent, and the dangers of "fluffwings of Death" – the Mercurians who can shoot Hellsworn or Gamesters under Humanity without a qualm. The attunements of Ofanite, Malakite, and EloHITE Judges get only brief mention, but the instructors emphasize the Dominican Kyriotate's ability to spy, wreck vessels, and trash Hellsworn hosts.

## GAMES WITHIN GAMES

*"We should play a game," said Gilt. "I have a rather nice board myself. I play the troll side, for preference."*

*"Ruthless, initially outnumbered, inevitably defeated in the hands of the careless player?" said Vetinari.*

*"Indeed. Just as the dwarfs rely on guile, feint, and swift changes of position. A man can learn all of an opponent's weaknesses on that board," said Gilt.*

*"Really?" said Vetinari, raising his eyebrows. "Should he not be trying to learn his own?"*

– Terry Pratchett, *Going Postal*

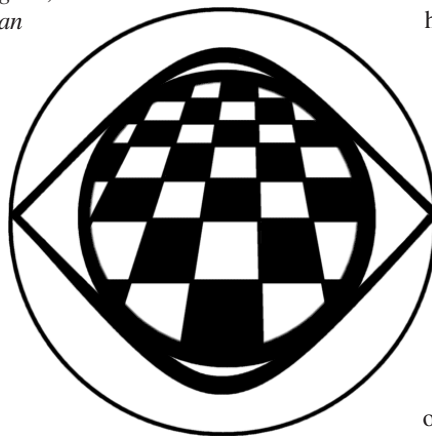
The organization of the Game has many sub-groups, each with their own responsibilities and opportunities. Some are formal, reporting in the chain of command. Others, like the Chess Club, operate behind the scenes.

### Aces and Eights

Founded by the Demon of Low Odds before the birth of Christ, the members of the organization currently known as Aces and Eights specializes in is taking the unlikely and making it more likely. This may involve sending an angelic Seneschal into Trauma, making certain that the lead in

Nybbas' next blockbuster is a particular Balseraph, or moving a book in Fate's archives two shelves to the left. The actions seem absurd, irrelevant, and irrational – but the odds of whatever eventual result Aces and Eights was contracted for are substantially higher.

Membership in Aces and Eights is necessarily exclusive, as they require a wide variety of skills as well as an intuitive grasp of the Game. Most of them keep their affiliation under wraps – it is expected that if you have capacity to buy the services of Aces and Eights, you will also know how to find them.



### The Chess Club

In theory, the Chess Club is open to anyone with an interest in playing chess. In practice, very few demons are willing to even enter the premises without a Distinction of Baron or above. The Chess Club is the unofficial meeting-place for Dukes, Counts, and other ranking Gamesters to discuss things of note and arrange discreet transactions of materials, information, or even Servitors. (That they do so while playing chess goes without saying; they do, after all, have an interest.) Not all appropriately distinguished demons attend every meeting, but few have *never* gone. If nothing else, it disguises the deal-making going on behind the scenes.







## BUREAUCRATIC DEPARTMENTALIZATION

By necessity, the Game has a large bureaucratic element – there’s no other way to keep track of all the paperwork and authority structure. Some of the major departmental names are listed here for reference.

**The CIWC (The Tarot):** The Committee for Inter-Word Cooperation is composed of the Game’s formal liaisons to Hell’s other Princes. Hadeans often refer to them as the Tarot, or the Tarot Pack. (Assigning Major Arcana to the various members of the Committee is a popular leisure activity.)

**The Draw:** Formally the Requisitions and Equipment department, the Draw distributes relics and other useful objects.

**HIA:** The Hadean Intelligence Agency: better known as “the bureaucrat’s version of InfPol,” the HIA is responsible for intelligence analysis.

**InfFiles:** The file systems in Asmodeus’ Palace. Whether the abbreviation stands for Information & Files or Infernal Files is up for debate.

**InfPol:** The Infernal Police, Intrigue’s spy force, designed to police the Game itself.

**InfSec:** The overarching Infernal Security organization.

**P&P:** The Passports and Permits department, responsible for checkpoints, security clearances, and getting your documents stamped appropriately.

**SYB:** The Soul Yard Bishopric, handling soul distribution matters; subsections of the Yards are referred to as SYB-1, SYB-2, et cetera.

**S-W:** Quite recently, the Information and Propaganda department was renamed S-W in all official communication. Explanatory theories point to its new head, the Balseraph Demon of Neurolinguistic Programming, and his affinity for the Sapir-Whorf hypothesis (p. 39).

**The Windows:** The Windows is the popular name for the Personnel Department, headed by the Three Marquises (p. 21).

**The Yard:** The Soul Yards themselves.

### *Infernal Police*

InfPol is the secret police of the Game, headed by Staciél, the Demon of Intrigue (p. 24). While the task of all Gamesters is to control and enforce the Rules of Hell, it is the job of InfPol to seek out sedition *inside* the Game. Handpicked for their abilities at interrogation, intimidation, and information acquisition, InfPol is to the standard Gamester as the SS were to the German police. Members of InfPol keep their identity secret, even from each other: only Asmodeus (and perhaps Staciél herself) knows all of their names.

### *The Loyalists*

*He was back in the Ministry of Love, with everything forgiven, his soul white as snow. He was in the public dock, confessing everything, implicating everybody. He was walking down the white-tiled corridor, with the feeling of walking in sunlight, and an armed guard at his back. The long-hoped-for bullet was entering his brain.*

– George Orwell, 1984

While the threat of being “handed over to the Loyalists” by the Game is a cliché among the denizens of Hell, it is not an idle threat. As Asmodeus’ interrogators, they are responsible for extracting information, confessions, and repentance from captured traitors to Hell. Headquartered in the maze of

tunnels beneath the Halls of Loyalty, each Loyalist is carefully trained in the arts of torture, both psychological and physical. The punishments inflicted by the Loyalists are inventive and ruthless: they may last a brief hour in an interrogation room, or continue for hundreds of years. Demons who enter beneath the gleaming facade of the Halls rarely emerge unscarred, whether or not the scars are visible.

In addition to being torturers, the Loyalists are one of the main sources InfPol uses to discover the identities of those who are planning to commit sedition. One of the only ways to escape the attentions of a Loyalist interrogator is to provide him with the name, location, and crime of a fellow traitor – it is marginally possible that giving up such information will commute the snitch’s sentence. A wise demon will betray his friends to the Game to save his own skin. A wiser demon would not get caught in the first place.

## DEALING WITH THE GAME, INSIDE AND OUT

Only fools are unconcerned when the Hounds come sniffing about, for Gamester arrests are based more on their ability to drag someone off in the night and less on actual guilt.





## ANATOMY OF A HUNT

Ideally, the perfect capture of a target is a smooth and elegant play. First, someone discovers a traitor, either personally or via another's report. The Gamester or team assigned to the case is usually whoever discovered the subject's malfeasance. The team evaluates the target's strength and resources, plots a moment to strike, requests backup if necessary, and moves in to make the arrest. (An experienced, specialized team is assigned to delicate operations, such as Renegades who *must* be captured alive.) Intimidation, Will Shackles, and nooses (p. 26) are all ways to subdue a captive, but combat is never out of the question.

Naturally, this does not always work. Overconfident Gamesters may confront a subject who is unexpectedly potent and unmanageable. Backup may be incompetent. Targets may get spooked by entirely different demons (or angels), and flee before their assigned arrest date. A Heart-broken subject may even be killed and wind up in Limbo, to potentially emerge at some future date.

The Game keeps careful records of any Renegade or suspected Renegade who *ever* slipped their grasp. Memos are issued to senior Gamesters, and "wanted" pamphlets are left in front offices so that Hounds can flip through them while waiting to see higher-ups. More competent *Canes Asmodei* are assigned to the case. (Hopefully, the three Marquises do not each assign their personal favorites, and if they do, hopefully bother to tell them there are other teams on the job as well.) Renegades who evade capture multiple times may be assigned a caseworker (p. 30).

However, Gamesters *are* reined in by the threat of political repercussions, they seek *evidence* of crimes in case the victim's Prince takes offense. Sloppy Hadeans have been destroyed for making arrests with flimsy charges, themselves charged with "defaming the reputation of the Game."

### Gaming the System

Ignorance of the Game's rules is no defense against accusation or conviction; however, descriptions of the legal procedures are almost as arcane as the procedures themselves.

The courts of the Game are arranged into several different hierarchies, theoretically by type of case. In practice, technicalities ensure that any defendant can wind up in almost any

variety of court. Most Gamester teams don't care where their captive winds up, once they've handed him over to the Halls of Loyalty. Typically, a senior jailor does the paperwork that decides the prisoner's disposition.

The rules of each court are not consistent with each other, or even necessarily itself. Some verdicts are decided by juries, others by a judge or tests of skill: commonly combat or games such as Chess With Death (p. 27). Sometimes the defendants may defend themselves, sometimes they may not. Some judges have kept the Roman practice of *accusatio*, where the accuser will suffer the punishment for the crime if the accused is found innocent. Others do not. Some are exceedingly bribable, and others consider the very offer to be an insult and a crime, no matter who tries it.

Prisoners brought to a court of the Game are not warned in advance of what kind of process they will be going through. They only have an advocate if some Hound wants the practice or can be bought, but research and careful bribes may uncover a given court's reputation.

**Dec. 3, 1627**

*It is by my order and for the good  
of the state that the bearer of this  
has done what he has done.*

*Richelieu*

— *Alexandre Dumas,  
The Three Musketeers*

On Earth, matters become even more complex. The Game's mandate to capture or kill Renegades is complicated by the fact that Gamesters seeking to remove anyone, rival or traitor, have to come up with the paperwork to justify an arrest, as well as the power to *make* the arrest. Paperwork is often done *ex post facto*, though some *Canes Asmodei* carry undated documentation. (Some supervisors require more bribery than others to backdate papers or issue them early, but too much balking can be construed as a crime of knowingly aiding a Renegade — especially if there was actual treason involved.)

More than one junior Gamester fantasizes about having the power to "disappear" other demons on a grand scale. However, they would require the physical power and influence to do so, *and* ensure that such a thing would not spoil any of their Prince's hidden plans.

### The Arrest

*Oh, you know where **you're** going, all right. Good thing you don't have a tongue any more to scream about it.*

There are no Game-wide standard phrases or traditional accusations. One Hound may *tsk* and cluck, "That's treason, that is," as he snaps the Will Shackles onto a restrained

## CRIMES AGAINST HELL

*Yes, this is my Heart. Yes, we're being let out of the room. No, you're going with the guards, not with me. Welcome to the Halls of Loyalty, traitor.*

Essentially, anything a Gamester can call "disloyalty to Hell" can put a demon into a Hadean prison, and getting out again is a chancy matter that depends on one's support network and favor with one's Prince – even if one is innocent of the exact charges. Many Gamesters simply mention what they *could* accuse the demon of: a pointed hint that they are willing to be convinced otherwise.

The Game claims that any Discord at all is potentially a sign of betraying a Prince's Word, and thus disloyalty to Lucifer's chosen royalty. In practice, there are too many Calabim and Lilim around to bother with this accusation, except in the case of "good" Discord, such as Merciful (*In Nomine*, p. 88) and Selfless (*Infernal Player's Guide*, p. 105). That Princes may impose Discord personally is another deterrent.

Dissonance, on the other hand, is rarely imposed by Superior fiat, and indicates that the Servitor was doing something undemonic. If the Hound is bored or needs to win favor by making an arrest, it might be worth pursuing. Demons with truly impressive amounts of dissonance and Discord may be brought to the Halls of Loyalty simply to show off their plight.

Consorting with angels is always risky when *Canes Asmodei* are around. Even the most reasonable of them may kindly explain, with the noose around the unlucky demon's throat, that angels can be tricky and have more unwholesome influence upon a loyal minion of Lucifer than said minion thought. (Andrealphus' practice of awarding a Knighthood for angel-sex produces tensions when Lust, the Game, and divine Servitors are in the same area.) Likewise, they can accuse someone of "disloyal over-fascination with Heaven" for possessing angel-made artifacts or even the sort of "angel-defaming" material found in Shal-Mari magazines.

Being a Renegade is treason, pure and simple, but Hadeans find it a waste of time to pursue ex-Renegades from one Prince's service if they are Heart-whole and now serving another. Heart-shattered Renegades who seek out the Game, hoping to join, are amusing and might be assigned as apprentices to those who bring them in.

captive's wrist. Another might press a dagger against her victim's back and purr, "Hi. I'm the Game. We can go to a Tether, or I can collect you in Trauma, sweetie." Most Gamesters are fond of a surprise noosing and swift descent to their guarded Hearts; it saves them from having to identify themselves, threaten, make accusations, and chase down a fleeing target.

### *In the Prison Block*

A true arrest allows confiscation of anything the team feels like taking, though a subsequent legal defense may demand those items *back*. Confiscating lands and other immobile properties requires mundane paperwork; some Hounds don't find the prize worth the effort. Any remaining personal possessions are often claimed by jailors and guards in the Halls of Loyalty.

Captives of the Game may be sent to a court quickly, languish within cells until ransomed, be tortured for information on possible traitors (or just for practice), or be chained and used as pets by higher-ranking demons. The amount of casual abuse depends on what the captive can offer, and what friends and influence he convinces people he has.

### *Guilty Until Acquitted*

Jailors do not like to release their prisoners, but sufficient bribes (or threats) may convince them the paperwork is too tedious; this will require external aid, and not mere Essence or sordid favors. Relics and other tradable goods are appreciated. A Superior's intervention – usually in the form of a Baron or Word-bound – will recover most prisoners from the cells, and often much of what was confiscated. Occasionally Asmodeus himself ordered a capture, and such matters will require direct Princely diplomacy.

Few escape Hades unscathed; destruction is the most common punishment meted out for treason, with public torture, Force-stripping, and enslavement coming next. Sometimes the Game merely confiscates artifacts or corporeal resources (including Servants and assigned Hellsworn) – especially for crimes such as possessing dissonance or Discord. Occasionally, whether due to friends in high places, bribery, or selling out everyone he knows, a prisoner will walk free entirely, unharmed.

### *Dealing with InfPol*

Gamesters themselves are not immune to accusations, but these are typically handled by InfPol, which has its own designated cellblocks, its own jailors, and its own courts. The delicate web of bribes and intimidation is much the same as for outsiders, but actual value as a piece is taken into account during trials. Trumped-up charges may rebound upon the accuser, for wasting InfPol's time. Acquittals for the guilty may be granted, with Geases to the Countess Intrigue to ensure wavering loyalties remain strong.





## THE SAPIR-WHORF HYPOTHESIS

*Human beings do not live in the objective world alone, nor alone in the world of social activity as ordinarily understood, but are very much at the mercy of the particular language which has become the medium of expression for their society.*

— *The Status Of Linguistics As A Science*, Edward Sapir

Anthropologist and linguist Edward Sapir, along with his student, Benjamin Whorf, built upon prior research to – in short – conclude that language affected how people thought and acted. They even hypothesized that, in some cases, the particulars of a language *determined* actions and thoughts.

After the Fall, demons took the speech of angels, which had no room for lies, and built an entirely new, infernal language out of it. Therefore, the Sapir-Whorf hypothesis is highly respected among educated demons. There are frequent attempts to use this and similar theories to manipulate Helltongue to control Hell itself – or at least influence it. The Demon of Neurolinguistic Programming, Balseraph of the Game and head of the department formerly known as Information and Propaganda (now simply S-W), has staked his entire existence upon it. Lucifer and Asmodeus apparently believe that it was worthwhile to grant his desired Word.

## GAMING WITH THE GAME: ADVENTURE SEEDS

*Just as no chess player will ever live long enough to exhaust all the combinations of possible moves for the thirty-two pieces on the chessboard, so we know (given the fact that our minds are chessboards with hundreds of billions of pieces) that not even in a lifetime lasting as long as the universe would one ever be able to make all possible plays. But we also know that all these are implicit in the overall code of mental plays, according to the rules by which each of us . . . formulates his thoughts . . .*

— Italo Calvino, “Cybernetics and Ghosts”

The seeds here are designed specifically for Gamester PCs. However, the Hounds of Asmodeus may easily be worked into almost any adventure seed, even those of other Words: investigating the actions of NPCs going through the adventure, investigating the aftermath of the adventure, working in parallel or opposition to another group of PCs, or seeded within the PC group as spies.

### AN OTHERWISE UNCONVINCING NARRATIVE

There are some jobs which are given, not to the best of the *Canes Asmodei*, but to those Hounds who are deemed

expendable because of bad luck or true incompetence. If fortune smiles upon these Servitors during their suicide mission, they may live and regain favor in the ranks of the Game. If not, it's not much of a loss.

This particular mission is simple: pretend to be a Renegade (from whatever Superior) and infiltrate the organization of another Word. Any Prince is a potential target, and the “friendly” ones may be harder to fool than the openly hostile.

To lend plausibility, Asmodeus will shatter the Servitors' Hearts and grant a two hour head start – after which, he will call in another team to hunt down these newly Heartless and Discordant traitors to the Game.

*The hapless “Renegades” and the unwitting pursuit team are both possible PC choices, especially in a one-shot game. Alternatively, an NPC sacrifice may seek shelter with non-Gamester PCs! If he was a prior enemy, this may be to ensure he isn't taken down alone, instead of convincing them to help him join their Prince's organization.*

### THE FIRST RULE OF LARP CLUB

*This adventure seed may not be appropriate for all campaigns. Still, much as the Game dislikes Dark Humor, both make their homes in Hell . . .*





The first time a young Gamester (an Impudite Heart, as it happens) walked into a SF convention after a Renegade Vapulan, she nearly laughed herself sick. A game, which has a celestial, pretending to be a human, pretending to be a supernatural creature, pretending to be a human to keep “the mundanes” from finding out? How droll! And when she was able to claim she was “just playing the game” as she dragged the Ethereal Attraction-afflicted Renegade to her room?

It started a fad. It’s a small one, popular only with a subset of the youngest Gamesters and sneered at by older *Canes Asmodei* as insufficiently respectful, insufficiently dignified, and insufficiently terrifying to the Renegades. But it exists, and the networking and politicking that happens within the Hades LARP Club are only different from those in the Chess Club (p. 35) in that the participants are younger and have less power.

The commonly agreed-upon goal of the Hades LARP Club is to make Live Action RolePlaying “mainstream,” like poker or chess. This will both make another game part of life (and fuel the Word), and make it easier for them to excuse odd behavior in pursuit of a celestial as “being in character.” The most optimistic Hadean LARPers dream of a day when the entire War will be open and overt – and no humans will notice.

This would be nothing but a passing fancy, to survive or be abandoned as with any other organization in Hell, except that a group of Michaelites – only slightly older than the Asmodeans in question – have come into conflict with the LARPers. You see, the War-angels (several of them 8-Force relievers) are into *war-games* . . .

Now, a perfectly mundane gaming store is the center of strife between the LARPers and War-gamers, and it’s beginning to turn violent. After three promising Roles have been *co-opted* by Michaelines, their prior holders in Trauma, more senior *Canes Asmodei* have been sent in. Their goal is to find out how much damage to Role security has been done, if older Warriors have arrived, whether this is actually an incursion authorized by the Archangel of War, if War-faction demons are getting involved, and if there’s going to be a way to cool things down without resorting to the temptation of shooting every Hadean LARPer in the city.

*Player characters could be young Gamesters, protecting their nascent “turf” and organization or trying to clean everything up before their elders ruin it all; elder Hounds trying to untangle loyal stupidity; demons in the city who are caught in the middle; or anyone who’d like to take advantage of the situation. Kobalites would be especially pleased to discover such a petty matter turning deadly serious.*

## GO FISH

The good news is that the Prince himself told them to do it. As with most personal orders from Asmodeus, this is also the bad news. The PCs have been given vessels of various kinds of sea life (of levels equal to their Corporeal Forces) and told to establish themselves in a coastal reef. Their goal

is to severely inconvenience the resident Jordians, *without* resort to legal measures that might make the Archangel call in reinforcements from his Heavenly allies. Sabotage via human Roles or demonic contacts is permitted, but the presence of their new vessels is a very strong suggestion. They are expected to compensate for their inability to communicate with the animals, lack of support from the environment, and other inconveniences.

Sabotage via their bipedal identities (such as capsizing an oil tanker) will result in interest from a Soldier and a Kyriotate of Animals, while the reef itself holds several Seraphim, an Ofanite, and a visiting Malakite of Creation. Investigating why they’ve been given responsibility for this clear feint will result in the discovery of significant wrongdoing in their *own* records – wrongdoings they have not actually performed. Following that up while continuing to perform their task – whether the culprit is their immediate superior, a rival, or simple misfiling – should be enough to keep them occupied for some time.

## STRATEGIES

Feuds over the same Word tend to be bloodier in Hell than Heaven. This has led Anani, Shedite Captain of the Game and prospective Demon of Strategy, to begin playing a game of war with Lysimachus, Djinn Captain of the War and *also* prospective Demon of Strategy. Their conflict has been in various realms through several years and several different assignments by their Superiors.

Anani, recently assigned across the country, has seen no reason not to continue its feud with Lysimachus at a distance, and has co-opted the PCs to help it with this. The Captain of the War has been given command of several small outposts in the PCs’ area: Anani has politely requested that the PCs inconvenience one of them. Severely. Should they attempt to decline, they will find their own immediate superior to have been thoroughly bribed to look the other way, and other routes of escape neatly cut off.


Finding a scapegoat (aside from themselves) will be a priority: unfortunately, the resident angelic population is mainly Stone, Flowers, and Trade. Should the PCs need support or ideas, Anani is available, but the Shedite will be reluctant to stray from its new position.

And, of course, should the Michaeline *Angel* of Strategy intrude, the Asmodeans and Baalites will promptly be expected to join forces and deal with matters appropriately.

## TALKING IS PROHIBITED

Send a spy to catch a spy. The Countess Intrigue has summoned the PCs to her offices in the Halls of Loyalty and assigned them to locate and retrieve an Impudite named Saheen. Staciell will inform the PCs that there is no reason to believe Saheen has left Hades.





Staciel is quite right: Saheen, a former member-in-good-standing of InfPol, has not left Hades. She's merely defected from one political faction to another – and now the PCs are embroiled in negotiating their way through the longstanding feud between the Demon of Intrigue and the Demon of Mao, Saheen's new boss. The Impudite is just the latest of Jahathanna's thefts from Staciel, as Mao tries to wrest away Intrigue's political power in Hades.

This is a good opportunity for the GM to make use of Hades as a setting: it is full of paranoiacs, schemers, and lots of architecture to visit. Saheen has gone to ground somewhere within the city, and the PCs will have to engage in a

fair bit of diplomacy to get wind of her whereabouts. Searching too obviously will alert Jahathanna, which may cause the appearance of violence-minded Gamesters eager to interfere, while methods more appropriate to Servitors working for Intrigue run the risk of bringing down the entire force of Hadean politics on the PCs' heads, including Mao's precarious alliance with Chess and Go, Intrigue's connections with Lilith (if any), enterprising members of Aces and Eights, or anything else the GM cares to inflict. After all, blatant unrest in the upper nobility of the Game means *everyone* stands a chance to gain points.

## REAL LIFE GAMES (THAT GAMESTERS PLAY)

In the interest of spreading the Word of the Game, here is information about some of the most important influences on the *Canes Asmodei*. (Naturally, there are others, drawn out of other games and gambling activities from "tag" to horse racing. These are merely some of the most interesting or wide-spread.)

In **checkers**, two players jump each other's pieces to take them, seeking to get to the back ranks and "king" their tokens (and allow them to move backward). It is relatively simple, though not *easy*, and thus deemed the game of demonlings by fledged Hounds. Demonlings are also frequently referred to as "checkers," and their fledging compared to a kinged checker-piece.

**Chess** is an ancient two-player game that has changed greatly through the centuries. It is considered the premier intellectual game of the West; mastery of chess has often gone hand in hand with madness. In modern times, the weakest pieces are the pawns, which can – if they survive – become queens, the most powerful pieces. The winning condition is to place the slow-moving king in checkmate, where he *will* be taken on the next turn. "Benedict Chess" or "Crazyhouse Chess" allows a captured piece to be placed on the board and used by its taker. "Fairy chess" is a term for versions that allow the combination of pieces with different moves (such as a queen who can jump like a knight), or invent entirely new pieces. (For more chess variations, see *Knightmare Chess*, *Proteus*, or *Tile Chess*.) For historical information, the online Wikipedia entry is a good place to start.

**The Royal Game of Ur** is one of the oldest known games, dating back to 3000 B.C. The modern rules are conjecture more than translation; two players roll four

marked stones (shaped like 4-sided dice) to determine how many spaces their counters move on the board track. Some squares are "safe," but most allow a piece to be knocked back to start if the opponent's stone lands on it. The goal is to be the first to get all one's own pieces from start to finish. There are online sites with variant rules and information on both the Royal Game and an Egyptian variation known as Twenty Squares. It is certain that old Gamesters possess Royal Game boards enchanted with Chess with Death (p. 27).

**Go** is the premier intellectual game of the East, beginning its existence as the game for the upper class. (Other names include the Chinese *Weiqi* or *Yi* and Korean *Baduk*.) The earliest written reference to the game is dated to 548 B.C., but it may be as much as 1,800 years older than that. Two players place stones on the intersections of a 19x19 grid, to try to enclose and thus "capture" each other's pieces. The goal is to hold the most territory upon the grid, capturing any opposing stone played within that area. It is said – and is quite plausible – that no one Go game has been played twice. To find rules, look at the Wikipedia entry, the British Go Association's pages, or the Online Guide to Traditional Games.

**Jenga** is a Hasbro game, first published in 1987; the name is derived from a Swahili word that means "to build." Players take turns removing rectangular wooden "bricks" from the lower layers in order to build upper layers. The winner is the last person to stack a block before the tower tumbles over. Jenga has an official website.

*Continued on next page . . .*



## REAL LIFE GAMES (THAT GAMESTERS PLAY) (CONTINUED)

**Playing cards** have both modern and historical characteristics, with the fortune-telling Tarot's cups, wands, pentacles, and swords becoming the modern suits of hearts, clubs, diamonds, and spades. The games that can be played are innumerable! Poker is a common one. (Many variations, such as Texas Hold'em, involve designating one to three cards as "window cards" or "community cards" which each player can use to complete his hand. This is where the Windows (p. 30) get their current name.) An online history, with many samples, is at the World of Playing Cards.

**Mao** is described on p. 19 (*The Game Writ Small*). The *named* game of Mao has been around since at least 1975, though there is a reference to "Mao Games" in an 1899 Arthur Machen short story. *The Mao Game* is also a 1999 movie, based on a book by Joshua Miller. Jahathanna, the Demon of Mao, probably has a hold on various demons in the Media. The best place to seek information – though doing so is definitely breaking the Rules – is the Wikipedia entry.

**Uno**, currently published by Mattel, was developed in 1971. It is a card-game much like "Crazy Eights," requiring players to play the cards in their hand, matching card number or color. There are several special cards that

cause players to be skipped, direction of play to be reversed, extra cards to be drawn, or the color changed. The winner is the first one out of cards. The full rules are available as an online PDF.

**Ulama** is an Aztec ball game which is still preserved and played in Mexico. Archeologists have found hundreds of ball courts, as well as rubber balls dating back to 1500 B.C. Ulama-player figurines have been dated back to around 400 A.D. The modern version believed to be closest to the Aztec form is *hip ulama*, in which the heavy, rubber ball must only be touched with the hip after being served. It has a complicated scoring process as well as numerous local rules variations. It has an online article in the April 2006 *Smithsonian* magazine, a Wikipedia entry, and a homepage.

**Video and computer games** are relative newcomers to the scene, and many Gamesters have been slow to integrate them into their worldviews, play-styles, and slang. Others are *quite* familiar with everything from Pong to the latest Massively Multiplayer Online RPGs. Asmodeus has demons on both sides fueling the debate over violence and video games, but whether there *is* a correlation is largely irrelevant to the Prince, though he would not object if there were.



## Stuck for an adventure? No problem.

**e23 sells high-quality game adventures and supplements in PDF format.**

- Get complete sample adventures free!
- PDFs from the major players in online publishing – plus gems from the up-and-comers, and digital editions of out-of-print classics.
- See the ratings other users have given . . . and add your own ratings.
- Buy it once, have it always. Download your purchases again whenever you need to.

**Download ● Print ● Play**

e23 is part of Warehouse 23, the online store at Steve Jackson Games. Warehouse 23 is also the official Internet retailer for Dork Storm Press, Atlas Games, and many other publishers. Visit us today at [www.warehouse23.com](http://www.warehouse23.com) for all your game STUFF!