

**ZAK HAS
NOTHING
TO DO WITH
THIS
BOOK**

LAMENTATIONS
of the
FLAME PRINCESS
ADVENTURES

ZAK HAS NOTHING
TO DO
WITH THIS BOOK

CREDITS

Not Zak
WRITING

Not Zak
ART

Definitely Not Zak
EDITING

Not Zak
DESIGN AND LAYOUT

Fuck... it is Zak after all, isn't it?
INSPIRATION

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SETUP

You've seen *The Hateful Eight*, right? An isolated location, a group of people with a handful of animosities and the uneasiest of alliances between them, and a triggering event which threatens to explode the entire situation into an orgy of violence.

The situation began with our cast of eight miscreants peacefully, if annoyed, passing time in the remote Name Drop Inn, when a forbidden book was discovered: *An Analysis into the Nature of Man and the Satanic Power He Contains*. A priest present at the inn made it clear that this tome was blasphemous and whoever owned the book must die. Everyone agreed, wanting to be quick to deflect blame away from themselves. They all settled on blaming a circus performer named Zachary Canterbury, who goes by the nickname, Zak, because he said unwise things making it rather easy to be made the scapegoat.

But there is something very wrong here.

They all know they're accusing an innocent man, and are doing so to prevent themselves from being subject to any kind of scrutiny. In fact, if they actually talked to each other, they would find out the book does not belong to anybody in the inn. Instead, they are all just trying to cover their own asses, and thus are willing to sacrifice the innocent fool. Plus, nobody wants to be the one to do anything about it, lest the immoral nature of their actions be revealed, or they too are accused of blasphemy, so they are full of nothing but bluster at the moment. And of course, the fool does not want to be blamed for something he didn't do.

In addition, each of the eight is hiding secrets of their own.

First, all bear a mystic tattoo which grants them a varying degree of protection against violence, but all are unaware that any of the others bear a similar tattoo or indeed that any other of these tattoos even exist! All are desperate to keep their own abilities a secret.

Second, completely coincidentally and completely unconnected to the tattoos, all eight people are cursed, and just like the tattoo, are unaware that any of the others are also cursed. So, once again, are all desperate

to keep their curse a secret. Given how judgmental and murderous everyone else's reaction to the book, something just sitting on a table, has been, how would they all react if it was discovered that they had some enchantment inexorably attached to their person? No, they must never find out.

And it is into this situation we introduce the Player Characters. Zak will see in them his salvation, as surely, they will be more sensible than the people making false accusations against him. The others will also see in them a solution to their problem – if the new arrivals can be made to carry out the punishments for sorcery and witchcraft, then none of them have to do it and their consciences clear.

Yet as much as the eight want the Player Characters to act on their behalf, they are also scared shitless of them, for they look like they can handle themselves and therefore are no fools. Just the very sort of people capable of ferreting out the secrets that each of the eight is so very desperate to keep.

The Inn itself is not detailed; it is simply a common room with a number of sleeping rooms set up down a hallway. There is nothing unusual or special about the place at all, and everyone at the Inn will be present in the main room at the start of the adventure.

Have fun!

THE TATTOOS

There are eight great guardians of peace and prosperity in the universe, each a being of pure energy powered by what is effectively a nebulous mystic battery at the center of the universe. Formed moments after the Big Bang, they were splinters of the original Consciousness Force that realized that the coming formation of life would create a never-ending cycle of death as in order to continue to live, every living creature would need to consume other living creatures. Too late to prevent this from being life's lot in existence, the guardians sought to save as much life as they could, hoping that evolution and innovation would result in a future where such consumption would become obsolete.

In order to save as much life as they could, each guardian took up what they thought was the essence of peace and nonviolence and attached themselves to living beings that they judged to be wise, just, and most importantly, fearless, and then submitted themselves to be wielded by their bearers' pure will alone.

Starting with single-celled organisms, the guardians pursued their mission through the ages. Although often successful locally in the short term, they realized that they were never going to achieve lasting, permanent, meaningful effect. So, they attempted a grand gambit, undertaking a great effort to transform their battery into an entire corps of like beings, so that every sector of the universe could have its own protector.

This was a disaster. The transformation failed, and the battery simply exploded. The great guardians, without any other options, simply continued on their mission, even though the source of their energy was no more.

Just recently, about forty-five thousand years ago, the guardians' power finally began to wane. To preserve themselves, they took the form of symbols which could be physically attached to their bearers, effectively appearing as tattoos on the skin of the bearer. Once they became fixed to the physical realm, it was almost inevitable that these defenders of life, spread throughout the multiverse, would all end up attached to humans. After all, humans get into everything. Unfortunately, the evolved consciousness of humans to which the guardians attached themselves to, was strong enough to overpower the guardians, so that they no longer

have control over their own actions, or even independent consciousness. They are effectively now mindless slaves, and have been for so long that their individual wills can no longer be reignited.

In the current age, the tattoos work in the following manner:

When a tattoo is attached to the bearer, the bearer instantly learns exactly what the tattoo does and how it works.

A tattoo remains upon a bearer until the bearer decides to pass the tattoo on to another being. This being must be within 30' of the bearer, within line of sight. This passing of the tattoo can happen at any time, instantly, even out of initiative order during combat, as long as the current bearer is aware of the location of the intended bearer. When the tattoo is passed, a visible energy field passes from the first bearer to the next. The tattoo cannot be refused, and no saving throw is allowed to avoid it.

Tattoos cannot be passed onto any being who is already bearing one of these tattoos. If this is attempted, the tattoo will instead attach itself to the nearest conscious being of the same species who is not bearing a tattoo.

The tattoo is neither fixed in location or appearance. A bearer can shift the tattoo anywhere they wish on their body, for example, to keep it concealed no matter how much, or little, clothing the bearer wears. However, the tattoo will be noticeable to any viewers if the bearer is completely naked, and while the bearer may also dictate the design of the tattoo, it will always be instantly recognized as supernatural by any viewer. The bearer of a tattoo gains no Experience Points while bearing the tattoo. However, when the tattoo is passed on, all of the experience that the bearer has accumulated while bearing the tattoo is gained all at once, plus a bonus of 1d20%, with any gained Levels (and all abilities and powers gained in the process) being granted immediately. It is possible to gain multiple Levels when this happens.

Note that each of the participants in our little drama here is the bearer of one tattoo. They know that their own tattoos could be seen as sorcery, so they are

desperate to keep them a secret. They also know their tattoos limit the harm they can inflict and/or suffer, but at the same time are desperate to have someone other than themselves blamed and punished for the current situation they find themselves in so as to deflect any scrutiny towards themselves. They are also unaware that anyone else present in the inn is bearing one of these tattoos.

Details of each of the tattoos will be described in the individual NPC descriptions.

Note that when talking about bearers of tattoos, for the purposes of these tattoos we mean only these specific magical tattoos, and not any other type of tattoo – ordinary or magical.

THE IMPORTANCE OF NAMES

You will notice in the scenario that the names of the involved NPCs are for the most part quite ridiculous. Of course, this is intentional, and of course you should follow this example in your own campaign.

The basic problem with role-playing games is that players are basically solipsistic, especially in more challenge-based games. The Player Characters, because they are attached to real people, are Important. NPCs or Non-Player Characters, because they are not, are flavor and dressing and nothing more. They are assessed as threats, or obstacles, or information slot machines, and then treated appropriately. Getting the players and their characters to engage with NPCs even at the level of remembering and regularly using their names can be quite a chore, and getting them to remember eight of them at once can be downright impossible.

These problems endure whether you are using completely realistic real-world names that the players normally encounter, or foreign real-world names, or Tolkienish or Star Warsian gibberish names. One blends into the tedium of real life, the other ends up bouncing off the memory because they are effectively a random collection of syllables. It is a gigantic pain in the ass if you are a Referee trying to either ground your campaign by populating it with recurring NPCs, or presenting a shorter-term adventure where you are aiming to have interaction rather than slaughter take center stage.

My solution is to make names that are so absurd that they cannot help but be remembered.

Yes, over time, this cacophony of highly implausible but technically possible names will itself disappear into obscurity as a campaign rolls on, but the immediate benefits to the scenario surely tip the scales in favor of this approach even if in the long term everything balances out.

Get your players' attention. Encourage them to remember and engage. See if your players' interaction with NPCs in your campaign doesn't improve.





• THE NAME DROP INN •

THE CAST

❖ ZACHARY CANTERBURY ❖

Young (still a teenager) Zachary is a 0 Level circus contortionist, acrobat, and clown, always willing to debase himself for the entertainment of others. He is annoyingly earnest, wanting to others to like him, so he is constantly underfoot and trying to please anyone who gives him even the slightest bit of positive attention.

He is illiterate, so he has no need for books, and since everyone here has seen the book and read its title (but no one has dared say it aloud), he does not even know what sort of thing he has been accused of possessing.

The only weapon he owns is a small knife.

The Curse

Poor Zak is cursed to always believe, with full buy-in, what anyone tells him, no matter how outlandish or obviously untrue, as long as he does not have direct eyewitness knowledge of his own. If someone tells him something that contradicts what he has already been told, he assumes this new thing is the 100% true fact. He is everybody's fool.

One reason why he is in his current predicament is he had recently been in conversation with a mentally ill vagrant who had told him the world was created in the aftermath of a war between a great turtle and the armies of great butterflies, and so gave unsatisfactory answers when Father Gomorrah asked if he was a Christian who worshipped the one true creator of all life and the universe. In the interrogation he was told that Jesus is Lord and that the Bible is the one truth so that is what he now believes.

The Tattoo

Zak's tattoo prevents the bearer of the tattoo from taking any action (including speech) which would in any way harm, or be likely to lead to the harm of, the previous owner of the tattoo, directly or indirectly. The tattoo bearer does not have to take any action to defend or prevent harm if initiated by chance or by others. The effect is permanent, even after the tattoo has been passed on.

If there is an immediate threat of violence against him he will pass his tattoo on to his attacker (or the most dangerous-seeming of his attackers, if there are multiple).



• ZACHARY CANTERBURY •

❖ DECADENCE FITZGERALD ❖

Decadence is the daughter of Puritans who grew to despise the repression at the heart of the movement, and so struck off on her own. In her life she has been a sailor (disguised as a man) who saw much combat on the high seas, a trafficker of human beings across the frontlines between warzones, and a smuggler of illegal and heretical literature before settling down to a life of innkeeping. Still, an actual magical tome is beyond the pale for her and she feels whoever it belongs to needs to be gotten rid of.

Decadence is nearing middle-age, is world-weary, impatient with people, and nobody's fool. Her primary concern will be her own safety and the preservation of her property. She's also on the lookout for a husband, since she does want a family, and anyone that seems humorless, capable of mass-murder, and well-organized will catch her eye.

She is a 2nd Level Fighter. Behind the bar she keeps a club and a wheellock blunderbuss filled with scattershot.

The Curse

Decadence must always be gripping something with at least one hand. It is not possible to break her grip if the other hand is not also grasping something. This is undeniable and absolute. If you cut off one of her hands, she could never let go, or be made to let go, of whatever she was holding in the other hand. Not without cutting off that other hand too, but the grip would still never open.

The physical strain created by this death grip is immense as her muscles unconsciously flex trying to physically accomplish what the enchantment is already doing.

The Tattoo

Decadence's tattoo allows for consideration and changing of the mind with regards to violence. The bearer of the tattoo is never able to do more than one hit point of damage in total in any round to any creatures or objects which can take hit point damage. The bearer can also never suffer more than one hit point of damage in a single round. The tattoo does not prevent or in any way affect effects which are not hit point related. Note that this applies liberally and creatively. If the bearer of the tattoo were to detonate a rather large gunpowder supply in the middle of a large crowd, the explosion would only do one hit point damage to a single person in the crowd, and that's it.

Decadence has accepted that the current situation is going to lead to someone's death, but she feels protected. If general mayhem and violence begins to break out, she will pass her tattoo on to whomever she perceives to be the most vulnerable person in the situation (which very well may be herself, meaning that she would not pass it on).



• DECADENCE FITZGERALD •

❖ MICHAEL GOMORRAH ❖

Father Michael Gomorrah is a Zero Level Catholic priest. He is extremely sincere in his faith, and knowledgeable about its history and dogma, and vigilant against corruption, supernatural or otherwise, since he has been unlucky enough to encounter it often in his life. He believes magic and the supernatural are by nature dangerous and evil and seeks to snuff it out wherever he encounters it.

When he discovered the book, just sitting on the floor under a table in the corner of the main room of the Name Drop Inn, he acted quickly because he felt he must to snuff out the evil it embodies. The owner of the inn was adamant that the book was not there before guests arrived (and if it was her book, she would not have it where the public could stumble upon it), and when questioning the other guests, it was Zak who reacted most strangely. Father Gomorrah knows the book could not possibly be Zak's, and is very much hoping that before anyone gets hurt, events conspire to clear up the truth of the situation.

He will question and prod and deduce as if he is some sort of Sherlock Holmes, but he all too often relies on "A wizard did it! Are you the wizard?" shortcuts in his thinking.

Father Gomorrah does not keep arms or armor, the only oddity among his possessions being the numerous bags of money in his travelling trunk. The coins total 2527sp in varying, mixed denominations. This is despite the fact that he does not carry a coin purse about his person.

The Curse

Michael is unable to spend, or in any way part with money. He is currently on the run, having basically stolen his church's collected donations, and has to beg, scam, and steal transportation, meals, and lodging as he travels. He hates himself for this, but cannot do anything about it, resulting in his always being visibly nervous and shift, and always very quick to deflect attention onto others.

The Tattoo

Michael's tattoo imposes a duty, as the current bearer must do everything in her power to protect the one who passed the tattoo from harm. Physical force or violence is not required to do this; the bearer gets to use their best judgment and if reason, rhetoric, or minimum necessary force is sufficient to prevent harm, then so much the better. If any permanent harm comes to the previous bearer by any means (including natural causes; old age must also be defended against!), the current bearer loses all Experience Points. If any harm is suffered by the previous bearer, even one hit point of damage, then the current bearer may gain no Experience Points that session. Even when the tattoo is passed on, the duty remains. One is forever the 'current bearer' when it comes to the duty to protect the one who passed on the tattoo to her.

Harm is meant here in physical terms. Insults or emotional damage are not counted, although loss of mental or physical capacity or autonomy does count. Imprisonment is not counted as harm as long as the prisoner is well provided for in terms of food, water, clean conditions, and exercise.

Michael is eager to divest himself of his tattoo, but realizes the power involved and so will be careful who he passes it on to. He will only pass the tattoo on if he is in imminent danger of harm, and in that case will pass the tattoo on to someone who seems to be both a capable defender, but most importantly a Christian, as he realizes the new tattoo bearer could be very motivated to escort him around for quite some time. (The previous bearer of Michael's tattoo died some time ago, but not being an adventurer, experience penalties really did not cause any problems.)



• MICHAEL GOMORRAH •

❖ THURSTON GALLOWAY HITCHENS ❖

Thurston is a 3rd Level Fighter with a +5 to-hit bonus for ranged attacks. He is currently unarmored and carries a sword, dagger, and pistol on him, but in his room are his armor (breastplate and buff coat) as well as his rifled flintlock rifle.

Hitchens is an assassin, a hit man, willing to take on any fight, eliminate any target, as long as the price is right. He is currently taking a break from his chosen profession for reasons that will soon be made clear...

He most notable physical feature is that he is cock-eyed, but he has learned to compensate and is actually quite the sharpshooter. Personality-wise he is normally quite jovial and looking to party, although lately he is withdrawn when there are women around.

Because he could not participate in punishing the 'guilty' in the current situation even if he wanted to, and because he cannot hear anything that either Decadence (the Inn's owner) or Mariana (the Knight of Science) says, Thurston stays very, very quiet during all of the proceedings here.

He will be favorable towards any effort to shift ownership of the book to Decadence or Mariana for the book if someone must be held responsible, but would be happy if someone would just destroy the book so that everyone can just forget about the whole thing.

The Curse

Thurston cannot hear anything a woman says, nor can he understand any non-verbal cues a woman might give. He normally goes well out of his way to avoid dealing with women. When he arrived at the Inn and saw it was being run by a woman, he slapped a generous amount of money down on the counter, rudely shouted, "Beer! Keep it coming!", and sat down, hoping his show of incivility would prevent any attempt at conversation or communication.

The Tattoo

Thurston's tattoo is simple in its totality towards conflict resolution. The tattoo's bearer cannot take any action which directly or indirectly stands any chance of harming anyone or any thing. It likewise prevents anyone or any thing from taking any action which directly or indirectly stands any chance of harming the bearer. Note that the bearer may be killed by environmental circumstances, but even mindless automatons such as undead, ambulatory robots (but not simple mechanical traps), and animated elemental spirits are considered to be imbued with enough self-determination to be affected by the tattoo.

Since Thurston is unable to practice his trade while bearing the tattoo, he is rather eager to be rid of it. He does not want to be exposed as being enchanted though, especially not in this crowd, but should anyone else reveal that they are cursed, or bearing a tattoo, or possesses any other magical ability, he will quite readily pass his tattoo on. He will prefer to pass his tattoo on to someone who is about to inflict violence in order to calm the situation down.



• THURSTON GALLOWAY HITCHENS •

❖ HITLER GUGGENHEIM HOROWITZ ❖

Horowitz is a German Jew, posing as a simple humble scholar. And he was, once upon a time. But the discovery of a bit of strange knowledge, curiosity into those truths which were discouraged, and a glimpse into the true nature of the cosmos led him to study the forbidden arts. Today he is a fully-fledged Magic-User (3rd Level), and obsessed with gaining more mystic power and knowledge.

While he is not so concerned about being exposed in the current situation, he would think it inconvenient, so as long as nobody is looking at him and discovers he is a wizard, that would be ideal. If he can abscond with the book in question, so much the better.

Horowitz's spellbook contains *Charm Person*, *Decision Paralysis*, *Enlarge*, *Floating Disc*, *Message*, *Spider Climb*, *Forget*, and *Invisibility*. He has *Charm Person*, *Decision Paralysis*, and *Forget* prepared.

Decision Paralysis

Magic-User Level 1

Duration: One Decision

Range: Line of Sight

This spell can be cast on anyone within line of sight of the caster, and they may save versus Paralyzation to resist its effects.

Anyone affected is unable to make their next decision. Whether or not to attack, who to attack, what to order from a menu, who to accuse of a crime, which corridor to travel down, whatever the nature of the decision, it is simply impossible for the subject of the spell to make a decision, so they will never take any action related to that decision, and will actively resist the efforts of anyone who tries to make the decision for them. If they can, they will simply abandon the situation associated with the decision, otherwise they will remain quite still, all but catatonic until there is another, different decision to make.

The Curse

Horowitz can only consume raw meat. Any other sort of nourishment, including any sort of drink including water, makes him physically ill. When in social situations, he will order a drink and pretend to drink it, but of course, never actually does.

If he does not eat within a 24-hour period, he becomes ravenously hungry and will become reckless and obvious in his quest to feast on fresh flesh. Squirrels if he can, small children if he must, but he has become partial to feasting on those that trouble him, even

while they are still alive... He was not always like this. I mean, being a wizard, he was always a bit strange and disconnected from people, but before acquiring the curse, he was never really cruel and in general, held no ill-intent towards anyone (well, possibly towards an academic rival, but certainly not towards anyone important). But once he was under the curse, he has certainly learned to both harbor and exhibit ill-will towards others – and even relish it. Now he would not have the curse removed even if he could.

At the moment when the Player Characters enter the Inn, Horowitz has not eaten for 23½ hours. He will be hungry very, very soon...

The Tattoo

Horowitz's tattoo makes it very costly to be violent towards the bearer. Anyone attacking the bearer of this tattoo has the opportunity to hit and do damage as normal, but hit or miss, the weapon used will shatter into a million pieces, destroyed forever. With missile weapons it is the delivery mechanism, not the actual missile, which is affected, so it is the gun or the bow, which is destroyed, not the bullet or the arrow. Mystic or otherwise 'indestructible' weapons or implements used to attack the bearer are affected like any other thing. Note that intent to do actual harm as well as inflicting harm is sufficient to meet the conditions and so destroy the implement or weapon used – a half-ass swing in order to destroy a thing does not count. And things which cannot, or do not, cause appreciable immediate harm cannot be manipulated so as to be destroyed this way. Sorry, you still have to throw that ring into a volcano.

If the weapon is part of the body (tooth, claw, fist, etc.), things get interesting. If the attacker is an automaton or in any way not alive, then the body part in question is destroyed utterly, shattered into a million bits. If it is part of a living creature, it does not literally explode, but causes such massive bone and/or tissue damage as to make the attacking body part completely useless. This causes no hit point damage, but the body part cannot be used for any purpose for 3d4 weeks until healed.

It is not bloody likely that Hitler will give up his tattoo, considering it does not constrain his actions any. Maybe he might trade it for the ability to run away with *An Analysis into the Nature of Man and the Satanic Power He Contains*, that seems like it contains incredible power.



• HITLER GUGGENHEIM HOROWITZ •

❖ BLACKIE RITCHMORE ❖

Ritchmore is a bard (and a 2nd Level Specialist), an aging troubadour making his living by entertaining others through singing and strumming his lute. He is both the epitome of the horny musician and a hopeless romantic. He seeks his one true love with whom he hopes to attempt to have dozens of children.

While he is more than competent at his job, he is rather slovenly. He is overweight, his clothes are stained and dishevelled (apart from his white boots, which he keeps immaculately clean and shined, and as long as they are so he ignores his other hygiene shortcomings), and while he does not want to grow a beard, he never bothers to keep up on his shaving either. He comes across as a real sleaze.

In the present situation, he is not exactly thrilled that the kid is being blamed, but he knows the minute he leaves this place he will not remember him anyway, and since it keeps the blame off him, why not?

The Curse

Blackie can never remember having met someone after they leave his sight. It does not matter how long they spend together, or what they have done together, once they leave his presence he will forget all about them and think them to be a complete stranger when next they meet.

He knows he is under the curse, and is actively seeking means of having it lifted. In the meantime, he will seem extraordinarily clingy towards anyone he likes, because he knows if they so much as leave the room, he will be unable to remember them anymore.

He is most interested in obtaining the Analysis book for himself. He does not actually know much about magic, but he is ever hopeful that any magic he does come across might have an answer to his current condition.

The Tattoo

Blackie's tattoo is just bizarre, as it believes that the threat of random violent escalation will motivate lesser beings to be less violent. Unfortunately, it does not very well work when those attacking the bearer do not know the consequences in advance...

When the bearer of this tattoo is attacked, whether the attack hits or not, the following round every being that is able to make an attack on the offender, will. Friend, foe, neutral, bystander, it does not matter. They will attack the one who dared attack the tattoo bearer using their most effective means.

If no one is available to attack the attacker the following round, then nothing immediate happens, but the most powerful being within a one day's journey will suddenly find themselves under a very powerful compulsion to immediately seek out the attacker, and when they do, make exactly one – no more, no less – attack against the bearer of the tattoo. Naturally, this must be the most potent attack that the powerful being possesses.

Blackie is likely to pass on his tattoo if there is an attractive woman in trouble. He will want to protect her by any means necessary.



• BLACKIE RITCHMORE •

❖ MARIANA TRENCH ❖

Mariana Trench is a Knight of Science, an order dedicated to the rooting out and destruction of all things magical, extra-dimensional, and supernatural. She is utterly dedicated and unbending in her mission, and as a Knight displays the typical haughtiness and dismissiveness necessary to execute her mission. Contradicting her opinion or refusing an order she gives will make her your enemy for all time.

She is a 5th Level Fighter, wears full plate armor, and carries several swords, daggers, and a halberd.

She wants to see everyone involved in magical affairs burned at the stake, and she wants the Analysis book destroyed at the first opportunity as well. Her current limitations prevent her from taking the lead (heads would literally have already rolled if she was not so curtailed), but she will support anyone willing to take violent action to restore the natural order.

The Curse

Mariana has a curse which distresses her to no end: She cannot harm anyone who has not harmed her. This has so proved to be inconvenient when it comes to carrying out her duties, as she is forced to let those she accused have a swing at her before she could act against them. Consequently, since she has been under the effects of the curse for some time, her body, if she ever took off her armor in front of others, would be revealed to be covered in a network of scars. She has also become something of a masochist. she is unable to properly perform her duties at all, and can only punish the wicked through proxies. She hates her life. So much evil to smite and she can no longer do it herself, nor can she be properly punished for her own sins.

The Tattoo

Mariana's tattoo was once the most powerful of them all: its bearer simply could not be harmed by any means natural, unnatural, intentional or not, but had no restrictions as to their own actions. But it has become damaged, and it now malfunctions.

The tattoo's bearer cannot be harmed by any intentional violence whatsoever. However, when attacked, the tattoo has a chance (a percentage equal to the to-hit roll of the attack) to short out the nervous system of the bearer, rendering them unconscious for 1d10 minutes. The bearer is still protected by the tattoo while unconscious, but attacks on the unconscious bearer still give the same chance to short out the nervous system, adding to the time the bearer will be unconscious.

Mariana desperately wants to be rid of this tattoo. She feels unworthy of its protection, is horrified that she is under the influence of magic in the first place, and is unable to feel the pain she craves and feels she deserves because of it. However, she recognizes its power and feels it can only be passed on to the most worthy, most innocent soul worthy of its protection.

Under normal circumstances it would be highly unlikely that she would ever consider someone innocent enough to justify this strong protection (not to mention she would feel like she was corrupting that innocence by involving them in magic), but... should she discover that absolutely everyone around her is mixed up in curses and magic tattoos, she will snap, pass the tattoo on to the most harmless person she thinks is not already in some way enchanted, and knock all the heads she possibly can, taking out months of frustration in an orgy of violence.

Given that all the other tattoos discourage violence in one way or another, should such a situation arise, it probably will not turn out so well for her, but then that will give her what she wants as well.



• MARIANA TRENCH •

❖ ANTONIO GALAHAD TRUMP ❖

Trump is a circus strongman, proud in his physical abilities (Strength 18!) and his physique. He simply does not understand why everyone is not as fit and as spectacular a physical specimen as he is, and as he is constantly inebriated he cannot help but be openly condescending and insulting to anyone overweight (Blackie), slight (Zak), or just generally unpleasant looking (Hitler). To him, appearance and physical robustness is everything.

He does not have a Class or Level, but because of his incredible condition, he has 22hp.

He is greatly distressed by the unfolding situation. Zak is part of his same circus troupe and although they have very little in the way of contact with each other (Trump would never be friends on even the most superficial level with someone so skinny), this is unlikely to be good for business. Of course, since his constant state of inebriation means his mind is never clear, Trump would not know what to do even if the situation was good for business, so he is just going along with whatever the majority says so the whole thing will hopefully end soon, and then he can get back to his drinking.

The Curse

Trump is unable to absorb calories or nutrients from non-alcoholic sources. He can eat and drink whatever he likes, but it will all pass, undigested. Only alcohol stays. And since he is a weight lifter and body builder, he requires a massive amount of calories to maintain his size and strength. So, he must booze it up, constantly, during his waking hours. He has not been sober for years. His liver resembles a shoggoth's anus and probably won't last much longer; his lifespan will be measured in months if he cannot lift this curse.

The Tattoo

Antonio's tattoo believes there is strength in numbers. Whenever the bearer of this tattoo takes any damage, from the wound pops out a miniature (12-inches tall) naked simulacra of the tattoo bearer, one for every hit point of damage taken.

These simulacra have one Hit Die, and one hit point each. They have all of the intellect, memories, skills, and special abilities of their bearer at the point they were formed. They have their own will and autonomy, but will be loyal to and defend their 'host' to the best of their ability. After they are created, they are permanent beings with natural lifespans.

Antonio is not really enamored with his tattoo, and he is kind of annoyed that there are at this point dozens of miniature versions of him around the continent (he releases them to their own independent lives after the circumstances which caused their creation has been dealt with), but he is not so sure that anyone else would want it either. If there is someone who seems like they have a good solution to the current situation that does not involve murder or general condemnation, Antonio will ask them, "Do you want some help? There is strength in numbers, you know." and if that offer is accepted, he will pass the tattoo on to that person.



• ANTONIO GALAHAD TRUMP •

GAMEPLAY

This will be a very messy adventure to run. There are eight people in the middle of a tense situation, and the Player Characters have no reason to take any action, so it is very difficult to give advice on how play will proceed after the situation has been established. But players generally want to be proactive, so you will need to be on your toes and ready for however they want to play the situation out.

You will surely notice that non-essential information has been left out. Their exact equipment and how much money they have, who has horses in the barn, and so on, are unimportant to the matter at hand so we have not provided those details.

As envisioned, and played, this is a drama. The Player Characters enter the Inn, see this situation, learn what is going on, and then begin investigating to find the truth. But the answer they are likely to want to find, who owns the book, does not exist. Nobody here has ever seen the book before. There are though, other secrets that come out as everyone's curses creates some bizarre behavior that will raise the players' suspicions, and conflicting motivations amongst those present means that certain decisions will have to be made. At a certain point opposing parties will not compromise, and violence breaks out, and that is when things are likely to descend to violence.

Or maybe the players will immediately resort to violence (or force the issue, for example, by simply snatching up the book). At this point the situation should descend into farce, as all the tattoos' effects come into force and combat becomes very, very weird. Whatever the final situation, it is unlikely to be clean and easy. With even an average-sized game group, there will be a dozen moving parts, with eight of those parts each having at least two unique enchantments. Literally anything can happen.

But for best results, make sure you have Gomorrah and Trench stress how dangerous and powerful the book is, because having the Player Characters walk away with the book and the intention of using it will be so sweet for your campaign.

AN ANALYSIS INTO THE NATURE OF MAN AND THE SATANIC POWER HE CONTAINS

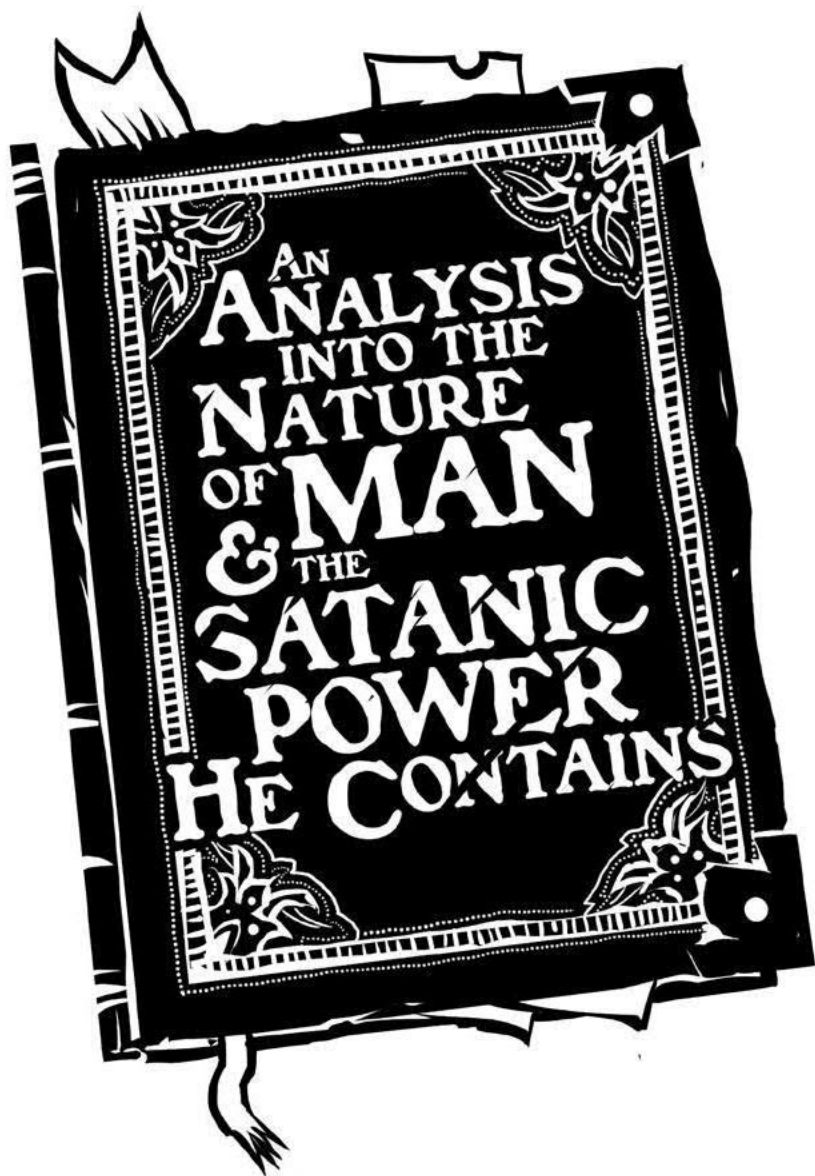
This forbidden tome contains a number of spells and other eldritch knowledge.

As far as spells, it contains seven 1st Level, four 2nd Level, two 3rd Level, one 4th Level, and one 5th level spell, determined randomly.

It also contains one spell each of 2nd, 3rd, 4th, 5th, and 6th Levels, randomly determined, but these spells are formulated so they can be learned, and prepared, as a spell one Level lower.

There are also two unique spells to be found in the book. The first will be visible and available to anyone reading the book. The other will always be hidden and anyone preparing spells from this book (including spells transcribed from this spellbook into a caster's own) will never know they are also preparing this one.

The book is invisible when closed unless there are more than six people present.



• THE BOOK •

Summon Petohtalrayn the Equalizer of Ignominy and Humiliation

Magic-User Level 1

Duration: See Below

Range: 10'

This spell summons a being known as Petohtalrayn who will wipe from existence a single being, known as the 'doomed', as designated by the caster. It opens a dimensional rift, inviting Petohtalrayn (so named because every utterance of it gives a certain other cosmic figure the equivalent of a wart*) into our world. At the beginning of the round following the casting of the spell, the rift opens. At the beginning of the second round after the spell is cast, Petohtalrayn appears and the caster must vocalize her wishes during this round. At the beginning of the third round, Petohtalrayn performs his assigned task. At the beginning of the fourth round, it retreats back through the rift. And then, finally, at the start of the fifth round, the rift closes. At the start of the turn following the spell's casting, The Price is then paid.

Petohtalrayn is a human-sized physical being of some formidability (Armor 37, 26 Hit Dice), but possesses the unique ability to instantly end the existence of mortal beings. The caster simply needs to identify someone within sight of both the caster and Petohtalrayn, and they will be destroyed, no saving throw. The method of their destruction will be of Petohtalrayn's choosing, and may be important when determining what remains and what can be looted from the doomed soul.

DOOM OF PETOHTALRAYN (ID12)

1 Alien light tentacles emerge from the rift and pull the target through into Petohtalrayn's home dimension.

2 The doomed one's arm bones rip out of their skin, and still connected at the shoulders, strangle the doomed.

3 The doomed's blood multiples in volume one hundredfold, causing them to burst (and doing 1d6 damage to anyone within 30' from the force of the explosion).

4 The doomed's eyeballs grow legs, remove themselves from their sockets, crawl into the doomed's mouth, and expand in her throat until she chokes.

5 The doomed suffers explosive diarrhoea of such power that she shoots one thousand feet into the air. If there is a ceiling before that, she is smashed flat against it; if not, at one thousand feet altitude she explodes like the Challenger in a cloud of faeces.

6 The doomed vaporizes, with only the brain, voice box, lungs, and mouth left remaining. It takes this tissue 1d10 rounds to die, and it screams the entire time. Any hearing these screams must save versus Magic (only one save necessary for the entire duration) or do anything possible to pierce their own eardrums to stop the hideous noise.

7 The doomed's teeth, gums, and tongue turn to fragile glass which shatters into a million razor-sharp pieces. The doomed's palate and neck are instantly shredded and she bleeds out.

8 The doomed's stomach lining dries up, and the stomach acid intensifies in potency. The doomed's gut and groin begin leaking viscous, toxic sludge and she dies in utter agony.

9 The doomed's skin expands to take up a one square mile area. The doomed is unable to move or act in any way. She can breathe, but the transport of oxygen through the bloodstream is so inefficient that the edges of the skin turn necrotic almost instantly, with gangrene advancing so quickly that she will die long before she can starve to death.

10 The doomed's lungs fill with razor-sharp metal shavings; the ensuing coughing fit shred the doomed's windpipe, throat, and mouth.

11 The doomed's facial skin peels off and crawls down the throat, choking the doomed.

12 The doomed's gametes multiply a millionfold, and the doomed's lower abdomen explodes as they are buried in the stuff.

(Modify as necessary for beings without human anatomy/anatomical processes.)

If for some reason the caster is unable to identify a target for Petohtalrayn to destroy on the assigned round (say, they take any damage before their turn on initiative that round), Petohtalrayn will be annoyed at being summoned for no good reason and Doom the caster.



• PETOHTALRAYN •
• THE EQUALIZER OF SORROWS •

The Price will be paid by the caster to end the spell. The effect cannot be avoided, cannot be mitigated. Effects are cumulative in case some idiot summons Petohtalrayn more than once.

THE PRICE (1D12)

- 1 A random ability score loses 1d4 points.
- 2 A random limb withers to the point of utter uselessness.
- 3 The caster's spellbook bursts into flame; all spells are lost.
- 4 The caster's radius and fibula lengthen by 50%; the caster's movement rate is lowered by 50% and Dexterity bonus lowered by 1d4 points.
- 5 The caster's lungs are seared; permanent hit points are lowered by 1 per Level of the caster, and all future hit point gains upon gaining a new Level are lowered by one.
- 6 The caster's mind burns, and forevermore she can cast one less spell per day of the highest-Level spell she can normally cast (minimum zero).
- 7 The caster develops a debilitating illness. At the beginning of every month, the caster loses 1 point from a random ability score. When an ability score goes below 3 the caster becomes an invalid. When an ability score goes to 0 she dies.
- 8 The caster's eyes develop a deep red glow, visible even when her eyes are closed. This makes it the caster extremely visible in the dark, and retards the caster's own vision in both dark and low-light (i.e. torch- and lantern-lit conditions) conditions, where she has only half normal visibility.
- 9 The caster's back grows knobby and twisted. Standard armor cannot be worn (custom armor costs 50% more), and backpacks count double for encumbrance purposes.
- 10 The caster suffers incredible fatigue, and requires 50% more rest/sleep every night before preparing spells.

Anyone who goes through the rift is lost.

* This entity knows why this happens, but not who causes any particular incident... until face-to-face with a being who has ever uttered the name "Petohtalrayn". You do not want to meet the entity if you have ever said this name.



Ruin

Magic-User Level x (see below)

Duration: Instant

Range: 0'

Ruin is a "spell virus." A spell virus is a spell, or other effect, which is hidden in a spellbook. It can be connected to a specific spell in a book, or to every spell in a book. Spell viruses are not detected when a spellbook is read, but come into effect whenever a spell is prepared from the spellbook. If the spell has been transcribed into another spellbook, the virus goes along with it, and remains in effect when the spell is prepared from the new spellbook.

Do note that if a spell infected with a spell virus is transcribed into an existing spellbook, the virus does not infect any of the other spells already there.

Spell viruses can only be detected if the Magic-User effectively researches an infected spell already in the spellbook from scratch with the specific purpose of searching for the virus. Detecting the virus in one spell does not detect it in any others. Spell viruses cannot be eliminated, but once the virus has been discovered, the spell can then be re-researched from scratch, this time leaving out the virus. No, dealing with spell viruses is not a fast, convenient, or fun undertaking.

Ruin is automatically secretly prepared when a Magic-User prepares any spell from the Analysis book (or that has been transcribed from the same). It is prepared as the highest-Level spell the Magic-User is able to prepare, but does not take its own spell slot, nor does it take extra time to prepare. It simply invisibly inserts itself into the Magic-User's brain. When the Magic-User casts the highest-Level spell she is able to cast, *Ruin* is cast instead.

When the spell is cast, a sparkling energy sphere appears before the caster, and then electrical shards burst forth, attaching themselves to every physical being within 50'. Each being loses 50% of their current hit points (no saving throw to avoid the effect; keep track of how many hit points in total has been drained from everyone) and the sphere explodes. Then things go badly.

Select one of the random beings that has had their hit points drained. This unfortunate soul takes the initial brunt of the energy blast. Roll 1d10 × 10% to determine what percentage of the total lost hit points this being suffers in damage (save versus Breath Weapon for half damage, but if the save is made, the damage avoided is not removed from the pool of

stored hit point energy). If it was less than 100%, then move on to another random target, randomly determining what percentage of the remaining stored hit point energy the target suffers in damage, until 100% of the drained hit points has been expended as damaging energy. If all potential targets have been cycled through and all of the energy has not been expended, then go through all of the targets again until it has.

Anyone reduced to zero hit points is completely vaporized, including any equipment carried.

The casting of *Ruin* does not expend the spell the Magic-User was originally intending to cast, and *Ruin* will not again be cast until an infected spell is freshly prepared by the Magic-User.

CANTERBURY'S TALES

If Zachary Canterbury survives the incident, he will be forever grateful to the Player Characters... even if they were hostile towards him, as he feels he was surely doomed if they had arrived at the inn and come to his aid. He will tell them that he has stashed away valuables in various places. As an insecure hanger-on, he will only tell the player characters about each stash one at a time, so they have to keep him around. Roll randomly on the table below to see which one he offers up next.

Of course, he cannot remember exactly how valuable each stash is, and it will turn out that none of his safe places are quite as secure as he thought.

Each stash will be some sort of gem or jewellery worth 1d30 × 1d20 × 1d10sp (50sp minimum). Make the roll in front of the players at the time a particular stash is uncovered so even if the current one is not very valuable, they know how potentially valuable the rest might be.

- 1 He left a gem with a farmer's daughter for safekeeping. Unfortunately, she later married a local Lord and he now has the gem mounted on a ring he always wears.
- 2 He left a stash with 'some old buddies' in a large town. What he neglects to mention (he has legitimately forgotten) is that they were very organized criminals and he gave it to them to settle gambling debts. They will not be amused at the idea that they should give it back.
- 3 *"I hide one under a flagstone in a church!"* It was actually in a tomb underneath the church, and the sarcophagus was open because the local archbishop had just died, and he was to be laid to rest there later that day. The tomb has long since been sealed.
- 4 He fed one to a local dog, *"with some Arabian herbs to make sure it doesn't pass. We just need to catch the dog and feed it some Indian herbs and it'll poop it right out!"* The dog was a large hunting dog belonging to a rural farmer... who will report that the dog became bewitched (the day after Zak was there, coincidentally) and grew large, monstrous, and vicious, killing the rest of the pack and now terrorizing the countryside.

- 5 He buried one under a tree in the middle of a village. The village has since been abandoned, all vegetation in the area completely dead. The treasure is still there, but is actually a Colour Out of Space. ("Hmm, I recall I was ill when I got it, and got better after stashing it under the tree.")
- 6 He cut out some pages in a book kept at the Monk's Abbey, a village pub, and stashed the treasure there. *"The barkeep kept a shelf of books behind the bar just for decoration for the theme, of course nobody there reads them."* The owner has since died, and the new management has rebranded the pub, donating all the books to the nearest city's university library, which contains over 40,000 books. If asked he will reply, "Uh, no, I don't remember the title of the book."
- 7 He swapped a stone used by an urban street hustler in his shell game. *"We just have to win, and we get the stone. Easy!"* The stone substituted was recognized as having been stolen by the local crime boss, and have lookouts around the hustler waiting for Zak's return...
- 8 He buried one next to a very recognizable rock in a field outside a village. Unfortunately, there has been a landslide, with hundreds of similarly-sized rocks, and Zak will be unable to recognize if any of them was the original.
- 9 He stashed one in a very sensible place: In a bank! Unfortunately, it is a very high-class bank used to working with joint-stock companies, governments, and incredibly wealthy individuals; they were taking advantage of poor Zak when they accepted his deposit. To retrieve his item, the bank will require fees equalling 1d4 × 1000sp to first be paid.
- 10 *"Oh, I put one in a box and threw it into a lake!"* But now the lake is frozen... even if it is high summer.

Motivation Cheat Sheet

<i>Zachary</i>	Get out alive!
<i>Decadence</i>	Get out of the situation with minimum bloodshed and minimum damage or impact on her business. To keep Michael satisfied and Mariana pacified.
<i>Michael</i>	Root out the danger and neutralize the responsible parties.
<i>Thurston</i>	To lay low and be unnoticed, but if everything goes to hell, unload his tattoo.
<i>Hitler</i>	To gain the book for himself and get out without being noticed (especially by Mariana) or implicated.
<i>Blackie</i>	Get out without blame. Avoid scrutiny from Michael or Mariana.
<i>Mariana</i>	Destroy all involved with magical activity with maximum prejudice. Destroy the book at all costs. Will force choices from those around her. Someone must be punished.
<i>Antonio</i>	Get out of the situation safely. Not be on Mariana's bad side.

Tattoo and Curse Cheat Sheet

NPC	TATTOO	CURSE
<i>Zachary</i>	Cannot take any action which would harm the previous tattoo bearer.	Always believes everything said to him
<i>Decadence</i>	Cannot suffer 1hp from an attack or inflict more than 1hp in an attack.	Must always be holding something in one hand.
<i>Michael</i>	Must protect the previous bearer of the tattoo.	Cannot spend or part with any money in his possession.
<i>Thurston</i>	Cannot take any action which would directly, or indirectly, harm anyone or any thing.	Cannot hear anything a woman says, or understand her non-verbal cues.
<i>Hitler</i>	Any weapon used to attack him, successfully or unsuccessfully, shatters.	Can only consume raw meat and must do so once per 24 hours or be ravenously hungry.
<i>Blackie</i>	Attacks against him force everyone around him to attack the first attacker.	Forgets everyone after they leave his sight.
<i>Mariana</i>	Cannot be harmed by any intentional violence whatsoever.	Cannot harm anyone who has not harmed her.
<i>Antonio</i>	When hit, creates a miniature, simulacra of the tattoo bearer.	Can only absorb calories or nutrients from alcoholic sources.

CHRONOLOGY OF EVENTS, IN CASE THE PLAYER CHARACTERS INTERROGATE THOSE PRESENT:

The Morning: Decadence wakes up and does the daily chores. Nobody stayed at the Inn the night before, so the place was otherwise empty.

Late morning: Others start showing up. First Blackie, asking for permission to play for tips later on. Then Michael, Hitler, Antonio, and Thurston in that order. They all ordered drinks, with Antonio drinking heavily. Nobody has been near the corner where the book is later discovered. Mariana then shows up and everyone gets very nervous with a Knight of Science around. (The book becomes visible at this point, but nobody notices.) Finally, Zak arrives, and as Blackie is playing at this point already Zak begins dancing around and showing off his acrobatic and contortion skills. He ends up doing tricks on top of the table, and that is when people notice the book under the table.

Mariana stepped up, but let Michael take the lead in finding out what the book was, and since Zak was the only one who went anywhere near where the book was discovered, he was blamed. (Decadence put on a strong front, spouting Puritanical pronouncements to convince everyone she was a woman of God and so would neither be found owning this book or be lax enough to just have it out where anyone could have seen it.)

Michael, backed up by Mariana, demands bloody punishment be carried against the individual who brought such a blasphemous tome into the inn or who was its owner. Everyone agrees that this is a fitting punishment, and nobody wants the finger pointed at them, but nobody is exactly comfortable with the fact that Zak is being blamed for it, because obviously the large book did not simply just fall out of his tights while he was doing handstands. Condemnations and positioning have taken about half an hour before the Player Characters come upon the scene.

You will have to improvise from here.

Good luck. Enjoy.

He really doesn't.

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