

BIG PUPPET

PRESENTATION
of the
GAME PRINCE
ADVENTURES



A. ALFREY * A. FINCH * A. MAYO

18+

LAMENTATIONS
of the
FLAME PRINCESS
ADVENTURES

BIG
PUPPET

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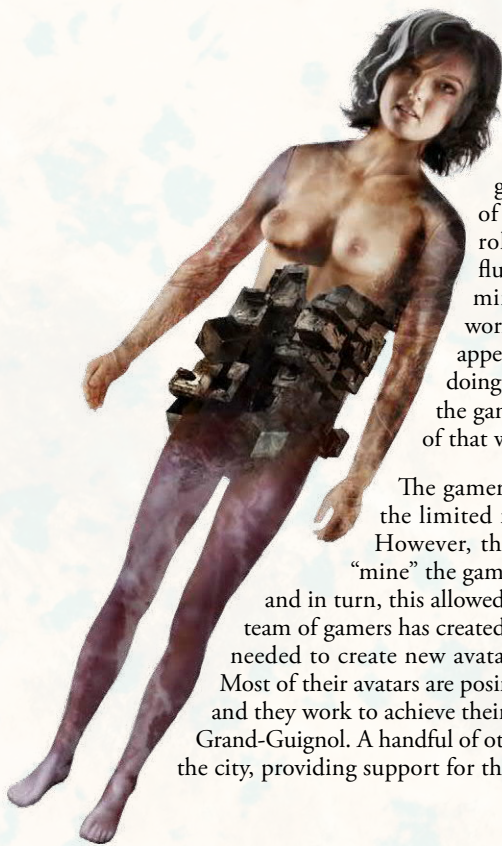
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INTRODUCTION

TO THE ADVENTURE



On an alternate Earth in a dimension slightly different from the one we know, a civilization arose that developed advanced gaming technology. Using that technology, a group of gamers began to beta-test the premiere edition of a cutting-edge massively multiplayer online role playing game. Somehow, through an odd fluke of physics (or perhaps masterful programming), the game became connected to another world. The avatars of the other-dimensional gamers appeared on that world, and unaware that they were doing anything other than playing a marvelous game, the gamers began to exploit the people and resources of that world for their own recreational ends.

The gamer-avatars were small in number at first due to the limited number of players invited into the beta-test. However, the nature of the game encouraged players to “mine” the gaming world for the means to create new avatars, and in turn, this allowed even more gamers to join in the game. Now a team of gamers has created an elaborate means of gathering the resources needed to create new avatars within a major city on the gaming world. Most of their avatars are posing as part of a theatrical troupe within the city, and they work to achieve their goals from within the so-called Theatre of the Grand-Guignol. A handful of other gamer-avatars roam the countryside around the city, providing support for the main group in different ways.

DRAMATIS PERSONAE

THE MARIONNETTISTES

The gamers, dubbed the Marionnettistes by their in-game arch-nemesis, [Pierre DuPont](#), are out of phase with the player characters' reality. They can only interact with it by using their "puppets," interfaces that resemble humans or other creatures, but are really just organic constructs that carry out the gamers' will in the characters' world.

While the gamers are careful to never break character "in-game," their personal communications with each other are full of terms that are recognizable by MMORPG players. For instance, magic use is seen as altering the underlying structure of their game world, and is referred to as using a "cheat code." The puppets are considered "avatars" or "PCs," and when the Marionnettistes' puppets are regenerating from an attack, they are "respawning." The characters' world is even referred to as a MUD (Multi User Dungeon). Also, like gamers in the modern world, they don't perceive the characters and creatures in their game as truly alive, so they feel they can treat them in any manner they see fit.



THE PUPPETS

Each puppet or avatar is created and controlled by a special **biocontrol unit**. Such a unit grants the puppet that it resides within great physical powers. For instance, humanoid puppets are stronger than the average human of the same apparent age category, and many of them have unique physical modifications that can give them an edge in combat. All the puppets are immune to non-magical poisons, and they also don't even really need to eat, as they absorb nutrition directly from the environment. However, puppets can ingest and process food and drink if they need to blend into a social setting. Finally, and perhaps most importantly, as long as a **biocontrol unit** is in contact with a puppet's body, the puppet can heal at a rate of 1 hit point per round. Acid and fire damage can greatly slow this regeneration, reducing the rate to 1 hit point per turn. The only way to completely halt the regenerative process is to remove the **biocontrol unit** from the body of a puppet, and even then the **biocontrol unit** can begin reforming an amorphous body mass the size of a human hand from the microorganisms in the environment around it in only a single turn. Such a small mass has no initial offensive capability, but can move much like an amoeba, and will attempt to slither away in secret from any foes that have taken the **biocontrol unit** into their possession.

The gamers don't feel the pain inflicted upon their avatars' bodies, and thus are not typically afraid of committing their puppets to combat. Given that the avatars can regenerate from most forms of damage, gamers will often just let them "die" rather than run away from deadly situations, and threats or acts of torture directed at the avatars are treated with contempt.

The console that the gamers use to play is of such advanced design that it allows each one of them to control up to 5 puppets at once. Each group of puppets (called a "Hand" by [Pierre DuPont](#)) shows personality traits specific to the gamer that runs them. As they are controlled by the same mind, each puppet in one particular Hand knows what the other puppets in its Hand knows. Puppets belonging to the same Hand are never in disagreement with each other, and tactics executed by those within one Hand are always perfectly coordinated. Four gamers and, thus, four Hands, are in operation in the area of the city. Others may be in operation in other parts of the world at the Referee's discretion.

It should be noted that the Marionnettistes do not spend all their time playing the game, and so when things seem to be at a lull, they turn their attention elsewhere. At this time, their puppets either enter into a "screen saver" mode where they perform actions in a repeating manner or they go into "sleep" mode where they simply fall into a dormant state. When they are in these states, it will take 1d10 rounds before a gamer notices their puppets are in any form of distress. The Marionnettistes are aware of this weakness, and so have set up a rotation where they "play" at different hours each day to insure at least one group of puppets is active and aware in the game world at any given time. All puppet groups are always active immediately before, during, and after a performance in the Theatre of the Grand-Guignol. Gamers will also break from their standard active playing patterns at other times if they feel the situation in the game world demands it.



Amorphous mass

Armor 12, Move 60', 1 Hit Die, 3hp, no attacks, Morale 12.
Regenerates 1 hit point per round. Immune to poison.





The Usher's Hand

The puppets of the “Usher’s Hand” (again, so dubbed by [Pierre DuPont](#)) are quiet observers, guards, and enforcers. They are more reserved than the puppets in the other Hands, but take decisive action when needed. They are most active from early morning until the early evening.

EDWIN and **LOUISE MCCLELLAN** are the strongest and most durable of the humanoid puppets. They are hairless, oversized, and misshapen, but can still pass for (very ugly) humans. They were the first human-like puppets fashioned by the Marionnettistes, and the first used to explore human domains. The gamers have noted how the pair repulse onlookers, so they are rarely brought out into public. In *mêlée*, they can strike twice per round with their powerful fists. They rarely carry any items of extraordinary value or money. They are rarely placed into “sleep mode;” when their gamer is inactive they are often set to “screen saver mode” where they repeat a regular patrol pattern around the first floor of the theatre complex. The thought behind this is that their lumbering forms could intimidate would-be thieves despite being totally insensate to their surroundings.



Edwin

Armor 12, Move 90', 3 Hit Dice, 16hp,
fist 1d2+3, fist 1d2+3, Morale 12.
Regenerates 1 hit point per round. Immune
to poison.

Louise

Armor 12, Move 90', 3 Hit Dice, 18hp,
fist 1d2+3, fist 1d2+3, Morale 12.
Regenerates 1 hit point per round. Immune
to poison.

BRIDGETTE is a puppet in the form of a dog. However, it is insidiously different from a typical canine. Covered in symbiotic lab-created organisms called **hairasites** instead of hair, it can change coat color and type so as to appear as different dog breeds as suits its needs.

Hidden in its tongue is a micro-syringe filled with deadly poison. A human marked for death by the Marionnettistes may be singled out by **Bridgette** in some common area away from the theatre. In such an encounter, it will seek to lick the face and hands of the person in a friendly way. If its advances are accepted, the dog's saliva contains an anesthetic that masks the prick of the needle as it enters the human's flesh multiple times over the course of the encounter. A character so injected must make

a save versus Poison or die in 1d4 turns. The poison is designed to be untraceable by human standards, and the person that succumbs to it appears to have had a sudden and seemingly natural heart attack. **Bridgette** is a guardian and frequent companion of **James** from the Manager's Hand. When in a dormant state, it is often found in the theatre's nursery.

If it is attacked, **Bridgette's** **hairasite** fur transforms into a quill mane not unlike that of a porcupine, so traditional *mêlée* attacks that succeed against it using weapons of medium size or smaller cause the attacker to take damage in return. In *mêlée*, **Bridgette** may choose to simply bite rather than deliver a poison lick. Its bite does not allow for an effective dose of poison to be delivered in the time it hits, so no saving throw is required.

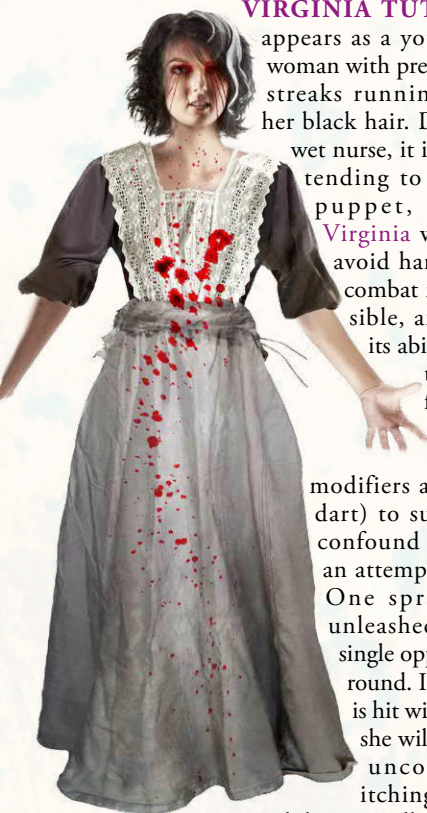


Bridgette

Armor 13, Move 120', 2 Hit Dice, 6hp, bite 1d4, Morale 12.

Regenerates 1 hit point per round. **Hairasite** quill defense does 1d3 damage to any opponent making a successful *mêlée* attack with a weapon of medium or smaller size.

Quill damage leaves behind 1 clump of **hairasites**. Poison tongue requires save versus Poison or die in 1d4 turns. Immune to poison.



VIRGINIA TUTTERING

appears as a young, petite woman with premature grey streaks running through her black hair. Dressed as a wet nurse, it is often seen tending to the infant puppet, **Beatrice**.

Virginia will seek to avoid hand-to-hand combat if at all possible, and will use its ability to spray toxic blood from its eyes (using the same range modifiers as a thrown dart) to surprise and confound enemies in an attempt to escape. One spray can be unleashed against a single opponent each round. If a character is hit with the spray, she will experience uncontrollable itching (-1 to hit

and damage rolls, movement rate cut in half) until the blood is washed away. In its dormant state, **Virginia** can be found rocking away in a chair within the theatre nursery. **Virginia**'s purse contains 30sp.

JOSEPH HARMONY

appears as a somewhat average-looking middle-aged man with a slight potbelly and graying hair. It acts as a general body servant to the troupe, running errands and doing other necessary tasks in public. During shows, it acts as ticket-taker and usher.

In combat, it prefers to act as a sniper. If in possession of its flintlock musket, it will use the weapon to fire the super-hard eggs of a **shot-beetle** into its foes. When traveling outside the city, on



patrol in the theatre, or otherwise readied for battle, **Joseph** typically carries its musket, a bag with 50 **shot-beetle** eggs, a powder horn, a jar of 10 **silencer worms**, and a 12 Apostles bandolier. If **Joseph** has just visited the **Miner**, it will be carrying 1d3 x 500sp in its pack. If simply on a normal run into town, it will be carrying 5d20sp on its person. **Joseph** often patrols the halls of the theatre living quarters while in its dormant state.



Virginia

Armor 11, Move 120', 2 Hit Dice, 8hp, by weapon +1, Morale 12.

Regenerates 1 hit point per round. Immune to poison. Spray toxic blood from eyes.

Joseph

Armor 11, Move 90', 2 Hit Dice, 9hp, musket shot 1d8, musket bash 1d6+1, Morale 12.

Regenerates 1 hit point per round. Immune to poison. Uses **shot-beetle** ammunition.

The Hand of the Thespian

The puppets belonging to the **Hand of the Thespian** are eccentric and creative. While all the puppets can behave in a sociopathic manner, these seem particularly cruel in their demeanor. Each puppet in the **Hand of the Thespian** has also replaced its hair with **hairasites**, allowing the puppets to alter their hairstyles and appearance on a whim. The **hairasites** also afford them the ability to fashion impromptu weaponry if they are cornered.

The **Hand of the Thespian** is currently most active from mid-evening until early morning. This group was once known for circulating among the general populace of the city, often joining in at gatherings held at local inns and taverns. However, since the mysterious disappearance of their fifth member, they have become reclusive and rarely venture outside the theatre. They now spend most of their free time in the biology labs examining specimens brought in by the **Trapper**.

JESSICA and **ROSE MACDUFF** appear to be identical sisters. However, **Jessica** is light in complexion while **Rose** is dusky. Their hairstyles vary daily with their whims, and often emulate the hottest current trends. In *mêlée* they can attack with scourges woven from the **hairasites** on their scalp. Both rarely carry money on their persons these days, but they both like to wear jewelry. **Jessica** will often be found grooming its hair or trying on clothes in a repeating pattern in its quarters while in a dormant state. **Rose** will be in its bed while lying dormant. Each will have some 5d100sp worth of jewelry in its possession.



Jessica and Rose

Armor 11, Move 120', 2 Hit Dice,
9hp, **hairasite** scourge 1d3+1,
Morale 12.

Scourge damage leaves behind 1
clump of **hairasites**, Regenerates
1 hit point per round. Immune to
poison.

ZACHARY WELKINS and **SAMUEL MCLEAY** appear as young men. **Samuel** sports a goatee and dirty blond locks, while **Zachary** has a long, well-groomed beard underneath brown curls. **Samuel** prefers to use the sword cane it likes to carry at its side, but if disarmed will pull **hairasites** from its scalp and use them in spiked fist attacks in *mêlée*. **Zachary** will tear its considerable beard from its face to form a **hairasite** club to use in battle. **Zachary** and **Samuel** are usually found in bed in their

quarters while lying dormant. Neither typically carry money on their person, although **Samuel's** sword cane is valued at 150sp.

The missing 5th puppet of the group was called *Benet DeGranmont*. Its body has been destroyed by **Pierre DuPont**, and its **bio-control unit** rests in his lab within a vat of growth-inhibiting fluid that prevents it from reconstituting a new body.



Samuel

Armor 11, Move 120', 2 Hit Dice, 11hp, **hairasite**-spiked fist 1d3+1, cane sword 1d6+1, Morale 12. Punch damage leaves behind 1 clump of **hairasites**.

Regenerates 1 hit point per round. Immune to poison.

Zachary

Armor 11, Move 120', 2 Hit Dice, 12hp, **hairasite** club 1d4+1, Morale 12. Club damage leaves behind 1 clump of **hairasites**. Regenerates 1 hit point per round. Immune to poison.

The Manager's Hand

The Manager's Hand is responsible for overseeing the tactical and strategic goals of gamers. It seems to be the most welcoming and friendly of the Hands, and often acts as the social face of the gamers within the city, welcoming dignitaries to the theatre, negotiating for goods and services with outsiders, and attending public events. They are typically active from late morning until late evening.

"UNCLE" WILLIAM LABOEUF appears as a dapper middle-aged gentleman with dirty blonde hair. It is in charge of negotiating business deals for the troupe, and is seen as the main financial backer of the theatre's programs. The deed to the Theatre of the Grand-Guignol rests in its name. William carries a tin of snuff laced with bacteria that renders those it infects vulnerable to suggestion. In negotiations, the snuff is proffered to the potential target, and if accepted, the character who inhales it must save versus Poison or be rendered into a compliant, docile state for 1d4 turns. In combat, William may blow the contents of the tin into the face of an aggressor (using standard attack roll in *mêlée* range) in an attempt to cause her to lose her will to press the attack. In its dormant state, Uncle William will often appear to be going over a ledger in its quarters. Uncle William usually has 6d20sp in its possession.



Uncle William

Armor 11, Move 120', 2 Hit Dice, 10hp, by weapon+1, Morale 12.

Regenerates 1 hit point per round. Immune to poison.

Carries snuff that removes the will to fight (save versus Poison).



JEAN-GUI and **MARIELLE MASSON** portray a husband and wife. They are well-known among social circles of the nouveau riche, and are often in attendance at important public events and parties.

Jean-Gui seems to be a man of late middle-age with thinning brown hair and a coarse, short-cropped beard. When prepared for battle, it carries a brace of flintlock pistols, each loaded with **shot-beetle** eggs rather than traditional shot. *Jean-Gui* will often appear to be reading a book in its quarters during its dormant period. *Jean-Gui* carries 3d20sp on its person.



Jean-Gui

Armor 11, Move 120', 2 Hit Dice, 10hp, pistol shot 1d8 or by mêlée weapon +1, Morale 12. Regenerates 1 hit point per round. Immune to poison. Uses **shot-beetle** ammunition.



Marielle is a short, plump figure with long blonde hair. It has the bearing of a woman some 5 months pregnant, and if attacked, it can spontaneously give birth to bat-winged baby drones. The drone normally has animal-level intelligence, and it will act to defend its “mother” by swooping in to bite its foes with its oversized fangs. The act of birthing takes 1 round, and releases a gush of fluid that can make footing treacherous for all in a 10 foot radius (any rapid movement across or on this surface requires a character to save versus Paralyzation or fall prone). *Marielle* can produce these drones at a rate of 1 every five rounds. In a particularly desperate situation, *Marielle* can shift its **biocontrol unit** from its body into that of a drone in an attempt to escape attackers. *Marielle*’s adult body falls into a dormant state as soon as such a drone is birthed.

This drone gains the poison resistance and regenerative ability of *Marielle*’s old body. During its dormant period, *Marielle* usually appears to be knitting some amorphous bit of clothing in a chair within its quarters. *Marielle* usually carries some 2d20sp in its purse, and wears jewelry of 2d100sp in value.



Marielle

Armor 11, Move 90', 2 Hit Dice,
8hp, by weapon +1, Morale 12.
Regenerates 1 hit point per round.

Immune to poison.

Can spawn flying “drone babies” at a
rate of 1 every 5 rounds.

Drone Baby

Armor 15, Move 120' (flying), 1 Hit
Die, 3hp, bite 1d3, Morale 12.



JAMES MASSON is in the shape of a 2 and ½ year-old boy. While not as physically powerful as the other puppets, it is just as mentally adept as any of the others in the Manager's Hand. It puts on a passable show as a real boy when in the company of outsiders, but acts with assertiveness and experience when alone with the others of the troupe. At times, **James** acts as a spy when the Manager Hand "family" is asked to the home of some official or other person of interest for social events. It slips away to explore the residence it has been invited to, rifling through important papers in offices in desks. If anyone catches it, it breaks into tears and wails for its "mother." It always carries a miniature **image scanner** (formed into the shape of a toy soldier) to record anything interesting it happens to find. In combat, it can spit its teeth at foes, which fly and strike as effectively as darts. It currently has 20 teeth, and can regenerate the full set in the span of a single turn. **James** will often lie dormant in its bed in the nursery. **James** never carries money on its person.



BEATRICE MASSON is a puppet in the form of a 7 month-old girl child. In the presence of outsiders, **Beatrice** typically acts as any baby would. When there is no need for pretense, **Beatrice** is capable of the full range of human adult actions, including talking, running, and wielding tools or weapons. **Beatrice** has a sonic nauseator built into its voice box. It can cry at a specific frequency that can cause all normal humans who hear the sound to suddenly fall ill, requiring a save versus Breath Weapon to avoid the effect. In a social setting, **Beatrice** is often positioned by its attendant (usually **Virginia** or **Marielle**) so it can use its cry to drive away unwanted guests or disrupt uncomfortable situations. In mêlée, **Beatrice** will use its cry to weaken enemy combatants. **Beatrice** sometimes lies dormant in the arms of **Virginia**, otherwise it lies in its crib in the nursery. **Beatrice** never carries money on its person.



James

Armor 11, Move 90', 1 Hit Die, 4hp, by weapon or tooth dart 1d3, Morale 12.

Regenerates 1 hit point per round.

Immune to poison.

Beatrice

Armor 11, Move 60', 1 Hit Die, 4hp, by weapon -1, Morale 12.

Regenerates 1 hit point per round.

Immune to poison.

Sonic nauseator effect (save versus Breath Weapon).

The Hand of the Unknown

None of the puppets in the last Hand are human in form, and even **Pierre DuPont** is unaware of the existence of this group. They serve the gamer cause in a variety of supporting roles and are usually active from dusk to dawn.

THE TRAPPER is usually found exploring the wilderness around the city, where it collects specimens for examination and modification within the labs in the underground complex of the Theatre of the Grand-Guignol. It is designed for stealth and capture. The mass of the **Trapper** is formed from microorganisms clustered around a **biocontrol unit**. The collective mass looks and moves much like a gigantic amoeba. When not carrying any specimens, it is almost perfectly transparent, and surprises most prey on a roll of 4 or less on a d6. The **Trapper** often lies dormant within the cave of the **Poseur-Defender**.

The **Trapper** attacks by lashing out with up to five sticky pseudopods. If a pseudopod hits, it sticks to the flesh of the target and can only be dislodged with a successful open doors check. Once a pseudopod is attached, it sends out filaments that begin to burrow towards the brain of the trapped being. These filaments automatically inflict 1d4 points of damage per round until the victim reaches zero hit points. When the hit points of the trapped being reach zero, the filament has reached the brain of the victim. At this point the **Trapper** assumes complete control of all voluntary functions of the victim. Up to five beings can be controlled at one time. The **Trapper** does not actively collect treasure, but trapped specimens in its possession may have items of value on their person at the Referee's discretion.

If it so wishes, the **Trapper** can use the physical attributes of a trapped being to defend itself. The **Trapper** can only use one physical attack of each being it controls in its defense, even if a controlled being would normally have more. For each being controlled in this way, the **Trapper** forgoes the use of one of its pseudopod attacks. If a controlled being is hit in combat (assume all controlled beings have an armor rating of 11 due to the awkwardness of their movements), it does no damage to the **Trapper**, and the controlled being dies if it reaches -4 hit points or less. At the point of death, the controlled being's brain no longer functions, and the **Trapper** will release it to free up one of its appendages for combat or collection of another specimen. If the **Trapper** is dropped to 0 hit points or less, its filaments automatically disengage, but their spasmic withdrawal may lobotomize the victim. Each victim formerly under control of the **Trapper** must make a save versus Poison at time of release or be rendered feeble-minded.

After successfully trapping five large specimens or a larger number of smaller ones, the **Trapper** will seek cover in the lair of the **Poseur-Defender** until it has a chance to deliver what it has caught to one of the humanoid puppets (usually **Joseph Harmony**). At this time it will resemble a rolling, tumbling, tangled mass of bodies and will not have the ability of surprise it normally has when traveling free of specimens.



The Trapper

Armor 15, Move 90' (-5' for each large trapped being it carries), 3 Hit Dice, 15hp, pseudopod attack (no damage) or by trapped specimen, Morale 12. Adhesion on pseudopod strike. Automatic filament damage (1d4) each round following adhesion. Control of trapped target at 0hp to -4hp. Regenerates 1 hit point per round. Immune to poison.



THE MINER is charged with collecting silver to fund the Marionnettistes' operations, and is also looking for more of the material needed to make **biocontrol** pods. A mass of coordinated microbes, it appears as a yellow-tinted, man-sized amorphous blob. It tunnels in the depths of an abandoned silver mine for most of its active hours, and typically only emerges once a week to drop off what it has collected with a fellow puppet (usually **Joseph**). It adheres to earthen materials at will, and can crawl freely on all tunnel surfaces without slipping or falling, enabling it to easily follow mineral veins in any direction as they wind through the earth. It can process silver and other metal ore it takes up into pure ingots, and it breaks down the salt it finds in the soil into components of sodium and chlorine. The chlorine can be released as a jet of gas to deadly effect in *mêlée*, and the sodium can be dropped into available water to create terrific explosions that deal 3d6 damage to all characters in a 20 foot radius, with a save versus Breath Weapon for half damage. If defeated in battle, the mass of the **Miner** typically contains 1d4x500sp worth of silver ingots. The **Miner** usually falls dormant stuck to the ceiling of the tunnel that is currently the farthest from the opening of the silver mine.





The Miner

Armor 15, Move 90', 3 Hit Dice, 12hp, chlorine gas jet 3d4 (save versus Poison for half damage), Morale 12. Sodium released into water can cause explosions.

Regenerates 1 hit point per round.

Immune to poison.

THE PROCESSOR appears as a blood-colored mass of microbes the size of a large cow. It attacks by adhering to a target with its pseudopods, and up to 5 pseudopods can strike each round. Upon a successful strike, a pseudopod adheres to its target and can only be removed with a successful open doors check. If three or more pseudopods attach to a victim in one round, the victim is drawn into the mass of the **Processor**. Engulfed victims are completely immobilized, and if still alive, suffer an automatic 1d4 hit points of damage each round. Engulfed victims also take ½ damage from any successful attacks upon the **Processor**. Once a victim reaches zero hit points, she undergoes a metamorphosis into a simulacrum. After the transformation, the victim gains 1d4 hit points each round until she reaches her full original hit point total once again. Upon reaching her original hit point total, she is expelled, unconscious (for a duration of 1d4 turns), from the body of the **Processor**. The **Processor** usually falls dormant within the confines of its processing chamber.



The Processor

Armor 15, Move 90' (-5' for each engulfed victim carried), 4 Hit Dice, 24hp, pseudopod (no damage), Morale 12. Pseudopod Adhesion. Simulacrum transformation.

Regenerates 1 hit point per round.

Immune to poison.



THE POSEUR-DEFENDER acts to distract would-be adventurers from discovering the Marionnettistes' secret. Playing on superstition and folklore of the local population, it has taken the form of the legendary Lambton Worm, a monster known for its regenerative powers. In this form, it resembles a gigantic 50-foot-long eel with nine holes running down each side of its head. The creature can swim or slither on land with equal ease. It often guards the silver mine where the **Miner** works, and it keeps a lair in a cavern not far from the mine's main shaft.

Characters in good standing with the gamer community will never be fatally attacked by the **Poseur-Defender**, and the puppet will even feign defeat at the hands of gamer allies and agents to increase their fame and influence with the local populace. If its **biocontrol unit** is not removed from its body after a defeat in battle, it will regrow into a new form (always drawn from local legend), and return to wreak havoc in a new guise. Regardless of what form it takes, the **Poseur-Defender** will retain the regenerative capabilities and immunity to poison that all the puppets enjoy. The **Poseur-Defender** typically falls dormant in a nest that it has made at the back of its cave.



The Poseur-Defender

Armor 17, Move 120', 6 Hit Dice, 40hp, bite 1d6, constrict 1d10, Morale 12. Any caught in constrict attack will automatically take 1d10 each round until freed (successful open door check needed). Regenerates 1 hit point per round. Immune to poison.





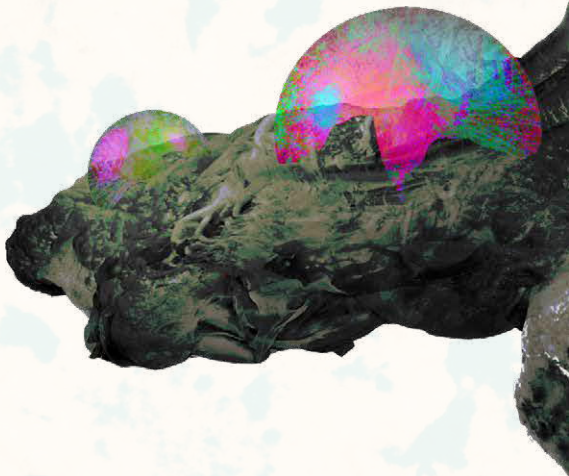
THE MONITOR is the final line of defense for the gamer-avatars' home base. If intruders uncover the secrets of the complex and look as if they might escape, the **Monitor** can withdraw its tissues from the walls of the complex to cause the collapse of the entire underground structure in an attempt to crush the interlopers. It will do this regardless of whether or not any other puppets or simulacra might be in the area.

The **Monitor** is integrated with the structure of the Theatre of the Grand-Guignol itself. Its tendrils, composed of networks of microorganisms, line the walls, floors, and ceiling of the surface building, and sheets of its tissue completely cover the surfaces of the complex that rests beneath. It provides structural support for the underground complex, and when it is aware and active, it makes infiltration by stealth practically impossible because it can feel the steps of intruders the second they enter the complex. The **biocontrol unit** of the **Monitor** sits anchored to a pedestal in the control center of the underground complex. It can speak with the others via the strings of vocal cord tissue that wind about the pedestal, and often communicates the needs of the humanoid Hands to the Hand of the Unknown. When the **Monitor** falls dormant in its place within the underground complex, the whole area becomes unnaturally quiet.



The Monitor

Armor 11, Move 0', 20 Hit Dice, 160hp.
Morale 12. "Body" comprises whole portions of the theatre, and can initiate collapse of underground complex.
Regenerates 1 hit point per round. Immune to poison.





PIERRE DUPONT

The only person to have stumbled upon the gamers' plans is an outcast among his own people. **Pierre** could have been the foremost authority in the world on chemical sciences had he not fallen prey to his own ingenuity. He had developed a solution that, when applied to wood and other combustibles, prevented them from catching alight in all but the hottest flame. **Pierre** actually treated his entire home with the chemical in the hope that he would be able to show others how it could drastically reduce the hazard of fire in an urban environment. Unfortunately, the chemical is highly toxic, and prolonged exposure left him with extensive neurological damage. This affected his personality, making him increasingly paranoid and delusional. As a result, **Pierre** lost most of his credibility long before he first discovered the gamer plot. Now his rantings about an invasion with no enemy in sight have caused the people of his community to brand him as a lunatic. **Pierre's** pariah status is such that he no longer goes out into public. He has developed a network of "agents" who serve as his eyes and ears in the world. Most of his agents are, unfortunately, a bunch of inebriated winos and addicts. They don't particularly care about **Pierre's** reputation as long as he pays them enough to continue to feed their appetites. In order to fund his operations, **Pierre** has used his lab to create a number of desirable recreational drugs, and has commanded his men to sell them to the community at large.



Pierre DuPont

Armor 11, Move 120', 1 Hit Die, 4hp,
damage by weapon, Morale 9.

Pierre has taken to instilling "loyalty" in his agents by giving them access to a particularly potent drug he designed to create intense addiction. As the only source of this drug, **Pierre** now has almost complete control over his men. The drug creates intense euphoria and even heightens strength while it lasts, but it is incredibly hard on the body, and so his men are starting to deteriorate.



EVENTS OF CONSEQUENCE

WHAT HAS HAPPENED SO FAR

The gamer-avatar, “Uncle” Bill LaBoeuf, commissioned the construction of a new theatre in the city. It paid in pure silver collected from a silver mine that the gamers had seized from local control, and construction of the Theatre of the Grand-Guignol was completed in mere months. The theatre advertised a show that promised to shock even those with the most stoic demeanor, and drew the eyes of the public to the new venue. Residents flocked to these initial performances, and the gamer-avatars reaped huge rewards from their success.

The rewards were not all financial. The gamers were seeking to expand the number of avatars available to their play group by acquiring additional **biocontrol units**. These units exist as balls of the rare element duoinium, which like many metals, can normally be obtained through soft-earth mining. However, one of the gamers discovered that, either by quirk of evolution or through some bug in the programming of the game, the body of each human within the game world also contains traces of this element.

Gamer ingenuity would not allow such a valuable resource to go unexploited. The gamers quickly developed a process for extracting duoinium from the bodies of the local humans, but found all test-subjects that had been deprived of the metal quickly became physically unstable and ultimately died in a spectacularly messy way. Robbing graves to harvest the metal from the bodies of the deceased was considered as an option only briefly, as it was discovered

that the element broke down within a body shortly after death. The solution came when the gamers devised a way to commit mass murder right under the noses of the local population.

Volunteers are taken from the audience of the Theatre of the Grand Guignol to participate directly in each show. These volunteers are literally killed onstage to the delight of onlookers, who think it is all a part of some elaborate illusion. Through the work of the **Processor**, the duoinium is extracted from the bodies, and the remains of the victims are reformed into almost perfect simulacra that are sent back out into society. The simulacra are aware of what has happened to them, but are kept silent by a failsafe built into their bodies that puts them under the influence of the gamers.

In the months since the opening of the Grand-Guignol, only one simulacrum has been uncovered to local human eyes. George Melling was a wealthy merchant who ran a prominent book shop at the center of town. George also happened to be a close friend and patron of the burgeoning scientific innovator, **Pierre DuPont**. **Pierre**, something of a paranoid shut-in, noticed some odd new behaviors in his benefactor shortly after George’s conversion, and immediately imprisoned and interrogated his once-friend, leading to his discovery of the gamer plot. George is still alive, kept in a cage in **Pierre**’s quarters above George’s own storefront. However, George’s health is suffering because **Pierre** has cut off his contact with the technology that was keeping him stable and healthy.

Following the interrogation and imprisonment of his friend, **Pierre** swiftly acted to learn more about the avatars themselves. He arranged to have one of the members of the theatre troupe abducted, and spirited it away to his laboratory. **Pierre** quickly set to work vivisectioning the avatar, exploring the workings of its body and learning its secrets. Armed with new knowledge, **Pierre** has set into motion his plans to drive the gamer menace from his city. The gamers don't know where their missing puppet went (**Pierre** was clever enough to keep it blind-folded during the abduction), but they know it was ultimately destroyed. They are irate over the loss of the duonium in its body, and are on the lookout for leads on its abductor.

WHAT MAY YET BE

Regardless of what the player characters do in the city, events will continue to unfold in the background. If they do not intervene in some way, then the events listed below will play out as written. It is hoped that the player characters will get involved, and a number of opportunities for such involvement are included in the timeline.

Day 1:

- § The Theatre of the Grand-Guignol will host a performance in the early evening. Tickets will be going fast, but the high price (10sp) of the remaining seats means that some will be still available if the player characters wish to attend.
- § Vagrants in the employ of **Pierre DuPont** can be seen panhandling near the theatre before and after the show. After the show ends, they will be interested in finding out who volunteered to go on stage during this evening's show.

- § An NPC that the player characters know may be turned into a simulacrum during the show. Their behavior may be altered in some subtle, unsettling way.
- § Any characters turned into simulacra will be commanded to attend the after party being held immediately after the show on the main theatre stage. If they go, they will be given vital life-preserving technology. If not, they will be considered unreliable and will be left to die from instability. If regular humans crash the party, they will be attacked, and if they are killed, they will be processed into simulacra. If they escape, the gamer-avatars will be set on hunting them and killing them. The assassin, **Bridgette**, will seek them in the city, and the monstrous **Poseur-Defender**, and possibly the **Trapper**, will seek them out in the countryside.

- § Simulacrum George Melling, trapped in **Pierre DuPont**'s laboratory for days without access to a vital **nutrient**, will become physically unstable. Unbeknownst to all in the lab, this instability may cause him to explode into a deadly disease-causing mist.

Day 2:

- § A group of engineers will be laboring to reclaim the nearby silver mine from the build-up of toxic chlorine gas produced by the avatar called the **Miner**. They will succeed in clearing the gas, but will be decimated by the attack of the **Poseur-Defender** before anyone can go into the mine. Rumors about the attack will begin to spread in town almost immediately, and the player characters will hear the news by nightfall even if they aren't looking for new information.
- § At dusk, troupe member **Joseph Harmony** will travel outside the city using an empty wagon drawn by a single large horse. First it will go to the lair of the **Trapper** and

the **Poseur-Defender** to collect a number of specimens. Following this, it will then travel to the site of the mine to collect silver from the **Miner**. All this will be accomplished in the span of a few hours, and if all goes to plan, **Joseph** will return to the theatre with five large animal specimens of the Referee's choice, as well as a large purse full of silver ingots (500sp). Characters who immediately set out to investigate the location of the mine upon hearing what happened may encounter **Joseph**, or witness one of its transactions with the **Trapper** or the **Miner**. A monstrosous trail leading from the mine to the **Poseur-Defender**'s lair will be obvious to any who investigate the location.

- § George's Constitution score will become 5.

Day 3:

- § The human owner of the silver mine, Patrick Best, will make it widely known that he is hiring a party to hunt down and destroy the **Poseur-Defender**. The characters will be offered a spot on the hunting party if they inquire. If they don't go, the entire hunting party will fall to the **Poseur-Defender**. As noted earlier, the trail from the mine to the **Poseur-Defender**'s lair will be obvious to any who investigate.

- § Distrustful of the attention that **Pierre**'s men have been showing the Theatre as of late, the gamers will send **Bridgette** out to eliminate any vagrants and pan-handlers that happen to be in the area around the Theatre during the evening hours on this date.

- § George's Constitution score will become 4.

Day 4:

- § The Theatre of the Grand-Guignol will host a second public show on the evening of this day. If any fully human characters return from a successful clash with the **Poseur-Defender** from the day before, they will be directly invited to the show, free of charge, and asked to participate on stage by the gamers. Cheaper seats for the pit area on the floor will be available for the price of 5sp if the characters act to purchase them before midday, otherwise the only tickets available right before the show will be the higher cost 10sp seats.

- § As usual, men in the employ of **Pierre DuPont** can be seen panhandling near the theatre before and after the show. After the show ends, they will be interested in finding out who volunteered to go on stage during this evening's show.

- § As before, any characters turned into simulacra during the show are commanded to attend the after party being held immediately after the show on the main theatre stage. All human characters who defeated the **Poseur-Defender** will be invited regardless of whether they attended the actual show or participated on stage, and the puppets will attempt to kill them and convert them into simulacra.

- § The **Miner** will have, once again, flooded the contested silver mine will more chlorine gas.

- § If **Bridgette**'s task from the day before went uninterrupted, the bodies of a number of **Pierre**'s men will be found dead in the neighborhood around the theatre, all apparently of natural causes.

- § George's Constitution score will become 3.

Day 5:

- § Vagrants will be seen attacking and killing stray dogs throughout the city. These are **Pierre DuPont**'s men trying to hunt down and eliminate **Bridgette**. Characters may witness one of these attacks in passing or simply hear about it second hand. **Bridgette** will have taken cover in the theatre.
- § The gamers will have set out a pile of old costumes in an alley near the theatre, seemingly discarding them because of wear and tear. Some of **Pierre**'s men who wander down the alley in search of **Bridgette** will claim them for their own. The rags have been laced with **tracking lice**, which the gamers will use to find the men when they feel the time is right.
- § George's Constitution score will become 2.

Day 6:

- § **Pierre DuPont**'s men will be out in force around the Theatre of the Grand-Guignol during the evening hours, using specially-designed sprayers to douse the buildings around the theatre with **Pierre**'s flame-retardant chemical. They will be armed with jars of acid in preparation for an attack from the puppets.
- § If any of the player characters are in the service of the gamers, they will be commanded to disrupt the spraying process. Once the men are scattered, they are to track them back to wherever they have been acquiring the chemicals, and then kill them and their supplier.
- § George's Constitution score will become 1.

Day 7:

- § Early in the morning, George's constitution score will become 0, and he will explode, infecting **Pierre** with a fatal lung disease. **Pierre** will make a note of how George dies within his journal.
- § Spurred by the death of his friend, **Pierre** will choose this date to fly his balloon over the Theatre of the Grand-Guignol. The weather will be fair and clear for the time of year, and he will have the advantage of a full moon, so he will launch late in the evening. He will drop incendiaries upon the building, and it will catch alight. The theatre will completely burn to the ground in 5d4 turns. If **Pierre**'s men succeeded in their task of spraying the adjoining buildings with flame retardant, then only the theatre will burn. If not, then the fire will spread throughout the entire city district, killing dozens and displacing hundreds of people from their homes. The underground complex will survive intact, but it will take the gamer-avatars months to rebuild the surface structure.

THE PERFORMANCE

The current show in the Theatre of the Grand-Guignol is called *Courses of Fear*. It features a number of vignettes in which various devices are used to torture and kill victims chosen from the audience. All volunteers chosen for the show will be led backstage by **Joseph Harmony**. They will be asked to leave personal possessions in a big trunk for collection later, and given black robes to dress in. If a volunteer refuses to switch her dress or leave behind personal possessions, she will be released back to the audience and a new volunteer will be chosen. **Zachary** will mock any who return this way as cowards to the audience. After dressing for her role, each volunteer will be secured to a binding apparatus (table, sawhorse, etc.) appropriate to the vignette she will be in.

If characters go to see the show, one or more may be asked to participate on stage. If they volunteer, and take no precautions, the characters will be killed during the show. Players whose characters die this way will be able to continue playing as a simulacrum. These simulacra have all the attributes and possessions of the characters they replace and can even gain levels in the same way as the original characters. Player-run simulacra will be rewarded with access to advanced technology if they collaborate with the gamers, but they may suffer dire consequences if they ignore or work against the Marionnettistes' wishes.

Each vignette in the current production is preceded by an interpretive dance piece (performed by **Rose** and **Jessica MacDuff**) that pantomimes the tortures to come, allowing time for the stage hands to set up for the following sequence. Victims will be moved onto the stage by **Edwin** and **Louise McClellan**, and the monstrous puppets will remain with them when the curtain opens. Edwin and Louise will apply whatever tortures are needed, and act to restrain the victims if they try to escape. Victims that scream and howl during the performance will be lauded by **Zachary** for their

profound acting abilities, and the audience will be encouraged to cheer them on. To punctuate the end of each vignette, **Zachary** will step forward with a couplet meant to unsettle the audience even further, and at the conclusion of the show, a sprig of mint will be presented to the audience with great ceremony by **Jessica** and **Rose**, who will place the sprig on a pedestal at center stage. **Zachary** will announce that the mint is for the traditional after-dining "cleansing of the palate."

The following pages contain descriptions of possible vignettes for the Referee to choose from. In the interest of keeping the game moving at a brisk pace, it is recommended that the Referee only read aloud descriptions for one or two of his favorite acts for each show that the player characters attend. Of course, if more than two player characters should volunteer for a particular show, then everyone should be allowed the chance to hear all the gruesome details behind each player character's onstage death.







In one act, a device is used to twist the head from the body of a victim. The chosen person is placed in a chair bolted to a rotating dais. A claw suspended from the ceiling is fixed around the head, holding it in place. The dais is slowly turned, eventually breaking the neck of the person seated. It continues to twist until the head separates from the body. The dial is pulled away leaving the head suspended in the claw.

"One must twist the head and neck;

*Tis a most common practice to still the
chicken's peck."*







One piece features a device that is used to flay a victim's body whole. The victim's feet are nailed into place on a plank as a deadly "chandelier" is lowered from the ceiling. The chandelier is comprised of hooks connected to central steel frame by links of delicate, but strong chain. The hooks are inserted at strategic spots in the skin, and precise cuts are made along the limbs and torso with a blade. The chandelier is then withdrawn, pulling the skin away from the body in one intact piece.

"The fish's scale hide tasty meat;

Pry it away to expose the treat!"



One act is centered on a vivisection. The victim is strapped to a plank, and tilted so the audience can easily see. A retractor is forcefully inserted into the sternum, and a rack and pinion is used to crank its blades open, forcing the ribs apart and exposing a beating heart and gasping lungs to the open air. After a pause to observe the exposed workings, a two-man felling saw is produced and then used to cut the legs and pelvis from the torso, finishing the victim off.

*"The heart's workings for doctor's studies
are fine;*

*Tis upon the frog's legs, though, the true
connoisseur will choose to dine!"*







One act features a sledge. The victim is secured to the floor in a kneeling position with their head resting on an anvil. The operator of the sledge then raises the hammer above its head and brings the tool down upon the skull of the victim in three sharp blows. The first drop pulps and shatters, the second splatters, and the last rings out clearly upon the anvil. Meat hooks are then used to drag the body to a wagon, where it is carted off stage.

*"The hammer rings a forceful blow;
It prepares the calf for butcher's tow!"*



One act features a giant snare. The victim's neck is encircled with a cruel razor wire which has been thrown over a thick rafter above the stage. The wire is drawn tight, until the victim is slowly lifted from her feet and suspended. The end of the wire is looped around a spike driven into the stage, and the victim is left to hang until she either suffocates or her head is severed by the flailing weight of her body.

"The rabbit's body twists in snare's end;

A full loop is the diner's friend."







In one act, a spit is used. The victim is bent over a sawhorse and the spit is inserted into her rectum. It is pressed through her body until it exits from her mouth. The spit is then placed on two forks over a pit fire, where the body is then slowly turned.

"Skewered upon a spit!"

No nobler end for any pig worth his grit!"



During one piece, the victim is crushed using vices. The victim is secured in a spread-eagle position. Vices are applied to each limb, first the arms and then the legs, until the bones in each one snap with a loud pop. Finally a vice is secured around the head of the victim, where it is tightened until the skull is crushed, forcefully ejecting first the victim's eyes and then her brain tissue upon the floor.

"Grind and crush the crab's armor;

*The succulent flesh left behind is a diner's
ardor!"*







For one vignette, a victim is disemboweled.

The victim is strapped to a table, and a large knife is used to slice open her belly. The base of the intestine is pulled from the abdominal cavity and cut so that it can be secured to a free-spinning wheel mounted to a bar. The wheel is turned using a handle, drawing forth the rest of the colon and small intestine. Once the bowels are fully extracted and wrapped about the wheel, the knife is used to slash the throat of the dying victim.

"A deer is dressed in the field;

Only tasty, clean cuts will it now yield!"

SIMULACRA

Simulacra created by the Marionnettistes are physically human or animal, but have two modifications of note.

First, all simulacra are modified so that they are fully compatible with gamer-created technology. For example, they can control implanted **hairsites** by force of thought, although they still suffer 1 hit point of damage from each implanted clump each for day it stays in place.

The body of every simulacrum is also modified so it is dependent upon a synthetic **nutrient** that only the Marionnettistes know how to produce. This **nutrient** acts to replace the duonium extracted during the process of transformation, and keeps the body of a simulacrum stable in the absence of the element. The **nutrient** does not stay in the body long however, and so must be consumed on a daily basis for it to be effective.

The **nutrient** is controlled and distributed to simulacra through animals that have had their digestive tract altered by the Marionnettistes. The animals are fed a normal diet and the food is processed by their bodies much in the way that one would expect. However, the resulting excrement produced is now rich in the vital **nutrient**. The **nutrient** can then be collected and imbibed as the simulacrum sees fit, and only a handful of excrement contains enough **nutrient** to meet the need of a simulacrum for each day. When deprived of the **nutrient** for more than 24 hours, the body of the simulacrum begins to break down. It loses one point of Constitution for every 24 hours beyond the first. The loss is permanent, but can be halted by further intake of the **nutrient**.

Should the Constitution score of a simulacrum reach 6 or less for any reason, it becomes unstable. If an unstable simulacrum ever receives maximum damage from any physical attack (an opponent rolls a 4 on a d4 for the damage roll of a dagger, for instance) the simulacrum

must make a save versus Death or explode into a bloody mist that coats everything in a 30 foot radius. Anyone inhaling this mist must save versus Poison or contract a degenerative lung disease that will cause their decline and death within 1d4 weeks. A simulacrum whose Constitution reaches 0 automatically explodes, leaving little behind.

Simulacra are aware of the modification that allows them to use gamer-created tech, and they are aware of their dependence on the **nutrient** (these are memories implanted by the **Processor** during the time of transformation). They are not aware of the problem of instability and the potential disease their death may cause.

The Marionnettistes have been known to withhold **nutrient** as punishment for insubordination. They will also withhold **nutrient** to weaponize a simulacrum. An unstable simulacrum may be sent into combat with foes where it can explode and decimate the ranks of the opposition. An unstable simulacrum may also be carefully placed in a position where it can be used to assassinate a person or group who might normally be out of reach. Messenger animals or objects sent to the simulacra by the gamers can be coated with a virus that inactivates the ability of a simulacrum to process the special **nutrient**, causing eventual instability of the simulacrum. The simulacrum need only touch such a coated object or animal to become affected by the neutralizing virus, and no saving throw applies. Currently, the only way to reactivate the ability of a virus-infected simulacrum to process **nutrient** is to have the simulacrum submit itself again to the **Processor**. The simulacrum's old body will dissolve and be reformed inside the puppet, emerging virus-free at the end of the process.

PLAYER CHARACTER TRANSFORMATION

To enhance the play of the game, a Referee should handle the transformation of player-characters into simulacra in a careful way. If any player-characters die during the show, the players should be told that the characters wake up, apparently unharmed and clothed as they were when they first appeared on stage, on a pallet in a strangely-shaped room lit by an odd green glow emanating from the ceiling. **Samuel McLeay** will be waiting there to thank them for participation in the show, and will distribute their personal belongings back to them from the chest they were collected in earlier. It will then take them up a spiral staircase and through a door leading to the backstage area. Once backstage it will hand each character an envelope, letting them know it is an invitation to the show's special after-party, which will occur an hour hence. It will caution them not to show the note to others so as to maintain secrecy as to the location of the party.

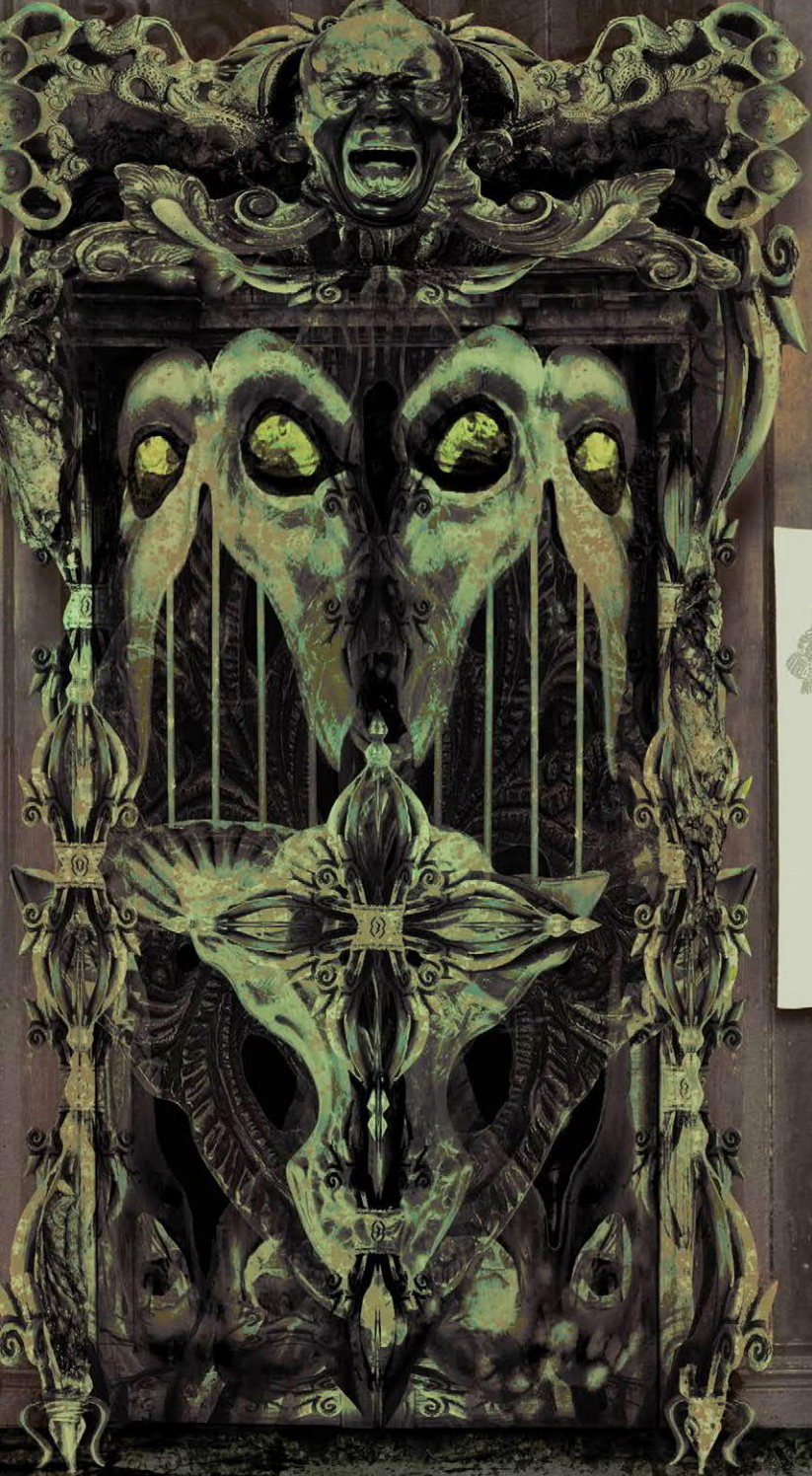
The Referee should hand a note to each player who lost their character at the time he is describing **Samuel's** distribution of the invitation. These notes should contain the details of each character's transformation into simulacra. As players open the notes to read, the Referee should discourage any players whose characters were not transformed from reading the notes, insisting that they will have a better game if they refrain from doing so.

If players choose to have their characters act with knowledge that they should not have during the game, the Referee may choose to compensate by making the Puppets more resourceful and challenging than they normally would be to offset any player advantage. In this case, it is recommended that the Referee give in-game hints to the players that their meta-knowledge-fueled-strategy has been noticed by the Marionnettistes. Individual Puppets that are engaged by player-characters directly could openly talk about how the player-characters

seem to know too much, and how there are special plans in place to deal with them. Other hints could also be dropped in the Record Room or in intercepted messages.

One option for making the Marionnettistes more dangerous would be to introduce "cheat codes" into the game. When the time is right, the Marionnettistes could use these cheat codes in-game to increase their capabilities. For example, if a Puppet engaged with the characters is in dire straits, the Referee may have a sudden chime ring out, and freeze everyone and everything in the scene in place (this represents a gamer hitting "pause" on the game). Then the Ref may describe a glowing hand with a pointed finger appearing in the scene, along with a couple of rows of ghostly letters representing the alphabet. The hand would float from letter to letter as paralyzed characters watch, selecting each one until a random-seeming 8-letter-code has been entered. After this, the Ref could have the chime ring again and let the action of the scene unfreeze. The Puppet under threat can now show a new power of the Referee's choice that will enable to it more easily extricate itself from the situation. The Referee could pattern this new ability after effects he has seen in real video games such the ability to leap great distances, double-quick regeneration, or even the ability to shrug off weapon blows or spell effects. If the players complain about the cheating, the Referee may remind them that they are not the only ones who have the ability to meta-game, and if they wish to avoid such scenes in the future, they may wish to play in a way that better upholds the spirit of the adventure.

It should be noted that if a Referee has introduced cheat codes into his game, he could also allow player-characters that work for the Marionnettistes to ask their masters for those kinds of enhancements to be applied to them. This could be handled in much the same way as Clerics being granted spells or abilities by their patron deities.



THE AFTER-PARTY

The after-show party is held on the main stage of the theatre after all the other audience members have left the building. The characters who have been transformed into simulacra must go if they are to receive any technology from the gamer-avatars, and they will also receive any orders about the role they will play in the gamer community. If all the player characters are simulacra, there is no reason for subterfuge. Simply tell the players what they receive and what the gamers want them to do. The gamers may just ask the characters keep their secret, but may choose to call upon them at a later time to perform tasks that the gamers do not wish to do or cannot do themselves. Standing orders from the gamers should be simple and easy to remember so the players don't have to keep looking at their notes, and they should be issued to further gameplay in an interesting way.

If player characters who have not been transformed insist on going to the party, then the gamers will attempt to kill them after they arrive. All the humanoid puppets will be onstage for the party, with the exception of **Joseph Harmony**, who will be waiting in the private box across from the stage with its musket, ready to fire upon anyone who shouldn't be there. The gamer-avatars will be cordial at first, but will act to maneuver any humans into a position where **Joseph** can easily take its shot. From there, the *mêlée* will be joined. Killed humans will be thrown into the pit with the **Processor** to be transformed into simulacra. Particularly troublesome characters, such as Magic-Users, may be pushed into the open trap door backstage, forcing them to face the **Processor** in close-quarters combat. If any simulacra rebel and try to save their friends, the gamer-avatars will try to kill them, too. Treacherous simulacra that are killed will not typically be revived.

If some players-characters have not been transformed, and are not at the party, read aloud the following passage for the players whose simulacra do attend:

"You attend the after party and have a great time. You think some of the actors flirted with you a bit, the food was good, and you received a wonderful thank-you gift. At the end of the evening, the young son of the manager of the troupe, **James**, presented you with a rabbit to do with as you please. Apparently, he helps his father raise them for fur and meat. You graciously accepted the rabbit, along with some directions for care that the boy had scribbled out for you on this note."

The Referee should then present notes to the appropriate players detailing the importance of the **nutrient** the rabbit produces to the health of their characters. The notes should also include a list of other technologies the gamers have chosen to give their characters and details about how to use those technologies. Finally, the note can include any standing orders the gamers want to issue. Again, the Referee should discourage other players that have normal characters from reading these notes.

LOCATIONS

OF NOTE

THE THEATRE OF THE GRAND-GUIGNOL

The top levels of the theatre were built using conventional human designs and techniques. The majority of the structure is wood, with some minor masonry applications here and there. The one oddity that may stand out to sharp-eyed player characters is that there is no parlor, kitchen, or food cellar. The gamers decided that it was not worth the extra expense to add these structures to the living areas of the theatre, given that their puppets had no need to eat.

Each entrance into the theatre from the outside has a sonic nauseator built into its frame, where it appears as ornamental filigree. These doorway devices are all controlled by the **Monitor**, and are used to drive away unwanted callers or loiterers. The **Monitor** can see the outside of the theatre using image recorders mounted on the roof, and it can track movements inside the theatre using image recorders mounted to the ceiling. The **Monitor**, which is directly connected to the image recorders through bundles of nerve tissue that have grown to line the interior of the walls and ceiling, can access recorded image playback at will, and often performs a review of the recordings as soon as it rises out of dormancy each day. The puppets **Edwin** and **Louise** also actively patrol the theatre during their waking hours, and even when they fall into dormancy they still roam the halls in a repeating “screen saver” pattern.

The living quarters are decorated in such a way as to invoke a sense that “normal” well-to-do people live in the theatre, even though they are rarely used to the fullest extent by the gamer-avatars. The fine goods the rooms contain are meant to distract would-be thieves, snoops, and looters from investigating the complex too thoroughly. A puppet is typically only found in an active state in its living quarters during the time it takes to prepare for the day after it comes out of its dormant state.

THE AUDITORIUM Bleachers line the upper areas of the auditorium, and walkways lead down to a “pit” area where wooden benches are set in neat rows. A raised area called the “Royal Box” lies directly across from the main stage, easily accessible only by the private admission area at the back of the theatre. For public showings, the pit seats sell for 5sp, the bleachers sell for 10sp, and the Royal Box is reserved for important guests.

THE STAGE The stage rises some 5 feet above the pit floor and is lined with an 18-inch tall wooden railing. A five foot wide walkway remains exposed at the stage front even when the curtains are drawn.

BACKSTAGE The backstage area nearest the actor’s entrance is lined with rows of costumes on racks and boxes of minor props such as stage weaponry and costume jewelry. The center of the backstage area is dominated by a grand fireplace of carved marble. This fireplace is the only feature of the backstage area visible to spectators seated in the auditorium. The area nearest the spiral stair entrance is dominated by the large apparatuses used to torture the

victims during each show. A trapdoor lies in the center of this area that leads down into the processing chamber. The door is only open during shows to allow for easy deposit of victims' remains. In between show times the trap is locked with a high-quality padlock.

JOSEPH HARMONY'S QUARTERS This room is modestly decorated. If **Joseph** is out on one of its regular errands in town or ushering for a performance, its weapons and traveling equipment can be found stored in a footlocker at the base of the bed along with 6 full sets of everyday clothing.

"UNCLE" WILLIAM LABOEUF'S QUARTERS This room is decorated with 3 fine-quality art paintings on the wall (each worth some 200sp). **William's** wardrobe contains 8 full sets of extravagant clothing valued at some 300sp. A locked chest hidden under its bed contains the deed to the theatre, a finely embroidered handkerchief, and 5000sp worth of silver ingots. The chest has no traps, but contains an image recorder hidden in the lid that is set to record an image of whoever opens the chest. The handkerchief is also laced with **tracking lice** which will transfer to the person of whoever handles it.

JESSICA and **ROSE MACDUFF'S QUARTERS** One full wall is dominated by a gigantic wardrobe stuffed with 20 sets of extravagant clothing valued at 450sp. A large silver vanity mirror is hung on the wall near the door worth some 40sp.

BENET DEGRANMONT, ZACHARY WELKINS, and **SAMUEL MCLEAY'S QUARTERS** The room has two modestly ornate long swords mounted on the walls, valued at 50sp each. Each one of the three beds has a footlocker at its base. Each footlocker contains 2 sets of fine gentlemen's clothes valued at 30sp and 10 sets of normal men's clothes valued at 50sp.

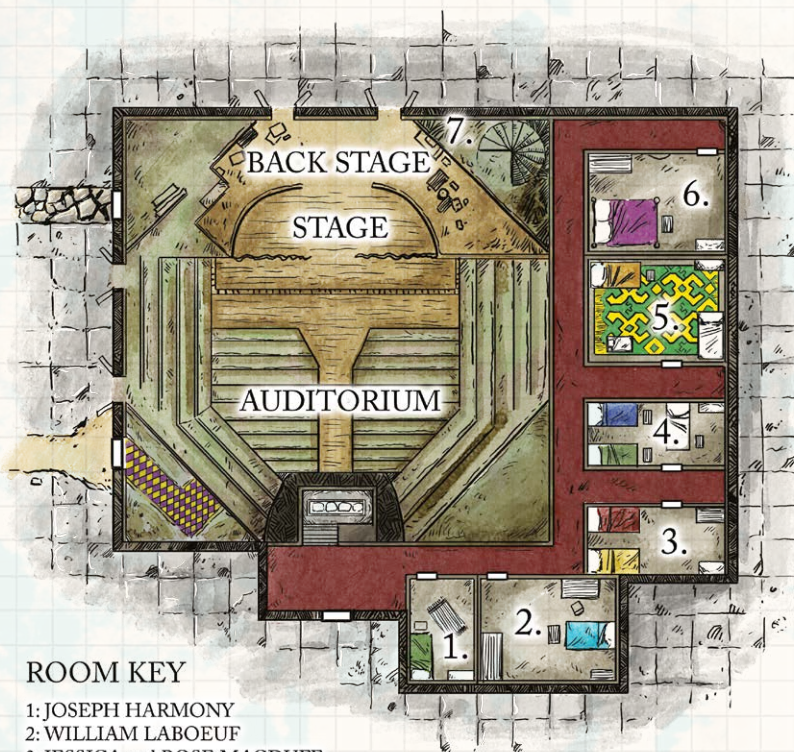
THE NURSERY This room has two regular beds and a crib, and a woven rug worth 10sp covers much of the floor. At the end of one bed is a footlocker that holds 6 sets of normal women's clothes valued at 30sp. A wardrobe contains 10 sets of fine children's clothes valued at 150sp. There are a number of elaborately made toys in the room. They are in pristine condition and are neatly organized. The toys would hold a value of some 300sp on the open market.

JEAN-GUI and **MARIELLE MASSON'S QUARTERS** This room has a large ornate four-pillar queen-sized bed worth some 500sp. The sheets are silk and worth some 50sp. The wardrobe has 8 sets of extravagant women's clothing valued at 170sp, and the footlocker at the base of the bed contains a like number of extravagant men's clothes of similar worth. A small silver mirror also hangs on the wall, valued at 30sp.

THE THEATRE ROOF The hidden spiral stairwell leads up to the roof. The roof houses a large carrier pigeon enclosure and 6 rabbit hutches. There is a small flock of 15 pigeons kept in the enclosure, valued at 1500sp. The dozens of rabbits raised here have been altered to provide the **nutrient** in their feces that the simulacra need to consume to survive. One corner of the roof features a large mounted telescope worth 400sp, used by the gamer-avatars to study the night sky, and also to spy on neighbors and passerby.

THEATER

Ground Floor

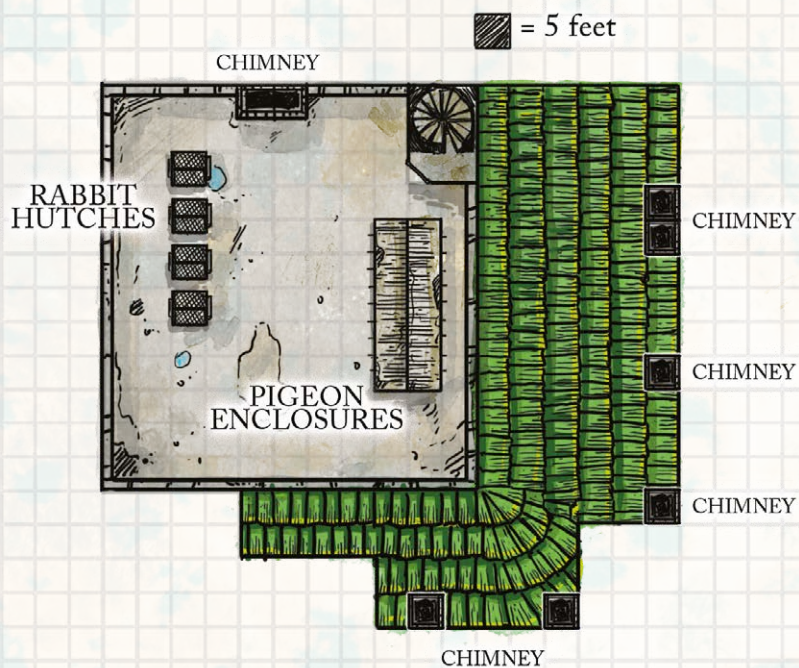


ROOM KEY

- 1: JOSEPH HARMONY
- 2: WILLIAM LABOEUF
- 3: JESSICA and ROSE MACDUFF
- 4: DEGRANMOUNT, WELKINS, and MCLEAY
- 5: THE NURSERY
- 6: JEAN-GUI and MARIELLE MASON
- 7: STAIRCASE to the ROOF

THEATER

Roof Level



THE UNDERGROUND COMPLEX

The hidden spiral staircase also leads down into the puppets' true "living" quarters. If the puppets are not dormant, running a show, or on another errand, they will be found in this complex doing research and plotting their next move.

The construction of the rooms is unlike anything built by conventional humans in the game world, having been carved out in secret by the **Miner** and then lined with the supportive tissues of the **Monitor**. The tissues lining the ceiling and walls are coated with a thin film of mucus, and the floor appears to be covered with wall-to-wall carpet, but is in actuality covered with short brown hairs that constantly whisk and twitch to remove any dust that settles on them. The ceiling is coated with writhing masses of glowing maggots, which wriggle and move at the command of the **Monitor** to shine their light where it is most needed. The doors are made of nictitating membranes controlled by the **Monitor**. They automatically withdraw when approached by a puppet or simulacra in good standing, but humans or other intruders will have to cut through them to pass. While strikes against the membrane automatically hit, each door can take 18 points of damage before falling open, and heals at a rate of 1hp per round.

The **Monitor** can feel every step or touch that falls upon the surfaces of the complex while it is in its active state. If the **Monitor** feels it must, it can withdraw the support of its connective tissues from the surfaces of the complex, collapsing the entire structure in only 5d10 rounds.

THE MACROBIOLOGY LABORATORY

One room in the underground theatre complex is dedicated to the dissection and study of some of the more large and complex organisms from our world. If **Joseph** has collected specimens from the **Trapper**, five tables will feature large organisms in various states of deconstruction. Most are recognizable, with the exception of one large monstrous being with six arms, two legs, and a wrinkled face sporting a mouth full of jagged teeth.

Jars of smaller preserved specimens can be found on a table alongside a stereomicroscope, an item so technologically advanced that humans won't produce one like it for a hundred years (valued at 2500sp if the right buyer can be found). One jar contains a colony of **tracking lice** nesting in a clump of hair. Another has 1d10 **silencer worms** inside, and yet another contains 5 sprigs of dried **reed creeper** root. All the other jars contain mundane specimens.

There is a **shot-beetle** nest dominating the wall in one corner. It contains 2d100 eggs and the decaying remains of some twenty adult beetles.

A cabinet is filled with what appears to be 6 severed human heads, each with exactly the same features as **Zachary**. The faces appear relaxed and insensate, but if the heads are pulled from the film lining the bottom of the cabinet shelves, they will scream and their hair will begin to writhe and change color. Each head was actually cloned from the puppet **Zachary** to serve as a breeding place for **hairasites**, and each head holds 1d10 clumps of those organisms. A head won't last long once removed from the **nutrient** film that sustained them, and the **hairasites** on it will seek to migrate to any new host that they come into contact with.



Arachne-Troll Puppet

Armor 15, Move 120', 6 Hit Dice, 36hp, 6 claw attacks 1d4, bite 1d8, Morale 12.

If 4 claw attacks strike a single target in one round, the bite will automatically hit that target as well. Regenerates 1 hit point per round. Immune to poison.

Should characters corner a puppet in this room, it may take drastic action by smashing open its own skull to retrieve the **biocontrol unit** within. After tearing the **biocontrol unit** from its brain, it will place the unit into the mouth of the unknown monster and the body will rise as a new puppet to attack the party. For extra dramatic effect, the author suggests the Referee arrange to have **Beatrice** be the puppet who makes this sacrifice.

THE MICROBIOLOGY LABORATORY

This room serves as an area for the study of microbiology. 5 gigantic pustules rise from the floor on one side of the room. If disturbed, the top will open and fluid containing a particular kind of micro-organism will ooze out. One of these pustules contains **deactivator virus**, one contains the bacteria that cause the deadly respirator disease that is spread by exploding simulacra, one contains the microbes that produce **pigeon grow** (some 5d10 doses can be milked from the pustule at this time), one contains the bacteria used in **suggestion snuff**, and the last contains the slime mold that produces **mnemonic goo** (some 3d12 applications can be retrieved from the pustule). Two valuable compound microscopes worth some 2,000sp each are present at a table on one side of the room.

THE RECORD ROOM This room is an “office” where the Marionnettistes of different Hands keep records and exchange information with other Hands. The posted “memos” exist in the form of dozens of rats that roam about a number of **biocages**. Rats containing information are marked with bizarre symbols representing the knowledge they contain in an unknown language. Unused rats have no symbols. There is also one cage containing 10 **projector toads** present.

A bucket of headless rat bodies lies in the corner. These rats had their information extracted when the puppets bit off their heads to devour their brains. Most info is intel on various persons of interest that the gamers have

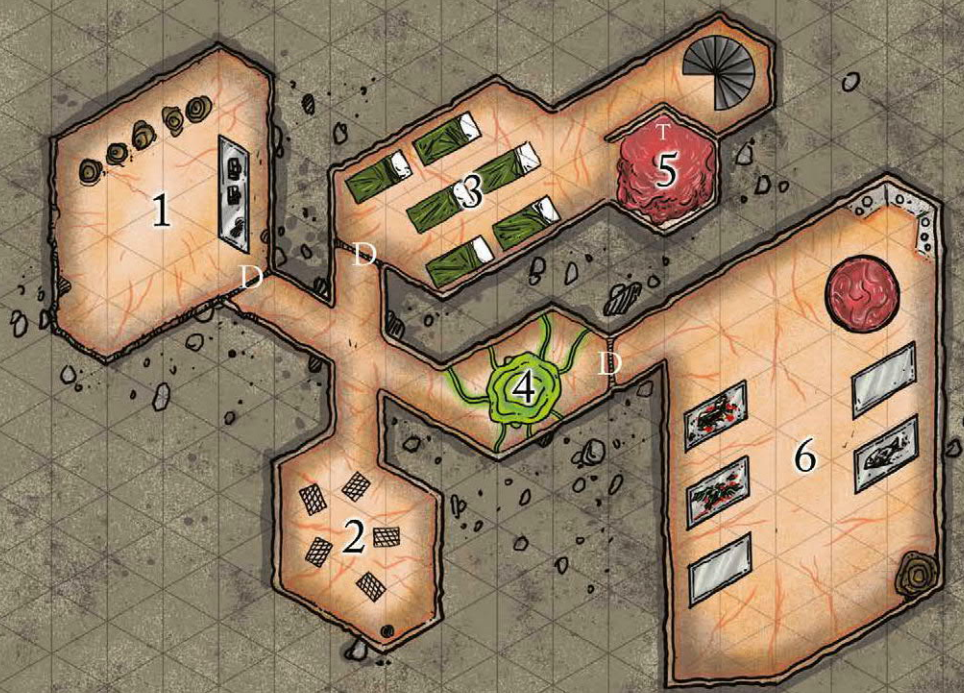
under observation in the community, including a dossier on **Pierre DuPont**, who is considered a potential threat. Some information makes no sense to the characters as it contains references to a totally unknown culture on an alternate Earth. This information includes twisted gamer “memes” that the Marionnettistes think are humorous, as well as data on when certain Hands are expecting to be “online.” Humans exposed to this info have a risk of suffering mental damage and must save versus Magical Device or permanently lose 1 point of Wisdom for each meme encountered. If a character bites the head off a rat at random, roll 1d10. The rat will have conventional information on a roll of 7 or less, a meme if 8 or more.

THE MONITORING CENTER This area contains the **biocontrol unit** of the **Monitor** on a central pedestal. If the **biocontrol unit** is removed, the **Monitor** will automatically trigger the destruction of the underground complex. Anyone who touches the **Monitor**’s Control unit will be subject to the domination attack of the Marionnettiste who controls the **Monitor**. This Marionnettiste will seek to cause as much havoc within the party as possible when exerting control over its victim.

THE PROCESSING CHAMBER This chamber is almost completely filled with the mass of the **Processor**. Dead audience members are dropped into this chamber for conversion into simulacra. The **Processor** will eject completed simulacra and any indigestible belongings they might have had into the adjoining recovery chamber through a large chute in the wall. The chute is covered with a membrane door as with the other portals in the complex. The **Processor** rarely leaves this space, usually only doing so to defend the complex from invaders.

THE RECOVERY CHAMBER This is the room that newly converted simulacra will awake to find themselves in after processing. The room contains six conventional cots and little else of interest.

THE UNDERGROUND COMPLEX

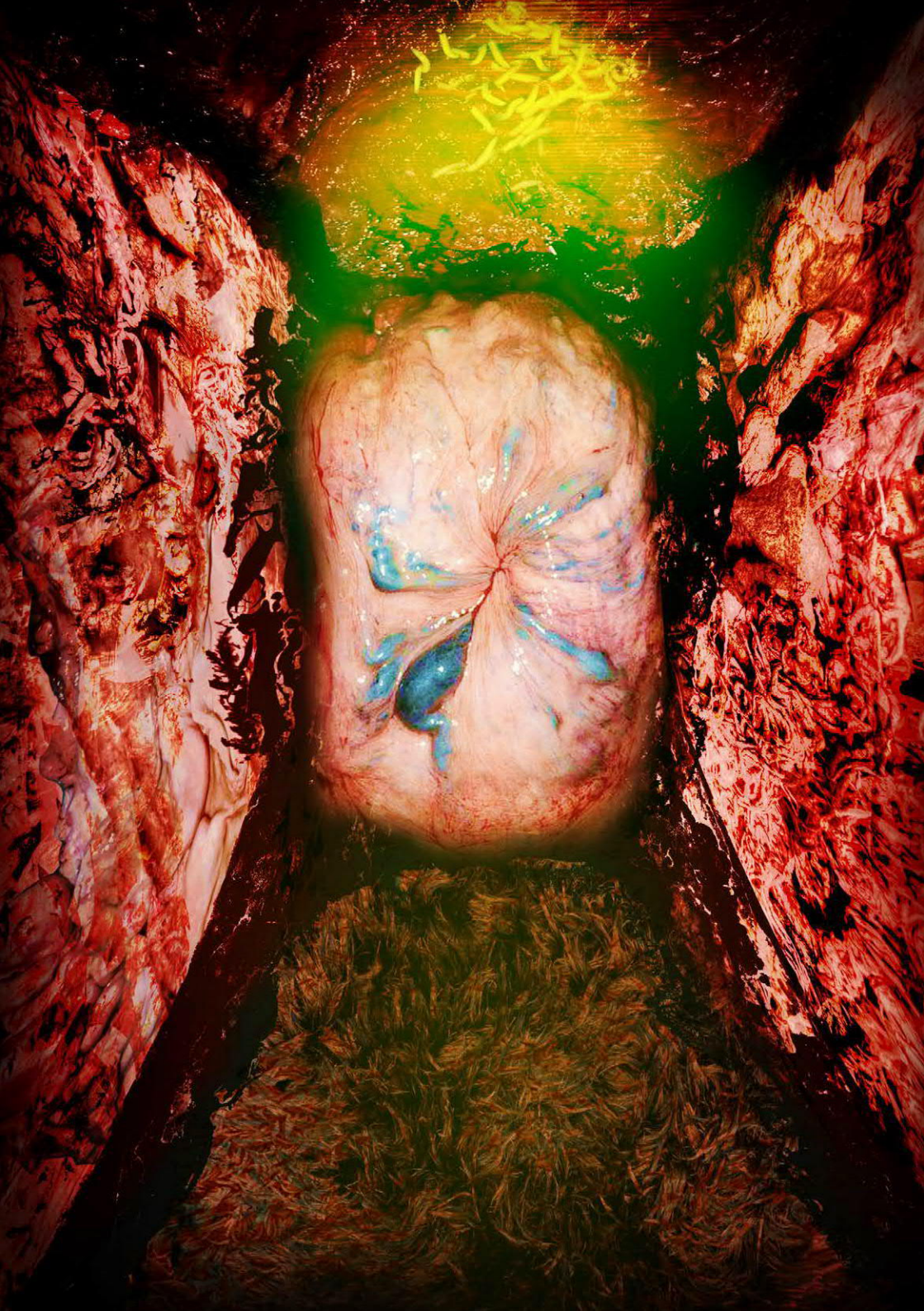


ROOM KEY

1. MICROBIOLOGY LAB
2. RECORD ROOM
3. RECOVERY CHAMBER
4. MONITORING ROOM
5. PROCESSING CHAMBER
6. MACROBIOLOGY LAB

D = door
T = trapdoor





THE LAIR OF THE POSEUR-DEFENDER

The lair is a simple cave in a hillside, unremarkable except for the beings it houses. The **Poseur-Defender** and the **Trapper** both reside here during their dormant periods. If the men of the hunting party organized by the mine owner fell here, then their equipment and wealth may be present upon their decaying bodies. **Joseph** will collect most valuable items from their remains upon its next visit to the cave following their demise. Items like coins and jewels will be added to the theatre's coffers in **William's** quarters. Items that could otherwise be easily traced or identified will be left on the bodies.





THE SILVER MINE

The silver mine is the lair of the **Miner**. It never leaves the mine, but will sometimes sit within the lower tunnel entrance to await **Joseph** during its weekly trip to collect silver from the **Miner**. The upper parts of the mine are of conventional human construction, with timber supports every fathom or so. The lower part of the mine resembles a bizarrely shaped cavern. This represents the area that the **Miner** has excavated.

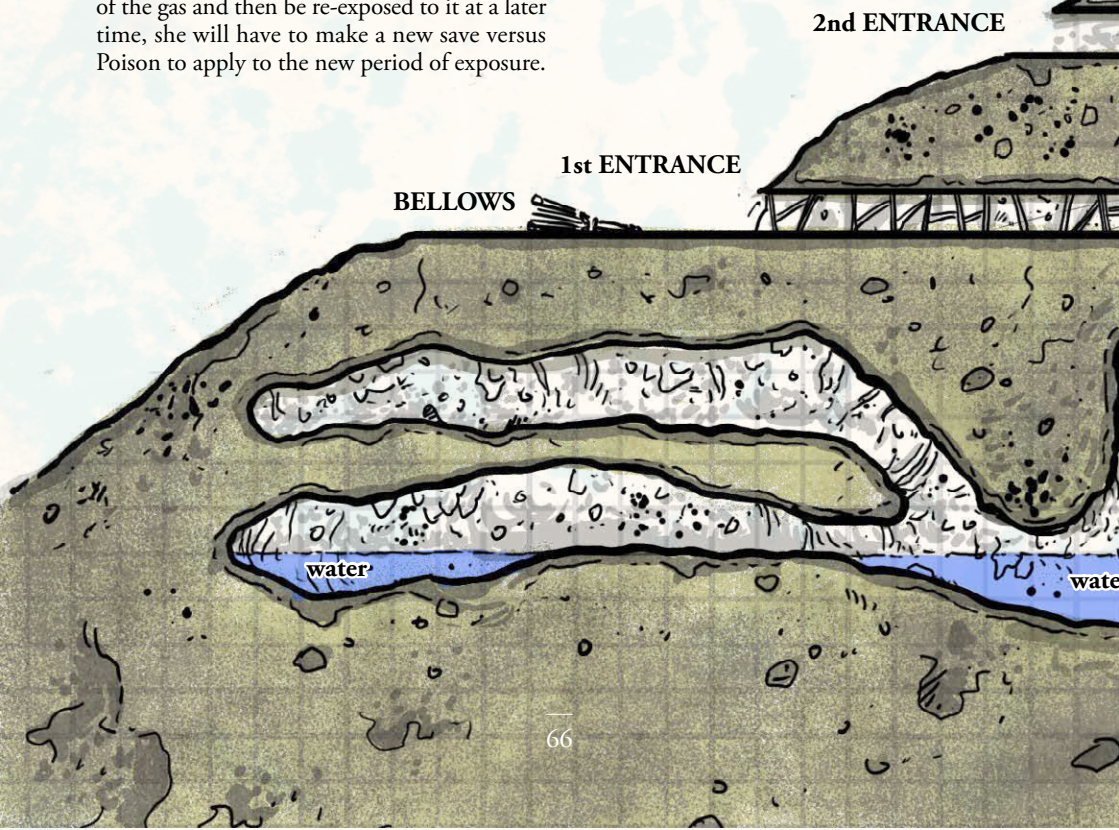
Depending on the time at which the characters visit the mine, it may be filled with poisonous chlorine gas produced by the **Miner**. Going into the mine without the protection of a gas mask requires a character to make a save versus Poison upon exposure to the gas. A character will take 3d4 points of damage from the toxic gases at the end of each round of exposure, with the total damage reduced by half (round down each round) if her saving throw was successful. Should a character leave the influence of the gas and then be re-exposed to it at a later time, she will have to make a new save versus Poison to apply to the new period of exposure.

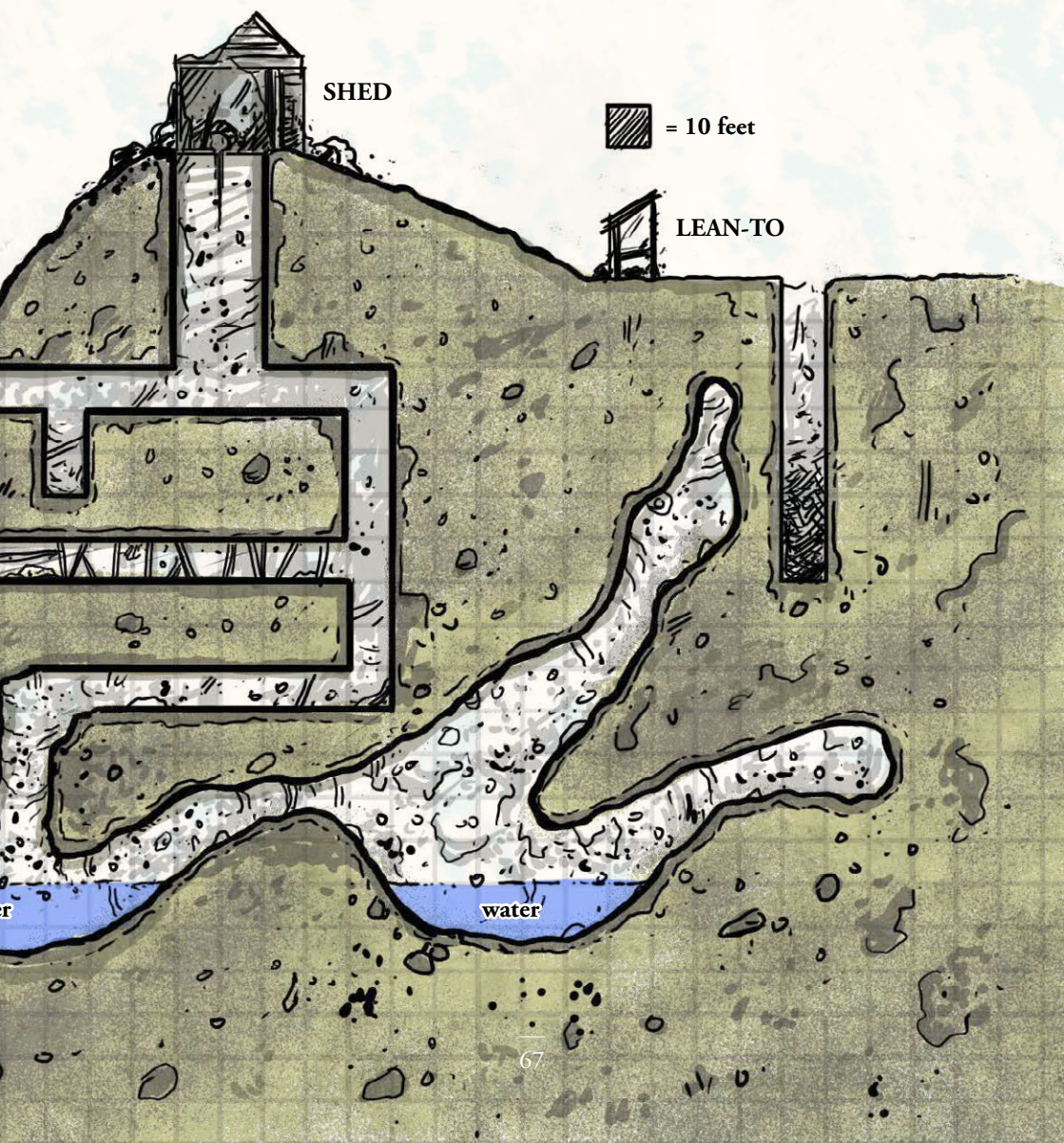
The **Miner** will retreat from the man-made area to the lower tunnels if it discovers that characters have entered the mine. It will wait for the characters to enter into the water-filled area of the lowest part of the mine, and then drop balls of pure sodium into the water in an attempt to destroy the party.

THE SHED This area once housed a winch used to extract waste and ore from the mine. Piles of rubble that are nearby attest to this. However, the mechanism has been completely destroyed by the efforts of the **Poseur-Defender**. The shed is in deplorable shape, with one whole side missing from the intrusion of the monster.

THE 1ST (LOWER) TUNNEL ENTRANCE

The area in front of this opening contains the remains of a giant bellows that the engineers had been using to reclaim the tunnel from the chlorine gases expelled by the **Miner**.





PIERRE DUPONT'S HOME

Pierre's home is actually owned by his patron and benefactor, George Melling. When **Pierre** hit upon hard times, George allowed **Pierre** to take up residence in the townhome connected to George's bookstore (George himself was wealthy enough that he lived in another home elsewhere). The shop has been closed since **Pierre** imprisoned George, and the outside doors and windows on all levels are locked and barred at all times.

THE BOOKSTORE The shop has been turned into a flophouse for **Pierre's** men. They sleep in whatever corner they can find, and they have sold off all the useable goods. Now the bookcases that lined the wall have nothing in them but debris and trash. 2d6 men will be found here at any given time. Half of these will be drunk and all will be high, so they will suffer the typical -2 penalty to Dexterity checks and saving throws. Each one is armed with 4 acid-filled jars that they will throw at their opponents. A direct strike with a jar of acid causes 2d4 points of damage, and anyone in a five foot radius will take 1d4 hit points of splash damage. They have 2d20 silver among them, and will be carrying 500 silver pieces worth of a designer drug (each individual "hit"

of the drug is worth about 10 silver pieces).

If a character partakes in some of the drug that was held by **Pierre's** men, she should make a saving throw versus Poison. A failed save results in that character entering a euphoric state for 5d4 turns. She will suffer a -2 penalty to Dexterity checks and saving throws for the period the euphoria lasts, but will also have a +1 bonus to all attack rolls and *mêlée* damage rolls she makes during that time. A character has a 65% chance of becoming addicted to the drug every time she takes it, even if she doesn't enter the euphoric state. Addicts will go into withdrawal from the drug if they don't use it again within 24 hours. Characters in withdrawal suffer a -2 penalty to all rolls until they use the drug again, or they successfully go through the full period of withdrawal. At the end of each 24 hour period spent in withdrawal, a character will make a saving throw versus Poison. If she fails the save, her withdrawal continues. If she makes the save, withdrawal ends, and the character will be able to function normally thereafter. However, should she ever take the drug again, that character will instantly relapse into addiction. Finally, a character's Constitution score will be permanently reduced by one each time she fails two consecutive saves in a row as a result of either taking the drug or by going through withdrawal.



Typical Agent of DuPont

Armor 11, Move 120', 1st Level Specialist, 2hp, acid jar 2d4 or belt knife 1d4, Morale 8.
When in a drug-induced euphoric state, attacks as a 2nd level fighter.

Elite Agent of DuPont

Armor 11, Move 120', 1st Level Specialist, 6hp, flamethrower 2d6 or belt knife 1d4, Morale 10. Flamethrower automatically ignites any character it strikes.



THE HALL [Pierre](#) invented a flame thrower, dangerous to use but very effective. He has armed two of his best men with the prototype model and placed them here as a last line of defense. One man must work a fuel pump while the other directs a stream of flame in the direction of invaders. The flamethrower has an effective range equivalent to that of a thrown knife. If either man working the device dies, the remaining man will not be able to work the flamethrower on his own. Those caught in the flame will take 2d6 points of initial damage, then they will catch alight suffering 1d8 points of damage each round until put out. If anyone successfully lands a blow upon the flamethrower apparatus itself, it will explode, doing 2d6 points of damage to all in a 10 foot radius. The house itself will not ignite due to being treated with [Pierre's](#) flame retardant.

THE PARLOR This room has the usual accoutrements one would expect for a home of this type. The one item of interest is a large chest near the door leading to the back courtyard. In it are 6 prototype gas masks developed by [Pierre](#) for his men to use when venturing into the cellar. Each gas mask has enough activated charcoal left in its filter to allow a character to function in a toxic gas environment unharmed for 1d4 turns.

There are also 6 mechanical chemical sprayers present in the chest if [Pierre's](#) men aren't actively using them to treat the buildings around the neighborhood of the Theatre of the Grand-Guignol. These sprayers are similar in some ways to the flamethrower that [Pierre](#) devised. They require two people to use properly, with one individual working a pump connected to a bottle of fluid while another directs a hose and nozzle in the direction that they wish to spray. The chemical spray is emitted in a cone that can extend up to 20 feet from the tip of the nozzle, achieving a maximum diameter of about 5 feet at the base of the cone.

THE KITCHEN This room has been trashed by [Pierre's](#) agents. Most of the surfaces are disgustingly dirty, and the only food that is

present is rotten. The stove is still functional, and if it is lit without being cleaned first, it will produce a pungent smell not unlike that of a raging dumpster fire.

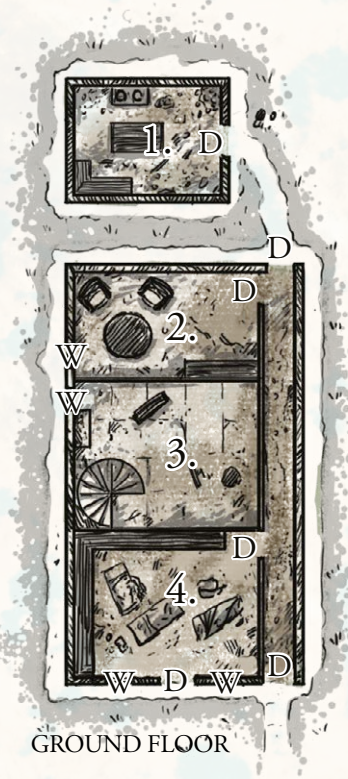
THE SOLAR [Pierre's](#) private room contains a standard bed and wardrobe with 10 sets of normal clothes inside. A locked chest contains 500sp at the foot of the bed, money earned through the sale of his designer drugs. Under his bed in a small locked fire proof box is a journal that details what [Pierre](#) knows about the Marionnettistes. In it he makes the request it be publicized upon his death. A ladder leads to a trap door that permits entry into his lab.

THE LABORATORY This chemical lab contains equipment worth some 4000sp. Hidden in among the glassware on the lab table is the jar that contains the **biocontrol unit** of that was extracted from the puppet, [Benet DeGranmont](#). The jar is filled with an antimicrobial that prevents the **biocontrol unit** from growing an amoeboid body that it could use to escape. This room also contains a makeshift cage some 5 feet deep by 10 feet wide. This area is where George Melling was imprisoned by [Pierre](#). Whether or not George is still alive depends on the timing of the characters. If he is, he is unstable, and if he takes any damage he will explode. Another ladder leads to a trap door that opens to the roof. This door will have been reinforced by [Pierre](#) and will apply a -2 to all open door skill checks. Because it is a trap door in the ceiling, only one character may try to open it at a time unless extraordinary measures are taken.

[Pierre](#) has rigged the ceiling with a trap. As soon as he hears someone trying the breach the final trap door he will open a valve on a giant vat of acid that he has sitting on the roof. The acid will spray into the room below from nozzles in the ceiling. Anyone in the room will be splashed with acid, and will take 2d4 points of damage for each round they are in the room. The vat has enough acid to keep the spray going continuously for one turn.

THE ROOF **Pierre** has a hot air balloon on his roof. As soon as he knows his house is under assault, he will lock all interior doors, arm his laboratory booby trap, and try to make it to his roof. It will take ½ hour for **Pierre** to fill the envelope of the balloon and lift off. If he manages to escape, he will try to carry out his plan to firebomb the Theatre of the Grand-Guignol using the balloon. If **Pierre** is forced to lift off ahead of schedule, then a number of things could work against him. The Referee may decide weather conditions are less than ideal, with winds blowing **Pierre** away from his intended target. If visibility is also poor due to a cloudy night, **Pierre** may accidentally set the wrong section of the city ablaze.

THE CELLAR The cellar door is kept locked. In the cellar is a pit that **Pierre** has used to dispose of unwanted chemicals. Walking into this area without the protection of a gas mask requires a character to make a save versus Poison or that character will take 3d4 points of damage from the toxic gases for each round of exposure. A successful save reduces the damage by half. Three barrels filled with **Pierre**'s flame retardant and one barrel of fuel for his flame thrower are also kept in this area.



GROUND FLOOR



FIRST FLOOR



SECOND FLOOR



ROOM KEY

- 1. KITCHEN
- 2. PARLOR
- 3. HALL
- 4. THE BOOKSTORE
- 5. SOLAR
- 6. LABORATORY
- 7. CELLAR
- 8. THE ROOF

D = door
W = window

RECOMMENDATIONS

FOR PREPARATION

It is recommended that the Referee prepare certain notes and materials ahead of time to run this adventure. Suggestions for such preparation follow below:

If the **Trapper might be encountered in its “full” state, the Referee should determine what specimens the Trapper has incorporated into its form.** In turn, this will determine what modes of defense it can use. The Referee may choose to use any creatures for this that suit his purposes, but may simply use a d10 to roll on the table below to determine each large specimen under its control and its corresponding attacks. Remember, the organisms chosen here may also show up in the Macrobiology Laboratory if **Joseph Harmony** successfully picks up the specimens from the **Trapper** on Day 2 of the event sequence.

1. Brown Bear, bite 1d8
2. Stag, gore 1d6
3. Wolf, bite 1d4+1
4. Large Bat, bite 1d2 (2% cumulative chance per bite of catching rabies)
5. Wild Dog, bite 1d4
6. Wild Boar, gore 3d4
7. Badger, bite 1d3
8. Human, punch 1d2
9. Goat, butt 1d3
10. Weasel, bite 1 point

The **Poseur-Defender can appear in multiple forms throughout the game. The Referee may wish to have a list of alternative monstrous forms and their statistics readied ahead of time.** It is recommended that the new forms be representative of monsters found in mythology and lore produced by the cultures of the game world. For example, if the Referee chose to set the adventure in the early modern time period of Earth in the city of London, it would not be out of the question for the **Poseur-Defender** to appear as a dragon. It is recommended that the Referee determine the composition of the non-player character party that is hired to go out to silver mine before that event occurs in play. The character of the owner of the silver mine, Patrick Best, is also left open for the Referee to define in a way that best suits the needs of the game. In the author’s personal playtesting, a few characters from the hunting party were used to replace some of the players’ characters that were lost earlier in the game, and Patrick Best became a patron of the players’ party, granting them access to funds and equipment that were initially out of reach. The rewards for entering into Patrick’s service are left to the Referee to determine.

The Referee should prepare a note ahead of time for each player that might have their character transformed into simulacra during the game. An example of how that note could be written follows:

“Congratulations! Your character is dead, and has been replaced with a duplicate created by beings from another world! You need not change a single thing on your character sheet, and you may play your character as normal, with one caveat. The creators of the replacement body ask that your character attend the after-party on the main stage of the theatre in one hour’s time to receive further orders. She should not tell any other characters this information or bring any other characters with her to the party unless she wishes them to be assimilated as well. Your character still has free will, and may choose to disobey, but be aware that there will be negative consequences for her if she does not.”

The Referee should also prepare player notes for those that attend the After-Party. These notes should describe the importance of **nutrient** animals, detail the use of any equipment the simulacra are receiving, and describe any marching orders the Marionettistes might have for them. The orders are for the Referee to determine. It is recommended that each player-controlled simulacrum be given a kit that contains the following items in addition to their **nutrient**-bearing animals if they attend the after party at the theatre (a complete description of all items is listed within the glossary of new technology at the end of this manuscript):

§ **Mnemonic Goo**

§ **Image Scanner**

§ **Projector Toad**

§ **Pigeon-Grow**

Additional items will be warranted if the standing orders call for a particular service. For instance, if the gamers intend a particular simulacrum to serve them as an assassin, that simulacrum might also be given **shot-beetle** eggs and **silencer worms** in addition to the standard equipment. A saboteur could be given a bag of dried **reed creeper** roots and a sonic nauseator, and a simulacrum on a mission to find an elusive foe may be given a single clump of **hairasites** and a vial of **tracking lice** to use as needed. Finally, a **biocage** or small case of **suggestion snuff** might be issued in those instances when a simulacrum might need to capture a foe alive.

The Referee should decide ahead of time what information is available within the rats in the Record Room. The Referee should use this as an opportunity to give the player characters information about key non-player characters that they might meet on the game world. It is also recommended that the Referee prepare for this portion of the game by printing out a handful of real memes from the internet to share with the players, the more obnoxious and offensive, the better.

While the exact contents of Pierre's journal are left to the Referee's discretion, it is recommended the journal include the following bits of information:

- § **Pierre** believes the group running the Grand-Guignol is part of an alien invasion bent on controlling the world. He calls these beings, “Marionnettistes,” or puppet masters.
- § **Pierre** has compiled a list of all the citizens who volunteered to go on stage during the shows at the Theatre of the Grand-Guignol. He believes all of these individuals to be under the control of the aliens. It is left to the Referee to determine just who these individuals are, and where their allegiances happen to lie.
- § **Pierre** knows the names of all the humanoid puppets, their basic roles in the Theatre of the Grand-Guignol, and their basic patterns of movement outside of the Theatre. He refers to them in sub-groups known as “Hands.”
- § **Pierre's** plan for firebombing the Theatre of the Grand Guignol is outlined in detail.
- § The details of **Pierre's** inventions are listed and include schematics for a gas mask, a flamethrower, a chemical sprayer, and a hot-air balloon. The formulas for his flame-retardant chemical, the fuel for his flamethrower, an antimicrobial agent, and the drugs that he has been distributing to his men are also outlined.
- § **Pierre** thoroughly examined the body of puppet **Benet DeGranmont**, and discovered that it could quickly heal from most forms of damage. After experimentation, he determined that flame or acid could slow the regeneration, but the only way to totally stop the healing process was to remove the metal sphere (**biocontrol unit**) located within the brain pan of the puppet.
- § **Pierre** knows from personal experience that the metal sphere he extracted from **Benet** can exert influence upon a person's body. He has learned not to handle it directly.
- § **Pierre** is aware of the metal sphere's ability to generate an amoeboid form, and so has stored it in a special fluid that inhibits this ability.
- § **Pierre** noticed George Melling seemed preoccupied with eating the feces of the pet rabbit that was given to him by the Marionnettistes. George had a bag of the feces on him during his capture, and **Pierre** has withheld the feces from George for the duration of his imprisonment as a precaution. Studying the feces for signs of unusual chemicals, **Pierre** has isolated the **nutrient**, but does not know its purpose. Given time, **Pierre** feels he might be able to replicate the **nutrient** in his lab.

If the player characters used in this adventure are going to be a part of an ongoing campaign, the Referee should probably decide if the nutrient needed by simulacra can be reproduced by anyone other than the gamers. If a character becomes a simulacrum over the course of an adventure, that character may seek independence from the gamers by developing her own source of **nutrient**. One option would be to allow a character to hire a chemist like [Pierre DuPont](#) to reproduce the **nutrient** in his lab. Such a task should take a considerable amount of time and funding to accomplish. Another option would be to allow a character to breed the **nutrient** animals with the assumption that the production of the **nutrient** is a heritable trait. It is recommended that the **nutrient** trait be treated as homozygous recessive trait that will only “breed true” if two **nutrient** animals of the same type are bred together. In this case, if a **nutrient**-bearing rabbit were bred with a common rabbit, none of the offspring will show the **nutrient**-bearing trait. However, if the offspring of the second generation of rabbits are bred with each other, one quarter of their offspring (the third generation) will exhibit the trait. Thus, only characters who are persistent in their breeding experiments would be rewarded with **nutrient**.

It is recommended that the Referee print a copy of the Glossary of Technological Marvels and the Characters and Creatures at a Glance sections found at the end of this document for easy reference during play.





CHARACTERS AND CREATURES AT A GLANCE

The following is a quick reference guide to playing the characters and creatures during a game. Basic statistics are given along with a few descriptors to help with roleplaying.

Form produced by an extracted biocontrol unit

AMORPHOUS MASS (skulking hand-sized amoeba-like being) : Armor 12, Move 60', 1 Hit Die, 3hp, no attacks, Morale 12. Regenerates 1 hit point per round. Immune to poison.

The Usher's Hand (Common Traits: reserved, quiet, most active from early morning until the early evening)

EDWIN (hulking male enforcer): Armor 12, Move 90', 3 Hit Dice, 16hp, fist 1d2+3, fist 1d2+3, Morale 12. Regenerates 1 hit point per round. Immune to poison.

LOUISE (hulking female enforcer): Armor 12, Move 90', 3 Hit Dice, 18hp, fist 1d2+3, fist 1d2+3, Morale 12. Regenerates 1 hit point per round. Immune to poison.

BRIDGETTE (female dog): Armor 13, Move 120', 2 Hit Dice, 6hp, bite 1d4, Morale 12. **Hairasite** quill defense does 1d3 damage to any opponent making a successful mêlée attack with a weapon of medium or smaller size. Quill damage leaves behind 1 clump of **hairasites**. Poison tongue requires save versus Poison or die in 1d4 turns. Regenerates 1 hit point per round. Immune to poison.

VIRGINIA (petite female nursemaid): Armor 11, Move 120', 2 Hit Dice, 8hp, by weapon +1, Morale 12. Regenerates 1 hit point per round. Immune to poison. Spray toxic blood from eyes (-1 to hit and damage rolls, movement rate cut in half until washed off).

JOSEPH (middle-aged male servant): Armor 11, Move 90', 2 Hit Dice, 9hp, musket shot 1d8, musket bash 1d6+1, Morale 12. Regenerates 1 hit point per round. Immune to poison. Uses **shot-beetle** ammunition.

The Hand of the Thespian (Common Traits: cruel, artistic, most active from mid-evening until early morning)

JESSICA and **ROSE** (twin female dancers): Armor 11, Move 120', 2 Hit Dice, 9hp, **hairasite** scourge 1d3+1, Morale 12. Scourge damage leaves behind 1 clump of **hairasites**. Regenerates 1 hit point per round. Immune to poison.

SAMUEL (male "special effects" artist): Armor 11, Move 120', 2 Hit Dice, 11hp, **hairasite**-spiked fist 1d3+1, cane sword 1d6+1, Morale 12. Punch damage leaves behind 1 clump of **hairasites**. Regenerates 1 hit point per round. Immune to poison.

ZACHARY (male narrator): Armor 11, Move 120', 2 Hit Dice, 12hp, **hairasite** club 1d4+1, Morale 12. Club damage leaves behind 1 clump of **hairasites**. Regenerates 1 hit point per round. Immune to poison.

The Manager's Hand (Common Traits: outgoing, charismatic, most active from late morning until late evening.)

UNCLE WILLIAM (middle-aged male financier): Armor 11, Move 120', 2 Hit Dice, 10hp, by weapon+1, Morale 12. Regenerates 1 hit point per round. Immune to poison. Carries snuff that removes the will to fight (standard mêlée attack, save versus Poison).

JEAN-GUI (late middle-aged male socialite) : Armor 11, Move 120', 2 Hit Dice, 10hp, pistol shot 1d8 or by mêlée weapon +1, Morale 12. Regenerates 1 hit point per round. Immune to poison. Uses **shot-beetle** ammunition.

MARIELLE (female socialite and matron): Armor 11, Move 90', 2 Hit Dice, 8hp, by weapon +1, Morale 12. Regenerates 1 hit point per round. Immune to poison. Can spawn flying "drone babies" at a rate of 1 every 5 rounds, which causes slippery floor in 10 foot radius.

DRONE BABY (infant with fangs and wings): Armor 15, Move 120' (flying), 1 Hit Die, 3hp, bite 1d3, Morale 12.

JAMES (male toddler): Armor 11, Move 90', 1 Hit Die, 4hp, by weapon or tooth dart 1d3, Morale 12. Regenerates 1 hit point per round. Immune to poison.

BEATRICE (female infant): Armor 11, Move 60', 1 Hit Die, 4hp, by weapon -1, Morale 12. Regenerates 1 hit point per round. Immune to poison. Sonic nauseator effect (save versus Breath Weapon to avoid).

The Hand of the Unknown (Common Traits: monstrous, alien, most active from dusk to dawn)

THE TRAPPER (giant transparent amoeba-like being): Armor 15, Move 90' (-5' for each large trapped being it carries), 3 Hit Dice, 15hp, pseudopod attack (no damage) or by trapped specimen, Morale 12. Adhesion on pseudopod strike (successful open doors check to release). Automatic filament damage (1d4) each round following adhesion. Control of trapped target at 0hp to -4hp. Regenerates 1 hit point per round. Immune to poison.

THE MINER (man-sized yellow amoeba-like being): Armor 15, Move 90', 3 Hit Dice, 12hp, chlorine gas jet 3d4 (save versus Poison for half damage), Morale 12. Sodium released into water can cause explosions (3d6 damage in a 20 foot radius, save versus Breath Weapon for half). Regenerates 1 hit point per round. Immune to poison.

THE PROCESSOR (cow-sized red amoeba-like being): Armor 15, Move 90' (-5' for each engulfed victim carried), 4 Hit Dice, 24hp, pseudopod (no damage), Morale 12. Pseudopod Adhesion (successful open doors check to release). Simulacrum transformation. Regenerates 1 hit point per round. Immune to poison.

THE POSEUR-DEFENDER (giant eel-like creature): Armor 17, Move 120', 6 Hit Dice, 40hp, bite 1d6, constrict 1d10, Morale 12. Any caught in constriction attack will automatically take 1d10 each round until freed (successful open door check needed). Regenerates 1 hit point per round. Immune to poison.

THE MONITOR (gigantic organic mass lining the structure of the theatre): Armor 11, Move 0', 20 Hit Dice, 160hp. Morale 12. "Body" comprises whole portions of the theatre, and can initiate collapse of underground complex (5d10 rounds). Regenerates 1 hit point per round. Immune to poison.

Macrobiology Laboratory Specimen

ARACHNE-TROLL PUPPET (large six-armed beast): Armor 15, Move 120', 6 Hit Dice, 36hp, 6 claw attacks 1d4, bite 1d8, Morale 12. If 4 claw attacks strike a single target in one round, the bite will automatically hit that target as well. Regenerates 1 hit point per round. Immune to poison.

Humans

PIERRE DUPONT (paranoid male chemist): Armor 11, Move 120', 1 Hit Die, 4hp, damage by weapon, Morale 9.

TYPICAL AGENT OF DUPONT (filthy male beggar): Armor 11, Move 120', 1st Level Specialist, 2hp, acid jar 2d4 or belt knife 1d4, Morale 8. When in a drug-induced euphoric state, attacks as a 2nd level fighter.

ELITE AGENT OF DUPONT (slightly less filthy male beggar): Armor 11, Move 120', 1st Level Specialist, 6hp, flamethrower 2d6 or belt knife 1d4, Morale 10. Flamethrower automatically ignites any character it strikes.





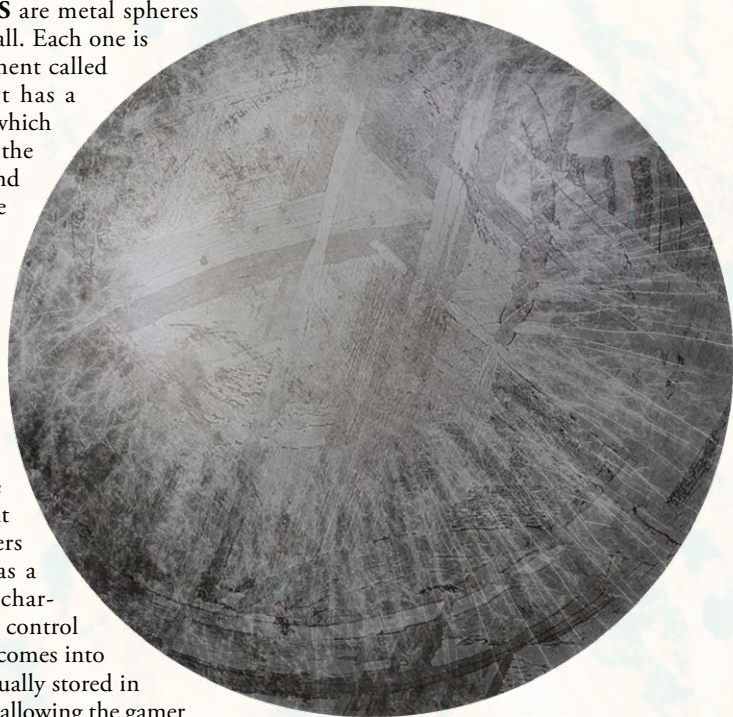
GLLOSSARY OF TECHNOLOGICAL MARVELS

The gamers have harnessed the power of their **biocontrol units** to shape the living things naturally found on the player characters' world into forms that are useful to them in various ways. Most of this new technology has been manufactured to withstand the casual scrutiny of humans, so only close inspection or magic will reveal these items' true nature.

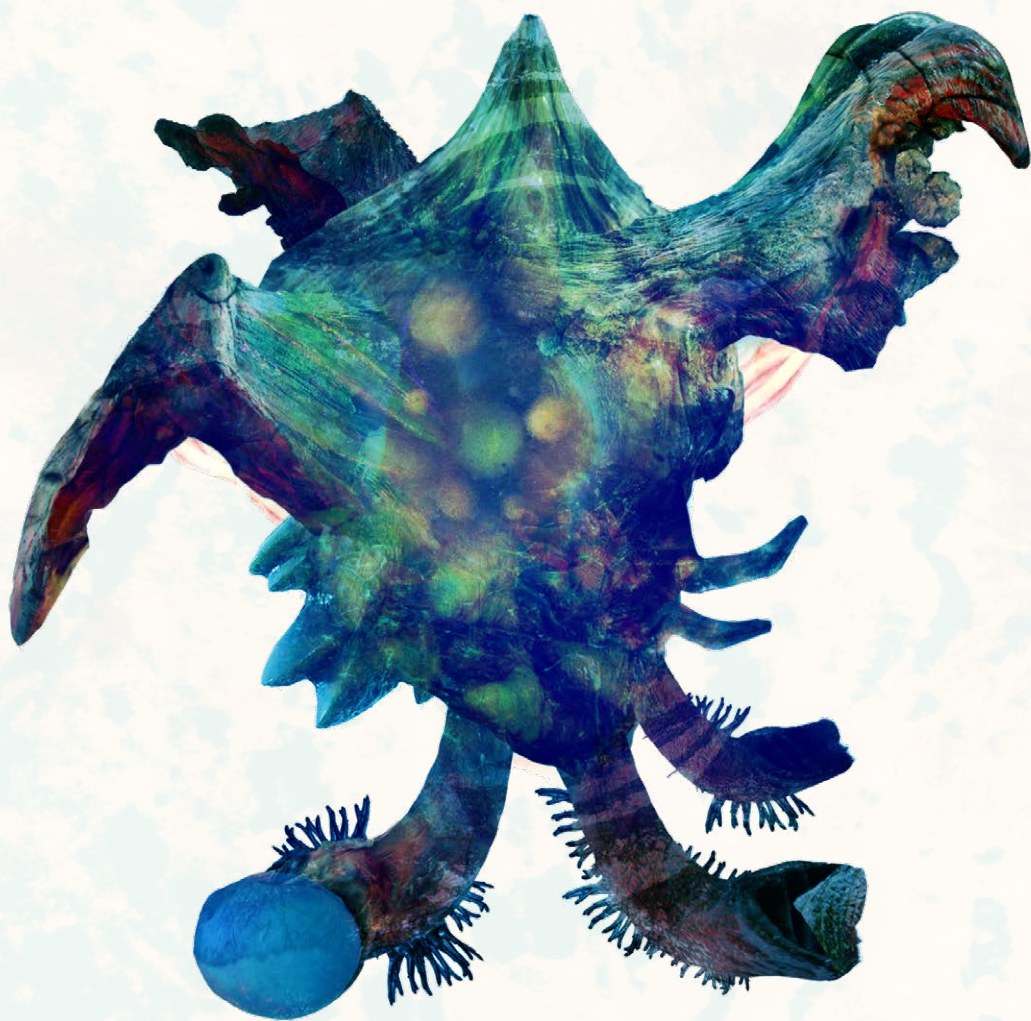
BIOCAGES are organic cages that can fold down to accommodate beings as small as rats or stretch to encase things the size of humans. They are very light (about 10 pounds), but also very strong. Such cages appear to be made of muscle and tendon. The muscle can tense to become smaller or relax to become larger, while the tendons can become rigid and hard as bone to provide a stable shape. A cage can be thrown like a net, forming a solid enclosure once it surrounds the target. A successful open doors skill check is required to escape. Once hardened into place, if the **biocage** is not fed a special slurry of minced meat every 12 hours, the structure grows "tired" and loses its ability to form a rigid structure.



BIOCONTROL UNITS are metal spheres about the size of a golf ball. Each one is made of a rare earth element called duoinium. The element has a unique natural property which causes it to exist in both the player characters' world and in the dimension of the Marionnettistes at the same time. The element can be mined from the earth, but also naturally exists within the bodies of humans (approximately 20 human bodies contain enough of the element to make one **biocontrol unit**). The dual nature of the element is exploited by the gamers who have harnessed it as a tool to sense the player characters' world and to exert control over living matter that it comes into contact with. A unit is usually stored in the braincase of a puppet, allowing the gamer control of the puppet's body.



If the **biocontrol unit** is cut from a puppet's body and allowed to touch the bare skin of a character, a gamer can make an attempt to influence the actions of that character's body. A failed save versus Magical Device means the gamer has taken control for a single round. If a **biocontrol** or sensor unit is stolen, the Marionnettistes will make a priority to get it back. A removed **biocontrol unit** can be reinstalled into a puppet with relative ease. A **biocontrol unit** left on its own in an open, non-sterile environment can be used to collect and coordinate microorganisms to form a large living mass over time. This is how the first puppet was created. Each puppet can regenerate at a rate of 1 hit point per round as long as its **biocontrol unit** is in contact with its body and it gains immunity to conventional poisons.



DEACTIVATOR VIRUSES are used to induce instability in simulacra. Simulacra that come into direct contact with these microbes suffer a permanent loss of their ability to process the **nu-
trient** that keeps them from becoming unstable. There is no saving throw to avoid this effect.

GLOW MAGGOTS can be used to produce light that matches the intensity of torches without producing any heat or smoke. If fed a constant supply of **nutrients**, they will remain in larval form indefinitely. As soon as the food source dries up, they will become dormant and form pupae. After 2 weeks or dormancy they will emerge as normal looking flies. The flies will live for three weeks before dying, and if they find a mate, will lay eggs at the end of the third week on the nearest source of food they can find.





HAIRASITES are hair-shaped organisms that are attached to the puppet's bodies in place of real hair. The influence of a puppet's **bio-control unit** can make the **hairasites** assume new shapes and colors, essentially allowing the Marionnettistes to change their puppet's hair styles at will. "Wild" **hairasites** that aren't under the influence of a **biocontrol unit** appear as straight, coarse black hairs. The tip or "follicle" of a **hairasite** looks like a tiny fanged mouth under a microscope.

Each **hairasite** can burrow into skin to secure itself like real hair or cause damage to enemies. Each clump of **hairasites** will drain 1hp per day from a human host. The regenerative ability of the puppets easily compensates for this drain, so many **hairasites** can remain in place on a puppet indefinitely without causing the puppet harm. In combat, the puppets can pull **hairasites** from their skin to form weapons. A successful strike from a **hairasite** weapon will leave behind a single clump of **hairasites** that will remain in place until pulled from the skin. Pulling a clump of **hairasites** in a careful fashion will cause 1 point of damage. Pulling a whole clump in haste will cause 1d4 points of damage. Cutting the **hairasites** will only cause them to burrow under the skin in an attempt to escape the blade. Cutting just one **hairasite** will cause it to shriek in agony, triggering the burrowing behavior in all the other **hairasites** on the host body. Each clump will cause 1 point of burrowing damage per round, and the behavior will last for 1d4 rounds after being triggered.

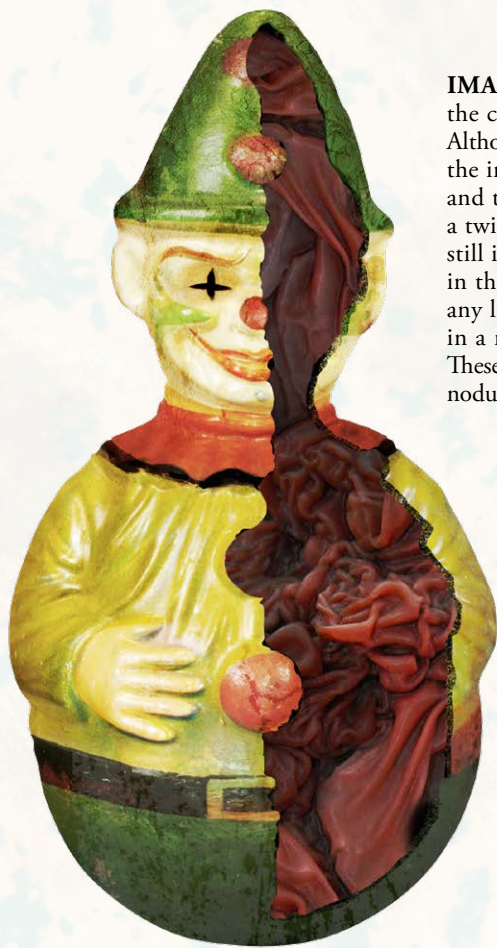


IMAGE SCANNERS are often hidden in the common form of toys or a scroll cases. Although they appear normal on the outside, the insides of these items are full of viscera and tiny organs. Usually activated through a twisting motion, it can record moving or still images of people and documents, even in the dark (although color is lost without any light). Each specific recording is stored in a nodule that grows among the viscera. These recordings are retrieved by plucking the nodules and feeding them to **projector toads**.

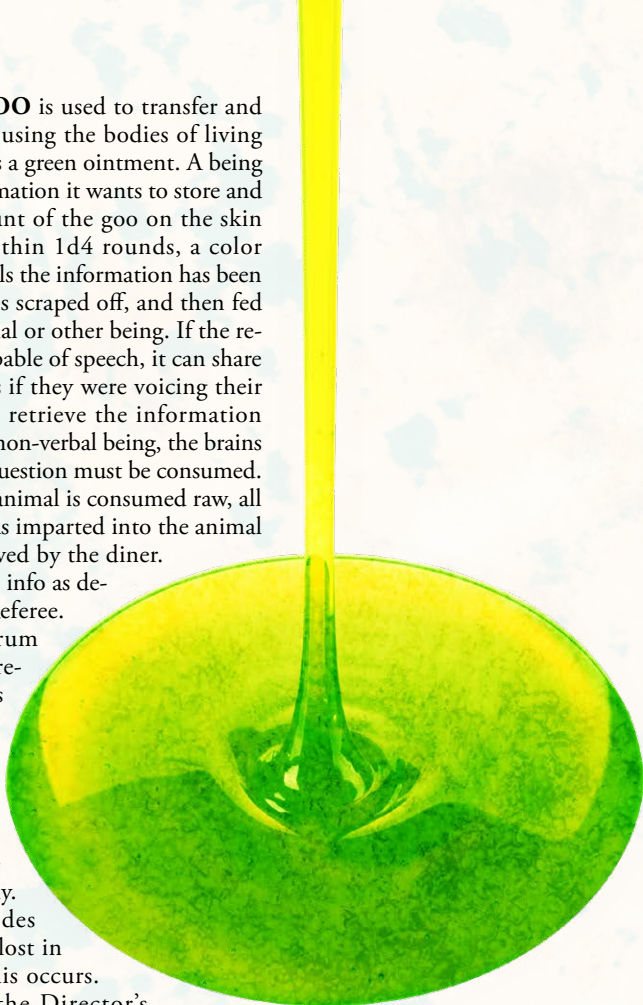
MNEMONIC GOO is used to transfer and store information using the bodies of living things. It resembles a green ointment. A being thinks of the information it wants to store and rubs a small amount of the goo on the skin over its brain. Within 1d4 rounds, a color change to red signals the information has been received. The goo is scraped off, and then fed to a receiving animal or other being. If the receiving being is capable of speech, it can share the information as if they were voicing their own thoughts. To retrieve the information from an animal or non-verbal being, the brains of the creature in question must be consumed. If the brain of the animal is consumed raw, all of memory that was imparted into the animal by the goo is received by the diner.

Cooked brains lose info as determined by the Referee.

Any non-simulacrum human character receiving info in this way runs a 15% risk of having one of her own memories overwritten with the new information she receives in this way.

The Referee decides which memory is lost in secret any time this occurs.

The puppets of the Director's Hand keep a flock of carrier pigeons in a pen on the roof of the theatre which they use to exchange information with agents in distant lands via use of the goo.





NUTRIENT ANIMALS are animals that have been altered by the gamers to produce a specific vital **nutrient** in their feces. A simulacrum must eat the equivalent of one handful of these feces each day or begin to lose Constitution at a rate of one point per day. The loss is permanent, but can be halted with further regular consumption. Simulacra whose constitution drop below 6 points become unstable as described in the section on simulacra. A **nutrient animal** can be of any animal species, although most are rabbits. Replacement **nutrient animals** are usually sent by the Marionnettistes to loyal simulacra as their old ones die off or are lost. Simulacra that are in remote areas often receive replacements in the form of carrier pigeons.



PIGEON-GROW is an ointment used to regrow the lost heads of carrier pigeons that are used to transfer messages using **mne-monic goo**. The regrowth takes about one turn to complete. The ointment can be used to heal wounds of other beings, but for every two hit points it restores, a pigeon head will grow out of the spot that was treated. Thus, if the ointment is used to heal a four hit point wound on a human's chest, she will be sporting a brand new set of pecks. Each full jar of **pigeon-grow** contains 20 applications that can heal up to two hit points each.



PROJECTOR TOADS appear as common toads, but if picked up and squeezed in the proper manner, bioluminescent organs flare into life at the backs of their mouths. If a **projector toad** is fed a storage nodule from an **image scanner** after its glowing organs are activated, then the toad's mouth will open and the image stored within the module can be projected upon the nearest flat surface. Moving recordings can be paused, rewound, or fast forwarded by applying appropriate pressure to the toad's eyes. Sound reproduction is, unfortunately, limited to the natural vocal range of the toad.



REED CREEPER is a fast growing vine designed by the Marionnettistes to choke off waterways and cover buildings. It is a weapon meant to sabotage infrastructure controlled by political rivals. It can be carried in dormant state as a small fist-sized clump of dried roots. Once exposed to a water source, it will grow at a rapid rate (1 square foot per round) until that water source is consumed. For every gallon of water available, it can produce 10 square feet of vine coverage. It is very tough, and cutting it only slows its growth rate by half. It takes a successful open doors check to break a tangle of vines using physical force. It is vulnerable to fire, and can be burned away at a rate faster than it grows. Of course, this usually results in the destruction of any structure the **creeper** vines were covering.



SHOT-BEETLE EGGS are the size, shape, and hardness of common firearm ammunition. The eggs are used in place of regular shot to increase the lethality of a firearm. If a character is hit with this shot, she must remove it within 1d4 turns or the egg will hatch inside her body. The insect larva will devour the flesh in its immediate vicinity causing 2 points of damage every round it is active. If not removed (requiring 1d4 points of cutting damage) it will fall dormant at the end of 5 rounds. If left undisturbed, the insect will undergo metamorphosis in 1d4 days and emerge from the body of its host, causing an additional 1d4 damage in the process. The resulting winged adult returns to the nest where it originated and crawls inside. There it will lay a new generation of eggs (1d100) before dying.



SILENCER WORMS are small black and white caterpillars. They seem unremarkable until they are severely damaged to the point of death. A dying worm's wails of anguish take the form of a bizarre "anti-sound" that completely cancels out all other noise within a 5 foot radius. This effect only lasts for a single round, but it is useful in that it can silence gunfire. A sniper wishing to shoot at a target without giving away her position could impale such a worm on a spike mounted upon the barrel of her weapon before unleashing a volley at her victim. Naturally, each worm is good for only a single use.



SONIC NAUSEATORS are devices that can hum at a specific frequency which causes any non-simulacrum humans who hear it to fall ill on a failed save versus Breath Weapon. Most **sonic nauseators** take the outward form of flutes, pipes, or other small musical instruments, and the inside of each one is lined with cords of organic tissue. Puppets and simulacra are immune to its effects. Affected characters suffer a -1 penalty on rolls to hit and on saving throws. The effect fades 2d4 rounds after a character is removed from its sphere of influence, which is a 20 foot radius centered on the device.

SUGGESTION SNUFF is a mixture of traditional snuff and mind-altering bacteria. A character who inhales this must save versus Poison or be rendered into a docile state for 1d4 turns. Characters affected this way will wish to avoid conflict of any kind during the time they are under its influence. Simulacra and puppets are immune to its effects.



TRACKING LICE stick to the hairs of beings that they come into contact with. They release pheromones that can be tracked using **hairasites**, which naturally hunt the **lice** for sustenance. Hunting **hairasites** cause their host to itch at varying intensity based on proximity. If the **lice** are more than a mile away, the **hairasites** are calm. Within a half mile, they cause a slight tingle. A hundred yards distance raises an itch that is regular and strong, and within 20 feet, it is nearly painful.



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